

A Letter from the Editor

Nottingham, England

We feel that some of the following should take responsibility for the contents of these pages:

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Additional Notes: The Letters Page is a project run within the Creative Writing section of the School of English at the University of Nottingham, and is entirely funded by the University of Nottingham. We are grateful for the opportunity, and for their support, and excited about the enthusiasm and insight that our student assistants have brought to the project. We don't feel it would be inappropriate at this point to mention that, should you or any of your close friends and relations be considering studying for an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in English or especially in Creative Writing, it would be well worth your/their while looking at the courses available here. We're not saying that our editorial office is the smartest place to spend time honing your/their love of reading and sense of writing craft, but it's pretty close. Also, there are sometimes doughnuts. Details of both undergraduate and postgraduate courses can be found at www.nottingham.ac.uk/ugstudy/courses/english/english.aspx, or by writing to:

*Admissions,
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One Last Thing: Submissions are now open for our fourth issue, loosely based around the notion of the summer house. We've been thinking, since the issue will be produced while our students divide their time between home and the beach, about living in more than one place. We've been thinking about lake cabins, about Tore Jansson's summer island, about the dacha and the summer residence and the holiday caravans of Mablethorpe and Skegness. We're thinking about people who have two houses when others have none. We're wondering if anyone still uses Poste Restante. We're thinking about the divided self, and we'd love to hear from you. Letters should be handwritten, around 500 words long, and posted to us at the address below. Closing date is June 10th 2014, and we'll pay £100 for every letter we publish.

*The Letters Page,
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Dear Reader,

I'm writing to you from the newly refurbished reading room of Nottingham's Bromley House Library, a subscription library since 1816, which houses an excellent collection of books both ancient and sprightly, and has all manner of quiet corners and comfortable armchairs in which to both read and write. (Members of a similar establishment in London may wish to check Bromley House's subscription fees online before weeping quietly into their warm laptops.) Tomorrow will be the first day of May – the plane trees in the courtyard garden are bright with first leaf, and the pigeons on the chimney pots are plumply excited – and I am conscious that we had planned for this issue to have reached you by now. But a letter is a letter, subject to the vagaries of time and human agency, and sometimes delays are inevitable; we trust you will find that the letters within these pages have been worth the wait.

Fittingly, given the theme of this issue, one member of the editorial team has recently had cause to pack bags and relocate, and in so doing to make choices about the necessities of a life. (Books were still at the top of the packing list, we were pleased to see.) How much can one person carry with them? How much can one person leave behind? Observing the process gave us cause to consider the neat fit of the metaphorical notion of 'baggage' to the actual physical weight of, well, baggage. We were reminded of Luc Besson in the film *Leon*, moving from apartment to apartment with only a suitcase and potted plant to serve as his worldly goods. (The potted plant was a fine detail, we always felt: not a ruthless asceticism, this, but a considered selectivity.)

And yet, unless you are either a holy ascetic or an amoral assassin, it can be difficult to live this way for very long. Life has a way of accruing, we find, in objects and papers and packages and books (especially in books). The state of the editorial desks in the *Letters Page* offices is good evidence for this accrual. But the notion of travelling light – the ideal of it – is still one to which we cling, and return. As did so many of the writers who submitted letters for this issue, who wrote to us of heavy baggage and none, of simple journeys and impossible ones, and of the lightness or heaviness of love. We were delighted to read these letters when they fell through the office letterbox, and we take great pleasure in passing the best of them on to you now.

You'll have noticed, perhaps, another change in format for this issue. We are restless souls. These are A3 pages, which should scale quite nicely on the screen of your electronic device (unless it's a phone, in which case you're probably in a world of scrolling pain right now) but will look most handsome if you print it out, roll it into a tube, and post it to a friend or colleague or loved one. Should you not be fortunate enough to work in an office with A3 printing capability (and do remember to select both 'print double-sided' and 'flip on the short edge'), your local print shop will be only too happy to assist.

And so I draw to a close. Lunch beckons. The sun beats down into the courtyard, and to be honest these strutting chimney-pot pigeons are beginning to make me uncomfortable. We hope you have a wonderful summer, wherever you spend it and however much baggage you take with you. Why not send us a postcard? We'd be happy to feature it on our website. And, talking of summer, you should know that our next issue – due out in October – will be loosely themed around summer houses. See the submissions page on our website for details.

We leave you now in the hands of Mr Roddy Doyle, who will launch this issue on a fine spring evening in Dublin, from the offices of the excellent Fighting Words organisation. Thank you Mr Doyle, and thank you, dear Reader, for your continued attention.

Yours Sincerely,
The Editor.