

FROM THE EDITORS



The Scooters, England 2002

Once the smoke had cleared from our glorious explosion onto the web, we here in the Commonwealth of Wag's braved the short walk to our inbox.

Feedback was plenty. We were flattered by many kind words and some serious critical engagement with our magazine's content. And we like to think we've learned a few things from the insightful critiques many readers offered. Surprisingly, for all the talk of our manifesto's purple prose, there was nary a mention of our purple background, which we've taken as implicit approval.

As for the peripheral flak, hate mail, and blog flotsam, we consider it great entertainment, because among the miasma, there lies the occasional pearl. Take, for example, our absolute favorite slice of disparagement—a scathing critique we received via email, with rhetoric straight from the Book of Ecclesiastes: “In a cosmological sense, none of it means anything. *Wag's Revue* will be dust, the planet will be dark, nobody will remember a thing, or care [...] The world will be just fine without *Wag's Revue*.”

These words sent us three editors spiraling into existential despair. What the hell were we thinking starting a literary magazine? What was the point of it? Are we in it for the fame? An unlikely prospect. Fortune? Even less so. Are we, then, in search of some kind of transcendence through art? Maybe we are.

But perhaps T.C. Boyle said it best in his interview with us for this issue: “Everybody needs to find distraction from the grimness of life and I've found my distraction in art. Of course, it's all utterly meaningless, as Beckett pointed out joyfully, over and over again. [...] I write in order to have something to do so I don't have to go out and hang myself.”

Instead of allowing the potential meaninglessness of literature be cause for utterly dismissing it (and all other creative endeavors), we like to celebrate literature as the very thing that

keeps us from succumbing to the potential meaninglessness of life itself. Sure, quoth Qoheleth, “all is vanity,” and, as George reminds us, “all things must pass.” But until the end comes, by God, let there be lit.

Luckily our critic had a few other, more concrete, words of advice: “If you want to make a difference, veer away from the swarm of hacks in writing programs desperate beyond all measure to have their lives validated by appearing clever, and instead go outside your door and take a homeless person to lunch. Call your mother. Help a fly find its way out the door instead of smashing it.”

We tried following his advice, but it was difficult avoiding all those ‘hacks’—mostly because many of those hacks are good friends of ours, and several of those hacks contributed terrific stories, poems, and essays featured in our current issue. We did indeed take a homeless person out to lunch, and he was delightful—certainly more pleasant than our mothers were when we called them. “Still on with that lit mag nonsense?” they asked. “Where’s the money in that? What’s the *point* of it all?”

Well, where’s the money in anything these days? What is the point of it all? In a cosmological sense, none of it means anything. Eventually *Wag's Revue* will be dust, the planet will be dark, and nobody will remember a thing, or care.

We shuffled home, hearts in the gutter, and found the *New York Times Magazine* yellowing on our doorstep. Its pages, its editors apologized, are now nine percent smaller to cope with printing costs. Some things, we realized, may become dust before others.

All we could think to do then was roll up that mag and use it to smash a shit-ton of flies.

Oh, and for this issue, we’ve made our pages nine percent bigger. Suck it, print.

—The Editors, *Wag's Revue*