

# EDITORIAL

Recently the old Ecclesiastical quote “there is nothing new under the sun” has come to the forefront of some of our discussions around the magazine. A rather self demising quote to say the least, one that leaves us little room for maneuvering as writers and readers. To think that there is nothing new under the sun leaves us with little work to do of our own accord and could easily spin any writer into a serious depression. Yet, in one sense the statement is correct. History shows us that themes repeat themselves from age to age and even day to day. But is this purely applicable to us as readers and writers of words? Relying on the famous quote of Ezra Pound, “Make it New,” I want to address this issue.

Ezra Pound, his own legend tells us, got this quote from Tching Tang’s (Ch’eng T’ang, 18th century BCE Chinese Emperor and founder of the Shang Dyansty) bathtub. Pound gives us the direct quote from the Chinese in Canto 53: “New, Sun, Sun, New.” If you take a look at the original Chinese characters, you will find that the character Pound translates as new, Hsin or Xin, can also be translated as “fresh” or “up-to-date.” One magic of reading Pound is to read “around Pound,” gather his meanings from all those words surrounding the words in question – contextualize. Just past the place where Pound lays down his famous “Make it New” in Canto 53, he says, “Day by day make it new / cut underbrush, / pile the logs / keep it growing.” Here, clearly, Pound is using “Make it New” in the sense of the Chinese that he translated, make it fresh, clean it out, dust it off so that it (language) can keep growing. Pound, then, was not saying that we had to re-invent the wheel every time we sit down to write, but rather make it (language) fresh within ourselves.

And although some only read Bloom’s title and not his book, Bloom is saying, in *Anxiety of Influence*, to acknowledge the past as it is for what it is and deal with it as it exists within ourselves, our writing and even our reading. Reading across cultures and across history only serves to develop a newness within ourselves. A newness that is organic and does not require the invention of new rhyme schemes, or rhythmic variations, or writing poems with the first letter of every other third verb missing in order to be new. As Richard Hugo points out in *The Triggering Town* “A good teacher can save a young poet years by simply telling him things he need not waste time on, like trying to will originality...”.

The past just is, as we just are and as poetry just is. Poetry exists, as we exist, in the process of becoming (Kierkegaard). James Joyce summed it up in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* when he said “Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.” It is not about having to be original; it is about being yourself. In the end everything that is written or read is absolutely new because it comes through you. *You* are what makes it new.

And just to be clear, this does not deny experimentation, or pushing of envelopes—I like to see that. It just means that these things are not necessary. But if they happen organically in the development of the poet’s self, then we are right back to just being, it just is, without trying (remember Bukowski’s epitaph: “Don’t Try”).

With this issue, I am proud to say that the NYQ is back up to a full, on time, publication schedule of three issues a year. I am also very happy that we represent 88 poets in this issue with two interviews and two essays. We are providing more support for our poets through readings, website hosting, and book sales. Bill’s dream of an NYQ Poetry Series has finally been realized with the publication of Ira Joe Fisher’s book, *Some Holy Weight in the Village Air*, this Spring. And we have many new items for sale on *poetscraft.com*, including pens, mugs, shirts, bags and many items with the cover art from your favorite issue.

I want to thank Helen Hulskamp who has been instrumental in getting the magazine back up to its full potential over the past six years. Helen has done an excellent job and brought us this far. Helen has decided to move on to bigger and better things. So to Helen we regretablely say good-bye and good luck.

I also want to extend a special thank you to everyone who has shown us support over the years that we have not published regularly either through money, time or patience.

Enough for now, you are here for the poetry, please, read on:

**Raymond Hammond**