From the Editor:

Farewells

Difficult as it has often been for me to write a prefatory note to each issue of *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* since first joining its staff in Spring 1988, this one—my last—is the hardest. How does one say goodbye? After all, these notes have all marked beginnings, thresholds for the articles, notes, archives, and reviews that follow. In my thinking about women's writing and writing about women, these notes have also marked continuities as much as departures from prior moments in this journal's history and more generally in the history of women's studies and women's movements, continuities as much as departures from other contemporaneous feminist projects in this country and around the world. If these editor's notes have been difficult, it is precisely because none of these introductions has ever been intended as "last words" on their subjects. Yet this also made them seem that much more possible, permitting for later thoughts, revisions of earlier ones. Indeed, while I have farewells to say, everything else I want to say involves ongoing questions and going on. It is difficult too because, with this issue, the journal pays tribute, saying its farewells, to one of the most prominent feminists of the last century, Carolyn G. Heilbrun, who took her life in 2003. At the same moment that we greet a new future for this journal, we revisit the painful recent loss of one of its foremost advisory board members; who, since our third volume—Shari Benstock's "Feminist Issues in Literary Criticism"—had served this journal's best interests as she served the feminist interests of so many scholars, students, and friends. Nonetheless, we do greet the future with hope—inspired by Heilbrun's example as a teacher and writer, as a critic and self-critic; the lead she set is undiminished by the end of her life.

Nor am I abandoning this journal, merely moving aside for a new editor to take it on. I hope to support her (or not) in whatever ways she might wish it or not. As many of you know, over the years, I have grown ever more fond of *Tulsa Studies* and am as committed as ever to the kinds of work it does. I will stay on the journal staff in a consultative capacity. Thus, as in my other editor's notes, I wish to foreground not my own scholarship or myself, but others. In a preface to "The Feminist Legacy of Carolyn Heilbrun," I present the ten tributes to Heilbrun that Susan Gubar sent us this past spring after their MLA deliveries (including a trib-
It is with great pleasure and confidence that I announce the successor to the post of editor of *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*: Laura Stevens. She brings enormous strengths to this journal as a scholar of early modern literature; as a superior writer herself; and as a person of wisdom and judiciousness. Professor Stevens and I are already almost finished coediting a set of essays on emotion and women’s writing for one of her inaugural issues in spring 2006. As of this fall 2005 semester, she has taken over the journal’s day-to-day decisions, bringing her considerable talents for writing, editing, organization, and collaboration to bear on all its operations.

Let me highlight some of Professor Stevens’s academic accomplishments over the years. Having received her Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, she joined the faculty of English at the University of Tulsa in fall 1998. She proceeded to win numerous grants for her research, both nationally and locally: from the NEH, from the John Carter Brown Library, from the American Philosophical Society, from the Huntington Library, from the Oklahoma Humanities Council, and from the University of Tulsa. In 2002-03, she won the Society of Early Americanists’ Essay Award and the Presidential Prize of the South Central Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Her book *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 2004. She has published or has forthcoming articles in such journals as *American Literary History* and *Eighteenth-Century Life* and in book collections, including *Approaches to Teaching Robinson Crusoe* and *The Spiritual Conversion of the Americas*. In 2004, she was promoted with tenure at the University of Tulsa. She spent 2004-05 as a Barbara Thom Fellow at Huntington Library working on a new project on Biblical women in Restoration and eighteenth-century literature. With special interests in both American Colonial and British Restoration and eighteenth-century culture and literature, Professor Stevens will continue this journal’s lasting commitment to archival recovery of women writers, to their histories and interpretation, and to feminist theorization of women’s writing. Join me in welcoming her to this journal’s staff.

In one of my first editor’s notes (vol. 8, no. 1), I tried to set forth for *Tulsa Studies* readers and authors what I hoped and planned for the journal, despite the vast unknowns of that future. I saw its future embedded (not unambiguously) in each term of its title: from its loud reminder of its particular (marginal) locality; through its reiterated insistence on “risking” the notion of “women” (and resistance to a too-polite “gendrification” of gender, sex, and sexuality); to its brazen revamping of “literature” through
archival digs, (self-)critical re-analysis, and feminist theorizing. Thus, for
example, the special tributes in the current issue to Carolyn Heilbrun
refuse easy answers to what her writing’s mysteries reveal, how women
should age, and how death should be engaged, not only elaborating on
Heilbrun’s arguments with the world, joining her interrogation of ortho-
doxies of every type, but also arguing openly with her and with her choices.

Following these critical pieces, Katherine Montwieler makes a case for
the least liked and least read of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s volumes,
Poems Before Congress. Thanks to its unorthodox pro-women, seemingly
nonfeminist politics, this volume has never found a happy audience. But
in this, in fact, politically complex volume, Montwieler argues that Barrett
Browning “address[es] women’s right to political opinions and to utter-
ances of those opinions” and “to a range of emotions as well,” whether “soft
and sad” or “triumphant and angry.” “It is high time,” she concludes, “that
we read this volume in its entirety, for the lesson of the narrative that the
poems collectively create.”

After Montwieler’s article, a second essay appears on the equally
neglected Scenes of Childhood stories by twentieth-century writer Sylvia
Townsend Warner. In “‘There Was a World of Things . . . and a World of
Words’: Narration of Self through Object in Sylvia Townsend Warner’s
Scenes of Childhood,” Kristianne Kalata sees these stories “as “effectively
challeng[ing] boundaries of fact and fiction, personal and political, popular and literary.” By explicating the generic mix of these stories as a “type
of experimental serialized autobiography,” applying Gertrude Stein’s theo-
ries on the grammatical relations of word and thing to the thematic con-
tents of Warner’s vignettes, and demonstrating how these methods operate
to produce political commentaries specifically on nationalism and broadly
on traditionalism, Kalata positions Warner’s work firmly within a feminist
modernist lineage. Warner’s writing in these stories should not, Kalata
argues, be set aside (as they have been) as only “popular,” for they “manip-
ulate[e] the popular in order to access the literary and the political in a way
that metamorphosizes the process and the product of self-writing into a
modernist experiment that comments on issues of language, gender, and
politics.”

Montwieler and Kalata’s essays both exemplify the kind of critical
restoration and studious reconsideration of little-read texts by women writ-
ers of the past for which this journal has become widely known: expand-
ing, one writer and one text at a time, the historical record of feminist
work, probing these writings for the insights they yield for the present. Yet
it seems to me now that signification of the terms in this journal’s title,
Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature, and the terms themselves could alter
without undercutting the ongoing project it has undertaken or the
repeated self-metamorphoses it also needs to undergo. While it is easier to hail change one asks for oneself, change usually comes unbidden. The journal I edited traveled with my earliest plans and then some more as it encountered increasing numbers of submitted manuscripts, ever-changing cross-currents of new feminist scholarship and theory, and various resources: drawing upon these resources at times from within—in my own preoccupations, for instance, with redefining marginality, collaborative writing, and parental adoption—more frequently grasping opportunities from without.

I am profoundly grateful to the many women and men who have served on this journal’s staff for the past seventeen years: one need only return to the string of editor’s notes in these issues to see how many and how valuable they have been, and so they remain embedded in this journal’s pages and in my thoughts. I am no less grateful to our editorial boards, all those who have served either as general or specialist readers or both, delivering without any sort of remuneration scholarly reports that are among the most detailed and compassionate discoverable in today’s academic scene. I have found myself deeply regretting that I could not thank each of you in turn. I am grateful too to the faculty in English at my university, all of whose members have offered, both individually and collectively, their unhesitating support of the journal’s endeavors throughout the years. And I am grateful to our authors: what a joy and a challenge it has proved to be to work with you.

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