

How and Why

A Note from the Editor

I draw your attention to the “*New Letters* Literary Initiative,” a many-directional approach to promoting literary art. By this, we mean that *New Letters*—with help from subscribers, patrons, staff editors and colleagues—attempts to encourage and distribute new writing and art in dazzling ways. As the poet Kabir has proclaimed, “Friends, hope for the Guest while you are alive. / Jump into experience while you are alive. / Think . . . and think . . . while you are alive.” *New Letters’* editors over the years have built this initiative from the belief that the human race sustains and advances itself, in part, and of necessity, on its exposure to great, new literary art.

Not solely a magazine, *New Letters* is also an international radio program; not only a magazine and radio program, it is a website, with audio streaming of hundreds of interviews with writers; not only a publisher, it is an awards program, offering new, aspiring writers a way to establish themselves. We operate a writing conference, and a comprehensive regional events calendar, and that doesn’t even mention our affiliate book publisher, BkMk Press; yet that, too, is our effort.

Recently, we mourned the passing of a great friend, William (Bill) Hickok—yes, indeed, a distant cousin to the famous Wild Bill—a humorist in the grand tradition of American storytellers, a poet, a businessman, and, let me say, patron of the arts. He supported individual artists, organizations, and programs, including those I, myself, direct. He shared our passion for the inspiring value of art. I am looking for others now—“while you are alive”—to form a band of passionate supporters of the literary and the visual arts.

Call me or Betsy Beasley in our office, or any other member of our staff, or send your support through our website or regular post. You will be acknowledged.

Ours is not a competition with friends at other literary journals (witness the many complimentary ads enclosed, promoting others); *New Letters* presses forward in competition only against complacency. Look at the writing and art presented in this issue. Nothing better could represent our purpose, to uplift and inspire the human spirit. Each written work here is tough, heartbreaking, funny, and formative, as you will see in essays by Sheila Kohler and David McDannald, or poems by Fleda Brown and Gerald Stern, and on and on. I can't imagine much that could be more surprising or more joyful.

If you can, join us in this celebration; please consider our literary initiative for your charitable gifts.

—Robert Stewart