

An Editorial Introduction

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This second issue of *Veritas Review* builds on the strength and variety of the first and inaugural issue. As with the previous issue, this one highlights the work of students and others at Harvard and in Cambridge and beyond. Encouraging student work and creativity in verbal and visual arts is at the heart of what this journal does as well as what the Abigail Adams Institute, which houses this publication, also does. We seek artistic and critical interpretations of the world in which we find ourselves. We strive for harmony, sometimes *discordia concors* or concord from discord or the harmony of discord, to echo Pythagorean music theory and the Empedoclean idea, the *harmonia mundi*.

The body of the issue begins with a poet, an undergraduate at Harvard, Gabrielle Landry, who records her conversations with six paintings at the Harvard Art Museums, focusing on Degas' *The Rehearsal*, the first of six encounters, learning patience and enriching her life and poetry with a slow seeing. A Harvard undergraduate decades before who also worked at *The Harvard Gazette* and The Museum of Comparative Zoology, Alfred Alcorn, a long-established and distinguished novelist, has written a series of mysteries about murders in the museum, and here represents a poetry reading. So, Harvard museums and poetry are keys to these first two contributions. My own contribution is poetry from a manuscript I lost on the Celts, who were pushed back in Europe by invaders, and I remember, revive, and represent them by beginning most of the poems in Gaelic.

Henry Stratakis-Allen, an undergraduate at the College of William and Mary, responds to Demosthenes' *Third Philippic*, which begins with the great orator addressing Greece's inactivity in the face of Philip's wrongs. Stratakis-Allen explores the implications of Demosthenes' thought in areas such as war, politics, religion, and other matters, including "the Roland ideal." Iosif M. Gershteyn writes an appreciation of Ivan Bunin, a brilliant Russian writer who deserves to be better known in this generation of English-speaking readers, and describes what it means to translate him, including two major challenges. Gershteyn provides an elegant translation of a short story, the title of which he translates as "Barely a Breath."

In this issue, as in the previous one, we have interpretations of a figure or work, the first issue on Plato, and here on the epic in Old English about Beowulf and his world, on the borders of Denmark and Sweden. David Franks, who leads The Great Conversation at the Abigail Adams Institute, explores pressing matters of life and death in *Beowulf*, discusses Tolkien, who was a scholar and translator of the poem, and examines the typology of monsters then and now, in poetry and life. Anne Knechtges moves away from some earlier views by discussing Beowulf as both a Christian and pagan hero, of honour and grace, who honours his pagan ancestors and looks forward to salvation.

Throughout the issue, Catherine Ezell presents her portraits, her drawings, which, as in the first issue, enhance *Veritas Review*, literally giving the journal character and a lively interaction between the verbal and visual, putting a face on the words of the writers. More images and words interact in the work of two other contributors. Yunfeng Ruan writes about her photographs of Cambridge, which also appear here, and explains that rather than photograph the academic part of this town, she, although a researcher, is free to reshape her life and the town, photographing the plants, river, sky, graffiti and the like. James Capuzzi also photographs Cambridge, the Harvard Colleges along the Charles River, and the Abigail Adams Institute and its programs for students and others, as well as recording what he photographs in words, ending this issue of *Veritas Review*, which is of the Institute and reaches out to Harvard, Cambridge, and beyond. The issue ends with a gallery of Ezell's portraits, moving from John and Abigail Adams to larger versions of the other portraits that appear earlier in the issue.

This second issue embodies a diversity and richness in image and word, of past and present, here and there. The contributors seek, imagine and even find beauty and truth in the whirligig of the world, poetic or artistic moments in various tones. Whether these moments are a poet's conversation with a painting, a poetry reading in a mystery, a meditation on a people, a consideration of an ancient orator and more, a remaking and reviving of a writer, two interpretations in conversation of an epic poem in terms of the spirit then and now, portraits of human faces, different points of view on photographing Cambridge, the shared theme is the human in the world. Matters of life and death are part of the thoughts, experiences, feelings, and ideas—matters of body, mind, and soul—found in this issue.