

EDITORIAL

In the editorial of the latest issue of *Acumen Magazine* editor Patricia Oxley expresses her disappointment about receiving many submissions – she only accepts postal submissions – but hardly any subscriptions. While spending a few days in London, she had received fifty submissions, among them only three from writers on her subscription list, and just one new subscription. This makes one wonder which, if any, little magazines these poets read. “If poets want to be published and read by other poets”, Oxley assumes, “surely it is a courteous, reciprocal gesture to read other poetry than their own”. She believes there is no better place “to find a wide variety than in the independent magazines”.

I totally agree with *Acumen’s* editor about the majority of poets only wanting to see their work in print but not being interested in supporting a magazine or reading work by their fellow poets. Oxley does not accept email submissions; we do; which makes the problem even more complicated. When I receive email submissions, I send the poets a personal letter acknowledging receipt of their submission and asking them to take out a subscription. More than 90% do not reply. If only one third of these hopefuls replied and sent in a subscription, our finances would be in better shape. We could even turn *Poetry Salzburg Review* into a triquarterly magazine or, if deserted by our better judgement, start making token payments.

During the time when Fred Beake, James Hogg and I edited *The Poet’s Voice* (between 1993 and 2000), most poets submitting work seemed to know the magazine. In the late 1970s Donald Davie, at the time co-editor of *PN Review*, confirmed “in despair that no one reads us except those who either write for us or plan to”. In the age of the Internet, though, more and more poets do not seem to bother about knowing the magazine they are submitting work to or, to make a related point, about the ethics of simultaneous submissions. On the other hand, one perhaps ought not despair too absolutely. It was only a few weeks ago that I received a letter from a poet finishing his PhD in Renaissance Intellectual History at the Warburg Institute, London. He told me that he had found a copy of *Poetry Salzburg Review* in the Institute’s Common Room. As he thought it looked like a magazine worth supporting, he sent me a letter, a submission of four poems, and a cheque covering one year’s subscription plus a donation.

I disagree with Pierre Bourdieu when he holds that the little magazine scene is “the most perfectly autonomous sector of the field of cultural production [...] where the only audience aimed at is other producers”. Still, it would help if more contributors saw it that way and were not only happy to receive their complimentary copy but took out a subscription as well. The penny-pinching European *zeitgeist* with its passion for cutting down on costs seems to be firmly lodged in the minds of many (would-be) contributors. We often receive letters with bizarre excuses as to why their writers cannot afford one year’s subscription at £10.00 for 400 pages of poetry and critical writing. This is an email I received from a British poet, whose Selected Poems were published by the University of Salzburg Press: “I received your recent reminder about sub renewal to PSR. However, support and appreciation within the literary arena, financial and otherwise, is mutual surely? I don’t imply or endorse back-scratching but the magazine never did review either my prose or poetry. (Despite your having earlier featured brief extracts from them, which I duly acknowledged in both these works.) Since I have three new books to be published later in 2006, there seems little point either in sending you review copies or a further sub.” No comment necessary!

Editors can only publish their magazines if they are also supported by a regular and committed readership willing to pay the subscription fee, to publicise the activities of these magazines among their friends and fellow poets and to pass on fliers to their local librarians.

Don’t get me wrong: *Poetry Salzburg Review* is not a magazine only publishing subscribers. In our Spring 2006 issue, we published work from 58 poets/critics, 15 of whom are subscribers, and 6 of whom might be described as lapsed subscribers happy in the certainty that they would receive a complimentary copy. In the current issue the proportion is similar. We will continue publishing and reviewing work by poets who we believe deserve our support. And, we hope, poetry lovers and poets alike will thereby be persuaded that we also deserve their support.

Wolfgang Görtschacher