

EDITORIAL

I have over the past three decades been fascinated by the differing qualities and characters, each admirable in their way, of Anne Cluysenaar and Geoffrey Soar and been influenced by them both over roughly the same period. This issue is dedicated in a spirit of affection and gratitude to Anne and Geoffrey who both died in November last year.

On 1 November 2014, Anne was killed in her smallholding, Little Wentwood Farm, near Usk, a small village in Wales. Without ever having met her, I knew and profited from her work as an academic, critic, editor, and poet. When I started to teach literature classes at the University of Salzburg, I studied her *Introduction to Literary Stylistics* (1976), alongside Peter Verdonk's classic *Twentieth-Century Poetry: From Text to Context* (1993), and happily endorsed her contention that stylistic analysis familiarises students with the working methods and assumptions of writers, and, more generally, the possibilities and limitations of the verbal medium. As a practising literary critic publishing in a number of magazines, Anne regarded stylistics as an extension of practical criticism, enabling the critic "to sensitise his grasp of detail *together with* his grasp of structured wholes". Such an approach, Anne held, enables readers to understand much better the delicate interaction of form and meaning. Thirty years later this school of criticism is still the one that exerts the most influence on me and, in terms of teaching and criticism, has triggered the most persuasive analyses and readings of texts by my students. For Anne, the teaching of literature and the writing of it were never in opposition but formed an integrated creative process. She felt most at home in poetry – "my 'country', it is where I live".

It was probably my friend Glyn Pursglove, who introduced me to Anne's poetry and showed me copies of her early collections. Glyn infected me with his discerning enthusiasm so that I discovered in these volumes a writer who enriched at once my experience of poetry and life. Anne said that in her poetry she always wanted to "explore our sense of the world [and] to help counter the destructive effects of a materialistic and superficial culture", insisting on the centrality of ritual and art-making in the development of 'spiritual freedom', a concept that, as she acknowledged herself, has affinities with Viktor Frankl's philosophy. About Roy Fisher she once said: "The more one reads him, the more one wants to read, tantalized by one's own immediate experience." This holds true also for her own work. I had always wanted to print her poetry in our magazine. So, when Jan Fortune of Cinnamon Press sent us a re-

view copy of *Touching Distances* (reviewed by Giles Goodland in *PSR* 26), I seized the opportunity and got in contact with Anne. She readily submitted six poems the publication of which we unfortunately had to postpone: These are now posthumously published in this issue. A note of pardonable vanity may be added as a postscript. Anne, the founding editor of a distinguished literary magazine herself, was sympathetic to *PSR*. She said in one of her emails: “I am in absolute agreement with your policy – to seek a wide range of different types of writing, looking for quality in each.”

I first met Geoffrey Soar in the late 1980s when he was librarian at University College London. He had developed an impressive collection of little magazines and small press publications. Supported by research grants I spent practically months at UCL Library working my way through this accumulation. And Geoffrey was always very generous with his time and expertise. “The Librarian of Little Magazines”, as I nicknamed him, introduced me to many unknown journals that hardly any academic had ever heard of. I also admired Geoffrey’s survey essays on UK little magazines, his innovative academic work in a field hardly anyone was interested in as a result of their ignorance. When the situation slowly started to change, it was perhaps the result of many exhibitions of little magazines and small press publications that he organized, together with David Miller, in the early 1990s. Together with his wife Valerie Geoffrey introduced me to a great number of editors, poets, and academics, a network of very supportive colleagues and friends. It is with affection and respect that I name among them the late Eric Mottram, Robert Sheppard, Ken Edwards, Robert Hampson, Gavin Selerie, and Lawrence Upton.

Testimonials of the regard in which Geoffrey was held are not wanting. A long-term friend and colleague at UCL Library pointed out that “Geoffrey was remarkable for the wide scope of his intellectual interests, mainly in the humanities but also including the natural sciences. His knowledge of European culture, including literature, art and music, was extensive. He was an honest and kind man with an essential decency and humanity whose company I greatly miss.” Eric Mottram once described him as “a man of absolute integrity”.

One could not do better, remembering both these dear, departed figures than to close, quoting one of Anne’s diary-poems: “It’s the cards I can’t send this year. / The names crossed out. / To them, my intensest thoughts.”

Wolfgang Görtschacher