

EDITORIAL

I only discovered that Eric Ratcliffe had died in December last year, when Gerald England informed me by email in early January. I never personally met Eric, but he edited *Ore Magazine* from 1954 to 1995 and we co-edited the memorial volume to his magazine *Veins of Gold* in 1997. In the course of this latter project we became good friends, if only in the style of the virtual world, mainly on the basis of emails. But the man became truly known, a man conscientious in matters of detail, fecund of practical solutions to problems and, with it all, a poet of high imaginative vision.

The first few issues of *Ore* were in the same format, cyclostyled in quarto by Eric, using paper of various colours, but relying on a printer to produce a letterpress cover. The cover subhead was “Poetry, occasional Articles and Criticism”. He chose the title *Ore* because for him it connoted “a valuable vein of thought in the rock of the world”. With hindsight Eric described – in rather idealistic terms – the editorial programme as “back to basics, using the best parts of primitive and innocent tribal thought where still unpolluted by civilisation.” Initial contributors were Jon Silkin, Edward Storey, Derek Parker, Geoffrey Holloway, Peter Redgrove, and Raymond Tong. Eric was interested – in the early years in particular – in poems that reflected “holism, harmony, optimism”, combined “with mystic, legendary, or magical elements”. Unlike Auden who roundly declared that “poetry makes nothing happen”, Eric believed that “poetry could forge a path which would be helpful to the human race”. He felt that he “had a message [...] which could strike home with some force.” This may be one of the reasons why early issues featured a symbolic “radiant head” on the cover, indicative of human capacities transcending normal sentience. Even in the editorial to the penultimate issue, subtitled “The Heart and Soul of Poetry”, he asks the rhetorical question: “Should we play safe within the proven sensual world, or leave the gates open”?

Eric always had an interest in digging up people who, he thought, had sunk out of public memory, but because of their fight against affliction or for others in the past, deserved to be kept in the public mind. He published books and booklets on Emily Faithful, one of the pioneers of today’s feminist press, and commissioned André Guillaume to guest-edit a special issue on the Victorian poet and editor William Ernest Henley. Steve Sneyd wrote in his obituary that “vast indeed was

ER's vision". I could not agree more and hope that the volume *Veins of Gold* will help initiate a reevaluation of Eric's achievements too long outstanding.

When we received a review copy of Rae Armantrout's new collection *Versed* in July last year and decided to review it, we could not possibly anticipate the reception it has since received from critics and juries of literary prizes. It won both the National Book Critics Circle Award 2009 and Pulitzer Prize for Poetry 2010. The Pulitzer Prize jury praised Armantrout's tenth collection as "a book striking for its wit and linguistic inventiveness, offering poems that are often little thought-bombs detonating in the mind long after the first meeting." The NBCC emphasized "its demonstration of superb intellect and technique, its melding of experimental poetics but down-to-earth subject matter to create poems you are compelled to return to, that get richer with each reading." The editorial board of *Poetry Salzburg Review* would like to extend its congratulations to Rae Armantrout. We are happy, indeed privileged, to be able to present a number of her latest poems to our readers.

This is also the first time that the publication of an issue has been considerably delayed. For this we offer due apologies to our readers. The printer we have been working with for more than fifteen years went bankrupt, a fact of which we only received notice in late February when we were about to send in the CDROM of a new collection. It has been difficult to find a printer willing to devote himself with the same care and degree of commitment to our projects and whose rates we could still afford. Finally we managed to sign a contract with Friedrich Druckerei in Baden-Württemberg in late April. It is to be hoped that the new partnership will once again be a long standing one.

Wolfgang Görtschacher