

RUSSELL SCOTT VALENTINO

EDITOR'S NOTE

I hesitated among three possible organizing impulses for this issue: anachronism, the magic of the number three, and family. There's no reason to choose only one, of course, and keeping all three is not inconsistent with either the impulse or the content we've collected. We might have also gone with rabbits.

For anachronism, there's the epistolary form, an actress as angel, and three stories from the mid-twentieth century Russian author V.S. Yanovsky, who came to the U.S. as part of the first of three waves of Soviet emigration, in the 1920s. The author of some two dozen books, including twenty novels, Yanovsky was known for the complexity of his fiction and his frequent metaphysical flights delivered with an airy touch. Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, in a *New York Times* review of Yanovsky's 1974 novel *The Great Transfer*, noted that Yanovsky squeezed "his deepest spiritual insights into sentences as innocent as the prose of Peter Rabbit" (NB rabbit).

The three Yanovsky stories are paired with three new short shorts by Josephine Rowe, which came to us under the title "Relics" and impressed us with more than their anachronisms. They are part of a collection titled *Tarcutta Wake* due out shortly from the University of Queensland Press.

Separating them are two poems each by Michael Judge and Michael McKimm, along with five even shorter shorts by the Danish author Louis Jensen, in Lise Kildegaard's exquisite translations. Jensen is at work on 1,001 *firkantede historier*, or "square stories," and the five we've selected are a representative sample of Jensen's quirky Carroll-esque sensibility, under the angular constraints of the square, which would only have been more appropriate for this issue if they were triangles.

On either side of the three in the middle (4 poems + 5 square fictions) is the work of nine authors, beginning with Katya Apekina's epistolary fiction and ending with Nathan Hill's "SuperAngel," the third of Hill's stories we tried to publish, the other two having been snatched from us by others just as we were about to accept them, lucky bunnies.

The odd confluence is perhaps best explained by something in the stars or Monte Albán.

Family is nearly everywhere, from Sarah Rose Nordgren's holiest mother to Mehdi Tavana Okasi's other one; from J. Kevin Shushtari's painfully absent Baba, to Lorrin Anderson's poignant remembrance of his mother, Saskia Beudel's of her father, and the rabbits, of course, hidden, conspiratorial, cuddly.

Apologies for the *übermütig* note. Something about the season.