

1955

Editorial

Jim Bowman
Denison University

John Miller
Denison University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bowman, Jim and Miller, John (1955) "Editorial," *Exile*: Vol. 1 : No. 1 , Article 2.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol1/iss1/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at Denison Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Exile by an authorized editor of Denison Digital Commons.

Editorial

This is the second issue of *Exile* (third—if we count last year's *Campus Literary Issue*) and, for the first time, we have received enough good material to make the final editorial decisions a pleasantly difficult task. Many manuscripts showing a great deal of creative ability had to be rejected due to lack of space. But this enthusiasm on the part of students interested in writing must be encouraged and increased if *Exile* is to publish the quality of writing it has set as its goal.

Students will accept the competition of publication and will strive to make that competition keener if they seriously wish to improve their own writing. *Exile* can provide a stimulation for potential talent, but it is up to the student himself to develop this talent. He can do this only by writing. He must become more prolific, for his own benefit. *Exile* should only serve as a guide by publishing the best material available.

Many students have asked what kinds of material *Exile* wants to publish. An answer to this question must be general. We are looking for well written, thoughtful material of all kinds. Our standards are only those that have always distinguished good writing from bad. Any form is acceptable: short story, essay (any type), poetry, drama, sketches, and portions of novels. From the good material we will try to select the best.

Since the short story, essay, and poetry seem to be the most popular forms, we shall attempt here to set forth the standards we use in appraising them.

Many of the short stories we read are good stories, they are interesting, and deal with appealing characters and subjects. Their chief fault is that they show a lack of care in the writing. There are too many irrelevancies, too many over-worked phrases. The writer has usually not taken time to examine his own work critically, to make sure that he is expressing each idea in the best possible form and in the most exacting words.

The short story should not be a realistic newspaper snippet, nor should it be a stereotyped snaring of interest, a filling-in of necessary documentary details, and a smash finish. The short story is a form of art. As a form of art, it should take the materials of everyday

life (or otherwise) and attempt to use them to raise the consciousness of our lives to higher aesthetic and moral levels.

The writer must be thoroughly acquainted with his subject; it must be important enough to him that he feels compelled to present it truthfully to the reader in terms that will evoke the same appreciation and understanding that the writer himself experienced.

William Carlos Williams has made a perceptive comment concerning the writing of a short story: "It is not to place adjectives, it is to learn to employ the verbs in imitation of nature—so that the pieces move naturally—and watch, often breathlessly, what they do. That is the enlargement of nature which we call art, the additions to nature which we call art. . . . You do not copy nature, you make something which is an imitation of nature."

We set no limits on the subject matter, length, or the style of stories published in *Exile*. We only demand that they be well written, and that they evoke in the reader that inner action of mind or imagination that justifies the story as an art form.

Considering the many different subjects available to the college essay writer, it is odd that so few essays are submitted to the editors of *Exile*. Many of those we do receive are merely term papers and classroom themes that would have little appeal to any, except a professor who is thoroughly acquainted with the topic and who, incidentally, is paid to read them. We want to publish essays on specialized subjects—science, literature, current issues in politics, and philosophy—but they must be written with the intent of stimulating interest in the uninformed as well as providing an experience for the informed. In this issue we have two essays on D. H. Lawrence, written from two points of view. We believe they will interest those who have read many of Lawrence's books, as well as readers who know little of Lawrence and might be stimulated to find out for themselves what he has to say.

There is also a definite place in *Exile* for the personal essay and the humorous essay, especially the humorous essay that has something to say besides being funny. We look for thoughtful, clever writing that entertains the reader, rather than mediocre writing describing a ridiculous situation that wins a raucous laugh and then is forgotten.

The most important thing to remember in essay writing is the construction. Whatever its subject, the essay must be logical, and clear to the reader. It must avoid ambiguities. It must have some-

thing to say, and what it has to say should be said in lucid terms that leave no questions in the mind of the reader, except those all-important questions that begin where the writer's thinking leaves off. The beginning writer should spend more time with the essay, simply because the main object of the essay is logical communication; and without communication, writing is only words on paper.

Poetry submitted for *Exile* will be judged, only in part, on its content and its sincerity.

By content we mean the stuff of poetry that lies behind the mechanical devices of syntax, rhyme, and meter. Acceptable material must be something more than a mere exercise in prosody; it must work toward a clarification or revelation, no matter how small, of some element of life.

Sincerity is that virtue which allows a writer to share his most intimate feelings and striking observations with his reader. These must be actual experiences—physical, intellectual, emotional, or imaginative. Any emotion that is feigned by the writer is bound to show through and destroy a poem's effectiveness. Sincerity transforms the "I-thou" relationship between the writer and his universe into something which, because of its force and freshness, can never be regarded as hypocritical or wishy-washy. It is only by retaining this freshness of approach that a writer can hope to create a fresh impression on the senses of his reader.

Poetry of content and sincerity, abetted by the surge and flow of original perception—this *Exile* wishes to encourage. Although any editorial staff must assume a basic standard for the prosody of the verse it prints, we believe that such a standard should be kept elastic.

At best, form renders the exuberant flight of imaginative thought communicable to others. Any emphasis on form that looks beyond this requirement runs the danger of sacrificing the poem to mere poetizing.

J. B.

J. M.