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Introduction

Exile Anthology

A Special Sesquicentennial Issue

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Introduction

For me and many others, the creative writing program at Denison is synonymous with Paul Bennett. It is not merely that Paul initiated the program and, for a decade or so, was the sole member of the English department who taught Advanced Composition and directed student Honors Projects in writing. Nor is it only the assurance of stability and continuity which identifies Paul with creative writing at Denison. Even more important is the low-keyed but vital encouragement he has given to his students and colleagues. When an aspiring writer leaves Denison, he or she knows that Paul's active influence has not suddenly ended. Whenever an alumna, alumna, or former student needs advice or encouragement, Paul is the one to whom he or she turns. Over the years he has remained in touch with an astonishing number of Denison writers--never overbearing, never harshly negative in his response, always generous with his encouragement and praise.

Thus it is very appropriate that this special issue of *Exile* features the contributions of Denison alumni, most or all of whom have experienced Paul Bennett's support and stimulus for their writing. These contributors testify to Paul's lasting impact on their college careers, and on their view of creativity as a lifelong endeavor. Some are published or professional writers; others write as an avocation, an extension of their liberal education into later life. All of them exemplify the results of Paul's encouraging motto.

As an alumnus with enormous gratitude for Paul's teaching and collegueship, I join *Exile's* contributors in resounding this motto: Write on, Paul Bennett, right on!

John Miller

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