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Marilyn Hacker's Editorship of *The Kenyon Review* 1990-1994

Jack Harvey

A Thesis Submitted

for

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to

The Faculty of Arts

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Methodology

My interest in modern American poetry began with the work of Randall Jarrell. Jarrell led me to John Crowe Ransom, which in turn sparked a desire to discover more about *The Kenyon Review*. Marian Janssen's excellent study of the *Review* was an excellent stimulus for my study of the journal.

On a visit to Kenyon College archives I was fascinated by the controversy surrounding Marilyn Hacker's tenure as editor of the *Review*. In order to attempt to uncover the truth behind her dismissal from Kenyon College in 1994 I endeavoured to locate as many primary sources as possible to enable me to adequately and fairly answer the questions being asked following her departure. It was apparent that there was sufficient material with which to work in order to fully research this period.

Kenyon College provided access to all Ms. Hacker's correspondence during her editorship. Additional Hacker correspondence held in Yale University's Beinecke Library provided more evidence regarding the events at the College during this period. Via a combination of email and standard mail I wrote to anyone whom I considered could provide background to the happenings at Kenyon College.

Ms. Hacker agreed to answer a series of questions as did many of her former colleagues at *The Kenyon Review* and Kenyon College.

I referred to newspaper articles relating to Ms. Hacker's appointment as editor and her dismissal.

I relied heavily on Marian Janssen's book, *The Kenyon Review 1939-1970 A Critical History*, particularly with respect to John Crowe Ransom's time as editor.

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Appendix:

- (1) Chronological Transcription of Correspondence Relating to Hacker's
Editorship of *The Kenyon Review*
- (2) Articles Concerning Marilyn Hacker
- (3) Letters to the Author

When Marilyn Hacker was appointed as editor of *The Kenyon Review* the term 'culture wars' was in its infancy. However, two years after Pat Buchanan popularized the term in his 1992 presidential election speech, Hacker was potentially a high profile victim/casualty. This thesis will examine the effect the 'culture wars' had on Hacker. The term 'culture wars,' which is derived from the German word *Kulturkampf*, means 'a struggle for the control of the culture'. Hacker, whether consciously or otherwise engaged in her own personal 'culture war' at Kenyon.

This particular war was fought on several fronts, one of which concerned her battle over the National Endowment for the Arts obscenity clause in 1990. It has to be noted that in all probability Hacker relished the opportunity to demonstrate her determination to publish whatever she considered to be appropriate without any outside intervention. Ironically, notification of the NEA award of \$7,500 arrived at Kenyon on April 30, the same day that Hacker delivered her presentation to the trustees. Former *Review* editor Terry Hummer had penned an article on the meaning of obscenity in a 1990 *AWP Newsletter* and his opinion was that what the NEA classified as obscenity was actually one particular religious sect's definition of blasphemy. David Baker, a colleague of Hacker's and currently on the *Review* staff, saw the opposite sides of the debate represented by rightwing religious zealots and self-righteousness versus a choice of artistic freedom. The definition of what constitutes art is a controversial topic. Hacker was not alone in questioning the reason for the American government's unwillingness to support creative autonomy and as a result she refused the NEA grant. Her opinion was

that she could not accept money from a government that assumed such a sanctimonious attitude.

While Hacker's editorship began with her seeking the backing of President Jordan over the NEA grant refusal, John Crowe Ransom's Kenyon career started with the full backing of President Gordon Chalmers. Chalmers remit was to raise scholarship standards at Kenyon and he regarded Ransom as the man to help him achieve his aim. Chalmers was not deterred when Ransom informed him that he did not feel qualified to become head of the Philosophy Department. An alternative was found which saw Ransom take up a prominent post in the English Department. Support from your president is essential for continued success and although Chalmers and Ransom did not always agree they were prepared to compromise.

Hacker wrote to NEA chairman John Frohnmayer, explaining that although the *Review* editors and publishers were initially delighted on hearing about the grant award, they were dismayed over the 'General Terms' that accompanied the letter. Her argument was that since *The Kenyon Review* was sponsored by a liberal arts college that traditionally promoted freedom of expression she could not agree with the conditions specified in the 'General Terms'. It is ironic in a sense that Hacker should cite tradition to support her stance since a broad interpretation of the 'culture wars' involves the debate surrounding liberal progressives and conservative values. Hacker was upset at the prospect of writers consciously restricting themselves from writing about particular subjects. While President Jordan supported Hacker's stance over the NEA grant he made it clear that the college would not make up any shortfall in cash that the *Review* might suffer as a result of refusing it.

As time moved on it became known that material by gays was welcome at the *Review*. Daniel Curzon wrote to her on September 19 1994 stating that he was 'happy to hear that gay stories are welcome at the KENYON REVIEW.' The significant word in this sentence is 'welcome' since it implies that this type of material was actively being encouraged. Curzon's statement that a particular 'genre' of writing was being welcomed at *The Kenyon Review* leaves it open to question whether Hacker's judgement was totally unbiased, yet she asserted in her letter to Frohnmayer that the *Review's* solitary criterion was literary merit.

In her quest to embrace multiculturalism Hacker may have taken her vision too far. Levine states that America 'has always been a multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial society,' then goes on to add that in our time 'these truths - and their implications for higher education' have become more sympathetic to and representative of the 'diverse peoples, experiences, traditions, and cultures' which make up the U.S. Levine asserts that 'to find explanations for those parts of our history and our culture we have ignored grows proportionately'.¹ In Hacker's case she adopted a strategy that ensured that a disproportionate amount of literature from particular literary genres appeared in the *Review* as Curzon's letter implies. Herrnstein Smith asserts that there is a 'politics of personal *taste* as well as a politics of institutional evaluation and explicit evaluative criticism'.² Hacker's definition of herself as a 'hyphenate' illustrates what Herrnstein Smith states when she refers to any 'particular subject's "self"-or that in behalf of which he or she may be said to act with "self-interest"'. Herrnstein Smith believes that the 'self' is 'also variable, being multiply and differently configurable in terms of different

¹ Levine, L.W., *The Opening of the American Mind*, (Boston, 1996), Introduction p.xviii

² Smith, Barbara H., *Contingencies of Value* (Harvard University Press, 1988), p25

roles ... and, in effect, identities'.³

In an article entitled 'Homophobiaphobia - gay rights and women's studies at Kenyon College' which appeared in the *National Review* on August 18 1989, Thomas Short wrote, 'Gambier, Ohio - Black Studies, Women's Studies, and Minority Studies claim to represent society's victims' previously excluded from the liberal arts. Describing this curriculum as 'victim-based' he stated that its 'very rationale is an implicit condemnation of American society'. If Short's opinion is correct it places Kenyon College squarely at the centre of the culture wars debate since he considered this type of curriculum change to be 'political' rather than intellectual. As such he considered that academic standards were being spurned and that higher education was in 'general decline'. This 'victim status,' according to Short 'makes these courses and those who propose them sacrosanct'. Kenyon College, 'once a bastion of curricular sobriety' had 'suffered a revolution from the top down' which saw the promotion of Women's Studies, 'polarized the faculty, and transformed the college's ethos'. Short stated that the cultural revolution was continuing on 'many fronts, of which "gay rights" is but one'. Asserting that the word 'homophobia' is a 'nice invention' he stated that any 'skepticism about "gay rights" was labeled "homophobic"'. While in the recent past clinical psychologists regarded homosexuality as a disease it had now become an 'orientation' and the 'disease consists in doubting whether one "orientation" is as good as another'. This remark leads Short conveniently to his definition of 'homophobiaphobia,' which he describes as the 'pathetic fear of being called "homophobic"'. According to Allan Bloom 'sex no longer has any political agenda in universities except among homosexuals, who are not yet quite

³ Smith, Barbara H., p31

satisfied with their situation'. He added that the very fact that there is an 'open homosexual presence,' with rights which are recognised by universities and virtually all students 'tells us much about current university life'.⁴ Referring to Robert Maynard Hutchins's dictum that liberal arts colleges should be able to free students 'from the prison-house of his class, race, time, place, background, family and even his nation,' Levine asserts that universities have succeeded in reversing Hutchins' definition by focusing on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation'.⁵

The Core Knowledge Foundation was founded in 1988 by University of Virginia English Professor E.D. Hirsch. Following on from the success of his 1987 best-seller *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*, Hirsch's non-profit organization was aimed at formulating a course of study for American schools which would result in a core of shared knowledge available to all students. The Core Knowledge Foundation offers publications, workshops and a variety of resources to schools interested in learning the basic knowledge that Hirsch and his organization consider to be a requisite to success in American society. The Foundation under Hirsch's guidance published a document called the *Core Knowledge Sequence* which was an example of the type of curriculum they advocated. Working with various people ranging from parents to subject specialists the *Core Knowledge Sequence* contained guidelines aimed at forming the basis for approximately 50% of a school's curriculum. While state or school curricula provide general outlines regarding skills to be learned at each grade, the *Core Knowledge Sequence* advises specific content. The relevance of Hirsch's views when compared with that of Hacker's can be seen in the fact that the idea of 'core

⁴ Bloom A., *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York, 1987), p107

knowledge' has been criticised for focusing too heavily on European American history and paying too little attention to ethnic and cultural differences in relation to American history.

In an article published by the Core Knowledge Foundation in 1992 entitled 'Toward a Centrist Curriculum: Two Kinds of Multiculturalism in Elementary School,' Hirsch stated that there were two kinds of multiculturalism, one of which was progressive while the other was retrogressive. In a statement reminiscent to that of Robert Maynard Hutchins Hirsch believes that the retrogressive form of multiculturalism sets group against group which gets in the way of the fairness it was designed to achieve. Although both types of multiculturalism appear to advocate pluralism and express an admiration for diversity he states that 'in their philosophical and practical implications the two conceptions are polar opposites'. Hirsch differentiates between 'cosmopolitanism' and what he describes as 'ethnic loyalism'. He believes that while ethnic loyalists consider that it is their ethnicity which constitutes the essence of a being, cosmopolitans look at it completely differently. They think that a person's ethnicity is simply due to chance. In other words, although a person's ethnicity may be a defining element in their identity it is presumptuous to assert that it defines one more essentially than the many other circumstances which influence a person's life.

The question that requires to be answered according to Hirsch concerns whether individuals wish to define themselves in terms of a particular ethnicity or a broader cosmopolis.⁶

In the spring of 1989 Kenyon staged a Gay/Lesbian Awareness Week which

⁵ Levine L.W., p28

included a 'Denim Day' on which gay rights' supporters were invited to wear denim to mark their support. According to Short, 'Denim, the undergraduate uniform was never less in evidence among the students or more so among the faculty,' with the result that students who did not wear denim 'were berated by bedenimed instructors for opposing' gay rights. As the Gay/Lesbian Awareness Week drew to a close, a member of the Delta Phi Delta fraternity wrote out an invitation to a 'Heterosexual Support Group Awareness Party' which stipulated 'No bare feet. No spitting. No denim.' The officers of the fraternity scrubbed the invitation on the grounds that it was in 'bad taste' and it was never sent out. However, according to Short, when the Gay/Straight Alliance got their hands on a copy they photocopied and distributed it to 'prove that homophobia is rampant'. His conclusion is that the type of textual exegesis now being taught means that 'any time you interpret a text as proving injustice to one of the approved groups of victims, you are right'. Bloom's opinion is that 'the university must resist the temptation to try to do everything for society,' since the university is only one aspect of life and must be vigilant against compromising itself in the 'desire to be more relevant, more popular'.⁷

In justifying her stance on obscenity Hacker informed John Frohnmayer that there was currently a display of books in the Kenyon College bookstore, which at one time had been banned. By conforming to the NEA restrictions she believed she would be no better than people who wished to ban particular books. As editor of a liberal arts college sponsored journal she could not agree to it. She believed that if a journal was considered worthy enough to be awarded a grant then its choice of material should be respected. Adding that the traditional role of American journals had been that of re-defining

⁶ Hirsch, E.D., *Toward a Centrist Curriculum: Two Kinds of Multiculturalism in Elementary School* (1992)

boundaries and of transgressing rather than adhering to conventional public expectations, Hacker stated that one of the reasons for awarding grants to journals such as the *Review* was to recognise the importance of independent editorial judgement. The fact that she had been hired in the first instance provided her with a legitimacy to publish what she wished to publish.

Barbara Herrnstein Smith states that while it must be accepted that 'evaluation of texts is not confined to the formal critical judgments issued within the rooms of the literary academy' it has to be acknowledged that the activities of the academy contribute considerably 'in the production of literary value'. This is a fact that Hacker endorsed when she announced in 1992 that the *Review* had received 20 Pushcart nominations, and that included in the next Pushcart anthology would be a short story and an essay by *Review* authors. She also announced that poems by Stephen Berg and Mary Oliver would appear in *Best American Poetry 1993*. As Herrnstein Smith points out, the inclusion of a particular work in a literary anthology does more than simply promote that work since it also 'goes some distance toward creating its value'. While institutional acts such as this have the effect of bringing a particular work to the attention of a greater reading public the drawback is that the people who 'edit anthologies and prepare reading lists are ... those who occupy positions of some cultural power'.⁸ Herrnstein Smith, in acknowledging that there is a degree 'to which evaluation is a form of *social* behavior' asks what 'social occasions' bring about judgmental actions, how they are controlled by the social settings in which they occur and what social roles they fulfil. She states that while it is clear that 'the answers to such questions will vary for various communities' it

[<http://www.coreknowledge.org/CK/about/articles/centrst.htm>]

⁷ Bloom A., p254

does not mean that the stalemate of 'individual subjectivity' will be replaced.⁹ Hacker undoubtedly believed that her judgement should not be questioned with regard to her choice of material.

While a committee chosen for the task carried out Hacker's selection, there appears to have been an element of affirmative action applied to the process. Patsy Vidgerman of the Kenyon English Department remembers that 'there was some feeling in favor of selecting a woman,' adding, however, that that was not the decisive element.¹⁰ The selection committee consisted of Ronald Sharp and Lori Lefkowitz of the English Department and William B. Scott of the History Department. A member of the Kenyon English Department since 1988, James P. Carson suspects that since Ronald Sharp was interested in contemporary poetry he was attracted to Hacker due to her reputation and flair as a poet. Lori Lefkowitz, on the other hand, is a Jewish feminist whom Carson believes 'liked the direction in which Ms. Hacker intended to take the *KR*'. Carson's opinion is that both Sharp and Lefkowitz probably thought that a poet of Hacker's prominence who had clearly stated her 'controversial agenda' would help to boost the profile of poetry at Kenyon. This aspect of Hacker's selection took priority over her 'administrative, budgetary, and diplomatic skills'.¹¹

Lewis Hyde stated that 'the committee chose Marilyn for her talents and sense of mission'.¹² Lefkowitz stands by her judgement that Hacker was the right choice for the post. She thought that Hacker had 'a lot to offer the *Review* and that her presence would enrich the community'. The fact that Hacker appears to have regarded her remit as

⁸ Smith, Barbara H., p46

⁹ Smith, Barbara H., p14

¹⁰ Patsy Vidgerman to Jack Harvey 05.06.05

¹¹ James P. Carson to Jack Harvey 13.06.05

maintaining 'the *Review*'s excellence' rather than finding ways in which to involve the English Department or students is not, in Lefkowitz's opinion, to say 'that at some later stage in its growth, she might not have been more inclusive'. Although Lefkowitz can understand how some people 'saw Marilyn as a one-woman band,' she believes 'she had more than enough to do editing a first-rate publication'. During Hacker's time faculty were required to live within 5 miles of the campus, yet Hacker 'was commuting between Gambier and New York (and maybe Europe?)'. Stating that as 'rather a private person ... Marilyn did not seek friendship actively,' Lefkowitz regrets that having been a member of the selection committee she did not make a greater effort to 'support her success and her vision for the magazine'. While Lefkowitz admitted she had experienced a 'culture clash' at Kenyon and 'was by no means alone' she speculated that Hacker had encountered a similar situation. Despite these apparent similarities, Lefkowitz found that 'those of us who were New York, urban-oriented, liberal Jews in rural Ohio did not find Marilyn Hacker meeting us for lunch or calling to chat or forming friendships. She worked hard. She travelled. She wasn't much on the campus scene.' It is not unreasonable to assume that if Lefkowitz found it difficult to form a relationship with Hacker it must have been virtually impossible for rural male professors to establish a rapport with her.

Lefkowitz was disappointed that Hacker 'and the College were not happy with one another,' but it is her opinion that Hacker probably had more reason to be unhappy since she had done an excellent job as editor and because she might have reasonably expected that the quality of the *Review* would be the sole basis of performance assessment. However, Lefkowitz's opinion is not supported by fact since the financial side of Hacker's job was the reason she was upset her over an assessment Provost Reed S.

¹² Lewis Hyde to Jack Harvey 04.06.05

Browning gave her. Regretting that 'we may not have extended ourselves' enough in reaching out to Hacker, Lefkowitz conceded 'that Marilyn did not make it easy to do so'.¹³

Hacker admitted that she 'was only at Kenyon for about half the time, and did the work from New York for the rest of the time'. She was aware that 'not being a full-time presence on the campus caused resentment' and that a right-wing campus student newspaper financed by the Olin Foundation referred to the *Review* as 'being edited from New York'.¹⁴ Having been brought up in the Bronx Hacker was used to living in a city, so it must have been a huge change for her to find herself in Gambier. In contrast to Hacker's unhappiness at having to live in Ohio, John Crowe Ransom embraced it fully and eventually retired in Gambier. Having been raised in Pulaski, Tennessee it would not be anything like as big a change for him as it was for Marilyn Hacker. In the year 2000 the population of Pulaski was still less than 10,000.¹⁵ Ransom found it easier to settle in Gambier because he was joined there by Randall Jarrell and Robert Lowell, both of whom had studied under him at Vanderbilt University. Jarrell became an instructor at Kenyon, while Lowell arrived as a student. So, from the beginning of his career at Kenyon Ransom had the support of Chalmers and Jarrell among the staff as well as a member of the student faculty. Jarrell and Lowell both had poems published in the first-ever *Kenyon Review* in 1938.

The NEA 'obscenity' clause cuts straight through the centre of the culture wars debate. Hacker firmly believed that popular taste and the literary canon were in constant flux and that small press publications and independent literary magazines were due a

¹³ Lori Lefkowitz to Jack Harvey 16.06.05

¹⁴ Marilyn Hacker to Jack Harvey 07.08.03

measure of credit for encouraging non-mainstream writers to submit work. Gerald Graff believes that the debate over what should be included in the literary canon should be part of what is taught in universities. In his 1992 book, *Beyond the Culture Wars - How Teaching the Conflicts can Revitalize American Education* he explains how things have changed during his time in education. When he began teaching in 1959 ‘the literary canon—the body of literature thought to be worth teaching—seemed so uncontroversial that you rarely heard the word “canon.”’ He admits that ‘It is also true that social and cultural change has brought difficult new problems in the areas of admissions, hiring, and campus life.’¹⁶ It was with respect to campus life that Hacker encountered problems at Kenyon. David Bergman’s opinion is that she did not display the commitment to Kenyon that had been expected of her and that ‘she was at the college as little as she could manage’.¹⁷

Perry Lentz, a Kenyon English Professor who along with most members of the then English Department helped Frederick Turner and Ronald Sharp resurrect the *Review* in 1979 provides an insight into the problems surrounding the demise of the *Review* in the 1960s and compares them with Hacker’s editorship. According to Lentz a major factor in suspending the *Review* in 1969 was that it had become ‘so isolated and remote from the necessarily central enterprise’ of Kenyon College. Lentz found himself ‘early on to have been absolutely dismayed’ by the way in which Hacker appeared determined to make the *Review* ‘even more isolated from the College and the community than it had been in its first incarnation’. He admitted that no one at Kenyon could have predicted ‘how

¹⁵ [<http://www.usacitiesonline.com/tncountypulaski.htm#history>]

¹⁶ Graff G., *Beyond the Culture Wars - How Teaching the Conflicts can Revitalize American Education* (New York, 1992), p4

¹⁷ David Bergman to Jack Harvey 09.11.01

temperamentally unsuited Ms Hacker was to the basic requirements of the task' facing her or how uncomfortable she was at finding herself in 'Gambier Village rather than Greenwich Village'. Paying tribute to her 'considerable (and admirable) literary achievements' Lentz notes that it was the very same personal qualities of 'alienation and isolation' which had brought her success which 'rendered her not only unforthcoming in a position in which forthcomingness had to be a concomitant for any success, but rendered her characteristically suspicious and hostile to institutional, collegiate, departmental, and community appeals'. Lentz described how he found it 'almost impossible' to have a conversation of any kind with her and stated that any suggestions about how the *Review's* new status might be developed to further the students' interests or the English Department 'were received, by our new editor, with silence if not hostility'.¹⁸ As far back as Lentz's student days, beginning in 1960 at Kenyon College, he believes there was never any tension between 'creative writers' and 'literary scholars'. Lori Lefkowitz, who was a member of the committee who hired Hacker, supports Lentz's view. She stated that 'she was not aware of any tensions between literary scholars and creative writers at Kenyon'.¹⁹ Lentz believes that there is a tendency for creative writers to be 'less settled' due to the fact that 'Gambier village is not Greenwich Village,' and considers the problem back then to be the same as that which Hacker brought about in the 1990s; 'the manifest separation of the *Review* from the life of the Department and of the College generally'. He asserts that during his four years as a student he 'never even met' anyone connected to the *Review* despite the fact that he shared the same building.²⁰

In May 1993 Kenyon's Academic Dean Anne Ponder attempted to bring English

¹⁸ Perry Lentz to Jack Harvey 07.06.05

¹⁹ Lori Lefkowitz to Jack Harvey 23.04.06

Department staff and *Review* staff closer together. She assigned office space in Sunset College, the home of the English Department since the late 1970s to the *Review*. Ponder specifically expressed her hope that ‘this space reassignment can facilitate a spirit of collegial conversation among English department members which will extend to the Kenyon Review and that the Review staff will do what it can to make English department members feel welcome on the ground floor of Sunset Cottage’. However, she added at the end of her letter that ‘if this reassignment does not function to the advantage of all parties, as envisioned, a return to the current assignment is possible’. The tone of Ponder’s letter suggested that she was not entirely confident that this arrangement would be successful. Tribute has to be paid to Ponder for making an attempt to heal the rift which had developed, but by then it was probably too late. If Hacker met enquiries with resentment as Lentz stated, then being in closer proximity might only result in a greater degree of unfriendliness.

If Lentz and others in the English Department were concerned about Hacker’s editorship so early on in her tenure it is highly unlikely that the administration failed to notice the tension being generated. Indeed, even Donald Rogan of Kenyon’s Religious Studies Faculty who admitted to being ‘one of her relatively few friends’ conceded that he thought Hacker was fired because she was ‘personally obnoxious’ to anyone ‘she thought did, or would, disagree with her’. Rogan added that ‘she succeeded in making more enemies than friends’ at Kenyon, ‘especially of the president, the financial administration, and the English department’. Another recollection of this period in Kenyon College’s history that Rogan remembers is the fact that Hacker ‘refused to teach’

²⁰ Perry Lentz to Jack Harvey 24.04.06

in the English Department 'or at least refused to teach what they wanted her to'. While Rogan points to the fact that the English Department had for several years envisaged the *Review*'s editor would fill a teaching position in their syllabus, he adds that 'in any case, no-one in the department much valued her'. Rogan is 'open to the possibility that financial reasons were an excuse for other reasons to fire her'.

Around this time Kenyon was starting to provide facilities for unmarried couples, both heterosexual and homosexual. According to Rogan 'The press for all kinds of diversity was very strong' and administrators and female faculty members 'were very vocal'. When John Crowe Ransom arrived at Kenyon he was fully prepared to teach, so when he was offered the position as editor of a new review he was delighted. It was clearly a major advantage for him to be involved from the beginning since he was responsible for appointing most of the advisory board to the *Review*. Diversity was not an issue in his time and it was more or less accepted that straight white males would mainly feature in the *Review*. In retrospect, Ransom could be accused of hypocrisy over Robert Duncan's poem 'African Elegy,' which he initially accepted for publication, describing it as 'very brilliant'. Ignoring his new critical approach to poetry, Ransom rejected it after reading Duncan's essay 'The Homosexual in Society'.²¹ Ransom's decision was never questioned at Kenyon. A major irony of the situation that Hacker found herself in was that she made it very clear from the outset what her aims and objectives were for the *Review* and what she expected to publish. Ransom did not have to explain to anyone what he had in mind to publish and was never asked.

It has to be acknowledged that John Crowe Ransom's task as editor of *The*

Kenyon Review was much easier than that of Marilyn Hacker's. He did not have quite the same burden of expectation as that of Hacker who was under far more scrutiny than he ever found himself. When Hacker arrived at Kenyon College she had a reputation as an editor. Ransom was an unknown quantity in the field of literary editing, as even his closest friend Allan Tate acknowledged.²²

Referring to David Lynn, Rogan stated that the *Review* staff who replaced Hacker 'were people who were "in" with the administration from the start'. In other words, instead of appointing an editor and hoping that he or she could be persuaded to teach, Jordan appointed a teacher whom he knew could edit the *Review*. Lynn was the ideal replacement; he had edited the *Review* prior to Hacker's arrival at Kenyon, he was a member of the English Department, he was not going to intentionally isolate the magazine from the College and he could not be accused of editing the journal from New York. In one move Jordan had solved several problems.

Rogan's observation was that 'such policies as might reflect a position in the "culture wars" ... were no different with the new administration than with the old'. However, since many of Hacker's problems appear to have been of her own making there was certainly a 'war' of some description going on. Following Hacker's departure Rogan stated that the major difference in the administration was the establishment of 'very tight reins on the business side of the publication,' while a programme was introduced to source financial support that made the *Review* more independent than Hacker ever dreamt it could be. Rogan's opinion is that David Lynn is 'more politically savvy in the sense of

²¹ [<http://www.enotcs.com/african-elegy/>]

²² Tate, A., 'Teacher and Friend,' in D. David Long and Michael R. Burr (eds.), *John Crowe Ransom: A Tribute from the Community of Letters*, supplement to the *Kenyon Collegian*, XC (1964), p18

knowing where and how to please those who might be in powerful positions around him'. According to the way Rogan saw it, Hacker was hired 'primarily by *Review* supporters, including the then provost and president'. She lost the support of the people who had brought her to Kenyon and 'overextended the cost of the *Review*,' and when this happened the people whom she had upset 'took her poor fiscal (and implicitly poor managerial) record to the trustees' who eventually took care of her dismissal. The continuation of her editorial stance is, in Rogan's view 'one of the sad ironies of the situation'.

A problem encountered by Hacker that no other *Review* editor had faced previously was highlighted by James P. Carson. The early 1990s saw tight budgets being imposed on higher education in general. Carson explained that when Hacker was selected 'the KR editorship was structured so that her entire salary came from the KR budget,' while the disadvantages of this arrangement become ever clearer on realising that the requirement to teach was intended as a way of reducing the reliance on the College budget. Carson stated that just at a time when Philip Jordan and the trustees were looking for ways to cut expenditure 'the KR at least appeared to be costing the college more than ever'. Rogan's point that Hacker was obnoxious to people whom she imagined might disagree with her is really quite a damning indictment.

If Rogan's view were in isolation it would be possible to dismiss it, yet there is further evidence to support it. In reply to one of the many letters of complaint which were later officially named 'protest letters,' Cy Wainscott wrote to Bruce Berlind, a Professor at Colgate University on July 14 1994 informing him that Hacker 'has

expressed suspicions that homophobia, xenophobia, misogyny, parochialism, racism, envy, boorishness, religious zealotry – any or all of these things – were the reasons she was not continued as editor’. Wainscott added that if that were the truth of the matter he would have resigned from the *Review*. He thought that Hacker was unquestionably ‘a great writer and a great editor,’ but he also stated that great editors were not of necessity good publishing executives and that great publishing executives were not necessarily always successful in stimulating confidence. It is clear from Perry Lentz’s comments that Wainscott recognised Hacker’s shortcomings in the matter of engendering confidence in her editorship.

With respect to the teaching arrangements referred to by Donald Rogan there was an ongoing clash between Hacker and College Provost Reed S. Browning over when and what she should teach. When Browning wrote to Hacker on October 18 1991 he reminded her of a conversation which had taken place several weeks before at which Philip Jordan, the President of Kenyon College had also been present. In order to reduce the financial burden the *Review* placed on the College it was decided that Hacker should get involved in teaching a course. This should not have come as any surprise to Hacker since it was mentioned at her interview for the post. The advantages to both the *Review* and the College should have been obvious, bearing in mind Perry Lentz’s remark about how remote the journal was from the life of the Kenyon students. However, it was not quite as simple as that. Browning’s proposal was that Hacker would teach a creative writing class in each semester during 1992-93 which would involve either one evening or one afternoon per week. Browning considered that this would be a tremendous opportunity to integrate College life with that of the *Review* by allowing students to work

with someone of Hacker's stature. He also regarded it as a beginning in terms of the budgetary adjustments he had planned for the *Review*. Since former *Review* editor Philip Church was Hacker's contact in the English Department, Browning stated that he hoped she had already spoken to him on the topic.

When Hacker replied to Browning she reminded him that her understanding was that she would teach one course per year and not, as he had supposed, one course per semester. She defended her position by pointing out that teaching one course per semester was the equivalent of at least a one-third increase in her workload resulting in her either working four-thirds time or reducing her editing work for the *Review* to two-thirds time. Browning was satisfied with this arrangement and wrote to Hacker in early November to thank her for her willingness to teach a writing course in the 1992-93 academic year. He reminded her once more to discuss the course and confirm it with Philip Church. Browning allowed a month to pass before he wrote to Church and Hacker to check that teaching arrangements for the coming year were 'clear to everyone'. The letters confirmed that Hacker's writing course was scheduled to be taught in the second semester of 1992-93. Although this was the maximum commitment Hacker was prepared to agree to at this time, Browning was determined that she would teach 'one course each semester at a later time'. Browning offered his assistance in making arrangements for inclusion of Hacker's creative writing course in the English Department curriculum if required.

Some weeks later Browning wrote to Hacker complimenting her on achieving 'focus' with regard to the *Review*'s contents. He was of the opinion that there had been an increasing number of interesting manuscripts arriving at the *Review*. The problem for

Hacker was that he was not going to allow her to forget that he wished her to teach one course per semester. The important point in this particular letter is not so much the fact that Browning reiterates his stance on Hacker's teaching commitment, but that the administration was monitoring the contents of the *Review*. In the infamous *Kenyon Review* questionnaire circulated in late 1993/early 1994 the question of editorial content reared its ugly head. However, since the *Review's* funds were constantly at the forefront of Browning's concerns it has to be admitted that he gave Hacker fair warning and it is in this vein that he ends his letter by expressing his hope that she will continue to pursue the task of achieving fiscal stability. In what could be seen as an incentive, Browning included a copy of his recommendation that Hacker receive an above average wage increase for 1992-93. The award of \$3,300 brought her salary up to \$61,600.

On March 20 1992 Hacker wrote to Browning to confirm that her salary from the spring semester teaching course would be covered by the general faculty salary budget. She clearly wished this fact to be officially recorded since it established that neither the *Review* nor the English Department were responsible for paying her salary.

Hacker's 'war' with Browning took a new twist in January 1993 when she received an evaluation with which she was less than pleased, since she considered that it focused more on the literary aspect of her job than the financial. However, for some inexplicable reason she waited until May before writing to complain about it, adding that the Lila Wallace grant had taken months of 'mind-numbing and soul-destroying work precisely to do with that financial aspect' which had been 'unremunerated'. She pointed to the fact that since its inception the Lannan Foundation had only ever awarded grants to the same three journals until she made a case for the *Review*.

Another factor which annoyed her was that the increase in the bookstore circulation of the *Review* which had almost quadrupled during her editorship had not been taken into account in her evaluation. While she had not expected a merit award for the coming year because she understood the College was 'not in a financial position to offer them' she believed she 'deserved one, if anyone did'. This point was made because she had heard that some faculty members 'did receive them'. However, what concerned her most was the average performance rating she received for a period during which she 'practically suspended [her] own life to attend to the literary and business needs of the Kenyon Review'.

When Browning replied to Hacker's letter on May 10 he confirmed that they had a lunch scheduled for later that week. Stating that the purpose of the meeting was to have a chat, he added that he had a couple of things he wished to discuss, the first of which was her complaint regarding her average wage rise. Browning informed Hacker that because 'Kenyon expects good work from its employees' a standard salary increase had been awarded. The second matter Browning wished to discuss was the familiar topic of her teaching commitment. Having informed Browning that she would not be teaching during 1993-94 he responded with, 'that's not acceptable'. He reminded her of a meeting she had attended at which both he and President Jordan had been present at which the importance of reducing the *Review's* dependence on the College for financial help had been emphasised. Uncharacteristically perhaps, Browning had not insisted on her teaching at that time because she had argued convincingly that the time involved would be detrimental to her editorial work.

Another problem which concerned Hacker and involved Browning was her

proposed budget for 1993-94. When Browning discovered that Hacker had assumed a subsidy of \$141,700 he informed her that the College budget had been set at \$135,000. He advised her to adjust her finances accordingly. On the same day, May 13 that Hacker received notification to adjust her *Review* budget, Browning penned a second letter to her. He returned to the subject of her teaching commitment and reminded her of two letters he had sent her in November and December of 1991. Browning thanked her for appreciating the necessity of teaching and stated that he would contact Ted Mason, Chair of the English Department who would get in touch with her vis-à-vis the creative writing course she would teach in the second semester of 1993-94.

Hacker either did not understand or did not want to understand the relevance that Browning placed on the value of her teaching Kenyon students. As has already been stated, she was isolating herself more and more from day-to-day college life and how she could have failed to realise that this was to the detriment of her position as editor is hard to understand. By October 20 1993 Browning was once more in pursuit of Hacker for her failure to contact Ted Mason as agreed the previous May. He informed Hacker that he was surprised she had not been in touch with Mason and pointed to the three letters he had now written on the subject. On May 13 Mason had received an email from Browning to say that Hacker would contact him, but she never did. In fairness, what Browning had actually written in his May 13 letter to Hacker was 'I will be in touch with Ted Mason, Chair of the Department of English, and ask him to contact you about the character of the creative writing course you will teach second semester of 1993-94'. Due to her treatment for cancer Hacker had been excused from a previously agreed teaching commitment. However, Browning reminded her that the 1993-94 requirement to teach

had been restored. His frustration at her reluctance to teach overflows in this letter in which he practically orders her to 'consult' with Ted Mason 'as soon as possible' over 'the course you will offer' in the second semester of 1993-94. The urgency of Browning's letter was increased because course information had to be collated as quickly as possible for the benefit of new students.

However, if Browning thought he had finally succeeded in pinning Hacker down he was wrong. When Hacker contacted Ted Mason they were in agreement that the small number of students who would find her course beneficial was already being catered for in a course being taught by Philip Church. So, she was excused from teaching in 1993-94. Browning wrote to Hacker on November 3 reminding her that he expected her to teach a course in the first semester of 1994-95.

Hacker contacted Mason to discuss the course she would teach in 1994-95 and once that was agreed she informed Browning that she would be teaching an advanced poetry workshop in the fall of 1994-95 when there would be a sufficient number of suitable students. Having received good reports about her future students she stated that she was looking forward to teaching them. Hacker had agreed with Ted Mason's suggestion that Philip Church should start teaching the advanced workshop and that she would take over in the fall. She took the opportunity to remind Browning that she would like to invite a guest editor to Kenyon in the spring of 1995 when she hoped to be on leave of absence. The two candidates she had in mind and wished to discuss with Browning were Carole Maso, who was a faculty member at the Columbia University School of the Arts and Suzanne Gardinier, who had taught literature and creative writing at Rutgers University. She had taken the liberty of asking both candidates to forward

their CVs and letters of intent. The irony of this situation was that Hacker had informed Maso and Gardinier that part of their remit would involve teaching.

When Hacker received a reply from Browning almost three weeks later it contained a similar response to that of Jordan's 18 months previously. While he was in no doubt about the potential benefits a guest editor might bring to the *Review* he stressed that this type of venture would have to wait until the work of the trustee review committee had been completed. Browning even suggested that she discuss her proposal with David Banks and his fellow trustees when they arrived on campus in January 1994.

The first letter Hacker received in 1994 was from Joseph G. Nelson, Kenyon's Vice President for Finance who reminded her on January 12 that 'you will need to vacate McIlvaine apartment C-3 when your four-year term ends on June 30, 1994'. Although Nelson appeared to be simply stating Kenyon's Housing Policy the irony of this situation was two-fold. Firstly, Nelson was present at the meeting at which Hacker was dismissed and, secondly, the reason given was due to finances. In retrospect the notice to vacate her apartment could be regarded as symbolic of her fate to come. It was around this time that the questionnaire relating to the *Review's* future was circulating.

Following Hacker's dismissal an article appeared in *Bay Windows* on July 21 1994 in which she stated that although the questionnaire 'was ostensibly to solicit suggestions to help the magazine with its financial problems' this aim was 'undermined' by the actual questions themselves, some of which she recalled were about editorial content. Cy Wainscott, the *Review's* managing editor is quoted as saying that he was 'also offended' because there was 'something in there asking about the content'. However, Wainscott added that he had 'been reassured about the likelihood of trustees or

others attempting to meddle' in editorial decisions. Apparently at a meeting he had attended with trustees and administration 'they went out of their way' to tell him they did not 'want to have anything to do with the content or controlling the content'.

The questionnaire referred to consisted of only eight questions, five of which were fairly innocuous. However, sandwiched in the middle were the meaty questions which naturally concerned Hacker and Wainscott. Question 4 was 'I am/am not satisfied with the image of *The Kenyon Review*. I would suggest the following changes:' Question 5 expanded on the topic of image: 'If I could design an image or editorial statement, which would best position *The Kenyon Review* to support the College's reputation, it would be as follows:' If these questions did not alert Hacker and Wainscott to the danger posed by the questionnaire then after reading question 6 they would be in no doubt whatsoever. This stated 'I am/am not satisfied with the content of *The Kenyon Review*. I would suggest the following changes:'. It is inconceivable that Hacker did not realise at this point that her position was untenable. The very fact that this question was being asked was surely a clear indication that she was on her way out of Kenyon.

On July 11 *Bay Windows* reported Hacker as denying she had been sacked for homophobic reasons. She reportedly said, 'I don't think it's homophobia directed at me as a lesbian ... I don't think they care if I'm a lesbian, a nun or someone who only did it with my pet'. However, apparently she did accuse Kenyon of being 'xenophobic'. The article asserted that Kenyon's argument that Hacker was dismissed for 'her lack of financial expertise appears undercut' by their choice of David Lynn as her replacement since his reputation 'is not based on business acumen'. Cy Wainscott admitted that 'neither he [Lynn] nor Marilyn had terrific expertise at cost cutting,' adding that Lynn's

appointment reflected the 'very precarious position' that the *Review* found itself in. Philip Jordan is quoted as stating that Lynn 'is a member of the faculty doing part-time work as a member of the faculty at a substantial reduction of cost'. Lynn's recollection of events is that after Hacker was sacked he was 'told by the then college president that if [he] didn't agree to become editor, the journal would be closed down permanently'. Since Lynn did not wish that to happen he agreed. In terms of Hacker's problems at Kenyon, Lynn explained that she 'never wanted to be in the wilds of Ohio ... spent as little time here as possible ... never taught classes, had almost no contact with students, and never sought to build a constituency here'. Despite these criticisms Lynn is more generous than most in stating that 'many of us liked her and were inclined to support her efforts'. Although the *Review* and the College appear to be synonymous in many people's minds the reality was that during Hacker's tenure it 'had come to have little direct connection with the life of the college'. Lynn added that she 'probably didn't spend enough time trying to control the KR budget or to raise money from supporters, although she did have some success with program grants from foundations'.²³

In the same *Bay Windows* article Richard Howard, poetry editor of the *Paris Review* and a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, referred to the trustees and College administration as a 'very conservative and provincial group,' adding that Hacker had kept her side of the bargain and delivered 'exactly what she promised'. He stated that she 'told them what she was going to do ... did what she said she was going to do. And they hated it.'

Hacker's former husband, Samuel R. Delany, speculated that 'somehow Hacker's very clear statements were assumed to be metaphoric and abstract--rather than the

²³ David Lynn to Jack Harvey 14.06.05

underpinnings of a hard-headed, down to-earth editorial policy'. Delany believed that since 'Hacker wrote in rhyme and meter and espoused formal verse, the assumption was that because she could be seen (if you squinted and didn't read closely) as espousing a somehow conservative aesthetic, therefore she must be allied to relatively conservative politics'.²⁴

David Baker believed that Hacker's appointment as editor came at a 'high point in the culture wars'. Although he did not know her before she arrived in Gambier he was a great admirer of her work. Now teaching at Denison University in Granville, Ohio Baker taught and lived at Kenyon in 1983-84. During his time there he found Kenyon 'to be considerably more interesting as a relic than a progressive site'. Later, when the *Review* editorial vacancy was advertised Baker was employed as one of the outside consultants. As such he attended the presentations for each of the three candidates and his advice to the 'Kenyon folks' was to hire Hacker, whom he considered then and now to be one of America's most important poets and 'one of the significant voices for progressive social awareness and action'. Baker's opinion is that the Board of Trustees and the administration 'wanted to be progressive, or at least to look progressive' though he questioned whether they really knew what that meant. This remark confirms Delany's view of things. Baker stated that it has to be borne in mind that the Board did not consist of 'literary people, in the least -- rather, mostly, powerful white males whose power was primarily financial'.

Although Hacker did not disguise her intentions for the *Review* in any way, Baker thought that the 'apparently conservative board had only a vague idea of what literature actually was' and a 'vague idea of what conservative or progressive or any other "kind"

²⁴ Samuel R. Delany to Jack Harvey 16.05.05

of literary vision was ...'

Aware that there were differing versions circulating as to the reason for Hacker's sacking, Baker admitted his sympathies were with Hacker. He acknowledged that 'many people there were uncomfortable with some of her selections,' and that Hacker believed her sacking was due to her 'daring or progressive editorial decisions'. However, the 'Kenyon people' consider they sacked her because of 'reasons of financial and administrative management'.

While people like Lentz and Rogan found Hacker made little effort to make friends at Kenyon, Baker believes 'no one there seemed interested to help her, or offer advice'. He qualifies this by adding that his observation is 'coming from someone living and working elsewhere'. However, it does support Lori Lefkowitz's wish that she had made a greater effort to include Hacker in Kenyon life.

In Baker's opinion Kenyon 'treated her stupidly from the point of view that they appear to 'have known they wanted to release her' but waited far too long before telling her 'and did so badly,' bearing in mind she was undergoing treatment for cancer and 'was suddenly stranded without insurance'.²⁵

Theoretically, Marilyn Hacker arrived at Kenyon at the right time. 'The Women's and Gender Studies program at Kenyon College began in 1991, shortly after she arrived in Gambier. Susan Ruth Hopkins argues that 'women's studies began at Kenyon in 1969 when women were admitted for the first time'.²⁶ Prior to 1990 there had been only 2 interdisciplinary programs at Kenyon but there are now around 7 programs. Director of

²⁵ David Baker to Jack Harvey 09.05.05

²⁶ Hopkins, Susan Ruth., *The History of the Women's and Gender Studies Program at Kenyon College* (2001) [<http://www2.kcnynon.edu/Depts/WMNS/Projects/1hopkins/title.htm>]

the Asian Studies Program at Kenyon Joseph Adler pointed out that 'It was also one of various kinds of efforts to "diversify" both the curriculum and the culture of the college.'²⁷

In an article entitled 'Scholarship and sexuality: Lesbian and gay studies in today's academy' which was published in the online magazine *Academe*, Robert J. Corber emphasises that Lesbian and Gay Studies 'has emerged as one of the most exciting and innovative of the new academic fields'. According to Corber Lesbian and Gay Studies departments are flourishing while humanities and social science departments are under increasing financial pressure, to the extent that they are facing budget cuts and 'declining student enrollments'. He claims that lesbian and gay scholars have succeeded in moving sexuality from the boundaries of the curriculum nearer to the center. In Corber's opinion it is in the field of literary studies that lesbian and gay studies has had the greatest impact. He points out that since the 1970s literary critics influenced by Marxism, feminism and other less traditional approaches have 'struggled to open up the canon of writers studied in literature departments'. In what could be regarded as a direct comparison between Marilyn Hacker and John Crowe Ransom Corber refers to these critics as having 'redrawn the boundaries of literary history ... that had grown excessively narrow under the influence of the New Criticism'²⁸

Marilyn Hacker unquestionably opened *The Kenyon Review* up to a wider community of writers, but in doing so she upset the people in power at Kenyon. This factor, combined with a lack of expertise in controlling finances led to her downfall. As

²⁷ Joseph Adler to Jack Harvey 26.03.06

²⁸ Corber, Robert J., *Academe Online* September-October 1998, Volume 84, Number 5

Donald Rogan pointed out, it is ironic that her editorial policies have survived long after her.

Chalmers at Kenyon College

The appointment of Gordon Keith Chalmers as president of Kenyon College in 1937 could, in retrospect, appear to have been an appointment to a prestigious position. However, at that time, Kenyon College had not yet earned a reputation in the literary world.

Chalmers was not without distinction, having graduated from Brown University in 1925, aged twenty-one. As a Rhodes scholar he went to Oxford, where, in 1928, he received his BA in English literature. While at Oxford, Chalmers met his future wife, Roberta Teale Swartz, an American poet. John Crowe Ransom credited the birth of *The Kenyon Review* to Swartz, remarking in 1963 that she 'really founded the *Review*. During her college days a strong-minded old mistress had enrolled her in an Eighteenth Century course, and made her read the British quarterlies of the period; not without remarking that no review of such quality had yet appeared in America. 'Roberta at once resolved to remedy this disaster, and it is now known ... that she early came to an understanding with Gordon that he would bring it about if he could.'²⁹

When Chalmers took charge of Kenyon, his remit, as laid out by Wilbur L. Cummings, chairman of the committee to select the president, was to raise the standards of scholarship.³⁰ Chalmers wasted no time in setting out his plans to fulfil Cummings'

²⁹ Ransom, J.C., 'The Gordon Keith Chalmers Memorial Library at Kenyon,' *American Oxonian*, L (1963), p93

³⁰ Wilbur L. Cummings to Chalmers, April 1, 1937, quoted in Thomas Boardman Greenslade, *Kenyon College: Its Third Half Century* (Gambier, Ohio, 1975), p67

aim. Shortly after his election as president of Kenyon College on May 1 1937, Chalmers wrote a memo referring to Ransom's visit to Kenyon on May 15 and 16.

John Crowe Ransom

Chalmers' memo records the role he envisaged for Ransom with respect to establishing Kenyon College as a prestigious seat of learning. Ransom believed his visit to Kenyon was to discuss the possibility of becoming a professor of philosophy and poetry and at this time had no knowledge of Chalmers' intention to found a review. When Ransom expressed the view that he didn't feel qualified to head the philosophy department, Chalmers offered him a leading position in the English department.³¹

Ransom's future success as editor of *The Kenyon Review* appears to have been something of a surprise to even his closest friends. Allen Tate, a lifelong friend of Ransom's, confessed that: 'not even his old friends were sure that he would become one of the great modern editors'. Tate added that there was a question mark over Ransom's ability to engage with modern literature.³² Janssen states that it was Robert Frost who suggested Ransom as a possible editor, adding that perhaps Frost's choice was influenced by the fact that he did not regard Ransom as a threat to himself.³³ At that time ten years had passed since Ransom had published his previous book of poetry, *Two Gentlemen in Bonds* (1927).

Born in Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1888 Ransom entered Vanderbilt University to study Philosophy and the classics at fifteen years of age, a year younger than would

³¹ Janssen M., *The Kenyon Review 1939-1970 A Critical History*, (Louisiana State University Press, 1990), p11

³² Tate, A., 'Teacher and Friend,' in D. David Long and Michael R. Burr (eds.), *John Crowe Ransom: A Tribute from the Community of Letters*, supplement to the *Kenyon Collegian*, XC (1964), p18

normally be considered. His education until this point had been somewhat unusual. As a Methodist minister, his father, John James Ransom, was never sure how long he would be in the same place and the result of this was that John junior was taught at home until the age of ten.³⁴ It was not until his father was appointed pastor of North High Street Methodist Church in Nashville on October 25, 1898 that Ransom had the opportunity to go to a public school. Having never been to school he posed somewhat of a problem to the authorities. Consequently, he was moved around and sat a series of examinations prior to being assigned to the eighth grade, which saw him placed alongside pupils several years older than himself.³⁵ At the end of that year Ransom's father, in consultation with his teachers, decided he should enter a preparatory school to enable him to better prepare himself for the rigorous entrance examinations for Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Ransom was enrolled in a school supervised by Angus Gordon Bowen, who had only graduated from Vanderbilt two years previously. Despite his apparent inexperience Bowen clearly did an excellent job with respect to Ransom's education. In 1957, Ransom credited Bowen with having done 'more for my own education than any other man'. Part of this education involved Bowen introducing Ransom to a discussion group of Nashville intellectuals which met at Goodpasture's Bookstore on Saturday afternoons and it was probably this atmosphere that helped Ransom cultivate his love for debate which was to further develop with his Fugitive involvement.³⁶

Vanderbilt University awarded two prizes annually for the best students in two categories, one of which was for the person with the highest marks in English, history

³³ Janssen, M., p 11

³⁴ Young, T.D., *Gentleman in a Dustcoat*, (Louisiana State University Press, 1976), p15

³⁵ Young, T.D., p18

³⁶ Young, T.D., p18/19

and mathematics combined. In 1903 Ransom, then still only fifteen years of age, won this prize. With an assurance from Bowen as to his maturity, he was accepted by Vanderbilt. Due to the financial burden placed on his family, Ransom's studies at Vanderbilt were interrupted. During this time he taught, ironically, students preparing for admission to Vanderbilt. It was September 1907 before Ransom re-enrolled at Vanderbilt. However, upon graduation he was awarded the Founder's Medal which was conferred upon the graduate who had accumulated the highest average grade in the subjects contributing to his degree.³⁷ While at Vanderbilt Ransom was elected to the Calumet Club which was the most prestigious body on campus. In 1909, Ransom wrote that the Calumet Club was 'a literary organization in which merit alone secures admission. They are leading literary thinkers; it is their purpose to encourage literary activity. They want cultured men who are gaining distinction in their departments ... Every man who wishes to do his best should aim at the Calumet Club.'³⁸ Once more, Ransom's enthusiasm to engage with literary like-minded people was in evidence. In 1908, while in his senior year, he was elected editor of the *Vanderbilt Observer*. He wrote home that it was 'a very great honor'.³⁹ As a result of his excellent progress Ransom was awarded a Rhodes scholarship and studied Greats at Oxford from September 1910 until July 1913. Taking up from where he left off at Vanderbilt, Ransom established the Hermit Crabs at Oxford. This group was similar in set-up to the Calumet Club in that the membership could not exceed twelve. However, the Hermit Crabs allowed a maximum of six Americans.⁴⁰

³⁷ Young, T.D., p33

³⁸ Young, T.D., p33

³⁹ Young, T.D., p34

⁴⁰ Young, T.D., p49

Ransom's hectic schedule required that he submit two essays every week. Undeterred, he attempted to attend as many of the weekly debates held in the American Club as he possibly could. These debates were modelled along similar lines to the Oxford Union Society and, sporting activities apart, were one of Ransom's few diversions.⁴¹ However, his early impression of the American Club was not favourable. In a letter to his father, dated October 1911, he wrote that 'the men of my year are disposed to make too much of a joke out of the programs'.⁴² One can only assume that when Ransom became President of the Club he set to putting things right. Seven months after the letter to his father he wrote to his mother that his 'presidential term' had been 'inaugurated very successfully' and that 'the Club at present is in most flourishing condition'.⁴³

Throughout 1912 Ransom was unsure which career he should pursue. In January he wrote to his mother that he 'should like best to teach philosophy,' but was 'not averse to Greek'.⁴⁴ By March he was 'still undecided' as to his chosen profession. However, he stated that he believed 'a few years of journalism would be better ... than the same time spent teaching'.⁴⁵ Writing in November of that year he asked his father to let him know of any teaching positions, preferably in philosophy, which offered a salary of '\$1800 or \$2000'.⁴⁶ In February 1913, as his exams approached, Ransom was still seeking a teaching post. He provided an interesting personal opinion of the examination system at Oxford, stating that the 'standards [were] so indefinite' that it was difficult for him to ascertain his 'comparative merit'. Having made that point he then criticised the 'accepted

⁴¹ Young, Thomas Daniel, p42

⁴² Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core (eds.), *Selected Letters of John Crowe Ransom*, (Louisiana State University Press, 1985), p35

⁴³ Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core, p52

⁴⁴ Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core, p41

⁴⁵ Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core, p46

⁴⁶ Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core, p68

method of treating any subject', which consisted of accepting one of the 'successive historical views of it ... with modifications'. Ransom much preferred to 'start from the beginning with an independent analysis of the situation'.⁴⁷ This is an early example of the attitude which Ransom would exhibit in response to his decision not to pursue a PhD. He equated the historical analysis of philosophy with what he regarded as the predominantly biographical analysis involved in studying for a PhD and disagreed with both. In his essay, 'The Kenyon Review, 1939-1970,' Robie Macauley wrote of Ransom,

For him, psychological or biographical studies of writers, historical examinations of their times, descriptions of their sources and influences, scrutiny of their moral values were satellite affairs that revealed only vague intimations of the real thing – the work itself.⁴⁸

Ransom was unhappy with his performance in the exams, stating that he 'turned in a long series of very mediocre papers,' and adding that he thought it unlikely he would get a First.⁴⁹ As it turned out he just missed a First. Ransom considered it 'a moral defeat rather than [an] intellectual' one, explaining that two of the five examiners elected to give him a First, but that three were opposed.⁵⁰

On returning to Vanderbilt he was appointed to a teaching position in the English Department. In Nashville, Ransom became involved in company which gathered round the mystic Sidney Hirsch. Although only three years older than Ransom he was extremely influential with regard to this group which would later become the Fugitives. Hirsch was a colourful character with eclectic interests. Having run away from home to

⁴⁷ Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core, p70/1

⁴⁸ Anderson, E. and M. Kinzie (eds.), *The Little Magazine in America: A Modern Documentary History* (Connecticut, 1978), p72

⁴⁹ Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core, p78

join the navy, he later became the Pacific Fleet's heavyweight boxing champion. On leaving the navy he toured the Far East where he became interested in Buddhism, Taoism and Oriental philosophies. While in Paris, he modelled for Rodin and embarked on a study of neglected languages. On his return to New York he met and became great friends with Edwin Arlington Robinson who would go on to win three Pulitzers, ironically edging out Ransom for the 1924 Prize.⁵¹

The Fugitives

At this time the group engaged mainly in philosophical discussions. However, following the Great War, the Fugitives' topic of discussion changed from philosophy to poetry and along with this shift came a gradual change in the leadership of the group. Ransom, as the only Fugitive at that time to have had a volume of poetry published, assumed control. In April 1919 his first volume, *Poems About God*, having been positively endorsed by Robert Frost, was published by Henry Holt and Company. When, in March 1922 Hirsch suggested to his fellow Fugitives that they publish their work in a magazine they agreed.⁵² 'As *The Fugitive* developed, it soon ceased to be a friendly diversion for Ransom, Tate and Davidson, who were deadly serious about poetry and professionally ambitious for their work. They rapidly moved into the front lines of the literary campaigns of the 1920s. Writing and publishing verse was not an avocation for them; it represented an increasingly important professional activity.'⁵³ However, by the time he published *Chills and Fever* in 1924 he was already beginning to question whether poetry

⁵⁰ Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core, p79

⁵¹ Rubin Jr., L.D., *The Wary Fugitives – Four Poets and the South*, (London, 1978), p13/14

⁵² Rubin Jr., L.D., p43

⁵³ Rubin Jr., L.D., p44

was the best channel through which to express himself. Referring to *Chills and Fever* in a letter to Robert Graves, Ransom wrote, 'I thought of what the public would think ... it would be for them a hopelessly hard nut to crack ... I can assure you that my simple strains will not find in Nashville, not even among fond relatives, nor well wishers ... more than two persons who will guess what I am after.' In what could be regarded as an insight into Ransom's future agrarian stance he felt that in an age where science was playing an increasingly important role someone had to justify the existence of poetry. He deliberated as to whether he could best respond by carrying out a methodical analysis of the nature and function of poetry.⁵⁴ So, at the height of his poetic power Ransom was turning away from poetry and directing his energy towards literary theory.

In November 1921, Donald Davidson, a fellow English instructor at Vanderbilt, introduced one of his undergraduates, Allen Tate, to the group. Tate's comment regarding Ransom's possible inability to engage with modern poetry probably stems from this time. While Tate immediately recognized Eliot's *The Waste Land* as a poetic masterpiece, Ransom regarded it as nothing more than an interesting curiosity. He believed Eliot's intention was to 'present a wilderness in which both he and the reader may be bewildered, in which one is never to see the wood for the trees,' and it was his opinion that *The Waste Land* would not stand the test of time.⁵⁵ It was in fact through his involvement with Tate that Ransom was won over to modern poetry. One matter on which Tate and Ransom agreed, however, was that 'the commonly held belief in scientific knowledge as final authority was the supreme enemy of poetry'.⁵⁶ Rubin stated that 'liberation from the intellectual boundaries of the old southern community past, with

⁵⁴ Young, Thomas Daniel, p131

⁵⁵ Young, Thomas Daniel, p151

its theological orthodoxy, albeit necessary, will be grudging. He will be a modern because he must be, not because he delights in it.’⁵⁷ The important point, though, is that he was able to overcome his reluctance to engage with modern poetry. Ransom also became acquainted with Robert Penn Warren at this time and went on to influence Penn Warren’s development as a major figure in American letters. The important aspect of Ransom’s involvement in the Fugitive movement, with respect to his future commitment to *The Kenyon Review*, was that he gained indispensable experience in terms of editing, while at the same time making valuable contacts. Tate and Penn Warren both became important contributors and subsequently advisors to *The Kenyon Review* while also bringing new talent to Ransom’s attention. Another aspect of the Fugitives’ poetry discussions was in regard to the close attention they paid to the text. Donald Davidson, a Fugitive and former Ransom student at Vanderbilt recalled forty years later that Ransom’s teaching method involved the pedantic analysis of a single scene from a play and sometimes focused on a few lines.⁵⁸ It was this approach to analysing poetry that formed the basis for the critical theories employed by Ransom when he began editing *The Kenyon Review*.

Although the last edition of *The Fugitive* was published in December 1925 the members continued to meet and discuss poetry as before. In the ‘years immediately after the discontinuance of the magazine, the correspondence between Davidson and Tate, Ransom and Tate, and, to a smaller degree, Warren and Tate developed the mature view of each with a wholeness and clarity not available to the isolated thinker’.⁵⁹ This

⁵⁶ Young, Thomas Daniel, p158

⁵⁷ Rubin Jr., L.D., p21

⁵⁸ Young, Thomas Daniel, p86

⁵⁹ Cowan, L., *The Fugitive Group: A Literary History* (Baton Rouge, 1959), p223

collaboration united once more to defend what they regarded as the principles of the Old South. The event which stirred them into formulating a response was the Scopes' evolution trial. Believing the South to have been misrepresented as backward in Northern newspapers they embarked on a study of Southern history in an effort to formulate a suitable defence of the values of the Old South. The result of this rallying together was the publication in 1930 of *I'll Take My Stand*. However, the genesis of the book is contained in a letter from Tate to Davidson dated March 17 1927 in which Tate refers to his 'recent communication to John regarding a Southern symposium of prose'.⁶⁰

Agrarian Versus Industrial

The introduction to *I'll Take My Stand* is also 'A Statement of Principles'. This statement explained that the views expressed by the authors had been arrived at over a number of years due to the many beliefs they had in common. It stated that the authors 'all tend to support a Southern way of life against what may be called the American or prevailing way; and all as such agree that the best terms in which to represent the distinction are contained in the phrase, Agrarian *versus* Industrial'.⁶¹ Bearing in mind that Ransom later repudiated agrarianism, it is interesting to note that in a letter to his father dated November 1913, he wrote that 'the dweller in the city can not easily become fixed in the ruts that his country cousin calls principles'. In this letter, which referred mainly to the lack of dramatic and artistic opportunities to be found in Tennessee, many of the same points which Ransom cited as holding the South back were the same ones he was now promoting in *I'll Take My Stand*. He expressed a wish to be delivered 'from the

⁶⁰ Fain, J.T. and Young, T.D. (eds.), *The Literary Correspondence of Donald Davidson and Allen Tate* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974), p195

man who has fixed principles, forever beyond the reach of fresh evidence or new argument'.⁶² The same quality of inertia which Ransom commended in *I'll Take My Stand* was condemned as he asserted that 'country conditions operate to produce in country people the qualities of stolidity, conformity, mental and spiritual inertia, callousness, monotony'.⁶³ Having pointed out that he used the terms 'artist' and 'moralist' interchangeably he stated that 'whatever morality may be, to my way of thinking there is one thing which it is not: it cannot consist in a man's reading of his own narrow, special brand of humanity as the standard of all human excellence'.⁶⁴ This was a complete change of heart from what Ransom believed in 1930.

Whereas in *I'll Take My Stand*, Ransom could not 'comprehend' how an 'infinitely progressive' America could offer the leisure which would act as a foundation to 'the life of intelligence and the arts',⁶⁵ his view in 1913 was that a large city could provide 'more and better material for art and drama' in one week than Tennessee could in ten years.⁶⁶ In adopting this stance, Ransom was now attacking science from an agrarian standpoint, whereas previously, he had felt a responsibility to defend poetry in the wake of scientific advances. The Agrarians felt it was necessary to defend the principles of the Old South, not so much against the North, as against what they considered the New South. Almost thirty years later, Tate defined two types of New South. On 28 March 1958, he wrote to Davidson, 'I define *two kinds* of "New South" – one, with a small "n," is the more or less "natural" process of change affecting the whole country and *crossing*

⁶¹ Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand* (1930; rpr. New York, 1962), p(IX)

⁶² Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core, p81

⁶³ Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core, p80

⁶⁴ Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core, p81

⁶⁵ Twelve Southerners, p21

⁶⁶ Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core, p80

sectional patterns ... the other kind of "New South" is to be defined as the expectation the North generates of a South that it *wants* to come forth'.⁶⁷

The Statement contained a plea for younger Southerners who were 'being converted frequently to the industrial gospel'.⁶⁸ The religious analogy was both intentional and ironic in the sense that some people regarded industrialism as the saviour of the South. The Agrarians felt these 'converts' had to be persuaded to examine what advantage lay in becoming a 'new South' which, they maintained, would 'be only an undistinguished replica of the usual industrial community'.⁶⁹

The Statement maintained that the 'members of the present group would be happy to be counted as members of a national agrarian movement'. Defining industrialism as the collective decision of society to 'invest its economic resources in the applied sciences,' the Agrarians took issue with the iconic status now being afforded to science. They considered it had 'enslaved our human energies' to a degree they felt was oppressive.⁷⁰ While acknowledging that science had a role to play in easing the burden of labour they also stated the principles upon which that good labour should depend. It relied on two factors, as they saw it; the first being that good labour should be effective, and second, that it should be enjoyable. Since labour occupied so much of a person's life it should be rewarding. However, the philosophy of applied science did not consider this position. It had one objective which was to save labour and the more it could save the better. 'This is to assume that labor is an evil, that only the end of labor or the material

⁶⁷ Fain, J.T. and Young, T.D., p375

⁶⁸ Twelve Southerners, p(X)

⁶⁹ Twelve Southerners, p(XI)

⁷⁰ Twelve Southerners, p(XI)

product is good.⁷¹ It is pointed out that though apologists of industrialism have acknowledged that economic ills sometimes result, they ‘expect the evils to disappear when [they] have bigger and better machines, and more of them’.⁷²

The Statement affirmed that if consumption was the objective which justified modern labour then the people had been deceived. Since there was now more time in which to consume and more products to be consumed, the Agrarians questioned whether ‘the tempo of our labors communicates itself to our satisfactions,’ or whether these in turn ‘become brutal and hurried’. Their conclusion was that it was probably against man’s temperament to work less and increase his ‘consuming-time’ indefinitely.

The Agrarians were united in their view that in an industrial society religion and art would suffer. Applied sciences advanced industrialism and the combination of these two elements reduced religion to a subservient role. As such, an impression of having control over nature was created while the sense of nature as ‘mysterious and contingent’ was eroded.⁷³ Both religion and art relied on a ‘right attitude to nature’ which could not be achieved without a ‘free and disinterested observation of nature that occurs only in leisure’.⁷⁴

Defining humanism as a culture which embodied ‘the whole way in which we live, act, think, and feel,’ the Statement maintained that ‘genuine humanism was rooted in the agrarian life of the older South’.⁷⁵ Arguing that labour saving measures did not emancipate workers so much as evict them, the Agrarians highlight the fact that the number of workers employed directly on the land was constantly diminishing. They

⁷¹ Twelve Southerners, p(XII)

⁷² Twelve Southerners, p(XIII)

⁷³ Twelve Southerners, p(XIV)

⁷⁴ Twelve Southerners, p(XV)

pointed out that although industry initially provided work, devices would be introduced which would reduce labour, resulting in lay-offs. As other industries sprang up, the cycle of work and unemployment would continue, with instability the inevitable consequence. 'In 1850 agriculture contributed over 34 per cent of the national income. This had declined to 21 per cent in 1910 and to slightly over 10 per cent in 1932.'⁷⁶

Industrial advancement brought with it the inevitable consequence that 'production greatly outruns the rate of natural consumption'.⁷⁷ Advertising also came under attack. In order to keep industry viable, people had to be persuaded to want 'exactly what the applied sciences' were able to provide. Choosing to ignore the motive of profit, the Agrarians could not understand why industrialists were prepared to 'sacrifice their private dignity and happiness to an abstract social ideal' without considering the impact on individual welfare.⁷⁸ In *The World's Body* Ransom went even further. He stated that, 'It is common opinion that business as a self-contained profession has created business men who are defective in their humanity; that the conduct of business has made us callous to personal relations and to social justice; and that many of the occupations which business has devised are, in the absence of æsthetic standards, servile.'⁷⁹

The Statement of Principles contained a theory of agrarianism which asserted that the cultivation of the soil was the most worthwhile of occupations and as such it should be given economic priority by employing the maximum number of people.⁸⁰ If the

⁷⁵ Twelve Southerners, p(XVI)

⁷⁶ Odgard, P.H. and Helms, E.A. (Eds.), *American Politics* (New York, 1938), p227

⁷⁷ Twelve Southerners, p(XVII)

⁷⁸ Twelve Southerners, p(XVIII)

⁷⁹ Ransom, J.C., *The World's Body* (New York, 1938), p68

⁸⁰ Twelve Southerners, p(XIX)

Statement was not very precise in advocating any practical measures on how to deal with industrialism it was certainly clear as to how the Agrarians regarded it. 'If a community, or a section, or a race, or an age, is groaning under industrialism, and well aware that it is an evil dispensation, it must find the way to throw it off.'⁸¹ They add that it was cowardly to believe that this could not be achieved.

Ransom began his essay, 'Reconstructed but Unregenerate,' by stating that it was unfashionable to look to the past rather than the future. The only American paying heed to the past was the 'unreconstructed Southerner' who was regarded as an anachronism because he persisted in living his inherited way of life. Ransom stated powerfully that he wished 'the whole force of [his] own generation in the South would get behind his principles and make them an ideal which the nation at large would have to reckon with'.⁸² Having made this plea he conceded that the Southerners' 'antique conservatism' offered little resistance against 'the American progressivist doctrine'.⁸³

He attributed the adoption of an 'urbanized, anti-provincial, progressive' stance as directly responsible for 'a condition of eternal flux,' asserting that this constant change would not be able to foster memories as in the past.⁸⁴

Echoing 'A Statement of Principles,' Ransom accused modern societies of waging an unrelenting war on nature rather than trying to strike a balance. He believed that men were determined to conquer nature far beyond any reasonable advantage to humanity. 'Man is boastfully declared to be a natural scientist essentially, whose strength is capable of crushing and making over to his own desires the brute materiality which is

⁸¹ Twelve Southerners, p(XX)

⁸² Twelve Southerners, p1

⁸³ Twelve Southerners, p3

⁸⁴ Twelve Southerners, p5

nature; but in his infinite contention with this materiality he is really capitulating to it.' In other words, man was never satisfied with an accomplishment for there was always another challenge to overcome, and so 'he must invent new engines that will perform even more heroically'. Since 'Progress' had no defined ultimate aim it was self-perpetuating. He likened this industrial machine to a nation which was in a continuous state of readiness for war and could not agree to peace.⁸⁵ Ransom stated that the first challenge for ambitious men was to overcome nature and asserted that 'this is the dream of scientists burrowing in their cells, and then of the men who beg of their secret knowledge and go out to trouble the earth'. He advised moderation and respect in such pursuits because man would submit before nature did.⁸⁶

Women did not escape Ransom's wrath, since in his view they were responsible for wishing to keep up with the Jones'. 'There can never be stability and establishment in a community whose every lady member is sworn to see that her mate is not eclipsed in the competition for material advantages.' Ransom's prescription for the 'good life' was to abandon 'personal advancement' in favour of engaging with 'the free activity of the mind,' which was only achievable through leisure. He defined the theory of Progress as 'the concept of man's increasing command, and eventually perfect command, over the forces of nature'. It was Ransom's belief that man must recognise his 'precarious position in the universe' since it was this realisation which allowed him to develop an awareness of beauty, heroism of conduct and sublimity of religion.⁸⁷

Ransom and the Old South

⁸⁵ Twelve Southerners, p8

⁸⁶ Twelve Southerners, p9

While admitting that the old South had its faults, Ransom denied it could be accused of having an obsession with work or an infatuation with material prosperity, since the South never conceded that material production was man's purpose or that cultural advancement was gauged by that same material production. The business of the South, in Ransom's view, was to encompass both work and leisure in a union which permitted the 'activity of intelligence'. What he seemed to be suggesting was that industrialism disconnected the worker from the thought process to an extent that he no longer had the time nor the inclination to engage in active intelligent thought.⁸⁷

Referring to settled communities Ransom made a distinction between the North and the South, believing the South to have been 'constituted by such communities and made solid'.⁸⁸ Part of the solidity of the old South was achieved through the social organisation of a community in which classes were not too firmly defined. He preferred the term 'squirearchy' to aristocracy to describe this social organisation, and, referring to it as 'loosely graduated' he asserted that 'people were for the most part in their right places'. Included in this social order was slavery, which, in Ransom's opinion had its place. 'Slavery was a feature monstrous enough in theory, but, more often than not, humane in practice; and it is impossible to believe that its abolition alone could have effected any great revolution in society.'⁹⁰

In Ransom's opinion, the Civil War was disastrous to both sides. The North, having defeated the South was now being conquered by industrialism which was the worst of all pioneers. 'Industrialism is a program under which men, using the latest

⁸⁷ Twelve Southerners, p10

⁸⁸ Twelve Southerners, p12

⁸⁹ Twelve Southerners, p13

⁹⁰ Twelve Southerners, p14

scientific paraphernalia, sacrifice comfort, leisure, and the enjoyment of life to win Pyrrhic victories from nature at points of no strategic importance.’ He adds that ‘industrialism is ... a menial, of almost miraculous cunning but no intelligence’.⁹¹

Ransom recognised something heroic in the stance the South had taken by not surrendering to industrialism and believed it had done a service to the Union by preventing that particular ‘theory of life’ from vanishing. Following the Civil War relations between the North and South stood in ‘polar opposition’ to each other.⁹² As a result the South ‘retired within her borders’ and engaged in a minimum of commerce with ‘the enemy’. Ransom made an analogy between the American progressivist principle and ‘a ball rolling down ... hill with an increasing momentum,’ and considered that by ‘1890 or 1900’ any ‘intelligent Southerner’ would not have failed to recognise it as ‘a principle of boundless aggression against nature’ which could not offer anything of worth to ‘a society devoted to the arts of peace’.⁹³

Conceding that not everyone agreed with his sentiments, he acknowledged the existence of a ‘considerable body of Southern opinion’ which he named ‘the New South party,’ as being not only pleased with the industrialism which has taken place, but who wished for more. The ‘Old South’ party were concerned lest the South be transformed into another version of the North.⁹⁴ Ransom asked a direct question of the President. ‘Do Mr. Hoover and the distinguished thinkers at Washington see how essential is the mutual hatred between the industrialists and the farmers, and how mortal is their conflict?’ Unfortunately for the South, the government was advocating industrialism,

⁹¹ Twelve Southerners, p15

⁹² Twelve Southerners, p16

⁹³ Twelve Southerners, p17

⁹⁴ Twelve Southerners, p18

despite the industrialists embodying a doctrine which was 'monstrous'. Ransom lamented the fact that the solutions put forward to aid the South were little more than 'enticements ... to become a little more cooperative, more mechanical, more mobile—in short, a little more industrialized'.⁹⁵

The Southern ideal as Ransom saw it was one in which a man identified himself with a piece of land which 'defines itself for him as nature'. By cultivating this land he discovered the infinity of nature, enabling him to acquire 'its philosophical and even its cosmic consciousness'. A farm was an entity which could be revered and loved but industrialism offered no such benefit, and the people who advocated further industrialization offended those 'who would still like to regard the South as, in the old sense, a home'. Ransom admitted that the 'resistance' to the industrialism was now mostly confined to the 'village South' and the 'rural South' since the 'urban South' had surrendered to the invasion of 'regular American ways and regular American citizens'. He commended the 'vast quantity of inertia' displayed by the 'resistance'.⁹⁶

Ransom could not comprehend how an 'infinitely progressive' America could support an 'established order of human existence, and of that leisure which conditions the life of intelligence and the arts'. He blamed the Southern minority for not making its voice heard in the face of an American progressive principle which developed into industrialism.⁹⁷

His major concern was whether the South could retain its historic identity in the rush to industrialize. He pondered the possibility of the South accepting industrialization

⁹⁵ Twelve Southerners, p19

⁹⁶ Twelve Southerners, p20

⁹⁷ Twelve Southerners, p21

but 'with a very bad grace,' which would, if accepted in this spirit, allow her to 'maintain a good deal of her traditional philosophy'.

Ransom agreed that the South had to be industrialized, but he wanted it to be done in moderation. Having earlier compared the American progressivist principle to a rolling ball gathering momentum, he should have realised the chances of keeping industrialism at bay were slim. Resorting to metaphor, he wondered how the Southern leaders could 'handle this fire without being burnt badly'.⁹⁸

In an attempt to dissuade Southerners from embracing industrialism, Ransom advocated advertising specific Northern industrial communities 'as horrible examples of a way of life we detest'. He emphasised the 'human catastrophe' that resulted from 'the cheap labor of a miserable factory system,' referring to it as 'the new so-called industrial slavery'. Ransom did not consider this type of slavery as being 'humane in practice,' possibly because it impacted not only the poor, 'but upon the middle and better classes of society, too'.⁹⁹ He must have been familiar with William J. Grayson's well-known poem of 1856, "The Hireling and the Slave" which defended slavery:

Vainly the starving white, at every door,
Craves help or pity for the hireling poor;
But that the distant black may softlier fare,
Eat, sleep, and play, exempt from toil and care ...¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Twelve Southerners, p22

⁹⁹ Twelve Southerners, p23

¹⁰⁰ McKittrick, F.L., *Slavery Defended: the views of The Old South*, (New Jersey, 1963), p61

Ideally the position of the South in the Union would be 'a position ... analogous ... to the position of Scotland under the British crown'. In other words, Ransom wanted a South within the Union that could retain its own identity and culture. He scoffed at Southern politicians who had seldom had any more 'imaginative manifestation' than to 'scramble vigorously' for their share of the 'federal pie'. Ransom would have much preferred that they fight the creeping industrialism threatening his old South.

By 1932, however, Ransom was beginning to modify his views. In a letter to Allan Tate, dated October 25 he wrote, 'Andrew [Lytle] is moving in the same direction I am, mentally. I hope you won't be too disgusted. He's prepared to accept some industrialization in the South to keep our farmers from feeding out of the hands of the Yankees.'¹⁰¹ By the time Ransom left for Kenyon College in 1937 he had repudiated agrarianism. His essay, 'Art and the Human Economy' was meant to be a commentary on W.P. Southard's essay on Robert Penn Warren's poetry, in which Southard expressed a longing for an agrarian economy. Admitting that he once desired the same, Ransom referred to the Declaration of Potsdam, which advocated that the German people return to an agrarian economy. Ransom stated, 'Once I should have thought there could have been no greater happiness for a people, but now I have no difficulty in seeing it for what it is meant to be: a heavy punishment.'¹⁰²

Kenyon College's Offer

¹⁰¹ Young, Thomas Daniel and George Core, p209

¹⁰² Young, T.D. and Hindle, J., *Selected Essays of John Crowe Ransom*, (Baton Rouge, 1984)

Kenyon's offer came at an opportune time for Ransom. He had earned his professorship at Vanderbilt without having gained a PhD but despite being held in high regard by his colleagues, he was continually being harassed to get his doctorate. Ransom considered that a true understanding of literature had little to do with what he regarded as the mainly biographical and bibliographical content involved in the doctorate program, and as such, he refused on principle to study for the degree. Indeed, Ransom's New Critical approach to poetry study could be seen as evidence that he was correct in this respect, at least as far as he was concerned. Other advantages to Ransom in leaving Vanderbilt were that he would have less of a burden in terms of teaching at Kenyon while gaining an increase in salary. On June 11 1937 Ransom wired Chalmers with his decision to accept the position at Kenyon.¹⁰³ The furore caused by Ransom's departure cannot be exaggerated. Tate regarded Ransom's 'leaving Tennessee ... as [a] disaster,' and wrote an open letter to Vanderbilt's retiring chancellor, James H. Kirkland which was published on May 26 1937 in the *Nashville Tennessean*.

Tate's letter is a mix of prophecy, compliment, rebuke, condescension and plea. He informs Kirkland that Ransom is 'one of the most distinguished men of letters in the world today' and that 'if he goes it will be a calamity from which Vanderbilt will not soon recover'. He prophesied that Robert Lowell, who had gone to Vanderbilt to study with Ransom, would follow his professor to Ohio; acknowledged Kirkland's 'proprietary interest' in the revival of letters at Vanderbilt and suggested that perhaps the Chancellor had been too occupied with other matters to 'judge the value of certain members of their faculties'. Tate rebuked Kirkland for not being 'aware of Mr. Ransom's distinction,' adding condescendingly that perhaps 'the sources of your information have been faulty'.

¹⁰³ Janssen, M., p15

Not only was Tate accusing the Chancellor of not recognising Ransom's worth to Vanderbilt, he was also implying that any knowledge he had was hearsay. 'I am sure that you will see it as your duty, in view of the gravity of the situation, to correct them.'¹⁰⁴

On the day the letter appeared in the paper, Donald Davidson, a fellow Fugitive, wrote to Tate expressing his support. Davidson stated that he had 'been raging helplessly for days and weeks,' adding, 'I have never been so angry, disgusted, and sad in my life, and all the more because of my own feeling of impotence—of not knowing how to tackle the monstrous & incredible situation'.¹⁰⁵ Davidson's response sums up the esteem with which Ransom was regarded at Vanderbilt and the shock felt over his departure. Tate was not exaggerating Ransom's prestige within the literary community. In 1924 Ransom's volume of poetry *Chills and Fever* narrowly lost out to Edwin Arlington Robinson for the Pulitzer Prize.¹⁰⁶

There were protests by both staff and students urging Vanderbilt to match Kenyon's offer. Randall Jarrell organised a petition that cited Ransom as the University's foremost tutor of the previous two decades. Despite collecting hundreds of signatures from students and faculty members Jarrell's petition failed to persuade the chancellor of Vanderbilt and his English Department colleagues. Jarrell never forgave the people whom he held responsible for Ransom's departure. Mary Jarrell recalled how Jarrell met one of the Vanderbilt professors twenty-five years later. The professor, knowing how Jarrell felt over the Ransom incident, 'pathetically tried to clear himself and explain the other side'.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Fain, J.T. and Young, T.D., p417/8

¹⁰⁵ Fain, J.T. and Young, T.D., p303-5

¹⁰⁶ Young, T.D., p137

¹⁰⁷ Jarrell, M. (ed.), *Randall Jarrell's Letters*, (London, 1986), p8

So strongly did Tate feel over the situation that he returned his diploma to Vanderbilt informing the authorities that he no longer considered it a privilege to be one of her alumni. At a dinner given in Ransom's honor on June 10 1937 many letters of support were read out from various dignitaries. However, despite this strong support even Tate knew at this point that Ransom was leaving. In a letter from Andrew Lytle, an Agrarian dated June 4, Tate was informed that 'the chances of retaining John look slim. He has given up all hope of staying'. It seems certain that Ransom had no notion at this time that his Kenyon post involved editing a new review, since it was not until October 29 1937 that he informed his mother of the 'profound secret' that 'the President called me to talk about founding and editing a ... Review.' He added that it was more than he could ever have hoped for.¹⁰⁸ Twenty-five years prior, Ransom had written to his mother that 'not many pleasures are superior to observing a new author'.¹⁰⁹

Chalmers convinced the Trustees of Kenyon College that there was no better advert for an institution than a successful quarterly review and in this respect Chalmers has to be commended for his prescience. He told the Trustees that under Ransom's guidance Kenyon had the opportunity to develop a quarterly that would become a real influence throughout the country.¹¹⁰

Ransom was keen to have Tate as his fellow editor at Kenyon. However, Tate had been offered a post at the Woman's College in Greensboro, North Carolina which he described as requiring almost no work. It also transpired that Tate would have proved too expensive for Kenyon so there was in fact never any chance of him assisting Ransom in this venture. The same financial restraints ruled out Robert Penn Warren, Ransom's

¹⁰⁸ Janssen, M., p16

¹⁰⁹ Young, T.D., p53

second choice. Chalmers wrote to Philip Blair Rice and, as in his initial approach to Ransom, omitting any reference to his plans for a review, offered him a position in the philosophy department. It was as a fellow Rhodes scholar that Chalmers first met Rice during their time in Oxford.

When it was proposed at Rice's interview that he not only head the new philosophy department but that he spend half his time as managing editor of a literary review, he was instantly hooked. The continuing problem of finance reared up and in the end it was decided that Rice would spend three-quarters of his time in the philosophy department and the other quarter on the review. Ransom was pleased to have Rice join him and in fact wrote to tell him so. In the same letter Ransom informed Rice of his intention that before long he expected to retire to the Editorial Board, thereby leaving Rice in charge.¹¹¹ It seems strange that Ransom would contemplate giving up the editorship before even beginning the job. Whether, at this point, Ransom was seriously considering this as a possibility or not he went on to edit *The Kenyon Review* for twenty-one years, so evidently he enjoyed the work more than he had anticipated.

Chalmers, Ransom and the Scope of the *Review*

Chalmers and Ransom were at odds with regard to the scope of the review. While Chalmers preferred a general periodical, Ransom wished it to be devoted entirely to arts and letters. It was Ransom's opinion that the major distinction of a new review 'might lie in its superior literary quality ... There are not Reviews enough to take care of the good

¹¹⁰ Janssen, M., p17

¹¹¹ Janssen, M., p20

literary critics who have emerged in this and the previous decade'.¹¹² Ransom, no doubt had in mind the likes of Randall Jarrell who subsequently followed him to Kenyon. Jarrell's work featured in the first three issues of *The Kenyon Review*. Robert Lowell fondly remembered a friendly argument between Ransom and Jarrell in which they discussed Shakespeare's sonnets. Ransom had written an essay listing what he regarded as faults in the sonnets. Jarrell, on the other hand, found them 'richly and satisfyingly ambiguous. I can see and hear Ransom and Jarrell now, seated on one sofa, ... the sacred texts open on their laps, one fifty, the other just out of college, and each expounding to the other's deaf ears his own inspired and irreconcilable interpretation.'¹¹³

Ironically, it was due to a lack of money that Ransom got his wish with respect to the format of the new review. In May 1938 he wrote to Tate that there was not 'money enough to get out a real Review, I am glad to say'. Ransom cited printing costs as the reason, adding that they had 'finally dropped the notion of a skimpy publication trying to compete with ... 200-pagers like Yale and Southern Reviews ... We will get out 100-page issues and devote the pages exclusively to literature and the arts'.¹¹⁴ He wrote to Merrill Moore, 'It will be in fact what I wanted it to be in the first place, a periodical devoted to literature and the arts exclusively.'¹¹⁵ While Ransom was pleased there was not enough money to enable Chalmers' plans to be fulfilled he did not want 'to edit another Fugitive, or little magazine, which would be wondering if each issue might be the last.'¹¹⁶

¹¹² Janssen, M., p22

¹¹³ Pritchard, W.H., *Randall Jarrell - A Literary Life*, (New York, 1990), p51

¹¹⁴ Janssen, M., p22

¹¹⁵ Janssens, G.A.M., *The American Literary Review*, (The Hague, 1968), p256

¹¹⁶ Janssens, G.A.M., p261

Chalmers was unhappy with this situation and as a means of combating this outcome he wrote to Rice on 28 May 1938 that he considered 'the arts and letters as very generally related to all affairs and, consequently, will be inclined to interpret that phrase to include from time to time treatment of subjects not conventionally called literary or artistic'.¹¹⁷

The Kenyon Board of Trustees took seven months to authorize the publication of the new review. Although it was still without a name, it was decided that the first issue would be published in December 1938. Ransom considered various names for the review before settling on *The Kenyon Review*. Despite the fact that Ransom and Chalmers each had their own opinions regarding content and advisory editors they always managed to reach a compromise. Evidence of their cooperation can be found in the composition of the *Review*'s first Board of Advisory Editors. When Ransom announced his proposals for the Board - Roberta Teale Swartz, Howard Baker, William Empson, Mark Van Doren, Allen Tate and Paul Rosenfeld - Chalmers wanted to know why he had not included other members of the Kenyon staff or alumni. Ransom duly included Philip Timberlake of the Kenyon English Department, but despite Chalmers announcing that 'I, also, shall be an associate (advisory) editor,' he was not in fact included. In the first issue of *The Kenyon Review* the advisory editors were R.P. Blackmur, Paul Rosenfeld, Mrs Chalmers, Allen Tate, Philip Timberlake, Mark Van Doren, and Eliseo Vivas, a Venezuelan professor of philosophy. In a letter to Van Doren Ransom wrote that an Advisory Editor's role is 'whatever he will make them; we want his advices, his contributions, and his name on our masthead. It is all in our favor, not his.' Ransom's instructions to his Advisory Board were that they should alert the *Review* to any writer they thought worthy of

¹¹⁷ Janssen, M., p23

attention. He also requested an honest assessment of the *Review's* maiden issue. Ransom confided to Tate some years later that he was the only person whose advice he had constantly sought.¹¹⁸ By May 1938 the new review had \$15000 pledged from trustees and others, including Richard Eberhart, Wallace Stevens, John Berryman, Eudora Welty, Merrill Moore and Paul Rosenfeld.¹¹⁹

Ransom's career at Kenyon was almost over before it had properly begun. In early 1939 the Women's College of Greensboro, North Carolina tried to entice both Ransom and Tate to join their faculty. The prospect of working with Tate was appealing to Ransom and in February 1939 he believed it was 'pretty certain' he would accept the position. Chalmers, however, was determined that having secured Ransom he was not about to lose him. He obtained a grant from the Carnegie Corporation which enabled him to give Ransom a raise while reducing his teaching commitments. In May 1939 Ransom declined the Greensboro proposal and embarked on what proved to be an extremely productive and exciting journey into the field of literary editing. Without doubt, Ransom can be credited with the fact that in the minds of many people Kenyon College and *The Kenyon Review* are one and the same.

Hacker's Predecessors

I Philip Church

¹¹⁸ Janssen, M., p25

¹¹⁹ Janssen, M., p27

A couple of Marilyn Hacker's predecessors deserve mention at this point for their contribution to *The Kenyon Review*. Philip Church who was involved as editor and co-editor between 1983 and 1988 died in 1998. The following article was the obituary issued by the College.

Philip Dake Church, Professor of English at Kenyon College, dies in Gambier.

Philip Dake Church, Professor of English at Kenyon College since 1963, died at home in Gambier on June 17, 1998. He was sixty-three. As a dynamic teacher and critic, an editor and a poet, Church was a revered figure in a long literary tradition at Kenyon started by John Crowe Ransom.

A native of Girard, Ohio, Church received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, where he was a teaching fellow from 1961 to 1963. His dissertation, later published, was *The Nature and Mythological Poems of George Meredith*.

While an undergraduate, Church received the Avery Hopwood Poetry Prize. In his first year of graduate school he went on to win the prestigious Major Hopwood Award for literature. At the invitation of the distinguished scholar Denham Sutcliffe, Church joined the Kenyon faculty in 1963. There he developed a passionate style of teaching that left its mark on all who heard him. "He would do a very courageous thing," says writer David Bergman. "He would show the students exactly how he was thinking, feeling, wondering, never afraid to show the boundaries of knowledge. He taught us how to enlarge the field of discourse."

"For many generations of Kenyon students, Phil's courses have been legendary," says Associate Professor of English Kim McMullen. "We are really going to miss him."

In 1983, Church became editor of *The Kenyon Review*, serving proudly as editor and coeditor until 1988. "He steered the *Review* steadily," says current editor and Associate Professor of English David Lynn. "During his distinguished tenure as editor, Phil Church cared passionately about the craft and spirit of literature. His own fine poetry reveals that precision and passion in every line."

Church's craft as a poet was an inspiration to student writers. While teaching at Kenyon the poet completed *The Fire Round the Garden, Poems 1970-75*, and the long poem *Furnace Harbor: A Rhapsody of the North Country*, published in 1988. *Furnace Harbor* has been compared with the longer poems of Hart Crane for its lyrical power, and with Robinson Jeffers's work for its evocation of place.

Among many honors, Church twice received Kenyon's Senior Cup, given by students for excellence in teaching; several summers he was invited to serve as guest editor at the Bread Loaf Writer's Conference in Vermont. In 1996, Kenyon awarded him the Philander Chase medal for his more than twenty-five years of service to the College.

Church is survived by his wife, Barbara Beintum Church; two daughters, Susan Elizabeth Church and Brooke Church Kolosna; two grandsons, Carl Philip and Evan James Kolosna; a sister, Elizabeth Kline; a brother, William Church; and five nieces and three nephews.

II Galbraith M. Crump

Galbraith M. Crump came to Kenyon in 1965 as a Professor of English. He earned a doctoral degree from St. John's College, Oxford, and taught courses at Kenyon in many areas, most notably Shakespeare, Milton, and 17th century literature. During his time as a professor, Crump chaired the English Department and also served as the editor of the *Kenyon Review*. He retired in 1990.

Marilyn Hacker biography -

Marilyn Hacker was born in New York City in 1942 and enrolled at New York University at the age of 15. After earning her B.A. Hacker began to send her poetry to

literary journals. She is the author of several books of poetry, including *Desesperanto: Poems 1999-2002* (W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2003); *First Cities: Collected Early Poems 1960-1979* (2003); *Squares and Courtyards* (2000); *Winter Numbers* (1994), which won the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize and a Lambda Literary Award; *Selected Poems, 1965-1990* (1994), which received the Poets' Prize; *Love, Death, and the Changing of the Seasons* (1986); *Assumptions* (1985); *Taking Notice* (1980); *Going Back to the River* (1990), for which she received a Lambda Literary Award; *Separations* (1976); and *Presentation Piece* (1974), which was the Lamont Poetry Selection of The Academy of American Poets and a National Book Award winner. She also translated Venus Khoury-Ghata's poetry, published in *She Says* (2003) and *Here There Was Once a Country* (2001). Hacker was editor of *The Kenyon Review* from 1990 to 1994, and has received numerous honors, including the Bernard F. Connors Prize from the *Paris Review*, the John Masefield Memorial Award of the Poetry Society of America, and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Ingram Merrill Foundation. She divides her time between New York City and Paris.

1990

In Marilyn Hacker's presentation to the Kenyon College trustees in the Spring of 1990, she stated her intention to combine mainstream American writing with what had previously been regarded as non-traditional writing, but which now, in her opinion, was too significant to be regarded as an offshoot. What she did not know at that point was that she would become embroiled in the NEA obscenity controversy and that this would put her relationship with Kenyon College President Philip Jordan under strain.

In the presentation Hacker stressed the importance of Native-American, Asian-American and Hispanic-American authors as well as that of writing by women of any race. Literary diversity was her primary objective and she believed she had achieved that in previous editorial endeavours. She asserted that as the new editor she would bring not only new ideas and visions of a superior literary journal, but a coterie of writers, poets and critics who were as familiar with her work and objectives as she was of theirs. As such, she was confident of mutual cooperation. Hacker pointed to her editorship of *The Little Magazine*, which she edited from the mid to late 1970s, as an example of a magazine, which when she assumed the editor's post received only 25% of its submissions from women writers. There were virtually no submissions from minority writers of either gender.

Her method of correcting the imbalance was to announce the publication of two special issues devoted to women's writing. According to Hacker, submissions for general issues after that evened out both in terms of women to men and established

writers to new writers. She believed that if *The Little Magazine* had applied a similar strategy with regard to writers of color, that imbalance would have been rectified also.

When Hacker began editing the feminist publication *13th Moon* in the 80s, she considered there had been enough segregated issues dealing with the writing of women of color, so she solicited manuscripts from a few dozen writers, published these, and in so doing made a difference to the pool of contributors from that point on. In endorsing affirmative action, Hacker contended that centuries of exclusion had prevented the previously excluded from suddenly believing things had changed. Without editorial intervention, she believed journals would simply publish work similar to what has gone before. In Hacker's view, affirmative action had a specific meaning. As she saw it, it did not involve altering standards, it simply meant acting on principles. In other words, Hacker was not content to simply select from unsolicited submissions. She actively searched for different texts, made a point of studying particular journals, and carefully selected books to be reviewed. As a firm believer in soliciting work, she also placed faith in the special issue/anthology technique which she considered central to her own editorial method.

Hacker endorsed the emphasis on literary essays and book reviews and considered it one of *The Kenyon Review's* strongest assets. While expressing her determination to maintain that tradition, she believed there was an opportunity to bring a more wide-ranging vision to the *Review* since reviewers and essayists did not normally submit unsolicited work. So, by soliciting this type of material, she believed her vision of inclusiveness would be most readily apparent. The list of writers whom Hacker proposed to introduce to *The Kenyon Review* was extensive and in this respect her enthusiasm

probably exceeded the practicality of her ambition, since she stated that this list of writers would be in juxtaposition to the writers already associated with the *Review*, not in place of them. She visualised a variety of contemporary American writing for the *Review*. Other innovations Hacker envisioned included publishing short dramatic works and critical works on contemporary playwrights and theatre. Hacker stated that she wished to incorporate writing on modern playwrights and theatre, which she believed was neglected by the majority of literary journals. The consequence of this disregard was that contemporary playwrights were made inaccessible to the public. Science fiction was another area in which Hacker expressed an interest and as such she proposed to solicit work from writers in that genre. Despite her passion for American writing, Hacker proposed to solicit work from other continents with the aim of introducing current developments in those literatures to *Kenyon Review* readers.

As part of her vision, Hacker aimed to increase both *The Kenyon Review* readership and contributors and saw a connection between these two aspirations. She proposed to initiate exchange ads with other publications and organize benefit readings and literary symposia sponsored by the *Review*. She recommended that the *Review* change its distributor, advising that the two she recommended would reach far more bookstores than the current distributor.

While acknowledging the importance of *The Kenyon Review* to American letters, Hacker pointed out that she could not fail to notice the lack of work by minority writers in recent issues. She regarded her appointment as endorsing editorial affirmative action in widening the scope of *The Kenyon Review*.

Marilyn Hacker's first letter as editor of *The Kenyon Review*, dated September 3 1990, was from Rafael Campo who had read the interview she had given to Boston's *Bay Windows*. Introducing himself as a young gay poet who was taking up her invitation to submit poetry to the *Review*, Campo explained that having successfully completed his clinical rotations he was taking a year out from Harvard Medical School. In his year away from medical school, Campo stated his intention to pursue an M.F.A. degree in creative writing at Boston University under the tutelage of Derek Walcott and Robert Pinsky, among others. Boston University had recently awarded him the George Starbuck Fellowship in Poetry.

Campo's track record was notable and just what Hacker was looking for in her vision of cultural diversity, previously lacking in *The Kenyon Review*. In his spare time, Campo read poetry manuscripts for *Ploughshares*, a literary magazine which had its genesis in September 1971. While an undergraduate at Amherst College, Campo studied and wrote poetry under the supervision of Amy Clampitt, William Pritchard and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. He had been published in *The Amherst Review*, *JAMA* and *Field* and had three poems chosen for a UCLA Press anthology entitled *The UCLA Poet-Physician Anthology*, scheduled for 1990. Amherst had awarded him the Rolfe Humphries Poetry Prize and he had been a prize winner in the 1989 William Carlos Williams Poetry Competition. Campo's letter ended with a courteous expression of thanks for creating a journal open to different voices.¹²⁰

Hacker and the N.E.A.

¹²⁰ Rafael Campo to Marilyn Hacker 03.09.90

On September 11 Hacker wrote to Philip Jordan, the Kenyon College President, informing him that at their forthcoming meeting she would discuss the editorials scheduled for the Fall 1990 *Review* along with her opinion on the controversy surrounding the NEA's changed position regarding obscenity. She stated that she had really enjoyed working at the *Review*, especially in Gambier.¹²¹ It is ironic that one of the criticisms levelled against her was that she did not spend enough time in Gambier. David Bergman, currently a member of the *Review*'s editorial board, stated that although he was 'in no way involved in the episode' he had heard that 'Ms. Hacker was not very much engaged or committed to Kenyon or Gambier itself'.¹²²

On the same day Hacker gave her presentation to the Kenyon trustees, April 30 1990, a letter arrived from the NEA informing Philip Jordan that *The Kenyon Review* had been awarded a grant of \$7,500. The problem for Hacker was that new rules had been introduced by Congress which placed restrictions on the use of these funds regarding what might be regarded by some as obscene writing. Since Hacker was committed to cultural openness and diversity she refused the grant. Jordan supported her stance on this but made it clear that Kenyon College would not make up the shortfall in the *Review*'s budget.

David Baker wrote from Denison University on September 13 1990 offering his unreserved support for the decision to reject the NEA grant. Baker accepted it must have been a difficult decision to make, supporting this view by pointing to the perilous financial state of literary magazines in general and the indifference of the public to serious literature. He conceded that the NEA's grant would have been very welcome and

¹²¹ Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 11.03.90

¹²² David Bergman to Jack Harvey 09.11.01

that in fact NEA grants had in the past been a lifeline to large and small journals alike; however, he also recognised the thankless and tedious work involved in simply making applications for grants. It was Baker's view that a successful grant bid was as important to the psyche of the applicants as it was to the finances of the institution. Having acknowledged that refusing the grant was a difficult decision, Baker then modified his view by stating that in the end it was probably quite an easy one to make. Clearly, what he meant was that the decision was ultimately not a decision, since it would mean refuting Hacker's vision for *The Kenyon Review*. Baker thought it was regrettable that the NEA was timid in regard to artists who challenged the established views of normality. He pointed out that the new NEA guidelines demanded that writers sign a statement which directly opposed the First Amendment, and as such, a stand had to be made. The NEA required that literary editors promise not to use funds to 'promote, disseminate, or produce materials which in the judgment of the National Endowment for the Arts...may be considered obscene'. Baker expressed his opinion that the NEA's restrictions came close to totalitarian control of society's most vital component, that of freedom of expression, by demanding that deliberations of literary worth be undermined by censorship and prior moderation.¹²³

Terry Hummer, a former *Kenyon Review* editor, had written an article on the meaning of 'obscenity' as interpreted by the NEA, in a 1990 AWP Newsletter. According to Baker, Hummer demonstrated that what the NEA classified as 'obscenity' did not actually describe obscenity at all, but a specific religious sect's meaning of blasphemy. The argument as Baker saw it lay in the conflicting views of rightwing religious zealots and self-righteousness versus artistic freedom of choice. Baker wanted

¹²³ David Baker to Marilyn Hacker, Martha Finan and David Lynn 13.09.90

to know why the American government would not support creative autonomy and emphasised that *The Kenyon Review* could not accept money from a government office which supported such a self-righteous attitude.

Referring to his long-time association with the *Review*, dating back to 1983, Baker stated that he was as proud and dedicated to the *Review* as it was possible to be. Adding that he had never been prouder of the *Review*'s work, or more enthusiastic with regard to Hacker's vision, Baker envisaged the pride held by everyone involved with the *Review*, including the board of trustees, subscribers, alumni, campus colleagues and the Kenyon College administrators with regard to the NEA grant refusal. Baker regarded Hacker's decision to refuse the grant as an endorsement of *The Kenyon Review*'s trademark leadership in terms of taste, commitment and vision.

On September 17 1990 Hacker, no doubt buoyed by Baker's support, wrote to John Frohnmayer, the NEA's chairman, informing him that though *The Kenyon Review* editors and publishers were initially delighted on learning of their \$7,500 grant for the 1990-91 financial year, it was diminished on reading the 'General Terms' enclosed with the grant award announcement. Hacker stated that as *The Kenyon Review* was sponsored by a liberal arts college which had a tradition of encouraging freedom of expression, she could not agree with the conditions specified in 'Public Law 101-121' in the second paragraph of the 'General Terms'. She echoed what David Baker had written to her in his letter of the September 13 with respect to writers consciously restraining themselves from writing about certain subjects, and pointed out that any restriction contradicted directives previously given to the NEA's Literature panellists, that the only criteria in considering applications was that of literary merit. Emphasising that literary merit was

The Kenyon Review's one and only criterion, Hacker asserted that there had always been, and always would be works, which, though of undoubted literary merit to one editor, might be considered obscene by another, including members of the NEA. In other words, Hacker was saying that the definition of obscenity was ultimately subjective.

Whether it is purely coincidence or not, Hacker informed Frohnmayer that in the Kenyon College bookstore there was currently a display of books which had been banned at one time or another. The list included a book by Judy Blume, a prize-winning children's author, whose novels had been read by Hacker's own daughter Iva, as a child. By agreeing to the NEA restrictions, Hacker believed she would be joining forces with people who wished to see certain books banned. As editor of *The Kenyon Review* this could not be editorially endorsed.

Hacker informed Frohnmayer that inherent in awarding a grant to a journal should be the confidence in the editorial team to publish what it considered to be good literature. She stated that the historical role of literary journals in America had been one of re-defining boundaries, of transgressing, rather than adhering to norms. Pointing to the past, Hacker asserted that the awarding of grants to literary journals and small press publications was an acknowledgment of the value of editorial independence and not a command for those same magazines to be the embodiment of conventional public taste. In Hacker's view, both popular taste and that of the literary canon constantly fluctuated, and that this could be attributed in part to literary journals and small press publications who encouraged writers outside the conservative mainstream. Ending her letter by expressing her wish that *The Kenyon Review* intended to continue to publish non-traditional works as the magazine entered its second half-century, Hacker wrote that she

could not accept the \$7,500 NEA grant unless the restrictions were withdrawn. If they were withdrawn, she stated her intention to publish the best fiction, poetry and criticism available.¹²⁴

On the same day that Hacker wrote to Frohnmayer she also wrote to Philip Jordan informing him that she had altered her next editorial to reflect the fact that the *Review* had never officially accepted the NEA grant, and that they would only accept if and when the obscenity clause was removed. She wrote that she was including her proposed letter to Frohnmayer, which she believed should accompany the one from Jordan, as publisher of the *Review*. Her letter, she believed, would be the one more likely to be quoted, since she was the *Review*'s editor. Hacker mentioned the *AWP Newsletter*, *PEN Newsletter* and the *Village Voice* as journals she considered might be sympathetic to their stance and from which financial and moral support might be achieved. Hacker signed her letter, 'Yours in struggle'.¹²⁵

The following day, September 18 1990 Hacker wrote to Jordan once more to clarify events regarding the 1990-91 NEA grant to the *Review*. She stated that the College knew on April 30, the day notification was received about the grant, about the new obscenity restrictions. At this point in time, Hacker noted, Kenyon College had not signed any documentation relating to the acceptance of the grant. She mentioned her letter of September 17 to Frohnmayer which was awaiting Jordan's approval.¹²⁶ Hacker provided an insight into how the NEA grant functions. The NEA reimbursed literary journals once the equivalent amount, or part of it, had been spent. It would then be up to the recipient to apply for reimbursement, which would involve signing a form assuring

¹²⁴ Marilyn Hacker to John Frohnmayer 17.09.90

¹²⁵ Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 17.09.90

the NEA that the grant funds had been spent according to the rules and parameters of the grant application. Clearly at this time, no such form had been signed. Hacker finished this letter by stating that these points had arisen in conversation with Michael Matros of Public Affairs and that they had agreed that they should be officially recorded.

Hacker and Minority Writing

Hacker wasted no time in replying to Campo's poetry submission of September 3. On September 20 Campo wrote to Hacker thanking her for her prompt response in accepting two poems, 'The Love of Someone,' and 'El Curandero' for the Summer 1991 issue. While 'El Curandero' is a cathartic poem about recuperating in a hot bath after a day working in a hospital's casualty department, there is a homoerotic undertone. 'The Love of Someone,' on the other hand, is quite explicit in its homoerotic element. Informing Hacker that he had been in a daze since receiving notice of the acceptance of his poems, Campo went on to apologise for not being able to find the copy of *Bay Windows* in which an interview with her appeared, since he had intended to send it to her. Campo added that he was in the process of attempting to contact a former colleague, Jennifer Rose, with whom he had worked at *Ploughshares* to see if she had a copy of the interview, but that at worst it would provide him with an excuse to keep in touch with Hacker. Wishing Hacker every success in her new position as editor, he also sent his best wishes to Hacker's partner, Karyn London, who, in common with Campo, was involved in the medical profession. He informed Hacker that he was happy to have a year off from his medical studies to enable him to concentrate on his writing.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 18.09.90

¹²⁷ Rafael Campo to Marilyn Hacker 20.09.90

Barbara Di Bernard sent her manuscript 'Zami: A Portrait of an Artist as a Black Lesbian,' to *The Kenyon Review* on October 22. She explained that she was exposing how much of the feminist criticism concerning female 'portrait of the artist' stories had been based on heterosexual and white theories and paradigms. Di Bernard, an associate professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of Nebraska Lincoln, stated her belief that all feminist critics must take into account Audre Lorde's experience as a black lesbian when writing on this subject. Hilda Raz, a colleague of Di Bernard's, had suggested Di Bernard submit her essay to Hacker for *The Kenyon Review's* 'women of color' issue.¹²⁸

Stephanie Byrd, a teaching assistant at Cornell University, having found out about the special writers of color issue from Hattie Gosset, submitted poetry to the *Review* towards the end of October 1990. Byrd was a Black feminist writer who was writing a master's thesis on the works of Bessie Head, a South African novelist. Her two poems, 'War and Eggs,' and 'A Birthday Deserves a Handsome Surprise,' appeared in the Fall 1991 De Colores issue as Byrd had hoped. 'War and Eggs' was a brutal poem dealing with death in what Byrd described as a 'relatively bloodless war'. The casualties of this war had died as a result of drugs, prostitution and a 'generic death' which the narrator was fortunate to have survived. In common with 'War and Eggs,' 'A Birthday Deserves a Handsome Surprise,' is a punctuation-free poem. Double spacing is the only indication that one phrase is separate from the next; however, this tends to encourage a reading similar to that which William Carlos Williams advised, in that the poem tends to 'flow' over the reader. This is consistent with Byrd's emphasis on the senses, epitomised in the

¹²⁸ Barbara Di Bernard to Marilyn Hacker 22.10.90

phrase 'nothing touches me but sound,' which superimposes the tactile on a non-tangible sensation.¹²⁹

In reply to an enquiry from Roberto Calderón dated November 8 Hacker revealed an important editorial decision, which was that she would not consider work in any language other than English, since, in her opinion it would be unfair to the majority of *Review* readers who would require a translation. She explained that her exception to this rule would be if the other language was principally being used as a political statement that the reader should be able to read it. If she published works in Spanish, but not in any other language, Hacker wrote that she would be making a different type of statement altogether. According to Hacker, up until that point, *The Kenyon Review* had only published works in other languages which had been translated into English. She stated that she felt differently about work written in both languages and in this context made mention of the work of Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. Calderón's poem 'American Queque,' satisfied Hacker's requirement of a bilingual poem, which she gladly accepted for the Fall 1991 issue. Calderon wove English and Spanish together in this poem about Mexican immigrants and the 'American Queque,' which was a border crossing joke. As was her custom, Hacker enclosed a subscription card in her reply. She finished the letter by informing Calderón that the *Review* had refused the NEA's 'Helms-tainted mink'.¹³⁰

Jane Cooper wrote to Hacker on November 11 congratulating her on becoming new editor of *The Kenyon Review* and expressing her interest in what Hacker would be able to achieve through her editorship. Reminding Hacker, with whom she had been

¹²⁹ Stephanie Byrd to Marilyn Hacker 26.10.90

¹³⁰ Marilyn Hacker to Roberto Calderón 08.11.90

friends for years, that she had finally finished the long poem about Willa Cather on which she had been working, Cooper asked if *The Kenyon Review* would be interested. She requested that her poem be considered for the Summer 1991 issue since she hoped to have a book of her poems published in 1992. Cooper's letter ends with an acknowledgement that she enjoyed the edition of *Ploughshares* which Hacker had guest edited.¹³¹

Towards the end of November 1990 Hacker received a handwritten letter from Cyrus Cassells thanking her for accepting his poem, 'Life Indestructible,' and informing her that he had made one revision since it had been accepted. 'Life Indestructible,' which had originally been in fourteen parts had had the penultimate section taken out. Cassells felt this alteration made for greater resonance within his poem, which dealt with the poignancy of death. 'Life Indestructible' was dedicated to Ety Hillesum, a Dutch Jew who died at the hands of the Nazis. Having read Hillesum's diary of events leading up to her death, Cassells was haunted by the final entry, which read, 'We should be willing to act as a balm for all wounds'. Hillesum's realization that the Nazis planned the 'total destruction' of Jews, her courage in facing this prospect without sharing her fears and her resultant questioning of her faith all struck a cord with Cassells. In the poem he links Hillesum's fears with that of the AIDS epidemic. While she believed the manner of her death would indicate who she really was, Cassells asked what a young AIDS victim meant when he said catching the disease was a blessing because it caused him to face his true self. In the final stanza, Cassells imagines Hillesum's voice to be saying she was never in anyone's 'clutches,' since she was at all times in the 'arms of God'.

¹³¹ Jane Cooper to Marilyn Hacker 11.11.90

Cassells could not match Hillesum's faith and so had to imagine what this courageous young woman, who died aged 29, would have said. Having been to the recent Harvard Conference and found it to be lively and inspiring, Cassells regretted that he was able to attend only one other panel besides his own. The one he chose, on Latino Gays, he considered to be outstanding. Over 1200 people had registered for this conference, which was twice as many as had been expected. The most enjoyable part of the entire Conference for Cassells was a lunch he attended along with eight Black gay male writers and artists, since they had much to talk about. Writing that he had encouraged a couple of poets, Martin Espada, a Puerto Rican, and Cheryl Savagean, a Native American, with whom he was friendly, to submit work for the forthcoming special issue, Cassells finished up by wishing Hacker the very best for the upcoming holiday season wherever she spent it. Hacker had homes in New York, Paris and, of course, Gambier.¹³²

Dorothy Sutton sent a postcard to Hacker from Richmond, Kentucky, in early December to thank her for her 'kind words' regarding her poetry. Hacker had asked Sutton if she could recommend any Black women writers for the *Review's* Fall issue. Sutton informed her that she had met Allison Joseph, editor of the *Indiana Review*, at the Indiana University Writing Conference and was impressed with her work. On a personal note, Sutton wrote that her family was thankful to have survived 'The Big Quake'. Printed on Sutton's postcard was the sentiment 'A woman's place is in the House - and the Senate.'¹³³

¹³² Cyrus Cassells to Marilyn Hacker 29.11.90

¹³³ Dorothy Sutton to Marilyn Hacker 04.12.90

On December 6 1990 Hacker wrote to Gillian Conoley, asking to be excused for the delay in responding to her letter of October 20. She wrote that she had naively assumed that a poem of Conoley's which had been accepted by David Baker had been scheduled for the Winter 1991 issue, the last one to have been compiled by Baker and David Lynn. Hacker informed Conoley that the poem, 'Beauty Queen,' would now appear in the Summer 1991 issue, along with two more of her poems, 'Bedrock,' and 'The Birth of a Nation,' and that this combination would constitute a good selection of her work. 'Beauty Queen' dealt with transient fame, but rather than treating it as something to be grieved over, Conoley took a refreshingly optimistic view, by portraying it as a memory to be recalled if and when required. The beauty queen of the poem had the ability to experience the excitement anew by imagining herself in her white bathing cap making an impressive dive into a pool. 'The Birth of a Nation,' is about D.W. Griffiths' film of 1915, which expressed anti-black sentiment. The film, originally entitled *The Clansman*, featured white men acting as Blacks, complete with blacked faces. Conoley's poem mentions the 'black men in black face,' and accurately quoted President Woodrow Wilson saying as he left the theatre that 'it was like writing history with lightning ... so terribly true'. 'Bedrock' is a complex poem dealing with the permanency and impermanency of life as represented by stars which change, yet remain the same, and mankind which survives though people continually die. Conoley ends the poem with a touch of anarchy by having the narrator announce, 'I want no government'. She asked that her greetings be passed on to Baker and Lynn, and Hacker informed her that she was glad to report that both of them were still involved in editorial positions at

the *Review*. In closing, Hacker reminded Conoley that they had met six years previously and then thanked her for her subscription to the *Review*.¹³⁴

African-American poet James A. Emanuel sent a number of haiku to Hacker from his home in Paris on December 9, explaining that if he continued to revise them any more he would not have time to send Christmas cards. Referring to his 'Harlemite' series of haiku, Emanuel wrote that it was a particularly difficult process because of self-imposed limitations required in order to fit with the type of language heard in Harlem. Emanuel, who lays claim on his internet homepage¹³⁵ to being the founder of a new literary genre, jazz-and-blues haiku, informed Hacker that he had corrected the galleys for his volume of poetry, *Whole Grain: Collected Poems, 1958 -- 1989*.¹³⁶

Martha Finan, the *Review*'s managing editor, wrote to Hacker on December 11 regarding Barbara Di Bernard's essay, 'Zami: A Portrait of an Artist as a Black Lesbian'. She found the essay to be stimulating and interesting, but urged Hacker to request a reduction in Di Bernard's footnotes. However, there were a couple of aspects that annoyed her. As a heterosexual, Finan took exception to the connection Lorde made between resilient women and lesbianism. Finan interpreted this as implying that heterosexuality was synonymous with weakness. She voiced her concern that a display of admiration for women's experiences defined one as a lesbian, regardless of the gender of one's partner. Conceding that Lorde probably meant her comments to be regarded as compliments, she added that many, including herself, found it disconcerting. Finan asked how Lorde would have liked it if someone had suggested that women displaying qualities such as kindness and affection had to be heterosexual, irrespective of the gender of their

¹³⁴ Marilyn Hacker to Gillian Conoley 06.12.90

¹³⁵ [<http://www.james-a-emanuel.com/>]

partner. She also took offence at Di Bernard's generalization that all white women had been raised into a matriarchal society, that their daughters were forced into the same situation, and that those same daughters, and in particular the artistic ones, spent the rest of their lives trying to escape the oppression their mothers had inflicted upon them. Finan went on to ask a series of rhetorical questions. She wanted to know who these white women were, who could not unite a home life with that of adventure. Was Di Bernard referring only to white women, only to North American women, or exclusively suburban American women in a post-1950 world? Asserting that white women throughout the world had had to work very hard, Finan made reference to underdeveloped nations, Ireland, and the Iron Curtain countries in which women emerged as the mainstay of the family unit in terms of earning a wage. She then launched into another sequence of rhetorical questions in an attempt to pin down exactly what Di Bernard was getting at. If Di Bernard was referring to American middle and upper-middle-class women, then the onus was on her to say so, because in Finan's opinion, the sweeping generalizations did not survive close examination. Finan's guess was that Di Bernard was assessing only college educated, North American women of the writing establishment, and though she had no complaint with that, she believed Di Bernard had to be more explicit. Acknowledging that the definition referred to in the essay was Lorde's, Finan suggested that if Hacker considered other readers might be as troubled as she was, then Di Bernard should either qualify it, provide her own alternate opinion or get another writer of a similar persuasion to supply one.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ James A. Emanuel to Marilyn Hacker 09.12.90

¹³⁷ Martha Finan to Marilyn Hacker 12.11.90

In mid-December 1990 Hacker replied to Di Bernard regarding her 'Zami' essay. She explained that she had liked it and would be interested in publishing it in either the special 'De Colores' issue or in a general issue, depending on the availability of space however, she insisted that the *Review* could not work with seven pages of footnotes. Hacker suggested that Di Bernard do her utmost to cut the number of footnotes, preferably to three pages, or consolidate them into the text. In her reply to Di Bernard, Hacker enclosed a page of Finan's commentary. Hacker's sense of humour was apparent in her description of Finan as a 'non-academic white working-class heterosexual feminist omnivorous reader'. On a more serious note, she added that Di Bernard made a good point in stating that feminist critics tended to conflate 'white women' with 'white middle-class North American women' in both literature and life. Hacker mentioned in her letter that none of the books which dealt with white women at variance with their mothers, struggling amid creative and erotic desires, was concerned with rural, immigrant or working-class women.

Several years before, Hacker had made a similar comment about June Jordan's poem 'What Would I Do White?' in which Jordan wrote that she would wear furs, clip coupons and think about make-up. Hacker's response was that it would be just as likely for Jordan, as a white woman, to go on pro-choice marches or pick up a child from day-care. While conceding that in general, white women's lives were easier, Hacker stressed that race and class were not synonymous and suggested that as a critic, perhaps Di Bernard could provide an objective view of literary or sociological studies which failed to take this into account. She agreed with Finan's point regarding the synonymous link Di Bernard made between the term 'lesbian' and a strong, woman-centered woman, who

might never have experienced a sexual liaison with another woman. Hacker is critical of Di Bernard for not quoting Lorde's outrageous comments on this subject until pages 18 and 19, adding that any reader unfamiliar with Lorde's work would be unaware of whether it was Lorde's view or an extrapolation of the author's. In the original work, according to Hacker, Lorde was specifically referring to Black women.

Hacker informed Di Bernard that some years previously she had been upset by a statement made by Adrienne Rich, in which Rich stated that it was 'the lesbian in us' which was responsible for the creative artist whether or not a woman considered herself lesbian or not. In terms of heterosexual or celibate women, Hacker interpreted this as saying that it was the man within who was the creative artist, not because 'lesbian' was synonymous with 'a man,' but because it suggested that the creativity in a woman emanated from something she was not. She believed that it was simply the creative artist within which was the creative artist, irrespective of sexual persuasion. Pointing to the potential problem this assertion could have, Hacker wrote that if a 'woman-identified woman' was tantamount to being a lesbian, then several older lesbians had stated that they would have to come up with a new word with which to identify themselves. Lorde conceded that some of the women whom she referred to as lesbians would have died rather than describe themselves as such.¹³⁸

Associate editor David Lynn was so impressed by Di Bernard's essay that he wanted to teach *Zami* in his College course on autobiography, despite not having read the book. Hacker ended her letter by stating that she hoped Lynn's reaction would be endorsed by the Review's readers, reminding Di Bernard about the importance of reducing her footnotes and asking her to consider becoming a subscriber.

Di Bernard's essay was informative; but there was a contradiction in that while she described Lorde's book as 'largely autobiographical,' she quoted Lorde as saying, 'It's a biomythography, which is really fiction'. Lorde had combined biography, history and myth in the construction of her work. Controversially, she claimed that all Black women were lesbians because they were raised for the most part in a matriarchal society despite patriarchal pressures. Lorde's reasoning for this assumption was connected to the title of her book; however, Di Bernard did not explain until almost the end of the essay what 'Zami' meant. Having been born on the small island of Carriacou in the West Indies, Lorde's mother was reared in a tradition in which it was common for wives whose husbands had left the island to find work to take a female lover and become a 'zami'. Although Hacker had agreed with Martha Finan's fears regarding Di Bernard's assumption that lesbianism was synonymous with strong female resiliency, the essay portrayed heterosexual relationships and marriage as damaging to a woman's artistic side. This was the reason, asserted Di Bernard, that a major theme of feminist criticism on the *Künstlerroman* concerns the reconciling of two identities, that of woman and artist. Lesbianism, according to Lorde, was a positive boon to female artistic expression since each woman she loved, whether as a friend, lover or relative, nourished her as a writer.

Hacker's all-inclusive vision for the *Review* started positively for her, but while she could claim victory over the NEA restrictions, it appeared that President Jordan was not altogether supportive of her stance. It's possible that even at this early stage she was beginning to fall out of favour with a man who eventually had a leading role in her downfall. The multiculturalism she envisaged for the *Review* appears from her early correspondence to be one of inclusivity in terms of gay and lesbian writers with themes

¹³⁸ Marilyn Hacker to Barbara Di Bernard to 13.12.90

following a similar vein. It is ironic in a sense that David Lynn, who eventually succeeded her as Editor, embraced Barbara Di Bernard's essay 'Zami,' in such a wholehearted manner.

1991

Having successfully dealt with the NEA obscenity restrictions Hacker had every right to be optimistic regarding the year ahead. What she failed to realise was the significance of her correspondence with Provost Reed S. Browning with respect to her teaching commitment and how this would affect her position adversely.

On January 29 1991 David Bergman, a poet and editor, wrote to Hacker informing her that he had had two of his poems, 'A World of Difference,' and 'Heroic Measures,' accepted by the *Review* three years previously, but that they had never appeared in print. He enclosed a letter of acceptance from Philip Church, one of Hacker's predecessors, as proof. Bergman wrote that he knew the *Review* was in turmoil and that he was not surprised his poems had not yet appeared. Wondering if his poems had gone astray in the reshuffle, Bergman enclosed copies of the two poems along with some more recent work. The two poems appeared in the Winter 1992 *Review*. 'A World of Difference' starts fairly humorously, with the narrator explaining that he had bought a one hundred-year-old Italianate townhouse and had been trying to put off a visit from a former neighbour. When she eventually visited, she surveyed the rooms as if they were 'ruins out of the mezzotints of Hubert Robert'. Her advice was that he should cut his losses and sell up.

Bergman had previously had essays and poetry published in the *Review*. One of his essays, entitled, 'Alternative Service: Family Structure in Recent Gay American Fiction,' was the first essay on gay literature to be published by *The Kenyon Review* in 1986. The appearance of this essay, which was later published in his book, *Gaiety*

Transfigured: Gay Self-Representation in American Literature, seemed to mark a change in attitude for the *Review*, since, as Bergman pointed out, it was the *Review* which rejected Robert Duncan's 'African Elegy,' because in John Crowe Ransom's opinion it promoted homosexuality. Bergman expressed his hope that his connection with the *Review* would flourish under Hacker's editorship. He had been published in various journals and been awarded the George Elliston Poetry Prize for his volume, *Cracking the Code*. An alumnus of Kenyon College, Bergman was a leading figure in gay literary circles. At the time of writing he was editing *Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality*, for the University of Massachusetts Press. He had also edited John Ashbery's *Reported Sightings: Art Chronicles 1957-87*.¹³⁹

In late January Hacker wrote an acceptance letter to Gabrielle Dennis. Dennis was informed that her short story, 'Fear of Hair,' which Hacker had greatly enjoyed, would be published in either the De Colores issue scheduled for Fall 1991 or in the general issue of January 1992 depending on space. Hacker reiterated her commitment to discovering and publishing work by new and established writers of color. She emphasised in her letter to Dennis that work by writers of color would not be limited to special issues and that this would become evident in the general issues which followed. 'Fear of Hair' was published in the Fall 1991 issue of the *Review*; however, the author's name was listed as Gabrielle Daniels. Written in an African-American dialect, 'Fear of Hair' was a tale about child neglect. Herminey is a young black girl whose mother refuses to wash her hair despite it being matted. The mother tells Miz Rutha, the story's narrator, 'I doan like washin haid no way. Fraid to put muh hans in dat hair. Never

¹³⁹ David Bergman to Marilyn Hacker 29.01.91

know whaz in it.' The day after Miz Rutha takes it upon herself to wash Herminey's hair, she awakens to find the entire family gone.

Hacker admitted to having taken the liberty of giving Dennis's name to the Astraea Foundation in New York. The Foundation had recently been awarded funds with which to provide small fellowships to emerging lesbian writers. At this time, Hacker did not know whether Dennis was lesbian or not; however, she wrote that she had formed her conclusion from her publication credits, adding that she believed Dennis would not take offence if she were wrong in that regard. In signing off, Hacker stated that she regretted the *Review* only paid \$10 per page for fiction.¹⁴⁰

Hacker puts her 'queer shoulder to the wheel'

On February 1 1991 Hacker wrote to Bergman that the *Review* of recent times had been hell, in editorial terms, but that she would put her 'queer shoulder to the wheel' in an attempt to correct the problems incurred. Apparently, according to Hacker, the previous editors had not bothered to check on their predecessor's commitments. She informed Bergman that his work was scheduled for the Winter 1992 issue because the Fall issue was the De Colores issue and the spring and summer issues were already full. Acknowledging her awareness of the controversy surrounding Robert Duncan, John Crowe Ransom and the *Review*, Hacker stated that it was especially rewarding to have been given the editor's post as an openly lesbian writer committed to a multicultural literature.

Hacker offered some suggestions on how Bergman's poem about AIDS, 'Days of..' could be improved; however, she never published it in the *Review*. She was

similarly unimpressed with another offering, 'Durham Cathedral,' which dealt with the emotive subject of misogyny. Hacker took exception to this poem which included the phrase, 'passionate disdain for women,' and admitted she never finished reading it. She went on at some length in describing what she saw as the ills which have befallen the world as a result of misogyny and went as far as to point out that it was hard to imagine that the two saints who expressed their 'passionate disdain for women' confined their opinions solely to other men. Hacker apologised to Bergman for the delay in publishing his poems but requested more of his work. She promised his work would not get lost again, and, interestingly, predicted that she would still be editing the *Review* two years hence.¹⁴¹

Omar Castaneda, a teacher at Western Washington University in Bellingham, wrote to Hacker on February 12 thanking her for accepting his short story, 'On The Way Out,' and congratulating her on the stimulating changes she had brought to the *Review*. He particularly wanted his story to appear in the De Colores issue and praised Hacker for appreciating his writing quirks, rather than attempting to eradicate them. Castaneda's writing impressed Hacker, who succeeded in enticing him into taking out a subscription.¹⁴²

NEA Restriction Lifted

In mid-March 1991, Hacker wrote to Doug Givens, Kenyon College's Vice President for Development, thanking him for a draft copy of President Jordan's NEA

¹⁴⁰ Marilyn Hacker to Gabrielle Dennis 30.01.91

¹⁴¹ Marilyn Hacker to David Bergman 01.02.91

¹⁴² Omar S. Castaneda to Marilyn Hacker 12.02.91

acceptance letter.¹⁴³ Pressure from *The Kenyon Review*, among others, had forced the NEA to back down on their 'obscenity' stance, hence the reason for Jordan's letter. Over twenty individuals and arts organizations had complained about the NEA guidelines. It reiterated the *Review*'s position regarding their 1990/91 NEA grant refusal and why they could not, initially, accept it, due to the restrictions imposed upon them. It stated that Marilyn Hacker and Jordan had both written the previous October, informing the NEA that *The Kenyon Review*, along with the writers published by the *Review*, could not agree with the limits forced on them by the conditions and would refuse the grant until those restrictions were removed. The letter went on to state that now that the restrictions had been lifted, the *Review* would use the grant to meet the year's publication costs, and in particular how it would be devoted to the production of the special Writers of Color issue. In acknowledging the grant acceptance, Jordan stressed the importance of the NEA's trust in editorial autonomy.

Cherrie Moraga wrote from San Francisco on March 25 congratulating Hacker on her return to the 'magazine business'. She also enquired as to whether the *Review* was still accepting submissions for the De Colores issue and if so she required information regarding the kind of work which would be of interest to Hacker. Moraga, who had spent the previous five years writing for the theatre, had a track record of stage readings and productions throughout the U.S. stretching from New York to Seattle and as far south as Los Angeles. She was also keen to learn more about Hacker's plans for the Fall 1992 issue. Having recently written some essays on Chicano Theatre, Moraga recommended

¹⁴³ Marilyn Hacker to Doug Givens [5.03.91]

the work of Yvonne Yarbro-Bejorano, whom she described as a 'fine Chicano Feminist, Lesbian Theatre Critic/Theorist'.¹⁴⁴

'Why Should Feminists Read *The Kenyon Review*?'

When Hacker wrote to the *Review*'s readers in April 1991 she opened with the rhetorical question, 'Why should feminists read the *Kenyon Review*?' She then went on to explain that the *Review*, which she described as one of the most eminent literary magazines in the U.S. was now under the 'direction of a feminist editor, one with a long-time commitment to bringing the work of women writers, writers of color, lesbian and gay writers, to a wider audience'.¹⁴⁵ 'The *Review*'s tradition since 1939 had been to publish what was considered to be the best of contemporary writing covering short fiction, nonfiction prose, poetry and, of course, criticism. However, in Hacker's opinion, what was 'best' in current writing had not 'remained static'. Pointing to new voices and new alternatives being investigated, she stated her commitment to recognizing this wonderful variety. The upcoming De Colores Fall 1991 issue was a 200-page collection of work which included the work of Native Americans, African-Americans, Hispanics and Arab- and Asian-Americans.

Hacker's plans for 1992 included an issue on 'Issues in Contemporary Theater'. Critical articles in the pipeline would take a fresh look at the work of writers such as Audre Lorde, Gwendolyn Brooks and Muriel Rukeyser. Adding that in 'all our issues' there would be work by prominent old and new contributors, she specifically mentioned

¹⁴⁴ Cherrie Moraga to Marilyn Hacker 25.03.91

¹⁴⁵ Marilyn Hacker to Kenyon Review Readers April 1991

Joy Harjo, Alicia Ostriker, Alberto Rios, Richard Howard, Judith Ortiz Cofer and Quincey Troupe.

The Helms Clause

In what she referred to as the 'Helms clause,' Hacker explained the situation surrounding the *Review's* refusal to accept a National Endowment for the Arts grant. She had objected to the content restrictions, which she argued would have meant refusing the work of Walt Whitman, Djuna Barnes and James Joyce, if they had submitted work to the *Review*. The *Review* was one of a number of magazines to refuse a grant on the same basis and the outcome was a successful lawsuit which challenged the constitutionality of the restrictions, and resulted in the abolition of the 'Helms clause'. Irrespective of the political climate, Hacker stated that the *Review's* editorial policy would remain one of discovery, not one of 'exclusion'.

Hacker's letter ends with an invitation to discover the *Review*, 'unpredictable, eclectic and provocative as it's going to be'. She considered that an engaged readership was the best way to support independent presses.

Hacker received a copy of the Grants Committee Protocol, dated April 11 1991, issued on behalf of the Provost's office. The committee of five was made up of three men, President Jordan; Reed S. Browning, the Provost; Doug Givens, and two women, Ms. Leonard and Anne Ponder, the Academic Dean. The document stated that Kenyon College had formed the Grants Committee specifically to support faculty members and administrators who sought external funding which served the interests of the College. Kenyon believed that external funding could assist with research and teaching and allow

for experimentation with new ideas. The Committee's function was twofold. Firstly, it would evaluate the potential of grants brought to its notice, and if believed worthy, it would invite a faculty or administration member to develop a competitive proposal.

Secondly, whenever a grant proposal was ready to be submitted to a funding agency the Committee would decide whether it was suitable for collegiate approval. The Committee wanted to be sure that any successful proposal would be of benefit to the College, and advised the people who were drafting the proposals to keep a Committee member apprised of the progress of the project so that any queries that arose could be dealt with promptly. One of the reasons why the Committee required to be informed of the particulars surrounding any funding application was that in many cases a successful bid involved the institution matching dollar for dollar any award. Other stipulations potentially associated with a successful award were the revamping of facilities, installation of equipment, or a guarantee of maintenance provision. In other words, the Committee wished to know in advance of any financial commitments likely to be incurred before endorsing any application. A requirement of any proposal was that it had to be accompanied by a budget and one of three criteria had to be met. These criteria were that the proposal did not involve a financial outlay on behalf of the College, that the source of any required funding was identified and money set aside, or lastly, that the project was of such high standing that it would warrant specific fund raising to obtain the necessary funding. The people responsible for drafting proposals were encouraged to seek Committee advice during the preparation of their budgets. A series of additional points of advice intended to allow the Grants Committee to make the most of successful external funding applications was listed. Since indirect costs represented real expenses,

appropriate provision had to be taken into consideration. The Committee required at least a month's grace prior to any external deadline submission in order to evaluate proposals. If a faculty member made a proposal, the academic department of the proposed principal investigator would be required to gauge the significance of the project and compare it with other departmental needs for which external funding might be sought. Proposals brought forward by a group of faculty members representing different departments required assessments of the project from the departments concerned before the Committee would act on the proposal. The Grants Proposal Committee required reports from the principal investigators since they were obliged to report on all grants.

The Protocol finished by reiterating that any group or individual contemplating applying for a grant should discuss their proposal at an early date with a Committee member.

How to Shoot Heroin: a Suitable Case for Censorship?

Omar Castaneda wrote to Martha Finan on June 22 1991 to thank her for the excellent editing she had done on his short story, 'On The Way Out'. He appreciated Finan having amended some minor grammatical errors; however, he did not agree with some other suggestions and, in fact, made additional changes to his story. One recommendation of Finan's which upset Castaneda was that he either abridge or delete two passages, since he considered it would alter the entire story. That said, he stated that he had then attempted to examine his story from the perspective of Finan and was horrified to read his story as a guide for prospective heroin abusers. Castaneda imagined some kid with drug paraphernalia deciding to break the spine of a copy of *The Kenyon*

Review so that the instructions for shooting heroin might be accessed more easily. Adding that this was a horrible image which made him extremely ill at ease he admitted it brought to mind descriptions of other horrors about which he had read. He then rambled on at length, cataloguing these horrors which ranged from unfaithfulness, to rape and child molestation. Castaneda's initial conclusion was that fiction encompassed everything in life, bad as well as good, but he wrote that because he was 'torn' he consulted several friends who all believed the same thing, which was that the revulsion they experienced on reading 'On The Way Out' was what in the main contributed to the morality of the tale.

Castaneda immodestly explained why his story worked so well. Albeit the explicitness was abhorrent, he maintained that of even more importance was the fact that he had set it in a context which denounced the narrator's actions. Through his confessions of wickedness and misery and the hope he now had of motherly love, the damaged narrator purged himself of the genuine horrors existing in the world. Some of Castaneda's friends worried that any dilution of the gory details would detract from the story's impact. One of his female friends told him *The Kenyon Review* would not be the sort of journal normally read by people requiring instructions on how to obtain heroin or who would be so naïve as to be harmed by the graphic details. It is difficult to believe that Hacker would be pleased to read Castaneda's statement that some of his friends considered the *Review's* stance on censorship to be genuine, with the obvious implication that others doubted the *Review's* sincerity on this matter. Castaneda voiced his fear that the explicitness of the story would attract legal repercussions and asked the *Review* to append a warning with the story. Describing himself as a moral writer and 'On The Way

Out' as an extremely moral story, Castaneda believed that while the story's poignancy emanated from its daring frankness, this openness involved horrifying particulars. He wrote that he was honoured that the *Review* saw the appeal of his story and that they had the nerve to publish it, but that he would prefer a warning to accompany his story rather than risk legal problems.

Castaneda included his suggestion of how a warning should be worded. It explained that the story was a fictional work which contained material unsuitable for young audiences, was not intended to promote the use of drugs, but was meant to induce disgust towards intravenous drug abuse. The warning suggested by Castaneda went on to state that the *Review* could not accept any responsibility for any harm resulting from reading the story or from acting in a similar fashion to the characters in the story. 'On *The Way Out*,' is certainly graphic in detail; however, while it is also extremely convincing, the heroin injection instructions seem superfluous to the story. The 15-stage description is unnecessary since later in the story he realistically describes the process and induced effects resulting from injecting heroin. The scariest aspect of the story is the realization that the resultant excitement is linked to the possibility of impending death. As it is, the male protagonist finishes up in a wheelchair, pondering the question of how he'll cope with going to the bathroom, since ironically, the heroin scene is set in a bathroom. In this respect, Castaneda's claim that his story was moral is accurate. His request to have a warning published with the story appears to be a bit of melodrama in itself. Perhaps he simply wanted to attract more attention to himself and his work, but in fact, the work succeeds very well without the added publicity.

Having already written her editorial for the *Review* containing 'On The Way Out,' Hacker neither wished to rewrite it, nor did she want to attach any warning to the story. She did, however, consult her editorial team on the matter. They agreed with her that no warning was necessary.¹⁴⁶

Grand Street Books publisher, Ben Sonnenberg, had promised Hacker an essay about tobacco for the *Review*, but wrote to her on September 3 1991 to let her know he could not deliver on his promise. He congratulated Hacker on the *Review*'s summer issue, adding that he was thrilled that Suzanne Gardinier's poems formed the backbone of the issue. Sonnenberg's opinion was that the *Review* would soon be the best quarterly in the U.S.¹⁴⁷

In late September 1991 Hacker wrote to Rita Dove to thank her for submitting a novel excerpt from *Through the Ivory Gate*, stating that she was very interested in it. That said, Hacker considered it made fragmentary reading. Consistent with Hacker's editorial approach, she clearly outlined the parts she found to be non-cohesive and requested that Dove find a way of connecting the sections to form a more coherent narrative.¹⁴⁸

On October 8 1991 Martha Finan wrote to Jane Cooper, who had persisted in sending revision after revision to the *Review*. Finan, to her credit, answered with an extremely comical letter, informing her that she was enclosing a large bundle of papers related to Cooper's copyedited manuscript due to appear in the Winter 1992 issue. On behalf of the *Review*, Finan wrote 'we urge you (read BEG, PLEAD, CAJOLE, IMPLORE)' not to submit further revisions. She went on to state that for reasons of

¹⁴⁶ Omar S. Castaneda to Martha Finan 22.06.91

¹⁴⁷ Ben Sonnenberg to Marilyn Hacker 03.09.91

which only God was aware, the issue in question had been plagued with late submissions, authors who had moved leaving no forwarding address, and 'obsessive-compulsive' poets who believed they would not survive another day on earth unless they made one minor alteration to a poem. Finan stated that late revisions threw the *Review's* production cycle into convulsions, thereby multiplying the probability of printing errors and causing perfectly decent staff to fantasize about sending each of the late revisionists a pickled polecat or a mail bomb. The letter is signed: Martha Finan, 'Wicked Witch of the Midwest'.¹⁴⁹

On October 11 Rita Dove replied to Hacker stating that she had attempted to do what Hacker had suggested with respect to making her novel extract from *Through the Ivory Gate* more cohesive, but that she was struggling to overcome the main problem of how to join different parts together. Dove admitted she found it impossible to take the disparate sections of the novel and make them flow together into a short story. She had hoped that the thematic unity of past and present day racism would be sufficient to unify the narrative. Dove only made minor changes to her manuscript and, surprisingly, advised Hacker that if she did not consider it good enough, then she should discard it. She confided that she was relieved that the novel manuscript was finally with Random House and that she could now concentrate on poetry. Dove's extract was published by the *Review* in the Spring 1992 issue and it does not constitute a unified short story. She was unable to gather the main threads of the story together sufficiently, and could not find room for the most interesting part of the novel, which involved the revelation that

¹⁴⁸ Marilyn Hacker to Rita Dove 28.09.91

¹⁴⁹ Martha Finan to *Kenyon Review* Author 08.10.91

prior to the marriage of the female protagonist's parents, her father had slept with his own sister.¹⁵⁰

Jane Cooper's reply to Finan's comical rebuke arrived at the *Review* in mid-October. She enclosed her copy-edited manuscript of 'Vocation: A Life,' along with her contributor's notes and copyright agreement form. Cooper apologised for being 'THE obsessive-compulsive' poet, but added that she was not apologising for making changes to her poems which had come about after having corresponded with Adrienne Rich. Acknowledging that she had no experience of working on a magazine, Cooper apologised once more for her unremitting revisions of the Author's Note. Having been working on 'Vocation: A Life' on and off for over a decade she admitted it was hard for her to let go of it. She gave instructions on how she thought the poem should appear on the page, but deferred to the judgment of the *Review* staff as having the final say.¹⁵¹

Writing from Harvard University on October 17 1991 James Bland had an unusual request. He wrote and asked Hacker to withdraw his poem, 'The Prostitute's Soliloquy,' from consideration for publication. On first reading it, Hacker suggested that Bland change the relationship central to the poem from that of a heterosexual one to a homosexual one. This would appear to be a strange piece of editorial advice and one has to question whether a heterosexual editor would have offered the same suggestion. However, Bland believed the change provided his narrative with a social readability which had been missing from his original draft. Having found inspiration in Lee's 'Jungle Fever,' Bland included his reasons for withdrawing his poem. He stated that depictions of relationships between black men and white women must in some way re-

¹⁵⁰ Rita Dove to Marilyn Hacker 11.10.91

¹⁵¹ Jane Cooper to Martha Finan 13.10.91

inscribe the black man's male privilege over the white woman's racial privilege. However, what he had been attempting to do was show that inter-racial relationships were complex and as such sometimes racial privilege triumphed over male privilege. Bland asserted that black men do not participate in patriarchy in quite the same manner as their white counterparts. This was the reason he regarded the original poem as less socially readable. However, while altering the relationship permitted him to maintain the sadomasochism he wanted to explore, it was at the cost of a more radical consideration of black male privilege. Along with 'The Prostitute's Soliloquy,' Bland also withdrew another poem entitled 'Sun and Steel,' but maintained that he would re-submit both poems after making revisions. He asked Hacker, if she were not too annoyed with him, to consider a third poem, 'The Blue Period,' for publication, but none of them was ever printed. The Summer 1992 *Review*, however, contained Bland's poem, 'Billie Holiday in Tokyo'.¹⁵²

'The Haunting - Part I

Kenyon College's Provost, Reed S. Browning, wrote to Hacker on October 18 to remind her of a discussion which had taken place some weeks prior and which involved *The Kenyon Review* budget. College President, Philip Jordan, had also been present at the meeting at which it was decided that one way to reduce the financial support the *Review* received from the College would be for Hacker to get involved on the teaching side. Apparently this had been discussed at Hacker's interview for the editor's position. Informing her that he would like to bring that idea to fruition, Browning proposed that she start teaching a creative writing class in each semester throughout 1992-93 involving either one afternoon or evening per week. Browning stated that he saw this as a great

¹⁵² James Bland to Marilyn Hacker 17.10.91

opportunity for College students to work with an eminent writer and allow a start to be made to the budgetary adjustments that would be required in the years to come. Philip Church, a member of the College's English Department and a former *Kenyon Review* editor, was to be involved in this discussion and Browning wrote that he hoped Hacker had already spoken with Church on the subject.¹⁵³

In a letter dated October 19 Alicia Ostriker asked Hacker if she was still commuting from New York to Gambier. Explaining that her summer had been very busy, Ostriker wrote that she had visited South America among many other places. She had also taught at the Havurah Institute in Bryn Mawr in her position as 'Biblical Expert'. Ostriker wondered if the *Review* might be interested in a piece she had originally written for *Cream City Review*, a journal based in Milwaukee. Ostriker was disappointed when the article was published because many of the writers who had agreed to contribute did not in fact do so. She wanted a larger audience for her article on theory in the humanities and believed the 'Cream City people' would not object. Ostriker explained that Cream City's name was 'not what you think,' and actually originated from the colour of the bricks used in much of the city of Milwaukee.¹⁵⁴

Towards the end of October, Adrian Oktenberg wrote to thank Hacker for speaking to her regarding the Women's Studies Department at Kenyon. Writing that they had never been properly introduced Oktenberg guessed that Hacker would recognize her name as the 'moncybags behind the Eighth Mountain Poetry Prize'. She went on to explain that she had attended law school with Ruth Gundle in the early seventies when they had been lovers. When Gundle asked Oktenberg to fund the poetry prize, she

¹⁵³ Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker 18.10.91

¹⁵⁴ Alicia Ostriker to Marilyn Hacker 19.10.91

readily agreed. Between them they chose the judges and Oktenberg stated that as a long-time fan of Hacker, she was high on the list. Regarding Hacker as a 'comrade' in the fight to 'get good things published, especially our things,' Oktenberg also enclosed a copy of her review of *Love, Death and the Changing of the Seasons*. Informing Hacker that she was now free of deadlines, Oktenberg was prepared to commit herself to an essay, 'The Sex Education of Alice Walker,' which they had discussed on the phone.¹⁵⁵ In referring to 'our things' Oktenberg appears to suggest that there is more value in certain genres than others. Barbara Herrnstein Smith states that 'our experience of 'the value of the work is equivalent to our experience of the work in relation to the total economy of our existence'. She adds that 'the reason our estimates of its probable value for other people may be quite accurate is that the total economy of their existence may, in fact, be quite similar to that of our own.' Smith's view seems to be accurate at least in terms of Oktenberg's value judgement.¹⁵⁶

Hacker wrote to Rafael Campo on October 24 1991 thanking him for an essay for which she requested a title, and a sonnet sequence. She wanted to publish several sonnets from the sequence, including 'When Rafael Met Jorge,' 'Our Country of Origin,' 'He Interprets the Dream,' 'Translation,' 'A Medical Student Learns Love & Hate,' and 'Towards Curing AIDS,' but had a few editorial points to raise with him which mainly concerned lines she considered too long in terms of syllables. With regard to Campo's poem, 'A Medical Student,' which, of course, he was, Hacker requested that he re-write the last four lines. She believed the lines 'Which after all is really losing love,/ And losing homes,' to be too wide-ranging in meaning and not specific enough, while

¹⁵⁵ Adrian T. Oktenberg to Marilyn Hacker 29.10.91

¹⁵⁶ Smith, Barbara H., p16

pointing out that 'death means death'. Hacker was very impressed with the rest of that particular poem and wished to publish it alongside Campo's as yet untitled essay. She proposed a couple of suggestions with regard to 'Towards Curing AIDS,' and advised Campo that when returning his revisions he should mark the envelope 'revisions of accepted work,' to avoid it ending up in the 'slush pile'.¹⁵⁷

A week after receiving the letter from Provost Browning regarding her teaching commitment, Hacker replied, reminding him that what had been discussed with President Jordan was the possibility of her teaching one course a year rather than one per semester. She maintained that teaching one course per semester would be the equivalent of at least a one-third increase in her workload, meaning that either she would be working four-thirds time or that her work as *Review* editor would be reduced to two-thirds time. Hacker pointed to the fact that the reason for hiring her was so that *The Kenyon Review* would have a full-time editor, and added that in 1992 David Lynn, the *Review's* Associate Editor, would be off campus for fourteen months. She was shrewd enough to point to the fact that Lynn's absence would represent a saving on *The Kenyon Review's* budget and added that the *Review* staff would verify that the editor's job had increased considerably.

Promotional mailings to Kenyon alumni, parents, friends and subscribers were all on the agenda, along with readings, both on campus and in New York and Cincinnati. As Hacker pointed out, the onus for ensuring success in these ventures fell on her shoulders, as *Review* editor. According to Hacker, both Martha Finan and Doris Jean Dilts, an editorial assistant, were working at full capacity. She stated that this meant that if there

¹⁵⁷ Marilyn Hacker to Rafael Campo 24.10.91

was work that could conceivably be done by the managing editor but that should be done by an editor-in-chief then at the end of the day it was down to her to attend to it.

Having discussed the situation with Finan, they agreed that the most practical time for her to teach would be during the Spring semester of 1992/93, since the workload in the *Review* office reached its peak in the Fall, due to compiling grant reports, promotional campaigns and mailings, not to mention the large number of manuscripts arriving. Hacker agreed to discuss the arrangements with Philip Church as soon as was practical.

Responding immediately to Hacker's letter of October 24, Rafael Campo thanked her for accepting his sonnet sequence and essay. He was thrilled they would be appearing together in the same journal and pleased that Hacker agreed that the sonnet and essay offered intriguing contexts for one another. Campo expressed his admiration for Hacker's work and praised her for the feedback she had provided on his submissions. He considered that as an editor her analysis was rare in terms of specificity and mentioned the shared sensibility they experienced with regard to life circumstances. While at Boston University studying for an M.F.A., Campo had been advised by Robert Pinsky to write masses of casual blank verse, as a mental habit. The idea was that a worthwhile poem would emerge from the debris of less worthy efforts, since along with his letter he explained he had enclosed a fragment of a poem resulting from this method. Campo also informed Hacker that he was memorizing some Robert Frost poems. He agreed with all the minor changes suggested by Hacker, specifically mentioning 'Towards Curing AIDS,' in which she had asked him to consider altering part of the last line from 'to his begging,' simply to 'pleading'. Campo believed that Hacker had helped him work

through some complex personal issues, including what he described as his guilt at 'surviving' the HIV epidemic. 'Towards Curing AIDS' was based on personal experience and Campo stated that the austerity of his first choice of words was due to the guilt surrounding his own complicity in his partner's condition, yet he felt that Hacker's suggestion succeeded without significantly reducing the intended impact of his original choice. Admitting his embarrassment at sending his essay minus a title, Campo informed Hacker that he was at a stage in his life in which 'naming issues' had to be figured out. He wrote that he was currently applying for a residency in Primary Care, which, in the opinion of some people, was a waste of a Harvard Medical School education. So, as well as coming up with an essay title he had been pondering his future in terms of which actual career path to follow, where he should live, and who he was. He stated that the identity question arose in his applications for residency, but that they were far more cursorily provided in the required 'Personal Statement' than in the essay submitted to the *Review*, for which he now had a title. Having chosen the title 'A Case of Mistaken Identities: The Human Body,' he stated that while not wishing to appear too coy, he felt potential readers should be made aware of the questions surrounding that of identity and self-image he raises. Campo stated that the principal objective of formal poetry was to locate himself within his physical body. He carried on to say that he was trying to place himself in a tradition which went back to the human body, long before the genesis of canonical literature and which was so difficult for other 'outsiders'. Having embarked on this complex explanation in case Hacker was unhappy about his choice of essay title, Campo continued by stating that as the owner of a human body he felt

empowered to articulate its inexorable, truly universal rhythms in relation to his own experience and in his own physical shape.

He believed this to be a better method of building communities with other people as opposed to 'selling out' or 'wanna be-ing'. Along with his letter, Campo returned an essay of Margaret M. Gullette's which had been sent to him by mistake from the *Review*. He had been tempted to read it since, as he wrote, it appeared to be on a similar subject to his own, but he decided to await its publication.¹⁵⁸

David Baker, who had long been associated with the *Review*, asked Hacker if she would write a general letter of recommendation on his behalf. He was eager to teach poetry writing and literature and was interested in positions at schools with graduate writing programs. In his letter of October 30 he asked Hacker to mention his expertise in editing, his understanding of poetry and his own poetry, his history with the *Review* and her knowledge of his teaching at Denison University. Baker expressed his gratitude and informed her that he was really hoping to remain at Denison.¹⁵⁹

When Hacker wrote her letter of recommendation for Baker she addressed it 'To Whom It May Concern'. She wrote that she had been working with Baker in his capacity as Consulting Poetry Editor at the *Review* for nearly two years. She stated that she had been 'consistently and increasingly impressed' by his understanding of contemporary American poetry and his knowledge of both English and U.S. literature. Hacker stated that Baker had an 'omnivorous appetite' for poetry and that he was a model editorial colleague who knew what he was talking about. It was her opinion in that discussing poetry Baker could make it interesting to non-MFA candidates or creative writing tutors.

¹⁵⁸ Rafael Campo to Marilyn Hacker 28.10.91

¹⁵⁹ David Baker to Marilyn Hacker 30.10.91

Hacker ended her recommendation by praising Baker's poetry and referring to him as 'one hell of a nice guy'.¹⁶⁰

In early November 1991 Provost Browning wrote to thank Hacker for her willingness to teach a writing course during the 1992-93 academic year. Browning agreed with her that one course per year rather than one per semester would be appropriate. Requesting that she discuss and confirm the teaching arrangements with Philip Church, he went on to praise the most recent *Review*, the De Colores issue. This special Fall issue, which featured Native American, Caribbean, Hispanic, African American and Arab- and Asian-American writers epitomized the type of journal Hacker had envisaged.¹⁶¹

Hacker wrote to Marina Budhos on November 15 thanking her for her revision of 'Hollywood,' and informing her she would like to publish it; however, she did have one further recommendation, which concerned the identity of the female protagonist in the story. Since the man in the story had been identified as being of West Indian nationality, Hacker thought it only fair that his wife be afforded the same consideration, and, in fact, assumed that the 'shy girl from the Bronx' would be either Italian or Jewish and of middle European origin. When David Lynn read 'Hollywood' he thought the woman was an African-American, so Hacker wanted Budhos to clear up this confusion. Suggesting it could easily be done by writing 'Shy ----- girl from the Bronx,' Hacker then complicated matters for Budhos by pointing out that the language used by the newly identified woman would be dependent on her ethnicity. Hacker wanted to know if the woman was separated from her own family, commenting that the Bronx was not as far

¹⁶⁰ Marilyn Hacker Reference for David Baker 16.11.91

¹⁶¹ Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker 08.11.91

away as Trinidad. Expressing her admiration for the understatedness of how the story dealt with what Hacker assumed to be the problems arising from being the offspring of an interracial marriage, she stated that what is not said makes the mother into a generic white-American. If this were the case, then Hacker believed it was inevitable she would be cut off from her family. However, if the woman was an African-American, then the absence of family was even more odd. Hacker informed Budhos that 'Hollywood' was scheduled for the Spring 1993 issue of the *Review* so long as the revisions were attended to promptly.¹⁶²

Emory George also wrote to Hacker on November 15, describing his pleasure in having read her poem 'Quai Saint-Bernard,' which appeared in the Spring 1991 issue of the *Review*. Particularly impressed by her 'skilful handling of the Alcaic meter,' George explained that he had been working on the meters of Horace for some time and enclosed a copy of his collection of poems written entirely in Horatian forms, entitled *Kate's Death*, along with 9 new poems for her consideration.¹⁶³

In describing a poem of Hacker's as 'splendid and appalling' and one of the best things to come his way in a long time, Richard Howard offered to publish it in *Western Humanities Review* if she had no plans for it. Howard agreed that the prose sections of his poem 'Occupations,' later published in the *Review*, should be in italics.¹⁶⁴

Included with a note thanking Hacker for advice she had offered after hearing Susan Searles give a reading in Athens Ohio, was a sonnet parody. However, the sonnet politely poked fun at one of Hacker's suggested alterations in Searles' reading which 'received much applause'. Part of the sonnet read –

¹⁶² Marilyn Hacker to Marina Budhos 15.11.91

¹⁶³ Emory George to Marilyn Hacker 15.11.91

So fine, I was off

base with Petrarch's creativity, but, you shouldn't scoff
at "demonic diction"--what attention! And, besides,
"demotic" sounds like "emetic," and, if you must chide,
I will tell you that the reading of the paper went swell...

Reluctantly agreeing to the suggestion, Searles was relieved that Hacker had found nothing else she considered incorrect or weak. Searles revealed that a couple of professors had requested that Hacker be asked to give a future reading.¹⁶⁵

The Haunting - Part II

Provost Reed S. Browning wrote to Hacker and Philip Church on December 9 to ensure that the schedule for the coming year was 'clear to everyone'. He confirmed that Hacker had agreed to teach a writing course during the second semester of 1992-93. This arrangement was the maximum commitment Hacker could make at this point in her editorship; however, Browning was determined she would eventually teach 'one course each semester at a later time'. Wanting to know whether Church and Hacker had made arrangements for the inclusion of the course in the English Department curriculum, Browning offered his assistance if required.¹⁶⁶

In early December 1991 Ben Sonnenberg sent a cheque to the *Review*. He requested 'for form's sake,' a note of thanks for a gift of one thousand dollars from

¹⁶⁴ Richard Howard to Marilyn Hacker 22.11.91

¹⁶⁵ Susan Searles to Marifyn Hacker 26.11.91

Grand Street Publications for the commissioning of an essay-review by a woman, on the Eagles translation of the *Iliad*.¹⁶⁷ Hacker sent a formal letter on December 18 with the requested note of thanks. The said essay, entitled 'Two Cities,' by Suzanne Gardinier, was scheduled for the Spring 1992 issue. Along with the official letter to Sonnenberg was a less official one. Hacker wrote that she deliberately did not mention that the essay was 'by a woman' because she did not consider it to have been a specification of either of them. She did admit to preferring an essay written by a woman because, she asserted, the *Iliad* represented to such a great extent the 'Western ur-male text;' however, while there were a number of male writers whose essays she would have been pleased to accept, serendipity presented Suzanne Gardinier.¹⁶⁸

Hacker, who had spoken to Sonnenberg by phone about the possibility of establishing an ongoing series of Grand Street Books/ Ben Sonnenberg awards, now explained how it would operate. Firstly, Sonnenberg's name would not figure. In each of the three previous years, the *Review* had awarded three one thousand dollar prizes for non-fiction, poetry and fiction, and since Hacker's arrival, another category had been added, that of best work from an emerging writer who had been published in the *Review*, but who had not yet published a book. These awards were decided by distinguished judges outwith Kenyon College. The judges for the 1991 awards were Edmund White, Jane Cooper, Faye Moskowitz and Hacker's former husband, Samuel R. Delany. Hacker explained that the *Review* had been able to make these awards because of a possibly one-off bequest by another anonymous donor. However, she stated that funds were quickly being depleted and there was only sufficient money to continue the current awards for

¹⁶⁶ Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker and Philip Church 09.12.91

¹⁶⁷ Ben Sonnenberg to Marilyn Hacker 02.12.91

two more years. Asking Sonnenberg if he would be willing to contribute one thousand dollars a year for the coming four years, Hacker informed him that it would help keep the prize series alive and act as encouragement for other potential donors. As Sonnenberg's donation would be used specifically for the purpose of awarding a non-fiction prize, Hacker invited him not only to act as one of the judges, but to select the other judges in that category also. Judges received a \$250 honorarium and were required to read all the published work in their category for the year in question. Hacker signed off by saying how much she enjoyed reading both Sonnenberg's memoir and Daryl Hine's review of it in the *Times*.

On December 19 1991 Hacker wrote to Judith Barrington regarding book reviews she had written on *Poetry After Modernism*, edited by Robert McDowell and *Conversant Essays: Contemporary Poets on Poetry*, edited by James McCorkle. Informing her that both reviews would appear in the Summer 1992 issue, Hacker in reply to a query, stated that the *Review* did use titles for their reviews and that she would appreciate it if Barrington could provide them. Hacker considered Barrington's work to be very good; however, she had a couple of points to make. She felt that Barrington had paid more attention to some essays in *Poetry After Modernism* than others and believed that she had managed unwittingly to marginalize an essay on African-American poetry, which Hacker regarded as central to the book, by not mentioning it. Requesting that Barrington define what she meant by 'sexist language,' to specify who used it, in which essays and in what context, Hacker confessed to having no idea what Barrington meant, since, in her opinion the term was so vague it could mean anything. Hacker also wanted Barrington to identify just whose view she regarded as hazardous and 'sexist'. In apologizing for the abrupt

¹⁵⁸ Marilyn Hacker to Ben Sonnenberg 18.12.91

tone of her response, Hacker stated she was attempting to cram nine days work into two, including two grant applications.¹⁶⁹

Hacker failed to realise the significance of her early correspondence with Provost Reed S. Browning regarding her teaching commitment and how she was gradually alienating herself by continuing to agree to teach while never getting round to doing it. After little more than a year in the job, the cracks were beginning to show and Hacker's position was becoming slightly more precarious. Despite Browning's endorsement of the De Colores issue, he was determined that Hacker would fulfil her teaching commitment.

In retrospect it is not difficult to understand how conservative trustees might have been unnerved by Hacker's version of inclusivity when people like Adrian Oktenberg referred to her as a 'comrade' who wanted to get good things published, 'especially our things'. The word 'comrade' conjures up connotations of a struggle, while the second comment is quite explicit in terms of what Oktenberg wished to see published in the *Review* under Hacker's guidance.

¹⁶⁹ Marilyn Hacker to Judith Barrington 19.12.91

1992

Although 1992 could be regarded as Hacker's best year it was not without its difficulties. Reed S. Browning was determined that she would fulfil her teaching commitment in an effort to offset the *Review's* operating costs. Another obstacle Hacker encountered was President Jordan's response to her suggestion to appoint an annual visitor-in-residence. Most importantly for Hacker was her cancer diagnosis on December 31 which resulted in a mastectomy.

In early January 1992 Ben Sonnenberg, publisher of Grand Street Books in New York City asked Hacker to consider Anne Carson's 'Water Margins' for the *Review*. Princeton University Press had published Carson's *Eros the Bittersweet* and Sonnenberg had previously published her poetry and translations. Sonnenberg regretted that he had no money in his foundation but wrote that possibly later in the year he would be able to give \$500 with a similar sum to follow in early 1993.¹⁷⁰

The year started well for the *Review*. Louise Glück, guest editor of THE BEST AMERICAN POETRY 1993 had selected for inclusion 2 poems, Stephen Berg's 'Cold Cash' and Mary Oliver's 'Poppies,' previously published in the *Review*. David Lehman, series editor of THE BEST AMERICAN POETRY was on the *Review's* complimentary list and it was requested that A.R. Ammons of the English Department at Cornell University be included also.¹⁷¹

Hacker wrote to Frank Chipasula on January 8 thanking him for a copy of an anthology introduction he had sent to the *Review*. She had enjoyed it and looked forward

¹⁷⁰ Ben Sonnenberg to Marilyn Hacker 03.01.92

¹⁷¹ Kate Fox Reynolds to Marilyn Hacker 07.01.92

to the publication of the anthology. Consistent with her desire to showcase multicultural work in the *Review* she expressed interest in Chipasula's proposed article on African women poets. She was quite specific about the contents of the article. It would contain information on the exclusion suffered by African women poets in relation to African anthologies of poetry as well as women's poetry in translation or international women's poetry in English. Hacker wanted Chipasula to discuss the historical importance of women poets in Africa, in their roles as creators of written texts and within oral traditions. However, she believed the most interesting aspect for *Review* readers would be that on contemporary African women poets, adding that since this article was not a preface to the anthology it could contain longer selections of poetry.

Hacker informed Chipasula that his work would not be published until spring or summer of 1993, and since the article was not yet finished she wished to know when it would be completed. She also made it clear that she could not give a firm acceptance until she had read the completed article. The Winter 1993 *Review* was scheduled to be devoted to writing for and about the theatre.¹⁷²

On January 13 Hacker replied to Ben Sonnenberg that she considered Anne Carson's 'Water Margins' to be 'a thousand percent' more interesting than most of the fiction manuscripts she received. However, she thought the pace of the story was not fast enough and admitted skipping less exciting parts. She also believed it to be too long and suggested halving the story's length. Thanking Sonnenberg for his continued interest and possible financial aid with respect to the *Review*'s awards, Hacker asked him to consider judging the nonfiction prose awards for 1992. She explained this would involve reading

¹⁷² Marilyn Hacker to Frank M. Chipasula 08.01.92

all the essays, memoirs, and book reviews published in the four *Review* issues of 1992, amounting to about 40 pieces of work.¹⁷³

Hacker was keen to have Marie Ponsot on a part-time visiting appointment to teach creative writing. Ponsot had published three volumes of poetry, the most recent of which had won the Delmore Schwartz Award at New York University, and co-authored two books on the teaching of writing, which according to Hacker were widely used in the field. Ponsot was a recently retired English Professor at Queens College and had an impressive record in teaching. Her main attribute as far as Hacker was concerned was that she was an inspired teacher and as such would be an invaluable asset to Kenyon. In suggesting this prospect to Philip Church, Hacker pointed out her reasoning behind it. Three members of the English Department were scheduled to be on leave the following year with another having a reduced teaching commitment. Hacker did not pretend disinterest in having Ponsot appointed, since they were friendly, but she believed it was a great opportunity for Kenyon's students to have the chance to work with a respected teacher and writer. Ponsot was willing to teach two courses, while also acting as a temporary Consulting Editor for the *Review* in the absence of David Lynn, one of the English Department staff who would be on leave. Hacker described Ponsot's work as 'buried treasure'.¹⁷⁴

Ben Sonnenberg was quick to reply to Hacker regarding her suggestion that he act as judge for the *Review*'s 1992 non-fiction prose award. On January 18 his terse reply stated he could not act as judge for 1992 because Hacker had agreed to publish Suzanne Gardinier, a writer with whom he was friendly. Sonnenberg, who had never been asked

¹⁷³ Marilyn Hacker to Ben Sonnenberg 13.01.92

¹⁷⁴ Marilyn Hacker to Philip Church and Philip Jordan 16.01.92

to judge anything previously, ruled himself out from judging the 1993 award also since he expressed his hope that Hacker would publish another of his friends, Maria Margaronis. It is to Sonnenberg's credit and honesty that he refused to compromise himself by agreeing to judge an award in which he had a personal interest.¹⁷⁵

The Haunting - Part III

Provost Browning wrote to Hacker and complimented her on providing 'focus' regarding the contents of the *Review*. He considered that the number of interesting manuscripts arriving at Kenyon had 'proceeded in the manner we had hoped for'. Despite acknowledging that she had also gained favourable recognition for the journal, he was not going to allow Hacker to forget that he wanted her to teach one course per semester. Bearing in mind that this letter arrived only 5 weeks after he had conceded that one course per year was a sufficient teaching commitment, it would be reasonable to assume that he had by now become very concerned about the matter. Along with securing external funding, teaching was one of his suggestions for reducing the *Review's* operating budget. Browning ended his correspondence with a request that Hacker continue to help in accomplishing this task.

Included with Browning's letter was a copy of his recommendation that Hacker receive a 'greater than average increase' for 1992-93. Her current salary was \$58,300 and she had been awarded a \$3,300 rise on July 1 1991.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Ben Sonnenberg to Marilyn Hacker 18.01.92

¹⁷⁶ Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker 20.01.92

Indran Amirthanayagan sent several poems, two of which Hacker enjoyed, to the *Review* towards the end of January. Hacker planned to publish 'You Must Love' and 'The Blood Abroad,' but she did have reservations over the latter, and in fact suggested how, in her opinion, it could be improved. She was also keen to know when Amirthanayagan's volume of poems was to be published, since it was important for the poems to appear in the *Review* prior to the book being published. There were two reasons for this: firstly, there would not be any point in the *Review* publishing poems which had been published in a book, and secondly, it was a good advert for the poet's forthcoming volume.¹⁷⁷

It was due in part to Hacker's recommendation in 1990 that Patricia Traxler got a position in The Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute at Radcliffe College in Massachusetts. Reappointed as a poetry fellow in 1991-92 Traxler wrote to tell Hacker she thought of her often and to express her gratitude. She explained that although the Bunting does not award a stipend when renewing a fellow for a second year she felt very fortunate despite having to give up her apartment and rent a room. Among the 1991-92 fellows was a former political prisoner in Czechoslovakia, Miloslava Holubova, who was writing her memoir, and an Australian attorney, Hilary Astor, who worked with domestic violence cases. Astor's influence and encouragement had provided Traxler with the nerve to include poems on domestic violence in a book she was completing. She was still not entirely comfortable with revealing a part of her life that she confessed to having kept secret.

Traxler informed Hacker that 1991 had been 'pretty monumental' for her and she didn't think she would ever feel the same again. She had never lived among a

¹⁷⁷ Marilyn Hacker to Indran Amirthanayagan 21.01.92

community of women before and she found the combination of tranquillity and interdisciplinary interaction inspiring. However, the tranquillity of the College had been shattered on April 4 when one of the fellows, Mary Joe Frug, was murdered with a machete only a few blocks away. Traxler, who described Frug as a 'brilliant, funny, beautiful ... feminist legal scholar,' stated that the mood had changed as result of this terrible incident. Nobody had been arrested in connection with the murder and Traxler was angry with the locals whom she believed had either preferred to ignore it because it made them feel uncomfortable or decided that Frug had brought it on herself.

It was Frug's own 15 year-old daughter who found her dying in the street. Over a 4 week period, five women were raped during daylight hours. For the first time, Traxler found herself scared to walk home alone and from then on she started to regard things in a different way. She thought that 'language had a new air of secrecy and a new power as if the air were full of lurking truths'.

After a Hebrew scholar had given her books on Jewish mysticism, Traxler read the Old Testament, the Koran and *The Confessions of St. Augustine* in what became for her an obsession with the notion that there was a 'power invested in the words one is forbidden to speak'. She did not know what she was looking for but, she explains, it began to appear as if 'silence, things one doesn't talk about,' assumed the power of language. *Forbidden Words* was the title chosen by Traxler for her new book, which included poems on the domestic violence she had kept hidden for so long. She had forced herself to tell the circle of new fellows at the Bunting Institute that she had wanted to write about her violent marriage but was afraid to for various reasons. One of the factors which prevented her was a fear of writing it down which seems contrary to the

customary idea of writing as catharsis. Traxler figured if she announced her goal to the group she would have witnesses from whom she could not shy away. In the weeks following the revelation of her experiences, a number of women, both gay and straight, confided to her that they had had similar experiences.

Traxler ended her letter by thanking Hacker for publishing her poem, 'The Widow's Words,' in *Ploughshares*. The poem, which won *Ploughshares*' 1990 Cohen Award was the beginning of a number of good things that had happened to Traxler, many of which she attributed to Hacker.¹⁷⁸

In February 1992, Hacker accepted Rane Arroyo's 'Juan Angel' for publication. She informed Arroyo that a particular editorial interest of hers was to publish writers of color, gay and lesbian writers and playwrights and expressed her hope that the eclectic blend of the *Review* would appeal to him as a reader.¹⁷⁹

'Another glorious issue,' was how Joan Cusack Handler described the first *Review* of 1992. Her particular favourites in a 'broad & expansive' issue were Leslie Ullman, Yusef Komunyakaa, Rudy Kikel, Kim Vaeth, Dionisio Martinez and C.K. Williams.¹⁸⁰

Writing from France in early March, James Gill informed Hacker that one of his stories was soon to appear in the Russian magazine, FOREIGN LITERATURE 'when they get hold of the paper for their circulation of 1,000,000'. Gill poked fun at Russia's passion for bartering – 'so where did you buy this? How much? Do you want resell some of it to me? I'll barter.' He was awaiting word from an admirer of Hacker's, Anna

¹⁷⁸ Patricia Traxler to Marilyn Hacker 22.01.92

¹⁷⁹ Marilyn Hacker to Rane Arroyo 10.02.92

¹⁸⁰ Joan Cusack Handler to *Kenyon Review* Editors 03.03.92

Karenine-Furkova, who had arranged for her poetry to be translated in order to show it to other editors.

Turning to American politics, Gill stated that he was horrified at the lack of insight displayed by the unremarkable presidential candidates. Referring to this lack of political talent, he wanted to know where all the men and women with insight, courage and talent had gone. Gill had been visited by Wallis Menozzi, whom he described as a 'wonderful guest'. He found Menozzi to be a wonderful conversationalist, thinker and a person who filled 'the air with originality and meditative nutrients one munches on long after she is gone'.¹⁸¹

Hacker had sent a pile of *Review* submissions to David Baker under the heading 'Worth A Look'. Baker had had to be ruthless because there were many impressive pieces of work. He also apologised if he appeared 'frazzled' the previous week, but he explained things had been difficult of late. A combination of family illness, an ice storm which cut power and phone connections and an inability to find a publisher for his new book had all contributed to this 'damn hard time'. Looking on the bright side, Baker accepted that these problems would provide material for poems.¹⁸²

On March 20 Hacker wrote to Provost Reed S. Browning to confirm that her salary for teaching a spring semester course would be paid from the general faculty salary budget. It is evident that Hacker wished this fact to be on record since it established that neither the *Review* nor the English Department would cover her salary. She finished by thanking Browning for clearing up the confusion surrounding the matter.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ James Gill to Marilyn Hacker 03.03.92

¹⁸² David Baker to Marilyn Hacker 24.03.92

¹⁸³ Marilyn Hacker to Reed S. Browning 20.03.92

In March 1992 Tory Dent thanked Hacker for her interest in a group of poems she had written. Dent was grateful for the thorough attention Hacker had paid in criticising her work, remarking that in her experience editors were often unable to advise on how to incorporate their suggestions into her work. In praising Hacker's editorial feedback she considered it had helped her find her own 'voice'. Dent described her poetic style as 'baroque,' and admitted that she caused herself problems by using obscure language, unrelated metaphors and a propensity for switching verbs for nouns. Her poem, 'Jade,' is about testing HIV positive and Hacker's suggestions helped her find the appropriate language to convey her feelings. Having had the benefit of Hacker's editorial advice, Dent felt she had improved as a writer. Dent admits to a common problem when it comes to revising work, that of having to surrender the affection held for an original composition. She also confesses that her supposed Luddite sympathies were put to the test when her computer was out of action for a month.¹⁸⁴

In reply to a letter from Hacker, James Gill wrote on April 22 that some of her work would be published in a Czech review, *Svetova Literatura*. Gill's opinion on foreign journals was that while many had gone out of business, the survivors were printing quality work, including *Svetova Literatura*.¹⁸⁵

Jaye Austin-Williams contacted Hacker seeking advice on a project upon which she had embarked. Her uncle, who died in 1985, aged 74, had never been able to find a publisher for his poetry, although he had been published in newspapers. Having entrusted Austin-Williams with his work before he died in the hope that she might be able to do something with it, she decided to write a book incorporating his life and work.

¹⁸⁴ Tory Dent to Marilyn Hacker 21.03.92

¹⁸⁵ James Gill to Marilyn Hacker 22.04.92

The working title for the project was 'Downstage of Silhouette: Portrait of an Unknown Poet'. Austin-Williams believed that her uncle Eddie, who wrote under his own name, Elwood Dudley, and that of Edward Harris, had lived a life which was 'tailor-made for captivating storytelling'. Instinct had led her to ask Hacker, who met her uncle shortly before his death, and who was a fan of Hacker's work, on how to proceed with her undertaking. Austin-Williams thought Hacker would appreciate the importance of the project and sought advice on how to gain funding through either a grant or a fellowship.

A friend had suggested that she send a proposal to W.W. Norton & Co. since they tended to support non-traditional projects, such as 'people of Color, gay people, that kind of thing'. Enquiring as to whether Hacker's 'instincts or experiences' confirmed this, Austin-Williams confessed that her literary credentials were 'paltry'. She had, nevertheless, enclosed her résumé for Hacker's benefit in deciding 'in all honesty' whether she had a 'chance in hell' of receiving a proposal from a major publisher. Along with her enquiry, Austin-Williams enclosed a signed copy of one of her uncle's books.¹⁸⁶

Jeremy Reed, writing from London in late April, apologised to Hacker for the *Literary Review's* failure to publish his review on her *Selected Poems*. Referring to the 'dead poetry establishment here,' Reed believed it was no more than could be expected due to the 'English antipathy to minorities'. However, he did send the piece to Hilary Davies, who was editing an edition of *Aquarius* which was devoted entirely to women. Reed was also confident he would receive a positive reply to his offer to write an essay on the sensuousness in her poetry. It was his opinion that Hacker was the best female poet alive and that English readers deserved to know it. Promising to forward his new collection of poems, due out in July 1992, he said he would also include his 'anti-

autobiography,' *Lipstick Sex And Poetry*, along with his book on Rimbaud entitled *Delerium*.¹⁸⁷

Dan Bellm sent translations of some of Manlio Argueta's poems to the *Review* in April 1992. Hacker was impressed by 'Mama,' and kept it for publication. However, despite rejecting 'Second-Class Postcard,' she offered some helpful advice and posed several questions for Bellm as to how it could be improved. For instance, she queried whether the title did not translate simply as 'second postcard'.¹⁸⁸

Following up on a conversation she had had with Kenyon President, Philip Jordan Hacker submitted her idea for the appointment of an annual visiting writer-in-residence, whose duties would include teaching in the English Department and serving as a consulting guest editor of the *Review*. Hacker wanted the position to alternate between poets, fiction writers, essayists, critics and playwrights. She admitted it would be a tall order finding someone of stature with experience of literary editing, yet she stated that she knew of several potential candidates. Depending on the criteria outlined she envisaged a salary of between \$40 and \$50 thousand dollars for the successful candidate. Hacker suggested that positions previously held by her, which included the Jenny McKean Chair at George Washington University and the Elliston Poet-in-Residence at American University could advise on the administration of such a program. What would differentiate the Kenyon post from the others was the editing aspect. MLA and AWP job listings allied with invitations to prospective people were expected to provide more than

¹⁸⁶ Jaye Austin-Williams to Marilyn Hacker 22.05.92

¹⁸⁷ Jeremy Reed to Marilyn Hacker 28.04.92

¹⁸⁸ Marilyn Hacker to Dan Bellm 12.04.92

enough candidates. Hacker regarded this position as a potential boost for prospective and current students as well as for the *Review* and the English Department.¹⁸⁹

Jordan's response to Hacker's suggestion was somewhat muted. He thanked her for her proposal and informed her it would go into the 'hopper of ideas' in the planning of a *Kenyon Review* endowment endeavour. Jordan emphasised that while the writer-in-residence position would be a nice addition, his first priority was to meet the basic costs of the magazine, including that of the editor's position.¹⁹⁰

Farrar, Straus & Giroux's editor-in-chief, Jonathan Galassi wrote to Hacker on July 17 to say that he was awaiting some of her work so he could read it in 'totality'. Although he was familiar with her work he wanted to read it in its entirety. Galassi pointed out that Farrar, Straus & Giroux could not take on new writers very often, but he wished to take the time to properly consider her work.¹⁹¹

In August 1992, Richard Howard, the poetry editor for *Paris Review*, contacted Jordan to praise Hacker's work as editor. He mentioned that he had written three years previously recommending her for the editor's position and stated that the *Review* now stood alongside *Yale Review* and *Raritan Review* in terms of quality of critical pieces, articles and stories. Writing that the *Review* gave him great pleasure, Howard deemed it necessary to list his accomplishments in the literary world. Included on this list was the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1970 and his membership of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 16.04.92

¹⁹⁰ Philip Jordan to Marilyn Hacker 22.04.92

¹⁹¹ Jonathan Galassi to Marilyn Hacker 17.07.92

¹⁹² Richard Howard to Marilyn Hacker 24.08.92

Hacker was pleased with a sequence of poems by Elizabeth Alexander and kept them all for publication. However, she apologised for the 15 month delay before the poems would be printed due to the usual problems of magazine space.¹⁹³

Richard Abowitz sent an essay on Alfred Corn to the *Review* in September 1992. Hacker considered it had possibilities but was irked by the number of repetitions. She commented that if she saw the words 'the poet' or 'the poem' one more time she would change careers. Another problem she had was that it was not concise enough and tended to ramble on. Hacker edited the essay and apologised if she had offended Abowitz. However, the tone of her letter points to her having been annoyed by his lack of care in relation to pedantic prose and bibliography, which was not in chronological order. Abowitz had also cited works in his bibliography which he had mentioned within the main body of the text. Another aspect of the essay which troubled Hacker was the omission of any mention of the juxtaposition between Corn's open homosexuality and his Christianity. She believed that Corn would not want an essay written about his work which did not address this issue and she was not certain that it was Corn's Christian beliefs which had provided him with the desire to embark on a series of dramatic monologues in contrasting voices very different from his own. Hacker put forward the theory that there was a link between Corn's 'outsider' status as a gay man and his other identity as a white intellectual middle-class Christian which empowered him to adopt various personae and write from a sympathetic standpoint.¹⁹⁴

Stephen Booker was a long-time prisoner on Florida State Prison's death row when he sent some of his work to Hacker at the *Review* in late September. He had been

¹⁹³ Marilyn Hacker to Elizabeth Alexander 20.09.92

¹⁹⁴ Marilyn Hacker to Richard Abowitz 28.09.92

in touch in mid-September and commented that he appreciated he would receive a good rapid critique of his poetry. Wesleyan University Press had taken 7 months to respond to a manuscript submission so he was encouraged by Hacker's quick response.¹⁹⁵

In October Hacker accepted 3 poems, 'Ecstasy,' 'Surrealism' and 'Waterloo' by Hayden Carruth. She scheduled them for the Winter 1994 issue.¹⁹⁶

Richard Abowitz, who worked full-time as a nightshift security guard, sent his revised essay on Alfred Corn in late October. He apologised for the poor condition of the essay, explaining he had been ill most of the summer and had to edit his work between classes during the day. Abowitz commented that Hacker's editorial observations were precise to the point of hurting him. However, Hacker was very pleased with this version and accepted it for publication. She thought he had judged correctly the extent to which Corn's work reflected his homosexuality and that Abowitz had succeeded in identifying specific references in the poems. The combination of Corn's Christianity and sexuality, in Abowitz's opinion, was the factor which allowed him to successfully adopt different personae. While Christianity compelled him to take the gamble it was his sexuality which supplied the empathy to undertake such a project. One aspect in which Abowitz disagreed with Hacker was in her comment that Corn's work displayed a 'growing self-revelation ... of his homosexuality'. He considered there was evidence of open homosexual references in all of Corn's six volumes of poetry, albeit, it was usually referred to as 'love,' and as such it could not be separated from heterosexual love. An essay in which sexuality assumed the principal role would be misleading in Abowitz's view, and he stated that he could not find any conflict between Corn's Christianity and

¹⁹⁵ Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker 28.09.92

¹⁹⁶ Marilyn Hacker to Hayden Carruth 01.10.92

homosexuality in Autobiographies. He admitted that having come from an ultra-orthodox Jewish background there could be something he had missed in this respect.¹⁹⁷

Jeffrey Betcher was another nightshift security guard who had submitted work to the *Review*. He was very impressed by Hacker's editorship and commented that he had been inspired to write to her on reading the Fall 1992 issue, which he regarded as the 'finest thing I own'. Betcher described Hacker's work as heroic and ground-breaking and praised her for publishing excellent work by writers who were saying what was 'elsewhere unsaid'. He submitted several poems to the *Review*, remarking that they were a way of keeping in touch, but that it would be the proudest moment of his life if they were published.¹⁹⁸

Ben Sonnenberg had only recently been released from hospital when he wrote to Hacker in November. Hacker had asked him, as she did most people with whom she corresponded, to subscribe to the *Review*. Sonnenberg thought his subscription still had a couple of years to run, but said he would give a gift subscription to a friend.¹⁹⁹

In mid-December Hacker informed Stephen Booker that his perseverance had resulted in an acceptance of two of his poems, 'Sandii' and 'The Pied Piper of Murderloin Downs'. Security on Florida's death row was tight, so Booker was not allowed to receive certain items, including 'freebies,' in terms of magazines, so Hacker wanted to know if there was any way she could send copies of the *Review* to him. She also had a few editorial queries for Booker, such as his invention of the word 'daintiliousness' in 'Sandii'. Hacker pointed out that the word 'dainty' had acquired negative connotations and considered that 'daintiliousness' detracted from the tone of the

¹⁹⁷ Richard Abovitz to Marilyn Hacker Oct 1992

¹⁹⁸ Jeffrey Betcher to Marilyn Hacker 09.11.92

poem, more so since it was in the last stanza. Having raised that, she tried to persuade Booker to change the title of the second poem to 'The Pied Piper of Death Row,' believing that it would carry more weight and that readers would know immediately to what he was referring. Hacker thought 'Murderloin Downs' failed as an attempt at humour since it missed the mark. As in 'Sandii,' she had a problem with Booker's invented words. She had no notion of what 'de-cyed' meant and was at a loss as to the intended meaning of 'ununderstood'. At this point the *Review* had received so many unsolicited manuscripts that Hacker had called a moratorium until September 1993.²⁰⁰

Rane Arroyo caused Hacker a problem when he revised his play, 'Sex With the Man in the Moon,' and increased its length from 27 to 48 pages. He wrote that there were 'no changes except proofing'. The problem for Hacker was that the issue for which she had scheduled Arroyo's play was almost editorially complete so it left her with a dilemma. She informed him that it was not fair to other writers to have their work rescheduled and that since the Winter 1994 issue was full and the Spring 1994 had a long play already scheduled, it would be at least eighteen months before it could appear in print. Since *Review* readers were only now becoming more accepting of plays, Hacker could not risk publishing two in the same issue. Consistent with Hacker's usual order of business in her editorial letters she then asked several questions of Arroyo with respect to 'Sex With the Man in the Moon'. Hacker wanted to know why Arroyo had changed the name of the protagonist from Homer to Cal thereby rendering many of the double-meanings pointless. However, that was not her only query. She did not like the new ending and suggested that Arroyo, in struggling to end his play, had resorted to the old

¹⁹⁹ Ben Sonnenberg to Marilyn Hacker 11.11.92

²⁰⁰ Marilyn Hacker to Stephen T. Booker 11.12.92

technique of introducing mayhem. Hacker felt she had been cheated and stated that an apocalypse was an unsuitable ending to a play, the essence of which concerned memory. She asked him to reconsider the ending of the play, and, in fact, offered two possible endings of her own.²⁰¹

Hacker apologised for the delay in replying to Rosemary Deen regarding her poetry submission. She explained that it had been a particularly chaotic time at the *Review* due to forthcoming changes of staff and what she described as the preparation of the 'Grant from Hell'. Due to the fact that approximately 700 manuscripts were arriving monthly at the *Review*, Hacker was required to schedule well in advance, which meant that Deen's essays, 'The Genius of the Place,' 'Denizens,' 'History' and 'Raccoons' would not appear until the Spring 1994 issue.²⁰²

On December 15 1992 Stephen Booker wrote two long letters to Hacker. While acknowledging it to be his most prestigious acceptance to date he was not prepared to concede on the choice of the word 'daintiliousness' on the basis that he could justify its use. As an autobiographical poem, Booker described himself as having got involved with a woman more experienced than himself. Booker regarded the female as a hustler, who, in giving the illusion that the man had the power, actually retained it herself. He stated that he appreciated Hacker's sensitivity to language and made a connection between this and discrimination. However, he claimed that there are women's liberation movements flourishing in unusual places, including red-light districts. Referring to 'Sandii' in the poem as an 'Afro-Amer-Asian' dancer who had a hypnotic effect on spectators and who actually used 'daintiliousness' in conversation, Booker adds that she put up with him

²⁰¹ Marilyn Hacker to Ranc Arroyo 11.12.92

²⁰² Marilyn Hacker to Rosemary Deen 14.12.92

because he was there when she needed him. If he changed 'daintiliousness' it would not be the same poem, because Sandii's essence was contained in it. Nevertheless, Booker was prepared to change it if Hacker insisted, but as he put it 'under protest'.

'Murderloin Downs' was not meant to be an amusing take on death row. He intended readers to ask why the title sounded like a racetrack, explaining that some of the prisoners 'race' to become completely mad prior to execution. Defending his use of 'de-eyed' he states that it works perfectly from the point of view of a death row prisoner, since it reflects the denial of being able to see something not wished to be seen. Booker claimed it worked on another level also in the sense that death on the electric chair resulted in victims' eyeballs popping. 'Ununderstood,' the other word with which Hacker had a problem, was simply a reinforcement of 'de-eyed' and presumably was meant to represent the choice between understanding a situation and choosing not to because it was too horrible to contemplate. Booker felt if he had chosen 'Death Row' as the title he could not have the confidence that the poem could carry enough weight to match such a title. Having defended his reasons for choosing words of his own invention, Booker was prepared to change them and consider alternatives. He admitted it was his custom to invent words but that sometimes he credited readers with more understanding than he should.²⁰³

Booker's 'Braindance'

Booker's first long letter of December 15 was followed by a second, written later that day. He explained to Hacker that he had to have the first letter available to be picked up before 10pm, and that it was now 10.35 and he was beginning his second letter.

Booker's inventive language was not specific to poetry and he wrote that he was doing a 'braindance' over 'Sandii'. He felt he had to stand firm over his choice of words in order to defend the memory, the poem and Sandii. Having regarded himself as a 'rebel, a bad man, somekinda big shit' Booker's poem is cathartic in helping him deal with what he describes as the 'true fear' at being involved with a strong woman like Sandii. The poem is a tribute to Sandii, whom Booker describes as an artist, rebel and 'whole lotta woman'. Referring to Sandii's darker side he stated that she was also a 'dipso lush' and suffered what he later realised were bouts of manic depression.

Booker made disparaging remarks against 'the punk, Uncle Sam' who placed his troops abroad, in this instance in Japan, then arranged with the authorities for designated areas where U.S. servicemen could 'screw their troubles away at \$2 or \$3 a throw!' Having spoken to other servicemen, Booker compared American foreign policy with gangsters who waylay teenage runaways at Port Authority. As a man who firmly believed people should not get above their station, Booker got upset over individuals who forgot where they had come from 'a la black Marines in Somalia doing the marstahs bidding'.

Acknowledging he had strayed from the main topic of his letter, he returned to the subject of Sandii by stating that he did his utmost to capture her essence in his poem. Booker explained how he accompanied her several times to the beauty parlour and how he felt like a little boy again visiting the 'same greasy-smelling strange land,' with the language the only difference.

He described how Sandii 'played the light card,' explaining that it manifested itself in terms of hair, colour, facial features and race awareness which drifted through the

²⁰³ Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker 15.12.92

love-hate relationship she conducted with herself. Pointing to how comfortable Sandii was with the English language, Booker explained how she fooled around with the pronunciation of the letters 'l' and 'r' when saying, 'praying the right card'. One thing both Booker and Sandii had in common was their mindset. He asserts that Sandii was black in every way despite being 'café au lait' in colour and part Japanese. According to Booker, Sandii had a 'thing' about colour which made her more aware of the 'heaven' inhabited by white women in the West, than if she had been of purely Japanese origin. Booker's definition of 'daintiliousness' is less to do with being delicate or petite and more to do with attitude. If a man looked at Sandii she would respond with a verbal tirade. Sandii's combined strength of character, unpredictability, 'reckless independence' and the impression that she could do anything she wanted appealed to Booker. He had no doubt Hacker would be familiar with the trait he found so attractive in Sandii, an inherent quality impossible to fake of being able to take on and deal with all-comers.

Booker complimented Hacker on her criticism of 'Sandii' and mulled over her suggestions, some of which he incorporated. He asked if in 50 years time he would be labelled a 'screwball obscurantist' because of his inventive language. In moving on to 'The Pied-Piper of Murderloin Downs,' Booker referred to his 1982 poem 'The Races at Murderloin Downs'. The earlier poem is permeated with evocative language such as 'one oaken coach stands alone on the track' while the participants 'anticipate the starter-buzzer' awaiting the eventual 'crack of leather upon flesh'. In what could be regarded as another side-swipe at America, Booker's poem contains the line 'the stars between their eyes goes unnoticed'. Booker wrote from 10.35pm on December 15 until 2am the following morning 'by the light of an empty t.v. channel'. However, by 9.15am he was

ready to continue his letter. He carried on by saying that he was fairly well-known and that Hacker was now in the company of more than a hundred editors who were familiar with his work.

In preferring the word 'cave' rather than 'cell,' Booker stated he thought hard before selecting it. The connotations invoked by 'cave' suited Booker's depiction of life on death row where he saw men having to choose between madness or searching inside themselves in an attempt to find something stronger. He related how some prisoners who had resorted to collecting spiders and roaches or inventing friends with whom they then held conversations grew incredibly petty and increasingly insecure.

Booker believed his title of 'Murderloin Downs' invited readers to look inside their own heads in search of clues to explain the title. He admitted to a literary ruthlessness in not allowing easy access to his poetry. However, once the reader had gained entry, Booker claimed to offer up 'View Master' slides which captured their imagination to the point where they may be afraid to look too deeply into his well of work for fear of 'seeing themselves looking up at em'. Booker quoted one reader who read it in terms of a Stephen King horror movie in that he imagined horses being skinned and butchered with 'shit and guts and horse parts' everywhere. Hacker is praised by Booker for her inability to pin down the definition of 'dc-eyed' since he intended readers to endure a measure of uncertainty with regard to meaning. Speculating that most people would be able to remember a time in their lives when as children they 'tortured' or made 'life miserable for insects, animals, or other people,' Booker mentioned kids who shot birds simply to 'see how they die'. His conclusion was that the 'whole world is a death row gone to pot, really – it's a Murderloin Downs'. Booker intends his readers to ask

questions of themselves. He saw no disadvantage in having them invest some 'imagination-courage' in searching for an insight into his poetry. The letter finished with Booker pleading for as few changes as possible and an apology for the length of the letter.²⁰⁴

Elizabeth Creamer was a 31 year-old graduate student when Hacker accepted her story, 'Sexual Harassment and Confessional Poets' for the *Review* in December 1992. As a mother of three she was grateful to people like Alicia Ostriker for proving that being a mother was no handicap when it came to writing. What proved to be more of a handicap was Creamer's own doubts that, firstly, her dream of becoming a writer was not realistic, and secondly, that she was already too old to succeed. Accompanying Creamer's letter was a subscription to the *Review*.²⁰⁵

On December 28 Stephen Booker informed Hacker that Wesleyan Press had accepted his poetry manuscript, *Tug*. In anticipation that Wesleyan might request revisions to some of his poems, Booker, while determined to get his own way, was not prepared to get upset over the matter. As Hacker now knew, he was prepared to justify his use of any word contained in his work. Once more he pleaded with Hacker not to change anything in 'Murderloin Downs' though he was less concerned about possible alterations to 'Sandii'.²⁰⁶

Hacker's Most Successful Year?

²⁰⁴ Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker 15.12.92

²⁰⁵ Elizabeth Creamer to Marilyn Hacker 16.12.92

²⁰⁶ Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker 28.12.92

In many ways 1992 could be regarded as Hacker's most successful year. The *Review* was shaping up in the way she had envisaged and in general everything was running smoothly. However, looming in the background was Reed S. Browning's insistence that she fulfil her teaching commitment, which of course she still had not done. This matter began to assume more importance as time moved on since it was one of the suggestions put forward for offsetting the *Review*'s operating budget. In a sense, Hacker's reluctance to teach could be regarded as an obstacle to reducing the operating budget.

Another indication that all was not entirely well was Philip Jordan's response to her proposal that an annual visiting writer-in-residence be appointed. Since the official reason Hacker's contract was not renewed in the summer of 1994 was due to a lack of financial resources it is not surprising that when Jordan was faced with a salary of between \$40000 and \$50000 for the writer-in-residence that the proposal was quickly consigned to the 'hopper of ideas'. The importance of Jordan's response cannot be underestimated. While he considered that it would be beneficial to have such a person, his first priority was to satisfy the financial demands of the *Review*, which included that of the editor's position. It is hard to believe that Hacker failed to realise the significance of this rebuff, but on the other hand she might have thought that since no previous editor had been fired, her position was secure.

While in New York over the Christmas break Hacker had paid her annual visit to her family doctor for a routine check-up. The doctor discovered a lump on her right breast that had not shown up on a mammogram carried out earlier that day. Hacker had to have a mastectomy on New Year's Eve and three weeks later she started receiving

chemotherapy. Credit has to be paid to Hacker because at no point did she ever allow this traumatic experience to hinder at her work at the *Review*. Evidence of the fact that she played it down can be found in a letter to Reed S. Browning in which she writes, ‘I wanted to “get off my chest” (such as it is) something that’s been bothering me for a while ...’²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ Marilyn Hacker to Reed S. Browning 06.05.93

1993

Hacker's year began badly following her New Year's Eve mastectomy, but ahead of her were more problems. Her planned return to Kenyon in mid-January 1993 had to be postponed until February 8 to enable her to undergo chemotherapy. Although the treatment often drained her physically she continued to work as normal. A performance evaluation carried out by Reed S. Browning that resulted in an average pay award for Hacker was to cause problems. Also ahead of her were budgetary difficulties that had to be resolved.

On January 6 D.W. Fenza wrote to Philip Jordan to express the AWP's support for the *Review*. Fenza understood that the journal was under threat due to the 'unfriendly economic considerations' now prevalent at many institutions. He informed Jordan that although a multitude of magazines arrived at the AWP offices they considered the *Review* ranked alongside the very best literary reviews in America. Acknowledging Hacker as an outstanding editor, Fenza stated that the *Review* had become livelier and more appealing under her editorship. Attributing the significance of the *Review*'s success to its relevance and freshness, he considered feminism and multiculturalism as the most important literary development since romanticism.

Fenza attributed Kenyon College's eminence to the success of the *Review*. The relationship between the two contributed to the national reputation of both, but without the *Review* the College 'would be a much smaller and obscure place'. He finished the

letter by hoping that the trustees would do everything in their power to allow the *Review* to continue.²⁰⁸

Stephen Booker started 1993 as he finished 1992, by writing to Hacker. Having spent Christmas and New Year deliberating over his invented word ‘daintiliousness,’ Booker conceded that not everyone was as attuned to his thoughts as himself when it comes to figuring out what motivated Sandii, whom he believes was intelligent enough to have various reasons for her behaviour, or perhaps none at all. While on one level Sandii scared Booker, he stated that she could also be summed up as simply ‘a game broad w/attitude’. Booker’s aim of having ‘Sandii’ pulsate on the page was a way of imposing his reality on readers rather than relying on their own abilities to bring her to life. He wanted to present the genuine article as opposed to a ‘masturbatory fetish’.

Hacker’s insightful comments were appreciated by Booker who stated that she had caused him to take a hard look at his word usage. Quoting the definition of ‘womanish’ from Roget’s thesaurus he writes that it’s ‘a bunch of shit,’ since neither his mother nor many women he knows fits this definition. Once again Booker reminded Hacker he did not want any changes in ‘The Pied Piper of Murderloin Downs’. Since he had to exist in such an establishment he thought he had the right to call it what he wished. To emphasise the point he refers to the ‘poor maniac’ hung in Washington State. Booker cites him as an example of someone ‘de-eyed’ and ‘ununderstood’. He urges Hacker to write and let him know her decision and thanks her for ‘a lesson in word-courage vs. word-sense’.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ D.W. Fenza to Philip Jordan 06.01.93

²⁰⁹ Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker 12.01.93

Hacker's Mastectomy

Referring to Hacker's mastectomy, Booker advised her to 'press on,' and not allow it to get her down. Admitting he knew little about many things, Booker wrote that it was at just such times that one appreciated the things that were truly important. Stating he was almost expert in the psychology of dragging oneself down to the point of imagining oneself in the grave, Booker had learnt that whatever happened to be the 'immediate problem' did not warrant the degree of worry spent on it. In other words, nothing was ever quite as bad as it first appeared and a positive mental outlook was essential to avoid 'f-ing' herself up.²¹⁰

Kenyon College's associate professor of English, Ted Mason, wrote to Jordan on January 12 to convey the Department's support for the *Review*. Acknowledging that every part of the College's budget was under scrutiny, Mason echoed what Fenza had written in stating that the *Review* added to the 'quality of life ... at the College, for students, faculty, and administration alike'. The English Department was satisfied that the presence of the *Review* accrued value for Kenyon far beyond Gambier.²¹¹

James Gill contacted Hacker in January to have half a dozen copies of the *Review* plus three copies of *Going Back to the River* sent to him for a bookstall at the Jerusalem Festival. He abruptly changed the subject to discuss cancer drugs which were available in Europe but which were not yet obtainable in the States. If Hacker could provide Gill with the names of the drugs she wanted he would use his contacts to enquire as to their availability. Clearly knowledgeable on the subject, Gill informed Hacker that there were new approaches that could be utilised in conjunction with chemotherapy, and in certain

²¹⁰ Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker 09.02.93

cases circumvent chemotherapy entirely. Describing Hacker's spirit as 'indomitable,' Gill wrote that there were 'many winners' now, adding that research in the field of cancer was considerable.²¹²

Hacker was impressed by a selection of Tory Dent's poems received in February 1993 and chose 'Family Romance' and 'Many Rivers to Cross' for publication. Apologising for having to schedule so far ahead, she informed Dent that her poems would most likely not appear in print until the Summer 1994 issue. At this time Hacker was undergoing a six-month period of chemotherapy. Her first session had been on January 23 and the treatment was scheduled to finish in June. She put Dent in the picture regarding her 'unexpected bout under the knife,' adding that she was taking high doses of vitamins called 'Immune Protectors' in an effort to maintain her workload. Making her customary appeal for Dent to subscribe to the *Review*, Hacker also asked if Dent were familiar with Michael Klein, the editor of *Poets for Life*, who was then compiling a second volume of poetry and prose about HIV/AIDS. Hacker believed he would be interested in Dent's work and told her to feel free to mention her name.²¹³

As a fan of Hayden Carruth, Hacker was delighted to receive a batch of his poems in mid-February. Carruth had not intended them as a submission to the *Review*, rather they were simply sent to her as a friend. However, she considered 'The Camps' to be 'bloody fucking brilliant' and stressed in capitals that she wished to publish it along with three other poems of Carruth's in the Fall 1993 issue. Comparing 'The Camps' with Denise Levertov's Vietnam poems and June Jordan's poems about Palestinians, Hacker stated that most poetry about 'events far away' didn't work for her, since she was always

²¹¹ Theodore O. Mason to Philip Jordan 12.01.93

²¹² James Gill to Marilyn Hacker 18.01.93

conscious that the poet had not been there. 'The Camps' was, in her opinion, different because it took the material further than mere protest or reportage.²¹⁴

Hacker had almost given up on Frank Chipasula's essay on African poets. It had been over a year since he first proposed the essay and while she was keen to publish it, she had a few queries. She hoped she was correct in assuming that the essay was not identical to the introduction in Chipasula's *Mother Tongues* to prevent the *Review* from publishing work which would simultaneously appear in book form. Chipasula had omitted to indicate the languages in which the writers had originally written and Hacker thought this information was vital in emphasising the diversity of African languages. She also believed it was necessary for American readers who assumed the English language reigned over other languages. Although she had found Chipasula's own poems very enjoyable she refused them on the basis that the *Review* was 'groaning' under the weight of a poetry overload. Chipasula's essay, originally scheduled for the Spring or Summer 1993 issues was now re-scheduled for the Spring 1994 edition.²¹⁵

On receiving the copies of the *Review* and book he had requested, James Gill contacted Hacker with the news that he had given copies of *Going Back to the River* to Estée de Nour, General Director of the Jerusalem Festival and Vivian Eden, who was in charge of organising the poetry readings. Gill sympathised with the landslide of submissions Hacker had to handle along with the attendant problems. During his 'tenure of 2PLUS2' Gill discovered 'sensitive, often thoughtful ... word arrangers' who were run

²¹³ Marilyn Hacker to Tory Dent 10.02.93

²¹⁴ Marilyn Hacker to Hayden Carruth 17.02.93

²¹⁵ Marilyn hacker to Frank M. Chipasula 18.02.93

of the mill writers while ‘absolutely awful, schizoid, predatory human beings’ could write ‘profound, compassionate’ pieces.²¹⁶

A Second Cycle of Chemotherapy

Towards the end of February, Hacker was feeling as well as could be expected. However, she had had her second cycle of chemotherapy postponed due a low white blood cell count and mentioned to Alfred Corn that any postponement seemed to drag the process out endlessly. She found life in Gambier consumed more time and energy than New York and she hated what she described as ‘this horrendous Stalingrad weather’. Another complication for her was that she missed her partner, Karyn London, who worked in a hospital emergency room in New York. Hacker was scheduled to return to New York on March 12 and hoped to meet with Corn. She joked that she was bald, but that Sinéad O’Connor was still in style.²¹⁷

Hacker informed Rafael Campo on 25 February that she was suffering ‘constant exhaustion’ due to the bad weather in Ohio. Underneath the date on her letter she had written ‘bitter cold/ snow & more expected’. She had by now begun her second treatment of chemotherapy and was taking what she described as ‘cell killer’ pills. The good news arising from her hospital appointment in Columbus was that after supplying the doctors with her health history and domestic status, which included details about her partner, Karyn, who was just completing her PA training in New York Hacker was asked if Karyn would be interested in a job at the James Cancer Center at OSU Hospital.

²¹⁶ James Gill to Marilyn Hacker 24.02.93

²¹⁷ Marilyn Hacker to Alfred Corn 22.02.93

At the time, Karyn was working in Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx and according to Hacker she hated it, due to the 'profit-motivated, sleek, contemptuous male doctors there'. Although London would not be fully qualified until the following January, there was a possibility that part of her training could be carried out in Ohio. Hacker was critical of the male oriented Lincoln Hospital in which London found herself. She stated that London was 'not allowed to do anything,' was not consulted on matters in which she was knowledgeable and told 'There's no place for you here,' when she asked to work Saturdays at the 'almost clandestine' abortion clinic. Hacker, who had found Campo's creative energy stimulating, informed him that she had reduced her working day from the normal 11 hour day in order to devote time to her own writing.²¹⁸

Having heard about Hacker's cancer scare, Ruth Whitman wrote to say that she had had a 'similar shock about mortality and vulnerability'. Whitman had been receiving treatment chemotherapy for leukaemia over the past six years and explained that her condition came in cycles. Contrary to what might have been expected, Whitman was writing more than she had ever done. She explained that she did as much work as possible while she felt able to, because when she was ill she was unable to tackle the smallest chore. Along with her heartfelt good wishes Whitman believed there was a chance of permanent remission for Hacker. She thought that Hacker would now be discovering that she must decide what is important in life and 'do everything you want to do'. It was with shame that Whitman admitted that she only read friends' copies of the *Review*. She had recently stopped teaching at MIT and was taking a year off to write and travel.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Marilyn Hacker to Rafael Campo 25.02.93

²¹⁹ Ruth Whitman to Marilyn Hacker 06.03.93

Writing from Italy in March, Cyrus Cassells sent two AIDS related poems, 'Marathon,' and 'Evening Lasting As Life' to the *Review*. 'Marathon' had been written for his friend, Melvin Dixon, shortly before he died. Having lost four friends to AIDS in recent months, Cassells had been preoccupied with the disease. Some good news he shared with Hacker was that his second book, *Soul Make A Path Through Shouting*, was soon to be published by Copper Canyon Press and that Stanley Kunitz had selected him for a Peter I.B. Lavan Younger Poet Award.²²⁰

When Jeffrey Betcher received notification that his poem 'Elegy,' had been accepted by the *Review* he was over the moon. He believed it was appropriate that it should be Hacker who accepted it since it concerned his first experience with AIDS during his 'coming out'. As a Kenyon alumnus Betcher exchanged some reminiscences with Hacker.²²¹

In mid-April, Hacker wrote to Omar Castaneda informing him that due to ongoing chemotherapy she would have to pass on a writing favour he had requested. She explained about her breast cancer and stated that she was 'running on empty' most of the time due to the treatment. As such she had been forced to cut back on non-essential work. As well as her normal editorial work Hacker was putting together the 'horrendous' Lila Wallace marketing grant. In closing, she mentioned that she was now working on the Summer and Fall 1994 issues.²²²

When Hacker wrote to Cassells in April she informed him that Copper Canyon were also publishing her *New & Selected Poems* in the spring/summer of 1994. Her intended title, however, *Against Elegies* had been scuppered by Carolyn Forché's Norton

²²⁰ Cyrus Cassells to Marilyn Hacker 04.03.93

²²¹ Jeffrey Betcher to Marilyn Hacker 14.03.93

anthology, *Against Forgetting*, so she was still deciding what to call it. Hacker gave Cassells a run down on her condition, starting with her New Year's Eve mastectomy and subsequent chemotherapy. While she had been given a good prognosis she admitted that the treatments were no picnic and left her exhausted. To counter the effects of temporary hair loss she had had a crew cut. Travelling back and forth between Gambier and New York was also sapping her strength. Hacker wanted to publish Cassells' poem 'Marathon' and had two possible suggestions on how to introduce the poem, which had been written as a tribute to Melvin Dixon. She had a query for Cassells regarding his choice of 'dying bed' in preference to 'deathbed'. Despite the fact that she was in the process of scheduling work for the Summer 1994 issue she wanted to fit 'Marathon' into the Fall 1993 issue to coincide with the first anniversary of Dixon's death.²²³

Tory Dent found out about Hacker's cancer from friends and towards the end of April wrote with some advice. Although they had never met, Dent felt a sense of camaraderie with Hacker that empowered her to offer guidance regarding her health problems. Dent had been undecided for a time on whether to disclose her experiences to Hacker since she had been met with differing responses in her desire to share her methods with others. However, she felt that the regime she now followed was saving her life. Dent had appreciated Hacker sharing her health problems with her in responding to her poetry submission and wanted to offer her friendship and support. Having been diagnosed HIV positive in April 1988 at the age of thirty, Dent had employed a number of healing practices that she believed had improved her condition dramatically. Hacker's mention of 'super immune support vitamins' had prompted Dent to suggest alternative

²²² Marilyn Hacker to Omar Castaneda 13.04.93

²²³ Marilyn Hacker to Cyrus Cassells 18.04.93

treatment. As someone with an unusual medical history, Dent stated she had found conventional treatment unsatisfactory and as such she sought alternative methods. When first diagnosed HIV positive, she was told she would have two years maximum to live since everyone who tested positive developed AIDS. It was customary at the time to be prescribed full-doses of AZT despite some doctors' scepticism. Dent refused AZT and ignored recommended T-cell testing, since everyone known to her who had followed that advice had died. Uncertain whether she was simply lucky or not, Dent, who had lost five friends to AIDS, was nevertheless confident that her health was improving and that she had made the correct decisions with regard to her condition. She believed that bearing in mind she might not be the exception safeguards her against denial. She emphasised the importance of focusing on a life enhancing approach to recovery involving friends and work. It was Dent's belief that hope was critical to the healing process and her main dissatisfaction with conventional medicine lay in its 'less than hopeful' approach. She strongly endorsed an alternative approach and felt it was directly attributable to her improved health.

When only eight months old, Dent fell from her cot and suffered a subdural hematoma. Following surgery in 1979 at the age of 21, she developed grand mal seizures. Scans revealed the seizures were caused by scar tissue on the brain as a result of the hematoma. Dent explained how she first discovered she could heal herself. While in college she had been on phenobarbital and dilantin which dulled her thinking. Since her neurologist had said the seizures would only be reduced in number and not eliminated entirely, Dent, who at the time was suffering between 5-7 seizures annually decided to cut down on her medication. The result was that her thinking process cleared and her

studies improved. One day while grocery shopping, Dent experienced an aura. Her method for dealing with it was to sit on the shop floor, bury her head in her hands and 'will' it away. From that moment on, Dent found this method worked for her. When she told her neurologist, she was informed the method she had discovered for herself was known as bio-feedback. The difference in Dent's case was that bio-feedback had never been used to treat her condition. In fact, the technique was used to treat high blood pressure. Bio-feedback, as Dent explains it, is a way of self-treatment in which a communication is transmitted to the body that it is being looked after. Through a variety of different methods of alternative treatment, including psychotherapy and physical therapy, Dent's health improved greatly. As far as cost is concerned, she does not consider it to be any more expensive than orthodox medicine. Eleven years had now passed since her last seizure.

In 1983 Dent took ill with an undiagnosed virus. Doctors believed it to be Hodgkin's Disease and she underwent a lymph node biopsy. Three nodes were removed and it took her six months to recover the power in her arm. Next, doctors thought she had leukaemia, but blood tests proved otherwise. For three weeks she underwent tests in N.Y.U. medical centre, until finally a young infectious disease specialist diagnosed what at the time was called 'pre-aids'. At this point there was no HIV test available. Dent, then aged 24, went to Block Island, R.I. for the summer, during which time she meditated and learned self-healing techniques. When she returned to hospital in autumn she had completely recovered, causing the doctor to backtrack on the AIDS diagnosis. However, in 1988 she tested HIV positive, and stated that in retrospect it appeared the 1983 diagnosis was accurate after all. Since 1988 Dent had built up a network of medical

services which included a homeopathic doctor, a nutritionist/ chiropractor, a traditional HIV specialist, a shiatsu practitioner and an Ayurveda doctor. On top of this she meditated three times daily, practised transcendental meditation, exercised every other day and sought instruction in the Alexander technique. She considered her approach to be one of common sense and compared her integrated lifestyle to that of a farmer.

Dent stressed the importance of understanding that alternative medicine could take longer to show results than conventional methods. However, she believed they were healthier with respect to promoting longevity and a more stable mental and physical outlook. Stating that alternative medicine was not in conflict with conventional methods, Dent wrote that she took a PCP prophylactic, adding that if there were a drug available that cured HIV she would take it in an instant. She deducted the cost of her alternative medicine from her taxes following a struggle with the IRS. The hardest thing Dent had to cope with had been what she called 'the integration process,' in other words, working out a schedule with which she was able to cope. She admitted it took her five years to get it together. Her order of priorities was health first, then work and friends and she said that along the way she figured out her own motto which stated that if one's health is given priority everything falls into place, but if health is placed last everything falls to pieces.

The long letter ended with an offer to put Hacker in touch with any of the practitioners responsible for aiding Dent's recovery, and indeed, provides a mini-directory of names. Dent asked, 'Where did you come from Marilyn?' She thanked Hacker for accepting poems for publication she wished she had never had to write. Hacker had heard Dent read 'Many Rivers to Cross' at Barnard the previous spring. In January 1993 Dent had been asked by Michael Klein to contribute a poem to an AIDS

anthology being published by Persea and this led to her submitting a manuscript which was accepted.²²⁴

Hacker's Poor Evaluation

In early May Hacker wrote to Reed S. Browning that she 'wanted to get off her chest (such as it is)' something that had been on her mind for several months. In January she received an evaluation with which she was unhappy since she believed it concentrated too much on the purely literary aspect of her editorship while ignoring the financial side. Hacker complained that the Lila Wallace grant required months of 'mind-numbing and soul-destroying' work for which she received no extra pay. With respect to the Lannan grant it was due to Hacker that the Foundation had even considered *The Kenyon Review*. Hacker had informally 'lobbied' them to open up the application process to allow such as the *Review* to apply. The Lannan Foundation literary director had expressed a high regard for what Hacker was doing at the *Review*. Since its inception the Lannan Foundation had automatically awarded grants to the same three journals.

During the appraisal Hacker and Browning discussed the *Review's* rise in bookstore circulation from 450 per month to 1975, not including those sold at the Kenyon Bookstore. However, this did not feature in the evaluation. Having assumed that the College was not in a position to award a merit raise, she did not expect one, however, she was upset on discovering that other faculty members received one. She stated that if anyone deserved one, she did, since she raised over \$103,000 for the *Review* in grant awards and raised the *Review's* status considerably. Even more than the 'average' raise for which she was recommended she was troubled by the 'average' performance ranking

²²⁴ Tory Dent to Marilyn Hacker 24.04.93

she received, since she considered that prior to her illness she put the literary and business needs of the *Review* before everything else.²²⁵

On May 10 Browning wrote to Hacker to confirm they had lunch scheduled for later in the week. Stating that the main purpose of the meeting was to discuss 'how the world was going,' he also had two items of business he wished to chat about. Browning expressed his regret that health problems which had affected both of them had not permitted a meeting in January. He was rather condescending in his explanation that a standard increase was a satisfactory response to good work because 'Kenyon expects good work from its employees'.

The Haunting - Part IV

The second matter Browning wanted to discuss was Hacker's notification that she would not teach during 1993-94. His response, 'That's not acceptable,' was terse to say the least. He reminded Hacker about a meeting she had attended with Philip Jordan and Browning at which it was stressed that in order to lower Kenyon College's subsidy of the *Review* she would assume responsibility for teaching a course. Browning conceded to having shied away from insisting on her teaching at that time because she had expressed concern at the amount of time involved and how it would affect her editorial work.²²⁶

In a memo from the Academic Dean, Anne Ponder, Hacker learned she had been assigned to Sunset Cottage which she would share with members of the English Department. In pointing out how this new arrangement would operate, Ponder gave advance warning that 'complaints about noise will be considered very bad form'.

²²⁵ Marilyn Hacker to Reed S. Browning 06.05.93

²²⁶ Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker 10.05.93

However, this noise could be offset by strategically arranging books and wall hangings to 'acoustical advantage'. The interesting part of the letter concerns Ponder's hope that collegial conversation would be generated between members of the English Department and *Kenyon Review* staff. She also expressed a wish that *Review* staff would make English Department members feel welcome.²²⁷ This implies that there was some tension between the two groups, evidence of which may be found in a statement by Eleanor Bender Hamilton. She said, 'At Kenyon, she built a wall around herself. Yet she would say they snubbed her. Her office was in a small building with other members of the English Dept. Yet, she did not chat with people, or make an effort to get to know them. She was not collegial and didn't grasp the need to be collegial.'²²⁸ Clearly this reluctance on Hacker's part to actively engage with members of the English Department did not help her either at the time or later when her position as editor was under threat.

While theoretically this change of accommodation was to Hacker's advantage in the sense that facilities could be shared, *Review* staff were still spread throughout the campus. As such, they remained on the list of people seeking more space, and more importantly, contiguous accommodation.

Another headache for Hacker was the proposed budget for 1993-94 which had been set by the College at \$135,000. Reed S. Browning had been informed unofficially that Hacker had assumed a subsidy of \$141,700 and advised her to do her sums again.²²⁹

The Haunting - Part V

²²⁷ Anne Ponder to Marilyn Hacker, Theodore O. Mason and Cy Wainscott 11.05.93

²²⁸ Eleanor Bender Hamilton to Jack Harvey 11.06.02

²²⁹ Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker and Cy Wainscott 13.05.93

On the same day, May 13, that Hacker received notice to reassess her budget, Browning wrote her a second letter stating he had consulted letters written in November and December 1991 vis-à-vis her teaching commitment. Following a recent conversation they had had Browning thanked her for understanding the importance of 'taking responsibility' for the course and said he would contact Ted Mason, Chair of the Department of English who would in turn get in touch with her regarding the creative writing course she would teach in the second semester of 1993-94. Browning finished by wishing Hacker well for her summer in France and a successful launch of a French edition of her poetry.²³⁰

By May 18 *Review* managing editor, Cy Wainscott, had submitted a revised budget. He stated that the new budget reflected the staff's resolve to attain greater autonomy for the *Review*. Admitting it would not be an overnight process he expressed a determination to move as speedily and efficiently as possible towards achieving that aim. The revised projection represented a cutback of almost nine percent in support from Kenyon College in comparison to the 1992-93 budget in order to conform to the instruction to reduce College support to \$135,000. Wainscott did not hide the fact that reducing the *Review*'s dependence on College funds was difficult at a time when they were trying to put the journal on a more sound financial footing while simultaneously maintaining the level of quality expected by readers. Since Wainscott had not been involved in preparing the preliminary budget he admitted to being uncertain about the reasoning and history surrounding it. He wanted to know if the *Review* staff should have been aware of the ceiling cap prior to submitting the preliminary budget or whether the ceiling cap was determined after the budget had been submitted. In other words, would

²³⁰ Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker 13.05.93

any preliminary budget have satisfied the committee, or did they simply expect cuts to be made on any initial budget? Wainscott's 'perception' was that neither Hacker nor Martha Finan had been aware the ceiling cap had been lowered and their aim had been simply to reduce the dependence on financial support from the College. When Hacker was hired she had been informed the ceiling cap was \$150,000 and this sum had been confirmed several times, so she was not only surprised to discover on May 11 there had been a reduction in College support but was concerned that she had not been consulted prior to the implementation. In the face of rising business costs, she could not understand what she perceived to be an arbitrary reduction.

It was Wainscott's 'understanding' that the Lila Wallace and Lannan Foundation grants supported a fund-raising consultant and that she had already visited Kenyon. Apparently she had spoken to President Jordan, submitted rough outlines of a program and now awaited word to implement it. Since the funding for the consultant was on a 'use-it-or-lose-it' basis Wainscott was anxious to take advantage of her expertise and allow her to work with the College Development Department to secure more and continuing support for the *Review*. The consultant, Eleanor Bender Hamilton, was development director at the University of California at Davis. She told Hacker that with the cooperation of the Kenyon Development Department it was not unreasonable to expect that \$5,000 could be realised in added and continuing support for the *Review* in the 1993-94 financial year. Bender Hamilton emphasised that any major returns from the 1993-94 endeavour would produce greater returns in the coming years. The revised budget now included this \$5,000 under 'Grants-supported funding effort' which now raised the total under Gifts/Grants to \$25,000. The other \$20,000 was made up of

\$8,500 from the National Endowment for the Arts, \$2,125 from the Lannan Foundation, \$2,867 from the Ohio Arts Council and individual gifts totalling \$6,508. Wainscott acknowledged that this change would require the cooperation and support of both the Development office and the President's office and speculated that this support would signify a substantial 'Return on Investment'. He added he could not presume to know whether this support would be forthcoming or not. Finishing on an ironic tone, Wainscott stated that unless the College had discovered a way of printing money he could not find a way to further reduce the budget without compromising the objective of *The Kenyon Review*.²³¹

In mid-June 1993 Hacker sent a detailed report of the *Review*'s activities for the year to Provost Reed S. Browning. She began by stating that since she returned to campus on July 27 1992 until the October 30 deadline, the *Review* staff had been 'up to our scalps' in preparing the second phase of the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Foundation Marketing and Promotion grant application. The 72-page application form was a time consuming task that required a commitment of '10-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week'. In addition she had to attend a conference for Stage 1 grantees in San Francisco, while at the same time overseeing the routine operations involved at the *Review*. She emphasises the 750 unsolicited manuscripts arriving every month and the importance of maintaining a schedule and keeping within budget.

Staff changes at the *Review* had also consumed valuable time. Managing editor Martha Finan had announced her resignation the previous August, so a search for a replacement had to be carried out towards the end of 1992. Consulting fiction editor David Lynn was in England, while consulting poetry editor David Baker, was on

²³¹ Cy Wainscott to Joseph Nelson 18.05.93

sabbatical. Baker had been diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome and was unsure of his future at the *Review*.

On the immediate agenda was an appointment to the recently created post of marketing coordinator. Recent recruits to the *Review* were Eleanor Bender Hamilton, the funding consultant who would also serve as a consulting poetry editor and novelist Carole Maso as consulting fiction editor. Bender was founding editor of the now defunct *Open Places* while Maso, besides being a writer of innovative fiction, had contacts throughout the country.

The awarding of \$79,430 by the Lila Wallace Foundation in November 1992 meant that the *Review* could now create part-time positions for a marketing coordinator and a marketing assistant while also providing additional funding for editorial assistant Doris Dilts, while employed on marketing matters.

Under Hacker's editorship, the *Review's* bookstore circulation soared from 450 to 1800. Inland and DeBoer were the distributors when she arrived. However, she negotiated for Fine Print and Ingram to help deal with distribution. During the autumn of 1992 the *Review* conducted its usual direct mail campaign to Kenyon alumni and friends as well as to subscribers to *Poets & Writers* and *The American Voice*. Sample copies of the *Review*, complete with subscription information, were also mailed to parents of first-year College students.

Hefferman, the company who had been printing the *Review* since 1982, went bankrupt in late 1992. Martha Finan's last major piece of business as managing editor of the *Review* was in securing Thomson-Shore as the new printer, and it was only now, in the summer of 1993, that they were beginning to catch up with scheduling delays.

Finan's departure resulted in a misunderstanding between James Gill and Hacker. Hacker had written to Gill on May 13 to clear up what he described as a 'perplexing misunderstanding'. Apparently Gill had told Wallis Menozzi that Finan was leaving the *Review* and somehow Wallis Menozzi thought he was referring to Hacker. It is inconceivable that Gill would say any such thing regarding Hacker and the episode clearly upset him. He paid tribute to her courage and perseverance that he compared to his own personal struggle against ill-health, 'including Mark Twainish reports of hyperbolic departures'. When Gill spoke to Menozzi on May 25 it emerged that the misunderstanding probably occurred because of a letter she had written to Finan expressing her regret that she was leaving. Gill asked rhetorically, 'why should I ever make such a wounding, thoughtless, aimless statement?' Ironically, by the time Menozzi's letter reached Gambier, Finan had left. The incident disappointed Gill, who found it difficult to believe that Menozzi would attribute such a remark to him.²³²

There were over one hundred applicants for the vacant managing editor's post. The successful candidate was Cy Wainscott, formerly the managing editor of *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland. Hacker stated she was 'extremely happy' with Wainscott who joined the *Review* in April. David Breithaupt was appointed marketing coordinator in May 1993, while Mary Ende was hired as a marketing and clerical assistant starting on June 1.

The Theater Issue came out in spring of 1993 and Hacker reported that both subscribers and professionals complimented the *Review* on its content and appearance. Her hope for this edition was that it would be treated in a similar fashion to the De Colores issue that was read as an anthology by theatre readers and used by drama

²³² James Gill to Marilyn Hacker 25.05.93

teachers throughout the U.S. As a way to promote the issue the *Review* staff announced its publication to theatre journal subscribers and 900 bookstores which either had large theatre sections or which specialized in theatre. One hundred and fifty copies had already been ordered for use in schools.

Eleanor Bender Hamilton suggested the *Review* approach corporations with a history of philanthropic contributions to the arts requesting a \$1,000 donation in each of the next three years. Initially, 50 letters were sent out, but it was an ongoing project aimed at uncovering potential benefactors.

The direct mail campaign was in a state of uncertainty since around 8,000 of the projected 38,000 mailings had apparently been misplaced by the U.S. Postal Service.

Hacker reported the good news that the *Review* had received more than twenty Pushcart Prize nominations and that included in their next anthology would be Rebecca McClanahan's short story, 'Somebody,' and Suzanne Gardinier's essay, 'Two Cities: On The Iliad'. Poems of Stephen Berg and Mary Oliver would appear in *Best American Poetry 1993*. This was the best performance ever for the *Review* in terms of Pushcart nominations.

Processing the results of a reader survey conducted earlier in the year had been delayed due to a shortage of computers. However, Hacker acknowledged the help of Anne Ponder in relieving this shortage. The survey results would be used to invite fresh advertising and grant assistance.

Included with Hacker's report to Browning was a selection of reader/writer mail received at the *Review*. She recorded that the only letters of complaint were from rejected authors accusing them of having students read the manuscripts of 'unknown'

writers or complaints about discovering a subscription request with the rejected manuscript.

Although she had not been asked to list her own professional successes, Hacker thought it appropriate to do so, since, as she pointed out, the report was coming from her and not the *Review* staff as a whole. This list was very impressive and included the publication of *Against Elegies: New and Selected Poems* by Copper Canyon Press, due to appear in spring 1994; inclusion in *Best American Poetry 1992*; publication in September 1993 of *Fleuves et Retours*, a bilingual collection of her work with French translations by Jean Migrenne; inclusion of a considerable selection of her work in *No More Masks: 20th Century American Women's Poetry*, scheduled to be published in July 1993; poetry published in *New England Review*, the autumn issue of the *Paris Review*, the autumn issue of *The American Voice* and the winter/spring issue of *Boulevard*; poetry published in a British journal, *Aquarius* with an accompanying essay by poet-critic Jeremy Reed; poetry scheduled to appear in *Paris Review* and *TriQuarterly*.

With regard to appearances, Hacker explained they had been curtailed due to her cancer and subsequent chemotherapy. However, she did attend the Center for 20th Century Studies at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, where she appeared as reader and lecturer in December 1992. Unfortunately, she had had to cancel readings in New Mexico, California and at Colgate University in New York, scheduled for spring semester.

Her future engagements included readings at Chico State University, San Diego State University and the Lesbian Writers' Series in Los Angeles in October. On the same trip she had scheduled *Kenyon Review* readings in both San Francisco and Los Angeles,

where she would introduce *Review* contributors Bia Lowe, Michelle Clinton, Wanda Coleman and Aleida Rodriguez.

Hacker was very optimistic about the year ahead. She was pleased with the staff at the *Review* and acknowledged the rising prestige of the journal. She informed Browning she felt a 'real sense of accomplishment' following a year of personal and professional hurdles.²³³

Stephen Booker got word that Hacker had not received his reply to his revisions for 'Sandii' and 'Piper'. His letter had gone astray somewhere, though he believed it had been destroyed either before it left Florida State Prison or at Kenyon. He had included a poem, 'Requiem,' which appeared in his volume of poetry, *Tug*. Booker was pleased and relieved that Hacker had agreed to accept 'Piper' with no alterations. He reminded her not to send him any literature, since the prison authorities considered it 'contraband' unless cleared in advance. Included with the letter to Hacker was a postcard for her to return to Booker so he knew she had received his 'kite'.²³⁴

Daniel Curzon sent Hacker a selection of his short fiction, including two stories about the son he had 'sired' with a lesbian couple and another about the status of gay men in society. He expressed his pleasure that gay material was welcome at the *Review*, adding that he had had far too many manuscripts rejected because editors deemed them 'perverted'. In stating that he hoped what he was writing was considered literature and not propaganda, Curzon had made his stories as truthful as he could and hoped one of them would appeal to Hacker.²³⁵

²³³ Marilyn Hacker to Reed S. Browning 16.06.93

²³⁴ Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker 09.09.93

²³⁵ Daniel Curzon to Marilyn Hacker 19.09.93

Towards the end of September Eavan Boland wrote to Hacker from Dublin to say she would be in New York the following month and would like to meet up with her. They had previously discussed the possibility of Boland doing a book review, and Boland suggested reviewing a book by Mark Doty which was awarded a prize by Philip Levine and was largely about AIDS.²³⁶

A common problem for magazine editors concerned novel excerpts and short stories which were already scheduled for publication. On October 6 Hacker wrote to Marina Budhos to apprise her of just such a situation. Since the *Review* normally scheduled work 15 months in advance it meant that the novel from which the excerpt had come would most likely be published before it could appear in the magazine. In Hacker's opinion, this meant that everyone involved lost out since the *Review* missed out on high quality fiction and the author lost out on an opportunity for advance publicity for a forthcoming book. Budhos learned unofficially that her story 'Hollywood,' had been selected by Alfred Corn as co-winner of the *Review's* Emerging Writer award for 1993.²³⁷

Farrar, Straus & Giroux's Editor in Chief, Jonathan Galassi was another notable who wrote to Philip Jordan in support of the *Review*. He shared the view that the *Review's* prestige was in large part responsible for the reputation enjoyed by the College. In terms of American letters he believed the journal was a crucial and challenging component; without the *Review*, both Gambier and the world at large would be lesser places.²³⁸

²³⁶ Eavan Boland to Marilyn Hacker 21.09.93

²³⁷ Marilyn Hacker to Marina Budhos 06.10.93

The Haunting - Part VI

However the saga surrounding Hacker's teaching commitment, dragged on. Reed S. Browning contacted Hacker on October 20 informing her he was surprised she had not yet contacted Ted Mason to make arrangements to teach a course in the English Department. Browning reminded her of the letters he had written to her in November and December of 1991 and May 1993, all of which reiterated the importance of her teaching a course. Ted Mason had received an email from Browning on May 13 informing him that Hacker would contact him, but she never did. As a result of her illness, Browning had allowed her to forgo the course scheduled for the following semester; however, in May he reminded her that the requirement to teach was restored for 1993-94.²³⁹ Browning's frustration is evident as he virtually orders Hacker to 'consult' with Mason 'as soon as possible' regarding 'the course you will offer' in the second semester of 1993-94; since course information had to be made available as quickly as possible.

Hacker contacted Mason and they agreed that the few students who would benefit from her course were already being catered for in a course taught by Philip Church. As a result, Hacker was excused from teaching during 1993-94. However, Browning prompted her to contact Mason about teaching in 1994-95.²⁴⁰ She was asked to contact Browning if she had any queries to discuss prior to deciding which course she would teach.

As requested, Hacker contacted Mason. She informed Browning she would be teaching an advanced poetry workshop in the fall of 1994-95, when there would be a considerable number of suitable students.²⁴¹ She had heard good things about her

²³⁸ Jonathan Galassi to Philip Jordan 12.10.93

²³⁹ Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker 20.10.93

²⁴⁰ Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker 03.11.93

²⁴¹ Marilyn Hacker to Reed S. Browning 10.11.93

forthcoming students and was looking forward to teaching the course. In terms of course schedules Hacker endorsed Mason's arrangement to have Philip Church teach the advanced workshop in spring, with her taking up the reins in the fall. Hacker reminded Browning about her suggestion to invite a guest editor to Kenyon in the spring of 1995 when she expected to be on leave of absence. She wished to discuss the two candidates she had in mind with Browning. They were Carole Maso, who was on the faculty of the Columbia University School of the Arts, author of four books and a recipient of a Lannan Foundation grant, and Suzanne Gardinier, a poet, essayist and fiction writer who had taught literature and creative writing at Rutgers University and was a former associate poetry editor at Grand Street under Hacker's old friend, Ben Sonnenberg. Maso was of course currently employed as a consulting poetry editor with the *Review*. Hacker had asked both her candidates to forward their CVs and letters of intent. Ironically, perhaps, Hacker had informed Maso and Gardinier they would be expected to teach a course as part of the requirement for their guest editorship. Hacker had made it clear to Maso and Gardinier that the final decision would be up to the College's senior staff, with her preferences and recommendations taken into consideration. The suggestion of a guest editor was a return to an idea she put to Philip Jordan in April 1992. Back then, her proposal of a writer-in-residence was consigned by Jordan to the 'hopper of ideas,' and effectively forgotten about by everyone but Hacker. However, she resurrected the idea with Browning by suggesting that the guest editor would provide Kenyon's students with a 'teaching writer-in-residence' while allowing her time to recharge her batteries. Another benefit to the *Review*, not lost on Hacker, was the saving made on her wage bill

while she was on leave. Hacker sent copies of this letter to Philip Jordan and Ted Mason.²⁴²

When Rafael Campo wrote to Hacker on November 11 'he had not fully recovered from the experience' of having met her and hearing her reading. Campo was genuinely overawed at having been befriended by Hacker whom he described as having a tremendous 'generosity of spirit'. A couple of his friends were keen to send their work to the *Review* for Hacker's consideration, while another wanted to move to Ohio to be closer to her sphere of brilliance.

Campo referred to the unquestionable delight he felt at being included in the 'rich and diverse aesthetic that is your vision'. He clearly believed that Hacker was fighting the corner of writers whose work had previously been inaccessible to mainstream journals. In thanking the 'Goddess' for her poetic talents Campo stated that she now had another vehicle with which to tell the world 'Our voices have value'.

At this time, Campo was getting frustrated at a couple of things. Having been promised a blurb for his forthcoming book which was slow to arrive he was 'fearful' that the reviewer had found 'too much queerness in it to overlook'. Another niggle was that he had had no communication from Arte Publico regarding a revised contract for which he was hoping, nor had he received word of his enquiry about rearranging the order of his poems.

Campo's 'antidote' to this situation was to make himself busy with a second manuscript which contained a sequence of sonnets, including one about his daughter and another in which he imagined himself as a woman. On Hacker's advice he had contacted Richard Howard to inform him that this second MS was as yet uncommitted to

²⁴² Marilyn Hacker to Reed S. Browning 10.11.93

publication. However, he was tempted to take up an offer of Hacker's to pass his MS on to her 'editor-friends' at Norton, but he did not consider it fair to burden her with 'yet another' hundred odd pages of his poetry.

It was in response to the essays and poems he had had published in the *Review* that Campo received a letter from a 'queer physician' who admired Hacker's work also. He added that the doctor was not Latino and was probably older, 'otherwise I'd think we were the same person'. Campo suggested that the doctor write to Hacker in praise of her editorial direction in an effort to counter comments 'from the (as always) more vocal adversaries of change'.²⁴³

Almost three weeks passed before Hacker received a reply from Browning to her letter of November 10. Not surprisingly, it was in a similar vein to Jordan's letter 19 months previously. While Browning accepted that both Maso and Gardinier were 'exciting possibilities' he emphasised that commitments such as this had to be avoided until the work of the trustee review committee was completed. Browning told her to be sure to discuss her proposal with David Banks and his colleagues when they visited campus in January 1994.²⁴⁴

Addressing her concerns to 'President Philip Jones,' Alicia Ostriker informed him that she thought it would be 'most unfortunate' for both the College and American letters if the *Review* were dropped. Referring to the *Review* as a 'touchstone' magazine which, for most of the century, had published the most noteworthy writing, she was always pleased to have her work appear there. Ostriker's opinion was that Hacker was doing an exceptional job in establishing a journal addressing the 'need for multicultural awareness

²⁴³ Rafael Campo to Marilyn Hacker 11.11.93

²⁴⁴ Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker 30.11.93

throughout American society' while maintaining the *Review*'s high standards. In T.S. Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' he stated that the 'already-known' should not be repeated. President Jordan was informed by Ostriker that Hacker was achieving what Eliot believed. Before stating that she now read every issue cover to cover, she praised Hayden Carruth's new work; poems she considered to be his best in years. She also applauded the work of Hacker's former husband, Samuel Delaney(sic) for its 'rich fantastic realism,' and Rafael Campo, whom she described as a discovery of Hacker's. Ostriker ended her letter by pointing out the importance of the *Review* to the College.²⁴⁵

As the end of November 1993 approached a steady stream of concerned *Review* readers and subscribers wrote to Jordan expressing their support for the continuance of the journal and for Hacker as editor. Having got wind that the *Review* was 'under dangerous scrutiny,' Anne Shaver, who was a new subscriber, wrote that she was not only defending her own investment, but that she was worried about the future of a 'very special journal'. She explained that when she was interviewed for a post at Denison University in 1973 the location in Ohio had to be clarified in terms of its famous neighbour, Kenyon College. Now a Professor of English at Denison, Shaver stated that it was a 'peculiar situation' that much of the College's historical reputation was based on the 'old' *Review*, when in fact the new version was 'such a different matter'.

Shaver may have inadvertently uncovered the real problem some people had with the *Review*'s content in stating that the 'current journal rides the edge of the academy's inevitable multicultural and interdisciplinary future'. However, she added that the *Review* had not failed in its pursuit of the excellent standards of its predecessor. She praised the *Review*'s tradition for challenging the trends of the day and pointed to

²⁴⁵ Alicia Ostriker to Marilyn Hacker 26.11.93

Ransom's time as a 'young Turk' editor who had introduced new criticism in the face of 'entrenched historicism'. Urging Jordan not to allow the famous journal to disappear, Shaver reiterated the College's good fortune in having such a 'phoenix' to perpetuate its good name, both nationally and internationally.²⁴⁶

If the end of Hacker's editorship was on the horizon she seemed unaware of the fact. Her enthusiasm for taking the *Review* forward seemed as great as ever when she wrote to Louis Simpson on November 30. She emphasised the importance of the work he had published in the *Review* and asked him to consider becoming a donor as well as a contributor. Ironically, she pointed out that it was a 'critical turning point' in the *Review*'s history and that over the past four years the *Review* had resumed its place as one of the country's leading literary journals. Hacker listed the accomplishments of the *Review* along with the successes of individual authors whose work had appeared. She stated that the *Review* published a substantial amount of work from writers of color, not out of political bias, but because she believed that much of the best and most exciting writing stemmed from these people. While most literary magazines stuck to traditional genres, Hacker's vision for the *Review* in terms of expanding literary definitions was coming to fruition. Hacker's objective was to include writing which could not be easily confined to a single genre. In an effort to persuade Simpson to become a donor, Hacker explained how the *Review* had been awarded grants from the Lannan Foundation, the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts once the 'infamous Jesse Helms content oath was removed'. Acknowledging that Kenyon College was experiencing financial problems, Hacker expressed her concern that the budgets of the NEA and the Ohio State arts council had been halved. Advertising was a necessary

²⁴⁶ Anne Shaver to Marilyn Hacker 30.11.93

evil; however, Hacker knew a literary quarterly in Ohio could not attract big-money advertisers.

In order to secure the *Review*'s future Hacker had to convince people like Simpson to become donors. The four categories of donation were Friend at \$100, Sponsor at \$250, Patron at \$500 and for a donation of \$1000 one could become a Lifetime Patron. Donations were used in a variety of ways, including promoting *Review* readings at venues throughout the country, retaining 'old' subscribers, establishing contact with important bookstores, art and design work plus wages for copy-editors and proofreaders. None of these important areas of production was covered by grants, yet in Hacker's opinion they were what attracted readers to the *Review* and made contributors proud to have their work appear in it. Hacker requested up-to-date biographical information on Simpson since she intended to introduce a column in the *Review* listing contributors' successes. In a postscript Hacker informed Simpson that since the *Review* was a non-profit organization any donation he made was tax-deductible.²⁴⁷

On December 3 Ellen Walker, Professor of English at California State University, sent Hacker a copy of the letter she had written to Jordan. She mentioned that Hacker's letter to Carole Simmons Olcs, a colleague of Walker's, seemed 'ominous,' adding that she was willing to do anything she could both in support of her position as editor and that of the *Review*. She also enclosed copies of comments her students had made following Hacker's visit to Chico. Writing that she had been reluctant to forward the comments to Jordan, because they were less 'articulate' than she had hoped, Walker still thought Hacker should put the comments in her file, if she saw fit. She ended her letter by hoping to see Hacker, either in the U.S. or in France.

In her letter to Jordan Walker explained that Hacker had visited Chico to give a reading and serve as a visiting lecturer on her literary editing course. The purpose of her letter was to inform him of how valuable Hacker's input had been and to congratulate the College for its support of the *Review*. Walker's course involved teaching the theory and practice of literary editing. In preparation for producing a literary journal the students studied other literary magazines which served as exemplars. Immediately prior to Hacker's arrival *The Kenyon Review* had been the subject topic. While it is doubtful if any of the students were familiar with the *Review* before Hacker's visit, it was a subject of much discussion afterwards. Describing her as a 'superb addition' to the syllabus, Walker stated that Hacker's overall knowledge, insight and honesty were invaluable in responding to students' questions. The students' comments were included with the letter to Jordan.

Unquestionably, Hacker motivated Walker's students. Following her visit, one girl had applied to several graduate schools with literary journals. The same student, Michelle Herter, was impressed by Hacker's views on the liberation of women. A second female student found the visit enabled her to 'visualize' her editing prospects. Having seen and heard 'a real editor,' rather than simply reading reports had impressed her in ways she never envisaged. Many of the students remarked on how beneficial her visit had been in terms of gaining an insight into how she selected work and the relationships she built up with contributors.²⁴⁸

Not all Hacker's pleas for donations received a sympathetic response. Jim Kates, former editor of *Stand*, was upset over a request to become a donor. He did not publish

²⁴⁷ Marilyn Hacker to Louis Simpson 30.11.93

²⁴⁸ Ellen Walker to Marilyn Hacker and Philip Jordan 03.12.93

his own work in publications with which he was involved and he did not intentionally double-submit, but he did object to being asked to donate money to magazines in which his work appeared. Kates was also unhappy about the format of the donation request in which he was referred to as 'a past and potential' contributor. He had given money to magazines in the past and subscribed to more, but he did not ask magazines to which he made donations to consider his work. Kates' reasoning was sound in the sense that by only subscribing to magazines which did not publish his own work he was able to access different types of poetry. It was Kates' opinion that if everyone operated on the same principle it would even out in the end. In a minor piece of drama Kates offered Hacker an ultimatum. He sent her a sealed envelope containing a cheque made out to *The Kenyon Review*, instructing her that if she cashed it he would not submit any further work for her consideration. If, on the other hand, she returned the cheque, Kates stated he would continue to send his work for what he termed her 'usual rejection'. He closed by saying that in a publishing world which is so easily compromised demarcation lines enabled him to sleep easier at night. Kates' cheque was returned to him.²⁴⁹

Writing from Italy on December 5, Wallis Wilde-Menozzi did not hold back on what she thought about the *Review*'s predicament. She informed Jordan that it had come to her notice that the *Review* was in 'danger,' and that the only feasible response was 'alarm'. 'As you well know,' she wrote, the *Review* was responsible for putting the College on the 'country's intellectual map'. Since Hacker had taken over as editor this was even more evident, according to Wilde-Menozzi. The work she was publishing was 'stunning' and possessed a passion that soared far above that of academic workshops. In

²⁴⁹ James Kates to Marilyn Hacker 04.12.93

Wilde–Menozzi’s opinion each issue superseded the previous one and she claimed to know many Europeans who read the *Review*.

A series of rhetorical questions followed which must have given Jordan much to think about. Wilde–Menozzi wanted to know how a liberal arts college could justify itself if not by concentrating on what was important to today’s society. She questioned how the ‘cost-efficiency of ideas transmission’ could be measured and wished to know the price the College would have to pay if it relinquished its role as ‘beacon and forum’. Kenyon’s great strength was in possessing a magazine as well-established and thought-provoking as the *Review* and Hacker’s editorship had made it required reading even for people outwith universities. Having stated this, she made a direct connection between the *Review*’s continuance and the future of liberal arts. Far beyond its value as a College public relations vehicle, Wilde Menozzi considered the *Review* could be regarded as a ‘set of forest plantings that will go on growing in time’.

In her concluding paragraph, she paid tribute to Hacker, describing her as a ‘force of nature, a rare mind’. She urged Jordan to do everything in his power to ensure the journal was not discontinued, adding that she hoped her remarks would be regarded as a token of her admiration for the *Review* and his devotion to publishing it.²⁵⁰

Frederick Smock, the editor of *The American Voice*, wrote to Jordan on December 8. Expressing his support for Hacker and the *Review*, he declared it was odd to have to defend success. Quoting Monroe K. Spears, who claimed that journals uphold literature ‘as the unifying center to our culture,’ Smock asserted that at any particular time there were few magazines that could be trusted to carry the mantle. The *Review*, however, with its courageous editorial foresight, was well-equipped to lead the way. Asking the same

rhetorical question as so many others, Smock wanted to know how many people were familiar with Kenyon because of the *Review*. In an attempt to save the *Review*, Smock pointed out that 'little' Gettysburg College had elected to start its own literary journal specifically to raise the College profile.

Smock believed that Hacker had not only transformed the *Review*, but had in fact transformed the 'American publishing scene'. Editors of other journals looked to Kenyon as a touchstone of literary excellence. It was with genuine concern that Smock urged Jordan to 'fight for its life!'²⁵¹

Firebrand Books' editor and publisher Nancy K. Bereano also wrote to Jordan on December 8 commending and supporting the work of Hacker and the *Review*. As an independent publisher whose remit was to publish the 'best contemporary feminist and lesbian literature,' she paid close attention to the standards set by literary journals. Entreating Jordan to do all in his power to ensure that the *Review* survived, she wrote that she considered it to be one of the few magazines where 'emerging voices' and 'quality' were synonymous.²⁵²

By the middle of December Jordan's mailbox was starting to fill with a flood of letters praising both Hacker and the *Review* and urging him to do his utmost to preserve the journal's future. Steve Berg of *The American Poetry Review* reminisced about *The Kenyon Review* from forty years previous when he was an aspiring writer. Since Hacker's arrival it had regained its foremost place among literary magazines. He considered the early stages of a writer's life to be very important, adding that responses

²⁵⁰ Wallis Wilde-Menozi to Philip Jordan 05.12.93

²⁵¹ Frederick Smock to Philip Jordan 08.12.93

²⁵² Nancy K. Bereano Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 08.12.93

and criticism from prominent editors provided a great boost to the solitary writer. Berg signed off with an offer of help if there was anything he could do to sustain the *Review*.²⁵³

Assistant Professor of English Adam Brooke Davis wrote to Jordan from Northeast Missouri State University on December 9 to say that while he was sorry to hear that the *Review* was under threat he was heartened to hear of Jordan's commitment to keeping it alive. Davis reinforced the view that the journal was of great importance to the 'national scholarly and literary community'. In fact, Davis had a relationship with the *Review* that ranked as potentially unique, since he had accumulated thirty rejections over the previous decade. However, stating that he had always been treated fairly and politely, he acknowledged that the *Review* set the standards for the rest of the country's journals. Paying tribute to John Crowe Ransom, Davis believed that while many 'historically influential' magazines had stagnated to the point of serving a small elite readership, the *Review* had evolved to 'reflect and shape' the changing literary scene. Complimenting the *Review* on its range of material, Davis was pleased to find it 'mercifully free' from the dull and overemotional 'lit-babble' found elsewhere.

In defence of the *Review*'s viability in the classroom, Davis asserted that when its contents generated good conversation, it was performing a necessary undertaking. The *Review* was, according to Davis, passing on a 'culture of words' to a future generation. Having known many Kenyon graduates, he was of the opinion that the College's reputation had much to do with its prestigious journal. Associating the modern liberal arts culture with attributes he found in both the *Review* and Kenyon graduates he stated that academic aspiration, an awareness of what is important and the 'integrity of craft'

²⁵³ Steve Berg to Philip Jordan 09.12.93

were the vital components. Davis finished by informing Jordan that 'some economies are Pyrrhic' and that 'you don't want to cut off your feet to save money on shoes'.²⁵⁴

Prairie Schooner editor, Hilda Raz, wrote in support of what she described as a 'watershed' magazine. The *Review* was, under Hacker's direction, pushing the barriers of literary publishing. Raz reported that during the previous two years it had been hard to get hold of the *Review* in the University of Nebraska library and that the bookstore sold out every copy.

The *Review* was indispensable to Raz and several of her colleagues who used it in their teaching. She pointed to texts which quickly became outdated, while the *Review* presented fresh work from an international coterie of writers. Enclosing a cheque for \$100, Raz explained that it was only a fraction of what she would prefer to send. She asserted that only with the support of affluent patrons was it possible to 'realize the vision of extraordinary editors,' and then only if colleges and universities had the foresight to appoint a remarkable editor in the first instance.²⁵⁵

Robert Fox, Literature Program Coordinator of Share the Arts was another who contacted Jordan to remind him of a meeting of the Ohio Arts literature advisory panel several years previously which 'erupted in abrasive policy discussions'. Apparently, some members had flinched at the idea of meeting the needs of a multicultural audience, possibly because they interpreted this inclusiveness to mean a drop in standards. Hacker's editorship was proof that culturally diverse material was not only achievable, but, in fact, required.

²⁵⁴ Adam Brooke Davis to Philip Jordan 09.12.93

²⁵⁵ Hilda Raz to Philip Jordan 09.12.93

Comparing the first few 'promising' issues of the New Series of the *Review* edited by Frederick Turner and Ronald Sharp with that of Hacker's editorship, Fox asserted that it had now become a highly prized journal. Like many other commentators, Fox regarded Kenyon College and the *Review* as inseparable to the point that the magazine put the College at the forefront of the country's 'literary consciousness'.²⁵⁶

Writing from Guerneville, California, on December 10, Dorothy Allison informed Hacker that she was enclosing a copy of the letter she was sending to President Jordan in support of her editorship. She was scheduled to give a reading for the Women's and Gender Studies Program, an event that was being co-hosted by the *Review*. Jordan learned that not only was Allison delighted to have the opportunity to read, but that she had been reading the *Review* for years and found it 'extraordinary' under Hacker's leadership. Despite the fixed income of her students, she had urged them to subscribe to the *Review*. Allison claimed to have been surprised by the standard of writing emanating from comparatively young and unheard of writers. Some of the essays which had appeared in the *Review* had been taken as exemplars by Allison to use in her classes. Explaining that she would not be making the trip to Gambier if it had not been for Hacker, Allison added that she was receiving much less than her normal fee for her appearance.²⁵⁷

If Hacker wanted big names to support her leadership of the *Review*, there were few who could match the credentials of Joyce Carol Oates. Paying tribute to the history of the *Review*, Oates went on to express the view that the current journal under Hacker was one of the few noteworthy literary magazines being published in America. Hacker's

²⁵⁶ Robert Fox to Philip Jordan 09.12.93

²⁵⁷ Dorothy Allison to Philip Jordan 10.12.93

'imaginative' editorship had provided a 'living, exciting presence' to a journal which published tremendously varied work from both new and long-established writers. Describing as 'unthinkable' the possibility that the magazine might be discontinued, Oates went further than most in stating bluntly that to many people the 'sole means' by which the College was known was through the *Review*. Her letter ended with her wishing Jordan luck in his fight to save the *Review*.

Having been apprised of the situation by Hacker on December 6, Karl Kirchwey, Director of The Unterberg Poetry Center in New York, wasted no time in writing to Jordan. He expressed his wholehearted support for the work of Hacker and her colleagues at the *Review* over the past few years. Although he felt unable to comment on the value of the *Review* to Kenyon, he stated that it was vastly important to the literary community of the nation. Kirchwey applauded Hacker for the diligent work she was doing as editor and named many of the writers whose work he had enjoyed.

The freshness and completeness of the *Review* with respect to fiction, poetry and essays provided a 'national model' for which the College should be proud. If Jordan did not know it previously, he now knew that in most people's minds the *Review* and the College were indivisible. As yet another to mention this link, Kirchwey went on to enlighten Jordan on the situation with *The Yale Review* several years before. It had been discontinued, only to be resurrected due to the resulting furore. Kirchwey charged Jordan with the responsibility of ensuring the country was not deprived of an iconoclastic journal.²⁵⁸

Copper Canyon Press founding editor Sam Hamill wrote to Jordan on December 10 to notify him that he was fortunate to have the power to save one of the six literary

journals worthy of mention in national or international terms. Hacker had been all-embracing and astute in her choices at a time when many well-known magazines had surrendered to 'cronyism' and boring staleness. It was Hamill's opinion that there was no other college-affiliated magazine to match the *Review*. In making the connection between the College and the *Review*, Hamill wrote that as its President, Jordan carried the burden of responsibility in assuring that the journal continued to keep Kenyon College on the world's literary map. The point he appears to be making is that being President of Kenyon College is only prestigious if the *Review* is functioning as an international emissary on its behalf.²⁵⁹

One of Ellen Walker's colleagues at Chico State University was Associate Professor of English and Coordinator of Creative Writing, Carole Simmons Oles, to whom Hacker had written in November. Writing on December 10 to confirm her support, Oles stated that in no other present-day journal was it possible to find the breadth of material currently available in the *Review* under Hacker's guidance. Prior to Hacker's arrival at Kenyon, Oles had never had occasion to use the *Review* as a teaching tool, but now she found it of value. Referring to Hacker's recent visit to Chico, Oles considered her a wonderful ambassador for the *Review*, due to her honesty, professionalism and unrivalled talent as an editor. Oles wrote that she had never heard such great praise for any visitor and that both faculty and students alike were 'awed' by her presence.

The very thought that the *Review* was under threat due to financial considerations disturbed Oles, who made the point that in terms of advertising the College the journal

²⁵⁸ Karl Kirchwey to Philip Jordan 10.12.93

²⁵⁹ Sam Hamill to Philip Jordan 10.12.93

was priceless. As an exceptional icon of cultural distinction for which Kenyon College was renowned, Oles urged Jordan to continue to support Hacker and the *Review*.²⁶⁰

As 'isolated' as Hayden Carruth was in Munnsville, New York State, he heard about the *Review*'s problems. In view of the fact that most publications were facing an uncertain financial future he did not find the *Review*'s prospects surprising. Not knowing 'what to think,' Carruth's pessimistic outlook included almost every institution committed to 'thought and culture'. He believed if a society was worth sustaining, a more determined effort had to be undertaken to defend the most valuable agencies of cultural dialogue. In his opinion the *Review* led that particular field. Informing Jordan that it was John Crowe Ransom who had boosted his career by publishing some of his early poems, Carruth considered the former editor to be among the finest poets, critics and editors America had been fortunate enough to produce. Ransom's greatest achievement was in thrusting the *Review* to the cultural forefront of Europe and the States. Having become required reading on both continents, the journal deteriorated somewhat in stature following Ransom's departure, but it was Carruth's opinion that under Hacker's 'aggressive new editorship' it had reclaimed its previous reputation. In similar fashion to Ransom's early days, the *Review* was once more connecting with the country's cultural 'elements'. Urging Jordan to use his influence to protect the *Review*, Carruth stated that it was the College's best known and most respected 'manifestation'.²⁶¹

When Catharine R. Stimpson of The State University of New Jersey contacted Jordan on December 12 she came straight to the point. Hacker's appointment as editor was a 'brilliant' coup and the *Review* was an intellectual giant in literary circles. Having

²⁶⁰ Carole Simmons Oles to Marilyn Hacker and Philip Jordan 10.12.93

²⁶¹ Hayden Carruth to Philip Jordan 11.12.93

taking over the reins of a magazine with a history of distinction, she had not only maintained that tradition but supplemented it with fresh 'voices and visions'. Sympathising with the financial constraints placed on small liberal arts institutions, Stimpson asserted that the *Review* lay at the heart of 'what the liberal arts ought to mean'.²⁶²

Vassar College's Nancy Willard wrote to Jordan praising the *Review*, but in doing so she was one of the few supporters who failed to mention Hacker's stewardship, despite notifying her that she was writing to the President. Willard's regard for the journal had developed to a degree from a long-time association with the *Review*. Her letter ended with the sentiment, 'Long may it live'.²⁶³

Professor of English and distinguished critic Terry Castle, was jealous of the prestige the *Review* afforded Kenyon College and wished that his own institution, Stanford University, had a similar publication. As a regular reader and former contributor, he believed under Hacker's 'inspired' leadership it had surpassed its celebrated past to become a vital leader in the U.S. literary community. If the *Review* were to disappear it would be a 'horrible shame'.²⁶⁴

On December 13 James M. Hughes of Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, wrote to Jordan expressing his disquiet for the *Review*'s future. The difference between Hughes and most others concerned about the journal's uncertain prospects was that he was also a 'proud Kenyon parent'. Regarding the *Review* as symbolic of the College's prestigious position he maintained that they reinforced one another's 'unique historic importance'. The *Review*'s reputation had influenced Hughes' son, Brad's choice of

²⁶² Catharine R. Stimpson to Philip Jordan 12.12.93

²⁶³ Nancy Willard to Philip Jordan 12.12.93

Kenyon to study as a political science major. Insisting that the *Review* be preserved, Hughes stated it was recognised in literary circles that its pluck and energy matched the College's high standards of excellence.²⁶⁵

Having been contacted by Hacker to inform him of the problems at Kenyon, Robert Fagles duly wrote to Jordan to weigh in with his support. He was another to acknowledge the debt owed by the College to the *Review*, which he considered had accommodated 'every shifting genre'. By this, he meant the way in which the journal had been flexible in mirroring the trends of the day starting with Ransom's New Criticism to the current multiculturalism embraced by Hacker. For the past two generations the College and the *Review* had been synonymous. Referring to *The Yale Review*, Fagles believed that both institutions gained enormous advantages from their respective magazines at nominal cost. Since Kenyon was enriched by the *Review*'s existence, it seemed irresponsible to jeopardize that potential.²⁶⁶

Having been asked by *The Los Angeles Times* to recommend books for Christmas presents, Kate Braverman indicated that she would give gift subscriptions of the *Review*. Intimating that Hacker and her staff were doing a 'terrific' job, she informed Jordan that she would not normally consider publishing her work for such a small fee. However, she was proud to see her work appear in the *Review*. In an interview for *Ms. Magazine*'s January issue, she mentioned that her most recent and boldest fiction would soon be appearing in the *Paris Review*, *Antaeus* and the *Review*. Braverman rated the *Review* as one of the few places where she could still dare to write as a 'true woman' in a constantly shrinking 'climate of artistic amputation' in what was proving to be an uncongenial time

²⁶⁴ Terry Castle to Philip Jordan 12.12.93

²⁶⁵ James M. Hughes to Philip Jordan 13.12.93

for the literary consciousness. If the *Review* ceased to exist, there would be no alternative market in which to publish, leaving only writing regarded as fashionable.

It was her opinion that the *Review* had previously sunk into irrelevance and become marginalized; however, under Hacker's guidance it had not only been rescued from the point of 'extinction' but had increased its distribution to the extent that Braverman had seen copies in bookshops coast to coast. Subscribing to the *Review* seemed the best way to demonstrate her support now that it had 'reappeared' owing to the terrific dynamism and drive Hacker had brought to it. She was sure she was not the only person who swapped financial gain for the prestige of seeing her work in the *Review*. Braverman, in understanding the power a name can carry, applauded Kenyon for its 'international calling card'.²⁶⁷

Nancy A. Walker, a Professor at Vanderbilt University wrote to Jordan on December 13. Having been reviewing some of Robert Penn Warren's manuscripts and papers with a view to purchasing them for Vanderbilt library she discovered some correspondence between Penn Warren and Ransom relating to the founding of the *Review*. She was reminded of the *Review*'s importance in promoting new routes for significant enquiry and the provision of a platform for writers and intellectuals. Journals such as the *Review* had a major role to play in the nation's aesthetic as well as promoting the eminence of the campuses that support them. Sympathising with the financial strains facing small institutions, Walker informed Jordan that it would be naïve of any college not to support a review which kept it in the forefront of public attention. She hoped that

²⁶⁶ Robert Fagles to Philip Jordan 13.12.93

²⁶⁷ Kate Braverman to Philip Jordan 13.12.93

the literary community would be able to rely on the *Review* to enhance their lives for the foreseeable future.²⁶⁸

Another December 13 letter which arrived on Jordan's desk was from Rosemary Deen, poetry editor of *Commonweal*. She had a particular kinship with Gambier, having first arrived there in the summer of 1948 to attend a 'special School' organised by Ransom, and which included some of the most eminent literary critics of the period. Although she had just received her Master's, she felt that at twenty-two she had 'no business' even applying since she would need to find a job and be awarded a scholarship. Admitting she had no idea why she was successful in having her wish granted she assumed that perhaps effrontery had a part to play.

Deen describes that summer in Gambier almost poetically. She had never lived in a such a small place before, but in the 'lush Ohio summer' the green fields appeared to overwhelm the four corners with corn seemingly growing taller than buildings. The picture painted by Deen is one of rural bliss in which field mice come out at night to do battle with moths larger than themselves. She added that she imagined herself to be in some tropical place unknown to the outside world.

It was *The Kenyon Review's* influence that attracted Deen to Gambier. Realising in retrospect that she was too young to fully appreciate the literary scene, she was still an avid reader of journals which included the *Partisan Review* and the *Sewanee Review*. She found the *Sewanee* was 'often heavy with self-importance' while the *Partisan Review* was very political and so 'New York' that it appeared provincial. In contrast, *The Kenyon Review* was 'it'. Deen found it bursting with energy, both compassionate and worldly. Everyone she wanted to read was to be found in the *Review*, and despite the

²⁶⁸ Nancy A. Walker to Philip Jordan 13.12.93

quaintness of the surrounding fields with its attendant small animals, Deen did not feel that the 'great figures' she met there were in any way out of place. In this 'unmappable tropic' their presence only served to enhance the cosmopolitan atmosphere that was Gambier back then.

In a recent issue, Deen had discovered work by William Empson, one of the people she had met back in 1948. She enjoyed Empson's piece and praised the manner in which the *Review* had succeeded in gauging the best in contemporary literature while also finding space for 'old treasures'. Deen believed the *Review* could easily be utilised in class due to its eclectic contemporary material. This was the quality which meant it surpassed any book available.

Acknowledging the great changes in American literature over the past 40 years, Deen wrote that although *Commonweal* was not a literary magazine and only published a handful of poems every year, she read in the region of a thousand poems every year. Since the majority of the poems Deen received were competent and some were extremely good she judged that the literate population of America was substantial. All this added to a potentially large readership for journals such as the *Review*. Rightfully proud of her Gambier connection, Deen believed intelligent editors were aware of their responsibilities with respect to America's status in international culture. She congratulated Jordan for playing an important role in ensuring its continuance.²⁶⁹

Wendy Lesser of *The Threepenny Review* considered *The Kenyon Review* to be one of the few literary journals which had sustained its influence on America for as long

²⁶⁹ Rosemary Deen to Philip Jordan 13.12.93

a period of time. Jordan was urged to continue to support it since it was indispensable to literary society.²⁷⁰

Though she had been an occasional reader of the *Review* prior to Hacker's arrival, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick took out a two-year subscription when she heard about her appointment. She was keen to express her opinion of the *Review*'s prestige and position in American letters. It had become integral to her dual roles as reader and writer and to many of her students and colleagues. In particular she had used the De Colores issue as the main text in teaching a course lasting several weeks.

More so than any other publication, the *Review* was indispensable to contemporary literary life. Although Sedgwick appreciated the financial problems besetting the College she could not believe that the *Review* with its pre-eminent history could be allowed to die.²⁷¹

Enclosing a copy of her letter to Jordan, Jane Cooper wrote to Hacker on December 15 in the hope that the problems at Kenyon were not insurmountable. She apologised that the cheque she had sent was not larger and asked Hacker to get in touch if she were going to be in New York during January.

Cooper informed the President that she wholeheartedly supported the *Review*'s development under Hacker. As a subscriber to many literary magazines, she was well placed to offer an insight into the prominent role the *Review* played in literary circles. It was Cooper's informed view that it was the 'most consistently challenging' of all the available journals because Hacker consciously sought out the different voices who appeared.

²⁷⁰ Wendy Lesser to Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 14.12.93

²⁷¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to Philip Jordan 15.12.93

Having become acquainted with the *Review* under Ransom's editorship in the forties she stated that the excitement of finding it in her letterbox then had returned with Hacker's reign. Although Cooper was familiar with the pressures facing small liberal arts colleges after having taught for nearly forty years at Sarah Lawrence, she hoped the College would continue to support the *Review* and its place in the life of the nation.²⁷²

University of New Orleans Associate Professor John Gery wrote to Jordan in mid-December to extol the virtues of the *Review* and point to the contribution it had made to the literary scene in the U.S. It was Ransom's New Criticism which attracted his attention initially to the *Review* while studying modern poetry as a student, but he was disappointed to discover it had ceased publication. Frederick Turner's valuable contribution as editor had been developed and expanded on by Hacker to improve what had consistently been one of the most vibrant literary magazines in America.

For Gery, the qualities which set Hacker apart from other editors was her ability to combine diversity and creativity while promoting the work of her contributors with an energy far greater than her peers. While other journals stuck to a mainstream agenda, the *Review* continued to publish 'unusual' and 'unexpected' pieces without damaging its nationwide reputation. Gery maintained that America's 'literary landscape' would find it unforgivable if the *Review* was permitted to pass away. It remained imperative that the Kenyon trustees did their best to ensure its survival.²⁷³

Law Professor Lawrence Joseph, who had published three books of poetry, wrote to Jordan to congratulate the College for its dedication to the *Review*, which in his view was one of the best literary journals in the world. He was another who made the link

²⁷² Jane Cooper to Philip Jordan 15.12.93

²⁷³ John Gery to Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 15.12.93

between what Hacker was doing and what Ransom had begun in the late thirties. The standard of work being published was second to none and maintained a fresh up-to-the-minute approach to publishing. Joseph stated that he could not discuss the *Review* without using 'superlatives,' since it would be impossible to do so.²⁷⁴

Director of Writing Seminars at Bennington College, Liam Rector, was concerned with the possibility that Kenyon College was considering withdrawing its financial support for the *Review* when he wrote on December 15. He regarded this prospect as having 'the Solomonic logic of cutting the baby in half, which is to say no logic at all'. It was not uncommon for small liberal arts colleges to experience financial problems, but it would be unwise to discontinue the *Review*. In providing an example, Rector explained that Bennington had recently accepted a former Kenyon undergraduate into the writing program. The student had been accepted primarily on the quality of the writing she had submitted, but the Kenyon connection had been a factor also. The *Review* under Hacker had provided a lively forum in which a multicultural perspective had prospered and evolved and which embodied the state of current literature in terms of the vital social issues of the day. Describing Hacker as 'feisty,' Rector also complimented the work of other consulting editors, in particular Eleanor Bender Hamilton. Rector urged Jordan to honour the College's traditions by continuing to support the journal.²⁷⁵

In his December 16 letter to Jordan Richard Howard of Houston University started by explaining he was writing as an inhabitant of the 'Republic of Letters' and not as a poet, nor a contributor. The *Review* was critical in terms of keeping abreast with the latest in American writing. Howard's generosity regarding Hacker's achievement at the

²⁷⁴ Lawrence Joseph to Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 15.12.93

²⁷⁵ Liam Rector to Philip Jordan 15.12.93

Review knew no bounds. Despite being editor of *The Paris Review* and *Western Humanities Review* he complimented her with consistently gathering together an unrivalled assembly of writers. Howard appreciated it was a costly business publishing the *Review* but he believed it was also a 'priceless' one.²⁷⁶

Addressing Jordan as 'Dear Phil,' Ursula K. Le Guin did not disguise the fact that she had been asked to write a letter of support for the *Review*. Having previously taught at Kenyon, Le Guin had a high opinion of the faculty, administration and students, but she was sure it could not have escaped the notice of the trustees that the reputation enjoyed by the College was largely due to the influence of the *Review*. Le Guin thought it would be a disaster if the *Review* were discontinued and tried to persuade Jordan to fight for it all the way. She ended her letter by sending her best wishes to his wife, Sheila.²⁷⁷

Editor of *The Women's Review of Books* Linda Gardiner had heard a rumour that Kenyon College was withdrawing its sponsorship of the *Review*. She informed Jordan that she hoped that if it weren't a rumour it would quickly be relegated to one. As an editor herself, Gardiner knew the financial implications involved in the world of publishing and she felt it was unnecessary to 'lecture' either Jordan or the trustees about what the *Review* stood for. Gardiner was off the mark in her belief that the *Review* was not the type of publication which would generate a huge number of letters protesting against its discontinuation. However, as the 'self-elected spokesperson' for what she believed was the silent community of devotees, she wanted to persuade Jordan to do his best to keep the *Review* in business.

²⁷⁶ Richard Howard to Philip Jordan 16.12.93

²⁷⁷ Ursula K. Le Guin to Philip Jordan 16.12.93

She knew it was not simply chance which designated that journals such as the *Review* found a home in university settings. As Gardiner put it, 'Where else would they go?' As editor of a magazine which aimed to provide an alternative to mainstream literature she recognised that there was less tolerance than at any time previously for 'literary innovation, daring and originality'. The irony of the situation, as she saw it was that journals such as the *Review* and *The Women's Review of Books* were real bargains for their respective institutions since editors were ridiculously underpaid with respect to the amount of work they did. Referring to both journals once more, Gardiner did not feel it necessary to justify the fact that they promoted their colleges to the outside world. Gardiner wanted to see more funding for the magazine, 'more power' to Hacker and the fabulous assembly of writers she had gathered together within the covers of the *Review* and more letters thanking Jordan for a lively publication which gathered strength with every issue.²⁷⁸

The University of Iowa's Gerald Stern was another commentator who compared Hacker's editorship with that of its founding editor, Ransom. He felt the 'unique' reputation of the *Review* had been recovered due to Hacker's dedication to inclusiveness and her policy of juxtaposing established writers with new ones. Paying tribute to both Hacker and her predecessor, Terry Hummer, Stern believed that under their guidance the *Review* was in the top bracket of literary journals in the nation. Stern's personal opinion of Hacker was that she was an 'extraordinary' editor, with a wonderful intellect. The entire writing community held her in high esteem and were alert to what she was achieving at Kenyon.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ Linda Gardiner to Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 16.12.93

²⁷⁹ Gerald Stern to Philip Jordan 21.12.93

Margaret Atwood was another big name who wrote to Jordan regarding the possible withdrawal of support for the *Review* by the College. She was impressed by the daring, fresh and varied work appearing in the journal and stated that most serious writers relied on such magazines as a stepping-stone to the 'world of publishing'. Hacker's approach in terms of diversity was crucial to the literary life of the U.S. and brought favourable attention on Kenyon College as a result. Atwood ended by urging the College to continue funding this important journal.²⁸⁰

It was Christmas Day when Herbert Blau put pen to paper to inform Jordan that when he was a graduate student at Stanford after World War II working with Yvor Winters, *The Kenyon Review* was required reading. Back then it was a 'matter of standards'. Blau was heartened to report that under Hacker's editorship the *Review* was regaining its position as essential reading, despite a change in direction. Praising Hacker, whom he regarded as an editor of 'unquestionable distinction,' Blau saw in her an openness to new developments within literature. Yet, in embracing the changing landscape of literary expansionism she held firmly to one major tradition, that of quality.

Blau could not imagine Kenyon College without the *Review* since they were 'virtually synonymous'. Without the *Review* the world would be disadvantaged as would the people who admired the vitality it brought to literary culture.²⁸¹

Executive Director of Poets & Writers, Elliot Figman, wrote to Jordan on December 28 pleading with him to support the *Review* to the 'fullest possible extent'. As one of the nation's most illustrious magazines previously, it had only been enhanced and improved under Hacker. The *Review's* commitment to a multicultural perspective was

²⁸⁰ Margaret Atwood to Philip Jordan 21.12.93

²⁸¹ Herbert Blau to Philip Jordan 25.12.93

critical at a time when most publishers were interested only in the bottom line and not on the quality of material appearing in their publications.²⁸²

On December 29 Jordan replied to Kate Braverman thanking her for the esteem in which she held the *Review*. He promised to forward a copy of her letter to the trustees who were currently engaged in conducting an evaluation of the *Review* as part of an investigation into College expenditure.

In 1992 Diane Middlebrook, an English Professor at Stanford, had been invited to speak at Kenyon. Along with Carl Djerassi, she had given a lecture on Kenyon College's distinguished alumni. However, while Djerassi spoke of his own intellectual growth, Middlebrook experienced a different feeling. She felt that the invitation represented a 'professional affirmation,' and was a great personal boost in respect of her biography of Anne Sexton. She was concerned, however, for the future of the *Review*, which she described as a 'national treasure' which deserved acknowledgement. When the *Review* was resurrected under the stewardship of the 'dashing' Frederick Turner and 'cheerful' Ron Sharp it was greeted with delight by the literary faithful. Middlebrook was similarly impressed by the work of Hacker, whom she considered to one of America's best poets. As a veteran of academia she could understand why the people responsible for the finances might want to see an end to the *Review*, but she contended that it would be a huge mistake. What it needed, in her opinion, was an input of cash, not a reduction or withdrawal altogether. The *Review* was what differentiated Kenyon from other small liberal arts colleges and contributed to its already high standard of education. In closing,

²⁸² Elliot Figman to Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 28.12.93

Middlebrook suggested that benefit events be organised to raise money for the *Review*. Along with Djerassi, she was more than willing to help.²⁸³

Writing from Lausanne, Switzerland, on December 30, James Gill informed Jordan of his distress that the future of the *Review* was under threat. He had been proud to have his work published in the journal and praised the 'resourceful' editorship of Hacker. Her input of ideas had led to an international readership which had left Gill amazed at how quickly she had achieved this goal.

According to Gill, in a world infested by 'multimedia drivel' and an insistence on mainstream issues the *Review's* place in the literary world had taken on greater importance. Hacker had left an outstanding 'imprint' on the America's literary setting.

Gill suggested appealing to the College alumni, whom he felt certain would respond generously. He ended his letter on a philosophical and perhaps melodramatic note. Gill wrote that in totalitarian states the first to be jailed were frequently poets and academics. A close friend of his who had spent many years in detention and who had been 'one of the great figures of East European poetry' told him that large numbers of the prisoners he met died, but that the first to go were the ones who believed in nothing.²⁸⁴

If 1992 could be considered Hacker's best year, then 1993 heralded the beginning of the end. The evaluation she had received in January had played on her mind until early May when she wrote to Reed S. Browning. Having assumed that due to the College's financial problems no one had received a merit pay award she settled for an average raise. However, on discovering that merit rises had been awarded she was upset.

²⁸³ Diane Middlebrook to Philip Jordan 30.12.93

²⁸⁴ James Gill to Philip Jordan 30.12.93

When Hacker met Browning to discuss the matter she was told rather condescendingly that Kenyon expected good work from its employees and that as far as he was concerned that was satisfactory. Unfortunately for Hacker the meeting also provided Browning with an opportunity to discuss her recent notification that she would not be teaching a course during 1993-94. Browning told her that her refusal was unacceptable and reminded her that her teaching commitment was important in reducing the College's subsidy to the *Review*. The fact that she raised in excess of \$100,000 in grants for the *Review* was not mentioned.

Another problem which arose was Kenyon's proposed budget of \$135,000 which fell \$6,700 short of what Hacker had assumed for the *Review*. When Browning wrote to Hacker on May 13 to advise her to draw up a reduced budget he followed it up with a second letter reminding her about her teaching commitment. The saga of Hacker's teaching commitment raised its head again in October when Browning contacted her to take her to task over her failure to make arrangements to teach a course. As the end of the year approached a growing number of people were contacting Philip Jordan to express their support for the *Review* in light of the looming financial problems.

1994

Marilyn Hacker's tenure of *The Kenyon Review* was under question at the start of 1994 as was the future of the journal itself. The end was a messy affair that resulted in hundreds of protest letters arriving at the *Review* offices after her contract was not renewed. However, at the beginning of the year the letters that arrived were in support of Hacker and the journal. While the *Review* survived, Hacker did not.

On January 3 Kathleene West of New Mexico State University wrote in support of the *Review*, having heard that its future was in jeopardy. As a professor, poet and editor she found the journal under Hacker's editorship inspiring. The *Review*'s inclusive policy had succeeded in bringing together a collection of writers from every area of American culture as well as from overseas. As testament to the *Review* West stated that it was a necessary requirement in her teaching in order to show her students that outside the classroom there was a place where nerve and ingenuity survived in art. She was familiar with many literary periodicals and found most of them to be 'bland and derivative'. In her editorial work West used the *Review* as a benchmark against which to gauge her own work in an effort to improve.

West was not naïve enough to believe that the people who contributed the bulk of the finance to the *Review* did not have concerns which stretched further than the purely financial.²⁸⁵

As a Kenyon graduate, poet and writer, Jeffrey Betcher wholly praised Jordan for his commitment to the *Review* and offered his opinion on the journal's editorial policy. The *Review* had 'suddenly' become the most energetic and priceless magazine of its kind

in America. Betcher described the *Review*'s role as one which cut through the centre of contemporary issues. This incisive editing enabled the journal to depict an entire society instead of the usual narrow slice. In doing this the *Review* stood alone among its competitors. While other reviews were gathering dust, *The Kenyon Review* was always handy. If the College were to be regarded as the crown, then the *Review* was the 'jewel' which sparkled far beyond the institution in a manner impossible to measure. In ending his letter, Betcher stated that he had never been more proud of being a graduate of Kenyon. He encouraged Jordan to increase the finance available to the *Review*, adding that for the sake of Kenyon, the *Review* and everyone connected with literary culture, 'don't lose Marilyn Hacker!' Betcher credited Hacker with the journal's rise in prominence to become the nation's number one literary publication.²⁸⁶

Poet and English Professor Carol Muske, admitted that her interest in *The Kenyon Review* had diminished in the years prior to Hacker's arrival. As a regular reader and subscriber, she described the *Review* as one of the rare 'breakthrough' magazines to reflect the diversity and vivacity of contemporary literature. Admiring the manner in which Hacker had openly welcomed multiculturalism, Muske went on at length about the qualities which distinguished the *Review* from other magazines. It was obvious that Muske was a real fan of the 'new' *Review* and of the direction in which Hacker was taking it.²⁸⁷

In the midst of the seriousness surrounding the *Review* and Hacker's future, a humorous letter arrived from John Frederick Nims, Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Informing Hacker that he had 'quilled' a letter to Jordan he hoped

²⁸⁵ Kathleene West to Philip Jordan 03.01.94

²⁸⁶ Jeffrey Betcher to Philip Jordan 05.01.94

it would not embarrass her. He admitted he was not very good at this type of letter because he tended to rabbit on. As someone who did not feel qualified to judge journals due to his propensity for only paying attention to the poetry at the expense of the fiction, Nims explained he did not have enough time to read the entire *Review* though he did find time for worthless pursuits like watching football on TV. Having enlightened Hacker on these matters, he found the *Review* inspiring even though he had failed to read 'every page of every issue'. In his January 10 letter to Jordan Nims wrote that the covers of the *Review* adorning his desk were as bright and stimulating as the Christmas decorations he had just taken down. Having been an admirer of the journal since the 'great days' of Ransom, he believed it was more enthralling now than ever before. Due to Hacker's eclectic approach, Nims recognised the *Review*'s ability to capture the central spirit of 'our sometimes agonizing times'. When Kenyon was mentioned outside Gambier it often was in reference to the *Review*. Nims impression was that the achievements of the journal, more so than educational accomplishments, had put Kenyon on the map. He summed it up by asserting that 'Kenyon' meant *The Kenyon Review* and that despite the fact that other literary publications had a greater circulation, it was the *Review* that influenced the 'most influential'. No matter how important the *Review* was to Kenyon, Nims contended that it was of far greater value to the wider literary community, who were indebted to the College for its existence.²⁸⁸

Hacker's first official letter of 1994 was a reminder from Joseph Nelson, Vice President for Finance, that she would have to vacate her apartment in line with Kenyon's housing policy when her four-year term ended on June 30 1994. She could if she wished

²⁸⁷ Carol Muske to Philip Jordan 05.01.94

²⁸⁸ John Frederick Nims to Marilyn Hacker and Philip Jordan 10.01.94

apply for a one-year extension and was advised to inform him of her plans as soon as possible, since in Nelson's view, there would be few vacant apartments during 1994-95.²⁸⁹

On January 12 Ruth Gundle, a publisher with The Eighth Mountain Press, wrote in support of the *Review*. Under Hacker's editorship the work appearing had encompassed a wider gamut than any other literary journal. As such it was making a vital contribution in shaping the 'literary landscape' of the nation. While every literary journal was important, there was no doubt in Gundle's mind that some were more crucial than others. Since *The Kenyon Review* was in the latter category it was impossible to imagine the world without it. In concluding, Gundle stated that everyone associated with the College should be extremely proud of its achievements.²⁹⁰

When David Baker of Denison University put pen to paper to voice his concern over events at Kenyon, he was speaking from a position of some authority. As a former faculty member of Kenyon's Department of English and having worked for five *Review* editors over the previous 10 years, Baker was an important cog in the *Review* wheel. He pointed out that when he referred to his 'work' for the *Review* he was of course referring to unpaid work, since he did not actually earn anything. Baker's loyalty to the journal was testimony to his belief that it was on its way back to greatness. Having worked for Galbraith Crump and Phil Church, Terry Hummer, David Lynn and now Marilyn Hacker he considered that each had imbued the *Review* with their own particular passions which in turn had brought favourable praise on Kenyon. He was adamant, however, that Hacker's commitment, hard work and courage meant she was the finest 'recent' editor.

²⁸⁹ Joseph Nelson to Marilyn Hacker 12.01.94

²⁹⁰ Ruth Gundle to Marilyn Hacker and Philip Jordan 12.01.94

As Baker pointed out, he should know, since he had worked with all of them. His advice to Jordan was that rather than consider suspending the *Review*, he should 'recommit' himself to both it and Hacker. Kenyon's shortsightedness was troubling Baker, who believed the trustees did not appreciate the prestige the journal brought to the College. In terms of Hacker's vision, Baker compared her to Ransom's early days in which he sought new directions for literary theory. Providing an insight into the other editors under whom he had worked, Baker stated that under Crump and Church's leadership, the *Review* was 'traditional and ... conventional'. This is another way of saying that there were few writers of colour or women. He asked how much genuinely original and pioneering work had been published under their guidance. Though he conceded that they did publish some excellent work, it was his opinion that they did nothing to move the *Review* forward and that they were content enough to follow the conventional route along with that of *The Southern Review*, *The Virginia Quarterly*, and, in particular, *The Sewanee Review*. In other words, they were satisfied with publishing mainly white male academics.

It was not until Terry Hummer took over that a dramatic change took place. Hummer's 'effective radicalism' altered the *Review's* traditions, but unfortunately his editorship and that of Lynn were too short to provide any long-term effect. The three decades preceding Hacker's arrival in Gambier had seen women emerge from the shadows of white males to make their voices heard. America was beginning to get to grips with issues such as that of gender and sexual orientation issues. Previously repressed under a veil of ignorance, they were surfacing and being actively embraced by Hacker. Hacker's ability to sift through the diverse submissions and select the range and quality crucial to her vision was vital in taking the *Review* to the next level. Baker

claimed that many of the mainstream contributors with whom he was in touch were more eager to see their work appear in the *Review* now that it had opened itself up to multiculturalism.

Making it clear that he did not always agree with Hacker's choices he stated that he would be less generous to younger or novice writers than she was. He meant this in the context of technical ability as opposed to content, adding that this was a compliment to Hacker and an admission of his own limitations.

Baker's answer to the question of what constituted important literature was unambiguous. He thought that good editors were obliged to acknowledge fresh and previously silent minority voices and that these writers should put tradition to the test. This view of important literature was exactly what the *Review* was succeeding in publishing. If this challenge to mainstream tradition upset certain sections of conservative society and alumni, Baker regarded it as a price worth paying since more people would take their places. Anticipating pressure being exerted on the College, Baker wrote that these followers of tradition should read *The Sewanee Review*, a monument to 'male privilege and literary stuffiness'. However, the *Review* should continue with its courageous stance of inclusiveness. Rather than simply continue his support for the journal, Jordan should increase it. Baker ended his passionate letter by offering his best wishes and thanking Jordan for the opportunity to present his opinion.²⁹¹

When Robert Pinsky informed Hacker on January 17 that he had written to Jordan, he was genuinely astonished at the possibility of losing the *Review*. He was yet another who considered the *Review* to be a 'cornerstone' of Kenyon College and as such he wanted to know what they were thinking. In his letter to Jordan, Pinsky, Professor of

English and Creative Writing at Boston University, wrote that he thought it was timely for him to express his support and appreciation for the *Review*. For as long as he could remember, the *Review* had played an integral part in the College's prestigious position. Reminiscing about a visit to Gambier in 1978 as an examiner for the Honors Program in English, Pinsky was aware at the time that the *Review* was in the process of being revived. As a significant factor in the reputation of the College, it had made the visit all the more attractive.

Pinsky explained that one of his graduate students had been offered two positions as an assistant professor, one of which was at Kenyon. The deciding factor in the decision was the literary tradition which Kenyon embodied. With Hacker at the helm the *Review* had an editor who could carry that practice forward. The history and potential of the *Review* were indisputably beneficial to the College.²⁹²

When Kathleen Woodward faxed Hacker on January 18 with a copy of the letter she was sending to Philip Jordan, everything in Milwaukee was shut down because of 'ludicrously unthinkable sub-zero temps'. In her fax to the President, she stated that she hoped that some way could be found to ease the strain on the Kenyon budget. Many journals which had modelled themselves on the *Review* by devoting themselves to serving an all-embracing readership had failed to prosper. As an editor herself, Woodward appreciated the difficulties involved in trying to establish a magazine. However, she pointed out that it was easy to allow it to expire. Hacker's leadership had begun an era of vitality and insight, with 'a paradoxically wider yet more pointed focus'.

²⁹¹ David Baker to Philip Jordan 14.01.94

²⁹² Robert Pinsky to Marilyn Hacker and Philip Jordan 17.01.94

Woodward reiterated that the *Review* and the College were inseparable and that one without the other was unthinkable.²⁹³

As a teaching assistant at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, Judith Levin wanted to add her voice to the list of people supporting Kenyon's obligation to the *Review*. She particularly valued the journal's commitment to representing a variety of cultures. Levin paid tribute to Kenyon for its long and crucial tradition, adding that many writers looked to the *Review* for motivation and understanding in an age in which multiculturalism was of immediate concern in both academic life and in the wider world.

The loss of a 'long-term investment' such as the *Review* would be counter-productive to Kenyon since much of its reputation was derived from the journal's popularity. The *Review*, according to Levin, was a 'priceless contribution' to literary culture in America.²⁹⁴

Associate Professor of English and Director of the Women Poets at Barnard programme at Columbia University, Christopher Baswell, was dismayed at the prospect of losing the *Review*. His particular concern was that the journal should disappear at a time when it was appealing to a much broader audience under Hacker's guidance. Along with his other credentials, Baswell mentioned that he was a graduate of one of Kenyon's sister institutions, Oberlin College. The loss of the *Review* to his work as director of Women Poets at Barnard would be huge since the project was specifically designed to advance the work of new poets. In his mind, Kenyon and the *Review* were a partnership which shared equally in the recognition gained. Referring to the *Review* post 1979, Baswell wrote that though it maintained the respect of serious readers it did not offer

²⁹³ Kathleen Woodward to Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 18.01.94

²⁹⁴ Judith Levin to Philip Jordan 19.01.94

literature to challenge the norm. In other words, although the journal still published high quality writing, it was stale in terms of new ideas.

The turning point for Baswell was when Hacker was presented with the opportunity to revive the tired journal and instil new life into it. From his point of view, she turned it into a modern, challenging magazine which held exciting prospects within its covers. Under Hacker, the *Review* took the readers down unexplored alleyways to meet previously unknown writers. This was what Baswell wanted. Although he had no knowledge of the *Review*'s current circulation, he stated that it was more widely read and talked about than it been for many years.

As a concrete example of the *Review*'s impact, Baswell informed Jordan that one of his colleagues had been so impressed with the De Colores issue that he had used it as a starting point for a whole new curriculum, which though it was still based on tradition, displayed the potential for inclusion.

Baswell had been influenced by Hacker's work at the *Review* to the extent that he found himself questioning where boundaries should be drawn. New notions of greatness had emerged which had impacted on the series of readings he organised at Barnard College.

Although Baswell appreciated the financial constraints placed on small institutions he asserted that it was important for colleges such as Kenyon to maintain the links that made it great and distinctive. For that reason it was vital that the *Review* be saved.²⁹⁵

As Director of The Feminist Press and a Professor of English at CUNY, Florence Howe informed Jordan that she was not in the habit of writing 'fan letters'. That said,

she wanted to let Jordan know what she had been telling Hacker for a number of years, namely, how much she appreciated her editing skills. Having been an editor previously, Howe was in touch with the day-to-day rigours of editing a journal. Referring to her work as a critic and Professor of literature she also appreciated the importance of remaining true to publishing high quality writing. Howe wrote that she could not contemplate the *Review* under another name and located in another college campus. The type of publicity the *Review* brought the College could not be estimated in dollars and Howe was optimistic that Kenyon would learn to value the journal as much as its readers.²⁹⁶

In response to a request from Hacker, Joan Cusack Handler, a poet and psychologist, wrote to Jordan on January 23. She wanted to congratulate the *Review* for its priceless contribution to literary culture. It was among the foremost journals of its kind in the States. Handler was singularly impressed with its policy of inclusiveness and attributed this openness to Hacker and her editorial board.²⁹⁷

'Querida Marilyn,' was how Rafael Campo opened his letter of February 3. He apologised for the delay in writing, explaining that he had just completed a gruelling, month long stint with the Cancer Research Institute, during which time he had witnessed things he did not feel able to speak about. Just thinking about the courage of some of his patients left him feeling weak.

Praying that the 'Kenyon Inquisition' was over, Campo hoped that Hacker's silence meant that the situation was improving. He wanted to know if any changes were planned for the *Review* and if there was any way in which he could help. Hacker had

²⁹⁵ Christopher Baswell to Philip Jordan 19.01.94

²⁹⁶ Florence Howe to Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 22.01.94

been asked for a blurb for Campo's forthcoming book, the editor of which he imagined, having only spoken on the phone, to be a 'gruff country dykey' whose language was sprinkled with words like 'queer, gay, lesbian etc'. One plus point for Campo regarding the book's cover was that the publishers, Arte Publico, had agreed to use a painting done by his friend, Jorge's '(lesbian) Auntie Joan'.

Campo informed Hacker that he had bought every copy of *Love, Death and the Changing of the Seasons* he could find. He had given one copy to his mother and another to Gigi Fernandez, whom he explained was Jorge's 'dyke tennis star step-sister'.²⁹⁸

The University of New Mexico's Joy Harjo wrote to Jordan congratulating him on the excellent journal associated with Kenyon. While the *Review* had always been considered among the top echelon, Hacker had transformed it into a valuable teaching tool, essential to America's emerging culture. Harjo sent a copy of her letter to Jordan to Hacker.²⁹⁹

When Jane Miller ardently encouraged Jordan to support the *Review*, she was aware that he had been bombarded with letters urging the College to retain its financial support. The strength of America's artistic community was represented in its literary journals and the *Review* was a leader in the field rather than a follower. Hacker had reinvigorated the *Review* by investing it with innovative and exciting work. Although Miller had taught at Goddard College in the 1970s, it was not until the *Review* was resurrected that she realised Kenyon College had escaped the fate that befell many small

²⁹⁷ Joan Cusack Handler to Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 23.01.94

²⁹⁸ Rafael Campo to Marilyn Hacker 03.02.94

²⁹⁹ Joy Harjo to Philip Jordan 08.02.94

liberal arts colleges, that of 'elimination'. Miller urged Jordan to do his best to perpetuate the journal's existence.³⁰⁰

The Questionnaire

The first real indication that all was not well at the *Review* was the questionnaire distributed in early 1994. Laurie Finke of the Women's and Gender Studies Department faxed David F. Banks, Chairman of the Trustees on February 6 informing him that despite several attempts at filling it in, she found herself unable to 'answer the questions it poses'. She stated that the questions implied an agenda which made her very nervous and had no relation to the College's financial problems or the *Review's* 'significant operating losses'. As far as Finke was concerned, the questionnaire was more to do with confirming a dissatisfaction with the direction in which the *Review* was moving. She emphasised that not only did she not share that stance, but took the contrary view that the way the journal had gone had made it more appealing to her. Classifying herself as a person who would not normally subscribe to a literary journal, she described how she initially discovered the *Review*. While sitting in the admissions office on first arriving at Kenyon she picked up a copy and was impressed by an off-beat article about women and vampires.

In general, Finke found literary journals to be pretentious and boring. However she enjoyed the *Review* precisely because it was prepared to take risks. She endorsed the publishing of special issues such as *De Colores* and the theater issue since she believed it to be these writers who were defining the direction in which fiction and poetry were moving. While in graduate school, Finke recalled discussing what she terms the

³⁰⁰ Jane Miller to Philip Jordan 11.02.94

'literature of exhaustion', that is to say, the belief that all the major writing topics had been covered and there was no longer anything important left to be written. She mentioned Robert Coover, Philip Roth and John Barthes as writers who resorted to creating complicated fictional diversions for want of something better to do. However, when poets such as June Jordan and Audre Lorde emerged along with writers of the calibre of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker contemporary literature was rejuvenated. In her letter Finke endorsed Hacker's editorship completely. She pointed out that the issue which featured the vampire article also contained an essay by William Empson. According to Finke, it was entirely due to Hacker's influence that writers of the stature of Joy Harjo and Dorothy Allison lectured at Kenyon, since the College would have been unable to afford the fee for either of them.

Finke saw the questionnaire as more to do with Kenyon's image and less to do with financial considerations. She stated, correctly that most people outwith Ohio who had heard of Kenyon College knew it via the *Review* and as such the journal was the College's 'face to the world'. Insisting that the *Review* had to be read in order for that situation to continue, Finke stressed that the journal's image must not be seen as traditional and, by way of implication, dreary. She believed that there were plenty of other boring literary publications available to fill that market and underline the importance of remaining at the cutting edge of emerging literary culture. The days of projecting an image of time-honoured tradition should be put to rest, because she asserted, Kenyon as both College and *Review* had to move with the times. As a measure of the *Review*'s success, Finke considered that one only had to count the number of submissions to see the high regard with which writers regarded it. The other guide to the

Review's success lay in reader satisfaction. Finke stated that to expect the *Review* to survive without the College's financial help was impractical, since there were no artistic ventures which were not subsidized. As far as discontinuing the *Review* in an effort to save College money, she could not see any great savings resulting from such a move. As a literary scholar, Finke used the *Review* because it was useful to her in her work. However, she would only do so while it remained at the forefront of literary culture. She acknowledged speaking from the perspective of someone teaching in a marginalized interdisciplinary program and stated that it might be tempting to ignore her opinion, but she pointed to her reputation as a published literary scholar to support her judgement.³⁰¹

On the same day Finke faxed David F. Banks about her concern over the purpose of the questionnaire, Hacker spent the evening as an invited guest of Philip and Sheila Jordan. She wrote to Jordan the following day to thank him for the invitation; however, while at the Jordans' she discovered that several of the people whom she had expected to receive questionnaires had not received them. Having found out in conversation that Donald Rogan, Lewis Hyde and Robert Bennett had not been consulted, Hacker took it upon herself to send each of them a copy of the questionnaire. She was certain that both Jordan and David F. Banks would wish to have the opinions of such people on record. In the same correspondence, Hacker announced that as a result of fundraising letters sent out in December to 415 people whose work had appeared in the *Review* between 1990 and 1993 she had received \$3,600 in donations.³⁰²

Stephen Booker's volume of poetry, *Tug*, was due to be published in 1994 and he was keen to have Hacker read it. He had contacted Wesleyan University Press and asked

³⁰¹ Laurie Finke to David F. Banks 06.02.94

³⁰² Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 07.02.94

them to send her a copy but he was not very confident they would comply. His advice to Hacker was that she should phone the number on the flyer he sent her and leave a message on 'one of them recording machine things' that would ensure a copy was sent to her. Booker hinted Hacker might consider carrying his flyers around with her so she could distribute them to potential readers. He also suggested she could let him 'hitch a ride in every subscriber copy of TKR,' meaning she could enclose a flyer with every copy. Hacker, according to Booker, would be in good company since everyone he considered a friend would be put to the 'gimme' over his book. Booker only wanted as big a reading public as possible since, as a prisoner on death row, he would not be allowed to receive royalties.³⁰³

In mid-February Hacker followed up her initial letter to Omar Castañeda of November 30 1993, informing him that the *Review* had raised \$4,000 towards their goal of \$5,000. She reminded him that in a time of strict budgets and falling subsidies it was important to garner the support of valued subscribers and readers. Besides supporting the ongoing publication of writers such as Castañeda, Hacker saw it as a way to demonstrate the *Review's* worth to Kenyon College.³⁰⁴

A letter of support for the *Review* from the Fellows of the National Humanities Center, based in North Carolina, was written on February 15. They found the news that the College was considering discontinuing the journal upsetting and wished to add their voices to the growing number of people concerned about its future. Among the 17

³⁰³ Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker 08.02.94

³⁰⁴ Marilyn Hacker to Omar Castaneda 15.02.94

signatories were the names of Conor Cruise O'Brien, Christopher Baswell and Gary Shapiro. In their view, the *Review* had gained new prestige under Hacker's editorship.³⁰⁵

The editor of *The Southern Review*, Dave Smith, responded to a request from Hacker by contacting Jordan. Hacker had implied that the *Review* was in 'crisis' and Smith hoped that the situation was not quite as desperate as that. Ransom's editorship had provided a model for other editors to copy and Smith attributed his own career as having been directly influenced by that of *The Kenyon Review's* founding editor. Along with many other writers, he believed his work might never have been published if it had not been for the *Review*. Although Smith endorsed Hacker's editorship and believed that 'in general' efforts should be made to allow previously unheard voices to be heard, he had reservations regarding what he described as 'social engineering schemes'. The point Smith is making is crucial in terms of how Hacker's vision seems to have gone astray, at least as far as many of the Kenyon trustees were concerned. Hacker had requested that Smith endorse 'a multicultural and interdisciplinary landscape' in his letter to Jordan, but Smith was troubled by the possibility that adhering to a political agenda very often compromised standards. He was worried that literary standards may alter in the face of a particular 'political focus'. Smith stated that he had never been quite clear about 'what most characterized Ms. Hacker's editorship'. Apparently, Smith was not the only person with this view.

Having stated his views on multiculturalism, Smith went on to defend Hacker's editorial policy with respect to publishing 'controversial' material because in the land of the free, independence should be allowed to flourish. Referring to Jefferson's statement, carved on the gates of the University of Virginia which maintains that all who enter must

³⁰⁵ National Humanities Center to Philip Jordan 15.02.94

be 'free to follow truth wherever it might lead,' Smith asserted that literary journals had to do the same. Admitting he had suspicions regarding a multicultural program, he still believed in the freedom which allowed truth to be pursued, even if we do not know exactly what truth is. Smith thought there was an inherent danger in denying publication of material with which one did not agree. The *Review* was too precious a journal to be undermined in this way and Hacker's independence had to be retained.³⁰⁶

Pennsylvania Review editor, Julie Parson-Nesbitt, wrote to Jordan on February 23 expressing her support for Hacker and the *Review*. Acknowledging Hacker's vital role in making *The Kenyon Review* the number one literary journal in the country, Parson-Nesbitt regarded her as a role model. In achieving this, Hacker had set the standard for others to follow. The *Review* was required reading for anyone who wanted to know where literary culture was heading. Parson-Nesbitt ended her letter in persuasive fashion by informing Jordan that he must be proud to be President of a college linked to one of America's foremost literary magazines.³⁰⁷

University of Pittsburgh Associate Professor, Toi Derricotte, supported Hacker's editorship of the *Review*. She informed Jordan that she greatly appreciated what she had achieved in making the *Review* one of the top journals in the U.S. Derricotte went on to assert that Hacker's work with the *Review* in terms of inclusivity was contributing to a rewriting of literary history. She urged Jordan to commit himself to supporting Hacker.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ Dave Smith to Philip Jordan 15.02.94

³⁰⁷ Julie Parson-Nesbitt to Philip Jordan 23.02.94

³⁰⁸ Toi Derricotte to Philip Jordan 23.02.94

Literary Programs Director of the Lannan Foundation, Jeanie J. Kim, wrote with her support for Hacker and the *Review*. The Lannan Foundation had supported the *Review* in 1992 and 1993, by providing funds to pay contributors. Kim informed Jordan that the *Review* was one of only nine literary publications receiving financial help. She had been impressed by Hacker's policy of juxtaposing new talent alongside that of established writers and complimented her on providing this excellent facility for increasing the confidence of emerging voices. Under Hacker's editorship, the *Review* had become energetic, approachable and contemporary. She encouraged the College to establish a 'secure' environment for a journal which attached great prestige to Kenyon.³⁰⁹

When Eric Gudas of Sarah Lawrence College wrote to Jordan on February 28, he introduced himself as a writer and a huge fan of the *Review* who read every issue from start to finish. He hoped that by writing a letter of support he could encourage the College to have a rethink over the *Review's* future. The *Review*, in his opinion, had the potential to reach a greater range of people than its literary rivals. It was of major importance for keeping readers up to date on events in America. Gudas explained that he had thrust the *Review* upon friends, some of whom were not writers, and received very favourable feedback. He praised Hacker's policy of moving outside the literary mainstream in finding writers, which in turn resulted in articles with concerns unrelated to the academy. The loss of the *Review* would be a tragic blow to the nation's literary culture.

On the same day that Gudas wrote to Jordan, another academic, Jean Valentine also wrote from Sarah Lawrence College. As a member of the Writing Faculty she

³⁰⁹ Jeanie J. Kim to Philip Jordan 28.02.94

praised Hacker's leadership and direction, adding that the literary community would be 'impoverished' if the *Review* were to be discontinued.³¹⁰

Lewis Hyde was a Senior Scholar at The Getty Center for the History of Art as well as Luce Professor of Art and Politics at Kenyon College. When he faxed David F. Banks on March 2, he explained that a face-to-face meeting with Paul Healy, a Kenyon Trustee, had been cancelled due to the Los Angeles earthquake. Having failed to make contact with Healy following the initial cancellation, he had decided to fax his views to Banks.

Acknowledging that Hacker was doing the work for which she was hired, Hyde found that the *Review* always held his interest, though he conceded the contents were 'mixed in quality'. He defended this evaluation by stating that that was the way it should be, since in any issue of any small magazine you would find a similar situation. However, in the case of *The Kenyon Review*, this mixture included some 'gems'.

With respect to the *Review*'s 'operating losses,' Hyde had two comments to make. Firstly, he felt that private institutions were duty bound to encourage new writers and that colleges such as Kenyon should be prepared to invest money in them without first considering if they would benefit financially from the partnership. Large companies should have a sense of obligation to the communities who supply their workforce. The point he was making was that the *Review*'s contribution to the nation could not be measured in purely financial terms.

Hyde's second comment was that whenever he told people he taught at Kenyon, they would invariably associate it with the *Review*. However, the important aspect from his point of view was that the fame and prestige attendant on the College was worth the

³¹⁰ Eric Gudas to Philip Jordan 28.02.94

expense in maintaining this respect for Kenyon. He was quite sure that other College expenditures were not regarded in the same manner in terms of whether they operated at a profit or loss.

Having had a copy of the trustees' questionnaire passed to him, Hyde was unhappy with the format. He described it as 'unfortunate' because it asked questions relating to both the funding of the *Review* and to its editorial policy. At certain times it was appropriate for trustees to concern themselves with editorial policy, but if the primary reason was financial, then in Hyde's opinion this was not one of those times.³¹¹

When Daniel Curzon contacted Hacker in early March he reminisced over an event thirty years previously while in a Detroit restaurant with Joyce Carol Oates. As young writers they had each received two letters from literary journals. Oates' two letters, including one from *The Kenyon Review* contained acceptances, while Curzon's letters contained two rejections, one of which was also from the *Review*. Curzon, who was delighted his story, 'Wasps,' had been accepted, stated he was now a better writer and could write about the 'part of his life' that had been taboo in the past. 'Wasps' was based on a real event involving Curzon's 10 year-old son, Zack and his lesbian mother who lived in Oregon with her second lover. Now that it had been accepted, he intended looking over it again to ensure it did not contain anything which might offend them. Curzon intended to inform Zack and his 'mom(s)' about his acceptance. Since this acceptance had come on the heels of a San Francisco theatre agreeing to put on a production called ACTORS IN BRIEFS which included two pieces by Curzon, he felt he

³¹¹ Lewis Hyde to Marilyn Hacker and David F. Banks 02.03.94

was on a roll. In gratitude to Hacker and the *Review*, Curzon included a cheque for a year's subscription.³¹²

On March 5, the Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets and editor of *Poetry Northwest*, David Wagoner wrote to Jordan to outline his concern at rumours he had heard regarding the withdrawal of financial support for the *Review*. Wagoner, in coming straight to the point, believed it would be 'foolish' to allow such a beneficial publication to disappear. The energy and influence generated by the journal were matched by few others and its loss would be a serious setback for American letters. Significantly perhaps, there was no direct mention of Hacker in the letter, albeit Wagoner did send her a copy.³¹³

On March 8 Hacker wrote to Philip Jordan with ideas to further reduce the College's subsidy to the *Review*, while simultaneously increasing its role within the College that would have a decided influence on Kenyon's capacity to attract students to Gambier. Reiterating her undertaking to teach an advanced poetry workshop in the autumn of 1994 she regretted that illness had prevented her from doing so up to this point. As she looked forward to teaching a course every autumn from then on, she outlined what she envisaged as the future for the College creative writing program. The program would offer beginning and advanced poetry workshops both semesters every year. Students would be offered a choice of instructors and the opportunity to study with both. Hacker estimated there would be a saving to the College on the *Review* budget of \$12,240.

³¹² Daniel Curzon to Marilyn Hacker 05.03.94

³¹³ David Wagoner to Philip Jordan 05.03.94

Since Hacker was scheduled to be on a leave of absence in the spring of 1995 pursuing an individual NEA fellowship she had suggested a guest editor be appointed for one semester to edit a double issue of the *Review* and teach one course. She proposed a salary of around \$20,000 for the semester, of which two-thirds would be charged to the *Review*. Suzanne Gardinier, who had expressed interest, was Hacker's preferred choice. She had been awarded the *Review*'s Literary Excellence in the Essay prize for her work on Eagles' translation of *The Iliad*. Hacker, who enclosed Gardinier's CV, copies of her essays and her letter of intent for Jordan's consideration, added that other candidates were possible. She had in mind Allison Joseph, whom she stated would be very welcome if she were willing to come. The saving to Kenyon on the *Review* budget was estimated at \$21,602. Hacker expected the guest editor would produce one double issue, most likely the summer/fall issue of 1996. A considerable saving of \$17,000 could be made on a 250 page issue with a cover price of \$9.

Another idea Hacker put to Jordan was one she had formed with Cy Wainscott. They wanted to use the *Review* as the basis for a course on literary editing to be offered to English honours students as part of a creative writing program. The course would involve selected students working with Hacker and Wainscott for a semester during which they would read manuscripts in preparation for discussion of the editorial selection process, track the progress of the *Review* and other literary quarterlies over a 12 month period and recount their findings and work with Wainscott through the process which transforms a selection of manuscripts into a journal. Copyediting and proofreading skills would be developed and a comparison made between professional copy editors and a student-edited copy of a manuscript. Included in the course would be a weekly

discussion/report plus practical experience at the *Review*. The College would save \$12,240 on the *Review* budget if this were implemented.

Hacker's final suggestion was that the institutional yearly subscription be raised from \$24 to \$28. Adding that many quarterlies charge institutions double that of individual subscribers she did not want to risk alienating the library sales by taking such a drastic move. She judged that such a rise as she proposed would safeguard against losing any library subscriptions. If this suggestion were put into practice the College would save a further \$4,400. Hacker wrote that she looked forward to Jordan's response to her suggestions.³¹⁴

Around this time, Hacker wrote to *Review* subscribers asking for donations. The four main categories of patronage on offer were Lifetime Patron, Patron, Sponsor and Friend and corresponded to donations of \$1000, \$500, \$250 and \$100 respectively. Hacker highlighted the fact that the College subsidy allowed the *Review* to employ both a full-time editor and a managing editor. *Review* supporters were informed that their financial assistance was crucial since Kenyon College's 'generous subsidy' was under close scrutiny and the trustees were 'not necessarily benevolent'. Stating that many readers regarded the *Review* as a cornerstone of the College's status, Hacker compared its current reputation with that originally established by John Crowe Ransom. The difference in the 1990s was that the *Review* now existed in a 'multicultural and interdisciplinary literary landscape'.

Emphasising Philip Jordan's backing for the *Review*, Hacker insisted that letters of support from the 'literary and academic communities' could make a great difference in the debate over the journal's future. Hacker believed her work at Kenyon was 'crucial'

and she encouraged everyone to write to Jordan expressing what the *Review* meant to them 'in its present incarnation'. She directed that letters should be addressed to Jordan since 'our future may depend on it'.

On the same day Hacker wrote to Jordan outlining her plans to reduce the College's subsidy to the *Review*, English Professor Peter Balakian of Colgate University, also wrote to him. Emphasising how important the journal had been with respect to the nation's culture and history, he linked its prestigious past to the present day under Hacker. She had succeeded in reinvigorating the *Review* with her cosmopolitan outlook, of which Balakian fully approved. He stated it would be 'horrible' if the *Review* were lost, adding that it would also be a major blow to Kenyon College's identity.³¹⁵

Having received word from Catherine Gammon of the situation at Kenyon, Marilyn Annucci wrote to Jordan. She admired Hacker's policy of inclusiveness and quoted from the Winter 1993-94 issue of *Ploughshares*, in which fiction editor Russell Banks stated that although he fitted the stereotypical 'white Protestant middle-class heterosexual male,' he found it increasingly difficult to engage with fiction which portrayed 'American society and history as monoracial, monocultural, and monolingual'.

The people to whom Hacker was giving a voice were now typical of modern American culture and Annucci asserted that Jordan only found them unusual because they were habitually marginalised. Lecturing Jordan that it was not possible to comprehend things to which one had not been exposed she challenged him to familiarise himself with them. She thought if he did this, he might encounter more in common than otherwise. Since there was no shortage of journals to make readers such as Jordan 'feel

³¹⁴ Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 08.03.94

³¹⁵ Peter Balakian to Philip Jordan 08.03.94

comfortable and accepted,' Annucci condescendingly suggested that his own experiences and opinions might appear equally odd to other people. Annucci ended her strongly worded letter by stating that Hacker should be praised if her editorship caused some readers to feel uncomfortable since that was a measure of her dedication to multiculturalism.³¹⁶

Professor of English at the University of California Davis Sandra Gilbert was yet another big name who supported Hacker and the *Review*. She had been upset to hear of the possible demise of the journal which under Hacker's leadership had become a front runner among the nation's literary magazines. Gilbert considered it would be 'catastrophic' if the *Review* were to lose College funding. A copy of her letter was also sent to one of the trustees, David F. Banks in London.³¹⁷

By March 15 Hacker was beginning to contact a vast number of friends and colleagues to bring them up to date on events at Kenyon. She described the *Review* as being under 'intense scrutiny -- read attack' by the Kenyon trustees. She speculated that a decision on whether to discontinue it or drastically reduce its subsidy would take place at their plenary meeting due at the end of April. Up to that point the *Review* had received nearly 100 letters of support. However, she asserted that the trustees were more interested in the *Review's* 'place in the college'. Her view was that while Jordan wanted to retain the *Review* he required as many letters of support as possible to back up that intention.

She was alert to the potential irony of celebrating 'Twenty-five Years of Women at Kenyon' by announcing the demise of a magazine that had come to represent

³¹⁶ Marilyn Annucci to Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 09.03.94

³¹⁷ Sandra M. Gilbert to Marilyn Hacker and David F. Banks 12.03.94

‘multicultural, feminist and innovative’ work by sacking its first female editor. Hacker’s short letter urged everyone to contact Jordan to express their support for the *Review* and its editorial policies.³¹⁸

When Adrienne Rich wrote to Jordan she had been contacted by a number of people concerned over the *Review*’s future. During her time as an undergraduate in the late forties and early fifties she rated the *Review* alongside other literary journals such as the *Partisan Review*, the *Virginia Quarterly Review* and the *Yale Review*. Later, she found the *Review* to be a mere shell of its former glory days when the work of writers like Randall Jarrell, Robert Lowell and Ransom himself, appeared. Rich then makes an odd assertion that if the *Review* ‘had disappeared in the sixties or seventies’ it would not have caused much regret. Since it did in fact cease publication for a number of years before being resurrected in the late seventies, perhaps Rich’s assertion is wholly accurate.

Hiring Hacker to reinvigorate the *Review* was, in Rich’s opinion, the turning point in its history. She had given life and colour to the journal and made it impossible to ignore. Rich expected Kenyon to continue its support of Hacker in her quest to enhance literary life in the States. She believed that no other institution had a journal equal to that of *The Kenyon Review*.³¹⁹

The National Endowment for the Arts is a federal agency organisation which supports visual, literary and performing arts. The Director of its Literature Program, Gigi Bradford, wrote to Jordan on March 16 to express her ‘strong support’ for the *Review* which focused so much attention on the College itself. Under Hacker, the *Review* had been transformed from a journal mainly of interest in a historical sense, to one which was

³¹⁸ Marilyn Hacker to Committee Members 15.03.94

³¹⁹ Adrienne Rich to Philip Jordan 15.03.94

energetic, contemporary and indispensable. Bradford informed Jordan that among art forms, literature stood alone in attracting an increased amount of philanthropic finance.³²⁰

As soon as she became aware of events at Kenyon, Patricia Goedicke wrote to Jordan expressing her views on the effects the *Review's* potential demise would have on literature lovers throughout the nation and closer to home in Gambier itself. Her letter of March 19 summed up how Kenyon College was recognised and regarded. The pedestal upon which she placed the College was that of a custodian representing literary and cultural standards that were fast disappearing. Having taught for a time at Ohio University, Goedicke knew first-hand the reputation of Kenyon College, yet she was another powerful voice who believed it rested 'only' on its connection with the *Review*. Stating that this 'was certainly the case' in 1956 when Ransom published some of her early poetry alongside those of far more distinguished contemporaries, she asserted that it remained that way through all the intervening years during which different editors continued to publish her work.

Goedicke considered Hacker to be a 'star' who lit up the respected but rather ordinary name of Kenyon College. She ranked the potential loss of the *Review* with that of the 'travesty' surrounding *The New Yorker* in recent times. The difference between the two was that *The New Yorker* was primarily a commercial operation, while Kenyon College had an obligation to improve 'the educational and cultural standards' of young people. As such, it was imperative that everything possible was done to ensure the *Review* remained alive and connected to the College.³²¹

³²⁰ Gigi Bradford to Philip Jordan 16.03.94

³²¹ Patricia Goedicke to Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 19.03.94

Director of the Writing Program at the University of Washington, St. Louis, Eric Pankey continued the steady stream of correspondence to Jordan in support of Hacker and the *Review*. He hoped that what he had heard regarding the *Review* was only rumour, but if it were true he wished to encourage him to maintain the College's financial input. During its history the *Review* had published many writers of national prominence who had influenced the way people thought about literature. This tradition was being furthered by Hacker who had succeeded in making it one of the most discussed journals in the nation. Under her editorship the scope of the *Review* was unrivalled. At a time when he was under financial pressure himself, Pankey wrote that he had only contributed money to the *Review*, his local church and a homeless shelter. He pointed out that he considered a contribution to the *Review* as an investment in something which should be preserved.³²²

Writing from the Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, based in Williamstown, Massachusetts, Peter Erickson praised the speed with which Hacker had revitalised the *Review*. He found the journal to be a major asset in his research work, which encompassed both modern and Renaissance literature. Erickson's intention was to apprise Jordan of the impact the journal was having under Hacker's leadership and he backed this up by enclosing a cheque for \$100. However, he did point out that individual contributions were no substitute for institutional support. The inclusiveness she had embraced provided the College with a context for a true test of a liberal arts college.³²³

When Jan Clausen of Eugene Lang College, New York, wrote to Jordan on March 24 she compared literary magazines with orchards in the sense that patience is required in

³²² Eric Pankey to Philip Jordan 22.03.94

³²³ Peter Erickson to Philip Jordan 23.03.94

order to reap the rewards of the initial sowing. As a founding editor of *Conditions*, a feminist literary journal, Clausen was acutely aware of the difficulties caused by the loss of institutional funding. She appreciated this because that is what happened to her own magazine. Having experienced it first-hand, she pleaded with Jordan to do his best to secure a future for the *Review*, which was her personal favourite. Clausen knew the hardship involved in increasing circulation, attracting advertising, persuading bookstores to stock your magazine and getting writers to send their best work to you first. The type of journal into which Hacker had changed the *Review* was 'long overdue' in providing up-to-date news on America's literary landscape.³²⁴

Director of the country's only bilingual writing program at the University of Texas-El Paso, Leslie Ullman understood the situation at Kenyon to be one in which the College trustees had threatened to withdraw their support for the *Review*. Part of Ullman's remit was to prepare students to engage with cultural diversity since the institution was geographically located on the border between America and Mexico. Suspecting that some Kenyon trustees were finding it difficult to adapt not only to Hacker's policies, but to those policies taking place in the nation at large, he was troubled by what he considered censorship under the guise of economics, at a time when a multicultural perspective was vital.

While Ullman was not necessarily advocating that the canon be expanded, he believed it was essential that cultural changes be recognised. Contemporary writing had to reflect an interweaving of cultures and the *Review* was of paramount importance in achieving this goal because it was not content to simply accommodate this reflection, it actively championed the cause. As such the journal had, despite the many alterations it

³²⁴ Jan Clausen to Philip Jordan 24.03.94

had undergone, remained true to its history of leading, rather than following, literary culture.³²⁵

Towards the end of March Hacker accepted some translations of Aizenberg by Jim Kates, a former editor of *Stand*. The Summer 1995 issue of the *Review* was scheduled to contain a considerable amount of work emanating from Eastern Europe. Hacker also wished to see Kates' translations of other Russian poets and advised him to send them in an envelope marked 'solicited manuscript,' since she was currently returning unread unsolicited work and would do so until September 1.³²⁶

Hacker received a letter of thanks from Rafael Campo, dated April 2, relating to the complimentary comments she had written about his book of poems, *The Other Man Was Me*. He attributed its existence in part to her help and encouragement. Campo tried to cheer Hacker up by telling her that 'those fuckhead trustees' would be doing her a service if they decided to discontinue the *Review* since she would be able to concentrate on her own writing. Campo stated that Hacker's writing had influenced many 'queer' writers.³²⁷

On April 9 a petition signed by 47 people who had attended The Associated Writing Programs Conference in Tempe, Arizona, was sent to Jordan and the trustees in support of Hacker and the *Review*. The AWP was an eclectic community consisting of editors, students, writers, teachers, small press publishers and arts administrators. They concurred that Hacker had transformed the *Review* into a 'dynamic' literary journal

³²⁵ Leslie Ullman to Philip Jordan 29.03.94

³²⁶ Marilyn Hacker to James Kates 30.05.94

³²⁷ Rafael Campo to Marilyn Hacker 02.04.94

which had gathered together some of the best and most diverse writing America had to offer.³²⁸

Sympathising with her problems at Kenyon, John Frederick Nims offered a couple of suggestions as to potential alternative sources of finance. In an amusing manner, he explained that while at *Poetry* it was accepted that he was ‘feeble-minded’ regarding many practical matters. He said he would apologize and claim that all he knew about finances was that there were ‘five quarters in every dollar’. Nims wished Hacker luck with the outcome of the ‘untrustworthy trustees’ meeting, scheduled later that month.³²⁹

As Flannery O’Connor Professor of Letters at the University of Iowa’s Writers’ Workshop, Marvin Bell wrote to offer his support for the *Review* and its ‘new vitamins,’ as he described Hacker. Bell was one of the many who considered the *Review* and the College as Siamese twins who relied on each other for survival. While many people did not consider the Midwest to be a place capable of tackling serious issues, the *Review* had proved them wrong.³³⁰

Georgia Review managing director, Annette Hatton, was in a unique position in relation to Kenyon College. As the parent of a Kenyon student and with another of her offspring scheduled to study there, she had an insight into the goings on. She was aware of the benefits the *Georgia Review* and *The Kenyon Review* brought to their respective institutions and knew that the University of Georgia was pleased to be associated with the journal. Acknowledging that it was difficult to ascertain directly the advantages of having a journal based on campus, Hatton was adamant that Kenyon and the world of

³²⁸ AWP Writing Program Petition to Philip Jordan and the Trustees of Kenyon College 09.04.94

³²⁹ John Frederick Nims to Marilyn Hacker 13.04.94

literature would suffer without it. Having heard a rumour that the trustees disliked Hacker's 'politics,' she was in agreement with Leslie Ullman that it was shameful to exercise what appeared to be censorship under the guise of financial matters. Academic freedom should be allowed to flourish and Kenyon was not a place where any less was expected.³³¹

On April 25 Hacker informed Philip Jordan that certain operations at the *Review* were at an 'inconvenient standstill' due to the uncertainty over the journal's future. In effect, her hands were tied regarding the normal day-to-day operating of the *Review*. She was reluctant to contact contributors for fear there would not be a journal in which to publish their work. Important promotional information could not be distributed and there seemed little point in ordering new subscription cards until the matter was clarified. Hacker made a plea to Jordan from a 'humane standpoint' to inform her and the *Review* staff as soon as possible of the trustees' and his decision.³³²

Publication in the *Review* opened up a new world for Rane Ramón Arroyo. He wrote to inform Jordan of this fact and to congratulate the College for its vision in appointing Hacker as editor. As a Puertorriqueño Professor of English, Arroyo had found it difficult to be accepted as an American writer until his work appeared in the *Review*. He appreciated that Kenyon was experiencing financial difficulties but felt it necessary to put on record the effect the *Review* had had on his life.³³³

Diane Middlebrook contacted Hacker from London to let her know she would be teaching at Stanford in the autumn and that there was a possibility of organising a reading

³³⁰ Marvin Bell to Philip Jordan 17.04.94

³³¹ Annette Hatton to Marilyn Hacker and Philip Jordan 21.04.94

³³² Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 25.04.94

³³³ Rane Arroyo to Philip Jordan 30.04.94

on her behalf. The irony of the situation was that recent budget cuts meant it might be difficult to find the necessary cash to finance the venture.³³⁴

Hacker Fired

On May 11 Hacker wrote a letter to approximately 200 *Review* subscribers who had expressed their support for her editorship. She stated that 2 days after the trustees' plenary meeting of April 23 President Jordan announced that the *Review* would carry on but with strict fiscal restrictions. However, on May 10 in a private meeting with Jordan and Joseph Nelson, the College vice president for finance, Hacker was informed her contract would terminate on June 30. 'I've been fired,' she wrote. Not only unhappy at having been fired, she was disgusted that Jordan had waited until the last faculty meeting had been held and the last student newspaper for the academic year had been published. Hacker had been told by Jordan that the administration and the board of trustees 'did not have confidence in [her] to work with them to lower the magazine's subsidy and further integrate it into the life of the college.' Hacker was upset that the College subsidy to the *Review* had been reduced by \$43,000. The lowering of the subsidy was disputed by the College because the \$43,000 represented gifts and grants which were not guaranteed repeatable. She stated emphatically, 'How odd to fire an editor for raising \$43,000 dollars!' She found it hard to accept that having proposed a course on literary editing to accompany her creative writing workshop scheduled for the fall of 1994, that she should now be dismissed. Hacker did not 'believe ... this firing was about money,' since managing editor, Cy Wainscott, whom she described as a computer genius and a wonderful man, and editorial assistant, Doris Jean Dilts, both received new contracts.

³³⁴ Diane Middlebrook to Marilyn Hacker 04.05.94

According to Hacker, an hour and a half after she was fired, David Lynn of the Kenyon English Department was appointed as acting editor.

Urging subscribers to write to President Jordan if they had an opinion on her firing she requested they include a copy '(to be filed)' in *The Kenyon Review* archives. Although she did not actively encourage anyone to cancel a subscription, she did ask them to cancel if they felt it appropriate. She stated that the last *Review* under her editorial control would be the autumn 1994 issue, though work she had selected would be published during 1995.³³⁵

Two days after Hacker wrote to *Review* subscribers letters of complaint started to arrive at Kenyon. Eleanor Bender Hamilton, who was the *Review*'s development advisor and a consulting editor, protested to Jordan over Hacker's dismissal. As a friend and colleague of twenty-five years standing, Hamilton rated Hacker among the highest literary figures in the U.S. and a 'brilliant and extraordinary poet, editor, and feminist'. Hamilton voiced her pride in the *Review*'s decision to hire Hacker, stating it was an acceptance that Kenyon College was ready to face the challenge of establishing an intelligent forum where diverse opinions could be aired. Applauding Kenyon for appointing Hacker at a time when other colleges were reining in their operations, Hamilton regarded the appointment as a source of inspiration to others dedicated to furthering the cause of literary journals. In her opinion, Hacker's talents raised the *Review*'s status to its former prestigious position. However, she also asserted that those same attributes were never appreciated and that no matter how much the *Review* was praised, how much money she raised or how she furthered the cause of the College she was regarded as a 'burden rather than a blessing'. Referring to the Lila Wallace

Foundation and the Lannan Foundation awards, Hamilton stated that both were a direct result of Hacker's editorial aptitude and that she should have been congratulated since the grants were awarded to 'enhance the success of a well-edited magazine' and not to allow the College to reduce its subsidy. Raising funds to reduce the College subsidy would actively involve the president along with the development office plus others, so it was not possible for Hacker to do this alone. As such, Hamilton stated that rather than praising her, Hacker was shouldering the blame for what others chose not to do, and was a victim of 'disparaging remarks' from the College's administration in recognition of her successes.

Hamilton asserted that the real question surrounded why Hacker was fired. Although Hacker had explained her side of the story, Hamilton believed the sacking 'goes far deeper' and was 'more insidious' than straightforward financial problems at the *Review*. Having stayed on the Kenyon campus for a time, Hamilton detected much unfriendliness and antipathy towards the amount of money spent in maintaining the *Review*. Hamilton compared what she experienced to a 'threatening virus' with which no one wished to be associated and maintained that she never heard any praise for Hacker nor was there 'any understanding' of the work she was doing. Hamilton was 'astonished' that though Hacker's office was located in the English Department the gulf between her and the faculty members was as huge as the 'Grand Canyon'. There was no camaraderie that she could see and when she attended an on-campus memorial service for Audre Lorde, sponsored by the Women's Studies Department at which Hacker related her memories of Lorde and read her poetry, Hamilton was struck by the fact that there was not one member of the English Department present.

³³⁵ Marilyn Hacker to Kenyon Review Supporters 11.05.94

Hamilton observed that Kenyon was a difficult place for an outsider to become integrated since, as she claims, everything about the place, from the people to the buildings and landscape is 'carefully shaped'. The consequence was that Hacker was not made welcome and worked almost completely outwith the local culture. The tragic aspect of the situation, in Hamilton's opinion, is 'historically enlightened' Kenyon's failure to value Hacker's contribution to the College.

Having taught at a private college in the Midwest for eighteen years, Hamilton's experience was that such colleges suffer because they do not know how to prosper and develop from within. She maintained that these colleges could not excuse their bad manners in the name of self-preservation. Hamilton was impressed by Hacker's loyalty to her fellow workers at the *Review* and singled out Cy Wainscott and Doris Jean Dilts. In expressing her empathy for the circumstances in which they found themselves, Hamilton asserted that everyone with whom Hacker came in contact learned from her, adding that it was a pity the larger College community could not do likewise.

While Hamilton was confident that Hacker would prosper without Kenyon, she wondered what the future held for a college that conspired 'to expel a gifted and creative genius' who worked so hard on its behalf. Hamilton finished her protracted letter by resigning as both consulting editor and development consultant to the *Review*.³³⁶

On receiving Hacker's letter, Bea Gates immediately circulated a petition in New York City which gathered 61 names protesting against Kenyon's actions. The petition objected to the sacking of 'distinguished lesbian poet, Marilyn Hacker' who had single-handedly fashioned the *Review* into the 'most dynamic cultural force' in America which

³³⁶ Eleanor Bender Hamilton to Philip Jordan, Cy Wainscott, Theodore O. Mason, David F. Banks and John McCoy 13.05.94

consistently published the best work of 'gays and lesbians and people of all colors'. The petition supported Hacker's track record as a 'brilliant and brave editor' and stated the signatories' intention to cancel their subscriptions. A handwritten note appended to the petition by Doris Jean Dilts stated that 55 of the 61 names were not subscribers, 4 currently held subscriptions and had been sent refunds and 2 had previously subscribed but their subscriptions had expired. The note, intended for David Lynn's benefit, also asked if Philip Jordan would care to be informed.³³⁷

When Director of the MacArthur Fellows Program, Catharine R. Stimpson received Hacker's letter of May 11 informing her of events at Kenyon she was appalled. She replied that she was sending a copy of the letter to Jeffrey Kiltay who was the editor of *Lingua Franca*.³³⁸

Maxine Kumin was greatly disappointed to hear of Hacker's dismissal and stated she had brought 'honor and distinction' to the *Review*. While she hoped there had been no 'political chicanery' involved she suspected there was more to Hacker's firing than simple economics. Handwritten across the top of the letter was a personal message from Kumin that read, 'Marilyn - In haste & w outrage!' Kumin wrote that she regretted having to cancel her subscription to the *Review*. However, although she had contributed \$50 to the *Review* in December 1993, she did not, in fact, have a subscription.³³⁹

Bruce Berlind learned of Hacker's dismissal from Peter Balakian, a colleague at Colgate University. Berlind had recently written to Philip Jordan and was upset that most of the arguments he had put to him in favour of continuing the *Review* were irrelevant since it was now obvious the problem had not been budgetary. Since Hacker had been

³³⁷ Bea Gates (petition) to Philip Jordan 15.05.94

³³⁸ Catharine R. Stimpson to Marilyn Hacker 14.05.94

replaced by another editor, Berlind assumed the matter to be nothing whatever to do with finance and wrote to her, 'we can be pretty damn sure what the issue was'. In Jordan's reply to Berlind, he was assured his comments would be passed on to the trustees. Hacker had requested that Balakian, who had also written to Jordan, write to him once more. Offering to write a second letter also, Berlind wanted her advice on whether it should be approached as a 'fait accompli' or in the vein of urging a change of heart on the matter. He believed the former would require a degree of tact, while the latter would take the form of a lampoon. Berlind wished to know the circumstances surrounding her dismissal and offered to rally support from fellow writers if she desired it.³⁴⁰

Linda Smukler was outraged when she heard the news. It was her view that Hacker had transformed the *Review* from a mediocre magazine no different from any other, to an 'exciting showcase' for new and established writers. She could not understand why Hacker could be fired after having increased subscription and newsstand sales. Smukler noted that under Hacker's direction, the *Review* had become respected for its outstanding and ground-breaking writing and for featuring the work of gay and lesbian writers along with that of minority groups. She stated she would be 'horrified' if the College, 'a leading liberal arts institution,' had fired Hacker due to pressure from conservative trustees. Smukler thought it was 'reprehensible and unforgivable' that Hacker's brilliant work should be 'dismantled'.³⁴¹

When Jeffrey Betcher heard about Hacker's sacking, he wrote to Jordan to express his devastation at the news. Just as the *Review* was beginning to generate excitement, Kenyon decided to terminate Hacker's contract. Betcher was in no doubt

³³⁹ Maxine Kumin to Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 17.05.94

³⁴⁰ Bruce Berlind to Marilyn Hacker 17.05.94

about the motivation for getting rid of her and he was certain it would be obvious to anyone other than white, straight males. It was unfortunate that at a time when Kenyon College appeared to be embracing multiculturalism it should abruptly reinforce the notion of it as a place strictly for straight-laced rich people. In cancelling his subscription to the *Review*, Betcher, a College alumnus, stated he felt 'embarrassed' about the treatment of Hacker.³⁴²

On May 18 Kathleene West, an associate professor at New Mexico State University wrote to Jordan to inform him that she would no longer be using the *Review* in her teaching seminars. She was disappointed that Hacker was no longer editor of the *Review*, which had regained its prestige under her guidance. Regretting Kenyon's disservice to justice and equal opportunities, West refers to the 'so-called moral climate' existing in the country. West's opinion was that Kenyon's decision to fire Hacker was only another example of a wedge being driven between the different populations which constituted the U.S. and had its basis in a fear of an all-encompassing attitude to literature and life.³⁴³

As an editor at the famous City Lights bookshop in San Francisco Amy Scholder was 'extremely disappointed' and upset on discovering Hacker's fate. She had been introduced to many new writers under Hacker's editorship and stated she looked forward to each issue. Scholder believed Hacker should be rewarded by Kenyon for her commitment to the *Review* and her ability to gain funding and expressed her hope that the decision would be reversed.³⁴⁴

³⁴¹ Linda Smukler to Philip Jordan 17.05.94

³⁴² Jeffrey Betcher to Philip Jordan, *The Kenyon Review* and *The Kenyon Bulletin* 17.05.94

³⁴³ Kathleene West to Philip Jordan 18.05.94

³⁴⁴ Amy Scholder to Philip Jordan and *The Kenyon Review* 18.05.94

William Stephen Cross wrote to Hacker expressing his support for her and offering her some translations of Richard Exner's work should she be appointed editor elsewhere. It was Cross's understanding that 'a palace intrigue' had brought about her downfall. He thanked Hacker for encouraging him in his Exner project and her interest in his translations.³⁴⁵

On May 19 Ryn Edwards, a biology professor at Kenyon faxed 'Phil and The Trustees' under the subject 'Marilyn Hacker's Firing'. Opposite Edwards' name at the top of the fax was the word 'dyketactic'. She had a preface to her message which explained she had written it on May 13 but held it for a week of reflection before sending it. She complained that Hacker's firing was a 'loud indignant slap in the face' to any commitment to Women's and Gender Studies and multiculturalism at Kenyon. Edwards stated that Hacker's dismissal was a 'condescending slap with a punch to the groin' to all minority groups and was intended to silence marginalized writers. Accusing the administration of prejudice and 'ACADEMENTIA' she asserted there was no attempt to work out finances with Hacker, who had raised the *Review's* status to that of 'Distinguished and Heralded' in the literary world. Edwards remarked that the 'raw acidity' of the situation was the continuation of the *Review* as it was done in the past. In other words, control of the *Review* reverted back to the English Department. In her view the potential of Kenyon to be a leading college and a training ground for future academics, was constantly compromised by the short-sighted administration. This lack of foresight and courage constantly disappointed Edwards, who also accused the administration of hypocrisy. Her parting shot was a quote from Garrison Keillor's radio show *Lake Woebegone* which she considered would be a good analogy in describing the

³⁴⁵ William Stephen Cross to Marilyn Hacker 18.05.94

previous eight to ten years at Kenyon. 'What was the last thing that went through the bugs<sic> head as it hit the windshield? Its ass.'

Edwards' letter generated various responses from her colleagues at Kenyon. Rachel Fitzgerald wanted more information on the situation after finding out about David Lynn's appointment in *Fortnightly*. She wondered if Hacker had resigned, adding that if she had been fired the people responsible should 'plead temporary insanity' and ask her back.

Having read her 'diatribe' about Hacker's replacement by Lynn, Fred Baumann had two comments. He did not consider it up to her 'usual standards of literacy and taste,' and he took umbrage at Edwards for making unsolicited complaints on his behalf. Baumann also pointed out that he did not accept her view that Hacker's removal was an insult to every Jew, far less him.

Jane Wemhoener did not believe Edwards had gone too far in her condemnation of the College's treatment of Hacker. She thought the 'way-past-retirement president' with his 'male-dominated vision' had made women suffer far too long.³⁴⁶

On hearing about Hacker Karen Falkenstrom wanted to know whose socks to vomit over at the *Review*. She informed Hacker that she would keep her ears open for any 'subversive responses from the literary community'.³⁴⁷

When Carolyn Kizer complained at Hacker's dismissal she advised Philip Jordan that the barrage of criticism he was receiving should be seen as an attempt to teach him something, though she doubted the capacity of either Jordan or the English Department staff to learn anything. Kizer was mystified as to what Kenyon thought they 'were

³⁴⁶ Ryn Edwards to Philip Jordan and Trustees 19.05.94

³⁴⁷ Karen Falkenstrom to Marilyn Hacker 24.05.94

getting' when they initially hired Hacker, whom she described as one of the most candid and least 'dissembling' people in the literary field. She was accurate in her observation that when Hacker was appointed she had offered a clear vision for the *Review*. Asserting that Hacker not only succeeded in what was expected of her in terms of introducing 'social conscience' and 'gender diversity' to the *Review*, Kizer stated that her success was more than anyone had envisaged. The \$43,000 raised by Hacker demonstrated her ability to attract funding to the *Review*, and, according to Kizer, given time she would have solved the financial crisis. Kizer was 'forced to conclude' that Kenyon did know what they were getting when they hired Hacker, but had lost their nerve somewhere along the way. She wrote that she would encourage Hacker to sue the College.³⁴⁸

Homophobia?

Writing from the University of California, Irvine, on May 23 Professor Robert Peters said he had been waiting to decide whether to renew his subscription in the hope that Hacker's editorship would continue. Having written two reviews of *The Kenyon Review* over a year apart for the *SMALL PRESS REVIEW* he reported a vast improvement since Hacker had taken over. Peters' initial opinion of the *Review* prior to Hacker's editorship was that it was 'stale and moribund' but since reassessing it he had been astounded at the energy and breadth of the writing. Unless she was reinstated as editor Peters was not prepared to renew his subscription. When he heard Hacker had been fired he said he felt like 'wearing black'. He mentioned the \$43,000 Hacker had brought to the *Review* and stated he would hate to believe that the Kenyon trustees were not so narrow-minded as to be offended by the direction in which she was taking the *Review*. Peters

³⁴⁸ Carolyn Kizer to Philip Jordan 21.05.94

believed the trustees had opted for a safe conventional route. He was concerned that homophobia was a factor in Hacker's dismissal since she had published some of the best gay and lesbian writing around. Peters served notice that his 'expert testimony' was available in the event of legal action being taken against Kenyon.³⁴⁹

If Jordan thought things could not get any worse he was wrong. Laurie Finke penned a protest letter which had also been signed by six of her colleagues. They had written it a fortnight previously but had delayed sending it in order to gather their thoughts. The two weeks had done nothing to alter their initial disgust at Hacker's fate. They described the treatment of one of Kenyon's most illustrious employees, one who had brought great prestige Kenyon's way, as 'chilling'. Their underlying worry was that financial problems were a front for a 'more troubling political agenda'.

As the first female editor of the *Review*, Hacker's appointment was symbolic of the College's dedication to multiculturalism. However, it was evident to Finke et al that her firing was a 'backlash' against academic freedom. The questionnaire which had been circulated had made it crystal clear to Finke that the trustees leading the investigation were less than happy with the direction in which Hacker was taking the *Review*.

Pointing out Hacker's successes at Kenyon, Finke asserted that good literature was not generated by 'playing it safe'. Finke was disappointed that Hacker had not yet had the opportunity to teach a course on the Women's and Gender Studies program, which is ironic when you consider that Reed S. Browning had been trying for years to get her to teach a writing course.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁹ Robert Peters to Marilyn Hacker and Philip Jordan 23.05.94

³⁵⁰ Women's and Gender Studies Department to Philip Jordan 25.05.94

On behalf of the Women's and Gender Studies Advisory Board, Finke wrote to Hacker to express her shock and distress on hearing about her sacking. Her departure was a huge loss to Kenyon and Women's and Gender Studies. Although Finke expected Hacker would be angry, she believed she should be feeling extremely proud of her triumphs at Kenyon. Having transformed the *Review* into a leading literary journal and one which has been nationally recognised, she had proved that inclusiveness and quality could be one and the same. Finke was sure that when the history of the *Review* was written, Hacker's editorship would be as prominent as that of John Crowe Ransom's.

Assessing Hacker's contribution to the Women's and Gender Studies program as irreplaceable, Finke realised it was unlikely that any of the proposals arising from a recent committee meeting would come to fruition since much of it relied on Hacker teaching a course at some point. Hacker's loss to Kenyon was not felt only by people who valued her in literary circles, but by anyone committed to genuine inclusiveness.³⁵¹

Jane Miller wrote on behalf of the advocacy committee of the AWP to protest Hacker's firing on May 29. She informed Jordan that since Hacker's appointment as editor she had set the standards for other journals to follow. Not for the first time, Jordan was confronted with the prospect that many people only knew of Kenyon College via the *Review*. Miller offered some suggestions as to how Kenyon could have handled the situation without sacking Hacker. These suggestions included reducing the number of issues, hiring Hacker on a part-time basis and cutting the number of pages per issue. The AWP rejected the decision to sack Hacker, which they described as an 'act of cowardice'.

Jordan must have been haunted by the word 'censorship' by this point and Miller accused the Kenyon trustees of removing what they could not control. In explaining that

the AWP supported a policy of artistic freedom, Miller recommended that her members boycott the *Review* following the publication of the Summer 1995 edition, which was the last one to represent Hacker's editorial influence.³⁵²

Jacqueline Woodson was outraged on hearing Hacker had been sacked for homophobic reasons. Demanding a cancellation of her subscription and a refund of a \$40 donation, Woodson said she would be advising her colleagues and friends of Kenyon's lack of encouragement with respect to gay, lesbian and minority communities.³⁵³

Curator of the Olin Library at Washington University in St. Louis, Kevin Ray was saddened to hear of Hacker's troubles. He wanted her to know that he was a great admirer of the job she had done at the *Review*.³⁵⁴

On June 2 Laurie Finke wrote to Hacker in Paris. She regretted not having seen Hacker before she left and hoped that France was treating her better than Gambier. Enclosing a copy of the letter she had sent to Jordan on behalf of the Women's and Gender Studies program, Finke was still collecting signatures of protest by hanging around the Kenyon bookstore and 'pouncing' on people as they entered. Finke thought the College was going to look foolish as a result of the goings on, but she conceded that in the long run it might not make much difference.³⁵⁵

Cy Wainscott and Doris Jean Dilts forwarded letters to Hacker. However, she wanted them to be retained in the *Review* archives along with copies of letters of support she had received. She wrote that this correspondence was part of the *Review's* history

³⁵¹ Women's and Gender Studies Department to Marilyn Hacker 25.05.94

³⁵² Jane Miller to Philip Jordan 29.05.94

³⁵³ Jacqueline Woodson to Cy Wainscott 01.06.94

³⁵⁴ Kevin Ray to Marilyn Hacker 01.06.94

'whether or not Phil Jordan and his cohorts' liked it or not. Concerned that quotes from her letters of support might be used in a future subscription campaign, Hacker felt sure that Wainscott and David Lynn would agree it was inappropriate, as the letters' authors would not necessarily support a change of editor. During her editorship she had for the most part steered clear of selecting quotes which included her name to avoid a 'cult of personality emphasis'. Claiming to have 'won every bet so far' Hacker was certain that Philip Jordan and the College trustees had destroyed their copies of her letters of support and petitions.³⁵⁶

When Cy Wainscott replied to Jacqueline Woodson on June 7 he regretted having to send her a total of \$56.50, which constituted a return of her \$40 donation and \$16.50 in unused subscriptions. He informed Woodson that he believed she was wrong in her assumption that Hacker's dismissal was due to homophobia, adding that if that were the case, neither he nor David Lynn would have remained at the *Review*. Wainscott maintained that the editorial direction under Lynn would not deviate from that of his predecessor and that no instructions had been issued to alter course. He stated that the next few issues would be published 'exactly' as Hacker planned them. Speaking for both Lynn and himself, Wainscott stated their belief that Hacker was a 'great poet and a great editor' and that the multicultural approach she endorsed would continue under their direction. Although Wainscott remained friendly with Hacker they disagreed on the circumstances surrounding her dismissal. He told Hacker he did not think her vision of inclusiveness would benefit from any attempt to undermine the journal she so ably

³⁵⁵ Laurie Finke to Marilyn Hacker 02.06.94

³⁵⁶ Marilyn Hacker to Cy Wainscott 02.06.94

championed. Wainscott was determined to pursue Hacker's vision and hoped that in time Woodson would return to the *Review* as a reader and contributor.³⁵⁷

Duke University Professor and critic of international renown Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick decided to tell Philip Jordan some home truths about how Kenyon College was viewed by the literary world outside Gambier. Kenyon, she began, used to be acknowledged as the college which published the eminent *Kenyon Review*. Then, Kenyon became known as the college responsible for publishing the 'mediocre' *Kenyon Review*. For a brief time, Sedgwick asserts, Kenyon was regarded as the college which endorsed Marilyn Hacker's innovative vision which brought together diverse populations. Sedgwick predicted that in future Kenyon would be remembered as the college which sacked Marilyn Hacker 'secretly and summarily' without any public debate, on a 'transparent pretext' following the last faculty meeting of the academic year and the last issue of the student newspaper, and hot on the heels of her diagnosis with a life-threatening and costly disease. As a parting shot, Sedgwick stated that she hoped Jordan was proud of his contribution to Kenyon's national standing.³⁵⁸

In replying to Catherine Gammon in June, Wainscott quoted Samuel Clemens's famous saying, that reports of the *Review*'s death were greatly exaggerated. He explained to Gammon that as part of a general enquiry into Kenyon College finances the College trustees conducted an investigation into the financial viability of continuing to publish the 'highly-subsidized' *Review*. In April the trustees directed the *Review* should continue but with financial restructuring. Gammon was informed that as part of the financial reshuffle Hacker's contract was not renewed and that David Lynn, a former

³⁵⁷ Cy Wainscott to Jacqueline Woodson 07.06.94

³⁵⁸ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to Philip Jordan 08.06.94

editor and associate editor was taking over on an interim basis. Wainscott was concerned that Hacker's departure had generated the rumour that she had been dismissed for homophobic reasons. He stated that while Hacker 'believes this to be the case' he did not, and if it were true he would not have remained at Kenyon. The last paragraph of Wainscott's letter was almost identical to the one he had sent to Jacqueline Woodson, in which he explained the *Review's* direction would remain true to Hacker's vision.³⁵⁹

On June 14 Hacker wrote to Wainscott that however much she respected him she did not agree with the position he had taken regarding letters relating to her dismissal. She was insistent they belonged in the *Review* archive and stated that if Wainscott followed his position to its logical conclusion it would result in subscriber surveys with negative feedback being discarded. However, she acknowledged she was no longer *Review* editor and as such her view did not count. She asked Wainscott to kindly return letters she had received from Carolyn Kizer and Maxine Kumin. With the exception of Wainscott and a couple of others, Hacker found Paris 'considerably kinder' to her than Gambier. She had heard a rumour that Philip Jordan had told the *Chronicle of Higher Education* she had been fired because she was an 'outsider'. Admitting this sounded bitter, Hacker confided that 'injustice done' does not recover like a skinned knee. That said, she did not consider her 'expulsion' from Kenyon was worth becoming obsessed over. Although she had lost her job, she opined that the *Review* may have lost more.

Hacker denied she was the 'source' of whatever letters had arrived for Philip Jordan or the *Review* office. She conceded she had let some people know of the events at Kenyon, but felt they were responsible for their own actions. Some of the letters of complaint she had seen had come from people who had heard the news via the literary

³⁵⁹ Cy Wainscott to Catherine Gammon 09.06.94

grapevine. Hacker finished by offering her best wishes to 'Herr Professor Doktor Lynn' for his dual promotion.³⁶⁰

On June 15 the *Review's* managing editor, Cy Wainscott, wrote a general letter to KR authors. He apologised for the form letter but felt it necessary to answer enquiries regarding the *Review's* future. Wainscott explained the circumstances behind the investigation into the College finances and the attendant feasibility of retaining the 'highly-subsidized *Review*'. Having decided in April to continue the journal, the trustees advised that fiscal reforms were a requirement. Unfortunately for Hacker one of the reforms was that her contract as full-time editor was not 'renewed'. David Lynn, a former editor, associate editor and currently a member of the English Department was installed as editor on an interim basis.

Wainscott clearly felt a requirement to rebut the rumour that Hacker had been 'dismissed for homophobic reasons'. He stated that while Hacker believed it, he did not, adding that had it been true, neither he nor David Lynn would still be with the *Review*. In an attempt to justify this statement, he stated that the *Review's* editorial policies would remain the same and that the next few issues would be published 'exactly' as planned by Hacker.³⁶¹

When Bruce Berlind complained to Philip Jordan on June 16 about Hacker's dismissal, he specifically requested that his letter be retained in the *Review* archives. Berlind was outraged at what had happened and the 'disingenuous way' it was done. He was annoyed he had been led to believe the matter was purely financial, which meant his previous correspondence in which he had argued every effort should be made to continue

³⁶⁰ Marilyn Hacker to Cy Wainscott 14.06.94

³⁶¹ Cy Wainscott to *Kenyon Review* Authors 15.06.94

the *Review*, was rendered superfluous. As a *Review* contributor and subscriber of long standing, Berlind was angry that Jordan's reply to his initial letter had done nothing to alter his understanding that the problems at Kenyon involved anything other than finance, since it was the only matter to which Jordan had referred. It was now obvious to Berlind that the truth was 'somewhat different' and that while some financial reforms were forthcoming they were surely possible without the 'desperate and shameful act' of firing Hacker. In Berlind's eyes the reason for Hacker's sacking was evident. Alleging that the trustees objected to the *Review's* editorial content, he believed that if the subject had been directly addressed it could have been a matter for negotiation. Berlind contended that by avoiding the matter the trustees acted in a 'cowardly and disgraceful manner'.

To make matters worse, Kenyon had fired not only a major poet but one 'whose wit and ... mastery of technical formalities' would have thrilled John Crowe Ransom. Berlind considered it would take a long time before the 'deplorable' matter would be put to rest by the literary and academic communities.³⁶²

A week after Maureen Brady renewed her subscription to the *Review* she heard the news about Hacker. Cancelling her subscription in protest, she stated she was saddened that the 'great things' Hacker had done at the journal would not continue.³⁶³

Tucson Poetry Festival Director, Karen Falkenstrom, believed the reputation afforded *The Kenyon Review* was entirely due to Hacker and regarded her dismissal as a demonstration that Kenyon was no longer concerned with preserving the magazine's

³⁶² Bruce Berlind to Philip Jordan, David Lynn and Marilyn Hacker 16.06.94

³⁶³ Maureen Brady to The Kenyon Review 16.06.94

reputation in the literary world. She felt she had no choice but to cancel her subscription.³⁶⁴

When Vice President of The Associated Writers Programs, Jane Miller protested to Jordan about Hacker's sacking, she claimed to be writing on behalf of the AWP advocacy committee. Miller argued that since Hacker had taken over at the *Review* it had set the benchmark for literary publications and represented cultural diversity at its best. Under Hacker's guidance the *Review* presented work from across the literary field. In Miller's opinion it was ironic that Hacker should be fired after gaining the 'respect of the entire field' following several years of astute editing during which time she had tackled subjects involving 'multi-cultural topics, feminist material, homosexual realities [and] environmental concerns' while simultaneously applying strict literary standards. According to Miller, the quality of the *Review* had been unanimously applauded. In her condemnation, Miller did not restrain herself. She called the sacking an 'act of cowardice' and a stifling of the *Review*'s visibly forthright editorial practices essential to freedom of speech. On behalf of the AWP Miller stated she despised any action which removed that which could not be controlled. Miller recommended that her 'thousands' of members boycott the *Review* and that subscribers withdraw their support after the fall 1994 issue when the new editor would be in place. Since the AWP advocated an unconstrained artistic environment it could not condone impulsive and unexplained acts of authoritarianism that diluted its rights, and as such, it was saddened and distressed by happenings there.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ Karen Falkenstrom to Philip Jordan 17.06.94

³⁶⁵ Jane Miller to Philip Jordan and Marilyn Hacker 18.06.94

Cy Waincott was left to contact readers and subscribers to the *Review*, informing them that Hacker's contract had not been renewed but that the journal would continue with David Lynn taking over as interim editor. Adrian C. Lewis replied to Waincott on June 25 remarking that he was startled to receive his 'form' letter. Lewis was not shocked at Hacker's sacking; rather, he was shocked that he had been deemed worthy of being informed. He stated that in living in South Dakota he had very little contact with the literary establishment in the east. As far as he was concerned Hacker's fate was of no consequence to him. His first worry had been that his poem 'Vortex of Indian Fevers' scheduled for the forthcoming issue would be ditched. However, discovering that would not be the case, his next concern was that the review copy of his latest book, *Blood Thirsty Savages*, might have got mislaid. To be on the safe side he shipped another copy to Waincott. Lewis offered his 'take' on the Hacker scenario, stating that although he had been published in the *Review* prior to Hacker's tenure, he found the journal 'incredibly staid' back then. Acknowledging that Hacker had given more life to the *Review* and published him several times he felt his work was 'cheapened' by much of the writing she had published in recent issues. Lewis felt some of Hacker's choices had ignored quality in favour of a 'homosexual stance'. While Lewis was not intolerant of homosexuality he stated he did not like 'to have his face rubbed in it ... (as it were!)'. In wishing the *Review* well, he indicated he would continue to submit work.³⁶⁶

If Lewis was supportive of the trustees' decision he was in the minority. Stephen Booker heard about Hacker's sacking before his official letter of June 15 arrived. He asked Lynn to tell the Kenyon 'bigwigs' they were 'dumbasses' and obviously stepping on their 'wee-wees' or whatever they collectively used for a brain. After praising Hacker

³⁶⁶ Adrian C. Lewis to Cy Waincott 25.06.94

for being clever enough to accept his work, Booker, in describing her as a 'Living Poet's Society of one,' stated she was a 'happening' that Kenyon was not quite ready for.

Jordan's letter from Miller was passed on to Cy Wainscott who responded to it on June 28. While he had been impressed by the depth of feeling expressed he informed her that the 'emotional climate' created by the circumstances surrounding her departure was quite intense and had 'deeply affected' everyone. Wainscott was very proud of what Hacker had achieved at the *Review* and admitted he missed on her both a personal and professional level. Although the form letter of June 15 had been sent to Miller, Wainscott suspected she had not received it prior to writing her letter of complaint to Jordan. He answered each of Miller's complaints in turn, beginning with her conclusion that Hacker's sacking was a censoring of freedom of speech. Having spent 35 years as a journalist, Wainscott wrote that he had faced the prospect of prison in support of freedom of speech and was prepared to die in support of this ideal. He had been angered and frustrated at Miller's implication that he would remain at the *Review* if those freedoms were removed. In answer to Miller's call for Hacker supporters to cancel their subscriptions he rejected the implication that minority voices would be silenced and declared his intention to continue the 'openness and inclusiveness' Hacker had introduced. If the *Review* had a significant withdrawal of support, Wainscott believed there was a possibility that under-represented factions could be muted if not entirely silenced. Wainscott agreed with Miller over her abhorrence at activities which removed that which could not be controlled, but he affirmed that *Review* content was not an issue. The advocating of action which threatened the future of the *Review*, was in his view, tantamount to bookburning. Wainscott contended that Hacker, though no longer *Review*

editor, would continue to fight for freedom of speech, while the *Review* would carry on with her ideals of inclusiveness in her absence. Thanking Miller for her attention, he finished by stating that everyone had a responsibility to do what they could to forward the cause of equality and honesty in a not always just world.³⁶⁷

Hacker received a copy of a letter, dated June 27, that Adrian Oktenberg had written to the editors of *off our backs*. She wanted to alert the writing community that Hacker had been fired. Quoting from Wainscott's form letter, Oktenberg stated she did not believe that Kenyon could not afford to finance the *Review*. Instead she chose to believe that Hacker had been sacked due to the trustees' homophobia, but she was aware that even if her assumption were accurate, no guilty party would admit to it. If Hacker's dismissal was due to homophobia, and Oktenberg was convinced it was, then it could not be condoned.³⁶⁸

Hacker's Dismissal

Emery George received the standard letter of June 15 and wrote to Wainscott offering his congratulations that the *Review* would continue. He had read of Hacker's 'departure' in the May 25 issue of *Chronicle of Higher Education* in which she was quoted as saying, 'I was fired ... there was no discussion'. George wrote that he seemed to recall the article mentioned financial reforms were involved and he was pleased the 'perceptive' board of trustees were dedicated to keeping the *Review* in business. In George's opinion, any other decision would be 'calamitous' since he considered the *Review* to be in the top three literary journals in the U.S. Shortly after the *Review's* 1979

³⁶⁷ Cy Wainscott to Jane Miller 28.06.94

³⁶⁸ Adrian Oktenberg to *Kenyon Review* Editors 27.06.94

resurrection George had some of his work published in it. Hacker's demise was clearly no great loss as far as George was concerned and he looked forward to submitting work to Lynn. He reiterated his best wishes for the *Review's* future.³⁶⁹

Alicia Ostriker, having received the June 15 letter, was shocked at Hacker's dismissal and questioned the claim that the editorial direction would not deviate from that taken by Hacker. The notion that editors were interchangeable suggested to Ostriker that Kenyon was ignorant of the editorial role. She was adamant the *Review* could not possibly maintain its position as a leading literary journal publishing diverse work of high quality 'without Hacker,' since it was the editor who created a journal's profile. Although she appreciated it was not Waincott's decision to fire Hacker, Ostriker did not accept the sacking was due to financial problems. Inferring that trustees were neither knowledgeable nor interested in literary excellence, Ostriker cancelled her subscription which had another 17 months to run. She stated she would no longer submit work to the *Review*, nor would she attend events at Kenyon, including a scheduled symposium on Keats at which she had promised to speak, unless the decision was revoked.³⁷⁰

Josephine Jacobsen was aware that Hacker had 'really moved her life to Gambier' and encouraged her daughter, Iva, to enrol at Kenyon. As such, Jacobsen understood if there were to be editorial changes at the *Review* then Hacker would be given adequate warning. Agreeing with Waincott's assessment that Hacker was a distinguished editor and notable poet, Jacobsen was concerned about the summary 'break' between the two parties. She had hoped Hacker's association with the *Review* would be a long one and stated that there was a huge difference between a part-time editor and a nationally

³⁶⁹ Emery George to Cy Waincott 01.07.94

³⁷⁰ Alicia Ostriker to Cy Waincott 03.07.94

recognised editor. While Jacobsen was unhappy with the events at Kenyon she acknowledged the wisdom of writing what can only be termed damage limitation letters to readers and subscribers alike. She did not feel it explained the curtness of the decision but she appreciated the *Review* had to put its point of view to its supporters. Complimenting Hacker's 'intelligence, experience and courage,' Jacobsen asserted the *Review* had profited enormously from its association with her.³⁷¹

Hilary Masters was flattered to be addressed as a 'Kenyon author' and appreciated being contacted to be apprised of the situation. Her only comment was that whatever the truth of the matter it was a sad tale all round.³⁷²

According to Michelle T. Clinton, Hacker transformed the *Review* from a run-of-the-mill magazine to a lively risk-taking publication championing contemporary writing. Kenyon's decision not to renew her contract was a 'critical error' in her view. Prior to Hacker's assuming the Editorship, Clinton's friends, colleagues and students 'all agreed to politely ignore' the *Review* since they found it dreary and of no use in an evolving America. However, when Hacker took over they were excited by the new authors and new approaches to language. Clinton claims they shared copies of the *Review*, critiqued the prose and argued over the phone about poetry's potential to exhibit human experience. Describing Hacker as 'insightful and sensitive' Clinton believed she was incapable of a 'hallucination of homophobia'. Kenyon had made a 'big mistake' in firing Hacker, who had been a 'gift' to the *Review*, a 'gift' to Clinton's life and a 'treasured gift' to her writing community.³⁷³

³⁷¹ Josephine Jacobsen to Cy Wainscott 05.07.94

³⁷² Hilary Masters to Cy Wainscott 06.07.94

³⁷³ Michelle T. Clinton to Cy Wainscott 07.07.94

On July 12 Jean Migrenne wrote from France to officially record his 'disapprobation' at the firing of Hacker. He informed David Lynn he would not be renewing his *Review* subscription and his future decision would depend on how the *Review* performed.³⁷⁴

It was with deep regret that Waincott instructed the *Review* staff to cancel Alicia Ostriker's subscription. He also passed a copy of her letter of July 3 to the organisers of the Keats symposium. While Waincott acknowledged Ostriker's point that an editor does create a magazine's profile he defended his statement regarding an unchanged editorial direction by putting it in the context of the 'rumor' that Hacker's dismissal was based on homophobia. What Waincott meant was that Hacker's belief in openness and inclusiveness would not be abandoned now that she was no longer editor. He was adamant that these principles would be 'aggressively pursued'. Waincott accepted Ostriker's point that editors were not interchangeable but doubted that she really meant to say that the *Review* could not be in the literary forefront unless Hacker was editor. He did not consider Hacker's dismissal as inconsequential, but he resented the fact that 'well-intentioned but misinformed' people were threatening the continuation of the tradition Hacker had begun. Though the genius of a journal could be attributed to its editor, Waincott believed writers were its lifeblood. He regretted that writers with an established reputation such as Ostriker should consider withdrawing support since the *Review* relied on writers of such stature to encourage emerging writers to submit work.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁴ Jean Migrenne to *The Kenyon Review* 12.07.94

³⁷⁵ Cy Waincott to Alicia Ostriker 14.07.94

‘Homophobia, Xenophobia, Misogyny, Parochialism, Racism, Envy, Boorishness, Religious Zealotry’

When Wainscott replied to Bruce Berlind on July 14 he mentioned that David Lynn had shown him his copy of Berlind’s letter to Philip Jordan. Wainscott felt obliged to respond personally though he found it ‘especially difficult’ since Hacker was, and he hoped would remain, a valued friend. In an attempt to assuage Berlind over his annoyance at Hacker’s sacking Wainscott quoted directly from what Hacker had told him. She had been told by the trustees that they did not have confidence in her capacity to work with them to reduce the *Review*’s subsidy and further integrate it with Kenyon College life. Wainscott believed this to be not only the truth of the matter but the ‘whole truth’. He added that Hacker did not accept this and had ‘expressed suspicions that homophobia, xenophobia, misogyny, parochialism, racism, envy, boorishness, religious zealotry – any or all of these things – were the reasons she was not continued as editor’. If this were the case, Wainscott stated, not for the first time, that he would not have remained at the *Review*. Wainscott asserted that great writers do not always make good editors, great editors are not always effective publishing executives and that great publishing executives are not always effective in generating confidence. That said, he maintained that Hacker was ‘indisputably’ a great writer and editor. Recognizing that Hacker’s competence to successfully handle the ‘awesome’ financial challenges facing the *Review* could be a legitimate subject of debate, Wainscott was adamant that to confuse that with ‘imagined and groundless’ issues surrounding editorial control or academic freedom was ‘just plain wrong’.

The most important issue, as far as Wainscott was concerned was the survival of the *Review*, not simply for its own sake, but as a forum for the work of ‘under-represented and suppressed voices’ to appear alongside that of promising and established writers. It was Wainscott’s belief that what Hacker achieved in her time at the *Review* would be regarded as one of the great periods in its history, and he did not think she would stop campaigning for greater inclusiveness simply because she was no longer *Review* editor. The *Review* would continue to pursue the tradition Hacker established whether she was editor or not. Wainscott urged Berlind to hold fire on judging the *Review* too quickly. If what he alleged were true it would become obvious soon enough. However, since the *Review*’s future depended on people like him, Wainscott could not allow ‘destructive ... rumor’ and ‘innuendo’ to impact on the ‘struggling’ journal. Wainscott’s letter to Berlind finished exactly as his June 28 letter to Jane Miller had, in which he stated that everyone had a responsibility to do what they could to ensure fairness and justice in a world which was not always just.³⁷⁶

When Wainscott wrote to Hacker on July 14 he stated that she should have been receiving correspondence addressed to her at the *Review* and to let him know if there was a problem in this respect. He wrote that he had no objections to retaining her correspondence in the *Review*’s archive, but he did object to providing her with addresses of *Review* authors for reasons he said he had previously explained. Hacker’s daughter, Iva, was still at Kenyon College and Wainscott had met her a few times, including once while she was working as a receptionist in Ransom Hall. Wainscott was pleased that Hacker was enjoying some ‘R and R’ in Paris and recovering her strength. He informed her that Philip Jordan had announced his forthcoming retirement ‘next June (control

³⁷⁶ Cy Wainscott to Bruce Berlind 14.07.94

yourself),’ after which he would maintain homes at Kenyon and Maine. Stating that life in Gambier was ‘unremarkable,’ Wainscott’s main gripe was replying to letters complaining about her dismissal. He told her he hated having to respond to the complaints. One piece of good news he shared with her was the possibility that he would be teaching a class for ‘student journalizers’ in the fall. A piece of business requiring attention concerned the latest Lila Wallace plan which called for a reading from the *Review* theater issue at New Dramatists in New York City. Since Wainscott knew nothing about it he asked what Hacker could tell him regarding it.³⁷⁷

Alfred Corn of Columbus University was not convinced by Wainscott’s form letter and the explanation that fiscal reasons had decided Hacker’s fate. Hacker had spoken to Corn and provided him with her version of events. She told him she had offered to teach extra courses and take a term’s unpaid leave so as her editor’s salary could be removed from the budget. Corn found it difficult to understand why Hacker’s offer had not been taken up, adding that if it had been it would have provided the College with an opportunity to find alternative financial aid.

Another aspect of Hacker’s situation which upset Corn was the timing of the dismissal. Since it had come so late in the spring term it would be extremely difficult for her to find another appointment. He considered it was underhanded of the trustees to wait until all classes were over and most students had left for their spring break. Corn believed the literary community deserved a full explanation of the treatment meted out to one of America’s most distinguished poets.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁷ Cy Wainscott to Marilyn Hacker 14.07.94

³⁷⁸ Alfred Corn to Kenyon College Board of Trustees and Marilyn Hacker 14.07.94

Joy Harjo was upset about why should Hacker should have been fired 'for no apparent reason'. It was due to this 'unconscionable act' that she cancelled her subscription.³⁷⁹

In mid-July Stanley Plumly of the University of Maryland returned from abroad to discover his letter informing him of the happenings at Kenyon. Having heard the previous year via the literary grapevine that the *Review* was in trouble he was relieved to find it would continue. Prior to Hacker's appointment, Plumly had been consulted. Though he was a friend of hers he did not believe she was the ideal choice since she would have to commute from New York. While he also thought her 'clear politics' were the antithesis of the 'Ransom tradition,' he pondered that this may have been the reason she was selected. Plumly stated that Hacker was doomed from the beginning to fulfil the aspirations of a traditional literary journal and expressed a hope that when next an editor is chosen 'some real consideration will be given to his or her range of taste and balance of aesthetic judgement'. He considered the best person for the job to be David Baker, whom he believed had taste, an awareness of the past, and who was not frightened to 'experiment within the arts'. In Plumly's judgement, Baker's only mission was that of excellence. He thanked Wainscott for listening to his unasked for opinion.³⁸⁰

Eileen Myles' brusque communication to Wainscott complained that she had heard a rumor that Kenyon alumni were asked how they liked the 'homosexual content' of the *Review*. If it were true, Myles contended that such a question 'sounds'

³⁷⁹ Joy Harjo to Philip Jordan 15.07.94

³⁸⁰ Stanley Plumly to Cy Wainscott 15.07.94

homophobic. She asked Waincott to withdraw her poem, 'Troubadour', scheduled for the Winter issue of the *Review*.³⁸¹

The letters of complaint surrounding Hacker's dismissal were arriving in large numbers. Philip Jordan passed the letters he received to Waincott and left him to deal with them. Waincott contacted Karen Falkenstrom, Director of the Tucson Poetry Festival, on July 20 to inform her that her request to cancel her subscription had been attended to and that a refund would be in the post. He stated he was saddened Hacker was not continuing as editor, but financial considerations were to blame for her dismissal. In this letter, Waincott puts his argument in such a way that it appears as though it were a direct choice between Hacker and the *Review*. He stated that fiscal problems 'forced' Kenyon College 'to not renew her contract in order that it could continue publication of the *Review*'. Insisting this did not signal an end to the inclusiveness Hacker had established, Waincott asserted there was not a 'superabundance' of literary publications that could profess to be genuinely representative of the full gamut of contemporary and traditional writing. On the same day he wrote to Falkenstrom, Waincott also dealt with a subscription cancellation request from Maureen Brady. This letter was almost identical to one he sent to Falkenstrom.³⁸²

Melanie Rae Thon was pleased that work selected by Hacker would feature in forthcoming issues of the *Review*, but expressed her disappointment that Hacker had 'left'. She wished the *Review* well for the future.³⁸³

Waincott was quick to respond to the rumor Eileen Myles had heard that alumni had been asked their opinion of 'homosexual content' in the *Review*. In setting Myles

³⁸¹ Eileen Myles to Cy Waincott 16.07.94

³⁸² Cy Waincott to Maureen Brady 20.07.94

straight, Wainscott explained that although a questionnaire had been distributed it had not been circulated to the general alumni, but rather to approximately one hundred selected people, many of whom had been chosen by Hacker. The questionnaire included questions on what most appealed about the *Review* and whether or not the respondents were pleased with the *Review*'s content. Wainscott conceded he was concerned that these questions 'might sound homophobic' but decided they were not. He informed Myles that an earlier questionnaire went even further by asking what the respondent enjoyed most or least about the *Review*'s content from a list which included feminist, multicultural and gay/lesbian subject matter. The same questionnaire also enquired about ethnicity, race and background and while Wainscott thought this might 'sound' homophobic it was not. Hacker had 'designed' this particular readership survey. Rumors were the last thing Wainscott and the *Review* needed at this time. He dreaded the destructiveness of 'Goebbels-like repetition' which convinced even liberal-minded people to arrive at wrong conclusions. David Lynn and the *Review* staff were concerned that rumors such as Myles cited would be believed and make the task ahead more difficult in terms of continuing the tradition of inclusiveness begun by Hacker. One of the potential problems encountered by the *Review* was the withholding of writers' work because of a perceived condoning of homophobia. Wainscott saw this as a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' in the sense that if the *Review* was regarded as a non-inclusive journal then 'under-represented' writers would not submit work and the *Review* would be forced into a less-inclusive stance. Clearly exasperated at having to constantly defend the *Review*, Wainscott stated that when responding to letters such as Myles' he felt as if he were being asked if he 'still beat [his] spouse'. He regretted having to withdraw 'The Troubadour' and hoped its withdrawal

³⁸³ Melanie Rae Thon to Cy Wainscott 21.07.94

was because it was not going to be published as quickly as Hacker had indicated rather than as a sign of disapproval against an ‘imagined hostility’.³⁸⁴

On July 27 editor of *Sulfur*, and a member of Eastern Michigan University’s English Department, Clayton Eshleman, stated he was going to do everything he could to inform the literary world of the ‘irresponsible and sadistic’ sacking of Hacker.³⁸⁵

Hacker wrote to Wainscott at the end of July to thank him for forwarding copies of his responses to various letters of complaint. She had heard about, and been sent copies of his ‘damage control’ letters to contributors which contained comments such as ‘damn clever, that Wainscott’ and ‘he doth protest too much’. Although she understood why he had to write them she regretted he had been put in that situation.

However, Hacker was disturbed by some of Wainscott’s responses and one in particular upset her. In Wainscott’s letter to Bruce Berlind he cited xenophobia, racism and religious zealotry as Hacker’s judgment on why she was sacked. These implied, as far as she was concerned, that she was ‘a bit hysterical,’ and ‘in fact, an incompetent money manager’. Hacker reminded Wainscott he did not hold that view when they worked together and recalled him saying to her that the trustees might well use Kenyon College’s bona fide financial problems to execute a verdict that was ‘at least partially political’. She also related a comment allegedly overheard at Kenyon in which Jennifer Clarvoe was asked by Paul Healey if she thought that the *Review* content had become much narrower under Hacker’s editorship. The true purpose behind the ‘infamous questionnaire’ was questioned by her also. She believed there was more to it than simply financial restructuring. Referring to the ‘kangaroo court’ to which she was summoned by

³⁸⁴ Cy Wainscott to Eileen Myles 22.07.94

³⁸⁵ Clayton Eshleman to *The Kenyon Review* 27.07.94

Philip Jordan and Joseph Nelson, who said very little, Hacker stated that although Wainscott knew the details she was reiterating them deliberately to put them on the record. Jordan highlighted what he regarded as the two main problems with her editorship, the first of which was that the *Review* was losing money on bookstore sales due to the number of unsold copies. Acknowledging it was a 'real problem,' Hacker attributed it to 'growing pains' due to a 400% increase in bookstore distribution. However, she reminded Wainscott that she had reported it to Jordan along with the solution, which was to increase the cover price, reduce the number of pages and cut the distributors' percentage take on sales of less than 50%. The second 'mortal sin' Hacker was charged with was 'an invented one'. Jordan accused her of encouraging subscribers to petition Kenyon College to ensure the *Review* continued to be published on a quarterly basis rather the three times yearly which had been proposed. Hacker stated that she genuinely had no idea what Jordan was speaking about since she had never had cause to petition for any reason. She mentioned that the AWP petition to retain her as editor of the *Review* was the work of Adrienne Rich and Jean Valentine and that she did not see it until it was in print. However, it made no reference to publication schedules. In fact, the document to which Jordan was referring was the first draft of the annual subscriber's fund-raising letter which only differed slightly from the one sent to contributors in November 1993. Hacker reminded Wainscott that his pessimism regarding the success of that campaign was misplaced since it raised \$4600 from 415 enquiries. Both letters contained a list of what contributions would be used for, one of which was 'keep the KR publishing quarterly'. However, Hacker points out that this letter was a first draft and that anything not to Jordan's liking could have been altered or omitted. Hacker stated

that this type of letter would usually go through three or four drafts between the development office and herself and that she was unaware of any previous 'first drafts' having gone to Jordan's office. Nelson's contribution to the meeting came when Hacker pointed out that due to reduced production costs the College subsidy would be \$94K instead of \$137K. He argued the \$43K was a deficit because it was 'not necessarily repeatable'. Hacker called Wainscott's attention to Kenyon's mysterious insistence that gifts and grants be included in the 'deficit' bookkeeping column, contrary to the advice of the Lila Wallace consultants who considered them as bona fide income for a non-profit arts organisation. Her argument was that gifts and grants were traditionally included as estimated income when compiling a projected budget for the forthcoming financial year. Ironically, Jordan and Nelson seemed to be implying the \$43K raised by Hacker was a 'kind of loss' which, rather than helping her case, was in fact being held against her. Hacker wanted it on record that if she had been as financially naïve as Jordan and Nelson were alleging then they would have been able to come up with more substantial evidence. She appreciated she was in danger of labouring the fact that it could not be regarded as surprising if subscribers and contributors attracted to a particular publication because of its editor's policies failed to retain faith when that editor was 'fired'. If Hacker had decided to leave Kenyon by choice, she believed readers and contributors would have given the incoming editor a few issues' grace before making any decision. She regretted that Wainscott had been left to deal with Kenyon's 'dirty work'.

Since the letters of protest arriving at Kenyon were part of its history, Hacker was relieved that copies were being retained in the archives. She pointed to the fact that she was the only editor in the *Review*'s 55 year-history who did not voluntarily resign. What

did surprise her, however, was Waincott's refusal to provide her with the addresses of contributors she had requested. She insisted that she did not wish the addresses to encourage further protests against either the *Review* or Jordan and speculated that Waincott's 'damage control' letters may have triggered as much resentment as it did confidence. Some of the addresses she requested had been in an address book of Hacker's which she had lost in December 1993. Ironically, she had passed on these addresses to *Review* staff and now wished the information so she could encourage women to submit work to the Barnard New Women Poets Competition, while the male writers' addresses were so that she could inform them of a forthcoming AWP panel on 'Emerging Male Writers of Color'. In the event that Waincott refused to supply her with the addresses she asked if he could forward flyers to Rectika Vazirani, Diana Garcia, Melissa Cannon, Carolyn Beard Whitlow, Aleida Rodriguez and Toni Mirosevich with a note enclosed saying that Hacker had requested it be sent. Hacker wanted to know what she should do in the event of being asked to guest edit an edition of *Ploughshares* or an anthology of American Jewish poetry if she did not have access to writers' addresses. She advised Waincott that if she were still editor she would have taken the opportunity during the summer to schedule a reading at New Dramatists. Welcoming the news that Waincott was going to be teaching a class in journalism, Hacker hoped Kenyon would come to appreciate the 'Kentucky Derby ... warhorse' they had pulling the plough. She had just finished a course of antibiotics for bronchitis, but was otherwise fine. Her future engagements included the Tucson Poetry Festival at the end of March 1995 then on to Utah in April. However, her most immediate appointment was to sign up at the 57th St. unemployment office in October. Hacker shared the good news that her partner, Karyn

London's health insurance covered her as a domestic partner. The weather in Paris had been unusually hot and humid, but Hacker still found it 10 degrees cooler than in New York or Gambier and considered it to be an improvement on perpetual rain. Hacker wished to know if there were letters at Kenyon from Rafael Campo and June Jordan who had both contacted her to ask if she had received them.³⁸⁶

Toi Derricotte was 'disheartened' over Hacker's dismissal. In her view it would be impossible for the *Review* to maintain its position as the foremost journal of the age without Hacker at the helm. Expressing regrets at having to cancel her subscription Derricotte informed the *Review* she would not submit any further work.³⁸⁷

A few days after Derricotte's letter of August 6 arrived at Kenyon, Wainscott replied that he shared her regret at Hacker's dismissal and expressed his disappointment that she would no longer subscribe to, nor submit her work to the *Review*. Emphasising there would be no digression from Hacker's vision of inclusiveness, he hoped that through time Derricotte would come to realise that respect for Hacker and patronage for a journal that sought to be a devotee of her literary objective could coexist.³⁸⁸

Cornelius Eady took Wainscott's June 15 'form' letter as an insult to his intelligence and was certain he was not the only person outraged by Kenyon's 'clumsy attempt at damage control'. Like many others, Eady regretted he would not be renewing his subscription nor submitting any further work to the *Review*. Eady was convinced there was more to Hacker's dismissal than money and was 'amazed' that Wainscott would expect anyone to believe his phony explanation. It was his opinion that it would be unlikely that a new editor, 'picked and approved' by the trustees would be allowed to

³⁸⁶ Marilyn Hacker to Cy Wainscott 29.07.94

³⁸⁷ Toi Derricotte to *The Kenyon Review* Editors 06.08.94

continue the multicultural policy initiated by Hacker, since he was sure that it was this policy which had upset the trustees. Hacker's belief that excellent writing was not confined to a specific race, class or sex, was what Eady identified as the reason for her dismissal. Eady cited Toi Derricotte's review of Yusef Komunyakaa's work prior to his being awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Asserting that no other journal was prepared to offer an overview of Komunyakaa's writing, he found it hard to believe that altering the public face of one of the country's foremost literary journals could come about without interference from trustees. No explanation was going to convince Eady that it was anything other than a loss of nerve on Kenyon's part brought about by trustees urging a tightening of purse strings. Eady reminded Waincott that he was familiar with methods used to 'manipulate policy' regarded as 'too politically correct' within an institution or to get rid of someone without appearing too callous. He believed the 'reasonable tone' of the form letter was an attempt to dispel the possibility of too close scrutiny. It was with dread that Eady contemplated the *Review* two years down the line once the material selected by Hacker was exhausted and the trustees thought the furore had faded away. Eady stated that as a writer of color he had suffered from non-inclusion during his literary career and felt he was left with little choice but to categorise the *Review* with *Poetry* and *APR* in becoming more pompous in response to the vagaries of the literary 'status quo'. The *Review*'s action in sacking Hacker had proved to Eady that America's 'cultural landscape' at the close of the twentieth century remained a battlefield. Eady finished by stating he would miss the fleeting moment of potential that was once the *Review*.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁸ Cy Waincott to Toi Derricotte 11.08.94

³⁸⁹ Cornelius Eady to Cy Waincott 27.08.94

On August 27 Eady wrote to Hacker to inform her how 'pissed off' he had been with Waincott's letter. He feared that her sacking was part of a trend, since Nuula Archer, a poet at Cleveland State University had recently been removed as Director of the Poetry Center. Archer's problems seemed to emanate from her initiation of the Audre Lorde Award, which was a literary prize for lesbian poets of colour.

Eady was genuinely sorry and upset by Hacker's treatment at Kenyon and hoped they would realise the error they had made when subscriptions were not renewed. He hoped that the letters of support arriving at Kenyon would help alleviate the pain she was suffering.³⁹⁰

In Nancy R. Harrison's opinion, the *Review*, under Hacker's direction, had been among the best in the country. Harrison wrote to David Lynn on September 7 to record her incredulity and disillusionment on hearing of Hacker's firing. She was extremely disappointed because she had been impressed by the energy, variety and superiority of the work exhibited under Hacker's editorship, and gave this as the reason for her continued support of the *Review*. Harrison did not believe the range of work Hacker had brought to the *Review* would continue without her and regretted her own support was likely to falter also. If homophobia were involved in the decision to fire Hacker it was, in Harrison's opinion, liable to be at great expense to the *Review* and its subscribers, since the quality of work appearing in its pages had consistently risen. Dismissing Hacker was a 'wrong move' and Harrison advised if there was a way to reinstate her then the *Review* should do so because without Hacker the *Review* would lose many of its subscribers and followers.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ Cornelius Eady to Marilyn Hacker 27.08.94

³⁹¹ Nancy R. Harrison to David Lynn 07.09.94

Writing from Italy in early September, Wallis Wilde-Menozzi wanted more certainty regarding the facts surrounding Hacker's situation. She knew that situations such as this rarely had a single truth, but as she put it, 'truth exists'. Wilde-Menozzi had met Hacker only once and was not well acquainted with her, yet Hacker's 'intensity, intelligence, determination and vulnerability' had greatly impressed her. After Hacker left the *Review* she wrote to her, yet she never referred to homophobia as a factor in her dismissal and Wilde-Menozzi was surprised Waincott had even mentioned it in his correspondence. Now that homophobia had been mentioned, however, Wilde-Menozzi, who was originally from the Midwest, hoped it was not a factor in Hacker's case, since it reflected badly on Kenyon College. As she put it, if liberal arts colleges such as Kenyon were not prepared to uphold individual liberties then who would? Wilde-Menozzi stated she was reluctant to submit her work to the *Review* because she had to be reassured it embodied the same tolerance and novelty that Hacker's issues displayed.³⁹²

On September 10 Hacker wrote to Waincott from Paris. She informed him that she had recently spent two weeks in New York with her partner, Karyn, who had been celebrating her birthday. They had gone to Montreal for a few days, which was a first visit for both of them. A more serious matter she raised with him was that she had received over a dozen letters and phone calls from people confused over the situation at the *Review*. The confusion arose from the fact that these people had heard that Hacker had been 'canned' and then received subscription notices from the *Review* complete with her signature. Hacker recommended that it would be advantageous if David Lynn wrote his own subscription renewal notice and circulated it immediately in order to avoid further letters of indignation. During her time in New York she had spent some time with

³⁹² Wallis Wilde-Menozzi to Cy Waincott 08.09.94

her daughter, Iva, who had been working at Kenyon. Iva told Hacker that her boss, John Anderson, had been advised by the Kenyon trustees not to hire her because she was her daughter. However, he had been pleased with the standard of her work and ignored them. Since returning to Kenyon, Iva was pleased with her courses and accommodation and had impressed Hacker with her growing maturity.³⁹³

Describing Hacker's sacking as an 'unfortunate event' Pamela McClure wrote directly to Philip Jordan. She informed him she would no longer read the *Review* nor use it in her writing classes at Stephens College and the University of Missouri. McClure thought Hacker was an outstanding writer and editor who held literature in high regard. In a handwritten postscript she appended a message for Hacker informing her that everyone at Stephens and Missouri was horrified and she regretted not having 'clout + big bucks'.³⁹⁴

As a protest at Hacker's dismissal Ron Mohring withdrew four poems he had submitted to the *Review* and cancelled his subscription. He believed the trustees' actions were nothing short of 'cowardice' and let it be known he was urging his peers to follow suit in order to demonstrate their condemnation.³⁹⁵

On September 16, the day after Mohring's subscription cancellation, Gary Pembroke wrote from Akron, Ohio to cancel his subscription 'till Marilyn Hacker is rehired'. He believed Jane Miller's AWP letter mirrored his own feelings on the matter and enclosed a copy.³⁹⁶

³⁹³ Marilyn Hacker to Cy Waincott 10.09.94

³⁹⁴ Pamela McClure to Philip Jordan 12.09.94

³⁹⁵ Ron Mohring to *The Kenyon Review* 15.09.94

³⁹⁶ Gary Pembroke to *The Kenyon Review* 16.09.94

Syracuse University Assistant Professor, Melanie Rae Thon, was another Hacker enthusiast who cancelled her subscription due to the Hacker incident. She expressed her hope that the *Review* would maintain high literary standards but was saddened that Kenyon College did not do more to protect Hacker, whom she regarded as a brilliant editor and poet. Though her supporters were plentiful, Thon believed the people in charge of finances were Hacker's most vociferous critics and as such had the power to remove her.³⁹⁷

In his reply to Wilde-Menozzi, Wainscott thanked her for her 'most insightful' letter and assured her that the *Review* would continue to embody Hacker's spirit of 'tolerance and curiosity'. According to Wainscott, the College trustees had given no instructions regarding any editorial path other than that of inclusiveness, 'that, thanks to Marilyn, has become associated with the magazine'. The challenge for the *Review*, as Wainscott saw it, was whether the full gamut of voices could be presented. While the *Review* would welcome those voices, Wainscott was unsure whether certain people would continue to submit their work. Achieving diversity would become more difficult if writers who reflected differing views withheld their work. Admitting that facts were difficult to ascertain, Wainscott asked Wilde-Menozzi to give the *Review* the benefit of the doubt by judging it in forthcoming issues. He was eager that Wilde-Menozzi should continue to submit her work to the *Review* because it was 'important to the cause of tolerance' in the world. Wainscott, to a certain extent, had been backed into a corner. Instead of promoting a literary journal which justified itself on the basis of quality he found himself having to defend it against accusations of intolerance. In a postscript he

³⁹⁷ Melanie Rae Thon to Cy Wainscott 17.09.94

endorsed Wilde-Menozzi's assessment of Hacker's qualities, as described in her letter to the *Review*.³⁹⁸

As someone who subscribed to a different literary journal every year, Vicki E. Linder was surprised to read of Hacker's sacking in the Associated Writing Program's newsletter. Although Linder had not been published during Hacker's time at the *Review*, she appreciated her work had been fairly criticised. She had recommended the *Review* to fellow writers and students as one of the few journals that was not 'stuffy'. Linder rebuked Philip Jordan over Hacker's dismissal and informed him that he owed the writing community an explanation. In Linder's opinion Hacker had drawn attention to Kenyon with the type of multicultural approach that properly represented American literature. She informed Jordan she would not subscribe to the *Review* ever again.³⁹⁹

Having heard about Hacker's dismissal, E. J. Graff wrote to her on September 20. He simply wanted to know why she had been fired. Describing the letter he received as 'bizarre,' he added that there was a suggestion of 'financial impropriety' implied without making any specific accusation. Graff was astounded at what had happened because he admired the quality and liveliness she had brought to the *Review*. He had been expecting to see a letter from her published somewhere and wondered if there was any reason why she might want to avoid that.⁴⁰⁰

David Lynn was 'surprised and disturbed' when AWP Vice President Jane Miller's 'Open Letter to Kenyon College' was published in its original form in the September issue of the *AWP Chronicle*. On September 21 he wrote to *AWP Chronicle* editor D.W. Fenza at George Mason University to express his concern that the letter had

³⁹⁸ Cy Waincott to Wallis Wilde-Menozzi 19.09.94

³⁹⁹ Vicki E. Linder to Philip Jordan 20.09.94

been published in the form witnessed by Lynn and Wainscott when it arrived at Kenyon earlier that summer. Following the arrival of Miller's letter Wainscott had replied, explaining several 'fundamental misapprehensions,' so Lynn was disappointed to discover the published letter did not correct what Lynn regarded as errors nor acknowledge Kenyon's response. While Lynn felt it 'noble' of Jane Miller to defend Hacker he regarded it as 'ignoble' and 'unprofessional' that she should intentionally misrepresent the events. He stated that he admired Hacker for everything she did for the *Review* and the non-renewal of her contract was a blow felt by everyone connected with the journal. Lynn informed Fenza that evidence of Kenyon College's cost cutting exercise could be found in the fact that he had been chosen to replace Hacker. Emphasising the *Review's* commitment to publish a year's worth of material chosen by Hacker, Lynn also pointed to the *Review's* Fall 1994 editorial which stated their intention to remain faithful to Hacker's multicultural vision. If the College administration had interfered in editorial matters Lynn maintained that neither he nor Wainscott would have remained with the *Review*. Lynn was appalled that Jane Miller's criticism of Kenyon College should do so much harm to the very journal that Hacker helped distinguish and which he aimed to continue. He admitted that Miller's proposed boycott would injure the *Review*, but asked what good it would do writers and readers. Lynn requested Fenza print his letter along with Wainscott's response in the October issue of the *AWP Chronicle* with equal prominence to that afforded Miller's Open Letter.⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰⁰ E.J. Graff to Marilyn Hacker 20.09.94

⁴⁰¹ David Lynn to D.W. Fenza 21.09.94

When Reetika Vazirani wrote to Doris Jean Dilts on 22 September she was 'awfully saddened' that Hacker was no longer with the *Review* and hoped the recent restructuring had not affected Dilts' position as editorial assistant.⁴⁰²

Writing a 'To Whom It May Concern' letter on September 26 Trudy Lewis stated that since Hacker was the reason she subscribed in the first place she now wished to cancel her *Review* subscription. Apart from losing Lewis's patronage Kenyon had to refund \$30.80 to her.⁴⁰³

Replying to Vicki E. Linder's September 20 letter Wainscott thanked her for taking the time to express her uneasiness over Hacker's 'departure'. He informed her that both Lynn and he shared her esteem for what Hacker brought to the *Review*, adding that they were determined to follow her example. Agreeing that they owed an explanation to the writing fraternity, Wainscott pointed Linder in the direction of the Fall issue of the *Review* and the recent note he had sent to *Kenyon Review* writers. Wainscott mentioned his concern that the AWP paid no heed to his response to Jane Miller's 'allegations'. Enclosing a copy of the relevant letters for Linder's benefit, Wainscott enclosed a subscription card in a similar fashion to what 'Marilyn usually did'.⁴⁰⁴

As requested by Melanie Rae Thon, her subscription was cancelled and a refund sent to her. Wainscott assured Thon that Hacker had 'no loud and powerful critics' at Kenyon and that her superb editorial work was highly regarded in both the College and the wider writing community. Attesting that Hacker's literary and editorial techniques were not in question, Wainscott stated the decision not to renew her contract was due entirely to financial considerations. Since both he and Lynn had been encouraged to

⁴⁰² Reetika Vazirani to Doris Jean Dilts 22.09.94

⁴⁰³ Trudy Lewis to *The Kenyon Review* 26.09.94

carry on with the work she started, he expressed a hope that she would return as a reader.⁴⁰⁵

Assuming that Ron Mohring's actions, as outlined in his September 15 letter had been triggered by Jane Miller's letter to the *AWP Chronicle*, Waincott responded to his request to have his poetry submissions returned and subscription cancelled. Waincott's reply to Mohring was almost identical to the one he sent to Melanie Rae Thon in informing him of the 'real truth' surrounding Hacker's contract.⁴⁰⁶

Writing to Lynn on September 28 Sesshu Foster of the University of Iowa's Writers' Workshop informed him that he had subscribed and given gift subscriptions to friends because of the qualities Hacker had brought to the *Review*. Regretting she was no longer in charge, Foster could not understand why she had not been retained in some other editorial capacity. If the *Review* ceased to be a forum for multicultural writing Foster was saddened to think it would revert to being an average literary journal of little consequence, instead of operating at the cutting edge.⁴⁰⁷

Christopher James attributed most of the *Review's* recent success directly to Hacker so when he wrote to Philip Jordan on September 29 he strongly supported the views expressed in Jane Miller's AWP letter. Praising the reputation gained by the *Review* in recent years through Hacker's policy of reflecting American cultural diversity, James stated that she was the reason he had first subscribed. Out of all the journals to which James could have subscribed he judged the *Review* to exhibit the greatest literary quality and the most exciting selection of literary work. James believed that the decision

⁴⁰⁴ Cy Waincott to Vicki E. Linder 27.09.94

⁴⁰⁵ Cy Waincott to Melanie Rae Thon 28.09.94

⁴⁰⁶ Cy Waincott to Ron Mohring 28.09.94

⁴⁰⁷ Sesshu Foster to David Lynn 28.09.94

to fire Hacker had been a heavy-handed attempt to censor her and deliberately curb the candidness she had introduced to the *Review*. As a faculty member at Iowa State University, James felt he could no longer recommend the *Review* to his students or continue his subscription. He stated that he could not bring himself to support such an ‘unjustified, shameful act’.⁴⁰⁸

Jay Rogoff was shocked and bemused over the ‘Kenyon mess’ and was not entirely sure what to make of it. He had not even heard so much as a rumour prior to receiving Wainscott’s letter in the summer. Under Hacker’s editorship, Rogoff considered it had become ‘altogether extraordinary’.⁴⁰⁹

Ron Mohring was prepared to continue subscribing to the *Review* if a public explanation of Hacker’s dismissal was forthcoming. As someone who had a great respect for the *Review* and who had hoped to see his poetry published in it Mohring regretted withdrawing his work and cancelling his subscription. However, he wanted to know if the part of Wainscott’s September 28 letter which stated that ‘her contract was not renewed because of economic considerations,’ was Hacker’s evaluation of the situation or the trustees. Wishing to know where he could find a published version of Hacker’s side of the story Mohring enclosed a SASE for Wainscott’s reply.⁴¹⁰

Another person who had heard rumours about why Hacker had been dismissed was Amanda Powell of the University of Oregon. She was ‘dismayed’ at the news and believed the suggestion in Jane Miller’s AWP letter that advocated subscription cancellation made sense. Powell considered Hacker’s dismissal to be a huge loss to both the *Review* and publishing in general. In common with Mohring, she was eager to be

⁴⁰⁸ Christopher James to Philip Jordan 29.09.94

⁴⁰⁹ Jay Rogoff to Marilyn Hacker 29.09.94

directed towards the 'official version' of the story. Although Powell was upset at Hacker's dismissal she wanted more information before deciding whether to continue with her subscription. Assuming Kenyon had put together an official version of events, Powell intended to consider this along with literary grapevine gossip before forming an opinion. She finished her letter by expressing her regret at the decision of the board of trustees.⁴¹¹

Confused by the whole business surrounding Hacker Melanie Rae Thon wrote thanking Wainscott for replying to her. Initially deciding to continue her subscription, Thon later felt she had been premature in her decision and cancelled. On October 3 she wrote to apologise if she were now erring in the opposite direction. Thon stated that if she had known Hacker personally she would simply ask her the truth of the matter, but that for the present she hoped the *Review* would stay true to its dream.⁴¹²

Wainscott contacted Scsshu Foster on behalf of himself and David Lynn to thank him for his concern regarding 'the change in editors' at the *Review*. He assured Foster that the *Review* would continue to publish the work of established and new writers alongside that of material representing the non-traditional genres. Lynn and Wainscott had no intention of allowing the *Review* to be relegated to the status of a second-rate literary magazine and it was their policy to focus attention on cutting edge material in the spirit embodied by Hacker. Wainscott informed Foster that Hacker, the *Review*'s first full-time editor, could not be retained due to financial reasons 'even after factoring in severe operational and publication economies'. According to Wainscott Hacker was resentful over the decision and had since suggested that Kenyon had ulterior motives for

⁴¹⁰ Ron Mohring to Cy Wainscott 01.10.94

⁴¹¹ Amanda Powell to David Lynn 03.10.94

her dismissal. Asserting this was not the case, Waincott emphasised that neither he nor Lynn had any part in the decision. In attempting to finish on a positive note, Waincott let Foster know that Lynn was eager to see his forthcoming work.⁴¹³

On October 6 Waincott found himself replying to Christopher James on behalf of Philip Jordan. Regretting that James had followed Jane Miller's lead in 'confusing the issues' surrounding Hacker's dismissal, Waincott went to some length to assure him that 'Marilyn's brilliant direction' with respect to introducing the *Review* to non-traditional genres had never been an issue. In this regard, Philip Jordan told Hacker that she had done 'just what we asked you to do'. Informing James that Lynn intended to edit the *Review* in the spirit Hacker envisaged, Waincott stated the trustees' intention not to interfere in editorial affairs. Having published his objectives in the Fall 1994 *Review*, Lynn was committed to publishing material selected by his predecessor, including work which was not yet in the 'production pipeline'. Waincott wrote that the decision reached by 'this very small college with limited resources' to terminate Hacker's contract could be a reasonable subject of conjecture, but for James to accuse the College of ulterior motives was simply wrong. Any policy which advocated the cancellation of subscriptions or the banishment of the *Review* from classroom use, was, in Waincott's opinion, the equivalent of bookburning. Since the *Review*'s policies remained consistent with Hacker's view, Waincott was appalled that the journal's future was in jeopardy as a result of actions such as that advocated by James. Since the *Review* existed primarily for

⁴¹² Melanie Rae Thon to Cy Waincott 03.10.94

⁴¹³ Cy Waincott to Sesshu Foster 06.10.94

readers, it pained Wainscott that his principles of free speech and openness could be a victim of personal disappointment, such as that displayed by James.⁴¹⁴

Wainscott responded to Ron Mohring's questions of October 1 by providing him with the most detailed response of any enquiry up to that point. He admitted that Hacker had not resigned and 'deeply resented' the imputation that her contract had been terminated. According to Wainscott she believed the non-renewal of her contract was a personal attack on her. When Hacker wrote to her followers she informed them that the Board of Trustees 'did not have the confidence in [her] to work with them to lower the magazine's subsidy and further integrate it into the life of the college'. Aware that Mohring had probably read Jane Miller's AWP letter, Wainscott directed him to Lynn's Fall 1994 *Review* editorial, adding that other published reports included an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* plus interviews in *Bay Windows* and the September issue of *The Advocate*. Copies of these articles were forwarded to Mohring along with Wainscott's initial response to Miller's letter, David Lynn's letter to AWP's D.W. Fenza and a copy of the letter sent to Christopher James. Wainscott also provided Mohring with a chronology of events, starting from late 1993. The *Review* learned that due to a drop in the College enrolment there was to be a general evaluation of finances. Since College support for the *Review* had exceeded half a million dollars over the previous four years a committee was formed to examine its financial viability. In January 1994 comprehensive interviews were conducted with important literary individuals, publishing authorities and the College community among others. As requested, Hacker provided names of people whom she wished to be consulted and a questionnaire was sent to prospective interviewees. The questionnaire called for a response to statements such as 'I

⁴¹⁴ Cy Wainscott to Christopher James 06.10.94

am/am not satisfied with the image of *The Kenyon Review*' and 'I am/am not satisfied with the content of *The Kenyon Review*.' Wainscott and Hacker were concerned about where enquiries of this nature might lead, although according to Wainscott an earlier reader survey carried out by Hacker asked practically identical questions. In late February or early March 1994, Hacker and Wainscott were told by Philip Jordan that due to the doubt surrounding continuing financial support for the *Review* from the College, there was no guarantee their contracts would be renewed. Although the trustees voted in April 1994 to continue supporting the *Review* it did so by stressing that stringent fiscal reforms would have to be implemented and that the journal would have to be self-supporting within three years. Informing Hacker in May that her contract would not be renewed, President Jordan announced the appointment of David Lynn as new part-time editor of the *Review*. Wainscott stressed that Hacker was the only full-time editor in the *Review*'s history. The trustee committee affirmed in early July that the concerns for the administration and trustees with respect to the *Review* would be confined to its finances and its contribution towards an improvement in the academic life of the College as a whole, and not to interfere in editorial matters. Wainscott stated that as far as he was aware that was the situation and considered it sad that Hacker did not accept there was no ulterior motive behind her departure.⁴¹⁵

David Lynn asked Wainscott to respond to Amanda Powell's letter of October 3. Stating that he was encouraged by her willingness to withhold judgement until she had a better idea of what was going on, Wainscott began by informing her that neither he nor Lynn had any say in Hacker's dismissal and that they were close friends and admirers of the skill and insight she brought to the *Review*. The whole truth of the matter, according

⁴¹⁵ Cy Wainscott to Ron Mohring 12.10.94

to Wainscott could be summed up in Hacker's own words, contained in a letter to her supporters in which she said the board of trustees and administration were not satisfied that she could work with them to reduce College financial support and foster greater integration of the *Review* into the Kenyon community. President Jordan had told Hacker that she had done exactly what had been asked of her, which suggests she had completed her remit as far as he was concerned. Informing Powell that part of the College's financial problems stemmed from the *Review*'s half-million dollar subsidy, Wainscott stated that the drop in enrolment triggered a campus-wide examination of finances which included department budget cuts of 25% and more in some cases, and a reduction in the number of teaching positions. The *Review*'s future had been in doubt; however, the trustees decided to continue the journal, albeit, with severe financial restrictions. Despite cost-cutting suggestions such as reducing the number of issues, cheaper paper and fewer pages, the administration felt a full-time editor was surplus to their needs. Apart from economics, Wainscott maintained there were no other factors involved in the decision, yet he took time to point out a few things to Powell. He informed her that Lynn, who was interim editor prior to Hacker assuming control, shared Hacker's vision of inclusiveness for the *Review*, that neither he nor Lynn would have remained at the journal if there had been any hint of trustee interference in editorial matters, that the trustees had stated they would have no say in such matters and, finally, he confirmed Lynn's commitment to publish material selected by Hacker. Wainscott then asked the rhetorical question, 'So what's all the flap about?' He stated that Hacker simply did not believe that there was no ulterior motive, adding that although she was far from being 'dumb,' in this instance she was 'just wrong'. As he did with Mohring, Wainscott sent copies of his

initial response to Jane Miller's letter and Lynn's letter to the AWP's D.W. Fenza.

Wainscott's advice to Powell was not to judge the *Review* on arguments and allegations but on what appeared in the journal.⁴¹⁶

On October 12 David Lynn decided to send a general letter 'for three good reasons' to all *Review* subscribers. He introduced himself as the new editor of the *Review*, thanked them for their loyalty and asked for their added support in the form of a gift to help meet rising production costs. Lynn explained that he had been long associated with the *Review*, as both reader and contributor prior to becoming associate editor. In the spring of 1994 he was 'honored to be asked' to become the *Review*'s editor, combining it with his role as a member of the English faculty at Kenyon.

Acknowledging readers to be a journal's strength, Lynn stated that it was an unfortunate reality that subscription dues and bookstore sales alone could not support production costs. In order to meet these rising costs and maintain quality and a unique character the *Review* had to seek extra patronage. Lynn went on to ask subscribers to become a 'Benefactor, Patron or Friend' of the *Review* and included a form to be completed which committed subscribers to \$1000, \$500 or \$100 respectively. In exchange for this patronage supporters' names would be published in forthcoming issues.

Lynn's attempt to raise the *Review*'s income by this means met with a great deal of hostility. Jacsun Shah returned the form with a large 'NO' written across it. He stated bluntly that he had subscribed to the *Review* because Hacker was editor and since she no longer occupied that position he was neither renewing his subscription nor did he have any intention of 'benefacting'.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁶ Cy Wainscott to Amanda Powell 12.10.94

⁴¹⁷ Jacsun Shah to *The Kenyon Review* 12.10.94

As Director of East Carolina University's Creative Writing Programme, Julie Fay felt insulted by Lynn's letter. Commenting that Hacker's dismissal was 'cowardly' she considered he had 'some nerve' asking for a donation. Requesting a refund and removal from the mailing list, Fay stated that the *Review* would continue to be well-known in literary America, but for all the wrong reasons. Her handwritten note ended, 'Shame on you all'.⁴¹⁸

On October 16 Bruce Weigl answered Lynn's call for a donation by informing him he had subscribed because of the distinction Hacker had brought to the *Review*. Now that she was no longer editor he saw no reason to renew his subscription or make a donation.⁴¹⁹

Judith Bechtel, a professor of literature and language at Northern Kentucky University, regretted Hacker's removal as editor. She believed Hacker had introduced a variety and depth to the *Review* that had been absent beforehand. Bechtel considered that as one of America's foremost living poets, Hacker had brought 'integrity' to the *Review*. If there was a way to reinstate her, Bechtel thought many scholars and writers would be pleased.⁴²⁰

Outraged at Hacker's sacking, Kim Vaeth cancelled her subscription. She considered that Hacker had wakened the *Review* from its '100 year sherry party' and transformed it into one of the most exhilarating literary journals in America. Vaeth did not believe Hacker's dismissal bore any relation to fiscal matters. The 'truth' as Vaeth saw it, was that under Hacker's editorship subscriptions and donations increased, grants were awarded and bookstore sales increased. Endorsing Jane Miller's view that

⁴¹⁸ Julie Fay to David Lynn 04.11.94

⁴¹⁹ Bruce Weigl to David Lynn 16.10.94

Kenyon's decision was an act of cowardice and an attempt to gag free speech, Vaeth expressed her disappointment at the 'cloaked actions' of the trustees. Vaeth requested a refund of her outstanding subscription.⁴²¹

The first published issue of the *Review* under Hacker's editorship back in 1990 had been compiled by David Lynn and acknowledged as so by naming him on the masthead as 'Editor for This Issue'. The second issue of Hacker's tenure listed both their names as 'Editors for This Issue'. Since Lynn's Fall 1994 *Review* editorial stated his intention to publish Hacker's choice of material she wrote to Lynn on October 18 requesting a similar acknowledgement for the issues she had put together.⁴²²

Another subscriber angered and 'immensely disappointed' over Hacker's sacking was Margaret Morrison of the Maryland Institute College of Art. Morrison, who had 'loved' the *Review* under Hacker's guidance had heard rumours that the sacking had been due to homophobia. In cancelling her subscription and refusing to make a donation, Morrison stated that in Hacker the *Review* had 'lost a treasure'.⁴²³

'Deeply distressed' over Hacker's departure, Dan Bellm decided to maintain his subscription to the *Review* and judge forthcoming issues. Clearly referring to Lynn's donation request, Bellm stated he could not see how anything more than he had agreed to could be expected from him in light of events at Kenyon. Bellm feared the *Review* would return to the 'dreary, forgettable affair' it was prior to Hacker's arrival.⁴²⁴

Lynn's donation request resulted in a subscription cancellation from Steve Amidon who was 'very disappointed' at the move to replace Hacker, whom he judged

⁴²⁰ Judith Bechtel to David Lynn 17.10.94

⁴²¹ Kim Vaeth to *The Kenyon Review*, Philip Jordan and David Lynn 17.10.94

⁴²² Marilyn Hacker to David Lynn 18.10.94

⁴²³ Margaret Morrison to David Lynn 19.10.94

had undoubtedly improved the *Review*'s editorial content. Amidon suggested that Kenyon should have appealed for donations before sacking the 'finest editor in its history'.⁴²⁵

Mary Pinard was yet another subscriber who cancelled, stating she would not 'under any circumstances' make a donation to the *Review*. Pinard referred to the decision as 'cowardly'.⁴²⁶

Writing from Hawaii Terese Svoboda insisted that if Lynn restored Hacker's name to the masthead it would 'show a less vindictive approach to her work'.⁴²⁷

Towards the end of October Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick cancelled her subscription in protest at the sacking, stating her support was for the magazine edited by Hacker.⁴²⁸

Another person who cited Hacker as her reason for subscribing to the *Review* was Katherine Killingsworth, who applauded Hacker's success in bringing a broader perspective to the *Review* than that 'espoused by straight white men'. Killingsworth was not prepared to renew her subscription or make a donation to a journal which 'summarily fired' Hacker.⁴²⁹

On October 28 Elly Bulkin made her views clear regarding Hacker. She was neither willing to contribute to the *Review* nor renew her subscription.⁴³⁰

Wainscott's reply to Judith Bechtel on November 2 stated that the *Review* staff and College administration shared her regret that due to 'purely economic considerations' she could not be retained as editor. Informing Bechtel that it was not possible to reverse

⁴²⁴ Dan Bellm to *The Kenyon Review* 21.10.94

⁴²⁵ Steve Amidon to *The Kenyon Review* 21.10.94

⁴²⁶ Mary Pinard to David Lynn 24.10.94

⁴²⁷ Terese Svoboda to David Lynn 25.10.94

⁴²⁸ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to *The Kenyon Review* 27.10.94

⁴²⁹ Katherine Killingsworth to David Lynn 27.10.94

⁴³⁰ Elly Bulkin to *The Kenyon Review* 28.10.94

the situation, Wainscott stated the *Review*'s commitment to follow Hacker's lead in terms of a multiculturalist perspective. He expressed his wish that she contact him periodically with an opinion of how the *Review* was performing in that respect.⁴³¹

Dan Bellm was praised by Wainscott for making a personal response to the appeal for financial support. However, the rest of the letter was in a similar vein to other subscribers to whom he had written. Wainscott responded to Bellm's fear for the *Review* by articulating their determination not to 'regress into the realm of dreary and forgettable'.⁴³²

On November 3 Wainscott replied to Mary Pinard. He appreciated that Pinard was not prepared to support a *Review* without Hacker as editor, but he took exception to her accusation that it was a 'cowardly' decision not to renew her contract. The 'cowardly' appellation suggested to Wainscott that Pinard believed there was explicit anti-Hacker dissatisfaction at Kenyon to which the administration and trustees had buckled. Assuring her it was definitely not the case and that financial constrictions were the sole reason, Wainscott stated that neither he nor Lynn would have remained at the *Review* if the decision to fire Hacker had been 'prompted by homophobia or xenophobia'. Wainscott emphasised the *Review*'s dedication to Hacker's vision of inclusiveness before apologising to Pinard for 'running on so' if 'on the other hand' he had misread her remarks.⁴³³

Terese Svoboda's letter of October 25 'startled and concerned' Wainscott who responded by informing her it would be difficult to restore Hacker's name to the masthead since it had not been removed. He pointed out it had been there in the summer

⁴³¹ Cy Wainscott to Judith Bechtel 02.11.94

⁴³² Cy Wainscott to Dan Bellm 02.11.94

and fall issues and would be there in the forthcoming winter issue in the status 'editor for this issue'. In reassuring Svoboda that the spring 1995 issue would have Hacker's name on the masthead along with all issues to which she contributed, Wainscott stated they had never contemplated any alternative. When Lynn wrote in the fall *Review* editorial that it was the last time Hacker's name would appear at the 'top' of the masthead it may have been 'misinterpreted'. However, what really concerned Wainscott was Svoboda's comment that restoring Hacker's name 'would show a less vindictive approach to her work'. According to Wainscott there had never been any vindictiveness towards Hacker from *Review* staff or College administration and he stated he would appreciate learning of anything that had been written or said that had given that impression. Hacker was held in the highest regard at Kenyon as well as throughout America for her intelligence and success in stimulating the *Review*. Wainscott relied on Philip Jordan's statement that Hacker had succeeded in what she had been hired to do, which was to open the *Review* up to 'greater diversity'. Kenyon's decision not to renew Hacker's contract had been reluctantly taken following a comprehensive study of alternatives, but in the end it came down to finances.

Quoting Hacker as having said that the administration and trustees did not believe she could work with them to reduce the subsidy and further assimilate it into College life, Wainscott stated that that was the truth of the matter. If there had been a hint of interference from trustees, neither he nor Lynn would have stayed with the *Review*. He pointed Svoboda to the fall 1994 *Review* editorial in which Lynn 'praised Marilyn and her work' at the journal. Recent *Review*-sponsored events had also included complimentary tributes to her. Wainscott defended the *Review* by stating that this was

¹³³ Cy Wainscott to Mary Pinard 03.11.94

not 'lip service' but genuine admiration which did not harmonize with an accusation of vindictiveness towards Hacker. In his opinion it was unfortunate that Hacker had chosen to see herself as a 'victim of intolerance' as opposed to economics, and he surmised her appeal to writers and subscribers 'to withdraw support' was done more as a desire for justice than 'hurt-bred vindictiveness'. According to Wainscott Hacker appeared to be saying 'you can't love me ... and love the magazine of which I am no longer editor,' but he asserted, she was wrong. Speaking on behalf of the *Review* he expressed a love for her and a determination to carry on the work she began.⁴³⁴

Upset at the way the *Review* 'severed' its relationship with Hacker, an 'extremely disturbed' Carol Dorf cancelled her subscription in response to a donation request.⁴³⁵

Replying brusquely to a donation request, Judith Barrington wrote 'you've got to be kidding'. Barrington was yet another subscriber who was not prepared to support the *Review* without Hacker at the helm.⁴³⁶

Six months after Bea Gates sent her 'Hacker protest' petition of May 15 to Philip Jordan she forwarded a copy to David Lynn. Gates directed the Poetry Series at A Different Light Bookstore in New York City and wrote that she had been collecting signatures since hearing the news from Kenyon in the spring. She believed it was a sad time for writing when politics dictated policy to a literary journal and wished a reimbursement of her outstanding subscription.

On November 15 Leslie Lawrence responded to a donation request by stating that he 'wouldn't dream of supporting Kenyon' because of the 'appalling treatment' of Hacker who had done so much for the *Review*.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁴ Cy Wainscott to Terese Svoboda 04.11.94

⁴³⁵ Carol Dorf to *The Kenyon Review* 10.11.94

Hacker's partner, Karyn London, wrote a strong letter to the *Review* criticising Lynn and Wainscott in response to their claim that they would have nothing more to do with the *Review* should the College administration and trustees exert their influence over the editorial content of the journal. She pointed out that anyone who knew anything about publishing or journalism appreciated that administrators and trustees did not wield their influence by censoring material but by changing editors. The two examples she cited were Hacker's initial appointment and when she was sacked. Stating that Kenyon gave Hacker a 'vote of no confidence' in dismissing her, London gave Kenyon a similar vote by cancelling her subscription and requesting an immediate refund.⁴³⁸

On reading the material sent by Wainscott on October 12, Ron Mohring decided that although he still considered Hacker's dismissal to be 'untimely and unfair' he appreciated that no good would be served by cancelling his subscription. Satisfied with the *Review's* commitment to remain true to Hacker's editorial vision, Mohring resubscribed to the *Review*. He informed Wainscott that of all the people he had contacted regarding Hacker, there was unanimous agreement that it was an unfair decision. However, he had been encouraging friends to support the *Review* and address any objections to Philip Jordan. As a graduate student Mohring was on a limited budget, but he enclosed a cheque for a two-year subscription.⁴³⁹

AWP secretary, Jim Simmerman wrote to Lynn on November 18 from North Arizona University expressing his support for Lynn's reply to Jane Miller's open letter. Lynn's letter, which was published in the Oct./Nov issue of the *AWP Chronicle* was, in

⁴³⁶ Judith Barrington to *The Kenyon Review* 10.11.94

⁴³⁷ Leslic Lawrence to *The Kenyon Review* 15.11.94

⁴³⁸ Karyn London to *The Kenyon Review* 15.11.94

⁴³⁹ Ron Mohring to Cy Wainscott 16.11.94

Simmerman's opinion, 'much in need of saying'. Simmerman was upset that since Miller's letter had been published in the AWP publication it appeared to represent the views of the AWP Board, which he pointed out was 'not the case'. He was also concerned that Miller's boycott recommendation approached a position which was the antithesis of what the AWP stood for. In other words, Miller was calling for a censorship of literary material, which the AWP did not support. Aware that efforts were being made to retain Hacker, Simmerman had signed a petition, but he was unaware of Miller's letter until he read it in the *AWP Chronicle*. Simmerman had considered writing a letter 'rebutting' Miller's letter but thought it 'bad form' for AWP Board members to be bickering in public. Admitting that his letter was personal, Simmerman assured Lynn that the AWP Board had no quarrel with the *Review*.⁴⁴⁰

Mark Wunderlich wanted the 'editors & the like' to know that he would not 'invest a dime' in the *Review* after the despicable way Hacker had been treated. Praising Hacker's editorship for embracing and practising diversity rather than simply paying it lip service, Wunderlich regarded the administration's attempt to turn the clock back as 'offensive & myopic'.⁴⁴¹

On November 28 Jane Miller wrote to Hacker on behalf of the advocacy committee of the AWP to let her know that since their letter of support had appeared in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* they had received several letters of concern regarding their proposal of a total boycott. She reminded Hacker that a complete boycott would affect the remaining issues for which she had selected the material. Since David Lynn had written to the *Chronicle* in order to make *The Kenyon Review's* case, Miller

⁴⁴⁰ Jim Simmerman to David Lynn 18.11.94

⁴⁴¹ Mark Wunderlich to *The Kenyon Review* 22.11.94

suggested that perhaps Hacker should compose a response addressing the matter of the 1995 issues. This was an involvement too far for the AWP and Miller wanted some clarification on the situation which was further complicated by the fact that Hacker had requested that her name be retained on the *Review* masthead for these issues.⁴⁴²

Diane Lefer had been on the move since June and had only just returned to New York. While the changes at the *Review* had been a jolt to many people, she wanted Hacker to know that her prestige, 'unlike Kenyon's' was untarnished.⁴⁴³

On New Year's Day 1995 Elissa Mondschein sent a postcard to David Lynn to let him know of her disappointment at Hacker's dismissal. She expressed her regret that homophobia had won again.⁴⁴⁴

On January 10 Larry Lieberman wrote to thank David Lynn for accepting three of his poems. Lynn had been an admirer of Lieberman's work for some time. Lieberman informed Lynn that he shared his concern at 'that very peculiar letter' of Jane Miller's. He stated that many of his friends at the University of Illinois Press agreed with him that the 'attack was ignoble and unfair'. Lynn's response, published in the October/November issue of the *AWP Chronicle* was, in Lieberman's opinion, 'beautifully measured and eloquent'. He promised Lynn that he would do his utmost to garner local support for the *Review*. The three poems of Lieberman's accepted by the *Review* were scheduled to appear in a book in progress. However, he had a collection due to be published by the University of Arkansas Press in early 1996. He thanked Lynn for the

⁴⁴² Jane Miller to Marilyn Hacker 28.11.94

⁴⁴³ Diane Lefer to Marilyn Hacker 30.11.94

⁴⁴⁴ Elissa Mondschein to David Lynn 01.01.95

consideration shown his work and praised him for his mature handling of the situation surrounding Miller's letter.⁴⁴⁵

Hacker wrote to Waincott in early 1995 stating that she had been under the impression that 'all still-living former editors' received a complimentary subscription to the *Review*. While she had been sent the Summer 1994 issue along with some of her personal belongings by Doris Jean Dilts, she had not received subsequent issues. She questioned whether the fact that she had not received them was an oversight or if it was a further indication that the College administration wished to prevent her obtaining contributors' addresses. Hacker rebuked Waincott for withholding the addresses of nine female poets whom she wished to encourage to submit manuscripts to a 'first-time book competition'. She wondered how withholding this information could possibly harm the *Review*. Out of a 'morbid curiosity' Hacker wanted to see what would subsequently happen to the *Review*.⁴⁴⁶

Having terminated her subscription Jacqueline Woodson wrote to the *Review* asking to be deleted from the mailing list. She accused the College of homophobia and racism over the decision to fire Hacker. Woodson considered herself part of the 'Hacker-targeted audience' and as such had no desire to see the journal's direction moderated to favour a conservative audience. She made it clear that she wanted no more contact with the *Review*.⁴⁴⁷

In April 1995 Almitra David returned a subscription renewal notice with a terse note stating that he would not be renewing his subscription due to Hacker's treatment.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁵ Larry Lieberman to David Lynn 10.01.95

⁴⁴⁶ Marilyn Hacker to Cy Waincott 11.01.95

⁴⁴⁷ Jacqueline Woodson to *The Kenyon Review* 31.03.95

⁴⁴⁸ Almitra David to *The Kenyon Review* April 1995

Two months after Woodson wrote to the *Review*, Doris Jean Dilts responded. She asked Woodson to ‘imagine her chagrin’ on discovering that she was still receiving the *Review* a year after it had been cancelled and her refund returned. Informing her that she had received a year’s supply of material selected by Hacker with no outlay, Dilts issued a second cancellation order and assured Woodson she would not be troubled by any further *Review* correspondence.⁴⁴⁹

It was more than a year after Hacker’s dismissal before Kenyon received the last letter of complaint. In response to a subscription renewal request Meryl Altman stated she had no interest in supporting a publication that had treated Hacker so disgracefully. She thought the *Review* deserved to ‘go out of business permanently’.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ Doris Jean Dilts to Jacqueline Woodson 19.06.95

⁴⁵⁰ Meryl Altman to *The Kenyon Review* 17.08.95

Hacker's Editorship

When *The Mount Vernon News* of September 22 1990 announced that Marilyn Hacker had been appointed as editor of *The Kenyon Review* they quoted her intention to discover poets, essayists and fiction writers not only from the American mainstream but also 'from those parallel and counter-currents too significant and well-recognized today to be viewed in any way as tributaries'. If that was rather complicated for people to understand, she clarified it by adding that future issues would see work from 'writers of color, more women, more gay and lesbian contributors'.

Kenyon College President Philip Jordan was reported to have said that her appointment was an opportunity to recapture the *Review's* prestige within the literary world while also reaching out to new writers and readers.

Hacker's interest in the post at Kenyon grew from her love of editing. Her editorial background had been as unpaid editor of *City*, a 'counter-cultural' magazine; for *13th Moon* and as guest editor of *Ploughshares*, so the thought of editing a 'venerable' journal like *The Kenyon Review* and earning a living from it appealed to her. She welcomed the challenge of editing a publication with 'no built-in limits' in order to include what she considered to be the most interesting writing available. In practice this would mean retaining the best of traditional writing juxtaposed with the cream of the 'transgressive'.⁴⁵¹

David Lynn, a member of the College English Department, succeeded Hacker as editor of the *Review*. Shortly after, David Bergman, a gay poet and editor was asked to

join the editorial board. Although he had no direct involvement in the decision to oust Hacker, his 'understanding' was that there were three main issues relating to her editorship which were causing concern. The first of these was purely down to finance. Hacker was being paid a 'hefty' salary and production costs had increased during her tenure. Secondly, some people felt the literary quality of the work she selected was not as high as had been expected. The complaint was not that she was publishing too many gay writers or writers of color, but that she sacrificed literary quality in favour of political considerations. Thirdly, Bergman had heard objections regarding Hacker's lack of involvement in, and commitment to Kenyon and Gambier. This apparent reluctance impacted on her in relation to fundraising and development work that had been expected of her.

Bergman did not consider Hacker would be surprised if he mentioned that she was not an 'easy going person' and that her 'intensity' would generate difficulties. He doubted her willingness to adjust to the 'desires of authority'. In contrast, he found Lynn a ready listener who proved receptive to 'virtually all' of the gay writers he suggested for publication. Bergman stated that if he had sensed any homophobia with respect to editorial policy he would have immediately resigned from the board. Since Hacker's departure, he had seen an improvement in the *Review*. Much of what she published did not impress him 'as well written, or interesting, or particularly provocative'. In fact, contrary to what could be regarded as the main complaint that Hacker was too outspoken in her editorial choices, Bergman asserted that many more people would have risen to her defense had she been more provocative. While the current *Review* under Lynn's leadership now had a 'stiffness,' it also had a 'weightiness' which was lacking under

⁴⁵¹ Marilyn Hacker to Jack Harvey 07.08.03

Hacker. He felt that Hacker's editorship was marked by a rehashing of old views, whereas it should have forced people into reassessing their initial opinions.

An obvious answer to Bergman's point about Hacker's salary was made by Jeffrey Betcher, who stated that the College and its trustees must have established a budget which took account of her wages. Betcher also questioned Bergman's assertion that literary quality was an issue, since he believed that the question of good and bad literature was subjective to a large extent and was the reason for employing an editor in the first instance. In response to the complaint that Hacker was not fully engaged in campus activities, Betcher, who was raised in Ohio and attended Kenyon College, stated the 'obvious,' which was that New York and Gambier were completely different. He cited the case of a roommate of his who came to Gambier from New York and did not stay beyond his sophomore year. Betcher did not believe it was entirely the student's fault. His own experience of Kenyon during the early eighties was that it had a 'fundamental problem,' in that it catered for a rather narrow social group and he could only speculate about the many challenges facing a 'radical lesbian Jewish feminist poet from the Big Cit'.⁴⁵²

By introducing the work of gay and lesbian writers, women and writers of color, Alicia Ostriker believed Hacker 'strengthened, not weakened' the quality of the *Review*. Prior to her arrival the journal had lapsed into mediocrity, but she revived its vitality and energy and made it an exciting read once more. While Ostriker did not offer an opinion on Hacker's dismissal, she was fairly certain that she was never at ease with the Kenyon

⁴⁵² Jeffrey Betcher to Jack Harvey 02.02.02

College culture. Hacker's move to New York was a 'blessing in disguise' since she was now in the 'ideal' place for her as a 'teacher, writer, and New Yorker!'⁴⁵³

Ann Shaver was an English faculty member at neighbouring Denison University in Ohio when Hacker was appointed editor of the *Review*. As an admirer of what Hacker did in terms of interracial and 'queer' writing, Shaver admitted that she found it 'odd and very delicious' that Kenyon College, which had always been regarded by the Great Lakes College Association as a 'more complacent and less experimental member,' had hired someone with her 'particular mission' to reinvigorate their almost stagnant journal. Having begun teaching gay-themed courses around the same time Hacker arrived at Kenyon, Shaver arranged for her to visit Denison to give a reading. Conceding that Hacker's choices were not to everyone's taste, Shaver asserted that she did not select 'overtly political content so much as representative writers'. It was her opinion that Hacker's dismissal resulted from Kenyon College's capitulation to complaints by conservative subscribers and trustees.⁴⁵⁴

Another person who did not consider Kenyon College as a place associated with 'radical risks' was Suzanne Gardinier who was impressed by the appointment of Hacker. As a young writer she found Hacker's editorship 'thrilling'.⁴⁵⁵

Judith Barrington considered Hacker to be unusual in the sense that while she was a 'radical' she was also held in high esteem by the mainstream fraternity. She believed that could have caused some later 'confusion' among the trustees who had initially

⁴⁵³ Alicia Ostriker to Jack Harvey 16.06.02

⁴⁵⁴ Anne Shaver to Jack Harvey 11.06.02

⁴⁵⁵ Suzanne Gardinier to Jack Harvey 12.06.02

selected her on her reputation as a poet without paying too much attention to her politics.⁴⁵⁶

As editor of *The Kenyon Review* Hacker 'made no secret of her lesbianism' and was not averse to publishing material with homosexual inferences. Furthermore, Bruce Berliand believed Hacker's sacking was directly related to the fact that the Kenyon trustees were conservative like 'most governing boards of American colleges'.⁴⁵⁷

Having first been published in the *Review* in the fifties, Arthur Gregor's opinion was that until Hacker's arrival the journal took no particular political stance with regard to the work published. Having changed that by introducing subjects previously 'off-limits,' Gregor theorised that Hacker's vision may have taken her beyond what was acceptable to the College's 'conservative governing board'. He stated that while subject matter influenced style she continued to publish mainstream work also.⁴⁵⁸

In agreeing with Berliand's assessment regarding conservative governing boards, Reginald Shepherd explained why this was so often the case. Since potential financial donors may be scared off by controversy, trustees tended to walk the 'path of least resistance'. Shepherd believed that no matter how multiculturalism was defined it was frequently controversial. He took issue with Bergman's verdict on Hacker's editorship, since he credited her with introducing more non-traditional writers to the mainstream than would normally be found. He saluted Hacker for doing so 'given the still highly segregated nature' prevalent in America's literary culture. Shepherd paid tribute to Hacker's influence on other journals.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁶ Judith Barrington to Jack Harvey 28.08.02

⁴⁵⁷ Bruce Berliand to Jack Harvey 06.12.01

⁴⁵⁸ Arthur Gregor to Jack Harvey 11.06.02

⁴⁵⁹ Reginald Shepherd to Jack Harvey 11.06.02

Although Marina Budhos was not sure whether Berlind's assertion regarding conservative boards of trustees was wholly accurate she thought it would explain Kenyon College's decision. She did not consider that Hacker had been 'too multicultural in her approach,' since the trustees must have known what to expect when they hired her. Budhos stated that Hacker was alert to what was emerging from newer voices and embraced them while other journals resisted. Hacker's cultural astuteness and refusal to publish only mainstream material was what differentiated her from editors of similar types of journal.⁴⁶⁰

It was almost certain that a board of trustees would steer towards a 'conservative path,' according to Maurcen Seaton. She believed that when it came down to it, trustees were reluctant to give too much power to alternative voices, and as such they veered away from the opportunity. During Hacker's tenure the *Review* was 'amazing' and Seaton claimed she had never seen anything like it before or after. Hacker's propensity to embrace and nurture difference set her apart from other editors. Seaton reacted to David Bergman's statement regarding politics taking precedence over quality by describing it as 'untrue and ignorant'. The question of who decided what constituted literary quality fascinated Seaton, particularly with respect to work which transcended previously accepted norms. 'Yikes! Isn't that what an editor is hired to do?' She agreed with Jeffrey Betcher that an editor was hired to publish what she considered the best available work.⁴⁶¹

Hacker's notion of what constituted great literature meant she was always ahead of her time according to Toi Derricotte. When they first met in the seventies Derricotte

⁴⁶⁰ Marina Budhos to Jack Harvey 11.06.02

⁴⁶¹ Maureen Seaton to Jack Harvey 11.08.02

was impressed by Hacker's passion to see this work get published, and she did everything in her power to influence people in her way of thinking. In practical terms she made connections and recommended work by unpublished writers to editors. The problem for Hacker at Kenyon was that she made sweeping changes so rapidly that it was, in Derricotte's opinion, 'astonishing'. As such, she believed Hacker 'was in danger from the very beginning'. The diversity introduced to the *Review* was 'a scary thing' for people who did not share Hacker's vision of inclusiveness. In her attempt to alter people's perspectives on literature, she fell foul of those who were not ready for change. Despite that, Derricotte believed Hacker was instrumental in creating a 'domino effect' in getting 'conservative poets' to examine their own aesthetics. Hacker's accomplishment was in getting these people to accept that minority groups, such as gays, could produce great work which deserved to be published alongside mainstream writing. Rating Hacker as one of the foremost thinkers of the 20th century, Derricotte placed her in the same editorial league as Toni Morrison and Randall Jarrell, both of whom were 'fearless and visionary'.

Since Hacker's dismissal, Mary Biggs has stopped reading the *Review*. During Hacker's tenure, she saw the 'comparatively stifled world' of the journal assume an inclusiveness which reflected what was happening in the real world. It was the magazine to read to discover what was new in literary circles and Biggs believed it was ironic that Hacker attracted the controversy she did since she was one of the 'strongest proponents of traditional LITERARY values'. Biggs is another notable figure who considered that

many conservative trustees and readers were unwilling to accept literature which originated outside the mainstream.⁴⁶²

Hacker's role in introducing gay and lesbian writers to the mainstream impressed Robert Peters who thought that while Allen Ginsberg's influence exceeded that of hers, she had succeeded in making an 'enormous' impact on 'quality' journals such as the *Partisan Review* and, of course, *The Kenyon Review*.⁴⁶³

As a firm believer that diversity was beneficial and that the *Review* had a 'rare and welcome sheen' while Hacker was editor, Jeffrey Betcher was of the opinion that the 'seed of her ousting may have been planted' when she was hired due to a 'clash of cultures'.⁴⁶⁴

Steve Amidon offered several potential reasons as to why Hacker fell out of favour at Kenyon. He believed finances played a part, but he also thought the trustees had come under pressure from subscribers unhappy with gay and lesbian writing. It was possible in his opinion that the *Review* could not afford her.⁴⁶⁵

Having heard that *The Kenyon Review* was more likely to accept literature with 'gay subject matter' under Hacker's editorship, Daniel Curzon submitted work for the first time since the sixties. Ironically, it was after Hacker's departure that his short story, 'Wasps,' was published in 1995. When she accepted Curzon's story she had remarked that she liked it because it did not make 'gayness the issue'. Although he was unaware of the facts, he had heard a rumour that Hacker had been fired 'because of prejudice'. Curzon did not submit any more of his work to the *Review*, believing he had had his one

⁴⁶² Mary Biggs to Jack Harvey 12.06.02

⁴⁶³ Robert Peters to Jack Harvey 12.03.02

⁴⁶⁴ Jeffrey Betcher to Jack Harvey 02.02.02

⁴⁶⁵ Steve Amidon to Jack Harvey 29.11.01

chance of publication there. It had been his experience that it was easier to get 'non-gay' work published, since gay material had 'met with immense resistance'. While Curzon believed that homophobia existed, he qualified this by stating that 'perceived homophobia' triggered an over-reaction. Unfortunately, he considered that in some quarters bad work got published because it was gay, while the reverse situation existed, where good gay material failed to get published.⁴⁶⁶

Former U.S. editor of *Stand*, Jim Kates asserted that no editor can be 'all-inclusive,' since an integral part of the job involved 'editing out as well as editing in'.⁴⁶⁷

Hacker's appointment at Kenyon was met with delight by Hilda Raz, editor of *Prairie Schooner*. Although she also admired David Lynn's editorship, she was impressed by the manner in which Hacker brought a new identity to the *Review*. Raz believed no one who knew how Hacker's mind worked should have been surprised when she opened the *Review* up to 'a wider range of political postures'. While she was sorry that Hacker was sacked, she was philosophical about 'literary culture' which always managed to survive despite institutional decisions.⁴⁶⁸

Another admirer of David Lynn's editorship was Grace Schulman, but she also supported Hacker whose editorial goals she described as 'quality and diversity,' in that order. She did not examine Hacker's editorial choices in terms of homosexual content but purely in terms of quality. There were only two kinds of poetry as far as Schulman was concerned; good and bad. She also suspected that any one editor could influence national culture.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁶ Daniel Curzon to Jack Harvey 13.11.01

⁴⁶⁷ James Kates to Jack Harvey 11.12.01

⁴⁶⁸ Hilda Raz to Jack Harvey 06.06.02

⁴⁶⁹ Grace Schulman to Jack Harvey 11.06.02

The late Reetika Vazirani credited Hacker with welcoming her into a 'vast community of eclectic and rich new voices'. Hacker's all-inclusive stance in respect of writers from all ethnicities was overridden by her quest for quality. Vazirani considered her as a 'bridge-maker' whose 'genius' lay in her ability to make community.⁴⁷⁰

Hacker's future as editor of the *Review* was the subject of an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, dated May 11 1994. It reported that the *Review* had been saved but that Hacker's position was 'still up in the air'. President Jordan told the *Chronicle* that a panel was working to reduce the financial burden the *Review* was placing on the College. Although it had been costing as much as \$150,000 the editors had successfully reduced it to under \$100,000 and it was planned to publish the journal three times a year rather than four. Ransom's contribution to the initial success of the *Review* was mentioned, as was its 1970 demise and subsequent resurrection in 1979. David W. Fenza of the AWP was quoted as saying that he was unsure about how honest the trustees were with regard to their 'motives for putting the kibosh on the *Review*'. The article ended by stating that Hacker had not received any news of her contract which would normally have been finalised in February.

Two weeks after the *Chronicle* reported that Hacker's position was in jeopardy it reported that her tenure as editor was 'through'. Describing her as an 'outsider' it explained that the 'prestigious but financially strapped' magazine had replaced her with David Lynn. Hacker told the *Chronicle* that she had attended a meeting with President Jordan believing she was there to discuss cost-cutting measures with regard to the *Review*, only to discover that she was one of them. She stated that she was 'fired...there was no discussion'. It reported that Laurie Finke, an Associate Professor of Women's

⁴⁷⁰ Reetika Vazirani to Jack Harvey 17.06.02

and Gender Studies at the College thought that the trustees were 'irked' by the feminist and multicultural work which appeared in the *Review*. Finke also mentioned her concern regarding the questionnaire which paid more attention to editorial content than financial considerations. She believed that Kenyon would suffer more than Hacker, while 'other observers' considered that Hacker 'alienated' potential supporters by not paying enough attention to local politics.

Controversy over the Questionnaire

The questionnaire to which Finke referred caused a great deal of controversy. It solicited opinions on various issues with respect to what was described as the 'significant operating losses' suffered by the *Review*. As a consequence of these financial problems the Board of Trustees had formed a committee to investigate the feasibility of 'continuing, discontinuing or modifying' current operations at the *Review*. The first three questions appeared to be fairly routine enquiries. Question 1 asked if the recipient was a subscriber, how long they had been subscribing and whether they regularly read the *Review*. This was followed by two questions regarding the *Review*'s 'place in your home' and what most appealed to readers about the journal.

However, questions 4, 5 and 6 were much more pointed and were probably what upset Finke and her colleagues. Question 4 enquired about the *Review*'s 'image'. Requested to delete as appropriate whether they were satisfied or otherwise with it, there was a further opportunity to suggest what changes they would like to see. Question 5 invited suggestions for an 'image or editorial policy statement' which would 'best position' the *Review* to 'support the College's image and reputation'. If Finke was not

extremely concerned after reading question 5 she would have been after discovering the next question concerned editorial 'content'. This stated 'I am/am not satisfied with the content of *The Kenyon Review*. I would suggest the following changes:'.

Question 7 was straightforward enough in that it invited suggestions regarding methods for funding the *Review*. However, question 8 offered three options; a continuation of the *Review* in its current format, a continuation in a 'modified' format or, 'discontinuing' the magazine. The final 'question' was simply an invitation to contribute ideas.

1994's *Lambda Book Report* stated that Hacker's firing, which had sent 'shock waves through the literary community' had come as a 'surprise' to her. The *Report* stated that despite Hacker's proposal that she teach extra classes for no payment while reducing the number of issues from four to three, the College decided to end her contract. Kenyon also denied that homophobia was part of the reason for her dismissal.

Hacker's Claim to be a 'Hyphenate'

An article about Hacker appeared in *The Advocate* on September 20 1994. It quoted her as saying that although she was undoubtedly a lesbian writer, she considered herself to be a 'hyphenate'. She was obviously conscious of the role played by identity as to how she was regarded by the rest of the literary community and as such the 'hyphenate' term included the fact that she was not only lesbian, but Jewish, American and female also. The article described how she was 'fired summarily' from the *Review* after having saved it from 'long-standing dullness' by providing a stage for new writers, including work from the gay and lesbian community. Hacker told *The Advocate* that she

had received many letters from gay and lesbian writers informing her that their work was not welcome in mainstream literary magazines. As editor of the *Review* she attempted to represent them along with writers of color. Hacker speculated that her editorial policy could be responsible for her sacking. Referring to the Kenyon trustees' questionnaire which asked if the content of the *Review* had 'become much more narrow' she stated that 'narrow' meant work 'written 85% by straight white men'.

On December 22 1993 Hayden Carruth of Syracuse University wrote to the Kenyon trustees. In his letter he stated that no one doubted their sincerity regarding the financial problems facing the *Review*. However, he pointed out that 'every other important cultural institution' in America suffered fiscal restraints and always had. As far as Carruth was aware virtually every serious journal, theatre, museum and orchestra had been subsidized since its inception. He believed the federal government had relinquished its role with respect to funding resulting in a 'state of crisis'. This abrogation of responsibility was one of the crucial problems facing a society attempting to preserve a civilization worth passing on to its children. Carruth summed the questionnaire up as one which asked what the *Review* could do for the College. He turned the question around and asked what the College could do for the nation. It was his opinion that the *Review* had occupied a place of major importance in the nation for fifty years. Despite the obvious differences between Ransom and Hacker, Carruth considered they were similar in that both their editorships marked a regeneration of tastes and a realignment of literary and cultural values. Carruth warned the trustees that a withdrawal of support for the *Review* would be devastating to the reputation of the College.

Hacker's Identities

In a profile of Hacker which appeared in the Spring 1996 edition of *Ploughshares*, Rafael Campo referred to her many 'identities' and how she defied all attempts to categorise her. Hacker's bitterness towards the treatment her mother received as a master's graduate during the Great Depression appears to have stayed with her. According to Hacker her mother's chemistry degree 'entitled her to work as a saleswoman at Macy's'. After being refused admission to medical school because she was 'a woman and a Jew,' Hacker's mother became a teacher in New York City.

The Kenyon Collegian of September 22 reported on Hacker's 'sudden dismissal' from the *Review*. It relied heavily on the article that appeared in *The Advocate* for its information.

There is no question that Hacker succeeded in opening the *Review* to new audiences. The problem for the trustees was that she appears to have gone too far down the inclusiveness road to the point where she left the mainstream behind.

The 'Ten Mile' Rule

The Kenyon Collegian of November 15 1990 reported that the Kenyon Board of Trustees had scrapped the residence obligation, known locally as the 'ten mile' rule, which had been in force with regard to all faculty members and administration. In other words, every single member of staff had to reside within a 10 mile radius of the College. The 'ten mile' rule had been in operation since the late sixties when it replaced the 'three mile' rule. Initially the residence obligation had been introduced to encourage a 'climate of close interaction' among campus staff and the trustees still considered residentiality to

be important. However, following a discussion of the pros and cons they decided the College would not suffer if it were repealed. The trustees' decision was taken in order to make Kenyon College a more appealing place for potential employees, and while they hoped the vast majority of the faculty would continue to live in Gambier they felt obliged to make a concession to candidates with spouses or partners who might find it difficult to locate work locally.

While it was no secret that Hacker spent her time between Gambier and New York it is less well known that some people were unhappy with the amount of time she spent away from Gambier. David Bergman, currently on the *Review* advisory board, stated that he had 'heard complaints that Ms. Hacker was not very much engaged or committed to Kenyon or Gambier itself—that she was at the college as little as she could manage'.⁴⁷¹ Hacker did, in fact, acknowledge that she 'was only at Kenyon for about half the time, and did the work from New York for the rest of the time'. She was aware that her time spent off campus caused resentment and she had read an article in a 'right-wing' campus student publication which made reference to the *Review* 'being edited from New York'.⁴⁷² This accusation stung Hacker into responding that it was 'definitely not true'. Hacker recalled travelling back and forth between Gambier and New York, 'usually spending half the month in each place'. She never took any time off during her treatment for cancer, which was treated in both New York and at the local hospital when she was in Gambier. In Gambier, she requested an office phone line be installed in her apartment to enable her to work on days when she did not feel strong enough to go into her office.

⁴⁷¹ David Bergman to Jack Harvey 09.11.01

⁴⁷² Marilyn Hacker to Jack Harvey 07.08.03

Hacker's illness did not affect the running of the *Review* and no work was delayed due to her cancer.⁴⁷³

The Kenyon Review Refuses NEA Grant

The first controversy of Hacker's editorial career at Kenyon was in the *Review's* refusal to accept a \$7,500 National Endowment for the Arts grant because of the obscenity clause which accompanied its acceptance. *The Mount Vernon News* of October 1 quoted Hacker as saying that though she was delighted to have received the award there was 'absolutely no way' the grant could be accepted since the money would not be handed over until the statement was signed. The clause in question stated that 'none of these funds may be used to promote, disseminate or produce materials which may be considered obscene, including, but not limited to, depictions of sadomasochism, homocroticism, the sexual exploitation of children or individuals engaged in sex acts which do not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value'. Hacker was not prepared to betray her principles and believed if they accepted the award they would be agreeing to 'become censors before the fact'. The newspaper also reported President Jordan as saying that while he respected the 'judgement' of the editorial staff, the College would not make up the financial shortfall.

The NEA grant represented 3.7% of the *Review's* budget of \$205,000 and the importance of losing it was not lost on Hacker, who said it would 'wreak havoc on our already balloon-taut budget'. She hoped that *Review* supporters would donate money to cover the deficit. Noting that Congress would soon be conducting hearings regarding the

⁴⁷³ Marilyn Hacker to Jack Harvey 25.06.02

NEA's budget and grant procedures, Jordan said that if the obscenity restrictions were suspended, the *Review* would expect to receive the grant.

In relation to the obscenity clause, Associate Editor David H. Lynn said the *Review* wished to be at the forefront of the debate. His prediction that other journals would back them proved accurate.

Before *The American Poetry Review* would submit to a censorship of its contents it rejected a \$10,000 NEA grant. In a letter to their readers it was explained that major cuts might have to be made to accommodate the loss to their income. The editors appealed to their readers to support them in one of three ways; an early subscription renewal, a gift subscription or a tax-deductible donation. Comments were invited regarding their commitment to maintaining the journal as a 'forum in the community of American poetry'.

Editor of *The Gettysburg Review* Peter Stitt wrote in his Summer 1990 editor's notes that he deeply regretted having written to John Frohnmayer, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts to refuse a \$4,550 grant. Having read the 'General Terms' enclosed with the announcement of the award, Stitt realised he could not agree with 'Public Law 101-121'. In the letter, Stitt explained to Frohnmayer that he could not determine what would be deemed obscene unless he first submitted the work to the NEA for their approval prior to going to print. Not only that, Stitt believed the obscenity clause breached the First Amendment and as such was unconstitutional. He pointed out that as a 'law-abiding American' he staunchly objected to any form of censorship with regard to *The Gettysburg Review*.

In refusing the NEA grant, Stitt believed he was committing himself to the principles of freedom upon which America was founded. He referred to another grant recipient, Paul Zimmer, Director of the University of Iowa Press who had similarly refused to accept the award on the same basis. Stitt enlightened Frohnmayer on his experiences of having served on the Literature Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts back in the mid-eighties. He recalled being reminded repeatedly by NEA staff members Frank Conroy and Mary MacArthur that the one criterion used to judge applications was that of merit. In defending *The Gettysburg Review's* stance on the disputed clause, Stitt claimed that readers had never encountered nor ever would encounter obscenity within its covers. That said, he appreciated that serious literature sometimes contained acts or words that most people would not perform or express in front of their children. However, when they did appear he did not think they had been included specifically to encourage readers to 'emulate them'.

Stitt thought it worth noting that since *The Gettysburg Review* was sponsored by an institution committed to freedom of expression any censorship was in direct conflict with that commitment. He ended his letter by stating that open discussion of views was the ideal upon which a free society was based.

Financial Problems and *The Kenyon Review*.

The Kenyon Review has suffered recurring financial troubles over the years. In December 1937 President Chalmers had to alter his plans for a 132-page general review and settle instead for a 100-page arts and letters review when he realised that his projected estimated budget of \$6,000 per year had a \$1,000 shortfall.

By the time America entered World War II, the *Review* was struggling once more. Gordon Chalmers invited the faculty to form a committee to investigate the College budget with the possibility that the *Review* might be suspended 'for the duration'. By February 1942 Ransom believed the journal would not survive to the end of the fiscal year without 'outside aid'. He resorted to offering Henry Church, a rich former editor of the French journal *Mesures*, a stake in the *Review*. However, Church had lost his enthusiasm for editing and this tactic failed. The plus point for Ransom and the *Review* was that Church very generously made a donation of \$500.

It took a Rockefeller Foundation grant of \$7,500 over a three-year period to bail the *Review* out in 1944 when it ran into financial trouble again. Having donated \$1,750 between them in the budget year 1942-43, Henry Church and another benefactor, George Frazer withdrew their support. Church changed his allegiance to *The Sewanee Review*, where he became an advisory editor and sponsor.

While Ransom spent the best part of a year from 1949-1950 at Indiana University, Philip Blair Rice, his assistant editor took over the reins. During this period they were never out of touch and Ransom constantly wrote offering advice and suggestions. However, when he returned to Gambier and resumed charge once more he was burdened with the task of keeping the *Review* solvent. Kenyon College was adamant that the journal should not be paid for from their funds so it was left to Ransom to come up with sponsorship. Yet again, the Rockefeller Foundation came to the rescue along with donations from Duncan Phillips the publishers, Random House and Paul Mellon, who gave \$8,000 towards Ransom's salary. Before Mellon donated \$8,000 in 1950, Ransom had almost decided to remain permanently at Indiana University so his salary would not

strain the Kenyon finances. In 1958 Ransom wrote that as *Review* editor he had 'almost always been preoccupied with the problem ...of survival with credit'.

In 1955 when the Rockefeller grant was almost exhausted, Ransom informed President Chalmers that the \$4,800 loss from the *Review's* operating budget was a major blow and could 'be fatal to the continuance of the *Review*'. Ransom was not optimistic about their chances of securing another Rockefeller grant since part of the most recent grant had not been used as originally specified. Chalmers had directed that some of it be used to reduce the *Review's* deficit which was running at \$9,000 in 1953.

Despite Ransom's pessimism regarding a renewed Rockefeller grant, it was awarded. However, it was not so straightforward and there was a delay prior to the award being granted. During this period of uncertainty, Ransom once more remarked that if the request was unsuccessful the *Review* would not survive beyond the issue currently in production. Another factor which threatened the *Review's* continuance was Ransom's view, expressed in July 1955 to Richard Blackmur, that the journal would be discontinued when he retired.

The Kenyon Review Today

Following Marilyn Hacker's departure from the *Review* in 1994 David Lynn was appointed as acting editor. He was eventually appointed as full-time editor and continues so. Under his editorship the journal has flourished and prospered. In 2006 *Best American Poetry* selected 5 poems that had appeared in KR for publication.

As such *The Kenyon Review* website provides information on every aspect of the journal including a short history from its beginnings with John Crowe Ransom in 1938 to the present day.⁴⁷⁴

Hacker is given credit for broadening the *Review*'s scope by opening it up to a variety of ethnic and social minorities. The rift between Hacker and the *Review* has healed to the extent that she has had her work published in the journal since her departure. Hacker made a great contribution to the *Review* and in her own way did as much to bring public acclaim to Kenyon College as John Crowe Ransom did back in the late thirties.

The *Review* has embraced the latest technology on its website and enthusiasts can even access podcasts via their computers. Other features include author interviews, excerpts from recent and forthcoming issues and a list of their recent awards. It is a simple matter to access the current issue and back issues via the website for contributors and their selections, David Lynn's editorial notes and a list of contents.

Annual week-long workshops led by David Lynn are organised for poetry, fiction and creative writing. In 2006 a workshop was organised in Italy. David Lynn led both of these workshops. Young writers aged between 16-18 are encouraged by the *Review*. The important point here is that *The Kenyon Review* is keen to expand its boundaries and make contact with people throughout the U.S. and abroad. A system is in operation to enable online submissions to be made. Submission guidelines are available to simplify the process.

Even a cursory glance at *The Kenyon Review* website is sufficient to appreciate that there is now a strong link between the journal and Kenyon College students. A KR

⁴⁷⁴ [<http://www.kenyonreview.org/>]

Associates Program has been set up which involves a minimum of 12 students volunteering to work in a variety of areas for two or three hours per week. By doing so they gain valuable hands-on experience in literary editing, marketing and publishing. Throughout the year all Kenyon students have the opportunity to attend discussions hosted by *Review* staff on the work of the journal and how it operates. It has clearly been recognised that in order for the *Review* to move forward it is essential that close links with the student population be maintained. David Lynn has been instrumental in achieving, maintaining and encouraging those links.

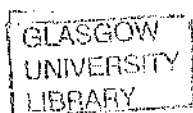
Ironically, the major transformation in *The Kenyon Review* since Marilyn Hacker's departure has been in the manner in which it has encouraged inclusiveness. The workshops, which are now an integral part of the *Review* operation have introduced the journal to new audiences and students are now actively involved in the day-to-day operating procedures. This serves not only to make them feel that the *Review* is 'theirs' but to take pride in the association that College and *Review* share.

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Marilyn Hacker's Editorship of *The Kenyon Review* 1990-1994

Jack Harvey

A Thesis Submitted

for

The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

to

The Faculty of Arts

The University of Glasgow

Volume 2

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Appendix to

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August 2005

Marilyn Hacker
Kenyon Review
Presentation

The opportunity I see for the Kenyon Review and for myself in my assuming its editorship is in the combination of what I'd call, in the best sense, the mainstream of American writing and those parallel and counter-currents too significant and well-recognized today to be viewed in any way as tributaries.

The importance of contemporary African-American writing is not moot -- nor is that of Native American, Asian-American and Hispanic-American authors: this is true in fiction, poetry and criticism.

The importance of writing by women of all races, and of feminist theory and perspective in creative writing and criticism is incontrovertible as well.

This is poetry, fiction and criticism which has been vitally important to me as a reader, writer and editor, and I would like to make it available to the Kenyon Review's readers. The representation of literary diversity is a goal I believe I achieved in previous editorial endeavors, and I have specific plans and goals in fostering it here.

One of a new editor's most valuable assets is a Rolodex: I bring with me not only my own ideas and visions of a preeminent American literary magazine, but the many poets, fiction writers and critics who know my work, and my interest in their work and their aims, and will respond to a request or an inquiry.

I know from experience that a journal does not achieve diversity by wishing it were so. When I was an editor of The Little Magazine in the mid-to-late 1970s, only a bare 25% of the submissions we received were from women writers; almost none, from either gender, were from minority writers. The former imbalance was almost instantly corrected after the announcement and publication of two special issues on women's writing: submissions for the general issues after that tended to be almost 50/50 in percentage, equally divided between men and women as to excellence, and as to the ratio of widely published to newly discovered writers as well. If the magazine had followed a similar tactic as regards writers of color, that would have changed more quickly<sic> too. When I edited 13th Moon, I thought that there had been enough "segregated" issues on the writing of women of color (at least in the mid-80s): contacting a few dozen writers and soliciting manuscripts made a difference, not only in the issue resulting, but in the pool of contributions afterwards.

A few years ago, I saw a special issue of a literary magazine on Southern writing that managed to be as white as a 1950 Ole Miss class reunion. I don't think its editors wanted to present that near-caricatural perspective. But decades, centuries of exclusion do not encourage the formerly-excluded to jump into the mainstream without knowing how the current runs. What comes to the editors of general-interest literary journals over the transon will be a reflection of what those journals have published before, unless there is editorial work of a special kind going on.

The words "affirmative action" mean something specific. They don't mean a change of standards: they mean actively affirming, acting on one's principles. For an editor or a publisher, they mean going out in search of different texts: by reading many specialized journals, and the books and catalogues of a variety of presses, by asking questions, by writing letters and making phone calls, by the selection of books to be reviewed. Soliciting writers works. The special issue/anthology approach works. This has always been, at least, my approach to editing, and it is an approach I would use at the Kenyon Review.

The literary essay/book review portion of the Review has historically been one of its greatest strengths. It's an area I want to keep strong, and one in which a more inclusive vision is most quickly noticeable. Reviewers and essayists, even more than poets and short-story writers, don't usually appear in the mail unsolicited. Some whose work I'd like to introduce to the Kenyon Review's readers are: Kathleen Aguero, Gloria Anzaldúa, Paula Gunn Allen, Joseph Bruchac, Shari Benstock, Michelle Cliff, Selwyn R. Cudjoe, Carole Boyce Davies, Judy Grahn, Michael Harper, Essex Hemphill, Bell Hooks, Gloria Hull, June Jordan, Maurice Kenny, Audre Lorde, N. Scott Momaday, Alicia Ostriker, Arnold Rampersand, Charles Rowell, Earlene Stetson, Catharine Stimpson, Edmund White... not in place of the writers already associated with the review, but in juxtaposition to them, as part of the mosaic pattern of contemporary American writing.

Other innovations I envision for the Review include the publication of short dramatic works and critical works on contemporary<sic> playwrights and theater, by playwrights and theater scholars such as Lee Breuer, Thomas M. Disch, Adrienne Kennedy, Cherrie Moraga, Vivienne Patraha, and Joan Schenkar. Writing for and about the theater is inexplicably omitted by most literary magazines and publishers, leaving contemporary playwrights, especially innovative ones, the least accessible<sic> writers, in the literal sense, of all.

I have a long-standing interest in science fiction as a literary genre, and would seek out writers in that field like Samuel R. Delany, David G. Hartwell and Joanna Russ for essays and short fiction.

A passion for contemporary American writing does not preclude an equally avid interest in other texts. The mutual unavailability of the work of writers -- poets in particular -- in different parts of the English-speaking world to each other has always seemed to me an especially unnecessary source of frustration.

I would continue to research and solicit work by Irish, Carribean<sic>, British, Australian, Canadian and African writers, as well as critical work introducing the current trends in these literatures to the magazine's readers.

I believe the Kenyon Review can find an expanded readership, as well as an expanded pool of contributors, and that those two expansions go together. New writers, of course, become new readers. But there are more active and efficient ways of increasing readership. I would initiate exchange ads with differently-situated publications, such as the African-American literary journal Callaloo, the West Coast feminist magazine Calyx, and The American Voice, a general magazine which

presents a multi-ethnic perspective. I would organize benefit readings for the review, and literary symposia sponsored by it, not only in Gambier, but at the Writer's Voice at the West Side YMCA in Manhattan (for example) and Intersection in San Francisco. Most practically, I would suggest that the review change its distributor, and make an arrangement with Inland book distributors on the east coast and Bookpeople on the west, both of whose catalogues reach many more bookstores in many more areas than DeBoer's: these are the distributors that independent booksellers know and trust for small-press, alternative press and university press publications.

The Kenyon Review has been and remains an important literary journal in which it is significant to be published and to be reviewed. It would be disingenuous of me to claim not to have noticed the paucity of work of minority writers in recent issues, not to have noticed that only one review article on a woman writer's work appeared in four issues, not to have noticed the absence of feminist and African-American perspectives in criticism. I don't think I would be here if an expansion of the Review's texts and contexts were not envisioned as a positive possibility by the magazine's directors and by the college: if you didn't think that my version of editorial affirmative action might be good for the review, as co-education and minority recruitment have been good for the college.

The Kenyon Review editorship would be, for me, an occasion for inclusion and synthesis: it would be an occasion for the Review to regain and retain a forefront position in contemporary American letters, not just from the point of view of one group of writers and scholars, but from a more global viewpoint, encompassing what American writing today really represents.

Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 18.09.90

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

Sept. 18, 1990

Dear Phil,

Some clarification of events surrounding the FY 90-91 NEA grant to the Kenyon Review.

- 1 The College knew as early as April 30 -- the day we received grant notification -- of the new restrictions against obscenity. Please see the NEA letter which accompanied our grant notification, attached.
- 2 Kenyon College has not signed anything pertaining to the acceptance of the grant until my letter to Chairman Frohnmayer which is pending your approval. NEA reimburses literary magazines after they have spent the equivalent of the funds due them (or a portion of those funds). At that point the College would normally apply for reimbursement and sign a form assuring NEA that funds have been spent according to NEA restrictions and within the parameters of the grant application. No such form has been signed this year, obviously.

These points arose in a conversation with Michael Matros of Public Affairs, and we agreed they should be made quite clear for the record. Please call me, Phil, if you need anything else: 5213.

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

cc: Givens, Roelofs, Matros & Nelson
T.R. Hummer, *Editor*: Philip D. Church, *Senior Editor*: William F. Klein, *Associate Editor*

NATIONAL WASHINGTON
ENDOWMENT D.C. 20506
FOR
THE ARTS

A Federal agency advised by the
National Council on the Arts

APR 30 1990
Mr. Philip H. Jordan, Jr.
President

Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Mr. Jordan:

On behalf of Chairman John Frohnmayer, it is a pleasure to inform you that your organization has been awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Grant Number: 90-5224-0191
Application Number: A89-017101
Sponsoring Program(s): LITERATURE
Amount Awarded: \$7,500

To: Kenyon College
For: KENYON REVIEW
Start Date: July 1, 1990 End Date: June 30, 1991

Grant funds are provided for the following purpose(s): Support for the contributors' fees and awards for issues of KENYON REVIEW, as outlined in your application cited above and the enclosed project budget.

The enclosed "General Terms" for grants from the National Endowment for the Arts specifies the Endowment's regulations, procedures and other requirements and references the Office of Management and Budget Circulars which apply to this grant. Note that at paragraph two these "General Terms" include a restriction on use of Arts Endowment grant funds newly enacted by Congress for Fiscal Year 1990. Please read the "General Terms" carefully.

All correspondence or inquiries regarding the administrative requirements of this grant should be directed to the Grants Office (202) 682-5403.

Sincerely,
Laurence M. Baden
Grants Officer

Enclosures

Iva Delany to Marilyn Hacker

27.08.90

[postcard, postmarked 27-8-1990]

CATSKILL GAME FARM

CATSKILL, NEW YORK

Aoudads, Barbary Sheep From North Africa

Marilyn Hacker

~~33 Rue de Turenne~~

~~75003 Paris~~

~~France~~

Faire Suivre: The Kenyon Review

Kenyon College

Gambier, Ohio

43022

Etats-Unis

anyway how is Paris? we are sitting in a little restaurant and we are going to eat soup
and wicked lemonade Stacy is writing to her grandma. I like it up here let's move.
Jesus I have lousy handwriting

well I love you

P.S. I'm sorry I haven't written until now

Iva

Rafael Campo to Marilyn Hacker 03.09.90

44 Griggs Terrace
Apt. #2
Brookline, MA 02146
September 3, 1990

Marilyn Hacker, Editor
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Ms. Hacker,

I'm writing to thank you for the wonderful interview you gave recently in our local community newspaper, Bay Windows. I read your thoughts with great interest. As a young gay poet, I wanted to accept your kind invitation to submit poems for your consideration. I hope you might find a place for one of these in The Kenyon Review.

I also hope you'll allow me to tell you a bit about myself. I'm taking a year away from Harvard Medical School, after successfully completing my clinical rotations. I was awarded recently the George Starbuck Fellowship in Poetry at Boston University, where I will be pursuing the M.F.A. degree in Creative Writing during my time off. I will be working with Robert Pinsky and Derek Walcott, among others.

In my spare time, I read poetry manuscripts for Ploughshares. As an undergraduate at Amherst College, I studied and wrote poetry under the supervision of my friends William Pritchard, Eve Sedgwick, and Amy Clampitt. My poems have appeared in The Amherst Review, Field, and JAMA. Three have been selected for an <sic> new anthology entitled The UCLA Poet-Physician Anthology, due out this year from the UCLA Press. I was the recipient of the Rolfe Humphries Poetry Prize at Amherst, and a prize winner in the nationwide William Carlos Williams Poetry Competition in 1989.

I hope you enjoy these poems. I am looking forward to hearing from you. Thanks for considering these, and for making a place for different voices.

Sincerely,

Rafael Campo

Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 11.09.90

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

Sept. 11, 1990

Dear Phil Jordan,

The enclosed editorials, which we plan to include in the Fall '90 Kenyon Review, will fill you in a bit on what we'd like to discuss with you on Thursday, and where I/we stand on the current controversy pertaining to the NEA's changed autonomy and direction.

I've really been enjoying working with the Review, starting long-distance during the summer, but most especially here in Gambier.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker

Marilyn Hacker, *Editor*; David H. Lynn, *Associate Editor*; Martha Finan, *Managing Editor*

Denison University

Sept. 13, 1990

Dear Marilyn, David, and Martha:

I want to write this letter to send my congratulations, admiration, and vigorous support for your decision to decline the National Endowment for the Arts grant recently awarded to the Kenyon Review. In some ways--especially considering the fragile state of literary magazines, their perilous financial footing, the public's general disregard of serious literary effort--this must have been a difficult decision to make. It is, after all, needful money, and the NEA's support would have made things just a little less tiresome for you for a while; the NEA has been a friend, even a vein of lifeblood, to magazines large and small for a good long time. I know that merely filling out these contorted applications and then waiting ages for the grant decisions are tedious and generally thankless parts of literary editing, and so completing a successful bid for support is important to the psyche as well as the purse.

Still, in the most very important ways, I imagine that this decision was finally quite easy to make. The NEA's recent timidity to support artists of vigor and challenging vision is regrettable. Its demand that artists sign a statement which directly contradicts, virtually erases, the First Amendment, as well as our implicit right to privacy, is outrageous. And its requirement that literary editors promise not to use funds to "promote, disseminate, or produce materials which in the judgment of the National Endowment for the Arts...may be considered obscene" is not only itself mind-wrenchingly obscene, but borders dangerously on totalitarian control of this society's most essential element, the freedom to express, by its demand that considerations of literary merit be subverted into censorship and prior restraint. One of Kenyon Review's recent editors, Terry Hummer, has written brilliantly and precisely in the current AWP Newsletter on the meaning of "obscenity" as the NEA has applied it, showing essentially that the term really describes, not obscenity at all, but a particular religious sect's definition of "blasphemy." Much of the argument lies between rightwing religious fervor and self-righteousness on one side, and creative freedom and challenge on the other. How can this office of our government not support the latter of these forces? How can we accept money from an office of our government that articulates the former?

I have been a member of Kenyon Review's staff since 1983, and I am as proud and dedicated to the magazine as anyone could ever be. I have never been prouder of your work, or more dedicated to your vision, than now. I can only imagine that the Kenyon College administrators, your colleagues in English and across campus, your subscribers, the alumnae, and the board of trustees, should and will be terribly proud of you and your decision. It has been an abiding hallmark of Kenyon Review to lead in its taste, commitment, and vision. That is exactly what you have done--once again.

Sincerely,

David Baker

Department of English · Granville, Ohio · 43023 · (614) 587-6207

Marilyn Hacker to John Frohnmayer

17.09.90

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID H. LYNN
Associate Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

September 17, 1990

John Frohnmayer, Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts
Washington, DC 20506

Dear John Frohnmayer,

The editors and publishers of the Kenyon Review were initially delighted to learn of NEA's decision to award us a \$7,500 grant for FY90-91. However, that delight was mitigated upon reading the "General Terms" for acceptance which were enclosed with the announcement of the grant. As editors of a literary magazine sponsored by a liberal arts college whose tradition includes the free and open expression of ideas, we cannot agree to the terms specified by "Public Law 101-121" in Paragraph 2 of those General Terms.

In our view, that paragraph constitutes prior restraint upon our editorial choices. It directly contradicts the instructions formerly given to NEA's Literature panelists: that literary merit was the only criterion to be used in judging applications. It is our only criterion as well. But there are, have always been, always will be, works which are of indubitable literary merit to one editor, or committee of editors, which "may be considered obscene" by some reader somewhere -- perhaps even a member of the National Council on the Arts.

This week at the Kenyon College bookstore, there is a display table of "Banned Books": hundreds of titles which have been "considered obscene" at one time or another. Their authors range from James Joyce and James Baldwin to Judy Blume (a prize-winning author of juvenile fiction whose novels my then eight-year-old daughter received from her grandmother as favorite Christmas presents). We believe that by submitting to NEA's new restrictions, we would be volunteering to join the book-banners, which is not at all our editorial policy.

A grant to a literary magazine should express, as it has in the past, enough confidence in that magazine's editors, history and intentions not to require complicity in any kind of censorship or prior restraint. The role of the literary magazine in the history of American literature has been that of explorer, re-definer of boundaries; it has been

transgressive rather than normative. The awarding of grants to literary magazines and small presses has been, in the past, a recognition of the importance of that independent, noncommercial role, not a call to order for literary magazines and small presses to represent a consensus of majority taste. Such taste, both popular and canonical, is itself in a constant state of flux, due, at least in part, to the support by literary magazines and small presses of writers who begin beyond the pale.

The Kenyon Review wishes to continue that invaluable function into our second half-century. We cannot, therefore, accept the \$7,500 grant awarded us by NEA with the new restrictions. If and when those restrictions are withdrawn, we will, of course, be pleased to acknowledge the honor bestowed on us by NEA's literary periodicals panel, and use the funds to publish the best new poetry, fiction and criticism we can find.

Sincerely yours,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 17.09.90

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

September 17, 1990

Dear Phil,

Here is the editorial, changed to clarify both that the Kenyon Review had never officially accepted the grant, either in the sense of signing anything, or of having been given a check, and that we would, indeed, accept the grant if and when the restrictive language is removed.

I'm including my proposed letter to John Frohnmayer. My thought on that is that there probably ought to be a letter from me, as editor, accompanying the one from you, as publisher -- because it's the editor's letter that is most likely to be quoted in journals sympathetic to our stance -- from the AWP Newsletter to the PEN Newsletter to (perhaps) the Village Voice -- from which we might garner financial as well as moral support, and new subscribers.

All best,
or, as we East Coast agitators used to say

Yours in struggle,

Marilyn

c.c. Doug Givens
& for Nelson

T.R. Hummer, *Editor*: Philip D. Church, *Senior Editor*: William F. Klein, *Associate Editor*

Rafael Campo to Marilyn Hacker 20.09.90

44 Griggs Terrace
Apt. #2
Brookline, MA 02146
Sept 20, 1990

Marilyn Hacker
Editor
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022-9901

Dear Ms. Hacker,

Thank you so much for your rapid response to my submission of poems. I'm thrilled that "The Love of Someone" and "El Curandero" will be appearing in the Summer '91 issue of The Kenyon Review.

I've spent the past few days in a bit of a daze at the prospect of these poems being published by you. So perhaps you'll forgive me for not being able to find the issue of Bay Windows in which the interview you gave appeared. I wanted very much to send you a copy of it. I'm in the process of trying to contact Jennifer Rose, with whom I worked closely at Ploughshares, to see if she has a copy of it. In any case it will provide me [with] an excuse to write to you again in the future.

Thanks again for the wonderful news. I wish you all successes in your new editorial position. And best of luck to your partner, too--it's<sic> sounds as if she and I are going through a very similar process of learning (not only about disease, but also empowerment and disadvantage, humanity and technology). I'm glad to have this year off to write, and come to terms with what I'm seeing.

In any case, I hope to remain in touch.

Best Regards,

Rafael Campo

Barbara Di Bernard to Marilyn Hacker

22.10.90

**UNIVERSITY OF
NEBRASKA
LINCOLN**

Department of English
202 Andrews
Lincoln, NE 68588-0333
(402) 472-3191

October 22, 1990

Marilyn Hacker, Editor
Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Marilyn Hacker:

Enclosed is my manuscript "Zami: A Portrait of an Artist as a Black Lesbian." In it I expose ways in which much feminist criticism about female "portrait of the artist" stories has been based on white and heterosexual assumptions and examples. I then try to discover what emerges in looking at Audre Lorde's black lesbian experience, and to suggest why all feminist critics must take account of this experience in writing about female artist stories.

My friend and colleague Hilda Raz, who has read my essay, suggested that I send it to you to consider for your "women of color" issue.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Barbara DiBernard
Associate Professor of English
And Women's Studies

Stephanie Byrd to Marilyn Hacker

26.10.90

Africana Studies & Research Center

607-255-5218 Director

607-255-4625 Faculty

607-255-5229 Library

26 October 1990

Marilyn Hacker, editor

Kenyon Review

Kenyon College

Gambier, Ohio 43202

Dear Ms. Hacker,

I spoke with Hattie Gosset and she told me about the special writers of color issue scheduled for publication in 1991. I would like you to consider the enclosed poetry for publication in that issue.

I am a Black feminist writer who currently is writing her master's thesis on the works of Bessie Head, the late southern African novelist. I am a teaching assistant at Cornell University also.

Thank you for looking over my work. My address is in the right hand corner of each page. I hope your winter is mild. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Byrd

P.S. I have enclosed an S.A.S.E for your convenience.

Cornell University, 310 Triphammer Road, Ithaca, New York 14850-2599

Marilyn Hacker to Roberto Calderon 08.11.90

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

Nov. 8, 1990

Dear Roberto Calderon,

It was a pleasure to hear from you, and to read these poems. To answer your important question (and I realize any answer will seem somewhat gratuitous): I'm not considering work written entirely in Spanish, or in any other languages than English, because in fairness to the majority of our readers, it would require translation (unless it was there predominantly as a political statement that they should be able to read Spanish -- or French, or Hopi, or Cherokee, or Japanese). And it would be another kind of statment<sic> to say that I would publish work in Spanish, but not in any of the other languages of origin, of childhood, of every day, of non-Hispanic North American writers. So far, when the KR has published works in translation, it has only published the English-- although eventually this may change.

I do feel differently about work written in both languages, like two of the poems you submitted, like a lot of Cherrie Moraga's and Gloria Anzaldua's work. Usually, the context leads the Anglophone reader through the Spanish --- and one of the effectos<sic> of the text, when successful, is to reproduce in the reader's mind the rich and sometimes bewildering state, mental surroud<sic>, of bilingualism. For me, the poem "american queque" does just that, superbly, and I'm pleased to accept it for publication in the Review, for the Fall '91 issue.

You'll be hearing from our managing editor later on about SS# & contributors' notes.

I'm taking the liberty of enclosing a subscription card. We told the NEA to take back their Helms-tainted mink: reader support is the best revenge.

Abrazos,

Marilyn

Marilyn Hacker, *Editor*; David H. Lynn, *Associate Editor*; Martha Finan, *Managing Editor*

Jane Cooper to Marilyn Hacker

11.11.90

545 West 111th St., apt.
New York, NY 10025

November 11, 1990

Marilyn Hacker, Editor
THE KENYON REVIEW
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022-9623

Dear Marilyn:

First of all, congratulations on becoming editor of THE KENYON REVIEW! I'm glad for the magazine and look forward very much to seeing what you can do with it.

I'm sure over the years I've mentioned to you that I was engaged in writing a long poem about Willa Cather. Finally, this fall, I finished it, and I thought I would like to try it out first on you, to see whether the KENYON might be interested. Actually, as long poems go these days, it isn't so long -- all told, about 50 lines longer than "Threads."

I have just gotten permission to use the quotations from all Alfred A. Knopf books (with proper copyright acknowledgements, of course): that is, by Cather, THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE, DEATH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP, A LOST LADY, NOT UNDER FORTY, WILLA CATIER ON WRITING, and FIVE STORIES BY WILLA CATHER, and by Edith Lewis, WILLA CATHER LIVING. I shall now be writing to Houghton Mifflin and Lippincott for the remaining permissions. Be sure that, in the event you decide you can use the poem, I should have everything clear.

I'm working hard to finish my book and hope I can find a publisher for it for 1992. That being the case, I would also ask that the poem be considered specifically for the Summer 1991 issue.

I should have let you know long since how much I liked your issue of PLOUGHSHARES. It was full of fine things, and I was very pleased to have the O'Keefe sequence there among them.

I look forward to hearing from you. Warm greetings, meanwhile,

As always,

Jane

(Jane Cooper)

Cyrus Cassells to Marilyn Hacker

29.11.90

Cyrus Cassells
11/29/90
669 Fremont St #5
Boston, MA 02118

REVISION attached

Dear Marilyn,

Please excuse the handwritten note, as my typewriter is on the blink. I just wanted to let you know that I'm very pleased and honored that you've taken "Life Indestructible" for the magazine. I've made one more revision in it since your acceptance. I've deleted what was previously the penultimate section, so that now the poem is in 13 parts; I feel this deletion makes for greater resonance. Please see the attached revision.

The Harvard Conference was lively & inspiring, though unfortunately I was only able to attend one other panel beside my own -- one which I found exceptional -- on <Latino?> <Gays?>. Over 1200 people registered for this Conference, twice as many as expected. The most enjoyable part for me was a lunch I attended with eight Black gay male writers and artists. We certainly had a lot to talk about!

I've encouraged a couple of very gifted poets I know, Martin Espada, who's Puerto Rican and just won the Pen/ <Renson?> Award, and Cheryl Savagean, a native American writer, to send you work for your special issue.

Are you planning to spend the holidays in France? Wherever you go -- New York, Ohio or France -- I send you my very best wishes for the season.

Cyrus

(encl.)

Dorothy Sutton to Marilyn Hacker

04.12.90

[postcard]

Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier
Ohio 43022

Dorothy Moseley Sutton
Phone 606-623-6071
115 Southland Drive
Richmond, KY 40475

4 Dec '90

A woman's place is in the House - and the Senate.

Dear Marilyn,

Thanks for your kind words about my poems. I <deleted> often that one of <deleted> "incited a cheer"[they <deleted> Wilbur's poem] I will <deleted> send again in the <deleted> suggest.

You ask if I know of Black women writers for your fall issue. This summer at Ind. U. Writing Conf. I met Allison Joseph, ed. of Indiana R. and she had some good poems. You might wish to contact her. We're thankful to have been passed over for "The Big Quake." My mother, bless her heart, in the epicentre would not leave (81 years old) "and miss all the excitement?" Instead she ordered a hard hat! Guess I need to make a poem of it!
Best,
Dorothy Sutton

Marilyn Hacker to Gillian Conoley 06.12.90

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

Dec. 6, 1990

Dear Gilian<sic> Conoley,

Please excuse this delay in responding to yours of the 20 October. I (naively?) assumed that, since I hadn't seen the poem David Baker accepted, it was scheduled for publication in the Winter '91 issue -- the last one completely put together by David & David. Well, somehow it wasn't. So it will be published in the Summer '91 issue, along with "Bedrock" and "The Birth of a Nation". Hope that's all right with you -- it makes a nice selection of your work.

I'm very happy to say that David Baker is still "aboard" as Assistant Editor (and David Lynn as Associate Editor). I've passed on your greetings. We met, you may remember, at MacDowell some six (?) years ago ...

Thanks very much for the subscription: we hope you enjoy the magazine.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

Marilyn Hacker, *Editor*; David H. Lynn, *Associate Editor*; Martha Finan, *Managing Editor*

James A. Emanuel to Marilyn Hacker

09.12.90

55 bis, bd du Montparnasse
75006 Paris
FRANCE

9 December 1990

Marilyn Hacker
Editor, The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022
U.S.A.

Dear Marilyn,

I've studied, experimented with, and revised most of these enclosed haiku so often (got up at five o'clock a few mornings ago to change one of them, the one on Gary Cooper, and worked after midnight on others) that I must not keep them around me any longer--lest I mail no Christmas cards.

As far as "the poetic process" is concerned, the Harlemites series was unusually difficult because of restrictions I imposed upon myself concerning diction, rhythm, emphases, and other things that I know for sure about what one might hear in Harlem. Jubilant fit exactly in the Bogart haiku, for example, until I remembered that almost nobody in Harlem would say that word. Of course, Thurgood Marshall lived in Harlem, but that didn't help me.

The Milicević haiku already sent you could become a part of this series, bringing it to nine (minus any you don't care for). As for another blues poem, one is floating around in my head. Regarding Whole Grain, I've corrected the galleys (383 pages, a total excluding front matter), so I guess the "late January-early February" publication date will hold. Just got a copy of my poem "The Crooners" as it appears, in French and English, in the December issue of INEDIT in Belgium (not a Jean Migrenne version), and a graveuse in Brussels wants to illustrate some of my poetry in woodcuts. So....

Don't overwork. <Illeg> HAPPY HOLIDAYS, Marilyn.

Best wishes,

James

Encl: haiku

Martha Finan to Marilyn Hacker 12.11.90

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID H. LYNN
Associate Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

11-12-90

Marilyn ----

The Barbara Di Bernard essay/ review/ whatever strikes me as refreshing, interesting, well organized and articulated. By all means, though, please ask her to boil down her footnotes.

A couple of points kept sticking in my craw:

Page 5: Lorde's definition of any strong, woman-centered woman as a lesbian. She seems to imply that only wimps can be heterosexual -- at least female wimps. Once you've exhibited much strength or respect for other women's experiences, you've defined yourself as a lesbian, regardless of genital partners. Lorde probably means that as a compliment, but many of us would find it off-putting. How does she like it when some ignoramus insists that any woman exhibiting safe, traditional qualities such as compassion and tenderness has to a heterosexual, no matter whom she lives with?

Pages 8 through 12: DeBernard's<sic> generalization that all white women have been socialized into a patriarchal society, that they force their daughters into the same mould, and that those daughters, especially the artist-types, struggle the rest of their lives to break free of the bondage their mothers have dumped on them. Black women, of course have escaped all this: just ask Mary Helen Washington or Gloria Joseph or Toni Morrison. This is not a new theory, I'll grant, but surely it could use some fresh scrutiny. Can the author be sure this is a racial dichotomy and not a socio-economic one? Exactly who are these white women who cannot combine the nest with adventure? (Morrison, p.8) All white women? Just North Americans? Just American women living in suburbs after, say, 1950? Seems to me that, in the history of the world, many -- indeed, most -- white women have had to work and work hard. Among the poorest --- refugees, the underdeveloped nations, Iron Curtain countries, Ireland and others with such high unemployment rates among men -- the women are often the major wage earner and the stable parent. How else has the tradition of the domineering Irish mother emerged? Does she include rural women? American Indians? Merely urban Anglo-Saxon? All Western women? All non-Negro women? Are Jewish women included? What about Hispanics? Asians? If DeBernard<sic> is thinking of modern, American middle and upper-middle-class women, it would be

honest of her to say so. The sweeping generalization may lend an aura of broadly researched, cosmopolitan subjects to the essay, but it doesn't stand up under scrutiny. Is it possible she's comparing only black-women-and-white-women-of-the-writing-class, most-of-them-living-in-North-America-and-many-of-them-college-educated? That's my hunch, and there's nothing wrong with it: she just needs to be a little more explicit.

Back to the first point: I realize it's Lorde, not DiBernard's, definition, and she's being perfectly consistent to mention it. But if you think it might bother other readers as well as this one, we might suggest that she either qualify it, or inset an alternate view from herself or another writer of a similar persuasion.

Martha

Marilyn Hacker to Barbara Di Bernard

13.12.90

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID H. LYNN
Associate Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

Dec. 13, 1990

Dear Barbara Di Bernard,

Thanks very much for letting us read your essay on Audre Lorde's Zami. I liked it very much -- and so did my colleagues, David Lynn and Martha Finan. We'd be very interested in publishing it in the Kenyon Review -- either in "De Colores" -- the special issue on writers (women and men) of color, or in a general issue, depending on space possibilities. (If it was in a general issue, it would be published either in Summer '91 or next January. I'd let you know well ahead of time.)

There are a few editorial points I'd like you to think over. One is just practical -- to do both with space and our format as a literary quarterly. We can't work with seven pages of footnotes! Please do your best to cut, consolidate, incorporate some of them into the text. Aim to get them down to three pages, four maximum.

I'm also enclosing<sic> a page of commentary by Martha Finan on the essay: I think her reactions (as a non-academic white working-class heterosexual feminist omniverous reader -- is that enough adjectives?) are, to say the least, interesting. And the point about feminist critics, black and white, conflating "white women" with "white middle-class North American women" is extremely well-taken whether one's talking about life or literature: none of the books mentioned about white women at odds with their mothers, struggling between erotic and creative impulses, deal with working-class women, or immigrant women, or rural women (what about Anzia Yezerskia, The Dollmaker, Faye Moskowitz? And isn't there mother-daughter antagonism in Brown Girl, Brownstones and Annie John?) I remember years ago making a similar comment in a review, about June Jordan's poem "What Would I Do White" -- wear furs & clip coupons & think about make-up was her depiction; type and file, pick up the two-year-old at day-care, and go pro-choice marches was just as likely, I suggested. This is not to say that white women's lives are, in general, not easier than those of women of color -- only to note that race and class are not synonymous. And that, perhaps, you, as a critic, can look objectively at studies, literary or sociological, that don't take this into account.

And I also agree with Martha that perhaps some critical distance can be taken from/ comment made on/ the statement that "lesbian" can mean a strong, woman-centered woman who has not had sexual relationships with other women. You don't get

around to quoting Lorde's rather deliberately outrageous statements on this subject until pp. 18 and 19: till then, the reader not familiar with Lorde's work doesn't know for sure if it's her assertion or the critic's extrapolation. Perhaps<sic> those quotes should be boldly worked in earlier in the essay. (Lorde, I know, is speaking of Black women. Some thirteen years ago, Adrienne Rich made a statement -- which I don't know if she'd still hold to -- at the MLA, that it was "the lesbian in us" who was the creative artist, the adventurer, etc. etc. -- whether we --women--considered ourselves lesbian, or acted on it, or not. As a creative artist who is also a lesbian, I found that statement very disturbing, and said so: for heterosexual or celibate woman, it was on the order of saying "it's the man in you who is the creative artist" -- not that a lesbian equals "a man" but that a woman's creativity comes from something she is not. It's the creative artist in you who is the creative artist, I'd say. And several older lesbians objected that if a "woman-identified woman" is automatically "a lesbian," they'd have to think of a new word to specify themselves: women who did desire women, have sex with women, live conjugally with women ... I think there are Black women, both heterosexual and lesbian, who might have the same reactions to Lorde's statements. And I think some critical acknowledgement of that might be helpful. Even Lorde says some of the women she calls lesbian "would rather have died than use that name for themselves.")

I think the paragraph on pp.6/7 about Audre & Gennie could be made much more specific for the reader who hasn't yet read Zami. "Lesbian connection", especially given what's gone before, sounds very programmatic-- and amorphous. The episode is initially about two teenagers who are in love with each other, although they never "make love"/ have sex. I know that because I've read the book. But by this time, "lesbian connection" sounds so vague and girl-scouty that it might mean helping each other with deponent verbs & pinning up each other's skirt to hem.

"Gennie and Audre never make love, or even "make out", but their relationship is charged with eroticism, and is a source of creative affirmation and strength for Lorde." Maybe something like that would clarify matters?

David Lynn, who hasn't yet read Zami, said your essay made him want to go out and buy a copy -- and include it the next time he teaches his course on autobiography<sic>. That's the kind of reaction I hope a lot of Kenyon Review readers will have.

You'll hear from us later on with copy-edited ms., contract, payment info. Etc. But I hope we hear from you sooner with footnote-reduction et al.

I'm including a letter about "current events" at the Kenyon Review -- in the hope that you might consider joining us as a subscriber as well!

All best,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

David Bergman to Marilyn Hacker 29.01.91

David Bergman
3024 North Calvert Street, Apt. C-5
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

January 29, 1991

Marilyn Hacker, editor
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Ms. Hacker:

Two poems of mine "A World of Difference" and "Heroic Measures" were accepted for publication by The Kenyon Review (I enclose Phil Church's acceptance letter, which to my surprise is dated exactly three years ago). Since the Review has been in turmoil, I've not been surprised that the poems haven't appeared, but I've begun to worry whether they haven't been lost in the shuffle. I'm also enclosing copies of the poem in case they have been misplaced and some recent work as well for your consideration.

My association with the Review has been a long and happy one. It has published both essays and poems of mine. Indeed, one essay "Alternative Service: Family Structure in Recent Gay American Fiction" was the first gay literature essay KR--the journal that rejected Robert Duncan's "African Elegy" because it promoted homosexuality--ever published. I will be reprinting the essay in my book Gaiety Transfigured: Gay Self-Representation in American Literature, which The University of Wisconsin press is publishing this coming autumn. This is a long way of saying that I hope that connection can continue with KR under your editorship.

I am the winner of the George Elliston Poetry Prize for my volume Cracking the Code and the editor of John Ashbery's Reporting Sightings: Art Chronicles 1957-87, which Harvard is issuing in paperback. At present I am editing Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality for the University of Massachusetts Press. My poetry has appeared in The American Scholar, The New Criterion, The New Republic, The Paris Review, Poetry, Raritan, and The Yale Review among other journals. I teach at Towson State University, and I graduated from Kenyon College many years ago.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

David Bergman

Marilyn Hacker to Gabrielle Dennis

30.01.91

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

Marilyn Hacker
Editor
David H. Lynn
Associate Editor
Martha Finan
Managing Editor

January 30, 1991

Dear Gabrielle Dennis,

Th anks<sic> very much for sending us your short story "Fear of Hair". We like it very much, and are pleased to accept it for publication in the Kenyon Review. It will either be in the Fall 1991 issue, "De Colores," or in the general issue to be published in January '92, all depe nding<sic> on space considerations: we'd already accepted several fiction pieces for the Fall issue, and we've got to do a lot of weighing & (length) measuring. It should go without saying (but probably doesn't) that our commitment<sic> to finding and publishing work by new and established writers of color is not limited to a special issue, and will be increasingly evident in all the issues to come.

I hope you had a good and productive stay at Hedgebrook Farm.

I took the liberty of giving your name, among others, to the Astraea Foundation in New York, who have just been endowed with funds to provide small fellowships to "emerging lesbian writers": you'll be receiving application information from them. It was a liberty, because I have no idea if you're a "lesbian writer" or not -- but, from your publication credits, I figured you wouldn't take offense at the error if that wasn't the case.

You'll be hearing from our managing editor closer to the publication date, with your copy-edited ms. for approval, request for contributor's note, and a contract (first North American serial rights). We can only pay \$10 a page for fiction: I wish it were more.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

Marilyn Hacker to David Bergman

01.02.91

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID H. LYNN
Associate Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

February 1, 1991

Dear David Bergman,

What an editor's nightmare: FOUR editors, I think, have come and gone between Phil Church and myself, who didn't bother, apparently, to check up on their predecessor's (or s') commitments. All I can do is put my queer shoulder to the wheel and redress the error ASAP. ASAP, *he las*, will be the Winter 1992 issue: the Fall issue is devoted to writers of color, and the spring and summer issues are, *tout court*, too long.

I knew about the KR's history with Duncan and Ransom: it made it, somehow, particularly satisfying to be appointed editor as an open lesbian writer with a commitment<sic> to feminist, gay and lesbian and multicultural literature.

I kept rewriting "Days of .." in my head, for the sound/ rhythm, not the sense: "I could recount my escapades/ on the Metroliner and the Metro/ The memory rises up and fades." If the repeton in the first stanza read "how we loved before there was AIDS" it would be easier/possible to modualte<sic> it into who/whom in stanza 3 without it being a violent change, and make a supple sentence that enjambes 3 lines:

There were bath-house tricks. And tea-room trades
with a living Michaelangelo
whom I loved one night before there was AIDS ... or something.

The "to rescue his friend ..." line clunks rhythmically, and it shouldn't. I guess my point is that if you're going to go the Villon route & tackle this topic "lightly" in a fixed form, the form should be extra-fine-tuned. I hope you don't resent my tinkering!

I ground to a halt on the last line of "Durham Cathedral" because I think misogyny, institutionalised & otherwise, has caused a lot of real harm, pain, suffering, death in this world: since you start the poem with the two saints' "passionate disdain for women" -- and it's hard to imagine that they confined this passionate disdain simply to keeping male company only--- I wonder if they did do nothing worse than love words and men in that order --- unless the speaker of the poem tells me otherwise.

I'm sorry you have to wait for publication once again --- till next January. I'd very much like to see more of your work in the interim, perhaps to go "along with". You'll be hearing from our managing editor closer to publication with a contract, copy-edited ms., request for contributor's note. And you WON'T --- I promise --- get lost in the shuffle again. (I will even venture to say that the KR will have the same editor a year, two years, from now!.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

Omar S. Castaneda to Marilyn Hacker

12.02.91

12 February 1991

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
THE KENYON REVIEW
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Marilyn Hacker:

What a wonderful letter you sent me! I have to confess, that I am extremely pleased not only because "On The Way Out" is ne of my favorite stories (and it has always felt like one of the riskiest in terms of techniques), but because THE KENYON REVIEW seems to be undergoing some very exciting changes. It would be particularly gratifying, then, if my story came out in yor "De Colores" issue. However, I understnd that many things enter into such decisions.

As to your editorial comments, I also found them satisfying. I am always anxious to encounter an editor who can appreciate my odd juxtapositions and quirks, such as unreality with reallism. It was nice to see that instead of eliminating the fantastic, you want to evenly distribute and reinforce the early exaggerations.

I thought I had done some of this with the mother's "tangoing" cry in the court house, the ridiculous purchases of clothing, the plaster falling from the ceiling during sex, the exaggerated coma, the mother putting a handkerchief over the narrator's face, and maybe one or two smaller things (e.g. "never ever tell the truth"). Granted, these are not all as purely exaggerated as the line of men waiting for Violet or the number of cigarettes she smokes at one time, but they have their own unreal touch.

Do you want me to add more? If so, do you want me to do this on the copy-edited manuscript or would you like to see a revision --- along with the line on Dorothy --- sooner than that?

Again, I am extremely pleased with this acceptance, and am more than happy to begin a subscription. The card and check are enclosed.

Very best,

Omar S. Castaneda

Marilyn Hacker to Doug Givens 15.03.91

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

DAVID H. LYNN
Acting Editor
David Baker
Poetry Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

March 15, 1991

Doug Givens
Vice President for Development
Kenyon College

Dear Doug:

Thanks for sending me the draft of President Jordan's NEA letter. Three suggestions: please delete "unsolicited" from paragraph 1. Please recast paragraphs 2 and 3 as follows:

Last October, Kenyon Review editor Marilyn Hacker and I both wrote to the NEA to inform them, on behalf of the Kenyon Review and the writers it publishes, that we could not accept the grant as long as the new restrictions were in effect; that we would only apply for the funds should the restrictions<sic> be lifted -- for 1990/91 grantees as well as for those granted in the future -- during the term of the grant.

That change has now been effected, and we will make good use of the award to meet this year's publication costs: in particular, those of a landmark special issue devoted to North American writers of color. The arts community's response in this controversy, and the attention it focused on the integrity and responsibility of that community, have achieved something important for the arts in America. Our voiced protest, and that of some two dozen other artists and arts organizations, made a difference. In addition, your support has not only helped us pay the bills, and our contributors; it has also renewed our faith in the important role of journals like the Review and our resolve to continue to merit your trust in our editorial judgment, and our editorial autonomy.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

Cherrie Moraga to Marilyn Hacker 25.03.91

CHERRIE MORAGA
19 BESSIE STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94110

March 25, 1991

Dear Marilyn,

Just got a notice about The Kenyon Review. Glad to hear you were back in the magazine business and hope this letter finds you well and content in Ohio.

I'm dropping you this note to find out if you are still accepting submissions for the "De Colores" issue. If so, please let me know your deadlines; the type of work you might be interested in publishing, length requirements, etc.

Also, as I have been writing theatre for the last five years quite seriously, I am eager to hear about the Fall 1992 issue. I've had productions and stage readings in San Francisco, L.A., Seattle and in N.Y and am also beginning to write some essays re: my observations on Chicano Theatre. I would also recommend to you Yvonne Yarbrow Bejorano at the Univ. of Washington Romance Languages in Seattle. Who is a fine Chicano Feminist; Lesbian Theatre Critic/Theorist.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding all this and I wish you great success in this new venture.

Sinceremento<?>

Cherrie Moraga

(415) 821-2429

Kenyon College

April 11, 1991

Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Tel 614/427-5114

Grants Committee Protocol

Kenyon College encourages the seeking of external funding in support of activities that serve the interests of the College. For faculty members such funding might assist in teaching and research work. For administrators such funding might permit the testing of ideas and opportunities. The College wants to be as supportive as possible of these efforts, and to that end the Grants Committee has been formed. Its members are President Jordan, Mr. Browning, Mr. Givens, Ms. Leonard, and Ms. Ponder.

The committee will act in two general ways. First, whenever the College is apprised of a grant opportunity that is institutional in nature (designed, e.g., to assist in recruiting students, to permit a study of residential life, to experiment with modes of strengthening education in writing), the Grants Committee will evaluate its potential and, if the opportunity is judged worth pursuing, invite a member of the administration or faculty to accept responsibility for developing a competitive proposal. Second, whenever a grant proposal that requires institutional endorsement (whatever the origin of the proposal) reaches the stage of readiness for submission to a funding agency, the committee will determine whether it is appropriate for collegiate approval.

In fulfilling this second function, the committee will want to be confident that, if the proposal is successful, the funding will serve an appropriate collegiate interest. Therefore those who are drafting proposals should stay in touch with the Grants Committee through one of its members, keeping that member informed of the project and its development; in this fashion the drafters may be confident that the committee understands the purpose of the proposal and has had an opportunity to raise any questions that might emerge in a timely manner.

The committee will also ask financial questions. A successful grant proposal frequently carries costs with it, sometimes in the form of matching funds and regularly in the form of the costs associated with the installation of equipment, the refurbishment of facilities, and perhaps the provision of maintenance. Therefore, the College will need to understand the full extent of its financial commitments and to have determined how those commitments will be met before it will endorse a grant application.

To that end, all proposals should be prepared with complete budgets attached, and before the committee approves of a grant proposal, one of the following criteria must

be met:

1. either the proposal involves no costs to the College (as certified by the Senior Accountant);
2. or the source of the necessary funds is identified and the money reserved;
3. or the project is acknowledged to have such a high priority that, if it is successful, we can be confident that through fund-raising or some form of allocation we will be able to find the necessary funds before the expiration period for accepting the grant runs out.

As part of the process of keeping the Grants Committee informed, drafters are encouraged to seek the advice of the committee as they prepare budgets.

The following additional points of advice are designed to allow the Grants Committee to seek to optimise the impact of external funding from successful grant applications:

1. Appropriate provision for indirect costs must be made. Such costs represent payment for real expenses. Therefore the College will not forgo them.
2. In order to assure that the committee has an adequate opportunity to evaluate proposals fairly and comprehensively, they should be brought forward at least a month before the external deadline for submission.
3. If the proposal is brought forward by a faculty member, the academic department of the proposed principal investigator will be asked not only to assess the importance of the project but also to weigh it in comparison with other known and ranked departmental needs for which external funding might be sought.
4. When a proposal is brought forward by a group of faculty members from a separate departments, the assessments of the project held by the departments involved must be known by the committee before it will act on the proposal.
5. We must acknowledge and report on the use of all grants, and to accomplish this goal the College will seek information and reports from principal investigators.

It is useful to conclude by repeating advice found throughout this protocol: In order to maximize our chances for success and minimize occasions for misunderstanding, individuals and groups that are contemplating applying for grants are urged to discuss their projects with a member of the committee as early as possible.

RSB/bm

Revised: April 11, 1991

Kenyon College

Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Tel 614/427-5114

Date: March 23, 1992
To: Members of the Grants Committee
From: Reed S. Browning, Provost RSB
Subject: Guidelines on Accepting Matches

Doug has reminded us that we need to be sure that we can supply the money we will need to make matches before we submit applications that have matching components. Everyone agrees on this point. I suggest the following as guidelines to proceed by:

1. All grant applications that involve a financial commitment from the College must be reviewed by the Grants Committee before being submitted to a granting agency.

2. When grant proposals come to our attention, we will use the Strategic Plan to help us assign them a relative priority.
3. When possible, we will identify specific sources for the match.
4. But we will also proceed when the nature of the proposal leads us to conclude that if we are awarded the grant we will, by virtue of the character and purpose of the grant, be able to acquire the match from external funders.

=====

Point 1 represents existing policy. As far as I know, we are honouring it.

Point 2 proposes that the Strategic Plan gives us a basis we have not previously had to grade the importance of proposals by.

Point 3 is the most desirable counsel when considering proposals.

Point 4 recognizes that we should give ourselves room to take into account the possibility that the securing of a grant will open funding doors.

RSB/vl

Marilyn Hacker to Readers April 1991

THE KENYON REVIEW

KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022

TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER

Editor

DAVID H. LYNN

Associate Editor

MARTHA FINAN

Managing Editor

April 1991

Dear Reader,

Why should feminist read the Kenyon Review? Because the Kenyon Review, one of America's most distinguished literary magazines, is now under the direction of a feminist editor, one with a long-time commitment to bringing the work of women writers, writers of color, lesbian and gay writers, to a wider audience.

Since 1939, the Kenyon Review's tradition has been, simply, to publish the best in contemporary short fiction, poetry, criticism and nonfiction prose. But what is "best" in new writing has not remained static. New voices are being heard, new options being explored. The Kenyon Review enters its second half-century recognizing this fruitful diversity. De Colores, our Fall 1991 issue, will be a 200-plus page anthology of remarkable work by African-American, Arab- and Asian-American, Caribbean, Hispanic and Native American writers. In 1992, we'll be publishing "Issues in Contemporary Theater," a collection of new plays and critical writing on theater. Upcoming critical articles take new perspectives on the work of important women writers like Gwendolyn Brooks, Audre Lorde and Muriel Rukeyser. In all our issues, there'll be work by distinguished old and new contributors --like Joy Harjo, Richard Howard, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Alicia Ostriker, Alberto Rios and Quincy Troupe.

Last year, the Kenyon Review was one of some dozen arts organizations, including five other literary magazines, to decline a National Endowment for the Arts grant as long as it contained new content restrictions which, taken at face value, would have required us to reject the work of Walt Whitman, Djuna Barnes and James Joyce, had they submitted it to us. The protest was felt: its culmination was a successful lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the restrictions, and another out-of-court settlement by the NEA which resulted in the retroactive abolition of the "Helms clause." Whatever the political climate, our editorial policy will continue to be, not one of exclusion, but one of discovery.

We'd like you to discover the Kenyon Review -- unpredictable, eclectic and provocative as it's going to be. The best support for independent presses is an

interested readership. If you don't already subscribe, just send the enclosed card to our office -- four fat issues of good reading for only \$20, or eight for \$35. If you've discovered us, pass it on to a friend -- a gift subscription is a wonderful way to extend an occasion or a season. Share some food for thought!

Sincerely yours,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

Omar S. Castaneda to Martha Finan 22.06.91

22 June 1991

Martha Finan, Managing Editor
THE KENYON REVIEW
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Martha Finan:

Thank you for the wonderful editing job on "On The Way Out." I particularly appreciate the corrections of embarrassing errors such as in my using "anymore" for "any more."

I deviated from your recommendations in the following places:

--- p.7, l. 16 "drops her head back..."

--- p.8, l. 2 "flyspeck..."

--- p.25, l. 2 "like Hindu maya..."

And I made additional changes in the following places:

--- p. 1, ll. 12-13 "De sheet deparment<sic>..."

--- p. 22, ll. 25-26 "Evidently, Dorothy called the ambulance and is all right..."

Now, the more serious stuff: I thought hard about your suggestion that I delete or abridge the material on pages 5-6 and 15. My first reaction was to be surprised at such a major change so late in the game -- I thought the story was accepted for what it was doing?

My second reaction was to see it from what I thought to be your perspective: I was extremely horrified to conjure some kid with paraphernalia<sic> piled up, the spine of THE KENYON REVIEW broken to better flatten my story before him, his lips moving as he simultaneously read and followed instructions for shooting heroin. This image is terrifying. It makes me very uneasy!

Then I remembered all sorts of literature with descriptions of murders, armed robberies, thefts, illegal surveillances, child molestations, rapes, tortures, unfaithfulness in marriage, racism, executions, sexism, manipulations of emotions and people, the making of bombs, drunk driving... the list went on and on, and ended with simply remembering that fiction deals with everything in life-- the awful as well as the good.

I wondered what the answer was. I was torn. I am torn. I spoke with several friends at different times and they all said a version of the same thing: That the horror they felt while reading my description is exactly what contributes to the story's morality. That the explicitness is repulsive; more importantly, it is put into a context which condemns in no uncertain terms the actions of the narrator. The story is a confession of depravity and despair, and the surfacing into some kind of hope due to his mother's love. This narrator is damaged. He is spilling it out. He is purging himself of real horrors that exist in this world.

Some readers said that diluting the details would seriously diminish the story's impact. One friend said that THE KENYON REVIEW is a venue not normally accessible to such innocents as would be damaged by the explicitness. She said that someone able to purchase heroin would not be needing my directions. Some friends said they thought that KR's decision to resist Helm's proposals about censorship was in earnest. One friend told me that I ought to do exactly what you want no matter what you said.

Obviously, some friends are just plain extreme. While it was comforting to hear people voice support of the story's hard-hitting approach, I can perfectly understand the fear of legal liability and the concern for morality in fiction. I would like to think that the poignancy of the story lies in its fearless openness. In this case, this openness includes elements which are horrifying. I was honored that KR saw something of value in "On The Way Out" and that KR had the courage to print it.

I pride myself in being a very moral writer. This story is a very moral story to me. Yet I do not want to put myself or you in legal trouble. I think I would prefer to put a warning label above the story than to make such major changes as you suggest. Perhaps something like the following:

The following short story is a work of fiction. It contains explicit material which is not suitable for young audiences. The story does not encourage drug use in its descriptions and, in fact, means to evoke the horrors of intravenous drug use. The Kenyon Review does not accept responsibility for any damages resulting from reading this story or from acting in a manner similar to the characters in the fiction.

While this may seem odd, I am very serious about a warning as a possibility for avoiding legal problems. Please let me know if this or some other possibility is agreeable.

Sincerely,

Omar S. Castaneda
English Dept.
(206) 647-6104/ 5323

¹ M.F. called him 6-25-91: agreed to <ill> his opinion to Marilyn – she has final decision. He's serious about Warning label, or about her preparing the reader for [rough stuff] in an editorial.

MF

¹ Handwritten

Ben Sonnenberg to Marilyn Hacker

03.09.91

Grand Street Books

Published by Ben Sonnenberg

September 3rd, 1991

Dear Marilyn,

I promised more than I could perform. I couldn't do the tobacco essay. I still can't. I hope I can do something for you sometimes.

When we spoke of the Iliad essay, did I mention a sum? Tell me if I did, so I can reserve the amount from the fast-dwindling treasury of my never-tremendous foundation.

Congratulations on the summer issue. Thrilling that Suzanne's poems were the bowsprit of it. You're soon going to have the best quarterly in America, just as I always thought.

Yours ever,

BS

Ms Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review,
Kenyon College,
Gambier, Ohio 43022

GRAND STREET PUBLICATIONS, INC. 50 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10024
TEL. (212) 496-6088 FAX 496-7174

Marilyn Hacker to Rita Dove

28.09.91

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID H. LYNN
Associate Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

Sept. 28, 1991

Dear Rita,

Thanks very much for letting me see the novel excerpt, which I'm very interested in. As it is, though, it makes very fragmentary reading: the only thing that connects the "puppet" section and the earlier one is the more-or-less epiphanic memory-once-removed after the earlier puppet show. Also, the Aunt Carrie thread is left hanging in an odd way: the reader suspects that Aunt Carrie is dead, or that some harm has befallen her, when there's no light on, and Virginia just turns away. This may not be the case in the novel -- the next page may have Virginia talking to Aunt Carrie on the telephone and omitting to say that she'd come as far as her house.

Also, we're not at all sure why Virginia wanted to avoid seeing Aunt Carrie -- who then disappears completely from this excerpt, leaving a kind of question mark.

And -- Virginia and Karen are in the same second-grade class, eraser monitors together that week, former friends: do they never speak to each other again? How do the<sic> avoid it? It's as if they were abstracted into different worlds after that happened: maybe in Virginia's mind they were, but a sentence saying so might enrich the novelistic depth of the narrative.

That is, though, structurally less of a problem here than the dysjunction between the two sections. I'm hoping that you'll be able to add soemthing<sic> that will serve to connect them and make the excerpts more of a narrative "whole".

All best,

Marilyn

(When/ if you send more, or a revision, please mark the envelope SOLICITED MATERIAL, so it doesn't get logged into the piles of unsolicited ms.)

Alicia Ostriker to Marilyn Hacker 19.10.91

ALICIA OSTRIKER
33 PHILIP DRIVE
PRINCETON, NJ 08540

Marilyn Hacker
Editor, Kenyon Review
Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Marilyn,

Thanks for your note. You sound good--are you enjoying the magazine? Are you still commuting? My own summer had a little too much gadding about in it--Aspen, Naropa, a trip to S. America (because I'd never ever been below the equator before & thought I had to go), a week teaching at the Havurah Institute in Bryn Mawr in my new capacity as Biblical Expert--with the result that I got mononucleosis, didn't know I had it, & did a labor day reading in Seattle at the Bumbershoot Festival more or less on my hands & knees. Fine now, though, & teaching hard.

I wonder if you might be interested in the enclosed, or a somewhat expanded version of it. Here's the story--a magazine called Cream City Review (not what you think; it comes out of Milwaukee, which is apparently made of cream colored bricks) asked if I'd write something for a special issue on the theory & PC debate*, so I took the opportunity to figure out what my feelings about the flood of theory in the humanities was. I knew I felt strongly but hadn't sat down to formulate why. The piece came out about a month ago, and I was disappointed because many of the writers they said were going to be contributing to the issue didn't. In sum--I'd like a bigger audience for this, and my guess is that the Cream City people would give permission.

If you are in NYC October 30 you might enjoy coming to the debate I'm moderating for the Poetry Society of America, between Brad Leithauser and Robert Bly, on formalism versus free verse. Should be entertaining, and it would be nice if some people in the audience were actually interested in issues of poetic form (hint hint).

What are they saying at Kenyon on the Thomas hearings? I am trying to console myself with the thought that all the votes that changed changed<sic> in Anita Hill's favor, but it's not a big consolation. What a spectacular demonstration of how cold power works.

Hopc all is well with you and yours,

Alicia Ostriker
10/19/91

² *The idea was for critics to say what their positions were, but also to ground their opinions in personal experience.

² Handwritten

Adrian T. Oktenberg to Marilyn Hacker 29.10.91

ADRIAN T. OKTENBERG
646 ANDERSON AVENUE
CLIFFSIDE PARK, NEW JERSEY 07010
OFFICE: (201) 945-9200
RESIDENCE: (201) 886-8619

October 29 1991

Marilyn Hacker, Editor
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College, Ohio 43022-9623

Dear Ms. Hacker:

Many thanks for speaking to me about the Women's Studies scene there. You were very helpful, and if I get to the stage of being granted an interview, or otherwise find myself in the vicinity, I will make the effort to look you up. The least I could do is take you to lunch.

We've never been properly introduced! I guess you must have known my name initially as the moneybags behind the Eighth Mountain Poetry Prize -- Ruth Gundic and I went to law school together in the early Seventies, were lovers, moved to Portland together, etc., all in the days before she found Judith. Ruth and I are family, so when she asked me to fund the prize, there was no question about it. We choose the judges together, and because I've been deeply involved with poetry for years and have always been a big fan of yours, you were always high on that list. I know you judge things like that all the time, but I thought you had a special feeling for the Eighth Mountain Prize, and I appreciated that. You know how impossible it is to get good things published, especially our things and in the form of poetry, so I consider you a comrade in that fight.

I'm enclosing as a present my review of Love, Death, etc., because I don't know whether you ever saw it at the time. Hope you enjoy it.

I am free of deadlines now, so I can commit to do the essay I described to you on the phone, "The Sex Education of Alice Walker." I will need 3-4 months, since I am in the middle of selling my house. If you are interested, let me know, send me your guidelines, give me a deadline date, etc. I promises I'll give you twenty pages and not forty.

Many thanks, again. Let me know if I can do anything for you.

All best,

Adrian Oktenberg

Enc.

Martha Finan to Kenyon Review Authors

08.10.91

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

Oct. 8, 1991

Dear Kenyon Review author:

Enclosed you will find a nice fat bundle of papers pertaining to your copyedited manuscript scheduled to appear in our winter '92 issue. Apart from answering our copyeditor's queries on the pink slips, we urge you (read BEG, PLEAD, CAJOLE, IMPLORE) not to submit any more revisions.

For reasons known only to God -- and perhaps the Adversary, who is doubtless at the heart of it all -- this particular issue has been plagued by late submissions, authors who moved and forgot to file a forwarding address with the KR, and obsessive-compulsive poets who can't live one more day on this planet unless they make just one more teeny change in one or two of their poems. Innocent as that sounds, revisions at this late date throw our production cycle into spasms, increase by a quantum leap the probability of errors in the published product, and drive perfectly nice staff people to fantasize about sending each of you a pickled polecat or a mail bomb.

Thanking you for your kind attention to this request, I am as ever, sweetly yours,

Martha Finan
Wicked Witch of the Midwest
encl.

Marilyn Hacker, *Editor*; David H. Lynn, *Associate Editor*; Martha Finan, *Managing Editor*

Rita Dove to Marilyn Hacker

11.10.91

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
CHARLOTTESVILLE
VIRGINIA 22903

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
WILSON HALL
Te. 804-924-7105
804-982-HEAR (TDD)

October 11, 1991

Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Marilyn,

Thank you for your letter. I've thought about possibilities to file down the fragmentary edges of these novel excerpts (of course, further explanations, solutions, etc. occur in other parts of the novel), and I've tried to fix the smaller problems you addressed, inserting a paragraph on page 3 dealing with Virginia's further attitude with Karen and making some changes concerning Aunt Carrie on page 7. But I don't see how I can overcome your main objection and tie obvious knots between the parts. I find it impossible to break away from my concept of the novel (and there are many snapshots of memory inserted into Virginia's insecure stumbling through her present) and make it into a well-rounded short story, have the sections flow out of and into each other. When I cut this piece out of the cake I was hoping that the thematic unity of the disruption of everyday past and everyday present by racism, the thematic unity of futile attempts to be oneself and lead a life unobsessed, would hold it together sufficiently.

I've enclosed the minor changes on the off-chance that you might reconsider. If not, just discard the manuscript; all further serial rights will be with Random House, and I breathe a sigh of relief that the manuscript is finally out of my hands. (The book is due out from Pantheon in the fall of '92.) All I can think of now is: back to poetry! And it shouldn't be too long until I can send you new poems.

All best,

Rita Dove

RD:kg

Jane Cooper to Martha Finan 13.10.91

545 West 111th St., apt.8K
New York, NY 10025

October 13, 1991

Dear Martha Finan,

Enclosed is the copy-edited ms. of "Vocation: A Life," with all pink slips responded to, plus the copyright agreement form and contributor's notes.

I really heard your letter which came with the copy and want to apologize for being, probably, THE "obsessive-compulsive poet" referred to. Not that I'm sorry for the changes I made in the poem itself, because small as they are, they came about because of a long correspondence between Adrienne Rich and another poet and myself, and I think Part 3 is fractionally clearer because of them. But I am truly sorry that, never having worked on a magazine, I didn't realize that my endless revisions of the Author's Note, especially, must have driven you up the wall. What can I say now but (and it is heartfelt): Thank you for your patience?

It means a great deal to me that this poem, which in fact I have worked on off and on for over ten years, is coming out in The Kenyon Review. I suppose because of this long gestation period, it is just especially hard for me to let go of.

You'll find that I have questioned one of your or Marilyn's small changes of tense in the Note, but if my reasons don't seem convincing to you, just please let it go as marked by you.

You'll also see that I find it rather hard to visualize how all those titles on page 1 will look in succession. But basically I think the main and sub-title should match, and then the section heads should be in the same type as the text. I would think caps for the section-heads, but again would be guided by you. On page 10 I marked the epigraph reference line to match other similar ones (one small green bracket).

Thank you once again. I also got a good laugh out of your letter, which I guess was at least part of the point -- and I hope some day we'll get a chance to meet and can laugh together in person. Wouldn't an un-pickled polecat be even more persuasive? With warm wishes for a very untroubled winter issue from here on in.

Jane
(Jane Cooper)

James Bland to Marilyn Hacker

17.10.91

James Bland
Harvard University
Child Hall 430
Cambridge, Mass 02138

The Kenyon Review
Ms Hacker
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Ms. Hacker:

I am writing to withdraw "The Prostitute's Soliloquy," but I thought that you deserved an explanation, after the careful attention and encouragement you have given me. Your original letter gave me the idea of changing the relationship from heterosexual to homosexual, and it seemed like a good idea, for it gave the narrative a certain social readability that was absent in the first draft. But with inspiration from Lee's "Jungle Fever" of all things, I've begun to see why I was prompted to make the change: the depictions of relationships between black men and white women must in some way re-inscribe the "black man's" male privilege over and against the "white woman's" racial privilege. But what I was attempting to illustrate was that inter-racial relationships or<sic> not that simple, sometimes racial privilege wins out. That is, "black males" don't participate in patriarchy in the same way as "white males." It is for this reason that the original poem seemed less "socially readable." Changing the relationship, allowed me to preserve the sadomasochism that I wished to explore, but at the cost, of the more radical understanding of "black male" privilege. I, am, therefore, withdrawing it, but wish to resubmit after making major revisions. I also wish to withdraw "Sun and Steel," (I need to cut and tighten it, and get permission to use the translated parts that are italicised) but again I'd like to re-submit it after revision. Finally, "The Blue Period," is in its final form, and I wish for you to consider it for publication; that is, if you're not too annoyed.

My sincere apologies,

James Bland

Marilyn Hacker to James Bland 17.10.91

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER

Editor

DAVID H. LYNN

Associate Editor

DAVID BAKER

Consulting Poetry Editor

MARTHA FINAN

Managing Editor

October 17, 1991

Dear James Bland,

I'd been meaning to write to you since last week about your latest revision -- then got your letter today. What I had been going to say was that, for me, the more you conflated the speaker of what used to "Another Country" with the murderer, the less successful the poem became: it was the presence of the speaker, an articulate young Black man of ambiguous sexual preference, that mediated the possible clichés<sic> of the wealthy, trivial, socially-unconscious white homosexual man and the young Black male-hustler-turned-killer<sic>. I'm rather curious to see if/how you can make this same poem illustrate a white woman's racial privilege predominating over a Black man's gender privilege in an interracial relationship. (Doesn't this particular story, ending with the murder of a woman by her lover -- whether here or in Richard Wright*, re-incribe<sic> gender privilege? Also, in your story, the "relationship" is not a sexual one; the two are friends, the young man thinks both that they might have been lovers and that his unexpressed anger might have been strong enough to erupt murderously.)

I liked "Wat ching<sic> MTV" much better than the not-exactly-fresh "lavish cocktail parties" -- it said more about a kind of intimacy between the characters. Also -- have you spent much time in Manhattan? East Fifth St. is one of the worst slum blocks on the Lower East Side -- it doesn't start being called "E. 5th St." until<sic> east of Second Ave. (I know it well-- I lived there as a piss-poor 20 year old, before the crack dealers took over.) No "wealthy" person of any gender or sexual preference would live there -- or keep a couple of hundred dollars in cash in an apartment there. While "posh apartment" is faceless & stale, another address would do better: West 9th St. brownstone, or something.

There are parts of "The Blue Period" that I like very much, the loss-of-virginity sequence, for example, and the meditation on touch to which it moves, but the whole is just too long, takes too long to get started, meanders a bit too much at the end. I'd like to see a shorter version, also "Sun & Steel" when it's done -- though I'm a bit wary of the too-easy gay-male-suicide thing. The poems might work better if "he" doesn't kill himself. Mishima did not kill himself because he was gay!!!! And it's

hard not to read the homosexual-as-suicidal-social-misfit into "Sun & Steel<sic> as it stands.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker

18.10.91

Kenyon College

Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5114

October 18, 1991

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
Editor of The Kenyon Review
Sunset Cottage

Dear Marilyn:

When you, I, and President Jordan met several weeks ago to discuss the need to find ways to lower the amount of budgeted support that The Kenyon Review receives, we returned to an idea that had been discussed when you were interviewed for the position of editor -- namely, your participation in the teaching life of the College. I would like to move to realize that idea. What I propose is that starting in 1992-93 you teach a creative writing course each semester, one afternoon (or maybe one evening) a week. Owing to the nature of the instruction, you might well want to limit enrollments. And perhaps there are other conditions that would be appropriate. In any case Kenyon students would have the grand opportunity to work with a distinguished writer and we would begin to make the budgetary adjustments that will be necessary in the coming years.

I need to begin conversations with Phil Church (and I hope you have had them too), and so I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Reed S. Browning
Provost

RSB/bm

Marilyn Hacker to Rafael Campo

24.10.91

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID H. LYNN
Associate Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

October 24, 1991

Dear Rafael Campo,

Once again, thanks for sending us your essay and the sonnet sequence. I'd like to keep the essay (for which I'd very much like a TITLE) for publication in the Kenyon Review. I'd also like to keep the following sonnets from the sequence:

When Rafael Met Jorge
Our Country of Origin
He Interprets the Dream
Translation
A Medical Student Learns Love & Hate
Towards Curing AIDS

I hope it will be all right to use these just with their own titles, rather than with :from..... & numbers. I think it will be clear to the reader that they are part of a sequence.

I had a few small editorial quibbles about very minor point<sic> is<sic> the sonnets -- usually to do with lines that went on a syllable or two too long without there being any evdent<sic> dramatic/ lyric "point" to that. In "translation", why not cut the word "and" in line 5? And line 12, in the same poem seems more awkward than pointed with the extra syllables. Would

Or not, to see what cannot be undone:

work? I confess I wish you'd perhaps re-think the last four lines of "A Medical Student...": the rest of the poem is awfully good (and goes well with the essay!), then, there's a real anticlimax. I don't believe<sic> "Which after all is really losing love,/ And losing homes"-- for one thing because both of those are so general and can mean such a variety of things, while death means death. In "Towards Curing AIDS", just a couple of meter questions

Him even now, as she does: he hasn't died

is more succinct and "saves" a syllable

And what about, for the last line:

I leave him pleading. Too much to do.

(Somehow “pleading” doesn’t invite the ambiguous reading of “begging” where it’s hard to tell who’s begging without the extra “to his” -- which is also, somehow, too dismissive.)

If you send revisions, a title for the essay, any response to this, as I hope you will, please mark it REVISIONS OF ACCEPTED WORK, so it doesn’t go into the “slush pile”!

You know about our contract/ copy-edited ms. Routine already.

All best,

Marilyn

Marilyn Hacker to Reed S. Browning

25.10.91

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER

Editor

DAVID H. LYNN

Associate Editor

DAVID BAKER

Consulting Poetry Editor

MARTHA FINAN

Managing Editor

October 25, 1991

Dear Reed,

Thanks for your letter of October 18. I'll be delighted to have the opportunity to teach Kenyon students. I did want to remind you, though, that what we'd discussed with President Jordan had been the possibility of my teaching one course a year, rather than one course a semester.

One course a semester for me would mean a one-third (at least) addition to my workload: either I'd be working four-thirds time, or the Kenyon Review would have only a two-thirds time editor. I believe that obtaining a full-time editor for the Review was the College's intention in hiring me.

Next year, the Kenyon Review will be in particular need of a full-time editor, as the Associate Editor, David Lynn, will not only be off the Kenyon Review payroll (which will represent an economy for the College vis-à-vis the Review in comparison with this year's budget), but absent from the Kenyon campus for approximately fourteen months.

As the Review staff will attest, the editor's job has expanded as the Kenyon Review, and our idea of it, have expanded. This fall, we're doing promotional mailings, not only to Kenyon alumni, parents and friends, but to Poets and Writers and Associated Writing Programs members, and to Commonweal the<sic> The Nation subscribers. The Kenyon Review is cosponsoring readings on the Kenyon campus, in New York City, and in Cincinnati, involving fifteen writers: this all comes from, and falls to, the editor, from the groundwork in making the events happen to, often, the travel arrangements.

Martha Finan and Doris Jean Dilts are working at full capacity and full speed, which means that if there is work a managing editor conceivably could do, but an editor-in-chief should do (like grant applications and promotional writing) there's no question what the practical decision will be.

Martha and I have discussed this, and we both feel that it would be more feasible for me to teach in the Spring semester of the 1992/93 academic year, as the pressure in the Review office is highest in the fall, with promotional campaigns, Kenyon-related mailings, grant reports due, and the largest concentration of manuscripts received. I'll discuss the scheduling of this with Philip Church at our earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker

Rafael Campo to Marilyn Hacker

28.10.91

94 Griggs Road
Apt. #32
Brookline, MA 02146

October 28, 1991

Marilyn Hacker
Editor
The Kenyon Review
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Marilyn Hacker,

Thanks again for finding a place for my essay and the six sonnets in The Kenyon Review. I'm delighted that this work will be appearing together in the same forum; as you pointed out, the essay and poems provide interesting contexts for one another.

I'm also grateful for your suggestions concerning the poems. It's rare to have such specific feedback from an editor at all --- never mind one who's a poet I admire (and with whom I like to think I share a certain sensibility, or, OK, at least "life circumstances"). In any case, I'm enclosing revised versions of the sonnets. Some of the prosodic missteps I blame partly on the torrential way in which the sonnets came upon me; others probably have more to do with my need to train my ear even more carefully. I've found writing casual blank verse (and I mean loads of casual blank verse) very helpful in this regard---which Robert Pinsky first suggested I do, as a sort of mental habit. I'm also memorizing Frost poems. (For fun, I'm also enclosing a fragment from this ongoing activity that is sort of becoming a poem---I thought you might find it entertaining. Feel free to discard it if you're too busy.)

Anyhow, I agreed with all your points. The change from "to his begging" to simply "pleading" in the last line of "Towards Curing AIDS" helped me sort out some of my complicated issues that are basically the knot that the poem is from beginning to end. I don't think it dilutes too much the sense of my own complicity as regards his condition, which was perhaps behind the harshness of "to his begging"---I'm quick to convict myself of hypocrisy, or, as in the poem, enact it as a way of blaming myself, whenever I confront AIDS. I suppose this has to do with guilt for "surviving" the HIV epidemic. And I hope you'll be pleased with the new ending for "A Medical Student..." I have to credit your comments for guiding me back into this poem, to the same place with which I'd been dissatisfied. So thanks again!

Regarding a title for the essay: my apologies, first, for sending it without one. How embarrassing. Now, as it happens, you're catching me at just the right time. I'm in the middle of applications for residency (I'm applying in Primary Care, thereby wasting my Harvard Medical School education in the opinion of some), when some pretty painful "naming issues" need to be worked out: besides what actual career, where I want to live, who I am (much more superficially rendered in the so-called "Personal Statement" required for the applications than in the essay you have), who Jorge is (lover? Press agent? dictatorial application-monger? the reason I have to

move to San Francisco? some guy I see once in a while who's doing a horrible internship? really my future?), etc...

Anyhow, I think I have a title, believe it or not. How about "A Case of Mistaken Identities: The Human Body"? I don't mean to be too coy, but I do want potential readers to be alerted to the issues of identity and body/ self-image I try to address. For me, as you know from the essay, formal poetry has the primary function of locating myself within my physical body---and is no longer an act of self-denial and destruction. In fact, I'm trying to situate myself in a tradition that goes back to the human body, way before canonical literature was ever even written---an act that's so problematic (for various valid reasons) for other "outsiders." (I am saying all this, by the way, in case you're unhappy with my proposal and wish to glean a more suitable title from the thought process that lead<sic> me to mine.) The bottom line is that I feel pretty empowered as an individual owner of a human body to express its inescapable, truly universal rhythms in terms of my own experience, in my own physical shape. I'm convinced this is a way toward building communities (not assimilating)) with other people, rather than "selling out" or "wanna be-ing."

One final note: I'm enclosing an essay I (mistakenly?) received in my SASE that belongs to Margaret M. Gullette. It seems to be on a related subject, and though I was very tempted to read it, I'm returning it to you. I guess I'll have to await its appearance in a forum in which the author chooses to make it public.

Thanks again for your generous attention. Please let me know if there's anything further I can do, and if the changes and title meet with your approval. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rafael Campo

P.S. How goes P.A. school – for both of you?

David Baker to Marilyn Hacker

30.10.91

10-30

Dear Marilyn,

Good to talk to you today. Thanks again so much for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation. Here is an envelope and note, to send with your letter to my placement office. I am looking for positions at schools with graduate writing programs, to teaching poetry writing and literature. If your letter could speak to any of these, I'd be grateful:

My editing, with you and previously (history with KR?)
my critical writing/ reviews
my understanding of poetry
my poems (even, if you happen to remember, the new work in Love Poems: Elegies)
what you know of my teaching/work at Denison (perhaps the writing program, colleagues, the big Beck visiting writer series, etc.)

Or any other good stuff. Thanks so much for taking the time to do this hard thing. I'm really grateful. I'm really hoping that we can stay right here, but who knows? There may be something wonderful elsewhere. I'll include a vita, in case it's useful.

Cheers,

Dave

Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker

08.11.91

Kenyon College

Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5114

November 8, 1991

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
Editor of The Kenyon Review
Sunset Cottage

Dear Marilyn:

Thank you for being willing to teach a writing course in 1992-93. I think you are right in believing that one course a year rather than one course a semester is an appropriate pace for now. If you would like to discuss and confirm this schedule with Phil Church, please go ahead. Or if you'd prefer, I'll be glad to do so.

The De Colores issue has some wonderful pieces in it. Each time I explore it I find something to enjoy.

Sincerely yours,

Reed S. Browning
Provost

RSB/bm

Emery George to Marilyn Hacker 15.11.91

Emery George
8 Dickinson Street
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
November 15, 1991

Professor Marilyn Hacker, Editor
THE KENYON REVIEW
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Marilyn Hacker:

I have been meaning to write to you earlier than this (a major project, now completed, prevented me), to tell you how much I enjoyed and admire your poem "Quai Saint-Bernard," in the Spring 1991 issue of THE KENYON REVIEW (Volume XIII, Number 2, pages 98-100). I like, of course, the setting, the tone, and the mood, its evocation of Paris (if I am correct that this is a Paris scene), a city whose intense poetry I have yet to respond to as a challenge; "noble Paris," as Apollinaire called it, challenges all of us.

But what I admire most, perhaps, is your skilful handling of the Alcaic meter, a measure in which I don't see many poets write these days, despite the heartening fact that poetry in bound forms is "back." I myself have worked on the meters of Horace for some time now, and have published a collection of poems written exclusively in Horatian forms; its title is Kate's Death (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1980). Are you acquainted with it? If you are not, and on the chance that you may welcome seeing it, I am taking the liberty of sending you a copy, inscribed, by separate first-class mail. Please accept it in the spirit in which it's offered: as a sign of esteem. And I needn't tell you that I hope you will enjoy the poems.

Enclosed with this letter I am submitting to THE KENYON REVIEW nine poems: six on Ibsen: "Pictures," "Ibsen in Egypt," "Ibsen Playing Dolls," "Wilderness," "Verticality," "The Sun,"; and three other poems in bound forms: "On Mozart's Motet 'Ave, verum corpus,'" "Surgical Miniature," and "Cello Sonata." I have also been working on more poems in Horatian meters, and if you would like to see these, I will be delighted to send them. Best thanks for your consideration.

Cordially yours,

Emery George

Enclosures

Marilyn Hacker to Marina Budhos 15.11.91

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID H. LYNN
Associate Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

November 15, 1991

Dear Marina Budhos,

Thanks very much for sending us the revision of "Hollywood". I like it a lot better the<sic> the new version, and we'd like to keep it for publication. There is just one further revision I'd like to strongly suggest. A lot is made of the narrator's father's West Indian nationality/ ethnicity. In contrast, it's never specified what her mother's background is, even though the mother is equally important in the story. I assumed that the "shy girl from the Bronx" was probably either Italian or Jewish of middle-European background. My colleague, David Lynn, thought she<sic> was African-American. If two of the story's first readers can read it so differently, an auctorial word or two might be helpful. "Shy _____ girl from the Bronx" would do it. But there's also the question of the conflict/ clash in the couple's temperaments, uses of language (not just "dialect", but how what's said is to be related to what's done, or will be done) -- that, in the father's case, is related by the narrator to his ethnicity, but in the mother's case, is not. Is Jamila's mother cut off from her own parents/ family (the Bronx not being as far away as Trinidad)? While I like the understatedness of how the story deals with (what I assume to be) the problems of the child of an interracial marriage, what's not said makes the mother into a generic-white-American, and (if that's the case) leaves the reader to think that, of course her family cut her off; what else would happen? If she's to be read as African-American, the absence of maternal family is even more peculiar.

Also, on a much more minor "technical" plot matter: in the earlier version, there was at least a paragraph describing Jamila's getting her bicycle: how it wasn't exactly the model she'd wanted, but once she started riding it, she acquired the freedom that's part of the story. Here, we've got her saying, on page 6, "What about my bicycle" -- and on page 7 although "it was finally agreed that my father's checks would first go for driving school for my mother..." Jamila has suddenly got her bike, in the following sentence, without the reader's knowing how this came about, where it came from, what it was like ...

I hope these (further) revisions don't pose too much of a problem. I'm tentatively scheduling the story for the Spring '93 issue (Winter '93 will be a theatre issue)--- but it still would be good to have everything satisfactorily in place ASAP. When you

send the revision, please mark the envelope REVISION OF ACCEPTED
MANUSCRIPT, so it doesn't get looged<sic> into the unsolicited-submissions pile!

You'll be hearing from our managing editor about three months before publication,
with a contract, request for contributor's note, and your copy-edited manuscript for
approval and responses to queries.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

THE KENYON REVIEW

KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022

TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER

Editor

DAVID H. LYNN

Associate Editor

DAVID BAKER

Consulting Poetry Editor

MARTHA FINAN

Managing Editor

November 16, 1991

To Whom It May Concern,

I've been working with David Baker in his capacity as Consulting Poetry Editor of the Kenyon Review for almost two years now. (His association with the KR in fact antedates my own.) During this time, I've been consistently and increasingly impressed, both by his wide-reaching knowledge of contemporary American poetry, and by the general knowledge of English and American literature which forms the ground for that figure. But his rare enlightened love and discerning enthusiasm for poetry is what illuminates and particularly distinguishes that knowledge.

More prosaically speaking, David is an ideal editorial colleague: he's fast, he's incisive, he knows what he's talking about and loves what he does. Whether or not we agree, his opinions -- and, more importantly, his observations -- are acute and pertinent, worth, in response, the kind of attention he put into them. His tastes are catholic, and that aforementioned omnivorous appetite for poetry makes him as keenly-honed a reader of an apostle of the "New York School" as of an inheritor of Auden (and he won't call Alcaic stanzas "unrhymed quatrains" as did a reviewer I was reading yesterday).

David's knowledge of, and appetite for, poetry, most definitely extend<sic> to his critical writing. I think he's one of the best younger poetry critics/reviewers around. He knows what he's talking about -- and he talks about it in a clear-headed, jargon-free, intelligent prose that conveys both enthusiasms and caveats. He knows how to write about poetry in a way that makes it interesting to readers who were never MFA candidates or creative writing teachers: those "real" disinterested who come to poetry without one eye focussed elsewhere on their "careers".

David reads poetry that way himself, which is particularly admirable because he is a fine poet. That's an understatement, as editors of journals all over the country will

increasingly attest. His poetic talent is as generous and precise as his editorial and critical ones are -- but with a music added that is lyrical, quirky, that comes from the whole man, not merely the critical apparatus.

He's also one hell of a nice guy, and a wonderfully congenial colleague.

Sincerely yours,

Marilyn Hacker

Richard Howard to Marilyn Hacker 22.11.91

RICHARD HOWARD

November 22

Dear Marilyn

Your poem--it is splendid and appalling. If you will let me, I will print it in Western Humanities Review; one of the advantages of a magazine like that one is that we can do extended pieces, and yours is the best thing to have come my way in a long time. It deals, and magisterially, with things I've been trying to say, or even to think, for a long time. Please let me have it, unless you have some other provenance planned.

Herewith OCCUPATIONS, double-spaced as requested. Yes, you are right about the prose sections, they should be in italics. Much obliged.

Yes, send galleys and contract and edited manuscript to Waverly Place, where I'll be from mid-December on. Looking forward to seeing you in NYC.

All news to follow then, most of it cheery enough. Fondly ever,

Richard

1425 Branard / Houston, TX 77006

Susan Searles to Marilyn Hacker

26.11.91

Susan Searles
13 Mound Street
Athens, Ohio 45701

November 26, 1991

Marilyn Hacker
%<sic> The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Marilyn Hacker,

That time of year when tests and grades demand
all profs and pupils, or none, or few, to stand
upon their wits and pens, and, thus, to never sleep,
piles my desk with sheets and notes ahead
so that, only after sunset seepeth in the west,
do I keep abreast of time to answer you with the best
of meter, rhyme, and two-bit line. So fine, I was off
base with Petrarch's creativity, but, you shouldn't scoff
at "demonic diction"--what attention! And, besides,
"demotic" sounds like "emetic,"and<sic>, if you must chide,
I will tell you that the reading of the paper went swell,
that all sorts of stuffies asked about your book, and, well,
now I wish I knew where to send my piece for publication;
perhaps, you might esteem me with a few suggestions.

What fun to write a sonnet, even if it's a parodic one.

Actually, I thank you for your comments, and, even though I think "demonic" sounds
more exciting than<sic> "demotic," I will certainly change the word to protect the
guilty. I am glad you didn't find anything else that was incorrect or weak. After the
reading, I received much applause and comments like, "Your prose is full of energy"
(energy, I admit, absorbed from your sonnet sequence).

Well, I'm going to be out of Athens for a month, so, hope to hear from you by the first
of January when I return. A couple of professors asked if you wouldn't like to visit
Athens to do a reading (for #<sic>1,000 or more), and I told them they would have to
ask you. So, anyway, you got publicity, now, maybe, you'll have ideas where I might
publish the article.

Hedonic holidays,

Susan Searles

Ben Sonnenberg to Marilyn Hacker

02.12.91

Grand Street Books
Published by Ben Sonnenberg

December 2nd, 1991

Dear Marilyn,

Here, at long last, the promised check.

For form's sake, could I ask for a note of thanks for a gift from Grand Street Publications enabling the Kenyon Review to commission an essay-review, by a woman, on the Eagles Translation of the Illiad<sic>?

Yours ever,

BS

Ms Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review,
Kenyon College,
Gambier, Ohio 43022

GRAND STREET PUBLICATIONS, INC. 50 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10024
TEL (212) 496-6088 FAX 496-7174

Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker and Philip Church

09.12.91

Kenyon College

Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5114

December 9, 1991

Mr. Philip Church
Department of English
Sunset Cottage

and

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review
Sunset Cottage

Dear Phil and Marilyn:

I want to make sure that the plans that are being developed for next year's curriculum are clear to everyone, and so I write you both to bring you up to date on conversations that have occurred.

Several months ago the President and I asked Marilyn if she would be willing to teach one writing course during the second semester of 1992-93. She agreed, and we then asked her to talk with Phil about how this course might best fit into the curriculum of the Department of English. More recently, Marilyn and I have confirmed that one course in one semester was the broadest commitment to teaching that Marilyn could envision at this point in her editorship, although the College hopes she can move to a schedule of one course each semester at a later time.

Needing to know whether these plans have settled in, I write for information. Maybe the arrangements have already been completed, in which case please just let me know. If not, please proceed with whatever conversation may be necessary. If you need my assistance, I'll be glad to help out.

Sincerely yours,

Reed S. Browning
Provost

RSB/hm

Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker

09.12.91

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Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
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Sincerely yours,

Reed S. Browning
Provost

RSB/bm

Marilyn Hacker to Ben Sonnenberg

18.12.91

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

December 18, 1991

Ben Sonnenberg
Grand Street Publications
50 Riverside Drive
New York, N.Y. 10024

Dear Ben Sonnenberg,

We at the Kenyon Review thank you, and thank Grand Street Publications, for the gift of one thousand dollars to be paid as honorarium to the writer of an essay on Robert Fagles' translation of the Iliad. The essay, "Two Cities," by Suzanne Gardinier, will appear in the Spring 1992 issue of the Kenyon Review.

Sincerely yours,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

Marilyn Hacker to Ben Sonnenberg

18.12.91

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Sincerely yours,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

Marilyn Hacker to Judith Barrington

19.12.91

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID H. LYNN
Associate Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

December 19, 1991

Dear Judith,

Thanks very much for sending the book review of Poetry After Modernism and Conversant Essays. I'll be veyr<sic> pleased to have it in the Summer 1992 issue of the Kenyon Review. You'll be hearing from our managing editor closer to the time of publication, with a contract, request for contributor's note, and your copy-edited manuscript for approval/responses to queries. We do use titles on book reviews, so I'd appreciate your thinking one up.

It's a very good essay. I wonder if there'd be a way to elaborate just a bit more on the Dove/ Waniek and Emanuel essays in Poetry After Modernism (Allen gets by far the most attention): in a way, by not discussing the essay on African-American poetry as central to the book, you marginalize it even more... In the second paragraph on page 5, I think it's necessary to specify<sic> what you mean by "sexist language" --- used by whom, & in which essays (surely not Dove and Waniek, or Emanuel) and in what context. "Sexist language" is an enormously vague term, which could indicate anything from "the poet ... he" to highly specific objectifications of women, or delegation of women writers to a lesser sub-group. I've no idea what you meant, and I'm a reader who shares many of your assumptions.

I cut out "for example" on page 8. On page 9, I slightly revised a sentence to read "... this is a dangerous and misogynist view, and one which invokes racist connotations..." Also, from your quote, this seems to be Christensen's reading of Bly, not his own definition of "nature". Whose view, exactly, do you see as dangerous and "sexist": Christensen's or Bly's? Is there a different reading of Bly you'd posit?

Please send revisions to the Kenyon Review office, in an envelope marked REVISIONS OF ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT, so they don't go into the unsolicited pile!

I'm trying to get about nine days work crowded into two here, including two grant applications, so please forgive the somewhat abrupt tone of this letter!

All best,
Marilyn

Marilyn Hacker to Ben Sonnenberg

03.01.92

Grand Street Books

Published by Ben Sonnenberg

January 3rd, 1992

Dear Marilyn,

Please consider "Water Margins" for the Review. Anne Carson is the author of Eros the Bittersweet (Princeton University Press). I used to publish her poems and translations whenever I could, including "Now What?" in my last issue.

I haven't got any money in my foundation, I find. Maybe, maybe I can give you \$500 late this year and \$500 early next.

Your friend,

BS

Ms Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review,
Kenyon College,
Gambier, Ohio 43022

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TEL (212) 496-6088 FAX 496-7174

Kate Fox Reynolds to Marilyn Hacker

07.01.92

David Lehman
105 Valentine Place
Ithaca, New York 14850
Tel. (607) 277-0794

7 January 1992

Marilyn Hacker, Editor
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Ms. Hacker,

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that Louise Glück, guest editor of THE BEST AMERICAN POETRY 1993, has chosen the following poems that initially appeared in The Kenyon Review:

Stephen Berg, "Cold Cash"
Mary Oliver, "Poppies"

We will be securing permission to reprint directly from the poets. The Kenyon Review will be given full acknowledgement in our pages, and you will be sent a complimentary copy of the book.

Other poems from The Kenyon Review were greatly admired, though they did not make the final cut.

We would be grateful to you for continuing to keep David Lehman, the series editor of THE BEST AMERICAN POETRY on your complimentary subscription list. For the record, his address is 105 Valentine Place / Ithaca, New York 14850. I would like to request that you consider putting A. R. Ammons on your comp. List for 1993 as well. He is at: Department of English / Cornell University / Goldwin Smith Hall / Ithaca, NY 14853.

Thank you for your assistance. Feel free to call me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (212) 799-4964.

Sincerely,

Kate Fox Reynolds
Assistant to the Series Editor

p.s. David asked me to mention that he has yet to receive a comp. Copy from the Kenyon Review – could you let me know if you cannot provide him with one? Best regards to all –

Marilyn Hacker to Frank M. Chipasula

08.01.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID H. LYNN
Associate Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

January 8, 1992

Dear Frank M. Chipasula,

Thanks very much for your letter of November 15, and the copy of the anthology introduction accompanying it, and please excuse my delay in response. The introduction left me eager to read the anthology -- I wish you the best of luck with Heinemann.

I would be interested in seeing an article on African women poets for the Kenyon Review. I would include the information about their exclusion from anthologies of African poetry (and from anthologies of women's poetry in translation, or of international women's poetry in English) -- would then discuss the historical importance of women poets in Africa, both as originators of written texts, and within oral traditions -- you can be specific about this, citing different times and cultures. But probably the most interesting section for our readers will be the one on contemporary African women poets, of varying nationalities, the Algerians, the Lusophone writers, the Kenyans, Negritude etc. Since this will not preface an anthology, longer quotes/ selections from poets the poets' work would be appropriate -- you'll have to cite translators' names too, where appropriate.

Given our present schedule, we wouldn't be able to publish such an article until the Spring or summer of 1993. The Winter 1993 issue will be a special one devoted to writing for an<sic> about the theater. I'd appreciate having some idea when the piece would be completed: although I'm very interested, I can't promise acceptance until I have the essay in hand. Would it be possible for me to have it before the end of April this year? I'd envision it as being about 20/ 25 pages long -- that's including quotes from poems, and quotes of entire poems when possible/ zppropriate<sic>. We follow the usual format of "Works Cited" for a list of books quoted from in an essay, at the end, followed by footnotes, if any.

I look forward to hearing from you again.

Sincerely,
Marilyn Hacker
Editor

Please mark the essay SOLICITED MANUSCRIPT when you send it!

Marilyn Hacker to Ben Sonnenberg

13.01.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

January 13, 1992

Dear Ben,

Thanks very much for sending me Anne Carson's "Water Margins". The writing is quite beautiful-- about a thousand percent more interesting than the majority of fiction manuscripts we receive. But, for a piece of this length (accepting which would be an exceptional "investment" of space for me) the shape and especially the pace weren't successful enough. (I found myself skipping on to the monk brother's letters: perhaps that's only a sign of what an uninstructed, or unreconstructed, or undeconstructed reader I am.) If this had been half as long, I probably would have opted for it anyway.

I'm very interested in Anne Carson's work, though--perhaps, despite my reservations about this one, particularly in her prose work.

I very much appreciate your continued interest in the Kenyon Review -- including the possibility of a bit of financial help in continuing our awards, which I realize remains that: a possibility. Would you be interested in judging the nonfiction prose award for 1992? It would involve reading all the essays, memoirs and book reviews published in the 4 1992 issues of the KR, perhaps 40 in all, and deciding on a winner -- or two, if you prefer. I include book reviews because some of the ones we print<sic> -- like an upcoming one by James McCorkle on poetry & the Holocaust, really are essays.

All best,

Marilyn

Marilyn Hacker, *Editor*; David H. Lynn, *Associate Editor*; Martha Finan, *Managing Editor*

Marilyn Hacker to Philip Church

16.01.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID H. LYNN
Associate Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

January 16, 1992

Dear Phil,

I'd like to discuss with you the possibility of inviting the poet Marie Ponsot to come to Kenyon next fall on a part-time visiting appointment, to teach a section of Creative Writing: Poetry, either beginning or advanced. Marie Ponsot -- whose work I hope you know at least a bit -- is the author of three books of poetry, most recently The Green Dark (Knopf, 1989) for which she was the recipient of the Delmore Schwartz Award at New York University. She has also co-authored, with Rosemary Deen, two books on the teaching of writing, Beat Not the Poor Desk and The Common Sense, published by the Boynton Press: these are used widely by teachers of composition and creative writing, and the authors have given numerous presentations and workshops on the subject at colleges and universities all over the country. Marie Ponsot is a recently-retired Professor of English at Queens College and has also taught<sic> in the graduate writing program at the University of Houston, at the Writers' Community and at the 92 St. Y Poetry Center in New York, is a former NEA Fellow -- etc. Most importantly, besides being a consummate poet, she is known to be an inspired teacher, and loves teaching, which is why this prospect interests her.

I make this suggestion because Professor Ponsot is a friend of mine -- I won't pretend to be disinterested -- but also because of the number of English Department faculty who will be on leave next year: yourself, David Lynn, Lori Lefkowitz, Ron Sharp, with Ted Mason as Chair having a reduced teaching load. I think there's be<sic> a demand for her workshop, and the opportunity for students to work with such a distinguished teacher and writer would be invaluable. If there were interest, a faculty workshop on the teaching of writing might also be arranged during her stay. Professor Ponsot's other areas of expertise include the British modernists -- she is a Joyce scholar and a contributor to the new volume of essays on Djuna Barnes, Silence and Power --, contemporary American poetry, and American and British women's literature. She would be willing to teach two courses -- two writing workshops, or one writing workshop and one literature course -- for appropriate remuneration. She would also be able to serve as temporary Consulting Editor for the KR in David Lynn's absence.

I'd very much like to talk with you to explore this possibility: if it is of interest to you, I'd sent you her vita and copies of her books, and transmit the same to Phil Jordan to see what could be arranged, and how.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker

cc. Theodore Mason, David Lynn, Martha Finan

Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan

16.01.92

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DAVID H. LYNN
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Phil Church, Ron Sharp and David Lynn, with all of whom I've discussed this proposal, are all very enthusisastic<sic> about the possibility. I'd very much like to

talk with you to explore it further, as well as having Professor Ponsot's vita, and copies of her books, sent to you.

Sincerely,

Marilyn

Ben Sonnenberg to Marilyn Hacker 18.01.92

Grand Street Books
Published by Ben Sonnenberg

January 18th, 1992

Dear Marilyn,

No, of course I can't judge the non-fiction prose award for 1992, that being when you're publishing Suzanne.

And I doubt I could judge next year either, that being when you will (as I hope) publish Maria Margaronis if she does what she and I talked of last night when your name came up.

No one ever asked me to judge anything before. See me flattered, grateful, nonplussed.

Yours ever,

BS

Ms Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review,
Kenyon College,
Gambier, Ohio 43022

GRAND STREET PUBLICATIONS, INC. 50 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10024
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Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker 20.01.92

Kenyon College

Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5114

January 20, 1992

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
Editor
The Kenyon Review
Sunset Cottage

Dear Marilyn:

Your work in giving focus to the contents of The Kenyon Review and in attracting interesting manuscripts has proceeded in the manner we had hoped for. You have also won favourable attention for the publication. We must all continue to explore ways to reduce the size of the operating budget subsidy that supports KR operations – through securing external funding through keeping costs down, and perhaps through expanding your teaching commitment to one course a semester – and I count in your continuing help in accomplishing this task.

Sincerely yours,

Reed S. Browning
Provost

RSB/bm

Name and Title of
Administrator: HACKER, Marilyn
Editor, The Kenyon Review

7-1-91 Increase: \$3,300

1991-92 Contract Salary: \$58,000

Salary recommendation for 1992-93:

Average increase _____

Greater than average increase _____[√]_____

Less than average increase _____

Explanation and support of the above recommendation:

³See attached letter

Performance evaluation interview held on 1/20/92

Signed: Reed S. Browning Date: 1/20/92
Supervisor

Signed: Marilyn Hacker Date: 1/20/92
Employee

Signed: Senior Staff Member Date:

³ Handwritten

Marilyn Hacker to Indran Amirthanayagan

21.01.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID H. LYNN
Associate Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

January 21, 1992

Dear Indran Amirthanayagan,

Thanks very much for sending us these poems. I'd like to keep "You Must Love" and "The Blood Abroad" for publication. I did have one slight editorial quibble about the second poem (which I otherwise like very much indeed). The second "Granny" stanza doesn't add very much, linguistically or descriptively, to the poem: in fact, it's noticeably less vivid than anything else. I wonder if it could simply be cut, leaving you with something like

while Granny walks even in rain
to the chapel next door.... etc.

Although you don't mention it, the line "the elephants of reckoning" in one of these poems leads me to think that they are going to appear in the book *Hanging Loose* Press has scheduled. When is "late 1992"? I'm going to try to fit these two poems into the Summer 1992 issue, which is pretty much filled up, so that there will be no chance of the magazine publication coming after the book.

Please let me know as soon as possible about how you'd handle the revision suggestion: the Summer 92 issue goes into production in early February.

I very much look forward to reading your book -- and I hope the Kenyon Review gets a review copy -- but I've promised myself the small respite of not writing blurbs or grant recommendations.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

PS I'm enclosing our current "coming attractions". I'm pretty sure you're already a subscriber, but perhaps there's someone you know who'd enjoy what we're up to.

Marilyn Hacker to Indran Amirthanayagan

21.01.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
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MARTHA FINAN
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while Granny walks even in rain
to the chapel next door.... etc.

Although you don't mention it, the line "the elephants of reckoning" in one of these poems leads me to think that they are going to appear in the book *Hanging Loose* Press has scheduled. When is "late 1992"? I'm going to try to fit these two poems into the Summer 1992 issue, which is pretty much filled up, so that there will be no chance of the magazine publication coming after the book.

Please let me know as soon as possible about how you'd handle the revision suggestion: the Summer 92 issue goes into production in early February.

I very much look forward to reading your book -- and I hope the Kenyon Review gets a review copy -- but I've promised myself the small respite of not writing blurbs or grant recommendations.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

PS I'm enclosing our current "coming attractions". I'm pretty sure you're already a subscriber, but perhaps there's someone you know who'd enjoy what we're up to.

Marilyn Hacker to Rane Arroyo

10.02.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER

Editor

DAVID H. LYNN

Associate Editor

DAVID BAKER

Consulting Poetry Editor

MARTHA FINAN

Managing Editor

February 10, 1992

Dear Rane Arroyo,

Thanks very much for sending your work to the Kenyon Review. We'd like to accept "Juan Angel" for publication. It will most probably appear in the Spring 1993 issue. We'll be contacting you again closer to the time of publication, with a contract (first North American serial rights), request for contributor's note, and your copy-edited manuscript for your approval and/ or responses to queries.

We appreciate your interest in the Kenyon Review, which we hope will also extend to reading the enclosed and joining us as a subscriber. Writers of color, lesbian and gay writers, and playwrights, are and have been a particular interest of ours in current and upcoming issues: we hope our general eclectic mix will be of interest to you as a reader.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

Joan Cusack Handler to *Kenyon Review* Editors

03.03.92

JOAN CUSACK HANDLER
6 Horizon Road
Fort Lee, New Jersey 07024

March 3, 1992

Dear Editors:

Another glorious issue! – from Leslie Ullman's stunning opening to Yusef Komunyakaa, Rudy Kikel, Kim Vaeth, Dionisio Martinez(!) and C.K. Williams.

The range is wonderfully broad & expansive as are the voices and the talents.

Thanks again for bringing such brilliant writing together and to us, the readers.

Joan Cusack Handler

James Gill to Marilyn Hacker

03.03.92

JAMES GILL

March 3, 1992

Dear Marilyn,

Martin has received the first subscription copy of the Review and was impressed. Though American journals have a limited circulation, they do know how to put it together.

One of my stories is due in the Russian FOREIGN LITERATURE when they get hold of the paper for their circulation of 1,000,000. – which is not unusual in Russia, I mean that kind of circulation. But people are reading much less than before<> As Tash writes, the favorite past-time in Russia, is “so where did you buy this? How much? Do you want resell some of it to me? I’ll barter. One kilo of tomatoes for a quarter kilo of cheese!”

I hope to be hearing soon from Anna Karenine-Furkova who likes your poetry. It is being translated so that it may be shown to the other editors.

On the rare occasions when I’m TV’d into what’s happening in America, I am appalled at the lack of vision that propels the unexceptional presidential candidates further into the deepening American impasse. Where have they all gone, the men and women of talent, of insight of courage? Clarence Thomas? Carla Hill? Bush? Buchanan? Quayle? The democratic pre-conventional babblers? The congressional circus teams?

Not that things are that much brighter here. Mitterand and Cresson have, together, crushed social democratic credence out of existence. The center-right and the ultras are not doing much better. And Germany? And England? And the uncertain East?

With a look into the past, it all begins to smell like the ‘30’s.

Wallis Menozzi came here for a couple of days. She is a wonderful guest to have around. No Pressure. Much laughter. A relaxed, imaginative and stimulating thinker and conversationalist who fills the air with originality and meditative nutrients one munches on long after she is gone.

We’re sitting, having tea. The door bell rings. Rostropovitch, out of nowhere, as usual! The habitual five Russian kisses, then goes on with hand-kissing, cheek kissing Wallis whom he has never seen before, and sits down next to Irene, with his hand firmly placed, as always, on her knee! Will Slava ever change?

He is a wonderful raconteur, in Russian. But his English has greatly improved.

“Now I speak very well” he says carefully. Did you heard what I say, Volodya...before I would say I speak very good! But I still no write English good and don’t waste time reading...news is bad! What’s new!”

Wallis is working on the Ginzburg. She had to read some twenty books, and is also planning several interviews. *

Regarding Jean-Pierre, I'll translate some of his poems which are coming out in book form this Fall. But I need time. Thanks for having had a look at his essay.

I'm busy with the novella. Ca avance, mais lentement. This kind of memoir-demi-roman has to be carefully découpé, restively<sic> brief, with characters who are hautement images...almost like in a film without being one, while preserving a Romanesque continuity.

I send you warm greetings. I'm very hopeful for Rotterdam!

Ever yours,

James

⁴Regards to David and Martha!

* She is writing you.

TELEPHONE 021-784 31 94 - TELEFAX 41 21 - 784 31 64

⁴ Handwritten from there on.

Marilyn Hacker to Reed S. Browning 20.03.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

March 20, 1992

Dear Reed,

This is to confirm our telephone conversation of March 18, which clarified the fact that my salary for teaching one course in the Spring semester will be covered by the general faculty salary budget -- and will be charged neither to the Kenyon Review nor to the English Department budget.

Thanks very much for taking the opportunity to clear up any confusion about this!

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker

cc. Joe Nelson
Phil Church

Marilyn Hacker, *Editor*; David H. Lynn, *Associate Editor*; Martha Finan, *Managing Editor*

Tory Dent to Marilyn Hacker

21.03.92

Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio
43022

March 21, 1992

Dear Marilyn Hacker,

Enclosed are the poems in which you showed interest and suggested I revise in order for their re-consideration. I would like to thank-you for your close reading and editorial comments, offered with painstaking effort and care. Often editors will comment on submissions but its<sic> difficult to know exactly how to incorporate the criticism into actual changes. Your editorials made the feedback applicable for me, which is so valuable in consolidating one's 'voice'. My style is baroque, as my mentor and friend David Shapiro once called it ("new baroque" which I liked), but he's also warned me not therefor to get lost in detail, which I think my predilection for "ness"'s, obscure language, exchanging verbs for nouns, unrelated metaphors, makes problematic for the poems at times. At other times, I feel these some of these tendencies give the poem its strength--but its<sic> not always clear at what turn in the process this works. Especially in the process of writing the poem itself. Because I wrote these poems a couple of years ago, your comments were immediately cogent in their intention to focus the subject and clarify the meaning in a way, due to their belatedness (whoops!), I could see. "Jade" was the first poem I wrote about testing HIV positive, and it was so instructive to understand the place where I needed the language that one intuitively deems fit. I've never had an editor respond to a submission where I could say honestly that it helped me become a better writer which I feel your remarks did. Thank-you so much.

I apologize if I have taken longer though in re-submitting the poems than protocol would have it. I must admit that there were a few stages involved in my coming to terms with the revisions—relinquishing attachment to a sense of original and redressing one's determination for the poem vs. the first desire in its writing is a<sic> introspective procedure that took some time. Also my computer was busted for a month and the part that always presumed myself to be a Luddite at heart I realized, quickly, had vanished. Making do with a manual typewriter didn't even occur to me until this very minute.

Once again thank-you for your attention and interest in my work and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely

Tory Dent
463 West 21st St.
New York, N.Y. 10011

David Baker to Marilyn Hacker

24.03.92

⁵MAR 24 1992

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

Dear Marilyn,

Here ya go. A big pile of things -- including quite a few culled from my slush piles, and just about all the things you passed on as Worth A Look.

Lots of good things here, I think, so I have been hard.

I'm sorry if, last week, I seemed frazzled. In fact, I was frazzled, but if I was curt or anything, I'm sorry. It's been a damn hard time. Kate is great, but so many other difficulties--Ann's dad, her aunt, you know. And I can't get anybody to look at my new book. And last week, during the ice storm, our power and well and phone went dead for two days and through one night. That's a bitch with a little (cold!) baby. Anyway, this will all give me material for poems, if I should ever be able to work on poems again!

I wrote for Linda Bierds' book. Right now, I seem to want to try to write about Eric Pankey, Louise Gluck, Chase Twitchell, Ann Lauterbach, and perhaps Bierds. Also tempting: Jorie Graham (but maybe you're right about not including her, unless my overall topic needs it, which it might), Mary Stewart Hammond, Larry Levis. I was gonna include Renee Ashley, but Poetry asked for that to be one of the ones I do for them. How's that sound, for now? I am really grateful--I don't need to keep saying this, but I keep feeling it--for your faith and support in my reviewing. I love to do this.

Going for now. More poems to read. Wasn't that Goethe's last remark?

Love,

Dave

Marilyn Hacker, *Editor*; David H. Lynn, *Associate Editor*; Martha Finan, *Managing Editor*

⁵ Stamped

Marilyn Hacker to Dan Bellm

12.04.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER

Editor

DAVID H. LYNN

Associate Editor

DAVID BAKER

Consulting Poetry Editor

MARTHA FINAN

Managing Editor

April 12, 1992

Dear Dan Bellm,

Thanks for letting us read your translations of Manlio Argueta's poems. I'd like to keep "Mama" for publication in the Kenyon Review. It will most likely appear in the Summer 1993 issue. You'll be hearing from our managing editor a few months before publication, with a contract, request for contributors' notes (on yourself, Stacey Ross and Manlio Argueta) and the copy-edited poem for your approval/ responses to queries. We'd appreciate, for the copy-editor's sake<sic> a double-spaced copy of the poem --sent in an envelope marked ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT, please.

I liked "Second -Class Postcard" too, and wish my current space constraints weren't so pressing. There were one or two places where the translation (I thought) needed a bit of fine-tuning. Are you sure the title indicates "second-class" & not merely "second postcard"? "Helados pops" isn't a brand name, but "ice-cream pops" -- or, if you want a brand name, "Popsicles". "Churrasco argentino" would, I think, be an all-you-can-eat-mixed-grill -- at least, that's what it is in Brazil. Why "bugs" instead of "ants" for "hormigas"? I don't know what "leche holandesa" actually is, but am willing to bet it's something more specific (& familiar) than "Dutch milk" -- is it buttermilk? heavy cream? -- worth looking up/ asking about.

We hope your interest in the Kenyon Review will also include having a look at the enclosed and joining us as a subscriber, too.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan

16.04.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID H. LYNN
Associate Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

April 16, 1992

Dear Phil,

Pursuant to our telephone conversation yesterday, here is the idea I had which might be the goal of a supplementary endowment search -- or part of a "menu" of choices for interested donors.

I'd like to see the Kenyon Review and Kenyon College jointly enabled to annually appoint a Visiting Writer-in-Residence. This writer's duties would be: to teach a specified partial course load in the English department, probably one course in the Fall semester and two in the Spring, and to serve as Consulting Guest Editor on the Kenyon Review. The writer's duties soliciting work and shaping, to some extent, the content of at least one issue of the Kenyon Review, which might be a general issue, or a special issue of the guest consulting editor's devising. I'd like to see the position alternated between fiction writers, poets, essayists/critics and, if possible, playwrights. I'd want us to be looking for<sic> writers of some stature and experience, who've published one or two books, who have excellent teaching references, and who have some experience in literary editing. This sounds like a tall order, but I can think, just off the top of my own head of a dozen possibilities. Our salary goal should be, I think, between 40 and 50K, depending on publication and experience. We could learn a lot about the administration of such a program from other colleges and universities which regularly make appointments: the Jenny McKean Moore Chair at George Washington University, the Elliston Poet-in-Residence at American University. (Those all happen to be positions I've held, and I know the administrators.) The editing component, of course, is what would distinguish our program from theirs. Such decisions are usually made by a small committee, on the basis of vita, references, and published work, without the time-consuming interview and search apparatus. Invitations, plus the AWP and MLA job listings, would provide a more than sufficient number of candidates.

I think this idea might well appeal to donors because it serves the College as well as the Review, the English/Creative Writing program at the College in particular -- and because its possible effect on the College<sic> might be an enlarged and enriched applicant pool of entering students, to whom the prospect of studying -- not only creative writing, but a wealth of possible other offerings -- with diverse distinguished writers would be one more good reason for choosing Kenyon.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker

Philip Jordan to Marilyn Hacker

22.04.92

Kenyon College

Office of the President
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5114

April 22, 1992

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
Editor, THE KENYON REVIEW
Sunset Cottage

Dear Marilyn:

Thanks for our telephone conversation and your letter of April 16. Your proposal for an endowed writer-in-residence is interesting and will go into the hopper of ideas as we plan for a KR endowment effort. As we discussed, the endowing of the chief editorship and other basic costs of the magazine will be our first and fundamental priority, with the writer/editor as a nice addition when the first is accomplished.

It is good to have your letter as description of the project and in part a case statement for it.

Sincerely,

Philip H. Jordan, Jr.

cc: Provost Browning
Mr. Givens

James Gill to Marilyn Hacker

22.04.92

JAMES GILL

April 22, 1992

Dear Marilyn,

Please forgive this delay in answering your letter of March 25th.

I'm looking forward to the Spring issue, especially since you seem to have localized the typesetting, cover etc. These changes do carry some risks (I did it once with 2PLUS2 and it took a while for things to get settled).

In Roe vs. Wade, I think the "Bush-Reagan" court might decide ambiguously in this election year; to befuddle the issue with perplexing legal contingencies. It would equivocally preserve Bush's stance and at the same time lend false hope, or neutralize the pro-choicers. This is the legal folklore left to us by Reagan, and so transparently pursued by his shallow successor.

As far as mobilizing the pivotal women's vote is concerned, in past elections, early fervor has been known to dissolve by election time. In this year, it is true, there are cruel, weighty, and traumatizing problems largely caused by an inept determining factor this time around, if only they can ~~play~~ stick to their guns: a question of a solid national organizational effort.

The other problem of choice, I mean in terms of candidates, also predominates in the decision making. America's astonishing hypocrisies has become the laughing stock of most of the European press. Parenthetically, when Britain's liberal candidate, Paddy Ashdown's extra-marital affairs were uncovered, his popularity jumped from 13% to 20%. *Chacun son gout*.

On the subject of foreign journals, though many have gone under, others survive and print quality material. Svetova Literatura (the Czech Review that will be publishing your material - it is now in translation) is one of them. Inastranaya Literatura (the Russian Review with a very high circulation, is another). It is true that many fifth rate sheets are appearing with very badly translated American "blockbusters" and other obscenities<sic>.

The Eminence Grise (who we published in 2PLUS2) responded that he was "overwhelmed" (bullshit!) with material and has not gotten around to read yours. From others, I hear that Deguy is no fan of American poetry. I don't hold much hope. Generally, the picture in Europe is bleak indeed.

I will now send the material to Pierre Segher's Poésie which since his death is run by Colette Seghers. It's a good one and does publish foreign poets.

Martin is in Dakar. I spoke to Yoke, his administrative assistant and I'll be lunching with him when he returns.

It appears that with the final choice of Ashbery and Merrill who have been chosen for this year's festival, some of the selection committee people felt that US representation was adequate. They have reserved the right to invite you next year and when I am in Rotterdam this summer, I will meet with the committee members and insist. It is true that this year they were overwhelmed with candidates. I am very disappointed!

They did invite Wallis Menozzi, but only for the ON THE ROAD reading which covers cities outside Rotterdam during three days.

Once I'm happy with it, I might send you a short excerpt from the fiction-memoir. Martha once asked me if I had any more material like IANVAR. It's quite self-contained.

I have longer passages. I think they would be too long for a magazine.

I presume you'll be in Paris part of the summer. Tasha is returning from Moscow at the end of April – directly to New York. She will then probably spend some time with me. Maybe we'll drive over to Paris. I think you'd enjoy meeting her.

Irène joins me in sending you our warmest greetings.

Ever yours,

James

Jeremy Reed to Marilyn Hacker

28.04.92

28 April 1992

73 South Mill Park
London NW3 2SS
England

Dear Marilyn,

I've been meaning to write to you for ages, and apologize over the failure of the Litcrary Review to use the piece I wrote on your Selected Poems.

Given the English antipathy to minorities, I suppose it's all one can expect from the dead poetry establishment here. But what I have done is to place the review with Hilary Davies, who is editing a special edition of Aquarius devoted to women.

I've also asked if I can write an essay on the sensuous in your work. I'm sure I'll meet with a favourable response. You're the best woman poet alive today, if one has to use terms of gender, and I want to make that very clear to English readers. Anyhow, you know I'll do something special.

I shall send you my new collection when it appears in July, and I'd like to send you Lipstick Sex And Poetry, a little anti-autobiography of mine which was published late last year together with my book about Rimbaud – Delirium. I'll get these off to you.

With Much<sic> creativity
and friendship

Jeremy

(Jeremy Reed)

Jaye Austin-Williams to Marilyn Hacker

22.05.92

Jaye Austin-Williams
330 First Avenue #8B
New York, New York 10009

May 22, 1992
⁶(mailed 5/29/92)

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
Executive Editor
Kenyon Review

Dear Marilyn:

Can you believe you are hearing from me at long last? The delay is attributed mainly to tending to the failing health of an aunt of mine whose horrendous ordeal within the health care system has inspired an article which I am looking to publish as soon as I get the finishing touches on it.

Instinct has pointed me to you, Marilyn. I need some advice. I am constructing an outline/ proposal for a literary project-- its working title: "Downstage of Silhouette: Portrait of an Unknown Poet" -- encompassing the life and work of my Uncle Eddie (who wrote under his name: Elwood Dudley and also under Edward Harris).

He was a self-published poet, as well as having had various poems published in newspapers over the years. but upon his death at age 74 of bone cancer in 1985, he, like too many poets to name, had never been able to be published by a major publisher.

On one of my last hospital visits with him shortly before he died, he entrusted all of his literary effects (books of other poets, manuscripts, self-publications, newspaper clippings, correspondence, etc.,) to me and said that perhaps I could "do something with all that stuff". I knew that one day I would find a way to do exactly that. The day did finally come when I was clear what it was that I wanted to do. I decided on a book intertwining his life -- a tumultuous, largely unhappy one which was, I believe, tailor-made for captivating storytelling -- with his work, which I believe, given that he was, for all intents and purposes, a "self-crafted" poet, quite exquisite.

I said earlier that instinct steered me to you, in terms of getting advice. As I may have told you at some point, you were one of the poets whose work he read. I can't tell you what an impact, having met you before he died, it made on me to find several of your books in his collection -- the first being Taking Notice. I did. That fact that he read your work, studied your work, in tandem with my sense of you as a poet and as a person, confirms for me that you will appreciate the importance of this project to me in ways I can't trust everyone to.

⁶ Handwritten

What I am interested in, Marilyn, is finding my way toward a grant or fellowship (or two!) to fund my time and effort researching and putting the project together so that I can devote a concentrated amount of time and energy on it and "do him proud" as they say. A colleague of mine suggested an interesting idea: that I send a proposal for the project to W.W. Norton & Co., as that is a major publisher which tends toward supporting "non-traditional" projects, if you will, people of Color, gay people, that kind of thing. Do either your instincts or experiences confirm this?

The next hurdle, of course is my paltry literary credentials. I have enclosed my literary resume<sic> for your perusal. Upon review, in all honesty, do you think I have a chance in hell of a fruitful proposal to a major publisher like W.W. Norton or any other? Or do you think I should take a different route?

I do indeed have a couple of things I'd like to send to Kenyon for your review. But in the meantime, I really wanted to get your feedback about this. I've enclosed a signed copy of one of my uncle's books, as I know he'd be very proud and honored for you to have a copy. I've also enclosed a copy of a chapbook in which an excerpt of my now infamous character Effie's monologue was published. The chapbook is a project of which I'm very proud, and whose origin you will discover in the Foreword.

Take care, Marilyn, and thank you ever so much for your support, time and energy!

Warmly,
Faye

Jonathan Galassi to Marilyn Hacker

17.07.92

FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX, INC *Book Publishers*
HILL & WANG

JONATHAN GALASSI
EDITOR in CHIEF

7.17.92

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Ms. Hacker,

Thanks for your letter of the 10th. I also spoke to Frances Collin, who is going to send me some of your work for me to read in a totality. I of course am familiar with it--have read it off and on over the years--but want to look it over as a whole. This will take a while, especially as I'm about to go on vacation for a month or so, but eventually I will be in touch with you.

we<sic> can't very often take on a new writer--or a writer new to our list--but I want to consider your work very carefully. I hope you'll bear with me while this happens.

Cordially,

Jonathan

cc: Frances Collin

19 Union Square West, New York, New York 10003 Telephone (212) 741-6900
Cable Farrarcomp FAX (212) 633-9385

Richard Howard to Philip Jordan

24.08.92

RICHARD HOWARD

August 24, 1992

11/2/92 cc: M. Hacker

Dear President Jordan,

Since I wrote you three years back recommending Marilyn Hacker to be the editor of The Kenyon Review, it seems suitable, before I light out for a spell in Japan, that I write again to remark how splendidly the magazine has fulfilled its functions under her editorship. I am the poetry editor of the Paris Review myself, so I have some idea what the problems are in that sector, and I (enviously) observe how splendidly the Kenyon Review has solved them (even to including some of my own work!)--but much more than from the point of view of poetry (which after all one would expect Ms Hacker to have a pretty firm hand in--if you can have a hand in a point of view), the Review in articles, stories and critical pieces seems to me as vivid and useful a periodical as I see on the stands, comparable only to the Yale Review (under Sandy McClatchy) and Raritan Review (under Richard Poirier). It gives me great pleasure to appear in it, greater pleasure still to read it, and perhaps best of all, to tell you how much I admire what Marilyn Hacker has done in her term as editor. I look forward to further issues as to little else in the intellectual world, and congratulate you on having such a distinction at Kenyon.

Perhaps it is apposite to identify myself--I am the Henry Luce Visiting Professor in Comparative Literature at the Whitney Institute of the Humanities at Yale, University Professor of English at Houston University, the author of some ten books of poems (Pulitzer 1970) and a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts + Letters. I have had some experience in the periodical world, having been poetry editor of Shenandoah for 10 years, and of The New Republic for the last five, and now the Paris Review...

Again, my admiration for Kenyon Review, which has stimulated this letter, and my hopes for its continued success.

Faithfully

Richard Howard
2540 Branard
Houston TX 77006

(Postmarked N.Y.)

RICHARD HOWARD
23 WAVERLY PLACE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10003

Marilyn Hacker to Elizabeth Alexander

20.09.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER

Editor

DAVID H. LYNN

Associate Editor

DAVID BAKER

Consulting Poetry Editor

MARTHA FINAN

Managing Editor

Sept. 20, 1992

Dear Elizabeth Alexander,

Thanks for letting me see these new poems. I think you hit the jackpot this time -- I'd like to keep all of them for the KR. Because of the volume of work we're receiving (and a special theatre issue this coming spring), I may not be able to publish them until the winter (January '94) issue. I hope this 15-month gestation period isn't too irksome. Depending on space possibilities, I may use the two Josephine Baker poems in the fall '93 issue, and the others in the issue following.

I had one very small quibble in "Haircut" -- lines 3 & 4. The word "it" is so far removed from its antecedent that it took me a while (really!) to figure out that "it" was the early Amtrak, not the IRT (as if that ran on a schedule) or something else. And, really, what's relevant is the time the speaker gets off the subway -- or the time of the haircut appointment, if there is one. The word "Waiting" in the next sentence suggests that there is. So why not "My appointment is at ten to eleven" -- or -- "I'm on the street at ten to -- ten whatever" -- and whatever suited the rhythm of your prose.

You'll be hearing from our managing editor about two months before your poems will be published, with a contract, request for contributor's note, and your copy-edited manuscript for approval/ responses to queries. We would appreciate double-spaced copies of the poems; this makes things much easier for the copy-editor, especially with longer, long-lined pieces.

Is "Haircut" to be set as prose, with left and right margins?

Again, thanks for thinking of us with your new work.

All best,
Marilyn Hacker

PS: When you send double-spaced copies, etc., please mark the envelope
ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Marilyn Hacker to Richard Abowitz

28.09.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER

Editor

DAVID BAKER

Consulting Poetry Editor

MARTHA FINAN

Managing Editor

Sept. 28, 1992

Dear Richard Abowitz,

Thanks very much for sending us your essay on Alfred Corn's poetry. I think it has, at least, possibilities -- but it still needs some work. It's rife with repetitions (I felt if I saw the words "the poet" and "the poem" one more time, I'd want to go into another line of work) and sometimes sentences take several lines to say what they could put better in one. I've gone through it myself, tightening up, paring down, and clarifying when I could -- I hope I've done some of the work for you, indicated a direction, and not offended in the process.

Are the numbers after the quotes page numbers in the books cited?

I don't think you have to give Gravity's Rainbow a footnote, since the author & provenance of the quote are right there in the text. If you say, "George Garrett, in his essay '-----' (from The Sorrows of Fat City, U.S.C. Press, 1992)," you can eliminate that footnote as well. Then you're left with only Corn's books in the Works Cited. PLEASE put them in chronological order!

There are too many instances where you tell and don't show: where you tell us in fairly pedestrian prose what Corn succeeds or fails in doing without substantiating this with a good quote. This is most apparent in the paragraphs on "1992" -- a couple or three lines each from several of the "Alfred" and "dramatic monologue" sections would demonstrate much more clearly how the long sequence works than that rather muddled description, which I've tried to clean up a bit.

I also think that, in a consideration of Corn's oeuvre (and especially in one for the Kenyon Review -- but, really, for anywhere) it's important to mention the growing self-revelation, in his persona and in his work in general, of his homosexuality. Corn is in no way "closeted" in his later books. For many readers, it is the juxtaposition of his open homosexuality, his choice of a male life-partner (or partners) with his stated Christian faith that would make his work especially interesting. Yet there's no reference at all to that subject in this essay, except, perhaps the deeply coded one of Corn's stated fraternity with Whitman and Crane -- and he makes that connection: it's not remarked upon by the essayist. The doctor in "An Xmas Murder" is a gay man

telling his story to a gay couple of sometime-neighbors. The autobiographical series of journeys in "1992" is also a journey toward, first acknowledgement of, and then the successful fruition in a committed relationship of, the narrator's gay identity. Frankly, I don't think Alfred Corn would want a prolonged essay on his work to omit this aspect (present him as one more straight white male intellectual who found God!).

I think the tightening-up I've done will shorten the essay by at least a page, which is all to the good. I've kept a xerox of this version. If you can do a revision (if you're willing to) along the lines I've indicated, I think we can use the essay.

Please send the revised version (marked REQUESTED<sic> REVISION) to us at your earliest convenience, if you're doing it.

And again, thanks for thinking of the Kenyon Review.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

PS I'm also not entirely convinced that it's Corn's Christian faith which has "justified" his desire, or ability, to write a series of dramatic monologues in voices so disparate and so different from his own. (Does that mean every successful novelist must be religious?) It might have just as much to do with a desire to reclaim for poetry some of the "territory" that has increasingly become the sole provenance of prose fiction in this country. I think one could, and much more successfully, argue that the the<sic> degree of empathy, of charity, evinced by Corn toward the varied personae he creates, has something to do with accepting the "outsider" status of an openly gay man at the same time as the more familiar, and perhaps comfortable, identity of a middle-class intellectual white male Christian.

Christians, of course, have no monopoly on charity, or on being able to imagine what another person is going through -- indeed, these are qualities some Christians prodigiously lack (I think Alfred Corn would agree). And many middle class white male writers have felt quite "justified" in representing people of genders, races, classes, ages, other than their own -- in fact, middle class white male writers seem to feel themselves endowed with this permission more than any other writers do, from the evidence. Nonetheless, Corn's dramatic monologues are remarkably free of either condescension toward or mythologization of his subjects, pitfalls other practitioners of this genre, from Browning to Eliot to Jarrell have often tripped into.

Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker

28.09.92

Monday September 28, 1992

To: Ms. Marilyn Hacker, Ed.
The Kenyon Review

From: Stephen Booker/ B-044049
Florida State Prison
P.O. Box 747/ P-3-N-13
Starke, Florida 32091

Dear M.H.,

These too are unpublished + nowhere else being read.

Why so soon on the heels of the 9/15 submission ...? Well, because you're there, and I know I'll get a decent read from you; plus you won't be kicked back on my poem for endless months – if your response on my 3/4 submission of "The Comedians" is any indication of your appreciating how I must utilize my time as if it is always up for grabs.

Nothing to report that's new or unusual. I did, however, finally get word back from Wesleyan Univ. Press (re: reading my poetry collection [Tug] ms for about 7 months!) The 4 outside readers' comments were for the most part positive, although several mentioned how some of the poems needed, in their opinions, revision; and one said that a few should be dropped out of the ms altogether. (I say <nix?> on that, and my arguing with the editors can wait till the manuscript is accepted – but I will not revisit previously publ'd poems and revise them to suit a particular reader's whim.) Anyway, Tug is now being read by what the assistant to the editor [Suzanna Tamminen] calls the university's editorial committee. In the interim I've reached out and earned my own blurbs from poets with names, if you know what I mean. And I know you do, big-timer.

Let me quit bragging to you, and let you eye-ball my stuff before you think I'm lobbying for a position inside your publication by making myself familiar to you – even if I am, maybe. I best be trying to prepare myself for you scolding me again with what was really plain good sense. Dig you later.

Yours,

Stephen

P.S. SASE encld.

Marilyn Hacker to Hayden Carruth 01.10.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID BAKER
Consulting Poetry Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

October 1, 1992

Dear Hayden Carruth,

Thanks for your letter, and for these poems. I'm very pleased to accept "Ecstasy", "Surrealism", and "Waterloo" for publication in the Kenyon Review. Because of the embarrassment of riches we receive (in the avalanche of manuscripts you can imagine) -- and because Spring '93 is a theater issue, it's possible that they won't appear until the winter (January) 94 issue. I hope this 15-month gestation period isn't too excessive.

You'll be hearing from our managing editor closer to the time of publication, with a contract, request for updated contributor's note, and your copy-edited poems for approval/ responses to queries. (I presume the ### at the end of each poem are just to indicate "end" -- and needn't be reproduced.)

I very much appreciated your letter, too. I've sent you a book I don't think you have under separate cover, which I hope is not an imposition. Speaking of people who do with the tradition what they will, and are barely talked about -- our mutual friend Carolyn Kizer, and Marie Ponsot, whose work is buried treasure as far as (what's left of) the poetry reading public is concerned.

Why are you in such isolation now, if it's not indiscreet to ask? The rural voices from upstate New York in that wonderful Collected Shorter are so strong and individual. (I also remember with pleasure one of "that sort" of yours which I used in the issue of Ploughshares I edited three years ago.) ("What a lot of kitchen sinks he's got in there!" Marie Ponsot said to me a few days ago, viz your book; I'd called her long distance & said she had to get it, and she did. That comment was made in the utmost admiration -- she meant range, not a pot-pourri.) I loved "John Dryden" and "Lady" and "McCabe". And also the Ardeche poem (of course). And I was particularly heartened by an earlier "after the Chinese" one, written in your 49th year, with the line (I think) "I'm not an old man/ yet" (please forgive misquoting, the book's not here) -- not by "not being old" at 49 (my age) -- but by the fact that the poem was on page 103 of a 500 page book.

Is the young woman who interviewed you for New York Quarterly any good as a critical writer? She wrote to me about reviewing your Collected Shorter. Of course I'd like to run a review of it, but by someone smart.

Amicalement,

Marilyn H

Marilyn Hacker to Richard Abowitz 21.10.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID BAKER
Consulting Poetry Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

October 21, 1992

Dear Richard Abowitz,

Thanks VERY much for the revisions, and for your thoughtful letter, too. I think the article is much improved, and I'm delighted to accept it for publication in the Kenyon Review. It is scheduled for the Summer 1993 issue. You'll be hearing from our managing editor sometime closer to the date of publication, with a contract, request for contributor's note, and your copy-edited manuscript for approval/ responses to queries -- so please keep us informed of any address changes, even long-term temporary ones.

I think, on reflection, that you're correct about the degree of reference to homosexuality (his own life/ lovers, and a gay social milieu) being fairly constant throughout Corn's work (as it is, more or less, in Merrill's) -- and that you've dealt with this appropriately by "opening up" the references in the poems: identifying Walter, and (for me) most tellingly, by opening up the treatment of "An Xmas Murder". I also found the extended reference to the speaker's relationship with Christopher as focal point in 1992 added considerable depth to the treatment of the sequence.

I'll let someone else (the copy-editor?) adjudicate whether a dramatic monologue must be in the first person. You are, I suspect, correct.

I don't know whether you're also a subscriber to the KR, but am enclosing the necessary with this letter in case you're not & would like to remedy that situation.

Again, thanks for taking this essay that one draft further.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

Richard Abowitz to Marilyn Hacker

Oct 1992

University of Minnesota
Twin Cities Campus

Department of English
College of Liberal Arts

207 Lind Hall
207 Church Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0134

612-625-3363

Dear Ms. Hacker,

Here is the revision you requested. Thank you for the time and effort you put into reading and editing my manuscript. I apologize or<sic> the sloppy condition it was in. I know excuses are unnecessary and unwelcome, but your comments on my style and repetition were accurate enough to hurt. I've been ill most of the summer, and I write while working full time midnight to eight as a security guard (it is now 4:30a.m.) and then I do my editing between classes during the day.

I've agreed to almost all of you line editing. The one exception, because they are free indirect discourse, is the calling of the fictionalised sections of "1992" dramatic monologues. If I am mistaken and dramatic monologues need not be in the first person please feel free to make the change.

The numbers after the quotes are page numbers. It seems to me easier to start on the right page than to have to look up the pages of a poem and then count unnumbered lines.

I regret, and was totally unaware of, my total previous omission of Corn's homosexuality. I've included references to it in my discussion of Notes and in "An Xmas Murder." I've also attempted to incorporate it as a source of empathy and restraint in "1992." My view is that Corn needs the permission that Christianity gives because his experience as an openly gay man has given him more than empathy. As a member of a group that mainstream society chooses to "read" in a variety of negative, misleading, and just plain smug ways --especially with this election-- Corn must have felt trepidation about creating characters of different groups than himself. However, it seems to me that his Christianity forces him to take the risk and his sexuality allows for the empathy that makes the project successful. I think all of these changes improve the essay.

However, I disagree with your idea that there is a "growing self-revelation...of his homosexuality." I find poems that are openly gay in all six books. While Corn's homosexuality is always present he has chosen not to make it a subject. It usually appears under the subject of "love" and in this context is not separated from heterosexual love. For example in Notes Anne and he find new lovers: "(Your new Victor whom I judged suitable, as you did/ My new Walter)" (101). For better or

worse this is the consistent treatment of gayness that I find in Corn. To write an essay that places sexuality in a central position seems misleading. I feel Corn has chosen to provide no more emphasis than pronoun choice. This in itself is grist for a different essay, but I can't find room for it in this one.

A conflict between Corn's Christianity and homosexuality is not addressed in Autobiographies in any way that I can find. My own background is ultra--orthodox Jewish so I may be missing something. However, I suspect Corn has performed the Whitman trick of dealing with contradiction by not believing in it.

I hope that my arguments convince you and that my revision pleases you. Again thank you for the time you've spent on this.

Sincerely,

Richard Abowitz

Jeffrey Betcher to Marilyn Hacker

09.11.92

353 Pierce Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

November 9, 1992

The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

ATTN: Marilyn Hacker, Editor

Dear Marilyn Hacker,

You may recall my name, having sent a few generous lines my way with reference to short story submissions, though I have been out of touch for nearly two years. During the first of these, poetry demanded me to the exclusion of all other writing. I did readings occasionally, including one at A Different Light Bookstore as part of their "Sub-Lingual" series. For most of the second year, I have been working on a novel while supporting myself as a graveyard shift security guard. Ah, well ...

I was inspired to write to you while reading the current issue of The Kenyon Review, which may be the finest thing I own. For me, it has become a confluence of pride and possibility, alongside the recent political shift. The world seems again big enough for breathing, young and strong; and I am like the suddenly fast-moving who didn't have to die to see that shocking, old shell left just back there. I felt it at the Castro Street election night celebration, then saw it clearly in The Review where you have brought together writers who are saying what is elsewhere unsaid, with such intelligence, creativity, and skill that I am caught on every page with my jaw down. I am not overstating. Your work is sustaining and practical, beautiful and ground-breaking, heroic. I hope you hear this and "thank-you!" over and over.

I'm sending along several poems. It would be my proudest moment to be published in The Kenyon Review, but I am sending these as much as a gift than a submission, and as a way of being in touch. I enclose a SASE only should you consider a reply card or some response appropriate; gently putting them aside would be fine, too. I'm sure I'll be sending new work eventually.

Warmest regards,

Jeffrey Betcher

Ben Sonnenberg to Marilyn Hacker

11.11.92

Grand Street Books
Published by Ben Sonnenberg

November 11th, 1992

Dear Marilyn,

I was in hospital for quite a spell or I'd have answered your letter, with the welcome news about Suzanne, long before this. What a good year she's had, and who deserves it better?

Thank you for sending me Lucia Perillo's poem. I'm sorry to say I disliked it. Maybe if it hadn't come in a season when absolutely everyone seems to be latching onto Frida Kahlo...

It was neither "vulgar" nor "indiscreet" of you to ask me to subscribe to the Review. My own subscription already runs for a couple of years more, doesn't it? Let me think of whom I might give gift subscriptions to, just as soon as I get back up to speed.

With every good wish, as ever,

BS

Ms Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review,
Kenyon College,
Gambier, Ohio 43022

GRAND STREET PUBLICATIONS, INC. 50 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10024
TEL (212) 496-6088 FAX 496-7174

Marilyn Hacker to Stephen T. Booker

11.12.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
Tel: 614-427-3339

Marilyn Hacker
Editor
David Baker
Consulting Poetry Editor
Martha Finan
Managing Editor

Dec. 11, 1992

Dear Stephen Booker,

I'm glad to say that perseverance pays off. I'd like to keep "Sandii" and "The Pied Piper of Murderloin Downs" for publication in the Kenyon Review. They will most probably be in the Winter 1994 (next January) issue. You'll be hearing from our managing editor a few months before publication, with a contract, request for contributor's note, and your copy-edited poems for approval/responses to queries. Will we be able to send payment, and then contributor's copies to you "inside," or how can this be arranged? (Also, is there anyplace books/ copies of the KR etc. can be sent to you? You said in several letters not to bother to send "freebies" because they wouldn't reach you.)

I did have a couple of small editorial queries/ quibbles about the two poems. In "Sandii" the invented word "daintiliousness" detracts, for this reader anyway, from the effect of that stanza, which is the last one, after all -- it makes it seem sarcastic, which I don't think is your intention -- and the word is, as it were, underlined by being preceded by "I say she used .." You're saying, I think, that her gesture was precise, polite, even elegant, despite who she was and what she was doing -- that she was doing it with grace and dignity, no? -- and even "dainty" has come to have a rather negative, belittling connotation -- then it would be very clear that your assertion, with the "I say," is of this person's essential worth, not triviality.

Same kind of thing about the other poem. "Murderloin Downs" is a kind of heavy-handed attempt at humor in the title that either overshoots or undershoots its mark. Why not "The Pied Piper of Death Row"? That would pack a punch as a title -- and readers would know what you were talking about right off. (And there's a heavy and real irony in it, I think.) The rest of my "problem" is all with the second line. I've no idea what "de-eyed" means, and that, in turn, calls the ambiguity of "ununderstood" back into question -- i.e., why not "not understood" or, even, "impenetrable" or something. And do clue us in on "de-eyed": it could mean anything from "purlind" to "practically unseen"!

When you write back in response to these questions, please mark large on the envelope REVISIONS OF ACCEPTED MS, so it won't go into the "slush pile". (In

fact, we are, as of next week, calling a moratorium on unsolicited manuscripts until next September -- we've received so many, and are obliged to schedule work so far ahead.

I wish you the best of luck with Wesleyan

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

Marilyn Hacker to Rane Arroyo

11.12.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER

Editor

DAVID BAKER

Consulting Poetry Editor

MARTHA FINAN

Managing Editor

Dec. 11, 1992

Dear Rane Arroyo,

Ouch, and then again, hummm. You make life more than a bit difficult here. I accepted a 27-page play, and you send back a 48-page one, accompanied<sic> by a letter saying there are "no changes except proofing"!!! Of course there are -- the new version is one act longer. It is, also, more of a complex and complete play, but nonetheless it poses a problem. If I were to use it in the issue for which I'd scheduled it, which is very largely editorially complete except for a couple of outstanding solicited essays, I would have to bounce one or more other already-accepted pieces (probably "more" since none of the scheduled fiction or essays is 21 typed pages long). I can't, in conscience do this --it's not fair to other writers to say their work is being rescheduled because someone else has doubled the length of his play. The winter '94 issue is also full, and the spring '94 issue already has a long play in it -- scheduled that far ahead precisely because it was a long play -- i.e., about the same length as "Sex" now is. Since our general audience is just, as it were, getting used to our publishing plays at all -- with some resistance -- I wouldn't choose to give over 55+ pages in a general issue to two of them. And I'm not at all at liberty simply to extend the length of an issue by 12-14 pages: budgets do not permit it.

In short, or at length, I'd still like to publish "Sex With the Man on the Moon," but it may be eighteen months from now, in July 1994. I'll do my best to use it earlier, but that may not be possible.

I do have a few questions about the new version. Simplest one: why did you change Homer's name to Cal? It makes all the double-meansings<sic> about Homer-Pony's friend and Homer-the-Greek-poet meaningless<sic>: for Pony to have "called Cal 'Homer'" makes no sense. "Homer" is a perfectly plausible name -- why not put it back (or take out the Homeric references)? And the association Homer-Greeks-barbarians is how Hans/ Erik first finds about Pony's dead friend.

More complex one. Frankly, I don't like the new ending at all!! (this is one opinion, I know, but perhaps worth listening to). It reads like: the writer doesn't know how to get out of this situation/ end the play, so he decides to blow everything up, terrifying scream, flash of lights, earthquakes, end of the world: talk about a deus ex machina! If I were seeing this on stage, I'd feel manipulated and cheated of some kind of

resolution, and I feel the same way reading it. It seems entirely<sic> inappropriate for a play which is essentially about memory. The ending of the first version was a lot more à propos. (And the frame of the visit from "you" is now fairly meaningless - - and the re-introduction of Pony's lover at the end of what's now act one goes nowhere -- when the existence of that relationship is part of the structure of the first act.) There is definitely time enough-- I hope you'll be willing to think a bit about this, maybe run it by a couple of other readers. An apocalypse is such an easy way to end a play. And, since this play clearly takes place in the mind of Pony the Narrator, what exactly does the apocalypse signify? He has a heart attack and dies? It seems to me you could very profitably re-think that ending, and get out of the play without an escalation of special effects. (Also the relationship -- imagined by Pony the Narrator - - between Homer/ Cal and Hans/ Eric<sic> is never really developed. The idea that theghost<sic> comes back because he "wants to meet that guy" sort of fades after the brief sequence whn<sic> they go off together. But that's considerably less important.)

(You could almost end the play with Pony the Narrator saying "We love games" -- it would work better than the dysjunction of what follows.)

On page 44, you have two consecutive lines separately attributed to Pony the Younger: "You're not that pretty<sic> in pink, buddy." directly<sic> followed by "You know where my bed is..." Is there a mis-attribution or something, or a line left out?

I look forward to your response: please accept it RE: ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT, and any revision sent REVISION OF ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT. We're getting so many "unsoliciteds" that we will be declaring a moratorium on them for several months.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

The point is, isn't it (if there is one) that Pony, in having "exorcised" Hans and Homer/ Cal has estranged himself from his younger self as well -- although he's estranged from his younger self throughout the play. He has somehow lost something -- and I'm not quite sure why he has lost, rather than gained, from the imaginary encounter that got beyond his control. But lost or gained, the way to most effectively express that is not "terrifying screams, crashing, earthquakes".

Marilyn Hacker to Rosemary Deen

14.12.92

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID BAKER
Consulting Poetry Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

December 14, 1992

Dear Rosemary,

I'm so sorry it's taken months and months to get back to you. This has been an unusually hectic, agitated time at work, with imminent staff changes and the preparation of what I can only call the Grant from Hell.

However, and at last, no news was (I hope) good news. I'd like to publish, from your garden essays: "Raccoons," "The Genius of the Place," "Denizens," and "History" in the Kenyon Review. We are working so far ahead of ourselves (700 manuscripts a month!) that I'm obliged to schedule them for the Spring 1994 issue -- but spring is a logical time to read about gardens. You'll be hearing from our editorial assistant a few months before publication, with a contract, request for contributor's note, and your copy-edited manuscript for approval/ responses to queries.

I had a couple of small questions, all in "History." On page 1, you whited-out some number following "1" (last line) when stating how many years it took to excavate the broom closet --but you didn't then fill in the right number. In the same paragraph, on the following page, the second line doesn't make sense to me "without any idle going deeper .."? Later on the same page: "Hyacinth Miller was a woman of color .." In my modest opinion, "woman of color" is useful as a description if you're discussing women of many races other than Caucasian. Here, I think "black" or "African American" (if that's what she was) would be more to the point (and would tell us more: if she was Filipina, tell us so!) And the sentence would be more graceful without the repetition of the word "color."

Please mark any correspondence about this: RE: ACCEPTED MS -- as anything not well-tagged tends to end up in the slush pile.

I hope you and Leonard et famille have a wonderful Christmas and a good year to follow.

All best,

Marilyn

Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker

15.12.92

Tuesday December 15, 1992

To: Ms. Marilyn Hacker, Ed.
The Kenyon Review

From: Stephen Booker/ B-044049
Florida State prison
P.O. Box 747/ S-3-S-15
Starke, Florida 32091

Dear Ms. Hacker,

It's definitely the biggest and best news I've heard (since poeeting) – and you know it. You are the bigtime.

But let's hash this thing out a little, please. I've got to defend my reason for using (for making up) certain words. Because there are very good reasons why I do what's done in certain poems.

Here's the lead-in to why "daintiliousness" is used – and why I, as both person and participant in the actual narrative "say she used" it. First off, I qualify myself earlier on in the piece as what can only be a representative model for the ordinary sorta guy who's way in over his head with a woman who's much more – how should I put it? – experienced than he is. But he's aware of that fact, as well as how shrewd, manipulative, and disarmingly honest the woman is -- the guy is putty in her hands, but really. (Though I don't name any place in particular, I give enough details for the reader to understand that the locale is not the U.S. and the woman isn't American – the language that she uses is precisely how even an educated female hustler handles a man in the Far East; she molds her words for domestic effect (or perhaps, affect) and, in my opinion, does a great deal of playing and positioning while pretending to leave the man the illusion of power over her, if not intellectually, why then some other way. Little does he realize it, but he's no competition for her.)

I fully understand your caring and sensitivity to language, thoughts, and actions – especially in this berg and during our present-day climate (which seems to be a forever) of snideness and belittling of folks for gender or even more superficial reasons. But, please, believe me when I tell you this much: there is a women's liberation movement at work in some of the most unlikely places – even in red-light districts. And it takes a man who failed to notice it when absorbed in the surrounding atmospherics to look back on it and but wonder at the strength of the women involved – who had private lives that they'd only reveal to their closest and choicc friends; who had feelings; guts; the works. And, yes, I say that my "Sandii" – an Afro-Amer-Asian – used "daintiliousness," with her slick self, with her fine, smart feisty, durable self. She did her hand-jive move like a parry and thrust into the hearts of the onlookers who couldn't take their eyes off of her (and me, who had bad table manners). And she hissed (which is like a curse when a Japanese woman does it – a real bad curse and she smiled at me with a look that told me that she put up with me because she really did like/ love me, enjoyed my dumb-assed company, liked how I was there for

her when she needed a friend or whatever.

I love the word, really. It describes something she put on like a mask of inscrutability and a flourish of cynical acquiescence to what's considered correctness. I've seen it over and over again for 20 years. I can't think of a better word for it. In place of it, there would be left that wide gap between who she was and how stand-up and tough she was in the face of the forty acres of hell she lived in and the real strength it took to survive – better still, get over.

Nonetheless, should you insist upon a word change in that one, I'd be foolish to not go back to the drawing board on it – but of course, with whatever help you can supply me with by way of ideas. I know you'll deliberate over my reasoning in my way, but you'll have to tell me if you want it changed for real-like. I will do it, but under protest.

... "Murderloin Downs" is my way of saying death row, the hotseat, the electric chair. It's not an attempt at humor at all. It hits the mark that I'm after: it screams "what the hell is he saying ... about where ... why ... sounds like a racetrack, huh?" And this is what this sorry place is, and there are nutcases here – and, surely I don't have to describe true psychosis and psychotic behavior in any other light than how it looks and how those acting out act. "de-eyed" works – the prefix does the trick; and "un-understood" works, too. "De-eyed" would have to mean one who's capable of seeing but acts to the negation of that ability or is seeing something that others can not. "Un-understood" just layers it on a bit more. I know.

Again, please, indulge me the privilege of spelling these thoughts out the way they are in my own eyes & memory. I can not use the words "Death Row" in a poem and feel secure in the knowledge that the poem moves under the weight of the stuff below the title – this is where they pack a person's <keister?> with a wad of cotton and slap <ill del> that person's ass in a chain and murder. They do it til<sic> eyeballs pop, Marilyn – they really de-eye a joker. They race to do it, and some who do the waiting for it to happen race to go totally mad for the waiting.

A previous poem by me, in my 1983 collection, WAVES & license, uses the title: "The races at Murderloin Downs." So, it is a word-combination that's out there; and it takes no feat of logi-cizing for anyone to dig where I'm coming from.

Yet you will inform me of your final word on it – about both or either poem – and I'll leap into action to get things right or more to your likely acceptance. What, do you think I'm fixing to get into a big brawl with you over a few words and have you pass on putting in the most (the "bestest") lit mag going?! (Count me capable of thinking that you're <?> to want to hear how I defend myself under such pressure as you're applying – justifiable pressure I might add. I've a knack for going out on a limb with the word-making and presuming to give my readers, perhaps, a bit more credit, in terms of comprehension, than I should. Call it an act of faith.

Please write & lower the boom on me & send me scrambling to work, or let me off the hook. The drama hurts. (I'm going to plumb my head for a replacement for each word, in case) It's Roget-a-go-go right now!

Yours,

Stephen

P.S. Wesleyan reports this week sometime.

Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker(2)

15.12.92

Monday 15 December 1992

To: Ms. Marilyn Hacker
Kenyon Review

From: Stephen Booker/ B-044049
Florida State Prison
P.O. Box 747/ S-3-5-15
Starke, Florida 32091

Dear Ms. Hacker,

I had to get an earlier letter on the door before 10p.m. for pickup. It is now 10:35, I have begun to do the braindance on "Sandii." Here I'll maybe give you a headache to dig how mine works, but I figure that I owe as much of a stand-up defense to the memory & the poem & the person as possible. You see, the memory is one that has attached itself to my conscience, the poem is the best way I know how to deal with my own unaccountability and true fear of being stuck with a woman as strong as the subject of the poem, Sandii. And I had thought of myself as a rebel, a bad man, somekinda big shit. But it's a <ill del> backwards round of applause to a whole lotta woman, a born rebel and artist – though she had her weaknesses also, which weren't unlike mine: she was a dipso lush and would go through bouts of what I think now were symptomatic of manic depression, I guess. I ain't no doctor.

Anyway, you may not have clued in on it, but she also had her problem with being color-struck – in a place where the working ladies didn't think twice about plastering bleaching cream on the faces before going to bed; and the dubious surgical procedure to round their eyes could be had for what wasn't too much money, and could be done even at some of the beauty salons. (Crazy place, it was: <Naminone, Okinawa: '71-'73 – but it was like anywhere the punk, Uncle Sam, sat his troopies down and got with the people living there to have designated parts of cities be for G.I.s and sailors to screw their troubles away at \$2 or \$3 a throw!) I've compared notes with guys who pulled tours wherever, and it's the same all over: American foreign policy turns people out just like a gangster <mack?> lays in wait for runaway teenyboppers at Port Authority. While a cat's there and thinking with what he supposes is his giant-sized tool in his hand and a fat bankroll in his <kick?>, he hasn't time to reflect on the common ground that he's on – how he's been there before, himself, or his own blackfolks have but didn't even get paid as things to be took off by the slavers. Gives me a bad feeling, thinking of the way even those at the bottom of the proverbial well float up sometimes, and forget who they are & where they're from – a la black Marines in Somalia doing the marstahs<sic> bidding. What a sick flick.

I stray. Back on track. I can not but know that I've done my best to convey to paper the subjective reality of how the person that Sandii was struck me. We'd get together sometimes, and she<sic> leave the house – the 'skivy house' – and I did go with her several times to the beauty parlor; and that's just like being a little boy again and going to the same greasy-smelling strange land, the chatter is the same, the only difference being the language.

Sandii, as I describe her, played the light card. How that works is how I try conveying two things at once about the peculiar brand of color/ hair/ facial feature/ race consciousness <ill del> that sifted through her own love-hate relationship with herself. (She did not have the eye- or nose-job done to her, but did get the hotcomb straightening process on her 'do.) And what I say about her "playing the light card," bouncing her game off me, says something to how capable she was with the English language, when "praying the right card" would have been a stereotypical and coy application of pronunciation<sic> of "l" and "r" sounds. But she did play, still and all, the light – she used a 'thing' about color that we had in common. She was a sister, in every way, a black woman – café au lait, sure, but black; and her "thing"<sic> about color, about the fantasy of the heaven that white women occupied in the West, was bigger than were she only full-blooded Japanese.

There wasn't anything about her that was dainty – my use for the word implies the quick-change move that she threw down with, and the move said to everyone "Who do any of you assholes think you're stealing looks at? This uncouth nigger is with me, and I'm with him. We are down together and not <stuttin?> any of you. I merely know the bullshit rules here better." That's what "daintiliousness" means. Wish you could've seen it. You'd know what I mean – a lady so so (Whew!) fine. A warbaby, like some of the ones Don Cornelius seems to want his stage on Soul Train to look like The Cotton Club with. – But this was one who'd punch another lady dead in the face, and kick her. She knew what a watered drink tasted like, and she'd go off in a bar and get it straightened. She'd pull a wad of holdout trick money out from her bra or from a garter around her thigh right in front of the Mamasan or Papasan who ran the house that owned her people's debt, and she owed her flatbacking services to until nobody knew when, and she'd say "Hey! Get outta my face! I got money and you can't take it! Come on...! Try!... Go to hell! My boyfriend's here and we're goin out. I might be back tomorrow... might not!" (And she probably got away with the same reckless <ill del> independence with other guys, at other times. She was cool, cold, hot, distant, in your face, raw, The Virgin Mary – probably what everybody knowing her wouldn't mind being. She could do it all: anything she wanted to do.)

I haven't any doubt that you're up on what I'm talking about – how there's like an innate sense in some people, especially women, to make just the right moves at just the right time. It flashes on like cleverness or good timing, but it really isn't. It's a flow, a knowing of moves too intricate to bluff one's way through. It's like being ready and able to deal with anything or any- and everybody. She was mocking the on-lookers even by her use of Western eating utensils!

Your "I say it was with elegance,"... has its merits, but I'm drawn more to words like inscrutable, electric, incisive, indomitable, (the "power" words), ascendent; but too I need to convey the fact that hers was a pose. "I say she used incisiveness" – "incisive elegance." Your "was" is stronger than my assumption of what she may "used." (How'd you do that? You haven't said anything about it but just left it there for me to catch. See how it work<sic>? Now, you've made one of the same kind of moves.) The "I say she was <>" make her banged home in granite, while the "I say she used" doesn't do anything but suggest or speculate, inferring a good guessing rather than a rock-solid knowing.

Just thought of something – “I say she was inscrutable, as she patted dry with a napkin a crescent of milk from her lips, hissed and smiled, and lifted her glass again to click a toast with me, to us.”

Either that or “peerless” – or the jolly good “daintiliousness” – or “without peer.” What does it for you? Shall I be the screwball obscurantist whose stuff is found 50 years from now as purely <notched?> as it is now? Or do I conform to sound logic? (12/16 “mythical” is a good one, but)

I’m not through yet.

Next up to bat is “The Pied-Piper of Murderloin Downs.”

The best way to fix the idea, thematically, is by lamping back to my 1982 poem.

The Races at Murderloin Downs

One oaken coach stands alone on the track.
A buggy, really, in the right of way.
The races have been rained out,
But no one seems to mind sitting
In the bleachers, waiting;
They wait for the rain to stop,
Anticipate the starter-buzzer,
The shock-chime of the bell, the instant
Crack of leather upon flesh,
Bugeyed mares and geldings, lunging.

The stars between their eyes goes unnoticed.

The people who claim to know about horses
Say, “A horse is a horse ...
We won’t tell you how to save scalps
Or goddam whales ...
Don’t mess with us about our horses.”

The rain is slackening up.

My margin is straight down of course, but it is 2.00 am and I’m writing by the light of an empty t.v. channel. Will get back on this tomorrow – I mean later today.

12/16 9:15am

The word “cells” lets the reader of “Piper” know where I’m talking about. And though you might not believe it, <ill del> I’m not so new of a name that folks’d have to ask around a lot to learn that I’m “that black guy on death row in Florida whose poetry turns up all over” (You know who I am, where I am. And you’re in good company with at least a hundred or more other editors – and wherever I’m printed, if they run bios, there’s the tell on me in it. So, I can’t see a problem about locale – “cell”/ “tier”/ “catwalk”/ “Murder-”/ “killer.”

I banged my head hard on the use of the word “cave,” and finally, I concluded that it would suit my purpose better than “cell” (which I’d use later on in the piece). Because “cave” lends itself to possibly evoking the image of a cave – which this place does look like in plenty of respects, while viewing the surroundings and digging the acoustics from the inside – it’s also ‘cave-like’ in respect to how one starts to think while here for any duration of time: men become “de”-evolved, primitive, cavemen (not monks in another type of joint that’s “cell”ular – not like bees, either). People go stark, raving mad, bored to death, numb – or they beam up to something stronger than themselves, or go inside & find self. They collect roaches, spiders, friends who live in their one-man cells with them (friends they talk to). They get extraordinarily petty, insecure, nutty.

“Death Row,” as a tail to the title, is far too flat and unstubbed<sic>. Why then use “-loin” hooked to the word “Murder-“, you asked yourself. And that’s where I know such a word has to take you – inside your own head for clues to a mystery of seemingly disassociated things and actions. Well, there’s Rogue’s Gallery, Tin Pan Alley, Catfish Row, Tobacco Road, Strawberry Fields, Penny Lane, so why not a death row (where people wait to be fried in an electric chair) being called “Murderloin Downs”? A lightbulb<sic> goes on in the head. Sooner or later, the reader gets hip that I’m not sliding a fast one by, or kidding around. I mean to overshoot mere humor, to go flying by sarcasm, wit, or irony. I want it laid out on the page like crazyguilt<sic>, a needle-point nightmare, a sick thing that there’s maybe no cure for. I admit to being merciless in not letting the reader right into many of my poems, but it’s how I do it, how I poet – it’s sometimes a matter of knocking, or the manner in which the reader knocks at the door of my poetry. Once in, however, I give up View Master slides of people, places and things, that has em staying a spell, hooked, maybe even scared to look too closely for fear of looking deep into the well of my work and seeing themselves looking up at em.

“Death Row” is really clean (antiseptic) sounding. “Murderloin Downs” is a steeplechase track where there’s an open book of connotations that the reader can hand him- or herself as a ring for a free ride each time around. The main idea, for me, is to get them dirty right quick, you know – with murder and loin – and show them the track that never ever gets cleaned. (I’ve had one person tell me about the wording murderloin downs, and he said, “Dig, man, I’m picturing it like Churchill Downs or Aqueduct, and the horses or whatever are skinned and partially butchered up, dude, and yet they’re running around the fuckin course anyway, and there’s shit and guts and horse parts all over the place. Some real Stephen King stuff, man!” - Readers like that are rare.)

You’re in rare form when you see & say how “de-eyed” could mean anything from “purblind” to “practically unseen”! Now, there you’ve read it better than I could ever explain it to you or try to describe how I want the reader to feel the uncertainty of the moment but to also, down inside, know what I mean. I’d think that there are few folks who don’t (or DO) get shivery when remembering how they maybe messed with, tortured, or couldn’t find anything better to do with themselves when they were kids than to make life miserable for insects, animals, or other people. Perhaps the killer next door is Everyman – like the sailors on ships who snatch-fish sea gulls like my “-Piper,” or the ones who toss them Alka Seltzer tablets or ‘brown bomber’ laxative pills wrapped in bread (to see what happens); or the kids who play Great

White Hunter with their b-b guns, and shoot birds for nothing but to shoot something alive, to see how they die. The whole world is a death row gone to pot, really – it's a Murderloin Downs.

You know what? I'm conscious of steering my readers all around and through me and back to find themselves wondering "... what the hell was that he said about me?!" And that's maybe me at my best. You know how you've gone way out there to fetch the right word-picture-idea, knowing that it wouldn't hurt nobody to use just a little bit of imagination-courage to nail you down. I got to beg you to let my hard work be what they are: Booker poems. As few changes as possible. "-Piper" is of the macabre reality of the real world – I'm a poet who the readers of my bio notes will know is on death row – $1+1 = \dots$ But I'm not a 'prison poet.'

Granted, you're who you are – and there're few poets got the power like you're holding it down and pushing real art at Kenyon. (I have spies who've said extra-good things about you.) You're hip, wise, and have a feel about things. I've got to go with you if you're dead-set at what you believe will be the tilt or 'correctness' spin that readers will put on "daintiliousness" – I await your advice and final "Change it!" word on that score. But please leave my other piece intact as is? (I'll change it to "Death Row," but I'll hate it, and forever won't see as how it works towards the ends I intend & order up with "Murderloin Downs.") <ill del> Can I keep it?

I've just done something stupid & know it. You've got better things to do than read great, long letters from me. (I won't bore you again. Promise.) Just give me the job, and I'll deal with it & send you it when done.

Yours, Stephen

Elizabeth Creamer to Marilyn Hacker

16.12.92

Elizabeth Creamer
594 Wythe Creek Road
Poquoson, Va. 23662
(804) 868-0370

Marilyn Hacker, Editor
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Ms. Hacker,

I have delayed writing you for a week because I have known that whatever words I use will be inadequate to express my satisfaction in hearing that "Sexual Harassment and Confessional Poets" will appear in your journal. At the risk of confessing my amateurism, I must tell you that this story is not only the first piece I have sent out, it is also only the seventh story I have written. As a graduate student who is aware of your magazine's reputation, I felt submitting to your journal was naively optimistic. Nonetheless, having read several issues cover to cover, I decided that The Kenyon Review is the place I most wanted to publish. So, I'm feeling like Cinderella, now--an unusual experience for a doubter like me.

During the last year of working on my M.A., I have been trying to teach myself to write--mostly by reading poets. Given the plethora of M.F.A. programs, and the fact that I must write around the demands of a teaching job and three children (thank God for the examples of mothers like Alicia Ostriker), I have felt that my, initially repressed, but pervasive desire to become a writer was just not feasible. I still struggle with daily doubts--fears that, at 31, I've started too late and have too many responsibilities, all the usual sorts of demons. While having one story accepted hardly signifies a radical change in my life, it has helped to keep me at the word processor for at least part of every day, and, maybe, that's what it's all about.

In short, thank you. Enclosed is the double-spaced copy of my manuscript. Your copy editor will note there are some (very) minor changes--mostly corrections to the copy which I forwarded to you and which, shamefully, had several typos. (When I sent the story to you, I was so exhausted by my obsession with its lines that I just wanted the damn thing out of the house.) If your staff prefers the original version in any places where I've made changes, feel free to typeset that copy. Since the editorial process is unknown to me, I will appreciate any guidance you can offer.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Creamer

P.S. I have sent in my subscription. Point taken!

Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker

28.12.92

Monday December 28, 1992

To: Ms. Marilyn Hacker, Ed.
The Kenyon Review

From: Stephen Booker/ B-044049
Florida State Prison
P.O. Box 747/ S-3-S-15
Starke, Florida 32091

Dear Ms. Hacker,

As an update, because you were so kind to wish me luck on the Wesleyan front, today I did receive the welcome news that they'll accept Tug -- I mean they are accepting it! We'll be hashing out particulars about my art & the cover, as I've done my own multi-colored cover, and that's unacceptable because they do them in 3 colors; and as for my illustrations (also in color), they only do black & white. I'll not let either become a bone of contention, and in responding I said that my own illus (done in b & w) can be used, as their graphic artists can also try and follow my concept and do them Wesleyan's way -- "line art" or whatever it was called in a previous letter. There may [be] some impasse over suggestions that I revise or put wholesale changes to work that been previously published; but I'll not go off half-cocked about it -- will try to get my own way, however. For I've a strong case for every word that I use.

Dig: can I be real bold and ask you to cut me break on my "Piper" poem? You know it is one in the Tug ms., and it has been mentioned, specifically, be even the readers they <?> on the manuscript in the initial reading & vote for it to go up before the university's editorial board -- rather, it was voted by one reader. Not all four. Anyway, can I please-please-please my title? I'll owe you a fade in return. No lie.

You already know you got whichever word that moves you, as far as "Sandii" is concerned. I was thinking hard over the weekend, and was putting the slide rule, so to speak, on our line. The wording, "I say she was my sister as she patted dry" has a rather becoming, kinda thoughtful ring, if not actually true to some extent. Will need all of your insight on what's what, o.k.?

JACK -- CHECK TO SEE IF THIS LETTER IS COMPLETE

D.W. Fenza to Philip Jordan

06.01.93

AWP

6 January 1993

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Philip Jordan, President
Ransome<sic> Hall
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I am writing to express AWP's support for *The Kenyon Review*, which I understand may be threatened by the unfriendly economic considerations that now trouble many colleges and universities.

Here at the offices of AWP, countless literary magazines cross our desks, and *The Kenyon Review* is one periodical we always look forward to reading; it is one of the best and most important literary reviews published in the United States. Although

The Kenyon Review has a long and distinguished history of publishing fine writers and good works, the review has especially become more lively and more interesting in recent years. Marilyn Hacker and Eleanor M. Bender are outstanding editors; I have followed and admired their work for years now.

The Kenyon Review continues to be a widely read and significant review because it has kept itself fresh and relevant. Feminism and multiculturalism are the most important literary movements since romanticism; and *The Kenyon Review* can be counted on to present some of the most engaging songs, stories, and criticism from these literary fronts. Embracing the present rather than immolating past achievements, *The Kenyon Review* contains the best new writing informed by multiculturalism and new perspectives of our world and its literary history.

The Kenyon Review connects Kenyon College with the world of ideas and a national reputation. One can't ask a literary magazine to do more. Without *The Kenyon Review*, Kenyon College would be a much smaller and obscure place, and we as lovers of literature would miss a great literary journal.

We hope that you and the college's trustees will do everything possible to allow *The Kenyon Review's* glory days to continue.

Sincerely,

D.W. Fenza
Editor

A national nonprofit association of writers and writing programs supported by its membership, federal grants, and gifts

Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker

12.01.93

Tuesday January 12, 1993

To: Ms. Marilyn Hacker, Ed.
The Kenyon Review

From: Stephen Booker/ B-044049
Florida State Prison
P.O. Box 747/ S-3-S-15
Starke, Florida 32091

Dear Ms. Hacker,

After days and nights of banging my head over it, I have to give you your due: You're on the good lookout for the right reasons. "Daintiliousness" is super-cool, novel, a-o.k. the way I mean for it to be taken; but how many people are as into my head as I am when I write a retrospective account of what I think were the motives behind the gestures of a woman intelligent enough to either have numerous reasons for doing what she did or perhaps even none at all.

"Daintiliousness," as a word, seems to put too much of a control valve on the potential for that movement – that body-English, the pinky-in-the-air slight – to mean everything to the person who did it. Maybe it's presumptuousness<sic> on my part to want it to mean less because, as I've admitted, Sandii frightened the hell out of me on one level but also could be reduced to a sorta package deal on the other (a game broad w/ attitude). You've peeked my hole card, and I can't say that I'm comfortable with it, either. But I must never let the sound of a word (especially one made up) push to the rear the all-important fact of what I need to be shoving forward and into the readers' head as the fullest picture that words can project. Thus I see "daintiliousness" as rather smallish in light of the real goal, the truest prize, having "Sandii" seem to pulsate up from the page, a little more real than she would be were I to operate on guessing my readers' abilities to make her come alive for themselves, while they also slap flesh onto characters according to whim and prejudices – some fool might have her be a masturbatory fetish rather than the genuinc article.

Will you please change the whole line to read as follows:

"I say she was mythical as she patted dry"/

And for your own back-of-your-mind record, know that you've given me a right painful scolding and a cold, hard look at some things you know I had to come across and be rocked by, although they were there to be seen (read) before. i.e., in the Roget's thesaurus:

womanish, adj. effeminate, emasculated; unmanly, cowardly (of men); shrill, vixenish; soft, weak. See Female. Ant., see Male, COURAGE.

That's a bunch of shit, really! Makes me have to know that Roget had a little problem. And I'll have to watch out for unintentionally exhibiting the same trait,

even if they're present in my head to some lesser degree. I need only ask myself if my own Moms<sic> was "weak" or "shrill" or "vixenish"; are my female poet buddies, are you? And then if any of that is attractive or in any stretch of the imagination laudatory?

Enough said on "Sandi."

On my "The Pied-Piper of Murderloin Downs," I want no change at all. Here is no place deserving a lucid monicker like 'Death Row'. Prison is the joint, the slammer, the can – so I can name it my way, and there's no rule being broken. – oh, and dig! Think about the poor maniac the State of Washington snuffed the other day, the one they hung: he was an example of one "de-eyed," "ununderstood," and certainly was "insensate," right through to the end, a real certifiable bug. My "Piper" is such a wildness, a blind fury housed in the body of a human. I mustn't touch this poem.

Please don't leave me biting my nails. Write back. (And tell me if I should bomb my Wesleyan ace with news that you'll want a review copy of my Tug book when it's printed?)

Yours,

Stephen

P.S. Of course you still have the lastword<sic> on "daintiliousness"! If my initial defense convinced you to keep it, why then I'll trust to you knowing that the reader who smarts from reading negativity into it has just read me wrong[er] than I am. If my substitute ("mythical") meets with your approval, then we'll go with it. Either way, you're a sensible and smart editor for knowing the difference, and crackling wit for letting me stew and sweat over the subject of connotations without guidance – which would've stiffened my resolve only to not let you win an argument, maybe. I surrender. And it feels good. The poem has won. I sincerely thank you for a lesson in word-courage vs. word-sense. Don't tell nobody I'm a softy at heart, please.

James Gill to Marilyn Hacker 18.01.93

JAMES GILL

January 18, 1993

Dear Marilyn,

I've decided finally to go to the Jerusalem Festival in early March. The weather will be temperate. This will render life bearable for those ten days. Over 79° is unsafe, over 85° life-threatening, over 90° lethal!

I called Martha Finan (you were away in NY) to remind you to send me a half dozen copies of the last Kenyon issue plus three copies of Going Back to the River (and bill me for the whole business) for the bookstall at the Festival.

The Festival is well attended. And there is a stall that appears to be much more important than the one in Rotterdam.

NOW, there are drugs which are already in use in Europe, and which the FDA for well known reasons is not yet allowing in. If you can give me names, I can try to get them for you.

In other respects, is there anything at all I can do? I have some connections with Hoffmann-la-Roche and Ciba and can at least make inquiries (specify the type of cancer)<.> This is not to denigrate chemotherapy in any way, but there are new strategies that can be used in conjunction with or in certain cases even avoid chemotherapy altogether. Studies are also under way in Europe to puncture the so called pharmacologic sanctuaries which prevent even strong drugs to reach tumour cells on account of the bloodbrain barrier.

We are navigating, you and I, on much the same ships, with different captains. Il n'y a rien à expliquer. But you know the nature of the destroyer and the research in the field is considerable, your spirit remains indomptable<sic>, a great part of the battle, while some great advances are being made. There are many winners, nowadays, need I tell you.

The unknown etiology of my ailment has genetic origins. Its its rarity, makes research insignificant. The illness demolishes you with odd benevolence, almost gently, while all that time the drug therapy is settling things with imperious energy for the unannounced coup de grâce. Doctors smile, shrug or invent new amalgams that seldom work. Finally, so do I... smile. I already know more than they do.

"Life, if well used, is long enough." (Seneca: De Brevitate vitae).

Ever yours,

James

TELEPHONE 021-784 31 94 - TELEFAX 41 21 -- 784 31 64

Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker

09.02.93

Tuesday February 9, 1993

To: Ms. Marilyn Hacker, Ed.
The Kenyon Review

From: Stephen Booker/ B-044049
Florida State Prison
P.O. Box 747/ S-3-S-15
Starke, Florida 32091

Dear Ms. Hacker,

You got to know that I was holding my breath as I opened your letter. Ready to clash with you, figuring you'd be jumping all in my shit – I know you don't mind scolding folks (re: "Uprange from 'Guitar' -- Lee," which you pommeeled me about the head over in only a few short lines). So, yes, I was ready for a sound whipping.

And here it is, you've got this awful news. I feel extra- lightweight in the what-it-is dep. You know, things that're truly important. You really have to press on now, dig. Can't let it get you down. Mind you, I probably don't know about a lot of things, but I'm nearly an expert on how, if you let it you<sic> mind can almost see you planted in the ground, where the immediate problem doesn't deserve as much cold sweat as you can spend on it. Maybe that 'positive mental attitude' jazz works. In any case, you have to give it a shot and not even think about going down that "woe-is-me" path, the one where not thing gets met at the door of f-ing with your head or body and told to be gone.

I want you strong and feisty and perhaps in leather – poetically. You and my ace, Hayden Carruth, are the only ones doing atypical sonnets – like how I sometimes wind em out. And how would it look, I ask you, for there not to be some measure of sanity, of studied and evidenced wisdom in our dark little poets' corner where real neo-, post-,(or protean) 'our way' stuff gets slung out of with no warranty to the use? Get well, you hear! Thanx for the in, too!

Yours,
Stephen

P.S. Wesleyan hasn't told me the out-date – but we do up the contract next month. Will certainly tell you when, and will convey my BIG suggestion to them (my contact: Suzanna Tamminen, Ass't to the Editor) that you get a review copy. For there are a number of pieces in it that I just know you'll dif or else maybe even be rocked on your heels by. I rarely take any prisoners.

(I'm sending this in a card, which I'll leave blank so you can use it if you wish. Don't you dare peg me as mushy for the card or spread rumors about me being that sentimental.)

The envelope will merely stand out amongst the batch of letter-sized ones & regular submissions.

Marilyn Hacker to Tory Dent 10.02.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID BAKER
Consulting Poetry Editor
MARTHA FINAN
Managing Editor

Feb. 10, 1993

Dear Tory Dent,

Thanks so much for letting me see this new group of poems. I'd like to keep "Family Romance" and "Many Rivers to Cross" for publication in the Kenyon Review. I'm very much impressed with the strength and authority your voice has assumed in these new poems.

Because of the avalanche of manuscripts we've been receiving -- over 700 a month -- I'm obliged to schedule work, especially poetry, a bit far ahead. Your poems will most likely be in the Summer 1994 issue. I hope this 18-month gestation period isn't too much of an inconvenience. You know our procedures by now -- you'll be getting back your manuscript with another set of little pink tabs a few months before the publication date. So keep us informed of any address changes, even longish temporary ones.

I hope you're well -- I can see that you're "productive"! I've just been through an unexpected bout under the knife (a mastectomy) with six months of chemo to follow. I've been fortifying myself with heavy duty vitamins called "Immune Protectors" and hope not to fall too far behind.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

PS: I don't know if you're also a subscriber to the KR, but hope we can tempt you with the enclosed -- a lot of good reading, as you'll ascertain from your contributor's copies, too.

PPS. I don't know if you've heard that Michael Klein, the editor of Poets for Life, is compiling a second volume of poetry and prose on HIV/AIDS. I think he'd very much like to see your work, if he hasn't already. His address is: Michael Klein, Box 1729, Provincetown MA 02657. Please feel free to say I suggested you contact him.

Marilyn Hacker to Hayden Carruth

17.02.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER

Editor

DAVID BAKER

Consulting Poetry Editor

MARTHA FINAN

Managing Editor

Feb. 17, 1993

Dear Hayden,

I got the packet with "The Camps" this morning, just after I'd put a handwritten letter to you in the mailbox.

I think the poem is bloody fucking brilliant. (And I think you used up any right to say you've "written yourself out" in any way, shape or form.) I know it wasn't sent as a submission, but I would VERY much like to have it for the Kenyon Review. If it is humanly possible, I'll fit it into the Fall 1993 issue with the other three poems -- besides everything else, "The Camps" is so, alas, timely -- not that it won't, alas, again, be equally timely nine months later. Most poetry about "events far away" doesn't work (for me, at least) --- I could never respond more than politically to Denise Levertov's Viet Nam poems, or to June Jordan's poems about the Palestinians: I was always painfully aware that the poet hadn't been there: I was looking at "color photographs of the atrocities" to borrow a title from Ken Pitchford's underrated book. I think there's something about what your one critic named as "surrealistic" that does anneal, transform and transmute the material beyond protest or reportage.

If space is a problem in the Fall, would you mind if I used "The Camps" first and the three shorter poems (maybe with other new shorter ones) later?

Speaking (as you did in your last letter) about time-warps, enclosed is the last poem I finished, at the end of November in Paris, a month before the cancer diagnosis, along with Xeroxes of two in the last Paris Review, one of which sort of "goes with" the newer one.

Love,

Marilyn

Marilyn Hacker to Frank M. Chipasula

18.02.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER

Editor

DAVID BAKER

Consulting Poetry Editor

MARTHA FINAN

Managing Editor

February 18, 1993

Dear Frank M. Chipasula,

Thanks very much for sending your essay (I'd almost given up hope, as I hadn't heard from you for so long) and the poems. I'll be very pleased to use the essay in the Kenyon Review. I'm correct in assuming that it is not identical to the introduction to Mother Tongues, so we wouldn't be publishing something that was coming out simultaneously in book form?

I had one small, but perhaps, necessary query about the essay: you don't indicate in what language each of the poets discussed writes or wrote. I'm assuming that Noemia de Sousa and Alda do Espiritu Santo wrote in Portuguese; I've read Andree Chedid in French -- but I think the variety of languages (and linguistic traditions<sic>) in which these poets express themselves is important. (I also wonder in de Sousa and do Espiritu Santo read contemporary Brazilian poetry, and if it influenced them -- if there was any intellectual commerce between multiracial Brazil and Mozambique.) I think this information is important for readers -- I wanted it myself -- and it also indicates how multifaceted the African poetic tradition(s) are. It's all too easy for American readers to assume everything underlines the primacy of English.

One small technical request: we'll need a copy of the essay with the footnotes at the end, before the Works Cited: we always format essays this way, and it's sheer hell for the copy editor and compositor to have to make the adjustments for themselves.

I got great pleasure from reading the poems, but am afraid I won't be able to use them: we're groaning under an enormous poetry overload at the moment.

We will try to include the essay in the Spring '94 issue (there's no way, now, that we could have published it any sooner) and hope for the best as to having copies in England for a May 94 book launch. We aim to have our spring issues out in April, but copyeditors<sic> leave, printers go belly-up, and things are sometimes delayed.

Please send the revised version, footnotes at the end, marked REVISION OF ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT.

You'll be hearing from our managing editor closer to the date of publication, with a contract, request for contributor's note, and your copy-edited manuscript for approval/responses to queries. So please keep us apprised of any address changes, even long-term temporary ones like a stay at YADD0.

And -- we hope your interest in the Kenyon Review will also include a subscription!

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

Marilyn Hacker to Alfred Corn

22.02.93

TUE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

Feb. 22, 1993

Dear Alfred,

Thanks so much for sending these new poems. I'm pleased to accept them both for the Kenyon Review. They'll either be in the Spring or Summer 1994 issue (the result of getting 750 manuscripts a month -- but I've declared a moratorium on "unsolicited" until the fall, and trust my luck to go through the mail & find things I want to read -- like your poems).

Here, it's up and down. My second chemo cycle was postponed because my white blood cell count was too low last week -- no, the week before, and any postponement stretches the process out what seems like interminably. I'm not feeling too bad, considering: just getting around & coping with life in Ohio consumes more time and energy than anything does in New Yor<sic>, especially in this horrendous Stalingrad weather. And of course, having Karyn with me in New York (even coming home exhausted from the emergency room at 7:45 PM, & leaving again at 6:45 AM, or down with a hospital-bred flu) made an enormous difference.

I'll be back in NY for, probably 2½ weeks on March 12. I hope we can get together then. Needless to say, I'm considerably more mobile than I was last time we had tea. I may be bald -- but Sinead O'Connor's still in style, & I've never minded if I epater la bourgeoisje.

Love,

Marilyn

PS Charlie Williams nominated your "1992" selection for a Pushcart.

Marilyn Hacker, *Editor*; David H. Lynn, *Associate Editor*; Martha Finan, *Managing Editor*

James Gill to Marilyn Hacker 24.02.93

JAMES GILL

February 24, 1993

Dear Marilyn,

Thanks for giving me some news about yourself.

As I wrote Martha, the six Kenyons arrived in good order. I already mailed four of them to Jerusalem. I also received the three Going Back to the River, many thanks. I'll give one (on your behalf) to Yehuda Amichai, the second to Estée de Nour, the general Director of the Festival and the third to Vivian Eden, who heads the organization of the Poetry readings and associated programs. They read and are future-project oriented.

How well I understand the editorial avalanche you have to endure with its daily flood of big and small problems.

During my tenure of 2PLUS2 I often had to contend with sensitive, often thoughtful...word arrangers who were in the end mediocre writers, and with absolutely awful, schizoid, predatory human beings...curiously transformed into profound, compassionate and splendidly attuned writers.

With the hemoglobine<sic> in gradual and inexplicable retreat (etiological secrets known only to me) I've told my doctors I'm still going to Israel. Great, one of them said. Eat olives, lots of them. Good good, nothing to worry about, another said, they have some of the best doctors there...

Let me hear from you.

Ever yours,

James

I've been reading Carruth's Collected Shorter Poems - 1976<?> -1991 - at your suggestion!

TELEPHONE 021-784 31 94 - TELEFAX 41 21 - 784 31 64

Marilyn Hacker to Rafael Campo

25.02.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER

Editor

DAVID BAKER

Consulting Poetry Editor

MARTHA FINAN

Managing Editor

Feb. 25, 1993

bitter cold

snow & more expected

Querido Rafael,

I hope the letter I wrote to you last week has reached you since you sent the essay. My current news, aside from experiencing constant exhaustion more due to the bad weather than anything else, is that I began the second chemo cycle on Tuesday, & resumed my "cell killer" pills yesterday. Also, that, at the end of the requisite question session with the Columbus oncologist<sic> & nurses, during which I'd given my health history & domestic status, etc. -- so I'd said that Karyn was my partner & finishing her PA training in New York -- the doctor asked me, was my partner thinking of coming to Ohio to join me. I said I couldn't say, now, why? Well, would she like a job? They're looking to hire PSs at the James Cancer Center at OSU Hospital, actually one of the 10 top cancer facilities in the country. I explained that she wouldn't be "hireable" until next January-- but was there a chance that she could do her SICU rotation in their facility, to see how she liked it. In fact, I may have to do the calling myself, as Karyn is on a 7AM to 5 PM rotation in OB/ GYN at Linoln<sic> Hospital in the Bronx -- which she hates, not so much OB/ GYN as the profit-motivated, sleek, contemptuous male doctors working there. She said there is one scared mouse of a female first-year resident: the other MDs are all male, including all the residents. There are no other Pas, which means that, unlike what she experienced on other rotations, she is not allowed to do anything -- and isn't even called on in conferences when she knows the answer to a question & all the residents are sputtering in ignorance. She wanted to put in Saturdays at the (almost clandestine) abortion clinic, to the delight of the nurse administrating it, but was told by the attending: "There's no place for you here."

I was very moved by the essay, by what it says and by the beauty and grace with which you said it. If it's humanly possible, I would like to use it in the fall issue: the other essays relevant to the "science" part are actually about science fiction; this is a hundred times more "relevant" as far as I'm concerned. And, of course, I equally like the accompanying poem. But I may have to eliminate some of the other poems of yours I've taken (or postpone them) in order to use it (and to avoid the impression of a "Rafael Campo issue).

I'll probably xerox the essay and send a copy to Karyn!

I'm going<sic> home from the office earlier (no more 9-to-8) and trying to use a bit of the time to write, even if only in a notebook. I find you prodigious creative energy admirable -- and I hope even, someday again, imitable!

Spanish? Inscription

Marilyn

Cyrus Cassells to Marilyn Hacker

04.03.93

Cyrus Cassells
March 4, 1993
c/o Cassells
2190 Belden Place
Escondido, CA 92029
(619) 745-9156

Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Marilyn:

I've enclosed two poems related to AIDS, "Marathon," and "Evening Lasting As Life," for consideration for the magazine. "Marathon" was written for Melvin Dixon, just before he died. I lost four friends within a brief period in the fall, so the crisis has been much on my mind of late.

I have some very good news to share. Copper Canyon is going to publish my second book, (now titled) Soul Make A Path Through Shouting in 1994. Stanley Kunitz recently selected me for a Peter I.B. Lavan Younger Poet Award.

Though I'm writing from northern Italy, all correspondence should be addressed to me in care of my above California address.

I send you my best wishes for the spring.

Sincerely,

Cyrus Cassells

Ruth Whitman to Marilyn Hacker

06.03.93

40 Tuckerman Avenue
Middletown, RI 02840

March 6, 1993

Marilyn Hacker, Editor
Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Marilyn,

Thank you for your kind letter of February 26. I too have had a similar shock about mortality and vulnerability. Out of the blue my doctor discovered that I have chronic myelogenous leukemia<sic>, a condition that with me seems to go in cycles. For the past six years I must go on chemotherapy two or three times a year, a process which so far produces a state of normal energy so I can do my work. Despite this handicap - or even more possibly because of it -- I have been producing more writing than ever. When I am feeling good I try to do as much as possible because when I am not feeling good, I lack energy for the smallest task.

With you, however, there is the possibility of permanent remission, and I hope with all my heart that the procedures that you are going through will bring this about. I'm sure you are discovering, as I did, that now more than ever you must stick to the important things and do everything you want to do. I send you my most affectionate wishes for your recovery.

How and where is your daughter? I often think of that charming dinner in your apartment on 109 street<sic>. And of those innocent years at MacDowell.

I must shamefacedly admit that I have only read other people's copies of The Kenyon Review, but am hastening to remedy that oversight, despite the fact that my income is greatly reduced since I am not teaching at MIT this year. I have taken the year off to write and travel, and I like this vacance<sic> so much I may never go back. We are off to Amsterdam at the end of this month.

With warmest good wishes,

As ever,

Ruth Whitman

Jeffrey Betcher to Marilyn Hacker 14.03.93

353 Pierce Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

March 14, 1993

The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

ATTN: Ms. Marilyn Hacker, Editor

Dear Marilyn Hacker,

I've been so excited since receiving your letter, haven't been able to sit down and respond. This is my first time to be published in the likes of The Kenyon Review; and, while almost unbelievable, it is also impossibly appropriate that it is this journal, that you are the editor, and that it is this poem (about my first experience with AIDS that took place during the time of my initial "coming out").

I've enclosed a new copy of the poem, including the title ("Elegy is perfect; thank you), and the typo correction to line 6, along with a separate letter marked :RE: ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT for purposes on your end.

The first issue of the review just arrived, and the next few days will feel a little like a holiday. In the previous issue, I particularly appreciated Pam Houston's essay which not only informed my current thinking, but was a delight to read.

I was in the grant library here in San Francisco recently and ran across your name with a New York City address and thought how strange it is - your being in Gambier. I wonder if you have been to "Friendly's" on Coshocton Rd. where I worked for years (a good breakfast; and Dee Fluharty, the manager there, is still one of my favorite people), or if you have discovered the cow bridge and the tressle (just over the hill), or the "lookout" (the path for which is off the road behind the library). Truly a different world.

By the way, as I've been hoisting my swell-head all over town, soliciting back-pats and lifted glasses, I have also been encouraging everyone to subscribe. I hope some of them do.

I cannot express how enormously grateful I am, and freshly inspired. Thank you.

Warmest regards,

Jeffrey[Betcher]

Theodore O. Mason to Philip Jordan

12.01.93

Kenyon College

Department of English
Sunset Cottage
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Tel 614/427-5210

12 January 1993

Phillip H. Jordan
President
Ransom Hall

Dear President Jordan:

I have been asked by the Department to express our support for The Kenyon Review. We understand thoroughly that in a time of financial constraint all parts of the College must fall under budgetary scrutiny. However, we would hope that such scrutiny would result in appropriately conservative responses to Kenyon's current financial situation.

We believe that The Kenyon Review continues to add to the quality of life here at the College, for students, faculty, and administration alike. Further, we remain convinced that the presence of The Review accrues value to the College in provinces outside of Gambier. For these and other reasons, we look forward to the continuing success of the journal.

Sincerely,

Theodore O. Mason, Jr. Chair
Associate Professor of English

cc: Kenyon Review

Marilyn Hacker to Omar S. Castaneda

13.04.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

April 13, 1993

Dear Omar,

I'm delighted to learn about your awards and upcoming publications. But I'm going to have to demur on the blurb-writing. I'm recovering from a New Year's Eve day operation for breast cancer, & am trying to do my work while coping with a six-months course of chemotherapy, which means I'm running on empty a lot of the time, & must curtail a lot of "extracurricular" work -- especially as we're also coping with the rather horrendous Lila Wallace marketing grant.

A few months ago, you mentioned the possibility of your sending some new short fiction our way. I hope that's still true (although not, please, work scheduled for publication this October, as I'm now working on the summer and fall 1994 (!) issues.

All best,

Marilyn

(Have you considered trying Reg McKnight or Beth Grant or Judith Irtiz Cofer for blurbs: I'm assuming they all know your work (at least) as readers of the KR.

Marilyn Hacker, *Editor*; David Baker, *Consulting Poetry Editor*; Martha Finan, *Managing Editor*

Marilyn Hacker to Cyrus Cassells 18.04.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID BAKER
ELEANOR M. BENDER
CAROLE MASO
Consulting Editors
CY WAINSCOTT
Managing Editor

April 18, 1993

Dear Cyrus,

It's always good to hear from you, and I'm glad you've managed the wherewithal to stay on in Florence. I'm also delighted that Copper Canyon is going to do your new book. They'll also be doing my *New & Selected Poems* (I haven't thought of a title yet -- I wanted to call it Against Elegies, but then Carolyn Forché's Norton anthology, Against Forgetting, turned up) in the spring/summer of 1994.

My own other news isn't so good. In quick succession, I was diagnosed as having breast cancer, had a mastectomy on New Year's Eve day, began chemotherapy on January 23, which is to go on until the end of June. The prognosis<sic> is "good" -- but the treatments are no fun: I've very little energy left beyond that necessary to go on with my work for the Kenyon Review, and I'm (temporarily) almost hairless, but I've gotten a crew cut to counteract the effect, and silver earcuffs to go along with it. My partner, Karyn, and other friends have been strong and wonderfully supportive, but work is work, and the New York/ Ohio shuttling back & forth hasn't made it easier<>

I'd like to keep "Marathon" for publication in the Kenyon Review (where, of course, we'd also published poems of Melvin's). I wonder if the line under the title mightn't just read -- either: In memoriam: Melvin Dixon (1950 -- 1992), or For Melvin Dixon: (1950 -- 1992) Either way (I incline toward the latter) the import is swifter, and the typesetting would be cleaner. Also, and this is a minor thing, have you a particular reason for wanting to say "dying bed" instead of the more usual "deathbed"? The other locution doesn't seem to add anything.

I'm going to try to fit the poem into the Fall 1993 issue (even though I'm currently scheduling poetry for Summer 1994) because I'd like it to appear something like a year after Melvin's death -- to keep him in mind. That means you'll get a contract & copy-edited poem within the next couple of months -- so please let us know ASAP where these should be sent: it would be swifter to send them directly to you in Italy, if that's where you'll be through July/ August/ Sept.

I'm also enclosing a poem of my own, which appeared in The American Voice (a good magazine that hardly anyone sees) this past fall -- written the summer before Melvin died.

All best,

Marilyn

Tory Dent to Marilyn Hacker

24.04.93

483 West 23 21 St
NY NY 10011

4/24/93

Dear Marilyn,

I've been wanting to write to you now for the past couple of months ever since Jesse and Rachel let me know what you've been going through. Indeed I even began this missive in February but for various reasons, like my book accepted by Persea which I want to thank-you for and why later I will explain (if you don't already know), health ups & downs, overwhelming workload, etc. As well I didn't quite know the best way to approach and still don't since we have yet to meet although I feel as if I know you to some degree and as if you know me. Also I never know whether or not, how much or how little people want this kind of butting in with healing advice. I've experienced a range of different responses in my desire to share with others methods which frankly at this point I feel convinced are saving my life. But, of course, I could always be wrong. When I received your acceptance letter for Kenyon I appreciated your confiding in me about your health. I want to thank-you for your support of my poetry but that I will speak to in a few minutes for firstly I want to offer you my friendship and my assistance during this difficult time you're experiencing. I hope you will forgive me for being so bold as to share what has been going on in my life with since I tested HIV positive and the healing methods I've incorporated hence that I think have made an enormous difference. In short, I'm about to give you allot<sic> of free advice with the hope that you will find it useful. When you mentioned taking the super immune support vitamins it cued me as to how open you might be to hearing about alternative methods. I will try to speak only in reference to my experience but I may fall into making recommendations. Again, please forgive me for any presumptuousness I may be making by enclosing so much information. Its<sic> just here in this letter, and in the accessibility of my presence for you to utilize when you want if you want.

I'll begin by giving you a sense of how I came upon the mind-set I have toward health and healing by giving you a bit of background. I have an unusual medical history and as unusual are the methods I have discovered to resolve my medical problems since the more normative approaches have proved insufficient. Instead of starting at the beginning and bringing you up to date, perhaps its better to begin with my situation now and draw examples from the past. I tested HIV positive in April of 1988, just after my thirtieth birthday. So far I've been healthy, having suffered no opportunistic diseases, which today is more commonplace than in '88 when I was told I'd have two years max. to live and that everyone who tested developed AIDS. At that time it was the practice for full-doses of AZT to be prescribed to anyone HIV positive, although there were varied opinions according to the varied doctors. I refused AZT and have remained aloof from the more conservative medical recommendations of consistent T-cell testing and AZT or DDI. Everyone I know who has followed this procedure has died. I have lost five friends to date. Perhaps I am just extremely lucky, and perhaps in the choices I have made in terms of my health care, I've made the correct decisions.

Perhaps I am no different and its<sic> just a matter of time. But I don't think so because my body is proving the statistics otherwise. On the other hand I must always accept the possibility that I may not be an exception. Keeping this in mind safeguards me from denial. On the other hand focusing on my life, my work, my friends, that which is life-giving while allowing the emotions that come up with the worst HIV scenarios provide the most light, the most hope, and hope I believe is critical for healing. This attitude towards hope is perhaps where my greatest discontent with western medicine, since their approach is always less than hopeful, dashed hopes proving most lethal. But fed a steady diet of the worst expectations proves just as lethal to me. And there are doctors that are beginning to agree with this.

O.K. I feel strongly that my good health is a result of the alternative approaches I have taken in order to heal myself. Now I will now jump back a decade to explain how I came up [with] the notion that I could heal myself outside the perimeters of traditional medicine.

At the age of eight months I fell out of my crib and suffered a subdural hematoma. I underwent surgery. In the spring of 1979, at the age of 21, I developed grand mal seizures. After c. scans it became evident that my seizures were the result of scar tissue on my brain from the hematoma. I was put on a consistent dose of dilantin and optional phenobarbital. Being in college with the aspirations of becoming a writer I found that the medication interfered with my thinking. My neurologist had said that the medication in fact did not stop the seizures entirely but only reduced their probability. At the time I suffered about 5-7 grand mal seizures a year, the lowest rate of probability the medicine could promise anyway: six or one half-dozen of another. I started to experiment going off the medication on my own. It definitely improved my thinking and thus my studies. One day I experience an aura while grocery shopping. I sat on the floor, buried my head in my hands and WILLED the spot away. It worked then and from then on. Later when I revealed this to a Neurologist they said the technique was called bio-feedback, usually used for high blood pressure. They were impressed I'd discovered it on my own. They said it was never used though for treating seizure disorders. I said, now it is. In short bio-feedback can be called doctoring oneself, sending your body the message you are being taken care of. Through the years I have broadened my support system of alternative healing practitioners and practices to perfect the techniques of the doctor within me. Whether in<sic> be through psychotherapy, physical therapy, which includes so many forms, i.e. Rolphing or shiatsu, other practices to curb stress, the counseling of different therapists these practitioners have replaced the more orthodox doctors I have found in my past to be less effective in my healing. I have not had a seizure since 1982. I have not been on medication for seizures since 1981. I have not had [a] bi-annual check up with a neurologist since 1984. If I had followed the orthodox methods it would cost as much or more than my alternative approaches.

In 1983 I became ill with a strange virus doctors could not diagnose. First they speculated it was Hodgkin's Disease and I underwent a lymph node biopsy which they took out three nodes and took my<sic> half a year to fully recover the use of my arm. Then they thought it was leukemia. Extensive blood testing proved otherwise. I entered N.Y.U. medical center and was hospitalized for nearly three weeks given every test they could think of to figure out a diagnosis. I was 20lbs underweight. I'd had a low grade fever of 100 to 101 for several months. Most, if not, all my lymph

nodes were swollen. Finally a young infectious disease specialist checked me out and settled on a pre-aids (today would be called ARC) diagnosis. There was no HIV test. There was no AZT. There was nothing but hope.

I was 24. All those brilliant and expensive doctors had nothing to suggest. I went away to Block Island, R.I. where I summer. I ate well, I meditated, I learned self-healing techniques taught to me by some of the people mentioned above. When I returned in the fall I had completely recovered. The doctor obviously thought they had been wrong about the AIDS diagnosis. When I test positive in 1988 it looked in retrospect as if that strange virus had indeed been HIV.

Since then I've developed what I think of as my brain trust which consists of a nutritionist/ chiropractor, a homeopathic doctor, a traditional top-of-the line western HIV doctor, a shiatsu practitioner, an Ayurveda doctor, as well as other health care practitioners that have assisted me on this journey, i.e. I started learning the Alexander technique this fall. I practice TM and meditate 3x a day. I exercise every other day. I eat well, go to bed early, wake up early. Basically, my approach is quiet<sic> commonsensical once everything is integrated and not that different from the life of a farmer. I've enclosed as well one of my favorite books on healing that really helped me bridge the gap between a deeply indoctrinated Western mentality toward health and medicine to a more autonomous outlook that encompasses alternative methods. Its<sic> important to remember that alternative methods take longer than Western recommendations like drugs. But they are healthier for you, promoting longevity and a solid state of mind and body no drug can induce (not its reality that is). The medical practices I choose can be called alternative in that they are an alternative to traditional western methods. They are not in conflicts with incorporating Western recommendations either, IE. I take a PCP prophylactic and if there were a drug to stop HIV that definitely worked I'd swallow it in a minute. I feel I'm fully justified in deducting the expenses for my alternative practices from my taxes and after battling it out with the IRS I do. Any other deduction for a doctor's fee or drug expense would never [have] been questioned as to their authenticity. I can give you the name of my accountant. Brilliant man.

What do I do about meeting deadlines in addition to taking care of my health, etc.? The integration process I'd say has been the hardest. Only now have I gotten the hang of it, and its<sic> taken me five years. Setting up a schedule for relaxation and sticking to it is key. Priorities are health, work, friends, in that order, (for you 'family' may come in between health and work). I've even stumbled the hard way upon a motto: put your health first and everything falls into place; put your health last and everything falls apart.

So there's the gist of it Marilyn. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions, care to elaborate on any thing I've said, want more information, or just want to talk with someone who understands. I want you to know that of course I have no investment in what choices you decide to make, that I wouldn't want you to feel any kind of pressure to do what I've done, or explore partially what I've done and then discard it, etc. I only support you. Its<sic> your body, its<sic> your life. I've enclosed the names and numbers of all the members of my brain trust except for my shrink of course, although if you would like a recommendation I can of course get one

for you. If you choose to explore any one of these great people just tell them you're a good friend of mine.

Now for the thank-you. Where did you come from Marilyn? To publish the poems I wish in a way I never wanted to write. "Many Rivers to Cross" I read at Barnard last spring in lieu of sobbing and screaming and railing at the audience for my 10 min. slot. Thank-you for hearing that poem. In January Michael Klein asked me for [a] poem for the AIDS anthology published by Persea which sparked the idea to send them my manuscript. I know I have a little bird to thank, and the bird is a phoenix.

Sincerely, with love,

Tory

nutritionist/ chiropractor:

Nane Cheung
83 Washington Place
NYC 10011
(212) 505-9190

Homeopath:

Anthony Aurigemma, M.D.
133 East 73rd St.
NYC 10021
(212) 988-4800

Shiatsu:

(3 people I know. Each will come to your house. All have worked on me at various times. Sam is my regular practitioner)

Sam Berlind
(718) 274-7578
Maribeth Dawkins
Nini Melvin
(212) 260-2858

GP & HIV kingpin:

Tom Nash, M.D.
260 East 66th St.
NYC 10021

Marilyn Hacker to Reed S. Browning

06.05.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID BAKER
ELEANOR M. BENDER
CAROLE MASO
Consulting Editors
CY WAINSCOTT
Managing Editor

May 6, 1993

Dear Reed,

Along with sharing my pleasure at the enclosed (and hoping that your recovery is now entirely complete) I wanted to "get off my chest" (such as it is) something that's been bothering me for a while -- namely the evaluation which I received in January. To read it, one would think that I had been paying exclusive attention to the "merely" literary side of the Kenyon Review, while ignoring the all-important (?) financial aspect. The passive voice in the sentence concerning the Lila Wallace and Lannan grants makes it appear that they fell upon us from the blue. In fact, as I think you know, the Lila Wallace grant required of us, and of me in particular, months of mind-numbing and soul-destroying work precisely to do with that financial aspect, unremunerated, and on top of all the work, business/marketing included, incumbent upon the executive editor. The only reason that the Lannan was even open to application from literary journals, instead of going automatically to the same three journals which they've granted since the foundation's inception, is that I "lobbied" them to open up the application process. Although we'd discussed the fact that the bookstore circulation of the Review has gone from 450 to (as of this month) 1975, not including the copies sold at the Kenyon Bookstore, since I've become editor, that did not appear in the evaluation. There are times when I'd like to work in a literary ivory tower, but it hasn't been either an option, or a choice that I've made.

I didn't expect a merit raise this year because I assumed that the College was not in a financial position to offer them (although I've since learned that faculty members did receive them). I frankly think I deserved one, if anyone did, having brought the Review over \$103,000 in grant monies for the next two years (if the Lannan grant is renewed, as it doubtless will be, since their only stipulation seemed to be that I remain the editor), as well as considerable notice and praise for <sic> that "mere" literary side. But more than the "average" raise recommended, I was disturbed by what seemed to be an "average" performance rating for a period in which, before my own illness, I'd practically suspended my own life to attend to the literary and business needs of the Kenyon Review.

Sincerely,

Marilyn

C. Philip Jordan

Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker

10.05.93

Kenyon College

Office of the Provost

Ransom Hall

Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Tel 614/427-5114

May 10, 1993

Ms. Marilyn Hacker

Editor of The Kenyon Review

Sunset Cottage

Dear Marilyn:

We have lunch scheduled for Wednesday, and while my chief purpose in proposing it was to give us a chance to talk about how the world is going these days (for both of us, a post-operative world), I do want to insert two items of business into it.

The first concerns your letter of May 6. I am sorry that our respective health difficulties made a face-to-face conversation impossible last January. The explanation for your salary increase -- which is a good one in the Kenyon context -- is that Kenyon expects good work from its employees. A standard increase is a response to good work. And as the materials you sent me clearly indicate, you are doing good work.

The second concerns your contract. You added a notation to the bottom of it indicating that you would not teach in 1993-94. That's not acceptable. You will recall a meeting with the President and me in which we stressed how essential it was to lower the College subsidy of the KR and explained that your assumption of the responsibility for teaching one course, aside from bringing an outstanding poet into the Kenyon classroom, was an element in accomplishing this goal. You expressed at that time some worry about how much this teaching might eat into your editorial work, and for that reason I backed away from my initial proposal that you offer a course each semester. But it is essential that you teach one writing course.

I am looking forward to our getting together.

Sincerely yours,

Reed S. Browning

Provost

RSB/bm

Marilyn Hacker to Diana Abu-Jaber

10.05.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID BAKER
ELEANOR M. BENDER
CAROLE MASO
Consulting Editors
CY WAINSCOTT
Managing Editor

May 10, 1993

Dear Diana Abu-Jaber,

Thanks so much for sending us this new story. I would very much like to use it in the Kenyon Review. I did, however, have a couple of problems with it which I hope will be soluble with a bit of revision.

The first problem was what seemed to me like an anachronism. As far as I know, the persecution of pregnant women for "fetal alcohol abuse" is very much a 1990s thing. But since Estelle then goes on to four years of boarding school and four of college, this would put the body of the story in 1985, latest, which makes Shoshona's being put in prison for that offense somewhat out of the ordinary, to say the least. Perhaps you have information I'm not privy to about the use of alcohol-abuse regulations against pregnant Native women: if so, fill me in!!

My second problem was the encounter with the shaman (as I guess he's meant to be). I didn't find it quite believable, after all that had gone before, that Estelle doesn't have some hesitation about going off with an unknown man, no idea that his intentions might be sexual, and what does she think about that (the story clearly implies that she doesn't want to go the way of Shoshona and, now, Elizabeth -- and there are examples enough in the story of older men of all races finding thirteen-year-olds "fair game."). In fact, his initial sentence to her sounds like a come-on: "Elizabeth Medicine Bow now lives with her new lover. Why don't you come with me instead?" And there's no other indication of why, initially, he might be interested in this unknown, non-Native girl. I think, to make this episode effective, it has to be fleshed a bit more, especially in its opening. I also thought that might be a good place for the narrator to remember her real, Palestinian, name.

Because of the avalanche of manuscripts we've been receiving, the KR is editorially complete<sic> through the summer of 1994 -- I'll have to schedule your story for the Fall 1994 issue. This gives you plenty of time to think about & send in revisions -- but I would like to know what you think of my comments. You'll be hearing from our managing editor a few months before publication, with a contract, request for up-to-date contributor's note, and your copy-edited story for approval/ responses to

queries. So please keep us informed of any address changes, even long-term temporary ones.

If you're not yet a subscriber, we hope your interest in the Kenyon Review will also tempt you to use the enclosed to become one!

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker

10.05.93

Kenyon College

Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5114

May 10, 1993

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
Editor, The Kenyon Review
Sunset Cottage

Dear Marilyn:

We have lunch scheduled for Wednesday, and while my chief purpose in proposing it was to give us a chance to talk about how the world is going these days (for both of us, a post-operative world), I do want to insert two items of business into it.

The first concerns your letter of May 6. I am sorry that our respective health difficulties made a face-to-face conversation impossible last January. The explanation for your salary increase -- which is a good one in the Kenyon context -- is that Kenyon expects good work from its employees. A standard increase is a response to good work. And as the materials you sent me clearly indicate, you are doing good work.

The second concerns your contract. You added a notation to the bottom of it indicating that you would not teach in 1993-94. That's not acceptable. You will recall a meeting with President and me in which we stressed how essential it was to lower the College subsidy of the KR and explained that your assumption of the responsibility for teaching one course, aside from bringing an outstanding poet into the Kenyon classroom, was an element in accomplishing this goal. You expressed at that time some worry about how much this teaching might eat into your editorial work, and for that reason I backed away from my initial proposal that you teach one writing course.

I am looking forward to our getting together.

Sincerely yours,

Reed S. Browning
Provost

RSB/bm

Anne Ponder to Marilyn Hacker, Ted Mason and Cy Wainscott

11.05.93

Kenyon College

Academic Dean
105 Park Street
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5117

DATE: May 11, 1993

TO: Marilyn Hacker, Editor, Kenyon Review
Ted Mason, Chair, Department of English
Cy Wainscott, Managing Editor, Kenyon Review

FROM: Anne Ponder, Academic Dean

As we discussed last week, in addition to several individual office reassignments for the English department, beginning in late summer 1993, Marilyn Hacker will be assigned to Sunset Cottage 001. Barb Dupee will be assigned Sunset Cottage 106.

The English Department will retain use of what is currently Barb Dupee's office. That will become a public space, with mailboxes, English department work study students, departmental conversations over the copier, chairs (when we can afford them), etc. There will be the attendant noise from this public space. By baffling the sound, where possible, with arrangements of books or wall hangings to acoustical advantage, noise can be minimized but not eliminated.

This reassignment of space places obligations on the Kenyon Review staff to make likely the comfort and utility of the public uses of English department space on the ground floor of Sunset Cottage. Specifically, complaints about noise will be considered very bad form. It is hoped that this space reassignment can facilitate a spirit of collegial conversation among English department members which will extend to the Kenyon Review and that the Review staff will do what it can to make English department members feel welcome on the ground floor of Sunset Cottage. It is also hoped that this reassignment of the Kenyon Review editor to a larger office closer to the Review staff will facilitate Review work and make it possible for the Kenyon Review to take advantage of efficiencies, cost savings, and convenience afforded by access to computing equipment and the network.

Like any assignment of college space, assignments are not permanent. If this reassignment does not function to the advantage of all parties, as envisioned, a return to the current assignment is possible. Further, of course, the Kenyon Review will be in the list of areas requesting more spacious, contiguous quarters elsewhere on campus.

/sb

cc: Barb Dupee, Administrative Assistant, English Department

Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker and Cy Wainscott

13.05.93

Kenyon College

Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5114

May 13, 1993

Ms. Marilyn Hacker and
Mr. Cy Wainscott
The Kenyon Review
Sunset Cottage

Dear Marilyn and Cy:

This letter is a follow-up on my conversation with Marilyn on May 12 and in response to the memo from Joe Nelson to you both and to Martha Finan, dated May 11. Joe is correct. The Kenyon Review subsidy for 1993-94 is \$135,000. I have not seen your proposed budget, but I judge from the memo that it assumes a subsidy of at least \$141,700. If I understand that matter properly, then Joe is correct, and you do need to prune the budget back to a level consistent with a subsidy of \$135,00<sic>.

Sincerely yours,

Reed S. Browning
Provost

RSB/ bm

cc: President Jordan
Mr. Nelson

Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker

13.05.93

Kenyon College

Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5114

May 13, 1993

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
Editor
The Kenyon Review
Sunset Cottage

Dear Marilyn:

I enjoyed our opportunity for conversation before the summer and was glad to see you so strong and lively. I hope the last two rounds of chemotherapy go well and that you then lead a defiantly long and richly rewarding life.

I have consulted yet again the correspondence I wrote in November and December of 1991. It confirms the point I was making in our conversation about the importance of your teaching one course each year. I will be in touch with Ted Mason, Chair of the Department of English, and ask him to contact you about the character of the creative writing course you will teach second semester of 1993-94. Thank you for understanding the importance of your taking responsibility for that course.

Best wishes for a grand summer in France and for the successful launching of a French edition of some of your poetry.

Sincerely yours,

Reed S. Browning
Provost

RSB/ bm

Cy Wainscott to Joseph Nelson

18.05.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID BAKER
ELEANOR M. BENDER
CAROLE MASO
Consulting Editors
CY WAINSCOTT
Managing Editor

May 18, 1993

TO: Joe Nelson
FR: Cy Wainscott
RE: KR budget (proposed)
CC: President Jordan
Provost Browning
Vice President Givens
Jennifer Cabral
Marilyn Hacker

Here is the proposed 1993-94 budget for the *Kenyon Review*. It reflects our determination to move the *Review* to a position of greater self-sufficiency. As you know, this cannot be an overnight process. But we are determined to proceed as quickly and effectively as possible toward that goal.

This budget represents a reduction of nearly nine percent in support from Kenyon College compared to the projection for the current fiscal year and it conforms to your directive that the level of Kenyon support be reduced to \$135,000.

The cuts hurt (and, no, you didn't say it would be easy -- just necessary) especially at a time when we are attempting, with the help of the Lila Wallace marketing grant, to establish a circulation and marketing base to put the *Review* on a more solid business foundation, make more likely a decreasing call on general college support and maintain a level of quality that reflects well on Kenyon.

But cut we must and cut we have.

I was not an active participant in the preparation of the preliminary budget sent to you earlier and my familiarity with the history and reasoning behind it is incomplete. My perception is that, while Marilyn Hacker and Martha Finan were unaware of a support ceiling reduction, their goal was to significantly reduce the amount of college support needed.

(I remain uncertain about the budget determination process. Should we have known about the ceiling cap before preparing the preliminary budget? Or is the cap determined after you review our preliminary figures?)

(Marilyn tells me this: When she was hired she was told the support cap was \$150,000 and this has been re-confirmed several times since. Thus she was surprised by your May 11 note -- the first indication to her of a change in the administration's support position -- and concerned that as editor she had no opportunity for consultation before the change was implemented. While she has been and remains committed to reducing the support level, she has difficulty understanding what she perceives to be an arbitrary reduction in the face of rising business costs, all before the effects of the marketing effort can be realized and applied to the operating base.)

I have made some very minor changes to get the cuts in our budget nearer to the bone and have incorporated one major change -- in the Gifts/Grants line.

Increasing corporate and other contributions to the *Keryon Review* is a significant part of the Lila Wallace and Lannan Foundation grants. My understanding is that the grants support a fund-raising consultant and that she has already visited the campus, had conversations with President Jordan, submitted the broad outlines of a program, and now awaits a signal from the college.

It appears the ball is now in our court. That is, we have use-it-or-lose-it funding for the consultant and she is ready to work with the college's development arm to secure further and continuing outside support for the *Review*. The consultant, Eleanor Bender Hamilton, development director at the University of California at Davis, has told Marilyn that, with the cooperation of our development department, it is reasonable to expect that \$5,000 in added and continuing support can be realized in the 1993-94 fiscal year. Importantly, she emphasizes that the major returns from an effort in 1993-94 will produce substantially greater returns in the years following.

Thus the budget we are now submitting has a Gifts/Grants line changed from \$20,000 to \$25,000.

Included in this figure are:

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| National Endowment for the Arts | \$8,500 |
| Lannan Foundation | \$2,125 |
| Ohio Arts Council | \$2,867 |
| Individual gifts | \$6,508 |
| Grants-supported funding effort | <u>\$5,000</u> |
| | \$25,000 |

This change will of course require the cooperation and support of the Development office and the President's office. It seems to me that this support would represent a major Return on Investment, but I cannot presume to know the availability of support from those offices.

On the other hand, if you haven't yet found a way to print money, neither can I seem to find a way to further reduce reliance on College funds without abandoning the mission with which the *Kenyon Review* is charged.

Please let me have your counsel.

Thanks,

Cy Wainscott

PS: There are some time warps involved in this budget business:

1. I suggested the addition to the Gifts/Grants projection before I got your note on the reduced support ceiling.
2. While writing this, I learned of Doug Givens' suggestion about handling the accounting of the Lannan Foundation grant. I agree with Doug that the gift should be fully included in the Gifts/Grants line, rather the practice we had been asked to follow --- including only a portion under Gifts/Grants, and reflecting the remainder by a reduction of the author payments line. Doug's suggestion will be followed when the budget is finally approved, but I have not reflected this change here in order that you can compare apples to apples.

'93-94 BUDGET PROJECTIONS FOR KENYON REVIEW WITH COMPARISON TO '92-93 PROJECTIONS

| | <u>FY 92-93</u> | | <u>FY 93-94</u> |
|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| | <u>Projected Apr. '93</u> | <u>KR only</u> | <u>KR/Lila Wallace</u> |
| INCOME | | | |
| Subscriptions | \$ 62,000 | \$ 64,000 | \$ 82,589 |
| Single Issues | 7,000 | 8,000 | 15,000 |
| Paid Ads | 4,800 | 5,500 | 6,500 |
| List Rental | 1,100 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Other | <u>2,800</u> | <u>2,800</u> | <u>2,800</u> |
| TOTAL | \$ 77,700 | \$ 81,300 | \$107,889 |
| EXPENSES | | | |
| Salaries/Wages | 125,906 | [127,000] | {127,000} |
| Student Interns | 950 | 1,500 | 1,500 |

| | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Outside Copying Editing | | | |
| | 6,200 | 6,500 | 6,500 |
| Paper | 15,000 | 15,000 | 16,000 |
| Printing/Typography | | | |
| | 35,600 | 37,500 | 37,500 |
| Office Supplies/Copies | | | |
| | 4,300 | 4,600 | 4,800 |
| Office Equipment | 500 | 700 | 700 |
| Operating Postage | 6,200 | 7,000 | 7,000 |
| Mag. Postage/Freight | | | |
| | 8,500 | 9,500 | 9,500 |
| Travel | 150 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Managing Editor Search | | | |
| | 2,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Fulfillment | 11,000 | 11,500 | 11,500 |
| Outside Editors' Honoraria | | | |
| | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| Contributors | 8,000 | 6,000 | 6,000 |
| Telephone | 1,500 | 1,900 | 1,900 |
| Promotions | <u>14,000</u> | <u>12,850</u> | <u>65,257</u> |
| TOTAL | \$242,806 | \$246,550 | \$300,157 |
| Net Surplus/(Deficit) before Gifts/Grants | | | |
| | 165,106 | 165,250 | 192,268 |
| Gifts/Grants(NEA/OAC/private) | | | |
| | 17,000 | 25,000 | 40,000 |
| Lannan | -- | 5,250 | 5,250 |
| Lila Wallace | 0 | 0 | 42,815 |
| Kenyon College Contribution | | | |
| | 148,106 | 135,000 | 104,203 |

James Gill to Marilyn Hacker

25.05.93

JAMES GILL

May 25, 1993

Dear Marilyn,

We have just returned from Paris (looking after my little old aunt) and making my usual, mini-recorder-in-hand tours to half-remembered places.

I have your letter of May 13th, and I hasten to answer in order to relieve your concern and my sadness at what appears to be a perplexing misunderstanding.

The furthest thing from my mind would be to ever even mildly suggest to Wallis or to anyone else the idea that you would be resigning as editor of the Kenyon Review.

Aware of your courage and stubbornness which in some ways reflect my own long struggle (including Mark Twainish reports of hyperbolic departures) why in the world should I ever make such a wounding, thoughtless, aimless statement? I spoke to Wallis about it this very evening and it would seem that the misunderstanding may have occurred from a letter she wrote to Martha Finan expressing her sadness at seeing her leave. Martha, it seemed, was gone by the time the letter arrived.

Voila all I can say. I cannot believe that Wallis would attribute to me an utterance that I never made.

If you'd let me know when the "book party/ signing" will take place, Irene and I will hop over to congratulate you and give you a hug.

I hope everything turns out well for Karyn. I assume an endoscopy was done. Since the beginning of this year, I've had an erosive, hemorrhagic gastritis (a drug-related-effect). I take 40mg per day of ANTRA (a powerful anti-acid) and it seems that the hemoglobine<sic> and hematocrite have stabilized and have begun to slowly rise to more or less normal levels.

I send you the warmest wishes and I'll be calling you in Paris after June 30th.

Bien à vous

James

TELEPHONE 021-784 31 94 - TELEFAX 41 21 - 784 31 64

Marilyn Hacker to Reed S. Browning

16.06.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
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DAVID BAKER
ELEANOR M. BENDER
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Consulting Editors
CY WAINSCOTT
Managing Editor

June 16, 1993

Provost Reed Browning
Ransom Hall 21

Dear Reed,

As regards your memo of May 10, work and more work has been the record of this academic year at the *Kenyon Review*. From the time I returned to campus on July 27, 1992, through the October 30 deadline, the staff and I were up to our scalps in the preparation of the second stage of the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Foundation Marketing and Promotion grant application.

This involved:

- attending a conference for Stage 1 grantees in San Francisco in September
- visits for direct mail and management consultants
- 10-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week work preparing the 72-page application and marketing plan.

And it was added to the "normal" load of responsibilities:

- overseeing day-to-day operations of the *Kenyon Review*
- nurturing our new typography operation at New Directions in Mount Vernon
- keeping on schedule and within budget
- dealing with the (average) 750 unsolicited manuscripts that now arrive in our office each reading month.

Fall also was a time of staff change for us. In August, Managing Editor Martha Finan in August announced her impending resignation, so I knew that we'd be conducting a search for a vital staff member in Winter. David Lynn, consulting fiction editor, was in England and David Baker was taking a much-needed "sabbatical" from his duties as consulting poetry editor. We would also be faced with filling a newly- created position of marketing coordinator.

I was fortunate in being able to recruit novelist Carole Maso as consulting fiction editor and Eleanor Bender as consulting poetry editor. Maso's input as a published novelist in an experimental vein, in touch with daring and innovative fiction writers all over the country, has been invaluable. Bender was for twenty years founding editor of *Open Places*. This excellent literary magazine, now defunct, was founded in New York and then, for sixteen years, published under the auspices of Stephens College in Missouri.

(Due to a late-winter diagnosis of chronic fatigue syndrome, David Baker is unsure if he'll be able to resume working with us next year. David Lynn will again serve as a consulting editor for fiction.)

The protracted search for a new managing editor was initiated in the fall.

In October we received a major grant from the Lannan Foundation. The preceding spring I had informally lobbied the literary director of the foundation, who had expressed admiration for the work I was doing at the *Kenyon Review*, to open up their grant application procedure. They'd been granting the same three literary journals for several years and there was, at the time, no way other journals could be considered. They eventually agreed and the fruit of that was a grant to enable us to increase authors' honoraria while decreasing our budgetary responsibilities in that area and to pay for the services of a fundraising/ development consultant for the *Review*. (The same Eleanor Bender recruited a consulting editor is serving as funding consultant. Along with her literary credentials, she has an excellent record at funding/ development consultation and is director of development at the University of California at Davis.)

In November we were awarded the two-year, \$79,430 marketing grant by the Wallace foundation. We could now begin the search for the part-time marketing coordinator (a part of the grant program). The grant, among other things, funds the 15-hour-per-week coordinator, an additional 10 hours per week for a marketing assistant (who would work 5 hours per week as a Kenyon-funded clerical assistant) and additional funding for Doris Dilts, our four-day editorial assistant, when working on marketing matters.

Another positive Fall development was bookstore circulation. Due to having taken on Fine Print and Ingram as distributors in addition to Inland and DeBoer, our bookstore circulation was at a new high of 1,800 copies (it was 450 copies when I became editor).

We conducted our usual fall direct mail campaign to Kenyon alumni and friends and subscribers to *Poets & Writers* and *The American Voice*. We sent sample-copy gifts, with a subscription push, to the parents of first-year Kenyon students.

While our fall issue was in production, Hefferman, our printer of 10 years, went bankrupt. And to the welter of other activity was added the task of finding a new printer and negotiating a new contract. One of Martha Finan's last tasks was to secure Thomson-Shore as our new printer, a role they are so far filling admirably. Still, we are only now beginning to catch up with the scheduling delays caused by the demise of Hefferman.

In New York over Christmas break, I went to my family practitioner for a routine year-end checkup. She discovered a lump in my right breast. (It had not shown up on a mammogram done the same day, nor in one I'd had eighteen months earlier; small-breasted women beware.) To make an unpleasant story short, it was breast cancer. I had a mastectomy the day of New Year's Eve and began chemotherapy three weeks later. This meant I couldn't return to Kenyon in mid-January as I'd planned.

I came back on February 8 and immediately plunged into the search for a new managing editor. We had over a hundred responses to the ads we placed. We were, and are, *extremely* happy with our choice -- Cy Wainscott, former managing editor of *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland. Wainscott joined our staff in April.

Our other new staff members are David Breithaupt, who began as marketing coordinator in May, and Mary Ende, who we were fortunate to hire as a marketing and clerical assistant. Ende began June 1 as a replacement for Jennifer Sampson, who left to attend graduate school in Chicago.

Our special Theater Issue (the Spring number) is finally out. We've gotten accolades from subscribers and publishing professionals on its appearance and content. We are hoping that, like *De Colores*, it will have a separate life as an anthology among theater readers and, most particularly, with teachers in drama departments all over the country. To that end, we've announced its publication to subscribers to theater journals (many of whom are precisely those teachers) as well as to 900 bookstores either specializing in theater or with strong theater sections. We've already received an order for 150 copies for classroom use next fall.

On the advice of our development consultant, we're sending out over 50 letters this month asking for financial support from corporations with a history of philanthropic donations to the arts in Ohio and other parts of the country. We're requesting from each of them a \$1,000 donation in each of three years. We'll continue the donation requests as we research more potential donors.

We are currently receiving and assessing the results of our spring 38,000-piece direct mail campaign. We are still uncertain about this because of the apparent U.S. Postal Service misplacement or delay of about 8,000 mailing pieces. We'll know more in the next weeks.

This year we had over twenty Pushcart Prize nominations, the most ever, and will have a story -- Rebecca McClanahan's "Somebody" -- and an essay -- Suzanne Gardinier's "Two Cities: On The Iliad" -- being reprinted in their next anthology, along with poems by Mary Oliver and Stephen Berg to be in *Best American Poetry 1993*.

As the year concludes, we are about to complete tabulation of a reader survey conducted earlier this year. (We were delayed in processing this in part because of a shortage of computer terminals. Thanks to the Wallace grant and to Dean Ponder's helpfulness; this shortage has been reduced.) I expect to soon be sending you a copy of survey results soon. We plan to use the survey results to attract new advertising and grant support.

I'm including with this report a selection of the reader/ writer mail we've been getting. The only negative mail we've received has been from rejected authors. They accuse us, because they didn't get a personal letter, of having students read manuscripts of "unknown" writers (not the case) or complain about finding a subscription request with the returned manuscript (but for every whine we get 30 to 50 new subscriptions).

Although it was not requested, I think it appropriate (since this is coming from me and not from the Kenyon Review staff as a whole) to list my own professional accomplishments for this troubled year.

Among publication of my works, the most significant was the acceptance for publication by Copper Canyon Press of *Against Elegies: New and Selected Poems*. This will appear in the spring of 1994. Other publication activity:

- In September a French publisher, Amiot-Lenganey, will bring out *Fleuves et Retours*, a bilingual collection of my work with French translations by Jean Migrenne.
- A poem of mine was included in *Best American Poetry 1992*, edited by Charles Simic.
- A significant selection of my work will also be in the new edition of *No More Masks: 20th Century American Women's Poetry*, edited by Florence Howe and scheduled for July, 1993.
- New poems of mine appeared in the summer issue of the *New England Review*, the fall issue of the *Paris Review*, the fall issue of *The American Voice* and the winter/spring issue of *Boulevard*.
- New poems of mine also appeared in the British quarterly *Aquarius* along with an essay on my work by British poet-critic Jeremy Reed.
- More new work is scheduled for publication in the *Paris Review* and in *TriQuarterly*.

My appearances schedule was greatly curtailed due to the breast cancer surgery and adjuvant chemotherapy:

- I appeared in early December as reader and lecturer at the Center for 20th Century Studies at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee.
- I was obliged to cancel spring semester readings in New Mexico, California and at Colgate University.
- In October I will be presenting readings at San Diego State University, Chico State University and the Lesbian Writers' Series in Los Angeles.
- On this same October trip I will be presenting *Kenyon Review* readings (sponsored in part by the Wallace grant) in San Francisco (with our emerging writer award

winner Rafael Campo) and Los Angeles (where I'll introduce *KR* contributors Wanda Coleman, Bia Lowe, Michelle Clinton and Aleida Rodrieuez<sic>).

I hope, Reed, that this report has been helpful. I feel a real sense of accomplishment at having emerged from the multiple personal and professional challenges of the year with a magazine that is continuing to grow in acceptance and stature. We have a fine staff in place now and, chemotherapy behind us, look forward to an outstanding year ahead.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

cc: Philip Jordan Jr.
Anne Ponder

Eavan Boland to Jill Bialosky

13.07.93

W.W. NORTON:FOR JILL BIALOSKY
FROM EAVAN BOLAND

4 Ailesbury Grove
Dundrum
Dublin 16

13 July 1993

Dear Jill,

I'm delighted to do it. I wish the book – and the poet – so well.
I know it will be a wonderful publication.

Warmest wishes

Eavan

Quotation

Marilyn Hacker is an essential American poet. In these poems elements of tone and theatre find a balance which is witty and powerful all at once; which seems impossible but happens anyway. This is a poet of dazzling opposites. Her formal vivacity exists with a strong-willed vernacular; her lyric wryness with a determined narrative. These poems tell her story. They also honour the story of poetry in our time with their strength and purpose and their clear, unswerving gaze.

Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker

09.09.93

Thursday September 9, 1993

To: Ms. Marilyn Hacker, Ed.
The Kenyon Review

From: Stephen Booker/ B-044049
Florida State Prison
P.O. Box 747/ R-2-S-15
Starke, Florida 32091

Dear M.H.,

I have just got a letter from B. Vogh (Gainesville, Fla. saying that you never received my reply to the revisions, etc! This beats all! Because I wrote back immediately (on 2/25), returned the poem, "Sandii," with the changes and acknowledged your accepting "Piper" as is (w/ no changes), thanking you bigtime. Obviously, someone thought to trash my letter – here or there. And it's a damn shame. – I also sent you a copy of one of my Tug poems, "Requiem," just to show you a little flight I took on the 14-liner form.

Anyway, here again, I've enclosed the change – in red so that your typesetter will know which line it is. Parts # 1 & 2 remain true as written: hence, I don't guess you need those parts in this letter.

In my last letter I also told you how I did convey the information to Ms. Suzanna Tamminen (Ass't Ed.), my contact person at Wesleyan U. Press, regarding you<sic> desire to receive a review copy of Tug.

As an update to my bio-info, I could go on but won't of course. But I will. Let's see ... – Well, my most recent appearances have been in Psychopoetica (England) Home Planet News/ Deathrealm/ Starline/ Bouillabaisse/ Planet Roc/ River Stix Scarp (Australia)/ Sonora Review/ Xenophilia/ & Figment. -- forthcoming, again in Psychopoetica (England) Bouillabaisse/ Explorer Magazine/ Moody Street Irregulars (though I'm unsure if it still exists)/ Malcontent/ Amelia's SPSM&H/ The New Renaissance/ International Poetry Magazine (Holland)/ ARG-Catazine/ & Sulphur River Literary Review. – Next book out is Tug, which you know of. I'm on the row (since '78). – And you'll tack me together a bio note that isn't so much of a brag-tag, hopefully. (1st collection: WAVES & license [Greenfield Review Press, 1983].

Please remember not to send me any literature here: all being contraband unless authorized in advance. Send copy to

B. Vogh
1119 S.W. 11th Ave.
Gainesville Florida 32601

You can mash the ducats on me, in the form of an American Express Money Order or a U.S. Postal Money Order:

Stephen Booker/ 044049
Florida State Prison
P.O. Box 747/ R-2-S-15
Starke, Florida 32091

Yours,

Stephen

P.S. All of that said, you continue. The best to you. -- Almost forgot: I did get your American Voice poem too, back then (reason why I slid "Requiem" to you). Am putting a postcard with this for return to me so I know you got this kite. Will shoot "Req" to you again some time later.

Stephen T. Booker to Doris Dilts

13.09.93

Monday September 13, 1993

To: Ms. D.J. Dilts, Ed.
Kcnyon Review

From: Stephen Booker/ B-044049
Florida State Prison
P.O. Box 747/ R-2-S-15
Starke, Florid 32091

Dear Ms. Dilts,

Per your instructions, here're the forms back (signed), the poems, and your editorial notes. Thank you for the considerate attention paid my work – and your suggestions are appreciated. However, I must apologise to you for not accepting any other change in either of the poems.

- "playing the light card," in "Sandii," should be in italics. And your centered numbers are accepted. The rest of what you see on the pages (of the poems) is as it should be in the poems. My spellings, punctuations, hyphenated word-structuring, and seeming abandonment to whim rather than wisdom is a matter of style (be it what some might term "naivete<sic>" or "deconstruction" or plain "inventiveness"). Quite frankly, I'm up on Mr. Webster's own copious and subjective resourcefulness while not relying upon a set version of rules for his thing. I will let Webster be Webster, as here you have deferring to the scope of your task – which is a job when necessary. But I do have my own way of doing what I do, and I also know what I'm about, what I'm doing. I would never trivialize the process by not weighing the potential of my peculiar, though credible, style to raise the hackles of the 'English Department.' Ms. Dilts, I may well mean to huff & puff & blow the whole of that playhouse down with my poetic.

So, without sounding like contrary or roguish, I ask you to preserve your notes for a review rather than suggestions aimed at the possibility of my caring about whether my readers' eyebrows stick to their foreheads or not. When I write "dervishly," "ununderstood," "de-eyed," or whatever you find in my poetry, you can rest assured that I've done so after deliberating over many more things than the relative creature comfort of a reader' idea(s) regarding grammar or correctness. Anyone who resists presuming that I work at what I do has already been lured into the trap that I've laid before them.

Because of the way things operate here, I dare not use your return envelope – because of others' curiosity, etc. – I'm enclosing a postcard for you to return to me acknowledging receipt of the contract & the rest. (And thanx! For the stamps I'll be keeping!) – Take note of the information regarding the mailing of the copies & money, on the Contributor's Info form – and know that I'll be able to receive payment in U.S. Postal Money Order or American Express Money Order.

Lastly, I hope you and I don't have to get into a back & forth about the changes you want. Because I throw down about mine, having counted every letter, every space, every breath it takes to read what I've written (aloud & silently), and I've sourced most of my words back to where pictures would probably serve a better purpose. Any changes you make in either poem will be because you haven't respected my wishes as stated right here and previously in writing to Ms. Hacker.

As for Webster, let's let him stay on his shelf – or on Michael Jackson's shoulder, alongside Bubbles. If you think your readers will get the puckers from reading me, put a disclaimer after each poem; put my address there; tell em I said that they should pull themselves up by their bootstraps and get lives, jobs, cdjukashuns.

Tell Ms. Hacker I said "Hi!"

Yours,

Stephen

P.S.

Piper

Messiah keeps its CAP-M;
no comma after "he says"
separate none of my doublewords<sic>

Sandii

glamorgirls stays as is – oneword<sic>. w/o a "u"
dash at end of verse 3 stays and don't CAP "four"
no commas after "asking me" or "she whispered"

Reminder: send no literature here. Plus it is advised to use only lettersized<sic> envelopes so as not to risk calling attention to contents of communique<sic> & the correspondence being trashed. No joint digs a writer. – If you need a list of past credits & forthcoming to puff up my contrib note will do: latest (recent) ins include River Styx/ Xenophilia/ Sonora Review/ Scarp (Australia)/ & Figment. – forthcoming in The New Renaissance/ International Poetry Magazine (Holland)/ Psychopoetica (England)/ & Sulphur River Literary Review. – My poetry has been anthologised, included in a play, read on a National Public radio show, and reviled in high & low places.

Daniel Curzon to Marilyn Hacker

19.09.93

Sept. 19, 1993

Dear Marilyn Hacker,

I'm widely published, and stories of mine appear in the anthologies *ON THE LINE* (Crossing Press), *APHRODISIAC: STORIES FROM CHRISTOPHER STREET* (Coward-McCann), and *MAE WEST IS DEAD* (Faber and Faber).

I enclose a copy of the article on me in the new book on gay writers--at last!

I saw your "Dear Reader" piece and thought I'd try you on some of my new stories, two about the son I've sired with a lesbian couple, another about where I feel gay men stand today. I'm happy to hear that gay stories are welcome at the *KENYON REVIEW*. God knows, I had enough "How dare you send such perverted stuff to us" over the years!

Of course I hope I am writing literature, not propaganda, and so my stories continue to be as honest as I can make them, with the chips falling where they may. I'm long past the stage of trying to make my character gay characters any better than anybody else. Maybe one of these will appeal to you.

Thanks,

Daniel Curzon
416 Dorado Terrace
San Fran Ca 94112

415-585-3410

P.S. I've had two stories recently accepted by *DESCANT* (at Texas Christian U).

Eavan Boland to Marilyn Hacker

21.09.93

4 Ailesbury Grove
Dundrum
Dublin 16

21 September 1993

Dear Marilyn,

It was lovely to hear from you. I think August Journal is a lovely name for your "nameless" poem<sic>. And a wonderful piece it is too.

You were kind enough to speak about a second book to review. It wouldn't really be Lawrence Joseph I would think of. And I would probably quail a bit from a second, except in one case: do you have any trace on a book by Mark Doty, which was awarded a prize by Philip Levine, and is largely about Aids? He wrote a book I liked called Bethlehem in Broad daylight that I really thought contained some fine poems a few years ago. I'm pretty sure this book is called My - Alexandria. Something like that.

I'll be in the States in October, and will be in New York for a few days. I'm in and around the PSA and Dia. You probably aren't there. If you were it'd be great to have a cup of coffee. Anyway, you must know how much you're in my thoughts and I hope the sunshine and poetry of the summer -and the interfering (but admiring) comments of friends - have done some good -

Love

Eavan

Marilyn Hacker to Marina Budhos

06.10.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL: 614-427-3339

Oct. 6, 1993

Dear Marina Budhos,

I did get your letter of Sept. 16. The novel excerpt had gone on to a consulting editor, but I'll pull it when it returns. However -- I would advise your agent that she could be shooting herself in the foot. All too frequently, I receive fiction submissions from agents, short stories or novel excerpts, which are already scheduled for book publication -- and by the time the agent's got the book contract, and then sent me the work for serial publication, there's no way I can fit it in before the book publication date. The KR, like most other quarterlies, receives thousands of manuscripts a year, many of them good; the result is that we're usually obliged to schedule work for publication a year or even 15 months after we receive it. And by the time the book contract's signed, and the agent gets on to the "lowly" magazine editors (when the New Yorker and Redbook haven't made offers she can't refuse) it's too late for excerpts from the book to be in quarterlies. So (as I see it) everybody loses: we don't get book-quality fiction; the author doesn't get magazine publication (which has to be good advance publicity for the book).

On a completely different subject: a piece of unofficial news you'll appreciate. Your story "Hollywood" was selected by judge Alfred Corn as co-winner of our Emerging Writer award for 1993. You'll get official notification soon and the prizes will be announced in the Winter 1994 issue.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker
Marilyn Hacker, *Editor*; Cy Wainscott, *Managing Editor*

Jonathan Galassi to Philip Jordan 12.10.93

212-206-5353

JONATHAN GALASSI
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Marilyn --
I hope this is OK

Jonathan

JONATHAN GALASSI

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT 19 UNION SQUARE WEST
FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX, INC NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10003

FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX, INC. *Book Publishers*
HILL & WANG

JONATHAN GALASSI
Editor in Chief

12.10.93

Mr. Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan,

I'm writing to express my sense, which I know is widely shared in the literary community, that the Kenyon Review is a vital, challenging, and highly visible player in contemporary American letters. Indeed, I think it goes without saying that Kenyon College is best known to the world at large through its association with the Review. It would seem to me an absolutely essential part of what Kenyon is, and I hope very much that this will continue to be the case. Kenyon, and the world, would be much the poorer without it.

Sincerely,

Jonathan
19 Union Square West, New York, New York 10003
Telephone 212 741-6900 Cable Farrarcomp Fax 212 633-9385

Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker

20.10.93

Kenyon College

Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5114

October 20, 1993

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
Editor of The Kenyon Review
Sunset Cottage

Dear Marilyn:

Ted Mason has reported that you have not scheduled yourself to teach a course in the English Department this year. This information surprised me, for I know that in our conversations I have regularly emphasized the importance of your offering a course annually, and in the letter I wrote you last May 13, following our good lunch meeting, I both reiterated that same point and reminded us that I had included this instruction in letters to you dating from November and December of 1991. (Also on May 13 I Emailed Mr. Mason about your intention to teach, and so he was waiting to hear from you.) It is true that you did not teach a course last year, for as a result of your illness of last January you sought and received my permission to drop the course scheduled for the semester that was about to begin. But I confirmed last May that the obligation to teach was restored for 1993-94.

Please consult with Mr. Mason as soon as possible about the character of the course you will offer in the second semester of 1993-94. Information about it needs to be made available to students as promptly as possible.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with me.

Sincerely yours,

Reed S. Browning
Provost

RSB/ bm

cc: President Jordan
Mr. Mason

Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker

03.11.93

Kenyon College

Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5114

November 3, 1993

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
Editor, The Kenyon Review
Sunset Cottage

Dear Marilyn:

Ted Mason spoke to me on Tuesday about conversations you and he have had as a consequence of my letter to you about teaching. He reports that he and you concur in believing that the group of students at whom an upper-level writing course could be aimed this year is small and that this group is already being handled by Phil Church's course. I have therefore accepted his recommendation that you not be expected to offer a course in 1993-94. He will soon be inviting the members of the Department of English to let him know by December which courses they plan to offer in 1994-95, and he said that he thought you would propose a course for the first semester. If we need to discuss that matter before you let him know your preference, please get in touch with me.

Sincerely yours,

Reed S. Browning
Provost

RSB/ bm

cc: President Jordan
Mr. Mason

Marilyn Hacker to Reed S. Browning

10.11.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022
TEL.: 614-427-3339

MARILYN HACKER
Editor
DAVID BAKER
ELEANOR M. BENDER
CAROLE MASO
Consulting Editors
CY WAINSCOTT
Managing Editor

Nov. 10 1993

Dear Reed,

Thanks very much for your note of November 3. (I'd have responded sooner, but had to leave for a weekend conference in Boston -- details attached for your records -- on Friday, when I received it.)

I'm really pleased that I'll be teaching the advanced poetry workshop in the fall, when there will be a considerable student pool for it, and when no one else will be offering the same course. I hear good things from Jennifer Clarvoe about the students who'll be "in the pipeline," and I look forward to working with them. Indeed, I think this is a good precedent to set: to have me teach the advanced workshop in the fall, and Phil Church teach it in the spring. As we have an increasing number of students interested in creative writing, this will provide an additional option for them. (And I understand that it will not be impossible for students with a creative writing concentration to take both advanced workshops.)

And there's something else which I hope the KR will be able to add to the Kenyon student menu. Last spring we talked about my taking a leave of absence in the spring of 1995, and having an invited guest editor on campus for that semester. I would like to discuss with you the possibility of inviting either Carole Maso or Suzanne Gardinier in that capacity. Carole Maso is the author of four novels, was recently awarded a grant by the Lannan Foundation for her work, and is currently on the faculty of the Columbia University School of the Arts. As you know, she's been acting as consulting fiction editor of the KR since the fall of 1992. Suzanne Gardinier is a poet, fiction writer and essayist. Her first book of poems, The New World, a National Poetry Series winner, is being published by the University of Pittsburgh Press this month. Last year, Elizabeth Pochoda selected her essay, "Two Cities: On The Iliad" for the KR's nonfiction prose award. She is the former associate poetry editor of Grand Street (when Ben Sonnenberg was its editor). She has taught both creative writing and literature courses at Rutgers University.

I've asked both of these writers to send me their CVs and letters of intent -- including<sic> courses they'd be interested in teaching, with the understanding that, as

guest editor of the Kenyon Review, they would be offering one course. I'll send these on to you when I receive them, and we can talk further. Of course I made it clear that the final decision on this was one to be made by Kenyon College's senior staff, with my recommendations/ preferences considered.

I think that this guest editorship would effectively be providing Kenyon students with a teaching "writer in residence" for a semester -- while giving me some needed free time, and a fresh perspective (and a budget cut) to the Kenyon Review.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

cc. President Jordan
Theodore Mason

Rafael Campo to Marilyn Hacker

11.11.93

11 nov 93
sf, ca
50 degrees!

Queridísima Marilyn,

Though I haven't yet fully recovered from the experience of meeting you and hearing you read, I have regained enough composure to write you this little note to say, again, thank you for your generosity of spirit, for your work and your life, and for befriending me. It felt impossible to me to articulate these things to you fully in person—I became a shy, tongue-tied groupie in your presence!

I must say Eve was quite taken by you, too. We both went on and on about how sparkingly beautiful you were, brimming with the energy of active engagement with all around you. I know Eve is eager to send you some work for *The Kenyon Review*, as is our friend Gary Fisher (who was regaled with stories about you after you'd departed—he was sorry indeed not to have been able to join us that evening around Bill's apple torte). Jorge wants us to move to Ohio immediately so we can remain within the circle of your brilliance—he was not kidding about that "Spanish Imposition" stuff. He's investigating retinal surgery fellowships in Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus and is ready to make the reservations for Paris. (Your smile reminds me of his.)

When the latest **KR** arrived in my mailbox just a few days ago, with all the wonderful work it contained, I felt again that undeniable pleasure of inclusion in such a rich and diverse aesthetic that is your vision. Thank the Goddess that your talents, already so vital and available through your poetry, have found expression in this other vehicle which says to the world, "Our voices have value." I could almost believe myself to be a poet.

Meanwhile, no word from Derek on the blurb he offered for my book (I'm fearful that he's found too much queerness in it to overlook in the way that he has in the past). No word from *Arte Publico*, either, on the revised contract or my enquiries into rearranging the poems as we discussed. As an antidote to my despair, I've busied myself with working on the second MS, which is in length equal to the first, and contains the second four of those eight sonnet sequences—the one for my daughter (about which I did write Richard Howard as you suggested to say was uncommitted to publication as of yet), the one in which I imagine myself as a woman, the one on death which you have accepted for **KR**, and the one on immortality. The essays do work better with this MS, I think. I'm very tempted to take you up on your offer to pass on the MS to your editor-friends at Norton, but I don't wish to saddle you with yet another one hundred pages of my poetry, with everything else that you have to do. Perhaps sometime in the near future, when you're "caught up" with everything (how's that for wishful thinking?).

A last word: I had a very kind letter from a devoted reader of **KR** in response to the essay and poems, from a queer physician Amherst grad who also loves your work and knows Thom Gunn. He's not Latino, and sounds older; otherwise I'd think we were

the same person. I suggested that he write to you and tell you what he thought, so as to counterbalance the comments from the (as always) more vocal adversaries of change.

I also enclose the check I promised, with every best wish for **KR**'s continued success with you at its helm.

Con cariño,

Rafael

P.S. The remainder of the money was from the gift subscriptions for family and friends to KR!

Alicia Ostriker to Marilyn Hacker

26.11.93

Philip Jones<sic>, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jones<sic>:

Marilyn Hacker has told me that the Board of Kenyon College is considering dropping KENYON REVIEW<> I am writing to say that I think this would be most unfortunate, both for American letters and for Kenyon College. KENYON REVIEW has for much of this century been a touchstone journal for the most significant American writing, and continues to be so.

I am always pleased to have my work published by KENYON, because it is a journal people read widely, and remember. I like the experience I've often had, of being introduced to someone, and having that person say "Didn't I recently read something of yours in KENYON REVIEW?"

But apart from my personal feeling, it seems to me Hacker has done an extraordinary job as editor, creating a magazine which speaks uniquely to our need for multicultural awareness throughout American society, while maintaining the high artistic--the very purely literary--standards of the magazine. She does, in other words, just what T.S. Eliot says should be done, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent." She doesn't repeat the already-known. She combines a traditionalist's training in artistic values with the capacity to recognize those values on new guises. In the most recent issue, for example, there is the bitter splendor of Hayden Carruth's new poems--the best he has written in years--and the philosophic edge of Samuel Delaney's rich fantastic realism. Rafael Campo, one of Hacker's discoveries, has just won a major national contest for a first book of poems. And so on. Every issue of KENYON that I get, I now read cover to cover, for its acute combinations of tradition and experiment.

To the culture at large, Kenyon College is known as the home of KENYON REVIEW. The journal is surely one of the great strengths of your institution, and should receive ongoing support.

Yours truly,

Alicia Ostriker
Professor II
11/26/93

Marilyn -

How's this? - & how are you? Congrats on Selected coming out. I'd like to be putting a new book of poems together this spring - Will my mastectomy poems be in Kenyon soon?

XX Alicia

Reed S. Browning to Marilyn Hacker

30.11.93

Kenyon College

Office of the Provost
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5114

November 30, 1993

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
Editor, The Kenyon Review
Sunset Cottage

Dear Marilyn:

Thank you for your letter of November 10, recommending that either Carole Maso or Suzanne Gardinier serve as guest editor of The Kenyon Review during the spring of 1995. Both are exciting possibilities. I think, however, that we need to avoid commitments of this sort until the work of the trustee review committee is completed. When David Banks and his colleagues come to the campus in January, the opportunities provided by a guest editorship program are one of the subjects you should be sure to discuss.

Sincerely yours,

Reed S. Browning
Provost

RSB/ bm

cc: President Jordan

Marilyn Hacker to Louis Simpson 30.11.93

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022-9623
Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor Marilyn Hacker • *Consulting Editors* David Baker, Eleanor M. Bender, David Lynn, Carole Maso, Robyn Selman • *Managing Editor* Cy Waincott

November 30, 1993

Dear Louis Simpson:

The work you've published or will publish, in *The Kenyon Review* is important to us. We are working to assure that *The Kenyon Review* will continue its pivotal role in promoting the best writing of the present and the future. This letter is to request that you become a contributor to *The Kenyon Review* in another way -- as a donor. (This may help us keep publishing your work, and the work of other writers.)

This is a critical turning point in the history of *The Kenyon Review*. In the past four years we've resumed our place at the forefront of American literary magazines. Our readers once opened *The Kenyon Review* to discover the work of the young Flannery O'Connor, of Robert Lowell and James Wright. Today -- as you know -- they'll find new work by such contemporary lights as Ursula K. LeGuin, Herbert Blau, Russell Banks and Rita Dove, while discovering the work of exciting newcomers like Rane Arroyo, Diana Abu-Jaber, Ha Jin and Tory Dent.

Three National Poetry Series winners this year -- Rafael Campo, Kevin Young and Rachel Wetzsteon -- are *Kenyon Review* contributors, as is the 1992 Morse Poetry Prize Winner, Carl Phillips. This year *The Kenyon Review* was represented by two poems in the *Best American Poetry* anthology, and a story and an essay in the *Pushcart Prize* volume (along with four Special Mentions in poetry and two in fiction).

The Kenyon Review is one of the very few general literary magazines which publishes a sizeable representation of the work of writers of color (you've only to look at the names above) -- not out of any political conviction, but because we believe that much of the strongest and most exciting writing new American and world writing comes from these writers. We're stretching traditional literary magazine definitions to include more plays, critical work about theater and film, literary writing on science and medicine, writing that isn't easily pinpointed by genre.

The Lannan Foundation said "*The Kenyon Review* does not simply use the buzzword 'multicultural'; it embodies it," and awarded us a grant to enhance authors' honoraria. The Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Foundation awarded us a grant to implement a marketing plan for the magazine. When the infamous Jesse Helms content oath was removed, we were pleased to receive a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

But these are also difficult times. The already small budgets of the NEA and our state (Ohio) arts council have been cut in half. Kenyon College, without whose subsidy we could not exist, is facing the same serious financial problems as other small liberal arts institutions, and our subsidy is under close scrutiny.

We wish that a literary magazine could become self-supporting through subscriptions and bookstore sales – but unless Absolut Vodka or Volvo-Renault buys a four-color back-cover ad, that won't happen. Even *The Atlantic* or *The New Yorker* wouldn't stay afloat financially without paid advertising that's not likely to come to a literary quarterly, however worldly, in central Ohio.

This is where you come in. We hope you agree that it's in your interest, as writer and as reader, that *The Kenyon Review* continue to publish, remain quarterly, not shrink in size or shrink from controversial content. You can help insure our survival:

- as a Friend, with a donation of \$100 or more
- as a Sponsor, with a donation of \$250 or more
- as a Patron, with a donation of \$500 or more
- as a Lifetime Patron, with a donation of \$1,000 or more

Your name will be listed (if you wish) in the winter 1995 issue of *The Kenyon Review*. Patrons and Lifetime Patrons will receive a handsome limited-edition *Kenyon Review* 50th Anniversary Poster. Lifetime Patrons will become complimentary lifetime subscribers.

Of course, smaller donations are welcome too!

Your support will be used in the following ways:

- Increasing our subscriber base in diverse reading communities
- Retaining "old" subscribers
- Establishing contact with key bookstores (*The Kenyon Review's* bookstore distribution has gone from 450 in 1990 to 1,800 in 1993)
- Promoting *Kenyon Review* readings at bookshops and community centers around the country

- in other words, making sure your work has as large a readership as possible. And:

- Paying for art and design
- Paying for our professional copy-editors and proofreaders – upon whose excellence many writers have commented.

These areas of production are not covered by any of our grants – and yet they are what attracts readers to the magazine, makes them pleased to read it, and part of what makes writers proud to be published here.

We want your work to have as large and committed a readership as possible!

When you return the enclosed card, please, if you've time, send us a note about what you're doing – in particular, new books just published or due to be published, and plays being produced, as well as awards, grants and residencies. We'd like to start a column listing such events in *The Kenyon Review*.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

P.S. *The Kenyon Review* is a non-profit organization, so your donation is tax-deductible.

This effort could make a real difference to us. We hope you can help (And – we'd love to see new work!)

MH

Anne Shaver to Marilyn Hacker

30.11.93

November 30, 1993

President Phillip Jordan
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I've just heard that *The Kenyon Review* is under dangerous scrutiny. Although as a new three-year subscriber I am protecting my own investment, my concern for the well-being of this very special journal goes beyond selfishness.

When I knew I was going to interview here in 1973, the location and reputation of Denison had to be explained to me in terms of literarily famous Kenyon. It is a peculiar situation that much of Kenyon's long term reputation rests on the old *Kenyon Review* when the renewed *Review* is such a different matter.

But the current journal rides the edge of the academy's inevitable multicultural and interdisciplinary future without ever losing sight of its predecessor's tradition of excellence. Indeed, the old *Kenyon Review* was disturbing once, its young turk editors and contributors challenging entrenched historicism with their new critical approach. Kenyon College is fortunate to have such a phoenix bearing its name across the country and across our borders to people who value current variations on the long tradition of great literary journals.

So I am thinking of Kenyon-and of reflected glory for the GLCA-when I urge you: please preserve the *Review*.

Sincerely,

Anne Shaver
Professor of English

cc: Marilyn Hacker, Editor

Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker

01.12.93

Wednesday December 1, 1993

To: Ms. Marilyn Hacker, Ed.

From: Stephen Booker/ B-044049
Florida State Prison
P.O. Box 747/ R-2-S-15
Starke, Florida 32091

Dear M.,

I don't know how the hell I might've mislaid this extra copy of "Requiem" in this tiny cage but I did. And so because you never did get it back when I sent it before, I just have to shoot it to you -- because it'll be me keeping that promise to let you spy out one of my own curious 14-liners. Count me kinds silly about keeping my promises.

What I'll say about the poem won't begin to give it the justice or objective slant that it deserves; and of course there's probably no such thing as a poet being objective about his own sweaty work. Thing was, back when I originally mailed the piece to you, I wanted you to dig how much your own advanced stylings (as well as those of a few others -- & I did name my <pa?> Hayden Carruth) have had on my word/ form-courage, even if I might well go overboard sometimes almost spitefully mocking, & perhaps negating, the time-honored definition of a certain format. I try to say what I feel I must while also not cutting corner in terms of how I want the look of the vessel to propel its contents in a bee-line to what I wish to evoke -- maybe I wanted "Requiem" to shift its own weight around inside of the eye of the beholder, as it may succeed in doing so inside of its vessel, the splash, if you please, making one pause and wonder: "What was that?"

You will keep this copy, please, as it's yours -- and know that you fly high above the peculiar crabs alluded to in certain portions of the piece. And that's probably what I mainly wanted to say and yet not seem too in awe of you by saying straight out. Anyway, I have now. Dig: you stay well, and stay bad -- because bad is better, should Mae West have been right.

Do convey to your editorial staff my sincere wishes for a Merry Xmas & Happy '94. And don't let D.J. Dilts think for a minute that my almost-curt dismissal of her (or whoever) suggestions for revisions &/ or changes within the framework of my poetic is no reflection of how I view the difficult job of editing<sic> -- rather, like most folks in this poetry thing, I have become convinced that can't nobody write a poet's poem better than the poet.

(Lastly: I did relay to the Managing Editor of University Press of New England one Mary Crittendon, that you should surely get a review copy of 'Iug -- don't know if my best "so this"/ "do that" will move a copy into your hands, but -- the address there is 23 South Main Street/ Hanover, NH 03755-2159 -- and the phone & fax as follows: Tel: (603) 643-7115 ~ Fax: (603) 643-1540. Why I'm hopped up on you wanting a

review copy is because I'm no dunce, as you can imagine. Hell! If you dig my book I can rest assured of a serious reception in other places! Who's fixing to get into a big thing with you over something you say is the genuine article. But will I stoke you for a good or kind review ...? Please, kiddo. I want you to light into my work like you're supposed to if you find it wanting or defective. Even that will post it as worthy of your having checked it out and come up with an opinion about it.) Maybe I try hard to have a whole lot of sense too, Marilyn. But don't we all. It is part of the gig.

Yours,

Stephen

P.S. Still pushing papers: got a poem currently in that new publ: International Poetry Magazine (still another coming out too) (Holland); and lowered my head and took off on a foreign binge and came up with acceptances in other far away places: a poem each forthcoming in The Plaza (Japan), Sivullinen (Finland) and Backstreet Abortions (South Africa). Plus had one accepted at Black Warrior Review (<'Ba?>). When I get one somewhere in a publication in South America, then I can say I've been in every continent save Antarctica – it's a lightweight goal, precisely what I sometimes have to set before myself to keep me pressing forward. – What I'd really like is a Pulitzer nomination for Tug, so I can blast a "Kiss my black ass!" parry & thrust outta here. Let me not say too much and bore you or make you think I need medicating, huh! Got a p.c. here so you can return, letting me know if you've gotten everything.

encl: 1p.c./ & "Requiem"/ & Xmas card

Ellen Walker to Marilyn Hacker 03.12.93

California State University, Chico
Chico, California 95929-0830
Department of English
916.898-5124

Dec 3, 1993

Dear Marilyn,

Sending you a copy (badly spaced -- it was fixed) of the letter I sent to the President at Kenyon after talking to Carole. I am enclosing, also, the comments from my students. If you think they should go in your file, I hope you will put them there. I hesitated to send them to the president because they are often less articulate than I would wish.

Your letter to Carole sounded ominous - I hope all goes well, and if there's anything I can do to support you & The Kenyon Review, please let me know

Ellen

Hope to see you -- here or in France

Ellen Walker to Philip Jordan

03.12.93

December 3, 1993

Philip Jordan, President

Dear President Jordan:

Marilyn Hacker, Editor of *Kenyon Review*, was in Chico California some weeks ago to give a poetry reading at California State University, Chico, and was kind enough to serve as a visiting lecturer in my course, Literary Editing. I am writing to let you know how very valuable her contribution was, and to congratulate Kenyon College for its support of the very best in contemporary letters by its publication of *Kenyon Review*.

The course I teach is in the theory and practice of editing literary materials. The students produce, among other projects, the University's literary magazine, and study, in preparations for this other literary magazines which might serve them as models. We spent the class period before Ms Hacker's arrival discussing *Kenyon Review*, and two students wrote reports on it. I think it is safe to say that most of my students did not know much if anything about Kenyon College before their exposure to Ms Hacker and the *Review* and now it is very much on their minds and in their conversation.

Ms Hacker was a superb addition to the semester's syllabus. Her knowledge of the editing process, her experience, and the integrity with which she goes about her work were all evident in her discussion and her forthright and eloquent answers to the students' questions. I have sent a packet of short written responses by the students to Ms Hacker, but I include some of them to make clear how much her talk contributed to their education.

Marilyn Hacker is a very interesting Woman. Her visit to our class was extremely informative. Since her visit I have applied to several graduate schools that have literary magazines.

Just seeing a real editor helped me to visualize my possible editing future...I was impressed with her in ways I could never have been if I'd only read what she had to say.

Marilyn Hacker's visit to our class was interesting and shed light on the editor's process. She was honest and forthcoming about her position as Editor of *Kenyon Review*.

Her time and visit were greatly appreciated...our short preparation for the talk was immeasurably supported by our initial readings and discussion of the magazine she edits.

Kenyon College is to be congratulated for its continuing support of the best of contemporary arts and letters through its publication of the *Kenyon Review* and for its landmark editor, Marilyn Hacker. Under her guidance, the *Review* is making a significant mark on contemporary literature.

Ellen Walker
Professor of English

Michelle Herter

Marilyn Hacker is a very interesting woman. Her visit to our class was extremely informative. Her comment on how to enter the publishing field by first attending graduate school was very helpful. Since her visit I have applied to several graduate schools that have literary magazines. I enjoy her poetry, and her frame of mind about womanhood is liberating.

Crystal Bonlon<?>

Just seeing a real editor helped me to visualize my possible editing future. Before, although we had read editors' reports, they were faceless. Now, after listening to and seeing Marilyn Hacker, I want to be "in" editing more than ever. I was impressed with her in ways I never could have been if I'd only read what she had to say. Her realness and <illeg> vulnerability are is encouraging because it makes me feel like what I'm getting into is not a world of machine-like business people.

One of the more interesting topics that she brought up was how she solicits manuscripts. I was not aware that editors will frequently read other literary magazines for possible contributors. I thought it was also interesting that she if a piece did not suit her, she would suggest to the author or poet other editors who might publish the work.

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she came across manuscripts by chance and built a relationship with the author that led to future pieces being published. It was also helpful to know about the work she does with contributing editors that help in finding new work.

Eileen Bryden

I enjoyed Marilyn Hacker's visit just for the chance to query someone who is a functioning editor right now

- how she got there

- her the structure she has built with assistant editors and her criteria for choosing.

Dan Harlan<?>

What I found interesting was when she talked about the actual soliciting of manuscripts via advertisements in the proper places (i.e. magazine [I forget which one] that all other editors read). I believe she remarked that this was a very effective way of getting a look at some good stuff that might not otherwise be published [normally because certain pieces are right for some publications and not for others] Is this clear? Who knows!

Pauli Galin 30 Nov 93

Marilyn Hacker Visit

Her time & visit were greatly appreciated. ~~Impromptu~~ Impromptu though it was, our short preparation for the talk was immeasurably supported by our initial readings & discussions of the magazine she edits – The Kenyon Review.

It was important to hear someone in the flesh describe their sorting, reviewing technique of new manuscripts.

It was also refreshing to hear about the wide range of other projects she has edited & to hear that she was, seemingly with ease, able to move from one to the next.

I thought I learned very much about the publishing editing process. It really brought everything down to earth for me to listen to what she had to say. At first I was very nervous but after a few people asked her a question I got my thoughts together and asked her a question. Nothing specific comes to mind as a certain point of editing but it was just the fact that she was here and made herself available made it seem more real.

Elizabeth Sheridan

Marilyn Hacker Interview.

<Illeg> She was interesting. I like hearing about her different jobs and how she applied for them. that is something that could <Illeg> be in useful to know after college<> She's very involved in women's magazines and organizations which I found enlightening, I don't know enough about this. <Illeg>

It would have been easier to write this if we'd done it sooner.

I am sure for those who plan on working in the field Ms. Hacker's presentation was extremely helpful. The beuacracy<sic> of the university interested me. I would have liked to know more about her personal life – How much money she makes. How often does she travel for work.<sic>

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I learned from her visit more about how the idea of publishing gets turned into a reality. I benefited from learning how she goes about picking manuscripts and she helped me answer the question of "who's to say".

Marilyn Hacker

Jenny Cook

I was surprised and interested in what she had to say. I think it is important to know and understand what the real world is doing and how it is done. She is educated and definately<sic> knows her stuff! Having speakers come to class can only benefit our learning process.

I appreciate her sharing with us what was involved in starting out in publishing & editing business and her own experiences in this field. I<sic> gave me a sense of hope and a little insight towards editing. It was just nice to about someones<sic> success and experiences in something of my interest.

Ellen Walker to Philip Jordan

03.12.93

December 3, 1993

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James Kates to Marilyn Hacker

04.12.93

4 December 1993

P.O. Box 221, Fitzwilliam

New Hampshire 03447

{e-mail: jkates@igc.apc.org}

The KenyonReview<sic>

KenyonCollege<sic>

Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Dear Marilyn Hacker:

I wish you hadn't written to me as a past and potential contributor, and asked for me to be a donor, too. I have very few literary principles in this venal world -- I don't intentionally double-submit, I don't publish my own work in a publication that has my name on its masthead -- but one of them is not to make financial donations to magazines to which I submit my work.

I have given money to help with magazines.

I subscribe to many -- my wife thinks, too many -- literary magazines.

But the magazines I give money to, I don't ask to consider my work. And, often enough, the magazines I subscribe to are ones that would never publish my work. (There is a logic to this: I can read magazines that do publish<sic> my work when they send contributors' copies -- but subscribing to magazines that wouldn't publish me keeps me open to very different kinds of poetry. The kind that, by definition, is not mine. So I make new discoveries, and, presumably, somebody else out there is supporting a magazine I'm in, on the same principle, so it all comes even in the end. You know, of course, that I do subscribe to also to magazines, like *KenyonReview*<sic>, that have published at least a piece of me.)

Yours is the second time a magazine has appealed to me not as a reader, but as a contributor, to give money. I give you the same choice I gave that other magazine. The enclosed envelope contains a check made out to *KenyonReview*<sic>. If you open the envelope and cash the check, I will continue to read the writers you publish, with pleasure, even with enthusiasm, but I won't feel comfortable about submitting my work for your consideration. (This is what the other magazine did.) On the other hand, if you'd rather, you can return the envelope with the check, and I'll keep on sending you my work, for your usual rejection but -- after all, in the hope of an acceptance.

I know this probably strikes you as fussy and probably unnecessary, and I don't mean to impute anything to anyone in particular, but the publishing world is so generally compromised, I just sleep a little better if I keep some distinctions clear.

Thank you.

Stay well,

J. Kates

Wallis Wilde – Menozzi to Philip Jordan

05.12.93

Wallis Wilde – Menozzi
Via Monte Penna, 12
Parma 43100 – Italy
0521 – 242641

December 5, 1993

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan:

Recently it has come to my attention that the Kenyon Review is in danger. There is no other reaction for the possible coming to an end of this institution except alarm. The Review, as you well know, has always put the college on the country's intellectual map. This is even more true, since Marilyn Hacker took over. There are few magazines one waits for these days. The Kenyon Review, with its beautiful covers and its generous forum giving space to the reasoned argument--the written word as thought, not a quick catchy gloss--is a magazine necessary to American life.

Marilyn Hacker's energy and vision have opened up the pages to work that is stunning. The issues' variety leaves one thinking and considering. The stories and poetry possess an intensity that soars above the products of academic workshops. The quality of work that she attracts seems to rise higher with each issue. I know many Europeans who read the magazine rooted in Gambier, Ohio.

How does a liberal arts college justify its existence, if not by focusing deeply issues of importance to society's definition? It is Kenyon's great fortune to possess a journal as well-established and stimulating as the Review. Hacker's editorship has made it vital to many thinking individuals beyond universities. Her push gives Kenyon a national part in enlarging the ever more restricted standards dictated by the publishing market place. The Review's survival lies at the core of the future of liberal arts. How do you measure the cost efficiency of ideas' transmission? What prices will be paid if Kenyon relinquishes its role as beacon and forum? What do liberal arts mean if institutions are unable to defend their perpetration and buckle to non-reading, non-thinking pressures? The long essay, for example, the space needed to lay out an argument that holds as more than an opinion, finds few homes in commercial publishing. The Review offers this space and uses it beautifully. By way of justifying what must be a considerable expense, the journal, beyond its public relations value, might be seen as a set of forest plantings that will go on growing in time.

Your editor, Marilyn Hacker seems to be a force of nature, a rare mind, a visionary and someone unafraid to work issues from all sides. Having such a resource, you must protect the journal. Have faith that it is growing, making a mark. In the

development work you do, surely if the journal becomes a priority--an important part of your identity as an institution furthering dialogue--somewhere a donor with a soft spot for the arts will be found. I hope that you find a way to send this important signal: there is resolve to defend and nourish the written word.

Please accept my remarks as a sign of my appreciation for the Kenyon Review and your commitment to publishing it.

Sincerely,

Wallis-Wilde Menozzi

Nancy K. Bereano to Philip Jordan

08.12.93

**Firebrand
Books**

141 The Commons

**Ithaca, New York 14850
(607) 272-0000**

Nancy K. Bereano
Editor & Publisher

December 8, 1993

Marilyn Hacker
KENYON REVIEW
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Marilyn:

I'm swamped and wanted to get the enclosed off my desk before it was submerged. I hope it helps.

Take good care.

Best wishes,

Nancy

**Firebrand
Books**

141 The Commons
Ithaca, New York 14850
(607) 272-0000

Nancy K. Bereano
Editor & Publisher

December 8, 1993

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier Ohio 43022

Dear Philip Jordan:

I am writing this letter to commend and support the outstanding work done by the KENYON REVIEW and its current editor, Marilyn Hacker.

As an independent publisher committed to bringing into print some of the best contemporary feminist and lesbian literature, I often look to the standards set in the periodical world. The KENYON REVIEW is one of the places, and there are precious few of them, where "emerging voices" and "quality" are synonymous.

I hope that you will be able to do everything in your power to ensure continued visibility for this fine journal.

Sincerely,

Nancy K. Bereano

Frederick Smock to Philip Jordan

08.12.93

The American voice

332 West Broadway, Ste. 1215
Louisville, KY 40202 USA
502 · 562 · 0045

8 December 1993

Dear Philip Jordan,

I am writing in support of The Kenyon Review, and of Marilyn Hacker's editorship, and, I must tell you, it feels strange to have to defend success.

Such magazines maintain literature "as the unifying center to our culture," to quote Monroe K. Spears. And, at any given time, there is but a few magazines that the culture itself seems to entrust with this responsibility, because of their bold editorial vision, their proven history -- currently, The Kenyon Review is one of these few, and its willful<sic> destruction would be an unconscionable act.

How many people in our culture know and respect the name "Kenyon" because of its review! When little Gettysburg College, in Pennsylvania, set out to raise its profile, it chose to endow a high-quality literary magazine -- and it has turned out to be an enduring and relatively inexpensive piece of fame.

Marilyn Hacker's editorship has transformed not only The Kenyon's pages but also the American publishing scene -- it is a magazine that good young writers aspire to, and one that fellow editors hail as a standard, and to which they compare their own efforts.

As one such fellow editor, I urge you to fight for its life! We will all be diminished if The Kenyon Review suffers, and in ways that cannot be rightly measured. Though a small magazine, The Kenyon Review is a powerful force in our culture, and for its sake, for all our sakes, I urge you to be brave.

Sincerely,

Frederick Smock
Editor

cc to Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review

Adam Brooke Davis to Marilyn Hacker

09.12.93

NORTHEAST MISSOURI
STATE UNIVERSITY

12-9-93

Dear Prof. Hacker –

A copy of the letter to President Jordan, as requested (originals already sent). Hope it's of help.

Best,

AD

Dr. Adam Brooke Davis
Assistant Professor of English
McClain Hall 314a
(816) 785-4487; FAX (816)785-7486
804 East Illinois Avenue Kirksville MO 63501
(816) 627-0008

Northeast
MISSOURI STATE
UNIVERSITY Kirksville

Division of
Languages and Literature
Kirksville 63501

English, Foreign Languages,
Media, Speech

December 9, 1993

Mr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I was saddened to hear that our economic autumn threatens the Kenyon Review, but happy to hear of your personal commitment<sic> to it, and eager for the opportunity to report on the journal's importance to the national scholarly and literary community. I know this fine journal well; it has rejected each of the thirty manuscripts I have sent it over the last decade, and yet even the well-developed ego-defenses of a writer and professor can't shield me from the justice of their correct (but always kind) judgment:

the standards of the Kenyon Review dictate those of the best journals across the country.

The KR has of course charted the future of American letters since John Crowe Ransome's<sic> day, but a great many historically influential publications have since ossified, and survive on their reputations, and their service to a small coterie. The Review by contrast, continues to reflect and shape the changing world of letters; for most teachers and students of writing -- and the libraries they patronize -- it is the first choice among the many possibilities available. That is, I think, a reflection of the magazine's flexibility. The Review publishes a range of writers, from the very new to the fiction and essays of the first water appear with sensible reviews, all mercifully free from the familiar dreary, overwrought lit-babble which elsewhere and often renders the thoroughly human interests of good books arcane and dull. Have a look at PMLA, to see what the world of the word has come to, and to experience first-hand and by contrast the integrity of your own journal.

To speak only of the most recent issues, I find an interview with a pretty radical thinker like Michelle Cliff, and a debate in several parts on the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" which treats the poem as historically important, yet of abiding contemporary interest. Both of these figured immediately and prominently in my classroom, and in those of my colleagues. Could a journal offer clearer evidence of its viability and importance than its active role in the conversations of intelligent young men and women, the people to whom we will be handing over the culture of words, and the human world we shape with them?

I've known many graduates of Kenyon; your college's sound and deserved reputation has much to do with the prestige of your journal, and for the same reasons: intellectual ambition, a sense of what's important, the integrity of craft, a humane respect for the conversation which is culture. That's the core of the modern liberal arts culture, with which my own institution is so concerned (and with an equally frightening fiscal framework). But some things are worth struggling for, and some economies are Pyrrhic. You don't want to cut off your feet to save money on shoes.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Brooke Davis

Dr. Adam Brooke Davis

Assistant Professor of English

McClain Hall 314a

(816) 785-4487

Hilda Raz to Philip Jordan

09.12.93

Prairie Schooner
201 Andrews Hall
P.O. Box 880334
Lincoln, NE 68588-0334
Editorial: (402) 472-1812
Business: (402) 472-3191

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Kenyon College
Ransome Hall
Gambier OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

In the course of a busy day I discover the opportunity to write in support of your watershed journal, The Kenyon Review. Under the direction of Marilyn Hacker, the journal has increased its visibility with an increased commitment to the frontiers of literary publishing. For the past two years we have had trouble keeping our copies on the library shelves. In the English Department, Ph.D. students in creative writing vie with each other for new and back issues with work by Rafael Campo, Rita Dove, Russell Banks and others -- writers they admire for their new work in Kenyon Review. Our bookstores stock and sell out each issue. I teach from Kenyon Review, as do other professors here and in other universities. We simply cannot do without this journal, and I speak as a writer, a teacher, and especially the editor of Prairie Schooner, another old and distinguished journal supported by the academy. While anthologies and textbooks of middling quality come and go, what's new and excellent from the international community of writers is available quarterly from Kenyon.

The enclosed donation is only a fraction of what I want to send. Commercial magazines are able to realize the vision of extraordinary editors only with the support of wealthy patrons. Editors whose commitment to literary excellence can be tracked through the growth and praise of their journals must depend on the vision of our colleges and universities. Please keep your journal alive and publishing.

Sincerely yours,

Hilda Raz
Editor

cc: Marilyn Hacker, Editor, The Kenyon Review

University of Nebraska-Lincoln University of Nebraska Medical Center
University of Nebraska at Omaha University of Nebraska at Kearney

Robert Fox to Philip Jordan

09.12.93

Share the Arts

December 9, 1993

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier OH 43022

Dear Mr. Jordan:

Several years ago, meetings of the Ohio Arts Council's literature advisory panel erupted in abrasive policy discussions. Some panel members, also editors of fine literary magazines in the state, balked at the need to serve a multicultural audience, as if expanded inclusiveness meant a loss of quality, or worse, the sacrifice of editorial integrity.

Now Marilyn Hacker continues to show the field, not only in Ohio but in the nation, that representing culturally diverse writing is not only possible but desirable. *The Kenyon Review*, under Ms. Hacker's editorship, beginning with the De Colores issue, has become once again a magazine that leads the literary ranks rather than plods safely along in the mainstream.

Not since the first few uncertain but promising issues of the New Series edited by Turner and Sharp, during my first years with the Council, has *The Kenyon Review* become a highly sought after magazine. While a publication like the now defunct Contact II represented exciting and diverse poetry, *The Kenyon Review* presents a broad range of genres as well as styles. I can think of no other magazine that juxtaposes Toi Derricotte and Stanley Plumly, Maxine Kumin and Stephen Dixon, writers whose work revitalizes our national literature and converses with the best of tradition. Since it is not possible to separate the identify<sic> of the College from that of the Review, it seems to me that the new *Kenyon Review* places Kenyon College squarely in the forefront of the nation's literary consciousness.

Sincerely,

Robert Fox
Literature Program Coordinator

121/rf

Steve Berg to Philip Jordan

09.12.93

The American Poetry Review

1721 Walnut Street • Philadelphia, Pa. 19103 • (215)496-0439

Dear Philip Jordan –

The Kenyon Review has always been one of the essential literary magazines in America. I remember it 40 years ago, when I was starting to write as a perseverer whose sanction I aspired to, and I continue to admire its editorial accomplishments. Since Marilyn Hacker's arrival, it has regained its pre-eminent place among the very best journals that publish poetry and prose before they are gathered into books. That stage in a writer's life is terribly important to his impetus, his desire to go forward & finish the writing. Responses from respected magazine editors along the way can make a big difference to the loneliness and uncertainty of a writer's labor. It would be a great loss to see KR diminished or abandoned or lost altogether in this age of decisions made principally because of money. As a poet and an editor I would be glad to do anything I can to help maintain The Kenyon Review's present healthy career.

Sincerely –

Steve Berg

Dec 9, 1993

Dorothy Allison to Philip Jordan

10.12.93

Dorothy Allison
15866 Wright Street, Guerneville, CA 95446

December 10, 1993

Phillip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan,

I will be coming to Kenyon College Wednesday, January 26th to give a reading for the Women's and Gender Studies Program--an event cohosted by *The Kenyon Review*. I wanted to write and let you know how pleased I am to be making this trip, and how great is my regard for the *Review*, a journal which you<sic> generosity helps to maintain.

I have been a long-time reader of *The Kenyon Review*, and as both a writer, and editor, and a teacher of young writers I have found the last few years of the journal completely extraordinary. The quality of the fiction and poetry the *Review* has published has been consistently remarkable, so much so that I have been urging my students, many of whom are on very limited budgets, to invest in a subscription. But what has surprised me even more has been the introduction of relatively young and unknown writers of great talent, and a series of essays so interesting and well written that I have taken them as models for the form.

Frankly, I would not be making this trip to Kenyon College--in a year during which my travel and teaching schedule has had to be extremely limited--if the request had not come from the *Review* and its current editor, Marilyn Hacker. I have also agreed to take far less than my standard fee for this appearance--largely because the visit will in part benefit the *Review*.

I look forward to meeting you and the students of Kenyon College in January.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Allison

cc: Editor, The Kenyon Review

SAM HAMILL TO PHILIP JORDAN

10.12.93

Coppercanyonpress

P.O. BOX 271, PORT TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON 98368 · (206) 385-4925

December 10, 1993

Mr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College, Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Mr. Jordan:

There are at present only a half dozen or so literary journals deserving national or international prominence. You have the good fortune to be in a position to ensure the future of one of them.

At a time when many of our most prominent journals were falling into cronyism and dull predictability, Marilyn Hacker revived The Kenyon Review, and under her guidance it has become essential reading not only for the "literary community," academic and otherwise, but for everyone who participates in that other economy, literary currency. She has proven to be simultaneously expansive and judicious in her tastes. There is not another university-affiliated or sponsored literary journal of equal merit.

Because The Kenyon Review is so famously associated with your college, being its patron brings, along with the honor, a tremendous responsibility. All through the history of this country, many of its greatest, most noble writers have proven to be very small potatoes in the marketplace--from Thoreau, Melville, Whitman and Dickinson in the last century to any contemporary poet today. The Kenyon Review has nurtured writers with disparate views, it has been a primary forum for the exchange of interdisciplinary and intercultural ideas. It is a national treasure. You can assume the future of the review, and in return be assured that The Kenyon Review keeps Kenyon College on the literary map of the world.

Sincerely,

Sam Hamill
Founding Editor

Carole Simmons Oles to Marilyn Hacker

10.12.93

California State University, Chico
Chico California 95929-0830

Department of English
(916) 898-5124

Dear Marilyn –

This is a copy of my letter to the Prez. I hope it helps. Plunging into student papers –
glub glub...

Take care,

Carole

The California State University
December 10, 1993

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College,
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I am writing to register my enthusiasm for The Kenyon Review and for Marilyn Hacker's outstanding editorship of the magazine. I look forward to the arrival of each issue, which inevitably delights and instructs me. In no other contemporary literary magazine can I find the breadth of work which I have come to expect and depend on from The Kenyon Review under Hacker. The recent Theater issue provides a perfect example of the range which so impresses me. (In fact, it led me to purchase a gift subscription for some actor/teacher friends.) This semester I have also had occasion to use the magazine as I taught a Modern Poetry class--something I have not been drawn to do before the current editor's arrival.

On a recent visit to Chico State, where Marilyn Hacker gave a poetry reading and talked to a Literary Editing class, the magazine received the best kind of publicity--the personal integrity, professionalism, and dazzling talent of its editor. I have never heard such high praise for any visitor here as from the other writers, faculty, and students who were thoroughly awed by Hacker. As you know, this is advocacy for The Kenyon Review that has nothing to do with bottom lines because it's priceless.

For so long The Kenyon Review has been the basis for literary audiences' familiarity with Kenyon College that I regret to think that the magazine's future is in any way jeopardized. I can only urge vigorously that you not only continue to support the magazine with Hacker as Editor, but that you support it as the outstanding symbol of cultural excellence for which Kenyon College is known.

Sincerely,

Carole Simmons Oles
Associate Professor of English
Coordinator of Creative Writing

Joyce Carol Oates to Philip Jordan

10.12.93

Princeton University

Creative Writing Program
185 Nassau Street
Princeton, New Jersey 08544
(609) 452-4712

10 December 1993

Dear Philip Jordan:

THE KENYON REVIEW is one of a small handful of truly distinguished literary magazines currently being published in the United States. Along with PARIS REVIEW, ANTAEUS, YALE REVIEW, and one or two others, it has both a remarkable history and a living, exciting presence. Under the imaginative editorship of Marilyn Hacker, THE KENYON REVIEW continues to be a vehicle for the publication of wonderfully diverse work; "emerging" and "established" writers appear side by side. It's one of the magazines I read with genuine anticipation.

Frankly, given THE KENYON REVIEW's prestigious history alone, it is unthinkable that the magazine suspend publication. It is, in fact, the primary means--in many quarters, certainly the sole means--by which your distinguished liberal arts college is known.

I wish you luck in your admirable campaign to maintain THE KENYON REVIEW during this time of financial stress.

Sincerely,

Joyce Carol Oates

Roger S. Berlind
Distinguished Professor in the Humanities

Dorothy Allison to Marilyn Hacker 10.12.93

Dorothy Allison
15866 Wright Street, Guerneville, CA 95446

December 10, 1993

Marilyn Hacker
c/o The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Marilyn,

Sending you a copy of my--very--quick and dirty letter in support of *The Kenyon Review*. I am moving in just six days, and completely overwhelmed with packing.

Yours is the last letter being printed before we get down to serious packing--afraid my copies of the *Review* are already packed or I would have referred to specific stories and essays. But I do hope this does some good, anyway.

By the way, I think we had some miscommunication about my upcoming publishing schedule. *Skin* will be out the first of June, 1994, while *2 or 3 Things* is not scheduled for publication until the spring of 1995. The essay I was talking about sending you has been pulled out of *Skin* because I could not finish it by the closing deadline (this past week). Also I spoke to Carolyn Megan and we'll finish her interview after I get moved and settled, some time in January.

Glad I know *Numbers* is coming out this fall. I could use a dose of good poetry.

All My Best,

Dorothy

Karl Kirchwey to Philip Jordan

10.12.93

Unterberg Poetry Center
OF THE 92ND STREET Y

1395 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10128

December 10, 1993

Marilyn -

Thanks for your letter of December 6. I hope this helps. All best

- K

Unterberg Poetry Center
OF THE 92ND STREET Y

Karl Kirchwey, *Director*

December 10, 1993

Philip Jordan, President
Ransom Hall, Kenyon College
Gambier OH 43022

Dear Dr. Jordan:

On behalf of The Unterberg Poetry Center of the 92nd Street Y, I would like to express my enthusiastic support for the work done by Editor Marilyn Hacker and her colleagues at The Kenyon Review over the past few years. I am unable to comment upon the relationship and importance of the magazine to Kenyon College; however, it seems to me that the magazine is of crucial importance to the literary life of this country.

As a poet, I have benefited from the exposure afforded me by publication in its pages, and consider it one of the five or six most important literary periodicals in the country. As a reader and arts administrator, I have benefited from seeing new work by such established writers as Alfred Corn, Sandra McPherson, Alicia Ostriker, Albert Goldbarth, Hayden Carruth, Maxine Kumin, Romulus Linney, Samuel R. Delany, Martin Espada, and Lucille Clifton. Perhaps more importantly, I have also been introduced to the work of the new writers such as Sherman Alexie, Suzanne Gardinier, and Cyrus Cassells, and have been able to follow the work of poets such as James Cummins and Elizabeth Alexander whom I have presented as "emerging writers" at The Poetry Center.

I think The Kenyon Review also provides a national model for completeness as a literary journal, providing in most issues as it does new poetry, fiction, and essays (sometimes new drama too, which is unusual in a literary magazine) as well as reviews.

As the furor<sic> over the death (resulting in the subsequent resurrection) of The Yale Review made clear a few years ago, there are certain literary magazines which are inextricably linked, not only to the cultural life of this country, but also to the academic institutions where they were founded, to the extent that institution and magazine share a single reputation-- and in the case of The Kenyon Review, that is for excellence and iconoclasm. It seems to me that Kenyon College has a responsibility, not only to itself but also to the literary community at large in the United States, to ensure that The Kenyon Review will continue to flourish.

Please feel free to call me at the number listed on this letterhead if I can amplify any of these remarks. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karl Kirchwey
Director, The Unterberg Poetry Center

cc: Marilyn Hacker, Editor, The Kenyon Review

Hayden Carruth to Philip Jordan

11.12.93

Hayden Carruth
RD 1, Box 128
Munnsville, NY 13409

December 11, 1993

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransom Hall
Gambier OH 43022

Dear Mr. Jordan:

The news, or perhaps rumor, that *The Kenyon Review* is in trouble has reached me even here in isolated situation. Of course it isn't surprising. Most publications and publishers are in trouble nowadays, along with colleges and universities and arts centers and nearly every other establishment devoted to thought and culture in our society. One does not know what to think. But clearly if the society is to be worth preserving we must make a greater effort than ever to sustain and champion our important agencies of artistic and intellectual exchange. And *The Kenyon Review* is to my mind, and in the minds of many others, at the top of the list.

Fifty years ago some of my earliest poems were published in the *Review* by John Crowe Ransom, which was of course a great boost to me personally. I thought and still think that Mr. Ransom was one of the best poets, critics, and editors ever produced in this country. But even more important to me was the fact that he made the *Review* a publication that reached into every intellectual center here and in Europe, one of the two or three most widely respected American periodicals of the time. It was essential to all serious literary people. Perhaps after Mr. Ransom's death the *Review* declined somewhat in reputation, but in the past two or three years, under an aggressive new editorship, it has regained its former distinction. It is now again in touch with the forward-looking intellectual and artistic elements of our population, just as it was fifty years ago. And it is now, as in the past, by far the most widely known and admired manifestation of Kenyon College in the national consciousness.

I urge you and the trustees of the College, in the strongest terms I possess, to do everything you can to support the *Review* and assure its continuance.

Yours sincerely,

Hayden Carruth
Professor Emeritus
Syracuse University

Catharine R. Stimpson to Philip Jordan

12.12.93

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
Rutgers

Catharine R. Stimpson
University Professor

172 College Avenue
New Brunswick New Jersey 08903

908/932-1628
FAX: 908/932-1674

December 12, 1993

President Philip Jordan
Office of the President
Ransome<sic> Hall
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan:

Let me come to the point immediately. Kenyon Review is one of the most important cultural journals being published today. The appointment of Marilyn Hacker as editor was a brilliant stroke. More than any other editor I know, she has taken a journal with a histories tradition of excellence, kept that tradition, and added vital new voices and visions. Hers has simply been an extraordinary stewardship. I am fully aware of the financial pressures on liberal arts college<sic>, but the current Kenyon Review, for many of us outside of the college, is one of our most important sources of understanding what the liberal arts ought to mean today.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this letter.

Sincerely,

Catharine R. Stimpson
University Professor

CRS/sk

Nancy Willard to Philip Jordan

12.12.93

Marilyn Hacker –
a copy for you –
Nancy –

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan,

I'm writing in praise of THE KENYON REVIEW, a journal so long admired and enjoyed by a wide range of readers that I fear my laudatory remarks will seem superfluous. When I examine my own high regard for the college, I realize that it derives in part from my longstanding acquaintance with the REVIEW.

Long may it live.

Sincerely,

Nancy Willard
Vassar College
Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 12601

December 12, 1993

Terry Castle to Philip Jordan 12.12.93

Stanford University
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-2087

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

December 12, 1993

Philip Jordan
President, Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I am writing in support of continued college funding for The Kenyon Review, one of the best and most admired small literary magazines in the country. I am a regular reader and --I am proud to say--have also contributed to the review. Under the inspired editorship of Marilyn Hacker, the Kenyon Review has become, even more than during its illustrious past, a crucial voice in American letters. It would be a horrible shame if the magazine were to cease publication: I only wish my own institution, Stanford University, had a publication of such merit and distinction.

Yours sincerely,

Terry Castle
Professor of English

cc: Marilyn Hacker, Kenyon Review

Kate Braverman to Philip Jordan

13.12.93

President Phillip Jordan
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

13 December 1993

Dear President Jordan,

I am happy to write to you on behalf of the terrific work being done by *The Kenyon Review* and Ms. Marilyn Hacker and her extraordinary staff. Last week, The Los Angeles Times asked me, as a regional author of some note, what books I would be giving as Christmas presents. I answered (and it was published) that this year, I would be giving magazine subscriptions to, among others, *The Kenyon Review*.

Let me state my case simply. As a writer dependent upon my own financial contributions, I would not ordinarily publish my short stories for as little financial remuneration as *The Kenyon Review* offers. I would have to consider such a publication, really a gift, to be a matter of personal honor and the tangible demonstration of my aesthetic. I gave Ms. Hacker a story this year and have sent her another for 1994. Simply, I consider it a privilege to be published by *The Kenyon Review*. I tell that to my students and to interviewers. I am the Ms. Magazine interview subject for their January issue and I did, in fact mention, that *The Kenyon Review*, along with the *Paris Review* and *Antaeus* have published my newest, most cutting edge and daring of fictions. I consider *The Kenyon Review* a place where I can still risk writing as a true woman would write in this ever diminishing climate of artistic amputation, in this increasingly inhospitable period for the literary soul. If venues such as *The Kenyon Review* are silenced, there will be no alternative writing in this country. There will be only the marketplace and what greed spawns and even worse, the fashion mongers who think they deal in substance.

I have traveled extensively this 1993 on behalf of my new novel and in bookstores every where, I have seen *The Kenyon Review*. Ms. Hacker has managed to achieve unusual distribution for the magazine. Wherever I have gone, from New York to California and places in between, people are speaking about it. It has returned from what I thought was extinction, with vigor and purpose and I have demonstrated my support in that most tangible of methods, namely, my pocketbook.

As a California writer, I must tell you that *The Kenyon Review* has long seemed the most prestigious little magazine in a certain area of the country. Then it became somehow irrelevant, too peripheral. I never heard about it or thought about it. Now that *The Kenyon Review* has reappeared and with an astounding direction and energy, (the reflection of Ms. Hacker's efforts, clearly) it would be tragic not to support it at a moment when it has never been so important.

I believe I am only one of many writers who make a financial sacrifice to publish in *The Kenyon Review*. I will continue to do so, and to speak about the innovative

atmosphere it provides in interviews, question and answer sessions and forums both public and private.

Finally, as a former professor and director of creative writing programs and conferences, I know the value of name recognition. Your college is fortunate to have an international calling card like *The Kenyon Review*. It's something of a literary treasure, particularly as history itself and its artefacts seem to be disappearing.

If I can be of further service in this most important matter, please do not hesitate to contact me, by telephone or mail.

With sincere respect,

Kate Braverman
345 N. Palm Dr. #6. Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Nancy A. Walker to Philip Jordan 13.12.93

Vanderbilt university

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37235 TELEPHONE (615) 322-7311

Department of English · Direct phone 322-2541

13 December 1993

President Philip Jordan
Kenyon College
Gambier Ohio 43022-9623

Dear President Jordan,

I recently had the opportunity of reviewing some manuscripts and other materials from the estate of Robert Penn Warren for possible purchase by the Vanderbilt University library, and among the papers was some correspondence between Warren and John Crowe Ranson<sic> pertaining to the founding of the Kenyon Review. I was reminded on that occasion of the central role the Kenyon Review has played for decades in fostering new directions in critical inquiry and providing a highly visible forum for writers and scholars. Such journals play a unique role in the intellectual life of the nation as well as enhancing both the reputations of and the actual tenor of life on the campuses that sponsor them, and those with distinguished histories, such as the Kenyon Review and a handful of others, attract readers and contributors of the highest caliber.

Having taught at a small private college for many years before coming to Vanderbilt, I am well aware of the financial stresses that such institutions face. It would, however, be short-sighted indeed for such a college to discontinue (or even diminish) support for an intellectual enterprise that brings such luster to the image of the college--that, in fact, keeps it in the public eye more than any other single activity can.

I hope that those of us in the academic community will be able to count on the Kenyon Review to enrich our lives for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Nancy A. Walker
Professor

cc: Marilyn Hacker

Rosemary Deen to Philip Jordan

13.12.93

Rosemary Deen, 38-02 214th Place, Bayside, NY 11361-2122

13 December, 1993

Mr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Philip Jordan,

I'm writing in support of *The Kenyon Review*, and I want to begin with a story of my own, if you have patience with a small beginning to support for a great international quarterly. When I came to Gambier for the first time in the summer of 1948, it was to a special "School" which Ransome<sic> had set up with some of the most remarkable literary critics of the time. I had just got my master's I was twenty-two, and poor, of course – my scholarship having got me through my year of master's study without any pennies left over. I had no business even applying for admission (limited to seventy-five persons), because I needed not only to be accepted but, but to be given a scholarship and a job. I've no idea why I got all three. I think a smile at my effrontery must have edged me in.

Gambier was the smallest place I had ever seen. In the lush Ohio summer, the fields seemed almost to engulf its four corners, and the corn appeared to be growing taller than the buildings. At night outside my dormitory windows, mice darted out from the ivy to battle with moths bigger than they were, in a contest fascinatingly equal. I had the odd feeling I was in a tropic not quite marked on the map.

I had come there because of *The Kenyon Review*. I was too young to know know<sic> much about the big literary scene, and I had done my undergraduate work in a tiny Michigan college of five hundred students, but I read *KR*. And occasionally *Sewanee* and *Partisan*. *SR* was often heavy with self-importance. *Partisan* was so political and so "New York" that it often seemed provincial to me. *Kenyon* was it: lively, humane, worldly without worrying about it. Everybody I was keen to read, whether critic, story writer, or poet, showed up in its pages. And quaint though the cornfields and mice of its home campus were, the great figures I encountered in two summers there did not seem out of place. They rather revealed how cosmopolitan Gambier really was. It was a tropic unmappable.

I came across one of those great figures I had studied with – William Empson – in a recent issue of *KR*. It was good to see him again. I saw also that though the review has changed greatly with the greatly changed times, it is still it, the best of the contemporary reviews. Its editors know how to use its old treasures when the world is still hungry for them, and how to make it preeminent when the world wants to find the center of contemporary literary culture.

In a recent survey of little magazines, I was surprised to see how obviously *KR* stands out. For one thing, it is almost a book. Other reviews are half its size. Some are

printed on beautiful paper, which is luxurious, but the money isn't invested in the patience and brains it takes to keep putting out a world-class review. A teacher could order an issue of *KR* for students in a contemporary literature class and work on it satisfactorily for most of the semester. It would be better than a book, of course, because it's really fresh and contemporary. Most books are part of big business, where having already arrived is the price of entry.

Kenyon is remarkable in the way it gets the "up-to-the-moment" advantage of a magazine, along with what we expect is the permanence of a book. In a recent issue, there were thirty-two authors, only eight of whom were familiar to me. I wondered how I could read so much new literature with such pleasure until I realized that I could sense a strong structure in every piece. Yet the structures were new too. That's exhilarating – and extraordinary. Your editors are rare birds. They have a contemporary sense of the classic.

The literary situation in the United States has changed deeply in the past forty years. I act as the poetry editor of *Commonweal*, which is not a literary magazine. We publish only about twenty poems a year, but I read at least a thousand. Almost all the poems I get are competent, and many of them are wonderful. So I reckon there is a very large literate population in this country now – literate enough to write as well as read, and therefore sophisticated enough to read literature with the fine eye of the amateur. I get a first hand-view of these candidates for literacy and culture when I profess literature at Queens College CUNY, myself now in one of the provinces of New York.

New literature is burgeoning; older writers are still going strong. And there are hundreds of really little magazines. It's a relief to have *The Kenyon Review* to turn to with its classic eye, its wonderfully intelligent editors and their sense of responsibility for the United States' place in international culture, their respect for literature and the people who create it and read it creatively. You are doing splendid work in supporting this enterprise. In the literary map, Gambier is brighter and larger than ever. I'm terribly proud of it.

Sincerely yours,

Rosemary Deen

James M. Hughes to Philip Jordan

13.12.93

Wright State
University

Department of English Language
and Literatures
Dayton, Ohio 45435
513 873-3136

James M. Hughes

Professor of English

December 13, 1993

Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I am writing to express my concern for the future of the Kenyon Review. As an English teacher and as a proud Kenyon parent, I must testify to the importance of the Review.

You and I both know that the Review symbolizes the great reputation of Kenyon College in English and the Liberal Arts. Kenyon and the Review in its name reinforce each other's unique historic importance. Among academic and literary persons, the Review's continuing courage and innovation echo the college's traditions of excellence.

Though a Political Science major, my son, Brad, has had close friends in English, some even assisting the Review. His choice of Kenyon College was based in part on the college's national reputation by way of its Review !

Though acquainted with academic financial constraints, I insist that the esteemed Kenyon Review be preserved !

Very sincerely,

James M. Hughes

Robert Fagles to Philip Jordan

13.12.93

December 13, 1993

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier OH 43022

Dear President Jordan,

I understand, from the editors of The Kenyon Review, that your superb journal is under financial threat these days. I am writing to express my support for the future of the journal.

From the days of Ransome<sic> to those of Hacker, the Review has represented the finest in criticism, reviewing and original writing, and the finest in flexibility as well. How often the journal has changed its tack, from the New Criticism to the interdisciplinary, multicultural present. Yet the Review has never been faddist in the process; it's always challenged the daily slogans and come forth with the strongest work in every shifting genre.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Fagles
Arthur W. Marks '19
Professor of Comparative Literature

cc: Marilyn Hacker, Editor
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Wendy Lesser to Philip Jordan

14.12.93

Marilyn –
Hope this helps.

Wendy

THE THREEPENNY REVIEW

December 14, 1993

Dear Philip Jordan,

There are only a handful of literary magazines that have been as important to American literary life for as long a period as The Kenyon Review. We can't afford to lose it now. Please continue to support it.

Sincerely,

Wendy Lesser

WENDY LESSER, EDITOR P.O. BOX 9131, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94709
TELEPHONE (510) 849-4545 FAX: (510) 849-4551

John Gery to Philip Jordan

15.12.93

Marilyn & Company -- My meagre contribution.
Bon sortel!

John

University of
New Orleans
SHAPING OUR FUTURE

Department of English

15 December 1993

New Orleans

Louisiana 70148

(504) 286-6273

Dr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I write in enthusiastic support of the contribution to contemporary arts and letters made by **The Kenyon Review**, housed on your campus.

As a college student over twenty years ago, I first became aware of **The Kenyon Review** while studying modern poetry, because of the new critical ideas of John Crowe Ransom and the major poets he published, so I was disappointed to learn, later, when I began to publish my own poetry, that the **Kenyon** had ceased publication. In restoring the Ransom tradition, the work of Frederick Turner was invaluable, and issues he edited are still discussed for the formal directions they led in contemporary poetry. Now, even more impressively, Marilyn Hacker's editorship has broadened, and deepened, what has always been one of the most dynamic literary journals in the United States.

What distinguishes the current **Kenyon**, in my view, is not only its commitment to diversity, both cultural and artistic, but the verve and quality of the creative work it published: Ms. Hacker actively seeks the best writers in the country, not just those in fashion, and then she promotes their work with an energy few other editors possess. In an increasingly tight market for literary art, the open-mindedness and vision of the current **Kenyon** have become indispensable<sic> to established as well as to younger writers. While other journals of the **Kenyon's** caliber print

fewer and fewer unusual pieces, the **Kenyon** continues to offer the unexpected, yet its national reputation has remained unflappable through most of this century.

The loss of **The Kenyon Review** is simply unacceptable to the American literary landscape. Because of its buoyancy and grace, it has become as important to our culture as the periodicals of Ralph Emerson, Frederick Douglass and William Dean Howells were in the last century. I urge you and the Trustees of Kenyon College to do whatever necessary to keep it afloat.

Sincerely,

John Gery
Poet & Associate Professor of English

A Member of the Louisiana State University System

Committed to Equal Opportunity Employment

Lawrence Joseph to Philip Jordan

15.12.93

St. John's university
GRAND CENTRAL AND UTOPIA PARKWAYS
JAMAICA, NEW YORK 11439

SCHOOL OF LAW
FROMKES HALL
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

TELEPHONE
(718) 990-6161

December 15, 1993

Dear Marilyn,

I hope this helps...

How are you? I think of you often; I hope we'll have the chance to be in touch again soon. You've all my best and warmest wishes for the remainder of this 1993, and for the new year,

As ever,

Larry

St. John's university
GRAND CENTRAL AND UTOPIA PARKWAYS
JAMAICA, NEW YORK 11439

SCHOOL OF LAW
FROMKES HALL
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

TELEPHONE
(718) 990-6161

December 15, 1993

Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Ransom Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan,

I write poetry (I have published three books of poems) and literary essays and reviews. I am a longtime, avid and scrutinizing reader of literary magazines journals. I am writing to applaud Kenyon College for its commitment to The Kenyon Review -- in my opinion, one of the premier literary magazines in the world. Relative to today's literary world, The Review's stature is, in fact, equal to that which it held under the editorial direction of John Crowe Ransom. More than any other literary magazine, The Kenyon Review remains in touch -- in the most fundamental cultural ways -- with the best writing in the United States. The vigor, integrity, and vitality of the work is, under any critical standard, impeccable. In the world of writing, Kenyon College, with one of the great liberal arts colleges in the country, Kenyon College, is identified by the excellence of The Kenyon Review.

As my letterhead indicates, I am also, by profession, a professor of law. As a law professor, I am acutely aware of the importance of the highest quality of writing to our social culture. From this perspective, The Kenyon Review is a journal of the highest order -- always alive (as it was under Ransom) with the breadth of the realities of its time.

I realize that I have spoken only in superlatives. That is because it is impossible to talk about The Review -- and Kenyon's identification with it -- without superlatives.

I very much appreciate, and thank you for, your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Joseph
Professor of Law

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to Philip Jordan

15.12.93

15 December, 1993

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Dear President Jordan:

I understand that the status of The Kenyon Review is coming under discussion by the trustees of Kenyon College. Perhaps you'll be kind enough to allow one of the journal's readers an opportunity to express a view of its stature and significance. Though I had been a casual reader of The Kenyon Review early in my career, it was the announcement of Marilyn Hacker's appointment as Editor that galvanized my interest in the journal: I instantly took out a two-year subscription for myself and a couple more as gifts for colleagues. Every expectation raised by that announcement has been more than fulfilled. In a way I could never have anticipated, the continuing provocations of The Kenyon Review have become central to my work as a writer and reader, and to those of many of my colleagues and students. I have regularly used poems and prose from the journal in both my undergraduate and graduate classes--in one case using an entire issue (the magisterial "De Colores") as the focal point for several weeks of teaching. The journal has also become a central and immensely valued presence in the reading groups I participate in with colleagues.

I can't think of any other case where a journal with a heritage of such distinction has been able to make itself so thoroughly indispensable on the most contemporary terms. It represents an extraordinary achievement, profoundly valued by those of us in the community of readers who make use of it. Continuing support for The Kenyon Review must certainly represent Kenyon College's most widely visible and deeply appreciated contribution to the world of contemporary thought. I certainly understand how times of financial stringency can require the cutting back of programs--but The Kenyon Review is a treasure. It is too integral to the college's history, its stature, its impact on the universe of ideas, to be allowed to be endangered.

Most sincerely,

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick
Newman Ivey White Professor of English

Jane Cooper to Philip Jordan

15.12.93

Dec. 15, 1993

Dear Marilyn,

Here's a copy of my letter to President Jordan. I hope it can help in some way.

I do hope your situation isn't absolutely perilous. But I know it's a very narrow time for small colleges generally.

I also have just sent off a small check to help with the ongoing needs of the magazine. I'm only sorry it can't be more.

I'm glad you liked the looks of the new SCAFFOLDING. I am certainly glad it's in the world. The letter soliciting funds suggests that we should all send you news of our lives in poetry (or whatever). However, I think you'll be printing a line about that to preface the poems in the spring issue, so probably you don't need more. My news remains that SCAFFOLDING is out and GREEN NOTEBOOK, WINTER ROAD on the way for fall 1994.

I have my niece coming to stay from tomorrow through December 30. But do give a ring if you're home for the holidays, and if you're still here in January I would love to get together. Who is bringing out your Collected and when?

Good luck and love,

Jane

545 West 111th St., apt. 8K
New York, NY 10025-1966

December 15, 1993

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022-9623

Dear President Jordan:

I'm writing to express my wholehearted support of The Kenyon Review as it has developed during the editorship of Marilyn Hacker.

Of all the literary journals that reach me regularly, The Kenyon Review seems to me the most consistently challenging. Hacker not only encourages a multiplicity of voices, in that she actively seeks out writers from different cultures, she also mixes young writers with very senior figures, she reaches across categories that are too often seen as separate (in the Fall 1993 issue, science/poetry/sci fi), she is a formalist who refuses to be limited by genre. What she prints is of consistently high quality. The Kenyon Review is, among other things, a celebration of the possibilities of our language.

I'm a poet who came of age reading Ransome's Kenyon Review in the middle and late forties. At that time to find one's new Kenyon in mailbox was an event. It has again become so in the last several years.

As someone who taught at a small liberal arts college (Sarah Lawrence) for almost forty years, I know the kind of financial pressures Kenyon College must be up against. Just the same I hope you can continue to sponsor and subsidize the Review. It adds to Kenyon's luster<sic> -- and it adds to the health of our shared intellectual and feeling life.

Sincerely,

Jane Cooper

Liam Rector to Philip Jordan

15.12.93

Bennington
COLLEGE

BENNINGTON WRITING SEMINARS

Liam Rector
Director

Priscilla Hodgkins
Assistant Director

December 15, 1993

Mr. Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Ransome Hall
Gambier OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I understand that the trustees of Kenyon College may be considering no longer supporting *The Kenyon Review*. In my judgement, this would be a grave mistake. *The Kenyon Review* and Kenyon College are so linked in the world of literature that the demise of *The Kenyon Review* would have about it in the Solomonic logic of cutting the baby in half, which is to say no logic at all.

Many private colleges looking to extend the traditions of the liberal arts are finding themselves in financial straits, but cutting funds for *The Kenyon Review* would be, especially in the mid- and long-term wisdoms of this fiscal climate, penny-wise but pound-foolish.

Let me give you a concrete example. We recently accepted a former Kenyon undergraduate into the graduate Writing Seminars at Bennington College. We accepted her primarily on the strength, the literary merit of the writing she submitted, but we also took into full account that she had been to Kenyon College, where *The Kenyon Review* has long thrived. We value the *Review*, and we value the climate of literary study it provides and fosters.

As a reader of the *Review*, I have also noted the lively editorship it has enjoyed in the last few years. In addition to teaching poetry, writing, and literature, I also teach courses on censorship, the First Amendment, and our present "culture wars." *The Kenyon Review* has, in my estimation, resisted much of the iron headed, Stalinist "political correctness" of the Left and exposed much of the mistaken, censorious, literalist-fundamentalist furor among the Right. It has presented a multicultural

perspective which is not special-interest racism and sexism in disguise, and it has provided a vortex for an important national debate. I look to *The Kenyon Review* for an evolving sense of standards, and its social and political ruminations are, I feel, driven by literary merit rather than half-baked sociology. *The Kenyon Review* embodies the ongoing fact that fine literature has always engaged the important social issues and values of its times, and *The Kenyon Review* does so by publishing the finest literature and commentary it can find. Marilyn Hacker is an especially feisty editor, and Eleanor Bender and other consulting editors have made important contributions.

I have also long been a student of the traditions which have been extended directly through Kenyon College and *The Kenyon Review*, through James Wright, Peter Taylor, Robert Lowell, and others. I urge you to honor those innovative traditions, and to do yourselves a favor in continuing to support the magazine. If I can be of further help, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Liam Rector
Director
Writing Seminars

Cc: Elizabeth Coleman, President, Bennington College
Marilyn Hacker, Editor, *The Kenyon Review*

Richard Howard to Philip Jordan

16.12.93

December 16

Dear Marilyn, this is a copy of the letter I just sent to President Jordan:

Dear President Jordan,

It is not as a poet, principally, that I write, nor even as an occasional contributor of poetry and critical prose to the KENYON REVIEW, but as a citizen of the Republic of Letters, a reader and a teacher. It is in these capacities, or vulnerabilities, that I want to assure you how much the Review means to me and to those like me--serious readers seeking to learn what the writers of our moment are engaged in producing. In the last few years, Ms. Hacker's editorship of the Review has brought home to our hearts and minds a remarkable accounting, one which I have not been able to gather up from any other periodicals (and in part I write to you as the poetry editor of two such Reviews, THE PARIS REVIEW and WESTERN HUMANITIES REVIEW); it seems to me that Ms Hacker is always there first with the work of writers whom I am eager to hear more from, to hear out, as it were. And I understand that it matters to you to hear as much from the world of letters Out There. I know that sustaining a periodical as splendid and as handsomely produced as the KENYON REVIEW is an expensive operation; let me assure you that for many of us it is also a priceless one.

Faithfully,

Richard Howard

University Professor of English, Houston University

Ursula K. Le Guin to Philip Jordan 16.12.93

Ursula K. Le Guin
3321 N.W. Thurman Street, Portland, OR 97210

December 16, 1993

Mr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Phil:

I've been asked for a letter of support for The Kenyon Review which, I understand, like so many other academic magazines and university presses, is threatened with a loss of support by its institution. My short period of teaching at Kenyon left me with a high regard for the quality of its faculty, students, and administration, but the Trustees of the college surely cannot be ignorant of the fact that its reputation across the United States is very closely tied to the existence and the very high reputation of its literary review. I very much hope that immediate exigencies will not lead to a retrenchment in the wrong place. For Kenyon to lose the Review would be a disaster. I know you will see it this way, and I hope this view will prevail.

Warmest good wishes to Sheila and yourself,

Ursula K. Le Guin

UKL/d

Linda Gardiner to Philip Jordan

16.12.93

The Women's Review
of Books

Wellesley College
Center for Research on Women
Wellesley, MA 02181
(617) 431-1453 / 235-0320

New Phone: (617) 283-2555
New Fax: (617) 283-3645

12/20/93

Copy of a letter to President Jordan 12/20/93

Hope it helps!

Linda

The Women's Review of Books

Wellesley College
Center for Research on Women
Wellesley, MA 02181
(617) 431-1453 / 235-0320

New Phone: (617) 283-2555
New Fax: (617) 283-3645

Linda Gardiner, Editor

December 16 1993

Philip Jordan
President, Kenyon College
Ransome Hall
Gambier OH 43022

Dear President Jordan,

I hear a rumor that Kenyon College's support for the Kenyon Review is in some jeopardy, and I'm writing as the editor of a sister periodical to say, first, that I hope it's only a rumor, and second, that if it's not a rumor, I hope it will be demoted to one as soon as possible!

All of us who administer educational or cultural enterprises, large or small, know how much more we could do if we had twice the money; none of us needs to lecture you or your trustees about the value of all the things Kenyon stands for. I do want to put in a special plug for the Kenyon Review, just the same, because I suspect it's the kind of publication that is valued most by the people who are least likely to take pen in hand to praise it. Speaking, then, as the self-elected spokesperson for a large, yet invisible, community of readers and admirers, I want to encourage you to keep giving the Kenyon Review the support it deserves.

As editor of a journal that seeks in its own way to provide an alternative to the uniformities of mainstream culture, I'm acutely aware of the fragility of most publications of this kind. It's no accident that so many of the successful ones have historically found a haven in colleges and universities: quite simply, where else would they go? The marketplace has less sympathy for literary innovation, daring and originality now, it seems, than it ever did. If these qualities are to disappear from American cultural life, it won't be for lack of editors, writers and artists: it will be because the places that have always sustained them are turning them away.

The irony is that it takes so little to sustain a cultural institution like the Kenyon Review: editors and writers are (I speak from painful experience) absurdly underpaid for the talent and experience they have and the work they put in. Journals like the Kenyon Review and The Women's Review of Books, to put it bluntly, are a real bargain for the institutions that house them.

And journals like ours speak for our sponsors in a continuing way: we prove in public, visible terms your commitment to enriching cultural life over the long term. That's not something we can quantify, but it's a goal that surely needs no justification.

So: More funding for the Kenyon Review! More power to Marilyn Hacker and the terrific company of writers she's assembled in those pages! More letters (I hope) from all your readers, thanking you for a flourishing, exciting journal that goes from strength to strength with every issue.

Sincerely,

Linda Gardiner

Gerald Stern to Philip Jordan

21.12.93

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Dec 21 93

Philip Jordan, President,
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio

Dear Philip,

I am writing this letter in support of the Kenyon Review which I understand could be in some trouble because of financial strain. I want to say that, in addition to loving Kenyon College I deeply love the fine work that is being done at the Review. I feel that it has revived the fine--the unique--reputation it had under the days of Ransome<sic> et al. It is an extraordinary journal, as you of course know, and is in its way also unique in its support of both new and established writers and in its emphasis on neglected areas, the multicultural and the interdisciplinary, as Marily<sic> Hacker describes it. I think that under the leadership of the last editor, Terry Hummer, and the current editor, Marilyn Hacker, it has become one of the four or five most important magazines in the United States. I am not exaggerating<sic>. Marilyn, if I may take the liberty of saying so, is an extraordinary editor, with great knowledge, wisdom and tact. She has the respect, and the attention, of the whole community of writers. If there is anything I can personally do, in addition to writing this letter, to help please let me know.

I want to say that it was a joy meeting you and your dear wife when I visited there a few years ago. The students were fantastic; it was the highlight of my gruelling tour.

Thank you for your support of poetry.

Sincerely,

Gerald Stern, Professor of English, Senior Poet, Writers' Workshop

Program in Creative Writing
Department of English

436 English Philosophy Bldg.

Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1492

319/335-0416
800/553-4692 ext. 0416
FAX 319/335-0420

Margaret Atwood to Philip Jordan

21.12.93

Margaret Atwood
c/o McClelland & Stewart
481 University Ave
Toronto, ON
M5G 2E9 CANADA

Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, Ohio
43022-9623

December 21, 1993

Dear President Jordan,

I am writing to you to express my concern at the news that Kenyon College is reconsidering its funding of *The Kenyon Review*.

As a reader, I enjoy the diversity and freshness of the writing in *The Kenyon Review*, and would be very sad to see it stop publishing. As a writer, I value it as a venue for more adventurous work. Most serious writers get their start in small magazines like *The Review*. Without such magazines, it is almost impossible for new writers to break into the world of publishing. The contribution of *The Kenyon Review* to the literary landscape of North America is particularly important because of their multicultural and interdisciplinary approach.

The Review also contributes a great deal to the reputation of your college. It is a significant journal, and speaks of Kenyon's commitment to the continuing growth and importance of the written word.

I urge you to continue Kenyon College's financial support to this essential journal.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Atwood

To the trustees of Kenyon College,
A statement to accompany the Questionnaire:

No one doubts that The Kenyon Review is suffering "significant operating losses." So is every other important cultural institution in the country. And so have they always: almost every serious magazine, museum, orchestra, or theater has been subsidized since the very beginning. Now that the federal government has in effect abrogated its responsibility in this sector, we are in a renewed state of crisis, and I feel strongly that if we are to sustain a civilization worth sustaining for our young people, this is one of the very most urgent problems of our time.

The thrust of the questionnaire is: what can the Review do for the College? In the circumstances this is natural and necessary, and the trustees must give the question serious thought; but in my opinion another thrust requires at least equal emphasis: what can the College do for the nation? For half a century the Review has been momentous in our lives. Years ago, under the editorship of Mr. Ransom, it was crucial in regenerating taste and realigning literary, cultural, and broadly enlightened values throughout our culture. Today, under the editorship of Marilyn Hacker and in greatly changed social and cultural circumstances, it is doing the same things. We need the Review now as much as ever and more than we needed it during some of the years between Mr. Ransom and Ms. Hacker.

The College has supported the Review through several generations of American artists, writers, and critics, and is well-known for doing so. If this support is abandoned now, the College will suffer a loss of reputation in the larger intellectual community which I should think would be devastating. And the loss to the serious and inquiring segment of the populace would be more than devastating.

Although I have been associated with subsidized publishing nearly all my life, I'm not an expert in fund-raising. But other people are, and I don't mean only paid professionals. I feel confident that a concerted effort can find the necessary resources. Perhaps Mr. Annenberg could be approached. What is the point of massive aid to public education if the cultural life of the nation stagnates (so to speak) at the top? I think our best high-school and college teachers in the liberal arts are without doubt people who pay attention to The Kenyon Review, even though many of them cannot afford to subscribe to it. Or perhaps a consortium of other small colleges in or near Ohio could be formed to support the Review, which would probably entail a partial change of its name. Perhaps the importance of the Review, and even an opportunity to have some working connection with it, could be accented in the College's recruitment strategies, thus increasing enrollments<sic>. I believe that if Ms. Hacker were permitted, for instance, to teach an upper-level seminar in magazine publication, using the Review as a kind of exemplary workshop, many young literary aspirants would be attracted to it. And there would be no shortage of other ideas, I'm sure, if the College undertakes to seek for them.

Hayden Carruth
Professor Emeritus

Syracuse University
RD 1, Box 128
Munnsville, NY 13409-9549

December 22, 1993

Herbert Blau to Philip Jordan

25.12.93

UNIVERSITY
OF WISCONSIN

MILWAUKEE

Department of English and Comparative Literature UWM
College of Letters and Science

December 25, 1993

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

When I was a graduate student at Stanford, after World War II, working with Yvor Winters--one of the major New Critics about whom John Crowe Ransome<sic> wrote in his eponymous book--The Kenyon Review was essential reading. That was simply a matter of standards. What is particularly heartening about the review under the editorship of Marilyn Hacker is that it is, amidst the amorphous plethora of journals today, rapidly acquiring such status again, but in quite other directions.

I not only look forward to reading it, but it is one of the journals in which it is a pleasure and distinction to publish, because of the substance of the work, and its diversity. In Marilyn Hacker, you have an editor of unquestionable distinction of her own, whose writing is surely a measure of the contributions in poetry, even as she is open to other practices, attentive to other genres, and very sophisticated about the proliferous developments on the multicultural landscape of contemporary art and thought. What I particularly like about Kenyon's responsiveness to the ubiquitous demands for representation is that one major tradition is being sustained, and that is the counter-demand for quality.

It's really quite hard to think of Kenyon College without The Kenyon Review, they are virtually synonymous. But I suppose you know that. I trust that you will want to do everything you can, in these budgetarily straitened times, to keep the review going, since the college would be, if it were to lapse, impoverished without it--as those of us who have been admiring its recent energy and foresight would also be.

Sincerely,

Herbert Blau
Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature

hb/ce

Curtin Hall · PO Box 413 · Milwaukee, WI 53201

414 229-4511

Elliot Figman to Philip Jordan

28.12.93

Poets & writers

72 SPRING STREET NEW YORK NY 10012 212-226-3586

December 28, 1993

Dear Marilyn Hacker,

I've enclosed a copy of my letter to Philip Jordan. I hope it helps and that The Kenyon Review thrives.

Best,

Elliot Figman

Poets & writers

72 SPRING STREET NEW YORK NY 10012 212-226-3586

December 28, 1993

Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Mr. Jordan:

I am writing to urge you to support, to the fullest possible extent, Kenyon College's commitment to The Kenyon Review. The Review has long been one of America's most distinguished journals, and under the leadership of Marilyn Hacker has maintained and enlarged that role.

With an increasing emphasis among commercial publishers on the bottom line, it is critical that The Kenyon Review and journals like it remain able to publish and disseminate work by excellent writers from diverse backgrounds.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elliot Figman
Executive Director

bcc: Marilyn Hacker

Diane Middlebrook to Philip Jordan

30.12.93

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305

DIANE WOOD MIDDLEBROOK
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

30 December 1993

President Philip Jordan
Kenyon College, Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

It was just a little over a year ago that Carl Djerassi and I were guests at Kenyon, both giving lectures on illustrious alumni of the College. Carl, indeed, was speaking about the role the college played in his own intellectual development--reading, as you will remember, from his autobiography. For me the visit was inflected with a different kind of retrospect. Kenyon has been such an important home to writers, mainly through the agency of The Kenyon Review, that I felt your invitation as a kind of professional affirmation, a real high point in the reception of my biography of Anne Sexton.

I'm writing now because<sic> I understand that the college is experiencing great financial pressure that is calling into doubt the future of The Kenyon Review. I would like to make the strongest possible appeal on its behalf. In this era of declining national literacy, a journal with a history of publishing serious literature is a national treasure that deserves acknowledgment<sic>. Moreover, the Review is news that has stayed news; it continues to flourish in the esteem of writers and literate readers because it has kept its nose to the wind. Its revival in the late 1970s by the dashing Fred Turner and the cheerful Ron Sharp was hailed with joy by all the writers I know; their hard work really did bring the journal back into national consciousness (the great parties in New York helped too!). But I am just as impressed with the quality of the journal under the current editor, Marilyn Hacker, whom I regard one of the finest poets in America.

I'm enough of an academic veteran to understand why financial officers at the college might have their eye on The Kenyon Review. But it's an asset that needs investment, not the axe. Small liberal arts colleges are going to continue to have a tough time in this economic era; a product so prestigious as the Review differentiates Kenyon from similar selective private institutions<sic>--and shows the seriousness of Kenyon's claims to providing value for the high cost of such an education. Why not throw a benefit for the Review in various locations where alumni live? Call them Kenyon Salons? Carl Djerassi and I would be happy to host one in San Francisco. Let us help!

With all good wishes for the new year, I am yours truly,
Diane Middlebrook

James Gill to Philip Jordan

30.12.93

JAMES GILL

CHEMIN PRAZ · BUCHILLY 107
1000 LAUSANNE 25
SWITZERLAND

Lausanne.

December 30, 1993

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022
U S A

Dear President Jordan,

It has come to my attention that The Kenyon Review may be facing a threat to its present quarterly format, and perhaps even to its existence.

This would be very distressing.

I have contributed to the Review, and have been pleased and honored to find myself in fine company under the talented and enormously resourceful leadership of Marilyn Hacker.

Since she assumed her role, the new look of the Review, the broad and distinctive range of its content, its multinational flavour have recaptured readers in the United States and abroad as well.

I cannot remember a time when a literary magazine was able, in such a short time, to re-affirm its direction and drawing power.

I understand the reservations your institution might have in these times of temporary financial embarrassment.

As a former editor of a European based annual collection of international writing, I am aware of the problems publishers face today; particularly when so many of them are harassed by conglomerate masters stroking a "bottom line" that can no longer accommodate fiction, poetry and essays of even the highest quality.

This can only be an added reason for maintaining a unique Review that has amply earned its participation in the larger issues of a literary culture endangered by so much invasive, multimedia drivel.

Besides contributions from readers, there are other approaches that could assure more substantial commitments to the maintenance of a distinguished and influential Journal

that boasts an eminent lineage, and has, with Marilyn Hacker's creative insights succeeded in making an exceptional imprint on the American literary scene.

Resolute, appealing proposals to the alumni of the College would result, I feel certain, in substantial donations, and possibly in endowments.

I am associated with the annual Poetry International Festival of Rotterdam, now the most successful and influential one in Europe.

I've witnessed how, over the past years, various institutions, foundations and individuals still in possession of an artistic conscience, sustained and animated the festival: not only with funds, but also in the persevering belief that poetry may truly be, in the words of Yehuda Amichai, the last purely human activity.

It is not an oddity that in totalitarian states, poets in particular and intellectuals more generally, were the first to end up behind bars.

A late, close friend of mine who was one of the great figures of East European poetry once told me that during his long years of detention, many of the countless prisoners he encountered perished. But those who believed in nothing were the first to go.

Sincerely yours

James V. Gill

JVG:wrt

TELEPHONE 021-784 31 94 - TELEFAX 41 21-784 31 64

Questionnaire

Questionnaire

In response to the significant operating losses of *The Kenyon Review*, a committee of the Board of Trustees has agreed to study the feasibility of continuing, discontinuing or modifying the existing operations of *The Kenyon Review*. Your opinion would be valuable in this analysis.

1. I am/am not (*delete one*) a subscriber of *The Kenyon Review*, and have been since ----- I do/do not regularly read *The Kenyon Review*-----
2. What is *The Kenyon Review*'s place in your home?
3. What appeals to you most about *The Kenyon Review*?
4. I am/am not satisfied with the image of *The Kenyon Review*. I would suggest the following changes: -----
5. If I could design an image or editorial policy statement, which would best position *The Kenyon Review* to support the College's image and reputation, it would be as follows: -----
6. I am/am not satisfied with the content of *The Kenyon Review*. I would suggest the following changes: -----
7. I have the following ideas for funding *The Kenyon Review*, and they are as follows: -----
8. In the absence of a contrary recommendation, and without any further background facts or explanations, I favour (check one) :
Continuing *The Kenyon Review* in its present format
Continuing *The Kenyon Review* in a modified format
Discontinuing *The Kenyon Review*
9. If there are any other ideas you wish to contribute by all means do so, and return this form and those ideas to :

David F Banks
12 Church Row
London NW3 6 UT
England

Thank you very much for your help.

Kathleene West to Philip Jordan 03.01.94

New Mexico State University

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
Box 30001, Dept. 3E
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003-0001
Telephone: (505) 646-3931

January 3, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan,

It has come to my attention that the future of *The Kenyon Review* is being discussed. This letter is to voice my support of the periodical and to encourage you and the trustees of Kenyon College to continue not only financial support of the review, but full and enthusiastic backing of its accomplishments as well.

I am a professor, an editor and a published poet. As a member of the academic, publishing and creative community, I see *The Kenyon Review*, under its current editorial staff, as nothing short of an inspiration to me and my colleagues. I subscribe to the magazine, and find it meets the historic test of excellent literature; that is, it "delights and instructs." *The Kenyon Review* has an inclusive policy of publishing that brings to the reader poets, fiction writers, and essayists from all strata of our rich American society, as well as important writers from other countries. Note the word "important." *The Kenyon Review*, is devoted to publishing important work, by authors widely known, and by those who are establishing themselves. As a reader and writer, I am familiar with the content of a number of literary periodicals being published today; I am sorry to say that many of them simply do not interest me. Too much of the work published today is bland and derivative. How necessary it is for those of us who teach to have a periodical like *The Kenyon Review* to show to our students, to show them that beyond the classroom, there is a place where courage, invention, and power still exist in art. How necessary it is for those of us who write to know there exists a forum for our work and the work that interests us. And for those of us who are editors, how necessary to have a model, a colleague, something to measure our own work against, something that makes us strive to do better.

I know these are troubled times. I know that those who contribute financially to a literary periodical have concerns that extend beyond the financial. I hope this letter will provide some sort of ease to those concerns. Despite the difficulties of the age, we live in a strong and brave country, which deserves to have both its beauty and

significance artistically recorded in a publication that is necessary now as it exists and in our future where it will continue to have artistic and historic importance.

Sincerely,

Kathleene West
Associate Professor
Alternate Poetry Editor
Puerto del Sol

cc: *The Kenyon Review*

NMSU
1888 Centennial Celebration 1988

Jeffrey Betcher to Philip Jordan

05.01.94

353 Pierce Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

January 5, 1994

Mr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Philip Jordan,

As an alumnus of Kenyon College ('82), and as a poet and writer (contributor to The Kenyon Review's upcoming summer edition), I would like to heartily commend you for your support of The Kenyon Review, and offer some feedback on the direction the Review is taking.

It's difficult to put down metered thoughts, so emotional and unequivocal am I about the subject. The Kenyon Review has become, suddenly, the most alive and valuable publication of its type in the country. It is slicing to center of the most sensitive issues of our day, reflecting a whole society back to startled, hungry readers accustomed to seeing only a narrow strip of it. It is the only one of its stature to do so. (I should say, "the first," as the others will be followers). In short, it's not boring. Thank God! The other top shelf reviews are collecting dust.

What has always been a jewel for the College (if only in name while it was dormant), has suddenly sky-rocketed in value. You've made a wise investment that, I believe, you will be able to leverage directly, and that will bring subtle but rich rewards to our cherished institution in ways we will never track. I've never been more proud of being a Kenyon graduate and a person of letters.

I encourage you and the College to continue your support for The Kenyon Review, and, even in these difficult financial times, to increase it. And, for the sake of the College, the Review, and the entire literary/academic community, don't lose Marilyn Hacker! Can there be any doubt regarding the credit she deserves in elevating The Kenyon Review to the position of most important literary review in the country?

Most sincerely,

Jeffrey Betcher ('82)

cc: The Kenyon Review

Carol Muske to Philip Jordan

05.01.94

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
UNIVERSITY PARK
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90089-0354

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

1/5/93

Philip Jordan, President
Ransome<sic> Hall
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Mr. Jordan,

I am writing to you as a reader and admirer of The Kenyon Review. Like many other poets, I'm familiar with the long and prestigious history of the Review at Kenyon College and as part of the literary community at large. However, I will admit that my interest in the magazine had diminished in recent years -- that is, until Marilyn Hacker became editor.

Now, not only am I a regular subscriber, I look forward eagerly to each issue. What has made the difference? Simply, The Kenyon Review, without altering its rigorous tradition of excellence, has become one of the few "breakthrough" journals, one of the very few publications which reflect the enormity, complexity and energy of the contemporary literary milieu. The new Review, rather than withdrawing into itself, intimidated by diversity and complexity, has embraced (with the most stimulating and infectious enthusiasm!) this fin-de-siecle resurgence of new and established writers.

A glance at a recent issue confirms my assertions. In Volume XV, Number 4, Editor Hacker has included a special section on "Science, Science Fiction and Poetry." What could be more timely and provocative? I recently published a novel -- the protagonist of which was a biochemist and cosmologist, a woman. So, as a novelist and as a poet -- indeed as a person living at the end of the technology-driven twentieth century, I am thrilled to see that other writers are confronting and examining this phenomenon, indeed incorporating science into their art, establishing a dialogue between these artificially-separated disciplines. I discover a poem like "Why We Care About Quarks" by Gary Fincke -- a kind of hymn to the poetic, mysterious (even Joycean!) names particle physicists give to their discoveries, a trend I've pondered with pleasure and amazement. I read Albert Goldbarth's extraordinary essay on the "Future", Judith Moffet's charming and intriguing "Confessions of a Metamorph", (on how a poet has managed to mutate into a science-fiction writer) and Renée Ashley's searching, lyrical poem on "The Various Reasons of Light."

Beyond this special section are other visions. The distinguished poet Hayden Carruth's poem, simply called "The Camps", appears to describe the horror of present-day Bosnia -- but the poet moves the poem into a kind of repeating moment of

endless human atrocity. I found this poem devastating and its ending a moment of healing. Judith Kroll (a writer who "disappeared" for many years after publishing two remarkable collections of poetry) has returned from India with a shocking meditative essay called "The Beheaded." Toi Derricotte offers a review of four recent books by another writer of color, Yusef Komunyakaa, whose poems on the Vietnam War, racism and art have changed poetry irrevocably.

There is not another literary journal with this questing sort of energy and intelligence - - this polyphonous chorus of voices. In the issue preceding this one, Joyce Carol Oates and Richard Howard and writers from other countries and cultures share space, complement and confront each other.

As is obvious, I am a devoted of the new Kenyon Review. I think Marilyn Hacker has produced a journal of real artistic force, a forum for writers and readers which is catholic in its tastes (certainly multi-cultural) and of absolutely first-rate literary quality. Brava.

Sincerely,

Carol Muske
Poet
Professor, Univ. of Southern Calif.

Marilyn -

Hope this helps! It's late at night & my brain's a bit fuzzy, so it's a tad blurry, I think. Oh well...

Happy New Year! Here's to health and inspiration! I'll send a couple <of> poems in next mail.

Love,
Carol

John Frederick Nims to Marilyn Hacker 10.01.94

3920 Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60613

January 10, 1994

Dear Marilyn,

Here's a copy of the letter I quilled (on the typewriter) to President Jordan. I hope it won't embarrass you.

I'm not very good at this kind of thing. It seems to me I lapse into blather and cliché with blurbs, recommendations, etc. Have a block about it.

And also I'm not especially qualified to assess journals, since I too often look at only the poetry and the titles of stories, articles. Seems I "don't have time" to read all through. Though I have time for quite a few worthless things, like football games on TV.

But Kenyon Review really seems to me impressive these days, even though I haven't read every page of every issue. They make me want to read them, and I will "get around" to it.

I hope you missed the big storms in the east. Even Ohio must have been better those days. We're about to take off for Florida until April or so. It is boring there, but at least there is nice weather to be bored in. In Jan. and Feb. anyway. After that, as my wife once said, it's "like living inside a blister."

Best of luck with the Review and everything else. 1994 will be the best 1994 you ever had.

John

Florida address, good from next week to about April:
2610 SW 14th Drive
Gainesville, FL 32608

John Frederick Nims to Philip Jordan

10.01.94

3920 Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60613

January 10, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

My eye has been falling rather often lately on recent issues of Kenyon Review redivivus on my desk, their covers as lively and exciting as those of the Christmas decorations we just took down.

Though I have known and admired the Review ever since the great days of John Crowe Ransom, I do not believe it has ever been more compelling than it is today. Certainly it takes into consideration a wider range of interests, is more in tune with the crucial spirit of our sometimes agonizing times than it occasionally seemed to be in earlier decades.

When one hears the name "Kenyon" at gatherings of those alert enough to be concerned about the state of our culture, the chances are that it is in reference to the Review. My impression is that the Review, even more than the educational achievements of the College, has made the name of Kenyon known to and respected by a wider world than that of academia. For many of us, "Kenyon" means the Kenyon Review. Of course other journals are more massively circulated, but Kenyon Review is among those that influence the most influential.

Important as it is to the College and to its reputation, it is even more important to what is called our "republic of letters" and to the intellectual and spiritual health of the republic itself. We are all of us indebted to your College for the spirit of sane inquiry and for the maintenance of the substantial values which the Review represents.

With our gratitude come our congratulations to you and to Kenyon College for the important contribution to our national life which the Kenyon Review is continually making.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

John Frederick Nims
Professor Emeritus, the University of Illinois at Chicago

Joseph Nelson to Marilyn Hacker 12.01.94

Kenyon College

Vice President for Finance
Walton House
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 614/427-5172

January 12, 1994

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
P.O. Box 1959
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Ms. Hacker:

This letter will serve as a reminder to you that, according to the terms of Kenyon's Housing Policy, you will need to vacate McIlvaine apartment C-3 when your four-year term ends on June 30, 1994.

Although we do not anticipate the availability of many apartments for the year 1994-5 academic year you may, if you wish, apply for a one-year extension. If there is an apartment still available on June 1, 1994, you may be assigned the same for one year. Please let us know as soon as possible, and before June 1, 1994, whether or not you wish to apply for a one-year extension.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Very truly yours,

Joseph G. Nelson

JGN:mw
pc: Mr. Reed S. Browning

Ruth Gundle to Philip Jordan 12.01.94

Marilyn - this is a copy of the letter I mailed today. (This one, but not the one sent to Jordan, was mistakenly printed with a large font. All else is identical.) I hope it will help!

Ruth

January 12, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Mr. Jordan:

I am writing to add my voice to the clamor of support for *The Kenyon Review*. There is no doubt at all, that *The Kenyon Review* is one of the most important literary journals in the United States today. Particularly under the editorial guidance of Marilyn Hacker, it has been a showcase for the liveliest literary work around (from perhaps the broadest spectrum of cultural traditions of any literary magazine) and it has played a crucial role in helping to shape the literary landscape we all inhabit.

As a small independent literary press, The Eighth Mountain Press is no stranger to the continual need to assert the importance of artistic values in a world where commercial values are dominant. Although every literary institution is important, some are, no doubt, more crucial than others. *The Kenyon Review* is one of those—it has always been and continues to be an essential part of the world of letters. It is unthinkable that it should falter for lack of support.

The faculty, administration, students, staff and trustees at Kenyon College should be enormously proud of the resource you make available to your community and to the world. I hope you will continue to support it as the vital institution it is.

Sincerely,

Ruth Gundle
Publisher

THE EIGHTH MOUNTAIN PRESS · 624 Southeast 29th
Avenue · Portland Oregon 97214-3026 · (503)233-3936

David Baker to Philip Jordan 14.01.94

DENISON
UNIVERSITY

January 14, 1994

Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I understand that your college is reviewing the Kenyon Review. Please accept this letter as my hearty recommendation that you continue to support this magazine, and as my sincere admiration for your college's vision in housing such a magazine. My short-hand recommendation, in fact, is that you use this occasion not only to recommit yourself to the Kenyon Review and to Marilyn Hacker, but redouble your efforts in that behalf, realizing what a fortunate circumstance she has created for you. You surely understand this better than I, but it seems to me that the Kenyon Review is one of the proudest traditions your college holds, one of its most visible and effective vehicles, and that under Marilyn Hacker's visionary editorship it continues to be, as under the leadership of John Crowe Ransom, both consistently excellent and effectively transgressive. How many people at Kenyon still remember how terribly threatening, and how wonderfully foresightful, were Mr. Ransom's directions in literary theory and literature?

I write this letter with some considerable experience in the matter. Not only am I a past faculty member of Kenyon's English Department, not only am I a neighbor now at Denison, not only am I a practicing poet and critic, but of course I have worked for Kenyon Review editors for ten years now. Still, please understand that I have nothing personal to gain from this letter; though I do continue to "work" for the magazine, I currently make no money, so its continuation, in some material way, means nothing to me. I have, as I count it all up, worked for five past editors: Galbraith Crump and Phil Church, Terry Hummer, David Lynn, and Marilyn Hacker. Each has brought his or her own special passions and commitments to the magazine, and each made the magazine a proud voice. But make no mistake: The magazine's finest, most hard-working, and most brave recent editor has been Marilyn Hacker. I should know, since I've worked with them all.

Indeed, the magazine has improved, and continued to improve, since Crump's and Church's days; it was a strong, traditional, and substantially conventional magazine under their editorship. How many women, how many minority writers, how much truly original and ground-breaking work did they publish?

While they published some fine work, they did not effectively take the Review into the future, preferring to follow the conventional wisdom of the big literary journals--like The Southern Review, The Virginia Quarterly, and especially The Sewanee Review--publishing very many male, white, academic writers. Hummer began to change that vision quite dramatically, defining what he called an "effective radicalism," proposing a change in the traditional wisdom of the Review. But of course, both his and David Lynn's editorships were too short to effect much coherent change.

That has been Marilyn Hacker's remarkable subject: coherent change. The world of the United States has evolved drastically in the past two or three decades, and so has its literature. A hugely exciting generation of women writers has emerged--led, in part, as well, by Marilyn Hacker's own combination of feminist and lesbian placement and by her formal, technical, and (in some important ways) traditional prosody. The country is coming to terms with many issues related to gender, power, and sexual orientation--and to the repressions heretofore carried out under the mantle of ignorance, silence, and violence. As well, it is trying to understand, and embrace, its changing ethnic face. Any genuinely true literary effort that seeks to articulate and represent its culture's fullest realities must actively engage in these kinds of conversations. Otherwise, we might as well stick our heads in the sands and die of thirst. I am constantly amazed by, and grateful for, Marilyn Hacker's ability to find a huge diversity of writers and, within that, to fairly judge the merits of the massive submissions she receives. She nourishes minority and women writers; she makes a crucial "space" for their work within the mainstream literary world, not ghettoizing them in "specialty" markets; and in doing so, she nourishes us all.

I want to be clear. This is not to say that the Kenyon Review publishes, exclusively, minority writers. Hacker continues to publish the very best work by any potential contributors. Recent contributions include the best new work by Stanley Plumly, Philip Levine and C.K. Williams, and many other of our finest white, male writers. I know, in fact, from personal correspondence, that many of our best "traditional" contributors are now more interested to publish their work in the Kenyon Review, since it is such clearly important and diverse forum. I want to be clear about something else: I do not always concur with Marilyn Hacker's individual choices for publication. Sometimes she publishes work which I would not, if I were Editor. I am not referring to content, but to technical ability. She is more encouraging of younger or less established writers than I would be. That is to compliment her, you understand, and to describe my limitations. I disagreed with very many more of Crump's and Church's decisions, by the way, too often feeling a sort of boring sameness, a conventional gesturing, that did not seem to be provocative or challenging.

The issue is this: What do we regard important literature to be? My own answer is quite clear. I believe, as writers and as editors, we must articulate and nourish the new, the difficult, the challenging, the transgressive, and the heretofore silent. A work of art is not truly important if it fails to shake us, to challenge our notion of values, and to engage fully with our cultural mores; it must also teach us. I believe these goals are precisely the kinds of things that the Kenyon Review currently is doing. No one else is doing anything like it, at least at this level, to this extent. That means that many of your past readers, and probably quite a lot of your (traditional),

conservative, secure, powerful) alumni, will be upset. Some of them will cancel their subscriptions. Let them; many more will take their places. Some of them may try to put pressure on the college. Let them. Let them read The Sewanee Review, a pedestal of male privilege and literary stuffiness. But let your college's continuing vision be forward-looking, rigorous, brave, and acute.

You should be very proud of Marilyn Hacker's work at the Kenyon Review; she should be roundly thanked and your support--personal, professional, and material--should not only continue but increase. And you should feel proud of your college's achievements and of your own sustaining commitment to important, challenging, and true work. Thank you for allowing me to submit this passionate, careful opinion, with all my best wishes.

Sincerely,

David Baker
Associate Professor of English

Robert Pinsky to Marilyn Hacker 17.01.94

136 Washington Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02158

January 17, 1994

Dear Marilyn,

I hope this is not too late to help, and that it may do some good. (What can they be thinking of—the magazine is a cornerstone of the college's reputation, it really is.) Also, that you are well.

My oldest daughter was married in August. This summer, my translation of the Inferno will be published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. My wife has begun a doctoral program in clinical psychology—after twenty years as an English teacher!

Best wishes,

Robert Pinsky

Boston University

College of Liberal Arts
236 Bay State Road
Boston, Massachusetts 02215

Department of English
617/353-2506
Fax: 617/353-3653

January 17, 1994

Mr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Dear Mr. Jordan:

I understand that it would be timely for me to express my support and admiration for the Kenyon Review.

The Kenyon has been an important part of Kenyon College's reputation since I can remember. When I was in college, it was one of the publications that made the intellectual and literary life of the country vivid to me. When I was poetry editor at the New Republic, the Kenyon was one of the places that had collegial significance for me. Sometime around 1978, when I visited Gambier as an outside examiner for the Honors Program in English, the magazine, which as I remember was in the process of revival, seemed a significant aspect of the College's reputation, one of the attractions of visiting the campus. When one of my graduate students at Berkeley was offered a position as assistant professor at Kenyon, as well as a similar place within the California system, I think that an argument in her mind as well as mind was the Kenyon and the literary tradition it embodies.

In Marilyn Hacker the Kenyon has a leader able to extend that tradition into the future. In her work as an editor as in her distinguished poems, Ms. Hacker has an understanding of both tradition contemporary reality. I hope that Kenyon College and its friends realize that the history and promise of the magazine make it a truly remarkable an asset.

Sincerely,

Robert Pinsky
Professor of English and Creative Writing

Kathleen Woodward to Philip Jordan

18.01.94

UNIVERSITY
OF WISCONSIN Milwaukee

UWM

center for twentieth century studies
College of Letters and Science

January 18, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

FAX at The Kenyon Review: 614-427-5417

Dear President Jordan:

I gather that The Kenyon Review must be under some budgetary distress. I certainly hope, however, that is not the case or if it is then some way can be found to alleviate the pain. I say this because the journal has been a guiding force over the spectrum of the humanities for yours<sic> now. New journals dedicated to serving a broad readership have consistently tried to model themselves after the success of The Kenyon Review. Yet few journals of this kind thrive. Most remain limited in their effects, circulated <Illeg> a few people and almost always to the same people. The same is not at all true for the Kenyon Review. It has persistently been strong in attracting a wide and influential readership.

Of course, all journals have ups and downs. With a journal you have to be in for the very long run. That's why I've been so pleased with The Kenyon Review since Marilyn Hacker assumed the editorship: the journal has emerged with new energy and vision, with a paradoxically wider yet more pointed focus. Hacker is a remarkable editor (nevermind<sic> a gifted poet), replete with a tenacious energy, stamina, and intelligence rarely seen in academia. I've found myself reading The Kenyon Review much more avidly, almost voraciously, since she has been editor.

As an editor of a journal myself (Discourse, a journal that specializes in theories of the media and culture), I know how difficult it is to launch, nevermind<sic> establish a journal. It is very easy, however, to let one die. Today Kenyon College itself is virtually known to many people by the Kenyon Review. People come to learn about the college through the journal itself. For me, then, Kenyon College without The Kenyon Review would be unthinkable.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Woodward, Director
Editor, Discourse

Curtin Hall · PO Box 413 · Milwaukee, WI 53201 414 229-4141

Kathleen Woodward to Marilyn Hacker

18.01.94

UNIVERSITY
OF WISCONSIN Milwaukee

UWM

center for twentieth century studies
College of Letters and Science

January 18, 1994

Marilyn Hacker, Editor
The Kenyon Review

FAX: 614-427-5417

Dear Marilyn,

I'm planning on sending this letter duly addressed to Philip Jordan to you because (wouldn't you know it when we come down to the wire) all is shut down here due to ludicrously unthinkable sub-zero temps. I will try to call the office of the president, though, and see if there is a FAX number there. If not, I hope that your office will be able to get it to him.

I hope this helps!

In unseemly haste,

Kathleen Woodward

FAX: 414-229-5964

The letter to the president was faxed directly on 1/18/94.

Curtin Hall · PO Box 413 · Milwaukee, WI 53201 414 229-4141

Christopher Baswell to Philip Jordan

19.01.94

Barnard College
Columbia University
3009 Broadway
New York, New York 10027-6598

Women Poets at Barnard

19 January 1994.

Dr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan,

I have recently heard, with real concern and dismay, that Kenyon College may consider abandoning its long-distinguished quarterly, The Kenyon Review. I am writing to urge your college not to discontinue a publication of such history and quality. It would be particularly sad for readers across America to lose this important journal just as it has emerged into new appeal for a much wider range of readers, under the editorship of Marilyn Hacker.

I write as a reader, a university teacher of literature, a graduate of one of Kenyon's peer institutions (Oberlin College), and as a director of a project that promotes the work of new poets, Women Poets at Barnard. If The Kenyon Review were to retreat or disappear, I would count it a loss on each of these fronts.

Before I went to college, The Kenyon Review was about the only literary quarterly whose name I knew. Naturally, the college that stood behind it shared in that recognition. Once in college and studying English and Classics at Oberlin, I heard the general talk that the great English department that had begun the Review was largely gone but that the journal continued, and was still worth anyone's respect. I went on reading it, and encountered there some of the poets and prose writers who have sustained and challenged me ever since.

At the same time, as I graduated and started reading more widely, I began to realize that The Kenyon Review had arrived at a place where it commanded respect, undoubtedly, but less excitement and probably less attention than it once had. I was trying, as all readers should, to find the places where new ideas and missions for literature were being created; but the Review, in the later 1970's and much of the 80's, only showed me a fine version of a notion of writing that I already knew. I looked at it in libraries, but I did not subscribe, and I suspect that was typical. The Kenyon Review was a journal still universally known and sincerely respected but insufficiently read.

This changed, and the magazine became (from my perspective) truly important once again--challenging, unexpected, innovative, yet always of superbly high quality--when Kenyon made the admirable decision to appoint Marilyn Hacker editor of the

Christopher Baswell to Philip Jordan

19.01.94

Barnard College
Columbia University
3009 Broadway
New York, New York 10027-6598

Women Poets at Barnard

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Dr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

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This changed, and the magazine became (from my perspective) truly important once again--challenging, unexpected, innovative, yet always of superbly high quality--when Kenyon made the admirable decision to appoint Marilyn Hacker editor of the

Review. Today I find there once again the excitement that I look for in a great literary journal: it takes me places I have not been before, and introduces me to a range of writers and work I would not otherwise know. It stretches my sense of what literature can do. I am once again a private subscriber of The Kenyon Review. I have no idea if circulation has increased under Hacker's editorship, but I guarantee you that the Review today is more read, more discussed, that it has a greater impact than it had in many years.

Let me give you an example. When a colleague of mine was revising his syllabus for a course in twentieth-century American poetry a couple of years ago, he wanted to expand the kinds of voice poetry can use, the notions of what worlds poetry can serve. Since I work with a lot of emerging poets, and arrange readings at Barnard by some great established writers, my colleague talked to me about pushing his course past the available anthologies. I showed him the Kenyon Review issue called "De Colores," as a really exciting example of the range of fine and important writing in current American culture. That issue became the starting point for a wholly revamped syllabus, still based in a traditional canon but showing the limits of that canon, and its potential for extension. Since that time, some hundreds of students in this popular course have been touched by the wonderful and challenging group of writers brought together in just that one issue of the Review. This is what an important literary quarterly should do.

Under the editorship of Marilyn Hacker, The Kenyon Review has repeatedly helped me find the best work of writers I have long known, but also brought me names I have never seen before. more important, it challenges to see contemporary literature as a more varied, more powerful instrument than I have tended to recognize within the walls of the academy. It pushes hard at the edges of the canon, but also gives me new ways of reading that, as a teacher, I bring back to the canon. It also proposes new ideas of greatness that have had an impact on the series of readings and first books that I run at Barnard College.

I know how hard-pressed small colleges are today, from the pressures of finances and a dwindling pool of new applicants. But I also know that, for the same reasons, colleges must preserve what makes them important and unique. The end or retrenchment of The Kenyon Review would be a loss to American literary culture. It would also, though, be a great loss to Kenyon College, wiping out what made the college distinctive to me twenty years ago, and what helps make it distinctive to so many people today. I hope I may hear from you, soon, that the future of the Review, and its present important place in American letters, are secure.

Sincerely,

Christopher Baswell
Associate Professor of English
Director, Women Poets at Barnard

Judith Levin to Philip Jordan

19.01.94

University of
Nebraska
Lincoln

Department of English
202 Andrews
P.O. Box 880333
Lincoln, NE 68588-0333
(402) 472-3191
FAX (402) 472-0771

January 19, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I have recently learned that the trustees of Kenyon College are scrutinizing The Kenyon Review in their efforts to reduce costs. I want to add my voice to those of many others who strongly support Kenyon's commitment to keeping and supporting Kenyon Review at its present superb level.

As a graduate student and teacher who is concerned with reading and teaching excellent literature, I strongly value the commitment of Kenyon Review to writing that helps its readers locate and explore powerful voices of women and men from different cultures and classes. It is a tribute to Kenyon's very long and vital tradition that now more than ever thinkers and writers in academia look to it for inspiration and understanding in times when the multicultural nature of our national life is of pressing concern in the academy as well as in the streets.

For example, Barbara DiBernard contributed an extremely thoughtful piece about the meanings and implications of African-American poet and essayist Audre Lorde's "biomythography," Zami, and Kenyon Review gave it greater visibility than it would have had in perhaps any other literary journal. Audre Lorde's death several months ago was widely mourned in the communities of women and men she inspired, and it is not an accident that Kenyon Review had recently published an important essay about her. Your journal is telling us what we need to know, keeping us vitally in touch with the sources of inspiration and reflection that make our reading, writing, and teaching worthwhile. It would be a terrible loss if the trustees try to manage current (and very real, I'm sure) financial concerns by losing the college's long-term investment in its unique and widely recognized literary institution. Your journal's ability to continue its distinguished tradition and renew it in vital forms makes Kenyon Review a priceless contribution by Kenyon College to the literature and education of the United States.

Sincerely,

Judith Levin
Teaching Assistant

cc: Marilyn Hacker, Editor, The Kenyon Review

University of Nebraska-Lincoln University of Nebraska Medical Center
University of Nebraska at Omaha University of Nebraska at Kearney

The Feminist Press
at The City University of New York

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Dear Marilyn, I hope this helps!
Florence

January 22, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I do not usually write fan letters, but I am responding to Marilyn Hacker's request that I tell you what I've been telling her over the years: how much I appreciate her editing of The Kenyon Review, and how much I esteem that journal.

As a publisher and former editor of a journal, I am aware of the kind of work involved, both day-to-day and for each issue. As a professor of literature and a critic and anthologist of poetry, I am especially aware of the need for high standards, especially since, more than ever before, vast quantities of poetry and prose are being produced by those who would be professionals. In my view, The Kenyon Review is especially fortunate to have as editor a poet who is known for her remarkably astute taste, and her amazingly broad perspective as a critical reader.

Let me give you a specific example: I asked a dozen people to help me prune a list of some 120 poets for an anthology I was editing for HarperCollins<sic> two years ago. The best advice came from Marilyn Hacker, who not only suggested cuts, but, more importantly, advised me of 20 poets I had not known of. They were young and very talented and had, of course, been in touch with her, since The Kenyon Review is, as you know, a most prestigious journal in which to publish.

About the journal's function in a world of many journals. Each issue is physically beautiful: I can't say that about many journals. Moreover, each issue pays respect to the "multicultural and interdisciplinary literary landscape"--to use Marilyn Hacker's own language--without diluting quality or straining credence. The best poets and prose writers are present, both known names and newcomers.

I can't imagine The Kenyon Review renamed and moved to another college or university campus. And yet, its tradition of excellence and its current editor both make it extremely attractive to a campus that wants to advertise its intellectual seriousness in a<sic> age in which academic excellence is rare. One cannot "buy" the kind of publicity that appears on the cover of each issue. I can be cogent on this subject, since the Chancellor of The City University of New York wooed The Feminist Press away from the State University of New York and Indiana University Press, exactly for that reason. There is no CUNY Press, but the name of The City University of New York appears on all that we publish, even our letterhead!

If I can be helpful in any way, please feel free to call on me. I trust that you will decide that The Kenyon Review is as valuable to Kenyon College as it is to its readers.

Cordially,

Florence Howe
Director, The Feminist Press, and
Professor of English, City College and the Graduate School,
The City University of New York

311 EAST 94TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10128 (212) 360-5790 FAX (212) 348-1241

Joan Cusack Handler to Marilyn Hacker 23.01.94

JOAN CUSACK HANDLER PH.D.
6 HORIZON ROAD
FORT LEE, NEW JERSEY 07024

January 23, 1994

Marilyn Hacker, Editor
The *Kenyon Review*
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Dear Marilyn:

Sorry this letter took so long but "the holidays" and an extended vacation have resulted in late correspondences in every arena.

As per your request, I sent the enclosed directly to Philip Jordan. I hope it helps. My support and appreciation for *Kenyon Review* continue. Thanks so much to you and your staff for all your hard work-- the journal is testimony.

Sincerely,

Joan Cusack Handler

JOAN CUSACK HANDLER PH.D.
6 HORIZON ROAD
FORT LEE, NEW JERSEY 07024

January 23, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Dear Mr. Jordan:

At this critical time in the funding of arts' enterprises, I would like to draw your attention to the invaluable contribution made by *The Kenyon Review* to the literary arts community. *Kenyon Review* stands out among the finest journals being published in the United States today. Of particular merit is its commitment to excellent work from writers of all cultures, races and voices. Marilyn Hacker and her editorial board are to be commended for their high literary standards and generous spirit in opening the pages of *Kenyon Review* to fine writers of all backgrounds.

As a poet and a psychologist and thereby a lover of people, poems and prose, I would like to thank you and the administrators and benefactors of Kenyon College for underwriting such a worthy enterprise. I trust that you will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

Joan Cusack Handler Ph.D.

3 feb 94

Querida Marilyn,

It's been far too long since I've written. My excuse: a particularly grueling<sic> month on the CRI (Cancer Research Institute) where I cared for some of the most gravely ill patients I have encountered thus far in my young career as a physician. It will be a long time before I will be able to articulate meaningfully very much about the experience. Suffice it to say now that part of me is dying now, as I write this, thinking of those very courageous people.

My dear, I pray that the Kenyon Inquisition has lifted! I can only hope that your silence means nothing bad has come to pass—surely any of my most awful fantasies in reality would have cause you to write to me with news. Do they plan any changes at all? Eve Sedgwick, Wendy Lesser, Askold Melnyczuk and Don Lee were all aghast at the prospect of such evil afoot in what we all consider now such a wellspring of hope in the literary world, and each spoke of the letters they were dispatching to Kenyon College in support of you. I hope that their words haven't been needed to defend you. Please let me know what precisely the situation is now, and what more we can do to help.

You may have received by now an advance copy of my book with a request from Arte Publico for a "blurb." Suddenly they are busily at work on the book, which is due out officially on July 1. They have arranged a reading and book signing at of all places A Different Light (!) here in SF, along with other events at Cody's, Grolier and Charlesbank in Boston (travel expenses on them), and plan to nominate the book for a whole slew of awards! Talk about a change in attitude, girl! My editor is a woman whom I picture is straight out of Desert Hearts, sort of gruff country dykey sounding on the phone throwing around words like queer, gay, lesbian etc like they do small farm animals in those rodcos. They even agreed to the cover art I proposed a painting done by Jorge's (lesbian) Auntie Joan! I guess I'm beginning to get excited about this book thing.

I felt particularly writerly the other day, when I went out to a fancy-schmancy lunch with an acquisitions editor from Harcourt Brace. After apologizing for approaching me directly and not going through my agent—my face bright red, hardly able to contain my laughter at that supposition—off we went to dine. She was very gracious and New York chic as she explained she happened to be passing through SF, had read my work—and might I have any book projects underway? She knew about the NPS prize, and so was interested in a second book of poems, or perhaps a collection of essays. I guffawed awkwardly a number of times, got crumbs on my tie, and generally acted like a buffoon. She warned me that she was quite persistent, and true to her word, three days later arrived a large package of gorgeous books she had worked on (stories by one queer African-American Randall Kenan, Alice Walker's collected poems, a novel by a recent Stegner fellow, etc.) along with a letter entreating me to send a MS or two her way. Since I hardly have my first book out yet, and since we had discussed Norton as a place where I might direct future projects, I must say I do not know how to respond. You must let me know how your own

projects are going with Norton- I eagerly await your selected, as I have already bought up every copy of Love, Death..., one of which I gave as a gift to my mom, another to Gigi Fernandez (Jorge's dyke tennis star step-sister, who states she lent her copy to Martina Navratilova during the Australian Open!)

Well, enough chatter. May you prevail at KR, as you ought. Let me know how you and Karyn are, what I should do about HBJ, and whether you will endorse my book!

Un millón de besos

Rafael

Laurie Finke to David F. Banks 06.02.94

Kenyon College

Women's and Gender Studies
Ascension Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Tel 614/427-5276
Tel 614/427-5656/5657
Fax 614/427-2272

Sun, Feb 6, 1994

To: David F. Banks
From: Laurie Finke
Re: Kenyon Review

I have sat down on several occasions to try to fill out the questionnaire I was given on the *Kenyon Review* but have found that I simply cannot answer the questions it poses. The questions seem very much to suggest an agenda that makes me decidedly nervous, an agenda which seems to have almost nothing to do with the college's "financial environment" or the *Review*'s "significant operating losses." It seems rather to express its own dissatisfaction with the direction the *Review* is currently taking, a dissatisfaction which I most decidedly do not share. If anything, the directions the *Review* has taken in the last few years has made it more, not less attractive to me than other similar literary journals.

I am a person who would probably never subscribe to a literary review. Generally I find them pretentious and uninteresting, publishing only the safest and hence duller literary work. When I arrived at Kenyon I was surprised to pick up an issue of the *Kenyon Review* while sitting in the admissions office. I was struck by an article on women and vampires which caught my attention precisely because it was a little off-beat. I immediately went out and bought a copy and later subscribed. I have been impressed with the current editorial policy of taking chances, publishing special issues on theater and science fiction, expanding its accessibility to include women and writers of color many of whom are currently defining the direction poetry and fiction are taking. I remember when I was in graduate school we used to talk about the "literature of exhaustion." There were no great subjects left to write about and the "great writers" like Philip Roth, John Barthes, and Robert Coover were creating elaborate fictional games for lack of anything better to do. Then along came writers like Toni Morrison and Alice Walker and poets like Audre Lord and June Jordan who revitalized contemporary writing, literally giving it new life. Today no one talks about the literature of exhaustion anymore. The *Review* has consistently sought out the best of both old and new writers (the same issue that had an essay on vampires also contained an essay by William Empson) who are working at the cutting edge of literature, culture, and the arts. Marilyn Hacker has bought<sic> many of these writers to campus; this year alone I have sponsored with *Kenyon Review* extremely successful visits by the poet Joy Harjo and the novelist Dorothy Allison. Kenyon

would not have been able to afford the fees of either of these writers; they came as a favor to Marilyn.

The questionnaire suggests that far from money being the primary consideration in this appraisal, "image" seems to be the major concern. The *Kenyon Review* is a major part of the Kenyon's reputation. It is Kenyon's face to the world beyond its circle of faculty, students, trustees, and alums. Outside of Ohio, when you mention Kenyon College to someone, if they have heard of the college at all, they are likely to associate it with the *Kenyon Review*. For that to continue, the review must continue to be read. The image it needs to project is not that of a traditional, establishment, conservative, and, dare I say, stodgy literary review. There are already lots of reviews in the market that do that; most of them aren't worth picking up. Rather, it needs to show that it is on the cutting edge of literary culture. Kenyon has been content for years to project an image of established tradition. But at some point, the alumni of this college need to recognize that no institution can remain frozen in time forever. The students who attend Kenyon now and who will be attracted to Kenyon in the years to come are very different from those who may have attended in the past. The college can not remain frozen in time and neither can the review. The review, it seems to me, has discovered that it must seek out both the best and the most innovative work. The volume of its submissions suggests that it is certainly recognized by writers as a prestigious place to publish; the satisfaction of its readers can be the only other measure of its success. It would be unrealistic to expect the review to be financially self-supporting. There are no artistic endeavors in this day and age that are not heavily subsidized. Nor do I really believe that discontinuing the review would result in any substantial savings to the college.

You may be tempted to disregard my opinion as coming from someone teaching in a marginalized interdisciplinary program who therefore speaks for some "special interest," but I am also a published literary scholar of some repute so I believe I can speak with some authority about the state of contemporary literary culture. To reiterate, I don't subscribe to the *Kenyon Review* because I'm a member of the faculty; I'm not that loyal. Nor does it sit on my coffee table as a decoration. I subscribe because it is useful to me in my work as a literary scholar and I will continue to subscribe only so long as it continues to be useful and continues to have a reputation among writers as a cutting-edge literary publication.

Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 07.02.94

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022-9623
Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor Marilyn Hacker • Consulting Editors David Baker, Eleanor M. Bender, David Lynn, Carolc Maso, Robyn Selman • Managing Editor Cy Wainscott

Feb. 7 1994

Dear Phil,

It was a great pleasure seeing you and Sheila again yesterday evening. Thanks so much for inviting me.

On a more official, and more troubling subject, I was somewhat disconcerted to learn (in conversation) that several of the people whom the trustees were going to interview in their investigation, and to whom they were going to give questionnaires, had not been contacted. Just from my own knowledge, Lewis Hyde, Robert Bennett and Donald Rogan were not consulted. I've taken the liberty of sending them copies of the questionnaire, since I'm sure they are individuals whose opinion Mr Banks and his committee -- and you yourself -- would want to have on record.

On yet another, and more cheerful subject, I sent a fundraising letter, early in December, to writers whose work had been published in the Kenyon Review from 1990 through 1993 -- 415 letters in all. We've received \$3,600 in response so far, and I've reason to think the response will reach \$4,000 in the weeks to come.

Sincerely,

Marilyn

Stephen T. Booker to Marilyn Hacker

08.02.94

Tuesday February 8, 1994

To: Ms. Marilyn Hacker, Ed.
Kenyon Review

From: Stephen Booker/ B-044049
Florida State Prison
P.O. Box 747/ R-2-S-9
Starke, Florida 32091

Dear M.,

Got word from B.V. (in G'ville) of the arrival of copy. Big thanx! Have harangued UPNE/ Wesleyan to shoot you a proof as a copy of Tug when it's out. I can't predict how they handle it, whether they'll send it. (If I were you, why I'd call the number on the flyer; and if it's one of them recording machine things, leave the message you know will see a proof or early copy rocketing your way: "This is Marilyn Hacker Booker wants a copy of Tug in my hands and I do too. You really don't wanna piss us off)

Dig, anyway: here're two copies of Tug's flyer. I'm going to fantasize about you copying a gross of them and looking me up. I guess that'd be something like you <mashing?> copies on bookstores and people – you know, keeping a dozen or so in your attache<sic> case just for the purpose of throwing them around like molotovs. I won't pick at you about how you could let me hitch a ride in every subscriber copy of TKR – because I'm planting the suggestion as is.

Any way you look at it you can rest assured of being in excellent company. Everybody I like and consider a comrade will be put to the gimme over this flyer. And even some people I don't know at all – some groups, i.e., ACIU, etc. I do this & because it does seem like a proper form of self-propulsion that'll work. Only chasing the biggest reading possible, as I'm not after money (and will see no royalties anyway).

Let me let you go now before I wear the welcome thin.

Yours,

Stephen

Joy Harjo to Philip Jordan

08.02.94

TWO RED HORSES, INC.

Joy Harjo

P.O. Box 4999
Albuquerque, NM 87196
Tel. (505) 897-9092
Fax (505) 897-9094

8 February 1994

Dr. Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Dr. Jordan:

I am writing to congratulate you on the longstanding and fine publication associated with your college, *The Kenyon Review*. The review has been noted as one of the finest literary reviews in the country since its publication, but through the efforts of current editor Marilyn Hacker it has become one of the most widely read and used-- I've used issues as texts in my writing workshops. I'm not the only one. *The Kenyon Review* is considered by many to be at the pulse point of contemporary poetry and most certainly is an indispensable<sic> part of the culture.

I thank you for your efforts to support this invaluable part of us.

Sincerely,

Joy Harjo
Professor, University of New Mexico

Hello Marilyn --

I talked to June and she told me there was some talk of the College withdrawing support of the Review -- So here's a copy (I sent <illeg> corrections) -- I forwarded to the Pres.

I'm looking forward to seeing you in Phoenix<?> at AWP -- & excited!! that <illeg> reprinting Love, Death & The Changing of the Seasons. Until then --

Love,

Joy

Jane Miller to Philip Jordan

11.02.94

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

February 11, 1994

Philip Jordan
President, Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH

Dear President Jordan,

I write to ardently encourage your support for the Kenyon Review. By now, I imagine you have received, many letters describing the literary merit of this journal, and I wish to add my voice to the chorus. As a poet, essayist, educator, and musician, it has been my experience that the American artistic community is as strong as its printed and circulated documents announce; that art survives by way of its audience and its support group; that we are at a crucial juncture in terms of visibility now as a literary body, and in need of assistance. It seems to me, as a reader and contributor, that the Review has been a rare and innovative type of magazine, a magazine that creates trends rather than follows, and is an essential part of or landscape. I urge you to continue your financial commitment.

Marilyn Hacker is one of the most widely respected poets and editors in the field, and indeed has put the punch and the excitement back into the publishing of poems. The Review is popular, visionary, and surprising, thanks mostly to Marilyn. I must tell you that, although I myself taught at Goddard College in the 70s and find the small liberal arts college an essential part of American education, I did, in fact, not realize that Kenyon College survived the elimination of such schools until the revitalization of the magazine. With all due respect to the hardworking efforts of the faculty and staff, it took this national exposure to "make Kenyon College happen" for me, and I daresay, many others. Please do what you can to perpetuate its existence.

Sincerely,
Jane Miller
Visiting Poet, University of Iowa

Full Professor of English, University of Arizona

copy to: Kenyon Review, Ms. Marilyn Hacker

Program in Creative Writing
Department of English
436 English Philosophy Bldg.
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1492

319/335-0416
800/553-4692 ext. 0416
FAX 319/335-0420

Dave Smith to Philip Jordan 15.02.94

The Southern Review

43 ALLEN HALL LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY BATON ROUGE, LA 70803-5005 (504)
388-5108 FAX (504) 388-5098

JAMES OLNEY
EDITOR

DAVE SMITH
EDITOR

Dr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransome Hall
Gambier, OH 43022-9623

February 15, 1994

Dear President Jordan,

I have had a request from Marilyn Hacker, Editor of the Kenyon Review, for a letter of support for that fine journal. Hacker seems to imply a crisis and I hope that is not the case. I feel acutely the historic and ongoing presence of KR in the literary community of our country. Its continued publication is, to me, essential. Had it not been for model of Mr. Ransom, I may not have become a writer and editor. Had it not been for the work of other KR editors, much of my writing may not have seen daylight. Many Americans can say the same, thanks to the generosity of Kenyon College.

Ms. Hacker's letter seems also to ask for endorsement of "a multicultural and interdisciplinary literary landscape." I do, in general, support an editor's effort to open doors to those who have been denied access, but I have reservations about literary journals which set up as voices of social engineering schemes. It is not a matter of denying art's politic; that is undesirable as well as impossible. Advocacy of a political agenda often enough compromises high standards of literary excellence, but literary standards also may be changing in the shadow of political focus. I have not always been clear about what most characterized Ms. Hacker's editorship. Yet I have little hesitation in endorsing her as requested.

If the question is whether KR and its editor should publish an independent, though controversial content, it is clear free minds, whether a country's or an individual's, need that independence to grow. Jefferson carved on the University of Virginia gates that all who entered must be free to follow truth wherever it might lead. Literary journals do exactly that. As we do not know what the truth is, as the truth evolves, we must be free to pursue it in the teeth of either repellent or beautiful visions. If I suspect the program of multiculturalists, I think ours will be a dangerously thin life when we do not support free publication of views we may oppose. The Kenyon Review is part of our national education and is simply too valuable to undermine. The only way most journals can exist is by subsidy, just as opera and ballet and public broadcasting require help. If our leaders fail to give that help, our national sense of destiny will be greatly impoverished. I urge Kenyon College to continue what it has

done so long and so well, to maintain the Kenyon Review and editor Hacker's independence.

There is much more to say but I am sure you have my point. Please give my regards to your wife and tell her I said she will be dazzled by the new Churchland High School, if appalled by the village life to mall concrete. But tell her that Miss Emily Duke's house, as of last week, appeared restored and grand. I have had the pleasure of helping get a poetry festival under way in the local library and it would surprise anyone to see twenty Virginia poets turn up for a weekend of readings--and no pay--in Churchland.

Yours,

Dave Smith
Coeditor

National Humanities Center to Philip Jordan

15.02.94

NATIONAL HUMANITIES CENTER

7 Alexander Drive, P.O. Box 12256, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina 27709

15 February 1994

Dr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan,

As Fellows of the National Humanities Center, and admirers of The Kenyon Review, we are troubled to hear that the Review may be discontinued. We urge you, on the contrary, to continue supporting a publication of long-standing distinction that has gained new stature and importance under the editorship of Marilyn Hacker.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Barish
Christopher Baswell
Judith Bennett
Vincent Blasi
Paula Giddings
Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham
Claudia Koonz
Shepard Krech III
Luise White

Lawrence Lipking
Joshua Miller
Conor Cruise O'Brien
Philip Richards
John Beldon Scott
Gary Shapiro
Leonard Smith
Katherine Tachau

Telephone 919 549 0661 / Cable: Humanities

Marilyn Hacker to Omar S. Castaneda 15.02.94

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022-9623
Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor Marilyn Hacker • *Consulting Editors* David Baker, Eleanor M. Bender, David Lynn, Carole Maso, Robyn Selman • *Managing Editor* Cy Wainscott

February 15, 1994

Omar Castañeda
910 20th Street #304
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Omar Castañeda,

We hope you received and read our letter of November 30, requesting that our most valued readers -- that is, those who are also our writers -- come to our aid as donors in a time of tight budgets and dwindling subsidies.

So far, our campaign has been a success: we're 80% of the way to our target goal of \$5,000. Achieving this goal -- besides supporting our continuing publication of writers like yourself -- may also be instrumental in demonstrating our value, our importance to the literary community, to Kenyon College, on which our continued subsidy depends.

If you've been meaning to make a contribution, please do so now, with the enclosed card. And take the time, too, to let us know what you've been doing: new books published or due to be published, as well as grants and awards, so we can announce these accomplishments in an upcoming issue.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker
Editor

Julie Parson-Nesbitt to Philip Jordan 23.02.94

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

February 23, 1994

Dear Mr. Jordan:

I am writing in support of Marilyn Hacker's editorial leadership of the *Kenyon Review*.

As the editor of the University of Pittsburgh's *Pennsylvania Review*, I consider Marilyn Hacker a role model for editing a serious, high-quality literary journal. Hacker has made the *Kenyon Review* the most important and exciting literary journal today. She publishes leading writers whose work influences and creates literary modes for writers nationwide.

I know how difficult it is to make a literary magazine compelling enough for people to buy in these difficult financial times. Under Hacker's editorship, the *Kenyon Review* has become the kind of journal which writers feel they must purchase in order to know what is going on in contemporary literature.

You must be proud to house one of the country's finest literary journals at your university.

Sincerely,

Julie Parson-Nesbitt, Editor
The Pennsylvania Review

Toi Derricotte to Philip Jordan 23.02.94

University of Pittsburgh
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
Department of English

February 23, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I am writing to convey my great appreciation for the editorial leadership of Marilyn Hacker at The Kenyon Review. The integrity and clarity of her vision have made The Kenyon Review one of the two or three most exciting literary journals in the country.

In the past few years since Ms. Hacker's tenure as editor, I have heard countless high school and university teachers, graduate and undergraduate students, writers, and scholars praise The Kenyon Review.

Because of Ms. Hacker's continued devotion to a diverse community of writers, The Kenyon Review has become the nexus for work that is rewriting our literary history. As writers, teachers, and scholars, this work is absolutely essential for us.

I certainly hope you will continue to give her committed and generous support.

Sincerely yours,

Toi Derricotte

Associate Professor

PITTSBURGH, PA 15260-0001 (412) 624-6506 FAX (412) 624-6639

Jeanie J. Kim to Philip Jordan 28.02.94

Lannan Foundation
5401 McConnell Avenue
Los Angeles
California 90066-7027

310 306.1004 Fax 310 578.6445

Lannan

28 February 1994

Mr. Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Mr. Jordan,

I am writing to express the Lannan Foundation's support for Marilyn Hacker and The Kenyon Review. As you may know, Lannan has funded the journal for two years now, primarily supporting payments to contributors. There are scores of literary journals published in the United States, and The Kenyon Review is one of only nine literary journals funded by Lannan in 1993.

Marilyn Hacker's keen editorial eye has consistently succeeded in publishing exceptional work from established and emerging writers. An editor provides a tremendous service to a writer by publishing his work among the finest work being written. Under Ms. Hacker's editorship, The Kenyon Review has become a dynamic journal which is both readable and relevant.

The Kenyon Review is an asset to the reputation of Kenyon College. It is essential for The Kenyon Review to have a secure home at Kenyon College in order to maintain and build on its present excellence. I respectfully encourage you, in these difficult times, to sustain support for a vital member of our literary community.

Sincerely,

Jeanie J. Kim
Director, Literary Programs

Eric Gudas to Philip Jordan

28.02.94

Eric Gudas
Sarah Lawrence College
Bronxville, NY 10708

February 28, 1994

Dear Marilyn Hacker,

Enclosed is a copy of my letter to Philip Jordan written in support of Kenyon Review. I would be glad to write in further support, and can be contacted at the above address, and at (914) 961-8060, until May 20.

Sincerely,
Eric Gudas

Eric Gudas
Sarah Lawrence College
Bronxville, NY 10708

February 28, 1994

Dear President Jordan,

By way of introduction, I am a writer and an avid reader of Kenyon Review. I was dismayed to hear about that magazine's possible discontinuation, and am writing in hopes that my support could help prevent this. I feel that Kenyon Review, under Marilyn Hacker's editorship, is not only the best literary magazine in America today, but also a vital cultural document with the potential to reach a more general readership than most literary magazines. I read each issue of the magazine cover to cover as soon as I receive it, not only for the excellence of its writing, but also to inform myself of what is going on in America right now. I urge the magazine on to my friends who are not writers or the usual readers of literary magazines--all have responded positively, and several have become subscribers themselves. In today's literary climate, the existence of a magazine such as Kenyon Review, which consistently publishes work by writers outside of the academic mainstream, the existence of a magazine such as Kenyon Review, which consistently publishes work by writers outside of the academic mainstream, and addresses concerns beyond those of the academy, is vital. I hope that Kenyon Review, under the editorship of Marilyn Hacker, will continue to be the outstanding magazine, document and beacon it has proven itself to be. Any less would be tantamount to the loss of a national asset. Please feel free to contact me at the above address--I would be more than glad to write in further support of Kenyon Review.

Sincerely,

Eric Gudas

Jean Valentine to Philip Jordan

28.02.94

SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE
BRONXVILLE, NEW YORK 10708

Feb. 28th, 1994

TELEPHONE
914 337-0700

President Philip Jordan
Kenyon College

Dear President Jordan,

I am writing to urge the continued support of the Kenyon Review and its present editorship, which I understand is under consideration.

Marilyn Hacker has brought life and energy and imagination to the Review, and the entire writers' community would be impoverished if we lost the Review now, with its eclecticism, artistic scope, and intellectual vigor.

Sincerely yours,

Jean Valentine
Writing Faculty

Christopher Baswell to Marilyn Hacker 01.03.94

1 March [1994]

NATIONAL HUMANITIES CENTER

7 Alexander Drive, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina 27709

Marilyn,

For your files, copy of another letter & bunch of signatures. I am sorry it's taken so long to pull this together, but I wanted signatures from some of the more recognizable folks, esp. Giddings, Lipking & O'Brien. Hope that isn't too late to do whatever good it can.

All best,

Chris B.

M --

I faxed this to Banks in London.
Let me know what happens.

Lewis

The Getty Center for the History of Art
401 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 700
Santa Monica, CA 90401-1455

March 2, 1994

David F. Banks
12 Church Row
London NW3 6UT
England

Dear David Banks,

I had arranged to talk with Paul Healy from the Kenyon Trustees committee about the Kenyon Review, but the Los Angeles earthquake managed to cancel our appointment and, though I tried to contact Mr. Healy later through the President's office, we never did get to speak. In any event, I wanted to say the few things I might have said had we made contact.

I read the Review regularly and like it a great deal. To take the Summer 1993 issue as an example, I was glad to have the Adrienne Rich essay on Rukeyser; Rukeyser is not much discussed, and should be more. I didn't particularly respond to the ending of T.R. Hummer's poem about Whitman (I may love Whitman more than Hummer seems to), but I did respond to its ambition and scope. I liked Joy Harjo's poems a great deal, and was glad for the interview with her. I hadn't known her work before, and am grateful to have been introduced to it.

I could go on and on in this vein, but the point is the magazine consistently engages this reader and, though the pieces are mixed in quality, there are consistent gems. That is as it should be. If we were to look at any small magazine, even the acknowledged greats (Poetry in the 1930's, say, or the Review under Ransom), we would find any single issue mixed, with gems. Such is the nature of the undertaking. Marilyn Hacker is doing very well the job she was hired to do.

As for the magazine's "operating losses," I have two things to say.

First of all, I believe that all private institutions have some duty to the public good. I believe that publishing houses should occasionally subsidize young writers, that colleges and universities should be willing to spend some of their endowment on research and publishing that has no clear economic benefit, that firms like IBM and Xerox should have a corporate office of public giving, and reflect on how they might

act in their own communities to make them better places to live. The Kenyon Review has been and continues to be an important actor in the literary life of this nation. To think of the College's support for the Review only in terms of "operating losses" is to confine the discussion to an unnecessarily narrow sense of our common economy. (I should add, by the way, that I don't confine this question of support to private institutions. My wife and I have given the Kenyon Review over \$1,500 during the last few years.)

Secondly, as I'm sure you know, the Review is the one thing that everyone knows about Kenyon College. I never say that I teach at Kenyon without someone wrinkling the brow and saying "Isn't that where the Kenyon Review comes from?" I wish I could say that people ask me about the swim team, or the beautiful grounds, but they never do. The point is that the Review is an important part of the College's public presence. And again, the "accounting" here gets complicated. Do the other ways in which the College presents itself to the public operate at a "loss" or a "profit," and how do we know? Whatever the answer, it seems to me worth some expense to keep this presence going.

Finally, a colleague passed along to me a copy of a questionnaire that the trustees' committee sent around. It seems an unfortunate document because it mixes the question of funding the Review with questions of editorial policy. In the larger frame of things there must be times when it is appropriate for trustees to concern themselves with the character of the magazine, but if the issue at hand is the budget, this is not one of them.

We all realize that the budget is tight at the College these years, but nonetheless I do hope the trustees will see their way clear to continuing the College's support of the Kenyon Review.

Yours sincerely,

Lewis Hyde

Luce Professor of Art & Politics, Kenyon College
Senior Scholar, The Getty Center

cc: President Philip Jordan
Kenyon Review

Daniel Curzon to Marilyn Hacker

05.03.94

March 5, 1994

Dear Marilyn Hacker,

Some thirty years ago about this time I was sitting in a restaurant in Detroit with Joyce Carol Oates when we were beginning writers. We'd both received mail---she with two acceptances of short stories, including one from THE KENYON REVIEW. I'd received two rejections, one from THE KENYON REVIEW. (Of course I write better now than I did then, to spoil the sweetness of the story. I also can now write about the part of life that was denied all of us then.)

I'm thrilled that you have accepted "Wasps" for publication in THE KENYON REVIEW. I've been showing the letter around. It's very much a prestige publication, and your comment about 750 mss. a month makes the acceptance all the better. Only one person, a 28-year-old, didn't know what THE KENYON REVIEW is. I set him straight.

Yes, I have a son, now ten, with a lesbian mother, who lives in Oregon with her second lover. Zack called me last week. We were hoping to get together during the spring break, but we don't share the same week. Maybe this summer. I'll tell Zack and his mom(s) about the acceptance of the story since it's based on a real event up there, but I'll have to look at it again to make sure it doesn't say things they may not like. I have a genius for writing what hurts feelings, but to me this is the only way I can be truthful. Perhaps you have encountered this same conflict as a writer.

An evening of theater called ACTORS IN BRIEFS that contains two of my short pieces has just been picked up by a producer and will be moved to a new theater here in San Francisco, so I feel that I'm on a roll after a dry spell, even though the four founding members of this theater, including me, are at each other's throats over which pieces will be moved or won't. Ah, arty!

So thanks a million for taking my story, and I hope it won't be the last. I'm looking forward to seeing it in THE KENYON REVIEW.

Let me help support it. Here's my check for a year's subscription.

Many thanks,

Daniel Curzon
416 Dorado Terrace
San Francisco, CA 94112

David Wagoner to Philip Jordan

05.03.94

Poetry

NORTHWEST

March 5, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I have heard a disturbing rumor that Kenyon College is considering curtailing its sponsorship of The Kenyon Review. I hope it isn't true. There are few periodicals in the country so influential and highly regarded throughout the creative community, and the loss of its lively pages would be a serious blow to the growing end of American literature.

Surely a college that has benefited so greatly from a tradition established by John Crowe Ransom--and enhanced by nearly all our major poets, fiction writers, and literary critics since then--would not be so foolish as to allow such an asset to be diminished or to disappear.

Sincerely,

David Wagoner
Editor, Poetry Northwest
Professor of English
Chancellor, the Academy of American Poets

cc: Marilyn Hacker

Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 08.03.94

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022-9623
Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor Marilyn Hacker • *Consulting Editors* David Baker, Eleanor M. Bender, David Lynn, Carole Maso, Robyn Selman • *Managing Editor* Cy Waincott

March 8, 1994

TO: Philip H. Jordan Jr., President
FR: Marilyn Hacker, Editor

Dear Phil,

To accompany Cy's list of economies already taken, I'd like you – and the trustees – to know what I have in mind, both to reduce the college's subsidy of the Review and, perhaps more importantly, to enhance the Review's participation in the life of the college in a way that will have a direct impact on Kenyon's ability to attract students.

I will, as we know, be teaching an advanced poetry workshop in the Fall 1994 semester. (I regret that illness and bad scheduling have prevented me from doing this before.) I look forward to doing this every fall semester. This will mean that our burgeoning creative writing program will offer advanced, as well as beginning, poetry workshops both semesters every year. Students will be provided not only with a choice of instructors, but (given the flexibility of Kenyon's scheduling on this matter) the opportunity to work with both.

Saving to the college on the KR budget: \$12,240.

In the spring of 1995 I will be on leave without pay pursuing my individual NEA fellowship. I've proposed that a guest editor be appointed for this semester to edit one "double" issue of the Kenyon Review (see below) and teach one course. We'd be proposing a salary of \$20,000 or \$21,000 for the semester, only two-thirds of which would be charged to the Kenyon Review. A guest editor/teacher here for one semester would not be receiving benefits.

Our preferred candidate for this is Suzanne Gardinier. She is very interested. She has editorial experience at Grand Street, varied teaching experience and is a poet, fiction writer and essayist, published in all three genres (she won the KR's Literary Excellence in the Essay award for her piece on Fagles' translation of *The Iliad*). I'm enclosing Suzanne Gardinier's book, copies of her essays, her CV and letter of intent in case the copy I sent you isn't readily at hand. Other candidates are also possible. Allison Joseph, were she willing to come, would be a highly desirable choice and she has editorial experience with the *Indiana Review*.

The presence on campus of a visiting writer in the year Fred Kluge will not be here is also a propos.

Savings to the college on the KR budget: \$21,602.

The guest editor would produce one "double" issue of the Kenyon Review, most likely for the summer/fall of 1996. This would be approximately 250 pages and have a cover price of \$9. the difference in cost (including printing, postage, fulfillment, contributor payments and editing fees) would represent another considerable saving.

Saving to the college on the KR budget: \$17,000.

Cy Wainscott and I would like to use the Kenyon Review as the core of a course on literary editing, to be offered to English honor students as a part of the creative writing concentration.

A group of selected students would work with us for a semester. They would read groups of manuscripts in preparation for discussion of the editorial selection process, follow the Kenyon Review and other literary quarterlies over the space of a year or more and report on their findings – with each student having one magazine as a term project – and work with Cy in following just how the Kenyon Review goes from being a pile of manuscripts to the book-format journal.

Practical skills such as copyediting and proofreading would also be acquired, with the excellent insight gained by comparing a student-edited copy of a manuscript with the one delivered by our professional copy editors.

There would be a weekly group discussion/report as well as hands-on hours at the Review.

Other liberal arts colleges and graduate schools offer such courses with great success. But, as far as I know, no such course is offered on the undergraduate level in the GLCA.

Savings to the college on the KR budget: \$12,240.

On a completely different tack, we are considering raising our institutional yearly subscription price from \$24 to \$28. Many periodicals charge institutions twice as much as their individual subscribers. We don't want to risk our invaluable library base by such a radical move. However, since \$24 was simply four times the cover price and cover price is now \$7 I don't think we'd lose anyone.

Savings to the college on the KR budget: \$4,400.

I look forward to your responses to these proposals.

Peter Balakian to Philip Jordan

08.03.94

COLGATE UNIVERSITY
13 Oak Drive
Hamilton, NY 13346-1398
(315) 824-7262

Department of English
Lawrence Hall

March 8, 1994

Mr. Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Mr. Jordan,

I know that Kenyon College is reviewing The Kenyon Review at this moment, and I am writing as a poet, editor, and university teacher to express my strong feeling about the importance of The Kenyon Review.

For over a half a century The Kenyon Review has been a major force in American letters and in the broadest sense, in American culture and history. It has represented many distinguished writers and many lesser known and excellent writers. Under Marilyn Hacker's editorship, the magazine has grown yet into another phase, into a full-bodied twentieth century forum for literature and culture. Ms. Hacker's leadership has been exemplary, and I find the review<sic> today to be one of the most exciting magazines in the English language. It is both beautifully produced and it represents fine writing. I find Ms. Hacker's editorial tastes most cosmopolitan and broad, and the new energy she has brought the magazine is an extension of the magazine's brilliant past.

It would be horrible if The Kenyon Review were to disappear, and I would think that students, faculty, and alumni would find it a great lost<sic> to the identity of their college. For, The Kenyon Review has been an important force in giving Kenyon College so much of its national and international prestige. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Peter Balakian
Professor of English

Marilyn Annucci to Philip Jordan 09.03.94

3/9/94

Marilyn Hacker:

Received word from Catherine Gammon of U-P, H that you needed letters of support. I sent the enclosed to Pres. Jordan. Good luck!

Marilyn Annucci

2336 Eldridge Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

March 9, 1994

Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I am writing in support of Marilyn Hacker's editorial leadership of *The Kenyon Review*.

Ms. Hacker's commitment to diverse, politically engaged writing is admirable. I am reminded of the words of novelist Russell Banks, fiction editor of the winter 1993-94 issue of *Ploughshares*, another well-known, well-respected literary magazine. In the introduction to this issue, Banks writes:

Increasingly...in recent years I have found it difficult to generate much affection for fiction that portrays American society and history as monoracial, monocultural, and monolingual, with no significant gender or class barriers. Fiction that gives the lie to life. Simply, it has no plausibility for me, even though I myself am a white Protestant middle-class heterosexual male. In search of plausibility<sic>, then, if not the simple truth, I have been drawn more and more to fiction by writers who see themselves as situated in a society that puts American man and woman on the borders of race, culture, language, gender, and class, and who view their world not from the privileged center of their own private Idaho, but from out there on the edges, where they are obliged to look both ways, as if at a dangerous crossing, and say what they see coming. (9)

What distinguishes *The Kenyon Review* from many other literary magazines (though it is certainly not alone) is that it refuses to give "the lie to life." The subjects,

individuals, and styles to which Ms. Hacker is giving voice in the pages of *The Kenyon Review* are representative of our culture. That they might at times seem to you strange or unfamiliar is only, I believe, because they have been frequently relegated to the sidelines. We cannot come to understand that to which we have little or no access.

My challenge to you is this: Rather than participating in the marginalization of the voices to which Ms. Hacker provides a forum, why not familiarize yourself with them? Perhaps you will find that they are not so Other, that there is more commonality among us than strangeness.

And if you should still find some strangeness, consider how your experiences and views might seem equally strange to others. What is the harm in validating those whose experiences might differ from your own? There is no dearth of magazines that make readers such as yourself feel comfortable and accepted. If *The Kenyon Review* under Ms. Hacker's leadership causes discomfort among some readers, take that to be an uncommon strength of the magazine. Ms. Hacker should be congratulated. We are far too easily anesthetized in this country.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Annucci

cc: Marilyn Hacker

Lynn Emanuel to Marilyn Hacker 10.03.94

HOTEL GRAMERCY PARK

~~Gramercy Park Hotel~~
~~21st St. and Lex. Ave., NYC 10010-5420~~
~~(212) GR5-4320~~
~~out of town call 1-800-221-4083~~
~~Cable GRAMPARK~~

MAR 10 1994

Dear Marilyn,

I've written a strong letter of support for The Kenyon Review and for you as its editor. After we talked, I realized that it would compromise the effectiveness of the letter if I copied you on it. I do have it on disk, if you need it at some point I can easily send it. I have called Bill Mathews, Maggie Anderson (who has an ad in KR), David St. John, and Molly Peacock. Each will write on your behalf, Molly will write as the president of the PSH.

Good luck.

Best,

Lynn Emanuel

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Sandra Gilbert to Marilyn Hacker 12.03.94

3/12/94

Marilyn – Hard copy for you* - Cheers -

Sandra

* but not, I hope, hard times!

TO: MARILYN HACKER, ED., THE KENYON REVIEW
FROM: SANDRA M. GILBERT
FIRST PAGE OF ONE

Department of English
University of California
Davis, CA 95616

53 Menlo Place
Berkeley, CA 94707

March 12, 1994

Marilyn Hacker, editor
THE KENYON REVIEW
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9263

Dear Marilyn,

This is just to let you know that I have been deeply distressed to hear of threats to the Kenyon Review, a journal which, under your editorship, has become one of the premier literary periodicals available today. I have enjoyed both reading KR and writing for it; I think it would be catastrophic for the intellectual community if this splendid publication should lose its funding and/or your editorial guidance.

With all good wishes,

Sandra M. Gilbert
Professor of English

cc: David F. Banks
12 Church Row
London NW3 6UT
England

Marilyn Hacker to Committee Members 15.03.94

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022-9623
Phone (614) 427-3339
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Editor Marilyn Hacker • Consulting Editors David Baker, Eleanor M. Bender, David Lynn, Carole Maso, Robyn Selman • Managing Editor Cy Wainscott

March 15, 1994

Dear Committee Member,

As you may know, the Kenyon Review is under intense scrutiny -- read "attack" -- by the college trustees. It is entirely possible that, at their plenary meeting at the end of April, they will decide, either to shut it down entirely, or to cut its subsidy so drastically that we will no longer be able to continue publishing. These possibilities will definitely be under discussion.

We have received close to a hundred very strong letters of support from members of the literary and academic communities all over the United States and abroad. (I'm enclosing a sampling.) But the trustees are more concerned with the Kenyon Review's place in the college.

We believe that President Jordan would like to keep the Kenyon Review alive. But he needs to know that it is important to the Kenyon community as well as to the world at large.

It would be ironic if Kenyon College were to celebrate "Twenty-five Years of Women at Kenyon" by shutting down a journal that has come to the forefront of multicultural, feminist and innovative writing -- and by firing its first woman editor and her staff.

Please let President Jordan know, by letter or by e-mail, that the Kenyon Review's survival concerns you, that you support its presence on campus -- and its editorial direction.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker

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727 E Main St.
Columbus OH 43205

Sharon Olds
250 Riverside Drive
New York, N.Y. 10025

Robert Pack
Middlebury College
Middlebury VT 05753

~~Robert Pinsky~~
~~1924 Monterey Ave.~~
~~Berkeley CA 94707~~
(see addl. sheet)

Dave Smith
2821 E. Brigstock Rd.
Midlothian VA 23113

Gerald Stern
Creative Writing Program
Dept. of English
University of Iowa
Iowa City IA 52242

Brian Swann
Humanities Division
The Cooper Union
Cooper Square
New York, N.Y. 10003

Quincy Troupe
1655 Nautilus St.
LaJolla CA 93039
(sent money)

Ellen Bryan Voight
Box 16
Marshfield VT 05658

Florence Howe201<sic> East 87 St.
New York, N.Y. 10128

Richard Howard
23 Waverly Place
New York N.Y. 10003

Derek Walcott
Dept. of English
Boston University
Commonwealth Ave.

Boston MA 02215

Nancy Willard
133 College Ave.
Poughkeepsie NY 12603

Annie Wright
529 East 85 St.
New York, N.Y. 10028

Wendy Lesser, Editor
Threepenny Review
1426 Oxford St. Box 9131
~~Berkeley CA~~ Berkeley CA 95709

Polly Shulman, Editor
VLS
The Village Voice
(look up) 872 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10013

Ben Sonnenberg
50 Riverside Drive
New York, N.Y. 10024

Tree SWenson<sic>, President
Associated Writing Programs
Old Dominion University
Norfolk VA 23529-0079

Gale Arnoux, Program Director
Associated Writing Programs
Old Dominion University
Norfolk VA 23529-0079

Peter Balakian
13 John St,
Hamilton N.Y. 13346

Russell Banks
129 Poe Road
Princeton N.J. 08540

Willis<?> Barnstone
Comparative Literature
Indiana University
Bloomington IN 47405

Eugene M.J. Pugatch M.D.
4 Crestview Court

Montclair N.J. 07042

Professor James M. Hughes
Wright State University
Dept. of English
Dayton, OH 45435

Robert Peters
9431 Krepp Drive
Huntington Beach CA 92646

Joan Cusack Handler
6 Horizon Road
Fort Lee, N.J. 07024

Dr. Adam Brooke Davis
Division of Languages and Literature
314a McClain Hall
Northeast Missouri State University
Kirksville MO 63501

Willard Spiegelman
15 Eustis St.
Cambridge MA 02140

Sydney Lea
Orford N.H. 03777

Marge Picrey
Box 1473
Wellfleet MA 02667

Robert Pinsky
Creative Writing Dept.
Boston University
236 Bay State Road 236
Boston MA 02215

Dorothy Allison
15866 Wright St.
Guerneville CA 95446

Margaret Atwood
105 Admiral Rd.
Toronto Ontario M5R 2L7
CANADA

Robic MacMacauley
65 Marlboro
Boston MA 02166

Jennifer Moyer-Bell
RFD 1 Colonial Hill
Mt Kisco NY 10549

Nancy Walker
918 Marengo Lane
Nashville TN 37204

Jeanine Elliot
2361 Lancashire #1A
Ann Arbor MI 48105

Susanne Woods
452 Pace Ave.
Lancaster PA7603 17603

Adrienne Rich to Philip Jordan 15.03.94

COVER PAGE (p.1 OF 2)

TO: Cy Wainscott, Managing Editor
THE KENYON REVIEW

Fax #: 614/427/5417

FROM: Adrienne Rich
Fax #: 408/475/0148

Dear Cy Wainscott:

Herewith is a copy of the letter I am sending to President Jordan on behalf of the KENYON REVIEW.

Good luck and all best hopes--
Adrienne Rich

Adrienne Rich

2420 Paul Minnie Avenue Santa Cruz, California 95602

President Philip Jordan
Kenyon College
Gambier Ohio 43022-9623

Dear President Jordan,

I have recently found myself in a number of conversations with writers and intellectuals about the possible fate of the KENYON REVIEW. I would like to join the many voices urging you to reconsider closing it down.

In the late forties and early fifties when I was an undergraduate, KENYON REVIEW was among a handful of respected and read literary magazines such as the YALE REVIEW, PARTISAN REVIEW, and the VIRGINIA QUARTERLY REVIEW. Then, for a long period, the KENYON, like some of its siblings, became inert. It seemed a husk from another era when Kenyon College had been home to poets and writers like John Crowe Ransome<sic>, Robert Lowell, Randall Jarrell. If the KENYON had disappeared in the sixties or seventies, I doubt there would have been much regret among writers of my generation and younger.

Then a wonderful thing happened. The KENYON received a life transfusion in the form of a new and brilliant editor, Marilyn Hacker, herself a fine poet. With maturity of judgment along with a keen sense of the expansion and revitalization of American writing in the 1980s, she turned a rather colorless magazine into the best literary journal in the country. I consider it now required reading for anyone who cares to understand the power and reach of contemporary poetry, fiction, criticism, and even

drama, in the United States today. I have urged it on students, given it to friends, I keep every issue and have been proud to publish there. The new KENYON provides not only handsome and dignified space but a vibrant context of new writing that lends resonance to each individual contribution. I consider Marilyn Hacker a master editor, and I would expect Kenyon College to honor and support her endeavors to the best of its ability. The KENYON REVIEW is an institution of which a great university could be proud, and, I may say, no great university has a literary periodical equal to the KENYON REVIEW.

I do, therefore, most seriously urge you to gather all possible resources to protect and save this extraordinary magazine.

Sincerely yours,
Adrienne Rich

Gigi Bradford to Philip Jordan

16.03.94

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
ARTS

The Federal agency
that supports the
visual, literary and
performing arts to
benefit all Americans

March 16, 1994

Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Ransome<sic> Hall
Gambier, OH 43022-9623

Dear President Jordan:

I would like to express my strong support for the current incarnation of The Kenyon Review and to tell you how much prestige this literary magazine brings to Kenyon College.

The Kenyon Review is in the forefront of contemporary writing. Its literary merit is unquestioned. Under the recent editorship of Marilyn Hacker, a publication regarded for its history has become again an indispensable contemporary American literary presence.

The literature field itself is experiencing an explosion of activity and interest. Alone among art forms supported by the NEA, literature is seeing an increase in private philanthropic dollars. I hope that Kenyon College will continue to support The Kenyon Review. It brings honor to your college and immeasurably enhances the contemporary literary landscape.

Sincerely,

Gigi Bradford
Director, Literature Program

dictated: GB/bg
bcc: Marilyn Hacker

The Nancy Hanks Center
1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20506
202/682-5400

Patricia Goedicke to Philip Jordan 19.03.94

Dear Marilyn – As you can see, I not only hate to write prose, I'm no good at it.

Still, this is something, anyway. I hope it helps.

Patricia

310 McLeod
Missoula, Montana 59801

March 19, 1994

President Philip Jordan
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan,

I have recently learned that there are plans afoot to dissolve Kenyon College's time honored support of The Kenyon Review, and I write to express my deep concern over the damage such an action would do, not only to the entire literary community of the United States, but also, quite conceivably, to Kenyon College's hitherto unblemished record as one of the chief custodians of a set of literary and cultural values which are presently and most lamentably, disappearing all too rapidly from the contemporary educational and cultural milieu.

Kenyon College has long been known for THE KENYON REVIEW. In fact – and I speak as one who, having taught for many years at Ohio University, can qualify as a more than usually sympathetic ex-neighbor of yours – I'd venture to say that by far the largest part of Kenyon College's reputation as a distinguished Liberal ARTS institution rests only on its connection with THE KENYON REVIEW.

That was certainly the case in 1956, when John Crowe Ransom published in THE REVIEW, alongside poems by many other, far more distinguished luminaries than I, the first of my by now -- 10 books of poetry later -- hundreds of published poems. It remained the case all through the intervening years, when I continued, (of course under the aegis of other editors,) not only to publish other poems in the REVIEW, but also to look to the Review for consistently the very best in contemporary fiction and poetry. Even as recently as the last few years, the prestigious GETTYSBURG REVIEW has been devoting many pages to the early days of THE REVIEW -- days in which such poets as, among others, Randall Jarrell, James Wright, and Robert Lowell, were either students at Kenyon College (to whose great credit and fame surely their own fame has redounded again and again over the years) or intimately associated with it.

And the same inter-connectedness of academic and literary values continues to this

very day. For your new editor, Marilyn Hacker, is recognized everywhere as yet another of the stars which, so far, seem always to be lighting up the good but otherwise fairly ordinary name of Kenyon College. Everywhere I go on my various reading trips, her name is on everyone's lips, not only for the undisputed excellence of her taste and judgment, and talents, but also for the exciting new goals and standards she has established for the magazine.

I think it would be safe to say that KENYON REVIEW -- and by extension Kenyon College -- is one of the Grande Dames of the academic and literary world. To have its presence vanish from the scene would be the equivalent, in my eyes and in many others', to the travesty that has in recent years been made of THE NEW YORKER. But THE NEW YORKER is, first and foremost, a commercial venture: how much more incumbent it is on an institution like Kenyon College -- dedicated to and responsible for raising the educational and cultural standards of the young -- to do everything possible to keep a tradition of such excellence alive.

I urge you to do everything possible to support THE REVIEW and keep it connected with Kenyon College.

Sincerely yours,

Patricia Goedicke
Distinguished Professor
Creative Writing Program

Eric Pankey to Philip Jordan 22.03.94

Washington

WASHINGTON · UNIVERSITY · IN · ST · LOUIS

Department of English
The Writing Program

March 22, 1994

Phillip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I have heard from friends that Kenyon College is consider<sic> doing away with The Kenyon Review. I hope that this is an unfortunate rumor, but if not let me state my support for the journal and let me encourage you to continue the college's support for The Kenyon Review. Kenyon Review is a rare thing among literary reviews: it has a long history (many journals fold after five years); it has published in its history the major writers of its history; its editors have been much admired writers, writers who have helped establish the way we think about modern letters; and it continues to get better and better.

The new Kenyon Review, by which I mean since the editorship of Marilyn Hacker, is one of the most talked about and eagerly awaited literary journals in the country. Its dedication to the best in American and international writing is unmatched by any existing literary journal. As a writer who has spent much time as an artist in the schools during my career, I have many times recommended Kenyon College to the finest high school writers I have met. My recommendation was based on my belief that the college was dedicated to the humanities, and my belief was based on the long and impressive history of The Kenyon Review.

I recently contibuted<sic> money to the review and this in a time when I am financially strapped and giving money this year only to my church and to a local food pantry and homeless shelter! What I mean to suggest is that I feel a personal investment in the journal and feel it is worth preserving.

Sincerely,
Eric Pankey, director

Washington University
Campus Box 1122
One Brookings Drive
St. Louis, Missouri 63130-4899
(314) 935-5120

Peter Erickson to Philip Jordan

23.03.94

Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute

225 SOUTH STREET, BOX 8, WILLIAMSTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 01267
TELEPHONE (413) 458-9545 · FAX (413) 458-2336

March 23, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Ransom Hall
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I am writing to express my appreciation for Kenyon College's support of The Kenyon Review and also to urge the College's continued strong support of the Review.

In particular, I have been extremely impressed with Marilyn Hacker's editorship since June 1990. In a short period of time she has reinvigorated Kenyon Review and greatly enhanced its prominence and prestige. I speak as a productive scholar with research interests in both Renaissance and contemporary literature. That is, my academic work is broad-based and includes classical as well as new material. I find The Kenyon Review invaluable for my work and I judge its overall quality to be very high.

My purpose is to comment on what I see as The Kenyon Review's national impact under Marilyn Hacker. However, I would hazard the assumption that The Kenyon Review may also have local educational value for Kenyon College. Insofar as the journal projects a multicultural image, it provides a real-life context for this aspect of the College's mission.

I believe so strongly in Marilyn Hacker's leadership of The Kenyon Review what is for me a substantial check of \$100. While private contributions are important, however, they are no substitute for ongoing institutional support.

I hope that the College will continue to appreciate The Kenyon Review's significance and that this appreciation will translate into maintaining a fully adequate level of funding.

Sincerely,

Peter Erickson

Jan Clausen to Philip Jordan 24.03.94

NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH
EUGENE LANG COLLEGE
66 WEST 12TH STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10011
(212) 229-5617

March 24, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Philip Jordan:

I have just found out that one of my favorite periodicals, and undoubtedly my very favorite literary magazine, The Kenyon Review, is facing the possibility of drastically decreased support from Kenyon College. I am extremely distressed at this news.

A literary magazine is like a fruit orchard. It doesn't produce fruit the minute it is planted. One has to wait through many seasons of preparation and attention; to cut it down in the prime bearing years would be an inestimable loss. I know because I was a founding editor of Conditions, a pioneering feminist literary magazine started in 1976, which recently ceased publication because without institutional support it could no longer keep going on volunteer labor. I'm well aware of the effort that goes into building circulation, attracting advertising, getting the publication into more and more bookstores, and persuading a sufficient number of excellent writers that it is worth their while to submit their best material.

Under the editorship of Marilyn Hacker, Kenyon has flourished remarkably. The magazine has become indispensable to a growing community of writers and readers, not only because of the high quality of the contents and the impeccable format, but because Marilyn has made it a center for an extraordinary multicultural "conversation" among writers, one long overdue in this country's literature. Not just another good literary magazine (though that would be reason enough to offer it maximum support), Kenyon is unique in this way. It is a magazine in which readers know they will find "news that stays news," and where good writers know they will be read--not simply filed away on the shelves of a few literary bookstores, as is too often the case with "little" magazines.

Besides being a former magazine editor, I teach creative writing (at the Eugene Lang College of the New School for Social Research and in the Goddard M.F.A. Program).

In my "real life" I'm a poet, novelist and story writer, past N.E.A. recipient, reviewer and critic. All of my writer friends read The Kenyon Review. Please don't cut this magnificent orchard down--or starve it at the roots!

Yours truly,
Jan Clausen

Leslie Ullman to Philip Jordan

29.03.94

March 29, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan,

I understand that the KENYON REVIEW has undergone some attack from the college trustees and that its future is now in question. I am writing you now to express my strong support of the magazine and my hope that it will be able to continue in the fruitful directions it has taken.

I direct a new MFA Program at University of Texas-El Paso, the only creative writing program in the country to offer a bilingual option. This program has come into being partially as a response to our geographical location on the U.S./Mexico border and our bi-cultural student population; however, it also responds to a need that has been recognized at a national level, for writing programs which reflect and serve the rapidly widening cultural diversity of today's students. For example, this year's annual Associated Writing Programs Conference, which will take place in the Tempe April 7-9, is offering several panels on the subject, and over the past two years AWP has also taken steps to institute creative writing programs at minority institutions. Times have changed and they continued to change, and as a university professor and program director I am especially aware of wanting to prepare students to play their part in a far more complex and vital literary world than the one I faced when I graduated from the Iowa Writers in 1974.

Although I don't know for sure, I suspect that some of your Trustees may be having trouble with the changes the magazine has undergone under Marilyn Hacker's editorship. And if so, I would further guess that the same individuals are equally uncomfortable with changes that have taken ~~and are still taking~~ place in our overall culture. I understand that economics are a crucial factor here; however, I can't help but fear that closing down the magazine would amount to censorship--if not in intent, then certainly in effect--and the very time such a magazine is most needed for the variety of voices it makes available to the reading public under Marilyn's editorship.

I am not advocating "democracy" or "widening the canon" so much as a more open recognition of the real nature of our culture. Our "language" has become a braiding of voices. The memories and rituals that nourish today's writers have many different expressions and origins. If we are to offset the fragmentation that potentially could confuse and maybe paralyse us as artists and as members of a nation, we need the very sort of forum THE KENYON REVIEW provides, which not only accommodates but honors a diversity of expression and experience and thus sets a crucial example. Despite the changes in the magazine, it seems to me that THE KENYON REVIEW has remained consistent with itself and its history by taking a role of leadership in the literary world. I sincerely hope you will allow it to continue. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Leslie Ullman Director, Creative Writing

Marilyn Hacker to James Kates 30.05.94

KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022-9623

Phone (614) 427-3339

Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor Marilyn Hacker • *Consulting Editors* David Baker, Eleanor M. Bender, David Lynn, Carole Maso, Robyn Selman • *Managing Editor* Cy Wainscott

March 30, 1994

Dear J. Kates,

Thanks for sending these. I'd like to keep "And like a silly burrowing sectarian..." for publication in the Kenyon Review. It's come to pass almost "organically" that the summer 1995 issue will have a considerable representation of Eastern European writers (either in translation, or writers of Eastern European origin represented by essays or fiction which have this background) so the inclusion of Aizenberg there is appropriate. Although I wasn't completely bowled over by the others here, I'd certainly like to see more of his work for possible inclusion -- also, perhaps, other Russian poets' work if you have other current projects. If you do send any such, please mark the envelope SOLICITED MANUSCRIPT, as we're returning "unsolicited" unread from now until September 1.

I assume that the "titles" in Cyrillic are, in fact, the poems' first lines, and that the poems themselves are untitled. We don't have Cyrillic typeface available, so we'd just have to present this as an untitled poem.

All best,

Marilyn Hacker

Rafael Campo to Marilyn Hacker

02.04.94

2 april 94

Dearest Marilyn,

Thank you for your generous comments on *The Other Man Was Me*. I think the book exists in large part because of your encouragement and support. I should be receiving a prototype copy of the book in the near future, complete with cover art and blurbs etc. Yikes! I'm not sure I'm ready for the poems as packaged commodity.

I do feel a bit like a product these days, with this NYC agent hawking my essays and poems around town to all the big publishers. She has asked me to fly out to New York to meet with her and with them as soon as possible, so of course I'm trying to put it off. I would like to coordinate my visit with a time you will be in town, perhaps at the beginning of May. I'm enclosing a copy of *What the Body Told*, the second MS of poems, for your consideration and if you think it worthy to pass along to Jill Bialoski. I'm much more comfortable with the idea of going through you, and to an editor who admires your work, than I am dealing with this agent. I know she wants to get me a good contract, but the way I see it poets don't need agents, really. The money seems to be in the book of essays anyway, and in the novel they would try to persuade me to write. Before I know it I'll be the queer Latino doctor (poet) essayist being oohed and aahed on Good Morning America, if these people have their way. No thanks!

I wonder if you know of Marcellus Blount. He is a critic at Columbia University who has called me a couple of times, interested in my work for a piece he is writing on poetry and AIDS. In the course of our discussions, he invited me to do some readings in NYC at Columbia, the 92nd Street Y and A Different Light Bookstore, probably at the end of September sometime. Perhaps we could read together again—your invitation to read in the New Voices series for the Academy of American Poets is especially tempting, undeserving though I am. As for the queer studies conference in Iowa, Eve has all the details on that—I'll be calling her soon to find out whether my fantasy threesome can happen. I'm sure Eve will be as thrilled and overstimulated by the prospect as I am.

Not much new to report. I've just started the wards again, where half of my patients are in the final stages of AIDS and are awaiting hospice placement. Depressing. Just when I thought I was getting over what happened with Gary. I'm glad to know Karyn is making such a difference for her patients. She is an inspiration for me, when I think of her dedication and enthusiasm.

You, my dearest Marilyn, must not despair. Those fuckhead trustees will be doing you a favor if they decide to shut down KR—and shooting themselves in the foot at the same time. Our consolation will be knowing you will have more time to write—don't even dare to think that you are not a writer, because your wonderful books not only shaped my writing but I know have influenced and given hope to many other your<sic> queer writers. So please remember always how deeply I respect you, for your many talents, especially your poetry.

Well, I'm off to bed now—I'm on call tomorrow. Thankfully Jorge prepared a romantic (though messy) California supper of Dungeness crab, sourdough bread, asparagus and a nice North Coast chardonnay, which cheered me up somewhat. Someday we'll cook the same meal for you.

Su cangrejo gordito,

Rafael

AWP Writing Program Petition to Philip Jordan and the Trustees of Kenyon College
09.04.94

April 9, 1994

To the President and Trustees of Kenyon College:

We who are attending The Associated Writing Programs Conference in Tempe, Arizona, April 7th-9th, are a national community of writing teachers, writers, arts administrators, small press publishers, editors and students. We represent a wide range of artistic, intellectual and cultural endeavor and we are based all over the country.

Under the editorship of Marilyn Hacker the Kenyon Review has become a dynamic literary magazine bringing together some of the best writing of many of this country's literary cultures.

We understand that the Trustees of Kenyon College will soon be determining whether or not to go on funding the Kenyon Review. We urge the President and Trustees of Kenyon College to think of this journal as a source of prestige and pride for their institution and to give it all possible support.

[47 names, many illegible]

John Frederick Nims to Marilyn Hacker 13.04.94

3920 Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60613

April 13, 1994

Dear Marilyn,

I'm very sorry your having trouble with what I gather is a money problem at Kenyon. People who hold purse-strings aren't inclined to loosen up for poetry, as you know. Are there any grants, foundations, etc. that would be of help? I was lucky at Poetry; it was sort of understood that I was feeble-minded about many practical things. "All I know about money," I'd apologize, "is that there are five quarters in a dollar, and even that seems to get me in trouble." And I inherited a staff that was inured to money raising; they were great at grant applications, etc. So you have a lot of sympathy from me. I wish I had some practical ideas, but if I had I guess I would have become a business man. Very best of luck when the untrustworthy trustees meet later this month. It's awful that your job there is tied to the survival of the magazine. I wouldn't think you'd have trouble getting a job in a university--but that kind of move is unsettling. Is that a pun?

Yes, I did like the winter issue. Looks, and reads, just fine. And it's so handsomely produced. Do you suppose the monied people have even seen it?

My sympathy on your awful winter too. We were in Chicago through much of January, so I got a taste of it. Taste?--there were about 7 straight days there when the temperature never got above 10 below. I guess it got worse later. Here it was pleasant. Cool nights, warm days. Now it's getting too hot. Florida is only nice in mid-winter. We'll be going back to Chicago in about 10 days, so I put my Chicago address above.

Since you let me see some of your work in Greek (and Latin) meters once, let me send these two pieces in your direction. No need to respond, react, or even read. I'm just throwing a long pass downfield, and if you're there to catch it, O.K. If not, O.K. I done these here sumbitches (as an artist I knew used to say of his pictures) when asked by anew journal on I guess poetics if I could send them something metrical, but not in iambic pentameter. So I found these two meters in Horace I had never used, I don't think, and thought they'd be fun to try. They were. Two weeks and about fifty typed and scrawled over pages later, these translations resulted. Translating and then fitting into such rigid meters is like doing crossword puzzles.

Don't give them any time. Blame my sending them on promiscuous xerox.

All the best,

John
[John Frederick Nims]

HORACE, ODE I,4

(Fourth Archilochian Strophe)

Blustery winter relents as we welcome the changing airs of springtime,
And rollers trundle dried-out keels to harbor.
Cattle go free of their sheds and the farmer no longer hugs the fireside.
No meadows glisten; blanching frosts are over.

Under the luminous moon, now the goddess of love directs her dancing,
And shapely Graces, woodland nymphs assemble.
This ankle, that ankle gleams on the pulsating turf, and ruddy Vulcan
Relights his forges for the waiting Cyclops.

Now is the time to entwine in our holiday hair a wreath of myrtle,
Or strands of blossom open meadows lavish.
Now, in the shadowy groves, celebrations in gratitude to Faunus,
His choice oblations, youngling goat or lambkin.

Pale Death pounds on the porch, chalks equally pauper's grubby hut and Great
Caesar's palace. Lucky friend, remember:
Brief are the days of our life; no extravagant hopes for far tomorrows.
The dark's upon us, all too soon--its phantoms,

Hades' impoverished house, stripped bare of amenities: no more your Old wining,
dining, dancing days; no more your
Gazing at ivory limbs of that youngster his lusty fellows vie for
This year, and next year all the girls are after.

HORACE, ODE I,5

(Fourth Asclepiadean Strophe)

Who's that slip of a boy, lotioned and soaped, who'll urge
Love on you in the cool grot by the rambling rose?
Who've you tied back your golden
Curls for, Pyrrha, in just your own

Simple elegant way? Oh what a shock in store
For him! "Count on the gods? Never again!" he'll groan,
Dazed, ungainly, engulfed in
Pitch-black hurricane-swirling seas.

Now he glories in you, thinking you purest gold:
Trusts you, "Always my own! Always my own true love!"
Trusts you, never suspecting
How torrential your summer air.

Those your glitter allures, put to no proof--beware!

I? Just made it to shore, hung up my storm-drenched clothes,
Votive gifts for the shrine of
Neptune, lord of the turning tide.

Marvin Bell to Philip Jordan 17.04.94

1416 E. College St.
Iowa City, IA 52245
ph/FAX: 319-337-5217

04/17/94

Mr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan,

I write to encourage you to support the Kenyon Review with all your might. It has a distinguished, important history. Indeed, the College has long been accorded special standing because of the Review, and there are many of us who came to know the college primarily because of the magazine. Marilyn Hacker's editorship has given it new strength.

Although I will sign myself as a professor, I write on ordinary paper because this is not an academic matter. It is a matter of the cultural life of our country. Is the Midwest a place for the investigation of serious ideas? Many of our friends on the coasts would doubt it. But then there is the Kenyon Review to wise them up.

I urge you to stay behind the Review and to give it the funds and license it needs to remain one of the best, especially now that it has been given new vitamins.

Sincerely,

Marvin Bell
Flannery O'Connor Professor of Letters
Writers' Workshop
The University of Iowa

Annette Hatton to Philip Jordan 21.04.94

The Georgia Review

The University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30602-9009

21 April 1994

Dear Marilyn,

I was glad to be able to talk with you directly the other day. Enclosed is my letter (a copy) to Philip Jordan; Stan says he's going to write one too. Hope it helps. Just know that we're all behind you.

Regards,

Annette

P.S. I told Erin about all this. I also suggested she introduce herself to you and offer to give you driving lessons!

The Georgia Review

The University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30602-9009
(706) 542-3481

21 April 1994

Philip H. Jordan, Jr.
President
Ransom Hall
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022-9623

Dear President Jordan,

I want to thank you belatedly for your reassuring response to me last fall regarding Kenyon's fire safety program. Mr. Robert Graves wrote as well and sent a packet of pertinent material.

This time I am writing to express my concern about the apparent possibility of the college's discontinuing The Kenyon Review. My daughter Erin recently informed me of this fact and, as a Kenyon parent, a parent of a future Kenyon alum, and as

managing editor of The Georgia Review, I have to say that the idea of dropping The Kenyon Review because of financial difficulties is an alarming and very shortsighted one. As far as I know, all of the major literary journals must be subsidized. Perhaps we are just very lucky to have had administrations that support us, but the real fact is that the university is also fortunate and very happy that it has us. We are a very visible, award-winning, and internationally distributed literary magazine--just as The Kenyon Review is--and we bring a high level of quality attention to the university, just as the KR does. The benefits both The Kenyon Review and The Georgia Review bring to their respective institutions and, for that matter, to the literary world in general, are mostly intangible and therefore hard to measure in a concrete, hard-dollar way. But they are real nonetheless, and without the KR the college will suffer--if not now, down the road. And, as I've implied, so will the literary world.

Because so many people seem to be familiar with The Kenyon Review, I am always surprised at how often I have to explain what and where Kenyon College is to people I tell that my daughter is there. Kenyon's name recognition, in other words, appears to come from The Review.

I've also heard it mentioned that Kenyon's board of trustees dislikes the "politics" of The Review under Marilyn Hacker's editorship. If this is the case, it is a shame that, under the guise of reducing "operating losses," they should be exercising what appears to be censorship, the absolute anathema to academic freedom, and certainly not what I hope Kenyon College is all about. Upholding any real commitment to diversity is difficult anywhere but, finally, if The Kenyon Review were to be dropped, a lack of such a commitment would be seen as the real reason for having done so.

I hope that you will take my comments under consideration; I look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Sincerely,

Annette Hatton
219 McWhorter Drive
Athens, GA 30606

Marilyn Hacker to Philip Jordan 25.04.94

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022-9623
Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor Marilyn Hacker • Consulting Editors David Baker, Eleanor M. Bender, David Lynn, Carole Maso, Robyn Selman • Managing Editor Cy Wainscott

April 25, 1994

Dear Phil,

As you may well imagine, certain operations at the Kenyon Review are at an inconvenient standstill, as we wait to know about our future. New subscription cards must be ordered, important promotional<sic> material for freshman parents, potential new institutional subscribers and others must be written. And there is fiction, poetry and essays by exceptional writers to whom I dare not write to inform them that we'd like to publish their work, until I know that we indeed will be able to.

From a practical as well as a humane standpoint, my staff and I hope you will inform us of the trustees' and your decision as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker

Rane Arroyo to Philip Jordan

30.04.94

April 30, 1994

President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to congratulate Kenyon College for its visionary editor and professor, Marilyn Hacker. I appreciate your reading this letter for I hope it will reveal the profound effect your "communal" work at Kenyon Review has had for me.

I've been published in **Kenyon Review**. My inclusion was decisive in my own job search as an assistant professor at Youngstown State University. You must understand as a Puertorriqueño professor of English, it has been difficult to be considered an "American" writer. Publication in your college's magazine, among my other credentials, assisted me in achieving my own dreams.

Yet, the ripple effect doesn't stop there. Now I am to present my "Juan Angel" work at the upcoming MLA conference in San Diego; it was a text first published in **Kenyon Review**. I must confess that I decided to focus on the state of Ohio as a future home because of the vision of the United States I see in your publication. I commend you for your support of Marilyn Hacker's work and vision.

I know these are difficult times, but it's important to realize that poetry has the power to affect at least this reader's life and career. I thank you for this opportunity to introduce you to this sincere and spontaneous appreciation of Marilyn Hacker's accomplishments. I fear she is too modest to take the credit due her and so take this circuitous route.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rane Ramón Arroyo

P.O. Box 7157
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

cc: Chairman of the English Department
cc: Marilyn Hacker

Diane Middlebrook to Marilyn Hacker 04.05.94

25 WARRINGTON CRESCENT, FLAT #3
LONDON W9 1ED
PHONE; (071) 289 3081 FAX: 289 5902

4 May 1994

Marilyn Hacker, Editor
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Marilyn,

Your letter of 28 March was forwarded to my bolt-hole in London, where I'm working on the biography of Billy Tipton. I was pleased to hear that you have a whole slew of publications coming out, including a new edition of *Love, Death...* I really like that book--maybe I told you I wanted to use it as a text in my seminar last year on "Feminism, Poetics & Women Poets"? Maybe I didn't tell you, because I wasn't able to order it (out of print) and I thought you'd find that depressing.

I'm teaching in the fall, so I think it might be possible to arrange a reading at Stanford, though I'm embarrassed to tell you that it is quite difficult to arrange honoraria for such readings, because of newly-instituted budget cuts. I will find out more about this when I get back to California in July. More profitable to you might be a reading at Printer's Ink Bookstore in Palo Alto. The owner, Susan MacDonald is a poet herself and a friend of mine. If you are on a bookstore circuit, Old Wives' Tales or Modern Times bookstores in San Francisco are good locales for the promotion and discussion of a specifically lesbian subject matter. If you do come to the Bay Area I'd like to have a little dinner for you with friends who will be interested in your work.

I'd be delighted to give you a blurb. Reviews are more difficult to promise because I'm deeply into writing the Tipton book now and have decided to avoid the path of temptation presented by any alternatives whatsoever. I'll be in London until 30 June, so if bound galleys are now available, this would be the place to send them.

Warm regards,

Diane
[Diane Wood Middlebrook]

Marilyn Hacker to *Kenyon Review* Supporters

11.05.94

THE KENYON REVIEW
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022-9623
Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor Marilyn Hacker • Consulting Editors David Baker, Eleanor M. Bender, David Lynn, Carole Maso, Robyn Selman • Managing Editor Cy Waincott

May 11, 1994

Dear Friend,

Excuse the impersonality of this letter, but there are about 200 of you, who wrote letters of support for the Kenyon Review and for me as its editor, who are receiving it.

On April 25, two days after the trustees' plenary meeting, Kenyon president Philip Jordan announced to me, to the Kenyon Community, and to the local newspapers, that the Kenyon Review would continue publishing, albeit under severe financial restrictions.

On May 10, in a private meeting with me and the college vice president for finance, Philip Jordan told me that my contract as editor of the Kenyon Review would be terminated as of June 30. I've been fired. Mr Jordan's waiting until the last faculty meeting had been held, and the last issue of the student newspaper for the academic year published, was not coincidental.

I was told that the board of trustees and the administration "did not have confidence in me to work with them to lower the magazine's subsidy and further integrate it into the life of the college." Considering that this year's subsidy had been lowered from a projected \$137,000 (this includes two full-time and one 4/5 time positions' salaries & benefits) to \$94,000, and that the Editor had proposed originating a course in Literary Editing, as well as teaching a (scheduled, now-to-be-cancelled) Creative Writing workshop, this is hard to swallow. I was even told that the lowering of the subsidy by \$43,000 "did not lower it, because the \$43,000 represented "gifts and grants which were not necessarily repeatable." Who raised the gifts and grants? And does any non-profit arts organization from the Metropolitan Opera on down survive without them? How odd to fire an editor for raising \$43,000 dollars! (This did not include the Lila Wallace Grant from Hell.)

I do not believe that this firing was about money.

The Managing Editor (a wonderful man and a computer wizard) and the Editorial Assistant, without whom we couldn't function, have received renewed contracts. An hour and a half after I was fired, David Lynn, the English Department faculty member who was interim editor before my hiring, was named Acting Editor.

If you have an opinion on this, please let Kenyon president Philip Jordan (Ransom Hall, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio 43022) know what you think, with a copy (to be filed) to the Kenyon Review office.

If you feel it appropriate to cancel your subscription, with a note indicating the reason, by all means do so. ("My" last issue is fall 1994, though the work of writers I've accepted will be used into 1995.)

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hacker

Eleanor Bender Hamilton to Philip Jordan 13.05.94

Eleanor Bender Hamilton
2915 4th Avenue West
Seattle, Washington 98119

May 13, 1994

Cy & Doris Jean – Love & Luck to both of you and The Kenyon Review. I enjoyed working with both of you.
Eleanor

Dr. Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Dear President Jordan:

I am writing to protest the firing of Marilyn Hacker as Editor of THE KENYON REVIEW. As you know, I have been closely associated with the REVIEW for the last two years, both as a development advisor and as a consulting editor for poetry. Moreover, I have been a close friend and colleague of Marilyn Hacker for twenty-five years. There is no doubt in my mind and in the literary leadership of this country that Marilyn Hacker is a brilliant and extraordinary poet, editor, and feminist. When you hired her to edit THE KENYON REVIEW, many of us were proud of that decision because it meant that Kenyon College had chosen to meet head-on the challenge of making the REVIEW into an intelligent forum for engaging and diverse points of view. It was exciting that Kenyon College took this step at a point in time when other institutions were either withdrawing or curtailing their responsibilities toward literary magazines. Marilyn's editorship served to inspire those of us who have worked all of our professional lives to make the case and fight the fight for the growth and progress of this nation's literary magazines.

Marilyn jumped into her work for THE KENYON REVIEW with all her energy, knowledge, and talent, and in a very short time she succeed<sic> in bringing the REVIEW back into the limelight of the country's best literary magazines. However, it was my observation that her successes were never recognized and fully appreciated by the college. No matter how many laudatory reviews the magazine received in the media, no matter how many grants she obtained, no matter how much prestige she gained for the REVIEW and the college through her superior editorial work, she was perceived by the institution to be a burden rather than a blessing.

THE KENYON REVIEW received funding from the Lila Wallace Foundation and the Lannon Foundation because of her work as editor. And yet, the institution did not congratulate her for these impressive achievements because the funds that were awarded were not given to reduce the college subsidy. They were given to enhance the success of a well-edited magazine. Funds to reduce the subsidy would require time and the active involvement of the president, the development office of the college, and others. Marilyn should not be blamed for what others chose not to do, and she should have been praised for obtaining such prestigious grants, grants that

could in fact strengthen the case for private fund raising. If one of your faculty members receives a distinguished award or grant, don't you view that as bringing honor to the institution and then use that honor to promote fund raising? Why was it that Marilyn received only disparaging remarks from members of the college's administration as recognition for her achievements?

The real question here is, why was Marilyn Hacker fired from Kenyon College? Marilyn has told me the reasons you gave her, but I think her dismissal goes far deeper and is more insidious than anything that went wrong with the financial management of THE REVIEW. Over the last two years, I have talked with Marilyn by telephone REVIEW. During my stay on campus you arranged for me to talk with many of the people in your administration about ways to help the REVIEW. And when I talked with these people it was obvious there was a lot of resentment and hostility regarding the expense and work involved in maintaining the magazine. It was as if we were talking about a foreign object, or a threatening virus that no one wanted to get close to. There was never any praise for Marilyn, nor was there any understanding of the work she was in fact doing and the success she was having beyond the campus of Kenyon College.

I also spent several hours each day of my stay in the building where her office was located. I was astonished by the fact that while she was physically located within the English Department, the distance between her and the department itself was as large and as vast as the Grand Canyon. The atmosphere was stiff and cold and there was no camaraderie that I could see. One evening I attended a memorial service for the poet Audre Lorde, who had died the previous November of breast cancer. It was sponsored by Women's Studies and Marilyn talked with the students about her memories of Lorde, and the students read Lorde's poems and talked about what her poetry meant to their lives as women. The striking thing for me was that while the room over-flowed with students, not one member of the English Department was present.

My observation of Kenyon was that every aspect of the college is cut into distinct shapes, as if with cookie cutters. The people, the buildings, the landscape are all very plainly and carefully shaped. Marilyn's work wasn't done with a Kenyon cookie cutter and few people found comfort in the shape of what she did. Therefore almost everyone pulled away from her and she worked outside of the local culture almost entirely.

I think that the tragedy of the situation is the failure of an historically enlightened institution like Kenyon College to grow with its own circumstances, to value people like Marilyn Hacker, to work with her and nurture that part of the institution that helps people and solves problems rather than discredits, humiliates, and lies to them and to itself.

I spent eighteen years at a private college in the Midwest, and I know from personal experience that many private colleges are suffering because they do not know how to grow and evolve from within. Such institutions persist in being dishonest within themselves, they feed off their own and insecurities, they cling to outmoded illusions about themselves, and they use technicalities and legal means to get rid of them. It is not enough for a community to excuse its bad behavior in the name of self-

preservation. A college must learn how to love itself and it can't do that if it treats one of its members with such indignity and lack of respect.

One of the things about her work for the REVIEW that impressed me the most was Marilyn's loyalty and respect for the people who worked alongside her in THE KENYON REVIEW offices. I am thinking specifically of Cy Wainscott, her astute and talented managing editor, and Doris Jean Dilts, her very capable and hard working editorial assistant. I am certain that this situation has been very difficult for them and I empathize with them. Those of us who worked closely with Marilyn needed her in some way and we were always learning from her. It is a pity that the larger community of the college failed to need her and to learn from her.

I know that Marilyn will be fine. She will write great poetry and she will survive financially. But what of Kenyon College, what is the hope of an educational institution that conspires to expel a gifted and creative genius who worked so hard for it?

Finally, I wish to officially resign as a consulting editor and as a development consultant. I am sure this news will come as a relief to you.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Bender Hamilton

cc: Cy Wainscott
Theodore Mason
David F. Banks
John McCoy

Catharine R. Stimpson to Marilyn Hacker

14.05.94

140 South Dearborn Street
Suite 1100

Chicago, Illinois 60603-5285
Telephone: (312) 726-8000

THE JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T.
MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

May 14, 1994

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Dear Marilyn:

Your letter of May 11 is appalling. I am sending a copy of it to Jeffrey Kittay, the editor of Lingua Franca. Let's talk soon.

As ever,

Catharine R. Stimpson
Director
MacArthur Fellows Program

CRS:ms

Petition to Philip Jordan 15.05.94

May 15, 1994

New York City

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

To President Jordan:

We, the undersigned, loudly object to the firing of distinguished lesbian poet, Marilyn Hacker, as Editor of The Kenyon Review. She single-handedly shaped the magazine into the most dynamic cultural force for literature currently available in this country--routinely including the very best work from gays and lesbians and people of all colors. We ardently support Marilyn Hacker's record as a brilliant and brave editor and will not support your blatant hypocrisy in killing The New Series of The Kenyon Review. You have shown your contempt, and we will answer by withdrawing economic support and cancelling our subscriptions.

Sincerely,

| Name | Address | Subscriber |
|------|---------|------------|
|------|---------|------------|

[Petition has 65 names including Bea Gates]

Maxine Kumin to Philip Jordan

17.05.94

MAXINE KUMIN
R.D.1 BOX 30 JOPPA ROAD
WARNER, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03278

17 my 94

Marilyn – In haste & in outrage!

Dear President Jordan:

I am deeply disappointed to learn that Marilyn Hacker has been dismissed from her position as editor of the Kenyon Review. It had seemed to me, as a longtime observer of the literary magazine scene, that she brought honor and distinction to KR; indeed, I continue to believe that KR was lucky to have her.

While I would like to think there was no political chicanery involved, I am realist enough to know that something more than the magazine's subsidy was involved in this firing.

Therefore, I regret I must cancel my subscription to KR.

Yours,

Maxine Kumin

I have checked with SPFS repeatedly, the last time today, August 2, 1994, and Maxine Kumin does not have a subscription to the Kenyon Review.

Her contributor's gift of \$50 received December 27, 1993, gives no indication that a part of it might have been intended for a subscription.

DJD

Bruce Berlind to Marilyn Hacker 17.05.94

Bruce Berlind, Box 237, Hamilton, New York 13346

17 May 1994

Dear Marilyn:

Peter Balakian just told me that you've been fired as editor, and that you indicated there would be a new editor. If that's the case, then the issue was not a budgetary one, as I had thought, involving the survival of KR, and we can be pretty damn sure what the issue was. And the president has been disingenuous about it, to put it mildly. I wrote him some weeks ago, arguing that the magazine should be continued and adducing reasons which mostly turn out to have been irrelevant. His perfunctory reply was to the effect that my letter would be sent to the trustees, but that in these days of fiscal problems, blah blah blah.

Peter said you asked him to write the president (again), and I'd be happy to do the same. Question: to what purpose? To urge him and the trustees to change their minds, or to protest a fait accompli? The difference would affect the tone of the letter: the former would require some tact, the latter a lampoon. Let me know.

If there's anything else I can do, like mustering support from writers I know, don't hesitate to ask me. It might be useful to know any explanation you were given, if you think it makes sense to be public about it.

Best,

Bruce

Linda Smukler to Philip Jordan

17.05.94

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransom Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

May 17, 1994

Dear President Jordan,

I am writing to express my outrage at the firing of Marilyn Hacker as the editor of The Kenyon Review. Hacker transformed the Review from a run-of-the-mill literary journal indistinguishable from other academic journals to an exciting showcase for both new and well-known writers.

My understanding is that under Hacker's direction, the circulation of the magazine increased -- in both subscription and newsstand sales. The Kenyon Review became known for its excellent and innovative writing and for featuring the work of minority, lesbian and gay writers.

Although I do not know the details, if the decision to fire Marilyn Hacker had anything to do with pressure from a conservative board of directors (of the college or of the review) or from other conservative pressures, I would be horrified at the actions of what is supposed to be a leading liberal arts institution, accountable for bowing down to those pressures and changing the course of an extremely successful magazine.

It takes time to build a vision. I dare to say that, in the future, the issues of The Kenyon Review edited by Marilyn Hacker will become collector's items. I'm sure that Marilyn Hacker will apply her vision to new endeavors and will be welcome where ever she goes. It is reprehensible and unforgivable to see the extraordinary work she has done over the last few years dismantled.

Sincerely,

Linda Smukler
P.O. Box 121
Austerlitz, NY 12017
(518) 392-6394

Jeffrey Betcher to Philip Jordan 17.05.94

353 Pierce Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

May 17, 1994

Mr. Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Mr. Jordan,

I was devastated to learn that Marilyn Hacker has been terminated as editor of The Kenyon Review. Finally, people had begun to get excited about The Review, to talk about it in the way I imagine people talked about it in its early days. The motivation for firing Ms. Hacker will be obvious and familiar to any lesbian, gay, bisexual person, any feminist woman, any person of color, perhaps to anyone with an experience of oppression. At a time when Kenyon is ostensibly reaching toward some measure of diversity and respect for difference, the move substantiates the perception of the college as a place for strait white rich folks, a place for intolerance; and it underscores the fact that when those who control the purse strings control the arts, good people, fine things suffer.

As an alumnus of the college who spent the first twenty-two years of his life in Knox County, I feel as though I have participated in this insult to Ms. Hacker, The Review, the literary arts; as though your actions, and those of the Board of Trustees speak for me. I am embarrassed. I hope that I can at least symbolically, distance myself from it all by cancelling my subscription to The Review.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Betcher

cc: The Kenyon Review
The Kenyon Bulletin

Pls. Consider for your 'letters to' section

Thank you!

Kathleene West to Philip Jordan

18.05.94

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Box 30001, Dept. 3E

Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003-0001

Telephone: (505) 646-3931

May 18, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Ransom Hall
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan,

I am saddened to hear the news that Marilyn Hacker has been fired as editor of *The Kenyon Review*. For a brief brilliant moment, *The Kenyon Review* regained its long-lost status as a literary publication that meant something to its readers and contributors. I am proud to have contributed to the magazine during Marilyn Hacker's tenure, as a poet, reader and subscriber. I had encouraged a number of my students to read and subscribe to the magazine as well, and was planning to use an issue as a text for my next graduate seminar. All of that is past tense now. I believe your decision was based on a fear of an inclusive approach to literature and life and is only one more example of actions that widen the gaps between the various facets of United States citizens. It is difficult to be courageous in the so-called "moral" climate that exists in this country now, and I regret this disservice to fairness and equality.

Sincerely,

Kathleene West
Associate Professor

cc: *The Kenyon Review*

Amy Scholder to Philip Jordan

18.05.94

CITY LIGHTS
BOOKSELLERS & PUBLISHERS
261 COLUMBUS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. 94133

May 18, 1994

Dear Philip Jordan:

I was extremely disappointed and disturbed to learn that Marilyn Hacker will no longer be editing The Kenyon Review.

I am disappointed because I have been looking forward to each issue she has been publishing, and have learned of many talented writers through this important venue under Ms. Hacker's direction.

I am disturbed because to my knowledge The Kenyon Review has benefitted enormously from Ms. Hacker's prestigious literary reputation, and from her ability to gain funding through very competitive grants programs. Which makes me wonder why she would no longer be a suitable editor. In fact, I would think that after her commitment to the publication and with its subsequent success, she would be rewarded.

I hope that this decision will be reconsidered.

Sincerely,

Amy Scholder
Editor

cc: The Kenyon Review

BOOKSELLERS (415) 362-8193
PUBLISHERS (415) 362-1901
FAX (415) 362-4921

William Stephen Cross to Marilyn Hacker

18.05.94

WILLIAM STEPHEN CROSS
P.O. Box 43132
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043-7132
(201) 744-7251

May 18, 1994

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
c/o KENYON REVIEW
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Ms. Hacker:

I was most distressed to learn that you have been fired by *Kenyon Review*. It is my understanding that a palace intrigue of some sort has brought about this unfortunate turn of events, but in any case, I am writing to express my support. Although I don't know what your future plans are, if you should decide to return to editing, please contact me as I would be happy to supply you with translations of Richard Exner's work no matter what magazine you are with. In any case, I wish you good luck in all you future endeavors, and thank you for the encouragement you have given me in my Exner project over the past few years by your continuing interest in his poetry.

Sincerely,

William Stephen Cross

Encl.

•Member National Writers Union•

Ryn Edwards to Phil and the Trustees

19.05.94

Marilyn –
My e-mail & responses to it

From: KENYON: :EDWARDSR "Dyketactic" 19-MAY-1994
To: TO:FACULTY, TO:ADMINISTRATORS
CC: WAINSCOTT, KUSHNER, HACKERDELANI
SUBJ: MARILYN HACKER'S FIRING

Preface: This was written May 13, 1994 and was held for a week of reflection prior to sending.

Phil and The Trustees:

The firing of Marilyn Hacker is a loud indignant slap in the face to any articulated commitment you have or will make to multiculturalism and to Women's and Gender Studies on this campus. It's a condescending slap with a punch to the groin to those of us here who are deemed "minorities" by you: all blacks, all latinos, all gays/lesbians, all jews, all... It is a wish to silence and to separate oneself, like a whipping would do, from all those specially gifted and marginalized poets and writers this college, this nation, and the world needs to hear....and this includes that poet who is Sheila Jordan.

Of course it's more than a slap in the face it's downright prejudicial, it's an upholding of Rush Limbaugh values in academia. The raw acidity of it is the fact that Kenyon is continuing the Review as it was in the past and run by a member of the English Dept. The decision, with no attempt or intention, I dare say, to "work out monetary concerns with" reknown<sic> Ms Hacker, who had increased the subscribership and moved the Kenyon Review into the realm of Distinguished and Heralded in the literary/art world such as it has not seen since its inception, is ACADEMENTIA at its best.

I have always thought Kenyon had such potential to be a truly great school, a leader in the future of academics, but you have never ceased to disappoint me with your lack of vision, lack of courage, and lack of ethics...telling one story and doing another.

I was listening to Lake Woebegone on the radio the other day, and one old time farmer offered the following that appears to me to be a good explanation for the last eight to ten years at Kenyon:

"What was the last thing that went through the bugs<sic> head as it hit the windshield?" "Its<sic> ass."

Ryn
(Professor of Biology)

From: KENYON: : FITZGERALDR "RCTF" 23-MAY-1994 09: 22: 51.01
To: KENYON: : EDWARDSR
CC:
Subj: RE: MARILYN HACKER'S FIRING

Dr. Edwards-

What can you tell me about the background for this? All I saw was the notice of David Lynn's appointment to the Review in Fortnightly. I figured they're crazy to want anyone else BUT Marilyn Hacker, but that she might have resigned. If she was actually fired-- well, I'd be interested in any information that's public. Maybe someone should plead temporary insanity and try to get her back. Thank you.

- Rachel

From: KENYON: : WALECKAA 21-MAY-1994 12:01:17.16
To: KENYON: : EDWARDSR
CC:
Subj: RE: MARILYN HACKER'S FIRING

Hello,

Thank you for your letter. I am very underinformed about the whole situation -- I think it would be good to hold a meeting where all parties involved would be present. ANna<sic> Walecka (MLI)

From: KENYON: : PATTONM "Frogs can eat what bug 'em" 20-MAY-1994 23:42:11
To: KENYON: : EDWARDSR
CC:
Subj: RE: MARILYN HACKER'S FIRING

Dear Ryn,

I am not politically active at Kenyon for various reasons non-political but I applaude<sic> you and all that you have said to the administration. Kenyon needs a good kick in the BUT<>

Thanks for speaking up<>

From: KENYON: : BELL 20-MAY-1994 17:22:13.62
To: EDWARDSR
CC: BELL
Subj: problems

Hi Ryn,

Great message about Hacker! Wish it could/would have an impact!

I'm feeling pretty distressed about a letter I got from Reed --- he always seems to write these insensitive letters. I'm really going to need some help from you unless I can reach Maria. We'll talk.

Janis

From: KENYON: : BAUMANN 20-MAY-1994 15:38:22.82
To: KENYON: : EDWARDSR
CC: BAUMANN
Subj: RE: MARILYN HACKER'S FIRING

Dear Professor Edwards:

I have just read your diatribe about the change of editors at the Kenyon Review. I have two comments. 1) It is not up to your usual standards of literacy and taste. 2) I will thank you to make complaints on your own behalf and not on mine, particularly when they have not been solicited. I do not consider the decision an insult (slap in the face, punch to the groin or whatever) to "all jews," (sic), much less to me. If I did, you can be sure I would not be silent.

Yours most sincerely,
Fred Baumann

From: KENYON: : MARCUSJ 20-MAY-1994 12:40:27.82
To: KENYON: : EDWARDSR
CC:
Subj: re: KR and M. Hacker

It was interesting to read your condemnation of the recent firing of MH. I should like to comment on it as another "outsider," (woman, Jew, foreign-born w/strong accent, non-native English, etc.).

First of all, it beats me how you can slap a face and deliver a punch to the groin<sic> at the same time. Maybe you wanted to: "kick in the groin," the well-publicized MO of women in distress....

Second, while I am an ignoramus re: the affairs of KR, the work and reasons for the firing of MH, I do not much care for group "spokespersonship" in any shape or form and don't want to be included in this group protest either. It is probably due to my very sobering experience of living both under Nazi and Stalinist regimes when group identification was the supreme duty of every and all with dire consequences for the: "outgroups." Hence, I came to cherish the American way of individual responsibility. Thus, your letter probably properly expresses your own personal indignation--but do not speak for me. marcusj

From: KENYON: : WEMHOENE "Jane Wemhoener, OCS, PBX 5637"
19-MAY-1994 21:05:1
To: EDWARDSR
CC:
Subj: Your message

Ryn--I liked your message, and did NOT think it went too far. As I said to someone this evening--it's about time that this way-past-retirement president should have his foolish and costly mistakes put in the context of all superficial and male-dominated vision he has--and from which we all have suffered too long.

I also wondered whether, if Robert Bly had been directing the review, Bly would have been fired by Phil or (more likely) Phil would have joined him in the woods to beat his own tom tom.

Jane

From: KENYON: : FINKEL "STRETCH OR DROWN/ EVOLVE OR DIE
19-MAY-1994 17:58
To: KENYON: : EDWARDSR
CC: BAUMANN
Subj: RE: MARILYN HACKER'S FIRING

Great letter Ryn. I am in the process of writing letters to phil<sic> and marilyn<sic> about this disaster and I may quote a few lines.

Laurie

Carolyn Kizer to Phillip Jordan

21.05.94

21 May 1994

Philip Jordan
President, Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan:

There is little point in my adding to the stack of eloquent letters you have been receiving about the summary firing of Marilyn Hacker as editor of *The Kenyon Review*. These are letters which in their optimism are trying to teach you something, but it seems to me highly unlikely that you are capable of learning anything--you and her ex-colleagues in the English Department--or you would not have behaved as you have. What beats me, though, is what you thought you were getting when you hired Ms Hacker in the first place. Surely you must have known what to expect? She is one of the most forthright and least dissembling persons in the literary world. She would have explained herself, and her goals for the magazine with exemplary clarity; and she has brought to the review exactly what we all expected from her: social conscience, gender diversity, generosity to writers marginal by virtue of their originality or their youth or their unjustified neglect. Except that she did more, and did it better, than anyone had a right to expect. And she raised \$43,000 from various sources, including me, which more than demonstrated her ability to dig the review out of its financial hole, given time which you have denied her.

I am forced to conclude that you did know what you were getting, and that at somewhere along the way you lost your nerve. And because of the shameful and underhanded way you handled her dismissal, I think you feel guilty. Not guilty enough, however. I believe she should sue you, and I shall encourage her to do so.

Carolyn Kizer

Robert Peters to Philip Jordan

23.05.94

Marilyn --
for your info --
Bob P.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

IRVINE CA 92717

Department of English

From: Prof. Robert Peters

To: President Philip Jordan, Kenyon College, Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I have been waiting to decide whether or not to renew my subscription to KENYON REVIEW, hoping that Marilyn Hacker's brilliant tenure as editor would continue. I have written a pair of substantial review<sic> of KR, over a year a part<sic>, for THE SMALL PRESS REVIEW, and in the earlier one I found KR to be stale and moribund, one of the least impressive of all college and university college and lit mags I have seen. This past year, knowing that the editorship had changed, I decided to assess the magazine again, and this time was astonished at the vitality and breadth Marilyn Hacker had obviously brought to the journal. It had gone to the top, in my estimation, among its peers---and I subscribed at once. I knew that over the past few months the future and status of the REVIEW was in doubt, and I felt I would await the outcome before renewing my subscription. When I heard just yesterday that Ms. Hacker was fired I felt like wearing black. There is no way now that I shall resubscribe, ever, unless she is reinstated as editor. I understand that her efforts on behalf of the REVIEW raised over \$43,000 towards easing the financial crunch. It would appear that her efforts were for naught. I would hate to believe that the board deciding against maintaining her services was so illiberal that the energetic, intelligent, and new directions she was taking the REVIEW disturbed them. Obviously they have opted for the conventional and safe. I would hate, moreover, that homophobia had anything to do with the matter, for Hacker was congenial to some of the best writing by lesbians and gays (and other minority voices) going on today. I should hope that the story is not over, and if an<sic> legal action should accrue I should hope that my expert testimony as much published poet, critic, fiction writer, professor of English and creative writing would be tapped.

Sincerely,

Robert Peters

Karen Falkenstrom to Marilyn Hacker

24.05.94

KA Falkenstrom
P.O. Box 43664
Tucson, AZ 85733

May 24, 1994

Dear Marilyn,

I'm sorry I didn't get your message in time to call. I imagine you're out of the country, as you said you'd be by now on my machine. To say I'd like to throw up on someone's socks over the Kenyon Review news is an understatement. Tell me whose socks, and I'll do what I'm able. I've got my ears perked for any "subversive" responses from the literary community as well.

Drop me a line when you get where you're going. I'm in a period of seclusion and selfishness, but relish the thought of our continued correspondence. I know you probably get a glut of writing by mail, but it's my practice to send a poem with my ever-so-brief letters. So here's a picker-upper.

Also, you could not suggest too many writers for the festival. It's my pleasure to read all I can of new writing, and any new names are welcome. Tucson has its insular qualities (go figure!), and if I hear one more suggestion that we invite Gary Snyder or Leslie Marmon Silko again, I'll...., well, I'll throw up on someone's socks.

Alison Deming sends her regards. We're thinking of you, and hope you will turn this whole stinky business towards your highest and best. Please keep in touch.

Yours,

Karen Falkenstrom

P.S. I trust the Tucson Poetry Festival's invitation was okay with you. I wrote Rafael, but haven't heard back yet. Another writer who will be participating (since one of our goals is to feature one or two local talents) is Boyer Rickel. If you can't find his book, Arreboles, I'll try to get a copy to you.

As the sun went down hours ago we speak over stir-fry and tea and tea and speak. We decide that humans cannot conceive of "forever," scoped-in as we are within the narrow gradient of life that begins with "birth" and ends with "death," stemmed metal imperatives indicating *eyes open eyes closed*, and nothing more but what's between. We decide for now it's best to remain immaculately doubtful about such concepts, and "love" also, or it could get embarrassing, how we hate to retract anything like a word since words, though cheap and godless, linger hot singed fingerprints a path. You are stirring and frying, stirring, setting the teacup back on the table just within reach telling me its flavor, and the history of that flavor gradient to your twenty-some years which spread now like a spill on the aged wood. You're saying *fuck me, I don't*

know what I want and I'm not reaching for the towel I'm reaching for history, trebling
out like wind-whipped signs desert posted lonely indicating what it's best to do *It's*
not a noun I'm saying DO it, do it now, *forever* me.

Karen Falkenstrom

Kenyon College

Women's and Gender Studies
Ascension Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Tel 614/427-5276
Tel 614/427-5656/5657
Fax 614/427-2272

Thu, May 25, 1994

Marilyn Hacker
33 rue de Turenne
75003 Paris
France

Dear Marilyn:

We, the members of the Women's and Gender Studies Advisory Board, wanted to write you on behalf of the the<sic> faculty who teach in the program, to thank you for all of your contributions to the program. We were shocked and distressed to learn that the college had fired you as editor of the *Kenyon Review*. Your departure is a great loss for Kenyon and for Women's and Gender Studies.

While undoubtedly you are feeling angry right now, you should also feel justifiably proud of your accomplishments during your tenure as editor. You have made the *Kenyon Review* into a first-rate literary review, one which has brought nothing but positive recognition to the college. If the number of prize-winning authors you have published is any measure, your determination to publish the works of a wide diversity of writers demonstrates that multiculturalism need never come at the expense of quality. When the history of the *Kenyon Review* is written, we have no doubt that your tenure as editor will be as significant in its own way as that of John Crowe Ransom.

Your contributions to the Women's and Gender Studies program are irreplaceable. You have been instrumental in bringing several important women writers to campus. This year alone you brought the poet Joy Harjo and the novelist Dorothy Allison to campus for readings. We feel relatively certain that, without you, these events--both of which drew a large audience of enthusiastic students, faculty, and staff--would not have been possible. You have given freely and generously of your time to help the program rethink its curriculum, especially in the area of of<sic> gay and lesbian studies. You were under no obligation to agree to serve on the committee that examined our course offerings in this curricular area, yet you willingly participated. Your leaving, of course, makes it that much less likely that any of the excellent proposals that came out of that committee will ever be realized, as we had very much counted on your participation in the curriculum at some point in the future. Your loss will be felt not only by those on campus who value poetry, literature, and criticism,

but also by those of us who care deeply about Kenyon's commitment to true multiculturalism and to the empowerment of those who have not traditionally enjoyed the privilege Kenyon represents.

On a personal note, let me say as the Director of Women's and Gender Studies, that I am very sorry to see you go. You have been a good friend and have gone out of your way to make my transition into this job an easy and comfortable one. I thank you for your many kindnesses and I wish you well. I very much hope that our paths will cross in the future.

Sincerely

Laurie A. Finke
Director, Women's and Gender Studies

Joan Cadden
Professor of History

Jennifer Clarvoe
Assistant Professor of English

Antonia Banducci
Visiting Assistant Professor of Music

Eve Moore
Assistant Professor of German

Jami Peelle
Special Collections Librarian

Jane Wemhoener
Director, OCS

cc: President Jordan

Women's and Gender Studies Department to Philip Jordan 25.05.94

Kenyon College

Women's and Gender Studies
Ascension Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Tel 614/427-5276
Tel 614/427-5656/5657
Fax 614/427-2272

May 25, 1994

President Jordan
Ransom Hall
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

We have put off writing this letter in protest of Marilyn Hacker's firing for a couple of weeks because we wanted some <time> to get some perspective on the issues involved in it. But we find we cannot<sic> let this action go unremarked. It is inconceivable to us that the college could countenance the loss of one of its most prominent employees. That Ms. Hacker, a widely acclaimed poet whose tenure as editor of the *Kenyon Review* has brought nothing but the most positive recognition to the college, could be so summarily dismissed we find, frankly, chilling. We fear that financial constraint may be masking a more troubling political agenda.

A poet with experience and vision, a lesbian and feminist with a strong sense of identity and justice, Marilyn's presence as the first woman editor of the *Kenyon Review* was a powerful symbol of Kenyon's commitment to inclusiveness, to extending its privilege to those who had traditionally been excluded. Her firing can only seem, both to those of us here and those outside Kenyon, as part of a backlash. Marilyn's success at increasing circulation while opening up the *Review's* pages to include women and writers of color, many of whom are currently defining the direction poetry and fiction are taking, seems to have threatened some vested interest. The questionnaire some of us were asked to fill out and the interview many of us participated in both made it abundantly clear that those spearheading the assessment were unhappy with the editorial direction of the *Review*. So much for academic freedom.

Good art, like good intellectual inquiry, does not come from playing it safe. Both require a willingness to take chances. All the evidence--volume of submissions, increased circulation, literary prizes, contributions--points to the spectacular success of the *Review's* editorial policy under Marilyn's direction; the results validate the chances Marilyn took in seeking out gifted and often marginalized poets and writers whose work is currently revitalizing contemporary writing.

We should also point out the very real implications Marilyn's dismissal will have for the Women's and Gender Studies program. Though she had not yet had the chance to teach a course in Women's and Gender Studies, the presence of a prominent woman poet on campus directly benefitted the program in many ways. Through Marilyn's contacts we were able to bring women writers like Joy Harjo and Dorothy Allison to campus. In addition to her editorial duties, Marilyn voluntarily served on a subcommittee that worked most of fall semester to revise our course offerings in gay and lesbian studies. Her leaving, of course, makes it that much less likely that any of the excellent proposals that came out of that committee will ever be realized.

It is sadly ironic that our celebration of 25 years of women at Kenyon will begin with the firing of the only woman editor of the *Kenyon Review*.

Sincerely,

Laurie A. Finke
Director, Women's and Gender Studies

Joan Cadden
Professor of History

Eve Moore
Assistant Professor of German

Jennifer Clarvoe
Assistant Professor of English

Antonia Banducci
Visiting Assistant Professor of Music

Jami Peelle
Special Collections Librarian

Jane Wemhoener
Director, OCS

Jane Miller to Philip Jordan 29.05.94

AWP
May 29, 1994

ASSOCIATED WRITING PROGRAMS
Old Dominion University
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Philip Jordan, President
Ransom Hall
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan,

On behalf of the advocacy committee of the Associated Writing Programs, representative of a consortium of writers and writing institutes, I wish to protest the firing of Marilyn Hacker as editor of The Kenyon Review.

Since Marilyn's appointment as editor, The Kenyon Review has set the standard for literary magazines. Its contents represent multi-culturalism at its best; in the Review's pages, one can read across the literary spectrum, from formal to experimental work, and find the tough issues of the day confronted in imaginative, demanding language.

It is because of the resurgence of the Review itself that many readers "discovered" Kenyon College, either again or for the first time. It is ironic that Marilyn Hacker should be dismissed just as she earned the respect of the entire field for several years of insightful editing, confronting charged socio-political issues -- feminist material, homosexual realities, environmental concerns -- always with the most rigorous

application of high literary standards. The excellence of the magazine is universally applauded.

When confronted with fiscal concerns, the Board of Regents had many options, including cutting back on the number of issues, hiring Ms. Hacker part-time, cutting back the number of published pages, and so on. We reject the decision to fire Marilyn Hacker and can only conclude that the Board's decision is an act of cowardice and that, further, implicit in the act is a censoring of the magazine's obviously outspoken editorial practices, practices central to a belief in freedom of speech. We abhor the kind of activity that summarily removes that which it cannot control.

I have recommended a boycott to our thousands of constituents, many of whom know Marilyn's reputation for excellence, I have also recommended that those who wish to act in support of Ms. Hacker's editorial practices cancel their subscriptions after the summer 1995 issue, when the magazine will reflect new management.

The writing community cannot conscience sudden and inexplicable acts of authority that dilute its rights. The Associated Writing Programs supports an unconstrained artistic environment. Given Kenyon College's history as a humane institution, we are sadly disappointed and disturbed by events there.

Sincerely,

Jane Miller
Vice President

A national nonprofit association of writers and writing programs
supported by its membership, federal grants, and gifts

Kevin Ray to Marilyn Hacker 01.06.94

Washington
WASHINGTON · UNIVERSITY · IN · ST · LOUIS

Olin Library System

Marilyn Hacker
230 West 105th Street
New York, NY 10025

1 June 1994

Dear Ms Hacker:

I was saddened to learn recently of your troubles with Kenyon College. For what solace or small satisfaction it may be, in a time of disappointment, to hear from one's generally silent readership, I have admired the job you have done at Kenyon. Those few little magazines that achieve any manner of longevity, however troubled, often come to labor under their own venerability. One hopes that the current terrors<sic> at Kenyon do not reflect the return of the burden of its own traditions.

With All Best Wishes,

Kevin Ray
Curator

Washington University
Campus Box 1061
One Brookings Drive
St. Louis, Missouri 3130-4899
(314) 935-4045
FAX: (314) 935-4045

Jacqueline Woodson to Cy Wainscott

01.06.94

June 1, 1994

Cy Wainscott, Managing Editor
KENYON REVIEW
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Cy:

I have heard that Marilyn Hacker has been fired from the Kenyon Review for homophobic reasons. This is an outrage.

As a result, I am demanding a cancellation of my subscription to the magazine and a return of the \$40 donation I recently made.

I will be sure to advise all of my friends and colleagues of your lack of support toward the lesbian, gay and bi-sexual communities.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Woodson
101 Lincoln Place
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Laurie Finke to Marilyn Hacker

02.06.94

Kenyon College

Women's and Gender Studies
Ascension Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Tel 614/427-5276

Tel 614/427-5656/5657

Fax 614/427-2272

6-2-94

Marilyn,

I hope Paris is doing more for you than Gambier did! Sorry I missed you before you left. I didn't get to say goodbye. I tried calling but I think you'd already left for Paris. I got your address from Cy. I'm enclosing for you a copy of the letter Women's and Gender St. is sending to Jordan, as well as one we are officially sending you. (as you can see I'm still collecting signatures, no easy feat once everyone scatters to the winds -<Illeg> I've been hanging out -- lurking -- at the bookstore & pouncing on people as they walk in).

I sense Kenyon is going to come out of this looking pretty foolish though I'm not sure how much difference it makes finally. The Chronicle article -- for which I was interviewed -- made their <Illeg> sound pretty capricious. The only real "reason" given is that you were an "outsider" -- isn't everybody.

Two more weeks & I'm off to London & really looking forward to it. Hope all is well!

Laurie

Marilyn Hacker to Cy Wainscott 02.06.94

The Kenyon Review
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022 TEL: 614-427-3339

June 2

Dear Cy,

Thanks very much -- you & Doris Jean both -- for the packet. I know noone<sic> at the KR is under any obligation -- quite the contrary -- to waste time and postage on me now.

The enclosed letters were good for my morale. But I think they should remain in the KR archives. As should copies of the letters of support, which I'll provide when I return to New York, whether or not Phil Jordan and his cohorts like it, this is part of the magazine's history (the first 50 years of which were already the subject of a book).

I'm sure you & D. Lynn agree with me that it would be most inappropriate to use quotes from the letters of support received for my editorship in any future subscription campaign. While I was careful to select, for the most part, quotes which did not include my name, even from letters which emphatically did, in the brochure we prepared (to avoid a "cult of personality" emphasis) this doesn't mean that the writers cited would wish to be cited now as supporting the changed editorship.

I've won every bet so far, and this one is that Jordan & the trustees had their copies of the letters of support & petitions destroyed.

If it's not too much of a strain on Doris Jean's good humor, there are a few more addresses I'd like: names on verso. Thank you both.

All best,
Marilyn

Norman Wong
Reetika Vazirani
Claudia Rankine
Adrienne Kennedy
Jeredith Merrin
Eric Pankey
Jan Clausen
Leslie Ullman
Peter Erickson
John Frederick Nims
Michelle Clinton
Michael Klein
Richard McCann
Yusef Komunyakaa

Cy Waincott to Jacqueline Woodson

07.06.94

June 7, 1994

Jacqueline Woodson
101 Lincoln Place
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Jacqueline –

With more than a little regret, I've directed that \$56.50 be returned to you (\$40 contribution; \$16.50 unused subscription) and have cancelled your subscription.

I have to tell you, though, that I believe you are wrong in your assumption that Marilyn was fired for homophobic reason. Were that true, it would indeed be an outrage and I would not be still in this position. Neither would David Lynn have accepted the editorship. There has not been the least intimation that the editorial direction of the magazine of the magazine be changed. And, in fact, the next several issues are being published exactly as Marilyn planned them.

We both believe that Marilyn is a great poet and was a great editor of K.R. We are both committed to continuing the open and inclusive approach she so ably advanced as editor.

Marilyn remains my dear friend and, as friends do, we disagree on the circumstances of her departure. I will tell you, as I've told her, that I don't believe the cause of inclusiveness is well served by seeking to undermine the magazine she helped establish as a leading light in this area.

Here at the Review we continue to struggle against the economic factors that threaten that light. I hope that, in time, you will see that the ideals Marilyn fostered have not been abandoned. And I hope, then, that you will want to return as a reader of and writer in the Review.

Sincerely,

Cy Waincott
Managing Editor

David H. Lynn *Editor*

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to Philip Jordan

08.06.94

Duke University
Durham
North Carolina
27708

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
BOX 90015

TELEPHONE (919) 684-2741
FAX (919) 684-4871

8 June, 1994

Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear President Jordan:

It's time for some truth-telling about how Kenyon College is viewed by the American world of letters beyond Gambier, Ohio.

It used to be that Kenyon was known as the college where the distinguished Kenyon Review was published.

Then, Kenyon was known as the college where the mediocre Kenyon Review that used to be distinguished, was published.

Then, for a short time, Kenyon was known as the college that invited and supported Marilyn Hacker's visionary transformation of the Kenyon Review, making it the meeting-place of a vital, diverse, and brilliant cluster of cultural and artistic movements.

In future, Kenyon College will be known in American letters as the college that fired Marilyn Hacker, secretly and summarily, without public discussion, on a transparent pretext, after the last faculty meeting of the year and the last issue of the student newspaper, and shortly after her diagnosis with a grave and expensive disease.

I hope you are proud of your contribution to the national reputation of Kenyon College.

Sincerely yours,

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick
Newman Ivey White Professor of English

Cy Wainscott to Catherine Gammon 09.06.94

The Kenyon Review

Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor David H. Lynn *Managing Editor* Cy Wainscott

June 9, 1994

Catherine Gammon
6326 Forward Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Catherine

As Sam Clemens said, the reports of our death are greatly exaggerated.

As part of a general enquiry into the state of Kenyon College finances, the college trustees last January did conduct an investigation into the financial feasibility of continuing the highly-subsidized Review. In April the trustees reported their determination that the Review should be continued, but directed that financial reforms be made.

As part of the financial reforms, Marilyn Hacker's contract as full-time editor was not renewed. She has been replaced, on an interim basis, by David Lynn, a former editor and associate editor and member of the English Department here.

Marilyn's departure has generated yet another rumor – that she was dismissed for homophobic reasons. Marilyn believes this to be the case; I do not.

Were that true, it would indeed be an outrage and I would not be still in this position. Neither would David Lynn have accepted the editorship. There has not been the least intimation that the editorial direction of the magazine be changed. And, in fact, the next several issues are being published exactly as Marilyn planned them.

We both believe that Marilyn is a great poet and was a great editor of KR. We are both committed to continuing the open and inclusive approach she so ably advanced as editor.

That's what I can tell you about rumors. We are saddened by Marilyn's departure, encouraged that the magazine to which she has made such a significant contribution will continue and hope that its future issues will include more works by Catherine Gammon.

Cy Wainscott

Marilyn Hacker to Cy Waincott

14.06.94

33, rue de Turenne
75003 Paris

14 June, 1994

Dear Cy,

Having paused for considerable time to think about it, however much I respect you, and will, I trust, always continue to do so, I don't agree at all with your position re: keeping letters responding/reacting to the editorial change on file. If one were to follow that position to its logical conclusion, subscriber surveys with negative responses, letters complaining about anything from the magazine's content to its type size, would also be selected out (from the favourable mail) and destroyed, so as not to "undermine the magazine."

However, I am no longer editor of the KR and my opinion has no weight in this matter. I would, however, appreciate the return of the Kizer, Kumin & whatever other letters I returned to you, if they have not been thrown away.
Returned to Marilyn 7-14-94

Paris is being considerably kinder to me than Gambier was (yourself and a couple of others excepted). Not that that's saying much. (I heard Jordan told the Chronicle of Higher Education that I was fired because I was an "outsider".)

This still sounds bitter, I realize. But you no doubt know, from your own considerable experience, that injustice done doesn't heal like a scraped knee. But my expulsion from Kenyon is not worth "obsession," and it has not become one. I lost my job. The KR may have lost more. (That wasn't meant to be underlined.)

FYI, and everybody else's, I am not, incidentally, the "source" of whatever letters arrive chez Jordan or at the KR. Of course, I let some people know what happened. But their reactions are their own. And some letters I've already seen come from people who heard through the literary or academic grapevine.

My best to Doris Jean and the Herr Professor Doktor Lynn. It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and I wish him well with his dual promotion.

I miss you, too.

All best,

Marilyn

Cy Wainscott to Kenyon Review authors

15.06.94

The Kenyon Review

Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Phone (614) 427-3339

Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor David H. Lynn

Managing Editor Cy Wainscott

June 15, 1994

Dear KR author –

My apologies for the form letter, but, in light of some inquiries we've received ("Is the Kenyon Review going out of business?" "Is there a change in editorial policy?"), I wanted to report to you.

As Sam Clemens said, the reports of our death are greatly exaggerated.

As part of a general enquiry into the state of Kenyon College finances, the college trustees last January did conduct an investigation into the financial feasibility of continuing the highly-subsidized Review. In April the trustees reported their determination that the Review should be continued, but directed that financial reforms be made.

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That's what I can tell you about rumors. We are saddened by Marilyn's departure, encouraged that the magazine to which she has made such a significant contribution will continue and hope that its future issues will include more works by writers such as you.

Cy Wainscott

Bruce Berlind to Philip Jordan 16.06.94

BRUCE BERLIND, BOX 237, HAMILTON, NY 13346

Please deposit this in the Kenyon archives.
And make any other use of it you'd like.

BB

No entertainment is so cheap as reading;
Nor any pleasure so lasting.

6326 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Poets and Writers - ?
p.10

NCTE

Colgate University
Hamilton, New York 13346
(315) 824-1000

BRUCE BERLIND

*Charles A. Dana Professor Emeritus
Department of English*

16 June 1994

President Philip Jordan
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Mr. Jordan:

I write as a contributor and longtime subscriber to Kenyon Review to express the outrage I feel at the firing of Marilyn Hacker as editor and, more particularly, at the disingenuous manner in which it was done. When I wrote to you some months ago, having heard that the future of the magazine was in jeopardy, I had been led to believe that the issue was entirely one of financial exigency; and I argued that, given the magazine's long and prestigious history and its importance to the image of Kenyon College, every effort ought to be made to continue its publication. Your response to my letter, saying that it would be forwarded to the board of trustees, did nothing to disabuse me of my understanding that the issue was indeed exclusively one of financial exigency; that was the only matter to which you referred in your letter.

It is evident now that the truth is somewhat different. While one can believe that some fiscal retrenchment was advisable and is, I am told, forthcoming, a number of measures were proposed--retrenchment without the desperate and shameful act of sacking the editor.

What is clear is that the real issue was the board's objection to some of the Review's editorial content, an issue which was not addressed forthrightly and which, if it had been, might even have been a matter for negotiation. By skirting the issue--at least with Ms. Hacker--and acting as it did, the board behaved in a cowardly and disgraceful manner.

And what is doubly sad for Kenyon College is that it has fired not merely an editor, but a principal poet of her generation, one whose wit and whose mastery of technical formalities would have delighted John Crowe Ransom.

It will be a long time before this deplorable matter is forgotten by the literary and academic communities.

Sincerely,

CC: Professor David Lynn, Editor
Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Marilyn Hacker
33, rue de Turenne
75003 Paris
France

Maureen Brady to *Kenyon Review*

16.06.94

6/16/94

Dear Kenyon Review:

I sent in a subscription just last week and then over the weekend heard that Marilyn Hacker had been fired. Please cancel my subscription and consider my chagrin at hearing this news as a protest!

I think Marilyn was doing great things with the Kenyon Review. It was becoming truly representative of and inspiring to our times and it saddens me to think it will not continue in this vein.

Regards,

Maureen Brady

Karen Falkenstrom to Philip Jordan

17.06.94

June 17, 1994

Phil Jordan, President
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Phil Jordan,

I am writing to let you know that Kenyon College has made an unfortunate decision. Marilyn Hacker is the reason The Kenyon Review now enjoys its reputation as one of the finest literary journals in the country, and by letting her go you have demonstrated that you are no longer interested in maintaining the magazine's level of quality, innovation, and importance to the literary community.

I feel I have no other choice--though it be a small gesture--than to cancel my recent subscription to The Kenyon Review.

Karen Falkenstrom
Director

Cc: KR office, instructing refund of \$16.50 to be sent to Karen Falkenstrom, P.O. Box 43664, Tucson, AZ 85733

Refund ordered 7-20-94

Jane Miller to Philip Jordan 18.06.94

The Associated Writing Programs
Old Dominion • Norfolk, VA 23529-0079
804/683-3839 • Fax: 804/683-5901

AWP

•
The
Associated
Writing
Programs

June 18, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Ransom Hall
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan,

On behalf of the advocacy committee of the Associated Writing Programs, representative of a consortium of writers and writing institutes, I wish to protest the firing of Marilyn Hacker as editor of The Kenyon Review.

Since Marilyn's appointment as editor, The Kenyon Review has set the standard for literary magazines. Its contents represent multi-culturalism at its best; in the Review's pages, one can read across the literary spectrum, from formal to experimental work, and find the tough issues of the day confronted in imaginative, demanding language.

It is because of the resurgence of the Review itself that many readers "discovered" Kenyon College, either again or for the first time. It is ironic that Marilyn Hacker should be dismissed

A national, nonprofit association of writers and writing programs supported by its membership, federal grants, and gifts just as she has earned the respect of the entire field for several years of insightful editing, confronting charged socio-political issues -- multi-cultural topics, feminist material, homosexual realities, environmental concerns -- always with the most rigorous application of high literary standards. The excellence of the magazine is universally applauded.

When confronted with fiscal concerns, the Board of Regents had many options. We reject the decision to fire Marilyn Hacker and can only conclude that the Board's decision is an act of cowardice and that, further, implicit in the act is a censoring of the magazine's obviously outspoken editorial practices, practices central to a belief in

freedom of speech. We abhor the kind of activity that summarily removes that which it cannot control.

I have recommended a boycott to our thousands of constituents, many of whom know Marilyn's reputation for excellence; I have also recommended that those who wish to act in support of Ms. Hacker's editorial practices cancel their subscriptions after the fall, 1994 issue, when the magazine will reflect new management.

The writing community cannot conscience sudden and inexplicable acts of authority that dilute its rights. The Associated Writing Programs supports an unconstrained artistic environment. Given Kenyon College's history as a humane institution, we are sadly disappointed and disturbed by events there. Finally, on a personal note, as one of the writers whose work in Kenyon received the honor of a Pushcart Prize in 1993, I deeply regret the loss of Ms. Hacker.

Sincerely,

Jane Miller
Vice President

copies to: Cy Wainscott, Managing Editor, Kenyon Review
Marilyn Hacker
Markham Johnson, Executive Director, AWP
Carolyn Forché, President, AWP
David Fenza, Publications Editor, AWP Chronicle

Adrian C. Louis to Cy Wainscott

25.06.94

ADRIAN C. LOUIS • PO BOX 1990 • PINE RIDGE, SOUTH DAKOTA 57770

June 25, 1994

Cy Wainscott, Managing Editor
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Dear Cy Wainscott:

Was startled to receive your form letter. Living out here in America, I have virtually no contact with people who are versed in the so-called "literary scene" of the east. My first concern was that my long poem scheduled for your next issue would be scrapped, and then reading further in your letter, that concern was alleviated. And then my next worry was that a review copy of my latest book, *Blood Thirsty Savages*, recently sent to M. Hacker might have departed with her. So, I have today, shipped you another review copy under separate cover.

Here's my take on the Hacker situation. First, while I did have a poem published in KR prior to her tenure, there can be no doubt that the KR was incredibly staid in those days. On the other hand, M. Hacker took my poems on several occasions and she seemed to inject some life into the veins of KR. Nevertheless, part of me felt that my work was cheapened by much of the work that appeared in recent issues. It seemed to me that some of the work was chosen not because of quality, but because of its homosexual stance. Believe me, I am tolerant of homosexuality in general, but I do not like to have my face rubbed in it...(as it were!)

Anyway, I wish you guys luck, and I will continue to submit my work to KR. Please give some consideration to reviewing *Blood Thirsty Savages*.

Sincerely yours,

Adrian C. Louis

Stephen T. Booker to David Lynn

26.06.94

Sunday June 26, 1994

To: Mr. D. Lynn, Ed.
Kenyon Review

From: Stephen Booker/ B-044049
Florida State Prison
P.O. Box 747/ R-2-S-5
Starke, Florida 32091

Dear Mr. Lynn,

I'd gotten word from somewhere else about you all clearing your books, so to speak, of Ms. Hacker -- and now that I have your very own June 15th kite testifying to this fact, here's a short kite back at you. Do pass it along to the bigwigs there at Kenyon:

You are some dumbasses, clearly stepping on your wee-wees or whatever you use for a collective thing like a brainstem. Ms. Hacker was hip enough, wise and brave enough to scoop two of my best efforts for KR earlier this year. So, I know she's bad, a "Living Poet's Society" of one, a happening that someone there just wasn't ready for. When you get to trusting trustees to decide poetry editors is when you lose out.

And do be sure that Marilyn gets my Tug book that UPNE/ Wesleyan sent KR. --
Thanx, D.L. --

Yours,

STB

To: Mr. David Lynn (letter)
card to Ms. Marilyn Hacker

2/24/94

Dear M.,

Go the <XC?>. Thanks. Had a person tell me that it's not policy for me to conduct a business, etc, & the next time I get any dough as "payment" for something, it'll be returned. No way to explain how honoraria<sic> for 1st N.A. Serial Rights, etc, or whatever, is far from being a business.

Anyway, KR is my 'biggest' in to date -- in 14 yrs. of the fray. You bad. Know I'll be back at you.

Yours,

Stephen

Adrian Oktenberg to the Editors 27.06.94

ADRIAN OKTENBERG
PO BOX 267
NORTHAMPTON, MA 01061-0267
(413) 584-4020

June 27, 1994

The Editors
off our backs
2423 18th St., NW, 2d floor
Washington, D.C. 20009

To the Editors:

I write to draw the community's attention to the fact that Marilyn Hacker, a distinguished poet and editor, has recently been fired from her position as Editor of *The Kenyon Review*. As a contributor to *Kenyon Review*, I recently received a letter from the magazine explaining the firing as the result of a financial cutback, denying that Hacker's firing was the result of homophobia "as she believes it is," and begging everyone's continued support for the magazine. *Kenyon Review* would have us believe that everything is fine at the magazine, except only for the fact of financial constraints.

I, for one, do not believe them. I believe her. The fact is that Marilyn Hacker is one of the most far-sighted editors the magazine has had in recent years, that she has made a practice of publishing the work of people of color, feminist, Gay and Lesbian, and politically dissenting work of high literary quality, that she was unexpectedly and unceremoniously removed, and that she believes the firing was politically motivated.

Homophobia, like racism, is sometimes a hard thing to pin down and prove. Guilty pleas from those accused are not customarily forthcoming. In this instance, the magazine's action is suspect. Diversity is a strength, not a weakness. The firing of an editor whose real commitment to diversity has brought new life (and funds) to the magazine would seem a move likely to weaken the magazine's financial condition, not improve it. If homophobia is implicated in it, as I believe it is, then this kind of action should not be allowed to pass without resistance and response.

Responses may be directed to David H. Lynn, the new editor, at *The Kenyon Review*, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Oktenberg

The letter above was also sent to the following people –

Jim Marks, Editor
Lambda Book Report
1625 Connecticut Ave., <sic> NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

Linda Gardiner, Editor
The Women's Review of Books
Wellesley center for Research on Women
Wellesley College
Wellesley, MA. 02181

PEN American Center
568 Broadway
New York, NY 10012

ATT: Gay and Lesbian Rights Project

The Editors
Poets & Writers Magazine
72 Spring Street
New York, NY 10012

Katrina vanden Heuvel, Editor
The Nation
72 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10011

Cy Wainscott to Jane Miller 28.06.94

The Kenyon Review

Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor David H. Lynn *Managing Editor* Cy Wainscott

June 28, 1994

Jane Miller, Vice President
The Associated Writing Programs
55 E. Rudasill Road
Tucson, AZ85704

Dear Jane Miller –

I've just received my copy of your June 18 letter to Kenyon College President Philip Jordan. While I assume you may be receiving a response from him, I want to make a personal response.

I was quite impressed by the depth of feeling that shows so movingly and is so well expressed in your letter. You can appreciate, I am sure, that the emotional climate generated by the circumstances of Marilyn's departure are quite intense and have deeply affected us all. Like so many who love her, I am intensely proud of what she accomplished with the *Kenyon Review* and I miss her on a personal as well as professional level.

I suspect my June 15 letter to you and other *KR* authors may not have reached you before your letter was sent. In any case, I ask your indulgence as, from a personal perspective, I share my reactions to some of your comments:

"We...can only conclude...that...implicit in the act is a censoring of the magazine's obviously outspoken editorial practices central to a belief in freedom of speech."

In my career of 35 years as a journalist I have faced jail in support of freedom of speech and, not to overdramatize, would die to support it. You may appreciate, then, my anger and frustration at your implication that I would remain at a *Kenyon Review* from which that freedom was removed.

"...I have also recommended that those who wish to act in support of Ms. Hacker's editorial practices cancel their subscriptions after the fall, 1994, issue, when the magazine will reflect new management."

Among the great achievements of Marilyn's editorship has been the elevation of openness and inclusiveness as significant elements of its content – giving voice to under-represented and suppressed voices. The implication in your statement is that, with Marilyn's departure, these voices will be silenced and ignored. This is not true. The *Kenyon Review* is determined to nurture and encourage these voices.

The distressing irony is that there is a very real danger that those voices could be silenced – at least significantly muted – if support for the *Kenyon Review* is withdrawn.

“We abhor the kind of activity that summarily removes that which it cannot control.”

I agree. But control of *Kenyon Review* content has not been at issue. Indeed, I believe that advocating action threatening the existence of a magazine whose editorial practices are unchanged but are now administered by another editor, smacks of a sort of economic bookburning. It grieves me that support for the principles of freedom of speech and inclusiveness can fall victim to personal disappointment.

Marilyn Hacker need not – I know will not – cease to champion freedom of speech and inclusiveness because she is no longer editor of the *Kenyon Review*. The *Kenyon Review* need not – I know will not – cease to champion freedom of speech and inclusiveness because Marilyn Hacker is no longer editor.

Thanks for your attention. It's not always a fair or just world, but I think we all have a responsibility to try to add what fairness and justice we can to it.

Sincerely,

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

cc: Philip Jordan, President, Kenyon College
Marilyn Hacker
Markham Johnson, Executive Director, AWP
Carolyn Forche, President, AWP
David Fenza, Publications Editor, *AWP Chronicle*

Emery George to Cy Wainscott

01.07.94

Emery George
8 Dickinson Street
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

July 1, 1994

Mr. Cy Wainscott, Managing Editor
THE KENYON REVIEW
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 430222-9623

Dear Mr. Wainscott:

It was good to speak with you on the telephone earlier this week. As I mentioned to you, I very much appreciate your informative letter of June 15, with the good news that THE KENYON REVIEW is assured of continuation. Congratulations.

I had read of Marilyn Hacker's departure as editor of the REVIEW in the CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION. I seem to recall something from that news item to the effect that financial reforms were indicated, and am much relieved to know that Kenyon College's perceptive board of trustees are determined to keep the REVIEW alive.

Indeed it would be calamitous, were any other decision the case. THE KENYON REVIEW is one of the two or three topmost literary journals published in this country, with a long, distinguished history. I still remember its courageous new beginnings, with a new series, in the winter quarter of 1979. It was not long after that that<sic> I had the distinction and pleasure of becoming one of its contributors.

Thank you for letting me know that the REVIEW works far in advance, and that submissions will be welcome, starting in September. I look forward to being in touch with David Lynn, with whom I have corresponded before.

Once again, kindest thanks for writing. My warmest good wishes go with the continuation and future of THE KENYON REVIEW.

Sincerely,

Emery George

Alicia Ostriker to Cy Wainscott

03.07.94

ALICIA OSTRIKER
33 PHILIP DRIVE
PRINCETON, NJ 08540
609-924-5737

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor, THE KENYON REVIEW
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

July 3, 1994

Dear Cy Wainscott,

I am writing in response to your letter of June 15 about THE KENYON REVIEW, and the decision to fire Marilyn Hacker as editor. Frankly, although I understand that it was the decision of the trustees and not your own decision that you were describing, it is difficult to take your description at face value. I find it shocking that the trustees could abruptly fire an editor of Marilyn's excellence. Given her capacity to bring in grant money, the financial rationale seems implausible; and the claim that the "editorial direction of the magazine" will remain unchanged suggests ignorance of what a literary editor actually does. Do you or the trustees suppose that editors are more or less interchangeable? That another person will be *able* to plan issues, solicit and work with contributors, and exercise the same literary standards, as Marilyn has done? An editor creates a magazine's profile. KR will not and cannot maintain its character as a mainstream literary journal publishing multicultural writing of the highest quality, without Hacker.

I infer that the trustees are not particularly interested in, or knowledgeable about, questions of literary quality. A pity. With regret, I must ask you to cancel my subscription to KR. I will not submit work to the magazine in future, or attend events at Kenyon College (including a symposium on Keats at which I had promised to speak) unless this decision is reversed.

Yours truly,

Alicia Ostriker

cc. Marilyn Hacker
Poets & Writers

Expire 12/95

Dear Marilyn –
Courage –
Love, AO

Josephine Jacobsen to Cy Wainscott 05.07.94

13801 York Road
Cockeysville, Maryland 21030

Dear Mr. Wainscott –

Thank you for your letter on the question of Marilyn Hacker's dismissal.

I knew that Marilyn had put her daughter in Kenyon College, and that she had really moved her life to Gambier.

I had understood that, in lieu of this major shift in her future, there would be a minimum of a long warning if things didn't work out.

As you say, Marilyn's a fine poet & a distinguished editor, and I had hoped this would be a very long & fruitful relationship. The break seemed to me very summary, and I am sure it must have brought major problems in Marilyn's immediate future.

You would probably agree that a part-time editor is quite a different matter from a full-time & widely recognized editor, I think The Kenyon Review has immensely benefited by Marilyn's intelligence, experience and courage.

Though it leaves me uncomfortable with the way things have turned out, I think you were wise to write the letter. I don't feel it explains the brusqueness of the action, but it does take a stand on what you feel has been misinterpreted,

Sincerely yours,

Josephine Jacobsen

Hilary Masters to Cy Wainscott

06.07.94

July 6, 1994

Dear Cy Wainscott;

Whatever the truth of the matter may be; it is a very sad story all the way around.

But, I appreciate your keeping me informed with especial appreciation that the magazine will continue. And extra thanks that I am yet considered to be a "KR author" --

Best regards,

Hilary Masters

Michelle T. Clinton to Cy Wainscott 07.07.94

Michelle T. Clinton
2411 Third Street #C
Santa Monica, CA 90405

July 7, 1994

The Kenyon Review
Cy Wainscott
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Mr. Wainscott,

The college trustees of Kenyon College made a critical error in failing to renew Marilyn Hacker's contract as editor of the Kenyon Review.

Under Ms. Hacker's leadership, this publication was transformed from a mediocre, academic journal to a vibrant, risk-taking, champion of contemporary literary art.

Before her editorship, my colleagues, students & friends all agreed to politely ignore the journal. Because the sensibilities expressed in the publication were tedious, boring & useless to our vision of an evolving America. After she began to edit, we were so excited: we shared copies, we critiqued xeroxes of prose, we argued on the phone about the capabilities of poetry to fully express the scope of the human experience. We were introduced to exciting new authors, new ways of manipulating language, we were challenged, we were validated in our desire to appreciate & create literature.

The writers I know that worked with Ms. Hacker all feel she is a woman of integrity. An honest, hard working woman full of respect for humanity, & gifted with a progressive & flexible vision. I do not believe she is capable of a hallucination of homophobia. Rather I know her to be insightful & sensitive. Her insights into language, contemporary poetics, & the politics & culture of our time, was a gift to your journal, a gift to my life, a treasured gift to my community of writers.

You have made a big mistake.

Sincerely,

Michelle T. Clinton
Poet

cc: David H. Lynn

Jean Migrenne to *The Kenyon Review*

12.07.94

Jean MIGRENNE (Mr)
16, Rue Aristide Briand
14123 Ifs France

12 July 1994

Dear new editor of the Kenyon review

In the KR Volume XVI, number I, one short story The Sprite by one John FOSTER was published.

I think I knew him when he was in France some years ago, but there surely are more than one person of the same name in the US of A.

Could you forward the enclosed letter to this person, since it's a long time since I had, and lost, his address?

Please receive my thanks for doing so.

I've heard that the former editor, Marilyn Hacker, was dismissed recently. Please convey to the trustees my disapprobation of their decision. I shall not, for the time being, reconsider my subscription to the KR, but I nearly did so on the spur of the moment. All will depend on what the KR becomes.

Sincerely,

J. Migrenne

Cy Wainscott to Alicia Ostriker

14.07.94

The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor David H. Lynn

Managing Editor Cy Wainscott

July 14, 1994
Alicia Ostriker
33 Philip Drive
Princeton, NJ 08540

Dear Alicia Ostriker --

With deep regret, I have instructed that your subscription be cancelled and that a refund for the unused portion (the Fall 1994 issue) be sent to you. I will also pass along a copy of your letter to those in charge of arrangements for the Keats symposium.

In response to your comments on my note to KR authors, let me say that, yes, I do know that an editor creates a magazine's profile. My statement that the editorial direction of the magazine would remain unchanged, was made in response to and in the context of a rumor that Marilyn's departure was based on homophobia. I was trying to say that the principles of openness and inclusiveness that Marilyn had so effectively espoused and established at the *Review* would not be abandoned and would continue to be aggressively pursued.

And, no, I do not believe that editors are interchangeable. Marilyn's preeminence in this regard requires no defense. I doubt, though, that you really meant to say no magazine can be a mainstream literary journal, publishing multicultural writing of the highest quality unless Marilyn is the editor. As we agree, the particular genius of a magazine is inseparable from its editor, but I think the ability to publish multicultural writing of the highest quality cannot be ascribed to only one person.

I don't regard Marilyn's departure as inconsequential, but I do rankle that reaction to the hurt of it, well-intentioned but misinformed, could make it more difficult to continue the tradition she so ably and courageously established. If the genius of a magazine is in its editors, its lifeblood is its writers. Association with writers of established reputation, such as you, is what encourages emerging writers to offer to editors their works. It would be a shame if that encouragement were abandoned.

Sincerely,
Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

cc: Marilyn Hacker
Poets and Writers

Cy Wainscott to Bruce Berlind

14.07.94

The Kenyon Review

Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor David H. Lynn

Managing Editor Cy Wainscott

July 14, 1994

Bruce Berlind,
Charles A. Dana Professor Emeritus
Department of English
Colgate University
Hamilton, NY 13346

David Lynn has shared with me his copy of your letter to Kenyon College President Philip Jordan about Marilyn Hacker's departure from the *Kenyon Review*. David and the president may be responding to your letter, but I wanted to make a personal response.

It is especially difficult for me to make such a response; Marilyn is and I hope will remain my dear friend.

She has said that "... the board of trustees and the administration 'did not have the confidence in me to work with them to lower the magazine's subsidy and further integrate it into the life of the college'". I believe that to be not only the truth, but the whole truth. Marilyn does not accept this. Rather she has expressed suspicions that homophobia, xenophobia, misogyny, parochialism, racism, envy, boorishness, religious zealotry – any or all of these things – were the reasons she was not continued as editor.

If this were true, I would not have remained on the staff.

Great writers are not necessarily good editors. Great editors are not necessarily good publishing executives. Great publishing executives are not necessarily always effective in engendering confidence. Indisputably, Marilyn is a great writer and a great editor.

To argue Marilyn's competence to deal successfully with the awesome fiscal challenges facing the magazine may, I suppose, be a legitimate subject for informed debate. But to confound that debate with imagined and groundless issues of editorial control, or intellectual or academic freedom, or Marilyn's preeminent abilities as a writer and editor, is just plain wrong.

None of those things are at issue.

What is at issue is the survival of the magazine – not just as a publication, but as an instrument for the advancement and appreciation of the best in contemporary writing, one giving exposure to under-represented and suppressed voices, to emerging as well as established writers. I believe what Marilyn did in establishing the *Review* as an open and inclusive environment will be seen as one of the great periods in the magazine's history. Marilyn Hacker need not – I know will not – cease to champion those standards of inclusive excellence because she is no longer editor of the *Kenyon Review*. The *Kenyon Review* need not – I know will not – cease to champion those standards because Marilyn Hacker is no longer editor.

I urge you to at least reserve judgement. If what you allege in your letter is true, it will become evident soon enough. But the *Kenyon Review* depends for its survival on the support of writers and educators such as yourself and I'm sure you know what virulent and destructive effect rumor and innuendo can have on a struggling journal.

Thanks for your attention. It's not always a fair or just world, but I think we all have a responsibility to try to add what fairness and justice we can to it.

Sincerely,

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

cc: President Jordan
David Lynn
Marilyn Hacker

Cy Wainscott to Marilyn Hacker

14.07.94

The Kenyon Review

Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor David H. Lynn

Managing Editor Cy Wainscott

July 14, 1994

TO M HACKER

Hi –

Let me get rid of the business graph first: In my earlier letter, I wasn't saying anything about sending on to you – and placing copies in the archives -- your correspondence. You should have been receiving them right along (please let me know if you haven't been getting them). What I was demurring about was sending you addresses of KR writers, for reasons I hope I explained.

Glad to hear that Paris is treating you well. It would seem to be as good a place as could be hoped for R and R from the recent unpleasantness. I hope your<sic> getting back your physical and emotional strength and feel like writing up a storm.

I've run into Iva a couple of times this summer (once while she was serving as receptionist in Ransom Hall!) and she seems to getting along well (no grouching about being Carless in Gambier).

Phil announced last week that he's hanging it up next June (control yourself). He told me he plans to do some collaborative writing with Sheila and will maintain homes in Gambier and Maine. Haven't talked to her.

Life here is, as the medical examiners say, unremarkable. Judy is gaining a rep as the Demon Gardener of Wiggin Street and is not-so-slowng<sic> transforming our place into a quite lovely park. Meanwhile, back at her day job, she earned the highest bonus of any salesperson in her category and is still enjoying the work.

I'd be enjoying my work a lot more if there were less micromanaging and especially if I didn't feel I had to respond to those letters about you. I really hate that. On the other hand, there's a real possibility that I'll be teaching a class for the student journalizers this fall and I'm really looking forward to that.

Uh oh, more business. The latest Lila Wallace plan we filed calls for, in September, "a reading from The Kenyon Review theater issue at New Dramatists in New York City. Probable participants are Adrienne Kennedy, Anthony Clarvoe and Joan Schenkar." What can you tell me about this?

And tell me, too, what your near and future plans are. Will you be doing the Utah gig?

Judy sends her best, as I do, to you and Karen.

Cy

Alfred Corn to Kenyon Board of Trustees

14.07.94

Columbia University in the City of New York | *New York, N.Y. 10027*

SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
Writing Division

Dodge Hall

July 14, 1994
The Trustees
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Board of Trustees:

I have received a letter from The Kenyon Review with explanations for the Trustees' decision to ask Marilyn Hacker to step down as editor. I have also spoken to her about the review's present situation and her own estimate of how the decision was reached.

The financial explanation currently being circulated is not convincing to me or to anyone else I have spoken to. Literary reviews always require a sponsoring institution or private support: none has ever been fully self-supporting, not even The Kenyon Review under earlier editors. If Kenyon College is undergoing a financial crisis, still no one has suggested that the review itself be discontinued, no doubt because it is a great credit to the college. Certainly, it was under Ms. Hacker's editorship, as testimonials from writers and scholars sent to you have proved.

Replacing Marilyn Hacker with someone already on the Kenyon faculty could be considered an economic measure if it weren't also true that she offered to teach extra courses next year and take an unpaid leave of absence for a term in order to remove her editor's salary from the budget. None of us concerned with your treatment of Marilyn Hacker understands why you ignored her offer. If it was regarded as a temporary solution only and therefore inadequate, still it would have provided two opportunities now denied to her: first, a year's grace period in which to move heaven and earth and find full financial support for the magazine; and, second, to begin making arrangements to be employed elsewhere.

The operations of universities are familiar to you, and there's no need to point out how difficult it is to find academic employment when the search must begin as late as the end of spring term. Waiting to give notice until all classes were over and students who might have wanted to say something in her behalf had left campus, apart from presenting Ms. Hacker with an insoluble professional problem, gives an impression of underhandedness. This is an impression I am certain Kenyon College would not want to make in the world, and I call on the Board of Trustees to explain to all concerned its treatment of one of our leading poets, who has served the college well and does not deserve the lack of respect implied by a dismissal as peremptory and slightly accounted for as this.

Sincerely,
Alfred Corn
cc to Marilyn Hacker

Joy Harjo to Philip Jordan 15.07.94

TWO RED HORSES, INC.

Joy Harjo

P.O. Box 4999
Albuquerque, NM 87196
Tel. (505) 897-9092
Fax (505) 897-9094

15 July 1994

Philip Jordan
President
Kenyon College
Ransom Hall
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Dear Philip Jordan:

I am very disturbed at the news of the firing of Marilyn Hacker, for no apparent reason, as editor of The Kenyon Review. Her firing does not reflect well on the college in the view of many of us in the academic community. Her work as editor for The Kenyon Review has been outstanding. The review is now considered one of the best in the country, due to Hacker's efforts to establish a literary magazine of the most dynamic literature being written. She succeeded.

In protest of this unconscionable act I wish to cancel my subscription.

Sincerely,

Joy Harjo

Poet, and professor at the University of New Mexico

18 July 94

Dear Marilyn –

Here's a letter I wrote in response to your ridiculous firing –
So, how are you holding up? Glad to hear your book(s) coming out from <?> --

We had a big book party –

Joy

Stanley Plumly to Cy Wainscott 15.07.94

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND AT COLLEGE PARK
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

July 15, 94

Dear Cy Wainscott:

I've been out of the country since June 1 and returned this week to find your Kenyon Review letter waiting for me. I understood, via the grapevine, that KR was under reconsideration once again. I heard this news last winter. I'm pleased to see that KR will continue, with an interim editor.

I was asked the last time a KR review came up for my opinion regarding the editorship, and though Marilyn Hacker is a friend, I stated at the time that I felt she was not the ideal choice, especially as she would have to 'commute' to the job. I also felt that her clear politics were not part of the Ransom tradition, which may have been the point in selecting her. (For that matter, I feel that the editor before her was 'political' in a dishonest way: Mr Turner had an aesthetic axe to grind.) The truth is, the moment Marilyn was chosen she was doomed, it seems to me, to fail to meet the expectations of a traditionalist literary magazine.

I hope the next time an editor is selected some real consideration will be given to his or her range of taste and balance of aesthetic judgement. The best person I can think of is right there on your staff, next door to Gambier. I'm thinking of David Baker, a young man of taste, a sense of the past, and someone unafraid to experiment within the arts. The only mission he has is a mission of excellence.

Thanks for listening to this unasked for advice.

Sincerely,

Stanley Plumly

3101 SOUTH CAMPUS SURGE BUILDING ♦ COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND ♦ (301) 405-3809

Eileen Myles to Cy Wainscott

16.07.94

7/16

Dear Mr. Wainscott,

There is also rumor that the alumni were asked about how they liked the homosexual content in the Kenyon Review. Maybe it's not true, but that sounds homophobic, if such a question were directed at them. Anyhow I have a poem scheduled in a winter issue entitled troubadour & I'd like to withdraw it.

Best of luck,

Eileen Myles

Cy Waincott to Maureen Brady

20.07.94

July 20, 1994

Maureen Brady
427B Spillway Road
W. Hurley, NY 12491

I apologize for the delay in responding to your note.

We will, of course and with regret, see that your subscription is cancelled and that a refund is sent to you.

I agree with you that Marilyn was doing great things with the *Review* in making it truly representative of and inspiring to our times and I am saddened that she is not continuing as editor (financial concerns that had nothing to do with its appreciation of Marilyn as a brilliant full-time editor forced Kenyon College, our publisher and major supporter, to not renew her contract in order that it could continue publication of the *Review*).

But this does not mean, as you say, that the *Review* will not continue to be truly representative and inspiring in presenting the best of established and emerging writers working in the full spectrum of contemporary and traditional genres. The inclusive tradition Marilyn established here cannot and will not be discarded.

I hope you will come to see that this is true and that you will return as a supporter of the *Kenyon Review*.

Sincerely,

Cy Waincott
Managing Editor

Refund requested 7-20-94

Melanie Rae Thon to Cy Wainscott

21.07.94

Melanie Rae Thon
138 Harvard Place, #3
Syracuse, NY 13210

21 July 1994

Dear Cy Wainscott,

Thank you for your response to my query regarding Marilyn Hacker. I'm relieved that so much of the work in upcoming issues will be work she selected, but I am disappointed that she's left The Kenyon Review. I wish you all good luck in the future,

Best wishes,

Melanie Rae Thon

Cy Waincott to Eileen Myles

22.07.94

July 22, 1994

Eileen Myles
86 E. 3rd Street
New York, NY 10003

Dear Eileen Myles –

First, let me respond to that “rumor that the alumni were asked about how they liked the homosexual content in the *Kenyon Review*.”

The facts are that the committee looking into the operations of the *Review* did circulate a questionnaire, not to the alumnae and alumni in general, but to a list of a hundred or so names, many of which were provided by Marilyn. Among the several questions about operations were two which asked what appeals most about the *Review* and whether or not the respondents were satisfied about the content of the *Review*.

I agree with you that those questions might sound homophobic, and indeed I was at first concerned that this might be the case. It wasn't.

Another questionnaire circulated earlier went further. It asked what the respondent liked most/least about KR's content from a list that included multicultural, feminist, and gay/lesbian topics. It also enquired about race, age and ethnic background. This, too, might sound homophobic, but was not. The questions were, in fact, in a readership survey designed by Marilyn.

As you know, rumors can be terribly destructive, especially when Goebbels-like repetition leads even enlightened persons to wrongly believe in their truth.

David Lynn and I are pained and disheartened at the prospect that rumors such as the one you cited will be believed and will make it more difficult for the *Review* to carry on in the tradition of inclusiveness that Marilyn so ably championed here and to which we are unalterably committed.

One of those difficulties is that fine writers such as you might opt not to contribute their work for fear that they would be seen as condoning a homophobic environment. It's a self-fulfilling prophesy: *KR* is said to not want to be inclusive therefore writers on under-represented topics do not offer their works to *KR* therefore *KR* indeed becomes less inclusive.

Ah, well, I sometimes feel when responding to a note such as yours as if I'm being asked if I still beat my spouse.

I do hope that your withdrawal of “The Troubador<sic>,” is prompted by an inability to schedule it sooner than<sic> the date Marilyn gave you, rather than a protest against an imagined hostility.

In any case, your manuscript is enclosed. I hope to see it in print someday. It's too

good to keep hidden.

Sincerely,

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

Clayton Eshleman to *The Kenyon Review* 27.07.94

English Department
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197
313.483.9787

sulfur

Editor
Clayton Eshleman

Managing Editor
Caryl Eshleman

27 July 1994

dear Kenyon Review:

enclosed this thing I am supposed to sign.

I also state that from everything I have heard, the firing of Marilyn Hacker was irresponsible and sadistic on the part of Kenyon College, taking place, as I believe it did, after May 10th, 1994.

I am doing all I can to make the literary community at large aware of this unfairness.

Clayton Eshleman

Marilyn Hacker to Cy Wainscott

29.07.94

FROM PARIS

July 29, 1994

Dear Cy,

Thanks for your letter and thanks, too, for being enough of a mensch to send me copies of your responses to various letters. Needless to say, I've heard about, even been sent copies of your "damage control" letter to contributors, with comments ranging from "damn clever, that Wainscott!" to "what the expetives<sic> deleted does this mean?" to (frankly) "he doth protest too much." Of course I understand why you had to write it, and regret that you were put in that position.

I was a bit disturbed by your responses. The one to Bruce Berling, with its accretion of abstract substantives racism, xenophobia, religious zealotry -- moves in the direction of implying that "MH is, you know, a bit hysterical ..." and what MH was, in fact, an incompetent money manager. You didn't seem to think that when we worked together, and I recall your saying that the trustees might well use the college's real financial problems as a cover to implement a decision that was at least partially political. (Paul Healey saying to Jennifer Clarvoe: "Isn't it true that the content of the KR has become much more narrow under the present editorship?" -- and the infamous questionnaire, seem to me, and not only to me, to indicate that something besides penny-pinching was going on.)

I wish you had been present at that kangaroo court to which I was subjected by Jordan and Nelson. You know, because I told you, everything that follows, but I'm including it in this letter precisely because I want it to be on the record.

Jordan and Nelson (Jordan more precisely, Nelson was largely silent) made a big production of accusing me of two "major" missteps. One, that the magazine was losing money on bookstore sales because of the number of unsold copies destroyed, and the high per-copy production cost, as compared to what could be made per copy after the booksellers' & distributors' percentage was subtracted. Yes -- a real problem, albeit one that could be attributed to "growing pains" because of the 400% increase in bookstore distribution. Also, a problem that could more reasonably be laid in the lap of the previous ME. But, most importantly, a problem that they knew about because Hacker & Wainscott had reported it to them as a problem, along with the steps already taken to solve it -- raising the cover price cutting the number of pages, cutting the take of distributors with under a 50 % sell-through -- four months earlier.

My second mortal sin was an invented one: "We have in our hands a letter in which you ask subscribers to petition the college to keep the KR publishing 4 times a year when we are considering cutting it down to 3." For a moment, I honestly didn't know what they meant! I had never called for a petition on anything. (The AWP petition to save the KR with MH as editor, was written, printed & passed around by Adrienne Rich and Jean Valentine -- I didn't see it until it was printed out. And it didn't mention quarterly publication.) What they meant was a first draft of the annual fundraising letter to subscribers, which you had seen, and which had been sent to

Janet Roelofs' office for approval and/or suggested changes. It was a slightly changed version of the fundraising letter to contributors, sent out in November, which you'd thought wouldn't work, and which brought in \$4600, more or less, from 415 letters. There was, in both letters, a "laundry list" of "what we'll do with your contributions" and "keep the KR publishing quarterly" was, indeed, one of a dozen or so items -- which could have been blue-penciled out at Janet's or anyone else's suggestion: those letters normally went through three or four drafts between the development office & myself, sometimes with the ME's input, before finally being sent out. (And I'm not aware of first drafts of fundraising letters having previously gone to the president's office.)

That, in short, was all they could come up with as a justification for their financial vote-of-no-confidence. Except that, when I brought up the fact that, due to cuts in the production costs (largely thanks to MH working her tail off), the college subsidy, estimated at \$137K for FY93/94, would actually only be something like \$94K, Joe Nelson said "Oh no! It's really \$140, because that \$43K represents gifts and grants which are not necessarily repeatable. That money is part of the deficit."

I would like to call your attention to the fact that, while Kenyon does mysteriously insist upon including "gifts and grants" in the "deficit" column in bookkeeping for the KR (against the advice of Lila Wallace consultants -- because gifts and grants are a legitimate part of the income of a non-profit arts organisation) -- they are always included as estimated income in making up a projected budget for the following FY. Essentially, though, PJ & JN seemed to be saying that money I'd raised was really a kind of "loss," which was also being counted against me.

I would like merely to suggest here, and to have it on the record, that if I had actually been an incompetent money manager, or even an inefficient publishing executive, they would have been able to come up with some more substantial example of my inadequacies than what I've just described. The defense rests.

I'm risking, I know, belaboring the obvious in writing to you that it is not surprising if writers and readers attracted to a journal by the policies of a particular editor do not retain confidence in that journal when that editor is fired. (Especially if the journal was quite different under previous editors.) If I had resigned, because Columbia University or the Hudson Review or the MacArthur Foundation had made me an offer I didn't want to refuse, and a new editor had been named, even without my recommendation, no one would question the change, until at least a few issues compiled by the new editor had appeared.

I really regret that you find yourself doing Kenyon College's dirty work.

I was relieved to learn that copies of all those letters -- the reactions to my dismissal are being kept on file. Whatever happens, writer/reader response like that is part of the magazine's history. (Also for the record, I believe that I am the only (ex) editor of the KR who did not resign voluntarily -- in 55 years -- unless you count the end of D Lynn's stint as acting editor, since he had applied for the job.)

I was, though, surprised to learn that you meant you wouldn't divulge to me contributors' addresses! Believe me, I didn't want those names to incite them to

protest to the KR, or to Jordan, or anyone else. (I think that the "damage control" letter may inspire as much indignation as it does confidence, but I wasn't responsible for that.) What's ironic is that, in December, I lost my address book, which contained many of those names & addresses (some of which had been there before they were in Doris Jean's Rolodex) -- and a combination of illness, work pressure, and the fact that they were in the office got in the way of my taking a Saturday morning at DJD's ddesk<sic> & copying them into the new one. I wanted the addresses I requested to encourage some of them (the women) to submit MSS to the Barnard New Women Poets Competition; the men were writers I wanted to contact about a panel on "Emerging Male Writers of Color" for AWP next year. The panel has been temporarily shelved. But I would appreciate, if you won't send me the addresses, your having a copy of the enclosed flyer sent to the following: Reetika Vazirani, Diana Garcia, Melissa Cannon, Carolyn Beard Whitlow, Aleida Rodriguez, Toni Mirosevich. Maybe with an "MH has requested thqt<sic> you be sent this."

What happens if I'm asked to guest edit an issue of Ploughshares or if a project under discussion, of an anthology of American Jewish poets, materializes? Will I not be able to get writers' addresses from the KR so I can solicit work from them? Should I have eloped with the Rolodex?

If David Lynn can organise a reading at New Dramatists, I suppose there will be one. I would have done that organizing in May, or over the summer, if I were still editor.

I'm really glad they've given you that journalism class! I hope Kenyon actually comes to appreciate the Kentucky Derby capabilities of the warhorse they've got pulling a plow!

I'm finishing up yet another course of antibiotics, for the same old bronchitis. Otherwise well. I said I'd go to Utah for the month of April, after a long weekend of readings and panel discussions as part of the (annual) Tucson Poetry Festival at the end of March. (I'm hoping Karyn will take a few days vacation time & come to Arizona with me.) In the meantime, I'll be signing up at the 57th St. unemployment office in October. I think I said that Karyn's insurace<sic> (under the auspices of Columbia U.) will cover me as a domestic partner, so that's a big worry off my mind. It's been unusually hot, & even humid, in Paris, but that's still 10° cooler than hot & humid in NY or Gambier, and better than omnipresent rain: I have a fan, I'm not complaining!

Oh -- I believe a contributor's copy of the current issue of the current issue<sic> Poetry Iremand<sic> (bright pink cover) was sent to me at the KR. Could you have it sent to me -- NY address, & book rate -- please? I don't have ther<sic> address either. Also -- were there letters either to me opr<sic> to the office from either June Jordan or Rafael Campo? They both asked if I had "gotten the letter" each sent.

All best to you & Judy,

Marilyn

Toi Derricotte to *The Kenyon Review* Editors

06.08.94

TOI DERRICOTTE

7958 Inverness Ridge Road Potomac, MD 20854
(301)299-2874

August 6, 1994

The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Editors:

I was most disheartened by Marilyn Hacker's removal from her position as Editor of The Kenyon Review. I have felt that The Kenyon Review was one of the most important and forward thinking magazines of our time. Without Marilyn Hacker's vision it will be impossible for The Kenyon Review to continue that work.

Therefore, with much regret I cancel my subscription, and will not send poems to the magazine in the future.

Sincerely,

Toi Derricotte

Cy Wainscott to Toi Derricotte 11.08.94

August 11, 1994

Toi Derricotte
7958 Inverness Ridge Road
Potomac, MD 20854

We share your regret about Marilyn's departure and regret losing you as a most valued contributor and as a subscriber.

Vision, of course, isn't heritable. But I doubt that you will see any departure from the principles of inclusive excellence that Marilyn advanced during her tenure as editor.

I hope that in time you will see that esteem for Marilyn and patronage of a magazine that seeks to follow her literary vision are not incompatible.

We'll have your refund in the mail as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Cy Wainscott

Refund request to Shirley Slaughter 8-12-94

Cornelius Eady to Cy Wainscott

27.08.94

Stony Brook
The Poetry Center

Director

Cornelius Eady

Advisory Board

Carol Marburger, Chair

Joseph Auner

Siv Cedering

Paula Cohen

David Ferguson

Marilyn Hechler

E. Ann Kaplan

Jonathan Levy

Jack Ludwig

Thomas Maresca

D. Terence Netter

James Rubin

Mark Sakitt

Mary Samios

Jerry Schubel

Louis Simpson

Father Robert S. Smith

James Watson

Claire Nicolas White

8-27-94

Cy Wainscott

Managing Editor

The Kenyon Review

Kenyon College

Gambier, Ohio, 43022-9623

Dear Mr. Wainscott,

It is with great regret that I write this letter to you, to serve notice that I will not be renewing my subscription or submitting any new material to The Kenyon Review. Your form letter of June 15, 1994 was in all respects, an insult to my intelligence, and I'm sure I am not the only writer who has responded in outrage to your clumsy attempt at damage control. The thinly-laced double talk of paragraphs three and four ("the *financial feasibility* of continuing the *highly-subsidized* review" indeed!) leave little doubt in my mind that there is more to your dismissal of Marilyn Hacker than

money, and again, I am insulted as well as amazed that you felt that a form letter to us would be so persuasive that we would not be able to detect the altogether phony tone of your "explanation".

As for the other part of your letter, well, though of course it will be useless to argue this point with you, I have little hope that a new editor, picked and approved of by your current board of college trustees will be permitted, even if he or she wishes, to fully continue the inclusive policy Marilyn Hacker has begun, a policy, I am quite sure, that has ruffled the feathers of more than a few colleagues and trustees there, from her basic premise that excellence in American writing isn't restricted by class, race or sex, to her insistence that these same writers be considered critically as well as having their work published within the pages of the review. (a perfect example being Toi Derricotte's review on the work of Yusef Komunyakaa before his wining<sic> the Pulitzer- *no other* journal or review cared to give his work an overview- or a change that has been long overdue for mainstream "quality" literary magazines in America, and it is difficult to believe -- despite your insistence to the contrary -- that changing the public face of one the oldest mainstays on the literary scene could be accomplished with *no resistance whatsoever* from your English Department, or board. Quite simply, it appears to me that some unknown number of trustees, "uncomfortable" with what Marilyn was doing, (and I've little doubt, who she was and what she *represented* to them) banded together to oust her, flexed their financial muscles, and you lost your nerve. I am sure you are well aware of how simple it is to manipulate policy considered too "politically correct" within an English Department or remove an "undesirable" colleague without appearing to look unsavory. Believe me, I am more than familiar with the "reasonable" tone in your letter that attempts to head off and undercut all possibility for examination or reply. Your "note" simply reeks of it, And I shudder to think of what the Review will look like two years or so down the road, after the backlog of material Marilyn Hacker accepted before her departure is printed, and you and your board believes the furor has died down.

So, given the present situation, and as a writer of color who counts himself among the many who have felt the sting of inclusion during their writing career, I feel I am left with little choice but to count The Kenyon Review among those magazines (like Poetry and APR) that has made the regretful choice to become more and more supercilious in response to the changes it detects in the literary status quo. Thanks for proving once again, if proof was still needed in this very decisive time, that cultural landscape of America at the end of the 20th century is a battlefield. I will miss the brief moment of possibility that was once the Kenyon Review. And I wish you luck-- Mark Twain was only wrong once.

Cornelius Eady

Cornelius Eady to Marilyn Hacker 27.08.94

Stony Brook
The Poetry Center

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Cornelius Eady

Advisory Board

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Mary Samios

Jerry Schubel

Louis Simpson

Father Robert S. Smith

James Watson

Claire Nicolas White

8-27-94

Marilyn Hacker
230 West 105th St.
New York, NY 10025

Dear Marilyn,

I am writing to an address provided by the Poets and Writers Directory in the hope that if this isn't your permanent address, this letter will be forwarded to where ever you are now. I just wanted to let you know how pissed off I was by the form letter from Wainscott, and to make you aware of my response to him.

This is the second time in a year I've heard of a lesbian writer who lost their position at a college; the other is Nuula Archer, a poet at Cleveland State University, who is in danger of losing her tenure in the English Dept. CSU claims she's a personality problem, but her troubles there really seemed to began<sic> when she initiated the Audre Lord<sic> award, which was to be a literary prize for lesbian poets of color.

As of my writing this, she has been removed as the Director of their Poetry Center, and as I said, she's in great danger of losing tenure. I hope this isn't the beginning of a trend.

I can't begin to tell you how sorry (and angry) I am to hear about happened to you at Kenyon Review. I hope, when they begin to see the falling subscriptions, that it finally sinks in that they can't pull something like this and hope that a thinly - veiled excuse will cover their actions. I hope my letter, and the letters of the hundreds of writers (and readers) who understood and applauded your direction at the Review will help to lessen the sting of this moment. Personally, I feel that I have lost a safe harbor in the otherwise homogeneous landscape that makes up so much of mainstream American writing. I'm sure I'm not the only writer who feels this way. May we all have the strength to resist the world people like Cy Wainscott would like to visit upon us. Be well.

In support,

Cornelius Eady

State University of New York at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, New York 11794-5350
516-632-7463

Nancy R. Harrison to David Lynn

07.09.94

HC12, Box 169F
Anthony, NM 88021

7 Sept. 1994

David H. Lynn
Ed., The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Dear Mr. Lynn:

I am writing to register my disbelief and disappointment upon learning that Marilyn Hacker has been fired from her position as Editor of The Kenyon Review. I have found the magazine – under her editorship – to be, as I have told many friends and acquaintances in the last year or so, to be among the finest, if not the finest literary journal in the country. The diversity and vigor, the quality of the work presented under her editorship has been remarkable – the reason for my continued interest and support of the magazine. I am sorely disappointed to hear of this loss – and it is that, a loss. The dimension and depth Ms. Hacker brought to The Kenyon Review is unlikely in my view, to continue without her. I am afraid my own support for this publication is likely to flag as well.

I am shocked at this move. If homophobia is implicated in any way, it is a prejudice implemented at great expense not only to the magazine but to the subscribers, of whom I have been one – and a very enthusiastic one at that as I have watched the quality of The Kenyon Review's offerings grow from strength to strength under Marilyn Hacker's editorship. To let her go is a wrong move, to say the least. Certainly not a very smart one. If there were a chance of getting her back I would suggest you try it. Otherwise, you will lose many of the rest of us – The Kenyon Review's subscribers and supporters as well.

Sincerely,

Nancy R. Harrison

Wallis Wilde-Menozzi to Cy Wainscott

08.09.94

Via Monte Penna 12
Parma 43100, Italy

September 8, 1994

Dear Cy Wainscott,

Your letter about Marilyn Hacker's firing reached me (Italian maids are very creative) a few weeks ago. These issues probably never have "one truth," because we as human beings often see things differently; yet surely truth exists. As a reader and a contributor I wish that I had more certainty about the "facts." I have not received my summer issue so perhaps you address the change there. I do not know Marilyn well. I met her once & her intensity, intelligence, determination and vulnerability all left strong impressions. She did write to me after she was fired and I must say she never mentioned "homophobia" as a cause, in fact your letter in that sense surprised me.

Marilyn had/has a far-reaching idea of <ill>. The pages of Kenyon so noticeably began to lift, not only in variety, but in the audible pitch of enthusiasms and outcries with her editorship. As a reader, I felt grateful for her vast reach. I hope that within all the inner workings that led you to your decision, that her unique abilities were always held in the higher regard. As someone who grew up in the Midwest, I hope, too, that "homophobia" was not a pressure, (if not from staff), arising among alumnae and trustees. If liberal arts colleges can't defend individual differences who can?

Thus probably like many others, I am slightly hesitant about submitting. I have been proud to be published in Kenyon, but I need to know that Kenyon Review in its present incarnation embodies the same spirit of tolerance and curiosity that Marilyn's issues showed.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ms. Wallis Wilde-Menozzi

Marilyn Hacker to Cy Wainscott

10.09.94

Marilyn Hacker
33, rue de Turenne
75003 Paris

Sept. 10 1994

Dear Cy,

I think I'd said that I was going to improvidently treat myself to this month in Paris, after using the plane ticket I had to return to New York (in order to beging<sic> the semester at Kenyon) to spend a couple of weeks with Karyn on & after her birthday -- she took four days off, for once, vacation and not sick time, and we went to Montreal, where neither of us had been: a good little vacation, as was spending the Labor Day weekend in Manhattan.

On a less relaxed subject, I've received more than a dozen letters and phone calls expressing confusion and/ or indignation from Kenyon Review subscribers who'd heard that I was canned, through your letter or otherwise, and then received subscription renewal letters with my signature. I think it would be entirely to the magazine's advantage for David to write his own subscription renewal plug, with his own signature, and get it into circulation immediately, or as soon as SPFS can make the change. This may well have already been done. The aforementioned confusion/ indignation is only going to generate more irate letters on your desk.

The couple of weeks in New York also enabled me to spend some time with Iva, who was there for five days before the term started. She'd had a fairly good, if slightly boring summer, and was in good form. (John Anderson told her that the trustees had advised him not to hire her, because she's my daughter -- but that he was very pleased that he had because of the quality of her work.) I spoke to her again after classes had started, and she's really pleased with her courses and her room. And is becoming, not surprisingly, more and more adult and astute.

Enjoy the Fall perennials. Best to Judy.

Marilyn

Pamela McClure to Phillip Jordan 12.09.94

Stephens College
Columbia, Missouri 65215 • (314) 442-2211

Philip Jordan, President
Ransom Hall
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

September 12, 1994

Dear President Jordan,

Recently I became informed about the dismissal of Marilyn Hacker as editor of *The Kenyon Review*. This is an unfortunate event--not only have I enjoyed reading the work found in its pages, but I have used *The Kenyon Review* with writing classes both at Stephens College and at the University of Missouri. Because of Marilyn Hacker's dismissal--the dismissal of an exceptional writer and editor who clearly values literature-- I will no longer read *The Kenyon Review* and I will no longer use it in my classrooms.

Sincerely,

Pamela McClure

Languages and Literature
Stephens College,
Columbia, MO 65215

MH – everyone at Missouri & Stephens is mortified. Wish I had clout + big bucks –
P. McClure

Ron Mohring to *The Kenyon Review* 15.09.94

September 15, 1994

Poetry Editors
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier OH 43022

Dear Editors:

Please withdraw immediately from editorial consideration the poetry manuscript I submitted earlier this month (poems "The Duck House," "The Thoughtof<sic> It," and "Under").

I have decided as well to cancel my subscription to the Kenyon Review, effective immediately. These actions are taken as protest against the firing of Marilyn Hacker by the Board of Regents of Kenyon College, which I feel was an unconscionable display of cowardice.

I am urging my peers to take similar actions to demonstrate our overwhelming disapproval Ms. Hacker's dismissal.

Ron Mohring
812 Fairbanks
Houston TX 77009

cc: Managing Editor, Subscriptions
Phillip Jordan, President, Kenyon College

Requested refund (\$11) being requested of accounts payable
9-22-94

Gary Pembrook to *The Kenyon Review*

16.09.94

9-16-94

Kenyon Review –

Please cancel my subscription till Marilyn Hacker is rehired. Please send a refund check for undelivered copies to address below.

Jane Miller's letter says it best.

Gary Pembrook
190 St. Clair Dr.
Akron Ohio 44307

216-434-6074
216-996-3397

An Open Letter to Kenyon College

Phillip Jordan, President
Ransom Hall
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

On behalf of the advocacy committee of the Associated Writing Programs, representative of a consortium of writers and writing institutes, I wish to protest the firing of Marilyn Hacker as editor of *The Kenyon Review*.

Since Marilyn's appointment as editor, *The Kenyon Review* has set the standard for literary magazines. Its contents represent multi-culturalism at its best; in the review's pages, one can read across the literary spectrum, from formal to experimental work, and find the tough issues of the day confronted in imaginative, demanding language.

It is because of the resurgence of *The Kenyon Review* itself that many readers "discovered" Kenyon College, either again or for the first time. It is ironic that Marilyn Hacker should be dismissed just as she has earned the respect of the entire field for several years of insightful editing, confronting charged socio-political issues – multi-cultural topics, feminist material, homosexual realities, environmental concerns – always with the most rigorous application of high literary standards. The excellence of the magazine is universally applauded.

When confronted with fiscal concerns, the Board of Regents had many options. We reject the decision to fire Marilyn Hacker and can only conclude that the Board's decision is an act of cowardice and that, further, implicit in the act is a censoring of the magazine's obviously outspoken editorial practices, practices central to a belief in freedom of speech. We abhor the kind of activity that summarily removes that which it cannot control.

I have recommended a boycott to our thousands of constituents, many of whom know Marilyn's reputation for excellence; I have also recommended that those who wish to act in support of Ms. Hacker's editorial practices cancel their subscriptions after the fall, 1994 issue, when the magazine will reflect new management.

The writing community cannot conscience sudden and inexplicable acts of authority that dilute its rights. The Associated Writing Programs supports an unconstrained artistic environment. Given Kenyon College's history as a humane institution, we are sadly disappointed and disturbed by events there.

Sincerely,

Jane Miller
Vice President
AWP Board of Directors

Melanie Rae Thon to Cy Wainscott

17.09.94

Syracuse University 1870

17 September 1994

Dear Cy Wainscott:

I have decided to cancel my subscription to *Kenyon Review* after the next issue. It is my understanding that this issue will be the last one edited primarily by Marilyn Hacker. Though I hope the journal will maintain high standards, I feel I must cancel in protest of Marilyn Hacker's dismissal. I think she is a brilliant poet and editor, and that she made *Kenyon Review* one of the most passionate and interesting reviews available. I am saddened that the college did not defend her. Her critics were loud, I suppose, and perhaps held the power of money over the school, but her supporters are numerous.

Please refund the appropriate portion of my subscription fee.

Sincerely,

Melanie Rae Thon
Assistant Professor
Syracuse University

refund to:
Melanie Rae Thon
138 Harvard Place, #3
Syracuse, NY 13210

Refund payment order for \$11 issued 9-22-94. Expire date is 6/95.

Syracuse, New York 13244-1170 | 315-443-2173

Cy Wainscott to Wallis Wilde-Menozzi

19.09.94

The Kenyon Review

Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor David H. Lynn

Managing Editor Cy Wainscott

September 19, 1994

Wallis Wilde-Menozzi
Via Monte Pcma 12
Parma 43100, Italy

Thank you for your most insightful letter of September 8.

You say in it that you need to know that The Kenyon Review in its present incarnation embodies the same spirit of tolerance and curiosity that Marilyn's issues showed. I can tell you, at the risk of sounding mawkish or absolutist, that David Lynn and I deeply appreciate and endorse the tolerance and curiosity Marilyn championed and are determined to carry that spirit forward.

I can assure you, too, that we have had not the least indication from Kenyon College trustees, administrators or alumni, that we should follow any course other than the spirit of inclusiveness that, thanks to Marilyn, has come to be associated with the magazine.

Now, whether we will be as successful as Marilyn in presenting the full range of voices is an open question. The Review can and will continue to welcome and encourage diversity. But if fine writers who reflect diverse views withhold their work to protest Marilyn's dismissal, then achieving that diversity becomes just that more difficult<sic>.

Without question, we would like<sic> continue to receive your work. Such material is important to the quality of the literary world the Review seeks to reflect and important to the cause of tolerance in that world.

As you say, all of the above can be taken as assertions rather than "facts." I hope that you will at least be willing to give us the benefit of a doubt and will judge the Review on it<sic> performance.

Sincerely,

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

PS: Even though you met Marilyn only briefly, I believe your characterization of her ("intensity, intelligence, determination and vulnerability") to be one of the best and most concise I have read.

Vicki E. Linder to Philip Jordan

20.09.94

605 Milton Avenue
Casper, Wy 82601

Sept 20, 1994

Philip Jordan, President
Ransom Hall
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I was surprised to read in my copy of the Associated Writing Programs<sic> newspaper that Marilyn Hacker had been fired as editor of The Kenyon Review.

Although I do not have a subscription to cancel (it is my personal policy to subscribe to a different literary magazine every year), my short fiction was published in The Kenyon Review shortly before Hacker came on board, and I subscribed to the magazine for her first year as editor. I was pleased and surprised to read the work Hacker selected. I have often recommended the magazine to other writers and students as one of the only literary magazines that wasn't stuffy. Although Hacker did not take more of my stories, she always gave my work personal attention, and I did think that the unusual work she brought to the Review deserved its discerning audience.

I believe you owe the writing community some explanation for the dismissal of an innovative editor who was bringing attention to your college and Review with her exciting view of the diverse visions that American literature can and should be. I would certainly not subscribe to the Review again without one.

Sincerely,

Vicki E. Linder

E.J. Graff to Marilyn Hacker 20.09.94

E.J. Graff
197 Westminster Avenue
Watertown, MA 02172
phone 617.924.5172
fax 617.923.4956

September 20, 1994

Marilyn Hacker
230 West 105th Street
NY, NY 10025

Dear Marilyn,

I'd heard you were fired; the letter they sent out was bizarre, suggesting financial impropriety without making any direct accusation. So why *were* you fired? I was (and am) appalled -- you did such a fantastic job, giving the journal such quality and vitality. Are you putting up any public objection? I've been waiting to read some letter from you somewhere. Have you some reason not to?

Of course I'm happy to let the journal know I object to seeing your name on renewal letters. Meanwhile, I hope you've found something better, and that New York is more rewarding than mid-Ohio.

We'll be in New York for the *Astraea* gala the weekend of November 4/5, and probably a day or so before or after. Will you be around?

Best,

EJG

David Lynn to D.W. Fenza 21.09.94

The Kenyon Review

Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Phone (614) 427-3339
Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor David H. Lynn *Managing Editor* Cy Wainscott

September 21, 1994

D. W. Fenza
Editor, AWP Chronicle
Tallwood House
Mail Stop 1E3
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA 22030

Dear D. W. Fenza,

In opening the September issue of the AWP Chronicle today I came upon the "Open Letter to Kenyon College" by Jane Miller, the Vice President of AWP. I was surprised and disturbed to see the letter in its current form. When the original arrived at Kenyon earlier this summer the Managing Editor of the Kenyon Review, Cy Wainscott, replied to Ms. Miller, explaining a number of fundamental misapprehensions. Yet the letter you printed is identical with the original; it neither acknowledges our response nor corrects any of its errors. A copy of Cy Wainscott's reply is enclosed.

We, Cy and I and many others connected with the Kenyon Review, understand Ms. Miller's concern about Marilyn Hacker. Like her, we admire Marilyn Hacker as a poet, an editor, and a friend. The fact that Kenyon College did not renew her contract after four years was a blow we all felt. Yes, it is noble to stand up and defend your friends, as Ms. Miller does; it is ignoble, however, to do so by deliberately misrepresenting the case. It is unprofessional.

The fact that Kenyon College is indeed cutting its subsidy to the Review should be obvious, not merely in my becoming editor, but in our move to publish three rather than four times a year.

The fact that the content of the magazine was not at issue should be obvious in that we are committed to publishing everything Marilyn Hacker had already accepted--well over a year's worth of material. In addition, we have publicly stated (see "To Our Readers," Kenyon Review Fall 1994) that we intend to remain as aggressive as Marilyn in publishing emerging voices from many communities; we can only strive to be as distinguished as she. Neither Cy Wainscott nor I would have remained with the

magazine had the Kenyon College administration offered a single word of editorial intrusiveness.

It saddens me, it appalls me that in attempting to strike out at Kenyon College Jane Miller strikes out at the magazine that Marilyn Hacker did so much to distinguish and that we are working so hard to continue. The logic of her proposed boycott of KR is petty. No doubt it will be damaging. And the good of that to writers and readers?

I ask that you print this letter, perhaps along with Cy Wainscott's earlier response, in your October issue, and with the same bold prominence given to Jane Miller's Open Letter.

Sincerely yours,

David H. Lynn

cc: Jane Miller

Reetika Vazirani to Doris Jean Dilts

22.09.94

P.O. Box 115
Blacksburg, VA 24063

22 September 94

Dear Ms. Dilts,

The Fall issue just arrived; I am enjoying it. In fact, I wanted to tell Raphael Campo that I liked his poems. Since I do not have his address, I was wondering if you could forward my note to him (it is already stamped).

I am awfully saddened that Marilyn Hacker is no longer to be with the KR. I hope the recent changes have not affected your position.

With thanks for your help, and best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Reetika Vazirani

Enc.

Trudy Lewis to *The Kenyon Review*

26.09.94

September 26, 1994

The Kenyon Review

P.O. Box 8062

Syracuse, New York 13217

To Whom It May Concern:

Please cancel my subscription to *The Kenyon Review*. I do not wish to support the firing of Marilyn Hacker, whose editorship is the reason I subscribed in the first place. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Trudy Lewis
213 Sanford Ave.
Columbia, MO 65203

Cy Wainscott to Vicki E. Linder

27.09.94

The Kenyon Review

Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Phone (614) 427-3339

Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor David H. Lynn

Managing Editor Cy Wainscott

September 27, 1994

Vicki E. Linder
605 Milton Avenue
Casper, WY 82601

We at *The Review* appreciate your taking the time to express your concerns about Marilyn Hacker's departure.

Certainly, Editor David Lynn and I share your esteem and appreciation for what Marilyn brought to *KR* through her editorship. We are determined to follow as best we can in that regard.

We believe with you that the writing community is owed some explanation for the dismissal. We have tried to provide that explanation (though neither of us was involved in the decision) through a notice David has included in our Fall 1994 issue and a note I sent to recent and current *KR* writers.

We are not a little concerned that AWP chose to ignore my response (which it has had since June) to Jane Miller's allegations. I'm enclosing a copy of those letters and hope you have an opportunity to read David's note in the fall *Review*.

I hope they will be helpful to you in reaching a conclusion. And, just in case you should be moved to subscribe to what we believe will continue to be the liveliest and most provocative of literary journals, I'll do what Marilyn usually did when corresponding with writers: enclose a subscription card.

Again, thanks for your interest.

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

Cy Wainscott to Melanie Rae Thon

28.09.94

September 28, 1994

Melanie Rae Thon
138 Harvard Place, # 3
Syracuse, NY 13210

Dear Melanie Rae Thon –

As you directed, we have cancelled the balance of your Kenyon Review subscription (the Winter and Spring 1995 issues) and have asked that a refund be sent to you.

You should know, though, that Marilyn Hacker had no “loud and powerful critics” against whom a defense was required of the college. Her brilliant work as an editor was widely respected in the college as elsewhere.

Contrary to some well-intentioned but ill-informed reports, the decision not to renew her contract as KR's first full-time editor was based solely on economic constraints. Her literary and editorial approach simply were not an issue.

We have been encouraged to continue the work she began and hope that in time you will return as a reader.

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

Cy Wainscott to Ron Mohring

28.09.94

September 28, 1994

Ron Mohring
812 Fairbanks
Houston, TX 77009

Ron –

At your request, we are returning, with regret, your poetry submissions and have instructed that your subscription be cancelled and a refund issued to you.

I gather that your actions were prompted by Jane Miller's well-intentioned but ill-informed letter in the AWP Chronicle. The real truth is that Marilyn Hacker's contract was not renewed because of economic considerations (she had been the only full-time editor of KR) and had nothing to do with her splendid work in bringing the magazine to a new level of excellence.

We hope to continue the work she began and hope that in time you will return as a reader and contributor.

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

Sesshu Foster to David Lynn

28.09.94

David H. Lynn
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio
43022

9-28-94

Dear David H. Lynn and the Kenyon Review, I have subscribed and given gift subscriptions of the Kenyon Review to friends, I think, because of the strengths Marilyn Hacker brought to your magazine. I regret that she no longer serves as editor. I do not understand why she no longer serves in any editorial function whatsoever. If the Kenyon Review ceases to be "an environment for the best in new writing, not only by established writers but also by emerging writers and those working in non-traditional genres and with perspectives of diverse populations" then it will revert to the average, run-of-the-mill level of literary journals, and I will be saddened that it no longer focuses on the cutting edge.

Sincerely,

Sesshu Foster,
University of Iowa Writer's Workshop,
4th Floor EPB,
Iowa City 52242-1316

Christopher James to Philip Jordan

29.09.94

5168 Buchanan
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011

September 29, 1994

Phillip Jordan
President
Ransom Hall
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear President Jordan:

I cannot echo strongly enough the words of Jane Miller, Vice President of the Associated Writing Program's Board of Directors. In the last few years, the Kenyon Review has gained an excellent reputation in the contemporary literary community as a journal that publishes exceptional works reflecting the diversity of American culture. Much of the magazine's success in this respect can be attributed to the outstanding work and reputation of Marilyn Hacker.

She was the reason that I first chose to subscribe to The Kenyon Review. Of all the journals I could have supported, the Kenyon Review boasted the highest editorial quality and the most fascinating cross-section of literature available today.

The Board of Regents' action to dismiss Marilyn Hacker can be read as nothing more than an attempt to censor her and render The Kenyon Review less outspoken in its editorial policy of representing diverse cultural communities. Although I am a faculty member in English, I find I can no longer recommend The Kenyon Review to my students or retain my subscription to the magazine. I refuse to support, even tacitly, such an unjustified, shameful act.

Sincerely,

Christopher James
Iowa State University

Karen -- do not send renewal notices. Remove from file now
Did expire 9/94 Reinstated to 3/95.

D.W. Fenza to David Lynn and Cy Wainscott 29.09.94

The Associated Writing Programs
National Headquarters
Tallwood House, Mail Stop 1E3
George Mason University • Fairfax, VA 22030
703/993-4301 • Fax: 703/993-4302

AWP/ODU International Writers Center:
Old Dominion University • Norfolk, VA 23529-0079
804/683-3839 • Fax: 804/683-5901

AWP

•
The
Associated
Writing
Programs

Thursday, September 29, 1994

FAX

Cy Wainscott
David H. Lynn
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022-9623

Dear Cy Wainscott and David H. Lynn:

We would be glad to consider publishing a single letter from either one or both of you in response to Jane Miller's open letter. We must be first requested to publish a letter before we dare do so; I was not solicited to publish Mr. Wainscott's letter to Jane Miller, although I did receive a copy.

A national, nonprofit association of writers and writing programs supported by its membership, federal grants, and gifts
The letter should not exceed two pages. We would need the letter by Wednesday morning, October 5th, 1994.

Please FAX it to (703) 993-4302. Thank you.

Sincerely,

D.W. Fenza

c: Johnson, Miller

Jay Rogoff to Marilyn Hacker

29.09.94

Jay Rogoff
35 Pinewood Avenue
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-2622
(518) 584-0912

29 September 1994

Ms. Marilyn Hacker
230 West 105th Street
Apt. 10A
New York, NY 10025

Dear Marilyn,

I'm writing with some good news and a request for a favor. My sequence of baseball poems, *The Cutoff*, has won the Washington Prize and will be published early in 1995 by The Word Works in Washington, D.C. Since you were one of the first to appreciate and publish some of the poems, I was wondering if you would agree to provide a blurb for the book. If you feel you can, I'll be happy to send you a copy of the manuscript. I've enclosed a stamped return envelope for your reply.

I've put off writing you to express my combined shock and bewilderment over the *Kenyon* mess, primarily because I honestly still don't know quite what to make of it all. I had heard nothing about it--not even rumors--until receiving the Cy Wainscot<sic> letter this summer, and of course I have seen the letter of protest in the current *AWP*. In the absence of any other kind of evidence, it was also difficult to know how to respond, whether to understand your release as a politically motivated move and refuse to submit to *Kenyon* any longer, or to take on good faith Wainscot & David Lynn's professed support of you and believe the motivation was financial. In the meantime, I want you to know that I have not pulled the review of Howard & Hudgins you invited me to write, and that it will appear in Spring. I also want you to know that under your editorship *Kenyon* became something altogether extraordinary, and I am obviously not saying that simply because of your generosity to me. I can only hope that the magazine will continue to be the kind of open and exciting place you made it.

I hope your health has been good and that in spite of the stress of the past months you're able to get some poems written. I'm very much looking forward to your new book, which I understand is due any week now. And I hope I can keep sending you poems from time to time, whether or not you assume an editorial position elsewhere.

I'll look forward to hearing from you about the blurb. Please take good care.

All best,

Jay

Ron Mohring to Cy Wainscott

01.10.94

October 1 1994

Cy Wainscott, Managing Editor
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier OH 43022

Dear Mr. Wainscott:

Thank you for your personal response dated 09/28 re: the withdrawal of my poems and cancellation of my subscription. I shall miss the *Kenyon Review* very much and wish I could continue as a subscriber. As a poet, I have had the highest respect for the journal and hoped to one day see my own work appear there.

As to the possibility of returning "as a reader and contributor," I repeat: I should be very pleased to do so, provided some reasonable public explanation of Ms Hacker's dismissal. I understand that she did not resign, but was fired. Your letter indicates that "her contract was not renewed because of economic considerations." Is this Marilyn Hacker's assessment, or the official word put forth by the Board of Regents? Has Ms Hacker publicly discussed her departure? Could you direct me to any published statement to this effect?

As an indication of my serious interest in pursuing this dialogue, I have enclosed an SASE for your reply.

Ron Mohring
812 Fairbanks
Houston TX 77009

Amanda Powell to David Lynn

03.10.94

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

October 3, 1994

David H. Lynn
Editor
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022

Dear Mr. Lynn:

I have been dismayed to hear (in the AWP Journal, KR, and elsewhere) of Marilyn Hacker's dismissal as editor. I have heard references to why this occurred but no direct explanation. The AWP letter from Jane Miller suggests that AWP members cancel subscriptions to KR in protest of Hacker's firing. This makes some sense to me--Hacker's dismissal from that position is an enormous loss to the KR and to publishing in this country. (I say this with no disrespect to your own future work in the position, an unknown quantity. I am sorry to hear that direction will include "more prose"!)

However, I like to have more information before I take a stand. Could you please provide me with the "official version" of Hacker's dismissal? I imagine you are receiving similar requests and have something written up. Put together with the mixed news and gossip of literary networks, this will provide me with some idea of what occurred. I will then decide whether to cancel my subscription.

I am terribly sorry that the board of directors of KR has taken this decision. What a sad thing for readers and writers.

Sincerely,

Amanda Powell

Home address: 3520 Glen Oak Drive, Eugene, OR 97405

DEPARTMENT OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES
College of Arts and Sciences • Eugene OR 97403-1233 • Telephone (503) 346-4021 •
Fax (503) 346-4030

An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution committed to cultural diversity
and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

Melanie Rae Thon to Cy Wainscott

03.10.94

3 October 94

Dear Cy Wainscott –

Thank you for taking the time to write. I'm confused by the whole business with Marilyn Hacker. You may recall I wrote this summer and then decided to keep my subscription. Then the wave of publicity this fall made me think I'd been too passive. So this note is to apologize and express my regrets if I've now erred in the other direction.

I don't know Marilyn Hacker personally – if I did I'd simply ask her.

In the meantime, I hope you remain true to your vision, and that Marilyn's vision will be an inspiration.

Sincerely,

Melanie Rae Thon

Cy Waincott to Sesshu Foster

06.10.94

October 6, 1994

Sesshu Foster
University of Iowa Writer's Workshop
4t Floor EPB
Iowa City, IA 52242-1316

Dear Sesshu Foster –

David Lynn and I thank you for your recent note of concern about the change in editors at The Kenyon Review.

We want to assure you that the Review will not cease to be “an environment for the best in new writing, not only by established writers but also by emerging writers and those working in non-traditional genres and with the perspective of diverse populations.” And we certainly don't intend that it will not “revert to the average, run-of-the-mill level of literary journals.

Be assured, too, that David intends to retain KR's focus on the cutting edge and to pursue presentation of literary excellence in the spirit Marilyn Hacker so well established here.

With you, we regret that the economics off continuing the magazine has meant that Marilyn is not here. She was KR's first and only full-time editor and the college, even after factoring in severe operational and publication economies, felt it could no longer continue the magazine with a full-time editor. Marilyn, as you may have read, is quite bitter about the decision and has intimated that base and ulterior motives were in force. We, who, by the way, had nothing to do with the decision, can only assure you that this was not the case.

Again, we appreciate your concern, want you to know that we enjoyed the excerpt from “City Terracc Field Manual” (in our Winter 1995 issue, which should be out December 12) and hope the book does well. David has asked me to pass along to you his hope that you will let him see your future work.

Regards,

Cy Waincott

Cy Wainscott to Christopher James

06.10.94

October 6, 1994

Christopher James
5168 Buchanan
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011

Dear Christopher James --

I am sorry to learn from your letter to Kenyon College President Philip Jordan that you have followed Jane Miller's lead in confusing the issues involving Marilyn Hacker's departure from the editorship of The Kenyon Review.

Marilyn's brilliant direction in opening the Review to a more inclusive range of writers and genres, in presenting those voices to a wider and more diversified audience, in advancing the magazine to a preeminent position in publication of "leading-edge" new writing, simply has never been an issue. Never.

President Jordan told Marilyn Hacker in this context: "You have done just what we asked you to do." The college administration and trustees have explicitly stated that they do not wish to control or influence the content of the magazine. David Lynn has said upon accepting the editorship that he intended to continue the magazine in the inclusive spirit Marilyn established. He has repeated this in communications with the constituencies of the college and in his editorial comments in the Fall 1994 issue of KR. We continue to publish all works accepted by Marilyn, including, significantly, works not in the production pipeline.

The conclusion of this very small college with limited resources that, even after factoring in severe operational and publication economies, it could no longer afford to continue the magazine with a full-time editor (its first), could, I suppose, be a legitimate subject of debate.

But to accuse it, without recourse to objective inquiry, of base and ulterior motives is just plain wrong. And, I believe, advocating actions (cancelling subscriptions, discontinuing classroom use and the like) threatening the existence of a magazine whose editorial practices are unchanged but are now administered by another editor, smacks of a sort of economic bookburning. It grieves me that support for the principles of freedom of speech and inclusiveness can fall victim to personal disappointment.

This magazine exists for and cannot continue without readers such as you. I hope you will in time come to see that it merits your support.

Sincerely,

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

cc: Jordan, Lynn

Cy Wainscott to Ron Mohring

12.10.94

October 12, 1994

Ron Mohring
812 Fairbanks
Houston, TX 77009

Dear Ron Mohring -

I appreciate your continuing interest in the state of things concerning the editorship of The Kenyon Review. I'll try to be as responsive as possible.

Marilyn Hacker did not resign and deeply resented that her contract was not renewed. Her assessment was that the action was a personal attack against her. In a letter to supporters shortly after she was told that she would not be continued she said: "I was told the Board of Trustees and the administration 'did not have the confidence in me to work with them to lower the magazine's subsidy and further integrate it into the life of the college'."

As to public comment, I believe you have read Jane Miller's letter in AWP. You may not have seen the note to KR from new editor David Lynn in our Fall 1994 issue. The only other published reports of which I am aware are a notice in The Chronicle of Higher Education; an interview with Marilyn in Bay Windows, a Boston weekly; and another interview in the September issue of The Advocate. Copies of each are enclosed.

I am also enclosing my initial response (in June) to Jane Miller's letter (the one which she published in AWP's September issue), a copy of a letter to AWP from David Lynn. Also enclosed is a copy of a letter to Christopher James which may give a bit more insight into the issue.

The chronology of events of which I am aware runs something like this:

- In late 1993 we were told that, as part of a general reassessment of Kenyon College finances in light of a downturn in enrollment, a committee would be looking into the financial viability of The Review (the college contribution to the magazine's support had been in excess of half a million dollars over four years).
- In January 1994, the committee conducted extensive interviews with publishing experts, leading literary figures, the college community and others. Marilyn was asked to and provided a list of persons to be interviewed. Prospective interviewees we asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire invited response to, among many other topics, statements "I am/am not satisfied with the image of The Kenyon Review" and "I am/am not satisfied with the content of The Kenyon Review." This raised questions in Marilyn's mind and mine about where the committee might be coming from (even though in an earlier reader survey Marilyn had asked substantially the same questions).
- In late February or early March, Kenyon President Philip Jordan informed Marilyn and me that, in view of the uncertainty of continuing financial support by the college for the magazine, he could not assure us that our contracts would be renewed.
- In April the trustees voted to continue the magazine, with the proviso that severe

financial reforms would have to be made and that it expected the magazine to be self-supporting in three years.

- In May, Jordan told Marilyn that her contract would indeed not be renewed and announce<sic> the appointment of David Lynn as a part-time editor. (Marilyn has been KR's only full-time editor).
- In early July, the head of the trustee committee declared that it was imperative that the administration and trustees be totally excluded from editorial control of the magazine and that their interest be confined to the magazine's financial health and the contributions the magazine could make to the academic life of the college community.

That's the situation as far as I know it. I believe it unfortunate that Marilyn has chosen to believe – and encourage others to believe – that her departure was due to some base motive other than finances.

I hope all this has been helpful to you.

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

Cy Wainscott to Amanda Powell

12.10.94

Oct 12, 1994

Amanda Powell
3520 Glen Oak Drive
Eugene, OR 97405

Dear Amanda Powell –

David Lynn and I appreciate your concern over the departure of Marilyn Hacker and especially your willingness to withhold judgement until you have a better understanding of just what will happen. David has asked me to respond.

First, let me say that neither David nor I had any voice or role in the decision-making process, that we are both close friends of Marilyn and that we are both great admirers of her talents, courage and the vision she brought to The Kenyon Review.

There is, so far as we know, no published “official version” of the basis for the decision. Perhaps the closest approach to that is what Marilyn said in a letter to supporters: “I was told the Board of Trustees and the administration ‘did not have the confidence in me to work with them to lower the magazine’s subsidy and further integrate it into the life of the college’.”

From what we now know, that is not only the truth, but it is the whole truth. Marilyn was told by the college president “you have done exactly what we asked you to do (when hired as the magazine’s first full-time editor)” in expanding the inclusiveness, relevancy and exposure of the magazine.

The economic facts are that the college had subsidized the magazine in the amount of over half a million dollars in the last four years and, when an enrollment dip brought on a financial retrenchment of the entire college operation – including curtailing teaching positions and departmental budget cuts of 25 per cent and more, the Review was among those areas brought under close review.

The result of a study extending over several months was that the Review would be continued, but that the subsidy would have to be drastically reduced. Even after projected cost-cutting measures (eliminating the summer issue, fewer pages, cheaper paper, etc.) were factored in, the administration felt it could no longer continue with a full-time editor.

So much for the economics. What else was involved in the decision? Well, really, nothing.

- David (he’s a tenured member of the English Department, was interim editor of KR before Marilyn’s appointment and worked with Marilyn as an associate editor) said before accepting the editorship that he shared Marilyn’s vision for the magazine – making it an exemplar of inclusiveness in regard to perspective, orientation, gender, genre while fulfilling the magazine’s primary task of presenting the very best new writing of established and emerging authors.

- Neither David, nor I would be or remain associated with KR if we felt that there was

the slightest exclusionary motive in restructuring the magazine's staff.

- The administration and trustees have told us that they feel it imperative that they be and remain excluded from having any influence over the content of the magazine.
- David has committed the magazine to printing all the material selected by Marilyn – including, significantly, works not yet in production and scheduled to run as much as a year from now.

So what's all the flap about? Well, Marilyn just refuses to believe that there was not an ulterior motive. She's not dumb, far from it, but in this case she's just wrong.

I'm enclosing with this a copy of my response to Jane Miller (written in June) and David's letter to AWP (written after Jane's letter was published in September).

I hope all this will be of help. My suggestion though, is that you make your decision not on back-and-forth arguments and allegations, but on the bottom line – what appears in KR. If it veers away from what you have appreciated in Marilyn's vision, then drop it; if not, continue to support it.

Sincerely

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

Jacsun Shah to *The Kenyon Review*

12.10.94

The Kenyon Review

Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Phone (614) 427-3339

Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor David H. Lynn

Managing Editor Cy Wainscott

October 12, 1994

Dear Subscriber:

I am writing to you today for three good reasons--to introduce myself as the newly appointed editor of the *Review*, to thank you for being a loyal subscriber, and to seek your added support through a gift which will help us meet the rising costs of producing a literary magazine of quality.

My association with the *Review* is of long standing, first as a committed reader, then as an occasional contributor, and most recently as Associate Editor. This spring I was honored to be asked to take up the reins as Editor and to be able to combine editorship with continued service as a member of the English Department faculty at Kenyon College.

I well know that our readers are our strength, and I am very pleased that you are among our subscribers. It is unfortunately true, however, that subscription income and bookstore sales alone cannot cover the costs of author payments, printing, production and circulation. We need your added patronage to help ensure the continued health of the *Review* and the maintenance of its quality and distinctive character.

That is why I am asking you to give serious thought to becoming a Benefactor, Patron or Friend of the *Review* this year. We would be most grateful for your contribution and proud to list you among our supporters in an upcoming issue of the *Review*.

Thank you again for subscribing to the *Review* and also for considering a special gift this year to help ensure its continued high quality.

Sincerely,

David H. Lynn
Editor

Julie Fay to David Lynn 04.11.94

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Thank you again for subscribing to the *Review* and also for considering a special gift this year to help ensure its continued high quality.

Sincerely,

David H. Lynn
Editor

You have some nerve soliciting a donation! I have been meaning to cancel my subscription ever since I heard of Marilyn Hacker's cowardly firing. Please send me

a refund and take me off your mailing list. The Kenyon Review will remain well-known by literary America, but now for all the wrong reasons. Shame on you all.

Julie Fay
Director, Creative Writing Program,
East Carolina University
11/4/94

cc: Hacker

Bruce Weigl to David Lynn 16.10.94

The Kenyon Review
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022 TEL. 614-427-3339

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I wish to be a Friend of *The Kenyon Review*
Enclosed is my gift of \$100.

My company will match my gift (form enclosed)

BRUCE WEIGL
1251 S GARNER ST
STATE COLLEGE PA 16801

10-16-94

Dear David,

I subscribed to TKR because I felt Marilyn Hacker had brought the magazine into distinction. Now that she's been let go, I see no reason to renew.

Thank you,

Bruce Weigl

Judith Bechtel to David Lynn 17.10.94

Northern Kentucky University

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Literature and Language
Landrum Academic Center 500
(606) 572-5416

October 17, 1994

David H. Lynn
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, OH 43022-9623

Dear Dr. Lynn:

I note with regret that Marilyn Hacker has been removed a editor of The Kenyon Review. I thought she brought and<sic> depth and variety to the journal before her editorship had been missing. Besides that, her prestige as one of the most prominent poets alive in America today lent integrity to The Kenyon Review.

If there is any way of undoing her dismissal, many scholars and writers would be grateful.

Sincerely,

Judith Bechtel, Professor
Department of Literature & Language

Nunn Drive
Highland Heights, Kentucky 41099-1500

Northern Kentucky University is an equal opportunity institution.

Kim Vaeth to *The Kenyon Review*

17.10.94

The Kenyon Review

KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022 TEL. 614-427-3339

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KIM VAETH
104 WILLIAMS ST
JAMAICA PLAIN MA 02130-3661

Kim Vaeth
104 Williams Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

October 17, 1994

To Phillip Jordan, President & David Lynn, Editor:

I am cancelling my subscription to the Kenyon Review, effective immediately, as an expression of my outrage at the firing of Marilyn Hacker as Editor. Marilyn's exquisite editorship woke up *The Kenyon Review* from its 100 year sherry party and made it one of the most exciting and well respected literary magazines in the country, acknowledged by readers, writers and editors.

I reject the firing of Marilyn Hacker as having anything to do with fiscal concerns. In truth, with Marilyn Hacker as editor, subscriptions increased, donations increased, and grants were awarded and independent bookstores were ordering copies for their shelves. I conclude with the AWP Board of Directors that the Board of Regents' decision is an act of cowardice and a form of censorship of the magazine's outspoken editorial practices.

Along with thousands of others, I am sorely disappointed and disturbed by the cloaked actions at Kenyon. Please mail me any refund due from my subscription.

Sincerely,

Kim Vaeth

\$11 refund requested 10-27-94

Marilyn Hacker to David Lynn

18.10.94

Marilyn Hacker
230 West 105 St.
New York, N.Y. 10025

Oct. 18, 1994

David H. Lynn
The Kenyon Review
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear David,

The first issue of The Kenyon Review to appear under my editorship had been compiled by my predecessor: yourself, as acting editor, and the masthead indicated this by stating: Editor: Marilyn Hacker; Editor for This Issue: David H. Lynn. The following issue had both our names listed as "Editors for This Issue." Your editorial states that you have the intention of publishing the 1995 issues as I had prepared them. If this is the case, I hope you'll extend the same courtesy of listing my name as "Editor for This Issue" on the masthead.

Sincerely,

Marilyn

Margaret Morrison to David Lynn

19.10.94

The Kenyon Review

Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

Phone (614) 427-3339

Fax (614) 427-5417

Editor David H. Lynn

Managing Editor Cy Wainscott

October 12, 1994

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That is why I am asking you to give serious thought to becoming a Benefactor, Patron or Friend of the *Review* this year. We would be most grateful for your contribution and proud to list you among our supporters in an upcoming issue of the *Review*.

Thank you again for subscribing to the *Review* and also for considering a special gift this year to help ensure its continued high quality.

Sincerely,

David H. Lynn
Editor

Please cancel my subscription and refund any money owed to me for the remainder of any subscription.

I've been immensely disappointed and angered at your firing of Marilyn Hacker. I loved Kenyon Review during her tenure as editor and looked forward to each issue. Suggestions have been floating everywhere in academe that Hacker was fired because of homophobia – Whatever the reasons for her firing, you've lost a treasure – and me as one of your subscribers.

Margaret Morrison
10/19/94

*Margaret Morrison
Lang & Lit/MD Inst-Coll of Art
1300 Mount Royal Ave
Baltimore, MD 21217*

Dan Bellm to *The Kenyon Review*

21.10.94

The Kenyon Review

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Enclosed is my gift of \$100.

My company will match my gift (form enclosed)

DAN BELLM
61 FORD ST
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94114-2011

Dear Kenyon, sorry -- but I'm not sure how you can ask us to do anything more than keep up our subscriptions, and wait and see. Like many others, I am deeply distressed by the dismissal of Marilyn Hacker and fear the worst -- that KR will regress to the dreary, forgettable affair it used to be.

Sincerely,

Dan Bellm

Steve Amidon to *The Kenyon Review* 21.10.94

The Kenyon Review
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022 TEL. 614-427-3339

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My company will match my gift (form enclosed)

STEVE AMIDON
7 RIVERDALE
WESTERLY RI 02891

Please cancel my subscription to the Kenyon Review. Like many subscribers, I am very disappointed at the decision to replace Marilyn Hacker, who had clearly improved the magazines<sic> editorial content!

If KR is in financial trouble, perhaps it should have asked its readers for help prior to replacing the finest editor in its history.

Regretfully,

Steve Amidon

Mary Pinard to David Lynn 24.10.94

The Kenyon Review
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MARY PINARD
50 CATHERINE ST
ROSLINDALE MA 02131

10.24.94

Mr Lynn:

Because of Marilyn Hacker's departure, I will not, under any circumstances, become a Benefactor, Patron, or Friend of The Kenyon Review. I plan to cancel my subscription as well.

I'm sorry for your decision – it seems shortsided<sic> and cowardly.

Mary Pinard

Terese Svoboda to David Lynn

25.10.94

44-147 Bayview Haven
Kaneohe HI 96744

October 25, 1994

David Lynn
KENYON REVIEW
Kenyon College
Gambier OH

Dear Mr. Lynn:

Please restore Marilyn Hacker's name to the masthead until the issues she edited are exhausted. This would show a less vindictive approach to her work.

Sincerely,

Terese Svoboda

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to *The Kenyon Review* 27.10.94

The Kenyon Review
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022 TEL. 614-427-3339

\$40 refund requested 10-27-94

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Enclosed is my gift of \$100.

My company will match my gift (form enclosed)

EVE KOSOFSKY SEDGWICK
2726 MONTGOMERY ST
DURHAM NC 27705-5718

Please cancel my subscription + send me a refund for the remaining issues. My support was for the journal Marilyn Hacker was editing. I am cancelling in protest against her firing.

Eve K Sedgwick

Katherine Killingsworth to David Lynn

27.10.94

The Kenyon Review

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My company will match my gift (form enclosed)

K KILLINGSWORTH
PSC 473 BOX 95
FPO AP 96349-0005

Dear Mr. Lynn,

The reason I subscribed to the Kenyon Review last year was the presence of Marilyn Hacker as editor and her efforts to make the review reflect a broader viewpoint than those espoused by straight white men. The college trustees characterization of the content as "more narrow" – i.e. including gay and lesbian writers – is anathema to me. Thus I will not be the Friend, Patron, or Benefactor of a magazine which summarily fired Ms. Hacker. In fact, I will not renew at all since she's no longer editor.

Sincerely

Katherine Killingsworth

\$11 refund requested 10-27-94

Elly Bulkin to *The Kenyon Review*

28.10.94

The Kenyon Review

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My company will match my gift (form enclosed)

ELLY BULKIN
11 SPRING PARK AVE
JAMAICA PLAIN MA 02130

I am neither renewing my subscription to the Kenyon review nor making a contribution in protest at the firing of Marilyn Hacker as editor<>

Cy Wainscott to Judith Bechtel

02.11.94

November 2, 1994

Judith Bechtel, Professor
Department of Literature and Language
Northern Kentucky University
Highland Heights, KY 41099-1500

Professor Bechtel --

The Kenyon Review staff and the administration of Kenyon College appreciate and share your regret that Marilyn Hacker, because of purely economic considerations, could not be continued as editor.

While that cannot be undone, we are determine<sic> to continue the policy she so notably established -- making KR an environment for the best in new writing, not only by established writers but also by emerging writers and those working in non-traditional genres and with perspectives of diverse populations.

We welcome your interest and hope that you will let us know from time to time how, from your perspective, we are doing in our pursuit of that goal.

Sincerely,

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

Cy Wainscott to Dan Bellm 02.11.94

November 2, 1994

Dan Bellm
61 Ford Street
San Francisco, CA 94114-2011

Thanks for taking the time to make to<sic> a personal response to our appeal for support.

The Kenyon Review staff and the administration of Kenyon College appreciate and share your regret that Marilyn Hacker, because of purely economic considerations, could not be continued as editor.

While that cannot be undone, we are determine<sic> to continue the policy she so notably established – making KR an environment for the best in new writing, not only by established writers but also by emerging writers and those working in non-traditional genres and with perspectives of diverse populations. And, as you note, we are determine<sic> that KR will not regress into the realm of dreary and forgettable.

We are grateful<sic> that you are maintaining your subscription and are willing to judge the Review on its performance.

We welcome your interest and hope that you will let us know from time to time how, from your perspective, we are doing in our pursuit of our goal.

Sincerely,

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

Cy Wainscott to Mary Pinard

03.11.94

November 3, 1994

Mary Pinard
50 Catherine Street
Roslindale, MA 02131

I can appreciate the feelings you expressed in declining to support the work of a Kenyon Review without Marilyn Hacker as editor. However, I would like to express exception to your characterization as "cowardly" the decision not to renew her contract.

Use of that expression would seem to indicate that there was some sort of anti-Hacker discontent and pressure to which the Kenyon College administration and board of trustees yielded. Not so. There was no such pressure. The decision, reluctantly taken after an exhaustive study of alternatives, was purely economic and in the context of an institution whose financial circumstances had become severely straitened.

Marilyn Hacker was the only full-time editor in the long history of The Kenyon Review. Moreover, as the college president has told her and others, Marilyn did exactly what they asked her to do when she was hired -- produce a magazine with greater diversity, relevance, appeal and excellence.

Marilyn herself said, "I was told the Board of Trustees and the administration 'did not have the confidence in me to work with them to lower the magazine's subsidy and further integrate it into the life of the college'." That's not only the truth, but the whole truth.

The administration and trustees have repeatedly and consistently told editor David Lynn and me that the editorial direction of the Review is not an issue and that the content of the magazine is the sole province of the editor. If this were otherwise, or if there was the least hint that the decision on Marilyn was prompted by homophobia or xenophobia, neither David or I would remain associated with the magazine.

Neither of us yield to anyone in our admiration of Marilyn as an editor and as one of America's outstanding writers. We are dedicated to continuing the vigor and inclusiveness she so ably established in the Review.

On the other hand, maybe I misread you<sic> remarks. In which case I apologize for running on so.

Sincerely,

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

Cy Wainscott to Terese Svoboda

04.11.94

November 4, 1994

Terese Svoboda
44-147 Bayview Haven
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Terese --

I'm startled and concerned at your October 25 letter to David Lynn.

First, we can hardly restore Marilyn Hacker's name to the masthead since it hasn't been removed. It was there in the summer issue, there in the fall issue, there (in the form "editor for this issue") in the winter issue now at the publishing house, there in the spring issue now in preparation and will remain there for all issues to which Marilyn contributed. We've never for a moment considered doing anything else.

(It may be that David's remark in the fall Kenyon Review was misinterpreted. He said that was the last issue in which Marilyn's name would appear at the *top* of the masthead.)

However, I'm most concerned about your comment that "restoring" her name "would show a less vindictive approach to her work."

I *know* that no vindictiveness toward Marilyn is felt by the KR staff or the college administration. **If anything has been said or written that would give this impression, I would very much appreciate learning about it.** She is held in the highest regard here as elsewhere for her achievements as one of America's most gifted poets, for her intelligence and for her work in revitalizing the Review. As the college president told her and others, Marilyn did exactly what they asked her to do when she was hired -- produce a magazine with greater diversity, relevance, appeal and excellence.

The decision not to renew her contract, reluctantly taken after an exhaustive study of alternatives, was purely economic and in the context of an institution whose financial circumstances had become severely straitened.

Marilyn, the only full-time editor in the long history of the Review, herself said, "I was told the Board of Trustees and the administration 'did not have the confidence in me to work with them to lower the magazine's subsidy and further integrate it into the life of the college'." That's not only the truth, but the whole truth.

The administration and trustees have repeatedly and consistently told David and me that the editorial direction of the Review is not an issue and that the content of the magazine is the sole province of the editor. If this were otherwise, or if there was the least hint that the decision on Marilyn was prompted by ulterior motives, neither David or I would remain associated with the magazine.

(Moreover, David, in his fall issue note to readers, has praised Marilyn and her work

at the Review. In the last couple of weeks, Review-sponsored events here have included tributes to Marilyn. This is not lip service, but sincere appreciation and hardly the stuff of which vindictiveness is made.)

Marilyn, apparently and unfortunately, chooses to see herself as a victim of intolerance, rather than of economics. And, no doubt, she sees her appeals to writers and readers to withdraw support from the magazine as a plea for justice rather than hurt-bred vindictiveness (that word!). You can't love me, she seems to be saying, and love the magazine of which I am no longer editor.

Well, she's wrong. We do love her and we are determined to continue the magazine as a champion of the principles of excellence and accessibility with which she endowed it.

Sincerely,

Cy Wainscott
Managing Editor

Carol Dorf to *The Kenyon Review*

10.11.94

The Kenyon Review

KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022 TEL. 614-427-3339

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My company will match my gift (form enclosed)

CAROL DORF
1235 SOLANO AVE
ALBANY CA 94706

Cancel my subscription, I'm extremely disturbed by the way you severed your
relationship with Marilyn Hacker as editor.

Carol

Judith Barrington to *The Kenyon Review* 10.11.94

The Kenyon Review
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JUDITH BARRINGTON
622 SE 29TH AVE
PORTLAND OR 97214-3026

You've got to be kidding – Marilyn Hacker made KR outstanding. I certainly don't support it without her leadership.

She doesn't say cancel, so I didn't.
DJD 11-10-94

Leslie Lawrence to *The Kenyon Review*

15.11.94

The Kenyon Review

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LESLIE LAWRENCE
24 MIDDLESEX ST
CAMBRIDGE MA 02140

I wouldn't dream of supporting Kenyon after their appalling treatment of Marilyn Hacker who did so much for the journal<.>

Karyn London to *The Kenyon Review*

15.11.94

250 West 99 St.
New York, N.Y. 10025

November 15, 1994

To the Kenyon Review:

Your new editor, David H. Lynn, and your managing editor, Cy Wainscott, have frequently and publicly stated in the last five months that the Kenyon College administration and trustees have no interest in influencing the editorial content of the Kenyon Review, and that they would no longer work with the Review were such an influence to be exerted.

As anyone who has worked in publishing or journalism, yourselves included, knows, administrators, publishers, trustees, do not exert editorial influence by censoring individual articles, or deleting stanzas from poems. They do so by changing editors. They did this when Marilyn Hacker was hired; they did it again last May.

Kenyon College gave Marilyn Hacker a vote of no confidence in her editorial and administrative decisions by terminating her contract. I am giving Kenyon College a vote of no confidence by cancelling my subscription to the Kenyon Review; I trust your office will register this cancellation immediately, and refund the balance due.

Yours sincerely,

K.J. London

Ron Mohring to Cy Wainscott

16.11.94

November 16, 1994

Cy Wainscott, Managing Editor
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier OH 43022

Dear Mr. Wainscott:

Thank you once again for your correspondence. I have read the material you provided (much of which I had not seen and shared it with several friends. Though I remain convinced that Marilyn Hacker's dismissal was untimely and unfair, I realize that penalizing the journal would serve no one's interests. The commitment to maintain the same editorial standards, expressed by yourself, and Mr. Lynn, is the decisive factor in my decision to resubscribe to the *Kenyon Review*.

I must say that of the poets and readers I contacted, every one objected to Marilyn Hacker's dismissal, and most had not decided yet on a personal response. We are all looking forward to Marilyn's visit to Houston this January. Personally, I'm urging friends to support the journal, to do it now, and to direct their objections to Philip Jordan.

As a graduate student with a limited income, I choose my journal subscriptions carefully. My enclosed check for a two-year subscription is the best I can do financially; I'll continue to encourage others to show their support of the *Kenyon Review*<.>

Ron Mohring
812 Fairbanks
Houston TX 77009

Donald L. Wyler to David Lynn 17.11.94

Donald L. Wyler

11.17.94

Dear David,

It was a pleasure meeting you last Friday evening, when you were San Francisco with President & Mrs. Jordan. I enjoyed your comments about your goals for the "Kenyon Review." It was also interesting to talk to you briefly about your interest in Ernest Hemingway. As I promised, I am enclosing the information concerning the biography of Hemingway written by your long lost "cousin," Kenneth S. Lynn in 1987. It was published by Simon & Schuster. Perhaps when next we meet, you'll have read the book. If so, I'll be interested in your thoughts.

Also enclosed is our check for a subscription to the "Kenyon Review." Your comments about the "Kenyon Review" and your obvious enthusiasm make us look forward to receiving our first issue.

Sincerely,

Don Wyler

Jim Simmerman to David Lynn

18.11.94

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

18 November 1994

David H. Lynn, Editor
KENYON REVIEW
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Dear Mr. Lynn:

I read, yesterday your letter in the Oct./Nov. AWP CHRONICLE, and wanted to let you know that your objections to Jane Miller's open letter were, to my mind, on the mark and much in need of saying.

Though Jane is a friend, I too was troubled by her letter: first because the call for a boycott of any literature seems to me dangerously close to the sort of censorship many of us as individuals, and AWP as an organization, have been fighting so long and so hard against; second because the letter, written by an AWP executive and appearing in an AWP publication, seemed to imply that Jane's position represented that of the AWP Board--which is not the case. Though I had been aware of efforts--in particular a petition, which indeed I had signed--to persuade Kenyon College to retain Ms. Hacker, I knew nothing about Jane's letter until, like most everyone else, I saw it in the CHRONICLE. Indeed, I had thought to write my own letter rebutting Jane's, but finally figured it bad form for AWP Board members to be squabbling in print and before the entire membership.

Though mine too is a personal rather than an organizational response, I thank you for your appropriate and well-taken letter; and I assure you that, to my knowledge, the AWP Board has no quarrel with you or with the KENYON REVIEW.

Sincerely,

Jim Simmerman
AWP Secretary

PO Box 6032 Flagstaff, AZ 86011-6032 (602) 523-4911 FAX (602) 523-7074

Mark Wunderlich to *The Kenyon Review*

22.11.94

11/22/94

Cy--

I checked with SPFS. He does not appear to be a subscriber.

dj

Dear Editors,

After the shabby treatment Marilyn Hacker received at the hands of Kenyon College's Board of Trustees I'd be very reluctant to invest a dime into your magazine. As one of the few magazines in America that actually embraced & practised cultural diversity, rather than simply talking about it, the Kenyon Review's attempt to turn back the clock is offensive & myopic. B Please strike me from your mailing list & pass this note on to editors & the like

Earnestly,

Mark Wunderlich

Jane Miller to Marilyn Hacker

28.11.94

THE UNIVERSITY OF

ARIZONA
TUCSON ARIZONA

Modern Languages Building #67
Tucson, Arizona 85721
(602) 621-1836

Department of English

Nov. 28, 1994

Dear Marilyn,

Greetings for the holidays. May this letter find you well.

I'm writing you on behalf of the advocacy committee of AWP. Since our statement of support for your position vis a vis The Kenyon Review was published in the Chronicle (under my name as chair of the committee), we have received a few letters of concern regarding our suggestion of a total boycott, because of the effect this would have on the next few issues, whose material you selected. If I remember correctly, you felt at the time that a strong position was necessary to make a statement to the President. You may be aware that the current editors have written to the Chronicle. May I suggest that you yourself write a letter, taking a position on the difficult matter of 1995 issues? AWP would prefer not getting involved in these painful details. I had tried to suggest to a few of the letter writers that they simply withdraw their material, but they did not wish to do so; one woman said she had spoken to you and that she found out you had requested that your name remain on the masthead for the next few issues. Therefore, are you still recommending a full boycott, immediately? It would be a help to me personally and to the other members of the committee if you could jot a letter for clarification. I am assuming you have seen the Chronicle's letters, but if not, I will have them sent to you.

May the new year be wonderful. See you in the Spring over a long cool drink.

Warmly,

Jane Miller, chair, advocacy committee,
AWP

Diane Lefer to Marilyn Hacker

30.11.94

Diane Lefer
151 West 82nd Street
Apartment 7E
New York, NY 10024

212/362-8679

November 30, 1994

Dear Marilyn Hacker,

I've been traveling since June, just returned home, so this is a very belated expression of support in return for your support and your exceptional editing at Kenyon. The "change" at the journal is a blow to many writers and readers. But putting aside for a moment the many people who lose here and all the implications, you must at least know that your stature and reputation – unlike Kenyon's – are undiminished.

with thanks,

Diane

Elissa Mondschein to David Lynn 01.01.95

David H. Lynn
The Kenyon Review
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

1-1-95

Dear Mr. Lynn,

I am dropping you this postcard to let you know how disappointed I am by the dismissal of Marilyn Hacker. I have long felt that Ms Hacker was one of the more far-sighted editors around today, and I believe it is your loss that she is no longer with the Kenyon Review. Too bad homophobia wins out again,

Sincerely,

Elissa Mondschein

Elissa Mondschein
611 W Grand Ave Apt 7
Oakland CA 94612-1643

Larry Lieberman to David Lynn

10.01.95

Home Address:
1304 Eliot Drive
Urbana, Il. 61801

University of Illinois Press URBANA-CHAMPAIGN AND CHICAGO

January 10, 1995

Dear David Lynn,

Belatedly, I wanted to thank you for your very welcome and generous note accepting my three poems so promptly last August. No, I didn't know that you'd "long been an admirer" of my work, but I was very elated to hear it. And of course I shared your distress when that very peculiar letter from Jane Miller appeared in the AWP Newsletter. Many of my friends and colleagues here at Illinois feel—as do I—that the attack was ignoble and unfair. And your letter of response, published in the October/November issue was beautifully measured and eloquent. My hat's off to you for your tasteful handling of the matter. And I'll certainly do everything I can to support the magazine locally in the years to come.

Did I mention that U. of Arkansas Press will be publishing my next poetry collection in early 1996? But the poems you've taken will be included in a next book in progress. However, I do wish to request a letter of permission from you to reprint my poem "Lifestyles Prince," that appeared in KENYON REVIEW in the special issue edited Albert Goldbarth, since that poem will be included in DARK SONGS: SLAVE HOUSE AND SYNAGOGUE, when the book appears from Arkansas. Also, perhaps I should mention that my New and Selected Essays (BEYOND THE MUSE OF MEMORY) will be published by University of Missouri Press this coming fall.

Thanks, again, for your kindness to my work, and even more for your noble and responsible handling of the AWP letter.

all best wishes,

Larry Lieberman

1325 SOUTH OAK STREET, CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS 61820 TELEPHONE 217/333-0950
FAX 217/244-8082

Marilyn Hacker to Cy Wainscott

11.01.95

Marilyn Hacker
230 West 105 St.
New York NY 10025

Dear Cy,

I was under the impression (because you said so) that, like all still-living former editors of the magazine, I would receive a complimentary subscription. I received the summer issue in a box of office detritus forwarded by DJD; the subsequent issues not at all (though I have seen them). I trust the complimentary subscription's not yet having been started is an oversight rather than a further reflection of the administration's "lack of confidence" etc. or a way of preventing my obtaining contributors' addresses. (You effectively prevented nine women poets who have not yet published books from submitting manuscripts in time to a first-book competition at Barnard-- or at least from finding out about the competition from me and deciding whether they wished to do so. How their doing so would have damaged the Kcnyon Review I've yet to puzzle out.)

I'd like to have the upcoming issues which I (in fact) edited. I'd also, if only out of morbid curiosity, like to see what happens to the magazine subsequently. Please have the complimentary sub. started.

Thanks,

Marilyn

Jacqueline Woodson to *The Kenyon Review*

31.03.95

March 31, 1995

With the termination of Marilyn Hacker<sic>, I cancelled my subscription to The Kenyon Review and asked to be deleted from your mailing list. My position has not changed. It was from a homophobic and rascist<sic> stance that the Review decided Hacker was not reaching the audiences they wanted to target. I consider myself part of the Hacker-targeted audiencce and have no interest in a journal moving toward a more conservative audience. Please do not send me anything further.

Jacqueline Woodson

Adrian Oktenberg to Marilyn Hacker

10.04.95

ADRIAN OKTENBERG

PO Box 267

NORTHAMPTON, MA 01061-0267

(413) 268-0048

April 10, 1995

Marilyn Hacker

C/o Catherine Stockton

159 South McClelland Street

Salt Lake City, UTAH 84102

Dear Marilyn,

All I can say is, I know. I'm sorry you were disappointed by the review -- your comments are all perfectly understandable -- I did the best I could. I don't have control over most of the things you mentioned, as you know. I originally suggested to Linda that I review the Selected & the Winter numbers together, alone -- and she rejected it. She had also, some time ago, originally rejected my suggestion to do the Alice Walker Selected -- Her Blue Body -- because she seems to think a Selected is "old stuff," not new. I had to fight to do the book, finally convinced her by saying it had a number of new poems. She doesn't get it that a Selected is like a major artist having a retrospective -- an opportunity to review a body of work. Then she came up later with this idea about a review of various books involving illness and the body -- which is exactly one of those editors' brainstorm that makes sense to an editor but doesn't make sense in the actual review. So you were lumped in with crap like Susan Steingraber's book.

It has become harder and harder to write for TWRB, because they are "successful" now and letting me have less and less space. When I started with them in 1983, I used to do a single book in 10 pages. Now they want 3 books, or even six, if it's poetry, in that same space. One simply cannot SAY anything serious in such a short space, and the poetry gets slighted. L. Gardiner is a scholar, and just doesn't know anything about poetry. She has no idea who's really important as a poet and who's not, what to cover at length or not. She clearly likes your work, and mentioned to me how beautiful the lines were that I quoted from "August Journal," but she just as clearly doesn't understand that a distinguished poet of your standing and accomplishment simply shouldn't be treated this way. I'm sure she would be surprised if you let her know that the way it was handled was actually insulting.

Anyway, I wish you would write her a letter yourself & tell her your concerns, about the amount of space allotted <sic> to poetry, etc. It need not be for publication. She controls that stuff, not I.

Please keep all my comments here confidential. But I am really sorry that the whole thing turned out to be such a drag for you.

Yours,

Adrian Oktenberg

P.S. You sent your note to my old address. Please note my new address & phone, above.

Almitra David to *The Kenyon Review*

April 1995

The Kenyon Review

KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022 TEL. 614-427-3339

Please make checks payable to
Kenyon College/*The Kenyon Review*.

Your gift is tax-deductible.

I wish to be a Benefactor of *The Kenyon Review*
Enclosed is my gift of \$1000.

I wish to be a Patron of *The Kenyon Review*
Enclosed is my gift of \$500.

I wish to be a Friend of *The Kenyon Review*
Enclosed is my gift of \$100.

My company will match my gift (form enclosed)

ALMITRA DAVID
986 N RANDOLPH ST
PHILADELPHIA PA 19123

I will not be renewing because of the firing of Marilyn Hacker<>

Doris Jean Dilts to Jacqueline Woodson

19.06.95

The Kenyon Review

KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022 TEL: 614-427-3339

June 19, 1995

Jacqueline Woodson
101 Lincoln Place
Brooklyn NY 11217

Dear Ms. Woodson:

Imagine my chagrin upon learning that you have continued to receive The Kenyon Review, although I put through a cancellation order on your subscription a year ago and refunded your money.

You have received a year's supply of material chosen by Marilyn without paying for it.

I have again issued a cancellation order. Trust you will not again be bothered with mail from us.

Doris Jean Dilts

David H. Lynn, *Editor*; Cy Wainscott, *Managing Editor*

Meryl Altman to *The Kenyon Review* 17.08.95

The Kenyon Review
KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022 TEL. 614-427-3339

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Enclosed is my gift of \$500.

I wish to be a Friend of *The Kenyon Review*
Enclosed is my gift of \$100.

My company will match my gift (form enclosed)

GALTMNM109S35ZA 03/31/96
MERYL ALTMAN
109 ASBURY HALL
DEPAUW UNIV
GREENCASTLE IN 46135-2280

No. Since the disgraceful firing of Marilyn Hacker I have no interest in supporting
The Kenyon Review. Everyone I know feels the same way.

As far as I am concerned, you deserve to go out of business permanently.

Cy Waincott to Marilyn Hacker

undated

The Kenyon Review

KENYON COLLEGE, GAMBIER, OHIO 43022 TEL: 614-427-3339

Marilyn –

Well now look, dear heart, you're much too intelligent and sensitive to, when you pause to think about it, ask me to use KR resources to help undermine the magazine.

As you well know, I genuinely believe what you did in establishing the Review as an open and inclusive environment will be seen as one of the great periods in the magazine's history. But I think you do yourself and the cause of inclusiveness a disservice by seeking to undermine what you worked so hard to establish. I would oppose anyone who would try to do so, even you.

I appreciate the pain, anger, outrage, injustice you feel. I hope you won't let it become a destructive obsession. Move on; the world needs the beauty of spirit you bring to it.

Here endeth the sermon for the day.

I hope you're drinking in *vie Paris* with gusto and getting your batteries recharged and that Karen has by now fully recovered. I miss you and hope you won't forget to keep in touch.

Cy

David H. Lynn, *Editor*; Cy Waincott, *Managing Editor*

Articles Concerning Marilyn Hacker

KENYON COLLEGE

HOUSING POLICY [1988]

1. Certain administrative positions in the College may require that the incumbent reside within the Village of Gambier as a condition of employment. The list of such positions will be made public each year in the President's report at the first Faculty Meeting. In these instances the College will assist in securing appropriate housing and under some circumstances may assign a College-owned residence to an employee. In the latter event this assignment must be approved by the President and, by contract, the Board of Trustees.
2. All other College-owned residences are available for rental to full-time members of the faculty and administration according to the following regulations (when two part-time members of the faculty or the administration are sharing a full-time position and wish to occupy a single housing unit, they are eligible for such rental):

(a) Apartments will be rented to members of the administration and faculty in their first year of appointment on a first-come, first-served basis. Once assigned, occupancy in a particular unit will be guaranteed for four years. If in any year there are more vacancies than first-year appointees who wish College rental housing, other members who are in their first four years of appointment are eligible for assignment on a first-come, first-served basis.

New members who are unable to obtain apartment housing in the first year of their appointment will have priority in obtaining housing in their second, third, or fourth years, with the understanding that such rental is available for only the first four years of their appointment. After four years of occupancy or the member's fourth year of appointment, whichever comes earlier, the occupant will vacate in favor of more recently appointed administration and faculty.

If, after all applications for housing are filled, apartments remain unoccupied, they may be occupied by part-time members of the administration or faculty for a maximum of one year.

(b) Current occupants of College-owned apartments whose eligibility or such apartments expires June 30, and who have one or more years remaining of eligibility for College-owned housing, may, if apartments are still available on June 1, be assigned an apartment for one year. Priority among persons in this category will be determined by the date of the member's first duly executed contract. Those wishing to apply for the above mentioned consideration should inform the Office of the Vice President for Finance, prior to June 1, in the year the current lease expires.

(c) "First-come" shall be determined by the receipt in the Office of the Vice President for Finance of a letter of confirmation from the President's office

that an employment contract has been executed. This statement of the policy covering allocation of college-owned residences will be mailed with the proposed employment contract. Persons not wishing to be on the apartment/housing list will be removed from the list, only when such desire is confirmed in writing to the Vice President for Finance.

3. Administration and faculty may sublet apartments under the following conditions:

(a) Subleases must first be offered to persons (in order of priority) on the housing waiting list.

(b) The sublease period may not exceed the period of the sublessor's authorized occupancy.

(c) Rents must be at the rates established by the College.

(d) The sublessor is ultimately responsible for payment of all rents, utilities and damage, if any.

The above policy approved by the
Kenyon College Board of Trustees—May 2, 1981
Edited by J.G. Nelson and approved by
President Jordan—May 1988

MARILYN HACKER

ON NEA, EDITORS, AND OTHERS

In June 1990, the *Kenyon Review* was awarded a \$7,500 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, applied for some months earlier. The General Terms and Conditions for the acceptance of this grant included, as they never had before, this paragraph:

NONE OF THE FUNDS AUTHORIZED TO BE APPROPRIATED FOR THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS ... MAY BE USED TO PROMOTE, DISSEMINATE, OR PRODUCE MATERIALS WHICH IN THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS ... MAY BE CONSIDERED OBSCENE, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DEPICTIONS OF SANDOMASOCHISM, HOMOEROTICISM, THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN, OR INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN SEX ACTS AND WHICH, WHEN TAKEN AS A WHOLE, DO NOT HAVE SERIOUS LITERARY, ARTISTIC, POLITICAL OR SCIENTIFIC VALUE.

Initially, this paragraph, although intrusive on editorial autonomy, would seem meaningless: by definition, work selected for publication by the editors of the *Kenyon Review* has "serious literary ... value." Obviously the work of individual artists, or of other editors, producers, and arts administrators selected by panels of their peers, has serious literary or artistic value as well. Kenyon College acknowledged its gratitude for the quarterly's first assistance from NEA since 1985.

In the ensuing months, however, the current director of NEA has made it clear that peer panels of writers, artists, arts administrators, and editors will no longer be the final arbiters of what constitutes "serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value." The controversy over the exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs has not been about a grant to an artist, but about the autonomy of museum curators to decide what work merits exhibition once they have received NEA funding. A gallery in New York City showing a collective exhibition of art works on AIDS temporarily lost its funding, not because of any claimed "obscenity," but because of the overtly political character of an essay in the exhibition catalog: "political value" depends, apparently, on what your politics are. Senator Jesse Helms challenged NEA as having violated its mandate in awarding grants to three "known Lesbian" writers -- Audre Lorde, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Chrystos (Lorde was a National Book Award nominee; Pratt's second book was a Lamont Poetry Selection of the Academy of American Poets). There was no suggestion the work of these poets, taken as a whole, was "obscene": it was the open fact of their sexual orientation which (according to Helms) should have disqualified them. NEA's current chair, John Frohnmeyer<sic>, recalled work by five fiction writers selected to receive grants by the NEA peer panel for "reconsideration" by the National Council on the Arts, a congressional body including only one writer. Those grants were "passed on" and awarded. More recently, he requested the same "reconsideration" of grants recommended by a peer panel for four performance artists: Karen Finley, John Fleck, Holly Hughes, and Tim Miller. This time, thirteen of the Council's twenty-six members recommended that NEA not award the grants: their decision overrode that of the theater panel.

Clearly, the definition of what constitutes "obscenity" and what is of "literary, artistic, political or scientific value" will no longer be left up to individual artists, writers,

editors, theater producers, or curators, if they seek NEA assistance. And those terms are vague enough, and subject enough to redefinition by cultural evolution or cultural whim, to refer to nothing but what the censor, once there is a censor, defines as censurable: *Ulysses*, *The Well of Loneliness*, *The Gulag Archipelago*, *The Satanic Verses*. *Wuthering Heights* was called "obscene" in its time, when its author's gender was revealed. Harriet Jacob's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* had no redeeming artistic or political value to the proponents of slavery.

The inclusions of "depictions of ... homoeroticism" is particularly egregious. Almost by definition, "eroticism" need not approach the pornographic, or even the sexually explicit. Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* "depicts homoeroticism": the domestic, affectional, and sexual partnership of two adults of the same gender. Walt Whitman's *Calamus*, Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood*, James Baldwin's *Another Country*, Richard Howard's *Fellow Feelings*, and Adrienne Rich's *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far* all depict, even "promote" homoeroticism. Whitman, Stein, and Barnes, as experimental writers, elicited much purely literary controversy as to their artistic merit. Would we, as editors of the *Kenyon Review*, believing in the work of such writers, yet partly funded by an NEA grant, now be obliged to reject the works of the next Barnes, Whitman, or Stein?

Equally dangerous, in the NEA restriction, are the five seemingly anodyne words, "including, but not limited to" Definitions of "obscenity," or of legally permitted socio-sexual behavior, change more quickly among our fifty states than the speed limit, and are much harder to define. Twenty-five years ago, "miscegenation" was illegal in many states in this country: there were then, and probably still are, individuals to whom the portrait of a happily married, interracial couple (male and female) with three healthy children would be "obscene," and the work of writers such as Alice Childress and Lillian Smith who depicted the struggle of interracial couples to live together in dignity would be devoid of "serious ... value."

For an individual artist to accept an NEA grant with these restrictions is a matter of conscience. NEA has threatened to recoup grant monies used to produce "obscene" works. Writers or painters, at least, could do the work they chose and not publish or exhibit it until their grants had expired; or they could deliberately go on exercising the freedom of expression guaranteed all of us by the First Amendment, make their expression public, and wait to see if they became the object of discussion at further congressional hearings.

For editors, we feel the problem is different. By submitting to this restriction, we would agree to become censors-before-the-fact. We would be giving a message to past and potential readers and contributors that controversial writing, and critical writing supporting controversial art or opinions, would be, if not unwelcome, at least read with a different eye, a different standard of judgment. A grant to a literary magazine should express, as it has in the past, enough confidence in that magazine's editors, history, and intentions not to arrive dependent on the signature of a political/sexual loyalty oath. The role of the literary magazine in the history of American literature has been that of explorer, re-definer of boundaries; it has been transgressive rather than normative. The awarding of grants to literary magazines has been, in the past, a recognition of the importance of that independent, noncommercial role, not a call to order for literary magazines to represent a consensus of majority

taste. Such taste, both popular and canonical, is itself in a constant state of flux, due, at least in part, to the support by literary magazines of writers who begin beyond the pale.

The *Keryon Review* wants to continue that invaluable function into our second half-century. We cannot therefore accept the \$7,500 grant awarded to us by NEA as long as it entails compliance with the new restrictions. This will, of course, wreak havoc on our already balloon-taut budget. We hope our readers, subscribers, and contributors who agree that an editor's criteria should remain literary, will consider keeping that balloon from bursting with a (tax-deductible) contribution.

We emphatically support and appreciate the work done by NEA as an independent arts organization in the years before a vocal and monied minority sought to destroy it by turning it into an arbiter of "decency" instead of artistic merit. We also support all the recipients of NEA grants this year, in what was for most of us, artists and administrators alike, an unprecedented and difficult decision, whatever decision they made.

Peter Stitt
Editor's Notes

IT WAS WITH a deep sense of regret that, on June 19, 1990, I sent the following letter to John Frohnmayer, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts:

Dear Mr. Frohnmayer:

I was delighted to learn that *The Gettysburg Review's* application for an award of \$4,550 had been granted by the National Endowment for the Arts, but was disheartened when I read the "General Terms" that were enclosed with the announcement of the award of the grant. I find that I cannot agree to the terms specified by "Public Law 101-121" in those General Terms.

Thus I am in the position of feeling that it is impossible for *The Gettysburg Review* to accept the award of a grant. My reasoning on this matter goes on as follows. The restriction specifies that we may not use the funds that have been authorized "to promote, disseminate, or produce materials which in the judgment of the National Endowment for the Arts ... may be considered obscene...." I cannot see any way for us to determine what the Endowment considers obscene unless we submit the materials that we wish to publish to the Endowment for review prior to publication. My reading of the First Amendment tells me that such prior restraint is unconstitutional. As a law-abiding American, I strongly object to the censorship that you wish to exercise over *The Gettysburg Review*.

Thus our refusal of this award is meant to indicate my support for the American system and my commitment to the ideals of freedom that I consider to be the foundation of everything that this country believes in—or should believe in.

Other grant recipients—for example, Paul Zimmer, Director of the University of Iowa Press—took similar action. Paul's *vers libre* response to the Endowment's policies leads off this issue of *The Gettysburg Review*.

Back in the mid-eighties I served for two years on the Literature Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts. I recall being told over and over (by NEA staff members Frank Conroy and Mary MacArthur) that the only criterion upon which grant applications were to be judged was literary merit. Cronyism was of course forbidden. But so were all other extraneous considerations, such as the level of propriety or purported degree of obscenity exhibited by a given body of work. I mention those two characteristics together because I think they are often confused. Actual obscenity is not something we often encounter in serious literature; certainly it is something that no reader has ever encountered nor ever will encounter in the pages of this journal. However, serious works of <ill> do sometimes present improprieties; characters in novels and short stories, for example, occasionally perform acts and utter words that few of us would perform or utter in our living rooms before the adoring gazes of our children. But I think it is safe to say that almost no artist depicts acts of impropriety so that viewers and readers will be encouraged to emulate them. Even if they did, how many readers are so unsophisticated as to do so?

It is also worth mentioning that *The Gettysburg Review* is sponsored by an institution of higher education that is committed to the free and open expression of ideas. The censorship advocated by the National Endowment for the Arts goes directly counter to that commitment. It does seem to us that the open discussion of ideas is more likely to set people free from, rather than enslave them to, the various forms of obscenity that may be found in our world. Thus it is in a spirit of intellectual and artistic adventure that we present our Summer issue. Grouped loosely together among other concerns in its pages you will find materials concentrating upon mountains, forests, music, and eccentric characters.

A final, more personal note. During the academic year 1989-90, two positions at *The Gettysburg Review* were filled for different periods by temporary employees. Kiki Theodoropoulos, Acting Assistant Editor from October until June, was replacing Frank Graziano, who was on fellowship at the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island; Harry Stokes, Acting Managing Editor from October until February, was replacing Carolyn Guss, who was in Philadelphia on an Arts Management Fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. The work done by Kiki and Harry was outstanding in every way, and we thank them for helping us through a difficult time. Beginning with this issue we welcome a new permanent Assistant Editor to the magazine: Elizabeth Tornes comes to us from the University of Utah, where she earned a Ph.D. in Creative Writing and completed a manuscript of poems.

Sat Sept 22, 1990: *Mount Vernon News*

New Editor begins work at 'Kenyon Review'

Gambier — Poet and critic Marilyn Hacker assumed new duties this month as editor of "The Kenyon Review," a literary magazine published at Kenyon College.

Hacker is the author of seven books, most recently "Going Back to the River," published by Random House, and "The Hang-Glider's Daughter," due to be published this fall in London on Onlywomen Press. Her 1974 book "Presentation Piece," received the National Book Award in poetry and was named the Lamont Poetry Selection of the Academy of Poets.

As editor of "The Kenyon Review," Hacker said she wants to maintain the magazine's traditions of quality, but to widen the base from which it draws both its contributors and readers. She intends to seek out poets, essayists and fiction writers not only from the mainstream of America writing but also "from those parallel and counter-currents too significant and well-recognized today to be viewed in any way as tributaries." She expects future issues "to include more writers of color, more women, more gay and lesbian contributors."

She also intends to maintain the strength of "The Kenyon Review's" essay and book-review sections, to include short dramatic works and critical essays on theater, to examine such frequently overlooked genres as science fiction, and to solicit works from writers in other parts of the English-speaking world.

Kenyon President Philip H. Jordan Jr. called Hacker's appointment an opportunity to reaffirm the magazine's position in the literary community and at the same time to reach out to new writers and new audiences.

Jordan thanked Assistant Professor of English David H. Lynn, who had served as acting editor of "The Kenyon Review" for the last four issues. He also coordinated last November's 50th anniversary celebration for the "Review," which brought numerous literary luminaries to Kenyon's campus. "David Lynn has served not only as a responsible caretaker," Jordan said. "He also arranged some very exciting moments for this year's readers."

Hacker's work has also been anthologized widely, appearing in "The Pushcart Prize XIV: Best of the Small Presses," "The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry," "Fifty Years of American Poetry" and many other collections. Her poetry and criticism has appeared frequently in literary magazines, including "The American Poetry Review," "Antaeus," "Poetry," and "The Time <sic> Literary Supplement."

Hacker has served as guest editor of "Ploughshares" and "Women Poets: The East." Among other editorial positions, she was editor-in-chief of "Thirteenth Moon: A Feminist Literary Magazine" from 1982 to 1986. She is currently co-editing an anthology of by North American women writers to be published in French translation in Paris.

A graduate of New York University, Hacker has held teaching positions in creative

writing at the Binghamton and Albany campuses of the State University, the University of Cincinnati and other campuses and writing centers.

She was twice the recipient of the Robert F. Winner Award of the Poetry Society of America and has received grants and awards from many other organizations.

Subscription information about "The Kenyon Review" is available from the journal's office in Sunset Cottage, Kenyon College, Gambier 43022-9623. The telephone number is 427-5208.

The American Poetry Review VOL.19/NO.5
September/October 1990

To Our Readers:

The American Poetry Review has rejected a \$10,000 National Endowment for the Arts grant for 1990-91 rather than agree to content restrictions in the work it publishes.

The loss of this grant will require a revision of our annual budget and may necessitate significant cuts in a number of areas. We ask for your support at this time in the form of tax-deductible donations, an early renewal of your subscription, or the purchase of gift subscriptions for your friends.

We have always conducted the magazine as a forum in the community of American poetry, and so would especially appreciate your comments on this matter.

The Editors

Kenyon Review Refuses NEA grant

Gambier -- The Kenyon Review, one of the nation's leading literary journals, will refuse a \$7,500 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts because of an obscenity clause that is a condition of acceptance.

Marilyn Hacker, who was named editor last summer of the quarterly Kenyon College journal, said last week that while she was "delighted" to receive the award, there is "absolutely no way we will accept the grant."

"There is no way to get the money without signing the statement," Ms. Hacker said. "Taking the money would be saying the clause has a place."

The clause stipulates that "none of these funds may be used to promote, disseminate or produce materials which may be considered obscene, including, but not limited to, depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the sexual exploitation of children or individuals engaged in sex acts which do not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value."

Ms. Hacker said that the amount of material that may or may not have been affected in the review was not the issue. "By submitting to this restriction," she wrote in an editorial introducing the fall issue, "we would agree to become censors before the fact."

The college provides the review, which celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, with more than half of its revenue.

President Philip H. Jordan Jr. said "he respects the judgement of the editors," but added that the college would not cover the review's loss.

The grant covers almost 3.7 percent of The Review's operating expenses of about \$205,000, according to the college news director, Michael Matros.

Refusing the grant, Ms. Hacker said, "will, of course, wreak havoc on our already balloon-taut budget." She said she hoped that supporters of the review would help cover the loss.

"We want to be at the forefront of this debate," the journal's associate editor, David H. Lynn, said of the obscenity issue. He predicted that other publications will follow suit.

Noting that Congress is holding hearings about NEA's budget and grant procedures, Jordan said, "If negotiations lead to the suspension of the present restrictions, we expect to request the funds in our grant.

"We are pleased to have been recognized by the NEA in its 1990 awards," Jordan said, "and we hope the current deliberations will result in guidelines that allow The Kenyon Review to seek and accept their support in the future."

Trustees Trash "Ten Mile Rule"

[as it appeared in the *Kenyon Collegian*, Nov. 15, 1990]

At its meetings during the first weekend in November, Kenyon's Board of Trustees considered the College's rule regarding all full-time members of the faculty and administration to live within a ten-mile radius of the campus. After discussion of the merits of the "ten-mile rule," and of the problems associated with it, the board voted to repeal the restriction.

"The trustees continue to believe in the importance of residentiality for Kenyon, not only for the students but also for the faculty and administration," said President Philip H. Jordan, Jr. "The consensus of opinion was that the 'ten-mile rule' is no longer essential to the operation of the College or to a climate of close interaction among faculty members, administration, and students on campus."

The resolution, passed at the meeting of Saturday, November 3, is as follows:

"In recognition of the changing nature of the professoriate and in order to assist the College in its efforts to make Kenyon as attractive a place of employment as possible, the Board of Trustees rescinds the residence obligation (which had been known as the "ten-mile rule") for members of the faculty and administration.

"The Board of Trustees recognizes that one of Kenyon's historic strength has been the close and frequent contact among faculty, administration, and students that the college offers. The Board of Trustees therefore takes this opportunity to affirm its belief in the value of this tradition. To that end, the Board of Trustees expresses its hope that the large majority of faculty members and administration will continue to live in or near the village of Gambier; it supports the continued inclusion of consideration of availability and accessibility among the performance elements that are judged when a faculty member is evaluated; and it reaffirms the ten mile limit on College mortgage guarantees."

The "ten-mile rule" has been in effect at Kenyon since the late 1960's, when it replaced the earlier "three-mile rule." In recent years, the restriction had been criticized as detrimental to the College's efforts to attract some able candidates for faculty and administrative positions especially those candidates with spouses or partners who were unlikely to find adequate local employment opportunities.

The Chronicle of Higher Education
May 11, 1994

The Kenyon Review lives, despite worries in the creative writing community that trustees of Kenyon College were trying to shut it down. Whether **Marilyn Hacker** stays on as editor, however, is still up in the air.

Following Ms. Hacker's campaign for write-in support and a petition drive announced by **Adrienne Rich** at last month's meeting of the Associated Writing Programs, Kenyon's trustees decided to keep the journal going. President **Philip H. Jordan, Jr.**, says a panel will work to reduce the *Review's* subsidy from the college, which has reached as high as \$150,000 a year. This year the editors got it below six figures, and plans are afoot to cut costs further by publishing three times a year instead of four.

Founded in 1939, the journal had its heyday in the 1940's and 50's under the editorship of **John Crowe Ransom**. It suspended publication for financial reasons from 1970 to 1979. Since taking over in 1990, Ms. Hacker has published special issues on "writers of color" and contemporary theater. She also refused to take a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Some observers smell politics behind the pressure on the journal. "I'm not sure how candid the board is being about its motives for putting the kibosh on the *Review*," says **David W. Fenza**, publications editor for the writing-programs group.

Ms. Hacker, a poet who commutes from New York, says she usually knows by February about her contract, but so far hasn't heard a thing. Maintaining that the matter is purely about money, Mr. Jordan says they will soon meet to talk about the job—including ways to cut the journal's costs.

The Chronicle of Higher Education
May 25, 1994

Marilyn Hacker is through as the editor of *The Kenyon Review*, ending a four-year stint in which she, an "outsider," ran the prestigious but financially strapped literary journal. David H. Lynn, a Kenyon College associate professor of English, will take over.

Ms. Hacker says she entered a meeting with Kenyon President Philip H. Jordan, Jr., expecting to discuss ways the journal could cut costs, only to be told she would no longer be part of the picture. "I was fired," she says. "There was no discussion."

Mr. Jordan says the college will save money with a faculty member as the editor. But Ms. Hacker and others believe the college's trustees were irked by multicultural and feminist writings in the *Review*, which was founded in 1939. Laurie Finke, an associate professor of women's and gender studies, says the trustees circulated a questionnaire about the journal that focused more on content than on costs.

"Ultimately I think the college will suffer more than Marilyn will," she says.

Other observers say Ms. Hacker could have realized her goals had she paid more attention to local politics and not alienated her likely supporters. Ms. Hacker is a poet who commuted to Kenyon from New York.

Mr. Lynn served once before as interim editor of the *Review* and was a candidate for the full-time job when Ms. Hacker was named. This time he has a one-year appointment, which could be extended after he returns from a sabbatical. He says the journal will publish the material that Ms. Hacker already accepted. Cutting costs is also on the agenda, since the trustees have suggested the eventual elimination of the college's subsidy. But Mr. Lynn says he is not around purely to win back the favor of trustees and alumni. "It's important that the *Review* be on good relations with the larger Kenyon constituency," he says, "but it's also important to look beyond that, because otherwise you become a parochial magazine."

Bay Windows
July 21 1994

Dismissal raises questions at Kenyon Review
By Serine Steakley

The editor of a literary journal whom some observers say made the magazine the most prestigious forum in this country to welcome openly gay writers was recently fired, raising eyebrows among her supporters.

Marilyn Hacker, editor of the Kenyon Review published by Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, received a dismissal from the college president in May. Hacker, with at least initial support of the board of trustees, had flung the journal open over the last few years to a diverse crew of writers, many not usually seen in establishment publications. At the same time Hacker said she never stopped publishing traditional writers.

"It was an interesting, lively publication," said Richard Howard, a well-known gay poet and critic. "She published the kind of writing that might not ordinarily have appeared in that publication before, writers from social and ethnic groups whose work had not been sought out by editors before."

In a letter to Review authors, managing editor, Cy Wainscott praised Hacker as "a great poet and...a great editor of KR."

Rumors that her contract was not renewed because of homophobic or misogynistic reasons, was contradicted by Hacker herself in a July 11 interview at her home in Paris.

"I don't think it's homophobia directed at me as a lesbian," she said. "I don't think they care if I'm a lesbian, a nun or someone who only did it with my pet."

Hacker then made a more general indictment of those who dismissed her, calling them "xenophobic," afraid of those different from themselves. The college denied the accusations.

It was "for financial reasons entirely," said President Philip Jordan, Jr., who cited a general "financial tightness" at the school and longterm cost cutting measures.

"The board of trustees had been concerned for some time about the cost of the review," he said, "it had mounted up to \$500,000 over several years and they decided there would have to be a radical reduction in cost."

Wainscott, in his position for the past 18 months, pointed out that he was not part of the decision making process. However, he said it is "my strong belief" the reason she was forced to leave was financial. Wainscott quoted from a letter he said Hacker sent to friends and authors.

"She said she was told by the board of trustees and administration," Wainscott said, "that they 'did not have the confidence in me to work with them to lower the

magazine's subsidy and further integrate it into the life of the college."

Hacker acknowledges the small, 1,400-student, liberal arts school faces financial problems, but she disputes this assessment of her abilities. In a July 11 telephone interview from her summer home in Paris, she noted the last fiscal year's actual budget of \$94,000 to cover three salaries and benefits was \$40,000 less than predicted and that the magazine's production paid for itself in subscriptions and sales. Hacker said she also made several other suggestions in order to cut costs including teaching two courses for no extra pay, cutting back the quarterly to a three-times-a-year publication, reducing the number of pages and raising the sale price by \$1 per issue.

During Hacker's tenure bookstore distribution of the journal increased from 450 to 2,000, but the trustees said they were losing money on the bookstore sales because some distributors took many more copies than they could actually sell. Hacker said even with a 50 percent shelf remainder, it still reflected a major increase in the number of single copy sales. She also acknowledged the Review needed to sell through 65 percent of the publication to stay profitable and said the Review staff was dealing with the problem by sending fewer issues to bookstores who reported a large number of remainders.

The argument that Hacker was let go for her lack of financial expertise appears undercut by the college's choice of her replacement. A tenured member of the English faculty at Kenyon, David Lynn's reputation is not based on business acumen.

"Lynn has directed some writing institutes and things of that nature," said Wainscott, who as managing editor deals with the financial aspects of the quarterly. "Neither he nor Marilyn had terrific expertise at cost cutting."

Wainscott said Lynn's appointment as an interim editor reflects the "very precarious position" of the magazine and Jordan said Lynn's appointment demonstrated cost-saving measures.

"He is a member of the faculty doing part-time work as a member of the faculty at a substantial reduction of cost," he said.

Hacker argues that the questionnaire circulated to inside Kenyon and outside of it by the college trustees during an "investigation" of the review was ostensibly to solicit suggestions to help the magazine with its financial problems. However, Hacker found the alleged premise undermined by the questions contained in the form.

"Questions like, 'I do, do not, like the Kenyon Review editorial content,'" she recalls. "I do, do not, like the image of the Kenyon Review. If I could design the review in the image best reflecting the traditional image of the college, what would it be?"

Wainscott was also offended by the questions.

"I remember, too," he said, "being very upset at that questionnaire because it did have that onerous question in there. There was something in there asking about the content."

Despite the presence of the questions, Jordan said, "editorial policy was not an issue."

"She made quite a reputation for the review in the literary community and the board was aware fo<sic> the regard for the review," he added.

Wainscott said he has been reassured about the likelihood of trustees or others attempting to meddle with the review's editorial decisions.

"I've just come from a series of meetings with the trustees and administration," he said, "and without even being asked about it, they went out of their way to say we don't want to have anything to do with the content or controlling the content."

What particularly sticks in Hacker's mind is the timing of her dismissal in late spring. Hacker notes it was shortly after the student newspaper was published, the last faculty meeting held and too late for her to get another position for the academic year beginning this fall.

"There's something particularly slimy about firing someone in an academic setting in the middle of May," she said. "That's something that gets done in the fall and winter." Hacker, considered part of the administration, continued, "If I had been the most junior non-tenure track faculty," she said, "they would have had to let me know in November for a June" position.

But Jordan said he had kept Hacker informed throughout the process, including telling her in early 1994 there was a question whether the contract would be renewed.

"I told her what I could when I knew it," Jordan said.

Hacker plans to sign up for unemployment this fall. Meantime, she has two books both coming out from Norton. Her new book, "Winter Numbers," and a book, "Selected Poems, 1965-1990," will be published in the fall.

The new editor has the same determination as Hacker to keep the review's stable of writers diverse, according to Wainscott, but Lynn may not have the means.

"There's no doubt in my mind he'll be as inclusive," Wainscott said, "with this exception. Marilyn was a writer of great stature and was more acquainted with established writers and so could do a good job of finding writers in those underrepresented groups."

Howard, a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets and the poetry editor of the Paris Review, rejects the explanations given by the college. He refers to the trustees and college administration as "a very conservative and provincial group" and said Hacker gave them exactly what she promised. She edited a publication which embraced writers of many literary, sexual, social and ethnic types, including many authors of color and women.

"She told them what she was going to do." Howard said, "She did what she said she was going to do. And they hated it. She really produced a distinguished and valuable magazine and I think the world was better for it."

books

Marilyn Hacker

The award-winning poet on motherhood, mastectomies, and meter

By John Weir

"OF COURSE I'M A LESBIAN writer," says 51-year-old poet Marilyn Hacker, as if to dismiss any possibility of doubt. The author of seven volumes of poetry, including *Winter Numbers*—which W. W. Norton is publishing this fall along with an edition of her *Selected Poems 1965-1990*—Hacker has been a literary force for 20 years and openly gay for almost as long. But she insists on being treated as what she calls "a hyphenate." "I'm lesbian," she explains, "but I'm also Jewish. I'm American. I'm a woman, I'm a writer born in the '40s, I was raised on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx—if you're willing to include everything and not use any single word to limit me, then I don't hesitate for a second to describe myself as a lesbian."

She is also a writer whose intelligence and nearly unrivaled mastery of metrical forms commands the respect of fellow poets. She is a partner in a nine-year relationship with Karyn London, a registered nurse who works in an AIDS hospice at New York City's Harlem Hospital. "We've been friends for 19 years," Hacker says happily, "though not always lovers." She is the mother of a 21-year-old daughter, Iva, who shows up over and over in Hacker's poetry. ("Iva minded my writing about her when she was in her early pubescence," Hacker says, "but now that she's older, I think she likes it.") She is a Sagittarius; a cook; a resident of two continents, having apartments in New York City and Paris; and most recently, a distinguished editor.

For four years—until she was fired summarily last June—Hacker edited the *Kenyon Review*, the famous literary journal associated with Kenyon College, a small liberal-arts school in central Ohio. She rescued the *Review* from long-standing dullness, transforming it into a forum for exciting new writing, including work from emerging gay and lesbian authors. "I got a lot of letters from gay and lesbian writers saying that they found their work wasn't welcome in most literary journals," Hacker says. "I tried to represent them as well as writers of color."

This editorial policy may have cost her the job, she now speculates. "Somebody on the college's trustees committee asked questions when they were 'investigating' the magazine, like 'Isn't it true that the content of the *Kenyon Review* has become much more narrow?' *Narrow* meaning it's not stuff written 85% by straight white men."

She laughs dismissively, taking a break from writing at her home in Paris, where she has spent summers since 1978. An open woman with a clearheaded sensibility and an easy laugh, she gives the impression of not having too much time for regrets. She is also, says a friend, Marie Ponsot, "a short-sighted woman. I mean literally—that she wears thick glasses. She doesn't drive a car in part for this reason. But her other kind of vision—her moral and poetic vision—is entirely superior. She does *tour de force* after *tour de force*."

Hacker has reached a career high with the publication of her collected poems in *Winter Numbers*, such as "Against Elegies" and "Cancer Winter," which gaze unflinchingly at her breast cancer as well as the loss of friends to cancer and AIDS. In "Against Elegies" she asks starkly, "Whom will I call, and get no answer?" and reminds us that "No one was promised a shapely life / ending in a tutelary vision. / No one was promised: if / you're a genuinely irreplaceable / grandmother or editor / you will not need to be replaced."

But, according to friends, her commitments to the craft and vision of her poetry has always been remarkably unwavering. "She's fierce," says poet Richard Howard, poetry editor for the *Paris Review*, where some of Hacker's poetry has appeared. "Marilyn found her poetic manner quite early and has held to it."

"I suppose I was fortunate in that my first book—*Presentation Piece*, which had very little gay subject matter—won the National Book Award in 1974," Hacker says. She believes winning this award early in her career helped because when she started writing explicitly about feminist and lesbian concerns in her books *Taking Notice* in 1980 and *Assumptions* in 1985, straight readers "couldn't turn their backs on me."

Hacker says she started writing poetry when she was "11 or 12. I remember writing long poems about animals—wolves and bears and reindeer." She adds that she was never interested in writing fiction, though her poetry, as Ponsot observes, "is full of the kind of detail you expect from a novelist." Raised by what Ponsot calls "assimilationist Jewish parents," Hacker went to the Bronx High School of Science, where she befriended Samuel Delaney, who later became a novelist and science fiction writer as well as Hacker's husband for 12 years. "We were best friends from age 14," Hacker says, "and we got married when we were 18. He was African-American, and I was Jewish, and he knew at the time that he was gay. It was as much a way for us both to leave home as anything else."

Hacker lived with Delaney in New York City's East Village when the two were in their early 20s during a period that Delaney has chronicled in his memoir, *The Motion of Light in Water*. When Hacker turned 30 she decided she wanted a child. Still married to Delaney though not living with him full-time, she had moved to London, "where I was earning my living as an antiquarian bookseller. I was making a good living," she says, so it seemed like a good time to have a kid.

She and Delaney conceived their daughter and then "separated for good when Iva was about 11 months old. But we shared custody always. And because I came out very soon after that," she adds with a touch of pride, "she's always had a gay father and a lesbian mother. For her whole life. And if it ever seemed like that would be a problem—well, here was a child who first of all was going to be half black and half Jewish just to start with."

Unafraid to face controversy, Hacker has long been willing to put her life on display in her poetry and politics. Last June she marched shirtless, her scarred torso exposed, at the head of the Dyke Parade during New York City's gay pride weekend. "There have got to be dozens of women with one breast or no breasts," she says, "and that has got to be demystified." She also feels solidarity with people with AIDS, calling AIDS and breast cancer "twin scourges." "It's all part of the same struggle," she

insists. "And if it shows up in my poetry, it's because your work flows from the way you think and what you notice about the world. What a person notices is always a declaration of their politics."

What this Jewish-lesbian refugee from the Bronx increasingly is noticing is the importance of connections between people. "Friendship is one of the major subjects I write about," she says. "Especially for lesbians and gays, friends are real family. This hasn't been explored much in writing: intergenerational friendships, friends who turn into lovers, lovers who become friends. It's our real contribution.

[*Kenyon Collegian* 22.09.94]

Hacker Remarks on her Sudden Dismissal from *Kenyon Review*

By Elizabeth Bennett
News Editor

This month's edition of *The Advocate*, a national gay and lesbian newsmagazine, features an interview with former *Kenyon Review* Editor Marilyn Hacker. Though the article discusses her life and work, Hacker candidly claims that she was fired from the *Review* last June.

John Weir '80 conducted the interview, which states that Hacker served for four years as the editor of the *Review*, until "she was fired summarily last June."

According to Weir's article, Hacker "rescued the *Review* from long-standing dullness, transforming it into a forum for exciting new writing, including work from emerging gay and lesbian authors." Hacker mentions that she made a great effort to include gay and lesbian authors as well as authors of color in the *Review*.

Hacker speculates that her editorial policy may have cost her the job. "Somebody on the college's trustees committee asked questions when they were 'investigating' the magazine, like 'Isn't it true that the content of the *Kenyon Review* has become much more narrow?' Narrow meaning it's not stuff written 85 percent by straight white men," said Hacker.

Hacker is the author of seven volumes of poetry, including *Winter Numbers* (which will be published this fall).

In the current issue of the *Kenyon Review*, David Lynn, associate professor of English and editor of the *Review* addresses many of the issues Hacker suggests in her interview with the *Advocate*.

In the *Review's* "To Our Readers" section, Lynn commends Hacker's work for the *Review*, saying, "Marilyn Hacker is, as well as being one of the leading poets of our time, a brilliant literary editor. Her tenure at the *Review* may well be regarded as one of the highlights of the magazine's illustrious history."

Lynn, however, maintains that there is no evidence that the Board of Trustees didn't renew Hacker's contract because of her editorial policy. Rather, her contract was not renewed due to financial strains on the College.

Hacker was the first full-time editor in the *Review's* history.

According to Lynn, if the College refused to renew her Hacker's contract because of her editorial policy then they wouldn't allow the *Review* to publish over a year of her selected material and work.

Now, angry about the recent attacks against the *Review*, Lynn suggested some of the ways the *Review* is trying to become a more integral part of the school. Through

lowering subscription costs for Kenyon students, hiring students as associate workers, and a number of other programs Lynn wants to bring the *Review*, "back to the hill."

[Fall 1994 *Kenyon Review* Editorial]

To Our Readers --

This is the last issue in which Marilyn Hacker's name will appear at the top of the masthead (opposite page). Beginning with our Winter 1995 issue, my name will appear in that spot.

That will be a bit misleading, however.

Marilyn Hacker's term as the first full-time editor of the *Kenyon Review* officially ended June 30, 1994. Nevertheless, our Summer issue (out in July), this issue and our upcoming Winter issue were prepared exclusively under her editorial direction. Indeed, most of the works that will appear in the *Kenyon Review* through all of 1995 (and much in issues beyond that) have been selected by her.

Marilyn Hacker is, as well as being one of the leading poets of our time, a brilliant literary editor. Her tenure at the *Review* may well be regarded as one of the highlights of the magazine's illustrious history. Not the least of her accomplishments was firmly establishing *KR* as an environment for the very best in new writing, not only by established writers but also by emerging writers and those working in non-traditional genres and with perspectives of diverse populations.

I feel privileged to have been associated with Marilyn Hacker as a colleague, a friend and as an associate editor. Because any literary magazine must in many respects be a personal reflection of its editor, my approach to the task may vary from hers in detail. You may, for example, see in these pages more prose, more international literary thought, more new writing in traditional forms. But my vision for the journal will not be at variance with those principles of excellence, balance and inclusiveness which she so ably championed.

The months ahead will be challenging. Kenyon College, our publisher and underwriter, has renewed its commitment to continue the *Review* but has said it must reduce its contribution. That contribution, along with grants and gifts from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lannan Foundation, the Ohio Arts Council, the Smart Family Foundation, the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest foundation and individual donors, has been our mainstay.

Now we must work to increase our support from individuals and organisations, increase revenue and reduce operating costs -- all while maintaining the quality of the magazine.

We will hold our individual subscription and single-copy prices at the present level. But, in order to reduce our printing and mailing costs, we will adopt the practice of a number of other literary magazines and combine our Summer and Fall numbers into an expanded double issue beginning in the fall of 1995. (Current subscriptions running through summer 1995 -- and those that subscribe before the end of this year -- will receive four magazines, including the expanded Summer/Fall issue. Future subscriptions will cover the regular Winter and Spring issues and the expanded Summer/Fall issue.)

I urge you to help sustain the *Kenyon Review* and the cause of writing excellence by subscribing now – for yourself or for a friend.

Your subscriptions – and your individual financial contributions – are especially important to us.

Last, but not least, I would like to ask you to write me with your comments and suggestions about the *Review*, and if you are a writer as well as a reader please consider submitting your best work to us.

Thank you for your attention. And now I invite you to turn to the excellent poetry, essays, fiction, interview and review that Marilyn Hacker has selected for presentation in the pages that follow.

Lambda Book Report -- 1994

Marilyn Hacker fired. In a move that came as a surprise to now-former *Kenyon Review* Editor **Marilyn Hacker**, the president of Kenyon College fired her in May. Hacker, the first lesbian to head the prestigious literary journal, had her contract terminated for "financial reasons." The firing, which occurred at the end of this academic year, after the final issue of the student newspaper had been published and the faculty held its last meeting, has been causing shock waves through the literary community. Hacker is widely credited with the increasing appearance in the *Review* of a member of traditionally underrepresented writers, including gay men, lesbians, and people of color.

According to informed sources, in the months prior to the firing, Hacker made several proposals to cut the budget, including teaching extra classes for no pay and reducing the number of issues published from four to three, but officials at the college clearly thought that her termination was the solution, and they deny that homophobia was a factor in their decision.

Hacker is the author of a number of books, including **Love, Death and the Changing of the Seasons**, and the National Book Award-winning **Presentation Piece**. She has two new books due this fall: **Selected Poems 1965-1990**, and **Winter Numbers**, both from Norton.

[*Washington Blade* 3-3-95]

Confrontation with Mortality

Marilyn Hacker: "There's the sense that our concerns, whether political or artistic or both, can't really wait"

by Irene Elizabeth Stroud

Marilyn Hacker, whose eighth collection of poems, *Winter Numbers*, was published last fall, is not only a brilliant poet but also an extraordinary editor – so extraordinary, it seems, that she lost her job.

Four years ago, her appointment as a<sic> editor of *The Kenyon Review* was a landmark event – a nationally known openly Lesbian poet would be editing a mainstream literary journal. But Hacker refused to be a token, and soon *The Kenyon Review* was much more than mainstream. She published a breathtaking range of poetry, fiction, nonfiction prose and work in experimental genres by writers who as often as not were people of color, women and Gay men, Lesbians, and others whose work seldom receives the attention it deserves. Last summer, after four successful years, her contract was not renewed.

While she was editing *The Kenyon Review* she was also fighting breast cancer, and *Winter Numbers* reflects not only her own experience with cancer but her confrontation with the illness and death of many of the writers and others of her generation and younger whom she has worked with and loved.

Her own cancer has not recurred since she finished chemotherapy in June 1993. Since then, she hasn't had to undergo any treatment more dramatic than taking Tamoxifen, a drug to prevent breast cancer. "Whether it works or not I don't know, but apparently the statistics are fairly good," she says, knocking on wood.

Other statistics are not so good. "It's alarming – I'm just talking about writers because I happen to know a lot of writers – among the women writers I know, how many have had breast cancer: Alicia Ostriker; Maxine Kumin; June Jordan; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick; Hilda Raz who's the editor of *Prairie Schooner*; Patricia Goedicke in Nebraska; Judith Moffet...and that besides the ones of us who died of it like Audre Lorde and Pat Parker<sic>. I am firmly convinced that there is some environmental reason why this is happening now. It was not the case 30 or 40 years ago – that is, breast cancer and cancers of the reproductive organs were not that common in women in their early 50s and 40s and even 30s." Along with AIDS and other diseases cutting down the young, cancer has changed writing, so much that she compares her own generation of writers to those that have lived through wars.

"There's constant confrontation not just with mortality but with the gratuitousness of how human life ends or continues," she says. "There's the sense that our concerns, whether they are political or artistic or both, can't really wait. There's an impetus to imagine more, to look beyond lyrical complacencies and to make necessary connections."

For Hacker, some of the necessary connections are between her own work as an artist and the work of her partner, Karen London, a physician's assistant who works with HIV-positive and AIDS patients at Harlem Hospital—almost entirely people of color, about half of whom are women. Every night at dinner, Hacker says, when she hears about these patients and about the closing of treatment centers and detox centers that have enabled some of them to turn their lives around, she knows that recent vicious cuts to services and care are rooted in the same sentiments that have led to cuts in arts funding.

“There’s the creation of a false sense of scarcity of resources and a division of people into Them and Us—and an insistence that “We” have no obligation to “Them.” As a writer and as a Lesbian, I know I am Them and not Us. But it’s not only a question of feeling personally threatened. It also is a question of feeling many of the things that we would like to take for granted are not secure. And I suppose that goes from the personal sense of not knowing when you or your best friend or the graduate student you’ve been working with is going to be struck by a possible fatal disease to the idea that suddenly there will be no more government funding for the arts.

“I think all writing is political, whether or not it has an agenda, simply in its willingness to look, observe, describe what’s been observed. This is not necessarily a mandate to take a stand on every issue or have an opinion of everything that’s observed, but simply that kind of clear-eyed observation; this is what’s there, I saw it and I’m telling you about it.”

More and more writers who are not part of the literary mainstream are offering such observations, and Hacker is excited about the blossoming of new literature.

“Once individuals who identify themselves with any group feel free to write both about their own experiences and about any damn thing they please, and also when they can hear voices like their own and read books by people who are in some way like themselves without having to do a kind of active mental translation, that does mean that their participation – whether we’re talking about African Americans or Lesbians, and Gay men – in the general literary conversation is going to be much more marked.

“Whether it seems statistically anomalous or not, I think many of the most exciting younger – whether younger in years or younger in career – writers of color and Lesbians and Gays. Part of that comes from that rush of excitement of not having to translate. And I think what’s equally important is that they’re finding an audience, that there are people who are interested in reading their work.”

Hacker’s efforts to publish such work exceeded that of most editors. She opposes what she calls “bean-counting” – publishing work simply because of the writer’s race, gender, or sexual orientation. Instead, she expanded the pool from which excellent work could be chosen.

“Submissions from writers of color and submissions from working in experimental genres don’t just come over the transom,” she says. “Most general-interest American literary magazines manage to be 98% white even though some of the most exciting writers are writers of color. You’ve got to let people know you’re interested – by

knowing their work, by writing to them, by soliciting work from them. We began receiving wonderful work from writers who would not have automatically thought of that journal as a place to publish their work. Some of that work was mediocre and didn't get published, and some of it was terrific and did."

The Kenyon Review insists that Hacker's contract was not renewed because Kenyon College which publishes the *Review*, faced a financial shortfall and was unable to afford a full-time editor. But Hacker is certain that opposition to her editing decisions played a role. She says she cut the college's subsidy to the journal by \$43,000 in 1993-94 through cost-cutting, fund-raising and grants, and even proposed working half-time to publish three issues a year instead of four.

"I believe that there were people on the Board of Trustees who very strongly disliked what I was doing," she says. "They used the college's financial shortfall as an excuse to get rid of an editor who was doing work that they didn't like." She recalls hearing about a Kenyon trustee asking a faculty member, "Isn't it true that *The Kenyon Review* is much more narrow under its current editorship?" It's a ridiculous way of describing a journal that had been 75% male and maybe 99% white for years and years," she says.

When Hacker was dismissed, consulting editors David Baker, Robyn Selman, Elmer<sic> Bender, and Carol Maso resigned. David Lynn, the other consulting editor who is on Kenyon's English faculty and had served as acting editor before Hacker's appointment, is now the editor; all the new consulting editors are members of Kenyon's English faculty. All the work Hacker accepted will be published; *The Kenyon Review* will reflect her editing through the Summer 1995 issue.

Now Hacker is looking for a job. She can't support herself on her writing alone: her advance from Norton for *Winter Numbers* was only \$1,000, low but hardly atypical for a book of poems. Fees from readings and lectures help somewhat, but not enough.

"A novelist can conceivably live on his or her writing after a certain point, but I don't think there's any poet in the United States who can," she says. She would love to edit another journal, but realistically she is more likely to find a teaching position. The opportunities to do what she did at *The Kenyon Review* are rare and becoming rarer.

Letters to the Author

Letters to the Author

David Bergman to Author 09.11.01

David Bergman
3024 North Calvert Street, Apt.C Baltimore, Md 21218
410-467-8070

November 9, 2001

Jack Harvey
c/o Michael Stanley
501 Penny Lane
Cockeysville, MD 21030

Dear Mr. Harvey:

I have no direct information about the incident, and I was in no way involved in the episode. I consider Marilyn Hacker as a friend, and after David Lynn was named editor, I was asked to sit on the board. I have published in *The Kenyon Review* before Ms. Hacker was editor and afterwards, and I attended Kenyon College. So although I have many connections to both the Review and Kenyon, this is a matter about which I have only second and third hand information.

My understanding is that there were three major problems with Ms. Hacker's editorship. First, I heard that the magazine was costing the college a lot of money. It paid her a fairly hefty salary, and the production costs of the journal had gone up during her editorship. Second, I know that some people felt that the literary quality of the journal was not up to the standard many had hoped she would bring to the journal. The objection was not that she was publishing a large number of queer writers or authors of color, but rather that political considerations were put before literary quality. Third, I heard complaints that Ms. Hacker was not very much engaged or committed to Kenyon or Gambier itself—that she was at the college as little as she could manage and resisted the sort of fundraising, schmoozing, and development efforts that others had hoped she'd bring to the enterprise. I don't think I will be saying something that will surprise Marilyn if I mention that she is not an easy going person, happy to adjust herself to the desires of authority. I have no doubt her intensity made for some difficulties. But let me add, I was never asked about Ms. Hacker, nor was I one of the alumni polled about the Review under her stewardship.

I should add that I am gay. Since David Lynn has taken over the editorship, virtually all the gay writers I have suggested he publish have found their way into the journal. I'm particularly pleased by our mutual regard for Thomas Glave, who is Jamaican and gay. I inaugurated the series on introducing young writers of promise by writing about Keith Banner, a number of whose stories have appeared in the Review. Michael Lowenthal, another young writer who is gay, published his first literary story in the pages of KR (up to then he had published mostly erotica). I believe that David Lynn is very committed to publishing queer writers and authors of color, and if I felt any homophobia in the editorial decision-making, I would resign from the board.

I believe that the Kenyon Review is a better journal now. I find many more things in it that I want to read, and I think the poetry is better. I have to admit that much of what Marilyn published didn't strike me as very good—either well written, or interesting, or particularly provocative. In fact, I think if the Review had been really more provocative, there would have been a much longer line of defenders. I think there is a stuffiness in the Review now that wasn't there before, but there is a weightiness as well.

I hope that this has been helpful.

David

P.S. I guess I should distinguish between the annoyance of many of the work and really provocation. I didn't find the works forcing me to rethink ideas I had. Much of the work was rehashing of old positions.

Daniel Curzon to Author 13.11.01

Daniel Curzon
416 Dorado Terrace
San Francisco CA 94112
Tel: 415-585-3410

To Jack Harvey:

In response to your enquiry, let me say that I have never had extensive correspondence with Marilyn Hacker.

A friend told me that *The Kenyon Review* was, under Ms. Hacker's editorship, more likely to be open to submissions with gay subject matter. I sent her a story of mine called "Wasps," which she accepted and published in 1995. The last time I'd tried the magazine was probably in the 1960s, when I was somewhat green. Her comment, as I recall, was that she liked the story because it didn't make gayness the issue. Indeed, it is about a gay father going to visit his son sired with a lesbian and how the son both is like him and very much not like him.

I later heard that Ms Hacker felt she was let go because of prejudice. I don't know the facts.

I don't believe I submitted any more stories to that magazine after that, probably feeling that I'd had my one opportunity there.

In general I would say that material with "gay content" has met with immense resistance over the years, with a slight lessening in the last decade or so, perhaps even with a limited amount of "Affirmative Action." I've noticed, though, that it is easier to publish and win play contests with non-gay material, as my publishing record indicates.

There may be several truths here: there is homophobia; there is over-reaction to perceived homophobia; there is resistance to being forced to publish certain material; there is bad stuff published because it is gay; there is good stuff not published because it is gay.

These realities have all been clearly shown in material with black and women's content. I think gay material hasn't begun to reach the Must Be Included at All Costs phase.

Daniel Curzon

BIOGRAPHY

DANIEL CURZON

416 Dorado Terrace
San Francisco Ca 94112

415-585-3410 (tel)
e-mail: Curzon@pacbell.net
415-452-1525 (fax)

In fiction, Daniel Curzon has published in *The Kenyon Review*, *Descant*, *Parnus Index*, and many other magazines. His stories have been anthologized in *Mae West Is Dead* (Faber), *Man of My Dreams* (Chronicle Books), and several others.

His books include *Something You Do in the Dark*, *Among the Cranivores*, *The World Can Break Your Heart*, *Curzon in Love*, and *Only the Good Parts*.

Curzon has also written plays on a variety of subjects, including a Shakespearean sequel (*Henry II; Part III*), a Maugham/Coward-like down-for-the-weekend comedy (*When Bertha Was a Pretty Name*), plus several musicals with composer Dan Turner (*Cinderella II* (about what happens to Cinderella and her prince after they live happily ever after) and *No Mince Pies* (about Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans with parallels to our own times). His *My Unknown Son* was produced in New York at the Circle Rep Lab (1987) and later in an Equity production at the Kaufman Theater off-Broadway (1988). Two of his pieces were included in *Homosexual Acts*, produced off-Broadway at Theater Off Square, New York (1991). *My Unknown Son* was given its West Coast premier in Los Angeles in the summer of 1997. He won three one-act contests--one for "The Hit" at the Attic Theater of Los Angeles and one for "Sour Grapes" at the Actors Theater of Santa Cruz, and First Prize in the 1998 One-Act Marathon of the Attic 1999 National New Play Contest Award Theatre, Hollywood, California.

He was awarded the 1999 National New Play Contest Award for *GODOT ARRIVES*

by the Southwest Theatre Association.

Daniel Curzon (Daniel R. Brown) was born in Litchfield, Illinois and grew up in Detroit, Michigan. He holds a M.A. in English from Kent State University and a Ph.D. in English from Wayne State University. He has taught at several colleges and universities, including Wayne State University, and the University of Maryland (Far East Division), California State University--Fresno, and City College of San Francisco.

Steve Amidon to Author 29.11.01

7 Silver Ripple Way
Westerly, RI 02891

29 November, 2001

Jack Harvey
c/o Michael Stanley
501 Penny Lane
Cockeysville, MD 21030

Dear Mr. Harvey,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the protest letter I wrote to the *Kenyon Review* following the firing of Marilyn Hacker as editor. My memory is a little vague on a couple of these matters, but I'll do my best to answer your questions.

I believe I subscribed to the *Kenyon Review* a year or two before Hacker became the editor, but I might be wrong about that. *Kenyon Review* was one of a number of literary journals I subscribed to at the time. As a working poet, as well as a writing teacher, I like to keep up with trends going on in the field, and the better literary magazines allow me to follow those trends.

I had followed Hacker's career for a number of years, and I felt that during her tenure at *Kenyon Review* she had revitalized what had become a bit of a staid and tired journal. She had brought in young dynamic writers. She made the journal worth reading again. I was upset when the journal fired Hacker.

Do I believe she was fired for financial reasons? I believe financial problems might have been part of the reason she was fired. I believe the publisher was pressured by some long-time readers or subscribers to fire Hacker because they found her work controversial, at least in part because she so openly embraced writing being done by the gay and lesbian community. Perhaps some readers cancelled subscriptions, or withheld financial support. It is possible that the journal could simply not afford Hacker. But without her editorial expertise, I felt the journal would return to a very tired, conservative aesthetic. Regardless of the cause, I was not interested in supporting a journal that fired such an intelligent and innovative editor, for whatever reason.

I have looked at the review occasionally since Hacker left. It is available at the university library where I teach. It seems to me the journal is pretty old-fashioned, and not interested in publishing work that is controversial or avant-garde in nature. To be fair, I don't read it much.

I hope this helps you. Where are you in Scotland? When I was a Navy submariner, I used to work out of Dunoon, and would travel to Edinburgh several times a year. It's a wonderful place. I still follow Premier League football on the BBC website.

Steve Amidon

Doris Jean Dilts to Author

30.11.01

THE KENYON REVIEW

November 30, 2001

Jack Harvey
%<sic> Michael Stanley
501 Penny Lane
Cockeysville, MD 21030

Dear Mr. Harvey:

Marilyn Hacker was not fired.

She was the first full-time editor of *The Kenyon Review*. When it became evident *The Review's* finances could not support a full-time editor, her contract was not renewed.

We still do not have a full-time editor. David H. Lynn, the editor who replaced Hacker, also teaches in the English department.

Sincerely,

Doris Jean Dilts
Operations Coordinator

Bruce Berlind to Author 06.12.01

BRUCE BERLIND, BOX 237, HAMILTON, NY 13346

12/6/01

Dear Mr. Harvey:

The answer to your question about my letter to Marilyn Hacker of 17 May 1994 is this: she made no secret of her lesbianism and, as editor of the Review, was receptive to material with homosexual content/implications/etc. Take that in the context of a conservative governing board of the college -- most governing boards of American colleges and universities are of course conservative -- and the reason for her sacking seems to me evident.

I have no way of responding to your query about Cy Wainscott's letter to me other than noting that Marilyn said she liked him and that many of the nouns he cites as emanating from Marilyn herself seem to me to follow from my original assessment.

Good luck with your thesis,

Sincerely,

Bruce Berlind

TEL: 315 893-7078

~~FAX: 315 893 7831~~

E-MAIL: Bberlind@mail.colgate.edu

James Kates to Author

11.12.01

11 December 2001
P.O. Box 221, Fitzwilliam
New Hampshire 03447
jkates@monad.net

Dear Jack Harvey,

Well, if you're asking me, no editor worth the salt can be all-inclusive. Implicit in the job description of editing is editing out as well as editing in. Of course, in English, the word "editor" itself is ambiguous. We use it for both the person who shapes a text (read, if you will, a group of texts) as well as for the person who compiles the texts. The Russians can use separate words -- *redaktor*, *sotavitel'* -- for the separate acts. The French tend to rely on *rédacteur* for both. It is a rare case in English where our vocabulary choices are more dependent on modifiers than Russian, but so it proves: copy editor, text editor, and so on. The pudding of the editing is in the proof, or something like that.

If I am hiring somebody to "edit" a magazine, or a segment thereof, what are my expectations? This was where many editors associated with Jon Silkin at *Stand* ran aground. Jon was a founding editor with a founder's vision. As time went on, he wanted new blood and new ideas, but couldn't accept the egalitarianism this implied; he could not cede the power of selection, which is the essence of such an editor's job. Jon quarreled over and over again with people he himself had brought in. (Having come from a similar situation at *The Nantucket Review*, I was first introduced to the same problem when I read his correspondence with Ian Wedde of New Zealand at the Newcastle office of *Stand*.)

Stay well,
Jim Kates

Dear Mr. Harvey,

What an interesting topic! I'm glad some history has been retained with regard to Ms. Hacker's dismissal, and that you have access to it.

Thank you for sharing feedback you have been getting. I must say, I'm confused by some of it, particularly Ms. Dilts who said, "Marilyn Hacker was not fired." Certainly Ms. Hacker did not leave willingly. She initiated a letter writing campaign with the purpose of changing the decision!

I enjoyed Mr. Bergman's prose, but wonder about the content. Surely the College and its Board of Trustees established a budget for the KR and had some say in Ms. Hacker's salary. It's a shame if the reason she was let go had something to do with poor budgeting or disbursement controls. And, as for literary quality, well that's as much perspective than science, I'm afraid. I will review some back issues, but my memory is that Ms. Hacker published a great number of writers who are respected, even revered in some corners -- writers for whom the quality of their work would not be in dispute -- who probably wouldn't have been published before her editorship. She also published a great number of emerging writers, something most would argue is an obligation of even the top shelf literary magazines. It never struck me that Ms. Hacker was inappropriate in her decisions here.

Not being on campus at the time, I won't be a good resource in terms of the social aspect of Ms. Hacker's time there. I did grow up in the area, went to school at Kenyon, and can tell you the obvious: that Gambier and NYC are very different places. Interestingly, while a student at Kenyon, I had a beloved friend and roommate who hailed from NYC. He didn't endure past his sophomore year, and I don't think it was entirely his fault. My own experience of Kenyon was that it worked for a fairly narrow social segment, and that that was a fundamental problem with the institution. Personally, I had to weather the fact of my being a "townie" and below the mean financially (not to mention gay). I'm not sure how much Kenyon changed between my graduation in 1982 and when Ms. Hacker became editor of the KR, and can only imagine the subtle and overt challenges to a radical lesbian Jewish feminist poet from the Big City.

The seed of her ousting may have been planted with her hire given the clash of cultures, but I am one who believes that good comes from diversity, and that the KR had a rare and welcome sheen while Marilyn Hacker was involved. I can't remember the last time someone in my circle mentioned the Kenyon Review.

That wasn't the case then. The quality of the publication may be equally as high now. I hope so, but wouldn't know. I haven't been following it much.

I'm not sure how useful these thoughts are, but am glad to be asked. I find there is still energy for me around the issue, and a sense of missed opportunity. At the time, it seemed like the KR had the power to move the ocean of art and culture a tiny bit, rather than just fish a few big ones from it. What would the KR be like now if Marilyn Hacker were still there? I'm sure you could find opinions ranging from

defunct to glorious. For me it would be more alive, and I miss what might have been.

I would be very interested in knowing of your progress and reading any of the correspondence you mentioned. Feel free to be in touch. All best with your work.

Warmest regards,

Jeffrey

Jeffrey Betcher
Family Violence Prevention Fund
383 Rhode Island St., Ste. 304
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 252-8900
jeffrey@fvpf.org
www.endabuse.org

-----Original Message-----

From: JHarvey54@aol.com [SMTP:JHarvey54@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2002 5:01 AM
To: Jeffrey@fvpf.org
Subject: Marilyn Hacker's sacking

Robert Peters email to Author12.03.02

ROBERT PETERS & PAUL TRACHTENBERG
9431 KREPP DR
HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA 92646
PTRACHRP@AOL.COM March 2, 2002

to: Jack Harvey, %<sic> Michael Stanley, 501 Penny Lane, Cockeysville MD 21030

March 12, 2002

Dear Jack Harvey,

You won't believe this: your letter of Nov 27th asking for my responses to Marilyn Hacker and the Kenyon Review just reached me yesterday. My former English Dept, from which I retired 9 years ago, apparently didn't know what to do with it, so let it linger for months, only forwarding it to me yesterday. Shocking. And I'm sure now that whatever I have to say will be of no use. I had and still have a high regard for Hacker's role in helping gays and lesbians get published in any mainstream publications here. I guess you'd have to say that Ginsberg's influence was much greater, but Hacker's influence was enormous on "quality" mags like KENYON, PARTISAN REVIEW and others. I am afraid that I long ago lost touch with Marilyn, and the whole episode has so faded in my history that I can't find that I have anything significant to tell you at this late date. Very sorry, and I'd love to see eventually what you do manage to write about that period/episode.

Sincerely,

Prof Robert Peters

Subj: **Re: Kenyon Review archives**
Date: 15/05/2002 14:13:53 Eastern Daylight Time
From: 110165.74@compuserve.com
To: JHarvey54@aol.com

Sent from the Internet (Details)

I don't know if you're aware that at the 1994 Associated Writing Programs conference in Tempe AZ , the poets Adrienne Rich and Jean Valentine raised a petition, which gathered some 400 signatures, asking Kenyon College to keep me on as editor (since it was known that the trustees were "investigating" the Kenyon Review). It was faxed to the then president of the college -- who responded -- "But they're not all _subscribers_."

MH

Subj: **Re: Kenyon Review archives**
Date: 16/05/2002 12:32:28 Eastern Daylight Time
From: 110165.74@compuserve.com
To: JHarvey54@aol.com

Sent from the Internet (Details)

All in all, I'd much prefer that you concentrate on the positive work I did at the Kenyon Review than on the unfortunate or sordid or however you'd like to look at it circumstances of my dismissal....

MH

Subj: Re: Kenyon Review archives
Date: 16/05/2002 12:32:28 Eastern Daylight Time
From: 110165.74@compuserve.com
To: JHarvey54@aol.com

Sent from the Internet (Details)

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MH

Subj:Re: Marilyn Hacker enquiry
Date:06/06/2002 09:20:16 Eastern Daylight Time
From:hraz1@unlnotes.unl.edu
To:JHarvey54@aol.com
Sent from the Internet (Details)

Dear Jack Harvey,

Thanks for contacting me about Marilyn Hacker's editorship of KR. Please keep in mind that I know Ms. Hacker as a major poet and also as a generous and able translator; we've published her poems and translations regularly and with appreciation in PRAIRIE SCHOONER for many years. And we solicited her journals for my book LIVING ON THE MARGINS: WOMEN WRITERS ON BREAST

CANCER (Persea, paper 1999), journals I edited at the time. Hacker was a keynote speaker at PRAIRIE SCHOONER's 75th Anniversary Celebration and Conference, in October 2001, a three day event in Lincoln that brought over 750 writers and scholars to give panels, readings, and parties. Although Marilyn Hacker and I are not personal friends, I declare myself a friend of her work and have said so in print and in public. But of course I am not alone in this matter.

As one of the few women editors of a major quarterly, I met the news of Hacker's appointment as editor of KR with delight and have never had cause to alter my response to the journal under her editorship. David Lynn, now editor, has been a friend of PS for years -- both before and after the Hacker years -- and he is an able, even brilliant editor. But Hacker brought to the journal a new distinction. Surely we were not surprised to see KR open to a wider range of political postures! Readers of Hacker know the measure of her mind.

I don't have much to add to these paragraphs. I was sorry to see Hacker leave and especially saddened to know that Kenyon withdrew its support. Institutions make the decisions they think they must and literary culture absorbs them and continues. Hacker herself continues to write, translate, and edit and PRAIRIE SCHOONER is glad to have the benefit of her range of interests and opinions, whether we agree with her or not. We publish her work whenever we can get it and hope she'll edit a special issue for us in the near future. We live in a vexed world. All artists and editors notice and make comment.

All best wishes,
Hilda Raz

Hilda Raz
Professor of English
Editor in Chief, PRAIRIE SCHOONER
201 Andrews Hall
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, NE 68588-0333

Subj: **Marilyn Hacker**
Date: 07/06/2002 13:54:21 Eastern Daylight Time
From: Verb3K
To: JHarvey54
File: **RESU.doc** (72704 bytes) DL Time (45333 bps): < 1 minute

Dear Mr. Harvey,

I've attached a CV, which will give you further references if you need them.

I'm not able to answer your question concerning the political views of the governing board of Kenyon College, nor do I have information about their counterparts at other universities. I do not know whether Kenyon's governing board asked Marilyn Hacker to resign on the basis of conflicting politics. It struck me as an unusual decision on Kenyon's part, given the excellence of the issues published under Ms. Hacker's editorship. At the time, I wrote a letter objecting to the decision. No explanation was offered.

Anyone considering the issue of the literary quality of Ms. Hacker's =Kenyon Review= should first examine the two dozen or so literary quarterlies published in the United States under the auspices of universities. Even a rapid perusal ought to establish that we don't expect to find in these the very greatest writing of our era. What we can expect is an effort to find work of real interest and an editorial slant that is distinctive. Ms. Hacker provided that, and, furthermore did something that no other journal was doing then, or not so well. She neatly evaded the sense of *deja vu* that mars so many quarterlies in the category. She welcomed writers dealing with experience that differed from the expected norm. In poetry, she welcomed poems that used meter, rhyme, and verse form. On the other hand, she did not allow avant-garde experimentalist indeterminate writing to dominate her issues. There was a high degree of intelligibility in what she published. Writers of worth who had not received much exposure elsewhere were given a chance to find an audience. I will mention only one, Reetika Vazirani, whose early publication in the =Kenyon Review= launched what promises to be a an important career. But there were many others, and they cannot be unaware of the debt owed to an editor who was willing to take risks and break out of the humdrum restrictions that seem to operate elsewhere.

Sincerely,

Alfred Corn

Subj: **RE: Marilyn Hacker enquiry**

Date: 11/06/2002 12:17:04 Eastern Daylight Time

From: eleham@earthlink.net

To: JHarvey54@aol.com

Sent from the Internet (Details)

Dear Robert,

I have a full day of work ahead of me, so I will offer brief answers to your questions and if you want to follow-up with more questions, please do.

First, I would agree that most governing boards are conservative by nature. That's because of their role as watchdogs over the financial operations of the institution. They also have a fiduciary responsibility and, believe me, this informs their decision making process. Historically, the conservative nature of boards works to balance out the liberal tendencies of faculty. In the case of KR and Marilyn Hacker, I think the real problem was not a matter of a conservative board feeling uncomfortable with her multiculturalism. I think they were uncomfortable with her because she did not fit their genteel and mildly progressive image of the Institution. Marilyn was simply not a good fit for Kenyon in terms of her personality and social skills. She's a New York City Jew who prefers to spend her time writing and translating in Paris than making her mark on the academic world. She guards herself from demands that take her away from writing and editing. In short, she does not tolerate fools gladly. Moreover, she tends to befriend people who are on the fringe, rather than people who operate at the center. At Kenyon, she built a wall around herself. Yet she would say they snubbed her. Her office was in a small building with other members of the English Dept. Yet, she did not chat with people, or make an effort to get to know them. She was not collegial and didn't grasp the need to be collegial.

I have great admiration for Marilyn as a poet and an editor, but she is not always an easy person to be around. She can be very abrasive and unreasonable, especially if she feels she is under attack, which she often was at Kenyon. She had something of a privileged position at Kenyon and this must have created some jealousy and set her further apart from the

English Dept. She was paid well to edit one of this country's best-known literary magazines. She had a staff, she had the support of the President, and she did not have to teach. When she was asked to teach, she resented the fact that she was not offered plum courses. She found fault with everything there was to find fault with and, in the small college environment, that's self-destructive behavior. It was a bad marriage, not because the partners were bad people, but because they could not find a way to accommodate each other and live together with any kind of harmony.

I think she was a superb editor and published a number of gifted poets who were not being published elsewhere. At the same time, I think she published certain poets whose work was not of high quality. [JACK REFER TO BERGMAN 09.11.01]

I think she did that

because she wanted to offer support and encouragement to poets, not just published well-polished poems. She should be commended for doing that. I get a little incensed by the academic world's so-called sense of standards for literary quality. That sounds exclusive and self-contained and that is what Marilyn so opposed. In Marilyn's case, I think the English Dept. hid behind their "standards" as a way to undercut her autonomy as an editor.

As for Marilyn's influence on other magazines, I think she set the standard for quality editing and diversity in editing. She was also very loyal to other editors, like myself, and supported me by publishing some of her best

work in Open Places because she believed in me as an editor. She kept up with other editors the way she kept up with poets who were being rejected by the mainstream. She had the intellect and the passion for poetry that was missing in the more academically oriented magazines. Editors like Larry Levis of the Missouri Review looked up to Marilyn. He did not always agree with her editorial choices, but I think he was a better editor because of her editing. I think this was true for a whole generation of editors.

I don't have a website. I founded and edited the literary magazine Open Places, 1966-1987. I first met Marilyn in 1968 and published her work throughout the history of the magazine. She helped raise the level quality of poetry published in Open Places and taught me to see the value of editing a truly open literary magazine. I hope your book or your article supports this view. It's sad the way her relationship with Kenyon ended. There were pressures on all sides and Marilyn was pretty much alone in trying to withstand them.

I must get back to work.

Eleanor Hamilton

Subj: **Re: Marilyn Hacker enquiry**
Date: 11/06/2002 14:55:43 Eastern Daylight Time
From: MBudhos
To: JHarvey54

In a message dated 6/11/2002 5:30:31 AM Pacific Daylight Time, JHarvey54 writes:

Subj:**Marilyn Hacker enquiry**
Date:6/11/2002 5:30:31 AM Pacific Daylight Time
From:JHarvey54
To:MBudhos

Dear Ms. Budhos,

I am the Scotsman working on Marilyn Hacker's editorship of The Kenyon Review. Thank you for taking the time and trouble to respond to my enquiry. I would be interested in your opinion on Marilyn's editorship of the Review, particularly in respect to her aim of multiculturalism. In Marilyn's presentation on becoming editor of the KR she made it perfectly clear that she wished to achieve 'literary diversity' and that she had 'specific plans and goals in fostering it here'. Bruce Berlind, formerly of Colgate University, wrote me (Dec 6 2001), 'she made no secret of her lesbianism and, as editor of the Review, was receptive to material with homosexual content/implications/etc. Take that in the context of a conservative governing board of the college - most governing boards of American colleges and universities are of course conservative - and the reason for her sacking seems to me evident'. Would you agree with Berlind's assessment that most governing boards are conservative, and if so, does it then follow that Marilyn was, ultimately, 'too multicultural' in her approach?

I don't know if most college boards are conservative; perhaps that of Kenyon College is, which would make a lot of sense. It is, after all, a traditional liberal arts college, steeped in history. I would not say Marilyn was too multicultural in her approach. After all, they knew, when she hired her that she would be bringing in new voices and perspectives.

In reply to an enquiry David Bergman stated (Nov 9 2001), 'I know that some people felt that the literary quality of the journal was not up to the standard many had hoped she would bring to the journal. The objection was not that she was publishing a large number of queer writers or authors of color, but rather that political considerations were put before literary quality'. I would appreciate any thoughts you have regarding this statement.

I can't say I saw any diminishment in quality--if anything the review became livelier, more relevant, not so stodgy. There were many writers in there who I read to this day; who I discovered there. Put political considerations before literary quality? This doesn't quite sound right. I did not read every issue. In my dealings with Marilyn I

felt she was a sensitive reader, and alert to new experiences and voices coming through the literary form. The story I published while she was editor is probably one of my best, and she in fact didn't accept it at first, but had suggestions for revision.

Robert Peters, formerly of the University of California wrote me (Dec 3 2001), 'I guess you'd have to say that Ginsberg's influence was much greater, but Hacker's influence was enormous on "quality" mags like KENYON, PARTISAN REVIEW and others.' I would value your opinion on how Marilyn's editorship of the KR has influenced other literary publications re diversity of published material.

I think so, because she made the Kenyon Review so much, much more contemporary. So many of these magazines, to this day, are a bit well, middle of the road. Marilyn was alert to what was starting to bubble up in American letters from younger voices and she was open to them, in ways other magazines were not. I think she did a great service to the realm of literary publishing. She was simply not provincial; she was textured and culturally astute.

Is there a website available where I could find a biography of yourself? Your help in this matter is greatly appreciated. Any other thoughts on any aspect of Marilyn's editorship of The Kenyon Review would be very welcome,

In general, I thought it was a pity she was let go from the Kenyon Review. It made it more alive to me, while keeping the quality high.

There is information on me on a website called SAWNET. If you do a search under my name, it's one of the first entries that comes up.

Best,
Marina Budhos

Subj: Re: Marilyn Hacker enquiry

Date: 11/06/2002 18:24:02 Eastern Daylight Time

From: toiderri+@pitt.edu

To: JHarvey54@aol.com

Sent from the Internet (Details)

i'll reply within the body of your text.

----- Original Message -----

From: <JHarvey54@aol.com>

To: <toiderri@pitt.edu>

Sent: Tuesday, June 11, 2002 9:46 AM

Subject: Marilyn Hacker enquiry

Dear Ms. Derricotte,

I am the person working on Marilyn Hacker's editorship of *The Kenyon Review*. Thank you for taking the time and trouble to respond to my enquiry. I would be interested in your opinion on Marilyn's editorship of the *Review*, particularly in respect to her aim of multiculturalism. In Marilyn's presentation on becoming editor of the *KR* she made it perfectly clear that she wished to achieve 'literary diversity' and that she had 'specific plans and goals in fostering it here'. Bruce Berling, formerly of Colgate University, wrote me (Dec 6 2001), 'she made no secret of her lesbianism and, as editor of the *Review*, was receptive to material with homosexual content/implications/etc. Take that in the context of a conservative governing board of the college - most governing boards of American colleges and universities are of course conservative - and the reason for her sacking seems to me evident'. Would you agree with Berling's assessment that most governing boards are conservative, and if so, does it then follow that Marilyn was, ultimately, 'too multicultural' in her approach?

Marilyn has always been way ahead of the times. She had a unique vision about what great literature was and a passion to get it published when I met her thirty years ago. I don't know what gave her this vision at such an early age, and how she tackled this with such toughness, but she had a fire in her to do this important work from the very beginning. She saw to it that fine unpublished writers were published (when she couldn't publish them herself), by recommending, encouraging, making connections, etc. She was tireless. Many of these people are now among the most respected poets of our time. At Kenyon she made such big changes so quickly that it was astonishing. It looked like she was in danger from the very beginning.

In reply to an enquiry David Bergman stated (Nov 9 2001), 'I know that some people felt that the literary quality of the journal was not up to the standard many had hoped she would bring to the journal. The objection was not that she was publishing a large number of queer writers or authors of color, but rather that political considerations were put before literary quality'. I would appreciate any thoughts you have regarding this

statement.

marilyn knew that writing that tackled real life issues, that wanted to make change in the way people saw themselves and others, was not only poetry, but that, in fact, it was better poetry than most poetry that was getting attention at that time. she knew how to take into consideration diversity of voice, form, subject, and knew that in fact this diversity was what was going to make poetry vital again in the united states. that was a scary thing to people who didn't have that vision. marilyn had to get people ready to respect the poetry that she knew was good. she did this by exposing people to poetry they weren't accustomed to reading until their taste buds changed. this took risk, time, and, unfortunately, she paid a cost.

Robert Peters, formerly of the University of California wrote me (Dec 3 2001), 'I guess you'd have to say that Ginsberg's influence was much greater, but Hacker's influence was enormous on "quality" mags like KENYON, PARTISAN REVIEW and others.' I would value your opinion on how Marilyn's editorship of the KR has influenced other literary publications re diversity of published material. Is there a website available where I could find a biography of yourself?

I think Marilyn's vision has, in the long run, created a domino effect. I believe she was one of the first poets who could get the attention of those people who were among the most conservative poets of that generation and get them to think a little about their aesthetics. there were lots of little magazines being published that they didn't read. but when somebody as formally accomplished, brilliant, and articulate as Marilyn Hacker said that some poems by women, gays, and people of color that they wouldn't have even looked at were good--and not just for publication in special places--it made them think again.

Your help in this matter is greatly appreciated. Any other thoughts on any aspect of Marilyn's editorship of The Kenyon Review would be very welcome,

she is one of the great thinkers of the 20th century. when i think of her impact on poetry, i think of great editors like Toni Morrison and critics like Randall Jarrell, fearless and visionary. she is also a hero, because she wasn't just fighting the battle so that her friends could get awards. she made great personal sacrifices because she believed that art has a moral purpose too. please get my bio from my secretary wesolowskis@cs.com all my best in your project, if you use my remarks, please correct for caps, punct. etc. thanks,
toi

Very best wishes,
Jack Harvey

Subj: Re : Marilyn Hacker enquiry
Date: 11/06/2002 07:46:20 Eastern Daylight Time
From: arthur.gregor@wanadoo.fr
To: JHarvey54@aol.com
Sent from the Internet (Details)

Dear Mr. Harvey,

Sorry about the delay in my reply. I have only just returned to my desk after a few days in Paris. (I live both in the country, in the Loire Valley, and in Paris).

As I have had a long affiliation with *The Kenyon Review* (having first been published there in the late Fifties) it would be valuable to take a look back at the nature of that magazine and to relate it to what it became under Marilyn's very able editorship. Kenyon had long had recognized leadership in representing the New Criticism founded by its editor, John C. Ransom along with Allan Tate, Robert Penn Warren and others as well as being one of the half a dozen or so literary magazines known and respected for their high literary standards. In short, it represented the best in literature of its epoch and had no political viewpoints to represent. This tradition of the magazine continued for some time and was changed with Marilyn's arrival and her proclaimed emphasis on 'literary diversity' which, in a nutshell does represent the character of her four year's of editorship. She brought to the magazine writers whose subjects had been off-limits for a long time with the firmly established high quality literary magazines which Kenyon had been part of for decades. Subject matter does influence style and the combination of both may have been too far off the mark for the university's conservative governing board. It must not be overlooked that while multiculturalism was evident in some of the work Marilyn published it was by no means so exclusively. Many of the country's best known poets with no connection to marginal subjects appeared in the magazine during those four years.

I think this pretty much answers the points raised by those respondents you mention.

I am told there is a website listing my biography but I don't know which it is. Briefly then, I have published with Doubleday, The Sheep Meadow Press and others eleven volumes of poetry, the most recent being *THAT OTHER SIDE OF THINGS* (Sheep Meadow, 2001), a memoir with Schocken Books, *A LONGING IN THE LAND*, (1983), three books for children, etc. Over the past decades my poems have been regularly published in most of the leading literary journals and outlets, have been recorded, anthologized, etc. During the sixties I was a senior editor in the trade department of Macmillan and from 1974 until 1995 Professor of English at Hofstra University where I originated and directed the Creative Writing and Publishing Studies programs and for the last seven years was Poet-in-Residence. Since 1984 I have had a home in the French countryside and in 1998 moved from New York to Paris.

Feel free to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Arthur Gregor

Subj: Re: Marilyn Hacker enquiry

Date: 11/06/2002 12:19:08 Eastern Daylight Time

From: 4shaver@bellsouth.net

To: JHarvey54@aol.com

CC: 110165.74@compuserve.com

Sent from the Internet (Details)

Dear Mr Harvey,

I am retired (as of 2000) from the English Department at Denison University, some 20 miles from Kenyon's campus. I may still be on their website, but probably not. As a renaissance scholar, I was/am not as tuned into contemporary publishing and contemporary lit as I might have been, but about the time Marilyn came to Kenyon I began to teach gay-themed courses. I used her books and brought her to Denison, both into my classrooms and as a Beck poet reading for the larger community. I loved what she did with the Kenyon review, both its interracial, international tone and its attention to queer writing. I admit I did find it odd and very delicious that Kenyon, which we in the Great Lakes College Association (GLCA) always thought of as our more complacent and less experimental member, would hire someone with that particular mission to revive its nearly moribund publication.

I do not, however, have any acquaintance with the specific members of the governing board, nor did I ever discuss motives with anyone at Kenyon except Marilyn herself.

But one thing I know for sure, Marilyn is fierce about craft. The quality of the pieces she chose for the Review was as important to her as their politics, if not more so. While I would not deny that to deliberately publish minority writers is political, she did not choose overtly political content so much as representative writers, and all of them were superb on their own terms--terms she recognized and valued--even if they were not to all tastes.

It was an exciting few years for that journal. I do not know how well subsequent editors of the Review profited from her example, since I no longer subscribe. It is true that Kenyon saved a little money by firing her and giving the journal to a tenured member of their English Department, but I doubt if it was enough of a savings to drive the decision. Kenyon probably accumulated a critical mass of objections from conservative alums and trustees, and just caved in. It is too bad. All the best, Anne Shaver

Subj: **Re: Marilyn Hacker enquiry**

Date: 11/06/2002 11:05:30 Eastern Daylight Time

From: GSchu61185

To: JHarvey54

Dear Mr. Harvey:

I'm happy to be writing about Marilyn Hacker, and I'll try to answer your questions as well as I can.

At the outset, I must state my belief that Marilyn Hacker is one of the most exciting poets writing in English in our time. Her originality is easily missed because overshadowed by the obvious, her meticulous attention to craft and her work with received forms. Actually, her uniqueness is in a doubleness of tone, a mastery of simultaneous elegance and street talk, a mingling of traditional forms and contemporary speech. Another striking effect is her novelistic way of unfolding central emotional detail, as in her poem "Autumn, 1980."

As an editor she is first a poet, the major poet I believe her to be. She seeks quality, sometimes in unexpected places. I would describe her editorial aims as quality and diversity, in that order, perhaps summed up in Hacker's essay, "What's American About American Form?": "This is a nation with a contradictory past, a past with very different resonances for its different citizens -- the African American great-great-grandson of slaves and a man who owned slaves . . . the Polish Jew whose parents were the sole survivors of their shtetl, the Vermont hardscrabble farmer losing the battle against agribusiness and rural gentrification."

As to your query about "homosexual content," I simply don't know. To my way of thinking, there are only two kinds of poetry, good poetry and bad poetry, and Hacker represents the former. Just as she would not rule out the acceptance of "dreadlocks" or "knish" or "megabyte" in the dictionary, as she once wrote, so she would not rule out homosexuality. And to be sure, there are many good heterosexual poets that Hacker prizes, from John Milton to the present. As for your question about Hacker's influence on "quality" magazines, again I don't know. I suspect that one editor cannot influence national culture, but it boggles my mind to think in those terms. I have no idea as to why the Kenyon Review was not happy with her editorship, but I prefer to regard that as a past and forgotten matter. I admire the present staff of the Kenyon Review, too, and praise them as well.

Your question about my bio: A number of websites contain it, but some are out of date.

I've attached a new one. Yours, Grace Schulman

Grace Schulman's new poetry collections are *Days of Wonder: New and Selected Poems* (February, 2002) and *The Paintings of Our Lives* (2001), both published by Houghton Mifflin. Earlier books of poems include *For That Day Only*, *Hemispheres*, and *Burn Down the Icons*. She is the recipient of a Delmore Schwartz Award for Poetry, a Poetry Fellowship from the New York State Foundation of the Arts, and two Pushcart Prizes; her poems have been chosen for the *Best American Poetry* and the *Best of the Best American Poetry*. Schulman lives in New York with her husband, Dr. Jerome Schulman, a scientist. She is Distinguished Professor at Baruch College, C.U.N.Y.

Subj: **Re: Marilyn Hacker enquiry**
Date: 11/06/2002 18:22:14 Eastern Daylight Time
From: rshepherd@worldnet.att.net
To: JHarvey54@aol.com
Sent from the Internet (Details)

Dear Jack Harvey,

Thanks very much for your note; I am certainly very happy to contribute my thoughts on Marilyn Hacker's editorship of The Kenyon Review--she was one of the first editors to publish my work and has been a consistent supporter ever since.

I do agree with Bruce Berling that most college and university administrators and governing boards are conservative, if only implicitly--controversy frightens or at least upsets potential donors, and institutions of higher education are highly beholden to their donors and alumni. Even if they don't mean to be conservative, that is usually the path of least resistance. "Multiculturalism," however it is defined, is often controversial.

I would disagree with David Bergman's assessment of the literary quality of the Kenyon Review under Marilyn Hacker's editorship. The previous editorship was explicitly conservative in its aesthetic, leaning toward neo-formalist; it is ironic that Marilyn Hacker, who is herself an amazingly skilled and fluent formalist poet (and proof that formalism doesn't or at least needn't equal conservatism), should have been the one to open up the journal to a much wider range of aesthetics. Marilyn Hacker did not just publish more women, more gay and lesbian writers, and more writers of colors than one usually finds in a mainstream literary journal. She certainly did so, and that was quite salutary given the still highly segregated nature of the American literary world--as can be seen from the implications of Bergman's remark that to publish a broader range of writers of diverse backgrounds is to lower literary standards or to operate by 'political' rather than 'literary' standards. But she also published a broad variety of kinds of writing, from 'neo-formalist' to 'experimental'. The Kenyon Review under her editorship was a much more eclectic and capacious literary journal than it was before or has been since. 'Diversity' takes many forms, and Marilyn Hacker was sensitive to all of them. I do think that the way that the journal she edited broke down barriers among different writing camps has been very influential on other journals, and that influence has been highly beneficial.

I have a brief web page on Previewport; the address is:
<http://www.previewport.com/authors/viewclob.asp?key=1&aid=610>. I attach a brief biographical sketch below.

Thanks for your solicitation of my thoughts on Marilyn Hacker's editorship of The Kenyon Review; I hope that they prove useful.

best wishes,

Reginald Shepherd

Reginald Shepherd was born in New York City in 1963. He received his BA from Bennington College and MFA degrees from Brown University and the University of Iowa. His first book, *Some Are Drowning*, was published the University of Pittsburgh Press in 1994 as winner of the 1993 Associated Writing Programs' Award in Poetry; Pittsburgh published his second book, *Angel, Interrupted*, in 1996; that collection was a finalist for a 1997 Lambda Literary Award. Pittsburgh published his third book, *Wrong*, in 1999; it was a selection of the Poetry Book Club. His fourth book, *Otherhood*, is forthcoming from Pittsburgh in 2003.

Shepherd has received a Nation/Discovery award, and grants from the NEA, the Illinois Arts Council, and the Saltonstall Foundation, among other awards and honors. His work has been widely anthologized, including in the 1995, 1996, 2000, and 2002 editions of *The Best American Poetry*.

Subj: **Re: Marilyn Hacker enquiry**
Date: 12/06/2002 10:19:23 Eastern Daylight Time
From: SplittheLark
To: JHarvey54

Dear Jack Harvey,

Just back from out of town at a place where I was unable to check my messages, hence the delay in answering.

Let me think a bit about your questions and get back to you early next week. Is that OK? I want to look back at the issues Marilyn edited (I have only a few of them here), as well as several of the issues in the preceding years, and make some substantive, specific comments.

There is, however, no doubt that Marilyn expanded the comparatively stifled world of KENYON REVIEW to include much more of the actual world. This was a great service to that magazine and to others which may have been influenced directly by the change in (unwritten) policy - as well as indirectly, but the widened group of writers who were encouraged, given exposure, and, thus, became available as contributors.

I've pretty much stopped reading KENYON REVIEW. It seems like "all the other" magazines to me now - hasn't an interesting "personality." But I could be wrong; I haven't been keeping up. When Marilyn edited it, I didn't miss an issue. That was what you READ if you wanted to know what was new and different and interesting. She followed in a long, distinguished line of adventuresome, knowledgeable, and loving women literary editors: a line that includes Harriet Monroe (though she is sometimes vilified or dismissed - unjustly), Margaret Anderson, Marianne Moore, Daisy Aldan, Martha Foley, the founders of AMAZON QUARTERLY, the 4 founders of CONDITIONS, Hilda Raz, etc.

It's ironic that this kind of controversy arose around Marilyn, who is one of the most knowledgeable people alive about literature, both old and new, both traditional and experimental, and who has been one of the strongest proponents of traditional LITERARY values. Many conservatives are unable, or refuse, to recognize that writers of "nontraditional" sexualities, ethnicities, subject interests, and perspectives can represent and extend those values.

But let me send you a more specific reaction early next week. Should you need to contact me within the next couple of days, you'll have to call (718+796-8915), as my computer will be in sick bay. It has a virus.

No, I don't have a biography posted on a Website. In fact, I am passionately resisting setting up a Website, though my college is about to insist upon it, I fear. I'm a Professor of English at The College of New Jersey. Before that, I was a librarian and library/computing administrator, as well as a teacher, for 20+ years. I've published several dozen articles, essays, reviews, etc. - mostly about librarianship, publishing (including the publishing of poetry), and issues related to information and intellectual freedom. A relevant book is A GIFT THAT CANNOT BE REFUSED:

THE WRITING AND PUBLISHING OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY. I also coedited a feminist literary magazine for several years (PRIMAVERA) and coedited a couple of small-press literary anthologies with Morty Sklar, of The Spirit That Moves Us Press. I'm currently working on a study of American feminist poetry of the 1960s and beyond. I'm also working on individual papers about several American poets, including Marilyn Hacker, Lois Marie Harrod, and the late Hilda Morley and Karen Brodine. In teaching, I'm rather a generalist, as all undergraduate teachers must be, I suppose, but I have evolved some specialization in writing by women and in feminist literature, in gender and sexuality in literature, in poetry, and in *The Love of My Life*, Emily Dickinson.

Hope this helps -

Mary Biggs

Subj: **Re: Marilyn Hacker enquiry**
Date: 12/06/2002 14:10:52 Eastern Daylight Time
From: sgard@mail.slc.edu
To: JHarvey54@aol.com
Sent from the Internet (Details)

Dear Mr Harvey,

Thank you for your letter about Marilyn Hacker's tenure at the Kenyon Review. I'm afraid I can't be very helpful about opinions on governing boards or literary magazines in general; for a variety of reasons I'm a writer who is fairly isolated from what is called "the literary world," and I'm sure you've spoken with people who are not and will be able to offer you much more useful and nuanced information. I also know nothing first-hand about Marilyn's firing from the Review, except for her understandable pain about it, so can only speculate about the reasons for it.

[That said, the time Marilyn edited Kenyon was a thrilling one for me as a young writer it was impressive to me that a place like Kenyon, which I did not associate with radical risks, literarily or politically, would hire Marilyn and commit themselves to her mission of making, as Margaret Walker would say, "a world that will hold all the people" in a literary magazine. USED]

From my perspective, every issue lived up to Marilyn's committed promise; I don't agree at all with David Bergman's assessment that "political considerations were put before literary quality," and find that that is often an argument put forth by disgruntled liberal-conservatives who don't wish to be labeled conservative but feel unsettled by the kind of world Marilyn's issues of Kenyon reflected. She and Ben Sonnenberg of the old Grand Street were the finest editors I've ever worked with, with what's now become an old-fashioned commitment to careful working with writers, taking interesting chances, and meticulously attending to literary detail. They are both very smart people who do not suffer fools gladly, and who have idiosyncratic, uncompromised and uncompromising standards when it comes to great literature. (Have you contacted Ben? He was always a great admirer of Marilyn's, for her talents as both poet and editor.) It seems to me these are all qualities any governing board would want in an editor, whether or not you agreed with her politics.

I still have those Kenyon issues here in my office at Sarah Lawrence, and return to them often. Without particular information about what happened re Marilyn's firing, it seemed to me then and seems still that she was caught in that familiar campus battle between liberal-conservatives and the people on the left seeking change, and paid a heavy price for that. Did you see the issue of the Boston Review that published Harold Bloom's introduction to 1996 The Best American Poetry issue (edited by Adrienne Rich), and then the torrent of responses? That outlines the terrain pretty well. And then the little piece of it Marilyn

was able to stand on for a time, to the great benefit of literature in this country, disappeared.

I'd be happy to answer more questions about this if it would be useful to you. Are you going to talk to people at Kenyon and find out more first-hand about what happened? It would be fascinating to read the exact details from all sides. I expect it's a pretty paradigmatic story. I wish you all the best.

Yours sincerely,
Suzanne Gardinier

PS A brief bio: SG is the author of the long poem *The New World* (Pittsburgh 1993) and *A World That Will Hold All the People*, essays on poetry and politics (Michigan 1996). Her poetry, fiction, and essays appeared in *The Kenyon Review* during MH's editorship. She teaches writing at Sarah Lawrence College and lives in Manhattan.

Subj: **Re: Marilyn Hacker enquiry**
Date: 16/06/2002 09:19:34 Eastern Daylight Time
From: ostriker@rci.rutgers.edu
To: JHarvey54@aol.com
Sent from the Internet (Details)

Dear J Harvey,

It was my sense during the time that Marilyn was editor of KR that she brought the journal into the contemporary world of American letters--a world that is, yes, multicultural, including women, writers of color, and gay and lesbian writers--and that the literary quality of KR was thereby strengthened. Yes, strengthened, not weakened. Her literary standards were higher, not lower, than those the journal had lapsed into. She published work exciting for its literary vitality, originality and energy, not merely acceptable for its propriety.

I don't have an opinion on why Marilyn was fired. I do think she was never particularly comfortable with the culture at Kenyon, and that her shift to NY was a blessing in disguise, since it brought her to her present position which is an ideal one for her as a teacher, writer, and New Yorker!

Yours truly
Alicia Ostriker

Subj: Re: Marilyn Hacker enquiry

Date: 17/06/2002 13:34:11 Eastern Daylight Time

From: reetikavazirani@yahoo.com

To: JHarvey54@aol.com

Sent from the Internet (Details)

Dear Mr. Harvey,

As one of the authors Marilyn Hacker included in the KR (four or five issues), I can tell you that it was her Editorship that made me feel welcome into a vast community of eclectic and rich new voices. Marilyn carries a great spirit of generosity towards writers of all ethnic backgrounds; but I believe it is her belief in the strength of individual character and quality within a piece of writing that overrides issues of ethnicity and gender. I think of her as a bridge-maker. Her genius resides partly in making community, and I believe she did that with great panache during her tenure at the KR.

With all good wishes,

Reetika Vazirani

Subj: **Questions**
Date: 25/06/2002 06:59:20 Eastern Daylight Time
From: 110165.74@compuserve.com
To: JHarvey54@aol.com

Sent from the Internet (Details)

Some of this is rather painful to read. I suppose writers are always eager to put editors "on trial" even after the fact & even, or especially, if the editor is also a writer. The attachment format seems to mean I can't reply directly, will have to print it out to be able to see the quotes while responding to them.

I think Alicia remembered things somewhat inaccurately, as I was "back and forth" between New York and Gambier for the whole time I was editor of the KR, usually spending half the month in each place (the outside [Olin Foundation]-funded campus right-wing newspaper stated that I was editing the journal from New York, and that was definitely not true).

Other than actually having and recovering from the cancer surgery (which took place on a New Year's Eve, and thus during academic holidays) I did not take time off the journal for treatment: I had chemotherapy treatments in the local hospital when I was in Gambier & at my oncologist's in New York when in New York. I did request an office phone line in my Gambier apartment so that, on days when I was too weak to come into the office (it was winter & I did not have a car), I could (and did) continue to work at home, and a student intern was kind enough to bring me KR mail. That work included being on a search and interview committee for a new managing editor (not done at home, of course). No work due for or at the journal was late because of my illness.

Marilyn

Subj: **Hacker questions**

Date: 08/08/2002 22:39:42 GMT Daylight Time

From: JACKSON76

To: JHarvey54

Dear Jack,

I'm hoping that it's not too late to respond to your work regarding Marilyn Hacker's editorship of *The Kenyon Review*. I had misplaced your e-mail in hardcopy during this wild move from Chicago to Hollywood, Florida. But I've found it now and welcome the opportunity to express my own opinions about Marilyn, her gifts and vision for editing, and the situation with *KR*.

First, I would agree with Berlind's assessment that most university governing boards are conservative. I think that when it comes to redistributing the kind of power/privilege that publishing inevitably brings to authors (voice, audience, money, even on a small scale), most of the folks who already hold power/privilege (or whose cultural group holds it) will take the conservative path.

Regarding Marilyn's being "too multicultural": What an amazing journal *KR* was during her editorship! I've seen nothing like it before or since! Bland bland bland. With few exceptions. Marilyn has an instinct for and love of difference. And she's wise in her knowledge that excellence is found on the fringe as often as inside the margins. She naturally mistrusts arbitrary boundaries, she's not held hostage by them.

In looking over the *KRs* I have on my shelf, I'm struck by the wealth inside--Marilyn's "multicultural" choices. I see only people that are worthy of inclusion and, although I'm aware that I might not be seeing the same old same old, I'm thrilled with the freshness and new light of Marilyn's choices—always!

On the other hand, how terrifying the ramifications of the statement: "The objection was not that she was publishing a large number of queer writers or authors of color, but rather that political considerations were put before literary quality." Of course, this statement is untrue and ignorant.

Literary quality is such an interesting subject to me. Aesthetics—who makes the rules and has them handy when a person of color or queer writer or, or, or... comes along and has chosen to follow an entirely different tradition—perhaps his or her own? (What's beautiful to me MUST be beautiful to everyone else, no? Is there no set standard? Haven't these rules of ours been in place, uh, Forever? Didn't God make them?) In any case, what would happen if we agreed to acknowledge different traditions of aesthetics and everyone in all of the traditions were open to everyone else's? Or: What if someone in the dominant accepted tradition of a nation were to reach out beyond her own tradition, trust in her own perception of quality, trust in the writers themselves, and then publish them? Yikes! Isn't that what an editor is hired to do? Choose what SHE thinks is excellent?

Your last question, Jack, regarding Marilyn's influence on other literary journals—I'm not sure I know the answer. I can say that her influence on me and my life and

poetry has been one of a kind. I know no one with more of a commitment to inclusion. I owe a lot of my awareness to Marilyn, and I try to use that awareness in my own shots at editing and certainly when I teach. But I'm not sure, when I look around at the available literary journals, if very many have taken up the baton. Hilda Raz, Alison Joseph, Neil Shepard. The National Book Award committee did a fine job this past year. There are inroads.

My heart is heavy whenever I think of what we are missing without Marilyn in that editor's seat.

We've got her poetry. And there are many who have her friendship as well. We're the lucky ones.

Subj: Re: Kenyon Review research enquiry
Date: 29/08/2002 02:07:21 GMT Daylight Time
From: judithb@pacifier.com
To: JHarvey54@aol.com
Sent from the Internet (Details)

Dear Jack,

Sorry to say I don't have any insights into this event. I can only suppose that Marilyn was selected on the basis of her reputation as a poet and that her politics seemed less of an obstacle than they might later have become to the powers that be. She is quite unusual in that she's a radical but also highly respected in the mainstream of the poetry world. That could have led to some confusion. I hope you find someone closer to the situation than I.

Judith

Subj: **The Kenyon Review: answers to some of your questions**

Date: 07/08/2003 14:48:58 GMT Daylight Time

From: 110165.74@compuserve.com

To:  JHarvey54@aol.com

Sent from the Internet (Details)

Alicia Ostriker wrote, 'I do think she was never particularly comfortable with the culture at Kenyon, and that her shift to NY was a blessing in disguise, since it brought her to her present position which is an ideal one for her as a teacher, writer, and New Yorker!' Was it difficult to fit in at Kenyon?

I can only answer this laconically, but yes. That being said, I very much miss being an editor, which was, in my own mind, a more "ideal" position for me than teaching, or at least one that brought me more pleasure. I was only at Kenyon for about half the time, and did the work from New York for the rest of the time.

I know that my not being a full-time presence on the campus caused resentment. A right-wing campus student newspaper (financed by the Olin Foundation) referred to the Kenyon Review as "being edited from New York."

Do you have any correspondence relating to your time at Kenyon not in their archives which you would be willing to share with me?

It's now all at the Beinecke Library at Yale.

In your presentation on becoming editor you stated, 'I don't think I would be here if an expansion of the Review's texts and contexts were not envisioned as a positive possibility by the magazine's directors and by the college: if you didn't think that my version of editorial affirmative action might be good for the review, as co-education and minority recruitment have been good for the college.' In retrospect do you consider your editorship was 'too' multicultural for the trustees?

It's hard for me to answer this. The succeeding editor of the review has not eradicated the multicultural outlook I gave it (although it was not there before I became editor) and has published numerous writers of color and writers of different national origins writing in English, as well as work in translation.

In a letter from Rafael Campo (September 3 1990) he referred to an interview you had given Bay Windows. Do you have a copy of that interview? No. (Pre-computer days.) It was a minuscule interview. (There are lengthier interviews, one conducted by Suzanne Gardinier in the AWP Chronicle, and one by Annie Finch in, I think APR, both in 1995.)

Do you feel you were fully supported in your decision to refuse the NEA grant in 1990? At the time, Philip Jordan wrote that he supported your decision, but that the College would not make up the financial shortfall.

Were you surprised at his reaction or is it what you expected? How confident were you that the NEA would alter the terms of the grant to allow you to accept it?

I was not at all confident that the NEA would alter the terms of the grant. But I did launch a campaign to subscribers and donors, explaining the situation. By the time the terms of the grant were changed, the shortfall had been made up for by donations! The Review offered to refund these when we could accept the grant, but no one asked for his or her money back. So the magazine came out ahead.

Philip Jordan appeared to quickly quash your proposal for a Visiting Writer in Residence suggested in April 1992. How did you feel about his decision?

I frankly don't remember!

How much did your cancer interfere with your editorial work at the KR?

I arranged to have an office phone installed in my campus apartment, and had boxes of manuscripts and correspondence brought there (we're talking about a campus about a mile in circumference!) so that I could work at home when I was too fatigued by the chemotherapy to walk the half-mile on a snowy day. But most days I got a lift from a neighbor, and recall having at least one chemo treatment on my lunch hour. I don't think that the magazine suffered: I did not ask anyone to do any of my work for me.

However, I had been intended that I would begin teaching one course a semester in addition to editing the Review, and the cancer treatment (plus the lack of an available appropriate course) kept me from doing that,

Were you fully aware of the financial problems prevalent at the Review when you assumed editorship?

I knew, of course, that any literary magazine was bound to be in financial trouble. But, in fact, Kenyon College's search for a full-time editor was indicative of the college's intention to strengthen the Review with renewed financial support: this wasn't an assumption, it was said during the search.

You wrote to Reed S. Browning in May 1993 expressing your displeasure at an evaluation you'd received in January '93. In the letter you wrote, 'To read it, one would think that I had been paying exclusive attention to the "merely" literary side of the Kenyon Review, while ignoring the all-important (?) financial aspect. The passive voice in the sentence concerning the Lila Wallace and Lannan grants makes it appear that they fell upon us from the blue.' Did the financial side of your work take up more time than anticipated?

Yes, especially the Lila Wallace grant, both applying for it and administering it, as it was uniquely a marketing grant: a large sum of money which could not be put directly into the production of the magazine.

Do you keep in touch with any of your former colleagues at the KR? Yes, with David Baker, who is a poet, critic, and editor I admire --- and like as a person - greatly. David & his wife, the poet Ann Townsend, became friends of mine while I worked there - they, like several others who have

remained friends, were attached to Denison University, not to Kenyon itself, & said themselves that Denison was a much more open and welcoming community.

How many people were responsible for reading incoming manuscripts? Myself, David Baker (the former and present poetry editor, whom I asked to stay on as an associate editor), David Lynn (the present editor, who had been interim editor after Terry Hummer left, and whom I also asked to continue as an associate), and Eleanor Bender Hamilton, the former editor of Open Places. For a while, the novelist Carole Maso read some of the fiction submissions. That is to say, five, but I was the first reader for 2/3 of what came in.

Do you have a copy of the questionnaire circulated to KR subscribers in early 1994?

No..

Arthur Gregor wrote, 'Subject matter does influence style and the combination of both may have been too far off the mark for the university's conservative governing board.'

Toi Derricotte wrote, 'at Kenyon she made such big changes so quickly that it was astonishing. It looked like she was in danger from the very beginning.'

Stanley Plumly wrote to Cy Wainscott on July 15 1994, 'The truth is, the moment Marilyn was chosen she was doomed, it seems to me, to fail to meet the expectations of a traditionalist literary magazine.'

Suzanne Gardinier wrote, 'it was impressive to me that a place like Kenyon, which I did not associate with radical risks, literarily or politically, would hire Marilyn and commit themselves to her mission of making, as Margaret Walker would say, "a world that will hold all the people" in a literary magazine'.

Anne Shaver wrote, 'I admit I did find it odd and very delicious that Kenyon, which we in the Great Lakes College Association (GLCA) always thought of as our more complacent and less experimental member, would hire someone with that particular mission to revive its nearly moribund publication.'

Can you tell me how you first became interested in the post at Kenyon? Bearing in mind these comments re conservative boards of trustees why do you think you were given the job?

I can't read people's minds retroactively - or even in the present!

I became interested in the post at Kenyon because I love editing, had been doing it gratis for a long time, for a now-sought-after counter-cultural mimeographed journal called City, for the feminist magazine 13th Moon, & then as a guest editor for Ploughshares. The idea of being editor of a venerable journal like the KR, that had no built-in limits (certainly not women-only like 13th Moon, but not poetry-only or fiction-only either) and expanding it to represent what it seemed to me was most interesting in new writing in English (primarily, but not exclusively) in the most inclusive way possible - and that meant keeping the best of the "traditional" alongside the best of the "transgressive" - seemed like a marvelous

challenge. And to earn my living doing it was a marvelous prospect.

In a letter to Eileen Myles, dated July 22 1994, Cy Wainscott wrote, 'First, let me respond to that "rumor that the alumni were asked about how they liked the homosexual content in the Kenyon Review." The facts are that the committee looking into the operations of the Review did circulate a questionnaire, not to the alumnae and alumni in general, but to a list of a hundred or so names, many of which were provided by Marilyn. Among the several questions about operations were two which asked what appeals most about the Review and whether or not the respondents were satisfied about the content of the Review.

I agree with you that those questions might sound homophobic, and indeed I was at first concerned that this might be the case. It wasn't.

Another questionnaire circulated earlier went further. It asked what the respondent liked most/least about KR's content from a list that included multicultural, feminist, and gay/lesbian topics. It also enquired about race, age and ethnic background. This, too, might sound homophobic, but was not. The questions were, in fact, in a readership survey designed by Marilyn'.

I would appreciate your comments on this letter and the difference between 'sounding' homophobic and 'being' homophobic.

How did you feel about this questionnaire? Did you consider your position as editor was being jeopardised?

There IS a difference between sending a readership survey questionnaire to the magazine's subscribers & contributors (this was part of the Lila Wallace marketing grant - I wouldn't have wasted time & money otherwise) to see their reactions to the "new face" of the journal, or its old face, for that matter, and sending a questionnaire about the journal and its editor in particular, to the trustees and faculty (who might not have read the journal). I became aware of the latter questionnaire when a faculty colleague alerted me to it. I think "homophobic" is only part of the question.

In January 1995 you wrote to Wainscott, 'I was under the impression (because you said so) that, like all still-living former editors of the magazine, I would receive a complimentary subscription. I received the summer issue in a box of office detritus forwarded by DJD; the subsequent issues not at all (though I have seen them).' What was your opinion of these issues that you effectively edited? Do you continue to read KR? The former-editor's subscription was subsequently established.

Was the KR, in your opinion, in any real danger of going out of business? It wasn't in danger of going out of business because of my editorship. Of course, if the college pulled the plug on the subsidy, it would go out of business - now, too.

In the interview at which I was fired - with Philip Jordan and the college's treasurer - I mentioned that, in the months since the review's subsidy was being re-considered, I had raised forty-three thousand dollars for the magazine by a mail campaign to subscribers and donors. I was told

by them that, as this money represented gifts and grants that were not necessarily renewable, it was to be counted as part of the magazine's deficit(!) They also stated that they had in their hands a petition to subscribers I had written to keep the magazine quarterly, when I knew they were considering cutting it down to three times a year, which they took as a sign of non-cooperation. In fact, this was an early draft of a fundraising letter, which they had gotten from the desk of the college's fundraising officer, which was going to be vetted by her - as was the procedure twice a year: keeping the magazine quarterly was one of a laundry list of a dozen things that the money we were requesting "might" be used for (& could have been struck from the list by the fundraising officer). This was the only concrete example of my "non-cooperation" that I was given!

(I had also offered to teach, which I admit I "should have" been doing from the beginning, or to edit the magazine one semester a year, when it appeared only three times a year, at a halved salary.)

Subj: **Re: Marilyn Hacker research enquiry**
Date: 16/05/2005 15:49:54 GMT Standard Time
From: sdelany@temple.edu
To: <mailto:JHarvey54@aol.com> JHarvey54@aol.com

Sent from the Internet
(Details)

Dear Mr. Harvey--

Let me start by saying that I could not be more delighted that somebody is taking on the job of researching this period, this situation, and the events it encompassed. You ask why an apparently conservative board of trustees should appoint someone who did not hide what she would be attempting to do at the *Review*? I wonder if it was something like the following: Because Hacker wrote in rhyme and meter and espoused formal verse, the assumption was that because she could be seen (if you squinted and didn't read closely) as espousing a somehow conservative aesthetic, therefore she must be allied to relatively conservative politics. Somehow Hacker's very clear statements were assumed to be metaphoric and abstract--rather than the underpinnings of a hard-headed, down-to-earth editorial policy.

Hacker not only raised the circulation of the KR, but she made it important--for the second time in its history--on the American literary landscape. During her tenure as KR editor, all over the country, graduate creative writing programs and undergraduate programs--occasionally even high school programs--were regularly assigning the review to its students. Monthly I meet poets and writers of color who tell me that Hacker gave them their first push.

Hacker has been a superb editor since her teens. When she edited **The Washington Square Review** out of NYU, she was the first person to publish both Charles Simic; as well, she published director film Martin Scorsese's first film script! But one could go on . . .

(Should you have any more questions, please contact me at [office; Philadelphia] 215-204-7344 or [home: New York City] 212-580-1943. I will be in NY after Friday.)

Good luck in your researches--

--Samuel R. Delany,
Professor of English and Creative Writing,
Temple University

Subj: **RE: Kenyon Review research inquiry**
Date: 04/06/2005 13:39:52 GMT Standard Time
From: hyde@kenyon.edu
To: <mailto:JHarvey54@aol.com> JHarvey54@aol.com

*Sent from the Internet
(Details)*

Dear Mr. Harvey,

My memory of the hiring of Marilyn Hacker is this: as with all Kenyon College hires, the task was given to a search committee. This committee consisted of faculty members only. They reduced their list to three candidates, all of whom came to campus and gave a talk and were interviewed.

The committee chose Marilyn for her talents and sense of mission.

At Kenyon it would be very unusual for a search committee to be overruled by either the administration or the board of trustees (the only case I can think of in the 15 years I have been there involved a search committee that was itself divided, at which point the President became involved).

The politics of hiring at Kenyon are simpler than the categories "culture wars" and "conservative board" will indicate. Faculty committees do the work and their choices are almost never overruled.

Best wishes,

-- Lewis Hyde

Lewis Hyde
Richard L. Thomas Professor of Creative Writing
Kenyon College

Current address:

8 Donnell Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Phone: 617 547-1981

Subj: **Re: Kenyon Review research inquiry**
Date: 04/06/2005 08:56:37 GMT Standard Time
From: kinsellaj@kenyon.edu
To: <mailto:JHarvey54@aol.com> JHarvey54@aol.com

*Sent from the Internet
(Details)*

interesting question - it was before my time, but it's occasionally discussed, of course. probably best to ask the editor, david lynn - he's quite approachable. it seems, generally, that issues other than editorial policy are 'discussed' when the issue comes up. i feel, however, that it's probably an issue of the broader college community - what it is such a 'liberal arts' college sees itself as representing (i am entirely in favour of what m. hacker might seem to 'represent!') as opposed to the journal itself. i know, for example, that david is very positive re m. hacker's work etc.

in many (most) ways i probably don't fit the college's prescription (i'm vegan anarchist pacifist) - chronically at times, and i imagine some of the same issues might have pertained to m. hacker. but i'm only guessing here - this is a private assumption. i think it's ultimately about what some in the community of power perceive as being the public face of their private space. having said this, the fact that i am international editor with my externalisation from the community, says something about flexibility - maybe that's something to do with david's liberal views rather than those who operate behind the scenes (ie outside editorial policy).

best,

jk

JHarvey54@aol.com wrote:

Dear Professor Kinsella,

I am writing a PhD thesis - at the University of Glasgow, Scotland - on Marilyn Hacker's editorship of *The Kenyon Review*. I have been in touch with Ms Hacker and she has answered some of my questions, however, I wondered if you could supply an answer to a question which is puzzling me. Ms Hacker seems to have been appointed at a time when the 'culture wars' were reaching a peak. Do you have any insight into why an apparently conservative board of trustees should appoint someone who did not hide what she would be attempting to do at the *Review*?

I am a 50 year old teacher of English and I have read all of the *Review* correspondence available in the Kenyon archives for this period. I am a subscriber to the *Review* and I have attempted to be as objective as possible in handling this delicate subject. Any insight on this matter or anything else pertaining to this period would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for taking the time to read this,

Yours sincerely,

Jack Harvey

Subj: **RE: Kenyon Review research inquiry**
Date: 05/06/2005 01:45:26 GMT Standard Time
From: vigdermanp@kenyon.edu
To: <mailto:JHarvey54@aol.com> JHarvey54@aol.com

*Sent from the Internet
(Details)*

Dear Mr. Harvey,

My recollection of the selection of Marilyn Hacker is that it was done by a faculty committee. She was the candidate whose sense of what the Review could be was the most energized and appealing. I don't recall any discussion of her politics, or "culture war." I believe there was some feeling in favor of selecting a woman, but that was not the decisive element.

Patsy Vigderman

Subj: **Re: Kenyon Review research inquiry**
Date: 05/06/2005 17:04:54 GMT Standard Time
From: klugef@kenyon.edu
To: <mailto:JHarvey54@aol.com>JHarvey54@aol.com

Sent from the Internet
(Details)

Your question might better be put to the people who were on the search committee that brought Marilyn Hacker here. I was not a member: among the members, as I recall, were Ronald Sharp, now dean of the faculty at Vassar and Will Scott, a professor of history here. My sense is that the decision was primarily the search committee's and it would surprise me if a discussion of her agenda, its liberal or conservative character, got to the board of trustees. You might check with the review's current editor, David Lynn, lynnd@kenyon.edu. Good luck, p.f. Kluge

----- Original Message -----

From: JHarvey54@aol.com
To: klugef@kenyon.edu
Sent: Saturday, June 04, 2005 3:36 AM
Subject: Kenyon Review research inquiry

Dear Dr Kluge,
I am writing a PhD thesis - at the University of Glasgow, Scotland - on Marilyn Hacker's editorship of *The Kenyon Review*. I have been in touch with Ms Hacker and she has answered some of my questions, however, I wondered if you could supply an answer to a question which is puzzling me. Ms Hacker seems to have been appointed at a time when the 'culture wars' were reaching a peak. Do you have any insight into why an apparently conservative board of trustees should appoint someone who did not hide what she would be attempting to do at the *Review*? I am a 50 year old teacher of English and I have read all of the *Review* correspondence available in the Kenyon archives for this period. I am a subscriber to the *Review* and I have attempted to be as objective as possible in handling this delicate subject. Any insight on this matter or anything else pertaining to this period would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for taking the time to read this,

Yours sincerely,
Jack Harvey

Subj: **Re: Kenyon Review research inquiry**
Date: 05/06/2005 00:55:34 GMT Standard Time
From: lobanovrosto@kenyon.edu
To: <mailto:JHarvey54@aol.com> JHarvey54@aol.com

*Sent from the Internet
(Details)*

Dear Mr. Harvey,

Your thesis sounds fascinating. Unfortunately, I arrived at Kenyon during the final year of Marilyn's editorship, so I can't answer your question about the Board of Trustees' intentions or expectations in appointing her. You might put that question to David Lynn (lynnd@kenyon.edu), the current editor of the Review, who knows the history better than I. My own experience of such boards is that, like any political body, they're rarely as monolithic as they seem: every board includes a range of voices, and that can mean that their collective politics can be changeable and hard to predict. Different factions can move the board in one direction or another as the discussion and their perception of circumstances at the college evolve. While I wasn't here to witness the events first-hand, my guess would be that they appointed Marilyn because of her stature as a poet and her ideas for the Review, attempting to do something positive for the magazine and the college, as they perceived its needs at the time. Later, their perception of those needs apparently changed. I suspect that a more conservative wing of the board asserted itself at that point, and that they convinced some of the board's "swing voters" to join them, but that's purely speculation on my part.

Good luck with your project. I hope you'll send us a copy when the dissertation is complete.

Sergei Lobanov-Rostovsky

Subj: **Re: Kenyon Review research inquiry**
Date: 05/06/2005 15:34:14 GMT Standard Time
From: finkel@kenyon.edu
To: <mailto:JHarvey54@aol.com> JHarvey54@aol.com

Sent from the Internet
(Details)

Jack, I'm really sorry but I can't answer your question. I arrived at Kenyon after Marilyn did and don't really have an idea about why they hired her. I assume that they did because she was a well known poet and my guess is that they didn't look much further than that. But that would be purely a guess on my part based on how search committees often work. A look at the membership of the search committee might tell you more than I could. If the search committee was made up mostly of faculty who would be looking for the best writer they could find, it might not seem odd that they came up with Marilyn.

Sorry I can't be more help but I just wasn't around at that time.

Laurie

Subj: **Re: Kenyon Review research inquiry**
Date: 07/06/2005 14:44:01 GMT Standard Time
From: lentzpe@kenyon.edu
To: <mailto:JHarvey54@aol.com>JHarvey54@aol.com
CC: lentzpe@kenyon.edu

*Sent from the Internet
(Details)*

Dear Mr Harvey:

Your very courteous and scrupulous query deserves a better response than I am capable of giving. But for what it is worth:

Underlying your research inquiry is the thesis that Ms Hacker's tenure at the KR was brought to an end by a conservative "board" because of "culture-war" disagreements. This thesis just does not conform at all to my own personal experience, although it does have two profound advantages: it places her lugubrious record here in Gambier on solidly cultural and hence intellectually "discussable" grounds; and it sidesteps issues of personality.

For what it is worth: the resurrection-- I use the term not metaphorically but literally-- was achieved by two members of the English Department who undertook it as a labor of love, and who were enabled in that project by the generous support of all of us in the Department. Our own teaching responsibilities were increased, and much of the scoutwork of the enterprise was shared communally by all of us (e.g., for the three years of my Chairing of the Department, far and away the College's largest, I not only taught the usual slate of three courses, but at each hasty lunchtime in my office I worked through a score of unsolicited manuscripts). To bring the Review back to life was, in sum, a communal endeavor, which inevitably imposed strains upon all of us; adding not only to our own individual labors, but tending to heighten disagreements between us -- tensions generated, for instance, by such things as the editors' decision to publish their own work in one of the early issues of the New Series, although that was the visible tip of the vast iceberg inevitably congealing below us as the project came to life and individuals found their labors visibly rewarded, or not. Nonetheless, we persevered, and maintained our collectual amity and continued to offer an exceptional program of undergraduate education even as the Review was resuscitated. Indeed, that program -- and it was under this crucial understanding that the Department and the College permitted this undertaking from the outset-- for the first time in the history of the Review brought the journal itself into the immediate life of the faculty and students of Kenyon College.

Ms Hacker's hiring was not, to the best of my knowledge, achieved by a "conservative board," but by a search jointly undertaken by the College administration and the English Department, assisted by those other Kenyon faculty of consequence in our endeavor. And the administrators and faculty could hardly be considered as "conservative," then or now.

What we did not recognize was how temperamentally unsuited Ms Hacker was to the basic requirements of the task before her: how discomfited she was to find herself in Gambier Village rather than Greenwich Village; how the personal qualities so vital to her own considerable (and admirable) literary achievements-- her sense of alienation and isolation, in especial-- rendered her not only unforthcoming in a position in which forthcomingness had to be a concomitant for any success, but rendered her characteristically suspicious and hostile to institutional, collegiate, departmental, and community appeals. I found it almost impossible for me (granted: I am the aging white conservative New Critical and alcoholic male that it is somewhere mandated that every English Department must have) to have much conversation with her of any kind. Proposals and suggestions about how the labors and results of the Review's new founding might be developed in ways enhancing the life of our students and our Department were received, by our new editor, with silence if not hostility. I confess myself early on to have been absolutely dismayed, not by what she was directing the Review to publish, but how determined she seemed to be to make the enterprise of publishing it even more isolated from the College and the community than it had been in its first incarnation: and the fact that the Review, in that first incarnation, had indeed been so isolated and remote from the necessarily central enterprise of this institution, viz offering the best possible liberal arts education to American undergraduates, without whose presence and whose tuition we would literally no longer exist, was the (entirely justifiable) reason why the Administration had suspended its publication back in the 1960s.

Mr Harvey, I myself was a student at this College in the last years of that first incarnation of the Review, and can testify to how completely removed was the Review from the life of Kenyon College. Thus, having spent no small amount of my own tears and sweat in bringing it back to life, and hopefully so on the basis of integrating it appropriately into the life of the College, I was heartbroken to see that, under Ms Hacker's direction, it was -- as a journal and an enterprise -- being rendered less of a collegial enterprise than ever before.

Thus, my own conception of these matters; a conception rendered suspect even to myself, by the passage of years, the dwindling of my intellectual resources, and by the conjoined unreliability of and creative restructuring going on in my memory.

All the best, in your undertaking!

--Perry Lentz

Subj: **RE: Kenyon Review research inquiry**
Date: 09/06/2005 15:54:55 GMT Standard Time
From: rogand@kenyon.edu
To: <mailto:JHarvey54@aol.com> JHarvey54@aol.com

*Sent from the Internet
(Details)*

Sorry about my confusion over your request! I think what I would have answered would be to say that I think your question is wrong. The board of trustees would have had little but a rubber stamp function in Hacker's hiring; they do not micro-manage and approve hirings pretty perfunctorily and always have. They do watch finances and would have had no warning that finances would become a problem with her appointment. The fact that her financial overextensions were the declared reason for her firing would attract their attention but only if the administration made a big thing about it. In my limited experience the trustees take very few actions without being pressed to do so by the administration.

I am open to the possibility that financial problems were an excuse for other reasons to fire her. but I don't really think "culture wars" as such were involved -- the college about that time was beginning to provide benefits to unmarried couples, both hetero and gay; the press for all kinds of diversity was very strong; women faculty and administrators were very vocal.

I think (emph "think") that Marilyn was fired because she was personally obnoxious to people she thought did, or would, disagree with her and succeeded in making more enemies than friends here (I speak as one of her relatively few friends), especially of the president, the financial administration, and the English department (I could be wrong but I seem to remember that she refused to teach in the department or at least to teach what they wanted her to and the department had for several years thought of the editorship as providing a teaching slot for the program -- in any case, no-one in the department much valued her.

The Review staff which replaced her were people who were "in" with the administration from the start and the editor was already a member of the department and wanted to continue to teach, and such policies as might reflect a position in the "culture wars" (whatever that actually means in the situation) were no different with the new administration than with the old. Ms. Hacker has been frequently published in the Review (although I don't know how soon that began after her departure). What was different was the establishment of very tight reins on the business side of the publication and the beginning of a program of building financial support for it that has made it more independent than she ever

dreamed of being. The current editor is more politically savvy in the sense of knowing where and how to please those who might be in powerful positions around him.

So, in sum, her hiring was done primarily by Review supporters, including the then provost and president; she lost the support of those who had brought her here and overextended the cost of the Review and those whom she offended took her poor fiscal (and implicitly poor managerial) record to the trustees and they, conveniently, saw to her dismissal.

I think, she thought, she was railroaded and the problems could have been approached in some other way. The continuation of her policies as regards "cultural" issues is thus, in my opinion, one of the sad ironies of the situation.

I hope this helps somewhat at least to clarify the situation.

regards,

Donald Rogan

Subj: **Re: Kenyon Review research inquiry**
Date: 09/05/2005 01:06:09 GMT Standard Time
From: baker@denison.edu
To: <mailto:JHarvey54@aol.com> JHarvey54@aol.com

*Sent from the Internet
(Details)*

Dear Jack. Thanks for your note. I will try to reply candidly and clearly. If there's anything you'd like further explained, or something else you'd like to ask, feel free. It's been some time since Marilyn's editorship; and yet your project sounds awfully interesting. And yes, I think her appointment did come at a high point in the "culture wars." I wish I could say the good guys are winning that war, don't you?

I did not know Marilyn personally before she moved to Gambier, but she and I have become very dear friends. Of course I knew and much admired her work. I lived in Gambier myself for a year, 1983-84, when I taught at Kenyon; since then I have taught mostly at Denison University in Granville -- a similar liberal arts college, which I thoroughly prefer to Kenyon. I found -- when I was there -- Kenyon to be considerably more interesting as a relic than a progressive site. But I made friends, and much enjoyed the students.

I was one of the outside consultants for the editorial appointment that Marilyn accepted. There were three final candidates for the position, and I attended each presentation and interview. My own advice to the Kenyon folks was to hire Marilyn, though all three candidates were quite wonderful writers and editors. I thought, and think, that Marilyn is one of the most important poets in America, a daring and lovely lyric poet, and one of the significant voices for progressive social awareness and action. I was not involved in the actual hiring vote, though, nor do I even know for sure who was involved, though I think you're right: I think the Board of Trustees along with the high administration were responsible. I think they wanted to be progressive, or at least to look progressive; though I also think they did not have much idea what that really meant. Remember, we're not talking about literary people, in the least -- rather, mostly, powerful white males whose power was primarily financial. Marilyn's advocacy of gay and lesbian writers, minority writers, women writers, was clear, and clearly part of her editorial vision. It is also the case that she was fair and open-minded toward ALL writers and submitters during her tenure there. I know this, because she asked me to serve as her Consulting Poetry Editor, and I did, gladly. I served for 4 years on the staff of the magazine, under her editorship.

She did not, as you say, "hide" anything. She was and is clear and open about her aesthetics, her politics, her tastes, and her opinions. I believe it is the case that the Board then was "apparently conservative," as you say. I think, however, they would not all have identified themselves so. To be blunt: I think they had only a vague idea what literature actually was or is! I think they had only a vague idea of what conservative or progressive or any

other "kind" of literary vision was, or is. There was no ill will on any part, that I was aware of, at the beginning; no hidden agendas, as far as I could see.

Now, let me be clear about something else. There were, and there remain, two pretty different narratives about Marilyn's firing. I have not spoken to anyone at Kenyon on the Board or administration about this; and I have spoken to Marilyn about her views. I think it might be true, though, that the two parties see two very different reasons for the firing. I believe that Marilyn feels the Kenyon people got rid of her because of her daring or progressive editorial decisions -- and it is clearly true that many folks there were uncomfortable with some of her selections. But I believe, too, that the Kenyon people feel they got rid of her because of reasons of financial and administrative management; I think some there did not approve of her handling of the money or budget. I think, too, that no one there seemed interested to help her, or offer advice -- but again, this is coming from someone living and working elsewhere. I suspect, myself, that both parties had some reasonable arguments . . . but my sympathies were, and remain, with Marilyn. The school treated her stupidly; they seem to have known they wanted to release her from the contract, but they also seem to have waited too long to tell her, and did so badly -- and this was a woman undergoing treatment for breast-cancer, who was suddenly stranded without insurance. I don't think many people in the Kenyon and Gambier communities ever welcomed Marilyn warmly. In the end, I don't know if you can argue that it's clear that Marilyn was fired because the conservative Board had not anticipated her progressive vision. I suspect that it's true; but there are other issues as well. I feel I need to say this, to be fair to everyone. And I need to reiterate that I'm a third party, not a part of the Kenyon deliberations and thus I have no evidence or clear proof of anything.

I hope this makes sense. Let me know if there's something else I can do to help.

Best,

David Baker

Subj: **Kenyon Review research inquiry**
Date: 13/06/2005 18:02:33 GMT Standard Time
From: carson@kenyon.edu
To: <mailto:JHarvey54@aol.com>JHarvey54@aol.com

*Sent from the Internet
(Details)*

Dear Mr. Harvey,

I'm not the best Kenyon authority on the matter of Marilyn Hacker's editorship of *The Kenyon Review*. You should contact Professor David Lynn, Ms. Hacker's successor as editor, or Professor Ronald Sharp, a former editor of *KR*, who is now Dean of the Faculty at Vassar College. Professor Lynn was closely involved with the *KR* during Ms. Hacker's editorship. My own limited knowledge comes from my serving as a member of the English Department since 1988 and from my getting to know something about the Kenyon President at the time, Philip Jordan.

I don't know the entire membership of the search committee that chose Marilyn Hacker as editor, but my recollection is that two of the members were from the English Department: Professor Ronald Sharp and Dr. Lori Lefkovitz. Ron Sharp was and is very interested in contemporary poetry, and I suspect that he was attracted to Marilyn Hacker's candidacy because of her prominence and talent as a poet. Lori Lefkovitz was and is interested in feminism, and I suspect that she liked the direction in which Ms. Hacker intended to take the *KR*. In any case, both of these members of the search committee probably thought that such a prominent poet with a clear and controversial agenda would give the *KR* and poetry at Kenyon a higher profile. They probably paid far less attention to Marilyn Hacker's administrative, budgetary, and diplomatic skills.

Marilyn Hacker's problems at the *KR* appear to me to have been more a matter of finances than of cultural politics. The period of the early 1990s was a time of tight budgets in higher education in the United States. Unfortunately, in the search in which Ms. Hacker was chosen as editor of the *KR* the editorship was structured so that her entire salary came from the *KR* budget. The salaries of previous editors had come entirely or in part from the academic budget of the college, since those previous editors taught at least part time in the English Department. (Such is still the case with Professor Lynn.) Hence, at a time when the President and the Board of Trustees were looking for things to cut from the college budget (partly to offset the new costs of developing an information technology infrastructure), the *KR* at least appeared to be costing the college more than ever. In the early 1990s, Boards of Trustees of American colleges and universities became increasingly unwilling to subsidize literary and academic journals and loss-making university presses. I have heard that at the same time that Kenyon's Board of Trustees dismissed Ms. Hacker and gave the *KR* three years to get its financial house in order or be closed down the Stanford University Board of Trustees issued a similar ultimatum to the Stanford University Press. The Kenyon Board of Trustees no doubt included some political conservatives, but I think fiscal conservatism was much more the issue in the dismissal of Marilyn

Hacker.

Even internal college politics and community issues strike me as more significant than the "culture wars" in Ms. Hacker's problems as editor. Kenyon College is a residential college, which at one time attempted to compel its faculty and administrators to participate in the life of the institution. For example, when I arrived at Kenyon College in 1988, the administration required faculty members to live within ten miles of the college. Although President Jordan increasingly granted exceptions to this rule, before eliminating it entirely, there was still a culture of residentiality and community. Ms. Hacker had little to do with Kenyon students, even the huge number of students interested in creative writing and poetry. Moreover, her life was rather more in New York than in Gambier, Ohio. (Part of the problem here may have been that English Department faculty seem to have little time for socializing during the semester. I recall that my wife and I only had Marilyn over to dinner once.) Still Ms. Hacker did not, I think, go out of her way to foster good relations with President Jordan and his wife, Sheila. Such good relations would have contributed to the likelihood of Ms. Hacker's successfully achieving her agenda at the *KR*, especially since Sheila Jordan herself wrote poetry and was very interested in poetry at Kenyon.

So, Mr. Harvey, from my own perspective, the "culture wars" played little part in Marilyn Hacker's dismissal from the editorship of *KR*. Indeed, I'd like to think that Ms. Hacker's aim to include diverse voices, in terms of race and sexual orientation, has now become part of the living tradition of *The Kenyon Review*.

Yours sincerely,

James P. Carson

English Department

Kenyon College

102 College Drive

Gambier, Ohio 43022

U. S. A.

Subj: **Re: Kenyon Review research inquiry**
Date: 14/06/2005 13:12:27 GMT Standard Time
From: lynnd@kenyon.edu
To: JHarvey54@aol.com
CC: lynnd@kenyon.edu
Sent from the Internet (Details)

Dear Mr. Harvey,

I'm sorry not to have responded more swiftly, but I've been running a new KR program in Italy and am just back.

The questions you ask are important and interesting, but also hard to answer because, in truth, they require some "mind reading" of Kenyon College trustees, which is always a difficult and uncertain business. I really don't believe that the "culture wars" had anything to do with Marilyn's contract not being renewed. As you say, there was no secret of her political inclinations or intentions. And indeed, I share most of her political viewpoints, which the trustees and administration also knew at the time.

I think the real problems were two-fold. First, the appointment was not a good "fit." Marilyn never really wanted to be in the wilds of central Ohio. She spent as little time here as possible. She never taught classes, had almost no contact with students, and never sought to build a constituency here, though many of us liked her and were inclined to support her efforts. From the college's point of view, the trustees felt that the journal cost a lot of money for an institution that had few resources, and that it had come to have little direct connection with the life of the college.

Second, Marilyn probably didn't spend enough time trying to control the KR budget or to raise money from supporters, although she did have some success with program grants from foundations.

That's about as much as I know or can surmise. I was told by the then college president that if I didn't agree to become editor, the journal would be closed down permanently. I didn't want that to happen.

I hope this will be of some use to you. Good luck with your thesis.

All the best,
David Lynn

David H. Lynn
Editor, The Kenyon Review
Professor of English

Subj: **RE: Kenyon Review research enquiry**
Date: 16/06/2005 20:20:06 GMT Standard Time
From: lefkovitz@rrc.edu
To: <mailto:JHarvey54@aol.com> JHarvey54@aol.com

*Sent from the Internet
(Details)*

Dear Mr. Harvey,

I was indeed on the selection committee, and my memory is that Marilyn Hacker had all of the credentials that we most hoped for in an editor: she is herself a brilliant poet, a seasoned and highly skilled editor and educator, with an interesting and distinctive sensibility. We thought that she, personally, had a lot to offer the Review and that her presence would enrich the community. And to this day, I think those judgments were all correct.

Kenyon had been used to the Review being the pride of the English department (a folksy place), and the College itself was invested in its being part of, and integrated into, the larger institution. Marilyn worked as editor to maintain the Review's excellence (indeed she improved the Review), but she did not necessarily think it in her job description to find ways to involve the rest of us or find new and clever ways to involve students, faculty, etc. It is not self-evident to me which model is "better" or better served the interests of KR; neither is it self-evident that at some later stage in its growth, she might not have been more inclusive. While she was there, she had more than enough to do editing a first-rate publication. But many at the College who were close to the Review may well have experienced the new paradigm as a loss and saw Marilyn as a one-woman band.

In those years, faculty were required to live within 5 miles of campus. Marilyn was commuting between Gambier and New York (and maybe Europe?) as well. Marilyn seemed rather a private person. At the same time, I became aware, at some point, that Marilyn was being treated for breast cancer. She received, as far as I could tell, almost no support from that small, "supportive," intimate community. Busy with my own life, new baby, work, etc., I don't think that she and I shared so much as a meal together during what must have been a very trying situation for her in many, many ways. Marilyn did not seek friendship actively, but retrospectively, I very much regret that I, as a member of the selection committee, did not see it as part of my job to support her success and her vision for the magazine. On reflection, I feel real remorse about my professional and personal distance.

I loved being on the faculty at Kenyon College, and I loved the place itself. I did experience a "culture clash" there that Marilyn may also have experienced. (I only speculate.) But I was by no means alone, and those of us who were New York, urban-oriented, liberal Jews in rural Ohio did not find Marilyn Hacker meeting us for lunch or calling to chat or forming friendships. She worked hard. She travelled. She wasn't much on the campus scene.

So, yes, I was disappointed that Marilyn and the College were not happy with one another. Each had reason not to be happy; Marilyn perhaps had better reason because, in my opinion, she did excellent editorial work (and she might reasonably have supposed that the quality of the Review would be the only basis for assessment of her performance), and because we may not have extended ourselves adequately. That said, you are right that Marilyn did not make it easy to do so.

All of this is obviously subjective and based on old memories. Hope these impressions are useful to you.

Best wishes,

Lori

