

Do NOT Throw Rocks in North Carolina

by Margaret D. Bauer, Editor

At the same time I was organizing the content of this winter issue content in December, the newly expanded selection committee for the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame met for the first time. A longtime member of the committee, now its chair, I remarked to the membership that the only difficulty is narrowing down to no more than five new inductees for each biennial ceremony, as there are so many deserving writers in this “writingest state,” including those on our ever-lengthening “watchlist.” When I took up the mantle of *NCLR* Editor over twenty-five years ago, one of the first things I heard was the mantra that if you throw a rock in North Carolina, you are likely to hit a writer. I meet new writers with every contest we manage as I match judges’ selected titles with the finalists’ names and as more and more books are added to our [books available for review list](#). I really get attached to these folks, particularly after their work has been featured in our pages. So please, do not throw any rocks in North Carolina!

With this last section of the issue, the count is in: this issue includes reviews of over two dozen new books by North Carolina writers, which facilitates our Saturday Review, a website and social media feature. Thank you to all reviewers, past and present. Make sure we hear when your book is published, so we can be sure to get it on our list. And a shoutout to those reviewers who volunteered after we reviewed a book they’d written. That’s how it works in North Carolina: writers support writers.

So would you like to review for us?

The math is easy, if daunting: releasing reviews weekly is over fifty reviews a year, which makes for very long online issues. Or . . . (drumroll here) . . . more issues? Yes, that. Less than two years after adding a fall issue in 2022, we are adding a spring issue in 2024 – coming in April, with at least

a dozen more books reviewed, as well as still more honorees from our 2023 contests. As North Carolina’s natural, cultural, and historical riches continue to inspire writers, *NCLR* expands our efforts to fulfill our mission to preserve and promote the state’s ever-expanding literary history. We are now a quarterly (cheer here). And four issues equals about five hundred pages of content.

We can cover the additional design costs of a fourth issue thanks to a Spark the Arts grant from the North Carolina Arts Council and the matching funds from the ECU Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, which also covers our newest staff position. Digital Editor Devra Thomas makes sure all these reviews go up weekly, along with the other daily interaction via our website and social media: Teaching Tuesday, What We’re Reading Wednesday, and Friday from the Archives, just to name the weekly features.

The additional book review formatting labor has been handled in collaboration with *NCLR*’s newest assistant editor, ECU English professor Desiree Dighton, who is incorporating book review layouts in one of her publication design classes. This experience inspires some students to then sign up for interning with *NCLR*. Others are inspired to join the team by my ECU colleague Amber Flora Thomas’s newly designed Creative Writing as a Profession class, which incorporates some work with *NCLR* to give students a peak behind the scenes. We certainly need our student staff members as we prepare all of this content for publication. I am so grateful to these ECU colleagues, as well as to other colleagues, here and beyond, who help with other aspects of producing this magazine.

And lastly, I am grateful to our donors. Won’t you [join these Friends of NCLR](#) to help sustain all that *NCLR* is doing to preserve and promote the state’s rich literary history? ■

