

## A PEEK INSIDE

In 1953, T. S. Eliot delivered a rather curious speech entitled "American Literature and Language," in which he pondered a highly unusual phenomenon: the first transatlantic crossing not of Lindbergh but of an American robin. Eliot (who had become a British citizen in 1927) wondered whether the bird would stay in England and mate with the British thrush or become a mere aberration in a two-century history of American isolationism: "It is interesting to speculate on the future of this pilgrim."

After several trips to Britain over the course of the last three years to share ideas with the English and Scottish writers and educators, and in turn hosting visits to New York City by these new-found friends, we decided that it was time to ask some follow-up questions. Namely, what are the major differences between British and American literary worlds, especially in creative writing education? What are the prospects for increasing cross-fertilization between our two kindred cultures?

The responses of the contributors herein, a diverse group from both sides of the Pond, reveal that while distinctions still exist, there is much common ground, and great potential to work more closely together.

We would like to express our thanks to Christian McEwen, who initiated many of the connections that made this issue possible. Additional thanks to Tanya Earnshaw of London's Saison Poetry Library, Sylvia Dow of the Scottish Arts Council, and Paul Munden. Please note that, in the spirit of this issue, we have retained the British spelling of words and certain un-American grammatical activities.

—Christopher Edgar & Christina Davis

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

January–February 2004 Issue

<b>Educating the Imagination</b>	3
<i>Barrier of a Common Language</i>	
Dana Gioia	
<b>Caledonia Goes to Gotham</b>	7
<i>Two Scottish Writers on Teaching in NYC</i>	
Suhayl Saadi	
Linda Cracknell	
<b>Illuminations</b>	15
<i>Great Writers on Writing</i>	
Oscar Wilde	
<b>On the Circuit</b>	16
<i>The Profession of Poetry in England and America</i>	
Mark Ford	
<b>Illuminations</b>	21
<i>Great Writers on Writing</i>	
Charles Simic	
<b>Filling Tennyson's Shoes</b>	22
<i>A Tête-à-Tête with the Laureates</i>	
Billy Collins	
Andrew Motion	
<b>Mavericks and the Curriculum</b>	27
<i>Writers-in-the-Schools in Great Britain</i>	
Paul Munden	