

In Remembrance: John L. Brown

IT WAS WITH GREAT SADNESS and a deep sense of loss that the *World Literature Today* staff received word of the passing of longtime WLT collaborator, editorial board member, and 1982 Neustadt Prize juror John L. Brown, who died on November 22, 2002. Remarkably, Brown contributed to the pages of *Books Abroad* and *World Literature Today* for nearly fifty years, longer than anyone in the seventy-six-year history of our enterprise, surpassing the tenure of any of the journal's directors, editors, or staff. His own work has been reviewed in our pages since 1954, when *Books Abroad*, the forerunner to *World Literature Today* and *WLT Magazine*, provided coverage of his *Panorama de la littérature contemporaine aux États-Unis* (see BA 29:4, p. 310).

John Lackey Brown was born April 29, 1914, in Iliion, New York. He was educated at Hamilton College, where he received an A.B. in 1935, before pursuing graduate work in medieval studies and comparative literature at the École de Chartres and the Sorbonne in Paris (1936–38) and earning a doctorate from Catholic University in Washington, D.C., where he first taught as an instructor of Romance languages from 1939 to 1941.

During World War II, Brown served as an assistant chief of foreign publications in the U.S. Office of War Information (1942–43) and as a member of the staff of the Office of Strategic Services (1943–44). For a number of years after the war, he resided in Paris, traveling extensively throughout Western Europe as European editor for the publisher Houghton Mifflin as well as correspondent with the *New York Times* Sunday edition and contributor to numerous European and American journals (1945–49).

For more than a decade (1949–62), Brown worked for the U.S. government in a number of capacities as director of the Economic Cooperation Administration, Information Division, the Marshall Plan (France); as chief of regional services for the U.S. Information Service at the U.S. embassy in Paris; and as cultural attaché to the U.S. embassies in Brussels and in Rome. From 1964 to 1968, Brown served as counselor for cultural affairs to the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

Brown's distinguished service in the diplomatic corps was matched by his outstanding and richly diverse academic career. From the time he was a fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies at Wesleyan University (1962–63) until the end of his life, Brown held posts or lectured widely at many universities in the United States (e.g., Harvard, Rutgers, Smith College, Yale, and Catholic University of America) as well as at academic institutions in Canada, Mexico, and Europe, including the National University of Mexico, the Institut Catholique in Paris, and the University of Lisbon, where he was Senior Fulbright Professor.

Brown's many academic works in comparative literature that have appeared in English, French, and Italian reflect in part the vast expertise that the editors of *WLT* often relied upon in assigning books to him for review. In fact, among the scores of works he regularly reviewed for us from the 1980s until last year alone were those by writers as diverse as Marguerite Yourcenar, Ernest Hemingway, Claudio Guillén, Italo Calvino, Claudio Magris, Mircea Éliade, Blaise



Courtesy: John Halit Brown

Cendrars, Ralph Ellison, Julien Green, Édouard Roditi, Edmund Wilson, Saint-John Perse, and Carson McCullers. Amazingly, Brown knew firsthand many of these authors and would often include personal anecdotes in his coverage for *WLT*, much to our delight and that of our readers, referring, for example, to the little-known eccentricities of Katherine Anne Porter or to a lunch with Alice B. Toklas in which she pointed out that her gold fork and spoon had once belonged to Mary Pickford. Brown's personal correspondence with such important literary and cultural figures as Sylvia Beach, John Dos Passos, Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, Brassai, and Jacques Maritain forms a substantial portion of the John L. Brown Papers archived at Georgetown University.

John had an exquisite sense of humor and a generous spirit, which was evident in his many phone conversations with our staff as well as in his handwritten cards and letters he often sent to us, particularly to former *WLT* Editor William Riggan, with whom he enjoyed a close friendship for many years. John repeatedly extended an open invitation to anyone at *WLT* to visit him in Washington, D.C., where he and his beloved wife, Simone-Yvette L'Evesque, lived together for many years, with the added enticement that he would take us to lunch at the Cosmos Club to "raise a glass and speak ill of our enemies."

Although it is often said—if not believed—by many who have served the government or academia that, ultimately, one's true friends remain grateful for a lifetime of service but that institutions seldom are, *World Literature Today* will always be indebted to John L. Brown, the self-proclaimed Crocodile of the Potomac, for his remarkable contributions, support, and friendship. John's death is a great loss we share with his widow, Simone; his two sons, Michael-Simon and John Halit; his two granddaughters; and our readers worldwide.

D.D.C.



Is Canada Postcolonial?

Unsettling Canadian Literature

Laura Moss, editor

Paper \$34.95 • ISBN 0-88920-418-0

The twenty-four articles collected here wrestle with the problems of situating Canadian literature in the ongoing debates about culture, identity, and globalization and of applying the slippery term of post-colonialism to Canadian literature.

My Husband

Dacia Maraini

Translated by Vera Golini

Paper \$19.95 • 0-88920-432-2

In this short story collection, Dacia Maraini, award-winning author of novels, screenplays, and poetry, recreates the vexing, tragic, and often humorous experiences of women in Italian urban centres in the 1950s and '60s. This is the first English translation of *My Husband*.



Wilfrid Laurier University Press
www.wlupress.wlu.ca

Phone: 519-884-0710 ext. 6124 • Fax: 519-726-1399 • Email: press@wlu.ca

**Engaging
Innovative
Unique**



**UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME**

University of Notre Dame Ph.D. in Literature Program

The University of Notre Dame invites you to apply to its innovative interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in literatures and languages. The Program approaches the study of literature from a transnational, intercultural, and multilinguistic perspective. Designed for the intellectually creative student, the Ph.D. in Literature requires both depth and breadth of language study while offering curricular flexibility in a program of study responsive to the student's own interests. Language and Literature concentrations include combinations of Arabic, East Asian, French and Francophone, German, Greek, Irish, Iberian and Latin American, Italian, Latin, Spanish and Portuguese. Taking advantage of Notre Dame's many resources; the Program offers an unprecedented level of intellectual as well as financial support.

For Program, Admissions, and Fellowship information, please visit www.nd.edu/~litprog/.
Application deadline: 15 January 2004.