

# Editor's Note

*"We've been through a lot."*

We began our call for papers for the 13th volume of *Plath Profiles* with this phrase, and I'm *still* being struck, constantly, in barrages with the brilliance of a meteor shower, by the tenacity of the past 2 years. I know I'm not alone in this. If we are meant to be "resilient" - the word one author in this volume uses as the catchphrase, of sorts, for optimism these days - in the face of COVID, then COVID itself, and the conditions it surrounds itself with, are just as resilient. Not to be a drag, but we are still in the state of muchness that "a lot" implies. Our CFP has now attained a sad irony. Whether it's COVID, struggles for racial justice, disquieting white supremacist rallies, emotional and financial debt and depletion, or just the omnipresent, complete, toxic (yet often uplifting) landscape of social media and the internet, we are still going through *a lot* and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The magic light of vaccination has dwindled to a glimmer of hope. Yet here we remain.

Here we remain, gathering around the Sylvia Plath campfire, telling the stories that keep us here, keep us going, keep us engaged and feeling and being human. What story would Sylvia tell herself (reflexively or perhaps as a mirror) around this campfire? I like to think that she would revel in puns, or take a long sonic dive in the local swimming pool, step into the shoes of a janitor, or bring out her witch tools, just as the writers in this volume imagine. I like to think she would be *resilient*, too, that her biographical situation is not proof of escapism or what might be termed "weakness" by those who don't know Sylvia as we might and as we want to show her in the world. Sylvia's witchy bonfires and frantic *Ariel* scribbles were dreams of deep humanity, empathy, and connection in the face of the tragedy that is being human, being in a body, trying to be in relationship, being through *a lot*.

This is our campfire. These are our stories. And for now, let them be enough. We can survive - we can thrive - in the face of continuing uncertainty *because* we persist in believing in the power of poetry, of story, of beingness.

Welcome to Volume 13 of *Plath Profiles*.

I risked waxing sentimental with this note, but I'm in the business of granting myself more permission these days. Some of that permission blends the boundaries I put between myself and others in the hope of compassionate exchange. This may look like sentimentality, and so be it. Some of that permission includes binge-watching children's cartoons when I just *can't* with the world. In deep sentimentality and gratitude, this volume brings together some of the brightest lights in the Plath community in the hopes of pointing at a path forward in the face of struggle and in pointing out a Plath-path for this journal that is growing quickly in scope and review strength. We, the editors, want *Plath Profiles* to be symbolic of the community that gathers around Plath and her work, not just a publication. We used a uniquely symmetrical structure for this volume, centering around the fulcrum of scholastic exchange between Plath writers and scholars in Gail Crowther's new work and bookending with two iterations of a truly groundbreaking and heartbreaking poem by Crystal Hurdle. We hope you feel as deeply heard and felt by this symmetry and by all of the indispensable work in this volume as we do. We hope *Plath Profiles* can be a symbol and a light for you.

In the hope of further community-building, *Plath Profiles* is issuing a special call for BIPOC topics and contributors. If we've learned anything in the last two years, it's that we need to open the field - every field. Plath studies is a bit navel-gazey, and that can sometimes blind us to conversations worthy of notice, including the absence (and persistence) of race in Plath's work. We invite you to consider this topic, outlined in the call, from any angle for the next volume, and we hope you will share the call with your peers and friends. If you have questions about contributing work to the journal, please email us at [PlathProfiles@gmail.com](mailto:PlathProfiles@gmail.com). We look forward to speaking with you.

Additionally, please visit the Indiana University submission page at <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/plath/submission/wizard> for electronic submissions.

There's no end to this work or to the possibilities we want to embed in this editor's note, and so we must abruptly, hopefully write...

Together in Plath,

Editors Eric, Dolores, and Bill

### **About the Journal**

William K. Buckley, Professor Emeritus at Indiana University Northwest, founded *Plath Profiles* in 2008 at Oxford University in the U.K. during a Sylvia Plath convention. He announced his intention for such a journal and the response from Plath scholars was immediate. The response to this journal since 2009 has been overwhelming.

*Plath Profiles* prints essays, poetry, art, memoirs, book reviews, responses, student essays, and notes, along with new media and released documents from the Plath estate. Indiana University is also the home of the Lilly Library, which has the largest and most extensive collection of materials on Plath.