



Editor's Note

Welcome to Volume 14 of *Plath Profiles*! We're happy to be here, and we're elated to have you on this journey with us. Like most small journals and indie presses have dealt with over the last two years of the COVID pandemic, the staff here at Plath Profiles has encountered our unfair share of tosses and turns together. Delaying the release of this volume until Sylvia's birthday, 2022, was a necessity which ended in kismet. Our constant staff of two editors, one editor emeritus, and one designer is enough to keep us afloat, but we came across personal and professional developments that turned into roadblocks for *Plath Profiles*, as has happened for other editors before us. Both of us were in our PhD programs at the same time this past year—Eric in defense and now post-defense mode, and Dolores in exams and now post-exams mode. We both taught multiple courses and had side gigs as well. Dolores went through Hurricane Ian, thankfully physically unharmed, while Eric moved to Chicago and began a new job. So, as you can see, it has been quite a year!

This list may sound like excuses on the surface, but we can assure you, they're not. These are the circumstances many, many scholars and writers like us are also in, whether it be by choice or by necessity. This uncomfortable reality isn't confronted enough; work like this—the passion projects that we value as important to scholarship and to the literary community—are done out of love, and can be incredibly taxing. It is also important to note that we are not paid, and though it is a privilege to be able to do any sort of work without pay, it is also a difficulty. Overall, we, as an academic journal, are under-resourced. We do this work as a small staff because we believe, as Dolores often says, that we "carry a light for Sylvia's work that continues to have a place in readership and discourse and influences the ways in which we see the world today." Eric does this work because criticism and history have erased parts of Sylvia's writings and her life story that are, perhaps, even more relevant to contemporary readers because of their redaction; as a woman with mental illness struggling to fit into the canon of writers and into a prescriptive, normative mode of being that wasn't quite big enough for her, Sylvia is, for many of us, an intriguing inspiration for our own stories. That is the light Dolores might describe that this journal can work toward.

This desire to see more of Sylvia, redacted, led us to write our last call for papers encouraging submissions from historically under-resourced and under-represented groups, including BIPOC writers. However, this is a difficult ask during especially difficult times. Without qualification or flexibility, how could we ask under-resourced writers to contribute on topics personal to them amidst pandemic, protest, and persistent strife against the police state, and to ask for this donation of their time and scholarship during a recession? We may be an under-resourced journal but being an academic journal at all is and indicates privileges that we do not know are shared in all cases by the writers that we want

to hear from—those who have the perspectives that we want to give the light to. There isn't an easy and ethical answer to this publishing conundrum, but as with all things *Plath Profiles* and small, literary passion projects, the answer seems to divide evenly to 1) keep going amidst all the obstacles in front of us, or 2) end our part however it is we move on. We have opted to keep going and are doing what we can to move forward and to invest in new ideas and new voices, whenever possible—and as ethically as possible—and with the knowledge that our compassion and flexibility must extend to others and to ourselves.

We believe scholarship has a future beyond even the digital page. Eric, now engaged daily by digital scholarship and creativity in his job, wants to see the work we do here manifest in the best way to move that light of Sylvia's creative fire forward. That can mean a print or online journal in PDF form, such as this current iteration founded by our editor emeritus and champion Bill Buckley. It could also mean physical exhibits or interactive educational opportunities, public humanities expansions of Sylvia's work under the *Plath Profiles* banner, or maintenance of this scholarship elsewhere. Maybe it's creative interpretations of Sylvia on stage, on film, or in audio. Maybe it's a conference or supporting the work of others who put together meetings of Plath lovers, like the Sylvia Plath Society. There are also many options offered by the digital publishing landscape that we have not yet begun to dream of, and beyond that, who knows—but we want to find out. The current structures for academic journal status do not support the changing twenty-first century in their present form, and we cannot limit ourselves as scholars, writers, or editors to that which we know has worked in the past, but may be failing us now. We don't know the solution, but here we are in the wake of pandemics and questions of the "new normal," and we want to embrace the possibility of changing our perspectives and our work. If we're going to include, and to diversify, and to move our passions forward, let's do it with open arms.

Plath Profiles is a passion project born out of passion, and passion is what we should aim to preserve. Sharing passion is, essentially, one definition of publishing; it could also be a definition of scholarship or poetry. Whatever you share, with *Plath Profiles* or any of the myriad of journals that we all read, try to keep your passion lit. Amidst the difficulty of "the now," try to retain and feed your passions, and to do it with joy when you can. For the short time that Sylvia lived, that is precisely what she pursued, so we choose to take our lead from her.

At the end of this volume, you will find a revised CFP based on the call that we first put out in Volume 13. Our work is ongoing, which means pushing through and adding to our dream of sharing and expanding the capacity of scholarship. We hope you will share this call with us. We also hope you find encouragement to write your own creative, dreaming engagements with Sylvia's work, and we hope to see those soon here in this passionate little publication of ours. Thank you so much for your readership and support, and we look forward to hearing from you when we review submissions over the upcoming year. We look forward to seeing your shining light in the next volume of *Plath Profiles*!

Sincerely,

Eric and Dolores

About the Journal

Plath Profiles, founded by William K. Buckley, prints essays, poetry, art, memoirs, book reviews, responses, student essays, and notes, along with new media and released documents from the Plath estate. It is anchored at Indiana University, Bloomington, home of the Lilly Library, which has the largest and most extensive collection of materials on Plath in the US.