



Editorial: Social Media will be the Death of Prose

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“Social media will be the death of prose.” When a friend said that to me a while ago, I brushed it aside as the muttering of someone who didn’t like his new iPhone. Then, hearing more and more grumbles from undergraduates about having to write good sentences and coherent paragraphs, I began to worry that it might be true. Why bother with a well-formed sentence, or even the nuanced separation of consonants by vowels, when your friends will know what you mean without those frills? With our sophisticated transmission of images (I’d just learned about Instagram), I worried that we might be evolving toward hieroglyphics—through a kind of back-to-the-future cultural accident. I was getting discouraged and wondered what I could possibly say by way of introduction to this second edition of *OUR Journal*.

Then, I had a conversation with a student. We were both in the science prep room, doing mechanical chores—she, working at her job and I, cleaning up loose ends from the previous term. The windowless room was dim—its mood conveyed by the ashy-black of worn lab benches. Talk was pleasantly distracting and the student, though not animated, was politely responsive to my questions about her science major. Then, after a pause, she said, “...but what I really want to do is write!” The sudden enthusiasm in her voice startled me, and I looked up to see a different person: a face alive with intelligence and verve, a presence that dominated the drab room. I quickly learned that she likes all kinds of writing—journalistic reports, stories, poetry—and feels newly-liberated from the sense that she really ought to be embarking on a more predictable career. My head cleared. I could stop fretting. We’ll always write, and for all kinds of reasons—to persuade or provoke, to examine our own thinking or to make sense of the world—and sometimes, just for the sheer pleasure of it. We write because we’re human.

In this journal, you’ll find the same spirit I found in the prep room. You’ll meet individuals—Antoinette Cosway, Becky Sisley, and Mina Loy—whose struggles toward freedom make compelling prose and poetry. In the process, you’ll get a glimpse of the authors, and you’ll know that writing is very much alive among the University of Oregon’s undergraduates.