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## Letter from Editor

Alex Muller

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Writing this letter reminds me of signing yearbooks on the last days of high school: in the chaos of exchanging copies, I wasn't sure that I was ever writing to the correct person. In almost every case, I felt like I didn't have enough time to write the thoughts that *I really* wanted to tell my friends, and I'm worried that they'll look back years from now with a red pen in hand, critiquing my notes: *I'm unsure if this sentiment is fully developed. Ouch, comma splice. I can't even read this handwriting.* And so on. Imagine, then, the even stranger sensation of writing this letter now: I consider you a friend even if I do not know you. How can I write something to convey to you the things I feel? But I guess that's the point of writing. More on that later.

I'll be the first to admit how much of an *Anthology* nerd I've been during the past three years I've served on the staff. I've become fascinated by reading these letters from the Editors in the older editions: *What was it like to publish the first full-color issue in 2003? Or, What were they thinking when they did the design of 1998??* But if you read those old letters (and sometimes there are no letters), you'll often find only a vague sense of what it was really like to publish *The Anthology* for any given year. The Editor usually writes: *Well, we've had our share of ups and downs, but here it is. We finally did it, and we hope you enjoy it.* Although we can infer what those ups and downs might have been, we'll never know.

Essentially, we don't really know what the *it* is. But more on that later.

I'll be the first to admit that I'm an optimist, so in reflecting on this past year, it's hard for me to say truthfully *we've had our share of ups and downs*. Though I will say: it's tough to stay on schedule when there are multiple snow days during the spring semester, it's tough to decide which pieces we put into the magazine and how to arrange them. It's tough knowing

that sometimes, no matter what you do, the best writers or artists simply *won't* submit their work for publication. And it never gets any easier telling someone else *I'm sorry, but we won't be able to publish you this year.*

Perhaps what was most difficult for me was the idea that my staff and I had a year to get this book together and then published. And with it being my final year, I found myself putting this inevitable *thing* off as long as I could. (I'll be the first to admit that I resent planning ahead). Mostly, it was tough to think of finally being done with *The Anthology*. I suppose that this letter represents everything I wish it wouldn't: an end, a summation, a final signature.

But in reality, I am writing this letter before we've even finished the book—several weeks before we even publish it. So when you read this letter, think of me at that point in time, a constant state of *in-between*, always thinking, yeah, *I've got a few more weeks. And then I'll write a really good letter.* May you always wonder *What were the ups and the downs?*

For my part, I defer to Rebecca. Her letter represents what mine cannot. When people ask me what I *do* with *The Anthology*, I usually say that I do a bit of everything, but really it's my staff that does everything: Rhiannon did the design, Patrick picked the prose, Connie picked the poetry, Sarah picked the art, and Rebecca kept me focused and filled in the gaps when I could not see the whole picture.

So what *do* I do? I sit in my office at the end of the summer before my senior year of college, before classes have started and before anyone has arrived on campus. I close my eyes and try to imagine myself writing this letter after seven more months. And then *it* is here. And I begin to write. But more on that later.

—ALEX MULLER  
Editor-in-Chief