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**The Last Rose of Summer**

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**The Last Rose of Summer**

Literary journals and magazines often have themes. Usually, they concern things we presumably should all care about—some kind of struggle, a perceived injustice, a challenge looming on the horizon. Or themes might concern a new way of doing things, a surprising artistic turn of events, or a group not known for doing something suddenly doing it. A paper call asks us to discuss one of these things.

This issue, belatedly the spring/summer issue, is coming out in mid-October. It is therefore a last artifact of this summer. Today, my wife rescued a rock rose from the bush on our front lawn, proclaimed it the Last Rose of Summer, and sequestered it in a fluted vase for the table. The Last Rose of Summer is also the name of an old song my grandfather used to sing to me. You can imagine that I, full of the Beatles at that time, didn't think that corny old tune was particularly cool, but I could tell that it reminded my grandfather of happier times, despite its somber message. He had an old nineteenth-century copy of the poems of Thomas Moore (1856), who wrote "Tis The Last Rose of Summer," or more accurately, who set his poem to an old Irish air, "Aislean an Oigfear," or "The Dream of a Young Man" (Bunting, 1796). I would pick out the melody on the old Mason & Hamlin upright in my grandparents' living room, and my grandfather would do his best Irish tenor. Sometimes my grandmother would wander in, late of mashing potatoes for dinner, and remark how everyone knew my grandfather had the best voice in town, back in the 1920s. She had a cheery disposition and loved her lawyer husband, even though she had to leave law school in the early 1930s to care for my father, whom she had just had.

And so, something about author David Harscheid's reminiscences of living with his grandparents, as he recounts in "My Grandparents' Kitchen," reminds me of weekends spent for

fourteen years with my grandparents when I was young. Mr. Harscheid's grandfather was a fireman in the late 1940s; my grandfather was a retired department of education official in the 1960s, but we were both just kids who worshiped our grandads, who loved going to work with them when they let us, and who loved breakfast made by our grandmas.

I don't have children, so I don't know what it is like to have my child create art. I do have a young niece and nephew whom I fiercely love and dote upon, and like children everywhere, they create art. My niece's mother is an established and accomplished painter; I have often wondered what she thought of her niece's erstwhile childlike drawings. In "Primary Colors," Renee Schatteman muses about how her child's art reminds her of that of Jacob Lawrence, especially in its use of color. A professional artist and friend of mine once told me that while children generally have little craft, they have not learned to censor what they see and in their art, they create exactly what they wish to show, and the world they truly perceive. If only we all could be so fortunate.

I do have something in common with our other author in this issue, Catherine-Laura Tremblay-Dion. She is a teacher, and so am I. To my friends and colleagues, I make a big deal out of how what I do and what Ms. Tremblay-Dion does differ in some respects, since she is a schoolteacher and I am a college professor. And while I have never taught in primary or secondary school, both of my parents did, and numerous other relatives as well, so I know "the life." I know about the challenges of teaching a diverse student body, remarked upon both comically and very seriously in Ms. Tremblay-Dion's "Tread Lightly."

We hope you like this last artifact of the summer, and as a Northern boy, I should tell you that Atlanta's fall temperatures have sure felt like summer to me. It has only been very recently

that the cool air has blessedly moved in, and so this issue is a fitting colophon for the closing season of the warm.

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**Author Bio:** J. Patrick McGrail is Associate Professor of Communication at Jacksonville State University. He teaches media literacy, television news and video production. Prior to his career in academia, McGrail worked in television and radio as an actor and director. He also has a keen interest in poetry and music production, and he holds a number of musical copyrights himself.