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JULY/AUGUST 2013
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From Poets & Writers, Inc.

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A special report on MFA programs...lessons writers can learn from the history of FSG...our Agents & Editors series continues...why writers need to consider trademark.

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If you're looking for an agent, begin your research with our carefully curated [Literary Agents database](#), which includes not only contact information and submission guidelines, but also client lists, tips, and even Twitter feeds to follow for daily dispatches from the agenting world.

And don't miss [Agent Advice](#), featuring some of the best literary agents in the country answering the questions writers most frequently ask about how to get published.

Listen to Neil Gaiman read an excerpt from his new novel, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, as well as [podcasts](#) of authors reading from their new books featured in Page One, including Jane Miller reading from her poetry collection *Thunderbird* and Rebecca Lee reading from her story collection, *Bobcat and Other Stories*.

Watch [videos](#) of the authors featured in Kevin Sampell's "Make Them Glad They Came: How to Give an Inspired Reading."

Read an expanded version of this issue's Agents & Editors interview with Eric Simonoff as well as [excerpts](#) from books by the debut authors featured in First Fiction 2013.



Lit Mag Helps Newtown Heal

The *Newtownner*, an arts and literary quarterly in Newtown, Connecticut, was about halfway through the production process for its next issue on December 14, 2012, the morning Adam Lanza walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School and started shooting. By ten in the morning, twenty children and six staff members at Sandy Hook were dead. And like everyone else in Newtown, the magazine staff was in shock.

"It felt like the world had come to an end," recalls editor in chief Georgia Monaghan, the mother of two teenagers in the local public schools. "We had a Kickstarter program going, raising funds for the next year's issues, but my immediate thought was, 'I don't care if the *Newtownner* goes to print ever again.' Nothing mattered anymore, compared to what had just happened. All of the things you ever thought were important, none were as important as your own children."

A painting by Avielle Richman, age six, a victim of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, featured in the *Newtownner's* tribute issue.

But two agonizing days later, Monaghan, a native of Australia who moved to Newtown five years ago and founded the magazine in 2010, began to reconsider. "Oh, hang on," she thought, "the *Newtownner* has the opportunity to do something special for the community, something that could really help." In fact, she thought, didn't the magazine have the means, not to mention the obligation, to do what it could to help the grieving town heal? "I began to see that we had a chance to deal with what happened here by doing an issue

addressed to the community from the community, from the inside out."

The editor and her thirty-member, all-volunteer staff began to consider how to proceed. A business-as-usual approach to the magazine's new issue seemed unthinkable. They discussed the possibility of devoting some, but not all, of its pages to the tragedy, but that seemed inadequate. In the end, the staff realized what it must do: create a special commemorative issue to be distributed free as a gift to the Newtown victims' families and, if fund-raising



AVIELLE RICHMAN, COURTESY OF THE NEWTOWNNER

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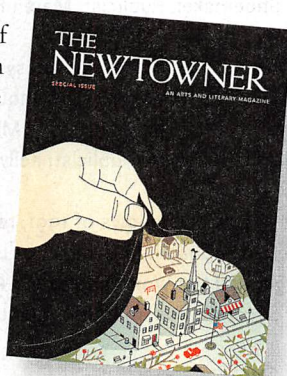
TRAVIS KUROWSKI is the editor of *Paper Dreams: Writers and Editors on the American Literary Magazine*, forthcoming in August from Atticus Books. His website is traviskurowski.com.

should permit, to each of the town's roughly seven thousand households.

And so a special "tribute issue" of the *Newtown*, released in June, began to take shape. The staff launched a dedicated fund-raising drive to raise money for printing and distribution, which ran through Indiegogo until July 1, and set about gathering submissions. But what sort of work would they include? The question was both tricky and pressing. "We don't want to make people feel worse," Monaghan says. "We want to express our emotions, of course, but we want to do it without leaving people in a dark place."

She called the staff together and asked each member what should be in the issue. "One main thread was a desire to celebrate Newtown for the wonderful place that it is, and to define ourselves, rather than be defined by others in the onslaught of media attention after the shooting," she says.

"The second thread was the desire to honor and commemorate our loss. And the third thread was the need to recognize that the role of literature and the arts is to give expression to profound human emotions, of which grief is one of the strongest. We thought that the content of the magazine could help us express our grief in an artistic way, deal with it, process it, heal from it."



To those ends, the staff gathered poetry, fiction, essays, visual art (including a Thanksgiving-themed drawing and other artwork by children who died at Sandy Hook) and statements from Newtown residents and natives of the town from around the country, along with poetry from Pulitzer Prize winner Yusef Komunyakaa and letters to the residents of Newtown by novelist Wally Lamb and children's book authors Lois Lowry and Katherine Paterson. One piece, an essay called "The Wrong Train," was written by David Wheeler, the father of Ben, a child killed in the shooting. In the essay, Wheeler imag-

ines riding on one train and looking through the window into another, speeding along on a parallel track. Inside is his family, including both of his sons. "You're not supposed to be on *this* train," Wheeler writes, "*this* isn't the place you were supposed to be, and the train is moving fast in the dark tunnel and there's no way you can get off, get free of this, get onto that other train, the one you can see so clearly, the one you're supposed to be on and aren't."

A single piece from the previously planned issue, Newtown-based writer Sophronia Scott's "Tain in the Rain," was carried forward into the tribute edition. The essay by Scott—a former *Time* magazine reporter, author of the novel *All I Need to Get By* (St. Martin's Press, 2004), and the mother

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Key West Literary Seminar

the dark side

MYSTERY, CRIME & THE LITERARY THRILLER

CHAPTER ONE: JANUARY 9-12

MEGAN ABBOTT STEPHEN L. CARTER

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SARA PARETSKY JOHN SANDFORD

ALEXANDER McCALL SMITH

LES STANDIFORD SCOTT TUROW

FINAL CHAPTER: JANUARY 16-19

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OTTO PENZLER LISA UNGER

WRITERS' WORKSHOPS: JANUARY 12-16

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of a Sandy Hook Elementary student who survived—"worked beautifully for the tribute," Monaghan says. "It's so symbolic and so powerful—about how we worry about our children but need to let them go—that we knew we had to include it." In the essay, Scott's son Tain, then seven years old, stays outside when it starts raining, holding his arms out and moving them up and down "like a human weather vane" in mystical communion with the brewing storm. In the house, her hand on the door, his mother is about to call him inside, but then does not.

"I think the concept of writing about my child not really being my own—in the sense that he belongs to himself, not to me—maybe fits somehow," says Scott, whose family is close with the Wheelers. "Even though my child will go into dangerous situations, I have to let him do that, because that's the path that we all have

to walk. I hope that there can be some peace for some people in knowing that we shepherd our children for a certain amount of their journey here on this earth, but in the end, we have to let them go."

Whether enough money was raised for free distribution to the families and residents of Newtown was not known at the time of this writing. Regardless, the release of the *Newtown* tribute issue, Scott says, is an important moment for both the magazine and for Newtown itself. "They're trying to do the right thing, and it's scary for them," she says of the magazine staff. "There are a lot of literary journals in the world, but how many find themselves in a situation like the *Newtown*? They're having all of their dreams and goals and intentions put to the test, the ultimate test of whether they can really be the magazine they want to be. Personally, I think people are going to love it." —KEVIN NANCE

Page One

Where New
And Noteworthy
Books Begin

"This is how my new life came about." **Search Party: Stories of Rescue** (Counterpoint Press, July 2013) by Valerie Trueblood. Third book, second story collection. Agent: Jessica Papin. Editor: Jack Shoemaker. Publicist: Maren Fox.

♦ ♦ ♦
"As the ancients detail it / ecstasy passes over us / in a mist of particles / it lives bare / dies unburied" **Thunderbird** (Copper Canyon Press, July 2013) by Jane Miller. Tenth book, poetry collection. Agent: None. Editor: Michael Wiegiers. Publicist: Kelly Forsythe.

♦ ♦ ♦
"This particular story begins in the dusky hollows of 1991, remembered as a rotten year through and through by almost everybody living, dead, or unborn." **The Telling Room: A Tale of Love, Betrayal, Revenge, and the World's Greatest Piece of Cheese** (Dial Press, July 2013) by Michael Paterniti. Second book, memoir. Agent: Sloan Harris. Editor: Andy Ward. Publicist: London King.

♦ ♦ ♦
"And there he sat, up front, all alone in the first pew." **& Sons** (Random House, July 2013) by David Gilbert. Third book, second novel. Agent: Bill Clegg. Editor: David Ebershoff. Publicist: Maria Braeckel.

♦ ♦ ♦
"It was the terrine that got to me." **Bobcat and Other Stories** (Algonquin Books, June 2013) by Rebecca Lee. Second book, first story collection. Agent: Douglas Stewart. Editor: Kathy Pories. Publicist: Emma Boyer.

♦ ♦ ♦
"Lingering over bok choy in neat formation, / bitter clean contrast of white and green, / I hide my cold hands in my coat." **Pause, Traveler** (Boreal Books, June 2013) by Erin Coughlin Hollowell. First book, poetry collection. Agent: None. Editor: Peggy Shumaker. Publicist: William Goldstein.