

FORWARD

BY KENT J. BRUYNEEL

IF YOU ARE FEELING GENTLE AND KIND, lend me your ears. By way of introduction: I will be your host for the evening. I'll walk you through it, as you me, and hopefully by the time we reach the end, we'll both think I was right all along. Bing Crosby thinks I am right already: He is wondering about you.

I am here, in my smoking jacket. Bing Crosby is here too. We are sitting in the great parlour. We are laughing and drinking and Ol' Bing can't decide whether to start a new song or join me in my spot-on rendition of Bobby Darin's Mack the Knife. We are slurping down Eggnogg and Bing is throwing things at poor MacLeod: He is cowering and sad. It is a time of great wonder and happiness. Even Jeff, he kind of looks happy over there. Because Jeff knows. Sarah and Stephan know too. But they are not going to tell you. Neither will Ol' Bing. You forgot about Bing?

Bing has been to the end and like you he was scared too, like me. I think the best thing to do is to confess to inconsistencies. Firstly, I am a censor, by way of admission. I censored the back page of this book, and I will do it again. Next, I know with so much text it becomes difficult to read after awhile. One's eyes glass over. We know. With all the arguments about everything, we just like it simple. Try to read the entire thing over a number of days. Put it in your bag. Or in your car. Try. At least that's what Bing says. Bing has never seen a year like we have had. And like I said Ol' Bing he gets around. My jackboots are resting on the desk now and I am sharpening up my pencil. Lets not sleepwalk through another one Bing is saying, like we have so many times before. Lets not pretend we are looking at this page with anything but withering spite at the thought of having to read it. Lets pretend we are not actually at this time, trying to focus on just swallowing the damn thing without choking. I am a soldier now, walking around the place, crying madly in the air.

You on the other hand are worrying Bing a lot. Bing likes UPEI. He particularly likes the English faculty. In one of Bing's semesters he took a class where every person in the class spoke their mind freely, and said insightful things at exactly their own pace, and Ol' Bing saw that, and watched the person doing it and thought, oh, 'that is how one teaches.' But I have no ear for his garbage so it is my advice you stop reading these words now.

Because, though I will go on for some time, you'd be better lying down, and you are really not missing much (throw a pencil at the 36 page student newspaper you are holding and start reading where it lands. it will probably serve you better than this introduction). Or, if lying down is not an option, I would check out the center spread of Santa's desk. It is very nice unless, of course, the printing degradation is higher than normal. Plus I know the paper quality is bad, but we have tried, like guerrillas, to compensate. But you probably don't care about paper quality, or why there are never any apostrophes in *The Cadre*. Really, I doubt if either of us is going to make it through in perfect condition anyway. We're both pretty weary at this point. But at least I have Ol' Bing. He is not really awake anymore. Nodding off in the chair. He knows already, and therefore he can sleep. He has passed, not like you and me. We are still way up in the air. And blue. We don't truly know if it is a Christmas reader (I was not sure how many people were offended by that, Christmas that is, and not

another religious holiday, but if there are any, feel free to come to our office and tell us how you celebrate the holiday and we will publish a piece about it in *The Cadre*, or online, I promise. Also if you have any stories about life on farms in PEI we would love to publish those too and poems too, I am particularly hoping to have David Hickey and John Mackenzie write poetry in a future issue, but the fact that I am saying that in print to get them to contact us reflects the effort I am paying to the long-promised Poetry Spectacular. There are some awfully good poems in these pages though, right up front: Just as an aside. So I hope you are not offended.) or maybe the Holiday Special, or some other subtitle, or is it just a bunch of essays? I mean, what is it really?

But. Let us get into details. Firstly, this is not David Weale. He is gone. Buried under the rubble of what you know. You are about to find something different. An essay on the slaughter of innocence (He asked me in his office if there were any word changes I would suggest and I smiled and thought about the first time I asked him to write for the *Cadre*, which was 18 months ago, and I realized that he is putting all this time into this story, caring acutely about every word, for nothing, for me because I asked him and kept asking. Which proves to me that the most important part of being an editor is to keep asking the right people to write and bring karma to the overall: And he wanders whether I would like to presume to suggest him anything. And I politely say no. And I split, like some junkie robbing a Green Gables). That is Page 15, by the way. But I wouldn't start with that. Well if you started with this, then you are far better off. Because now you will know what to do later when you are getting unsure, and a little afraid. Especially now that Ol' Bing is gone. I am not sure if he is ever coming back. He is in Coolbreeze city. Which is very fun: What my room used to look like, except without all the cool stuff. But now my room is a little cold. Which is better if we are going to continue, and ever get through this. Sometimes, you can feel the end of something poring out of your eyes, and your ears, and even your pen and if your heart allows you to name it than you are luckier than I am. But you are still not free. There is much more. You should read Matthew Dorrell's "Testing the Hypothesis that Stories Are Better When They End With Tea" because it is very good and full of laughs, and it wins the best title award, with Professor Weale coming in a close second.

But, if you are bilingual, which my God man we all should be in this fine country, then I suggest beginning Sarah Murphy's article located handsomely on page ten, immediately. If you are not, we can carry on. And by now I am beginning to think Bing might not have been here at all. There are four chairs here but I am the only one sitting and now I am executing fake subjects and rolling around on the floor, when I hear Marc say, 'Oh man here comes that Bing guy again', and then I remind Bing why we are all here which is to pause for a moment and read. 'Just read' I say to Ol' Bing, 'just you read and I will look for mistakes and you, you don't bother doing that.' Because there are mistakes in this present too. There are mistakes on almost all the pages. But do let us put that aside. I will be by later to see if it all went fine. Which I am sure it will. Mostly you just need to calm down. Read with big eyes. Also, everything else is in 12 point type, so that alone is a perfect way to begin. Going uphill.