

EDITORIAL

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF LIES, but they generally fall into one of two categories: concealment and falsification. The differences between these categories are often described in terms of passivity and activity, as concealment involves the passive (and possibly unintentional) withholding of information, which serves to avoid or hide the truth, and falsification involves the active (and necessarily deliberate) creation of new information, which serves to distort or obscure the truth. Secrets can thus be understood as a specific form of lies, as they similarly serve to conceal the truth. They can also be unintentional, as the act of lying to oneself involves the concealment of a truth that one is unconsciously trying to avoid. French writer André Malraux had good reason to describe humanity, in his book *Antimémoires* (1967), as “a miserable little pile of secrets.” It has also been said that the exposure of secrets can alleviate some of our misery, whether in the form of government transparency, which ensures accountability and trust, or psychotherapy, which is supposed to provide a deeper understanding of the self.

As the current pandemic has raised numerous concerns about the prevalence of misinformation and self-deception in contemporary society, our summer issue features a special section that addresses the theme of secrets and lies in various ways. Many of the works in this section illustrate the potential dangers of keeping secrets as well as the idea that the truth inevitably comes out. For example, Jennifer DeLeskie’s story “(Not) A Metaphor” features a young graduate student who attempts to construct a new social identity, which she sees as simply an act of storytelling or the narrating of the self; however, her attempt to reinvent herself soon becomes a source of tension in both her personal and professional relationships, as it is understood by others as a deliberate act of deception and a sign of her own privilege. Sean McBrien’s story “A Life in the Shade” also focuses on personal and professional secrets by describing the efforts of a young scholar to learn more about the life of a famous Canadian politician. While interviewing a

sibling, he gradually discovers uncomfortable truths that shatter his preconceptions and force him to recognize the difficulty, if not impossibility, of reconciling the politician's public and private lives. Emily Pegg's story "The Second Side of a Magnet" similarly focuses on the exposure of secrets and the shattering of preconceptions, as the protagonist learns that her brother is a child sex offender—a truth that not only destroys his marriage but also forces his loved ones to question their own perceptions of reality. Nicola Winstanley's story "Keys" similarly dramatizes the impact of a divorce precipitated by the exposure of a husband's secret sex life, but it is also the story of the protagonist's struggle with alcoholism, which she seeks to conceal from her therapist as well as herself. Yvon Mills' story "Van-Isle Video" provides an even more vivid dramatization of the damaging effects that secrets can have on families and friendships, as it parallels the decline of a family's video empire and their son's descent into a life of addiction and criminality. This section concludes with William Bedford's story "Shrunken Heads," in which an academic is visited by a student claiming to be in contact with the spirit of his dead mother, who is allegedly trying to reveal a family secret that might also be a lie. Like the other works in this section, therefore, Bedford's story demonstrates how the exposure of secrets potentially challenges preconceived narratives of the family and the self, which are always subject to revision, although it remains somewhat unclear whether this is a case of active deception or passive self-deception, as the protagonist is unsure whether to accept the authenticity or the veracity of the message he receives from beyond the grave.

Our summer issue also features an interview with celebrated Canadian writer Ian Colford, who discusses the theme of deception and betrayal in his work, and two new chronicles: Robin MacKay's review of Peter Jackson's documentary *They Shall Not Grow Old* (2018) and Stephen Low's review of The New Group Off Stage's production of *Waiting for Godot* (2021) and Kidd Pivott's dance performance *Revisor* (2019).