

EDITORIAL

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF HETEROSEXUAL LOVE are often traced back to Aristophanes' speech in Plato's *Symposium*, in which he claims that humans used to be four-legged, four-armed, and two-headed creatures until Zeus split them in half, forcing them to search for their other half in order to make themselves whole. Maren Behrenson points out that this myth "endures both in common-sense conceptions of romantic love and in Christian and especially Catholic teachings on sexuality and the sacrament of marriage," in which a man and a woman "become one flesh, both physically and in the union of their hearts and lives." Aristophanes' speech and Catholic teachings on marriage are thus part of a long tradition that shares the idea of romantic love as a union of opposites, which remains closed to same-sex couples, and proponents of marriage equality—legally recognized in Canada with the passing of the Civil Marriage Act in 2005—explicitly challenge it by asserting that love is love, regardless of sexual orientation. This message informs political activism, as in the red and pink equality symbol created by the Human Rights Campaign, and popular culture, as in Macklemore and Ryan Lewis' 2012 single "Same Love," which was adopted as an anthem by many supporters of marriage equality in the U.S. However, some scholars note that it is not enough merely to promote political reform, as queer love also has the power to challenge the very idea that love can be governed by social practices and institutions. David Halperin argues, for example, that representations of queer love are "forms of tactical resistance to the standardization of emotional life in contemporary society and to the agencies (political and ideological) that attempt to guide, shape, and routinize modern practices of love, intimacy, and personal association."

Our spring issue features a special section that addresses this theme in various ways. For example, Christopher Ring's story "Gravel Bar" describes a budding romance between two women who share a love of the outdoors yet live on opposite sides of the U.S.-Canadian border. The border thus becomes a metaphor for their sexual awakening, as illustrated by the pro-

tagonist's realization that a "new border had already been crossed and taken down in her mind," and the legal difficulties they face when travelling across the border also function as a metaphor for the treatment of queer couples, as it suggests that they can only find sanctuary in the wilderness, where all forms of love are accepted. Michele Koh Morollo's story "Another Night Out" similarly features a character who experiences "a deep, tender ache" for another woman, who makes her feel "alive, wanted, real," yet it remains unclear whether her declaration of love will ever be reciprocated, as her love interest appears to be overly invested in the codes of compulsory heterosexuality, despite the suffering it entails. While Gordon Taylor's poem "On Flying for the First Time After Years" does not explicitly depict queer love, the idea of jumping from "this cliff of ourselves" evokes a similar sense of the exhilarating freedom that comes from overcoming the social and mental obstacles that inhibit the acceptance of one's own desires. Shaheir Beirut's essay "Imposter Syndrome" also examines the experience of shame felt by queer teenagers growing up in a straight society, and he particularly focuses on the difficulties they face when coming out to parents. André Narbonne's story "We Don't Do That Anymore" depicts a similar experience from the perspective of parents, who feel increasingly estranged from their son following his coming out. While they clearly want to accept and support him, they cannot help feeling that his rejection of their conservative hometown is also a rejection of them. J. P. Rodriguez's story "The Shoals" similarly features a queer couple visiting parents who accept them yet also bring up painful memories when recalling earlier relationships with members of the opposite sex. All of the works in this section thus reinforce the idea that queer love is natural and normal, and they also depict the difficulties faced by people who reject the conventions of heterosexual love, as they often struggle with social acceptance as well as self-acceptance.

Our spring issue also features an interview with poet David Blair and two new chronicles: Jerry White's review of Paul Schrader's latest film and *Sight and Sound's* recent poll of the greatest films of all time, and Stephen Low's review of the Soulpepper Theatre Company's new production of Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*.