





translating, reviewing, and, no doubt, arguing over the eternally vexed point where extremes meet. Price makes no bones about his preference for maintaining coherence and continuity amongst contributors and for keeping the journal itself at something of a remove from the conventional literary market. Past issues have featured the fresh talents of, among others, David Kinloch, Peter McCarey, Tom Leonard, Simon Smith, Jen Hadfield, Edwin Morgan, and Fanny Howe. Given

small presses: all this represents the 'underground economy' of creativity, the crucial zone in which "spiritual/corporeal exchanges" between writers actually occur.

Among the many good things about the emerging Scottish presence within the MLA is the deep commitment of all involved to such exchanges. One immediate consequence is the on-going effort to bring Scottish writers to the annual conference (the 2006 conference featured readings by Liz Lochhead and Theresa Breslin). Another result is the display, at the exhibit stand, of literary journals actively engaged with Scottish writing in the international context. This year's exhibit focused on three journals that have shown a marked interest in such work: *World Poetry*, *World Literature Today*, and *World Literature Review*. All three are labours of love, produced by extraordinary author-editors. All three are instances of the vital underground economy in creativity that Rothenberg so eloquently describes.

Established in 1980, Philip Fried's *World Literature Review* is digest-size and professionally printed with a glossy card cover that typically features either black-and-white photographs or artwork. The journal has been described as "a leading force in the effort to increase multicultural awareness in the world of poetry"; certainly, since its inception, it has placed a distinct emphasis on international writing, especially writing in translation. Scottish-affiliated writers Polly Clark, John Burnside, and Robin Fulton have all been visitors to the pages of *World Literature Review*. The journal's most recent issue (Vol. 12, No. 2) headlines with the work of the Scotland-China Translation Project, described as a "unique collaborative project between four UK poets and six Chinese poets which took place in both China and Scotland in 2005." It includes translations of Zhang Wei, by Clark, and Yang Lian, by the ever inventive W.N. Herbert. Fried is interested in featuring more Scottish poetry in the journal.

Another New York publication with a consistent interest in Scottish writing is *World Literature Today*. This handsomely produced, now wildly occasional, literary review features poetry, stories, essays, and cover artwork and has been edited by writer Mark Rudman since its early days in the 1970s in California. It is rich in aesthetic and intellectual ambition. In fact, to read through back-issues of *World Literature Today* is to encounter a roll-call of luminous names, from Paul Auster, to Charles Simic, Mario Vargas Llosa, Robert Walser, Eugenio Montale, Joyce Carol Oates, and many, many others. Rudman has long been drawn to Scottish writing and, over the years, has published work by, among others, Kathleen Jamie, Robin

Robertson, Alan Warner, and Carol Ann Duffy. The current issue of *Rebus* (#48-50; 2006) runs to some 382 pages and includes poetry and fiction by Robin Robertson and Ian Rankin; an interview with Rankin (touching on Scottish crime fiction; 'disorder and invention'; and social themes in the Rebus novels); and a review-essay (by myself) on Christopher Whyte's translation of Sorley MacLean's Modernist sequence *Rebus*. Robertson's poems, as ever, are presented with a clarity that turns on a knife edge. Rankin's Inspector Rebus glowers from the page, skeptical and scabrous, and even fitfully tender.

*Rebus* has been edited in London since 2001 by the indefatigably generous and inventive Scottish poet and critic Richard Price. Of all the journals described here, *Rebus* is the most visually modest, closer in aesthetic to a zine than to a conventional literary journal (it typically consists of about 20 stapled pages). In spirit, too, it is appropriately idiosyncratic, disseminated for free, in exchange for a stamped addressed envelope, to readers swift enough to snap up the mere 100 copies produced per print run. There's something of a samizdat feeling about this and the plain, paper cover of *Rebus* suggests an unmarked door behind which poets and writers are talking, creating,