

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear reader of the *Nabokov Online Journal*,
Дорогой читатель НОЖа!

You are about to explore the 10TH anniversary double-issue of our journal. When we launched it a decade ago, the digital humanities were still a relatively fresh concept. It proved to be an enduring one; more and more peer-reviewed editions are switching today from paper to digital. Ten years in print for any periodical marks a kind of maturity, more so for an online publication. We have enjoyed your support over the years and will keep reinventing ourselves in the future. Our readership has grown considerably: only recently we reached a milestone—NOJ now has 850 individual subscribers.

One of our key principles is to make Nabokov studies accessible to everyone worldwide (Vol. IX/2014 was devoted to international Nabokoviana and our readers are reaching us from all five continents). We will always offer individual subscriptions free of charge. Most of you are affiliated with academic institutions and we would be grateful if you could ask your university library to purchase an annual institutional subscription: this ensures our long-term stability and helps us maintain the server, pay the annual domain fees, cover editorial expenses and many more small, but vital things essential in running any publication, whether print or digital. It should take just a few moments: all you need to do is to forward this link (<http://www.nabokovonline.com>) to your local periodicals/e-journals librarian along with your personal recommendation to subscribe. As for us—we will continue doing what we know best—finding, editing, and bringing the most cutting-edge and thought-provoking scholarship to you.

There are plenty of articles to choose from in this current issue—to list just a few: a rare insight into a bibliographer’s life in an interview with Michael Juliar; Liza Mrosovsky-Shaw’s archival discovery, “Following Darwin’s Footsteps”; a mini-monograph by R. Dyche Mullins entitled “Conjuring in Two Tongues” that takes our understanding of the prosodic nature of Nabokov’s poem “Pale Fire” to a fundamentally new level (one of the many benefits of digital publishing is that it effortlessly allows breaking page limits!). And there is much more to digest, of course, in these two volumes under single virtual cover.

* * *

I wish to share a little story with you. When the journal’s subscription was steadily approaching the plump figure of seven hundred, it was decided that the random subscriber who became “Number 700” would receive a copy of *The Goalkeeper: The Nabokov Almanac* as a modest gift from the Editorial Board. When the subscription request came through, the name of the lucky subscriber (Robert Boyle) sounded vaguely familiar. I checked with the newest reader himself and, indeed, he turned out to be the same Mr. Boyle who conducted a long interview with Vladimir Nabokov for *Sports Illustrated* (September 14, 1959, pp. E5–E8). In his biography, Brian Boyd provides a lively account of that meeting in Oak Creek Canyon, resulting in “perhaps our finest moment-by-moment image of Nabokov the man,” in the first two days of June 1959 (*American Years*, pp. 383–385). I asked Robert Boyle to tell us more about his passion for Nabokov that he had carried for what is now over six decades. With Bob’s kind permission, we copy his response here:

I always read a lot (‘His nose is in a book again’) starting at age six, am 87 now. Re the Russians, in my teens I first read, in just about chronological order, Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Gogol, Chekhov, Goncharov, Leskov, Fet, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Andreev, Bely, et al., all, sorry to say, in English, although my wife Katya born in Serbia of a Serbian mother and exiled Russian father, taught Russian and French. She also knows German and can figure out

Polish, Czech, etc. since she knows Russian and Serbian.

My long departed good friend, translator, and Third Avenue bookseller, Bernard Gilbert Guerney,¹ became my Russian lit mentor when I was 17. Once when he was extolling the unmatched grace and beauty of the Russian language, I asked, ‘But what about Polish?’ He replied, ‘Ever heard two Poles speaking? Sounds like a cow pissing on a flat rock.’ Nabokov had high praise for him and was impressed when I told N. I knew him. I first read N. in *The New Yorker*, extracts from *Conclusive Evidence*, and I didn’t see his genius at first. I thought he was copycatting Aksakov. Boy, was I wrong. I showed Bobby Fischer, the chess whacko-genius, N.’s book on chess problems. He flicked the pages and gave it back to me saying, ‘Cute.’

I am not a lepidopterist. I am, among other things, a plecopterologist, an amateur student and collector of stoneflies, which I imitate with flies I tie for fishing.

D. G. Guerney’s gaffe regarding the actual acoustic beauty of the Polish language notwithstanding, please enjoy reading the newest edition of the *Nabokov Online Journal*.

YURI LEVING

Founding Editor of the *Nabokov Online Journal*



¹ Bernard Guilbert Guerney (1894-1979), Russian-born writer, translator, publisher, and owner of the New York City bookshop *The Blue Faun*. Nabokov appreciated Guerney’s translation of N. Gogol’s *Dead Souls*. A large body of Guerney’s work in Russian-to-English translation is now part of the Penn State Libraries collection.