

Achieving Literary Liftoff

Ideas are among our most valuable commodities. When they are in short supply, our options and our optimism are always compromised.

This applies to writing as directly as it does to any other dimension of our work. For example, I might have the *urge* to write, and even the time and the energy. But these aren't much use if I have little idea of *what to write about*. No less a writer than George Bernard Shaw (allegedly) observed that, "You say something better if you have something to say."

While this is very true, it is far from being a hopeless or intractable situation. Here is one area where we as editors can be of some help. Let me explain:

- 1) If you'd like to write, but don't quite know where to begin, a *review* is an excellent option. With a review, the topic and the task are taken care of for you. At the same time, the discipline of reviewing — considering what a reference work's objectives are, and thoughtfully assessing whether they are achieved — is not only useful to a broader readership but is an excellent way of building confidence as a writer.
- 2) If you've had "something" in mind for a while, but aren't certain that it amounts to an idea, or is worth writing about, we editors are very good people to talk to. We can help you shape and develop what you've been thinking about, developing the right structure and placing it in the genre to which it is best suited.

Most of all, we want you to succeed in your writing, and are quite happy to begin wherever you are, and help you get where you want to go. Writing for our vocational community is a rewarding experience. We'd be honored to have you join our ranks of writers.

And now, a word about transitions:

First, with our January 2014 issue, there's been a change in the makeup of our Editorial Board. Melody Layton McMahon has been an energetic contributor and collaborator on *TL* almost since the journal's outset. With many other projects and responsibilities to consider, she has decided to step aside. We extend our deepest thanks for all of Melody's contributions. At the same time, with this present issue we are pleased to welcome Miranda H. Bennett as our new Critical Reviews Editor. Miranda has significant experience within the ATLA community, and we are already enjoying working with her. Thanks also to all the other fine candidates who expressed an interest in this *TL* opportunity. It is most encouraging to have had such a talented group to discuss the position with.

Second, we'll be changing our publication schedule slightly (from January/July to March/October). Our next issue after this one will be published on 15 March 2015.

This revised schedule will shift our publication dates away from times of the year that are especially demanding for ATLA staff, who play an important part in the production of *TL*.

Thanks for reading.

DRS

