

# THE MALAHAT REVIEW

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February 23, 2012

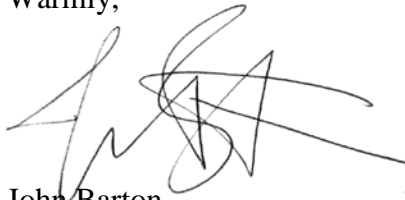
Dear Mike,

Rhonda let me know on Monday how ill you are and have been. I want you know how appreciative we, at the *Malahat*, are of your long connection with the magazine. A search of our index reveals that you wrote your first review for us in 1987. It was published in the Spring issue, which was an auspicious one—a special issue honouring George Johnston. And it immediately put you in august company: together with the great man himself, you are published alongside P.K. Page, Earl Birney, and Jay MacPherson, and several Norwegian poets translated by George. It's an important issue of the magazine, and, if a little off-topic, your review was of a cookbook, *White Trash Cooking*. I wonder if it's the only cookbook review in *Malahat's* history?—I'll have to look! It seems that you liked it, but I wonder if you tested any of the recipes, which would have been the definitive critical assessment.

I've always enjoyed reading your reviews—they are a pleasure to edit, and I admire their intelligence, acuity, and generosity. And importantly, from an editor's perspective, they are both well written and a good read. Cumulatively, they exhibit both consistency and wide-ranging taste. Some may feel that, in a literary magazine, reviews are overshadowed by “creative content,” but to me they are on an equal footing. Authors (or readers) who are even somewhat unappreciative of them aren't deserving of the effort put into writing them—especially when there're fewer and fewer of them in print (we won't even talk about the many weaknesses and few strengths of blogosphere criticism).

In total, you've written twenty-one reviews for us since 1987, seven of them after I became editor in 2004—or a third of your total output for us. There's a coincidental, if unimportant, balance here, for the eight years of my editorship are almost equal to a third of your twenty-five-year association. In case you're wondering, Carol's *Malahat* contribution (review-wise) is slightly behind yours at seventeen. I suspect yours and her combined total of thirty-eight reviews represent one of the most substantial critical “blocs” in the magazine's history. It's a significant contribution.

Warmly,



John Barton  
Editor