

Editorial

Colin Grant

For *Everyone has an elsewhere*, nine writers embark on a quest to evoke pasts whose truths are slippery and elusive: a kind of time travel to such moments, whether physical, metaphorical or a combination of both.

This edition takes its title from Mirza Waheed's tender essay 'My father's places' and features similarly poignant pieces, like Naneh's Hovhannisyan's 'Sketches from the edges' and Hannah Lowe's 'Searching for Nelsa Lowe', which details her efforts to discover more about her aunt Nelsa from very few sources, taking her to Jamaica. The stories by Mirza, Naneh and Hannah all serve as bridges between the living and the dead.

A simple pilgrimage to the Freud Museum rekindles Andy Bay's appreciation of Sigmund Freud's daughter Anna's pioneering work in child psychology along with Andy's reflections on his own encounters with psychoanalysis. 'Devotion', an autofiction by Sarah Issever, reads as a yearning for reunion and an act of familial devotion towards a brother who left home aged six to start rabbinical training.

In 'King Herod in Florida', the admiration that Haitian writer Isabelle Dupuy feels for the Harlem Renaissance novelist Zora Neale Hurston inspires her own journey to Eatonville, Hurston's hometown. In traveling alone as a Black woman writer in the South, Isabelle identifies with Hurston and her fearlessness.

The notion of 'meeting yourself coming back' informs Suzanne Harrington's musings on her life as an enquiring and rebellious young woman having left Ireland in the 1980s to seek experiences abroad with like-minded adventurers.

Writers may not always like what they find when digging into memories with their pens. An uncomfortable reckoning with the past is at the centre of 'Think pathology?', my reflections on the way a medical school education had framed my inability to see people as anything but examples of walking pathology.

My selective perception has evolved since then, I hope, from pathology to pathos, and this essay takes its place amongst the others in this edition that are all notably shaped by empathy. I suspect you'll find them, as I have, surprising, heartrending, revelatory and a joy to read.

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Colin Grant's books include *Bageye at the Wheel*, short-listed for the Pen Ackerley Prize, and *Homecoming: Voices of the Windrush Generation*, a BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week. His latest book is *I'm Black So You Don't Have to Be*. His oral history of migration to Britain, *What We Leave We Carry*, will be published in June 2026.

Grant is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and director of *WritersMosaic*, an online magazine and division of the Royal Literary Fund. He also writes for a number of newspapers including the *TLS*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer* and *The New York Review of Books*.

A recording of this piece can be found at writersmosaic.org.uk

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