Mosaic readers who were among the hundreds in attendance at the October 2006 Following Derrida: Legacies conference cannot but remember Rodolphe Gasché’s “Without A Title,” the stunning evening keynote address with which he opened the conference. Only moments after disembarking from a plane that had been held up all day in Chicago, and without pausing for nourishment, Gasché spoke to all assembled of the critical vigilance that constitutes the singularity of Jacques Derrida’s thought and that is the memory to which his heirs must respond. In the published version of “Without A Title,” Gasché explains that this critical vigilance has nothing in common with a “hermeneutics of suspicion,” or with an enterprise of “demystification” that occurs for the sake of a greater consciousness; “it is neither simply a subjective state of watchful awakeness, nor a deliberate act, or operation, by a fully armed subject, armed, say, with the precepts of rationality and reason” (10). Indeed, Gasché suggests, following Derrida’s argument in “Some Statements and Truisms,” critical vigilance, “not without the disarmament of the mastery of the sovereign subject,” suspends the use of (no longer “uses” but only “mentions,” in quotation marks) all concepts and words associated with consciousness and subjective mastery (10–11). The suspension (epoché), marked by the double inverted commas, opens a space for “deconstruction.” As Derrida puts it in “Rams,” suspension keeps attention “breathless, that is to say alive, alert, vigilant, ready to embark on a wholly other path, to open itself up to whatever may come, listening faithfully, giving ear, to that other speech” (146). In response to the legacy of such vigilance, Gasché proposes in “Without A Title” no longer to use, but only to mention, the term “deconstruction,” so as to free this title word from the homogenizing “deconstructionism” of the “deconstructionists,” and so as to open it to what “deconstructionism” excludes.

I cannot do justice here to Rodolphe Gasché’s “Without A Title.” Because he was unable to publish the text in Mosaic, I am delighted to include two of his essays in this

WORKS CITED

