

## Introduction

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DAWNE McCANCE

This is a *Mosaic* issue that took more than sixteen years to put together. It astonishes me that sixteen years have passed since Mary Ann Caws and I talked together in the Princeton Club, a warm conversation, before a welcome warm fire, on a February day when Manhattan streets were ankle-deep in icy water. As I read our conversation now—transcribed and originally published in the September 2001 issue of *Mosaic*, the first interview in what would become the journal’s “Crossings” series—I am astonished again: the interview is so interesting that I find myself making notes as I read, as if I were in an archive and had unexpectedly come upon a remarkable text. Let’s say that, although I participated in all of these interviews, I have been surprised, on rereading them, by “something else alongside, something you wouldn’t have expected,” as Mary Ann Caws puts it in her remarks on Surrealism. Perhaps neither reading nor looking is ever the same thing twice. Perhaps differences only multiply each time we approach a text.

Of course, each interview collected here recalls an occasion, a particular time and place. There are many memories here, mine marked by particular details: the sun in Brisbane, and then again in Noosa Heads, the sun and the beautiful birds; the light, the intense white, of Álvaro Siza’s architecture, his Galician Centre of Contemporary Art, affordable housing projects, and office building, the black of his espresso and

cigarillo, and the incessant movement of his writing hand, sketching as we talked; the trees all around my one-time urban forest home in which David Krell and I had our conversation, sitting at the dining room table under which Willow, my golden retriever, napped; the Hotel le Mura in Città di Castello, Italy, where John Sallis and I, amidst the activity and energy of the *Collegium Phaenomenologicum*, found a quiet place to talk; that large and wonderful kitchen in Bill Spanos's sprawling old house, his passionate voice filling the room; and not the least, the always dimly-lit, north-facing living room in Calgary's John Snow House, a space into which Aritha van Herk brought the clear light of her intelligence.

In the end, like you, I am a reader of these interviews. And, as also the editor of an interdisciplinary critical journal, I am struck by the breadth of their topics and fields: poetry, opera, photography, translation, literature, voice, philosophy, politics, art, architecture, writing, and even interdisciplinarity. I am truly grateful to the creative and critical thinkers—artists, writers, editors, translators, scholars—who agreed to do these interviews with me and thus to contribute so significantly to *Mosaic*. The interviews have been collected in this special issue as a fitting way to celebrate the journal's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Not incidentally, somewhere, early on in my tenure as Editor, I remember saying to W. J. T. Mitchell that I did not know how to promote *Mosaic*. His answer: publish the best people in the world in your pages. I welcome you to read some of them here.