Editorial

Anna Wallace and Sabina Rahman

'Absence', despite its promise of negativity, offers a tantalising range of possibilities. As tempting as it was to publish an entirely blank issue, our contributors answered the call to explore the negative and beyond.

Jane Eckett's "Hol(e)y Statues" is a contemplation of negative space in the sculptures of Vincas Jomantas and Julius Kane. Both these sculptors emigrated to Australia where they created works of longing and strange beauty through the simple process of making holes. Sasha L. Johnston in "The Idea(l) of White British Benevolence" analyses an exhibition at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum for its silences around the deeper issues associated with slavery and abolition. John C. Ryan's article examines the extinction of species as an absence that can provoke a degree of mourning; he then explores this mourning in response to absence in the artworks of Gregory Pryor and Adolph Plate, and the writing of Barbara York Main.

Our Excursions contributors have, as usual, provided us with a wealth of creative responses to the theme. Ann Brown blends fiction, non-fiction, autobiography, and diary entries to form a piece rich with the expression of yearning and loss in "A Posthumous Visit by Virginia Woolf", while Justine Grace meditates upon Bill Viola's *Ocean Without a Shore* and discovers, instead of absence, the weighty presence of death. Megan Orcholski weaves a personal narrative of family loss in "In the Midst of all the Emotions, Chaos and Commotions" as she recounts years of poignant memories. In "you are known by the company you keep", John C. Ryan uses blank verse to echo the alienation of the self in the modern metropolitan lifestyle while Jessica L. Wilkinson's poetic contemplation in "Posy" unearths the human desire to connect with life and literature and the fragility of both. Daniel Wood writes of Ernest Hemingway and the powerful nature of the absent, the way we are compelled to infer heartbreak and loss from matters not in the narrative but bubbling and toiling just below.

This issue draws the year to a close and heralds the absence of some members of the *Philament* team, but fortunately there are many members still present. We'd like to thank all our editors, contributors, and peer reviewers for ensuring this issue did not remain blank.

We hope you enjoy this issue in this season of plenty and wish you a very happy new year.