

Letter from the Managing Editors: Remembering Louis Rosenblatt

Because of her influence on all of us as writing teachers, we want to dedicate this issue's letter to our friend and colleague Louise Rosenblatt:

Louise Rosenblatt (1904-2005) touched many of our lives. For those of us who have taught courses in literature, literature methods, or writing, her publications have offered invaluable tools for engaging students with texts. For instance, her 1938 book, *Literature as Exploration*, was decades ahead of its time in laying a solid foundation for reader-response criticism.

When *The Reader, The Text, The Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* appeared in 1978, it invigorated literary study by demonstrating how the text and the reader "transact" to bring the poem into being:

"The poem" comes into being in the live circuit set up between the reader and "the text." As with the elements of the electric circuit, each component of the reading process functions by virtue of the presence of the others. A specific reader and a specific text at a specific time and place: change any of these, and there occurs a different circuit, and different event—a different event. (14)

Louise Rosenblatt's most recent book, *Making Meaning with Texts: Selected Essays*, was published several weeks before her death in February 2005. These essays, written from the 1930s to the 1990s, show the remarkable range of her work not only in literary study but also in composition. For her, reading and writing were simply different kinds of transactions with texts.

Besides being an influential scholar, Louise Rosenblatt, in both professional and civic arenas, tirelessly advocated for people who struggled to achieve political and economic security. Never mincing words, Louise boldly challenged all of us to treat our colleagues and our fellow citizens with dignity and respect. She was the quintessential role model for those who strive to contribute to our profession and to our world. We are sad that she is gone, but we are comforted by the legacy that she has left for all of us.

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