

From the Editor

Once again, we're flush with variety. But if volume 17 was a nod to transactional drafting, this volume returns us to the courthouse.

Jill Barton offers advice for readers who aspire to judgeships or judicial clerkships, supporting her observations with carefully selected passages from court opinions new and old. Meg Penrose calls on the U.S. Supreme Court to stem the trend of protracted opinions — including many that dwarf the Constitution itself.

Joseph Kimble and Jerry Payne explore how courts interpret legal language, taking us from a 21st-century dairy company in Maine all the way back to Tudor-period farmers tending the Kent countryside.

Two authors wonder aloud where all the details get us. You'll give a knowing nod to Patrick Barry's title ("Uselessly Accurate") and add a smile during the pages that follow it. And Matt Keating chimes in from *Down Under*, questioning the legal profession's "cult of precision."

Brad Charles and Thomas Myers show that the future is now for the singular *they* — and advise lawyers embracing this change on how to protect against ambiguity. (This article has the distinction of finally pushing this holdout to the other side.)

Our book reviews and essays reflect the colorful, textured fabric of writing. Beth Wilensky offers a thoughtful essay on John McPhee's latest collection, translating his lessons on nonfiction storytelling to legal storytelling. Rachel Smith reviews the 45th-anniversary edition of a book that many consider a classic: James Boyd White's *The Legal Imagination*, a meditation on legal language and thinking. She explores, among other things, whether its lessons and language have withstood the intervening decades.

Mary Massaron offers her professional and personal take on *Nino and Me*, the most personal work by our founding editor,

Bryan Garner. Finally, I review Mark Adler and Daphne Perry's *Clarity for Lawyers*, the latest edition of a UK standby that has an international message.

Enjoy.

— Mark Cooney