

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Christina,

The new issue of the magazine arrived today and while I'm pleased to be included in it I have to tell you I was stunned to have my vignette appear under a category not called fiction. Fiction-writing is what I do, and the whole excitement of writing, for me, is imagining people and situations I have never consciously experienced in my life, and by so doing finding the answer to questions I have not known how to ask and answers I would not have learned otherwise, which is a mystery I can't explain, but this is the way that fiction writers try to find some of life's truth, and why the writing of fiction becomes so crucial and electric in their lives that they would not know how to live without trying to write it. It is the means by which a fiction writer untangles and tangles with the deepest questions of his life. Yes, millions of people appear to be writing these days directly out of their own everyday lives, both in poetry and in personal memoirs on every subject, sometimes the more shockingly private the better. And this is another kind of writer's way to search for answers that are important to him. There have been some good/great memoirs, but I will never write one, or have the slightest wish to. The thought of trying to replicate people and situations I have already known and experienced is such a dull thought that I'd be completely uninspired to try it, and very bad at it.

The vignette I sent you was not written in the first person and it concerned the feelings a young man, not a middle-aged (or older) woman like me. The young man was so badly depressed that he'd been tempted by the thought of suicide, something I have never contemplated in my life even at its worst moments. What I wrote was entirely imagined and

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moving (to me) to try to understand. I can't find words to tell you exactly why it disturbed me as a writer to be so misplaced in your table of contents under "Stories From Life" instead of "Fiction," which is what the short piece was. Far from being a small matter, I think the distinction between fiction and memoir is huge and that it is important to keep the difference clear to readers. In the name of truth and for a reader's sense of trust in what he's reading. Is it fact or fiction? This has always been a crucial question. If at all possible, I hope you will put "Depression" under fiction in the electronic version of this issue.

Yours,

Ellen Wilbur