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## Introduction

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# Introduction

## **Abstract**

An introduction to this issue of *Northwestern Review*.

## Introduction

“I live in the heart of America,” writes Bob Hubbard in his theatre review in this issue of *Northwestern Review*. “To many in the larger theatre community, this sparsely populated, fly-over country constitutes a mysterious and preposterous cultural prison, a perceived dead-zone of red state artistic starvation.”

Living in the small-town and rural upper Middle West can be a challenge for scholars in any discipline. (Let us leave to another day what to call this region/these regions and where its borders lie. In

the meantime you can browse in [The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia](#) and the [Encyclopedia of the Great Plains](#), peruse the [Northwest Iowa Center for Regional Studies](#) website, and consider attending a [Midwestern History Association](#)



**Blood Run National Historic Landmark.** Image from Doug Anderson.

conference.) There are many institutions of higher education in the Greater Midwest, arguably making the metaregion second only to New England as the historical heartland of American higher education. The regional history, though, affords scant nourishment for those of us at the smaller colleges, for we dwell in a sociocultural landscape dominated by displacement in pursuit of professional advancement. In our institutions there is the to-be-expected load of teaching, advising, and committee work that persistently drag us and most all faculty away from scholarly work. Undergirding this, though, there is the further drag of an assumption in contemporary academia that functions like a riptide: significant scholarship comes from faculty in big, well-endowed, urban colleges and universities with graduate programs, not from faculty in small, primarily undergraduate, teaching-centered institutions. Even less so from confessionally Christian institutions. Fly-over country; fly-over colleges.

Christianity, though, has scholarly traditions of long standing. Despite more recent trends and contemporary popular culture and politics, there are still those who seek to keep such traditions vital. Here at Northwestern College, we find our penultimate theological and academic home in the Reformed tradition. We seek to grow in our understanding of ourselves, others, and all creation through research done in the light of Christ and scripture, “for in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:17b NRSV). A tenure requirement here is that faculty members submit a paper/project that presents “the faculty member’s understanding of how Christian faith relates to the philosophical and theoretical underpinning” of their field (2016-2017 Faculty Handbook).

Dan Young’s article in this issue is an example of a tenure paper. His is but one of many examples of Northwestern College faculty scholarship in our 2017 *Review*. The Fine Arts are represented by Yun Shin’s companion etchings. In Articles, beside Dan Young’s political science piece, we have historians Robert Winn and Michael Kugler each contributing. Our Literature section contains a substantive stand-alone piece arising from a novel-in-progress by Keith Fynaardt of English. Our Book Excerpts section features a selection by John Hubers of religion. The Spiritual Reflections section contains a sermon by religion’s Jackie Smallbones (she is retiring at the end of this academic year, but we trust that like Lazarus, God is not yet finished with her). Diana Gonzalez of modern foreign languages has contributed a piece to Conference Papers and Presentations. The Reviews section features four pieces from three authors this issue: one from Robert Hubbard of theatre; another from Duane Jundt of history; and two by Doug Anderson of history.

We hope that you find your time perusing this second issue of *Northwestern Review* well spent.

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