These dispatches are not a window into policy-changing triumphs but rather into the birth of a movement which draws attention to the negative effects of concentrated power. By protesting meetings of the world's most powerful leaders, activists are asking these leaders to recognize the effects of their economic polices and trade negotiations have on the lives of regular, particularly poor, citizens.

In *Fences and Windows* Klein covers a lot of ground – from Genoa, to Mexico City, to Toronto, to Washington – reporting on a movement's uprising. She also dares to draw links between macroeconomics and individual struggles, illuminating the real global connection that binds us all.

Melymbrosia
by Virginia Woolf,
edited and introduced by Louise DeSalvo
Cleis Press
review by Joy Parks

Since she died over 60 years ago, it feels odd to be reading a "new" book by Virginia Woolf. As one of the most influential modern stylists of the early 20th century, Woolf left a significant body of work prior to her suicide by drowning in 1941. While literary critics favor her better known books *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs. Dalloway*, in lesbian reading circles, Woolf is best known for *Orlando*, her witty, brilliant book-length love letter to Vita Sackville-West. Diaries and letters suggest that Virginia had several relationships with women, despite her marriage to writer Leonard Woolf and she was a member of the British Bloomsbury Group, an artistic circle that included several known homosexuals.

Even more important is the fact Virginia Woolf was one of the first women writers to openly defy conventions of both subject matter and form. She took big risks; her stream-of-consciousness prose rebelled against the stuffy narratives of Victorian literature and she wrote about the emotional lives of both men and women in a way that was hardly appropriate for a decent-thinking middle class woman in early 20th century Britain. She was also an incest survivor and plagued by bouts of mental illness, frequently hospitalized for mood swings and persistent headaches. In spite of all this, she wrote some of the most important books of her time, books that displayed an obvious lesbian or at least, uniquely feminine sensibility. Written while Virginia (then Stephen) was in her late twenties and completed in 1912, her first novel *Melymbrosia* is the starting point for this work.

The story is told through Rachel, a young single woman traveling with her beautiful Aunt Helen and her uncle, an aging Greek scholar. By taking Rachel away from home and familiar contexts, Woolf allows her unconventional experiences; she can ask unseemly questions, be vulnerable, think outside of the expectations of her social class. Despite the fact that this is a first novel by a young author, it is absolutely layered with meaning. There are wonderful, biting clues in the names she gives her characters. There is the extended metaphor that suggests that men and women are different geographies; the dreary but efficient male England versus the warm, ripe and mysterious female island that tempts exploration. At the risk of giving the plot away, readers come away from *Melymbrosia* with the feeling that Woolf is showing us the terrible price women pay for going beyond their boundaries. And, that the greatest tragedy for a woman is to suffer the slow demise of the spirit that comes from trying to wedge herself into a life that simply does not fit. Despite the sad event that occurs, it appears that Woolf wants us to believe that her protagonist has been spared a fate worse than death.

Reading *Melymbrosia* makes one wonder how heterosexuality managed to survive the 20th century. While there is no obvious sexual love between female characters (something that would have been unthinkable at the time), the issue of homosexuality does arise and the narrative shows both a disdain and a distrust of heterosexuality (and rather low opinions of men in general). In short, Woolf says things that simply were not said. The story lines, the issues and characters in *Melymbrosia* would surface later in *The Voyage Out*, but in a much more controlled fashion. Apparently, with time, Woolf learned to encode her ideas in a way that made her books publishable.

Woolf scholar Louise DeSalvo has to be thanked for the seven years she spent piecing together *Melymbrosia* and for providing us with a first glimpse into the genius that was Virginia Woolf. It's not an easy read, especially for someone unaccustomed to Woolf's densely layered style. But it is an important piece of our literary past, a genuine literary treasure. And readers willing to make the effort will sense its power immediately. ■