November 2010

International Dateline-Earthly Paradise

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Recommended Citation

Ricketts, Rita (2010) "International Dateline-Earthly Paradise," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 22: Iss. 5, Article 41.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.5674>

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The Miss Rumphius Effect — <http://missrumphiuseffect.blogspot.com/>, with its origins in the 1982 **American Book Award** winner *Miss Rumphius* by **Barbara Cooney**, is the blog of teacher-educator **Patricia Stohr-Hunt**. Here, teachers, parents, and students will find reviews of poetry and nonfiction for young readers through middle grades. Included are thematic booklists, browse by content, and her Teaching Library link to LibraryThing (<http://www.librarything.com/catalog/pstohrkidlit>).

Mitali's Fire Escape: A safe place to chat about books between cultures — <http://www.mitaliblog.com/>. Author **Mitali Perkins** blogs about the power of diverse literature to influence our lives. Whether delving into bullying, storytelling customs, ethnic differences and similarities, the effect of various media in presenting different cultures, among other relevant topics, her insights are thoughtful, inclusive, and offer anyone seeking quality literature and its importance in cross-cultural understanding a safe place to explore.

Open Wide, Look Inside — <http://blog.richmond.edu/openwide-lookinside/>. A blog about teaching elementary math, science, and social studies, with heavy emphasis on the integration of children's literature across the curriculum. The blog description says it all. This blog should be a great resource for K-5 classroom teachers looking for ways to inspire reading as well as explain challenging concepts in math and science.

Poetry for Children — <http://poetryforchildren.blogspot.com/>. Since 2006, professor and author of *Poetry Aloud Here!* **Sylvia Vardell** has blogged about connecting children with poetry through activities, holidays, books, and outstanding modern poets writing for young readers.

Reading Rants — <http://www.readingrants.org/> — has been promoting out of the ordinary YA books on the Web for more than ten years. As a true pioneer of Web reviews and a veteran of the blogosphere, it is still going strong. **Jennifer** started the Website in 1998. It was transformed into an interactive blog in May 2007, where teens can respond to reviews and add their own. A fun feature of this site is its wonderfully inventive title lists, including such temptations as *Riot Grrrl!*, *Slacker Fiction*, *Stoned*, and *Boy Meets Book*.

Wands and Worlds — <http://blog1.wandsandworlds.com/>. Small publisher, organizer of the **CYBILS Awards**, **SFF** fan, **Sheila Ruth** reviews science fiction and fantasy for teens and tweens. Fans of dystopian, faerie, and mixed-genre sci-fi thrillers, etc., will find some good reads reviewed here.

Well-Read Child — <http://wellreadchild.blogspot.com/> — is compiled by instructional designer, mom, and book lover, **Jill Tullo**. Her

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blog offers book recommendations, learning activities, and reading tips. **Tullo's** mission is simple: "get kids to read" and to provide resources to help instill a love of reading.

YA Book Blog Directory — <http://yabookblogdirectory.blogspot.com/>. One-stop shop for teen and tween book fan blogs. Its sister site **YA Blogosphere** — <http://yablogosphere.blogspot.com/>, is a worldwide resource for authors, publishers, reviewers, and teen readers of young adult books.

YABC: Young Adult Books Central — <http://www.yabookscentral.com/>. Since 1998, **YABC** has been a Web presence for teen and tween literature. Book reviews, author interviews, newsletters, publicity, and other YA lit resources for and by teens and tweens. Lots of great resources for homework, too, but no, they won't write your book report for you.

YA YA YAs — <http://theyayayas.wordpress.com/>. "Three Young Adult Librarians blather about YA literature, YA librarianship...." and while they're at it, provide sharp, pithy reviews; book news; craft ideas; and links to tons of resources YA librarians can use for teen programming. 🐾

International Dateline — Earthly Paradise

by **Rita Ricketts** (Blackwell's Historian and Bodleian Visiting Scholar, Author *Adventurers All*, *Tales of Blackwellians*, *of Books*, *Bookmen and Reading and Writing Folk*) <Rita.Ricketts@bodleian.ox.ac.uk>

The ceaseless tumbling of the billows grey, The white upspringing of the spurts of spray

In the last instalment, we encountered **Basil Blackwell's** own "upspringings." He and his father were frustrated poets, and both wrote articles, **Basil** profusely. **Benjamin Henry** wrote tourist guides for Oxford set between blue paper covers, serious in tone and style. All his working life **Basil** had wanted to write an account of the **Blackwell** story, and considerable correspondence exists in the **Merton Blackwell Collection** concerning his efforts. In the end he "ran out of time," despite his 94 years. Almost certainly the need to concentrate on the family firm, ensuring its well-being and a livelihood for family and employees, kept the **Blackwell** men away from their writing.¹ Secure in the family

firm, they felt keenly the problems of struggling writers and extended them enormous generosity. Top of this list were those who would not otherwise have been noticed, let alone published; the story of **Alf Williams**, "the Hammerman Poet," was the subject of the last issue. Another example of **Blackwell** beneficence concerns **Edith Barfoot**, who the soft-hearted **Basil** met in the 1950s. Over sixty, bed-ridden, and in constant pain with rheumatoid arthritis since her teens, she told **Basil** how she had triumphed over her pain under the spiritual guidance of the Cowley Fathers. Encouraged by one of their number, she produced a short paper entitled "The Discovery

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of Joy in the Vocation of Suffering.” Much moved and impressed by both **Edith Barfoot** and her paper, **Basil** published the study. Adding a brief forward, he drew on his own explorations into the idea of the Holy Spirit, but claimed nothing except “to speak as a child.”²² This small buff-coloured book was simply, although beautifully, produced at **Basil’s** own expense.

That we know the stories of such writers as **Williams** and **Barfoot** is in large part due to the written accounts **Basil** left behind, now in the **Merton Blackwell Collections**. **John Betjeman** had lauded **Basil’s** efforts, singling out “an account of **May Morris**, **William Morris’s** daughter, and her friend **Miss Lobb**, that tough nut, and of **Kelmscott** as he and I remember it.”²³ This episode recounts the story of **May Morris** and reveals **Basil’s** attempt to rescue her father’s unpublished writings.²⁴ As well as providing a vignette capturing the spirit and ethos of the Pre-Raphaelite era, it reveals, implicitly, much about **Basil** and his own philosophy of life. The story uses, in the main, **Basil’s** words, put together from various scripts. **Basil’s** interest in **Morris** was inherited from his father, **Benjamin Harris Blackwell**, and not unsurprisingly he chose *An Earthly Paradise* as a school prize. It was, **Basil** wrote, “a happy choice, for the idle singer enchanted me for many an empty day and led me on to explore his prose romances (good reading in youth!) and so to an event of cardinal importance in my life — the reading of one of the best biographies in our literature, **MacKail’s Life of William Morris**.” **Basil’s** ardour for **Morris** grew as he ventured into publishing, and living near to his house at **Kelmscott** he sought to establish a connection with **Morris’s** daughter, **May**. **Morris** had died in 1896 when **Basil** was only six years old.²⁵ Several excursions were made by boat from **Appleton** to **Kelmscott**, with his family in tow. His wife **Christine** was an asset, and her warmth and knowledge of gardening worked its magic on the reserved **May Morris**: “my wife, whom to know is to love ... could coax **May Morris** into shy merriment and persuade her to rehearse delightfully a nocturnal argument of cats.”

Basil always remembered his first meeting with **May**: “that happy day when I found her in knickerbockers, pruning the vine at **Kelmscott**.” Something of this happier face is captured in **Rossetti’s** chalk drawing of **May** in girlhood, showing the serene curved eyebrows of “her lovely mother” (**Jane Morris**). **May’s** is also the care-free face of the central figure in **Burne Jones’s** picture *The Golden Stairs*. But **Basil’s** abiding impression of **May** was more sober: of her “face of noble and austere beauty, somewhat haggard, with eyebrows set at an angle reminiscent of a Greek tragic mask and suggesting some sad and painful happening in her life. I remember her form as tall and slender, moving with dignity, and clad in garments of rich design and of a fashion that was all her own” ... and her surroundings echoed *The Tune of Seven Towers*:

*No one goes there now
For what is left to take away
From the desolate battlements all arrow
And the lead roof heavy and grey.
No one walks there now:
Except in the moonlight
The white ghosts walk in a row ...*

“Her appearance and her bearing were apt,” **Basil** explained, “to a sense of dedication which her conversation constantly revealed; for the words ‘my father’ were ever on her lips. It was manifest that her life was devoted to keeping her father’s memory not only green but dynamic. In an age which regarded the pre-Raphaelite Movement as a Victorian episode, his faith was to be preached entire, his crusade to be pressed home. Her championship of an artistic creed outworn, and something exalted in her air and bearing, prompted me to ‘see across a weary land a struggling road in Spain...,’ a vision encouraged by the appearance of her companion, large, hearty, crop-headed, and always dressed in a Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers.” A less Pre-Raphaelite character than the androgynous **Miss Lobb** could hardly be imagined.

May’s life at **Kelmscott**, **Basil** observed, was on two planes. “Downstairs one ate lunch in a homely table dining room, in one corner of which stood a cottage piano, a type of percussion instrument detested (very properly as I think) by **William Morris**. In the courtyard, on which, if

I remember aright, one of the windows opened, stood the pump under which in the morning **May** and her companion stood in turn while the other worked the handle. Upstairs one passed into a shrine dedicated to the memory of ‘My Father.’ There, in the frozen stillness of a museum, the pilgrim stood, surrounded by lovely evidence of that versatile genius, most memorable among them his painting, *la Belle Iseult*, showing at once rare achievement and promise of mastery, had he persisted, in the supreme art of ‘silent poetry’; and on the bed (four-poster and surprisingly short) his noblest memorial, a copy of the **Kelmscott Chaucer** — that masterpiece of typography whose artistic glories are so strangely alien from the robust spirit of the author. Thence you passed to the chill of the tapestried chamber, where, perished with cold, while a wooden fire sent its modest warmth straight up from a huge open hearth, the hieratic **May** would turn for you with an ivory knife the pages of some manuscript of her father, or sit at her loom, surrounded by grim titanic figures portraying the blinding of **Samson**... Then one became aware again of the tragic set of those (**May’s**) eyebrows. There must have been a time when in that gloriously exciting company at the Manor, like **Hardy’s** Phena: *Her dreams were upbrimming with light, and with laughter in her eyes.*”

Later, as friendship developed, **Basil** grew to discover **May** in her own right, “and in the end I began almost to regret that in her devotion to her father’s memory she had almost completely submerged her own genius. She would remind me of a spell-bound princess, such as may be found in those poems, half story and half dream, which enchanted me in reading that earliest collection, *The Defence of Guinevere and other Poems*. She was the captive of her father’s memory, and she had, as it were, to complete the tapestry of it before the spell could be broken. It was an heroic task; for all the current of present-day life ran away from or counter to so much for which **William Morris** had lived and worked, and it is the measure of **May Morris’s** achievement that **Morris** had remained an inspiration and a household word to this day; and I am glad that I was able to contribute a little towards that achievement. She had set her heart on building and endowing a memorial hall at **Kelmscott**, which was to perpetuate her father’s memory, and in craftsmanship be worthy of his ideals. So this proud shy woman, through the years, preached and pleaded her cause, lecturing and speaking on platforms, writing (and how well she wrote), and editing that monumental edition of the collected works of **William Morris** in 24 volumes.”

Basil continued what he termed his “dual relationship” with **May**: private friendship and public support for her work. “There were times when we talked of the progress of Memorial Hall and there were times when, with **Miss Lobb** and my wife, she would talk happily of trifling matters, of their camping holidays, of their visits to Ireland, or of the **Kelmscott** snowdrops of rare pedigree whose descendants each Spring carpet the bank beneath the beech hedge in our orchard.” He recalled a lecture on Pattern which **May** gave at his invitation at an Arts and Crafts Exhibition at Oxford in the early ‘20s. “What a knowledge of loveliness she showed, and how modest she was in presenting it; but how like a whip were her words when a foolish woman came up to her afterwards and rather patronisingly suggested she might give that lecture before some other body.” **May** retorted “My fee is ten guineas”; she had given her services to **Basil’s** cause freely. In the drive to proselytize she had to overcome her natural shyness: **Basil** remembered “comforting and encouraging her when she came to Oxford to address **Sir Michael Sadler’s** Town and Gown Luncheon Club, remote and timorous among two hundred men. I remember the lovely substance of her dresses, beautified by rare but unprecious jewelry.”

Shown here is Basil Blackwell's photo of May Morris and Miss Lobb.

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For all his admiration of **William Morris**, **Basil** wished for **May** to come out of the desolate land of ghosts to follow her own star. "Her aesthetic and mental equipment and her excellent prose style," **Basil** reflected, "fitted her for creative work in her own right." She was of course, an accomplished embroidress and closely associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement, she became the virtual leader of craftswomen in England, founding the **Women's Guild of Art** in 1907.⁶ "As it was she lived deliberately to preserve the past and set her face against new ways in art and life; and so the world bore increasingly hard upon her. But now I look back, I see that I was wrong in my regret; for time has set **William Morris** and **May** in perspective, and I see the daughter as the complement of her father. High priestess of his cult, hers was the **Pauline** function of ordering and interpreting the manifestations of his volcanic genius. In the devotee I see also the partner." And she had her triumphs. First came the Memorial Hall at Kelmscott. "Many contributed to the cost, but the inspiration and burden were mainly hers, and the reward of many years of sacrifice and work in lecturing and writing won in 1934 (the centenary of his birth) when the Hall was completed and her friends were invited to the opening. They came but could not get in; for they found the Hall thronged to the limit by an unexpected multitude of unknown disciples. With difficulty, and by way of the coal cellar, an entry was contrived for **Ramsey MacDonald**; the rest of us stood outside listening to **Bernard Shaw's** allocution relayed by an intermittent microphone. It was good to see **May's** concern for her guests overborne by her delight in the spontaneous cloud of witnesses to her father's fame."

*Through the earth shot up a lily red,
With a patch of earth from the land of the dead,
For he was strong in the land of the dead.*

May's second triumph, at **Basil's** behest, was the further promulgation of her father's word. At the beginning of the same year (1934) he had written to her enquiring: "that if any scrap of her father's writing should still be unpublished, we might help to commemorate his centenary by printing it handsomely at the **Shakespeare Head Press** on the very same hand-press which once had been part of the equipment of the Kelmscott (Press)." **May** responded almost immediately with a beautifully scripted letter. She thanked **Basil**, and explained that she would send all that remained of her father's writings that had not appeared in book form. "Bearing in mind that the whole of **May Morris's** life was devoted to keeping her father's memory not only green but dynamic, it should not have come as a surprise when, some days later, a panting porter brought into my room a huge parcel, which he set down with a thump on the floor. I found it to contain a mass of type-scripts, pamphlets, periodicals and off prints, variously parcelled and labelled; upwards of half a million words." **Sir Basil** recorded this memorable day: "My first thoughts were

of **Alf Button**." The apocryphal **Alf Button** had been a soldier in the 14-18 War, and had come across a button that was made from a fragment of **Aladdin's** cave. "When he polished it," **Sir Basil** recounted, "an overwhelmingly obliging genie appeared whose ministrations proved to be, in the authors words 'too bloomin' olesale' for him."⁷ **Basil** judged the packages to contain enough material for four more volumes in *The Collected Works of William Morris*.

Thrown by **May Morris's** "wholesale response," **Basil** looked to his publishing colleagues for assistance. His first port of call was **Longman's**, who had already published twenty-four volumes of **Morris's** work. **Longman's**, however, regretted that twenty-four volumes "were quite enough for them." **May Morris** had herself asked **Longman's** in 1932 and had been bitterly disappointed by their refusal. **Basil** then sought to engage the interest of **Allen and Unwin**, having in mind their "Ruskin," an edition, according to **Basil**, "which had made the firm." His dear friend **Stanley Unwin** "had a unique ability in finding markets for difficult books." But "Uncle Stan's generous heart was controlled by a strong and clear head, and his answer was the *Pie Man's*." "For over a year," **Basil** was haunted by the "silent reproaches" of **May Morris's** "thumping parcel," which "would not let me alone," he wrote. Anxious to relieve himself of a burden, **Basil** set off for Kelmscott to see if he could persuade **May** to make a selection: "Once more we sat in that grim and chilling room, and in the end **May**, dismayed and hesitant, agreed to see what she could do." Escaping from the grim and chilling "interview" room, **Basil** found his progress blocked by **May's** companion, **Miss Lobb**. He was no match for a woman "as strong as any male farm worker."

Penning **Basil** in a corner of the Hall, "her legs a-straddle and her arms akimbo, she unleashed a storm of eloquence." "Now look here, **Mr. Blackwell**, you are worrying **May**, and I won't have her worried. You've got to publish all that stuff. Don't think I care a snap for the writings," she bellowed. "I hate old **William Morris** — dreadful old bore — but I'll not have **May** worried. You go home and write tonight telling her you will publish everything." She then proceeded to offer her life savings as an inducement to the bemused **Basil**. "I've no money," she told him, "I've only £50 in the world, but you shall have that and welcome if you do as I tell you." **Basil** was no match for **May Morris's** minder. Drawing a veil over her views on **William Morris**, he did as she had bidden: all 500,000 words were saved. And **Miss Lobb** was never called upon to relinquish her life's savings. In return **Basil** received a little copper Turkish coffee pot, which he treasured. **May Morris** saw two volumes of her father's remaining unpublished works roll off the press of **Basil's** "**Shakespeare Head**," in 1936, "appropriately under the direction of **Bernard Newdigate**, who had designed and printed the twenty-four volumes of *The Collected Works* during his time at the **Arden Press** at Letchworth."⁸ The work was entitled "*William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist*," and the index was prepared by **Basil's** wife, **Christine**.

Bernard Shaw, who must have overcome an earlier and infamous confrontation with **Basil**, readily agreed to write an introduction to one of the new volumes, entitled *William Morris as a Socialist*. It gave an account of **Shaw's** relations with **Morris** in the early days of the socialist movement. **Basil** wrote of this introduction, "which revealed, with rare tenderness, his (**Bernard Shaw's**) youthful love for **May Morris**, disappointed by her surprising — and unhappy — marriage." It was this, **Basil** decided, that had been the cause of the tragic slant of **May's** eyebrows. **May** approved the introduction, which, contrary to his principles, **Shaw** gave to **Blackwell's**. **Shaw** told **Basil** how he came to frequent the **Morris** household, and how "among the many beautiful things in **Morris's** two beautiful houses was a beautiful daughter then in the flower of her youth, and how he, a penniless bachelor, dare not aspire to win her hand, but one Sunday evening he looked at her, rejoicing in her lovely dress and lovely self; and she looked at me very carefully and quite deliberately made a gesture of assent with her eyes. I was immediately conscious that a Mystic betrothal was registered in heaven to be fulfilled when all the material obstacles should melt away... and I did not think it necessary to say anything... I made no sign at all. Suddenly, to my utter stupefaction, and I suspect that of **Morris** also, the beautiful daughter married one of the comrades."

Shown are the writings of **May Morris**. One appears on Kelmscott letterhead.

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"For a time **Shaw** shared the house of the young couple, but finding the situation too exacting, and lest he should be the cause of breaking the marriage," he vanished. But "the manage that had prospered so pleasantly as a ménage a trios proved intolerable as a ménage a deux ... and the husband vanished too." Presently there was a divorce. "The beautiful one" **Shaw** wrote, "abolished him root and branch and resumed her famous maiden name." Forty years later **Shaw** was motoring through Gloucestershire when the spell of Kelmscott came upon him; he turned aside to visit the grave of **William** and **Jane Morris**, which he had

not seen before. Then he was moved to knock at the door of the manor. It was opened by the terrifying **Miss Lobb**, and "presently the beautiful daughter and I, now harmless old folks, met again as if nothing had happened." **Basil's** last encounter with **May** came on a Bank Holiday in 1938. "We shipped our skulls at Kelmscott and made our way up to the house; I saw her at a distance in the paddock: she turned and gazed at us stonily as we advanced, looking very like dishevelled tripper, and I had a moment's anxiety lest she might not recognise us and speak words of rebuke

which she might regret. I called out to her, and her manner changed (she admitted that she was about to chase us away deeming us to be a party of idle curious who had come by cabin-cruiser)."

After a feast of home-made wine and home-made cake, **May** walked the **Blackwell** family back to the riverbank where their boat was moored. She told **Basil** that "she no longer cared to go out either to the front or the back of the Manor House; for the long peace of Kelmscott had been invaded by an aerodrome behind the village, and on the river the old

wooden weirs and bridges had been replaced by concrete work, and rollers had given way to lochs for the benefit of motorboats."

"How much they miss," **Basil** commented, "these folk who lounge on the decks of cabin cruisers while they speed heedlessly above the stream, soothed (I suppose) by the tawdry music which normally invades their homes. Unknown to them the subtle music at the water-level, from swaying rushes, from the kiss of sculls precisely dipped, and the quiet mirth of little eddies as the blades are pressed home; unknown the deep content in healthy weariness and the sense of achievement at the day's end. Such joys were known to **May Morris** in the hey-day of life at Kelmscott, but are now almost forgotten on the upper reaches of the Thames. It is all part of the passing of an age. The noise and vulgarity of the world were pressing hard upon her, and I was aware of a weariness of spirit that day":

*The heavy elms wait, and restless and cold
The uneasy wind rises; the roses are dun;*

Basil's weariness must have been a premonition. "Before the year was out I stood at her grave. The chapter was finished and the book closed; **William Morris** had passed into legend."

Continuing the theme of **Blackwell** writing, the next instalment delves into the diaries of **Will King**: poet, Quaker, and a famous **Blackwell** antiquarian bookseller. 🌿

Endnotes

1. In his diaries (MBC) **Benjamin Henry** writes that his sole ambition is to "provide for himself, his mother and his apprentices," and his son never thought seriously of doing anything other than joining the family firm; the same went for the next two generations of **Blackwells**.
2. Notes from the Rector of Appleton, **Peter Wyld**; parts of these notes were published in the *Oxford Diocesan Magazine*, July 1984.
3. **Betjeman** at the celebrations for **BB's** 70th birthday.
4. This story has been published in many versions, one such by the **William Morris Society** – see also MBC BLK/3/6.
5. **May (Mary) Morris** 1862-1938.
6. **Fiona MacCarthy**, *William Morris A Life for Our Time*, Faber and Faber, 1994, p 677.
7. **Alf Button** is the character in a book of the same name by **W. A. Darlington**.
8. **Basil Blackwell**, *The Bookseller*, October 27, 1962, p 109.

I Hear the Train A Comin' — Anything Goes

Column Editor: **Greg Tananbaum** (Founder and CEO, Anianet) <greg@anianet.com> www.anianet.com

I am pleased to be attending the **30th Annual Charleston Conference**. The theme of this year's event is "Anything Goes," and, in honor of the great songwriter **Cole Porter**, I offer these few thoughts about the state of the scholarly communication industry — **De-Lovely** style. What will we be talking about in the hallowed halls of the **Francis Marion** this year? Let's appropriate the titles of some **Porter** classics to find out.

Too Darn Hot

The issue of what to do about research data is certainly boiling over. As I have written before on these pages, supplementary data have the potential to hasten scientific discovery. This is particularly true when data are presented in machine-readable formats that render meta-analysis feasible. However, the standards for how research data should be collected, curated, surfaced, and (possibly) monetized have not shaken out as yet. It is certainly true that cloud computing and other technical advances make

the sharing of this type of information easier and less expensive than at any time in history. However, publishers are increasingly wary of their responsibilities in presenting these data in conjunction with the articles they publish. *The Journal of Neuroscience's* recent decision to stop accepting supplemental data turned up the heat on this topic. The editors argued that the current peer review process is strained by the proliferation of data associated with journal manuscripts. Authors are submitting more supplementary materials than ever, reviewers are digging deeper into these data to suggest additional avenues of research for authors, and the back and forth is causing friction and delay in the publication process. My purpose in broaching the *Journal of Neuroscience* decision is not to critique their stance but to lament that our industry has not

crafted an intelligent path forward on research data. It is possible, of course, that if publishers determine that the issue of data is just "too darn hot," other mechanisms will arise to fill the void. Certainly, projects such as **Harvard's DataVerse** and **DataCite.org** offer promising approaches to the archiving and discovery of research data. However, given the close connection between raw materials (data) and finished product (journal articles), a truly effective solution will need to tie the two together seamlessly.

Night and Day

The Internet Era has thus far offered night and more night for the journal as a publication form. While the operational aspects of peer review have transitioned to a largely electronic process, the general publication pattern of submit→review→revise→publish remains a constant. There has undoubtedly been some experimentation. *PLoS One* is

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