

Editor's Note

A Zen parable speaks of a student and teacher sitting beside a river when a scorpion comes drifting down. The teacher reaches his hand into the water, grabbing the scorpion and setting it down on the shore. The scorpion promptly stings the teacher's hand, frantically scurries about, and falls back into the river. The teacher reaches in again and pulls out the scorpion, meriting another sting. The student then asks the teacher, "Why did you save the scorpion when you knew it would sting you again?" The teacher replies, "It's a scorpion's nature to sting, but it is man's nature to save."

Faced with the prospects and realities of economic derailment and ecological collapse, students find themselves in precarious positions where the possibility of honoring one's nature seems a Promethean blind hope. All is far from lost, however, and the purest defeat is one in which the contest is conceded from the outset. Blessed with understanding, empathy, and tenacity, the selection of articles herein gathered epitomizes research with an eye to the global as much as the local, the public as much as the personal. A world once built by strong hands now turns to keen minds, no longer limited to the few but available to every heart willing—nowhere else can this be better seen than in the fertile field of aspiring scholarship, to which this volume contributes. From industrial pharmacopeia to privileged pipelines, prole rebellions to plastic apocalypse; the problems faced by the present generation are ultimately as novel as the nature we human beings encounter—perennially groundbreaking, expectably unexpected. Aleph has striven to create the opportunity for the first dip into the river by hands fit for saviors, so that these hands might bear the pain required for just one more revival.

M. V. Kramer
Aleph Editor-In-Chief
2013-2014