

Peter Rose's diary of a pandemic year

Living through a pandemic has changed all of us. For *ABR* Editor, Peter Rose, Covid also coincided with a marked deterioration in the health of his mother, who moved into aged care in early 2021. A year later, Rose shares his – and his mother's – story in a series of extracts from his 2021 diary which appears in the March issue. Rose's diary documents the feelings of anguish and impotence that go with caring for a family member during lockdown. Mordant and moving in equal measure, this selection gives us a glimpse behind the scenes at one of the country's leading literary magazines during a time of personal and collective hardship.

This special instalment of the Editor's Diary is noticeably more sombre in mood. But in Rose's words, 'to have left out the dark stuff and retained only the editorial cakes and ale would have been blithe, even disingenuous'.

Extracts from Peter Rose's diary

'Remarkable dream in which my parents decided to euthanise themselves and tried to persuade me to do the same. I balked at the end and awaited news of their demise – and all the media hullabaloo that would surely follow.'

'Mary-Kay Wilmers has retired after thirty years as sole editor of *LRB*. There is a rather smug interview on the podcast with the great Andrew O'Hagan. Wilmers is hilarious about fiction reviewing, which she considers facile and bloodless – the last vestige of the welfare state.'

'In the window at the Avenue Bookstore I spied another of those small Princeton compilations from the Classics. I thought the title was *How to Be Continent*. Putting on my glasses, I realised it was *How to Be Content* (which is much harder).'

About Peter Rose

Peter Rose has been Editor of *ABR* since 2001, having previously worked in academic publishing. He is the author of six books of poetry, two novels, and a memoir, *Rose Boys* (2001), which won the National Biography Award in 2003.

Interviews

Peter Rose is available for interview. Please direct requests to editor@australianbookreview.com.au | (03) 9699 8822



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