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## Editors' Note

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At the beginning of *The Phantom Tollbooth*, the instructions Milo receives are peculiar and the mysterious boxes' contents even stranger: one tollbooth, three precautionary signs, a set of coins, one map, and one book of traffic laws. While vaguely interrelated, they're an odd collection of items without any certain usefulness; the map's labeled with make-believe words, there's no highway, and the fine print reads *RESULTS ARE NOT GUARANTEED*.

Most of the time, that's the way we feel writing stories - that we're pulling at parts only disparately related, wondering how this will all come together. Sometimes, they do, and many times, they don't. There's a character problem, stunted dialogue, a scene that just won't seem to work. It can feel like some of the tool box must have gone missing.

Milo takes a leap in thinking the tollbooth might work, but it does, and the adventure's wonderful. Workshopping helps push through rough patches, provide focus, inform direction; making the map's make-believe words legible again. Sitting in Sanborn Library on Sunday evenings, Humbug does more than that too. The laughter after an exhausting week, the magically amplified voices of the Poetry Room - these are the components of *Humbug's* own tollbooth, our own shared adventure.

The work in this chapbook was written throughout the fall and winter terms. We saw a lot of faces, both old and new. To all our writers who, unlike Milo, don't have plenty of time in the midst of a quarter, thank you for sharing your stories and building this peculiar and wonderful collective tollbooth.

Lastly, to the graduating seniors whom we will dearly miss: *It's true that there are many lands you've still to visit (some of which are not even on the map) and wonderful things to see (that no one has yet imagined), but we're quite sure that if you really want to, you'll find a way to reach them all by yourself.*

We're very excited to share this chapbook with you.

Yours,  
Katherine Carithers and Caroline Cook