Foreword

As managing editor, my first read of the work collected for a new issue of the *Bellevue Literary Review* is with a critical editorial eye, attuned to plot, theme, flow, and sentence structure. Each piece is then examined more technically as the layout of the issue comes together: proofreading, formatting, running headers, paragraph balance, facing pages, white space, table of contents, and then, proofreading again.

It’s lovely, then, to go back and read the published issue for pleasure, without thinking about punctuation or font size (though those thoughts must sometimes be banished forcibly). After having been immersed in the issue as a single entity—a computer file of glyphs and margins—indulging in each individual piece as its own work of literature is deeply satisfying and often surprising. I am “discovering” these wonderful poems, stories, and essays—familiar but suddenly fresh and invigorating—and then find myself returning to them time and again. Now it is my pleasure to introduce these pieces to you, the readers.

Family is a deep well for writers, and much of the fiction in the Fall 2012 issue focuses on these complex, tender, and fractious relationships. Edward Hamlin’s “Boy, Unleashed” takes a raw look at a rural family dealing with their “wild” son in the best way they know, set against the havoc wrought by outside interference. Andrea Rochat’s “Yellow Fog” is narrated by the unique voice of a father and daughter, and traces the unnerving—and ultimately chilling—choices they make in their grief.

The young narrator of Catherine Lewis’s “Not to Scale” begins her story by stating, “One morning I woke up afraid.” She struggles to keep her own anxiety at bay in the face of her mother’s depression, embarking on a project that she hopes will help quiet her fluttering thoughts. Laura Adamczyk’s “Apnea” follows a sleep-lab technician, beautifully describing the sensation of “waterless drowning” felt by both his patients and himself, as the adult child of an alcoholic pulled back into his mother’s orbit.

Several stories in this issue feature families complicated by the backdrop of war. In “Below the Knee” by Laura Ender, a wounded soldier’s return home dislodges the uneasy balance between two sisters, one his pregnant wife. Jake Wolff’s “Repurpose” takes us to rural Maine during World War II, where the installation of a camp of German prisoners-of-war upends the lives of a boy and his mother, who suffers from a mysterious ailment they know only as “the insanity with two heads.”

The essays in this issue examine life’s fragility from different perspectives. Elizabeth Scarboro’s “No Man’s Land” is a poignant memoir about reorienting her life after the death of her husband, moving past guilt into acceptance, perhaps even towards happiness: “There is no way, after what we had together, that life can keep me from its possibilities.” Toni Mirosevich’s “The Deposit” looks at the death of a stranger and how people react to tragedy in unison, from shrines and remembrances to the urge to claim a part of the story as their own. And in her essay “On Not Seeing Whales,” Nikki Schulak turns a sharp eye and equally sharp sense of humor to the choices that each of us must make when faced with the weaknesses of our own body.

This issue marks the first “solo voyage” for our new poetry editor, Jason Schneiderman. We are excited to share the work Jason has culled from hundreds of poetry submissions. “A Suspicion” by Ricardo Pau-Llosa describes the possibility of illness as “an anonymous / citizen of a journey / unaltered but changed / all the same.” Jeffrey Morgan’s “The Anesthesiologist” contains lovely, surreal imagery that allows the reader to join the subject on the border between consciousness and sleep. And several poems gracefully complement the prose in their meditations on family and parent-child relationships, including Deb Baker’s “Intersections” and Wendy Wisner’s “Weaning: First Day of School.”

This is the 23rd issue of the *Bellevue Literary Review*, beginning our 12th year of publication—yet each issue remains a joy to put together and to share with our readers. We hope the work in this issue resonates with you and inspires you.

Stacy Bodziak
Managing Editor