

## Foreword

At 6:30 p.m. on November 3, 2012, it was suddenly all very different. For the first time since March 31, 1736, Bellevue Hospital stood empty. The last of 700 patients had been safely evacuated and now the hospital hallways echoed with a preternatural stillness. Hurricane Sandy marked the first time Bellevue's doors were forced closed in 276 years.

The hurricane and its overwhelming ramifications have been well-documented in the media. In our small corner of the world, all three of our teaching hospitals—NYU, Bellevue, and the Manhattan VA—had to close. Hundreds of patients and thousands of staff members were dispersed to other hospitals. Research laboratories and clinical trial units suffered irreparable losses.

The tallying of such damage is often insufficient to convey the depth of loss. Dollars, hours, gallons, and acreage can seem almost flimsy when trying to understand the effects on a human level—the patient who was carried down seventeen flights of stairs, the administrator who never left the hospital for a week, the employee whose home was destroyed, the researcher who lost a decade of work, the nurse who directed each patient to an ambulance, the medical student who was overwhelmed by the enormity of it all.

The cumulative human experience itself can reach hurricane levels. The emotional winds can take far longer to calm. In this issue of the *Bellevue Literary Review*, we present a few snapshots of the experience of the hurricane, from the resident doctors who assisted in the evacuation. This is obviously only one of many perspectives, but we hope it gives you a sense of one moment in our history.

Just about one hundred days after the hurricane, Bellevue reopened its doors, grateful to restore its *sine qua non*—patients. At press-time, however, there still remain many displaced elements (including the *BLR*, and many laboratories and offices), but we are optimistic that the hospital community will be fully restored soon.

Part of the joy of the publishing process is turning up interesting, unusual, and new writing. In this issue of the *Bellevue Literary Review*,

we are pleased to present debut fiction from three authors—Calvin Hennick, Lori DeBoer, and Ashley Chambers, who won Honorable Mention in our fiction contest.

The winner of the 2013 Goldenberg Prize for Fiction—judged by Jane Smiley—is Kathryn Trueblood for “The No-Tell Hotel,” an engaging story of a mother hosting a house full of teenagers. Honorable Mention goes to Joan Leegant, in addition to Ashley Chambers. Their stories—though quite different—are similarly harrowing.

The Burns Archive Prize for Nonfiction was judged this year by Mary Roach. She selected Jacqueline Kolosov's essay, “Dust, Light, Life,” in which a moth infestation is deftly intertwined with the observation of a colleague's increasing infirmity. Honorable Mention was awarded to Maura Smith for chronicling the intensity of death on a desert ranch and in a family in “Omphalos.”

Laura Passin is the winner of the Marica and Jan Vilcek Prize for Poetry. In her poem “The Learn'd Astronomer on the Radio,” she contemplates the existence of a doppelganger for every living soul. “[W]e must accept, the cosmologist says/ that we are twinned: inside / of infinity.” Honorable Mention goes to Patricia Murphy for “Reading Sexton in Phuket.” She writes: “. . . I don't tell the man over the Tom Yum that I'm contemplating / losing my mind.”

Though we typically think of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry as having distinctive forms, authors freely borrow from one to the next. Megan Kimble, in her essay “Click,” invokes structures from poetry and styles from fiction to convey nonfiction events. The poet Paul Dickey makes use of prose style in his poem “Mother's New Play,” which itself toys with the ideas of genres: “. . . her performed plays at different times have been called fiction, creative non-fiction, or even science fiction. Or imaginative realism. . . .”

We hope you enjoy this issue of the *Bellevue Literary Review*. We are excited to present new writers, unusual styles, and thought-provoking topics to the reading public. We are grateful to our community of readers and writers that provides a welcoming stage for this literature.

Danielle Ofri  
*Editor-in-Chief*