

Foreword

Through our work at the *Bellevue Literary Review*, the editors continue to understand medicine's promise and its limitations. Our doctor editors learn this through their medical practice, and all of us have had personal encounters with medicine, either ourselves or through friends and family. However, we have discovered much more about the spectrum of experience from the many excellent manuscripts we receive—now over 2500 a year—only a fraction of which we can present in our pages.

This year the *BLR* sponsored its first literary contest. These entries expanded our understanding of what medicine gives to and takes from individuals. We were delighted by the high quality of the submissions.

The promise of cure has existed through the ages. From bloodletting to chemotherapy, medicine always has offered hope. When a solution for a disease exists, even partial, life can go on. However, illness extends its tentacles past any single episode of disease. There is the crisis, and for those fortunate to withstand it, the aftermath. How can one live with the anxiety that a disease may recur? Or live with chronic illness? How can a person embrace life fully after losing someone close? What are the reverberations, not just for the patient, but for family and friends?

In this issue of the *BLR*, much of the work deals with the crisis and that which follows. Amy Mehninger's meditative story, "Apartment 1-A," explores the unpredictable nature of grief when the manager of an apartment building loses his wife to illness. In the beautiful "Biofeedback," David Milofsky writes about the unsettling effects of a doctor's marital separation and how an alternative to conventional medicine can provide relief. Our fiction winner, Joan Malerba-Foran, looks at alcoholism and its tight hold on a school teacher's life in "The Little Things." This is Joan's first published work of fiction.

Other stories delve into the after-effects of accident and chronic disease as well. "The Crush" by Adam Tamashasky focuses on a teenager confined to a wheelchair and the events that occur when she falls in love. Caroline Leavitt, winner of an Honorable Mention for the delicate "Breathe," tells of how a boy's chronic asthmatic condition transforms a family's constellation.

"The Color of Sound" by Judy Rowley, winner of the nonfiction award, deftly draws the reader into the world of the hearing-impaired. Rowley details her search for a cochlear implant, which she hopes will help her finally hear sound in all its color and nuance. Diane Lawson Martinez visits Bosnia and Croatia, exploring the residue of war and the ruin of her marriage in the compelling "The Road to Kotor Varos."

Our poetry winner, Gibson Fay-LeBlanc, uses striking imagery in "Worry Bone" to describe the mind's great capacity for worry. "The Golden Hour" by Sue Ellen Thompson lyrically catalogues the final weeks of a mother's life and the effects on a daughter. And Carolyn Moore offers us her perspective on catastrophe and grief in her poem, "How to Housebreak a Shadow."

We hope you will enjoy these selections as well as the other prose and poetry that we are pleased to showcase in our pages.

Ronna Wineberg
Fiction Editor