Welcome to Awards 37! In these pages, a gem cutter searches for the signs of flaws hidden in the human soul, while a prescribed burn-setter for the Forestry Service tries to come to terms with the effects of a fire that helped destroy her marriage. A blueprint for the infinite takes us to strange and celestial heights, and the small details of a Muslim family’s life resonate with vibrancy and clarity. These are the premises behind the winning stories and poems from this year’s Nimrod Literary Awards, and these remarkable works and more await you in this, our 37th Annual Awards publication.

Each year, our editors read the hundreds of manuscripts sent for The Katherine Anne Porter Prize for Fiction and The Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry and, after often lively debate, carefully select our finalists. The finalists are then sent to the final judges, who award first and second prizes, as well as honorable mentions. This year, we were thrilled to have Karen Russell, Pulitzer-Prize finalist and author of Swamplandia!, serve as our fiction judge and Tina Chang, Brooklyn Poet Laureate and author of Of Gods and Strangers, as our poetry judge. They did the tough work of selecting J. Duncan Wiley and Emily Wortman-Wunder as our first- and second-prize fiction winners and Heather Altfeld and Leila Chatti as our first- and second-prize poetry winners. All four of our winners offer work that is diverse and fascinating, moving from the cosmic to the personal, from the burdens of loneliness to the solace of friendship.

In addition to our winners, we are proud to feature the work of our Awards honorable mentions, finalists, and semi-finalists, as well as work accepted throughout the year. As with our winners, the pieces here are by turns enchanting and disquieting, but always challenging and compelling. Katharyn Howd Machan explores the dark side of fairy tales in the poem “My Beast,” while Michelle Collins Anderson uses the Harry Potter novels to frame her story about the ways a family confronts the approaching death of a husband and father. Josephine Yu, Catherine Freeling, and Jennifer Clark all employ sly humor in their poems, “Middle Class Love Song,” “In Which I Praise My Right Foot,” and “Searching,” using that humor to enliven and enrich. Stephanie Carpenter considers
what is real and not real in “The Sweeper,” a story that asks us to imagine what might happen if words began disappearing—or were taken—from the English language, and Susanne Kort, Lorna Crozier, and Zane Kokter all depict loss in moving, deliberate language that distills the personal into the universal.

We are also especially pleased to publish a poem by the late Charlotte Stewart, *Nimrod*’s beloved former Associate Editor, and very excited to end this issue with work by former U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser.

We are pleased to present these and 35 other works of fiction and poetry. Thank you for joining us as we begin our fifty-ninth year of discovery.