In this issue, *Awards 39*, we celebrate the winners, honorable mentions, finalists, and semi-finalists of our 39th annual *Nimrod* Literary Awards: the Katherine Anne Porter Prize for Fiction and the Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry. The Awards, this year judged by poet Jericho Brown and fiction writer Laura van den Berg, have discovered and recognized remarkable fiction and poetry throughout their long history, and this year was no exception.

In poetry, first-prize winner Mark Wagenaar deftly weaves together themes of love, fatherhood, loss, and time in his poems “Count It Up,” “Nocturne &/or Aubade with Horses,” and others. In her poems “Chimera,” “Speaking the Beast,” and others, second-prize winner Mary Moore ponders what it means to be human and what it means to be a monster—and how we are sometimes both at once. In fiction, first-prize winner Jessica Cavero presents “Toguro,” a provocative, dream-like, sometimes disorienting story about a young woman “in the business of selling dreams” who yearns for deeper meaning in a life that is surface and façade. Second-prize winner Sandra Hunter’s “Finger Popping” is both fluid and challenging as it tells the story of two siblings caught on opposite sides of the border fence and what they must endure as they try to stay together.

The work by our finalists, Honorable Mentions, and semi-finalists is striking as well. Themes of borders, division, and togetherness arise in Owen Lewis’s poem “Borderlines” and Daniel Becker’s poem “Like All Perfect Strangers,” while Eric Schlich and Meghan Pipe both use dreams as a way to allow their characters to map alternative paths in their stories “Lucidity” and “Alternating Current.” Zach Linge, Anne Haven McDonnell, and Samuel Hovda explore themes of familial acceptance and rejection for LGBTQ people in their poems “Truth is, you don’t remember much,” “curse,” and “In a Dream, Faggot and His Father Drive Up the Side of a Dark Obelisk.” Music and art fill many of our pages, playing key roles in poems by Peter Krumbach, Stephen Cloud, Emily Rose Cole, Allison Blevins, and George Looney. Aurora Masum-Javed, Meghann Plunkett, and Shubha Venugopal trace the intricate, sometimes frustrating interplay of family.
Work accepted throughout the year also appears here, with Molly Bess Rector, Nilla Larsen, and Cindy Veach using ecology as a lens for examining about what we can and cannot save, Naomi Cohn and Louisa Howerow depicting the material embodiments of emotional loss, and more. So sit down for a long read or sample the work a little at a time: however you approach it, we think you’ll find this Awards issue rewarding.