Editor’s Note

Literature. Dance. Music. Painting. Photography. Film. I could go on, but to do that would fill this page and more. “The arts,” as we call them, encompass a wide and wonderfully varied range of practices, so much so that we might wonder why we often find them grouped together. What, after all, does sculpting have in common with rap, or ballet with fiction? And yet the arts, in all their forms, do share a binding purpose. Whether we’re talking about a play performed on stage, a mosaic on a wall, or a poem in a book, the arts provide not only pleasure and enjoyment, but a fundamental way that we explore and depict our inner and outer worlds. Essentially, the arts are the place where we figure out what it means to be human—and the place where we figure it out together.

The arts bring us together; as the title of this issue says, they let us gather. And, at their best, the arts are not only a gathering place, but a gathering place that embraces and encourages diversity: diversity in thought, diversity in content, diversity in creators. They let us show off—in words, in color, in song—our differences, the things that make us unique. What’s remarkable is that, at the same time that they spotlight our uniqueness, the arts also show us the ways we are alike, the universal feelings and thoughts that are shared by us all.

In this issue, we’ve attempted to demonstrate this concept in two ways, by including work that explores the various ways that the arts encourage and embrace diversity in all its forms, and by including work on many subjects from authors of diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, sexualities, and other areas of difference. Our authors have also confronted the times when the arts have not been as diverse as they might be, times in which in which, sadly, we still all too often find ourselves. We hope that what has resulted in this issue of Nimrod is an exceptional group of poems and stories that approach the theme from many directions and create a gratifying and thought-provoking place for us to gather.

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We’re also excited to bring to you, in this issue, the winners and finalists of the first-ever Francine Ringold Awards for New Writers. Fran served as Nimrod’s Editor-in-Chief for 47 years, and she was a tireless—indeed, often enviably energetic—proponent of Nimrod’s mission to discover and promote the work of new writers. In honor of her work with Nimrod and with writers at the beginning of their careers, we created the Francine Ringold Awards, which allow for submissions from writers who have published no more than two other pieces of work in their genre. Our inaugural year has brought in vibrant poems and stories, work that is fresh, original, and diverse in its origin and approach. We were delighted with the quality of the submissions, and we are very proud to share the work of these first winners and finalists with you.