

Editor's Note

I am so pleased to share with you our anthology, *The Masters Review*, with stories selected by Lev Grossman for its third volume.

The goal of this anthology is to showcase writers in graduate-level creative writing programs. Our feeling, after reviewing submissions from programs around the world, is that these writers are among the best. We believe the stories you read here represent the start of ten bright careers and that these writers will continue to produce great work.

MFA, MA, and PhD creative writing programs are constantly under scrutiny, but the MFA debate seemed particularly heated this year. I am especially proud to be publishing these stories within the context of that debate. I feel *The Masters Review* makes a strong statement about the kinds of writers these schools produce, and I am happy to support any program that inspires the kind of beautiful writing you see here.

Each year we pair with a guest judge to help us select stories. For our past two collections, judges Lauren Groff and AM Homes chose pieces by authors who continue to astound us. *The Masters Review* authors have gone on to publish their first novels and short story collections. Our authors include a Nelson Algren Award finalist, an Academy of American Poets Prize winner, Fulbright Fellows, and our writers continue to publish in reputable literary journals across the country. We consider the authors in this collection to be part of the community of emerging writers for whom *The Masters Review* serves as a platform and a resource. In addition to publishing our printed anthology, *The Masters Review* works year-round to provide content for and by emerging writers. We're

thrilled to add these new voices to our growing library.

For this collection we worked with *New York Times* bestselling author and *Time* book critic Lev Grossman. Mr. Grossman brings a wonderful balance to this collection. He is considered one of the best literary critics in the field, and he sees the magic in storytelling. It was an incomparable pleasure working with him, and our anthology is all the better because of his participation and perspective.

In our collection's opening story "The Behemoth," a giant falls from the sky. In "Go Down, Diller," a single father grapples with raising his daughter and understanding the bear who works at the burger joint down the street. "OpFor" is a story about a soldier departing for war, and "Braids" examines the intense and complicated microclimate of a prison hair salon. In "A Language Translatable by No One" Courtney Kersten writes a heart-wrenching essay about losing her mother, and in "Custody" a divorced mother tries to bond with her son on an African safari.

The stories in this collection are diverse, but each one carries an emotional truth. It is my feeling they are pieces of fiction and nonfiction that are impossible to walk away from unchanged. They are memorable and important. I hope you enjoy reading our third volume as much as we enjoyed preparing it for you, and I hope you find a voice in these pages that belongs to a writer you will continue to follow for years to come.

Kim Winternheimer

Founding Editor



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