

Resolute

An Editor's Note

This issue takes time to celebrate the lives of some literary artists close to us, both still writing and recently passed, and in so doing to celebrate the importance of literary art. "In some five thousand human languages," writes our late friend, poet Michelle Boisseau, in her co-authored textbook *Writing Poems*, "people use poems to express who they are, what they believe, what they have done, and, most of all, what it feels like to be alive."

The task, then, is simple and huge: The work of literature goes on, "From Iceland to Cameroon, on rickety tables in apartment complexes," Michelle continues, "around campfires on windy plains." We can add here, on Mackinac Island, in Buenos Aires, and Paris, because this issue not only covers much of the world, it stands to record, in circumstances of joy, abuse or coercion, what it feels like to stand for life. The life of the individual.

Poems by Kelly Cherry here seem to hold a pivot point on some of the important themes in this issue, including the resilience of specific, individual women, which echoes descriptions in the *Empty Dresses* series of artworks on the cover and inside. Kelly's confrontations, as well, with details about war and its effects, resonate in such work here as Garry Noland's collages "Welcome fascists," Willis Barnstone's major poem of Argentina, and others. Take a look at Sheila Kohler's essay, and you will see something of how the writing and art in this issue reflect the conditions of what it feels like to live now, in this civilization.

After years of work, perhaps decades, these diverse artists and writers gather here, not merely to reflect on conditions in our world right now but to stand for something. I think it is this: that we will let art tell our stories, unintimidated by outside forces. As Michelle Boisseau writes, "Poetry [literature] is so interwoven with the human story that we can follow its origins into the dimmest reaches of our roots."

—R.S.