

Dear Readers,

We are delighted to introduce Silk Road Review: A Literary Crossroads' Issue 19: Unclaimed. This issue features fiction writers, poets, memoirists, translators, playwrights, and artists investigating into cultures, identities, and ways of being that defy categorization or ownership. These writers delve into the complexities of family, sexuality, global ties, childbirth and death, immigration, and love.

L. Mari Harris's "Need" examines both the joys and struggles surrounding motherhood, while Will Donnelly's "A Mirror in the Darkness" follows a profound, heartbreaking journey of a boy and his dying dog. Richard Simas's "The Eye (I) of José Pedro Leite's Poetry" is a fascinating profile of a blind poet whose work is defined by vivid, sensory details.

Nikola Popović's "The Artichoke and Her Tender Heart" demonstrates the power of storytelling in times of hardship, while "Past the Borders," an excerpt from Kristine S. Ervin's memoir, is a touching and raw account of coming to terms with your sexual past and learning that those close to you might not always react how you'd hope.

Natalie Homer's poems are a stunning commentary on truth, memory, and transition, while Esteban Rodríguez's

poetry presents us with a layered portrayal of the “American experience” and father/son relationships. Mehrnoosh Torbatnejad’s beautiful poem “Doh Cheshm” moves us to examine micro-aggressions, and Jess Williard’s “Hands” explores trauma, art, and the persistence of memories in spite of our attempts to move past them. In her examination of a Nixon-era gathering of African-American journalists, Lolly Ward’s stunning one-act play “The Ethel Party” gifts us with an intimate look at segregation and emotional alienation.

In his powerful interview with Silk Road, Shann Ray, acclaimed author of *American Copper*, speaks to the relationship between the dominant culture and unrepresented voices, violence and forgiveness.

Together, these pieces feature the unclaimed voices of silenced cultures and perspectives. We are honored to present to you, our readers, this stunning collection of writing which portrays the struggles we all face with culture, religion, family, spaces, and identity.

With gratitude and warm wishes,

Dr. Keya Mitra and Katie Fairchild, Editors-in-Chief