

Dear Readers:

We are delighted to introduce *Silk Road's* Issue 18: *The Architecture of Identity*. *Silk Road Review: A Literary Crossroads* remains dedicated to investigating the complexities of community, identity, globalization, and diversity in its many and unique forms. Our current issue features poets, memoirists, short story writers, translators, playwrights, and artists examining the complicated, joyful, and dark relationships between global communities, generational strife, cultural divides, the universality of grief and suffering, and the attempt to bridge the gap between the self and society. The *Architecture of Identity* in this issue refers to the multifaceted and diverse aspects that make up the self and community—family (biological or self-created), culture, sexuality, race and ethnicity, gender, and global connections.

Marc Kaufman's "The Mountain Dog" explores the complicated relationships between family members and their dying dog in Japan. Olusola Akinwale's "Falling Leaf" is a heartbreaking piece about family bonds and loss in the midst of police corruption in Nigeria. Maryah Converse's "Becoming Bedouin: Daughter, Teacher, and Sister" is a brilliant glimpse into the narrator's experience with the Peace Corps in Jordan and her attempt to create a community beyond labels. Adrienne Lindholm's "Sweet Blue" also builds upon the concept of community: it speaks to the heartbreak of a mother who has lost her daughter to brain cancer and travels to Cuba, discovering the universality of suffering and healing in communities on the other side of the world. Stacy Parker LaMelle's "Left Alone" is another powerful reflection on identity and culture: through the eyes of a biracial narrator, this piece examines the desire to both be seen and unseen in her Detroit neighborhood.

Sasha West's poems offer a unique glimpse into motherhood, the precarious balance between humans, and nature in the modern world, while Andrew Garvin's "The Figure" moves beautifully



through the confines of time and gender. Meredith Davies Hadaway's poems provide a nostalgic look at the relationship between mother and daughter as well as the persistence of memory after death, and Emily Pérez's poetry explores the power of memory, illness, and healing with deep empathy and insight. Amanda Galvan Huynh's poems speak to the oppression that accompanies power play within families, racism, and migration, while Noel Sloboda's poem celebrates the beauty of cultural and artistic immersion. Maryam Zehtabi Sabeti Moqaddam's translation of a Persian piece, "The Antiques," explores the intersectionality of dreams, reality, and human connection. Finally, Aleks Merilo's one-act play, "Little Moscow," examines a Russian-Jewish experience of migration, community, and the difficulties in reconciling diverse identities.

In her poignant interview with *Silk Road*, Tiphonie Yanique, acclaimed author of *The Land of Love and Drowning*, speaks to the presence of Caribbean culture and Magical Realism in her work, as well as the connections between teaching, writing, and family in her life.

Collectively, these pieces examine, with great depth and power, a struggle to reconcile split communities and identities as a means to maintain a sense of unity, shared grief, and joy across cultures. We are thrilled to feature such a talented collection of authors in this issue and hope you, as readers, find these voices captivating as well.

With gratitude and warm wishes,

Dr. Keya Mitra and Taylor Farris, Editors-in-Chief

