## Introduction and Editor's Note

As with other unthemed issues of *WOW Review*, Vol. VI, Issue 3 takes readers across continents and across time with stories that cut across genres. These stories are as universal as they are unique in that they reveal how people face challenges, disasters, relationships, and daily life in both realistic and fantasy-driven ways.

Fantasy and legends establish a strong cultural context. Fantasy is the genre for the Russian tale, *Uncle Fedya, His Dog, and His Cat* and the Ukrainian story, *A Tale about an Old Lion*. Uncle Fedya is a child who discovers that the joys of running away from home are short-lived. And, amidst the unique problems of the animal characters visiting Ukraine, *A Tale about an Old Lion* introduces readers to the culture and hospitality of people in the capital city of this country. Hawaii, the Pacific island state, is the setting for *`A`ama Nui Guardian Warrior Chief of Lalakea*, an original legend that invites readers into Hawaiian culture.

Although traditional tales offer humor as well as value-laden connections, other books use historical fiction, fantasy and contemporary fiction as genres for portraying stories with heavy issues at the center. *The War within these Walls* focuses on the resiliency and resistance of Jewish people during the Holocaust, while *More Than This* explores the reality of life versus death in a British setting. Literature set in the Pacific is found in *Natural Destiny*, historical fiction from Guam that conveys the hardships of Japanese occupation during World War II. A more contemporary story, *Ano Hi no Koto Koto (The Things That Happened on That Day): Remember March 11, 2011*, comes from Japan and reflects the recent tsunami. And within the U.S., *Ghost Hawk* is critically examined for its portrayal of Native peoples. Latino cultures are examined through both poetry and informational text in *We are Latinos*—a book that shares both the challenges of Latinos and the heart of the culture that grounds their response to such challenges. New Zealand is the site for *Dear Vincent*, a contemporary and compelling story of suicide. From the Middle East, stories set in Iran and Lebanon offer greater insight to these two cultural groups. *That Night's Train* from Iran tells of a young girl who develops an unexpected relationship with a teacher, while *The Servant*, set in Lebanon in the 1980's, reflects the universal story of a young woman's struggle for identity.

Collectively, the reviews in this issue offer a brief slice of the possibilities of international literature for young readers through books that take readers into diverse cultures and eras while inviting them to respond to situations from their personal positions in life. Taking one's personal experiences into transactions with international stories in distinctly contextualized settings has rich potential for enhancing global perspectives. We look forward to sharing these reviews and titles as well as anticipate your response.

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