Introduction

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Dear residents of North Meridian, both far and near, welcome to the annual fall issue of the *North Meridian Review*. It is a pleasure to be writing to you from the editor’s desk. This year has seen a return to a more stable and normal schedule for our small journal, especially when compared to last year’s swerves and unexpected developments.

We are happy to report that we are still an independent journal, a public humanities publication for the humane of the world.

Changes to our world from the COVID-19 pandemic are still not fully understood. Daily we see updates about the ongoing climate crisis, political instability, and reactionary movements. But, as always, we place our hope in the continued struggles for economic and social justice, and the insistence that we retain our humanity even as billionaires and white supremacists try to set fire to the world. What we find is that our maintained humanity means we must fight back.

As I write this introduction, my campus of Jacksonville State University of Alabama is amid a labor union organizing drive. Those of us wanting a better university that centers human development, ethics, and sustainability are proud to join the United Campus Workers–Communication Workers of America as a new local. We cannot claim to be centers of higher thought, yet thoughtlessly allow our institutions to continue down a path of renovative destruction for the profit of a few.

This year’s issue truly reflects both the spirit of *NMR*’s original mission, as well as the efforts to organize on campus. You will find a conglomerate of different pieces, perspectives, and topics. Several of the contributors are returning writers, and even more are making their debut with us in this issue.
BJ Bruther returns with a follow-up to her essay from last year. Continuing with the theme of using pop culture productions such as the Marvel Cinematic Universe to better understand the prevalence of reactionary politics in today’s political spectrum.

Michael White provides a deeply researched essay on the labor organizing efforts of bookstore workers at Half Price Books. He is a former worker for the chain, and his scholarship is both timely and important for future labor historians.

MariJean Wegert has authored a stunning and beautiful prose poem/essay titled “The Witness of Trees,” while Ricardo Quintana-Vallejo and Marc Valle provide NMR with its first fiction section. Their stories, respectively, about homophobia and manhood, and enclaves and death, are great additions to the journal. We look forward to expanding the fiction section in coming years.

Our poetry section has once again a host of poets at different stages in their careers, while our art section has grown from last issue to feature not just the official artist in residence, this year Sarah Ellis with a beautiful series of prints titled “Little Worries,” but also three other artists, Adeyemi Doss, Audrey Grison, and Vivienne Rose who discuss race, disability, and fat liberation in their work.

Finally, we have our review section of scholarly and creative titles.

This year we at North Meridian are excited to also announce the launch of a new wing of publications called “North Meridian Books,” an outgrowth of the ideas, practices, and personalities at the North Meridian Review. Taken together, these two ventures will represent a larger endeavor called North Meridian Press.
We are a writer-led and artist-led press. We do not strive to become rich. Instead, we are interested in publishing works of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and translation that would otherwise not find homes at traditional publishers.

We are a press that is market adjacent and are proud to be so.

As we say, Donald Trump has found success in traditional publishing. Virginia Woolf began a small press to self-publish her works. We prefer to lean to Woolf over Trump.

As we grow and publish our first queue of titles, we will be discussing how to both compensate folks for their work while also maintaining an economically viable press.

Two final notes regarding misprints. Last year’s issue had two major mistakes. First, Charlie Wiles and John Lepley’s names were switched for attribution to their book reviews. It should have read that Wiles reviewed “The Peacemaker’s Path,” while Lepley reviewed “The Good Hand.” Also, for our special issue on the translation of the Auschwitz trial documents, the year of the trials was 1945, not 1940. We caught these errors after going to print, and have since updated them for the printer, and for our archived issues.

All in all, it is an exciting time at North Meridian, and we are glad you are here, dear reader.

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