

Letter from the Editors

Conflict is a common ground of avoidance, and dealing with it can be daunting, exhausting, excruciating. But as we honor the one year anniversary of the Boston Marathon bombing with campaigns like Boston Strong and a predicted record number of participants for this year's race, we are reminded that crisis also provides occasion to band together, overcome, and try to gain new understanding about our community—and our world.

This issue of *NU Writing* explores conflict on a gradient from tension to crisis, from micro to macro. These essays cover the gamut of ills: stress, pain, political unrest, interior wrestling, and sweeping tragedy are all present. But so is levity, hope, growth, and even triumph.

Many of our featured authors apply critical lenses to societal and worldly issues. In the opening essay, Margaret Soto and Ellie Buckhout examine the effects of trauma suffered in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombing. Ryan Leys offers a compelling examination of how technology can benefit students with developmental disabilities, while Dmitrij Borscz warns of the often-overlooked repercussions of privacy on social media sites. Corey Hoard delivers the stirring biography of Hedwig Kiesler, the Golden Age Hollywood star who battled discrimination and abuses throughout her career as an actress and inventor, consequently expanding the discourse on beauty and brains. Isha Singhal relates a captivating story of endurance as children of Indian slums contend with poverty, and in her gallery of artistic pieces, Alexandra Morris represents the duality of justice and perspective with creative renderings of World War II and 9/11.

The issue also explores the local struggles and victories which have defined so many of our university's diverse population. In her witty memoir, Janine Gong recalls the host of factors working against her during her black belt test, while Andrew O'Connor shares the story of his time in the military, working to dismiss the popular misconceptions about serving in the armed forces. Caolinn Sullivan weaves a powerful narrative about childhood loss, and Kevin Lacke shares his inspirational story of thwarting a speech impediment.

In these ways, the essays of this issue draw on the idea of functional conflict, allowing tension and crisis to serve as catalysts in diminishing hostilities, reshaping understandings of the self, and raising awareness about significant issues. Whether those issues be large or small in scale, we hope to highlight the progressive, impassioned thinking of our peers and foster emotional solidarity within our community by sharing their poignant works.

—Delaney, Melinda, Andrew, & Devon