

### Editor's Note

When Rachel and I were choosing a theme for this edition of RMR, one thing that we agreed on was that we wanted to hear Southern stories. Now, that aesthetic could've taken on many forms, but whatever way our writers told their stories, we knew there needed to be a presence of magic within them.

Magic is not simply witch's brew and hexes, or fae and familiars, although it very well could be. Magic is unique to the person and their experiences through life thus far. That magic that is inherent in Southern stories is not often seen as magic at all, but rather, takes on the form of tradition, or simply generational expectation. We wanted to know those perspectives, those traditions, those habits, those expectations, that magic.

Southern magic is often unspoken; woven so deeply within the fabric of our identities, that even the tone of the writing itself belies a unique Southern voice that rings true across any barrier or label. And yet each one is so unique because Southern identity is quilted together by factors such as generational poverty, agricultural economies, and racism, to name a few. That's why, after some time, I started to look at the idea of Southern stories as the quilts of our writer's experiences, stitched together by magic and love.

We wanted see our writer's quilts, the patches of their born or transplanted Southern experiences and how their quilts have grown over time. The patches could be neatly cut into their respective shapes but the stitching ragged. The patches could be a mess of sizes and shapes, but the stitching secure. Either way, however this quilt came into existence and is being held together, this quilt is cherished and valuable and unlike any other, even if all the materials are the same.

I think we've done that with this edition. Some of these voices are as unexpected as the tales being told themselves, but that's what makes being a Southerner so special and so unique. Expect to be surprised and enamored by what you find. Maybe you, reader, will find a story like your own here in this edition. Maybe you won't. But one thing I can be sure of, is that you'll know these stories and may very well add them to your own quilt.

Thank you to our writers for sharing their stories with us and all of those that helped us start this quilt of our own with this edition of RMR.

-Deidra