Maybe you told your first story to the stock clerk in the frozen food aisle. Or maybe you told it to your ceiling as you lay on your back, resolutely refusing to take a nap. No matter who or what your audience was, you immediately would have realized what you had stumbled upon: This translation of experience into words is a container of sorts, in which we can hold all of the things that have happened to us. The form is changeable – it could be poetry, fiction, narrative – but the heart of the experience shines through. We immediately begin to put that box to good use.

Stories are where we put our monsters. As we get older and our fears become too big to hide between the sidewalk squares and under our bed, we need somewhere else for them to go, and very often, they find their way out of our mouths or wriggle down through our fingers onto the page. Some of the pieces inside this magazine are someone’s monster, intensely familiar and very heavy to hold, and now placed in the story box and mailed off to the rest of the world.

Stories are also where we put our delight. The cracking-open of the first day of spring, thickly yellow and rising under your tongue like a birdsong. The first second of falling in love, reminiscent of standing next to a train as it blows past and takes your breath with it, all noise and color and motion. Unwilling to be lost, these moments too find their way out of us and onto the page.

The literary issue of the *Observer*, then, is a museum showcasing the brightest and darkest pieces of the people you have seen every day in your life on this campus. These writers have entrusted you and me with their stories, and there is no greater honor. I hope you, reader, open these boxes carefully, knowing what you have been given, and marvel at what you find inside.