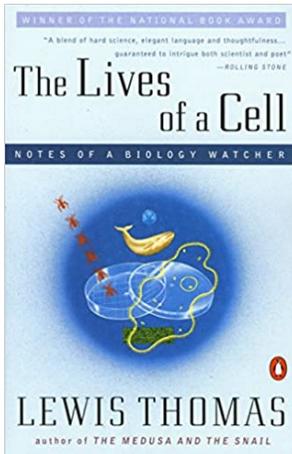
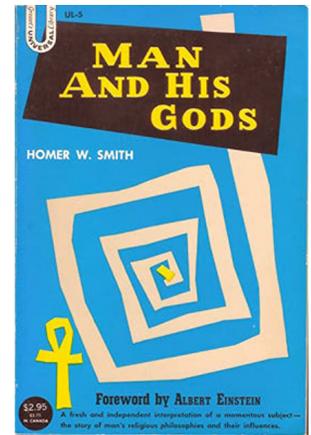
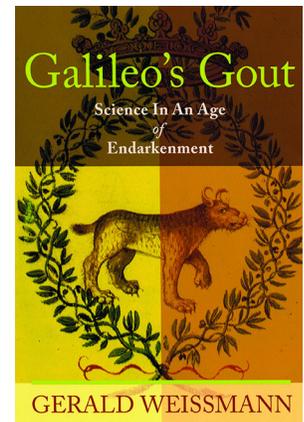


The central focus of the Bellevue Literary Press 2021 Fall Fête was to celebrate the press and to elaborate on its many accomplishments. BLP, now an independent nonprofit, had its origins in the NYU School of Medicine. I must give a bit of history that will link my background as a full-time member of the Department of Medicine at the NYU School of Medicine with my role as the Founding Publisher of BLP. The history can probably be traced to my meeting with Homer Smith in the 1950s. He was a pioneer nephrologist, but also a respected philosopher and writer. His book, *Man and His Gods*, published in 1952, was praised by Albert Einstein. I read his book after having a “tea with faculty” meeting with Professor Smith.



Lewis Thomas was Chief of Medicine when I was a student. He was a prolific writer and an outstanding popular science essayist. He brought his remarkable insight into the understanding of human disease. I still recommend his *The Lives of a Cell* to students.

Gerald Weissmann, a renowned NYU rheumatologist, was a marvelous essayist and science popularizer. His *Galileo's Gout* was BLP's first published book, and we went on to publish three more of his books. He died in 2019; we had planned to honor his life and work at last year's BLP fête until we were forced to cancel by the earliest signs of the pandemic in NYC.



I tried my hand at writing in 1991 when I wrote a book explaining acid-base physiology. I went on to write a novel about Lawrence Henderson, an outstanding acid-base physiologist and systems theorist at Harvard in the early 20th century. When I could not find an agent or publisher, Gerry Weissmann recommended that I contact Erika Goldman. Erika read the manuscript and made some suggestions. We met four times over the following year, usually over wine and pasta. Each time Erika asked probing questions about what I thought about Henderson and his ideas.

Around the time of our last meeting, aware that I served as an editor of the *Bellevue Literary Review* and had contact with many writers, Erika pitched the idea of founding a literary book press within the School of Medicine. Over the ensuing months, the idea that she planted in my mind took root and, with the support of Marty Blaser, then the Chief of Medicine, I reached the conviction that Erika Goldman would be a perfect editor. I must admit that I had little knowledge of the world of not-for-profit publishing when we began, almost fifteen years ago, but I will tell you that it has been an incredible learning experience. Erika had a long history of working with mainstream publishers but her goal, as she explained it to me, was to publish works of very high quality, rather than commercial appeal. She passed each submission that she chose to me for my approval. When we accepted a book for publication, it was clear that she worked closely with each author to develop

what she saw as the strength of the author's vision. It is Erika's expertise and devotion that have brought BLP to a place of prominence. The result can be seen in BLP's accomplishments: a Pulitzer Prize in fiction (Paul Harding's *Tinkers*) and many other awards.

As Founding Publisher of Bellevue Literary Press, I'm proud of our achievements. I hope you'll support us so that we can continue fulfilling our mission of engaging the two cultures of the arts and sciences in a rich and fruitful conversation that honors the legacy of Homer Smith, Lewis Thomas, and Gerald Weissmann through the books we publish.

Jerome Lowenstein, MD
Founding Publisher of Bellevue Literary Press