

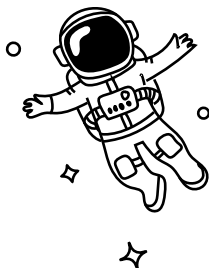
The Noisy Water Review

Whatcom Community College



2026

The Noisy Water Review



A Whatcom Community College showcase of student works, including nonfiction, poetry, fiction, and visual artwork of all kinds.

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Thank you to Sebastian G. Fish, for the use of "In the Prussian Blue Sea." This piece uses digital line art, layered over underwater stock photography and cyanotype printed.

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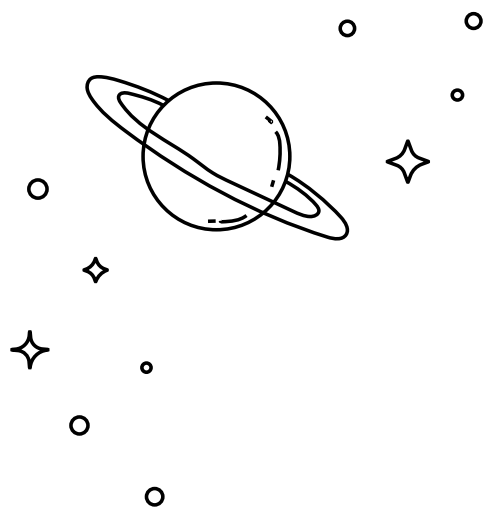
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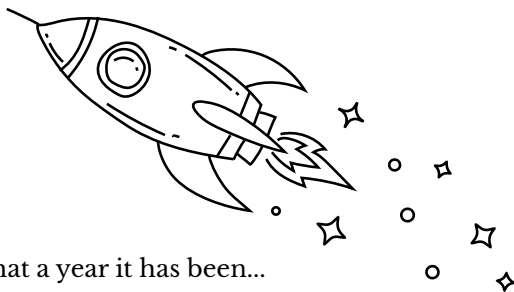
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Introduction

Welcome to the *Noisy Water Review*, Whatcom Community College's anthology of student work – including poetry, fiction, nonfiction, music, and various forms of visual artwork!



Whoosh, and what a year it has been...

Which makes it all the more important to celebrate the amazing talents of the WCC students – artists, writers, musicians, and Horizon editors alike. I hope the students showcased in this publication feel proud of their works, as well they should. I also hope all the students not showcased here (yet) likewise feel proud of their work, and are busy hatching plans to submit their artwork next year.

And yes, it is our firm desire to continue this publication next year, although the Horizon organization will be taking new shape, and thus the scaffolding for this publication has likewise changed. If you relish the opportunity to see student work published in such a forum, I hope you take the opportunity to speak to your student and administrative leaders – and voice your support for keeping a place for student publications at this college, regardless of the challenge budget cuts bring. With luck – and your advocacy – the *Noisy Water Review* will continue for years to come.

Wishing you all the best for your upcoming summer and next year.

Joanna Kenyon

English and Journalism Instructor

Noisy Water Review Project Manager

“What light does”

by Daisy Brand

created during Joanna Kenyon’s class

At evening’s dawn
light casts a shadow
upon crumbing shingles
and wall-less beams.
A sagging skeleton
as if its past
is still too heavy to burden.

Charred like the dry
cracked desert,
broken walls shakily stand,
tall and thin with peeling paint
from long ago.
Blacked
from the tattooed flames staining
once porcelain cement.

Rust creeps -
like orange hoar frost -
over metal window frames
and across mangled,
twisted, melted,
strangled shapes of iron beds.
Taking shape of the minds
they once held
upon them.

Though now little is left
there are still things that hold memories
of eternal tears

and strangled nonsense.
But most of all
hopelessness.

But as the light begins to fade
rays illuminate
with golden monotones
wedding dress buds on creeping jade vines.
Reaching for purchase
inhaling the day's last offering.

And the gaping hole
faced north
a chasm from inside to out
jagged edges padded
with soft moss and lichen
in conversation with the nodding heads
of positive bluebells.

Each day that passes,
each Spring that comes
slowly,
surely,
the place for the hopeless
becomes a place for the hopeful.

Though by the door,
Long gone from its hinges
a cluster of blue whispers
forget-me-not.
Forget-me-not.

“i wish to age like a leaf”

by Trina Trinh

I wish to age like a leaf:
visibly,
vibrantly.

burst open from my bud in spring
I, the teeny tiny spear
soft and waxy and new

as summer hums forth, I can grow into something
a squirrel or maybe a fairy
could use as an umbrella
bedazzling me in itty bitty raindrops

then in autumn; I get festive
a supernova of colors,
maybe not as dramatic as a dying star, though
steeping into a deep ruby red
like a tea bag

Then in winter, I collapse.
just like Virginia said
I'll become the home for a caterpillar
sleeping in its soil bed.

and there won't be a phase I regret
and there won't be a phase I regret.



"Unyield"

by Simone Janae White

ink painting



"Still Moments"
by Soleil Navarro
oil painting

“Still & Unmet”

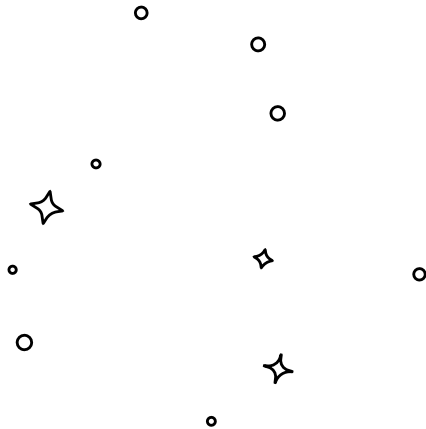
by Madelyn Harrell

haiku created during Dr. Andrea Romero's class

Water mirrors me

No ripples reach where I drift

Night's silence, endless



“The Silence of the Desert”

by Skye Beardsley

created during Dr. Andrea Romero’s class

I rubbed my toes into the warm sand, the desert stretching endlessly before me. The horizon glowed with the last light of day, without a building or road in sight. Behind me, a small group of ten huddled around a fire, cooking dinner, laughing faintly, swapping fragments of their lives before ending up here. It felt barren, hopeful, and hopeless all at once. We were fifty miles from the nearest town and 1,221 miles from my home. Sitting on the desert floor, dust clinging to my legs and smoke stinging my nose, I felt the ache of distance, not just physical, but emotional. I didn’t know my future, but I knew I wouldn’t return to the life I knew before; it would be a long time before I saw my family and friends again.

Two weeks earlier, I woke up in bed in the small house I had shared with my mother. I brushed my teeth, packed my bag, and went to school like any other spring morning. I was fifteen, nearly finished with my sophomore year. Now, that life felt like it belonged to someone else. Since that day, I had been captured and taken from my bed in the early morning and transported to the barren desert of Southern Utah.

My feet were raw, and blisters covered my heels, peeling open with each step. We had hiked miles that day to find a new place to camp that night. No electricity, running water, or contact with the outside world existed. Just seven teens, ranging from thirteen to seventeen, and three adults who watched over us - not quite guardians, not quite captors. Three of us had tried to escape within two days of arriving, sprinting barefoot into the mountains with a small bag of food. But we were found quickly, tracked by our footprints, we were restrained and returned to camp. I cried that night, not from fear but from the hopelessness of realizing there was nowhere to run. So, I stayed.

With time, it became clear that the only way to get out of this place was to follow the rules, hike each day, do the work they asked of me, and, most importantly, take accountability for the actions that led me there.

At first, I resisted. I denied I had a problem and convinced myself I didn't deserve to be torn from home and put here with people who, in my eyes, were far more broken than I was. But as the days passed, something shifted. I began to see that we weren't so different. Each of us was lost in our way, searching in a world that didn't offer us space for our pain, we turned to numbing ourselves with substances, thrill-seeking, or rebellion.

We rose at sunrise every morning, packed our sleeping bags and tarps, hoisted heavy backpacks over our shoulders, and walked. If someone refused to hike, the group stayed put, rationing water until they changed their mind.

The desert was unforgiving, yet it gave me the silence I didn't know I needed. I had been using drugs up until the day I was sent away. But now, without distractions, no phones, music, or chaos, feeling returned to me with force. The hum of the wind through the juniper trees, the call of a bird overhead, and the dust beneath our feet all became louder than the noise I used to drown myself in.

The birds would sing me awake each morning as I rubbed the sleep from my eyes. The air was brisk, and I pulled my hoodie over my head before stepping away from my sleeping bag. I would try to rise before the others, stepping away from the group sleeping under the morning dew. I walked to the fire pit, crouching barefoot on the earth, and knelt humbly before the warmth of the last night's coals.

We slept without tents, just a tarp if it rained and a thin mat beneath our backs. There was no schedule, no guarantee of food beyond the food we were given each week that was our responsibility to ration. But strangely, I felt more at peace in my body than I ever had before.

This was my second time being sent away. The first hadn't worked because I hadn't wanted it to. But now, I was

starting to understand something more profound. Change wouldn't come unless I chose it, owned it, and walked toward it one step at a time.

I missed showers. I missed the taste of ice cream on my lips. But longing for those comforts only hollowed out whatever joy I might find in the present moment. I began learning how to listen to my body and soul's stillness. My only anxiety came from the "what ifs" of the future. Out there, things were unknown. But here, in the dust and smoke, I was beginning to feel something close to home.

Seventy-five days I explored the desert and the inner depths of my soul.

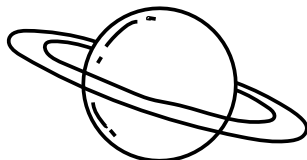
The day I finally left the desert, I was driven away in an old pickup truck down a windy dirt road back to civilization. I was brought back to the same feeling I had felt looking out across the desert in the first days of arriving here. I felt an ache in my chest, and the depth of this was just the first step into another unknown chapter. Although I felt hope and joy to be returning to the world, my heart was tender. I wasn't leaving with all the answers but with trust in myself that whatever the future held, I knew in my bones that I was capable. The land had gifted me the space to grieve, reflect, learn, and strengthen my clarity and physical ability to traverse any challenge the universe put in front of me. From the desert air's stillness, the long hikes that pushed my body to its limits, and the silence that filled the space where distraction used to live. It reminded me that I was still alive and that being alive meant I still had a choice.

There's light that is steady and strong in us, no matter what we've been through. I learned that real change isn't loud. It's quiet. It's waking up and choosing to take care of yourself so that you can keep walking even when it hurts. The desert didn't give me closure, but it gave me space, and in that space, I started believing in myself again. I could feel everything I had been through and still carry on, and that maybe I wasn't too far gone to build a life I could be proud of.

Sandra Cisneros writes in *Caramelo*, “The truth, these stories are nothing but story, bits of string, odds and ends found here and there, embroidered together to make something new.” This story, the one I’m telling you is true, or at least as true as memory allows. I may have stitched moments together like embroidery, colored in some emotions with a brighter brush, or softened others with the distance of time. But what remains is the feeling, the ache of transformation, the grit of truth, and the quiet beginning of healing.

Works Cited

Cisneros, Sandra. *Caramelo*. New York: Vintage, 2003.



“handmade compass”

by Trina Trinh

peak between
the gaps
of your tired, dewy fingers

slack and loose -
blurry at first -
is that sliver of light

the perfect width
to thread the eye
of a needle -
floating in a bowl of water.

hovering, glinting
the lingering embrace of a magnet
guides its assured hand
northbound
while its metal eye stares into your own.

the moon is silver
and unfamiliar
but the reflected glow of the sun
is all you need

you, who are lost and weary -
who fears the darkened night
turn your head clockwise
and wait.



"dissonance"

by Simone Janae White

linocut blockprint



"everywhere there's magic"

by Laura Minoia

cut-paper collage, created during Andrea Heimer's class

“Ode to Those that Raise the Banner”

by Jay Eckton

created during Joanna Kenyon's class

I see you arrive from my window
gleaming silver on fly-speckled stallion, dashing
up to the castle walls, you climb anchor vines
unused and beaming emerald. I let you
into my room, and you say
with a willing blade, “Take me to whoever did this to you.”

Valiant knight!

Cast that sword aside for
the dragons are sleeping now and
I have always thought you were better suited at
fighting with your love, so you may remove your helmet
and doff the heavy plates
your shield has no purpose here.

We'll go to the sunny courtyard with the
cherry blossoms and sit by the fountain.
I am no healer, but let me wash your wounds
with vinegar and honey, I will dry your tears
with the sleeves of my dress.

Neither of us asked to be born or
have these archetypes thrown upon us
smothering our childhoods in the weight of expectation.
See, your chivalrous oath is valued by me but
has anyone sworn themselves to you?
Who will raise the banner alongside you
in the embers of the hatred of this world?
Stay here a while, under these cosmic rays.
Take this flower.
I promise that I will help you too.

“Ode to Those Behind Tower Walls”

by Zoey Pope

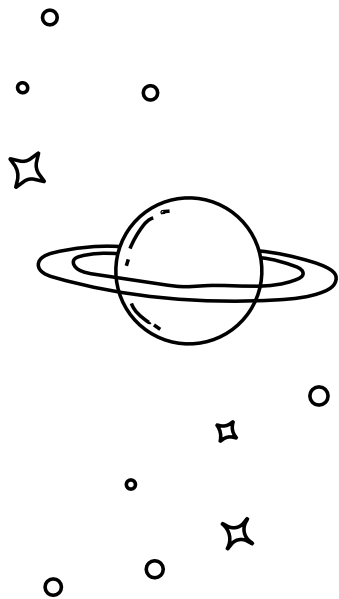
this choice was never yours
was it?
no, you did not ask to be born this way
crown nailed into your skull
a body for your kingdom
- never for you

the clothes are too stiff
the rooms too empty
the fire too cold
the blades too sharp
the mantle too heavy
the mirror too honest

your castle isn't for you
twas meant for a daughter
or was it a son?
every tower has a princess
every dungeon, a prince
every glass case ensnares a crown

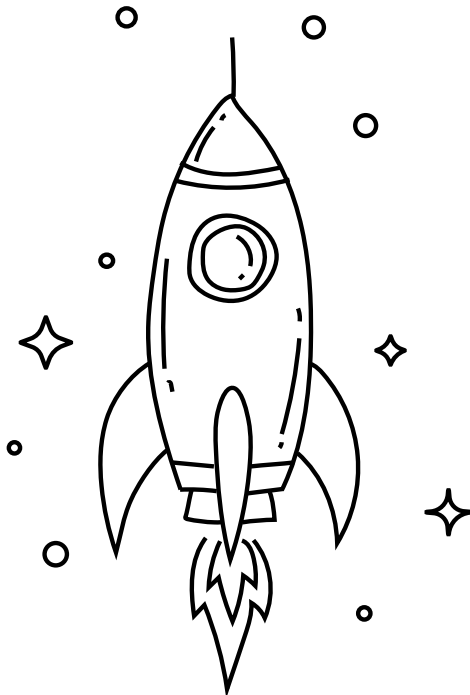
they say, sweet thing,
just prick your finger upon this spinning wheel
its easier to sleep everything away
just take a bite of the apple
loathed in the garden, loved for the silence it brings
just cut that long hair, no one will climb a tower for you

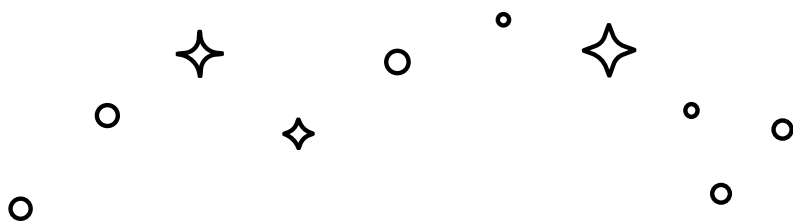
i have never been one to sit quietly
and allow injustice to be served
so dress me in plates of armor
and call me dame
hand me the sword and tell me which dragon to slay
point me towards the ones who have kept you locked away



A Musical Interlude...

We hope to showcase more original music from WCC's talented student musicians in the future! Their music will be archived by the WCC library, and hyperlinked in to the online PDF of this journal.





["Adrenaline Spikes"](#)

by Grace Stevens

created during Melanie Sehman's class

Visit the above hyperlink in the WCC library archives to find this musical piece!

“Rhythm Drum”

by Micah Petrich

Learning notes of	songs unknown
Language from a-	nother tongue
Moving feet like	never seen
My heart beats to	rhythm drum

Meaning Comes	from Deep within
Time unfolds its knowing	
Words Become to make sense	
Education's ever-growing	

Passion Strikes	no turning back
Bridges mend the difference	
Culture Views	Moral Hughes
Blend increasing richness	

Familiarity as	Memories breach
Another time where	We're all One
Stories in the breeze from	Ancestors past
Our hearts beat to	rhythm drum



"nala the dragon"

by Myah Krause

acrylic paint



"eyescream"

by Myah Krause

clay/thrift store find created during Brian Cope's class

“Jealousy Pool”

by Daisy Brand

created during Joanna Kenyon’s class

There is a gelatinous pool
filled with wobbly slime,
infused with lumps of ooze.

The pool is silent,
clear, tranquil,
never a ripple.

But then something begins;
possessed by an external force,
wavelets tumble over surface.

The clear turns to murk,
then sickly green, air suddenly soupy
of sour sulfur and overripe limes.

That jelly pool stars to bubble,
with undulating domes
popping in sucking, squelching, snaps.

Sickly green has turned rotten spinach,
the jello a boil, rumbling,
sour slime fingers reaching, huge bubbles slopping.

Then turmoil begins to settle
leaving only a stewing stench,
pool tinted still, pale green.

Leaving gelatinous pool filled with wobbly slime,
infused with lumps of ooze.
Sour and unsettled.

"Soneto CIV 104"

by the Fall 2025 English 133

Inspired by Pablo Neruda's "Soneto XVII," this soneto was written collaboratively by students in ENGL 133: Introduction to Latine Literature.

You are the shadow behind my heart, complex and deep;
Entangled love, as lucid carnation dreams,
My roots hidden, like the plant that doesn't flower;
Our love transcends nature and remains unutterable.
I love you, darkly, close within my body;
So close your eyes, and enter all of my dreams.
Our love, heed the unknown, glows inner phloem,
Where the plant keeps its hidden light.
I love you in dreams, in my body, and soul;
Shadow-soul complexities, love dark without light.
Dreams live on, between the shadow and the soul.
I love you, I don't know another way, unveil.
I love you, as certain rain falls and sun shines;
Open my heart, as an arrow of fire.

Neruda Inspired

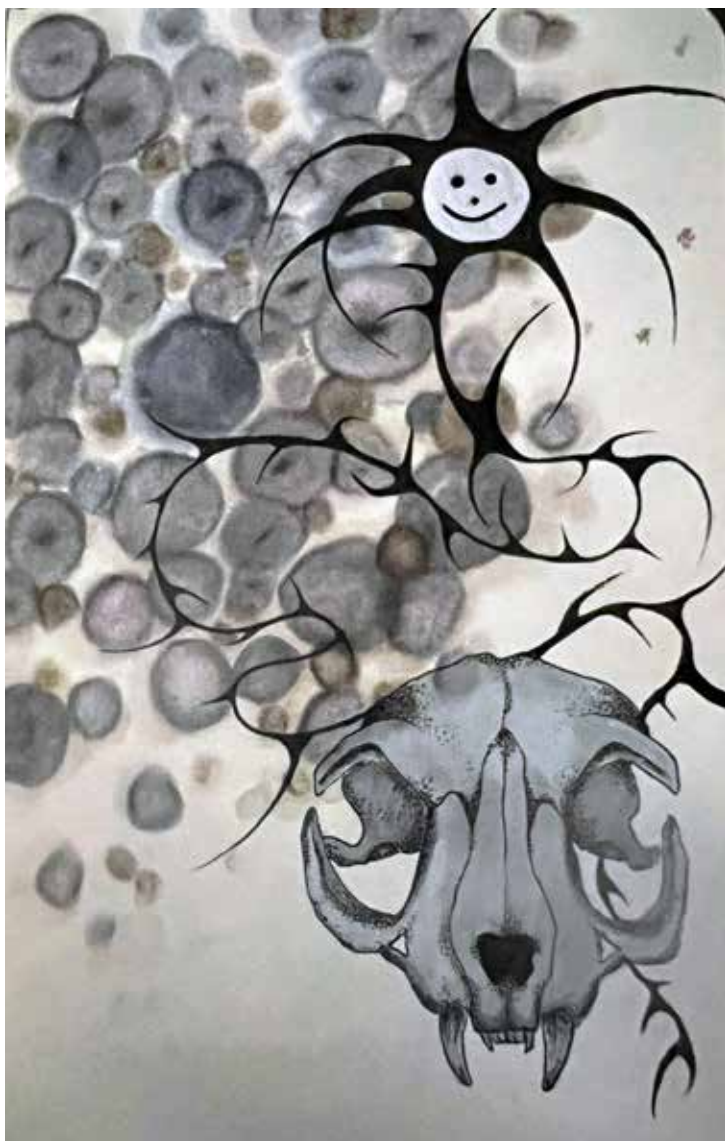
La sombra que yace detrás de mi corazón, compleja y profunda,
amor enredado como sueños lúcidos de clavel,
mi raíz oculta, como la planta que nunca florece,
nuestro amor trasciende la naturaleza, indecible.
Te amo, en la oscuridad, tan cerca dentro de mi cuerpo,
cierra los ojos, entrar en todos mis sueños.
Nuestro amor, abrazando lo desconocido, arde en la savia,
donde la planta guarda su luz secreta.
Te amo en los sueños, en mi cuerpo y en el alma,
sombra y alma entrelazadas: amar oscuro, sin luz.
Los sueños sobreviven entre la sombra y el alma.
Te amo, no conozco otra manera de amar, me revelo,
te amo como la lluvia segura que cae y el sol que brilla,
abre mi corazón como una flecha de fuego.



"A pose with mold"

by Alex Enriquez

marker and pen, created during Dr. Andrea Romero's class



"Mold, cat skull and sketch"

by Alex Enriquez

marker and pen, created during Dr. Andrea Romero's class

“In My Life”

by Amanda Howe

created during Dr. Andrea Romero’s class

“In my life, I loved you more.”

The Beatles, 1965

When I listen to the lyrics of my father’s favorite Beatles song, I immediately go to a few different memories in my life. I go to a few happy and joy-filled moments, like the time he took me to my first concert.

I go back to opening the door to my dad standing there with a dozen pink and yellow roses with baby’s breath. When I looked in the background, I realized that my dad arrived in a limousine that he rented for the occasion. He gave me the most magical night any ten-year-old could only dream of.

I go back to a few moments that matured me and taught me lessons, like the time I snuck out of the house. I thought I was going to get away with it until I was trying to climb back into my window to hear a voice behind me say, “You need a lift?” I turned around to find my dad standing right behind me. I replied with a smile. “Is there any way I could just use the front door?”

However, the moment I go back to most often is the moment I last saw him, the moment that my life changed forever. The moment I lost my father.

I go back to the moment that would impact every aspect of my life going forward. I was just five days past my seventeenth birthday. I was at the age when I should have been worried about what dress I would wear to my prom and what my teacher was going to put on our next math test. Instead, I was trying to figure out how to move forward in my life without the one person I could always count on to be my rock and be with me through all the major milestones in my life. I was thinking about the future without him in it. I remember thinking about how my conversations had drastically changed from stupid teenager gibberish to serious conversations about different types of urns and what needed to be included in the celebration of life.

Even though it has been almost thirteen years since he passed, I can still remember every detail of my father's memorial like it happened yesterday.

I remember the flower arrangements, the pictures in the memorial video, the people that attended and did not attend, but most of all I remember the music.

My dad loved The Beatles and would play them constantly on repeat. I know I must have heard the song "In My Life" a dozen times but never truly heard it until that day. I remember listening to it and everything in the room felt silent. It felt like the only thing I could feel and hear was the lyrics and my father's presence. I could hear my dad singing along to the music, closing his eyes as he felt the music in his soul, I could feel the warmth of my dad's presence fill the room around me. I knew at that moment at the service that when I listened to this song I would be able to instantly feel the presence of my dad.

"In my life, I loved you more." The lyrics I think about constantly.

They talk about the love for a child being unconditional, but what about the love for a parent? The love I have for my dad still continues to mature. I talk to people who were part of his life, and they tell me stories I never knew about him. It is like those stories awaken the love I have for him and all these emotions just start to pour out of me.

When someone in your life passes, so many different things run through your head. You come up with many hypothetical scenarios about what could have been in my life with that person. There are many life events my dad missed since he passed away when I was still a teenager. He missed my graduation, first job, first car, going to college, relationships, and many more. All moments most people would want their parents to be there for. Also things that I hope for in the future like marriage and children. I always hoped for that father daughter dance at my wedding.

I used to dream of the first time my dad would hold me in his arms after I became a wife and was no longer his little girl. The way he would try to lead me onto the dance floor while trying to not let me trip over my lace, white dress. And now, the dream has changed.

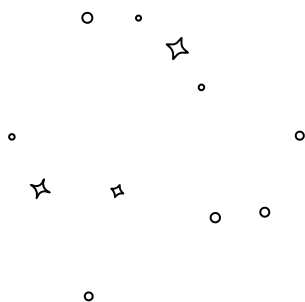
I now dream of dancing with my uncle to the song that makes me feel closest to my dad – “In My Life.” I imagine closing my eyes, listening to this song, feeling my dad’s presence all around me. I imagine feeling my dad’s embrace holding me close and finally giving me away.

So the question I now ask myself: in my life, did I love him more – like the lyrics in the song say?

I have loved him in every aspect of my life. I have loved him in childhood, in grief, in loss, in adulthood, and in every part of my life that has yet to exist. I have continued to nurture and care for the love I have for him, while the love my dad had for me closed its chapter that night in February. So yes, in my life I loved you more.

Works Cited

The Beatles. “In My Life.” *Rubber Soul*, Parlophone, 1965.



“what to do with grief”

by Trina Trinh

put it into your breast pocket
letting it soak and melt
into the fibers of your favorite shirt

let it rest
and radiate
and spread
like crayons left by summer’s window
wax dripping down the wallpaper
and onto the carpet

and when it is done melting
do not tell yourself it is over
but it is done for now

the waves are done with their dance
returning to the ocean
melting into the sea

and you, my dear sailor,
have dealt with this all before
and will again
and you shall brave it all



"flight"

by Simone Janae White
drawing



"Unconscious Reflections"
by Soleil Navarro
graphite

“Inpatient”

by Nick Coyle

short story created during a learning contract with Anna Wolff

You are three months into seeing a new therapist, your first since high school, when he tells you he can't help you anymore.

“I really think I'm not equipped to help you. I think you need a higher level of care. I can send the referral to The Program today, if you'll let me. But even if you don't go, I don't feel comfortable treating you anymore. I really hope you'll think about The Program.”

The relief you felt before, that you wouldn't have to see him anymore, congeals in your throat. You came here, you tried it, it didn't work. Doesn't that mean you're allowed to stop? You swallow this question along with your dread. It settles heavy in your stomach.

You tell him it's fine. You get it. He can send the referral, and you will think while you wait to hear back.

The last one isn't even a lie. You do think about it. While you're driving to work. While you're at work. While you're driving home from work. While you're lying in bed after work. For the next week all you can think about is how shitty it feels for your therapist to break up with you and how you didn't even like him that much in the first place. He talked over you, overreacted to things, never really understood what you were trying to tell him. It was annoying and you spent the majority of each session zoned out, but that was supposed to be fine. That's all therapy has ever been: a place to stare at a wall while you try and avoid saying something too bad. Eventually, you decide that must have been why he left you. You're out of practice after so many years and you slipped up. Said something crazy enough for him to leave.

Insurance gets back to you before The Program does. An email that lets you know that all treatment has been preapproved. It's only now that you begin to feel scared. Every month you have to call and beg them to approve your inhaler for the thousandth time, but this got stamped

in less than a week? It feels like a mistake, but then again, it's starting to feel like something else. You knew you were in danger, right? That's why you went to some guy in the first place. Because you were passing out at work. Because you had been driving aimlessly in circles instead of going home. Because you couldn't fall asleep every night without taking four shots first.

Because you were starting to actually feel sick.

So you feel stupid in a way you don't understand, because you have just been doing what you were told. It's a special kind of dumb where you know that you messed it all up somehow, but you still feel like you were doing it right. You're angry and confused and alone and you decide to go. If nothing else because Insurance is telling you that you should. It feels nice to be given directions.

Your mom calls and you tell her what you're doing and ask her not to tell dad yet. He calls you later that night.

"Your mom told me," he says. "I'm not saying you shouldn't go. I just want you to be smart about it. Those places lock you up for as long as they can, because they make money the longer you're there. Don't let them try and give you anything, or shock you, or transfer you somewhere. I'll drive down and get you if they won't let you out, okay? Just say the word. I love you."

The packet you were given says that you can leave at any time. You're no longer sure if you can trust that. You already paid for your bus ticket though, so it's not like you have a choice.

Standing in the parking lot, the building looks different than you had expected. A three-story office building in the middle of a downtown hot spot isn't quite an abandoned asylum in a horror movie. The huge glass windows and gray metal exterior is modern and professional. From what you can see of the interior, the light beige walls and warm upholstery is intimate and welcoming. It makes you question if you are even at the right place. You already called the number you were given for intake, who said she would be down in a minute, which leaves you standing in the dark early morning, idly kicking slush off your boots.

One minute passes. Two minutes pass. By the third minute, you are panicking, sure that you messed everything up, that you're in the wrong place for real, that maybe you even messed up before this, do they even know you're coming?

Even the sight of a woman in scrubs doesn't calm you. Now you actually have to follow her, take the elevator up to the top floor, watch as she badges into two doors, and sit down as she asks you to wait here for just a sec. As you wait, you look around. The best way to describe the lobby is generic. Generic splotches-of-gold artwork hangs in generic black plastic frames above a generic orange couch that sits kitty corner to a generic shag rug. You understand what they were going for. Nonthreatening blandness wraps you in its tight embrace. In a way, it does make the stacks of paperwork easier to fill out.

You move through the morning in the same blur you have been moving through most of your days lately. They take your bag to look through, and you hope no one is lying that it will be in your room later today. You get a physical, and you tell the doctor yes to almost every question they ask. Yes, you do get dizzy often, sometimes fainting. Yes, the hair on your head has been coming out in clumps. Yes, you are constantly cold and so tired you can't move. They release you and take you across the hall to your next appointment.

You meet your for now therapist and she asks you a bunch of questions you've answered a bunch of times before. At some point you started crying, and it's hard to focus on anything other than trying to make it stop.

"That must have sucked to grow up with," she says, handing you a second tissue box. "Your dad sounds like an asshole."

The word choice almost makes you laugh, but it's what she said that makes you pause. You sit up straighter. The room that had felt stuffy and too warm before now feels freezing cold. You are too confused to keep crying. The cold is clinging to your skin, the warmth under it from your body making it burn with discomfort, and a pressure builds between your ears and behind your nose as you physically

take in this information.

“What do you mean?”

“Just that it was wrong to say things like that to you. It makes sense that you would internalize a message like that, especially coming from someone you trust.”

The pressure is getting worse, sharply spiking behind your eyes, causing the tears to fall again as you worry that your skull is splitting. There is no room left in your head for you to take in what she said, so instead you look around. You can feel your dad’s eyes on you, your chest tightening in response. Hopefully he can’t hear you, if you’re making him sound like an asshole.

You don’t know where the day went, but suddenly it’s dark outside and they are having you unpack. You’re sharing a room that was clearly once someone’s office with two others, each of you assigned a folding twin bed and an amazon dresser shoved into a corner, as far from each other as you can be in a space this small. They lay on their beds and ignore you. Grateful, you turn around and give them the same gift.

On your bed is Carmilla, a stuffed sloth in a vampire costume you bought when you were supposed to be shopping for kitchen supplies for your first apartment. You still don’t own a pan. It’s worth it though, Carmilla has been much more useful. Your dad had made fun of her the first time he had seen your place, and then again when you joked about bringing her here with you.

“People are going to think you’re stupid for having it,” he had said that second time. “I would never, I love you. But not everyone does.”

As you sit on the bed, you run your hands over her head, twisting her little arms in your hand gently, feeling the soft fur on your fingertips as you breathe. In spots, the fur is worn from use. The black silky cape slips over your palm, cool and smooth. You make a point to focus on the comforting feelings in your hands, as opposed to the weird ones in your chest. Tomorrow morning, one of your roommates will tell you they like your sloth.

“It’s really cute,” she’ll say. “It was smart to bring

something like that from home. I should have grabbed one of my beanie babies.”

You’ve been practicing with your emotion wheel, so you are able to tell your therapist that you feel angry, and under that anger is frustration and worry.

“What is frustrating you?” she asks.

“I keep messing up. People keep saying things and I try and respond but I keep doing it wrong.”

An eyebrow lifts but she keeps her mouth tight, an expression you’ve come to recognize means she already knows what you are trying to say, but she’s going to force you to say it anyway.

“What do you mean by wrong? What sort of things are they saying?”

“Just wrong. Like, not right,” you say and then stop. You’re not trying to be obtuse, it’s just that everything seems to come out different than you mean. “I just... like, I know it’s wrong. It’s not the answer they wanted, or it doesn’t do what it’s supposed to, and then they look at me weird and I don’t know what I’m supposed to say next and I just... I don’t know. I’m not sure how to fix it.”

“When you say it doesn’t do what it’s supposed to, what do you mean by that? You aren’t getting the results you want?”

“No, not... it’s not about what I want, it’s about what they’re supposed to say next, and when they don’t say it, I just get thrown off. Like they went off script, and I’m frustrated that I don’t understand why they did that and angry that I’m in this position now and worried that I don’t know what’s going to happen next.”

She looks at you and you look away, choosing to focus on shredding the tissue in your hand. Finally, she decides what to say.

“That does sound really frustrating. I can imagine that it makes it really hard to interact with people if you are putting that much energy into doing it right.” She pauses, waiting for a response. You nod. She’s not wrong. “Do you think it might be helpful to stop thinking of it as a script

though? Maybe if you reframed it as something less rigid, you wouldn't have so much anxiety around saying the right or wrong thing?"

She waits again for a response, but you just stare at the ground, hands still working to try and keep you calm. Pulling apart another tissue, you focus on the paper in your hand and not the safety that she is trying to take away.

Later, during free time, you sit on the floor in the hallway and call your sister. The call rings out and sends you to voicemail so you hang up and call again. When she picks up, you're overwhelmed by the noise level. Muscle memory takes over and you pull your knees to your chest, making yourself small, hiding from the sound of screaming about your mom being a "stupid fucking cunt."

"Hey," she says, out of breath. At first you think you can feel her shaking through the phone, but when you look at your hand you realize it's you. "Now isn't a great time. I can call you back tomorrow, okay?"

"Okay. Where are you? Is everything ok?" you ask, but you know where she is. You know the sound of his voice.

"I'm fine. It's nothing. Dad just came home pissed off about something. I don't know what, but I've gotta go. Bye."

Before she hangs up, you hear something shatter, probably a plate thrown at a wall or a picture frame hurled at where someone had been standing. A door slams, more screaming, and then the call disconnects.

You sit on the floor until one of The Aides comes to tell you it's time for bed.

A week before you are scheduled to discharge, you tell your therapist you really don't want to go back home.

"You're not stepping down into outpatient?"

You are, but that's not what you mean. You like how many people are here, there are way more pride flags, and there is a whole mountain range between you and your family.

"But I'm supposed to go back," you say, deciding to let yourself cry as you do. It feels easier, choosing not to hold

them back, but it feels worse that you didn't try and fight it. "I have a job and an apartment and I'm supposed to dog sit for my boss next month and... I don't know. I just have to go back but I really don't want to."

"I mean... I don't think you have to. Those aren't the sort of things that you absolutely have to follow through with. You can give your job notice and break your lease if you want to. I know you were planning on going to the program online, but we have an outpatient campus here too. It might take a second to figure out, but it would all be doable."

You cry so hard that you feel like you might puke. You have before. Your therapist nudges her trashcan closer, just in case. Pain radiates through your body from how hard your muscles are clenched and you can't stop shaking from the tension. You don't want to come here either. Or maybe, looking at the chart, you are scared to commit to moving. It sounds really hard and you are already sure you would mess it up somehow. You want it to go back to the way it was, when everything sucked but you didn't know it yet and it wasn't your fault because you didn't have a choice.

You say okay anyway. You want to move here, and you need to do it quickly and you don't know how to do it on your own because you've never moved without help. So you ask for it, and your therapist smiles, big and real, the way she does every time you ask for help.

You waffle on the idea for the rest of the time you are there. On the day you call your family, tell them that you are moving here permanently, that they have better care in this city than theirs, it feels like someone is going to hit you through the phone. But after you hang up, you breathe and your chest actually expands enough to let the air in.

You put off telling them until the last minute, so it's the next day that you are being stepped down and transferred to the outpatient facility. As you are discharged, you are handed an envelope full of cards, handmade at craft time. Taking it, you stuff it into your bag, and then forget about it as you try and get through another intake day. It's almost exactly the same as before, an equally generic series of

rooms filled with the same kinds of questions from the same types of professionals you answered when you first got to inpatient months ago, just in a larger building that you are allowed to come and go from as you please.

The room you're provided is smaller, but you will take a closet with no roommates over your last dorm-style assignment. Unpacking in the beautiful silence that comes with being actually alone and unwatched for the first time in months, you are confused when you unzip your bag to find a blank manilla envelope at the top of the pile. As you turn it over, a rainbow of construction paper pours out, landing in a pile on your bed. You have to fight the urge to just put them back and hide from them, until you spot one that stands out. Picking it up, you read over the short message.

Wishing you all the best in out-patient and beyond. You're a star! Thank you for all your support and your endless creativity. It helped me more than you know.

Around the border he's drawn stars, moons, little planets, and sparkles. Right by your name is a sloth with an astronaut's helmet, riding a rocket ship. It's silly and it makes you laugh and even though he didn't sign it, you know who it's from. Clearly he put some effort into it, and that makes you cry even harder. It feels like the only thing you do lately, but today it feels good.

It makes sense. You always tried your best on everyone else's goodbye cards. Why wouldn't he do the same for you?

You are three years into seeing Joyce, your most recent therapist, when she tells you that she can't see you anymore.

"I'm really sorry," she says. "I can send a referral for you to work with one of the other practitioners here, if you'll let me. But even if you don't, I hope you will continue care with someone."

You feel sorry too, so you tell her "I've really liked working with you. I am happy for you though. I hope you enjoy retirement."

Joyce smiles in the little box of the zoom meeting on

your computer. “I hope so too. I’ve known I wanted to leave for a bit, and now just seems like the best time. For me, I mean, there never really is a best time to leave a client like this.”

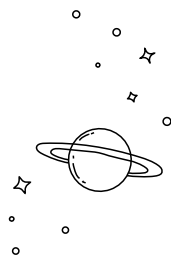
“It’s okay. I’ll definitely continue seeing someone. I don’t know about here though.”

“That’s okay too,” she says. “I get that it can be hard to find someone you can work with. I’m proud of you, that you’re going to keep working. It really has been a pleasure to see how far you’ve come.”

You purposely allow her words to wash over you. It’s nice to hear, even though hearing it exhausts you. Most days are still a slog. You get scared of messing it all up. You need monthly therapeutic reassurance, recently cut back from weekly. You take twelve pills a day, every day, and if you miss you get headaches so bad you can’t move.

But now you try to believe your friends when they say they want to see you. You are down to only asking yourself every other day when Maria is going to get sick of you and leave. You make a mistake, take a breath, and keep going. That stupid emotion wheel got ripped to pieces the second you left outpatient, but you are still able to picture it and point to what you’re feeling, to use I-statements to articulate your thoughts without assigning blame.

It’s harder than it has ever been. Most days you leave Carmilla in the closet. But sometimes, you take her out, put her on your bed, and decide that these feelings are better than the ones you’ve had before.



“to do list of a telephone pole”

by Trina Trinh

- stand tall and high
- wake up to greet the birds
- comfort the little girl who lost her dog
- keep an eye out for the dangerous robber in black and white
- tell the school children to look both ways
- tell a passerby of the local band playing
- listen to the elderly woman’s stories as she waits for the bus
- watch and watch and watch
- as the sky bleeds into the night
- and the buildings twinkle like far away stars
- maybe you will see the lost dog
- maybe you will see the dangerous robber at the pharmacy picking up medicine for
- the elderly woman, with her new limp, who you’ve watched grow from
- a little girl, who walked her dog every day
- and now walks alone
- and behind all her friends at the crosswalk
- looking both ways
- left and right and left and right
- as a group of tired musicians
- leave an empty venue
- earlier than expected.
- stand tall and high
- and be prepared to do it all over again tomorrow



"One Man's Trash"

by Sebastian G. Fish

patchworked tshirt and pants (both self patterned)



"Atmospheric Pressure"
by Kristen Baldwin
digital collage, created during Kevin Baier's class

"i have been putting this off"

by Jay Eckton

created during Joanna Kenyon's class

for about nine years which is why
 i'm pacing in the dark kitchen
 while my stomach writhes under the skin
 waiting to release its compendium
 you are watching a video of me
 or him *or it*
 some performance in elementary school
 i do not remember what but i restrain
 my urge to cry at how much
 that small thing did not want to exist
 as it was

i should have done this two years ago
 but THE CONVERSATION keeps growing
 wings and tells me
do it later
this is a bad time
 it's been so easy to catch and release
 but as time goes on the putting off
 has given me arthritis and heart disease
 well this time i've bolted it to the floor
 can't move it now

i begin right when we normally say goodnight
 stepping through the gate of
 BEFORE and After
 it isn't so bad?
 i'm warm inside but oh
 the insides
 i have to open up my abdomen and

release the thoughts
picking through the entrails
i collect neat piles of words for you
my face is red because everything in me
is on display on this bed between us
and your judgment always mattered so much

words are being exchanged
the specifics don't matter i only need the gist
as i take your words i feel their oily grime
finger print stains that won't wash off
i place them in my pockets where they
burn and dissolve my skin

you and i are standing inside The Conversation now
occasionally fits of laughter jump out
of their tombs then quickly hide back inside
embarrassed
i think we're both running low on words now
our voices drop
i embrace you and hope
my final handful of words don't fall out of your pockets

I am the daughter of nobody
no one in this world will call Me that
you look at me but you don't see Me
you see something you want instead

there is a caricature wearing my face
(no actually i stole it's face)
it's forcing me to make a decision.
i can choose the caricature
 a life of pretending
or i can choose Myself
 a life of invisibility

both paths lead to me not existing

my eyes are draining as soon as i leave

my tongue is bitter

Everything but NOTHING has changed

i confide in those who do see me

(would you call them enablers?)

the stars shift in the night sky

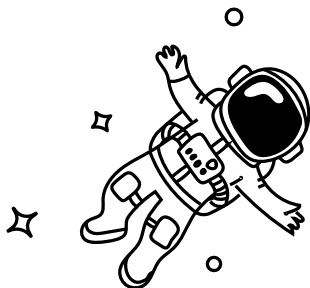
eventually my organs are back in place

i hear heavy footfalls as sleep approaches

my bed and i feel it curl around me

it covers my eyes in midnight fur

tomorrow i might not care at all



“Satisfaction Survey”

by Trina Trinh

HELLO/HOW ARE YOU/GOOD MORNING/
AFTERNOON/NIGHT
WELCOME/THANK YOU
PLEASE CLICK [next] TO PROCEED
(This form is not anonymous)

FORM START

QUESTION 1:

DO MY ECCENTRICITIES SCARE YOU?
DO YOU FEEL AS IF
YOU ARE BACKED UP AGAINST THE WALL?:
YES / NO

QUESTION 2:

TELL ME
ARE YOU ENTERTAINED?:
YES / NO

QUESTION 3:

HAVE I BUILT MYSELF
CORRECTLY?:
YES / NO

QUESTION 4:

ON A SCALE OF 1-5
1 BEING COMPLETELY DISAGREE -
5 BEING ABSOLUTELY AGREE
AM I:
A GOOD PERSON?
AM I:
PASSABLE?
AM I:
LIKE YOU YET?

QUANTIFY YOUR PERCEPTIONS:
INTO STATISTICS AND NUMBERS
I CAN FIT INTO AN ABACUS
CLICKING BEADS
ADJUSTING DAY AND NIGHT
YOUR EVER-CHANGING MIND
AGAINST THE RIGID SMEARS OF INK.
ERASING AND COVERING THE MARKS
EVERY DAY.

YOUR RESPONSES:
I'LL BITE INTO THEM ALL
SWALLOW WITHOUT CHEWING.

YOU.
LET ME ABSORB YOUR MANNERISMS.
COMPLETELY.
WHOLLY.

TELL ME
TELL ME
TELL ME

PLEASE TELL ME SO I CAN FINALLY BE RIGHT.
PLEASE TELL ME SO I CAN LEARN TO BE HUMAN.
PLEASE TELL ME SO YOU WON'T BE AFRAID OF ME
ANYMORE.

PERCEIVE ME.
PERCEIVE ME.
PERCEIVE ME.
PERCEIVE ME.
PERCEIVE ME.

*Thank you for your feedback! Your answers will be reviewed
shortly :)*

“Calc Class in China”

by Daisy Brand

created during Joanna Kenyon’s class

I feel as though
I’m surrounded
by dodgy vultures.

Their stares pry,
at my casing,
trying to understand
what is beneath.

So I find
it’s better just
to ignore them,
innit?

What makes them
look could be
a variety list
of many things.

Maybe my hair,
which once was
a colour, unremarkable
to me
is now like a splash of blood,
in a tray of black
charcoal.

Or maybe
just the knowledge,
learned from a dodgy
source,

that I was different.

I share my table
with three

others.

Two girls pretty as posies
faces sculpted from pale pink fondant,
lips so carefully piped
red frosting.

The third
is a boy just as odd
as me.

He seems to be
part statue,
and only a bit
on the dodgy
side.

He sits opposite me,
hand in hair
like buff feathers
of a bird,
watching only
my notebook as I fill it
with equations,
theorems and laws.
One line English,
the next Chinese.

So today I asked
what it was
he wanted.

When he ignored me
so, I asked again in Korean,
"Mwo chaja?"
because he had
that look.
But all I received
was a bloody grunt.

But then outside the classroom,
he stepped into
my path,
pointed to me notebook.
notes saying this and that.
said, *"Geugeo gareuchyeo jwo."*
Teach me how to do that.



"Faceted Jade"

by Sebastian G. Fish

ceramic stoneware teapot created during Jesse Rasmussen's class



"Witches Brew"

by Sebastian G. Fish

ceramic stoneware teapot created during Jesse Rasmussen's class

“FAUST”

by Camellia E. Yi

A tired and sweaty woman decides to take a break from unpacking and putting up various artworks and decorative items around her new home. She packs a big travel bag full of random items and decides to take a walk around the small town just down the road from her new humble abode. As she walks down the road, she asks herself,

What's in store for me today?

The woman smiles as she enters the bustling town's plaza. Farmers, townspeople, and merchants are seen walking about as they shoot glances at the beautiful maiden with her large bag.

As the woman slowly walks through the hustle and bustle of the small town, she is warmly greeted by every town person she walks by.

A yelp from a woman tending to her fruit cart is heard as barrels of apples and oranges fall onto the ground. Waves of fruit scatter all over the floor as people ignore the troubled woman.

Random feet trample some fruit, leaving behind pulp.

The young maiden sees the turmoil as she rushes over to help the poor woman who has been left to tears.

Oh no! My fruits, I will not be able to take home enough money to feed my family. This is a disaster!

The young maiden looks into the eyes of the troubled woman. The young maiden bites her bottom lip as she can feel the woman's pain. The young lady reaches into her bag and pulls out her coin purse as she reaches in and gives the poor woman a whole day's worth of gold and tells her,

Keep this and be sure to sell what you can today.

The poor woman sobs and hugs the young maiden.

God bless you, child. God bless you!

The young maiden holds the woman's hands and kisses the troubled woman's cheek as she walks away.

As the young lady moves forward, she smiles at the good deed she has done. The sun reaches its apex and shines down on the town. With every footstep, the gravel crunches as she makes way. Small creaks of wagons are heard with every turn of the wheels that passes by the young maiden.

She walks by a saloon that started to get louder as screams of men booms out of the swinging parlor doors. A man flies out, nearly missing the young maiden. She takes a few steps back as she witnesses an old drunkard crawling about on the dirt.

Spurs jingle louder as the parlor doors slams open. Standing at the doorway is a middle-aged man with a moustache that points up to God at both ends.

I told you to git outta here by sunup and what do I see? I see a drunkard sitting his dirty ass on my stool and drinking all of my whiskey and you expect me to not toss your ass out? Guess who's spending his days behind them iron bars. That's the only bar you'll ever be behind, ya miserable old fool.

The young maiden stands there with her mouth covered by her hands in disbelief of what she's witnessing right before her eyes. The sheriff looks directly at the beauty with fiery red hair. The sheriff walks down the steps with every jingle hitting each step as he makes his way to the fair maiden.

The young lady steps back in fear. She shoots her deep blue eyes up like a pistol that makes the sheriff stop in his tracks as she says in a stern voice,

Don't.

Don't what, young lady?

Don't hurt that man and do not throw him behind the iron bars. Why shouldn't I? He broke the law.

And what law has he broken?

Look here, little lady, in this town... I make the rules and when you break'em...you go to jail. D'ya understand?

Answer my question.

Ooh, a feisty one, aren't ya?

The sheriff says as he tries to caress her cheek.

I did not permit you to touch me,

she states as she brushes his hand away from her face.

Once again, answer my question.

Alright, firecracker... I'll tell ya, this drunkard gets drunk every goddamn day, all day. He wastes liquor and contributes nothing to this town. He drinks, he sobs like a coward, and he reeks because he has no home to wash his dirty, smelly ass. Thus, his only home is in jail. Does that answer your question?

The fair maiden looks the sheriff dead in his eyes and takes a breath.

Fine, I shall take this poor soul and I'll set him straight.

The sheriff bursts out in laughter as the other patrons of the bar looking out the windows bursts out in hysterical laughs as well. The young lady looks around as the townsfolk circle around the sheriff, the drunkard, and the fair maiden. In humility, she goes over to the drunkard and puts his arm around her neck as she tries to get him to his feet.

The young maiden and the drunkard stumble to the end of the town. She asks him,

Sir, what happened? What hurts you so to the point of delirium?

The old drunkard looks up to the beauty's face that casts a heavenly shine to his eyes as the setting sun kisses her face. He gasps softly as he tries to form spoken words.

The sheriff has robbed me of my life. My poor wife, my poor, poor wife.

The drunkard starts to sob as he tries to recall his nightmare.

Shh, shh. It's okay, sir. No need to bring forth tears and pain, apologies,

the fair maiden informs the drunkard as she tries to pull him up to his feet.

He wipes away his tears and wipes his nose.

Miss, you're so sweet to give pity to an ugly old man such as myself. I don't want to cause ya anymore problems. Thank you for taking the time to spend with a drunk old fool like me. Please, I don't want to waste any more of ya time.

The fair maiden grabs his hand as he walks back into town.

Please, sir, why not sit with me and tell me your woes. I may be able to provide some assistance.

The drunkard looks back at her. He looks into her eyes and immediately looks away in embarrassment. She pulls on his hand as she walks further down the road away from the town.

At least share a cup of tea with me as you tell me your story.

The old drunkard follows her hesitantly as she drags him away from the town.

They walk down the dirt road as they reach a field of grass. The old drunkard gasps,

How long has this been here for? How drunk am I?

The young lady giggles as they walk faster onto the field where a big, beautiful tree stands erect with blooming white leaves. As they walk near the tree, the old drunkard says,

I've never seen leaves like these b'fore. I must be too drunk, this has t'be a dream.

They reach the tree as the young lady sits down beneath while white leaves sparsely fall onto the grass. The scenery looks as if a patch of winter sits in the middle of summer.

The fair maiden pulls out a tea set with a tiny sugar bowl and a glass cup of creamer. The old drunkard looks astonished at the lavish items. The fair maiden then brings out a plate of Turkish delights. The old man then widens his eyes at the delectable treat as he immediately takes a few and tosses them into his mouth.

As he chews, his face puckers as he spits them out.

What in tarnation is this crap? It tastes like I ate a whole flower!

The young lady laughs as she explains,

These are Turkish delights. The flavor is of rose and they're very delicious. You must eat one and enjoy the flavors as they caress your tongue. The nodes of sweetness, the soft floral touch, and the smooth texture spreading in your mouth like soft butter.

The old man smiles sadly as she explains.

You remind me of my wife when she was younger.

The young maiden looks at the man as her smile fades away.

Please, sir, tell me your story.

She pours the old man a glass of tea as he begins to tell his tale.

A long time ago, me and my wife had moved into the town together from the east side to the west side. I was told this side was riddled with riches beyond the eyes to see.

When we gets here, it seemed them riches were never to be found. That, or we had just missed them riches as everybody in this town had taken them from us. I paid no minds as I was happy to live in a nice little town such as here.

So, I asked the sheriff of the town if I could get a job anywheres to be able to live a nice life with my wife as she was carrying our child. I've worked as a farmer, taking care of the horses around the town. It was humble work but it puts the foods on our table.

My wife finally brought our baby to the world and I was the happiest I had ever been. A couple of years pass us by and I hears a new young sheriff moved into our town and I hears he's a mean thing. He creates these new laws that were very mean and tough on everybody. He gots everybody to pay taxes for living in the town and them taxes are rough. Everybody works harder to makes more monies to pay them goddamn taxes.

Anyone that fights back them taxes either gets holes put in them or they be hanging.

The young lady gasps as she gets further into his tale. The old drunkard continues.

My family starts t'lose our monies more and more to the point we be starvin. I start to lose my mind tryinna figure out how we can pay them taxes and still have enough t'bring food onto our table. As the man of the house, I gotta bring food to our home or else, I would be a failure as the man of the house, ya know?

The old man snuffles and tears up as he tells the fair lady his tale. The young woman snuffles and wipes away his tears,.

Please, if you can, continue.

The drunkard nods and continues,

I could not make enough, so, I go to the new sheriff and plead my case. The sheriff would not budge and laughed at me for looking so pitiful and decides to tell me, 'If ya can't pay them taxes, I gotta take what I think is enough t'pay your taxes and by them books, I can see you are way in debt, m'friend.' I tells him that he can takes whatever he wants as long as he lets my family free. The sheriff agreed.

I get back to my home only to find bags of gold sitting on the dinner table and I shout for my wife to come see this! I look around the home and go back out as I shout her name. She was nowheres. I notice a commotion going on at the town square and notice the hanging post was sets up for a hangin. I looks and sees that a woman was to be hanging. The townspeople was silent and gasping. I gets to the front to see what it was that made the peoples so quiet. I see below the young woman and a dead child. There was so much blood, the air smelled like wet metal. That's when I noticed the child... That was my baby. I screamed and screamed so loud as the sheriff held me back and he whispered in my ear, 'Guess yur family's free now...'

The drunkard sobs and the maiden sheds tears for his pain as well.

My wife, my beautiful wife was dropped and the noose caught her and had snapped her beautiful neck. That moment on... My life had been robbed of me. I took all them golds and bought more

*than my weight in booze and drank my pains and memories
aways. No matter how much I drank, my memory will never get
outta my brain. I saw my family die right in fronts of me. I will
never stop drinking; I needs to forget.*

The fair maiden places her hand on his and kisses his cheek.

*Thank you for sharing your story. My heart aches for you and
your pain. Apologies for what you've experienced, and I am
sorry for the loss of your family. Really, there's no way that this
can be remedied.*

The drunkard sighed and said,

*Not if I can go back and try it all over again. I'd have us leave
this town and find another way of life.*

The young maiden stops and looks at him. Her eyes caught
his eyes as she said to the drunkard,

Is that what you truly desire?

The old man tears up and sobs,

Yes, more than anything.

More than your soul?

Oh god, yes... Yes.

The young maiden turns and pulls out a big leather-bound
book with a quill and ink well.

*I can make your dreams come true. Only your deepest and
darkest dreams. In return, I ask for a simple signature.*

The old man stops crying and wipes away his tears and asks,

All youse wants is my signature? That's it?

The fair maiden nods as she holds the book open that is
decorated with signatures.

*The old drunkard signs the book. As he signs, the fair maiden's
deep blue eyes churn and fade into black.*

She closes the book.

Suddenly, everything turns black and hot; glowing red embers pulsate from the ground and flashes of the man blink as he staggers up from the ground. The old man screams in horror as the landscape dissolves into a black cavern with flames bursting into a circle around himself and the young maiden. He looks into her eyes and screams as her skin melts into a pulp.

A deep and demonic voice booms,

The deal has been sealed.

What stands before the old drunkard was not the beautiful fair maiden but the Devil himself. The old drunkard drops his head in defeat as he realized what he had done.

Back at the town, the sheriff enters the home of the old drunkard,

Darlin', I'm fixen for a delicious meal!

The old drunkard's wife answers while holding their baby.

Alright, husband. Hang tight while I fix ya some supper.



"Ladybug Glow"
by Soleil Navarro
digital illustration



"overconsumed"
by Simone Janae White
multimedia

“this one... took a while to... write...”

by Chai Warrior
created during Joanna Kenyon’s class

There is no time like
the present.
So why?
would I waste it...

this moonlight is all so...
useful.
so
why would...

i... waste it?

what’s the point of
all this...

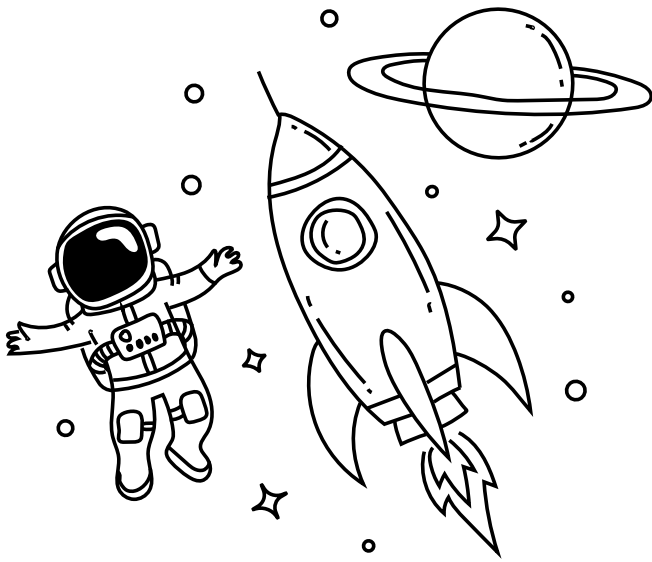
pillow...

if i’m not...

gonna

use it...

Finis



Contributor Bios

Amanda Howe is a student pursuing admission into the nursing program at WCC. Inspired by the memory of her father, she hopes to build a career in hospice care, providing comfort and compassion to others. Outside of school, Amanda enjoys showing cows and helping teach and mentor children in the dairy community.

Camellia Yi is a Cybersecurity student at WCC. She's also a creative tinkerer and writer. In her free time, she writes short stories and is currently working on a book series.

Daisy Brand is a second year Running Start student at WCC. Writing is one of her favorite pastimes, followed by art, exercise, sleep and eating. After she graduates, she will be exploring the creative writing world even deeper with plans to publish. Poetry is something that she finds intriguing and difficult but uses it to explore her deepest thoughts.

In **English 133: Introduction to Latine Literature**, students explored the richness and complexity of Latine voices across genres and generations. Through engagement with texts and lived experiences, our class continuously cultivated a culture of respect grounded in care and shared inquiry, inspiring the collaborative writing and publication of “Soneto CIV 104,” a Neruda-inspired piece titled for our classroom number, experimenting with language and expression.

Grace Stevens is a music major in her second year at WCC. She enjoys playing her various instruments, and spending time with friends.

Jay Eckton is finishing her Associate's degree this year before moving on to WWU for a Bachelor's in biology. In her free time, she enjoys playing TTRPGs, drawing, and designing fictional creatures. Recently, Jay has become possessed by a demon from the Shadow Plane named Lamashtu, but she honestly doesn't mind the company.

Kristen Baldwin is graduating from the Visual Communications program this year. Heavily inspired by the Bauhaus aesthetic, her work blends intentional color theory with striking layout design. You may have seen her work featured around campus as one of the poster designs for the Spring Student Showcase (can you guess which one?). Connect with her at cmyk.kristen.

Nick Coyle is a writer with a passion for storytelling and connection. Outside of writing, they enjoy volunteering with their community and engaging with their many other creative interests. After receiving their transfer degree, they hope to receive a bachelors in English.

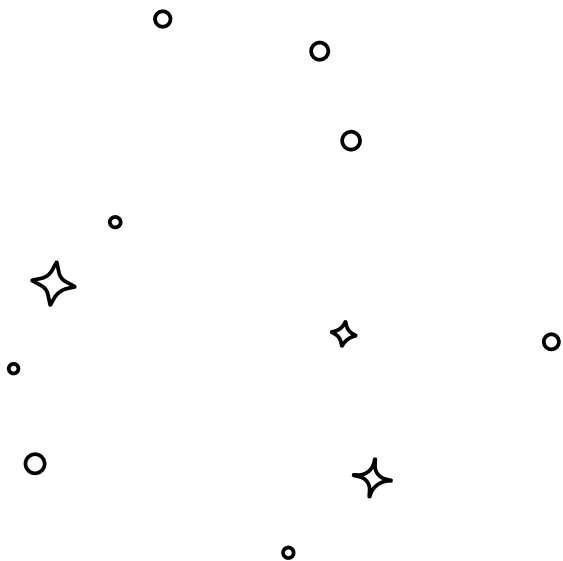
Sebastian G. Fish is a multi-media artist born and raised in Bellingham, Washington. He started at WCC at age 27, will be finishing his AAS-DTA this summer and will start as a ceramics major in WWU's studio art BA program in the fall of 2026. His primary sources of artistic inspiration are jellyfish, crows, trash and Art Deco.

Skye is completing her associate degree at WCC and plans to pursue advanced studies in craniosacral therapy. Her interests center on women's health, nervous system regulation, and trauma informed healing for those affected by PTSD. Deeply inspired by her own healing journey, Skye hopes to continue refining her craft as a writer and eventually publish a book that shares her experiences and insights.

Soleil Navarro is a visual artist and transfer student at Whatcom Community College originally from Oceanside, California. Inspired by surrealism, dreams, and quiet everyday moments, her work blends emotion with playful and dreamlike imagery through both traditional and digital media. After previously studying Studio Arts, she shifted her focus to Visual Communications and will be graduating this spring.

Trina Trinh is a WCC student studying for an AAS/DTA and hoping to later earn a MLIS. After graduating this spring, they are transferring to Western Washington University to pursue a Bachelors in English. She loves trying out new types of art, which led to a love for poetry and writing.

Zoe Pope is a Computer Science major with a love for the arts and sciences, hoping to combine the two in ways that you don't see often. She has a love for fantasy and tries to use it to help us see the wonderful in the mundane. This is her first time getting published for her writing!



Contributors

Zoey Pope
Trina Trinh
Soleil Navarro
Skye Beardsley
Simone Janae White
Sebastian G. Fish
Nick Coyle
Myah Krause
Micah Petrich
Madelyn Harrell
Laura Minoia
Kristen Baldwin
Jay Eckton
Grace Stevens
Fall English 133
Daisy Brand
Chai Warrior
Camellia E. Yi
Amanda Howe
Alex Enriquez