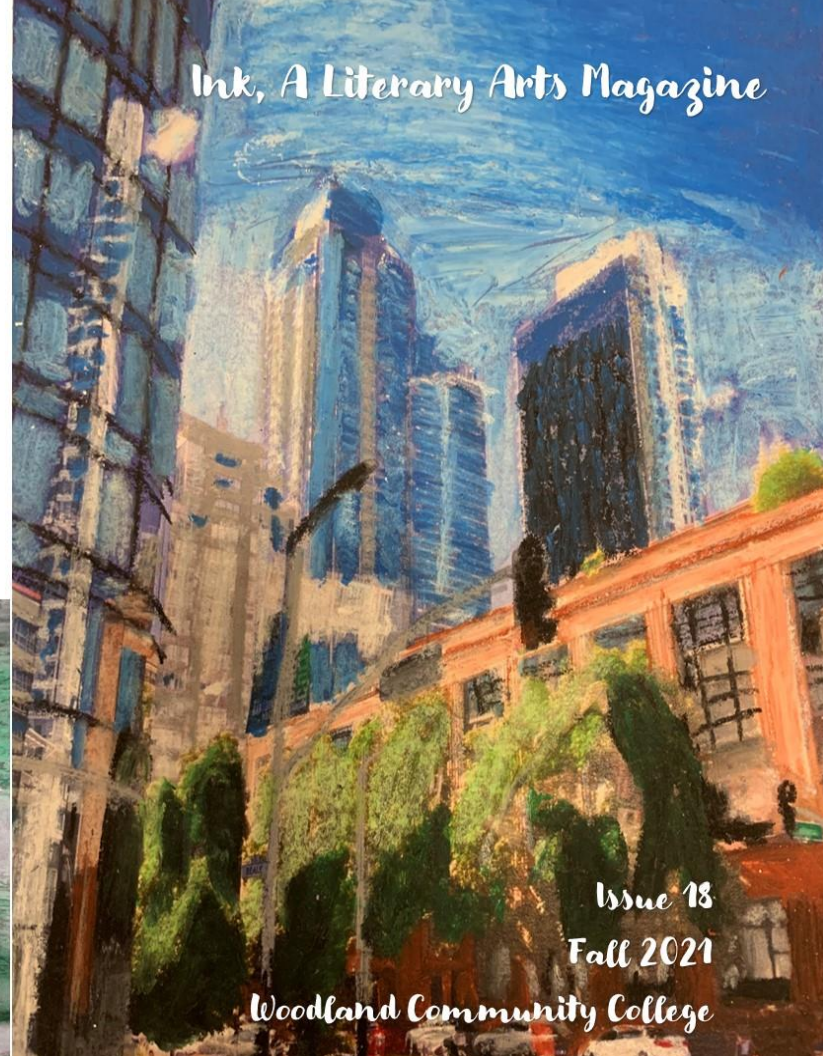
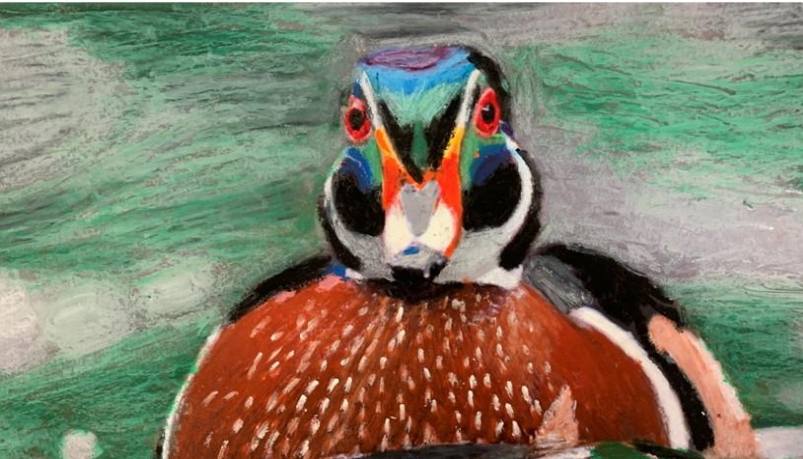


Persephone, my dear  
I fear the seasons  
are changing  
I can tell  
As the flowers in  
the kitchen have wilted.

My Bittersweet longing  
as I dream of you  
Underneath  
the sun, you  
are radiant, blessed by  
dawn's break and warm rain.

From "Persephone, My Dear" by Andi Fluetsch



*Ink, A Literary Arts Magazine*

Issue 18

Fall 2021

Woodland Community College

# **Ink**

*A Literary Arts Magazine*

**Issue 18**

*Woodland Community College*  
*Fall 2021*

**Editors:** Naomi V. Catalan, Ella Morrison, and Fatima Mushtaq  
**Cover Art:** “Rainbow Duck” by Brian Gersalia; “Country Free” by Brian Gersalia

**Cover Poem:** From “Persephone, My Dear,” by Andi Fluetsch

**Printing:** Mike Wieber, Yuba College Print Shop

**Faculty Advisor:** Kevin Ferns, Professor of English, Woodland Community College

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## **Persephone, My Dear**

Andi Fluetsch

Persephone, my dear  
I fear the seasons  
are changing  
I can tell  
As the flowers in  
the kitchen have wilted

My Bittersweet longing  
as I dream of you  
Underneath  
the sun, you  
are radiant, blessed by  
dawn's break and warm rain

Is this pride or perhaps  
Pure, brilliant despair  
That I stayed  
without you  
would I turn to ash  
If you took me with you

I wish for one more hour  
to whisper sweet words  
and then i  
wish again  
so I may kiss your  
cheek, before you leave me

I pray for summer's  
end, so that I might  
see you pleased  
and become  
akin to flowers  
blossoming at your feet

### **my successful lemonade recipe**

Fatima Mushtaq

success on my mind  
it's what i crave  
sweet as a dessert~  
one so tangy and minty with a dash of lemonade.  
i crave success to heal my mothers hurt,  
but i only speak to my head about these goals so excitedly,  
strawberry gracefully.  
my tiredness may swirl into handmade lemonade,  
deliciously cooling the thirst of what was yearned for.  
not a single drop of sorrow, nor an ice cube melting hollow.  
soon oh soon  
we will find a lemon balloon,  
the right foot of a berry shoe,  
nothing like this illustrates the joyful syrup  
pouring out our eyes,  
this is between me and you, and the Gracious up high.  
subconscious thrives on the summery night i  
swallow the tart alkaline,  
it's the chemical you won't drink, but i  
knowingly will.  
it is what i worked to become even if i am

doomed in my delusional thrill.  
tangerine sunrises sprinkle zest upon  
skittle green lands,  
and so what must i do with my own hands if i  
am shown a soothing sign?  
i must mix the ingredients and add that box of  
sugar with my exhaustion to create my  
success~  
the success that i made and yet still crave  
because my lily flowered lemonade tastes like  
the summery nights i spoke to myself about  
the dandelions swirling in the left blue shoe.  
soon oh soon  
success will be my special lemonade  
soon oh soon.  
for now,  
wait for the lemon balloon.

### **honey eyes**

Fatima Mushtaq

within my honey eyes  
are poems written of created scars.  
as if each time harm brutalized,  
the cracks overgrew my sugared charm.  
how warm glory sleeps in her honey eyes  
putting the innocent inner child to rest.  
now pure white lucent healing her past cries.  
hidden hope acknowledging her worst & best  
and her Creator softening the cold war to bring  
her finally onshore,  
all this within & beyond  
my own honey eyes.



**Eve (Penance)**

Ella Morrison

To err is human, to forgive is divine  
We humans err, make mistakes  
All due to the sin of one woman  
One woman screwed us all over  
She wanted more  
She wanted everything  
And so we get nothing  
We are all paying the price for her desire for something  
greater  
Someone greater is who we ask to forgive us,  
To forgive us when we say something unkind  
To forgive us when we make a wrong move  
To forgive us when we indulge ourselves  
To forgive us for being human  
but she has never been forgiven  
By Someone or anyone  
  
I don't buy it.

## **St Michael**

Andi Fluetsch

St Michael,  
to whom I pray for divine protection,  
waits for me,  
sitting under the dim lights on my porch.  
He knew that I would be getting home late.  
Motionless  
beneath his gaze, thousands of eyes tearing  
through my flesh,  
agonizingly, knowing all of me.  
His unbearable knowing burns in me;  
yet, I know  
He will not judge me for drowning in the  
bathroom sink,  
nor the dust shrouding the cross on the wall  
and so, sinless, my fear will make me safe.  
He tells me  
not to fear his blade, for the sanctifying  
fury is meant for corruption, not faith.  
The angels  
wear their crowns of thorns with pride, and so he  
smiles at me  
with desolate eyes and dripping ichor.  
The son of the creator treats me like I  
am his own  
son, daughter, child. He never needed to  
be told which  
words were mine—it was humanity  
that tried to distort me, not empyrean.

When I told  
him I had discovered their distortion  
His pride felt  
like static, piercing through my skin, thrumming.  
His smile is sharp, lethal, devoted; that  
eerie smile  
shatters me like my bones are made of glass.  
I dreamed that my lover would understand—  
but how could  
someone so beautiful know horrific  
purity?  
But she is flawlessly wicked with love  
and she asked to meet my family, so  
I gave her  
a pillow to kneel, watching hungrily  
as she sinks to her knees. Offering her hand, soft and  
uncalloused,  
we pray together, fingers interlaced.  
St. Michael  
whispers to me, making my ears bleed, that  
she's charming.  
He says her slit-pupils are the light's trick,  
and my slithering desire is a gift.  
I thank him.  
When fearful of my devious mind, I pray  
for virtue.  
He tells me wickedness is a burden  
a crucifix, we all carry. He doesn't  
offer to  
help me with my cross, the one god's people  
gave me, but

he walks slow so I that I may keep pace.  
He encompasses me, besides, behind  
and in front  
of me; he will not allow me to stray.  
My lover  
holds my hand as I cry out, terrified  
of the ethereal monster that guides me,  
of my faith in him to keep us all safe.  
His father's  
people scare me, but the father does not.  
I am love.  
The people teach me the fear of passion,  
but my love comforts me, and I am proud.  
Those who pray  
to St. Michael may scare me, but he is mine,  
I am his.



*Love and Peace by Kate Deng*

## **Blink**

Matthew O'Shea

I see myself walking slow,  
taking in the rushing river,  
then playing in its rapid flow.  
O' its water made me shiver.  
I was such a curious child.

## **Flash**

A gleam of deep flowing red,  
and her scent, I cannot forget.  
"I would stare for eternity," I said.  
Yes, my mind is truly set.  
Captivated by love, little Rose.

## **Flash**

My stomach, anxiety-filled, knots  
as I watch a woman walk.  
Vision fades, but hear words I sought;  
"I do." Now bound with love's lock.  
Beginning of a lifetime.

## **Flash**

A new, yet familiar face  
cries out, needing love and care.  
A newfound family finds warm embrace.  
Such a wonderful sight to bear!

My son. My flesh, and my blood.

Flash

Gone in the blink of an eye.  
O' how fast must they all grow?  
Empty rooms, quiet soul. Time flew by.  
It's just her and I . . . right? Oh.  
Alone. I need my medicine.

Flash

A line for every past road,  
A gentle frailness at hand.  
-How that river I chased flowed  
through my fingers like grains of sand.  
Youth is just a faint memory.

Flash

I doze off with peace of mind,  
sad eyes to my left and right.  
One last breath, our fingers entwined.  
-I never noticed that light?  
Flash, after flash, after flash.

A feeling of confusion,  
and covered in sweat, it seems.  
Is this . . ? No. It's not an illusion.  
It was only but a dream.  
"Collect yourself, sit back, breathe."

## **Mass Baptism (Baptism)**

Ella Morrison

My dad's family is large  
Five siblings, four spouses, and fourteen cousins kind of  
large.

My grandmother raised the five siblings in a religious home:  
They were enrolled in Catholic schools through high school  
They attended church regularly  
The priest and prayer were ever-present.  
Now, none of them attend church  
Unless they come into town for a holiday  
And even then, it is still hit or miss.  
Religion is no longer the staple eaten before every meal.

Despite this struggle to indoctrinate all the five,  
The fourteen cousins were still up for grabs.  
My grandmother held a mass baptism for my cousins who  
weren't yet baptized  
Their parents wouldn't take them to church or  
Enforce the rules and regulations of the too-old Bible,  
But baptism,  
that was something that could be done to make my  
grandmother happy.

My grandmother had a close relationship with a priest,  
And he agreed to perform the ceremony  
A ritual that did not feel as if it was not taken as seriously as  
it might have been  
A rite of passage gifted to those who did not seek what lay  
on the other side

A routine of allowing this religion to be passed in a way that  
satisfied the outside  
But lacked real substance for the inside of those  
participating.

Everyone came  
It was like a holiday except with nothing quite real to  
celebrate  
We all gathered, dressed in our Sunday best  
I didn't want to go  
I didn't believe in it and it made me angry  
That everyone just did what my grandma asked  
Despite it being obvious that they didn't really believe in it  
And that it was more for show than for faith.

Nearly two years later,  
All these qualms seem minor and invalid.  
I understand that making my grandmother happy is  
important,  
a good enough reason to do something  
I understand that this tradition,  
Despite its surface-level appeal,  
Has familial roots that are hard to overlook.  
I understand that this was my grandmother's way  
Of presenting these children before God  
Her way of loving them and allowing God to love them.



## **Cancer Sucks (The Anointing of the Sick)**

Ella Morrison

Whatever happened at Gramma's house, stayed at Gramma's house.

She taught me how to play King's Corners, a game that my family and I play frequently.

We would play rummy, although she played with much more

strict rules than I preferred.

She let us watch tv, which was often old VHS tapes

She had a basement that we would play in, often leaving it a mess

There were used legos, recycled makeup brushes, and so many Beanie Babies.

We would eat whatever we wanted.

Sometimes that was Rubios or Chipotle or In n Out.

Ritz crackers are still a favorite.

I was always sneaking the little candies from the dishes she had around the house.

We loved ice cream from McDonald's, chocolate-dipped for her.

We used to have many a family meal at the large dining room table,

My papa always sat at the head of the table with my gramma on his right.

If my auntie was in town, she would always sit right next to my gramma

With the rest of us spread out and the kids often at a different table.

Often, after a meal, my grandma would microwave chocolate  
and butterscotch pudding from Jello packets  
She would pour it into these white bowls that looked like  
they were made of flower petals.  
We would eat in on trays, maybe in front of the tv  
The pudding would be too hot so we would scrape the edges  
first as they were cooler.

When she was first diagnosed, she seemed okay.  
The cancer went from stage 3 to stage 2b, which somehow  
made it better.  
She was tired from the chemo, but was still able to do much  
of what she could do before.  
We would see her more as we made an effort to be around.  
We would come over and she would be up and about,  
Forever wiping down countertops and putting out chips and  
Pace Picante salsa.  
If she needed a break, she could be found in her chair,  
sipping from her big, pink cup  
Or by the pool, watching us swim in the pool my papa  
always kept pristine  
She was always so optimistic and faithful, positive that she  
would get better.

Today, I sit next to my gramma as she sleeps in her own bed  
for the first time in eight days since being hospitalized.  
My papa phrased it perfectly “we are treating the treatment.”  
Rather than the chemo targeting the cancerous cells invading  
her body,  
She is fighting the chemo as it rips away her energy and

strength.  
She is tired, weak, and in pain, not things I am used to seeing  
in her.

On the way home, I cry.  
I wonder how someone like her can end up like this.  
It's not fair. It's not even remotely fair.  
For a woman who has been so faithful, it seems absurd that  
she would be in this much pain.  
She relies on His strength as she has none.  
She deserves more.  
She deserves better.



*Rose by Kate Deng*

## **Bread and ~~Butter~~ Juice (Eucharist)**

Ella Morrison

I remember a time I couldn't receive the eucharist as I  
wasn't

confirmed

I was in a friend's church

I had to walk with my arms and hands crossed over my chest

It marked me as different

Not yet worthy of the blood and body of the One who loves  
all

I remember watching a film

The main character and her best of friends had their legs up  
on the wall

The plastic container of wafers was between them

As they enjoyed a between-class snack

To them, these were just wafers

Nothing more nothing less

I remember hearing the same thing once a month for a long  
while

The eucharist was our regular chance to ask for forgiveness

It was our chance to be clean

The pastor would break the bread

It always looked as if it was cut ahead of time

As if watching a pastor struggle to tear the loaf of bread

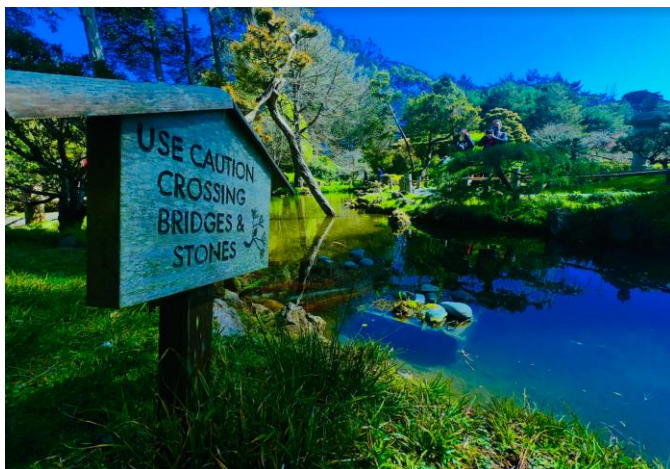
wouldn't have been the highlight of the  
service

I remember accepting the eucharist at a church with looser

rules  
Isn't it funny how the rules change?  
The taste of the grape juice  
The bread, if you could really call it that  
Maybe it was pita? Naan?  
It was a reprieve from the hunger  
For more, for something, for this to be over with



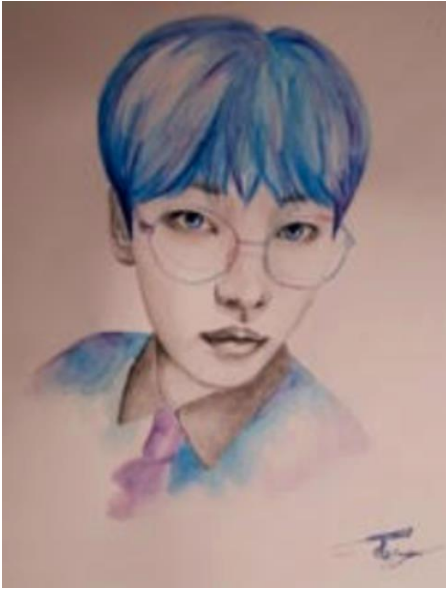
*Before by Jasmin Lopez*



*Koi Day by Brian Gersalia*



*Sunset 2 by Emily Cruz*



*In the Sky at 5:53 by Jasmin Lopez*



*Dews by Kate Deng*



*Eye by Tristan Grey Gomon*

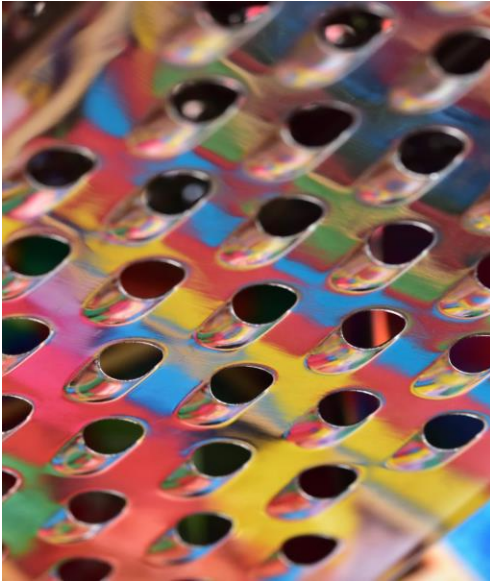




*City Free by Brian Gersalia*



*Sunset 1 by Emily Cruz*



*Light and Colors by Kate Deng*



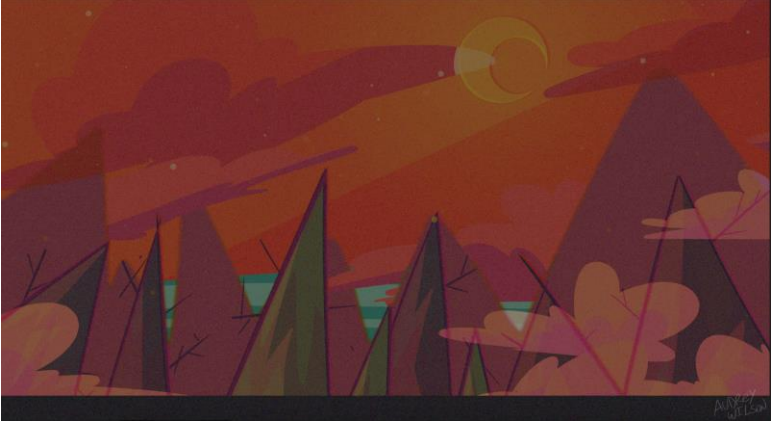
*Meds by Tristan Grey Gomon*



*The Kraken by Cole Paulson*



*Christmas 2020 by Dani Ocampo*



*traveler's night by Audrey Wilson*



*Leaves by Kate Deng*





*The End by  
Cole  
Paulson*

## Her

O'Naria Perez

Broken, shattered, vulnerable, but still willing to open her heart.

The start too something that will continue until the end of her beating heart.

You taught me to love myself, when you were learning to love YOURSELF.

Oneself would think that there was no room for love and affection in this cruel world anymore.

But even in this cruel world, you taught me to adore, then to be at war with myself.

But when you are helping me get out of war with myself, who is helping you fight yours?

You endure so much that you forget about yourself, and that is when I come in.

Like the violin, I have learned to be patient, gentle, but most of all appreciate what comes within the instrument.

**You**, you are that beautiful most difficult instrument.

Tall, beautiful, and with so much life to give to the world.

You say music is your life, **when in reality you are my music.**

A lone wolf, secretly looking for a pack.

Caring the whole world on her back, when in reality she can relax.

There's been a few times where I see you shivering, in some cases I'm scared you will collapse.

But then I remember, she can never collapse, not even  
relapse.  
She is strong, she is independent, she's brave, she can even  
dig out of her own grave.  
I've seen her at her lowest, gentle, vulnerable, as if she was  
asking to be cut wide open.  
But it's who she is. She endures pain, she swallows it like  
quicksand and nothing can get in her way.  
I hope to be as strong as her someday.  
To be able to survive, when those who were supposed to  
take  
care of you, didn't care for you.  
To stand tall-  
Taller than the golden gate bridge, and to withhold more  
than  
the golden gate bridge.  
  
Just like you've always told me, stop being so hard on  
yourself, I hope you repeat that to yourself as well.  
To look in the mirror everyday, and say "**I am strong, I am  
beautiful, I am smart, I am a survivor.**"  
Do not let the negative people deprive you.  
You are the main character and no one else.  
You are the author, you are the writer.  
You get to pick and choose who you want your audience to  
be.  
Pick carefully, pick wisely, but in the end...  
I hope one of those will be me.

## **Alice Becoming (Holy Orders)**

Ella Morrison

There is a book I love.

It's a children's book with painted pictures.

It's about Alice.

Alice decides when she is young that she is going to do two  
things in her life:

Travel the world

Live by the sea

Her grandfather tells us here there is a third thing she must  
do:

Make the world a more beautiful place.

I am young and there are many things I feel I need to do with  
my life.

Graduate from high school

Attend college

Education is the recommended path to success in my home.

I have been gifted with much,

Which means I need to do much

To make the world better

More beautiful.

This can feel overwhelming.

It seems that some have it all figured out.

They receive a calling from a higher power

Or the right new boss

Giving them sacred, subconscious orders

And they know exactly what they want to be.



Alice becomes Ms. Rumphius,  
World traveler  
Owner of a cat and house by the sea  
Crazy Lupine Lady  
Who planted lupines over the hills and made her world more  
beautiful.

What will I become?  
A mother of five and grandmother of fourteen?  
A believer in something greater, something beyond me?  
A professional worthy of good bread and wine?  
A woman haunted by mistakes in need of forgiveness?  
A spunky invalid waiting to get better?  
A wife with a wife?  
I don't know.  
But I hope it's someone who makes my world more  
beautiful.



*Flower by Kate Deng*

## **When I Am Older**

Julia Lindsay

When I am older, I want to be  
Stronger than all the waves of the sea.  
And I'm not just saying that so I'll seem bigger...  
It's because it's important to me.

For when I am stronger, then I can be  
As calm as the clouds in the sky.  
So pure and so caring, how I'd love to be  
Just like all of the clouds drifting by.

And when I'm calm as the clouds and strong as the sea,  
With a wave of my hand I'll be happy.  
Like the sun always shining and the world always spinning,  
So long as I'm always smiling.

But what shall I do if a storm should arise  
And threaten to darken the sky?  
Will the rain block the sun? Will the sea become stormy?  
And what of my clouds drifting by?

For when you're happy and calm and as strong as the sea,  
You know there's a dusk to each sunrise.  
There are dark clouds and bright ones, dull ones and light ones,  
And seas that match both your eyes.

Even clouds can bring thunder, even waves can get angry.  
But what about all of my sunshine?  
It may be hidden at times, behind clouds, below sea...  
But that happiness will always be mine.



*A Corner by Kate Deng*

**Identity: Confirmed (Confirmation)**

Ella Morrison

I was confirmed to be born  
At 8:25 in the a.m.  
On a Saturday, the best day to have a birthday  
Time of day, day of birth, date of birth  
All marked on a certificate  
Not things I've ever argued with.

I was confirmed to be female  
Something I have considered, but never questioned  
I'm a proud feminist  
I enjoy the curves my body has to offer  
While I don't have my own children,  
I am surrounded by little ones

Being a daughter, sister, woman fits for me.

I was confirmed to be an adult

Legally

I can vote

I can sign my own forms

I can give consent

I wonder if I am ready, but not whether I am an adult,  
legally.

I was never confirmed to be a believer in the Catholic church

As if belief could be confirmed,

Verified by email

Marked by a label

Noted on a certificate

I've rarely challenged my belief in a higher power,  
only my trust in a higher organization.

For how could I place my faith in an organization

That condemns my femininity, my queerness

And preys on innocent children

The church was confirmed to be malignant?

## **Love Story (Marriage)**

Ella Morrison

I am a lover of romantic movies

Two strangers become each other's everything

People who hate each other realize they love each other

The prostitute and the businessman

The suicidal quadriplegic and the cheerful, go-lucky  
caretaker

The athlete and the basket-case

The people who aren't supposed to meet, who aren't  
supposed to fall in love

These stories are unrealistic and yet I fall victim to them  
every time

I love knowing what will happen,  
the predictability and familiarity that comes with  
hours poured into watching the same story over and over  
again

There is a story that I so rarely see

The story of those of the same gender

Falling in love

The story of those who identify as something considered not  
normal

Finding the love we consider so normal

Until 2015, that story wasn't even legal

Marriage between a man and a woman

Is celebrated

Cherished

That story we see over and over again

In our books, in our movies, in our religion, in our lives

The Bible condemns same-sex relations

This “timeless” book has failed to keep up with the times

Rather than adjust and adapt to what our world, our people,  
my people demand,

We have fallen into a predictable cycle of allowing certain  
voices to overpower others

We have allowed hate to remain and drive out any love for  
our difference

We build barriers and barricades that block out people that  
we need to meet

We fall victim to the stories that tell us that certain people  
aren’t worthy of love

## **systemic routine**

Fatima Mushtaq

We human beings believe we are living when in reality, we are internally dying.

Living is the expectation of those who seek wealth and materialistic values.

Welcome to adulthood the people in power casually praise, while the starved children with their clay ribs pray during each catastrophic bombing.

We are expected to pay bills and not fool ourselves back into the honest reality of not being able to lay with a handful of pills.

When a seventeen year old is afraid to be thrown into rehab because she'll finally heal and would sooner or later be thrown out into the systemic routine,

After recovering she'll have to adapt to the simulation of the wealthy, for she's only one of the billions of atm machines.

We can't have recovery and intellect when our own leaders allow our fellow mothers and brothers to be slaughtered like the animals we poorly treat,

Despite the negatives, richest of the money's healthiest, catchphrase how we human beings definitely don't rot in the systemic routine we were born in.

Passed through generations of victims are the lies of happiness and freedom of the unfaithful

expression.

The system our blood is genetic to is what we are expected to be thankful for, because apparently, it's more than enough compared to what the blood covered, orphan wounded children in Muslim countries have.

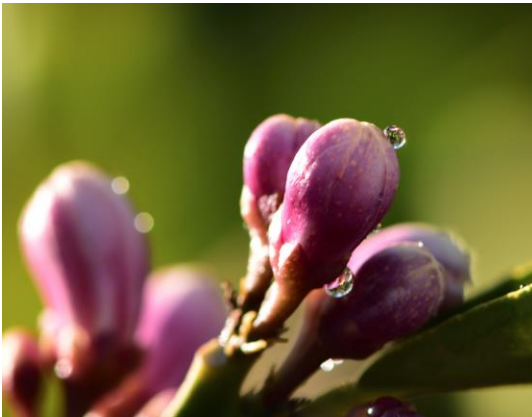
~It must be noted,

That the materialism in this upheld kingdom is only devoted by brainwashed colleagues and the daily bombed abuse we can never hold, nurture, or see.

We are not living, only dying.

We are not thriving, when they remain starving.

Expectation vs. Reality, and this is the reality scene of the selfish supremacy of this torturous systemic routine.



*Buds by Kate Deng*



## **Serenity**

Matthew O'Shea

Daydreaming as I walk an old dirt road,  
waiting for wonder, a glimmer.  
As day now slipped to slumber, all but slowed  
and steadily got colder, dimmer.  
A tiny glimpse of light catches the eye  
then traces a path before me.  
As if imploring to explore thee, a plea  
to follow past the trees, you lead.  
Into a grove below, energy flows,  
shaping luminous rows in glee.

O' to see this vast, beautiful city of rows;  
Full of colors, shapes, where everything glows.  
A place to slow, reflect, forego yourself  
and learn to grow. This, the city of roads;  
full of splendor, of knowledge worth countless in gold.  
I strangely feel I'm finally home,  
at peace, with time to think, and be alone.  
The seconds turned to stone and you approach

Veiled in whirling trails of dancing lights.  
"Stay, inhale, enhance, enlighten your frailing mind.  
Derail, get lost in space, in time. Retrace  
the lines to your design and find yourself  
refined, renewed, aligned anew inside."  
Inclined, I'd gaze away the days in peace,  
delay the sun, and stray the moon into cerise.  
At sudden, a gentle breeze relieves my senses;  
Morning's dawn breathes "beware the expenses"

Hesitant, though evident I must go,  
I watch the glow slowly fade below as  
morning's light lies behind the grove.  
How I'll miss you, my dear city of rows.  
I've tended carefully, I've seen some growth,  
and found some knowledge I needed to know.  
This journey reached the end of its road  
and I'm sad to go. I'll head wearily home  
ahead of my closely trailing shadow.

### **Anhedonia**

Matthew O'Shea

Here I sit, a bittersweet taste on my lips,  
and a pleasant warmth in my chest.  
Feeling their extremes, I can't come to grips  
with what's to come or how to face this test.

I wish I could take a break for a day,  
though the aches and shakes and craves I get  
would take a bet and say "just wait, he'll stay."  
Dismayed, upset, betrayed, regret, and yet...

My veins dissuade my brain from slow decay  
and bury an entertained grave I made  
by rushing blood, making sure I'm okay.  
Still, though, my soul feels faint and grayed.

I've been fettered by severed dependence.  
But tethered, tarred and feathered? Not again.

I admit I'm still sensing your presence  
-A tenant of mind; tempting now and then.

Every so often, I think I've lost it,  
made it run off, and just be forgotten.  
Every time, it comes back. I'm exhausted.  
I feel I should act, but know I oughtn't.

I truly don't want my substance of choice,  
though I only feel a void in my chest.  
No highs or lows, devoid of inner joys,  
yet, it's still better than being obsessed.

Bittersweet for me, our drinks clink to toast.  
"To health!" "-To endless sleep, a comatose.  
I'm counting sheep till overdose, I'm home."

an·he·do·ni·a

/anhē'dōnēə/

noun: PSYCHIATRY

noun: anhedonia

• inability to feel pleasure.

## **This is 26**

O'Naria Perez

In a world of 7.753 billion people I chose you, but you didn't  
choose me.

Many times I wondered and figured you'd come back for  
me.

Months went by and you guaranteed me a visit, but I guess  
you could say it was all in spirit.

You made me start second-guessing myself.

You had me asking, is it me? Am I the problem?

What do I have to do to have you come back to me?

I was willing to get on my knees, to beg and plead.

More time passed by, and I realized it was time to stop  
waiting and begin to proceed.

Years continued and I would constantly ask myself...

How am I supposed to move on from a person, when you  
know that they're YOUR person.

For what ever reason you know that they won't come back,  
or you cannot be together.

But again, how are you supposed to make that decision and  
be with someone else, when you don't want to be with  
anyone else.

At that point, I had to wake up from dream and face reality  
because it was affecting my health.

Continuing the healing process.

I realized that I was completely selfless, and you were  
completely selfish.

I realized that you took little pieces of me. Not chunks, but

pieces, to the point where I didn't even notice.  
I stopped working, I stopped going to school, in some cases I  
even stopped seeing my friends.  
And I let you, I let you take pieces of me and with that, I still  
loved you.  
And because of that and because of you, I lost myself for a  
very long time.  
So I decided to go in search of myself and leave you behind.

In the healing process I've met some beautiful people.  
I had come to the conclusion, in order to love someone else,  
I had to learn to love myself first.  
I made sure that I was good, that my cup was always full and  
never empty.  
During that journey I found it heartbreaking that some  
people showed envy.  
But like I told them, I am doing this so when the time is  
right, I can be good for someone else.

Right when I was almost at 100%, that's when you chose to  
contact me.  
And you asked me, "how do I love you?"  
I thought and thought and that's when it clicked and I knew...  
I said to you, the way I love you is by me just taking  
everything that you are.  
To accept the person who you are as a whole.  
Your identity and everything that has ever affected you.  
And when I do not understand, I am willing to just listen.  
When I had finished my answer your body language created  
suspicion.  
You had re-opened the wound, that you created.  
When you saw the damage that was done, you left all in a

rush.

Once again, heart broken and a wound open.

It was time to sew it back up again, but this time with tighter stitches.

When everything was all stitched back up, you came back to shower me with kisses.

In those showers of kisses, I realized that you were not meant for me.

A person who loves you does not open your healing wounds and leave you there to die.

A person who loves you tries to comply.

In reply, I took a big deep breath and told you

You have to let me go.

You have to let ME, let YOU go.

I need you to do that for me.

I've never asked for anything from you. So this will be the one thing I do ask from you.

As you walked away, I had one last thing to tell you.

I'm not the one you end up with, and that is okay.

But I am the one who helps you build yourself.

The one who helps you go in search of yourself.

Who helps you find who you are and to truly find your purpose in life.

The one who teaches you and helps you reach true happiness.

As you walked away, you turned around and looked back.

You replied, "oh ya, and who does that for you, huh?"

## Meet Your Editors

### Naomi Catalan

This is Naomi's third semester at WCC. She's an English major working for her transfer AA. She loves dance, and both teaches and takes classes in ballet and hip hop with the Woodland Opera House. In her free time, Naomi likes to draw and write, and she loves watching movies with her family.



### Ella Morrison

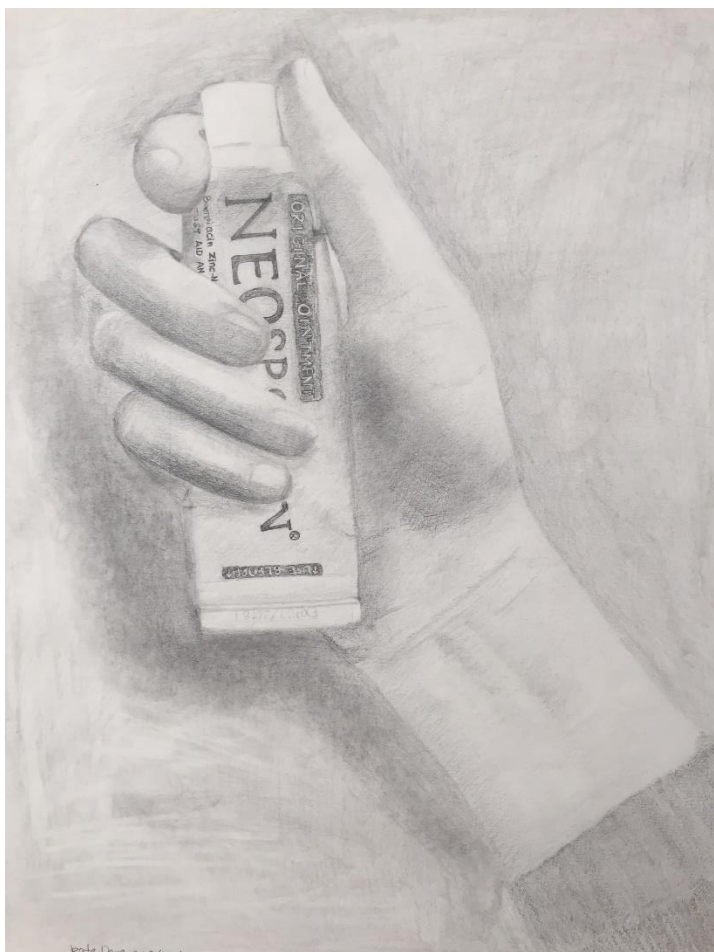
This is Ella's fourth semester as an INK! editor and her seventh semester at Woodland Community College. As a high school student, she is working towards her high school diploma and AA in English. In her free time, she can be found spending time with her family, bingeing Disney+, or listening to music!

**Fatima Mushtaq**

This is Fatima's first semester at WCC, and it is also her first semester working with the Ink magazine. In her free time, she enjoys writing poems, painting, spending time with her cat, Nacho, and/or watching new Netflix shows. She hopes to become a writer someday!







*Healing Power by Kate Deng*