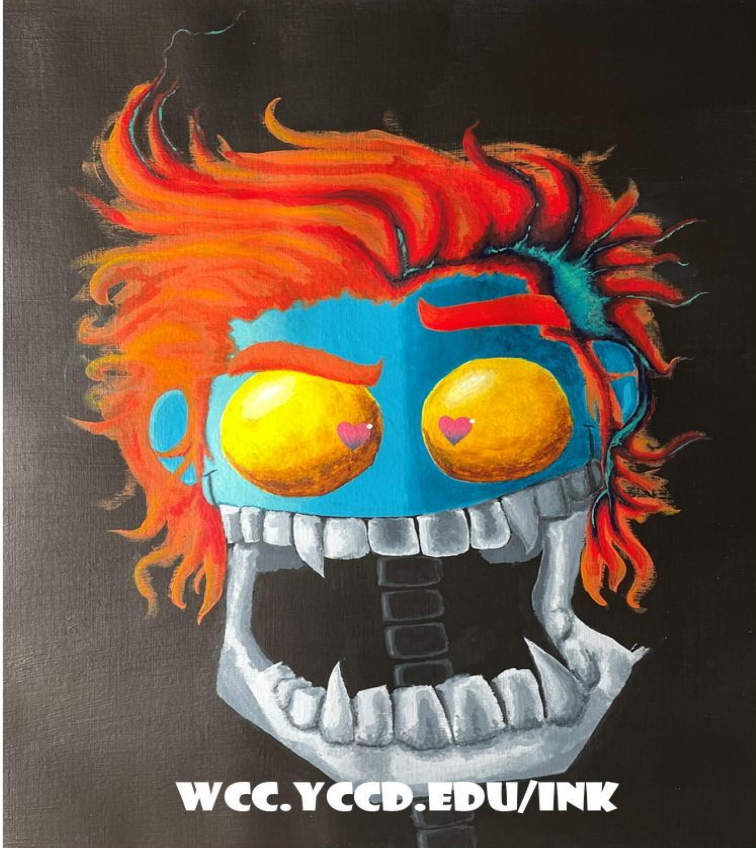


**"MY HEART IS FULL AND THE SMILE WILL NOT LEAVE MY FACE,  
AS I REALIZE THAT THIS REALLY IS A HAPPY PLACE."  
-TARA KEEBLE**



# **INK, A LITERARY ARTS MAGAZINE**

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**Ink**

*A Literary Arts Magazine*

**Issue 21**

*Woodland Community College*  
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### **Submissions**

If you are a current student of Woodland Community College, Colusa County Campus, or Lake County Campus and would like to contribute to future issues, please see [wcc.yccd.edu/ink](http://wcc.yccd.edu/ink) for submission guidelines and deadlines.

### **Donations**

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## **The Giants**

Tara Keeble

A soft autumn breeze flows through my hair;  
raindrops dance right through the air.  
The creek nearby flows with grace  
while puddles form with such great haste.  
The banana slugs find a place to hide  
as gray clouds form and thunder chides.  
Giant redwoods stand as tall as ever;  
this isn't the worst they've had to endeavor.  
My smile grows and I feel at peace;  
my love for California beauty will never cease.

## **Beach Boardwalk**

Kayla Camarena

Celebrating my nineteenth birthday in Santa Cruz,  
Booming music and bright signs welcomed us.  
The tall rides screamed, practically begging me to get in  
line,  
How could I ignore them?

We stop for some pink clouds of cotton candy,  
the sugar quickly dissolving in my mouth.  
Paired with a gorgeous view of the glistening Pacific,  
I watched from the boardwalk, ocean waves pushing  
and pulling.

I took so many pictures, because then the memories last longer.

The scariest part had to be the sky-glider,  
I don't like the feeling of my legs dangling, high up in the air.

My clammy hands felt like they were glued to the handles,  
Yet, looking past the anxious feeling in my stomach,  
I realized that the view was so much better up here.  
Above everything, higher than the tallest rides,  
I could see past the corn dog stands and photo booths,  
into ocean water.

So I got back in line with nothing to fear,  
After watching that sea so blue, I couldn't resist.  
My clammy hands grip the handlebars once more,  
Except this time, I'm so distracted by the world around me,

I can barely even feel that pit in my stomach.  
I guess the sky- glider's not so bad.

We tried our hand at carnival games,  
the ones where you can win big cuddly teddy bears,  
Again and again, no prize.  
The ones where you can win basketballs or tennis rackets,  
again and again, no prize.  
Good thing we were just playing for the hope of it all.



## **silent night**

Fatima Mushtaq

why are you silent my child?  
open your journal and write -  
pour out your emotions, every frustrated nerve out  
onto the page,  
although, it seems you lost your life to the death of  
your poetry ~  
no longer exclaiming to the world that you write with  
passion,  
for heaven and hell were once meshed together in your  
uniqueness of words,  
yet you no longer share  
and why?  
why do your profound poems lay in a black coffin up on  
the mountain top next to your destiny?  
would you rather burn your artwork, these  
masterpieces in a campfire?  
your honey eyes crystallizing from the sight of flames,  
oh my child,  
is there no proudness within that body piece of yours?  
does your soul not crave the taste of new vocabulary  
spilt from the mind onto the tongue, inked onto ashed  
paper?  
whatever happened to spending time to write,  
to explore this interest of yours or  
did the world bombard you with anxiety and thoughts  
of failure that you now sit criss crossed at the

cemetery, waiting as the sun rises from the west for  
your poetry to be revived.  
my lotus, my sweet sun child,  
reclaim your throne to poetry,  
please don't ever let this golden part of you die once it  
rejuvenates after the awaited sunrise,  
for time itself is decaying,  
and as a mother nurtures and supports her child,  
you my love,  
write so charismatically  
our aged moon awaits by your bedside  
waiting to hear another poem to receive its miraculous  
glow  
before the heaven descends its light into the crisp clear  
morning,  
and it is with your work, your crafts  
that our world awakens upon the entry of beautiful soft  
words.  
your poetry is forever living infinitely,  
even if you quit this love of yours,  
it will be tattooed onto you like you're the piece of  
paper, you are the journal,  
you have stories to create, write, and share.  
you my honey child,  
you are my delicate poet,  
and your creations live onwards  
with an affection beyond dictionaries  
an impact bestowed for centuries.  
you are poetry.  
my favorite poem of all <333

## Old Home

Abbigale Curnutt

Childhood homes are like a trip to the past  
My childhood home was the friendliest house on the block  
My house was the house everyone would go to for great candy on Halloween  
It was a classic home  
A one-story house that is just enough room for your family  
A white home but it wasn't pure white  
It was the type of white that is slightly discolored after being there for so long  
The front yard was like a fairy tale  
It wasn't big but the trees and flowers were always full of energy  
The grass was always a spring green color, living up the yard  
Rosemary and blackberry bushes surrounded the front like a moat  
In the summer we would pick the blackberries and eat like crazy  
Fourth of July they would close off the road and we would set off fire works  
But the backyard was where the magic happened  
It had a concrete patio that moved down to the grass  
In the summer we would put up the swimming pool  
We practically lived in the pool

Us kids would put up the tent and pretend we were camping  
In the grass area, we had a playset and a trampoline  
My childhood home will always find a place in my heart.

### **Nothing left to lose**

Sonia Eiffert

You told me I drive like I have nothing left to lose.  
Truth is I drive like this car is a rope around my neck  
like a fucking noose.  
I am not suicidal, I'm just in pain.  
These horrifying memories, thoughts and feelings won't  
go away.  
Instead of accelerating I slow down.  
I won't let the maniac depression show when you're  
around.

You told me I drive like I have nothing left to lose.  
Going 80 in a 30 in my white coupe.  
You tell me you love me as you touch my thigh.  
I push your hand away and smile as I try not to cry.  
He took everything from me what wasn't his to take.  
Hate, sex, love and pain it all somehow feels the same.

You told me I drive like I have nothing left to lose.  
I hide all my sadness and secrets behind these tattoos.

I've been hurt, used and abused what a waste of life I am.

If I told you how broken I am would you still love me or would you not give a damn.

You told me I drive like I have nothing left to lose.

I'm ticking bomb full of anguish and sadness you need to diffuse.

You told me I act like I'm insecure.

You told me you loved me when you really loved her.



*The Watching Watch by Alexis Biasi*

## Once

Carol Butzbach

I once had a lover and felt so fine.  
Woke up in the morning and knew he was mine  
I was lost when he died, a pea in half -pod.  
Me without him, it felt so damned odd.  
I wish I could start all over again,  
but I don't know how, I don't know who,  
and I don't know why I should try love again.

We once shared a home, exhilarating,  
It belonged to us both, our true beginning.  
We felt like we owned a gift from above,  
But when he passed away, I was standing alone.  
I wonder if you've ever lost a love,  
Would you know how, would you know who,  
And would you be willing to try love again?

So make sure that this doesn't happen to you.  
Whomever you lost, you're sure to be blue.  
Be willing to look for a pea for your pod.  
While it may be hard, it is surely not odd.  
Be sure you know how, be sure you know who,  
and be willing to embrace the world once again.

## Memories

Aalia Khan

Growing up seems like such a hassle,  
It's all we dream about as a child-  
little do we know our time is fragile;  
looking back on my memories I have smiled.

From promotions to high school graduations,  
And dancing till my feet hurt at prom-  
Going on endless vacations;  
To watching many Disney sitcoms.

These are the moments I want to relive,  
From elementary to high school-  
We don't realize how much our youth gives;  
Then we grow up and learn how the world is so cruel.

Now I don't want to grow up,  
Everyone expects you to be someone-  
If I knew what I wanted in life, maybe everyone would  
just backup;  
However, my life has just barely begun.

The days go by reminiscing the past,  
I should have cherished the youth I had-  
Life is too good for the memories to last;  
For all I've had, I should be glad.

## The Happiest Place

Tara Keeble

The happiest place on Earth, they say.  
Filled to the brim with wonder and joy.  
I watch a young child as she plays,

creating shiny round bubbles with her brand new toy.  
My mom points out Tinker Bell and my face turns red;  
I had no idea she was real!

I drag my family to the meet and greet line, full steam  
ahead;

pure excitement and wonder are the main things I feel.

A cast member smiles as I stroll on by,

as I inhale the salty and addicting scent of popcorn.

Jolly music from a barbershop quartet can be heard  
nearby;

the trumpet player screams a solo from his polished  
horn.

There's Mickey Mouse, the man of the hour,

giving hugs and high fives to both kids and kids-at-  
heart.

He stands beneath a castle with a drawbridge and a  
huge tower,

adorned with vibrant colors and tiny details like a work  
of art.

My brother tells our mom that we NEED to take a  
picture together,

and a nearby family offers to take it for us, no fuss.



I can't help but think of my grandma, who was feeling  
under the weather;  
I wish she could be here and take this picture with us.  
Pirates of the Caribbean is my dad's favorite ride,  
so we head towards New Orleans Square so we can  
ride it first.  
My whole family walks at a quite quick stride,  
and the anticipation makes my heart feel like it is going  
to burst.

My heart is full and the smile will not leave my face,  
as I realize that this really is a happy place.

## **Lover**

Kayla Camarena

We were supposed to be just friends.  
You and I shared a simple job that winter.  
But our shoulders brush,  
We laugh and we talk.  
For once, you let go of your worries and your guilt  
Strange look on your face.  
I knew what it was,  
You are in love.

Dancing in the kitchen at midnight, lit by refrigerator  
light.  
Small talks, you drive  
Sunday mornings, our place.  
For once, I let go of my fears and my doubts.

Spilled drinks on the couch,  
Nervous look on your face.  
Now I know what it was,  
I am in love.

And so it goes,  
I'm coming home to our apartment downtown.  
Your face lit by candlelight,  
I'm seeing rose petals fall down.  
You're on one knee and my whole world stops.  
In the silence I can feel it,  
We are in love.

### **Heartbeat**

Abbigale Curnutt

I feel your heartbeat with the feeling, I can't complete  
I see you on the street  
You never missin' a beat, the music playing to your feet  
There's nothing to see  
Just the space in between, we  
Don't say we can't speak,  
I feel your heart skip a beat  
Yeah, when you are next to me  
I can feel your heartbeat  
No, no one can compete, if you're right here next to me  
You have got the key to make my heartbeat  
Yeah, our hearts beat



*fallen angel by Alexis Biasi*

## **dancing away my youth**

Fatima Mushtaq

i'm where the parties at,  
dancing and swaying away into the night  
to wake up feeling as if life is by my side.  
what will it take for these people of corrupt society  
to recognize youth lives once - like us.  
experience is what thrives the blood in my veins,  
experience is what allows her to write when she's on  
the dance floor, her as in me,  
me who hopes to forget the reality i've endured -  
that will be a fail, so i dance away,  
like others who run miles on miles,  
i dance on my feet, escaping time and tragedy

bhangra, salsa, fun, silly moves to let loose,  
i dance all my worries and fears away  
for the three hours the dance floor becomes my  
comfort home,  
a safe space, where focus isn't about aging,  
rather enjoying the scarcity of youth one pertains.  
so tonight  
for the next 24 hours,  
let's fly to new york for a night of  
twirling into our dreams and  
dancing our youth away.

### Maui

Carol Butzbach

Sunshine streams in,  
awakening all my senses.  
Melodious birdsong fills the  
cozy warming air.

I pad out barefoot,  
unabashedly night-gowned,  
my hot Kona coffee  
thrilling my taste buds.

Enlivened geckos and anole lizards  
spring from palm frond to frond  
amid brilliant magenta hibiscus and  
luscious red poinsettias.

The fragrant breezes calm me.  
My listening ears behold the crashing of  
waves breaking on the rocky coast.

I dress quickly,  
then speed-walk past  
bustling tennis players,  
to arrive anticipating wonder.

When I see the blow of giant humpback whales,  
  
their massive bodies emerging,  
to create a vast peduncle arch,  
or slap their tails on the azure waters,  
the magic of Maui moves me.

### ***Downtown Disney***

Kayla Camarena

On my fourth birthday, I rode Space Mountain for the  
first time  
It ended with sweat and tears running down my face  
Rightfully so, since it's fast as lightning  
Wanting a peaceful recovery, we would become lost at  
sea  
Pirates of the Caribbean has the catchiest songs,  
and water that smells like memories.

On my fifth birthday, I tried dole whip for the first time

Colored like gold, and just as valuable in my book.  
Pair that with a mickey shaped pretzel,  
you've got a snack that can't be beat.  
By now I had collected a few pairs of Minnie ears  
They come in every color, from black and white, to  
rainbow stripes.

Downtown Disney was part of my next ten birthdays  
May 8th, every year marked with a handmade churro  
fried and lightly coated with sugar and cinnamon,  
they really can't be beat.

Live entertainment, light shows, and parades  
Main Street is always bustling with its classic music

There's Mickey and Minnie  
But don't forget about Goofy and Pluto  
The ticket booths stand there, guarding Disneyland's  
grand entrance  
Surrounded by gift shops and candy stores  
Where should we stop first?

## **William has Autism**

Jessica Paoli

William is the ocean, loud and crashing.  
Bouncing and whooping and plowing himself to the  
ground.

An apple, the only fruit he eats.  
A hard outside, and a sweet inside.  
He is rose quartz, the stone of love,  
pink has always been his favorite color.  
He is the tall redwood trees,  
taller than me despite being younger,  
building himself up higher and higher.  
He is the early hours of four thirty am,  
waking early without fail.  
William is as colorful as the 90s,  
as cartoony as Nickelodeon was then.  
Outside he stains his socks green from the grass,  
he is the stain on the bottom of your sock that will  
never wash out,  
the memories of sunny days that you will never forget.  
At home he is safe,

At home he can dump his societal abnormalities into  
the jar,  
and lock them up tight where no one will judge,  
not that he would notice.  
He cannot put what he feels into words,  
thus he says "I love you" every night,  
but those are just words, just consonants and vowels  
smashed together.  
He shows his love in different ways.  
He dreams about his family, school, and the stars,  
but he only tells you about the stars.  
He says his stuffed Monkey dreams about bananas.  
That his stars are bright and white and pretty.

“How was your day, William?” “Good!”  
But it isn't true.  
How many times are his responses true?  
How would we know?  
A person cannot just get a ladder and climb into his  
brain.  
But I know he loves me and I love him.  
No matter how he says so.

### **Was it ever love**

Abbigale Curnutt

Tw as it the way your sharp eyes looked at me  
Or was it the way you talked with your heart  
Your love was the one to help me break free  
Those words you told me was like flowers, art  
What would I do without your lovely smile  
You never seem to see me for the bad  
The time we have spent was always worth while  
We are far from perfect but I'm still glad  
Glad for the way you treated me with care  
The way you loved me with all of your soul  
Your soul is as golden as a ripe pear  
A pear that turned into a blackhole  
You tricked me, why did you tear us apart  
Did you ever see me for my true heart



**innocence elsewhere;**

Fatima Mushtaq

eyes; the windows to your visions i see,  
i glare at  
for more than a millisecond before they vanish  
like your innocence.  
i observe,  
i glare,  
i consider the hope layered upon your genetic honey  
eyes,  
i see you're on survival mode,  
what for?  
i stare at the smile upon your face,  
but it's far more crooked like a curved road  
with no destination,  
the location of your tears stuated up above your  
cheekbones: beautiful waterways  
~  
how long will those streams stay underneath the  
darkened windows?  
your angelic face, a global map or a home?  
the roads to comfort or the pathways to pure  
innocence?  
innocence before you sacrificed your entirety  
whether you had a choice or not,  
now your expressions are numb,  
saddened with the years of trauma you endured,  
oh mother,  
my superhero,

mother of my universe,  
i see no innocence in your eyes; who stole your pot of  
honey?  
eyes no longer honey glazed, who must the world be  
afraid of?  
the robbery of the bliss you once possessed as a young  
child,  
snatched away by the forced adulthood,  
who must we protect ourselves from so our own berry  
eyes are not raptured?  
i caress your cheeks, the hills that never move upwards,  
a face so motionless,  
what has he done?  
your joy, nowhere to be found underneath the layers of  
skin,  
your innocence, destructed, cremated, ashed elsewhere  
besides the crests underneath your mournful eyes,  
i stare past a map with no treasure,  
despondent are the roads,  
i watch a home crumble in front of my own two berry  
eyes,  
the windows to my ambitious dreams and noble  
innocence,  
will i too suffer the grieving of my once heaven-like  
innocence?  
eyes; the windows to your perished livelihood i see  
departure,  
a life i see disintegrate beneath those shuttered blinds  
when you sleep.

the only time of day you experience contentment  
before awaking to crushed womanhood,  
will i too, as a young woman, suffer the loss of my  
youthfulness?

oh my innocence,  
here before sent away,  
oh your innocence,  
vanished beyond decades from this universe,  
somewhere,  
not here,  
elsewhere.



IMG\_5100 by Daniel Zapata-Kraft



*Bikini Bottom by Fatima Mushtaq*



*IMG\_5384 by Daniel Zapata-Kraft*



IMG\_5339 by Daniel Zapata-Kraft



IMG\_3783 by Daniel Zapata-Kraft



Who Am I by Melissa Miller



*Crocheted Flowers by Fatima Mushtaq*



IMG\_5158 by Daniel Zapata-Kraft

## ***Under the Willow***

Kayla Camarena

If we must die, let us be together  
Deep in the meadow, a bed of grass  
If warm or cold, whatever the weather  
I think without you, my heart will be brass.

We can rest our eyes under the willow  
Listen as the birds sing a lullaby  
The earth will become our soft green pillow  
I don't think we should ever say goodbye.

People like to say, "Till death do we part"  
Yet death's cold grip won't keep me from your warmth  
However long goes by, you have my heart  
We will always be together henceforth.

My best friend, or lover, either will fit  
Under the willow, the memories hit.

## **Define: Love**

Sonia Eiffert

Looking at myself standing naked in the mirror,  
trying to figure out the meaning of love,  
I do a spin and fall to the floor and feel nothing but  
disgust.

I tell myself I'm beautiful like someday it will be true.



I hate myself so instead I give all my love to you.  
I love the way you smile, and I love the way you laugh.  
I love the way you hold me even when I don't ask.

I looked at myself in the reflection as we walked by  
I can't help but notice every flaw with tears in my eyes.  
Even with the makeup that covered my skin Sephora,  
Morphe and Elf.  
I love you more than I could ever love myself.

I tell myself that its love that I feel for you.  
If it's not, would you stay until it becomes true.  
I think I just feel less alone with you around.  
Please don't yell If its lust because love can always be  
found.



Untitled Sketch by Alexis Biasi

## **beyond fields of blue**

Fatima Mushtaq

the vision of us is gone,  
past the fields of youthful greenery we once imagined  
ourselves soaking up on,  
or maybe it was only me romanticizing my possible  
future with you - the one that never happened,  
the future that spread into ash when i held it in my  
blood-soaked hands.  
insomnia, my best friend at midnight  
when i yearn to ask these 21 questions:  
is it my presence or absence that bothers you?  
which one haunts you into insomnia each vacant night?  
do you fear - the thought that you'll be pondering about  
me  
when you're with your new girl?  
does she know about me?  
the danger that i supposedly possess,  
certainly enough for you to have your friends eliminate  
me from their lives as well,  
does your heart swell a little bit blue when you see me  
on the dance floor swaying the stress away?  
the memories of you,  
the tragedies of us,  
the betrayal of a failed connection,  
do you pray to Our Beloved Lord when your thoughts  
won't ditch what you perceived me once as?  
do you yearn - cry to Allah, the Most Compassionate,  
about me?

have you ever?  
for i do,  
i grasp prostration tightly - hugging the prayer mat,  
hoping that Allah can hear my silent sobs,  
the tears that wet my face you once thought was  
gorgeous.  
i pray for your happiness,  
who does such a thing?  
only me, the fool because  
i despise holding hatred in my heart, so i forgive,  
but there you are,  
dying at the sight of me joyful,  
for that was once me four months ago, but i now  
prosper in public and still suffer in private.  
will you take a proper look at me?  
for more than five seconds please.  
glare at this heart that's bound to be mortal,  
tell me the lies with your eyes when you cry to my face  
about your heartache,  
the heart attack that i caused with my attempt at  
healing,  
i, a fool,  
still nurture hope in my hands, water it daily like a lotus  
plant, expecting you to come back,  
urging God to send you back into my life.  
i am a fool,  
a fool who only cries blue.  
my gardens of peace have been destructed, damaged,  
pulverized because of you.  
where did you hide my sanity?

and why did you have the audacity to steal my sanity  
and take it with you to the lands of hurt egos and  
forever hating me,  
but truly beneath those layers of cover ups,  
do you know you will never forget about me,  
the first friend in a lover.  
you make me too blue,  
my flowers for you will never bloom,  
as i am a fool to think you ever pray good for me.  
your first friend in a lover, your biggest regret or your  
biggest self-mistake of not choosing me?  
why don't you kiss your confusion goodnight?  
as another night passes,  
where i question why you did what you had done.  
why i now cripple and suffer the consequences of your  
immaturity and lack of self-love.  
i am a fool, so so blue.

## **Finding Love**

Aalia Khan

Love is a feeling I have not yet had  
For it comes as seasons have passed me by  
Like those who leave, my heart feels like it's stabbed.  
Without love the sky will look down and cry.

Each day goes by slow looking for someone  
Craving affection and warmth to please us  
So we have a reason to become one

Never wanting to feel the stinging cuts.

It often feels as though I am broken  
Like a shattered glass that needs a fixing  
I am just waiting to be awoken  
But finding me a prince is conflicting.

People have come in and out of my life  
Who needs love when I've got myself to thrive.

### **Pleas for a Ruler of the World**

Carol Butzbach

Care for old ones so their past is not gone.  
Be sure of their comfort so they live long.  
Preserve the world's life forms, from dawn to dawn  
From ocean to mountain, all will be strong.

Promote deepened learning in every home,  
Give schooling to all, even if they're grown.  
Save books and ideas in every tome.  
Inventions are welcome, all are well-known.

Make homes for the homeless so they're ne'er alone.  
Acknowledge the need for service and care.  
Give food to the hungry, give more than bones.  
Guarantee the treatment of vets is fair.

Please launch all these plans, they must be released.  
Otherwise, how can you give our world peace?

## **Resiliency**

Tara Keeble

In January of 2020, I knew exactly what I wanted my future to look like.

I passed my audition for Sonoma State University's music program.

I quit my job at a coffee shop to perform in a musical and study for my final exams,

I was writing a speech to submit for graduation, and I had just begun talking to the most amazing person.

I finally felt truly happy,  
for the first time  
in a long time.

I soon found myself struggling to find my footing in an ever-changing world.

The pandemic resulted in my education being completely online.

I withdrew from the music program and took a gap year,

got rehired at the coffee shop and promoted to supervisor,

and began pouring endless effort and emotional energy into my job.

I struggled to spend time with my boyfriend, but we shared many FaceTime calls and snapchat messages.

My mind struggled to keep up with the overwhelming thoughts and feelings of uncertainty.

Was Sonoma State still a possibility?

Could I withstand the ever-growing stress of the pandemic?

Would my relationship feel inauthentic?

Why can't I just feel happy again?

As it turns out, happiness can be found even when you aren't sure what the future has in store.

I moved out to live with someone who is now my best friend, someone I truly adore.

I work as a cheese specialist at a company I respect.

I am still dating someone who is simply perfect.

I plan to attend UC Davis in the fall.

I am keeping my head up through every curveball.

I now understand that happiness comes and goes,  
that sometimes it's better to not be happy,  
to feel authentic emotions,  
to make big mistakes.

I am no longer scared of change,  
for I now understand my own resiliency.

## Lonely Little Fish

Jessica Paoli

A fish in the bowl,  
Inside looking out,  
Why am I alone?  
No one to talk to,  
Instead I just sit,  
Well- I guess I swim.  
Completely alone.  
Little lonely fish,  
Only food to eat,  
.. No one to talk to.  
Worth five syllables,  
No more and no less,

No castle, no rocks,  
No rainbow pebbles.  
Now the humans leave.  
Lonely little fish,  
Even food to eat -  
Has been abandoned.  
Hunger never strikes,  
When you aren't wanted.  
Down the toilet bowl.



## **My First Valentine**

Aalia Khan

My first valentine was in 6th grade  
Oh we were so young thinking the day would last  
His height and light brown hair beautifully displayed  
He was nervous as though it was a big performance.

Moments later outside the classroom, he gave me a box  
of chocolates  
It was large, heart shaped, and rosy like his blushing  
cheeks  
I was elated as he was my first valentine  
He was proud of himself and acted as if he had won the  
prize of his life.

Chasing me around was a game of tag  
He played it well just like in a game of basketball  
Oh we were young and innocent at the time, thinking  
we would last  
Realizing new feelings that were yet to be explored.

I ate the chocolates with my friends  
There was a mixture of milk chocolate and dark  
chocolate, as well as many fruitful flavors  
We finished the box slowly as if being forced to eat it  
They were an assortment of flavors with tastes I  
disliked.

The next day I asked him where he got the chocolates

He said he bought them with his dad at Rite Aid  
He wanted to know why I was asking  
So I told him they were disgusting, stinging him with my  
words.

I broke his heart as if running him over  
I saw the sadness as his big brown eyes looked towards  
the ground as I crushed his feelings  
He said he was sorry they tasted so bad  
He said instead let's just be friends.

The feelings didn't last too long  
As we soon went and played basketball  
Oh we were so young at the time  
Yet he was my first valentine.

## **Gone Father**

Abbigale Curnutt

I could hear the blood-screeching screams from my  
room  
They yell like there is no tomorrow, screaming, crying,  
hitting  
That's what it is at first him screaming at the top of his  
lungs off  
Saying that you all never loved him, that your mom  
cheated, you never spend any time with him  
Then he cries with tears that flow like a river,

trying to make you feel bad for him, saying he's sorry  
and that he really loves you  
He says he'll do better no more drugs, no more alcohol  
When that doesn't work, he hits, and he hits hard  
when he hits you, it feels like there is no tomorrow  
It feels like your heart has shattered into one million  
pieces  
Like your guts have been ripped right out of you and  
you are just bleeding out  
You feel like you are already dead, like there is no point  
in life  
If your dad doesn't love you, who will, you are  
worthless  
So many things going on inside your head  
What did I do wrong, what has him so mad, am I next  
Hiding in your room covering your ears, crying, asking  
the world to please make it stop  
Again and again, someone please help  
Trying to fight for your life that now you don't even  
want to have  
Wishing you were gone from this cruel unfair world  
Running to help save your own mother because you  
would be dead without her  
Fleeing town just to get away from all the pain that is  
swirling inside you  
Going to school the next day pretending you weren't  
just hit by your own father  
Laughing at everyone's jokes like you aren't scared to  
go home

Keeping it all bottled up inside to the point where if  
someone would look at you wrong you would cry  
That wasn't even the worst part, going home from the  
place that helped you forget even just for a second  
Anticipating the beating that you were going to get for  
not doing the dishes  
Punch after punch, slap after slap, kick after kick  
Oh please make it stop, stop, stop, STOP  
Why won't it stop  
We called and we called for help, but they would show  
up hours latter  
Father would be gone by then, but he would always be  
back  
Time after time, the same scenario repeating itself  
Until red and blue lights come on time  
Now the father is gone  
But father isn't really gone

## **Loving Me**

Tara Keeble

My fingers glide across my gentle skin;  
a patchwork quilt that tells you where I've been.

I trace my curves and folds,  
a crease, a bump, a roll;  
a piece of art, a masterpiece,  
a story to be told.

The lines that grace my body,  
from stripes to marks and scars,  
are things I once looked down upon;  
they're like my own memoir.

This body's seen a lot,  
some of it quite absurd;  
a perfect way to remember all  
the trauma I've endured.

I've learned to embrace my body;  
it's what makes me who I am.

I'm living my authentic life  
and not giving a damn.

### ***Alone Again***

Kayla Camarena

Sitting in my car alone again, you're probably with your  
friend  
Sad songs playing on the stereo  
Reaching for my phone  
To call you, you won't answer though  
So I turn up the music, maybe melodramatic of me  
I'm all alone again, while you're with your friend.

Sad songs playing on the stereo

Reaching for my phone, you won't answer though  
Now I'm on the highway going 'bout ninety nine  
So I turn up the music, maybe melodramatic of me  
I'm all alone again, while you're with your friend.

Sad songs playing on the stereo  
Reaching for my phone, you won't answer though

I pull over now, time to catch my breath  
This is something you might regret  
I'm all alone again.

## **grief**

Fatima Mushtaq

grief my dear lonesome friend  
seats itself in the corner of my room  
next to the dresser with my arabian perfumes.

grief my watcher  
captures my breakdowns about my past  
when the sun shines through the window onto the  
carpet of my apple - colored room.

the bright light and beautiful spring weather  
flashes me back to my middle school days  
when i was youthful and laughed too much,  
the change of dark gloomy weather to the sun casting  
down

has me grieving over my past and the peers i joked  
around with,  
the peers i created memories with  
that now depress me.

i am grieving  
about the child i once was  
before society forced me into adulthood,  
before i was taken advantage of in  
all the ways a child could've been,  
i am forever in grief  
for my youth that is ruptured with trauma.

lately,  
grief who keeps its eye on me  
has seen me sob into my floral pillows  
not about the terrible memories and the regrets,  
rather the joyful memories  
that make me wish i could be a child again  
without the responsibilities  
to survive in this corrupted world.

so i grieve  
with my sorrowed heart bleeding out onto the bed  
that i attempt to sleep on,  
yet insomnia has other plans,  
no longer will i be able to talk to the ones i loved in my  
past,  
for they are miles gone  
and i am alone again

weeping over my past innocence and stolen youth.

i am grieving over a childhood i cannot fix  
i cannot time travel back to,  
this realization keeps me deeply distressed.

## **Sixteen Days**

Jessica Paoli

November 22nd.

Driving home.

Music on the radio

Reaching the last stop sign,

The last before the turn onto my street.

Phone. Ringing.

We will go to my grandparents house once I reach my  
street,

In two minutes tops.

An early thanksgiving lunch.

It's dad

Is he telling me to hurry?

"Hello? I'm almost home"

"There's going to be an ambulance and a firetruck  
outside our house -

"Mom had a seizure -

"She's going to the hospital."

My chest tightens



My stomach flips  
My body feels fuzzy.  
"Thanks for telling me. I'm almost there"  
I can hear my voice shake  
I loop around our culdesac to park across the street  
I park so fast the car jolts to a stop  
it was still rolling

I speed walk across the street  
Mom is on the gurney  
"I love you"  
"I love you too"  
She leaves  
and I sob as I try to unpack my brother's nintendo

She had another seizure as they took her to the  
hospital.  
Her tongue swelled,  
She was intubated,  
Then she got sick.  
I cried more tears than I thought possible.  
One night I watched her -  
- while my dad got sleep he didn't get for days at a time.

Each day I wanted to give up,  
To crawl into bed and sob and never come out.  
But I had a brother and cat to take care of.  
No one else was here to help them.  
Or me.

Then she moved to the hospital in Modesto,  
Two Long Hours Away From Us.  
My dad and nana begged for a closer stay,  
But there was nothing they could do.  
My grandparents helped me watch my brother while  
my parents were gone.

Sixteen days.  
She was gone for sixteen days, at two separate  
hospitals.  
She was awake for seven of those.  
She got the tube out on day twelve.  
All the days blend together.  
At least she's home.  
At least her voice is getting better.  
At least she can walk without a walker.

We still don't know why it happened.  
It never happened before then.  
It hasn't happened since then.  
That fuzzy feeling of fear remains.

### Clear Lake

Carol Butzbach

Crystalline frost sparkles  
In the mildest winter sun.  
Foggy chasms in jade-green hills.  
Revived by welcome rains,

Emerald baby grass shoots grow like there's no tomorrow.

They smell of Spring.

Bright orange poppies festoon  
the banks of a narrow two-lane road,  
opposite, the diamond-studded lake  
dazzles like fragmented mirrors.  
Coots and ducks glide on the shiny surface,  
dipping and diving, gathering and scattering.

Breezes on the lake cause flashes like  
brilliant winking stars in the blackest midnight sky  
when the world is dark and silent.  
The fragrant earth broadcasts invitations  
to the dormant flowers,  
precursors of a much wished-for Spring.

## **Mine**

Tara Keeble

My face is blush because of your soft touch.  
Your fingers trace my face and neck with grace.  
I never knew that I could love this much.  
We melt into a comforting embrace.

Our eyes ablaze with passion and true love,  
and cheeks the shade of roses red as wine.  
The gentle moonlight graces us above.  
I can't believe I get to call you mine.

Your aromatic scent pervades my nose.  
I brush my fingers through your silky hair.  
You wrap your arms around and pull me close;  
the only thing that I can do is stare.

I never knew what love could truly be,  
until you showed me under that oak tree.

### **Recognizing The Truth/Burnt Caramelized Eyes: An Epilogue to Honey Eyes**

Fatima Mushtaq

I recently recognized how I have been fighting against  
my depression,  
When I should have been fighting with my depression  
all along.

If I would have known of the true battle not being  
within myself

but among my presence,

I would have not swamped a pool of Venetian during  
adolescence.

If I possessed dominance or verity,

I would assist my caved essence to refuge my berry  
self.

The truth is

I was innocent as could be.

How is it that I was stung by cosmo's bee  
before I was sophisticated, nurtured with  
nourishment and respect?

Developing in an abusive environment  
I was catered with consistent neglect.  
Eventually,  
What option was left  
when I had no right to treat myself with untaught  
purity?  
If only I held self-decency,  
I would not torture and combat my own declining body.  
I would have never thought to gulp anti-depressant pills  
to resist the youthful depressant within my agonized  
mind.  
Certainly,  
If I was thundered with dignity from my early years,  
Would I have not acted upon the need for attention  
For all these performances set me back another ten-  
fifteen years

And my audience was her, captivated in cherry vision  
We both knew we could never suppress our self-hatred  
and abandoned tears.  
Her caramel eyes revealing a stage of society's, culture  
lies.  
She spoke softly to me  
from a distance similar to my father and I.  
And she questioned me  
Why I had slit blades on my fair flesh  
Or why I had preceded to escape religion  
during the toughest stage of my sickness?  
How I could possibly reveal my inner anger

while the angel of death came to visit during its  
expedition?  
And I speak to her,  
the teenage woman, pure and clever,  
I speak to her to state my answers  
while glaring into her mysterious eyes,  
Gently reminding her that I was once an addict to pills,  
My will to live- I believed it did not exist,  
Had I been pill sober,  
I would have never written reasons  
why I should have stayed- My pro and cons list.  
Had I not made mirrors my home,  
I would have never faced a reflection of being  
hauntingly alone.  
And it's those eyes of yours,  
They used to be honey  
before society opened your insecurity pores  
expecting you to be the best soldier at war  
But now,  
Those closing eyes of yours,  
Close the velvet curtains on stage,  
Leaving the two of us on the granted floor.

Oh and she knows I speak all honesty,  
For she weeps burnt caramelized goodbyes  
From her so-called violent eyes.  
But she was only a child of ten- tomorrow reaching  
twenty.  
If they had not given her pharmaceutical drugs to have  
it all easy,

She would have recognized the truth of the hunters,  
Lucifer or shaytan,  
Reannouncing “kill her”  
until she runs out of syrup, that is when she-  
Or shall I say I,  
Will plead I am done.  
That is when I will have given up.  
Because I could not eat dinner peacefully  
without the invisible faces at the table,  
I could not hear the ceramic waves adequately  
with the taunting voices in my head  
butchering me until I became disabled  
Because even then without hearing,  
I could see a size seven ring  
Which would not fit on my fingers because that night, I  
had eaten dinner.  
Each one of my senses disappearing  
Yet appearing in the latest stage of my nightmares  
Those bells I hear ring and ring  
Until I plead for my own disappearance  
I shall leave strands of my organic, grain hair,  
Maybe a sip of my classic, red wine,  
With a zest of my ripped flesh.  
Because this hallucination of reality,  
I cannot bear.  
Neither can she- The mellow woman addicted to  
pleasure of a man.  
This is with all honesty,  
But it surely is too late,  
For she ate past her boundaries,

And now she bleeds dry, diminishing blades out her  
eyes onto the floor  
I bleed dry, diminishing blades out my once honey eyes,  
Then burnt carmelized stages of denial,  
Of syrup onto the breaking floor.  
Now it is too late to drink from my demonic blood  
wound.  
For I have recognized the brutal truth of my once  
fictional youth.



## Meet Your Editors



This is Fatima's fourth time working as an *Ink* editor. She is a sophomore at WCC studying Political Science, and is planning to transfer after this Spring semester. In her free time, she enjoys writing poetry, reading, crocheting, and watching Netflix shows like *Emily in Paris*.



This is Carol's first time working as an *Ink* editor. She is a retired teacher who grades college papers for a couple of WCC professors, and she plans to continue doing so. She is looking forward to writing, reading, playing with Bella, and working on the land this summer.