



Ink, A Literary Arts Magazine

**Issue 23, Spring 2024
Woodland Community College**

Ink

A Literary Arts Magazine

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Spring 2024

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Submissions

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

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A Walk in the Rain

Alex George

It's my first time on Kauai
Beauty unlike anything seen before
Temperature a reliable constant
The ocean like the warmest bath

I chose the pair of clothes lightest
My older relative waiting already
We couldn't have guessed
Mother nature had other ideas

We chose to walk the streets
To see the shops and Hawaiian culture
Bought coconuts and shave ice
Who knew there were so many chickens

Tropical weather can be so bipolar
The sun shine warming you but,
Raining buckets one minute later,
At least it's always warm

City Life/ Coffee Breath

Billy Barth

The rain continued to pour overhead,
The lamps started to flicker, turning on
Illuminating the town's sidewalk, fled
To the sanction of a coffee shop, drawn
In by the smell of the beans, freshly ground
And brewed, the barista looked up and said

“It’ll be a few minutes” but they were drowned
Out by the sound of a turning page, read
By the lone man, sipping his steaming brew
I walked to his spot and peered at the man
He looked up and muttered “Can I help you?”
I sat at his table, I had no plan.
“I’m waiting to order, may I sit here?”
The man instead grinned, no reason to sneer.

Time Well Spent

Ashley Ruiz

It’s campfire time when we lose daylight,
The best family activity we all share at night.
Let’s build it up, as big as we can,
Gathering firewood, the forest we scan.

Light the match and let it roar,
Raise of hands, who wants a s’more?
Let the marshmallows toast in the flame,
Who has the best one? Let’s make it a game!

Hypnotized by the fire’s crackling glow,
The clouds roll in and it starts to snow.
We circle up tight to help stay warm,
Keeping safe from the cold of the storm.

A perfect place to relax and let go,
The campfire helps our happy memories grow.
So much laughter and time well spent,
We’ll do it again soon with the same intent.

On Assignment

Cade Isenhower

“Vandera?” I said, eyeing the manila folder at the center of the desk.

“Yes. All the rage. Haven’t heard?” said Mr. Anderson, head editor at the Winnemucca Sun, and therefore my boss. He was a few years my junior.

“No. Not until I won this story, but I’d hardly call it victory. Nothing good come out of California since Johnny Mathis,” I said. The landscape from Klamath to Death Valley revolted me with the same presence of a too-young nurse in hospice care. You don’t deserve this, but neither do we.

“Right. Well. You put in good work. Publishers gave you a break from...high school baseball, storm alerts. Take it or leave it,” Mr. Anderson said. He stress tested pencils behind his desk. I questioned what thoughts, if any, trolled the crew-cut space uninitiated might call his mind. Imagine two marbles rolling around in a hamster ball, when they collide—bonk—an idea, violent, fleeting. But still, the activity is there.

“Leave it. Thanks, but no,” I said.

“Just an expression, Clint. Not up to you. Flight’s booked. Hotel,” said Mr. Anderson. Sensing the acceleration, I picked up the folder and began thumbing through its contents. Vandera appeared to be a musical performance, perhaps a series of performances. Name after vulgar name listed. Why our so usually just law system would allow a group to call themselves The Sex Buttons is beyond me. I made a mental note to have a word with the proprietor of the event regarding this issue, upon my arrival. Imagine his embarrassment! Within the brief lay a wristband, bearing that same name, Vandera. There was an undeniable attraction. The sound in my mind resembled a world-shaping volcano, or the matron of a moonspun folk yarn.

“I couldn’t possibly see all these acts in one weekend?” I said.

“Just the highlighted artists. Beyond that? Up to you,” said Mr. Anderson.

“The bare minimum should suffice,” I said. It usually did around here. “Can you at least give me a little background? I hate going into these big time pieces blind. I don’t want to look like a Rube.”

“In the folder,” Mr. Anderson said.

“Who prepped this?” I said.

“The fruits from publishing,” Mr. Anderson said. “Put this whole thing together. They think it’s funny,” Rarely do I see eye to eye with the fruits from publishing. I glanced through the folder one last time. Driver, five-star lodging, the whole nine. Seemed a little showy for the Sun, but we had been doing well. You don’t become the 4th largest paper in Northern Nevada by accident. Like Mr. Anderson said, I’d earned it. “Flight tomorrow morning. Two days in Southern California. Flight back Monday. Draft in by Wednesday.”

“Understood,” I said.

A glass piped sign above the roof of the Ace Hotel read “JESUS SAVES”. The sentiment lorded over a downtown, over people concerned lastly with Heaven and firstly with replicating it on Earth. The building once a theater, twice a church, and now a hotel, amounted to little more than sanctuary from the inescapable solipsism of the sunshine bleached state. The hotel clerk told me my booking was upgraded ‘on accident’, my least favorite of the many linguistic peccadillos so often committed by today’s youth. My room was sterile, ugly, and hip, reminiscent of a Norwegian prison. Its only plant sat within a pill-shaped glass vessel. A Fender acoustic guitar rested in the corner.

Alone in the room, I fought tears at the point of swallow. New art confounded me. Half a century later, and the entirety of culture had dropped me off at the side of the road, with my Jim Reeves records and normal-style hair. When I wrote, it read old. Little could I do, those days, to avoid smelling like a barbershop. It occurred to me that on the whole, it would be helpful if I died. I watched local news until I dozed off, shoes tied.

My cocktail hour alarm awoke me from a series of half remembrances from an admittedly cherished childhood. The hotel lobby brochure promised Old Hollywood charm courtesy of the Doheny Room, a restaurant 30 minutes south, by foot. Not that I knew what that was, or whether I wanted it, but it's all the clerk seemed to talk about. I strode out, and I noticed the Los Angeles palm trees were dying. I had always heard about them, from Nevadans on return from work vacations. The palm trees never belonged there in the first place, but over time their invasion turned saccharine and brown. Good riddance. Add it to the list of things I outlived.

Angels

Billy Barth

Your lack of "body" terrifies those who
Have observed you, their faith tied together,
Wrapped around tightly, bound with string and glue,
Tethered like all of your eyes and feathers.
"How will your portraits be depicted, now
That all your glaring eyes have been revealed?
A sight so ghastly, that you have to vow
To destroy those who refuse to yield."
"You gawk at how my thousands of eyes stared
At your "body" that was once made of clay.

It's you who should be begging to be spared,
Your kind has already been led astray.
Still, paint your portraits, depict me with grace,
You might have a chance to bask in this place

Night Drive

Billy Barth

The voices start to mumble, drowned
out by the sound of rain.
My head pressed against the cracked
window, allowing the night
breeze to seep in.
We drove for hours to that of a child,
The levee roads led the way.
A blanket smothered my face,
granting its warmth in a deep embrace.
When we stopped I shut my eyes,
hoping you would carry me in
to the house, which couldn't sleep
dimly lit, restless with worry.
The rain continued pouring, thunder
crashed outside my door.
The house and I began to sleep, safe
within these walls we listened,
to the rain dancing on the roof
trying to get our attention.
We made it home, we're still alive,
like the rain as it dances above.
The rain and I still love to dance,
it remembers my audience.

Agoraphobia

Billy Barth

I stay trapped indoors like a fly caught in a web,
But I am not the fly, no I am the spider, and the web is my own.
I peer outside my window through a gap in my curtains,
Is that all I'll get to see of the world? Through a gap so small
Yet big enough that I've convinced myself that I'd rather be here,
Trapped inside this web I've put myself in.
I grow restless within these walls, like a bird locked
In a cage too small to fly in, I'd rather be
Out there in the breeze like a kite that has no other
Purpose but to soar, but I'm imprisoned inside,
Adorned with a lock only I have the key for,
Still, the lock's hard to reach from inside the cage.
I was scared to reach out, like a trapeze artist
With no net to catch me if I fall, and yet, I wanted to try.
I asked for help, something so simple yet so hard,
Like a stone that's thrown in the sea, creating a ripple amongst
The mountains of waves, but what's a stone compared to a
mountain?
And if the ripple is so small, why is it the only thing I could focus
on?
I took the leap and grabbed onto their grip,
I'm rarely alone but that's fine with me, I'd rather be
With someone else than like a raft lost at sea,
No, I'm not alone, but I can still see the world,
Panicked and anxious, but no longer tethered
Like a dog who had gnawed at its chains till it was free.

The Forest

Billy Barth

The sky turned to dusk, leaving
Behind a purple haze, as the clouds
Set in their sullen gaze.

The large pines sat still, like giants
In the breeze, dimming any light
From reaching below the trees.

Rain overwhelmed the pines stained
With red, falling faster than the stars
Could dance overhead.

The fauna danced too, they've watched
The stars perform before, accompanied by the
Drops of rain that soaked the forest floor.
With the rain a fog came forth, it's ghastly
presence lingered for hours, and covered
All the plants and flowers.

The fog hovered atop the tallest pines,
It sunk down towards the deepest mines, even
Engulfing the largest shrines.

The fog crept on, leaving
The forest to slumber, as the
Rain continued on, even more in number.
The stars still danced, but far in few,
As they illuminated the leaves
That were sage in hue.

The Plight of an Author

Billy Barth

The more you write a character, the more they feel like their own person.

An individual with their own morals and thoughts and feelings, and such that I suppose every person ought to have right?

But nobody talks about how much pressure comes with it, how the only thing that controls whether or not this person, gets their happy ending is if I decide to give them one.

The more you write a character, the less they feel like your own. A certain entitlement that you owe to them, their story must be told and I

must be the one to tell it, a responsibility I signed up for without reading the terms and conditions.

A responsibility that sets my legacy into stone as hard as paper, a legacy dependent on the people inside my head.

The more you write a character, the more you have to look within yourself.

How can I tell someone's story if I haven't yet lived mine?

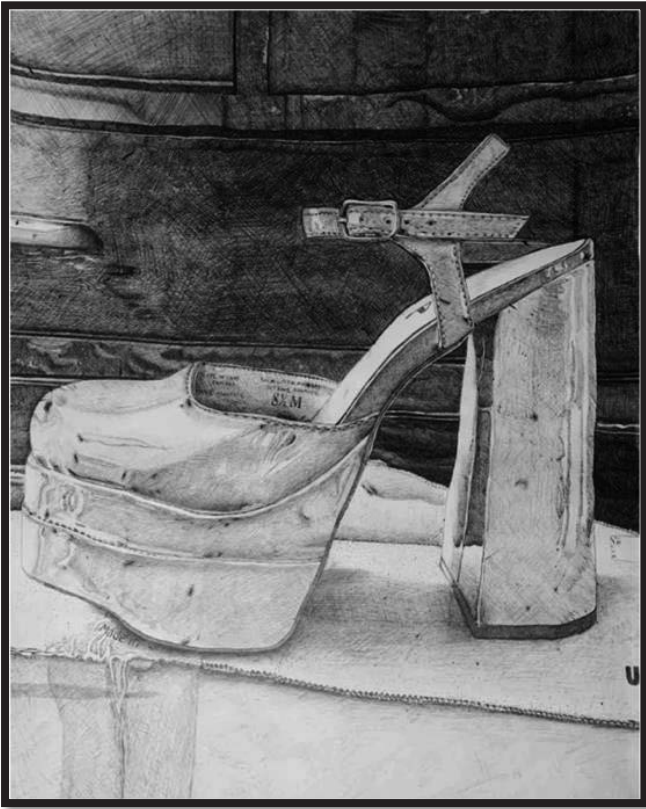
How can I create memories that aren't from my childhood?

How can I write about experiences that I haven't experienced?

The more you write a character the more you see the world.

The people you envision by hearing the way others speak and act, by observing this spectacle called life, and the way it keeps on moving.

If that was the case, isn't every author writing about the same person?



Bugged Heel by Araña Garcia-Noble

Tarot

Isla Myers

January First

Me and my sister pull out the tarot cards

Pick a card Any card

One for each month, all black and lined with gold that held my future

I just knew it

1, 2, 3, 4-

“April will bring love”

She says

I mark my calendars

I make a playlist for the lucky girl I will meet in four months

I spend hours pondering her

Come April, it all makes sense

She’s been here all along I just hadn’t

Seen it

We dance

We kiss

We hold each other

This is everything the cards told me

This is everything I wanted

This is everything

Everything is too much

She texts me paragraphs with each letter having the audacity to show me love

I see a future in these texts

“Hello, love

See me today?

Look at our growth

How far we’ve come

We can stay this way forever”

I did not want a daily tarot reading I wanted love

Love

Love makes sacrifices

I sacrifice myself, my time, my money, my art

I love her with every fiber of my being
But my brain, my imbalanced chemical makeup
Was not prepared for this

I don't text her back

She says she understands but I know I'm hurting her
I have to let you go
The depression wasn't caught in my Tarot

Role Models

Tyler Belloli

Old man who is strong and wise,
A man who I love to analyze,
He's hardworking and brought his family from rags,
He worked hard day and night fighting heavy eye bags,

I never grew up having that male role model,
Just grew up with guys who wanted to squabble,
Men who did drugs and threw their life away,
Not noticing a boy who needed them at the end of the day,

I searched and searched as people came and went,
This I noticed was time not well spent,
There was no one that was stable or strong,
Soon I would realize that I couldn't be more wrong,

There was one man in particular who had been reliable,
A man that to me is truly indescribable,
Strong and unwavering he holds up our family,
A Man to me who represents the best of humanity,

No complaints just quiet and respectful,
Never harboring hate or being resentful,
This man is important to me,
He is my Grandpa.

Brownsville

Tyler Belloli

The town I grew up in was small and quaint,
A place where everybody knew each other's name,
We owned much land there with lots of real estate,
This town had much for beauty but lacked in fame,

It was a forest full of trees with rivers that flow,
Could go hiking, fishing, or just sit with the sounds,
In the winter you could even go play in the snow,
Mountain ranges that surround the town like a compound,

A place where a child's curiosity and imagination were born,
Where I learned to skip stones and play in the leaves all day,
We hiked day and night to find gems hidden beyond thorns,
There was no straight path but the fun was in the stray,

I wish I could visit more as it's a different kind of home,
Life was different when I used to live up the hill,
Busy with college and work in the life of the city like Rome,
Whenever I need a break I know I can go to Brownsville,

The Ocean Blues

Olivia Fedor

I saw clouds of spun sugar
but the water,
splashing on my face,
left a salty taste
on my tongue.
My shoulders brushed
by the wind,
so soft and subtle,
as if by sheets of linen.
I heard the hum of his voice,
so scratchy and rough,
a woodchipper,
coughing up mere sawdust.

Story of My Sister

Tyler Belloli

I don't have many fond memories, life has never been too kind,

This makes memories of love and memories of life hard to find,
My memory is a bit spotty for the roads I've walked have been
bumpy,

But if I think back far enough I could find little moments that were
funny,

I remember one day me and my sister got to share,
The day I pushed my sister down the stairs,
I know you may think I was morbid or cruel,
But my sister wasn't being very cool,

I remember we argued because I needed to use the can,
But my sister was being difficult and had other plans,
She planned to not let me pass and to set an ambush,
The only thing she didn't plan was one little push,

My sister was fine and we talk about to this day,
We laugh and argue who was right and the final say,
While an unpleasant memory at the time,
Overtime it aged like a fine wine.

Growth

Tyler Belloli

Large Oak Tree wide and strong,
Sits in the front yard and watches over my family,
You lose hair and limb yet protect our home happily,
In the fallen leaves you guard the lawn,

In the wet lush grass of flat land,
You watch us grow through hardship and struggle,
We grow mentally and physically getting in trouble,
Through rain and snow your roots expand,

I stand under the tree and look up,
All is dark by the umbrella created by leaves,
Even so rays of sun shine through the tree,
I breathe and sit against the stump,

The tree has watched me grow,
Someday I hope to be as tall and big as it,
Someday I hope to protect others as it did,
Like those roots I'll grow slow.

Ivalani

Tyler Belloli

I remember the day I fell in Love,
We were on vacation fresh out of high school,
I went on a trip with those beloved,
A group of friends and a girl who'd make me her fool,

We had gone to the ocean to celebrate the milestone,
And through a sea of characters she stood out to me,
Was it her flowing hair, beautiful face, Hormones,
Everything in me racing to find out what it was about this beauty,

I remember my friends by the beach partying away but not her,
She had wandered off just to walk along the crashing waves,
Instantly mind and body racing to catch up to walk by her side like
a blur,
Mind like a chaotic sea, what would I say, does she want me there,
all a haze,

Short of breath, heart racing, mind in a downward spiral I catch up
to She,
We walk barefoot along the beach in the cold wet sand with a
breeze that is cool,
We walk, talk, and being by her side felt all so natural like where I
was meant to be,
I was her fool.

To Give

Ashley Ruiz

To you, I'll give you my very last dime,
The shirt off my back, with a hat to match.

I'll share a very special meal with you,
You pick the place; you choose the food.

Give to you, and all for free,
Expecting in return, not a single thing.

Increasing, spreading, sharing joy,
Sometimes with just a simple gesture.

Will you accept my offering?
Meet me without protest.

Reach out your hand and take it,
Please do, it's only intended just for you.

Selfless acts pave the way,
For brighter days to come, for some.

Pay it forward, when you can.
The best act of kindness known to man.

Kismet

Ashley Ruiz

It all comes to be when they least expect.
Two lonely lovers bear a hopeful wait.
No seeking nor searching, feeling neglect.
Will they beat the clock, before it's too late?

For a ship sails in right out of the dark,
In with the tides, to fill a vacancy.
Tenderly in need of an ear to hark.
The sweethearts both joined, not mistakenly.

A fire of fate burns as hot as the sun,
Smiles of fondness and blind eyes they share.
Without any aid, two fools on the run.
Tangled in madness and without a care.

Together they'll be, until the last breath,
Until one suffers an untimely death.

Presence

Ashley Ruiz

Just once a year we meet right here,
You whisper, "I miss you" in my ear.

The sound of the tide rushing in,
As the glowing sun kisses our skin.

Our deep longing for the sea,
And annual reunion of you and me.

Walking in the sand, hip to hip,
Sharing a cool drink, sip by sip.

Enjoying the spot where we first met,
A special place we'll never forget.

Nostalgic memories of years gone past,
Still coming here to make them last.

Same Old Song

Alex George

And though I know I'd choose any other way
You seem to have known this day might come
Try to fight for us to see another day
But you seem to decide that, for us, you're done

Loss was not a thought I could expect
For another with someone brand new
How do I do the same, feeling wrecked?
Soon, you're just a memory, morning dew

The days feel too mundane but still,
I'd choose the boring to longing,
Feeling no pain has become a skill
At least my company has belonging

But soon I meet someone who again turns nights long
And can't help but wonder if it's the same old song.

Escape

Alex George

Well, I've picked up an old hobby
I'm starting to enjoy books
Reading so long, my brains foggy

There's not a distraction I've took
It's hard for me to break my focus
So interested, it's hard for me to look

A series of books feels like a bonus
Fantasy usually my preferred genre
But I love a romance with slowness

Reading is my personal nirvana
Books read last year almost triple digits
Maybe with background music like opera

I swear while reading hours feel like minutes
Reading to me has almost become religious

The Lotus and the Dragon

Emma Hemsley

Our souls intertwined beneath the soil like the roots of an
evergreen tree,
Hand in hand, under the stars we danced with the fairies and
fireflies.

You place a crown adorned with crystals and cobwebs
atop my head.

As I slipped a ring woven out of roots and moss onto your finger
Our hearts as connected as the fungi
The forest queen and king intertwined forevermore.



Acrylic on Canvas by Tammy Sparrow



Zombie Tramp by Araña Garcia-Noble



Techno Tronic by Polina Bradley



Hangnail by Sebastian Campbell



Peace on the Water by Amanda Santana



Gravity by Sebastian Campbell



Flowers off the Mind by Sebastian Campbell



We're Leaving the Planet by Araña Garcia-Noble



Pink Rose by Tammy Sparrow



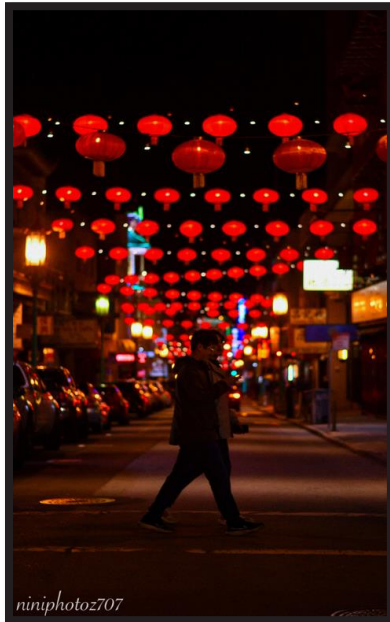
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Ferris Wheel by Anthony Reynoso



Purple Car by Anthony Reynoso



Red Lanterns by Anthony Reynoso



Green Dragon by Anthony Reynoso



The Bat by Araña Garcia-Noble

The Bat

Araña Garcia-Noble

There is a resented absurdity
To what I vision is a disturbancy
Rooted and grown from my own mind
Born to watch the blood poured to bind
Carved and spread for the purpose to fly
But my wings are so weak, destined to die
My bite is strong, and my fangs are sharp
But I am dazed and lost on this Earth with a tarp
Failed to find the words of where I'm going
I am the villainous bat who is all-knowing
Vibrant and poisoned, the animal who cannot be touched
I must scream but no sound comes out, the feeling of being
punched
The whip, trained to loyally follow behind me
It plays dead to create the illusions that surround me
My mouth needs to unhinge but can only stay small
The danger of my claws refuse to let me crawl
Crying for so loud and for so long allow flesh to tear
I must learn to live life authentically without fear.

The Hardest Goodbye

Alex George

I never expected it to come to this
You look like you could be asleep
Almost could say it looks like bliss
But the pain I feel runs so deep

Machines connected tell a different story

Which tell me you fight for your life
The mood in this building so stormy
I swear this pain is like a jack knife

Is your life flashing before your eyes?
When we used to pretend we were hobbits?
Maybe you're seeing all my teenage lies,
Or at night when we would watch the stars orbit?

I can't help but do the same thing
I'll never get another comforting hug
No more birthday presents you'd bring
No more cozy fire pits you've dug

Now that time has come
Where your fight is coming to an end
Never expect my dad to finally say I'm done
Never expected to say bye to my best friend

The Day Everything Changed

Alex George

I look down at the man slumped on the floor as the blood seeps into the carpet. It must've been more than a few moments before I was finally able to look away from the person who had hired me onto this firm, in this very office, not three years ago. My hand was still raised up clutching the letter opener as the warmth of the blood slid down my wrist and dropped onto the floor below. It was so quiet in that room you could hear everyone as they headed out for the day and walked right past the door. My mind seemed to finally connect to my body as it screamed for me to do something, anything! I looked down to the blouse I chose to wear

today hanging half open and my line of sight slid to the buttons laying on the floor across the room that used to be connected to it.

There was blood splattered across it now and I gasped covering my mouth with my free hand. How did this happen? When did it get to this point? I jumped around to the back of the desk, rolling out drawers, looking for anything that may help me clean my hands before my eyes spotted a mostly empty bottle of gin sloshing in one of them. I slammed that one closed before moving to the next one and finding a box of tissues. Jerking them out of the drawer, I grabbed onto the first one and slid it across my chest smearing the droplets across it that had already started to make their descent down my body. I grabbed a handful before trying to swipe across my chest and stomach again and started to wipe off the evidence on my hand. The letter opener glinted maliciously in the light before me, now tinted in a shade of red as its pointed end seemed to accuse me of what I had just done.

I looked up into the black computer screen and my face stared back at me, also covered in specks of blood and pale of color as there already seemed to be some bruising blossoming around my neck in contrast to my dark red hair. I used another tissue to try to clean my face just as there was a knock on the door. I froze, my body screaming at me to use any point of escape as my eyes swung to the window overlooking the street. Could my body handle a two story drop from this height? I shook my head from those thoughts knowing the impossibility of it and another soft knock came to the door. A female voice came from the other end calling out for the man who had been bleeding out on the floor and causing me to swallow the growing lump in my throat as I looked back down to the scene caused by my hand.

The button to his pants sits undone and his hand is still curled in a fist while the other one sits next to the side of his throat where he had been clutching a puncture wound. The blood has stopped flowing from the site by now and footsteps sound on the

other side of the door in retreat as the person must have assumed the boss had gone home for the day. His head is turned to the side, seeming to be looking at my blouse buttons and I can't help but wonder if he had been regretting what had taken place in this room at some point during those last few moments. All is quiet outside now and I make the decision to grab my purse that had somehow been knocked down into one of the chairs facing the desk as the altercation took place. I bolt from the room holding my blouse closed and aim for the elevator down the hall.

A Declaration

Alex George

I pulled up to the sidewalk in front of the restaurant Harrison chose for us to go to tonight, he picked somewhere that looks very extravagant. There is a valet waiting to take the keys from me to park my car and I thank them as I walk inside. I spot Harrison already seated at a very intimate looking table in a corner of the room and I wave to him as he smiles and waves back to me. Harrison isn't what I usually date when it comes to men, he's respectful, kind, thoughtful, and warm. Despite the fact that he isn't my usual type of man (a dirtbag) I have fallen in love with him after these months of dating. I've finally mustered up the strength to tell him and I can only hope he feels the same way. Harrison is sort of a free spirit who loves to travel and explore new places. He doesn't really seem like the type that is ready to settle down.

"This place is beautiful! I would've been happy going to our favorite pizza place like normal though." I think about how that sounds and add on. "Not that I'm complaining! The ambiance here is killer, I love it."

Harrison flashes one of his beautiful smiles. "I know it seems a little over the top, but I really wanted to treat you tonight." I can't help but blush even if it wasn't even that forward of a statement. I look into his red colored eyes and find myself getting lost in their depths for a few moments before I collect myself and clear my throat. "Well, I couldn't have picked a better place myself. Did your order my drink already?" I look down at the peach flavored margarita sitting on the table and feel my heart squeeze that he remembered my favorite cocktail. He knows me so well already and I love him even more for it.

"The waitress approached me while I was waiting for you to get here, I figured you'd appreciate your favorite drink ready for when you sat down." He shrugs nonchalantly and I can't help but notice that he seems a little nervous for some reason. He takes a sip of his old fashion before brushing a hand through his hair.

"Harrison, is everything okay?" I can't help but feel a little nervous myself after noticing his behavior. Has he decided he's going to see somewhere else? How long will it be until I see him again?

"Yes! Of course! Everything is more than okay, I did bring you here for a reason though. I need to be honest with you about something." He smiles a small shy smile and reaches for my hand on the table.

I place my hand on his and raise my eyebrow at him.
"Okay... what's up?"

He smiles before giving my hand a squeeze and looks up into my eyes. "I know we've been dating for a few months now and some people may say that that is a short amount of time to feel like this, but I can't help it. I love your hardworking nature, I love how you are always trying to find ways to make yourself a better person, I love waking up to you, I love your beautiful eyes, your never hold back personality. I just... I'm in love with you Amber. I have been since the first time I met you. I understand if you don't

feel the same way, but I couldn't go on any longer without you not knowing that."

I can't help but feel an overwhelming amount of joy as I look from Harrison's eyes, up to his sand-colored hair, down to his hand still gripping onto mine, then back up to his eyes again. "I planned on telling you the same thing tonight."

He seems to double back for a moment in shock before recovering. "What?"

"I was just psyching myself up to tell you how much I love you, no matter if you felt the same, out in my car. Obviously, I was going to say it in other words and your declaration way beats out anything I could've ever thought of, but I love you too Harrison. Every single thing I've learned about you. Everything I have yet to learn about you. You're my lobster."

He laughs at the Friends reference as the brightest smile I've ever seen lights up his face. His thumb rubs the inside of my palm as my heart flutters in my chest.

"My declaration could never beat out that Friends reference." He jokes as he takes another drink of his cocktail, and he relaxes back into his seat.

The Poet

Emma Hemsley

The tip of the pen dances on the paper— stained from the ink.

Your Heart and Soul, written.

And you wonder to yourself if the paper is in fact strong enough to hold such and powerful thoughts safe.

The weight of the quill— heavy but light, shines a light on some of the darkest depths,

Untouched and Unconquered by man.

In the reflection of the window, lit by moonlight—

you see yourself beside the face of the reader.



Worn Out by Sebastian Campbell

My Mind Is a Minefield

Emma Hemsley

Filled with horrors beyond salvation

But you, my dear...

You shelter me from my thoughts.

A body to caress, whilst the flames burn around us,

You clean the deep wounds I have endured that leave behind scars
that tell our story.

My love, let me take refuge within you from the stars as they
plummet from the heavens—

As the waterfall dries—

As the birds sing their last tune—

Our bodies intertwined eternally, in peace and fidelity

My Apricity

Emma Hemsley

Within languages lost and spoken

There isn't a word to express my love for you.

Nor will there ever be just one word

For my love is so deeply rooted within my heart,

Before I was even born, my soul knew you . . .

Yuanfen

I knew your heart . . .

Your pain

Your smell

Your joy

Your embrace

You are my latibule

My raison d'être

Satin draped over her flesh and curves ,

Ink stains from candlelit writing.

Tis she was alone, but not lonely —

for there were lifetimes within her soul,

some yet to be explored.

Her thoughts as beautiful as the vessel that carries.

When It Is Time

Emma Hemsley

When it is time, I am to be laid on the forest floor—

Where the mushrooms meet the moss.

Where the lichen meets the bark of the strongest trees.

Where the tips of the fern brush against the ground.

I want the fairies to find me, to adorn my vessel with flowers and crystals.

The local goblin to look down at the curiosity that is the curves of my flesh.

My body slowly overgrown with moss as I lay in pieces.

My flesh feeding the earth.

And eventually, Mother Nature shall take me back and hopefully forgive what I have taken from her.

Oh, To Be Loved by a Poet

Emma Hemsley

Emotions immortalized on paper . . .

seared into my soul.

To be loved by a poet is to have the little things be noticed.

The way your face crinkles up when you laugh with joy,

Your soul bright and overflowing

Every compliment you give morphed into a song

And in turn, my love expressed by words sung

Under the stars, in the deepest depths of the ocean,

Where the moonlight doesn't dare to reach.

You will find pieces of my soul besides the scavengers of the sea.

Pure love illuminating the void

Brighter than the stars in the heavens

Every grain of sand each a lifetime in which our love is just as strong.

The Final Cradle

Rain Ibarra-Pina

I can feel the joy
You are here I have waited so long
Just for you
Scooped in my arms, my baby
Brought thousands of miles
To be with me
Tears wash over you
My face wet with comfort
For a thousand afternoons
I will never know anything else like you
So old are we now
Am I now
Tears drown you
My face drenched in comfort
So many days and nights
we spent together
I can feel bittersweet pain
I am here and you will wait so long
Just for me

Dedicated to Tinkerbell "Belly" (12/7/2007 -3/7/2024)

Psychlone Hurricane

Sebastian Campbell

You look up all around yourself and all you see is pain.
Not a single person on this earth is feeling more than lame.
Sure, in fleeting moments, people think they run the game,
But in less than 15 minutes it just all goes down the drain.
What caused this dark affliction that humanity does plague?
Humanity has clearly made it personally tame.
In rotten gardens of our minds we sow these ill remains,
Hatred ebbs and hatred flows but hatred does remain.
In our society we take it out on other's brains,
To ensure that we feel gratified to multiply the pain.
For what is pain? Radiation killing us through shame?
A cancerous mass that latches on and screams in lost refrain?
No, pain is nothing but itself and makes us all insane.
Pain is pain that we all spread, but complain about the same.
What can one do? How do we fight this psychlone hurricane?
How do we survive and come out strong and escape all the blame?
We just do not. That is not pain, it only grows and gains.
We learn to live within its walls.
But still, we are insane.

Spectrumite

Sebastian Campbell

A cacophony of screams is all I hear inside my mind.
Broken only up by songs that I hear from time to time.
I hear it every time that I struggle now to rhyme.
I hear them calling out, oh the aching of my mind.

I think I might just think of something but I never find.

I think I never find my thoughts amidst the sea of- nice.
A complete thought would be nice, but I think I... never mind.
My mind never will, after all, and I think it might just die.

I say these things because I am a spectrumite I.
They say it is a spectrum because finite does not find.
I cannot say I find a finite answer any time.
If I would say such then I just might be normal, or a lie.

I see, however, that I'm not imperfect or sublime.
I see myself just as I am, an average man, just fine.
No matter if they see me and they label "wrong of mind,"
I may see the truth and know me to be objectively right.

Others feel I'm "hiding" something, but "restraining" fits more
tight.
Inside I'm always screaming, but I feel like I'm just fine.
I put on music time to time to feel like I'm alright.
I'm just autistic, after all, at least I feel my life.

Unsaid

Julia Lindsay

You're probably wond'ring why I'm here now standing at your
door

Tripping over words, fumbling fingertips
There once was this girl who liked the boy across the street
Butterflies and heated cheeks and stomach flips

She never told her love
She smiled at sadness, patience like the cooing of a dove
And she hoped her feelings would be read

But as years passed by, that hope was killed stone dead
She was left forever stuck on the unsaid

She followed him to college, leaving her whole heart at stake
Never one to give up faith or say goodbye
She lived a thousand lives, all of which ended in heartbreak
Pulling from the truth just to tell a lie

She never told her love
She smiled at sadness, patience like the cooing of a dove
And she hoped her feelings would be read
But as years passed by, that hope was killed stone dead
She was left to sit and dwell on the unsaid

She never let him catch her gazing in his eyes
Their friendship was too precious to ever jeopardize
And she pined in thought and knew she'd have to tell him just to
know
But then she'd shy away, too afraid to let him go

I never told my love
But I laughed at all your jokes and held your hand when you were
blue
And I prayed each night to the stars above
I've done all I can do, and now it's up to you.

You're probably wond'ring why I'm here now standing at your
door
Tripping over words, fumbling fingertips.

Hello, Sunshine

Julia Lindsay

Hello, Sunshine
What's your hurry?
Why get whisked away
In a rush, can't you stay?

Visit me longer
Remember when
You'd be by my side
All day to make me stronger?

Miss Sunshine, clear blue skies
Don't move out of sight
For my wavering heart
Needs wings for taking flight

Did I offend you?
Is that the reason
You come then you go
Like a pit stop or a show?

Just when I think you've
Abandoned me
I look out of my window
And see sunlight roaming free

Miss Sunshine, clear blue skies
Don't move out of sight
For my wavering heart
Needs wings for taking flight

As years pass by, it
Seems like the feeling
Turns more bittersweet
Each time we two meet

Don't try and change us
Never exchange us
I miss you when you're gone
So let's try and get along

Miss Sunshine, don't cry, now
Don't sigh, let's not fight
For my wavering heart
Needs wings for taking flight

For my wingless heart
Needs blue skies to take flight.

Wings

Julia Lindsay

He told her then and there he didn't love her anymore
The silence like a noose
She stared, then turned around, mind reeling, then walked out the
door
And just like that, he was cut loose
The boy roamed the world, he saw the sights
And Winter melted slowly into Spring
He met strangers, saved up cash, then spent it all
His freedom gave him worldly things
The girl walked home, turned on the kitchen lights
Her mind on a million things
She watched the rain fall, she listened to the birds

Her freedom gave her wings
She saw strangers lending hands
Worked on herself from day to day
He traveled off to foreign lands
But found nowhere he longed to stay
Inside his life, he sunk down deep
Feeling alone and lost
She held their memories to keep
Through laughter, Summer days, and frost
Years later he knocked on her door
Silence like a freeze in space
She asked what this all was for
He'd made it to her place
He said he'd climbed the peaks
He told her all the little things
But it turns out he was looking for a person, not a place
Turns out all along, she was his wings.

West Pool

Jack Fedor

As the nights get short, all down by a port
There is a place where cool air blows fast on many faces
A place where the metal bleachers are stomped on as loud as a
recycle truck collects glass bottles
Flags flying high, showcasing the allegiance of the attendees
Where the competition is fierce, and men turn to tears
Something so special, it is not replicable
The contest at times is much more than two opposing crowds
When the place is closed for the summer, it is a big bummer
It is not time to go home, when the whistle is blown
As what happens here, the feats and experience
Is not only spread throughout the city, but is etched into memory.

My Eyes Fall

By Isla Myers

When my eyes fall on you I gaze
I don't simply glance like strays
I take you in and take you close
Feed you, clothe you, hold you the most
You're dear, you're kind, you're beautiful
My eyes are blind to things you see
It's amazing, how you gaze
At what seems like nothing

Growing Darkness

Zei Sanabria

At a place unknown to me
Barely breathing, let me free

Can't be seen in the dark
Don't know what to do besides wait for a spark

Eagerly waiting for the end instead
Flower thorns pushing into my skin, bleeding all red

Going deep in the darkness every day
Holding back my tears and pain, saying I'm okay

I just want it all to end today
Jaded and left all gray

Knowing what this place will do to me
Lively is not this place, can't you see

Mourning who I used to be
Never knowing what I'll see

Openly knowing they put me here
Pretending they didn't make me live in fear

Quiet, I want to quiet my mind
Urges, the urges in my mind aren't kind

Revenge is what I'm waiting to feel
Silently waiting, hoping, the sexual abuse wasn't real

Hard To Speak

Zei Sanabria

Why is it so hard to get out words
When I have so many
Or do I have nothing
Do I really have nothing to say
After everything he did
I can draw him for days, months, years
hours
I can draw him for hours
Until my hands go numb

And turn all red
Throbbing like a heartbeat
Over and over again
Like a disc
Stuck on repeat
Yet I still push through

But I can't speak
Why can't I speak
That's not fair to me
Why am I doing this to me

I want to scream but some cat ate my tongue
Blood oozing out the sides of my mouth
Running down my face and onto my blouse
Oh wait, I just bit myself
And that's just some punch

So then why can't I speak
Speak about the things I felt for him
Speak about the words he said to me
Speak just any ounce at all

I really want to
Want to tell you how I used to love that man
More than I loved myself
To the moon and back is what they said

But I loved that man to the point of death
I can be buried alive six feet underground
Feel the cold wet dirt under my fingernails
Slowly losing air
Not being able to breathe
To death do us part

But not ever the grim reaper
Can scythe my love away for that man
And that's just sad

Sadder than a dog dying in a movie
Sadder than life itself
Sadder than me trying to take my own life
And trust me, I have

Because that man should be in jail
Said many things to me
Talked about raping me
And sexually abused me

I was a fucking minor
And he knew damn well
So why did I love him
Trauma bonding is what they say
But that's not fair

I say if I see that man
I'll slap him so hard his nose starts to bleed
But I know that's not true
I don't know what I'll really do

I want to be strong
Strong to carry a whole ass ton
But not with my arms
I want to carry them with my heart, my spirit, my soul
My everything

I don't know if I'll ever see him
But if I do
I can't wait to tell him

“I HATE YOU”



Charcoal on Cardstock by Tammy Sparrow

Meet Your Editors



This is Flora's second time working as an *Ink* editor. She is a sophomore at WCC studying Communications and is transferring to Sac State after this Spring semester. In her free time, she enjoys writing poetry, reading, scrapbooking, and playing with her god kids.



This is Triston's second semester working as an *Ink* editor. He is a tutor in the WCC Student Success Center, and he plans to begin his bachelor's in arts degree for Early Childhood Education this August. He is looking forward to the summer so he can spend time with his daughter.



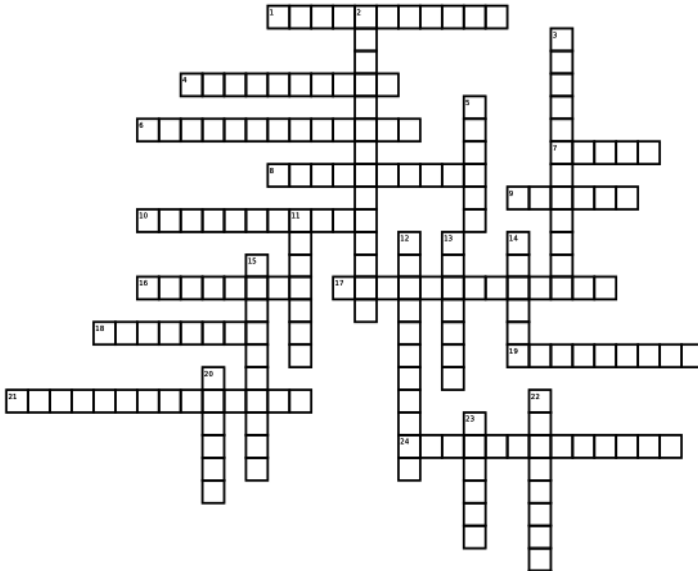
This is Sebastian's first time working as an *Ink* editor. He is soon to be a DSPS student aide in the WCC Student Success Center, and he is working towards a degree in English to pursue his dream of being a successful fiction author and English teacher. Excited to begin working at his college, he has taken his first step by joining *Ink* magazine



Starstruck by Triston Miller

Crossword Puzzle

Each clue presents a quote from a poem featured in this edition of *Ink Literary Arts Magazine*. Can you guess the titles to fill in the crossword puzzle?

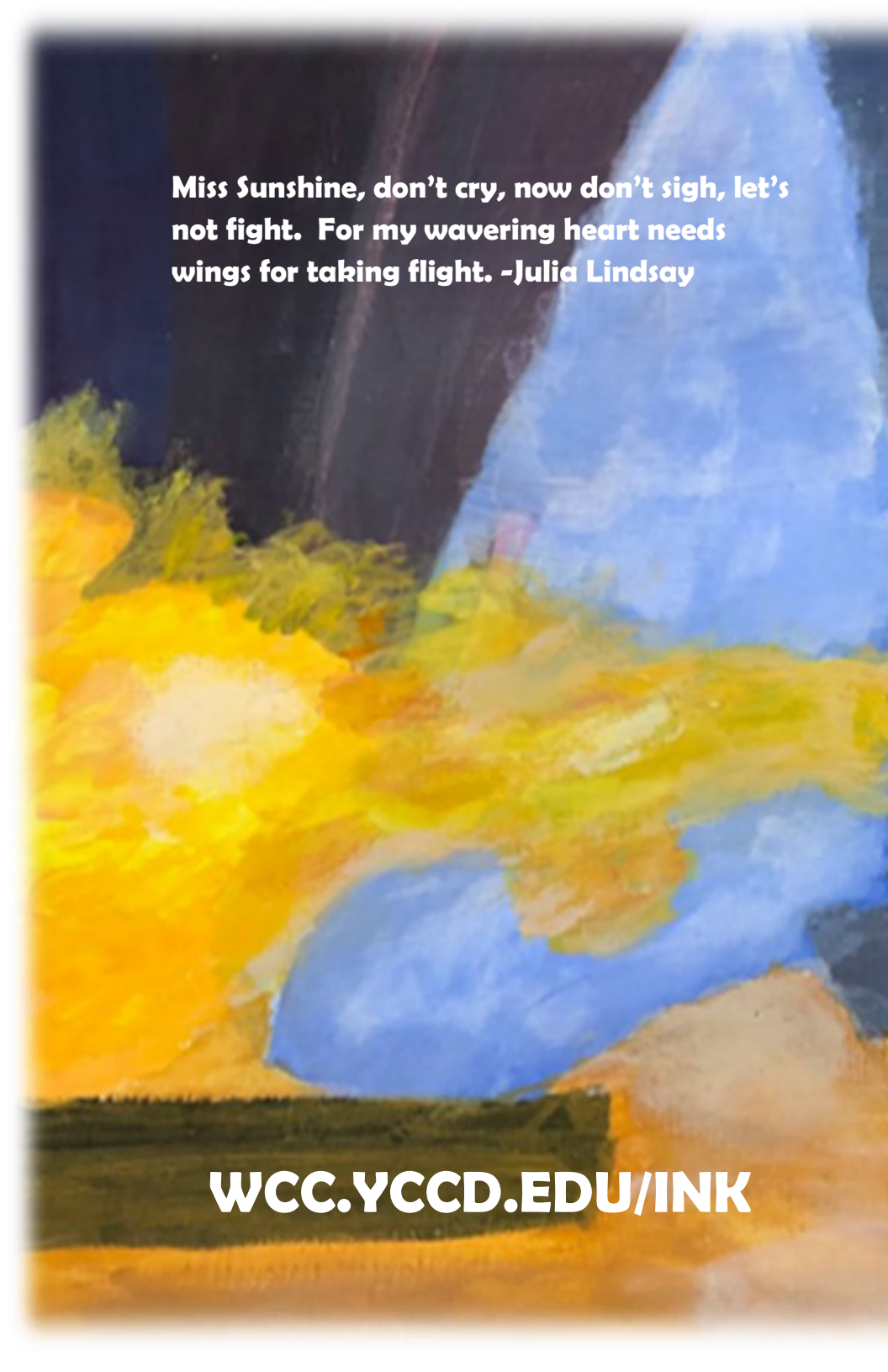


Down:

2. "My older relative waiting already"
3. "My body slowly overgrown with moss as I lay in pieces"
5. "Still, paint your portraits, depict me with grace"
11. "And through a sea of characters she stood out to me"
12. "A cacophony of screams is all I hear inside my mind"
13. "The tip of the pen dances on the paper — stained from the ink"
14. "Two lonely lovers bear a hopeful wait."
15. "I searched and searched as people came and went"
20. "Through rain and snow your roots expand"
22. "Before I was even born, my soul knew you "

Across:

1. "Trapped inside this web I've put myself in"
4. "My eyes are blind to things you see"
6. "You come then you go — Like a pit stop or a show?"
7. "All black and lined with gold that held my future"
8. "The house and I began to sleep, safe"
9. "She lived a thousand lives, all of which ended in heartbreak"
10. "Life was different when I used to live up the hill"
16. "The contest at times is much more than two opposing crowds"
17. "The campfire helps our happy memories grow"
18. "Nostalgic memories of years gone past"

A painting of a landscape. In the background, a large, dark blue mountain peak rises against a dark sky. The middle ground is dominated by a large, bright yellow and orange field, possibly a field of wildflowers or a sunset. The foreground shows a dark green field and a golden-brown field. The overall style is expressive and somewhat abstract, with visible brushstrokes and a vibrant color palette.

**Miss Sunshine, don't cry, now don't sigh, let's
not fight. For my wavering heart needs
wings for taking flight. -Julia Lindsay**

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