



OAKLAND

ARTS REVIEW

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SPRING 2025

AN INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE ARTS REVIEW



OAKLAND

A R T S R E V I E W

Oakland Arts Review (OAR) is an annual journal published through Oakland University in Rochester Hills, Michigan. *OAR* is dedicated to the publication and advancement of literature written by undergraduate students from across the United States and around the world. We publish fiction, poetry, essays, comics, hybrid and experimental work, and art. Because we believe that undergraduate students have much to contribute to the literary world, it is our mission to provide a platform for this generation's emerging writers and, in so doing, create a journal that is of both high artistic quality and great literary significance to readers from all backgrounds.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ZERO OUR GOAL OF BEING	12
Rayni Wekluk	
EMBERS OF AN ARCTIC FIRE	13
Rayni Wekluk	
NOAH'S POEM	14
Lauren Stanzione	
EXIT WOUNDS	16
Natalie Hanagan	
THE RAPE OF EVE	25
Kylie Wagoner	
ODE TO YELLOWSTONE WOLF 21	26
Pete Dorman	
TO A FUTURE CARNIE	28
Pete Dorman	
-9	29
Naomi Naylor	
PURITY RULES	30
Kelsey Sivertson	
DECONSTRUCTION	31
Kelsey Sivertson	
ERASURE OF THE TRANSCRIPT: AN APOLOGY	32
Amber Martens	

FOR MY YOUNGER BROTHER	35
Trent Long	
MY GLACIER	36
Cameron Kosak	
STUPID DUCKS	41
Dominic Dimapilis	
GHOSTS DON'T KILL BIRDS, DO THEY?	44
Carole Wood	
AFTER BAIL: DARKEST DAYS	48
Amber Martens	
SEQUENCE OF APPLE CHEEKBONES	49
Laiba Bashir	
TO THE GIRL READING A BOOK ON THE BENCH AT RECESS	50
Sarah Larsen	
THE LOST GIRL REACTS TO HER MOLECULAR ARRANGEMENT	51
Sarah Larsen	
JESUS CHAIN	52
Paige Abercrombie	
ALON AND NOLA	58
MacEwan	
COURTSHIP CLOTH	64
Nicole Stander	
BLUE OYSTER BIRD	66
Jade Ferrante	
HE LIKES ME NOT!	67
Jade Ferrante	
CONTEMPLATIONS ON A LIMINAL SPACE	68
Jack Meyer	

I DIDN'T KNOW	70
Julene Elias	
SHED	72
Adam Willis	
FENCE	74
Adam Willis	
GET IN WHERE YOU FIT IN	76
Shameka Richards	
A DRAG	84
Neptune Molitor	
MUNCHAUSEN SYNDROME	85
Rhiannon Li	
DILATED	86
Maya Arau	
THE MECHANIC AND THE MACHINE	87
Wilson	
PATIO	88
Anna Foppe	
SICKLICAL	89
Anna Foppe	
WE ALL SCREAM AT 14	90
Sarah Gissendanner	
GOLDEN JUDGMENT	92
Molly Jachim	
CERAMIC FORMS AND FUNCTION	93
Sophia Sprick	
SUGARMAN	94
Nathan Henry	

GO ON...LIVE	95
Emma Littrell	
BEDBUG DREAM	96
Margaret Kiley	
TRANSPARENCY	97
Maya Arau	
MY HAPPY PLACE	98
Savannah Keck	
POKI'S FLOWERS	99
Savannah Keck	
RECOVERY THROUGH MANDALAS 1	100
Maya Dey	
RECOVERY THROUGH MANDALAS 2	101
Maya Dey	
WHAT'S UNDERNEATH?	102
Caroline Emmerich	
HAIRCUTS BY GRAFFITI PIER	103
Elijah Boyer-Sebastiani	
SMOKE BREAK	104
Elijah Boyer-Sebastiani	
RISING STARDOM	105
Elijah Boyer-Sebastiani	
ENOUGH	106
Emma Littrell	
SIENA CATHEDRAL	107
Molly Jachim	
TIER FOUR	108
Sofia Soto	

THE HEAD AND THE HEART	116
Faith Montagnino	
GENESIS 4:10	124
Adonis Borer	
THE WEARY DAREDEVIL'S SHIBBOLETH	125
Diana Dalton	
THOSE WHO WISH TO SWIM IN LAVA	126
Zachary Hodges	
PLATO WITHOUT A CAUSE	127
Zachary Hodges	
FLORIDA	128
Riley Snell	
NATION OF ME	129
Ashleigh Smith	
AGON, AGONIS, AGONI	130
Paige Elliott	
ASPECTS OF LIFE	139
Nancy Abernathy	
THE MAN IN THE GRAY HOODIE	140
Max Adams	
PLEASE STOP EATING SAND	143
Josey Zeunges	
PAIN KILLERS	144
Luke Dickinson	
MY ABSENCE	145
Lori Stuer	
PATTI	146
Maya Singla	

WOMAN	148
Emma Heller	
BROKEN CANDY HEARTS	150
Ajayla Ries-Ennells	
BEFOREHAND	152
Paula Grieve	
THE WALKTHROUGH	155
Hailey Farlow	
THE AFTER	157
Kaylee Roberts	
LITTLE WIND	159
Thomas Meier	
PERFECTION IN FIVE EASY STEPS	161
Josie Eanes	
1000 THOUGHTS MOVING AS ONE	166
Dev Kартан	
FLOOD	168
Nicole Stander	
LITTLE DRAGONS	169
Nicole Stander	
THIS IS NOT CANCER	170
Caroline Bennington	
ROTTEN FRUIT	171
Sophia Smith	
SUNDAY IN THE GRAVEYARD	172
Riley Gwinnup	
HYSTERIA!	174
Alexis Fischer	

BEING THERE Jeremy Evans	176
CHRISTMAS EVE MEMENTOS Samantha Slabaugh	180
METAPHOR AND REMEMBRANCE: 9/11/01 Faith Montagnino	183
TIED OUTSIDE Elizabeth Henson	187
TORNADO WARNING, 2:18 A.M. Elena Streett	188
APRIL SHOWERS: AN ERASURE Mercedes Kemp	190
CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES	192
OAKLAND ARTS REVIEW STAFF	203

Volume 10

SPRING 2025

MY GLACIER

Cameron Kosak

Drexel University

The glacier first appeared the morning after You left. It was doing nothing. It presented no harm. But people were concerned. Because there was no glacier here before, see. We live on the coast, where there are no glaciers. It's warm here, and there's hardly ever any ice.

On the coast, things are generally fine. But the glacier, people thought, was not fine at all. It had this threatening quality. There was an air of darkness, ironically, in something so blindingly white. To look at it made one feel that everything was all wrong.

The glacier epitomized the word "looming."

I was out on the balcony that first morning, before sunrise, waiting. Then a sad, blue-gray haze brought the glacier into view, giving it shape and definition. I said to myself, "Yes. There it is. There it is."

To say it was large is to say nothing at all. Lots of things are large. Buildings, for example. Elephants. The moon. These things are good. Or at least neutral. These things exist for a reason. They go generally uncontested.

The glacier was large in a different way. It was menacing. It was wrong. It was stretching seemingly across the entire horizon, end to end, if the horizon even had ends.

The sun was up, now, reflecting off the sheen of the glacier's surface, and everyone seemed to have seen it all at once.

They flocked to the beach to react. The crowd had a pulse of its own and it was growing steadily. If there was no ocean, You wouldn't have been able to guess there was sand beneath the throng. The crowd was buzzing. They were exclaiming. Saying the types of things people say when they know there is nothing to be said. They said, "A picture won't do it justice!" and then took pictures anyway. They said, "Wow. Wow. This is truly a spectacle. This is truly moving." They were spewing the truisms that people thought they were supposed to say in the face of something beautiful or important. Or something that was supposed to be beautiful and important. To be moved. What does that even mean?

I don't like to mingle with our neighbors. You know this. I stayed up on the balcony, watching them watch it. I was invisible. I was a bystander to an impossible event.

I enjoyed their reactions. I expected them, even. I heard Jim from down the street say, "It's a fucking glacier. There are no glaciers here. This is wrong." This was the only statement I heard that first morning with some truth to it.

Some fucking honesty. It was wrong. He was right. Jim was rational. Jim reacted properly.

It'd been a few hours now and emotions were ranging. Some had fainted. Others cried. A few rejoiced. This was curious. I had a notebook on my lap, face down. I fumbled through my pockets to find a pen. I jotted down a note: *Rejoicing*.

Mostly though, people were angry. They were intimidated. I could understand this. But the glacier was doing nothing at all. I'd seen to this.

Kat, the woman You pretend to be friends with, was distraught. She screamed, "It's in the way of our view! Our beautiful ocean view! Penny and Wayne are supposed to have their wedding here in two days!"

She was crying in italics. *Beautiful ocean view*, she said. Their *wedding* here in *two days*, she said.

Then the hippie whose name remains an unknown responded, "Lady! It's not our view. The view, it doesn't belong to anyone. We belong to *it*, really." He trailed off here, looking around for approval and receiving very little. "And now, the glacier's a part of it too." He looked satisfied. Like he'd done an imperative duty.

Now Kat was wailing. She was wailing like a newborn might wail.

The glacier appeared like a grand confrontation, conveying itself without words, but demanding a response from people. Some of the local boys grew curious and decided they'd take the kayaks out to the face of the glacier. Their attempt at exploration was discouraged. Warnings gushed from the ever-present crowds. Things like: "Without a lifejacket!" or "The water's cooled down to a record low! You guys are gonna get frostbite if you fall! If you don't drown first!" and the boys were only saying, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." I admired their bravery. Their youthful gusto.

I jotted down another note with some amount of glee. My glacier, it was shaping up to be a success.

It'd been around for three days at this point. I was getting bored watching it, taking notes, listening. I was getting bored waiting, wondering where You were. Wherever You were, I still don't know, You felt impossibly distant. You always had a reclusive element about you, somewhere deep in the core of Your being. I'd often feel like Your back was turned to me constantly even in the throes of the deepest eye contact. Even when I watched You work the room at a party, floating expertly from cluster to cluster and never overstaying the short welcome of small talk, You seemed to disappear, little by little throughout the night, hiding deep within Your bottomless self until You became an exoskeleton of who You really were, a shape of a person and a concept that once was. Of course, only I noticed this. These were the things I noticed. These are the things about You that stick with me.

I wasn't worried. I didn't think You were out sleeping with other men. Or women. I didn't think You were dead or kidnapped. I thought You just needed

to be alone for a little while. I almost thought this was okay.

On the glacier's fourth day, I noticed people were exhausted, utterly lost in their obsessions with discovering meanings and explanations. I thought one was wrong to assume the glacier had any meaning at all. But I cannot say I don't understand. Because there was something so sinister in its size, in its clear misplacement. There was a certain stupidity in its vastness. Its apparent lack of utility itself gave one reason to think it was masking some greater significance. It had a randomness that was unacceptable, and so people gradually applied significance of their own.

Rumors emerged, then. A popular one was that the glacier was artificial. They thought it was nothing but a futuristic marketing campaign for an upcoming film, fittingly titled, *The Unlikely Iceberg*.

There were the doomsayers, of course. Those who said the glacier would cause cancer. Or explode. For many, this was an outlook that was preferable. It gave them reason to act, instead of watching passively for something to happen. The doomsayers, they simply evacuated.

It was so fucking simple for some, to just pack up and leave.

And then there were those who opposed the evacuees. An opposition that created two distinct, militant cohorts. The human necessity for enemies and allies. The glacier made this true.

I jotted another note and scribbled it out immediately and tried to put the thought more eloquently and failed. I closed the notebook.

Some of the eccentrics who'd rejoiced at its initial appearance were less eccentric now, as their following increased dramatically. It was a large group who worshipped the thing. They'd chant toward the glacier at sunset, one word repeated in a language I couldn't understand, or maybe a language they'd just created. It seemed unlikely being that the glacier had only been out there for a few days. It was powerful all the same.

These ceremonies kept people off the beach in the evenings, as You'd expect. I watched them chant down on the sand. The whole ritual was rough around the edges. I imagined it must've resembled the first mass after Jesus died. Starting a religion from scratch. People looked lost. It was evening and the sand was golden. I thought about You and the beach and the evening. We were so spoiled, living here together. We wouldn't even spend much time on the beach. We'd just watch. How spoiled we were, to get bored of the beach. Except for in the evening. That was our time. I'd watch You dancing in the flaxen light and You'd walk up to me fresh out of the ocean and say, "I remember why we bought this house now."

I didn't tell anyone that the glacier was there because I made it. I told nobody it was mine. I told nobody the glacier meant nothing to anyone at all except for me. And You. If You ever came back. I told nobody the glacier wasn't dangerous at all, and their trouble was without reason.

But as soon as this confidence of mine was solidified, I felt a twinging of

doubt. Because one can't ever be so sure about something, right? I tried to push it away. Everything was going according to plan and I felt confident and then I felt doubt. I tried to push it away.

I began to lose control over it. The glacier really was supposed to do nothing. Now it began to move. Another horde of people on the beach again. The consensus was that the glacier was now "bobbing." The glacier was not meant to bob. It wasn't even meant to float. It was to be rooted deeply in the ocean floor in the same way that the abutment of a bridge is.

So it was bobbing, and it was fine, I'd gotten used to it, I'd made a mistake, so what. I'd have my twinges of doubt and I'd try to push it away. But the glacier began to expand. The face was moving swiftly toward the shore. It was clear that there was imminent danger now.

People left speedily. Even the most steadfast of folks who accepted the glacier, embraced it, worshipped it, *needed* it. They all left.

Everybody left but me and I was alone for a while. Looking at the glacier, I felt how an artist might feel staring at his most neglected painting. Confronting his failure. Thinking of the wasted ambition. I felt it was deserved. My mother would say, "Sit over there and think about what you've done." I was thinking about it, now, mom.

Then You returned. It was the sixth day, then. You know the rest now. It was sunrise and the sky was red like blood. The glacier, yes, was unquestionably closer to shore. I wanted the glacier to look big, but now it looked too big, much too big. The glacier's innards once glowed bluely, but that day it looked dim. It glowed a spooky green.

You opened the sliding glass door, and I knew it was You without turning around. I made it a point not to act startled.

I asked You where You went and You told me You went away.

I added that You'd been away for six days, and I made this sound like a confrontation. You told me I sounded angry.

I told You You were right.

You told me I should have called You, and You made this sound like a confrontation. I said I didn't think You'd want to hear from me.

You told me I was right.

I asked You what was wrong. I asked You what happened.

You looked out at the glacier and acknowledged it and You said nothing about it.

I told You the glacier was mine. Something I'd created in Your absence to cure my boredom or ease the deep depression I'd fallen into after the fight we'd had before You left. I told You it didn't work. There were flaws in my design. I'd made a mistake and now it is expanding and something bad was surely going to happen. But I still found something beautiful about it. There was something beautiful about the way it made everything change.

I told You I made it because of You, or for You, or to impress You, or

something, and You acted like it wasn't even there.

And You looked at me and said that this won't work between us anymore and I was silent because I knew You'd say this.

You stood, now, and said something to the effect of a goodbye and then something to the effect of an apology, and shut the door behind You, the way You always used to shut the door, softly.

And with apparent haste, the glacier split down the middle with a screaming crack. The glow stopped glowing completely, and the glacier turned murky grey. A grey like the dirty slush that piled up on the side of the cul-de-sacs in the winters when we still lived in Connecticut. It was avalanching, now, massive shards of ice sliding neatly off the glacier's face and in between the central fissure. The splashes were monumental. The tide was rising. I knew what was going to happen and accepted it at once because it was my fault, my creation and my mistake. I decided not to stay to wait for my demise. I went inside and felt the presence You'd left after leaving the house for the last time. I felt, tangibly, the empty space You once filled. The water was in the house now. It was quickly up to my neck. The glacier cracked and the ice fell from itself and the whole thing turned grey and then it was gone. It seemed wrong that something that seemed so solid be destroyed so easily, so quickly.

CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

Paige Abercrombie is from Aiken, South Carolina. She studies creative writing at Winthrop University, where she served as the '23-'24 poetry editor of The Anthology. She currently serves as co-editor and -founder of Patchwork Soup, a hand-crafted literary zine local to Rock Hill, SC. You can visit her website at paigeabercrombie.carrd.co.

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Max Adams is a third-year undergraduate currently studying Integrated Design & Media at New York University, Tandon with a minor in Creative Writing. His work primarily consists of short stories within the genres of fictional realism and science fiction. Max's favorite book series is the His Dark Materials trilogy by Philip Pullman.

Maya Arau is a Sophomore at Kalamazoo College, but she hails from the wonderful land of Jackson Heights, New York. Maya has called herself an artist from the ripe young age of four years old and studied for four years at Frank Sinatra School of the Arts High School in Queens.

She is now an Art History major with minors in Studio Art and Spanish, and a dream to someday do on-field research at Pompeii. Maya would like to credit her artistic endeavors to many nights spent staying up way past her bedtime and her steadfast supporter, the stuffed (don't tell him she said that) hamster San-D.

Laiba Bashir is a Pakistani writer evolving her writing style by studying creative writing minor and Sociology & Criminal Justice major at University of Evansville. Belonging to a diverse culture, the perspectives of the world came sensitive to her, allowing the ability to provide description of life experiences in a delicate manner. Her journey from unwrapping from culture is shared on my poetry blog <https://imaginarywriter.wixsite.com/imaginarywriter>.

Caroline Bennington is a double major in Spanish and English at Florida Southern College, and she is from Arkadelphia, Arkansas. She has Alopecia, and was bald from the ages of 12 to 18 which greatly impacted her life. In her free time, she loves baking, exploring nature, and writing. Caroline writes a lot about her experi-

ences with Alopecia, her twin brother, and love, loss, and everything in between.

Adonis Borer is a Mexican-American Jewish writer and third-year undergraduate psychology and creative writing student at the University of La Verne in southern California. His works feature the often-clashing points of intersectionality within his own marginalized identities, particularly disability, queerness, ethnic situatedness, and religion. He has previously appeared in SeaGlass Literary and Toyon Literary Magazine, where he was awarded the Richard Cortez Day Prize for Fiction. When not busy with schoolwork, he also self-publishes his own small submissions-based zine project on a seasonal basis.

Elijah Boyer-Sebastiani is a senior psychology major studying at Temple University. He was born in Guatemala City and raised in Washington DC. Elijah has worked on a variety of art mediums including: digital art, photography, spray paint art, printing, poetry, and more. Elijah is currently working on getting EMT certified with plans of using his degree and certification to give back to his community.

Diana Dalton is an independent writer, filmmaker, and multidisciplinary artist based in East Tennessee. She focuses on poetic and documentarian work, and has been featured in Phoenix Magazine, The Pigeon Parade, Hey Alma, and more. Her poems and other works often find themselves concerned with memory spaces, the ephemeral, and the mundane. Diana graduated from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in May 2024 with a BA in Cinema Studies.

Maya Dey is a senior biology major with a pre-veterinary concentration and a minor in English with a film concentration, planning to attend veterinary school after graduation. Her art is a hobby and a passion and has helped her to overcome many obstacles including recovering from a brain injury and working through chronic illness. In addition to drawing, she is also an event/wedding henna and makeup artist and an animal photographer. She also works as a veterinary technician, a licensed wildlife rehabber, and holds several head leadership positions on campus at MCLA.

Luke Dickinson's work has appeared recently in Dripping Seconds. He is currently a student at Florida Southern College, majoring in English with minors in Spanish and marketing. He plans to graduate in May of 2024 at which point he intends to pursue an MBA with a supply-chain management focus.

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nature, or playing the drums. This is his debut publication.

Pete Dorman is a second-year writing major studying at Ithaca College. Originally from Columbus, Georgia, they love hot weather and pronouncing pecan correctly. Their poetry, often published under "a.k. barak," can be found or is forthcoming in coalitionworks, Dead End, Exist Otherwise, and elsewhere. In their free time, they go on wild goose chases and count their chickens before they hatch.

Josie Eanes is a third year English and Creative Writing student at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Her work has appeared in Equinox, JMMW, and Necessary Fiction and she currently interns for the independent press Braddock Avenue Books, as well as tutoring in her university's writing center. She recently studied abroad for a semester in Nottingham, England and now has the unwavering urge to travel and live in places far away from home.

Julene Elias is a history and mathematics major who has always tried to keep creative writing in their life. They find joy in making connections between literary and non-literary passions, and in using writing to reflect deeply on their life. Julene is most often a short-fiction writer, but has enjoyed experimenting with creative nonfiction in recent years. Outside of writing, they are a lover of tabletop games, costuming, and the great outdoors.

Paige Elliott is a recent Vanderbilt graduate with a BA in English literary studies. She enjoys historical literature and historical fact, the stranger the better. Currently, she's embarking on a career in nonfiction book publishing while continuing to write fiction on the side.

Caroline Emmerich is an Art and Advertising student at the University of Florida. She was born and raised in South Florida from a Colombian mother and a Costa Rican father. She uses her art as a way to express her feelings and frustrations. As an artist, Caroline struggles with the unattainable goal of perfection. She is currently in the process of letting go of restrictions she places on herself and letting her emotions guide her process.

Jeremy Evans is a third-year Creative Writing student at the University of La Verne who enjoys writing stories about connection and the human experience. He has worked as a senior editor for the school's literary magazine Prism Review, and aims to be part of a professional editing staff someday. In his free time, he studies storytelling in movies, TV shows, books, and video games. You can find his work published in Pomona Valley Review.

Hailey Farlow is a recent graduate of Salisbury University where she studied Biology with a minor in Psychology. She discovered her passion for writing while

taking a creative writing course under the leadership of John Nieves. She hopes to reach the students sitting in the very same classroom as she once did to tell them to embrace their uniqueness and let it shine in their writing.

Jade Ferrante is a third year writing major at Ithaca College. She is a Long Islander who has been writing poetry ever since middle school. Her work can be found on both social media and in her school newspaper. She is a fervent defender of the Oxford comma.

Alexis Fischer's *Hysteria!* was written during her final year of university. Alexis grew up in a small New York town on the Hudson River, later earning a Bachelor's Degree in English after seven semesters. During her years as a student, Alexis wrote for the Opinions section of her institution's largest undergraduate newspaper while working as a local artist in the community.

Anna Foppe is a multidisciplinary artist based in Gainesville, Florida, studying as a senior in the BFA program at the University of Florida. She was born and raised in Lakeland, Florida, on May 27, 2003, and is a first-generation Swedish-American. Diagnosed with ADHD at a young age, Foppe developed a passion for art as a coping mechanism early on and was fascinated by the mind, falling in love with Surrealism and later having work shown in the St. Petersburg Dali Museum. In college, she struggled with stress and health issues that led to several bouts of illness and sleep deprivation. These experiences and surrealist inspirations inform Foppe's current work, engaging themes of memory and perception as influenced by the subconscious. Her previous work has explored environmentalism, ADHD, gender, and her Swedish heritage.

Sarah Gissendanner is a third year student obtaining a BFA Graphic Design degree and certificate in Ceramics at the University of Florida. She has had a long life passion for various artistic endeavors, ranging from 2D traditional drawing/painting to 3D crafts such as jewelry making. Currently, she is focusing on pursuing a career as a graphic designer. Outside of her coursework however, she expresses her art making handmade ceramics and clothing items she sells under her small business, Haras Works.

Paula Grieve is an incarcerated writer/student with Exchange for Change. She is enrolled in Philosophy of Logic and Study of Literature through Adams State University in Colorado. Her work has appeared on LitHub, Tuft's University reSentencing, The Preservation Foundation's Story House and the Tampa Bay Times. She is a recent winner of PEN America's Prison and Justice Writing Awards for Honorable Mention in Memoir.

Riley Gwinnup is a senior chemistry major at Florida Southern College. She

started writing poetry after reading Emily Dickson's poem "I stepped from plank to plank" as she found it changed the way she does her research work. She plans to continue to read and write poetry for the way it modifies her perspective.

Natalie Hanagan is a senior at the University of Southern Maine studying Criminology and Creative Writing. She is currently hard at work on her debut collection of poetry, as well as multiple works of short fiction. Her work has been published in Island Ink, Outrageous Fortune, and The Aerial Perspective literary magazines, as well as an upcoming anthology of surrealist poetry from Defunkt Magazine.

Emma Heller is a poet and songwriter currently attending Columbia College Chicago. She is passionate about using words and music to convey the intricacies of life and emotion. Her music is available on all major streaming platforms.

Nathan Henry (b. 2005, Los Angeles) is currently a student at the University of California, Davis majoring in Studio Art. Upon completing his first year of undergraduate study, he was awarded the UC Davis Maria Manetti Shrem International Artist Residency Scholarship in 2024. Since then, Henry blends an intuitive mode of observational drawing with imagination, building worlds that serve as his personal folklore. Through the exaggerated forms and varied marks in Henry's evolving pictorial language, he invites the viewer to confront the tension and emotional weight embedded in everyday experience. Henry's work strikes a balance between control and expression, leaving room for the unexpected through the inventive use of different tools and materials in his artistic process.

Elizabeth Henson lives, works, and attends school on the eastern shore in Salisbury, Maryland. Though born and raised in Kentucky, coastal life has thrived. She currently studies creative writing with a focus on poetry, and political science at Salisbury University.

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Molly Jackim (b. 2003) is an American printmaker and ceramic artist. She currently splits her time between her hometown in Northern Indiana and Cincinnati, studying at Xavier University. Her art utilizes the therapeutic nature of undulating lines and sporadic phrases that come to mind during her creative process. Her current work is inspired by Italian churches, family, and healing her relationship with God.

Dev Damam Kartan is a Senior at Washington & Jefferson College majoring in Biochemistry and Spanish. He serves as Editor-in-Chief for the 25th edition of W&J's undergraduate literary journal, Hellbender. When he isn't writing, he can be found under a weighted blanket surrounded by Pokémon stuffed animals. Post-graduation, he plans to continue writing while attending medical school.

Savannah Keck is a college art student who aims to open her own studio post-graduation and is passionate about all things art. She would be lost if she could not work with her hands to create art pieces for the rest of her life. She thoroughly enjoys seeing the reactions of people who view her art and feels as though she is giving them a piece of her heart each time. She plans to continue her art career and share with others, not just for the love of it, but because she thrives through art.

Mercedes Kemp is an undergraduate at Eastern Michigan University; she is one who believes education is the key to success. While attending her first creative writing course, she found it difficult to express her feelings. She now understands that an unexamined life is not worth living. She often refers to this quote when looking for motivation, "That which we obtain too easily, we esteem too lightly" (Thomas Paine).

Margaret Kiley is a current Sophomore pursuing a BFA in Studio Art at the University of Florida. Having spent most of her youth in Florida she is captivated by the native environment that surrounded her. She is interested in exploring the humanity within insects through addressing themes of environmentalism and suburban sprawl. She hopes to highlight human displacement parallels to the lives of insects through whimsical narratives, challenging views to reconsider their relationship with nature.

Cameron Kosak is a junior at Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA. The small Connecticut town he grew up in remains dear to him, but he feels at home here in Philly. When he isn't writing, he's reading, and when he isn't reading, he's deciding which book to read next. Or he's trying to stare at the wall for an hour without picking up his phone. Cameron's work has previously been featured in Glass Mountain.

Sarah Larsen is an undergraduate student in the Writer's Workshop at the University of Nebraska Omaha, where she is earning a BFA in poetry and creative nonfiction. She has served two seasons on the staff of UNO's 13th Floor Magazine, once as an editorial assistant, and once as a genre editor. She has also worked as an editorial assistant on the staff of The Linden Review, a medical humanities journal housed in UNO's English department. Her current project is a thesis in poetry, and

she is working on completing a chapbook manuscript.

Rhiannon Li is a current first-year student at Boston University studying Graphic Design. Her favorite snack from Trader Joe's is dried okra.

Emma Littrell is a sophomore at Eastern Michigan University. Her major is Simulation, Animation & Gaming with a minor in graphic design. She loves painting and drawing, as well as collage work to expand on different ideas and media. Along with her classes in the arts, Emma is also a member of the Women's Swim and Dive team at Eastern Michigan. She hopes to work in the graphic design field, and create new ideas and inspirations for others to see.

Trent Long studied English and Philosophy as an undergraduate at the University of Florida. He grew up in Stuart, Florida. He wrote this piece for his younger brother, J.D. He graduated in December of 2024 and is pursuing English at a graduate level.

MacEwan is a novelist (still working on the published part) who writes because of her itchy fingers and their desire to answer the questions from the world around them. She enjoys doing anything and everything, is especially proud of her "Jack of All Trades" title appointed by her dad, and her lack of a verbal filter inherited from her mom. "Alon and Nola" is a piece she holds close to her heart, and she hopes it helps us learn about each other as much as we learn about ourselves.

Jack Meyer is a passionate writer of both poetry and short fiction looking to build his skillset and refine his craft. He participated in the intramural literary journal at Washington & Jefferson College as the lead poetry editor and eventually became the Editor in Chief. His experiences with the creative writing program at Washington & Jefferson College made him more connected to the works of others as well as his own, and he is incredibly grateful to the faculty of the English department for their guidance and encouragement along the way.

Thomas Meier is a senior english and history double major with a philosophy minor at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. When they aren't thinking about Foucault's Panopticon, you can find them editing the school newspaper and being (unfortunately) given 8 shots of espresso by the baristas on campus. Do not ask them about "Carry on Wayward Son" by Kansas at all costs.

Neptune Molitor is an undergraduate student at the University of California, Davis majoring in Art Studio. They love painting, drawing, and sculpture and are always looking to try new forms of art. Their paintings and drawings tend to be realism, and portraits have been a staple in their works. They are excited to have this be their first piece shown in any journal or magazine.

Faith Montagnino is a junior at the University of Scranton in Scranton, PA, pursuing an English degree with Writing and Philosophy minors in the Special Jesuit Liberal Arts and University Honors programs. Her poetry has appeared in the University of Scranton's literary magazine *Esprit*, *The Albion Review*, and *30 North*. She was a 2023-2024 Slattery Center for the Ignatian Humanities student research fellow and placed second in the 2024 Sigma Tau Delta conference awards category for creative nonfiction. When not in the "Electric City," she calls Morganville, NJ home.

Naomi Naylor is a New York City-based writer. She attends Union College and is pursuing a degree in English. Her career goal is to become an English professor with a focus on poetry and creative writing. She writes for the school newspaper and has had two essays published. She attended a summer program with the School of the *New York Times* to further her creative writing skills. She received an Outstanding Achievement in Humanities award from her high school.

Shameka Richards is in her senior year as an undergrad, at St. Thomas Aquinas College. She is majoring in childhood education with hopes of adding literacy and special education extensions. "Get In Where You Fit In," is her first fictional piece published in a literary journal. In Spring 2023, she was awarded the Rachel Carson award for her poem "A Mother's Love." Her poem will be published in the St. Thomas Aquinas College's literary journal, *The Voyager*, in Spring 2024.

Ajayla Ries-Ennells is a fourth-year college student at Western Illinois University pursuing a Bachelor's degree in English, and fulfilling her teaching certification for middle and high school. She loves all things literature and teacher related, arts and crafts, spending time in nature, music, and being fearlessly herself. She lives in a small apartment with her long-term significant other and their silly, beautiful cat, Leonidas. Her most recent work can be found in Western Illinois University's literary magazine, *Elements*, including a poem that placed second in the university's Creative Writing Awards for Spring 2024. Ajayla Ries-Ennells is also an esteemed member of several organizations at Western, including writing and editing for the college's literary magazines, and serving as the vice president for the college's chapter of Sigma Tau Delta national English honor society.

Kaylee Roberts is an undergraduate student at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. She is pursuing a major in creative writing, and plans to get her Publication Certificate to become a publisher or editor. Kaylee enjoys writing as a hobby, and hopes to become a published author in the future. She finds motivation in the power of words, and believes writing can be used to spark significant change and connection.

Maya Singla is a student at Duke University where she is studying Biomedical Engineering. She has had a passion for writing ever since elementary school, with a particular love for poetry and short prose. Through her writing, she hopes to connect with others, allowing them to find resonance in her words and feel a little less alone. In her free time she enjoys running, playing soccer, dancing, and listening to music.

Kelsey Sivertson is a writer living and working in Holland, Michigan. A 2024 graduate of Hope College, Sivertson won Hope's Lotz Prize for distinction in creative writing, and was the National Kennedy Center American College Theatre winner in Theatre Journalism.

Samantha Slabaugh is an Oakland University Writing and Rhetoric alumna as of 2024, with a minor in creative writing. Her piece "Christmas Eve Mementos" was inspired by her own personal family's experience with Dementia. Outside of aspiring to become an established creative non-fiction writer, poetry is one of her other creative passions. In her free time, Samantha enjoys film photography with her partner, riding her horse Lando and relaxing with a revered book.

Sophia P. Smith has loved to write since her earliest memories and is now pursuing a minor in creative writing at Salisbury University. Her work has also been published in Hawaii Pacific Review and Third Wednesday Magazine.

Riley Snell has been dedicated to creating art and poetry since middle school, and has been published in various school magazines and journals from seventh to twelfth grade. She is currently a junior at Florida Southern College, majoring in English with a concentration in writing and minoring in Art History & Museum Studies, as well as in Spanish. Currently, she is the Co-President and Literary Editor of FSC's Cantilevers Journal of the Arts. She plans to graduate in 2026 and hopes to work on a creative journal's editorial staff, much like Cantilevers or Oakland Arts Review.

Sofia Soto is a sophomore Television and Digital Media major with a minor in writing at Ithaca College. Her work has been featured in Buzzsaw Magazine, Fiction Attic Press, and the Ithaca College Writing Contest. She was previously a guide for the New Voices Literary Festival in Ithaca, NY. When she's not writing, she is reading, filming, or napping.

Sophia Sprick is an undergraduate student at Kalamazoo College, studying Studio Art, Critical Ethnic Studies, and Anthropology. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, and raised in Ann Arbor, Michigan, she began wheel throwing classes at age 12 and has continued her pottery practice throughout high school and college. In her sophomore year, she received an award for outstanding achievement and potential in the

arts from the Kalamazoo Art Department during Honors Day Convocation and later that year held a solo exhibition at the downtown Kalamazoo Art Hop event. Accepted into the New York Arts Study Away Program, Sophia plans to spend her 2025 winter term in New York City, where she will undertake two internships in the field of visual arts. Primarily working with clay, she focuses on functional pottery vessels and explores the physical, intimate, intentional, and healing aspects of wheel throwing, examining how this process manifests in physical handmade objects.

Nicole Stander is an undergraduate at University of Nebraska-Omaha. She is double majoring in English and Creative Writing with a minor in Gender Studies.

Lauren Stanzione is a senior at New York University studying English and Creative Writing. She is from New Jersey. Her hobbies include getting lost in cities, deep thoughts on trains, cooking pasta, and repeatedly listening to the same five songs. Her work can be found in Fellowship of the Unmoored, Vagabond Multilingual Journal, Brio, The Weasel, PARK Magazine, West 10th, Kelsey Review, Washington Square News, and Northern Lights.

Elena Streett is a junior Creative Writing major at Oklahoma Baptist University. She was raised in Texas and New Mexico, where her parents home schooled her and her five younger siblings. Her poetry has appeared in Folio: the Literary Journal of Holy Family University, and in Vita Poetica. She is also the composer and librettist of an original musical, Dreamers, which received its university premiere at OBU in April 2024.

Kylie Wagoner studies creative writing at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She is an editorial intern for the independent literary press Braddock Avenue Books.

Rayni K. Wekluk's poetry and nonfiction is published in Folio, The Linden Review, Collision, 13th Floor Magazine, The Oakland Arts Review, and more. Primarily a poet, Wekluk will graduate in Fall of 2025 with a BFA in Creative Writing (Poetry) and a BA in English (CNF) from The University of Nebraska Omaha. She holds the honor of having served as a manuscript reviewer for the Ex Ophidia Press 2024 Richard Gabriel Rummonds Poetry Contest. Wekluk explores the human condition through a strong feminine lens within her work and hopes to write a play in the coming years.

Adam E. Willis is an artist, writer, and biology student from Delaware, OH. Adam uses poetry as an outlet for expressing his feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, and displeasure with the current state of American culture and the environment. His recent poetry, in particular, criticizes the degradation of wild and rural landscapes by urban and suburban development, excessive materialism, and rampant con-

sumerism. In this regard, the tones and themes of his work are almost always negative; however—for his sake—the creative process is therapeutic.

Wilson is an artist from Cincinnati. In 2023 they started losing control of their hands and started their journey as a disabled person. Their paintings often attempt to visualize the cognitive disconnect between a person and their disability. This theme follows them through all their disciplines from graphic design and painting to writing and comic creation.

Carole Wood is a writer and singer-songwriter from Co. Wexford, Ireland. She completed a BA (Hons.) in English with Creative Writing at University College Dublin. She was awarded a 1916 Bursary in 2020, and was shortlisted for the Maeve Binchy Travel Award in 2023. Her work has been published in Caveat Lector, Envelope, and New Word Order. Two of her short stories have been adapted for audio drama by No Sleep and Chilling Tales for Dark Nights.
<https://bio.link/carole>

Josey Zeunges is an undergraduate student at Salisbury University. She is majoring in both English Creative Writing and Business Marketing. Her work has been published in Vernacular. Josey works as a marketing intern for The Shore Poetry and is the managing editor of her school's literary magazine, "The Scarab." In her free time, she loves to spend time with her horse (and muse), Jasmin.

STAFF

Grayson Hershey is a senior at Oakland University majoring in creative writing and minoring in theater. Besides writing unintelligibly long sentences within his creative works in any micro-chasm of free time he can get—which is mainly acquired through pleading and bargaining in the bathroom mirror—Grayson also enjoys video games, crochet, and late night reading; if his mind doesn't give out first. Currently, Grayson is engaged in a balancing act of writing more than one sentence a day, homework, and applying to MFA programs.

Casey Novak-Smolenski is a Creative Writing (specialization in Fiction) and Japanese double major at Oakland University. He often writes (or, at least, outlines) novels and short story collections about messy characters and escapism. He likes making jewelry, rockhounding, studying different languages, and playing Pokemon games in his free time. In the future, he hopes to work in any editorial or translation-related occupation.

Kaitlyn Piggott is a senior studying Creative Writing with a specialization in Memoir and Essay. As with many writers, she's been filling up hand-written notebooks with fictional worlds and character-driven realistic fiction. Since college, she found an interest in exploring personal narratives by stringing together meaning between memories, moments, and experiences. She hopes to continue this passion once she graduates. When she is not writing (or reading), she's either spending time with family or spending an unhealthy amount of time listening to music.

Clover Vassilev is a graduate student at Oakland University majoring in English. They will be graduating with their master's degree this April, and intend to pursue a PhD in English literature as well. They are passionate about writing both fiction and non-fiction, having to write a lot of academic essays for their major but also working on a novel in their free time. They also enjoy painting, watching old TV shows, video games, and hanging out with their cat Raspberry.



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