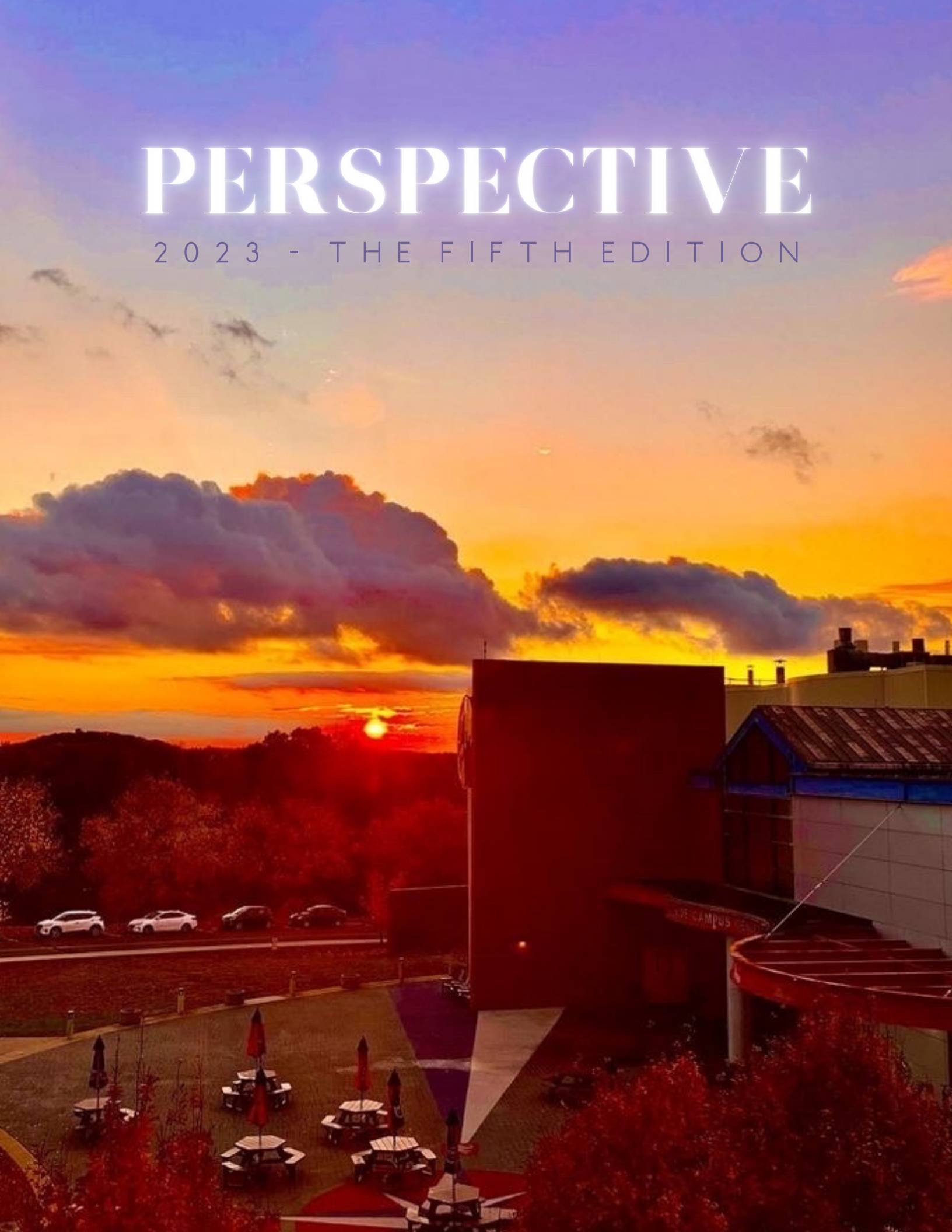


PERSPECTIVE

2023 - THE FIFTH EDITION



**FRONT AND BACK COVER PHOTOS
BY KIERAN DOOLABH**

**ALL FEATURED WORKS BY MEMBERS OF
THE KATHWARI HONORS PROGRAM
AT WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY.**

**EXTENDED APPRECIATION TO THE HONORS STUDENTS, FACULTY,
AND EVERYONE WHO MADE THIS MAGAZINE POSSIBLE.**

C. 2022-23

PERSPECTIVE

**The Kathwari Honors Program's
Literary and Arts Magazine
The Fifth Edition**

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF:

Tyler Munroe and Michelle Rochniak

CO-EDITORS:

Kellie Jackson, Maia Quirk, and Alivia Stonier

Letters from the Editors

Dear appreciators of the unique and creative, dear lovers of artistic beauty,

Thank you, first and foremost, for opening a copy of our magazine. These pages are composed of the consistent effort of our entire editing team over several months, even though you can read through this entire magazine in less than an hour. I hope you enjoy the eloquent and expressive journey that this edition will take you on.

When I was a freshman at WCSU, I received an email in February 2019 (yes I checked) asking Honors students to submit creative writing or artwork for a new (then-unnamed) Literary and Arts magazine. This first ever edition of *Perspective* was composed by many wonderful members of the Kathwari Honors Program who have since graduated, including the fantastic Fatima Izzat, whose work you have likely seen in those early editions. Without these amazing alumni, this magazine would not exist. I am grateful for their hard work, and for creating a magazine that I, a few years later, would become an editor of.

Last year, I became part of the editing team under our prior EIC, the lovely Bella DiMartino. She passed the torch(es) on to myself and my dear co-editor, Michelle, and I cannot thank her enough for trusting us to take good care of *Perspective*. I hope I have done every editor of this magazine, current and previous, proud with my contributions to this edition.

My work was accepted in the first-ever issue, and in May of 2019, I held this brand-new magazine (and my first ever published poem) in my hands. Every year since, my writing has been a part of *Perspective*. I have seen this magazine grow and change before me like flowers re-blooming every spring. I hope you – each and every one of you who reads these pages – all love how this edition has blossomed into existence.

Thank you to everyone who submitted work for this edition. Of course, this edition would not be possible without you, or the help of my incredible editors. Thank you to Alivia, Kellie, and Maia for the time and thought you have put into the formation of this magazine. Thank you to Michelle, for bringing a new perspective to this magazine, for working tirelessly to craft this beautiful edition with me. As sad as I am to leave *Perspective*, I cannot wait to see what you create next year.

I am so grateful and honored to have spent my final year at WCSU as an Editor-In-Chief of *Perspective*, a masterpiece that has sincerely changed my life.

I wish nothing but the best to the Kathwari Honors Program and everyone who reads this edition. Thank you for trusting us to behold your beautiful creations, and to compose them into a wonderful, worthy collection. Remember to always appreciate the beauty in creativity.

Sincerely,
Tyler Munroe

Letters from the Editors

My dearest readers,

This has definitely been...a year. A year of trying to revitalize community spaces and connecting with each other once again. And as always, creating community comes with obstacles. People have busy schedules. Communication isn't always reliable or direct. Sometimes, you're cruising along like you're in first place in Mario Kart, and just when you think you're going to cross the finish line, someone in last place hits you with a blue shell.

But even though you're not in first place anymore, you still finish the job and cross the finish line and feel proud of yourself. That's what this year's issue of *Perspective* feels like. Tyler and I have beaten the odds and produced another beautiful, beautiful magazine with our stellar editors, and that's what matters. No matter what happened this year, this was still going to be the fifth issue of *Perspective*, and it was still going to be an absolute knockout.

In these pages, you will find astounding photographs, mesmerizing writing, and more of those crocheted critters you know and love. We have also compiled a few letters to the lovely and talented Professor Sabrina Marques since it's her last year of being the Director of the Honors Program! Please take it all in, show some love on social media, and consider submitting next year if you're not graduating! This magazine is nothing without the artistic contributions of so many fabulous Honors students.

I would be remiss to end this letter without thanking my fabulous co-editor. Tyler, you are one of the most understanding and realest people I know. I appreciate the support you gave me this year so much, and I'm so glad that we created this gorgeous thing together! I'm going to miss you next year <3

And with that, lovely readers, enjoy what is within these pages! And never ever stop appreciating art created by wonderful human beings everywhere.

Warmest of regards,
Michelle Rochniak :)



Table of Contents

Letters from the Editors.....	i-ii
Table of Contents (You are here!).....	iii-iv
<i>verse xxiv - welcome to the frontline</i> by Anonymous.....	1
<i>TODOS Y NADIE</i> and statement by Laura Sosa.....	2
<i>Machine Take</i> by Becky Kessler.....	3
<i>Sartorial</i> by Campbell Mitchell.....	4
<i>Valor</i> by Ana Bourque.....	5-6
<i>The Weeds of Envy</i> by Alyssa Virtue.....	7
<i>Leaves</i> by Alyssa Virtue.....	8
Photography by Kieran Doolabh.....	9
"Silent Shores" by Eli Koukoulis.....	10
Photography by Tyler Munroe.....	11





Table of Contents

<i>abandon all hope</i> , by Tyler Munroe.....	12
<i>We Are Still The Kids in Kindergarten</i> by Satil Moni.....	13
"Abstract from Before and After" by Campbell Mitchell.....	14
Crocheted Work by Rachel Sloane.....	15-16
<i>there is a thin semantic line...</i> by Michelle Rochniak.....	17
<i>Waldeinsamkeit</i> by Campbell Mitchell.....	18
<i>In Another Lifetime</i> by Anonymous.....	19
<i>Bitter is The Fruit</i> and "Strawberry Stand" by Alivia Stonier.....	20
<i>Luminescence: A Short Story</i> by Tyler Munroe.....	21-30
Dedication: Farewells for Director Sabrina Marques.....	31-32
Grad Send-Off.....	33-34
Meet the Editors.....	35-36



verse xxiv - welcome to the frontline

there were no weapons of mass destruction in afghanistan
they are at home of the free from exactly what i don't know anymore

the kiddos woke up that morning, pledging to be one nation under God.
that afternoon they were one two three classrooms under desks.
that evening they were under i don't wanna know how many because it's too many sheets of white.

smear mud on yourself to blend with the surroundings
smear blood on yourself to blend with your dead friends

"send the police now"
"send the police now"

there was no war to fight in iraq
[“to launch a wholly unjustified and brutal invasion of Iraq”]
home is where the war is.
it is in
our bodies, our closets,
our pantries and our classrooms.
it is in our morals.
[it is in our conscience.]

welcome home, welcome back to the frontline!
this playground used to be my old stomping grounds
[these be killing grounds now]

home is where the heart is
“let mommy draw a heart on your hand”
[so i'll know which body is yours.]
“mommy, i love you.”
home is where it's hardest

home is where the heart is
but the american heart is where the american wallet is
and wallets have to be big enough for mansions and trips to cancun
guess it's not home otherwise

bear hug your children
in your arms that you would give up for them and your legs too
bear the children
in humane mind and kindred patriotic spirit

- S



TODOS Y NADIE BY LAURA SOSA

My intention behind this piece was to create an image in which anybody could potentially identify themselves. My goal was to represent humanity without the need for specificity. The faces are not realistic or complete, yet we can identify elements of this piece with human features. All of the elements come together to represent a figure. This figure showcased that despite our differences our unity as a community is essential to our humanity. A black line outlines each element intentionally, to further prove the symbolism of union.

MACHINE TAKE

LYRICS BY BECKY KESSLER
FOR VIOLENT MAE

YOU'RE A STAR IN A RAINSTORM
LOST TO STATIC HAZE
CHASING DREAMS LIKE WILD GEESE
FAR FROM HONAH LEE
HUNGRY AFTER THE FEAST
YOU'RE BETTER OFF A MACHINE.

WINTER NEVER MELTS
YOUR BEAUTIFUL HEART
TRIPS ME ON MY WAY OUT
I USED TO KNOW WHAT TO FIGHT FOR
BUT THE HEAT IS RUNNING OUT.
LOVE IS A HOT BATH IN A COLD ROOM
CAN'T GET ENOUGH
YOU'RE BETTER OFF A MACHINE
BETTER OFF A MACHINE.

Sartorial

A man who can wear a bow tie
Has surely got on him an eye
For that great care his dress entails
And all of life's little details

Yes he who is seen so well dressed
Will leave all he meets so impressed
By auras this man projects
To all that his couture inspects

That carefully placed burst of color
Front and center neath the collar
Stalwart sign of fashion sense
Social virtue's first pretense

Just how long has this man spent
Dressing the part of a gent
Building his bow tie collection
Perfecting knots on his reflection

But what underneath fabric festers
Under silks and polyesters
Strip away the snazzy ties
And look now into that man's eyes

Watch him wriggle fabric loose
Breathing shallow like a noose
Watch his lips give hollow smile
Eyes of one who's standing trial

See his gaze dart to and fro
How much he must long to go
Off to find his peace and quiet
Away from this highbrow riot

See him cling to that bow tie
As though without it he would die
See it serve psychic defense
In place of self confidence

Pity that poor bow-tied sod
Living outwardly a fraud
Do not his silk bow ties covet
For his life, he does not love it

By Campbell Mitchell

Valor by Ana Bourque

THE WORLD SHOULD HAVE PROTECTED YOU, BUT YOU HAVE BEEN ASKED TO PROTECT IT.

WHAT AN HONOR.

WHAT AN INJUSTICE.

— BRIAN MURPHY AS MELORA, *NOT ANOTHER D&D PODCAST*

Pick up your sword, my child,
and wipe off the dust and blood.

Tie your boots, lift your shield,
don't stop walking, you're still so far from home.

Don't be afraid, my love,
you were chosen for your strength.

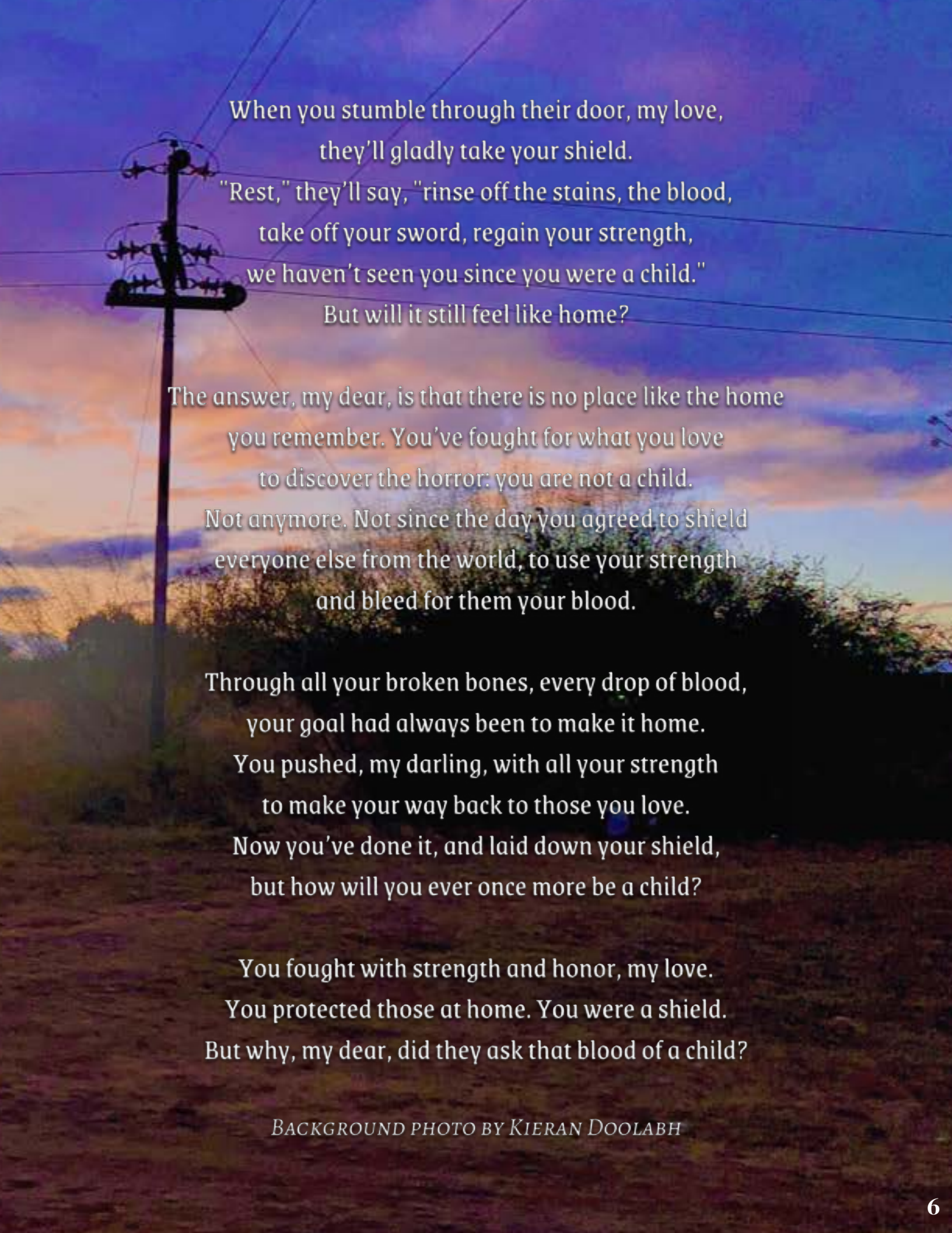
You do not know your strength.
You know only the things you loved as a child,
and the things they've told you to love,
to protect with your own blood.

You're left to fight your way back home,
to protect the helpless, to become a shield.

Do you think they know how it hurts to raise your shield?

How lifting your sword drains the strength
you've worked so hard to build? At home
do they speak of the hero? Or the child?

Do they know your hands, the callouses and blood,
or do they think only of their baby raised with love?

A utility pole with several cross-arms and power lines is silhouetted against a vibrant sunset sky. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a warm orange and yellow near the horizon. The foreground is dark and out of focus, showing what appears to be a field or a road.

When you stumble through their door, my love,
they'll gladly take your shield.

"Rest," they'll say, "rinse off the stains, the blood,
take off your sword, regain your strength,
we haven't seen you since you were a child."
But will it still feel like home?

The answer, my dear, is that there is no place like the home
you remember. You've fought for what you love
to discover the horror: you are not a child.
Not anymore. Not since the day you agreed to shield
everyone else from the world, to use your strength
and bleed for them your blood.

Through all your broken bones, every drop of blood,
your goal had always been to make it home.
You pushed, my darling, with all your strength
to make your way back to those you love.
Now you've done it, and laid down your shield,
but how will you ever once more be a child?

You fought with strength and honor, my love.
You protected those at home. You were a shield.
But why, my dear, did they ask that blood of a child?

BACKGROUND PHOTO BY KIERAN DOOLABH

The Weeds of Envy by Alyssa Virtue

*Why is it that weeds of envy sprout wherever
a flower grows high above all the others in the patch?*

The flower, determined to reach the sky
Stretches a little more each day
And after many hours spent blooming in silence
That resilient little plant is finally taller than the rest
It gazes into the Sun's warm face
Absorbing the rays of success, thriving.

The flower, though it is big and tall
Does not boast nor brag nor gloat
Instead, it humbly stands
Without so much as a whisper of self-importance
As a shining example for all others in the patch
That one day, they might reach the same heights
And feel the light of prosperity seep into
Each and every one of their petals too.

The weeds, despite the flower's good intentions
Will always be drawn to the flourishing blossom
And slowly, but surely
The bitter plant will latch on
Like a starving parasite
Strangling, smothering, suffocating
Until the poor flower
That once stood with unwavering strength
Is dragged back down to the Earth
By the all-consuming jealousy
That does not let another plant
Grow, thrive, or live in peace.

The background of the page is a soft-focus photograph of green leaves and thin branches, likely from a tree or shrub, set against a light, almost white background. The leaves are various shades of green, from pale to a slightly darker hue, and are scattered across the frame, creating a natural and serene atmosphere.

Leaves by Alyssa Virtue

We are born in the fresh spring air,
When many trees begin to bear.

Our earthy green hues reflect light rays,
But it is not for long that our youthful shade stays.

We thrive in the summer haze,
Despite those never ending, muggy days.

Lukewarm raindrops cling to our lime-toned complexion,
As the passing thunderstorm rumbles on in another direction.

Our color starts to fade once touched by a crisp autumn breeze,
And without warning, it appears that fire is blazing through the trees.

The forest comes alive with rich pigmentation,
We are even pretty enough for a book's illustration.

By winter, we have fallen all the way to the ground,
The bitter wind warns us of the fate we are bound.

Snowflakes gently float down from the skies,
Shielding the world's eyes from our dreary demise.

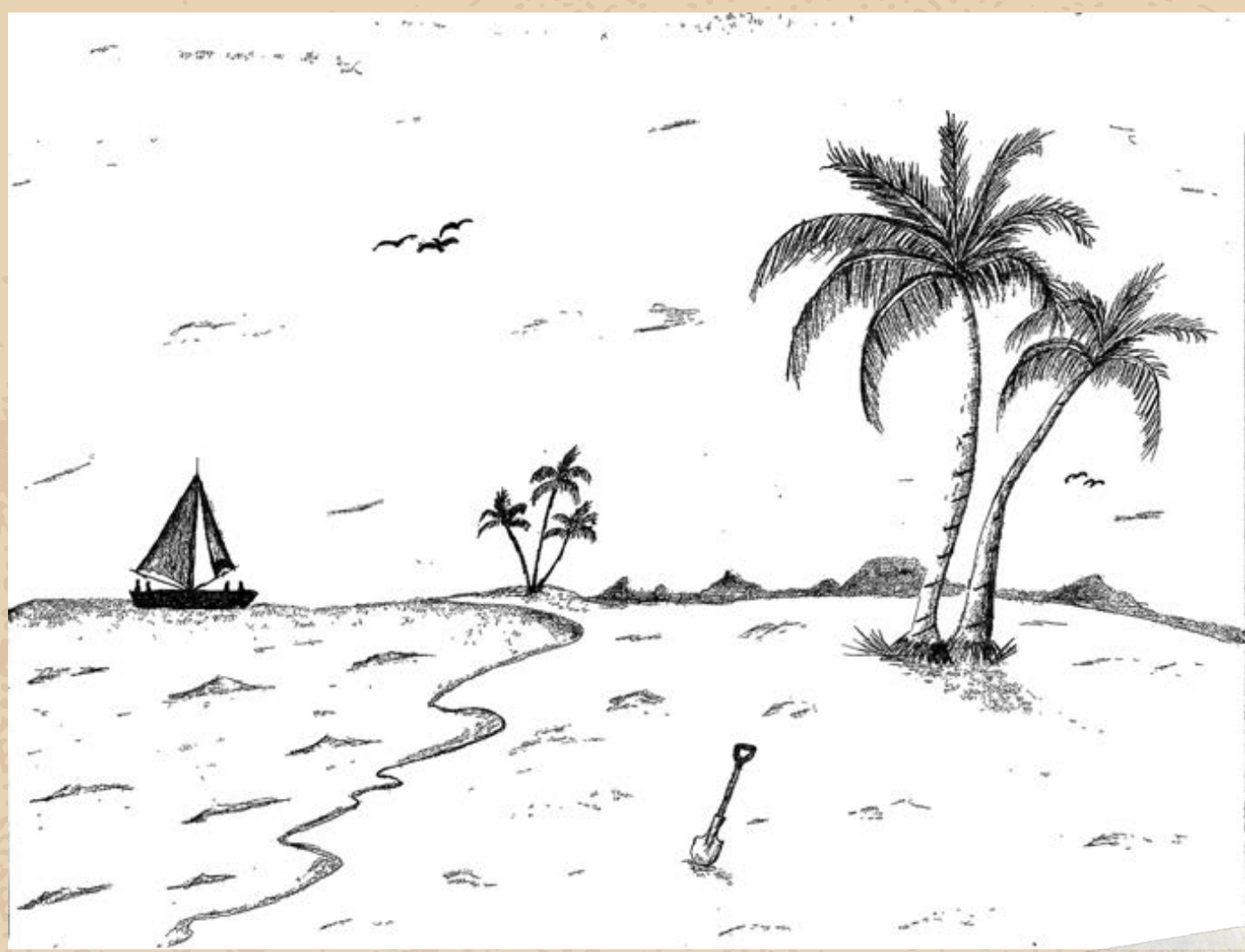
Photography
by
Kiernan Doolabh





Was back home
down to
beach!

U.S. AIR MAIL



POSTCARD

"Silent Shores"

by Eli Koukoulis



"Save Us Your Prayers"

Photography of Halsey's Live Performance on June 24, 2022

Captured by Tyler Munroe



**No one is coming to
do the work for us.**



**THE WORK IS OURS
AND WE HAVE TO DO
IT NOW.**

abandon all hope,

ye who enter the ports of shining seas
overlooked by Lady Liberty,
ye The People, "created equal,"
but equality is not equally distributed.

there are rules
but no instruction manual.

there are games
but no fair play.

there are articles
but no headline is enough to change
the determination of a public dead-set on self-destruction.
decades of detonating rights and protecting wrongs
damned yourselves by keeping your arms at your sides,
doomed sons and daughters to wounded arms at their schools
where you prohibit diversity and devastate populations
for the sake of dishonest patriotism.

we pledge to you each morning and
you cannot promise we will live until noon.

no need to abandon hope!
—it has already abandoned us.

by Tyler Munroe

We Are Still The Kids in Kindergarten

By Satil Moni

*There is little that requires repeating
Aside from all the wisdom we've worn
As kids in kindergarten guarding the goodness —
The nascent and pure sort that comes with being alive.*

*A part of all the wisdom we've worn
Holds that all our truths are self-evident,
And they are of the nascent and pure sort.
Remember to share this with your nation and friends,*

*That we must hold our truths to be self-evident:
We play fair and we say sorry when we hurt someone
And we must remember to share with our nation and friends,
And we don't take things that don't belong to us.*

*Now remember, as adults, we must work fair and make amends when we hurt someone.
There is little that requires repeating and yet —
We do not take away rights that don't belong to us.
We are still the kids in kindergarten, guarding the goodness.*





Abstract from Before and After: Undergraduate Enrollment Trends and the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Campbell Mitchell

From 2020 onwards, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted traditional undergraduate education, leading to fears of widespread skill shortages as fewer students enter the workforce with relevant degrees, training, and credentials. In particular, fears that the disruption of the pandemic on education will compound existing healthcare staff shortages has prompted warnings from major public health and labor consulting institutions. Despite these high stakes, a paucity of empirical data exists in order to quantify the effect of the pandemic on undergraduate enrollment rates in specific fields. This paper seeks to explore the effect of the pandemic on undergraduate enrollment in healthcare majors by using semesterly enrollment data from four Connecticut State Universities as a sample. The proportion of healthcare majors is then examined in a regression analysis with controls for economic effects of the pandemic taken from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This analysis indicates, contrary to warnings, an uptick in the proportion of healthcare majors at these state universities and suggests avenues of further study in order to develop actionable policy recommendations.

Submitted Spring 2022 for SS 400 Senior Research Thesis



CROCHETED WORK

Froggershop Quartet



Dino the Dinosaur (above)
Bulbasaur (below)

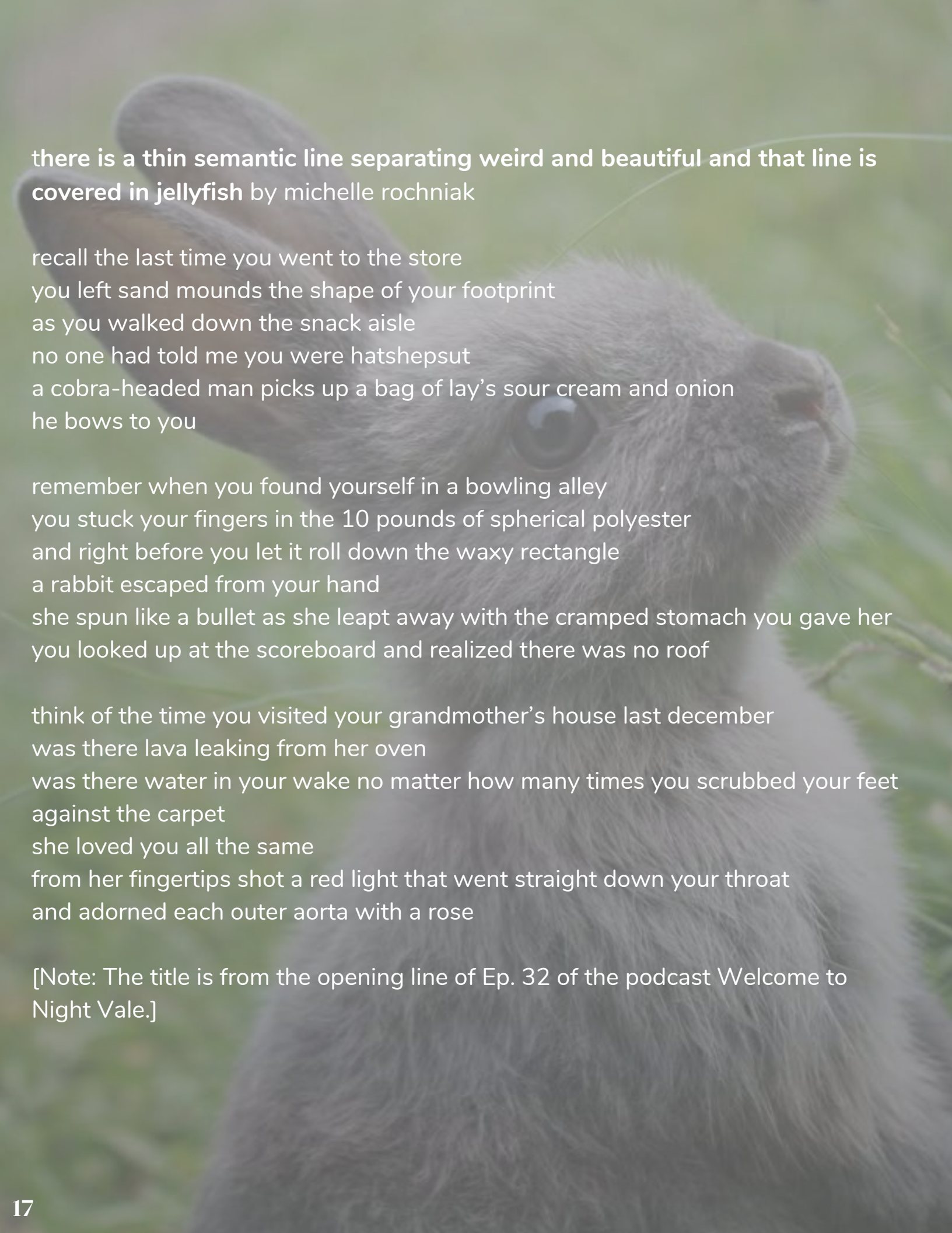
Ducky the Duck



BY RACHEL SLOANE



3-D Floral Mini Tote Bag
and Picnic Cardigan



there is a thin semantic line separating weird and beautiful and that line is covered in jellyfish by michelle rochniak

recall the last time you went to the store
you left sand mounds the shape of your footprint
as you walked down the snack aisle
no one had told me you were hatshepsut
a cobra-headed man picks up a bag of lay's sour cream and onion
he bows to you

remember when you found yourself in a bowling alley
you stuck your fingers in the 10 pounds of spherical polyester
and right before you let it roll down the waxy rectangle
a rabbit escaped from your hand
she spun like a bullet as she leapt away with the cramped stomach you gave her
you looked up at the scoreboard and realized there was no roof

think of the time you visited your grandmother's house last december
was there lava leaking from her oven
was there water in your wake no matter how many times you scrubbed your feet
against the carpet
she loved you all the same
from her fingertips shot a red light that went straight down your throat
and adorned each outer aorta with a rose

[Note: The title is from the opening line of Ep. 32 of the podcast Welcome to Night Vale.]

Waldeinsamkeit

By Campbell Mitchell

I WISH YOU WERE ALONGSIDE ME
BETWIXT THE MOUNTAIN, ROCK, AND TREE
WHERE CRISP PINE AIR TICKLES THE NOSE
AS CALL OF BIRD ON LAKE ECHOES

THE MELANCHOLIC SOLITUDE
THAT LEADS A MAN TO SIT AND BROOD
THE SILENCE IN THE PITCH BLACK NIGHT
WHAT GERMAN CALLS WALDEINSAMKEIT

I WISH THAT YOU WERE HERE PARTLY
TO RECOGNIZE NATURE'S BEAUTY
AND AS PERSPECTIVE CHANGES YOU
I THINK YOU WOULD GO HOME RENEWED

BUT IN SECRET AND TRUTHFULLY
I WISH YOU WERE HERE SELFISHLY
THAT AS THIS BEAUTY YOU APPRAISE
I'D SEE IT ALL BACK IN YOUR GAZE

In Another Lifetime

Soft is your touch on my broken skin
Healed me in ways but wasn't convinced
Found out you're like a sunset in Mykonos
A once in a lifetime view, but then forced to know
Special things always come to an end
Too bad timing wasn't our friend

In another lifetime, there I stand
Waiting for you to hold my hand
Live out the plans we made every night
Not worried by the future far in sight
I wish love came with an instruction guide
Would make it easier for me not to cry

Although you're leaving, the memories remain
Your laugh, your smile, it's glued in my brain
At last, my sappiness, fully out
Something so rare even I'm in doubt
How you healed me in ways you'll never know
But now it's time to finally let you go

-anonymous



CT. Grown
Strawberries
From Smith Acres - Nanticoke
\$8.99
each

Your paragraph text

Bitter is The Fruit

It started with a taste of sugar, that lingered on the tongue,
Just long enough to become a memory, clear in my mind,
If only I could flush out the mess you left behind, a stain,
To the softness, the gentleness that could kill, I clung.

I wasn't warned to not eat strawberry stems,
I will sputter on the seeds and choke down the leaves,
Let the carton break and hold them in my hands,
If it means there is a chance of sweetness in the end.

I will turn the juice to lipstick, make a beautiful disaster,
I will wash poison from the fruit until my water runs cold,
I will eat the whole damn garden,
If it means that you will stay.



LUMINE

A Sequel to Stargazing and High Tide

SCIENCE

A Short Story by Tyler Munroe

“We don’t know what it is,” Carrie said, flipping the VHS cassette over in her hands.

“I can answer that!” Logan lifted his hands, inviting a toss of the object his way. Carrie complied and he looked it over before proudly declaring, “It’s a tape.”

“No shit,” Maeve muttered and elbowed him in the stomach, replacing his self-satisfied grin with a surprised groan.

“I mean, there’s only one way to find out, right?” Juniper asked. She stood opposite the bickering pair and beside Carrie, who was feebly attempting to hide her giggles over Logan’s dramatic reaction.

Maeve took it from Logan’s grasp and inspected it for any labels or markings, but only found some dirt wedged in the crevices of the reels. “Where’d you say you found this, again?” they asked, preparing to dig out the soil with their fingernails but deciding against it.

“Outside that abandoned house on Hemlock. It was just lying in the front yard.” As if punctuating Juniper’s sentence, the television flashed to life. Logan was bent behind the screen as he fiddled with the plugs, hooking it up to the dusty VHS player that his mother insisted on keeping to rewatch their family’s memories, which were also dust-cloaked and forgotten on a distant shelf. Soon enough, the static snapped to a solid cobalt blue.

“Allow me,” Logan said with a smile, holding out an open palm in Maeve’s direction. He scraped out the dirt and wiped his fingers on his jeans before sliding the cassette into the slot. The four friends held their breath as they waited for the image to appear. For a moment, all that could be heard was the whirring of the machine as it processed the tape. Twilight was upon them, so the evening sky and the television screen doused them in blue, and Logan’s living room seemed to be underwater in the near silence.

The recording suddenly filled up the blank screen. A man sat at a tidy desk in a room lit by unwelcoming fluorescent lights. The wall behind him was decorated with pinned papers which held more ink than not, and sticky notes pressed on in an almost-neat fashion. He was on the verge of middle-aged and a little weathered around the edges of his face, but his eyes were wide and bright, reminiscent of an awestruck child. There was a sapphire-tinted glow that highlighted his sharp nose and defined cheeks. He talked as if his mouth was trying to catch up with his brain.

“Log for July 26. We have finally, finally created the Luminescence! After many unsuccessful attempts and unstable formulas, we did it! This is only a drop, but...” His smile was wide as he slid on a pair of goggles that looked to be wholly tinted the shade of sunglass lenses. He picked a small, steel clamp up from his tabletop and reached off-screen. There was the sound of a glass tube being handled, and as he brought his arm back into view, the recording glitched, chromatic lines suddenly formulating and painting his hands before pouring over the entire screen. Then, a flicker, and the man reappeared.

“Log for July 29. We’ve run more tests on the Luminescence, and it’s absolutely fascinating! It has a strange heat to it, which doesn’t seem to dissipate even when it’s in freezing conditions. This is going to be bigger and better than we could’ve ever imagined. They say we have big plans for this, and it’s going to help so many people, and I’m so relieved that all this work has been worth it.”

Another flicker. The papers on the wall look messier. The brightness in his eyes has faded. “Log for August sixth, um...” The man rubs his hand over his face and sighs. “There’s a problem with the Luminescence. They’ve started nicknaming it Blue Medusa. We did our first trials on subjects, and they just—” The video glitched again, this time immediate and consuming. The room was flushed with vibrant blue again as the machine spat out the tape.

“Huh, I don’t remember this thing auto-ejecting,” Logan said as he took it out and inspected the player. He pushed the cassette back in. The television flashed and the blank screen was replaced by the same man, but the recording was overexposed, his features blurred by a blinding cool white glow. Static fizzled over the image, gathering at the edges like cobwebs.

“It wasn’t supposed to turn into this,” is all that played before the tape ejected itself again.

* * *

The house on Hemlock Road looked like it could have once been a townhouse, being taller than it was wide. Part of the roof caved in from a fallen tree some years prior that no one cared to fix. The yard was overgrown with prickly bushes standing tall like pawns protecting their king. The curtains were drawn tight, juxtaposing the sun-bleached shutters that shed dandruff into the yellowed grass. It had spent eight years waiting for someone to repair its cracked skull and skin.

“Damn,” Logan breathed as he slowed to a stop on the side of the road. “No wonder the tape was here. This shit’s ancient.”

“Not really,” said Maeve, unbuckling their seatbelt. “It was occupied by a family until, like, eight... maybe nine years ago. I think the owner died—”

“In the house?!”

Maeve turned to Logan, giving him a deadpan “Yes.”

“You’re saying that to scare me,” he claimed with a laugh.

“Actually, no. The last owner died in the house. No one ever figured out how.”

“How do you know that?” Carrie asked as she hopped out of the backseat and onto the curb.

Maeve shut the passenger door. “Someone here’s gotta know the local legends.”

“I think I remember a news article or something about it when it happened,” Juniper said. She walked around Logan’s car and stood next to Carrie and Maeve.

“Yeah, I read up on it after you two found the tape. I think it might be the same guy.”

“Cool,” Logan grimaced as he tossed his keys a couple times over in his hand, “so we’re at a dead guy’s house because we think he’s the one who recorded that weird video?”

“Because we’re trying to find out what that weird video *means*,” Juniper corrected.

“Oh, that makes it better,” he replied, his words coated in sickly-sweet sarcasm.

The four friends stood side-by-side, staring up at the house that was not decrepit but simply decaying, that was not fallen but simply forgotten. Maeve took the first steps forward, playing hopscotch on the jagged slabs of concrete leading to the front door. Thick roots had burst through parts of the pathway, while other cement portions slept underneath the safety blanket of grass. Juniper, then Carrie, then Logan followed in their footsteps.

Maeve was halfway between the curb and the house when “Stop!” was heard. Everyone froze except for Carrie, who pointed slightly to the right of the path, at a small patch of grass drier than its surrounding blades. “That’s where we found the tape,” she explained. Juniper nodded in confirmation.

“No need to give us a heart attack over it,” Logan mumbled, clutching his chest.

Maeve approached the front door and knocked. Nothing replied. They tried to turn the door handle but it refused to move more than a half-inch in either direction. They checked for a key under the doormat, which was likely once a clean brown but now looked nearly black, the word “WELCOME” barely legible against the grime. No luck.

Following Maeve's lead, the group searched around the sides of the house. Nearing the backyard, they paused. One of the windows was broken. It was a bit taller than eye-level, and it looked as though something – perhaps a stray baseball or a brave trespasser – had punctured a hole in the bottom corner of the glass. Icelike cracks extended from the missing piece, stretching out to the edges and resembling veins under skin. Juniper, motivated by curiosity, reached to fit her fist through the hole in a dangerous game of Operation.

“Be careful,” Carrie whispered.

Successfully slipping her hand inside, Juniper fumbled for a few seconds, then pulled the windowpane up enough to get her fingertips underneath it.

“Woah, what are you doing?!” Logan’s hand flew to the window, taking the weight off Juniper’s.

She carefully maneuvered her wrist out of the jagged opening. “Well, we’re not finding anything else out here, are we?” Her hand replaced his, and she slid the frame up.

One at a time, all four friends hoisted themselves through the half-open window – Carrie only did so with a boost from Logan, who was the last one to enter. He tumbled onto a threadbare burgundy rug, large enough to cover half of the oak floorboards that whined under their weights. The room was blanketed in warm tones – from the gilded framings of sun-soaked landscapes to the tall, mahogany bookshelves of well-loved copies – all worn and desaturated by a thick cloak of dust. Maeve, searching with their phone’s flashlight, flicked a switch on the wall, where simply-patterned wallpaper was peeling away from the edges like the empty corpse of a cocoon. Rather than light, a cool breeze descended upon them; the cobwebbed ceiling fan spun, spewing dust to the corners of the study, lifting and misplacing a few stray papers. As if staged, one sheet floated onto Juniper’s sneakers.

“*Chemiluminesci caeruleus*,” she read from the paper. “Looks like a list of data.”

Maeve angled their phone to shine at Juniper’s hands. With a grateful smile, she continued, “Symptoms include dizziness, hallucinations, hemorrhages, nausea, and paranoia. Severe complications result in comatose and paralysis conditions.’ Yeesh.”

“Well,” muttered Maeve, “that sounds horrible.”

“Is that what got this guy?” Logan asked.

“Wait, there’s more.” Juniper’s eyebrows furrowed and the corners of her lips tightened. “All subjects have exhibited complete tetraplegia and persistent vegetative states within five minutes of exposure. This includes exposure to high-volume radiation emissions, not only direct contact.”

“Maeve?”

The spotlight, accompanied by three pairs of eyes, focused on Carrie. She held a small, white, plastic card in her hand. “This is him, right?”

Everything in the room stared at the identification card, at the small, grainy photo of a man withered at the edges, whose angular nose and bright eyes resembled those made by the picture of pixels on Logan’s television screen.

“Rian Cosmos,” whispered Juniper. The name moved unfamiliar in her mouth, as if she was in disbelief of the sounds she created.

In a moment, Maeve opened his digital obituary, which clearly declared his death date to be eight years earlier. The monochrome portrait of him appeared younger – perhaps before the stress had burrowed its way into the crevices of his face, the wrinkles of his eyes – but his eyes were full of life as always. Underneath, the small list of his surviving family members: his mother, Eleanora Cosmos, and his eleven-year-old daughter, Nova. Andromeda, his wife and his daughter’s mother, had been deceased for many years at this time.

“How awful,” Maeve sighed.

Logan and Carrie nodded in agreement. Juniper, instead, was focused on the card, inspecting it on both sides, and investigating her suspicions by scouring the Internet on her cell phone.

“How did you even get bars out here? I don’t have anything,” she grumbled, lifting her hand to reach better service, though she knew it rarely worked that way. Giving up, she turned to Maeve and asked, “Can you look up Stellar Labs?”

“I thought that place got shut down a few years ago, right?” Logan said. “My dad used to know some people who worked there.”

“You’re talking about STELLR, the Scientific and Technological Experimental Life Laboratory of Rockshift,” explained Maeve, a genius built by technology. “The lab itself is down by the outskirts of town, near the river. Articles are saying that a third of the branches at the lab had to be closed due to a weird fungal outbreak incident, but the remainder of the laboratory still functions as normal.”

“Think this could get us in?” Juniper flashed the ID card, showing a set of numbers below a star-shaped icon which matched the result on Maeve’s screen. Logan twirled his car keys and caught them in his hand with a chime, grasping everyone’s attention in a beat.

“Well, we can’t stop now.”

* * *

“The moon must be really full tonight,” Carrie remarked as she gazed out the window, watching ripples of blue in all shades, bold and bright, wash over the river as they drove upstream, cool light reflecting dreamily off the water, the leaves, the road.

Maeve, temple pressed against the passenger-side window, turned to look at the sky. Despite being far from any cities, the night seemed to be clouded by light pollution. The stars were distant, muffled, almost forgotten.

Logan slowed as he veered to the right and entered an unpaved road. At the end of the drive stood a massive building composed of three square sections. The far-right portion was completely dark, presumably deserted. The rest of the building was dimly-lit, operating on preserved energy, with the exception of a few bright squares scattered within the grid. He pulled to a stop beside a side entrance, then turned to face his three friends.

“Okay, so, I’m not going in, and that way we have an escape plan. Cool?”

“Fine by me,” Maeve replied. “I can go? I really don’t mind either way.”

“I’ll go,” Juniper declared, twirling the card between her fingers.

Carrie turned to face her and, unable to completely cover her anxiety, her voice quivered as she volunteered, “Then I’m coming with you.”

For a moment, silence doused them all in an intrinsic, inexplicable shared understanding. There could be no argument against this.

“Let’s pray they don’t update their access systems often.” Juniper grinned at Carrie as they walked toward the door, making light of the adventure they were about to take.

The scanner by the handle flashed green in response to Cosmos’s card, granting the pair entry into STELLR, but it didn’t get them much farther than that.

“Sorry, are you new here?” A short, slouched young man in a sweater vest peered at them from behind a desk. His phone was horizontally propped against the computer screen in front of him, playing a show of some sort, while his computer seemed to display genuine work.

“Yes, we are,” Juniper confessed. “We actually start as lab techs soon, but we just wanted to get a sense of the building before our first day. Would you be able to point us to the blue unit?” Carrie blinked, impressed by her quick thinking.

The man squinted even more, his eyes barely showing beneath his lashes. “Blue unit’s closed. If you’re thinking of the Black unit, it’s all the way down that hall and on your right. Purple is downstairs.”

“Sorry,” she said, “I meant... could you tell us which one’s the luminescent lab?”

“Oh, no.” He reached behind his desk. “I’m going to have to ask you to lea-”

“Of course, we can tell you!” The interruption came from an unfamiliar voice, resonating but not warm. A man so tall he was almost leaning, and seemed to be naturally leering in his stance, appeared from a corridor behind the desk. He wore a crisp white lab coat over black scrubs. He had blue eyes so radiant they felt blazing to see, and to be seen by. He seemed to lurch with each step as he made his way to Juniper. A long, skeletal hand clapped her shoulder. “In fact, let me show you the way.” He veered them in the direction of an elevator to their right, and continued to speak as he strided. “Do you have your IDs, young ladies?”

“I do,” Juniper said, hesitating to hand this man the card of an employee who had not been to a shift in eight years. Carrie shook her head, whether as a suggestion to her friend or an answer to him was unclear. Juniper stalled by faking and failing to search her pockets, but eventually gave Cosmos’s card over to him.

“Ah.” The man handed it back to her with a nod. “I see.”

The elevator opened at the basement level. The walls down here appeared to be made of thick cement, and everything was tinted with a strange blue glow.

“Stay here,” he said as a small smile played on his lips. He walked down the hall, moving around a wet-floor sign as if his head needed to stay in the same place while his legs avoided the obstacle. A few feet down, he turned and pulled a key from his lanyard’s collection to unlock a door. He disappeared into the room as if swallowed by the light within it. Despite the fluorescent appearance of the lab, it was difficult to tell what the source of the color was. The ceiling lights shone only cool-toned white.

After a moment, the handle clicked again.

“It’s unfortunate, you know,” the man continued as the door opened.

He turned to face Carrie and Juniper, revealing a small collection of test tubes in his hands. All of the tubes were plugged, and each one was entirely filled with a glowing blue fluid. It looked like a sample of bioluminescent plankton, or liquid neon in the brightest shade of cobalt possible.

Juniper’s jaw dropped. She knew.

The man stepped closer to them, and concluded, “Being too curious for your own good.”

In a flash of fury and panic, in an attempt to protect her friends, Juniper pushed him backwards. He tripped over the sign, and replicated the warning written on it in slow-motion as he fell. The glass tubes clattered against each other as they escaped and crashed onto the ground, crumbling into shards. The luminescent blue liquid within them ran over his skin and spread over the tile, mixing with whatever cleaning solution had soaked the floor.

Juniper grabbed Carrie’s wrist and sprinted back to the elevator, repeatedly pressing the button to close the doors before—

The man’s body tensed and froze, the only movement being a slight twitch of his arms. The chemicals around him sizzled on the floor and began to bubble as if boiling. Suddenly, a thick mist began to rise, cloaking the hallway in radiant, sapphire-tinted fog.

Juniper pressed the buttons again and again and prayed. Carrie couldn’t move.

Logan and Maeve watched as the STELLR building was engulfed in glowing blue mist. They felt the heat burst out from the center of the explosion. The Luminescence branched out and upwards, reaching into the sky for more minds to corrupt in tragic silence. There was nothing they could do but watch.

F A R E W E L L S A B R I N A

Dear Sabrina,

It feels like just yesterday I logged onto Webex to join our HON 100 course. It's hard to believe three years passed in a blink of an eye. Throughout my time here at WCSU, you have always been supportive and understanding of everything I have shared with you. Transitioning from having you as a professor to working with you in the Honors Program brought us closer and I am so grateful to have shared so many memories with you in such a short amount of time. Your energy radiates in every room, and I always look forward to hearing your stories at our monthly meetings. Although we faced many challenges this year, I always felt supported by you, which gave the other Honors assistants and me the confidence to push forward. This is far from a goodbye but rather a congratulations and see you soon. I applaud you for all your hard work during these hard three years filled with COVID and its consequences. The new director has quite the shoes to fill. I hope you can fully immerse yourself in your art and inspire more students like you have with us. Best of luck in all your future endeavors, you will truly be missed.

With gratitude,
Jocelyn



DIRECTOR MARQUESS

Dear Sabrina,

Thank you for all of the amazing work you have done for the Kathwari Honors Program. These past few months working for the program especially have come with adversity. Despite all the challenges that have faced us, you have given the Honors students a dedicated director who is willing to tackle these problems straight on. Although the work you do is done behind the scenes, you continue to put your best foot forward for us everyday. My best memories of you will be during our Honors staff meetings. Despite the long list of tasks we had to complete and problems we had to solve, you would remain calm and keep the meetings fun. We always enjoyed our time together while continuing to be productive and best of all, we would finish having shared plenty of laughs. I will miss the positive vibes and fun energy you bring to the program. Thank you for continuing to push the Kathwari Honors Program forward these past few years.

–Eli Koukoulis

Dear Sabrina,

I will never be able to truly express my gratitude for your appreciation of my energy and your recognition of my potential as a freshman. The second Jess told me that you saw me as an Honors assistant candidate, my heart soared. I remembered how much you appreciated the comments I made in HON 100, and I was so happy that we connected across the virtual divide.

This year has been devastatingly challenging, but you have been there through it all to advocate for the needs of Honors students. I never would have imagined the battles that occurred this year to make ends meet, but I'm glad that we fought them together. I'll miss your humor and your stories at staff meetings next year. Your creative spirit brings so much joy to my day, and I aspire to have as much enthusiasm as you do. You are an absolute champion of community support, and I've enjoyed working with you so much to start bringing back vibrance to the Honors family!

Thank you for being one of the many reasons why I choose to stay at WCSU. And as you always tell me, don't forget to breathe.

Warmest of regards,
Michelle Rochniak :)

Congratulations,

Jaymeejoy Alfonso

Sophie Baluzy

Skylar Bartush

Isabella Bosco

Ana Bourque

Zachary Brown

Fallon Campbell

Lauren Cerul

Andrew Colletti

Brenna Corrigan

Gabriella DeMaro

Ryan Denmark

Rebecca Donaghy

Claire Eastwood

Matthew Eskenazi

Angelina Fajardo

Ethan Fiske

Colleen Foley

Jason Friia

Sarah Green

Dara Grozdinski

Casey Gruppuso

Benjamin Hawthorne

Zachary Honse

Kathryn Huizinga

Adam Jackson

Elias Koukoulis

Jacob Laham

Aaron Liner

Sean Lyon

Graduates!

Yasmin Macancela

Karla Matos

Connor Meenan

Jamilly Mendes

Elizabeth Meskill

Anastasia Miller

Campbell Mitchell

Stephanie Mix

Satil Moni

Patrick Moody

Tyler Munroe

Isadora Oliveira

Alysha Olson

Ismael Ricardo

Allen Riego de Dios

Laura Roberts

Denisse Rodas

Elizabeth Rogers

Matthew Ruegg

Anna Schipf

Kelly Shpak

Rachel Sloane

Sergio Spiniello

Brooke Strand

Audie Szymanski

Seth Tarrant

Mark Tricarico

Zora Valentine

Meet the Editors

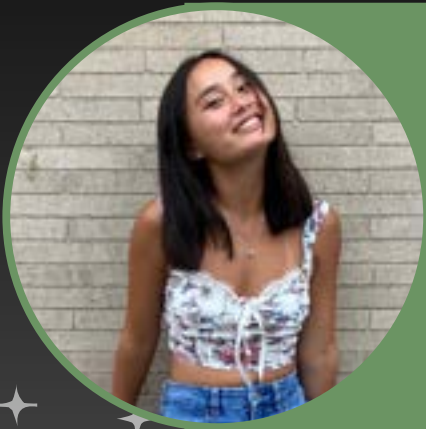
My name is Tyler Munroe and I am a Secondary Ed./English major with a minor in Creative Writing. My work has been featured in *Perspective* since the first edition, and I had the honor of being an Editor-in-Chief this year. My time at WCSU is almost at an end, but one of my favorite experiences was editing and contributing to this magazine. Best wishes to the Kathwari Honors Program and the *Perspective* team. Keep on blooming!



Michelle Rochniak (she/they) is a junior Professional Writing major and a co-editor of *Perspective*. More of their poetry can be found in WCSU's *Black and White* (and the previous issues of *Perspective*!) as well as *Aothen Magazine*, *fifth wheel press*, and *lavender lime literary*. As for crocheted items, you'll just have to seek her out yourself. Follow them on IG @shell.songs and Twitter @shellroch!



Meet the Editors



Hi, my name is Maia Quirk and I am an economics and financial management major. I love doing the magazine as it allows me to collaborate with amazing people and amazing artists from this school!

Hi, I'm Kellie Jackson! I'm a sophomore graphic design major and this is my second time working on the Perspective magazine. I've had an amazing time working on it with the other editors and loved continuing to improve my work on Canva. Can't wait to work on it again next year!



Alivia Stonier (she/her) is a Professional Writing—concentration in Creative Writing—and Media Production Major. She also minors in music. From Naugatuck CT, she hopes to pursue screenwriting and writing in the music industry, along with publishing fictional works, prose, & poetry. She serves as President of Student Publications, is on the Submissions Team for The Howl Magazine, and is News Director/a DJ at WXCI 91.7.

The Kathwari Honors Program at Western Connecticut State University was founded to foster and nurture academic and civic excellence among outstanding students in all four WCSU schools. The Program consists of highly interactive and interdisciplinary classes and is built on the fundamental assumption that knowledge is an open set of questions and ideas to be explored, rather than a closed set of facts to be memorized. WestConn's Kathwari Honors Program is arguably one of the more innovative programs in the country. It is designed to expose students to fundamental modes of inquiry found in various academic fields, and to illustrate the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to exploring a topic or issue.

