

Issue No.06 | May 2026

THE COMMUNITY QUILT



Saint Elizabeth University | Literary Journal



Meet Our Editorial Board:

Lead Editor - Amaya Carruthers

Assistant Editor - Diego Rios

Faculty Advisor - Jake Rogers

Department Chair - Lynne McEniry

Mission and Vision:

The Community Quill, the literary journal of Saint Elizabeth University, is a publication that celebrates the talents of the campus community through a collection of creative writing and art. We strive to provide a space where literary and visual artists can share their work as an expression of their human experience.

We welcome students, faculty, staff, and alumni to share their work and collaborate to contribute to our literary community. We encourage diversity and variety in style and voice and will highlight the meaningful work of the community while maintaining our core values of integrity, social responsibility, leadership, and excellence in teaching and learning

Cover Art: Maine Rocky Shores

By Ellen Lohsen

OPENING REMARKS FROM OUR CHAIR

LYNNE MCENIRY

Welcome to the sixth issue of The Community Quill, the SEU literary magazine, a collection of voices, visions, and creative spirit from students and staff alike. What you'll find in these pages is honest, creative expression by people who care deeply about the arts and are committed to exploring, experimenting, and growing. This magazine has always been about that spirit—about making space for emerging voices, celebrating effort as much as outcome, and building a creative community here at Saint Elizabeth University. This year's lead editor, Amaya Carruthers, and assistant editor, Diego Rios, have remained true to that mission while also bringing their own unique talents, perspectives, and vision to the process. Mentored with love and care by *eagle*-eyed professor Jake Rogers, a published poet himself, their thoughtful curation and dedication shine through every page of this sixth issue. We also extend our deepest gratitude to Dr. Laura Winters for over 44 years of tireless dedication as a mentor, advisor, and champion for the many issues of and editing teams for our student literary journal. Whether you're drawn to poetry, fiction, essays, or visual art, we hope you find something here that resonates. Thank you for reading and for supporting creative work on our campus.

NOTE FROM THE STUDENT EDITOR

AMAYA CARRUTHERS

Dear Readers,

Stepping into the role of editor for this year's *Community Quill* was one of the most demanding and rewarding experiences of my college career so far. The entire process showed me how much goes into creating a publication that truly honors its contributors and community. As someone who has struggled with imposter syndrome and performance anxiety, becoming an editor placed me in roles I once questioned. Moreover, it taught me how to trust my judgment and ability to lead.

Pursuing a double major in Communication and English also shaped the way I approached this publication. Visually, I wanted the edition to feel simpler than years before, not to disregard creativity, but to let each contributor's work speak for itself. I believe each piece stood as a reminder that writing, art, and creative expression still offer strength in such troubling times.

I am incredibly grateful to everyone who contributed to the publication's success. Thank you to the student body for promoting our efforts. Thank you also to Professor Rogers, who supported each step of this process during his first year as the publication's advisor, and to Professor Winters and McEniry for their service and support of the English Department. I would also like to thank Diego Rios for dedicating his time and creativity to developing this publication, as well as submitting to it. Finally, thank you to all contributors for trusting me with your work. Despite having one semester to complete the *Quill*, I applaud everyone's determination and passion for the project.

Thank you for reading, supporting, and celebrating the voices that make our campus what it is. I pray this edition of the *Community Quill* offers you the same grounding and encouragement it gave me.



NOTE FROM THE STUDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR DIEGO RIOS

As assistant editor for this year's Community Quill, I think it's important bring out student voices in a way that feels real, while giving us space to reflect and be creative. It's been really powerful to see what students in our community experience day to day and how their stories can be both similar and different. Working with this team to put everything together has been a great experience. I'm excited to help create something students will want to read.

NOTE FROM THE FACULTY ADVISOR

JAKE ROGERS

Poetry is one of the ancient arts, a tyrannical discipline, the best words in the best order. These are just a handful of definitions provided for poetry by some greats of the craft: Mary Oliver, Sylvia Plath, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, respectively. Spanning thousands of years and hundreds of languages, poetry is a universal means of artistic expression, with my definition for it now being, simply, “the written word.” Though it has morphed and evolved since Homer wrote down all those oral histories of the Trojan War, poets have sought to capture and communicate the conditions of their existence. Visual arts, of course, date back even further, with the oldest known “cave-painting,” located in Indonesia, being almost 70,000 years old. Art is a fundamentally human phenomenon, and here, the students, staff and faculty of SEU make their humble contribution to that tradition.

Sitka Spruce Hands

BY DIEGO RIOS

A man's oar of sitka spruce has lost
its evergreen warmth to give life his mission:

to push him across an infinite space,
stillness that's taken a circular shape,
the shape sitting on his wrist, echoing soft ticks,

as sun and moon take their turns
painting sky above trees, above clouds.

His arms can't help but grow frail,
begging him to grant them rest.

It is not until he stops rowing

that he allows himself to rock back and forth in the vast blue-
it is not until he stops his rowing

those trees surrounding the water

sway left to right with the breeze's whistle-
it is not until he gives up,

that he is back at the lake's twelve
and the sitka spruce hands, that are now still on his
wrist, stop ticking.

The Hollow Tree

By Aaron Mero

Roots I plant, trees that grow
Life flourishes, to the sky I soar
Branches of hope, twigs of sorrow,
Seasons comes and goes, seasons changes
Watching the clouds painfully strudel along, I stay still,
My leaves withered away, new life arises,
An endless cycle of my sadness and happiness,
An endless cycle of my guilt and pride,
A cycle of my hopes and dreams.
As I lay here in the sky, watching life itself build and reborn,
Vines and veins grow past the roots, the cold dew on my root of my branches,
Long morning comes,
A new day begins, a warm sunlight simmers on my branches,
Gray dead blue sky smiles, as the lifeless color of clouds wave goodbye.

Shine on Me (SEU Blossoms)

By Kathy Francis



Day and Night

By Thi Khuyen Tran

The faint rays of dawn
Tear through the blanket of night
Awakening the entire sky
White clouds swim playfully
Gentle breezes softly touch the leaves
Young birds chirp and flit from branch to branch
Then the sky changes color
The indigo hue gradually descends
The golden sunlight quickly retreats
Night approaches with its deep blackness
The beauty of the day fades into the silent night
When will night end and day begin?
I have watched the sunrise and sunset every day,
But I didn't know
Suddenly, someone told me that
The day is when we see God in everyone
See everyone as a friend
Walking in broad daylight with a heavy heart is still night
Day and night are not distinguished by physical light

But by compassion and tolerance

Excerpts from “The Usage of Artificial Intelligence and its Effect on Society”

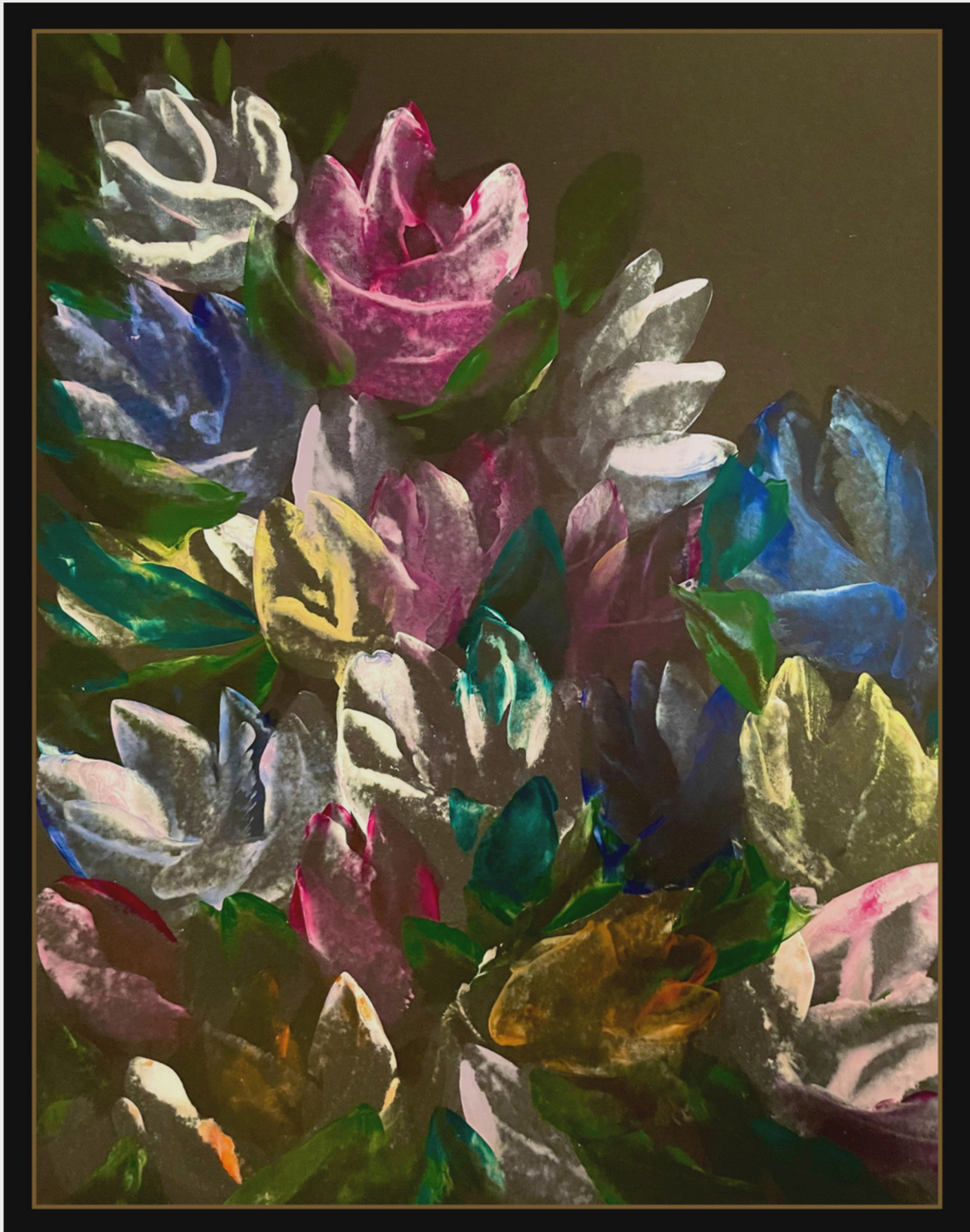
By Cat Ryder

When Haoyo Miazakyi, the founder of the company, was asked for his opinion on the matters of AI in an interview, he called it, “an insult to life itself” (Singh). Artists both within the company and out work extremely hard on their craft, sometimes taking four months to complete four seconds of animation or years to complete an art piece (Singh). The usage of AI has become a substitute for artists and their art pieces, it is indeed insulting...

Artificial intelligence was supposed to be used as a tool to help make life easier for everybody, as technology is supposed to, not make life difficult for the common man while making life easier for the upper class. As AI gets more and more use, the problems which come from the use of AI become more apparent. AI should be strictly limited to that of a tool as it is harmful to society when used as a replacement for humans...

Petals of Glass

By Kathy Francis



Technological Temptation Vs. Nature's Restoration

By Leah Tate

With the new emergence and growing popularity of AI, it's very tempting to use things like ChatGPT to do our work for us. I believe this can be very dangerous and harm the human mind from thinking on its own, especially amongst students of any level. These digital distractions have pulled us into a cycle of negatively affected thinking and learning. Students, kids, and adults no longer sit in the peace or stillness of nature which can actually bring about renewal to our minds.

My life as a college student has been heavily influenced by electronics, AI, and other technological advancements, however, that's not the only way my life has been affected by technology. I often found myself scrolling on Instagram or TikTok for hours on end, averaging six hours a day on social media alone and I was feeling the effects physically and mentally. I was always tired, suffering serious eye fatigue, headaches, and even nausea from time to time, all just from staring at my cell phone.

I felt my mind was never quiet; always distracted, always loud, and never still. It would be extremely overwhelming and I wasn't exactly sure what to do. I wasn't able to focus as well in class because I would have the urge to be on my phone, nor could I remember things as well as I wanted, which made classes more difficult for me.

So, I decided to take a break from social media and decided to go on more walks outside. Within a week, I could already feel the changes in my mind and body. I was able to focus more in class, get more work done, and remember things.

Technological Temptation Vs. Nature's Restoration **(continued)** *By Leah Tate*

I went for these walks on my university campus. There's a nice nature path in the woods that ends with a statue of Jesus Christ on the cross. As I was walking, I couldn't help but feel a sense of peace: the trees, the sun, and the little animals around me brought me a sense of relaxation. Also, as a believer and follower of Jesus Christ, I felt as though I was connecting with God in nature. This gave me a new profound perspective on how to spend time with God and see Him in the nature that He created. I'm not sure how to explain it, but it was like I could feel God around me; even though I couldn't see Him, I knew He was there. Spending time in that place literally felt like my mind, body, and spirit were being restored.

I believe that technology and our use of our electronics can cloud our minds and make them way too noisy. I have been learning and growing closer to Jesus Christ and I have found that I hear Him best when I am in a still and quiet environment. My phone, my computer, my tv are all distractions and obstacles in the way of me spending true intimate time with Jesus. I've had experiences where I was on my phone on social media and watching tv for hours all day. I wasn't spending adequate time with the Lord and I could feel the effects of it. I started to think more negatively about myself because I spent so much time comparing myself to other girls on social media. It felt like I couldn't break the cycle of going on my phone when I was bored, when I was doing work, and even when I was supposed to be reading my Bible, I was on my phone. I just wanted to get away from all of the technology around me because it felt like I was becoming overwhelmed. Until one day, I was sitting in my room looking at the trees in my window and I sat in silence. I opened my Bible and God started talking to me! It was the craziest experience I have ever had. I now make sitting in silence, going for nature walks, or listening to nature sounds when it's too cold outside, a part of my daily life because I believe it's another way for me to connect with God and give me true peace. Instead of relying on my phone to keep me grounded, I rely on God and his presence to give me genuine joy.

PSALM 50:15

By Leah Tate

PSALM 50:15

THEN CALL ON ME WHEN YOU
ARE IN TROUBLE, AND I WILL
RESCUE YOU, AND YOU WILL GIVE
ME GLORY.



Leah Tate

Faith

By Duong Tran

Faith is a gift bestowed from above
Nurtured through family
and flourishing through life
Every step of life is a path of faith.
Faith is like a lamp in the dark night
Unable to see the light ahead or behind
That light is only enough to illuminate each step
Persevering and courageously following.
The light of faith will be clearly seen at the end of the road
Where love and peace abound
I continue to move forward in confidence
Because in my heart, faith always shines brightly.

Poem about Faith

By Djeneba Sacko

Growing up as a Muslim
teaches the value of balance,
With five daily prayers that remind you of god.

The words "Allahu Akbar."
connect with me before they make sense.
Taking off my shoes before placing
my feet on the prayer rug and wash my
hands, face, and feet with cool water
reminds me of my dual identity as dust and devotion.

As a human,
I make mistakes
Hesitate
Doubt myself and fall short of my true abilities.
I am trying to become better
But I am not perfect

The ignorant comments I get, such as
"A real Muslim would not do that."
are reasons why I study my faith in peace.

Growing up with Islam is not about
Being perfect, It's about returning even
When you are at your lowest
And failing over and over until you learn

Phillipians 4:6-7

By My'Shiah McQueen



The Man Who Owned the Alphabet

By Laura Winters

Not far outside our village
in a deep wood
a man opens the window of his well-insulated hut
and sells letters to our townspeople
We are told each night which ones we may buy
A rusty voice calls out consonants and vowels
We try to piece together
the few words we can afford
Most of us buy only letters
we absolutely need to get by
bankrupting ourselves for the wrong ones
kept in poverty just to be able
to say apples hatchet firewood
Still others pay exorbitant rates
from the little they have
In the dead of the night
they come to the very small black window
next to a holly bush
They go hungry to save for an L or an S
hoping to use the leftover characters one day
We'd all be killed
if he realized some of us saved these
wrapped them in plain paper
and hid them near the kindling
They say there is no place in our village
for letters used the wrong way
Still we horde them in secret
until we have enough to spell our own names

On friendship.... or, letter to Lefty disguised as a poem: January 1, 2023

By Lynne McEniry

Again

we start off a new year

Apart

can of screws, five gallons of pet-friendly rocksalt
on your truck's front seat and yet there's

Always

room for me if I'd just get on

that damn plane to Bangor... ..

Always

I know if I go

through our emails & old cards

of the dozen or so Januarys we spent

Apart

I'll find at least that many times

I've promised the end

of procrastination

Again

& how

this means we'll talk more, Lefty finally

create our epic masterpiece

Apart

we will find a way to bridge

the 10 hour gap the 580-odd miles

so I can see the dancing

in your eyes

Again

I think it's been near three years now and yet there's

your hand, sagaciously scarred right here in mine... ..

Always

Old Orchard Beach

By Ellen Lohsen



The Train

By Duong Tran

The whistle blows
long, drawn out sounds
The train rumbles into motion
each carriage passes by
quickly, and hastily
The train stops
People get on and off in a hurry
Laughter, greetings, footsteps
A hasty return
The train whistles again sound after sound
Rumbling into motion on a new journey
Talking everything away
Everything returns
Peaceful and gentle.

The Milk (162)

By Lucian D'Aulak

As I lie in my coffin, I am lowered unto my final rest.

I awake, and I am wrought with a wanton desire for milk. So then, I head to my kitchen, pour and thus drink a glass, and fall back unto sleep, as I remember having done times before.

I awake again, and my wife reminds me to get dressed for my office job. I pour some milk into my coffee before driving through the city. At work I deal with numbers I have never seen, yet have more than knowledge on.

I awake another day, and it is my mother who reminds me to get to school on time. I drink a glass of milk and head over. I do not learn of numbers, but of stories, of writing, and of sciences. I fall asleep in class.

I awake, and I am standing over a grave with a name I recognize as my own.

But it is not my grave.

Loud Silence (Ekphrastic Poem after Van Gogh's "Starry Night")

By Ar'Mani Magwood

The sky is not quiet.
It refuses to be.
It twists and turns
like thoughts that won't settle,
like a mind awake at 3 a.m.
when the world is supposed to be asleep.
The stars burn too bright
to be peaceful.
They spin in golden circles,
restless
almost desperate.
Below them,
the village pretends everything is normal.
Windows dark.
Doors shut.
No one looking up.
But I know what that sky feels like.

Loud Silence (Ekphrastic Poem after Van Gogh's "Starry Night") (continued)

By Ar'Mani Magwood

It feels like holding everything in
while your insides are screaming.

It feels like standing still
while your mind is moving
faster than the wind.

The tall black tree
cuts through the night
like a shadow that won't leave
reaching, stretching,
trying to touch something
it can never hold.

And maybe that's the point.

Maybe the night isn't calm.

Maybe it's alive.

Maybe peace isn't the absence of chaos
maybe it's learning to survive inside it.

The sky is not quiet.

But it's still beautiful.

And somehow,

so am I.

Where Heaven Touches Earth

By Kathy Francis



A Real Smile

By Djeneba Sacko

Smiles are shown throughout
the museum in many forms

Including oil paintings,
Worn edges, their beautiful soft grins
Outsiders looking for meaning in the
Expressions that are stuck in place

However, I'm searching for a genuine smile.
Not the type that was
tightly brushed onto canvas in the 1800s

Not the kind that is carved
into unbreakable stone.
I desire the smile that almost cracks
the one that defies tears
yet continues to rise.

Poems are Soccer Balls

By Jake Rogers

Uncountable,

and no two identical:

some are flat, have no air;

others overinflated, hurt the head on impact;

some skins've been

lovingly chewed up;

some lie forgotten

in a garage, rotting;

some play outside every day;

some only appear for special occasions,

kicked around one night in a stadium

then hung in a case on somebody's wall;

some have many signatures upon them;

some spin down favela-lined side streets,

tucking home goals into trash bins;

they make nothing happen

except magic;

may they take you out of the world

for a while—

if you let them—

and make life

that much

more

The Emotion of Sport I

By Ezekiel Sabb



My Father's "Only" Poem

By Jake Rogers

He doesn't remember it all,
just the first and final
pairs of lines. It starts:
*The window to my world
looks out on white wood and brick.*
That's not so bad, we agree.

I see the gears turning to grasp
the ending again; it's on campus,
in winter, students scrambling, ah!
Hurrying, hurrying to nowhere.
He says to me "This was
a very college thing to write.
I was trying to be deep."
But he didn't end it there.
After a classy little white space,
he concludes: *I think it's time for lunch.*

He says his writing workshop
liked the poem, but hated
that last line. I love it:
it gives the lie to the previous line.
No one is going nowhere:
they, like him, were all walking
to lunch and the rest of their lives.

Small Things That Keep Me Going

By Ar'Mani Magwood

like the way my grandma checks on me
even when I say I'm fine,
or how my mom's voice sounds stronger
than my worries.
like sitting in my car after work,
engine still running,
just breathing before I drive off.
the quiet in the morning
when my body is tired
but I still get up anyway,
and the peace that comes after a long day
of doing too much.
the way customers say thank you,
even when I'm exhausted,
even when my feet hurt,
even when my mind won't slow down.
I notice how traffic lights turn green
right when I feel like crying.
how music understands me
better than most people do.
how small orders turn into big dreams.

Small Things That Keep Me Going (continued)

By Ar'Mani Magwood

how stress shows up daily
but so does strength.
I think about all the moments
that don't make headlines
laughing in parking lots,
crying in bathrooms,
checking your phone hoping for good news.
and somehow,
these little things
keep me standing.
they remind me
that even on hard days,
there is still softness.
still warmth.
still something worth holding onto.

What were they like // did it make a difference?

By Lynne McEniry

they were like cotton candy trying to survive a rain shower they lived just south of Pine in a converted summer bungalow with an outdoor kitchen and bath they survived on what they grew in a 10 x 10 patch out back and they foraged for mushrooms and berries in the land along the lake at the end of their road she always pushed the mushrooms around her plate before feeding them to their dog who was left behind by his parents last year when they decided to quit the rat race, sell the family home, and head to Butte to take over management of the Evel Knievel Memorial Museum so thank the gods for Spot the dog and Petunia, the pig (original, huh?) that her parents gave them as housewarming gifts a few years back because although they thought the young couple was lost and had run to the bungalow to escape their capitalist IT jobs that had turned them into massive excess consumers with a pile of plastic debt parents want their kids to be happy The young couple knew that Petunia was a sarcastic gift and they knew they weren't actually lost at all at least that's what they told themselves as they adjusted the string of pearls around Petunia's neck, and pretended they most certainly did not need online shopping when they raced to the library instead of the local market on their weekly trips to town. Had they given up? Only this, their third winter would tell...the first was romantic, the second, they decided to hibernate but got horribly ill when the chill set in and they hadn't stacked enough wood and had to sleep in the BMW they'd driven there a few years back...and even though they didn't voice it and even tried to hide the fact that the each jacked up their heated seats and loved it, they'd burned that element out so luxury wouldn't be an option this winter. as the last leaves fell, he decided to ask her if their dream had died and although she wasn't ready to butcher the pig she also was determined to buy that Land's End down comforter she saw advertised the last time she was in the library, and so they agreed that enough had changed to make them give at least this one last winter a try...so they gathered wood and they stocked the pantry and they upped their wifi to be sure they could both continue. Were they ready for what would come next? Who knew? Did it make a difference? They didn't even ask themselves that.

Conversations

By Princesse Exavier



The Green Monster, Bruce.

By Aaron Mero

Rage fills my soul, my blood boiling,
My veins filled with hatred, my heads pounding,
I am unstable, a gamma reactor in critical levels,
I explode, a monster consumes me,
Unable to control, I feel my chains that shackle me down break,
Destruction is all I can create,
Scared of my own power, yet I feel incredible,
A lake I see, while the moon sleeps peacefully,
I fall to my knees, the stares watches over me,
I let out a sigh before closing eyes, it's finally quiet on my mind.

The Emotion of Sport II

By Ezekiel Sabb



What Forms A Living Being

By: Marla DuBois Santos

Where do I begin? To describe the beauty, the complexity of a living being. To exemplify one's worth in a thousand words. The many roads. The sand that cradled their feet. The untold wars that linger beneath... That reoccur in a synchronized fashion as they're fast asleep.

There is beauty and complexity in what forms a living being.

Her hair pinned up elegantly as to calm the waves of each strand combined. An ocean each time. The colors divine. The colors of driftwood. Her skin, hues of pinks, one that's caused dynasties to sink. The boats, the ships... Capsized in the abyss.

Her touch, for once I can finally breathe. For once I can finally see. See things for what they are. No longer for what I need. To be held in her arms once again. I'd trade all my riches for that moment to come once more. In a world of wonder, this is the moment I live for.

The peace, the sigh that results in her touch, I am in awe of her presence, this alone is enough.

Her eyes deep brown. Exchanging glances and compliments. In this room I am safe and sound. In conversing I am found. In your presence I am found. There is no place on earth I'd rather be. No person I'd rather see.

Her voice calms the sea of my thoughts. One that I wish I had bartered. Not bought. One that compensates as a transitional object. That heals all that he has infected.

Her story unfolds as mine does too. The truth which bandages the wounded, the grace that heals the broken parts in me and in that moment I was believed. In that moment I was set free.

A Bouquet for My Wife

By Princesse Exavier



Healing

By: Marla DuBois Santos

I've found healing. When you call my name.

In your presence - I know I'm safe...

& you say you're done... but I know...

You've got this! & the best is yet to come!!

Who Are You?

By: Marla DuBois Santos

'cause who are you to say I can't change?

'cause who are you to say I can't change?

To be better than yesterday...

'cause who are you to say?

I can change.

For Me

By Stephanie Reinoso

I don't know how I can handle the pain
Of losing you
The mysteries of mine
Wish was a happy ending
Became my saddest tale
One that was told not upheld
And how it folds. Losing you
Might've been regretful
But what got me more blue
Knowing i could lose knowing
What was powerful was me within
Holding my bottle of booze head screaming
Unredeeming involving revolving
Pictures from the photo booth
The memories soar through head, heart,
The minds of the ones who want to be set free
Free from secrets from dark closed doors
Away from laughs thoughts and grins away from
A life I thought was mine
But they're the one holding the knife
They're the ones grabbing me by the
Neck chaining controlling
Feasting smelling my fear
Holding what's left in my dripping pouring heart
Hearing from you again made my heart feel warmth
Knowing you were ok,

For Me (continued)

By Stephanie Reinoso

After I mourned, I cried, I screamed
I begged and begged
When everything seemed gone
Grabbing my heart my chest
Not breathing not seeing
Anything but finally feeling numb I guess
Knowing i was blessed with things
Others need, want, crave I only
Begged and put up to be brave
For one, hearing you again made my heart feel warmth
Letting you know I love you
Letting you know I'm proud of you
Being here for you

Just For Today

By Jill Mackey

As her pen hit paper,
A long string of unruly emotions drained from her body and...
...the words began to write themselves.

With each passing second, She became flooded with a down pour of despair,
Beyond reason or control,
Above trial and tribulation.

This two way mirror called life amplified how truly spiritually disconnected she had become.

The fork in the road showed itself prominently..
But a simple answer was conveniently missing from the canvas.

She stood at the cross roads.
Reflecting on the unknowns of tomorrow and the events of days gone by.

Realizing that a journey of indecision, or perhaps, *self discovery*, was upon her.

Trapped in the confines of this identity purgatory,
excerpts of the same conversation rang through her ears
as the walls began to cave in.

Suddenly, She felt lifeless.
So far removed from the girl she once knew.

Just For Today (continued)

By Jill Mackey

Now broken and alone,
She collapsed to her knees.
Gasping for the air to proclaim one last foxhole prayer.

The white flag of serenity laced through her fingers.
Just as the final scene began to *unfold*.

As the curtain drew to a close,
She peered at the world through her cerulean eyes once again,
Signifying her rescue from the wreckage,

...If only just for today.

Hollow Grin

By Camille Miller

He takes a drag from the lit cigarette
abandoned he is
inhales the poison
but has no lungs to kill
no veins remain
addiction left him echoing
trapped in a cage
chasing a high
you can't see
but feel
prisoner to self destruction
loyal to the flame
though a hollow grin still remains

Entry 11

By N.P.

Dear Rhonda,

On March 25, it will be nine months to the day that you went to heaven. I know the why. What I want to know is the how come. How come the doctors couldn't help you? You did everything in your power possible to get help but nothing gave you relief. I am just happy you're no longer suffering. That brings me some peace. The only bright side to the situation are the nice people I met at the suicide support loss group.

On a positive note, on May 15, I'll be graduating from Saint Elizabeth. You have been pushing me for years to go back to school and I finally did it. I truly appreciate the support you gave me along the way. Without you, I don't know if I would have gone back. Your text messages always came at just the right time when I needed your support the most. I know you are proud of me and I wish you were still here on earth. At least you will have the best seat in the house and be able to watch me walk across that stage as they announce my name.

It was a blessing that our paths crossed when they did. Things could have been much different without your positivity in my life and for that I will be forever grateful.

Sincerely,

Brother

By Jill Mackey

These constant ruminations haunt my being.
My heart palpitates as I slip my hands over my eyes.
signifying defeat.

I sit here, *plagued.*
Wishing I could alleviate your demons.

Struggling between cognizance and day dreams,
I began to lose touch with reality as well.

The winter brings a frigid dry air, sending tingles throughout my body
and surrounding me with an aura of *involutional melancholia.*

Nothing seems to scathe me the way your anguish does.

I miss those lucid eyes and that fearless composure I once admired.

This delicate poison corrupts you & satiates you simultaneously..
...playing an unfair vanishing act right before my eyes.

And once more, I am left alone.
Chagrined by your state of dysphoria.
Begging for some greater being to free you from these *shackles of addiction and hardship.*

Minutes turn to hours, turn to days..
As you drift from the remnants of your unvoiced reverie and begin scrounging for that one
moment of clarity..

...to pull you from the darkness.

If not mine then yours

By Camille Miller

If not mine,
then let it be yours-
this beating heart
this space in between us
where your name lingers
upon my lips
like sweet nectar.

I won't claim it,
I won't take it
but I will love it
fully, unconditionally-
close up,
even from afar

If not mine,
Then yours-
And somehow,
That love between us,
That is enough.

Pulchra Domina (Pretty Lady)

By Jasmine Gabriella

For one year

I have waited for the pretty lady to return
I shall never forget the moment I first laid eyes upon her
Or the stench of rotting flesh that surrounded her like a grotesque halo
Never shall I forget the pitch-black eyes that peered at me
As I lie in a bed of my own filth
And though she had left since then
I continue to wait

For three years

I have waited for the pretty lady to return
Oh, how I was a fool to deny her existence
The woman I once believed was an ancient metaphor
Is realer than the love I held for her that day
And though she had left since then
I continue to wait

For six years

I have waited for the pretty lady to return
And my lady is like a moth
Flying towards the light that is death
So when I drain the blood of these unsuspecting animals
I pray to thee that their death attracts her
Such as how my near-death guided her to me
And though she had left since then
I continue to wait

Pulchra Domina (Pretty Lady) (continued)

By Jasmine Gabriella

For nine years

I have waited for my pretty lady to return

There are no animals left to offer

The foxes and rabbits, once on opposing sides

Now lie together in harmony on a rotting pile of their own

Reminiscent of how my pretty lady found me that day

She had left since then

And I have waited one, three, six, nine years

I will not wait any longer

Do wait for me, my pretty lady

As I come to find you myself

Star Darling

By Kamily Morales



My Sparkle

By Kiara Pereira

My sisters,
My daily reminder to be better,
to choose kindness even when it is hard,
to be good when no one is watching
because you are.

You make me try.
Even on days I don't want to.
Even then.

I am careful with myself
because you are learning from me,
because I am the older one,
because my choices echo.

Before you,
life was quiet.
Felt lonely, just empty.
Days felt long,

With you,
life is loud.
Color everywhere.

We are imperfect together.
We are better together.
There is no better company
than the ones who share your blood
and watch you become who you are.
I want to be good
because you exist.
I am who I am
because I am your sister.

I pledge allegiance

By *Lucian D'Aulak*



I pledge allegiance. To my country, not some flag. To which it stands, in our fascist bigoted nation, divided by hatred, under God, with only the pursuit of liberty, and no freedom. With justice only for those who look like me, in complacency. No longer. For we have all forgotten ourself.

How many names?

By Quassan Mason

How many names do we yell into the sky?

How many times do mothers' eyes shed tears, knowing their sons aren't coming home?

How many funerals for the same reason?

How many brothers, sisters, cousins, nieces, and nephews will we have to "remember"?

How many stolen futures?

How many protests?

How many riots?

How many shots?

How many bullets?

How many lives?

How many times will this happen?

How many candle lightings?

How many names?

The Bang

By Quassan Mason

A loud bang, followed by a thud.

The sound of gasping breaths paired with the sight of pooling blood.

The man collapsed after the bang. Hitting the floor with a heavy weightlessness.

I couldn't register what was going on because I was only a child.

But as I got older and I recant that experience, I realize that the entire situation is wild.

I was just before my age hit the double digits. So I thought what happened was like a game.

I thought the man would come back, I thought it was the same.

After the bang I felt a hard push from dad. He was pulling me.

I had the assumption that I was in trouble. Now I realize I was being pulled away from it.

Now I'm older. I still remember the bang. But now I know the significance of it.

The bang was the end of a life. Something so shocking but unfortunately so common at the same time.

I wake up from the memories of all this. In a comfortable bed, in a dorm room, in a university many miles away from the bangs.

I got lucky. I escaped the city of the bangs.

Now I'm in a city without them. It's quiet. I like it.

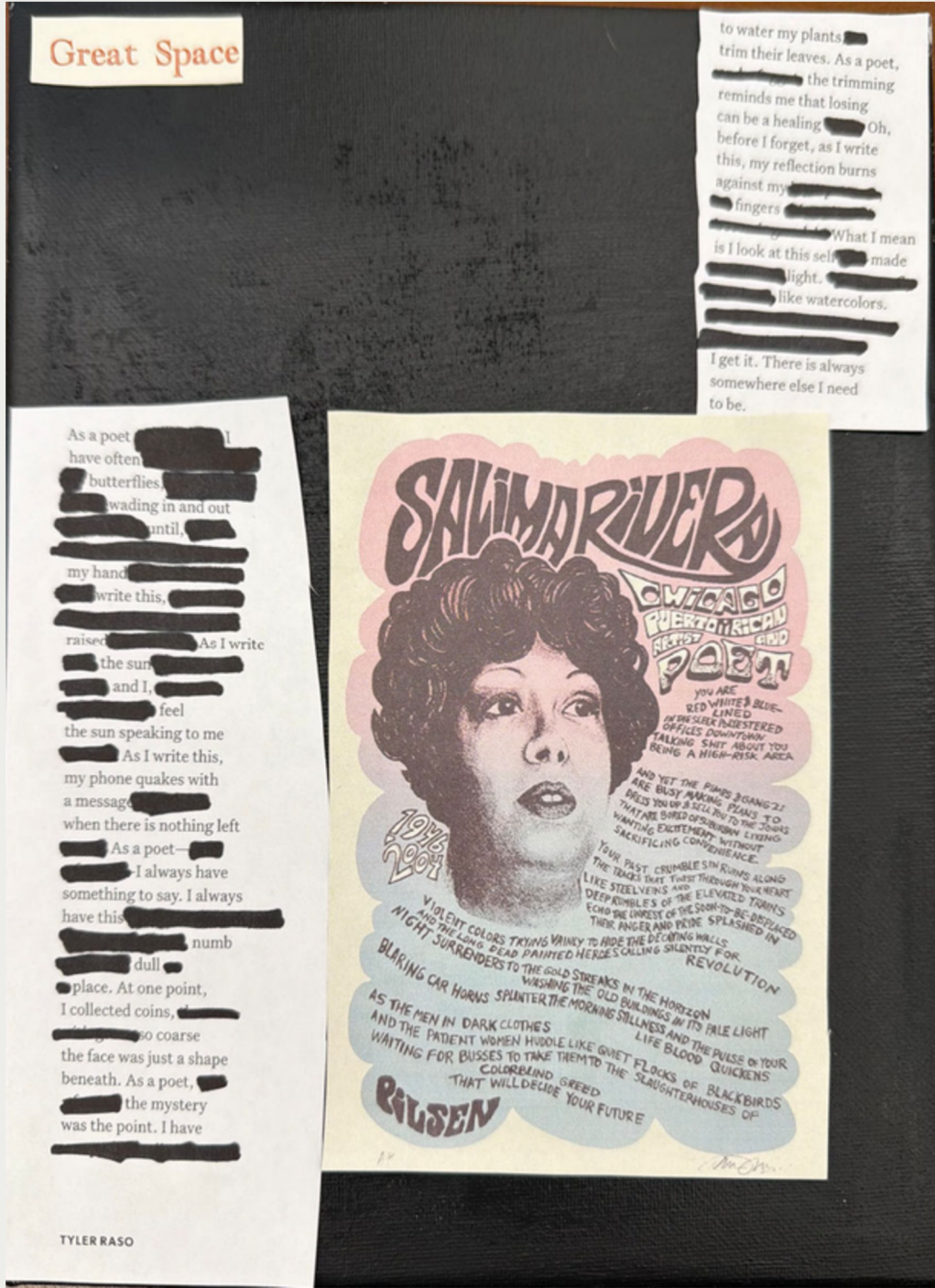
The nights here carry a serene atmosphere.

No more bangs. Just ... Exactly.

I got lucky. I escaped the city of bangs.

Great Space: A Blackout Poem from Tyler Raso's "Harold Norse says..."

By Kara Reyes



Great Space

to water my plants
trim their leaves. As a poet,
the trimming
reminds me that losing
can be a healing. Oh,
before I forget, as I write
this, my reflection burns
against my
fingers
What I mean
is I look at this self-made
light.
like watercolors.
I get it. There is always
somewhere else I need
to be.

As a poet I
have often
butterflies
wading in and out
until
my hand
write this,
raised. As I write
the sun
and I
feel
the sun speaking to me
As I write this,
my phone quakes with
a message
when there is nothing left
As a poet—
I always have
something to say. I always
have this
numb
dull
place. At one point,
I collected coins,
so coarse
the face was just a shape
beneath. As a poet,
the mystery
was the point. I have

TYLER RASO

SALIMA RIVERA
CHICAGO
PUERTO RICAN
AND
POET



you are
RED WHITE & BLUE-
LINED
IN THE SLICK DRESTERED
OFFICES DOWNTOWN
TALKING SHIT ABOUT YOU
BEING A HIGH-RISK AREA
AND YET THE PUMPS & GANGZ
ARE BUSY MAKING PUMPS TO
WANTING EXCITEMENT WITHOUT
SACRIFICING CONVICTION.
YOUR PAST CRUMBLE SIN RUNS ALONG
THE TEARS THAT TRICK THROUGH YOUR HEART
LIKE STEELVEINS AND ELEVATED TRAINS
DEEP PUMBLE'S OF THE SOON-TO-BE-DISPLACED
ECHO THE IMPREST OF THE SOON-TO-BE-DISPLACED
THEIR ANGER AND PRIDE SPLASHED IN
VIOLENT COLORS TRYING VAINLY TO HIDE THE DECAYING WALLS
AND THE LONG DEAD PAINTED HERDES CALLING SILENTLY FOR
NIGHT SURRENDERS TO THE GOLD STREAKS IN THE HORIZON
BLARING CAR HORNS SPLINTER THE MORNING SILLINESS IN ITS PALE LIGHT
WASHING THE OLD BUILDINGS AND THE PULSES IN YOUR
AS THE MEN IN DARK CLOTHES
AND THE PATIENT WOMEN HURDLE LIKE QUIET FLOCKS OF BLACKBIRDS
WAITING FOR BUSES TO TAKE THEM TO THE SLAUGHTERHOUSES OF
COLOR AND GREED
THAT WILL DECIDE YOUR FUTURE

RILSEN

Sitting in Power

By Jehreece Patterson

I am who they say I am
I am the person who looks at the competition
Examining what comparisons may come about
Not letting that stop me from my goals

I am who they say I am
I do not want to ask you for anything
I don't want to look vulnerable
Letting my guard down to say

I created you
I made you the person who you are today
Without me you are nothing

I am who they say I am
Sitting in power
Like a kingdom built from the ground up
I am the space and the measure

I am who they say I am
I am the villain that comes out in the night
Watching and examining the small moves from my enemies
As I sit in power
Laughing and taunting the people who laughed in my face as I conquer

I should have been a fireman

By Jorge Farinas

I should have been a fireman, I should have taken that test one more time, studied more, thought twice.

Who would have known that I would have experienced more trauma as a cop than as a Marine?

I should have been a fireman, where I could have gone home at the end of a shift to clean ash from my uniform and not blood.

I should have been a fireman, where instead of being bitten by an addict, I'd help save a cat from a tree.

I should have been a fireman, 22 years on this job, whiplash, stitches, broken fingers, a few ambulance trips, a couple of concussions, PTSD, a chipped elbow, and a chip on my shoulder.

I'm only 43, but I feel 63. If I were only a fireman, I would still feel like I was 23.

Excerpts from “Vincent Boy”

By Danny Sacco

Chapter 2-PRISONER OF WAR-THE MARCH

Most of the buildings were in ruins from the Allied bombing as they were in other cities when we went through them.

Later we marched to Hermeskeil where we met Dick Wiles, from the second platoon, who had been captured the night before while on patrol in the woods separating Kimmlerhof from Schomerich. We were turned over to older guards and started on our march of about 300-350 miles deeper into Germany. Towns and cities we marched through included Ottweiler, St. Wendel, Kaiserlautern (almost totally destroyed by bombing raids), Hockenheim, and Speyer where we crossed the Rhine River. Food was very scarce and on the road we ate what we could find – snails, raw potatoes, sugar beets, dandelions, seeds for animals, whatever.

Generally we were marched at night time, because the Allied Air Force controlled everything from above and strafed anything that moved on the ground. Other prisoners joined us as we marched on, worsening the food situation. We generally wound up in barns or abandoned buildings before dawn. One time while in a barn, I sneaked past the sleeping guard to get potatoes in a nearby food bin. Somehow I remember crossing on a bridge over the Rhine River on March 17 – St. Patrick’s Day. Later when we entered Stuttgart one night, and to our surprise, there was an ongoing parade of a marching Hitler Youth group in an obvious attempt to improve civilian morale. Most of the buildings were in ruins from the Allied bombing as they were in other cities when we went through them.

Excerpts from “Vincent Boy” (continued)

By Danny Sacco

CHAPTER 3-BOX TRAINS

We could hear the whistling of the bombs as they descended and followed by a big explosion when they hit the ground.

One night in a railroad junction in Mannheim, we were herded into and locked in a forty & eight railroad box car - called that because it was intended for forty men or eight horses. That night the Allies bombed the town and railroad junction. We could hear the whistling of the bombs as they descended and followed by a big explosion when they hit the ground. We panicked in the railroad car and somehow broke out. We ran to a nearby bomb shelter. However at the top of the steps was a Gestapo officer in full uniform who denied us entrance with a pointed pistol. So we huddled outside the building until the bombing stopped. Then the officer came out and directed us back to the box car - still with a pistol pointing at us. He bawled out our guards - who had sought shelter elsewhere - for not securing the box car. That night the train moved for about 4 hours. Then we got out and continued our march. Finally we reached a prison camp.

Violence into Joy

By Jameson Riegel

If you hear dark

What do you think of

Scary, or calm?

For me

I believe with darkness, comes peacefulness

No bright lights, no loud sounds

Nothing to alert yourself of danger

In my mind

There is peace

Small Grace

By Kiara Pereira

Is that Selva built
Selva's Beauty Salon,
Worked for most of her life,
Seven days a week, which means,
Maybe, that with her steady hands,
maybe, in the likelihood,
She lifted and carried
Not only scissors and brushes
But the weight of a family.

Which means she was
The breadwinner,
A hard working woman
Who sacrificed her life
So others could live well.

Maybe, in all likelihood,
She built an empire
Not of excess
But of stability
Food on the table, dreams quietly
protected.

She did not know how to relax
Because there was always
Work to be done,
Always someone depending on her

Now, maybe
She is learning what it means
To retire,
To rest hands that have given so much,
To breath without rush,
To watch what she created
Continue to grow

To pass down her legacy,
a life devotion,
of love that worked everyday
So others could simply live.

Pax (Peace)

By Jasmine Gabriella

My cousin of a different blood
My greatest mistake
I have known Lady Peace for as long as I can recall
Where she went north, I went south
Where she went east, I went west
Where I was nourished by misery and dismay
She lived on through peace and hope
And no matter how far we ran
We always crossed at the origin

I understand that all changes with time
But as I sit across from Lady Peace at the dinner table
I can no longer recognise the face before me
A girl who refused to treat humans like pawns
Now willing to knock them off the chessboard
All to prevent another loss at my hands

She had forgotten what had kept her alive for millennia
And I dread that if there is no Lady Peace
There is no Lady Misery

Without warning, I speak:
“Your wrath is not more than a beast
That demands to be fed, yet remains insatiable
It matters not how much you fed that beast
For the more it is fed, the hungrier it becomes
But to solely blame wrath is illogical
For wrath is a mere branch of a tree

Pax (Peace) (continued)

By Jasmine Gabriella

Connected to an even greater sin
Within you lies a parasite
One strong enough to slaughter gods
That tears at their flesh from the inside and out
One that feeds the beast of wrath,
Blinding even the greatest of minds
And the larger that parasite grows
The harder it becomes to spot
It is a filthy, conniving parasite
And I have called it
PRIDE.”

But Lady Peace only laughs in my face
And now I see that the parasite had deafened her ears
I can only sit in silence as she leans forward
And gives only a single response:

“I am too great for pride.”

The Emotion of Sport III

By Ezekiel Sabb



Femia

By Fallon Jean-Louis

The sound of waves crashing against the hull and thunder filling the air warned everyone aboard the S.S. Calamity that disaster was near. The wind howled profusely as rain poured endlessly from the sky. At the Captain's command, the crew rushed to rescue the sails, their fear growing with every violent strike of lightning. This voyage could not fail. The king had ordered his garments to arrive within four weeks' time, and delay was unacceptable.

The ocean soon proves stronger than the captain's command. Waves slammed the ship uncontrollably, forcing the captain to question his ability to steer safely. Panic spread across the deck. Some men screamed in despair, others cried silently, accepting their fate. Then, with a defeating crack, the ship struck a towering sea block, wood splitting, the deck tilted and the darkness swallowed them whole.

When the survivors awoke the next morning, the storm was gone. In its place was silence, broken only by soft whistling guiding the wind. The captain moved through the wreckage, waking the crew. Surprisingly, all were alive. Stranded and confused, the men agreed to explore the island in search of food, shelter, and a map to discover where they had landed.

They did not know they were on Femia.

Three hundred years earlier, Femia was known far beyond its shores. It was a wealthy man's escape, a place where powerful foreign men came to indulge. They arrived for the beaches, the warmth, and the women. The Femia women were treated not as people, but as pleasures. They were seen as exotic, obedient, and meant to be consumed. On their own native land, they were reduced to objects by outsiders who believed their wealth granted them ownership.

Their suffering ended with four women.

Chosen and assigned to foreign men, these women revolted. They refused to be used, refused to be silenced, and in their defiance, they consumed the very men who "owned" them. Their act was not hunger, but reclamation. It was power.

Femia (continued)

By Fallon Jean-Louis

Fatum, the almighty force that upholds the balance of the universe, recognized what the women had done. She saw not savagery, but justice. Fatum made a pact with them; Femia would be protected from outsiders forever, and in return, the women would guard its peace. Any man who stepped onto the island would never leave. Since then, Femia has only known harmony.

The people of Femia are passionate, educated women who live in order and peace. Life on the island continues through a sacred form of creation, one granted by Fatum herself, allowing the women to bear and raise children without the presence of men. Their knowledge is shared, their bonds are unbreakable, and no one lives in fear of control. No man has lived among them for three hundred years.

As the stranded crew wanderers deeper into the island, the air grew still. The whistling returned, closer now, surrounding them. Figures emerged from between the trees--calm, unafraid, watching. The men froze as they realized they were no longer alone.

The ancient law had been awakened.

To outsiders, Femia is a nightmare.

To her people, it's perfection.

Frankenstein (The Fourth Volume)

By Lucian D'Aulak

My creator is dead. He left me with but one axiom, one spark of purpose.

“Live, whilst you are alive.”

I believed I understood it before finally gaining the peace I desired whence my creator left.

I knew nothing when he eschewed me from the throes of that decrepit old manor, and now I am become aware of nothing itself.

To live then? Is this the only purpose I hold? I haven't even a name. I am called monster, as their faces contort to demonize me.

I am the child of a charnel house, what shall be welcomed nowhere. I have no place in this crazed hell world, yet I will far outlive it.

My creator, that man I never knew, has cast me off into a punishment of sadness, with only my self as my guide.

“Live, whilst you are alive.”

I take such time in search. Of one maddened like myself. I learn the speak of the world, granting my story to those who deign to ask.

I carry the words of my creator, the one thing I hold of him from that captain, in efforts to understand.

I do not learn his sciences, in hopes to never burden another with the melancholy of my creation.

I see the peoples dancing in their revelries, exchanging these small coins and currencies, deeming that I will never have such usage for these.

My frame persisted longer than I wished it.

If I am to do what my creator set me to do, then it remains impossible. For I am the only one who accepts my form. Or so I had believed until the age of cinema. Those who knew of my story, their grandchildren now created films retelling it. The people were enjoying it. I found it perplexing, how I would be immortalized beyond even my own frame.

The confines of time were nothing to me. Yet I would persist. Some children were even grand enough to spot and ask me to ‘star’ in these films. I declined.

One day, I came across a woman.

She was pale as moonlight, and she looked as dead as any corpse.

She was beautifully grotesque, and I realized myself in her. Someone had become as mad as Victor!

I pitied them who would dare to do as such, yet in my selfish folly I withheld.

Such things were prescient cause for natural alarm, yet I found I had forgotten natural emotion.

Another to outlive the universe with?

Perchance. I have heard stories of other such monstrosities through the years, none so horrific as human, and none ever like myself.

I must attempt. By the worst of it, I may already know. This world is vast.

“Live, whilst you are alive.”

Excerpts from “The Phoenix Frontier”

By Nyjier Lewis

Maron woke on his back, staring up at a canopy of leaves. Sunlight filtered through in fragmented beams, warm against his face. He forced himself to his feet, testing his ribs. The pain was... gone. Not diminished—completely absent. He pressed his fingers against where the breaks had been. Nothing. Healed.

“Bastard left me out in the middle of nowhere,” he muttered, scanning his surroundings. Dense forest stretched in every direction, unfamiliar and wild. Then he felt it. Energy—faint but constant—flowing into him. Not from any particular direction, but from the air itself, the ground beneath his feet, the trees around him. Like breathing in power with every breath. Invigorating. Alive. He looked down at his hands. A foggy energy radiated from his palms, swirling like smoke given form. It felt... malleable. Responsive. Like it was waiting for him to shape it. Curiosity took over. Maron concentrated, trying to mold the energy into something solid. A weapon. A shield. Anything. It dispersed uselessly. He tried again. And again. Frustration mounted with each failure. The energy slipped through his mental grasp like water through fingers.

Hours passed. The sun crawled across the sky as Maron experimented—focusing, releasing, attempting different visualizations. By the time he finally looked up, dusk had painted the forest in shades of orange and purple. His stomach growled. His throat was dry. Time to find shelter. Maron pushed through undergrowth, searching for a cave or hollow tree—anywhere defensible for the night. A low growl stopped him cold. He turned slowly.

A dire wolf emerged from the shadows—massive, easily the size of a horse. Its fur was matted and dark, eyes reflecting the dying light like twin coins. Muscles rippled beneath its coat as it stalked forward, head low, teeth bared. Every cell in Maron’s body screamed: run.

But he knew better. Turning his back on a predator was suicide. His only option was to fight. He pulled off his left glove, exposing his bare palm. “I don’t have the luxury of holding back anymore,” he whispered. “I’ll have to use everything I can to survive.”

Excerpts from “The Phoenix Frontier” (continued)

By Nyjier Lewis

The dire wolf lunged. Jaws wide, fangs gleaming, fast enough to blur. Maron threw himself aside, hitting the ground hard. The wolf’s teeth snapped shut inches from his face. He scrambled backward, heart hammering. Think. THINK. He concentrated mana into his palm—messy, uncontrolled, but there. A ball of crackling energy formed in his hand, unstable and pulsing. The dire wolf circled, snarling, preparing for another strike.

“This better work,” Maron muttered, “or I’m dead.” The beast launched again. Maron didn’t dodge this time. He cocked his arm back and drove the mana ball directly into the wolf’s open mouth. Then he poured everything he had into it. The energy expanded. Swelled. The wolf’s eyes widened—BOOM. The explosion was deafening. Gore splattered across trees, painting bark and leaves red. The wolf’s headless body collapsed at Maron’s feet, twitching. The scent of iron flooded the air. Steam rose from the corpse.

Maron staggered back, breathing hard. His hands shook violently, adrenaline still flooding his system. The sight made his stomach turn—viscera hanging from branches, brain matter sliding down tree trunks. But this was survival. This was the cost. He fell onto his back, letting out a shuddering breath. “I knew if I tried to throw it, I wouldn’t be able to control it.” He stared at his trembling hands. “But through failure, I learned how to make it combust. If I could concentrate it properly, I could do so much more.” Before he could process the victory, instinct screamed at him. Someone was watching.

Maron’s head snapped toward the treeline. He couldn’t see anything, couldn’t hear movement. But the presence was there—heavy, predatory, wrong. The silence pressed in, suffocating. Then it vanished. Gone as suddenly as it appeared. Unease twisted in his gut. What the hell was— A sharp whistle cut the air. Something fast was coming.

“MOVE NOW!” the voice in his head screamed. Maron dove aside.

A blast of raw magic tore through the tree where he’d been standing—scorching bark, splintering wood. The trunk exploded in a shower of burning fragments.

Another shot. Then another. Maron ran.

Excerpts from “Private Eye”

By David Olayanju

It was just another chilly afternoon in Casper, Wyoming. I was sitting at the desk in my office (It was really just a flat in the back of our house, but no one uses it, so it's my office now. I grabbed a bag of chips, plopped down on the couch, and switched on the TV. I flipped through the channels and turned it off again when I realized there was nothing interesting. I sighed. It seemed like there was nothing to do and no cases to solve. Now, you're probably wondering why I would be looking for cases to solve. Well, my name's Paxton Friedman. I'm 11 years old. And I'm a private eye. And for the past 2 months, absolutely nothing has gone wrong except for raccoons stealing from people's trash cans. Just when I was starting to wonder how long things would be this way, I heard a knock on the door. I walked over and opened the door. It was my close friend and colleague, Duncan Barnhall. "You won't believe what I just heard!" he said enthusiastically, "The new Maurice Howard painting at the Ridley Art Museum has gone missing!" At last, I had a case to solve.

"Tell me all the details," I told Duncan as we rode our bikes to the Museum. "Earlier today, I was at home with nothing to do, so I decided to go to the Art Museum since I heard they had a new painting by the Canadian Maurice Howard. It was worth \$1,920,750! But when I got there, it was nowhere to be found! After I told the manager about it, he told me that this wasn't even the first theft, and there had been many occasions on which valuable paintings had been stolen, and even though they tightened security, the paintings continued to vanish. Every night, at 7:00, the museum was closed until the next morning. And every morning, at 9:30 AM, when they opened again, at least one painting was missing without a single trace nor sign of a break-in. I told him that the security guards could inspect people for any potentially stolen items, but the manager replied it would be a violation of their Fourth Amendment rights. I nodded, taking in this information. We pulled up in front of the large museum and parked our bikes in the rack. There was a sign on the door that said that the museum was temporarily closed, but we decided to look inside the window to see what was happening inside. The manager, an average-sized man with well-combed brown hair, was seen pacing the floor inside. He seemed deeply troubled. But, when he saw me and Duncan peering in through the door, he let us inside. The manager knew me well, because my father, the mayor of the town, helped establish the art museum 4 years ago.

Excerpts from “Private Eye” (continued)

By David Olayanju

The manager, Herbert Rodgers, respects my dad greatly. “Good afternoon, Mr. Rodgers,” I said, “You seem troubled. What’s the problem?” Mr. Rodgers shook his head. “My staff and I have spent nearly 500 million dollars getting all the paintings for the museum, and nearly 250 million dollars worth in paintings has now been stolen. Mr. Rodgers sat down on a bench and rubbed his temples anxiously. “If this doesn’t stop soon, we’ll have to start letting some workers who are very dedicated to their jobs go. We might even consider closing depending on how many more paintings are stolen.” Duncan and I exchanged looks of shock and disbelief. We could not let whoever did this get away with it! “No worries, I told him, Duncan and I will find the thief,” I said assuringly. “Thanks, but the police are already looking into it,” he replied.

I glanced at Duncan. A small smirk was on his face. I knew we were thinking the same thing. By the time the police were simply “looking into it”, Duncan and I had usually caught the criminal red-handed. We both knew we were going to attempt to solve the case, regardless, but we decided to keep that to ourselves. “Oh, that’s a shame,” I said with a subtle wink towards Duncan, “I sure hope the cops can crack this one.” Then, Duncan and I turned towards the exit. “If we don’t solve it first,” I said to Duncan under my breath.

My Hometown

By Thi Khuyen Tran

I will send you my home address
Look at the map
You will see the letter S
With the light yellow and the blue of the sea
That is my hometown

My house with light white paint
Next to the porch is a star fruit tree laden with golden fruit
Every summer noon, birds chirp and perch on the tree.

When you drive to my house
A small road leads in from the main road
Green bamboo casts its shadow on the small river
Flowing peacefully all year round
Children bathe and swim
The river of childhood lives on forever

In front of my village gate, a big old banyan tree
Every hot summer noon,
Children gather to rest under the banyan tree
If you come to my hometown
Right at the entrance to my village
You will recognize my name still carved on the banyan tree.

Home is a Childhood Memory

By Naomi Mera

In my perfect place, I still had family around. I would be living in my childhood home, with no worries on my shoulder. Living in my pink room filled with posters and fur carpets. My parents' room was on the right after you'd pass the steps to go downstairs. Then looking to the left was the bathroom and my brother's room, super hero posters all over, and toys everywhere. The living room and kitchen farther down the hall connected with each other. We were living on the second floor with my grandparents and my aunt on the first floor. As you walked in, it was the living room first with three old beige couches, the large tv we've had for years that blasted Spanish music each morning and night, baby and family pictures with virgencita and Ecuadorian posters covering all four walls.

Walking further into the house you pass the small hallway with three different doors, and arts and crafts filling the wall that my brother and I would make in school. The first door was the closet filled with coats, extra bed sheets, shoes, and random items that would end up being collected. The second door was the creaky old basement door, the same basement that would get turned into a spare room a couple of times, where the kids would play hide n' seek, or even fight. At the end of the hallway it was my grandparents' room. The room I snuck into every night, where everyone would end up going into just to hang out, and be in their presence.

After the hallway was the kitchen, filled with so many memories, and birthday candles blown out. The many spills of food and drinks, arguments being held, and holidays being spent in. Turning left you'd see another three doors, the first being the pantry that would always be filled with so much food, the second door was my aunt's room where I'd always go every night to hang out and steal her clothes and makeup. The last door was the cold bathroom, which surprisingly had many memories, one being where my first baby tooth was taken out by the door.

Home is a Childhood Memory (continued)

By Naomi Mera

After you walked out of there you'd go into the backroom that had our extra fridge in it, then the door leading straight to the backyard. The same backyard that held so many funny and wholesome memories. We built the "largest" slip 'n slide from the back all the way to the front yard, where my dad and uncle had a pizza eating contest where they rolled up whole pies and stuffed them into their mouths and my last best memory of that backyard was on one of my birthdays where my brother and I shared it together, my side being Barbie and his Toy Story, kids everywhere running around and two bouncy houses for both sides. In all of these moments, nothing else mattered to us, it was just the laughter, family, and being able to have this feeling of happiness that we wished could last forever.

Unfortunately though, that house doesn't exist the way it used to, neither do the people we used to be inside it. My perfect place isn't just about a building, or a room, or a backyard, it's about having that feeling of safety, innocence, and closeness that was in that home. I know I can't go back to that place, but I've always carried it with me in my memories. Even though pretending doesn't come easily anymore, being able to remember reminds me that happiness was once simple and that young version of me still exists somewhere inside.

Barn Poem

By Jassemine Sainvil

As you walk towards the tall, wide, and beautifully carved wooden doors
you can hear the sounds of laughter, joy, love, and the joyous beat of feet dancing to the
rhythm of the music.

You cross the threshold, and the city night disappears—
for here, in my barn, the party is a fet, and it has no end.

The air is thick and sweet, a potion of Haiti:
the sizzling scent of griot frying in deep, fragrant oil,
the peppery bite of pikliz cutting through the heat,
the comforting smell of diri kole with its red beans and coconut milk,
and everywhere, the warm, earthy perfume of kleren and spilled rum,
mingling with the sweat of beautiful, moving bodies.

The music is not just heard, it is worn.

The tanbou is the foundation, a deep, polyrhythmic thunder that travels up through the
wooden floorboards into your spine.

Home is a City I've Never Been

By Dayana Gonzalez Torres

The beaming sunlight filters through the clear blue sky and thin clouds, reflecting on the soft clear gold buildings. The smell of fresh coffee, warm pan dulce, delicious food and the moistness of the beautiful earth. Vendors begin to set their stands up. Laying out a huipil or a china poblana dress, our traditional clothing, bright fruits and vegetables; deep red strawberries, bright golden mangos, and green broccoli that shines like polished grass. The best stands have to be the ones that serve sweet and spicy treats, like chamoyadas. A chamoyada is a frozen tropical storm in a cup: glossy, spicy and sweet, with deep red chamoy mixed with golden mango ice. A shower of Tajin follows, dusting everything in brick red specks. Every sip is simultaneously cold, sweet, sour, and spicy, causing your lips to tingle and flare up with your taste buds.

The sound of footsteps on sidewalks, the gentle rumble of buses, and the distant call of someone talking to their loved ones. The city gets louder and warmer as the day goes on. Guitars, singing, and radios playing from open windows fill the streets with music. Roasted peppers, burnt dough, and grilled corn fill the air with warmth and flavor. From food vendors, smoke gradually rises, rushing upward like tiny clouds. People gather to eat, laugh, and converse. In these busy streets, there is no loneliness; the very act of sharing a space makes strangers feel linked to each other. In the midst of the activity, parks and activities sprout up like peaceful places. Trees grow tall and broad in Chapultepec, where my grandparents are from, providing nice shade where people may breathe and relax. Birds hopping the branches while leaves murmur in the wind. Here, the commotion of the city subsides, turning from a roar into a quiet hum. Families take seats on the lawn. Couples stroll casually.

Home is a City I've Never Been (continued)

By Dayana *Gonzalez Torres*

The city never really stops, yet time appears to slow down. Mexico City is a vast and ancient capital that seems to breathe with its residents. It appears from above as a constellation that has settled on Earth, glowing with thousands of tiny lights. It feels limitless and filled from the inside with layers of color, history, and voices. However, despite its vastness, there is an odd sense of intimacy, as if each building, street, and plaza were a portion of a single heart. Everything feels alive in this city. The city does not become lonely as night falls; it shines instead. Vendors turn on their shop lights, and streetlights begin to flicker on. Laughter erupts from houses and restaurants, and music drifts through the air. Even though the stars are difficult to see, their presence is nevertheless felt in the vast and deep sky above. At night, Mexico feels cozy and kind of secure. Silence and serenity are not the main causes of happiness in Mexico City. It originates from being full. There is always something to hear, see, and experience. Mexico provides happiness, relaxation, and social interaction. Even when streets are crowded, there is always room for everyone. My perfect place is Mexico City because it gives you a sense of excitement. Although I've never visited Mexico City, I have such a strong connection with the land with the stories told by my parents and grandparents; even though I'm not familiar with it, the land knows me. It contains the history of how my family once lived and also changed. Calm parks, brilliant sunsets, gentle nights, and busy markets. I found a sense of belonging without even being there because the stories told make everything feel real, shared, and beautiful.

Mixed Berries

By Princesse Exavier



Mea Oblitus Scelerisque Arca (My Forgotten Chocolate Box)

By Jasmine Gabriella

“This is chocolate,” I am told as a piece of chocolate is handed to me
My teeth crack open the hard chocolate shell
And flowing in my mouth is sweet, liquid caramel
“This is chocolate”, I was told
And by no mistake, this is chocolate
But even if it is, I don’t experience the same joy as others do
I say to myself, “This can’t be all there is of chocolate.”

For years and years, I have bitten into many chocolates
Yearning for a filling that will bring me pleasure
But they’re all the same
Every chocolate is filled with coconut and marshmallow
Buttercream and hot fudge
And more sugary goodness that makes me want to vomit
I say to myself, “This can’t be all there is of chocolate.”

One day after school, I saw a chocolatier selling chocolates
The fillings they sold, I have tasted them all before

And so I ask the chocolatier,
“I have tasted every filling of chocolate there is,
But every sugary taste sickens me
Everyone tells me that is what chocolate is
But why is there no filling that warms me?”

Mea Oblitus Scelerisque Arca (My Forgotten Chocolate Box) (continued)

By Jasmine Gabriella

The chocolatier hands me a key, and they tell me
“The chocolate you crave was always with you

But you have yet to know how it looks or tastes
Take this key, and look in your pantry.
The chocolate you crave is closer than you think.”
I did not understand the chocolatier’s words
But I took the key and returned home

That’s when I look in the back of my pantry
And just as the chocolatier said,
There lies a chocolate box behind the cans
Inserting the key, I open the box
And a horrid, putrid stench assaults my senses
I look away, covering my nose as my hand reaches for...

A thing

What I hold in my hands imitates chocolate
But it’s appalling
The shell mashed and spoiled, leaving stains on my fingers
And when I crack—or rather press the shell open
Inside is raw meat that has been sitting for centuries
I place the chocolate in my mouth, my tongue running over it
As expected, the taste is horrendous
Everything about this chocolate is rotten and bitter

It’s the most vile chocolate in the world
And it’s the best chocolate I’ve ever tasted

Homecoming

By Milliana Senscat

I was packing the last of my dorm room into boxes when my phone rang. The screen flashed my stepdad's name. Normally I'd ignore calls during finals, but something in the way it lit up made my stomach twist.

"Milliana..." His voice cracked before he even said hello. "It's your mom..." Time slowed. My heart started pounding. I dropped my pen. Words blurred. "She... she's... not herself," he sobbed. "She thinks people are after her. She won't eat, she won't sleep..."

I couldn't breathe. My dream college, my first semester, all of it gone, paused, suspended. I didn't think about classes, or friends, or everything I'd been working for. I thought about her. The bus ride home was a blur. Rain hit the windows like it was trying to wash away my thoughts, but nothing could. I kept imagining her eyes—wild, scared, lost. I remembered the way she used to sing lullabies to me when I was little, the way her hands smelled like cinnamon, the way she could make me laugh even when everything felt heavy. And now she was gone somewhere inside herself. When I finally got home, the house felt smaller than I remembered. I found her in the kitchen, staring at the wall, muttering words that made no sense. My chest ached, but I swallowed it down.

"Mom," I said softly. She turned slowly, confusion in her eyes. Recognition flickered, just for a second. And I held her hand.

It wasn't my college, it wasn't my life planned perfectly. But in that moment, I realized I'd rather be here, in this small, messy kitchen, holding her hand, than anywhere else in the world. Because some calls you don't get the chance to ignore. Some calls make your heart break and stretch and bend at the same time. And some calls remind you what matters.

Catholic Social Teaching Awards Recipients

Each year, SEU hosts an art competition in which students submit a work of literature or visual arts that captures Saint Elizabeth's Catholic mission to show solidarity with the poor and its commitment to service in the community.

Special thanks to Dr. Ryan McLaughlin for coordinating this competition, to faculty who served as judges, and to all students who participated.

The pieces that follow were recipients of this year's awards. Congratulations!

The Question Was Never Us

By Destiny Battle

They debated out humanity
Like it was a theory to be tested
Measured out worth in labor and obedience,
Turned out skin into a question mark,
While claiming moral order with steady hands.

Before selfishness became a burden
they called it Destiny.
Before a dollar sign branded our bodies.
Before history tried to erase us
We were human first

Dignity wasn't always up for debate
Rejection wasn't always the constant

We were told unity mattered
Yet belonging came with conditions
Participation offered only at the margins
They called us brothers and sisters
While standing on our necks

We have the right to our names
And our stories

Yet Black culture is harvested like a resource
Our rhythm copied
Our pain repackaged
Our brilliance diluted for comfort

The Question Was Never Us (continued)

By Destiny Battle

Our origins blurred
Our inventions reassigned
Our rebellions renamed as chaos
Our history trimmed to fit a safer version
While accountability hides behind profit

We are not a theory
Not labor
Not a brand to be borrowed and discarded

If our humanity still feels negotiable to you
Then the questions were never about us

It was about who taught you
to look at us
And see less

Who are we in this war?

By Thi Khuyen Tran

War comes like a lion pouncing on its prey,
Like a poisonous wind blowing across your land.
You stand utterly alone and bereft.
Your life is like a flickering lamp in the wind
Constantly trembling with anxiety and fear.
The children who are the same age as you go to school,
Happy within the loving embrace of their families,
Play joyfully with friends in their neighborhoods
While you huddle, shivering, in a dark corner.
Bombs and bullets have stolen your loved ones,
And shattered the village where you once played.
Now, amidst a terrified crowd,
You flee to seek an air-raid shelter
Your innocent eyes see no blue skies,
Nor see the vibrant bloom of a hundred flowers as spring returns
You see only columns of grey smoke rising from the blasts,
And fragments of bodies scattered upon the earth
A crimson has deeply stained the pure wild flowers
Who are we?
How dare we take the lives of others?
While our names are engraved on God's hands
We are the same creations
What right do we have to decide one another's fate
While He will not break even a bruised reed,
Nor will Himself quench a faintly burning wick.

The World Within My Heart

By Duong Tran

In these days when the world resounds with gunfire,

I still seek a moment of silence

A place where weeping and death no longer dwell,

Where only laughter and peaceful slumber remain.

Amidst injustice as deep as the night,

There shines a tiny ray of light.

They share every morsel of bread.

Amidst poverty, they offer something even deeper than kinship.

The roads bear the imprint of footsteps,

Carrying with them nameless diseases.

Yet, amidst the loss, a glimmer of hope endures.

Like the dawn breaking upon the horizon.

War ravages the cities,

Yet somewhere, humanity still survives.

Hands reach out amidst the rubble;

Hearts beat strong with compassion.

I cherish a world of peace,

Fragile as a flower petal in the wind.

I believe that, from the smallest of deeds,

People learn to live for one another.

And one day, when the skies are cleared of smoke,

When laughter replaces every sorrow,

We shall see, rising from the ashes

A flower blooms, bearing the name "Love."

The Cost of Convenience

By Hagiél Marin

I awake to the blaring sound of my alarm. My eyes feel heavy and sore, the bags under them weighing down my lids.

7:00 am, another day in corporate hell. I wonder if my self-awareness of this life ultimately makes my experience here more painful than it needs to be.

I get up from my bed, already missing the comfort that my cotton sheets provide. I take a shower, letting the heat from the water slowly wake me up. I feel it down my back, going in between my toes, down the drain, carrying with it all my sins from the night before. I really should stop smoking, but it's the only thing that soothes the numbness of everyday life.

Dressing is quick, like most things are nowadays. I enter the code for my work uniform into my closet and wait for a moment. I can hear as it processes, finding the clothing items. It's a simple white built-in closet frame that holds various drawers and hanging space. Once you input the clothing item, it scans and organizes it all for you. When it's done processing, the drawers where each item resides spring out, along with the jacket that slowly comes hanging down from the top of the closet. I grab my items, a white button-up top, blue jeans, a black long leather jacket, and get dressed. I stare at myself in the mirror for a moment. My pale porcelain skin, almost blending in with my shirt, makes me look sick under this harsh white lighting. My green eyes match the veins that spread all throughout my bony arms. I tie my ink-black hair into a tight ponytail and head out.

San Francisco, the place I live, was once a thriving city filled with colorful Victorian houses, geometric-style buildings, steep roads winding up, and the occasional graffiti that was sprinkled all around the city. It has now all been replaced by bland uniform infrastructure made of grey metals and thick glass. The air smells of oil fumes and piss that stain every building corner.

The Cost of Convenience (continued)

By Hagiell Marin

The train arrived right on schedule; gone were the days of unexpected delays. The machines rarely make mistakes. As I step onto the train, I hear a robotic female voice say, “Welcome, passenger. Another day in the most efficient city in the world. Let’s make today a productive one.”

I find my way to a seat, and for a moment I dare a look around. Nobody is looking up, a train full of people who are staring at their wrists that now encase their cell phones. I am reminded of a time where we once had to pull them out and place them back in our pockets or bags. Now they were quite literally at our fingertips; it was a chip that is embedded in our skin that makes the phones appear at your command like a high-quality hologram. I quickly look down before anyone notices my staring; it’s considered rude now. You didn’t want to give people the wrong idea. In a big city like this, it was best to keep to yourself, especially as a woman.

Every workday looks the same. I check in with my wrist at the turnstiles that are at the entrance of my job. “Welcome, Katherine, to Rillings’ Tech Corporation,” a robotic voice says as I pass by, making my way to my office. I often wonder how hypocritical it makes me to work at a company that continues to promote and sell various forms of technology that are slowly draining us of human life. But what else am I supposed to do? Once AI was introduced 30 years ago, companies started laying off workers in droves. The jobs of copy editors, freelance designers, warehouse workers, and even drivers slowly began to be replaced by robots. My job will probably be gone in a few years too. This should worry me, but I’ve honestly lost the will to care.

When lunch arrives, that’s when I have the most time to despair. I am usually kept busy with meaningless but tedious tasks throughout the day. In this culture of convenience, I can usually find a way to appreciate the exponential ways technology has grown and evolved. I can recognize the privilege that first-world countries have. But as I stare into the face of the Meal Maximizer, a sour taste fills my mouth. It’s ironically the most colorful thing in this building, with its circular red frame made of metal, bright blue handles, and two yellow buttons that sit on the right side of the machine. It is comparable to the build of a microwave; it’s built into the wall, using the electricity from the infrastructure to generate instant meals.

The Cost of Convenience (continued)

By Hagiël Marin

The M.M. came out in the year 2035; it was invented by a man named Steven Rilling, who said his goal was to create “tools of the utmost convenience.” It comes with various rectangular packets that can be used to generate foods from all around the world.

When it was first introduced, people were astonished by the invention. Endless articles were published by big-time news outlets referring to it as “modern-day magic” and “a way to save time and still savor one of the most important times of the day.” At the time, no one could have foreseen what the cost of this would be. Looking at it now, its bright colors mocking me, still trying to dazzle and distract from all the damage it’s done. This machine is a reminder of where it all went wrong; it marks the beginning of the downfall for this country. An era where we began to trade community for convenience.

It happened slowly. Little by little, people began to take their meals to their offices or back to the confines of their cubicles. Lunch gatherings became less and less frequent. The silence of university cafeterias became so prominent that they began to shut them down and replace them with more Meal Maximizers. Along with that, many local restaurants began to go out of business. The chain ones were able to survive, but they are dying businesses nonetheless. People prefer the isolation of their home rather than a rowdy restaurant. Family dinners only occurred on holidays, if that. I can’t even remember the last time I had a home-cooked meal. The taste of homemade bread and a freshly warm rotisserie chicken have long since left, my taste buds starved of a meal that has been made with love.

It was a strange way to live; everyone continues to function not out of want but of necessity. What choice do we have? This is the system we have been forced to operate within. I make my way home, the sun has already set by the time I get out of work. It leaves only the lights being generated from buildings and lampposts. As I walk I reminisce of a time where all these innovations were met with wonder and excitement. This city in particular is still revered for fostering the world’s best innovators. But I look around at these gloomy and hollow streets, I am forced to reconcile with the fact that the reality will never match up with the fantasy. What is invention without accountability? We have created a world that is constantly looking to zoom forward without ever taking a moment to look back and see all we have missed.

It's All Your Fault

By Cat Ryder



Raise the Minimum Wage

By Niharika R. Perianayagam



Are We Great Yet?

By Ariadna Aviles



CONTRIBUTORS

Ariadna Aviles

Destiny Battle is a senior student-athlete at SEU pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Sport Management. With over a decade of experience playing sports, Destiny is passionate about leadership, teamwork, and using basketball as a tool to create opportunities for personal and family success. Outside of academics and athletics, Destiny enjoys spending quality time with family and finding new ways to combine creativity with discipline, both on and off the court.

Stephanie Colon Reinoso is a freshman at SEU, where she is pursuing a degree in criminal justice. She also cooks and works with her father in detailing. Her poetry is first appearing in the Community Quill of the 2026 edition. She loves to express her faith in the Lord and loves her dogs.

Lucian D'Aulak is a sophomore at SEU, where they are pursuing a degree in English with a minor in Mathematics, working with Student Engagement on campus. His work has previously appeared in classrooms. She loves Sleep Token, singing, and poetry.

Marla DuBois Santos is going for her Master's in Counseling Psychology, Clinical Mental Health Counseling at STEU. Marla plans on opening up her own safe house for the organization that she founded in 2014, Strong Survivors of Abuse in Recovery Advocacy Program (SSOAR). Marla also plans on opening up her own private practice for cancer patients and their family, friends, and loved ones.

Princesse Exavier is a freshman at SEU, where she studied psychology and sociology. She is now seeking opportunities in the field of business administration. She loves painting and writing in her free time.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jorge Farinas

Kathy Francis works as Advancement Coordinator at SEU. She is also the President of the Morris Museum Mineralogical Society, and loves collecting and finding rocks and fossils. She is a published writer, an avid crafter, musician, and artist, and is excited to see her work appear again in the Community Quill.

Dayana Torres Gonzalez

Fallon Jean-Louis is a member of the Class of 2029 at SEU, where she is majoring in Business Administration. This is her first published piece ever. Outside of school, she loves Queen Latifah, is one of the biggest Lucki fans you'll ever meet, and is still waiting for Rihanna to drop one more album.

Nyjier Lewis

Ellen Lohsen has worked at Saint Elizabeth University since 2018 as an Academic Program Coordinator. She received a Master's in Digital Media Design & Marketing in 2021 and teaches a Marketing Communication class. She's worn many hats in her career—editor, copywriter, recreation director, international flight attendant—but has never lasted as long as she has here at SEU!

Jill Mackey is an Adjunct Professor at SEU and Owner of her own private practice, Lost & Found Counseling and Consulting Services. Her poetry has previously appeared in Community Quill 2025, and she's taken part in other open mic events. When she's not in the classroom or behind the desk at her therapy practice, she is training in jiu jitsu, yoga, and running & hiking with her dogs, Ry girl and Jack.

CONTRIBUTORS

Ar'mani Magwood

Hagiel Marin

Quassan Mason

Lynne McEniry, MFA, is Chair and Assistant Professor of English. A few of her poems have been recognized for national awards, and her first book of poetry, *some other wet landscape*, was published by Get Fresh Books. She loves sea turtles and the ocean, which often show up in her poems.

My'Shiah McQueen is a graduating senior at SEU, where she is pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice, while minoring in Sociology. She plays basketball and runs track. Her poetry has previously appeared in the Community Quill 2025 edition, titled "What's Done Is Done". She loves pretty much everything involving art, in which art is everything.

Jasmine Gabriella is a freshman at Saint Elizabeth University, though she will advance to becoming a Sophomore in the fall of 2026. She's pursuing a major in English, with the dream of releasing her time-loop murder mystery series, *Servus Amoris*. As a fan of horror, mystery, and tragedy, one can expect her stories to be full of gothic suspense.

Aaron Mero is a senior at SEU pursuing his degree in Psychology with a minor in Criminal Justice. He loves listening to all kinds of music, and his favorite film is *Tron: Legacy*.

Naomi Mera is a first-year student at SEU majoring in English and Education. She is passionate about learning and creativity, and hopes to inspire future students through teaching. Outside of school, she runs a mini pancake catering business, and she occasionally paints and takes photos in her free time.

CONTRIBUTORS

Camille Miller is a junior at Saint Elizabeth University, where she is pursuing a degree in English and Secondary Education, a tutor in writing and English, and a student persistence mentor. This is her first publication in the Community Quill. In her free time, she enjoys going for long walks and getting lost in her books.

Kamily Morales is a Junior at SEU, majoring in both English and Education. Hoping to work as an English teacher for elementary students. She loves fantasy novels and designing characters.

David Olayanju

N. P. is a Senior at SEU, where she is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature this May. She is a returning student and has enjoyed her time getting to know all the new faces around campus. The last time she was on campus was when it was a Women's College and the football team was still undefeated. She hopes to find a job as a paraprofessional or direct support professional to help those with special needs. She has been to Hawaii and was even part of a Broadway show with her marching band in high school!

Jehreece Patterson

Niharika R. Perianayagam

Kiara Pereira is a Sophomore at SEU, where she is pursuing a degree in Education and English. She enjoys working with kids and loves helping out others. Her dream is to one day own her own preschool on a Farm.

Kara Reyes is a sophomore at SEU, she is pursuing English and Secondary Education and is working on getting her certification in Special Education. She plays softball here at SEU. She has an on campus job as a test proctor and works in the student success center occasionally. She is left-handed, and she loves Harry Potter.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jameson Riegel

Diego Rios is a junior at SEU, where he is double-majoring in Communications and English, plays soccer, and works with the English Department. His poetry has previously appeared in the Community Quill 2025. He enjoys listening to music and has a dog named Zuko.

Jake Rogers is a visiting professor of English at SEU and is the faculty advisor of the Community Quill; he graduated from Hood College in 2017 and earned his MFA at Drew University in 2020. His poems have appeared in Half and One, Shot Glass Journal, Stardust Review, Rise-Up Review, Garden Oak Press's "Tribute to the COVID-19 Experience" anthology, Arts by the People's "Moving Words" project, and now the Community Quill.

Cat Ryder is a freshman at Saint Elizabeth University, where they are pursuing a degree in Education and History, and a minor in business administration. They are also a lifeguard and swim instructor outside of college for the YMCA. They love to draw and create art.

Ezekiel Sabb is an Alumni from the class of 2025. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Art with a specialization in photography. He also works for the University. His photography has appeared in many social media posts from Saint Elizabeth University's affiliated social media pages. He loves God, his friends and family, and athletics.

CONTRIBUTORS

Danny Sacco is an adjunct professor teaching sport management classes at Saint Elizabeth University; his writing has advanced to the quarterfinals of the screenwriting contest “Final Draft Big Break,” and he played college baseball at Tusculum College in Tennessee. Danny just received a screenwriting certificate from NYU and a doctorate in Global Sports Leadership from ETSU, and he is a member of the Screen Actors Guild. The entry being featured, “Vincent Boy,” is an account by his father, Vincent Sacco, of his days as an American POW of the Nazis in WWII. Danny has proudly contributed and edited this excerpt; he appreciates his father sharing his experiences to help better the world.

Djeneba Sacko

Jassemine Sainvil is an upcoming sophomore at SEU, where she is pursuing a Mathematics degree. Wish her luck!

Milliana Senescat is a senior criminal justice major at SEU. She worked with student engagement, athletics, and residence life. She is currently an intern at the Morris County Courthouse. Poetry & storytelling have always been an interest of hers, but only recently has she shared a piece with the Community Quill. She loves trying new things and eagerly waits for her next trip.

Leah Tate

Duong Tran is a sophomore at SEU, where she is pursuing a degree in Communication. She works in the SEU Advancement Office. Her hobbies include admiring spring flowers, the changing colors of autumn trees, and enjoying the snow in winter. She currently lives with the Sisters of Charity at Mother House.

Khuyen Tran is a sophomore at SEU, majoring in Education and English. She joined Community Quill to learn from others and gain new knowledge. She enjoys taking care of houseplants and has a small fish tank in her room that contains guppies, mollies, and bettas.

Laura Winters