

COMMUNITY QUILL



SPRING 2021 INAUGURAL

Community Quill

The Saint Elizabeth University Literary Journal

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. As a community, we strive to provide a space where literary and visual artists can share their own work as an expression of their human experience. We welcome students, faculty, staff, and alumni to share their own 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.



Editorial Board

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POETRY AND ART



Mother Said, "A Poem"

Mother said to call it an erratic -- forty-foot masses.

God's one divine gone awry.

*To protect our common home includes
a concern to bring the... human family together
to seek sustainable integral development.*

Years ago, an erratic plopped amidst
a valley of land that cavemen would call
the Challis Football field. I dug, and dug,
and dug -- but the rock grew beneath.

I entombed it again -- *forgotten*
that we ourselves are dust of the earth.

Mother said to call it an erratic.
Nothing in this world is indifferent to us.

Pope Francis said this place looks *like an immense pile of filth.*

Our beloved Blue Mountain has fallen under
the weight of climate change.

Mother said to call it an erratic.

On borrowed time, maintain the past:
the late October sky, perfect mountain views --
Leaves morphing into hues of green and yellow.
A global problem with grave implications.

Nowadays, the horizon is gray as ash.
*Through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains
and governs us, and who produces various
fruit with colored flowers and herbs* we are dying.

Mother said to call it an erratic.

A remnant of the past.

We ran out of time.

Calvin Dawkins

All In

Are you sore?
Are you depressed?
Are you happy?
Are you depressed?
What's going on in that pretty little head?
Let me love you
Like I'm the one too
Let me say I know you don't want to go back home
Hopefully, I don't leave you on your own

Your eyes tell me a story
You love me every day
No matter what happens between us
You know I'm here to stay

Stop asking me questions
How would you feel if I asked you
Are you soft?
Are you afraid?
Are you loved?

Calm down
Just take a rest
You should know I am very blessed
Tell me how you feel!
You already know
I tell you every day
I will always make you smile
That's the only way



Chloe Gregory

Buddhist Tapestry on Covid Mornings

Phone buzzing against my face
I crack my sleep-deprived eyes
My slob stained mouth still has last night's taste
I wake up and ask..why?

Corona shares my home
I fight through the mist of coughs
I whisper to myself, Om.
those bananas are now soft

The copper rust sits on the murky kettle
As I pour the water I ask, "Who needs tea?"
I drizzle in the pot organic Chamomile pedals
I can hear the little monster, he barks out cranky

Yet another passing moment, that feels like an allusion
When will this whole mess come to a conclusion?

Above the copper chocolate carpet
Hangs the Blue Buddha
That sits on
The lily pad
Glistening halo
I hang You
Where my eyes
Catch the sunlight
Auras of bubble thoughts
Floating into abyss
Hugs the room
The demon is awake
Om...

Nickolaine Encarnacion

Am I Human?

What does it mean
When one says
Or asks
Am I Human?
Is it because I have the ability to love
To touch and feel
To see and hear
To doubt and fear
Or
Is it because of my
Ability to stand up straight
Or to be sitting down in class
To concentrate
On ideas or intricate concepts
Both big and small
Or to differentiate my actions
From right or wrong
Is it because of my larynx
A voice box only humans have
Or
Is it because I wear clothing
Shoes, hat
Shirt, pants
You see
We start as humans
And
Morphe into what a person is
The moment we
Are formed in the womb
We are life
We are human

Nickolaine Encarnacion

But when we learn new ideas
Speak, run, play
And learn that it is not okay
To be out in the sun all day
That we must be proper
Please, thank you
Excuse me, pass the peas
Don't be a people pleaser but
Please don't be mean
Sit up straight
Raise your hand
You are in class
You cannot stand
Without permission
Too many rules
Am I a person at all?
Or am I
A living human robot
Programmed to be
The person i do not
Intend to be
Me, the only me I see
What is God?
Who is life?
Workers going on hunger strikes
Global warming
Human rights
So many opinions and ideas

Nickolaine Encarnacion

Are they wrong?
Or are they right?
Am I my own person
Because of
Learned habits
Excuse me, pass the peas
Or am I a human
Being controlled
By what I cannot see?



Chloe Gregory

Falling

Tribute to Juice Wrld Poem

Turned to a whole different person
'Cause I'm still falling
It's 4am can't sleep
'Cause I'm stalling
Fell in love with her like my new Patek
But one sided love don't cash no check
I might fall in
I stay callin
She told me I don't have appreciation for art
I told her I have appreciation for her heart
Just feel the vibes
It don't hurt like it used to mentally
Dont' want this love to get the death penalty
She told me to deal with the emotion
Blowing up her phone from work trying not
To go berserk
Really want to know
If she's open to my devotion

What's on her mind
Is it the same thing I got on mine
I wonder why... I wonder why...
Finally I sleep, having deep dreams...

Wins and Losses

What room did Patrick say he's in?

Who knows there are more important things to find.

Where is my passion?

Where is my drive?

Where is my love?

August 27th was that fateful day.

When life or death came into play.

On the way back from a basketball game.

Patrick, Josh, Tony, and Charlie, the best of friends.

May lose the glue that holds them together.

What happened to us?

What happened to the time?

What happened to my guys?

Maybe they couldn't handle the pressure.

Maybe they got flustered.

Maybe they made it to the treasure but forgot the key.

All I know is patience comes first.

All I know is it's trust over lust.

All I know is recovery is essential.

Ibn Jacobs

This hospital is like a maze.
This whole situation makes me regret yesterday.
This is the worst of the best.

Step one is to let go.
Step two is to get it back.
Step three is to go harder than ever.

The challenge we face can't be faced alone.
The worst part is the start.
The family we built can withstand anything.
A broken leg and a concussion.
The road will be long, but we're here for you.

Patrick you got this.
Patrick we're here with you.
Patrick no car crash can hold you back.



Chloe Gregory

Jordan Jones

Paint your picture
Stop for nobody an explanation that must be denied.
Create and live your life,
A frequency that truly separates you and me
For the world will try to cover your eyes
Blindfold you and take hold of your pen and fill in the lines
You see, many will ask questions
Yet stay true to yourself and let your painting
be reflected and never confined
You see denial is a perspective
Your painting through is merely your reflection
A mirror image of what you accepted or neglected

- insulin

Don't let me catch you.
Yard behind because of the world I claim as mine,
Disadvantages that will always seem to affect my kind.
For these disadvantages seem to always bring my race back in time.
Every privilege you have separates you and me from the destined finish line.
For you and I start much closer to the end of the race we continuously idolize.
I repeat, do not let me catch you because if I do and when I do,
There will be only one thing on my mind.
That being that I started much farther behind.
As I pass you and catch you, I can't help but laugh
At the fact that you perceived that I wasn't in the race because
Of the privilege that you have over my kind.
For I don't care where I start,
I will always continue to run no matter the disadvantage
My environment continues to provide.

Taja Mitchell

Bluebirds Sighting

If you just so happen to be walking in the morning to wake your still sleepy mind, I want you to take a look towards the towering trees. Use both your eyes and ears to spot the unmistakable sight of blue wings and black pointed tips sitting on the wooden branches as they let out small chirps to bring out the sun. Even though it is rare and they may be gone in a flash, if one is patient and standing at the right time, you can spot this bird relaxing as its eyes are trained on something else in the background behind you or getting ready to swoop down to get their early morning breakfast. From one to two to three to four, they are there, as if plucked from a rainbow themselves and molded to their current shape like a little handmade gift from someone with gentle hands and an unbreakable concentration. I wish that I could hold my hand out for these birds to land on and gently sing to me, like a princess exploring the forbidden woodland areas with burning curiosity. Bluebirds are there, a treasure to behold, and no matter how many times I see them, I can never get tired of them nor grow old of their chirps and colors abound... So if you just so happen to be walking on a long stretch of road, keep watch and listen: for the bluebirds are sitting and waiting to be seen.



Chloe Gregory

Food for Thought

My taste buds are tingling slightly as I sit down at my computer, my thoughts being overrun by ideas of what I crave and want to eat for lunch today. I want to focus on my assignments at hand, but I simply can't as a hypnotic glaze comes over me and my mind goes into overdrive. Should I order something or make my way through the blistering cold weather to the dining hall and backtrack? To be honest, I wish for neither as I am craving for something homemade. I don't care if it's lasagne or stuffing, or even if it's fried chicken and freshly cooked vegetables, I know that what I want is something to remind me of home and take away this small sense of homesickness and worry. I feel so tired and thus I get up and put on my coat and mask, braving myself for the chilly winds to hit my face as soon as I take that first step outside. It's the food for thought that affects me greatly and makes me feel so... empty inside.

Gang Violence: Is It Worth

Is It Worth It?

Being jumped into a group
With guys who despise your existence
And brainwashed you into thinking you were “important to them.”

Is It Worth It?

Having your pants hanging off your a** and skipping class
Because they told you it was cool.

Is It Worth It?

Standing on the corner selling drugs, being known as a thug
When the truth is, it was all just a facade to fit in.
To be “one of the guys.”

Is It Worth It?

Coming home late at night with the smell of weed trailing behind
seeing the disappointment in your mother’s eyes
Every time you lied and told her you would do better.

Is It Worth It?

Getting into fights that lead to a night in juvie
Changing your image to display some gimmick
And hurting the ones closest to you.

Is It Worth It?

Running from the cops.
Hearing them yell, “freeze...Stop!”
Then boom, one shot, and now you’re gone forever.
Now, mom is sad. Her heart is broken.
As she watches, the only thing that kept her going
Tears flowing down her face
all because her son did not bother to ask that one simple question

Is It Worth It?

Ignored

Missed calls turn into unanswered messages,
Unanswered messages turn into averting eyes,
Averting eyes turn into silence,
Silence turns into two people becoming strangers,
Neglect is equal to mistreatment,
Silence pushes people into different directions,
It makes them realize who is really there,
It is the untold truth,
Silence is the definition of being ignored,
Love goes to waste as absence becomes abundant
Tears start to pour like raindrops,
Unset words become wishful thinking,
Being ignored is the beginning of the end.

dance dance revolution

i want to dance until my feet are worn
my body dragging me to my destination

i want to step one by one with you
holding me in your arms in the moonlight

i want our routine to create thunder
with each turn & leap we strut dramatically

i wish to reunite & perform once again together
my solo lacks passion without your presence

take my hand & guide me gently
with the rhythm of the melodies

new adventure for the eyes

it shall return back to your sweet soul
the moment you have made a vow to
yourself that the lively eyes of devotion
must embark on another adventure
in search of beauty in something else
within the life you are accustomed to
because you are immune to the living
of your original journey of what the eyes
of you possess have longed endlessly for

- set it free



Chloe Gregory

Sarai Santiago

The Road Ahead

we drive our cars,
stick shift in daylight
full speed on the I-287
no brakes

beware, there will be potholes
except, this, we weren't told

be prepared
for this ride has swerves and detours,
and the seatbelt isn't quite secure
don't pullover

switch on the headlights
the finish line is just insight
and it's promising

the thrill has just begun
but we find that Exit 37 is closed for construction
don't pullover

rev up the engine, put it in gear
no fear, just steer
our destination is near
don't pullover



Chloe Gregory

Stubborn Bull

stubborn bull, why do you push away
the people who step into your lives, they
want what's best for you, but you can't seem to
look their way

she fails to connect with those around her;
a feeling she's not unfamiliar to

her headphones of isolation
they walk past her, opening their mouths in hesitation but they
figure it's best that she's left alone
and it's no one's fault but her own
for who can help a stubborn bull
when her way is the only way she's known
surrounded by people
yet, somehow, she still finds a way to feel alone

oh, the stubborn bull
she stands with pride,
many oblivious to the tears she cried
she works hard to make her family proud,
but she can't remember the last time she allowed herself,
to simply. be. happy.

Nathalie Saint-Felix

Half & Half

I AM a black girl in a black and white world
Even though there are people who will say I am wrong
Tortured by my equals because of the color of my skin
that is not the Sweet Hershey chocolate
but instead picked on because my complexion that resembles as light as heavy cream
that was manipulated by the white man
still grown from the same roots but still seen as less than the ones I count as my equals.
“you are not enough”
 enough for who?
“you must be better”
 what is better?

I am all I want to be a survivor
I am resilient Bursting through each storm, transformed on the other side
Listen to me ROAR,
Listen to me shout,
LISTEN TO MY CRIES
One might even say
A black girl is stronger than most
I am a black girl free to be whatever the fuck I choose
A black that is no longer scared of the world
I am proud to be THAT black girl



Chloe Gregory

600 Seminary

I creek and ache,
As I have for years.
So many of my bones have
fallen and cracked
too many times to count

And chipping green paint
As if it will cure my wounds.

I sit here
watching the trees planted in my front yard
Sway and the children playing
Around my shattered windows

They are not the same as
The children who lived here before.
Those children loved me.

I had some hope,
When a man, a builder had seen me as I once was.
He helped a bit.

While they have patched some holes and breaks,
I feel they may not tend to the others.
I am not sure how they could.
My stairs have collapsed,
My roof has caved,
And my windows have shattered.
There are so many.
Just too many to bear.
I wouldn't go through the trouble either.

Perception of Community

My peer was murdered last night and I'm still trying to process it all
We have to process the ghetto and all of its endeavors and unpleasantness
Jersey City, Newark, Chirac. The ghetto. **My community.**
Let's process the life of Francis Villa the life of many other "Francis Villas"
Mom, friend, sister, and women

My community is a community where a woman lays slain at the hand of her protector,
A man she loved more than herself
My community is a community where talent overshadows popularity
behaving properly is acting white

I live in a community where evidence that's inequitable becomes negotiable for the right
person
Police officers get captured shooting unarmed blacks judges become blind
Where children experiment with tobacco/marijuana as early as age eight
And the person who is behind those 911 calls are considered opps rather than allies

My community is a community where
Former friends become targets
Family fits in that category too
In my community pick a side stay there
Its eye for an eye
take one of mine I'll take two of yours

My community is sad
My perception of community we don't have one
Our population is mentally ill, financially struggling, uneducated lost
as a union we see no strengths in unity. **My perception of community:** we are brainwashed
We lost our community years back

Whatever I Please

I am beautiful.
Every scar on my face.
Every grey strand of hair.
Every pound on the scale.
Beauty, is not defined by any one flaw.

I am confident.
Every anxiety attack.
Every therapy session.
Every self-harm thought.
Confidence, is not defined by any one misfortune.

I am intelligent.
Every absence in school.
Every D on my report card.
Every probation letter my parents got.
Intelligence, is not defined by any school assessment.

I will be, whatever I please-because the only one who gets a say
is me.



Chloe Gregory

TRIBUTES



Tribute and Dedication to President Helen J. Streubert

We, the editorial board of *Community Quill: The SEU Journal of Literature and Art* celebrate your service and commitment to the Saint Elizabeth University community as you retire. With gratitude and admiration, we dedicate to you the first issue of our journal under its new name. Under your leadership, we have had the opportunity for an excellent education. We have enjoyed having you attend our extracurricular events and cheering for us at every achievement. Your absence around campus will be a great loss to us! We wish you well in all that you do moving forward.

We are happy to share this poem by a fellow student, Kodi Peters, written just for you!

You are genuine and kind
You keep an open mind
You have a heart of gold
You always have everything under control
You are an amazing president, the best fit for this position
And you always fulfilled the SEU tradition
Thank you for coming to all of our events and games
Thank you for getting to know us and calling us by our names
You made sure to do the little things
And at the end of the day, the little things turn into big things
You managed to remain positive and hopeful during a pandemic
You managed to let the students know that COVID could not stop us from prioritizing our academics
You made us all know that our words are strong
You taught us that speaking up is not wrong
You acknowledged the social injustice in this country
And you let all of the students know that you stood tall with us like a tree
We can't thank you enough for what you have done
All I can really say is that we love and appreciate you tons
This isn't goodbye yet
But this is just us showing our appreciation for the things that we won't forget
Like Tina Turner once said,
"You're the best, better than all the rest" Thank you!

And, thank you, President Streubert, for sharing a piece of your own creative writing,
Day 22, with us to be included here and part of the SEU history forever.

Day 22

Today, I put on a dress. Not so much because I miss work but to recognize all of those afflicted by COVID-19 who wish they could get up and get dressed.

I put on a dress in honor of all those who have died during this pandemic and for those who await the time when they can bury their loved ones.

Today, I put on a dress...thinking about all those brave men and women who go to work every day and come home to those they love fearing that what they wore all day may carry the particles of this disease.

I put on a dress in honor of all the loved ones who taught us how to dress up and how to care for each other.

Today, I put on a dress and I cried because the world is turned upside down and now the simplest of things, a smile, a greeting, a hug are hidden from sight.

I put on a dress because I can, and I do so as I grieve the loss that so many are feeling.

Today, I put on a dress because I have to believe we will once again walk the streets, smile at our neighbors and maybe, just maybe, be kinder, more caring and a little more loving knowing that we survived.

Today, I put on a dress. It was a privilege.



**Tribute and Dedication to
Dr. Kathleen Hunter, Dr. Margaret Roman, and Professor Beatrice Kingston**

We, the editorial board of *Community Quill: The SEU Journal of Literature and Art* celebrate your service and commitment to the Saint Elizabeth University community as you retire. With gratitude and admiration, we dedicate to you the first issue of our journal under its new name. You have shared your wisdom, experience, patience, and kindness with us for every step of our academic journey. From the early first-year writing classes to courses on theory, tradition, and major figures, we gratefully accepted your invitation to grow as scholars. We will carry your passion, mentorship, and enthusiasm with us in all of our personal and professional experiences. Thank you for dedicating yourselves to being our excellent teachers and dynamic leaders! We wish you all the best in everything you do!

We are happy to share this poem with the three of you, written by Sydney Salomon:

I am Not Alone

I know I am not the only one
Who has been bitten by the English bug

Can anyone out there prescribe me
with medication to get me through the late nights

Because I am tired of trying to sleep
When my mind is awake dancing with
Endless stanzas & rhymes of poetry

As the sun rises for another day
I know I can rely on three
Hunter Roman Kingston
To adore English just the same



And, thank you, Dr. Roman, for sharing a piece of your own creative writing with us to be included here and part of the SEU history forever.

Jellyfish

The sea serves up its chilled custard
jellyfish coat the coast
in all degrees of decay
translucent circles reveal
the sand below
lips and curves are still
finely etched with black lines
of artful symmetry

The jellyfish take their place
among the particles of shells
of blue black mussels, pink clams,
and fluted snails the low tide
washes into strands like woven hair
a monarch butterfly
surprised by a sudden gust
raises quiet orange rusted wings
enfolding the sea salt
with prayerful hands
seagull beaks drip the claws
of newly washed up crabs
no longer whipping
against the waves

Bathers hesitate to walk on spongy disks
or half circles or clumps
of gelatin that ooze
between the toes
But the call of the ocean beckons,
and resistless, they rub elbows
with all the rolling plankton
a glance on the back, a tap on the foot
the swimmers join the flotilla rushing
toward the creamy shore

Here are some inspiring, beautiful thoughts from Dr. Hunter that we can forever keep with us as we each journey beyond SEU.

Like so many of our students, I too am a first-generation college graduate, as are my friends and colleagues Margaret Roman and Elena Colicelli, as well as others among our Faculty, I'm sure. All three of us received a sterling education at CSE, and when we were properly equipped, we all made our way back to the college we loved to do our part to educate new generations of young women and now young men as well, to help them toward the advantages offered by a college degree.

What a privilege for us! To be able to make our lives and our living doing such important work, sharing in the ministry of the Sisters of Charity. I am hard-pressed to think of a nobler way to spend one's life than by guiding, instructing, challenging, sometimes inspiring, sometimes prodding, consistently pouring out our lives for our students. I want to thank the Sisters of Charity for making it possible for me for all of us to pour out our lives for something so worthwhile, in my case, for just shy of five decades.



Chloe Gregory

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David Rabinowitz

Dr. Laura Winters

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Featured Artist: Chloe Gregory

Paul Rabinowitz, Founder and Executive Director for Arts By The People: for inviting our students, faculty and alums to participate in ***Jump The Turnstile*** for all three years of this collaborative project. Visit <https://www.artsbythepeople.org/jump-the-turnstile> for details for the 2021 event and to watch the 2019 and 2020 videos.

