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ANSALDOBREDA

WESTWIND



WESTWIND



WESTWIND  
JOURNAL  
OF  
THE ARTS



Spring 2021



## A LETTER FROM OUR EDITOR...



This edition of *Westwind* is short, no doubt, but in its briefness, there are layers of thought and observation; grim humor, and sharply wrought depictions of a world that is contradictory and strange, but also beautiful and worth recording.

The last few months of *Westwind* meetings flew by, ephemeral and difficult to keep track of; it still feels odd to know that we won't return in the fall in the same way, but I can't wait to see what the journal's next iteration will be. Everyone contributed so much thought and effort and creativity to *Westwind* this year; I think we are collectively very, very proud of each other. We hope you enjoy our  
Spring journal!

-Lillian Mottern  
Managing Editor  
2020-2021

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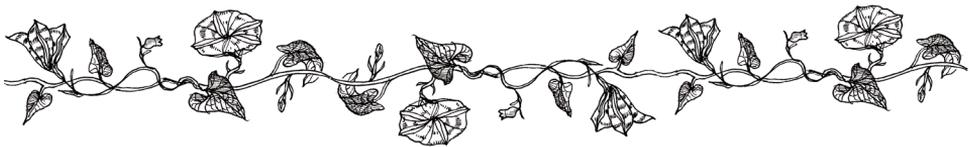
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# POETRY



# A LETTER FROM OUR EDITOR...

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Jade Lacy  
Poetry

This journal was created at the tail-end of crisis—long after the moment of panic has passed, when tragedy and sacrifice fade into the background of everyday rhythms. However, the poems we present to you here strive to break free from quarantined fatigue.

Some of these poems burst onto the page, unfolding into experimental forms that urge readers to engage with them. Others take a quieter approach, slowing down and narrowing their focus onto singular moments that define a life full of meaning. Overall, the work in this journal is a testament to the persistence of our poets, who pull meaning out of even the darkest times. We are so thankful for our contributors for giving life and voice to this journal. I cannot extend enough gratitude to our poetry staff who have stuck with us this season through thick and thin. Their energy and dedication are what make Westwind so special.

# Dolores Haze

## Emily Hernandez

---



Humbert Humbert, in pink and black,  
with icecream and xanax in each hand,  
dopes your mind into wonderland,  
while your body is left to be gobbled up;

and while he feasts on your immature body,  
with a swarm of Humberts waiting for their private party,  
within the pollution and tar of your squandered artistry,  
we drown.

i think, for a moment, of Marilyn Monroe, reduced to a sexual object,  
or Judy Garland, the ugly duckling desperate for the crowds affection,  
and little Shirley Temple, the *Baby Burlesk* with swaying hips and golden ringlets,  
with the degenerate Humberts of their era.

i think of my own debauched Humbert,  
as chlorine water fills my lungs

he pushes me further below the trench  
as my eyes and lungs burn

i hear his laughter at my despair.

he's persuaded the audience to join him.

i can feel their hands on you and me.

i reflect over our inept survival, red from our struggles,  
as Humbert walks free,

because our aloof audience doesn't see *you*,

they see *Lolita*,

the underage nymphet with her intoxicating youth,

vulnerable and *begging* to be used.



# Insomnia

Emily Hernandez

---



What you'll need:

1. [REDACTED]
2. Memories.
3. [REDACTED] symptoms.
4. A smartphone.

Instructions:

1. Don't look
2. Don't [REDACTED] Please don't [REDACTED]
3. Pretend [REDACTED] okay.
4. [REDACTED] to sleep. Your body can't take it.
5. Don't [REDACTED] be alert.
6. Distract yourself [REDACTED].
7. Don't look at the lurking shadows.
8. Or the tormented [REDACTED] on the walls.
9. Ignore [REDACTED] your head.
10. Stop thinking [REDACTED]
11. Remain calm.
12. [REDACTED] wake up.

...it's morning.



# Self Love

## Divya Ramesh

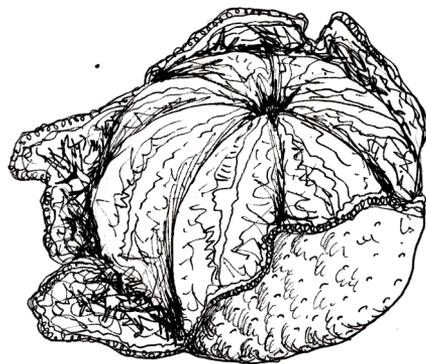
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I went to the kitchen and got myself two oranges.  
They didn't look the best, they felt a little off,  
but they were large and I was hungry  
so I picked them from the bag.

I ate the first one immediately, rapidly, my thumbs  
tore through the peel, citrus scenting the air  
I didn't notice it, peels littering my desk  
seeds piling up on rinds, I was hungry,  
and my cheeks were wet.

The second one was a process. My Thumbs  
pierced the peel, I unraveled the fruit. Opened.  
The segments fell out of their perfect circle,  
I helped them. Slowly, peeling each one apart,

Setting them on the wood. I got greedy,  
I ate one before I finished my excision. Im-  
perfect. I broke a segment in half and held  
a juice vesicle? a juice sac? in my fingers.  
Inconsequential. But it tasted so good.  
My cheeks had dried.



# Microbiome

Angelica Whitehorne

---



Life on mars, life on platform, your microbiome,  
all the little bugs, everyone who knew your name enough  
to type it into a search bar, following you like ants on a trail,  
finding the foodstuffs of your advertised mystery, make a picnic  
basket of your memories and then let them climb in,  
let them nibble at what once nourished you.



ET Rover Observation Log #620-19,  
Category: ALPHA-MIKE-OSCAR-ECHO-BRAVO-ALPHA  
Spencer Beck

---

1. Rough, blackened landscape gnarled like an elder's hand.
2. Fine grains of amber earth twisting across the seas of dismal blood
3. Flock with a humming inclination to stick to one another.
4. Like birds in flight
5. Like floating
6. Like falling
7. Like ochra sludge
8. Like kites
- (B i r d s)
9. The ground below their swooping shadows, the jowls of its wind blown face
10. Icy frost creeps like moss in the underbelly.
11. The sun burns and burns and  
b u r n s.
12. Things will float and fall like they aren't apt to back home and--

**HARK!**

In the ice:  
snide little life blinks into light,

ignorant of the loss, and the dying, and the fried shadows  
of what could have been trees.

(Green

Lush

Sticky

Dripping

Wet)

# WAIT.

1. The amoeba frowns beneath the ice
2. Time tests and time stalks (slipper footed)
3. Microbes risen up again, a phoenix of the planet red.
4. Strains of spirits long since dead.
5. The amoeba waits.
6. The amoeba watches.
7. The amoeba listens.
8. The amoeba counts each turn and

longs for sun.

Longs for tongue.

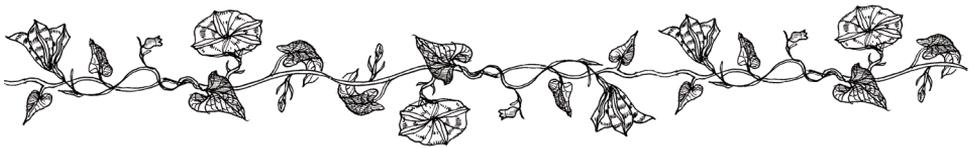
# NOW...

1. The amoeba is here to stay.
2. The amoeba is here.
3. The amoeba is
4. tHe Am0eBa
5. T h 3 @ m 0 3 b @

*Hello?*



# FICTION



# A LETTER FROM OUR EDITOR...



---

## Lillian Mottern Fiction

Our last quarter in Fiction was just as lively as the first, albeit a bit bittersweet for me, since I knew it would be my last. The two stories we selected for the Spring journal are very different but both have incredibly strong voices that belong solely to their authors. Thanks so much to our wonderful associate fiction editors -- you are all, as one of our former staff members would put it, galaxy-brain, and I'll really miss discussing stories with you every week. And thanks to Kurt for being a great co-editor, it's been such fun to work with you this year.

## Kurt Klaus Fiction

This letter marks my last as a member of the Westwind Journal of the Arts, and while I'm sad for what I'll be missing, I cannot be happier for what we've accomplished. Through a pandemic, our staff has managed to release three journals, all with different strengths and feeling. They've managed to meet on Zoom every Tuesday—regardless of homework or world happenings—to discuss the merits of art and literature. While some people might see the arts as frivolous in difficult times, I see them as a necessity, a way for people to express themselves and see the world in a new light. For fiction specifically, the two stories published in the Spring Journal accomplish just that, using nuanced lenses to dissect both turbulent and ill-advised relationships.

As a whole, I couldn't be prouder of these two authors, our wonderful Fiction Staff, and the rest of the Westwind team, all of whom I thank from the bottom of my heart. I also want to specifically thank Westwind's Managing Editor and co-Senior Fiction Editor Lillian, who always kept both me and the rest of the Executive Board on the right track. Truly, I'm thankful for the amazing year the team has had, Westwind was always something I looked forward to throughout the hardest of weeks. And hey, who knows, maybe next year the staff will be able to meet in person—I guess we'll have to wait and see.

# Captive Audience

## Katherine King

---



That summer was sticky-hot. Families from El Paso to Annapolis looked to slip from city limits and crawl towards kinder weather. Many set out for the mountains—daydreams of fragrant air, crystalline streams, and nature unrestrained danced through the minds of mothers and fathers as they packed SUVs to the brim with tents, hiking sticks, bug repellent, fishing poles, floppy hats, 100 SPF sunscreen, and children.

In the dead center of July, two such children found themselves expelled from the comfort of their San Francisco home, barreling towards the strange and distant land of northwest Wyoming in a 2004 Subaru Forester. The younger, Marjorie, was a towheaded girl of seven and a half. For the last two hours, she had occupied herself by marking dozens of butterflies onto her freckled arms. Her sister Frances, who had turned twelve in May, fixedly stared out the window. The white-capped peaks raced by like stop-motion waves. She had wanted to go to the beach.

Their parents, Lacey and Kevin Martin, bickered.

“I am never taking another goddamn road trip with you,” Lacey swore.

“Yeah? Don’t expect me to keep paying to take you places when you complain the whole time. I should have known you would be a princess about the motel.” Kevin’s mustache was dark with sweat. “God, I’m starving. How much longer?”

Fran squinted down at the map in her lap, before replying that they had “thirty minutes, give or take.” Thirty minutes before they could free themselves from the bumpiness of the dirt road, the stale smell of day-old Subway wrappers, and each other.

“Jesus Christ,” Lacey moaned, fishing around in her purse. She knocked down a white pill with the rest of her Diet Pepsi, re-staining the styrofoam cup with lipstick.

Kevin side-eyed his wife. “That back is a menace, huh Lace?”

“Dr. Jefferson hasn’t cleared me yet. I need them.”

“Keep telling yourself that.”

Marjorie looked up from her art. “Mommy, I have to use the restroom.”

Fran rolled her eyes and turned the volume up on her iPod, drowning out her companions with the punk princess whines of Avril Lavigne. “Left in four miles.”

The Martins were the last members of the 11:30 AM guided tour to arrive in Yellowstone, the world’s first national park and our nation’s resident supervolcano.



---

Ranger Felix Basset stood with hands on hips as the blue Subaru careened into one of the few remaining parking spots. All four doors flew open at once, unleashing a mess of tangled limbs. Kevin stretched his burly arms above him, bent down and touched his toes, and, for the grand finale, twisted his neck until it sharply popped. Marjorie bounded past him, braid whipping in the crisp air.

“Martin?” Felix asked.

“That’s us. Sorry for the wait, had to stop for a snack and a crap,” Kevin responded.

The ranger popped his gum. “Right.” His mirrored shades reflected Kevin’s dopey grin, but his face did not. Basset was a veteran ranger, stationed in Wrangell-St. Elias before transferring to Yellowstone. Two decades in the Alaskan tundra is enough to make a man indifferent to bathroom humor. What Basset was not indifferent to, however, was tardiness.

“About time you folks turned up. We were about to head out without you,” he said, with a slight gesture to the band of tourists behind him. The group consisted of nine other people: a family from Korea, a young couple from New York, and two elderly women from Idaho.

“Oh, well we’re glad you didn’t.” Lacey simpered. “These are our girls, Frances and Marjorie. Fran and MJ, for short.” She nudged the girls forward, smugly waiting for the compliments she usually received when exhibiting her kids like prize-winning hogs.

Basset looked down at the girls and clucked his tongue. “Make sure you use plenty of bug spray. There’s a lot of nasty crawlers in this park... wouldn’t want either of you getting a tick.” He turned away, leaving Lacey looking like she’d just caught a whiff of roadkill.

MJ was unfazed, but Fran grimaced. She was, to put it lightly, not an outdoor child. Her dad made her try out for the soccer team once, but she managed to fracture her ankle on the first day. Dodged a bullet with that one, she figured. Fran preferred the confines of their pale green house—it held her books, her array of colored pencils, and best of all, the family computer. She loved MySpace, and had spent hours refining her profile to impress Victor Ortiz. He had ignored her the whole year in Ms. Garfinkle’s class, but they had finally started messaging online last week. Currently, however, her thoughts were more occupied by parasites than emoticons.



---

The first stop of the tour was, to Fran's chagrin, a hike. Basset stood at the trailhead, arms crossed, and declared that this was, "A 1.2 mile hike up to Mystic Falls. To make it back to the lodge in time for lunch, we've got to maintain a moderate pace. Everyone understand?"

Kevin jerked as a fat bee whizzed past his cherry-red ear. He straightened and looked around wildly, hoping no one had seen his display.

One of the women from Idaho spoke up. "How fast is moderate? I've got a bad knee."

"And I'm recovering from a back injury," Lacey chimed in. The injury had happened nearly a year prior, during an especially vigorous pilates class. Her doctor prescribed her Vicodin for the pain, which she swore still hadn't subsided. Lacey's mother was the only one that believed this story; her friends had started to whisper.

"No need to worry. Moderate is guide-speak for snail's pace," Basset responded.

Kevin leaned over to the woman from New York. "Hey am I losing it, or did I just hear this guy make a joke?"

The woman smiled politely and shrugged. Her husband furrowed his brow.

"A couple of things. One, stay on the path at all times. Two, do not litter. Three, do not disturb the wildlife. And yes, that means plants." Basset scowled at MJ, who had accumulated a fistful of wildflowers. She pretended not to notice, shoving the sunny petals into her pocket.

"Questions?"

His audience had none, so they set off towards the falls.

The afternoon heat built steadily as Basset and his troop tramped along the trail. Thick bands of conifers ran alongside the winding path, studded with rocks and laced with roots. It was quiet, enough so to hear the tittering of songbirds and the soft snapping of twigs underfoot. Fran kept her eyes glued to her Skechers. The last thing she needed was to fall on her face in front of Seo-joon, the other family's teenage son, and his perfectly tousled hair. She tried to focus on the music streaming in through her earbuds, and to forget the sweat running down her spine, the soreness in her calves, and her rapidly deepening boredom.

Behind her, Kevin set out to make conversation with someone, anyone, other than his wife. Lacey had occupied the past twenty minutes with mutterings aimed at Kevin, the path, Basset, her back, and the rock that had firmly lodged itself in the toe of her hot pink hiking shoe.



---

“So, you live in Manhattan?” Kevin asked the New York woman.

“Ah, no, Brooklyn. What about you guys?” The woman, whose name was Sarah, smiled at MJ. They were thinking about trying for a baby soon, if her husband landed the promotion he had been gunning for.

“San Fran. Presidio Heights. It’s a nice area, lots to do. Renovations have been keeping us busy though. Just converted the garage into a home gym.”

Sarah arched her eyebrows in feigned surprise, as if to say: *Really, a garage gym? How brilliant! I’ve never heard of such a thing.* Kevin went on talking.

“It’s good to get out here in nature though. Too many people stay cooped up inside all day in an office. Or laid out on the couch.” He sent a glare Lacey’s way. “I make sure to jog twice a week too. Hey, you look like you jog. What’s your mile time?”

Sarah’s husband cleared his throat. “Look man, we’re trying to enjoy the hike here.”

“I wasn’t talking to you, man,” Kevin retorted, cheeks reddening.

Lacey whirled around. “Stop flirting,” she whisper-spat at him. “This isn’t a swingers’ retreat.”

“True shit, you’d never agree to that.”

Fran sped up, passing the Idahoans. Maybe she could pretend she was here by herself.

“You’re fucking unbelievable.” Lacey dug her nails into her palms. “You alwa—”

“Excuse me?” Seo-joon’s mother addressed the couple. She had broken from the group, and was standing slightly off the path. “Your daughter?”

“She’s up there,” Lacey snapped, gesturing ahead to Fran.

“No, the small one.” She waved her hand roughly four feet above the ground.

Marjorie Martin was, in fact, gone.

The group split off into pairs to search for the missing girl. Basset ordered them to stray no more than 50 paces from the path, and not to change direction, lest he lose any more of his hikers.

Lacey had immediately grabbed Fran’s hand, leaving Kevin as search partner to a highly displeased ranger. As they trudged through the thick brush, 50-pace rule long forgotten, calls of ‘MJ’ floated in from every side. It was still midday, but the tree cover kept the forest floor cool and dark as late evening.



---

“Mom, slow down,” Fran pleaded. Her arm felt like it had been stretched two inches too long. “She probably saw a rabbit or something and got distracted. She can’t have gotten far.”

Lacey stayed stone-faced. “Your dad should have been watching her.” Fran caught a glimpse of denim to her left. “Mom, wait. Wait.” She dug her heels into the soft dirt. Lacey turned to object, then followed Fran’s eyes to her youngest. She was in a nearby clearing, bending over something.

“Sweetheart?” Lacey cried out, rushing towards MJ. “You scared us all half to death.”

As Lacey neared the girl, she noticed a small brown mass quivering at her feet.

Marjorie was stooped over a grizzly cub.

“Hi Mommy,” MJ said, without taking her eyes from the cub. Her favorite animals were tigers, but she thought bears were neat too. She had found the grizzly rolling around in the grass whilst forging her own path. “Look how cute she is.”

Lacey froze. “Marjorie, I need you to get up. We’re leaving.”

MJ gazed up at her with wide eyes. “I thought we were going to a waterfall.”

Fran came up behind her mother and gasped. “Is that-”

“MJ. Leaving. Now. Up.”

A branch snapped, and Lacey and Fran’s eyes shot forward. 300 yards ahead of them, a massive grizzly shuffled along with its nose in the air. Her fur was damp; she had just been fishing. While two of her cubs had stayed put, eagerly awaiting their first trout in days, the runt had wandered off. The cub perked up, moving from underneath MJ’s hand, and cried out to her mother. The bear spotted her baby and the Martins in the same instant, and charged.

Adult grizzly bears can comfortably reach speeds of up to 35 miles per hour. Though she didn’t know it, this left Lacey roughly 17 seconds to save herself, and at least one of her daughters, from what seemed like certain mauling. In a heartbeat, she darted forward, snatched MJ from the ground, and frantically backpedaled. Meanwhile, Fran’s limbs ceased listening to her brain.

As the mother bear galloped forward, time seemed to slow tenfold. Despite Lacey’s shrieking at her to run, Fran’s legs had simply turned to jelly, and the thought of using them to escape from what could very well be her impending death became not only impossible, but



---

ridiculous. Fran could smell the pine needles, feel the subtle breeze, and see the grizzly's giant belly swinging like a pendulum with perfect clarity. The bear abruptly stopped, rose onto her hind legs, and let out a great bellow. As Fran gazed up at the animal towering above her, she thought not of her pale green house, or Avril Lavigne, or even Victor Ortiz. She stared at the bear's powerful white fangs, and anticipated what they would feel like clamping down on her.

Suddenly, three shots rent the summer air, striking the mother in her stomach, her chest, her head. She swayed, softly, before crashing backwards into the grass. The earth trembled from the impact, and Fran's vision blurred. She collapsed into the shaking arms of Felix Basset.

Frances Martin did not find out, that day, what the bite of a full-grown grizzly feels like. Instead of bleeding out on the forest floor, she came to beside the trailhead. A paramedic was saying her name and shining a flashlight into her eyes. She winced, covering her face with her arm, and pushed herself up so her legs dangled over the side of the gurney. There were people everywhere.

MJ sat cross-legged in the back of an open ambulance, cocooned in a shock blanket, sniffing and shaking with sporadic sobs. Fran could see Lacey gesticulating wildly to a ranger with a clipboard. A sweat-drenched Kevin stood beside her, rubbing circles over her shoulder blades. Various other members of the tour group stood in huddles, speaking in hushed tones. They hadn't seen the death, but they had all seen the body. Lacey caught sight of Fran and shouldered past the ranger.

"Baby!" She squeezed Fran so tight she thought she might pop. "We're so glad you're alright. I don't know what I—what we—would have done..." She stopped short.

Kevin approached the gurney and placed his hand on Fran's shoulder. "How's that for a story, huh?" he asked. "Bear attack survivor." Lacey successfully suppressed a grimace.

Basset approached the trio. "You okay kid?"

Fran gave a slight nod, opened her mouth, closed it again. "The bear."

"Dead. It was probably bluffing, but you can't take chances on that sort of thing."

Fran's chest felt tight. "The baby?"

"We'll relocate it, probably to a zoo. It can't survive out here without protection from the mother." Basset looked down at his folded arms. He seemed almost wistful.



---

Before she knew what was happening, tears were flowing down Fran's cheeks. She sputtered out a string of unintelligibles, burying her face in her mother's breast.

"I know, I know, that was scary," Lacey cooed. "But you're alright, we're just fine."

"No," Fran croaked. "No."

As the Martins packed their children back into the Subaru, they talked of how ready they were to unwind from their stressful day. They could watch a movie in the hotel room, all together. But as Kevin started along the worn road, squinting into the setting sun, and Lacey fished another pill out of her purse, both knew it would be a silent car ride, and another silent night.

Fran didn't feel scared, as her mother had assumed. She didn't even feel relieved. She just felt sorry: to the bear, her cub, the picked flowers peeking out of her sister's pocket. Bumbling through the park, looking for reprieve, they had damned them. Their momentary escape had come at the price of senseless death, of permanent captivity. Fran was not an outdoor child, and didn't think she should become one. The outdoors were better off without her.





I felt like an idiot standing in front of that house. Crop top riding up, eyeliner already smudged. Exploring some complete stranger's driveway in the middle of the night. I was making a fool of myself for nothing. But of course, at the time, I had no idea where that night would take me. I was still holding on to hope that I could be cheek to cheek, maybe even lip to lip, with other drunk teenagers within the hour, and there would be nothing else in the world to worry about.

I really should have stayed in the car, but I always had trouble waiting for people. Erin had sent me her location almost an hour ago. The blue circle was enormous, covering about half the houses on the block. I had sent her ten messages since then, which was not the kind of cool girl behavior I was trying to emulate. But that was exactly why I'd enlisted Erin to fix all that and get the new, cool me into parties. And she'd failed.

I had been scouting the houses I could see from my car for the past hour and figured that this was probably the one. Most of the facade disappeared behind a sleek wall, but the windows that peeked over the top were draped with heavy curtains. The slow, claustrophobic waiting had filled me with an impatient discomfort that now, halted right in front of the wall, morphed into a gripping anxiety. Anything for a party.

DUN DA DA DUN DUN. The clamorous banging of Apple's Marimba erupted from my pocket. From behind the wall came the panicked barking of a small dog. I took off, not even bothering to check who it was until I got in the car.

*Incoming call from Naomi*

Maybe it would have been best if I never picked up, but back then I wasn't capable of doing something like that. It was her first time calling me this late, and on a Friday night, but I wasn't surprised.

We had our first interactions at school, of course. There's no other place to meet a teacher. My friends, her students, pulled me into her classroom until I spent every lunch and free period there. Over the months our time together started to bleed out of those bounds. At first, it was spending early mornings before the bell in her room. Then, it was lunch on the weekends. Since last month when I sat on her couch for the first time, all bets were off.

My heart was racing when I finally picked up.

"What are you doing?" She always began her phone calls in the middle, and always with a tone like she knew exactly what she was doing. That night, though, she sounded a little different.



---

“Homework,” I lied.

“Can you pick me up?” She’d never asked me for a favor like this, which meant she already knew what I’d say.

“Of course.”

The things I did for Naomi were usually nowhere out of the ordinary. Make a copy, grade some homework, deliver something to another teacher. Occasionally, there were tasks that I knew to keep secret; sneak to my car and get us both coffee, tell the freshmen to stay away while she took a nap in the room, drop some papers off at her apartment. I did them all without question because I knew it was one of the many reasons that I was her favorite.

*Naomi’s Location. Saturday April 19th 12:34pm.*

She was all the way in Palo Alto. At least twenty minutes away. For some reason, she never wanted to stay in San Jose. She had a directory stored in her head of all the local boutiques and brunch spots that were just slightly too expensive for high schoolers. Occasionally, I would get to see them.

*From: Erin. 12:50pm*

*SORRRRY phoen died*

*nd invite onky*

Fucking Erin. It seemed back then that I was the only person I knew who could be exactly where they were needed at the press of a button. I didn’t take my eyes off the road long enough to respond.

This city was unfamiliar to me. The low buildings and elaborate storefronts seemed like a rebellion against the high rise and trash ridden downtown I was used to. Here, there were tiny, nearly product-less boutiques, Italian restaurants with vines hanging over the doors, and pastel teashops that unlocked some dormant childhood jealousy in me. Even on a Friday night, most of the lights were dark. The ornate streetlamps, designed to look much older than they were, barely kept the sidewalks visible. Only a bar here and there still had their doors open, but no lines out front.

She looked like a child, sitting on the curb with her head hanging down. Waiting for a ride from Mommy. I usually saw her in jeans and hoodies—she thoroughly rejected the bright print dresses that were so popular with her colleagues—but tonight was special. Smart linen pants, a crisp button up, and short pair of heeled booties. Sitting in front of a brick-walled pub that looked like a holdover from the days of hipster supremacy.



---

I didn't honk or text, just pulled up in front of her. She knew my car well enough to climb in the front seat without a word.

Even with my lack of experience, I knew enough to smell alcohol on her. Usually, her scent was carefully cultivated. Always something deep and spiced that changed with the seasons. I preferred light scents. I gravitated towards candles with made-up names like Dancing Water or Gentle Breeze, ones that didn't really smell like anything at all. She laughed at me when I first told her that. To her, anything that wasn't rich wasn't worth experiencing.

I said nothing at first. She always looked as if she had a thought brewing in her head, but was waiting for the perfect moment, when she knew you would really listen, to say it. Every conversation began with a negotiation. The first one to speak loses. For once, she lost that night.

"Thank you." She glanced up and down at my outfit. Nothing I would ever wear at school. "Sorry to interrupt your Friday night."

"I don't know what you mean. I was doing homework."

"Of course, and I was drinking alone." I had heard here and there that she was going on dates, but never paid much attention to it. She kept that part of her life under much stricter lock and key since her last breakup. It was apparently messy, the kind of thing that's whispered about in the halls. If I had known her just a month sooner, I would have been in the thick of it.

"She didn't want to take you home?" I asked. The most I'd dare to probe in the way of details.

"I didn't let her."

I said nothing for a moment, just let that hang in the air. Whether it was for me or her to hear I didn't know.

"Where should I take you?"

"You know where." Towards the one-bedroom apartment with the small, soft couch.

"You can make it all the way home without yakking?" I asked.

"I'm an adult, I don't yak. I vomit." I let her win with that while I punched her address into the GPS.

We peeled off from the curb and said nothing. Silences with her were unique. Comfortable—a prerequisite for anyone I allowed in my car—but exciting. My mind raced when we said nothing. My eyes felt more open than ever, taking in the new places I always



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seemed to find myself in when she was around. When I was with her, I lived like I was reading a book, trying to take note of each detail. Somewhere, I would often think, there must be something that will tell me what this all means.

That little secret neighborhood that was supposed to be hers must have looked different from my window. Her car was a big, boosted jeep. Some kind of statement about who can own what car. Plus, she liked surprising people who pulled up next to her. The first time I climbed inside it, the world became alien. It was at school. Though I'd been in and out of the barrack-like buildings a million times, I'd never seen them from quite so high up. She had jokingly offered me the key a few times to see if I'd like to take her big girl for a spin. I always declined. I was afraid of how the world would look from behind that wheel.

I wonder if she was afraid, in the passenger seat of my tiny car. I wonder if she felt small. She looked small, or at least smaller than I had ever seen her look before. She kept her eyes trained out the window. Maybe she was trying to keep everything down—I wouldn't become familiar with that feeling until I left for college—but there was something fervent in the way she held her eyes squarely open.

I still don't know if she saw them. As I watched that forbidden couple out my window, I didn't dare glance right to see if she had noticed too. It could have been her who told the principal, ultimately. She had warned us students many times about her mandated reporter status. If she saw them, she would have to tell someone. But I knew she still kept secrets. More likely it was one of his students, probably a favorite, who set everything into motion. Some people want company when their world is shattered.

I saw Chelsea first, taking a playful skip down the sidewalk. She did a little spin around one of the streetlights. I knew her face and name and general place in the world, like most people from my year. She was one of those who entered a few academic clubs and did the bare minimum, mostly known for having a pretty face. She stumbled and spun ahead, like she was inviting someone to catch her, but the only person around was Mr. Lo, who kept a steady, dignified pace behind her. Mr. Lo was the kind of teacher everyone knew. He taught the seniors history, though I had the disappointment of not getting him. Like most teachers under thirty, he was beloved. I think I had heard somewhere that Chelsea was his TA, or at least lurked in his room when she could spare the time. And now, here they were. Chasing each other down these secret streets together.



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Chelsea seemed to pout a bit when Mr. Coverly refused to run after her. She put on a show of standing with her back to him while he approached, as if she had no idea who he was. I remember her crossing her arms and tapping her foot cartoonishly, but maybe I added that in at some point in my many remembrances. When Mr. Lo reached her, he grabbed her by the shoulders and pulled her in for a kiss.

Somehow, I knew to say nothing. If I broke the silence now it would be the last comfortable one we ever had. I drove Naomi all the way home, a twenty-minute ride, and walked her to the door. She didn't ask me to come in. If I had asked, she would have said yes. I might have convinced her to let me try a shot of her fancy alcohol. We probably would have had one of our long chats until I left in the early morning. I didn't ask though, and she didn't chase me. We said goodnight, and I went home.

I was in her classroom when they came. A month or so later, when all of us seniors had one foot out the door. It was just the two of us, a before-school ritual we often shared. Blinds down, door locked, a candle for light, and the two of us in conversation or charged silence. Without the flurry of texts and calls from those who saw it first, we would have missed it all.

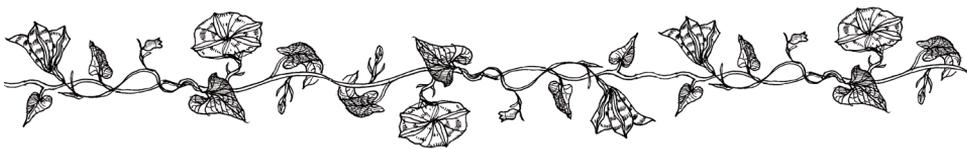
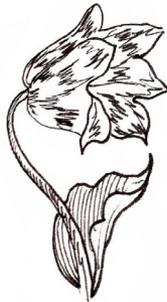
There were just two of them walking the halls, with the puffed-up chests and heavy footfall typical of police officers. More cops waited at the school's entrance. Their squad cars lined the front of the school. I always wondered why they chose to do it at the beginning of the day. There must have been a scramble in the office to find people to cover his classes.

I rushed to the window to watch. From all over the school, the early birds were flocking to the main hallway to gawk. The cops didn't hold Mr. Lo or shove kids' phones down when they started to film. They just walked out the same way they had walked in, while he followed behind with his head bent down.

I knew she was behind me in the window, though I didn't look back. Teacher and student, alone in a room with nothing but a candle to illuminate it. The blinds were rolled up just enough to watch Mr. Lo's walk of shame. I was waiting for her to put her hand on my shoulder. Just let it rest there, where he could see it when he walked by. A warning, or a gloat. I thought maybe someone would see her do it and start to wonder. Maybe they wouldn't wonder at all, but simply know. Just that gentle touch of ownership could break it all open.



# CREATIVE NON-FICTION



# A LETTER FROM OUR EDITOR...

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Katherine King  
Creative Non-Fiction

It was a slow quarter for CNF—this issue’s creative nonfiction section is a single piece. However, Judy Vallette’s “Dimensions of Burbank” was well worth the wait. This snapshot series portrays Burbank as splintered, contradictory, curdled by nauseating banality, and, somehow, stubbornly perpetual. It’s a great submission, one that tests the dimensions of its genre (as all my favorite creative nonfiction pieces do). Please, give it a read!

Huge shoutout to each member of our small but mighty creative nonfiction committee. I’m so grateful to have had your input each meeting, and I hope I get to see all of your lovely faces in person sometime soon.

# Dimensions of Burbank

## Judy Vallette

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The stifling hot air descends in unwavering intensity as I sit on the curb waiting for my friends to arrive. They pull up 10 minutes late and tell me to hop in the slightly beat up blue Volvo. The engine hums along to the beat of Ska music playing. The Specials ooze out of our slightly cranked down windows, a result of the air conditioning being seemingly permanently broken despite the many attempts to restore it. We cut through the dense air at 30 mph, crossing the deserted railroad tracks and the 99c and Goodwill stores that litter the way. Our destination remains uncertain.

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The parking lot is empty. From a distance the clicking and clacking of horse hooves mimic Edward Scissorhands going through mundane motions. A picture perfect still of suburbia. One that allowed Tim Burton to dream up his cinematic nightmares. “Do you have a light?” a hunched over middle aged man asks. “No.” Cigarette butts leave a trail of past Pavillion specters who stopped to smoke, bought their milk and left their souls behind.

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The studios’ size is magnificent, but their splendour is squashed by mediocre surroundings. I always ask myself, why did they move out here in the middle of a residential neighborhood? Their presence dwarfs the lives of their neighbors, mere human beings fragile to time and space while movies can last longer and have a farther and wider reach of audience. Wannabe actors and actresses move to Los Angeles to chase after their supposed “predestined stardom,” but no one moves to live next to the backlot of Disney in Burbank, do they? Life is too still, too slow. They know their time is fleeting, so they rather go Downtown, West Hollywood, Santa Monica, where trivial events and parties make the time go faster and appear to hold more substance. Does it actually?

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Classic American styled families served neatly in rows of houses adorning Riverside Blvd. Conventionality and sometimes a horse. Two cars parked in the driveway, not too sophisticated, not too classy, practicality meets a certain degree of elegance. Dinner gets served at 5:30-6, after that it’s too late, “too European.” Served on the plate are greens, your usual vegetable, salad, potatoes or rice, chicken or some other typical meat unless its Sunday then it’s probably beef, and trying to spice things up is a red carrot or a yellow tomato because that will



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be reason enough to fix marriages and cause excitement in a household where weariness domains. The buzzing of burning silence is the main topic of tonight's dinner. On the parallel main street three blocks down dreary-eyed 9-5 workers make their way home, slamming the doors of their grey Nissans. Dreaming of the family home with the red carrot in their near future.

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The weekend choice: ice skating or bowling. The Father has the say: it's bowling. Google defines Pickwick bowl as: "Festive bowling alley provides party packages, a pro-shop, cafe eats, a bar & various arcade games." Nothing short of a whole day of amusement.

Opening the door, the stillness of an atmosphere trapped in the '50s boogies out. Quick- Close the opening before the bright light of day effaces this mirage! It's a veritable time machine. The furniture, the dated bar stools, the jukeboxes, the music. The time lapse extends even to the people within, as if they have never left. Levi's and jean jackets, striped shirts and glasses. The bowling team of senior citizens is in one corner, a local Christian youth group in another. In the middle, a small birthday party takes place, parents smiling. The cheap party package offered a sweet financial revenge to the budget tightening price of last year's princess bouncy house fiesta. The sliminess of grip on the bowling balls matches the oiliness of the \$1 pizza slice from the "cafe eats:" who would spend the day any other way?

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Last but not least, the horses. Lethargic kind-eyed creatures, wishing to graze and trot, contained by stables with their own kind. The sun-aged face of their "owner" checks up on them throughout the week, taking them out and riding them: symbiotic exercise. The horses provide humanity and life. The smell of hay and the horses themselves diffuses in the neighborhood air and greets visitors, more than the indication from the city sign: Welcome to the city of Burbank!



# ART



# A LETTER FROM OUR EDITOR...

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Vivien Adamian  
Art



“Brushes”



“Concrete Chital”



CURIOSITY  
SOUL SEARCHING  
DREAMS

BY

IMRAN X

IN ORDER







END



SPRING  
2021



CONTRIBUTORS

# POETRY

DOLORES HAZE

INSOMNIA

Author: Emily Hernandez

Editors: Jade Lacy (Dolores Haze) & Cory Chen (Insomnia)

Emily Hernandez is a graduated senior with a passion for writing. She loves to daydream and binge on the unknown.

SELF LOVE

Author: Divya Ramesh

Editor: Mishal Imaan Syed

Divya Ramesh is a sophomore Psychology major at UCLA who keeps changing her mind about what she wants to study. In her free time, she loves to read, watch awful movies, and pet dogs.

MICROBIOME

Author: Angelica Whitehorne

Editor: Cynphnie Hsu

Angelica is a New York artist who writes poems, pieces of fiction, and stanza-formatted rants about the world we're living in. She's not creative enough to write about some other world, so this one is all she's got. She has published or forthcoming work in The Laurel Review, The Cardiff Review, North Dakota Quarterly, Mantis, Ruminant, and Hooligan Magazine among others.

ET Rover Observation Log #620-19

Category: ALPHA-MIKE-OSCAR-ECHO-BRAVO-ALPHA

Author: Spencer Beck

Editor: Austin Nguyen

Spencer is a recent graduate with Latin Honors from UCLA in the fields of English and Psychology. She's been telling stories since she could talk, but only recently rediscovered poetry. This piece comes from her Poetry Workshop portfolio, with special thanks to Professor Bonnici.

## FICTION

### CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

Author: Katherine King

Editor: Lillian Mottern

Katherine King is a second-year English major and history/professional writing double minor from Houston, TX. She preserves her sanity with YouTube yoga, late night baking, helicopter plant parenting, and plenty of writing.

### SMALL

Author: Jade Lacy

Editor: Lillian Mottern

Jade Lacy is a second year English major and Asian American Studies minor at UCLA. She enjoys creative writing, poetry, comedy, and dance. She is a cool older sister to three beautiful cats back home in San Jose.

# CREATIVE NON-FICTION

DIMENSIONS OF BURBANK

Author: Judy Vallette

Editor: Katherine King

Judy Vallette was born in Sofia, raised in Los Angeles. She is super interested in postmodernism, wild-wild prose and poetry, multimedia video art, and the discursive practice between reality and representation.

## ART

BRUSHES

CONCRETE CHITAL

By: Selena Perez

CURIOSITY

SOUL SEARCHING

DREAMS

By: Imran X

# COVER DESIGN



## TIME JUMPING

By: Saloni Kothari

@salonikothariart

Artist Info: I'm an ethnically-Indian and legally-Thai UCLA graduate who's about to move to New York to pursue a career in museum curation or the auction house space! I'm unabashedly aware that my major, International Development Studies, has nothing to do with my career, and I can't go a day without dark chocolate.

Cover edit by Chandler Kyle.



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## A CLOSING LETTER FROM OUR STAFF...

As the staff journal designer, my contribution to Westwind is often quite “behind the scenes.” Each quarter I have sat on my computer to compile all of the wonderful works that our contributors have sent us, carefully reading each one - and even more carefully trying to replicate spacing, font choices, and formatting on InDesign.

In completing this last journal, a part of me is sad...  
Sad that it’s over, sad to leave Westwind, and sad to be graduating.

Looking back on Fall Quarter, I remember how terrified I was at the responsibility that had been placed on my shoulders. Technically speaking, I wasn’t supposed to be design editor, but after a very hectic summer, a design editor was needed. Never having used an Adobe product in my life, it became my job to create these journals.

I can’t say that I got much better at using InDesign as these quarters have passed, fumbling around each time and refusing to watch YouTube tutorials - not unlike how I build IKEA furniture, which is always an interesting experience. However, each time I have tried my darnest to produce the best work possible, to honor the hard work of our authors, artists, editors, and staff; and I hope that mission has gone successfully.

This past year has been an amazing experience, and I’m so thankful that I got to be a part of it. I am deeply grateful for the members of Westwind who have helped me along this journey, and to the contributors who have made each quarter and publication inspiring.

To Lillian, thank you for carefully proofing the many drafts I send you - I am dumb and blind, and without you, this whole show would’ve been a disaster.

To Vivien, thank you for being the best illustrator anybody could ask for. I’ve sent you some wild requests in this past year, frantically asking for birds, botanical pieces, flowers, and monsters. Thank you for always going along with my whacky journal ideas - and for the amazing art you have contributed to each publication.

And to UCLA, thank you for the free access to Adobe Creative Cloud.  
That was a lifesaver.

With love,

Chandler  
Executive Design Editor  
2020-2021



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