

**NORTHWEST BOULEVARD  
LITERARY MAGAZINE**

**SPRING 2025**

**Eastern Washington University's  
Undergrad Creative Arts Magazine**

# The NWBLVD Team

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Northwest Boulevard would like to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to all of our contributors and everyone who has supported us—through past issues and into this new Spring 2025 edition. This magazine would not be possible without your creativity, passion, and belief in what we do.

Please enjoy this latest issue of **Northwest Boulevard Literary Magazine**—made for and by the students of EWU. And above all, keep creating.

# A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

By reading and writing, I have come to know a thousand people and a thousand lives. I experience what it is like to be someone else. I build empathy and connection. The poems, essays, and artwork in this magazine give me strength and hope. They give me confidence in a community of artists who want change in this world and are willing to seek it. They call to me to join them in this search. Let the writing and art in this magazine call to you, to be a part of more communities, to stand up for what you believe in, and most of all, to create everything stirring in your heart.

I feel grateful every day for writers and artists. I am grateful for my hands, my pencil, and my keyboard that write stories and poems, and for my eyes that take in paintings, photographs, and the writings of others. I am grateful for my team of editors, who have put their time and souls into making this magazine. I am grateful for the writers and artists who share their work with you in this issue. It is vulnerable to put your work into the world and I cannot be prouder of every author and artist published in these pages. I am grateful, perhaps most of all, for readers like you, who support emerging artists like us. Thank you for reading.

I have been a part of Northwest Boulevard for four issues now. First as a reader, then as a writer, then as Head Fiction Editor, and now as Head Editor. I have loved every second of it. I will always cherish this opportunity I was given. I have come to understand how important it is for young writers to write! For young artists to create! For us all to share our ideas as undergraduates, for what this world can be and what we know to be true. The undergraduate students of Eastern Washington University blow me away by what they are capable of creating. I hope the magazine continues publishing undergraduate writers and artists for years to come. I love this magazine, I love this issue, and I love what happens when a writer or artist decides to create something beautiful. I hope you love this issue as much as I do!

-Daisy Noelle

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Katie Gearing  
**I found a receipt**

limp  
in a dimly lit parking lot.

It feels indecent  
to look at, this list  
of needs and wants,  
like gazing  
through a window  
with the curtain drawn  
inside, someone is changing.

Some items are virtuous,  
of body wash and deodorant.  
Medicine even.  
They're lactose intolerant.

Then, it turns scandalous.  
Nail polish and flowers and a child's  
Halloween costume.

I keep the receipt in my wallet  
and read it when I can't remember  
who I am.

# Noelle Marquart

## **HAYSTACK AT NIGHT**

Do you remember when we stepped off into the night, feet bare  
though it was cold and nearly pitch black? The dark, oceanic

air was like aged wine. We drank it completely.  
We laughed and gossiped. The richness –

of stumbling through sand  
onto the compressed sediment of high-tide's realm.

A few stars peaked out behind a vast curtain. We were in the moment.  
Distant lights from the hotel windows blessed us and kept us

Due south toward Haystack. The colossal rock materialized out of the  
night.

We talked, though our wary gaze could not be torn

from this looming presence which gazed right back,  
ancient as myth.

My sister, I walk there with you often.

# Melanie Jones

## IF THERE'S ONE THING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ME

I've played cello for the last ten years. I started playing it in sixth grade, and I immediately loved it. I've been in every school orchestra I could since then, through middle school, high school, and even college. I'm not a music major, but I took on the crazy time commitments of being in a college orchestra because I love playing so much. I had to stop this year because of class conflicts. It's weird to not be in a two-hour rehearsal three times a week.

— • —

We were at a baseball game and my mom didn't want to be there at all, and hearing that there was a firework show afterwards was the straw that broke the camel's back. And yet, the fireworks started and maybe I'm making this up but she couldn't help but love it. And a sing-along began and as much as she wanted to hate being there, no one sang louder than her. And as much as I love fireworks, when I think of that night I think of the sing-along.

— • —

I started playing softball in sixth grade, playing in a summer league every year until tenth grade. I had a lot of different teams in that summer league, but I loved every season. And only playing in summer seasons wasn't enough, so I also played every school season I could through middle school and high school. I took a break from softball my first year of college, but last year I came back to the sport and remembered why I love it so much. But I have class conflicts with softball this year, so I can't go to practices anymore.

— • —

I was in history class and we started talking about the Tudors and I was excited because there was an entire bookshelf in our living room dedicated to my mom's love of Mary, Queen of Scots. And even though I really knew basically nothing on the subject, I was fifteen and thought I knew everything.

— • —

I've read *The Lunar Chronicles* by Marissa Meyer at least four times. I say it's my favorite book series because it has a really special place in my heart, but there might be other series that I actually like more. Of the other series that I like, I've read each at least twice, but there are specific books within each series that I know I've read more than that. I feel the urge to reread them again, but I have a to-be-read list that keeps growing.

— • —

I couldn't tell you what aisle we were in, or even which store we were in, but a song came on over the speakers and my mom started singing along loudly. I cringed and did what any child would do when they were embarrassed of their parent; I moved away to pretend I didn't know who she was.

— • —

I cry over TV shows and movies. I get incredibly attached to fictional characters, and when they die I get way sadder than I should. I know that it's kind of strange. But brains actually can't tell the difference between what's real and what's fictional, at least in terms of how you feel about it. The grief I feel is real.

— • —

My sibling once asked how much we paid each month to rent our house. My mom responded with "One million dollars." When my sibling said they knew that wasn't true and how much do we really pay, my mom and I spoke at the same time: "Two million dollars."

— • —

I have a favorite necklace, but I suppose it's only my favorite because it's the only one I own. I wear it almost every day.

— • —

I couldn't tell you how many hours I spent in my old house's tiny bathroom with my mom curling my hair before church. "You have such long and beautiful hair and you never do anything with it!" she'd say. Eventually we had to start bringing a chair into the bathroom for me to sit in while she curled my hair.

— • —

My favorite soda is either peach Fresca or Diet Coke. I haven't had either in a while.

— • —

I was at church and we started talking about the Joseph story in Genesis and I was excited because there was a CD of Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat on my bookshelf that was originally my mom's. And even though I hadn't listened to it in years, I was seventeen and thought I knew everything.

— • —

My favorite church hymn is called "Carry On."

— • —

It was supposed to be a normal appointment.

— • —

I played the violin in fifth grade. I wanted to play the cello, but my mom wanted me to play the violin. "Grammy plays the violin," she said. "She'd be so happy if you played it, too." I didn't mind playing the violin; I had fun just being in the orchestra. But I looked at the cello section with jealousy.

— • —

We were in the waiting room and my mom was laying across multiple chairs. It was obvious she wasn't doing well, and I was confused and scared. A nurse came by and saw her and suddenly there were so many people around and I didn't know what to do.

— • —

I played soccer for a few years before I started softball. My parents came to every game they could. My mom didn't understand any of the rules for either sport—besides the most basic ones—but you could always hear her passionately cheering for me and my team.

— • —

A gurney was rolled in and my mom was put on it and my dad and I were told that they were going to take her to the emergency room. We walked down the hallways and my heart was pounding in my chest.

— • —

I used to tell people that my mom's favorite book series was Harry Potter, and I said that because she had read the series at least four times.

— • —

We walked through the hallways at a somewhat leisurely pace but it felt like we should have been sprinting. We waited for elevators and my dad ran into a friend from church in the hallway and asked him to come by later. I had seen this scene

in movies so many times, but they were nothing like this. They always ran in those scenes and everything happened so fast in them but this was so slow.

— • —

My dad told me that one time my mom called him sobbing because someone in Buffy the Vampire Slayer had died.

— • —

It was so slow and yet it was so fast. We got to the emergency room and there wasn't a room available yet so we waited in the hallway. My mom explained to the nurses how she was feeling and I knew nothing good was happening but it wasn't supposed to be like this.

— • —

My mom had a long pearl necklace she wore all the time. She had others, but the pearl necklace was her signature.

— • —

I was in the waiting room because my mom didn't want me to be there, to see her like that. So I sat in the waiting room until my aunt picked me up. When I got into the car, my aunt tried to distract me by telling me about the baby shower she had been at. I wanted to be distracted and I hated being distracted.

— • —

My mom's favorite soda was Diet Coke. If she asked me to get her one from the fridge, I would open it before giving it to her and steal a sip.

— • —

My sibling and I were at our cousin's house the next day. We had been swimming and taking slow-mo videos of our cousin's friend doing flips off the diving board. Suddenly my dad was at the backdoor and he told me and my sibling to come inside and we both knew that something was wrong.

— • —

The first time I heard "Carry On" was at my mom's funeral. It was her favorite hymn.

— • —

"She's gone," my dad said. It had only been three months since she had been diagnosed with stage four cancer and she had been recovering, she was doing better, but my mom was dead. I was fourteen.

— • —

People ask me how I have the convictions and maturity and strength—whatever any of those things mean—that I do. I tell them some of these things in an attempt to answer them. The real reason is that I am twenty and I think I know everything.

— • —

If there's one thing you need to know about me, it's that I am my mother's daughter.

S.J. Sampaloc

## **ART OF MY ANCESTORS**

My titos, my lolas,  
and my tita belittle  
the dragon, the trident  
etched into my  
skin. Black,

weave and curve,  
wrought  
from silver quill  
and fire,  
art upon flesh.

Perhaps mine  
are avant-garde, compared  
to my forebears, but I know  
what my family doesn't,  
the conquerors called us painted.

# Vincenzo Cardamuro

## GENERATIONAL CAR TROUBLES

The captain of a failing ship  
 speeds down the Garden State Parkway.  
 In the rain, asphalt is obsidian.  
 I am in the car.  
 Lights blaze like Starship Enterprise  
 crashing into an alien world.

Systems fail:  
 entertainment,  
 power windows,  
 cruise control,  
 tire monitors,  
 windshield wipers,  
 headlights,  
 power steering,  
 anti-lock brakes,  
 traction control,  
 my ability to keep calm.  
 Green highway signs beckon me to safety.

Nearest exit: Five miles.  
 Not happening.  
 Nearest rest stop: 1 Mile.  
 I'll make it with a prayer to anyone who is listening.  
 Three-quarters of a mile:  
 The turn signal suggests I'm moving to the left lane.  
 Half a mile:  
 My chariot stops accelerating, coasting.  
 Quarter mile:  
 She dies completely.  
 We are a shadowed blood clot drifting  
 down the main artery of the Jersey Shore.  
 I drag her off the parkway, carried only by momentum.  
 We roll into a spot by the door to the rest stop. Rain patters  
 off the roof, a beat to the buzz of the Burger King sign.

I'm a kid again,  
 sitting on the steps of the reststop  
 watching Dad's Neon dragged up onto the tow truck.  
 I tried so hard not to be like him;  
 I wonder if I'll end up as his son.

Northwest Boulevard

Sierra Crisp-Johnson

# VALUE MEAL:

# END TIMES EDITION



*Dedicated to Simeon Mills, my imaginary world professor.*

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# Charly Fetzer

## HUMAN BEAR

In my dream last night,  
I wasn't afraid of the bears that live in the forest,  
I was one of them.  
I had their bodies and  
their appetites,  
I walked on four legs.  
I spoke their language but  
I can't really tell you about that.

I found and ate berries off of bushes  
but woke up,  
as a girl,  
before I made it to the fish.

What does it mean to want to stay inside of a dream, asleep  
forever?

Instead,  
I woke up,  
ate a granola bar I paid a dollar for,  
walked on two legs  
and spoke to the people around me.

What does it mean to feel a little disappointed about that?

# Daisy Noelle

## **I WROTE A BOOK!**

### **IN KINDERGARTEN**

When I was tiny  
I pushed two chairs back-to-back with  
just enough space for my five-year-old body  
to fit between.

I draped a blanket on top and then I  
snuggled my Strawberry Shortcake doll  
and told her my stories  
in secret.

Strawberry Shortcake and I wrote a book about  
a barber who was bad at everything and  
a brown-yellow dog with ears like lampshades  
who was lost but found his way home in the end.

Now I am grown, and I don't have my doll.  
I draft my stories and jot down my poems  
and think of the photo of me in that fort  
taped to the back of my very first book.

Miodist

## DEAR THE GIRL WITH NO NAME

Dear the Girl With No Name,

Ever since I turned twenty, I started to consider some of the major parts of my life. From simply where I will live to what my future career might be. I have spent far too long discussing the pros and cons of different locations with my girlfriend. I believe at one point I even made a powerpoint about why we should one day move to Portland, Oregon. She constantly tells me I need to focus more on the now and not the future that I don't have any control over. She's the one I tell everything to; I could never keep a secret from her.

I work day in and day out trying to perfect my craft of writing. I take class after class where I study different authors and discuss their particular writing styles and what things we can learn from them. I write and rewrite multitudes of poems, short stories, and long books to make things as perfect as possible. I can't count the amount of times my hands have been in pain from entire days of writing. I desperately want to write for a living, to share my stories with others while I live a life with those that I love...

And then you came into my life. Or more accurately, I should say my dreams.

I've always wanted children, whether by blood or by adoption. It is a fact of my life I have known since I was a kid. So who are you? You with your long thick brown hair or freckled skin. You with your infectious laugh and warm smiles. You with your little red dress covered in dirt from playing outside. I have dreamed of you over and over again, sometimes multiple days in a row, others once in a month. But... but who are you?

Why do I not know the color of your eyes? Why do I not know anything you enjoy? Why do I not know your name? I have awoken multiple times in the morning in tears because you were not in my arms. I have called for you, wondering where you went. I have spent days mourning your loss.

I tried telling my girlfriend about you, of course I did. I can't keep anything from her; she's who I confide in most. I could gush about the features I know about you for hours on end. And when I mention I don't know your name, I can see in her eyes how my heart breaks. I long for the days when you show up in my dreams when I can play silly games with you and lounge under the warm summer sun.

My girlfriend once tried to tell me that the little girl I saw was my inner child. The life I wish I grew up with, the features I wish I had, the world I wish I was born into. But that never felt right. If it was just that, then why do I mourn the lack of your presence? Why do I see others with children and feel jealous?

I'm afraid to tell others about you. I feel like they would think I am crazy. A person dreaming about a child and mourning them despite only being in my early twenties? Some might call that the dreams of a mad woman. A life that doesn't exist? A life that might never exist? Why should I mourn that?

But I do mourn it. I crave it with all of my soul. I want to hold you in my arms and never let go. I want to protect you from the cruelty of the world. I want to see you grow and live a happy life. Why are you restricted to my dreams? Why do you only live there? Who are you...?

I once heard a story of someone with a similar experience to my own. Mourning a life that never existed. I talked to that person, I dared to share my story, and we cried together. It felt nice to talk about you, but I know I can't tell others; they wouldn't understand.

Maybe you exist in my thoughts because a part of me wishes I was born different so that I could have you. So that I could carry you and one day greet you to the world. But because of how I was born I can't, and I hate myself for that. God, I hate myself for that...

Where are you? Are you my future or one that will never be? Are you nothing more than fiction? Please tell me your name... I want it with all of my being... I want it with all of my heart...

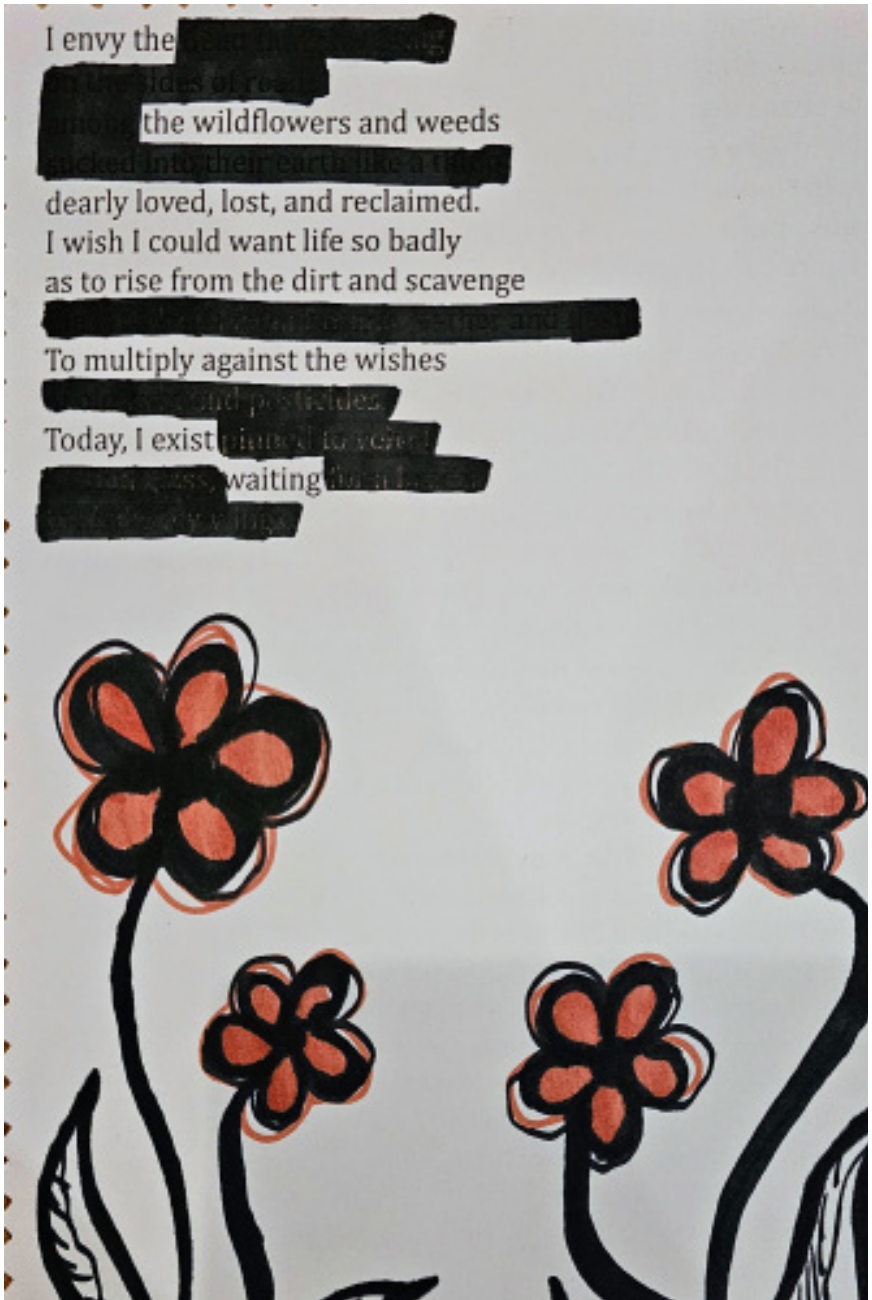
Sincerely,

The Person Who Wishes to Give You a Name

Brooke Turner

**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

**BLACKOUT POETRY CONTEST**



Northwest Boulevard

# Katie Gearing

## TENNESSEE HONEY

You hold my breast in your hand. The flesh soft...tender...  
Untouched...unexplored. Yet...when your finger pries along  
the peaked mountain, it feels as though I was made for you...  
this moment.

The soul curdles inside, that leaves me heaving...aching  
for something more.

It does not flow in a slow cascade of milky river. It  
grasps onto the fatty tissue beneath the heaving skin...screaming  
profanities at the heart who listens so intently, yet will not heed its  
demands.

As the herd of cattle rounded the aching bend,  
when the rain was beginning to blossom on their hide,  
before the weeds begin to grow back from unclipped  
hooves,  
as my eyes blister from this something more than I could  
never understand,  
as my mother kissed her lover goodbye in the barn a few paces  
away,  
I let my innocence die with you.

# Taylor Davis

## CANDLE

Silver  
glinting branches  
engulf the flicker  
of amber flames  
as tendrils  
of delicate  
smoke, waltz  
about the  
quiet air

a kiss  
of vanilla and  
a caress  
of cream  
linger in the  
shadows of  
heat, whispering to  
a secret love:

*Notice me,  
breathe my scent  
deep into  
your nostrils and  
let it live  
among the fibers  
of your  
nose as you  
write*

*allow me  
to comfort you  
in this  
silence until my  
pure wicks have  
charred, and my  
wax has melted,  
evaporated to  
gas, leaving nothing  
but the smoldering  
liquid of  
my remains*

Mercedes Greene

# EDITOR'S CHOICE COLLAGE CONTEST



# Noelle Marquardt

## **EDGE**

Tonight, I am far away,  
unsettled on this bare hill,  
on this grotesque island

with no nature to speak of.  
The little fires have spread. They will not stop  
killing the nerves,

killing the connections,  
which starve for care.  
O, how they eat up the loving touch.

And I bend over backwards  
to see the end  
or a beginning of sorts.

But the black night sits heavy  
like a tombstone that will not open,  
numbing the heart with stillness.

# Alexa Tomkowiak

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MADWOMAN

*"I know this sadness won't ever go away. And I'm OK with that. I'd just like the rest of the world to be OK with that too."*

*- Ella Purnell, A Week in the Life of a Madwoman*

I wake up earlier than I thought I would, despite waking up at about this time every day for the last few months. I pry my eyes open, unsticking my clumpy lashes from each other. For a moment, I don't even remember yesterday. The past is behind me and only the future is ahead. I'm ready for a new day! Then I look in the mirror and my puffy, mascara-streaked face betrays my late-night activity of crying myself to sleep. (A hobby I'm an avid participant in.)

The memories rush back and so do the tears and I'm more frustrated than anything else. Despite this being my thousandth time thinking about everything that happened yesterday, due to the way it's been repeating in my head nonstop, I still can't stop the tears from coating my skin like a slip-n-slide. My eyes burn, either from the tears or the contacts I left in, so I ball my hands and press them into my sockets before giving my head a few good whacks like it might reboot my brain. I ponder my options.

- Scream about it

Done that.

- Talk it out

Did that. Twice.

- Cry about it

Obviously tried and tested.

A quick look at the clock tells me I can think of more options on my way to class rather than while sitting hunched over in my bed staring at my reflection. By the time I'm getting my pants on, the endless repeat of yesterday in my mind is accompanied by one line of a song playing over and over on top of the incessant chatter of the Other me that either is my brain or lives in my brain. She tells me these jeans look like shit on me, and I ignore her because they're my only semi clean pair so they're going to have to work no matter what she says.

I run to the laundry room to look for socks, but by the time I reach the kitchen I've been in deep conversation with myself about how I can't do anything right, and I forget my mission as soon as I step past the laundry room threshold. I run back to my room because I realize I need my shoes, but I never actually got the socks so I run back to the laundry, passing my bathroom which makes me skid to a stop like a cartoon character so I can run in and brush my teeth and I nod my head to that one line of song again and again, that silly Other me tells me I'm worthless and I agree, and I don't put on any more mascara because I'm still crying off the leftovers from yesterday and I remember I didn't put my book in my bag so I tell myself to do that right after I get my socks which speaking of, I still need to do.

I realize my dad took my brother's car to his appointment which means I don't have a car to take to school because my car just broke down yesterday and I start to hyperventilate. I get so angry at my dad. I think he's selfish and unthoughtful for taking that car instead of his own and then when I realize the car is there and he did in fact take his car I'm angry at myself: for being stupid, for thinking that about my dad when he's trying his best. I think about how I'm an awful person and the worst daughter or maybe that was the Other me who thought that and I can't stop thinking about that stupid song and now I'm definitely going to be late and my dogs are giving me a weird look.

Somehow, at the end of it all, I'm in the car with (almost) everything I need, including the headphones I nearly forgot in the bathroom but not including the book I remembered and promptly forgot again. I'll remember it once more when I'm halfway to my destination. Finally, as I shift my car into drive and my music fills the space, I realize I've stopped crying. I tell the Other me that now's the time to recenter and turn today from bad to good. I then think about my family dying and cry some more.

I notice I'm quite tense as I unclench my jaw and loosen my grip on the steering wheel. I feel the weight of every task I need to complete pushing against the back of my mind, nagging me to be permanently on edge and anxious, and the drivers in Spokane actively work against lessening my agitation. I wonder if it's possible to exist in a constant state of fight or flight and remind myself to ask my therapist whether she thinks I'm fighting or flighting. I turn up the volume on the Will Wood song

I've been playing on repeat (different to the one liner stuck on repeat in my mind) and it gives me some reprieve from all the noise.

I pull up to the motel parking lot where I left my broken-down car and go to give my keys to the tow truck guys. I make sure to dispose of the evidence of my mental state and wipe my face of tears one last time before exiting my car. When I get to their window the boy in the passenger seat recognizes me and though it takes me a second, I eventually recognize him. While I usually dread seeing people from high school, this was an old friend, one I am pleasantly surprised to see. I smile for the first time today and we hug and talk, and I complain about my life which I'll regret later in the shower, much like my choice of clothes.

After this meeting the world seems lighter. The sun feels warmer and all the noise in my head quiets down a few notches. I feel so silly for having such big reactions to things and scold myself for crying so much in the morning. This new interaction replaces the repeating yesterday and becomes the new scene that plays over and over in my head. It plays again and again until slowly it starts to twist and deform into a cesspool of insecurity and eventually becomes just another background upset to fill all the empty space that I'd rather have in my mind.

Still my day is better. I've got a pep in my step and when the Other me brings up how different I look now compared to when I was in high school, I politely tell her to fuck off. She doesn't, but I'm trying to be kinder to her, so I leave it be. I'm still not completely unaffected by everything that came before this shift in mood, so I get through my classes and the rest of the day by partially dissociating and confining my bigger cries to the bathroom. It takes me a few tries to understand what my friends are saying so I mostly just nod along, going through the motions, trying not to expose how a few inconveniences this morning had me feeling like the world was ending.

Eventually I make it back home although I don't really recall the journey, and I almost immediately freak out over my parents chewing with their mouths open. The noise builds until my body feels like it's on fire and I don't tell them it bothers me because I don't want to be rude, and I also worry that if I try to speak the only thing that will come out is a scream. Instead, I rip my hair out and claw at my arms because that's less noticeable. When

I feel like I can't handle it anymore I skitter off to my bedroom, my goblin den, where I lay in bed and stare at the ceiling until my body feels normal again and I no longer have the desire to tear my ears off or pull my eyes out. Then I stay like that a little longer.

I'm not crying anymore.

I'm not screaming or hyperventilating or hurting myself, but I'm still just ... sad.

I deflate into my mattress like I've been defeated but really, I'm just letting the sadness be. I have to, at least for a while so that when I crawl out of my den and rejoin the living, I can pretend like I'm not. Like I'm guilt and stress free and like I can handle being around someone eating chips and like I'm not always having a conversation with myself in my head with another me that hates me just as much as I hate myself.

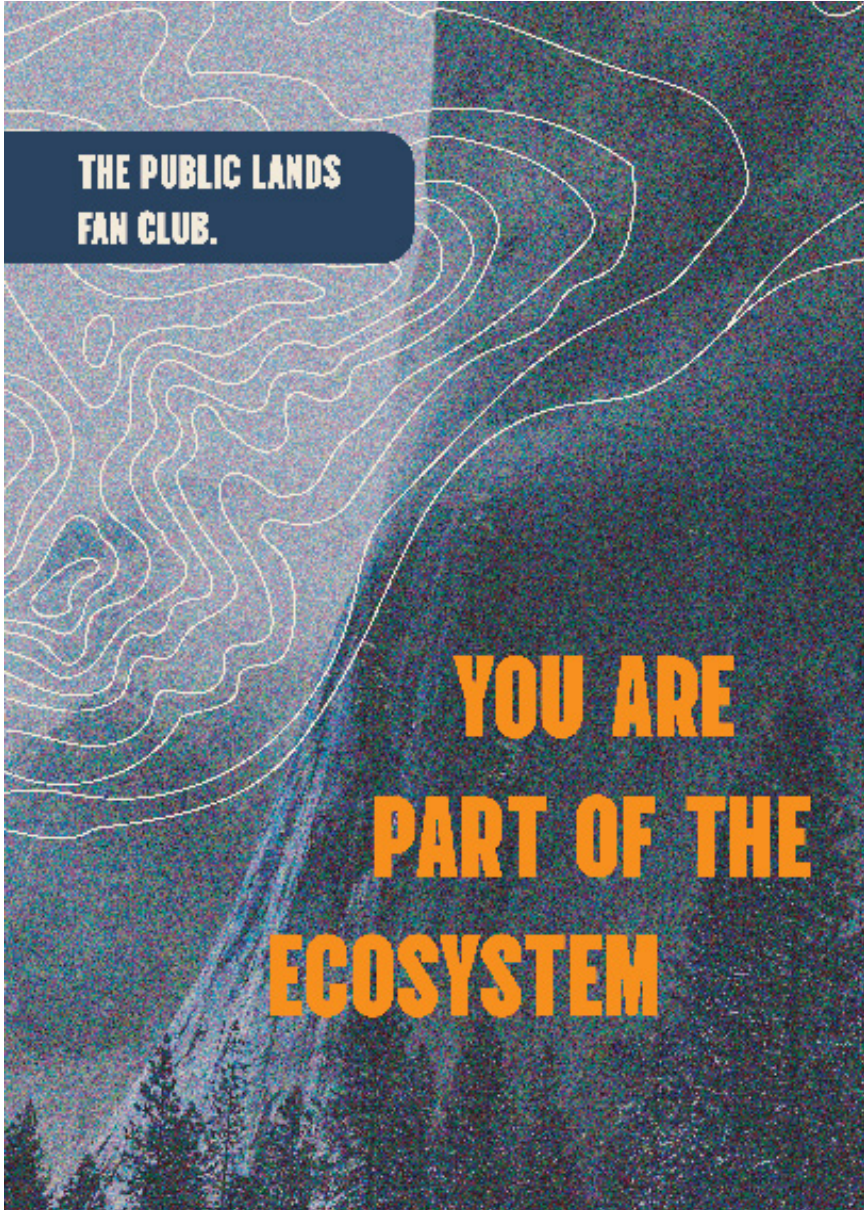
I do eventually make my way back out to humanity and spend time with my loved ones. We laugh about fanfiction and the NBA and quiz each other on songs, and I text my friends back finally and realize I haven't thought about yesterday in hours.

I don't cry myself to sleep.

Look at me go!

Ursula Bakken

# YOU ARE PART OF THE ECOSYSTEM



*People often forget that we are a part of the world. We belong, and we can have a positive impact. I think that is a fact that is often drowned out by all the harm mankind has done to the earth. I want to use design to help change people's mindsets.*

Northwest Boulevard

Daisy Noelle  
**the solace I find in water**

my red kayak floats on the waves  
and I feel like I am

twirling in my driveway after a fourteen-hour road trip.  
realizing I can get a 32% on my German final and still get an A in  
the class.  
running through the airport to baggage claim after being gone  
from my boyfriend for months.  
being told by my sister she picked me as her hero for a school  
project.  
being sent a TikTok and my friend says, this reminds me of you.

Vincenzo Cardamuro

# **WHILE SITTING ON A JETTY IN CAPE MAY**

I am the whim in a shark's tummy.  
In the depths beneath the waves,  
light dances across black eyes  
smelling for copper lost in blue.  
I chase harbor seals;  
I can never stop.

I am the security of a harbor  
seal, nestled between two rocks,  
napping, unaware  
of the whim lurking,  
languid in my cradle of stone.  
The current flosses through my fur.

Daisy Noelle  
**SEA SCOUTS**

I wish I had a candle scented like varnish.  
If only I knew the brand of the god-awful  
tasting coffee we bought.  
And sometimes I drive by a working harbor  
just to smell the barnacles and grime.  
I wish the rope burns on my hands didn't  
heal so I'd remember  
those summers I spent on the boat.

S.J. Samploc

## IN THE QUIET SEASON

His breath, heavy in the air, thick  
haze and his tears, frozen as he weeps and  
she takes his tears, white and boreal, weaves  
them into fabric, and wears them as her own.  
A great cloak enveloping  
her, covering her green hairs.

And I clad in navy and  
black armor. My father's armor orange, the two  
of us sit on a gray iron seat, hanging  
from gray iron cables, steady in wake  
of Boreas' breath. We sit silent or talk,  
serious, boisterous, pointless.

I gaze down at the white  
expanse, dotted with humps  
and grooves, glittering dust  
of pale stars when the sun  
strikes just right. I see insects,  
dozens. Blacks and greys common,  
blue varieties, scarlet and white patterned,  
a few violets and lilacs, striking pinks, magentas,  
dark greens, bright greens, one blinding yellow with  
horrid glowing pink. Some race through powdered  
sugar, others slide uncertain, clumsy, through the  
pale froth. To watch is a privilege.

The gray iron seat hung  
on the gray iron cable deposits  
us at the end of the  
ride. We join the fray, multitudes  
in the swarm upon her cloak,  
knit from his iced tears. As I  
zip, float along her robe, I wonder...  
Will my children get to do this?

Miodist

## **OH, DEAR NATURE...**

Listening to the sounds of the rain  
dripping down on this horrid day,  
those who weep for the lost,  
caused by smoke and flames.  
The sun tries to peek through the clouds  
but the storms refuse to part.  
Are these your tears Mother Earth?  
Grieving for the loss of your children?  
I wish I could speak to you  
to comfort you in your time of need.  
I want to show you how much I cherish you,  
and my love to you.

# Daisy Noelle

## AIRHEADS

Aiden loves hugging. He's sixteen and will hug anyone who asks and a lot of people who don't. He's always been this way. I didn't like physical contact until I moved out of the house, but I was still forced to hug Aiden. "You're his older sister," my mom would say, "It's good for his development." Or something like that. I blame it on David, my older brother. When Aiden was two, David would bribe him to hug anyone who wanted a toddler hug at church. How did he do this? By tearing off microscopic specks of an Airhead candy he got from the bishop's office, David would bribe our squishy toddler brother to hug practically the whole congregation.

— • —

Halloween was a night of business. My siblings and I were allowed to fill one gallon Ziploc bag with our Halloween spoils and the rest would be taken to the Candy-Buy-Back at our orthodontist. This Ziploc bag would contain all our candy to last us a whole year, except for a few pieces we'd get at Christmas and Easter. I always ended up with a lot of Reese's, since Emily is allergic to nuts and the younger boys, traumatized by her going to the hospital once from eating peanut butter, convinced themselves they too were allergic. I would give them pity trades for their Reese's. Emily wanted Kit-Kats, but my dad always traded her out of the white chocolate ones. David and I always gaslighted Aiden into thinking he liked suckers, so he'd trade with us. Who likes suckers, anyways? Everyone was a master of manipulation. Except when it came to Airheads. No one would ever trade those. If we were lucky enough to have an Airhead dropped in our trick-or-treating sack, we probably didn't even wait until the trading circle to eat them. Even the scary flavors, like grape or a mystery flavor, were coveted by the five of us. The only way to trade an Airhead was by offering the single king-sized bar we'd get each year from the house at the end of the cul-de-sac.

— • —

There was an American candy store on Hauptstrasse that I walked by every Wednesday, Friday, and sometimes Saturday. I didn't go in because I'd heard it was expensive. My host sister Lena was obsessed with America so one day I decided to take her. As she got excited over Cheez-Its and confused by Twinkies, I practically squealed seeing the one thing I was hoping to find: Airheads. I bought two red ones, and we left the store. At first, I was going to wait until we made it back home to try them because it was raining but I was too excited. In one of my silly YouTube videos, I captured the moment of her shock at what straight red 40 tasted like. She loved it. I was so glad she loved it, because a week before, I had taken a classmate to the same store to try Airheads, and she did not love the red 40 as much as Lena did.

— • —

Sometimes my coworkers put candies or snacks on the Table of Temptation in the office, and it's first come, first served. There's a candy basket always filled with candy nobody eats. Every once in a while, someone puts a blue or red Airhead in and I snatch it up every time. I don't care if anyone else wants the Airhead. I want it. I don't even think of Airheads as my favorite candy. They're not. I prefer chocolate. I wonder if my siblings snatch them up when they see them too, even though none of us wish for Airheads on our birthdays or Easter. Only when we're all picking candy out of a communal bag do we search for the Airheads. We can't let each other have it, even if there's something slightly better.

— • —

I have two magazines that my stories were published in that I keep meaning to send to Lena in Germany. It's expensive to send anything overseas, so I've been putting it off. Since I'm already sending the package, I'm planning on filling the box to the brim with Cheez-It bags and Airheads. I know my host dad won't like them. He doesn't really understand why things contain sugar. I know that Lena loves anything Haribo or Milka more than Airheads. I have a suspicion she only loved them because they were American and less because of how they tasted. Germany has some amazing candy. Airheads cannot compete. I'm hoping she'll remember that day we spent together in Heidelberg. It's one of my favorites. I hope she keeps

the wrapper pinned on her corkboard like I do of the green and pink Maoams.

— • —

I'm not sure if I truly love Airheads or if I just like reminiscing. I never buy them myself. Somehow, I just seem to acquire them. Why do they seem to be everywhere now that I'm an adult, but were in such short supply as a kid? Every time I eat an Airhead, I feel an urgency to gobble it up before anyone else does. But there's no one there to try and steal it. It's just me, my memories, and the cherry flavored Airhead in my hand. Instead of chewing it as fast as possible, as I would around my thieving siblings, I find myself savoring each bite. Perhaps if I eat slow enough, they'll have time to cross the state and grab it out of my grasp just as I'm about to bite into the last chunk. Of course, I'd never simply hand over an Airhead to my siblings if they were there. But if I could trade every Airhead I'll ever get for a few more moments on the living room floor, trading candy on Halloween, or under a rainy German sky with my host sister, I'd give them all up in a heartbeat.

Josiah Morgan

**FINALIST**

**BLACKOUT POETRY CONTEST**

Untitled

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I was going [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] know why,

[REDACTED] trying to figure out why [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I keep hoping [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] we're all in clown makeup [REDACTED]

and [REDACTED]

I'm supposed to ask, "Who's there?"

[REDACTED]

But [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The KAPOW!!! [REDACTED] covers up the sob I let out

when I drop the gun and crumple;

this is no way to make a living

[REDACTED]

Katie Gearing

## **AFTER ENID BOARDED THE BUS**

I'm alone on the bus  
dressed in a white fur coat  
from my estranged grandmother  
a blue pleated dress  
that brushes my  
bruised knees  
and the white lingerie  
I bought for my wedding day.

The road has been straight,  
crisp stitching.  
A constant echo  
thump thump thump

I gaze at the bus driver  
who resembles  
my father and his father  
his eyes hidden behind  
the shades of night.

I never ask, "where to?"  
he never answers my worries.

I see a man  
playing my father's piano  
on the crumbling cliff  
of the bridge the bus sways upon.

Woolly fog falls  
across the floor  
of the bus.

I'm not fearful  
some complication.

I look out the window again  
at glass houses melded together by bubbling tar  
wrapped in clever roses.

My mother jumps off the vine  
a silky sweet raindrop.

Years pass  
untill we reach my next stop

Grace Ogle

**FINALIST**

**COLLAGE CONTEST**



Vincenzo Cardamuro  
**A COLLEGE CREDIT**

Balls of fire fill the sky with a false sunset;  
rain ignites the atmosphere. A great steam  
engine powers the city, coughing  
lightning bolts that cast shadows from citizens' souls.

Horseshoe crabs crawl up Mt. Spokane.  
Clouds erupt, copper shells  
pulverize ponderosas.  
A wooden roller coaster sinks  
into the beach of gray sand. Waves crash.

The tide on the edge of my vision refocuses.  
I draw my attention back to the work,  
judging authors who may become peers.  
Clouds roll over the mountain.

C.B. Nygaard

# TALKING ABOUT MY FEELINGS (OR RATHER, LACK THEREOF)

*Dedicated to my parents who have always supported my writing.*

For as long as I can remember, I've been bombarded with questions like, "Why don't you ever smile?" "Don't you ever laugh?" "Are you sad?" "Are you okay?"

Part of the issue, I think, is that I have what is scientifically referred to as a "resting bitch face." The corners of my mouth turn downward when at rest, resulting in my neutral facial expression looking either angry or sad, depending on who you ask. This is not helped by one of my eyebrows being slightly taller than the other, making me look as if I am permanently raising one eyebrow in disgust and disbelief.

Another, perhaps more impactful, "issue" with me is that I am simply bad at expressing, and even feeling, at times, emotions.

I'm not completely cold and unfeeling. People who know me well will have seen me express joy and sadness.

I'm loveless. I'm celibate. I'm apathetic about my gender. I'm other.

I've always felt the othering. I never cared enough to be a girl, but I didn't care enough to not be a girl. My identity is fluid, I recognize that. But it's unimportant. It doesn't matter to me.

I think I could love, if I wanted to. If I knew and trusted someone enough, I could feel romantic love, I'm nearly sure of it. I do love. I love my parents. I loved my cat. I loved my friend. But there's no one I love romantically. There never has been.

People look at me and see an unfeeling, loveless, celibate, not-quite-a-girl, and that makes me other. Does it make me nothing more than a stereotype of lovelessness and celibacy going along with being cold and unfeeling? Maybe. Does that bother me? Not particularly. I am what I am.

But sometimes, I just don't feel anything.

Even when I know that I should.

This manifests in several ways.

Last spring, I lost a friend (not someone I was incredibly close to, but I knew her and I cared about her) to suicide. I watched as everyone else cried, publicly expressing emotion. Obviously feeling things. Grief. Guilt. Shock.

I didn't cry.

I didn't feel anything at all.

As I left the room, I was accosted by a counselor, who gave me his card and asked how I was feeling. I told him I was still processing, that I couldn't believe it. He took one look at my expressionless face and told me that what I was feeling was normal, that I was probably experiencing some shock.

Maybe he was right.

Maybe he wasn't.

But I didn't feel anything when I left that room. I know that I should have.

I checked myself into counseling later that afternoon. Another performative action. I told the counselor that I didn't feel upset, and that I felt like I should. Was something wrong with me?

She told me it was normal.

"Everyone processes grief differently," She said. The feelings, the crying, they may come later. Just because you're not feeling anything immediately doesn't make you a cold unfeeling bitch.

But the feelings just didn't come. I had cried for a day when my cat died, just a few weeks prior.

After counseling, I went out on a "sister date," trying to recruit someone new to join our sorority. I didn't cry then, I kept a straight face and answered her questions about our sisterhood and philanthropy. When my cat died I had to go to an event right afterwards. I could barely keep it together, but I managed not to let the waterworks out.

The day after my cat died, I went to my weekly TTRPG game and had a great time. I didn't even think about my poor cat.

To say I didn't feel anything for my friend would be a bit of an untruth. I did feel things; of course it was sad, what had happened, and of course I felt bad for her family, and of course I wished that she hadn't taken her own life. But whenever anyone asked me about it, I always worried about performing the correct emotional response. I performed sadness and shock, not because my insides were in turmoil, but because I didn't want

anyone to think I was cold and unfeeling. I already get accused of that enough.

Maybe I am a cold, unfeeling bitch. I've certainly had that accusation hurled at me a few times. When I take the MBTI (which is admittedly not considered to be a the most accurate personality test), I score one hundred percent thinking and zero percent feeling (which is more related to decision making, as I understand it, but still, it's a score that isn't indicative of lots of soft, squishy feelings).

I did love my cat.

I did care about my friend.

Does it make me a bad person if I didn't feel for her?

Now, it's a common misconception that I don't have a sense of humor. I do. I get jokes and I am perfectly capable of laughing. But sometimes, I just don't understand why people think something is funny.

The other night, I was with some of my sisters. They were goofing off, doing what I can only describe as stamping their feet and pointing. This was, to them, hilariously funny. I couldn't for the life of me understand why they found it so funny. It wasn't that I begrudged them for their fun; I simply didn't understand why it was fun. I stood to the side and observed, resisting the urge to interrogate them on the subject of why, exactly, it was funny.

I think that people simply expect this sort of behavior from me at this point. There's Ms. Stiff and Serious. There's Mx. Unfeeling Bitch/Bastard. There's Mr. Got a Bad Grade in Human Emotions. Nobody ever comes to me when they're looking for a good time. People come to me for help on essays or when the chapter needs someone to take a boring position.

Taylor Davis  
**A LOVER'S MEMORY**

The sparse strands  
sprouting from your chest  
tickle my cheek as  
the polish-chipped tips  
of my fingers dance  
along the muscular mounds

the rhythm  
of your heart  
is soothingly steady,  
each beat kissing  
the outer drum  
of my ear, singing  
me to slumber

the dark wisps  
that coat your  
eyes, faintly flutter  
before falling closed,  
coaxing mine  
to follow

the muted mahogany  
of your cologne  
mingles with the  
cotton fibers of  
the sheets before  
migrating to my  
nose, gently  
prompting me  
to inhale

my lungs consent,  
and our shallow  
breaths sync as  
I commit you, my  
lovely, and this  
mundane moment  
to memory

Charly Fetzer

## TULIP ORANGE

I opened my blinds this morning  
while my bed got on its hands and knees and begged me  
to stay longer.

I thought about it for a minute  
there's always tomorrow to try again.

But!

*This* morning I did it! I got up,  
pulled my comforter tight and sealed it shut for when I  
arrive home again.

I picked out my comfy shoes  
the ones I like to walk in and  
I walked.

I found every house that had  
a colorful tulip-painted lawn and  
I took my time like it was mine to take, watching.

The tulips  
- the pink and the purple ones  
were singing.  
I don't remember telling them my favorite song  
but maybe I did one time?

The red ones and the yellow ones,  
they were holding hands.  
Intimacy was radiating.

The orange ones well  
I can't quite describe them.  
They asked me if I had a favorite color  
-tulip or not  
and I said  
of course I do  
it's always you.

Sierra Crisp-Johnson  
**A STORM'S BOUQUET**



# Charly Fetzer

## IT SMELT LIKE FLOWERS

There was a perfume I wore last Spring.  
Every day last Spring.  
It smelt like flowers.  
It was green and inviting.  
I'd even say it was persuasive  
some days.  
I don't know why I felt I needed to wear perfume  
to the funeral.  
It's almost like it begged me, like  
it needed to be there itself.  
And it was;  
In my bed days after, stitched to  
my sheets and stained into my skin.  
One day last Spring, I stopped wearing it;  
even though  
it smelt like flowers.  
I don't know when and I don't know why.  
I smelt it yesterday, the beginning of November,  
and I flinched.  
My roommate said she liked it,  
I said  
"Me too."  
And I lied, of course, because  
it reeked of death  
and  
how do you tell someone that?

S.J. Sampaloc  
**VENOMOUS TALK**

The hatchet splits wood,  
the knife splits fruit,  
the hateful hand splits hearts,  
the vile tongue splits joy,  
cloven in two. Self-esteem  
lies dead on the ground, blood  
trickles from its temple.  
The tongue continues its  
impassioned crusade felling  
those in its way: confidence,  
peace, beauty, the humble pride,  
and hope. The tongue does this  
with violent strikes, ship-breaking  
waves, that splinter foundations, erode  
the senses with venom as its weapon  
of choice. Venom knife: f\*g! bitch!  
homo! snowflake! little girl! cocksucker!  
The poisoned root, another  
favorite, flourishes, flourishes in  
the foggy mind, bogged down, pulled  
further, further into the swamp. Tangles  
around the throat, blood pouring into  
the lungs, suffocation, strangling the heart  
in a grip of thorns. Deceptions and schemes  
burn the birds away, fleeing into skies of smoke.  
The tongue incites other tongues  
to spread the flames,  
multiply eternal,  
seeds dispersed in the wind,  
germination of undoing.  
The tongue does not realize  
the venom kills it too.

# Corbin Winters

## INAUGURATION DAY

Inauguration Day, 2025

I have work the next day, but I forget, and spend half of my shift asleep in the Pride Center, overwhelmed by anxiety but comforted by the safety of that refuge. It's nice to spend time around my people after spending the previous day desperately trying not to freak out. We are all scared, but at least we are together. There is hope for us yet. I clock in for two hours, and fortunately, my boss is kind. The librarian covering the desk does not berate me for being late, and though my coworkers regard me with a kind of mildly confused indifference, they do not begrudge me either. I buy a Lotus drink and a cookie. I'm burning through my spending money like it's flash paper, but whatever it takes to get through the day.

I decide, on that day, that I will no longer be nice. We played nice, us Queers and Transsexuals. We played kind, and all we got for our trouble was a knife in our backs. So I do not have to be nice anymore. I do not have to coddle cisgender feelings, as if they were more important than Transsexual lives. I wish I had fangs and claws and an invincible hide so that I could tear people apart with my teeth, and wear their blood as a badge of honor, a warning. I will no longer be the "nice" Transsexual or the perfect victim. I see a photograph of a protester from the 80's and internalize his sign: "No More Mr. Nice Fag." I allow myself anger. Rage, even.

I have class that day.

I don't want to go, but stewing in my thoughts is a worse fate, so I go anyway. It gives me something else to be mad about. It feels nice, in a way, to be mad about something so small, so inconsequential. I learn nothing new, only reminded that people lie through their smiling teeth, but at least I have an excuse to text the guy I have a crush on.

I spend the week trying to stay informed without spiraling into utter hopelessness. I fluctuate rapidly from defiantly

Northwest Boulevard

and cautiously hopeful, to bone-crushingly scared. My world becomes very small, just my state, and even smaller still, to my town, my friends. I do not have the energy to feel for the whole country, I barely have the energy to care about all the people I encounter on a daily basis. But here, at least, I can do some good.

By the end of the week, I'm tired. It's only the first week. But, I have movie night to look forward to. I drink far too much and hold my crush's hand in the grocery store. We eat pizza, they bake a cake. I look at him as much as I can. The alcohol makes me bold, but not bold enough to tell him. We hold hands and hug, and I kiss him on the neck. (I'll apologize for it the next day. He'll tell me he doesn't mind, though he doesn't get what I see in him. I'll compliment him fervently. He'll call me cute. I'll ride that high for the rest of the day.) For a few fleeting moments, I have a respite. I have peace. For just a few seconds, everything is okay.

Later, in my drunken delirium, held in my friend's arms on their bathroom floor, at 2 AM, I decide to tell him how I feel. Not tonight, the voices in my head are out for blood and he's making out with our other friend in the next room over, but soon. Later, when I'm sober, I decide it will be this week or the next one. Before Valentine's day, at least. That way I can stop tormenting myself with what-ifs.

I lose track of time in the shower a day or so later as I imagine all the ways that conversation could go. Despite my best efforts, I cannot stop myself from hoping, from playing out scenarios in my mind where things go well. My anxiety schools my thoughts into preparing for the worst, but even then, there is hope in those imaginings. I do not believe him to be cruel. (I trick myself into believing I will not lose everything I hold dear by telling him how I feel.)

The next few days, I'll contemplate confessing over text, with random bursts of confidence, but I resist. He deserves better than that. This week. This week I'll tell him.

It's almost funny to me, how these dark days have given me some of the courage I needed to confess. It feels like the world is ending, history repeating and rhyming, so why not tell him? What do I have to lose? (Everything, everything.) It's like dandelions growing on a battlefield. He is the sun and I am naught but a humble sunflower.

On Monday, I skip class to go to therapy for the first time since early December. It is much needed. (Only a week, only a week.) Hope and despair still battle within me, but I get through the day. I debate putting a bold patch on my jacket. (I decide against it, eventually. Hopefully someday soon I can wear it without fear, but for now, I prioritize my safety). I design new patches, with words from my community to give me hope ("better a faggot than a fascist," "do not obey in advance," "fix your hearts or die," "we take care of us"). I wait for my new paint markers to arrive.

On Tuesday, the hold breaks. My bus is late. I make the mistake of looking at the news for too long and spend my morning commute wondering if I'll need to seek asylum in Canada after I graduate. If I'll even be able to. Red flag warning for genocide. I feel the eyes of my Jewish ancestors on the back of my neck. They know the signs as well as I. They fled to America to escape this. Now it's my turn.

I feel the eyes of Transsexuals and Queers past on me as well. Their gaze raises goosebumps on my skin. I tell them that I hope I have not failed them. I tell them I'm trying, but I'm scared.

They tell me to live. They tell me to fight. I tell them I am not brave. I tell them that I talk a big talk, and have much rage in my heart, but I am not brave. I do not want to die. I do not want to die because even if my death spurs on the hearts of many, it will not matter, because I will be dead. My song unfinished, a solo cut short. Pages torn out of the end of my book. My mother would weep.

The dead hold my hands tenderly. So many eyes, so many of us. Echoing back through time and tide, more ancient than even Rome's ruins.

Their message is simple:

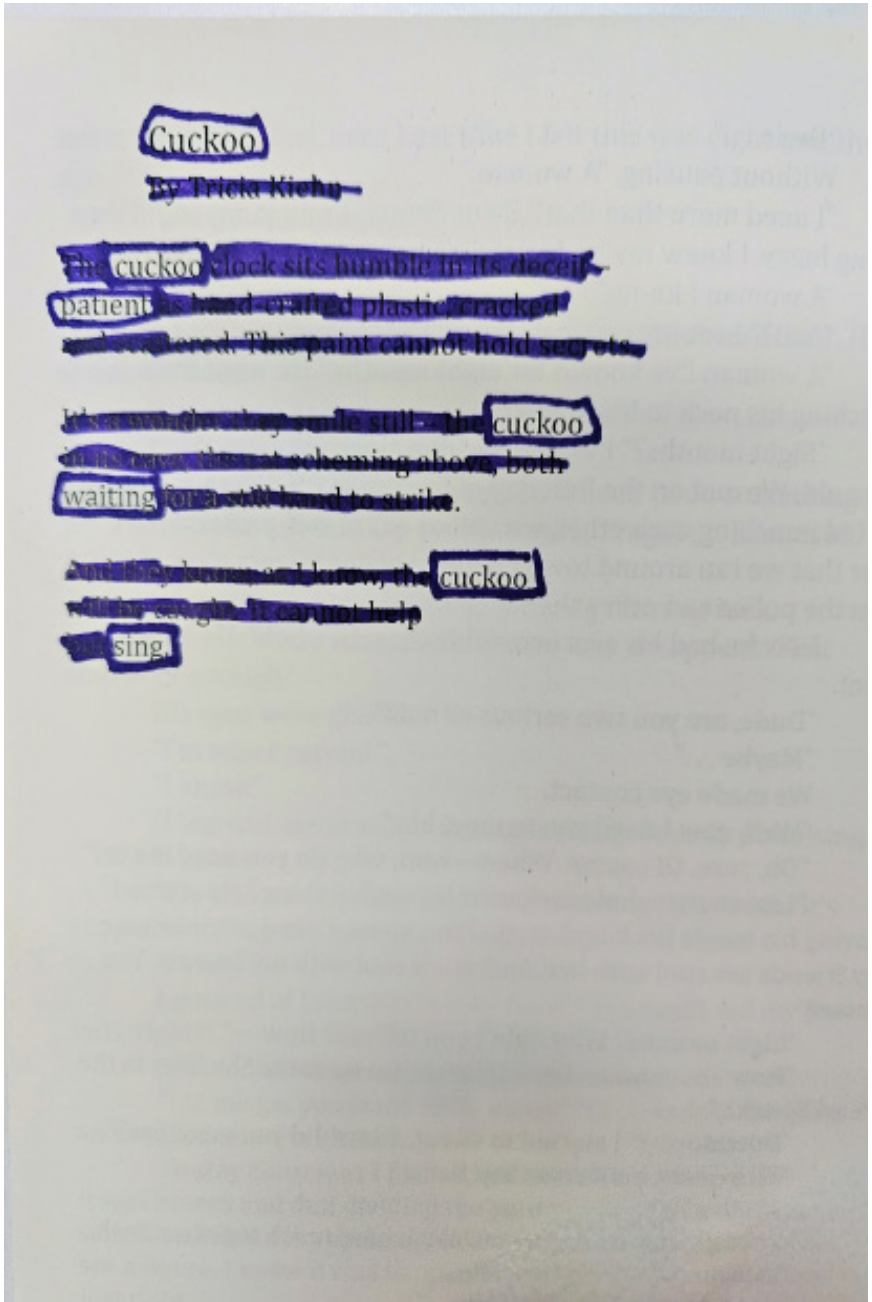
"Fight like hell, however you can."

They tell me my fight doesn't have to be in the streets. I am soft, and I am breakable, but I can write. They urge me to write. I bleed poetry on the fresh dirt of graves bearing the wrong names and hope my words will be enough.

Melanie Jones

**FINALIST**

# **BLACKOUT POETRY CONTEST**



# Katie Gearing

## **EIGHT HOUR SHIFT**

... I work at the hospital  
Where I make people concoctions  
To keep them awake  
They tell me of their dying sons as I pour sugar  
into the shots  
Into the milk  
A weary three-step process

...I'd rather give them  
Something to sleep  
Wake up after the funeral  
After the baby grows into an infant

There's a cardiac arrest  
On the third floor  
They repeat over  
Steaming milk          sorrowful whimpers  
Do I cry with them?

... I once saw a woman with  
Blood on her cotton tote bag  
Full of memories  
Was it type A or was  
She type O and special

I wish I were special

... I burn my hand and  
Tears fill my eyes  
For pity

When Jesus  
Looks at the mass  
Of people eating overpriced  
Mashed potatoes

Does he weep?

...The glass fogs up from  
A meaty child staring  
At his hollow blue eyes  
He does not pray

Someone just listen

Would you like to leave a tip?

# Noelle Marquardt

## **SOUTH SHORE, SD**

At night the Northern Pike  
Thrashes about its net.  
Stars lean in,  
Dark water waits.  
A fish's fate is considered.

In South Shore  
A siren sounds not for war,  
But for noon and six.  
Prehistoric pelicans devour the Old-Timer's hopes for his limit.  
Languid, he walks to the bar  
To pour one out for his dead luck.

Across from the bar the metallic silos are poised.  
Proud, silent giants against the blue  
And God's eye shining down on Diane's garden.  
The lush marsh below –  
Thick emerald refuge for small turtles  
And the nightly firefly flicker.  
Their bright cadence is like the slow tick of time.

The pike loosens fate's vise –  
It plunges into murky water,  
Slowly sinks to the bottom, still as a stone,  
And warily swims away.

# Violet Harreld

## FINALIST

### COLLAGE CONTEST



# Charly Fetzer

## OPEN EARS

And so when the sun is shining  
and the wind is  
gently braiding my hair the way my mom used to  
I like to think that things are ok.

Or maybe they will be?

Because  
what can't be made ok by  
sitting outside and knowing  
that it is by pure luck  
to be able to do so?

I think my life began when I stopped to wonder  
if the birds that seemed to  
always be talking  
were maybe talking to me.  
I realized that I wanted to listen.

# CONTRIBUTORS

## Ursula Bakken

is a 2025 graduate of the Visual Communication Design program at EWU.

## Vincenzo Cardamuro

is a BA in Creative Writing student at Eastern Washington University with a love for poetry. His work has appeared in Wire Harp and Northwest Boulevard, and nominated for the Baldasty Award in both 2024 and 2025. You can find more of his work at [enzospoems.netlify.app](https://enzospoems.netlify.app).

## Sierra Crisp-Johnson

is a Visual Communication Design student at EWU.

## Taylor Davis

has always had a love for words, language, and literature—from weekly trips to the library with her grandmother in elementary school to a junior in the creative writing program at EWU. She was raised in a large family that always nurtured her love for learning, and one of her biggest goals is to make them proud while exploring the complexities of human emotions and ordinary life through her writing.

## Charly Fetzer

is a sophomore pursuing a degree in Technical Communication and Creative Writing and feels incredibly lucky to get to write and create alongside a very supportive community. She looks forward to writing and publishing more and hopes to one day write a children's book for her family.

## Katie Gearing

is a senior at Eastern Washington University, majoring in Creative Writing and minoring in Literary Studies. She will attend the University of Alabama for her master's in library science.

Mercedes Greene

is the Editor's Choice of Northwest Boulevard's Collage Night Contest.

Violet Harreld

is a finalist of Northwest Boulevard's Collage Night Contest.

Melanie Jones

is a junior at EWU with a major in Creative Writing and a minor in Screenwriting. She fell in love with storytelling on the carpet in the reading corner of her fourth-grade classroom and has aspired to be an author ever since. Besides obsessing over fictional worlds and characters, she is also on the EWU fastpitch softball team and plays the cello. She also is a finalist in Northwest Boulevard's Blackout Poetry Night contest.

Noelle Marquardt

has graduated with a degree in psychology from EWU. She is a mother of two and loves to write creatively in her free time.

Miodist

is a senior studying Creative Writing with a minor in Screenwriting and learning different parts of theater productions. She grew up moving a lot and found a love for making up stories, characters, and entire worlds in her head while on long road trips. She primarily writes fictional stories set in fantastical worlds and poems that attempt to paint a picture in the reader's mind. She loves Dungeons & Dragons, making coffee, and reading way too much fan fiction.

Josiah Morgan

is a finalist of Northwest Boulevard's Blackout Poetry Night Contest.

Daisy Noelle

is a 2025 graduate of Eastern Washington University, where she studies Creative Writing and German. She grew up in the rainy weather of western Washington, so reading fantasy and fiction novels became her way to escape the gloominess outside. This love of reading turned into a passion for writing. Daisy mainly

writes short stories filled with magical realism, YA fantasy novels, and poetry based on the Puget Sound. Her short stories and poetry have been published in Northwest Boulevard.

### C.B. Nygaard

is a creative writing student in their senior year of undergrad. When they aren't writing, they enjoy spending time with their five cats or going on walks.

### Grace Ogle

is a finalist in Northwest Boulevard's Collage Night Contest.

### S.J. Sampaloc

is a sophomore double major in creative writing and technical communications. He's lived most of his life in the PNW where growing up he developed a love of storytelling. His fiction and prose explore themes of nature, fantasy, and sexual and cultural identity. In his spare time, he enjoys reading, skiing, and traveling. Once he graduates, he plans to get a job as a technical writer on the west side as well as work on becoming an author of fiction and poetry.

### Alexa Tomkowiak

is a creative writing major. She has had work published in the Wire Harp and won the Baldasty award for her poem "Agoraphobic."

### Brooke Turner

is the Editor's Choice of Northwest Boulevard's Blackout Poetry Night Contest.

### Corbin Winters

is perhaps best described as a murder of crows running around Washington State in the shambling approximation of a man. He's been telling stories (mostly to himself) since he learned how to, so it seemed only natural that he pursue a degree in Creative Writing. Currently studying at Eastern Washington University, he writes prose and poetry that he hopes communicate the multi-faceted experience of being queer and trans in a world that infamously does not like that.