



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
HONORS COLLEGE 2024

BRAINCHILD

VOLUME XI

Brainchild

Literary & Arts Magazine



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Brainchild

Literary & Arts Magazine

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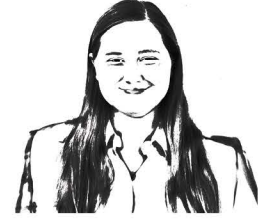
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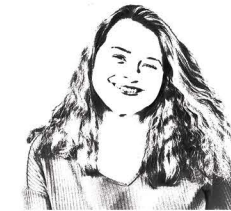
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Foreword

If you were to anxiously scour the internet for advice on how to navigate change, you'd be met with many equally uncertain answers: *Be more positive! Create realistic goals! Find simplicity!* These vague remedies often lead us to even more confounding questions. How can we remain positive when we are hardwired to resist change? How can we know that a goal is attainable when nothing is guaranteed—when life is so malleable? This kind of fear is intrinsic to life in the Midwest. Here, change is not simply a side effect of life but a culture, a way of being.

Our region is a hub of coming and going, of rural and urban, of growth and decay. We are the culmination of stereotypical American life, offering everything from sprawling cities to thriving farmland. For every standing building, there is one crumbling and yearning to be explored. For every meticulously tended field, a wild and untamable one. In the Midwest, you can't escape change. You'll find it in the endless city construction, in the spring soybean shoots, in the rare instances where it seems uncomfortably absent. In spite of our innate preference for stability, we overcome change every day because we have no other choice. We spend time with it, interact with it, and if we're lucky, will one day embrace it as a crucial part of who we are.

Until then, change remains disconcerting. It abides by no rules. It doesn't care about your new job or your recent breakup. It might arrive slowly, in many small doses over time. It may happen rapidly, all at once, without warning. In this edition of *Brainchild*, you'll find many interpretations of change and the feelings that come with surviving it. *Windy Fields of Memory* (p. 20) opts for a poignant and familiar

translation of uncertainty, beautifully and devastatingly weaving together its before, during, and after. *Somebody Bless America* (p. 32) shines a spotlight on the "after" of midwestern decay, the ever-present potential for reclamation, and the unwavering spirit of the region. *Seeing You In a New Light*. (p. 47) skillfully shifts our focus to the intrapersonal growth that happens in the "after," the joy that was previously shrouded by anguish, and the relentless desire to keep living. It is this very set of ideas that interests us—specifically, how the changes in our environment might reflect and counteract ours, and vice versa.

Last year, *Brainchild* celebrated its 10th anniversary. When the magazine was first launched, nobody could have predicted its eventual magnitude. *Brainchild* has become an award-winning safe haven for honors students, an artistic staple in its community, a collective voice for those who may otherwise go unheard. Despite this history, the world continues to shift and warp around us in unexpected ways: Birth rates are declining. Money is scarce. Young midwesterners are cultivating dreams that have less to do with raising families and seeking higher education, which leaves us in a precarious position. This year, as our university finds ways to cut costs, we find our journal in limbo. It is very likely that this will be the last physical issue of *Brainchild*. Rather than deny this painful reality, we decided that it would be more productive to address our discomfort in true midwest fashion, the only way we know how: by leaning into the change and doing our best to celebrate what may come of it. *Brainchild* will find a way to persevere, and so will you.

There are infinite tiny evolutions happening all around us. The soybeans are edging closer to flowering. The wind is slowly eroding the abandoned mill at the edge of town. They will all, in time, be returned to dust. This, like change, is an inescapable certainty. Being alive is difficult, but you already knew that. We don't need to tell you that the spring flowers will bloom anyway—that the sun will rise and the snow will melt. We don't need to tell you to read a Mary Oliver poem and get back to us. By offering these complicated and difficult pieces, we are instead challenging you to go against your instincts, answer the confounding questions, and emerge on the other side of change—different, and better. If we must open ourselves to the brutal movements of the world, may you do it with hope, curiosity, and an insatiable need to grow. May you survive, excited, with joyful tales to tell. And when you're ready to tell them, we'll be here.

With gratitude,

ISABELLA KAUFMAN
Editor-in-Chief





A Brief Encounter

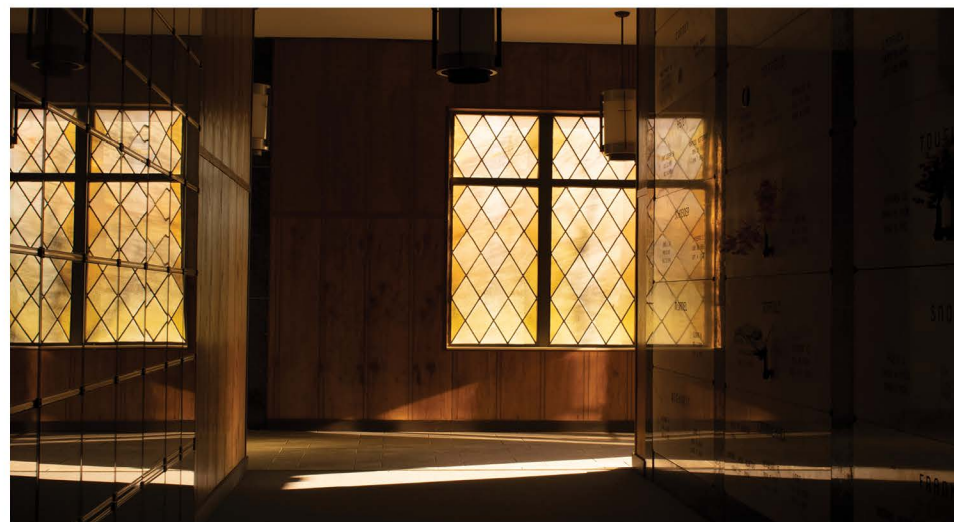
GRACE YUPA

Photography, Nikon D610

Burn

RYAN E. SPALDING

The last bit of sun slips beneath
the sky's tongue. The warmth
moves earth's body in the
same way you move mine:
continuously, cautiously, always
beneath water. And as I weep,
I am momentarily yours.
Just before the light escapes,
night consumes me fully.



Reflections

EMILY WRIGHT

Digital Photography, 16 x 20"

mirror me

LAKEN CHAPIN

sometimes my mother watches me get ready in the bathroom,
perhaps because she sees her twenty-two-year-old self in the mirror.

she'll watch me brush the hair that my grandmother gave us both,
hoping that just once I will glance away for a second more
so she can lean over the sink
and hug herself through the glass.



Edge

MEGAN PORTER

Photography, 24 x 30"

X, Y, See

SASHA JADE

Looking at your body bestows you with an odd sense of peace.
You stretch out your hands and gaze upon your bones,
the little divots of your knuckles, the gentle creases of skin,
the imperfect claws that lie at the ends. They don't know.
They don't care.

Looking at your body bestows you with an odd sense of wonder.
It's so complicated, so intricate, yet simple.

Your organs do not know, your bones do not know,
your blood does not know. They simply are what they're meant to be.
The blood understands the bones and both understand the organs.

Looking at your body bestows you with an odd sense of understanding.
No one sees the peace in piloting life; they are far too concerned
with things that do not matter, assigning meaning to pieces of being
that have no bearing on the person found within.
We are a galaxy of life, with love for every part.

Yet we continuously degrade and devalue the parts of ourselves
that never asked to be given some arbitrary meaning.

If you happen to bear the markings of a Y,
you are damned.

If you happen to display the sin of two Xs,
you are damned.

From the second your lungs take in their first shaky breath,
you and your form are damned to a destiny.

Looking at your body bestows you with an odd sense of grief.
I'm sorry we think so little of you.



The Pillar

KATE OH

Markers, gouache, pencil, colored pencils, crayon, and ink, 18 x 19"

Highway

LOUSTELLA PERRY

*Who, me?
I aspire to be loved one day.*

But it was a blur,
the icy wind across my arms.
Let's talk about love, he said to me,
eyes locked ahead.

I've been on display every day,
especially on this empty interstate,
but the way he saw me made it new.
There's magic in a meteor shower of streetlights, you know.

Every scar and every dream
rolled down beneath the twilight sky.
Can you ignite that feeling in my chest again?

He said to me, he said,
he said.



Go with the Flow

GRACE YUPA

Photography, Nikon D850

South

HANNAH FENDER

When I was young,
I used to ask my dad where the birds
went during the winter.

I'd sit there and stare
at his empty face, lined with regret,
and wait for an answer,

while he'd stare back
at anything but me. Then I'd pull myself
up from the floor,

heaving my ten-year-old body,
and leave him there in silence. Then
I'd lay outside in the grass

and stare up at the
sky, wasting away each moment of each
day trying to find an answer.

Now when I ask my dad where the birds
go, he tells me that I never worked hard enough.
He hands me an empty jar filled with

failures and asks me to do
something about them. So I take out each one and
lay them all on the table, side by side,

counting them by fives
as I feel warm water run down my cheeks.
When he finally looks at me,

I tell him that I am not
crying. I tell him that I forgot what it was like
to be ten years old and filled with hope.

*This poem is highlighted as the winner
of the 2024 Wick Poetry Scholarship.*



Windy Fields of Memory

ABRIANA ROSU

Ink and digital, 11 x 17"

Ars Poetica: Preserving human remains to forestall decomposition

ANGELINA FIRMALAN

it takes five minutes
without oxygen
for the brain to die.

it takes twenty-four hours
before the body starts
to leak, discolor, bloat.

now dilute its stench with methanol,
trade its coagulated blood with formaldehyde,
press pause on the process,

then play dress up
with the body:

brush its hair,
paint its nails,
trim its beard.

showcase it

swaddle it in yew,
like a frame
armored with tempered glass.

maybe burn it,
flesh melting off bone,
its ash turned into a trinket,

or let it crumble with the soil,
king vultures picking away
at meat left untainted.

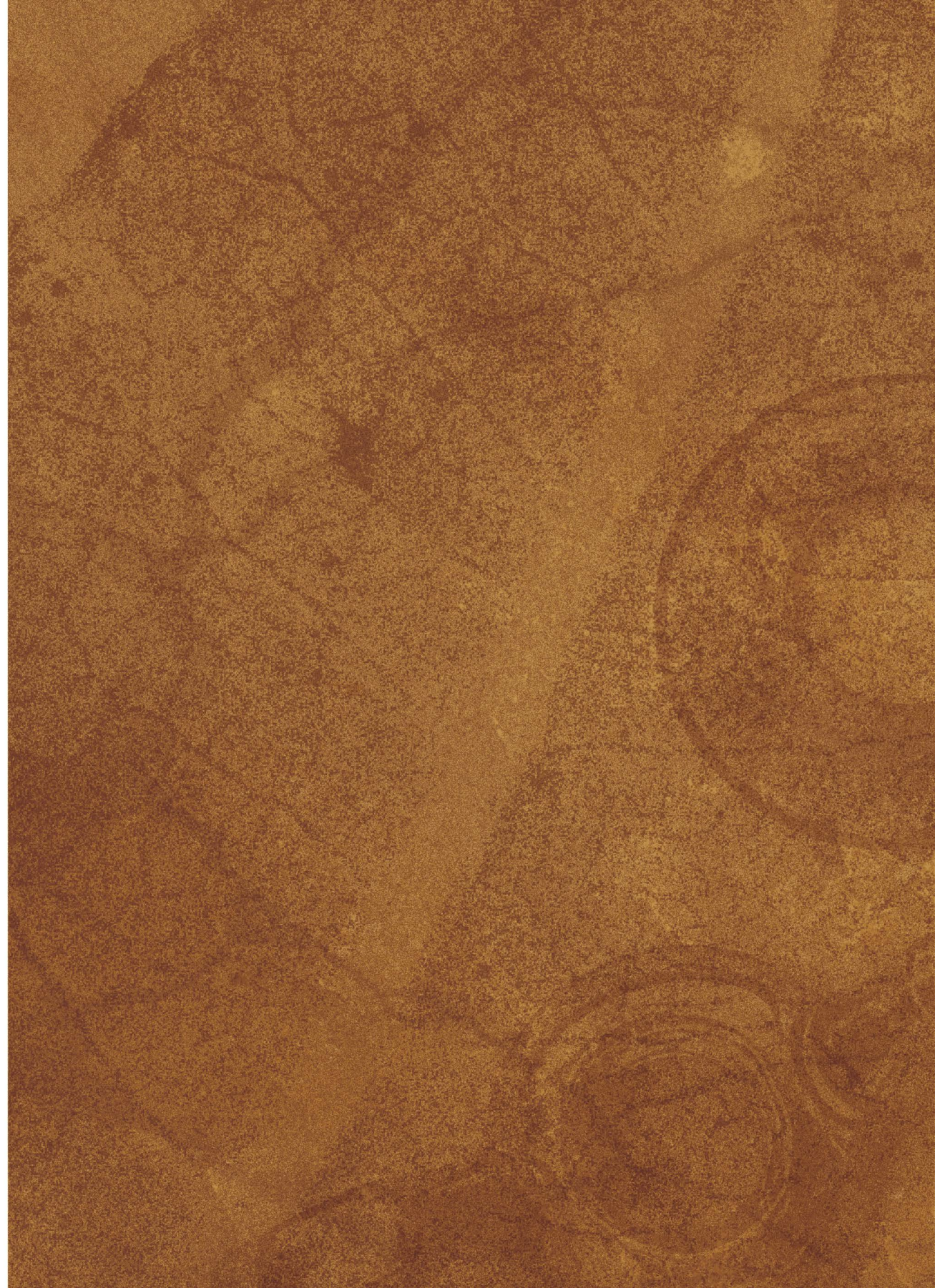
shed rivers of words left unspoken
and ask for forgiveness
with bouquets of hyacinth.



White Weeds and Rubble

BOBBY SIMONS

Photograph, 42 x 31.5"



Lightning Bug/Firefly

KAI CLARK

The fireflies are doing the sort of dancing that comes with late July;
something round, something light,
something like mercy.

There was summer with her sticky-sweet taste,
the hottest it's been in centuries,
the coolest it will be for a few more,

and there, lying in plain sight,
shimmering between the silver moon
and dewy grass:

A love that is helpless
and good and alive.

You always stumble upon those sorts of things, don't you?
Like a lucky penny,
a lucky star.

Here in the heat,
in the sunburn of summer,
hope grew like wildberries,

and we picked handfuls of it
and ate until we couldn't stomach anymore.

Trifolium repens

FINN P.

i lay on my back to look at the stars and feel a crushing weight on my chest. breathing becomes unfathomable. my grandfather runs to the car for his rescue inhaler because i don't carry mine. as my vision fades away, those two puffs of medicine make me whole again—make everything okay. and i am reminded of just how fragile life is. how those tiny, invisible pollen grains sneak into my lungs and disable me. how there are worlds in the grass below me and the air around me that i cannot begin to comprehend. how i am practically the universe.

how to cut green beans

LAKEN CHAPIN

for every summer I lived at home,
 Mom would plant green beans,
 or we'd buy some from the Amish,
 and whether we had hers or the Amish-down-the-road's,
 they were the best damn green beans we'd have all year.

she would sit us at the counter
 while she prepared the rest of supper
 and have us cut the stems off,
 giving us a lesson on knife safety
 every single time.

stems went in the bowl only meant
 for them, and by the time we finished
 and the last bean was cut,
 the water followed our cue
 and began to boil, ready just in time
 for the shortened beans.

when we were younger
 the bean stems in the bowl were long
 and took much longer to pile,
 one bean at a time.

cut away from you, girls

we focused so hard,
 but we always cut off too much bean,
 and the parts left for the pot
 were smaller than the stems in the bowl.

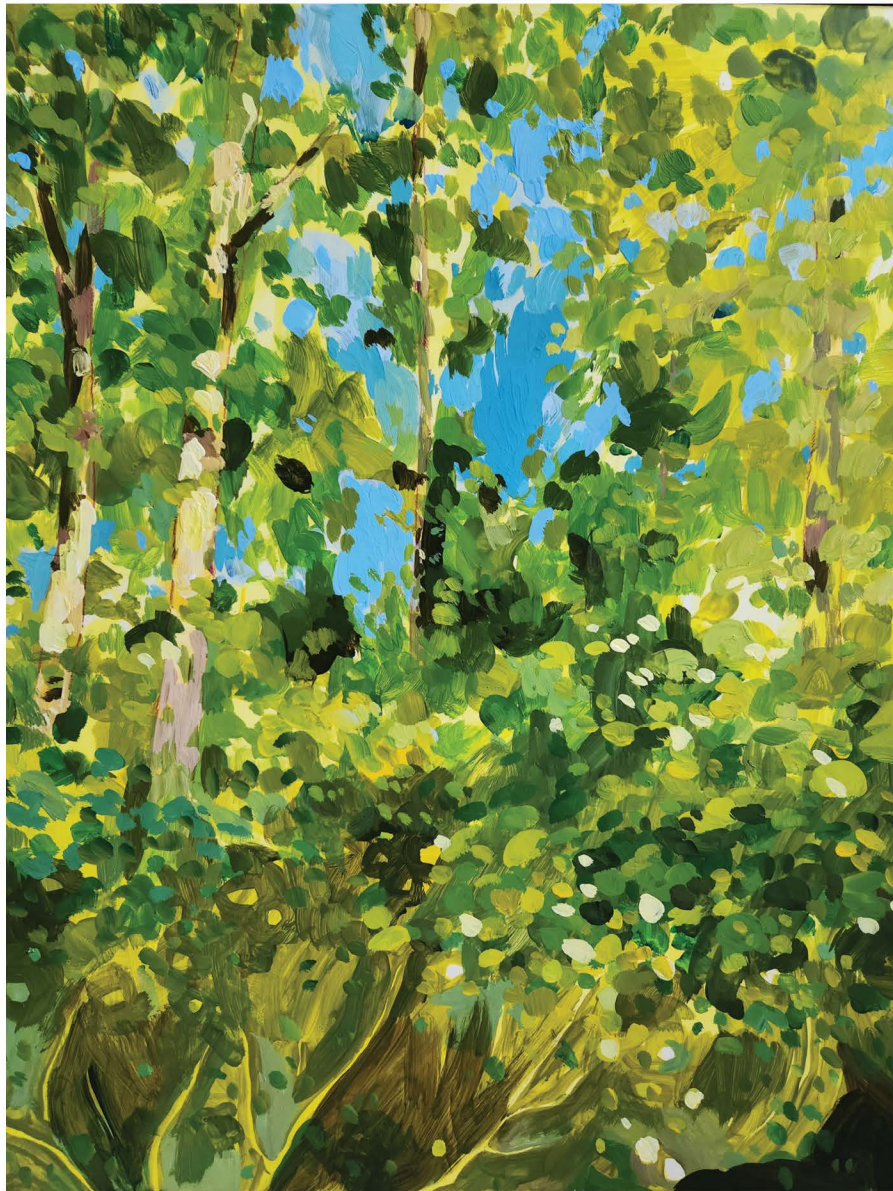
as we aged,
 the bean stems became shorter,
 and only what needed cutting was cut,
 three to four beans at a time.

we became so skilled at cutting bean stems
 that I bet Mom timed the water pot differently all along
 so that the boil would come just a bit sooner.

today, miles from our backyard garden,
 I realized I had been buying green beans
 only in the off-season,
 already pre-cut—
 not the best green beans,
 not even good green beans.

but, perhaps accidentally,
 on this early day of summer,
 I bought fresh green beans from the city market
 and had to boil the water,
 and cut the stems,
 all alone,
 and the water pot boiled
 much too quickly,
 so that all the water was gone
 by the time I piled all the stems
 in a bowl that wasn't meant for them.

no other part of supper had been started,
 so I ate the cold, bitter beans
 out of the incorrect bowl,
 and all the stems too,
 put the pot away
 and climbed myself into the little bed
 in my little apartment without a backyard garden,
 vowing never to buy fresh beans
 again.



Oak and Undergrowth

EMMA HOFFMAN

Acrylic on panel, 18 x 24"





Somebody Bless America

GRACE YUPA

Photography, Nikon D610

my childhood home

ANGELINA FIRMALAN

had lilac trimming
the windowsill caddies
bleeding a muted vibrance

masquerading the broken brimstone
and bullets rumbling in mother's bedroom
becoming the white noise to her child's slumber

my childhood home

had quad motors and a racing-striped celica
decorating the cemented carport
where I learned the importance of wearing helmets

to shield ghouls disguised in the familiarities of father(s)
creeping behind the steering wheel in the kindergarten parking lot
whose backhand traveled beyond unlit banisters and basements

my childhood home

had a blacktop corroding with concrete craters
where I'd lay on a scorching mid-afternoon
until the purple in my flesh blended with the rest of me



Twins No. 1

KENNY BORSCH

Collage, 11 x 22"



Twins No. 2

The Intimacy of Bad Habits

FAITH-ANN G. ENGLISH

There is something so intimate about bad habits;
whether that be watching someone roll theirs up
in a thin piece of brown paper,
or sharing their bad habits with them.
I always imagined smoking with someone
to be understanding without speaking:

Taking a long drag of a Newport menthol
mid-conversation.
Watching the ashes fall with no help.
Inhaling, feeling the tingle in the back of your throat—
exhaling, the buzz of the nicotine in your blood.
The non-smoker's fantasy.

Mashed Potatoes as a Metaphor for Emotional Abuse

ANGELINA FIRMALAN

peel layers of bruised skin
excavate sprouting eyes

drown in gallons
of salt water

stir the pot
around, *around*

boil until tender
strain contents

return to pot
pound with a mallet

season to taste
disguise mush

in polished ceramic
wash remaining residue

down the sink
with lavender hand soap



The Deer

AVA KUNNATH

Massive oaks, maples, spruces, and pines tower over me, the tips of their branches brushing each other in the empty air as they speak a language of convergence. It is as though I am walking through the very center of a weathered ribcage, treading from vertebra to vertebra on a solemn path. The wind brushes its claws and teeth over my reddened nose, my cheekbones and dry lips. This pain, one of bitter cold, is merely the clash of softness and harshness. It is what remains after there is nothing left to reconcile, no common language to speak. That is all. I cannot complain.

I trudge through more and more snow, the shotgun on my back tapping a luring rhythm with each step. I listen for sounds of life—hooves brushing against the ground, chatter in the trees, screaming in the sky—but the forest is reverberating with a stunning silence.

I have walked for a long time, yet I am not lost. I could trace every deer path, outcrop, and ravine of these woods as though they were pale blue veins under the thin skin of my wrist.

I know when I summit this hill, this swell of frozen mud and rock, that a dark road will wind below—the only thing that truly splinters this vast whiteness.

I peer down from the high place on which I stand, my eyes following the curve of the road. I see a flicker of motion, just a twitch on the bleak ground between the asphalt and the woods. I'd like to say that I feel a pull to look further because I crave the presence of anything that moves, anything that

could drop with a ripple into the steadiness of my day. But truly, I just let curiosity win.

I make my way to the bottom of the hill and trudge through the deeper snow that has blown off the pavement. Breathing hard, I surface on the shoulder of the road. Just a few paces away, I find the source of the movement.

Years ago, I severed myself from nearby towns and built a life that is truly only mine. I formed myself out of clay and threw myself into the fire; I came out the other side with rough edges and a practical strength. I felled the trees that shape my cabin's roof and fed myself off the shotgun's glimmering barrel.

The sight of watching some good creature fall at my whim may have once turned my stomach, but it is now as incurious as daybreak. So why do I find myself kneeling at the side of this deer, its chestnut abdomen torn, the both of us barely breathing?

It's splayed against the road, awkward knees against stiff asphalt, the warm air from its black nose breaking the frost near its head. I sit for several still minutes while my eyes graze each turn of its wrecked body. A trickle of blood seeps from its fur and drips steadily away. I imagine a solitary car moving farther with each minute, a predator with the deer's blood still sprayed across its shiny bumper. I think about the collision, a brash fight of metal and flesh, and my heart keeps anguished time in my chest. I move closer to the deer, lift its heavy head, and

cradle it in my lap. Its eyelids flutter over shiny black eyes as I trace my hands over the ridges of its skull.

And in a single instant, I am no longer there. I am back in the white woods; I am quietly traversing the snowy ground on slender hooves. Fragile saplings push through the heavy snow, and I chew their woody shoots. The storm lasted for days, and I have just emerged, blinking, from a bush-hidden refuge. Hunger, which turned to a pained roar that rattled my ribs, is driving me across the forest floor in search of anything that still grows. The snow chills my nose as I search for moss and lichen. My ears flick back and forth with the subtle sounds of the woods; I can hear the rustle of nesting birds, the clinking of wind on snow, the scratching of beetles in the dirt. I can see, or rather feel, the yellow light that winds through each sturdy tree, every yearning sapling, each living thing around me—the force that binds everything together—for everything is moving in sync, breathing, glowing, shifting all at once, blending together as one cohesive body. I feel it in my very blood, the thrashing and yet incredibly still entwining of nature. As I live in these woods, they live in me.

I wander up on a freezing creek with black water running like glass over a rocky bed. I drink slowly, my neck forming a gentle arc and the coarse fur on my back rustling in the breeze. I am not cold, not really, and it would never bother me—cold is just the same as warmth, truly.

I walk up the hill near the creek with delicate paces. The dim afternoon light will soon fade completely, and I want to find a sheltered place to sleep before the forest is thrown into darkness. From my place on the hill, I can see a road cutting through

the woods like an illusory river. Beyond the road, the slightest break in the trees signals a path, and I am compelled to take it. I step softly down the hill, not even a whisper of noise breaking the air. Then my hooves meet hard asphalt, and my eyes are caught by the expanse of sky that opens up above me, above the road. It's a vast grayness, almost intoxicating in its mundanity.

Then it all happens in one painfully slow instant—I hear the roaring of tires on pavement, I jerk my head to the side, and I'm caught between two beams of light. Everything is brighter than the sun, fiery white, and I can do nothing but watch, frozen, as the front of the car slams into my side. I'm thrown to the ground, skidding across the road. It seems like it will never stop, but suddenly the world is still.

As all things begin, so they must end. How can I know what it feels like to be alive if I do not equally know its opposite? For this reason, I have never feared death; its arrival merely signifies completion. I had wondered before when it would come: in the middle of the night, by the teeth of another, or maybe in the warm sunshine. Perhaps I would have met death by the creek, one wrong step causing a fatal collision of skull on rock. Perhaps I would have truly felt that sense of completion as I watched my blood marble with the sunlit water. But this is different—my head is a tangle of blaring headlights and stunning fear. My body still fights for breath as I lay against the freezing pavement. I can hear the car's hum receding in the distance, and I am numb, numb, numb.

.....

As though I am jolted awake, I blink to see my hands still cradling the deer's head. The light around me has faded, casting the entirety of the world in blue.

The animal has inhaled with no return, and its final breath is turning to ice on its nose. The last of the evening light is pooling in its black eyes, glimmering away with a devastating shine.

I leave its body on the frozen ground; what else can I do? Walking home through the dark woods, I am Phaedo, eyes fixed to the face of Socrates as he asks, *is not the separation and release of the soul from the body death?* In these words it sounds so simple, but I can't help but wonder at what point that good creature finally slipped from my arms. I can't help but think about the stillness of this thing that was once so existent. Where did it all go?

I Would Rather Live in the Meat Drawer

ANGELINA FIRMALAN

with an expiration date branded on my body like a tramp stamp—bologna never needs to worry about its mortality. Submerged below organic propaganda and thick-cut charcuterie, dirty fingernails ravage through ammonia and gray-mold-scented refrigeration, selectively discarding spoiled and discolored mortadella—the kind with cheese pins and olive pits that tastes the best skillet-toasted and with no penny left to name—replaced proudly with more of the same: vacuum-sealed, tupperware lunch meat containers, this time with a later date—newer. The meats suffocate together in the meat drawer, indifferent about their inevitable fate, and still, I writhe in my filth, wanting a different outcome, concerned about pointed fingers, wondering if—



Pulse

MYA COBLENTZ

Acrylic on ceramic, 6.5 x 4 x 4"

#Froyolo

SAGE HARDIMAN

I love frozen yogurt,
flying to Arizona
just to eat some with Nyx,
exploring Ohio in the dark
post Sweet Frog,

or in Georgia getting grilled
about my sexuality
by my sisters and cousin
right after the single most
dysphoric day of my life.
I came out as trans a month later.

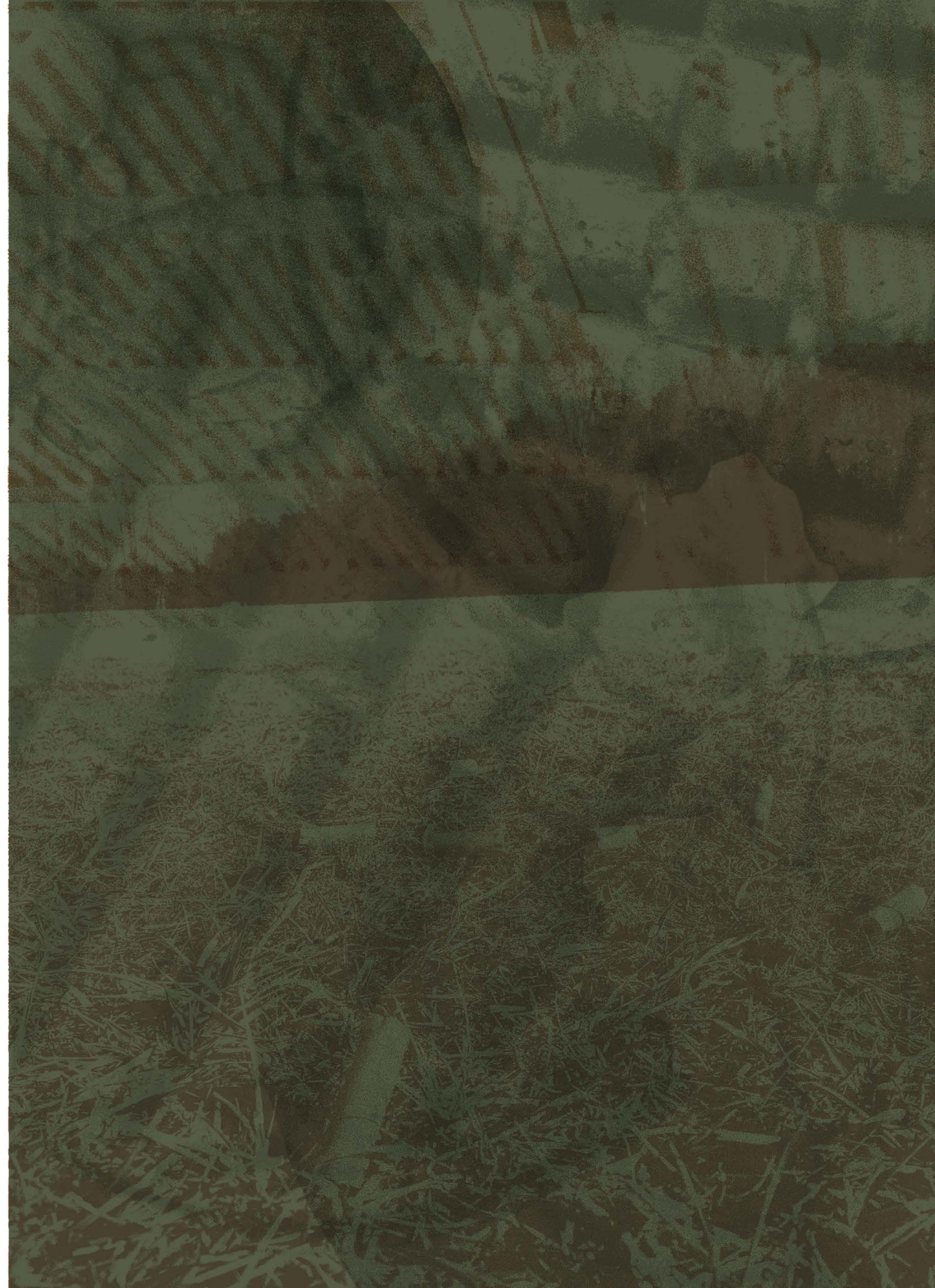
And yeah, I cuffed my jeans
for a damn gay reason, but I'll
be damned if I'm going to
say that out loud over frozen
yogurt in the southern heat.

Oh, Sweet Frog,
I know my sexual attraction,
bi pin catching light on my beanie,
broadcasting my gender in a beacon
of denim jackets and plastic pins.

But what the hell is romance?
I write with a green Bic,
and maybe there's green
in my romantic attraction too.
(That might be a lie.)
Oh, Sweet Frog, I don't know!
There's a white ring on my
left middle finger that wants to
lay claim to my feelings.
And maybe feelings are a lie

And maybe I can't lie about
what I don't fucking know.
Oh, Sweet Frog,
I don't fucking know!

But at least
I know
I love frozen yogurt?



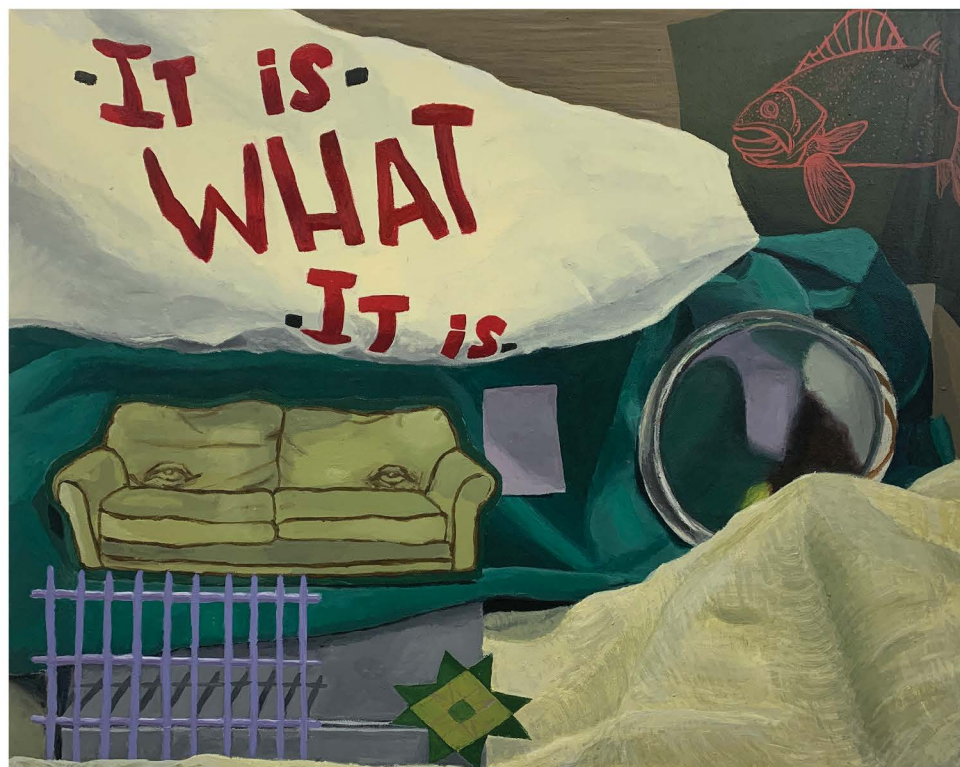
Seeing You In a New Light.

ANGELA GERTSNER

In the place where a man
with a halo once stood
lies the shadow of a boy
with broken dreams
at his feet.

When I meet him unmasked
and no starry skies illuminate the side of his face
that used to glisten in the night,
his dull-formed figure
blends into the background with the trees.

It is then that I finally look up,
no longer absorbed in his brilliant glory,
and in his absence,
I am awed by the luminescence of the moon.



-IT is WHAT IT is-

CAROLYN VARGO

Acrylic paint, 24 x 30"



Contributors

ABRIANA ROSU

She/Her

Abriana Rosu is a senior at Kent State University, studying visual communication design. As an artist, she works in many formats, but her focus is in illustration and comics. She strives to create something that others are able to connect with, while also staying true to herself. She is drawn to comics because they are a perfect blend of literature and art. Where drawings fail, words speak, and where words fail, drawings speak. She feels that comics act in a complete way, as the mind does, with both words and images. To see more of Abriana's work, check out her Instagram: @abriana_art.

ANGELA GERSTNER

She/Her

Angela Gertsner is a senior communication studies major at Kent State University. She has a passion for all things creative, including writing, photography, and painting. Her poetry is inspired by snippets of her daily life, and she hopes her work inspires others to explore their own emotional landscapes.

ANGELINA FIRMALAN

She/Her

Angelina Firmalan is currently a third-year writing major at Grand Valley State University, meaning she's self-critical, anxious yet excited, and always on the lookout for new clubs to join. Some might even describe her as a tad insane. Alongside her major, Angelina is minoring in anthropology because of her fascination with culture and people. Driven by her passion for creative writing, Angelina specializes in poetry while occasionally dabbling in creative nonfiction, using these expressive art forms to tap into the intricate emotions

and complex perspectives of the human experience. Actively engaging in literary communities, Angelina seeks to contribute to the discourse and captivate readers with a diverse range of topics. With her dedication to the craft, she hopes to share her unique voice and inspire others through the power of words. Outside of her passion for creative writing, Angelina finds joy in trying new foods, exploring mountain trails, and spending time with her wired-haired vizsla, Boomer.

AVA KUNNATH

They/Them

Ava Kunnath is an honors freshman at Eastern Michigan University. They are pursuing a degree in psychology with a minor in business, and they want to build a career in leadership and team organization. In their free time, they love to go for long walks, listen to music, and work at their favorite coffee shop. They are fascinated by nature and the transience of life, and they aimed to explore these concepts in *The Deer*.

BOBBY SIMONS

He/Him

Robert Joseph Simons is an actor, playwright, and writer whose work has been performed and published. He is in his final year of undergraduate work at Indiana University South Bend, where he studies theatrical performance and English literature. He enjoys running, unnecessary purchases of LEGOs and keychains, as well as studying languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, and German.

CAROLYN VARGO

She/Her

Carolyn Vargo is currently studying to become an art educator. She likes to be crafty and creative in her free time.

EMILY WRIGHT

She/Her

Emily Wright's artwork sets out to explore the complexities between the present and the past. The past shapes our future and the memories we gain along the way are our reminders. Bringing these reminders to the forefront of her photographs, she carefully crafts them as a window into the past.

EMMA HOFFMAN

She/Her

Emma Hoffman is a sophomore architecture student at Kent State University. When she is not in the studio, she enjoys reading and creating art. Painting is her preferred medium, and she draws inspiration from nature and everyday life. She would like to thank her friends and family for all of their support over the years.

FAITH-ANN G. ENGLISH

She/They

Faith-Ann English is a first-generation college student studying creative writing and sociology at Cleveland State University. In their writing, Faith-Ann explores ideas of religion, sexuality, identity, and personal relationships. In addition to writing, they aim to create meaningful messages through paintings and mixed media collages. They are most inspired by their family and friends, as well as the traumas that come with fighting for an

identity in a conservative community. A great deal of their inspiration also comes from social justice, mental health advocacy, and human nature. Faith-Ann has hopes of becoming a lawyer specializing in criminal justice and civil rights law with the goal of amplifying the voices of those who are forgotten in today's society.

FINN P.

They/Them

Finn P. is currently a nursing student at Ohio Northern University. They are fascinated with the human body, and their admiration for medicine tends to infiltrate their notes app poetry. Shout-out to Dr. Forrest Clingerman for introducing them to MEHA!

GRACE YUPA

She/They

Grace Yupa has been fascinated with nature from a young age. Growing up with fields and a wetland in her backyard sparked her fierce passion for conservation and strong connection with the environment. Now, she studies environmental and conservation biology at Kent State University in order to find a career protecting what she loves. Grace uses photography to share her perspective on the connectedness of humanity and nature. Grace is thrilled to be a part of 2024's Brainchild Magazine.

HANNAH FENDER

She/Her

Hannah Fender is a senior psychology major with minors in Spanish and creative writing. She enjoys reading and writing, especially poetry. In her free time, she enjoys listening to music as well as learning about the world around her in whatever ways she can. When she is not doing homework, Hannah can be found hanging out with her friends at the University Parish Newman Center. She also enjoys spending time with her family.

KAI CLARK

They/Them

Kai Clark is an art student, poet, and native Ohioan. On any given day you can find them scribbling at a notebook, taking a hike, trying to figure out how to meditate, or perhaps all three if you should be so lucky. Kai has been described by past English teachers as “a pleasure to have in class” and “potential flight risk.” They write what they know, which is mostly religious angst and lesbianism, so take their words with a grain of salt. Or a few.

KATE YEUNGEE OH

She/Her

Kate Oh is a studio art major with a concentration in drawing at Kent State University. She explores ways to combine narratives with art in abstracted compositions using repetition, color, patterns, and design. Kate enjoys creating art that overwhelms the viewers with tight and organized chaos in order to weave in hidden narratives throughout her artworks, all of which are inspired by her love for fiction, fantasy, folklore, and mythology. She also enjoys exploring color and its relationships in concept and design throughout her art. Kate hopes to continue developing her craft and creating large-scale drawings that not only immerse viewers with a visually chaotic space, but also delivers a hidden narrative.

KENNY BORSCH

He/Him

Kenny Borsch is a junior at Kent State University studying studio art in drawing, as well as minoring in both psychology and printmaking. His recent collage work focuses on tapping into an intuitive mindset to let the material guide him. He aims to escape collage’s roots in meaning, symbolism, and pop culture to focus on material and repetition. Achieving this through working with prints and cuttings of previous works and pasting them in an absentminded stream of consciousness; making works unprecious while having finished pieces blend a relationship between experiences through time. He strives for his work to be devoid of personal narrative and instead be a mirror, allowing for an exploration of the viewer based on their interpretations.

LAKEN CHAPIN

She/Her

Laken Chapin is a Christian author who writes to reflect on this great life—its sadness, joy, and mundane all the same. Nature and its beauty, along with family and ancestry are her greatest inspirations. She loves her family and friends who have been steadfast through her growth as a writer and as an individual. As an accounting student, writing makes her an outlier in her immediate peer group. However, being an honors student at Grand Valley State University, she has learned to embrace a mindset of stepping out of the “norm” and embracing the parts of us that make us different.

LOUSTELLA PERRY

She/Her

Loustellla Perry, also known as Lucy, is an English major with a creative writing minor at Kent State University at Stark. She is a self-published author of a poetry collection called Toast, which is available on Amazon. Loustellla is the active secretary of Kent Stark’s chapter of the English Honor Society, Sigma Tau Delta; she runs the social media for Kent Stark’s Feminism for All Beings (FAB) club; and she is a student leader for Kent Stark’s Creative Writing club. She enjoys writing poetry and interning as a social media manager for Stark’s Fine Arts Building.

MEGAN PORTER

She/Her

Megan Porter is a Cleveland-based visual communication design student at Kent State University, with two minors in photography and sustainability. Throughout her time as a student, she has gained experience with UX and web design, illustration, typography, design research, and more. Along with freelance work, she is currently a photographer for A Magazine, the leading Kent State fashion and lifestyle magazine. She is also the marketing intern for the Honors College!

MYA COBLENTZ

She/They

Mya Coblentz is currently studying animation game design at Kent State University. They grew up with a passion for creating and now use that love to dissect and share their inner world. They work with almost any medium they can get their hands on, including drawing, sculpture, and digital tools. Mya often ruminates on the beauty found in life, death, and grief, and these themes are often a focus in their work.

RYAN E. SPALDING

She/Her

Ryan Spalding is a freshman at Kent State University. She is majoring in education and plans on becoming an English teacher. She has a passion for reading, writing, and anything literature related! She is the oldest of three kids and has three cats that she loves dearly!

SAGE HARDIMAN

She/They

Sage Hardiman is a sophomore computer science major. Her work often confronts creation and identity, exploring fragments of science, poetry, the self, and what it means to be. They spend much of their free time writing poetry, writing code, and writing new stories with friends. Her work can also be found in Luna Negra magazine.

SASHA JADE

They/Them

Sasha Jade hopes to one day live up to the meaning of their name. Originally possessing a distaste for reading and writing at a young age, they grew to love language arts. Their passion was originally ignited when they discovered Warrior Cats by Erin Hunter and their flame has since snowballed into pursuing an English degree. All tales aside, they are a demiromantic/sexual, non-binary, and overall queer poet who hopes to create works where many people can see themselves and exercise their own creativity. They want every person to feel seen and safe in this shared world. If their work allows for even one person to feel spoken to, they will have had a successful career. Don’t forget: be kind, be brave, be smart, you are loved.

