

4-5-2022

Full Issue

Follow this and additional works at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/digressions>



Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#), and the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(2022) "Full Issue," *Digressions: Literary & Art Journal*: Vol. 19, Article 1.

Available at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/digressions/vol19/iss1/1>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Digressions at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digressions: Literary & Art Journal by an authorized editor of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.

2022



DIGRESSIONS



LITERARY
& ART
JOURNAL

VOLUME
9

Digressions Literary & Art Journal

Volume 19, 2022



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION, MEDIA, AND THE ARTS
HALMOS COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY



Halmos College
of Arts and Sciences
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

NSU
Florida

About Digressions

The *Digressions Literary & Art Journal* is a space composed of Nova Southeastern University students—past, present, and future—as they reflect on what they’ve been through, what they are learning, and what they hope for the future. It serves as a safe space for creative expression and connection. A safe space constructed by the submissions received from students, the input from various volunteers putting together the final product, and the engagement from our readers throughout the entire process. A safe space designed to encourage each and every person to imagine, create, and inspire their way through life.

In Volume 19, we reminisce on the little moments; the simpler times that we all have wished to stay in for just a little bit longer. Simultaneously, we are also looking towards the future and what we all need to change for ourselves and each other to have the best experiences in life. Throughout the publication, readers can find art, poetry, photography, and stories—both lighthearted and somber—that instill feelings of anger, restlessness, nostalgia, and hope.



WANT MORE DIGRESSIONS?

Follow this QR code for
access to our past issues at
<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/digressions/>

If you are an NSU student, you
can even submit your own
work for our next issue!



Staff, 2021-2022

EDITORIAL BOARD

Director – Athena Edwards

Associate Editors – Krina Patel, Rick Esner

Assistant Editors – Michael McCall, Adara Cox, Jasmine Jackson

Social Media Coordinator – Athena Edwards

Content Curators – Rick Esner, Janelle Giannetta

Faculty Advisor – Dr. Mario D’Agostino

Cover Designer – Gabriella Neves



REVIEWERS

Brielle Aguayo

Michelle Gorodisky

Yenifer Gandia Gonzalez

Ritu Upadhyay

Sri Konagalla

Jenna Handal

Diana Ramirez Carvallo

Olivia Cantalupo

Lenaia Powell

Jewel Mousa

Sheena Sookralli

Christopher Kidwell

Priann Franco

April Feeser

Janelle Giannetta

Sarah Soliman



LAYOUT TEAM

Bilal Amodu

Adit Selvaraj

Emma Masur

Rachel Larson

Adara Cox

Julia Kelley

Michael Lynn

Dr. Eric Mason

Director's Note

In my past three years as the Director for *Digressions Literary & Art Journal*, I've been blown away by all the creativity present in Nova Southeastern University's student body. We always receive significantly more submissions than we could reasonably publish in one volume. But every year, these submitters return, ready to bravely show their pieces again. And every year, we have the immense pleasure of working with these creators to optimize their pieces towards their creative intent in preparation for sharing and publishing. No submission or submitter is alike. Similarly, each member of our staff and review team brings something new to the table. Each year, we see a plethora of new observations, new ideas, new perspectives, and new forms of expression. I hope that this continues long after I depart from *Digressions*, as new passionate and driven individuals lead it forward.

"Don't forget – no one else sees the world the way you do, so no one else can tell the stories that you have to tell." – Charles de Lint

This publication, as usual, would not be possible without the collaboration and efforts provided by Gena Meroth and her team (for all things BePress, where we publish *Digressions* virtually); Dr. Eric Mason's Editing, Layout, and Design graduate class (who put all the pieces together into one cohesive published work for your enjoyment); Dr. Miriam Ahmed's Graphic Design II undergraduate class (who worked to design cover options to represent Volume 19 and its themes), and Dr. Kevin Dvorak and the Writing and Communication Center (who always do so much for *Digressions*, including recruiting reviewers for us, and spreading the word around campus). We also wouldn't be here without the continued support from the Department of Communication, Media, and the Arts, chaired by Dr. Shanti Bruce, and the Halmos College of Arts and Sciences, led by Dean Holly Lynn Baumgartner. Thank you for your belief in what we do and your continued support of *Digressions*.

– Athena Edwards, Director of *Digressions*



[HTTPS://NSUWORKS.NOVA.EDU/DIGRESSIONS/](https://nsuworks.nova.edu/digressions/)

Contents

- 1 You Wanted a Beach Day**
ATHENA EDWARDS
- 2 A Soothing Moment**
PAMELA MIGNACCA
- 3 no, I'm not jamaican**
ZOE HENRY
- 5 Faded**
MICHELLE GORODISKY
- 6 How Dare You**
ADARA COX
- 8 Peckish**
CASSIDY ZANGWILL
- 9 Love: A Feeling**
JANELLE GIANNETTA
- 10 Psychedelic**
MICHELLE GORODISKY
- 11 Madness Never Looked So Pretty**
AYSIA STEPHENS
- 17 Lovebirds**
CASSIDY ZANGWILL
- 18 Motion Granted**
JULIE SAINT-FLEUR
- 22 locs are more than**
ZOE HENRY
- 24 Wrapped in Tulle**
NICHOLAS WAGUESPACK
- 25 Dreamer's Woe**
CHERISH MATHEWS
- 26 Closing the Gap**
MICHELLE GORODISKY
- 27 Underestimated**
ATHENA EDWARDS
- 28 Normal Couple**
AMARI RUSSELL
- 36 Glass Life**
ALLISON D'AMICO
- 37 The Uncovered Pan**
SARAH SOLIMAN
- 39 Rx for the Soul**
COURTNEY MA
- 40 My Small Best Friend**
JENNA HANDAL
- 42 Past Present Future**
NICHOLAS WAGUESPACK
- 43 Violence**
AYSIA STEPHENS
- 45 Tranquility**
PAMELA MIGNACCA
- 46 For He Who Gives Can Also Take**
SAMANTHA KWAN
- 47 A Collection of Occurrences**
DYLAN DARLING
- 50 Trickster Spirit**
COURTNEY MA
- 51 It's Funny**
BREANNA BRADY
- 54 Undocumented**
AIDAN KUNJU
- 55 Free in Freeport**
SAMANTHA LANGMAACK
- 56 Voicemail**
CHERISH MATHEWS
- 57 Sharing is Caring**
CASSIDY ZANGWILL
- 58 The Woman's Workplace**
SARAH SOLIMAN
- 60 Louisiana Still Life**
NICHOLAS WAGUESPACK
- 61 Purple Flowers**
JULIE SAINT-FLEUR
- 63 Verdant Vermont**
SAMANTHA LANGMAACK
- 64 Reflections on Loss**
BIANCA OLIVEIRA
- 66 Home**
ZOE HENRY
- 67 A Dusk Sky**
RACHEL TAYLOR
- 68 The Shine of a Rainbow**
PAMELA MIGNACCA
- 69 Biographies**
- 74 VIP Acknowledgments**
- 75 Cover Design Artist Statement**
GABRIELLA NEVES

YOU WANTED A BEACH DAY ATHENA EDWARDS

You wanted a beach day
Took for granted my tame shores
But found its not the same anymore
Your lies no longer hang like banners
Decorating my thoughts and distracting from the view
And rage-cut seashells await your next misstep
The shattered, battered fragments of my trust
Turned into obstacles by your own inaction
A storm was brewing
But you thought you could ignore it
A passing storm, nothing more
It must have shocked you
You wanted a beach day
But the beach proved it wasn't yours anymore

Author Statement

"Anyone who knows me knows that the ocean is a great passion of mine—as a marine biology undergraduate, as a high school competitive swimmer, as a practicing pagan, and as an early-established 'water baby.' So it's no surprise that the beach and the ocean tend to make their way into most of my poems as a metaphor for things I am going through in life. 'You Wanted a Beach Day' was about a close friendship that ended recently, and I drew on the duality of how a beach day may present itself in different conditions to show that broken bond."



A SOOTHING MOMENT PAMELA MIGNACCA

Artist Statement

"'A Soothing Moment' was taken on the beach where the waves were lightly touching the soft sand and the sun was setting in the background. I hope that this photograph evokes the feeling of serenity that is found in a soothing moment like this one."

no i'm not jamaican



ZOE HENRY

hello! i've noticed that you have an accent.
it sounds very familiar.
you're probably from jamaica right?
"wha gwan mon?"
asked with laughter.

no, i'm not jamaican.

i am native to the United States Virgin Islands,
a proud and prideful Crucian.
i'm embodied with the fierceness of a Carib,
who obtains success like Tim Duncan
and with Queen Mary's determination.

no, i'm not jamaican.

i live on an island where the Locals' energy
is absorbed from the sun's rays
executed with smiles, love, humor, and respect.
we are powerful together; we stand as one
even with the devastations from Hugo days.

no, i'm not jamaican.

my accent does not affiliate with jamaica.
i do not say "wha gwan mon, everything ire"
to every person i recognize or approach.
my appearance and the way i strut are not
jamaican's pride; that is not me.

no, i'm not jamaican.

so think again when you're going to ask me about my nationality.

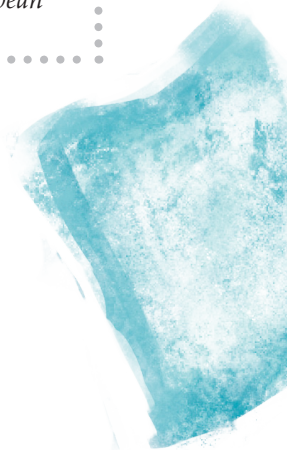
make sure your next inquiry is, "where are you from?" do not make the assumption of who i am because the next time my answer will not be

no, i'm not jamaican.

.....
Author Statement

"I wanted to express the frustration of being a person of Caribbean nationality in a different environment. 'no, i'm not jamaican' shows the misidentification of an islander, specifically from St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. Generally, most people do assume that a person from the Caribbean is Jamaican. Some tend to even mock the accents and/or ask questions, which comes off being ignorant and offensive. This poem emphasizes the importance of asking someone their nationality, rather than making the presumption of what and who they are. This poem also stemmed from personal experiences and the story of my peers from back home and other islands. With this poem, I want the readers to understand the annoyance of being mistaken. Also, to really observe the pridefulness that Crucians or any Caribbean islander has. Moreover, this poem is written on behalf of a Crucian, Virgin Islander, and other Caribbean nationalities."

.....



HOW DARE YOU ADARA COX

How dare you judge me for my complexion?

How dare you call me dangerous when you are the one with the weapon?

How dare you say that “All Lives Matter,” but remain silent or neutral when a Black life is taken for granted?

How dare you justify cops murdering Black people, and say that we are to blame?

How dare you say that you see no color and that you love all people the same—yet, not see that innocent lives are being taken because they see color?

How dare you say that “I am not a racist; I have Black friends.”—yet, not use your privilege to spread awareness and fight against?

How dare you be so unaware of the struggles that Black people face each and every day?

How is it possible to be so oblivious to the struggles of others, even if they are not your own?

How dare you say that we are all made in the image of God—yet, not treat us as such?

How dare you say, “Why won’t Black people just go back to Africa?”, when y’all are the reason that we are here.

How dare you belittle our pain.

How dare you not acknowledge our presence.

How dare you ignore our pleas for justice and cries for help.

How dare you.

Black people are tired of being treated as disposable.
Black people are exhausted.
WE JUST WANT TO BE HEARD.

Educate yourself.
We don't want your sympathy.
Empathize with our pain.

Racism is real.
Prejudice is real.
White supremacy is real.
Black hate, oh it's REAL.

I dare you to take action.
I dare you to speak up.
I dare you to fight against the very systems that
continuously try to take us out.

Ignorance is bliss, but your silence is betrayal.

Author Statement

"When writing my poem 'How Dare You,' I was creating to release the built frustration and anger I felt witnessing my people be murdered at the hands of those abusing their authority. I felt helpless and scared for my own life at the time, and the only way I knew how to channel those feelings, was through a pen. Writing has always been my outlet, but this poem I wrote is very special to me. I not only found my voice, but a fire ignited within me, to continue resisting power structures that work against me and other people of color. I hope the readers of Digressions are challenged by my poem, in such a way, that a fire is also ignited within them, to recognize that systems still exist that place value of one life over another; and that, people of color, just like me, experience this normalized reality."

PECKISH



CASSIDY ZANGWILL



Artist Statement

"'Peckish' was taken in a park alongside Pompano Beach. This lively green parrot was kind enough to pose for me long enough to capture his afternoon snack. I hope this photo serves as a reminder that animals can be silly too!"

LOVE: A FEELING



JANELLE GIANNETTA

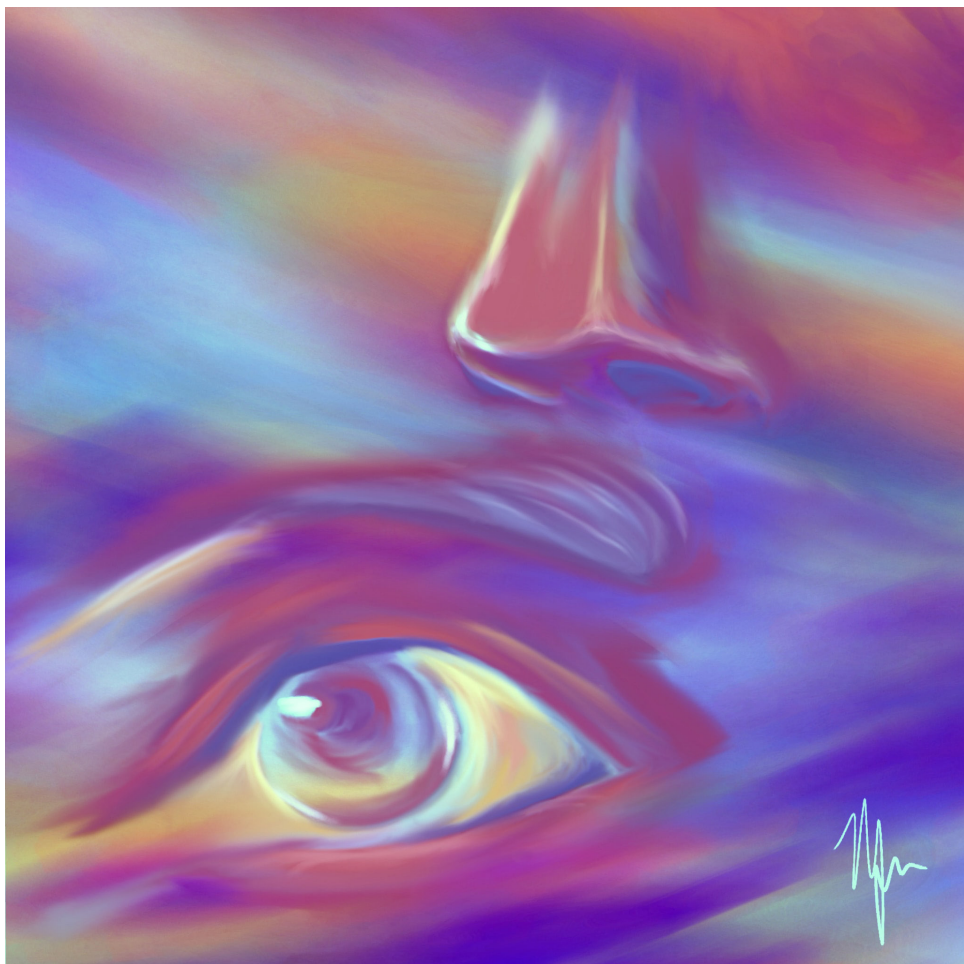
Suddenly, everything becomes brighter
In their dazzling presence
As my eyes receive a message
From my brain, widening the pupils.
The fluttering softness of wings
Hit against the lining of my stomach,
Like they are trying to escape.
My heart burns
The way Mercury does –

As the rays expand throughout
My bumpy ice-cold surface
Scarred by the impact of past lovers.
My lips begin to rise
Towards the top of my ears,
As serotonin slithers its way
Through my intoxicated brain.
A lingering tenderness of lust
Lies on my tongue,
Ready to find its partner –

Ready to melt our two bodies
Into one.

Author Statement

“‘Love: A Feeling’ was initially written for a class as a way to challenge myself since I have never written poetry before. When I started writing it, the words began to flow seamlessly from my imagination into the poem I am proud to present to you all now. The moral of my story is to be never afraid to challenge yourself because the things you are capable of doing may shock you in the best ways possible!”



PSYCHEDELIC



MICHELLE GORODISKY

Artist Statement

"'Psychedelic' strives to keep imagination alive. The vivid colors and disorganized facial features in this piece are meant to inspire artists to break away from the confines of proportions and color theory, and instead create whatever comes to mind."

MADNESS NEVER LOOKED SO PRETTY

AYSIA STEPHENS

The wheels of my suitcase squeal parallel to dim music. Sound waves and vibrations bounce off each tangible object around me: walls, tables, lights, chairs. I could not see them, but I was aware of their essence. I'm unable to make out the instruments of the objects, no, objects don't have instruments. Instruments are objects. What has instruments? The music! The dim music. It's a familiar noise, a sound I've heard before but where? I could never say. The music makes my lips twitch and my eyebrows rise in delight as it brought beloved memories from two years back. Or maybe it was four years back. I was never one for time. What I believe to be a viola and a chorus of flutes can be heard, but who cares? I'm always right in my mind. Violin, trumpet, oboe, it doesn't matter. The music conforms to me. The music wants me to be how I was once before. Pristine and perfect like an old porcelain doll. But as the days went by, I grew cracks and lacerations. I adored them. Everything was done for me and exactly how I liked. No one told me no because I never let them.

An old friend of mine that always donned a wide grin gifted me the suitcase that dragged behind me. The fabric is battered up and stained. Its blue and beige colors are shining parallel to the tile floor I dance across. So pretty and loved, but no one else thinks so. No, it's shown as archaic to others. It carries a bizarre odor that sings my nose hairs, but I rid myself of those a long time ago. I remember the music calling to me when I did it, but it was muffled and distant. It's even wiped my eyebrows clean off before. The smell, not the music. A man that I met multiple times before in my bathroom mirror redid my eyebrows for me, free of charge, and I did an outstanding job. Not I. Him. His hands knew exactly what I needed and where. The man never said a word but always had a welcoming smile on his face accompanied with his plump cheekbones. I had laughed at him and called him a jokester. I even licked clean the tomato sauce he had leaking on his face. It tasted odd, but I could have eaten it every day. I haven't seen him in a while, though. I wonder where he went? He felt like home to me. Always watching and always waiting. He resembled a bird chirping in the early morning- annoying, but welcomed.

I wish I knew how long I've walked this path. I'm unaware of the time at all. The clocks on the wall are broken. The hands seem to laugh at my misfortune, but that's okay. No one is ever late or on time if there is no time to count on. The lights chaotically nailed to the wall burn my

eyes with an easy to miss flicker every four hundred and twenty-six seconds. I believe it's every four hundred fourteen seconds, but I guess I'm wrong. The clocks told me that, but how can they tell me the time when time doesn't work here? Whenever I asked them, the music got really loud, deafening almost. I just learned to keep my mouth sewn shut.

With each step, I can feel my knees sliding back and forth. They frequently pop out of place if I'm walking or standing on them for too long. After my eyebrow appointment in my mirror, I went to see my doctor. The doctor said I have loose tendons. He tried to comment on my eyebrows, but he was cut short. He lost his PhD and his legs to an accident. I got to see the accident firsthand. It was really cool, but he didn't think so. He just kept screaming. I shushed him and told him "Quiet! You're ruining the show!" but he just wouldn't shut up. He's such a buzzkill. But anyways, his opinion doesn't mean anything. He can't give me advice on the tendons in my knees when he doesn't even have any. My knees hurt, yes, but I'm too young to have knee problems, so I have decided that I don't have them. I don't even know what tendons are. Neither does the doctor. Anymore, at least.

There are four lights on the walls with each light having its own pet table. The dark wood of the tables is lit with white light shining down, and the tables are overflowing with golden knobs, their scratches disappearing and reappearing with each flicker. Every table sits perched with speakers glued to their knobs. They're almost like wheels! And they play that music too. It's loud, and makes it hard to think, but I can't help but press my ears right up to them. Whenever I get the chance, at least. Most times when I try to reach out to the pretty speakers, they get farther away. Everything is always far and never near. The lights, the furniture, the door creaked open at the end of the path. It rarely gets closer. My feet are moving, I'm sure of it. I can see them stepping in front of each other, but nothing else is moving. It doesn't seem my suitcase is moving either. At least, I don't think so. I can only hear it. If I turn around to look at my suitcase, I don't see it. I see the lights, the tables, and the door. Any direction I look I only see what's in front of me but how do I know if that is the front if I can't see my sides or my back? I can never see what's behind me because what's behind me is in front of me and what's in front of me is all around me. There's no time, there's no direction, there's nothing. It only seems to be me. But that's all I need, yeah? That's what my friend always told me. Remember, my friend who did my eyebrows? He made me look so pretty. He always told me to take care of myself, no matter what it takes. I hope I've made him proud.

I counted that every two hundred and fifty-three seconds, the door at the end of the hallway creaks open. Whenever it does, the dim music rises in volume. I don't know what its problem is. Every time I do anything,

it screams in my ear, sometimes until I hear something pop. I like to pretend the popping noise is the music's vocal chords. Music seems to elevate around me quite often for reasons I used to be unsure of. I think I know why now. It's lonely, but I couldn't be its friend. No. I wouldn't dare. It's mean to me.

The same music played when the wonderful man who fixed my eyebrows worked on me. I've seen him all my life but luckily, he's only had to fix my eyebrows once. I was sitting in a blue and beige rolling office chair with a towel wrapped around me. He was quiet, like a little mouse sneaking some cheese, and very precise when he was fixing me. He had just bought a new pack of razors the other day, so I knew I was going to look wonderful after he was done. I liked to picture him as a well-known surgeon. Whenever I felt uneasy, I would look up and he would be staring right back at me with that wide smile and his yummy tomato sauce face. My mouth twitched in unison with his. Once he started chopping at the hairs above my eyes, all his rich tomato sauce was now on me! I thought I would've been upset, enraged even, but I was so calm and felt so sweet. Honored that he would share this experience with me. It ran down the sides of my face, in my eyes, and I even opened my mouth to welcome some inside. I think I liked tasting it from his face better, but they oddly had the same flavor, so I was okay with it. By this time, the relaxing violas and flutes were intense enough to replace the beating of my chest. I was my own conductor! The final fix wasn't completely done until a month or so had passed. He told me they had to set in and heal. I was instructed not to touch them, but I couldn't help it. I was stunning. Ethereal, if I may. I had to wrap a cloth around where my eyebrows used to sit, so they could finalize without prying eyes. He told me to be careful of infections, but how could I care about infections when my eyebrows looked so good? So smooth and hairless, yes, I was a model. I would frequently sneak off and remove the cloth, touching the bumpy skin every day with a smile. I was so happy. I just wish the music felt the same. It was louder than I had ever heard it that day. I told the music with a huge grin what the man had done, but it failed to match my enthusiasm. It really bummed me out. He had worked so hard on them! I argued with the music all night, but it didn't care. No matter then, more for me! The music just played all night long.

As I kept prancing down my path, I could hear footsteps that were not my own. It wasn't the pestering clocks, it wasn't the electrical buzz that occurred whenever the lights flickers, and it wasn't the rolling of my suitcase. I thought it was the golden knobs on the tables shaking whenever the scratches would announce themselves, but that wasn't it either. I slowed my walking to lazy shuffling, nine footsteps a minute, and I would still hear the dull padding of bare feet hitting the floor. Albeit they were delayed by three seconds after my own, but nothing

echoes on this path. Those footsteps were not of mine. I wonder if they were here to see how pretty my new eyebrows looked. Or maybe to find me a different doctor for my knees? To be fair, I haven't had any noticeable problems with my knees since I left his office, so I think he was maybe lying. Saying I needed help and that I was dangerous to be around. I didn't understand how loose tendons could make someone dangerous, so I just tuned all the voices out until it drifted off into my familiar music.

Apparently, my doctor had been worried about my eyebrows and how well they were healing. That confused me though because I thought I was there for my knees. It made me upset that he didn't trust the man who made me look better. I sat so still in front of the mirror for that man! He wouldn't do me wrong, he couldn't. I think my doctor was just angry that I was going to look so well, and he wouldn't, so I helped him look prettier! When I had seen him, he would always complain about how he thought his legs were too fatty and would soak in whatever he ingested, and it irritated me to hear his complaints. So, I did him a favor and fixed his legs up while violas and flutes flowed in the background. I was already in a good mood from the eyebrow appointment I had beforehand anyways. I wanted to share the excitement! It felt like I was a star in a movie from the way he was screaming. I titled the movie "The Accident." Good, right? The doctor was a doctor no longer; we had switched roles! Now he's my patient like I was to the man who shaped my eyebrows. To go an extra mile, I even shredded that slip of paper he had hanging in his office and made him a new one that said his new profession. I wasn't allowed back in to see my work, unfortunately. But with my help, we were both on our path. He was lucky to have a surgeon like me.

The footsteps behind me were getting closer and louder. They bothered me more than I had originally thought. I kept my eyes forward. Afterall, what else could I do? The lights now flickered every seventeen seconds. The door at the end of the hallway slammed open and shut every twenty-nine seconds. My suitcase violently shook in my hand, and it snapped my wrist at an odd angle. I'll fix it eventually.

The noise was starting to become displeasing. Not even the violas and flutes can cheer me up now, but they haven't been doing a good job at it lately anyways. More instruments filled in to help ease my mind, but none worked. No woodwind, string, percussion, or brass instrument could flatten my unease. The clocks thought it was hilarious, but I didn't. I was worried. The knobs that rested on the tables started to rattle and their scratches spilled onto the floor. How could a surgeon such as me fix this? I haven't been in the field for long, but I can think of something. But I need space. I can't think of anything with these ragged breaths huffing down my back. They were unsettling. But that's okay. I still had my lips upturned in a grin.

Shake it out. That's how I can fix this. The flicker of the lights, the laughing clocks, the knobs, the scratches, the door, the bodies looming behind me. There's no time, there's no direction, what's one more to add? I slowed my walking back down to nine steps a minute and shook my head. I banged my head up and down, left and right, any direction I could. I even circled my neck. I could feel something hitting my forehead, but I liked it, so I kept banging. My head started to pound, my feet couldn't continue to walk in a straight line anymore, more rose red tomato sauce dripped down my face and stung my eyes, but it was fine because I'm moving. Not walking and staying in place, no, I'm advancing. The slamming door drew closer and closer to my outstretched hand and my grin turned into a full-blown smile.

It's finally over. My path is ending. The previous violas and flutes that were once an orchestra changed. I didn't like it. First it was music. But then it turned into panting. Whispering. Talking. Yelling. Screaming. Please God make it stop. I don't like it. But I still had my smile and my pretty eyebrows. They're so beautiful and so perfect. They were only the first step but now I'm almost done. The body that was behind me feels to have become more than one and appears to want to stop me. Multiple hands are on my arms, my waist, my ankles, my grin, my stunning eyebrows. They don't want me to go. They want to stop my progress but what for? I'm finally getting what I want, what I deserve. I deserve to be pretty. My path to beauty is ending and I couldn't be happier. Why can't they be happy with me? I feel sorry for them. I would fix them like I fixed my doctor, but I don't have time. My exit is here.

With my head still bobbing back and forth, I stumbled to the door and reached for the opening with my limp wrist. It's here. I'm done. The end of my path is everything I could've imagined. I couldn't feel happier and I couldn't feel more pretty. In front of me, I saw my friend who fixed my eyebrows with his welcoming smile. He cleaned up his tomato sauce. He's everything I want to be. And everything I will soon be. He has such a pretty face. I opened my mouth in joy and stuck out my tongue to catch my own tomato sauce that was sliding down into my gaping maw. It tasted so nice. It tasted like happiness and beauty. What I deserved. This is all what I deserved. The yelling bodies and their hands holding me from every direction gripped harder to hold me steady. I felt something so soft touching my face all over, pulling me into a hug, whispering in my ear about something I couldn't comprehend. I hated it. It almost distracted me. Almost. But it's okay because I don't need them. My path has ended. Grin still unwavering, I shook out of their hold and hit the floor.

I'm gorgeous.

Author Statement

"'Madness Never Looked So Pretty' is a person's insatiable need to feel beautiful in the eyes of others. That they feel they can only feel whole and worthy if they see themselves as objectively gorgeous, which led to their demise in the end. No pronouns are used within this story to allow the character to fit into whatever or whoever the readers imagine when intaking the story, as beauty has a different meaning for everyone."





LOVEBIRDS



CASSIDY ZANGWILL

Artist Statement

“Lovebirds,’ was taken at a protected burrowing owl habitat in Coral Springs, FL. Burrowing owls are an endangered species and play a unique role in shaping their environment. I took this photograph to emphasize the importance of conservation and environmental awareness in South Florida.”

MOTION GRANTED



JULIE SAINT-FLEUR

The sidewalks downtown are always hectic on Monday mornings. Imagine rush hour, but without the guilt that the pollution from cars brings you. Cyclists weave through bodies of adults crossing busy intersections in unison. Everyone is dreading the next eight hours of their day as they continue their stride to their respective buildings. In front of the 1400 building, an opaque fifty-five-floored structure, a Lincoln MKZ comes to a stop. Seemingly before the car could even fully settle into park, the driver made it around the car, reaching for the handle of the passenger-side backseat. On the sidewalk, the crowd of rushing feet suddenly scurried in other directions, lengthening their own commutes. She had arrived! And no one wanted to be caught in her way.

Eliza Gamble was feared by all who frequented the downtown area. Her reputation for being a nightmare on earth had spilled out of her office and into the busy Miami area. She was a powerhouse of a corporate lawyer. Her firm represented the biggest companies around the world, and there was no situation too big for her to control. And her name anywhere on your resumé was a surefire way of getting hired to work there. The saying was: any Eliza Gamble survivor was a safe gamble.

This particular morning, the distinct clack of Eliza's brand-name heels hitting the sidewalk quickly changed the atmosphere of the space she was about to enter. Getting out of the car Eliza adjusted her pencil skirt – purse – and ear bud in what seemed to be one swift motion. If you blinked, you would have missed the transitions. The pedestrians seemed to bow as she floated from the car towards the building's entrance. But her graceful walk was no match for gravity – as a large structure walked right into her, sending her flying into the air. Everyone simultaneously started to gasp on a single note. Before she could react, the individual who had knocked her off her feet was holding her inches from hitting the pavement.

Frustration and irritation swept over her face as she mentally attempted to keep her composure. That's when she made eye contact with the clumsy culprit. And she blushed! This handsome stranger had the most innocent eyes, encompassed in a perfectly symmetrical face. Not only had he knocked the wind out of her when they collided but even here, he was taking her breath away. She didn't even realize they were standing upright again until his voice broke her trance.

"I'm sorry ma'am," a voice as strong as whiskey, yet smooth at the same time, came out of the man's mouth.

"Watch where you're going!" Eliza struggled to say sternly as she noticed all the bystanders. Clutching her bag, she stormed into the building.

"Good morning, Ms. Gamble." The security guard said as he tried to wipe the exchange he just witnessed from his memory. He feared that even her thinking he saw it could make him lose his job. Without acknowledging him, she hit the elevator button fiercely.

Despite the guard's desire to be safely oblivious, news of collision spread through the office quickly. The entire building walked around with their heads down and made sure to scramble whenever their paths crossed with Eliza's. No one dared make a peep on the 55th floor, afraid of receiving the backlash that the man had deserved. Meanwhile, Eliza sat at her desk all day and could not get the face of this handsome creature out of her head. She fumed as she chewed the back of her pen, distracted from today's agenda. The day went by in a haze. She didn't leave her office, and no one dared make a sound. You could hear keyboards clicking and printers spitting out papers – but not a single voice.

The next morning, Eliza walked into the building where the security guard from the day before nervously tried to get her attention.

"Good morning, Ms. Gamble," he moved towards the elevator. "These were delivered this morning for you." In his hands were a large bouquet of white tulips. "Didn't know the gentlemen, so we didn't send it up to your office."

She walked over and grabbed the card and motioned for him to get on the elevators with her, flowers in tow.

When Eliza got in her office and the security guard was gone. She opened the card:

Hello Eliza Gamble,

Let me start by apologizing for the new scuffs on your heels caused by my carelessness. I'm afraid I was not looking in front of me as I was walking yesterday. I'm new in this area and was looking for a building. It seems as if your reputation precedes you, because it didn't take much to get your correspondence information. I'd like to make the apology even more sincere by inviting you out to dinner.

305-555-1500
Jacob Davis

The card now flipped between Eliza's fingers as she searched the internet for his name. She came up blank every time. Not even a parking citation under this name. No Facebook account, let alone a LinkedIn. After a deep dive into the internet came up with nothing, and driven by curiosity, she picked up her phone and texted the number. "If you insist. I'm available Thursday at 7pm."

Thursday wasted no time coming around. Eliza and Jacob made plans to eat at a restaurant steps away from where they had their chance encounter. This time it was Jacob who was lost for words when Eliza stepped out of the vehicle, wearing a plunging satin champagne dress. Her hair wasn't in the usual stern work-force slicked back ponytail. Instead, that night, it was parted down the middle exposing beach curls that fell right by her bosom. She looked amazing, and he couldn't take his eyes off her as she made her way to where he awaited.

Dinner went without a hitch. Eliza, notorious for being an unpleasant person to be around, let her hair down literally and figuratively. She smiled between bites and laughed at his jokes as her eyes danced. They spoke about their childhoods and how they made it to this big city. They talked about their hobbies and almost everything under the sun - except work. She knew her career's reputation wasn't pretty and didn't even bother mentioning it, and he didn't either. She had accepted his apology the moment she seen the flowers but would never admit it. And so, Eliza let him apologize for the incident all throughout dinner. She felt like a giddy schoolgirl as she romanticized their dinner. The staff, who were quite familiar with Ms. Gamble, felt like they were having an out-of-body experience. No one in her building would believe them if they gave an account of how pleasant she was that night.

It wasn't until a staff person stacked the chairs at a nearby table that Eliza checked the time. Cinderella had to run out because in the morning she would be representing one of her biggest clients ever.

"I'm so sorry," she looked at her phone to find that the driver had been outside waiting. "I have an early morning and did not realize all this time had gone by." Eliza could feel her cheeks getting warm at the idea that she let her guards down and enjoyed herself.

"No need to apologize. I have an early morning as well." Jacob replied as he motioned for the check.

The following morning, Eliza made her way into the courthouse prepared to take down the plaintiffs that were bringing a class action suit against the company she had been hired to represent. This case was

huge. The commission alone could retire her and the 100% success rate she held would be further solidified. Everyone made it into the room and sat around the round table as the plaintiffs awaited the entrance of their representation. Eliza liked to sit with her back facing the door to catch the facial expression of the adversaries change as they came around the table and discovered she'd be the person she was going up against. It was now officially 17 minutes past the start time and everyone was growing antsy.

"We apologize, our lawyer will be here momentarily." An advisor on the other team's side spoke up. "We went into great lengths to get him down here to Florida."

Five more minutes went by before the door finally opened, and the entire left side of the table stood up to greet the person who had just walked into the door.

"My apologies . . ." Eliza's eyes popped wide open, and her jaw visibly fell as she heard Jacob's voice.

Author Statement

"An ode to the film Laws of Attraction, 'Motion Granted' is about a lawyer who is caught off guard by a mysterious gentleman."

locs are more than ZOE HENRY

locs are more than a hairstyle.
 it has a healthy and positive life.
 everyday, it lectures about strength, endurance,
 patience, confidence, and growth. it survives
 off nutritional foods and water.
 however, identified for its rebellious acts against the norm.

locs are more than a trend.
 although it is publicly known as a bully, it spreads influence
 within itself and towards others.
 locs are very stubborn because it continuously
 pressures someone to develop self-love and acceptance.
 it cannot fathom its portrayal as a wrongdoer.

locs are more than being dead.
 despite looking physically lifeless and enervated
 and its recognition of being dreadful and lazy,
 locs are immortal and hard-working.
 it has an everlasting spirit
 that constantly communicates with its homeland to flourish.

locs are more than being unprofessional.
 it has an underlying attraction.
 its beauty can never be understood for its appearance,
 hence why it's known for being uncontrollable, ugly,
 and a bully. nonetheless,
 it shows great appreciation to those who see that

locs are more than.

Author Statement

"In 'locs are more than,' I wanted to show the common misconception of the hairstyle, locs (aka dreadlocks, dreads, natty). Within this poem, I personified locs to portray the development of someone's overall well-being who has the style. This poem lies within the interpersonal connection of myself and the hairstyle as well. I started locs in March 2020, and I've realized that my character and self-esteem improved just because of my hair transition to them. I felt happier, bolder, more beautiful, and more confident. This poem is also an illustration of the appreciation and love I have for the hairstyle; I want my readers to understand how locs can be just as beautiful and elegant as other styles. In addition, locs are more than what most outsiders see them as."





WRAPPED IN TULLE NICHOLAS WAGUESPACK

Artist Statement

"'Wrapped in Tulle' shows its subject lost and trapped in tulle looking off into the distance wondering about the curiosities and emotions that will be present in their future life. "



Explorer locked in white walls
All senses are blocked by sound.
Drowning in blaring music,
She escapes to a livelier world.

She meets friends old and new,
Who welcome her with open arms;
A sweet smile graces her heart-shaped face,
And the quirk of her lips charm all those around.

She's strong and ladylike-
Shoulders back, hair elegant,
With the most gentle curls
One could only dream to touch.

Warm eyes, wide and inviting,
She draws you into her vicinity,
Her owl gaze almost haunting-
Daring you to get lost in them.

Admirers plead her for a glance-
To be only worthy of her affections.
Charismatic and poised at once,
She giggles at their silly worship.

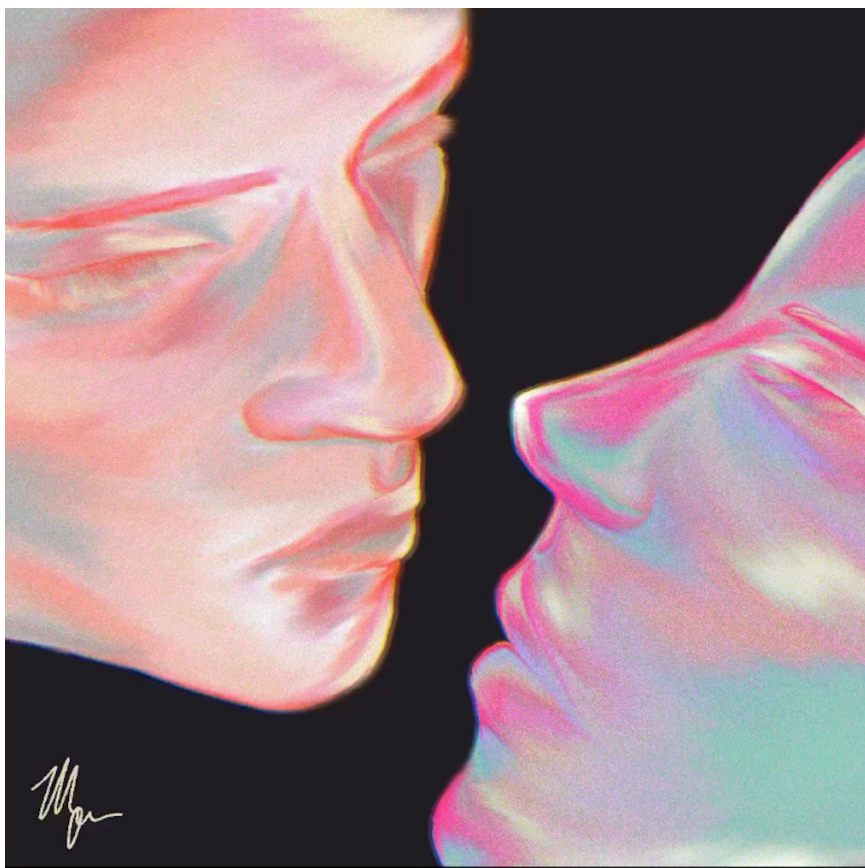
Woman of only the greatest honor,
She adorns the earth with her presence.
Yet she is humble in what she does,
For beauty is found in modesty.

She is loved and isn't afraid to love;
She is satisfied with who she is.
She lives her life with no sense of fear;
She lives with no regret.

But then, I wake up.
And it's just me.

Author Statement

"When I daydream, I'm not myself in reality - but anyone else I can think of- someone who can talk to people a little more freely, who is confident in who she is, who finds courage in fearful situations- but then, to quote the poem, 'I wake up/And it's just me.'"



CLOSING THE GAP MICHELLE GORODISKY

Artist Statement

"'Closing the Gap' celebrates the human experience. The contrast between the faces and the dark background is meant to emphasize this transformative moment, in which everything in the background is muted."



The green in my eyes stands for poison
My native jaw knows how to cut
These broad shoulders, inherited from my father, know
how to bear weight
And my hand won't shake when my sword finally swings
For this creator's mind knows how to erase
And this caring heart knows how to forget

You thought I was harmless
Underestimated the danger under my skin
You followed me to my workplace
Spent your time walking outside my home
Gained a following for your lies
Copied my interests like they were your own
You thought I did not see the moves
That you made to undermine me

But my namesake was no mere coincidence
They say demons run when a good man goes to war
What happens when women like me join in?

We make it our own.

Author Statement

"I think we have all had experiences where we were underestimated, especially as women. In 'Underestimated' I wanted to explore my own features and traits and twist them into reasons why I, and women in general, shouldn't be underestimated. In the poem, I also explore several different instances that form a collective experience of being seen as a woman that others could take advantage of."

NORMAL COUPLE AMARI RUSSELL

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE-NIGHT

A nicely dressed couple enter their home after a night out. From the looks of things, it must've been pretty fancy. NORA HIGGINS, the first to walk in, is a graphic designer in a beautiful dress that'll make any dude have heart-shaped eyes. She can't contain her laughter.

NORA

I saw that look he made too.

Her boyfriend WESLEY HAMILTON comes in wearing a classic tuxedo. Now WESLEY here, is a talented accountant with an inflated ego.

WESLEY

I know! And he kept tellin' me this entire time he was gettin' the award. "It's basically a done deal." "You shouldn't even come." Well how about this for a done deal you dumbass!

WESLEY holds up a trophy for being the top accountant at Prime Media.

INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

NORA sits on the couch. WESLEY stands in front of her. The guy is still on cloud nine. He paces from side to side.

NORA

I am beat.

WESLEY

Baby tonight was fuckin' great. All those people recognizing what I bring to the table. It's only gonna get better. And that asshole Frederick. Maybe I should I put this in my office, so he could see it every time he walks by. But I'm not that petty.

NORA

Babe you are that petty.

WESLEY stops pacing.

WESLEY

You right. You right.

WESLEY stares at NORA.

NORA

What?

WESLEY put his trophy down. He strolls up to NORA.

WESLEY

Dance with me.

NORA

Really?

WESLEY

Yup, really.

WESLEY helps NORA up.

WESLEY (CONT'D)

Wait here.

WESLEY leaves. NORA stands there looking at WESLEY's trophy.

WESLEY (CONT'D)

Here we go.

WESLEY comes back with his bluetooth speaker. He takes out his phone and starts to play the song "Mist of a Dream" by Birdlegs and Pauline. WESLEY grabs NORA's hands. They sway to the music.

NORA

I'm proud of you.

WESLEY

Thank you, baby. It still feels surreal ya know. Oh, and guess what?

NORA

What?

WESLEY

Irene was telling me about how I could move up in the company.

NORA

Really? That's good.

WESLEY

Feels like everything is falling into place.

NORA

I know the feeling. When I made that design for Lux. Corp. it really touched the owner and I just thought about how those were the moments I strive for and I wanna continue making them.

WESLEY

Yeah . . . not trying to kill this heartwarming moment, but I'm kinda starving.

NORA

You are so stupid.

WESLEY

And yet you still chose to go out with me.

NORA

Still debating why.

INT. KITCHEN-NIGHT

WESLEY *looks through the fridge trying to see what's edible enough.*

WESLEY

Hey, I thought Tracy brought food over from the other night.

NORA

She did, but I had to send it back. It had soy in it and I know how you're allergic so . . .

WESLEY

Oh, okay.

WESLEY *finds a piece of food that looks semi-good.*

WESLEY (CONT'D)

You looked beautiful tonight.

NORA

Thank you.

WESLEY

I know I didn't really see you that much tonight.

NORA

I'm surprised you noticed.

WESLEY

What does that mean?

NORA

I barely saw you and when I did, you were basically flirting with Irene.

WESLEY

Oh please. I was not flirting with Irene.

NORA

Not from what I saw.

WESLEY

Jesus. She was introducing me to some people. It's not that big of a fuckin' deal.

NORA

It is when you're getting handsy Wesley.

WESLEY

Fuck this. I ain't dealing with this shit.

WESLEY grabs a drink from the fridge and pours himself a glass.

NORA

You can't be this fuckin' blind.

WESLEY

It's harmless, okay. You're the one that's turning it into something that it isn't.

NORA

It's been that way with you since day one.

WESLEY

My God.

NORA

And tonight it just hit me. You're oblivious to anything that isn't about you. Now, it's your night and I am proud of you. I am. But you could've at least tried to see how I was doing Wesley. That's the least you could fuckin' do.

WESLEY

The least I could do. Nora she's my boss. If I gotta meet some people, then I gotta fuckin' meet some people.

NORA

I'm just saying Wesley.

WESLEY

Like you're one to fuckin' talk. How many fuckin' dudes did you talk to at Lux. Corp. while I was in the background?

NORA

That's besides the point.

WESLEY

Then what is the point Nora? Please, explain this shit to me.

NORA

That I was professional. Don't try and turn this on me when you're the one that's in the wrong.

NORA walks off. She wins round one. WESLEY takes another sip of his glass. He puts the food he took out in the microwave. WESLEY takes a seat. WESLEY starts eating.

WESLEY

Hey Nora! You full o' shit, you know that? Saying I'm in the wrong. It's my night. You know what this is? This yo' insecurities speaking. Yes sir. All the way.

NORA comes back fuming.

NORA

Really? That's how you're gonna justify this.

WESLEY

Hey, that's how I see it.

NORA

Oh fuck you, Wesley.

WESLEY

It is Nora. That's how it's been with you since day one. I swear I gotta hide my balls from you if any woman comes around.

NORA

Don't put yourself on such a fuckin' pedestal, Wesley. The amount of guys that wanna fuck me is uncanny.

WESLEY

They won't be as good as me.

NORA

Don't flatter yourself. I've had better.

WESLEY

Makes two of us.

NORA

Now I know your full of shit.

WESLEY

I'm serious. Where do I start? There was Michele, Kathryn, Suzanne, Ashley, Diana, Claudia . . .

NORA

You finished?

WESLEY

Fuck no. But the best out of all of 'em was Sasha. I can't even say I fucked her. She fucked me. She fucked the shit out of me. Like somethin' out of porno.

NORA

You're disgusting. You know that.

NORA *walks off.*

WESLEY

Don't get mad because she knew her way around an appendage. Fuck outta here.

INT. HOUSE BEDROOM- NIGHT

NORA *sits on the edge of the bed while and takes her shoes off when . . .*

WESLEY

Nora.

NORA

Don't.

WESLEY

Look I'm sorry. Can we just fuck and make up? Please, I'm beggin' you.

NORA

Wesley, I get that sometimes you can be a narcissistic prick. I do. For some reason it's wired in your fucking DNA.

WESLEY

You'd be doing the same shit.

NORA

I wouldn't Wesley. Believe it or not. Not everyone always needs validation like you do.

WESLEY

Then what was all that shit you told me earlier. "It really touched the owner." "Those are the moments I strive for."

NORA

You're a fucking child.

WESLEY

And you're a fuckin' hypocrite.

NORA

My friends were right about you.

WESLEY

Oh here we go w' this shit. They barely know me.

NORA

They know enough to see how much of a dick you are.

WESLEY

If you ask me, I'm first-class compared to other guys you dated.

NORA

I'm not with you for your looks, you condescending asshole. You were sweet. And back then you weren't suffering from Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

WESLEY

That's not even -

NORA

I'm not fucking done. Back then . . . It felt like it was just you and me. You loved me and I loved you. It wasn't about fucking higher positions at a job or fucking trophies that you wanna brag about because you're so fucking petty. It was about us. Learning and growing together. But somewhere along the lines, you decided that wasn't enough.

WESLEY

It is enough.

NORA

Is it?

WESLEY

Yes . . . I just struggled for so long to get where I'm at. I was just envisioning things like tonight and what else was to come.

NORA

At the expense of me.

WESLEY walks towards NORA and sits on the bed next to her.

WESLEY

I'll admit, I lost sight of you

NORA

And you were an asshole.

WESLEY

And I was an asshole. I don't have to worry about anything cause I got you. It's us against the world.

They place their heads together.

FADE OUT

Author Statement

"'Normal Couple' is a story about two people in a relationship that start to see red flags in each other after a night out at a business party. I drew some inspiration from the film Malcolm and Marie. This piece to me is about really having to reflect on yourself. To recognize your self-worth and to know that you deserve to be treated with respect."



GLASS LIFE



ALLISON D'AMICO

Artist Statement

"'Glass Life' represents a milestone for the artist, who was studying how glass and light interact. Objects in this still life were selected and arranged to evoke a sense of quaint beauty."

THE UNCOVERED

PAN  SARAH SOLIMAN

Rocking back and forth in my balcony chair, I look out at my grand, green garden that stretches for miles - illuminated by the cooked egg-yolk shaped moon. Tomorrow is the day. I am as certain of its timing as a woman's consistent, gory menstruation. It must be done for me to end this foul sadness and hollowness I have felt for six fatiguing, relentless months. Whilst the moon still reminds me of an elegant, dazzling pearl, it does not give me the same potent, all-powerful, God-like feeling I had before uncovering this damning, monstrous affair. I shall not continue to suffer in silence like most of my kingdom's men, whose voices never surpass a tense mumble when accompanied by their wives.

"Chief Greenbark? You've been sitting on the balcony for hours," my servant snaps me out of my thoughts just as fast as husbands may be pathetically exiled from their wives' homes. I stare at her blankly. My servant, Deb Presson, tends to exaggerate the time like men who undergo bloody, cosmetic operations to have defined features in order to appear irresistibly beddable to their wives.

"Chief Greenbark, you need your sleep for tomorrow's village party." I nod shakily, taking one final look at the humongous blinding pearl in the sky before making my way to my gigantic bedroom. In a few steps, I make it to my side of the bed, freezing like men in other societies who desperately try to freeze the numerous moles off their wildebeest-like backs, when my eyes fall on my soon-to-be-dead husband's sleeping figure.

I carefully crawl into bed like a fat, hairy spider discreetly inspecting where to create its nest. I stare at the repulsively peaceful form across from me. The man I used to love is the same man who caused me great shame and sadness these past several months because he couldn't keep his used goods in his pants. I want to projectile vomit all over him, hoping his pure, white pajamas would turn bile green, or even better, black - to display how filthy, sleazy, and soiled he is for cheating on me. His disturbing tranquility after hurting me so wickedly makes me see red. He must die now. How dare he.

Shaking him awake, I see his crust-covered eyelids uncover his gray, lifeless orbs that will soon match his lifeless body. His pathetic gaze settles on me, and his pin needle beard stresses the foul hole that turns up in a lazy smile. "What is it, my dear Chief?" His voice escapes as jarring and tortuous as nails against a chalkboard.

"I want us to have tea before tomorrow's event," I answer, my face feeling as though it'll rip from my artificial, phony smile I give him.

"Certainly dear." Dumping half the ipecac syrup in his tea, I smile with my whole body for the first time in six crippling months. Sitting in the living space, I stare at the distorted image reflected in the mirror across from me. Oh, how I hopelessly wanted to recognize myself once again. But what I have seen over these months creeps closer and closer to a mutant. "Dear!" The sickly voice of the thing beside me shakes me out of my thoughts. I can't help the demonic grin that spreads over my face like the quickness of him spreading his ancient tree trunk legs. With green vomit shooting out of him, he pathetically reaches for me as I stand over him, feeling the life reenter my body.

Heading out to the garden, I haul the largest murder weapons that I can find inside. Sitting on the couch, I drag his vomit-covered, struggling form and hold him in between my legs. Focusing on our reflections, I take a baby head-sized rock and bash it into the side of his head once. I ravish in his horrified expression and weak groans, feeling the life drain from his form and enter mine as great relief and power engulf me. It was a wise choice to bypass the massive metal pan and choose the rocks to carry out this delicious deed. Again, I bring the rock to his head entranced by the blood traveling across the carpet and the last few hideous sounds that escape him. I look up at the mirror and finally see myself staring back. Leaving the stiff, dead cheater in the blood swamp, it is the all-powerful Chief Greenbark that emerges from the palace into the garden. I am Chief Greenbark. I am Chief Greenbark. I am Chief Greenbark.

Author Statement

"Sylvia Plath was a modern American poet and novelist who wrote "The Bell Jar." Esther Greenwood, the character based on Plath, suffered from depression that was exacerbated by society's expectations of her as a woman. As a female in this society, she was expected to take on traditional, domestic roles with other roles being seen as unobtainable and unacceptable. The pressure and limitations placed on Greenwood worsened her mental state, yet most people in her life did not believe her. Her mother saw it as her 'choice' to feel better, and when frustrated, would ask Greenwood what she had done wrong when raising her. Throughout time, women have experienced the issue of yentl syndrome in which they have to desperately prove they are, in fact, ill. In 'The Uncovered Pan,' I explored women acting as the essentialist perspective of men in a flipped society, utilizing Plath's entrapment and rebirth imagery and symbolism."



Artist Statement

"My inspiration for 'Rx for the Soul' comes from being a pharmacy student. When most people think about prescriptions, pills are the first to come to mind. However, I wanted to people think about other forms of "prescriptions". In this case, I want viewers to think about how music is healing. This piece is meant to be seen as a full prescription bottle of music that is currently being used (right to left) or a prescription bottle being filled with music for later use (left to right). It is up to the viewer to determine what they think is happening."

MY SMALL BEST FRIEND



JENNA HANDAL

Leapt onto my nine-year-old lap
You filled my heart's big gap

Rested your head on Mother's shoulder
And for Father's hand you would saunter

Showered with toys at your new home
But only for the purple ball would you roam

Loved your pretty pink house
You always snuck there like a little mouse

Played tug-of-war after school for hours
Rocked you to sleep in that chair of ours

Sat at the piano by me everyday
You liked that song about a summer's day

Introduced as my small best friend
Love and joy were what you'd lend

Played hide-and-seek around the foyer
You ran as soon as you heard my okay

Lost the owner of our favorite chair
You comforted me with extra care

Grew up helping me through every trial
Your doctor's phone call drove me to denial

Your face more angelic as the difficult days begun
I gazed as you laid stretched under the morning sun

Brought you Mother's box shaded in blue
And kissed you with not much else to do

I promise I tried everything I could
If I could change it back to our happy days I would

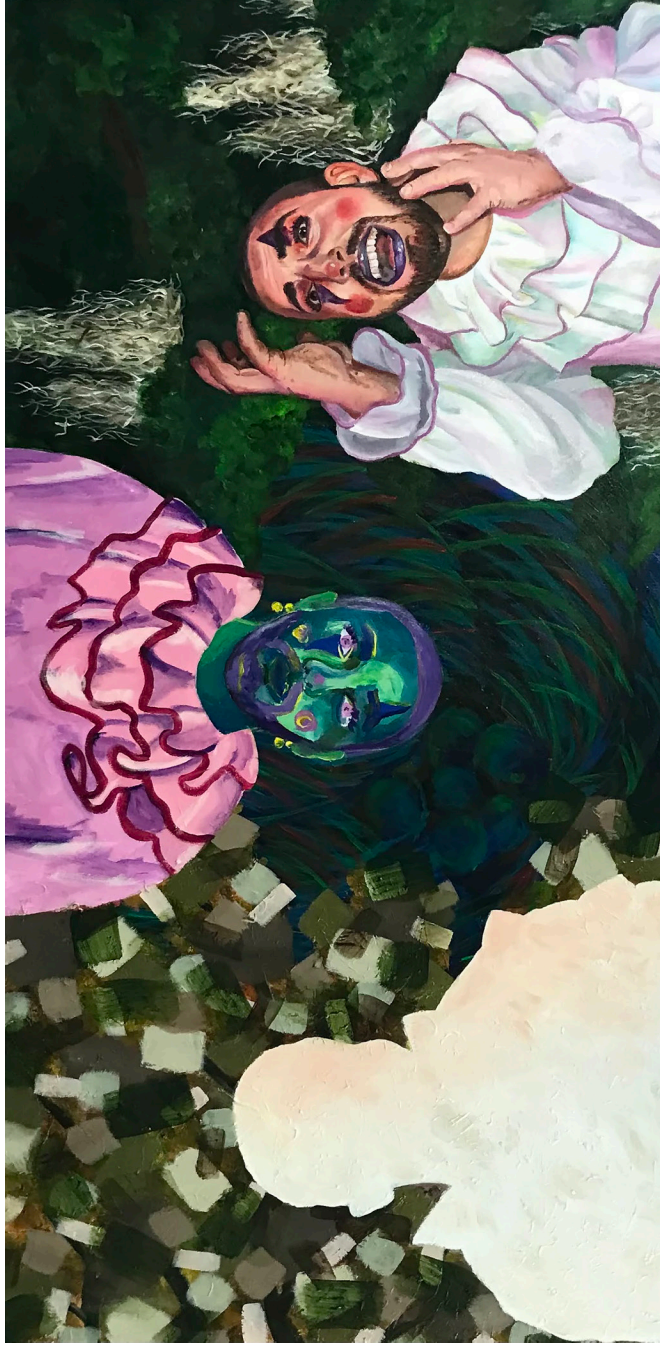
And when the time came I started to weep
But I stayed to watch as you fell asleep

Held you tightly as I once did in that chair
Told you about heaven and how I'd see you there

Artist Statement

"'My Small Best Friend' is about a long-lasting friendship between a human and a dog. After the loss of my dog of 10 years, I grew inspired to write a simple, yet telling story of our strong bond. I wrote this in hopes that readers can connect the poem's meaning to the ups and downs of their own friendships."





Artist Statement

"Past Present Future" represents my personal past with a screaming self-portrait realistically portrayed to represent the clarity of my past pain, my present in an impressionistic style self-portrait to represent the confusion and spontaneity of my current life and representing my future in an abstracted simplistic silhouette to allude to my unknown future."

VIOLENCE



AYSIA STEPHENS

Maybe he's done with the violence.
Is the pain worth the agony
of not knowing how his friends cope
without him there? Do they lose sleep crying
over what he became? Or do they shake in torment
knowing they'd be better off with him locked up?
He wants them safe.
He wants them to realize he cares.
He wants them to listen, for once.
He wants control over them one more time.
Maybe he isn't done with the violence.

He can't get his oxygen.
It dances around his form, seducing him with tales
of freedom. Tales of harmony that would give his mind
rest from the misery it whispers in his head.
Make the voices stop.
Make the ache drown.
Make him feel euphoric.
He doesn't need his oxygen.

Maybe with love, it'll make sense.
Would showing passion change their mind?
Does it matter if what he shows isn't sincere?
He needs their support, their love
to advance in this timeline. He doesn't plan to keep
the emotion within him. No, he'll throw it away
in a box to stay stashed under a dirt mound laced with
malice and manipulation. They won't listen otherwise.
How can he get them on his side?
How can he convince them to help?
What will it take to show he's different? That he's changed?
Why do they want the old him back?
He doesn't think love will help it make sense.

Maybe it's all in his intent.
Does he carry himself in a way that exposes
his true nature? Does he speak
with tones that give away the meaning of
his words? He needs a new pawn worth his time,
one that hides his poisoned intentions from onlookers
who know nothing but the words of their superiors.
He's tired of being looked down on, looked at in the way
he looks at everyone else. He wants them to think they're equals.
He wants everyone to join him on his quest to rid the earth of
its ignorant henchmen. What do they accomplish

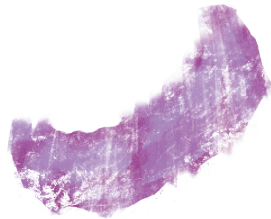
besides pain and anguish?
Catastrophes would have no impacts.
Murders would have no headlines.
He would no longer be ostracized.
He can't end the violence.

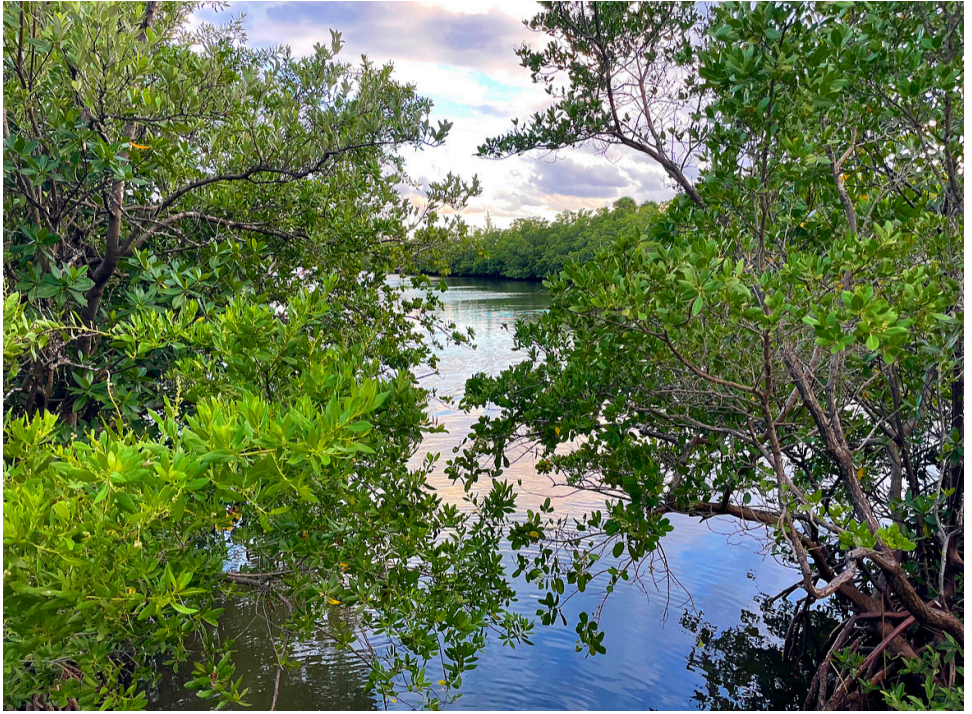
Deep down, he is innocent.
He wants power. But that doesn't make him defective.
Innocence makes him a target. The earth would shatter
with innocence dominating the souls of God's creations.
Is it his fault his former friends
are ones bearing innocent souls? Is he to blame
if he rids his spirit of innocence to keep the balance?

He's a vessel that harbors two souls in one,
one using the other as a stepping stool
to the throne he flings others off of.
All vessels need pairs to keep equilibrium.
He needs his shattered.
He can't keep fighting.

Author Statement

"'Violence' is about how no one's intentions can be truly proven. They can be told by the person, but there's never any way to truly know if what one is saying holds up to their actions. Every person has reasons to their actions and the story follows an individual whose reasons are flawed."





TRANQUILITY



PAMELA MIGNACCA

Artist Statement

"The contrast of green colors from the trees, blue from the water, and orange from sunset that reflects onto the ocean, complement each other to bring about a calm feeling. 'Tranquility' was taken at the spectacular Oleta River State Park where natural beauty is in abundance."

FOR HE WHO GIVES CAN ALSO TAKE



SAMANTHA KWAN

To he who encourages me to fly yet clips my small, frail wings

He who whispers words of motivation then turns me towards a path of desperation

Holds me up to bring me down

Waters my seeds and barely meets my needs
Even threatens an affair; sometimes I think our problems are beyond repair

Left to overthink and evaluate my actions when it is he who caused these factions

Wounded by his words, I listen relentlessly to hear an apologetic word in return

The five-letter word is spoken and yet my heart and trust are still broken
Time after time, things are the same and my feelings remain

Worried, regretful, dumb, and insecure are a few, but to him, they're like the morning dew

Appear in the morning and are gone by night but to me, they leave the relationship in fright and our future together out of sight

Nevertheless, I am said to be loved and told to put this above

Tears are wiped away and a smile forms at bay

For she who doesn't conceal her pain is the one who is seen as insane

Author Statement

"'For He Who Gives Can Also Take' is a poem of despair and represents a partner's longing for change, love, respect, and support. As such, the author's wish is for those who read it to always recognize their worth, understand that they have the power to demand change from their partner, and walk away when a relationship no longer serves them. When loving others, the author asks that you do yourself justice and never stop loving yourself in the process."

A COLLECTION OF OCCURRENCES



DYLAN DARLING

THE MEMORANDUM: A SIJO

I would rather live as a story than a memory
Memories paint too raw a picture, too visceral a blemish
To be loved, I must let a vague story eclipse this troubled past.

HOW MY FATHER DIED WHILE STAYING ALIVE TO HAUNT ME

I lost my very much alive father as a teenager,
In presence and in memory.

You see,
My father thinks of me as a liar.
Both a liar and a victim to a world of liars.
It would seem,
Only what he knows is truth.
Only he is aware in a unperceptive globe.

Experience was once known to inform knowledge,
Now it does not.
Narratives have taken its place.
Delusion stands where experience once stood.
To this father,
Whoever stands on his soapbox speaks gospel.
Gospel that can dispel the world around it.
Gospel that is sacrilegious to oppose.
So praise be, To my all-knowing he,
Who molds the world into a world of his own
Where reality is merely tampered with
If it ever threatens to make his narratives untrue.

Artisans of slander jointly stunt societies
distorting people, like my father,
distorting progress, in our very real world.
Only pain, with patterns so intrinsically sewn, is left in its wake.
Did you know?
Didn't you know about pain's profitability?
Progress however, that's quite the liability.
Greed and self-preservation has sewn itself into falsehood,
Into the altered realities my father has so wholeheartedly be-wedded.
A marriage so beautiful it seems, it overshadowed its predecessor
And so, this father, has consequently unmarried himself from family.

Yet still, he spits
 that I am the manipulated,
 My self is blinded and disabled by the lies of experience.
 He spits out his nicknames for me from my childhood
 To others, what is known as slurs.
 To him, I have traded my humanity it seems.
 Not he.

Nothing may hold a candle to the gospel of manipulation.
 I lost my father as he lost his family.
 He has resigned so gradually,
 So very gradually,
 so that the loss feels as if nothing was missing—
 As if a father was gone this whole time,
 As if a father was not there to begin with.
 Eventually, there was a clear point in time
 Unmistakable in circumstance and emotion
 Where I knew a father could never return
 Where I knew I would never have a father again

One day, I survived a tragedy.
 I came home covered in blood not of my own.
 To me, this day will forever haunt me
 From both the unspeakable terrors I faced
 And as it was the day my father truly died.
 Even though I was here, painted in the horror of experience.
 My tragedy, to him, was no reality of his.
 A false flag, his eyes screamed.
 Soon enough, his mouth screamed the same

Bodybags of my friends were never enough to prove it
 Suddenly, friends he had known now never existed before.
 I had to then wonder
 If I was the deceased, would I too have not existed?
 My father was buried that day, in head and heart.
 Somehow I treated him the same, and my emotions he has never seen.
 What good would my honesty do?
 What words are there to say against a world that doesn't exist?

Death is not sacred, when it can be a tool to an agenda
 And as I am forced to rewitness a cherished friends death
 Upon every booming sound, upon any quiet moment.
 Others speculate how she never existed, just like my father.

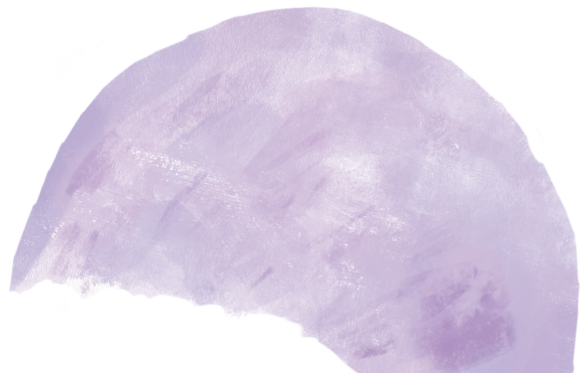
Now you should be able to see,
 Just by the spread of deceit and false realities
 How I've lost my father as a teenager, in presence and in memory.

SAND SLUSHIES

Guided by barriers of sky blue flush,
Into lands decorated with the sands of slush. Covering
sawtooth stones, Coveting simple sightseers to immerse in its tropic tones.
There's a luscious flush of lush-ish brush, With shops and
shacks of sea souvenirs where sightseers rush. Palm
trees scatteredly stab, Exposing the sky's bluey flesh
through intermittent jabs. And the dive store bustles as
sightseers hustle, to sands where many a seabird cheekily scuffle.
The keys to peace emerge from these dynamics, between locals and sightseer antics
Between drinking over love's semantics, on folding chairs atop mushy sands as true romantics

Author Statement

"'A Collection of Occurrences' is exactly that, with 3 parts that make up an interpretive whole. 'The Memorandum' is a sijo that accounts to the insecurities of being left behind. Is it selfish to wish to wish to be left as a story rather than a memory? And 'Sand Slushies' is a poem both vague and specific, reserved to any beachy tourist towns while equally reserved with subtle symbols to allude to a specific one."





TRICKSTER SPIRIT



COURTNEY MA

Artist Statement

"'Trickster Spirit' comes from a series of previous works where they all have the same style of mysteriousness. My inspiration for this piece comes from the Japanese kitsune or fox spirit. It is also known by several different names in various cultures. Kitsunes are known to be tricksters and I want the viewer to imagine what they think is behind the mask."

IT'S FUNNY



BREANNA BRADY

It's funny. Reservation bears no relevance in the presence of him. Anything short of a flashing red light is ambiguous and couldn't be recognized in the broad of day; what festers from no laughing matter faces him as a jest. The slow smirk creeping onto his face makes my stomach turn and my eyes swell. It's funny, really.

I shiver at the sight of his hand while I watch him grab the door to let himself out.

The door.

The door.

He grabbed the door.

If he grabbed the door then why do I feel his clutch on my knee? I'm not crazy. I felt it. I feel it. I can still feel it now. How could I describe a sensation if I had never felt it? I can't make this up. I see the mold of his fingers in a violet tint on my flesh. I wince at the sight of the once closed door that he left open to leave me exposed.

It's funny, truly. It is common courtesy to ask someone if they would like the door to be left open or closed. He didn't ask me. Seems like a silly thing to obsess over. Silly to fixate on something out of my hands. He should have asked. Funny that he didn't.

I see him everywhere I go.

*he is the collection of stares I get outside as I wonder whether people are looking through me or through every layer of myself I have piled on to redeem the integrity of myself or at least attempt to force these sharded fragments to come together close enough to pass as myself
or at this rate
even a version of myself
will suffice*

The creak of the hinge snaps me back. It's funny how something so familiar can be so startling. I recoil in response to the strokes of plum creating a path up my body. I saw his hand grasp the door.

The door.

It was the door.

right?

I feel the weight in my chest as the tight clench of my thoughts grip my throat. I can't move. All that moves are the tears streaming down my face. I am in a state of cataplexy as I watch another version melt away and leave me at the mercy of the spiritual euthanasia he administers to me. It's funny how he didn't notice the creaks of the door as it followed his stride.

Maybe I should have mentioned that I was not ready for company.

It's funny, truthfully, how the closed door wasn't enough. I suppose he may leave his open. It's funny though. Everyone knows how doors work. Right?

My shower runs red then clear but never clean. I wipe away the water but am faced with a reflection that I don't recognize. I see myself imprisoned in a flesh punching bag. My eyes call out to him and are met with contempt.

My loss is his gain. As I watched myself slip away I also watched him carry my virtue through the door. The grip on my throat loosens enough for me to finally start sucking in air. The weight travels throughout my body and weighs me down further.

I hear it again.

The door.

I can't move. My periphery watches his hand pull the door to a close and I sit in isolation.

It's funny how he didn't ask me whether I wanted the door left open. At this moment, I would do anything for company. He won't acknowledge the violet imprint on my soul. I saw it. I felt it. I still feel it.

At this moment, I would give almost anything to reopen that door for myself.

almost anything.

almost.

for myself.

What I had left, at least.

It's funny, really, how even a breath makes me worry that the tetrakis of my identity will come to an unbearable crash. I can't move or breathe or open the door.

I can't do much of anything now.

It's funny.

Author Statement

"'It's Funny' was written to bring attention to domestic violence. As a Resident Assistant (RA), Breanna has used campus resources and RA training to familiarize others with signs of domestic violence and aid those affected in getting the help they need. As someone in a healthy relationship with her partner, Breanna hopes that those who may resonate with her piece, 'It's Funny' will reassess their situation and seek out help."

UNDOCUMENTED



AIDAN KUNJU



Artist Statement

"'Undocumented' was started as part of an Honors Seminar with Dr. Fuentes in which we read 'The Undocumented Americans' by Carla Cornejo Villavicencio. In the book, she narrates the real experiences of undocumented immigrants in the USA. She talks about the uncertainty and anxiety that stems from an undocumented status, with many families constantly in fear of losing their loved ones or freedom to financial burdens, exploitation, and law enforcement. In my piece, I hoped to communicate a sense of fear, and insecurity, with the father in the family not present in the scene. The woman must continue to care for her children despite the stress she faces."

FREE IN FREEPORT



SAMANTHA LANGMAACK



Artist Statement

"Taken at Wolfe's Neck Woods State Park, 'Free in Freeport' serves as a reminder of a summer that Samantha will always hold close to her heart—one with days spent by the water and nights spent laughing in tents."

VOICEMAIL CHERISH MATHEWS

(Please leave a message after the beep.)

"Hey there, um-
I-I was wondering if you would pick up!
It's just, I have so much to say
But not enough time.
And I dunno if you'd want to hear it,
But here goes . . .

I know we wanted to do so much together,
And then I left you alone.
I guess- I was just scared of our dreams,
Because, well, the more I grew up
The farther they seemed out of our reach.

God, I want to hold you in my arms now
Cause I know how badly you crave comfort,
But I can't prepare you for the eventual hurt,
So I'll carry the consequences for later.

Y'know, I still can't discern the difference
Between my sensuality and sexuality . . .
It's funny- we never cared in the past!
But now . . . it claws down my throat every day-
I'm at a constant battle with myself-
Identity is just so difficult to understand-
Y'know, it would've been nice for some help!

. . . Sorry.
You don't deserve that.
Then again, we never understood what we deserved.

I'm sorry I left you behind.
I'm sorry we're still fighting each other.

. . . But it would be nice to hear from you again."

(Beep.)

Author Statement

"I wrote 'Voicemail' after coming to terms with the fact that who I am today is a lot more different than who my younger self aspired to be in the past. It's almost a bittersweet feeling- kind of like you're trying to tell your younger self the things you wish you could have done, or what will happen- only they can't hear you. So instead, you send them a message hoping they can hear you somehow, even if it's difficult to talk to them."



SHARING IS CARING



CASSIDY ZANGWILL

Artist Statement

"'Sharing is Caring,' was taken on the Pompano Beach Pier after the pelican had swiped a fish from one of the fishermen on the dock. I took this picture to capture this humorous moment as he refused to share his prize."

THE WOMAN'S WORKPLACE

 SAMANTHA SOLIMAN

Ten Minutes, (and who would want more?)

Swift's eyes fall on the side of the stage, an image so explicit,
Where Margaret awaits her turn sticky and breathless.

With the overexcited and unrestrained male entertainer on stage,
And misguidance by friends Samantha and Mindy exchanged,
She hubristically listens to the audience's sensational reaction
unchanged.

Wiping the elated tears from his eyes,
Swift thinks of her being next, quickly coming down from his high.
He is convinced it would not be too late for her to disappear,
Yet she feverishly approaches in the halting cheer.
The deformed expressions and body language unsightly,
Along with the wordy discharge and tasteless uncovering forthrightly,
The mainly male audience sit uncomfortable and flighty.
Many look away from the scene too obscene to be seen.
How else may Swift take these justifiable responses to be?

He anxiously envisions the probable state,
Of Margaret's designated workplace.
Coming home quenched,
He could first be beaten by the stench,
Followed by a sight so intense.

Perhaps this naughty and improper sight of woman by man
Could be more X-rated of an experience than,
A female's breadwinner returning to the foul sight of no food in
the pans.

Shocked he stands, taking in the sight of the mare.
Her disheveled and tangled hair,
moist skin, and splattered clothing without a care.
Her eyes blown out and face tomato red,
As if she had dunged and remnants spread.
Scraps across all surfaces and the ghastly smell,
Of the overflowing waste kissing her attractiveness farewell.

Swift imagines of advising her to fantasize,
About having a perfect kitchen, with overflowing food and supplies.
“All of the irresistible and mouthwatering dishes you can make,
Along with the tempting and inescapable scents leaving his mouth gape.
What could possibly be a better place?
Kindly leave your perverted and loose ways,
To a sacred position with only husband’s praise.”

“After all, attempts to unrealistically pursue a career as a comedian,
Only takes time away from collecting your ingredients,
To prepare your husband’s sandwich,
Showing your obedience.”

Author Statement

“Jonathan Swift was an 18th-century Anglo-Irish satirist who wrote ‘The Lady’s Dressing Room,’ in which consumerism as well as men invading the private spaces of women is satirized. Swift believed in a public sphere where men used their voices and professions to lead society forward, whereas women belonged in the private sphere to look after the children and the home.

A postmodern-day female satirist and comedian, Margaret Cho, believes in representation of gender and races in all spheres. In ‘The Woman’s Workplace,’ I satirized the unconditional power men hold in society along with the gentle reminder that women should not invade the public sphere, accomplishing this through ambiguity and Swift’s writing style in ‘The Lady’s Dressing Room’ using Margaret Cho as a device for the delivery of his message.”

LOUISIANA

STILL LIFE

NICHOLAS WAGUESPACK



Artist Statement

"Louisiana Still Life' explores my relationship with Louisiana and being ostracized, hanging in the distance far away from the typical status quo. This painting represents my exploration of using the unique material of alligator skin textured vinyl as a ground for painting. . "

PURPLE FLOWERS JULIE SAINT-FLEUR

"There are 5 stages of grief and I believe you've just reached stage two." I looked up from my seat and glared across the room at Nancy. "Exactly, look at how you're looking at me!"

"All of a sudden you're a psychologist? Cool." I rolled my eyes and looked back down at my phone at the influx of condolences and prayers I was receiving. Notification after notification, and yet the events that were unfolding still did not feel real to me.

It had officially been approximately 27 hours and 56 minutes since we received the news that our grandma had passed away. Of course, I was angry! I'd just been given the worse news of my life and there was absolutely nothing I could do about it. I wasn't one to sit around and do nothing and at this moment watching everyone else idly sit around was infuriating me. Surely there was one of us powerful enough to bargain with God. Someone who could get this Deity to reverse their decision to have my grandma ascend so abruptly.

"I look like someone to play with?" The question was stern and rhetorical, but it came from what looked to be a frail petite frame weighing no more than 110 pounds and standing at a mere five foot two inches. Even at the age of 96, she was a force to be reckoned with. No one dared questioned her authority. For sure if anyone could go against God's decisions it would be her. The epitome of fierceness and strength, she was exactly who I wanted to be when I grow up. Her death left me puzzled. She never rolled over for anyone and had absolutely no back-down. I couldn't get past the idea of how her encounter with God must have been in those final moments. Surely, God entered the room silent and unannounced, catching her off guard as she slept - coward.

At 341 hours and 22 minutes I was set to take the stage and give her eulogy. I walked up to the podium and straightened the pamphlet that lied there waiting for me to read it. As my eyes made out her name etched to the paper in a bold italic purple print under the words 'Life Reflections', my throat began to close up. Had I not learned anything from watching her? Was she looking down at me now shaking her head in disgust? Perched on the edge of a cloud watching this fiasco. Right in that moment, as if she leaned forward and blew wind in my direction, I ran off of the stage. It was here that I scaled to stage 4 of grief: depression. The scene of me dashing off of the stage lived rent free in my head and would forever torment me. I was not the person my grandma thought I was.

39,168 hours prior to her death, the women in the family gathered around simply enjoying one another's company. "I truly admire your strength." my grandma turned her head to me and took my hand. This

was random and had not been the conversation currently at play. Everyone in the room looked at each other in confusion and then back towards her waiting for an explanation. "I don't know anyone who would have been able to handle your accident the way you did baby." I humbly said thank you but, on the inside, I had been screaming in rejoice and disbelief. I couldn't fathom how someone as resilient as her could even say that to me. Ditto, I thought as I smiled.

That scene that had been a source of my strength all of these years had now placed itself at the forefront of my memory. Surely, I was the one who had been passed the torch and was expected to bargain with God for her life. I approached the bargaining stage of grief hopeful. The only issue was I had absolutely nothing God wanted but I would present my case anyways. 2 hours after she closed her eyes for the last time, as the family waited for the coroners to arrive, I sat there in silence, and presented a mental PowerPoint to the man upstairs. Images of all the seconds I spent with her that would forever be core memories for me. Like the time we sat outside in the backyard, a breeze flew by as we crouched over a bowl of snap peas. She had just spent nearly an hour picking them from the garden adjacent to where we were seated. Although this was something she had done her entire life, she sat there with her gaze fixated on the task. Her eyes never leaving her hands as we sat, snapped, and laughed. "Send her another breath, open her eyes, wake her up. I'll go to church, I'll give more to my community more, I'll change absolutely anything you want me to." But there was no change. From either of us. Her body remained still.

From my earliest memories: every holiday, every birthday, and every occasion that required a gift – you could anticipate seeing purple flowers. Those were my grandma's favorite thing in the entire world. So, it only made sense that 342 hours and 5 minutes after she left us, all the pallbearers would all be wearing a single purple rose on their lapels. 342 hours and 8 minutes after she left, her loved ones would be placing purple flowers on her casket. The sendoff was beautiful, but it did not take the grief with it.

Hours turned into days – days into months and I was still grieving. The first four stages took turns at this point taking up space in my life. But I could never seem to navigate stage 5: acceptance. Lavender, hydrangea, lilac, aster, and bellflower are just some of the many purple flowers found around the world. The purple flower at the center of my world was named Vesta. The emptiness left in the places she once took up will now be filled with purple flowers. A vase of wilting hydrangeas sat on my kitchen table. As I planned my next trip to the flower shop, I wondered if acceptance would be in the cart as well.

Author Statement

"'Purple Flowers' is a story about navigating one's grief. Inspired by the author's personal battle with the loss of a loved one. ."

VERDANT VERMONT



SAMANTHA LANGMAACK



Artist Statement

“'Verdant Vermont' was taken after an unexpected pit stop during a road trip across New England. It proved to Samantha that sometimes it's worth turning the car around.”

REFLECTIONS ON LOSS



BIANCA OLIVEIRA

Dear friend,

Walk with me.
 I know how you grieve.
 My heart shivers with yours.
 Your name isn't strange here.
 You're one and many among us all.
 Your empty is ours.
 Your tears polish our faces.
 Please meet me;
 let me show you the peace that calls for you.
 Now go!
 Cling to the hand where loss becomes life—

In time, we'll reunite at the end of the patterned road.
 Dear, your love will still live in the unseen,
 breathing and traveling among the glorious invisible.
 Your sight plays you a fool.
 My eyes have learned they're often blind;
 I hear the invisible's musings
 that live among the full, lovely winds, reconciling
 love and foe,
 breath and cry,
 chide and praise,
 limp and leap.

Mind the rocks, friend—rough.
 When you find that peaks have become stones have become sand,
 and your story marks the patterned road—
 totally defiant of despair's caverns—
 do remember the hand that held yours,
 its luster and etches timeless,
 arms eager for your bare hold,
 heart offering a universe of life's best,
 smile recognizing His child's cry,
 "O, God!"

Yours through first flower and frost,
 A friend

Author Statement

"The idea of "Reflections on Loss" had been ruminating in my mind since mid-2020. During a period of such widespread loss and grief, I didn't know how to process my emotions and those of others. I didn't know how to pray anymore. In 2021, I learned of the passing of someone from my hometown, and the news filled me with deep sorrow for the family. I turned to prayer once more, and my prayers translated into what is now "Reflections on Loss", anyone's uncertain road to renewal and Peace."





HOME ZOE HENRY

Artist Statement

"'Home' was taken back home in St. Croix, specifically at Cramer's Park. I took this picture to display the beauty my island has, and I want to capture it through the perspective I have. This was taken in 2021, at a family cookout on the beach. This is a normal tradition in St. Croix; just utilizing the weekend to either go to the beach, go to Buck Island, etc. with family and friends. This photo also reminds me of the togetherness we, Crucians, have. Being able to mingle amongst local strangers is what reminds me of this photo, Home."

A DUSK SKY



RACHEL TAYLOR

There's something about a dusk sky
The way the sun has finished setting, yet spares enough light
to romanticize the earth,
Like a candle flickering upon an old bistro table in a campy movie.
Layers of burnt orange, pale pink & turquoise blue
fading into the distant midnight sky,
Like colors smoothed out across a canvas.
A perfect sliver of a crescent moon, held perfectly in
orbit, seemingly within reach, yet so far away.
The cool of the night approaching, as streetlights, porchlights
& lamplights switch on across the city,
Like stars lighting up a galaxy.

And just before our bodies turn into mere silhouettes of the night,
Our skin catches a golden hue with a glimmer in our eye.
Every evening feeling hopeful for what's to come,
Yet blissfully sad for the nostalgia of time gone by.
These little intricacies prove that only the Creator of Heaven
and Earth could imagine such astronomical beauty that
shrouds a dusk sky.

Author Statement

"I take time to reflect most while driving and I have always noticed the way a setting sun foreshadows my mood for the evening. 'A Dusk Sky' stems from a collection of stopping and breathing in the present from a child to now. I remember sitting in my car before my calculus class, contemplating if I was choosing right for my life. Suddenly, before I knew it, I had a pen and a journal in my hand and couldn't put it down until I self-actualized my thoughts. It's like that moment, when you're sitting in Organic Chemistry and find yourself drawing The Starry Night over your notes. You realize somethings got to change before you enter a quarter-life crisis. This poem has undertones of nostalgia overlapped with romanticized potential. The beautiful thing about poetry, is that it's open to interpretation according to the reader and their place in life."



THE SHINE OF A RAINBOW



PAMELA MIGNACCA

Artist Statement

"In the darkest of times, light still shines through. On such a rainy day, a beautiful rainbow with its vibrant colors shines through the dark sky. In darkness, light prevails. Thus was the moment captured by 'The Shine of a Rainbow.'"

Biographies

BREANNA BRADY | SENIOR; BIOLOGY MAJOR

Breanna is from Jacksonville, FL, and has had a passion for connecting the sciences and humanities from a young age. She draws inspiration for her work from societal issues like mental illness and domestic violence, using her writing to bring awareness to uncomfortable topics that may be avoided.

ADARA COX | GRADUATE; CRDM PROGRAM

Adara, originally from Charleston, South Carolina, moved to Florida to pursue her graduate degree in Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media. What inspires Adara the most is knowing that her gift as a writer supports creating spaces for people of color who are often silenced by systemic power dynamics within society. For life after graduation, Adara intends to continue using her writing to guide others to advocate, whether that may be teaching, creating resources, and or designing training and development content, she knows that advocating for people of color will always be a priority in her career.

ALLISON D'AMICO | FRESHMAN; ENGLISH MAJOR

Allison is a native of the Sunshine State and a freshman at Nova. An aspiring writer and artist, she loves to have a pencil in hand to put ideas to paper.

DYLAN DARLING | SENIOR; SECONDARY ENGLISH EDUCATION MAJOR

Dylan is just another Brazilian American who hasn't learned how to settle. Not in the way you're thinking of... it is more along the lines of things like work, passions, and hobbies, Dylan is someone who has to try it all. And in this moment, Dylan is a writer in need of an outlet, and maybe, just maybe, you're a reader in need of an outlet. Welcome to a snapshot of me, who wrote purely research a year ago and one year from now will write something else oddly specific but just different enough. Maybe.

ATHENA EDWARDS | GRADUATE; CRDM PROGRAM

Athena is working towards a career as a book editor with the goal of helping underrepresented/hidden voices and stories get heard by the people who need them.

RICK ESNER | JUNIOR; SPEECH-LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION

Rick intends to attend graduate school and earn an accreditation to become a speech pathologist, with a vested interest in working with stroke and TBI patients. Originally from New Jersey, Rick says he is grateful to be completing his undergraduate degree in the South Florida Sun. If you see Rick on campus, he's likely enjoying the weather or feeding the friendly NSU cats some treats.

JANELLE GIANNETTA | JUNIOR; ENGLISH MAJOR

Janelle is from New Jersey, and writing has always been a passion of hers which she aspires to continue. She has already published a short story in an anthology and has found a passion in editing - which she has already done for two books thus far. She plans to pursue her master's in creative writing back in New York to further her abilities and inspire her even more!

MICHELLE GORODISKY | FRESHMAN; BIOLOGY MAJOR

Michelle is a freshman in the DO Dual Admission program majoring in Biology with minors in Studio Art and Honors Transdisciplinary Studies. She hopes to keep artistic expression close in her pursuit to becoming a physician.

JENNA HANDAL | SOPHOMORE; BIOLOGY MAJOR

Jenna is a sophomore Biology major and Public Health minor. She has many artistic hobbies like taking photos, writing poetry, and playing piano.

ZOE HENRY | FRESHMAN; BIOLOGY MAJOR

Zoe is from the beautiful and exotic island of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. She enjoys playing volleyball and softball, creative writing, photography, and listening to music in her spare time. Her creative writing began in the early year of 2018, and also began photography in the early year of 2020. From then, she has formed a passion for both art styles.

JASMINE JACKSON | GRADUATE; CRDM

Jasmine currently works as a production editor for the Taylor & Francis Group. She hopes to continue learning about the editorial process to support young authors and authors from underrepresented backgrounds.

AIDAN KUNJU | JUNIOR; BIOLOGY MAJOR

Aidan has enjoyed making art as a hobby since he was very young. He draws inspiration for his art from his coursework in the sciences, and from books that he reads. He hopes to continue making art as a creative outlet as he furthers his education in medical school on the path to becoming a physician.

SAMANTHA KWAN | SENIOR; PUBLIC HEALTH MAJOR

Samantha's passions lie within the realm of public health and serving others. As such, she hopes to further explore her hidden talent for writing and how it can enable her to give a voice to those who have, unfortunately, been neglected by society. Ready to enter the unknown, Samantha is excited about her upcoming graduation and to see where life takes her.

SAMANTHA LANGMAACK | SENIOR; COMMUNICATION MAJOR

Samantha aspires to become both a novelist and director. She has a passion for telling stories and finds writing to be her greatest form of expression.

COURTNEY MA | JUNIOR; PHARMACY MAJOR

Courtney is currently finishing her third year as a pharmacy student at Nova Southeastern University College of Pharmacy (NSUCOP) and is preparing to start clinical rotations. She is interested in compounding as it encompasses her interests in art and science. As an artist, she finds that this concept of compounding is very similar to mixing oil paints. In her free time, Courtney loves to draw and paint as they are great stress relievers and lets her take a bit of time - whether it is fifteen minutes or two hours - to be creative.

CHERISH MATHEWS | SENIOR; PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

Cherish is originally from Pembroke Pines, Florida before she moved to Davie. Hoping to enter the field of clinical neuropsychology, she enjoys creative writing and baking in her spare time.

MICHAEL MCCALL | GRADUATE; CRDM

Michael wants to be a Science Fiction author. After CRDM, he currently plans to pursue an MFA in creative writing.

PAMELA MIGNACCA | SENIOR; COMMUNICATION MAJOR

Pamela, a Miami Beach, Florida native, has an inherent passion for creating digital media. She gains inspiration from her hometown as creative insights to include in her work. She loves sharing her videography and photography projects with others to promote the enjoyment of Earth's natural beauty.

GABRIELLA NEVES | SOPHOMORE; MARKETING + ART/DESIGN MAJOR

Gabriella Neves is a Brazilian-Argentinian undergraduate at NSU, pursuing a degree in Marketing and Art & Design. She spends most of her time visualizing the preposterous in her work, and is currently building a portfolio for future endeavors.

BIANCA OLIVEIRA | GRADUATE; CRDM PROGRAM

As a Massachusetts native, Bianca seeks various creative opportunities to express her love for the change of seasons. Now a Floridian, she enjoys capturing moments of beauty in music, nature, and snowy memories through poetry.

KRINA PATEL | SENIOR; NEUROSCIENCE

Krina graduated early from her undergraduate degree and is already preparing for graduate school to pursue a career in either eternal medicine of psychiatry. She's from the suburbs of Chicago and in her free time, she loves to travel, hike, bike, try new places to eat, and spend time with friends and family.

AMARI RUSSELL | SENIOR; THEATRE ARTS MAJOR

Amari's career aspirations are to become a successful actor, screenwriter, and filmmaker. He draws inspiration from memories of pain and heart-break he's dealt with in his past.

JULIE SAINT-FLEUR | GRADUATE; MBA PROGRAM

Julie is a published author and creative storyteller, captivating her readers with incredible imagery while covering realistic topics. She aspires to be on the *New York Times* Best Sellers list.

SARAH SOLIMAN | SENIOR; BIOLOGY MAJOR

Sarah is completing her senior year as an undergraduate student with a major in Biology and minors in Psychology for Health Sciences and Honors Transdisciplinary Studies. While Soliman's major focuses on science, she's been able to gain literature-based knowledge through her honors courses. She felt inspired to create these pieces because of her supportive and fruitful learning experiences in these courses.

AYSIA STEPHENS | SENIOR; MARINE BIOLOGY MAJOR

Writing has always been a huge love of Aysia's, but their true passion is in marine biology, where she plans to become a Shark biologist. When it pertains to writing, it's difficult for her to plan what she writes; they only do it when inspiration hits - which keeps them from getting frustrated with their writing.

RACHEL TAYLOR | SENIOR; MARINE BIOLOGY MAJOR

Creative writing has always been a form of expression and decompression for Rachel. She says that sometimes it's hard to verbalize exactly how she's feeling - but when she starts to write, the words just make sense.

NICHOLAS WAGUESPACK | JUNIOR; ART & DESIGN MAJOR

Nicholas' art explores his identity as a queer individual from south Louisiana. His most recent artwork explores his relationship with his childhood and growing up in a conservative space where he was not allowed to express himself as he genuinely wanted to. He uses the clown as a muse for his artwork, representing himself as an individual who is and was perceived as an entertainment oddity, someone who does not really fit into the normal sphere of the world.

CASSIDY ZANGWILL | SOPHOMORE; BIOLOGY MAJOR

Cassidy was born and raised in South Florida and much of her inspiration comes from our native wildlife. She is studying to become a Physician Associate and, in her free time, she enjoys taking photos, doing yoga, and taking care of her pets.



VIP Acknowledgments

Our VIP submissions are pieces that we received by the VIP deadline and were greeted by positive reviewer feedback. This was a practice we implemented in 2020 (for Volume 18) to encourage more submissions to come in earlier in the process so that our reviewers are not as swamped with pieces right after our final submission deadline. The perks of being a VIP submission, upon acceptance into the *Digressions Literary and Art Journal* are special recognition, their choice of font for your name in the final product, and a chance at early premiere on our social media ahead of the launch.

To all of our wonderful VIPs, we applaud your ability to submit your creative pieces while you were still settling in during the first semester of the new school year. We appreciate you.

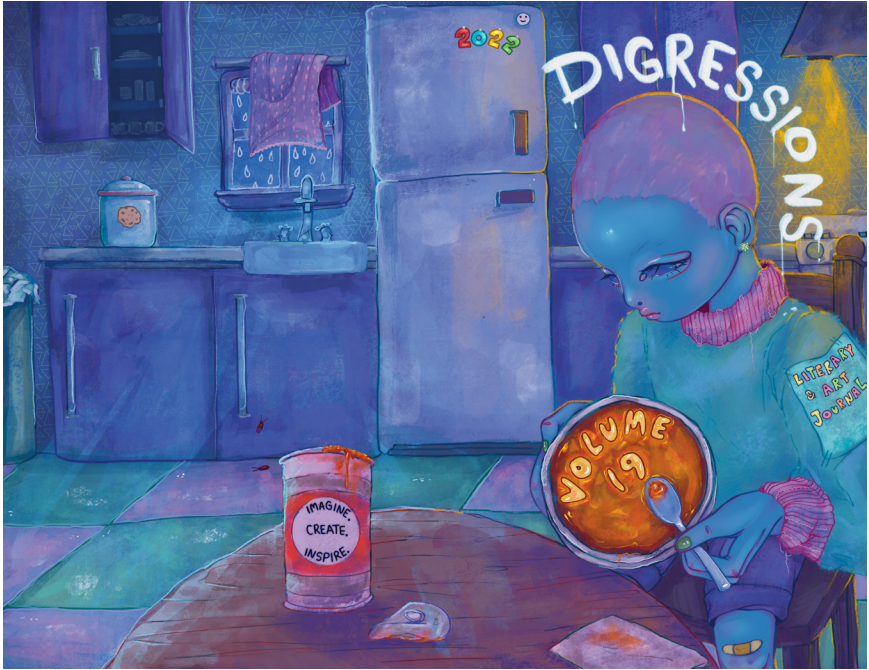
VOLUME 19'S VIPS

- "How Dare You" – Adara Cox
- "Underestimated" – Athena Edwards
- "You Wanted a Beach Day" – Athena Edwards
- "Closing the Gap" – Michelle Gorodisky
- "Faded" – Michelle Gorodisky
- "Psychedelic" – Michelle Gorodisky
- "My Small Best Friend" – Jenna Handal
- "Home" – Zoe Henry
- "locs are more than" – Zoe Henry
- "no, i'm not jamaican" – Zoe Henry
- "Free in Freeport" – Samantha Langmaack
- "Verdant Vermont" – Samantha Langmaack
- "Dreamer's Woe" – Cherish Mathews
- "A Soothing Moment" – Pamela Mignacca
- "The Shine of a Rainbow" – Pamela Mignacca
- "Tranquility" – Pamela Mignacca
- "Reflections on Loss" – Bianca Oliveira
- "Motion Granted" – Julie Saint-Fleur
- "Purple Flowers" – Julie Saint-Fleur
- "Madness Never Looked So Pretty" – Aysia Stephens
- "Violence" – Aysia Stephens
- "A Dusk Sky" – Rachel Taylor

Follow our Instagram (@nsudigressions) to view our VIP early premieres, future deadlines, and much more.

DIGRESSIONS VOL 19 COVER DESIGN

GABRIELLA NEVES



Artist Statement

"After observing the pieces of this year's submissions, I was enamored with the themes of nostalgia alongside somberness. We naturally tend to romanticize our memories, glossing over the true grit of our past. For my Digressions cover, I wanted to illustrate nostalgia without the guise of romanticization or frills. I was inspired partly by my youth, spending most afternoons eating alphabet soup in my childhood home. This memory remains diluted in my mind, as memories do, and lent towards the limited color palette and ambiguous nature of the piece. I anticipate that readers can potentially tap into their own nostalgia when examining the pieces of this volume, and I hope that the cover successfully sets the tone for that."



DCMA

Department of Communication,
Media, and the Arts

NSU

Florida

Halmos College
of Arts and Sciences
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN
UNIVERSITY