Editor’s Note

This year has felt like a thunderstorm. Rain pelting down on us so hard it burns. Lightning strikes so stark we have to close our eyes. Thunder rumbling so ominously we feel it deep in our bones. So many things we hold dear have been lost in this storm.

But something we have found is the human ability to feel a raw and powerful pain. We are intrinsically bound to each other, to nature, and to this world by the pain we feel. A pain so powerful and deep you feel it is sucking you under and drowning you.

The pieces in this issue explore this pain.

As I write this editor’s note, my last one as Editor in Chief of Sink Hollow, I find myself much more emotional than I thought I would be. It’s painful to leave something that has been so influential in my life for so many years. Something that has seen both the best and the worst of me. As you read this issue, I hope you feel the pain that has rained down on me. But, as you close the last pages, I hope you are able to look up and feel renewed.

Sometimes some water on the head is a new start.

Brianne Sorensen
Editor in Chief
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank the writers and artists who keep this magazine going. Without you, we would not be able to create such a raw and powerful magazine. Thank you for being vulnerable and courageous enough to share your triumphs and your pain with us.

This year has been especially hard for our staff here at Sink Hollow, and I wanted to say thank you to all of our readers, editors, and advisors for keeping up your energy and helping us produce a magazine that we are proud to publish. Without your creative tenacity, this issue wouldn’t be possible.

I would also like to especially thank Dax and Dara. Without the two of you I wouldn’t have been able to run a successful magazine this year. I could never thank you enough for the support you have so selflessly provided me during my time as Editor in Chief. I am so proud to pass this creative process onto you. You will both do great things.
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Forbidden Fruit
Stephanie Johnson

Rules are made to be broken, like the crisp cold rind of watermelon
That we haul out of the icy stream
Out in the field that morning, thumping and listening,
I find one; the most pleasing to me.
I know it holds the sweetest juice.
That the curve of its rind would be the most pleasing to the eye
And that it would arouse great hunger in all that saw it.
I pick it anyway; I want it just for us.
As I stand over the watermelon, carving knife in hand,
My sons, shivering and dripping in their swim trunks,
Waiting eagerly for the moment of violence
That would penetrate that perfect fruit;
I pause and look at them
Put down the knife, lift that watermelon,
And crash it down on the picnic table.
The green flesh explodes to yelps of joy.
As the pink flesh is birthed to the sticky summer air
The flies approach, attracted to the heady aroma
Of ripeness, I wave them away, but they return in greater numbers.
My wife looks at me sadly, fishing a plastic bag out of the car
And cleans up after us.
Forbidden Fruit
Stephanie Johnson

Like the crisp cold rind of watermelon
I am
jumping and listening,
me.

It be the most pleasing to the eye
hunger in all that saw it.
for us.

Carving knife in hand,
in their swim trunks,
of violence

Cut fruit;

Watermelon,

table.

Pes of joy.

The sticky summer air
The heady aroma

But they return in greater numbers.
A plastic bag out of the car
Josiah,
I found your *Lessons in Poetry* book.
The vintage *American Reader* lay hidden among the dead relics of my local antique store.
Your palms have worn smooth the green boards of the little book.
The spine is intact, pages open on command
like the mouths of baby birds—hungry eyes, looking for mother.
You must have loved your book, you told us so—many times.
*Josiah Baker, this is his book 1897*, I found scribbled throughout.
I can hear the scratch of the pencil as you tattooed your love
on the paper panels of its skin.
I imagine you reading your book on the train, or under the shade
of a live oak. I see this book nestled under your arm,
as you walk along the dirt road leading to your schoolhouse.
These pages, once white, have seen the face of last century’s sun—but now show signs of darkening, as if grieving—
longing for their master.
On page 93, I found the pencil rubbing of your Morgan Silver Dollar.
Lady Liberty’s image from 1891, still as strong as the day you traced her —
she looks firmly onward towards the future.
When I see her face, it’s like looking at yours —
your past becomes my future.
I imagine you fishing out that precious coin
from deep within your pockets,
where your mother told you to keep it.
I often wonder what you did with it next.
I picture you in bed reading your book by candlelight —
*this* book, I hold in my hands —
blowing out the flame
when you called it a day.
Letter to Alejandro Lucero from Highway 94 in Sapello, New Mexico

Alejandro Lucero

Alejandro, this road, my road, has been silent. Quiet. Tranquil. Still as adobe pots in a windless home. Does that bother you? You grew up near my stretch of mile-markers and rumble strips, but left. Moved faster than water over windshields. Faster than the clouds packing the rain we need. I remember bringing you home on a noisy school bus yellow as traffic signs. Now, I sound only of bug-bitten leaves dangling on an outstretched branch.

Along my road, your grandma still shares her savory sopapillas with you. Often offering me a bite, too. She still sees you, her young pinto bean, through the screen of her favorite window, playing your childhood games beside me. She worries you won’t see or hear the cars speeding by; I want to tell her you’re not here; that I let you leave us. But would she believe gravel and concrete all crocodile cracked from years of being rolled over? I wouldn’t.

Along my road, barn cats are snatched from a thinning alfalfa field at the owl’s midnight howl. They hoot and hold the writhing felines close to their tongue. But they want to fly away; they do not mind being taken. No rainfall. No snow. These cats don’t even have a puddle to lick. They are sick of eating gophers and mice mixed with the leftover Spanish rice sitting alone in the back of your grandmother’s refrigerator. Between us, I never cared for it either.

Along my road, your grandma still sits in the quilt covered recliner next to her fireplace. I watch her. Someone should. I even watch the embers of pine-wood she had to ax down alone flutter against the warm glass window, like flies in a jar, as she jokes about soil so dry it wouldn’t recognize a water drop, about how she farmed snow peas till their shells wouldn’t snap, and about being trapped in the Land of Enchantment. She never hears it, but I’m the only one who laughs. She probably thinks it’s just the echo of another car passing through Sapello for the last time.

Alejandro, if you’re still reading, I want to tell you that every night, with the consistency of a heartbeat, the consistency of a highway road, your abuelita unclenches her fists, revealing brown fingers curled like cursive from years of rolling your tortillas flat, before you used me to drive away.

Sincerely,

Highway 94
My dad said, he used to have dreams about flying over the power-lines of his childhood home. He used to float above the city and sing with the birds.

When I talk to him now, his lip quivers, and his eyes are pools of lost dreams. He says he found the Lord, and when he prays, he asks God to bring him joy again.

The morning I left home, I watched him shrink in my rearview mirror, and even though I’m agnostic, I pleaded with the universe, with God, with anything, to answer his prayer.

My dad said, I want you to live a good life.

Buried beneath the syntax, I wondered if he felt like his own wings had turned to iron.

He used to own a pool cue, and every time someone he loved died, he’d carve a cross into the wood. I counted eighteen crosses once.

I don’t know how he lives under the weight of his grief.

My dad said, he’s not tethered to this world. I think he wants Heaven to have power-lines he can float over.
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Dreams of Flying
Kathryn McDanel
The church smells of stale beer and flatulence; they mingle with the incense, and just then a wave of nausea passes over me. Stumbling a bit, I shuffle to the pews: mahogany benches, leather-bound books, in which bored teenagers have doubtless scrawled a thousand notes of playful blasphemy.

I wonder if the altar boys still sneak illicit swigs of the communion wine, mocking the priest’s stammer behind his back, and pulling faces at parishioners. Such fine traditions ought to be preserved, if just to balance out the stern malaise that is to churches what smoke is to flame.

Turning my gaze upwards, I lock eyes with the man himself: suspended on the cross, and looking utterly bored with it all. To be honest, I can’t say I blame him; even having nails driven through your flesh must seem blasé after a thousand years or so of running through the same old script.

The crowd is filing in for last call; outside the carolers are singing hymns and drinking songs from Ireland and Wales, and the snow is falling in thick layers onto their heads, and no one notices or takes exception in the least, because for a moment there is no cold at all.
LONG WALKS ACROSS THE BEACH WITH SANTA MUERTE
Kathryn McDanel

I first stumbled upon the street dog on Christmas Day, while I was walking along the coast of Ensenada with tangles of seaweed cuffing my ankles every time I pressed my heels into the sand. I sat down next to an Obleas wafers wrapper to nurse my Dos Equis, thinking of home, of gift wrap ripped from presents, of Eggnog mustaches and broken traditions. The salty sea breeze wafted the notes of Mariachi music and the faint stench of something rotting. Frantic trumpets fought against ocean waves to establish a rhythm; chewed watermelon rinds littered the ground. Leaning back, I dug my elbows into the sand and accidentally brushed my hand against matted fur. I twisted around to see the mutt. Its paws faced heaven, exposing a bloated stomach covered by a blanket of flies. Its tongue protruded, fat with rot, and as I gagged, I noticed one rolled cigarette lolled out of its open mouth.

On New Year’s Eve, I danced across the beach with sparklers and found the dog again. It reminded me of a tourist on vacation: a colored beach ball deflating by its side a pair of cheap sunglasses resting over its glassy eyes a newspaper placed over its body. I thought of Santa Muerte of shrines for the dead, of traditions reimagined. I gave the dog a Dos Equis and kept walking.
Vanishing Twin
Leif Liechty
I get in the car. The excitement that buzzes down my spine is so sharp that it brings goosebumps to my skin. I’ve always loved driving. I like the sound of the turn signals, the motion of turning the wheel, feeling my foot on the pedal and knowing that I am in complete control. But this excitement is different. It is sad, bordering on pathetic, like being excited for fish stick day at school because it’s the most edible of the options. My giddiness embarrasses me, but it is there nonetheless. I turn the key in the ignition.

The sun is coming down, right in my eyeline. I have to put down my sun visor, which makes it harder to see the road, but it’s alright. There are no cars on the road to worry about, so I can cruise down with my foot laying on the pedal. Once in a while a car will drive down in the opposite direction and my hands tighten on the wheel. I know what I’m doing on the road, but what about them? Where are they going? Instinctively, my body turns to face them, to peek into someone else’s life. But the car windows are tinted black, and they slip past me and away by the time I try to take a closer look.

When I pull my car into the parking lot, the sun is down. Time has narrowed to the color of the sky, the last tangible thing I can hold in my hands. Why bother calling something a Wednesday or Friday when each day plods along at the same monotonous pace, where the sun rises and falls but the warmth doesn’t reach past the window? It could be hours later, maybe a day. Whatever time it is, there is enough sun to shine a sliver of light on the building sign: Waffle House.

It’s not a new building, or a pretty one for that matter. There are no flashing lights on the red awning, no tall sign broadcasted to the drivers that used to pour down the road. Just big, bold, black letters that spell “WAFFLE HOUSE” against a dull yellow background. Even though there are windows wrapped around the building, it is almost impossible to see the inside. I open the door.

Surprisingly, it is unlocked. The emptiness feels like a being of its own, filling up the space and breathing down my neck. I fumble to a light switch and turn on the lights. None of them come on except for some of the orbs hanging from the ceiling, one of them flickering. From what I can see in the faint light, the restaurant is cleaner than I expected. The bar counter is cleared of clutter, plates and salt and pepper shakers stacked against the wall. The chairs are
stacked upside down on top of the tables, and the glossy red booth seats look wiped down despite their worn appearance. There’s a light dust covering the linoleum floor, but there are no obvious stains on the ground outside of the mystery stains that God himself wouldn’t be able to remove.

I move to the kitchen. It’s a little dirtier in there, but that’s to be expected. It’s still a Waffle House. The pantry is stocked with waffle and pancake batter, boxes of Domino’s Sugar and Splenda packets, and mini containers of jelly and jam. The fridge has eggs, milk, butter, the freezer packed with meat. The picture becomes vivid with every cabinet I open.

I imagined a place in chaos, with chairs tipped over and stepped-on menus and shards of broken coffee pots spilled across the floor. I imagined empty cabinets and a fridge with nothing left but a cardboard egg carton hanging open like a mouth ready to be fed. But instead, the people who worked here, who came here, thought they’d be back tomorrow. The guy who worked the closing shift probably got halfway home before he realized he forgot to lock the door. He felt bad for a second then shrugged his shoulders. Told himself it was the morning shift’s problem. “Tomorrow,” he told himself. “Tomorrow.”

It is not a place of chaos. But that’s okay, this works too.

I walk back to the dining area and lie down on the ground right under the flickering light. I shift and settle, knowing that I will never move from this spot again. Because if life is now an atmosphere of isolation and darkness and hope that steals away once you get close enough to grab it, why shouldn’t I find a place that matches who I am on the inside? Let my bones be added to the remains of this place, my ashes blending in with the dust on the linoleum floor.
body: virulent slight, borrow from it legible
past wintered aeon window limn
it is as asthmatic to black log flume fume
through spider rider web in to ruin sense
my body is levity and shallowness of frozen pool
hand full of a different moment trace soft curve of spine
if any healing is sudden—mute
but this only poor bricolage sense of self
to split become and handcraft—blinds drawn
evening glow sweetens and dies—
weak broth of progeny
to split dwell—flask-oriented node
ancillary and one-thousand senses
your word on my wrist totters
before skein or wormwood root
set light for light—
I will will without mediation to the first degree
and the one to the many heirs of trenchancy
for the infinite set
whose calyx it taps with a tongue shaped like all the facts of history
When I was a little girl, I had a pregnant Barbie poodle with a stomach that could open and close. When you unlatched its stomach, three poodle puppies would tumble out: one white, one grey, one pink. The pink puppy was my favorite. One time, when I was sitting at the kitchen counter playing with the poodles (in the tummy, out of the tummy, in the tummy, out of the tummy), the pink puppy fell all the way out of the stomach and onto the floor where my family’s black dog, Maizy, snatched it up into her jaws. Maizy let it go after I jumped down from the barstool and squealed at her, but not before she disfigured the small plastic face with its rounded muzzle and fine, painted eyelashes. Maizy was a quarter wolf and wasn’t ever going to have any puppies because she had been fixed. A silvery scar ran across her stomach from where she had been cut into and sewn tight.

Since I was a kid, adults have asked me about having kids like it’s as easy as in the tummy, out of the tummy, in the tummy, out of the tummy. Although they ask, there’s only one acceptable response. Everything else is met with, “you’ll change your mind.” It’s like I can feel their hands on my stomach searching for a latch.

I don’t know how many times I’ve googled the price of having an abortion. $600-$1500 for suction aspiration in the early stages of pregnancy. More for later on. Out of the stomach, out of the stomach, out of the stomach. The closest clinic is an hour and a half away. It’s good to know. Just in case. I used to think that I’d be fine if I just talked about contraception with my partner. I should have known that someone would want to pry me open on their own terms.

After I stopped playing with them, the Barbie poodle and its puppies were sealed in a bin in my parent’s basement. When Maizy died, my dad buried her deep in a canyon.

When I got my IUD, I stared up at a rectangular patch of sky that had been placed over a fluorescent light. At first, I thought that this small thoughtfulness was silly, but the glimpse of blue was oddly comforting as I laid back and felt the copper wings of the IUD unfold themselves sharply in my uterus. After the OBGYN cut the plastic threads, I got up from the rustling paper, pulled my skirt back on, and drove myself home. The cramps were only bad on the first day, and the bleeding stopped by day four.

I used to have dreams about giving birth to random objects: a hooked earring, a stone, a disfigured pink puppy. The occasional child. Those nightmares, at least, have stopped.
Snow Cliffs
Liam Weed
If I awaken in time,
Out my living room window,
I might catch him climbing up the road
Billowing robes stirring the pre-dawn stillness,
The world holds its breath as he puffs his way up
Up the hill silently just like every day,
But I don’t look today, I listen
In the predawn quiet, quiescently listening
Finally the crackle of a microphone
A small squawk of feedback like an urban rooster
And the Tiled Mosque begins its song

Bear witness
Hurry to prayer
Hurry to success
Prayer is better than sleep

And then another voice
Another ten seconds later
Haunting and lilting,
Counterpointed by the next call,
Hand to hand they pass on,
And now the drumbeat of dogs protesting out loud
The baby upstairs contributes a wail
But the neighborhood’s empty
If I get up now a few lights snap on
A discordant harmony:
It’s subjective decisions that change the symphony each day
Judged by keen eyes the dark thread of night, the white thread of light
Depending on season and eyesight and age
And the newspaper listing for sunrise that day
A dawn serenade, though dawn still feels quite distant
It vanquishes night and proclaims it is life
 Curling up into the air like smoke, carrying prayers,
Both yours and mine
And one voice drops off, the Tiled Mosque is done
Another voice in the perpetual canon fades
A gentle harmony remains
The baby sobs quietly and then only the dog is left, embarrassed
He woofs one last time
And all that is left is one last song in the distance

He seems to be lingering over his last sentence
His voice as it fades, bids me good day
And like all my neighbors, it soothes me back to sleep
If I awaken in time,
Out my living room window,
I might catch him climbing up the road
Billowing robes stirring the pre-dawn still
nothing else moves,
The world holds its breath as he puffs his way
Up the hill silently just like every day,
But I don't look today, I listen
In the predawn quiet, quiescently listening
Finally the crackle of a microphone
A small squawk of feedback like an urban rooster
And the Tiled Mosque begins its song
Bear witness
Hurry to prayer
Hurry to success
Prayer is better than sleep
And then another voice
joins in, a minute behind
the call arises from every side
flowing and pausing
and passed on to the next
their mysterious sound
protesting out loud
a wail
under morning's dark veil
and look out the window
on but most stay dark
the same song different times
change the symphony
instead of night,
the white thread
eyesight and age
for sunrise that day
still feels quite distant
and proclaims it is life
carrying prayers,
the Tiled Mosque is done
fades
harmony remains
quietly and then only the dog is left,
he woofs one last time
The last song in the distance
sighing over his last sentence
leaves me good day
In the summer of 1988, Basquiat was painting across New York City neo-expressionist graffiti, the stock market was booming, and I strutted down 116th and Broadway in pigtails, faded blue jeans, and a salmon-colored t-shirt. When I left the next year, Basquiat was dead, the stock market had crashed, and I carried a purse on my shoulder that accented my black dress, heels, and rolled joint between my red lipstick as I sped down the highway in a 74’ Ford Capri.

That summer, my major at Columbia University was supposed to be Biology because my father was a doctor and his father was a doctor. I’m not sure if I saw it as a tradition or a family right of passage. In the end, I left with a degree in Art History.

I blame Sofia for that.

Sofia once told me that art gave light to all the darkness around us. Oscuro brilla brillante, she used to whisper. Looking back now, it was an odd thing for her to say. She was not a joyful person. She was a skinny, long-legged girl from the Bronx, with hips that made muchachos whistle and papitos blush, she could not afford to be thin-skinned.

I stood outside Carman Hall one afternoon with three books in hand watching her draw beneath a cran-apple tree on the first day of classes. She wore a short, cheetah print dress. On her leg was a tattoo of three swimming orange, black, and white spotted fish in a triangle. Her skin seemed to glow like Lady Liberty’s first voyage to America.

I walked over to her gingerly and leaned against the tree as if taking a tired rest before sitting down. I glanced over my shoulder and peaked at her drawing. She ignored me as if in a trance and never said a word.

What does it mean? I asked her. She had drawn a picture of a bare-breasted woman with her legs sprawled open in wide adornment, revealing the shapely character of her vulva. The woman was looking to the sky with a look of desperation, her arms covering her nipples. There was a spiritual solemnity to the painting’s bright colors of purple, yellow, blue, and red. It was ethereal. It was racy. It was serene.

Does it matter what it means? She replied as she turned back to me with an intense gaze. I glanced at the brown, dry dirt beneath my hands. I told her I wasn’t sure if it mattered. Sofia was quiet for a while. She stroked the tiny brush in her hands against a parchment of canvas the size of my notebook.
“Why must everything in art have meaning?” She lamented.

We sat there together in silence. I watched the intricate detail as Sofia painted bags under the subject’s eyelids. “Her face was so vain,” I remarked. Sofia didn’t say a word. She kept painting.

Eventually, Sofia placed her brush down beside the tree and began packing up her acrylic paint. She introduced herself with paint-covered hands. In laughter, we connected. There was strange energy between us.

Sofia was going to meet some friends at a bar downtown and invited me to go with her. There was a boy there that her girlfriends wanted to see. Sofia always felt iffy about boys. I expressed delight at the idea while lamenting that I was from the rural town of Ashland, Nebraska, and was new to the city. I rode the subway with her northeast. After about thirty minutes, we got to her subway stop. “Welcome to the Bronx,” she laughed.

There was a vibrancy to the Bronx. Spanish voices echoing down winding balconies, the twang of a boombox across the street, a car engine raging.

The house was frosted in white oak. A tiny three-bedroom duplex. It was dainty and peaceful. The kitchen had old wooden chairs that were statuesque. It was as if she drew the life out of every nook and cranny of the home.

The boy wasn’t at the bar. It became a girl’s night out. We bar hopped around the city until Sofia called a cab. Her long curly hair, tight white dress, hands placed on her hips with one leg in front of the other—taught me everything I needed to know about fetching a cab ride in New York City.

When we got to her place, Sofia began rolling a joint to relax. I wish I could say that smoking with Sofia initiated something profound between us—deep conversation or some lucid spiritual awakening that signaled we were bound to be soulmates. It never happened. Instead, I fell asleep at her kitchen table while she was making quesadillas.

I woke up the next morning to find her lying next to me on her couch. She was hugging my torso with her hand upon my left breast. I paused to look at her peaceful, closed eyelids. I could smell a hint of lavender mixed with the imprinted smell of paint accenting her body.

Over the next year, this would be the daily bond between us. I would write about the art of the past while Sofia painted until she collapsed at twilight. I never knew what it meant. Perhaps I never will. We never spoke of what we were or tried to define it. I left New York in the Summer of 1989, Sofia’s head resting against mine, the wind blowing our worries behind us in laughing anticipation of what my parents would say.
HAREMAN
Gabrielle Sharrard
Mangey Cat  
Hannah Johnson

A feral cat lives  
In my boyfriend’s overgrown yard.  
Thin, with clumps of hair missing  
It hides among the thorns of roses  
And spines of creeping mahonia  
Leaving only the reflection  
Of light against its wide yellow eyes.

At night it slinks out,  
Pausing, at each privet bush  
and unkempt arborvitae,  
Eventually closing in on  
The porcelain dish  
Set out that morning.

Once, Jordan saw her basking,  
Amber rays on her copper cloak  
Tail flicking in the emerald grass,  
Eyes lazily squinting at summer sun.  
The clumps of hair had filled in,  
Its skin no longer hung off  
The bones like heavy curtains  
over thin steel rods.

When he approached  
At first, she did not move  
And blue eyes met gold.  
One slow blink  
And she flew  
To Queen Anne’s Lace  
and yarrow root.
A small rubber duck floats on the surface of the pond in the greenhouse, as my mother coaxes life into the old sunflowers and new arugula, pouring water on their heads. And as the pump in the pond moves water, the duck gets too close and the gentle stream is too much for him. Just a tap on his head from the water pouring in and he is floating upside down, as good as a dead duck. But I am here, and I pick up his body and I move him away from the stream pouring in and I put him right-side-up. And he is as good as alive again.

Sometimes some water on the head is a new start.

Ode to the Rubber Duck
Terra Peranteaux
A small rubber duck floats on the surface of the pond in the greenhouse as my mother coaxes life into the old sunflowers and new arugula pouring water on their heads. And as the pump in the pond moves water, the duck gets too close and the gentle stream is too much for him. Just a tap on his head from the water pouring in and he is floating upside down, as good as a dead duck. But I am here, and I pick up his body and I move him away from the stream pouring in and I put him right-side-up. And he is as good as alive again. Sometimes some water on the head is a new start.
Biographies Art

**Lief Liechty** is a philosophy/psychology undergraduate at Ohio Northern University. He is a photographer, artist, writer, and musician. You can find his work on Instagram under the username lief_liechty.

**Gabrielle Sharrard** is an undergraduate student at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College. She loves drawing, painting, and expanding her creative world in any way she can.

**Liam Weed** is an undergraduate student at Utah State University. He loves climbing, skiing, and bringing his camera along to document his adventures.

Biographies Poetry

**Charles Canady** is a writer and poet from Fayetteville, North Carolina. His writings have been published by Pinesong, The Fayetteville Observer, The Olive Press, Tapestry, Carolina Country, and MU Today magazine. He is the recipient of the 2018, 2019, and 2020 Sherry Pruitt Award for Poetry sponsored by the N.C. Poetry Society. Most recently, Canady’s work won second in the 2020 Charlotte Writer’s Club Nonfiction contest. When he’s not creating, he enjoys smoking his pipe and choking a tune from his fiddle.

**James Reilly** is an enrolled student at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), where he will be attending in Fall 2021 as a junior. He enjoys writing poetry, as well as studying political science, law, and philosophy.

**Hannah Johnson** is a nearly-graduated student at Utah State University studying Ecology and English. She has an obsession with the natural world, owns more houseplants than t-shirts, and a has ravenous hunger for new words. She aspires to be a nature writer and help bring the curative and curious aspects of nature to people through her writing.

**Stephanie Johnson** is currently working toward an undergraduate Certificate of Creative Writing from City College of San Francisco after a career teaching English literature, ESL and Spanish at universities and adult education settings around the world. Her writing often focuses on the slightly uncomfortable space of the expatriation/ repatriation experience forests. He is in the business of hunting ghosts and catching them in ink.
ALEJANDRO LUCERO is a writer from Sapello, New Mexico by way of Denver. He currently an undergraduate student at the University of Colorado-Denver where he serves as an intern and assistant editor for Copper Nickel. Pushcart Prize nominee, his most recent poetry and nonfiction can be found in Progenitor Art & Literary Journal and is forthcoming in The Susquehanna Review, Thin Air, and ANGLES.

STEPHEN GUY MALLET was born and raised. Him, he studies grammatology, uxorial phenomenology, and adjectively bereft haibun at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec. Aggie ice cream, its acquisition, and the construction of lean-tos in it are recurring themes in his dreams since y2k.

KATHRYN McDaniel is an undergraduate student at Prescott College. She is an avid traveler whose writing serves as a tool to understand and reflect on the world surrounding her.

TERRA PERANTEAUX is an undergraduate student at Utah State University studying English. She loves to travel, explore new ideas, and play with puppies.

Biographies Fiction

STEPHEN JANSEN is a Black/Native American writer, political activist. He is a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. He is attending the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to receive a degree in Finance. In 2020, Stephen formed an alternative rock band called “Virgin Ambition”. As the singer/songwriter of the group, Stephen’s band released the single “Splintered” and a demo version of their song “If You Love Me”. In 2021, the band has plans to release their singles “Royalty” and “Helena”. While the startup band is currently not signed to a record label, they began performing locally around the Greater Milwaukee area. Stephen is a three time winner of the “A Picture and a Thousand Words” writing contest in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Selected individuals provide public readings of their work at a local bar.

KEMI OMISORE is a senior English and Education double major at University of Maryland College Park. She loves lemonade, fanfiction, and her hamster, Uma.

Biographies Non-Fiction

SOPHIA THIMMES is an undergraduate student at Utah State University who loves fat snowflakes and gaudy Halloween decorations.
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