



HOG CREEK

SPRING 2025

HARDIN

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to our Spring 2025 Edition of Hog Creek Hardin. Hog Creek Hardin is an undergraduate Literary Journal from The Ohio State University at Lima's English Department, focusing on Ohio contributors. Throughout the fall and spring semesters, we have received a variety of exceptional poetry, prose, art, and photography for our second print edition.

As an editorial team made up of neurodivergent and LGBTQ+ students, we are committed to uplifting marginalized voices and creating space for stories that challenge, celebrate, and reimagine the world around us. We believe writing can be a form of resistance, healing, and connection—and we're grateful to every contributor who trusted us with their work.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge our journal's advisor, Timothy "Moth" Cheeseman. Cheeseman, a former poet laureate for the city of Lima, has an MFA in Poetry and has been a substantial support for this journal.

We hope you enjoy our journal and submit to Hog Creek Hardin in the future.



HCH

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POETRY AND PROSE

ODE TO MY COMPOST PILE

BY DARRIN W. SNYDER BELOUSEK

I.

You, O compost pile, are a storyteller,
like my great aunt from a bygone generation,
compiling and conserving anecdotes to chronicle daily life in mundane detail,
a treasury of quotidian tales told in layers of leftovers:
withered leaves of rhubarb, trimmed from stems that sprout each spring from a reliable root
I've named "old faithful"—stems pared and baked with Suter strawberries into a bubbly
crumble to enjoy after dinner with friends;
browned cores of apples, grown in Ohio orchards and bought at Swiss Country Market,
cored and chopped and cooked with oats and raisins and walnuts and cinnamon and maple
syrup for a chilly Saturday morning's porridge;
cracked shells from eggs, laid by hens free-ranged near Columbus Grove and bought at the
Lima Farmers Market, poached and served on toasted and buttered muffins for Sunday
brunch;
oily residue of coffee beans, grown on small farms in Guatemala, roasted by Coffe Amor in
Wapak, ground in my kitchen, steeped and sipped while reading the newspaper;
shreds of newspaper, written and edited and printed and delivered by neighbors near and
far, slices of life in Lima—council meetings and city budgets, sports scores and county fairs,
obituaries and birth notices;
blackened leaves from our oak tree, revealed in spring's thaw along the fence by receding
drifts of winter's snows, remainder of a summer's flowering and an autumn's showering,
reminder of another round of seasons passing;
dried stems and wilted heads from flowers, planted and tended and harvested and arranged
with love by brother Larry to beautify our church—and now to fortify you, my compost
pile.

II.

You, O compost pile, are a wonder worker,
a mound of modesty and mystery, for
in the heart of your heat operates the miraculous recycle of life,
converting detritus into humus, generating soil from spoil.

Your marvel is not the quick trick of magic,
not like a wizard's esoteric incantation creating an instantaneous transfiguration,
or an alchemist's secret art transmuting basest metal into purest gold.

ODE TO MY COMPOST PILE

BY DARRIN W. SNYDER BELOUSEK

I

Your marvel is the slow work of organic:
the tireless toil of worms
performing the common functions of ingestion and digestion and excretion,
the patient persistent ferment of microbes
breaking down the intricate structures of cells and fibers and tissues—
a natural analysis of and by nature's creatures into essential elements,
yielding the basic blocks for building up life anew.

II.

You, O compost pile, are an undertaker,
receiving the remains of what passes through my kitchen,
rinds and peels of fruit and veg produced in diverse places,
ends and heels of jars and loaves procured at various prices,
vestiges of vitality in stages of molder and decay, mingled in an open grave—
like a parish churchyard cemetery, which
gathers and buries the bodies of souls, all and sundry, where
lord lies near serf,
rich rests with poor,
wise and fool alike,
haughty and humble equal,
ancient and infant together,
in common ground.

You thus give us cause and counsel for contemplation:
though lives may vary by status and station,
all are sheep of one flock, feeding in the same pasture,
sharing a shepherd and destiny in death.

You, then, are heaven's prophet,
a signpost beside the garden inscribed with the word of old,
telling the children of earth what is ordained for them,
that in morning we thrive and at midday we flourish
yet in afternoon we wither and at evening we perish,
that God gives and takes our breath and turns us back to earth:
from compost you have come, to compost you shall return.

ODE TO MY COMPOST PILE

BY DARRIN W. SNYDER BELOUSEK

IV.

You, O compost pile, are a generous giver,
a fountain of good flowing beyond the borders of my garden.

Your resource of riches
enriches my garden's soil with nutrients necessary for growth and health, which
nourishes vegetables I plant in the soil, which
produce an abundance of fruit—tomatoes and peppers, kohlrabi and cauliflower, squash
and okra, zucchini and kale—that
satisfies appetites of family and friends, and
generates a surplus to distribute to neighbors.
You give both food to enjoy and the joy of food shared in love.

You are a spring of surprises, for
seeds from last summer's garden overwinter within you,
hibernating then incubating then germinating,
sprouting vines of mystery squash that
wind themselves around and through the fence and
wend their way across the ground into the grass,
sending forth blossoms and sometimes yielding fruit,
small gourds of odd shapes, striped and stippled in green and yellow and orange, which
we pick during autumn to decorate our home, whose
seeds we return to you to begin the fun again.

And you are a roadside rest stop for nocturnal travelers and visitors,
critters sniffing along your edges, seeking their need in your store,
licking the last drop of yolk from inside eggshells,
gleaning remnant kernels from cobs of corn.

Like a neighborhood grandmother, who gladly feeds
generations of kith and kin around her kitchen table,
neighbors hurting in hard times,
roving bands of playing kids who fearlessly approach her front porch in hope of cookies
and lemonade,
even hungry strangers who somehow know to knock at her back door—
you, O compost pile, are a sacrament of goodness in this world.

Darrin W. Snyder Belousek is a philosophy teacher, baseball fan, casual hiker, backyard gardener,
husband and father. A resident of Lima, Ohio, he regularly reads poetry at the Lima Land Poetry Slam.
His poems have appeared in DreamSeeker Magazine and Anabaptist World.

HCH

IN ORDER FOR MEANING, ALL NEEDS TO END

BY AINSLEY BRINKMAN

Contrast is a mundane idea in the grand scheme.
Another concept in a world of definitions.
After thought though, its weight multiplies
Becomes everything in the world at once.

Neutral is a strange state.
Feeling nothing other than numb.
Not considered bad next to despair or fury
Holistically is the worst by far.

Plains can be pretty, they live up to their name.
Minutes feel longer while pupils are focused on them.
Mountains give us views we dream of
Valleys take our breath away.

You can't have one without the other.
You can't have a peak without a pit somewhere.
Something isn't right when things aren't wrong
Pain doesn't hurt when that's all you feel.

GUT

BY AINSLEY BRINKMAN

Neural networks flow well
All connect and listen to each other
Keep my brain running
Yet they get tripped easily

Try as I might to understand
Aspects about the world I will never get
Where I am supposed to know the answer
Yet I tend to come up short

I am managing
I think using logic through problems
Sometimes I get the hang of it
Long stretches where I am doing well

Like talking to a stranger in an elevator
Or talking to my boss about scheduling
Or talking to my friend about pla—

Nevermind

I don't know

I should have never thought I was doing well with this

Where did I go wrong? What did I do? Please tell me, I have no other way of knowing this is
so hard to figure out what someone wants from me I can't do th—
I genuinely thought it got better.

I was a fool because I genuinely thought I got better.

I see where I went wrong. But how was I supposed to know that was going to be a problem
it was never a problem in the past no one ever said it was—

Hell, I have gotten upset about that shit when it happened to me but I did what everyone
does I didn't talk about it accepted that stuff like that happens and moved on with my life
isn't that what you're supposed to do yeah it is what you're supposed to do—

Just—

Just give me a sec. Or a few days.

HCH

WHY CAN'T YOU FIGURE THIS OUT?

BY AINSLEY BRINKMAN

Look at your own hands.
Look at yourself in a dirty mirror.
Look at what you perceive to be normal.
Look at how you see yourself and be confused.

Sit in a rickety chair next to an orange wall.
Feel the desk under your own hands.
Look around to see others laughing
And wonder what to say.

Grasp the chair underneath your legs.
Pull it closer to everyone.
Don't really know how close to s-sit per say
So give it your best guess.

Listen intently to each specific word.
As they talk, a m-million images fly around.
Get several ideas in how to add to the t-talk
Get excited kn-knowing you actually have a clue.

Now you just have to t-time it right.
Wait for a b-break in the s-sentences
But you know you have to get it out q-quick.
You f-forget what you are about to s-say otherwise.

That sounded l-like the e-end of a sentence!
Wait a second more, v-verify they are done.
It's your turn! It's your t-turn!
And b-b-begin adding y-your insight.

Start to t-talk and trip up a f-few words.
Everything else s-sounded cohesive, th-though.
Finish your l-last sentence p-proudly.
Y-yet, why is no one t-talking?

They aren't talking a-at all.
What did you miss? What d-did you miss?
They are all l-looking around at each other
Exchanging g-glances and no w-words.

You thought you c-contributed correctly.
Only a couple words had a s-stutter.

HCH

WHY CAN'T YOU FIGURE THIS OUT?

BY AINSLEY BRINKMAN

Feel as the r-room breaks away from you
Unsure of what went wrong.

Go back to your desk, a-alone.
Decide that your book is more interesting
More than whatever they were saying.
Be content but off in your own little box.

About an hour later, one of th-them comes up to you.
They seem nice but their tone is accusatory.
Their dark brown pupils stare s-straight into your soul
As they hover over you, u-uncomfortably.

They a-ask "Why are you so quiet?"
"You have just been sitting over here without talking much."
Waves of c-confusion crash onto you
A-and you feel your soul s-scream.

You can't win here, c-can you?
Your mouth opens, but your w-words are locked.
Out of a-all the things you can figure out,
Why can't you f-figure out this?

Ainsley Brinkman is a sophomore at the Ohio State University in Lima with a major in psychology and a minor in theatre. She is a managing editor of Hog Creek Hardin as well as the social media manager and works as a writing tutor in the Learning Center. In terms of clubs, she is the writing group Limerence, vice president of Pride Club, theatre club, Buckeyes and Bards, and has been involved in the theater department with several shows being *Peter and the Starcatcher* and *Snow Queen*.

HCH

AS THE BOAT WENT BY

BY LILY CHARKOW

We sat together, in your room and watched a boat go by
it was big and long and made of steel.
I was sat on the white bench with you right next to me
We gazed out the bay window, lined with white wood
my ragdoll shoved under my armpit
your white hair a wisp on your slender head.
The boat was weighed down by red blue and yellow crates,
you muttered what they were called
but my ears were closed.
As you spoke, the lines next to your eyes crinkled
your watery blue eyes, the ones you gave to me.
I rubbed my eyes and when I opened them, I cried
the boat is smaller than I remembered
and you're not sitting next to me anymore.

Lily Charkow is a sophomore at Denison University, originally from Oak Park, Illinois. Charkow is majoring in creative writing and minoring in journalism. Her extracurricular activities include working for the office of admissions as a docent, the sorority of Kappa Kappa Gamma, and a co-editor for the arts & life section of the Denisonian.

HCH

LATE BLOOMER

BY LUCY DALE

I bloom late in the season,
like a Russian Sage. I stay away,
in the background of the spring
and summer months, waiting,

always waiting. I am marked
perennially carefree as I stand
behind the early bloomers who show
their petals before the trees

are decent, and the summer colors,
that are picked by sticky adolescents
and savored in dry books for years
to come. The Russian Sage needs

full sun and well-drained soil,
so I spend hours in the garden,
trimming, repositioning, watering,
waiting, always waiting. In August,

I bloom three-foot flowers.
The Russian Sage is a soft, gray-
blue and like me, it acts as the perfect
compliment to other, sharper, lavender

flowers. I bloom into a dull flower,
like a Russian Sage. Long-lived
and drought-tolerant, I repel the deer
and the rabbits. I wait and bloom late.

YELLOW FLAMINGOS

BY LUCY DALE

Yellow flamingos crowd my room
when I drag my eyelids across

my tender corneas with the delicacy
of removing a piece of tape

from a thinly-painted wall.
Yellow flamingos lean over my shoulder

at the family dinner table. They watch
me from across the street as I walk

with my friends. They ask
about my thoughts. I try to reveal

that I see yellow flamingos
when I am wrapped in my bedding.

I scream on the inside. My comforter
becomes speckled with tear drizzles.

Yellow flamingos stand on my chest
and tell me they'll never leave.

Lucy Dale is a sophomore at Denison University studying Creative Writing, English Literature, and Women & Gender Studies. She graduated from Interlochen Arts Academy, where she studied Creative Writing. Lucy is originally from Cleveland, OH. Her writing has been published in literary magazines such as Sink Hollow and Crashtest. She was the third place recipient of the Annie MacNeill Poetry Competition in 2024.

HCH

LIMERENCE

BY ETHAN DUNLAP

In the lemon-limelight they kissed with chilled lips, swirling icy tongues across sugar-coated teeth. His head suddenly burned inside like it does when it's so freezing cold but you just can't help yourself. Her mouth tasted good, like candy, sour, but he couldn't stop making that ugly face you make when you don't like the texture. He wondered why and reeled in when he couldn't place it. She could tell, because his tongue stopped.

She pulled away from her lunch-tray and stared into his soul, observing the effects of her voracity. She's got a maw dripping red, fresh with death, and it's creeping across cheeks like a fault-line.

In Limbo, in Limerence,
Reciting little limericks,
In the lemon-limelight

OIL

BY ETHAN DUNLAP

There's oil on the shop floor
Concrete's glistening under harsh yellow lights.
Relentless, we feed the machine.
We tirelessly tread the footsteps of gods,
Living off the scraps of their shadows.
They hold the power overhead.
Swaying above, keys to a toddler.

And so, crawl.
Soiled with oil; blood, grease; sadness.

Like a giant she towers
Relishing in starving ego,
The oil is under her skin,
In veins pumping pipes of polished steel.
Atop her scrap metal throne
She sits, overlooking her failures,
All scattered on the killing floor,
Working to live, not living to work.
At her feet and dying on the concrete.
The film around our blood,
Separates the oil from the individual.

There's blood on the factory floor.

TOO HOMESICK TO HEAL

BY ETHAN DUNLAP

Left it all behind some couple years past. Let it fester in the Southern Sun 'till she could pick it up again, that cotton-soft scent sweet like glaze on the sugar-coated breeze and follow her nose all the way home.

Never saw the snow in Spring nor the frost in Autumn. The Ice there at home that hardens skin like leather covers pavement where blankets should be. All she ever understood was water; ebbing, flowing, splashing, pushing, pulling. Liquid. Mutable. Moveable. Constant. Never static; never frozen. "The Ocean makes the snow seem so cruel."

Cruel because it's not the same as before. Cruel because it carries the salty stench of peanuts, barbecue and mudbugs slathered in heavy handed cajun seasoning; those pungent memories left behind: HOME.

Mama and Daddy are sittin' on the couch, drinkin' old fashioned, watchin' the paint dry and smelling the air burn. TV's sayin' something bout the world, but they don't hear it. All they hear is her voice on the phone. All she hears are the tears rollin down her skin, baby-soft and spared by the cold.

Skin-crumbling, spine-trembling, bone-snapping cold. The Ocean seeps from her skin, and she sleeps.

Ethan Dunlap graduated from OSU Lima with a degree in English. An avid outdoorsman and writer, he is currently in the MSW program at OSU and has been missing for a few days.

HCH

I WONDER WHY THIS SOUNDS SAPPHIC...

BY EVELYN MEYER

My fingers tug at wisps of hair,
soft tendrils slip through my hands,
her head tilts back, inviting,
the salty curve of her neck under my lips.

Her skin is fire under my touch,
heat humming beneath each fingertip,
my name spilling from her lips like honey—
breathless, urgent, calling me closer.

We fall into each other like Icarus to the sun,
drawn by heat, undone by desire—
room filled with quiet sounds,
bodies lost in fruitless fervor.

My hands trace her curves,
claiming every inch—
the soft, supple skin of her thigh,
pulse thudding against my mouth.

My lips find places only we know—
where sighs and shivers mingle,
where she arches and gasps,
fingers tangling, breath catching.

Our bodies know this silent language—
the sighs, the gasps, the bites—
a conversation of teeth and tongue,
of bodies tangled, slick with desire.

STRAWBERRY LIPGLOSS

BY EVELYN MEYER

Strawberry-sweet on your lips,
sticky with secrets and summer;
you lean close—close enough to let me
taste the thrill of bottled shine.

One swipe, two—and it glows,
like a hint, a dare, a whisper.
You laugh, and it lingers in the air,
pink and tantalizingly saccharine.

You leave, a trail of strawberry gloss,
and I think I'll spend every night
chasing its shine—
glossy, daring, dangerously near.

Evelyn is currently exploring options in the editing and publishing realm post-graduation. In her free time, she's often found lost in various bookstores. She can also be seen staring at pictures of Pedro Pascal, talking about him, or buying things with his face on them.

HCH

FLORES WOMAN

BY RYAN W. NORRIS

The human said goodbye to the bones of the grandmothers and left the cave in the island's warm predawn drizzle. Meat-hunger gnawed at her gut, and the back of her neck told her something was drawing closer. The cave was no longer safe. She took nothing and wore nothing, for there was nothing to take and no other human eyes left to hide from.

She went south to the ruined city of giants, her long dead cousins. Many creatures nested in giant-town's vine-encrusted nooks and the human hoped for a bird's egg or a sleeping bat. She never slept here. Larger animals than birds and bats hid here.

She had scarcely reached the edge of the ruins when it became clear she wouldn't be eating anything here today. Since her last visit, a troop of monkeys had declared it their territory. They screamed insults at her as they drove her away. One even flaunted an uneaten egg. There had been a time when the monkeys would have run in fear of humans, as would the giant rat and even the boar, but those days had gone with the last of her companions. She could barely remember the taste of these creatures' meat, not fresh anyway, and now they all posed a greater danger to her than she to them. At least she wasn't being hunted. Not by them.

Giving the monkeys a wide berth, she continued south, weaker and hungrier. Drizzle gave way to torrent as it always did this time of the afternoon on the island. Weather served as a more reliable clock during the rainy season than the position of the sun, eternally hidden as it was by canopy and cloud.

She ascended into the highlands in search of protein. Killing a goat was out of the question, but these moist forests held creatures found nowhere else on the island. Both the long-nosed rat and the mountain shrew would feed on earthworms drawn out by the rain, and neither was as wily as its lowland counterparts. If necessary, she could always eat the worms themselves. Today, though, the highlands held something else.

For generations uncounted, her people had shared the island with no other predator larger than the civet. Then the world changed. The grandmothers had told her of a time when the earth shook and a mountain of water struck. For a brief time, though, the sea separating her island and the eastern island had disappeared, allowing something new to cross. The grandmothers' wisdom had been no help for their stories contained nothing like these creatures. The new predators fed on rats both small and large, monkeys, goats, and the people. They'd steadily dined on human bodies until only hers remained.

FLORES WOMAN

BY RYAN W. NORRIS

She didn't see or hear the predator, but knew it was there. She ran. The rainstorm would dull senses, but her own most of all. Perhaps she would lose it this time, but she wouldn't know until it was too late. She grunted to herself, something approximating words, but they were words without meaning. She'd had as much use for words as she'd had for clothes or even a name. But sounds with meaning behind them reminded her of childhood and of others. They brought her comfort and cost little thanks to the pounding rain.

The Anthropocene's last human made her way to where the trees ended at a rocky place on the edge of the dropoff. It could outclimb, outhear, and outsmell her, but the clearing gave her eyes, her only strength, something to do. She found a spot between two moss-covered boulders downwind of the forest where she thought she might see but not be seen, and she waited.

It arrived just as the torrent returned to drizzle, at the next chiming of the jungle's afternoon clock. Just as her stomach had begun to growl fiercely enough that she worried the sound might betray her. It crept stealthily at first, but advanced toward her with boldness upon entering the clearing.

These two species had come a long way together, first as business partners, one species with an excess of pests in food stores and the other happy to dispatch those pests. Then they had grown even closer, one species seeking food and shelter, the other looking for love and companionship. In time, their path had taken them here, to their final meeting. Evolution on the islands had changed their sizes, yet throughout these changes, they had not lost their ability to read each other's behavior. The skill had served one of them more than the other.

The human had a single trick left, one that had worked at this spot before. She bolted and her pursuer followed. It was faster, but she was closer. Her destination was a single flimsy palm tree perched on the very edge of the precipice. As she started to climb, the tree began to bend, leaning over emptiness. The cat could climb too, but the human hoped it was smart enough not to add its weight to hers. She gambled that its desire for self-preservation was stronger than its hunger and that it would choose to look elsewhere before her own hunger led to fatal weakness.

She was wrong. Predatory instinct defeated intellect. The human, humanity, and this cat, but not all cats, lost that day.

It began to climb. She pushed farther out. It climbed some more.

Crack.

Dr. Norris is an associate professor of Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology. In addition to his actual science publications, he's published two science fiction stories involving future evolution and speculative biology in *Analog Science Fiction and Fact*.

HCH

A MOURNING DOVE'S CALL

BY NICOLE POHLMAN

Blackbirds rejoice at enveloped orange shrouds.
Wings rustle, beaks unbar, talons release.

Dewdrops stroke fresh spring grass.
Stems lengthen, leaves tremble, buds gape.

Breezes flood the mottled, cardinal sky.
Trees quiver, clouds meander, mushrooms conquer.

Mourning doves bellow by yellow beams.
Chests expand, tails straighten, eyes bulge.

Beige tufts cascade towards moisture-laden pastures.
Blackbird plunges, Mourning Dove whimpers, people sleep.

Dawn glistens through misty windowpanes as Mourning Dove coos.
Gentle sounds, rhythmic songs, three echoes.

Can you hear the Mourning Dove's call?

HCH

HOUSE EDGE

BY NICOLE POHLMAN

Crumpled Busch cans surround steel-toed boots.
Forgotten poker chips ease under blackjack tables.

Dealers wear broad-toothed smiles shaded eggshell.
My sultry lipstick sings country as my fingers shuffle.

Women cradle Five Card Charlie's to their breasts.
Drunk men frequently double-down at sixteen.

With the top button of my see-through shirt undone,
I lean against the table to assess hands, to entertain.

Jaundiced eyes gleam, striking gold.
Every player hits and predictably busts.

I show them the concealed hole card.
A perfect twenty-one.

SOMEBODY MAN

BY NICOLE POHLMAN

Children color superhero capes with dead markers
and imagine a world in which they're wanted.
"Five more minutes," Teacher says,
as she deliberately sets a timer for three.

Stubby, nail bitten fingers scrounge for crayons
and nervously grasp for unique Crayola colors
such as Caribbean Green, Aquamarine,
or the child's favorite, Atomic Tangerine.

Crayons teeter on the edge of cream desks.
Glue sticks harden in cracked encasements.
Scissors extend with restless apprehension.
Teacher warns her students, "One more minute."

Snap!

The atomic tangerine colored wax breaks clean in half.
Anxious sweat dampens the utensils' wrapper.
Tears brim a new hue on the crinkled paper,
a tinged shade familiar and foreign.

"Time's up! Turn your papers in!" Teacher's voice echoes, and adds,
"Remember to write your name on the top of your paper."
Students created superheroes named Dragon Girl or Viking Boy
while the child envisioned himself as Somebody Man.

Nicole Pohlman was raised in Delphos, Ohio, and has always aspired to be a writer. She has two published children's books, being *The Little Fly Who Couldn't Fly* and *Mabel the Moth* on Amazon.com. Pohlman is pursuing a bachelor's degree in English and a Minor in Professional Writing at The Ohio State University. Employed as a writing tutor and a children's librarian, Nicole encourages others to creatively express themselves through writing.

HCH

ASYLUM

BY PARIS PRICHARD

I will build this love with glitter nor glass,
despite its beauty—affections shall pass.
Instead, let my love be a house—
and you be my home.
Let it cultivate slowly—
as did the city of Rome.

The hallways are hollow — light creeping in—
the windows rattle— Autumn's wind.
Your four post arms lay wide and open.
Snowflake dust descends,
This solace's seeping sight,
embracing all which's broken.

Falling within your comforter embrace—
Love wrapping round your delicate trace.
Close thy shutters, storms soon near.
Anxieties' dance
To symphonies of sorrow.
Melodies waltz in my ear.

Is this the great Romans before their fall?
Love me ravishly, blood, bones, and all.
Consume me, please, bodily whole.
Poach the performance
Autumn's tune is silent now
Winter's thief, a heart it stole.

Paris Prichard is an English major and writing tutor at OSU Lima. A gifted orator, she is most often found picking up strays on State Route 309.

HCH

DEBT POEM

BY SCARLET THAYER

“You asked to
walk me home,
but I had
to carry you”
- Phoebe Bridgers

You asked to protect me,
but that required me to save you,
from yourself,
and as my aching heart yearned
for you to do as you said you would,
I gave you what I was expecting in return,
but I never got any.
I gave what I didn't have
to someone undeserving.
I am in debt,
but who do I owe?

You asked to pull me ashore and save me from drowning,
but that required me to be your life jacket,
for you to swim in your sea of oblivion,
and as my aching lungs yearned,
for air that you said you would give me,
I gave you the air that I had been dying for,
and I never got any.
I gave what I didn't have
to someone undeserving.

I am dead,
to whom,
my
life,
did
I
owe
?
?
?

I am Scarlet, a sophomore in Highschool. I have been a dancer at Dancer by Gina for 13 years. Dance is a way for me to express myself, which I also like to do in my writing. Both writing and self-expression are very important to me. English is my favorite subject. I love to be expressive through many ways of art including music dance, drawing, writing, and more. I want my career to be involved in creative writing or any form of showing my artistic capability.

HCH

RED

BY MADISON VORHEES

My backpack weighs me down as I walk through the hall. It is filled to the brim with binders and different colored pencils that I will likely stuff in the back of my locker and forget about until I clean it out on the last day. The first day of school is always easy. It is just a bunch of meaningless introductions and multiple syllabuses that we are all bound to lose before we need them. "Welcome back, everyone", my first period teacher always began. Her hair is a light blonde color, which oddly pairs with her cinnamon and vanilla scent. The lights are dim, but light enough that I can still see everyone. The teacher ushers me into an empty desk, beginning her 'To-do Today' slideshow. Now, the blonde hair is matted and painted an ugly red color. The lights are now completely off, protecting our eyes from the red everywhere. The color almost looks black in this lighting, but we are all aware of the harsh reality of the sticky liquid and the loud bangs that contrast with our unusual silence. Now, as I lie falling in and out of consciousness, my teacher hovers over me, whispering things that I cannot make out with the loud ringing in my ears. As I fall into the world of black nothingness, I regret not paying attention to her name and what animals she may have.

Madison is a junior this year attending Apollo Career Center. She loves writing short stories about stigmatized topics to help spread awareness. She loves reading about these topics to try and educate herself on them and help inform others about it.

HCH

WHISPERS OF THE SUNFLOWER

BY ALAYNA HASTON

Sunflower, sunflower, standing tall,
Do you hear what I hear, above them all?
The trickle of water in the brook,
The songbirds' morning call, a gentle hook.

Oh, how the grasshoppers play their violin,
Nature's symphony begins to spin.
The rustle of maple leaves in the breeze,
The night owl's lonely call floats with ease.

Deep breaths of the mountains, fresh and rare,
Sunflower, sunflower, can you feel the air?
Standing tall, a sentinel proud,
Listening closely to nature's soft sounds.

HCH

TIME AND PLACE

BY ALAYNA HASTON

Time's racing, ever-changing,
While people wander through their days,
Never stopping, always moving,
Caught in life's relentless maze.

What makes a place, a sacred space?
Is it the soft whisper of trees,
The birds that flit on gentle breeze,
Or fish that dance in winding brook's embrace?

Fog drifts through long-forgotten wood,
Veiling secrets held in silent trust,
Each moment wrapped in nature's story,
A tapestry of life, both fragile and robust.

So pause a while, let stillness reign,
In echoes of nature, find your place again.

In the city's bustle, chaos thrives,
Growing, changing, a speed unending,
Strangers pass us in the street,
A friend, a brother, a sister,
Could be there, a story waiting to be told,
A broken heart in need of mending,
Bursting with tales, waiting to unfold.

So many stories, locked inside,
Skeletons yearning to be set free,
Yet people pass, and time marches on,
An unyielding tide, where moments flee.

Change is what we all must face,
Time, the inevitable destination,
Always close yet out of reach,
A constant in our fleeting creation.

Legacy, oh legacy, what we leave behind,
Small or grand, in whispers they remain,
An echo of ideas, of dreams we've spun,
A chain for others to claim or to feign.

TIME AND PLACE

BY ALAYNA HASTON

Yet death, the unchangeable thread we weave,
A truth we must meet, with grace or despair,
All that lives will die, it's nature's decree,
And time, relentless, catches up to us there.

We fade, wither, and decay,
To nothing but the dust of dreams once bright,
Fast lives gone in the blink of an eye,
Forgotten echoes fading into night.

I have always known two things to be true my love for reading and my overactive imagination. I
lie awake at night with stories flying through my head. So I write and create art.

HCH

THE SIREN'S CALL

BY KATHERINE MOORE

Run off the deck
And into the sea
Where you'll be free
Away from the wreck
Run off the deck
Come my love to be
Flee to the sea
Come and break thy neck
For you'll be mine
Givest thy hand
Pulling you beneath
It is just a matter of time
Till you sink to the sand
To stay with me in the underneath

My name is Katherine Moore, I love poems and the stories they tell us. Most of my poems are based off of books that I have read or people I know. I love that poems can evoke these feelings that you have gotten from other life experiences.

HCH

HOLDING SMOKE

BY SUBAH AUHONA

Rain dries out, thunder stops falling,
the earth stills after an earthquake.
All things must end-
not just the good, but the bad, as well.

We chase the light at the tunnel's edge,
giving ignorance to what we do to reach it.
But stability is a myth.
Innocence is the price we pay
for a mirage of certainty.

Fear is a comfort we build for ourselves.
Vigilance is wisdom,
but let it not turn into chains.

Life humbles those who grip too tight.
Absurdity is in etching meaning
onto something not yours.
We call it unfair when life resists our weight,
but is it not unfair to expect permanence
from the impermanent?

The devil dances where cracks begin,
where seriousness suffocates wonder.
Tread carefully, yes-
but embrace life's fragility,
so you can live as you were meant to.

A HOUSE THAT BREATHES

BY SUBAH AUHONA

A bed of flowers, one on the ground
one that floats.
Their bloom,
a reminder of how much time has passed.

We make our way up to the second floor,
where anticipating eyes
greet us with a bright glow.

Like a lock finally letting go of its hinges,
as its key finds its way back.
Going home,
feels like getting pieces of your heart back.

Walking inside,
where the elders sit,
somnambulant.

The same creaky chairs,
windows left slightly ajar.
The same scent of affection,
with the sounds of questions and laughter,
they are becoming so unfamiliar.

It is not time, nor distance,
is it the absence of those
that made the place a home.
The only proof of our memories
are now the outlines of what once was.

The color of the walls become darker,
sullen almost,
was it our ignorance that made them look happy before?
Or was it our breath-
the solace that brought its glow?

LOSING SLEEP

BY SUBAH AUHONA

She sees her,
but only one,
chooses to stare back.
Though dancing in the distance at first,
It's encroaching now,
proving its presence.

The more she averts her eyes,
the angrier it gets.
Crawling faster.
Closer.

The time has finally come,
she looks at it,
her angry self.
She drips with disgust,
repulsed, her nails dig in,
peel through the guilt,
the shame, and the dread.

Her own image, an unbearable aversion.
There is something in that stare,
she needs to know what it is.
Scraping.
Closer.
And closer.
She yearns to uncover what is behind
those eyes.

The warm dripping
as her nails rip.
Tear deeper as her skin wraps around,
giving permission.
Grasping for the answer
of what her eyes hide away
which she can't find,
even,
with them in her hands.

Hello! I am Subah Auhona, a Bio major at OSU-Lima. I am in the premed field and am interested in going into neurosurgery. I have a lot of homework due, but I don't want to do them, so I worked on these poems instead. Thank you for reading~

HCH

FREDERICO GARCIA LORCA ONLY MADE IT TO THIRTY EIGHT

BY GUILLERMO BOWIE

Darkness

Ruth Ann Howell

I never meant to leave you

I was just doing what my career called for

Twenty years ago

When I transferred from Austin College

Leaving the small town of Sherman, Texas

Twenty years ago when I was twenty years old

Darkness

Why did I leave you at Austin College

And brave this career path all alone

As if I were intoxicated by the love we had

It's as if I were waking up now

Returning to my senses

Turning around and asking

Where did I leave you

Darkness

We were meant to grow old together

Leaving Sherman, Texas and Donna and Rick and my career at the bookstore

Didn't mean abandoning everything that we had

HCH

RECOGNIZING HISTORY

BY GUILLERMO BOWIE

It was my first job after graduating with a master's degree from Columbia
A young marxist with Weather Underground direction
I had just completed my master's thesis on the indigenous movement in Guatemala
The second grade teacher position in the Bronx would give me the chance to apply
what I had learned
at Columbia

And in the class of this Weather Underground executive
Was the six year old son of the famous Black Panther leader in New York Shaba Om
At Columbia University's library I had carefully gone through all of their books on
marxism and Look For

Me In The Whirlwind on the New York Black Panthers had stood out
Mrs. Om set the tone of our meeting when she told me how young that I looked

This opportunity to impress the Black Panthers of New York didn't get by me
From teacher positions to teacher causes
The sensitive structures of the school were challenged
As this Weather Underground intellectual was not going to miss this chance in
history

Guillermo Bowie is a Portland, Oregon based writer. As poet he is recently published in Maryland Literary Review, Grey Sparrow Journal, Children, Churches, And Daddies, Blue Collar Review, forthcoming in Maryland's Academy Of The Heart And Mind and Book Of Matches.

Guillermo Bowie has a B.A. from Portland's Lewis and Clark College, a M.A. from Columbia University, a second M.A. in Spanish from New York University, studied Spanish at Harvard University, and did 1/2 of a Ph.D. in Spanish at the University of Oregon.

HCH

GIRL WITH FROZEN EYES AND A WILDFLOWER IN HER TEETH

BY STUTI JAIN

eyes open,
the walls a shade of blue,
the same color as the flowers
that died when you were little
goodbyes lined up on the desk; chiffon
sorries, velvet condolence cards, tasting of
glass and ice when you lick them,

her face is green,
hair whipped around, in shock;
roses blooming beside her-
over her, a backpack
left open on her desk

a grotesque beauty searched on her laptop
following images of twisted necks,
and railroad tracks, of girls falling from the edge-
of oceans, swing sets, you never know

then, *how to know if i've grown up?*
"you can't," the computer told her, it
creeps up on you slowly, like a bat winged moth; black and bloody-
but she was *tired*, she'd whispered
and too many lives lived inside of her

as empty as her champagne glass, she thought.
drew a white lily growing inside of it,
blooming as a explosion, left her screaming
like a bomb.

bracelets of the boys she'd loved
on the floor beside her
stars in her hand
her head in her lap,
she is not screaming
she is silent
like an unloaded gun.

HCH

SHE

BY STUTI JAIN

I. it's funny how the
cookie cutter shape the stars
make look so much like you.

II. i took my sorrows
and bottled them, in the shape
of slow-burn vodka

III. somewhere/how the
violence of our souls
enveloped you.

IV. your scars dot your skin
like freckles.
solid as raindrops, washing away
years of droplet guilt

V. she tasted like art
and ran like water down
my thighs, away from her life

VI. rose petals fell like
they were mourning you, the day
after you walked away.

VII. when a girl falls apart
they whisper sorry's and i love you's like smoke,
burning holes in the twisted frame
of her being until her
secrets fall out.

VIII. you confessed to leaving me
so long after you did.

Stuti is a teenage girl with a deep passion for art, writing, and all things creative. She spends her time, reading, writing, and coming up with new ideas. She is an accomplished poet with a national Silver Medal in scholastic and has been published previously more than 60 times. She hopes to one day publish a book or novel and is mostly focused on improving her work as a poetry writer. Her main inspirations include Olivia Gatwood, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and Laurie Halse Anderson.

She would be honored to have the chance to receive publication and would appreciate it. She is based in the US.

HCH

TO THOSE OF WHOM I DEDICATE MY LOVE

BY GABRIELLE HORNUNG

To The First: To you, who was there when I was first welcomed into this world. Your presence, even before I could talk or take my first steps on this corrupt Earth. My immaturity weighed heavily as I took you at your words of love. You chased me around the house, trapping me in your hugs—hugs that soon became the suffocating hold I know you for. The haunted monsters under my bed, which soon took shape before my eyes—in you. I see pieces of you in me, and it's horrifyingly comforting. My high school softball days, my codependency—those came from you. To you, the man who broke my heart first. I miss you still, even as I find myself confronted with many versions of you. I was meant to learn love from you—how it looks, how it feels. But what I received was a warped vision of broken promises and of care that came with consequences.

To The Second: To my first-grade crush, my best friend. You got excited about me, and I let you take over my tiny little heart. Playground dates and pencil trades, as if they were pieces of something bigger than us. To this day, I'm still not sure what happened—one moment we were inseparable, and the next, I had cooties, and you were just *annoying*. I keep a little place for you in this much older heart of mine, because you might have been the simplest love I'll ever have. I'll never have this kind of connection again—so far from complications. But I'll always cherish the woodchip-filled shoes and the seating charts that placed us together, as if the universe had a plan before we even knew what love was.

To The Third: To my best friend. The one that never actually happened. Everyone has that middle school crush that lingers into their more formative years, and you were mine. Stolen glances, flirty exchanges—tiny moments that felt bigger than they were. I remember looking into your starry eyes as I slid my homework answers your way, wondering if you saw me the way I saw you. I don't know if it was the charm, the popularity, or the intoxicating idea of you, but my crush never fully faded. And I like to believe the same was true for you. Then came the day when my fantasies finally became real—at your house, in the bed I had imagined for years. But reality has a cruel way of unraveling illusions. After that night, there were no more shared answers, no more stolen glances. Not even words.

To The Fourth: To my first “real relationship.” I find comfort in the fact that I don't remember much about us. At the time, I was consumed, obsessed, convinced I would never recover from the devastation of losing you. Your first teenage heartbreak feels like the end of the world—until it isn't. It's strange to think about how much we shared at such a young age, in some of the darkest points of our lives. But I am grateful. Grateful that I got to learn everything about first love with you. It showed me that I was meant for something greater, someone greater. I was afraid—afraid that no one would ever understand what it was like to be loved so deeply by me. But I am proud to say I was wrong.

HCH

TO THOSE OF WHOM I DEDICATE MY LOVE

BY GABRIELLE HORNUNG

To The Fifth: To my rebound. To number four's best friend. Don't look at me like that—we've all been there, and I'm not proud of myself either. I remember the fleeting moments of pleasure, the way the cracks in my heart were reshaped by finally feeling appreciated. I needed to be needed, and you gave me that. And I never said thank you. Looking back, I wish we had never crossed that line. Maybe then we'd still be friends today, instead of just a memory of something we both needed at the time. I hear stories about you now—the unfaithfulness, the lingering questions about how I am. I hope you heal one day and become the person I once believed you would be.

To My Sixth: To my love. Our years together have shaped us, growing side by side, intertwined. There isn't a part of my life where I don't see traces of you. I never thanked you—for waiting for me to heal, for healing with me, and for healing for me. I've had the worst years of my life, and you were there through all of it, even when you weren't standing right beside me. I can't imagine anything greater than what we share. You taught me that love is not enough—that it takes effort, work, and the willingness to face problems together. You showed me that it's us against the problem, not me against you. You taught me that someone can be truthful, genuine. I will never meet anyone as kind as you, and honestly, that's the hottest thing I've ever seen. You showed me what it's like to picture a future with someone and pray they want the same. Even if things don't work out between us, I know you will find someone who deserves you—and I truly want that for you. I know you would want the same for me, because that's just who you are.

To My Seventh: To myself. This is the relationship I have been working on for the entirety of my being. It will never be perfect, but I've learned that's okay. It will always be a process of learning, growing, and loving. One day, I will love you the way you deserve to be loved—even if that day isn't today. I love every past version of you and every future version of you because each one carries the lessons that shape me. You are the only constant in my life, and you deserve that place. I know you deserve the love you don't always receive, but I am confident that one day, everything you have given to the world will find its way back to you. You are someone full of love, someone who feels deeply enough to write to those who have hurt you and still wish them well. That kind of heart is rare. You are everything I love about the world, and it's okay if others don't always see it. We are one. We are the one true, honest love of my life—I just know it.

Gabrielle has a love for literature and reading that has been consistent her whole life. She finds that reading and writing are the best way to express oneself.

HCH



ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY

COWS

BY SUBAH AUHONA



HCH

ROSE

BY SUBAH AUHONA



I am a current undergrad biology and pre-med student at OSU Lima campus. I work with the Lima campus library and have too many hobbies, art being one of them.

HCH

TAHQUAMENON SUNSET

BY ANDEN BLANKEMEYER



Anden Blankenmeyer studies wizardry and grappling at Lima OSU. He resides at Foxwort Apiary and likes to photograph the night sky.

HCH

HESITANCY

BY NICOLE POHLMAN



HCH

THROUGH CUYAHOGA

BY NICOLE POHLMAN



Nicole Pohlman was raised in Delphos, Ohio, and has always aspired to be a writer. She has two published children's books, being *The Little Fly Who Couldn't Fly* and *Mabel the Moth* on Amazon.com. Pohlman is pursuing a bachelor's degree in English and a Minor in Professional Writing at The Ohio State University. Employed as a writing tutor and a children's librarian, Nicole encourages others to creatively express themselves through writing.

HCH

LIMERENCE

BY PARIS PRICHARD



HCH

TO GROW THROUGH THE CRACKS

BY PARIS PRICHARD



HCH

SPIRIT

BY PARIS PRICHARD



HCH

LULL

BY PARIS PRICHARD

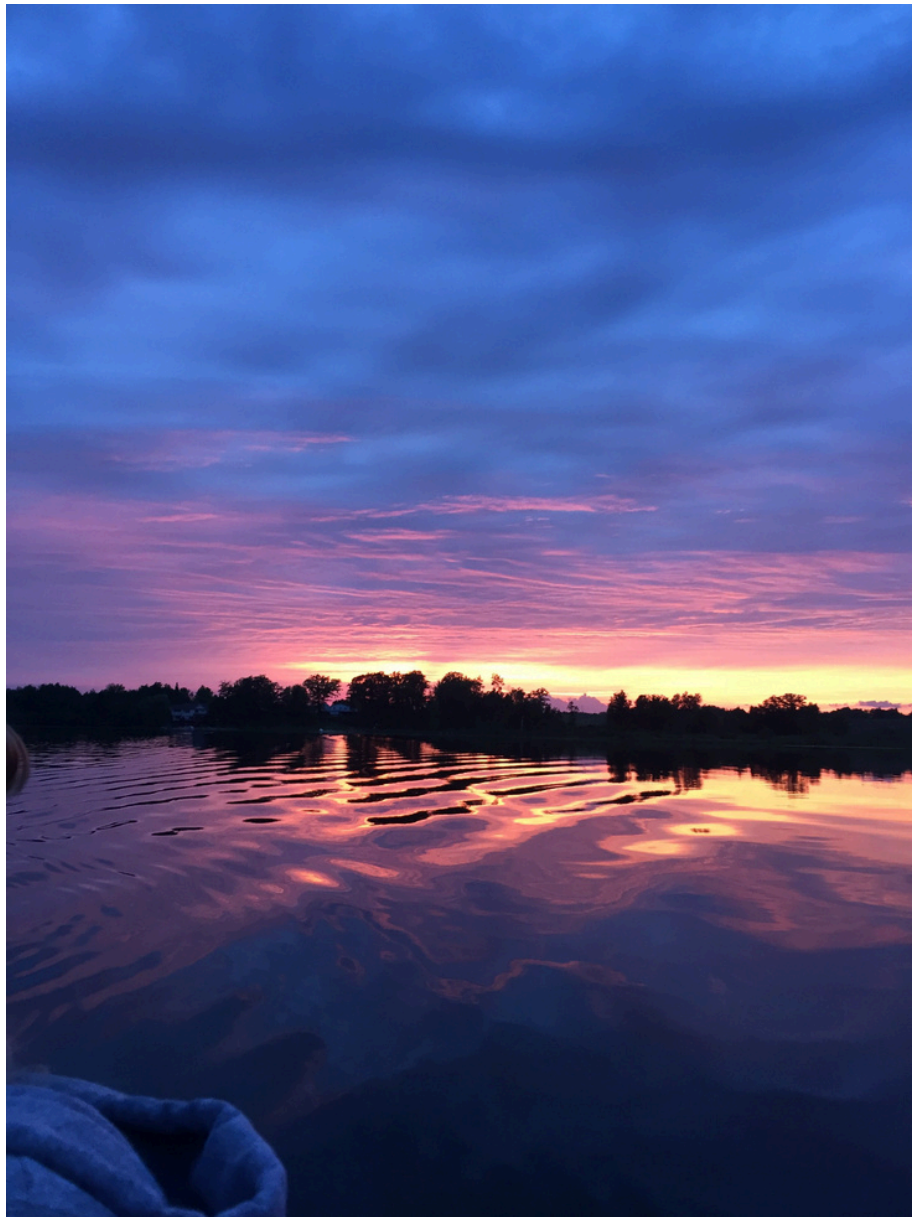


Paris Prichard is an English major and writing tutor at OSU Lima. A gifted orator, she is most often found picking up strays on State Route 309.

HCH

BLUSH HORIZON

BY ASHLEY VAUGHN

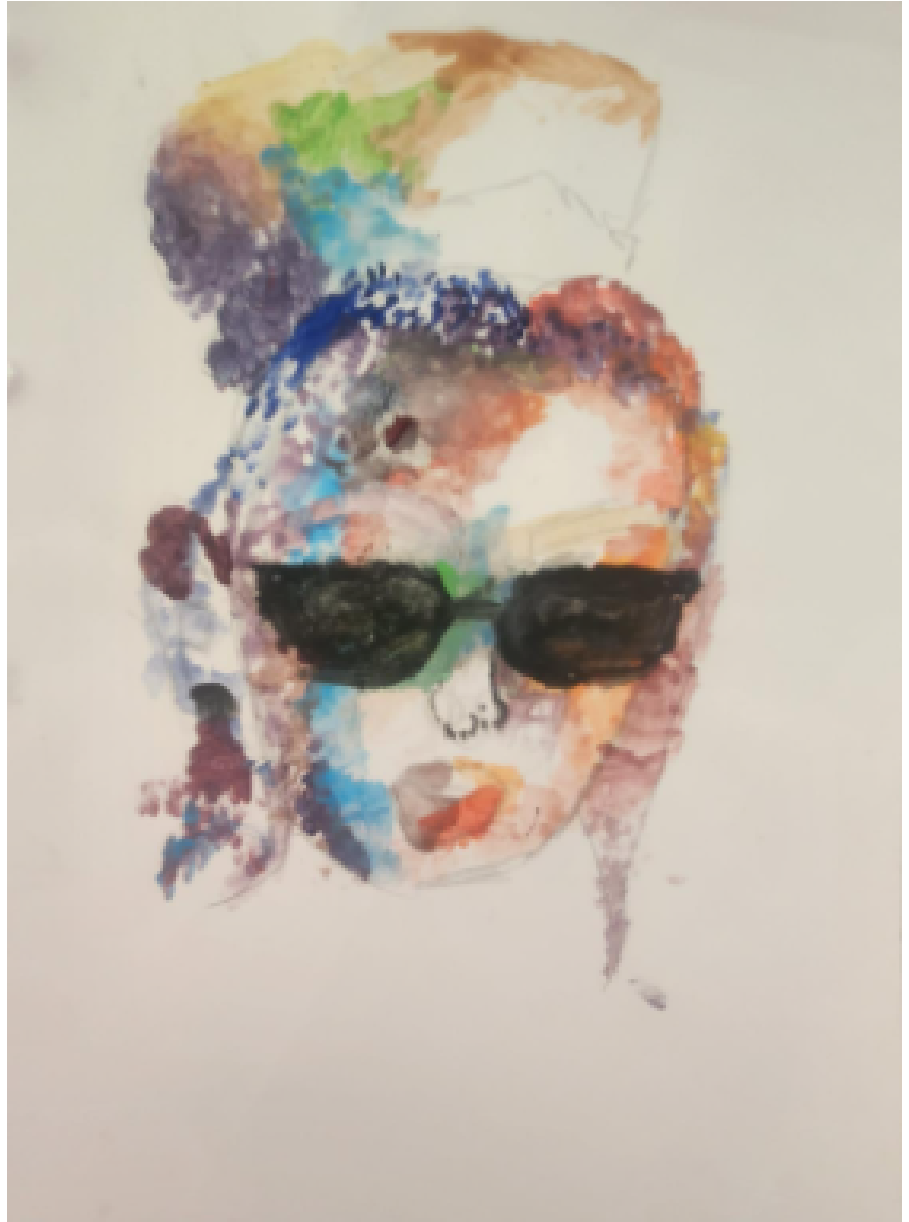


Ashley Vaughn is a senior tutor for the learning center at OSU Lima. She graduates this spring and will go on to be an Elementary school teacher.

HCH

MUSIC

BY STUTI JAIN



HCH

WATERCOLOR GIRL

BY STUTI JAIN



Stuti is a teenage girl with a deep passion for art, writing, and all things creative. She spends her time, reading, writing, and coming up with new ideas. She is an accomplished poet with a national Silver Medal in scholastic and has been published previously more than 60 times. She hopes to one day publish a book or novel and is mostly focused on improving her work as a poetry writer. Her main inspirations include Olivia Gatwood, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and Laurie Halse Anderson. She would be honored to have the chance to receive publication and would appreciate it. She is based in the US.

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