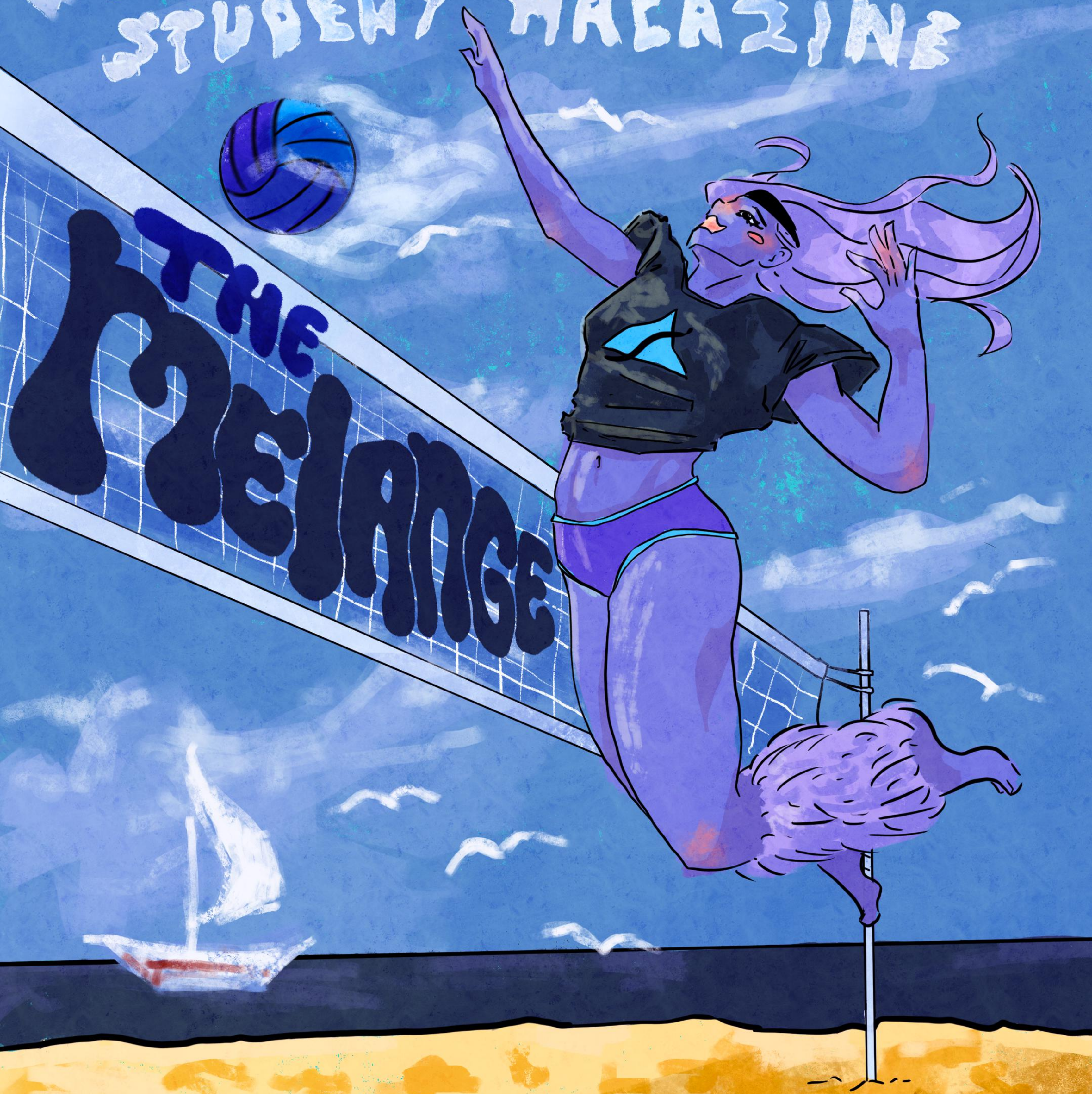


ARTS & SCIENCE STUDENT MAGAZINE



VOLUME 5 NO. 4
"BEACH EPISODE"

THE MELANGE MANIFESTO

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is for The Melange to be a light-hearted and enjoyable read, to shine light on what constitutes the Artsci experience (in terms of our formal degrees, but also in terms of day-to-day goings-on!), and to bring Artsci students together to appreciate each other's written and visual talent.

We want The Melange to be a positive force within the Artsci community; as such, we do not accept or publish submissions that are discriminatory or hateful. There is room for thoughtful critique or for kind-hearted teasing in the name of humour or satire, but there is not room for pieces that insult anyone, are hurtful, or perpetuate racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism, or religious discrimination. We also want all information published in The Melange to be factual, correct, and clear; please note that fact-checking and resulting edits for non-fiction pieces will be included in the editorial process.

CONTENT GUIDELINES

- Think about The Melange and all of its content as aiming to be **community-building**: when designing your submission, check with yourself: "Is this contribution supportive of my Artsci community?" (though your contribution doesn't have to be about Artsci!)
- If you want to create a piece on a faculty member, admin, student, or alumni, please get their consent (and evidence of consent, to show our editors) for the specific way in which you will be portraying them before you create or submit your piece.
 - Note: Merely referring to an individual in passing (i.e., when they're not the subject of your piece) doesn't require formal consent, but please note that The Melange's editors reserve the right to edit these names out of a piece if their inclusion is inappropriate.
- Please aim to keep submissions under two pages maximum/1000 words. We will assess submissions on a case-by-case basis, but generally we are looking for short pieces.

We accept poetry, short stories, comic strips, recipes, humour and satire, book reviews, reflections, visual art, fun riddles or crossword puzzles, and any other categories of submissions you come up with! Be as creative as you want! We can't wait to enjoy your work :)

WIN A PRIZE BY DOING THIS SIMPLE HACK!

It's not clickbait, readers: as a special thank you for being such dedicated fans, we've devised a quest for you. Somewhere in this issue, we've hidden the Melange logo (pictured here): be the first to find it to win a signature Melange button! Send an email to themelangebyartsci@outlook.com telling us where you found it for your chance to win. Happy perusing!





Like snow on the beach, April 2025

SUBMISSION AND EDITORIAL PROCESS

Submissions should be sent exclusively via our online form, which can be accessed through the link in our Instagram bio **@artsci.themelange** or through this QR code.

One of our editors will contact you directly within a few days of the contribution deadline to notify you whether there is space for your piece in the upcoming issue or whether we will need to save it for a future issue. If your piece is accepted, there will be a specific editorial timeline. We reserve the right to reject submissions if they do not follow our content guidelines.

Editors will work one-on-one with contributors to edit their pieces. There will be an initial round of edits, which the editor will return as feedback to the creator for any necessary or suggested revisions. A final draft will be sent from the creator back to the editor, who then will complete final touch-ups. Please be available to make revisions to your piece in the week following the contribution deadline, since our turnaround time for edits will be quick!



SCAN FOR SUBMISSION FORM!

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Editors

Luke Fancott, Elise Farmar, Olly Griesbach, Maya Hayworth, Lily Khair, Graeme Lavrence, Samantha Potts, Laura Tang

Journalists

Alyssa Abush, Avery Blundell, Gia Chahal, Ben Hemsworth, Ishmeet Johal, Kate Linardic, Sarayu Nambiar, Jacob Stotland, Matthew Wong, Macey Zhou

Contributors

Dr. David L. Clark, Jack Gillies, Mia Saha

Artists/Illustrators

Lauryn Flannagan, Jayda Hewitt, Tabitha Langford, Ally Pei-Middleton, Kristen Rasmussen, Jessica Tang, Jing Yi Xie, Olli Zelek

Layout/Art Editors

Vivian Vuong, Jadyn Westenberg, Emily Yang

IN THIS ISSUE...

after the party.....	2
Sailing Through First Year.....	3–6
Family Vacation.....	7
How to Beach Day: From a City-Dweller.....	8
Ode to the Unknowable Wind.....	9
Diaspora Makes Us Clay / inner child.....	10
closer.....	11
Love in the Time of Cosplay.....	11/12
Worlds Collide.....	13/14
LOL My Thesis.....	14
On Animal Faith.....	15–17
Sandcastles.....	18
Recurring Character.....	19
A [redacted] ritual (but you don't know that).....	20
Thoughts in a blender.....	21
An Artsci's Calendar.....	22
Asking Artsci.....	23
Goodbye from the Outgoing Editors.....	24

DEAR READER,

Despite what could be evinced from this tempestuous weather, it's Spring which means it's pretty much already Summer—the timeline has accelerated quite a bit in the last few years! I always feel as though I and everyone I know are in a state of perpetual transition, and the end of the semester is certainly not helping. On that note, more and more it seems like the pace of life leaves no time to pause. Which is why I feel it is never inappropriate practice to reflect on the ocean: the time she has taken to render the sand soft and pliant, the life she sustains, and the memories and understandings she suffuses (as evidenced by many of the beautiful pieces in this issue). Sometimes, it feels as if she mimics, retaliates against, our own frantic attempts to seize control. Still, with her pulse and full-bellied thrum, the ocean's surf bears a hopeful resemblance to the rhythmic surge of blood through the heart. This issue has prompted me to consider just how many ocean/beach analogies there are. Answer: so many—yet another way in which she is always giving and always reflecting.

The Melange, as well, is undergoing a transition. The last issue of the academic year is always a tender one and with my heart, I bid the departing members of the team goodbye: Olly, Jadyn, and Luke have been distinct presences in The Melange since my first year. They are among a few contributors included in this issue who are moving on from Artsci, so I hope you can find space in your reflections for them as well.

Finally, I know the first end-of-the-year on December 31st feels much more conclusive than that liminal feeling post-final-final-assessment. But I hope in that brief and vaguely disquieting interlude, you find time to rest and find balance once again. And I know that when I am, finally, on the other side of that line—wherever it exists—I hope to find myself at the beach. For now, I will make do with my imagination, as well as yours.

Thank you for making it through another year with us, reader.

With my heart,
Laura & The Melange Editorial Team



after the party

i watch the weight of your shadow untangle from
your fingertips and
lift off with the summer's
crumbling breath, her promise in what
is ours.

she looks upon us behind
her faltering retreat,
our lights ever minuscule
in her arms
until there is only the
flicker of contemplation for
what is lost.

you, staring through the
looking glass,
watch as
its delicate patterns shatter into
thousands more behind the horizon.

you, tender and distant as the earth
caressing the shore,
swathe in the sign of the times
until there is
nothing more to see.

so, you turn to me and
reach across that tender space,
where the world
can only listen.

across the skies, we are warm-stomached
and starving, enveloped in the conditional,
wandering amidst the dream
and the past,
and yet

here, we are free, we are
young, we are
enough.

Words by Matthew Wong, Level I
Art by Tabitha Langford, Level I

SAILING THROUGH FIRST YEAR



Ahoy! Summer is on the horizon! Our final days of being first-year Artscis are upon us. The end (of this academic year) is nigh!

To honour the conclusion of our first year, we have rallied the troops and gathered some perspectives on the first-year experience here in Artsci. Over the course of the last week, 13 interviewees have given their thoughts on our questions (which are as deep as the seven seas, some would say). And for the sake of being on theme, we have created a treasure map, intended to guide you through the turbulent waters of Artsci life, and have tried to capture this year's essence. So, onwards we sail!

***These interviews have been edited for clarity, and approved by the interviewees*

Q: WHAT IS AN EXPERIENCE THAT BONDED YOU WITH ANOTHER ARTSCI?

Ella: I have another example from welcome week, and I think it was the first Tea Party. So, I remember I walked backed with Avery, Marrin, and Ruth, and we had Subway at 12am, and Subway at 12am is a really liminal space, so it was just a good opportunity to connect with new people and be somewhere kind of off-putting but still have a really good time, and realize that maybe you made friends that were going to stick for the first time.

Avery: I think the Artsci campfire auction night was one of the greatest bonding experiences. I think it was cold, and raining, and I didn't really know what was happening, and it felt a little bit culty but in a really endearing way, so I think that was my first real immersion into the Artsci bond and experience.

Annika: For me, the first night at welcome week, I was standing outside our beloved Brandon Hall, and some weirdo girl came up to me, stuck her finger in my face, and went "you're in Artsci" and it was Maya Hayworth. That was my bonding experience. Then we went on a night walk. I highly recommend night walks as an Artsci bonding experience.

Aaron: I don't know. I feel like I am continuously becoming bonded to people around me again and again. Like even last night I went on this hike with Liam McLaughlin and Alina Brefo, and we went on the trail. We saw two swans who were a couple and it was really cute. [Reid appears, and this takes Aaron completely off track. He eventually finds the point again.] Anyways, the rest of my sentence was that connecting with people all throughout the year, that's been the first-year experience, and I'm sure it will be my experience for every other year too.

Q: HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ROCK CLIMBING BECAUSE OF AN ARTSCI?

Matty: No, and I stand proud of that fact.

Molly: I would like to second that response.

Aaron: I have not, and at times I have felt inadequate because I don't know how to rock climb.

Annika: I agree with Aaron. I feel like the proportion of rock climbers in this program has made me feel quite inadequate and has given me the Artsci Imposter Syndrome™ that everyone talks about.

Avery: I haven't.

Ella: Okay so one thing about me is I started rock climbing biweekly this year, and I go with Ruth pretty consistently, who's also in Artsci, as well as Ella and Andrew. So, to answer your question, yes.

Maya: Do you consider yourself a "rock-climber" now?

Ella: I would have to say I do consider myself a rock-climber, because I go in barefoot with my climbing shoes that I got for Christmas, and I have a refillable chalk bag. So, I fear that the answer is yes.

Q: WHAT'S MORE CULTY... ROCK CLIMBING OR ARTSCI?

Seb: *no hesitation* Artsci.

Antonio: Artsci.

Jack: Artsci.

Ella: I would have to say that Artsci, at the end of the day, puts the cult in faculty, so it's an easy answer.

Q: HOW MANY DAYS BEFORE THE DEADLINE DID YOU FINISH YOUR FIRST CAPSTONE?

Kira: Don't you mean hours?

Reid: I was trying to be really proactive, so I submitted it 12 hours before it was due. I was pretty impressed with myself, if I may say. I pushed myself really hard for that.

Matty: So, I submitted mine one day late actually. I feel like I'm gonna win this one.

Andrew: I was really pushing boundaries. Actually submitted about four and a half days late.

Seb: 11:58pm.

Jack: 11:59pm.

Avery: Mine was done when I did the outline.

Aaron: Wait, this is going in the official *Melange*? [nod from Maya] I submitted it on time.

Q: WILL YOU DO THE SAME THING FOR THIS CAPSTONE?

Matty: 100%.

Molly: Absolutely.

Andrew: No!

Reid: I'm gonna try to submit it less than 12 hours before.

Avery: Definitely not.

Ella: I'm trying to be more proactive, so I've started writing mine already.

Annika: I will be starting a month before the deadline. Dr. Savelli, if you hear this, I started a month before the deadline.

Maya: How do you feel that it's already two days after one month from the deadline?

Annika: I refuse to comment at this time.

Q: WAS THERE EVER A MOUSE IN THE POK ROOM?

Molly: I also was not there that day.

Reid: I wasn't there that day.

Andrew: There definitely was.

Matty: No.

Avery: No, and that was ridiculous, and I stand by that opinion.

Ella: I think I agree with Avery on this one.

Jack: There was. I heard the mouse.

Seb: I don't think there was, but...

Antonio: I'm not a reliable source.

Annika: **conspiratorially** Yes, and I actually have a theory about this. You know how under CNH, TSH, and KTH there is a tunnel system? So, there is actually a secret mouse tunnel system underneath that one. The mice can communicate through it, and so the mouse was in the POK room and was trying to speak to the mouse on the other side of the POK room where the bathroom is, and we could hear everything from the POK room, but then the mouse ran away because the mouse in the bathroom was not there.

Siya: Do I rationally think there was? I'm gonna say no, but I think that that whole class was really entertaining, so I'd like to thank the imaginary mouse for waking all of us up in that time.

Q: IF THE POK MOUSE WAS NOT REAL, THEN WHAT IS YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE POK MOUSE?

Seb: Just a malfunction in one of the machines in the room.

Jack: You know, I think the mouse is a product of society. But what is that to say the mouse isn't real. What is reality? And what is a human, as Manuel would say.

Siya: What is this, a POK class? Okay, I think that the mouse represents the camaraderie of Artsci. Everyone was laughing, and in a class where I so often felt delirious, it was nice to kind of have that fun, exciting moment with people.

Ella: I think the POK mouse, to me, describes the homogeneity of Artsci culture in a really important way. Which is kind of beautiful, because even if you can't rationally believe that there would be a live mouse stuck in the electrical box, you trust your peers enough to support their delusions and say you know what, maybe that squeaking noise is a mouse. And I back these people, I back my cohort, and I love that trust.

Q: DID DR. BETH MARQUIS REMEMBER YOUR NAME IN FIRST WEEK ORIENTATION?

Molly: Yes, she did.

Andrew: Uh, yeah, absolutely.

Reid: Yes.

Antonio: Yes.

Jack: Yes.

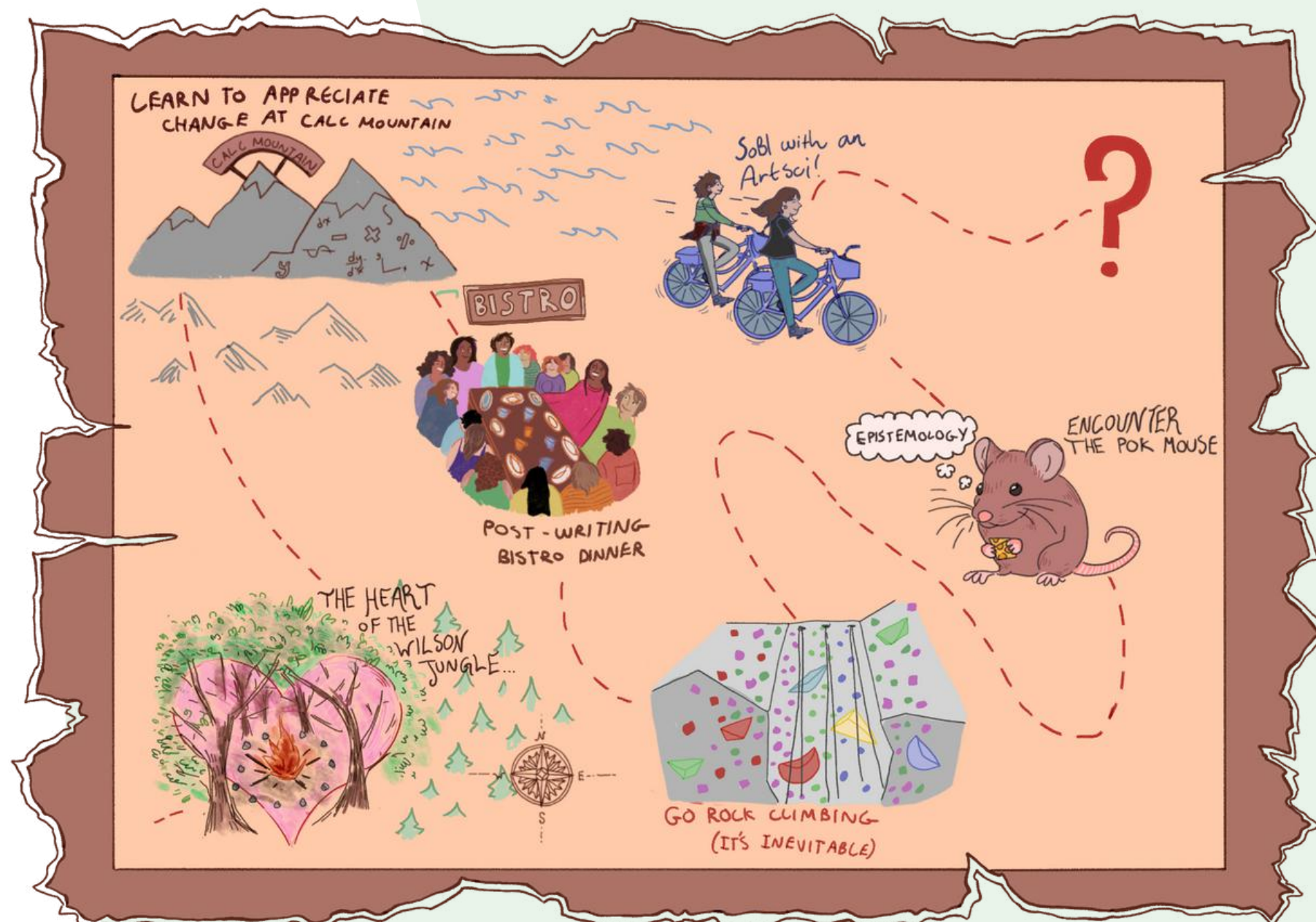
Seb: Yup!

Avery: She did, but then in one of the first GCI classes she forgot it, and she later sent me an email apologizing for it and promising that she would try her hardest to make sure it never happened again.

Ella: During the first time when we met her in LR, she did not remember my name, but I can't get mad at her because she's perfect at everything else.

Q: HOW DO YOU MANAGE THE BALANCE BETWEEN... RUGBY AND ARTSCI?

Antonio: Not a lot of sleep. Yeah, I sleep late and wake up early. But I think for me, more of the balancing is with the social events. I have to choose. Rugby does something every week, so does Artsci most of the time. So, it's just a matter of getting your work done so you can get out.



Safia Slotta,
Level I

EFRT AND ARTSCI?

Andrew: To the best that I can. I try my best and sometimes you have to make sacrifices, but it all works out in the end. If you can work on shift, and make it happen at the same time, I find that often works best.

Q: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO PERFORM IN THE MCMASTER MUSICAL OVER THE ARTSCI MUSICAL?

Seb: So, this is actually a pretty difficult question for me. I thought a lot about this at the start of the year, and I think getting that separation between Artsci and non-Artsci is important. Don't get me wrong, I love you guys, but I think I need some separation between the people I'm around, just so I see different perspectives and spend time with different people.

Q: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE PROPOSAL THAT EFRT SHOULD BE RENAMED IFART? DO YOU AGREE?

Kira: I think I'm a little bit opposed to that idea and can't lie, but I would invite you to take this up with the MSU. I'm kidding, I'm kidding.

Q: HOW DOES IT FEEL BEING ONE OF OUR FIRST YEAR SASS REPS?

Siya: It feels really cool. It's a lot of responsibility to advocate for everyone in Artsci, but I'm also really enjoying everything that comes with it. I really like going to meetings and learning about what's happening in the broader Artsci and McMaster community. And it's also nice just being able to plan fun things that I get to force people to show up to. I think that's a really nice way to help keep this community going.

Andrew: So, not only do I agree, but I also actually completely stand behind that and I will wear that every single day. I will have a shirt that says, "I fart and I'm proud."

Matty: What would IFART stand for?

Aaron: I love it so much! Sometimes I feel regret not being able to do certain things, but the first-year community is super supportive and are all so collaborative and show up when it matters. And so, if you are a first-year next year, in September 2025, I so strongly recommend that you get involved in SASS and represent your first-year class!

[a debate begins, with no conclusion]

Maya Hayworth,
Level I

FAMILY VACATION

The moment the minivan came to a stop, the Flemings spilled out into the sandy parking lot. Mrs. Fleming opened the hatch and grabbed the umbrellas, Mr. Fleming took the cooler, Suzy grabbed the towels, and little Michael took only his cherished spade. He swung it around onto his shoulder and hurried off before the others could notice.

When Suzy and her parents made it to the beach, they found Michael already knee-deep in the hole he was digging. The ladies laid the towels nearby and Mr. Fleming dropped the cooler at the nearest public grill, staking his claim. Suzy tried to get to the water before her mother could coat her with sunscreen, but Mrs. Fleming snagged Suzy by the wrist. Mrs. Fleming was always watchful. At last, they were both lathered and ran into the waves.

Mr. Fleming kindled the smoldering coals at the bottom of the grill, then he unfolded his portable side table. On that he arranged his two sets of chrome tongs, his mahogany-handled spatula, the burger patties, burger buns and fresh toppings. He removed each patty with a steady hand and laid them in soldierly rows across the grill. One started to hiss too early, but instantly he slid his spatula under the patty and relocated it. Mr. Fleming was always watchful.

After wading into the cool water Suzy and her mother swam front crawl, aiming for a sandbar beyond the buoys. After ten minutes Suzy noticed that Mr. Fleming was waving his tongs at them, meaning it was lunch time. They swam back to shore.

Having built quite an appetite, Mrs. Fleming hurried over to the grill. Suzy was hungry too, but something else was on her mind—where was her brother? The hole he'd been digging was still there, now surrounded by heaps of sand, but he and his shovel were gone. She beckoned her parents over and the three of them arrived at the hole together. It was meters deep, and a puddle of murky water sat in the bottom.

“Michael!” Mrs. Fleming called into it. Nothing. Mr. Fleming found a softball-sized rock and tossed it in. *Splloosh*. It sank out of sight. Suzy looked up and down the beach for her brother, but there were only a few reclining retirees in the distance.

“It’s lunch time, Michael!” Mrs. Fleming hollered into the hole. Suddenly her husband darted off toward the grill, which now shot out thick, black smoke. Mrs. Fleming strode after him, muttering. Now Suzy stood alone at the precipice.

She shuddered at the thought of Michael being trapped down there, lost in his own labyrinth. The water was opaque and worryingly still. Even in the turmoil, though, she had to admire his work; the hole was perfectly round, and its walls sculpted. She was circling the edge, lost in a moment of appreciation, when suddenly the wall crumbled.

When she hit the murky water, she sank fast. She doggy paddled desperately but that only spun her in circles. She quickly dropped below the sun’s reach, into the total, suffocating gloom. With all this effort her need for air became urgent, but she only sank further. Finally, she settled on the bottom. She gave a final, desperate kick and smacked her ankle against something sharp. Immediately she knew what it was, and a deep chill ran through her body. If Michael’s prized shovel lay at the bottom of the hole, he might be lying nearby.

Frenzied, she opened her eyes to look around, though she didn’t expect to see much. What she saw utterly confused her. A faint beam of light lay across the floor. She followed it along to its origin to see that it came from a little hole in the wall. The hole was only a few feet in diameter and neatly carved out of the dense sand.

Approaching it, she saw that the hole led into a short corridor that sloped upward. The light came from somewhere above the bend. She swam into the corridor and looked up. Her own shimmering reflection stared back. Right there, she realized, at the end of this tunnel, at the bottom of the hole, on the last day of this crummy vacation, was an air bubble. She swam up into it.

As soon as she popped above the surface, she drew ten hearty breaths. Her head spun and her ears rang, but after some flailing, she found a bank of sand to lean on. Finally she wiped her eyes and looked around. There, sitting on the bank and smiling slyly, sat little Michael. He put down his book and flashlight and offered her his hand.



Ben Hemsworth,
Level IV

HOW TO BEACH DAY: FROM A CITY-DWELLER

Hollywood's depiction of "beach days" have long captivated non-coastal audiences; the white sands, salty water, and the surf-mania of *Teen Beach Movie* and *Barbie in a Mermaid Tale* are all quite foreign to the average viewer from the Greater Toronto-Hamilton area.

This past summer, my friends and I were determined to achieve the California beach day of our dreams. But how would we go about this? The first hurdle was location; we knew that the park on Lake Ontario in our city wasn't going to cut it, so we ventured outward—to Etobicoke, that is. We settled on Marie Curtis Park, a charming spot on the lake with a permanent ice cream truck and a great view of downtown Toronto.

The trip was planned meticulously; we organized who was driving, found the day with the best weather, and packed up our umbrellas, playing cards, towels, and snacks.

We arrived bright and early on the Monday morning that everyone had taken off from work. It was perfectly hot and sunny, and we had a great spot on the beach. As we were playing cards and laying out on our towels, my friend suggested that we head for the water. At last!

However, while getting ready to wade out, we heard some commotion by the lifeguard chair. The guard was calling something out. Concerned, we checked the news. Marie Curtis Beach had tested positive for unsafe levels of *E. coli*. Great. Begrudgingly, we packed up and went to the nearest fast-food restaurant, disappointed, but not hopeless. There was still time this summer for another beach day.

The next trip required even more planning. Distrustful of Lake Ontario, we needed a new body of water. Determination to not let bacteria ruin our fun fueled us. Our research brought us to Guelph Lake, a short one-hour drive from our beachless suburbia. Rugby balls, digital cameras, and sunglasses were packed. GPS was set. And off we went.



After a brief road trip montage, we paid our parking fare and pulled onto the beach. It was perfect; the beach was still empty, the water was glistening, and the sky was...less than clear? Not to worry, it was still early in the day. We set up again, and after confirming with the Swim Guide that the water was *E. coli* free, we ran into the water. It was warm, a perfect depth, and we got a great game of volleyball going. On the beach, some more friends were taking photos while others began to rummage through our snacks.

And then the rain began.

It was easy to ignore at first, but it got heavier. And heavier. Eventually, we knew that if we didn't run soon, our clothes and towels would be drenched. But we were in Guelph: where would we go? No one wanted to drive back on the highway in this weather. So, we went to the closest Tim Hortons. There, our card games continued as the weather raged outside.

There were unfortunately no other beach days this past summer. It had become clear that the beach was not for us. Back to living vicariously through Ross Lynch, it seems.

So, if you're reading this as someone who lives on the Atlantic or Pacific, please enjoy the beach extra hard this year. And if you're from Toronto, check for an *E. coli* outbreak before you go!

Kate Linardic,
Level II



ODE TO THE UNKNOWABLE WIND

There is no touch in the evening sun,
Nor smell to the light of falling stars.
There is no taste in the bluish bowl
—Nor in that which holds the midnight sky.

The dancing air is a blessing unlike
Knowable thoughts and illuminated sights:
It is a sacrament contained by the celestial
ceiling,
yet concealed in the serging sediments of
time.

Such progress is blinding, abiding a
comfortable crime,
An escape from elicitation of the
eclectic unwindings
Which permeate proverbial pores
placed paradoxically across the *meta-*
dermis,
Easing the urges to grimace and gird
against the gradient gale.

Yet sail into the sea, and motions
unleash
What would otherwise be still and
stale,
And the lashings do lay across the
tender hull,
Until the wraith, unwitnessed,
prevails.

She shall dance in the leaves, the
twigs, the seeds,
As each whirls in a waltz of her
wanting tune,
Unweighted by a world beyond the
beach she stormed,
As she waves from the abyss just
once.

Never again shall it be,
Glancing through the gnarled groves,
Prancing along the prairie planes,
Or whispering amongst the
gravestones.



Only, for now, it is to go:
To remember it is to marvel over its
mysterious melody,
To wander towards the waning wish
for it to once more weightlessly wash
over,
But as is with all love and waves, we
shall not grasp at what gravitates
away.

Oh mystery, I wish to know your
name,
A lively tune you play, but a more
lovely game;
I am reprimanded into madness as
my memory strains,
For in chasing the clouds, I felt only
rain.

The winds do blow, and I am none
the wiser,
For despite wishing to know,
wondering why or where they might
go,
I am but a wandering, wondering,
wall to be wound around.
And today, drinking in its winding
whistle,
That is enough

Words by Jack Gillies, Level III
Art by Jadyn Westenberg,
Level IV

Migrated, relocated, the unseen
See how diaspora makes us its clay
Our pieces in two, worlds and stretched between
to neither we belong, nor we obey.

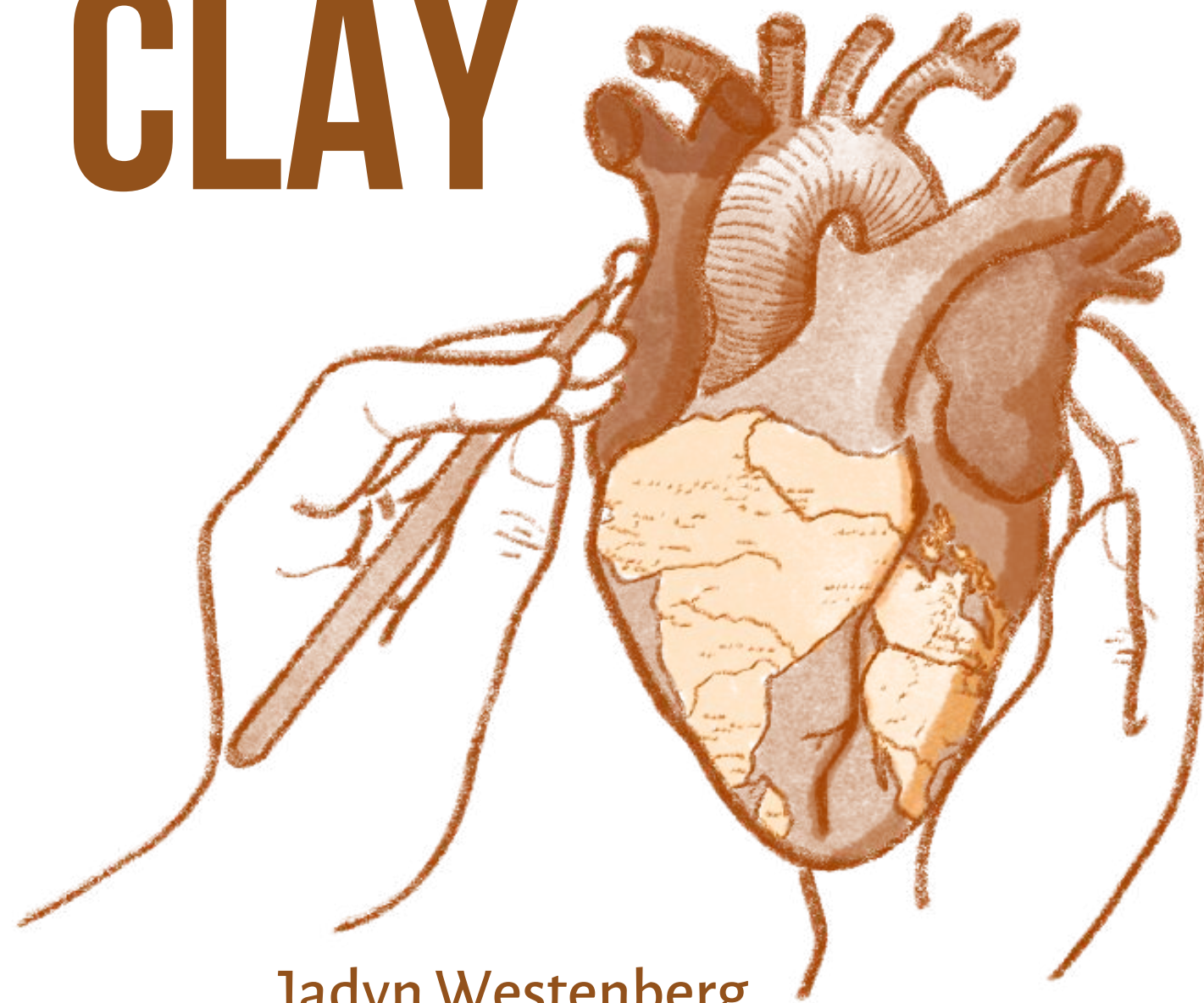
Identities are melded, carved about
dependent, empathetic, deference.
The kettle needs the handle and the spout
The greater good is our inheritance.

The potter's wheel moulds sticky hearts that throb
for family, our pain ten people's worth.
Intangible, but shared since old Punjab
our history through our aching, unearthed.

This exodus can stretch and stress till death
but cannot tear apart our mingled breath.

Ishmeet Johal,
Level III

DIASPORA MAKES US CLAY



Jadyn Westenberg,
Level IV

inner child



Jadyn Westenberg,
Level IV

you are far too wild for me to tame, but i like you that way.
i have never found peace in order.
i remember when i tried, once—i tried
to untangle the vines you'd wrapped
in your hair. you wouldn't hold still
and you lost your temper.
you lost it.
we had to wait all night for the fever to break,
curled beneath the blanket that grandmother knit
years before she passed.

after that, you came around less.
sometimes i worry you're gone for good
but then i will catch a brief glimpse of you:
in the overgrown grasses beneath my bed,
in the wind whistling through my window.
i wish that things could be different.
i wish that time were kinder, that
the road was wide enough for us both.
if i could have it my way, my hair
would have vines, too.

but i am not afraid. i am not afraid.
because i know that
when the last chord has been struck
and it is time for me to journey down to the river
you will be waiting at the bank
and we will wade hand in hand
until the wild flow takes us once more.

Olly Griesbach,
Level V

BE WE SO LO L E

Sometimes I think I understand you; I think I can see through you, and you allow me to see everything.

So I enter, thinking I am welcomed, that we understand each other.

And I get comfortable, so I swim a little closer to your core.

Then I lose track and when I look down again it is dark blue, almost black.

See, my dilemma is, is it that you gave me everything to look at; your complexity, your fears, and your dreams and it overwhelms me so I panic,

Or is it that you never told me the truth since the beginning?

You were warm—sun kissed, a turquoise colour—*the* turquoise colour I forgot I loved, but then you

turned cold, hard to navigate, and unwilling to listen.

Maybe we were never meant to love each other the way I want us to.

I cannot hug you.

Oh forget it but I can.

Because when I hug you I remember to hug myself too.

You keep me cool under the blazing summer sun

And keeps me afloat, drifting to wherever my heart desires.

I am still scared of you, just a little.

Sometimes I don't know if you are laughing or if you are angry.

Your laugh so crisp, so inviting.

I want to jump in and join you, share inside jokes with you only we understand

But I don't speak your language well.

You are nurturing. Provide life and sustain it.

But you also kill; you take many away from their families, misdirecting them farther into unknown

territories.

You know so many secrets; vows of love, deepest desires, and the saddest tales.

You also hold spirits—that sparkle of yours, the reflection from the sun, those are dancing spirits.

The ashes of passionate beings dancing with you make you so beautiful.

I want to learn how to sing for you.

Macey Zhou,
Level III

LOVE IN THE TIME OF COSPLAY



For the last five months, I've been working on my cosplay for Toronto Comicon. I started early because I anticipated that second semester would be academic and extracurricular hell. (It was). What's more, I knew my cosplay would require me to learn skills I did not possess. My crafting competencies have always tended towards sculptural elements. I can build impressive pieces of armour out of foam and thermoplastic, and I can paint them to resemble real metal or carbon fibre or what have you. I know my way around a hardware store, and I know how to make use of unorthodox materials in order to save money.

The creative arts I am not particularly good at include sewing, wig styling and makeup. Naturally, I designed a cosplay that required me to do those things extensively. My work began in November of 2024, in preparation for the event in March of 2025. I scoured Etsy for cheap sewing patterns that I could easily follow and adapt to my plans. I made weekly pilgrimages to the Fabricland on Upper James to acquire discounted fabric ends that I could use for a mockup. (I knew I would mess up over and over again, and I could not afford to waste my final fabric, a finicky stretch vinyl that did not accommodate mistakes). I engineered a wig to stand in a foot-tall beehive without toppling off of my head. I strategized the most effective and least expensive way to paint my head, arms and torso green.

Every second that I was swamped with lab reports or readings, or sitting in lecture wishing it were over, or cramming midterm content into my exhausted brain, I was thinking about cosplay. The weekends were my moment of respite—time that I had set aside for the making of my costume. Sometimes I wonder whether my grades would be better if I had spent those weekends studying. Most of the time I wonder whether I would have survived the winter *without* cosplay.

Comicon has the reputation of an event for basement-dwelling and deodorant-deficient creeps. This is only partially true. The whole truth is that media fans are perhaps introverted and obsessive, but also a group of driven, tech-savvy and artistically skilled individuals with a habit of forming tight-knit communities.

When I think of Comicon, I think about grown men clutching body pillows printed with illustrations of suspiciously young and suggestive anime girls, yes, but I also think about applying my makeup in my good friend Fran's bathroom while we listen to her assigned readings for her classics class on audiotape. I think about bundling up my hair so that I can squish it under a wig cap, and I think about pushing open doors with my hip so that I don't smudge the makeup on my hands. I think about carefully threading a needle through the spandex on Fran's back to stitch her into her costume, and I think about those cosplayers who, despite attending a comic book convention, show up in the bespoke, handmade uniform of a Roman legionary or a character from *Les Mis*.

In the aftermath of Comicon, I limped out of the convention centre, nearly tripping over my feet because the soles I had hot glued onto the bottoms of my boot covers had (predictably) begun to fall off. I plopped myself on the carpet to rip the soles off the rest of the way, and a few other cosplayers stopped and crowded around to make sure I was okay.

I left with Fran and the rest of the crowd, flooding out of the convention centre onto Front Street. We considered taking the subway back to her apartment, to take silly pictures on the train, and decided it wasn't worth the hobbling underground. When we slipped inside our Uber, the driver looked at us blandly in the rearview mirror. "Is there some kind of event going on today?" he asked, realizing that there was something different about this weekend, only now that an X-Man and a green person had entered his car.

We made it back to Fran's apartment around dinner time and collapsed on the furniture to pull off our boots. Cosplayers will tell you that conventions are taxing (something about standing for hours in six-inch heels, inflexible armour and non-porous fabrics), but we had only been at the con for three hours. In that time, we had forgotten to eat or drink and recognized now the hunger curling in our bellies.

"I could fuck up some soup right now," I told Fran. She concurred and recommended her favourite Pho place in the Fashion District.

Fran is someone that I have known since kindergarten and love deeply, but cosplay has only served to deepen our relationship. Friendship is many things, but for me and Fran, I think of degreenifying in her bathroom and scrubbing the tub so it doesn't stain, a belly full of soup once we've both undressed, and someone to guide me back to Union so I don't get lost on Queen.

**Words and Art by Samantha Potts,
Level III**

WORLDS COLLIDED

One afternoon:

Sunny
Sunday
Sweet
Slow

The kind that drowns in the sweet glow
Of the sunlight that pours in through the
windows

A ray of light hits the microwave clock just
right
And suddenly, time freezes

Perfect

From where I sit at the kitchen counter
I can't make out any number
[2:00]?
[8:80]?

But I do spot an orange that's been grazed-
zested, spelling out strange shapes along its
curved body
With patches of orange peel that have been
left behind
To leave this spotted surprise

Its otherworldly appearance cannot hide
It even catches the attention of the sunlight

It looks like a planet

I wonder if life here might taste as sweet as
it looks,
With oceans of sweet citrus

I wonder if the webs of pith that line each
naked slice could be roads
Leading to the city's core
And if its seeds house the planet's stories
and lore
That whisper reminders of its life before
It ended up on my kitchen counter



What does this planet look like?

I manufacture images of a citrus-suburbia
and orange-filtered night life
These images superimpose
Blurring in the heat

Melting together

Squeezed like a pulp
Dripping down the edges of my mind
Into a space that I can no longer reach
I decide to bid goodbye to this orange-
coloured world for the meantime

And give in,
Letting the warmth greet my shoulders
As they helplessly relax,
I lean into my fatigue and slouch,
Resting my cheek on the cool kitchen counter

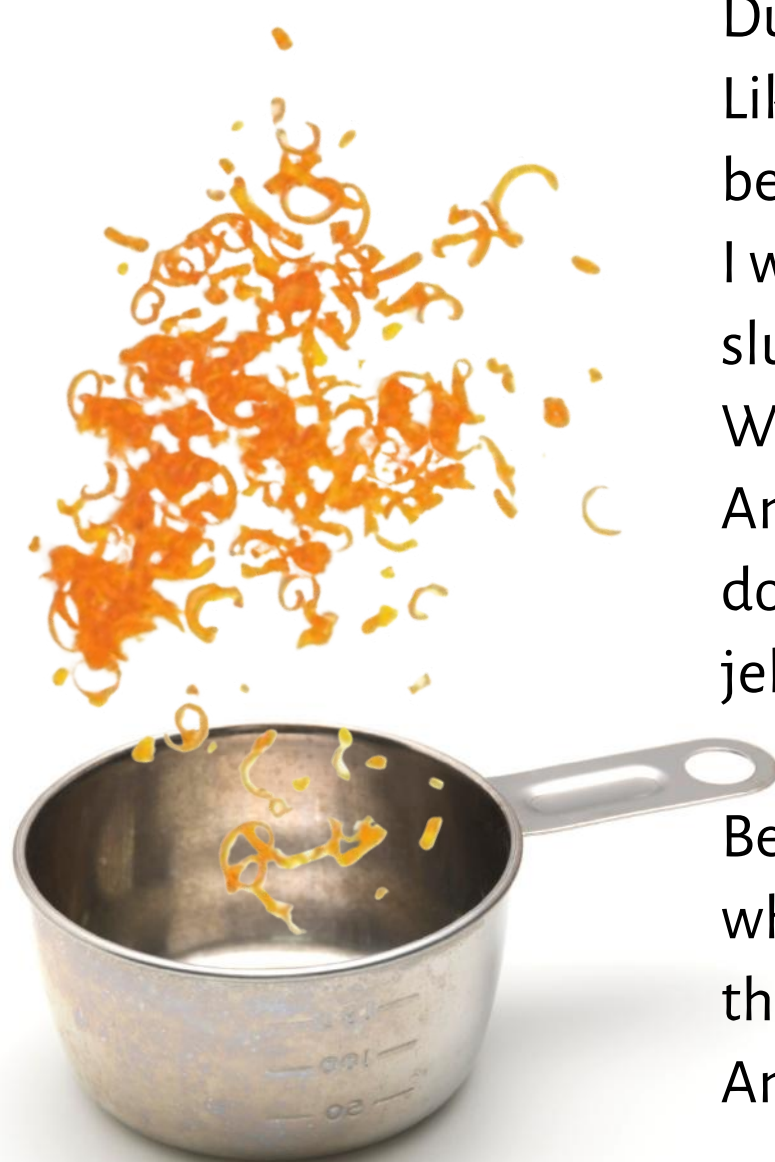
And my Mom comes into frame
From this angle, she's sideways
Defying gravity - moving side to side as she
shakes, sprinkles, pours, cuts, and tosses
ingredients into her pie
She seems to be in a magical world of her
own

I enter her world

My gaze drifts to the rectangular strips of pie
dough that sit on a plate
Dusted in flour
Like beige-coloured toboggans laying in a
bed of snow

I watch as she carefully lifts them from their
slumber
Waking them with the sunlight
And begins weaving them in and out, up and
down, across and over, a river of strawberry
jelly

Between every sweeping gesture of her hand,
when she's reaching for the sugar or rolling
the dough, she catches my watchful eye
And gives me a smile as sweet as her pie



Welcoming me into her world with the magical gleam in her eye

As the sunlight that once bathed her pie floods in closer to
my side of the counter

I decide to invite her into a world of mine;

I tell her about the imagined world of the orange-shaped
planet that sits in front of her

OUR WORLDS COLLIDE

She examines it carefully and picks up its zested rinds
As soft orange flecks begin raining down on her nearly-
assembled pie

In this moment, I realize

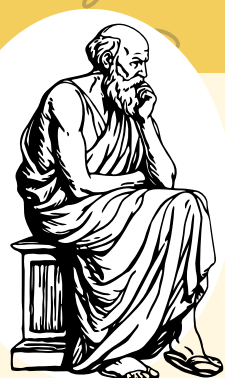
That we have been sharing the same space in time
In a world of our own outside our minds

What's hers is mine

And we've managed to create something else that's sweet
By simply being together
And allowing our own little worlds to meet

Gia Chahal,
Level II

As the year wraps up, so are the fourth- and fifth-years' theses! This Artsci tradition—whose origins trace back to the program's since-discontinued yearbook, *Abstract* (RIP)—lets students share the odd, silly, or ironic parts of their ARTSSCI 4Ao6 & 4Co6 final projects. Where they lack in nuance, these TLDRs (Totally and Legitimately Delivered Reports) abound in a *mélange* of astute self-deprecation and profound enlightenment.

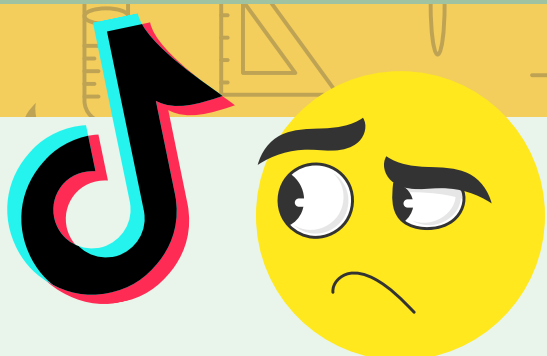


Joshua Watson: Spent way too long pondering what makes us human. Wait... maybe that's what makes us human...

Naia Lee: Everything I've ever noticed (cryptic version).

Luna Quail: Can trade unions ~really~ shape the future of climate change policy, or did I just waste a year trying to solve a global issue with too many words, a lot of caffeine, and much wishful thinking?

Sofia Ferraro: Oppressing kids = bad! Singing songs together = good! The golden rules of the classroom, of course.



Olivia Rowan: Basically tiktok is kinda sus but also has a big impact on public health narratives and you too could get 6 credits just for reading the comments section.

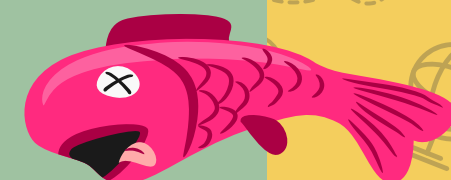
Jayden Miller: Nobody passed you the cyberball. Womp womp... how do you feel about your body rn?

Eve Adams: The girls r fightinggg (the girls are bacteriophages).

Surbhi Rao: I did a small community-engaged project about a big community-engaged project (which was actually multiple small community-engaged projects). I learned you shouldn't exploit people & then ghost them.

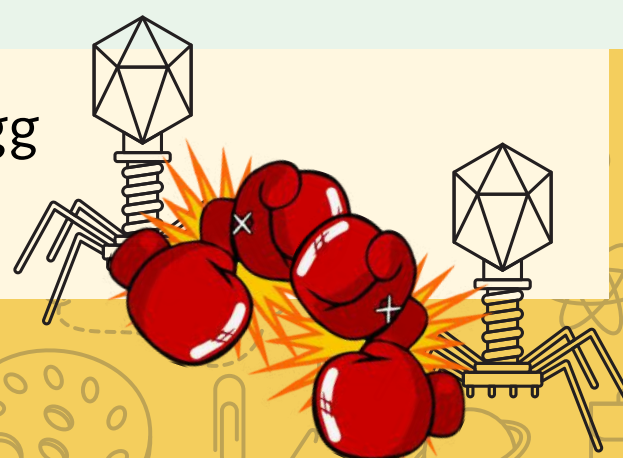
Jessica Tang: I have beef with Barthes, but he's also still my babeygirl <3

Anna Farley: I cut up a bunch of fish and weighed their organs (but don't worry guys they're invasive!!!)



Arthy Pansanathan: How many Brown characters does it take before a South Asian kid stops thinking that they are unworthy? (CRAZY)

Zoe Wind: Gender??? Sports!!! Sports and gender?!?! Bro ball = bad >:(((throwing to) Women = good :))



Jadyn Westenberg,
Level IV

ON ANIMAL FAITH

In the last issue of *The Melange*, Jacob Stotland wrote a wonderful reflective essay with the provocative title, “Have you ever killed a mouse, Dr. Clark?” In this column, Jacob ponders what to do with a mouse in his house, whether to welcome this creature or not. But it was clear from his remarks that he had already answered his own question in the very way that he asked it. “Have you ever killed a mouse, Dr. Clark?” is, I think, Jacob’s way of saying “I cannot and will not kill a mouse.” Language is funny that way.

Jacob invited me to respond in *The Melange*, and so I have . . . and in the best way that I know as a teacher, and that is by telling a story. Jacob’s story is about what it means to fall under the gaze of the non-human animal, to feel its mortal presence in our midst. My story reflects Jacob’s in that it is also about tarrying with the animal other. The context is this: the Talmudic scholar and moral philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas, once wrote a brief recollection of a stray dog named Bobby who befriended him during his days in a Nazi slave-labour camp. Levinas’s friend, Jacques Derrida (who we study in SPT) was a bit suspicious of Levinas’s motives, but promised, in his analysis of Levinas’s text, not to harm him: “I don’t intend to tear into this marvellous hymn to Bobby,” Derrida promises.

To Jacob, and in memory of both Derrida and Levinas, let me then say this:

I am thinking of a cat, a particular cat, the familiar named Zoë, or at least the one Tracy and I named Zoë (for I do not know what she calls herself; neither do I know what her mother called her when she called her, her mother, feral and cautious, of whom we only ever saw fleeting glimpses, the one we named The Burnished One, because of the way in which, with each pregnancy, her calico colours deepened and flared, as if fired in the kiln of life), the fluffy gray one with the large green eyes who holds my hand in her jaws, letting the sharpness of her incisors be felt along the surface of my exposed skin. I feel her feel my skin with her teeth, pressing them into my flesh without drawing blood, feel her inhibit her bite, not *not* bite but rather, bite without, as it were, following through. Remarkably, to her, I am mortal. I suffer and am vulnerable to suffering, a creature, like all creatures, open to having its flesh rent, its life taken. And more, much more: to her I am a creature whose vulnerability can be played with, made a game of. But why do I say that this

address, this comportment, is “remarkable”? Why do I express wonder that there is “transcendence in the animal,” as Levinas says, exclaiming his incredulity that animals are in excess of the sum of their captivations, their instinctual inhibitions? Perhaps what is remarkable is that there is nothing remarkable in that. Hegel had said that the difference between humans and animals is that animals devour and ingest the other, whereas human beings, in addition to devouring and ingesting, can also choose to incorporate the other, “inwardize” or “abstract” it, and in that way create the interior space that we who call ourselves human call the thinking subject. Thinking is then a kind of eating or a taking in without devouring. Zoë refuses to make me food and in that gesture of inhibition she makes a thought of me rather than a meal. My hand amid her pressed incisors is a thought. How strange! So I am thinking of the thoughts of this creature before me, the one in whom I wager a confidence, and who wagers one with me, the other animal who takes with her teeth yet elects not to bite, much less to eat (or eat in a certain bloody or unseemly way), and thus submits herself to a ritual or regulation that in effect creates a world in which we two animals dwell alone, together, at that moment, we two, *vivre ensemble*, playing at biting and being bitten among the meat-eaters, both feline and human. What we are doing together is not nature, is it? But does that make it culture? Perhaps that indeterminacy will be our shared *Umwelt*.¹ I fall under your gaze, Zoë, by yielding my hand to your mouth. What are the terms of that pleasurable agreement or engagement? “I won’t tear into you” (Derrida makes this oddly unpromising promise in his lecture remarks about Levinas’s story of the “little dog,” Bobby, asking for Levinas and for his readers to have faith in his restrained handling of that story), my little cat says to me, or seems to say to me, her tensed jaws on my flesh. Okay, I respond: “Instead, let us play, let us join in a game (perhaps not unlike the “hunting games” of which Levinas speaks in the opening of “Name of a Dog,” or the game with his cat of which Montaigne speaks and that Derrida remembers with fondness) . . . let us join in a game that we instantiate together, you know, the game that we’ve played before (that’s why I don’t reflexively shrink from you in real fear; we’ve done this before, the sign of which is that you understand and expect that there are rules to follow, rule number one being, you will pursue, yes, and bite, yes, after a fashion, but not *avec acharnement*, as Derrida says, i.e. not “fiercely”), the game where you pretend to bite me, and pretend right up to that thrilling threshold where you may no longer be pretending, and I

¹Editor’s note: “Umwelt” is a German word for “environment,” which Dr. Clark uses to situate the communication and signification between himself and Zoë.

pretend to be wary of being bitten, right up to the threshold where I may no longer be pretending too.” Is that what you are saying and thinking Zoë? In this game (if it is a game, a word and a concept that is after all so heavily burdened with anthropocentric assumptions about play being a human prerogative, as Friedrich Schiller claims, not to mention the closely related supposition that we “humans” know what play is and that we know who or what we are when we say that we are playing) . . . in this game, we agree, my little cat and I—rule number two, but who’s counting?—that the roles are not to be reversed. With her I agree that I will neither bite her back nor pretend to do so. I will not put her paw in my mouth and clamp my teeth down on it without drawing blood; I will not play with your mortality while you play with mine. That could in theory be a game that we might play, me taking you with my teeth and all but biting you; that is a game in fact that I’ve seen you, Zoë, the one whose very name means “life,” savour many times with an other of your kind, but with you and with me, things are different, that is not our game; it is the asymmetry and non-reciprocity of the pretending to bite and to be bitten that makes this game *this* game, the one that takes place between you and I and

that in some obscure way is what it is because it is you and because it is me. Before agreeing to these particular terms and, as the condition of the possibility of agreeing to them at all, we will already have agreed that we can agree, that agreement is within our individual and collective competences—that is, we will have undertaken an agreement, never something assured in advance because always open to being torn apart. And so, agreements call for trust. We have and express faith in each other; indeed, we trust in trust, we trust in that moment in which you inhibit your bite, that you bite and will go on biting but without disinhibiting your bite, that trusting can be the basis for a mutuality that I too coarsely and perhaps anxiously, defensively—but anxious about what? Defensive about what?—call “play.” So, then, we both agree and are *in* agreement, i.e., we are creatures who address each other and who discover ourselves, after the fact, dwelling in the midst of the very possibility of address, the wagered and risky space of acquiescence in which we materialize at once as addressees of each other and otherwise than addressees. Is this not *foi d’animal*, “animal faith?” Naming this primordial opening, this archaic clearing, let us not hesitate to use the phrase that Levinas



uses, even if he writes it down for others to read without necessarily knowing all there is to know about it, even if he risks the wager of these strange, necessary, and generative words about risk. And who is to say that a condition of generalized inhibition or reserve or restraint is not, as it were, Zoë's default demeanor, making biting and the tearing of the other's flesh not primarily or "positively" an outward behavioural sign of an assumed inner wildness perpetually waiting to escape but "negatively" the result of her having inhibited her otherwise resting state of inhibition. Biting is then the inhibition of an inhibition. Under these conditions, biting is not simply antithetical to not-biting but instead a special category or expression of taciturnity, a being restrained about restraint—in the same way that forgetfulness isn't necessarily the opposite of remembering but can sometimes be a particular form of remembrance: *repression*, a memory sheltered for sake-keeping, but in the mode of its being forgotten. These repetitions (inhibition of inhibition, taciturnity about taciturnity, etc.) speak to and of an interesting phenomenon: at the point that biting marks the restraint of restraint, the distinction—so normatively laden, the way we often distinguish between, say, a "good" and "bad" dog or cat—between biting and not-biting begins to tremble, analogous to what happens when you realize that walking is a species of (controlled) stumbling, or that flying in orbit is nothing more than falling (forward) to Earth. Now, no doubt the animal that abjures a biting violence still bites, just as the human being who refuses to eat meat still eats and indeed eats anthropophagically. In all rigour, who could say that the feigned bite, the all-but-bite, is not itself a kind of bite? And if a kind of bite, then why not a kind of eating? In the midst of this biting game and indeed in anticipation of it, have I not already given myself over to be eaten, not only because I may yet be eaten and because my not-being-eaten is intelligible only against that ghastly horizon but also because I am dispossessed by the animal that refuses wholly to possess me as, say, meat? When we two animals give each other to eat, but do not eat, when we expose each other's condition of exposure to each other, are we not then still eating, just a little? As if we needed to be reminded, eating and being eaten are hardly reducible to consumption for the same reason that biting flesh is so much more tearing into skin and bones. What to make of the *frisson* of the experience of the animal that decides not to injure the other and thus to address the other and be addressed by the other on that very basis, acceding to the imperative, "Thou shalt not kill," and all that flows irremissibly from it: "thou shalt not make him suffer, which is sometimes worse than death, thou shalt not do him harm, thou shalt not eat him, not even a little bit, etc.." (as Derrida says in "Eating Well"). *We cannot know and should not know in advance what an animal body can do, mine or an other's*. This suspension and this not-knowing is a kind of faith, a faith in the animal that too has faith, as Derrida also says: "the animal, it calls for faith and it has faith; it calls for trust and it trusts." In the game at hand, in the game with your mouth and my hand, we partake of each other in what is nothing less than an animal sacrament.

Words by Dr. David L. Clark,
Department of English and Cultural Studies
Art by Olli Zelek, Level II





SANDCASTLES

Jing Yi Xie,
Level II

These things which we build—we know they must crumble. For some reason, we dream of lands decorated with spiral towers and cathedrals, winding into the clouds high above.

How we dream of such dreams, and why, I do not know. As the sea recedes from view, we ask ourselves whether it is possible. Whether we can weather the force of millions of years, whether the dry sand can mould into a tower of defiance.

Every hour, on that beach, is a consolation—a reprieve from the fields of grass and rough concrete that cover the world, many times over. As the sea marches onwards, we are left in our own time.

Music, tranquil and tepid, can be heard from the grains of sand, as they shiver in the cold bursts of waves. One could close their eyes and feel a thousand worlds whirl on the tips of their fingers.

Opening our eyes, we see a plain of promise. A canvas on which we can build. A place for our castles. A land for dreams, a land of dreamlands, a land to sculpt the fractal fissures of the worlds we leave behind.

Unknown but known is the tide that will meet us once again. In the land that we wish to build, with our own hands in the sands, in the heat and the salt, we forge a plan.

Soaring birds circle our plot, as we sketch the boundaries of our phantom stand. The birds know better than to land on the land of our land of dreams in which our scratches and claws and fangs and teeth seek to render an impertinent permanence, in the hours we have left.

Each tower grows above the last. Reaching higher, pulling more sand from the land into the sky. And we wonder, is this enough? Can we stop? But we look out upon us, to the sea and to the clouds, and see what is to come and how much more must be done.

Inside our head we scream for rest. The sun begins to head west, but the castle is not ready. We heave hot heaps of sand into our buckets, grains of lies pressed into the fictions propped up, masqueraded as monoliths against fate itself.

So much must be done before the tide returns if our castle is to live. We can only build so high; so, we must dig. With those same hands, dirtied and abrasive, we scratch at the land. Flinging specks of worlds from below us—to secure the castle—for the castle.

Destiny beckons as the smell of the sea asserts itself. Leaping forth with its claws, spraying barrage upon barrage on the dry sand. The symphony squeaks in unison, as the wind swirls through the towers. The sea is coming.

Energy flows into our land as the dreams filter through our hands, and the water moves closer to the gates where we stand. It's plain to see—anyone could see—that this was bound from the first step on this desolate ground.

And I wonder what it feels like to crumble like they do. Sandcastles. How each grain, finite in time and labour, sees the world falling towards it all at once. Retaken, reclaimed, revived, rejected. As the waves pound the walls, the gates give way. The towers melt away.

Did we—I mean me—did I even try?

Jacob Stotland,
Level II

RECURRING CHARACTER

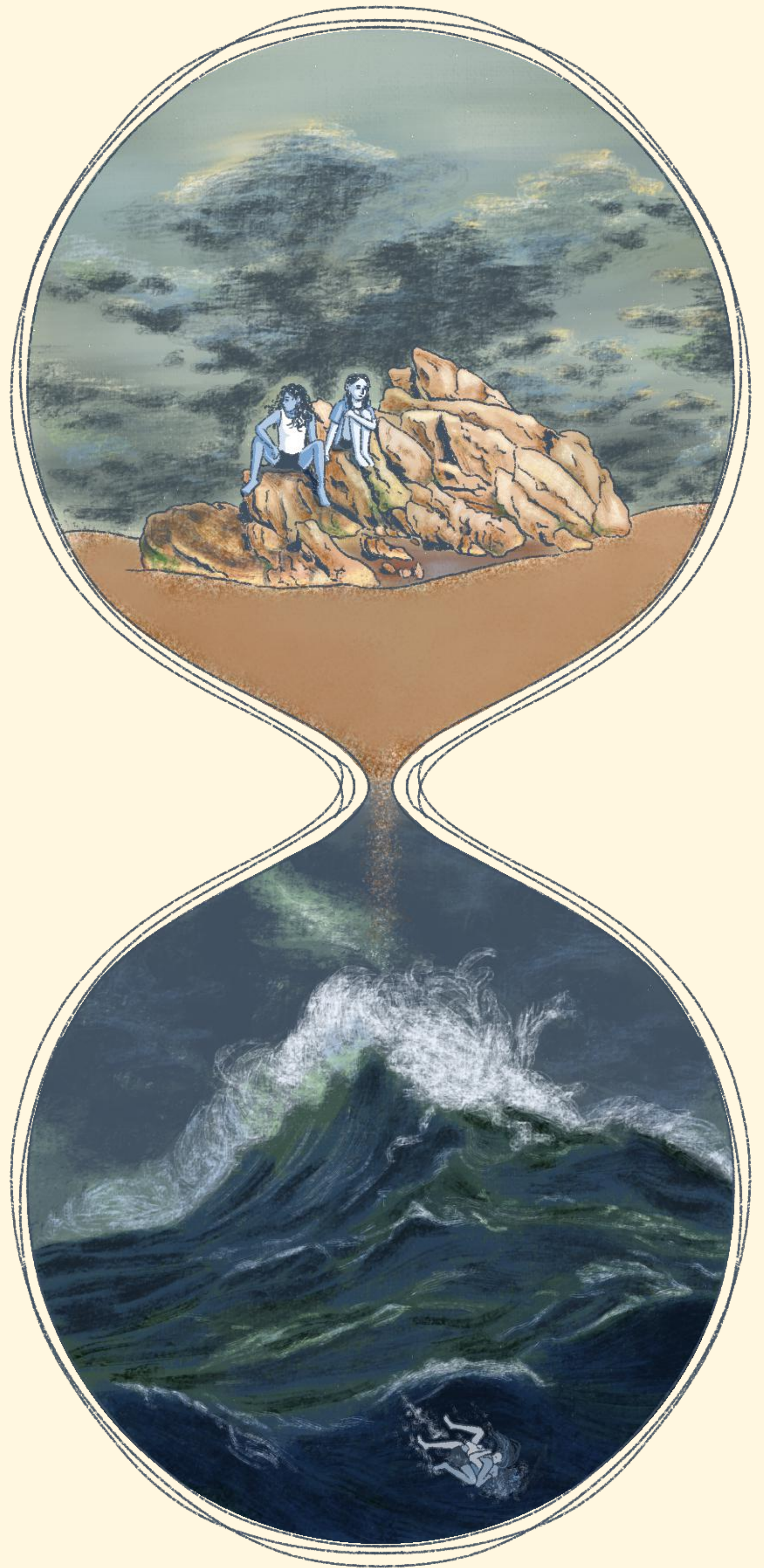
We're perched on jagged rocks, safe from the waves
but too afraid to sit and feel the hurt.
For if we dip our toes like I so crave,
the fervent grains of time might leave a burn.

Soft silence will not save us from the storm
but I can't see a single cloud tonight.
The bottle's cold but your hand, it's so warm
as though I ought to forget all my fright.

But how could I let you engulf me now?
You'd linger in my hair, my socks, my sheets.
To use this lull to make a fleeting vow
seems worse than just putting it out to sea.

So, let's not even try, let's leave it be—
just sit next to each other on the beach.

Words by Mia Saha, Level II
Art by Jadyn Westenberg, Level IV



A [REDACTED] RITUAL

[BUT YOU DON'T KNOW THAT]

You won't see this, and you didn't hear it from me. It probably doesn't matter – I doubt you'll be able to explain what you aren't seeing anyway – but just in case you try, you didn't hear it from me.

Somewhere, sometime, something happened. Something big, something unexpected, something you've never seen before and will never see again. I mean, you're not seeing this at all. But anyway, something happened. We're not quite sure what. It's possible they're not quite sure what. But they did intend to do something, so whatever happened, it's their problem. Not mine. Maybe yours.

They started uncertainly, honestly, as one generally does. No one knows what they're doing when it comes to this stuff. You know, this stuff. They may have danced around in a circle, because that's what they thought should happen. Where they get their ideas, I don't know. There's a lot of false ideas spreading these days. Makes people like them look like fools, but really, it's good for us. Better that no one really knows what's going on on their own. They can try to understand together, but how does that even work? You understand it sort of (some parts), I understand other parts, (sort of) and we collectively understand it all together, without either of us understanding it individually? Yeah, it's a bit unlikely.

Anyway, so they might have danced around in a circle, or maybe a line? Maybe a triangle. Some shape. I do know they danced, but I didn't tell you that. And they had candles, burning bright, or burning dimly. It's all the same anyway when this stuff is involved. You know, this stuff. So the light, and the dancing, and something else. Something else happened too. It always happens in threes. Or maybe that saying's from the wrong side. Maybe it always happens in fours. I don't know what the last thing was, if it was fours. Ask someone else. Or, actually, don't. They don't know you know this. You don't know you know this.

And so they were doing those things, and then suddenly it changed. Something was just not quite the same as it had been. They didn't know what, but they could feel it, and we could too. We can always feel it when this stuff is involved. You know, this stuff.

I can't tell you where they were anymore. I mean, I didn't tell you where they were before. But they were not necessarily in the same place anymore. You know when everything just sort of shimmers – it's glossy, it's glittery, it feels like a glamour? Or maybe it's more real, like the everyday glamour is leaving, you know? No, you don't know, and I hope you don't understand what I'm not telling you. But that's what it was like.

It wasn't just that, though. If they could, they'd tell you what it felt like. I'm sure it was like nothing they'd ever felt before. What has one never felt before? Fire? Maybe it was burning, sparks, fireworks. I don't know. But anyway, they can't tell you. No one's really sure what they remember when it comes to this stuff. You know, this stuff.

So they did something, and the place maybe changed, and they maybe changed. And they might not remember it. They probably can feel that something happened, that's usually how it goes. But I didn't tell you that. Remember, I'm not telling you anything. I'm not telling you that it probably changed something, whatever they did. Whatever they meant to do. Whatever brought them to try this? Most people are smart enough to not mess with irreversible stuff like this. These ones, they were fools, or they had good souls. I'd say it doesn't matter, but it does.

Here's the part that I am really, really not telling you. This is not information you know, okay? Okay. If they were fools, then they've done something terrible. They won't know it, you don't know it, but it will wreak havoc on your world. Maybe it already did – time is finicky when this kind of stuff is involved. But somewhere, sometime, something did happen. And every action has a reaction. The equal and opposite bit, that's nonsense.

So this reaction. That you didn't hear about from me, and you don't know about. If they had good souls... we're saved. We're all saved, you and me and them and everyone. Again, time is finicky, it's not important. Maybe it happened, maybe it's happening, maybe it will happen. It's not something anyone will ever know. It's not the kind of thing you'd notice, you know? No, that's right, you don't know. You didn't even see this. You can't see this, it's not something you're capable of doing. But even still...

Alyssa Abush,
Level III

When does an ending begin? (Westenberg, April 2022)

Don't look back ... [...] Leave everything behind, but keep
the little things with you because you don't want to
forget... (Jennings, March 2022)

Besides, maybe this was all life really was: an endless cycle
of leaving and being left. (Griesbach, January 2023)

Things without space are not really anything at all because with-
out space one thing bleeds into the next until there is no differ-
ence between you and I or here and there and without space we
are bound to get lost somewhere along the way ...
(Macpherson, January 2022)

I guess the world works in mysterious ways ...
(Wohl, January 2023)

Is it like this
In life's other kingdom?
Laughing with friends
At the hour when we
Ought to rest.
(Murgel, April 2022)

There is an associative property to love, by which we can
love small things in order to love things too big for us to
actually grasp. (Sheth, February 2022)



A CENTO FROM FOUR YEARS OF THE MELANGE



Sometimes it seems that to be found is a superficial safe
haven compared to all the depths wherein one can get
lost. (Abush, February 2023)

I am trying hard not to be melodramatic. I just miss my
friends. (Lavrence, November 2023)

You carry my dreams, and I wrap myself around yours [...] I
carry your stories, and you've unearthed mine ...
(Poon, April 2024)

I don't think this makes for good poetry.
(O'Dacre, October 2022)

I realized this is something I do often,
Carefully arranging the words I know how to say around
the ones I really mean. (O'Dacre, April 2023)

There is something to say,
And someone's someone should say it.
(Johnston, December 2021)

Now. (Westenberg, April 2022)

Words and Art by Jadyn Westenberg,
Level IV

AN ARTSCI'S CALENDAR

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
get dressed up for FORMAL!!! oh and Level I calc Crowdmark due 31	APRIL FOOLS LOL NWWS Work/Life Balance event! 1	2	morning yoga  3	SPT essay second deadline (yikes!) Level II Physics Oscars 4	5	National Pajama Day! 6
3CU3 Final Reflection Project due 7	LAST DAY OF CLASSES ??? Level II stats project due + Tech I term paper due 8	GCI Capstone due!!! 9	10	4MB3 Term Paper due 11	 12	touch grass pls 13
14	meal prep! 15	SPT EXAM 16	Level I Indigenous Studies EXAM DUE !!! 17	Good Friday regret life choices (why am i taking physics...) 18	19	Happy Taurus Season!  easter egg hunt @ 1pm 20
cram cram cram cram LEVEL I CALC EXAM 21	LEVEL II PHYSICS EXAM pull all-nighter 22	*panic* LEVEL I ARG EXAM 23	LEVEL II STATS EXAM 24	25	26	sleep for the first time in weeks yay 27
28	DEADLINE TO COMBINE 29	30	rent due :/  1	2	3	Star Wars Day (for all you geeks out there) 4



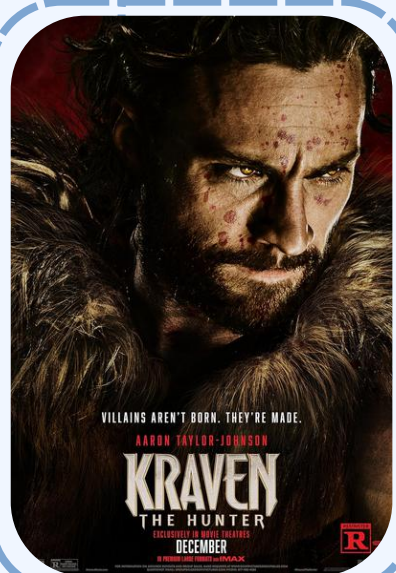
SEE U IN SEPTEMBER!

ASKING ARTSIES

inquire!

Tell us about your favourite piece of media that you enjoyed this year!

Was it a class reading? A novel? A song or a podcast? Maybe a TV show or a movie? We at *The Melange* want to know: what's your favourite piece of media that you consumed this school year? What do you recommend your fellow Artsies to check out this summer?

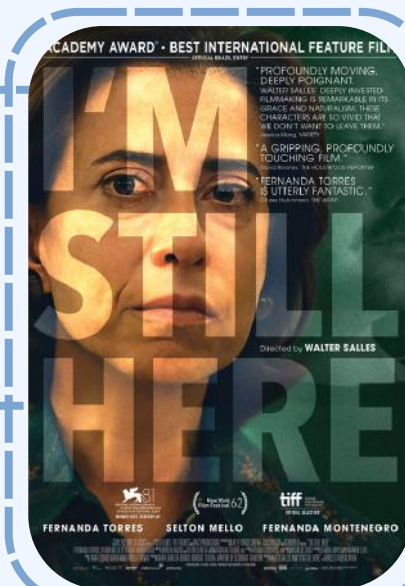


Kraven the Hunter [movie]
"A movie that I will never forget and will never stop talking about"
Sam P, Level III



Twisters [movie]
Hanako S, Level III

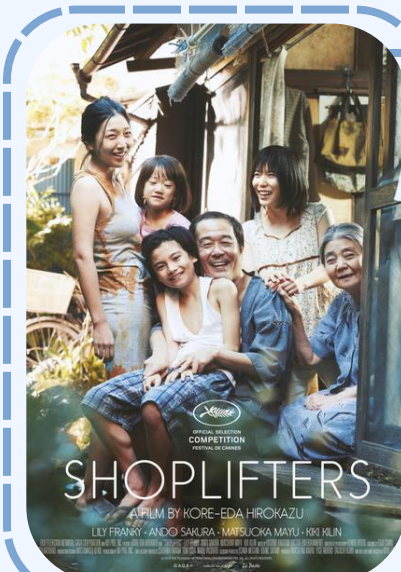
I'm Still Here
(dir. Walter Salles) [movie]
Amanda S, Level III



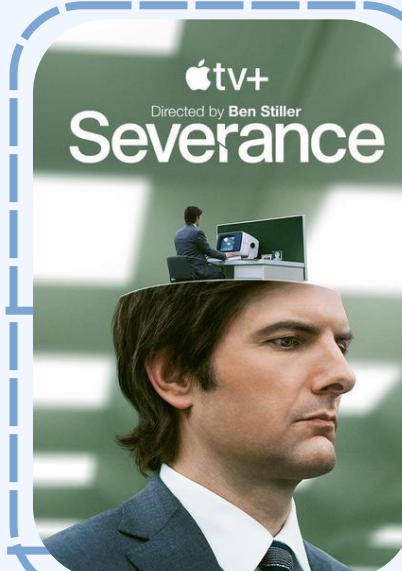
The **Binchtopia** podcast! [podcast]
Elise F, Level III



"Girlllll you know it was **Challengers**!! Or maybe **Conclave**" [movies]
Graeme L, Level III



Shoplifters! [movie]
Vivian V, Level III



Severance [TV show]
Madelyn H, Level III

Bones! [TV show]
"My comfort TV show this year, all about death and murder"
Maya H, Level I



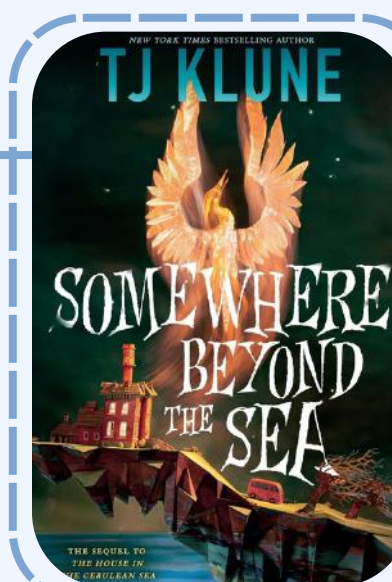
"Angel on a Satellite"
by Magdalena Bay [song]
Helen W, Level III

Challengers [movie]
Claire S, Level II

"Mega Circuit"
by Japanese Breakfast [song]
Ella T, Level III



Somewhere Beyond the Sea
by TJ Klune [book]
"I really read it at the right time, both in my life, and in the world right now, and it provoked a lot of thoughts."
Alyssa A, Level III

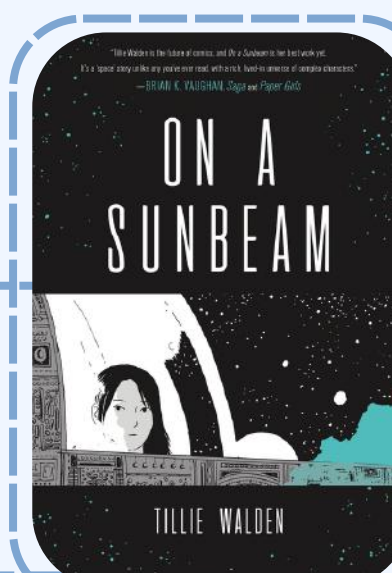


Wicked! [movie]
"I think I'll tryyyyyy defyingggg gravittyyyyy"
Emelia G, Level III



Percy Jackson and the Olympians [TV show]
Sarah G, Level III

On a Sunbeam by Tillie Walden
[graphic novel]
Jadyn W, Level IV



"Anything and everything **Jonathan Bailey** has been in"
[movies, TV shows, podcasts, songs]
Sofia Q, Level III



Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight [movie]
"I saw this film at TIFF and it is so insanely well done, probably the best movie I've ever watched. The main character is seven years old, and they let her be herself on set. So so many scenes look so natural, it's hard to imagine it's not real life. 10/10 would recommend."
Lily, Level I

GOODBYE FROM THE OUTGOING EDITORS

Calling it "outgoing" editors is kind of a misnomer; I generally don't leave my room. But, it's true that I won't be editing for The Melange next year. Which, frankly, is a shame: I've gotten so much joy from editing your pieces over the past two years. As proofreader, I got to dig into a lot more stuff than most of our other editors, and you've never disappointed. Getting to see our regular contributors evolve as writers has genuinely brought me so much joy, more than I could have expected.

I always prescribe a read-aloud, because it's almost always the best way to fix a piece's problems, but I'll give one more piece of advice, from editor to writer: never let anyone tell you writing isn't a skill. Writing is hard. Whatever form it takes. That means it takes time, that you can be bad at it — but you can be good at it, too. Nowadays, I'm surrounded by AI slop and people too scared to actually try writing, to write on their own. Don't be like that. If you have something to write, write it. Someday — perhaps someday soon — you'll look at what you've written and think, no one else could have written this.

Let me know if there's anything else you want me to look over. Otherwise, this looks great.

Stay fresh,

**Luke Fancott,
Level III**

P.S. when you finally get off your ass and finish that novel, let me know, I'll be a beta reader for you. Just lmk.



When I initially applied to be an illustrator for The Melange, I was in first year, living at home and commuting to campus just once a week for our single in-person GCI class. I was desperate for chances to get involved, to tap into the "close-knit community" that the Artsci program promised. So, when the call for applications to this quirky, student-run variety magazine popped up in my inbox, I leapt at the opportunity. I had no idea what I was getting myself into. Looking back at the two years I spent as an illustrator and two more as layout editor, I think that my sense of belonging within Artsci is and always will be inextricably bound to my work in The Melange.

To me, The Melange represents connection. I don't think that it's mere coincidence that the idea for it was first pitched during the summer of 2020—arguably one of the most isolating periods of our 20-something-year-long lifetimes. Here, we have carved out a space for ourselves to share our stories, opinions, and so much emo poetry. Each piece of writing and art invites us to enter into the mind of the creator and experience a moment of connection, where we briefly catch a glimpse of the world through a common lens.

I hope that The Melange can continue to be a source of connection for many years to come. And so, I hope too that, through The Melange, I will always feel inextricably bound to the Artsci community.

All my love,

**Jadyn Westenberg
Level IV**





I Love
ANIME"

-SAMUEL L. JACKSON