ARTS & SCIENCE STUDENT MAGAZINE

# THE IMMERSION

VOLUME 5 NO. 2
DECEMBER 2024

# 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!



VOLUME 5 NO. 2

THE MELANGE



A friendly face on campus, November 2024

## 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.

SCAN FOR SUBMISSION FORM!

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!

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# IN THIS ISSUE...

The Phantom Hunter.....2
The Quixotry of Our Favourite Narcoleptic.....3/4
My Guide to Music: Make Yourself Uncomfortable.....5/6
I can't read anymore.....7/8
Partially Immersed.....9
A Composite Poem from my Summer Writing.....10
In Fields of Rain.....11/12
The Melange Literary Universe.....13-16
Film Class Reviews.....17/18
Bumstead Lives.....19/20
Horoscope.....21/22
Public Transit.....22
drive across the island.....23-25
Stars.....26
Thoughts from the kitchen counter.....27
amnesia.....28
Melange Crossword.....29/30
ASMRtist Recs.....31/32
Lured In.....33/34
Mapping out the Melody: The Immersive Experience of Listening to Music .....35-37
Halfway to Immersion.....38
Asking Artsci.....39
An Artsci's Calendar / Call for Submissions.....40
Melange Crossword Answer Key.....41/42

# DEAR READER,

Can you recall the last time you felt truly immersed in something?

We live in an era where we are constantly overwhelmed with an excess of information and responsibilities, and it can be ever-so-easy to move through our days on autopilot, caught up in the motions of our busy schedules. We measure our experiences in time spent, money earned, or tasks accomplished, paying little attention to that which is unmeasurable and embodied. When we fail to immerse ourselves in our experiences, we rob our intellectual, emotional, and creative selves of opportunities for profound joy and self-understanding.

*Immersion* refers to experiences that pull us in through all our senses. To be immersed is to entirely give ourselves over to our physical or imaginative surroundings, to plunge into the deep waters of our minds and bodies. It is to allow our fears for the future and regrets of the past to recede until all that exists is the present moment. I believe it is in this ephemeral space of utter captivation that we can find the most profound personal fulfillment and self-cultivation.

This issue of The Melange seeks to expand the physical limitations of print media to create something truly immersive. As you explore this wonderful collection of written and visual work from your peers, we invite you to imaginatively engage with each piece through all your senses. Listen to the voices they represent and pay attention to the physical responses they evoke. Allow yourself to be completely and utterly captivated, even for a moment. I promise you won't regret it.

With care,

Olly Griesbach & The Melange Editorial Team



# THE PHANTOM HUNTER

Lost in the snowcapped mountains,
You don't feel inside
Yourself—blurry along the perimeter.
Your cold,
Your hunger is not human,
And it is not yours.

Until now,
You were a foreigner in this land.
The caps tried to expunge you—
You and your tender fluids.
And you comported yourself so:
As a transient.

But a sleeping fawn,
long lashes, pearling breath,
Doesn't stir as
You encroach and
You need.
No wherewithal for self-horror.

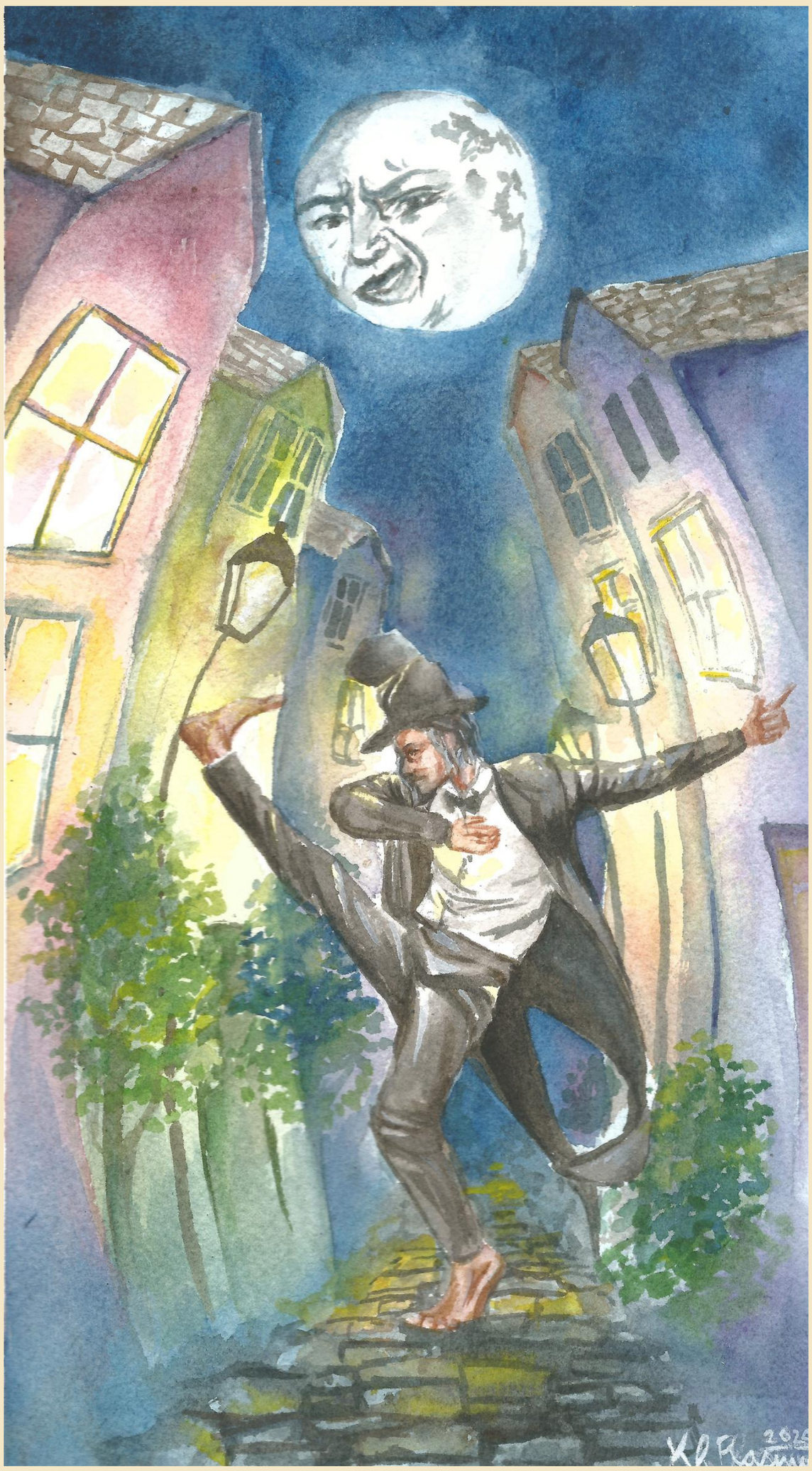
Your skin is boundless and elastic.
The snow has marked you down,
Evanesced your borders.
You are surrounded by you.
Every step,
Abandoned and accepted. You are

Part of the natural
Terror that acts upon this: you,
Yourself—self-slaughter.
You are a quiet thing that is not a thing at all.

The cold: so tenacious, you think it's drained you of blood,
Of nerve and teeth—
Forced instead to swallow whole.

Words by Laura Tang, Level III
Art by Kristen Rasmussen, Level V

# THE QUIXOTRY OF OUR FAVOURITE NARCOLEPTIC



Kristen Rasmussen,
Level V

Now, I don't condone the actions of Bartholomew Barnacle. His persona is better felt than explained, but if I had to put it to words, I would describe him as a slippery fellow. He moves in the shadows, dressed in rags with tattered holes, and smells of rotten flesh and pickled herring. Acrid fumes drip off his damp coat, which can never dry. His socks, if he feels so inclined, climb right up to his knees and then they too give up, for the smell becomes unmanageable.

And every night, this Bartholomew Barnacle slinks around lovely little neighbourhoods, each ornamented with quaint cul-de-sacs and trimmed hedges, and houses painted in cheerful pastels—pinks, greens, and yellows. He skips through lawns, and climbs up trees, though the squirrels, raccoons, and even the skunks all agreed that they would rather him not.

Then, as the moon gracefully walks into view, with its battered face, covered in silver speckles and pimples and spots, Bartholomew Barnacle asks for a dance. He stands up tall, his pointed shoulders moving to where shoulders should be, and he puffs out his chest like a matador of the night. He graciously puts forward his hand to the sky and asks, "A dance?"

But even the moon cannot be that close to Bartholomew Barnacle, and so, he is left to dance alone. He clicks his tongue, striking up a waltz, and wraps his arms out in front of him, gliding through the streets, twirling gracefully, as his rags transform into a dark black suit, with clean crisp creases, a bleach-white shirt, and long tails that whip through the air. He waltzes through the lawns, and trees, and onto fences like an acrobat. He continues doing so until the trees say they are trying to sleep, and since Bartholomew Barnacle respects the trees, he stops; and as he steps from the narrow top of the cracked wooden fences his suit sheds into the black of night, and only his rags remain.

At that moment, Bartholomew Barnacle glances up to see the upstairs window of the Green House—a small quaint house, made of long wooden planks that span the entirety of every side, covered in the most delicious mint green paint, with two floors, and a triangular roof ornamented perfectly with diamond windows—wide open. Little Lilly's window. And what does a grimy slimy icky homunculus of a man do when sweet Little Lilly is fast asleep, lost in her dreams, dancing among the cotton candy clouds? He sneaks into her room, obviously.

And so, Bartholomew Barnacle walks towards the Green House, jumping over the round manicured hedges, tapping, what one could call shoes, against the concrete, filling the air with metronomic slides and whirls that echo throughout the whole neighbourhood. Reaching the house, he looks up at the window, and back down to his feet, and up again, and down again. The window is about the height of a Willowthorn Evergreen on a rainy day in the Vathpatuta desert on a moon of Jupiter, though he couldn't remember which moon exactly.

"Okay, Barny," he says to himself as he stretches out his legs and arms. He bends down low, a deep squat, his knees screeching in E-flat—no, that can't be right; so, he squats again, and his knees produce E-flat again, but this time harmoniously balanced by same flatulence in F-major. Perfect.

With a few inhales, some spastic flails of his arms, and he jumps off the ground, leaving his rags behind, frozen in place like a chrysalis of a now-changed man. For, in those brief moments before he lifts off, he decides that Little Lilly would be his purpose for existing. A few hours went by, it shouldn't have taken this long he thinks, yet again you never know with Willowthorn Evergreens on rainy days in the Vathpatuta desert on mysterious moons of Jupiter. Almost there, almost there, as he threw his hands out before him, grasping the white diamond window frame with his long fingers, each decorated with yellowing nails.

Bartholomew Barnacle, dangling off the side of the Green House of Little Lilly, pokes his head through the small white diamond window. The room is dark, illuminated only slightly by a beam of moonlight that runs through the window and slices the floor in two. As he turns his head to the right, Bartholomew Barnacle stares at the pink little bed covered in a plethora of stuffed animals and fuzzy blankets, but the bed was empty. Where was Little Lilly?

So, craning his neck left, scanning around the room, his eyes settle on two chrome ovals slowly approaching towards him. He notices a faint noise. A low and muted sound, periodic yet alien. The noise becomes louder, and the mysterious ovals move closer, slowly growing larger. Then, as the irregularly shaped ovals move past the streak of moonlight, they morph into a military-grade gas mask on the face of the petite Little Lilly. She stands before him in purple and white polka-dot pajamas, with her blonde hair tied into pigtails, and small pink bows crowning her head. As he stares into the lifeless eyes of Little Lilly, he can't help but notice a long rod-like protrusion that stops just a smidge before his long pointy nose. Then, a curious clicking sound. BANG!

As Bartholomew Barnacle lies on the ground dead, he thinks to himself, perhaps I was a little flat after all.

played
Jacob Stotland,
Level II



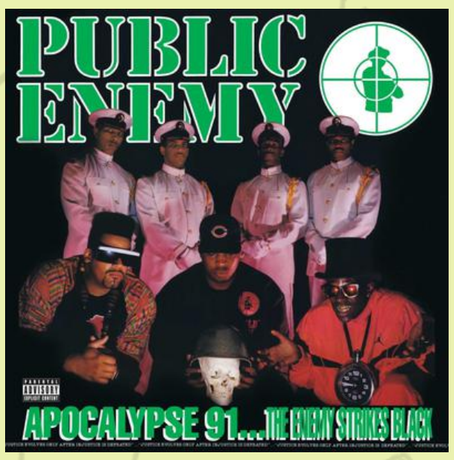
# MY GUIDE TO MUSIC: MAKE YOURSELF UNCOMFORTABLE

Listen to the playlist here!

Kate Linardic,
Level II

What sensation is more visceral than pure discomfort? Whether it's reading a horror story that makes your skin crawl, seeing a worm come out of an apple, or that fight-or-flight response to the sound of fingernails on a chalkboard, we can all think of some experience that makes us deeply, innately uncomfortable. But is that not so fun? It's amazing that something which we are not directly touching can make us have a physical reaction. Evoking these feelings of distress has long been the goal of musicians who make abrasive and unusual music. For some artists, it can even be a way to bring attention to the political or social issues discussed in the lyrics (see "By the Time I Get to Arizona" and "Slaughterhouse"). To strike a balance between the musically cohesive and the sonically disturbing is no easy task, but with this tier list, you can dive headfirst into the world of dissonant music. So, make yourself uncomfortable; this is my guide to abrasive music.

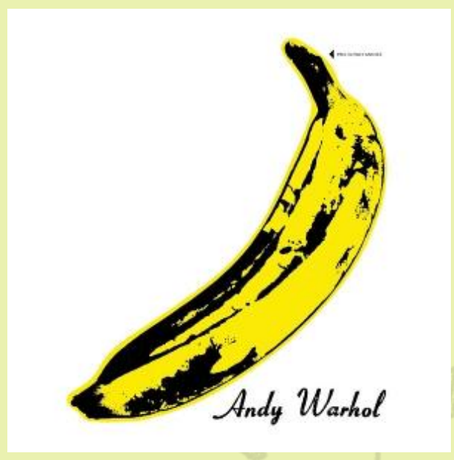
## TIER ONE: OH, YEAH, THAT'S AN UNUSUAL SOUND




**"By the Time I Get to Arizona" by Public Enemy**
***Apocalypse 91...The Enemy Strikes Black***



**"Alice Practice" by Crystal Castles**
***Crystal Castles***




**"Venus in Furs" by The Velvet Underground**
***The Velvet Underground***

On this tier, you will find artists that know how to incorporate a dissonant element to an otherwise digestible and, honestly, catchy song. These artists are Public Enemy, Crystal Castles, and the Velvet Underground. All relatively popular artists in their respective genres, these musicians add a layer of incongruency to their songs that somehow works so well.

"By the Time I Get to Arizona" is an old-school hip hop track that goes outside the box with its dissonant sampling and a highly political message against Arizona's decision to not celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day. And give the song a few minutes, there are fun elements embedded throughout!

"Venus in Furs" is a 1967 rock song that is rebellious in both theme (sadomasochism) and sound (an unusual use of string instruments). For the social context it was released into, it was abrasive in every way.

"Alice Practice" is a take on electronic music that ventures out of the socially acceptable bounds of electronic pop but with a strong sense of melody as well.

Whether it is the shrill, shrieking sounds in "By the Time I Get to Arizona" and "Venus in Furs," or the more intense electronica clash of "Alice Practice," these tracks are a great place to start understanding the value of creating discomfort in music.

# TIER TWO: THIS GAVE ME GOOSE-BUMPS




**“You Know What You Are”**
**by Ministry**
***Land of Rape and Honey***




**“Slaughterhouse”**
**by Chat Pile**
***God’s Country***




**“Full Body Removal”**
**by Doctor Cement**
***Full Body Removal***

On this tier, you start to feel your body’s reactions (or recoils) to the music. The artists you’ll find here are Ministry, Chat Pile, and Doctor Cement. These artists don’t just add dissonance to their music, they bake it into the foundation. This reveals itself in vastly different ways.

“Slaughterhouse” relies heavily on its lyrical content and vocal performance to disturb the listener. The lyrics depict exactly what the title suggests—scenes from an animal slaughterhouse —but not without purpose. The song ends up a scathing and memorable social commentary on the meat industry.

“You Know What You Are” is a repetitive and industrial-style song which embraces noise and thick layers of sound to rattle its listeners. In an odd balancing act, the song also comes across as similar to more agreeable 1980s new wave pop songs.

“Full Body Removal” uses both lyrical and production-layering strategies in a surround-sound attack! The song is strange and unusual even by industrial music standards (and is excellent live, if I might add).

Despite their rough surfaces, there is something appealing about the tracks in this tier that will make them stick in your mind well after listening.

# TIER THREE: IS THIS MUSIC?




**“Pain Dealer”**
**by Psychonaut 4**
***Dipsomania***




**“Only Castles Burning”**
**by Jute Gyte**
***Unus Mundus Patet***




**“Screaming Slave”**
**by Nine Inch Nails**
***Fixed***

Yes, it is! On this tier, the artists have thrown the typical song formula right out the window. Representing the “hardly-music” category are Psychonaut 4, Jute Gyte, and Nine Inch Nails. These tracks are intentional combinations of weird and harsh sound, with distinct musical arrangements (even if said arrangements are hard to hear on the first listen).

“Pain Dealer” employs a vocal style so strange it almost sounds inhuman. The lyrics are no delight either. But on this tier, features like these just make the song even more fascinating to the adventurous listener.

“Only Castles Burning” adds a complexity to its heavy metal core that makes it almost unrecognizable to the metal genre. Not to mention it is also eight minutes long, including one minute of silence in the middle to take a break from its unrelenting bass.

“Screaming Slave” is a monstrous disregard for all of music’s supposed rules. Trent Reznor, the well-regarded creative force behind Nine Inch Nails uses his fame for evil (or good, however you see it) by writing tracks like this to challenge his listeners.

On this tier, you can fully immerse yourself in the abrasion, embracing discomfort and forgetting the rigid boundaries of mainstream music. Have fun!




I can't read anymore, and I bet you can't either. At the start of every new semester, I look over my course outlines with hope—I'm going to do all my readings this year! Or at least most of them. Look at me, I'm getting ahead of the curve. I'm going to put my assignments into my calendar so I know what I need to do and when I need to do it. That way, I'll do my readings, and I'll finally feel like a good student.

But I can't do them. Every year, that dreadful week in November where all my final assignments are due encroaches upon me and all of a sudden, I'm ripping my hair out, googling *Studocu.com* and *SparkNotes* desperately trying to find summaries of my required texts so I can extract some sort of half-coherent and meaningful argument.

Don't get me wrong, I'll get some readings done, but ultimately, it's a fraction of what's actually assigned. And of course, I hate to admit this (if you're a professor and I've ever taken one of your courses I'm deeply sorry), it makes me feel terrible about myself. Why am I such a bad student? But the truth is, it's not wholly my fault, or your fault either.

My high school had a very robust STEM education, but (at least from my experience) lacked in the English department. We read some Shakespearean classics, like *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*, but when I actually think back to that time, *I* never read any of those texts. Rather, my teacher read them aloud to the class and analyzed the important elements in different passages. I might have read one full book throughout my high school career—a fact my mother was shocked and horrified to hear when I was discussing this piece with her.

This phenomenon isn't unique to my experience. Rose Horowitch's recent piece in *The Atlantic* entitled "The Elite College Students Who Can't Read Books" explores this exact phenomenon. Horowitch states that students, (even those at elite U.S. colleges), "struggle to attend to small details while keeping track of the overall plot… they're less able to persist through a challenging text than they used to be."

One aspect of this difficulty can be attributed to the advent of new technology, specifically smartphones and social media. We're simply not used to being *bored* anymore. It's so much easier to open TikTok or Instagram and get that instant gratification from scrolling than to trudge through intricate prose from the 18th century. Even when you know that text is extremely meaningful and insightful, it's simply a more arduous task.

The other side to this story is education reforms. Horowitch notes how changes in education have led to an emphasis on informational texts and standardized tests. These changes were intended to help students make clear arguments and synthesize texts, a skill that is definitely useful especially when it comes to the natural sciences. However, this is also a change that resulted in sacrificing "young people's ability to grapple with long form texts in general" (Antero Garcia, as quoted in Horowitch).

Though Horowitch does not go into detail as to why this shift occurred, I strongly suspect broader shifts in cultural and economic ideology are at play here. Specifically, the shift towards neoliberalism in the late 20th century aligns with the goal of educating youth to be better able to perform on standardized tests. Thus, extracting information from short pieces is prioritized as this is typically the type of assessment found on standardized tests, while letting education using full texts fall to the wayside. As Henry Giroux argues, neoliberal ideology "suggests that compassion, worrying about others or social justice are undesirable values because they get in the way of the market." (Giroux, as cited in França), all of which are skills that are often found and developed through sustained engagement with literary texts.

Horowitch's article focuses on education in the United States, and while emphasis on standardized testing is certainly more prevalent for our Southern neighbors,



I have seen this trend within my own educational experience. We live in a world with an increasing emphasis on *quantifiability*. As teacher and administrator Mike Szolka argues, “If a skill is not easily measured, instructors and district leaders have little incentive to teach it.” (as quoted in Horowitch). This mirrors the broader neoliberal shifts in North American culture. Assessing a student's understanding of a novel from an essay is not as easily quantifiable in the same way that, say, a multiple-choice test on plot points is.

I think we all still can read, it's just that we choose not to. But this choice is not something wholly shaped by the individual. It's important to look at the social context around us to understand why we choose not to read. The fast-paced pressures of modern life demand our attention and steal our time away from sustained engagement in novels. Why would we choose to read when we can spend that time updating our *LinkedIn*, padding our resumes with new clubs, or working on our *Etsy* shop to monetize our hobbies, ultimately cultivating ourselves into our own little capitalist enterprises. More and more we are concerned with ways that we can develop ourselves to become evermore profitable commodities for the workplace.

So, with the theme of immersion in this month's issue of The Melange, I challenge you to try and immerse yourself in a text. There’s not a doubt in my mind that you can all read, but when is the last time you have truly lost yourself in a book? We might not have been in control of how we were educated, but we are in control of how we choose to re-educate ourselves.

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Claire Crawford,
Level III

# PARTIALLY IMMERSED

Achilles was dipped into the Styx River to become invincible, but the exposure of his ankles led to his ultimate death. So then, what was the purpose of dropping a child into an unfamiliar life, then pulling them out and dumping them into new ones? For them to only be partially immersed. Have we really not learned anything from Achilles?

Words by Phuc Tien Nguyen, Level I
Art by Jing Yi Xie, Level II

Some thought immersion is the most efficient method for a child to learn a language. But did they recognize the loneliness the child would feel, when unable to communicate? Did they even understand the price required for efficiency? That when knowledge is built on a non-existent foundation, it will crumble into pieces the moment the wind blows.

Others believed that it is a chance for the child to meet countless people. Expose to the world. But what good would that be, if no time for a genuine connection to be developed? If the goodbye was already in mind, even before the first hello?

Some saw it as a privilege, an advantage, a way into a unique life. They said that the child would learn to adapt, but what they did not say was what the child would be adapted to. Adapt to the unfamiliar social etiquettes. Adapt to being silenced, ignored. Adapt to saying goodbyes. Behind the perfect way, there are so many things that are left unsaid.



# A COMPOSITE POEM FROM MY SUMMER WRITING

You recently told me you wanted grandkids, produced *normally*.
Can you really ~~love~~ someone who you do not accept in their entirety?
And what if the people you live with aren't your family?
Because how long can a caged bird sing, really?

What would it be to live in the house without fear?
To step out of the shower into silence,
to listen closely to the blood roaring in your ears.
Where do we draw the line for political violence?

Falling asleep wishing there was a lock on the door.
At the age of twenty piling clothes high on the floor,
just in case she tries to come in. Against my will,
it takes so much to listen, to the sound of staying still.

It horrifies me. To think of how long I have been here;
how long I will be *here*, kept under a tower of fear.
If I think about it too hard, I will be petrified with the rage I have not conquered,
and I might cry. It feels horrific, knowing what life I have squandered.

My mother has fostered resentment like her fourth son.
Kept caged in a catch-and-release trap, surely one
mouse eats the other. When I get to step out, one day,
I see there is mint growing through the gaps of the gravel in the driveway.

ESQ



# IN FIELDS

There is but mere inches that
separate order from chaos,
As the breathlessness of staring
off the side of a balcony
has me taken back momentarily
before once again the beckoning
of the blue sky besieges my body
as the ever-slight slipping of my
fingertips from the dew soaked,
skin-numbering handrail
Reminds me that where I am is
different from where I drop.

For I watch with dilated eyes as a
drip of dew doubles in size,
Displaying a distorted reflection
of the sky as it grows to realize
the light submerged within heart
Emerges in the eyes of angels as
it unleashes itself from the
handrail,
A single drip drops,
and I watch that drip drop down
through the dazzling daylight
into the drama of the downtown
core,
Splendid as drops begin dripping
all around,
a crescendo of light immersed in
marbles of frigid water
Falling as rain upon the world,
Or perhaps as the world falls
through fields and frames of
frigid fluid,
Referencing itself as receiving
the rain, as though it inclines for
city life,
And not the other way.

My paling hands grip the metal,
and I begin to wonder which
appears more glossy,
As waxy frostbitten flesh
emulates the smoothly welded,
white and warped rods clutched
by fingers curled in the cold.
In time the bars become me, as
though I held the balcony from
flying away as I floated in the
matrix of the rain,

# OF RAIN

Yet all below I hear the scuttle
and the buses,
The mutters and mumbles,
The vibrancy of vicious vocal
vibrations, reverberating from
the volumes of victims nestled in
vessel that is a vision of the
future that views our collective
vector as one without velocity,
but as a vessel receiving the
world,
Nestling in necessity of being
nowhere,
Warmed by weightless words
that uplift a universal umbrella,
For the dropping drips drop
down, so no one looks up.

The cold is overwhelming now,
As the frigidity of a forsaken fall
evening contains not a single
leaf,
No colour is to be found but in
the luminescence of neon signs
signaling the spaces closed from
passage, opposed from
perception, counter to
conversing,
As though the convergence of
paths unaligned would remind
the independent lines that they
are in motion,
But instead convergence is
conflicted with submergence,
subverting the sanctity of
sacrificing solidarity in the name
of immobile sameness and noble
saneness,
And as the streets fill with the
spheres of water that were swept
from the sky without recognition
of the trajectory of time,
The air further freezes,
And I release the railing
letting the world fly by,
As I join the rain,
For no words are left to warm me.

I count these drops,
Trillions of them I let fly by my
vision,
Imagining myself dancing in
their embrace,
Waltzing in the waters that wash
over the world,
Instead of being pelted by the
pouring realization
That if I do not count then I will
fit into this world only as
counterfeit,
A worthless weight weighed
down by a lack of worldly
wisdom,
One so warped in its grasp of
reality that even the iron weld
with which it wraps its fingers
around the railing will fail as it
tears from the wall like a tear
from an eye,
Instant, instinctual, incremental,
insignificant, intimate yet
irreversible,
It exists without action of its own
yet is perceived in the world's
reaction to it,
A crimeless mind criminalized in
a criminal's eyes,
As the primitive lies of a city
preyed upon by uncivil lives,
Lament through laughter,
liberate though languishing, and
lift libation only to the illusion
imagined in the rain.

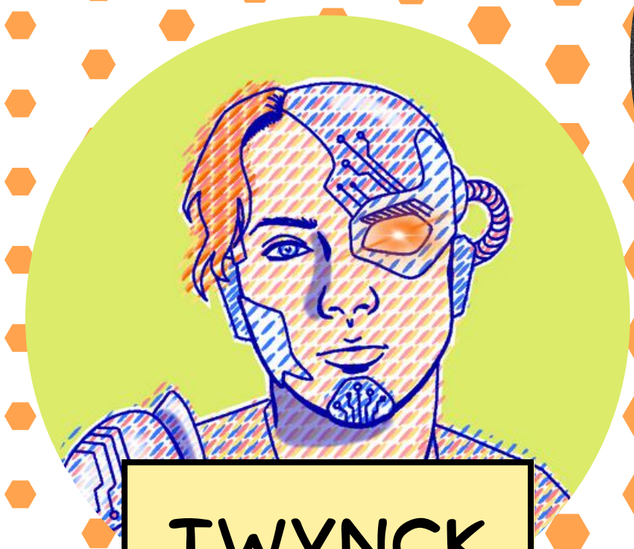
Jack Gillies,
Level III

# THE MÉLANGE LITERARY UNIVERSE

FEATURING...



RICHIE



TWYNCK



OLIVER



ORGO

PLUS, A BRAND-NEW, NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN CHARACTER!

Richie couldn't say with any given certainty, at any given time, where he was. One moment he was comfortably crammed in his cubicle watching stock prices fly across the monitors in front of his face, and the next he was sitting in an unfamiliar conference room.

"What the fuck," said someone who looked like an intern, if interns possessed bionic limbs and did not appear to understand the concept of binary gender expression. Richie looked around—he was back in the goddamn conference room, again. And the intern looked like one he had met the last time Richie had appeared here. The eye-searing orange hair was a dead giveaway.

The conference room itself was nothing like the conference rooms in the firm at which he worked—those rooms were oak-panelled and dark with windows overlooking the trading floor that made you feel like you were no more than a drone in a colony. *This* room was all gleaming white and chrome, and made Richie feel like the unlikely protagonist of a movie about the future. He didn't care much for the future, unless it meant that the Dow was up.

Richie smiled at the intern reassuringly. He was aware that the last time he had accidentally visited the conference room, he had destroyed more than one chair. The intern's bionic arm flashed and produced an unsettling whirring noise.

"What the actual *fuck*," said the intern. They turned to their associate. "Get the professor. Tell her that he's back again."

The intern's associate, who was possibly another intern, rushed out of the conference room. The intern, with orange hair so bright it stung Richie's eyes, remained in the room and crossed their arms vigilantly, surveying Richie from the corner.

"So, what are you planning to do when the internship ends, big guy?" Richie asked.

"Not a guy," said the intern, frowning. "Not an intern, for that matter."

"Ooookay," said Richie. "Me, I used my first placement to network. Truthfully, I wanted to jump ship and end up in risk management, but I had this connect in the marketing department, and my uncle who is in the business told me marketing would be a great item on my resume, and you know how it goes…" He smiled again. The intern must have seen something in Richie's smile that they didn't like and took a small step back.

"Yeah," said the intern, fiddling with some blinking electronic component on their arm. "Just… sit tight until the professor gets here."

Richie shrugged. "No problem, big guy."

Richie waited in silence, drumming his fingers on the strange plastic surface of the table while the intern watched him from the corner of the conference room and grew increasingly agitated. Footsteps sounded outside the door after a few minutes.

"That your boss?" asked Richie.

"For the last time, I am *not* an intern," said the intern.

And then Richie blinked, and he was back in his cubicle. The firm's price had only fallen one point while he was gone.

-

It wasn't just the conference room, anymore. Once, Richie stood up for his break and found himself in a dense forest, the night sky glowing overhead. On another occasion, while he was waiting for the Keurig to heat up, he blinked and opened his eyes to a mile-wide dome above his head, just an inch of glass separating him from the craggy depths of an ocean. A week later, he nodded off during a meeting and awoke with his head resting against the cold, lichen-infested wall of some underground fortress.

He wasn't sleeping well either, and it was clearly affecting his performance. His numbers had dropped far below the other sourcing associates and were displayed prominently in glowing red digits on the trading room wall. The humiliation clawed at him from the inside like an empty stomach, and he had run through three monitors in the last month on account of multiple occasions where he had thrown them across the room. The skin around his mouth felt tight and dry, and the corners of his eyes stung no matter what drops he bought from the drugstore.

The last time it happened, Richie was setting up his presentation boards for a strategic review. He balanced the board on the wire stand and stepped back with his hands on his hips to admire his work. The font he had selected was beautifully balanced, with perfect squared-off serifs on the capital letters. There was even a big green arrow to signify that the firm's profit had gone up in the last quarter. And then he blinked, and the board was gone.

He squeezed his eyes shut again so that he wouldn't have to face what he saw when he opened them. He could be anywhere. Anywhere at all, except it was never a pleasant location in which he ended up. There was always something strange, something unsettling, something hostile.

When he did open his eyes, he saw retina-searing orange. He blinked. The retina-searing orange slowly resolved into a cloud of hair haloing a semi-human head.

"Hey, big guy," said Richie. He could feel the smile spreading across his jaw.

The intern groaned. "Not this guy," they said.

# The Melange Literary Universe

The location in which Richie had appeared was a small clearing in a leafy forest. A fire crackled in the centre of the clearing, and two other figures sat on stumps around it, the orange glow of the flames flickering on their faces. One looked human like Richie, and the other bore similar electronic components to the intern.

"What is my life," said the intern, stalking away from Richie to join their associates at the fire. Richie wondered if maybe he had materialized at some kind of company retreat. Once, his boss had ordered that Richie and the other sourcing associates freeze their asses off for four days on a camping trip. The camping trip hadn't included cyborgs, though.

Richie pasted on his best marketing grin and went to join the intern by the fire. Thinking it impolite to intrude, he loitered outside the circle and laced his hands behind his back, watching from above. The intern didn't seem to like it, and grimaced.

"Oliver," said the intern to the boy who was warming his hands over the fire, "this is the creep that keeps hopping into my dimension."

"Cool," said Oliver, unperturbed. He turned his head sharply and muttered something as if speaking to someone Richie couldn't see. Richie squinted at the empty spot beside Oliver, but saw only a faint shimmering in the air, which might just have been sparks from the fire.

"Creep from the conference room," said the intern. "This is Oliver and…" they trailed off and affected a faintly repulsed face. "This is Orgo." The other kid, the one with cybernetic components like the intern, lifted their head and scowled from beneath a curtain of dark hair. Richie grinned brightly, and Orgo frowned.

"Richie," said Richie. "Junior strategic sourcing associate."

"What does that even mean?" said Oliver. Richie didn't even know where to *begin* with that question.

"Don't get him started," said the intern. "I'm Twynck, by the way. Looks like we're stuck with each other this time."

**Samantha Potts,**
**Level III**

Aoide sighed as she lowered her laurel-laden head to glare at the shimmering set of mirrors in front of her. She had so many lines of lyre music to get through before her concert that evening, and she hadn't even started her pre-show hair and makeup. With so much to do and so little time, Aoide barely even had time to mess with her mirrors for hours on end.

You see, there are a lot of perks that come with being the foremost lyre player in Sparta, besides holding a standing invite to the wildest Bacchanali around. For one, you get an in with some of the big shots up on Mount O., which gets you access to the newest and most up-to-date catoptromancy and scrying methods on the market. Aoide was lucky enough to get her hands on a beautiful set of vanity mirrors, which let her both see, and manipulate, worlds parallel to her own.

At first, she wasn't sure what she was seeing. People who seemed to glow, made of metals and fabrics which her silks and pelts didn't even come *close* to rivaling. More still, people who lived in great towers of stone and moved in and out like the ants of a colony. Others, though, lived lives that were more legible to her, like a boy who seemed blessed to wield magic. And then there was this *girl*.

Different from the rest of the people Aoide observed, this woman walked between the panes of the mirror, changing each world while she was there. Each time she would visit, she would take the hand of someone there, usually old or maybe a child, and lead them off to someplace dark and shadowy. Daily, Aoide would watch this woman, fascinated. In between rehearsals, she would sit down in front of her mirrors, transfixed by this woman's ability to bring death into whatever world she chose.

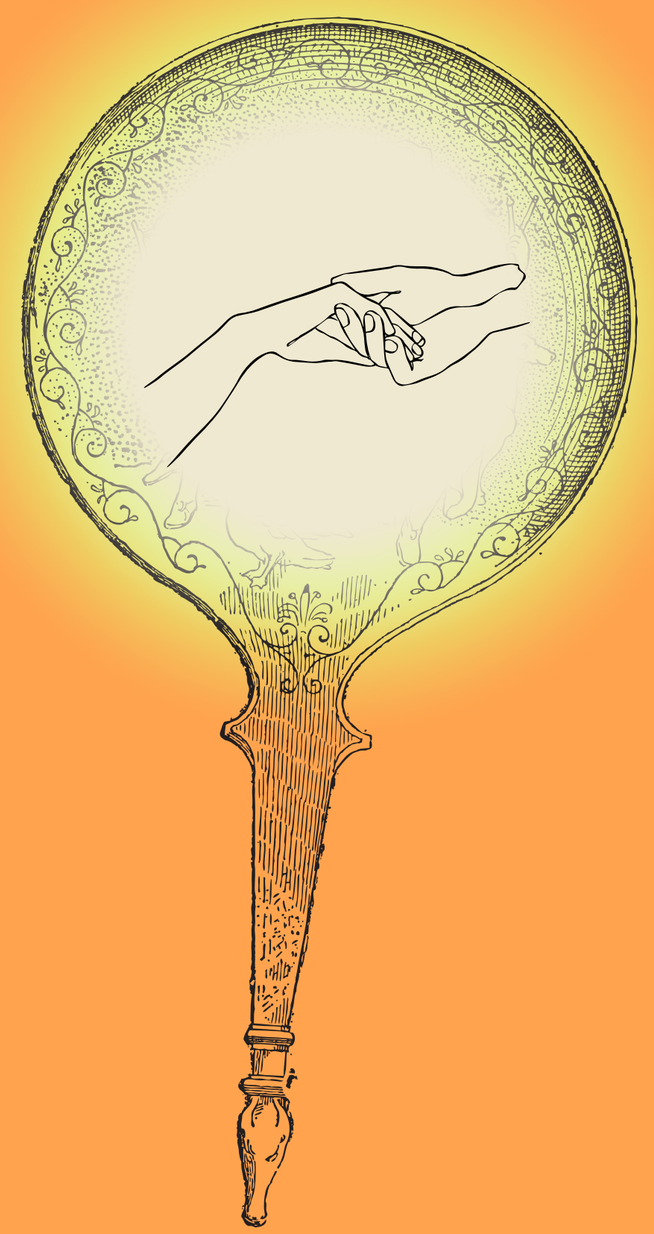
Aoide admired this seeming goddess of death—Death herself, as Aoide began to call her--and wished she too could mold and bend the fates of mortals. And so, Aoide tried to shape the lives of the people in her mirrors. That took some time, with much trial and error. There was one pet that she toyed with while practicing—a shadow of a man in strange synthetic clothing who milled in and out of his concrete tower on the daily. She plucked him from his cubicle and dropped him into various worlds, attempting to force him to see outside of his dreary world of work. Eventually, she managed to guide some of her *Achillean* pets and lump them into the same world. She watched through the mirror as her four favourites sat around a campfire, staring at each-other with confusion, and wrote some verses for tonight's concert. She was thinking about death, and well, Death:

TO WATCH THE WORLDS ACROSS ALL THESE MIRRORS
TO WATCH AND SEE HER MOVE FROM DOOR TO DOOR
SHE HAS NO FEAR OF CAUSING THESE HORRORS
SEE ALL THE BODIES SHE GUIDES TO THE FLOOR

AND SO I SIT BESIDE MY VANITY
DESPAIR JUST RESTS, FESTERS ALL THROUGH MY SOUL
WHILE WAITING, WATCHING ALL MY LOVE TO BE
I FEAR WE WON'T MEET TILL WE'RE AT THE SHOAL

FOOT FIRST IN LETHE AS YOU'LL HAVE LED ME THERE
I WORRY WHEN WITH YOU, I'LL HAVE LOST BREATH
WHY WON'T YOU HOLD OUT TO THIS HAND TO BEAR
OH HOW I WANT TO WALK ALONGSIDE DEATH

AND NOW THAT I KNOW I ADMIRE YOU SO
I'LL WILLINGLY DIE, WALK ON THROUGH THE THROE



**Graeme Lavrence,**
**Level III**

## WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IN THE MLU?

We hope to revisit these *Melange Literary Universe (MLU)* origin stories and, in the coming issues, continue to expand on them, develop their characters, and reveal them to you, the reader. Additionally, the writers of The Melange want to work **with you** to explore a collective universe which encapsulates the Arts & Science experience.

Consider these three stories and their characters as part of the same literary universe, one that is now open to you to explore. Feel free to take any of the characters introduced, conceive new ones, make them meet, make them fight, make them kiss, kill them off, or allow them some (direly needed) respite. Be as tropey as you like. Mix genres. Explore your self-indulgent fantasies. And if you ever have an idea for what comes next, let us know; we're here to make your wishes come to fruition. Our editors have started this universe, but let it be made yours.

# FILM CLASS REVIEWS

*What's more immersive than cinema?*

*Imagine: you are in a freezing cold lecture hall in CNH basement. It has been a long Thursday. You grab a granola bar from the back of the class (courtesy of Dr. Marquis) and sit down to watch a cult-classic film, selected by your peers. You are in ARTSSCI 4MN1.*

Over the course of the last three months, I have spent five of my Thursday evenings watching films and discussing genre and politics. While this module has not made a film critic out of me, it has allowed me to dedicate time to the contemplation of film. In honour of the final screening, I am reflecting on the movies watched and discussions had during ARTSSCI 4MN1 and attempting to make you feel like you were really there, shivering alongside us.

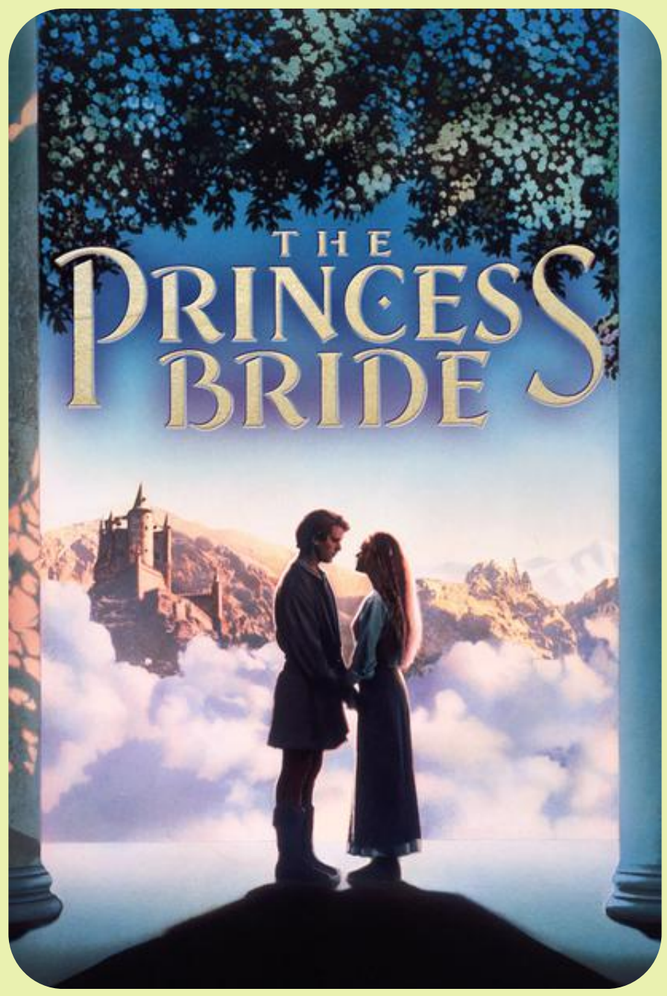
## FILM #1: THE PRINCESS BRIDE (1987)

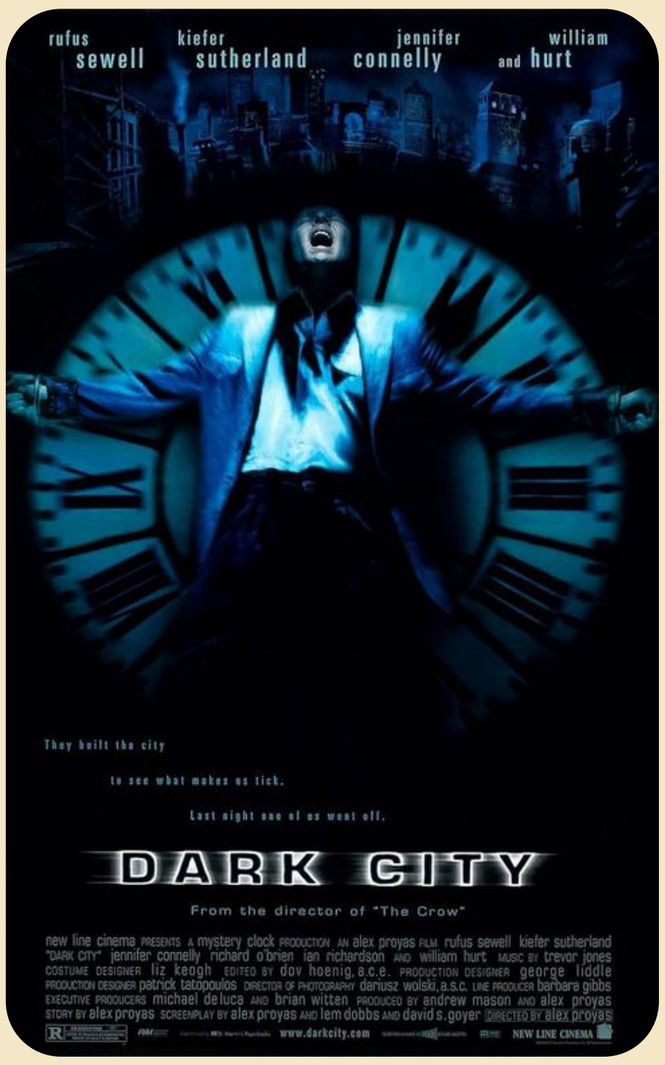
***Genre: Fairytale***

*Personal experience while watching:* Going into this movie, I had vague recollections of a masked man, a torture device, and Inigo Montoya, but no memory of the actual plot. Turns out that these components encompass the film perfectly!

*Key points of discussion:*

- The role of Buttercup, the central female character, was well debated, as she is firmly past the threshold of being helpless within the film's narrative. However, her strong-will quickly crumbles in the presence of Westley, her knight in shining armor. Well-beloved was the fire swamp scene, where she was perfectly capable of defending her love from harm, yet chose to do nothing!
- Another topic was the use of satire within this film, as it seemed very conscious of its genre, making use of classic fairytale tropes throughout but in a way that screamed irony.



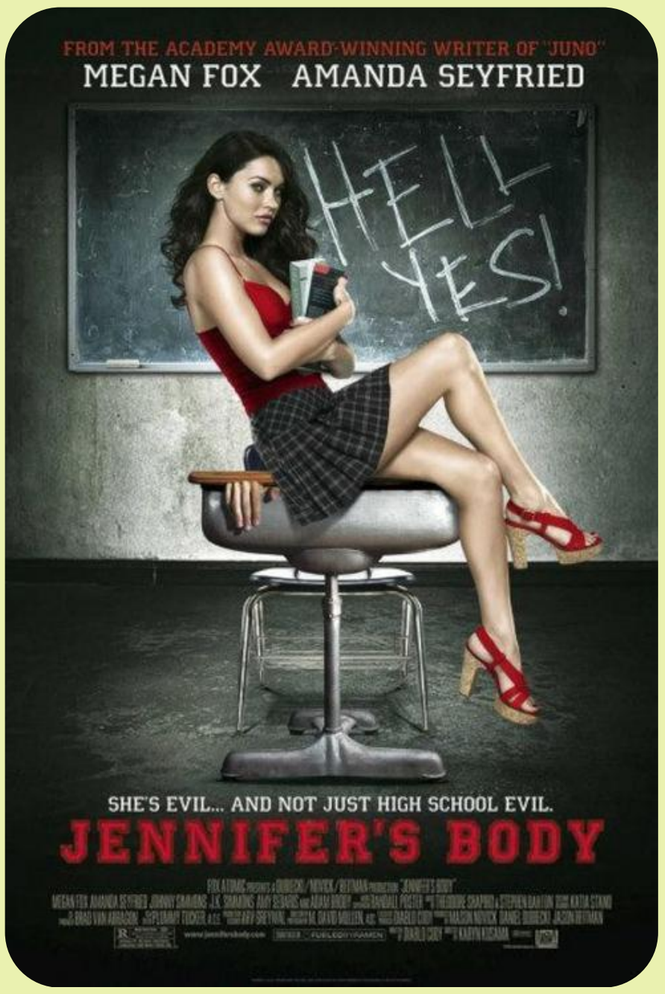

## FILM #2: DARK CITY (1998)

***Genre: Sci-fi***

*Personal experience while watching:* Walking into this screening late meant that I spent the first half hour of the movie thinking I was watching some kind of prototype Marvel film. Only after googling one of the actors did I realize that this movie was not based on any comic book franchise.

*Key points of discussion:*

- The ending of the movie was the main topic of this discussion. After the protagonist triumphs over the alien villains, exploding them with the powers of his mind, he takes control of the simulation he lives in and finds happiness on the beach; an ending which benefits him and only him. His neighbors, the rest of the *Dark City* residents, are left living their lives in the simulation created by the aforementioned aliens (did I mention this movie is kind of strange). We spent a long time debating the implications on the rest of the narrative. Was this ending hopeful? Disappointing? Did it ruin the film's critique of capitalism? Was it neoliberal??? The results of this discussion were inconclusive.
- We also spoke about this movie's plot being born out of society's fears regarding Y2K. Technology's role in contributing to the aliens' villainy played into a technophobe's perspective, relating the end of the world as we know it to an advancement of technology.




## FILM #3: JENNIFER'S BODY (2009)

***Genre: Horror / Comedy***

*Personal experience while watching:* I now have a note with the words purity culture, lesbianism, and Christianity sitting somewhere in my bag, which were my immediate reactions to the end of this movie.

*Key topics of discussion:*

- The sleazy man debate continued for most of this film's discussion session, with our class unable to decide whether or not the men killed in this movie were in fact morally corrupt. Could we consider Jennifer's actions through the lens of vigilantism, in the same vein of more recent films like *Promising Young Woman*? I argue: no.
- Also discussed was the movie's sidelining of male characters, as all of us struggled to remember the name of Needy's boyfriend when the time for discussion came. Truly, this movie puts the relationship dynamics of women at center stage, focusing exclusively on Needy and Jennifer throughout the film.
- Honestly, the discussion of this film could have gone on for hours, with this film having too many layers to unpack in one sitting. With all the imagery around Christianity, gay representation, and critiques of purity culture, we barely even scratched the surface of this film during our half-hour talk.

## FILM #4: THE LEGO MOVIE (2014)

***Genre: Children's Animated***

*Personal experience while watching:* Considering I helped facilitate this screening, I can confidently say that watching The Lego Movie twice in one week was too many times to watch The Lego Movie in one week.

*Key Topics of discussion:*

- Key to our discussion was the idea that this movie's criticisms of capitalism were weakened by it being produced by the LEGO company, a corporation looking to boost sales. President Business, a CEO (and the ruler of the world), being the villain of the movie seemed to be a critique of modern politics, until the third act when the plot devolved into an exploration of father-son dynamics of course. Throughout our discussion, we considered the role that LEGO executives might have played in the production process, and noted their possible involvement in this derailment of the narrative's critiques.
- The role of fandom was similarly well-discussed, with a focus on how this movie's animation style was inspired by stop-motion films created by fans of LEGO; clips from which were played during the face-off between Emmett and President Business. This morphed into the classic debate: is animation a genre or is it a medium?




Maya Hayworth,
Level I



# BUMSTEAD LIVES

*Inspired by Dark City (1998), which was screened during ARTSSCI 4MN1: Film, Genre, Politics.*

Frank Bumstead drew his last breath and saw the city for the first time. The shockwave that had sent him careening off the edge of town and into the arctic vacuum of outer space shivered through his helpless body and rotated him like a gyroscope so that he was forced to look at it.

From his vantage point, the city was nothing more or less than a sluggishly rotating black disk with grimy concrete edifices jutting from its face and coils of machinery festering at its underside. It was just as unappealing from afar as life had been on its surface. In fact, it was almost a relief to be free of it and slowly freezing in the endless night sky. There would be no more Strangers. No more syringes that bestowed synthetic memories. No more crazy bastards manipulating reality with their minds.

His lungs seized suddenly, and he knew it was the end.

———

Frank Bumstead awoke with hot grains of sand sliding between his fingers and a glaring pain behind his temple. He cracked open an eye. It *hurt*.

He pushed himself up from his sprawl in the sand and met the gaze of a young man who knelt across from him. His eyes were huge and round, and a long coat that was too dark and too woolen to be worn on a beach hung from his shoulders.

“Rise and shine, Inspector,” he said.

Bumstead rubbed at his eyes. The grains of sand he managed to rub into them hurt almost as much as the sunlight that assaulted his retinas. *Sunlight*. That was something he hadn’t seen before.

“Murdoch,” said Bumstead, grimacing. It looked like he wasn’t free of crazy bastards after all. Murdoch affected a strange, wobbly smile. “Did we book them?” Bumstead asked.

“Book them?” said Murdoch. He brushed a few grains of sand from his coat. “You didn’t do very much booking. Well, you tried. And then you died.” He shrugged sheepishly, which Bumstead didn’t quite believe. “Sorry about that. The Strangers are gone, though.”

“Evidently not,” said Bumstead, picking himself up from the sand. The scenery resolved around him once he regained the wherewithal to actually take it in. Gentle waves lapped at the end of the beach. The horizon was interrupted only by a lighthouse on a rocky promontory.

“They’re gone,” Murdoch insisted, unfolding from his kneel. “I promise you that.” His coat swirled around his knees, lending his character a degree of mystery that did not belong on the shore of such a pretty beach. That sort of mystery belonged in the before—that dim and sodden life that felt like a nightmare. In fact, everything about Murdoch screamed before. Those bulging eyes. That thin voice. He was like one of those Strangers. Pale and odd and containing an abundance of secrets that Bumstead couldn't pretend to know.

“I meant, evidently I didn’t die,” said Bumstead.

“Ha ha,” said Murdoch, hands crammed in his pockets. His shoulders were perpetually hunched. “You sure did, buddy. Luckily, I’m no common criminal.” He wiggled his fingers and the air around his hand pulsed.

Bumstead picked himself off the sand and shielded his eyes from the setting sun, massaging his screaming temples. Back in the saddle, it looked like.

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Bumstead remembered everything up until the moment he had died.

He remembered the city, the dank, dark wetness of it. He remembered the traffic that surged at all hours of the night like sluggish blood in congested veins. He remembered the smoggy air and the algae-infested canals and the streetlight that shone like puddles of mercury on the asphalt. He remembered waking up in his office and ignoring the growing stack of reports on the corner of his desk in favour of toying with his accordion. He remembered abandoning the accordion after only a few shuddering notes and burying himself in the case open in front of him, scrawled notes and fingerprint analyses and grainy printouts of mutilated torsos swirling in front of his eyes.

He remembered when Emma Murdoch had arrived at the station, and he had almost turned her away. Really, she had started the whole thing. It was her, legs crossed in the chair opposite his desk, twisting her wedding band like she was unaccustomed to wearing it, that had precipitated his death. He had told her that her husband had murdered six women, and she hadn't believed him. His instincts had told him to follow her to her place of work, an old lounge with smoky jazz and a well-stocked bar, so he had. And then, in his car with the rain drizzling down on the windshield, his instincts had suggested that he tell her that he could hardly remember his own past, and she had sat there silently and listened to him.

It was her quiet and unshakable faith in John Murdoch that had inspired Bumstead to follow Murdoch to the edge of the city where he had discovered his memories were not his own, that they had been injected into his prefrontal cortex by sickly creatures called the Strangers, that the city was not a city but an elaborate experiment, that he was less of an inspector and more of a shadow government's lab rat.

And then he had died. He didn't remember anything after that.

---

He met Murdoch at the diner that Murdoch had recently installed. "Cheers," he murmured, lifting his mug in Murdoch's direction. Murdoch lifted his own and drank. Coffee had taken on a new dimension for Bumstead, who had only ever consumed it to prevent himself from passing out on top of an evidence crate. In the daylight, sitting across from a friend, coffee lacked its usual acrid sting.

"How's Emma?" he asked. He figured he was better off inquiring after Murdoch's wife than divulging what he was *really* thinking about—his work at the station, which consisted of cleaning up the mess the Strangers had left. His heart wasn't in the job when he knew the poor mooks he was chasing after were no real criminals, just the unlucky subjects of the Strangers' experiments with memory and personhood.

"Anna," said Murdoch. "Her name is Anna, now." Bumstead watched his eyes flicker towards the counter, behind which workers were busy fussing with an old drip machine. His fingers twitched, and the air shivered, and the coffee machine morphed into a monstrosity of chrome and plastic. Bumstead averted his gaze. Murdoch couldn't seem to help himself. He exercised his strange ability like it was an extra limb, caressing every object he encountered.

"It's hard to remember," said Bumstead, quietly. That was the scary thing, admitting that his memory, even now that it belonged to him alone, was not infallible. Sometimes he awoke from terrible dreams of the before, muttering the names of people and places he couldn't remember. In those moments, the cold light of dawn offered no more certainty than the darkness had.

Murdoch hummed his agreement. "Funny how you can keep loving someone you hardly recognize," he said. "Did you know she can't carry a tune to save her life? She used to be a singer."

Bumstead sipped from his mug and recalled Emma's song in the lounge, the second time he had met her. Her voice was warm and airy, but her lips barely moved while she sang, and her eyes flicked lifelessly over the lounge's patrons stirring martinis and ignoring her. Emma was the best of the three of them, and she wasn't even Emma anymore.

"Funny," was all he could say.

**Samantha Potts,**
**Level III**



# HOROSCOPE

Emelia and Sofia have taken the liberty of reading your monthly horoscope directly from the stars. They have journeyed far and wide to ensure the information they present to you is 100% accurate. They have also graciously provided you with a celebrity match for the month who will help guide you through these chaotic times. Do not forget that while you may think these perfectly faultless predictions incorrect, you cannot escape fate.

## CAPRICORN
**(Dec 22–Jan 19)**

Capricorns, your birth month has passed, but don't let that dim your sparkle. There will be plenty of opportunities to shine this semester at ArtSci Formal and Kaffeehaus. Your singing isn't as bad as you think it is!

Celebrity Match: Jack Schlossberg

## AQUARIUS
**(Jan 20–Feb 18)**

New semester, new you, Aquarius! Maybe the first GCI Capstone took you down, but now's the time for your academic redemption arc. Remember, you are strong and brave.

Celebrity Match: Carly Rae Jepsen

## PISCES
**(Feb 19–Mar 20)**

Hey Pisces! Get ready to ring in the new year with the Tri-Sci Kaffeehaus! Channel the performer we know is inside you to show up the HealthScis. Don't be intimidated! Remember– their tests are crosswords.

Celebrity Match: Charli XCX

## ARIES
**(Mar 21–Apr 19)**

You don't have a thesis adviser yet, Aries? Don't worry, you still have two more weeks before you will be taking that 5th year! We believe in you <3

Celebrity Match: Olivia Rodrigo

## TAURUS
**(Apr 20–May 20)**

Taurus, now is the time to get going on those New Year's resolutions! Join a club, go to the gym, or maybe start working on those grad school applications. If all else fails, you can always come back to the warm embrace of ArtSci for a 5th year.

Celebrity Match: Florence Pugh

## GEMINI
**(May 21–Jun 20)**

As the Gemini twins, you may feel pulled between two different facets of yourself (the arts and the sciences, perhaps). Geminis, now is your chance to take a stand and think about what is truly important to you. Although, don't forget that you do want to have a job in the future...

Celebrity Match: Jonathan Bailey

## CANCER
**(Jun 21–Jul 22)**

Save your tears for another MONTH, Cancer. These next few weeks have exciting events in store for you. Think viral TikToks; think meeting a celebrity (Julia Fox?); think getting 100% on your upcoming Calculus test...

Celebrity Match: Julia Fox

## LEO
**(Jul 23 –Aug 22)**

How's it hanging, Leos? We know the winter months may be getting you down but now is your chance to show off your ferocious energy and join the squash team (please, our team really needs more players). Rawr!

Celebrity Match: Kathryn Hahn

## VIRGO
**(Aug 23–Sep 22)**

Dear Virgo, we are so very proud of you for surviving your Fall semester finals. However, remember that some people actually have real struggles. Stay true to yourself.

Celebrity Match: Michael Cera

## LIBRA
**(Sep 23–Oct 22)**

Oh Libras, are you participating in this year's ArtSci musical? If yes, you are a STAR! If not, when will you realize it's your time to share your talents with the world? You know what they say about wasted potential...

Celebrity Match: Cynthia Erivo

## SCORPIO
**(Oct 23–Nov 21)**

Scorpio, Scorpio, Scorpio, do not deny the Marauder lurking within you. Don't be afraid to show us your talons... you may need them sometime soon.

Celebrity Match: Rachel Sennott

## SAGITTARIUS
**(Nov 22–Dec 21)**

Sagittarius, we know you love to be a little silly and quirky sometimes. However, now is the time to get serious. Get in that grindset or before you know it, your SPT paper's deadline will be days away.

Celebrity Match: Bowen Yang

Emelia Grossman, Level III
& Sofia Quon, Level III

# PUBLIC TRANSIT



28 strangers in a metal tube:

I don't know them,

They don't know me,

But here we are with places to be.

Some people get on,

Some people get off.

The man over there seems to have a cough.

Now there are 29 strangers in a metal tube.

I won't know them,

They won't know me,

But we all have places to be.

Words and Art by Error

# drive across the island

It's past midnight on the west coast of Newfoundland, heading to Deer Lake, and the thundering and continuous chorus of rain splattering against the window prevents me from catching a wink of sleep. It's pitch dark outside, blacker than squid ink. I watch as the all-consuming darkness creeps in past the corners of the high-beams as we drive down the unkept highway. The rain briefly starts to ease but it's too late. With the summer-sun long-buried beneath the horizon, I'm informed it's time to start looking out for the moose.

I keep my eyes peeled as we carry on down the road. The once crowded motorway is seemingly empty, as if every car slipped away beyond my consciousness.

"Check the distance now," my mom says in a nervous voice, as my sibling's squabble in the background. I nod and pull out my phone. The bright blue glow fills the front passenger seat, and I watch as a "NO SERVICE" notice appears at the upper left-hand corner of my screen.

"I don't have any bars," I respond, slightly peeved.

"Try again, it's your GPS not your data," she says, this time with annoyance underpinning her voice. "Try with my phone." I do both, but neither works.

"I must be in a dead zone," she says. Something that sounds much more ominous than it should be.

We fall silent, and I keep staring ahead with my eyes darting side to side, watching the edges of the forest for any signs of movement. I think I see something in the corner of my vision, and my heart rate jumps. In a second, it's gone. Was it just a trick of the mind? A tree or a moose? Or was it something else entirely?

An hour passes and we feel no closer to our destination. I haven't seen any cars for a while now, which isn't too weird considering the time. Anyone with any sense wouldn't be out this late anyways. We can't find a working radio station for a while. I rotate through all the available channels with no change. Suddenly, in glorious ex-machina fashion comes Q with Tom Power. We catch him halfway through his interview with Lucy Dacus. It's a relief. Providing momentary escape from this hellish drive. As it ducks in and out with radio static, they talk of her new album, play snippets of some songs. Halfway through Night Shift the radio goes dark again, and we're left alone.

"How far are we?" from my mom, cutting through the endless white noise.

"I'll check," I respond. "But it's not loading." Moving at a glacial pace, the Google Maps route finally comes alive. "Still an hour and a half now," I inform her.

"Really?" she responds, incredulous. "Refresh the app and try again." A few minutes later I come up with the same answer.

In synchrony with the darkness in the sky and the distance we've traveled, more and more small, white objects have started to appear on the road. Initially I wasn't sure what they were. But now, they seem to be moving, hopping. One might say frogs, but there's something indescribably skewed, something off. An unfortunate few appear to be crushed by our burning rubber, regardless of their species or nature.

We carry on, with tall conifers looming ahead, above, and all around, as they have been since we left town. Rough bark coats their trunks as they stretch towards the sky. Why does it feel like they are closing in? Ironically, they make the sprawling mountain landscapes feel just as claustrophobic as the car. The car in question: jam packed with duffels and bags, to the point where vision is completely blocked out the back windshield. It made an ominous pop two hours earlier, like a virtuoso making a sudden pluck on his cello at the end of the piece. We pulled over to inspect the car, but everything seemed fine. I can't tell if it's just nerves, but I can't seem to shrug off the deep, rich strum that emanated from underneath the car. But so far, nothing has come of it.

As we protrude further into the wild, my dog becomes more agitated. His whines echo throughout the vehicle, and my siblings—whose faces are transfixed by their devices—don't seem to notice or care. He's pacing back and forth along the backseat, and his panting forms a rhythmic chorus. Eventually my brother decides to help him, not out of concern, but maybe annoyance. No matter, the beast seems committed to remaining in a state.

As my siblings resume their squabbles, the driving conditions take a drastic turn for the worse—something which I didn't think was possible. Ahead of us, maybe 100 yards, lays a thick blanket of fog; mist that seems to stretch as far and as high as the eye can see. As we get closer, an unnerving chill crawls from head to toe. I feel my hair stand on end. In unison, the voices of my siblings reach a crescendo, my dog starts yelping and my mom starts getting, well, irate. As we get even closer, everything gets louder. The rain pounds against the roof and windows, and thunder booms out across the fjord-like hills.

Out of nowhere—and I mean completely out of left field—comes Anne Murray's *Song for the Mira* from the inexplicably revived radio. Normally I would be thankful, but this was just too much.

As we near the threshold of seemingly no return, my head feels like it's going to burst. As we cross over, an otherworldly chill passes through us all, and all at once, everyone goes silent, including good ol' Anne and the symphony of the skies. This silence seems to stretch on for ages, as even my dog quiets—now quivering at my sister's side. My mother brings down the speed due to the now obscured road. We weren't expecting to meet anyone else at this hour, but it's better to be safe than sorry. We crawl through the dense fog, so thick that we can't see the cracked asphalt in any direction. It's so quiet that I can hear what seems like the croaks of frogs outside. I press my face against the glass, and peer out the window. I scan the white wall for a sign of anything. No luck.

Suddenly, acting in complete character, my sister lets out a shrill screech—a frog jumped against her window and bashed its head in against the glass. A small splatter of blood is now plastered all over the windowpane. Then, another, this time on my brother's window. The dam broke, and all around us small forms slam against the car, leaving splatters of blood and froggy brain. At least, I think they're frogs. They just look *wrong*. It might be fog. It might be the rain. It could even be the mutilation from attempting death by Volvo. Okay, those definitely are not frogs. My siblings, both wailing, beg my mom to drive. As much as she's trying to maintain calm, I can tell she's afraid herself.

Suddenly, a great big little fucker slams his head against the windshield, and it cracks. As his small body slowly slides down, leaving a smear of blood, it becomes so clear to everyone present that it cannot be further from a frog. Covered in misshapen eyes, many, many legs, and what seem to be small teeth protruding from its skin. Not just any teeth, but human teeth. It is what can only be described as otherworldly. Inexplicably pus covered and oozing.

Now is when we all start screaming. My mother slams her foot down against the acceleration and we speed forward through the smog. As we skid forward, the car bumbles over whatever those things are. Ahead of us in the fog, glints of other cars' headlights slowly emerge. As we near the lights, a loud horn blares and we swerve. At that very moment, a large transport truck barrels past at high speed. On it, are creatures of a similar nature to those that were frog-like; unearthly crows that look as though they were painted by a blind abstract-impressionist, who had never seen a bird in his life.

As we slide on the wet road, our car lifts up off the ground. Hydroplaning as we soar through the air. We land back down with a crash as my mother tries to regain control. It's as if the car has taken up a life of its own. At this point, we are all crying—although my sister is the most vocal. Just as it seemed my mother had control of the situation; I see it. From the corner of my eye: a great big beast. Something vaguely familiar. With many sets of antlers, as if taken from other animals. His head is covered with eyes that all pivot towards us. He stands unimaginably tall; an eldritch monstrosity that I can only vocalize as one thing.

"MOOSE!" I bellow, with every ounce of energy I have left coursing through my voice. My mom sees it too and takes a sharp right. We slide off the road and crash through trees and low bushes. The windshield shatters and the wild bursts into the vehicle. We get scratched by the branches protruding into the car. I watch, as creatures and forest and fog pour into the car. The car flips, we start rolling down a hill, our screaming voices fall silent, and I know that I am the only one left. We roll for what feels like an eternity. My voice sore and I can no longer scream; I feel I have no mouth. I can feel blood oozing from inside my throat, and it gets harder and harder and harder to breathe.



Jadyn Westenberg,
Level IV

Down the hill I go. Eventually, what was once somebody falls out of the car. Some of our belongings as well, and I see my beloved violin spill out and shatter against a passing tree.

Down the hill I go. I feel I have been trapped here for hours. I want to vomit. I want to heave my lungs out of my chest. My eyes throb against my head. My brain aches from mental and physical strain. The pain is unimaginable. It's not even pain at this point. I crave a release, maybe to join my family, to spare my own torture.

Down the hill I go. I just want to die. Like when you're anxious and you just want to fall asleep, because you hope when you wake up you won't be anxious anymore. I just want this to be over and I don't care what comes next. Even better if I can just rest, if I can see them again.

Down the hill I go. Spinning, and rolling, and flipping over myself. My body and my mind feel convoluted. I can't think anymore, and as I bounce and tumble down the hill, each jostle steals another piece of my willpower.

Down the hill I go. Eventually, after an eternity, my eyes become heavy, and I feel my breath being drawn out of my body. Everything goes silent and the car rolls to a peaceful stop at the base of the hill. Lying on my side, I look out the window to see the night growing lighter. The last of me turns cold, and I see the beast of a stag standing atop the hill. He looks at me, with barely a hint of pity. He turns away, and walks into the ink, the fog.

Graeme Lavrence,
Level III

# STARS

lying on my back
on gravel
grass
dirt
in the middle of the laneway at the
cabin—
my grandparents' cabin.
hands behind my head
shirt
sweater
pulled up, bare stomach
showing—
risky with the mosquitoes.
hands clasped around the
bun in my hair
no gravel in my hair—yet.
my papa in the lawn
chair beside me
little brother as his
blanket
crickets chirping around
us.
papa counting quietly, *1,*
*2* to *52*
brother silent for once.
silent in awe.
trees dark
black against the sky
pretty coloured, blueish
coloured, dark grey
coloured, sky coloured
sky.
stars shining—
bright ones
farther ones
barely there ones—
but all up there.
brother and papa getting
up
checking camera,
whispering, talking
coming back.



me lying down still, hands on chest now, hair
on gravel
again silent.
stars
milky way
camera clicking
orion's belt
brother whispering
*big dipper covered in clouds today*
cassiopeia
*is the camera working?*
it will be over soon.
yes—
when we go back inside
little brother screaming
peace disturbed
past bedtime—too tired
not quiet.
it will be over soon—
we can feel it
getting chilly
getting late
getting mosquito-y
but now:
laneway
gravel
grass
dirt
trees
sky
stars
silent
stars.
stars.

Words by
Alyssa Abush,
Level III
Art by Olli Zelek,
Level II

# THOUGHTS FROM THE KITCHEN COUNTER

When I look at my childhood photos, so many of them capture the same scene: a toddler, muppet-looking version of me perched on the kitchen counter. Our long-gone 2000s kitchen is forever memorialized in scrapbook pages, with its dark green countertops and maple cabinets. I'm usually sitting upright with my feet barely dangling over the counter's edge, licking a spatula covered in whipped cream or holding a half-peeled banana with a bite taken out of it. I have striped footie pajamas on and a ring of crumbs surrounding my mouth. Baby hairs wisp from my forehead.

When I asked my mom about these photos, she laughed. She told me she would sit me on the countertop every night while she cooked dinner, ever since I could sit up. She said she was never afraid I'd fall or wander as long as I was with her in the kitchen. The kitchen is where my mom would cook dinner every evening, make cakes on birthdays, and entertain her dinner party guests who waited in the next room. I watched as she commanded the kitchen, effortlessly floating from the fridge to the stovetop to the sink, as I sat still.

When I look back, I see my mom in many kitchens. I see her in her mother, my avó, who I picture baking a big orange cake, Pão de Ló, dusted with powdered sugar. She's wearing a dark blue apron and matching slippers, and she's quietly whistling through the gap in her front teeth. I see her in my other grandmother, who I remember greeting my brother and I with entire pies (chocolate for him and strawberry for me) when we arrived at her house. I see her in myself as I remember the joy I felt after being gifted an Easy-Bake Oven for my birthday. I was so proud to bake my first batch of brownies, topped with mint green icing.

I always wanted to watch what the women in my life did. I still do.

I like to think these women taught me. I'm not sure if they know they have. This summer, I made Pão de Ló from instructions in my avó's handwriting—in a language I can't read—as she sat at the kitchen table. I use my mom's sourdough discard to make cinnamon buns for our family. I bring over an apple pie to my grandmother's thanksgiving dinners.
If I were to sit on the kitchen counter now, my legs would awkwardly hang over the edge and my back would push against the cabinets. I might get in the way of the dance. Still, I want to sit still and watch.

Elise Farmar,
Level III



Jadyn Westenberg,
Level IV

# AMNESIA

as you escaped
the water in my eyes, you grew
distant as the words which echoed
your silence.

as we revisited those
spaces we left to pass,
love taught itself to forget
in spite of you,

but when you caught me by surprise that evening I grasped
a glimpse behind the curtain, now a film in a foreign language.

in my hand, I watched as you returned
to a world I'd lost,
smiling so wide I couldn't hear the words you spoke,
emerging so subtly
that before I could laugh you
were gone.

in your place was only an empty seat and your shadow.

then, as if this life was nothing, you
disappeared into the light,
&
we each went on our way.

Matthew Wong,
Level I

# MÉLANGE CROSSWORD

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | ■ | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | ■ | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | | | | ■ | 15 | | | | | ■ | 16 | | | |
| 17 | | | | ■ | 18 | | | | | 19 | | | | |
| 20 | | | | 21 | ■ | ■ | 22 | | | | | | | |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | 23 | | 24 | 25 | ■ | ■ | 26 | | | | | |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | | | | | 30 | 31 | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 32 | | | | ■ | 33 | | | | ■ | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 |
| 39 | | | | ■ | 40 | | | | 41 | ■ | 42 | | | |
| 43 | | | | 44 | ■ | 45 | | | | ■ | 46 | | | |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | 47 | 48 | | | | | 49 | | | | |
| 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | | | ■ | ■ | 54 | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 55 | | | | | | 56 | 57 | ■ | ■ | 58 | | 59 | 60 | 61 |
| 62 | | | | | | | | 63 | 64 | ■ | 65 | | | |
| 66 | | | | ■ | 67 | | | | | ■ | 68 | | | |
| 69 | | | | ■ | 70 | | | | | ■ | 71 | | | |

# ACROSS

**1** Third-largest country in South America
**5** Agreements
**10** Category of bird with long legs and downwardly-curved bill
**14** How much a first-year's bag might weigh
**15** Hawaiian greeting
**16** Spanish lady
**17** Chums
**18** Artscis might have too many to choose from
**20** Somewhere to bowl a strike
**22** Auditory apertures
**23** What Artscis sip at parties
**26** It comes from the heart
**27** An Artsci might carry a Nalgene to be ____
**32** Shape of some Westdale streets
**33** Doll (out)
**34** Seventh in the Fibonacci sequence
**39** Are, in the past
**40** "____ default?"
**42** Katy Perry classic
**43** "You ____ bad word!"
**45** It's beside Cu
**46** Depend (on)
**47** Something our program does not claim to produce
**50** Japanese religion
**54** Effuse
**55** Pilot of a paddle-propelled vessel
**58** Engagements for which professors might cancel lectures
**62** What one might struggle to do the night before an exam
**65** Timbre
**66** The Tender____, an SF neighbourhood
**67** Off-putting quality of the arts quad basement
**68** ____ Steven
**69** Fibbed
**70** Marks on a Dalmatian
**71** Legal contract

# DOWN

**1** Nickname of our beloved economics professor
**2** Citation abbreviator
**3** Rock's partner
**4** How one might feel after watching a horror movie
**5** Apartment, in bro-slang
**6** Arabic name meaning exalted and noble
**7** Suffix in many aesthetic names
**8** Greek name meaning goddess
**9** Relating to sacred rites or symbols
**10** Pejorative for the unthoughtful
**11** 19th-century mathematician after whom a data type is named
**12** ____ sanctum
**13** Cheeky
**19** Elevator button one would press to get to the Artsci lounge
**21** Nay's counterpart
**24** Goals
**25** "Achoo!" cause
**27** One always does this before reaping
**28** Middle layer of the eye
**29** Popular women's garment in Pakistan and India
**30** What one might enter through a hatch
**31** Stylish winter headwear donned by many Artscis
**35** How one might feel when on their last WebAssign attempt
**36** Takes one's turn in a game
**37** Old-timey stop
**38** Three in Lithuanian
**41** To sham or swindle
**44** Fall flower
**48** Readies (oneself)
**49** Apt descriptor of Dr. Wilson's inquiry class
**50** To row
**51** Capital of Vietnam
**52** DIY music genre
**53** What a circle has
**56** Big accomplishment for a baby
**57** Starchy root vegetable
**59** It comes from the heart
**60** Home to the ACL
**61** Email action often symbolized by a paper airplane
**63** ____ picking
**64** French conjunction meaning "of the"

Ben Hemsworth,
Level IV

**Stumped? Check the answer key on pp. 41–42!**

# ASMRTIST RECS!

If you're like me, you're a TikTok user (as hesitant as I am to admit it) who by extension has become a casual ASMR enjoyer. And now and then you may scroll yourself into an ASMR video so good it makes its way into a saved collection entitled "satisfying 🤦." Or maybe that second part is just me. In that case, I am about to fill a void in your life! Here is a list of visual/auditory ASMR artists (or ASMRtists) who had me enraptured—*immersed* if you will—from the moment I laid eyes and ears on them.

## @COME2RESTASMR

**(Auditory, Visual)**

This list is not officially ranked, but if it were, this ASMRtist would still be the first. Something about his energy is incredibly pure and deeply resonates with the inner child; it's unbridled, liberated. A little bit of him lives in all of us.

While his ASMR may seem completely instinctive and spontaneous, his dedication to creating a refreshing, organic ASMR experience is clear. Consider his versatility of locations, sounds, visuals, and style, ranging from chaotic to tranquil. He gives you a glimpse into his life without a single word. It's all carefully cultivated, and truly artful.

You have to see it yourself to understand.

(*Note: He also makes music under the name Philosophy of Music! Like his ASMR, something about his music and music videos is so raw and pure, but not at all frivolous. It can really make you cry. Don't ask how I know that.*)

## @JPDUSSAN

**(Auditory, Visual)**

Calligraphic writing. Hand-written music scores. A soft yellow-light atmosphere. So classical, so high-brow. Though they are also visually pleasing, the appeal of this creator's ASMR videos lies mostly in their auditory stimulation, for me. The scratches are scratchy and the ink is inky. I don't think I've seen anyone draw a cleaner treble clef with a calligraphy pen. Not even Graeme.

## @MUKBANGMAXWELL

**(Auditory)**

This is one of my favourite food reviewers/ASMRtists. I appreciate the diversity of his palate and his cultural curiosity; he highlights a lot of great Toronto food spots and showcases so many cultures' cuisines. His food choices are thoughtful, his energy is warm, and his videos have subtitles! The way he eats is culturally informed, and so passionate; he convinces me that the food I eat every day is ten times more delectable than I think. I love that he's not afraid to spill a little and get messy; food is best enjoyed carefree.

## @SUMIBI.CLUB

**(Auditory)**

I have followed this self-proclaimed "charcoal man" on TikTok for quite a while. His content is enjoyable to various audiences, ASMR-oriented or not, and has cultivated a nice little community of long-term watchers with its very own inside jokes (#iwontforget).

I would categorize his account as cooking ASMR. His videos take place outside, at night, in weather that is somehow always frigid. Their main ASMR feature is the various sizzles of different ingredients on his charcoal grill which he constructs into a gorgeous meal. At the end of each video, without fail, he takes a bite of the food straight off the grill, huffing steam and struggling with tongue burn, but still managing to smile and nod his head. This habit is a little impulsive, kind of precious, and entertaining to watch. His videos make my soul happy.



## @COOKITGIRLEATS

**(Auditory)**

This creator is That Girl when it comes to dessert-eating ASMR, in my opinion. She makes every bite of the softest cookie look crisp and decadent. Every time she dunks a cookie into her glass of iced milk, the intense urge to finally try Crumbl Cookies is aroused in me once again. I almost want to call her a visual ASMRtist, because it's enchanting how her lipgloss is unmoved by her eating.

## @ALECPAINTSOFFICIAL

**(Auditory, Visual)**

I think this wall-painting creator may need no justification for being on this list. The soft scratch of his brushes and the unbelievable precision of his paint strokes around intricate moulding and outlet plates can fill any void of satisfaction that may exist in your life. Beyond that, his content somehow creates this hyperreal reality that I live vicariously through—as if I were appreciating all the home renovation work I'd done myself.

## @JENNYS_ASMR

**(Auditory)**

When I first saw this creator's outfit ASMR, I thought she was a genius. Who knew so much sound lives in our clothes, and *hair*? As opposed to "get-unready-with-me" ASMR, she just scratches and taps and plays with her clothes, jewelry, hair, nails, and shoes. It's a wonderful reminder of the simple joys of textural diversity. Her videos have helped resensitize me to the vibrant sensory experiences available to appreciate every day.

## @REALPATRICKSASMR

**(Auditory, Visual)**

My favourite category of this creator's videos is his swinging ASMR, which is mainly visual. While his whispering is quite nice, I am more astounded than anything else by the skillfulness of his swinging—it really takes you for a trip. Watching it feels like watching one of those first-person POVs of rides at Canada's Wonderland. It's so immersive I'm almost afraid I'm going to fall, but strangely, I trust him not to let that happen.

**Scan this QR code for a list of my fave recommended TikToks from each of these creators!**

Ishmeet Johal,
Level III

# LURED IN

He abandoned everything. There were going to be hundreds of emails about the company, even more texts about his supposed surprise birthday party, and, no doubt, a few frustrated voicemails sprinkled in. But for the first time in a long time, he didn't mind. All of that was just momentary chaotic noise in his head, of course, his phone sat on his table at home some 200 miles away by now. He told no one his plans—he had simply slipped out of the city like a bandit in the night. There had recently been many times where he'd been sitting elsewhere while wishing to be here, plagued by nostalgic thoughts that had egged him to do just what he was doing now.

The few things he had brought—a cold thermos of unsweetened iced tea, a quaint fishing rod, and his small tackle box—he grabbed from the backseat and clipped onto his pants with an anxious breath but surprisingly assured hands. He slammed his car door, unsettling a few nearby birds. He paused for a moment, allowing his eyes to adjust to the early morning darkness before heading towards the woods. Judging by how the path had become overgrown, swallowed whole by thick bramble, the knowledge of where he was going was held by him and him alone.

When the overgrown path left him a little lost, a drip of dread slid down into his heart. His apprehension only heightened when he heard a snap that pierced through the trees, with no source of the sound in sight—which called into question whether being alone in the dark was truly a wise course of action. Was this some kind of crisis? Had he finally experienced the breakdown everyone—including himself—had so often forecasted for him? He wasn't sure, there was no way to know, not truly.

At the peak of his uncertainty, the dawning sun finally poked its head through the trees, shining fibres of golden thread through the evergreen needles. With the new light, memories flooded in, illuminating a path long forgotten, and he made an abrupt turn left. He was pretty sure this instinct was leading him the right way. He wasn't sure, there was no way to know, but he tried anyway.



After a few minutes of ambling about the mature shrubs, there was a break in the treeline. He let go of his short, anxious breaths and nabbed the luxurious air of the early morning into his lungs. The smell of flowers and citrus flooded his mind, a marvelous aroma unreplicated in the bustling life he'd abandoned for the moment.

Bursting through the treeline, he was welcomed to the quaint scene he'd longed for, untouched by time. Patches of wildflowers spread all across the clearing, swaying to the rhythm of the spring's breeze. The river was cutting through the meadow, rushing with vigour. The salmon were leaping out from the frigid water, perhaps they wanted a chance to savour the moment as well.

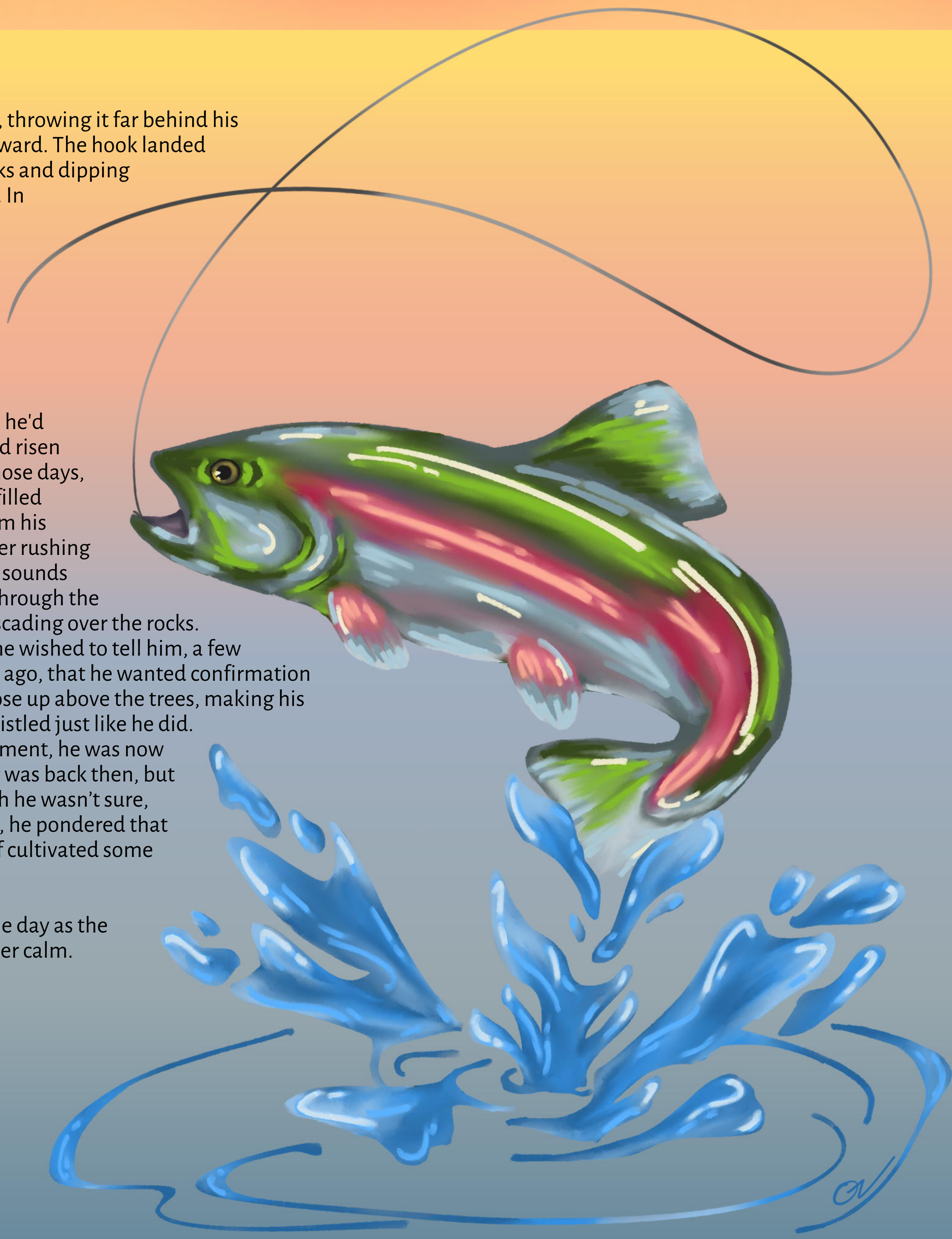
He waded to where the river was at its most calm, letting his boots be engulfed by the muddy riverbed as the current glided around his hips. He'd already gotten hints of the delightful view from the river's reflection, and after taking one small adjustment left to perfect the view, he gazed up at the pink sky and all that it revealed: the reborn sun, the fading stars, and the joyfully melancholic moon.

He lassoed his fishing rod, throwing it far behind his head before striking it forward. The hook landed perfectly, evading the rocks and dipping elegantly into the current. In the back of his mind, he worried that he forgot to put on a lure, but he dismissed the thought quickly—that wasn't what this was about anyways.

The last time he was here, he'd been eight—the water had risen all the way to his chest. Those days, from dawn to dusk, were filled with stories and songs from his father. Now, with the water rushing around his waist, the only sounds were of the deer leaping through the clearing and the water cascading over the rocks. There were many stories he wished to tell him, a few lyrics, from all those years ago, that he wanted confirmation on. In response, the sun rose up above the trees, making his face warm as the wind whistled just like he did. His soul sunk into this moment, he was now the same age as his father was back then, but not as wise as him. Though he wasn't sure, there was no way to know, he pondered that maybe that in and of itself cultivated some hope.

He let his mind drift for the day as the river bathed him in a tender calm.

Avery Blundell,
Level III



Olli Zelek,
Level II

# MAPPING OUT THE MELODY

## THE IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE OF LISTENING TO MUSIC

I hope you'll find yourself on a whimsical and out-of-this-world adventure when listening to my playlist, which has been inspired by this issue's theme: I M M E R S I O N. While making this list I've had a lot of fun pouring through my many wildly-specific playlists (I'm only as prepared as my playlist for the day; I think I've got a playlist for every kind of weather: rainy days call for alternative rock and if it's hailing...we're jamming to hard rock). I've compiled a list of songs that make me feel like I've been transported to a different place, or dimension altogether. Many of these tunes are about both real and fictional worlds, all of which either deeply resonated with and inspired these artists or were imagined and CREATED by them!

When listening I hope you find yourself immersed in the worlds contained within these songs and transported beyond them, to wherever your imagination desires.

**Listen to I M M E R S I O N here!**

## TRACK LIST




"Four Out of Five"
by Arctic Monkeys
*Live at the Royal Albert Hall*




"Ziggy Stardust (2012 Remaster)"
by David Bowie
*The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*




"Theatrical State of Mind"
by Papooz
*Night Sketches*



"Metaverse"
by Cage the Elephant
*Neon Pill*



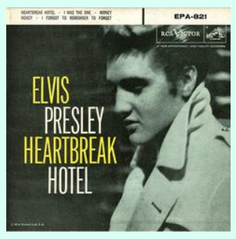

"Malibu"
by THE DRIVER ERA
*Summer Mixtape*




"Big Sur"
by The Beach Boys
*Holland*




"Les Champs Elysées (feat. John Shroeder)"
by Pomplamoose
*En français*




"Heartbreak Hotel"
by Elvis Presley
*Heartbreak Hotel (EP)*




"Calm Like You"
by The Last Shadow Puppets
*The Age of the Understatement*




"The Bakery"
by Arctic Monkeys
*Fluorescent Adolescent*




"Le Festin"
by Camille & Micheal Giacchino
*Ratatouille (Score from the Motion Picture)*



"The Dream Synopsis"
by The Last Shadow Puppets
*The Dream Synopsis (EP)*




"Lucid Dream"
by Glue Trip
*Glue Trip*




"Airplane Effect"
by Wyatt Pike
*(Single)*




"I, Carrion (Icarian)"
by Hozier
*Unreal Earth: Unending*



"After Hours"
by The Weeknd
*After Hours*

*The soles of my shoes are naively clean*

Today I've been to 

and 


I had breakfast on the 


and got space dust in my lungs

*Untouched and pristine*

I climbed rolling green hills
Before watching the sea
Engulf the sunshine that shone down endlessly

On 


*as if they have no idea where I've been*

I hopped on a 


and ended up in Paris overnight

Running down l'avenue des 


Toward a 

at midnight

Suddenly I was launched into the 


And shot out the other side

into a world of 

except they aren't mine

Is it wrong to say I'm having such a good time?

*Surely I'm lost. I didn't mean to travel this far*

But the smells of the 

are wafting up the road

And the line to get into the 


on Lonely Street has slowed

I ought to stay
And fight some space aliens away

....Or maybe that was Bowie

*I stop in my tracks*
It's getting too late, and nothing's making sense
It's about that time
I call it: After Hours....

But it sounds like something 

said

Suddenly, my headphones die
And the world before me transforms

*I've walked around the world to the sound of a guitar*
*but maybe it's my playlist that's led me to travel this imaginarily far*

# BEHIND THE BANGER

*Banger: a song [that] is extremely tight or just unbelievably awesome* (1)

Here's a little behind-the-scenes spotlight of how these artists came to be inspired by significant locations in their lives in order to create such immersive music centered around and inspired by them!

**Four Out of Five**

On the band's 6th record, *Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino*, Alex Turner imagines a lavish hotel situated on Tranquility Base, the site of the moon landing.

Turner seemed to be thinking along the lines of *immersion* when he thought this one up as he alludes to in an interview: "When I think about it, there's something in Tranquility Base and this song that suggests that you may not have to leave the comfort of your own home to get to this place—you just put your headphones on. And there you go" (2).

**Big Sur**

The Beach Boys explained that they were "homesick as hell" when they were recording this tune for their upcoming album, *Holland*—taking inspiration from the landscapes on California's central coast (3). They ended up recording "Big Sur" as part of a three-part tribute to their home of sunny California, which they would title as the 'California Saga.' The saga made up three songs featured on their album *Holland:* "Big Sur," "The Beaks of Eagles," and "California."

**Metaverse**

The track launches us into the psyche of Matt Shultz, the lead singer of Cage the Elephant, who openly spoke about his struggles with and diagnosis of psychosis last spring. His idea of the 'Metaverse', an abstract alternate dimension, reflects his state of mind at the time. When asked if the track is "...about feeling you're living in an unreal world," (4) Shultz replied "I hadn't thought of it that way, but now that you say it, I think that is definitely part of it" (5).

**Airplane Effect**

Wyatt Pike was inspired to write about an experience he coined the 'Airplane Effect,' the unnerving and heartbreaking experience of flying away, unsure if the same friends will be waiting for you when you get back. (Wow, I know – Wyatt really takes us on a journey with this tune). After flying back to LA, after a trip with his Dad, Wyatt discovered that he had been ghosted by someone he had started dating. He explained that he wanted to "write about the whole arc of the flying experience in the song," (6) which led him to take us listeners on a detailed journey into the sky. It feels like we're sitting right there with him, from the ride to the airport to reading the safety brochure before takeoff, all while navigating the heartbreak.

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Gia Chahal,
Level II

# HALFWAY TO IMMERSION

In the beautiful state of Kerala, there is a festival known as Vishu, which marks the Malayali New Year and the spring equinox. It is customary to set up a *Vishukkani*, a display full of fruits, rice, traditional bronze cookware, money, idols, mirrors, all the good stuff. In Malayalam, *kani* means "that which is first seen," so in my Malayali culture, this display is the first thing you must see in the morning when you open your eyes. As a little girl, my mom would wake me up with her hands covering my eyes and guide me to the living room. I'd giggle with anticipation.

"Ready ponnu? Three, two, one…"

She uncovers my eyes. The room is illuminated by glimmering diyas, with swirls of orange and yellow reflecting off the beautiful items intentionally laid across the table.

This is my first and fondest memory of being immersed in my culture.

Having been born and raised in North America, I wasn't constantly surrounded by elements of my culture like my cousins in Kerala were. My brother and I weren't taught our native tongue, much to my mother's and grandparents' chagrin. Instead, the ways I was immersed were different.

I was immersed through listening to melodic Karnatic tunes or devotional music or soundtracks from my mom's favourite Malayalam movies, all while sitting in the backseat of the car on the way to Taekwondo or eating my cereal before school. I remember how the sounds reverberated around my ears and resonated through my whitewashed body—I felt connected to them somehow. Yet as a child, I didn't fully comprehend that these notes were the music of my people—the people across the sea whose eyes I had barely gazed into, whose voices I couldn't point out, whose lives were completely different than my own.

I was immersed through my mom's fusion cooking, like naan pizza or dosas with honey or chapatis with ketchup.

I was immersed through comic books of Indian gods and epics, like the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, and trying to understand how Ganesha was formed from clay and turmeric paste.

I was immersed through prayers—prayers that I would do well in school, prayers that I'd get a hug that day, prayers to multi-armed deities that I wasn't sure existed.

These aren't just memories from my childhood. Every time I go back home, my mom makes me delicious naan pizza or crispy dosas served with honey. I still sit in my car, cruising across town with Malayalam movie soundtracks blasting through the speakers, but this time, I'm in the driver's seat. And just in case, I still pray before my exams, despite my uncertainties.

I love these parts of my life, and I feel content with who I am now and how I've grown up. These little experiences are unique to me, and I wouldn't have it any other way. Still, I know there is something deeper within me, a side of me that could emerge if it were nurtured properly. One of my many goals when coming to university was to explore my culture and meet people who were kind enough to open my eyes a little wider to the Malayali experience. Though it's a little daunting, I think I'm finally ready to step into that world. I don't have many relatable experiences to offer as a whitewashed Mallu, but maybe that's okay. Maybe they can learn a little something from me too.

Watch out immersion (or at least its second half), here I come.

Sarayu Nambiar,
Level II

# ASKING ARTSCI... inquire!

When you close your eyes, what smell takes you to your happy place? Is it the smell of fresh linens? Your favourite home-cooked meal? The smell of Mills first floor? The McKay common rooms? We at The Melange want to know: what's your favourite scent?

Dog
**Laura, Level III**

Campfire!
**Emelia G, Level III**

Ocean!!
**Amanda, Level III**

Freshly baked bread... the crunchier the better
**Sara P, Level III**

Fresh laundry
**Ella T, Level III**

Pine trees!
So Christmas, which means it's so winter break and I really love winter break
**Sarah G, Level III**

Caramel
**Macey, Level III**

It's tied between the smell of freshly baked cookies in a house and walking into a pho restaurant
**Vivian, Level III**





The prosecco aroma diffuser I bought in first year (it hasn't run out yet)
**Sam, Level III**

Espresso
**Elise, Level III**

Campfire smoke on clothes
**Ally, Level III**

Toasted Montreal bagels. I just finished my supply. Need to know where I can find some in Hamilton.
**Luke, Level III**

Fresh rainfall
**Sofia, Level III**

The smell of wet soil, and the smell of plants
**Alyssa A, Level III**

Cedar and lavender
**Olli, Level II**

Lemon
I'm averse to really sweet scents, but love a good citrus
**Laila, Level II**



Freshly baked cookies
**Claire, Level II**

Apple cinnamon!
**Sarayu, Level II**

My grandparents' mouldy basement
**Jadyn W, Level IV**

The smell of yelling "good afternoon" in my aunt's mudroom after half-day kindergarten
**Surbhi, Level IV**

The fresh sea air on the coast of Newfoundland
**Graeme, Level III**





Lemon ginger tea
**Madelyn H, Level III**

# An Artsci's Calendar

| SUN | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | 30 | Finish all alumni meetings by today! 31 | January New Years Day "There's glitter on the floor after the party..." 1 | time to give up on the Winter arch :( Bye New Years Resolutions 2 | 3 | 4 |
|  Pokemon Grind 5 | First Day Back! 6 | 7 | Visit Marquis's Office Hour! 8 | Sign up for Artsci Book Club ! 9 |  HOUSEPLANTS APPRECIATION DAY i LOVE MY PLANTS <3 10 | 11 |
| APPLY FOR ARTSCI SCHOLARSHIPS 12 |   Wolf Moon! 13 | drop/add courses deadline shoutout SeatAlert! 14 | ARTSSCI Interim Reports DUe 15 | 16 | 17 | Make a snowman  18 |
| SOUP DAY! 19 |   20 | Exchange Application Due! 21 | Read the newest Melange Issue! 22 | Early Burnout 23 | Anti-Nepotism Day 24 | Start looking for Summer Jobs 25 |
| Call My Mom 26 | 27 | Coding Project Part 1 Due! 28 | ARTSSCI 4ST3 Policy Brief Due! 29 | Self Care Night 30 | Reflect on the past month in your journal 31 | |

Want something of your own to be included in our magazine? As noted in "An Artsci's Calendar," the deadline for general submissions from the Arts & Science student body for our upcoming issue will be Sunday, February 2 at 11:59 PM. You will be notified about whether your submission meets our content guidelines (see the Melange Manifesto on page i) and whether it has been accepted for publication in the Food Issue within a few days of the February 2nd deadline. Please keep in mind that we are looking for short written pieces: **a maximum page count of two pages and a maximum word count of 1000 words**. Feel free to submit visual pieces too! Please send your submissions via our Microsoft form (available through the link in our Instagram bio @artsci.themelange or the QR code on page ii).

Finally, if you submit your work to *The Melange*, please note that you will be expected to engage in a collaborative editorial process with a member of our team to refine your piece for publication; plan to set aside some time for this in the week following November 22nd. If you have an idea for a possible submission but want to run it by an editor before working on it, feel free to contact anyone on the editorial team directly (Luke F., Elise F., Olly G., Graeme L., Samantha P., Laura T., Vivian V., Jadyn W.). We are so excited to see your creations!

# MÉLANGE CROSSWORD

# ANSWER KEY

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 P | 2 E | 3 R | 4 U | ■ | 5 P | 6 A | 7 C | 8 T | 9 S | ■ | 10 I | 11 B | 12 I | 13 S |
| 14 A | T | O | N | ■ | 15 A | L | O | H | A | ■ | 16 D | O | N | A |
| 17 P | A | L | S | ■ | 18 D | I | R | E | C | 19 T | I | O | N | S |
| 20 A | L | L | E | 21 Y | ■ | ■ | 22 E | A | R | H | O | L | E | S |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | 23 T | E | 24 A | 25 S | ■ | ■ | 26 A | R | T | E | R | Y |
| 27 S | 28 U | 29 S | T | A | I | N | 30 A | 31 B | L | E | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 32 O | V | A | L | ■ | 33 M | E | T | E | ■ | 34 E | 35 I | 36 G | 37 H | 38 T |
| 39 W | E | R | E | ■ | 40 S | E | T | A | 41 S | ■ | 42 R | O | A | R |
| 43 S | A | I | D | 44 A | ■ | 45 Z | I | N | C | ■ | 46 R | E | L | Y |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | 47 S | 48 P | E | C | I | A | 49 L | I | S | T | S |
| 50 S | 51 H | 52 I | 53 N | T | O | ■ | ■ | 54 E | M | I | T | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 55 C | A | N | O | E | I | 56 S | 57 T | ■ | ■ | 58 T | A | 59 L | 60 K | 61 S |
| 62 U | N | D | E | R | S | T | A | 63 N | 64 D | ■ | 65 T | O | N | E |
| 66 L | O | I | N | ■ | 67 E | E | R | I | E | ■ | 68 E | V | E | N |
| 69 L | I | E | D | ■ | 70 S | P | O | T | S | ■ | 71 D | E | E | D |

# ACROSS

**1** Third-largest country in South America **PERU**
**5** Agreements **PACTS**
**10** Category of bird with long legs and downwardly-curved bill **IBIS**
**14** How much a first-year's bag might weigh **ATON**
**15** Hawaiian greeting **ALOHA**
**16** Spanish lady **DONA**
**17** Chums **PALS**
**18** Artscis might have too many to choose from **DIRECTIONS**
**20** Somewhere to bowl a strike **ALLEY**
**22** Auditory apertures **EARHOLES**
**23** What Artscis sip at parties **TEAS**
**26** It comes from the heart **ARTERY**
**27** An Artsci might carry a Nalgene to be ____ **SUSTAINABLE**
**32** Shape of some Westdale streets **OVAL**
**33** Doll (out) **METE**
**34** Seventh in the Fibonacci sequence **EIGHT**
**39** Are, in the past **WERE**
**40** "____ default?" **SETAS**
**42** Katy Perry classic **ROAR**
**43** "You ____ bad word!" **SAIDA**
**45** It's beside Cu **ZINC**
**46** Depend (on) **RELY**
**47** Something our program does not claim to produce **SPECIALISTS**
**50** Japanese religion **SHINTO**
**54** Effuse **EMIT**
**55** Pilot of a paddle-propelled vessel **CANOEIST**
**58** Engagements for which professors might cancel lectures **TALKS**
**62** What one might struggle to do the night before an exam **UNDERSTAND**
**65** Timbre **TONE**
**66** The Tender____, an SF neighbourhood **LOIN**
**67** Off-putting quality of the arts quad basement **EERIE**
**68** ____ Steven **EVEN**
**69** Fibbed **LIED**
**70** Marks on a Dalmatian **SPOTS**
**71** Legal contract **DEED**

# DOWN

**1** Nickname of our beloved economics professor **PAPA**
**2** Citation abbreviator **ETAL**
**3** Rock's partner **ROLL**
**4** How one might feel after watching a horror movie **UNSETTLED**
**5** Apartment, in bro-slang **PAD**
**6** Arabic name meaning exalted and noble **ALI**
**7** Suffix in many aesthetic names **CORE**
**8** Greek name meaning goddess **THEA**
**9** Relating to sacred rites or symbols **SACRAL**
**10** Pejorative for the unthoughtful **IDIOT**
**11** 19th-century mathematician after whom a data type is named **BOOLE**
**12** ____ sanctum **INNER**
**13** Cheeky **SASSY**
**19** Elevator button one would press to get to the Artsci lounge **THREE**
**21** Nay's counterpart **YEA**
**24** Goals **AIMS**
**25** "Achoo!" cause **SNEEZE**
**27** One always does this before reaping **SOWS**
**28** Middle layer of the eye **UVEA**
**29** Popular women's garment in Pakistan and India **SARI**
**30** What one might enter through a hatch **ATTIC**
**31** Stylish winter headwear donned by many Artscis **BEANIE**
**35** How one might feel when on their last WebAssign attempt **IRRITATED**
**36** Takes one's turn in a game **GOES**
**37** Old-timey stop **HALT**
**38** Three in Lithuanian **TRYS**
**41** To sham or swindle **SCAM**
**44** Fall flower **ASTER**
**48** Readies (oneself) **POISES**
**49** Apt descriptor of Dr. Wilson's inquiry class **LIT**
**50** To row **SCULL**
**51** Capital of Vietnam **HANOI**
**52** DIY music genre **INDIE**
**53** What a circle has **NOEND**
**56** Big accomplishment for a baby **STEP**
**57** Starchy root vegetable **TARO**
**59** It comes from the heart **LOVE**
**60** Home to the ACL **KNEE**
**61** Email action often symbolized by a paper airplane **SEND**
**63** ____ picking **NIT**
**64** French conjunction meaning "of the" **DES**

"I BATTLE WITH ZOE FOR SPACE ON MY ARCHIPELAGO"

-DR. CLARK (via instagram)