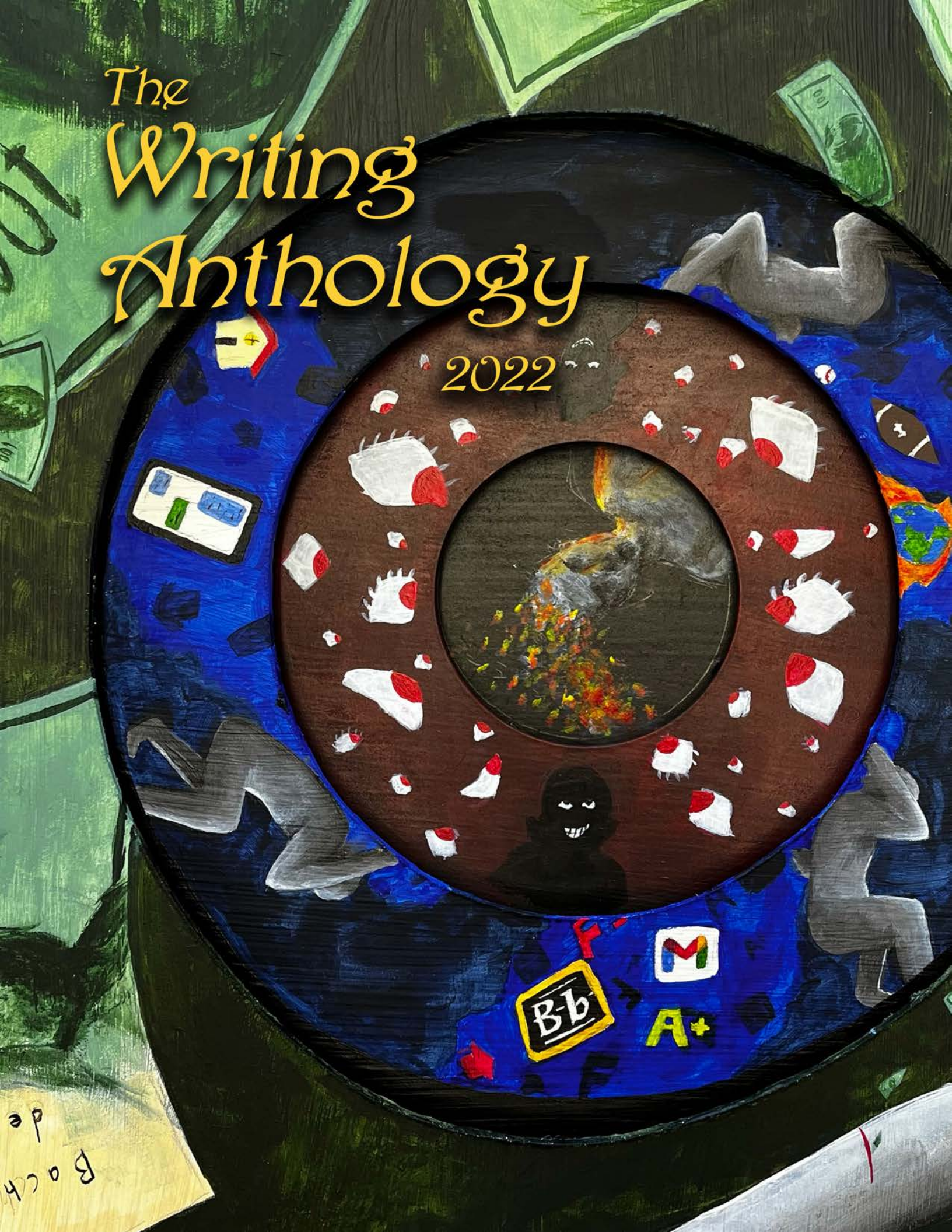


# The Writing Anthology

2022

Bach de



# *Hell On Earth / College Inferno: A Description of the Cover Art Written by the Artist*

*Audrey DeBie*

*Painting: Traditional to Digital*

This piece is about the struggles of a college student. I was inspired by Dante's Inferno and this idea of "hell on earth". This led me to the idea of creating a 3D layer of rings and each ring representing a stressor in the average college student's life.

The first layer represents the stress of the cost of a college education. This cost is represented by the blood and tears of a college student transmuting into hundred dollar bills and then finally a degree.

The second layer from the top represents the overworked nature of a college student's life. Three figures are painted carrying the burden of school work, relationships and extracurricular activities.

The third layer from the top represents the social pressure and expectations placed on a college student. I painted two figures to represent parental pressure and then countless eyes to represent societal pressure.

Finally in the middle you can see the effects of everything weighing down on the student. Their brain melts away, on fire from everything that burdens them.

# The Writing Anthology



Edited by Gabrielle Anderson, Emma Carlson, and Mattie Francis  
Advisors: Dr. Valerie Billing and Dr. Anna Christensen  
Cover art by: Audrey DeBie

A Publication of the English Department and the Art Department

Visit [Central.edu/Anthology](https://Central.edu/Anthology) to view the  
digital version of this year's Anthology.

Central College Pella, Iowa  
2022

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 42nd edition of The Writing Anthology. Founded in 1981 by now-retired Central College professor Dr. Walter Cannon, The Writing Anthology presents an annual collection of remarkable student work that spans a wide variety of academic disciplines. After review of dozens of strong pieces, our editorial team has chosen the following works for publication. These cuts were no easy decision. Still, the difficulty of our choice was a welcome burden. It signified the abundant skill and talent of our Central College student body. As both editors and peers, we are proud to support the exceptional labors of our hardworking authors and artists.

A couple of lines from American poet Mary Oliver's "Wild Geese" particularly speak to this year's selections. They read, "Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine. / Meanwhile the world goes on." Though this sentiment may initially seem dismissive, it is also comforting. As writers, artisans, scientists, and mere human beings, we are all united and empowered by our individual ability to tell one another stories and other important information. The very act of doing so is healing on both ends. While the broader universe may be indifferent to our opinions, we always remain capable of caring deeply about our fellow mortal beings. This is in part why we are so particularly proud to present the 2022 anthology; it contains student works that illuminate a wide variety of healing perspectives. Take for instance Sarah Linde's "Don't Bury my Bones" or Kayla Lindquist's "I Hope You Feel No Pain," which both brilliantly utilize environmental imagery in their poetry to illustrate a strong connection with the natural world. Or examine Quinn Deahl's "Remembering American Slavery: Learning from Germany's Eradication of Antisemitism" to receive a fresh, insightful perspective on a centuries-old issue. Or fix your gaze upon Jaden Hoag's gorgeous monochrome print of a heart, and become more conscious of the steady beat of your own. Though these pieces vary in genre and style, they are related in their ability to inspire and connect us to each other in a life that seems bent on tearing us apart.

Each year, the John Allen Award is awarded to a piece of student writing that the selection panel deems to have superior rhetorical competence, high levels of readability, originality, and insight. This year, we are pleased to announce that Sarah Smith will receive this honor. Sarah's piece "To My Core" is an exceptional combination of both original poetry and analytical writing. While candidly reflecting on a traumatic experience, Sarah excels at both making strong creative choices and eloquently explaining the reasoning behind them. Sarah's masterful command of language and free-verse poetry elicits raw, powerful reactions from her reading audience. Through this brilliant work, Sarah brutally but beautifully depicts grief, and she prompts us all to be more honest about the more vulnerable elements of our own personal bereavements.

We would like to congratulate all the students whose work is featured in these pages. Additionally, we would like to thank the professors who recognized the excellence of these pieces and submitted them for our judgment. Furthermore, we must thank Mat Kelly, Associate Professor of Art, and Brian Roberts, Professor of Art, for nominating outstanding student artwork. This year, we are excited to introduce a new section featuring full-color panels of the most exceptional student art. Special acknowledgments are also in order for Mat Kelly for designing the cover using artwork by Audrey DeBie. Also, we would like to thank Jordan Bohr and the student workers of the Central College Communications Office for their efforts in bringing The Writing Anthology's website to life. We also express our thanks to Steffanie Bonnstetter for her advising. Of course, our biggest thanks are owed to our faculty advisors Dr. Valerie Billing and Dr. Anna Christensen. Thank you both for your dedication, hard work, patience, flexibility, and guidance. Again, we must extend our sincerest gratitude to everyone who made this publication possible. We hope you enjoy the 2022 anthology!

Emma Alex Carlson '23  
Mattie Francis '23  
Gabrielle Anderson '22

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# And it was a Loop

Sarah Linde

ENGL 213: Nature Writing and Environmental Literature

*The class and I appreciate Sarah's "And It was a Loop" with its theme of the circles of life and death and the way she integrates herself into the loops. She marvels at the ephemeral snowflakes and spring flora and the enduring loops of life. Her creative description, word choice, and perspectives draw readers into these circles with the gliding reassurances of natural patterns, layers, dimensions, and wonders.*

-Mary Stark

There is a forest behind my house, just north of Pella. It is not so much deep, as it is wide. A gentle circle of embrace curled around the homes of my neighbors and myself. Nature is full of loops, whether it be the formation of trees, or the way familiar *Cathartes aura* (turkey vultures) swoop and glide across drafts that keep their wings free of the green summer canopies.

The forest is a place I grew up, and it is a place I will always return to. The constant march of my footsteps, along with those of my kin, wear a trail in the placid earth. Our boots and bodies push back branches and crush down shoots as we carve our place in this world. Fret not, though, for the wild plants and growing trees, for the cut we make is that of a sharpened blade: clean and smooth. And though our mark is long-lasting, it is far from permanent. When we are gone the forest will heal over this path we left. Branches reaching across it, flowers and bushes climbing from the fertile earth.

Until that day comes, we tread carefully enough, sticking to the path in the leaf-litter earth that we have long since cleared, leaving the rest of the forest to its own devices. The ground on which we walk is made up of layers- one for each year I have been alive, with countless more from the years before that. And when I am finally gone and buried under the layers of a different part of the earth, this place will still have countless layers left to create. Leaves fall, they lay on the cold winter earth, the world tilts and warms and the leaves slowly decay into compost. I'm not sure how long it takes for a single leaf to fully rot.



*Madilynn Peitzman, copper, wood, found objects, Metalsmithing I*

As a child, I assumed they were the same leaves all year long, every year I visited. Now, I can't help but think of what Joan Maloof wrote, about how, "[Trees] fertilize themselves with their own rain of debris" (Maloof 132). Another cycle—that of life and death and rebirth, told across tens of hundreds of years.

As children, my siblings and I were only allowed to walk into the woods when our father accompanied us. We'd save these trips for when the weather was the most appropriate, be it the warm touch of spring or the gentle chill of autumn. Autumn walks were a treasure of sensation; leaves would rustle as they were pulled loose, falling and dancing upon the air and sometimes catching on a jacket or hair. The scent of gentle decay that I so heavily associate with the season would surround us in a way that could practically be tasted. Despite the cold slowly creeping in, birds would still flutter in the branches if you looked closely enough. It was as if they were acting in defiance to change, saying that even in this state of half-death, their home would stay alive and vibrant for ages to come.

Returning to the forest for the first time in the cold grip of January felt alienating, to say the least. The forest is nothing but a skeleton of its former glory, a husk of the things it once held. There are no birds in the trees, and no leaves to grace their branches. The branches rattle together in a death-toll, in contrast to the familiar rustle they offer when they are covered in leaves, whether it be leaves of yellow-red-orange or a bright healthy green. Trees are unique in that way, though. Their leaves will not remain gone forever, they will grow back new and fresh, and the cycle of death and rebirth will continue until each tree reaches its own eventual end. With that mindset, it's difficult to be too sad about the forest's current state, especially not when winter can be beautiful in its own way.

Frost bites dead leaves, creating delicate patterns that melt under a warm touch. Soon, the sun will come in full force and destroy those intricate patterns of ice; like they were never there to begin with. And yet, I think beauty can be appreciated, even if it is fleeting. Snowflakes are much the same, and when they catch on my gloves or coat, I always take the time to try and see the delicate structure before it liquifies into nothing. Sometimes, when the flakes are large, I am lucky enough to see. Other times, the little specks of white seem to be nothing but dots, and their design is forever lost within moments.

Still, as January fades into February fades into March, I can't help but dream of spring, and think on the words of poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. "And Winter slumbering in the open air/Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!" (Coleridge 3/4). Perhaps then, the world dreams as I do of the shift in seasons. Perhaps it longs to ease back into the life and bursting color spring brings.



Spring was another common time for my family to tread the woods. Slick mud and flowers being some of the most obvious things the season brings. The mud was a bit of a hazard to walk through, and I definitely remember slipping more than once, but it was worth it for those flowers. Dozens of bright blooms pop up in early spring, stretching up towards the sun as it leaks through the branches that are still not quite coated.

*Mertensia virginica* (the Virginia bluebell) and *Dicentra cucullaria* (Dutchman's breeches) were always some of my favorite flowers to pick and bundle into a scrappy bouquet for my mother. She'd always humor me, putting them in a glass of water to try and keep them alive for a few days more. But eventually the flowers would wilt and decay, just like the leaves as they fall from the trees, just like any other living thing. In the past we'd toss our food waste in a pile near the edge of the woods, letting raccoons and possums take what they pleased before bacteria and fungi did the rest. With that food waste would go my plucked flowers, and I look back and wonder, like Walt Whitman did, "O how can it be that the ground itself does not sicken/How can you be alive you growths of spring...Are they not continually putting distemper'd corpses with you/Is not every continent work'd over and over with sour dead?" (Whitman 6/7, 9/10). For the compost we offer is nothing more than those things the earth once grew, and whether it be little hands that clumsily beheaded flowers, or skilled ones that brought down fruit, the world still ends up bringing its own living back into the dirt as they pass. A loop of life and death we see again and again in nature.

Just as spring is upon us now, summer will bear down soon after. I've never been during that time, when the sun is hot and the forest is in its fullest greens. It is then that the Turkey vultures I love to watch are most active, dancing on the wind and circling in search of something to pick apart. Perhaps this year, I will explore the woods during this time and get to know the sounds and sights while they are there. After all, just as the seasons cycle and loop endlessly, I too will loop between the places I am headed and this place where I grew up. I will return, again and again, and create my own loop. My own addition to the nature of this place.

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# Axolotl: The aliens of Mexico

*Leslie Delgado*

*SUST 125: Introduction to Global Sustainability*

*During our Introduction to Sustainability course, students explore their connections to the natural world around them in several assignments. Leslie delighted in exploring and sharing her cultural and natural connections to the *Ambystoma dumerilii*, or axolotl, in this nature journal entry.*

-Paulina Mena, Sue Pagnac, and Mary Stark

Alien Salamanders exist in Mexico. Curious? Well, this “alien salamander” is named the axolotl, or *Ambystoma dumerilii*, and has been a prized Mexican icon for centuries, but they are on the bridge to extinction. I first heard of their existence through a classmate on my marine biology trip to Galveston, Texas. He showed pictures of the creature and answered any questions I had. After he said they were endemic to Mexico, I quickly became more excited and intrigued with the axolotl. I almost felt a sense of embarrassment because I, the daughter of Mexican immigrants, didn’t know about them, but a kid from small town Iowa did. Nevermind the self-doubt, have you seen these creatures? They are the cutest, scariest, most interesting creatures we will ever see.



The Axolotl is only found specifically in the Lake region, Xochimilco, just south of Mexico City. Dionisio Eslava, at the museum Umbral Axochiatl, confirms that they are pronounced (Ah- HO- loe- tae) in Spanish and are named after an Aztec god. Although the creature is beautiful, the axolotl also has a deep history to Mexican culture. Eslava states that at the beginning of time, the Aztec gods sat around a fire to sacrifice themselves to give their sacred souls to an element, such as soil or water. One of the gods, Xolotl (SHO- lot) refused to throw himself in the fire. His brother Quetzalcoatl demanded he be sacrificed, but Xolotl resisted. He suffered many shape shifts and found himself at lake Xochimilco, eventually turning into an Axolotl. His brother then spared his life but punished the god by having him live in darkness forever as a water monster. Axolotl differ from other salamanders because they remain in their larval phase and don't experience metamorphosis. According to Dr. Mena, biology professor of Central College in Pella Iowa, this phenomenon is called "neotenia". They can also regenerate any body part that is wounded or severed, which is unique. Axolotls can produce eggs at a high rate, but the struggle is to keep them alive in the wild. Dr Erika Servin Zamora, Axolotl vet and author of *Mi ajolote en casa*, says, "In Mexico, there are 17 different species of Axolotls and all except for one species are in an endangered category."



*Megan Rohr - ceramic, Ceramics I*

Many factors have contributed to the Axolotl's endangered status. The main reason is the inappropriate introduction of exotic species of fish, like mojarra and carp, to the lake, which makes the Axolotl a target prey. Also, because Mexico City is so close by, its polluted water pours into Xochimilco's waters through runoff, making it hard for the Axolotls to adapt quickly (Zambrano). Mexico City is built on water because they are literally on top of the water; one can imagine how many chemical pollutants contaminate the freshwaters of Xochimilco.

According to professor Luis Zambrano of National Autonomous University of Mexico, "By 2025, they [axolotls] will be extinct if we don't do anything" (BBC News). Although it is a tragedy that they are struggling in the wild, only a few organizations specialize in the repopulation of the Axolotls. The beauty of Mexico is its fusion of religion and traditional culture; according to the BBC news, nuns nearby Patzcuaro, who belong to the Monastery of the Dominican Order, host a conservation organization

breeding the creatures, not only to keep the population alive, but also to make cough syrup. Although this hasn't been proven yet, the Axolotl is believed to have healing powers that can help with cough, bronchitis, and asthma. The nuns have years of experience of breeding axolotls and helping the scientists better understand their growth patterns--eventually using that knowledge and data to help restore the axolotl population.

Ever since I was introduced to these amazing creatures, I have been spiritually attracted to the animals. I am intrigued by the religious and spiritual meanings for the Axolotl as well. Who would've thought these creatures were connected to a cursed Aztec god? That is what's amazing about this whole situation: culture and religion surround this compelling, endemic creature. I will be visiting my family in Mexico and will definitely make efforts to visit the axolotl museum and conservation lab. We cannot turn our heads away from their suffering. As the axolotl becomes critically endangered, we must do our part to spread the word and attempt to contribute towards conservation efforts. But the question is, will attempts be enough to save them?

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# The Edge

*Mattie Francis*

*ENGL 241: Short Story Writing*

*My Short Story Writing class had so many talented fiction writers, I had a hard time selecting a favorite story. Since we workshop all stories and everyone in the class reads and comments on each one to make it the best it can be, I asked the students to suggest which story I should submit. Many stories were nominated, but *The Edge* received the most nominations. And I can see why. It has honest emotion, vivid descriptions, and is a metaphor for our times.*

-Cathy Haustein

I'm shocked awake. The siren blares with its high-pitched morning scream. Red lights at the corners of our small apartment whirl, casting bloodstained splotches on the bare white walls. I groan. The nights are never long enough. I am on refuse duty today. One of my least favorite jobs. I nudge Bernie, who's still asleep next to me. She can sleep through anything — even earthquakes and the air contamination alarm, which was literally designed to *nearly* pierce our eardrums. Her nose twitches. That's a good sign. I grab her shoulders and rock her whole body back and forth. Her nose twitches again. She must have been restless last night; her light brown hair is strewn across her face and even looks matted in some parts. This kind of sleep cannot be an evolutionary advantage. It's like Bernie dies every night and I have to breathe life back into her. Wide green eyes start to flutter. Thank God, maybe today we would be on time to work.

"It's refuse day Bernie, your favorite," I sing-song. I know that annoyance is the best way to wake her up. Rage is certainly a motivator.

"Shuddup 'mber." She rolls away from me, a line of displeasure forming between her eyebrows.

"Oh, c'mon Bernie, all that beautiful refuse is just waiting for you. Can't you smell it?" I shove my face into the back of her neck and inhale obnoxiously.

Her body shakes a bit. Laughter is also a motivator.

I wonder if I'll have to resort to tickling her sides, something she truly hates, but she rolls back towards me, shoving her hair out of her eyes. She smiles.

"Let's get that garbage," she says with a poke to my side.

"Hey! That hurt!" I say, mocking a grievous wound and flopping back down on the bed.

"You're so dramatic, Ember," she says as her feet tumble out of bed. She stretches like a cat, arms fully extended, spine arched, and yawns prodigiously. She shivers and rubs her hands up and down her arms. Then, Bernie zombie-walks to the stove. Coffee is another motivator.

I could tell you Bernie's morning routine backwards and frontwards. After we moved in together, I watched her like a hawk, almost creepily, worried that she'd suddenly realize that I wasn't worth her time and that she'd leave. So, I tried to memorize as much as I could about her. I needed to have memories, not only of the big things, but of the random Thursday when she laughs at my stupid joke and tilts her head back in the

white afternoon sunlight. Bernie's morning routine is a bright spot on a gloomy day. Her shuffling, tired footsteps, her little idiosyncrasies, infiltrated the grooves in my brain. Like footprints on wet sand, she carved paths through my neurons because I wanted her to, I needed her to. So, I know her as well, or even better than I know myself.

I smile and follow her to the kitchen area. Our apartment is standard fare for middle class citizens. One main room with a small bathroom. Everything is clinical shades of grey, white, or black. Except for our touches of course. Bernie can't live in a world without color. The pillows on our bed are outrageous shades of yellow, orange, and pink. The quilt that Bernie made, when she decided to take up another hobby, is almost vulgar in how bright and cheerful it is.

I stand at the sink, washing last night's dishes, and look out our one window. It offers a panoramic view of our small outdoor space — it's much nicer than most people expect for an apartment in standardized living. Our building's "natural" area is very manicured. We have regulations on everything. Each blade of grass is purposeful and accounted for. Short shrubs line the space beneath our window, and if there was ever a breeze, they would sway in it. Trees are rare, but we have a Crusader Hawthorn that blooms white flowers in the spring. Not that the seasons matter to us anymore after the installation of the Veil, but the trees still seem to care. Their internal clocks still tick in the same way, keeping their natural rhythm. Winter, spring, summer, fall remain the same when you're as stubborn as the Hawthorn tree. My hands are wet as I scrub the hours old food off of our tin dishware. The water from our faucet mimics the sound of rain on a metal roof.

In the distance, I can see the flickering of the Veil. It looks strong. We might have a good air quality day. That always makes refuse duty easier when we aren't fighting so hard for air while bending down to collect our community's massive amounts of trash. If I squint out our window, I see the oily shifting of the Edge. The Veil is a huge flexible dome that stretches across our sky and separates us from the toxic air Beyond. The Edge marks the most vulnerable parts of the Veil. It's like a weak seam in a well-worn dress. One forceful tug and the whole thing will tear apart. I place the dishes on the counter, and Bernie joins me to dry. She puts her head on my shoulder and sighs.

"The Veil looks strong today. That's good."



*Tessa Brubaker - ceramic, 3D Prob Solving*

“I know, maybe we’ll actually be able to breathe.”

“I wonder what’s out past it, you know. Nobody official has been out there for close to 50 years. Maybe things have changed.” I tense. Bernie *knows* this is a sore subject. I take a deep breath.

“I don’t really think we have to worry about that. Since everything out there is dead. We still struggle to breathe even from within the Veil. I doubt that anything has changed.”

“You just aren’t thinking big enough. I didn’t want to tell you, but I saw a bird yesterday.” *A bird?*

“What do you mean, ‘a bird’?”

“Exactly what I said, silly. I saw a bird flying outside of the Veil. It was a flash of white, but I saw its wings, its silhouette. It was definitely a bird.” I feel my jaw clench. I really don’t want to fight this morning. Bernie and I rarely fight, but when we do, it’s always about the Beyond. She knows as well as I do that going through the Edge, past the Veil, and into the Beyond is a death sentence.

Bernie dries the last dish and stumbles back to her coffee on the stove. Its bitter smell fills our small space. I take a breath. *A bird. Flying past the Veil. That’s rich.* The atmosphere out there is so poisonous, so deadly, that it corrodes your brain and corrupts your body. Bernie and I both learned about Beyond poisoning in school. Each year we’d have to sit through presentations and get educated on “Veil Safety.” The gist of these presentations was this: stay the hell away from the Edge, and you’ll be fine. Or, close to fine at least.

Beyond poisoning is complicated. First, the hallucinations begin. These are horrifying and nightmarish. Scientists predict that the neurological aspect of the poison triggers a fear response so intense that the afflicted witness their own death and the deaths of their loved ones repeatedly, until their brains turn to mush. Then, pustulous, painful boils form on the skin. It’s said that they reek of decomposition. The skin explodes with toxins; flesh is often seen torn from the bodies of those who cross the threshold. There are no animals in the Beyond, so these hideous scenes of mutilation are either self-inflicted, or a result of the massive and extremely fast swelling of the body. It takes four to six minutes to die from Beyond poisoning. However, the polluted mind can stretch time to unimaginable lengths, transforming minutes into years. Rangers claim some bodies seen beyond the Edge are aged drastically. The bodies of young women, spry and supple with hair of gold, auburn, or deep black, are found looking ancient. White hair streaming from their unmoving bodies. Young men, lithe and muscular, are found with sagging skin and hair of silver. The families of those who go past the Veil never see their loved ones again. Their bodies aren’t retrieved, as it is a certain death sentence. Rangers say that the Edge is lined with the bodies of those rash optimists who believe that the Veil is a hoax. They whisper about an Eden beyond the Veil. I know it’s a foolish fantasy.

But, there are a few, like Vali Cripps, who make their living off of poor, naive suckers who will believe any of the honey-sweet dribble that falls from their stinking mouths. Vali is nothing if not charismatic. His hard angular face is punctuated with a tattoo on his neck that reads: “rotten to the core.” He’s really classy, if you can’t tell. Even with that stupid personal motto scrawled across his neck, people still trust Vali. They feed off of his inane optimism. Forbidden fruit and all that, you know. If you dangle something like a Red Delicious in front of a starving person and say, “don’t eat this,” they’ll be gnawing it out of your hands before you can tell them “this one is actually poisonous.” The same goes with trapped people. If you offer them a way out, they’ll stampede. Even if it’s over a cliff.

Vali is especially popular with people that live closer to the Edge. Their air quality is so degraded that they actually have a much lower life expectancy. And a much higher infant mortality rate. Why they believe that the Eden past the Veil exists is unknown to me. But, I guess if I watched my baby gasp for air, its small lungs faltering under the strain of our polluted air, I would be feeling pretty desperate too.

I hate that Vali exploits the last hopes of otherwise hopeless people. I hate that he creates a space for dangerous levels of optimism. I hate that Bernie seems to like Vali’s spiels. She sees more beauty in the world than I do. Like imaginary birds, for instance. I didn’t respond about the bird after that. I didn’t want to fight. Not with my Bernie.

\*\*\*

By 8:00 in the morning, Bernie and I are stumbling on the sidewalks in the stiff, neon yellow jumpsuits that mark us as refuse workers. I grab crumpled food wrappers with the pincher tool that the community center provides. My garbage bag drags on the ground. I’ll have to unload soon. We’re almost done with the main road, which was our biggest assignment today. The concrete sparkles behind us as we proceed through the square. Our limited space must remain clean, yet that doesn’t stop people from littering. I’ve seen people throw their garbage on the ground, only to pick it up the next day on refuse duty. It is a strange world.

“Hey! Ow, Vali! That hurts!” I hear a pincher snap together.

“C’mon have a little fun, Bernie. What do you think of this one?”

“Ew, that’s *foul*. Get it away from me!”

Vali laughs, a piercing, shrieking laugh as he pulls a plastic bag full of yellow, fishy-smelling juice away from Bernie’s face. His greasy, slicked back hair shines. Somehow, he looks tacky even though we are all wearing the same clothes. Bernie looks back at me, and mimes retching into her garbage bag.

We continue picking, until we get to the northmost point of the bubble. Vali is close to useless which is why working with him is such a pain. I’ve found that having a superiority complex makes it exceedingly difficult to pick up garbage. His ego is already so heavy, he struggles to add any more weight to his sleazy form.



Finally, it's our lunch break. Bernie gets done before me, so I wait in the lunch line by myself. Looks like some sort of bean soup today. I lost Bernie in the crowd, it's so easy to do when we're all dressed the same, and then I see her. Laughing. With Vali Cripps. Touching his arm. Head thrown back.

I feel a spike of jealousy, but even more than that, fear. We are quite close to the Edge by now. Bernie and Vali turn away from me, I crane my head to see where they are headed, but they disappear down the hill, food in hand, talking like old friends. I get my soup, so excited for the bean mush and stale bread, and nervously head in their direction. They're sitting cross-legged at the base of the hill. The Edge is about a mile away. Its oily sheen shifts and moves hypnotically in the midday sun. They're too close. I balance my soup — if you can even call it that — in my hand, and carefully descend in my community-issued white tennis shoes. The grass is all one hideous color. Like it's been spray-painted the cheapest, most heinous shade of green.

I get close to them, their backs turned to me, both of them staring at the Edge. They're speaking eagerly in hushed tones.

"That's what I said! You know, no one believes me. Ember won't even talk about it. She's too scared." I feel an old wound open, one made fresh again, at Bernie's words. *She's opening up to Vali. She wants Vali, not me. She thinks I'm a coward.*

"Nobody wants to be brave anymore, Bernie. Folks like you and me, and my friends, we still see a future outside of the Veil. It's crazy that hundreds of years ago people could just go wherever they wanted. Can you imagine the freedom? That was Eden, Bernie, it was. What if we're missing out?" He pauses and inhales deeply. He clasps his hands around his near-empty bowl. "My neighbor lost their little girl yesterday. I saw her three days ago. Her breathing sounded like a whistle through two reeds of grass. She was always so fragile. Her coughing used to rattle her so much I thought she'd convulse to death. But, nope, just stopped breathing. Like they all do." For once Vali looks genuinely moved.

I close my eyes. *Jesus, that is horrific.*

"Oh, Vali, that's so awful." I can hear that Bernie is about to cry. "What is the family going to do?"

"The rest of them are booked for my first excursion. We're getting out of here. We want to stop wondering what's Beyond and see it for ourselves. You know about the Eden theory, right? We're going to test it soon. What is the Veil keeping us from?" He sounds like a salesman again.

"I can tell you that," I cut in, my voice dry and foreign, "it's keeping you from death."

Vali jumps at my voice but recovers quickly. "Speak of the devil! Ember, I was just telling your old lady Bernie here, about my plans to pass the Edge. I think she's about to glide on out of here, by the looks of it. Did you see her face? All smiles. If I survive, I'll be sure to take a lot of pictures for you guys. Postcards, whatever."

Vali's confidence is disgusting to me. That poor grieving family that he's swindled. He usually sells old pictures of the Beyond. Waterfalls, rivers, beaches, all the things we don't see anymore. But, his most popular product is himself. He can spin anything about the Beyond into fool's gold.

Bernie's face is pink when she turns towards me. "I'm not going to go or anything. I just wanted to hear what Vali thought about the bird I saw the other day."



*Amelia Brown - Acrylic, 11" x 15" 2D Problem Solving*

I nod rigidly. I sit down next to Bernie, and eat my *delicious* mush in silence, while they talk animatedly about the Beyond. About what used to be out there. Something about deer? I don't remember what they are from school, some kind of forest animal I think. They sure as hell don't exist anymore. They might be the ones with the long necks? Or horns? Really, no idea. I'm so laser focused on trying to picture a deer, that I almost miss Vali's very discreet sales pitch.

"Bernie, you are really intelligent and open-minded. There are so few of us left now! You know, if you wanted in on my excursion I'd be willing to let you in on a discounted price." He wiggles his thin, black eyebrows suggestively. My blood boils.

"Oh Vali, no, I couldn't. I would love to, but I couldn't." She looks at me while saying this, not at him.

"Okay, well if you ever change your mind, the first excursion is next week. But, keep it quiet. The rangers can't know."

Bernie's face is turned away from me as she slowly nods. I feel excluded from her, alienated, wrong.

The lunch bell dings. Our time is up. Back to work.

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Wailing. My chest tightens as I gasp for air. *Goddamn those alarms*. Red lights flash around the room hurting my eyes. I groan. The nights are never long enough. Yesterday was rough. Maybe today we'll have a better assignment. I roll over to nudge

Bernie. The bed is cold. I bolt up. Bernie never wakes up before me — it's impossible. She enters a near coma every night. I race around our small apartment. I don't see her. I check everything again. I open and slam every door. I even look in the larger cabinets that she hid in once for a game of hide and seek. But she's not here. She's gone.

Something catches my eye on the shiny black surface of our countertop. Bernie left a note. My hands are shaking. Her delicate handwriting clutches my heart.

*Ember,*

*I know. I'm sorry. But, I feel like I have to do this. I love our life together, but I feel like a bird in a cage. We breathe recycled air and pick up garbage that isn't ours and stare at the same trees and the same blades of grass every day. I feel so trapped. We're stuck on a treadmill on the same setting. I think there's a better life for us. I want to go somewhere and see something new. I think that Eden is real. I've seen things Beyond the Veil. It's alive out there. It has to be. I'm going with Vali. I can't be trapped in here, even with such a wonderful cell-mate. If you want to come with us, we are going through the gap in the patrol on the southeast side of the Edge. You know the one. I want so desperately for you to come. I want to hold your hand at the base of an oak tree, its leaves shading us from a brilliant sun that heats our skin unlike ever before. I want to watch the wind kiss your face and rustle your hair. I want to see you smile at the birds twittering above our heads, upset that we've chosen their tree. They'll swoop down at us, furious at the idea of us discovering their nest. But, we leave them be. All we do is share their tree. That is my greatest dream. Please tell me you share it. I love you. I hope you love me too. Even if I don't deserve it.*

*Yours, Bernie*

The note is too short. I feel bile rise in my throat. Damn her. Damn me. Damn it all. I had a special day planned for us. I bought us pancake batter. I always make Bernie's into funny shapes to make her laugh. I try to make our lives as palatable as I can, but I feel the knot in my throat bob at Bernie's words. She is unhappy. No amount of silly pancakes could change that. I look longingly at the stove, Bernie's dragging feet and sleepy eyes completely absent. I was looking forward to that. Fuck.

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I'm really good at pretending that my life isn't falling apart. That is the skill that I'm relying on as I head towards the southeastern gap. I am so angry. So betrayed. I try to ignore the nagging sadness and abandonment that has settled itself in the base of my throat. I focus in on the anger to keep myself moving. It works. I see only red. I told her not to do it. Does she listen to me? No. It's like talking to a godforsaken wall. Vali Cripps. To believe him over me? But Bernie was too busy seeing the good in him that doesn't exist. They're both totally stark, raving mad. Vali's *See where the Edge meets the horizon? Where it looks like a heatwave in technicolor? That's where it is ... Eden* speech — I could throw up. Who would believe that horseshit? But Bernie ate it up, right out of the palm of his hand. I remember her green eyes were so wide and she was looking at him

like he was God, their neon yellow jumpsuits screaming in the midday sun. I saw what he was pointing at too, and it didn't look like Eden to me. It looked angry. Like a transparent oil spill coming to life, and hungry for whatever it could suck into its path.

Thoughts racing, I pick up my pace. No one is out yet, or if they are I don't see them, blinded by the severity of my mission. I am going so fast, fueled by anger and jealousy. I can't let this happen. Bernie may be an idiot, but she's my idiot. I don't want her to die. I would never forgive myself.

I cringe thinking about Bernie. Her positivity used to be comforting to me. Sort of a light in the dark. But now, my poor, stupid Bernie, is on her way to die. And I have to save her stupid ass. Is love always going to be like this? Will I always be saving someone from a danger that I already warned them about? God, I can just see her laughing at Vali's sleazy jokes and grabbing his arm as he spun those lies to her. She wants so desperately to believe that there will be a better life for us there, one where we can breathe deeply, but it's just not possible.

Maybe if I had been a better listener this wouldn't have happened. I shut Bernie down at every turn whenever she tried to shift the conversation towards the Veil.

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I see them in the distance. A clump of them. Crowded around one figure. Vali. He must be making his big entrance speech. I start to run. They are 50 feet from the Edge. I've never seen people get so close. Its height is incredible. The translucent surface shimmers and moves in the coldness of the daylight. The multicolored shifting makes me dizzy. It does not feel welcoming.

Bernie is towards the back. Something unclenches in my chest when I see her. She's still alive. She's trying to catch a glimpse of Vali, their valiant speaker, but she's too short to see over the people in front of her.

I finally reach her. I'm breathing heavily as I tap her shoulder. She shrieks, happy to see me, a small relief, which is followed by a hacking cough.

"Oh, Ember, you came! I didn't think you would! Vali is telling us the plan for when we enter." She grabs my sweaty hand tightly, her smile stretched so far it splits her face in two.

"Bernie, I think—"

"We have a new member! Ember, thank you for joining us." Vali gestures towards me, and the crowd turns. Either eyeing me suspiciously or nodding at me encouragingly. If I ever wondered what it was like to join a cult, I don't need to anymore. The way these people are looking at Vali is insane. A few almost drool.

Vali finds a different voice. A politicized tone, a polished exterior. All the better to convince us to go to our deaths with. "I know that you were all taught to fear the Edge, but I want to eradicate that fear today. No longer will we shudder at the idea of the Beyond, but instead, we will think of it as an area of unlimited opportunity. A place of beauty. These hundreds of years have cleaned the air that was once toxic to us. Nature has restored itself. The crimes of our ancestors have been answered to, by us, and now we will reclaim their Earth." Vali raises his fist, triumphantly. His followers cheer. Bernie is absolutely vibrating with excitement. I hate being the reasonable one. Vali looks rabid.

Eyes wild, hair disheveled. I want to believe him, it would be a relief, but I'm too rooted in this reality to be able to see the one Vali has fabricated.

"Now, it's time, my friends, to begin our new life! Who among us is brave enough, strong enough, to enter the Beyond first?" Vali yells, gravel in his voice. His arms extend, embracing the crowd with his manic energy. A young boy near the front, his black hair shining in the soft morning sun, raises his hand. The woman next to him grabs his upraised arm, eyes fearful. His frame is thin and pale. Their faces are mirrors of one another. She must be his mother. The boy's face is set, determined, despite its pallor. He removes his mother's hand, and stares ahead stoically. He can't be more than seventeen. "Ah yes, young Theo! Please, step forward." Vali's smile looks as if the corners of his mouth are being pulled upwards by strings. I think he may start to bleed soon, if the pulling of his skin continues.

Theo turns to face the Edge, Vali's hands on his shoulders. He is maybe five feet from the iridescent wall that protects us from the poison Beyond. Theo stands there, facing the unnatural mass, and takes two steps forward. One more step and he will pass the Edge. He takes a deep breath. One step.

He is Beyond. He is Beyond. Theo is Beyond! He turns, his silhouette distorted. His shadow waves. We all clap and cheer. I am so shocked. I turn to Bernie, my jaw almost dislocated, and we embrace. Her body is wracked with happy sobs.

Someone screams. I turn back. Theo's young body is on the ground, convulsing. It jerks as if he is possessed. I smell him. Decomposing before our eyes. His flesh is swelling. I can hear the distorted cries of pain that are wrenched from his shaking body. His right hand pops like an over-inflated tire. Blood and puss. Carnage. The scene is carnage. Bernie is crying.

She is whispering, "No, no, no, it can't be," as we back away from the Edge. Minutes pass, all of us locked in on Theo's twitching body. His once black hair is white. His body stops moving. We are still. I had never seen someone die. Sirens are going off. The rangers will be here soon. Interference with the Veil is a major felony. I grab Bernie's hand and pull her away.

"C'mon, let's go home." I say, softly. Theo's mother is shrieking. She is a crumpled form on the ground. Something inside of her is irrevocably broken. She doesn't sound human.

The crowd advances on Vali as Bernie and I work our way back. Vali, hands raised, seems to accept his fate, as the mob pushes him beyond the Veil. I hear his flesh burst seconds later. Somewhere in the next four to six minutes Vali Cripps will die.

Bernie and I walk towards home, she leans into me, weeping, as I try to stay upright for the both of us. I'm shaking. My hands are numb where they hold onto Bernie's shoulders. I didn't believe Vali, I really didn't. But some part of me *wanted* to, so desperately. There is nowhere else for us to go. We're stuck in this cage. Safe, not sound, but safe, inside the Veil.



*Fynn Wadsworth - marker and graphite on paper, 22" x 30" 2D Problem Solving*

# Dido, Compulsory Heterosexuality, and the Lesbian Continuum

Anika Faro

ENGL 361: World Literature I

*Anika's research project on The Aeneid illustrates the enormous payoffs of reading ancient texts through the lens of modern feminist theory. Anika intervenes effectively in the scholarly conversation on this ancient Roman epic by exploring how Adrienne Rich's theory of compulsory heterosexuality can better help us understand how gender and power work in the text.*

- Valerie Billing

Strong warrior women and regal queens are the epitome of strong female characters. In the *Aeneid*, Dido is a powerful queen who has fought for her people. Dido is the queen of Carthage who ends up falling so in love with Aeneas that she commits suicide at the end of Book 4. Adrienne Rich's theory of the lesbian continuum and compulsory heterosexuality is useful in providing a new feminist analysis of Dido's story in Book 4. The lesbian continuum talks about how women fall in love with other women, but also "include[s] the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, [and] the giving and receiving of practical and political support [...]" (Rich 649). Dido's story is an example of why the support system Rich calls for in the lesbian continuum is important because all of the other female characters fail to empower and support her, leading to her death. Rich defines compulsory heterosexuality as an ideology that says women are biologically built to fall in love with only men, denying the existence of lesbians and any kind of female community (Rich 632). Dido has compulsory heterosexuality forced upon her by goddesses like Juno and Venus and her own sister, Anna, when they all encourage her to marry Aeneas for their own reasons, which are political for the goddesses, and in order to fulfill societal expectations for Anna. Scholars have often analyzed Dido as a victim of her own choices and the cause of her own death. However, using Rich's terms, Dido is the victim of the other women in her story, who enforce compulsory heterosexuality and do not support her, leading to her fall from being a strong, regal queen and into death. Dido's death shows how important Rich's idea of the lesbian continuum is, specifically in women empowering and supporting each other. Having a good support system that was focused on empowering women instead of focused on putting Aeneas and the thought of marriage and children first would have changed the outcome of Dido's story.

Adrienne Rich's article about compulsory heterosexuality and the lesbian continuum is an influential text in feminist discourse. Rich decided to talk about these terms because she saw a gap in scholarship where feminist writings were enforcing the

idea that women want to be with men sexually, which denied the existence of women who loved other women platonically or sexually. When Rich was talking about the lesbian continuum, she was not limiting the term to lesbian women; instead she was using the lesbian continuum as an umbrella term that “embrace[d] many more forms of primary intensity between and among women” (Rich 649). This continuum includes all relationships between women, be it a friendship, a romantic relationship, or any other relationship between two or more women. By applying the idea of the lesbian continuum to Dido’s character, the lack of relationships that would be a part of the lesbian continuum and the enforcement of compulsory heterosexuality from the women around her, Dido’s mental anguish is easier to explain and more relatable to the modern experiences of women who refuse to take part in compulsory heterosexuality.

Dido’s character is heavily influenced by her compulsory heterosexuality throughout the *Aeneid*, but her first introduction does not show it as she is powerful on her own. Her power in the beginning scenes comes from the fact that she shows masculine traits instead of feminine ones. According to Barbara McManus, these traits and attributes are positive if they are masculine, and negative if they are feminine:

In the figures, a whole complex of positively charged ideological and cultural values are regularly and repeatedly associated with males and masculinity (order, rationality, *fatum*, *pietas*, *imperium*, Rome, Jupiter) while their negatively charged contraries are associated with females and femininity (disorder, irrational emotion, *furor*, *impietas*, defeat/submission, Carthage, Juno). (McManus 97)

This quote directly connects to the differences between Dido and Aeneas. Dido is queen of Carthage introduced in Juno’s temple, while Aeneas is on a quest to Italy so his descendants can found Rome. In Book 1, Dido is first physically presented as a powerful queen of Carthage with more masculine traits than feminine,

So too Dido, moving through their midst.  
Urged on the work of building a kingdom.  
Then under the temple’s vaulted entrance  
And flanked by guards, she ascended her throne.  
She was making laws for her people,  
Distributing duties or assigning them by lot... (Virgil 1.619-624)

This introduction of Dido’s character shows Dido as a powerful woman who is acting with traits that McManus would say are masculine. She is completing the duties that are usually reserved for a king while also keeping her femininity and power. In the quote above, Dido is shown making the laws, not just agreeing to them. This is important because it shows that Dido’s power over Carthage is completely in her hands, not filtered through other people first. She is also shown going up to her throne, putting her literally

above everyone else in the room, but also showing that her status is higher than everyone else's and that she has the most power of anyone in Carthage. According to Katherine De Boer, Dido is even considered a militant figure at her introduction:

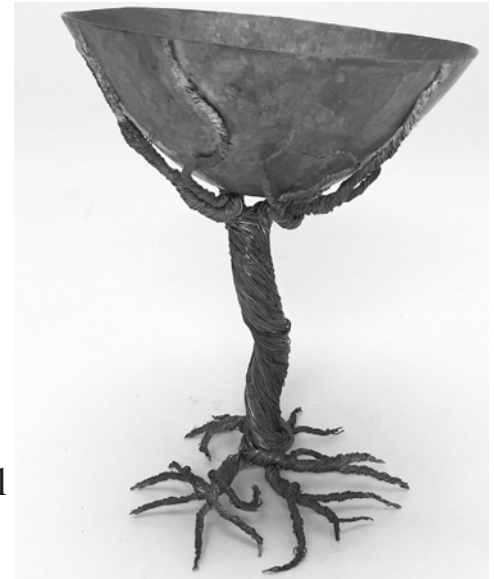
Though she does not personally commit wartime violence, Dido is often figured as militant, particularly in the introduction and conclusion to her story. She is first described as a *dux femina* (1.364), a female leader, who spearheads her people's escape from tyranny. As is often noted, Dido's initial appearance is immediately preceded by the tableau of the Amazon Penthesilea on the doors of the temple of Juno, and this juxtaposition suggests that the two women should be identified with one another (1.490–93). (De Boer 143)

DeBoer's analysis of Dido as a militant figure adds to her masculine portrayal of power, rationality, and *pietas*, which means duty. Dido founded the city of Carthage after her brother killed her husband and attempted to steal her gold. She fought for her livelihood and succeeded in creating her own city and building her own power. The comparison between Dido and Penthesilea, an amazon warrior, reminds the people who visit the temple of both Juno and Dido's power, not only as queens, but also in war. However, as her narrative continues, this positive view where she is shown as more masculine is quickly exchanged for a desperate woman whose only goal is to keep a man from leaving her.

Dido's strong introduction is quickly overpowered by men and goddesses taking away her power and slowly leading her to exhibit the stereotypical 'negative' female traits that McManus mentioned above. When Aeneas comes to Carthage, Venus tells her son Cupid to make Dido fall in love with Aeneas in order to keep Aeneas safe. Thus, thinking that Cupid is Aeneas' son, he goes to sit in her lap, and Cupid forces her to forget her dead husband, Sychaeus, and fall in love with Aeneas,

And she clung to him  
With all her heart, her eyes were riveted on him,  
And she cuddled him on her lap. Poor Dido.  
She had no idea how great a god had settled there.  
Mindful of his Acidalian mother,  
Little by little he began to blot out Sychaeus

And tried to captivate with a living passion  
Her slumbering soul and her heart long unused. (Virgil 1.877-884)



Rylie Clark, copper, *Metalsmithing I*



As Cupid is making Dido fall in love, he is taking away Dido's wish to stay true to Sychaeus and replacing it with a desire for Aeneas that eventually leads her to the point of madness. He is also taking away her masculine traits and replacing them with irrational emotional ones, along with more motherly actions when she cuddles him as if he was her own son, despite being in front of her people. Her strength as the "masculine" queen who was making laws earlier is now gone and replaced by *impietas*, which is the opposite of doing one's duty or acting in a way that is considered improper, and irrational emotion as Dido clings to the boy and stares at him. The line "with all her heart" shows how desperately she is holding onto Cupid. The other interesting part about this section of Dido's story is that Venus is the one that ordered Cupid to make her fall in love with Aeneas. Venus is on Aeneas' side, so she decides to tear down Dido instead of empowering her by dooming her to an unwanted love. Venus is not supporting Dido, but supporting Aeneas by forcing her to love him, and by forcing her to participate in compulsory heterosexuality by falling for the strange, strong man. Venus is herself participating in compulsory heterosexuality and denying the lesbian existence because she is not supporting Dido but doing everything for her relationship with Aeneas. Dido's character has changed as well. Instead of the masculine, king-like figure shown at Dido's first appearance, she is now an emotionally motivated woman at the whims of a god who looks like a child. Dido suddenly wants marriage to a man and a child, which is the main ideology of compulsory heterosexuality. The difference between Dido at the beginning of the epic and the scene where she is cuddling a child makes her seem like two completely different women. The first Dido is strong, independent, rational, and willful, but the Dido holding Cupid in her lap is emotional, acting improperly with no sense of her duty as queen, and has no control over the situation. She has gone from showing stereotypical



*Madilynn Peitzman - Artist's book, detail 2D Problem Solving*

masculine traits to stereotypical negative female traits. Instead of participating in the lesbian continuum by helping Dido and supporting her politically, Venus is helping to force Dido down the path of compulsory heterosexuality by making her love a man when she would rather be a single widow for the rest of her life.

In Book 4, Dido's spiral into compulsory heterosexuality forced by Venus and Cupid is encouraged by Anna, Dido's sister. At the beginning of the book, Dido is horrified by the fact that she is in love with Aeneas, and that she has broken her promise that she would stay faithful to Sychaeus. This horror at loving Aeneas could also show Dido's horror of compulsory heterosexuality and its denial of her desire to stay single, which is a concept more on the spectrum of the lesbian continuum. Anna decides to encourage Dido to love Aeneas, instead of supporting her decision to stay single, enforcing compulsory heterosexuality because Dido has no children:

O sister dearer than light itself,  
Will you waste your youth in spinsterhood  
Alone and grieving, never to taste love's joys,  
The sweetness of children? Do you think  
Any of this matters to ghosts in the grave? (Virgil 4.37-41)

In the first line, Anna seems to be trying to empower Dido by supporting her in her love for Aeneas, begging Dido to live her life and not waste it. However, in the next few lines, Anna's views change to focus on motherhood and how Dido should want to be a mother. Instead of supporting Dido in the fact that she wants to keep a promise and that her love for Aeneas is hurting her, Anna wants Dido to focus on having a relationship and having children, which is part of compulsory heterosexuality which says that a woman's most important role is having children and a husband. Anna also scolds Dido for making a promise to her dead husband when she asks if anything they do matters to "ghosts in the grave." Instead of supporting the admirable duty that Dido is trying to keep in her promise to Sychaeus, a masculine trait to try to keep, Anna is trying to encourage Dido to let go of her duty to her husband so she can have children.

Dido's desire to stay unmarried and her horror at the idea of being married again relates to modern women's experiences of being forced into compulsory heterosexuality. Teresa Ramsby points out that Dido is "not only a queen, but a woman with the potential desire and power to seek her own mate. When Dido falls in love with Aeneas, we see a stronger emphasis on her vulnerable femininity" (Ramsby 14). Ramsby's argument here emphasizes the fact that if Dido had wanted to, she could have found someone to be in another relationship with, but she did not until Venus used her son's power to force her to. Dido did not have any desire to be in another relationship with a man in her lifetime, going against compulsory heterosexuality. Dido shows her wish to stay unmarried when she tells Anna,

If I were not unshakeable in my vow  
Never to pledge myself in marriage again  
After death stole my first love away—  
If the mere thought of marriage did not leave me cold,  
I might perhaps have succumbed this once. (Virgil 4.18-22)

In this quote, Dido is directly telling Anna that she does not want to marry Aeneas and that the thought of marriage “makes her feel cold.” Instead of supporting her sister, Anna exploits Dido’s emotional vulnerability by convincing her that she should want to marry Aeneas and a chance to have children, even though the very thought of that marriage is causing Dido mental anguish. Dido’s horror at the idea of marriage and Anna’s denial of that horror is similar to a story in Adrienne Rich’s article of a woman who was subjected to “forcible rape for six months” after coming to a doctor and saying she was a lesbian, to which the doctor told her she was not a lesbian (Rich 653). Although the conflict between Dido and Anna is not so horrific as the story of the woman and the doctor, Anna’s denial of Dido’s feelings and horror is similar in that it brings Dido down and eventually hurts her mental health. Anna is an example of a woman not empowering another woman as they should in the lesbian continuum, but instead is subscribing to compulsory heterosexuality and forcing Dido to agree.

Dido is forced even further into compulsory heterosexuality against her will when the goddesses, Venus and Juno, arrange for her to marry Aeneas. After Anna convinces Dido to go through with marrying Aeneas, she has continually fallen deeper and deeper into madness: “Dido is burning. / She wanders all through the city in her misery, / Raving mad” (Virgil 4.80-82). The magic that Cupid used on Dido, and Anna’s encouragement to give into it, are causing Dido to go insane as she tries to fight it and keep her promise to her dead husband. This mental turmoil also shows her fight between staying the masculine, powerful queen she was at the beginning, and the emotional femininity of her desire for Aeneas. This turmoil is also the fight between the desire a woman feels for a man in compulsory heterosexuality and Dido’s actual desire to stay single. When Juno sees this turmoil take over Dido, she tries to use it to her own advantage by marrying her to Aeneas so that Aeneas will never make it to Italy. Juno approaches Venus to make the deal to marry Dido to Aeneas for her own political goals, but Venus twists those goals to fit her political goals in keeping Aeneas safe until he can move on to Italy. The two goddesses agree that they will cause bad weather on a hunt, where Juno will marry Aeneas and Dido in a cave,

And with your consent I will unite them  
In holy matrimony. This will be their wedding.  
The Cytherean approved and nodded her assent,  
Smiling all the while at Juno’s treachery. (Virgil 4.145-148)

In the first two lines of this quote, Juno is asking Venus, Aeneas' mother, for consent for the marriage, but never asks Dido if the marriage is something she wants. Juno is exploiting the yearning Dido has for Aeneas, which was forced on her when Venus exploited her earlier. In the next two lines, Venus is also exploiting Dido again, but is also exploiting Juno's wish to keep power in Carthage by stopping Aeneas from moving on to Italy in order to keep him safe while he is in Carthage.

Venus is the only one of these three female figures who comes out on top because Aeneas stays safe but leaves when he is prompted to by the gods. Dido is heartbroken as he tells her that he does not accept the marriage, meaning legally it never happened,

I never hoped to steal away from your land  
In secret, and you should never imagine I did.  
Nor have I ever proposed marriage to you  
Or entered into any nuptial agreement. (Virgil 4.384-387)

In the quote above, Aeneas is denying that he ever married Dido, which causes her so much pain and mental turmoil that she eventually kills herself. His denial of the marriage also hurts Juno because Aeneas is still succeeding and has set up the destruction of Carthage, her beloved city and denied the marriage that she set up as the goddess of marriage. According to Leme,

[t]he emotional world of Dido is one of unsuccessful love, so much so that Aeneas's flight mobilizes the feelings around her past loss. Almost as in a post-traumatic stress disorder response, the recent loss revives the old one, the death of Sychaeus. The damage has been done. Aeneas attacked her honor and created a *fama* [reputation] that debases the queen in front of her people and her equals. (Leme 96)

Not only did Dido's reputation get ruined by Aeneas, but so did Juno's and the reputation of her beloved city, Carthage. Leme's argument emphasizes the loss of Dido's positively viewed masculine traits and the reputation she had because she broke her vow to Sychaeus and forgot her duty to her people by focusing on her emotions surrounding Aeneas. Aeneas' denial of their wedding leads Dido to decide that she will die by the sword because she feels guilt for breaking her promise to Sychaeus,

No, Dido, die as you deserve, end your sorrow  
With a sword [...]  
It was not my lot  
To live a blameless life as a widow, as free  
As a wild thing, untouched by these cares.  
I have not kept my vow to Sychaeus' ashes. (Virgil 4.640-646)

After ruining her reputation and leaving, Aeneas has also destroyed Dido's will to live. Dido blames herself for not keeping her vow to Sychaeus, but also wishes she could have avoided falling in love with Aeneas at all. This shows how even though Dido is unaware of the exploits of the goddesses, she has recognized the loss of her power and reputation at their hands and is essentially wishing she had never met Aeneas, and that Cupid had not made her fall in love with him. Christopher Nappa's article analyzed the last lines of the quote above and argues that,



*Caleb Kuiper, glass, Glassblowing I*

[o]n the face of it, Dido would seem to complain that she has not been allowed to live her life without marriage, like a wild animal, thereby escaping the painful situation in which she has twice found herself, once when her husband Sychaeus was murdered, now again when her lover Aeneas is preparing to depart in order to fulfil a destiny that does not include her. (Nappa 303)

Nappa's argument emphasizes that in a world where heterosexuality was expected of her and forced upon her, all Dido received was pain, heartbreak, and betrayal. It leaves her wishing that she could have avoided marriage, but also for a support system like what would be found in the lesbian continuum. "Poor Dido", as she was called in Book 1, was a victim of compulsory heterosexuality in that she was forced into a relationship with a man with no alternatives, while Venus, Juno, and Anna pushed her to marry Aeneas instead of supporting her like they should have within the lesbian continuum.

In the end of Book 4, Dido's anguish reaches its breaking point as she decides to actually go through with her plan to kill herself by the sword. After seeing Aeneas' ship leaving the port, Dido builds a pyre, and standing on it, kills herself,

With these words on her lips her companions saw her  
Collapse onto the sword, saw the blade  
Foaming with blood and her hands spattered.  
A cry rises to the roof, and Rumor  
Dances wildly through the shaken town.  
The houses ring with lamentation  
And the wails of women. (Virgil 4.769-775)

After all Dido has had to endure, she is finally driven to death which leads to the only showing of the lesbian continuum in her story. Right after her death, the epic says that the houses rang with the “wails of women” specifically. The women of Carthage were wailing not only for the death of their beloved queen but were also wailing in companionship with her because they felt the pain Dido did at Aeneas’ leaving and at all the pain he caused by arriving in Carthage. It took Dido’s horrible suicide to get any of the women around her to support her and empower her decisions. Dido’s death also spurs the only instance of the goddesses participating in the support system of the lesbian continuum as well. Juno, after exploiting Dido earlier, now pities her and decides to free Dido so she can die,

Then Almighty Juno, pitying Dido’s long agony  
And hard death, sent Iris down from Olympus  
To free her struggling soul from its mortal coils.  
Her death was neither fated nor deserved  
But before her day and in the heat of passion. (Virgil 4.809-813)

In this quote, Juno is shown supporting Dido instead of acting against her by freeing her from life so she can join her husband in death. If Juno had not sent Iris, Dido would have had to suffer with her wounds but would not die, thus Juno is supporting her practically by letting Dido finally find peace and freedom away from the pressures of being queen, falling in love, and being a pawn to exploit for the goddesses. The end of Book 4 offers this image of women supporting women in a beautiful but sad scene of Dido finally dying, but also before her time. If Juno and the other women had supported Dido earlier, she would not have died before fate had decided she was supposed to. The consequence of women not supporting other women is shown as very grave and sad because that consequence is suicide for Dido.

By using modern feminist ideas like compulsory heterosexuality and the lesbian continuum to analyze Dido’s story, the dire consequences of women not supporting one another is shown in the dramatic and depressing death of Dido. As society continues to push compulsory heterosexuality on women so that they believe they must love a man or try to force other women to conform to heterosexuality, stories like Dido’s are made possible as women’s true feelings are suppressed and unsupported by other women. The lesbian continuum and its ideas of women supporting one another and creating

community and meaningful relationships with one another is imperative to the survival of women and their power. If women tear other women down, they are doing the job of the patriarchy and anti-feminists by preventing women to rise above as they would if they all worked together to make change. Further study of other strong female characters in the *Aeneid*, like Camilla in Book 7, further show the success of the lesbian continuum in her support for women around her and the support she receives from the women of her city, though there is not room to analyze her story here. Learning from Dido's experience of pain and sorrow inflicted by society's expectations and the selfish ambitions of the other women around her, modern women can avoid making the same mistake by supporting one another and helping to make women's voices heard while stamping out compulsory heterosexuality.

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# Remembering American Slavery: Learning from Germany's Eradication of Antisemitism

Quinn Deahl

PHIL 275: Memory and the Holocaust

*The Germans have gradually come to terms with their Nazi past, building a culture of remembrance. For the final assignment, the students were asked to construct an argument in response to the question: what can we learn from the Germans about coming to terms with one of the dark chapters in American history? Quinn has constructed a compelling argument for applying the German culture of memory to the American context, showing how we can come to terms with the legacy of slavery. Each part of the paper is well-structured and convincingly argued. The account is also nuanced, acknowledging the differences between the Holocaust and slavery, while demonstrating their alignment in well-defined ways. Moreover, Quinn's argument is especially timely, in light of recent debates about the public memory of racism.*

-Mark Thomas

The Holocaust is widely considered the worst moral crime in the history of humanity given its sheer brutality and the millions of victims who suffered at the hands of the Nazi Regime. Unfortunately, instances of radical, state-sponsored immorality are not unique to Nazi Germany and have occurred numerous worldwide and throughout history. In the United States of America, the enslavement of human beings was legal for over two centuries. Although the period of slavery is deemed the darkest period in American history, black people in America continue to face systemic oppression over one hundred years after emancipation. In this way, America is unlike Germany in its response to this great atrocity given that Germany has made significant efforts to acknowledge its responsibilities for the Holocaust and build a culture of remembrance, subsequently becoming a welcoming and inclusive place for the Jewish people that were once victimized. In this paper, I will argue that America has much to learn from these German practices regarding its treatment of slavery as an element of its past. I will begin by providing an overview of Germany's attempts to come to terms with its Nazi past. I will then argue that these efforts should be applied to America's remembrance of the institution of slavery, before going on to explain how Germany's *Stolpersteine* could be a particularly well-fitting memorial in America.

## *1. Germany's Coming to Terms with its Nazi Past*

### *1.1 Initial Response*

Following the end of World War II and the subsequent end of the Holocaust, Germany didn't immediately begin to make amends for the atrocities it had perpetrated. Susan Neiman explains in her book, *Learning from the Germans: Race and the Memory*



*of Evil*, that much of Germany refused to take responsibility for the Holocaust. She writes that, instead, “Germans were obsessed with the suffering they’d endured, not the suffering they’d caused” (40). It seems to be a natural response for Germans to be defensive of their culpability in what is considered the worst crime in all of humanity. Many Germans didn’t directly support the Nazi regime, didn’t perpetrate these acts themselves, and may not have even had knowledge of the scale and severity of the genocide – so why should they be blamed for the Holocaust? Furthermore, they had faced their own suffering during the war and were now additionally being “beaten over the head with what would later be called a moral club” (Neiman 40). The Germans felt that they were being unjustly blamed for the Holocaust and World War II.

These attitudes greatly influenced the tendency of ordinary Germans to neglect responsibility in the decades following the war, but as time progressed, their perspectives began to change. In 1970, German chancellor, Willy Brandt, decided to publicly kneel on the steps of the memorial to the Warsaw Ghetto as a symbol of atonement for the crimes that were committed during the Holocaust (Neiman 43). A survey that was conducted at the time showed that the German public was divided over the gesture. 48% of participants called it excessive, while 41% thought it was appropriate (Thomas). Those who thought it was excessive were frustrated that their political representative was acknowledging the victims of the Holocaust which they were being blamed for while neglecting the suffering that the Germans faced as well (Neiman 43). However, nearly just as many people accepted the gesture, which goes to show that Germans were beginning to acknowledge responsibility for the Holocaust just twenty years after the end of the war. This progression continued into the next few decades while Germany began to come to terms with its Nazi past.

## 1.2 Building a Culture of Remembrance

This concept is what Germany considers *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, which translates to the English “managing or overcoming the past”. Daniel Reynolds gives a detailed account of these efforts in his work, *Postcards from Auschwitz: Holocaust Tourism and the Remembrance of Evil*. In 1980, a decade after Willie Brandt’s kneeling, Berlin began dedicating and creating Holocaust memorials all over the city. Reynolds explains that “[as] the Federal Republic’s willingness to acknowledge the historical responsibilities it inherited grew in the post-war era, the government invested in the restoration of Holocaust memory in the city” (158). While it would have been easy to destroy important sites of Nazi perpetration as bad reminders of the past, sites of Nazi perpetration such as the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, the Topography of Terror, the Levetzowstrasse, and the House of the Wannsee Conference were instead transformed into museums and education centers (Reynolds). More than just restoring past sites, Berlin created new memorials for the victims of the Holocaust, a notable one being the *Stolpersteine*. These are small brass stumbling stones that have since been

implemented all over Europe and each commemorates an individual victim of Nazi perpetration (Reynolds 161). The Stolpersteine are just one example of many memorials that Berlin has newly created to memorialize the Holocaust in addition to its efforts to restore previous sites of Nazi perpetration.

Furthermore, Reynolds explains that not only has Germany acknowledged the atrocities of the genocide by creating sites of Holocaust remembrance, but “it also emphasizes Jewish Berlin as a living culture – which it undoubtedly is” (156). Just as important as the efforts that Germany has made to remember the Holocaust itself has been the revival of Jewish culture in the city. Berlin is now home to various Jewish restaurants, museums, and memorials, all of which do well to emphasize the importance of Jewish culture to the city. A notable example of this is the Jewish Museum. The structure is a lightning-bolt shape that employs its unique architecture and empty space to memorialize and celebrate Jewish culture. Reynolds says that “while the exhibition focuses on the history of Jews in Berlin, daily life in the Jewish community, Jewish religious practice, and the achievements of famous Jewish individuals from Germany, its voids make continual reference to the Holocaust” (167). In this way, the memorial has the dual purpose of remembering the Holocaust and the loss of Jewish life in Berlin while also celebrating and promoting Jewish culture, similarly to the culmination of Germany’s remembrance efforts.

### *1.3 The Effects of Remembrance*

Since the late twentieth century when these efforts began to come to fruition, Germany has become what is considered “one of the safest countries for Jews in the world” (Neiman 59). As Berlin became the center of Holocaust remembrance, the attitudes of the German public become much more welcoming and accepting of Jewish culture. Neiman illustrates this attitude shift by explaining that there was a great amount of excitement from Germans leading up to the museum’s opening, and that “the fact that the Jewish Museum’s grand opening was the most sought-after invitation in the new republic was heralded as a sign that Germany had turned a corner” (58). The deliberate efforts by the German people to remember the Holocaust reflect their acceptance of responsibility for their Nazi past and the subsequent regaining of moral credibility. Furthermore, the remembrance of Jewish culture promoted its celebration and acceptance by the German people. As a result of Holocaust remembrance, Germany has made incredible strides to eradicate antisemitism in the country and make post-Nazi Germany a welcoming place for Jewish people and others.

## 2. *Applying Germany's Example to American Slavery*

### 2.1 *Comparing the Nazi Holocaust to Slavery in the United States*

The example that Germany has set for coming to terms with its Nazi past through building a culture of remembrance is one that the United States can learn from regarding its history of slavery. Before I explain how the German example can be applied to America, it is first important to compare the Nazi Holocaust and American slavery to demonstrate why Germany's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is an appropriate example to apply. I'd like to begin by acknowledging the fact that these two institutions were radically and fundamentally different from one another. To attempt to compare the two is an impossible task that risks trivialization, becoming a competition of evils, and undervaluing the unique suffering of the respective victims of both instances – all of which I do not wish to do. The comparisons I will be drawing are only meant to illustrate how The United States can learn lessons from Germany about coming to terms with a dark period in its history, building a culture of remembrance, and accepting responsibility for its moral crimes.

Firstly, and most importantly, both the Holocaust in Germany and slavery in America were state-sanctioned institutions of moral injustice, which has several implications for how each nation must come to terms with their pasts. Since the governments of both nations encouraged and permitted these evils to occur, the nation itself, and therefore its citizens, have a degree of responsibility for its perpetration. The injustices were not individual but systemic, and the fact that their institutions were so deeply ingrained in society through state sponsorship means that the society itself was complicit in and contributed to the evil that occurred. As a result, when state sponsorship of each institution ended, the attitudes and injustices remained in society in different forms as seen through the Germans' tendency to neglect responsibility for the Holocaust immediately after the war and in the development of Jim Crow laws and further racism after the Thirteenth Amendment was passed in America. This exemplifies the idea that state sanctioning of the Holocaust and American slavery makes each entire nation responsible for the perpetration of evil that existed in each institution.

Secondly, both the Holocaust and American slavery perpetuated their respective moral injustices due to prejudice and beliefs of superiority over the victimized groups of people. The Nazis believed that the Aryan race was superior to people who were Jewish, Roma and Sinti, homosexual, disabled, Black, asocial, etc. In America, slavery was sanctioned because of the belief that black people were biologically inferior to white people. The evils that were perpetrated against these victims in both cases were justified by these beliefs and prejudices which were unfair and untrue. Because these beliefs were sponsored by the government and systemic in society, they were difficult to eradicate even after they were proven untrue or could no longer justify immoral treatment. Failing to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the existence of these prejudices or their

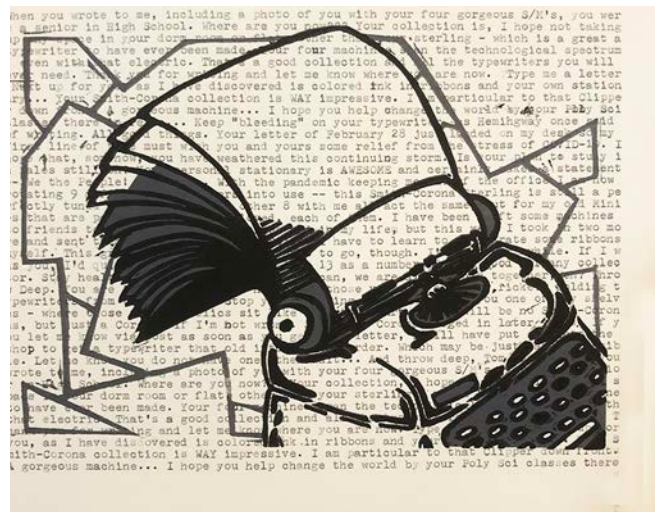
role in the Holocaust and American slavery can allow these beliefs to remain and further injustices to be committed, which exemplifies the importance of eradicating these beliefs in addition to ending the institutions of evil.

Finally, the brutality of the human rights violations and the extent of the injustice in both cases were extreme. Although it is difficult to estimate how many people were victimized by the Holocaust and American slavery respectively, experts have been able to make informed estimates about the extent that which each institution impacted its victim populations. As for the Holocaust, 6 million Jewish people and 5 million others were killed, and much more were victimized (United States). In America, it is estimated that approximately 10 million people were enslaved in the United States between 1619 and 1865 (Hacker 148). Furthermore, both the Holocaust and American slavery treated their victims as sub-human, submitting them to torture, starvation, terrible work environments, separation from their families, and much more. In both cases, people were deprived of basic human rights and were victims of unimaginable suffering. Although it is impossible to attempt to compare or weigh the evils of either institution as they are far more complex and respectively unique than their statistics would show, it is clear that both the Holocaust and American slavery were extremely brutal and extensive.

The comparability of the Holocaust and American slavery regarding their state-sanctioning, foundational prejudices, and extremities of evil allows for the German example of coming to terms with its Nazi past to be applied to the United States regarding its history of slavery. Each nation is itself responsible for the injustices it perpetrated, their foundational prejudices were systemically ingrained, and the extremity of their evils are beyond comprehension – all of which demonstrate the need for each nation to come to terms with the past by accepting responsibility for this dark period in its history.

## 2.2 America's Shortcomings in Accepting Responsibility for Slavery

The end of slavery in America is marked by the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, which abolished slavery under constitutional law. However, today, over a century and a half later, black Americans are still fighting for their rights as citizens of the United States and systemic racism remains a major issue nationwide. These facts can be traced back through history and attributed to America's shortcomings in coming to terms with its history of slavery. Unlike Germany did in the aftermath of the Holocaust, America failed to adequately accept responsibility for the injustices of slavery and



*Jill Podhajsky - Linoleum cut on typed paper, 8" x 10" Printmaking*

subsequently neglected the importance of building a culture of remembrance in coming to terms with its past.

Following the abolition of slavery in 1865, black Americans continued to face extreme levels of prejudice. State-sanctioned Jim Crow Laws allowed for continual racial discrimination in all aspects of American life, and it is estimated that over 4,000 African Americans were lynched between 1877 and 1950 (Equal Justice Initiative). It wasn't until the passage of The Civil Rights Act of 1964 that racial discrimination was prohibited under federal law, and, over fifty years later, black Americans continue to be incarcerated at nearly five times the rate of white Americans (Nellis) and are over three times more likely to be killed by the police (Schwartz and Jahn). The civil rights legislation that the United States has passed since the 13th amendment does the bare minimum to eradicate discrimination and fails to acknowledge the systemic nature of racism that originated with its institution of chattel slavery.

Neiman explains that self-reflection was essential to Germany's accepting responsibility for the Holocaust and its subsequent ability to come to terms with the past (62). America's unwillingness to reflect on its history has been instrumental in its allowance for injustices against African Americans to continue nearly two centuries after slavery was abolished and is most clearly demonstrated in the American education system and the modern debate over Critical Race Theory. In recent years, scholars have begun investigating the ways that American slavery is taught in the public education system and have found that "[s]chools are not adequately teaching the history of American slavery, educators are not sufficiently prepared to teach it, textbooks do not have enough material about it, and – as a result – students lack a basic knowledge of the important role it played in shaping the United States and the impact it continues to have on race relations in America" (Teaching Tolerance). The problems and gaps that are being uncovered in the American education system have led to growing popularity of the concept of Critical Race Theory, which is an educational framework that "acknowledges that the legacy of slavery, segregation, and the imposition of second-class citizenship on Black Americans and other people of color continue to permeate the social fabric of this nation" (George). Critical Race Theory would allow children to learn about slavery in a way that recognizes the impact that it continues to have on American society and would be a massive step towards the idea of self-reflection that Neiman believes to be instrumental in a nation's accepting responsibility for its past. However, nine states have banned Critical Race Theory or anything like it from being taught in American schools exemplifying the nation's refusal to acknowledge its responsibility for slavery and modern systemic racism (Ray and Gibbons).

### *2.3 American Progress and the Beginnings of a Culture of Remembrance*

Nevertheless, the fact that Critical Race Theory and reflections about teaching slavery have become popularized at all illustrates the progress that America is beginning

to make towards accepting responsibility for its history—which is also reflected in the recent growth and development of memorialization efforts for American slavery. For instance, in 2004, The African American Civil War Memorial Museum was established in Washington D.C. The official website for the museum states that “[t]he mission of the African American Civil War Museum is to correct a great wrong in history that largely ignored the enormous contributions of the 209,145 members of the United States Colored Troops” (*African American*). The creation of this museum and its explicit admittance of America’s failure to acknowledge this essential element of history in the past exemplify a degree of progress in America’s acceptance of responsibility and in building a culture of remembrance. Other monuments such as the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Maryland, the Freedom Riders National Monument in Alabama, the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park in Georgia, and more have also been established across the United States over the past two decades which further illustrate American progress in coming to terms with its past of slavery.

The developments that the United States has made in recent years regarding its reflections on the history of slavery and its modern implications, as well as its remembrance and memorialization efforts, give hope for the future of America coming to terms with the past. As was discussed previously, Germany didn’t immediately begin to reflect and take responsibility for the Holocaust following the end of World War II. It took time and gradual efforts for Berlin to become the center of remembrance that it is today, and America is showing hints that the past couple of decades could be its turning point for accepting responsibility and remembering its true history of slavery. If the United States can continue following the German example of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* by participating in self-reflection, accepting responsibility for the impacts of slavery, and building a true culture of remembrance, it could begin to come to terms with its past and eradicate systemic racism. However, America’s history of neglecting these important factors is long and dark and will take much more reflection and remembrance efforts to meet the bar that Germany has set.

One might object that doing so much to acknowledge American responsibility nearly two centuries after slavery was abolished wrongfully makes today’s Americans feel guilty about slavery just because of their nationality, and that they are too far removed to rightfully hold any responsibility for the crimes of the nation’s past. Although it is true that Americans today cannot be personally blamed for the history of slavery in the United States, I argue that it is the responsibility of modern Americans to understand the ways in which slavery shaped the society that they live in today. To continue allowing America to forget the crimes of its past allows the effects of those crimes to persist, which is why modern Americans are continuing to live in a society where systemic racism is still so prevalent. In the same way that it is important for Americans to learn about the victories and bright spots of their nation’s history to better understand and appreciate why they have the privileges that they do, it is important to learn about the dark periods

in their nation's past to understand how those events have also shaped their present lives. Moreover, as has been exemplified by Germany's success in reflecting on its past, accepting the responsibilities of a nation and building a culture of remembrance around those responsibilities can ultimately lead to a society that is more just and prosperous.

### 3. *Germany's Stolpersteine as a Fitting Memorial in the American Context*

An element of Germany's culture of remembrance that America could learn from to further come to terms with its past is the development of counter-monuments. Reynolds explains that "whereas traditional monuments claim permanence in their efforts at remembrance, counter-monuments incorporate flux, ambiguity, and self-negation, leaving the memory work to the viewer" (164). By rejecting the traditional and straightforward tools of remembrance that are employed by customary monuments, counter-monuments force the viewer to analyze its meaning and understand the memorial for themselves. Resultantly, people are forced to truly reflect on their understanding of history and how it applies to a monument, which contributes to the process of self-reflection that Neiman describes as essential for a nation's coming to terms with the past. A German example of a counter-monument that would apply well in America is that of the *Stolpersteine*. These stumbling stones that I described previously can be found all over Germany and Europe and typically mark a location where Nazi perpetration occurred to an individual, having the effect of interrupting people's daily routines and reminding them that the Holocaust occurred right beneath their feet and that it happened to people just like them. By making people stop and recognize this, the *Stolpersteine* makes people reflect on history and confront the misunderstandings that they may have about the Holocaust that contradict the individuality and the extent of the genocide.

Countermonuments, *Stolpersteine* specifically, would be fitting in an American context for a few reasons. First, America is in the early stages of building a culture of remembrance and accepting responsibility for its past of slavery. Integrating counter-monuments into this developing culture would encourage people to reflect on American slavery and, subsequently, aid in the process of America's coming to terms with the past that it is currently working towards. Furthermore, many Americans today believe that they are too far removed from slavery to need to take responsibility for it. By using a memorial technique such as the *Stolpersteine*, Americans would be reminded of the realities of slavery for its individual victims and the fact that it happened on the same soil that they're walking on today, making them more likely to reflect on that period in American history. Thirdly, many Americans, especially white Americans, fail to acknowledge the impacts that slavery still has on society today. By making reminders of slavery a normal occurrence in the lives of white Americans, they will be more likely to acknowledge the modern systemic racism that they would typically ignore by making them reflect on the impacts of slavery.

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# Don't Bury my Bones

*Sarah Linde*

*ENGL 213: Nature Writing and Environmental Literature*

*The poems and the connections to course materials that Sarah created in "Final Pursuit: A Series of Poems with Connections" surprised and captivated me as a reader. Her imagery and voice sing with different tones and perspective; I particularly enjoy her sense of humor.*

- Mary Stark

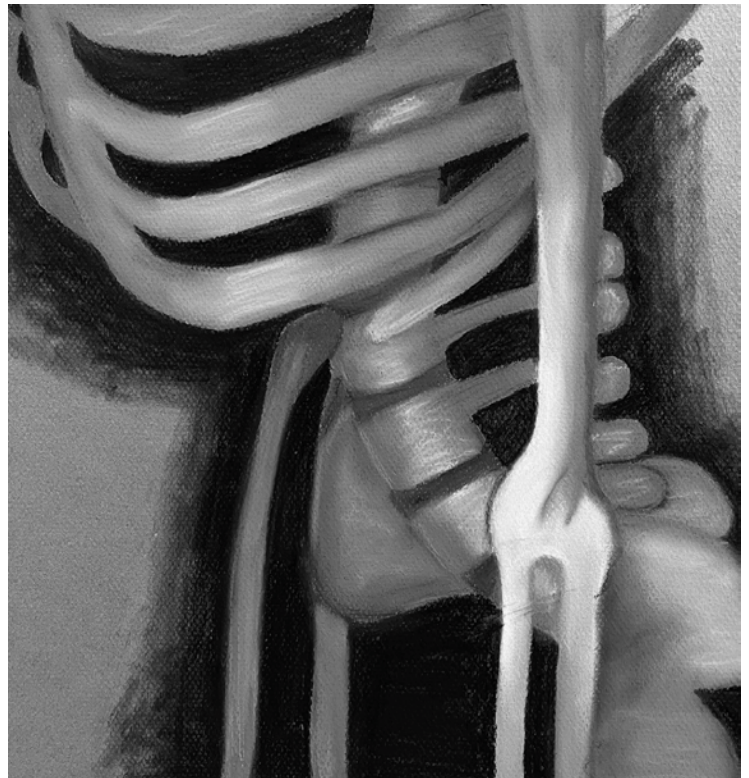
## **"Don't Bury my Bones"**

When I die  
Don't bury my bones  
Let my body rest,  
Let it gently decompose  
And when the animals come  
To gnaw at my bones  
Let them taste  
The sweet secrets of my marrow.

Let me rot,  
Let me sink.  
And with the courage you brought,  
Plant flowers in my skin,  
And let the roots connect my thoughts

To the earth,  
To the worms  
To the deepest things in  
The soil  
The core  
The planet's metal heart.

When my time's finally come,  
Don't bury my bones.  
There are other things here,  
My body still needs to know.



*Nicole Lutz - Conte crayon on toned paper, 15" x 15", Drawing: Traditional to Digital*

# I Hope You Feel No Pain

*Kayla Lindquist*

*LAS 110: Intersections*

*The final project in my Intersections class asked students to try their hand at writing a poem and then to write a paper explaining their artistic choices. Kayla wrote a poem to the prairie near her home that is systematically being destroyed, and her poem hits hard with great sonic impact in a way that complements the fury she feels at those who are destroying this prairie. The accompanying paper explains in thoughtful detail how Kayla wrote this poem and what inspired her. It represents a masterful blending of art and environmental concerns.*

- Valerie Billing

i hope you feel no pain.  
*a poem for Bell Bowl Prairie*

you have a rare blend  
but you've met a dead end

it wasn't your fault  
we've tried to extend  
your life  
we've fought  
we've cried  
we've thought  
we've pried  
we've sought

but they don't see  
for their eyes had rot  
and their minds?  
...full of knots

we have a good shot  
and they have squat  
but you are, it seems  
a jackpot in their blindspot

‘what do they have to gain?’  
i’m not sure  
‘all this for a plane?’  
i suppose  
‘well tell them they have bad aim.’

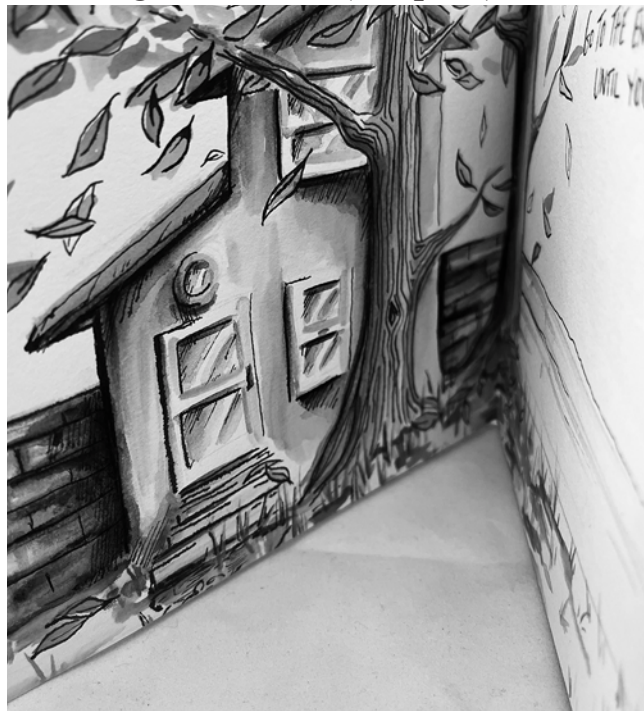
i will, and i hope you feel no pain

we will amend  
and defend  
until the very end  
and then  
we will miss you...  
old friend.

My poem, “I Hope You Feel No Pain” is about a ten-thousand-year-old prairie that is at the risk of being destroyed. It is located about thirty minutes from my home so it’s something that stirs up a lot of emotion in me. The reason for its destruction happens to be due to its location, which is right next to an expanding airport. The fight to save this prairie has been occurring for about 100 hundred years but has recently heated up quite a bit (Save Bowl Prarie) Naturalists in my area are starting to doubt if they can change the minds of these stubborn airport officials, who have so far either ignored us or lied about their plans. Bell Bowl prairie is important because over 99.99% of the natural prairie in Illinois – known as the prairie state – has been destroyed (Leopold) In addition to this, the habitat is one of the oldest and most rare left. So, it is rather compelling that now is the time that people take an interest. Following that, Bell Bowl inspired George Fell to say one of his most repeated quotes of all time: “Nothing becomes valuable until it becomes rare” (White). To continue, Bell Bowl is home to many endangered plants, insects, and bird species that literally can’t live in any other ecosystem on the planet. This creates an obvious conflict because the prairie cannot be moved, it would not be able to survive anywhere else (White)

Much of my poem was inspired by the great poet and naturalist Taylor Brorby. When I read his poem, “Sweetness”, I realized that people now don’t really understand prairies and their significance. I additionally felt making the poem more personal would invoke emotion and maybe encourage more people to care. To continue, Brorby’s poem describes a prairie and its purpose to us, or how we are supposed to enjoy/spend time in it. Lines 3-9 of “Sweetness” highly inspired the human to prairie connection I longed to express in my poem: “This is why we walk: to push aside/ clay and clover, to dust our pant/ Legs with green gray pollen, sage oil/ oozing into pores. To crush it/

Between thumb and finger press it/ into journals fill pages with the/ wide open space of prairie” (Brorby). In lines 4-6, Brorby illustrates a scene where a naturalist feels an element in a prairie and then keeps it as a memento. This sort of activity was very common, and still is in the naturalist world. However, I feel like this general sense of curiosity has been lingering among people. The phenomenon has led to a strong disconnect, which is proven when society values the local economy and an airport over one of the oldest ecological remnants in the history of Illinois. One of my heroes, Aldo Leopold, a famous naturalist in literature, often spoke about this developing lack of interest. He, too, was frustrated with the lack of empathy and knowledge represented in recent times regarding the wild places and critters on our planet. Leopold was a man who often did what Brorby described in those lines. Most days, he sat somewhere outdoors for hours and collected every piece of data he could. He then would travel back to his cabin and write books about his experiences, trying to teach us about the resources we are losing because we are too “blind” to see them (Leopold). One of his most famous quotes which really hits home to his argument is “The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: ‘What good is it?’” (Leopold).



*Gunner Hutton - Artist's book, detail 2D  
Problem Solving*

In terms of the design and flow of my poem, I wasn't really inspired by any other sources. Most of it just comes to me randomly while listening to music. Once I heard George Fell's quote about the value of rarity, I took off from there. For example, my first line “you have a rare blend, but you've met a dead end” was designed to illustrate a naturalist seeing and studying the prairie like George Fell had, only for it to be destroyed. Shortly after, in lines 3-10, I tie in the empathetic perspective gained from the works of Brorby and Leopold. The rest of the poem goes on to rotate between these two themes

in an effort to pull emotion out of people. One line, in particular, was intended to get a certain group of people to care: the airport officials. I tried to achieve this by being simple, but also slightly offensive at the same time. This is seen in line 23 when I wrote: “well tell them they have bad aim.” The inspiration for this line was simply the fact that they had plenty of other land around the prairie that they could have destroyed, but they refused to listen to multiple environmental and urban engineers that had sided with the naturalists. Moving on, I played with sound in my poem in a couple of different ways. My favorite example of this is in the third stanza: “we’ve fought/ we’ve cried/ we’ve thought/ we’ve pried/ we’ve sought.” I tried to design the sound to be quicker and more dramatic than it otherwise was if stretched out. I feel that it grabs the reader’s attention better this way. In terms of context for that stanza, the “we” refers to the naturalists trying to save the prairie. To add, I think this small detail in sound makes the next stanza bolder, almost like a gut punch. “But they don’t see/ for their eyes had rot” is a bit harsh and adds a bit of the realistic anger that was created by the decision of the airport officials. To wrap up, my sound methods were a tiny bit chaotic in the sense that it wasn’t necessarily consistent. For example, I started off the poem in a calmer way, almost every line ending with “end.” I also finished the poem in this way to “bring it home” so to speak. I felt that it made the last theme and stanza more somber instead of angry and helped to close in an obvious/softer sort of way. Stanzas 2-4 however end with harder letters like “t” and “ht.” Using these letters was fitting because it enhanced the emotion or frustration that was expressed.

To finalize, the fight to save Bell Bowl Prairie has been a long and stressful one for me, and my local naturalist friends. Writing this poem helped to express some of the feelings we all shared about the airport’s choice. Learning along the way from writers like Leopold and Brorby helped me to find a foundation for my poem and to trust the emotions I was feeling in the first place. I hope that anyone who reads it can one day understand what we’ve lost and the wild places we lose every day because of decisions made by people who refuse to care.

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# To My Core

*Sarah Smith*

*LAS 110: Intersections*

*The final project in my Intersections class asked students to try their hand at writing a poem and then to write a paper explaining their artistic choices. Sarah's poem is both raw and beautiful, using sound, rhythm, and vivid imagery to create emotion and demonstrate the power of language in processing trauma. The accompanying paper is compellingly written, guided by clear arguments and substantial evidence that walk readers through key lines in the poem and show in-depth connections with two poems we read in class that inspired Sarah's use of language and imagery.*

- Valerie Billing

## To My Core

time

a weightless concept

the flutter of a butterfly's wings

the scream of tires on asphalt

the soft thud of earth atop a mahogany casket

the decrepit hands of time

braid my hair with a manufactured sense of hope

renewed happiness

the eyes that once wept

the hands that once gripped the clouds for a ride

away from the stay

here at hotel hell

anew

i cut myself open

the wounds still fresh

blood making rivers in the divots of my fingertips

my intestines hang out where they shouldn't be

out from my core

vulnerable

slewing down by my vagina

where they shouldn't be

reminding me that i am both human and woman

mortality screamed into my eardrums  
painted across my face  
a picture lost in translation

a happy girl  
a promising future  
skin as thick as sun washed leather  
and a heart as solid as earth's core

your face  
forever planted under the big 'O' in obituary  
a picture lost in translation

dirt caked underneath my fingernails  
trying to dig you out of earth's core  
and back to mine

formaldehyde fingers  
an abdomen stuffed with cotton  
almost human  
i want to puke but the hole in my stomach won't let me

time  
home for my broken soul  
my nose scrunching for its smell of nostalgia  
like a coke addict

no more  
nothing to touch  
nothing to see  
nothing to hear

nothing more than a concept  
the grass beseeches my knees  
asking for time of departure  
in no more than a whisper  
i beg the sparkling stone for something more



*Jaeden Hoag -Linoleum cut, reductive print,  
9" x 12" Printmaking*

This poem is a dramatized version of a real event that happened in my life. I lost my serious boyfriend last year to suicide. While talking and writing about his life, death, and memories is something that isn't difficult for me to do and is something that I have done quite frequently, this is the first time I ever wrote about him being dead in the ground, focusing on him as a carcass. This concept may sound morbid or vulgar, but it was honestly so healing for me. Throughout my poem, I really tried to focus on his remains: "formaldehyde fingers / an abdomen stuffed with cotton / almost human" (Smith 36-38). I didn't think of him as a human or of my memories of him during his life. Rather, I thought of him as a body that has been in a funeral home. I thought of him as a body that is cold and dead and void of a beating heart or a working brain. Writing about him being a dead body in my poem made it easier to metabolize that idea for me. It took power away from that ominous thought of his death and made it feel more human and normal.

Being sad is normal, too. Being sad about his death isn't a new concept in my writings either, but the way that I addressed it in this poem is. Before, I always wrote about my sadness as big and profound, a placeholder for the newfound happiness and growth I would receive as time inevitably heals my wounds. I never wrote about how ugly and humiliating it is, though. I never addressed what it's like to scream at a stone in the ground for hours on end, or to fall asleep cuddling a patch of grass in a cemetery because it's the only place I feel calm.



In my poem, I discuss the feeling of helpless desperation that death sometimes brings: “*dirt caked underneath my fingernails / trying to dig you out of earth’s core / and back to mine*” (Smith, 33-35). In these lines, I tell the urgency that my body felt to bring itself back to what used to be normal, sometimes digging at the ground to just feel a little less far away from my loved one and that sense of normalcy.

Though my poem is different, it still has the same connotation of sadness that Emma Carlson’s poem *For Smoke and Mirrors* did. In lines 49-51 of Emma’s poem, she writes about some of the sadness and anger that is forced upon the loved ones of someone who died by suicide: “and i want to call you a **fucking** fraud how **dare** you / force me beneath the blinding bulbs of grief of a / premature memoir” (Carlson 49-51). I like these lines because, though I didn’t write about the anger that comes with grieving someone who died by suicide, we both discussed taboo subjects that aren’t always well received. The subject she discussed was being angry at the dead loved one and mine was being open about thinking about and discussing them as a carcass and not just as a memory. Though I didn’t write about the same topic in my poem that she did in these lines, they still resonated with me and my own grieving journey. This made her poem feel more intimate to me and my story.

I found inspiration through the expression of vulnerability sometimes discussed in Emma’s poem: “we reveal our secrets / for just a second of being seen; / pulling back the curtain” (Carlson 61-63). I perceived these lines as the breaking of a facade that is held up by those who are dealing with depression and suicidal thoughts. When someone with depression completes suicide, they’re letting everyone in on the secret life they’ve been keeping from them, letting them see the complete identity of who that person was. I expressed this vulnerability in my poem: “i cut myself open / the wounds still fresh / blood making rivers in the divots of my fingertips / my intestines hang out where they shouldn’t be / out from my core / vulnerable” (Smith 14-19). The message that I was trying to convey in these lines was the ugly, messy, and inevitable vulnerability that comes from expressing one’s grief for someone who died by suicide. I screamed and cried out loud in the cemetery, whether there were people there or not. I made my pain very transparent and allowed other people to see my messy journey. Because my boyfriend broke his facade and allowed everyone to see the truth of his depression by completing suicide, it broke my facade, too. I allowed his wounds to bleed over into my life, and I allowed them to perpetuate my hurt. I used the metaphor of my stomach being cut open and my intestines hanging out of me because that is how loss feels. I always describe the feeling I felt when I first found out my boyfriend passed away as my stomach falling out of my body. I felt a rush of adrenaline fill my body in a second and then leave just as fast, taking everything with it and leaving me feeling empty. I wanted to use these feelings as inspiration for some lines in my poem.

I was also inspired by the poem *Living in the Body* by Joyce Sutphen. This poem inspired the aspects of my poem that talked about the physicality of the body. Though concepts like happiness and self-esteem were talked about in her poem, I focused on the parts that talked about the body: “Body is a thing that you have to leave / eventually. You know that because you have / seen others do it, / others who were once like you,” (Sutphen 17-20). I liked the wording in these lines. It brought about a sort of intimacy that is sometimes faced with death. Not only do you see loved ones die, but because you know that they have passed, you have the assurance that you will someday also. The way those lines brought about a connectedness with loved ones and death, inspired some in my own poem: your face / forever planted under the big ‘O’ in obituary / a picture lost in translation” (Smith 30-32). These lines took more of an intimate approach, speaking to my loved one as if they were alive, rather than speaking about them and the morbidity of their death. This connected life and death in a similar way that Sutphen’s did.

Other lines in her last stanza took a much more physical approach when focusing on the body: “living inside their pile of bones and / flesh, smiling at you, loving you, / leaning in the doorway, talking to you / for hours and then one day they / are gone. No forwarding address” (Sutphen 21-25). This quote talks about the “pile of bones and flesh” and the fact that one day they are with you and the next they are gone with “no forwarding address”. They discuss the memories that are attached to the body. These lines talk about the same aspect of death that my poem did. Though this inspired the essence of my entire poem, it helped with some specific lines: “time / home for my broken soul / my nose scrunching for its / smell of nostalgia / like a coke addict” (Smith 40-43). These lines are really the only times I talk about the typical things that are discussed when it comes to missing someone, memories, and nostalgia. These lines are my way of attaching a soul and a mind to the body and allowing myself to wallow in the positivity of what used to be and *who* used to be.

Though people write for a multitude of reasons, writing this poem was healing for me. I allowed myself to think about my boyfriend as an actual dead body in the ground rather than fantasize about the memories attached to him. It was difficult sometimes but attaching it to other works of poetry really made me feel less alone, even if the poems were not about the same topics as mine was.

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- Carlson, Emma. “Aristotle and Alison Discover the Secrets of Their Dads.”  
*The Writing Anthology*. Central College, 2020.
- Sutphen, Joyce. “Living in the Body.” *Poetry Foundation*, 1995,  
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/51337/living-in-the-body>

# Exceptional Art

*Chosen by Professors in the Art  
Department for their immense skill  
and artistic vision*

# Orange Tux

*Vanessa Baccam*

*Printmaking*

*Professor's Description:* This image is a reductive print which is a process requiring careful planning and a mastery of printing techniques aside from the content of the image. Vanessa managed both with this piece with a complex layering of color and beautiful detail in the carving of the linoleum block.



# By Fire or Flood

*Kaeanne Louks*

*Glassblowing II*

*Professor's Description:* This incalmo vessel, made of two glass bubbles merged together, has an interesting palette of overlaid colors and the illusion of an interior glow captures the viewer's attention.

*Artist's Description:* This paperweight incalmo reminds me of the land around my papa's place out in Colorado. Throughout the years, it has been devastated by wildfire and flooding, but with time it comes back to the beauty I remember from my childhood.



# Untitled

*Emily Tavegia*

*3D Problem Solving*

*Professor's Description:* The project was to create a cup and saucer derived from botanical references. The student continued the investigation further by creating additional related objects. All the objects are rich in detail and all the surfaces have been fully considered.



# Rusted Dreams

*Averi Kron*

*Metalsmithing I*

*Professor's Description:* This copper vessel has a great patina finish and an innovative solution to its legs inspired by chain.

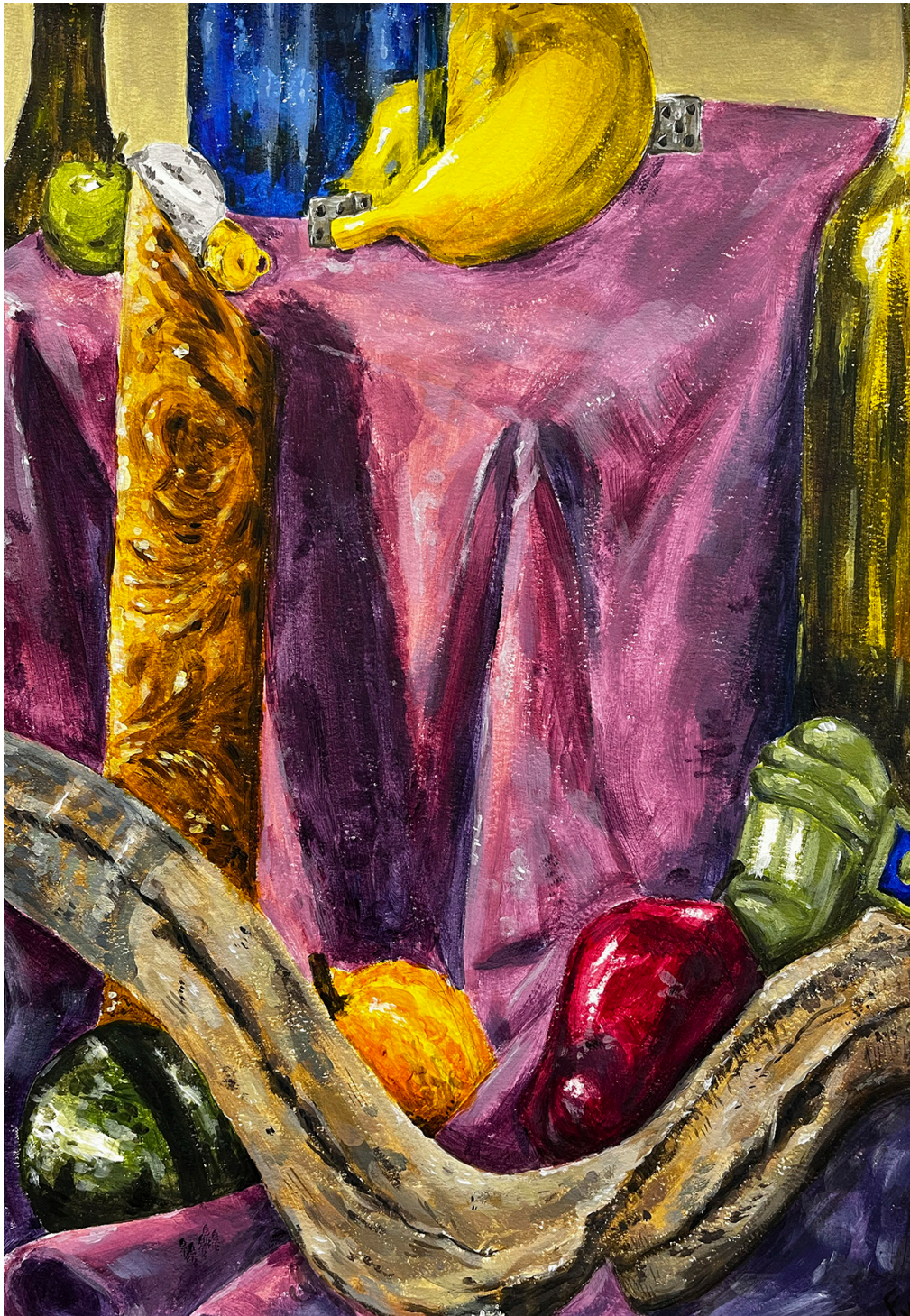


# Framing

*Fynn Wadsworth*

*2D Problem Solving*

*Professor's Description:* This painting accurately captured the colors in the still-life but it is the textural interpretation that infuses character and life in these otherwise static objects. This is more about artistic voice than representational painting.





# Time to Prevail

*Tessa Brubaker*

*Painting: Traditional to Digital*

*Professor's Description:* For the Social Action painting assignment, Tessa painted this intense visual image expressing the urgency behind the fight for reproductive rights and how important this is to her.

*Artist's Description:* This image is about the war on reproductive rights. The key point I wanted to target in this image is the fact that there is a fight going on for the basic right of female healthcare. This is not an easy topic, and many people are outraged, and with the splatter paint I wanted the point of anger as well as bloodshed to be recognized. The ovaries in this image are supposed to be darker than they would normally be; this color and the darkness of the tubes represent death creeping in. I decided that the clock should not have a specific time but look like it's malfunctioning. I wanted both these aspects to convey the idea that women are running out of time in this war. However, I kept the inside of the uterus bright to say that not all hope is lost but we must keep fighting for the right to our health.



# Light

*Paige Cahill*

*Drawing: Traditional to Digital*

*Professor's Description:* In this drawing using conté crayon on toned paper, Paige has captured the heat of the light and subtle texture differences in the wood, metal lantern, and woven fabric in the background. A wonderful example of careful direct observational drawing.



# **Art Credits**

<b>Madilynn Peitzman, copper, wood, found objects</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Megan Rohr - ceramic, Ceramics I</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Tessa Brubaker - ceramic, 3D Prob Solving</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Amelia Brown - Acrylic, 11” x 15” 2D Problem Solving</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Fynn Wadsworth - marker and graphite on paper, 22” x 30”</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Rylie Clark, copper, Metalsmithing I</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Madilynn Peitzman - Artist’s book, detail 2D Problem Solving</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Caleb Kuiper, glass, Glassblowing I</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Jill Podhajsky - Linoleum cut on typed paper, 8” x 10”</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Nicole Lutz - Conte crayon on toned paper, 15” x 15”</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Gunner Hutton - Artist’s book, detail 2D Problem Solving</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Jaeden Hoag -Linoleum cut, reductive print, 9” x 12”</b>	<b>50</b>

[back cover]