

# ENVELOPE

DASHEW'S ART & WRITING MAGAZINE



**UCLA** Dashew Center

2021-2022 ISSUE

# About Envelope

Dear Readers,

This is our fourth issue of Envelope, Dashew's Art & Writing Magazine.

When you open Envelope, you find poems, creative fiction, digital art, drawings, paintings, and photography. The hope for this magazine is that it provides a platform for international students, scholars, and staff, both at UCLA and UCLA Extension, to share their unique perspectives with the extended campus community and beyond.

We hope you enjoy taking in the creative work from this talented community.

Check out the past issues here: <https://www.internationalcenter.ucla.edu/programs-events/in-house-program>

Photo by Fredy Martinez

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Photo by Louis Paulin

# 舅父

by: Max Christoph Loy

I am an Architecture major, I'm in my senior year. My home country is Hong Kong. In my free time, I enjoy dancing, singing and taking walks.

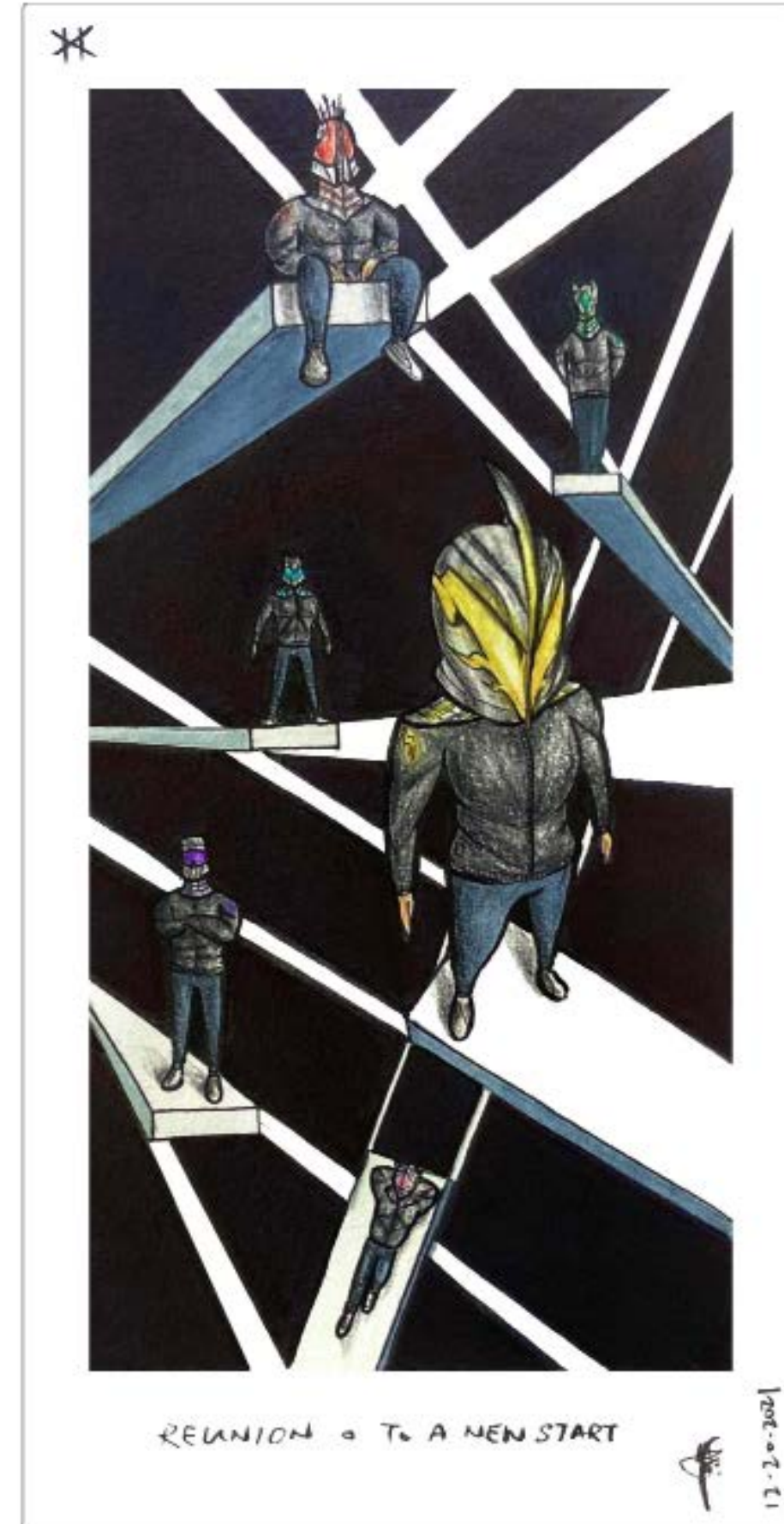


### About the Piece:

“I was stuck in Perloff Hall alone for 2 days during the winter break due to a rain-storm. Without heater and food, it made me think of my uncle Kenneth, who has always been a hardworking father for his family; no matter if it is in the midst of calamity.”

# Heroes of My Childhood

by: Max Christoph Loy



### About the Piece:

“Starting school in a new university, life was supposed to be exciting, yet loneliness has made it more apparent for a 2nd year transfer student that only has a few months left in school. I am glad that recreating the characters I drew back when I was 10 years old helped as it did.”

her

by: Umiemah Farrukh

I am a first year transfer Psychology major student. My home country is Canada and I dearly miss the rainforest where I grew up. In my free time I love to write, crochet and bake!

At the register  
barista says next.  
a deflating balloon.  
my chest constricts

don't know what she likes,  
so I order what she might  
*iced macchiato,*  
*extra caramel please*  
she tells me it's too sweet

I read  
that book she loves  
about a worthy man  
was poorly written,  
hard to get through.

yesterday  
my lips formed  
the words *I love you*  
she didn't say back.

hollow where eyes be  
tell me escape is underway  
I reckon her mother  
didn't teach her how to stay

narrow  
yet unbridgeable  
this distance is.  
I need but her,  
she needs not I.

As it turns out  
I have nothing  
in common with myself.

Chaos Within

by: Vartika Sharma

I am from India and I joined UCLA as a post-doctoral researcher. Other than research, I write blogs and do try to paint the serenity in the chaos.



About the Piece:

“My poems deal with themes of young adulthood, such as realizing you don't know yourself, dealing with injustices, and losing people you thought would be in your life forever.”

About the Piece:

“You must have chaos within you to give birth to a dancing star. - Friedrich Nietzsche. Looking for calmness in the chaos propels me to sustain in this chaotic world. I accept chaos because it is random and yet beautiful.”

# Wolf in the Woods

by: Conrad Haberland

I work at the UCLA Luskin and Meyer Conference Center. I make paintings in oil and water color. Also create digital creations. I am interested in the environment and social justice. I am Dutch Indonesian, born in the Netherlands, but California is now my home.



# [boxes]

by: Umiemah Farrukh

I am a first year transfer and a Psychology major. My home country is Canada and I dearly miss the rainforest where I grew up. In my free time I love to write, crochet and bake!

A man with an ego taller than his height  
Masculinity so fragile it crumbles in my presence  
So he lashes out in more ways than one  
Until he makes me smaller than he is,  
til he can cut me up and put me into neat little boxes

My melanin is too much, my tongue just sharp enough  
So there I go into the box, "not good enough"  
I forgot to let myself lose the argument so he'd be right,  
stopped stroking his ego every time he went off the rails.  
I cringe from his touch, shut myself off from his twisted love  
So here I stand in the, "she's such a bitch", box

He gets mad when I understand what he's saying  
some quantum mechanics and time travel explanation,  
(what like it's hard?)  
As if he is personally affronted that somebody else  
can think with the brain that they were given  
now my intelligence is put in a box titled, "conceited"

but in the little part of me that I have left, the part  
that I fed, watered, and that I watched blossom  
Within the part of me that is still mercifully mine  
I find the courage to pack up my love and leave  
before he can seal me into a box labeled "his".

## About the Piece:

"My poems deal with themes of young adulthood, such as realizing you don't know yourself, dealing with injustices, and losing people you thought would be in your life forever."

## About the Piece:

"Wolf in the Woods is a painting about the extinction of our precious wild life."

# Diversity

by: Sankha Subhra Das

I am a post-doctoral scholar at UCLA. My home country is India. In my free time, I enjoy watercolor painting, photography, and traveling.



About the Piece:

“The beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people”

# In Person

by: Julia-Carla Schmidt

I am a senior exchange student from Germany. I major in film and I want to go into animation.



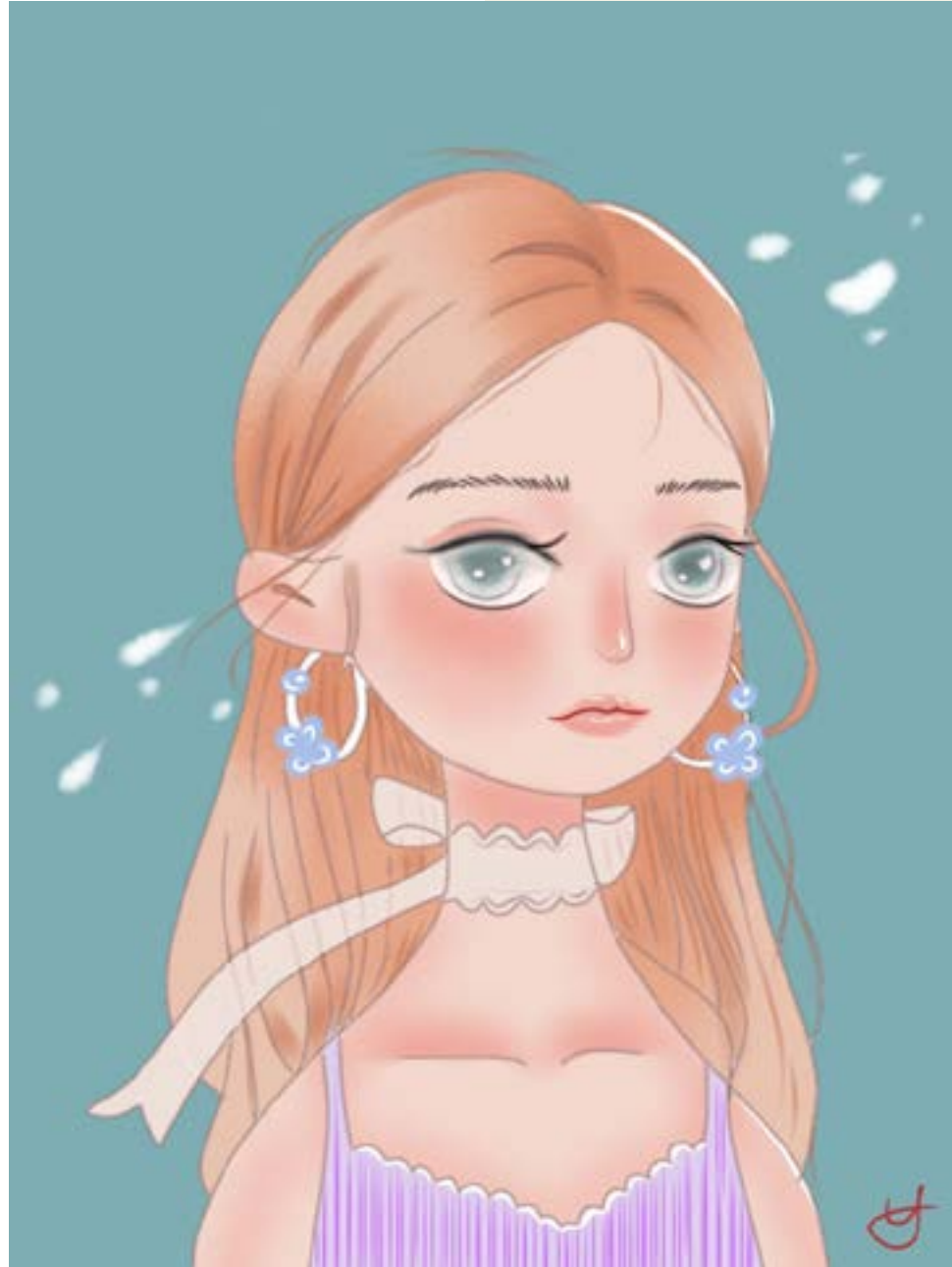
About the Piece:

“I drew this at the beginning of the quarter while we were still online. I felt terrible nostalgia. Going to class is just one of these things that I can't enjoy in the moment but looking back it always feels like home to me.”

# Stranger & Friend

by: Fang Lei

I am a fifth year PhD student at the School of Nursing at UCLA. My home country is China. In my free time, I enjoy drawing digital arts, reading, and hiking.



## About the Piece:

“It is a piece of art for which I drew a stranger, without the expectation that we become good friends at the end. The world is always full of surprises unless you are open to it!”

# If We Still Talked

by: Umiemah Farrukh

I am a first year transfer and a Psychology major. My home country is Canada and I dearly miss the rainforest where I grew up. In my free time I love to write, crochet and bake!

I'd tell you college is better than I anticipated  
That I like my friends, for the first time since forever  
And we'd be so happy to laugh about that.  
I'd tell you that I'm applying to grad school  
And that I got published for the first time

I'd tell you that I miss you  
That I still use that lipgloss you gave me  
I'd tell you about the most delicious pasta I had last  
night,  
And that I thought of you with every bite.

And then I'd ask, “What about you? How have you  
been?”

Let's catch up over coffee and croissants”  
And I'd promise to buy you your favorite kind  
Filled with chocolate and crispy on the outside  
And you would roll your eyes and smile at me  
Then, at the end, I'd say “let's do this again”.

But I'm sitting at our favorite coffee shop  
Drinking my latte and thinking about  
All the things you could be doing right now  
And how none of them are with me,  
Or will be ever again.

## About the Piece:

“My poems deal with themes of young adulthood, such as realizing you don't know yourself, dealing with injustices, and losing people you thought would be in your life forever.”

# The Night After

by: Anbu Vajuravel

Alan was three when his parents went. He was ten when he decided he wouldn't. He would end the legacy of suffering and solitude with himself. All his life, Alan struggled for one thing: control. Autonomy over what was supposed to be his own. His body belonged to him and only he would dictate its actions. Not anyone else and certainly not an animalistic illness ravaging at the corners of his mind. He was sure of that. He had to be. For any amount of doubt or uncertainty would only fuel the illness, strengthening its hold on the mind and body until all control was lost and all that remained was a shell of the person that once was, occupied by a mindless beast. Alan knew these things. He knew these things because he had studied his illness extensively, understanding its cunning and its slow, creeping hold on the mind and body. Some would call it an obsession. Alan saw it as necessary preparation. The only chance he had at facing what awaited him was understanding his eventual fate in its entirety. It was why Alan did anything he did. He studied biology and medicine, not because he was fascinated by the body but because he was repelled by what it could do to itself. When he was still a boy back at the orphanage, Alan would pore over every book and documentary he could find and then bother Mrs. Green, the headmistress, for more. But in all his reading and learning, Alan had only truly uncovered one irrefutable fact: there was no outrunning his illness. There was no cure. There was no hope for a cure. There was no hope at all.

Today, however, offered something new and entirely unfamiliar.

Today, one of few instances in his life, Alan is unsure. He stares at the creases and lines of his palms, illuminated by moonlight pouring through the open window. A gentle breeze caresses his face and Alan buries his face in his hands. Through the cracks between his fingers, Alan watches a row of ants march across the dusty windowsill. Ants. Alan disliked ants. His study of ecology had taken him all over the natural world. But of all the creatures that inhabited the earth, ants were the ones that made Alan most uncomfortable.

Ants were everything Alan feared of becoming. Mindless machines that dedicated mind and body in their entirety to their colony with an utterly frightening disregard for self-preservation. The image of an orphanage and a television screen and a documentary and a voice of a narrator all enter Alan's mind at once.

*Alan is sitting cross-legged on the orphanage floor in front of the television screen. On the screen, the limp lifeless body of an ant is being carried by two other ants. "When an ant dies, its body begins to emit pheromones, notifying its companions of its demise. These companions then methodically carry the departed's body to a pile of the colony's dead—an ant graveyard, if you will—and add it to the pile.*

*Do these creatures feel any remorse for their dead comrade? Do they experience grief? What's even more unsettling is what happens when a live ant is exposed to the death pheromone. The ant's companions carry it, still alive, to the graveyard and leave it with the others, as if it too were dead. Are these ants aware of their companion's life? Can they not see the creature twitch and move? Or do they simply not care?"*

Alan wonders if ants had the capacity to care at all. He wonders if the live ant struggled, felt fear or helplessness. Or if it, like its companions, believed itself dead and committed itself to its fate. That was what scared Alan most. A lack of self-awareness that cut so deep, it became difficult to know where life ended and death began.

*"Were it not for the pheromone, the ants would be entirely unaware of their companion's demise."*

To lack control, so much control that you would willingly throw yourself or your companions into death... it scared Alan. The boundaries of one's own body shrouded by mindless delirium and desperation. That was what Alan had seen in all the DGD wards he had visited.

Today, the ants remind Alan of his mother, sitting in Dilg, working on her sculpture, like a good and loyal part of the ant colony, comforted by a scent. Humans liked to think of themselves as above the rest of the organisms on the planet. But Alan often found himself wondering if they were really any different from the animals they studied.

Alan knew he was different though. He didn't give in to the animalistic impulses that overcame the minds of others. He was different. As soon as he could, he had gotten himself sterilized to end any chance of the illness propagating. He was in control of his body. But today, Alan is unsure. He had learned things today that made him doubt whether he was indeed in control. He loved Lynn, he knew that. More than anyone else. But... did he? Or was he also an insect, serving his queen with unthinking loyalty and mindless dedication? Did it even matter if he was? Those at Dilg, those like his mother—they spent their lives in their own little worlds, working, tinkering, painting, all on their own. And yet, perhaps for the first and only time in their lives, they weren't alone in what they were going through.

Alan had spent so much of his life in solitude. He grew up without his parents. At the orphanage, he stayed away from most of the other kids. And at college... at college, he had found Lynn. He had allowed himself to grow just a little less bitter. A little less angry. A little more happy. Before Lynn, Alan hadn't cared all that much for life at all. Other DGDs would try to fit as much living as they could into their short lives. Alan had never seen any point in that. "I don't believe in anything," he had told Lynn when they first met. But over the last few months, he was beginning to feel himself change. When he had first learnt about his mother in Dilg, Alan had asked Lynn to accompany him to visit her. A year ago, he would have gone on his own.



Alan thinks back to the night it all changed. When Lynn had allowed him into her past. Allowed him into a place where no one else had been before. He knew of her childhood, her parents and her own experiences with DGD. And yet she had decided to come with him.

Lynn had told him today that he had a choice and that she didn't. Under the moonlight, Alan thinks about choice. Whether he has any choice at all. Whether his choices were ever his to make or if they had just been picked for him to keep up an illusion of autonomy. Like a child asked whether they wanted to read a bedtime story before or after brushing their teeth.

Alan wonders if anyone has any choice at all. Or whether in the end they all felt robbed. That they hadn't done enough, seen enough, loved enough. That their whole lives had passed in a single instant. That they had only gotten to watch it happen before them as audience rather than actor. And that it wasn't their fault.

Perhaps they were all ants. But they were ants that feared and loved and hoped and cared. Alan saw that now. He wonders again what the live ant felt as it was carried by its companions to its grave to be buried alive. Whether it thought itself dead or not. Perhaps that's all death was—the lack of a will to live. For if that were the case, maybe Alan had already been dead for years and it had taken Lynn to change that.

The hallway door creaks, and a figure enters the room. It's Lynn. She looks over at Alan and knows what he is pondering. Somehow, she always does. She sits by his side and together they watch the moonlight pour in through the open window, just as they had done months ago when they first confided in each other. The moon looks especially pretty tonight. On the windowsill, the ants continue marching. Outside, the moon edges its way upwards and the stars that haven't yet been drowned out by L.A.'s glow continue twinkling. Most stars are rendered invisible by the city lights. Humans had replaced the lights of the night sky with their own. In a few centuries, they had changed what had been a part of the night for eons. Nothing lasts forever.

Everyone and everything faces an end at some point. Mortality hides in the shadows, closer than anyone will ever know. Watching. Waiting. Patient. Cold. Mortality was only a step behind Alan, just as it was only a step behind anyone else.

Alan stares at the creases and lines running across his palms. Little lines that branched out and flowed and ended abruptly. Mortality was only a step behind Alan, just as it was only a step behind everyone else, DGD or otherwise. He looks over at Lynn and finally recognizes the unfamiliar feeling that has been gripping his mind all evening. It's hope.

So Alan decides to do the only thing any of us can.

He would live out the rest of his days.

And he would hope.

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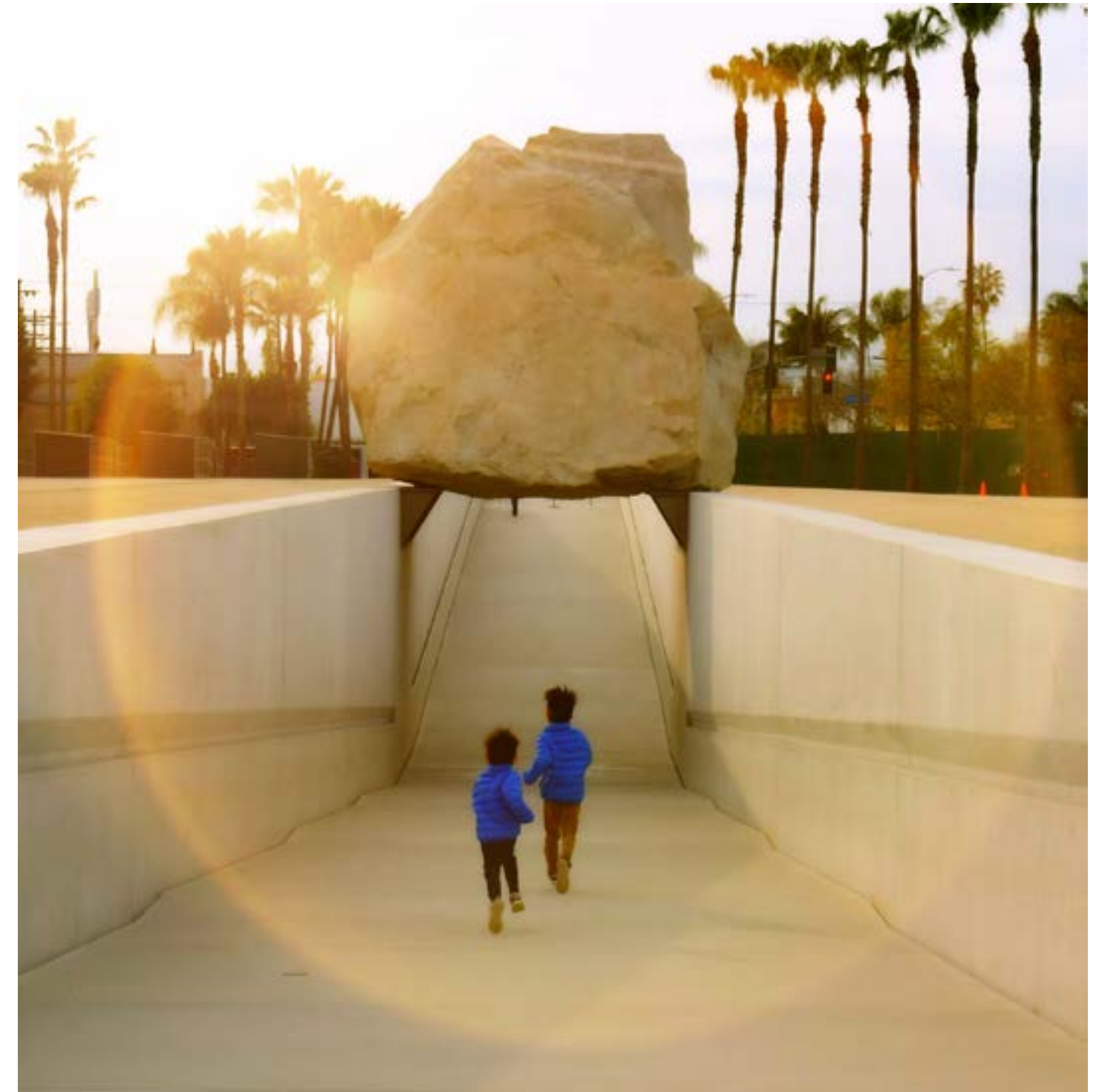
Anbu is a first-year Physics major from India who loves video-games, movies and thinking about how big space is.

“This is an original short story that is closely connected to and set after the events of Octavia Butler’s *The Evening and the Morning and the Night*. It is a continuation of that story told from the perspective of a character in the story.”

## This is Life

by: Sankha Subhra Das

I am a Post-doctoral Scholar at UCLA. My home country is India. In my free time, I enjoy watercolor painting, photography, and traveling.



### About the Piece:

“Life is much better when you are living in the present moment.”

# Innocence, Warped

by: Disha Sikaria

I'm a second year Cognitive Science, Linguistics, & Computer Science major. I'm from India. I love sketching, listening to music, and watching a lot of food videos.



## About the Piece:

“Innocence is valuable. Temporary. Every moment since birth is another that adds to the continuum of growth, which I have witnessed myself, and further through my brother. Yet time and culture catches up and warps this innocence, leading to adulthood.”

# Paeon

by: Disha Sikaria



## About the Piece:

“Enduring the taxing journey of eczema by my friend’s side inspired me to express my theme through this paeon. The transition depicts the contrast between pain and acceptance, the slow but rewarding nature of continuum.”

# Skyscrapers, Condos, Tents, and Campers

by: Conrad Haberland

I work at the UCLA Luskin and Meyer Conference Center. I make paintings in oil, water color and also create digital creations. I am interested in the environment and social justice. I am Dutch Indonesian born in the Netherlands but California is now my home.



About the Piece:

“This painting is about the various living situations here in Los Angeles.”

# Moon Eclipse

by: Xin Zhang

I believe there are magical beings in everyone's heart, which does not conflict with my science degrees.



## About the Piece:

“Inspired by the total moon eclipse on 05/15/2022. Apart from physics what if there is just a giant flying drunk octopus who tried to devour the moon and decided he did not like the taste of rock and spit it out so we got to enjoy our moon again?”

# Rocket to Mars

by: Conrad Haberland

I work at the UCLA Luskin and Meyer Conference Center. I make paintings in oil, water-color and also create digital creations. Interested in the environment and social justice. I'm Dutch Indonesian born in the Netherlands, but California is now my home.



## About the Piece:

“This painting is about a hope in the future.”

# Flow

by: Disha Sikaria

I'm a second year Cognitive Science, Linguistics, & Computer Science major. I'm from India. I love sketching, listening to music, and watching a lot of food videos.



## About the Piece:

“This is a depiction of time as a transparent barrier, a barrier that we cannot see but we are constantly looking through it. It displays an older woman looking at a younger version of herself through time, seeing a fantasy, a distorted version of reality.”

# Death in a Dream

by: Frances Staples

I am a British postdoctoral scholar in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences. Specializing in space weather, I incorporate science into art in my spare time.

last night I dreamt  
the atmosphere above me peeled away  
exposing me to the abyss of space  
the sky faded from blue to black

I watched this last prospect  
gasping for my last breath  
with one final thought

endless time I spent  
to gain these paper achievements  
worrying for a future life  
which I never got a chance live

somehow I did not grieve  
for I had a life  
I just did not know  
that it was

## About the Piece:

“Poem reflecting on the devotion of a students life towards their degree.”

# Possibility

by: Anbu Vajuravel

I'm a first-year Physics major from India. I love video-games, movies and thinking about how big space is.

Across the vast ocean of possibility  
lie islands.

Infinitely many in number  
and each infinitely far apart.

Every passing minute  
land floats farther way.

So many islands.  
Do any have that crucial one that you need?

A mere glance at the stars.  
I wish to lie here forever.

Gently rocked to sleep  
by the waves of the ocean of possibility.

Oh sweet possibility!

Forever and ever  
frozen in this instant.

The sound of the stars  
and the wine-dark sea.

The world stretched out before us.  
An infinite plane of infinitely many infinities.

Bundled up in little dreams  
and held within tiny beating hearts.

Your eyes light up.  
And there it is again.

A rare wonderful world  
of in-betweens and un-invented.

It's possibility.

# MARANAKIDILAM

by: Naveen Vikraman

I am from India and I am a Master's student in Electrical and Computer Engineering.



## About the Piece:

“I think about how whenever something happens, there are so many other things that don't and how tempting it is to remain in an instant where anything is possible but nothing has yet come to pass. This poem is about those moments and an uncompromising optimism that things simply must get better even when the present seems bleak.”

## About the Piece:

“Friends are forever, and this is an ode to the wonderful friends who led me through happiness and sadness”

# Multiplicity and Spatiality

by: Chaoying Zhao

I am a first-year Architecture major student who is interested in everything besides architecture. I am from China. I work with ceramic, digital art, sculpture, illustration, graphic design, gaming design, web design. I just love to explore everything!



## About the Piece:

“I try to separate the stairs from simple architectural components, exploring their deeper possibilities. How do stairs connect different spaces? How do stairs interact with people? Can stairs create ambiguities? Can stairs create repetition?”

# speak to me in symphonies (love that fades)

by: Amina Hossain

I am second-year Economics major and Labor Studies minor. I am from Bangladesh. I love anything that inspires or facilitates creativity. Let's make the world a better place with art..

you see him  
eyes scanning the pages of a book you don't care to notice  
because all you can see is him  
you see him  
*or maybe he sees you*

sun-kissed skin and dark eyes  
you want to feel his skin beneath your fingertips  
you want to trace patterns on the golden canvas  
you want to kiss the moles into constellations  
*you want him*  
he must be an ethereal being lost on its way home  
*no mortal can be so otherworldly*

he laughs in short bursts of staccato  
he ends his sentences in crescendos  
his voice is a symphony  
you aren't surprised when he tells you he wants to be a musician  
something about him is so musical  
*lucky you know how to read sheet music*

he lets you hear him play  
lets you into his world where he has resided on his own for years  
and when his fingers grace the ivories  
you wonder if beethoven and mozart were to descend from the heavens  
would they seethe in envy or pull up a chair to listen in awe

when he tells you you're his favorite instrument  
the crimson in your cheeks rivals the setting sun  
together you make music  
he never believed in religion  
but he calls you holy  
mumbles your name like a hymn  
drinks your incoherencies against his lips like holy water  
*even his profanities sound like scriptures*

so you let him ruin you in the most beautiful way  
let him take you apart between his fingers  
and take everything  
until you're empty so he can be full  
you're his salvation  
his redemption  
his atonement  
you let him break you into pieces so he can be whole  
*pieces he takes to make his own orchestra*

you shrink to let him grow  
so he grows  
expands until he's no longer in your trajectory  
no more your binary star  
you try to fall into his gravitational field  
but the inertia is too strong  
*he slips away*

and just like that, you face a black hole  
maybe you should have seen it coming  
maybe you did see it coming  
you fell into the abyss  
*no*  
you dived head first

## About the Piece:

“This is from a collection of poems about love, this one is about love that fades.”

# Photography Still from Love, Laugh, Doom, Tears

by: Nhung Nguyen

I am a third-year MFA Documentary Directing candidate. My home country is Vietnam. In my free time, I enjoy swimming, biking and hiking.



## About the Piece:

“This is a still from an award-winning personal experimental documentary film that I shot, directed, wrote and featured in it. As the film deals with the topic of sexual assault, I hope spreading the word about it will support other survivors as well”

<https://vimeo.com/648902903>  
Password: tftwards2022

# Watching by: Chaoying Zhao

I am a first-year Architecture major student who is interested in everything besides architecture. I am from China. I work with ceramic, digital art, sculpture, illustration, graphic design, gaming design, web design. I just love to explore everything!

## About the Piece:

“With the rise of social media, we are always exposed to people’s attention. Will privacy decrease or even disappear through social development? Just like using the common utilitarian tableware with an eye on it, people are being watched all the time.”





# The Giant

by: Anbu Vajuravel

I'm a first-year Physics major from India. I love video-games, movies and thinking about how big space is.

It seems so far away  
until it isn't.

Until it is at your heels  
Until they arrive.

Where we were  
and where we will be  
collide

and you can see neither  
despite feverish desire.

And we float  
suspended in a bubble  
between thumb and forefinger

of a Giant

whose gaze pierces my lungs  
and uncovers the breath  
that never left.

Nothing ever leaves.

The thought refuses to leave  
The words refuse to leave  
my lips  
They rattle around in my skull

The beast grows restless  
threatens to snap the bubble  
fingers rush together  
snuff out the flame,

that last living light,  
leaving naught behind

but the scent of a breath  
held but an instant too long

# Crowning Glory

by: Minh-E Lau

I am a 3rd year Global Studies major. I am from Singapore, although I have lived in 6 cities in 5 different countries overall. In my free time, I enjoy reading, DIY projects, music, and food.



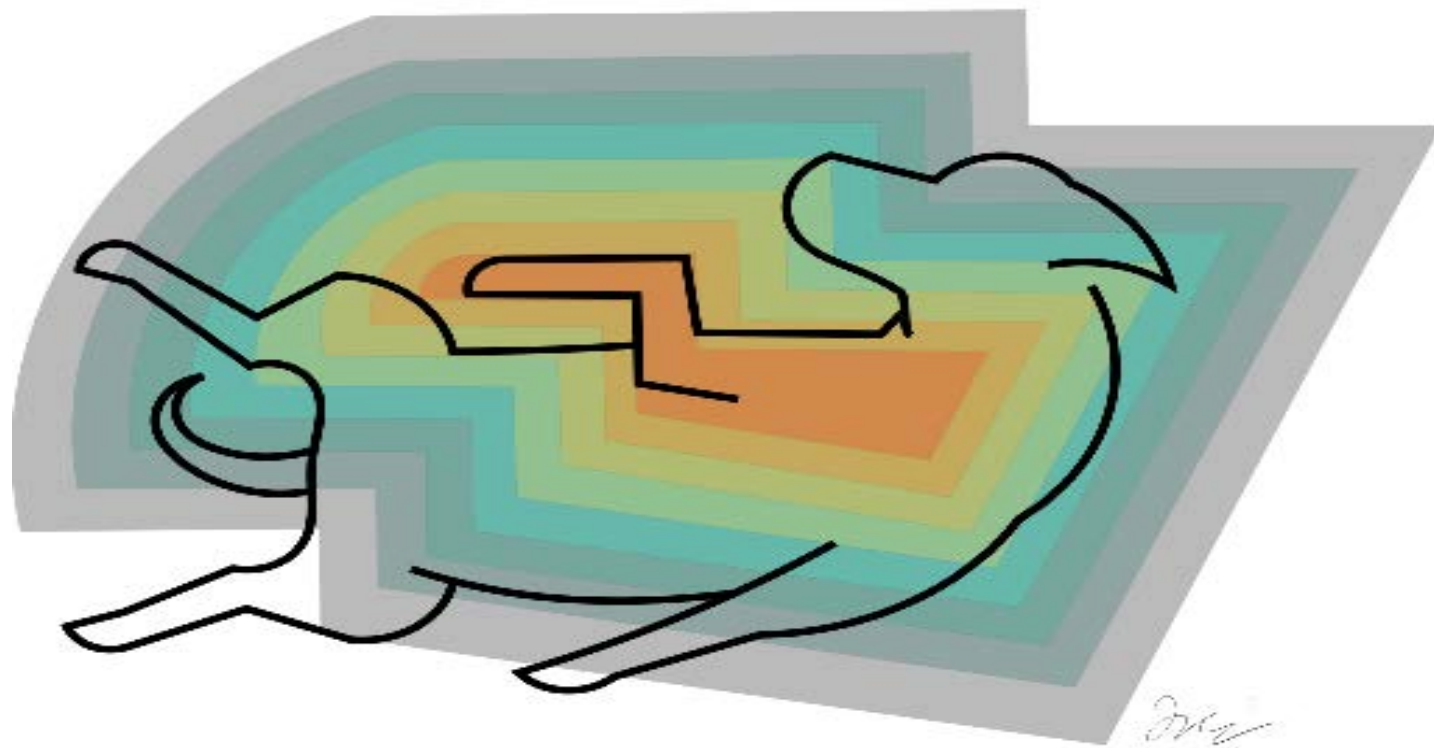
About the Piece:

“Man and nature meet at the top of the building, where a brilliant point of light refracts across Los Angeles. Is mankind nature’s crowning glory, or will it be its destroyer?”

# Dogo Flash

by: Luke Yoo

I am a stretched senior student majoring in Electrical Engineering. I am from corea del sur. I love to quickly make things happen when an inspiration kicks in.



About the Piece:

“dogo flash: a flash dogo is a good dogo.”

# Acknowledgements

An enthusiastic thank you to all of our artists and authors who submitted to this 2021-2022 edition of Envelope. We are inspired by your creativity!

Thank you to Fredy Martinez & Louis Paulin for their beautiful photos.

This magazine was assembled by Caroline Thrailkill and Hillary Thomas.

Want to get involved in the next issue of Envelope? Look for announcements on Dashew Center’s website [www.internationalcenter.ucla.edu/](http://www.internationalcenter.ucla.edu/) and in our newsletter & social media channels.

Dashew Center for International Students & Scholars.



Photo by Louis Paulin



**Dashew Center**  
for International Students & Scholars