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

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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 rainstorm. Without heat 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

“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.”
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.

**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!

“**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.”**

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**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.

“**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.”**

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**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.”**
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.

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 wildlife.”
Diversity
by: Sankha Subra 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.

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

About the Piece:

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.

“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.”

About the Piece:
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.”
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.

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 Subra 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.”
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.

“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.”

“Innocence, Warped 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 paean. The transition depicts the contrast between pain and acceptance, the slow but rewarding nature of continuum.”

Paean by: Disha Sikaria

About the Piece:
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.

Skyscrapers, Condos, Tents, and Campers
by: Conrad Haberland

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, watercolor 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 Vajravel
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.

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

“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

“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.”

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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
smuff 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.

“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?”

About the Piece:
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.

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

About the Piece:

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!

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This magazine was assembled by Caroline Thrailkill and Hillary Thomas.

Thank you to the Dashew Center!

Want to get involved in the next issue of Envelope?
Look for announcements on Dashew Center’s