

# Writer's Ink



Norwich Free Academy's 2021-2022 Literary Magazine



# **Writer's Ink 2021-2022**

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Dear Readers,

Writing to me has always been humanity's way of showing their thoughts of despair, humor and passion, of delving into the intricacies, complication and beauty of the world.

I have been a member of Writer's Ink since freshman year and this club has helped me to grow in so many ways. My confidence and my passion for writing has only ever grown because of experiences brought forth from this club.

Watching many club members, new and old, who have joined the club over the course of the year, listening and reading the pieces they wrote, has been both an honor and a privilege. Through them I have learned different ways to view the world both cruel and beautiful.

My creativity, my laughter, and my joy has only ever increased because of the friendships, stories and memories I have shared within Writers Ink.

I would like to thank my amazing advisors, Ms. Roberts and Mrs. Krauss, for their delicious desserts and much needed grammar advice.

To the writers new and old, from the club and those outside, thank you for all your amazing contributions and hardwork.

To my dear readers, I hope that you enjoy these pieces as much as I have and as many others within the club have as well.

I advise you to be ambitious and explore the world with all its joys and wonders and see the beauty it has to offer.

—Faiyhaa Saulat, Writer's Ink President 2021-2022





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### **I found my heart to hold Such vile, selfish thoughts**

I wish for things to remain,  
frozen away  
from all this hellish change  
I wish to scream & beg & shout  
that this is all too soon  
In my head  
I plead for all to remain frozen  
crafted in our past  
but I know what I must say  
despite the wishes that I keep  
& I shall hide my treacherous heart  
like the past that I seek  
& keep my nightmares buried well  
within my restless sleep

Faiyhaa Saulat

### **Time: 3:44. Cause of Death: Me**

I was resting against the wall of the building, cigarette burning in my hands, and contemplating what had happened prior. How could I have stopped myself?

*"Ma'am I am sorry, the cause of death is me."*

I spent a hundred and twenty thousand dollars on all that education. I graduated top of my class. I gave the speech as the valedictorian.

*"Ma'am I am sorry, the cause of death is me."*

Time and time again I keep going over it in my head. If only I hadn't done that operation. A small mistake. A small yet deadly mistake. Fresh out of med school, it was my job to hold things still for the surgeon. But the blood made me slip and-

*"You killed my son! MURDERER!"*

I looked down at my cigarette. I took a deep inhale. Lung cancer was a long and painful process, so I wouldn't be dead tomorrow, or the next year, but it would be a long long time. Then

*"The cause of death would be me."*

Joseph Bartlett

### **How to Survive the Thing in the Dark**

Step one: Don't run  
Running doesn't help.  
Your legs tire as it waits for you to collapse  
Then you become prey

Step two: Don't breathe  
It can feel the air move.  
It can hear each breath  
It can smell your fear

Step three: Think  
Thinking hard will not outwit it  
Think of your survival compared to the rest  
Make it go after the person next to you, even if you love them

Step four: Pray  
God please  
God please  
God please god please god please god please god please god please

Step five: Give up.  
It found you.

Joseph Bartlett

### **Days of Hope**

Living life in all possible ways  
Are the beginnings of all good days,  
Finding a bright green leaf  
Will eliminate all thoughts of grief,  
Cleaning oneself with pure soap  
Can fill one's heart with hope.

Richelle Tang

### **Pebbles, Stones, Rocks, and Boulders**

Time and time again,  
The conflict is par for the course  
Confessions go unsaid  
It feels like I have committed a federal offense

I want to break glass  
I want to throw doors  
Imaginary havoc feels so therapeutic

Father please forgive me  
For this monumental inconvenience,  
And let me feel content for five minutes

This process is definite  
This process is infinite  
Another situation will occur  
The gravel will pile up,  
Until a boulder will seep into my stomach

Logan Ferando

Emily  
Bartoshevich





### **Free**

The cries of the damned, now silenced, echoed in his ears, begging for the mercy of gods that will not give it

Too busy sitting back watching or participating in the bloody war.

Although, maybe worse, sitting back not by choice, but by force,

Either too weak to fight against stronger gods, or

trapped in their own realms

Unable to break free of their confinement,

Both doomed to be mere bystanders

to watch the death of people who just wanted to be freed.

Yeseneia Ayala

### **A Dame's Gift**

There came a dame

On that bright, blue and wretched day

Who saw a crow so broken and lame

White bones cracked and seen

And to fix its wing the knight was keen

*A gift a gift* the crow thankfully cried

Wrapped and mended and healed over time

And as the dame stayed grounded beneath the golden sky so fine

The crow cawed in cheer and took to the sky

Eyeing the dame once, a final time

Faiyhhaa Saulat

### **The accented tapestry, lavishly violet in hue**

The accented tapestry, lavishly violet in hue,  
Embellished in rich golds and intense navy blues,  
The needle and the thread guide their master,  
Wringing beauty and grace above all matters.

The seamstress's work, adored by many,  
Yet her needle and thread began to cast  
Her undoing.

To weave her ornate tapestry,  
She works tirelessly through the days  
And restlessly envisages  
Its potential for beauty.

At midnight, her needle dives and it winds,  
With one misstep, it binds to her eyes,  
A vivid rouge rushes over her vision,  
Blindness sweeps over, freedom at last.

She releases the needle and thread, fast,  
Her hands clasp together without restriction,  
"Rejoice, rejoice!" cries out the seamstress,  
No more must she suffer artistic constriction.

Olivia Henry

### **Special Snowflake**

Snow falls in the morning past midnight  
Snow falls at the beginning of every day!  
Snow falls the morning until night  
Snow falls when the moon is on display!  
And when the snow falls you feel the wind bite  
And so I will keep you warmer than the fires of Pompeii!  
Snow falls in the mornings that I love you  
And I will love you every day

Joseph Bartlett

## **Loving my Blackness**

When I was younger I used to always wish I was a white girl.  
Wished I had the silky straight hair,  
the small nose,  
The beautiful colored eyes,  
and all the popularity they had.

I had gone to an all white school growing up,  
and being the only black girl in my grade wasn't easy.  
Whether it was the one other black student  
or the white students it didn't matter.  
They would pick on me for the color of my skin,  
and my hair.

Then in fifth grade I moved.  
I had thought that now I would fit in,  
considering that most of the students at my new school were black.  
For the most part that happened.  
Now being black wasn't a problem,  
but my natural hair was.  
Most of the other students had braids or relaxed hair,  
so I felt like I had stuck out, with my frizzy curly hair.

In sixth grade was when the hate for my hair happened.  
I had noticed one day that when I had straightened my hair,  
everyone loved me all of the sudden, including my crush.

I wanted to keep straightening my hair,  
so that the attention I was getting wouldn't stop.  
Only, my older sister would not allow me to.  
And so everyone acted how they did before.

That was when I decided that I would just slick my hair back into a bun,  
for now on.  
I kept that decision up until freshman year,  
And by then I had lost a lot of hair from slicking it back so much.

It didn't matter to me though,  
because around that time my sister was never home,  
So I would straighten my hair twice a week.

Now when I straightened my hair,  
it wasn't like the other times.

Nobody treated me differently,  
because they were around a lot of girls who had naturally straight hair,  
and all the features I wished to have so badly.  
I started to wonder for a long time,  
why the boys who were the same as me,  
desired the girls I longed to be.

That was around the same time that I had started hearing about reincarnation.  
I had made it a strong belief that it was real,  
because If I couldn't be fully white in this lifetime,  
then maybe I would in the next.

Then the pandemic hit,  
and my sister urged me to start taking care of my hair.  
I thought it would be pointless,  
felt like it would look ugly if I wore it out in its natural state.

I had soon thought, mine as well just try.  
And so I did, and as I was healing my hair,  
it felt like I was healing my black side too.

Not long after, my hair started to flourish, and so did I.  
I would do all these creative hairstyles,  
and embrace the amazing hair I now have.

By doing that,  
it caused me to realize everything about being black is incredible.  
From the beautiful people,  
to the amazing dancing,  
or the great food.

Everything about us is unique, and I'd rather be that than ordinary.

Airiel Fletcher

## **I did it anyway**

*I did it anyway*

But you swore you wouldn't  
And look what you did  
*What did I do*  
You came, then went  
And chaos ensued  
As the bones lay bare  
And the dead woke  
*Confused*

You eyed them grinning  
Watching them wake  
And you swore you did it  
*For their sake*

Now look at them  
*They're such a glee*  
You watch them go  
Whilst the rest flee

Faiyhaa Saulat

## **Pricilla**

What a child  
A bouncing delight

A little girl  
With a spirit of flight

Oh how she grazed  
On that grass

Oh how she thought  
If would last

She picked the roses  
With their thorns

She picked the roses  
With her hands so worn

They bled and bled  
With delight dimming from her eyes

As the rain fell from the sky  
And her spirit of flight began to die

The petals fell  
And all was well

As she lay faint  
Then took to the sky

Faiyhaa Saulat



## Sky Highway

I'm jolting on a beam of light  
Hundreds of feet adjacent  
To the lived, explored, and expired.  
The light collapses as I walk on it.  
It was made many decades ago.  
Its strands of noble gasses  
Fall into the vulnerable crust.  
My bare feet become burnt and blistered,  
But I continue to run  
At a light year's pace.  
I've crossed the world over five hundred times  
In the past three minutes.  
The radioactivity looks like snow  
To observers below.  
The acidity is making the Earth unlivable.  
The world will be gone soon,  
So I exit into interplanetary routes  
That will take me  
To light built sturdier and traveled less.

Logan Ferando

Haley Herman



## Hollow

It's wretched and it's cruel  
And I find my words to be oh so hollow  
To the ears of my loves

Oh what shall I face  
In these dark skies?  
What friends will I take  
And leave behind?

I look for them in the corners of my eyes  
Only to find shattered glass and broken  
promises  
Much like the lies I tell beyond my disguise

Oh what will I do with these hollow words  
With the jeers and screams I bear inside  
Will I hide and hide till the dead of night  
Till I see them turn to threaded whispers  
And silent forever?

I see my thorns grow as my soul dims and dies  
As I watch them go, will I leave my guise?  
Or will I be forever buried in the grave  
Of my honest *please stays* and *don't say goodbyes*?

I'm on the outside  
Filled with the taunts and cries  
Of false niceties and screaming lies

They never know how much I pretend to be  
The image they want to see  
As though the devil's lies are better than the truths of mine  
I keep it all buried inside

## Summer Girl

I'm starting to think I'd like to be a summer girl.  
I've spent my whole life as a winter girl,  
However, as I've aged I've begun to see the blue in winter.  
I've noticed that my body blends with each season transition.  
Winter is frigid and cold-hearted,  
While summer is warm and passionate.  
I don't want to live in blue anymore.  
I want to escape this cycle.  
I'd like to be a summer girl.

Emma Brayman

Faihyaa Saulat

## V

You know how much time  
I spend under a sink.  
I touched the edge,  
Wash for eleven more seconds.  
I touched the edge,  
Wash for five more.nxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx  
I can't do sixteen, that's a multiple of four.  
Add five more.  
My whole body feels cold now.

You know how many times  
I close the cap on a plastic gallon of milk.  
I repeat the line "Rendezvous then I'm through with you"  
So I can let it be.  
It doesn't work.  
I put the milk in the fridge,  
But a wave of discomfort settles in.

I don't know if I believe in God,  
But I can't stop thinking  
About entities and deities.  
And only one digit  
Of the beast's number  
Is enough to make this one letter bolder.

All of this bad takes the feelings out of me.  
All of this bad takes the life out of me.  
All of this bad takes sixteen out of me.  
All of this bad takes the me out of me.

These wipes create such a distinct smell.  
This sanitizer creates such a distinct smell.

These smells are me.  
This cold is me.  
This fear is me.  
These two years have done so much to me.  
These two years have done too much to me.

### Untitled Two

The pain I once saw as neverending  
Disappeared into my quicksands of giddiness  
Soldier by soldier, together and linked  
Until the end, when the vultures picked  
Tendon by tendon  
And gave way to the pain underneath.

Faiyhaa Saulat

### Untitled Three

Honey dripped gold  
On welded silver tongues  
What spirits  
These younglings had  
To the comings of eternity and delight

Faiyhaa Saulat

Logan Ferando

## **Decrepit Mind**

The memories you saw  
On that given day  
Were clouds dancing whispers  
Of dropped shells and cursing doves  
The clusters of fallen and mended loves

You looked to the past and across your grave  
Worse than a broken clock  
And wished some days you forgot the happiness you had sought

You clandestine feelings  
Came out one day, like jagged stones  
As your heart turned to spoiled milk  
And maimed your weary bones

You thought your perdition began then  
For you screwed the ones that were benign  
As your sharp tongue burned the bridges  
Of your most beloved shrines

You chose the things you thought would stay  
Inside the walls you built  
As your cadaverous youth remained eternal  
And so you began to wilt



Photo and Poem  
by  
Faiyhhaa Saulat

You

Sometimes I strive for a change.  
The change manifests eventually,  
Yet suddenly my mind yearns for it to be the same again.

So I wash my dishes like always,  
Fold my laundry as the time before,  
And eat a meal with sudden guilt and regret.  
The same shower routine as usual  
Standing in silence as the water rushes down my damp locks, then shoulders, absorbing into  
my pale skin.

However, the only slight changes I see from this ongoing loop are the sudden, gloomy,  
Connecticut days.

But not how I look at you.  
That will always stay the same as it was years prior,  
And will remain the same as the years catch up to us.

Emma Brayman



Reagan Pennewill



### Starseed

I still look for constellations as much as I did as a young girl.  
Frantically searching for this glistening art spread evenly above me.  
But I want to appreciate the clusters of energy light years away from me just a little more.

I want to keep looking at them until the Mother Moon is no longer in my view and her children  
slowly begin to fade with the inevitable rising morning sun,  
I want to keep searching for them until the clouds are ready for the next step in their  
never-ending cycle, of crying down to Mother Nature's creations,  
And I want to keep studying them until my skin shrivels, my hair turns brittle, and my bones  
weaken until God decides it's my turn to close my eyes and open them in the new world.

Emma Brayman



Faiyhaa Saulat

### If I change

If I change how I look  
If I change how I act  
Will I finally be able to look in the mirror  
Without seeing the person he made me

If I blame myself  
If I forgive him  
Will I finally be able to see myself  
Without what remains of him

Hailie Davidson

### **“The world is not a pleasant place”**

The world is not a pleasant place.

Any bit of information on the news a person can attain is enough to make an untainted soul instantly become a raging cynic that gets their only dopamine from observing how unpleasant this world is.

People do really unsettling things in the blink of an eye, and in every few seconds a person becomes a statistic and is evaluated by hundreds of people that knew them.

This is what's just in, as told by a universal, yet unsettling accent.

As much as it can hurt nearly anyone, the world is not just defined by sorrow and horror. Have you ever looked at your surroundings before? Have you ever taken the time to just see the countless objects that create your environment or seen how people sway their feet during a lecture?

The world is unbelievably complicated.

Not just in financial responsibilities, social norms, and global affairs, but it's also complicated in the most simple senses.

There are hundreds of shoppers who you'll only ever observe in a grocery store setting.

There are thousands of cars you'll see on a week's commute that you'll never see touch the roads again, and in those cars thousands of unrecognizable drivers.

There are boundless atoms that float freely in a world that seems insurmountably large to them.

There are key moments in our lives that will live rent-free in our heads forever due to the happiness that they bring us, and there are joyful two minute interactions with friends that aren't even thought of afterwards.

For every minor inconvenience we face every day, there's five pieces of media we can consume, ten smiles we can share with loved ones, and about a swimming pool's worth of facts we can learn.

We can cry, but we can also laugh uncontrollably and cherish moments, and for that, the world is one hell of a pleasant place.

\*Title and first line are taken from “The World Is Not a Pleasant Place to Be”, written by Nikki Giovanni, and featured in page 72 of the poetry compilation *The Invisible Ladder*, edited by Liz Rosenberg

Logan Ferando



Emily Bartoshevich

### **The red light that attracts me**

In the dark hall that I sit in comes a red light.  
At first it scares me,  
Makes me think I will encounter more pain.

But I'm curious so I panic and go up to the light.  
I find out it is comforting.  
It relaxes me.  
I like the way it looks,  
The way it feels against my skin.

But the red light—it is not good for my body.  
It calms my mind but gets my heart racing  
And my hands shaking.

At first I think it is me who holds control,  
But that doesn't last long.

Over time the red light brings me deeper down the black hall  
And when it goes away I crave for it to return.

When it shows up again I try to ignore it,  
But I can not.  
Its coldness has its way of manipulating me into thinking it is okay.  
That nobody will know.

I am wrong.  
And when someone finds me,  
the hallway only gets darker,  
And the red light vanishes.

I cry for it to come back,  
Cry for the person to retrieve me,  
Get me out of the darkness,  
But they do not.

I am trapped,  
Nowhere to go,  
No way to get out.

Airiel Fletcher

***The following are the three winning poems from our 2021-2022 NFA Poet Laureate,  
Wilbur (Nadia) DeRose  
Congratulations!***

**Soliloquy**

Onlookers watch with confusion  
As I let the words manifest themselves on the tip of my tongue  
And no one dares to intrude on my aimless muttering.  
I watch in awe as their eyes fill with tears,  
My heart squeezes in my chest at the sight.  
But I continue.  
My sentences wrap around their chests,  
Squeeze the breath out of everyone's lungs  
As they all become witnesses to my undoing.  
They all begin to realize that I am unsaveable,  
That soon my very existence will be transferred into the past tense.  
It will be a reality for everyone to cope with.

And still, despite my own tears making their way onto my cheeks,  
Painting my face in streaks of glitter and gold,  
I continue to speak,  
Finally allowing the inner monologue of my mind to  
Slip past my previously sewn lips,  
Watching as my words float into the air,  
A parade of apologies and unspoken concerns drifting through the wind.  
But as my descent to the ground ensures my demise,  
No one is even aware that it's too late  
As they hear my final words,  
Simply because I am not speaking at all.

Instead they all hear the echo of my voice,  
Whirling around in their heads, a tidal pool of emotions,  
As reality finally dawns on them  
That I will not be coming home,  
That this is the last they will hear from me,  
That I  
Am a master of goodbyes,  
So much so, that I have turned my own into a soliloquy,  
Forced to be heard,  
An uninterrupted reckoning  
For anyone who dares to listen.



### Seamstress

Please,  
Don't look at me too carefully.  
Because if you look close enough,  
You'll find the messy seams across my back.  
Wounds pulled together through teary eyes.  
Thread in all colors,  
Replaced every time someone new takes a knife to it.

You'll find the loose cross stitches on my wrists,  
Although the reasons for those are unimportant,  
Because the blame for the wounds themselves  
Is always mine to take.

You'll find the X over my mouth in duct tape  
From when I ran out of red thread.  
Stitches given from saying too much.  
Speaking out.  
Using my voice.

Or maybe you'll be able to see the way that my eyes  
Are sewn shut,  
From no longer wishing to see how the world burns  
With every step I make.

So don't ask questions.  
Don't look too hard.  
And if you end up seeing something you don't like,  
Please,  
Don't make me take out my needle and thread.

### Untitled

Just like me,  
This poem will remain untitled.  
Don't get me wrong,  
I have a name,  
But it does not belong to me.

No, it belongs to my mom,  
Who was strong enough to give me life.

It belongs to my dad,  
Who would always accompany it with a simple  
"I love you."

To my grandmother,  
Who replaced it with "angel" more often than not.

Funnily enough,  
It belongs to my mom's close friend,  
Who saw it once on a television show.

But the only person it doesn't belong to,  
Is me.

I used to ask the question,  
"Why should they get to make that choice?"  
Into the air, lost with little meaning,  
Falling upon the ears of the silenced.

Then someone once told me  
That they don't.  
That I do get to make that choice.  
It fueled me to take back control.  
It's my turn.

I won't be untitled any longer.



Reagan Pennewill

