



Ramifications

Berry College Art and Literary Magazine



Diversity Issue — Spring 2022

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Important Note

All authors and artists in this issue come from diverse communities, including but not limited to: LGBTQIA+, disabled, neurodivergent, POC, first generation students, and more.



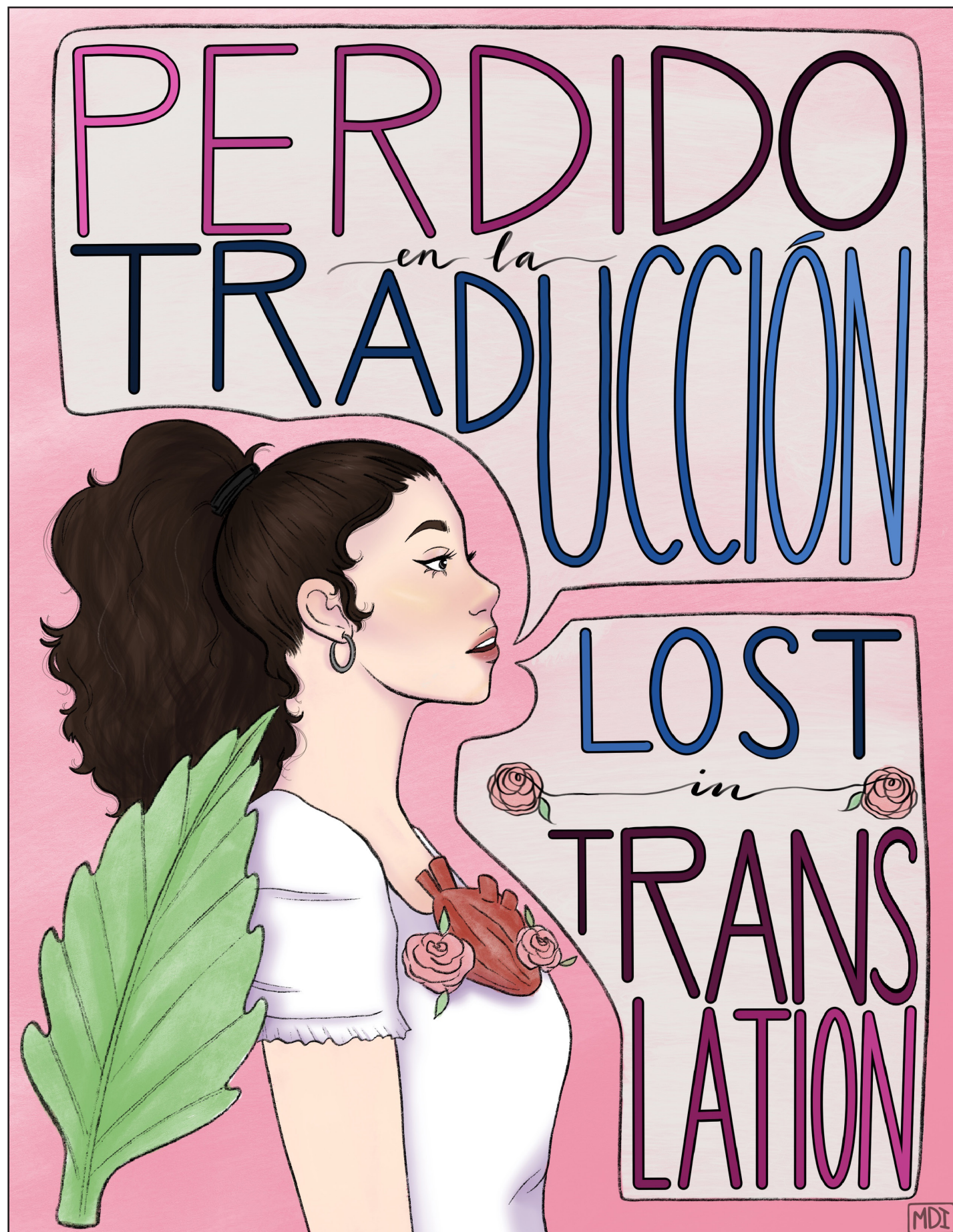
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Berry College Art & Literary Magazine

Special Diversity Issue



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Perdido en la traducción // Mia Irizzarry

Viviremos para Siempre

Maria-Andrea Nivon Galvez

Viviremos para siempre
Tu y yo, sonriente
Sin gente que miente
Tu y yo, hasta la muerte.

Mami why are you so tired?
Hanging your heart by the fire
Hija yo no se, I don't know
Everything I've been through, high and low
Espérate en este segundo yo no se en que mundo
Pensaste que tu no puedes hablar de todo que te pasa
Dame un abraso--just give me a hug, don't tell that you are giving up

So, Mami why are you so tired?
Stopping your life like somethings dire
Hija tu no sabes, you don't know
Something I've been hiding from you so
Espérate en este segundo, si se en que mundo
Yo pensé que yo no pude hablar de todas mis cosas
Entonces no se equivoca vas a conocer which side I reside

Mami I miss your little smile
Laughing your soul, you'd inspire
Hija yo lo se, oh I know
Everything I do,
has been for you.

We both will live forever
You and I, we'll be smiling
Without people who lie
You and I, until death

Viviremos para siempre
Tu y yo, sonriente
Sin gente que miente
Tu y yo, hasta la muerte.





Emergence // Sam Warner

Omen

Michael Berry

I am not a beast without his marks, though *infinite*
 is the ignorance that allowed my name to escape
 I am the pole you split on your walk through the park, and
 I am the ladder you fumbled under without a thought.
 A little salt tossed over the shoulder would *never*
 keep me at bay or drive me away, because truly
 I am the entire shaker you could not keep upright.
 The umbrella opened indoors, the one forgotten
 with forecasts of furious clouds, can rest well knowing
 I am the raven perched just above your chamber door.
 I am the cats' glaring--jet-black and crossed long ago,
 a mirror, waiting for you in a thousand pieces.
 I am entropy, chaos, *and* what your logic failed.



From The Top // Nahdia Garcia

Little Roman Stillborn, Recovered 2020 A.D.

Rose Dankesreiter

Little Roman stillborn
swaddled in blue,
just as every shift before
I shall sing to you
a lullaby,
soft and sweet
like your toes beneath my glove
that have tinged yellow with age.

I hold you close to my heart through a
heavy-plastic gown,
lay you down on a bed of
metal, and
tuck your blanket tighter
to keep out the chill
of the archives.

Your eyes closed tight, your lips
never parted to cry.
So delicate you seem under florescent lights,
fully formed and fully
loved by a mother who dug you
a sacred grave, laid you
with toys with which
you were never able to play.

It feels wrong to forget
this love so soon
though over 2,000 years have passed
for you. And so
as I place you in your sterile crib
underneath the museum floors and
close the heavy steel door,
I continue to hum the tune:

*Sleep forvermore,
little Roman,
swaddled
in blue
Goodnight
little Roman,
Good-
night
to
you.*



Ancient Graffiti // Katherine Gates

Jesus in the Bible Belt

Alyssa Prather

Crosses hang on every door
With a Bible in every room.
Sweet tea is paired with a whispered “Amen”
After bowed heads come up for air.
But you won’t find Jesus in the Bible Belt.

You won’t find Him
In the shifted eyes
Of fast-walking people
Who pass a man with a still chest
And track marks on his arm,
A fly on the wall.

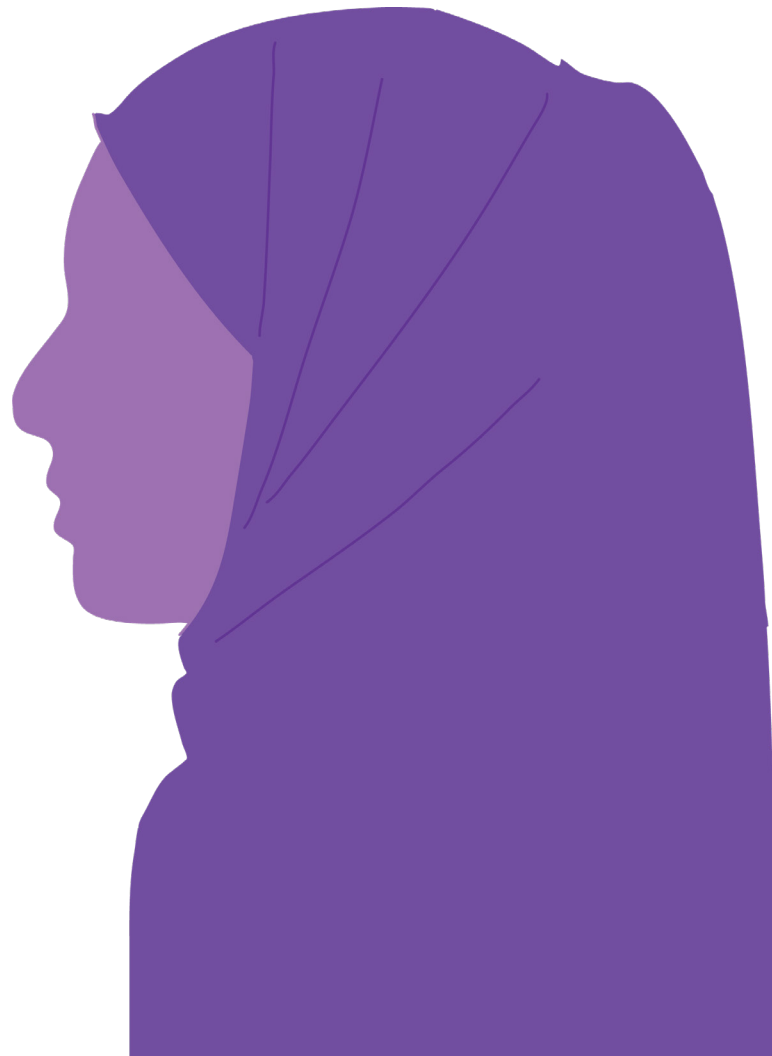
You won’t find Him
In the new, money-sewn clothes
Of a white man
Who scoffs at cardboard signs and
Outstretched hands
And tells them to work harder.

You won’t find Him
In the fiery words of a preacher
When he tells his congregation to
“Resist homosexual impulses
Or be dragged to the fiery pits
Because that’s God’s word”
As he looks into the rainbow-colored heart of his son.

You won’t find Him
In the tears
Of a young girl
As she is pelted with trash
And called a terrorist
In the halls of a school
Where she should feel safe to practice
Any religion she chooses.

You won’t find Him
At Ms. Christina’s
Where the sheets
Aren’t for beds
But for people
To make more clear what tattoos
Of swastikas
And white power do not.

You won’t find Him



In the barrel of the gun
Pointed at a jogging Black man
Or in the hands
Of a man driving his truck
Into crowds holding signs reading
Black Lives Matter.

Pack your bags
You poor, lost soul.
Try to find your Messiah here
But trust me when I say
You won’t find Jesus in the Bible Belt.



Winter’s Generosity // *Camille Schmied*



Untitled

James

I'm what people in my community call stealth. It's not evident I'm transgender - I pass considerably well, and only some people on campus know that I wasn't born a man. I started my transition in Highschool at 16 and went on hormones at 17, and legally changed my name at 18. I got top surgery at 19 in the middle of a global pandemic. Of course, my story was typical, a tom-boy who hated dresses and refused to play sports on the girls' teams because I didn't see myself as one of "them". My short hair as a child made many question me when I would walk into a restaurant bathroom, and my skinned knees and rough housing raised questions. I was ridiculously okay with being pestered about my gender because I had to start so young, so I pulled back.

By the time I arrived at Berry at 18, I was so scared of being myself that I chose to separate myself from my identity. It was a distinctly personal choice. No one forced me into hiding other than myself, but now I can see it was purely defensive.

I am a driven student - I work hard - I am determined to make something of myself. I believed that was what was important - not my gender.

But why? Why do I put so much pressure on myself? Does it have to do with a self-perceived chip on my shoulder?

Being trans has given me faith in myself. It has made me realize the real impact of hatred, people believing I don't exist, or because I was 16, being told my identity was a phase. It has presented me with challenges I still struggle with. I know that it has made me stronger, more emotionally intelligent, and certainly much better at dealing with conflict. I am a stronger storyteller because telling everyone in your life at the age of 16 that they need to rethink their own biases and perception of you requires persuasion. I can deal with criticism and hatred as a self-assured person because I wasn't for so long. I am self-assured because I knew I could only count on myself for so long.

But occasionally, I forget I wasn't born a man and that I've had to fight for a chance to be a man. I will live my life in a way that matches my values and simply move from class to class and assignment to assignment until the semester ends. **But I still feel it.** Anytime I enter a bathroom, my heart rate spikes. When I meet new people, I always wonder if they can tell, handing my license to someone with the wrong gender and getting questioned. It all drains me if I overthink it. I also became an excellent liar, telling people their words didn't hurt or that someone telling me to "pull down my pants" to check my gender didn't make me cry for three days after.

In these struggles, it is easy to lose sight that being trans has made me grow in ways like no other. Because my family is supportive and allowed me to transition at a young age, I got a head start, and I have lived a seemingly ordinary college experience. But other times, it feels like a blaring siren.

I am reminded by doctor appointments to get blood drawn every six months to check my hormone levels, by my trans friends who feel more open with their identity- who join clubs and wear pins and are unabashedly themselves, random spotting reminding me I have a uterus, and the occasional misgendering. Not to mention the news coverage on new 'trans bans' or hearing stories of acts of violence against those in my community. It shakes me to my core.

I feel like an imposter so much of the time, and most of my life is spent trying to figure out how a cisgender person would react so I can mirror it. I live in the greyscale, still searching for myself but urging to find ways to help others who have felt what I have felt. I know who I am, but I am still struggling with the growth we all face in college.

Because we are such a small community, especially in our bubble, our experiences go unnoticed. But we are **here**, and we are **resilient**, and our gender has nothing to do with that.

We don't have a chip on our shoulders but instead have whole lifetimes of experiences we have gained through transitioning and living authentically. That's what I tell myself anyway because if you can't find a positive in a world actively working against you, it's hard to be confident in yourself.



Safely Trans Outside // Art by blkmoodyboi, Photo by Emily Saunders

you might have a disability if...

Sam Warner

you might have a disability if you have to google what counts as a disability and get frustrated when there’s no consensus, no agreed upon definition, no box to check yes/no.

you might have a disability if you learn very early in life that you can’t go to certain places, do certain things, eat certain foods, because your body doesn’t work like that, won’t let you, will struggle to recover.

you might have a disability if, at fourteen years old, you get on stage for the first time feeling like you’re about to pass out, feeling like your entire body from the hips down is nothing but aches and pains, feeling like you should have stayed home today, and you smile out at the crowd and think, “no one has any idea i’m falling apart.”

you might have a disability if you, a teenager, an overgrown child, go to three different doctors with a list of complaints (jointpainbackpaincrampsohgodthecrampsfatiguedizzinessbleedingbleedingtoomuchsleepingtoomucheatingtoomuchnoteatingenoughnotdoingenough) and are told that the real problem is that you’re fat.

you might have a disability if the fourth doctor talks to you for ten minutes, orders blood work, diagnoses you the same day, and sends you home with two prescriptions and a glimmer of hope.

you might have a disability if one of those prescriptions destroys your body, kills your organs, makes you sicksicksick until all you can do is puke your guts out and sleep for fifteen hours a day.

you might have a disability if you lose a chunk of your high school years, days slipping through the cracks and fading into daydreams, sliding into a blur of feeling bad in bed feeling bad on the couch eating so much sopa de pollo because it’s the only thing you can keep down.

you might have a disability if you realize before you’ve finished puberty that you can get away with being sick if you’re also beautiful and brilliant, always with makeup and hair done, always with something intelligent to say, wrapped up in vintage dresses that hide your assistive devices, writing essays and blog posts and text messages from bed.

you might have a disability if you have your first surgery at seventeen, for the removal of an organ that no longer functions, that has died inside of you and is slowly poisoning you, that may have been killed by the medication given to you by the one doctor who took you seriously.

you might have a disability if you start college with still-healing surgical scars hidden under your short skirts and perfect lipstick and cheerful attitude, the first of many.

you might have a disability if, at nineteen, you have to decide between paying rent and buying food that won’t make you hurt, so you decide a little bit of hurt is acceptable if it means you and your partner won’t be homeless.

you might have a disability if you have to stop wearing heels at twenty-one because they make your joints swell and hurt and anything besides comfy boots or tennis shoes gets hard to walk in after a few hours.

you might have a disability if you’re constantly apologizing for being tired, for not having energy, for needing breaks, for having to rest.

you might have a disability if you can never make plans without researching the venue ahead of time, checking for clean, accessible bathrooms and a place to sit down and an allergy-friendly menu.

you might have a disability if you realize at twenty-three that you now have days when stairs are difficult, then get frustrated with yourself because you eat healthy and go to the doctor and take your meds and meditate and do therapy and healthy twenty-three year olds aren’t supposed to hurt when they go up stairs.

you might have a disability if you get frustrated with yourself for being frustrated because this is the only body you have and you love it, you really do, but you can’t help but notice that certain things seem easier for everyone else.

you might have a disability if you read a book on disability justice and cry your little heart out because these words are describing your life and it feels so good to be seen and it’s okay, this book says, it’s okay if your body doesn’t fit the ableist heteropatriarchal capitalist system it was born into.

you might have a disability if the word “disabled” makes your skin crawl when you try it on for size, because you’re already queer and neurodivergent and mentally ill and pagan and fat and god, can’t there be one thing about you that’s normal?

you might have a disability if admitting you have a disability feels like giving up, like admitting that you couldn’t do it, couldn’t swing it in the “real” world, couldn’t fake it till you make it, couldn’t just do yoga and drink kale smoothies and believe yourself into normality.

you might have a disability if admitting you have a disability also, somehow, feels like coming home, like being really honest with yourself and your body, like a warm hug from someone who knows, they know and they’re so sorry.

you might have a disability if writing this poem made you cry, because it felt like peeking into the closet where you keep all the things you don’t ever want to talk or think or write about.

you might have a disability, but what if you don’t? what if you’re fakingitoverreactingbeingahypochondriacbeingdramaticdoingitforattentionjustlazynotsickenough? what then?





After the Fall // Sarah Esther Merry

The Banshee

Grace Jordan

She was born 7 pounds 3 ounces, a healthy baby girl, already with a mop of red hair and powerful lungs. She had come from the rich soil of the earth and her parents were keen on showing off their prodigy. They liked to dress her up in polka dotted hats, push her on the fraying, red swing that fell over the koi pond, hold her soft hands as they cooed at her. The girl ate kiwi as green as her eyes and jumped in piles of crisp leaves that held maggots and worms.

Her early days were filled with adventures, sculpted by her parents like a Venetian bust.

That is why her parents said nothing when her hair had reached down her back and she started talking to the tiny hole in the wall behind the unbruised white nightstand and the withering yellow wallpaper.

That is why they turned a blind eye to her aptness for guessing whose soul the grim reaper would collect next and her sleepy ramblings of women with no hair.

That is why the truth was never spoken between the patriarch and matriarch of the family, not even when blood as red as a ladybug’s wings dripped from her eyes and smeared on her fingertips because *the one in the mirror is not me*.

Instead, they tore off the wallpaper and painted the room a baby blue;

they cut her nails and took down the mirrors;

they fed her a tiny sprinkling of a panacea mixed with her daily supplements and vitamins.

She was slowly subdued, a ghost of the girl with dimply cheeks. She smiled less and didn’t grow upset when her parents turned the lock of her room as the sun was crawling into bed. She kept her growing nails covered in her dress pockets and gazed at the koi fish with uncaring eyes.

Her parents were satisfied, having grown weary of the cries of anguish and blood smeared walls.

They let her be in her own quelled world, almost forgetting the midnight songs of fright.

She eventually grew quiet.

So quiet, that when she muttered of the next soul the grim reaper would possess there were no ears to hear it and when she returned to the earth from which she had come there was no one to pick up her bruised body and mourn it.



Euphoric Tears // Camille Schmied

Mama you see me

Hannah Owusu

Mama you see me?

They see me but
cast aside the soul they see a negro with animal tendencies
That’s why mama you tell me to stay home right?
So I can lose myself in a fantasy rather than be eliminated in reality
But shii
It ain’t even safe nomore but what I can I say, it’s my safest bet nowadays
Cuz i’ll be zamned if I lose myself before I spread my rage
Rage
Cuz as far as they’re concerned we are all the same

Untamed
Untrained

It makes me rage

That 12 can catch me lacking
Faq around shoot me and call it check mate
My fate stolen in a stolen place
Where I once thought was heaven just to find
A stolen nation with some borrowed history
Now I find
myself tryna prevent my folks from becoming history
Cuz I know at the hand of massa they might become pending mysteries

Another unnamed

...a hashtag

And with all these trials comes my denial
I thought with brown spice everything is nice
Mama you told me brown is the color of nature
So tell me why
Tell me why it forsakes me
Mama tell me
Tell me why
why nature absorbs my cries, my clots in silence

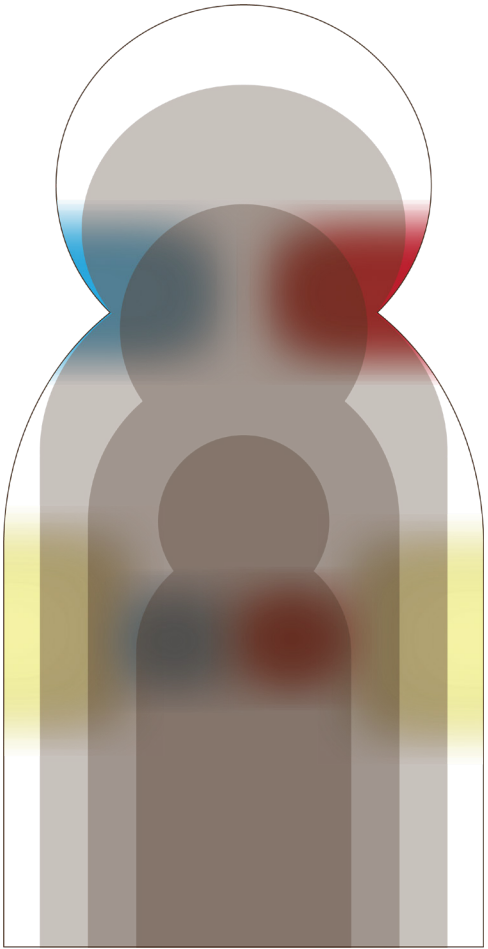
No-
it rages as I remain silenced

Living in a world where I'm hated
My every flaw is dilated and struggles elevated
And all my emotion remains unstated
Bottled up waiting to drown me
While I rage in my silence
Mama do you see me?
Am I child or a threat?
Cuz I'll never know
I'll never know how it feels to be free

It makes me rage

But I will go out in black with my brown skin
And enjoy the creator's creation from mere soil because though hated,
my black habits remain undefeated
Wanted by many but cursed and gifted to a select few

Mama...I can finally see



Las Caras de Protesta #3 // *Melissa Pérez*

Lesbian Lament

K.S.

I'm followed by every storm
And he's always right behind me
So I'll just hide away in this purgatory

But her body's holy
And I'm never worthy
St. Peter don't tell my Father how I was worshiping

Oh I'm a sinner
But my contrition will never come
Oh I may be a sinner
To her sweet body I will succumb

My father doesn't care about me
And my mom says to let it be
So I'll just sit here an empty elegy

And I'm too tired to go home
For it is far to far away
And St. Peter will tell Father that I was just a waste of space

Oh I'm a sinner
But my contrition will never come
Oh I may be a sinner
But she's a goddess
Only to her will I succumb



The Art of Self-Discovery

Emily Perry (after Joe Brainard's "I remember")

I remember choking on tapioca pearls the first time I had boba tea.

I remember my first drink. I felt a cold coming on, and my dad's solution was a shot of peppermint moonshine. I guess I took it well. My parents still think that wasn't my first drink.

I remember my first communion. I nearly spit out the blood of Christ. That also happened to be the day I learned I hate grape juice.

I remember crying in a church bathroom when I realized my feelings for a woman were a little more than just like, and that God would hate me for it.

I remember embodying envy to the point of self loathing, of forgetting my own name.

I remember discovering that in some cases it wasn't envy, it was just attraction.

I remember falling in love with my best friend. She didn't love me like that.

I remember my first tattoo. I hid it from my grandparents for nearly a year. The second one they found within a week.

I remember when I couldn't bring myself to sing hymns during service.

I remember when I stopped believing in God and Jesus Christ.

I remember when my dad told me he was proud of me, and I wondered if he would still say that if he knew who I was.

I remember when I decided he would never know.

I remember hiding who I was.

I remember accepting to settle for second place, that first place was never something I was good enough for.

I remember my first hangover and the day-long headache that came with it.

I remember driving six hours to meet someone I had met online. We are best friends now.

I remember the struggle of trying to pull myself out of bed, of bursting into tears without a reason.

I remember my friends, the flights to D.C. and drives to Canton that kept me sane, kept me connected with those who meant the most to me.

I remember my attempts to process my thoughts, to truly understand my own mind which before had been an enigma.

I remember learning the balance between self-love and self-preservation.

I remember learning to be happy.

About Us

Ramifications is an arts and literary magazine. We showcase student talent through our publication and strive to reflect the Berry community through our selections. We have been publishing our magazine for over 50 years, including genres such as poetry, fiction, non-fiction, essays, musical compositions, drama, and all types of visual art.

Review Process

All submissions are compiled into one anonymous word document and given to staff members to vote on. Staff will vote on a scale of 1 to 5 and submit their scores to the Editor-in-Chief. From there, the Editor-in-Chief tallies the votes and presents them to the staff during a selection meeting. The highest voted pieces are discussed and final selections are made.

Diversity Issue Editor’s Note



When I went to my first meeting as a volunteer at Ramifications, it felt like stepping into a room of people I was meant to know and become friends with. The Berry community is strong and always has been, but it is through things like this that we continue to grow stronger. When I was first approached about this special issue focused on diverse voices, I was excited, overwhelmed, and honestly, emotional.

As someone who is neurodivergent and queer, this issue is incredibly important to me. I wanted to create a space that felt safe for anyone to share their story however they felt comfortable, and I am proud to say we accomplished that.

I want to thank all of the amazing authors and artists who sent their work to us at Ramifications, and for trusting us with your pieces. I know firsthand how difficult it can be to share your stories, and I applaud you all for doing so. I am honored to be a part of uplifting and showcasing your voices.

Thank you for reading and supporting these communities.

— Kayla Slack

Meet the Staff



Art Editor
Jennifer Hernandez-Argueta



Editor-in-Chief
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Staff
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