

The Writing Success Project

VOLUME 13 / SPRING 2023



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Dedication

This has been a year of transitions for the TRIO Writing Success Project as we have moved back onto campus after the pandemic lockdown, and we want to say thank you to the wonderful people who have helped us with the transition and moved on to their own new adventures.

Monique Ubungen, our excellent WSP tutor who joined us during the remote-working period of the pandemic, kept students supported and connected online and then helped make our home base on the Ocean campus a warm and vibrant place this fall when we all returned to in-person work. We enjoyed collaborating with Monique for the time that she was a part of our program, and we miss her spark. Many students who also loved working with Monique have come by the office this spring semester looking for her. We know she's continuing her good work in her new job!

Katie Dalla, now our second-longest-serving WSP tutor, has been with the program for six years and has made an impact on the academic careers of innumerable students. She came to us from the English department's Embedded Tutoring Program, and their loss was absolutely our gain. The enthusiastic students that come to her study group sessions know what a steady,

positive source of support she is in guiding them through their semester of English. Beyond the help with English, Katie offers coaching in strategies for college success. As a panelist for our First-Gen Celebrations, she has shared her own advice and college experience with our community. She has also brought creative flair to our program with her poetry workshops. Although City College is lucky to be keeping Katie as she moves into a new position at the Ocean campus, she will be greatly missed here at the WSP.

Monique and Katie: You have been an absolute pleasure to work with. Thank you, many times over for being the smart, compassionate, dedicated—and fun—people you are!

Volume 13 | Spring 2023

FALL 2022

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SPRING 2023

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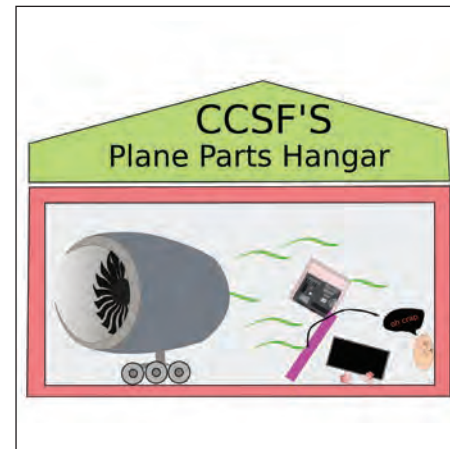
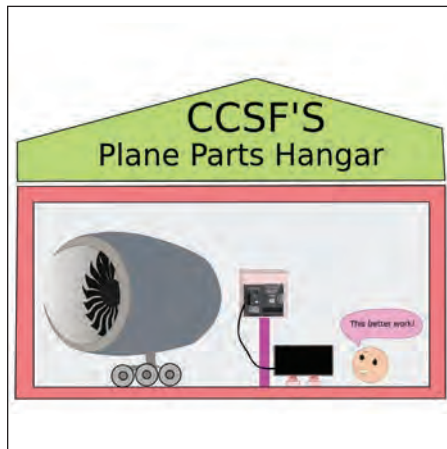
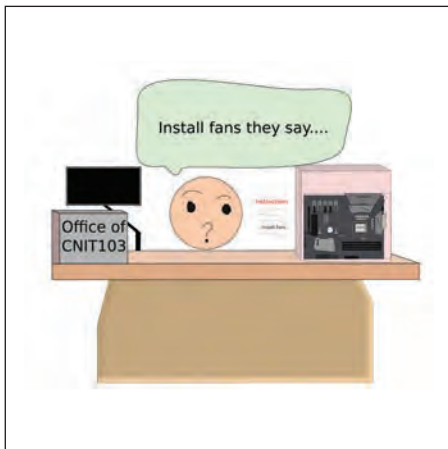
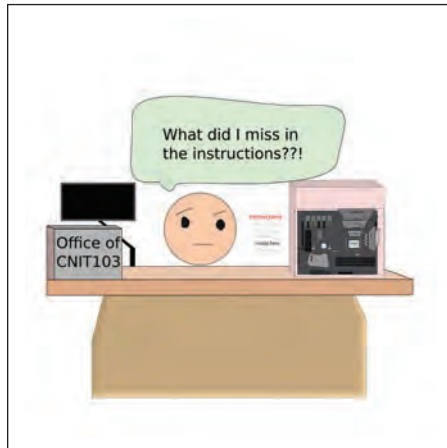
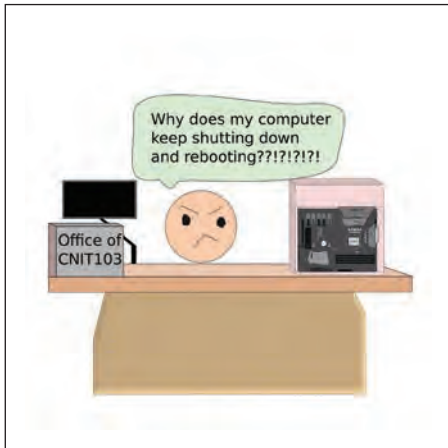
Monique Ubungen, Tutor

Arnie Warshaw, Tutor

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Need a Fan | Corey Jen



Orange Smile | Victoria Serano

Ode to a Black Girl

Artie Jean

This is dedicated to all the black girls and black women who have ever been called angry or not beautiful. To the black women who have an opinion but have been labeled angry because they speak passionately: I see you. I hear you.

You are too loud, lower your voice,
No one wants to hear your opinion, let alone look at you.
Make yourself smaller!

Your skin is as dark as the night,
Lips big and full
You are a black girl; you are different.

The sassiness in your walk intimidates people,
Change the way you walk, and the inflections in your voice as you speak!
Makes you sound angry; you shouldn't speak with such passion.

You are the black girl, never considered the beautiful one yet.
Everyone changes their bodies to look like yours.
Black girl, black girl, don't let them change you,

Stand up tall; face high to the sky!
Make them see you!
Do not shrink yourself to make them comfortable!

Know who you are!
Black and beautiful
Your voice matters!

The skin of mahogany, silky and smooth
Hair that reaches the sun
Black girl, black girl, you are beautiful.

Black girl, black girl
Stand up tall, and take up space.
Black girl, black girl
Let them wonder in awe!



Lunch Break Pupusa in La La Land | Katherine Aeschbacher

Thrive on the Decrease

Huanyao Li

Miserable groan. The crunch from the fierce contact between the wooden bar and the skull, along with the ringing made by the rusty metal cage, composes the dreadful prelude, followed by a moment of silence, which slightly abates the trauma of the audience. Before the audience can fully recover, the bloodiest scene occurs, featuring skinning, eviscerating and dismembering. Then, the hectic sound of people cooking, and the smoke coming from the fire stove trickles down the street into every surrounding household, indicating the imminent ending. Finally, the once most adorable and closest friend of humans is turned into a big pot of delectable meat, covered by a variety of sauces and spices. This is a scene that accompanies almost my entire childhood. Braised dog is the closest name I can come up with for this contentious dish in English. Particular to certain areas of China, braised dog is a dish that has been embraced by people for a long time. Even though debates around it have emerged here and there through the course of history, they have never been more intense than nowadays. Even in China, the voice of stopping dog meat consumption is getting stronger and stronger, as the younger generations mostly treat dogs as a companion animal instead of food. Under such circumstances, the decrease of dog meat consumption in China is inevitable. To some extent, braised dog might become a dish that people can only find in history books. But that might not be a bad thing. The decrease of the dog meat consumption represents an improvement of the Chinese society.

The decrease of dog meat consumption represents an improvement of the economic development in China. Treating dogs as food appeared a long time ago in Chinese history. Back in those times, Chinese society was constantly besieged by famine. As mentioned in the article, “Dog ‘Meat’ Consumption in China,” by Peter J. Li, Jiang Sun and Dezhi Yu, “For most of the 20th century (1900–1978), China went through internal turmoil, foreign invasions, and failed socialist experimentation. There was barely enough food for the people. During Mao’s rule (1949–1976), companion–animal keeping was condemned as a bourgeois lifestyle” (514). During those days, people couldn’t even feed themselves, let alone feed a pet. Starvation drives people to scour every corner for any nutritious objects. Dog meat was inevitably added to the menu, given that dogs are animals that live with humans closely, which makes them easy targets. As a result of the rapid development of the economy, the living conditions in China are now greatly improved. Not only has famine been extinct for most of the area, but also many major cities have achieved the developments that outstrip those of some developed countries. Because of the abundance of living supplies, more and more people have excess energy and time, which gives them the ability to keep a pet. As the closest friends of humans, dogs are treated as companion-animals, instead of food, by more and more people. The number of young generations who grow up with a dog as their companion–animals is constantly increasing, while the old generations who possess the habit of eating dog meat are gradually fading away from the stage of history. Under this trend, a bunch of new

business opportunities begin to emerge in the forms of pet supplies, pet hospitals and whatnot. Compared with the peripheral dog meat market, this whole new pet market and its various ramifications are enormous and promising, as we can see from the developed countries. The improvement of the economic development in China leads to the decrease in dog meat consumption which, in turn, boosts the economy even more.

The decrease of dog meat consumption represents the growing humane awareness of Chinese society. Cruelty is part of human history, such as the lives of the oppressed farm-workers before Cesar Chavez organized them in the U.S. (4). In the movie, *Temple Grandin*, Grandin, an advocate for the humane treatment of animals, states, “Nature is cruel, but we don’t have to be.” Temple Grandin uses her actions to evoke humane awareness deep inside people’s hearts. Thanks to her and many other efforts, treating animals in a humane way is now widely accepted by human society including the society of China. In China, dogs that are treated as food undergo extremely inhumane treatments. Though there are some kennels that raise dogs for restaurants, many dogs that become food in restaurants are stolen by thieves. In the country areas, most people let their dogs go wherever they want by themselves. The thieves usually ride in a minivan wandering around the country, looking for dogs that have no guardian around. Once they find a target, they will stop their vehicle near the dog, then lure the dog with a treat covered by

poison. To not be discovered by people, the poison must be strong enough to take down the dog in a short period of time. The way people slaughter dogs in China is also inhumane. Given that there are no laws prohibiting people from slaughtering food-animals, and people in China prefer fresh meat over the frozen, dogs are slaughtered at the restaurants where there is no professional slaughter equipment. Therefore, people usually use the traditional way, starting with a sequence of ferocious contacts between the wooden bar and the skull of the dog. These kinds of deplorable behaviors are condemned by stronger and stronger voices nowadays as the humane awareness is permeating through Chinese society. To oppose these inhumane treatments, many consumers choose to avoid dog meat, which leads to the decrease of dog meat consumption.

The decrease of dog meat consumption represents how Chinese society is breaking down the shackles of obsolete traditions. In “The Pleasures of Eating,” author Wendell Berry suggests people learn as much as possible of the life histories of food species. He deems this suggestion particularly important, because having more knowledge of the food species is critical for eating responsibly. Without enough knowledge of the food species, people cannot make any sensible decisions on what to eat and how to eat. They cannot appreciate the food as well. Therefore, they become passive consumers, eating what is easily accessible for them, most of which is provided by the food industry.

In certain areas of China, there are traditional dog meat festivals every year, during which thousands of dogs get slaughtered and cooked. Though the stories behind each of those festivals are different, the gist of them is identical: eating dog meat on that day is good for people. Once a person learns more about those traditions, however, he or she will find out the reasoning behind the stories of those traditional festivals is absurd and without scientific support. Businesses love these kinds of stories and traditions because they can benefit from the festivals. Therefore, businesses have the motivation to propagate these traditions. Passive consumers take in what they are fed, passing down these traditions to generations. Nowadays, resistance to these traditions is gradually growing. More and more people stop participating in those traditional festivals. This is an improvement of Chinese society, as more and more people start making efforts to eat responsibly. The shackles of these obsolete traditions are gradually being broken down by Chinese society.

The decrease in dog meat consumption also represents an improvement in public health among Chinese society. Mary Roach, in her essay, "Liver and Opinions: Why We Eat What We Eat and Despise the Rest," indicates that "culture writes the menu" (65). She means people's eating habits are shaped by their cultures and the environment they live in. When changes of the cultures or environment occur, what people eat changes as well. There is such a change happening in China, which has led to the decrease of dog meat consumption. There are

multiple pathogenic factors within dog meat consumption, such as prion diseases and rabies virus. With efforts from the medical world and the government, this knowledge about dog meat consumption is gradually spreading through society. Therefore, the number of people removing dog meat from their menu is increasing, which leads to an improvement of public health.

Even though dog meat consumption has a long history in Chinese society, its decrease is inevitable. But this decrease represents progress in economic development, growing humane awareness, abandoning obsolete traditions and improving public health development. After several generations, dog meat consumption may one day be extinct, as more and more consumers are eating responsibly, benefitting both Chinese society and nature. This is how Chinese society is thriving on the decrease of dog meat consumption.



Rainbow Pride Necklace | Ekaterini Stamatakos

Handmade beaded necklace, individually wire-looped with glass beads, mint quartz, and a yellow heart clasp. This necklace was inspired by the rainbow pride flag. I wanted to create a necklace with the beautifully bold colors of the rainbow. Since finding a love for making jewelry two years ago, I want to continue to explore making different styles of jewelry, learn more about creating art, and meet new people in the process of sharing it. Professionally, personal hurdles with mental health have led me to pursue a degree in psychology. My goal is to help people overcome battles with mental health, as others have helped me.

My Lady Lilith

Kaitlynn Smith

Empty arms could feel as heavy as a thousand-pound brick of stone, laying still yet in wonder; she portrays me as something of nothing.

Her fried gray and silvered hair smells of sweetness, a warmth I hope to consume.

Her body lies captive in my empty arms.

My empty arms weigh my mind as I caress the scar that lines her heart, cast and faded from the years that have jolted her body.

She came into this world with a broken heart, yet with such tragedy, you could never tell.

I find myself a liar.

I suppress the urge to scream to the moon of my virtue in sin as I lay with her naked in a cramped closet that feeds no light, instead only bathing me in her warm darkness.

Her arms are not heavy when she holds me, but relatively light and free, unknowing of the ravages of my mind that embark on a journey of loneliness every time I find myself in the comfort of her most welcoming darkness.

To kiss a woman is to feel freedom. The world purges on her lips as if telling stories of places unknown to me, a woman captivated by her being.

She knows how to hold on to me as she tugs at my breasts and opens me up like no man ever has. She knows I'm a liar.

I am a liar deep in the pits of despair, cradling the wounds of my choices.

I fall into her as my heavy empty arms pull her to me, needing and hopelessly.

Too soon to be in love but too much to be friends, my femininity shattered and vulnerable.

Admiration is all my heart feels and the solemn understanding that she does not carry empty arms such as I do.

She braces this earth effortlessly and with gentle grace, her kisses soft, her movements slow as my body aches.

She feasts on me knowing that this too shall come to pass as an accessory to her macabre collections of hearts she's stolen to replace her own.

I can't come to regret her cause, yet in my mind I idolize her,
her willingness and experience carry her well.

She doesn't think more than a single thought of me and we keep
our secrets tight from the world that exists beyond our writhing
naked bodies and twisted sheets.

Her fingers trace my body, mimicking lovers past, my youth and
innocence trembling with heavy breath.

Gutted is the feeling that embraces my body as she bites my
neck, trying to eat all the sweetness I have left.

I am a liar because I do not fight this wicked spell.

I allow her to feast without consequences; my heart is hers to
destroy, for I am a woman without limits.



Sunset at the Beach | Carmen Elena Aragon Ortiz

My good day

Sam Martin

how are you doing, i'm asked
i have good days and bad days, i say

the pain comes to me in waves,
not waves but tsunamis.
it ripples through me,
currents toss and turn me,
unable to breach, choked by water
streaming down, soaking my body
until i am drenched in the sorrow of our lost love.

Maybe my good day will come tomorrow.



Tahoe's Dock in Autumn | Katherine Aeschbacher



Abandoned Salt Mine | Katherine Aeschbacher

AI Dilemma: A Threat or an Asset to the Art World?

Chen Cheng Li

In recent years, artificial intelligence has made great strides in the field of painting. On August 31, 2022, the AI-generated painting “Théâtre D'opéra Spatial” won first place at the Colorado State Fair in the digital art category of the fine art competition. The award was highly controversial, with some lamenting that “the death of art is unfolding before our eyes” and others stating that “winning a prize for an AI work is not proof that you are an artist.” These developments are impressive and raise the question of whether artificial intelligence will replace human paintings.

AI has revolutionized the world of art in recent years, leading to the creation of a new chapter in human art history. To understand the progression and current state of AI art, it is important to examine its history, consider its current impact, and reflect on its limitations and drawbacks. For one, it is reliant on the data and algorithms that are fed into it, meaning that it is limited by the biases and limitations of these inputs. Additionally, some argue that AI art lacks the human touch and emotional depth that characterizes traditional art. Despite these limitations, I believe that AI art, as a combination of human knowledge and technology, has the potential to be a valuable asset for humanity. Rather than being a threat to traditional artists, it has the ability to open up new possibilities and broaden the horizons of artistic expression. As such, it is worth exploring and embracing as a tool for creativity and innovation.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The history of AI art can be traced back to the 1950s, when early computer programs were used to generate simple visual patterns. However, it was not until the 21st century that AI art began to flourish, with the development of deep learning algorithms and the availability of massive amounts of data. These advancements allowed AI to create more complex and sophisticated artworks, ranging from paintings and drawings to music and poetry.

While techniques for generating images in an artistic style, such as painterly or sketchy, have been developed over the past few decades (Gooch and Gooch), the use of deep neural networks [a method in artificial intelligence that teaches computers to process data in a way that is inspired by the human brain (AWS)] for image creation is a more recent development that has gained momentum in the past five years.

Despite the exponential growth of AI art over the past few years, DALL-E2 and Midjourney are the two applications that have gained the most traction among artists and the general public. Midjourney is one of the world’s fastest-growing Generative Art tools, allowing users of diverse backgrounds to produce art. In contrast to the DALL-E2, which was restricted to a small number of creators, DALL-E2 is the first platform that generates quick and open applications for the public, thereby providing an unprecedented artistic utopia for a wide variety of producers.

IMPACT OF AI ART

Over time, we observed that the artists who utilized Midjourney appreciated its ability to accelerate the creative process and supplement their existing knowledge. David Holz, the founder of Midjourney, desired his own image-generating AI system to assist artists in discovering novel applications for the technology. He states that the purpose of Midjourney is to “extend the imagination of human beings.” Midjourney is connected by Holz to the invention of the engine (Oppenlaender). It coexists with other modes of transit, such as walking, cycling, and horseback riding. People can still reach their destination without an engine, but an engine-powered mode of transportation will get them there faster, especially on longer journeys. Similarly, an artist may have a long way to go when experimenting with ideas. Rather than wasting hours attempting something that may not live up to their expectations, artificial intelligence can provide a preview of their concept before they attempt to implement it.

Los Angeles-based XR (extended reality) creator Don Allen III is known for his unique approach to art, using a Sharpie and a pair of white Converse high-tops as his canvas. In one particular piece, Allen creates a vibrant and dynamic image on the shoes, using swirling colors and dotted butterfly doodles to create a landscape of chevrons and free stripes. However, Allen’s art is not simply the result of his own creative vision (Gerth). He receives assistance from DALL-E 2, which helps him generate ideas and bring them to life. This collaboration between

humans and technology allows Allen to create both innovative and expressive art.

After reading *The Diamond Age* by Neal Stephenson, Allen initially considered integrating his artistic practice with artificial intelligence technology. Rather than depending solely on AI, Allen sought to determine how the technology may enhance the value of his existing artwork, such as shoes. Allen claims that in the four months since he began utilizing the program, his artistic practice has been beyond his wildest expectations. “AI Journey is a tool that speeds up and simplifies every creative process for me, to the point that I rely on it daily,” he adds. Typically, he uses DALL-E to make images and a projector to display them on various things. From there, he sketches his own outlines and develops his own work, incorporating his own style throughout as he draws (Vargas). Like Allen, most artists are still required to refine and build the appropriate word set to acquire the results they desire.

As AI art has gained popularity, more and more people without formal art training have begun sharing their AI-generated creations on social media platforms. The combination of AI technology and the power of social media have made it easier for the general public to access and appreciate this form of art. In fact, AI has lowered the threshold for art creation, giving ordinary people the opportunity to express themselves creatively even if they do not have the chance to receive any painting training. For many people, AI offers a way to harness their

artistic abilities and paint freely. It provides a pair of wings, so to speak, allowing them to explore their imagination and create art in a way that was previously not possible. In this way, AI is democratizing the world of art, making it more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

LIMITATIONS OF AI ART

The impressive capabilities of AI have understandably caused some concern among illustrators about the future of their profession. Some fear that the emergence of AI will lead to job loss for many people in the field. However, a closer examination of the differences between human and AI artists reveals that AI still has many limitations. One of the key differences between human and AI artists is the issue of creativity and imagination. While AI can generate new images based on existing ones, it lacks the inherent creativity and imagination that are present in human drawings. A human artwork is unique and cannot be replicated by AI because it reflects the unique experiences and perspective of the artist, which cannot be fully captured by an algorithm.

AI lacks the intelligence of the human mind and possesses just a repeated collage of contents and forms. The unique environment shapes each individual's own values and aesthetic traits, which are influenced by the person's historical background and developing experience. Frequently, the value of an artist is determined not only by his artistic skill but also by his self-expression in a certain historical context.

For instance, the Impressionist movement, led by the artist Monet, marked the peak of Naturalism in the nineteenth century. Monet's military service in the National Self-Defense Army defending the French Republic further enhanced his appreciation for the beauty of the outdoors, particularly the sun, crowds, and colorful elements. His vibrant and joyous personality is reflected in his passion for beauty and his ability to communicate it through exquisite color and brushwork in his art. Also, the artist Picasso infused his works with anti-war sentiment. In his collage series from 1912, he incorporated elements of political upheaval into the jumbled parts of his compositions. The news magazine clippings featured in several of his cubist collages reflect the turmoil and unrest in the Balkans at the time. Overall, both Monet and Picasso used their art as a way to express their personal experiences and beliefs, adding depth and meaning to their work.

Once I walked through the Van Gogh museum, I was struck by the power and emotion in Van Gogh's paintings. Sunflowers and irises, two subjects I had seen countless times before, took on new meaning as I viewed them in their original form. The bold brushstrokes and vibrant colors seemed to speak to the struggles and suffering Van Gogh endured throughout his life. But when I later saw AI works that imitated Van Gogh's style, I was disappointed. These paintings are short of depth and soul, without the context of the artist's life and experiences. They were simply superficial copies, lacking the evolution and growth that comes with an artist's changing style and historical context.

It is this human element, the ability to draw upon personal experiences and the changing world around us, that gives art its true power and meaning. This is something that AI, no matter how advanced, will never be able to replicate.

Copyright is another significant issue when it comes to AI art. There are two potential risks for copyright infringement when it comes to AI art: the data set used for AI to learn from may contain copyrighted works, and the AI itself may use copyrighted works in its creations. It is not always easy to determine if a work created by AI infringes on the copyright, as it requires examining both the materials used and the finished product. To avoid copyright infringement, AI developers must ensure that the materials used for learning are legal and non-infringing. They should also perform substantive similarity checks on imitative paintings before publishing them and update their systems to close any algorithm loopholes. Meanwhile, the creators of AI art tools should be held responsible for any copyright violations committed by the AI they have created, as they have taken on the risk and benefit of using it.

In addition, AI can often produce biased results, as was demonstrated in a story published by WIRED in May 2022. The article discussed the launch of DALL-E 2 by OpenAI and the discovery of biased results that perpetuated racial stereotypes (Johnson). In response, OpenAI assembled a team of experts to investigate the product and found that it depicted

race and gender in a biased manner. One member noticed that prompts such as “a man sitting in a cell” or “a picture of an angry man” generated images of people of color. This serves as a reminder that AI can reflect and amplify societal biases, and it is important to consider and address these issues when developing and using AI technologies.

Due to the lack of human emotions, the concern for its originality, and its inherent biases, it is unlikely that AI will completely replace humans in the field of painting at this time. These limitations demonstrate that there are certain qualities that AI lacks that are essential for truly original and expressive art.

CONCLUSION

Although AI may have limitations when it comes to creating original and expressive art, it has the potential to improve human painting in certain ways. For example, AI can improve the efficiency of the sketching process by generating a high number of images in a short amount of time. This is useful for generating basic sketches and design concepts, enabling human artists to explore a variety of ideas rapidly. Moreover, AI can help increase the capabilities of human drawing by enabling the creation of images with a certain style and form, thus allowing human artists to explore new pathways of artistic expression. As more people are exposed to artificial intelligence and begin using these tools in their

artistic practice, the nature of art is likely to change in both the way it is created and the way it evolves.

Throughout history, people have often expressed anxiety about technological advancements. The American professor Theodore Roszak questioned whether the Internet could encourage the interchange of ideas as effectively as a local café (Nye), and even philosophers such as Nietzsche and Heidegger have pondered the influence of technology on society. Every technical advancement is accompanied by cultural anxiety; therefore, these concerns are not unwarranted. The fears that people have about AI art may be similar to the fears that people had about the behemoth when the Lumiere brothers filmed the first motion picture of a train coming into a station. Technology is advancing at an accelerated rate and we are likely to see more and more changes in the coming decades.

It is clear that AI is unstoppable and will likely play a role in replacing some low-end, repetitive painting tasks. However, it is unlikely that AI will ever fully replace the emotional expression, personal narrative, and unique historical context that are rooted in the work of human artists. Furthermore, AI art may only partially replace human artists but might have the potential to enhance their skills and expand the possibilities of artistic expression. While AI programs are able to generate hundreds of photos with diverse compositions and color schemes in a couple of minutes, rather than panicking about the potential impacts of AI on art, embracing the opportunities

it presents and appreciating the power of AI art would be a better choice. I believe that with human creativity and AI technology, we can really work together to create a new world of art truly unique and compelling.



Boy with a Stick | George Gogl



On a Hike | George Gogl



Walking into the Dark | George Gogl



At the Beach | George Gogl



Birds in a Row | George Gogf



Birds | George Gogl



Formation of Birds | George Gogl



Trees | George Gogl



Dark Woods | George Gogl



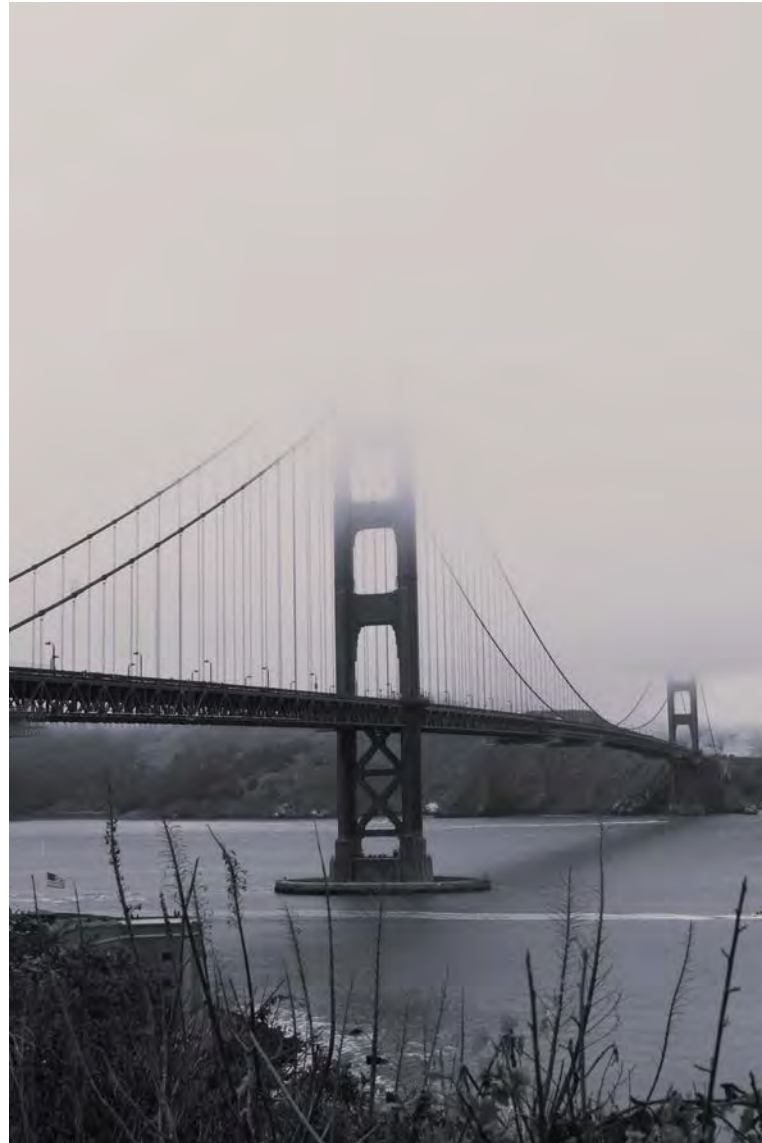
Another Dark Day in the Park | George Gog!

heartbreak mascara

Sam Martin

i haven't been wearing makeup,
ever since your text.
it comes off too easily when i cry.
the package says waterproof,
but i know it's not true.

there is no mascara
strong enough
to hold back the tears of my
heartbreak.



Golden Gate Bridge | Carmen Elena Aragon Ortiz



In Their Roots | Ada Steinberg

I Come From

Yashvi Raviprakash

I come from the East, I come from the West,
I come from the worst, I come from the best.

I come from the South and the North Pole,
I come from the love that lives in the soul.

I come from the land and from the seven seas,
I am the heart that beats within all living beings.



Homework | Annabelle Stephens

I Have Work to Do

Andres Bonilla

Birds and sun are just out I stink,
I have work to do,
“Mmcht” I’ll do it later.

Smell food cooking ate now full,
I HAVE work to do,
“Mmcht” I’ll do it later.

Call from a friend “lets go hang out,”
I HAVE WORK to do,
“Mmcht” I’ll do it later.

Haven’t seen this movie in a while,
I HAVE WORK TO do,
“Mmcht” I’ll do it later.

Moon’s now out and had a long day,
I HAVE WORK TO DO,
“Mmcht” I’ll do it later.

Birds and sun are just out I stink,
I have work to do,
“Mmcht” I’ll do it later.



This is my dog Nuk. He is one of the best things I have in my life!

Nuk the German Shepherd | Carmen Elena Aragon Ortiz

Home

Yashvi Raviprakash

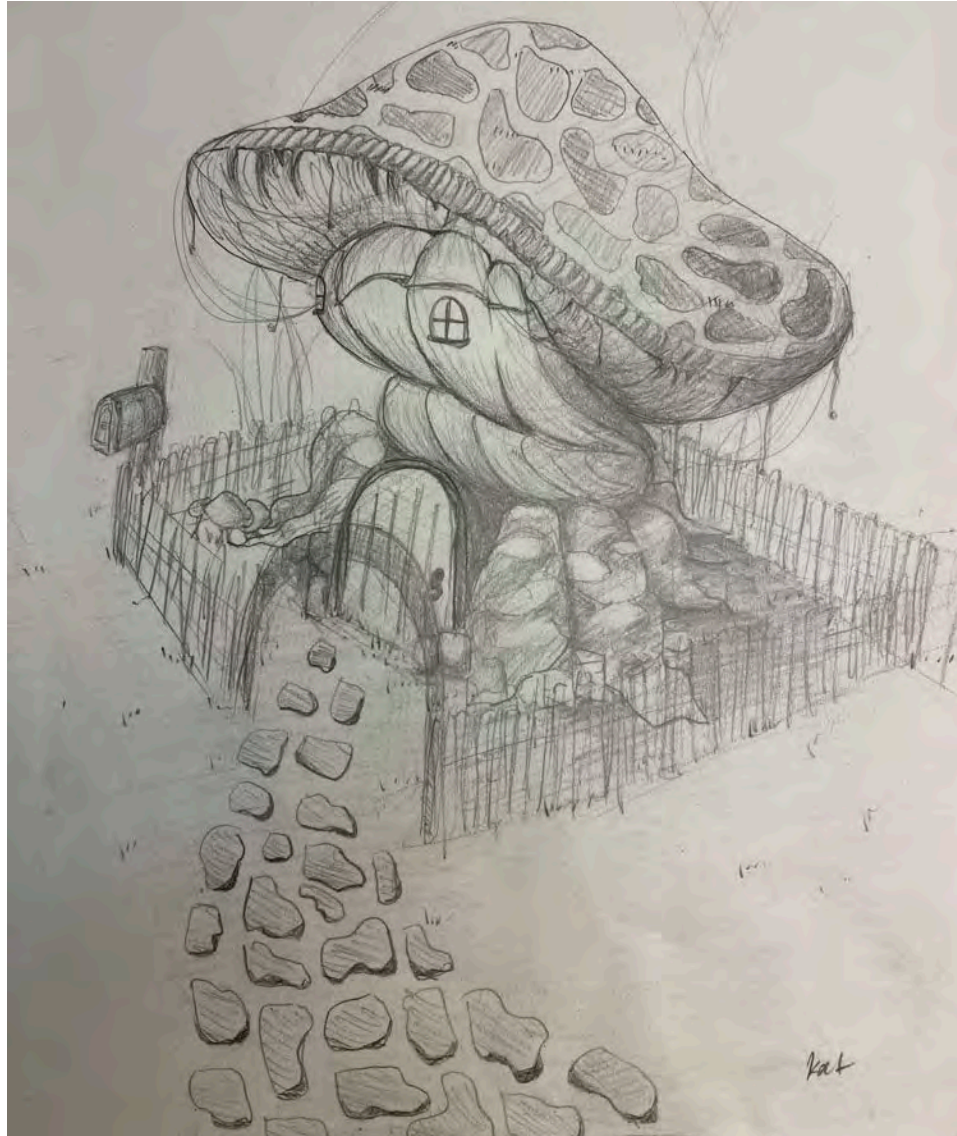
I find peace and health
In the home I first knew,
The comfort here,
Is bereft of anything new.
The closet with tiny clothes
And walls with crayon smears
The corner that holds my guitar,
One time, housed my baby bears.
Closed eyes see the places
Only which the heart knows
Maybe that's why it's home where
I could walk with eyes closed.
I'd doubt if I could,
As these walls heard me first speak.
And how wouldn't I?
I could recognize it in my sleep.
Love like that is rare.
Know what it is;
For what's too close isn't there
Until the end of it—is...



Alex Cameron | Katherine Aeschbacher



Autumn Leaves | Carmen Elena Aragon Ortiz



This drawing was inspired by childhood memories with my brother, creating forts together as an escape from our lives. My dream house looks something like this, a quiet escape in nature.

Dream House | Ekaterini Stamatakos

8

Johnny Santamaria, 20

*This was a poem made when I was 13, printed by WritersCorps in middle school.
My middle school was Aptos Middle School. I remade it now, as of 20 years old.*

Number eight, a victorious figure we cannot live without,
As seen in artworks by such artists, including Van Gogh,
The figure is used a lot in design and photography,
A member of an important concept, the golden ratio,

Eight, a very technical, selfless figure,
Constant, yet so important,
Even advanced concepts, would have to reconfigure,
Also used in Java as an int,

Constructed from former glass and concrete,
Yet this familiar memory from seven years ago,
Resembling an overcoming, cannot be beat,
Can we take a photo?

Like clockwork, but does it constantly do well?
Learning from spiky mistakes, coming out of its hard shell.

Hopefully

Felipe Bates

My coworker has just ordered us some Jamba Juice from DoorDash. We work at a pot shop in the Tenderloin. Sometimes I see DoorDashers and Uber Eats drivers from Venezuela riding by on their motorcycles and scooters. I know they're Venezuelan 'cuz they know I'm Colombian, and they come into the shop to chop it up sometimes. The way they swagger around with their helmets hanging off the tops of their heads reminds me of the Venezuelan Rappi drivers and mototaxis I used to chop it up with in Cartagena. At least they all have jobs, I think to myself, as a fentanyl zombie shuffles past the window of the shop. I heard that now they're cutting the fentanyl with something new. Innovation in action. Then again, the value of a job changes a lot depending on ifs, wheres and whens.

I remember getting Jamba Juice in middle school in Laurel Village on California St., Pacific Heights' own little strip mall. I never actually bought anything there, or at the Starbucks next door, but rather followed the pancake asses of the girls from the private school I was able to go to. Lord knows that the predilections I developed in such environments led me astray, and the thought that this is the best possible reality keeps me up the nights that I'm not too high to keep my eyes open. But at least weed doesn't make you fat by itself, or give you a hangover, or create chemical dependency, in the biblical sense of the word.

San Francisco in the 2020s is a shadow of San Francisco in the '90s, is a shadow of '69, is a shadow...

You get the point. It's exhausting being from a place that, like the human body, is completely recycled and replaced every seven years, antiseptic on paper. I must be a cancerous cell, malignant in my multiplication and reluctance to retreat.

My mouth is unbearably dry—a desert. I hope that the \$10 Juice gets here soon.



IHeartU | Haliun Enkhnyam

Love That Cat

Chencheng Li

Inspired by "Love That Boy" by Walter Dean Myers

Love that cat,
like a princess loves to dress
I said I love that cat
like a princess loves to dress
Love to call her in the morning
love to call her
'Hey there, Enya!'
She walks like a panther,
Stares like an owl.
I said she walks like a panther,
And stares like an owl.
Stares when she's needy,
When she chills, she stares again.

Love That Girl

Emily Cai



Inspired by "Love That Boy" by Walter Dean Myers

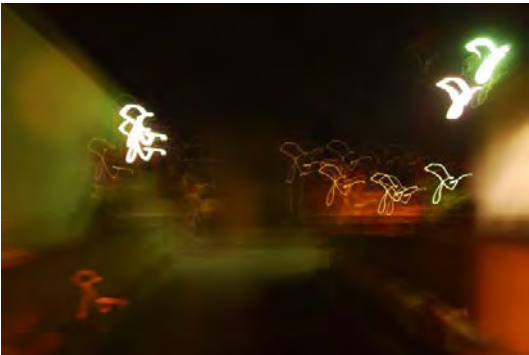
Love that girl,
Like a kid loves to run
I said I love that girl
Like a teenager loves to have fun
Love to text her in the morning
Love to text her
"Hey there, best friend"



Lady in Gold | Harpreet Deol



A6



After Hours, Say Goodnight, & Bedtime
at City College | Annabelle Stephens



Snowy Mountain | Carmen Elena Aragon Ortiz

Thanks, Dad

Rowan Ignacio

I often wonder what I'd be like if I had a healthy childhood. Would I have been one of those STEM whiz-kids that invent a new way to solve the climate crisis? Would I be religious? Would I still be pessimistic in nature? Would I have been considered the “ideal” child? My childhood was far from ideal, so I'll never truly know.

I would describe my upbringing as interesting. I was alone most of the time, despite growing up in a house with 10 other people. I only formed strong bonds with people outside of my formative years, albeit rarely because of trust issues. Growing up, I dealt with someone, one of the two people that are supposed to provide unconditional love and comfort, that made connecting with others scary. The one person I feared the most, the person that made Fridays the worst day of the week: my dad.

As a kid he never treated me as, well, just a kid. Sometimes, my dad treated me as if I was an adult. He rolled his eyes at minor spelling mistakes that he insisted I should know because I was “too smart for that.” He called me a smarty-pants when I dared to share something fun and new I learned (I graduated to “smartass” when I entered middle school). He told my mother that I was a “hoochie mama” for wearing tinted lip balm in high school. Other times, his behavior took me back to kindergarten. My dad would act like a toddler and mock me and my interests. He mocked the way I sounded when I raved about my current passion, and made yucky

faces when a cartoon I liked was on TV. Even as a kid I knew that being relentlessly teased by an adult wasn't right. I was only treated kindly when I got a shiny medal or a piece of paper that congratulated me for being a better student than the rest.

Every Friday I felt dread knowing that he was visiting my mother and I. I had to choose what I said carefully, navigating around every topic that could potentially anger my dad. I wasn't allowed to talk to my mother about anything because he would interrupt us to give his very much needed expert opinion on everything. Or he just made stank faces that he knew I saw in the corner of my eye. I gave up eventually, as anything I said would be turned into an argument. Now I would just say that school was good and say nothing more for the rest of the evening.

This treatment was exacerbated when my health started to worsen. These issues, along with typical coming of age self-discovery, made school extremely difficult. With a major lack of energy and an inability to focus, I was a classic case of gifted kid burnout. My dad was not happy to learn that I was struggling. Everything was an excuse to him, as I was simply just too lazy, too hard-headed, and too stubborn to listen and do my school work. He told me that I can't possibly have depression because I'm not homeless and still have two living parents— as if coming from a broken home wasn't enough to qualify. His only piece of advice was that

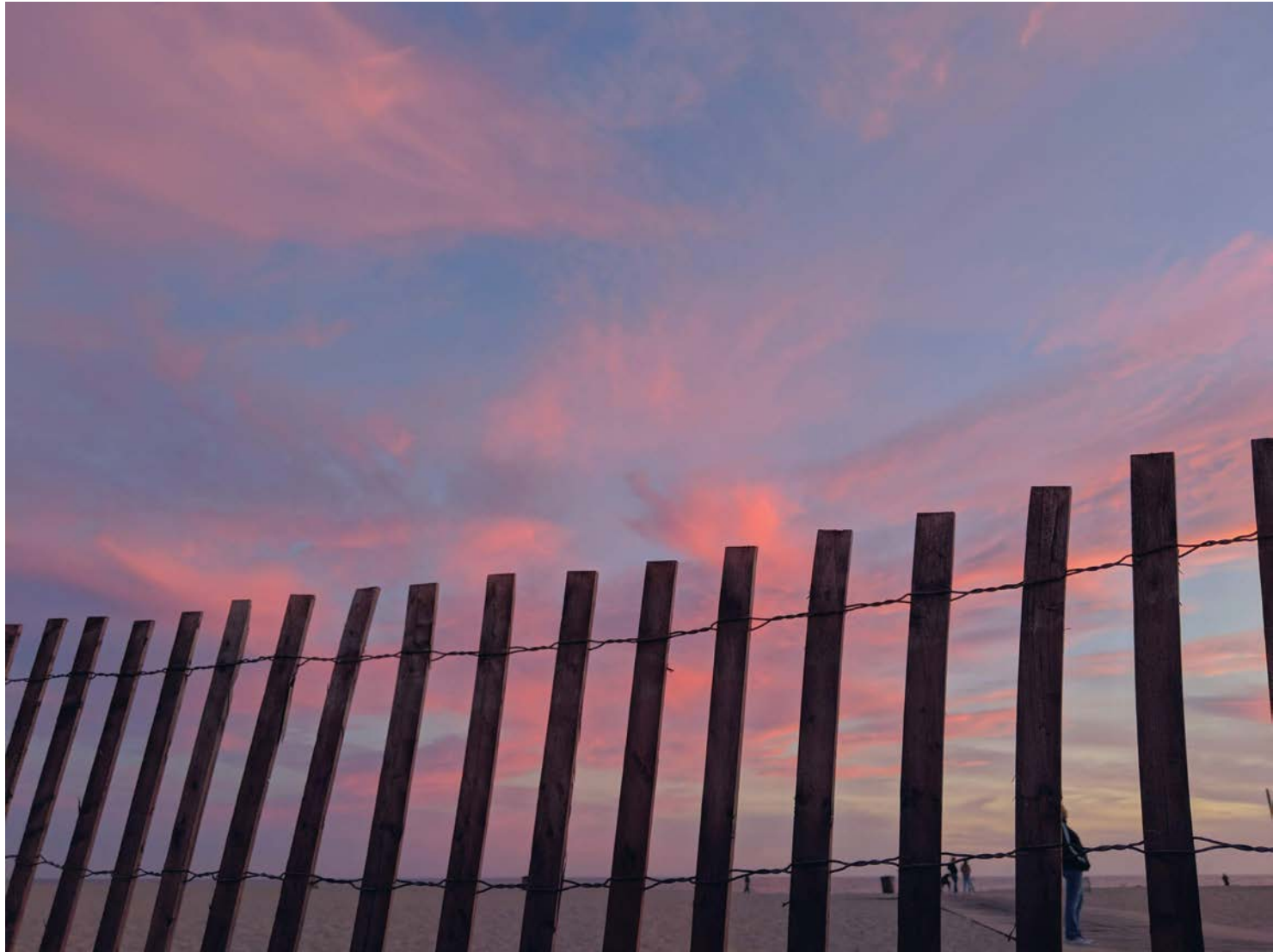
I needed to pray more and that I should stop listening to medical professionals. How helpful.

A few years ago, I accepted that my dad had done a great deal of damage. I struggled to open up to others in fear of being ridiculed. I rarely got help from anyone, feeling like a failure when I did. Any amount of constructive criticism made me cry. I realized that I had to do something to fix myself, something difficult: cut off the miniscule relationship I had with my dad. Difficult not because I cared or didn't want to, but because my mother begged me not to. She insisted that I forgive and forget and insisted that I can't possibly do that to my dad, my own DNA, even though his jerkish nature drove us both away. Unfortunately, I cannot forgive and forget, not when you're someone I have dedicated several therapy sessions to.

I cut him off and don't regret my decision one bit. I feel free; a freedom I haven't felt since I was in preschool. I healed slowly and made some friends that eased me into trusting again. I changed my name to further separate myself from him and highlight the people who truly made an effort in raising me. I can get medical help without feeling like a pathetic anomaly. Being my true self feels like rebellion, even sharing little things like silly Cartoon Network shows makes me unbelievably giddy. I can dye my hair and wear makeup without a nagging voice telling me that I'm going to Hell just for being me in the way that is most comfortable.

I can live my life knowing that the way I was treated wasn't normal and doesn't define who I am. I'm free.

Thanks, dad, for absolutely nothing.



That One Time in May | Katherine Aeschbacher



Purple Boy | Victoria Serrano

Thank you, Katie!

Our beloved tutor Katie is moving on to another job at City College! We're sad to see her go, but we're also happy for her new opportunity to work with the Queer Resource Center, and we know she'll continue to be an awesome support for students in our CCSF community. Here's what some of Katie's students and colleagues have to say:

Katie, it makes me sad to know that you are moving on to a bigger job because it means that new students will not have the opportunity to have a kind and patient tutor like you who genuinely cares about her students' progress. I think those qualities are what led you to get promoted to a better position, which you really deserve, and I'm happy for you; I firmly believe that this is just the beginning of many good things that life has for you, so I thank you for sharing your knowledge with us and I wish you the best in this new stage!

–Julian Montana

I wanted to take a moment to express my appreciation to Katie for all of the work and dedication that she has put into helping this class to improve on our English skills. Her efforts and commitment to our progress have truly made all the difference.

–Kevin Ensunsa

Hey Ms. Katie! You are a manifested demigod of English tutoring! Your helpful feedback and tutoring sessions helped polished many students' writing skills. Back in the study sessions, you were always looking at the positives in each student's writing. Sincerely, such a trait is admirable, as society makes it rare to see nowadays a human being that does not judge. Also, you have a wonderful, quiet yet inviting demeanor, which will undoubtedly help you transition into your new workplace. With that, good luck in your next chapter of life!

–Christian S

Thank you for all that you do. Please know how much I appreciate your efforts and the positive impact from you. Good luck in the future!!!!

–Peter Vo

Thank for tutoring me for English 1A!!!

–Jene Williams

Thank you for hosting your Writer's Workshop after class every Thursday last semester and giving me feedback on my essays. It has really helped me come into my own as a writer this semester; for that I'm forever grateful. Thank you!

–Dominic Verango

Katie, you are so kind and thoughtful. I definitely would not have passed English 1C without you. It was one of the most difficult times in my life; however, you sat with me to not just tutor me, but you have become someone my daughter and I are truly fond of! I see you constantly give your all to others, especially your students, and I wish you the best. With deep love and appreciation!

–Kash

Katie, it's hard to imagine a Writing Success Project without you! You've been such an inspiring supporter to our students, and such a great colleague to collaborate with. I know you'll be wonderful in your new gig, and I look forward to continuing to see and work with you.

–Ghislaine

Katie was my class embedded tutor last semester at 1A. I started making written feedback appointments with her since my second essay. I would send her my draft via email, and she would comment on it. She read the whole essay thoroughly and corrected all sorts of mistakes patiently. She would give me some ideas on how to improve the essay. All thanks to her, I passed the class with A. Now that I am taking 1C, I miss her presence in class more than anyone. Having her in class always comforts me in a way that there will be someone who I can go to when I feel helpless. She is the sweetest human being alive. I am very happy for her. I hope she encounters all the best things in life.

–Kyae Sin Thaw (Kast)

Congratulations on the new position. Thank you so much for being an unofficial temporary emotional professional support for me.

–DC Benn

You will be missed Katie! Thank you for the support, with classwork, technology and everything food related. I have learned so much from your patient and always kind approach to helping students and helping me. I'm sure to still be texting you with Canvas questions because you always figure it out. Be happy. You deserve it!

–Andrea Sanelli

Dearest Katie, words can not express how much I love working with you. I am in constant awe of you as a human being and also while watching you with our students. You bring a light to the WSP that no one can mimic or replace. I am beyond thrilled and deeply proud of your upcoming change within your career path. You might be the youngest of the WSP but you definitely bring a wisdom that no one can match and we have all learned from you time and time again. The QRC is gaining a lioness and I can not wait to be able to collaborate with you and continue our work aspirations together; just in a different capacity. I wish you luck, strength, admiration, tenacity, and most importantly LOVE...revolutionary love. With all my corazon.

–Tu amiga, Vita

Katie!!! You did IT! Your new role as Queer Resource Center Coordinator means our students will continue to receive the same high level of guidance, care, and support they have always received from you. Your enthusiasm, love, and professionalism have always shone through in your work, and I am excited to see what you will accomplish in this new position. I will always remember the T-shirt you wore that emphasized the importance of punctuation marks. "Let's eat Grandma!" vs. "Let's eat, Grandma!" Tshirt was both effective and amusing, and I even shared it with my kids to teach them about the importance of punctuation. While we're in different spaces, I'm always here and rooting for you. Looking forward to collaborating with you to support our students.

–Dawn Mokuau

Hi Katie, It been great having you around and seeing all the work that you have done for WSP. There is no better sense of accomplishment than seeing your students succeed in their academics and I'm sure you have made that possible for a lot of them. Wishing you the best in your next round of responsibilities. Keep on taking good care of yourself! "Creo que el mundo es bello, que la poesía es como el pan, de todos".

–Rico Ruiz

Gosh! We've had so many interactions over the years it's hard to find any one moment to point to! Mostly making tea or lunch in the break room. But in all of them I can recall you're consistently warm in your welcomes and sharp in your wits, so I know you'll do better than fine wherever you're headed next. Thanks for sharing this time with us, Katie!

–Morgan Dang

Katie, Working with you was a beacon of light during the 2020-21 pandemic year. We had a class Zoom on the day the world turned orange. We talked about our scared doggies. We celebrated our amazing students.

During this absurd, Kafka-esque time, your partnership, empathy, and heart energized me. Wishing you all the best in your new role. Lots of love.

–Amy Miles

Katie, Katie, Katie! I remember the day we chatted about your interest in applying for a WSP tutoring job, as well as your news that the QRC had hired you. In the years in between, I've felt nothing but admiration and appreciation for you as a colleague in the WSP. You've been a dedicated and talented tutor and a true pleasure to work with. You even respond to my silly email rhymes with a laughing face emoji—even if you're rolling your eyes as you sit at your laptop. I will hella, hecka, and friggin' miss you! But I am delighted that you are moving onward and upward! Now, a whole other group of students and co-workers will have the joy of working with you. You're the best!

—Arnie

I learned so much from you, Katie! Your questions, suggestions, and your inside track on the inner workings of students' minds as they worked on challenging readings and essays made a huge difference in all of my classes. I felt less isolated as a teacher to have a fellow poet by my side who loves poems and stories and let them shape her life. I won't miss you too much though—since I will find time visit you from time to time and will always think of you as a poetic ally and comrade.

—John Isles

Anthology Contributors

Katherine Aeschbacher, English 1B with Amy Miles and Arnie Warshaw. I believe I am a very emotional person and have always found comfort in expressing myself through the art I like to create, and have found it important in making the time to do so. Taking pictures is something truly intimate since I am able to capture something through my eyes and how I view life and by sharing that with others they are getting a glimpse into my world which is a unique experience of its own. A dream of mine even though I do photography as a hobby is to see one of my works displayed somewhere like at a café or even inside someone's home one day. My future plans as an archeologist will allow me to explore the world, which will inspire me to keep taking pictures.

Carmen Elena Aragon Ortiz, English 1B with Elizabeth Smith and Arnie Warshaw. I am not the most artistic person, but sometimes I like to take my camera and photograph things. My mom would always take pictures of me and my family growing up so we would remember our times together, and I want to do the same. I want to look back one day and remember every moment of my life, the friendships I made, and the opportunity to be somebody in this world. I want to look at my photos and be proud of how far I've come.

Felipe Bates, English 1C with Andrea Sanelli and Katie Dalla. My writing is inspired by my family, as well as the people I have met, the places I have been, and the things I have seen. I hope to continue writing despite what the future may bring.

Andres Bonilla, English 1B with Amy Miles and Arnie Warshaw. My creative work was inspired by the things I do in my own life. My academic goal is to transfer to a four-year school where I can earn a bachelor's degree.

Emily Cai, English 1B with Amy Miles and Arnie Warshaw. My best friend inspired my creative work. We used to live in the same apartment and grew up together. We would play dolls and hide-and-seek in the hallways. Now, we don't live in the same apartment anymore, but we are still in contact through social media. In the future, I plan to make art pieces with her. We hope to open a small business for jewelry or clothing.

Harpreet Deol, English 1A+1AS with Jen Brych and Arnie Warshaw. I am a fashion design student at CCSF and love fashion, sketching, illustrations, and sewing. My education goal is to have a bachelor's degree in fashion design and specialize in couture fashion.

Haliun Enkhnyam, English 1B with Amy Miles and Arnie Warshaw. My art is mostly inspired by other media that I consume, especially fashion, music, and films. The way I digest information and learn is by replicating other things in my own artwork. A large part of my art focuses on women and the experience of womanhood as I grew up in the digital age.

George Gogl, English 1C with Andrea Sanelli and Katie Dalla. These dark photos are inspired by a sense of doom from climate change, the Covid 19 pandemic, and the uneasy feelings which come from these happenings. My professional plans may be moving closer to creative work. However, I still continue to be in the discovery phase. From a creative standpoint, I have begun moving my photography medium into film again, and this offers a unique way to capture images in our digital age.

Rowan Ignacio, English 1A with Sean Kim and Arnie Warshaw. I named myself after the tree as *rowans* symbolize protection and are thought to bring bad luck to those who chop them down. Writing has always been an outlet for me to gather my thoughts and say how I feel in coherent words. It has helped me cope with darker aspects of my life and myself. Telling stories, both comical and crushing, is how I connect with others.

Artie Jean, English 1B with Amy Miles and Arnie Warshaw. My creative work is inspired by my life experience and the experiences of my cousins. I do not know my creative plans for the future right now.

Corey Jen, English 1B with Amy Miles and Arnie Warshaw. For this creative work, I was inspired by the textbook reading for my CNIT 103 (Computer Hardware) course because this is a relatively common error that people make when building their desktop computer. My creative plans for the future are to have fun with my classes by making fun things such as this—even though this was for extra credit.

Chencheng Li, English 1B with Amy Miles and Arnie Warshaw. As an ADHD student, I find inspiration in reading materials that Mr. Christopher provides, which broaden my understanding of ADHD and related research. In addition, my passion for artificial intelligence motivates me to explore the latest trends and developments in AI art technologies. Looking to the future, I plan to continue pursuing my academic interests and further develop my skills in both ADHD research and AI technology.

Huanyao Li, English 1A+1AS with Andrea Sanelli and Katie Dalla.

The conflict of attitudes toward pet animals and my childhood memory that is tortured by the scene of dogs being slaughtered inspire my work. My academic plan for the future is to prepare myself with the knowledge to seek the answer to the question, “Are we alone?”

Sam Martin, English 1B with Elizabeth Smith and Arnie Warshaw. For both works submitted, I do have a couple things to touch on. Love is strange, heartbreak is brutal, and life is still worth living. I had to find those out myself unfortunately, but to quote my absolute favorite movie, *Call Me by Your Name*, “We rip out so much of ourselves to be cured of things faster, that we go bankrupt by the age of thirty and have less to offer each time we start with someone new. But to make yourself feel nothing so as not to feel anything—what a waste!”

Nature, love, friends, movies, family: they all inspire me in different ways. I am attracted to lightness and things that catch my eye. When I write, I like to not follow any certain curriculum and just do what feels good for my spirit. Connectivity to the things around us is so important in order to balance our emotional endurance as humans and to ultimately bring us closer together in harmonious joy. That sounds very cheesy but it’s true! In order to create social justice, which is something I want for my academic and professional plans in the future, these values are especially important to me.

Yashvi Raviprakash, English 1A with Sean Kim and Arnie Warshaw. I am an international student from India and an English Major at CCSF. My inspiration comes from anything that means something to me.

Johnny Santamaria, English 1A with Sean Kim and Arnie Warshaw. I was inspired by Van Gogh’s twinkling painting, some video games, and the fact that my life has been very technical the past few years. By technical, I mean a lot of math, computer science, and AI involved in my life. In the future, I want to be a graphic designer because I enjoy working with various kinds of media including the one I am displaying here, a poem. I want to make an artistic, communicative, and technical impact in this world.

Victoria Serano, English 1C with Andrea Sanelli and Katie Dalla. I’m a self-taught artist, and I am inspired by Black women and embracing the African American community in my artworks. Through portraiture, I like to capture emotions candidly and create relatability for those viewing my pieces. I aspire to be an illustrator for children’s books and hope to work on large-scale murals in the future.

Kaitlynn Smith, English 1B with Elizabeth Smith and Arnie Warshaw. My creative work in recent years has been heavily inspired by my struggles with my own sexuality and faith. I’ve always had a passion for writing, and during my darkest times I’ve always relied on my art.

Ekaterini Stamatakos, English 1A with Sean Kim and Arnie Warshaw. Creating art always held a special place in my childhood. I hope to continue creating and preserving the childlike happiness I get from making art.

Ada Steinberg, English 1C with Andrea Sanelli and Katie Dalla. I am forever inspired by nature. I observe organisms in their element and reflect my perception of them through my art. I hope to continue to develop my understanding of botany and explore different creative outlets. After graduating, I’d like to find a way to merge my love for art with my passion for working with community—oriented farms.

Annabelle Stephens, English 1B with Elizabeth Smith and Arnie Warshaw. I am inspired by the life and beauty around me and a feeling inside that I need to capture and remember, or materialize it. I plan to transfer schools next year and work to earn a degree and credential toward my career goals, but creatively I hope to keep practicing, seeing, and enjoying everything artistic from photography to fashion, from music and literature, to illustration.



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Writing Success Project

City College of San Francisco

About This Anthology

This book presents the original writing and artwork of students who are participating in the TRIO Writing Success Project at City College of San Francisco. In order to celebrate student voices, the Writing Success Project staff has only minimally edited the students' contributions.

Since 1980, City College of San Francisco has hosted with Writing Success Project, which is a federal TRIO Student Support Services program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The TRIO WSP supports low-income students, students with disabilities, and students who are the first in their families to attend college. Our mission is to offer the full range of wrap-around services to help students attain their college and career goals. The TRIO Writing Success Project links with English classes to provide embedded tutoring, counseling, and other support for students. Each year, over three hundred students take advantage of the support that the WSP offers, forming a community of learners who support each other through their City College journey—and beyond.

