

The Inkwell

**Fairfield
University's
Undergraduate
Literary
Magazine**

INSIDE

OUT

*Spring
2020*

THE INKWELL

Spring 2020, Issue 2: "Inside Out"

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Katherine Klima '20

&

Maeve Nowak '20

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Trevor MacDonnell '20

MARKETING DIRECTOR

Connor O'Rourke '20

TREASURER

Paul Bova '20

NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

This semester our world turned upside down. When it was announced we would not return to campus for the rest of the school year because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, we knew as a club we had to do our best to keep our writers writing, even if we could not attend weekly meetings or create physical copies of the issues. Instead, we adapted to these changes. We sent out digital prompts via email and social media, we held an end of the year Zoom meeting, and we still published our bi-semester magazine online.

The pandemic is also the reason why the seniors of the Inkwell editorial board knew we had to do an issue dedicated to the writing created during this quarantine.

For many of the Inkwell staff, this is our last issue. We are proud to have been a part of something so beautiful and creative together. These past several years have been a mix of emotions and this literary magazine has been our outlet. We would like to thank all of our readers for being on this journey with us.

To all of the other seniors graduating this Spring - we've had a good run, let's go see what we can do next.

- THE INKWELL STAFF

INSIDE OUT

Table of Contents

POETRY	PAGE
“Back Home” Martina Goda ‘20	3
“Through the Window” Kiersten Bjork ‘21	6
“Isolation” Kiersten Bjork ‘21	7
“Still It Turned” Kiersten Bjork ‘21	9
“The Beast Inside” Mary Bevans ‘23	11
“Roommates” Katherine Klima ‘20	12
“An Ode to The Nanny” Katherine Klima ‘20	13
“Grey” Maeve Nowak ‘20	14
“Across the Ocean” Maeve Nowak ‘20	16

FICTION

“Only from a Stick” Paul Bova ‘20	18
“Walla-Walla Speak-n-Spam” Brandon Robles ‘22	20
“Doggie-Double Cross” Brandon Robles ‘22	21
“Something Something George Lucas’s Fault” Brandon Robles ‘22	22
“Look Before You Bite” Mary Bevans ‘23	24

“Back Home” | Martina Goda ‘20

Day 4

By day 4 of quarantine, we already hashed it out on each other

pent up feelings and anger

harsh confessionals as my sister’s face went

blank

stoic

stared off into the distance

— that bubbly, light soul burst and

I caused that

I fractured my relationship with my best friend

only 4 days in

told her I couldn’t trust her,

that she uses people’s problems as entertainment, and I kept going

I don’t know what I said or maybe I do

the truth is I don’t trust myself

I don’t want to remember

Day 5

I felt so guilty

she didn't say a word

I woke up on

day 6

and felt like a fool

of course, I trusted her

— my soulmate

unleashed it all everything that I kept concealed for 5 months but then I
couldn't sleep

I replayed all that again and again

the buried was uncovered and uncovered with someone close and

talking about it just made me miss it all

made me want to hold you again to hear the sweet sound of your voice to see
your luscious, wispy hair rise in the wind

I don't understand

I thought we had it good

so good my sister awed during my account despite the hour-long preface of
how wicked you are

and at the end she dared to utter,

“What a beautiful soul!”

to think that after all of this time, you still have power sickens me
it was then that I knew of your danger
your cunning facade
even without knowing you in person, people like you
you do things because you know that what the world wants
—you may as well be Ted Bundy with your handsome grin and comforting
voice that soothes
a romance for the ages
blah blah

I viscerally reacted and my body went numb
wanted to spit wanted to scream to burst out to crumble everything that I
made you to be

I could not make them see, see the pitch black
the bottomless pit of your filthy soul
even if I tried

heck, I shouldn't be surprised
for you had me fooled too
when you so gracefully ravished my life

“Through the Window” | Kiersten Bjork ‘21

The grass is always greener on the other side.

Slivers of stone cut holes through silent films,
Dragging their feet along concrete walks
Their ears
weighed down under tempestuous fury at forces
Things beyond their control.

Lost in an abyss
Plummeting beneath weathered books
Historic repetition
Repetition of stupidity
Of silver-furred creatures wandering aimlessly
Lonely, longing
Lame from one too many days spent behind glass.

The grass is tempting,
Waving in silent winds whipped up by the deadening oblivion of emptiness
Empty save for gliding abdomens of acrylic black
Leaping from cliff-tops to twirl
Lazily, lethargically
Away from existence.

They say
The grass is always greener on the other
Sides long forgotten by the scrambling
Scurrying shapes clustered behind bars
Wondering
Where is the other side?

“Isolation” | Kiersten Bjork ‘21

Unmade

Swirling in the sea

Of long-forgotten happiness and dreams

Days bleeding

Bending and warping their grim tendrils into walls

Doors, windows of microscopic fibers

Twisted beyond recognition

Someone I used to know

Unanswered

Prayers sinking beneath waves

Lost treasures crumbling into moth-eaten pages

Tomes unearthed by desperation

The presentation of nothingness

Emptiness

Silence.

Heavy wool blankets

Scratching at feverish skin

Burrowing into the mountains of cashmere and silk

To escape

To understand

To find solace in a soundscape ravaged by splitting threads and ticking clocks

Buried

Eyes raised to thunder clouds

Dragging limp bodies through existence

Tunnels of stone and brine

Salt-stung scars

Opened to new horrors

The sun came out today

I had forgotten.

“Still It Turned” | Kiersten Bjork ‘21

Coffee grinds

Steaming fresh in the dim buzzing of non-rush hour

Murmured good mornings and tousled hair over cheerios and spilled milk

Running water

Chocolate glass stains

Echoing fresh floors

I’m locked in a box

And yet the world still turns

Scratching

Breaking connections buried under chipped paint and cobwebs

Feet propped up on a stool

Wrapped in fur to sever the death grip of concrete

Coffee unintentionally iced, dead logs piled high

Doors locked against the murderer at large

And yet the world still turns

Life has hit a barricade

Traffic brought to a standstill amidst howling whistles and shaking bodies

Schools closed, jobs closed

Earth closed
And yet the world still turns

Bullets rained from the sky
Knees sank
Roaring in ears
Haunted blazes of glory and fury
Sinking teeth into flesh, the universe

Utter obliteration
And yet the world still turns

It is quiet
The lights still come and go
Hearts pulse so loudly
You can see them in windows
On doors

We will remember
And yet the world still turns

“The Beast Inside” | Mary Bevans ‘23

The beast inside does not want its host and the feeling is mutual
It plays devil’s advocate with your every thought, hope and idea
It stares at you everyday with its piercing gray eyes and laughs

The beast inside controls you like the rodent chef in *Ratatouille*
Away from people you would like to know
Away from things you would like to do and places you would like to be

The beast inside is made up of frustration and isolation
It knows only quiet gloomy rage and makes sure that you can feel it too
It has never let you slip through its firm and unforgiving grasp

You have always wanted to know
How did the beast find you?
Have we always been so firmly intertwined?
Or was there once a time where we were free

You don’t think you will ever be free of the beast
It will always be part of your whole self
But hopefully someday the beast will be free of you

“Roommates” | Katherine Klima ‘20

I miss those late nights
the ones that didn't quite make sense.
The smell of pizza rolls and cheap wine.
I miss the fire alarm,
blaring at 3 AM.
I miss that dumb hamster,
Mario Kart,
and Pokemoto.
I miss watching those silly Muppet movies,
the ones we made a list of.
I miss the random friends,
the ones that would just show up.
Those conversations we didn't plan
and those hours and hours of catching up.
I miss my roommates,
my temporary home,
the one I never got to say goodbye to.

“An Ode to The Nanny” | Katherine Klima ‘20

Oh Fran Fine,

my childhood queen.

There are a million shows I should start

and a million shows that I should finish.

Yet, the ones I’ve watched a million times over,

and over,

and over again....

Just keep coming back.

Maybe it’s because I need Nick at Nite

to feel eleven again.

Maybe because I need to hear how her boyfriend kicked her out in one of those...CRUSHING SCENES!!!

To hear that nasally voice shout, “MR. SHEFFIELD!”

Or watch Niles start to dance to that old time rock ‘n’ roll.

Maybe I need *The Nanny* more than anything right now....

Because as my world falls apart,

as a pandemic stunts my life,

and I’m stuck in my childhood bedroom...

I can remember a simpler time

and feel alright again.

“Grey” | Maeve Nowak ‘20 | *Pentru tine drăguțul meu Dan, te iubesc.*

It’s the color of the sky where I first met you,
That cloudy night
in the city with
string
lights.

It’s the color of the *Arch* I stood by
when
I
first
saw
you,
and we walked side by side
with our nerves bumping hands.

It’s the weather,
pounding on the car as I looked you in the eye
And prepared to say goodbye.

Grey.

Is the color of
“Poor Connection”
When you ask how I am

It’s your sweatshirt that night on facetime,
We said,
I
Love
You.

It's the color of airports
That have seen our reunions

Grey.

Is the color of
Tears
And
Vows that we'll make it

It's the color of nights
You're
Not
Here

It's the color I see when I'm wrapped in
your arms,

When I scrunch my eyes shut
'Cause it feels like a dream

Grey.

Is the color of missing you.

Grey.

Is how much I love you.

“Across the Ocean” | Maeve Nowak ‘20

It sang, and
Refused to be silenced.

It changed definitions
 When I realized, stepping off that plane,
I left home in a city I barely knew

Months later -

Words, Light as feathers
 Flew me 3,000 miles away
To a man I had grown to love

It is strong

When the space between us
Feels like a weight on my chest

It is pain

During empty nights
And endings to Rom-Com movies

It is bliss

And soaring

When my heart races and slows

It is brave

At the thought of one-way tickets

And the unknown

“Only from a Stick” | Paul Bova ‘20

Those packets of special sour-watermelon flavored gum usually weren't any kind of hassle, but while tracking the package, I saw it get delayed, reshipped to another facility, classified as lost, then found again, before finally reaching my house. There was a hole in the corner of the package that looked like a mouse had chewed through it which continued into my 64-pack of gum.

"Whatever," I thought as I popped a stick in my mouth, "the others are wrapped, and I like to live dangerously."

I check the rest of my mail and see a letter from the U. S. Customs. It said that the package took so long because there was risk of an invasive species of rodent that got into the country and was eating into this flavor of gum. The triangular-shaped bite marks made as much sense as a strange creature getting involved. The letter went on to say that there would be a pending investigation of possible Chinese infiltration and collusion to sabotage the U. S. government through biological warfare like this animal.

I immediately doubted this because it would be quite the coincidence for all the trade between China and the US to have this one animal that comes across my box. I checked my shipment and sure enough, this box had made multiple stops throughout Arizona and New Mexico. "Definitely some new defense technology or mutant that got loose and has a taste for watermelon gum. That makes a hell of a lot more sense." I then did what any normal person would do in this situation, take pictures of the letter and bite marks and post them on Twitter to disperse my theory.

It wasn't long before it started to gain some traction. The strangeness of the marks and legitimacy of the letter started to make the rounds among the academics who were giving my theory a lot more credibility than I was expecting. But what was expected were all the random anonymous accounts who provided a lot more probable information on this in a few hours than I thought was possible. I was on the right track, but the possibility of this being a loose extraterrestrial became more apparent.

Turns out from a leaker who works in the Department of Defense, somehow the organization had acquired this creature from outer space and contained it in the facility. Some behind-the-scenes infighting had led to the creature just being let out into the wild and it eventually made its way to the gum it enjoyed so much. The account suggested that such treatment might prompt so unforeseen consequences just from it existing in our realm.

Not long after reading through this material, the account was banned. "Looks like the cover-up has begun" I said to my girlfriend after having informed her of this situation. She replied, "But if he's concerned about realms, there could be some real dangerous shit going on."

And then it happened. Our phones blew up in notification, the TV turned on by itself and the Amazon products were all shouting warnings. A worm hole opened up above St. Louis and a massive mothership began to descend on the city. We only had to look out the window to see a great shadow covering the Gateway Arch. And then out of nowhere this great shape in fractal patterns and reforming designs flew into view. The mothership had a gravitational pull on the rodent-creature, flying up to its maker before some next great event happened. People said later it had a stick of gum in its hand.

“Walla-Walla Speak-n-Spam” | Brandon Robles ‘22

“Oooh, watcha’ gonna do, punch us?”

“Ah, shut up! What do you know!?”

“Literally everything. Walls got eyes and ears, y’know?”

“Yeah, and an annoying motormouth to boot.”

This has been my life so far. Doing nothing but talking to walls. Don’t get me wrong, I only talked to myself in the first week. But then, I started to hear voices that weren’t my own. It was just one at first. It was a little rude, sure, but you know, what else are you gonna do by yourself? Called him Connery after that one dude who was James Bond. All I had to do was take my time and wait for this whole thing to blow over.

“Ugh, what were you thinking with that text? You sound so desperate!”

“I’m texting my mom ‘happy birthday’! What’s so desperate about that?!”

“You’re so selfish for attention, you know that?”

Then came Dorian. And Mina. Then Thomas.

Yeah, things haven’t calmed down at all. Not at all. They’re always complaining about anything they see. I think I preferred when I was losing my mind by myself and not with these rude jerks.

“You should really start calling people, man. You’re starting to lose it hard.”

“Gotta agree with Thomas there. You’re living in an age of advanced technology after all.”

Like I said, jerks aplenty around here. I’d rather be alone right now, and maybe watch *Cops* sometime later. Wouldn’t you, too?

“Doggie-Double Cross” | Brandon Robles ‘22

Walking around my neighborhood wasn't the brightest idea I had. Every night, I'd hear people arguing, music being blasted, and the occasional cruiser and fire truck driving by. Still, it was daytime, so what was the worst that could happen?

Just as I say that like the naive idiot that I am, a small dog begins to run up to me. Strangely, I had a family member terrified to heaven by this fella, but that was because of their constant attacks from dogs as a child. So right when he tries to bite my leg, I just scoop him up with my hands. All he can do now is yap and possibly urinate on me, but I thank God it never came to that.

His owner came by shortly after, some woman from a few houses down. I never really got to know my neighbors since there were some incidents up and about the place.

“You got my dog, huh?”

“Yeah, I did.”

“You might not want to touch him.”

“How come?”

“He's got ticks and fleas.”

“...Ahhh sh-”

I wound up locked up in my room for my own good while my family slipped me some food. I could keep hearing that one person telling how they were right about how dangerous dogs really are. I don't really pay attention as I sit at my desk scathing at a few bites I got a few moments earlier.”

“Something Something George Lucas’s Fault” | Brandon Robles ‘22

“Gettsa innsa bing bang hoola hoola!”

The six-foot rabbit-frog man donning gladiatorial bondage armor instructed me to step into the talking school bus. Thinking about that in my head, it sounds like the most lucid thing. But as I walked onto that bus, I was wondering when this all started.

Around six months ago, I was bored. Watching most of the Star Wars movies was kind of a waste of time but in a good way. Being stuck at home with nothing to do really makes you do some weird stuff. So when you see a link for a chance to be in Star Wars, I signed up for funsies. Although, I actually never saw what for Star Wars the contest was for. Figured it was probably as some extra.

Imagine my surprise when said rabbit-frog man burst down my door and told me to get on the bus. Frankly, I never realized that life on other worlds was this weird. Star Wars made it seem so much cooler and PG. Inside that bus was a mechanical man with no legs, a large plant pod, and an elderly man who lived down the street.

“Greetings, alien,” said the mechanical man, “what brought you on this luxury cruise?”

“Luxury- Wait, I thought this was a contest to be in Star Wars!”

The plant pod opened up to reveal a moist, human-like figure inside. His skin was wrinkly as if he had been drenched in a pool for far too long. Alien

life was already looking terrifying to explore. When it opened its mouth, it sounded like a raspy, groaning man dying.

“Listen, I don’t know about you guys, but this is the worst trip to a nude beach ever. How else am I gonna get that sweet, sweet sunshine?”

The old man, known as Mr. Sherbert, was sitting happily at the front. He must have thought there was a bus driver or something to talk to. I wondered if he knew what was going on around him.

“-So anyways, I started blasting at this guy. I was all ‘damn kids don’t know how to act!’ And when I was out of bullets, I just started waving my gun around!”

The rabbit-frog man finally came through a compartment at the top of the bus’s roof. He seemed as though he had just seen some things he didn’t need to.

“Yousa meesa weesa diesa innsa bang bang!”

I turned to the disabled robot next to me. “Do you understand him?”

“He just said that he was going to send us into combat against the Lollipoputans in Quadros IV.”

“What? Why!?”

“Furriosa finny weesa bang bang hip hop!”

“He’s angry that some director on Earth offended him and his people. Now we’re going to war with some nearby planet.”

And that’s when I realized George Lucas was probably a racist that got me into war.

“Look Before You Bite” | Mary Bevans ‘23

As I stood at the edge of the valley with my easel in front of me, brush in hand, I wondered what to do with the endless landscape of grass and flowers staring at me. Do I paint a flower? No, too basic. Should I go abstract? Draw one singular blade of grass surrounded by an ambiguous white void of empty darkness? Eh. I used to be able to paint no problem, but lately, I’ve been in a kerfuffle. Last Tuesday at 3:54 am, I realized that I had no vision for my art. I don’t know what my purpose is. I thought coming here would help to fix that, so I came to be inspired, to find my “thing”. But instead, I’m sinking further and further into my dilemma. I sat on a rock to try and think everything through. I tried to come up with what it was that I wanted to create more than anything, I so desperately wanted to find what my signature “thing” was. Some people drew cubes, others drew landscapes and some wankers liked to spend an obscene amount of time on one single splotch with nothing else. Yet my mind was blank as the canvas in front of me. Instead of sitting and spiraling further, I packed my things and went for a walk through the valley.

While I casually strolled through the landscape, I came across a path that I had never seen before, I was curious. I couldn’t tell if I was lost or not but I decided to follow it anyways. I had nothing better to do and I had an almost full battery. The path winded through trees, beside a creek and eventually led me to a small cliff that stood over the sea. It was new– but it wasn’t anything special. People always talk about how beautiful the ocean is, how it sparkles like sapphires in the sunlight, and fills you with joy and wonder or some crap like that. It did not sparkle, it was cloudy and gray that

day. The water was not blue, it was just the greenish-brown color that water looks like when you're standing close to it. I, again, was not struck with inspiration like I was hoping I'd be. Just another dead end. Although I did find one single and very sad looking piece of black chalk hidden just beneath a bush, all by itself. I wondered how it ended up here as I picked it up. This shit's expensive. It looked worn but not so worn that it wasn't usable, more like someone bought it a couple weeks ago and hadn't yet gotten a chance to properly use it. I decided to keep it and gently placed it in my art box. Finders keepers right?

My stomach angrily rumbled and coincidentally so did the sky not too long after. When the first few drops of rain began to fall I headed for the nearest tree, which had a nice patch of grass underneath. I laid out my little blanket and took out my lunch, a *peanut butter and jelly sandwich*– when suddenly I was struck with astounding clarity and peace. Everything suddenly made sense. At first, I didn't know what to think or feel, I just held my *sandwich* in my hands, aggressively staring at it with newfound interest. How did I not see it before? All these years I had been searching for my identity as an artist and I was eating it like a clueless idiot. THIS– this beautiful construction of perfectly proportioned nutrients– was the reason why I was put on this Earth. I was born to portray this perfect balance, this effortless blend of *strawberry jam, peanut butter and sourdough bread*. My purpose was to share it with the world.

As carefully as I could, I placed my *sandwich* onto a napkin and then onto the soft patch of grass. I then unceremoniously dumped my canvas, paint and easel from my bag onto the ground. Using the chalk, I traced an

outline of the *sandwich*. Of course, in order to capture its true essence I would need other colors, pale oranges, yellows, and soft reds otherwise it would look like a joke.

I spent hours crafting my creation and I did not stop until it was done. I sketched every bit of crust and every drop of jelly. The bread looked fresh and tasty, the peanut butter nutritious and delicious. I painted the background, including the grass and the tree it sat underneath, but the *sandwich* was the real star. It always will be from this point forward. After meticulously capturing my muse for 6 hours, I finally finished, I sat and sobbed happy tears. Not only did I see the *sandwich* sitting proudly in all of its glory - I saw myself.

It was perfect.

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We accept submissions of:

Poetry, Fiction, Creative Nonfiction, Essay, Comics, Graphic
Literature, Original Lyrics, and more!

Check out our weekly section in Fairfield's campus newspaper, The Mirror! For more information, send us an email at inkwellliterary@gmail.com! Thanks to all of our readers and writers!

-- THE INKWELL STAFF

Faculty Advisor: Professor Carol Ann Davis
Cover created on Canva by Katherine Klima '20