BLUE MIRROR
FALL 2021
I don't think anyone could fully grasp the lasting impact the pandemic would have on us 2 years ago. It's been years since we've stepped outside without masks on, and for many of us, it's been years since we've sat inside of a classroom. Nonetheless, we've survived in spite of it all. This semester has been an amalgamation of challenges and new stressors no one could've predicted, but we've survived. We've met new friends, we've made new memories, we've had new experiences, and we've been given an opportunity to rediscover who we are outside of isolation. It's been a weird experience for most, I'm sure, but I think we've all come to find something beautiful in it. In our relations to one another – in our connections to our fellow students – we've formed an intricate web of love and support that reaches far across this campus and deep into our hearts. This semester's been a challenge for many; the demands of our academics and college season has taken time and energy away from us, but we still have each other. We still have that social network. So, I want this edition of Blue Mirror to be a testament to that. Even while the world continues to take from us, we're still here. When we don't have anything left, we will always have our love and one another. Sorry this edition took so long. Thank you to everyone who contributed. Peace and much love <3

CVZ

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WHAT I WISH I COULD TELL PAST ME

Angela Chen

You have lived your whole life seeking love from others. You would drain it from every compliment, seek for it behind every smile, and long for it every second you spent alone. Often, when the edge of sunlight glimmered over the horizon, enveloping the corner of your room in a light, soft glow, the craving for affection would overtake you.

You would sit at your bedside table and list all the people who loved you, starting with your parents and ending with your friends. You did not realize that you were not a real person, just a sculpture being carefully carved by everyone else’s wishes. Looking back on it now, you don’t quite remember who was on that list and in what order. But you do remember that not once did you put yourself on that list.

Then four days after that boy you’ve always liked said he would never love you back, you fell in love with yourself. It didn’t occur in an over-dramatic moment, nor did you even realize it had occurred at first. You were simply sitting in the backyard. As the memory of that boy’s harsh voice echoed in your mind, and you sat there wondering what if no one loved you, a voice in your head told you that you will always have yourself. As your eyes slowly widened at the thought, you spotted a lone flower sprouting from the cracks of concrete. The second you looked at it and whispered, “that’s beautiful”, that same voice in your mind said you are too.

And you want to know what you did this morning?

You awoke at the start of sunrise, when the pinks and yellows and oranges were just fresh new colors splashed across the paint palette of the sky. But you did not sit down at your desk to begin a list; in fact, you didn’t even think of it. Instead, you walked over to your full-length mirror, pulled the blue cloth off from it, and stared at the reflection of yourself. Your eyes gazed softly over your entire body from head to toe. You absorbed every crack, every flaw, every piece of yourself that you used to hate.

Although your breath was still shaky, you pressed your hand gently against the mirror. You smiled as if signaling to the girl in the mirror that you loved her. And after a few moments, the voice in your head, the one that is me, said simply: that is beautiful.

Yes, I am talking about you.
To Be a Writer

Xen Woods

Straight A’s, Straight goals, Kinky hair, Musical taste. That’s me. I aspire to accomplish all my goals before I hit the old age of 25 and I strive to be the best at everything I do. I’ve been writing since the age of six, and that’s why I deem myself a-

Sometimes the words don’t make sense in my head and I feel like a fraud. Typing, deleting, snacking, staring, then typing again. The mess in my brain doesn’t translate well on the screen and everything always looks white. There are never enough words. It’s draining to think of what comes next when my mind is racing to regurgitate a sentence that will waste away in the meaninglessness of words. I don’t see myself as a-

Oftentimes I wish I knew how to paint or had the same burning passion for food as I do for my work. I love my stories. I love to imagine. Yet the color and pictures in my head could never be beautifully and wonderfully translated into the imagery, tone, voice, and expression that others have with their writing. And sometimes I surprise myself with the way that words spill out one by one until I feel full from the picture I created on the document. Other times I want to hide in my cringe because my vocabulary and style is cracked and set back 10 years from the real world and their expectations for me as a-

I’m a writer. I consider myself a writer who is afraid to write. I also consider myself a writer who is struggling to break from their shell of poetry and meaningful meaningless nonsense that has gone on for too long. I still write for me, and no one else. I disregard society’s expectations and let go of the inner bully who never received their hug. I’m a writer because what else makes me, me.
All the good poems have been written already
Of that I'm wholly convinced
There's no rhythm or rhyme or meter or line
The world has yet to witness

We're left to dive in the dumpster
Left by poets of poetry lore
We quote and scrap and rearrange
But it's all been done before

This poem? It's just a parody too
They served it up to me warm and ready
So when you're out of juice just know
All the good poems have been written already
how long are you staying up?
until i can feel something real
until the keys under my fingertips go from smooth to rough and the power saver dims the screen
until the birds chirping blend into the budding headache and the world spinning looks a little more
magical instead of sickly
until the house is quiet and i feel as if i can breathe
until pain is just a memory and reality is just a game
until the blade looks foreign and not appealing, gray, dull, untouched across the room
until blurry green numbers of my clock register in my head and its time to go to my first class
until i can think without crying
until i can dream without feeling like dying
i will stay up hoping that these moments come true
i will stay up hoping i will feel less blue
i will keep myself awake in the simple, stubborn, human spirit that whispers maybe
maybe if we just keep trying, just keep existing, the next second will be a miracle compared to the
last
its the spirit that has led me to now
and until the human spirit breaks
until the birds don’t chirp and well dries out
and the tiny flowers are laid at my grave
i will stay up above the turbulent waves
i will stay up past the clock striking twelve
straining to see
just a little bit of a miracle
another second of the day
because what a time it is be alive
lying between midnight and magic.
my page is blank.
the clock ticks and my stomach lumps each time.
a million ideas tummaging through my mind.
  i can't think.

still blank.
growing seemingly white.
a single line at the top left keeps blinking back at me
  waiting to move its way across the page.
  
i'm staring at my blank page.
  now a staring contest between my page and i.
  i glare into the empty void waiting for it to give up.
  to shut down and leave my sight,
  but it stays.
  i feel its weight pulling down on my eyes.
  everything is blurry
  slowly my world fades away.

  my eyes shoot up
  i freeze
  the bright sun is pouring
  through my window.
  i look at the time.
  it's 9 am!
  my phone gets a notification.

“Assignment Update: Dear students,
  Due to schedule changes …”
  i skim through to read at the end.
  “... so your essay has been moved
  to next week...”
  a smile blossoms on my lips.
  just a little bit of a miracle
  another second of the day
  because what a time it is be alive
  lying between midnight and magic.
WAR AND PIECES
EJ Foster

A scarf flying in the wind.
Dirt and dust kicked up on the road, coming from nowhere
Nowhere to be.
The memories far harder to wipe away than the grit
The fear with it’s own trail of filth
A pair of burnt socks in a ditch, too small, too small.
What are you thinking about, dear?
Oh, the inherent violence of society, the rule of beasts, of man is all.
That they grew up too fast, too hard, too much
That hell is empty and all the devils are here
Why would you wallow on worrisome woes like that?
Blind yourself to reality
Sugarcoat the words they feed you
Only to sleep better at night
We bleed and fight
For what we believe is right
Or do we?
Some will be critical, they’ll make the personal political-
Let others be cynical.
Throw yourself into the glitz.
The glam.
The parties.
The sham.
Ignorance is bliss after all.
My body is submerged by liquid death. It petrifies the senses. I should have known better than to walk on the ice alone. I call out for you, but my lungs fill with frost.

We met on the riverbank in the spring. The water smoothly rushed past your feet as you stood ankle-deep in the water. I stepped from behind the treeline. My footsteps in the mud caught your ears. And you turned to me, your smile creasing your eyelids.

Summer arrived when I was lost in your eyes. The vibrant green faded to the background. Having no longer been born anew. The soft, warm air that brought me to life grew stale sitting stagnant in my lungs. After holding their hues for so long, the branches grew weary. Releasing their leaves to crumble to dust. I wonder if my arms were also tired. As I loosened my grip while we walked until my fingers slipped through yours.

By then the air had been chilly for weeks, but one day it was warm for an instant. I was weak to the sun and it scorched me. I put my feet in the water. And the cool touch made me feel alive. It reminded me of spring. So I wanted to immerse myself. I stepped further into the river. Until my body was submerged in liquid life. I floated all day with water dulling my senses. It covered your voice when you called for me.

As the sun fell below the horizon, I found myself on the opposite bank. A thick fog fell over the water. Our world disappeared in the milky haze. I crouched in the mud till frost covered my toenails. The air was frozen, the river stopped flowing. And even the crumbling leaves sat still. Nothing was left, so I turned to the trees. I sought solace from the woods. But a voice rang at the back of my skull. It was you, coaxing me from my gloom. Pivoting, I reached out with both hands. My fingertips led my feet onto the frozen river. I never noticed the cracks forming beneath them.
In No World

Xen Woods

In this world: the concept of time is defined by pizza. Because of this everyone is always speaking in phrases such as, “Yeah mate, we’ll be there in three slices of pepperoni pizza with a side of breadsticks.” No one in this world questions this because it is known that pizza is time. And when they mean pizza, they’re not talking about the American styled pizza that is greasy enough to block someone’s blood vessels three times over. Or so overly cheesy that you might find a mini person, the size of 3,0356 nanometers, working tirelessly day in and day out to produce more cheese. We’re talking about refined authentic European pizza that has the right ratio of sauce and cheese. It is happily decorated with dancing vegetables found from different countries and cultures. This type of pizza houses a family of mini people, the size of 3,0356 nanometers, where their only job is to make sure the cheese, sauce, vegetables, and meat live in harmony and remain balanced. In this family of mini people, they are fully content with their lives and don’t work as much as the mini person on American pizza. In the world, because the concept of time is defined by pizza, everyone is time. Because everyone is on time, does that mean the planet is inhabited by pizza people? In this world, time is pizza and pizza is time. People are time and the inhabitants are people.

In this world: the bugs are silent. The nights are instead filled with the blood curdling screams of trees. The trees do this only to annoy the inhabitants of this planet, for they have trespassed their territory and massacred their siblings, parents, friends, family, and more. The inhabitants try to make peace with the trees, but they refuse to speak. As deep as the ocean, as deep as space, as deep as Bella’s love for Edward in every Twilight movie, the trees knew that was the same depth of hatred that the inhabitants had for their species. And so it was said that the inhabitants eventually died from the overexposure to the frequency of screams. The screams were so loud it caused the inhabitants ears to bleed 1,000 Olympic pools of blood three times over. The trees knew this wouldn’t completely kill every inhabitant, so they made sure to halt their supply of oxygen. Because they were advanced enough so that they could live without the cycle, they needed to survive. With this final blow to the inhabitant they were no more. And from then on the planet was filled with more green than any eye could see. Trees grew so high that they passed the exosphere. Trees were so thick that it took the length of 500 Paul Bunyan arms to wrap around half of a single tree. The surrounding animals evolved more efficiently and created their own civilization. Without the inhabitants holding life by the throat every nanosecond, the planet started to breathe freely. And so, in this world bugs were now able to sing from the joy and pride of all of the land. Once silenced by the inhabitants because of implicit violence, now filled with glee throughout day and night singing songs as if they were never silent.

In this world: you are given an option to not exist. You are born with three switches in your mind. As you close your eyes, each time you blink, rest your eyes, or begin to go to sleep, you are presented with three choices. The first option is labeled white, this switch (If ever switched on) will grant you the ability to not exist. The second option is labeled red. This red switch is always on because it grants you the ability to exist. The third switch is magenta (But green), and allows you to not exist for as long as you desire. To not exist in this world is just that. You’re flowing in and out of a black hole with no concept of time itself. You’re constantly being dunked in water every time you try to reach for the surface. Swimming endlessly into the nothingness that you imagine yourself to be. Traveling through the tunnel of darkness, always imagining that flicker of light. Yet, because you’ve known the absence of light for so long, you cling to it. Like a baby clinging to the blood of their sleeping mother’s pricked skin. You live because of it, at least you’ve convinced yourself that. In reality, you fear what you’ve become and how you’ve inevitably become what you said you would never become. But you don’t exist, so you would never feel this guilt, fear, pain anyway. You’re just there, but you’re not. You sit, you stand, you sit but you don’t exist and no one cares because you are not. You don’t care for every other reason being that who you are? When do you decide to exist? At this point, after being nothing, why would you return to something? You are not. So stop. Just stop. I can’t, I can’t, I can’t, I can’t. In this world, the magenta (But green) switch is a hallucination. You created in your mind to cope with the fact that you do not want to exist. There are only two switches. And in this world you’re not.
ON LEARNING, ONCE AGAIN, TO

LIVE

Zenith Jarrett

Love and hate
Real and fake
Dance or die
Living and dead

We tried so hard to learn how to live
That we forgot what life was.
Tumult — conflict. Conflict and
Our individual struggles to draw lines.
Borders.

I am a battlefield.
Up my legs, millions of soldiers bud and climb
And die
And my soul is speckled in tears for them.
Machines of death and damnation crawl over
My shoulders, spilling the stench of corrosion
Into my collarbones.
My arms are runways for jets;
My tear ducts, oceans to conquer;
And the canals of my ears serve as trenches
To protect from canon fire.

The world dances as the battle rages on
And the soldiers are left to fertilize Chrysanthimums.

I tried so hard to Live free and love.
Love and Live.
Dance and Live.
Grow and Live.
Spin and set myself free, but
The moments when the shooting ends
The armistice between the real and
Those that insist we cannot exist
Are when life begins to shine the brightest.

Let’s not forget the lives of soldiers, lost on our skin, or
that
Living happens fastest when violence denies you life.
Dance and try your best to love.
Move — your legs, your shoulders, and your soul
Insist upon what you know!
That you are more than capable of life, and that
The struggle to love against the tide of violence
Is a just campaign to undertake.
after phoebe bridgers
and a failed experiment
Josie Barboriak

chemically, fatally unbalanced
elbows terrorizing test tubes
gut imploding from- fill in the blank.
I’m the inverse of ponytailed girlbossery

eyes clouded by the constant threat of tears
at the unconditional love of good teachers and small dogs
heart like a writhing screaming mass inside of me
unsuitable for dissecting or being dissected?

here we speak often of our love for science
but mine feels now like I am the dog
laying my dead-bird human heart at science’s door
heavy-collared but still trying trying trying

so I wait for the next time it makes sense
lift my head shake the kaleidoscope
force into being a refraction I can bear
and I imagine Sisyphus as a woman in STEM
The parties.
The sham.
Ignorance is bliss after all.
THE STARS WILL GO OUT
BEFORE I FORGET YOU

EJ Foster

You are like a language I am no longer fluent in but still remember how to read
This is why we call people exes, I guess
Because the paths that cross in the middle
End up separating at the end
It’s too easy to see an X as a cross out
It’s not
The X is a diagram of two paths
Person after person after person
All converge at one moment, irrevocably changing the course of a thousand
Even more
How do we forgive ourselves for the things we never became?
As it is with accidents, so it is with love
Relationships don’t really end
Even when you never see the person again
Every person you’ve ever known lives on somewhere inside you
People both alive and dead, metaphorically and literally
All of them evoke memories, conscious or not
I still forget we’re not even friends
I still wake up
with things
to tell you
there are a thousand little hostels where a thousand little hearts reside

Siani-Simone Ammons

I want to write but at the same time I cry whenever the pages are blank yet
I cannot help but not cry whenever you say you do not love me a thousand times
It has not been a thousand times, but with every second that passes us by
It feels as if my throat has silenced the words of promise in my windpipe
Perhaps my truth has died a thousand times and I say a thousand times
To summarize the headache that your words of non-love has created in my mind
I stare at the empty words, blinking a thousand times and I see no tears pour out of my eyes
I do not bear witness to the creation of yearned-ink from my eyes
I do not bear witness to the creation of dark-blood (coming, escaping, washed away from my heart)
I am "the best" and you say you want to spend the rest of your life with me by your side
A bed in my house, a room for you, there was already a room in my heart
And a bed nestled in the cavities of my mind belonging to the name that your soul calls your own
Were those all empty lies? Am I obsessive even when I did not cry a thousand times?
Because every line of lies that dripped from your painted lips
Should have inspired a thousand sobs that never once could escape my mouth
My mouth or my lips (my tongue or my kiss my thoughts and my bliss my hate and my frown)
When the days were painted gray, when the world escaped
my grasp, and when you still looked at me in the same way
When I was not just “the best”, when our friendship or the glance
In your eyes seemed to have / would have / could have stood the test of time
When I imagined in some distant world in that distant future
Your heart could have been mine (your heart or your smile or your hands or your laughs)
And I would have still been “the best” with every press of lips against your thighs
You used to look at me and I would trace every feature into my cold soul
And it would heat me up as much as the air did in that little hostel
Stretched across Victorian architecture and stretched in it my love for you

FACE YOUR FEARS

Duke Lewis
Caps will rain from the summers air
And we'll finally check out of this hospital.
I wish to follow you anywhere
But our paths are just uncrossable.
You’ll go out of state, you’re much bigger than I
Please go and see what you can
Because, it may, that in that May
We never kiss again.
I’ll spend everyday next to you
When time runs out we’re done.
I’ll cherish the time I have with you
And what we can’t stop will come.

The hooks of this world will rip us apart
But the end isn’t nearly in sight.
Don’t get wrapped up in the finitude of it all
Because I love you infinitely
Yarn
Ella Larson

can baba yaga pick me up and take me far from here?
scoop me up in her chicken-legged house and make us disappear?
can queen titania invite me for tea among the fauna and fae?
watch the human world from afar, alight with the bluejay?
i’d love to cajole with frog and toad, and fret with the mad hatter
watch romeo and juliet fall in love, and hop with peter rabbit
mope with eeyore and bounce with tigger, and gobble honey with pooh
plot and conspire with jinns and genies, pick the enormous turnip too
but no, these things are just fantasies, my fanciful reveries
so what are yours, my friend? tell me your wishful dreams

Raindance
Ella Larson

summer
brings the thrumming cadence of thunderstorms
the glistening drops of aqua land on the leaves of reaching
plants and quench the thirst of the parched clay
relief from the scorching, dry heat
the earth breathes out a sigh of relief

The Milky Way
Ella Larson

her hair the night sky
stars pierce the black canvas that frames her face
the diamonds in her tiara
satellites in the night sky
her eyes are made of moments lost staring into the heavens
she is royalty

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