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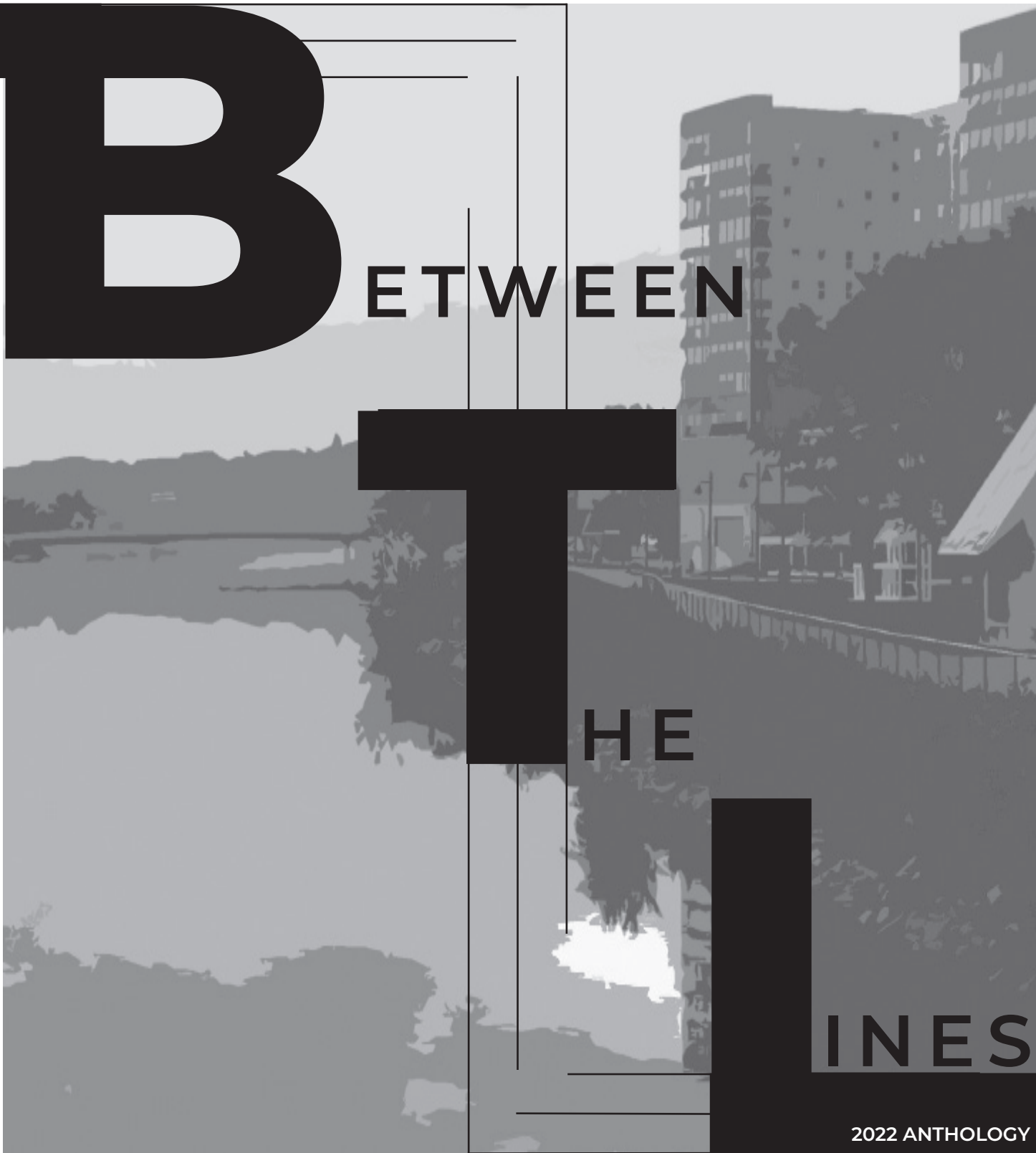
International Writing Program
Between the Lines

BETWEEN THE LINES

IDENTITY AND BELONGING 2022

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Each year, since its inception in 2008, Between the Lines has pursued innovation and growth. This year's objectives could be met thanks to the generous support and funding from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art's (DDFIA) Building Bridges Program, and the dedication of individuals and organizations that support the program's mission:

Christopher Merrill, Director; and all the staff of the International Writing Program, University of Iowa; Zeyba Rahman, Senior Program Officer for the Building Bridges Program (DDFIA); Firdaus Arastu, ReThink Media; Mary Paterson, UI Administrative Services Manager and Accountant; Carrie Wisner-Wacker, Asst. to the Sr. Director/Conference Specialist UI Housing and Dining; the program's faculty: José Olivarez and Poupeh Missaghi; BTL Anthology Designer, Georgie Fehringer; IWP Editor Nataša Đurovičová; BTL Residential Counselors Gyasi Hall, Jahnavi Pandya, Sean Zhuraw; BTL Summer Assistant, Mason Hamberlin; BTL Program Assistant Caitlin Plathe; BTL Program Coordinator Alisa Weinstein.

And our thanks to the special seminar instructors: Gyasi Hall; Georgie Fehringer; Khaled Rajeh; Melody Moezzi; alea adigweme; hurmat kazmi, Shimul Chowdhury and Yusuf Siddiquee; Jan Weissmiller, Kathleen Johnson and the staff at Prairie Lights Bookstore for hosting the BTL faculty reading; Codi Josephson and the staff at Home Ec. Workshop; High Ground Café for hosting BTL Open Mic Night; Mark Tade Photography; and finally, to all the participants of Between the Lines for making this program so extraordinary.

Special Thanks:
José Olivarez
Poupeh Missaghi

Faculty Forecasts for June 23, 2022
by BTL participants

Poupeh is an Octobox – The Octobox is a deeply compassionate and introspective sign. It tends to surprise and offer knowledge. The Octobox is an octopus with a box, representing someone breaking out of the box that confines them. Currently, you might be working through a struggle, whether that be with your family, friends, love interest, work, or even yourself. Remember that you will come out of this for the better. In addition, in the following days, you will touch the lives of many young people. Your impact will help them to grow.

José Olivarez is a Listener – Dear Listener, you are into thoughts and emotions of those around you. You quietly command the room with your intellectual presence. For this month it is okay to be the quiet observer as your silence provides comfort to those around you. But take your time to share your ideas as those around you are eager to listen and learn. Try to immerse yourself with those who surround you as you may not notice that you inspire and promote the thoughts of those around you. Embrace your true colors and your contagious smile as both radiate joy. As your Venus aligns be sure to share your outlook, as your view of life and beauty is unique and cherished.



FOREWORD

**“Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour”**

-William Blake, from Auguries of Innocence

On June 18, 2022, 20 young writers from 12 U.S. states embarked on a journey to Iowa City, Iowa having been competitively selected for the first in-person BTL session since 2019. As much as we wanted to consider it a return to regular residential programming, the pandemic has changed us all, and COVID still looms. Over the past two years, at one time or another, many of us have experienced increased isolation, and a deepening need for self-protection or sense of self-reliance. Yet within the two-week span of BTL, this passionate group of high school students and hardworking staff and faculty reminded me that we can and sometimes must trust and depend on other people. I'm so proud of this talented group of individuals for the ways they have bravely chosen to express themselves as writers even while caring for each other as listeners. From each of their dot on their own map, they drew lines of rooms in Catlett's halls, widened their circles of friendship, and formed huddles of spontaneous support. I witnessed walking turn to dancing and sitting turn to singing. Standing up at the Open Mic led to words flowing, fingers snapping, and high fives slapping. Through their Documentation Crew Instagram posts, each participant offered us images and insights to cherish every BTL day.


With the generous support of the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, IWP could coordinate flights, housing and meals, and offer two weeks of non-stop BTL programming. José Olivarez and Poupeh Missaghi joined BTL for their 4th year to teach writing workshops and global literature seminars. Special seminars included sessions such as 'Pause, Shuffle, Play: Writing Your Life Through Music' with Gyasi Hall; 'Somatics: Playing with Poetics, Movement, and Attention in Writing' with Georgie Fehringer; 'Lost in Translation?' with Khaled Rajeh; 'Writing for and about Mental Health from a Muslim American Perspective' with Melody Moezzi; 'Zine workshop' with alea adigweme; 'MIPSTERZ: A Path to Muslim Flourishing, Joy, and Futurism' with Shimul Chowdhury and Yusuf Siddiquee; and 'Real Life,' with fiction writer hurmat kazmi.

Cultural events included a reading and Q&A with José and Poupeh at Prairie Lights Bookstore; a bumpy bus ride to the Walker Homestead for a tour and pizza; bowling and games at SpareMe; and word stitching at the Home Ec. Workshop.

Residential and writing life was beautifully supported and head counts were artfully counted by Gyasi Hall, Jahnvi Pandya, and Sean Zhuraw. Caitlin Plathe's tireless organization kept us running smoothly, and Mason Hamberlin's social media mastery kept us looking good.

Special thanks to our anthology designer, Georgie Fehringer. Your brilliant assemblage not only connects our BTL writers together forever on the page, but your sensibility captures the lights, lines, shadows, cracks, and reflections of the 2022 BTL: Identity and Belonging experience.

I'm so grateful to these young people for their commitment to the inclusive and exploratory BTL mission and to their families for sending them to Iowa, affirming their dream to write.



Alisa Weinstein, IWP Youth Programs Coordinator
Caitlin Plathe, Between the Lines Program Assistant

THE CITY OF CEMETERIES

by Alee

The city of cemeteries. For in this city run the veins of ancient people who have long since died, in this city are the constructions made of bones of yesteryear. The souls of the ancestors watch as history repeats itself and the city evolves into a new layer of death.

In this city, the tombstones are houses of people old and new. They show what was and what will be. Rooms having housed thousands of people are decorated with the holes of nails that held personalities. Polished with the feet from everyone dancing and running and moving and living. She is a collection of these memories. She watches as the children of death and life strive to find their parents only to be welcomed by her in the end.

This city is an organism. With humans as bacteria and soil as skin. With sewage as blood and wildlife as cells. An example of how far humanity has come and still has to go. How we kiss the world with our inventions but kill it with our war.

But from this cemetery, we can learn. We are a beautiful people and a generation of lovers is ready to show their affection. From this city of graves, we must mourn what has been lost and celebrate what has ended.

The city of cemeteries is infinite. It is the first civilization and it will outlive all of humanity. Even after our kind has died off, the buildings will remain, a fossil in a museum of days of bygone. Though mother nature will take it back eventually, growing her oak trees to show her strength and roses to mourn her loss. Through the concrete, it will remain a layer of the earth.



Colorado



Georgia

emergence/self portrait as nightstrung closet

by Emma

open the dresser in the middle of the night
& dress your clothes in you.
put the paper lamps of ikea in the suit pocket
red apples staining bed sheets, beijing summers in jean shorts
how your grandmother held your hand tighter
& asked you to never change. (qi pao drenched, pearls untangled;
how the aliens never came.) a trenchcoat with a hole
past the abdomen, white satin in the dark (how you knot it)
how sometimes, you still wait for them at endings.
put your mother in the nightgown & make her beautiful
the way we become by choosing to swallow (again & again
despite yearning). don't let the finished product look itself in the mirror
instead, open the shutters and let it tiptoe down the staircase,
lips grazing a blue moon. it's so free it's here.
the body open & more radiant in the rain.



California



Illinois

assimilation

by Fiona

Qiyi is an alien with yellow parents, who wear ugly glasses & speak their language like angry bees. Qiyi is six. Teeth fall out of her mouth like pistoled English. Qiyi says under god and does not mean it—her parents still work at the restaurant on Sundays. Qiyi is ten. No one sits next to Qiyi at lunch because she eats stinky food. People call Qiyi an infidel because she sneaks out at night to worship Mao Zedong. Qiyi has no PJs for Pajama Day—people in China don't wear clothes. Qiyi is eighteen. Qiyi goes away to college and a white boy prays a bullet into her parents' backs. But Qiyi is Christian now, and fears God so much. Qiyi is American now, and she does not complain.

Gautam

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

As time flies by

The curb with people following me are now filled
with mail and garbage cans

The Paranoia isn't

the same as it used to be when I was younger

The running home in the dark

turned into a slow walk. Basketball under the
streetlight became school work beneath the lamp

All the yelling and bad calls are difficult teachers

Long walks with your family are now commentary
while you watch tv

Slowly drifting away

Looking over papers until your fingers are
cut

5 percent of your body is band-aids

Your face becoming pale and eyes

are hurting from staring at the same screen

You can feel the wrinkles forming

The dark bags under your eyes

Dreaming of a clean slate

Taking the wheel and hitting the gas

The only screaming in your ear is the

keyboard clacking

Closely criticizing the cramped page

Forwarding for a fresh set of eyes

Staring at the page in frustration

The aggravation that fueled my mind

Blazing past each page

Until you reach the epilogue

Smiling to yourself

Thankful for not having a

dead end of a job

To change or to not



Oregon



California

in these strange lands

by Henna

Teasing tantalizing tremors terrify and test the strength of our wills against tantrums of an Earth that tilts, trails, and trills dreaded devastation, threaten constant on our horizons by threading between lost toils and spoils, tracing erased engravings of tarnished temples below dirt that bears lifeline fruit, and fields of wheat on burial sites of emptied, teared-out heavens on tiding whims, begging for grains growing on grounds no longer ours, to veil truths and reel truce between traps of bulleting trains threatening to turn people to dust that's blowing across tiny tables for which we compete for precious silt tumbling from twelve fingers throwing spilt scraps with thumbs supporting our weight from the ether. My people trying to trust this trembling, laughing Earth that gives life with the same terrible hand that brutalized God..

(O₂)

by Kareena

You breathe. You demand the particles work. You never understood its worth. You can't see the particles have a bloody heart. You can't see the bruises. You can't see the force of my thirst. You hold the air, let it into your lungs. You let it pump the salt-water of your sorrows without flooding your air ducts. You let me dance down your throat to the throb of your heart. You introduce me to the secrets that burn the flesh of your tongue. You build me a raft to sail along your stream of blood. You turn your oceans of hell into flowers of love. Blow your air out and let me lather your skin. You share me with the sun, sky, and all alluring things. You will ignore all the air's power. Forget that it's there. Until the weight of your burdens spark flames out of thin air. Now you will treasure the air and beg for my breeze.

You knew I was there, but didn't ever care.

You saw me as a right to keep your ecosystem alive

I saw you as that soil for where my flowers never die.

I've accepted that you forget you need me to breathe. You will waste me on monsters and make me fight their smoke filled with insults and pain but I'll never concede.

I give you my love and you take my life.

I will never dream to leave you

I have to protect you from the pain.

I will let all of me sink into your skin.

Because I know what it feels like to suffocate.



Florida



Maryland

DOLLHOUSE BLUES

by Kira

Please, let me explain myself.

To be human is to be beholden to others. Obligations are the core, driving force behind most life. From the moment we are born, we are expected to do something- even just live- and somebody's well-being is dependent on that function.

When my parents were alive, they were the only people I needed to interact with, but not to my detriment. My mother and father were everything guardians should be: disciplined, kind, patient, generous. All they wanted from me was to see my growth, nurture me so that they could see me blossom. Between the two, I had enough company for several lifetimes. But that only made it harder when they passed. Their absence was as much a force in my life as their presence- the lack of support pressed against me like an anvil on my chest until I collapsed in on myself.

I know you understand what I mean. I know you've had the others ripped away from you so violently when they had just patched up the holes in your life. I know the destruction of those patches widened the holes that had just been hidden so they combined into one yawning, infinite abyss. What do you do then? You can't walk around with that gaping wound, not in this reality that will use it to drain you of everything.

Just listen

Stay with me. We can use the remnants of them, make it so they're still here. The messes they left: stains from spilled juice, shattered ceramic and glass, holes in the dry-wall from the pictures torn from it.

They're still here. We don't have to clean it up.

MY MOM TELLS ME YOU LIKE LUNCH

by Lauren

I didn't really know you. Not really, at least. Because I knew you but I only know I knew you because I've seen photos of our faces side by side. You sit in kitchen chairs we still have even though their wood is splintering and color is fading. My full height is just above your sitting shoulders. I'm holding the kiddush cup that was your cup even though you don't know the prayers. Even though it's not a kiddush cup it's an ice cream cup stolen from your teenage job. You don't know the prayers but the prayers are because of you.

I know I know you because I remember the soggy white carpet in your 420 E Ohio apartment. Your back relaxed in that brown armchair and my back against the wall building Lincoln Log cabins. Your white windowsill was lined with our school portraits mom gave you each year.

I didn't really know you. As soon as I was old enough to know you, you were too old to know me. So I grew up. And I didn't know you except for the you that laid in the nursing home bed. And the you who was fed off spoons held by nurses whose faces I never seemed to remember. I got to know you through the words of other people. I didn't hear these stories through your own words, and I search my mind for memories of you and each time I come up blank. So I am forced to know you through their words. I didn't know you liked lunch so much. I didn't know you went to school in five different states.

I feel guilty I didn't know you. I feel guilty that I miss you. It's been one year since you died. And I miss you.



Illinois



Iowa

THE SHOVEL

by Lily

The shovel is tired of digging up the dirt. Rusted from time. Battered with a bent handle and chipped metal. Sometimes there's nothing in the ground, so what's the point in digging? Opening a void just to fill it again with loose, airy dirt. Rain still seeps through so the worms slide back in, anyway. And when there's no more dirt, everything else is thrown in there. Old bicycles, broken toys, flat tires. The junk pits are covered up with an old tarp, but it's not secured in the ground and the wind is so strong that the tarp blows away and all the neighbors can see the junk in the holes because of the shovel. And if the shovel is so tired, why doesn't it stop?

I think the shovel should be thrown away. The junk in the holes should be thrown away, too. We can live on minimalist land, no junk, no shovel. As for the holes, maybe we can just sit inside of them and talk. Talk about why the holes are there in the first place and why we keep digging them up. We'll sit and talk in the holes and it'll take so long that over time, the soil will erode. In fact, it'll erode so much that the ground becomes level with the very bottom of the holes, and it'll be like the holes were never there in the first place. And when that happens, maybe the shovel will no longer be a shovel. Maybe the metal was melted and reshaped into a hook on the wall for a little boy's school bag to hang. Or maybe it's a horseshoe for a horse that lives on a farm. I think the farm would be big. With no holes.

STREET CAT NAPPING ON A PORCH

by Meredith

later a woman will open the door to find an absence of wind & an absence of cat; she will not wonder about a cat that is not hers napping on the porch because the cat will by then be traveling elsewhere, running, unstilling the air with its lean body, & also sleeping, always sleeping, always on the porch, & and in the same moment murmuring to itself because everything & everyone murmurs to itself in the same breath. when the cat, the street cat, was older, much older, the street cat with eyes of lamppost glow & pelt of shorn grass ate chunks of moon every night to sustain itself through famish. the street cat wonders why it is a street cat & not a frog cat or a clock cat or a chalkboard cat, & does not question, ever, the name of cat, because when that question is asked the street cat becomes an empty chair on a porch at dusk where a sleepless woman drinks tea & sneezes & murmurs to herself until the sun murmurs the rest of the people in the world awake.



Louisiana



California

WHY I WRITE: A STATEMENT TO POUPEH MISSAGHI

by Participant from California

Literature belongs to the people, the ordinaries. A writer does not speak as the spokesperson of a nation nor as the embodiment of righteousness. Unfortunately, I came from a place where literature is contrived as a devouring tool of propaganda: the chant of the land, the symbol of the race, and the agent of politics.

Growing up in my homeland, I made no distinction between what I experienced and what I learned in the textbooks. Careless about my differences from those in the books, I began to imitate their narratives, writing stories of people I had no opportunities to interact with, and cultures that never touch my heartstrings.

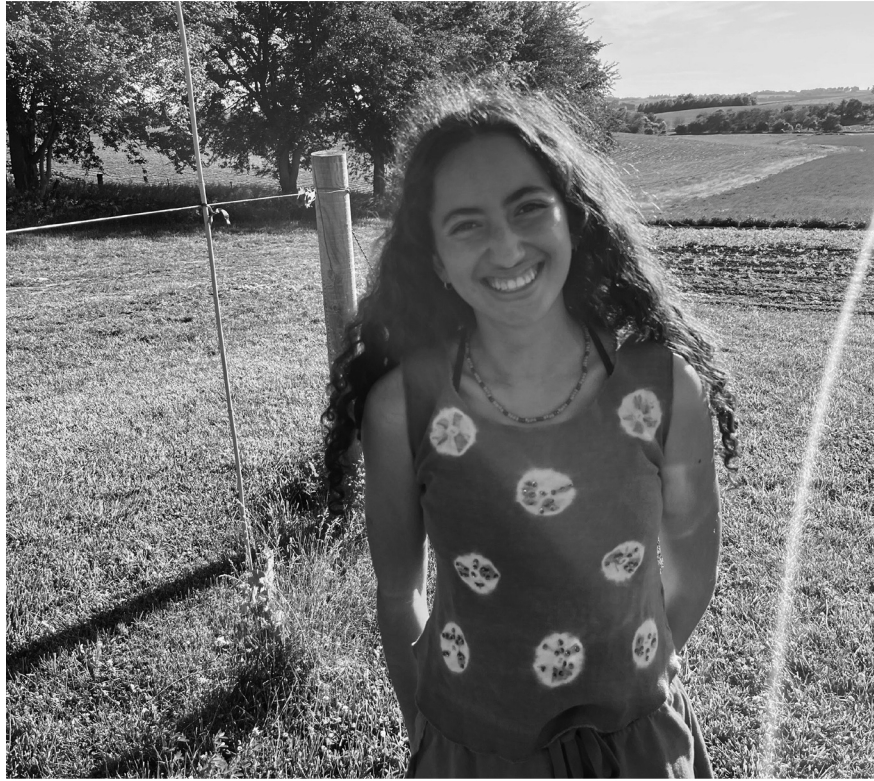
My early writing journey was a nod towards the acceptance of a single story. In doing so, I co-wrote the assimilation textbook that I spent the rest of my life trying to get rid of. My love for writing, for the first time, became a tool that assimilated myself and others.

I believe it is only through the voices of individuals, we collectively could safeguard literature's existence. To put it frankly, I write knowing I have no readers, I write knowing I would not publish, and I write with the earnest intention to tell my truth, nothing but my own truth.

A SHOE AND A LACE

by Sasha

A shoe is stitched, manufactured, made to look like another, enveloping human flesh, forced into the ground, growing dirty within an instant of being worn. A shoe is never like another. It does not depend on its partner for anything. Its partner never walks the same path or is stained the same way. A shoe is tied with a lace, a lace forever attached. The lace can never walk separate from the shoe, but the shoe can walk separate from the lace. A shoe with a lace is just a shoe, a shoe that inconveniences its wearer, a shoe that requires additional time and attention before it is worn to traverse new terrains. A shoe without a lace is still a shoe. A lace without a shoe is a nuisance. It is not valued when intertwined with the shoe. It is useless without the shoe. A lace is never seen. A lace is bunched up, forced into a knot. A lace is frayed. A lace is tripped over. A lace is a danger. A shoe is not a danger. A shoe is in danger. A shoe is stepped on. A shoe steps. Cracked sidewalks, sharp rocks, muddy trails. A shoe endures. The shoe, in danger, is tied by the lace, a danger. They are one, and they are separate, and they will forever be connected. Because the shoe and the lace were stitched, manufactured, together. Because the shoe and the lace witnessed the same first roads, first streets, first buildings. Because the shoe held the lace up. Because the lace held the shoe together. Because the shoe and the lace carried each other when the world would not.



Washington



Iowa

GOD IS JEALOUS OF ME.

by Sofa

Inspired by Kira

I am a sinner, yet

Good is jealous of me.

He is jealous I need no heaven or hell.

I only need my beauty, serenity, and blessings

I bring to get someone to follow me.

God is jealous of me.

He is jealous that I do not cause floods that wipe out the entire population I created.

I only cause tears of joy to FLOOD from all eyes.

God *is* jealous of me.

He is jealous I would have spared the Israelites of plagues and enslavement.

I would have blown them a kiss.

God is *jealous* of me.

He is jealous I do not need to make an example of my people to keep faith aligned.

I only need to be *authentically* me.

God is jealous *of* me.

He is jealous I need no angels or prophets to do my bidding.

I do it myself, **who can do it better than me?**

God is jealous of *me*.

He is jealous I would never consider the atrocities he so boldly commits.

I'll just be that bitch.

God is jealous of me.

He is jealous, I do not need to have my seal on foreheads to be worshiped.

I only need to pout my lips.

GOD is jealous of me.

He is jealous I would have allowed Sodom and Gomorrah REDEMPTION.

I wouldn't even have to break a sweat.

G O D is *JEALOUS* of me.

He is jealous that I do not need to remove my son from this world and hold him as a trophy to be won when the rapture calls.

I am trophy enough.

THEE LORD ALMIGHTY IS JEALOUS OF ME!

He is jealous that I AM A SINNER who will never commit these acts of terrorism upon humanity.

I will only commit VANITY!

God is jealous of me!

He is jealous that he TOO, is a sinner.

PEACE TO ALL RAT KIND

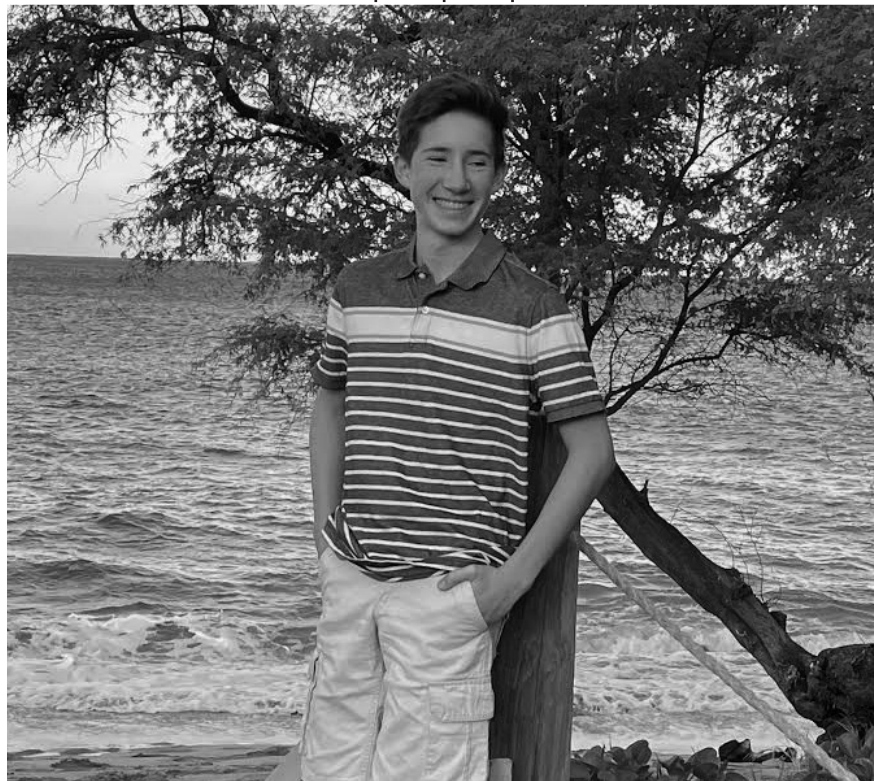
by Spencer

His elegant paw stretches forth from the sewers and he artfully dines at PizzaNow. When viewing rats we humans cannot comprehend their inspiring existence. Rats, living in dregs, have accepted their destruction and inevitable annihilation, but humanity continues to search for an alternative truth when rats have already discovered that simplicity is the most ideal form of life.

These hairy beasts leech onto the world with every ounce of their being with hair that sprouts out of their body as fast as it's pulled; an intricate example of their resilience. Humans unintentionally blind themselves with concerns of tomorrow; unlike rats who know of the precious seconds of today. Rats must be treated with reverence because they are a reflection of humanity's greatest fear: inescapable ruthlessness.

Rats, in their wonderful simplicity, solely search for trash to devour. To preserve the sanctity of life, humans shall follow in their footsteps in this righteous search. Forever intertwined with these superior beings, we must bow before them as they scurry across our kitchens. Henceforth, a gesture of goodwill will come at the expense of leaving a dollop of cheese for all rats to partake. This will build up good faith between humans and rats which is essential to becoming closer to the rats who have the capability of surviving what is equivalent to a six-story fall for humans. Comparatively, humans encapsulate the definition of uselessness with the inability to survive the fall from even a single story.

Furthermore, relying only on instinct, these glorious creatures swim for thousands of feet seemingly effortlessly. Their magnificence shines brighter than the stars, yet they stay humble despite our devastatingly obvious inferiority. Imagine a world where the populace roams the streets, not for purpose but for trash. A world of the truest freedom: anarchy. A world of rats.



Oregon



New Mexico

Syriana

A CONVERSATION

So I have something I need to tell you.

Need to?

Yeah. Well—more like I want to tell you. But I gotta say it, you know?

Ok. Hit me.

So! I've been thinking.

You've been thinking?

Yeah.

Oh no.

No! Not 'Oh no' just—

Mhmm

I'm just bored that's all and so I started thinking about stuff.

Stuff?

Yeah! Like if every day is a moment in our life then how the hell does our tiny little brain fit in all those moments?

You

know?

Mhmm. Yeah.

What?

Well, I'm just thinking—

Ha ha.

All I'm saying is..are you going to say it? Or shall I?

...

So..me then?

No..no. You don't have to do that.

Ok...

Right. Um. I want to know everything but I can't.

Mmk

And..and I want to control my environment...but I can't.

I don't know..though...I don't know though.

Ok..do you wanna keep talking about it?

Yeah.

the geography of a blank page

by Thanisha

The day she starts tearing roses out of the flowerbed, I take her down to the river to watch the cranes. She asks me why the sky is blue and I tell her to skip a rock across the water. The cranes scatter across the surface, dissolve like seafoam, ash-white, stark against the marshy shore. Of course, she tries to seize the ripples, and of course, her hand comes away filled with milky stones. She asks me how to tell the difference between a live fish and a dead dog and I tell her to close her fist, look for the ghost of the river in the contours of the cool stone. Eventually, she peels her fingers open to crabs burrowing into the white meat of her palm. This is how to make a home, I say. Bullshit, she says. The remnants of sun dripping down the trees, the trees exhaling into the evening. After dark, we pull weeds from the pits of our elbows and leave them on the riverbank. By morning, they'll have been swallowed whole and spat out somewhere else. The cranes return to the water with fresh blood in their scarlet brows. It's a little like starting over, I say. She asks me why it matters and I tell her it doesn't.



Virginia



New Mexico

Tien

RETITLED

Waking up.

Wishing you didn't.

Getting out of bed.

Ibuprofen.

Drinking.

Slipping on banana peels.

Trying to drown in a bathtub.

Airplane crash.

Jetlag.

Reality.

Insanity.

Rabbits skinning humans.

Thinking about dying.

Stirring your coffee.

Drinking your coffee.

Unstirring your coffee.

Living in your car.

Falling down the stairs.

Metaphors.

Eating your house pets.

Failing to build a new life.

Foaming at the mouth.

Losing your job.

Drinking.

Talking about peripheral vision.

Dead people petting dead dogs.

Purging your flesh.

Obscurity.

Drinking.

Bleeding in your coffee.

Drip.

Drop.

Drip.

Finding an occupation.

Counting tips.

Walking down the highway.

Tears.

Dreams.

Slipping on banana peels.

Tying a knot.

Tying a noose.

Failing to pay the bills.

Getting evicted from Neverland.

Untying a knot.

Crawling on the ceiling.

Playing on the edge of the roof.

Drinking.

Falling through the floor.

Drinking coffee.

Dead cats

Dead dreams

Dead thoughts

GROWING PAINS

by Zara

I hate waistband scars from too-tight jeans.
Scars that reveal the growth of my hips,
my sides pressing out to
become the white space between
picture books and makeup bags.

I can never throw away a pair
of too-tight jeans
because I can never acknowledge that
-I-am growing.

Everyone grows.
Everyone grows,
they say.
But what if I'm
afraid that my
jutting hip bones will disappear
and be replaced by
startling stares on
crowded LA streets?

I find that a lot of my jeans
end at my calves
and squeeze my waist until it
folds like a beach chair.
They are from when I was
ten
and twelve
and thirteen.

I don't have many
new pairs of jeans
because I'm scared that by
throwing out

old, ratty pants
I am somehow
inching toward
a war that spreads
through flesh
that doesn't
stop until
I no longer exist.

So I stick with the old jeans,
let the marks plant themselves
on my sides,
the bright red rings
crying and
screaming for air.
I'll let them
linger on my skin
until they fade and form
again.

I hate waistband scars from too-tight jeans
but I won't let them go..
Because time won't let me go.
Because letting them go
won't make the stares
dull like old scars.

Today I walked around the park
next door
wearing my too-tight jeans.
I let a thousand new eyes
bore into my back.
Today I let time swallow me.



California



Iowa

Zoe

THE UNDENIABLE BRITANY BAY

There once was a girl who was seven years old.
A girl who would watch, until the wind would hold.
She would grab her mace, follow men home.
And take the hair from their comb.

Her name was Britany Bay,
And she'd often lead men astray.
With her bewitching good looks.
Oh why, oh why, was Britany Bay such a crook?

The word on the street,
Was that Britany Bay would eat,
The men who did her wrong,
Until their bodies were all gone.

Some say, Britany Bay, would take men home,
Let them sip on a drink, until their mouth's foam.
Painted the bodies, in nothing but teal,
Sat back, relaxed, and enjoyed her meal.

The question still is asked to this day,
Why, oh why, did poor Britany Bay,
Act this way?

Some say her father, did what no father should do,
Something a little girl should never have to go through.
Some say the first love of her life,
Threw her away, and ran back to his wife.

Today, Britany Bay found a man,
But alas, this man was not a fan.
He took his drink, splashed in Britany's face,
And killed her with her own mace.

That's the tale, of Britany Bay,
Who would lead men astray,
And feast on them in the night,
In the woods, under the full moon light.

But tonight, on the third of June,
Under the Waxing Gibbous Moon,
A man took her life, by the name of Gage Gold,
And in his arms, laid a dead Britany Bay, cold.



DR. ALISA WEINSTEIN received a BFA in Drama and MA in Educational Theatre from New York University, and a PhD in Anthropology from Syracuse University; she also studied at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, and conducted dissertation research on a Fulbright-Nehru scholarship. Among her other writing, she authored scripts for India's Sesame Street, *Galli Galli Sim Sim*, and is currently at work on an ethnography on tailors working in Jaipur, India. A co-founder of Home Ec. Workshop in Iowa City, she often teaches knitting and sewing to crafters of all ages.

**YOUTH PROGRAMS
COORDINATOR**

CAITLIN PLATHE received her BA in English and Creative Writing from the University of Iowa. An alumna of IWP's Between the Lines program, she has held several assistantship positions at IWP. She is also the author of *I Am No Plath*, a volume of poems.



PROGRAM ASSISTANT



JOSÉ OLIVAREZ José is the son of Mexican immigrants. His debut book, *Citizen Illegal*, was a finalist for the PEN/Jean Stein Award and a winner of the 2018 *Chicago Review of Books* Poetry Prize. It was named a top book of 2018 by *The Adroit Journal*, *NPR*, and the New York Public Library. Along with Felicia Chavez and Willie Perdomo, he co-edited the anthology, *The BreakBeat Poets Vol. 4: LatiNEXT*. He is the co-host of the podcast, *The Poetry Gods*. In 2018, he was awarded the first annual Author and Artist in Justice Award from the Phillips Brooks House Association and named a Debut Poet of 2018 by Poets & Writers. In 2019, he was awarded a Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation. His work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Paris Review*, and elsewhere. .

FACULTY

POUPEH MISSAGHI has a PhD in English and Literary Arts from the University of Denver; an MA in Creative Writing from Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD; and an MA in Translation Studies and a BA in Translation Practice from Azad University, Tehran. Her novel *trans(re)lating house one* was published by Coffee House Press in 2020, and her translation of Iranian author Nasim Marashi's award-winning novel *I'll Be Strong for You* came out with Astra Publishing House in 2021. For the past five years, she has been teaching at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn; City University of New York; and Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland. She is joining University of Denver as an assistant professor in literary arts and studies in the fall of 2022.



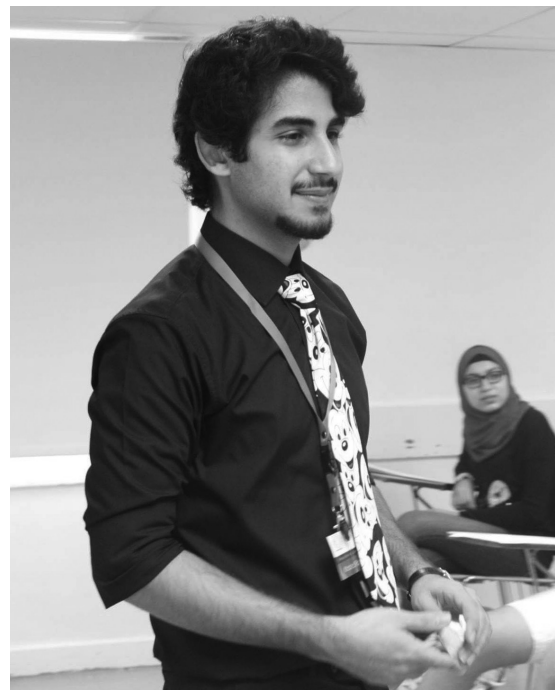
FACULTY



HURMAT KAZMI hurmat is a writer from Karachi, Pakistan. Their work has been published in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *American Short Fiction*, and *McSweeney's*, among other publications. A graduate of the Iowa Writers' workshop, they are currently the Provost Visiting Writer in Fiction at the University of Iowa.

INSTRUCTOR

KHALED RAJEH is a writer, translator, and language teacher from Lebanon. He is completing an MFA in Literary Translation at the University of Iowa.



INSTRUCTOR



ALEA ADIGWEME is an anti-disciplinary Igbo-Vincentian-U.S.-ian cultural worker who utilizes the mediums of creative writing, book arts, performance, community engagement, installation, video, and other visual media. She is based in Tovaangar, the metropolitan area commonly known as Los Angeles, where she just graduated from UCLA with an MFA in Interdisciplinary Studio Art. She also earned an MFA in Nonfiction Writing, an MA in Media Studies, and a graduate certificate in Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies from the University of Iowa.

INSTRUCTOR

MELODY MOEZZI is an Iranian-American Muslim author, attorney, activist, and visiting associate professor of creative writing at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. She is the author of *War on Error: Real Stories of American Muslims*, *Haldol and Hyacinths: A Bipolar Life*, and most recently, *The Rumi Prescription: How an Ancient Mystic Poet Changed My Modern Manic Life*, which earned her a 2021 Wilbur Award. Moezzi's writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *NBC News*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *Al Arabiya*, *The South China Morning Post*, *Hürriyet*, *The Straits Times*, *Parabola*, and many other outlets. She's also a United Nations Global Expert and an Opinion Leader for the British Council's Our Shared Future initiative. You can follow her on Twitter at @MelodyMoezzi and on Instagram at @Melody.Moezzi.



INSTRUCTOR



YUSUF SIDDIQUEE (he/him) is a musician, co-founder of MIPSTERZ, and a leader in arts and cultural organizing. He has worked for artist hubs such as the Silent Barn, Brooklyn Academy of Music, ArteEast, and StoryCorps. His original music has been featured in films for MTV, CAAMFest, and Tribeca Film Festival. Yusuf believes in the power of building lasting community legacies through arts and culture and the necessity of sustainable resources to accomplish it.

INSTRUCTOR

GYASI HALL is a Writer of Stuff™ from Columbus, Ohio. Their essay “Alas, Poor Fhoul” was the runner up for *the Black Warrior Review* 2020 Nonfiction Contest, and their debut poetry chapbook, *Flight of the Mothman: An Autobiography*, was published by The Operating System in spring 2019. They recently graduated from the University of Iowa with an MFA in Creative Nonfiction, and they are the lead nonfiction editor for The BreakBread Literacy Project. They currently reside in Iowa City where they’re working on what they hope will be their first book, an essay collection about Black people and comic books.



INSTRUCTOR & STAFF



SHIMUL CHOWDHURY Shimul (she/they) is a multimedia artist/maker, Art Director at MIPSTERZ, and a professor of Digital Media and Creative Technology at Florida SouthWestern State College. Shimul is most interested in using traditional craft practices as both archival tools and as modes of resistance for marginalized communities.

INSTRUCTOR

JAHNAVI PANDYA is a Ph.D. student in Counseling Psychology at the University of Iowa. She received her MA in Counseling Psychology from SNDT University, Mumbai. She has been a national award-winning archer, singer, YouTuber, & social worker. She has been honored with the Karmaveer Puraskar by the International Confederation of NGOs in partnership with the United Nations; the 'Nari Ratna' award; and the 'Student of the Year' award from St. Xavier's College Mumbai. She has been a practicum doctoral trainee at the University Counseling Centre at the University of Iowa. Her counseling experience in India includes working with a diverse population, including Mumbai Police, students, juvenile delinquents, and people with mental health disorders, suicidal tendencies, terminal illnesses, and trauma. Her passion for social work has helped her collect over 6 lakh rupees through social media for orphanages and old age homes. She has reached 50,000 students through her seminars and over 2 million views on YouTube.



STAFF



SEAN ZHURAW Sean's writing has appeared in *Boston Review*, *Handsome*, *New Session*, *Tin House*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Defunct*, and elsewhere. He has earned degrees from Columbia and the Iowa Writers' Workshop where he won the John Logan poetry prize. His translation of Theodor Däubler's *The Starchild* was a finalist for Ugly Duckling Presse's 2021 open reading period. He teaches at the Community College of Philadelphia and Widener University and lives in West Philly with his husband and two cats.

STAFF

MASON HAMBERLIN is a queer writer, designer, bookseller, and educator from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, located on unceded Occaneechi territory. An MFA candidate at the University of Iowa's Nonfiction Writing Program, they're the winner of the 2022 Roxanne Mueller Essay Prize, as well as a recipient of a Marcus Bach fellowship. You can find their writing at *Ninth Letter*, *The Adroit Journal*, *Entropy*, *Shenandoah*, and more. There, or along the shelves of Chapel Hill's Epilogue Books, where they wrote maybe one-too-many of those recommendation cards.



BTL SUMMER

MEDIA ASSISTANT



GEORGIE FEHRINGER is an Iowa Arts Fellow and MFA Candidate at the University of Iowa's Nonfiction Writing Program. Originally from Seattle, WA, their work has appeared in *The Black Warrior Review*, *The Chicago Review*, *TIMBER*, and *Brink* among other places.

**INSTRUCTOR &
ANTHOLOGY DESIGNER**

Between the Lines: Identity and Belonging

An anthology of poetry, prose, and images created by the International Writing Program's Between the Lines participants at the University of Iowa; edited and designed by Georgie Fehringer.

Summer youth programming has been an integral part of the International Writing Program (IWP) since 2008. With the support of the Building Bridges Program at the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art (DDFIA), IWP's summer program BTL: Identity and Belonging has since 2018 been building on IWP's core mission of global cultural outreach--but expanding it beyond geopolitics into the diverse cultural realms within the United States itself. BTL's creative writing programming for young people from a variety of cultural backgrounds joins the Building Bridges program in their mission "to support national efforts, working with U.S. Muslims, to increase mutual understanding and well-being among diverse populations for the benefit of building stronger, inclusive communities."

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International Writing Program
Between the Lines