

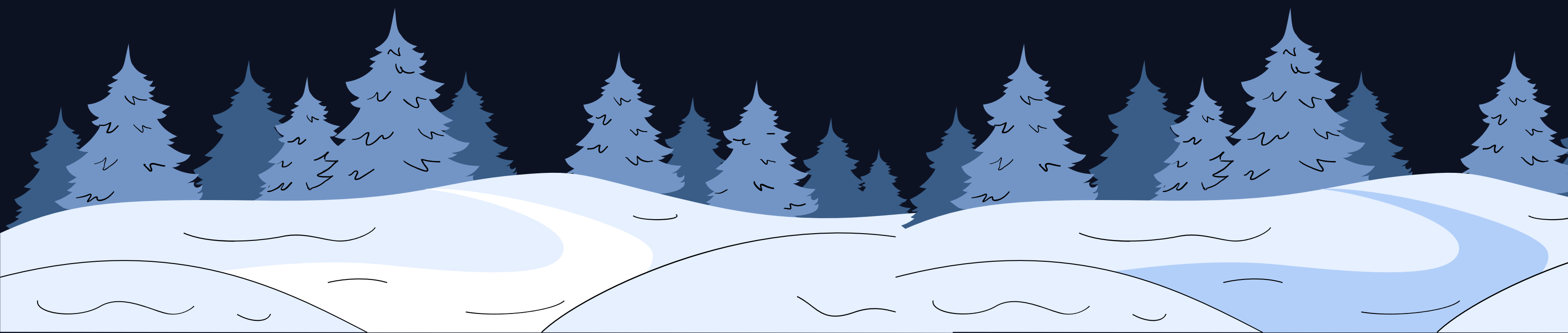


Love Letters

Teen Creative Magazine



Issue #10: Hygge





Editor's Note

i

Dear Readers,

For the past 8 months, I have been studying in Paris and traveling in my free time. During my winter travels in Switzerland and Denmark, I found the social environment to naturally cultivate feelings of contentment, nostalgia, and coziness through the little things: fleecy blankets in cafés, home-scented candles in hotel lobby's, fuzzy socks, and my personal favourite, Vin Chaud (hot, spiced wine!). Turns out, the Norwegians even have a word for this brilliant lifestyle! Yep, it's *Hygge*. Intrigued, I asked locals about what it meant to them. From my understanding, the harsh winter months in Northern Europe have fostered space for this aesthetic that holds unique meanings to each individual. I found myself embracing it completely as it is a concept that I have come to absolutely adore. I was quite literally sitting at a *brasserie* in Geneva in December with my mittens, Vin Chaud, and heating lamp, when I messaged the LoveLetters team saying *this is it!* This should be the next issue's theme because taking the time to get comfy, slow down, and create a warm environment for your body and mind is something we can all do more of for ourselves :)

The pieces in this issue highlight a dynamic range of nostalgic and home-y stories that have been a joy to read and relate to. So let's take a page out of the Nordic's book and grab yourself a delicious cup of tea (or Vin Chaud hehe) and get ready to read! Like we say in my family, "hurry up and relax!" ;)

Love,

Jaya Valji, co-founder & co-runner of Love Letters Magazine

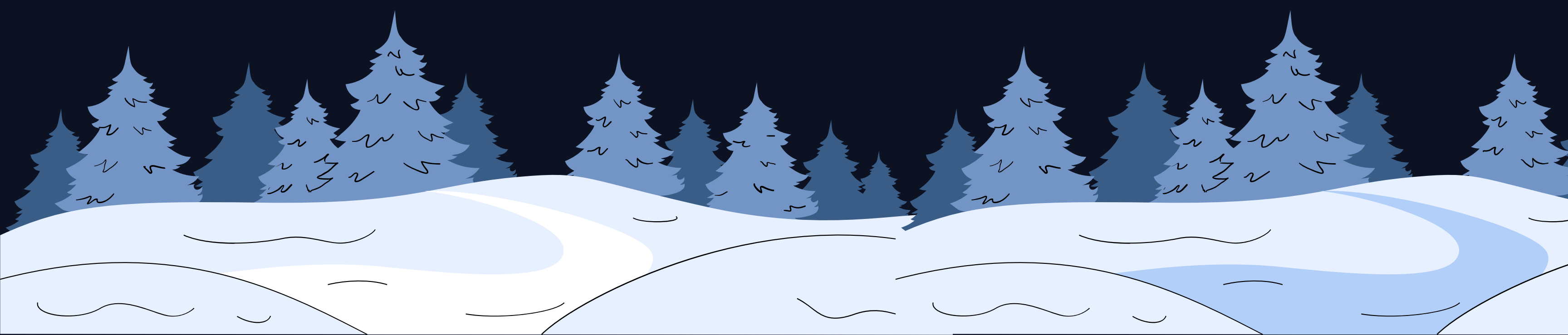
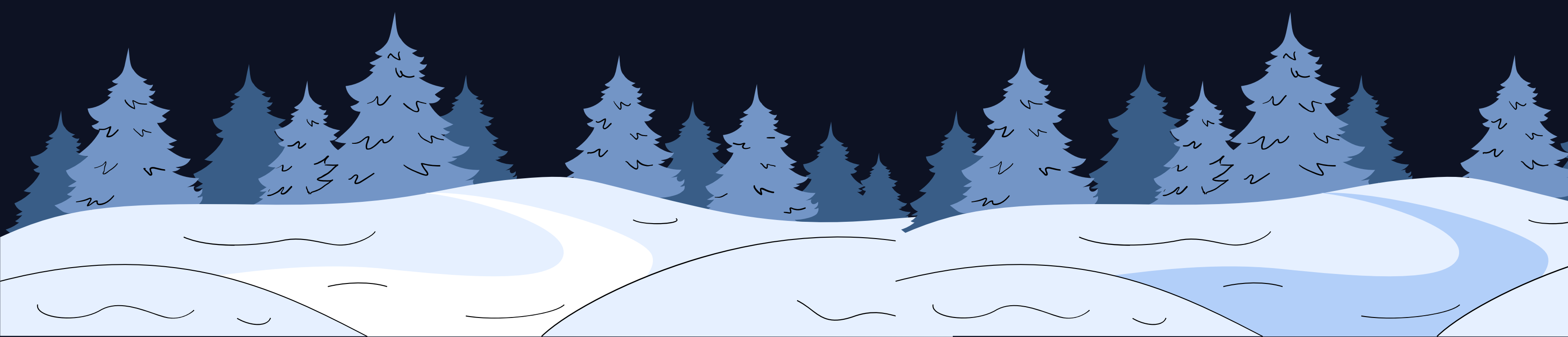




Table of Contents

ii

<i>Fluctuations</i> – Aaliyah Anderson.....	1
<i>An East Coast Love Affair, Summers by the Sea, Were We Ever As Young As We Were Then</i> – – Olivia Rose	2
<i>Nostalgic Obsessive</i> – Taliah Dumas Stephenson	6
Photography Submission – Cailey Tarriane.....	8
Ask The Editors – The Love Letters Team.....	10
<i>Books</i> – Erin Mullens.....	11
<i>Beautiful Boy</i> – E. Ö. Gálvez.....	14
<i>The Myth Of The Meatball</i> – Matilda Jenkins.....	16
<i>Valentine</i> – Cheryl Tan.....	18
<i>Castile</i> – Cheryl Tan.....	21
<i>How To Eat Rice Cakes</i> – Cheryl Tan.....	22
<i>The Chronic Nailbiters Safehouse</i> – Cheryl Tan.....	24
<i>Dear Delilah</i> – Cheryl Tan.....	25
Mini Contest Results.....	27





– *Fluctuations* –

1

Aaliyah Anderson

Without reason, you fissure me.

How basic will I be if I ask: how much more running will you do
just to eat? There must be a limit, a sour-ing that goes with a
wish for you to tell me,
in your clear-fog and wreck-syllables, your anecdotes for this.

Maybe it's in the way you pay me in compliments; letting me watch you write and revise, saying
what you want without thought.

Like how you whispered, "I got you," fast and breathless, although you didn't have to.

I will rupture (you know, hesitantly, like how we do), then be fine because
I'll decide none. No more.

About the Poet:

Aaliyah Anderson
(she/her) is a junior
studying literary arts
at her high school in
Petersburg, VA. She's
obsessed with
storytelling.

"This poem is about unrequited love and the shyness of a crush. There are direct references to ice that I used in a way to contrast the warmth in love. Even though I find all of these emotions confusing, I somehow find comfort in this person in the end and want them to feel the same back. Writing this poem made me feel a lot better about the situation and reminded me how poetry can be a gateway for emotions."

–Aaliyah Anderson

👉 – *An East Coast Love Affair* – 2

Olivia Rose

when i was twenty two i had no money, save a gift card to sears and \$1 from a lotto scratch off so i had no choice in the matter. i moved back in with my parents for summer.

back to the great state of maine.

have you ever been to maine?

nothing ever happens in maine.

“hey, watch it lady”—

at least until you lock eyes with a stranger in the middle of dairy queen and he could almost pass for a young brando. then maine’s outta sight and you’re buying lobster rolls by the dozen.

who guessed a banana split craving would be so consequential?



– *An East Coast Love Affair* – 3

Olivia Rose

i started seeing this guy. he was a fry cook at sal's, he'd flip potatoes for me, extra salty, and he'd sing along to the transistor radio with more gusto than springsteen himself. when he clocked out we loved each other with that kind of impulse you can get away with only when you're young.

let's not get it wrong, we weren't soulmates. eventually that fuming lust fizzled out faster than songs on the radio can fade to commercial, but for just a while i kissed a magician, witnessed a hypnotist show. this tall and deep voiced mainer made all its lakes look technicolor blue, and that summer all the tap water tasted like slushees.





– *summers by the sea* –

4

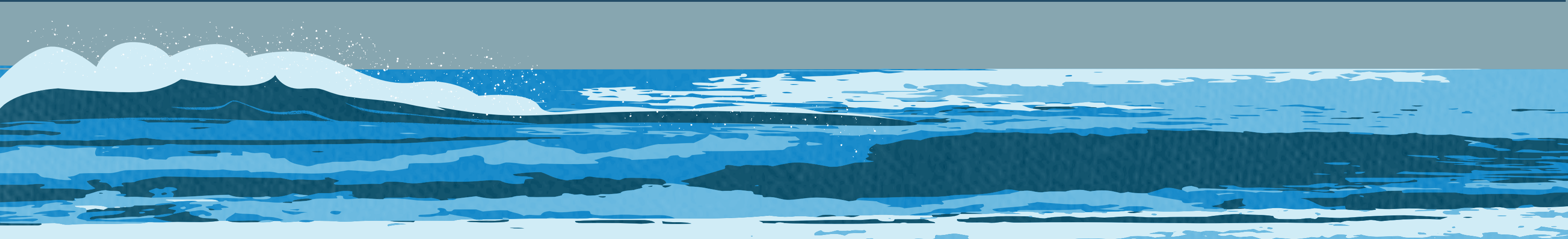
Olivia Rose

I want to be in the water again,
slinking sweatstained shoulders
through seas of cerulean,
cursing up a storm of sailor swears.

Afternoons passed by slow like molasses.
I can hardly even distinguish them by now.
They stuck together like a child's fingers
sliding down a jam jar
hot, like heavy June swampheat.
The water was our only relief.

Sister and I crawling like worn out fireflies,
inching closer for a spray of lagoon salt.
Backsides flipped, we submerged
our prayers in the sun,
as it glistened onto crackles of waves
we baptized our bodies in.

We, fresh flowerbombs, possessed the lake.
No queens like us existed before.
Nor could we ever be dethroned.





- were we ever as young as we were then- - 5

Olivia Rose

starry eyed, cherry tongued kids
whispering goodnight to the stars
nights like those make you realize why
the sky sleeps through the day.

the maples disappeared into the sky
when it grew dark but their sap was
still sweet and sticky enough
to glue your fingers to mine.

and every street we walked down,
each house and each drive way and
each howl from the family dog,
was a part of us, the way things

when you are younger become part of you,
like bedtime stories from a book with a cracked
cover and the taste of raspberries picked off the vine.
and how the sun on your shoulders calms the wilderness.



About the Poet:

Olivia Rose (she/her) is the 2020 recipient of the Academy of American Poets Jean Burden Poetry Prize. Her publication history includes Querencia Press, Drunk Monkeys, Prometheus Dreaming, Beyond Words Literary Magazine, Tofu Ink Arts Press, Perfumed Pages, Gypsophila, and Bloom Magazine. Her writing has also been lauded by the San Mateo County Poet Laureate, the California Writers' Club, the Half Moon Bay Speaker's Stage, and the San Mateo County Literary Arts Stage. More of her work can be read on her Instagram, @oliviarosethewriter.



- *nostalgic obsessive* -

6

Taliah Dumas Stephenson



Nostalgic Obsessive

Taliah Dumas Stephenson



0:13

1:00



Check it out here: tinyurl.com/nostalgicobsessive



- *nostalgic obsessive* -

7

Taliah Dumas Stephenson

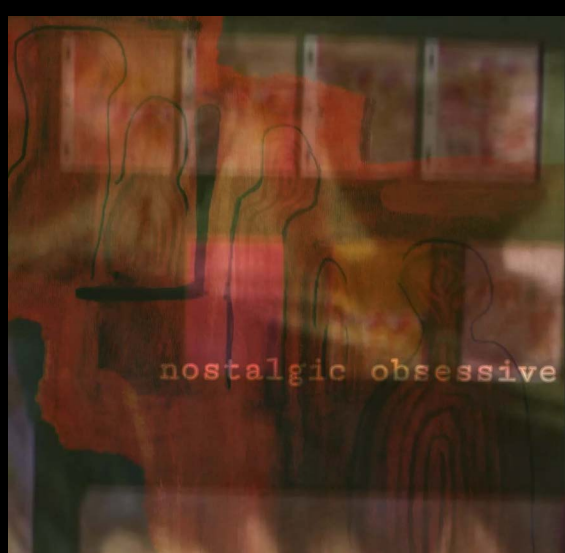
About the Creator:

Taliah is an artist and musician who makes multi media art with abstract portraits, creatures or concepts. In her art, she doesn't focus on realism or it's perfectionism because her art comes from my subconscious, it's one of the only interests she developed not as a coping mechanism. So her art is relaxing and a constant but she still challenges herself with new art techniques as a emerging artist.

Artist's Statement:

"I create my music for comfort. I started writing music with lyrics but I connected it to try to express my feelings in the most beautiful way possible or not at all and I connect my process to a past relationship. With instrumental music I'm using it to heal my connection to my music at my own past. I use my voice without perfectionism, i dreamed of the day I would be comfortable with releasing my music and when it came I still hate what I write but I'm still releasing. Hygge connects to the organic sounds of the song and it's process "

-Taliah Dumas Stephenson



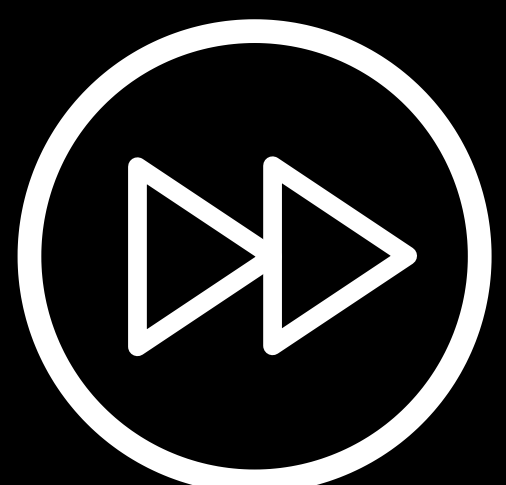
Nostalgic Obsessive

Taliah Dumas Stephenson



0:13

1:00





- Photography Submission -

8

Cailey Tarriane





- Photography Submission -

9

Cailey Tarriane

About the Creator:

Cailey Tarriane (she/her) is an avid reader, poet, and writer of everything that stills the shaking of her miserable heart.

She has poetry and photography published in Your Fire Magazine, Gypsophila zine, and Fairfield Scribes, among others. She has written over four novels to share with the world once they've reached peak misery.

Artist's Statement:

"These photos were taken in one's home to add more of a personal touch to them... The subject of these photos were focused on the quieter details and pleasures of life, such as a crystal between two worlds."

-Cailey Tarriane



- Ask The Editors -

The Love Letters Team

10

What are your comfort shows/movies?



Pride & Prejudice
(2005)



Twilight
(2008)



Little Women
(2019)



Gilmore Girls
(2000-2007)



Atypical
(2017-2021)



It's A Wonderful Life
(1946)



– *Books* –

Erin Mullens

11

The armchair sinks like the Titanic
My body a heavy weight of imagination
I am falling down the rabbit hole
And the grandfather clock calls,
Tries to pull me back to reality
Go to bed, go to sleep, get down
From that world of words and delusions
Never. Never. I enjoy being eaten alive
By the cracked spine of a haunted book.

Morning comes like a flood
As my neck muscles snap like a whip
My legs stutter like a drunken man
I am not used to inhabiting this body
Made of atoms and molecules and energy
I prefer the world of adjectives and infinitives.
I await the moment the grandfather clock calls
For the darkness to shepherd me into
The book lover's world of brilliant colors.





- *Books* -

Erin Mullens

12

In this space, I exist on a continuum
A million moments layering on top of each other:
Hiding in the bathroom from my family
Reading Edith Hamilton's Greek Mythology-
Sitting on the steps of my elementary school
Reading the latest Percy Jackson book-
Curled up in a comforter on a snow day

Whiling away the time with some poetry.
Whenever I open a book and lose myself
In the world the author has created
I hold the hands of all the girls that I was
In the years that have long since been buried
All of them loved books the way I do.
Though a face be unfamiliar, in a book
It will always be a friend. It will always be
Like coming home after roaming far away.
Every tree out there is shedding their leaves
Every flower is starting to bloom precariously
Every cloud is raining down snow.
I don't know. I don't care. I dance and spin
In the same cycle I've always been caught in
Moving in and out of books.





About the Poet:

Erin Mullens is an American writer who currently lives in Seoul, South Korea. Her hobbies include reading, going to art museums, and hiking in the woods. She has previously been published in Cathartic Youth Literary magazine. You can follow her on Instagram at @moonchildisuhgood.



Artist's Statement:

"Books are... something that give me an enormous amount of comfort, because of how much I love them, and because of how constant they are in my life. As I have grown up, I have experienced so many changes, and my personality has changed a considerable amount from the little girl I used to be. But I still love books, and I still feel incredibly attached to the characters in books. Whenever I read a good book, I always feel a little more like myself."

–Erin Mullens

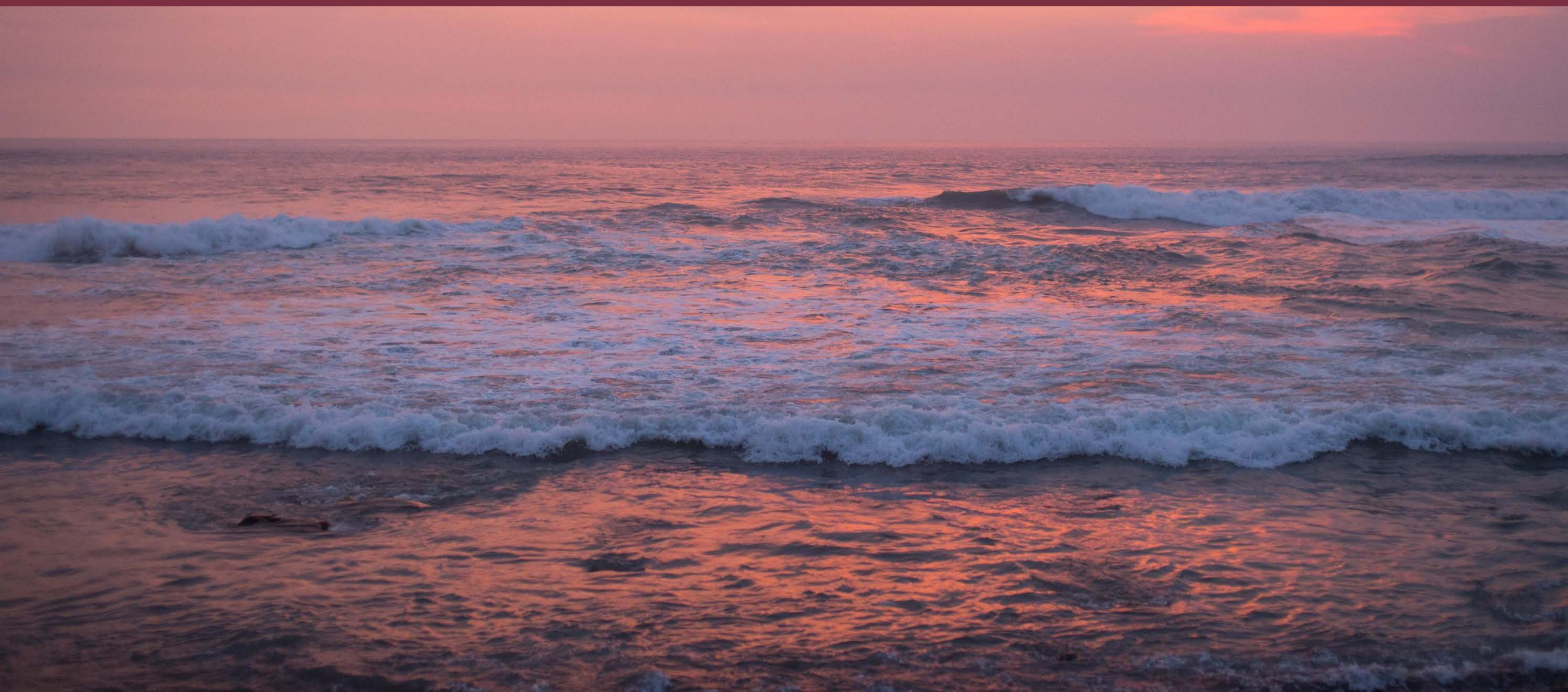


- *My Beautiful Boy* -

E. Ö. Gálvez

14

I believe I love the beautiful boy with soft, youthful features and golden curly locks. slumping into my lap, he looked so peaceful when he slept. I swiped away a lost curl, and cupped my hand over his right cheek—calm, blank, the ever-thinking brain finally at rest. When we kissed days before out in the reed fields, I remember his lips were cold. I pressed his body close to mine and pulled us closer to the reeds—no one from our hallway homes could see us there. I will never remember my beautiful boy's name, but there is probably no name fitting enough for his beauty.





- *My Beautiful Boy* -

E. Ö. Gálvez

15

Artist's Statement:

"This flash-fiction piece was originally a dream I had the night of December 8th, 2022, one that kept me repeating the story to everyone I saw the next day. It was the most memorable, comforting dream and I woke up sighing in happiness. This season, My Beautiful Boy is my hygge. This small paragraph of writing is by far the most vivid few words I have ever written, and I continue to feel the hygge when I remember the dream I had that one glorious night. "

-E. Ö. Gálvez

About the Author:

E. Ö. Gálvez (she/her) is a teen writer. Her greatest passion is writing, but she also indulges in observing people and their emotions. Gálvez's first novel is soon to be printed (not for sale, though), and her favorite genres to read are fantasy and romance This is her second online publication!



- *The Myth of the Meatballs* - 16

Matilda Jenkins

His love for Scandi noir was well documented...

(years spent hemmed in by forbidding stone walls tended to have that effect, forging a sordid love affair with all things dark and grimy) but he had not presumed that love extended to the world of Nordic interior design.

Now, though, the minotaur had to concede an affection for the smooth, clean lines of this place, its warm minimalist charm, its soothing earthy tones. He wandered past an intricately constructed showroom, wherein sat a bed, a desk, a throw rug placed so as to precisely simulate randomness, a perfect asymmetry. He stepped inside to adjust a picture on the wall which was slightly askew. There, he thought. Perfect.

A young family walked through the door of the showroom. The mother nodded politely at him. The minotaur smiled and waved at the baby, who gurgled.

They were not afraid of him. They were not afraid of his ten-foot frame, of his large herbivore's teeth in his heavyset jaw. Today, in his custom-tailored linen blazer, his stylish suede loafers, and this flattering bright light, the minotaur's figure was striking rather than terrible.

These were his people. Ordinary people, similarly charmed by these airy, meticulously curated spaces. People who understood the unique beauty of the SOLKLINT pendant lamp and acacia NACKANÄS table. Flexitarians, who made the occasional exception for a plate of outstanding Swedish meatballs. Children who slept through the night in their pale wooden cots, dreaming of the nextday's playtime with their pale wooden toys.





- *The Myth of the Meatballs* - 17

Matilda Jenkins

He had always felt large and ugly, a disaster on legs. But here, he could blend into the room's rounded edges, find the calm in the calamity. It was no wonder people could lose themselves in here.

He thought he just might.

About the Author:

Matilda (she/her) is currently in her last year of high school in Australia. She has enjoyed writing from a young age, and particularly enjoys writing stylised short fiction. She publishes her writing on a personal blog, matildalilywrites.wordpress.com, and has also written for The Vast Sky.



Artist's Statement:

This story juxtaposes a monstrous mythical figure with the clean simplicity of Scandinavian interior design. It's a meditation on the value of simplicity and the importance of small comforts.



- Valentine -

18

Cheryl Tan

On Valentine's Day I take my younger brother Rabbit out to tea...

It is a small ceremony, nothing too special, just earl grey with a slice of cheesecake exactly the way he likes it. We sit at the furthestmost corner of the room but even then a thin strand of light colours the slow patch of dust on the table. As usual I am the first to break the ice.

"Did you sleep well yesterday?"

He blinks at me before penning words on paper with a glitter gel pen. Yeah, he writes in looping cursive. I dreamt that we went grocery shopping. We bought emmental cheese and met my primary school Chinese teacher. She told me she was proud of me. The mundanity of it is touching.

"I couldn't sleep last night so I watched the sun come up from the balcony." I admit. "I dreamt of Jun again. It wasn't great."

Did you think of my infinite hugs? I think back to the day before O-Levels started last November, the sticker he sent over whatsapp of two frogs hugging. One bright yellow and the other happy green. If the sticker could ward off my fear of exams it could probably ward off my ex-boyfriend too.

"Sure I did." I lean back, thinking of a time when Rabbit could actually hug someone without flinching. The memory is fleetingly warm. "I'll go to sleep tomorrow thinking of them too."

While the rain pours outside I push my stirrer down my cup so the teabag sinks to the bottom. The Northeast monsoon is coming. Between the slight tints of grey and the 22°C weather he seems to be getting better. He is using his notebook less often now. When he speaks the stutter is still there but time has been kind to him, it truly has, perhaps even more so than for me.

I've been doing some thinking. As the words come out he pauses, stiffening. I've been writing a novel on the days I can't come out. My crush is in it. What's the difference between a person and a muse?



– Valentine –

19

Cheryl Tan

Woah. Wow. That's great. The first thing that comes to me is surprise, followed by amused indignation. He has a sister who's been published for ages and he never considered asking her for advice? "Woah. That's great." I parrot, dumbfounded. "Didn't know you liked writing too."

It's something I took up at the therapist. He fiddles with the hem of his shirt. I know it's not as good as yours but I'm trying to improve. Would my crush think I'm weird for writing her in?

Looking at his notebook I realise I'd forgotten to reply to his first question. Giving it some thought I use the best possible analogy to explain the concept of muses in literature. The answer he wants is painful, but an honest one.

"You know Jun, right? You've hung out with him before. Tell me what he's like."

The cheesecake goes ignored as he struggles to remember. *Um, blue shirt? Likes beatbox and tenpin bowling? He taught me calculus when he last visited. I remember his kindness. His expression softens when he sees my face. Uhhh I don't have to go on if you don't want to hear it. It's okay.*

"No, no, I'm good," closing my eyes I take in a breath. "Now tell me what he's like when you read my poetry."

He's... different. It's less about what he's like and more of what you want him to be like. He picks up his fork and starts nibbling at the tines. Realisation dawns upon him. I see. In that case I don't know if I like my crush at all. She's nice, has a cute laugh and everything, but I'm not sure what else there is to it. Am I overthinking here?

Gently I reach over and pull the fork out of his mouth, set it down onto his plate. From the crockpot of my mind I find a memory. I am sixteen and he is fifteen, and he stands behind my back while I write an essay. When I turn around I am caught by surprise so I swear out loud and smack him, to which he holds his head in his hands and begins to cry. *I'm sorry. Don't hurt me. Please don't hurt me.* It is the most terrifying thing I've ever seen.

"Nah, you aren't. Believe me, I will know."

A smile washes over his face. *Thanks.*



- Valentine -

20

Cheryl Tan

We sit in silence. It is Valentine's Day, but what fewer people know is that it's also my birthday so I get presents anyway. Dad sends me roses in jest. I give them out to friends. Rabbit finishes his cup of tea, rummages in his bag and takes out a rose he stole from my bouquet. I stare at him incredulously. *Sorry*, he shrugs. *I wanted to make you feel better but I didn't know how. Do you still wish you had kissed him?*

I snort out a laugh. "Obviously." *For some reason the idea of being in love seems so dreamy and alluring now.* The rain grows heavier, spurting in sheets like translucent wasps. A paroxysm of flooding. *It seems really nice to be so devoted to someone. Do you think I'll experience it someday?*

"Again, obviously." When he freezes I know he thinks I'm lying, so I change the subject. "So when are you going to show me your book? I want to find it in the store."

HAHAHA it's not done yet. He flushes. Again with the glitter gel. As he flips through the pages I see segments of fragmented scrawl, breadcrumbs of work in progress. *I'll show it to you once I'm finished. Right now my first draft is super bad.*

"I'm not arguing with that," I reply. "No one can escape lousy first-draft syndrome." Another memory. Jun and I are on the bus going home. His right hand is holding his phone where he is scrolling through my love letters with his thumb, his left hand holding mine. I look back at Rabbit, at his slightly shaking hands, and my eyes begin to prickle.

You're unhappy again. I don't like that. He frowns. He gets out of his seat and sits next to me, but keeps a far enough distance so he isn't touching me. I let him do it. Wanna play the glad game?

"Who are you, Pollyanna?"

If it works, it works. The rain outside has stopped. Unaware the other guests get up and leave, bequeathing the waiters their half-eaten cake. A white rabbit's heart beats at 150 beats per minute. At worst it would probably die. "Fine. What are you grateful for today?"

Waking up early. He writes. You, of course. Maybe the sun coming up, if you can count the sun as something to be grateful for. I'm glad to go to school again. He is smiling. He is wearing his National Cadet Corps uniform, pinned on his badges and everything. I'm really glad to go to school again.



- *Castile* -

21

Cheryl Tan

On Sundays I watch mama
make soap in a plastic tin. She tilts the
oil into the lye and the layers
become one, gelling like custard on a
knife, a smooth olive cream. Tallow in
my mouth plain as downstairs bread,
raw as
boiled fusilli. I imagine it to be sweet.
Mama has goggles on. They're the
science lab kind, the kind to let all the
light in the world through, clear as her
complexion. With a quick pulse of the
blender it turns to medium trace,
leaving strands of beige ribbon in its
wake. The slow coagulation. As she
slams the tin down to remove the
bubbles all the hairs on my head stand
up to greet her, awkward in their
adolescence. When she opens her
mouth I know it's a metaphor for
family. I am still learning what is good
on my skin.





- *How To Eat Rice Cakes* - 22

Cheryl Tan

Disclaimer: this guide doesn't teach you how to eat other types of ____¹.

Take rice cake out of steamer and transfer to ____². Heap a generous amount of _____³ on it, just enough to cover in gooey goodness. Don't be afraid to add ____⁴. Consider the ____⁵ from which the rice cake was made. Consider the body from which ____⁶ were made. Cut the rice cake with your fork. Dissect it into eight ____⁷ pieces. Make sure not to drop the filling. Spear one and ____⁸.

1 No, not Korean street food – breakfast. By rice cake we mean chee cheong fun, which comes from the humble province of Guangdong. This is an identity that wraps itself around you like a lover, blankets you in robes of starch. Everyone should try it out someday.

2 Take care that the rice cake does not flop out of your fork like a noodle. This is Singapore, not the Summer Olympics. Otherwise your partner will pull a face at you and you will laugh and then kiss them, which will prevent you from proceeding beyond step one.

3 When you do finally spill the sweet sauce be sure to lick it off with your fingers. This is the custom. Mama thinks it's disgusting but you love it so much you smear some on her hand, making her jump. Glorious giggling, greasy glee. The best love children have to offer.



- *How To Eat Rice Cakes* - 23

Cheryl Tan

4 There is never too much sweet sauce. That is the gospel truth. You have seen da ge eat his face full of it, the excess dripping down his chin in an oily beard. You are waiting for him to return from National Service. When he comes back the house will feel right again.

5 One of your school mottos is 饮水思源, which literally means to ponder the source of the water you drink. Pond-er, get it? Haha. Eating your rice cake you are glad for the farmers in the fields, the imagined chewy softness of your meal. You won't forget to live anymore.

6 The first food of most Chinese households is congee. Rice in a steamed and pureed form. When your baby sister first learns to hold a spoon you buy a small plastic one with Minnie Mouse on it to celebrate. You are as ancient as your mother herself.

7 When you think of equalness you consider bringing up politics at the table. There are some things you know you are never going to agree on. You have since made peace with that. Leaning back you watch the television and it has Channel 8 on. The drama plays contentedly.

8 It's been two years since you last dieted. The weight looks good under your skin. Sunlight streams in from the curtains and you find that it is filling. The mornings are less frigid now, the small things more tolerable. Living is more enjoyable with you around.



- *The Chronic Nailbiters Safehouse* - 24

Cheryl Tan

to be read from top to bottom & around

(amigurumi stack by stack) (kawaii kei dolls)

(hair layered in pastels) (a mild case of thumb sucking)

(crocheted lilies in a vase) (discs of candy in a dish) (werther's originals) (stella jang soundtrack) (nostalgia & chalkboards) (a gently tinkling bell)

(piano playing wedding march) (favourite piyo piyo cushion)

(kuromi keychain) (plump balls of yarn) (hand-dyed) (the crook of her neck) (eyes like 8B pencils) (slightly sweaty bolsters) (closed arm hugs)

(sometimes comfort is a person) (light pink diary) (plushie) (a flush of warm hair) (fluffy hair clips) (rose hand cream) (lava lamps with curtains closed) (mama's arm blubber) (pin felted toys) (yuika's love songs) (her pooh bear sweater) (tactile on the tongue) (security closet) (small mercies) (seal caught from the claw machine) (made in china) (sticky 2 hour nap) (still warm toffee)

(her gingerbread house) (christmas in her home) (key lime cheesecake) (shared strawberry chapstick) (cap unscrewed) (cotton tenderness)

(melted summer mornings) (precious marshmallow skin)

(every spoon a lover) (waiting to be filled)

(the table always made the right way) (elderberry fizzy) (my best concert dress) (blessed acoustic freedom)

(her hand on my heart) (tilting up my chin)

(a million flying birds
breaking the sky)



- *Dear Delilah* -

25

Cheryl Tan

Shanghai 1930

Still got the talisman you gave me last year, the red cloth one with elaborate knots. Shuangxi⁹. Double happiness. What's it like in America, love? I bet you're being all fancy with the ladies and dashing gentlemen in their long dark trousers. I bet you fit right in with them. The thought of that makes me smile. The face powder you gave me has served me very well. You'll be surprised when you come back. I am now ten times prettier thanks to you.

A-Niang¹⁰ let me bob my hair today - I'm a real modern woman now. It'll be funny to imagine it on your end, right? Delilah? Delilah with a D and an E and an AH. I am in love with all the letters of your name. They won't let me learn English but I'm secretly learning it from the ambassador next door, the one you said was too bookish for anything outside school. He looks slightly better now that he's married. His wife is a real piece of work but she makes the best fried lotus root in the country. I wish you were here to share it with me.

The pork rib soup business is doing well; A-Die¹¹ thinks we should expand into Europe. I support him in whatever he does. He says I am to be wed soon, for it was written in the stars. I refuse to believe anything can be written in the stars unless it is between you and me. That night when you kissed me behind the shophouse and there was dust everywhere, scattered like pieces of the moon. Your blond hair in my eyes and my neck. Our hearts breathing as one. You told me you wanted to show me the world. I believe you.

America, mei guo¹², the most beautiful country. A-Niang says I'll have to forget about you but I'm not doing it ever ever ever, not even when they break my toes so I'll never dance again. Shuangxi. Double happiness. Lilah, are you sure you still want to marry me? Are you going to come back from New York City and whisk me away with your fashionable heels and tassels? Either way I'm going to find a way to reach you. Do you hear me, Delilah Jane Pinkerton? I'm finding a way to reach you! No idea when I'll be there, but I will.

Love you always,
Jiang Mengying
(江梦莹)



- *Dear Delilah* -

26

Cheryl Tan

9 *Shuangxi* (双喜): Literally “double happiness”, it is used as a decorative symbol of marriage. 10 *A-Niang* (阿娘): The traditional address for “Mother” in Mandarin.

11 *A-Die* (阿爹): The traditional address for “Father” in Mandarin.

12 *mei guo* (美国): Literally “beautiful country”, it means “America” in Mandarin.

About the Poet:

Cheryl Tan (she/her) is a 17-year-old Singaporean of Chinese and Indian descent. She has been published in *Amber: The Teenage Chapbook*, *sourcherrymag* and *Eye on the World*, an anthology by the Creative Arts Programme, Singapore, and has works forthcoming in *Ice Lolly Review*, *antinarrative zine* and *Cathartic Youth Literary Magazine*. In her free time she writes poems and social commentaries by the sea, and hopes to write a book someday.

Artist's Statement:

"For “Castile”, I realised hygge can show up in the small things your family does together with you. My most comforting memory is that of my mother making soap with me as a child, so I decided to write about that. For “how to eat rice cakes”, the idea of hygge came to me as I was eating breakfast and I thought - hey, I feel pretty cosy right now. For “the chronic nail biter’s safehouse”, I thought of my ex-girlfriend and the various things she did while I was anxious that made me feel cared for and safe. She was a big inspiration. For “Dear Delilah”, I imagine that hygge can also show up even when one is alone in the form of hope, when you are comforted knowing that someday you will be with the people you care about."

-Cheryl Tan



– Mini–Contest 2 Results! –

27

The Love Letters Team

Prompt:

Write a haiku (5–7–5 syllable poem)
relating to theme: "X"

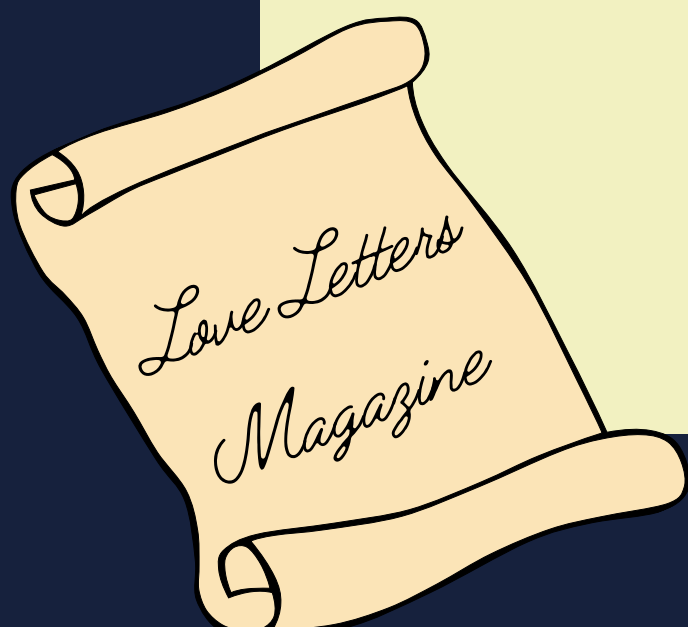
Congratulations to our Winner!

Tyrone Young



...And Our Runner-Up:

Thivya Seelan





Star-Crossed Lovers

**Instant's so treasured
What a luckless destiny
We just couldn't be**





Thivya Seelan

e(x).

**X does mark the spot,
the damn spot that you once took,
now the X marks you**



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Love Letters Chronology

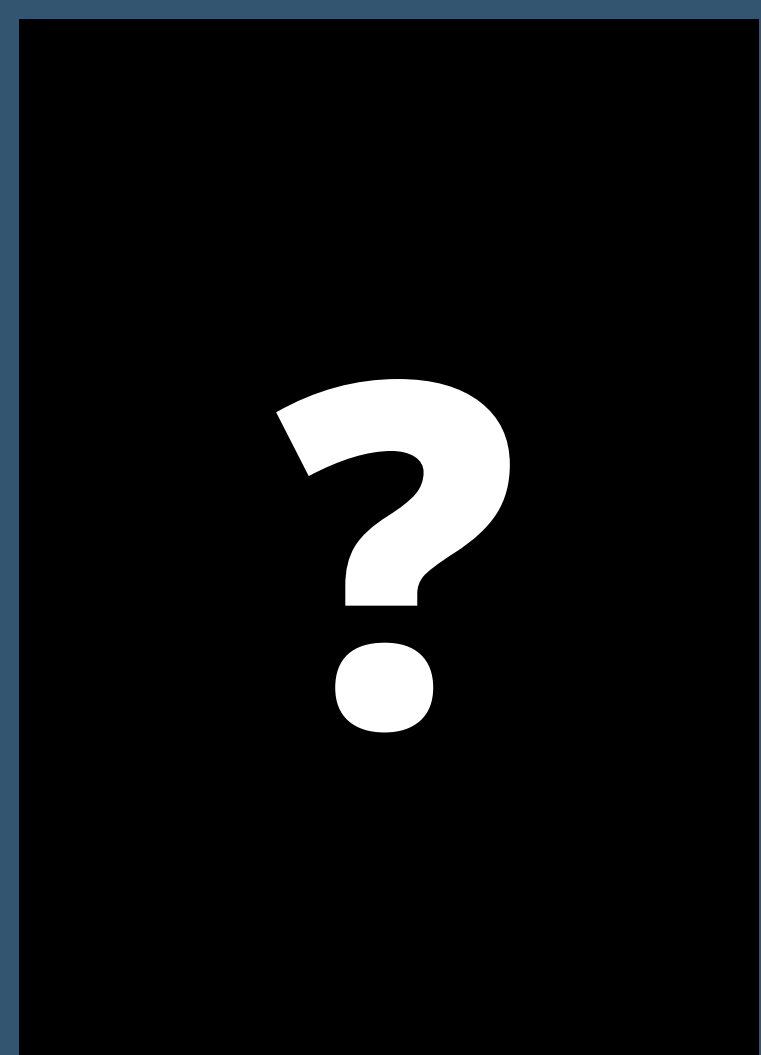
#09: Secrets



#10: Hygge



#11: ???





Love Letters Magazine

