

LIBRARY ZINE

VOICES ACROSS THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY



VOLUME 5
2021



New York
Public
Library

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"Let's Go Somewhere Very Far Away"
by Jasmine Chen

LIBRARY ZINE!

VOICES ACROSS
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Volume 5

2021 Issue

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Dear Reader,

There were moments within the past few years that have made the future unforeseeable, unknowable, and as if nonexistent. Perhaps the true identity of the future, sure, but for many of us used to looking down the road and seeing at least the predictable lines and signs, there was nothing but night and the basic fear that the dark can bring. This issue we asked patrons of the New York Public Library to write to their future selves with both a pessimism of the present and an untiring optimism that change is still possible.

We are a creative literary writing magazine containing original writing and visual art submitted by library patrons from around the world. Thank you so much to everyone who responded to this year's theme, Dear Future Self. In these pages you will hear the voices, hopes, and dreams of all those who responded to our call to dream about the future. Some content will touch on topics that might be sensitive to some readers. We kindly ask that you care for yourself when moving through these pages as they provoke strong feelings of love, care, trauma, and pain.

The support and enthusiasm we received after the publication of the previous Library Zines built the foundation for us to create another issue. We as the editorial team are the foreman of this operation, but it is you, our contributors, content creators, and readers, who have built the voice and meaning of this publication. Without you, we would be left with only a blank booklet read by none. Thank you for your work and warm reception.

Sincerely,
The NYPL Zine Committee

Dear Future Self

Destiny Alexander

Future self
 Please don't regret
 Times I said
 Not what I meant
 You are of my mistakes
 It's not a puzzle
 That one piece makes
 I am still charting
 The course of our life
 My map is blank
 But for a thin, short line
 Representing time
 Spent turning into you
 And striving for
 Horizons
 A more comforting
 Shade blue
 I will struggle
 And I will fall
 But I will always
 Rise above all
 I don't know where you are
 And I barely know where you have been
 But I am you
 And you are me
 Someday we will meet
 And both see
 That I did my best
 For you
 And for me

What Do You Do Now?

Michele Duffy

What do you do now?
 Rip off the mask, toss it in the air,
 shouting "Hallelujah, Free at Last" —
 or
 Remain cautious, doubtful, fearing
 Covid-19 is still lingering out there.

What do you do now?
 Take the trip you postponed too long,
 Hug that person you haven't seen in a year—
 or
 Delay traveling until the world is safer,
 No hugging yet, only elbow bumps for now.

What do you do now?
 Go see Hamilton on Broadway, price be
 damned.
 Have a dinner party, no masks or social
 distancing required —
 or
 Avoid crowded indoor entertainment,
 Throw a dinner party at an outdoor
 restaurant.

What will your future be?
 It's hard to know which way to go:
 Remain diligent, cautious, and safe—
 or
 Carpe Diem, throw caution to the wind
 and Live Life Again!

Note to Future Self - Membership not Required

Silvia Blumenfeld

Are you a member? Hey, do you know your way around?
It's a question, both pedestrian and yet quite profound
When I was young, some of us were hip, and some were just straight
Some had figured it all out, and for some it was too late

We all had long hair then and clutched Mao's little red book
Had those waif-like bodies with just the right look
There was poetry and art and drumbeat and song
The days were so magical and the nights were so long

We were so creative, so evolved, and always, always way cool
We weren't inclined, back in the day, to ever suffer a fool
Well now we're mature and we're quite a bit older
No longer judgmental, though surprisingly, really far bolder

There's more joy and acceptance and so much less strife
I like this new way that I've found to be in my life
The world seems expansive now, and precious, and new
You can be a member here and I am finally one too

It occurs to me lately, that a life confined to members only
Is one that's hollow, uninteresting, and in the end, lonely
So let's understand that on this earth, we are really all one
Let's get it together today - while maybe -it still can be done!

Shall I Dare Open Them?

Tara Isabel Dee Lago

Letters to my future self remain
sealed in their envelopes,
secrets of scrawled script.

Shall I dare open them
and breathe in the
hopes and dreams
and sorrows

of the youth who burned their candlestick
hours pondering

what if instead of what now

?

Only to be left with ashen fingertips,
tears that sizzle as they reach the ground,

like ambitious shooting stars propelled by
failed wishes—

Tell me.

Shall I dare open them.

Shall I entertain my past

come in make yourself at home

and listen to her wisteria
woes, rose regrets, peony pains,
a garden of curated misery,
festered right on my living
room carpet.

Yet.

She has wonders. and realizations. and perspective.
cracked into egg-shell envelopes, whisked in the
flurry of a pen.

Shall I dare open them.

And unfold with great caution,
the tenderness embossed in these letters,
the love woven into the calligraphy.

With her rounded t's and straight back y's,
with semicolons that mark beginning and end,
with her signing off on a promising goodbye.

With a hidden post script,

an I will be back,

her what if becoming
look how far I've come.



The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs:
Picture Collection, The New York Public Library.

"The fortune teller" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1871-11.
<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e1-365f-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Dear Me, Dear You, Dear Us

Diane Murray Ward

Looking back with resiliency and purpose, forthright, confident, not willing to accept phony racist narratives,

cognizant that putting lies in writing does not make them suddenly true and when repeated they do not become facts

especially when it comes from your own native, re-populated land masses, tree, tribe and nations.

Still a long way to go but worth the battle, wanting to finally see if various wrongs are not perpetuated.

Still waiting to know if karma is real, and finally witness it.

Kudos if this happens.

My future self wants to maintain hope and live long enough to witness progress.

Oh, but wait, I am ethereal now.

This, my future self is a waif, a ghost, a spirit still trying to help those listening in physical form.

I am still whispering "Stay strong, do not be afraid, have courage."
I care about you.

When I was in your form, I tried to find solutions. Are these battles we still share?

My future self I hope remains an inspirational thought.

I hope my legacy leaves you non- tiring.

Understand such wanting at times will be lonely but you know as I knew and still wish, that goodness could eventually prevail.

Truth can occur. Each person's substance is equally worth recognizing, for their contribution adds to our overall human greatness.

Yes, here I am still hopeful; now I can only whisper in your ear "Carry on."

A Blessing for My Future Self

Martina McGowan

Whatever the time remaining to me
Whether its 15 minutes, 15 summers or infinity
I'll trust the legacy I leave behind
To speak in remembrance of me
Beyond this secular capacitance

May my mind continue to expand
Rightly processing, holding love secure
My eyes, see unanticipated joys,
Wondrous potential in everything
And in all I meet in these final days

Sailing from this to that, and farther on
Hands working appointed, anointed tasks
Sharing the stories so others can see us
Pouring light into dark and dismal spaces

Paving new avenues for others
Sharing my heart's blessings beyond its tiny cup
Seeding the grounds we've tread with
discernment
Finding forever peace, tranquility
Continuing our journey amongst the stars



Rare Book Division, The New York Public Library. "The November meteors" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1881 - 1882. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47dd-e6cf-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Future Me

Julie Malik

One day I'll be an explorer,
though I might not be a scorer.
Foraging through the tropical,
I did not say it's logical.

Some animals hiding up in trees,
others swimming through the seas.
Some flying through the sky,
other trying to deny
the camera shining like an eye.

I'd like to take some photos,
to put them on my logos.
Sneaking up on tigers
and picking up some spiders.

I'd like to find new species
by investigating faeces.
It would help with human development
and help with exploring settlements.

I find it a disgrace
not to worry about the waste.



The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection, The New York Public Library. "Tiger" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1849. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e0-cfc5-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Tomorrow

Michele Duffy

Why fear for tomorrow?
It may never come.
Live every day with
each rising sun.

Why fret for the future?
One cannot foresee.
Tuck worries away—
laughter's the key.

Live in the moment,
set yourself free.
Don't think of tomorrow—
just let yourself be.

Koi Fish Pond

Zoe Umbach

Quiet peach blossoms fall
on a pond, always silent,
ripples so peaceful.
Koi fish forever dancing,
shy and cloud stuck in the pond.

Looking Forward

Lisa Goiens

Last spring it rained tears.
Whispered wishes sent skyward—
granted! Hopes rising.

To Begin Something, Something Needs to End

Megha Sood

Walking on the curving path of the waterfront for an early morning walk
greeted by the smiling faces behind the mask, smiling through their eyes.

Yes, I know they are. The simple beauty of nature cannot be hidden for long, as the small saplings and
dainty vines make their way through the cracked pavement, growing and fighting,

for sustenance and for the share of the sun's apricity. This is a moment of pause and a moment to act.
A moment where even though we are hunkered down with our version of realities ---

we share the collected grief, the collective truth that makes us human. That teaches us that nature
knows its ways to heal. She leads and we follow and there is no other way for us beings

Trying to outsmart nature has put us back in the starting position; we realize that we live at the mercy
of nature, at the mercy of the invisible things heavily and boisterously felt in our lives.

We know this is not the end, but the beginning of something so profound,
This moment of pause, this moment of introspection in our feeble lives

that need to find our way through this maze while observing the divine glow of the fireflies
that crowd our backyards on dark summer nights, or the yellow-breasted warbler

waking us up in the wee hours of the morning, or the stars that appear closer to us these days,
the air which feels more scented, that a face, a hand, a touch matters more in this virtual world,

that we owe our lives to Mother Earth which blesses us with its love but
will also take it all back in the blink of an eye. To know that this is not the end

But the beautiful beginning of something that has been ignored so long
Like a poem waiting to be read aloud.

Fifty Years On - Notes to a Teenage Me

Bo G. Eriksson

My class picture
Seventh grade in Sweden
Was posted online
Me, with long hair,
Glasses and good grades
Insecure, but too tall for anybody to notice

You will survive
(At least long enough to write this)
There will be good times
There will be bad times
As told over and over and over
And, yes it will be worth it

That haircut should have been avoided though
I know, I know, the belt was mother's idea
I/you/we hated it
But you will miss her
A lot
When she is gone

No, you will never kiss that girl
But others
Some will even like you
For a while
Others not at all
Occasionally you will even like yourself

I remember their names (most of the names)
I remember stories (most about myself)
To the left, in obligatory flared out jeans, me
To the right, blond and smiling, my best friend
He wanted to be a farmer
I an engineer

But his family had no land
And you only liked the drafting
Not the math
So you became a graphic designer

With a diploma
He a bus driver

You speak with him occasionally over the years
His little sister will choke to death on a slice of potato
His mother will die of cancer
On the bus he shepherded to France
His father will die of a heart attack
His child stillborn

You will move to New York City (No really!)
Working with clients of stage and fame
Names most others would recognize
But, none of them, will remember yours
Just as well, those things
Mean very little after a while

Amazingly, you will have two daughters
Both stirring something inside
That you never
Ever imagined
You could hold
Unconditional Love

Your parents will die of old age
Your mother at home, your father at hospice
Your brother is alive
You will have had cancer
You will retain some lifelong friends
Your oldest daughter will marry this summer

From this point forwards
You will have to experience
It all first hand (just like me)
Fifty years removed of that photo
Be kind
And don't drink too much.

The Beauty Myth by Naomi Wolf

Laura Stein

While working overnight shifts when I was 19 I had plenty of time to read. It was hard to stay awake but for the week that I was reading Naomi Wolf's "The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women" I had no trouble keeping my eyes open. In fact my eyes were opening up to many new things and Wolf was a big part of that awakening for me. At that point in my life I felt ashamed of being a woman.

I thought that our oppression over centuries must have stemmed from some truth; that we were weaker, dumber, less able. I rejected what I considered traditional femininity and tried to convince myself that I was different, not like the others. Before I started taking Women's Studies courses in college, this book, that I came across at a library book sale, helped me understand that the things I believed about women were myths, untruths that were perpetuated by the media and the adults all around me.

I remember one particular night that I was reading and a male coworker interrupted me to ask about the book. I tried to explain, using Wolf's words, but we weren't seeing eye to eye. At the time I didn't really care what he thought; this was a time for self-discovery and I wasn't prepared yet to persuade others. I have become more confident over the years and while Wolf was persuading readers to alter their own thinking, she was also urging us to change the minds of others.

The whole country buys into these myths about gender and the only way to break the cycle is to change minds. 'Feminist' became a label I was happy to wear and pointing out flawed marketing and sexist tropes became my hobby, much to the chagrin of my friends. As my personal ideology has taken shape I thank authors like Wolf for opening my eyes and I try to return the favor by spreading the word.

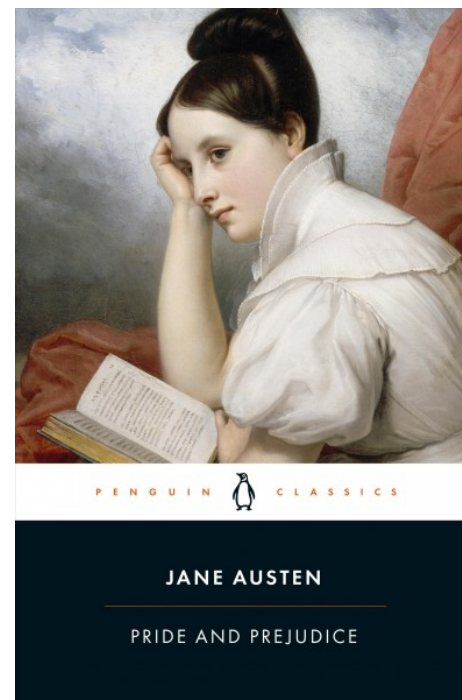
Laura Stein is an Adult Librarian at Webster Branch in Manhattan of the New York Public Library



Pride and Prejudice

Tabrizia Jones

I was never your average child reader. When I was young, for some reason, I was a type that was drawn to books that were older than me. Don't get me wrong, I still read (and enjoyed) various children's books such as Nancy Drew, Sweet Valley High, and the Babysitters Club. But there was just something about the classics that drew me in. However, those books with small print and single-space text called out to me for a young child. But it was intimidating. It was okay to hold it in my hand, but reading it made me feel I wasn't intelligent enough to read it. That all went away when I first met Jane Austen.



It was January 14, 1996. I noticed that my mom was excited about something that was going to premiere on TV. We only had two television sets. Since my dad was watching one (I don't remember what he was watching, but it probably was boring), I would be stuck watching what my mom was going to watch. To a nine-year-old, that is something you didn't want to hear. It was showtime, and my mom turned the channel to A&E, and before I knew it, this small nine-year-old was immediately enthralled. I never encountered something that captivated me so deeply. The story, the scenery, the music, the clothing, I was in love with it all.

This was the US premiere of the 1995 version of *Pride and Prejudice* and my first official "meeting" with Jane Austen.

It seems strange that an avid reader's first encounter with an author would be a TV adaptation. Still, from that moment, I was entirely fascinated by Jane Austen. For the next three nights, my mom and I would snuggle in front of the TV to watch the continued adventures of Elizabeth Bennet. When my mom told me it was adapted from a book, I made her buy me a copy. She would then, in turn, read me passages from it before I went to bed. It would be a while before I read the entire book on my own. It took time for me to understand it honestly, but that never deterred me. I just kept reading and reading, fully absorbing Austen's words. From then on, I would read anything I got my hands on that was about Austen: her novels, her juvenilia, biographies and essays. I wanted to know more about her because I never had a connection with any other author. Because of her, I was able to venture out and start reading the classics I envied.

Austen is more than a romantic author; sometimes, I don't even consider her that type of author. Austen used her wit, her observation, and humor to entertain the masses with her writing. Yes, people ended up getting married, but she showed what was important during that time. Her novels reflect analytical observation and used humor in her stories as a reason for escape. Austen's work is the true model of what books do for readers: taking a break from reality. Her social commentary on class and society is unlike any author and truly makes her more than a "romantic".

To me, Jane Austen has various definitions. She defines nostalgia: Austen offered that true bond and commonality that my mom and I could share. Austen depicts humor: her sarcasm and her wit never make you grow tired of her writing. She is the definition of a beautiful writer: her words healed when I was depressed, calmed me when I was anxious, brought me more joy when I was happy. She is and always will be my favorite author of all time.

Jane Austen is more than a writer, a humorist, a daughter, a sister, a pop culture icon...she is my best friend, and I am so glad I have her in my life.

Tabrizia Jones is one of the editors of the LIBRARY ZINE and also works as a Young Adult Librarian at the Pelham Parkway-Van Nest Branch in the Bronx of the New York Public Library.

Cross Game

Joe Pascullo

The series *Cross Game* truly does mean a lot to me. Allow me to explain why. Around November(ish) of 2010, I was a bit of a mess. I had dated the same girl from 2005 (my senior year of high school), to September of 2010 (the fall after wrapping up my bachelors degree). And perhaps that was foolish. I'd wasted all of those years of my youth dating the same person, rather than meeting new people, making new kinds of memories. Instead, I locked myself into a routine during my undergraduate years, when maybe at that time, it isn't an advisable thing to do. I was just a naïve kid, all of 22 years old. Looking back, I didn't know anything about life. I thought what I'd been doing was the proper thing to be doing. I didn't know I'd look back on those days at another time down the road with regret.

"But it's too baby now, it's too late." - Carole King, "It's Too Late"

So November(ish) 2010. The baseball playoffs were over (shoutout to Edgar Renteria). The relationship I was in for a long time was also over. In addition, I admittedly wasn't in a ton of friend circles back then. Probably because all I'd done was spend my time with that former partner of mine. I had nothing to look forward to besides a cold, dark winter, seeing other people happy during the holiday season. I remember telling my parents on weekends that I'd be going out to hang with this person or that person. But I wasn't. I'd literally just drive to somewhere in Queens, walk for miles and miles. Or jump on the subway to go to different parts of Manhattan, walk for miles and miles. I'd walk around aimlessly, everywhere and nowhere all at once. No agenda whatsoever. I had no purpose. I had no support. I was isolated. And a lot of that was my own fault. Who could I blame really? I sometimes wish I could do it all over. Perhaps back then, had I been a little more knowledgeable about life like I am now, I could have used those months to pick up a seasonal job, meet new people, make a little extra money, use my time productively. That's exactly what I've done the past few winters to whittle away the awful, bleak months that I still detest. But I didn't back then.



Like I said, I didn't know that much about life. I wasn't aware. I wasn't cognizant. I was just a clueless, naïve 22 year old kid.

Another thing I'll say about me back at 22, I did not have the knowhow or the interest I have in manga that I do today. Sure I had maybe a fleeting interest in it then, not quite none whatsoever. But it wasn't a lot. I just didn't know where to begin with it. Yet on one of those cold, lonely, winter nights where I was walking, I walked past a store in Union Square called Forbidden Planet. Which is still around today, but not in the way it previously was a decade ago. It's since been completely renovated. But back in the day (and some of you old time New Yorkers might remember this), they had all their manga selections way at the top of a staircase. It had its own floor, in this relatively cramped room. I remember it being very hot up there. So I went inside the store and up those stairs on this particular night. Who knows why? Nothing else to do I guess. I remember myself browsing the shelves aimlessly, admiring the artwork that I'd always had a fleeting admiration for, but again, had no clue how to start becoming a real fan of.

The girl working the counter up there, I think she noticed how...maybe out of it and overwhelmed I was walking amongst all the shelves. Her name was Shannon. And Shannon approached me asking if I needed help finding anything. I told her the truth. That I'd always had a distant appreciation for manga and its art, but had no idea where to begin. Shannon helped me find titles that night that she thought I'd be interested in. One of them was Mitsuru Adachi's Cross Game. Its first volume literally came out a few months prior to me visiting there. I liked coming of age stories, and I liked baseball, two of the title's central themes. I liked the book's art style, and this first volume just blew me away. It's a story not just about the sport, but about real life. It was amazing, everything I could have asked for in a book. A 3 volume omnibus, I tore through it, and couldn't wait for the next volume in the series to come out.

From that point on, I went further down the rabbithole. I checked out even more titles. I learned about more titles both on my own & from other people like Shannon. I found something brand new to keep my interest, something to pour myself into. I had something to look forward to again. Some of my fellow librarians who may be reading this know how invested I am in the manga medium now. A little under 10 years after my first foray to Forbidden Planet, I was named one of the two chairpeople for the NYPL's inaugural Best Comics Committee.

So who knows. Maybe if I don't experience heartache and anguish as I did in 2010, I'm not here today doing what I do. I just don't know. Was the way I spent my undergraduate years all a crazy, circuitous path designed to lead me to where I am today? It just may have been. Perhaps now I have the ability and the wherewithal to help somebody out who feels lost, the way Shannon helped me. And maybe her putting the right books in my hand all those years ago, is the reason I can do that, all these years later.

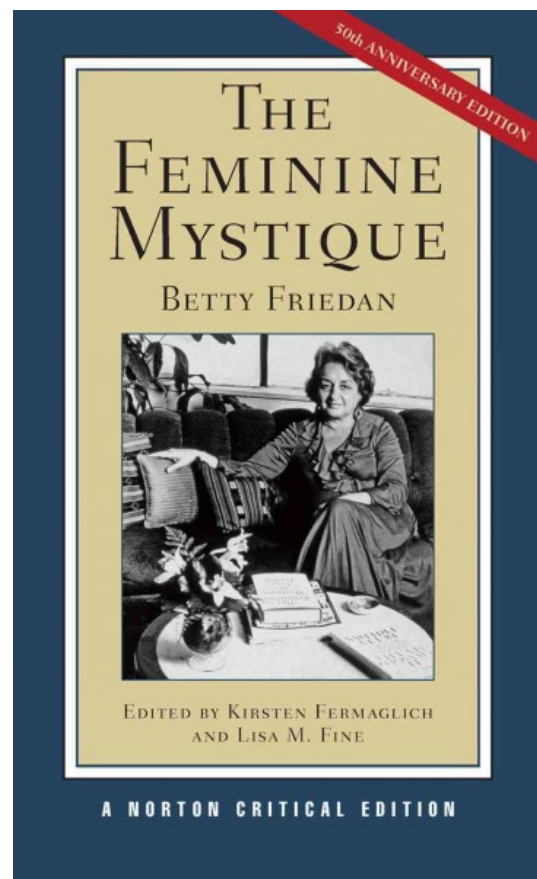
"It's not too late. We have the rest of our lives." - Rise Against, "Satellite"

Joseph Pascullo is a Young Adult Librarian and works at the 53rd Street Branch in Manhattan of the New York Public Library

The Feminine Mystique

Elizabeth Graham

The *Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan was the first book I read that really laid out for me what sexism was and how it affects society. I read it in high school after seeing it mentioned online, and that was the first time I realized the extent of sexism and how deeply it was entrenched in our culture. I'd experienced discrimination based on gender before, way back to when neighboring boys only let me play with them if I played the "girl roles" in childhood games, and I knew something wasn't right with the way girls were (and are) treated, but I never had the words to describe what was going on until that book. I wouldn't think a book published in the 1960s would still be so relevant to today nor still controversial, yet when I lent it to a classmate, her mother found and confiscated it from her. We still have a long way to go.



The Perks of Being a Wallflower

by Stephen Chbosky

Anthony Murisco

Dear Friend,

I was in 8th grade when another friend told me to about you. At the time I was going through a lot, as most 8th graders do; I was about to enter high school. I was about to enter the final four years of what felt like an eternity of grade school. Then there were things that not all 8th graders experience: I was questioning my sexuality. I was questioning my sanity. I was wondering who I was.



Who could I talk to about this? Certainly not my parents. What if my friends stopped talking to me after confiding in them? I couldn't risk that! I had just lost a bunch of friends through the weird vortex of growing up and growing apart. I needed to know that "someone out there listens and understands," which is when you came along.

I hope you don't take this the wrong way but there's something different about the way you look from all the others. Your size for one. There was something compact about you, like a diary. Then there's your color. An almost overwhelming but inviting green. And then we have your cover image, all the way to the upper right corner. Who is this? It felt like... me.

At the time, I hadn't gone through all you went through. Some of that would come later. I cried for you. How could this happen to my friend? I cried for myself. How could this happen to me? You let me let it all out and never judged me for it.

You may not have known this but I was there for you every step of the way. It wasn't just you who helped but the friends you made; Patrick, Sam, Mary and Alice. If I couldn't find myself through you, they were there with a seat saved in the cafeteria or on the bleachers for me. They welcomed me with open arms too.

It was easier to be myself because of you then. When I open the pages again, as I often do, there you are reminding me of how far I've come. How far we've both come...Thank you for everything.

Love always, Anthony

Time Machine

Lisa Goiens

You know how scents can take you back in time? For me, it's not the scent but the sight of my favorite childhood book that does the trick. Dusty and busted now, my copy of *FORTUNATELY* was a birthday present I received in kindergarten. I can remember my mother reading it to me, sometimes twice, before tucking me in bed. The cover features a smiling brown-haired boy, Ned, dressed in a red sweater and khakis, parachuting through a sea-blue, sunny sky. It's a picture-perfect scene, but books can be deceiving!

As Ned travels from New York to Florida, author-illustrator Remy Charlip takes the reader through a series of heart-racing surprises.

Like the weather in the story, the pictures change from brightly technicolor to cloudy gray depending on where Ned finds himself. Mildly reminiscent of *WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE* and *CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY*, his journey is both frightening and exciting for kids and grown-ups alike.



So what's a children's book got to do with my very grown-up future self? A year ago, the pervasive effects of the pandemic had put a damper on my summer and my spirits. Too many people were losing their peeps, their livelihoods, and sense of control, among other precious things. For a while, it was a challenge for me to see any kind of silver lining anywhere. Why plan for the future, I thought to myself, if a vaccine was months away, the streets were filled with protesters and police, the city was mostly shut down, and my search for full-time work had come to a full stop? Crossing my fingers that I'd still be around, I often found myself wishing the world could just fast forward to 2021 or '22.

Then, a blast from the past—I came across that battered picture book—and read it over and over. Aptly, the opening line of every page is either “fortunately” or “unfortunately.” Its timeless message is simple and sweet: ups and downs and bumpy turns are inevitable on any journey, figuratively or literally. Unfortunately, 2020 was full of scary, painful events. Fortunately, I got through it. Moreover, at present, I am safe and well, as are my loved ones, and that is a huge gift. So as I look toward the future, I'm choosing to look forward. I'm choosing not to waste time brooding, but to be fully engaged in life and the world because time is precious. I've also broken my habit of wishing my days away when the going gets tough.

This journey ain't always easy, but as long as I'm on it, I'll be present while making the most of it. Who knows what's ahead? Perhaps I'll write my own picture book, start a business, finally learn to dance the Tango properly, and even go out on a date! Regardless of whatever's in my stars and cards, fortunately, there's much to look forward to.

Dear Future Self: How You Became a Pivot Champion...

Shakina Shaw

Monday, March 16th is usually a day you light a candle and pray to your daddy to wish him a heavenly birthday. However, 3/16/2020 now serves as the 1st day of remote work/quarantine/COVID-19 work from home day, PIVOT. Your day started normal, stop to get a snack from favorite store, talk great stories, walk to get breakfast, and head to desk to begin work. Throughout the workday you begin to hear chatter about leaving early, Pivot. You started to gather items from the desk that would make working from home from a week or two comfortable. Welp fast forward 9 months, you are still in the same situation, working remotely, Pivot. With still no sign of a return date due to the COVID-19 virus. Allow this letter to be a reminder of what the last 9 months have been for you, are you ready to pivot all of what you thought was normal. The 9 months of March 2020 to December 2020, you will be introduced to all these things at once health concerns, civil unrest, being furloughed, starting a business, deaths and births, self-improvement, changes in relationships and most notably you will become an Author of a nonfiction book as a self-published author, PIVOT.

Experiences ranged from deaths and births, financial strife's, self-improvement by taking a took a sign language course, changes in relationships and most notably you released a nonfiction book as a self-published author. Losing friends and the matriarch of your family was hard hit. Your family continues to grapple with the loss. Dating life was good for a period but it ended. Personal and professional relationship were also adventurous. You became closer with co-workers, which is amazing. The distance has grown between you and other, surprisingly. However, that is the beauty of the work from home life. You really got to see how much one matters to you vs how much you matter to them; how much you are pouring into their cup vs how much they are pouring into yours.

Well self you overall health was a C in the 9 months you are averaging a B. Physical Health continue to work out in your 1 bedroom apartment every bit counts; Mental Health the sessions you attended have provided you the tools to combat future anxiety attacks; Financial Health you are still struggling but continue try to remain optimistic; Soulful Health remain surrounded with people/things that can fill your cup with positive energy, optimism, and laughter, while continuing to read positive affirmations; Spiritual Health keep God first, you may have a mustard seed of faith left in your body. Your mother said it perfectly, God has cut the grass so you could see the snakes. So, you admittedly move differently for the betterment of you.

So, for the biggest story for, you released a nonfiction book on business longevity, PIVOT. By the way, this stunned many, motivated others and added to the changes in relationships.

Dealing with all this stuff, you are still expected to be professional at work with optimism, a big sister, the oldest child, Titi aka Aunty, best friend, neighbor, optimistic, possess positive energy, and forward thinker. Not sure of the labels put on you by others but here are just a few labels you hold, a tall African American woman who is a part of Gen X, entrepreneur, Author, born and raised in NYC, brown skin with natural hair, who is an African slave decedent, and a human being. I know you are tired Future Self, God brought you through before he will do it again. Remember you have others that are routing for you. I will check in with you in the future to see what has changed or what has remained the same.

Future self tell me really

How are you?

Dear Future Self...

The future looks like it is going to be lots better after a few years or so. This virus will soon disappear, we can then live a much more normal life, everything should go back to normal. There will still be some horrible stuff like Climate Change because of pollution that affects the community awfully (that includes me). Then more abominable stuff would happen in approximately 5.5 billion years where the Earth would evolve and the Sun might eventually explode. (That does not include me though). Now back to the 2000s where we go by 2050, there might be more plastic in the oceans, most of our coral reefs may be dead and most of the sea would end up overheated.

In conclusion, When I'm older things will get worse and worse which affects me a lot.

Signed,
Kayden Li

Dear a future me

Daira Peralta

Writing to yourself isn't simple to write out the struggles that been look back at, mostly due that you don't know the decisions nor the person you come as from them lead to the path that will be ahead of you. You don't often know the turns events of the person you became as a better or terrible person it may be the question that you are reading this to yourself future Daira, am I right? Just think about it.

Have you ever truly achieved something to you overall as a person. Have you justify on your meaning of hopes and dreams. Well you know the future acquired the courage to make things come true. A brighter future is not is not easy and it doesn't matter the skill or abilities, you have it doesn't always means you going to have your head up in the sky there will always be hardships. It going to depend on one that all on you which is the attitude, it is a struggle that can lead to problems not a very good effect! Mostly with the creative part of the mind!

What brought us joy was doodling and drawing with a simple sketchbook and and watching other youtubers such as tamaytka and many other famous artist out there that have amazing art styles and ways of doing things! I guess that was a dream to be made by us and the road that we had chose to make us truly happy and others around us by giving what we can do to them for their enjoyment. You older than me by a couple or more years I mean this is a write to your future self well our dreams can come true because we have the freedom to make our own path! Just don't be wasting the years rather move and get up!

Did you go to college or not? I know it a weird question to ask out of nowhere. it is just something that been around of asking since,I mean it is me in the future to write and it just been a goal in our life since we little and it just been part of what we wanted in life so it huge part where we wanna be at well I mean now at my time during this crazy part of life now writing about people getting sick and it hurting a lot but I guess you most have complete that goal for yourself not for anyone else. But I finally found found something I wanted to be which is a nail artist! And still making art for as a new path to do, And it seems something fun to do and yet we still doing art and making other people happy. That one goal done!

Well I did wanted to be more mature and better overall self esteem, Is it easier to have friends now? Is the future really that much of a mystery? Well not in this time while I am typing things are normal well there in your own time it may just be something I won't know well at least I knew I wrote this letter maybe looking back at this feeling of being informed? Well that only you can find out good luck future.

Wherever you are.

Set Free

Twety Hsiao

“Here they come,” Teresa whispers and stands excitedly beside the French window watching her little friends who have visited her for over an year. “Johnny seems very hungry today,” she smiles and can’t take her eyes off these beautiful creatures.

“Slow down! Jonny! Slow down and share your food with Tommy,” Teresa raises her whispering sound, as if she were their mother who worries that her kids would choke. Johnny jumps down to drink some water, followed by Tommy who apparently has not had enough food.

“See you guys later,” Teresa says delightedly. She goes back to her desk and takes out her COVID diary. She flips to the first page, which reads, “March 16, 2020, the manager of the leasing office called me this morning, saying that everyone is supposed to stay at home. I don’t know how serious that will be, but I hope it will end soon.”

Teresa is a retired teacher who lives by herself in a three-floor senior apartment, a fine building in Forest Hills, Queens, with a small garden. She has been living there for a decade, but she never considers moving. She likes her neighbors, especially Mrs. Reed in 103 who initiates a book club inside the community and Mr. Dewan in 207 who likes to recite Hafez’s poems.

“It’s been over an year, but the pandemic isn’t fully over yet,” she murmurs and sighs. She continues flipping the diary and stops in a page with an illustration of a nest, “April 4, 2020, four pale-greenish eggs were found in my balcony.” She smiles with a beam of joy – on one hand, she is grateful to have a visitor laying eggs in her place, which ushers in her bird feeding journey; on the other hand, her rusty illustration one year ago cracks her up.

Indeed, the company of the birds brings so much comfort to her, especially during this dark prolonged pandemic. She never got a chance to be a mother in her life, so when she saw the first hatchling cracking out the egg shell, she almost cried. She witnessed their births and recorded their growths with her color pencils. Within just one month, she realized the hard work of being a parent and experienced the joy of having a baby. Soon after, all the baby birds flew away, but after a few days, they appeared again.

In order to welcome her new friends, she added more supplies to her balcony. She used an old frying pan with some stones inside as a bird bath. She ordered a bag of bird food as a special treat. She even used chopsticks to build a pavilion, hoping that her visitors will “take a rest” in it. More importantly, she gave names to them – Johnny is the fluffy one who likes to make cute sounds as those made by toddlers wearing squeaky shoes. Another one who tags along Jonny all the time is Tommy.

The recurrent visits of Johnny and Tommy brings her a sense of being needed, a feeling she hasn't experienced for a long time. Sometimes she wishes she were a bird who could fly away from her tiny apartment, fly to meet Johnny's friends, fly to see a sea of pink peach blossoms in the spring, and fly to visit her husband resting peacefully in the cemetery. But she is neither a bird nor a person who is less vulnerable to coronavirus disease.

She keeps on flipping the diary and then stops in a blank page, where she writes down, "December 16, 2020, I put a tray of new food, but it seems that Johnny and Tommy still prefer their old food – Quaker Oats. How interesting!" She then skillfully uses her color pencils to draw a bird beneath the entry, a ritual that gives her another layer of solace during the pandemic. When she is about to finish, the doorbell rings.

The customized holiday cards printed with her illustration of birds have arrived. She swiftly unpacks the box and starts to write, "Dear friends, 2020 is an unforeseen dark year to most of us, but we're not alone. My bird friends help me see a hint of light. Now I'd like to deliver this joy to you and wish you a wonderful 2021." After finishing writing cards, she turns on her laptop, clicks the Zoom link, where Mrs. Reed and Mr. Dewan are already waiting. Feeling a surge of excitement about her first volunteering at the library to teach English, Teresa turns on her camera to greet a full house of ESL learners joining from all over the country.

From this moment, she has set herself free.

(The End)

Excerpt from TRIGGERS

Alexa Recio de Fitch

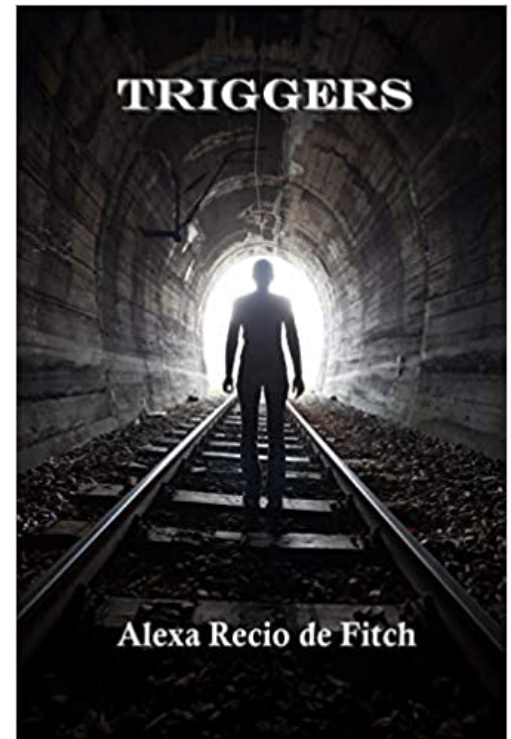
“Could you get used to living in the suburbs someday?” Anya asked Phillip while she cut into her steak.

“Never!” he replied, laughing...

Looking at the photos also reminded Phillip of how much time he'd spent indoors...how claustrophobic he would get. When he and his parents moved, nobody knew the old him; it was as if he had received a second chance at being normal. He made friends and began to date. Phillip had missed out on a lot... That's why the city was like one giant playground for him, one which invited him to come and explore its history...

Phillip sat up on the mattress and thought about how he hadn't written anything in a long time. He then went to the kitchen and poured himself something to drink. With a glass of wine in hand, he climbed to the top of the building. The building didn't quite have a real rooftop with tanning chairs and barbecue grills; it was bare up there, and the building management company didn't want people going there for safety reasons. Phillip admired the moon as he savored the Rioja. What will my new novel be about? he thought. He hadn't told Anya about how his meeting with his editor had gone. How can I get inspired? Anya isn't who she was when we first got married, he thought. She went to spin classes, spoke about diets and watched what Phillip thought were stupid romantic TV shows. A few days ago, he scrolled through a few photographs of the two of them on his computer. There were pictures of them at different bars, museums and out at dinner. He thought that the whole reason why they had decided not to have children was so that their lives could be about them, so they could always go on adventures together. However, they weren't going on any. How do we get that back? he thought. Phillip gazed downward at New York City. It was late on a weeknight, so the streets on the Upper East Side were empty...

He read that subways hadn't stopped at City Hall station since the 1940s because the curvature of the platform couldn't accommodate the newer trains. It was the first subway station in New York City, constructed in 1904. New York buried a few subway stations such as the one at City Hall, its inaugural showpiece, in 1945. The transit authority decided against cremation; instead they sealed the street entrances of this mausoleum, induced this sleeping beauty's coma and trapped her below a park...



A week later, after he had purchased a ticket through the New York Transit Museum, he went on a tour. Phillip gazed at the Romanesque Revival style architecture, bronze plaques, Guastavino tile ceilings and the natural light that escaped through the glass. He wondered what it would be like to sneak into City Hall station at night and explore that track.

Back at his apartment, he took out a notebook and wrote down the title of what would be his first novel, *Subterranea*. Later that month... Phillip learned about urban exploration (the art of infiltrating forbidden, derelict places that are sometimes historical)...

He did his research by learning about other urban explorers before he showed up. He even saw a short film about a man who had wandered through that particular station. Phillip took several notes while he watched the video on how to enter this secret place.

A few days later, at three a.m. on a weekday, he arrived at Fulton Street Station. Once he descended inside, Phillip walked onto the subway platform. When nobody was around, Phillip jumped to the subway track. After he examined the place for cameras, motion detectors and subway workers, he paced into the tunnel. No trains were around, so he proceeded.

Immersed in blue light, perspiration and his body odor, he proceeded with trembling feet. Little by little, Phillip made his way into City Hall station... Espresso-colored light cloaked the cavernous abandoned subway tunnels... Streams of sapphire-colored light flowed through the skylights of what looked like a jewelry box. The sound of his footsteps echoed off the toffee-painted walls. The tall, arched ceilings and brass chandeliers bewitched...him. A Danish-American sculptor and a Spanish architect, a contemporary of the famous artist Gaudí, created this work of art. No neon signs shoved materialism and weight loss down his throat as a means to happiness. Down here, he couldn't hear the sound of voices that demanded money, whether from business people in suits or beggars with signs in front of them and their heads bowed.

Phillip paused to look at the plaques. He remembered reading that the same sculptor who created Mount Rushmore built them. He read the inscription: The First Municipal Rapid Transit Railroad of New York. His face beamed.

Bike gloves protected his hands so that he wouldn't get callouses as he climbed his way onto the platform, from the track. Phillip took a notebook out of his backpack, sat down and began to write. It was in that subterranean escape that through his imagination, he met Victor, the murderer in his novel...

Phillip blinked and tried to concentrate again on his client's questions, which appeared on his laptop. However, his eyes whizzed away to his bookshelf, and he eyed *The Metamorphosis*, by Kafka. I'm just like Gregor Samsa before he becomes an insect. Just a cog in the capitalist system, whose only purpose in life is to make money until my body decomposes in a grave, Phillip thought...

Several months later, during Thanksgiving, he was in Massachusetts with his family. His parents were busy with the rest of his relatives, who had arrived from different parts of the country. As his family ate turkey and mashed potatoes, at the dining room table, Phillip answered emails with several red exclamation marks.

He found himself having trouble breathing. It never ends, Phillip thought. He walked into the dining room, but nobody was there anymore. His family wasn't in the living room, either. In the kitchen, he heard the water whooshing through the dishwasher. Phillip knocked on his parents' bedroom door and found them asleep in bed. He returned to his old room and was about to doze off when he heard multiple beeps on his phone. It was his telecommunications client. When he answered the phone, somebody high up in the company confronted him, saying he'd seen an ad on The New York Times website that Phillip's company wasn't supposed to release until Cyber Monday. The client cursed him out. Phillip called his coworkers to find the underlying cause of what had occurred. Even though he resolved the situation, the client still yelled at him. Phillip went to bed, but he couldn't sleep because his mind was on the laundry list of things due in a few hours. What's this all for? If I die right now, the only thing I'll have accomplished is getting people to buy the latest cell phone, he thought. Phillip didn't sleep at all that night, and in the morning his first thought was I'm done being Gregor Samsa.

He burst into his parents' bedroom and announced to his family that he was going to quit his job and become a writer. Before his father could say anything, Phillip said, "Yes, I know how much houses cost in the New York City suburbs. I don't care if I have to live in a hut! I'm quitting! I'm thirty-nine years old, and I'm finally taking control of my life!"

When Phillip's father found out that his son had decided to become a crime fiction writer, his eyes widened. He told Phillip that would be inappropriate considering his past. However, Phillip chose to ignore him...

That night, he went to bed but couldn't sleep. He debated whether he should tell his wife about the events that had transpired before he and his family moved to Massachusetts before he changed his name to Phillip Weatherly...



It Comes To Light

Muna Mir

Description: Oil on canvas board, 4 x 4 inches. The painting depicts a girl in a mask with large black eyes sitting alone in a field under a bright overcast sky. It aims to enhance the emotions felt during the past two years, and in essence, emulate the downward trajectory we continue to tread. The presence of trees signifies the looming importance of nature, and the thick veil of clouds obscuring the sky adds to the painting's feeling of claustrophobia and isolation. The painting draws parallels to Andrew Wyeth's *Christina's World* both in its imagery and themes of immobility.

Artist's Statement: This painting was one of the last I did during the 2020-2021 school year and largely represents how near-apocalyptic the city felt to me during this time. This painting is an ode to the rapidly changing world and questions how the effects of climate change will continue to alter our lives. Instead of questioning what's to come, it represents my relative pessimism in light of what the past two years have charged us with.



Let's Go Somewhere Very Far Away

Jasmine Chen

"Let's Go Somewhere Very Far Away" depicts a young girl drawing on the wall. She's using a crayon to paint a dear friend and herself in outer space, somewhere she'd like to leave for - somewhere very far away. Maybe when the wall is cleaned she will draw a different scene.

I almost constantly fear that I will never get better at the things I care about no matter how hard I work on it. It doesn't make it any better that I can't settle on a single interest. Perhaps I am that small child doodling away my aspirations or just a mark on the wall waiting to be removed. Though I may not wish to travel to outer space, right now I can paint a space for me to freely explore like a child and assure myself that I'll have the rest of my life to do what I want.

Future Me

Julie Malik

One day I'll be an explorer,
though I might not be a scorer.
Foraging through the tropical,
I did not say it's logical.

Some animals hiding up in trees,
others swimming through the seas.
Some flying through the sky,
other trying to deny
the camera shining like an eye.

I'd like to take some photos,
to put them on my logos.
Sneaking up on tigers
and picking up some spiders.

I'd like to find new species
by investigating faeces.
It would help with human development
and help with exploring settlements.

I find it a disgrace
not to worry about the waste.





Each Day is an Egg

John Maney Jr

Each moment is a broken egg
or a fertilized one

each day a promise kept
or forgotten

in the future you will know
which way I took.

I have survived so many things
that have killed others

let me always be thankful
and never wasteful.

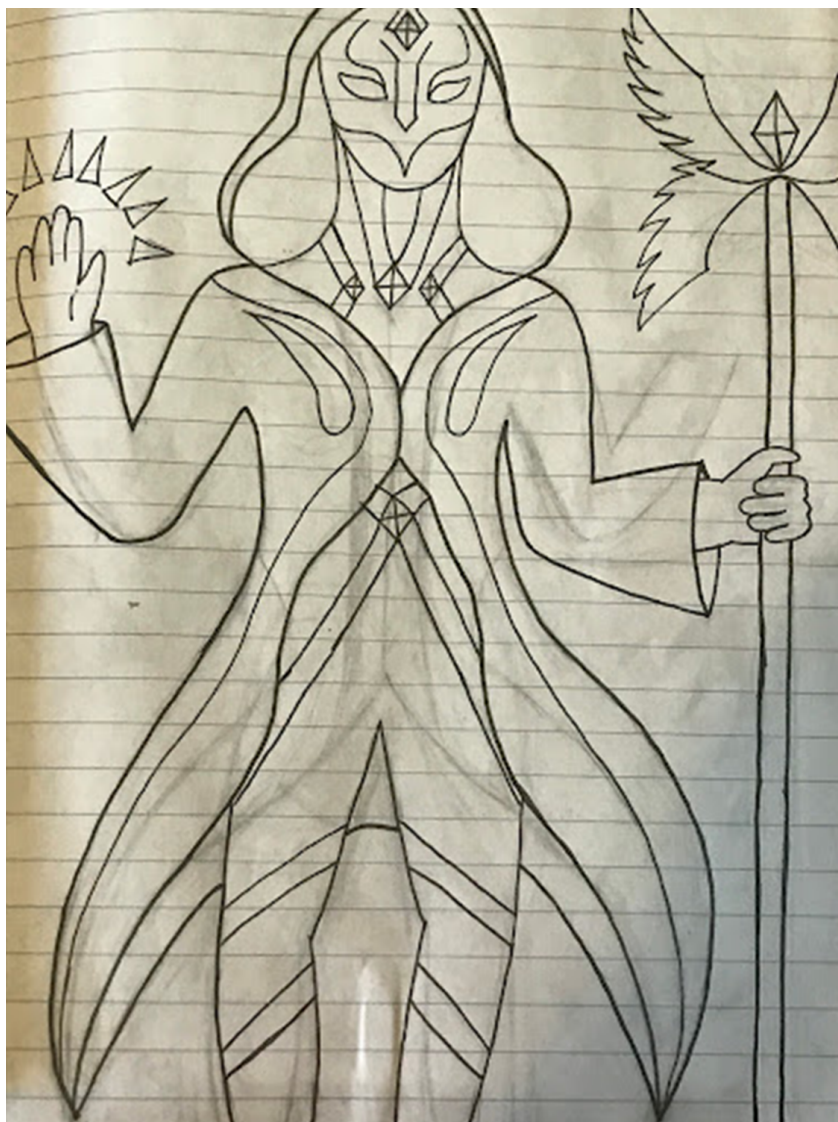
Each day is an egg
let it be said I fertilized it
with love

let it be said
I did good things.

Society

Zoe Umbach

I silently wandered in a world which I thought was bright. Eventually I chose to speak out loudly but it was a mistake. Society snatched me and threw me into their cages where I was so lonely. Though they let me out it was only to stuff clay down my throat so they could mold me to be like them but eventually I had enough. I threw up the clay returning to my normal self and finally escaping the grasp of society. As I fled I ran straight into the warm embrace of those who are not silent and are always yelling. we will not stay silent in cages, we will not be another clone, we are special, we are unique, we do not bow to society's rules, for we are ourselves.



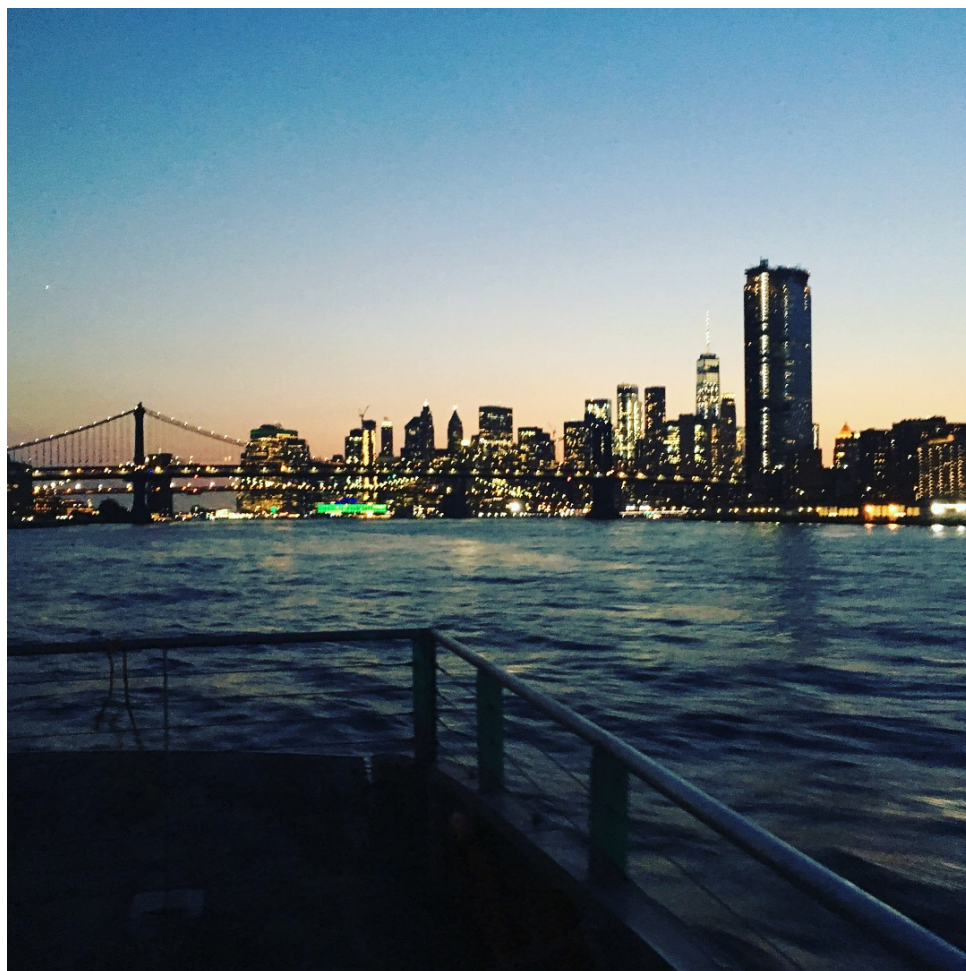
Amai

Zoe Umbach



Where I've Been: Tokyo at Night

Whitney
Davidson-
Rhodes



Where I Am: NYC

Whitney
Davidson-
Rhodes



Where I Hope to Be

Whitney Davidson-Rohodes

I love to travel. I've gone and been to a lot of places. The farthest I went was Tokyo, Japan for a college study abroad program in the summer of 2008. I got to be immersed in a rich culture with a perfect mix tradition and innovation. I got to eat ramen almost everyday, made amazing friends, and solidified my love for manga and anime.

I'm currently in New York after landing an amazing opportunity to work full-time as a librarian. I left my hometown, my family, and started anew in the city that never sleeps. I've made tons of friends, have a career in the field I studied in, and really made my mark in my own way.

But despite constantly finding myself in a bustling city in all my travels, I've found the most peace is being on the water looking out at the vast ocean in front me. I find it calming to look out into the blue void with the water cascading over my toes. And I hope wherever I go in life, I ultimately end up there.

Whitney Davidson-Rhodes is one of the editors of LIBRARY ZINE! and is also a Young Adult Librarian at the Wakefield branch in the Bronx of the New York Public Library.

The Innovation Project's mission is to expand our horizons by surfacing and supporting staff ideas and creativity throughout NYPL. We aim to break down barriers, to imagine the impossible, to support and encourage each other, and to create a culture of “Yes! Let's try that!”

The Innovation Project is part of an innovation landscape at NYPL which, along with the Innovation Communities, provides pathways for exploration and experimentation with the aim of improving our programs, services, and processes in ways that advance our mission and strategic priorities. NYPL staff bring smart, creative expertise to their roles in every corner of our organization and are often closest to understanding what innovative ideas might align with that aim. If you are a staff member with an innovative idea, this project can help bring it to life.

The Innovation Project Team is made up of staff from across the Library, including past awardees, to ensure representation of the entire system. All staff will have a voice in the process, by submitting their ideas, voting, or both. Also importantly, this process will expose staff to each other's projects, which we hope will in turn spark more ideas and conversation across the system.

Four librarians—**Whitney Davidson-Rhodes, Adena Gruskin, Tabrizia Jones, and Karen Loder**—came together with the idea to start a publication that celebrates the artistry of the New Yorkers. They applied for and won The New York Public Library's 2017 Innovation Project, which is made possible by a generous grant from the Charles H. Revson Foundation. **Emma Karin Eriksson** and **Victoria James** have since joined this initiative to form what is now the New York Public Library Zine Committee. Meet the editor's for The New York Public Library's literary magazine, Library Zine!

Whitney Davidson-Rhodes is a Young Adult Librarian in the Bronx. Though an upstate transplant, she's found a home in this bustling big city. Whitney was previously on an art gallery committee that showcased original work from LGBTQ artists from the tri-state area. With a background and passion in art and literature, she's always wanted to produce work that showed off the talents of the people in her community. She's lucky to have found other people who shared the same goals.

Emma Karin Eriksson is a Young Adult Librarian in the South Bronx and has been making zines since she was 13. Zines have a long history of providing space for people to share their stories, ideas, histories, and voices. Zines, like libraries, provide space for learning and building community between writers, artists, and readers. Emma loves everything about reading and making and sharing zines. She is excited to share this one with you!

Adena Gruskin is an Adult Librarian in Manhattan. While she has been published before, this is her first time working on a Zine and she is very excited to get to see her fellow New Yorkers' creativity firsthand. An avid reader and writer, Adena is thrilled to have the opportunity to work on this zine with colleagues who share her passions. She is particularly excited about this project because it provides a showcase for our talented patrons and beautiful city.

Victoria James is an Adult Services Librarian with The New York Public Library. She holds an MLIS with a focus in Indigenous Librarianship and additionally has a BA in Global Studies and Social Justice. She has served on LGBTQ+ committees and worked with community organizations that speak out against violence against women. Victoria hopes to continue to speak up and empower others to share their stories through Zines. Although she is Canadian, she is learning to call New York home.

Tabrizia Jones is a Young Adult Librarian in the Bronx. As someone who was born and raised in the Bronx, she has seen the great things that make New York a creative and vibrant city. What better way to display that creativity than in a magazine that celebrates New York! Tabrizia has participated with literary magazines and newspapers in high school, both working on them and submitting to them. In her spare time, she loves to write short stories and poems, do art, and of course, read!

Karen Loder is a librarian for the adults at her Manhattan community's library where she promotes reading and writing and learning because she loves those three things! Throughout high school and college, Karen has participated with literary magazines either by working for or submitting to them. She thinks this one is particularly special since here she can show off the super talented patrons who attend her writing workshops. She thanks you for your interest in this publication and asks that you continue to support the library and the amazing people who shape it.

LOST/ FOUND



What's something you wish you could change? What's something you wish would always stay the same? What event in your life made you the happiest? The saddest? What's one thing you always wanted to say to a loved one?

Answer these questions and more in our 2022 Zine theme: Lost/Found. This theme is centered around reflection and celebration. These past few years have been difficult for many, but don't feel limited to addressing current events. The Zine Committee is looking for creative and unique takes on the theme dealing with past, present, and future.

Call for work to begin February 2022!

Manuscripts

All written manuscripts must be typed in 12-point font with one-inch margins, and checked for spelling and grammar. At the top of your submission, please include your name, address, primary phone number, and email.

Poetry should be single-spaced and not exceed 1,000 words.

Short stories can be 500-2,250 words, about 2-8 pages double-spaced.

Non-fiction and essays should not exceed 2,250 words, about 8 pages double-spaced. Non-fiction/Essays should be about a book you have read that impacted your future/current self. No other topics will be accepted at this time.

Manuscripts must be in .doc or .docx format, and/or readable in Google Drive and/or Microsoft Word.

Submissions can be written in any language.

Artwork and photography

Physical copies of artwork (e.g. paintings, sculptures, etc.) or photos will not be accepted. Instead, take a full-frame picture or scan your work into one of the following formats: .JPG/JPEG, .TIFF, and .PNG. Images must be 300 pixels per inch (PPI). Images containing nudity will not be accepted.

Along with your image, attach a separate Word document with a description of your work and a short anecdote of what inspired the work. Any images included in the artwork must be the artist's original work and not under copyright of another party or entity.

Please Be Aware

While Library Zine does not want to limit our patrons' creativity, be aware that this publication is intended for all audiences. Submissions must be mindful of language, the use of graphic violence and abuse, and the depiction of harmful stereotypes based on age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and mental/physical disabilities.

Limit of 5 submissions for review per person, no guarantee that any or all will be selected.

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