Wetlands Magazine, Issue 10
Gender and Queer Studies Program, University of Puget Sound

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At Wetlands, we seek to make our magazine accessible to all people. In line with this, we ask that everyone practice self-care when engaging with difficult themes. In asking that, we would like to provide a few 24/7 resources, should they become relevant and necessary:

National Suicide Prevention: 1 (800) 273-8255  
Trevor Project: 1 (866) 488-7386  
Rape Crisis: 1 (800) 656-HOPE (4673)  
Eating Disorders: 1 (800) 931-2237  
Trans Lifeline: 1 (877) 565-8860  

Additionally, some on-campus resources include:  
peerallies@pugetsound.edu  
chws@pugetsound.edu  
pugetsound.edu/report
EDITOR'S NOTE

These are tough times for many of us. I have been struggling to find words for anything lately—Since November 9th, I've been struggling to even get out of bed. But I refuse to stop fighting. I refuse to abandon my friends and peers, especially because they are not abandoning me. I refuse to stay quiet, calm, apolitical, complacent... You get the idea. It's all been said before and in better words.

Regarding Wetlands specifically, though, I will say this: Wetlands is a place to discuss identity. And when we are threatened because of our identities, we are not going to accept it. We will continue to fight against hegemony, against institutional violence and discrimination to the best of our abilities. We want to uplift the voices of those who are disadvantaged—on a systemic and individual scale alike.

At the same time that we get louder and angrier, though, I want us to get softer and kinder. We must harden ourselves and defend each other tooth and nail, but it is just as important to extend compassion towards one another. These can absolutely coexist. Take care of each other, and take care of yourselves. Cherish the communities you form.

Our goal is to provide a platform. A magazine, a microphone, a stage, a projector, whatever you need in order to talk about who you are and why it matters. And it does matter. Please don't ever forget that, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

I ask you to read this magazine mindfully and with an open heart. Some pieces deal with difficult and potentially triggering content, and we have attempted to provide warnings for these. As Editor-in-Chief, I have had the privilege to oversee the pursuing of a vision that is now five years in the making. This magazine couldn't have happened without the hard work of our staff and our faculty advisor, as well as the help of ASUPS. Wetlands has changed a lot since its inception, and I hope that it continues to grow.

In solidarity,

Natalie Scoggins
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CONTENT WARNINGS FOR IMAGES ARE PLACED HERE FOR VISIBILITY. CONTENT WARNINGS ON WRITTEN PIECES ARE REPEATED BEFORE THE PIECES THEMSELVES.
Using line illustrations to explore the concept of belonging; belonging in one's own body, belonging in nature, and belonging in today's media heavy society. Sophia's style challenges the idea of realistic likeness by experimenting with how line and cartooning can define and symbolize character.
MY PLACE
Olivia K-B

A place where bodies collide into community
Where gravity pulls together a chaotic family
A place where thighs aren't scrutinized
Where bodies rest from judgment
A place where beauty is defined by energy and power
And where bodies are generators.

Another place where the body of a woman absorbs pain,
But where strength brings liberation and accomplishment:
A place where we destroy expectations
Where friends from the past don't believe
A place where "girls don't play rugby"
And where "they just did!"

A place with pounding hearts and screaming lungs
Where braids bind together nerves
A place where bodies work in tandem,
Where eight becomes one
A place where the watercolor of the game paints across bodies,
Where showers sort dirt from bruises.

A place of blood dripping into cleats
Where onlookers cover their eyes
A battlefield
And after we survive
A place where we share pasta with the enemy.
“When we drop fear, we can draw nearer to people, we can draw nearer to the earth, we can draw nearer to all the heavenly creatures that surround us.”
-bell hooks

TRANS LOVE  Indigo DaCosta

you’re so gay.
i love looking at you when i’m on top of you, touching you. the whole of my body has the whole of your body and all i want to do is look at your face.
your baby-brown hair sweeps over your forehead, and the obsidian disks in your eyes swallow the green kaleidoscopes behind them—as though your eyes aren’t looking at me but rather through me. your eyes are beyond this moment, in another realm. i wonder what you see.

afternoon sunlight files through the blinds and lands in parallel streaks on a disarray of grey bedsheets.

we go to twelfth night and “viola” fawns over “orsino” while he, fooled by her men’s clothing, confides in her his girl-problems. but if he’d only seen viola/cesario’s face, then he would have known. you turn to me and tell me that i was once her and the connection is—unnervingly accurate. i remember trying not to give myself away. but unlike viola, i’m not cross-dressing. i’m just a guy.
i don’t feel like letting you go. i want to take an afternoon nap with you forever.
sometimes i fear that we’ll go to a place one day where we can’t hold hands. i can/can’t imagine the lost, hurt look in your eyes—the one that betrays you when you say you’re okay. and i wonder, are you prepared for this? do you deserve this? but then i realize that if i get people to see/believe my real gender, then i too will face this problem. do i deserve this?

my mind tells me it’s not fair to be trans and gay. it’s asking too much. apparently turning a “straight” man gay is the cis gay man’s dream. i wouldn’t know.

but i love him so much.
as i lay my body over him, curling the blankets around us like cinnamon rolls, i try to collect all his warmth in case i lose it one day.

beyond the blinds—in another realm—the sun has started to set and leave the world in a myriad of shadows.
Quin Severo. Mark. Ink and watercolor.

This work is a portrait of a friend of mine who didn't know I was drawing him. I first drew his form as a blind contour, and later added the red accents with watercolor paint. I aimed to keep the image simple and capture a masculine form. There is limited color and minimal lines so that it is appealing to look at while still making the viewer think.
MAY  Ada Hoch-Schneider

Pick at your imperfections
scratch and tear,
Run your hands along the crusted fraying edges
ripping each thread from its surge

Born into a world with clean pressed seams curving in edges of chubby limbs and round chins,
They teach you to dissect and analyze

They hand you the seam ripper, the scalpel and claw
expecting you to run safely,
At least they’re not scissors

Feel the bumps and the bruises
Make yourself believe that some of them didn’t mean to,
Seduce your body with the wit and charm of catcalls and diet sodas

Coerce your body into hatred and harm
Be the pins in your back
Learn to hate for the things that you lack

And the things that come easy to others

Teach your body that it isn’t enough
That the way you move is to rough
That your skin is too tough
When the leather is the only thing between you and your condition

This pot represents queer theory, specifically, the component of its definition that echoes anti-establishment principles, focusing on the rejection of oppressive social categorization. I created this pot without any preconceived notion of what it would or should be—it represents authenticity. Authenticity acknowledges and responds to the diversity these socially constructed categories dismiss. With our culture dominated by expectations, we are rarely the product of explicit individuality.


Instead of working in the classic figure-drawing style, I chose to work in a more abstract style. I tried to keep the figure simple while still expressing a feminine form. In depicting a nude woman, I aim to capture the empowerment, strength, and beauty within all women, not just the model I was drawing.
GENDER IDENTITY DISCOVERIES IN MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Timmy Flock

Content warnings: Homophobic language, transphobia, negative body image

I am a senior music education major, and I realized that I am a gender-fluid trans woman at the beginning of this semester. Coming out helped me realize how to be "in the moment" when performing music. When I turn "in the moment," I feel my preoccupations with gender completely leave, or my desires towards gender touch me in a way where I can see my usually conflicting feelings of gender as compatible. I realize I have always felt this way in my performances in the past where I had felt "in the moment."

Regardless of your gender identity, you can still feel freed from a sense of gender in the music making process. Cis men specifically will grow up in environments that tell them playing music is effeminate. Playing in ensembles can help them realize that music is manly, they can get in touch with a feminine side through music, and/or simply that music is not and should not be about gender. Any of these realizations are valid. A person designated one gender can discover they identify as a different gender through the creative process of making music. Music is incredibly spiritual and revealing of one's true self in so many ways.

When someone performs music, whether they realize it or not they are facing several different forces at once. They are facing the external forces of audience and reception, the internalized forces of things their music teachers instructed them to do (or the many influences they picked up from music recordings and performances), and (possibly) the purely internal forces of the heart, spirit, body, and mind. Some call musicians brave, daring, and bold. Some think that professional musicians are full of shit, but I think of professional musicians as normal people. We just focus on being "in the moment" when we perform, and try to face these tough forces with a calm "evaluation without judgment," or evaluation that focuses on improving the performance itself instead of placing value judgments on the personal self.

Transgender people are similar to musicians. When transgender people prepare themselves for the day by putting on their clothes, they are facing several different forces at once when they go out in public. They are facing the external factors of the social environments around them that will either accept or loathe them. They are facing years of being told they are not acting like their assigned-sex/gender, and all the bullying and peer pressure that went along with that. They are (possibly) facing their purely internal factors of their heart, spirit, body, and mind. Some call transgender people brave, daring, and bold. Some think that transgender people are full of shit (and those people can eat shit.) But transgender people are just normal people. Whether a transgender person means to or not, when they present themselves in a different way that is outside of their assigned sex and gender, they are making an eloquent statement about all the social environments they have been in throughout the entirety of their life. That statement says: "It is what it is."

I was desperate for answers when I came to the realization that I was transgender, and I'm still searching for answers. This will be a lifelong realization. However, I feel fortunate enough that my identity as a musician answered so many questions I had been looking at for a long time. Now I remember why I went through that phase in middle school/early high school where I liked these 60s-70s male avant-garde pop musicians such as Frank Zappa, Captain Beefheart, and Ron and Russell Mael from the pop duo Sparks. I felt completely isolated from the experience of boys in my middle school and high school that I needed somehow to relate. So I listened to their music and watched the videos and interviews of these male avant-garde weirdos, and appropriated the characteristics they expressed within these medias into a male version of myself. I incorporated their utter sarcasm, treating everything like a big joke, and lack of emotionality. This is something that the middle school and high school boys could relate to, and I did get a good circle going of male friends. But I also incorporated their caustic wit and know-it-all attitudes, which many of my male friends and peers found to be distasteful. Also, the music that Zappa, Beefheart, and Sparks performed was music that seemed completely outside of a gender experience the way I understood gender in middle school and high school. So comparing music tastes to my male friends was problematic.

I remember when I was first introduced to the music, videos, and interviews of Joni Mitchell, Kate Bush, FKA Twigs, and Björk. Once again, this was music that seemed very avant-garde and outside the experience of gender the way I understood it. Girls in my middle and high school did not listen to any of these artists. However, these groups and solo artists were slightly different from the male avant-garde weirdos in one way: utter emotionality expressed in their music, videos, and interviews. When I came to college and started looking closely at the lyrics of these female artists, I came to realize that their music is often overtly and literally feminine, especially the music of Kate Bush. Her lyrical topics often deal with motherhood, pregnancy, womanly sexual experience, and, yes, even menstruation.

I notice now how these artists affected my personality, thoughts, and communications. The male side of me I learned about through Zappa, Beefheart, and Sparks (i.e. smart, witty, sarcastic) is something I occasionally bring out in how I communicate as a person, but I honestly don't listen to their music much anymore. The female side of me I learned about through Mitchell, Bush, Twigs, and Björk (i.e. power in vulnerability, emotionality in conversation) is something I bring out a lot more in my everyday communications, and I still listen to their music a lot. I love both these sides to myself, but I have to be cautious with how I communicate and not adhere to one side strictly.
Being a sarcastic know-it-all is not always appropriate as a young adult trying to make it in the world, but it sometimes works if I'm not achieving something I desperately need to get. I can love the music of FKA Twigs and talk like she does in interviews, but dieting because I'm jealous of her figure is not good. I tried to do that last summer. It was unhealthy and unrealistic in my male body build... However, all these artists are similar in how they call out the ills of modern society in their works, they are utterly original, and/or they enjoy and celebrate their sexuality. This is the kind person I always was, always am, and always aspire to be.

Being raised in a rich Republican Catholic family in a small, redneck town can really isolate you from the realities of the world and being able to communicate who your personal self is. I have tried to overcome these difficult aspects of my background through dating, meditating, exercising weekly, occasionally getting wasted with friends, keeping more conscious with news and politics, and practicing my instrument everyday. Studying music at the collegiate level has helped me tremendously with my psyche, and actually extending myself socially to others.

It is a privilege to be able to study the works of Schubert, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg and see that they wanted to break down these associations people attribute to music categories/genres, while still taking aspects from these categories/genres within their works as composers. I have realized many students on this liberal arts campus want to think critically about these associations they attribute to social communications and categories, but are often afraid to follow through with action. But just knowing that the students have this desire too makes me feel at ease to extend myself socially. I have always felt a clear sense of self, but have struggled to extend this self into everyday social communications outside of music. It has come to the extent where answering the question “How do you define yourself?” has been problematic for me. Performing music at the collegiate level has helped me answer this question. One answer I give is the simple, cliché “I am who I am.” I find this present in the performances I’ve had recently where I have just felt so clear-headed and “in the moment,” all because I have faced my identity as a transgender person. I’ve realized that all the performances before I came out of the closet where I have felt a clear-headed “in the moment” sensation have been because I left behind my preoccupations with how I wasn’t fitting into either gender. I just didn’t realize I was doing that at the time.

Another way I answer, “How do you define yourself?” is “I am all the people that have influenced me.” I find this present in the recent performances where I have been “in the moment,” but in another way, where all my influences in my life start popping in my head as images and start supporting me through the performance process. I used to get scared and distracted when this would start happening to me, and I would get preoccupied with one of those images. I’d see Zappa, Otis Murphy, or Gerard Morris and think to myself “These are men... play like a man...” Then... AGH! I’d fuck up again! But through meditation. I am learning to let these images pass through my head naturally, so I can see a wide assortment of them through my head as I perform: male, female, and non-binary influences. When I let all these associations wash over me naturally, I play more professionally and beautifully. My heart and mind feel euphoric, my spirit feels uplifted, and my body moves in a naturalistic motion. The most vivid memory I had of this process was in my first Puget Sound wind ensemble concert. I just didn’t realize what was going on at the time.

The cisgender professional musician probably experiences being “in the moment” the same way I do. They seem to be in a euphoric, spiritually uplifting rush, and I can see it through the natural movements of their bodies within performance. They too are channeling all these influences at once of male, female, and non-binary. But I approach and interpret this process as “gender fluidity” for myself because I have been bothered by gender my whole life. Through my coming out process, I was brought back to memories of what seemed to be my internalized, or possibly purely internal reactions to a different gender. Yes, this included listening to strange avant-garde music, but also rucking away my dick and clutching my chest as boobs back in high school to relax and find enjoyment out of my overweight body I didn’t really like. It included years of being called faggot, being told I talked, walked, ate, acted, and sat like a girl. It included many moments of being terrified and confused with my own personal experiences of masturbation. But observing the external forces I’m around today is much different from years before. Today, I am a respected musician within my major. I love my body and sexuality, and keep learning how to love it better each day. When my friends see me in either a dress or a suit, they just look at me, nod their heads, and say a loving comment, such as: “You can pull off any outfit, Timmy.”

“It is what it is.”

![Image of a person performing](image-url)
GOLDEN  Megan Lee Stills

Hot pink hair, metallic dress
Lashes long, blinking,
Fluttering like the night itself

Glitter and gold, freckles on my chest
Sequins materialized
Bits of love itself

Music between my legs
Champagne in my veins
Liquid gold unbottled, never
Taken by itself

My heart; yours
Song threads between
Our chests: pulsing, convulsing,
Our bodies pressed

Hot pink hair, glittering dress
Legs long, shimmering,
Crossed like lovers; like myself

Christmas lights in my eyes
Your lips next to mine
I want you to myself

Bronze, silver, crimson, gold
Pieces of clothes,
Bass in our souls
You watch me
Dance by myself

Inhaling, exhaling
Midnighted eyes
Hand on my thighs
I just can’t help myself.

Hips pressed, pulled, pangs in my chest
Your fingertips slide,
Dancing down my spine
As I spin in my dress

Hot pink hair, discarded dress
You kiss my neck
Color explodes
You enjoy yourself

Everything shines; I take off my disguise
Liquid courage, molten flesh
Don’t try to stop yourself

Glitter in my hair, lipstick everywhere
Melted, metallic, sequined
Puddle that was my dress

Stars behind my eyes, love loops
Through the skies
Keep me to yourself

Sheets twisted, fairy dust on my breath
Your hand drifts, dancing
Darkening the flame, burning,
Pulsing in our chests
Maggie Lanford. Sacrum. Oil on Canvas.
I carry it around with me all day, all night.
It rests in my back pocket, waiting. A constant presence.
Something precious and hated all at the same time;
relied on, clung to, rejected.

Do you know what it's like to have a secret?

It's a badge of honor kept in a locked cage.
It's a treasure—shared with a trusted few,
Those who will not cringe away from the ugliness of it,
threaten, judge, manipulate it.
Take me for their own.

Having a secret is like being possessed.
By what...
An invasion of the dark spaces within myself
That even I didn't know existed.

What was I like, before it took my limbs for its own?
Before my thoughts and words were those of another?
She was lighter, someone free of that heaviness in her back pocket,
Free to laugh at a joke, make a comment, answer a question.
Without consulting the other.
Without lying.

obsessive, shameful, unnatural, deceitful;
Love makes liars of us all.
LOSS  Anonymous

Content warnings: family death, drug abuse, child abuse, cancer

"Are you home?"

A series of voicemails I missed, from my sister. I was taking a nap. Of course I was home—there was nothing else to do. I don't even have the chance to reply before she comes in, and she gathers us all in the living room.

Our older sister has died of an overdose. Collapsed in the bathroom, her toddler in the next room. My father's daughter. I hadn't seen her in over a decade.

At the viewing I see my father. I haven't seen him in years, either. I hardly recognize him—his suit hangs off of his skeletal frame. He looks as sick as he is—the cancer, the chemo, the surgeries. I don't know where he's living, or how.

I hug him out of obligation, or maybe sympathy, or pity. He still smells like cigarettes, even now; it reminds me of the days I spent as a child trapped in a dark house filled with smoke and arguments and humiliation. A deep, musty depression, everything coated with tar.

"Never again," he says. "It's been too long."

Not long enough. I selfishly resent the situation that has brought us together, but I nod.

He doesn't apologize, still, for everything he'd done. But I can't be mad at him. He's lost almost everything. It would be selfish.

"I'm a writer, sort of," I tell him when we break for dinner. "It's... not the kind of thing you'd be interested in." I try to remember if I've written about him before. He says he'll look me up anyway.

A man—what is he? A pastor? A reverend? comes in and asks us to recite the Lord's prayer. Shit, I think. I don't know it. I am embarrassed, but I realize that that shouldn't be the focus right now. I am embarrassed for feeling selfish, and selfish for feeling embarrassed.

"Touch her hand and say goodbye," my grandmother says. I try, but I can't look at the body. I try not to throw up. Selfish.

There is a huge sweeping rainbow outside framing the church across from the funeral home. Everyone is outside taking pictures of it and crying. I don't know how to process anything that's happening. I can only think of the academic texts I've read: The physiological impact of grief on the body. Religious community and rituals, horizontal spiritual connection. The privatization of loss in a capitalist society. Prescription drug abuse in individuals who experienced childhood trauma.

I catch myself wondering how much this service costs, who paid for it.

Selfish, selfish.

I feel like all of my activism, all of my grief and rage about global events, about local protests, about politics and climate change and civil rights— all of that feels null and void. I get so worked up about those, but this one thing, this one person, hits me so much harder. I feel like I should have just as much difficulty with each and every death that comes out of police brutality, out of transphobia and homophobia, out of poverty and lack of clean water and disease. I feel insincere.

I do what I can. It sounds like an excuse, but at least when I am not paralyzed by grief I can do something. And even if it feels insincere, I know that I do care. And I know that stopping would be selfish, too.

Opposite: Sophia Munic. Figure. Watercolor.
I AM NOT PUGET SOUND  Indigo DaCosta

“We are a diverse campus.”

“There is hidden diversity.”

“Stand up if you are... male.”

My heart pounded. I looked at the board. I am a trans man, I thought. That means I am a man.

But I don’t look like one.

But I need to represent my identity. I need people to know.

I couldn’t do it.

It was as “simple” as my gender, it was something almost half of the class stood up for, and I couldn’t.

That’s how I remember the 2015 “I am Puget Sound,” one of the kick-off events to the Puget Sound Orientation Program.

Some remember it as even worse. What I hope to outline here are what I believe to be the intentions behind such an event at Orientation, and contrast that with the impacts it has. I will discuss the impacts in terms of anecdotal evidence of a handful of students, including myself, who I believe in many ways represent more students than themselves. I will then touch upon the ways in which we should start examining this event.

Intention

Talking to many students who have such a negative impression of “I am Puget Sound” and only having attended the 2015 event, I had trouble determining the possible intentions of such an event. The 2010-2011 Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report (fittingly titled “We Are Puget Sound”) calls the event in its 2010 iteration “a workshop for freshman and transfer students that introduces them to the Puget Sound community, celebrates the diversity of the incoming class, and encourages students to know and appreciate each other.” I am not sure what that means, nor am I sure that “I am Puget Sound” was similar enough six years ago to what it is now for this perspective to be meaningful.

Still, I want to briefly examine what this statement seems to imply. “Is diversity supposed to be celebrated?” sophomore Alona Stroup asks in response. While many of us feel disillusioned about the impact it has, I honed in on the idea that it “encourages students to know and appreciate each other” rather than the idea that it “celebrates” diversity. I believe that “I am Puget Sound” is an event that has good intentions behind it, and I believe that the purpose of showcasing many identities the way that it does is to remind our incoming classes to be sensitive to others and not to assume that we know others’ stories.

But does that really work?

Who is it for?

“I hate ‘I am Puget Sound’ more than anything,” student Alona Stroup says, adding that we need to “stop and analyze who it’s made for and recognize that it’s not made for students of minoritized groups.” Instead, it’s made for people who are not in these groups to showcase the kind of diversity we have. Sophomore Tyler Randazzo says that the event can create a “cheerleader” type of allyship, which is dangerous because it allows self-proclaimed allies to feel good about their support without doing anything while simultaneously making the students of minoritized groups feel uncomfortable.

Another sophomore, who was present for this year’s “I am Puget Sound” and who wishes to remain anonymous, says that she believes that this year’s facilitator didn’t do as good of a job controlling the crowd and maintaining the silence requirement. As a result, there were some moments where applause did happen, which made it an unsafe space for a lot people. One of the strangest dynamics about the event occurs when you reveal an aspect of your identity and then others praise you for it, even though you didn’t choose that identity.

Just like I didn’t, Tyler Randazzo says that he didn’t realize his discomfort with the event during our 2015 Orientation until this year. The event is tokenizing, but it can be hard for minoritized groups to realize that something is tokenizing until well after the fact, which Tyler Randazzo attributes to the fact that tokenization is a part of our daily lives. Many first-year students have shared their discomfort about the event with him, and only then did he realize how it felt for him a year ago.

Questions such as the one about being LGBT also present a problem. From what I remember from the event my year, we were asked to stand if we identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. For me and
for others, this can lead to a number of problems. For one thing, this event occurs at the very beginning of freshman year, just as many of us are still trying to figure out how to shape our identities in college. Even if we are at the point where we have figured out what our queerness means to ourselves (which is often not true for many of us by the age of 18 or 19), we don’t yet know that we want to share it with everyone. Sure, we’re told that this is a safe space, but this event occurs the second day we step onto campus, when that “safe space” hasn’t been proven, and it occurs in front of the whole class, so we can’t guarantee that every single person will be accepting and open. Even if there were some way to guarantee that, it’s unlikely that everyone actually knows how to approach conversations about these identities respectfully even if they intend to.

Just as the event itself intends to—and fails.

What the event does instead is tokenize, showcase, and “celebrate.” But who feels most comfortable at this event? I would argue that it will be those who have many others standing up with them when they stand up, and who get to realize the “diversity” that our school has. It’s a way for people who are outside of those marginalized groups to applaud the existence of those groups—in essence, we get to say, “look at how diverse our liberal arts school is.” We get to say, “look at all the identities represented.” But we don’t realize that when we say that, we don’t pay attention to who those people are. When we clap for the handful of people out of a class of 600-700 who stood up for an identity, are we clapping for them and for something they couldn’t control, or are we clapping for ourselves? Aren’t we clapping for how good we are for “supporting” them?

Challenge By Choice?

People justify this showcasing applauding ourselves by pointing out that this event is “challenge by choice.” And while I am all for challenge-by-choice activities, I need to point out that “I am Puget Sound” is inherently not challenge-by-choice.

First off, if you are a person of color, and you are asked to stand up if you represent a racial minority, it is often visible to those around you if you choose not to stand up. In that way, even if you choose not to, there is still pressure on you, and you did not get to choose that, just as you don’t get to choose your identities.

Even with less visible identities, this pressure still occurs. Sophomore Luke Ulrick points out that “if you don’t stand up, then you feel bad or like you lied.” Alona Stroup expands on that, noting that when you are one of only a few to stand up, it feels awful. So when you stay seated for an identity that you have that only a few other people stand up for, it feels like you need to stand up for solidarity with others who have to stand up. You don’t get to choose that guilt, either.

It’s also important to note that not only does this event occur on the second day of Orientation, it also occurs with no warning. As students of minoritized groups, we go in and then have to make choices that could affect how the entire class (of people we don’t know yet) views us for the rest of time here—and we have to make those “choices” in just seconds.

There’s no way that “I am Puget Sound” is challenge by choice—even for identities that can be considered invisible, the element of “choice” here is too loaded and too heavy on students of minoritized groups.

Looking Forward

The main question we need to ask about this event is “Who is it for?” As students of minority and marginalized groups, we know that this event is not for us. It makes us uncomfortable. It makes us feel like our school isn’t diverse, like we don’t belong here. For students who don’t belong to marginalized groups, it lets us praise others for their diversity—tokenizing these students for their identities. That impact goes directly against the event’s alleged intention of increasing our sensitivity to others, instead opening up a space for us to see students only for their identities, which they can’t control, and not for their individuality. It closes us off to being genuine listeners, because we think we know others’ identities already, and because we think they wanted to share when really they felt like they had to.

Often, students go through Orientation, and then forget about it as school picks up, only for the school to go through the motions again next Fall. This year, I challenge the school to look at and thoroughly revise—if not cancel altogether—this event. I challenge the student body to think back to when they went to their first “I am Puget Sound” and think about whether or not the event made them feel like they were Puget Sound and why or why not. Are you Puget Sound because you go to a diverse liberal arts school that accepts a wide range of identities? Are you Puget Sound because you are ready not to assume you know something about someone’s background? Are you Puget Sound because you felt pressure to be a token of your identity?

Or are you Puget Sound because you realize that this event is unacceptable?
This piece is supposed to be ambiguous. I tried to depict someone in free fall or someone who was drowning or who was being reborn from the womb. It demonstrates how trapped and also how exposed I felt when I found out Donald Trump was elected president. As a queer woman of color, I know that my community and myself are going to be violently impacted by Donald Trump’s term.
the ocean’s waves lick at my ankles on the shore
like a hungry beast of incomprehensible size.

there is a mutual respect between us.

i long to be consumed, to be calm,
to become.
always changing, never still,
but enduring despite it all.

i know in the ocean there is
anger, there is terror,
there is terrible ugliness.

there is all that men have left,
born of violence and greed,
not given a second thought.
i feel the pain of a broken body,
a broken planet.

i know in the ocean there is
so much uncharted, unexplored.

it will never allow itself to be known
but on its own terms.

it whispers to me.
i understand.
TAKE MY PICTURE OFF THE WALL

Maloy Moore

when I visited in summer
you showed me his photo next to the other grandchildren
a face i had not grown up knowing
because you took him away.
my model for love as a child, taken away
you were proud of putting him there
patting yourself on the back
like you deserve praise for acknowledging his existence.
is this how you say sorry to me for holding him back my whole life?
an awkward nod that you don’t shun him anymore?
does his photo on your wall help you sleep at night?
or do you think about all the years you lost.
you tell my sister that god doesn’t make bodies that way.
he made hers that way.
he made your grandson’s that way.
he made mine that way.
he makes millions and hundreds of people and animals that way.
more natural than the chemicals you slather onto your hair.
will you banish me next?
i wonder if, when my back is turned, do you glance at my photo?
do you tell lies about me with your nose turned up?
do you shit-talk me to my sister and my cousins and my own father as a way to discourage their acceptance of themselves?

Take my picture off your wall. I will no longer be responsible for your encouraging masturbatory back-pats for nothing more than realizing my existence.

I choose love and to be loved over hatred.

And Grandma, that’s the only matter of choice at hand.
YOUR PULSE  Indigo DaCosta

I couldn’t hear the gunshots
over the beating pulse of the music,
over the flashing rainbows of light
spattered on the black tiles—
not at first.

I couldn’t hear the gunshots
over the sound of the radio
saying Boston “knew what it felt like”
to be you.

I couldn’t hear the gunshots
the morning after the Pride parade
when even the sun didn’t want to wake up
and face the day.

I couldn’t hear the gunshots
because I wasn’t there,
because I’m not you,
yet I watch my blood seep
out of my heart, right through my skin
and onto the black-tiled floor
because I am you.
It’s been over three years since high school and you’re still going after me.

You get offended that I deleted you off of Facebook and Instagram,

Even though I’m “Eastern European trash” or that my people

“Bleach their skin to look like [you].”

You’re rich and white, a reflection of what our society loves.

And you shame me for how I was born. A reflection of what society

Resents.

You call me a hypocrite for calling you racist.

Because you say I cannot critique “groups I’m not a part of” (white people).

You appropriate ikebana while saying you’re “too European” to eat sushi.

You make fun of me for being kawaii when that’s my personality.

You silence me and steal parts of my culture you think are pretty enough for you.

You know, the culture whose people your “group” locked up in desert compounds while nuking their families.

Their people.

My people.

And you believe we cannot critique your “group.”

You have the agency to voice whatever the fuck you want.

You feed off of your own malevolent feelings to keep chasing after me.

To publicly write how this brown body “never had rationality.”

And to hurt my fellow POC along with me

You said in high school that “corn rows are disgusting,”

And asked me if it’s “trashy to find black people attractive.” But when you destroy my integrity with your privilege; when you degrade my culture and then

steal parts of it you think are pretty; when you talk about me with complete apathy—

And then you get consumed in wrath ‘cause I try to escape from your torment,

while you cannot see a human being when you see brown skin—

I’m pretty sure we know who is truly lacking rationality.
REMINISCE

Madyson Frank

I miss you.
I miss ditching class to do
Nothing
Because it was always something
with you.
I miss incense and tarot cards
Cigarettes and red wine.
I miss existential crises.
Doubt
And reassurance.
I miss sitting in the rain.
I miss having to explain what you were
To me
Because people just didn’t get it.
I miss Ru Paul and Vanilla lattes
Ghost stories and philosophy.
I miss being scared by time
Though I know it isn’t real.
I miss hating love
Unless it was queer.
And loving hate
As long as it was shady.
I miss dismantling the patriarchy
One outfit at a time.
But mostly
I miss you.
A CURSE  Anonymous

Should I die come four years time
I curse those who plague this earth
for those who take my sisters from me
my brothers, my loves
may you suffer
may you suffer a fate worse than hell
may you suffer a lovelessness
may you suffer as we have
for as much time as you have robbed us
I shall live these four long years
I will have surely suffered
and I shall have made hell
and I will continue on
as a living curse
as a blessing you shall not receive

to those who share my tone but not my loves
a color where no pride should be found
may your generations be plagued with ills
be marked with pallor and seen vividly
so that you may not hide from the eyes of us you wronged

may you wander aimlessly
and never find soil
never make roots
never grow
never prosper

to those who lay claim to lands
and forbid other ownership
may you wander aimlessly
and never find soil
never make roots
never grow
never prosper
I WILL SURVIVE DONALD TRUMP

I WILL KICK FASCISM IN THE ASS

I WILL BE OKAY

EVERYONE I LOVE WILL BE SAFE

Catherine Huber. Sigils. Digital.

A sigil is a symbol that allows you to channel your wills and desires into something both concrete and abstract. You create them by abstracting the words that make up your will, and by doing so you are able to focus all of your energy into that desire instead of getting hung up on the words themselves. Following the decision about Trump, I have had so much anger, fear, and sadness. I made some sigils that will allow me and hopefully others going through similar emotions to work through them. So that we can channel our energy into staying safe and achieving our goals.
Chronic pain and illness is an issue still very misunderstood in modern society. There are few resources or options for those living with chronic conditions, and it can be almost equally challenging to face a life with so little flexibility towards those with disabilities. Being a woman with a chronic condition provides its own set of problems. Women are more frequently told they are overreacting, that their condition is caused by emotional instability, or are even turned away by doctors who don’t believe anything is wrong. For many people with chronic pain, the weather has a big impact on how they feel day to day. Sometimes I feel that the dampness and decay of the Pacific Northwest mimics the feeling of what is going on in my body, and so much of my art incorporates natural elements from the area as a way of articulating that constant reality. I hope my art can continue the discussion about disabilities in our society, as well as the elevated difficulties women in these positions face.
I AM NOT INVISIBLE

Kaitlyn Carney

Artist statement: As an active campus community member that holds leadership positions in clubs, Greek Life, and other organizations, with high-functioning general and social anxiety, everyday feels like a battle of not letting myself fade into the background. Also, as first-generation college student, I try my absolute best to survive through academia in general and make the most of the opportunity to be present in this environment, despite my own personal battles. This poem reflects the past three years.

Meeting new people terrifies me
Being around large groups of people terrifies me
I can barely pull myself out of bed
And pull myself together to put on an act
For everyone, like I’m not ready to just fall apart
But apart from that and my visible invisible illness
I put myself out in a visible sphere
I lead groups and small organizations
I speak through a shaky voice
I exist and thrive in a realm my brain constantly tells me that I’ll die in
My presence is visible
As I build the backbone of structures
That builds others’ confidence in the future
Of miniscule systems
Watch me be visible at every
Relevant event—combating my invisibility
What I won’t allow myself to be:
Invisible

I am not invisible
I am not invisible, but my illness is
My illness makes me wish I was invisible
But here I am,
Visible and conspicuous to
Everyone’s eye and the light of day
Even on days when I can’t concentrate
Or form a whole sentence without overthinking it to the point of oblivion
On these days, you might think I’m oblivious
I am not oblivious; I see everything
I see everything upon the horizon and analyzing and overanalyzing it to blinding proportions
My vision blurs as my thoughts race around my head, a million miles per minute
So, I apologize
If you think I’m oblivious

This piece was created to represent human connectedness—how differently our relation to one another would flourish, if placed in an environment absent of expectations and illegitimate socially constructed institutions.
We dedicate this magazine to those whose lives have been lost in the past year to discriminatory violence and hate.