

VISION

2021



**POINT**



**OF**





**VIEW**



**Serena Vohra**  
*Journal Lead*

I'd like to start off by thanking each person involved in creating this year's edition of Vision. The following pages have been created and thought out by various students, creative individuals with a never-ending amount of talent. My hope for you is that each page brings you a different feeling and that you enjoy every single art form included. It's not just skill that's developed at Vision; it's the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes, empathize with their experience, and find the medium to voice their thoughts. No matter the challenges faced in the last year, these students have come together to make something great. To the contributors, shoutout to all of you. I'm proud to have been your Lead.

# EDITORS'



**Nadra Bashamuher**  
*Author and Editor Lead*

I am writing this at one of my mentally challenging times – I know, it's risky business. Here we go. The amazing people that they are, the ICCIT Council entrusted me as a co-lead for this journal's issue. My opening ramble isn't the only thing that makes this year's journal unique. Although we are no strangers to the difficulties of life, 2020 has exceeded our exceptions - Brexit, wildfires, BLM protests, United States presidency, the COVID-19 pandemic that literally stopped the world (I can keep going). People were asked to strictly #stayhome and it only made sense to stock up on toilet paper. It was and is very apocalyptic. Vision has become an enriching platform for students to express and share their 2020 individual experiences. This publication is packed with emotionally touching and motivating pieces. My heart goes out to the team; I am thankful for collaboratively working with this team of creatives to produce this beautiful publication. Please enjoy.



The ability to experience the world and be resilient to the things it throws at us is one thing that takes pure courage and creativity to transform those thoughts into art. We can dwell on how impactful the pandemic was and continues to be, however its unprecedented nature creates another layer of complexity to the experiences of life. This journal is comprised of stories from various perspectives, backgrounds and experiences. The emotion conveyed in each piece from stories to images speaks numbers about the talent of each artist. I am immensely grateful to be part of this amazing team and I hope that as you read this you feel the dedication and love put into its creation. To my fellow coeds, you all are amazing and thank you for being a great support throughout the year!

## Faizah Balogun

*Photography Lead*

# NOTES



In the second year of Vision, we showcase the point of view of UTM students in the historical year that was 2020. A lot of things happened, some individually, and some as a collective. This journal serves as a collection of these experiences from varying perspectives and storytelling in a time of disconnect. I am grateful to have worked with such a diverse and talented team. To our contributors, our Vision 2021 team, this is it, the fruit of your labour and hard work. I thank my Graphic Designers, Illustrators, and Artists, this journal wouldn't look the way that it is without your artistic vision and dedication. My associates, Anughya and Jenni, I appreciate you and the work you have put in, especially in Marketing. Lastly, my fellow Co-Editors/ Leads, Serena, Faizah, and Nadra, we did it!

## Samantha Balajadia

*Graphics and Illustrator Lead*

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# REBORN

**Author: Nadim Kassymov**

**Editor: Juliana Stacey and Anughya Bijlani**

**Illustrator: Aprill Zuniga**

Days pass faster than reality.  
I'm stuck inside my mind with no escape.  
The world has turned bleak, dark.  
Am I supposed to feel this way?

With decaying hope, I lay in my empty, dim room.  
When suddenly, a droplet of sunlight seeps in between  
the blinds.  
A warm breeze awakens my body.  
Ideas fuel my mind; my passions begin to ignite.  
The light begins to cover my room,  
Bright, as if it came from the palms of Apollo.  
I am dazed but overcome with feelings of prosperity.

I am awake,  
Feeling as if the world is in my hands.  
In control of my destiny,  
of my reality.



# STUCK

Michelle Tang

An immeasurable amount of time has been granted to us during the quarantine, but not much has been spent productively. Though we know this to be detrimental, it is as if we are stuck: heads to pillows, asses to seats, and especially, eyes glued to our screens. No post or picture is really remembered after we scroll past, yet the thumb continues its flicking automatically. This succubus promises us a fantastical escape from our worries; a journey to Neverland where time is deceptively stagnant. Where there are no destinations and we lost boys wander to our heart's content. What's left of our willpower whispers: pull away, pull away... but the bright beam of light from the device has already abducted our attention.





# R A I N

# P L A Y L I S T

*Story by: Sherene Almjawer*

*Illustrated by: Sherene Almjawer*

*Edited by: Chris Lee*

"Call your dad and tell him to come home," my mom shouts from downstairs, "NOW!"

I reach across the floor, arching my back off the carpet and digging my fingers into the ground, looking for my phone.

Without opening my eyes, I say, "Okay Google, call Baba."

Right as he answers, a bright flash of light seeps through the closed blinds of my room and seconds later a loud crash shakes the whole house.

"Baba you should come home now, they said there was gonna be a tornado."

The clatter of the rain drops against the pavement mimics phone static.

"Baba?"

I hear water pelting concrete.

"Hello?"

The rain becomes muffled.

"Aeh (yes) Baba, jayaeh (I'm coming)," he says.

"Okay yallah (come on)." I breathe and hang up.

**"Google, play rain playlist,"**

I call out. All my 3 a.m. indie song binges resulted in the perfect, somber, playlist. What better to accompany my existential thoughts, spiraling nightmares, and day dreams than simple melodies paired with bone-chilling harmonies? The first song, Still With You, plays through the speaker.

Lightning floods my room again and a crash follows. I focus on the ticks of the clock.



One, two, three, four... five seconds away. Like a cat, I stretch my limbs until I feel the relief of a few cracks. Then my foot hits the corner of my paint board. A wave of pain shoots through my entire body. Stupid board.

I started a huge painting of ocean waves over a month ago—meant to be my magnum opus—and only got as far as painting the sky. Since then, I haven't drawn, painted or sculpted.

All the polymer clay and the oil paints sit on my IKEA cart, drying.

My phone goes off. "SUBMIT JOB APPLICATION!!!!" the alarm reminds me. Neither my resume or cover letter are written. I press snooze. If working at the cinema for the rest of my life means not having to submit more job applications or go to any interviews, then I guess I'll continue to make abhorrently buttered popcorn for Susan and her fifty-eight kids.

I close my eyes for a moment and another strike of lightning hits, penetrating through my eyelids. For a moment, I only see stars. Then, they fade. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight... nine seconds away. I keep my eyes open.

I let my shoulders relax against the carpet and unclench my fists. Slipping into what I like

to call my daydream land is much easier recently. At any point of any day, I stare at some inanimate object—right now I've opted for the splatter of bright orange blood on my ceiling from when my brother killed a spider—while my mind is spiraling. Some days, I dream of my completely made up partner who drives a motorcycle and sneaks me out of the house at 2 a.m. Other days, I wallow in the fact that I'll probably be alone for the rest of my life and that I have no concrete plan for what to do once I graduate.

Depression? It fucking might be.

Like every other person, I set a new year's goal to exercise and lose weight. On the third day of the year, after coming home from eating out with friends, I stood in front of my mirror. I struggled to unbutton my jeans.

\*\*\*

***"Sherene! Come downstairs, food is ready,"***

my mom yells.

Tugging off the jeans, I stare at myself. Immediately, I walk to the bathroom and step on

the scale.

There's a moment between kicking the ball and making the winning goal where the crowd, the players, and the people watching on TV stay silent. It's deafening. No one breathes. It feels like the entire world is on pause. That's how I approached the number on the scale.

I stare at the black smudge on the wall. I take a deep breath and glance down: 162lbs. I hold my breath. No. Absolutely not. I step off and reset the scale. I try again: 162lbs.

"Sherene! Yallah! The food will be cold," my mom yells again.

***"I'm not hungry,"***

I shout back at her.

\*\*\*

Since then, I collected the few drops of motivation I had, and worked out every day for 173 days, hoping not to shake the entire house every time I did a jumping jack. For the first week, I couldn't laugh without crumpling in pain.

Turns out, I can't muster up motivation for more than one thing at a time. Slowly, my room collects dust: unfinished art projects, a mound of clothes on the floor, unopened packages

scattered under the bed and a stack of stationery on the desk—cute stickers, notepads and character pens all still in their packaging.

Lightning strikes again. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten... twenty-four seconds away. I can barely hear the thunder.

Over the summer, I promised my friends I'd open an art shop and update my Instagram every few days. I promised my parents I'd clean my entire room and research things I can do after I graduate. I promised myself I'd make as much art as possible and workout until I'm happy with how I look.

But I've only been working out.

All other things in my life, including romance and the future were put on hold. Submerging myself in my daydream land is the easiest way to block out whatever questions my family throws my way: When are you getting married? Do you have a boyfriend? What are you going to do after graduation? I answer ambiguously and most of the time they take the hint and stop asking. Confrontation is the last way I deal with these questions. I just push them into the corner of my mind where

procrastination takes place. It's like a Rolodex of thoughts I'd prefer to repress than ever think about again until I absolutely have to.

Perhaps I did have a crush on someone. Perhaps I met her on Twitter and perhaps she did not confine to the religious and cultural beliefs my family held so dearly. Perhaps I was never planning on telling anyone about her and how we wanted to run away together.

But I did.

I told my brother about it in May at 3 a.m. and sobbed like someone had turned the faucet in my eyes on. I regret it. I hope, by now, he's forgotten.

We're not together anymore. We struggled in June and broke up in July and stopped talking altogether in October. Only days before she told me she wanted to "come to Canada to see me."

\*\*\*

I smile at the message and something in my stomach flutters. Since 2017, we've been messaging over Twitter. We'd talk in the mornings through WhatsApp video calls and wonder what life would be like if we had met in an alternate dimension where no societal constructs

existed and everyone just wanted happiness for everyone else. She joins me in my daydream land in conversations like that.

Another notification pops up from her, the little blue Twitter bird sitting next to her username.

***"I think I want to study there instead."***

"You don't wanna be a nurse anymore?" I replied.

"Nah :(, and besides it'd be nice if I studied in Canada because we could see each other as much as you wanted."

***"I'd love that."***

"And," she replies, "it'd be okay if I stayed with you right?"

I nod like she can see me, "I actually already told my mom that you would visit," I frown, "but as a friend. Of course."

":( Ah. I know."

\*\*\*

Beads of rain beat at my window, no more thunder or lightning. A Soulmate Who Wasn't Meant to Be, the final song on my playlist, comes to an end.

In my mind, it's not 2020 and

I'm not in Canada. Instead, it's 2024 and I'm lounging in an outdoor café in Tokyo. A blurry figure, my future partner, is sitting across from me with a steaming mug in their hands. I've written a book and am working on the next. My partner and I live in a little studio apartment just outside of Toronto and we have a Samoyed dog named Luna and a calico cat named Sol. I've long forgotten 2020 and the disaster soup it served and force fed the world. I've forgotten the glimmers of light peaking through my curtains at 4 a.m., wondering if I was going to graduate. I've forgotten the tightening and cramping feeling in my heart every time I reread the letter I wrote her. I've forgotten how looking into the mirror and seeing the disgusting amalgam of emotion, stress, and fat that coated my entire body in shame.

The rain falls softly, little drops racing each other to the windowsill and whisking away the thunder and lightning.

The front door slams closed.

"Salam (peace and hello)," my dad calls from downstairs.

**"Salam baba,"**

I call back.



PRBLMS

Just the Two of Us

La La Lost You

This Is Why I Need You

lowkey

Summertime in Paris

Honesty

This December

Line Without a Hook

@\_nikkinatnat

Be Alright by Amanda Cook and Dante Bowe!  
So good! This track legit came out around the peak of COVID and it's just brought a lot of peace and stength.

@anughya.x

temptation by joey bada\$\$!! It's an upbeat and feel good song with a message that fits today's current events really well :)

# Quaran TUNES

@jennism7

Mariposa by peach tree rascals reminds me of cycling in the summer with the wind blowing <3 simpler times :'(

@samanthabljd

XO cover by John Mayer! Really made me feel like I was in an ending scene of a coming-of-age indie movie.

Think About Me

Sunflower Seeds

Trigger Protection Mantra

Are You Bored Yet?

This is Home

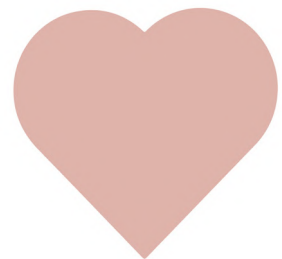
Changes

Everybody Out There

Sunset Lover

Eternal

Manic Monday

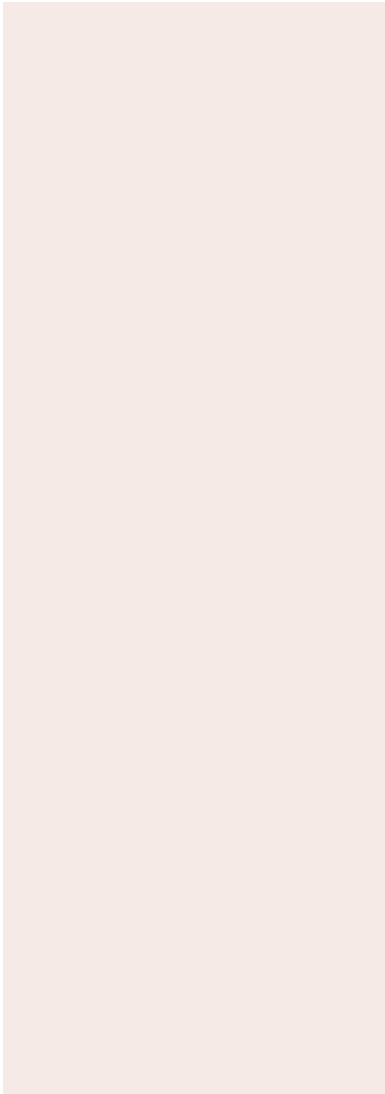
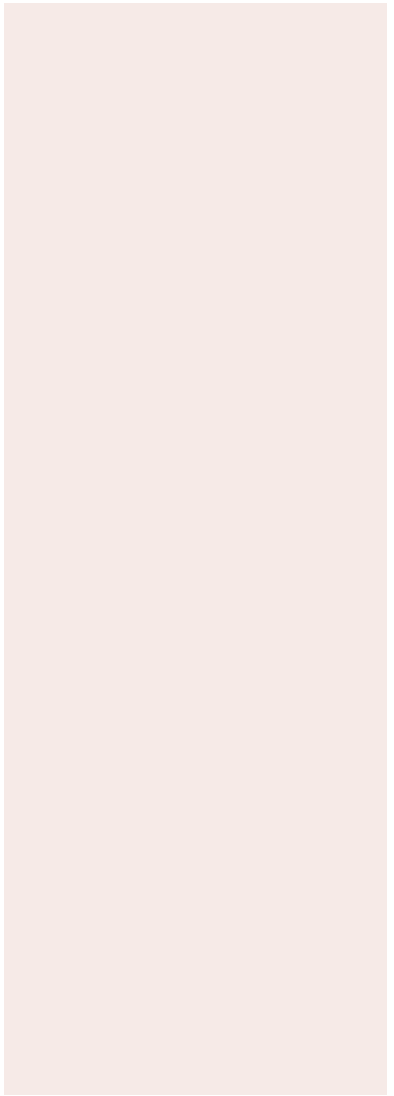


2020 has been crazy, but it's finally over so it's time to celebrate the little things that made this insane year worth it.

This playlist is about the music that made YOUR year the happy, the moody and the "crying in the bedroom" tapes.

Scan the code below to enjoy the entire playlist and relive 2020 through other's memories.





# LOOKING THROUGH GLASS

BY  
Chris Lee

While many believed that everything changed during this pandemic, nature didn't. It was the source of my sanity throughout these trying times. I would look out my window to watch the familiar motion of amber leaves swaying before resting on plush snow. It provided me with a sense of normalcy, a sense of security within the knowledge that one day, when the world finally settles down, there will be an old friend waiting.

My photography focuses on the unaffected within this pandemic. Since reflections not only show change but also what didn't, it was the perfect technique for me to present both.



# DISTRACT ME

Anaiah Reyes

**I**n March as the coronavirus lockdown made its way to Toronto, I was hooked to all the latest research and updates about the virus. As a health science major, I couldn't help myself from worrying about the impacts of the virus and what it might mean for the future. With the media constantly relaying infection rates and death counts, I realized I needed to take a break from the news.

I found myself exploring other ways to distract myself and keep busy during the lockdown. For me, I've always found comfort in drawing and painting, making time

for it even on the busiest of days. It wasn't until the end of summer that I realized the haven I had created at home, filled with new distractions and entertainments that kept me busy. Like a lot of people, I spent quarantine stuck in a daze, lying in bed, my attention fixed to a screen.

I spent quarantine stuck in a daze, lying in bed, my attention fixed to a screen.

This piece is meant to serve almost as a diary entry, a snapshot encompassing a summer's worth of days spent at home, distracted from the outside world yet engaging in it through technology. It is a reflection of my personal experience during the pandemic, in all its listlessness.

DISTRACT ME



DISTRACT ME

*\*Trigger Warning\**

# A Lucky Charmed Life



Author

Miguel DaSilva

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Editor

Chris Lee

Illustrator

Anaiah Reyes



Brian's house was a dark place. It had windows everywhere but they were always shuttered. We played road hockey with a net his dad found discarded on garbage day. After we sweated through our t-shirts, we would go into his house for some cereal. Brian would pull two chairs up to the kitchen table, furl up the blinds to illuminate the dingy furniture, then take two bowls from the kitchen counter, two spoons from the cupboard, a box of Lucky Charms from the pantry, the carton of milk from the fridge, and place everything in front of us.

He would pour the cereal in his bowl first and I would pour the milk in mine. It was a matter of contention. We could agree on who would play goalie on the road, who would get the first turn on the Xbox, and that both Santa Claus and God were myths; but Brian and I couldn't agree on whether cereal or milk should come first. Eventually, Brian won and I started doing it his way.

While we munched on our Lucky Charms, we would look out the window or notice the dust floating in the air. Then Brian would clear the table,

replace the milk in the fridge, return the cereal to the pantry next to the canister of Folgers, rack the bowls and spoons in the dishwasher, wash his hands, and unfurl the blinds—shrouding the kitchen in darkness again.

Brian was my best friend. One day, he never came to school. There was a rumor that his dad killed himself and his mom moved him away. I never found out where. I was young, maybe eight years old. We were in grade two then.

“  
When I was a boy I  
didn't know that things  
I did would become  
memories.  
”

People said he did it in the garage. I thought he hung himself from the metal rails that tracked the garage door up and down. Then I found my sister in her garage fifteen years later with the car running and I figured that Brian's dad did the same thing.

Life's a fickle fucker, but I'm still alive and I'm still breathing and that's all the hope I need—dark house or not.



I held a bag of milk and waited in line at the convenience store in a plaza down the road.

When I was a boy, I didn't know that

things I did would become memories. So it's sometimes hard to remember what happened when I was eight and lost my best friend. There are some images up there, swimming around and drowning, floating up bloated.

It makes me wonder how much I'm making up, and whether anything I say is true.

“

**My wall clock punched the air with each second and melted into silence.**

”

Charms laid in my kitchen beneath a shaft of dusty light, casted through a broken slat on my blinds. I stuffed one of the milk bags into a white jug, cut the corner of the plastic, and poured it into my bowl.

I ate the cereal while I looked out my window. Cars drove in cadences below me. My

“This and a pack of Canadian Classics, please. Small king. Original,” I said.

The cashier rung me up. I tapped the pack twice on the plastic counter laminating blankets of lottery tickets and left. I stood outside the store and ripped the plastic from the carton, looking at the rotten, black heart on the label.

“Quicker ways to kill yourself,” a man with grey stubble murmured as he walked past me, twirling his keys around his fingers.

I smoked the cigarette to its filter, flicked it away, then walked back towards my condo. A bowl of Lucky

wall clock punched the air with each second and melted into the silence. A notification from my phone pinged, reminding me to get ready.



The suicide support group met at a small community centre inside a room with math equations and cubbyholes on the walls. We sat in a circle and

“

**I stared at a blotch of dried coffee on the floor.**

”

shared stories, patted each other on the back, exchanged phone numbers, made plans to hang out, ate donuts, and drank coffee.

“How are you doing Marcus?” the support group leader asked.

“Umm... I'm alright,” I replied.

“That's good. Anything to

share today?"

I licked my lips. "Sure... When I was young, my best friend's dad took his own life. In the garage. Brian. I don't even remember his last name. Something Polish. He was cool. We played road hockey a lot."

I stared at a blotch of dried coffee on the floor.

"At that time, I didn't have friends. I did stupid shit. One time I invited all my classmates to a party at Laser Quest. One of the parents called and asked about the details and my mom told her there was no party. I got a cap gun that night and sort of... pretended to shoot myself a few times."

I pursed my lips and noticed all the dried coffee around the floor, under people's chairs, on the blue felt of the metal seats, on the hem of an old man's jeans.

"I think Brian's mom was at the front door. I came

downstairs and asked if Brian and I were gonna play today. Brian's mom smiled at me for a second, but she was crying so I felt a little weird about that... My mom told me to go back upstairs. There was a window in my room that overlooked the front door and the road. Brian was out there in the back seat of his mom's car, staring

into his lap. I wheeled the window open and yelled down to him. But he didn't react. I grabbed a box of Lucky

Charms that I kept hidden under my bed and waved it at him. He looked up and then back down."

I put my hands over my mouth and tapped my lips.

"That was the last time I saw Brian. He didn't come to school anymore and when I walked by his house, there was a padlock on the front door and the curtains were taken down from the windows. His dad killed himself in the garage... I had this picture of a thick torso swinging

“

I grabbed a box of Lucky Charms... and waved it at him. He looked up and then back down.

”

in the dust and dark, hung from the metal rails with an old rope.”

There were yellow stains on the floor too, and cobwebs, and dust bunnies that moseyed along the tiles. I thought they looked like oil stains on cement. I closed my eyes and saw a head lolled over a steering wheel.

I opened them and the little yellow stains were still there.

“When my sister died, when she killed herself, I found her in her car in the garage. I guess that’s how Brian’s dad did it too. It was easier to picture him hanging there because I never actually saw his dad. He worked a night shift and was always asleep when I went to their house. It was easy really, just a shadow...”

I waved my hand in the air. “But it wasn’t. I sometimes wonder where Brian went... If he killed himself too or wanted to kill himself like me. If he’s happy. Anyway, I had some Lucky Charms today. Just a random

craving. That’s why I thought about him.”

I kept my attention at the ground, nodded, and let someone touch my shoulder. Another man spoke up.

“When I was a kid, I had a best friend. He

was my only friend. Then my dad... well, my dad did it in the garage. And I never saw him again either—my friend, that is. We ate Lucky Charms after school everyday. He used to put his milk in first then the cereal. Idiot. I missed him.”

I rose my head and saw a scruffy dude with yellow teeth, thin sunshine blond hair, busted capillaries around his nose, and a stubbled blond beard. He had pale blue eyes that danced around in deep sockets.

“Hey Marcus. Long time no see,” Brian said.

“

He used to put his milk in first then the cereal. Idiot. I missed him.

”

“

We stomped our last smoke out and hugged.

”



After the meeting, we stood outside and shared a smoke.

We skipped the usual bullshit—the what’s and where’s and how’s. We just inhaled sweet, pungent tobacco that tickled our noses and watched people walk up and down the street. We spent thirty minutes in front of the community centre smoking on a chain.

“This is my last one,” Brian said. He held the cigarette like a pencil, pinched between his yellow, tar-stained fingers. “Ha... Me too. I bought this pack earlier today,” I replied. “I’m sorry about your sister.”

I nodded and stared at the strings of tobacco. They curled up, turned cherry red, bright white, then faded to grey. The tip’s ash got caught in a gust and flew away with the wind that buffeted in the courtyard.

“I’m sorry about your dad... I shoulda—”

“Nah.” Brian turned to me and drew circles around his eyes with his free hand. He traced the tears down his cheek, and

smearing a sharp frown across his mouth. “I thought he hung himself too, you know. My mom never told me but... You’re right. It was probably the car that did it...”

“Doesn’t get better, does it?”

“No.”

I nodded.

“But, I’m still alive.

You were

“

We played road hockey with a net his dad found discarded on garbage day.

”

wondering if I was happy? Somedays. Yeah,” he said.

We stomped our last smoke out and hugged.

“It’s Vitezic by the way. Brian Vitezic. Croatian.”

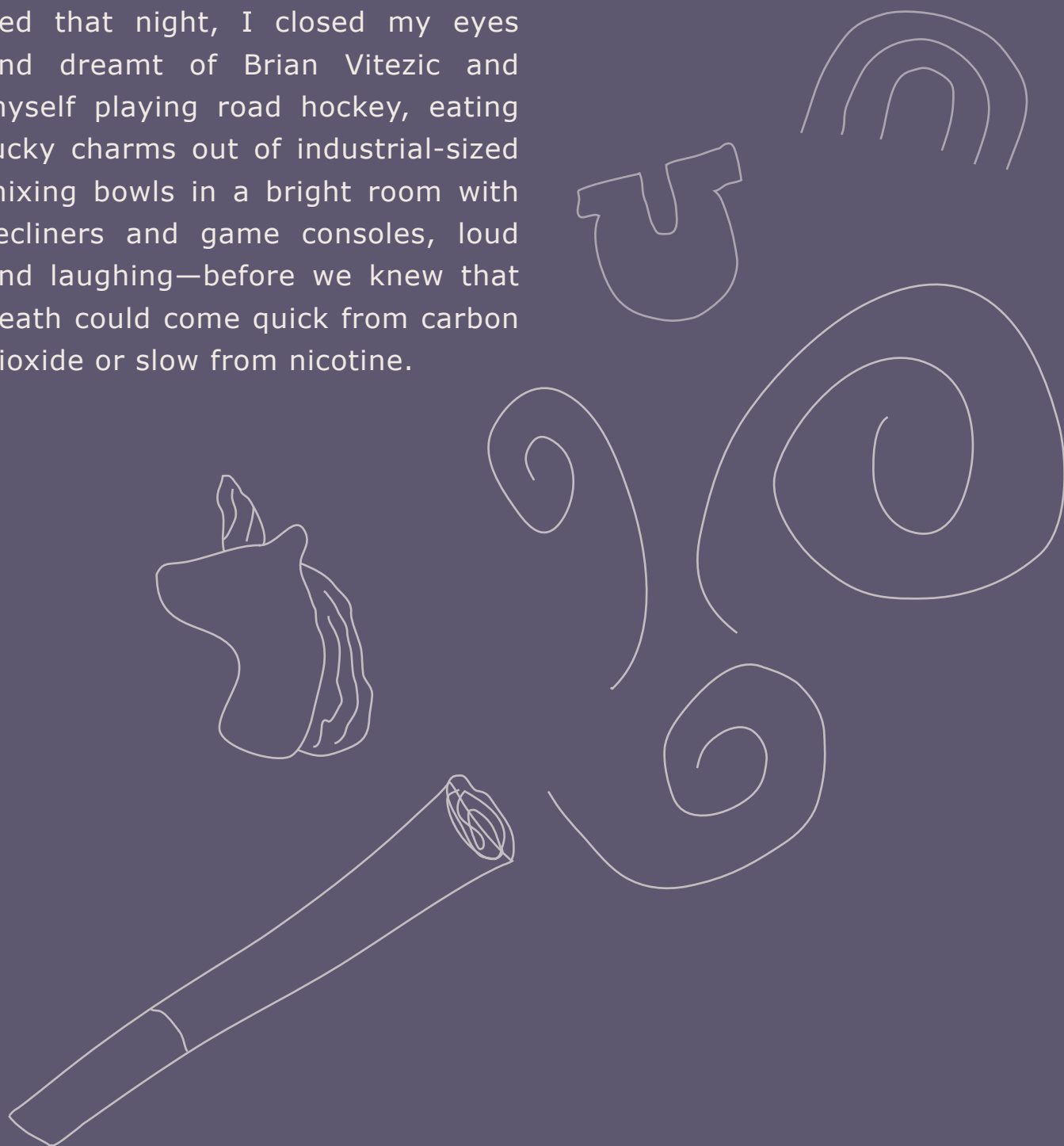
“I’ll look you up on Facebook.”

“No you won’t.” He slapped me on the back hard and walked towards the parking lot, stuck the middle finger up without turning his head and flicked his smoke through the air where the cherry ember somersaulted in a brilliant arc before extinguishing in a puddle.

That was the last time I saw Brian.



When I rolled into my double bed that night, I closed my eyes and dreamt of Brian Vitezic and myself playing road hockey, eating lucky charms out of industrial-sized mixing bowls in a bright room with recliners and game consoles, loud and laughing—before we knew that death could come quick from carbon dioxide or slow from nicotine.



# SPONTANEOUS CHEFS

Put on your chef's hat and show us your best quarantine recipes!



Vegan Chocolate Cake by @eleengong

"My friends dad actually first made this cake for a gathering and i was obsessed. No literally i had like 2 slices of cake in one sitting. Im not even vegan so thats how good this cake is. Its also SUPER easy to make so like... whatchu waiting for?!"



Taco Night by @samanthatbljd

"One day on a Saturday my sister and I decided to do taco night. It was a wonderful night paired with Paloma, wine and Legally Blonde."



Levain Bakery Style Cookies by Faith Joy

"Levain Bakery doesn't make your ordinary cookie. The bakery's founders created the ultimate cookie to give them energy as they trained for a triathlon. Stuck in lockdown and with no way for me to get to New York (for now), I wanted to make this beauty- 6 ounces, with 1 lb of a blend of dark and semi-sweet chocolate, and chunks of walnuts. The end result? A soft, doughy centre, a beautiful caramelized bottom, and a rich flavour \*chef's kiss\*"



Hannah-Banana Bread by @hcmayor

"I accidentally used chocolate covered caramel instead of regular chocolate, but it ended up turning out even better, into this ooey-goey banana bread. Serendipity? I think so! I guess you can call me Chef Boyar-han."



Birria Tacos by @gabbyknowsbest

"I first saw these tacos on tiktok. There was a period of time where almost everyone was making these. I decided to take the leap of faith and make them and they exceeded my expectations."

# Introducing Global Kitchen



UofT Global Kitchen was started in 2020 with a vision to seek to encourage cultural and culinary exploration for students both nutritionally and financially.

## ***UofT Global Kitchen's 4 pillars:***

1. The consideration of the consumption of food as a right
2. Improvement of student food budgeting, both financially and nutritionally
3. Food as a method for soft cultural introduction
4. The importance of sustainability within our diets

## ***President's address:***

Hello and thank you for reading the Vision Journal. If you've made it this far, I'm sure each entry has captivated you, and I hope to do the same. My name is Derek Choi and I founded UofT Global Kitchen along with Sarah Yoshimi Tropp, Pavneet Banwait, Rutvik Patel, and Gary Cong.

Let's face it, 2020-2021 has been a difficult year. Racial tensions have been skyrocketing, financial dependence has become a reality for some people, food charities have been overworked, and UofT is still charging me for a gym membership. Some of these are more important than others, nevertheless we still wanted to make a difference.

This club began with the intent to help others, whether that be directly or indirectly. We started with the idea to provide food to the homeless, and slowly expanded to become more student-focused. We wanted to address your difficulties and have some fun along the way. Our events are catered towards you: the student. We've shared recipes, made personalized memes, hosted kahoots, and held many giveaways. We set our sights on each of our 4 pillars, and despite our limited situation, we aimed to hit homeruns.

Our club grew from a community of 5 friends to 70+ members across campus. We held events nearly every week of 2021 and we can't help but think of what we can do in the future! Thank you for reading and we hope that you'll join our family of food lovers as well.

Sincerely,

Derek Choi  
President  
UofT Global Kitchen

P.S: You can find us on instagram @uoftglobalkitchen

# Can't Calm down

**By: Addisan Brown**

**A**nxiety has controlled my life since a very young age, but I never knew it. We always thought I just had asthma or breathing issues. It wasn't until I started going to therapy that I found out that I was dealing with anxiety. For almost a year now I have been experiencing panic attacks. When a panic attack is occurring it's like nothing I've ever felt before, I lose control of my body and have uncontrollable shakes. Recently I have opened up about my panic attacks as they have started to affect my every day. While doing so my best friend told me about how she has them too and that she deals with her panic attacks by writing things down on sticky notes. We worked together to get through our panic attacks while doing this shoot, I found a way to conquer my anxiety head-on.

**T**hrough this shoot, I can express my feelings and use photography as a mode of therapy. The out of body feelings I have during a panic attack is expressed in my photos through the use of shadows. When a panic attack occurs, I don't feel like myself and all I want is for the feelings to stop. This is a difficult feeling to explain and further express through art, but I feel that while doing this shoot, I was able to face the reality of my anxiety. Being able to see your anxiety and difficulties right in front of my face allows me as an artist to fix and edit my problems. For example, during the editing process, I was able to see my situation and emphasize the feelings and emotions that are at play during my panic attacks. This has a very therapeutic feeling as I can't hide from the truth as I want to show everyone the truth of a panic attack.



# INJUSTICE

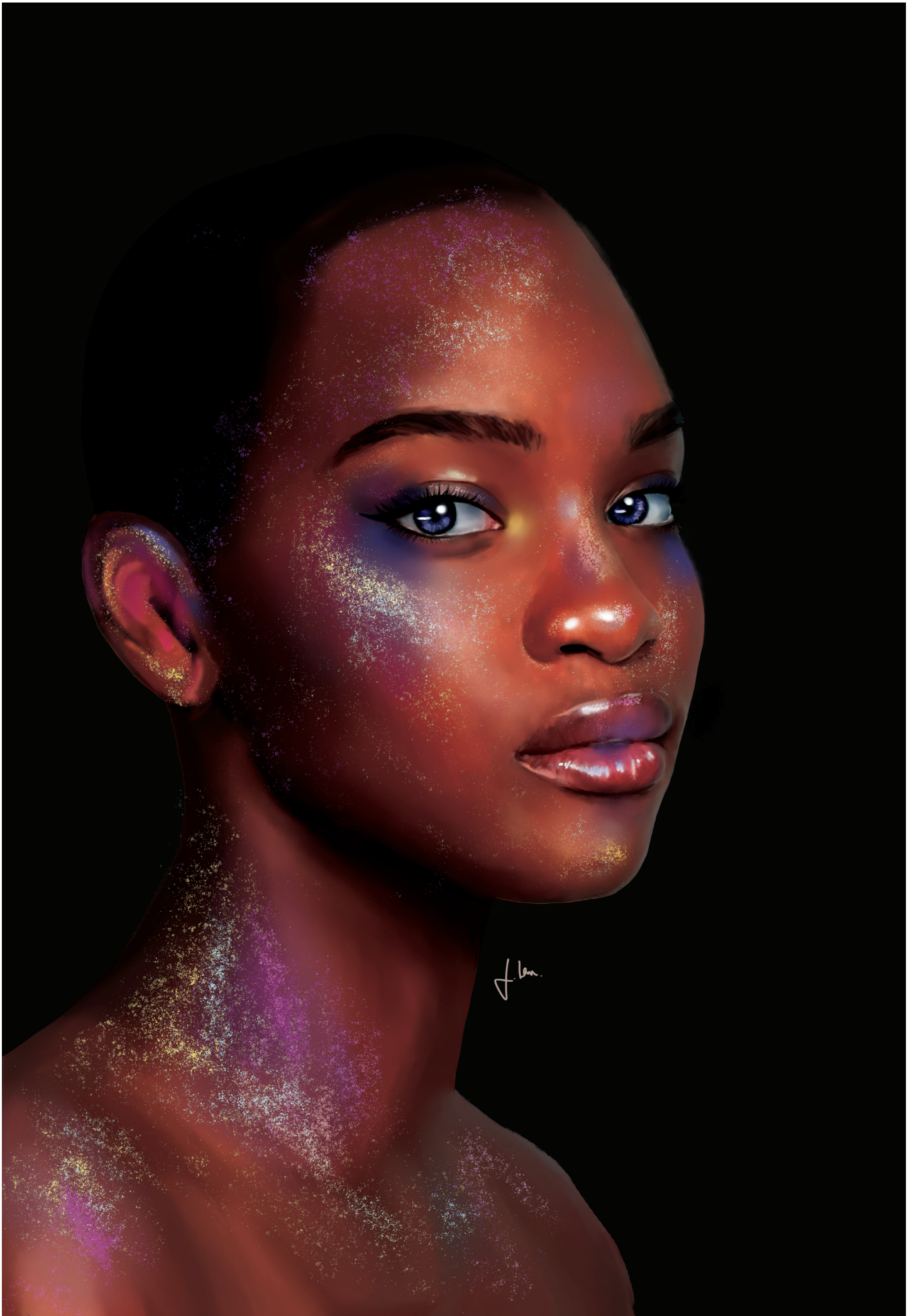
By: Juanita Lam

What does it mean to think about racism and injustice, then paint them in such pictures that will leave an impact on the viewer?

My process of creating artworks is driven by these questions. There is always a danger in making art that responds to inhumanity and suffering.

***This series of artworks expresses the marginalizing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing systemic racism towards minority groups.***

In the wake of George Floyd's killing, it sparked an uprising against white supremacy and inspired people to fight against racism. Civil disobedience, ongoing debates about race, power, and police brutality are often seen in widening gaps of the globalized community.



The minority groups are already socially and economically disadvantaged by the dominant race. People who are being prejudiced have unequal access to services and opportunities, like education, sanitation, access to employment, and justice.

The current phase of racism is part of a pervasive hysteria created by the imperialist powers to grind down the colonial subjects.

***We should acknowledge the approaches to diversity and understand that they have efforts for significant equity, equality, and justice.***



# FEARLESS

Written by: Simisola Ogunsina

Illustration by: Michelle Tang

Edited by: Eleen Gong & Jennifer Schneider

**Trigger Warning**

*You blacks are so fearless.*

**No. I'm terrified.**

May 7th, 2020. I felt my blood boil, an anvil on my chest, and tears I didn't realize had arrived. I had just read about Ahmaud Arbery. I sat on my bed and stared at Twitter, as hot tears poured down my face. We hear the stories, we watch all the videos, but this one... this one felt different. This one sparked a flame. This one resonated with me. It felt like the ringing in your ears after you've just felt the impact of a blow to the face. This was not the first black man to be killed in America. And not the last.

Police officers terrify me. Of course, I'm aware that not every cop is "bad," but from what I've seen, the "good" ones are far more limited than the corrupt. These "heroes" say they'll protect me, but when the time comes, they blame me. Cops have the world convinced.



They've justified their actions by calling themselves "protectors," saying the streets are safer because of them and not more dangerous because of them. How can you be a hero that attacks vulnerability? Who doesn't fight for the innocent? How can you be a hero that hurts? Instead, these "protectors" protect everyone but people who dare to have melanin.

Try to understand what it's like as a black woman in today's society. To be dark and subject to see what it means to be in this skin plastered on the media. Constantly reminded that the world doesn't think we're good enough.

I see it through the lack of sisters in lead roles, subject to be the sidekick or the faces of gangsters sincerely criminal and apologetically black. But we know that we are not just good enough to be the lead, and we're not what the world tries to make of us. We are what we choose to be. More often than not, we choose beauty. Beautiful in the way we talk, the way we walk, the way we work, sing, and dance.

You see, people do a fantastic job of belittling and berating and making you

assume you're the problem. Society makes you feel as though it is your fault. It's up to you to remember your beauty. They hate us for a reason we have no control over. Something majestic they wish they could conquer. I mean, not everyone's got black girl magic, black boy joy?

“

***We can't control the magic and beauty that is being black, and we wouldn't even if we could.***

”

We can't control the magic and beauty that is being black, and we wouldn't even if we could. It's a rare blessing to be black, to have this tone, to have this afro, to have this voice, to have this culture. It's the way music speaks to our soul and the way we overcome injustice. It's the way our hair defies gravity and our skin never ages.

It's the gold undertone of our blackness and the sweetness of our character. The beauty of the privilege of knowing our worth was taken from so many of us and is still trying to be taken. I have the privilege of understanding that my features aren't ugly because they don't meet Eurocentric standards. But are gorgeous for that same reason because distinction is beauty.

The threats come from all areas; threats of violence from peers who don't fully understand or threats from protectors,

who help everyone but those in actual need of help. What happened to warning shots? What happened to de-escalation? What happened to proper investigation? What happened to not racially profiling? They will arrest a person for simply looking "suspicious." But what's suspicious? What fits that description? Nappy hair, deep voice, chains? Black. We know what it is. Being black is all it takes to stir up some hate in a corrupt cop's heart. To make them see you as a threat. How and why does it seem hatred and prejudice are engrained into the training of police officers? To be black is to be scared of those who are supposed to protect us, scared they won't see us, scared they'll see a black threat.

I refuse to be oppressed. For too long, we've taken to the injustice that is black being shown as anything other than beautiful. That's why I take to the streets in protest in 2020. I won't rest unless my people are given due justice. I'm terrified, angry and most of all confused at why this has happened and is still happening.

I had been walking around, lying to myself about what life truly is like to be a black woman. I grew up loved and ignorant of the oppression I faced. In their strength, my parents faced real and inevitable oppression that every black person faces at some point in their life. But they made sure to meet the taunts, the racist threats, and slander on their own. They made my siblings and I aware of it but never allowed

us to see it. They shielded us because they knew the unbearable pain that came from knowing that someone could hate you based on how you look. It's a feeling that black people see and deal with constantly. But I have a beautiful privilege. My ancestors didn't arrive on a slave ship in 1610. I arrived on a plane in 2010. I was surrounded by people who knew their heritage and loved it.

I think I finally understand why I cried that day. Why I sunk that day. I'm tired. I'm frightened. I'm frustrated. And I don't know how to fix this. Everyone expects us to be so strong, and we are, but I have to say I feel scarred by the brutality we have to face every day.

We are fearless, but we are still terrified. Like many before, we march anyway. That's what makes us fearless. We are adaptive, and I think that fuels this movement. We shouldn't have to face the oppression, but we will fight the oppression and will do so as a strong collective as we have before.



# WHAT DID

*“Your favourite phrases, captions and memes that made*

**Sam Balajadia** @samanthabljd

Following

“Will it be recorded?”



**Anughya Bijlani** @anughya.x

Following

“Hi bestie I’m afraid to ask you this.”



**Serena Vohra** @serenavohra

Following

“You’re on mute.”



**Jennifer Schneider** @jennism7

Following

“All the welcome to jumanji memes.”



**Faizah** @faiiriis

Following

“I’m boredinthehouse yeah I’m inmyhousebored.”



**Chris Chavez** @theyknowchavez

Following

“Don’t worry, I didn’t start either.”



# YOU SAY?

2020 YOUR year, brought to you by UTM students.”

**Merica Carlos** @merica.carlos

Following

“No sorry, \*awkward laugh\* you go ahead.”



**Guliana de Angelis**

@gulianaalessandra

Following

“When covid is over we should \_\_\_\_\_.”



**Simran Hotwani**

@simranhotwani.x

Following

“Excuse the background noise.”



**Callist** @callistolite

Following

“\*constantly getting interrupted because of the lag & eventually giving up on asking the question which then creates an awkward silence\*”



**Serena Vohra** @serenavohra

Following

“Can you see my screen?”



**Anughya Bijlani** @anughya.x

Following

“\*Pretend to take notes\*”



# Who Are You?

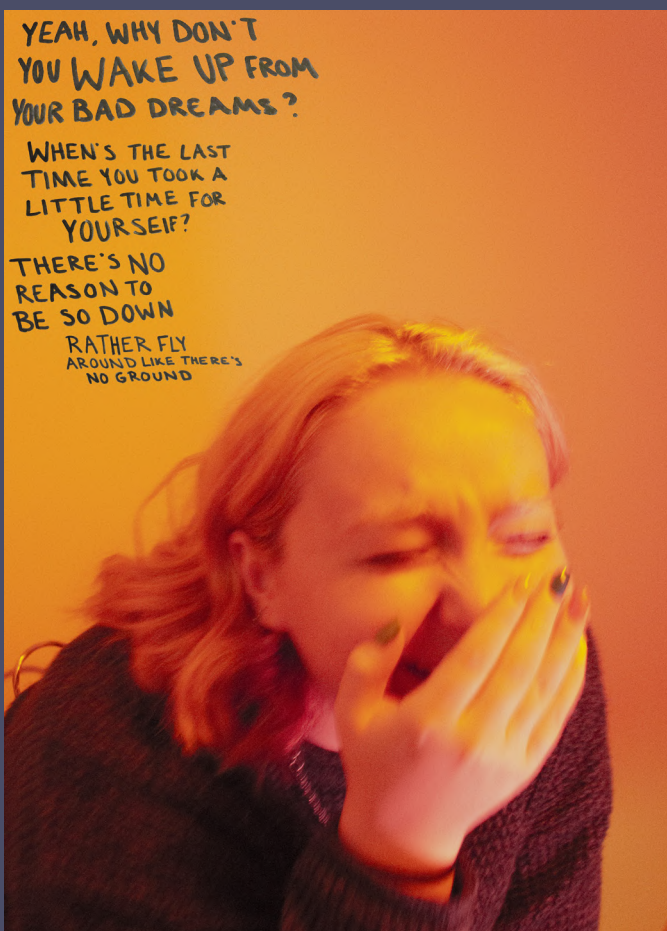
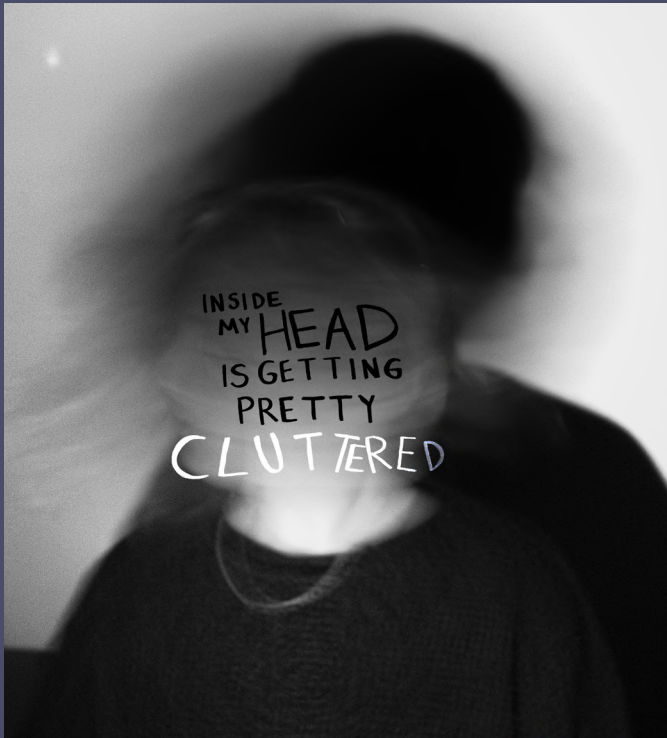
By: **Giuliana De Angelis**



**H**ow do you honestly view yourself? Do you perceive yourself as a “good” person? What constitutes “good” or “bad?” Throughout this photo series, color is used to represent self-discovery and growth within oneself. Throughout quarantine I finally had the time to be solely with myself and my feelings. I realized that I had not been treating some of the people I cared about the most in the way that they deserve to be treated. Why was I being so selfish and inconsiderate? Why did I choose to act the way that I did without fully comprehending? I think it’s important to know that you cannot be perfect. Though I try my best to be a great friend to people in my life, I am going to mess up at some point, it’s inevitable.

Who I am

# Complicated



It is well possible that I myself and everyone reading this has toxic qualities about themselves that we don't want to acknowledge. Does this make us bad people? Probably not. Does it excuse the poor behavior we showed? No, we should still take responsibility. But does this make us "bad" people? Not at all. Though it is cliché, everyone is going to make mistakes and do things that were probably not the best idea. It is so easy to feel like you are messing up everything with everyone around you, but chances are, you're not. No person is static. People are complex, with multitudes of emotions, thoughts, and conflicting actions. Life throws difficult situations at us, and all we can do is try our best. Being harsh on ourselves is self-destructive, acceptance is a form of self-growth. Bettering ourselves while understanding that we are all a little rough around the edges is the most important thing. Be kind to yourself.

# Good News

Artist:  
Chloe Cuevas

# GROWTH

Quarantine was filled with more free time and self reflections. The extra free time at home inspired me to use it productively by taking the initiative to practice every day for the duration of quarantine since I never had the opportunity to put my whole focus solely on art due to school or work. A lot of my childhood consisted of days of watching anime on TV and my obsession for watching anime shows continued as I got older, which has extremely influenced my art and shaped the way that I draw. I grew up watching shows such as One Piece, Cardcaptor Sakura, Digimon, and more. My art demonstrates a part of my identity, as the style derives from the shows that I watched as a kid. My art style is influenced by the cute style that anime have, such as the face shapes, the bold blush on the cheek and the style of colouring. In 2020, I was able to experiment a lot with my digital art in both greyscale and colour by putting a lot of time and effort into creating drawings that reflect my interests in anime. Being at home in 2020 fed into a learning experience, a journey of growth, and most importantly the opportunity to build creativity.



# THE CALL

*Author*

**Libby Setiadi**

*Editors*

**Juliana Stacey**

**Anughya Bijlani**

*Illustrator*

**Aprill Zuniga**



"Hey, Mommy."

"Hey, baby."

Avery is calling her mother, who sits in a living room halfway across the ocean. Who, in the tropical country of her childhood, stays with her little sister and father.

It's been three years since Avery moved out.

She was supposed to visit them all again this summer.

"How are you? How is everything?"

Her mother sighs, "Well, same old, same old. Now that your sister's online classes have ended, she's free for the summer. She's happy but -" another sigh, "- she's bored because we're self-quarantining, right? And she misses Dad. Terribly. I mean, he's still working abroad. And you. She misses you as always. But at least we're all still healthy."

Avery smiles into the camera. Typical of her mother to always find something to be grateful for, even in times like these.

She shuffles in her bed and tries not to think about the usual pang in her gut. The fleeting feeling of being punched in the heart and not being able to breathe for a second.

She can't tell them. She can't tell

them that she misses them.

That would be punching them in the heart too.

She can't do that.

Her eyes focus back onto her mother's pixelated face on the video screen.

"What about you, honey? Everything okay?"

"Yeah. I just haven't been sleeping well."

"Yeah?"

Avery tells her mom about the Incan-looking ruins in her recent dreams. Ancient, hut-like structures seemingly clustered together, carved straight from aging stone. She tells her mother how they littered the cavernous walls of a gaping cave, stacked upon the other like that of a child's sandcastle. Reminiscent of a life long lived years ago, perhaps, or a civilization - a people - from a time long lost.



Her mother listens with a dropped jaw, "So, it's a whole city built into a cave?"

"Yeah, kind of. And, like, I can see all the details and everything."

"Oh. I see. I mean, that's fascinating, baby, but what's bothering you? Are you anxious about something?"

Avery shrugs, "I don't know."

It could be school. But, with all this time to reflect and be alone with my thoughts, I think I've just been realizing some things too, you know?"

Her mother gives her the look to say she doesn't.

"I feel like I've been seeing so much of the world's worst lately," she continues, shifting a navy pillow that was poking into her back. "Like, I've been doing so much reading about so many things that are happening right now and I - I don't know if this constant re-evaluation of what I know and believe and think is some kind of false existential crisis or something. But it's all just - it's all just so sad, ma."

"What do you mean?"

She draws a breath. "It feels like there's always something to talk about or think about or *fix*. Something that's always broken, or wrong - like an injustice, right? Sometimes, I think about last year. About Sudan and Hong Kong and ICE and the Muslim Ughyurs. And I think about how they're still relevant, so pressing, but how we seem to be talking about new things now. As if the world's just swept everything under the rug and moved on. Now, it's Australia's wildfires and Yemen and Brexit and COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter and so much. There's just so much.

"Everywhere I turn, there seems to be a fixed narrative that leads to the same old conclusion. That life isn't fair. That it never will be. That these sys-

tems, made long before I was alive, will continue to work like the machine they are and it'll keep destroying and I'm not sure I - or anyone else really - will be able to do anything about it.

**“It feels like there's always something to talk about or think about or *fix*.”**

"I feel like there'll always be an issue that'll go through its season, before getting swept under the rug. Like by Time. Or by Money. I feel like Time and Money go hand in hand now, don't they? I mean, I'm learning how these structures work on different tiers and their intersections, I guess, and their magnitude, and I... it just... it never ends. It never ends. It just keeps getting worse."

Avery releases a breath. Her mother is quiet.

Then, "Yes, baby, I know. These problems -" her mother shakes her head, "- I've lived long enough to know that these problems will become old problems soon enough. Though they'll continue to persist, that's true, there will be new things on our minds. In our

hearts. Whether we like it or not. Things that we learn we need to fight for and to act upon.

“And I know that the World is so old. And that it is dying. And I’m sorry you seem to be learning all of these lessons at such an early age - well, at least earlier than *I* did, for sure. But welcome to the real world, *say-angku*. Life is full of disappointments; the world stops for nobody and there will always be something that needs to be fixed.”

Avery nods. She doesn’t look at the screen. Her mother starts talking about her journey with God. She listens quietly and understands. Tries to, at least. But all she can think about is how she wants to go outside and break free from this small, silent, moonlit room.

She thinks about how she wants to save people.

She thinks about how she’s been told that she saves people by staying inside.

She thinks about how she listens. And stays.

She thinks about how the best things - and the worst things - seem to come in threes.

Avery sees her mother’s face on the screen in the place where hers would typically be. Her fingers hover before touching the dark side of the phone, right on the edge of the video screen. She thinks how it’s not so much different from looking into a mirror. How, possibly, she is a reflection of her mother.

Or, it is her mother who is the reflection.

She thinks how maybe they reflect each other, whether it be in perfect or imperfect continuum, she doesn’t know.

“I suppose the world’s been given all this time to sit and think and reflect, you know?” her mother says suddenly.



Avery gives a short nod and begins to ask, "So, how do you think we—"

Her voice cracks. She clears her throat.

“

**How do we keep believing there's good in the world when it's become so hard to see?**

”

"Then, how do we keep moving forward?"

She doesn't elaborate but her mother knows there's more to the question.

*How do we keep believing there's good in the world when it's become so hard to see?*

*How do we choose which battles to fight for when we know there'll be more to come?*

*How do we change things?*

She sees her mother deep in thought. There's a second of silence before she chooses to speak.

"Well...I suppose, if we can't work against it, we work within it."

"What do you mean?" Her eye-

brows crinkle with confusion.

"Well, maybe it's about working from within a system we can't escape? God knows that people have tried and still yielded. And the change we need, the change you and others are so desperately fighting for, well, it won't happen overnight. I know you know that baby, and I know they do too. Which doesn't make it all any less important. It doesn't take away from the real, concrete change that is being made today. But maybe the type of change you're looking for, the type you're all working for, won't even happen during your lifetime. Or maybe even your children's. Maybe it'll happen in increments and just keep building on top of each other, like the city in your dream, right?"

"Maybe that's what it's all really about, my love. Holding on to that Hope. I read once, somewhere, that maybe optimism isn't always synonymous with naivety. That it might have more to do with desperate hope than obliviousness or ignorance. Because, I think, we need to continue to believe that everything happens for a reason. And though we may never know, or understand why, maybe it's about maintaining the balance *say-ang*. About finding those small moments of human goodness that seem to counteract all that - this evil in the world. Those moments that are worth

fighting for; they're what make life worth living. They help us move forward.

Again, and again, and again."

Both of them fall silent. Avery tries to think about those moments.

Moments of longer hugs.

Of sunny days and the smell of fresh rain.

Of the first day she heard her neighbours clap for healthcare workers.

Of the motivational writings in chalk - *We will get through this.*

Of living room concerts.

Of video calls with her family.



Of her little sister showing off her collection of toys. Every time.

Of deep, rumbling belly laughs with friends on Zoom calls.

Of food on the table and a roof over her head.

Of something as simple, but as fragile, as health.

"You're right. I think you're right."

Her mother chuckles, "Well, hopefully I am. Anyways, you should go to bed. Can you call me again tomorrow morning, your time, so you can talk with your sister?"

"Of course, ma."

"Okay, thank you, love you baby."

"Love you too, mama."

She turns off her phone and goes to sleep.

That night, Avery does not dream. She only wakes to the first rays of morning light.

~ ~ ~

The clatter of her longboard echoes in the street.

It's 8pm on a summer night and her friend is trying to teach her how to ride.

Dark three-story mansions tower around them. All is quiet, save for the occasional rustle of a house cat creeping through the front yard bushes or the distant sound of one of the houses' residents shuffling through the dark kitchens in pursuit of a midnight snack.

“Shit,” she stumbles for the sixth time.  
They laugh, “Go on. Try again.”

She gets on the board, keeps moving forward, and slowly, but surely, begins to carve the pools of streetlight. It seems to glint on the newly paved road as she speeds by. Avery suddenly laughs.

*How things change so quickly,* she thinks.

*How things so quickly change.*

A warm breeze ruffles her shirt and flows through her hair as the board reaches the end of the street.

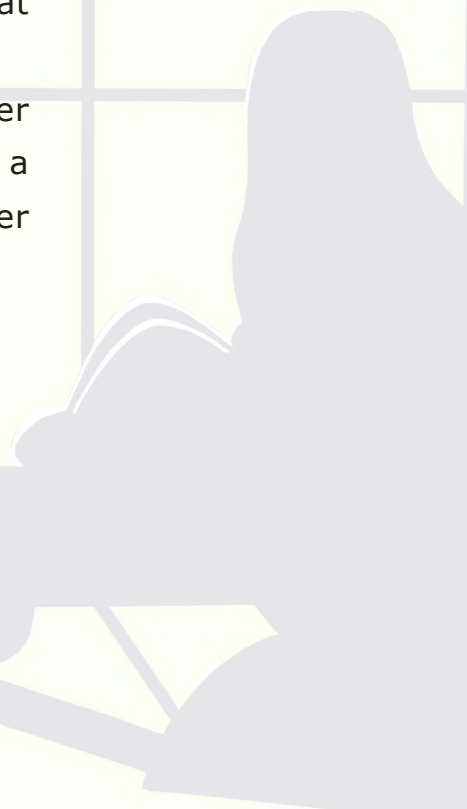
*This is it. This is that feeling.*

A sharp crack sounds above her, followed by a widespread fizzle.

She looks up to see fireworks. Kaleidoscopic colours exploding above a nearby park. She can't see who's setting them off but she can hear their laughter. She hears the clapping and the hooting that follows, like a rising melody.

Something starts to blossom in her chest, a warmth that hasn't flickered in a long enough time, and a smile tugs at her lips.

She knows its name.



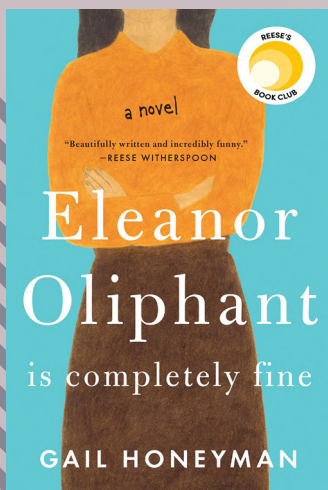


# TOP READS



*"Book Lovers, get ready for the best recommendations. Here are the books that made you travel, that took you on adventures and those that made you cry or fall in love, brought to you by UTM students"*





## Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine

Gail Honeyman

### Recommended By:

@anughya.x

*"Eleanor is such an odd character lol."*



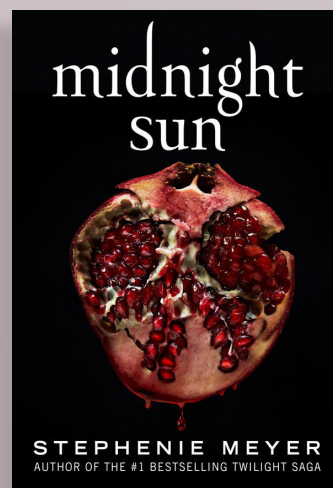
## Midnight Sun

Stephenie Meyer

### Recommended By:

@xogabster\_

*"It was such an interesting take on a classic story."*



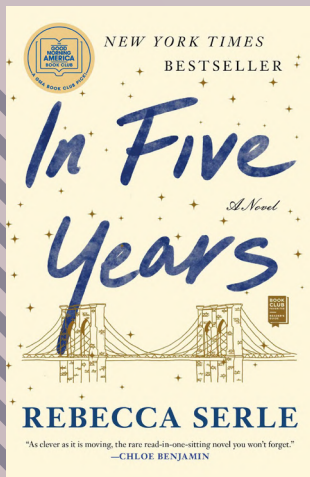
## Summer and Bird

Katherine Catmull

### Recommended By:

@callistolite

*"It was quite bizarre but really cool."*



## In Five Years

Rebecca Serle

### Recommended By:

@typicaladdie

*"In Fiver Years is as clever as it is moving, the rare read-in-one-sitting novel you won't forget. - Chloe Benjamin"*



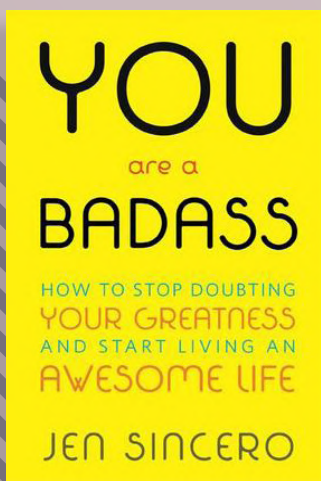
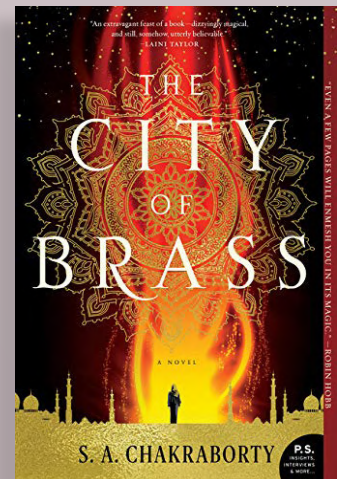
## The City of Brass

S. A. Chakraborty

### Recommended By:

@jazzy37120

*"It was so rich with culture and fantasy world building, definitely a must read."*



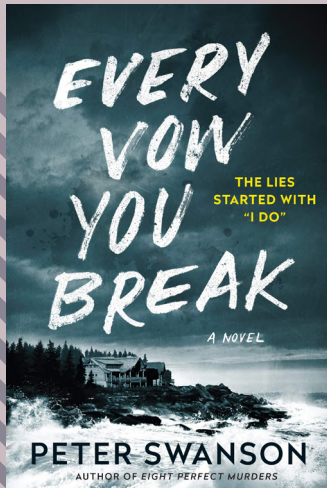
## Your Are A Badass

Jen Sincero

### Recommended By:

@serenavohra

*"YOU ARE A BADASS is a phenomenon!  
- Liesl Freudenstein, Boulder Book Store"*



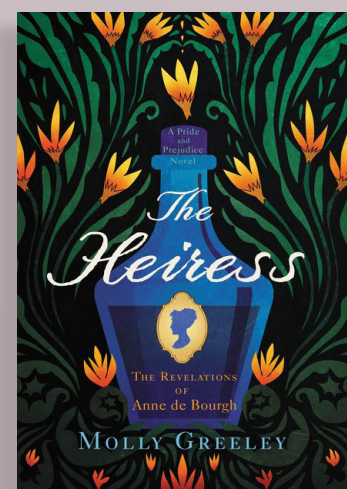
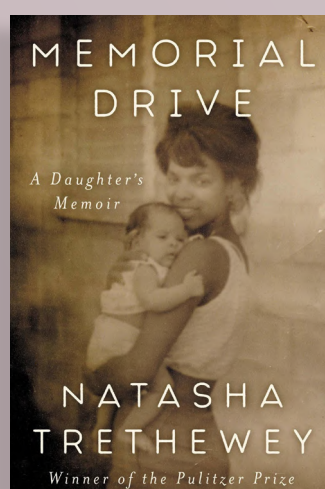
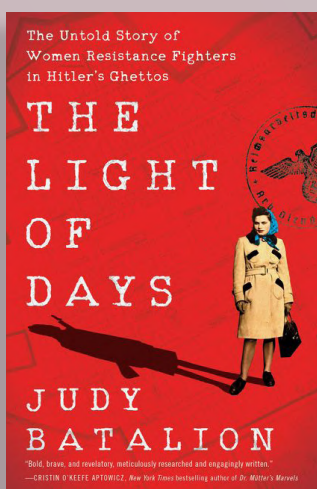
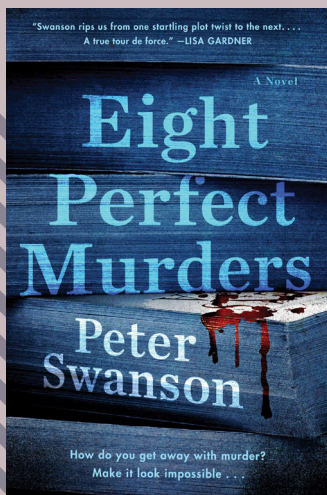
## Every Vow you Break

Peter Swanson

### Recommended By:

@nabii\_hope

"He also has a book called *Eight Perfect Murders*, that was so good! Other awesome books are *The Historians* by Cecilia Ekbäck, *The Light of Days* by Judy Batalion (absolutely amazing), *The Good German* by Dennis Bock, *The Heiress* by Molly Greeley (for all fans of *Pride and Prejudice*), *Memorial Drive* by Natasha Trethewey (such a touching story), *When No One is Watching* by Alyssa Cole, *Hench* by Natalie Zina Walschots, *The Cold Millions* by Jess Walter, *The Lost Orphan* by Stacey Halls, *The Forgotten Daughter* by Joanna Goodman, and *Moonflower Murders* by Anthony Horowitz."



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Growth

# A B O U

## Vision Journal

The ICCIT Council's Vision Journal is a publication showcasing the creative work of students at the University of Toronto. Our journal welcomes submissions from writers, illustrators, photographers, videographers and more. Submissions selected for publication in our journal are shared in our yearly submissions.

**Instagram:** [\*@vision.iccit\*](https://www.instagram.com/vision.iccit)

**Email:** [\*journal@iccitcouncil.com\*](mailto:journal@iccitcouncil.com)



Our contributors during our Holiday Social.



Our Vision Leads

# T U S

## ICCIT Council

As the governing society for the Institute of Communication, Culture, and Information Technology, it is our responsibility to represent the interests of the students. Each of us on the executive team started off with a small network, a limited portfolio and the little idea of what direction we wanted to pursue. That's why we've made it our mission to help others on their journey. It is what the ICCIT Council truly stands for, to help guide, create and inspire those who will soon take over, in order to continue the future of bringing the ICCIT and UTM Community together.

We host over 40 events a year on our own and in collaboration with other organizations, both on and off campus. Some examples include networking events, academic and creative workshops, conferences, case competitions, speaker events, and social de-stressors.

**Instagram:** [@iccitcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/iccitcouncil)

**Website:** [iccitcouncil.com](https://www.iccitcouncil.com)



ICCIT Council Executives 2020-2021

