

Cover Art: “Monoprint Two” by Maurin Stubbs

A Note from the Editors: Renewal

NU Writing Editorial Board: Sofia Caruso, Kyle Kirshen, Arielle Lee, Ya-Chi Christie Lee, Victor Silva, Tula Singer, Maurin Stubbs, Ashley Varghese

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Over the past two years, we have been confronted by great loss, cultural reckonings, and the challenge to adapt—but we have also been given an opportunity to reflect, rethink our priorities, and redefine our standards. Thus, the theme this year is renewal. We encouraged writers to submit compositions that engage with our theme through notions of growth, shifts, new beginnings, regeneration, rebirth, change, metamorphosis, futurity, second chances, and mid-pandemic insights. With these submissions came a stunning willingness to be vulnerable and to write from experience. We honor the deeply personal nature of the contemporary cultural moment and are proud to follow the 2020-2021 issue on Antiracism and Justice by amplifying models of self-discovery, coping, and of course, learning.

When we first met as an editorial board, we strove to encapsulate our vision for the issue with a hopeful and resonant theme. **Maurin Stubbs**, English, Graphic and Informational Design Student with a minor in Art History is a member of the board and creator of this year’s issue graphic. She reflects on the process, sharing: “I remember the editing group sitting in a meeting musing on what we might consider for a theme when asking for submissions. There were several ideas tossed around in the realm of creation and a sense that we were all trying to encapsulate this feeling of emerging from a shared experience, while still wading into other uncertainties. Covering so much emotional and intellectual ground seemed hard to grasp in a single word, yet settling on ‘renewal,’ I recall a near unanimous sentiment of agreement with the differing connotations we each drew from the word. Whether interpreted as a rebirth of sorts, a rising from destruction, or the changing of tides and seasons, it was clear that renewal was, and is, all around us as this moment in our lives. The diversity of the submissions only furthered our belief in this theme, and we are delighted to dwell in this period of renewal alongside each other.”

Ashley Varghese, returning to the board for her second term, is a student of Behavioral Neuroscience. She revisited her relationship to the theme for this issue, writing: “Renewal to me is representative of a rebirth or a renaissance of sorts. It can symbolize sparking new joy into your life after a period of growth during tumultuous times. The pandemic facilitated people to reassess their livelihoods and their values in relation to their families, friendship, and jobs. They emphasized their mental health in newfound ways through spending meaningful times with hobbies, reflection, and quality time with others. People interpret seasons, months, and other

fixated structures of times as the perfect time to begin a journey of renewal. However, I believe many have learned that renewal can begin at any time, and it starts with a determination to live with a new perspective. Embracing gratitude and giving yourself the grace to make mistakes can lead anyone on a path towards renewal. You can live a rewarding life when you can actively work towards self-fulfillment.”

In these reflections, the editors demonstrate their desire to encourage a sense of awakening, togetherness, and openness. This approach was met with a powerful response that we are proud to publish as a representation of Northeastern writing in a tumultuous time. Like last year, we invited students to submit from all different disciplines, writing courses of all levels, and various genres. The fifteen selected pieces speak through five major categories that structure the issue: Mental Health, Care, Growth, Homecoming to Greater Boston, and Identity. I understand each of these as complimentary values that serve as grounding points for our writers and offer insights to the inner work that is at the center of renewal.

The issue begins with “**Incense**,” a poem by **Jazmyn Nam-Krane**, as she illustrates a moment of presence and breathing through the burning of incense. We encourage you to find stillness through this piece as you drop into the issue. Following the poem is “**The Pros(e) and Cons of a Moment Deafened**,” by **Clara Barsoum**. In it, she collages text, image, and music as she illustrates her relationship to her mental health. You’ll find links to three Spotify playlists that can accompany your journey through this issue. In “**It’s Time to Ditch Your Social Media, You’ll Be Better Off: Five Takeaways from a Social Media Free Life in 2022**,” **Michael Gabriel Ambrozia** shares how his mental health changed after he deleted his social media and makes several suggestions such as practicing presence, critical thinking, and reclaiming your time. Rounding out the Mental Health section, **Esha Kaur Walia** writes through her intention and success in breaking negative thinking patterns and finding self-acceptance in “**Me, Myself, and I (and You)**”.

The Care section is brought together through the experience of supporting a loved one with chronic pain. **Emma Assiradoo** grounds her insights in a personal narrative about caretaking. In “**Swimming Pools**,” she weaves a compelling metaphor to help understand loved ones who endure chronic pain. In “**(in) Dire Straits**,” **Michelle Stoukides** explores the relationship between love, self, health, and body by combining Plato’s *Republic* with personal narrative. These works show the desire to proceed mindfully in the devotion to care of others while paying attention to the emotional response of witnessing pain.

Moving into the Growth section, **Elliot Goodman** writes “**Hentak**” in the genre of theatrical script to tell the story of a soldier finding his purpose and how that purpose carries him through his duty. In “**Growing Into Myself**,” **Niccola Lutri** draws a metaphor of growth through her

connection to nature. Finally, **Elizabeth Cui's** narrative, "**Money Girl,**" tells a tale of moving through grief and finding happiness after loss.

The Homecoming to Greater Boston section hosts narratives that are unique to the core student experience at Northeastern University. In "**Confessions,**" **Hiba Kamar Hussain** negotiates their relationship to identity, home, and authenticity through a personal narrative about their transition to Boston living. In "**All Roads Lead to Home,**" **Claire Sarah O'Neill** writes through her experience of finding home in an unexpected place: The MBTA Orange Line.

To close, we host four pieces that explore identity and personal expression. In **Abandoning Damage-Centered Teachings on Indigenous American Histories: An Open Letter to Educators,** **Raiya Suliman** offers a template for students to petition schools to integrate more nuanced education around indigenous and non-white cultures. **Arya A. Shukla** discusses the significance of personal and cultural expression in "**Traditional Clothing and my Indian Culture.**" In "**How I Learned to Love Myself Through Eyeliner,**" **Ann Harb** shares her exploration of the duality of femininity and self-expression. Lastly, we present "**Eye to Eye**" by **Victor Zheng** who presents the visuality of difference through a personal history.

We hope you enjoy and learn from these works as we have this year.