

THE IDEATE REVIEW

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers –

Welcome to Issue 4 of *The Ideate Review*! We are thrilled to present our selection of poetry, prose, and art submitted by talented writers and artists from across the globe on our magazine's theme—identity.

What is identity, and how is it related to art? Since its creation, art has served as a medium through which artists share their unique experiences and observations. Fiction and truth in art do not simply belong to the opposite ends of a spectrum; rather, they exist in a continuum. When studying literature, it is important to acknowledge the complexity of the relationship between fiction and truth to avoid reaching hasty conclusions about the implications of an author's particular work.

At the same time, perhaps this complexity is what makes art such a personal form of expression. In Robin Ray's "On Poetry," the narrator claims poetry "[n]ever fails to bring [him] home." Sometimes, people may seek to define themselves but fail to, as Briony Zhao does in "Undefinition." Sage Ravenwood's "I As in Letter Me" explores the origin and significance of the speaker's name in relation to the speaker's identity.

Whether a work involves fictional elements or operates entirely on truth, art is in a sense a reiteration of the universal human experience. We hope the works in this issue resonate with you.

Jimin Lee
Founder & Editor-in-Chief
of *The Ideate Review*

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ANTILOGY

CHELSEA BUNN

We are finished
having it both ways.
If we are sanctioned
we do not know
if it means penalty or permission.

How can we, when even language
fails us; when a word
means both itself & its opposite?

Imagine staring into a mirror
to see yourself fixed: are you
mended or has part
of you been cut away?

What little faith we had:
weathered. & how to know—
if we're enduring
or being worn
away?

We say love and mean apology, say
apology, meaning both regret
and excuse, say forever,
which meant until
you left & I am left.

ON POETRY

ROBIN RAY

Georgian wolves by starlight
baying at the moon, dripping
Kakheti wine from plaquened

fangs. Brackish taste of Tunisian
salt of cousins of men who climb
the Eiffel Tower just to watch

Tibetan signets burn. Sonoran
rains wilting the easily scalable
papier-mâché walls, smoking the

leftovers in Mississippi dreaming.
The beauty of the wayfaring pen.
Never fails to bring me home.

LIVE THROUGH ME

CARL CHEN

They sit by the fire's hearth
tending to their half-healed wounds.
Ivory dusk and ache on the bone,
tears re sewn in the arteries of the heart.

My happiness supplements theirs.
They watch with soft smiles,
hard creases tendered by clear
mornings and wakeful mourning healed by time,
in which I let my eyes wander again
before leaving for school.

A blind shot in the darkness
hoping for anything, they cast their
lines, throw-in-the-dark, a bluffed sacrifice.
No wonder they live through me:
I am their everything, I am their halves
never stirred from sleep, still beneath
the blankets of forgotten yearning.

I am what could have been; I am
the prodigal son wielding scepter in hand
passed on from peasants' toil and milky
half shut eyes to a child reborn
head tilted toward the sky, with brilliant beaming eyes.
I am their youth just as I am their fallen dreams.
They are the stepping stones into which I need to grow.
They give everything, breath and first life, and I
give them nothing more than a second chance.

SUSHI AT HANGING ROCK

BRIONY ZHAO



UNDEFINITION

BRIONY ZHAO

un·def·i·ni·tion \ ,ən-de-fə-'ni-shən \ *n.* 1. there is no definition for this entry.

[All the definitions included in this essay are created by the author, who reserves the right to undefine these definitions at any time without prior notice.]

Bri·o·ny Zhao \ 'brɪəni, zhào \ *pron.* **1.a.** someone who was formerly known as “Joane” and “Chong'er” and currently as “Briony” and “Dingru” **b.** someone who would rather live on planet where a day is much longer **c.** someone who does not know how to be female **2.a.** someone who has led a life without challenges (because she quits in the face of challenges) **b.** someone who is insecure (yet conceited), because she doesn't know who she is or will be **3.a.** someone who can only wait for love instead of search for love, because she is a coward **b.** someone who believes bisexuality increases her possibility of finding true love statistically **4.** someone who secretly hopes to possess the confidence of Marion Johnson as well as her ability to speak three languages, so that she can make more friends

fem·i·nin·i·ty \ ,fe-mə-'ni-nə-tē \ *n.* **1.** [*archaic*] **a.** usually characterized by flowy, floral-patterned dresses, glossy black leather shoes with lace-hemmed socks for 6-year-olds, and by profuse knowledge concerning how to be with boys instead of how to deal with boys for 17-year-olds **b.** exemplified by Instagrams of seemingly perfect human beings and models with airbrushed skin and abs **c.** the pursuit of this quality is often embarrassing and seems unachievable to me (maybe because my mom sees heels as a threat and makeup as toxin), a tomboy with a body full of scars since kindergarten **2.** but no makeup can polish the pores of my skin into porcelain; but I am Erysichthon with insatiable hunger (abdomen is synonymous with abomination); but I pine for indulgence that comes with a price; but I would do anything to be loved, even if it means to conform to an ideal; but I am nothing I would want to be, and I am so many things I should not be

Xin·jiang \ 'shin-'jyän \ *geo.* **1.** means “new borderland” in a literal sense **2.a.** an autonomous region in north-western China **b.** a place where deserts and mountains and forests and rivers coexist **c.** a place where Han people and minorities like the Uyghurs, the Tajiks, and many others (some of whom wear exotic attires and speak Turkic languages, sell dried plums and apricots and bake na’an in an underground, well-like tunnel) coexist **3.** it is odd for me to realize this in the end, that living in Lynchburg, Virginia, being surrounded by mostly white people for the past year didn’t make me more aware of my identity as Chinese, but instead, this place confounded me: amongst my own people, within the border of my own country, I feel less Chinese. I do not feel bonded to them by the same light blue ID cards¹, because I look so Chinese, and that they look more European than Asian **4.** how can I claim to be Chinese when I cannot speak rightfully for anyone but myself?

Chi·nese \ chī-'nēz \ *n.* **1.a.** people who live, were born, and/or have ancestry in China **b.** people who read menus with pictures of each course **2.a.** people (most of them) who feel like they (at least me) have enough freedom even without the freedom of speech **b.** people who sway between patriotism and xenophilia, arrogance and inferiority, because our gate was unsealed only 178 years ago². eople feel ambivalent about how far we have been left behind, and how far we had left others behind centuries ago (it is a nostalgia similar to what Owen Wilson felt for the “Golden Age” in *Midnight in Paris*, just way less romantic) **3.** scabs can only be peeled away by the generations to come, so I ask myself what part of the orchestra will I play to accompany their march? What can I do to shed them of their fathers’ prejudices, when I am not slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness? What can I do to keep them away from their phones and close to the nature and the nature of things, when I do not know how to make things and what things are made of? How can I do anything for them, if I am more alone than ever when the world has become smaller than ever?

Amer·i·ca \ ə-'mer-ə-kə \ *geo.* **1.** [*archaic*] **a.** a place of blue eyes and (eye) creases and freckles **b.** a place of pioneers who are fancy while driving in the fast lane **c.** a place of Woody Allen, Quentin Tarantino, Regina Spektor, Casey Neistat, and E.E. Cummings **2.a.** a place of Pavlov’s smiles **b.** a place of donkeys and elephants and ununited states **c.** a place of “substances” and friends we lost from them **d.** a place that at times seems more like a silicon mold than a melting pot **3.a.** maybe I lied, maybe I didn’t know, maybe I do feel more Chinese being here **b.** here I am constantly reminded of the poetry within the poetry of my language, by a spartan yet luscious language composed of mostly spaces and 26 letters **4.** the purpose of coming here to study has been to receive a better education, one that would better prepare me for my future,

one that would broaden my views of the world and clarify the reality. we can imagine how this decision was made through a pro-con list of possible losses and gains. lately the losses were haunting me and taunting me, reminded and intensified by the stories of Marvin Barnard and Ta-Nehisi Coates, two men who went to Howard University not just to pursue a higher education, but also to experience the diversity within the black race and to explore what it meant for them to be black in America. Barnard resolved to go Howard because he felt he didn't know enough about his race yet he was often asked to represent his race during the four years he spent in VES, because he wanted to define himself and understand his "blackness" from black people's standpoint and by living among them. it shames me and daunts me to think of how far apart I will be from the world I come from after eight years (or even longer, who knows?) of high school and college in America, during which the only connection left has been messages with my parents, the Guardian's China section, social media, summer break and Christmas break... now I can assume the right to define the word "Chinese", but can I still in seven years? in his book *Between the World and Me*, Coates described Howard as "a machine, crafted to capture and concentrate the dark energy of all African peoples and inject it directly into the student body" (40). will the kind of matchless magical metrical marxist (lol) energy that I'll be lacking disqualify me as Chinese? standing in the carpeted lounge, sitting next to white boards and around tables with hand sanitizers on them, wearing classroom dress, riding school bus to away games, I have already begun missing what I have missed: the farmer's markets on top of a bridge (where everyone pays with their phones), the filthiness of the streets, the blissful food, the hideous blue uniforms, the soft ivory-colored low-quality homework papers, the bunk beds, the girls with bangs, the collectiveness, the mellow taste of summer...

anom·a·ly \ ə-'nä-mə-lē \ *n.* **1.** something or someone that defies normality, intentionally or unintentionally **2.a.** the pumpkin-shaped ceiling light in my bed room **b.** the nosebleed during the prohibited late-night reading of *A Study in Scarlet* **c.** the school that ended at 17:30, where long hair was outlawed, where a balding American taught us about twenty essential characters and always said "you may be seated", where the only way to survive was through hard work (sided with bantering and a diluted taste of hypocrisy/bureaucracy), where I discovered people whom I thought could only exist in Murakami's novels **d.** the unorthodox art teacher who instructed me to chuǎng zuò instead of chuàng zuò **e.** me **3.** since early childhood, the sense of being different from other kids (a.k.a. the good kids who go to advanced math classes outside of school, who excel at some kind of instrument, who do their chores, who wear slippers; the cool kids who belong to cliques, who share secrets, who play basketball, who are "known") has borne a sense of urgency—the urgency of wanting to be defined, of not wanting to be amorphous, lost, and lonely anymore.

maybe this is also the reason behind my urge to conform; not because conforming is good, but because it provided the senses of safety and belonging. I want to claim my love, knowledge and devotion for something like the rest of the world seemingly does; let it be furniture, literature, or boys, astronomy, philosophy, or toys c. I was very different as a student than I was as a daughter (I probably still am). this most likely applies to everyone, but I felt ashamed and even remorseful for who I was and who I portrayed myself to be. I was eager to please, afraid of breaking the rules, and also the leader who had a lot of followers yet whose firm belief in fairness and justice was seen as unnecessary. more than often, I masked my insecurity and despondency with humor. in contrast, at home I was at times almost despotic towards my parents. it was a form of alienation exhibited through the cruel and standoffish attitude, but more accurately of a form of catharsis, a reaction stemmed from despair, towards the fact that my pains could never be grasped by them. parents often seek mutual understanding through communication; I felt that I understood their struggles, yet I could hardly use language to describe mine. I merely hope that one day they would come to realize that my love has been crammed into the cracks in between the absences of expression

me \ mi: \ *pron.* **1.** just me

¹ Xinjiang has been under surveillance of the Chinese government since the outbreaks of terrorist attacks carried out by Uighur extremists. The region only have access to 3G internet and any form of dissemination of information related to extremism or violence would be consider as a threat to the society. Along the streets you can see body scanners and metal detectors installed in every public facility. People have to swipe their light blue ID cards to enter certain places (for instance, a local bazaar) and to go through high-way checkpoints. I understand the urgency to eradicate extremism and to bring stability to our society, but it seems to me that these actions of our government are alienating these minorities at the same time. The most ironic would be the billboards installed on the side the streets, with our prime minister blushing, genially saying: “All ethnic groups must hold tightly together like a pomegranate.”

² The Opium War, which happened 178 years ago, in 1839, was defined later, by my history textbooks, as the start of the modern era for China. Qing dynasty literally sealed its gate off for a century, while others were engaging in the industrial revolution. However, since the early 1900s, revolutionaries had been trying to adapt capitalism and communism to the Chinese society respectively. I believe a lot of the incongruity of Chinese culture stemmed from this sudden exposure to modernity and foreign ideologies.

³ The word “创作” (chuàng zuò) means “to create”, while the word that my art teacher Mr. Wang coined was “闯作” (chuǎng zuò), which is pronounced very similarly and means “to dare-create.”

ALL THE DIFFERENT SHADES OF THE MOUTH

CARL CHEN

On the big stage,
the mouth is a quivering whisper.
Through lavender scents
and silk undertones,
the mouth is an inhaler.
In cold light and rhythm,
the mouth is the vehicle
that sings the heart out.
Under a clear sky and a strong gust
the mouth takes a deep gulp--
a faint sigh, a breath of life.
The mouth spurns love forward
without strings attached,
only the entwining of two mouths
together.

MOON

ANNA FRANKL



STARCHED-SLEEVE EASELS

HIBAH SHABKHEZ

In the third of my first languages
Half the colours are made of food;
Onions nestle in primrose cages
And unshelled almonds brownly brood

Pink is gulabi, for the wreath
Of stinging tears on a park bench;
Pink is piyazi for the slime-sheath
That steeps your fingers in its stench.

Purple sways twixt plum and berry;
Hallowed earth-sun feeding the sight,
Orange is malta-naranji;
Brown badaami still at midnight.

In the third of my first languages,
Half the colours are made of blood;
Child and sky are two pillar-pages
Of the rainbow hoarding the flood.

Red is laal, for children born clear
Of life's headlining finger stabs;
Green, harra: for the not-less-dear
Born defeated, dead, 'neath its slabs.

Blue is aasmaani for sky,
Where chaandani shall yet glimmer;
But moon-silver shines only by
The darkness that bids it glitter.

I AS IN LETTER ME

SAGE RAVENWOOD

Indigo begins with a capital I
I as in me, I begins the journey of a name
Earmark this human deity, begin each destination
With I as in I am – mapped identity, whole
Incandescent, warm glow spiritual,
Religion of oneself, I believe in me
Impish, mischievous, glint of rascal
You're tricked into traveling toward
Center I, beside me, toward discovery
Impaired denotes disabled, broken
Smirk, so says the imp rascalion
Introspective, don't linger, look closer
Introverted shy reserved Idealist, touché
Outliner I, discomfiture is a learning curve
Intelligence negates ignorance,
Empower language immersed in I/tself
Iguana curiosity – "I" always wanted one
Inescapable/infallible hand in hand
Imperfect, falling to rise again, again
Integrity's heart - mirror-ball in a discotheque
Censure individuality or become
Buried in self, I alone encompass destiny
To be loved for what one is, I as in I am
Well-traveled into self-awareness
My name is/Indigo begins with I

EXIT TO ENTER

BRIONY ZHAO



BLOODLINES

ARLENE ANTOINETTE

I follow my bloodlines as they lead me off
American shores and back to the warm
tranquil blue seas of my birthplace, Jamaica,
land of wood and water. My voyage doesn't
end there, I am pulled across raging oceans to
lands wooing me back to my ancestors.

I look towards Africa, my heart wishes to stop
there, but blood speaks only truth no matter how
my brown skin struggles to camouflage my mixed
ancestry.

Asia beckons, calling me to the fold. Europe is cold
and indifferent. Come if you may, it says. It's of no
importance and of even less consequence. Africa
remains silent but holds the strongest sway.

India, how would you embrace me land of spice,
festivals and many gods?
Scotland, what secrets do you hold across your
rolling hills, thick woodlands and deep glens?
Ethiopia, oh motherland, open your arms wide for
your wayward child. Welcome me home. Fill my
eyes with visions of your past, whisper tales of my
people from long ago.

I close my eyes for a moment and allow the water
to carry me where it wills. I am reluctant to decide.
Unwilling to turn my back on any part of my
genealogy. I open my eyes. Mother Africa, no
longer silent, sends me visions of the Garden of
Eden. *All life began here, she roars. Don't let go of
who you are. Come to me and claim all of yourself.*
My heartbeat races. I place a hand on my chest to
calm my breathing. Finally, I'm on my way home.

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Chelsea Bunn is the author of the chapbook “Forgiveness” (Finishing Line Press, 2019). Her work appears in Best New Poets 2018, Maudlin House, Sky Island Journal, Cover, The Big Windows Review, Sooth Swarm Journal, Dogwood, and other journals and anthologies. She earned her MFA in Poetry and her BA in English at Hunter College in New York, and currently serves as Assistant Professor of Creative Writing for the BFA program at Navajo Technical University. You can visit her at www.chelseabunn.com

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Robin Ray is the author of *Wetland and Other Stories* (All Things That Matter Press, 2013), *Obey the Darkness: Horror Stories*, the novel *Commoner the Vagabond*, the poetry collection *Welcome to Flowerville: Poetry from San Juan Commons*, and one book of non-fiction, *You Can't Sleep Here: A Clown's Guide to Surviving Homelessness*. His works have appeared at *Across the Margin*, *Rabid Oak*, *Delphinium*, *Bangalore*, *Squawk Back*, *Outsider*, *Red Fez*, *Jerry Jazz Musician*, *Underwood Press*, *Scarlet Leaf*, *Neologism*, *Spark*, *Big Pond Rumours*, *Aphelion*, *Vita Brevis*, and elsewhere.

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Carl is sixteen, a high school junior living in Los Angeles, California. He has always found poetry to be therapeutic. Carl has been writing for a while but did not think about finding an audience until recently. His work has appeared in or is forthcoming from several journals in print or online.

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Briony Zhao is a high school senior studying in Lynchburg, VA. Originally from Beijing, she is interested in languages, indie and alternative music, pale faces in Renaissance art, food in Twin Peaks, and cats in Murakami novels. She maintains a remarkable rate of metabolism which will hopefully last until her late 20s. She spends her free time checking her temperature, making coffee but drinking pomelo tea, and escaping.

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Arlene Antoinette is a poet of West Indian birth who grew up in Brooklyn, New York. She graduated from Brooklyn College and worked as an instructor with disabled individuals for many years. You may find additional work by Arlene at Foxglove Journal, Little Rose Magazine, I am not a silent Poet, Tuck Magazine, The Feminine Collective, The Open Mouse, Amaryllis Poetry, Cagibi Lit Journal, London Grip, Literary Heist, 50 Word Stories, Neologism Poetry Journal, Right Hand Pointing and Your Daily Poem.

THE IDEATE REVIEW

Literary magazine dedicated to providing a voice
for writers and artists from across the globe

ISSUE 4

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