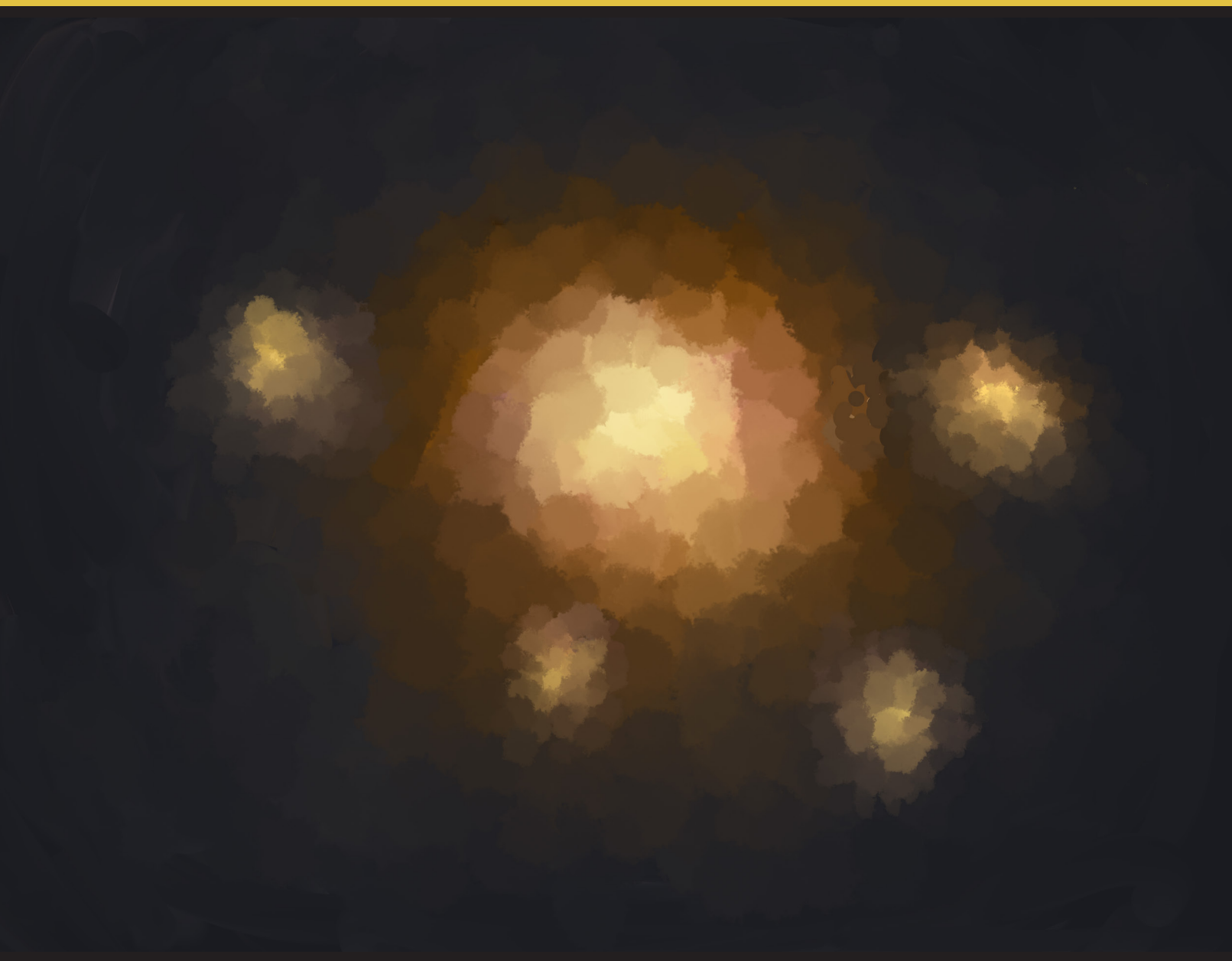


JULY 2021

ISSUE 11

# THE SOCK DRAWER

LITERARY  MAGAZINE



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**F**ounded in June 2020, The Sock Drawer aims to collect the voices of contemporary artists and writers. In a world as tumultuous as this one people need an outlet for their voice. With a current of feminism and activism running through the veins of the editors, The Sock Drawer seeks to be a place to release the tension of existence.

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ON THE COVER  
“Hen and Chicks” by  
Julia Gonzales

**Letters & Comments:** [TheSockDrawerLitMag@gmail.com](mailto:TheSockDrawerLitMag@gmail.com)

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# MEET THE TEAM

FOUNDER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



**G**racelyn Willard (she/her) is the founder and editor-in-chief of The Sock Drawer. She is a 2020 graduate of Hood College with a degree in English and a concentration in Creative Writing. She was a 2019 presenter at the Hood College Discovering the Humanities Conference. She had a nonlinear college career due to her battle with multiple chronic illnesses. She loves to read Roxane Gay, Valeria Luiselli, Agatha Christie, Terrance Hayes, and Wisława Szymborska. Her quest for the perfect gluten free madeleine is never ending and at times she wonders if she loves coffee more than her boyfriend. Her last job was as a cheesemonger and she identifies as bisexual. Her passion is writing, reading, editing, and bad reality tv.

NONFICTION EDITOR/  
ASSISTANT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



**K**erstin Holman is a 2019 Virginia Wesleyan University graduate. In order to get the most bang for her buck, she got her BA in three majors: English Literature, Theatre (with a concentration in dramaturgy) and Women's & Gender Studies. Some writers and voices who inspire her to not only speak but listen are Roxane Gay, Da'Shaun Harrison and noname. As TSD's non-fiction editor and contributor, she hopes to continue polishing her writing craft by bringing awareness to and discussing topics including race, gender, sexuality, and existential crises. She recently became a New Jersian and her interests include bowling, watching "RuPaul's Drag Race," and eating sushi.

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR



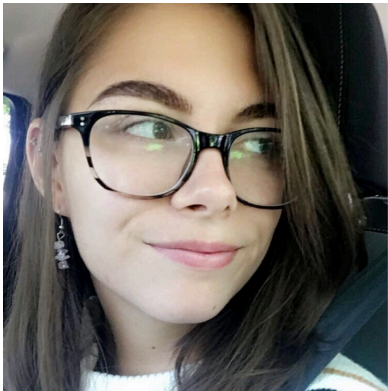
**I**zzy Peroni is the Book Review editor of The Sock Drawer. She is a recent graduate of Hood College, with a degree in English with a concentration in Creative Writing, and a minor in Studies in Women and Gender. Her main contributions to the magazine, as well as the rest of the world, will include poetry, fiction, and book reviews. The majority of the creative media she consumes is either horror or science-fiction, ranging from 70's slasher flicks to often non-traditional ghost stories, as well as practically anything having to do with aliens. She obsesses over the work of Elizabeth Bishop, and unintentionally imitates her biography. Her hobbies include video games and adoring her cat.

**ART & MAGAZINE EDITOR**



**J**ulia Gonzales was voted "Most likely to become an Artist" in 6th grade and knew her love for creativity would never waver. Growing up, she competed and placed in several minor art competitions within her community and enjoyed experimenting with various mediums and techniques. She is currently pursuing a degree in Computer Animation at Full Sail University with the intent to one day produce children shows. She is inspired by works from Damien Hirst, Erik Johansson, Frida Kahlo and Leonora Carrington. Some argue that she loves her cat a little too much and her current drink of choice is iced chai tea.

**FICTION EDITOR**



**M**adison Diemert is a 2020 graduate of Minnesota State Mankato. She holds a degree in English and a minor in Anthropology. She is currently pursuing her MFA in Creative Writing at Augsburg University. While Madison is not obsessing over nostalgic cartoons from her childhood or watching every true crime documentary she can get her hands on, you'll find her searching for the perfect cup of cold brew. As The Sock Drawer's fiction editor, Madison hopes to read as many unique stories as possible and hone her craft as a fiction writer herself. Madison resides in Minnesota, where she lives with her boyfriend, two best friends and (approximately) 400 books.

# Thank You & Farwell

**T**his is the final issue of The Sock Drawer. We wanted our final issue to be both a reflection and celebration of the time that our editors spent growing, learning and expressing our passion for creating. We truly cherished having the chance to give a voice and platform for creators who are typically ignored or forgotten in the literary and arts world.

We are so proud of everything TSD accomplished during our one-year run. We recieved hundreds of submissions. We published eleven issues. We were a team of five editors. We shared one mission.

Thank you to every single person who ever sent us a submission, clicked on our website, read our issue, gave us a follow and believed in us. We look forward to the future and we will always look back on this expereince with fondness and pride. Thank you for joining us on this journey.

With Gratitude,

Grace, Kerstin, Julia, Izzy & Maddie

# EDITOR REFLECTIONS

*A look back with each editor*

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# *Kerstin Holman*

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June 10th, 2020, which is baffling to realize that was over a year ago, was the day that our Editor in Chief Grace asked me to be on the board of editors for this new online literary and arts magazine that she wanted to start. At the time, I had been a college graduate for a little over a year, and I was still unemployed and completely adrift because I had no idea where my life was going. To say that The Sock Drawer gave my life meaning once again and lit a spark of passion and motivation within me would be fitting. It still seems like so much more to me, but it's a nice way to begin describing how much that day meant to me.

Aside from a very brief lesson about the history of LGBTQ+ zines I had in one of my WGS courses in college, I had zero experience with zines or online lit magazines, how to start/run a zine, and how large of a community and following that online magazines truly had. But with an all-female board of editors and a mission statement that I was willing to stand behind, I was more than ready to say yes and help my friend with this crazy idea she had.

The Sock Drawer gave me an invaluable number of skills, friendships, and lessons in such a short amount of time. I will never forget the feeling of pride that came with having my writing published in one of our issues. I will never forget the laughter shared between editors during our late-night meetings. I will never forget the excitement of coming across a submission that undoubtedly found a home in The Sock Drawer. I know I felt right at home while working on TSD and especially so every single time a new issue was published.

I am so proud of everything we accomplished in a year, and I look forward to the future.

Kerstin

Assistant Editor-In-Chief & Editor of Nonfiction





# *Izzy Peroni*

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So it's been about a year since this whole thing started, huh? It's been one year since I started my shitty retail job, having found no other method of slowly accruing funds that will eventually be funnelled directly into student loans, as at the moment, careers for English degrees weren't exactly popping off in the face of a global pandemic. It's been over a year since I sat in my ex's clean and lifeless basement bedroom, reading a text from Grace about possibly submitting work to an online literary magazine she was hoping to spring to life during the month of July. I responded with, "Sure, I can submit some poetry or fiction. Maybe a book review as well?" and in return Grace offered me a spot on the board of editors as the Book Review Editor. Never mind I had never REALLY functioned in the realm of book reviews outside of college essays— I felt confident and excited, realizing that this was a surefire way to keep my creative muscles flexing while I struggled to find fulfillment in the ugly world of customer service. I hadn't had a clue what I was going to do after college in the first place, never mind what I would do after graduating while the world was in near-total lockdown. My thoughts of "I'll figure the rest of my life out when I get back from spring break" were far, far in the past, it felt— and now Grace, a former classmate and fellow feverishly passionate poet, was here on my phone, handing me an opportunity to feel whole again.

The following twelve months were where I negotiated with that opportunity, and sought to expand upon it. There was never an extreme push to monetize the experience; we feasted on the passion for poetry, for community, and for engaging with art and literature that made us proud to publish and host on our website. That's, of course, not to say that everything was roses all the way through; running a lit mag is a highly stressful experience, often filled with miscommunication, passive-aggressive messages, anxiety, creepy men that you have to add to an ever-expanding email blocklist, weird personal drama masked in a weak veneer of non-fiction, and of course, seemingly-doable but ultimately-aggravating deadlines. I mean, we were fucking insane in the beginning to think that we were going to publish an issue of a literary magazine ONCE a MONTH. Why the fuck did we try to do that? What the fuck were we on???

We got through it somehow, though. I say 'somehow' but the reasons are obvious; we got through it because Grace, Kerstin, Julia, and Maddie kicked ass every single month and we all worked our asses off and we published issues that we were proud of. I think that was always the best part— finding pieces that we knew we HAD to be the ones to publish. Poems and fiction pieces that had to be in OUR lit mag, because we grew attached to them so strongly and wanted them to represent us and our establishment. Actually— the best part was fighting about it. Sure, it's great to just read a fantastic poem and know that it's

## EDITOR REFLECTIONS

going to be in this issue, but my favorites were the ones that we spent half an hour arguing over on Zoom or Discord. Grace and I had a professor in college, Dr. Angello, who once said to us something along the lines of, “You always hope there’s an editor on the lit mag board who’s convincing everyone else to look at your poem just ONE more time and give it another chance.” I loved being that editor, and seeing Grace become that editor as well. Our tastes were so different from each other and everyone else but talking that ONE poem into the final publication was endlessly rewarding— Grace convinced the entire board that “Airborne Orgasms” by Drew Pissarra NEEDED to be in one of our first issues, as the kind of unashamed and exciting poetry that we wanted to represent us as a literary magazine. Months later I got to review an entire book of short fiction by Pissarra, and it helped me feel truly connected to the community we had built, as well as making the stress we’d been going through basically worth it.

I think a lot of my favorite parts of running a literary magazine have been the most selfish parts. I love that poets respected me enough to ask me, by NAME, to review their books and publish those reviews on our website, and that they trusted a representation of their work to be hosted there. I love seeing submissions from the same couple of people in my section, like the always-talented Lisa Goodrum, and knowing that the Book Reviews part of our lit mag will always be full of quality work. I love that as a team we’ve created something that we’re endlessly proud of, and that will always be a part of us, no matter what the future holds.

Cheers, friends.

Izzy, the Book Review Editor



# *Madison Diemert*

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It's been a little dream of mine to be a part of a literary mag since I was a freshman in college. When I was introduced to the idea of a community of writers and artists who were able to share their work in a safe environment, I was hooked. I not only wanted to share my own work, but I wanted to create a space where others could showcase their best. Still, I had no idea where to start and my passion lulled until last summer, when I decided to look into smaller lit mags.

The Sock Drawer was closed for submissions, but I was intrigued after reading the first issue. Once I found out the Sock Drawer staff had no fiction editor on their masthead, I jumped at the opportunity and emailed our Editor in Chief, Grace. She was gracious enough to give me an interview and the rest is history. The Sock Drawer girls (as I call them to anyone asking about who I'm talking to on Discord for over an hour) took me in with open arms and immediately trusted me with the fiction section. I've never felt more connected to four people who I (still) have never met in person and I give my endless gratitude to them. Without them, this small dream would have never come true. I've grown so much working on the Sock Drawer with them, both personally and professionally. My workshopping skills have greatly improved and helped with my work as a grad student, I was able to get interviews and job opportunities and am now much more comfortable submitting to lit mags. Knowing what's going on behind the scenes only helps when finding a home for my fiction— which has also improved during my year here.

I can't lie, though— there's so much more to running a lit mag than I had ever imagined. At times it was chaotic, stressful, messy and even a pain to work on. The long nights were sometimes the worst, but having each other to lean on and crack jokes with made it bearable and even enjoyable. It was always worth it. I knew I was helping not only myself with this project, but my team as well, and all who submitted their work. By giving a home to some of the most beautiful pieces I had ever laid my eyes on, I felt fulfilled and I know the Sock Drawer girls would have to agree.

I am, of course, sad to see the Sock Drawer ending. It has given me a lot to look forward to on some of my darkest days. It made the periods where I was unemployed much more bearable to get through. Even when I felt like I just couldn't work on anything, once I sat down and started going through our submitted pieces I somehow felt better. Even now, in writing this reflection, I feel better about taking on the giant mound of homework assignments that I've allowed to pile up.

## EDITOR REFLECTIONS

There is so much more I could say about the Sock Drawer, about my friends and about the writing community, but I'm not sure I could put it all into words. I think it's safe to say that the Sock Drawer has had a tremendously positive impact on my life. I'm going to miss every aspect of it, but there's something everyone should know: I live and breathe nostalgia, so I think I'll be alright.

All things must come to an end. Everything has an expiration date, even when it might not feel like it. I know my friends will go on to do great things and I'm so lucky to have them in my life. Onto our next adventure!

Maddie

Fiction Editor



# *Julia Gonzales*

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Being an art editor seemed like a simple enough task when I was first approached about it by Grace. Thankfully, I couldn't have been more wrong. The late night adobe tutorial video binges, debates on art appreciation and branding and logo creation have all shaped me into the much happier and more confident artist that I am today.

The support from my team and love from our audience was channeled into every issue and it's my deepest hope that the magazine was able to showcase our collective hardwork. I'm so proud of what we were able to accomplish and I loved sharing our work with everyone I met. The trials and headaches along the way only made the end results more rewarding for me. Publishing the latest issue after hours of editing became the most satisfying part of the month at one point.

Kerstin, Izzy and Maddie are some of the most talented and beautiful people I have ever had the pleasure to work with and befriend. I always looked forward to our meetings and even skipped a date in order to catch up with everyone. Having experienced working with an unsupportive and even toxic team in the past, The Sock Drawer ladies were a breath of fresh air and an endless source of inspiration.

I'm going to miss the community we created together, but I know we all have exciting opportunities ahead of us. The Sock Drawer days will forever be fond memories for me and ones I will always be grateful for. As I wrap up the editing of our final issue, I'm reminded of an old song I learned when I was young: "This is goodnight, and not goodbye."

Julia

Art & Magazine Editor





# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*A note to our favorite Editor-In-Chief*

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# *Kerstin Holman*

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Dear Grace,

I am going to try not to say it a bunch of times during this letter. To make sure that does not happen, I will say it now: Thank you. I constantly marvel at the fact that language (specifically English, but that's a whole other letter) often fails us. I just don't know if there is another word or phrase that could convey my gratitude other than thank you.

Your devotion to building The Sock Drawer from the ground up and into something that gave so many people (including myself) a voice and a home for their work will always inspire me. It's safe to say that you taught me to approach any future project or even career with the same amount of care and carefulness that you did with TSD.

It's undeniable that this grand little journey we went on would not have been as memorable, bearable, or rewarding without you leading us. Anyone who has experience working on an online magazine of any kind will know that they require a lot of time, energy, collaboration, organization, and more. Luckily, the editors and I had you there to wrangle us together and always reassure us and offer a solution when things got chaotic (spoiler alert: things pretty much always got chaotic). You absolutely had the hardest job of all of us, and I want to acknowledge just how impressive it is that you were willing to take on so much responsibility for the love and passion of it.

Right from the beginning, when you initially approached me on that day in June 2020 when I was at my lowest, you and I both knew that what you wanted to do was ambitious. But I also knew that this was an opportunity that I would be incredibly stupid to say no to. And I think you might have felt that way, too. Turns out we were both right.

I want to thank you for the countless hours you put into working on TSD, whether it was sending emails and newsletters, building and perfecting our website, posting on social media, or combing through our submissions. I want to thank you for always being someone I could go to both as an editor and as a friend. Here's to The Sock Drawer's history and our futures.

Kerstin

Assistant Editor-In-Chief & Editor of Nonfiction



# *Izzy Peroni*

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Hey Grace,

I am writing this letter to the Editor-in-Chief with love, and with worry. I'm aware right now that you're going through health issues that I cannot possibly comprehend— most likely, some of my worst fears— but also that you're settled, hopefully into a place that's not flooded, with your boyfriend, and with your baking. Communication between us has been sparse but eh, I have ADHD and can't text back sooner than a six-to-eight-hour time frame, and you're, like, totally going through it.

You kind of saved my ass, you know that? I mean I don't know who or what I'd be if it wasn't for the Sock Drawer. I'm still working an unbearable retail job but underneath it all there's the knowledge that I've done something that I can hold up in people's faces and say, "See? I am accomplished. I write and I edit. I contribute." Maybe my temporary self-worth shouldn't be based off of the urge to contribute. But it helps, in a way.

The journey we've taken over the past year made me realize how little we really knew each other at the start— and also, that that didn't quite matter. We knew basically nothing of each other's lives besides the poetry we'd shared in class; can't that be enough? Is that not precisely as vulnerable as we needed to be with each other to take on the challenges that we did? Maybe so, maybe not. It doesn't change that we fucking did it. We made a lit mag. We pulled our voices out of the back of the sock drawer, and shit.

And even if the sock drawer is all emptied out I'm still proud of us. I'm proud of you, and I'm grateful for all you've done for us, and I hope we always gave back to you enough while we could. This isn't the end, I bet, but for now I really want to see you rest. Thank you, thank you, thank you. See you again soon.

Cheers,

Izzy, your Book Review Editor





# *Madison Diemert*

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Grace,

I've probably said this to you a hundred times by now, but I can't thank you enough for allowing me to work with you, Izzy, Kerstin and Julia on the Sock Drawer. Not only have I gotten the chance to work on something so dear to me, but I now have amazing, like-minded friends with who I've found a community. Without you, I would have never gotten this chance.

It's no secret that I've always had a hard time making friends. Having anxiety, especially in social situations, kept me from experiencing a lot of things in life. When I got to high school it was so much better. My friends didn't know what to do with me so they just forced me into uncomfortable situations and from that, I grew. I am still friends with the majority of them, but once I moved onto college it got hard again. I've always fluctuated like this, during big transitions in my life. Once I started grad school (during Covid, no less) I knew I wasn't going to have many friends around me again. I was wondering who would push me this time, to go out of my comfort zone and ultimately help me in the end. Plot twist— it was me. When I was looking into lit mags to submit to and found the Sock Drawer, I knew I had to try. I had always wanted to review the work of other writers and I saw an opportunity with you.

Emailing you made me so nervous. I thought for sure you'd just ignore me or if you did consider me, you'd think I was inexperienced and not good enough.

Thankfully, you thought none of those things and I was so relieved. When we met during my interview I was surprised to find how casual you were. I've always done absolutely terrible in formal interviews, and when I was the Editor in Chief at a newspaper, I completely avoided formal interviews with my editors and writers. The fact that you were like me in that way eased my nervousness so much. Basically what I'm saying is, thank you for being so cool and understanding.

We all know what happened after that, but I can't tell you how excited I was to work with you all. I told my boyfriend about it and he was happy that I had found something to work on, and people to spend my time with, (he was definitely getting annoyed with me depending on him for all of my social interaction.) We fit so well together and I am still so annoyed that we have to live so far from one another. I was a newcomer in an already-

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

established lit mag but it never felt that way. I cannot thank you enough for allowing me to find a creative outlet and a group of friends who I am still able to be creative with and get support from.

You are someone I admire so much, even though I don't say it enough. You started the Sock Drawer from the ground up and took on the most responsibility out of us all. And even though we all could have done better at times, you still believed in us. You were so understanding when I needed more time, when I just couldn't read something or when I needed help. Now it's time for me to be understanding of your situation, as well. Though I am incredibly sad to see the Sock Drawer go, I am so grateful for the experience and the growth. I now feel more like a professional in my field rather than a student. I've seen my writing grow so much and because of your work ethic I am inspired to keep going.

Thank you for starting the Sock Drawer and for giving me a space to be myself for a while. There will always be a place in my heart for the mag and for the time I've spent working on it with you all. You are someone I know I'll always be able to call a friend.

With all my love,

Maddie

Fiction Editor



# Julia Gonzales

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Dearest Grace,

From the horror that was band camp, ex's that shall not be named, salted muffins and chipotle in a class no one remembers in senior year to the shenanigans that is The Conglomerate. It's been a long and exhausting journey, but having the pleasure of knowing you and watching us grow personally and professionally over the years has been a joy.

If you told me at the beginning how this would all turn out, I would do it again in an instant. If only to see your smile again when you first told me about TSD. As someone who never followed through with any business ideas I've ever had (and sadly there have been many), your dedication to TSD and the scale you were able to achieve in such a short time has left me in perpetual awe of you and your spirit. I'm so proud of you. You inspire me every day to keep pushing forward despite the "what if's."

It was actually for this very reason that I never followed through with any of those ideas. "What if it doesn't last forever?" I always talked myself out of everything. As a result, I never gained any experience from the trials and successes that come from running a business or following my passion. If this past year has taught me anything, it's that the greatest joy and sense of contentment I've found in my life comes from following my passion. But of course, following your passion isn't easy and life always finds a way to intervene. The one good thing about life, though, is that there are always alternate paths to explore. And like a boomerang, your passion will always find a way back to you. It's made all the difference in my life and I can't thank you enough for giving me the opportunity to share my work and talents with TSD.

If I could give you all the peace and relief in the world with these words alone I would. No one deserves it more than you. Thank you for your leadership, dedication, sacrifice and commitment.

Sending hope and healing,

Julia

Art & Magazine Editor



## THE SOCK DRAWER



At The Sock Drawer we aim to raise the voices of those who have felt that their voices have been placed in the back of the sock drawer. We welcome all art and all artists, while giving special notice to those who are often marginalized by society.