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Letter from the Editor

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Letter from the Editor

I am honored to present the 17th edition of *The Laureate*, which serves as a stunning representation of the diverse student psyche that characterizes Western Michigan University. Kalamazoo, as a small midwestern town, sometimes feels removed from the chaotic global happenings that dominate our news feeds; and yet, this collection calls upon themes that feel familiar. This past year has been defined by monumental social and political movements—movements made possible by the extraordinary passion of young people. Through rallying cries of #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter, through petitions against gun violence and global warming, and through women’s marches and science marches, the national discourse is one of fierce activism. It is an honor to present to you a cohesive body of work that demonstrates the creative power our local community exhibits.

With immense gratitude, I celebrate the diverse range of human experiences represented in this collection. The included stories, poems, essays, and visual art call attention to highly individualized perspectives that demand to be seen and heard. We all have stories to tell, and it’s my hope that *The Laureate* exists as a mouthpiece for our united voices. Within these pages, you will find a collective narrative of our place and time—a narrative that simultaneously calls upon memory and looks to the future. As artists, we are called to create so that we might better understand our world, and we share our work so that others might also understand. I invite us all to learn from one another’s stories, and to commemorate all the wonderful, chaotic, and sometimes tragic ways we are human.

In the spirit of praising humanity, I would like to thank several superb individuals who have made this all possible. Allison Korteway—a Communications major, a powerful leader, and outstanding organizer—and Mary Maroste—a exceptional poet and literary soul—were exactly the people I needed to carry me through this massive project. Thank you, dear friends, for being my assistant editors. To the design center, I applaud your collective creative genius, and I am in awe of the work you create. Thank you for bringing this publication to life. To Jennifer Townsend, you are the coolest, and I'm so glad you agreed to be my faculty advisor. Finally, to Becky Cooper—Becky, I feel like I should write a poem to celebrate you. You have been a pillar in my creative and academic life, and I owe this all to you. I'm doing a happy dance and cartwheels over here!

Cheers to you, dear readers.

Jessie Fales
Editor in Chief