



Zeitgeist.

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Zeitgeist

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1. The general intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of an era.
2. A student-based enterprise that seeks to entertain, motivate, and inspire through short stories, arts, columns, and a variety of other media.
3. Provides a platform for aspiring writers and artists to express their creativity.

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theme

liberosis (n)

the desire to care less about things—to loosen your grip on your life.

Jordan

by Henie Zhang

i am sorry
i did it again.
i knocked over a vase, shattered
the vanity mirror, tripped over my foot stuck
in someone else's shoes. i am so sorry
about the time i put
a whole zucchini in the blender & jammed it
up, and the time
i fell asleep in your car
& drooled all over the backseat.
i am sorry
for the times
i made you cry.
& most of all when i left you alone and jumped
into the freezing river, barefoot
but in my defense it looked so pristine &
it is the only place
where guilt does not bloom through the seasons.
i think of going back there all the time,
so much that it is all i can do to pick myself
off the floor sometimes. in these spaces
i think it is easy to forget what fragility is. it is easy
to forget how it can split skin
as easily as a stone splits still water. sometimes
we all scream into our pillows and break
our fingers on piano
keys in search of a second chance like band-aids after paper cuts &
this is perhaps the river
into which we have always
been leaping. a river of
our own antiques, a box of buttons & vases & perverse little sacrifices—
the things we collect for the love of a forgiveness so black it might never
let us regret
anything, & so this
is how i go on:
i sleep,
i eat,
i mend together my vases without
ever remembering how i have walked
all the cracks on the things i crippled & never once
witnessed the ocean.



Iridescent

Lena He

33 x 44 inches

Acrylic paint

Inspired by the birds that lived nearby my apartment in Hong Kong, this painting depicts the death of a pigeon as an entire city grows up from its back. Despite its reputation as a pest, the pigeon's feathers are iridescent, just as the window of the skyscrapers and the bugs that consume it are.

enigma

by Jenny Fu

Layout by Hayley Hawkins

When

Life begins withering and death

Coils in its cot, I shall return to the land of silver trees,

Red stockings, and jingle rocks.

I could convince myself in spring, breathing flutters of

blowballs. Yet, when the fibres drift away, nothing remains

But a fragile stalk.

But hey, spring is here—why the gloom? Enjoy

The sun, the sprinkles, the winds, and

You may be happy too.

Wiser to turn away

Before sanity crumbles into ruin. Then, you may

Find, in your breath, a soft, strangled tune...



Honest Letter to College

by Isabella Luo

Layout by Claire Chen

Why this college? (420 words)

Welcome

CAID 2020

letsgraduate@concordiashanghai.org



Sign Out

B

I

U



I'm going to be frank—I applied to this college because I saw it was one of the top 30 schools on the US News ranking and I want to get in just so I could brag about it to my distant family members who really hate me.

In all honesty, you're probably going to accept me according to the emotional response you get from my essay. So now I shall proceed to write a very sad and over-exaggerated story of me getting an injury, my dog getting sick then dying, followed by me going on this enlightening journey of overcoming my challenges and learning some very cliché lesson like follow your dreams and avenge the death of your dog by all means.

B

I

U



Now I'm just going to list a bunch of qualities that I found on the featured pages of the university website and relate it back to myself.

I really like the courses, especially this one and this one and that one. These courses will help prepare me for my future, whatever it is. I'm also insanely excited about participating in some random study abroad that I picked from the website. Now I'm going to connect this location to some obscure trip I once had in that place. Lastly, I'm going to talk about the wonderful community at the school and how I would love to work with one of the professors that I picked because I happened to like that professor's name. To my surprise, I'll slowly fall in love with your school the more I research only for my love to be utterly destroyed by your rejection letter.

If you are to reject me, I want you to be aware that I will be receiving a lot of rejections this year, so competition for your rejection to be accepted is very high. Although I've become quite adept at speeding through the five stages of grief after receiving a rejection letter, the greatest amount of acceptances I can give out this year is low. From December on, you're looking at a 0 to zero percent acceptance rate for your rejection letter. This is classified by US News as highly selective. If your rejection letter is to be rejected, you may submit an appeal, but take note that I will simply read it then delete it. Also, Epstein didn't kill himself.

I'll see you in the Class of 2024.



Celebrate!

What's next



Drift

Joyce Wang

Dimensions: 5.83 x 8.27 in

When we stare into empty space with a scattered gaze, we are not merely losing focus or trying to escape the reality. Rather, in another dimension, we are allowing a different self to drift out of our unmoving body to explore the endless possibilities of nothingness.



scream

Joyce Wang

Dimensions: 5.83 x 8.27 in

Struggle is internal, and so is the desire to mask it with pretended calmness. When the disguise of our faces is ripped away, the only remains left of the battles that we constantly throw ourselves into will be emptiness. The truth is, we can only be alleviated if we pull away the veil that silences our piercing screams; we can only be alleviated if we try to loosen our grip.

Turning A Curse Into A Blessing

by Katherine Da

Layout by Joyce Wang

After a turbulent start to 2020, Concordia students have not forgotten their passion for learning

It's a cold, early February day in Shanghai. Outside, the streets are empty and filled with an eerie silence as everyone waits anxiously for the latest statistics on the coronavirus (COVID-19) attack. With most of China on lockdown, recent events were surely enough to rattle many living in Shanghai, a city with one of the highest number of infections in China. Yet Concordia high school student Iffany Z. with her usual cheery countenance, offers another view. "I wish this never happened," she begins, "but it has offered me an opportunity to grow."

The question of how and why the outbreak happened, as well as how to eradicate it, has occupied China and many around the world in the few months since the first patient was discovered in Wuhan. Subsequently, the virus spread to other parts of the country and the world, drowning society in fear and bringing back painful memories of the SARS outbreak in 2003.

Luckily, Concordia has been quick to react, putting in place a virtual school program after the Chinese government ordered the closure of all schools until the beginning of May. But it's a remedy, not a solution, to students' longing for their normal lives and social interaction.

"I'm really thankful that teachers are putting in an effort [for cyberschool], but it's an inefficient way to learn when I'm not being able to interact with people," Iffany explains. "I've only seen my family and haven't seen anyone else for over a week. I miss talking to my teachers and being able to go outside or even go to practice because I've just been at home."

However, despite the loneliness and added anxiety, this extended time at home has given Iffany and her friends the opportunity to start Masks for Wuhan, a personal fundraising project that seeks to donate masks and medical suits to hospitals in Wuhan. "There's nothing we can do to stop [the virus], so what can we do to help it? Or how can we alleviate it?" These are the questions that had first inspired Iffany to get together with friends online and jump-start the project. Since then, the organization has been able to reach its original 2-week goal of raising 21000 RMB in the first three hours, assisting doctors and cultivating important soft skills in group members.

"It [Masks for Wuhan] gave me an opportunity for me to work with people who think the same and are passionate about helping," Iffany says. "And this made me realize how to start an organization, how to work with others, how to reach out to people, and how to develop empathy."

As Masks for Wuhan continues to make meaningful change, Evelyn S., another Concordia student, has also been able to turn the virus's curse into a blessing.

"Especially since college app season is over, [staying at home] has given me some time to refocus on my hobbies," Evelyn explains. "I've been picking up stuff that I stopped doing last semester, such as playing piano and studying Swedish."

A typical day for Evelyn now involves going to cyberschool, studying Swedish through online courses, walking her dog, exercising, playing the piano, and drawing. With a smile, she added that this list may soon extend to include cooking.

In particular, Evelyn has been drawing a cartoon called Chasing Little Lights, which is currently being published on Tapas. Interestingly, when she first started it a few years ago, she set her characters in a world ravaged by a virus. But thankfully for curious readers, she has hinted that she will write a happy ending.

Evelyn and Iffany both serve as examples of the passionate Concordia community, which has become determined to push through the challenges of the coronavirus to grow and serve others. The past few months has served as a reminder of how easily our lives could be disrupted. We live in a delicate system, and it sometimes depends on the drive and kindness of community members to hold it together.

Europa



Geo Chen
30 x 30 cm
Watercolors

Europa is the sixth-largest moon in the Solar System and has a bronze and gold sheen to it. The youth and smoothness of the planet have led experts to believe that water exists below the surface that harbors extraterrestrial life and expresses the desire to escape from this planet.

1986- A Memorial of Chernobyl

by Andrew Yuan

Layout by Joyce Wang

Mead still grows
Swards still sway
House still stands
Maids still dance

You stepped out naked
Like those that stepped upon you
Ecstatic pale skulls undusted
Hollow weary eyes gazed

Sane as it might be
“Все стабільно! Everything is well!”
Cried the white-haired carpetbagger
How may you respond the same diplomat
Naught to b'membered

Those brave soldiers
Into the ashes without a shield
Into the flames without a sword
Into the bullets without armor
Who shall b'membered?

Metal, Concrete, Flesh
Tears, Corpses, Smoke
God weeps with black tears
Or was it Satan of Hell I must not tell
“Was it war?”

No, youth, t'as ourselves
You more baleful than hatred
More than the ashes over Pompeii
More than the mushrooms over the Pacific
Naught to b'membered

Burns, Blood, Bones
And echoes of sins
Yet what sins do they have?
Innocence to pay for the Red greed
Naught to b'membered

Boys with fallen hair
Angels with fallen wings
Debris with Fire
Resurrecting to Heaven

Red Capes are coming
No, my friend, they don't just come
They pirouette in the red blaze
And fiddle not in Rome but Pripyat

Dust to Dust
Crimes to Crimes
S'tit for the dead to pay for those?
Or the negligent to pay to die?
Naught to b'membered

Privilege by Hayley Szymanek

It starts with a kitchen table. With trembling hands and mumbled words. The cold chair beneath you mercilessly prevents the ground from consuming you whole. For the first time, you notice years of coffee rings and dents marking the surface of the table. You are determined to notice anything but the way they are looking at you.

They must know. They change the channel on those scenes, they ferret glances when you mention some celebrity's recent declaration. They must know. You can't be invisible, at least not to them. Your silence feels more and more like the scratchy rope sloppily tied into the figure-8 climbing knots you learned in sixth grade- the ones everyone pretended to hang themselves with. You must breathe.

You hate yourself for this moment. You hate yourself for disappointing them, for not being normal, for everything you could not wish away. God knows how you tried. How you have bruised your knees and lost your voice to prayer. How much you tried to cut it out like a bad kidney.

Oh well.

You stumble through the most important thing you've ever said, ineloquent as ever. You ramble, and your voice cracks. You don't notice when you start to cry. You can't focus on the feeling of dragging your heart from the pits of your stomach to the side of your sleeve; all you see are the coffee rings. You wonder if you will ever be the same again. You wonder if they will love you the same ever again. You have accepted either answer.

They do not react. They are stony and cold and stained. They ask you if you are happy. You say that you are now. They ask if you know this means that you'll never be loved. You nod, and their next question is lost to the sound of blood rushing to your ears. You tell them that at least you will be as loved by God as either of them, for what God would gift you with a love you can't use? What God would only love you after handing you a knife and asking you to slash yourself to pieces? You tell them to wake you up at seven tomorrow for church.

You are weightless.

Layout by Lena He



Impostor

Evelyn Shi

40 x 60 cm

Acrylic paint

Impostor syndrome is a psychological pattern where one doubts one's accomplishments, viewing themselves as a "fraud." This fear is irrational, but those who experience it trap themselves in a negative cycle of working harder and harder to prove themselves.



Incandescent

by Emilie Zhang

Layout by Claire Chen

deliver us
the way you throw
newspapers up front lawns. deliver us
the way you package faith
in cardboard boxes. deliver us up the Nile and beyond
the plains of Israel because death will claim me before deliverance;
expiry will dawn before salvation; mortality dances in my blood and I,
I am alive,
burning, smoldering,
blistering in my sinner's prayer,
incandescent.



Flight

Kelly Wu

The figure in the picture is plunging towards land but remains suspended in space--a moment in time. As he falls he becomes the bridge between space and land, the tie between two worlds. Despite the lack of control he has over his eventual fate, the figure serves as a symbol of hope. As he elevates over the terrain he experiences the bliss in flight.

24 x 32 in
Charcoal on paper

Dream

Kelly Wu

The girl is relaxed in a dream, enjoying a momentary bliss as she forgets the stress and demands of life.

6 x 8 in
Pencil on paper





Zhangjiang

Henie Zhang

1080×1620 pixels
DSLR photographs

I staked out a busy local market near my house to get candid shots of people. These two photos were particularly interesting as the subjects both seem like they're isolated from life around them and boxed in by their shops (until my intrusion), while in fact there were people constantly bustling around and talking to them. I managed to capture a few seconds of quiet. But you wouldn't know that—in these photos, they're suspended in a moment where they will always seem completely alone.





Impressions of Mr. Stripling

by Hayley Szymanek
Layout by Evelyn Shi

Words create worlds.

It is Saturday at 10 a.m. He is in a dusty classroom with yellow paper curtains. His favorite students (or so I like to think) made them, inscribing them with inside jokes and his best quotes. They remind him of the night we turned his desk into a ball pit. He is grading finals or working on his book (another email has

been added to the Wall of Rejection, but he is one step closer to making a Wall of Success). A taxidermied ferret in origami clothes that he will never tell us the story of is on top of his cabinets, next to the paper-mache *Lord of the Flies* pig head. The tree we decorated for the children's workshop is still covered in poorly-curved ribbons. A 1984-themed poster of a terrible (but optimistic) children's poet watches over him, and he wishes they were up around school (if only the name Joanna Fuchs wasn't so easy to vandalize). Two more issues of our literary magazine are on his bookshelf. He still ends every lesson by telling us to go forth and do great things. Most importantly, he is anywhere but a coffin.

He's planning on calling in sick to go watch the new Star Wars movie (again) or spending another ten hours painting board game figures for an upcoming tournament. He'll spend Sunday with his six year old son, who will grow up with a father who loves him more than life. Most importantly, his son is anywhere but attending his funeral.

He is alive. *Please.*

If words create worlds, tell me, what words shall I write to raise the dead? Whose blood shall I spell them in to get it right? Which parts of my memories must I relinquish and steep in eloquence to save a life? He deserves more words than I can write. He deserves sestinas and villanelles and entire epics about the lives he changed (and the ones he saved). We need a new word for something like this: a loss so awful that the sorrow of this world seems to have seeped into every breath. Instead, we call it death, and we find a way to carry it.

Go forth, and do great things.





Concordia

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SHANGHAI