

YALE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

*CREATIVE
WRITING
CONCENTRATORS'
BALL*

MAY 5TH @ 7PM

All of the 2021 Writing Concentrators would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Cynthia Zarin (Writing Concentration Coordinator), Richard Deming (Director of Creative Writing), Jessica Brantley (Chair), Stefanie Markovits (Director of Undergraduate Studies), Jane Bordiere, and everyone else in the English Department.

Ryan Benson

Ryan Benson is a twenty-two-year-old writer and actor from North Carolina. Her senior project is a collection of short stories titled *Fawn Song*, advised by Amity Gaige, whom Ryan adores for her patience, thoughtfulness, and good sense of humor.

Madelyn Blaney

Madelyn Blaney is an English major from Montclair, New Jersey. Her senior project is a collection of short stories about black women and is centered around themes of displacement. She is extremely grateful to her advisor, Adam Sexton, for his warmth and wisdom. She is thankful for her professors, classmates, and loved ones who have helped in ways both big and small.

Emma Brodey

Emma Brodey is from Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Her creative nonfiction project is a memoir tentatively titled *Jane Austen, My Mother, and Me*. Emma is grateful to her advisor, Anne Fadiman, and to her concentration partner, Daniel Yadin, for their generous help and for reading the same words so carefully so many times. She is also indebted to the wonderful Verlyn Klinkenborg, Richard Deming, Cynthia Zarin, and (last but certainly not least) her extremely forbearing mother.

Lydia Burleson

Lydia Burleson is an English major from rural Northeast Texas. Her nonfiction collection of essays, tentatively titled *My Mother's Daughter*, focuses on Lydia's complicated relationship with her mother and the stories she and her mother tell. Lydia would like to thank her concentration advisor, Verlyn Klinkenborg, for always pushing her prose to higher and higher levels of clarity; the JE Residential College Writing Tutor, Kate Hunter, for providing 4 years of encouragement and support; her past creative writing professors--Cynthia Zarin, Richard Deming, Susan Choi, Donald Margulies, Mark Oppenheimer, and Shifra Sharlin--for creating the space and community to ponder hard subjects; and her high school English teacher, Miss Herman, for encouraging Lydia to apply to Yale and never to give up on writing.

Kiran Damodaran

Kiran Damodaran is an English and economics major from New Jersey, which he still favors over his new home of San Diego, California. His senior project, a collection of poems entitled *Man of Lotus // God of Shame*, explores desire, shame, and identity. He is especially grateful to his advisor, Claudia Rankine, for her guidance, patience, care, and ability to locate the heart of every poem, and to Emily Skillings and Irene Vázquez, for their undying encouragement and insightful suggestions. He is also very thankful to his family and friends for their support and love, and to his many wonderful teachers and professors -- Cynthia Zarin, Verlyn Klinkenborg, Margaret Spillane, Adam Sexton, Tess Callahan James, and so many others -- without whom this collection would not have been possible.

Olivia Drubner

Olivia Drubner is an English major from New York City. Her senior project, *Don't Write That Down*, is a collection of reported essays about mental health, music, and New York — a perfect trinity. She's especially grateful for her advisor Verlyn Klinkenborg, Fred Strebeigh's ENGL 454, and her fellow concentrators. She'd also like to thank her family.

Abby Lee

Abby Lee is an English major from Roswell, Georgia. Her collection of nonfiction short stories titled *Taste and See* focuses on her family's relationship with food, alcohol, and rural Appalachia. She would like to thank Verlyn Klinkenborg for the constant encouragement and words of wisdom in advising this project; Anne Fadiman and Susan Choi for their writing guidance over her Yale career, and her mother for her insight and interviews included in the piece.

Lucy Silbaugh

Lucy Silbaugh is an English major from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Denver, Colorado. Her Writing Concentration project, a poetry collection called *The Counterargument*, would never have existed without Louise Glück's encouragement and unsparing criticism. Lucy is indebted to her parents, sisters, friends, and teachers (past and present) — as well as to Jon Koss for his invaluable printing assistance and to Kate Silbaugh and Dan Jurayj, who let her live in their house and eat their delicious food while she wrote many of the poems in the collection.

Eliana Rose Swerdlow

Eliana Rose Swerdlow is an English major in the Human Rights program from New Wilmington, Pennsylvania. Her senior project, a collection of poems, is titled *Daylight Savings*. She would like to thank Louise Glück for helping each poem find its way and her father for being her first reader, always.

Amanda Thomas

Amanda Thomas is an English major from Silver Spring, Maryland and Jamaica. Her senior project, a novella entitled *The Short Life and Death of Apollo the Dog* concerns the lives of three individuals ten years after an accidental dog death. She is immensely grateful for her advisor Susan Choi's kind wisdom, invaluable support, and illuminating phone calls. This project would not be possible without unresolvable conflict and ulterior motives at large. Special thanks to Amanda's multifarious friends and family, the loves of her life.

Rianna Turner

Rianna Turner is an English major from Corpus Christi, Texas. Rianna's senior project, *Recipes in Recovery: The Not-So-Story of Feeding My Body*, is an experiment in food writing. The project merges recipe writing with the personal essay form to intervene in the stories that contribute to self-construction. It is a collection of recipes for the self. Many thanks to Adam Reid Sexton for his advising, conversation, patience, and humor. Thanks also to Caleb Zane Huett, for his conversations about craft; mom, for her honesty; and friends, for their persistent optimism and graciousness.

Irene Vázquez

Irene Vázquez is an Ethnicity, Race, and Migration and English major hailing from Houston, Texas. Irene's senior project, *The Atlantic Now*, is a choreopoem in the tradition of Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls*. The collection follows a group of Black women on the Gulf Coast preparing for a hurricane. Much love and thanks to Claudia Rankine and Emily Skillings for their guidance over the last four years and on this project; the beloved poets of WORD: Performance Poetry at Yale for their care and all the late nights at the Af-Am House and on Zoom; family (both given and chosen); and to all the Black women of the South who have made a way out of no way.

Skye Ward

Skye Ward is an English major from Pass Christian, Mississippi. Her senior project is a southern gothic/horror novella entitled *The Southern Gentleman*. It is a story that deals with the sexual expectations projected on women both in the south and elsewhere, where to draw the lines of pleasure and shame, and being haunted by where and how you grew up. She would like to thank all of her incredible writing professors including Richard Deming, Caryl Phillips, Cynthia Zarin, Donald Margulies, and Adam Sexton. She would also like to thank her parents and grandparents for accepting and supporting her strangeness and her friends Jackie and Charlie for being constant sounding boards and figures of inspiration.

Daniel Yadin

Daniel Yadin is an English major from New Jersey. His nonfiction project, *Sea of Wheat*, tells the story of his family's famous Israeli folk band, the socialistic village on which they live, and their connection to the 1995 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. He would like to thank Anne Fadiman for advising his project and Emma Brodey for editing it, as well as Peter Cole and Sarah Stillman, as well as all his friends and all his family.

Sophia Zhao

Sophia Zhao is an English and Political Science double major from New York City. Her senior project is a collection of poems titled *Homecoming*. She would like to thank her advisor, Cynthia Zarin, for her endless support, guidance, and dedication. Thanks also to the creative writing faculty—Claudia Rankine, Derek Green, Susan Choi, Adam Sexton, and Caryl Phillips, to name a few—for their mentorship, the 2021 poetry concentrators for their keen insights, and her friends and family for everything else in between.