



## EDITOR'S NOTE

Ariel Birks

At the beginning of the academic year, I asked tutors at the Writing Center to answer some of the following questions in order to generate their *Inkwell* articles: what can you say, from your specific position, that would help other students, faculty, and staff at Evergreen as writers or readers? What have you come across independently or as a *Cultivating Voice* student or writing tutor that you feel the general campus hasn't gotten a chance to learn? What tangles are you willing to describe or write through in order to help others understand their writing or identity as a writer?

From those initial prompts, these writing-tutors-cum-authors have measured, melted, stretched, blown into, broken, and sifted their ideas and experiences until they've reached the printed, stable form of these articles. Meanwhile, our team of five editors straddled the line between emphasizing the final product and focusing on the growth of each writer. We acted as the sounding board, project-management team, and general support crew for each writer's two-quarter process. After much research, revision, and rephrasing, we are proud to present *Inkwell 12* to the Evergreen campus and beyond.

Though there is no formal distinction between the sections, this issue meanders along through three themes. *Inkwell 12* begins with straightforward and well-grounded advice about effectively connecting with an audience. Then, we make a quick pivot towards articles that concern how writers' choices with language can contribute to a more equitable world. We end with a set of pieces that reflect on how each individual deals with the opportunity, responsibility, pressure, and confusion of having a voice.

### **Why speculative fiction?**

This issue introduces each article through speculative micro-fictions. Why speculative fiction? I thought using the instructive, critical, and personal material found in the pages of *Inkwell* to inspire fiction would provide both the fiction writers and the article writers with a fun challenge—a

challenge that would result in rich analysis of each author's rhetoric throughout the editing process. I thought that students would like to approach big issues related to language through a creative avenue. Speculative fiction, which includes the subgenres of sci-fi, fantasy, and horror, situates characters in worlds that provide contrast to our own; writing it and reading it can be a method for making sense of the elements at play in our current technological, sociopolitical, and epistemological climates. I also find the speculative mode appropriate for the paradigm shifts that characterize student life. To be a student, to me, is to engage with a series of worlds: a student, like the reader or writer of speculative fiction, enters each new realm of concepts as a stranger and emerges from the story—or the class—well acquainted. Of course, sometimes engaging with the new realm only leaves us with more questions, and we end up feeling like even more of a stranger than when we first began!

This year's issue also features black and white digitally-rendered collage photography by Morgana Faye who was inspired by the speculative theme, or, more precisely, by creating "worlds."

While each of these micro-spec-fics may come from very different "worlds"—from a post-apocalyptic commune to the research site of a reptilian linguist; from "immersive reality" in the classroom to a sentient fire that gives off the only light in the world—each writer made an attempt to dive deeply into the heart of another author, and emerged with a short but powerful revisioning. Perhaps these short works are like prisms, which show us more than one color from a single ray of light. If not prisms exactly, perhaps they are jewels—or mutant jewels. Each relationship between fiction and article is the product of a type of creative listening that I hope you enjoy as you thumb through this guide. And while the micro-spec-fics are intended to be paired with the article following, it seems to me that the concepts within them do like to wander. So I encourage you to let them affect your experience of any of the articles you read. These articles, though they are stable in print, will continue to alter and shift the more they become part of the vernacular of our many worlds.