

# GUILD OF YOUNG WRITERS

A PLAYLIST FOR  
WRITING

BOOK  
RECOMMENDATIONS

SHORT  
STORIES

POETRY

ARTICLES

**VOLUME 10**  
**SUMMER**  
**2023**



Story Studio Writing Society is located on the traditional territories of the **WSÁNEĆ** and Lkwungen-speaking peoples. We respectfully acknowledge and thank the Lkwungen People, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations communities, for allowing us to live, work, learn, play and create on their lands.

Through the work we do on the territory, we are accountable to the following communities: Esquimalt, Songhees, **STÁUTW** (Tsawout), **WJOLÉLP** (Tsartlip), **BOKEĆEN** (Pauquachin), **MÁLEXEŁ** (Malahat), **WSÍKEM** (Tseycum), T'Sou-ke Nation, Scia'new Nation and Nuu-chah-nulth: Pacheedaht Nations.

We acknowledge that the historical relationship to the land and territories of these peoples continues to this day.

As an education based organization, we recognize that we have the responsibility to work towards truth and reconciliation, and to remain open to suggestions, consultations, and partnerships, especially with local Indigenous communities and organizations, on how our organization can continue to work towards reconciliation.

We hope that Story Studio's programing and publications create a safe, welcoming and engaging environment for all people, including Indigenous peoples.

**We acknowledge the support of the CRD Arts & Culture Support Service, the City of Victoria Strategic Plan Granting Program. and our generous donors.**



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Share your words.



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## *Editor's Note*

As we wrap up a busy school year for Story Studio, as well as members of the Guild, I reflect upon the growth we've seen since September. A year of new life and resurgence in community activities, extra curriculars, and connections. Our virtual meetings with the Guild of Young Writers became smaller, and fewer, as members became engulfed in school activities, work, and new endeavors. But as our zine reflects, that did not mean writing took a back seat. This group of youth are dedicated to stringing together words and sharing them along the way. I see their growth in the short stories they write, but also in the new articles and opinion pieces they have begun sharing, reflecting upon their learning, interests and new understandings.

This summer the Guild will once again take a back seat to our summer programs. Many of our authors participate instead in our Summer Writing Studio program where we support their individual writing projects over the 8 weeks of summer and produce a printed anthology in the end with their words. Many of our members originated from the first round of this program back in 2020. Each September we look forward to welcoming new members to our Guild from this program.

This will also be the final season of Zines and program coordination for myself until Fall 2024 as I move into my first season of motherhood. I look forward to returning to new and old faces next year!



Rebecca Ruiter  
PROGRAM COORDINATOR





# Get to know the Authors



WOULD YOU RATHER SPEND  
YOUR SUMMER IN THE  
MOUNTAINS OR AT THE  
BEACH?

At the beach. Even though I'm terrible with heat, I prefer the rays of sun that practically blind me over the summer, especially for writing! - Molly

At the beach! I love seeing sea creatures, reading a nice book at the beach, and enjoying the sun!  
- Cathy

I would rather spend my summer in the mountains. I would hike all day and the risk of becoming sunburnt wouldn't be as high. The mountains are beautiful and have lots of shady spots to spend time lying in. I would be worry free.  
-Lola

I prefer the beach for breeze and the endless horizon, and also because it takes way too much effort to get up a mountain  
- Raine

Can I say mountains by the sea? I'm equally connected to both—the mountains bring me close to the sky, while the ocean brings me to the water. I love them both; picking between them is incredibly difficult.  
~ Kira

I think I'd rather spend my summer in the mountains because it would mean I could go out for walks without being too warm. Being able to lie in the grass and write poetry is my picture of the perfect day.  
-Abby









# SUMMER READING RECOMMENDATIONS

Collective Reading List from the Guild

**Station Eleven** by Emily St. John Mandel

**The Night Circus** by Erin Morganstern

**The Words We Keep** by Erin Stewart

**The Memory of Light** by Francisco X Stork

**Beyond the Clouds** by Nicke

**Ducks** by Kate Beaton

**Sick Kids in Love** by Hannah Moskowitz

**Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe**  
by Benjamin Alire Sáenz.

**All the Dead Lie Down** by Kyrie McCauley

**How We Learn** by Benedict Carey

**The Silence of the Girls** by Pat Barker

**The Consolations of Philosophy** by Alain de Botton

**A Snake Falls to Earth** by Darcey Little Badger

**Amores** by Ovid





# THE IMPORTANCE OF ART IN SCIENCE

An Article by Kira

Art and science are seen as opposite aspects of human nature: art is the expression of experience, while science (at least, Western science) is the systematic and objective pursuit of complete understanding. And while both exist as vast and separate domains, I believe there is something to be gained by the twining of the two. There is inherent harmony in contrast, and we have neglected this for far too long.

While there is no widely accepted definition of art, some of its many forms share common traits. Art is often used as a tool of expression, be it of emotion, depictions of famous events, a political statement, an imagined scene, or something else entirely. Its focus tends to be on aesthetics, rather than rigour. And whether its medium is visual, written, or performed, the artist must hold a holistic viewpoint of their piece, lest they neglect an important detail or focus too much on it. Because of this, art can bring to light connections that otherwise would go unnoticed, making it a powerful tool.

Western science is not the only kind of science there is, but it is the form that dominates in modern society. Its basic tenets rest on the assertion of an elegant, unchanging, reducible universe where the observer is separate from that which is being observed. If the universe's laws were changing, there would be no use in pursuing science, except to better adapt to the discontinuity. If a system is more than simply the sum of its parts, simple mathematical models would not suffice to describe it—and the universe is nothing but elegant.

And if the observer does not have a privileged view, but is in fact part of the system they are observing, then universal objectivity cannot be understood in the same way. Reductionism, one of the central tenets of Western science, says that everything—every object and the interactions between them—can be understood by breaking down the systems into simpler and more fundamental parts.

Now, science and art have come together before. Despite their differences, there are artists with an interest in physics, and vice-versa, and those of both sides that choose to work together. Their creations are often beautiful, and have a degree of clarity that is hard to match. However, this has proven to be the exception to the rule.

Today, the general public has a tenuous relationship with science, one where scientific findings are doubted, poorly understood, or radicalized. Many people are scared of it; when the only connection you have is through elementary and high school science classes, you could be justified in saying that research is boring, complicated, and not worth your time.



There is a gap between researchers and the rest of the world. It is beginning to be bridged through popular science and journalism, but what those depict is not always accurate to the research or theory itself.

Science is humanity's primary way of understanding the world around us. Because of it, we have extended human lifespan by half a century, flown people to the moon, and have taken control of the world so we can expand and create ever further. There is no denying what science has accomplished; it has truly expanded human knowledge and power. Through the scientific method, says Western science, one can understand most anything. Whether it is the laws of physics or the complex dynamics of consciousness, through objectively isolating and studying the subject's individual parts, you will be able to gain a complete picture of the whole.

However, on a physical level, this cannot be true. Quantum mechanics describes a non-local universe, one where any particle's action influences another however far away it is, because they became entangled at some point earlier in the universe's history. There is no objective isolation of a particle; there never can be. Through measuring the state of a particle, you interact with it, making the measurement inherently dependent on the observer, and the measurement apparatus. Western science's insistence on an objective viewpoint also falls short in relativity, where every viewpoint is mathematically equivalent, and causality no longer holds the same meaning as it did in Newtonian physics.

Philosophically, too, it is difficult to understand the universe as composed entirely of distinct parts.

A complete understanding of an ecosystem cannot be gained through identifying and studying individual organisms; the more you isolate an organism, the less connected to the world outside of the lab. An ecosystem is created through the principle of emergence: the whole is more than the sum of its parts. There are traits that an ecosystem possesses—the dynamics of predator and prey population, for example—that a single species cannot show on its own.

On a larger scale, too, everything affects everything else: galaxies are made of billions of stars, but those stars are swept around in the arms of the galaxy, rotating around a supermassive black hole. The gravitational effects of multiple bodies on each other create a well-known problem that cannot be solved mathematically: the three-body problem. The mutual dependencies of one body's movement on all of the others is so complex so as to be solvable only with an incredibly large ( $10^{8\,000\,000}$ ) number of calculations. It is a chaotic system, with incredibly sensitive dependence on initial conditions.

So, even as a discipline, there is something lacking in the way science has been done over the last five hundred years. Not everything can be understood as a standalone individual; in fact, to gain a complete understanding, one must view the individual as part of a larger system. Perhaps this is part of why the public struggles with science—one hears of experiments with counterintuitive results, but can only look at them through the reductionist lens taught in elementary school. To understand those results, one needs to be capable of understanding the system as a whole, but that skill is not taught in school.



What, then, is the role of art in science? Art is expression, creation; science is the systematic search for understanding. I would argue that there is an inherent harmony between the two disciplines that could grant a more complete and holistic understanding of scientific thought. There are many reasons for this; I present three below.

First, art can serve as a method of communication that transcends language and culture. It brings human experience to the fore, which allows us to connect with its subject. Science fiction is an excellent example of this. In it, one sees scientific concepts brought to life, threaded through a story featuring the artistry that the best writers demonstrate. Anyone who has read the conclusion to the Remembrance of Earth's Past trilogy, by Liu Cixin, can attest to how poetic writing can complement complex scientific and philosophical thought.

Artists from a variety of mediums are beginning to partner with scientists to make science accessible to the general public. Quark Dance is a 360-degree dance performance designed to capture the motion and interaction of the subatomic particles within the Large Hadron Collider in Geneva. It's a beautiful representation of the strangeness of quarks—dancers will appear out of nowhere to interact with the others, or walk off and fade into nothingness. To accompany the performance, there is a booklet explaining certain aspects of the dance, and which interactions they represent. In doing this, the choreographer (Sabine Blanc de Carpentier) and physicist (Pierre Van Hove) brought science to life, and made it accessible, interesting, and beautiful, all three of which are difficult to realize for those outside the field of physics.

Secondly, because art is intrinsically human, the artistic expression of scientific ideas can serve to make it much more easily understood—and much more exciting—than science on its own. By expressing complex equations or relationships through a medium that brings them to life, the viewer can not only understand what is happening, but why and how, regardless of their background.

Gaining a deep understanding of a scientific topic can be difficult and time-consuming. To understand general relativity mathematically, one first must not only have a working understanding of non-Euclidean geometry, but tensor calculus, which is a step beyond multivariable calculus and linear algebra. Mathematics is the most precise way of understanding a topic, but it is labour-intensive to master all that you need to. Art has a way of accurately portraying the nuances of complex relationships that can provide insights that otherwise would go unnoticed. When looking to understand an ecosystem, one cannot look at each individual organism separately. There are a web of connections and feedback loops that cannot be separated out from each other. One needs an “artistic”, or holistic, viewpoint to be able to understand the system. Reductionism cannot cope with a large system; at some point, one must integrate the information back into a cohesive whole, which is not often taught in early science classes. As an artist, integration is the whole point of a piece—to bring together different elements of the subject to create a cohesive whole.

Finally, the ways of Western science are not a sustainable philosophy for humankind to follow. It has brought us far with its discoveries, and will continue to better our lives for generations.



However, it gives no meaning to life. In the Western scientific worldview, nothing is sacred—and nor should it be, for otherwise, the discipline would not progress. This view of reality has become mainstream, and has sunk into nearly every aspect of society. But humans need something more than plain rationale, straight logic. We are emotional, empathetic creatures, and by denying ourselves access to expression, we deny a part of ourselves. This, I feel, is a large part of why so many people turn away from science early on: while a researcher may enjoy the beauty of their subject, be it galaxies, or a lily in a pond, that appreciation cannot be incorporated into their research. It must stand apart. Empathy, too, is pushed aside for the sake of the experiment. Science can act to dehumanize the world, but as humans, we instinctively seek to connect it to ourselves and our understanding of all that is around us.

**“Where science distances,  
art brings together.  
Where science demands  
logic and rigour, art  
requires expression and  
interpretation.”**

While science is whole without artistic aspects brought into it, I believe it could be much bettered by it. And to build connections between the researchers and the public, I think we need to revise our methods of communication. Bringing together artists and scientists would allow for a kind of creation that could be understood by anyone—not just those with graduate degrees. It would make science more accessible, and perhaps even more exciting. Humans are drawn to stories, so why not write a story about those making a scientific discovery? Write it as you would a short story, not a journal article, and see if people are drawn to it. And if you are trying to explain the web of connections between different species or celestial bodies, creating a visual would allow a child to start asking questions about it.

There is much to be gained by bringing science and art to collaborate and create together. While the two are opposites in some ways, bringing them together could have a powerful impact on the world. Humans are not meant to be isolated, or view something in isolation, which is the doctrine of Western science. Art's philosophy—to express, to describe, to render whole—softens the rigour and reductionism that the scientific method demands, and creates room for dialogue about the way we understand science. If done in the right way, bringing the two together could create a harmony that changes society for the better.

# Six Months

BY SYLVIE



She lived behind a dirt-stained door in a rented room. She never quite looked like she belonged there, with her bottle blonde hair and designer bags. But when she laughed, oh god when she laughed, it lit up a room. I would have moved mountains to see her smile. They were rare, her smiles, she was unlike others I had had met, who gave smiles out like candy on Halloween. Her smiles were like sunrises, put in the work and the result was breathtaking. She was breathtaking. Her voice was like a melody stuck on repeat in my head. Her mouth turned up at the corners followed me in my sleep. She lived in a rented room, but it breathed her, with its mismatched furniture and hanging plants. She always smelled like raspberries and when she hugged you, it enveloped you completely, comforting as her arms enclosed you. She'd never ask what was wrong, she just simply offered you a cup of tea, that was raspberry of course, and a shoulder to cry on. She loved so openly and freely.

We had six blissful months. Six months of raspberry tea. Six months of sunrises and sunsets. Six months of a girl who was taught love is the most important thing and six months of a boy who was taught the opposite. Six months that ended with a phone call. Six months that ended with the words; "There's been an accident."

Maybe the world will end soon, but mine ended three weeks ago. Mine ended with one car ride to a hospital. Mine ended with one man, who was too much of a coward to face what he'd done. Mine ended with her, hooked up to machines. I didn't get a goodbye. I got ushered out of the room as her heart began flatlining. Then all I got was a: "We're so sorry."







# Affinities

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## Chapter Two

By Molly

Saffron never had assumed that a crowd could jostle them around so much. The girl's alarm-like scream had everyone on edge. No 'sorries' were spoken when someone pushed against their bags.

Guards were everywhere this time of year. Craning their neck above the rest of the huge group that surrounded them, Saffron could finally see the place they were looking for. A huge house, towering over the smaller ones that dotted the streets.

Saffron knocked five times on the wooden door, and a small latch opened.

"Oh, Mx. Saffron, you should have been back over an hour ago! And where is the liquor you were getting?"

Willem was a short, fidgety man. He had been working with the Affinities as a Portal owner for about five years now. Saffron was closest to him.

"He asked 500 guilds," Saffron slammed the bags down. One clanked with guilds. "500. That was my whole limit. And it was cheap, mind you."

Willem crossed his arms with a puff, "You could have tried to bargain."

"Like hell, you know how the guy is," Saffron muttered, placing their palm on the window.

"Are you heading out straight away, or are you staying for, say, tea or so?"

"I have to go, Cal is probably worried about me," Saffron said with a light air, pushing their hood back with a sigh.



"I'll save the tea for another day, I have a very nice one at the moment," Willem said, disappointment cracking his tone. "I'll await your next visit."

Saffron smiled. "Of course you will."

A solid oak door hid the only way to Celestia. A large mirror which nearly hit the chandelier that dropped from the ceiling. Placing their palm on it, Saffron stared at the empty space where their reflection should be. Willem was used to seeing Saffron stare solemnly at the mirror, but found it odd, since, being the step down from a god would be worth it, right? Sadness had been ripped from Saffron's body so long ago, that staring at the mirror seemed to touch a tender part of their existence. Quickly, Saffron threw their body against the mirror without a 'fare thee well' or spoken words otherwise.

Willem pursed his lips, then threw the door closed. He strode towards the kitchen and grabbed a glass. "Sometimes," he said, swishing a red liquid around in the glass, "I wonder if this is even worth it."

"Oh, it will be," a voice said, a dark figure standing in the corner of the room with a large stone in hand. "Soon, she'll be yours to adore."

~ ~ ~

The portal to Celestia was odd, to say the least.

Once you went through, you appeared at the edge of a large void-like pool. You weren't wet, not at all, and it seemed as though nothing happened. The chamber was highly ceremonious, with jewels coating every inch of the pool's fountain-like arrangement.

Saffron walked hurriedly through the door, not caring to show the agent at the door their proof of being an Affinity. They'd seen Saffron so many times in the past few days, that Saffron was practically part of the furniture.

These days, Saffron felt they were being hauled in for duty more often than not, more and more people wanted their services. 'Services. No, not those kinds of services,' Saffron would say if anyone found the working-at-all-hours strange. 'I work as an Affinity. I am not a brothel-worker.' Saffron's duty was more of the official sort. If people were found guilty of severe crimes, Saffron would be one to be called in; determining whether an eternity in prison with an extended life gift or a quick and painless death was better.

The violence down in de Dijk had been up almost 80% this year, and it was unknown why. Perhaps the death of an Affinity had set not only the clouds on edge, but the ground as well. It sure put Saffron off, the fact that Lavender even thought about love, oh, that set a shiver through Saffron's body.

Pushing open the great wooden door, Saffron breathed in a million different smells. The crisp marketplace bustle, where humans with very special permits, not to mention very wealthy, sold their goods to wandering Affinities who had an infinite budget. The scent of small food shops, serving no-one for months at a time and then a million people in an instant. This marketplace was only created twice a year, for the summer and winter equinox, where the Earlier Ones' power were at their best. However, Saffron was an Affinity on a mission.



## PATCHWORK HEART



I wear my heart on my sleeve. After how many times I sewed it back on the edges are a little flimsy, worn thin. Some of the stitches have broken and I've had to cut around the edges to make it strong again. The kind of thread I use, you can't get in store. It's more the things you learn as you get older. It's the kind of thread people give you when they don't need theirs anymore. It's the kind of thread your best friend of nine years gives you from a pair of her old figure skates. Sometimes, when you're given things you have to take them apart, like those too small, faded blue jeans which should have fit you but fit me perfectly. Other moments it's the thread you're offered but you don't actually take, too afraid of how it would look on your already patchwork heart. Thread is a tricky thing, you don't really know how it's going to hold up until you sew it down. From all the ways my heart has been used and abused and tossed around it's started to fray. At the hand of my own scissors I cut the broken bits away. But because my heart has gotten smaller I've had to unknowingly take pieces of cloth from others. So some of the heart I wear on my sleeve is stronger material than others. When I get bruises and spills on my heart it may fade but the stain will always stay. My heart is a patchwork of stories intertwined with my own and I know that no matter how many stitches I have holding it down, I'll always wear my heart on my sleeve.

## MY CHILDHOOD PARK

Went to my childhood park and let the memories flood me. Balancing on the middle of the seesaw, my mom and my sister on either end, pumping up and down. Climbing up the rungs connected by chains to the old red tunnel. Remembering peering out the small holes to spy on the world below me. Swinging beside my sister as our mom pushed us and told us to use our legs, her back was getting tired. Driving in the now small pink car with the two blue steering wheels, yelling, "Watch out for the kangaroo!" I remember it being so quiet, no one bothered us, we were in our own little world. Now there's cars noisily driving past which weren't there before. Runners giving me looks as I sit in the red car without my sister next to me saying, "We're going to drive in a forest," and, "Tree on your right!" and me not knowing directions and barely missing it as we go by. A woman stands across from me and throws her arms up in the air as she tries to hang a piñata from a tree. As I notice these things I realize I'm older than I used to be. There's rust on the little pink car which wasn't there before, the white coat on the slide is chipping away, and the swing set has some new creaks to add to its repertoire. And just like the painted lines on the basketball court my memories are starting to fade.



# ABBY



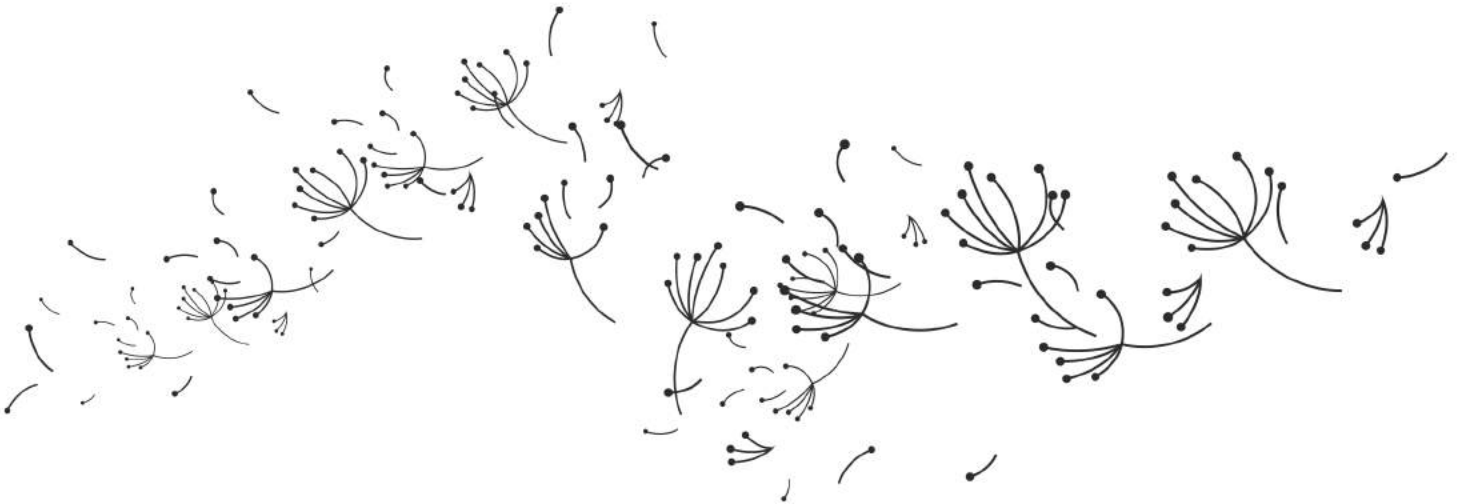
## ABOUT MY BEST FRIEND

If I could I would nail your words to my ceiling to preserve them forever. But I don't want to damage the words you've carefully hammered out, or lose some of the glitter as gravity brings some of the sparkles down, or if you decide to leave and forget to pick them up from my memories, I don't want permanent marks to be etched into my house. But I want, while I have you-to continue to plaster phrases to my walls. And if they fall off, I'll get you to say them again so I get the order right as I glue them back on.

Some days when I'm feeling more confident, I'll secretly wish you'll switch out my whiteboard for cardstock and my erasable markers for sharpies. Some days I want you to leave ink stains so that I remember that not everything you say is perfect. When I take notes I use highlighters to remember important phrases and keywords, but when I read your work I end up highlighting the whole thing. And I'm sorry when my pen slips and I give you a purple line down your arm, I'm just making sure I know the important things.

When I look at you it's like looking at Arial- the font, not the mermaid. Though when you dyed your hair blue you did look like one. Did you know that Arial font is easy on the eyes? When I look at you I think-Comic Sans! Because I always have a lot to say about you.

I want you to write as much as there are blades of grass in a field so I can roll down the hill with you always by my side. Your words are like dandelions, and my pencil like a breath, writing down and planting seeds for them to grow in an endless loop of newness. I'll put your plants in pots to sit in my windowsill, growing new ideas. The air in my house will become sweet with the smell of your words and each breath I breathe will become part of me. And I don't mind your words being permanent if it means I can breathe.





## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1

The house's a mess  
unfinished games of chess scattered all over the floor  
The room's a mess  
like a blizzard rained down from the cold war

My calendar's non-existent,  
assignments are overdue  
Perhaps I'm being distant  
or just in the blues

But there's unfinished business  
Downstairs every Friday afternoon  
And there's unfinished business  
When the clock strikes noon

I stare out at the same scene below my window  
Wondering what unfinished business happened below  
But curiosity killed my cat  
So I await an another chat.

2

Alone in an empty apartment  
A single light in a darkened room glows  
Like the sky when I saw hope in her eyes –  
before she said her goodbyes

When I found out the news  
I locked myself out  
Forgot all my dues  
And drowned in my doubt

Don't remember the last day in this room  
Before they yanked me by the legs  
Dodging and weaving through all of the  
piles of trash of sorts of junk, clutter, and messes of  
messes.

But I still don't remember anything.

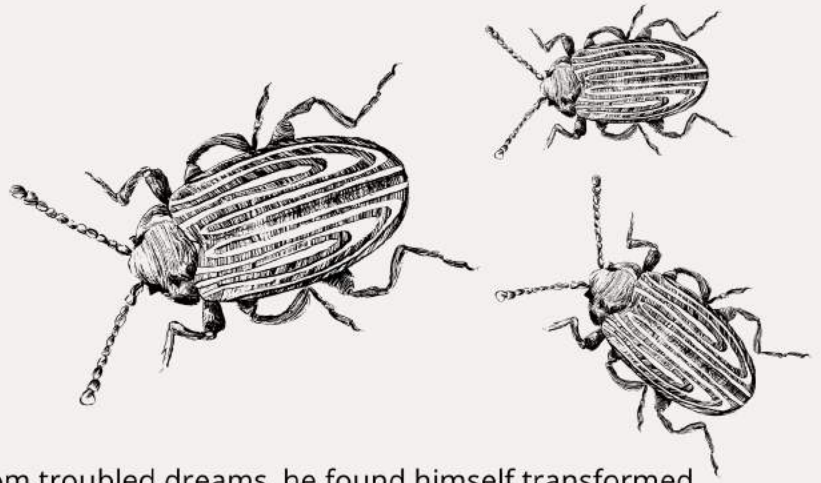






# Beetles

BY SYLVIE



One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin. He lay on his armour-like back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his brown belly, slightly domed and divided by arches into stiff sections. The bedding was hardly able to cover it and seemed ready to slide off any moment. His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, waved about helplessly as he looked.

"What's happened to me?" he thought. It wasn't a dream. It could be. He couldn't tell these days. The lines were blurred.

Gregor awoke again, gasping, clutching the sheets in panic. He'd been having nightmares, ever since Sarah. Himself transformed into some horrid monster.

Just making the outside match. A voice that sounded a lot like her said into his mind.

"I'm not a monster." This he said aloud, talking to no one, reassuring only himself. He did that a lot these days.

16% of released murderers go on to kill again. The number pops into his head unwarranted sitting among the other statistics. 75% of murderers are done by someone the victim knows. This flashes through his head as he washes his face. When he looks up, staring at himself in the mirror's smooth reflection, a monster stares back. Its large eyes are somehow strange but yet also familiar, the blue similar to Gregor's own.

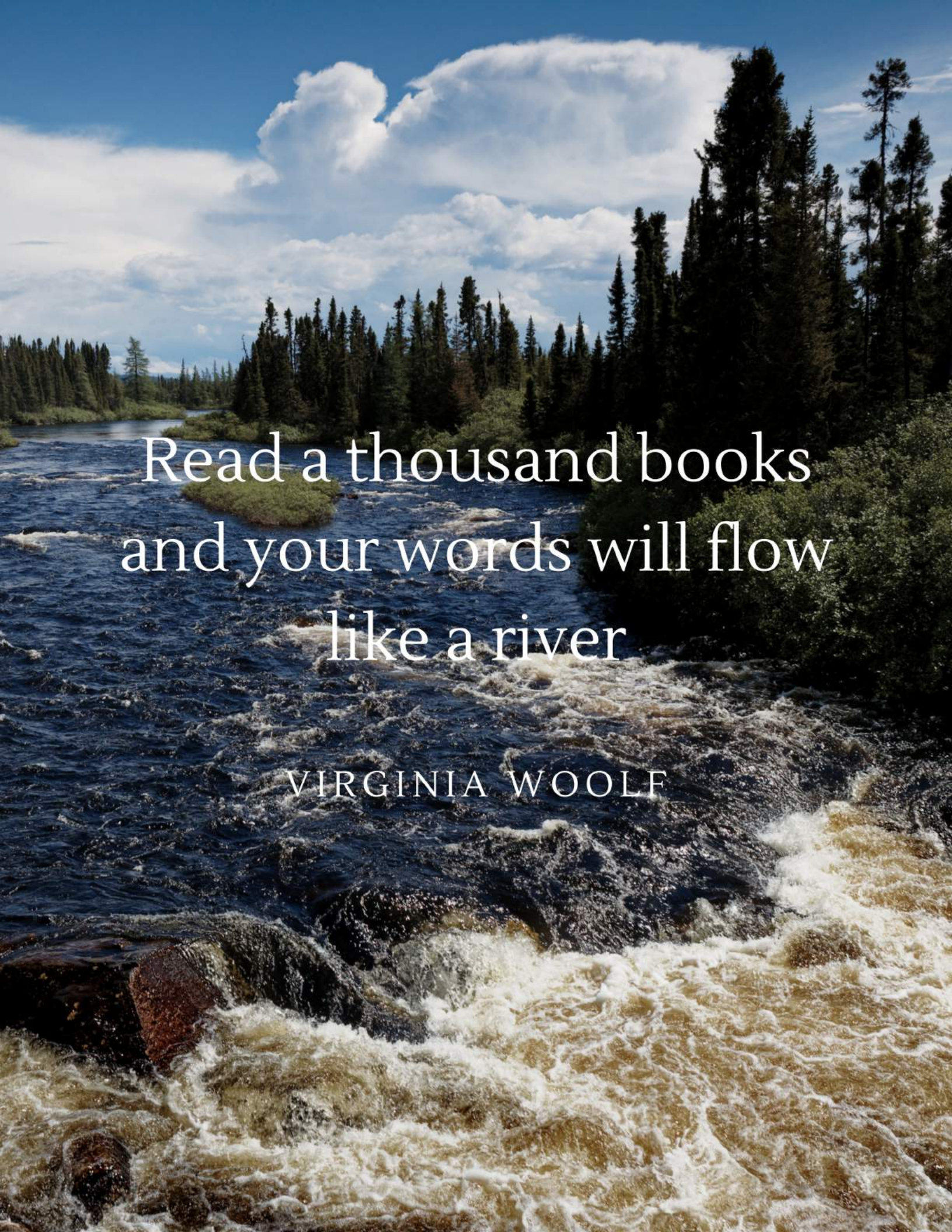
"Pull it together Samsa," he whispers at the stranger in the mirror. He takes a deep breath, the visions have got to stop. He needs to get a grip. When he looks up, the monster is gone, and in its place is her. Blonde hair hanging in loose waves, green eyes piercing.

"I'm sorry," he says, to the mirror. "I'm so sorry." The mirror doesn't speak back. "Forgive me please, let me live my life." She simply stares at him.

They stare at each other for a few more moments. Gregor lets out a scream and smashes his fist through the glass and it shatters, along with the last straw of his weakening sanity. He slides to the floor, gripping his bleeding hand. He feels the spikes come back, and this time, he doesn't fight the visions, if they really truly are visions. He lets it consume him, lets the guilt take over. Gregor lets out a single cry of pain when he spots her, no longer behind the mirror. Her face is so real, but it couldn't be. It never would be again. Because of him. Because he made one choice.

"You disgust me," she whispers in his ear, her breath tickling his neck, and the visions take control.





Read a thousand books  
and your words will flow  
like a river

VIRGINIA WOOLF



# SOULMATES

## A Short Story

*By Lola*

I first met Zach in the Cozy Corner Cafe. I was running late for work again but needed my morning dose of caffeine to function. I suppose the coffee was to blame, or maybe the fact that I was late. I had just entered the door when I saw him. He was sitting in an oversized armchair and was on a laptop typing away furiously. It wasn't exactly love at first sight like in the movies, but it was something.

He noticed me staring and turned his head slightly to look at me. He had the prettiest eyes. I blushed and quickly ordered my coffee, a mocha with extra whip. I turned around to head out the door not noticing the movement behind me. Zach bumped into me and coffee spilled all over his shirt. "Oh my gosh. I am so sorry I didn't see you." My face went bright red.

He smiled. "It's okay, I shouldn't have come up so close behind you."

I handed him a napkin and he attempted to wipe the quickly staining shirt. I glanced at the clock on the wall. "Crap, I'm so late. I'm so sorry again. Is there anything I can do to make up for the ruined shirt?"

He looked thoughtful for a moment then threw the napkins in the garbage. "Well how about I walk you to work? I mean it's only fair that I do since I ruined your coffee."

I looked at him surprised then nodded. "Sure why not, it's only a few blocks from here anyway."

We left the coffee shop together and he walked me down to my office. We talked the whole way there. He seemed like a really interesting guy. He told me he worked as a family doctor but he had the week off so he was spending his time writing. In the end we decided to exchange phone numbers. I walked over to my office door and grabbed the door handle about to go in when he put a hand on my shoulder.

"It was really nice talking to you... Oh wait, I didn't catch your name."

"It's Cordelia. What's yours?"

He smiled. "Zach."

Zach, what a nice name.

That was the first encounter we had.

Looking back, giving my number to a man I just met was probably not smart, but he was such a nice guy and I wanted to talk to him more. I thought about him all through work and couldn't wait to finish my job and get home.

He texted me that night, a waving hand emoji. When I got it, I smiled. We texted for a while that night before he called me. We spent the night talking on the phone. He told me all about his job and some of the most interesting patients he had had.

I told him about how I was always late for work and we laughed about me ruining his shirt with the coffee. We planned a date for the next weekend.



Our first date was at Butterfly Gardens. A garden that, true to its name, was filled with butterflies. It was pretty romantic for a first date. I had always imagined a first date at a fancy restaurant making awkward small talk and then deciding to break it off within the hour. This wasn't like that. It was a perfect night.

For our second date we watched a movie at my house in pajamas. I was starting to fall head over heels in love with him, which sounded crazy but it was true. I thought love like this wasn't real. It turned out to be for Zach and I.

We got married three years after we first met at the coffee shop. On the exact day. We said our vows to each other under the stars, in an orchard. We danced in the grass surrounded by our loved ones. Then we went down to the beach and walked the length of it barefoot. We put our feet in the water and squealed at the cold. He carried me down the beach and into the cabin we had rented for the weekend. We were happy. It was true love.

For our honeymoon we went to Australia. It was a truly magical experience. We went sightseeing and saw koalas and kangaroos. We swam in the warm oceans and avoided poisonous bugs and animals. We spent a month there. One perfect month.

We bought a little pink house on the corner next to the cafe. It had a nice fence and a big backyard. Every weekend we would go to the cafe and sit side by side in the oversized arm chairs and hold hands while sipping our coffees.

We had our first child two years after getting married. We named her Katniss after the main character in Hunger Games, a favorite novel of ours when we were teenagers. We adopted two dogs and took them for long walks everyday.

We spent many busy years working. Our jobs occupied lots of our day but we always had time for Katniss. When Katniss started insisting she wanted a sibling, we decided to have more children. We had two more, a girl and a boy.

We retired at fifty-five and spent everyday together. Our love story continued.

Then Zach got sick. Cancer, the doctors said. Leukemia. He claimed he felt fine but I could see he was losing his usual energy. He slept more and could no longer go for long walks with the kids. He started getting sicker. I held his hand at his doctor appointments and he let me cry into his shoulder when the doctor said he had a few months to live. I read him books when he went into hospice and brought the kids to visit.

Zach Martin Jones, the love of my life, died at seventy-five in the hospice. He died from his Leukemia. He was surrounded by loved ones. We buried him in a cemetery near our house and covered the grave in flowers. I didn't get out of bed for days, the kids had to bring food to my room. I cried and cried. I held the shirt covered in a coffee stain that he had refused to ever wash insisting that it was a memory of when we first met and when our love story truly began.







# SCP Adventures

AN ONGOING STORY  
BY BOWEN

## Chapter Four: Suspicion is Suspiciously Sus

Later-er that day...

I had returned to my office and logged on to my computer and began scanning the foundation database for any viruses or leaks.

Then the screen flashed red. "WARNING. DATABASE BREACHED," said a message on the screen.

"Are you tryin to hack us? How cute," I said as I typed a few commands on my screen.

ERROR, UNAUTHORIZED USER IS ATTEMPTING TO ACCESS DATABASE.

```
>>>>Identify.user
```

ATTEMPTING TO IDENTIFY.

IDENTIFICATION FAILED

```
>>>>Run.Hackstop.EXE
```

RUNNING...

INTRUDER SUCCESSFULLY SUBDUED.

```
>>>>Trace.location/unknown.user
```

TRACING...

ERROR. UNABLE TO TRACE



```
>>>>retry
```

TRACING...

ERROR. UNABLE TO TRACE

```
>>>>reestablish.firewalls.
```

FIREWALLS REPAIRED. SECURITY CODES RANDOMIZED.

```
>>>>log.out
```

LOGGING OUT. GOODBYE.

I grabbed my radio from my pocket.

"This is Dr. Wheeler requesting a meeting for all personnel level two and above."

Dr. Buck, Mr. Moore, Dir. Jones, Agent Lawrence and I all sat at a round table for the meeting.

"So what is this about anyways?" asked Mr. Moore.

"Earlier today, the database was attacked by an unknown user," I said.

"That's fine, we get that all the time," said Lawrence.

"It seemed like that at first, but somehow, they managed to penetrate the first firewall. Which from what we know, should be impossible," I said.

"Well what did you find on this guy?" asked Dr. Buck.

"Absolutely nothing. I also had barely managed to fight them off, which means that they have a lot of skill," I said.

"So what do we do?" asked Director Jones.

"That's a very good question. I found no location, so we obviously can't send a task force to detain them."

"Could it be the chaos insurgency?" Lawrence asked.

"Possibly. But there was no evidence of any outside attacks, whoever attacked us did it on-site," I said.

"So there is a mole in our ranks?" asked director Jones.

"That is very likely."

"There is an imposter among us," said Carson, who was eavesdropping in the corner of the room.

"Carson, this is serious," I said.

"Sorry, this is just reminding me of the among us massacre of 2020," Carson said.

"We are going to have to interview all of the personnel," I said.

"Alright this meeting is over, everybody back to your duties and I will call an interview later," said Director Jones.

"Yes sir," we all said as we walked out of the room.

I found myself deep in thought. Something wasn't right. Weird things have been happening ever since the containment breach had started.

The breach itself, epsilon 11 taking an hour to respond, the strange man who helped 049 escape, and the mix up with new recruits. It couldn't all just be a coincidence.

As I was walking to my office, the lights suddenly turned off and I heard a scream. I turned on my flashlight and ran to find the source. I had followed the scream to the electrical distribution room, and I saw a dead researcher on the floor. He had a gunshot wound on his abdomen. I saw the shadow of something, or someone, crawl into a vent and close it behind them.

I tried to open the vent and follow them, but the attacker fired a shot at me which landed into my left shoulder. I groaned and backed away from the vent.

"Medical emergency, electrical distribution," I said into my radio. I began to feel faint. My vision got blurry. Then I passed out.

I woke up in the infirmary. My shoulder was wrapped in a bandage and there was a small container with a bloody 9mm bullet in it. Dr. Buck was sitting in a chair beside my bed. "Deja vu," I weakly said.

"Doctor. He's awake," she said

"What happened to-" I was interrupted by her.

"He didn't make it."

I looked to my left and saw a body being zipped up in a black bag.

"There is nothing you could have done," she said.

I sighed.

"What even happened in there?" she asked.

"I'm not entirely sure. I was walking to my office and the lights turned off, I heard a scream, I followed it to the electrical room and saw him on the floor, dead. I saw someone crawling into a vent and tried to follow them but they shot me," I explained.



"We are going to be interviewing the personnel now. In the meantime, stop getting hurt please." Her usual emotionless or annoyed face had gone away, it had turned into a face of worry or concern.

"Alright."

"Also the medics are telling me that it will take about a week to heal with anomalous treatment," she said.

"Can I join the interview?" I asked.

"We will be holding it here," she said.

The door opened and Lawrence, Gustav, Moore, Carson, and Zolgamax all lined up against the wall.

"So where was everybody at the time of the power outage?" I asked.

"I was in the lobby with Carson," said Moore.

"I can confirm," said Carson.

"Okay clear."

"And where were you?" I asked Zolgamax.

"I was in my office, writing a report on the hacking incident."

"Show it to me," I said.

Zolgmax took out his novIOS tablet and brought up an unfinished document containing what little information he could collect from the incident.

"Okay clear. Lawrence?" I asked.

"I was at the armoury cleaning out my FN P90," he said.

"Hold on, Shouldn't we be asking where YOU were?" asked Mr. Moore, pointing at me.

I explained the incident again.

"You were the only one in the electrical room other than the dead guy and the 'shadow', correct?" asked Moore.

"Correct."

"So how do we know that YOU didn't kill him?" he asked.

"Don't be ridiculous. Mark almost got killed too. He wouldn't have just shot himself," said Dr. Buck.

"Oh and where were you all this time?" asked Carson.

"I was walking to my office as well," she said.

"Sus," said Carson.

"Wait!" I yelled.

Everyone went silent.

"Where was Gustav?" I asked. Everyone looked at Gustav.

"I was in the break room," said Gustav.

"Okay," I said. "Is there any way to speed up my healing process?" I asked.

"Yes, but it is still in testing phases. It is called stemboost," said buck.

"How does it work?" I asked.

"It temporarily boosts your stem and progenitor cells and makes the worst of injuries seem like scratches. It's an artificial form of scp 500," said Dr. Buck.

"I want to try it."

"It is still being tested!"

"Let me take the serum and then give me a pill of scp 500 and I'll be fine," I said.

"Alright."





# CODE SWITCHING

BY CATHY

**Code-switching** [noun]*Code-switch·ing*

the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation.

Source: [Oxford Languages \(google\)](#).

I first found out about code-switching last Thursday, after one of my friends defined it at a high school anti-racism symposium. Obviously, I was already shaken by the acts of discrimination happening at the high schools nearby, discussed by my peers, but this definition broke down all the problems in my head, like a disconnected light bulb rewired onto the circuit, bright and alive.

Even though Oxford Languages defines code-switching as “the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation,” I like to think of it as changing the way you speak, talk, and act, to fit in. And there is nothing that hits more than knowing what you have been doing unconsciously for the longest time.

At school, I'm a quiet person. I'm known as a quiet person, self-reserved, introverted. And they aren't wrong. I'm just too scared to speak; afraid of people judging me, afraid of being in trouble for things I say, and for the comments I provide.

The judging stares and the unwavering silence makes me sink into my seat, and pretend I did not speak.

Sometimes, I define this as the very reason I write. I write because I want to be heard, because I'm so scared about being judged when I open my mouth and speak. Even trying to open my mouth to speak takes twenty red-bulls worth of energy. And it shouldn't.

For the longest time, the world seemed to live in a world of oppression. Like an empty tin can that holds no value because all the food is already taken, but imagine a sea of these cans. A sea of empty cans that want to protest, and speak up, but stereotypes, discrimination, and simply prejudice make it near impossible. But times are changing. Events like symposiums, allow marginalized youth to speak their thoughts freely and respectfully, without the fear of judgment. There is no need for code-switching when you're here; it's time to speak your truth.





# A PLAYLIST

We all need something to listen to while we spend hours upon hours writing, rewriting and polishing our pieces. Sometimes these songs inspire more writing, sometimes they just put us into the right headspace to focus in on putting words to paper.

Here is a list of songs that we often find ourselves listening to while writing:

## POP/HIP HOP

- **Arms Around You** by XXXTENTACION & Lil Pump ft. Maluma & Swae Lee
- **The Otherside** by Jake Daniels
- **Pierre** by Ryn Weaver
- **If I Died Last Night** by Jessie Murph
- **End of a Life** by Mori Calliope
- **It's a Man's Man's World** by Jurnee Smollet-Bell

## ALTERNATIVE

- **Everybody Wants To Rule The World** by Tears for Fears
- **Goodnight Socialite** by the Brobecks
- **Visitation of the Ghost** by the Brobecks
- **Tick Tack (Genius)** by YOHIO
- **Salty Sweet** by MS MR
- **Starlight** by Muse
- **Paranoia on Main Street** by Demi the Daredevil
- **PERSON** by Co Shu Nie
- **Matchbox** by Rainbow Kitten Surprise
- **When it Lands** by Rainbow Kitten Surprise
- **Moody Orange** by Rainbow Kitten Surprise
- **Eupnea (Album)** - Pure Reason Revolution

## ELECTRONIC/ INSTRUMENTAL

- **No Strings Attached** by Swingrowers
- **Close Up** by Sobrem
- **Bloomoon** by Kie Katagi
- **Sense: Leads to Another (Full Version)** by Silentroom & BilliumMoto
- **Lost in New Blackness** by Frums

# GUIDE TO METAMORPHOSIS

BY RAINE

Metamorphosis is the power of nature. It is the Multichronozate that's found in the plants, the animals, the clouds, and the stars that grant us the energy to manipulate Radiance, Firmament, Locus, and Anima. No matter what stage of your life you're in, whether you're on your first second, third, or even final season, this guide will help anyone who's just starting out or who's already experienced in the art of magic.

This volume of the Guide to Metamorphosis will cover the uses of magic energy in combat situations. It will cover basic attacks, basic counters and defense skills, combos, and combinations with other elements. It will also cover how to best study and practice your combat magic.

## Radiance

Radiance is drawing the power of the stars to control light and darkness. Before engaging in a battle, make sure to darken the space around you and your opponent, as the stronger your light shines, the more effective it will be. A brighter environment will render attacks weaker. Radiance is excellent for offensive attacks.

## Basic Attacks

**Afterimage:** Create bright specks of stars you can fling towards your opponent. Effective even from a long range, but takes longer to reach its target. If you trace a series of stars together you can send them all at once, making the attack difficult to dodge.

**Asterism:** Create patterns of stars on your hands that can be used in close range hand to hand combat. Use the force from the energy in the light to push back your opponent and obscure their vision.

Besides offensive attacks, there is also the ambush. While hidden from your opponent's view, lower the light levels, then create a galaxy web of stars to trap your opponent's movements. If anyone touches the stars they will all explode in brilliant fashion.



## Defensive Counters

**Genesis:** Draw a pattern of light in front of you and a gas shield will form. The strength of the shield is determined by the importance the drawing holds to you.

**Attraction:** Illuminate any projectiles or weapons coming towards you to send them out of your direction, potentially in the direction where they came from.



## Firmament

Firmament is drawing the power of our skies. Our wind, our water, our clouds. Your abilities will be most effective outside, as Firmament Apparitions work better when they have space to grow larger. Firmament works as an offensive and as a useful support to your allies.

## Defensive Counters

**Cupola:** An invisible shield will protect you from other precipitation or gusts of wind, including those naturally or artificially produced.

**Throttle:** If a projectile or a weapon is coming towards you, creating a cloud in its way will slow it down considerably, giving you time to move out of the way.



## Basic Attacks

**Temperate:** Create a cloud in which you can control what kind of precipitation falls from it, including rain, snow, and hail. You can then catch the projectiles of precipitation and move them in any direction. Amass a collection of raindrops or snowflakes before firing them at your opponent. You can also freeze the falling precipitation in place.

**Tempest:** You can create large gusts of wind. This can control more than just precipitation. Gusts of wind can push your opponent, as well as move other objects and projectiles.

## Locus

Locus is the power of cradling the mind into a false security. Since the dawn of humans we have always sought shelter as a primary need, somewhere to calm down. The indoors are home of many memories and significance, and with Locus you can use this to your advantage. Locus plays a background role in the battlefield, by playing with your opponent's mind.

## Anima

Anima is communicating and working together with everything that is living. Plants bend to your will, and animals lend an ear. An ideal location would be somewhere with soil, where more offensive attacks will be possible. Anywhere else will have you relegated to a more supportive position.



## Defensive Counters

**Outcrop:** Vines and bushes can sprout out of the ground near your opponent. They can bind your opponents limbs, or serve as a wall.

**Catalysis:** By disintegrating your weapons, you can use the organic compounds inside to heal others injuries.



## Apparitions not Categorized

**Illusion:** Create any indoor setting within the view of your opponent. This illusion takes up a space around your opponent. This could be a home, a cave, or a school. The world inside cannot be interacted with by the opponent, and the opponent can escape the illusion if they wipe it away like a cloud, or move out of the space it influences. It will require strong focus to keep the image in place.

**Therma:** You can change the temperature within the illusion from very hot to freezing.

**Invisibility:** You can make yourself invisible inside the illusion. Your physical attacks will not be visible.

## Basic Attacks

**Synthesis:** Creating a melee weapon by growing branches out of the ground. These are not limited by any shape, but can include swords, spears, and knives. These can be disintegrated at will.

**Coaction:** You are able to work with any animals to follow your attacks. These are further explored in [The Guide to Anima and Animals](#).



## Combinations

When different types of energy interact with each other, they can produce alternative effects not otherwise possible. Compared to normal abilities, combinations are considerably more unpredictable, and are harder to control. Nevertheless, they work as useful boosts when fighting alongside your allies. The different types of combinations include:

### Colours = Radiance + Firmament

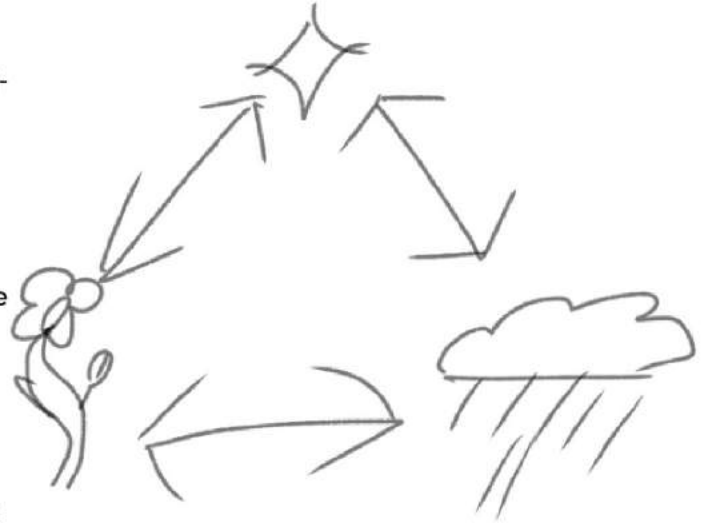
Shooting flickers of light into precipitation will create multi-coloured lasers that will fire out. These will reach a far distance but aim towards the ground.

### Photosynthesis = Radiance + Anima

Shine light on any objects created by Anima to enhance the strength and energy of whoever is wielding it. The effect will last for about fifteen seconds.

### Rush = Firmament + Anima

By placing a cloud above any objects created by Anima you can aim lightning to strike those objects.



## Studying

Multichronozate is found all throughout the world, in all the plants, water, skies, and cities. It responds to mental stimulation. When casting an apparition, think of what you are trying to make appear. You should feel the multichronozate energy flowing through your body. When your abilities are activated, perform the different gestures according to what you are trying to do. Pay attention to how you feel, and why you are doing this, the emotions will transfer themselves into your actions.

There are many ways to pursue studies in combat. Some will choose to enroll in academies, while others may apprentice under private instructors. but you can also study by yourself in a multitude of ways. Be on the lookout for conventions and tournaments being held in your area, as these are excellent opportunities to observe and also participate in sparring, as well as learn from other more experienced practitioners.

Before starting practice, make sure you are in a wide open area. Start by creating small apparitions and working to maintain them for increasingly long periods of time. Eventually you will be able to move them freely. Keep your distance from others when performing exercises. Put yourself in a space closest to your element.

## Conclusion

Metamorphosis is a gift from our heavens and from our ancestors. We are each blessed with the opportunity to experience each one of the pillars of Metamorphosis in our lifetime, and we're each able to make the most of the time we have with each. By choosing to take up combat training, you will be doing a service to yourself and your community, by becoming in tune with your own mind and body, and also being able to defend others. Take this guide as a starting point to your journey. It will always be here to come back to when needed.







# SHARE YOUR WRITING

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Opportunity!  
Ages 13-18**

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