

The ECHO



**TEEN ART &
LIT MAG**

**VOLUME XV
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The
ECHO

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Lovely, they're massaging
the dirt and grime away
from loose furs with their
alien paw.
“D’aw, Kitty!” The voice coos.

My head rubs against the
furless digits that wiggle
and scratch behind
my triangular ears.
This is bliss, I think
as my nose tickles at
the scent of fish on
their fingers.

But
the hand moves away
as I startle alert and
bat my paw
to beckon it back.

Hiss! Betrayal!
The hand that pets me
is now covered
by that awful woolen fur!
Horrendous horror,
the creature conceals themselves from me.

With an awful, cutesy cackle,
the faux paw dives at

the divot near my neck.
I roll onto my back
and unleash my deadly claws,
but the woolen hand
backs and ducks wildly.
“So aggressive!
Do you not trust me, kitty?”

Yes! Yes, strange cat!
This sleeve has hidden
your intention. Will you
pet me with that? Or is it
a ruse to attack!

Begone, lanky beast!
You and that wonderfully
fishy smell, once trustful
kind digits, and
monstrous woolen sleeve!
And to think I once
waved my tail as you arrived...
I will never trust again!





autumn, brown leaves erase the checkered map of humankind
& open a secret door.

the season when taro waves its broad leaves westward, tossing
jokes
& the black-lettered flight of migratory birds grows hard to
decipher.

the season when black rivers & brown rivers flow side by side,
never mixing
& trees, lined up solemnly, let go of their heavy fruits with a
splash.

the season when raindrops tap out sheet music on the
powerlines
only to erase it moments later—leaving us with the wind's
whistling tune.

at the end of the milky way, rising like a spine into the night,
crowns of brilliant stars begin to shimmer—this season.

the season when you & i, guessing at our future from vivid tarot
cards
step into the womb of dreams.

the season when we lift & lower eight trunks,
hearts drifting like balloons on an empty runway.

autumn, the season when i willingly offer my blood
for the final carnival of things about to vanish.

the season when cheerful sentences of reverie blow tiny, tender
kisses,
yet can never be held in my arms.





“Booth worker” is a terrible job to have at a train station in Sydney. Especially when you are in love.

Well, “in love” might be a stretch. More like smitten or infatuated. Love is a strong word for the girl across the classroom who you’ve only talked to a handful of times. And it’s an even stronger word for someone who had only just learned your name. In my case, it was a strong word for both of these things. But it’s not so strong a word for one who’s gone away. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, they say.

There was a day when I would be doing my job like any other, selling tickets to train riders. And she’d walk into the train station, the same way she always did, to greet her father from Adelaide. Only she wouldn’t be there to greet him. She’d be there to take a train herself. She’d walk up to my booth, with her elegant yet confident stride. She’d say, “One ticket to Adelaide, please.” And I’d type into the machine, and grab the ticket, and I’d hand it to her.

And if I was in love, I’d ask, “What brings you to Adelaide?”

And she’d frown, and she’d grab the handle of a suitcase I hadn’t seen before, and she’d say, “I’m moving in with my father.”

Now if I were in love, I’d have said, “Moving in with him? For how long?” because I would want to know when she’d be back.

And she’d say, with her eyebrows furrowed, “I don’t know. My mum got in some trouble, so I can’t live with her anymore. And my father, well, he’s the nearest family I have.” She’d look down at her lonely suitcase, and she’d think of all the friends she was about to lose. And then she’d remember who I was.

“We have a photography class together, don’t we?” she’d say.

And if I were in love, I’d say, “Yes, we do. I’m—”

“Thomas,” she’d interrupt me. “I remember. Your pictures of that fairy wren were incredible. How’d you get it so close?”

And if I were in love, I would’ve said, “I-I had to use a really long lens.” I would’ve kicked myself for saying something so stupid. But then she’d laugh, and I would feel like I was on top of the world.

And she would’ve said, “Of course you did. They don’t like getting their picture taken. They’re my favorite, though. The males look so pretty in their breeding plumage.”

If I were in love, I’d be baffled by her love of fairy wrens, and I’d tell her, “They’re my favorite too.” Because if she loved them, they would be.

If I were in love, I’d notice her starting to cry. And I’d ask, “What’s wrong?”

She’d say, “They aren’t nearly as common in Adelaide.” And she’d snifle.

If I were in love, I’d have told her to stay. And she’d have asked how, and I would’ve told her I didn’t know. And she would’ve cried more, and I would’ve stepped out of the booth and held her. And I’d tell her how I felt. And she’d smile and say she felt the same. Or maybe she wouldn’t. But maybe she would.

If she loved me, maybe she wouldn’t have stepped on that train, taking my dreams with her. Maybe she wouldn’t have moved so far away, or maybe she would’ve come back to see me. If she loved me, maybe I would have seen her again.

“Love” isn’t what I would’ve called what I had for Audrey. It may have felt like love, but maybe it wasn’t. Because if it was, it would hurt a lot more knowing that she’s gone. If it was love, I wouldn’t have lamented for weeks over a chance I never took. If it was love, I wouldn’t have stood there, pretending my heart wasn’t pounding out of my chest. I wouldn’t have held in the millions of things I wanted to say to her, like what my favorite bird was or why I hated working at the train station or where my favorite place in Sydney was or just how much I really did love her.

Sure, it wasn’t love. But maybe I wanted it to be.



Untitled

Khloe Fong



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ORIGIN stories

Khloe Fong is a teen artist
from Fremont, California.

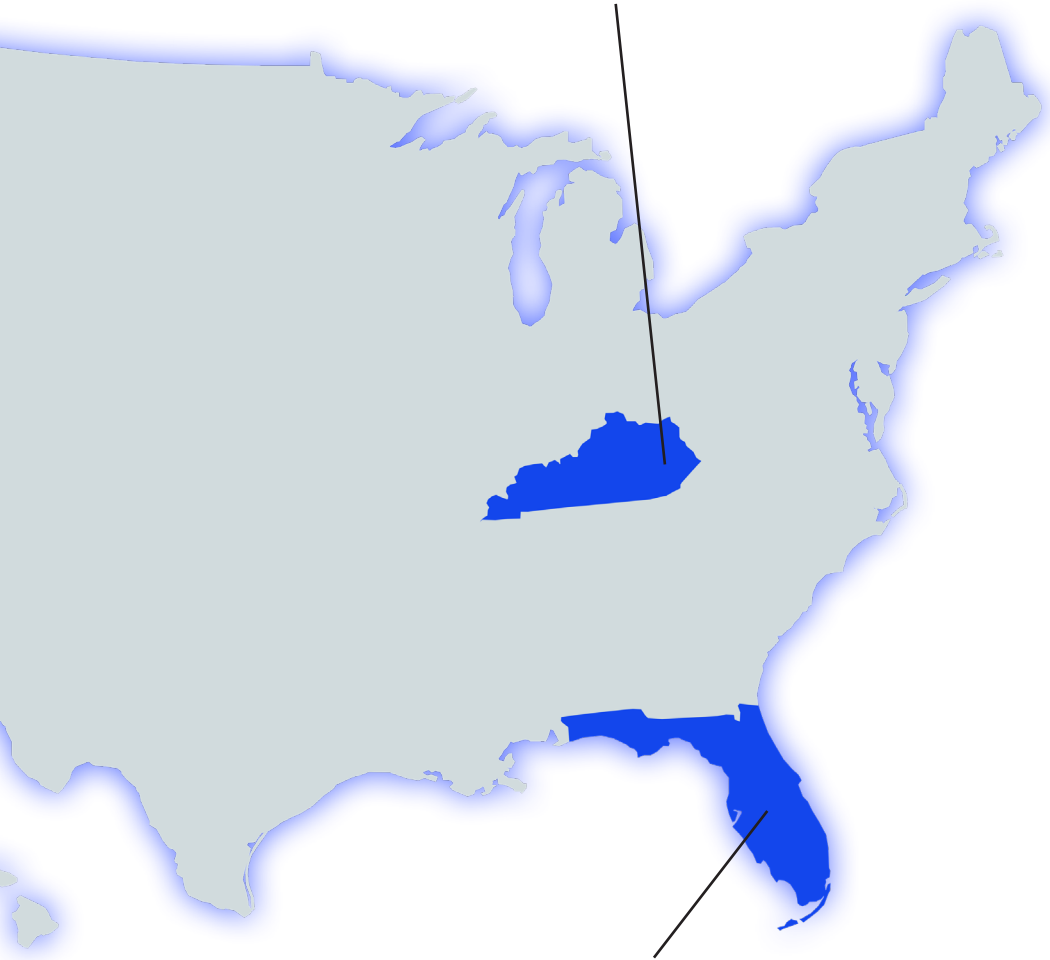


JS Choi is a teen writer
from South Korea.



Ty Eli is an aspiring fiction writer. He hopes to write Christian children's stories, epics, video games, and poems, with the occasional lyric essay mixed in.

Piper S. Mullins has been writing for most of their life, but they only started to pursue it seriously when they entered high school.



KaShay Smith has been creating digital and traditional art for about 7 years and has written fictional novels for 5. She hopes to inspire people with her art and bring joy from a simple image going forwards in life.

Sometimes the best stories come without a theme. Sometimes writing can stand out on its own. With this latest issue of The Echo Teen Art & Lit Mag, we bring you everything from an unrequited love story, to a poem that's read through a kitty's eyes, to a poem that makes you want to curl up with a blanket while the autumn rain falls. This magazine is all about letting words move your feelings and feasting your eyes on all the beautiful art.



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