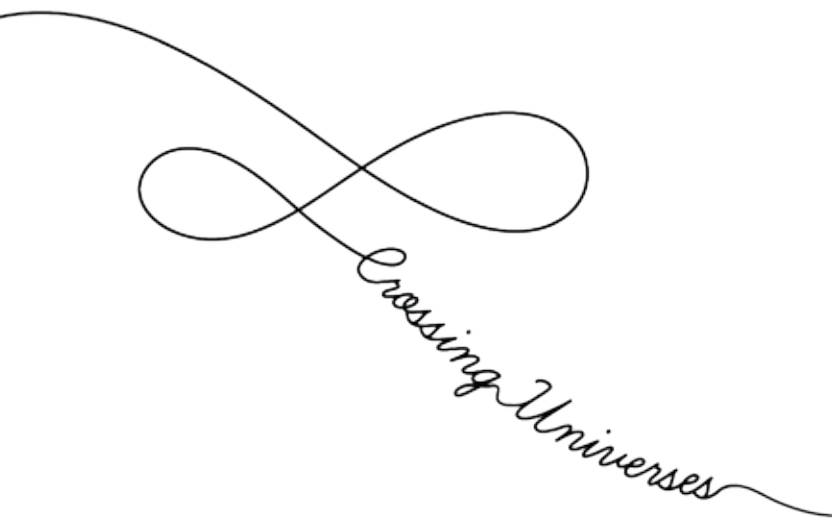




Crossing Universes



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Preface

Writing is, in many ways, an act of exploring. Through writing, we explore language, ourselves, or worlds different from ours, but which we nevertheless feel a connection to.

The works in *Unhomed*—the first LIVEpress chapbook—engaged with the anxieties of having a home but being or feeling outside of it. The pieces in this anthology bring us away from home, on a journey, in response to the theme of “Crossing Universes”.

Crossing Universes begins with Theophilus’s “On Roads and Rituals”, a reflection on why we travel and what it means to be able to travel. The short stories and poems that follow continue to traverse literal and figurative universes, exploring a myriad of ideas and issues along the way: faith, depression, perception, birth, coming-of-age, and death. Alfonse’s short but quietly stunning “Hanami Post-Earthquake” draws the reader’s voyage to a close on an ethereal, pensive tone.

Lim Qing

To The Casual Eye

Joel Li

Seeing is believing, I reckon
not. The rainbow is no more
than an arc here; the wind seen
elsewhere, in the clash of kites.
What a pity, if we believe what
we see on surface. The earth will
be flat; our universe will have a lonely
moon. Though a cactus might look harmlessly
alluring, one should never t o u c h it.

Fish

Tan Winnie

Twenty years it took
for the fish to rise from brine
triumphantly. Next, a closer look
at its own wrinkled, crusty exterior,
eroded its salty spirit no more
than a skinned fish
could survive if left out to dry.
It knows it has been swaddled
in an artificial environment
for too long; when every
uncalculated moment, more
salt is tipped into the bowl
from the edge, and other
unsuspecting fish rush
to resume a circle of confusion,
a reinless eddying
without start or end.
Outside the lazy water,
its leaden scales falling
off affirms its belief
that fish can wear a second skin.

Hanami Post-Earthquake

Alfonse Chiu

To count the falling cherry blossoms and
returning birds. To lay

on checkered mats with eyes
upturned and hands folded on
warm laps. To sip

the chilled draught of sake slow
burnt its sorry way down. To wait,

the fading cold retreating
like hope in a dark, damp world.

Afterword (Editors)

A theme empowers and encloses its creators into a white space of possibility. This year's focus on "Crossing Universes" in particular compelled writers to make a decision early on in their writing process on how they would take this step. Consequently, we were treated to an eclectic collection of works, with certain individuals placing particular emphasis on the experimentation of form and genre. Others withdrew inward to navigate through their own galaxies, ultimately finding new life after a journey of introspection.

As both a contributor and editor, my transition between creator and critic was in itself, an attempt to cross a universe. The process of editing did not simply involve the dissection of a work's technical merit, but further required reviews that were deliberate and aware of the author's ideas. It was a privilege working alongside Kah Gay and Lim Qing, individuals who possess honeyed breaths that tempered my sharp tongue. Their gentle guidance and keen insight infused our professional interactions with a nurturing warmth that has fuelled my desire to engage in further editorial work as this year's LIVEpress draws to a close.

Frederick

I am thankful for the opportunities that managing LIVEpress has given me: to work with an editorial team that showed me different approaches to editing, to work with both young and published writers, and to not just edit but also curate content.

At its heart, writing is this: a feeling, a thought, crossing from the author's mind onto paper in the form of words, in order to reach someone else across time, across space. Language is what we use to communicate every day, and yet it often slips away from us. Words hover just beyond the writer's reach, resisting articulation.

An editor peers into the darkness for those elusive tools of expression. It is not her job to find them, but she lights the way for them, and she points out where not to go. She guides the intangible matter that is journeying out of the author's mind, builds a bridge for them to become words.

Lim Qing

Every word has a meaning, a sound, a purpose. It must have a reason to exist in the space of a poem, just like how we ask questions about humanity and find the answers in poetry. The editorial process opened up new perspectives and standpoints I've never considered before, letting me discover further depths to writing. Poetry is the portal to another universe, and I'm pleased to have been privy to other writer's portals, to offer advice and critique. Hearing Lim Qing, Kah Gay and Fredrick's views broadened my understanding of writing in itself, and interests me to pick up editorial work in the future.

Eunice



I teeter at the precipice
stuck between worlds I
ponder: to stay or go?

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