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Letter From the Literary Editor

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Letter From the Literary Editor 2020

Fifty years of Calliope. The longevity of this magazine is a testament to the timeless sentiment that art, in all of its forms, is necessary. This isn’t a profound bit of information, but this statement rings true now more than ever. As Calliope enters into the age of “mid-life crises,” we too find ourselves in a time of crisis and uncertainty. In the raging chaos of pandemics and social distancing, the world is isolated. Through all this, art continues to document and ground the way we perceive the world around us. It connects us over space and time; art cultivates empathy when human connection is so limited.

With half a century under its belt, the magazine has taken on a life of its own; as writers, editors, and readers, we have developed a mutual relationship with Calliope. We write about the chaos, the calm, past and present, and the magazine is the friend that patiently waits for us at the end to listen to our story. Calliope does not just offer a platform for a cathartic release of the complexities of life, it offers more. It is a recognition of potential that is so imperative in a writer’s lifetime.

Last year’s theme, “how we become” hoped that Calliope would be a small but important part of a writer’s timeline. While last year focused on the journey, this issue asks you to shift your focus to where it all began. “Lineage: Sown in the Earth” calls back to the beginning. While Calliope enters into a new decade, we reflect back on where it all began. After graduating in December 2019, I thought a lot about this theme. I joined Calliope in my sophomore year, and since then I have had the greatest pleasure reading and cultivating stories from all walks of life. I thank the authors for allowing readers a glimpse into their lives, and the reader for welcoming it with open arms. The literature in this issue reminds us that our roots are planted somewhere, you just have to do a little digging.

— Ericka Wong, Calliope 2020

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Reader: in such a time and hour as this, we are unable to be blinded by the chaos that has spun much of this world in havoc. I am left pondering what historians will document, what authors will narrate, what parents will tell their children. Where will our solace lie?

Fifty years after the first Calliope issue in 1970, the torch for creativity and literacy has not been put out. As the literature team for Calliope MMXX “Lineage: Sown in the Earth,” we are amazed by the strong writers who are branching out and sharing with us (and you!) their stories: all together carefully-crafted and thought-provoking.

This year’s theme: “Lineage: Sown in the Earth” stems from the common thread that has tied the writings you will soon read. As the fiftieth anniversary of Calliope, our team is continually contemplating what Calliope has functioned for its audience. And we believe that this “lineage” of Calliope reveals the annals of Pacific, and of living. From the pruning and uprooting to the first spring bud and creation in its entirety—every aspect of our life is being sown into a metaphorical, and physical, earth.

So once more, I am amazed by the timeliness of this issue. As most of the world is confined to their own spaces, there has become a physical danger of leaving to explore the “nonhuman.” That is why I am thankful for the words in this issue that are able to craft and restore. As the literature team for the 50th Calliope, we are honored and hope with great expectation that beyond Calliope, you will continue to sow your words into the earth that surrounds us all.

— Carolyn Lee, Calliope 2020