

# East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Submit](#)

[Meet the  
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)

[Previous  
Issues](#)

[Join Our  
Team](#)

## Poetry

[back](#)

[Savannah Shepard](#)

[Ellie De la Cruz](#)

[Amy Waugh](#)

[Payton Marshall](#)

[Ambyr Strickland](#)

Copyright Eastfork Online Literary Journal. All Rights Reserved.

POWERED BY  
WebsiteBuilder

## East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[Contact Us](#)[Submit](#)[Meet the  
Editors](#)[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)[Previous  
Issues](#)[Join Our  
Team](#)

### Savannah Shepard

[back](#)

#### Thankful at 10 pm

Tonight, overwhelmed with a recurring grief,  
I turned to my love, climbed in his lap,  
and wrapped my arms around his neck.  
Tears rose but never fell, and I thanked him  
for that day in the car two years ago,  
when I told him about a night in April, earlier that year,  
when a stranger some years older than me,  
didn't listen when I said "not tonight",  
didn't listen when I said "I don't feel like it"  
didn't listen when I said "no" the first time,  
the third time, the fifth time, the last time  
before he was done with me.

Tonight, I thanked my love  
for holding me that day  
as I erupted in tears in the drivers' seat.  
I thanked him for not asking questions,  
for just listening and rocking me.  
I thanked him for saying "it's okay",  
for saying "I am here",  
for coming with me when I wanted to tell my family,  
For holding my hands  
while I looked my parents in the eyes  
and told them I had been assaulted.

Thanked him for never assuming.  
Thanked him for loving me.  
Thanked him for being patient with me  
over the next two years of our relationship,  
when I couldn't be touched  
without shivering,  
without remembering.  
Thanked him for trying to understand.

Tonight, overwhelmed with grief,  
I thanked the love of my life  
for never seeing me as disposable.  
Thanked him for never doubting me.  
Thanked him for believing me.  
Thanked him, because other women  
have not been as lucky as me.

#### Some Things Momma Doesn't Want to Hear

She is shattered glass  
frantically glued  
together, a broken window too  
significant to replace. Her  
soul is a damaged piece of  
family history, repeated. Eyes  
leak often, mostly at small  
inconveniences or personal  
mistakes. They don't weep  
at bumped heads, or stubbed  
toes, or annual shots. The  
pathway of thought dug  
into her brain is too deep  
to climb out of. Intrusive  
self-destructions have severed away  
therapy skills and repeated  
positive affirmations. A body  
so weathered that sunlight  
only shines out of the cracks  
and holes in her chest. A simple  
word can send her into isolation  
or self-destruction, another can  
dress her in a hopeful suit  
of armor. She is everything that  
is fragile, worn out, everything  
broken. Everything that is  
relentless and fierce

#### With Fear

With fear  
Comes a pounding heart, begging to be set free from behind the sternum  
Pacing feet, nausea asking the water filled belly to let it rise  
*You're fine, just breathe, everything's fine*  
With fear  
Comes demons of doubt, insecurity, and guilt  
Whispering into both ears: *failure of a daughter* and *disappointment child*  
With fear  
Comes a shifting body, unable to sit still,  
shaky hands, picking at the unpainted finger nails  
With fear  
Comes blank stares and *I can't do this*  
Daydreaming about running, fleeing the home that's housed you for fourteen years  
With fear  
Comes silent planning:  
*Purse is by the door, keys are in the purse, shoes already tied to your feet*  
Just in case the yelling begins, in case your father wants to remind you of your rightful place  
Remind you of your childhood and mistakes  
With fear  
Comes anger,  
and with anger  
comes elephant tears  
Stomping on the apples of the cheeks, falling from the jawline and plummeting through the floor  
Only to be followed with another and another, that are silently wiped away  
By the shaky hands  
Of the girl  
Who's so afraid  
That becoming a woman will leave her motherless—an orphan  
Leave her with nothing but another severed relationship,  
A disapproving family and an aching, shattered heart

[back](#)

## East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[Contact Us](#)[Submit](#)[Meet the  
Editors](#)[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)[Previous  
Issues](#)[Join Our  
Team](#)

### Ellie De la Cruz

[black](#)

#### Butcher

*Remember the whole recipe*  
I say to myself as I inspect  
My name.  
Cutting ends, slicing thin, and discarding  
The extra pieces.  
*Ok, Ellie De la Cruz sounds fine.*  
But not online while  
Filling out job applications.

*You have to take the spaces out.*  
The website tells me,  
*No, we don't care if your name's not right.*  
*You have to take the spaces out,*  
*We won't accept it otherwise.*

I type in Ellie DeLaCruz and now  
The butchering begins.  
The websites says:  
*Yes, yes, we like that best.*  
I hit submit, and hope they call me later.

I've gone home many times,  
Grabbed the cutting board and sharpest knife.  
First to scrub, then scrape, slice, and chop  
This name that holds me back from  
Call backs from jobs  
I know I'm qualified for.

I've readjusted myself before  
Anyone else could.  
I've hid, scraped out my name  
And with it, too, my accent.  
I've hid behind my green eyes,  
And colored my hair lighter,  
In order to look American.  
Because it matters. It matters.

My friends and I,  
We share the same four-name problem,  
I often think: *Which one should I pick?*  
We're called on this by questioning eyes,  
Insecure eyes,  
Annoyed eyes.

Where are you from?  
Oh, where is that?  
I've never heard of it.

But that's not what they meant to say.  
Instead, their eyes whisper:  
Irrelevant. Yes, you.  
You are irrelevant.  
We've been dismissed, my friends and I.  
We hold no place here or anywhere.

My name never fits on the little boxes  
On the screen, or spaces for the job application.  
It doesn't even rhyme.  
*Isaidy Elizabeth De la Cruz Paulino*  
What kind of name is that?

I've adopted Ellie.  
Abuela always called me Eli,  
But if I type or write Eli, which sounds more  
Like *e-Lie*, a voice inside mocks the  
Desperate attempts I make for  
This country to open its' arms,  
Reach out with a smile,  
And give me a little bit of room inside.

#### To be Spanish

To be Spanish, and in secret, thank destiny  
That you have light skin, green eyes at a job interview.  
To be Spanish is to stride confidently into the room  
As you've practiced numerous times the night before  
Hiding your accent, slowing down your tongue  
*You've got this*

To be Spanish is to say *You've got this*  
But not really believe it.  
To be Spanish is to explain to your future  
Employer how to say your first name, your middle,  
And your two-last names, which don't fit in the little space  
They gave you on the application. You only use  
Your first name and first-last name, for simplicity, you  
Tell yourself.

To be Spanish is to get the job (you knew you would)  
Because you've practiced, you've practiced.  
But you don't really want the job now.

*We're glad to have you*  
Your boss tells you, and you smile to look  
Appreciative.  
To be Spanish is to thank people, constantly,  
You're always in debt.  
You must say: *excuse me or pardon me or no,*  
*that's not how you say my name.*

To be Spanish is to tell them  
What you're going to tell them  
Again and again because they didn't follow.

A voice in your head  
Tells you *You need to practice,*  
*You need to listen more, be like them,*  
*Speak like them. Practice.*

To be Spanish is to wonder.  
Wonder why you have practice.  
Wonder why you're listening.  
Wonder why you're following  
Wonder why you won't lead.  
Wonder why you won't speak.  
Wonder why, and why again.  
Why so little?  
Why so quiet?

Why so Spanish?

[black](#)

# East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Submit](#)

[Meet the  
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)

[Previous  
Issues](#)

[Join Our  
Team](#)

## Amy Waugh

[back](#)

### Asphyxiation

Relaxed,  
head thrown back,  
skin tinged blue.  
A shouted name,  
a rough shake,  
no response.  
Clinched needle,  
still chest.  
Did you claw for air;  
or did you give in?  
Did you feel the choking,  
the suffocation?  
Was the high worth  
the future?  
You'll never reach  
that high again.  
The Deceit of Cancer  
They removed a chunk from your brain.  
Cut out the growing mass of  
malignancy. With that piece  
missing, you were  
different. Your  
words: kinder.  
Your touch:  
softer.

### The Deceit of Cancer

They removed a chunk from your brain.  
Cut out the growing mass of  
malignancy. With that piece  
missing, you were  
different. Your  
words: kinder.  
Your touch:  
softer.  
But I remember the you of before.  
Rough, violent outbursts  
that often became  
physical. Harsh,  
cruel words,  
that beat  
me into  
nothing.

### I Did Not Cry

I did not cry for you.  
I don't know why,  
but the tears would not come.  
The others glared as if  
I had committed some great  
transgression.  
Their sockets overflowed,  
tears trickled down their cheeks.  
Some were young and chubby;  
some old and gaunt.  
All wet with sorrow but one.  
And I don't know why,  
but I did not cry

[back](#)

## East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[Contact Us](#)[Submit](#)[Meet the  
Editors](#)[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)[Previous  
Issues](#)[Join Our  
Team](#)

### Payton Marshall

[back](#)

#### Loving Leaves

She wonders if he'll fade, just as seasons often do  
how Autumn does so wither, as spring shepherd's anew,  
Love's vein in wrinkled leaves, I force their fall to concur  
Leaves lack listen to their mean, my plea they do demur.

My tree has offspringed apples of the forbidden heart,  
Their ruby harbors snake's, allure décoré in art.

Oh apple, I wish I didn't arrest your snakely bite.  
Now I live in pleased pain of what's never to be,  
your venom has murdered my leaves to love again  
now venom is all that's left of me.

Ashamed in the delectable I savored in your taste,  
Discerning melancholic, has virtue lost its grace?

The reminisced ruby, this rooted lust is lifelong,  
I wish there was no black in your moralistic wrong.

Before your bite life had ease, I rue the day I did,  
Every pleasure has its price, a price I once forbid.

#### Forbidden Apple

In Genesis there is creation,  
Revelation is where it ends  
The interpretation between the lines,  
Is where we lack to lend.  
Parables and versus, count your blessings, share your wealth,  
First and foremost love God, and love your neighbor as yourself.  
But somewhere I got confused  
For the church produced a muse  
That the Bible was being used,  
To bruise and to accuse.  
We judge Eve for eating that apple, but don't we everyday?  
Don't we eat the apple in a different kind of way?  
I see apples being eaten every time I watch the news  
I see the apple in a drunk's bottle, floating in his booze.  
I see the apple swallowed whole in the gossip of my school,  
I see it in the church members who use the Bible as a stepping-stool.  
I see it in the father, who has a daughter he doesn't remember,  
I see the apple in the terrorists that forever changed September.  
Eve may have ate the apple, but remember so do we,  
The Bible is a reminder that God loves us unconditionally.  
Interpret the golden rule for what it means to you,  
Because Eve did eat the apple, but remember so do you.

[back](#)

## East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Submit](#)

[Meet the  
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)

[Previous  
Issues](#)

[Join Our  
Team](#)

### Ambyr Strickland

[back](#)

#### Everyone's Journey

My destiny, which I thought looked like a blooming field,  
Was turning out to be more of a burning forest;  
Where smoldering ashes and destruction are hailed,  
And the death of all is morbidly chorused;

Yet out of this "no-mans-land" I call my destiny  
Comes love, blooming as if it were weaponry

#### I See You

I see you, and the rivers on your skin  
The marks you leave for what you see as sin.  
I know what it feels like, what it means;  
How all you wish for is a caring friend.

I see you, and the scars you try to hide,  
Never as deep as the ones on your mind  
That makes you feel worthless and sad;  
How it only takes one person to be unkind.

I see you, and the pain self-inflicted  
And your caring heart that is conflicted;  
And the relief that comes as tears  
When your suffering is finally admitted.

I see you, and how some are fresh and new,  
The scars of crimson that you once drew  
That makes you beautiful nonetheless  
Representing your pain that only grew.

I see you, and I understand  
I'm always here to lend a hand.  
It's hard to stop, I know that much,  
Look deeper and you'll always find a friend.

I see you, and the scars that make you, you  
All the beautiful things you do  
That you're finally starting to see;  
I knew you could do it, I always knew.

I see you, and how they're just scars now;  
How sometimes you look back and wonder how  
Has the world gotten so dark, so hard to see  
And you know never again to stoop so low.

I see you, and how big your smile is,  
How your hand fits perfectly in his,  
And the utter happiness in your eyes  
And the love that you secretly missed.

I see you, and how far you've come,  
How much Better things are at home,  
How you don't lay awake making more rivers;  
And how you know you're never ever alone.

[back](#)