

Dear Readers,

“Though the storms keep on raging in my life/and sometimes it's hard to tell the night from day, still that hope that lies within is reassured/as I keep my eyes upon the distant shore.”

-- “My Soul Has Been Anchored,” Douglas Miller

Autumn rolls in with its usual dramatic flair—leaves turning into new shades of colors, the smell of sweet potatoes baked to perfection, and—oh yes—the new semester hitting us like a rogue wave. Schedules are packed tighter than a subway at rush hour, deadlines lurk around like sirens, and somewhere in the 5-minute breaks and late-night self-study sessions, we all feel a little adrift. But here's the secret every good sailor knows: you don't fight the current—you drop anchor.

This issue's word is Anchor. Not the heavy metal kind that drags you down, but the kind that keeps you steady. Think of it like Odysseus tying himself to the mast, or like the North Star for ancient navigators—something constant while the skies spin. The kind of anchor made of dreams that refuse to fade, perseverance that shows up for the next all-nighter, passion that turns required readings into something you can't put down, and friendships that feel like coming home after a long voyage.

We're all looking for rhythm in this whirlwind semester—something reliable to return to when the world spins too fast.

Whether through poems steadying the heart, stories mapping out harbors, sketches capturing seconds of happiness, and essays wrestling over what truly matters, we are reminded that anchors aren't about staying still. They're about choosing where to hold firm so you can move forward with purpose.

So take a deep breath. Find your rhythm.

Drop your anchor in whatever keeps you grounded—and let the waves come through.

Steadily yours,
Angela Li
Editor-in-Chief





Dear Readers,

" You say, 'Oh, sing one you know.'
But I promise you this:
I'll always look out for you."
— Sparks, Coldplay

Some moments arrive quietly. No, no like rolling thunder or fireworks; just a small spark. Could be a lingering thought after class. A sentence you read that refuses to leave your mind. The sudden realization past midnight that something you care deeply about has gripped your soul.

This issue's word is Spark.

A spark is brief, almost fragile. It can appear in the friction between two ideas, in a conversation that stretches longer than expected. Left alone, it might fade; tended with curiosity, patience, and courage, it becomes something capable of lighting a path forward.

Sparks remind us of why we began. At the beginnings of every long-lasting project, passion, and friendship, there are always sparks that turn scattered thoughts and feelings into something much more meaningful.

Within these pages, you will find sparks everywhere, in poems, stories, artworks, and essays. Hopefully, one of these creations will ignite the spark in you.

Remember to always follow the spark you saw. They are invitations to look closer, to ask one more question, to follow just a little further than you planned. Be that hungry, foolish one to chase the spark until you become the torchbearer. At the end of the day, you'll never regret where you wind up in.

Sometimes, all it takes is a spark.

Warmly,
Angela Li
Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers,

“Am I in a slump? Am I playing back time? Did I lose my perspective? Everything's still romantic, right?”

— Charli XCX, “Everything is romantic featuring caroline polachek”

These questions haunt us in every season of transition. We hesitate to outgrow our old selves, we try clinging to our peaks on our way downhill, we get lost in the past, unable to move forward. Somewhere deep down, we fear that changes strip life of its magic.

The fact is, in certain phases of our lives, we would mistake stasis for stability, and resistance to change for preservation of the supposed best. This issue's theme “Evergreen” is about reminding us of true vitality. True vitality is not unchanging, but a constant state of growth, renewal, and honest evolution blooming naturally within ongoing change.

Charli xcx's 2026 mockumentary *The Moment* offers her interpretation of what it means to be evergreen by reimagining the fate of her “brat” era. Following her June 2024 release “BRAT” that brought hyperpop music from underground to mainstream, the green-cover black-word album unleashed an unprecedented international sensation that reigned pop culture for not just a summer—Collins Dictionary named “brat” its 2024 Word of the Year. “Brat Summer” was successful because the Brat spirit was widely resonant for being unapologetically authentic, and throughout the promotion of her album, Charli stayed uncompromisingly true to her core artistic vision. But as commercial pressure closed in, industry professionals collaborating with her team reshaped her bold, boundary-pushing aesthetic into a generic, hollow, family-friendly facade that strayed away from what originally made Brat unforgettable.

Faced with this clash as a newly mainstream artist, Charli's every instinct begged to rewind, to play back time, and to salvage a dying era, a once culturally-defining and self-defining moment. Like the case with most artists, artistic distortion due to commercialization was an inevitable and involuntary consequence of Brat's viral success. What is truly inspiring is that instead of futilely preserving an artistic era that was already ending, she chose to exercise her own creative agency. She purposefully accelerated the conclusion of Brat Summer by complying completely with the reinvented aesthetic designed for the commodification of her creation. She reconciled with herself and reframed the industry's botched, inauthentic rework of Brat as a satirical farewell to protect her creative freedom. Charli is determined that her continued artistic experimentation is what gives her true self rebirth after the end of Brat.

Brat summer may end, but bold self-reinvention is evergreen.

This is the essence of being evergreen: no single moment, phase, or self can last forever. What endures is the courage to reinvent, the willingness to let go, and the persistence to keep creating and evolving, even when we doubt ourselves, even when we feel stuck in a slump, even when we worry the romance of life has faded again and again.

So, to answer your question: yes, Charli. Everything is still romantic, just not in what's familiar. You'll find the romance of life in the evergreen possibility of growing forward, upward, outward in every change you and I encounter.

May the newest edition of WLIFE, “Evergreen,” remind you that it is okay to outgrow your past, okay to question your perspective, and okay to close old chapters.

No rewind,
Angela Li
Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers,

“All these places have their moments / With lovers and friends I still can recall.”

— The Beatles, “In My Life”

In 1964, John Lennon tried to remember his life by taking a bus.

It was, in retrospect, a terrible idea.

The Beatles were at the height of Beatlemania. Lennon was twenty-four and living a life that had begun moving faster than he could properly remember it. For years, he had been writing pop songs with little more thought than to create a sound. Then a journalist asked him, why don't you put some of your own life into your songs? Why don't you write about your childhood?

So he began with his hometown Liverpool. He retraced the route from his childhood home into the city: Penny Lane, Strawberry Fields, the Abbey pub, the tram sheds, the number 5 bus, St. Columba's, the Dockers' Umbrella—and tried to string them into a song.

It didn't work. Years later, Lennon called that draft a boring account of a bus trip. He had all the places, but somehow none of his life. So he stopped naming streets and started thinking about the people who had occupied them: friends who remained, people who were gone, loves that had ended, and the Liverpool that existed in his memory even as the real city changed without him.

Lennon called “In My Life” his “first real major piece of work.”

Perhaps that is the strange thing about remembering. We forget the exact classroom but remember who sat beside us. We forget our Tuesday timetables but remember the five minutes when somebody made us laugh. When we try to preserve a place, we face the same problem Lennon did. We could make a timeline of every event, every award, and every name. But would it tell us what it was like to be here? Probably not.

A school is not really made of its buildings or calendars. It is made of a conversation in a corridor, a teacher's words that stayed with you, a song playing from someone's laptop, a friend who became impossible to imagine your life without. These are the things hardest to archive and what we are most afraid of losing.

That is what a postcard preserves. At the front, there's the fragment of a city, a holiday, or an entity. At the back, handwritten and stamped, says I was here, here's why I loved it here, and I want you to know.

Years from now, WLSA will look different. The people in these photographs will be somewhere else. The classrooms and the corridors will be refurnished. Some things that seem permanent now will have disappeared completely.

These fragments won't tell the whole story. But perhaps, they can tell us what it meant to have been here. In the end, Lennon did not need to remember every street. He only needed to remember what and who he loved on them.

Perhaps that is all we need to remember, too. After all, all you need is love.

All my loving,
Angela Li
Editor-in-Chief