

The Kudzu Review Internship

Lauren Perez

Written Work

A New Month Critique

“A New Month” seems to be a glimpse into the writer’s reflections as they are questioning their choices and their future path.

Though I can appreciate the relatability of this expression, this piece feels lacking and unfinished. There is a definite lack of specificity. This piece would do well to have a bit more detail within it. It feels performative, as though the writer has kept the content general because they knew others would be reading it. I think the narrative would benefit from some more detail and expansion. Though this piece contains expressions of reflection and doubt, there is a considerable lack of introspection and vulnerability that would be required from a piece like this.

Technically, the writing itself seems a bit rushed, as though it was written down as an unedited stream of consciousness. There was one random change from the first-person to the second-person point-of-view that feels off. Though I understand that this may have been the writer’s unedited stream of thought, the content is hard to follow, with many abrupt changes.

Overall, I would give this piece a 1 (Reject). It would benefit from some significant changes, additions, and elaborations. It feels unfinished and vague.

“But it’s golden” Critique

I really enjoyed this piece! It was a beautiful recollection of the beginning of the speaker’s first relationship. It was dynamic and incredibly interesting. The writer had strong control of the language and was able to walk the reader through the narrative easily. I especially liked the way the writer described the small moments between the speaker and Bryson. I do think there were some unnecessary details that distract the reader that could be eliminated, however.

Also, for the ending moment it would be much more effective if the writer mentioned the details of the episode they had watched earlier in the piece so that the reference doesn't need explanation in that final moment. Overall, I give this piece a 3 (Strong Maybe).

Dancing Shoes Critiques

"Dancing Shoes" is a generational story exploring femineity and promiscuity. The reader recounts an early-life experience of her mother carelessly dancing and then explores her experiences exploring herself and being careless.

I enjoy this style of writing a lot, though I think the voice could use a bit of work. The story explores some interesting themes, and we see character development throughout. The story feels believable, and I can get a sense of the characters, though I some further exploration could really bring a lot to this piece. The story felt important and wrapped well. I do think the author has control of the world, but I think there could be some adjustments to the story to make it come more to life. However, the writing did feel cliché throughout, and there was a level of over-dramatization that existed throughout the entire piece, muddling the significance of the storu

Technically, I think story was executed poorly. The cliché writing and overall lack of flow between sentences made this piece a bit hard to read. Something about the wording just felt a bit off. Though there weren't a lot of technical errors, the overall language and flow of the piece hindered it.

Because of all of this, I rate this piece a 2 (Weak Maybe). This story is a complete piece with an interesting story but due to the technical issues and certain levels of needed adjustment, I cannot say is strong.

“Diving into life” Critique

“Diving into life” is a story about the speaker’s first-time sky diving with their grandfather. It has a clear beginning, middle, and end and seems to be a significant moment in this reader’s life. However, the language used by the reader feels cliché and uninteresting. It is piece is choppy and difficult to follow. There was a clear metaphor that went with the emotions the reader was feeling that did give the piece some dynamics, which was enjoyable. Technically, there are also a significant number of errors, including a lack of punctuation and changes in tense and it did make the piece more difficult to follow. There was a lack of

The descriptions seem a bit superfluous, making the piece feel less believable and vulnerable. I had to read the piece twice to understand what the writer was trying to do. Overall, I give this piece a 1 (Reject).

“Fifty Cents” Critique

This piece was interesting, but it was a bit hard to follow. I think it could do well with some more expansion. Though the language was interesting, the technical errors clouded what was already a more abstract piece. It feels as though something is missing from this piece. I understand what the writer was attempting, and in some ways, it did work well, but I don’t feel that this piece is fully fleshed out. For that reason, I am giving this piece a 1 (Reject).

“Growing Pains” Critique

This piece is about a young writer’s journey and struggles with their passion for writing. It takes us through early childhood and adolescence as we learn how their passion has impacted their life.

This piece is very well-written with a distinct beginning, middle, and end. There is a bit of agency missing in the piece, but it still feels meaningful and compelling. The story was very believable and there was a very strong driving desire. Some aspects of the writing did feel a bit cliché, but there did seem to be real meaning and intention behind it. Though there is a character arc, I think it could use a bit more development to make the piece more interesting. I think more aspects of “showing” rather than “telling” would help carry this story further. The writer discusses their emotions and feeling about writing, but I think a little more narrative could do a lot for this piece.

Technically, this piece was well executed. There was one blatant error I clearly noticed, but other than that it worked well. Overall, I’d give this piece a 2 (Weak Maybe).

“Growing Up Tomboy” Critique

I enjoyed this piece a lot! It was an interesting and poignant exploration of gender and the speaker’s own experiences. It felt complete and vulnerable with much to offer. It was believable and very compelling. Some of the language felt a bit off, and there were some parts that could use a bit of finessing, but otherwise it was very well done. Overall, I give this piece a 2 (Weak Maybe).

“How lucky it is to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard” Critique

This piece is a recollection of the speaker’s time going away to college. It is well-written, and I believe that the reader has strong control of the language. My main gripe, however, is that the story feels a bit cliché and overdone. Many people can write about their transition to college

and how they love their family, there is nothing that makes this story feel special or significant. As sweet as it is, it doesn't necessarily captivate the reader.

Technically, there are minimal grammatical issues and the language works well. It has a clear beginning, middle and end, but there is a lack of depth. Overall, I give this piece a 2 (Strong Maybe).

"I Didn't Think" Critique

This piece is a story about how a child's perspective is warped, naivety allowing them to only see the silver lining of a situation instead of the true implications. The piece is interesting and occasioned. It has the arc of a solid beginning, middle and end, giving it a finished feeling. There are some instances of cliché and wordiness, but not so much so that it significantly detracts from the piece. The level of control over the writing does not seem as strong as some other pieces we've read, but it isn't the worse either. I think this piece could use some slight improvements, wording wise, but still hits the mark.

I would give this piece a 2 (Weak Maybe). It is an interesting, significant piece that captures the reader, but I do think the language could be tightened up a bit. Otherwise, it is well executed and could fit with the magazine.

"Is God Real? A story of Goats, Farms, and Faith" Critique

This piece is very well written. It is a story about childhood tests of faith, family influences, and growing up. The writer starts the piece in a current time period, and then moves into a flashback detailing a memory involving her grandmother

This story is very well-written, with clear character development and a compelling and interesting topic/throughline. I loved how the experience was described with such detail and how the writer was able to capture the childhood experience of growing up and learning about the world around you, both the good and the bad. My only critique would be that I think the beginning should be tied into the end of the piece. In that way the piece feels a little unfinished but the story as a whole has a true beginning, middle, and end.

I think technically the piece is very sound. Other than one or two grammatical errors, it flows well and is easy to read. The language is appealing and interesting.

Overall, I give this piece a 3 (Strong Maybe). It was a compelling and meaningful story that I really enjoyed reading.

“Joaquin’s American Dream” Critique

“Joaquin’s American Dream” is a story about a person’s journey towards becoming an attorney, starting with their upbringing in Guadalajara and then the United States. The story was interesting and had a sense of meaning, but I think there was a lack of stakes. We hear of the troubles Joaquin faced throughout his life, but they are told in a passive manner. The writing brushes over much of the difficulties Joaquin faced by narrating in such a casual manner. Otherwise, the story does have a significant arc and does end I think a lot more of the experiences Joaquin faced could be told with more detail. The piece currently feels like a summary.

Technically, the piece is mostly well-written. There are some lines that could use some editing, such as “he was not envisioning the rich potential futures promised to his peers to come in America. He had been tasked with adjustment and adjust he must.” The piece could use some other copyediting, but nothing incredibly significant. I give this piece a 2 (Weak Maybe).

“Otherworld” Critique

“Otherworld” is a story about the authors exploration into nature and attempt to escape the constant notifications and bothers of the world.

The story has a complete feel, with a very distinct journey being taken. Though the story seems important to the writer, the stakes don’t seem to be high enough to explain exactly why the story is being told. The story was somewhat believable, but there were some small moments that made me question if they happened, such as when the writer writes that “my hand trembles over the water now with my phone like some self-destructive dare.” The details around the phone seem a bit overdramatized, making the story a little less believable and a little more cliché. I also think the characters in the story could have been a little more developed. We hear a lot about Ellie, but we don’t learn that much about her or hear from her at all. Her character is completely undeveloped, making parts of the story fall flat.

Technically, the story seemed executed fairly well. There were, however, many cliches in language and thought throughout. Though mechanically, it was well-written the word choice and certain descriptors caused the story to have less appeal.

Overall, I’d say this piece is a 2 (Weak Maybe). It is a complete story, but it does need some workshopping. There is meaning within the story, but there are just some aspects that of it that I did not favor.

“Proverbs of Hell” Critique

This piece is a conglomeration of proverbs written to represent a concept of life. That is my closest guess to what this piece is about. Though I understand what this writer is trying to do, overall, it's a bit difficult to read and understand. There is not much of a plot or character arc. Honestly, it was a bit hard to follow.

Technically, it is well written with not many grammatical errors, but the structure of just one long paragraph loses the reader's attention, especially given that it is just one long string of various proverbs.

I give this piece a 1 (Reject). I just don't think there's much development, plot, or character. It felt pretty cliché and a bit meaningless to me. I think if there was a little more structure to the piece, with more of a throughline, it would have been a bit better, but I don't know if any of our edits would strengthen the piece as it is.

"Radar" Critique

I think this piece could use a bit more work beyond what we can provide. The syntax is choppy and lacking control. It also feels a bit unfinished. There doesn't seem to be much of a significant point being made, just some light thoughts the speaker is sharing with us. There were a few technical errors but not an excessive amount. I think that this piece could have potential, but it just needs to be workshopped some more. Overall I give it a 1 (Reject).

"Slowly, I Wake" Critique

"Slowly, I wake" is a beautiful story of how the speaker got out of their funk, if one could call it that. It is filled with detail and beautiful prose that elevate the narrative. Though brief, this story feels more than complete. It has significance and a dynamic flow throughout. Not only can

the reader relate, but each detail feels so vivid; it's as if the images are jumping from the page. The writer perfectly captures the experience of being in that somewhat unhappy state, and then perfectly details the beauty of starting to take in the world around you with intention. I felt personally impacted by this story.

Technically, this story is well-written. The language choice is beautiful and flows well. The writer has fabulous control of the language in the story. Overall I give this piece a 3 (Strong Maybe).

“Summer Piece” Critique

This piece was so interesting. It is about a person's connection to the summer and nature. I think this piece was very well thought out and well written. Though it is short, there is compelling details and character development. The story not only feels complete, but also is hard-hitting. The author has incredibly strong control of the world, painting a clear feeling and understanding. In this piece, I think we get a brief, but incredibly deep, meaningful, and vulnerable look into the writer. It feels alive and dynamic. I think overall it is exceptionally well written. I specifically love the line “The way the knife slides through the ripe orange flesh and the juice dripping onto my chin and hands feels murderous. A lychee pit like a pool-drowned junebug between my teeth.” The detail and the sensations feel so real, and so unique; I absolutely love it.

Technically, there are some grammatical errors but those could be easily fixed. I think the minimal number of copyedits would help bring this story further to life. It would be. I felt that

there was such strong control of the language, and great use of description. There is literally nothing I would change about the word choice at all.

This is an amazing piece and for that I give it a 3 (Strong Maybe). Though brief, it is complete and well-rounded. The writing is well thought-out and feels completely unique.

“The Happier Family” Critique

I really liked this piece a lot. It was incredibly compelling, and the details were so interesting. The writer has very strong control over the language and was able to vividly portray this story well. It also held an interesting perspective that hold value to the reader. I didn't notice too many technical errors. I think this piece is very well done. The structure of the piece flows incredibly well. Overall I give this piece a 3 (Strong Maybe).

“The Smell of Rain” Critique

This piece is extremely dynamic and captivating. I enjoy how the speaker jumps around in the narrative. The prose of the memories is very beautifully written, and their insertion works well. I think some of the language throughout other parts of the piece are a tad cliché, though. I think bringing down the dramatization of those parts of the piece would do a lot and would be an interesting contrast to the vignettes sprinkled throughout. There were a few grammar issues but for the most part it was nothing too bad. Overall I give this piece a 2 (Weak Maybe).

“There is No Such Thing as a Straight Line” Critique

This piece is an interesting extended metaphor for the pressure put on us. It explores the pressures and struggles the writer feels are imposed upon them. I found the prose interesting and compelling. The story feels rounded and significant. It doesn't necessarily tell us exactly why the author is feeling the need to say this in this moment, but the emotional exploration of the piece feels dynamic, making up for this in some ways. The character has a strong psychological desire, and we slowly learn more about the reader throughout. The author most definitely has significant control of the world.

I think technically, the story was written rather well. Some of the word choice was a bit questionable –mostly wrong connotations—but otherwise it was easy to read with not many technical issues. This was a very stylized piece, but I don't think it felt too cliché or overdramatic. There seemed to be a lot of control over the writing.

Overall, I give this piece a 3 (Strong Maybe). It is a complete piece that I think has strong substantial elements for the most part. I enjoyed the piece and I think it could be a potentially good fit for the magazine.

“Things Lost, Things Found” Critique

“Things Lost, Things Found” is a story that investigates the speaker's past. It investigates how they ended up where they are and the various building blocks that got them there. It is an interesting piece, formatted in sections. During the beginning of the piece, I got a bit lost. I think the bracketed text threw me off a bit, as well as some of the sentence structuring. As the piece went on, however, I think the writer's voice became a bit clearer and the main themes of the story came closer into view. I think from chapter 3 on, I really began to like and understand the

piece, but before that the prose felt a bit unfocused. The story does feel complete, however, and there are good dynamics throughout.

Technically, the language is moderate. There are some parts that could use some editing for clarity's sake, but otherwise it is well-written. Overall I would give this piece a 2 (Weak Maybe).

"To My Dedushka" Critique

This piece is a beautiful recollection of moments and memories about a girl's now passed grandfather. I think it is very well-written, with strong language and dynamic descriptions. The story feels deep and meaningful, I really enjoyed it! Everything felt believable and it really did stir some emotion inside me. The story brings the reader in close and shares a deep and vulnerable memory that feels very special.

Overall, I thought this piece was very well-written and would be a good fit for the Kudzu review. I give it a 3 (Strong Maybe).

"You Are Not Too Much" Critique

This piece is about the speaker's experience struggling with self-doubt and insecurity, and how their favorite teacher helped calm them down.

To be frank, I think this story is a bit difficult to follow and is a bit choppy. I think it just needs to be more focused and a bit more fleshed out. If we are learning about her favorite teacher, I think we should learn a little bit more about her or have a bit heavier of a description. I think the other character Erin, could also use some fleshing out. Right now this piece feels a bit more like a quick recount of an experience rather than a controlled piece of writing. There isn't necessarily a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Technically, the writer frequently changed tenses, especially during the first paragraph. The language did not flow freely. I think this piece would need some serious workshopping to get it where it would need to be. Overall, I give it a 1 (Reject).

Midterm Action Plan

I have already completed my two class visits, one with Professor Tyler Johnson (ENC 2135, WMS 201, (MWF 9:20-10:10AM) and one with Professor Alisha Gaines (AML 4604, WMS 201, T/TH 3:05-4:20). I will forward all emails regarding these visits.

I have signed up to edit Alexander Ivy's blog post, which will be an interview with a recent contributor to the magazine. As of right now that is all I have signed up for but if more spots open-up I may sign up for another.

Final Action Plan

I am not able to work Market Wednesdays because of the time it is at and the available time slots. Instead, I wanted to propose if the multiple blog posts I edited could make up for this. In total I signed up for and edited four blog posts. I put a considerable amount of time and effort into doing this. On Wednesdays I have class in the afternoon from 1:20-2:35pm and a weekly work meeting after that from 3pm-4:30pm. I also typically have either work or meetings with a professor I am working with those mornings.

For my community outreach assignment, I will be discussing the kudzu review with my sorority chapter. I am going to do this by sending out an announcement with the details of what the Kudzu Review is and how people can get involved, either by submitting or working on the team!