

Preface

When we began production on the fifteenth anniversary issue of *City Tech Writer*, we had no idea how meaningful the cover image of a globe would be. Yari Zhiliang's depiction of an Earth bursting with ideas, enthusiasm, and life has taken on added significance in the midst of COVID-19. Even as this crisis has highlighted the fragility of an interconnected planet, it has also forged and renewed solidarity across borders, between doctors, essential workers, and family members. How fitting, then, that the contributors to this anniversary issue continue *City Tech Writer's* proud tradition of parsing the threads that compose humanity's tapestry: the threads linking strands of DNA, in one essay's examination of gene therapy; linking narrative and metaphor, in analyses of classic novels; linking gender and mortality, in a consideration of ancient Egyptian funerary rituals; linking outer and inner battlefields, in fictional and non-fictional depictions of war and military life; linking homelands and new homes, in numerous reflections on immigration. Meanwhile, essays on *Homo sapiens'* distant origins, as well as its cybernetic future, remind us of the threads binding yesterday to tomorrow. This issue also marks the first time we are featuring work from the college's Photography class, so expect to contemplate visual connections between the objects and people that make up our strange, surprising world.

As we continue to face a crisis that literally and figuratively separates us, such reminders of connection have become all the more precious.

Much thanks is due to the writers and photographers who made this issue happen, amidst much tumult and adaptation; the faculty who sponsored these outstanding works; Professor Peter Fikaris, whose communication design students created many compelling candidates for the cover; and Yari Zhiliang, whose aforementioned design graces the front of this volume. Thanks also to Julia Jordan, William Lupurena, Lu Xue, Anmol Kaur, and the rest of the Faculty Commons Design Team, who created posters and bookmarks promoting our call for submissions; to Professor Lloyd Carr, the journal's Art Director, and Bill Linet of United Publishing Group, who produced the volume with skill and care. As far as contractual and logistical concerns, I'm indebted to Executive Director of Business Management Wayne Robinson; Marcella Lee and Myrlene Dieudonne in the Purchasing office; Chioma Okoye in the Provost's office; and Marilyn Morrison and Shani Tait in the President's office. I'm also grateful to English Department Office Assistants Lily Lam and Selima-Nijah McMillan, who have tirelessly worked to support the department that this publication calls home.

President Russell Hotzler, thank you for graciously providing the funding for this year's volume. Provost Bonne August, Associate Provost Pamela Brown, Dean Justin Vazquez-Poritz, and Dr. Stephen Soiffer have all provided affirmation, time, and resources: *merci*. I'm grateful to Professor Caroline Hellman for helping out with the cover design process, and to

Professor Mark Noonan for helping amplify the call for submissions, as well as facilitating the inclusion of this issue's first-ever Photography entries. A special thanks goes to previous *City Tech Writer* editors, Professors George Guida, Suzanne Miller, and Megan Behrent, for lending their experience and wisdom to the final product.

Last but not least, I wish to thank Professor Jane Mushabac on this fifteenth anniversary of her founding this journal. By providing an outlet for the exceptional writers in our community, she showed that humanity's oldest technology was still flourishing at City Tech. In the face of an uncertain future, may we draw comfort from the ancient tools with which we express our insights, fears, sorrows, and hopes. In the words of this volume's final entry, "Only writing helped me get through it."

Lucas Kwong
Editor