

IRIS SENIOR EDITION
2022

kat johnson
iris mag class of 2022

3114

i want to apologize
to the creaks in the floor
and the stains on the carpet and couch
where we knocked over cans and
broke promises and spilled kisses
into cushions like cheap champagne
expensive vinyls free will
frozen spotify screens and led lights.
i promise we'll be out of your hair soon,
cracking open cans in new cities
but for now, to the yellow tile floor grout spilled
over into blurry star-kissed nights and
grueling headache mornings
to all the time we spent trying
desperately to just get it out:
you have always apologized for taking up space.
here you are allowed to
here you are promised patience
in slow stoves boiling pasta
and baking cookies on long cold nights
and crackling coffee pots pouring
steaming hot black into cracked mugs.
here you will be referred to as yourself for the first time
here you will unlearn so much
of the thickness they have poisoned you with
swim in cold lakes, bathe in steamy showers
here every path leads to company
every door has been knocked on.





notes on leaving

my hands are a swan	wet	wandering our college pasture
& we are breaking	into blossom	sons & daughters
filling our fingers with splinter	soft apricot wood desk	tap pomp & circumstance
how did the others	did the others before us	<i>100 miles away by september</i>
car door snap	hummingbird bent	we cannot stop the apocalypse
the fog comes blue	wax over rain come down	harsher
now	<i>you don't have to</i>	now
<i>go</i>	scream it to the yew tree	<i>you are</i>
hot oil tongue	<i>already</i>	collapse the redwoods
spinal jelly	chrysalis opening	<i>home</i>
the very first	monarch	<i>we cannot stop</i>
harsher now	<i>wandering our college</i>	the very last
<i>my hands a swan</i>	the valley sings to me	<i>rain come</i>
two beaks peck	<i>100 miles by september</i>	blood rich moon
<i>scream it</i>	<i>harsher</i>	<i>now</i>
	<i>(go)</i>	
this land	will remember	us.

al tejera
iris mag class of 2022



human resources (blood)



the ill and the rich

An Interview with Al

A few days ago I [Mia Donaldson] had the honor of interviewing Al Tejera—Iris Magazine’s design editor—for this here senior editon—our first ever! Below is the transcript of our lovely conversation about creative inspiration, the beauty of expressing queer relationships, and Iris e-board.

M: So in honor of my astrological companions (I’m not that into astrology, unfortunately) But like,

A: Yeah. I think its been a really positive experience for me in terms of rust like, having something creative to do. And its also productive. Because like, sometimes I do get wrapped up in like, it's gotta be productive for it to be worthy of like, I guess being shown to the world. And so its been sort of nice to be able to create stuff. And for it to be like, fit into my schedule nicely. Yeah. And to be able to make time for it, because I feel like when I'm just doing art by myself, I'm like, Oh, I have no time for that. And then I realized, Oh, I do have time for creativity

M: That's a great lesson to learn, yeah.

A: Like, I think its been a super fun process, especially working collaboratively with Mia. She is awesome.

M: Yeah, cannot say enough about them; this interview isn't about Mia, but we love Mia.

A: It was, it was like, nice to come in. And they showed me how to do everything. And I was like, wow, this is a great team. So it's overall been really, really positive. And I just, I appreciate the whole eboard.

M: We're gonna miss you so much truly, and all of our graduating seniors. Soooo lastly, I didn't want to take too much of your time. But I'm just wondering what your favorite artwork you've done is... it can be one thing, could be like, a bunch of different stuff.

A: Let's see. Honestly, this is a hard question, because I feel like every time I come out with a new piece of art, its my new favorite. Because I'm constantly growing and evolving, I look at an old piece of art and I'm like. oh... so it's, it's definitely something thats ever-changing. Because right now I'm not able to pinpoint it. It's a lot of just like, I come up with something new. And I'm like, Whoa, I really liked that. Like, this is my new favorite thing. So its definitely changing every time I come up with a new art piece.

M: That makes sense. Do you want to plug your Instagram for the people?

A: Sure, I can plug my Instagram. It's @immenduo, I-M-M-E-N-D-U-O.

Thank vou again to Al for taking the time to interview with me! You will be missed dearly by Lady Iris and her e-board. and have been the best design editor we could ask for <3

Al and Ani



Bloodsuckers

By Al Tejera

I am nine. A dance of pastels weave in and out of my periphery. It is Bomba season. Skirts, white and as wide as the moon, are controlled by brown hands; the fabric breathes like the tides. My hand is locked with my cousin's. We don't want to get pulled into the sea of rainbow monster masks. I am four shades darker than her. The sun loves to marry my melanin and mosquitoes bed my blood. You're just too sweet, says my cousin.

My cheek itches and blossoms red from a bite. I am surrounded by hundreds, and it chooses me.

My abuela sees the little imperfection. A perfect, red circle. Un poco de Jesus will fix this, she says.

I want to say: When has he ever?

I follow her lead and link my free hand with hers. This is embarrassing. No one notices me in this chaos, yet I can feel hot blood pool in my face and sweat tarnish my temples.

A nun cups my face with her old, olive fingers. Santa María, Jesus, she says, ¡cura esta mejilla! I can barely hear her over the guitarra and the bongo and the maracas. She pushes my cheeks in like empanada dough, and she blesses me again. I see my cousin laughing. She tries to hide it with little hands cupped over her mouth. My abuela gives her a whap on the head and talks about Jesus curing all.

When I am turned away, I itch to the beat of the drum, the beat of my heart, a red flower at my fingertips.

Later that night, I get bit three more times.

charlie kenny

iris mag class of 2022



Kiss of the Heart

Kissed by the dying candle's light, Rune brushed the long locks of hir lover out of their sleeping face. So serene they were almost divine. Almost; the fresh bite marks dotting the curve of the neck showed the true filth Awyn was involved with. A few specks of blood still peaked out of the twin depths that Rune quickly cleaned with a swipe of hir tongue. Hie was nothing if not clean.

Which brought to their mind, once again, the issue at hand: Awyn. Such a succulent little thing at just barely twenty-eight to Rune's one hundred and two yet if you were to guess who the cradle robber was you would always be dead wrong. If only she had found hir when hie was a little older than twenty-three. A little less chubby in the cheeks, a little wiser—then maybe hie would not have fallen for such tricks.

But no. This was about Awyn.

Awyn had been a part of Rune's life for about five years now, the two having met when hie had grown bored and re-entered college once more. This time it was for another degree in literature the two had even met in a class about nineteenth century queer literature. Awyn had

“I want to love you right.”

“You will! We'll figure it out together, ok? You're ok.” Awyn's words are a kiss that stills Rune's quivering

Hie pulls back to look Awyn in the eyes. “W-we will?”

Awyn smiles, that world-beginning grin. “Of course. Because I love you too.” They roll them over so now it is Rune's face pressed into Awyn's neck as they rub hir back in soothing circles. Now it is Awyn listening to Rune's heavy breathing as they murmur the ways in which they love hir and how they know hie loves them in return. A feeling of warmth, of safety, of calm soothes Rune's shaking corpse of a body and brings their still heart back into the warmth. A feeling of love.

A Wretched Thing

It was a silent, wretched thing. The walls were covered in a fuzzy moss that glowed like a puddle of vomit in the mid-morning sun. Vines crawled around the deck's banisters, pulsating in the wind in time to Aaron's harsh heartbeats. Protest knocked gently from its nest in his throat as he watched Florian continue forward. There was nowhere, no one, else to go to. Aaron hobbled on.

Florian stopped them right at the threshold. Reverence filled his veins as a smile graced his cracked lips. He all but fell into the banister's embrace, clinging like a child who had just found their missing father. Moss kissed Florian's pallid skin. It warmed his long cold heart.

Aaron allowed the display for a few minutes before forcing an audible grunt. “Can we go inside? I need to sit.”

The normal snakish remark was instead replaced by Florian bouncing up onto his feet. “Watch the step, it's a bit rickety. Same with most of the floors. Papa liked it that way. Kept us safe.” Florian did not wait for Aaron to move himself. Instead he hooked an arm around the one legged-man's waist and led him up and to the door. Florian kept his hand at Aaron's waist as he pressed his free one to the decaying door. A gentle brush of his thumb took with it three years of dust and revealed a new crack. His hand forced its way to the knob and gingerly pushed it open.

The inside was not much better to Aaron. Moth eaten, rough-hewn furniture. Dust blocked out his already poor vision. The aura of it all felt vile. If Aaron still had both legs they would be carrying him all the way back to the cliffs they saw three days back. Florian's hand tensed on

An Interview with Charlie Kenny by Emilee Meadors

On a scale of 1-10, how excited are you about life right now?

I'd say a solid 9. I'm engaged, gonna get married soon, move to Boston, see my fiance. Moving out of my parents house. So nervous to move to a city I've never been to. No set job or apartment. Things are up in the air, I'm trying to keep a positive attitude about it.

What was your favorite memory from your time at Geneseo?

Last weekend I went to Rochester with some of my friends and then the next day we went swimming because Al and I had missed the Iris swim meet because we were in Rochester! So I'd say last weekend was definitely top notch. I feel like all of the movie nights I've had with my friends this semester have been just great.

What was your favorite piece that you submitted to Iris?

Oszmanthus and the Weird Wolf, was the title based off of a weird dream I had where I was the protagonist where there was a wolf hunt going on. I vividly remember pinning this wolf down for hours and having a weird connection to it. I haven't written more than one piece for that story but I do plan on writing more of it at some point.

If your life was a musical, what would the marquee say?

Charlie Kenny the Musical about a Very Depressed Ghost

What's one thing people don't know about you?

I love catching animals. Like my childhood, my dad and my brother would go hunting which was them going into nature and grabbing snakes, lizards, and frogs. I would go with them cause I needed to get out of the house. I have tried to catch squirrels on campus but I always get yelled at by my friends.

What was your favorite Iris event to plan?

I think the first craft night was very fun, I really enjoy craft nights. I think it's fun to just get together with a group of people and just hangout and just do our own activities. I love blasting music!

What's your favorite book?

My favorite book is a duology called the Death and Life of Zebulon Finch. I really love the premise for it. It made me fall in love with the author Daniel Kraus. It made me realize my love for weird gore. It also made me realize what you can do with such an unlikeable protagonist. Zebulon Finch started my list of bastard boys that I want to punch in the face and give a big hug.

What's your favorite time of day?

Night. It's when I'm most awake. Mainly when I'm at my parents house and everyone else is asleep and I can do what I please. Play video games and crochet.

Dream country to visit?

Ireland, I really want to visit Ireland.

What's the best surprise you've ever had?

As sappy as it is, being proposed to. Like I knew it was coming but I didn't know the when or the how. I was so distracted that night too so I didn't realize until he was down on one knee. It was so nice.

Do you have any tattoos and if so what's your favorite?

I have a pokeball tattoo and a ghost sword tattoo. I think I'm gonna be a little preferential to the ghost sword because I think it's a lot more detailed. It has a little less meaning than my pokemon tattoo but also kind of not because pokemon has always been one of my favorite things and I got this because I love swords and ghosts. Both have been very integral to my identity since I was a little kid. Whenever I would play games I would always have a sword in my hand and I've always identified with ghosts.

Would you be a good court jester?

Probably not because I feel like most of my jokes are references to things so it depends on what it is. I don't think the King would appreciate me quoting the McElroys like twenty times or just like making the worst dick jokes that I can think of.

What's your spirit animal?

Wolf. Love wolves

What does Iris mean to you?

Community and welcoming. Everyone in Iris has always made me feel very welcome, which I haven't always gotten in a lot of other clubs that I've joined on campus. Everyone's very chill and nice and I love just having a community that's based on one of my passions.

What are three things you can't live without?

Books, my friends, podcasts

What's one ingredient you put in everything?

Garlic

What 3 people living or dead would you like to make dinner for?

Daniel Kraus, Neil Gaiman, Terry Pratchett. Those three are some of my favorite authors and biggest influences. I'd end up making them chicken francese because that is something I've made a couple times and really enjoy.

What's your biggest fear in life?

Being alone. There's this great podcast called the Magnus Archives which is all about fear and there's 14 separate different fears and fear entities and one of them is called the lonely. As soon as I got to that episode it was just "oh, oh this is me."

Favorite candle scent?

Lavender. I have a lavender body soap and a body spray.

What's your current TV obsession?

Jojo's Bizarre Adventure Jojo's Bizarre Adventure and also Our Flag Means Death. I'm on part 4 of Jojo and I'm re-watching Our Flag for the third time. It's a really great pirate show about blackbeard and the gentleman pirate Stede Bonnet and how they fall in love.

Who has made the largest impact on you here at Geneseo?

Career wise Dr. Almomani because I've been doing research with him for the past two years and he's made me really understand my love for sustainability and I want to continue sustainability research in some sort of way or form if I can. He's really encouraged me on my mathematics work and made me feel a lot more confident in that field which is hard when you're not AMAB or a man at all, it's so difficult. Especially when you're a humanities major. It's that thing where people are looking down at me because I'm also an English major and they think English majors are dumb.

Secret talent?

I'm really good at guessing voice actors in shows.

Most adventurous thing you've done in your life?

I think actually coming to school here because in Boston I'm going to be 2 ½ hours away from my sister but going to Geneseo I'm over six hours away from my family so I have no close family nearby, I was kind of alone here, I didn't have any friends going into it. Going to Boston, I'll live with my fiance so I will at least have somebody there. Coming into Geneseo I vaguely knew Al through facebook. We both posted messages looking for roommates and we're both like "oh you're cool, we should room together" but I didn't talk to him much because I was so anxious and awkward coming into college that it was the most terrifying thing that I did.

How would you define yourself in three words?

Creative, attentive, observant

Part A: Favorite piece of clothing you own?

I have two black mock necks, one is a long sleeve and one is sleeveless and I love them both to death. I would wear them constantly if I could.

Part B: Does it embody any meaning to you?

Every nonbinary character I've ever seen has this sleeveless mock neck or a longsleeve mockneck so I wear it and I'm like "I feel so gender right now."

What is one of your good and bad guilty pleasure music artists?

Bad: Amanda Palmer's music. Amanda Palmer sucks as a person but unfortunately I really love her songs. I'm listening to "My Alcoholic Friends" a lot on Spotify because it is so nice.

Good: I listen to the RWBY Soundtrack a lot. RWBY is something that influenced me a lot as a kid and was one of my favorite shows for so long. RWBY is one of those shows where I can make fun of it, me and my friends can make fun of it, but nobody else (haha).

Superpower you would want?

Invisibility

What's inspiring you in life right now?

Honestly the future. I'm inspired by things that are to come to do good now.

Best piece of advice you've received?

This is from my therapist, "Allowing yourself to feel your emotions and fully experience them, even if it's anger or sadness it's still good to feel everything. I made jokes a lot that I never cry and it's because I would block out and avoid crying for so long which is not a good thing to do!

Best advice you'd give your teenage self?

"Your worst outcome is not going to happen, also please go to therapy."

What muppet are you?

Gonzo

How do you define beauty?

How you feel about yourself, your own confidence.

What art style speaks to you the most?

I recently read On a SunBeam by Tillie Walden and I love her artwork so much, it's so beautiful. There's this comic on Tapas about a girl who lucid daydreams called Dream Constellation, it's so nice.

Favorite flower?

Rose

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS ROUND OF QUESTIONING

What location encountered in the campaign has your character felt the most "at home" in, or just generally liked the most?

The arboretum

If your character had time to pick up any artisan's tools, game set, instrument, etc., what would it be?

Oh thieves tools baby, I want to break into shit.

What battle in the campaign has been most memorable to your character?

Prose that I took last year. I did a lot of great writing in that.

What role would your character play in the "Five Man Band" structure?

I think I would be the smart guy or the leader surprisingly.

What treasure/item/artifact that your character has collected during the adventure is the most important to them?

The power and treasure that is friendship, I'll be cheesy. :)

Does your character think more with their heart or their brain?

Depends on the situation. It'll usually be heart.

What is your character's biggest pet peeve?

Selfishness

Is there any particular weapon, item, etc. that your character longs to find?

The raging, poisoning, flaming sword of doom. This is specifically from a DND podcast that I want so badly.

Is your character the most swayed by ethos, pathos, or logos?

I think logos

What makes your character feel safe?

A nice cozy bed

What major arcana tarot card best represents your character?

Death as change. Over the course of this campaign there's been a lot of change.

Who is your character's biggest rival?

Denise Battles. My own propensity towards procrastination, actually write that down too.

What is your character's relationship with magic? Are they scared of it, wish to know more about it, indifferent to it?

Want to know more.

What, currently, is your character the most curious about?

The next boss in the campaign.

END OF DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS ROUND OF QUESTIONING

Coffee or tea?

Coffee. Coffee can be a lot sweeter to me, tea is a little too bitter.

What's your favorite board game?

Dungeon Mayhem: Monster Madness. You play as different DND monsters and then the game is to just kill everyone else.

What's the weirdest word in the English language?

I think malaise is very weird, I love it. It just sounds weird and it plays in my mouth weird. It fills me with such joy to say and to spell but then like it means melancholy.

Best compliment you've ever received?

I was once in a Hot Topic with a friend and some random person came up to me and said "Hi, I just want to say you look really beautiful, have a good day." I think about it all the time.

If you made a documentary, what would it be about?

I think I would want to make it about probably some sort of author that I really enjoy, maybe Neil Gaiman. "The making of" for how he made a book or series that he created.

Last piece of content you consumed that made you cry?

Internally cry was probably Our Flag Means Death.

Your affirmation for today?

Get work done! You're almost done

Any final comments about your time with Iris Magazine?

I hope they're gonna allow alumni to submit cause I'll definitely keep submitting. I'm excited to see where Iris is going to go in the future. It's not even in its first full year yet and I feel Iris has done a lot of amazing things that's produced such beautiful work that I'm really excited to see where it goes.

Thank you Charlie, Iris wishes you the best of luck in your future campaigns!

mia serritella

iris mag class of 2022



taking turns with the EIC

EIC Frances and I created this painting the last night of Spring '22 classes. We passed it back and forth between us, taking turns painting a portion without communicating what our vision for the painting was. To me, this painting is about being in a state of gluttony and completely ravaging yourself with all that you can. It's fitting for this time of year, as my last weeks of college are being spent saying "yes" more than I ever have in my life, trying to fit it all into the few short weeks I have left here.



if you wore these shorts as a kid
you're gay now

Cmon my AFAB friends, we all know these shorts. We remember them, and shudder at the thought. Some of you had the pink and yellow ones like me, or the blue and green ones (also like me...these pants were a regretful staple in my 4th grade fits, and I guess we now know why).



longing

This is my favorite sculpted piece to date and what I think is also my quickest. The majority of my sculptures have been for other people, so I'm not surprised how streamlined the process of making this sad, sad guy was when I too was feeling like a sad, sad guy. There is a lot I could write about the meaning behind him and the messages I hope he conveys, but instead I hope you can connect your own personal meaning to him. Or maybe I don't, because longing really, really, sucks.

acknowledgements from the design editor:

Arranging and publishing these pieces has been one of the most incredible experiences of my first year in Geneseo. To see these wonderful artists and the work that they are able to create shows just how much one can grow in so little time here, and how immensely having a community of unwavering support and kindness can affect us. I worried that Kat and Jenna would look at the way I formatted their pieces and say, "really? you picked *that* font?" I worried too that retiring Design and Web Editor, Mia Serritella, would take one glance at the site and say that none of it worked, it should all be scrapped. But instead I was met with a community of outstanding support and kindness. Everyone has been so busy through the final weeks but every question I asked was answered, every submission and photo request given, and so many tips and compliments were supplied. This final blurb really isn't about me or the collaging of this edition, but about how much of a community Iris Mag is, and about how special the seniors are who make up the community. Thank you all, we love you and we are so excited to watch you grow beyond this tiny queer community in Geneseo and into your own wherever you go from here.

