

# Wild Flower

GROW INSPIRED

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"I experience fear that I must simultaneously embrace and dismiss."

## Fright Night

It won't surprise you to learn that I was a highly sensitive child. When it came time for thrills and chills, I instead opted for all the lights on and eyes shut, and hands over my ears if necessary. I was frightened by lots of things: noises, eerie pictures, ghost stories, and scary kids' movies. For example, I hid in the backseat for the entire length of 'E.T.' when my parents took me to see it in a drive-in theater. That movie still gives me the creeps. Then at age seven, I was permanently traumatized by watching (in a theater, so there was no escape) the most horrifying kids' movie ever produced. Go and watch some scenes of 'Return to Oz' and you'll see what I mean: the movie opens with Dorothy committed in an insane asylum where she is strapped to a gurney and prepped for shock therapy; later in the movie she's fleeing a witch who can remove her head and replace it with various different heads from her "closet" (spoiler alert: she wants Dorothy's head). There are also these weird "wheelie" creatures that have wheels for hands and feet and chase Dorothy. And then there's the Nome King. Terrifying! I watched the whole movie from behind my hands—which were covering my eyes. For years I had nightmares about the witch with no head. There are whole online communities of adults who were scarred as kids by this movie just like I was!

These days, I actually like a little scare. I've grown into it. Halloween scariness allows us perspective on pure terror versus controlled, fun fright. Like, every time my teenagers leave our home driving themselves, I experience fear that I must simultaneously embrace and dismiss. And sometimes I have nightmares that we forgot to file our taxes. In many ways, the halloween season gives us a chance to explore scariness and fright at a relatively safe distance. I'm a huge fan of Christmas, but in adulthood I've actually come to enjoy Halloween almost as much. Which is why I love Tim Burton's 'The Nightmare Before Christmas.' The lyrics, the animation—everything about it is delightful. I also absolutely love the Haunted Mansion ride at Disneyland—Jack Skellington overlay or not. In a different vein, I like

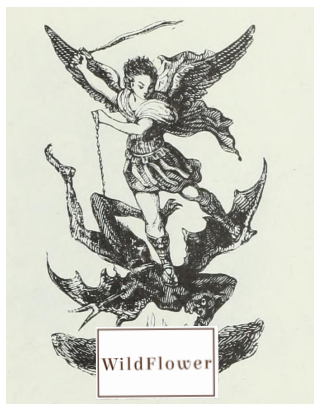
watching Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' music video and hearing Vincent Price's evil laugh. It never fails to give me some chills. I've also been in a Stephen King season for the past few years, and I enjoy his scariest stories. My favorites have been *Salem's Lot*, *Pet Sematary* (it's really spelled that way), and *The Shining*. I also like his novella *The Body* and short story collection, *Night Shift*, which includes some scary



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stories—check them out! Note that I will read the books, but I will not watch the movies. King's writing has not only entertained me, it's prompted me to write my own scary stories.

When it comes to this season of fright, I look for ways to find a little scare—and if there's a laugh, too, all the better. For a light approach to vampires, I love Taika Waititi's original mockumentary 'What We Do in the Shadows.' I'll probably watch it this month for a good laugh. I'm a fan of the first two seasons of 'Stranger Things.' And even as I write this, I'm



listening to a creepy haunted house immersive video that inspires me as I create this issue of *WildFlower*.

How is it with you? Will you be sticking to 'It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown'? Or will you be taking in 'Black Phone 2' this Halloween? For this special October issue, I interviewed my friend Cynthia Hamamura, who is a legend when it comes to costumes. She's a super fun person, and I hope you enjoy my interview with her. 🍂



## Inspiration: Poetry

### Alone in the Dark

Anonymous

She has taken out the candle,  
She has left me in the dark;  
From the window now a glimmer,  
From the fireplace not a spark

I am frightened as I'm lying  
All alone here in my bed,  
And I've wrapped the clothes as closely  
As I can around my head.

But what is it makes me tremble?  
And why should I fear the gloom?  
I am certain there is nothing  
In the corners of the room.

*The whispering room: haunted poems, 1996*

### Jack's Lament

Danny Elfman

There are few who'd deny, at what I do I  
am the best  
For my talents are renowned far and  
wide  
When it comes to surprises in the  
moonlit night  
I excel without ever even trying  
With the slightest little effort of my  
ghostlike charms  
I have seen grown men give out a shriek  
With the wave of my hand, and a well-  
placed moan  
I have swept the very bravest off their  
feet  
Yet year after year, it's the same routine  
And I grow so tired of the sound of  
screams  
And I, Jack, the Pumpkin King  
Have grown so tired of the same old  
thing  
Oh, somewhere deep inside of these  
bones  
An emptiness began to grow  
There's something out there, far from  
my home  
A longing that I've never known  
I'm a master of fright, and a demon of  
light

And I'll scare you right out of your  
pants  
To a guy in Kentucky, I'm Mister  
Unlucky  
And I'm known throughout England  
and France  
And since I am dead, I can take off my  
head  
To recite Shakespearean quotations  
No animal nor man can scream like I  
can  
With the fury of my recitations  
But who here would ever understand  
That the Pumpkin King with his  
skeleton grin  
Would tire of his crown, if they only  
understood  
He'd give it all up if he only could  
Oh, there's an empty place in my bones  
That calls out for something unknown  
The fame and praise come year after  
year  
Does nothing for these empty tears

*Jack Skellington, The Nightmare Before Christmas, 1993*

*WildFlower is a monthly publication  
featuring writing, interviews, stories,  
designs, observations, recommendations,  
encouragement and reflections on faith  
and creativity.*

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# Spotlight on Teacher Cynthia Hamamura

*Tell us a little about yourself, Cynthia.*

I'm a middle school art teacher. I live in Beuna Park with my husband and two teenage daughters.

*Where did you find inspiration for creativity when you were younger, and where do you find it now?*

When I was young, I found a lot of calmness in

coloring—when I was stressed, I loved to color. I've always loved colors. Even later in school, I would color code things—I took my school notes in color and used it to visualize and memorize.

I have a younger

sister, and when we were growing up I was always entertaining her. I used to do things for her, like making my own magazines, cutting out photos. I had a issue called "The 50 Ugliest People," and I made up

stories about their lives. I'd come up with activities, projects for her, and now she laughs because of course I'm a teacher now. I created games, read to her, made worksheets for her. I was even her penpal. I made up a whole backstory and sent her letters, and all the while it was me.

I did cartooning for my high school newspaper. I was in ASB, and the student newspaper was in the classroom next door, so I used to make doodles and submit them. I have always loved the problem-solving part of art—with visuals instead of writing. I like to ask, "how do you convey a message with a picture instead of words?" I first began taking art classes in high school.

*What sorts of things inspire you in the everyday?*

For my job teaching students, I'm always looking for hands-on, fun projects. Like to integrate maybe an artist, also color, texture, design—one of the elements. I like to give them assignments that will be interesting to them but that will also stretch them. My students tell me they want to draw anime—and I tell them: learn the basics, then you can deviate. Your art is better when you have a foundation. Even though they hate it, I make them do observational drawing, shading, and lighting.

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Cynthia dressed up as Bob Ross to teach her middle school art class. "Paint yourself a happy little tree this Halloween."



## Cynthia's Spam Musubi (or something like it)

*Cynthia is world famous for her Spam Musubi, a popular snack in Hawaii, where she often visits.*

### Ingredients:

2 cups uncooked short-grain white rice  
2 cups water  
6 tablespoons rice vinegar  
½ cup white sugar  
¼ cup soy sauce

¼ cup oyster sauce  
1 (12 ounce) container fully cooked luncheon meat (such as Spam)  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
5 sheets sushi nori (dry seaweed)

Soak uncooked rice in water to cover for 4 hours; drain and rinse. Bring 2 cups water to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add rice and stir. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove pan from heat and stir in rice vinegar. Set aside to cool. Stir sugar, soy sauce, and oyster sauce together in a medium bowl until sugar is completely dissolved. Slice SPAM lengthwise into 10 slices, or to desired thickness, and marinate in sauce for 5 minutes. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook slices until lightly browned, about 2 minutes per side. Cut nori sheets in half and lay on a flat work surface. Place a rice press in the center of a sheet, and press rice tightly inside. Top with a slice of luncheon meat, and remove press. Wrap nori around rice, sealing edges with a small amount of water. (Rice may also be formed by hand in the shape of the meat slices and about one -inch thick.) Serve musubi warm or chilled.

Every year I have students in my class who have amazing talents. I notice that kids who are patient are the ones who make the most amazing pieces. I'm always telling the kids to slow down. First you make your broad strokes, then go in and add detail. I think most people can draw—but they say they can't because they don't try.

***What are some projects you're working on currently? Please describe some of your hobbies.***

I like to exercise, read, and travel. I've toured much of Europe, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, England, and Amsterdam. I've chaperoned student trips to Canada, Mexico, and Japan two years ago. My destination goal is the Philippines. It's where my mom grew up.

I usually walk and run, and I've been doing Zumba or Body Pump, which is like Zumba, but with a bar bell. I practiced ballet for many years. I achieved *en pointe* for one year. I started in the first grade, and I remember thinking it was such a beautiful expression. So I begged

my mom. My whole family played soccer, but I wanted to do ballet. Recently I started doing Pilates, and it's ballet, only on the floor. I had a good core to start with. I have always loved dancing, and as an adult, I've even taken a hip hop class at a studio.

When I retire, would love to take classes and focus on art. I would love to learn how to do print making, something with ink-making, and I also want

to do things by hand, carving, inking it, then printing it. I feel like when you do all the steps, your ownership becomes more appreciated.

***Do you have projects and interests in more than one type of artistic expression? (writing and music, for example, or dance or baking...do you collect anything?)***

My favorite artistic expression is painting. Water color is best because it allows subtlety—it only takes a little swipe to make a big difference. I love teaching my unit on clay. I like to do a variety of different mediums in my art classes, and there's always one they like. A lot of

times, the kids who don't like getting dirty won't touch it. But most of the students did really well with their clay. It's fun teaching them the kiln, the properties of clay, the forms, how to form edges to a pinky's width. We've learned what happens if the pottery isn't dry enough. It has to be bone dry, and you have to knead out all the bubbles.

I love baking. I love to make everything: cookies, loaves, cakes. My Italian grandmother lived with us when I was young. So I used to help her cook all the time. One weekend was bread, and we'd store it to use for several weeks. Another weekend we'd make a bunch of pasta. I'd help make the sauce. For my birthday I'd ask for lasagna, or ravioli.

***How do you nurture creativity?***

I usually go walking around the lake in my neighborhood. I just listen to music. For me, when I feel too tense, I have to let out energy by running, walking — doing something that lets all that frustration out in a constructive way. I like music that's fast-paced, but not anthems.

***What are you writing/reading/listening to/ cooking/growing/making these days?***

I love to read dystopian novels. *Sunrise on the Reaping*, the new Hunger Games book. So good. What I like about dystopian books is that there's always the underdog who's trying to make a change, someone who believes in something, and they have to keep themselves intact among other threats. I like to read what my kids are into. I read along with them, so we can discuss the heavy topics.

***Could you please share a favorite artist, album, playlist, or music genre that inspires you and brings you joy?***

I really enjoy Weezer, Bruno Mars, Taylor Swift, the Cure, U2, and Depeche Mode. ♀

***Keep scrolling to read Cynthia's music and shopping recommendations!***



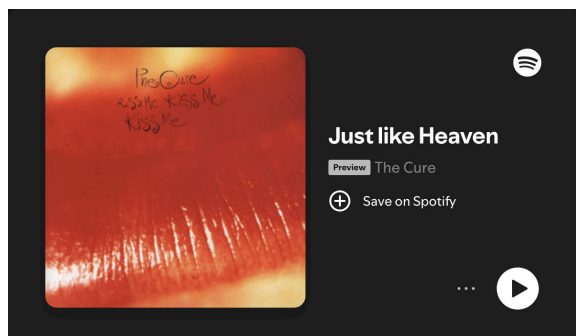
Cynthia dressed up as Adam Sandler's 'Water boy' during spirit week.



"Well, I have a microphone, and you don't, SO YOU WILL LISTEN TO EVERY WORD I HAVE TO SAY!"

## Recommended Listen: The Cure's 'Just Like Heaven'

Cynthia likes listening to The Cure's special blend of vocals, guitar, keyboard, and drums. There's nothing like a little nostalgia to brighten your day. Here's 'Just Like Heaven', a hit from the band's 1987 release. Give it a listen:



I often use background videos with rain, thunder, and other sounds to help me concentrate as I work. Here's one of my favorites to listen to in October: a spooky, classic ambiance video that has lots happening in the windows and yard!

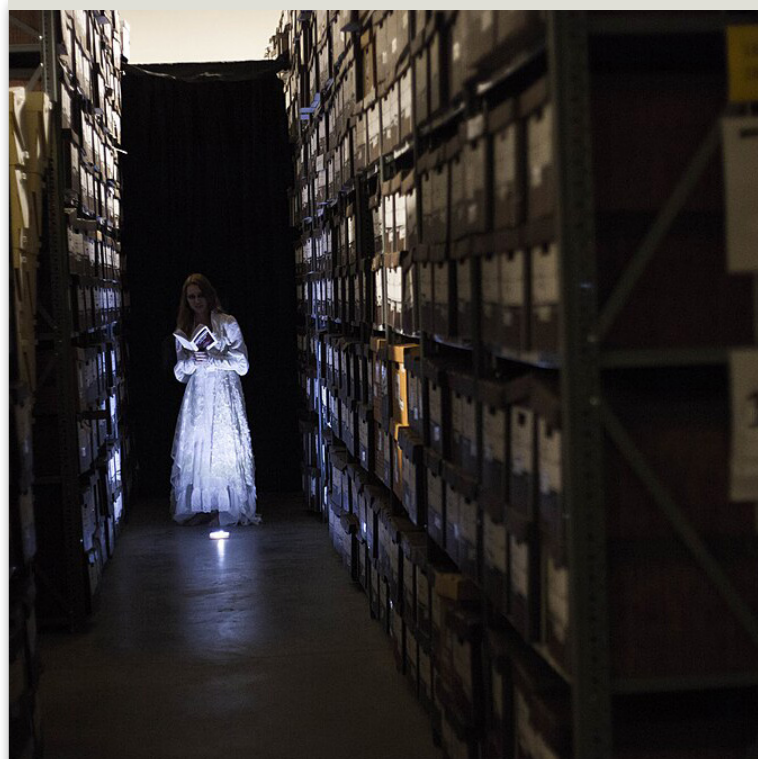


## Holiday decor: IKEA

A few years ago, I discovered one of the best places to find Christmas wrapping paper and decor: at **IKEA**. Stockings, artificial trees, ornaments, small santa and elves, and even gingerbread house kits. So many cute things! You can shop online and have your finds shipped, or wander around the store for even more surprises. But don't wait too late: I noticed much of the good stuff was already out of stock by Thanksgiving. Happy shopping! 🌿

## Pens: Daiso

Cynthia says she's not much of a thrifter, but she does love Target. She can always find things she needs and wants there. Daiso is her favorite store. She likes to find fun things there to buy, like stationery, the Sanrio stuff, and pens. Cynthia claims to have an obsession with pens. Felt tips especially, and also sharpies, mid-liners, and calligraphy pens. She loves the feeling of pulling a pen across paper. She likes to use calligraphy pens to make special awards, cards, and to re-write her notes. Take a tip (pun intended) from Cynthia and check out a Daiso near you!



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## The End: Until Next Time



I hope you've enjoyed this spooky issue of *WildFlower*. I'll be back next month to share an interview with another amazing friend of mine, as well as some original essays, writings, and inspiration. If you'd like to submit content or ideas, please reach out to [editor@wildflowerjournal.com](mailto:editor@wildflowerjournal.com). 🌿