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We Will Not Yield to Change: A Note from the Editors of Tapestries

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We Will Not Yield to Change¹

A Note from the Editors of *Tapestries*

Benjamin (“Ben”) Perry Levy, Angelina (AJ) Papakee, and Andrew Lee

“We do not worship God. We perceive and attend God. We learn from God. With forethought and work, we shape God. In the end, we yield to God. We adapt and endure, for we are Earthseed, and God is Change.”²

~ Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Sower*, 1993

There is nothing that feels quite fitting to begin this statement with, nor is there anything that can fully encapsulate the numerous points and meshworks we are writing from. Over the course of the last three years, the world has been in a state of constant, tumultuous motion and change. We came to Macalester College in the fall of 2019, and by the end of our first year, the world was in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and once more reckoning with the continued murder of Black people by the state: realities that we are still living within. The Twin Cities have played host to a range of these motions that layered the international, national, local, communal, and personal together with the resurgence of the movement for Black lives. This motion, albeit at a drastically different scale (both with regard to size and importance), was not detached entirely from Macalester, as our educational experience was (re)molded by administrative and student support staff turnover and changes made to the class structuring through the implementation of the module system. In spite of these layered realities, we were, and still are, expected simply to “continue to get it done”; we were, and are, expected to accept these continued motions—new waves of the pandemic and horrific state violence—as the “new normal” and simply move with it. We recognize that the imposition of anything as ‘normal’ is in and of itself a tool for ignoring the multifaceted realities we live within; or, otherwise, a half-assed, harm-reproducing, institutional response that has left us feeling one thing most powerfully: rage. Rage at the incalculable violences that

¹ This title is a derivation of Octavia Butler’s words, below, in *Parable of the Sower*.

² Butler, Octavia Estelle. *Parable of the Sower* (New York, NY: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993): 34.

have been exacted on us, our communities, and those we hold dear; rage at institutions' production and exacerbation of these violences; rage at the displacement of our futures.

Even as we write this, though, we recognize that rage is in and of itself something that is not sustainable—a truth that nearly all of us have felt, and hold, deeply in our bodies and minds. It is from an episteme rooted in this truth that we have questioned how we may mold our rage, varied and complex as it may be, into sustainable form(s) of resistance; how we may practice our passions as life-giving practices so that we may exist in our *full humanity* and continue to engage in more sustainable forms of resistance. In reflecting on this, we think of the deeply interconnected relationship(s) between rage, change, and liberation: which we have chosen to be the theme for this year's issue of *Tapestries*. Considering this, few others have written on change—and all that it encompasses and is connected to—in a more powerful fashion than Octavia Butler. A genre-defying author, intellectual, and pioneer of Afrofuturism, Butler's words in *Parable of the Sower*, which we chose to frame this note with, describes “change” as something that must be “attended.” Indeed, we recognize that all change—as is the case with the change that has fueled our rage(s)—cannot be controlled. Yet, in spite of this, we—as Butler so poignantly notes—work to “shape” the change we wish to see, and “endure” that which we cannot control. Our works in this year's issue of *Tapestries* respond to just this: how can rage—born from the change which we cannot control—be molded into change that can, then, be instantiated in ways that catalyze liberation? How, through this, may we work to (re)create the futures that have been altered or displaced?

Holding this all in mind, we want to thank and recognize those without whom the creation of this issue would not have been possible. Thank you, first and foremost, to everyone in this class: we have supported and advised one another, we have extended grace and care for one another, and we have all made it to the end. We, collectively, are the reason that this has been possible. Thank you, secondly, to all of our people: mentors, friends, and family (chosen, given, or otherwise) who have created holistic networks of support that have sustained us during, and beyond, our time at Macalester. Thank you, finally, to Dave Collins, Louann Terveer, and Professor Duchess Harris for their support and guidance throughout the course of the semester.