

Artist's Note on the Inspiration for the Cover of the 2020 *Owl & Spade Magazine*

By Lara Nguyen

This was a perfect morning to fold a paper boat, a symbol for me of simple ingenuity. How do you make a boat out of a single sheet of paper? What do you learn when you launch it? How do simple acts like these spark the imaginations of people of all ages?

I recently completed a juice and broth fast, and I asked my mom to taste a cold juice I invented, intending it to be a cross between gazpacho and tom yum soup. She nodded, said it was good, and added, "Your imagination will save you."

Whether she meant that I would beat my terminal cancer diagnosis or finish my five-day juice fast as I had set out to do, it didn't matter, because none of us know when our time is up. All we can do is live in the now.

Something about making a paper boat this morning, walking down to the campus stream that was re-carved to mimic Mother Nature's original route, and finally setting it to sail after thinking about this idea for weeks renewed the importance of being present.

In these uncertain times, in this "Uncharted Territory" — whether it's life beyond graduation, a single person's cancer journey, or the world stopping in its tracks to fight COVID-19—I hope we come away with the knowledge that we may come into this world alone and leave it alone, but during the time in between we are lucky to have each other.

In the wise words of the late British politician Jo Cox, "We are far more united and have far more in common with each other than the things that divide us." Through tragedy after tragedy, maybe we will come out of the other end better for it.