October 2025



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Highlighted events

Parramatta Lanes

From Wednesday 22 October to Saturday 25 October, Parramatta's city centre will come alive with Parramatta Lanes, a four-night festival celebrating food, art and music. Across the CBD, laneways will transform into pop-up dining zones, performance spaces and art installations, filling the streets with colour and sound.

You can explore over 80 food stalls serving global flavours, watch live performances from more than 200 artists and experience interactive displays that light up the night. Curated music from local talent, including sets by Koori Radio and MC Trey, will bring a lively rhythm to the event.

Free to attend and running from 5pm to 10.30pm each evening, Parramatta Lanes is an ideal way for you to relax after classes, discover new food and enjoy one of Sydney's most creative festivals.





Oktoberfest in the Gardens

On Saturday 25 October, The Domain will host Oktoberfest in the Gardens, Sydney's biggest celebration of German culture. From 1pm until 9pm, the park will transform into a festive village filled with music, games and traditional food.

You can enjoy live Oompah bands, DJs, a silent disco and a wide selection of German and European beers. There will also be bratwursts, schnitzels and pretzels, along with carnival rides and roving performers to keep the energy high.

This ticketed event captures the lively spirit of Munich's famous festival while adding a Sydney twist. It is the perfect way for you to celebrate spring and enjoy a day of fun with friends in one of the city's most iconic outdoor spaces.



NOTEWORTHY EATERIES



Image credit: Cali Press website

Cali Press

Various locations

Looking for something to eat on those dog days but don't want anything too heavy? Or maybe you like to have your meals colourful with a little bit of everything? Inspired by the food culture of Southern California, Cali Press offers a range of nutritionally dense salads, sandwiches, cold-pressed juices and smoothies. The best part? It doesn't even feel like you're eating healthy!

EUCA Gelato

QVB, 455 George St, Sydney NSW 2000

There's an exciting new gelato popup but be quick, because EUCA will only be in QVB until 19 October! Executive Pastry Chef Miko Aspiras, who you may recognise from his appearance as a guest on MasterChef earlier this year, is shaking up the gelato scene by infusing legendary Italian and Australian flavours into their sweet treats.







University is formative time in many people's lives. We change a lot, and learn about who we are, what we value, and who we want to become. For me, a lot of that learning came from the things I studied in my classes—specifically, in my philosophy classes.

One of the most notable philosophers I remember studying was Jean-Paul Sartre.

Sartre wrote about a lot of things, but a key theme in his work is that of identity and the individual. For him, identity is not something that already exists, which we can discover in ourselves, but something that we create every day through our choices and actions.

Often, we hear people talk about 'finding oneself' and 'knowing oneself', but less common is the notion of 'creating oneself'. What practical consequences does this change in phrasing have? Well, it offers us a kind of freedom—a freedom not to be limited by 'who we are' or 'what we are like', but instead to choose our own life.

Do you ever stop and think about why you make the choices and take the actions that you do every day?

Have you ever made yourself do something that you didn't want to, simply because other people told you it was the right thing?

Have you ever put something off or turned down an opportunity because you thought it wasn't for you, even though you wanted to do it? If you answered "yes" to the first two questions, or "not really" to the last one, Sartre would tell you that you are acting in 'bad faith'. You are acting as if you do not have control over your own life, when in fact, you do! In essence, you are lying to yourself.

Sure, there might be unpleasant consequences for taking these decisions. You could lose time, money, a relationship, or worse. Sartre is not necessarily saying that you *should* make those decisions, only that you *can*—the only thing stopping you is your (perhaps reasonable) fear of the repercussions.



But why is our fear of things going wrong often so much greater than our fear of missing out? What are you losing by not pursuing these opportunities?

Of course, we must also acknowledge some of the realities of life—what Sartre called our 'facticity'. We can't do absolutely anything we want. Some things are just not possible. We can't undo past actions. We can't change the circumstances of our birth. We can't change the fact that one day we will die. Ignoring these facts would be equally dishonest.



Despite all that, when people are near the end of their life, very rarely do we hear reports of them regretting what they did. More common are laments about what they didn't do. They didn't spend time with their family. They didn't follow their passions. They didn't travel. They didn't live in accordance with their own values.

So, the lesson is to be honest with yourself. Don't make excuses. Your identity is nothing more or less than the actions and choices you make every day. Take responsibility for them and create the life that you want.

YOU WON'T GET BETTER ADVICE THAN STRAIGHT FROM THE STAFF AT UNSW COLLEGE

Through the Lens presented by he Photography (ub







Photos by Ryann (Siyu) Wu



Photos by Bohan Hong



Photos by Daphne (Diandian) Dai



Photos by Daphne (Diandian) Dai



Finding your identity in the professional sphere can feel like navigating a maze. The expectations of your career, the company culture, and the constant pressure to perform can often cloud the true sense of self. You might find yourself wondering "how much of myself can I show to my workmates" or "will they think differently if I did this".

But it's essential to carve out a professional identity that aligns with your values, strengths, and goals. After all, it is likely you will spend a large portion of your time working. Your identity at work is not just about the role you occupy; it's about how you define yourself and navigate your career with authenticity, purpose, and confidence.



HERE ARE SOME STEPS TO HELP YOU UNCOVER AND DEVELOP YOUR IDENTITY IN THE PROFESSIONAL WORKPLACE.

1. Reflect on your personal values

Understanding who you are begins with understanding what you stand for. Your values are the core principles that guide your actions and decisions, both in life and at work. For example, if creativity is important to you, seek a role or company that fosters innovation and free expression. If work-life balance is a priority, identify workplaces that align with that value, offering flexibility and supportive policies.

Action Steps:

- Take some time to list your core values (e.g., integrity, collaboration, personal growth).
- Think about how these values show up in your work, and if they're being respected or compromised.
- Consider whether your current job or company aligns with your values, and whether any adjustments are needed.

2. Identify your strengths and passions

What do you excel at? What tasks or activities light a fire in you? Recognising your strengths and passions can serve as a compass to guide you toward roles that suit your unique skill set and bring you satisfaction.

Sometimes, it's easy to get caught up in the routine of performing tasks without thinking about whether they reflect your true talents or interests. However, finding a career that speaks to your passions often leads to greater job satisfaction and a stronger sense of identity.



Action Steps:

- Ask for feedback from colleagues or mentors to identify areas where you naturally excel.
- Look for professional development opportunities that allow you to cultivate skills that align with your passions.

3. Embrace your authentic self



In many workplaces, there can be an unspoken pressure to fit in or conform to certain expectations. This might involve adapting to the culture, adjusting your behaviour, or even suppressing parts of your personality to be seen as "professional". However, the key to developing a meaningful professional identity is authenticity.

When you show up as your true self, you bring a unique perspective that can contribute to the workplace in ways others cannot. Whether it's your sense of humour, your creativity, or your empathetic leadership style, embracing who you are can lead to better relationships, increased job satisfaction, and even career advancement.

Action Steps:

- Speak up about your interests and ideas, even if they are outside the norm.
- Foster authentic relationships with colleagues by being transparent about your needs and values.

4. Define your career goals and purpose

Your professional identity is also about your future. To align your actions with your career aspirations, you must have a clear vision of where you want to go and what kind of impact you want to make.

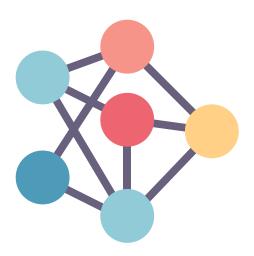
Think of your professional identity as a map. Without knowing your destination, it's easy to lose direction or take detours. Having a sense of purpose can help you remain focused and make choices that align with your long-term career objectives.

Action Steps:

- Set both short-term and long-term career goals.
- Reflect on the kind of impact you want to have in your industry, team, or community.
- Regularly assess whether your current role aligns with your career trajectory, and make adjustments if necessary.



5. Build a network that reflects your identity



A strong professional network is essential for growth, but it's not just about quantity—it's about quality. Surrounding yourself with colleagues, mentors, and professional contacts who support and challenge you is crucial to personal and professional development.

Your network should be a reflection of who you are and where you want to go. It's not about trying to impress people but connecting with those who share similar values, goals, and interests. The right network can help you stay grounded in your identity, offer support during challenging times, and open doors to new opportunities.

Action Steps:

- Seek out mentors who align with your values and can provide guidance based on their own experiences.
- Build relationships with people who encourage you to be your best self at work.

6. Adapt without losing yourself

The workplace is dynamic, and change is inevitable. New technologies, shifting company goals, and evolving roles may prompt you to adapt to new circumstances. While adapting is crucial for career growth, it's equally important not to lose sight of your core identity.

Rather than simply conforming, focus on how you can adapt your skills, strengths, and values in ways that allow you to remain true to yourself. This adaptability will not only keep you relevant in the workplace but will also enhance your professional identity.

Action Steps:

- Stay open to new opportunities but evaluate how they align with your long-term vision.
- Take on challenges that push you out of your comfort zone but stay anchored to your core values.
- Embrace ongoing learning and growth without compromising what makes you unique.

Finding your identity in the workplace is an ongoing process. It requires introspection, self-awareness, and a willingness to evolve. By aligning your work with your core values, embracing your authenticity, and staying true to your passions, you'll be able to carve out a professional identity that is not only successful but deeply satisfying. Remember, it's not just about the job title you hold, but the person you become along the way.

Letting go of relationships that no longer serve your true self

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One of the most profound aspects of personal growth is the realisation that not all relationships are meant to last. As we evolve, so too does our sense of self, and with this evolution comes the inevitable process of letting go of relationships that no longer align with who we are becoming. This can be an incredibly difficult experience, especially when these relationships are long-standing or when the people involved have played significant roles in our lives. Yet, it is through letting go that we make space for healthier connections and continue to grow into the truest version of ourselves.

Letting go of relationships that no longer serve us is rarely an easy or painless process. Even when we recognise that a friendship, family bond, or romantic relationship is holding us back or stifling our growth, there is a natural resistance to severing ties. Often, we feel a deep sense of guilt, fear, or sadness at the thought of ending a relationship, especially if it has been longstanding or important at a particular stage of our lives.



This emotional struggle arises from the attachment we form to people, places, and situations. Our relationships become interwoven with our identity, and the thought of letting go can evoke a fear of losing a part of ourselves. However, the reality is that change is inevitable, and while some relationships are meant to be with us for life, others serve their purpose for a certain period. The challenge lies in acknowledging that it is okay to move forward, even if it means outgrowing the connections that once seemed vital.

The first step in navigating the process of letting go is recognising when a relationship no longer contributes to your personal growth or aligns with your values. This can manifest in various ways—feeling drained after spending time with someone, a sense of constant tension or negativity, or realising that the relationship no longer feels fulfilling or authentic.



You might find that the person you once connected with is no longer in sync with your current mindset or values. Perhaps they are stuck in old patterns, while you are seeking growth or change. Alternatively, you might notice that their actions or behaviours have become toxic, undermining your confidence or well-being. In some cases, you may find that the relationship no longer brings joy, support, or encouragement, and instead, it has become a source of stress or frustration.



It's important to acknowledge that this realisation does not diminish the value of the past or the good times you shared, with the person. Relationships can have meaningful moments, and sometimes, people enter our lives to teach us something important. However, when a relationship begins to feel like it true self, it is a sign that it may be time to let go.

is hindering your progress or preventing you from being your

Letting go of relationships that no longer serve you can trigger grief, and it's important to allow yourself to feel this grief rather than suppress it. Whether it's the end of a friendship, the cooling of a family relationship, or the dissolution of a romantic partnership, the loss of connection can stir up feelings of sadness, loneliness, or even guilt. It's important to recognise that this is part of the process and that it is normal to grieve the loss of what the relationship once was.

Grieving the loss of a relationship does not mean you are weak or that you made the wrong decision. It simply reflects the emotional investment you had in that connection. During this period, it's crucial to allow yourself time and space to process your feelings. Speak to trusted friends or a therapist, journal your thoughts, or engage in self-care activities that allow you to reflect and heal.





The act of letting go is not just about severing ties; it is also about making space for new, more aligned relationships to enter your life.

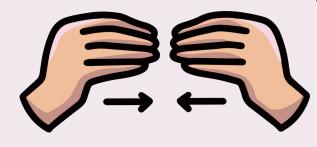
As you release connections that no longer serve your true self, you open the door to new people who support your growth, encourage your ambitions, and share your values.

New relationships may not appear overnight, and it may take time to build deeper connections that are rooted in mutual respect, shared goals, and authentic engagement. However, by letting go of old relationships that no longer fit, you create the emotional space to foster relationships that will nourish your evolving sense of self.





Letting go of relationships is an essential part of self-discovery and personal growth. It requires courage to face the discomfort and uncertainty that comes with change.



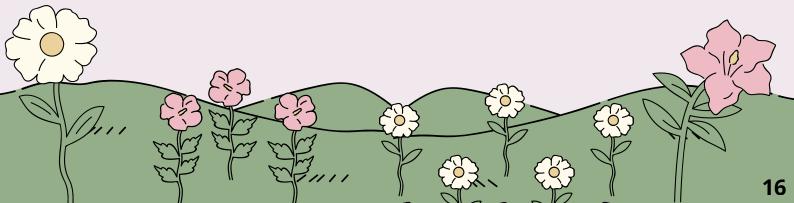
However, by recognising when a relationship no longer serves your true self, establishing healthy boundaries, and grieving the loss in a healthy way, you can navigate this process with







Ultimately, letting go is an act of self-love. It allows you to honour your authentic self and create space for relationships that nourish your growth and support your journey towards becoming the person you are meant to be.



THE UNSEEN STRUGGLE OF NAVIGATING THE BETWEEN OLD AND NEW VERSIONS OF YOURSELF

Change is an inherent part of life, yet it is rarely easy. The process of evolving as a person often brings with it an internal tension, particularly when the person you once were clashes with the person you are becoming. This tension can be subtle, but it is no less real. The struggle between the old and new versions of ourselves is a quiet, often unseen battle that many of us face as we grow, adapt, and redefine our identity.

It is a struggle that involves reconciling who we were with who we are, and understanding that it is entirely possible to outgrow parts of ourselves, even if they once defined us.





THE EMOTIONAL CONFLICT OF CHANGE

One of the most difficult aspects of personal growth is the emotional conflict that arises when we no longer recognise the person we once were. As we evolve, whether due to new experiences, shifting values, or changing circumstances, we may feel a sense of grief or loss for the person we used to be.

It can be uncomfortable to admit that certain aspects of our identity (beliefs, habits, or even relationships) no longer serve us. This realisation can bring with it feelings of disorientation or confusion, as if we are caught between two versions of ourselves.

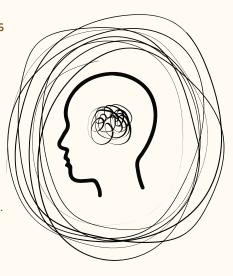
The old version of ourselves often comes with memories, comfort, and a sense of familiarity. It is the identity we built during a particular phase of our lives, and in many ways, it feels safe. On the other hand, the new version of ourselves represents growth, transformation, and a sense of becoming more authentic, but it can also bring feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability. The tension between these two versions is often exacerbated by the fear of letting go of the past, and the fear of what the future may hold.



NAVIGATING THE GUILT OF OUTGROWING THE PAST

As we grow, it is natural to outgrow certain parts of our past. This might involve letting go of old habits, beliefs, or relationships that no longer align with who we are becoming. However, this process can often be accompanied by guilt. We may feel guilty for distancing ourselves from the past or for changing in ways that others may not understand. In some cases, there may be a sense of betrayal, as if by evolving, we are abandoning the person we once were or the people who knew us in a previous phase of life

This guilt can be especially potent in the context of relationships. As we grow, we sometimes find that our friends, family, or even romantic partners do not recognise or support the changes we are making.



This can create a feeling of alienation or loss, as if we are caught between two worlds: the old world that no longer fits and the new world that we are still navigating. It can be difficult to balance the desire to preserve important connections while also honouring the person we are becoming.

However, it is essential to recognise that personal growth does not mean discarding the past. Rather, it is about integrating the lessons learned from previous experiences into the new version of yourself. The guilt of outgrowing old parts of your identity can be alleviated by understanding that change is a natural and healthy process. It is not a rejection of your past, but a recognition that you are continuously evolving.

THE FEAR OF "LOSING YOURSELF"

As we change, there is often a fear of losing ourselves in the process. We may question whether the new version of ourselves is still "us" or whether we are becoming someone entirely different. This fear is particularly common when the changes are significant—such as shifting career paths, ending long-term relationships, or moving to a new environment. These external changes can trigger internal upheaval, leading us to wonder if we are losing touch with the essence of who we are.

The fear of losing oneself is rooted in the belief that identity is fixed and unchanging. In reality,



identity is fluid and multifaceted. While certain core values and principles may remain consistent, we are constantly shaped by our experiences, choices, and interactions with the world. We are, in essence, always in the process of becoming. Embracing this fluidity allows us to see the changes we experience not as a loss of self, but as an expansion of who we are.

This fear can be countered by taking a step back and recognising that personal growth does not erase the past; it adds depth and nuance to our identity. The key is to embrace change without losing sight of the values and qualities that define us at our core. As we evolve, we may shed certain behaviours or beliefs, but our essence remains intact.



THE CHALLENGE OF RECONCILIATION

The tension between the old and new versions of ourselves often comes with the challenge of reconciliation. We are faced with the task of integrating the two identities into a cohesive whole. This requires a process of self-reflection and acceptance, recognising that both versions of ourselves have shaped who we are today.

This reconciliation is not always easy. We may find ourselves resisting change, clinging to old habits or relationships out of fear of the unknown. At the same time, we may feel frustrated or alienated by aspects of our old identity that no longer serve us. It is in these moments of internal conflict that self-compassion becomes essential.

Rather than viewing our old self as something to be discarded or rejected, we must learn to honour the journey that has brought us to where we are. Our old self, with all its flaws and imperfections, has played a vital role in shaping the person we are becoming.

Reconciliation also involves understanding that personal growth is not a linear process. There will be times when we feel like we have fully embraced our new identity, only to find ourselves slipping back into old patterns. This is a natural part of the process. Growth is not about perfection, but about progress and continuous learning.

EMBRACING THE JOURNEY

Ultimately, navigating the tension between old and new versions of ourselves requires patience and acceptance. It is a journey of self-discovery, one that is not always straightforward, but is nonetheless essential for personal growth. The struggle between who we were and who we are becoming is not something to be feared or avoided; it is an opportunity to embrace the complexity and fluidity of our identities.

As we move forward, we must learn to accept that growth is not a process of leaving behind who we once were, but of integrating the lessons of the past into our evolving self. The tension between the old and new versions of ourselves is a reminder that we are always in the process of becoming, and that this journey is just as important as the destination.



FIVE THINGS ABOUT YOU

THIS MONTH, THRIVE IS BRINGING YOU SOMETHING DIFFERENT! INSTEAD OF WRITING A WHOLE ARTICLE, WE'D LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO DO AN ACTIVITY WITH US!

This activity is referenced from <u>STIR</u>, a collection of classroom activities designed by researchers at the University of Sydney, to encourage conversations about gender and sexuality amongst peers, and foster a respectful campus where everyone feels included and has a sense of belonging. STIR encourages Seeing, Talking, Interrogating, and Reflecting on the everyday rules and habits that shape the way we think and interact with others in our daily lives. For example, it could be the ways we greet people, the language we use, or the assumptions we make about other's gender and sexuality.

Today, we'll be reflecting on how parts of our identity are important to us, how we feel connected to them, and how it feels to have language to describe it. Sometimes, labelling parts of it can feel strange and uncomfortable, and this can be especially true for LGBTQIA+ community. By the end of this activity, I hope you can understand why having accurate language to describe gender and sexuality is important to some people.

WHILE DOING THIS, THERE ARE A FEW EXPECTATIONS THAT WE NEED TO SET TOGETHER:

- BE CURIOUS
- IT'S OKAY TO FEEL EMOTIONAL
- THERE ISN'T ALWAYS ONE RIGHT ANSWER
- TREAT YOURSELF WITH KINDNESS

I'll start first.

If I have to describe five different things about myself, then it would be:

- I have black hair and I wear a heart-shaped earrings
- I'm a university student studying Commerce
- I love photography and taking pictures of nature
- I'm curious and like paying attention to small details
- I'm Chinese-Indonesian

See how these five things are all different parts of who I am? Some are about how I look, some are about what I do, and also my background. You all have your own mix of things that make you, you! This is what becomes your identity and it can also change over time.

Now, it's your turn to write down five things that describe yourself!

Give yourself some time to think about it and answer these questions when you're ready:

- Do you find the activity easy or hard and why do you feel that way?
- If you have to rank the five things about yourself from one to five based on how important they are to you, how would you do it?
- Why are some words more important than others to how you see yourself?
- Do we want others to see us a certain way?
- Are there any parts of yourself that you find hard to put into words?

Identity isn't always simple, and it can be tricky to put into words exactly who we are. Having the language to describe ourselves can sometimes feel supportive and comforting, but at other times it might also feel limiting and restricting.

For many people who are gender or sexuality diverse, discovering a label that describes how they feel can be really empowering because it can help them understand themselves better and find a community that shares similar experiences. Everyone's identity is personal and unique, so showing respect for how others describe themselves is a key part of making sure everyone feels safe and valued!

If reflecting on your identity feels overwhelming or brings up strong emotions, remember you don't have to go through it alone.

THERE ARE SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE:

Student Wellbeing Team

 Book an appointment with a Wellbeing Advisor for a safe and confidential space to talk.

UNSW Queer Collective

 A supportive student community advocating for LGBTQIA+ students and providing peer connection.

ACON

• NSW's leading health organisation specialising in community support and resources for sexuality and gender diverse people.



Don't forget to check out the other support article on the Current Students Website below:



Embrace Reflection and Gratitude



View all Health and Wellbeing support articles

Love, Jolin

THE MONTH

October

THIS MONTH'S GENRE

This month's picks explore the many layers of who we are and who we become. Each story asks what it means to belong, to change, and to see ourselves through the eyes of others. Together, they remind us that identity is not fixed but constantly unfolding.

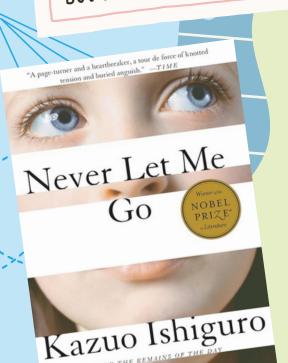
NEVER LET ME GO

KAZUO ISHIGURO

Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go is a quiet, unsettling exploration of what it means to be human. The story follows Kathy H., a young woman reflecting on her childhood at Hailsham, an idyllic English boarding school with a dark secret.

Alongside her friends Ruth and Tommy, Kathy grows up in a world where creativity and obedience are valued, yet questions about their future remain unspoken. As the truth of their existence slowly unfolds, the characters are forced to confront the limits of love, freedom, and identity.

Ishiguro masterfully blends nostalgia and unease, creating a world that feels both familiar and strange. Beneath its gentle tone lies a profound inquiry into how we define ourselves when our choices are constrained and our purpose is predetermined. Never Let Me Go lingers long after its final page, inviting readers to consider the fragile line between humanity and what lies beyond it.

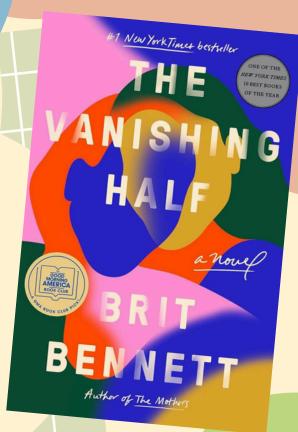


THE VANISHING HALF

BRIT BENNETT

Brit Bennett's The Vanishing Half tells the story of twin sisters Desiree and Stella Vignes, who grow up inseparable in a small Black community in the American South. As teenagers, they run away together, but their paths soon diverge: Desiree returns home years later with a daughter, while Stella chooses to live as a white woman, erasing her past entirely. Their choices ripple across generations, shaping not only their own lives but those of their daughters, who are unaware of the secrets that connect them.

Through elegant prose and vivid storytelling, Bennett explores the complexity of racial identity and the cost of self-reinvention. The novel examines how personal history, social expectation, and family bonds shape who we become and how we are seen. The Vanishing Half is both a sweeping family saga and an intimate study of identity, asking whether we can ever truly escape where we come from, and whether we should.

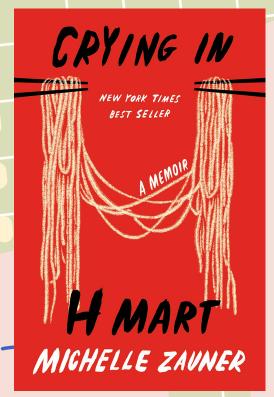


CRYING IN H MART

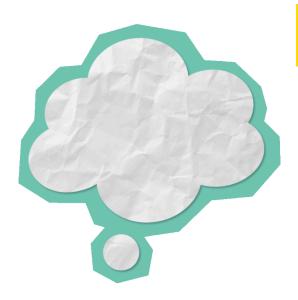
MICHELLE ZAUNER

In her deeply moving memoir Crying in H Mart, musician Michelle Zauner, best known as the lead singer of Japanese Breakfast, writes about growing up Korean American, the death of her mother, and her search for belonging. The title refers to the Korean supermarket where she finds comfort in familiar foods and memories that keep her mother close. Through vivid descriptions of cooking, eating, and grieving, Zauner weaves a powerful story about family, identity, and the delicate threads that hold them together.

Her reflections move between Seoul and Eugene, Oregon, between teenage rebellion and adult understanding. What begins as a personal story of loss becomes a universal meditation on love, culture, and the way food becomes language when words fail. Crying in H Mart is a celebration of heritage and healing, a reminder that identity is not only inherited but built from the stories, tastes, and people we carry with us.



Contact Us

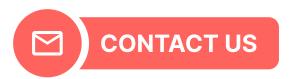


Welcoming all submissions to the newsletter!

Got a fresh idea, content suggestion, your best kept secret of Sydney, or a tale of your student experience here at UNSW College you'd like to share?

Click the button below to send us your submission for a chance to get featured in next month's issue!





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Credits

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