



# The West Edge

by Sydney Elliott

A lot has transpired since our relaunch of the Community College Humanities Review (CCHR) in October, 2017. At the Pacific-Western CCHA conference in Portland, Oregon, protesters filled the streets outside our hotel. As I walked to a nearby jazz bar, I swam upstream against people with signs and police in riot gear. At the conference itself, I felt simultaneously hollow and hopeful as I listened to the speakers.

Recently, I remembered the time when I was in high school and got into trouble, almost expelled to be honest, for publishing an underground newspaper. The newspaper was in the style of the band posters and album covers of the time, with letters cut out ransom-note style. The content was mostly about our favorite movies and albums from our one record store in a nearby town, but they showed up on school property, which got me into trouble.

It was the early eighties. I lived in a small town. I was a punk-rocker. I had the spirit and lack of authority of Kevin Bacon in the movie *Footloose* (so not super threatening), but my turntable at home spun the colorful vinyl of punk bands as I safety-pinned and painted my jeans. On the surface, I was a straight A student. A jock, even. But with a mohawk that I had to disguise with a beret for my mother for my senior pictures. I thought myself a poet. An artist. A rebel. I was ready to change the world.

I think about the music and art that influenced me during high school and beyond, most of it anti-establishment and a protest against authority and convention, and as I emerged from a two month post-election haze (I honestly lost track of time for a spell), I had a realization: *Art is going to do something cool with all this*. Music, visual art, and writing is going to evolve into something new and exciting. At that moment, I not only felt a new resolve to continue my work with the Review, but I felt darn protective of it. The Review will be my song, my punk rock anthem of resistance and tenacity.

Granted, I'm older now. I sing in a jazz band. Standards and swing. Not exactly something that inspires a mosh pit. But I'm still writing. And the Review is a platform for the humanities, the arts, the voice of democracy and thought. I'm still a poet. An artist. A rebel.

It's time to roll up my sleeves, tattoos and all, and get to work. It's a time to observe, listen, respond, create, and continue to defend the humanities one page, one issue at a time. And I can't wait to see what we come up with.

Best,

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Editor

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