

cover by Kawa

Editor's note

Welcome to Zine #2.
And welcome to new beginnings.

Every beginning holds a quiet spark: the moment before the page turns, the breath taken before the leap.

This issue of the Language Cafe Zine explores that spark through art, photography, poetry, and stories created by our community. Each piece reflects a different kind of beginning: the ones we choose, the ones that choose us, the ones that feel tender, exhilarating, heavy, or hopeful.

As you move through these pages, linger with the artists as they open new doors, test new mediums, revisit old memories, or step into unfamiliar spaces. Notice the small transformations, the brave first attempts, the honest reflections.

New beginnings aren't always loud. Sometimes they look like a keychain, a scent, a sketch, a handmade dress, a moment in a traffic jam, but they all carry the same pulse:

the desire to grow, to start again, to see what comes next.

See you in the next issue,

Kawa

Co-founder & Editor

Along with

Joon | Language Cafe Co-founder

Jam | Zine Coordinator

Zine #2 - New Beginnings

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Autumn

Autumn is a passionate but still progressing writer who loves horror and drama movies. They've been writing since childhood and likes to write emotional pieces in her free time. They hope to one day release work that captures the art of being human to the world.

About the work

See You Tomorrow is a fictional piece I had thought up of while trying to think about my feelings of letting go of the past and looking forward to the future.

A lot of us feel like once new opportunities come up, we must immediately rush toward it. I further pondered on the idea of using a short story to show that rush to the future and the uncomfortable idea of potentially saying goodbye to the past (when really, it doesn't need to be permanent).

Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

A: I felt this calmness but also a tint of sadness thinking about this narrator and what this big change is to them.

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

A: I'm hoping to communicate that while new beginnings are great, there's no rush toward them (unlike how the narrator feels) and the past doesn't always have to be behind you. Saying that you will revisit something when you're ready is just as important.

See You Tomorrow

The car screeches to a halt at the greyish-yellow house with a vine etching toward the upstairs window. And through that foggy window, I can almost see someone looking back. I nervously step out of the car to get a better look at my childhood home.

The white picket fence scrapes the pink sky as the house starts to shadow over

me. A soft creak breaks the silence, the front door slightly ajar. Heading to my room past the multitude of moving boxes was somewhat easy enough. But the sight of my scratched up door doesn't take kindly to my stomach.

I peer inside. The room inside looks bigger than what I remember it to be. I

remember complaining to my dad about wanting a bigger room but it doesn't seem to be so bad now. I rush inside to take the lonesome box in the door but am immediately stopped by a fallen picture of me and my old friend from high school.

I should really call her again. The moment she picks up, I'll tell her everything from receiving my acceptance letter from my first pick university to how my new cat sits

at the food bowl. Then I'll apologize. It must be a lot to hear at once. I'll finally ask her

what she's been up to and if she wants to hang out soon at my new place. Scratch that idea. I don't know if she'd want to hear from me. I put the photo back in the perfectly squared off spot inside the box.

Hauling the box into my arms, I speed walk toward the front door back to the car

with my impatiently awaiting friend. I just can't handle being in the room anymore, let

alone this house. I mean it's not like I'm going too far...right? But alas, I can't help but feel like it's goodbye.

But for now I'll say, "see you tomorrow". Whenever that "tomorrow" is.

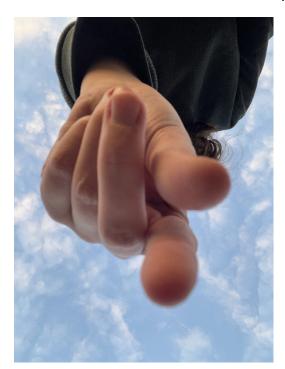


Joon

Joon is a casual photographer who started out taking pictures for her dogs' Instagram when she was a kid. Her coworkers said her vacation photos looked cool, so now she's here. She likes learning languages, doing theatre, and k-pop.

Change of Hands

Photography









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About the work

My photos focus on the small moment of picking something up from the ground, like a coin. I liked the idea that an ordinary object can have a "new beginning" every time someone new finds it. In this series, each photo shows a different person reaching down, hinting at the story of an item that gets picked up, used, dropped, and passed on again.

This simple action connects to a bigger tradition in the U.S., where many people pick up face-up coins because they're thought to bring good luck. Coins also show up in a lot of small ways in our lives: smashed souvenir pennies, arts-and-crafts projects, bubblegum machines, or just spare change in a pocket.

And now, with pennies being discontinued, coins are slowly disappearing, which adds another layer of meaning. Each time someone picks one up, it feels like a tiny new chapter for the coin before they all eventually fade out of everyday life.

Q&A

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

A: I want to show that new beginnings can be small and kind of random, not always big life changes. Even something as simple as finding a coin can start a new little story, and those small moments can matter more than we think.

With coins overall being phased out in many places, these small moments of finding one on the ground will eventually disappear, so this project is also about appreciating that small surprising burst of joy while they're still part of our everyday experience.



Juda

I'm a graphic designer who dreams of being an illustrator in the future. I'm still finding a way to express myself through my artworks and my style is constantly changing. At the moment I really like to put eyes on not-alive objects to make them seem like they're in fact alive.

New beginnings

Gouache on paper



Artist: Juda

About the work

This piece is done with gouache and it's the first painting I've even done with this kind of paint – so it's also a new beginning in my art journey.

I really enjoyed the process and learned a lot about this new medium but it also helped me deal with my life situation. I just moved out from my home town to study Graphic Design at a university. The moment I saw the topic for this zine I knew I wanted to do something related to that since it's a big chapter for me – living on my own, away from my family, learning new things that will help me with my career as an artist/designer.

The piece shows the keys to my new apartment. One of the keychains is made by my mother who is also my best friend and an amazing artist herself – she makes jewelery out of buttons (mainly the ones found in second hand stores or at different kind of fairs my town is hosting every week) and wodden beads – like this keychain. The 2nd keychain is a silly ceramic guy made by my aunt who helped me get into university (I seriously wouldn't have do it without her advice).

I was really sad about leaving home, even though I enjoy this new place and the university is truly amazing. Creating this piece helped me deal with my emotions and made me realize that even if I did leave my childhood home – it's always with me in my memories and in the trinkets I can take with me – such as the keychains. So remember... even if you start a new chapter in your life and can't take those who you love with you – don't let yourself forget the moments you spent with them (and that you will see them again very soon).

<u>Juda on Instagram</u>

juda.creates

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Kawa

Kawa is a self taught artist that has been drawing her whole life. Her focus while creating is either releasing and expressing emotions, or capturing beautiful moments of life.

Space for Growth

Plant pot made with air-dry clay







Artist: Kawa

About the work

This piece wasn't planned. I created it while learning to use clay with the help of my partner. We both wanted to make pots for bonsai seeds that we recently bought on a trip. At first I was frustrated with how hard it is to handle the clay, but it all became better when I asked for help and we chatted about my ideas.

This represents new beginnings in 3 ways: trying out a new medium, learning to ask for and accept help, and creating a pot for a bonsai.

Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

A: I was feeling very frustrated while working with the clay and the sensation of dry clay on my hands was horrible. After looking up a tutorial on how to make a bowl I felt way better and everything worked smoothly. I was super excited to add the little stones.

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

A: Don't be afraid to try new things and mediums. Looking up tutorials is not a bad thing.

Q: What was a surprising moment while creating?

A: That the river stones came out very good. I am also super happy with the ground texture. I'm really excited to explore this medium more in the future.

Kawa on Instagram

the_kawaa Page 11



Kin

I am a curious soul who loves to learn and explore.

Perfume

Poem

A vial was given, bitter to my breath, a fragrance of sorrow, sharp as death. I sought to return it, to cast it away, but the shopkeeper smiled, "It blooms, some day." Another man touched it, and roses unfurled, sweetness that drifted and softened the world. I closed my eyes, the perfume drew near, temptation whispered, yet refusal was clear. Again I reached, and again I was stayed, my longing unanswered, my touch delayed. So still I became, and silence was kind, and only then did his hand find mine. The roses remained, though I could not claim, a secret perfume, without a name. Not his, not mine, yet carried within, a pearl of love, transformed from sin.

Artist: Kin

About the work

The poem "Perfume" is about a girl experiencing love and longing. At first, the love feels bitter and disappointing, like a perfume she wants to return. But the shopkeeper (fate) sprinkles it on a man, and what was once unpleasant blooms into the scent of sweet roses.... though her feelings remain unrequited. His gentle touch symbolizes the pure friendship they form.

Through patience and stillness, she learns to treasure this love in her heart, transforming longing into personal growth and a new beginning, where love is recognized as sweet and beautiful like roses.

Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

A: I had a dream one day, and when I woke up, the feelings felt so real that I wrote down every detail and then tried turning it into a poem, creating this has been a very reflective experience for me.



Leni

Pattern Mock-up

Sewing





Artist: Leni

About the work

So my "artwork" is a mock-up for a magazine pattern that I recently bought. Sewing is a new hobby for me in general after my accident and I wanted to try something new.

I used 100% cotton fabric and a pattern from Burda style issue 10/25. It's supposed to be a 60s straight A-line dress with a collar and sleeves, but I decided not to test the sleeves cause I got bit lazy. But I handstitched it all bc I currently don't have a sewing machine.

Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

A: I felt really excited actually. I had more or less a vision of the dress and I really wanted to see how it fits me, because it would be my first piece since the accident. I also adore vintage fashion, so it was definitely the right choice.

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

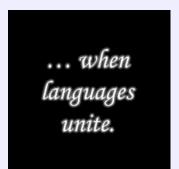
A: Probably that it's never late to try smth new or that you shouldn't give up on hobbies. I made this mock-up, including tracing, cutting, hand-sewing despite having nerve damage and not being able to lift my right hand high up. If I did it, so can you, you just gotta have interest and passion. And well, time.

Q: What was a surprising moment while creating?

A: That I forgot to extend the middle triangle piece lextended the hems of the side and back panels, but forgot about the middle piece. I only noticed that while hand-sewing.

Leni on Instagram

allkindsofcreativeness

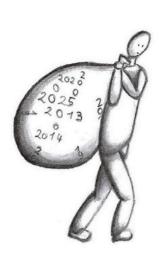


LingLator

The Linguistic Translator Language enthusiast who enjoys being creative in her spare time.

Pencil Sketch

Pencil on paper





<u>LingLator on YouTube</u>

eLingLator

Artist: LingLator

Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

A: As one year ends and a new year begins, we are often faced with mixed – sometimes conflicting – feelings, such as excitement, anticipation if not even fear. Whether a new year can truly mean a new beginning is, however, quite questionable.

Firstly, a new year can in fact symbolise a new beginning. Entering a new year can help those of us looking for a new start to let go of the past and its problems which burden us.

A new year is like a new step forward. The digits making up the year 2026 on the door are shining brightly offering us a ray of hope.

Whilst some may be looking forward to the new year, others might be slightly more sceptical.

As we enter 2026, we are full of anticipation and face the fear of the unknown as the dark shadows behind the door show us. This feeling of anticipation may be mixed with anxiety or worry.

Can a new year truly be a new beginning? Year after year, we experience different things and make new memories. Yet these memories become part of us, shape us and make us who we are. Year after year, we accumulate and carry these new memories with us. Some of which lift us when we recall them whilst others seem to burden us.

All in all, even though a new year can lead to a feeling of uncertainty, it can represent a new beginning for many of us. Whether that worry is justified or not is something only time will tell. Nevertheless, we must not forget that new experiences soon wait to become memories of the past – some good, some bad – which we shall continue to carry with us for a long time to come.



نار Nara l

Hi, I'm Nara! I love getting creative—whether it's writing, learning new languages, or making things with my hands. I enjoy exploring ideas, experimenting with different crafts, and discovering new ways to express myself. For me, these little creative adventures make life more fun and meaningful.

About the work

My artwork is an article about New Year celebrations around the world, highlighting the beauty of different customs and traditions. It celebrates the shared values behind these festivities: renewal, hope, gratitude, and the joy of coming together. Showing how, despite our differences, we all aspire to start fresh and embrace new beginnings.

Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

A: I felt excited and curious while creating this article. Researching New Year celebrations from different cultures made me feel connected to people around the world, and writing about it gave me a sense of joy in sharing the beauty of these customs.

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

A: I hope to show that, despite our cultural differences, we all share common values like hope, renewal, and the desire to start fresh. I want readers to feel inspired by the diversity of celebrations, while also recognizing the shared human spirit that unites us all.

Q: What was a surprising moment while creating?

A: I was surprised by just how many unique traditions exist for celebrating the New Year. It made me realize how creative and meaningful people's ways of welcoming a new year can be.



New Year Celebrations: A Cultural diversity wishing for the best

New beginnings, revelations, fresh start. All these terms are commonly used when mentioning New Year. These words reflect the excitement and hope people have for New Year. That is the common purpose of celebrating New Year across cultures, generations and over time.

Interestingly, the customs of celebrating that renewal vary and differ beautifully. From ancient rituals to modern fireworks, these celebrations remind us that despite the fact of celebrating differently, our hearts wish for the same things: happiness, peace and a better world for all of us.

New Year in Different Cultures

You might think the New Year is always the first January, but it is not the case. Around the world, people follow different calendars:

 Gregorian calendar: Used by most of the world, marks January 1 as New Year's Day.

- Lunar calendar: Based on the moon's phases, determines celebrations like the Chinese New Year.
- **Solar and lunisolar calendars:** Tie New Year to the movement of the sun or a mix of solar and lunar cycles—such as those in Persia, India, and Islamic regions.

In fact, New Year can arrive at very different times of the year: in the coolness of January, the sunny days of spring, or even the calm of autumn. Despite these differences, every culture shares similar themes: renewal, reflection, and hope for what lies ahead.

Major New Year Celebrations Around the World

Chinese New Year (Lunar New Year)

When: Late January or February

Where: China and much of Southeast Asia

Traditions

- Families reunite for feasts
- Homes are cleaned to sweep away bad luck
- Red envelopes filled with money are given for blessings
- Celebrations honor ancestors
- Each year is represented by one of the twelve zodiac animals

Meaning: A time for renewal and honoring ancestors, celebrating the start of a new cycle based on lunar zodiac animals.

Nowruz (Persian New Year)

When: Around March 20 (Spring Equinox) Where: Iran, Central Asia, Kurdish regions

Traditions

- Families prepare the Haft-Seen table with seven symbolic items starting with "S" in Persian
- Each item symbolizes rebirth, health, prosperity, or other blessings

Meaning: Nowruz celebrates the rebirth of nature and the triumph of light over darkness, marking the arrival of spring.

Islamic New Year (Hijri New Year)

When: Date varies (11 days earlier each Gregorian year)

Where: Muslim communities worldwide

Traditions

- Marked by prayers and quiet reflection
- Commemoration of Prophet Muhammad's Hijra (migration) from Mecca to Medina
- Some families attend lectures or share special meals

Meaning: A time of spiritual reflection, gratitude, and the renewal of faith, marking the beginning of the Islamic lunar calendar.

Songkran (Thai New Year)

When: April 13–15 Where: Thailand

Traditions

- Country-wide water fights, symbolizing washing away misfortune
- Visiting temples
- Paying respect to elders
- Cleansing rituals

Meaning: A celebration of cleansing, respect, and renewal, symbolically washing away the previous year's negativity.

Diwali / Vikram Samvat (Hindu New Year)

When: October-November (Varies by region)

Where: India and Hindu communities worldwide

Traditions

- Homes are decorated with lamps and lights
- Fireworks brighten the skies
- Families exchange sweets
- Each region marks the New Year differently
- Light always symbolizes victory over darkness

Meaning: Represents the triumph of good over evil, and the eternal flame of hope and light.

Gregorian New Year (January 1)

When: January 1 Where: Worldwide

Traditions

Fireworks

Countdowns

New Year's resolutions

Meaning: A modern mix of festivity and reflection, reminding us that every sunrise brings another chance to start fresh.

Other celebrations include Vietnam's Tết, Korea's Seollal, Bali's peaceful Nyepi, Africa's Zulu New Year, and the Jewish Rosh Hashanah. Each unique, yet all united by the shared human spirit of renewal.

Most Common Customs Across Cultures

Even though the calendars differ, New Year across the world have these similarities:

- Cleaning and purification: Sweeping away old energy to make room for new blessings.
- **Family gatherings:** Love and togetherness remain the heart of celebration.
- **Symbolic foods:** Whether dumplings, grapes, or lentils, each bite carries a wish for prosperity.
- **Fire and light:** From fireworks to lamps, fire chases away darkness and brings light and warmth for what is next.
- **Prayers and reflection:** Almost everywhere, people pause to give thanks and look inward.

New Year Celebration in the modern, connected world

Nowadays, New Year celebrations are shifting and transforming. Cities like London or New York mix fireworks with multicultural performances, while communities worldwide keep ancestral traditions alive from afar. Across social media, millions share countdown videos, online blessings, and global resolutions in real time. With the same belief: gratitude for what's past, and hope for what's next.

My personal reflection about New Year

Personally, I love the festive and unique vibes of New Year celebrations around the world, as they bring families together around warm meals, light up the sky with colorful fireworks, and warm hearts with hope and wishes for the best in the year ahead.

Moreover, I believe the New Year is always a good spot to start fresh and carry on from there. It's an opportunity to reset and rewind in all aspects of life: emotionally, spiritually, physically, etc. It's the time when you can reflect on yourself, your achievements, setbacks, and future plans. It's the right opportunity to give yourself a chance to dream, forgive, and move on.

Ultimately, as we step into another year, may we carry these shared values forward: renewal, reflection, and hope for the future. While appreciating the beauty in our uniqueness and the unity in our dreams. No matter where we live or which calendar we follow, the New Year reminds us that we are all aspiring individuals.



Niko

Niko is a young artist from Belgium who explores all the media she can get her hands on. She's either creating paintings to brighten up her world, or poetry to explore those harsher feelings.

Cat Bookmark

Gouache on paper, laminated



Artist: Niko

About the work

I created a bookmark heavily inspired by an old Christmas card. The cat depicted on it is my childhood cat, who showed me that new beginnings are always possible.

I used gouache on paper, and laminated it afterwards.

Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

A: I was reminded that we can indeed learn a lot from animals, in this case about new beginnings. We, as humans, often see things through a certain lens, and for me it was really valuable to step away from that for a moment.

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

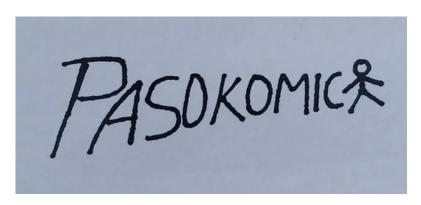
A: I'm hoping to encourage people to embrace the upcoming year, celebrate it, and maybe look at it through a different lens. Even though we may live in darker times, I hope this image can bring some light.

<u>Niko on Instagram</u>

nikosarts26



パソコン / jesanime





TRANSCRIPT:

NEW YEARS MYSTERY
"I tells ya! Ma n' Pops don't
know what happened to
the New Year's money.
They was holding it safe..."

Artist: パソコン / jesanime

About the work

For some reason, the time my jokes and/or albeit primitive art shines through, is when the vessel which it inhibits is unsavable. Something you'd throw away. So I thought, "Might as well digitize these jokes." Most often it comes in the form of a sticky note, like this one.

Q&A

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork? A: Funny

Jesanime on X

jesanime

<u>Outro</u>

Thank you for checking out our zine!

Close this zine, but carry the spark. If something here stirred a feeling, sparked an idea, or nudged you toward trying something new: follow it. Begin it. Let it be small, let it be messy, let it be yours.

When you're ready, bring it to the Language Cafe server. You'll find the <u>#creative-corner channel</u> that's always open for conversation (make sure you have the @Creative role). Share a work-in-progress or a finished piece, ask for eyes on a draft, or simply sit in and create.

We welcome all mediums and experience levels. All you need is a wish to create and explore. The next issue will grow from the hands and hearts of artists like you and we'd love to create it together.

Stay open and curious.

Join our community

Language Cafe Zine #2
Art on New Beginnings

Celebrating the courage it takes to start again — in art, in language, and in life.

Through illustrations, photographs, articles, and poems, each artist offers a glimpse into what a new beginning can look like: bold, quiet, tender, uncertain, hopeful.

May these works remind you that beginnings aren't measured by their size, but by the intention behind them.

Wherever you are in your journey, may this zine be a companion — a small spark inviting you to explore, create, and begin anew.