

FOREWORD

Welcome to the third issue of *Tracks: A Journal of Undergraduate Research*. In this issue, three talented and committed students invited English senior capstone-paper submissions from the past four years at West Texas A&M University to submit work for consideration; they came up with a grouping of nine essays that linked together thematically and that represented the best in undergraduate research in the department. Aimee Kendall, Jonah Dietz, and Kali Dennis worked with me, their faculty sponsor, throughout the 2020 fall semester. As the faculty member involved in their project, I am tempted to abandon my own rules for avoiding overstatement; but, instead, I will simply note, with praise, their terrific and substantial selection, reading, and editing.

The cover photograph for the issue marks a fleeting moment in time, suggesting previous, off-stage events – moments involving predator and prey interaction, powerful silences, agency as well as lack of power, and sheer natural force. The essays selected all have some connection to these themes and showcase the contributors' abilities to link them to compelling novels and authors.

As the faculty sponsor for this issue, and the instructor for the associated independent study, I am terrifically proud of the work done by the editors and by the essayists. The volume is a testament to the quality of undergraduate research at West Texas A&M University and exhibits the editorial talents of three dedicated and talented students whose efforts have made the semester's work a true pleasure.

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