

WITDA Award Interview:

1. *What got you interested in your essay topic?*

I've always been interested in psychology; how our brains work and how they process trauma/emotions, but throughout quarantine as I wrestled with my own anxiety and depression, I began finding a bunch of resources that explained strategies to walk myself through the hard days. The more accounts I began discovering on Instagram and Tik Tok, the more I realized that more people than I had originally thought were in the same boat, navigating their mental health in such an isolated season of life. It felt like the most relevant thing to talk about!

2. *What's the best / most surprising discovery you made about this topic while working on your essay?*

The most surprising thing to me while I was working was discovering how “trackable” anxiety and depression rates are in America. Meaning these are not completely invisible illnesses- they have noticeable enough effects that researchers can provide percentages of their growth in a population!

3. *What's a tip you can give first-year Otis students to help them make their writing/their time in WITDA as successful as possible?*

Write shitty first drafts! Write what's real and true and meaningful! Throw perfection out the window... embrace and trust the mess of the process.

“If something inside of you is real, we will probably find it interesting, and it will probably be universal. So you must risk placing real emotion at the center of your work. Write straight into the emotional center of things. Write toward vulnerability. Risk being unliked. Tell the truth as you understand it. If you're a writer you have a moral obligation to do this. And it is a revolutionary act—truth is always subversive.”

— Anne Lamott, [Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life](#)

