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## Section Intro: Chronicles of Precarity

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# CHRONICLES OF PRECARIETY

Donato et al.: Section Intro: Chronicles of Precarity



**P**recarity can be defined as uncertainty, self-doubt, insecurity, or even instability. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, precarity is “a state of persistent uncertainty or insecurity with regard to employment, income, and living standards.” Precarity takes many forms, and our experiences with it are accompanied by a range of emotions. Life is full of unknowns and things that are out of our control. More often than not, adversity shapes our perspectives.

As shown by Ande Wittenmeier’s illustration, at left, precarity can leave us feeling lost and unsure what to do next. The authors in this section deal with their emotions as they confront situations and circumstances that create uncertainty, instability, and confusion. Although such conditions may be temporary, their impact can last a lifetime. The following pieces reflect precarious experiences from a variety of perspectives.

“The Deer” by Kai Sorensen describes his experience killing a deer while hunting with his father. He depicts the emotional journey of contemplating the morality of his actions. He forms a traumatic bond with the animal that he has just murdered. As he waits for his father to arrive in a truck to pick up the deer, he considers what he has just done.

In “He Feels Bad about It,” Victoria Caroline Baker depicts the ongoing struggles she faces dealing with the trauma of sexual assault and harassment. She focuses on a less often discussed aspect of this trauma—how people’s reactions and words affect the victim and the victim’s mindset.

In “The Things Worth Living For,” Colton Chu shares the life story of his grandfather, a

former Tuskegee Airman. Chu captures his grandfather’s positive attitude toward life, even through unexpected complications. Despite numerous obstacles, his attitude and kindness guided him as he created positive relationships with his family, fellow soldiers, strangers, and God.

Nic Suarez, in “Lechón Served in Westchester, Miami,” recounts their last traditional Christmas Eve or Noche Buena as their family faced challenges that would forever redefine its dynamic. Despite the uncertainty, Suarez makes the most of this special Noche Buena, sharing an experience of love amidst adverse conditions and depicting how they worked to accept the inevitable changes impacting their family.

Finally, in “Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Workplace,” Victoria Caroline Baker sheds light on the challenges that autistic individuals face throughout their careers. Although companies may preach diversity and inclusion for autistic individuals, the behaviors of employers often fail to reflect these values. For autistic individuals, this makes maintaining a career all the more precarious. Baker describes how our current employment systems set autistic individuals up to fail.

These powerful accounts provide insightful perspectives from outstanding writers who have faced uncertainty, self-doubt, and insecurities and yet are brave enough to share their writing.

We present to you “Chronicles of Precarity” as a way to acknowledge moments too often left unspoken.

—Rachel Jane Donato, Aidan Shane,  
and Camren Wyche