

## Art Feature: “Loss and Regrowth”

Kyla Schmitt\* (Environmental Science and Humanities)

During a recent job as a field technician, I spent time in the burn area of the Beachie Creek Fire, which struck the Lyons-Detroit corridor in August 2020. The fire burned nearly 200,000 acres of old-growth forest, and countless people lost their homes. In the two years that have passed since the incident, however, the scarred hills have gradually grown brighter as foxgloves and other early-successional flora take hold. While wildfires can have devastating effects on human populations—effects that I do not at all intend to diminish—wildfires are a natural part of Oregon’s landscape, and they open up ecological niches for a plethora of wonderful meadow species that cannot tolerate the shady conditions created by old-growth canopies. This photo juxtaposes the human cost of wildfires—embodied by the abandoned, rusted trailer—with the ecological rejuvenation of open skies and ash-rich soil.

Medium: *Digital photography, Nikon D3200, AF-S DX Zoom-NIKKOR 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6G ED II lens. Raw. Edited with darktable.*



\*Kyla Schmitt is a second-year Clark Honors College student majoring in environmental science and humanities and minoring in English and economics. She is a member of the OURJ editorial board, and after the call for art for the Summer 2022 Issue garnered no external submissions, she decided to anonymously submit a few photographs to help ornament the issue. In addition to working with OURJ, Kyla is a peer mentor with Affiliated Students for Undergraduate Research and Engagement, the treasurer of the UO Society of Ecological Restoration, and a research assistant at the Ocean and Ice Lab. Last spring, Kyla received the FYRE grant to fund her independent research, which focuses on characterizing signal crayfish populations in Tryon Creek. Beyond academics, Kyla loves hiking and exploring, curating her dozens of Spotify playlists, working out, and caring for her houseplants.