

HARMONY

Literary & Arts Magazine

2019-2020 / 2020-2021



Rowdy Jackson, “Still Life”

Mission Statement

Harmony Literary & Arts Magazine is dedicated to enhancing the cultural and intellectual environment of Culver-Stockton College by providing an outlet for creative and artistic contributions to the campus community.

Editorial Policy

Harmony Literary & Arts Magazine is published by a student staff and supervised by a faculty advisor. The staff encourages all Culver-Stockton students, faculty, staff, and alumni to submit artwork and literature for possible publication. Submissions are presented to the entire *Harmony Literary & Arts Magazine* staff as anonymous works, and the staff then reviews and selects pieces for publication. Submission guidelines can be found at our website, culverharmony.com.

DISCLAIMER: Works published in *Harmony Literary & Arts Magazine* do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the staff or of Culver-Stockton College.

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2019–2020

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2020–2021

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Carlee Hummel	Julee Priest



Dr. Patrick Lane

Introduction

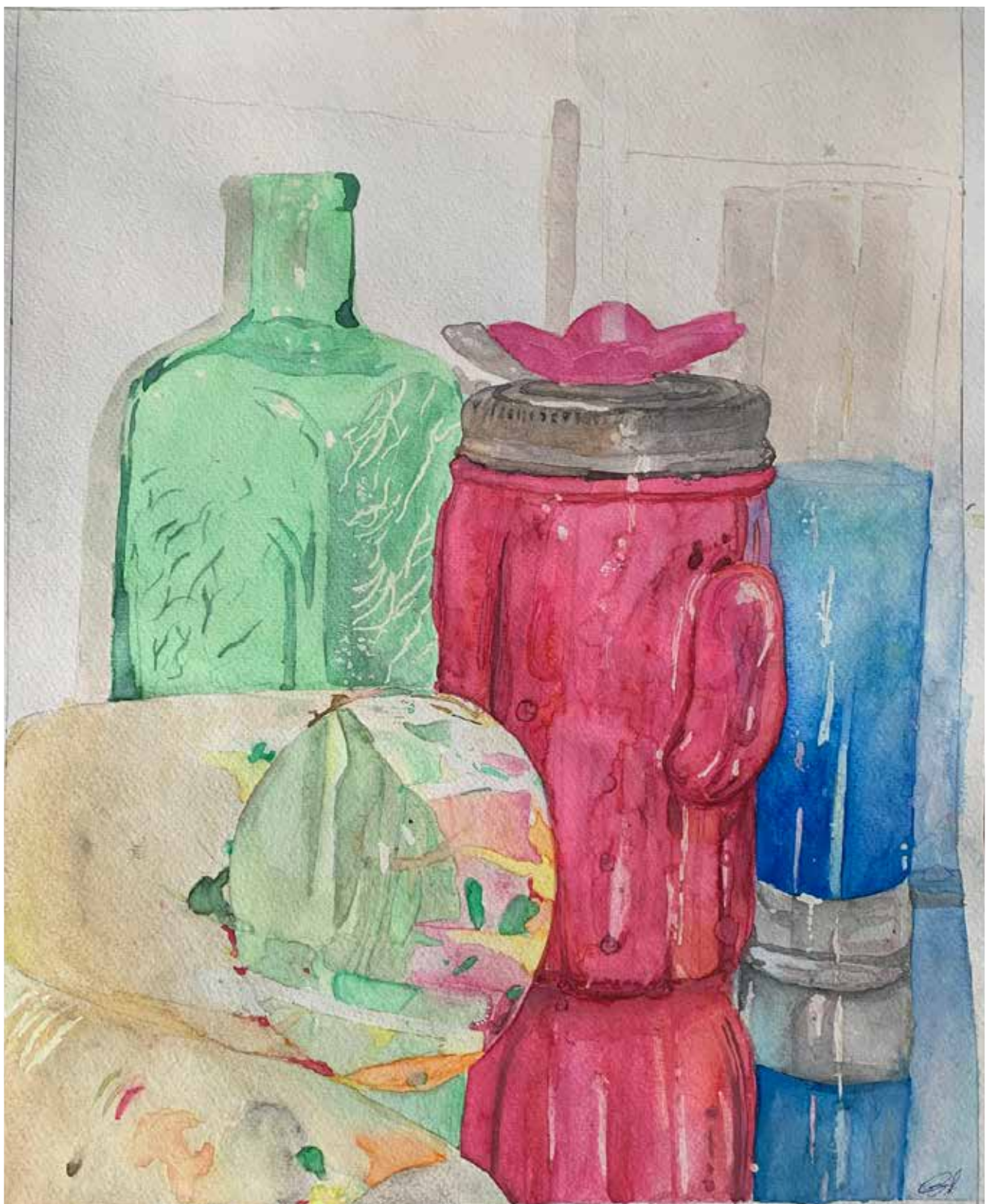
This unusual double-issue of *Harmony* is the product of unusual times. Headlines in the back pages of the newspaper about a new disease afflicting people far away perhaps garnered only passing attention for most of us here in the fall of 2019, but as winter turned to the spring of the new year, those clouds on the horizon drew closer. The term “novel coronavirus” moved first from the backpages to the front pages, and then jumped from the news into our email in-boxes and into legislation, and eventually wound up the common currency of our daily conversations.

That first plunge into pandemic life brought disruption, with one casualty being the final production of *Harmony* for the academic year 2019–20. And yet, as the Silicon Valley maxim goes, disruption can also be an engine for creativity, and while the layout process for *Harmony* may have been sidelined, the students, faculty, and alumni of Culver-Stockton College continued to produce art, sometimes in direct response to the disruption we were experiencing, and oftentimes looking beyond it.

So in this issue, you will find the work submitted in 2019 before everything changed alongside work submitted during these unusual times in 2020 and 2021. It represents the work of two years of *Harmony* staff members, who kept at it even as the challenges of production during a pandemic battered us. And now, having weathered the storm, I am, with the *Harmony* staff, pleased to present to you our literary and arts journal of these plague years: the combined Volumes 42 & 43 of *Harmony*.

—Dr. Patrick Lane

Faculty Advisor to *Harmony*



Morgan Zavoral, "Glassy and Sweet"

Dr. Cindy Whiston

2020 Life Lessons

Life can be full of expectations and noise.
Learning to live in a world of disconnection leads us to look inside ourselves.
We find what is important without the distractions that fog our vision.

In 2020
we missed the crazy,
we missed the excitement,
we missed the commotion,
we missed the entertainment,
but what was left was real and true.

As we navigate the future, that will reconnect us with the expectations and noise,
we should remember the simple reality and feel gratitude for what is truly important.



Nevin McNally, "Self-Portrait — Happy Face"



Madeline Moody, "Give Me Royal-Tea"

Julee Priest

Speaking Mind

I sit a cross from you to say no thing,
To speak a way the Feel-Lings' cry in sleep,
Lost in rest-loss dreams, to scream is to sing
Mud-dulled truths broke in by low spoke kin sheep.

What point is stuck in side of brains' minds' mind?
A seed for trees of sticks and stones to climb,
While fine nests find its self in thoughts to wind.
Minds' brains' mine points for minds' body to mime.

I cross to say, to sow a seed in you.
I cross to say, to grow your thoughts to gleam.
I cross to say, to turn a mind to new.
I cross to day, to speak the cries in dreams,

To sing and preach the pure in meek and dull,
Songs in low to show the .

Abigail Heinecke

Paris Je T'aime

The sites you'll want to devour
The place might be the cathedral
Many wish to see the tower
The Louvre may make you gleeful

To see the lights twinkle at night
The awe will strike at your first sight
There is no place I'd rather be
There is no place like my Paris



Tyler Riley, "Sea Nymph Vase" (above)
"Dragon Tea Set" (right)



Kenna Armstrong

Can I do it?

Sweat glistens like 눈물
 My heart and the music, same beat.
 With no hesitation 나는 춤을.
 All of my faith in my feet.

My heart and the music, same beat.
 On the tile, my shoes squeak.
 All of my faith in my feet,
 And I can't help but feel weak.

On the tile, my shoes squeak.
 I feel like I'm 미치다.
 And I can't help but feel weak.
 모르겠다...

Sweat glistens like 눈물
 I feel like I'm 미치다
 With no hesitation 나는 춤을,
 모르겠다...

Nun-mul, means “tears.”

Na-nun chum-eul, means “I dance.”

Mi-chi-da, means “going crazy.”

Mo-reu-get-da, denotative meaning: “I don't know”; connotative meaning: “Go for it.”

Noel Vanderbol

The First Time

The first time I rode a bike I fell on my chin
I cried and cried and never got on my bike again.

The first time I dated a guy it came to a sudden end
He wanted my body and I wouldn't give in.

The first time I said yes and gave up that part of me
He left the next day and broke my belief.

The first time I missed a period my heart skipped a beat
I tried to ignore the thought of pregnancy.

The first time I took a pregnancy test I missed the stick
I had to buy a new one and felt that shame flick.

The first time I told my parents I was pregnant.....

The first time I moved into an apartment I did so alone
My parents weren't speaking to me and the father was gone.

The first time I had a doctor appointment I asked for my options
They told me of three: to keep it, give it up, or have an abortion.

The first time I went to the abortion clinic, protestors threw signs in my face
All of them read "murderer" or "killer"... the place was surrounded by hate.

The first time I got on the operation table I had a panic attack
I went home before they started, though I couldn't relax.

The first time I saw my baby bump I felt so ashamed
I could hear my parents shouting, their anger untamed.

The first time my mother threw my clothes on the lawn
I cried and begged her to stop and be my mom.

The first time my dad locked me out on the porch
I cried and I begged him to save me from his scorn.



Vanessa Bolen, "Abandoned"

The next time I went to the doctor I felt scared.
I still didn't know what to do but I wanted to be prepared.

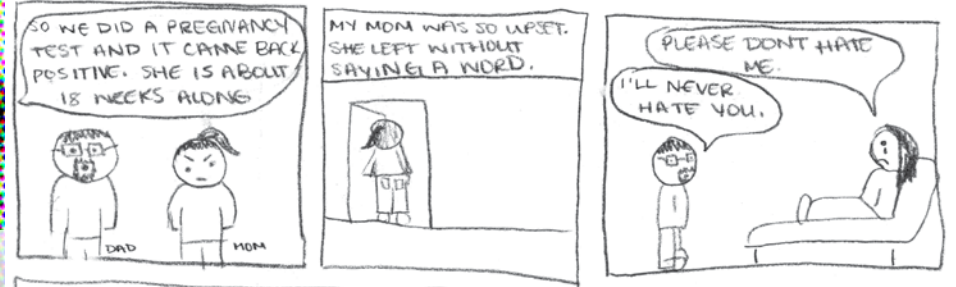
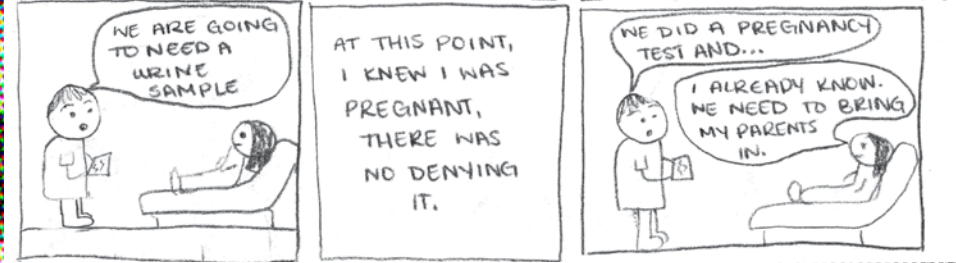
The first time I heard my baby's heartbeat...
I felt a warmth spread from my head to my feet.

The first time I held my baby I cried, tears falling on her soft face
I clutched her to my chest in a loving embrace.

The first time I kissed my baby
I felt whole and held her safely.

The first time I saw her riding her bike she fell on her chin
I helped her back up and she got on again.

APRIL 25, 2019



MAY 18, 2019



Jaden McAfee

My Pregnancy



GOING TO SCHOOL GOT MORE SCARY BECAUSE I WAS SO CLOSE TO MY DUE DATE.



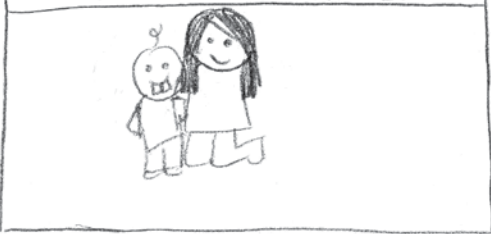
ON SEPTEMBER 22, 2019, I STARTED GOING INTO LABOR AND HEADED TO THE HOSPITAL.



THE NEXT MORNING AT 11:15 AM, MY SON, HUDSON GREY, WAS BORN



I WOULDN'T CHANGE BEING A MOM FOR THE WORLD.



Lindsey Miller

Untitled

There are hundreds of thousands of different gods in my religion, but not one is female. What does that say about the state of my world? Women are not seen as pillars of strength, but the ruins of society. We are the trash, the necessary stepping stones towards the building of what is known as mankind. It doesn't matter that we work as hard, do as much, and think and feel and breathe, as men do. It doesn't matter that there would not be any men without women. Like the bush is but a vehicle for the fruit, so too are we but a mere inconvenience on the reproductive path, machines for creating men. Hell, one of the gods is

a pig; what does it say that the men of our society are less resistant to worshipping literal swine than to even consider the notion that a female may be their equal or, gods-forbid, their superior in any sense of the word?

But perhaps I am just a fluke. A freak of nature, as your culture would say. Yes, I still identify as a part of the culture that shuns me instead of yours, which accepts me with seemingly open arms. Why? Because at least my culture has no pretense of equality. It makes no attempt to hide its preference for the male of our species. It doesn't pretend that everyone is the same

while paying women a percentage of what men make. In my culture, women may not be valued, but at least they aren't forced to act like they are. We are disillusioned to the idea of equality for all, we know our place in society. I don't want to have to hold my head high and smile and say that everything is fine when it's so clearly not. At least in my society, no one asks if I'm okay only to ignore the answer, or expect me to lie. In my society when you're not okay you're not okay, and that's that. Like I said, pretenses are not a part of our culture.

I know what you're looking for. You want a satisfying conclusion, something that will end this negativity with a positive or hopeful note. But sometimes, there isn't a hopeful ending. We have to fight to make our own.



Carlee Hummel, "Bitter Tears"

Kaite Schneider

The Arcana

Three of twenty-one—
Magician, High Priestess, Hanged Man-
Dark, mysterious, yet good.
But just which one to choose?

A man with no heart
And what strange power does he share?
With one and only one: you.
Is he the one you choose?

She who slept for years;
Her beauty and grace matches
Her vast knowledge and strong will.
Is she the one you choose?

A man on the run,
A rowdy raven to hang high;
An innocent man to die.
Is he the one you choose?

Yet it matters not.
The three must face a deadly threat
From one whose sclera are red;
He who spreads a plague.

Who will live and die?
Just who above all will triumph?
Will you be who saves them all?
Could it be you, the Fool?



Steven Walker, "Lure Study"

Morgan Zavoral, "Seatangle"



Max Phillips, "Abstract"



Julee Priest

Starving

Abundant faraway suffering,
More than the capital sentence.
A craving danger caged and roaring,
In grumbling excesses of plentiful space.
Of bouquets colored with emptiness,
And banquets put to shame,
There is delicious desire.

Lust not for the meat and stem
But for the bud.

A pleasure unattainable
By a hollow core
A contained achievement
On a skeleton Earth
A dashed smile
Worn in respite
By a starving universe

Ahna Matthews

Nyctophile

I am a nyctophile

I dream during dawn of my time with dusk
to gaze at the stars and imagine a world that I am in control of.

The solace of twilight assured me that being a hermit allowed for growth.
And she was right. Twilight was the one time I was able to be myself.

I dream during dawn of my time with dusk
to remain mysterious yet, vulnerable
to judge and not be judged.

My hour with dusk is my time to be cherished

My impatience for the night sky causes me gitter
but also, smile.

There's a *je ne sais quoi* about the stars that I yearn for more of.

Dakota Hudson

The Mantra of Acrimony

Her eyes looked like clocks. I saw the hands moving sometimes if I looked closely. Pale green, counting down. Why am I thinking about her again? It has been so long. I barely remember her calm voice or the way one side of her mouth smiled more than the other. I barely remember her perfect nose that came to a confident point. Her dull brown hair. Barely.

I guess she haunts me.

She knows what she is doing... It was raining lightly a while ago. Light enough for it to whisper into my tent. Her voice was carried within the droplets that plastered themselves against my skin. Terribly vexatious. She will not let go of my mind, for she has already faded from my heart.

I am sitting here under a dilapidated freeway. I do not know what time it is but I feel as if the sun will never come up again.



**Max Phillips,
“Enchanted”**



Nevin McNally, "For Honor and My Family"

Jessica Beaver

Disappeared

“They’ll bring you back,” but will they though?
From dusk through dawn, until morning glow.
Is that what the parents told their children, who ended up on
lamp posts, milk cartons, and national news?
If only they would’ve known,
they could’ve changed their tune.

Walking home from school, biking through the park.
Mothers’ tear-stained faces when light turned to dark.
Disappearing without a sound, gone for:
days, months, years never to be found.

Those poor defeated faces,
must have been engulfed in fright.
But you know what they say.
They’ll bring them back.
Right?

Disappointment

Disappointment is different in everyone’s lives, and
it always seems the grass is greener on the other side.

It can be pink confetti when you wanted blue,
or receiving one line when you prayed for two.

Not winning the lottery, filled with greed,
or being in poverty with kids to feed.

Disappointment comes in many different sizes and shapes,
but some are affected in more drastic ways.

Rain, Don’t Go Away

I crave for the days that it rains.
The chills come in waves, coursing down my spine.
The lightning and thunder intertwined,
creating a symphony in the sky.

Storms are the only melatonin I need,
although it can lead to calamity,
it helps me sleep.

It’s the reason I’d move to Seattle
because of the constant downpour of what I love.
There’s a sense of solidarity from the clouds above,
that the sweet scent is a refreshing sensation.

When it rains, it pours but never enough,
so please keep trickling down until morning comes.



Kaitlyn Conaway

Not Knowing

I woke up this morning not knowing
Drove my car to school, ate a granola bar for breakfast
Not knowing
Went to class and sat by my best friend
Not knowing
Not knowing that this was how my world would end
It did not end with a whimper, it did not end with a bang
My world ended with the screams of my classmates as they tried to get out of the school
Rounds of gunfire echoing throughout the halls, the screams changing as the thuds start
And then I knew
This is how my world will end
Shock shooting through my veins as the floor changes color
No longer a hospital white, instead a deep crimson stain
As he walked in front of me, a boy I thought I knew, I knew I would die
A gun pointing at my face
Now I knew
And that's my last memory, because that was how my world ended.



Dakota Hudson,
“Risus” (left)
“Mordere” (above)
“Coniuncta” (below)



Kerri McGraw

In This Moment

the wind can not hold a candle to the way i feel inside
everything is cold, and dead
an unforgiving, unending winter
a vacant wasteland of an eroded heart

i close my eyes for a moment underwater
months have passed and i'm still drowning
i can not find warmth
i do not know how to rekindle the fire
that once burned so brightly inside of me
the grass will grow around me

the fountains overflow
like words leaving my mouth
i lie here in the sun
feeling the heat
letting it burn me
hoping to replace a feeling that i lost long ago

Jennifer Liddle

Death

Enter the gray tomb.
Decrepit and decaying.
See where treasures lie.

Lindsey Miller

Toni's Secret

Toni felt her heart pounding in her chest, and drew in a quick, shuddering breath. She would be brave, she had to be. Amanda was standing there, reading her lines for the next play. Toni felt a pang of sorrow.

“I still can't believe this is going to be our last ever play together.”

Amanda frowned. “Are you sure you can't convince your mom to let you stay? At least until you graduate high school?”

“Trust me, I've tried. I've fought and begged, but she's not changing her mind.”

She was going to tell Amanda today before she left, the secret she had held locked up inside her since they met. The terrible truth had dawned on Toni mere weeks after they met, and she had been too afraid to share it with Amanda for the past two years. Now, she had decided — before she left, the truth would be known.

After rehearsal, Amanda took her by the hand, as usual. The warmth from her thin fingers immediately set Toni's heart fluttering again. Amanda flashed that smile, perfect white teeth, soft pink lips: she was truly angelic in her beauty.

“So, what did you want to talk about?”

Now was the time. Toni led her outside.

“Amanda, I don't know how to say this. It's like, really embarrassing and I don't want it to change anything between us, because you literally mean the world to me and I don't know what I'd do if you started hating me and—”

“Slow down! You know I'd never hate you. You can tell me anything.”

Toni drew in a shuddering breath.

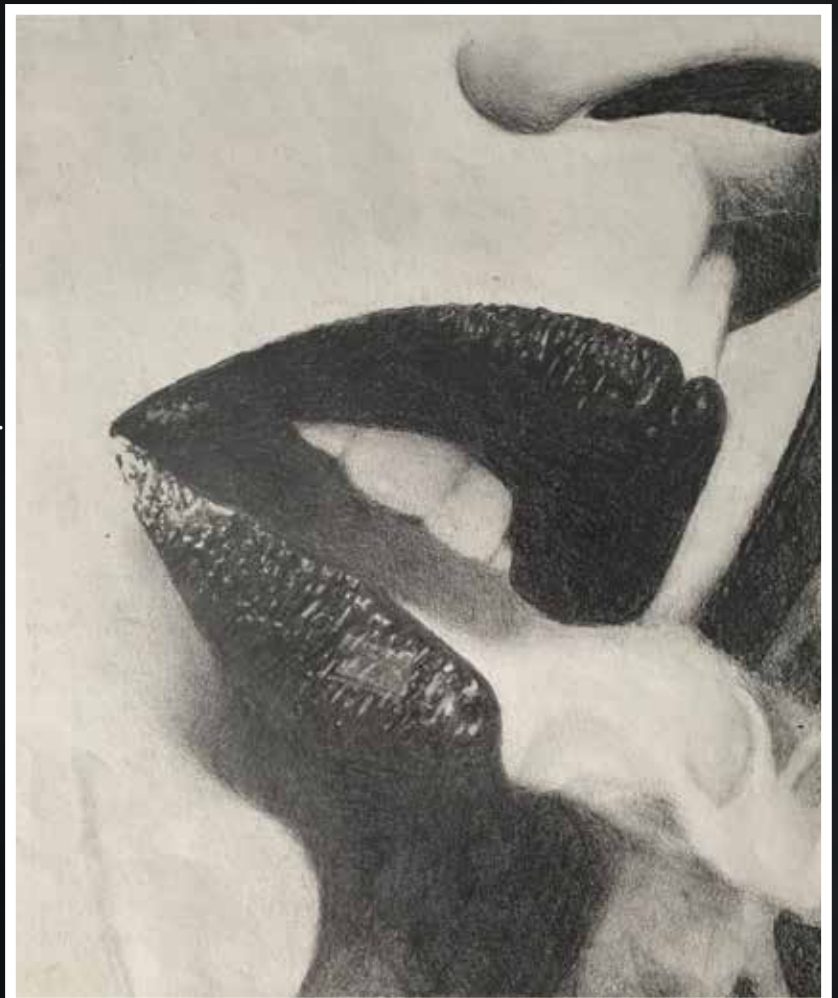
“Promise?”

“I promise.”

“I like you.” It came out as one word.

“I like you too.”

“No, I mean, like... I like-like you. I've had a crush on you since we first met.” The silence that followed stretched out for an eternity. It felt solemn, like the weight of the world was dangling by a thread, precariously suspended in time and space, directly above them.



Morgan Zavoral, “Exhale”

“Oh... I’m sorry, but I’m not... I don’t like girls.”

Even though Toni had known it was coming, the weight of Amanda’s words came crashing down, sending her heart shattering into a million pieces. This was it, the years between them would be tainted forever in Amanda’s mind. She’d hate Toni for lying to her for so long, for pretending they were just friends when Toni had always longed for something more. Every sweet memory would be soured by this moment, and it was all Toni’s fault. She could feel the tears prickling at the edges of her eyes, but she would not cry.

“I still want to be friends, though! You mean the world to me, Toni. I swear if I were into girls you’d be my first choice, but I love you in a different way.”

All she could do was nod in response. The girls went back inside, but Toni noticed that this time, Amanda didn’t take her by the hand.

Jennifer Liddle

Love and Death

Dead leaves and branches hung bare on the trees.
They barely live alone and in the cold.

I remember when the birds could fly free.

Now all, once bright, has turned to ash and mold.

Here I walk, dreading your end in this life.

There you stand, your face radiating heat.

Thought of death around us hurts like a knife.

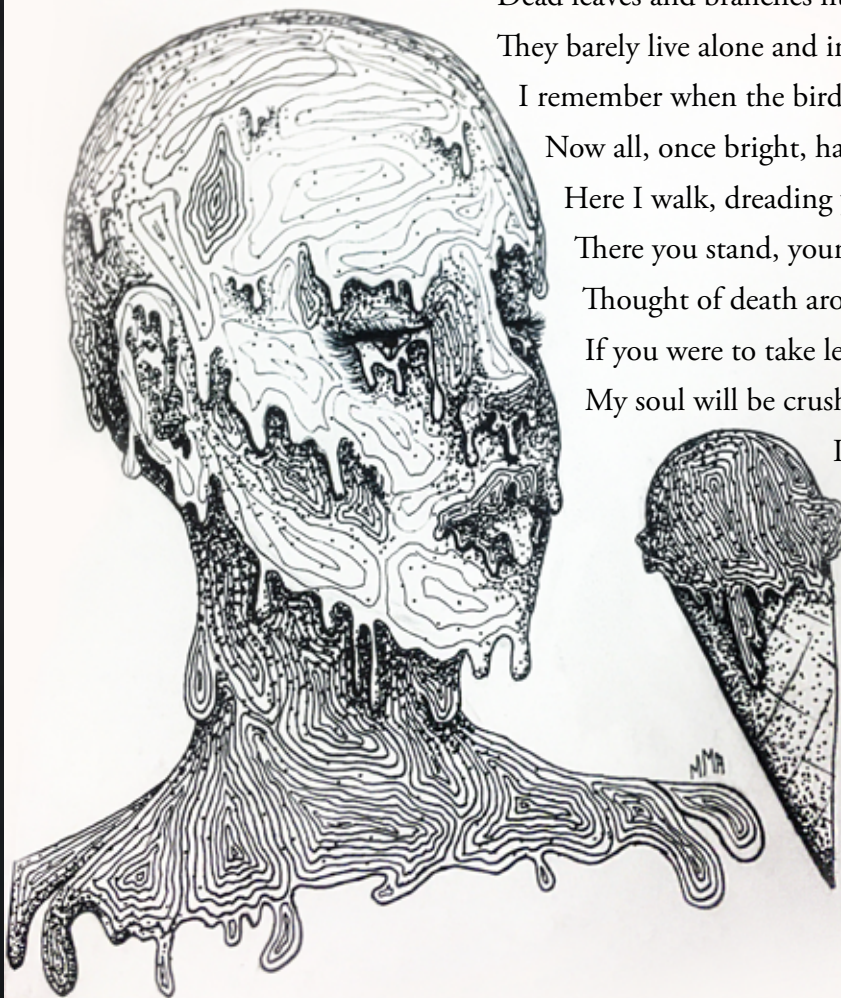
If you were to take leave, and brisk depart,

My soul will be crushed and thrown into fire.

I will burn for eternity with you
gone from me, and thrown upon
the pyre.

My meaning from this, please do
not construe.

For not even angels who fly above,
hold as much of my heart, and all
my love.



Max Phillips, “Pattern”

Ahmed Barrow

The Art of Forbidden Love

Question do black and white mix?
Is there a gray area where they blend?
I mean, when I see her I don't see a hue different of mine
I see 7 seconds
And those 7 seconds are all I need in life to be happy swimming in her aura
Allow me to paint you a picture of this landscape to illustrate what I see
I see the color black they gave this object, me
The style of a thug and the texture of something so rough and jagged
thinking it could never love anything else in this artwork
But that's not true, because in the painting lays a masterpiece painted
white, she has the texture of the softest silk ,she's the brightest thing on
the page
Shining so bright making everything else on the page look like negative
space
That's what they called me, negative space
Isn't that abstract
To view me in such a way without getting to know me
Judging this art piece by only its color and not by its shape, form, lines,
and value
You see I'm the shape of a young man
My form is unpredictable therefore beautifully unique
Lines would go from right to left, ironically showing the viewer that
you can't simply read this art piece from left to right like a book which
shouldn't be judged by its cover
My color may be dark but my value sure is lighter than the darkest room
filled with a thousand lit candles
Every candle being a quality I have that makes my smile a little bit
lighter, a little bit brighter
But they choose to see my color and say that it's not light enough, not
bright enough
So they said that this art piece and that art piece would never work
Naming me abstract and her Idealism
And saying we are from two different worlds
He said that our worlds are too different
It's like a Kandinsky
I was the rough abstract side nobody could understand therefore they
didn't like



Sally Kintz, "Canna"

She was there little angel ideal and concrete and structured and everything they deemed me unworthy of being

I say now that our picture of me and her was the last Black and White picture ever made to touch the big screen

The best motion picture without any emotions attached to them

Because to have emotions for another was just something unimaginable and never spoken of

That's why black and white movies are played in silence

No words because there's nothing to say

Well there is something to say but they are both afraid to say it

So they instead use their actions to portray this love that has been frowned upon by the artists of this art piece

But I don't care if I was erased from this artwork at all

As long as I am with this masterpiece I would no longer see the world as black and white

But as a plethora of colors just waiting to become discovered

Others say that the two colors don't mixed and decided it didn't quite fit expectations

So now they call me the artwork that should've been kept out of the frame Like I didn't belong

Should've never had the opportunity to witness true beauty like her

Her beauty meant more to me than the beauty of the sunrise or sunset

More to me than the sweet tune of a thousand hummingbirds singing

She means more to me than any type of tangible object I could ever obtain

If I had a dream she'd be my american dream

I wouldn't dream for money or health

But to be able to see her more than 7 seconds a day

And to have her artist that made and brought her into this world

See me as more than an abstract piece of art

And wouldn't judge me as so

But it's ok art is subjective anyway

So personally

I give this art piece a five out of five

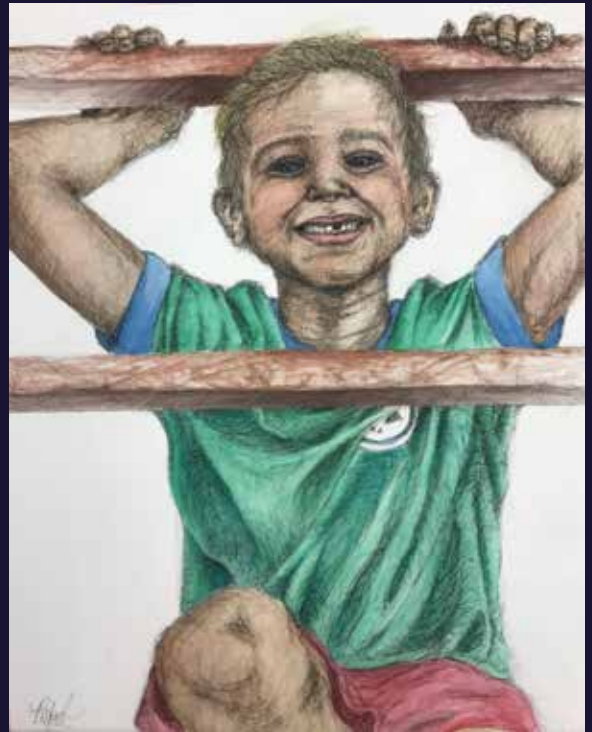
Because it shows the unity of black and white at a time where this was unexceable

And unthought of by any artist





“Am i a f*cking joke to you” by Taylor Wood



“Silus Michael” by Taylor Pitford



“Zombie Chef Series #2” by Christopher Peter



“Flower Boy” by Steven Walker



"Duke" by Ashley Frese



"Deb" by Analiese Meany



"Inflation" by Nevin McNally



"An Icon" by Debra Myers





“Kathleen” by Taylor Wood



“Feline Eye” by Carlee Hummel



“Blayde” by Analiese Meany



“Dua Lipa” by Braeden Wenneker



“Tyronic” by Max Phillips



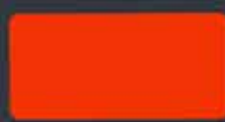
“Simplicity” by Carlee Hummel



“Tree Frog” by Steven Walker



“Braeden, For Mom” by Braeden Weneker



Lindsey Miller

People Are Like Puzzles

“People are like puzzles,” the young boy told the nice lady who sat in the chair across from him. Her office was small but cozy, not as intimidating as he had feared. It felt clerical yet somehow homey. There were pictures on the wall, mostly coloring book pages — some smiling, scribbled in with outrageous shades of orange sloppy circles; others were neater, with muted colors. The latter never ventured outside the lines, always remaining within the confines of predetermined shapes. Dozens of these drawings decorated each wall, each conveying the artificial feeling of a normal childhood. The boy wasn’t old enough to notice that there was something slightly off in each; he lacked the cognitive awareness and years of psychological education it would have taken to perceive the deeper meaning in the way each child had chosen colors to represent emotions or lack thereof. He only noticed that some pictures were prettier than others, and this was enough to satisfy him.

“How so, James? Can you explain to me how people are like puzzles?”

“No, they just are.”

“Could you give me some examples?”

“Well,” James chewed on the inside of his cheek, mulling over examples. “Dad’s like one of those fit-in-the-shape puzzles, where you can tell which piece is supposed to go where. You know, the circle goes in the circle hole, the square goes in the square hole. He’s that kind of puzzle.”

“Mom is like one of those sliding puzzles. Those are really confusing! And sometimes, you just have to shake them around, but after a long time of working on it, you get a picture of, like, a happy face or something. I really don’t understand that kind of puzzle.”

“And what kind of puzzle are you, James?”

“I’m one of those color squares, a Roobix Q.”

The woman shifted slightly in her seat, marking on the notepad on her desk. “You mean a Rubik’s cube?”

“Yeah, that. And Amelia is a jigsaw puzzle with like a thousand pieces.”

This seemed to pique the woman’s interest. Her eyes widened slightly, and she scribbled furiously on the notepad, trying and failing to conceal this movement from James.

“Tell me more about Amelia, how she’s like a jigsaw puzzle.”

“Oh, she’s my best friend! She’s got all these little pieces that you wouldn’t think go together — so many different colors and shapes that don’t make any sense until you put them together.”

“Could you explain that a little more, James?”

He sighed in response; he didn’t like the way this lady kept saying his name. Of course, he didn’t know it was one of her techniques to instill a sense of familiarity with patients, nor would he have cared if he did.

“Like, she’s funny and smart, but she doesn’t have a whole lot of common sense. I always have to remind her of stuff, but she gets all A’s. She’s a ballerina and she can dance good, but she can be really clumsy and trips when we’re just walking. She’s like a living contraception.” The woman had to bite her tongue to keep from correcting him as he continued. “We play together all the time. The other kids say it’s weird for boys and girls to play together, but Amelia’s not like other girls. She doesn’t like silly stuff like princesses and pink stuff. She likes dinosaurs and Pokemon.”

“And you two play together often?”

“All the time! She’s my best friend.”

“What kinds of games do you play?”

“We play make-believe a lot. We play astronauts and aliens and she’s always the Alien leader. She likes playing with superheroes the most. But we haven’t played together in a while, not since I found out her secret.”

James could tell the woman was very interested in this. She actually looked at him, for the first time. He looked like any other kindergarten boy — black hair cut short, flawlessly smooth brown skin, and chubby little fingers. He wore red and black basketball shorts and a T-shirt with a smiling cartoon dog, which was accompanied by the phrase “Life’s Ruff!” He looked back with his dark chocolate eyes. They were so big; the woman felt she could get lost in their innocence.

There was some emotion hidden in this lady’s features, poorly concealed in an attempt to avoid alarming the boy. An adult would have recognized the mixture of pity and awkward self-consciousness behind her strained grimace. James just knew she looked funny smiling like that.

“And what is her secret, James?”

“When we played superheroes, she wasn’t playing make-believe.”

One week ago

James and Amelia sat, bored, outside on Amelia’s front lawn. They had just finished eating their grilled cheeses and were trying to figure out what game they should play next. James’s mother wasn’t due to pick him up for another two hours, which may as well have been an eternity away.

“What about Legos? They’re still out in your room.”

“We just played Legos this morning, I’m tired of Legos!”

Amelia was always like this, James thought. James liked working on things for long stretches of time - he could have spent all day carefully sculpting a rocket ship, spending hours just ensuring the intricate details

matched his vision exactly. He didn’t know this was a trait that he would foster into adulthood, carrying with him this need for precision in all areas of life. He wasn’t aware that he would grow into the type of person suited for accountant work, or perhaps quality assurance. Amelia, on the other hand, flitted from project to project, working in erratic bursts of passion before growing bored and moving on to the next topic that grabbed her interest. It made their friendship a little tumultuous at times, but ultimately they balanced each other out: Amelia helped James to see the bigger picture, and James ensured that Amelia didn’t leave every project unfinished. Of course, neither of the children knew any of this. James just knew that he liked being with his friend Amelia, and that he liked to spend a lot of time doing one thing while she didn’t. That was enough for him.

“Besides,” Amelia continued, “it’s so pretty outside! We’ve gotta stay out in the sunshine.”

“Well then, what about... um...”

Usually, Amelia was bursting at the seams with ideas of what to play. She came up with all sorts of games that stretched the imagination, pushing the bounds of human creativity. She would grow to be an innovator or artist. After spending the morning playing with Legos, creating monsters out of the boxes in her father’s burn pile, drawing what heaven would look like, playing hide-and-seek, Barbies vs. G.I. Joe, Star Wars, house, and wizards, the girl was exhausted with creating new ways to entertain herself. James knew it was his turn to contribute but wasn’t sure he could top any of his friend’s games. He needed something original, something really outside the box, but the best he could come up with was—

“Superheroes?”

Amelia took a moment to consider this. With a limited number of options, those namely being superheroes or sitting there doing nothing, her choice came easily.

“Sure!”

“Okay, I’m gonna be Batman!” James loved Batman’s practicality. He didn’t have any powers, but that just made him cooler. In the real world, he reasoned, no one had powers. Those that could use their superior intellect and inventions to overcome evil were so much more realistic. Of course, James wasn’t consciously aware of why he preferred Batman to someone like, say, Superman. He just knew Batman was cool. “Who are you gonna be?”

Amelia’s options were limited to the few female superheroes that she knew of, and none of them particularly caught her interest. She decided she would be her own superhero, with special powers that no one else had.

“I’m gonna be... Amazing Amelia!”

“That’s not a real superhero.”

James was a stickler for the rules, and coming up with a fake superhero was decidedly not allowed. If she had free reign, he knew Amelia would invent new powers on the spot. She needed some kind of limit or she would go over the top.

“Yes, it is! That’s me, I’m a superhero.”

“Fine,” James conceded, on the condition that “you only get two superpowers though.”

Amelia seemed discontent with this, but agreed, thinking long and hard about what her powers should be. After an agonizingly long fifteen seconds, she finally came to a decision.

“I can soar like a bird and I can make copies of myself.” This combination was just unique and bizarre enough to suit Amelia perfectly, and James was happy that she hadn’t tried to find some loophole. He wasn’t sure how she would use those powers, but he had every confidence in his friend’s judgment. She would find some unimaginable way to combine those powers into something incredible, so he didn’t even bother to ask why. He just agreed.

“Okay,” Amelia said. “Now that we’re superheroes, we have to do something super. What can we do?”

James hadn’t thought this far ahead. He hadn’t thought of a problem to be solved; Amelia could do that part.

The pair walked to the sidewalk in front of Amelia’s house. Across the street, a pit bull barked at them from Mr. Caulfield’s front lawn. He was a mean old man,



and the children had often been witness to his cruelty. He would curse at the animal, and the children had even seen him kick the animal when he thought no one was looking. He left it tied to a chain in the front yard all day every day, where it stood guard behind a sign that read “Beware of Dog.” Amelia, being the animal lover that she was, had confided in her friend that she always wanted to help the poor creature. James had inadvertently provided her the perfect opportunity to act on this impulse.

“We’re going to save the dog, Batman!”

James hesitated. He was afraid of the dog, and his parents had always told him to stay far away from Mr. Caulfield’s house. Lacking the vocabulary skills to properly express his apprehension, all he said was—

“No, that’s a bad idea.”

“No, it’s really good! It’s our job as superheroes!”

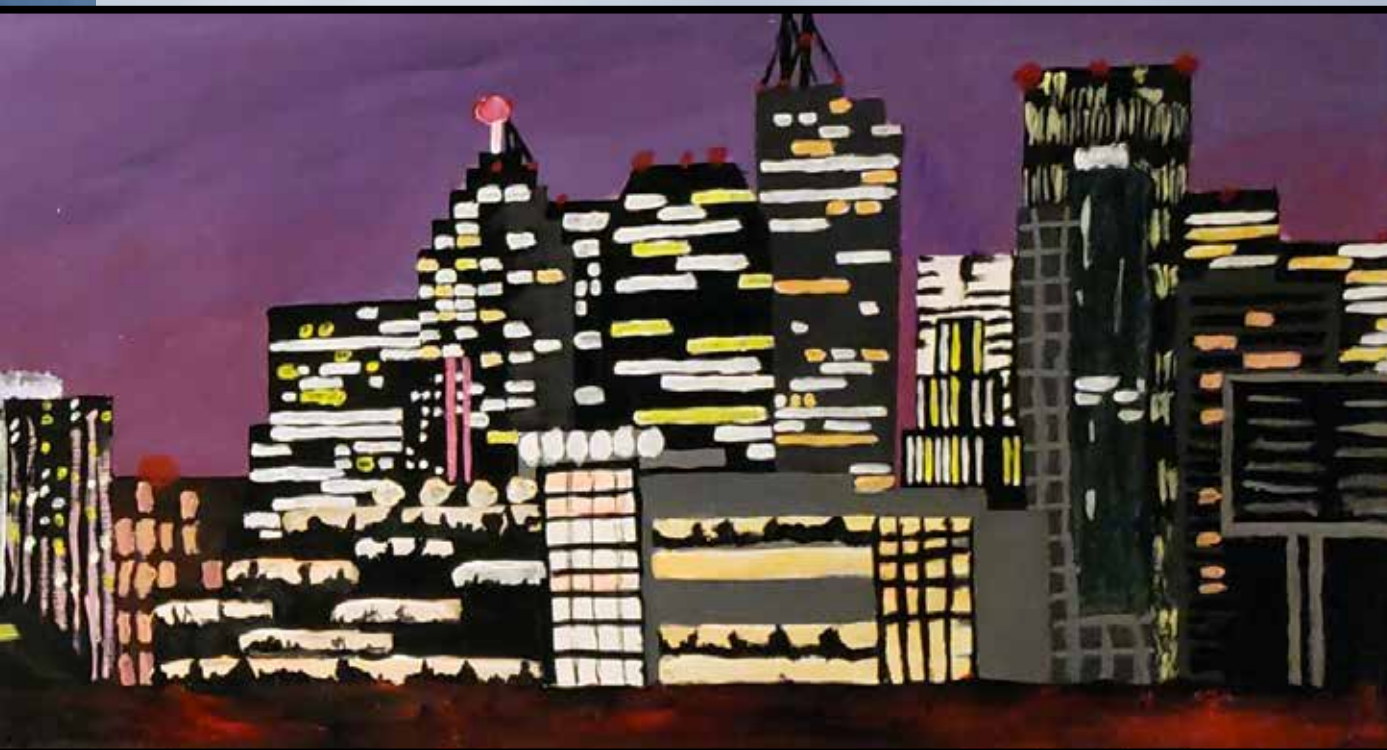
James was beginning to regret his suggestion. He knew that he would be unable to persuade his friend against an idea once she set her mind to something. The next best option was to tell an adult what was going on so that they could prevent a potential catastrophe. He turned back towards the house,

opening his mouth to call for Amelia’s mother. Before he could form words, a high-pitched screech and the sound of an impact caused him to turn back around.

James didn’t see Amelia step into the street without looking. He wasn’t aware that the car hit her at 44 miles per hour. He didn’t know the young woman driving the car hadn’t seen the girl until it was too late to do anything to stop it, slamming on the brakes mere feet in front of Amelia. He didn’t know the impact of the front bumper against Amelia’s skull caused near-instant death, nor that her neck cleanly snapped, almost severing her head and body. He didn’t see that her left leg was caught under the tire, ripping it off.

When James turned around, what he saw was his friend fly through the air, like a bird. He saw Amazing Amelia, the superhero, soaring through the sky. He saw that she didn’t land right; she was broken in pieces, but that was another one of her powers, wasn’t it?

“People are like puzzles,” James concluded, frowning at the strange woman. “I just want to know when they’re going to put Amelia back together.”



Braeden Wenneker, “Busy City”



Ahmed Barrow
I'm Tired



Megan Ferry, "Harmony"

*When I say I'm tired, my teacher says, "Get more sleep at home."
When I say I'm tired, my mother says, "Then stop staying after school."
When I say I'm tired, my friend says, "Me too."
But when I look in the mirror and say, "I'm tired" My reflection says,*

"I know, I've seen you hold your tears in like your eyelids are a dam holding in the pressure of your emotions I've seen you go to school, sit there, get criticized for not being what society thinks you should. You can't help it if you're not Superman.

Shame on the people who judge you for actually being, human

They don't know

That you're scared of being you, being black

Scratching at your skin as if this paint would come off, along with the target tattoo on your back

You're a black man in a world filled with opposites

They say opposites attract. I guess your only opposites are.....

Failure, gunshots, and violence

Your magnetic, negative charges always find a way to combine with your positive vibes

Your father is in the hospital fighting for his life

And it's hard, trying to part an ocean full of tears, without a staff.

Meanwhile, your mother is trying to cope, work, keep being a role model for her children.

She's trying to be a role model even when the runway ahead of her turns into shards of broken glass, she keeps on walking.

A former friend threatened to plug your cord out, to bring the finish line closer, to break the thin ice around you, to let you meet your maker earlier than scheduled. And

so.....

.....you watch your back like a clock in your least favorite class just waiting for the bell to ring.

A friend of yours has reached the end of their journey
Grief follows the storm of tears that lead to your existence

You miss your great grandma and just want to see her one more time.

To see her laugh

To hug her

To say everything

You should've said at the funeral.

You stay after school to relieve stress yet at the same time it pains you to stay clear from
reality

It all hits you like it was the first time you heard the news
When your mouth shouted something out of anger, then your ears heard the words you
had spoken and your lips shut in disappointment of the person you are becoming
That's what you should say to them instead of saying you're tired."

*They say the eyes are the windows to the soul
If that's true then the curtains I call my eyelids have been closed for far too long because no one
seems to see me*

*See me being me because I have to be them because they would never accept myself
They're trying to fit this image of me..... into a frame that is way too small.
"Tired" is not just an adjective, but also an emotion, a place, and quite recently, a way of life.*



Sally Kintz, "Finding Max"



Morgan Zavoral, "Tiny Treasures"

Lindsey Miller

This Path

As I walk down this path,
Its familiarity suffocates me.

I know where it leads,
And I long to go anywhere else. Yet,
I stay,
Deeply rooted here, in place.

Should I try to stray,
I find myself drawn back.
Unable, or unwilling
To challenge its command.
I don't know.
Gnarled and twisted,
The path hurts, yet I continue.
The pain is nothing
Compared to
The unknown. I feel sick, strong.
I am weak.

My path disgusts me,
And yet I stay.



Blayney McClenning, "Bee"



Shannon Tournear

Alone

He sat by himself
And watched the day pass him by
Alone not lonely

Kerri Magraw

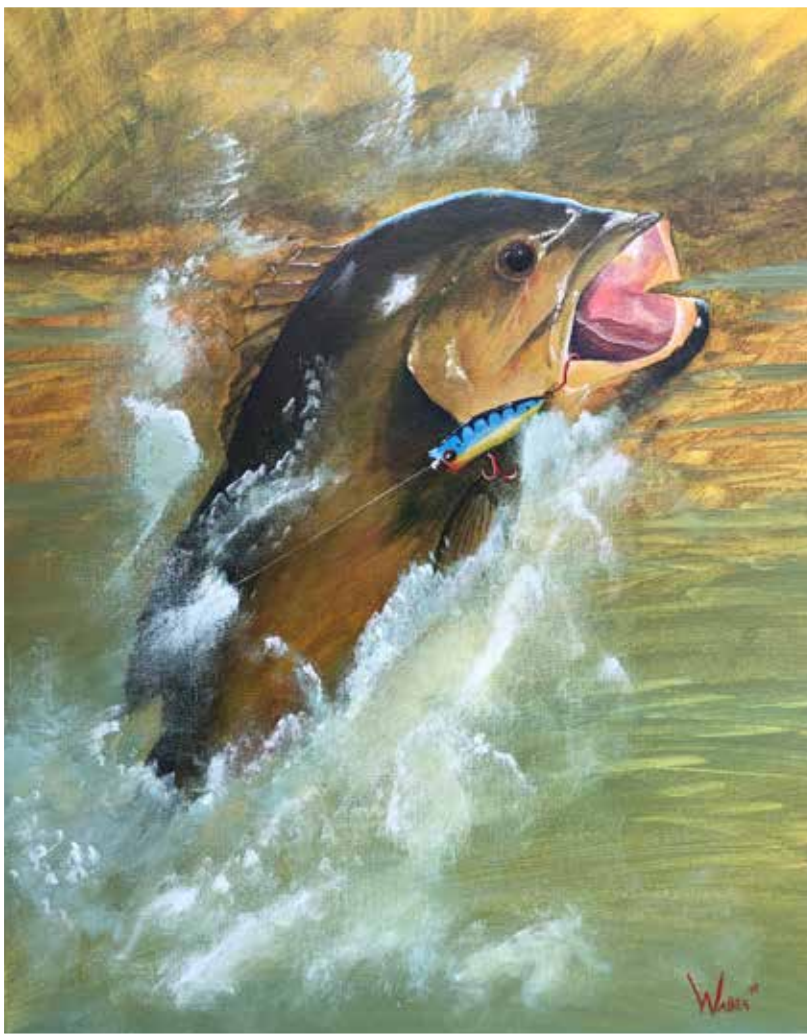
Daylight

Lilac skies turn into long days
Orange horizons into a dark haze
Dinnerless nights call for late-night snacks
Hoping one day the monster down the hall turns into dad
Everything blends together and I can't create
I'm trapped inside my own mind without a word to say
Maybe if I got help I would change
Maybe if I learn how to stay the same I can cope with who I am
My throat hurts
My feet ache
My hands shake
Somewhere in the deepest part of my mind I am in there, in a frozen tundra trying to escape
But every time I move the ice just breaks
Depression is the best lover I've ever had
She fucks me in all the best ways
She fucks me so hard I can't get out of bed for days
Why do I let these things I can't see hurt me
I've been swallowed whole and feel like I'm living in a memory
I am a broken ship inside a glass bottle, shake me till little pieces fall out so you do not shatter
the bottle
How did the ship break before the bottle
The world is throwing rocks at the glass house I have become
But I guess they never knew I was made of glass because the windows are tinted black
So when you stare at it only your reflection stares back
There is not a door to get inside
Do not even try
You can not break in
This is my safe haven
But I fear since I made sure there was no way anyone else could get in
I likewise made it where I can not get out



Mary Phillips, "Evergreen Icicles"





Steven Walker, "River Monster"

Cindy Freels, "Water Lily Number 1"



Lori Leathers

Look for the Beauty

Every person has their own way of living,
But they never stop to see the beauty God has given.
They pick their favorite weather, month, and season.
Then they explain their choice with many different reasons.

They never see the stars and moonlight,

Or the calm before the storm.

Or the beautiful skies just before night,

Or even the sunrise in the morn.

They never stop to see the snow on the trees,

Or flowers growing, the budding of new leaves.

Or watch the crops grow along the road,

Or see the leaves change from red to orange, to gold.

They think of the weather being too cold or too hot.

They think of muddy lawns or roads being too slick.

They never stop to think of what's right or not,

And never hear the clock with its never-ending tick.

You must enjoy the beauty that God gives,

And find the hope and the will to live.

Look forward to the rainbow after the rain.

Look at the pretty colors and find something to gain.

Wake up in the morning and listen to the birds sing.

And at night, listen to the bugs as they let out a musical ring.

Enjoy the weather, the months, and the seasons,

And love each one of them with your own different reasons.

Don't ever be unhappy or dismayed.

Look for the beautiful colors every day.

Don't ever forget the beauty you've been given,

Because God gives you a reason every day to keep on living.

Kaitlyn Conaway

Make a Difference

I don't just write because it's fun
Or because I want people to read what I wrote

I write to make a difference

I see injustice in the world and I want to fix it

Use words to tie up the loose ends

Bring people together and help them see there is a better way

I don't know if I can

But I keep trying

I keep writing

Because if I give up

If I stop trying to change the world

Will it ever change

Or will everyone else give up too



Carlee Hummel, "Still Life"

Vanessa Bolen, "Fall Cabin"



Ahmed Barrow

Beginning*

It all begins with one
One movement
One second
One person
Can change everything
We
Need to find the beauty in new begins
Most of us focus in on only the conclusion
The last hoorah
The last time
The last one to say I love you
Was suppose to be me
The beginning
The beginning
Drips into the sequels of
The end

Πνε ενφ
Δριψ ιντο τρε σεκουετς οφ
Τρε ρεξιππιινγκ
Τρε ρεξιππιινγκ
ΰαε υπερωε το ρε με
Τρε ιαε ονε το εαλ Ι λοβε λον
Τρε ιαε τιμε
Τρε ιαε ηοοιαη
Μοστ οφ ηε φοουσ ιν ον οηλ τρε κονκλιουσιον
Νεεδ το ηιντ τρε ρεαυιλ ιν νεω ρεξιππ
ΰε
Οαν ομπαυδε ελεεληπιινγκ
Ονε ηεζου
Ονε σεκουετ
ΰαε υπερωε το ρε με
Τρε ιαε ονε το εαλ Ι λοβε λον
Τρε ιαε τιμε
Τρε ιαε ηοοιαη
Μοστ οφ ηε φοουσ ιν ον οηλ τρε κονκλιουσιον
Νεεδ το ηιντ τρε ρεαυιλ ιν νεω ρεξιππ

** Reverse poem, read down and then back up*



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