

2024-2025

# HARMONY

Literary & Arts Magazine

# Our Mission

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 staff as anonymous work, and the staff then reviews and selects pieces for publication.

**Disclaimer:** The content of works published in *Harmony Literary & Arts Magazine* does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the editors, staff, or Culver-Stockton College.

**Trigger Warning:** The works contained within this edition of the *Harmony Literary & Arts Magazine* may include sensitive topics and language regarding mental health, identity, abuse, and more. We advise that you be responsive to your own mental health and safety while reading this edition.

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## Scan The Code

To reach our website

[harmoniymagazine.org](http://harmoniymagazine.org)

Read the full lengths of:

Crashing

Acquaintance of a Murderer

A Very Long Poem About Depression

Why Me?

The Woman

The Moment the World Stopped

Fire Upon the Hills

And listen to the songs:

The Many Sides of Me

Magical Misfits



## Preview “Crashing” - Libby Skaggs

May 10, 2023

7:30am

God, I hate being at school early. This is the first day in the entire year I was up before seven for school. I have my AP Biology test today. This is the big one, the one for college credit. I knew I would fail. Science was never my strongest subject. Especially biology. There was too much to know, to memorize. As they read the test instructions, I pray for a three.

12:00pm

Shockingly, the test was a lot easier than I thought. I think I may have even pulled a four. I definitely passed though. My friends sit around me at lunch and they discuss what they will do for the rest of the day. Most teachers excuse anyone who had an AP test from class. Sadly, I had a guard director who did not understand the sanctity of the unspoken law. So, begrudgingly, I plan to stay at school all day.

3:00pm

I am finally free from this prison. A little dramatic, I know, but standardized testing followed by a whole school day? I would rather be locked up. I swing by Sonic on my way home

and pick up a Coke. It is my little treat for making it through the day. The traffic on the street is backed up, so I take a few alleyways to get home. No big deal.

I chase my cat around the house until she resigns to lie with me on the couch. That brat likes to pretend she doesn't love me, but we all know I'm her favorite person. We cuddle as I turn on whatever trashy tv show I am obsessed with. This week, it's Dance Moms.

I only get a few minutes in when my dad gets home from work. We talk about our days. Small surface level conversation, and then he switches the channel. Like hello, was I not watching something? He turns on some football rerun that he's seen a thousand times before. Go Cowboys? I walk to my room, cat in tow, and lay down for a nap.

4:00pm

My phone buzzes. It's my brother's girlfriend. I roll my eyes as I open the text. I do not like her. She doesn't know it, though, and still loves to text me. This one was different though. It was just one sentence: Has Hayden texted you?

# Student Awards

Each edition of Harmony Literary & Arts Magazine there are at least two works chosen by professors to be nominated for different awards in both visual and written arts.

## Guy Cooper Poetry Award

“A Conversation Which Must Be Had”  
By: Quinn Hewitt

Quinn’s poem is a deeply emotional piece, rich with layered meaning that weighs in on familial bonds that is both haunting and beautifully expressed. The imagery is particularly striking and honest, adding a raw quality to the poem. Overall, it captures the complexities of love, pain, and the ever-turning cycles of history within families with grace and intensity.

-Professor Ralph Buckner

## Andrew Rutherford Art Award

"Hidden Happiness"  
By: Tabitha Haxel

Tabitha's piece is strong formally and conceptually. The juxtaposition of bright, arbitrary color and grayscale with the realistically rendered portrait in the center provides an engaging yet balanced composition. The array of faces at different angles and with varied expressions lends nuance to the idea of happiness. The viewer is left to grapple with the tension in the picture plane between the smiling face and the aspects of self or the greater world seeking to bury happiness.

-Professor Jennifer Bock-Nelson



## “Mom’s Garden” - Haylie Silva

My mom has worked hard  
Extremely hard for everything she  
owns One thing she always had  
dreamed Her own garden

Years of townhouses and apartments  
Giving no opportunity for a flourishing garden  
My mother continued to push  
Until she got her house

The home that she bought  
Orange door, opening to endless dreams  
Two-story, brand new  
Nothing like we have ever experienced

After many anticipated years  
Finally, it is possible for her  
dream Started with a few flowers  
Turned into many

Purple flowers falling off our deck  
Seasonal pink and red flowers in her pots  
Elephant leaves in the ground  
Flowers all around

So many different kinds  
Sunflowers and vines  
Ferns growing back each year  
Her continuous love shows in every petal and leaf

Water twice a day  
On the hot, blistering summer days  
Carries so much more weight Then  
just a garden

Her hard-working days  
She still tends to her garden  
One of the only things that she keeps  
All for herself

Tendering to her masterpiece Her  
hard work is being rewarded

Her garden flourishes in bright colors  
All through the warm months

In the winter her flowers begin to fall  
The only thing that is reserved for her  
Gone In a matter of months  
A restarting of the cycle

Her drive does not change  
She continues to push  
Wants the best life for her children  
And of course, her flowers



*Caladium* - Brandi Beckett

*Pansies* - Brandi Beckett



**“The Many Sides of Me”**  
**Randi Green**

[Verse 1]  
Deep in the heart of the country,  
Where the sun always shines  
Riding horses through the fields,  
Feeling so divine.  
But then I put on my uniform, ready  
To defend  
Serving my country with pride,  
A duty I will never bend.  
As an artist, I let my creativity flow  
Painting colors on canvas,  
Letting my emotions show  
Embracing every side of me,  
Letting my true self glow  
Many sides to me, each one unique

[Chorus]  
I am a country girl, a military  
Member too  
An artist at heart, a girly girl  
Through and through  
A tomboy at times, embracing all  
That I do  
My many sides shine bright, my  
Spirit always true

[Verse 2]  
From boots and camo to dresses  
And pearls  
I can rock a paintbrush, or conquer  
The world  
My tomboy spirit keeps me  
Grounded and strong  
While my girly side adds a touch of  
Sweetness all along  
I am a reflection of the world  
Around me  
A blend of contradictions, yet still

So carefree  
A true chameleon, ever-changing  
And free

[Chorus] X2  
I am a country girl, a military  
Member too  
An artist at heart, a girly girl  
Through and through  
A tomboy at times, embracing all  
That I do  
My many sides shine bright, my  
Spirit always true

**“I am from...”**  
**Rebecca Lynch**

I am from  
Strawberry shortcake and G.I. Joe.  
Late night arguments and no sleep.  
Paint splatters and musical car rides.  
Unhappy parents and protective siblings.  
Unwavering trust and innocent hope.  
Little seashells and worms on the  
Playground.

I am from  
Alcoholic fathers and absent mothers.  
Gentle teachers and quiet reading times.  
Deep dark closets that hold all of your secrets.  
BB guns and baby dolls.  
A void or a pit where love should sit  
And an unbearable pressure to never  
Quit.

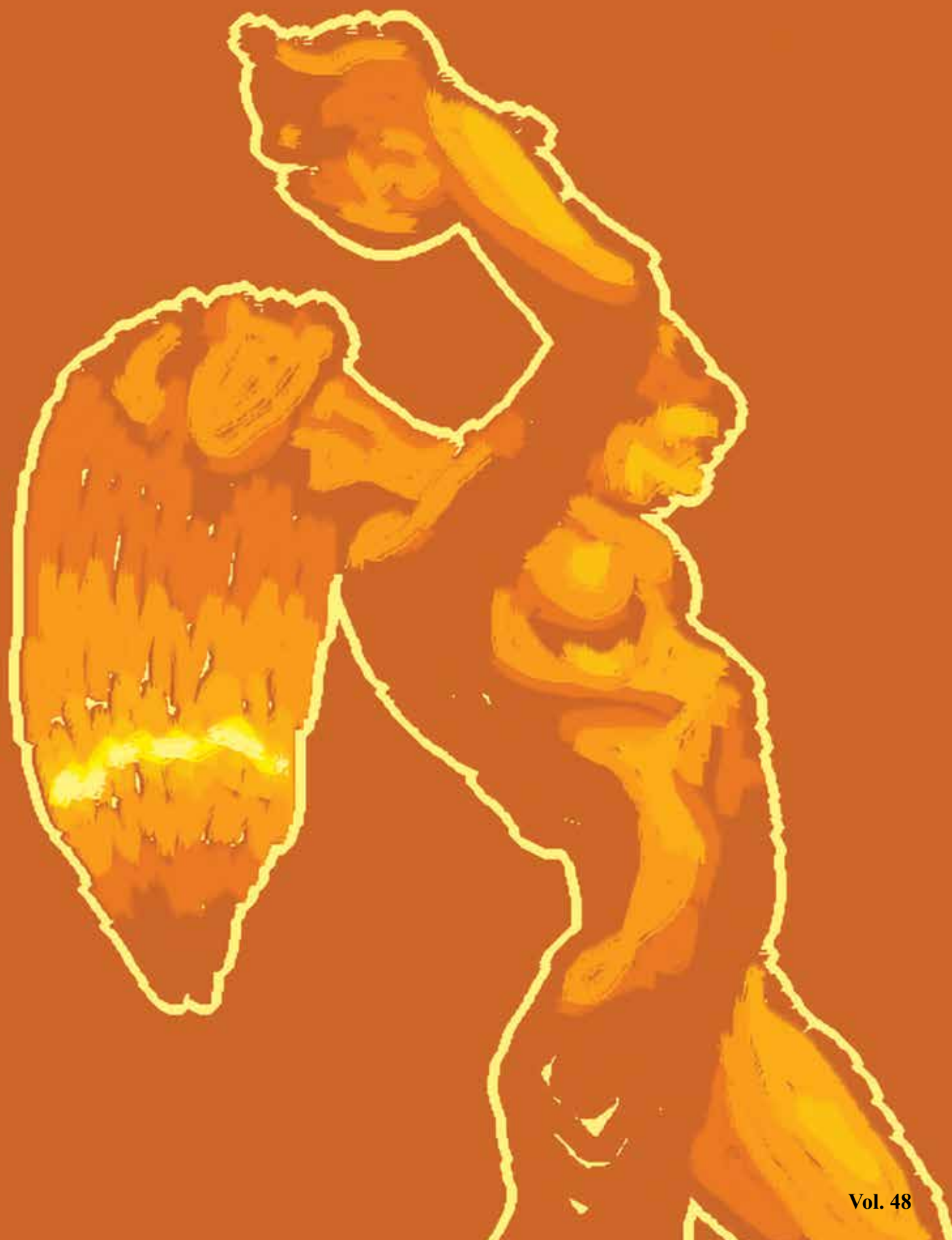
I am from  
The realization of the frailty of life.  
New worlds, new people, new things and  
New fears, new thoughts, new pain.  
Grieving someone who never died.  
Believing there is still hope and  
Comforting others with tear-filled eyes.

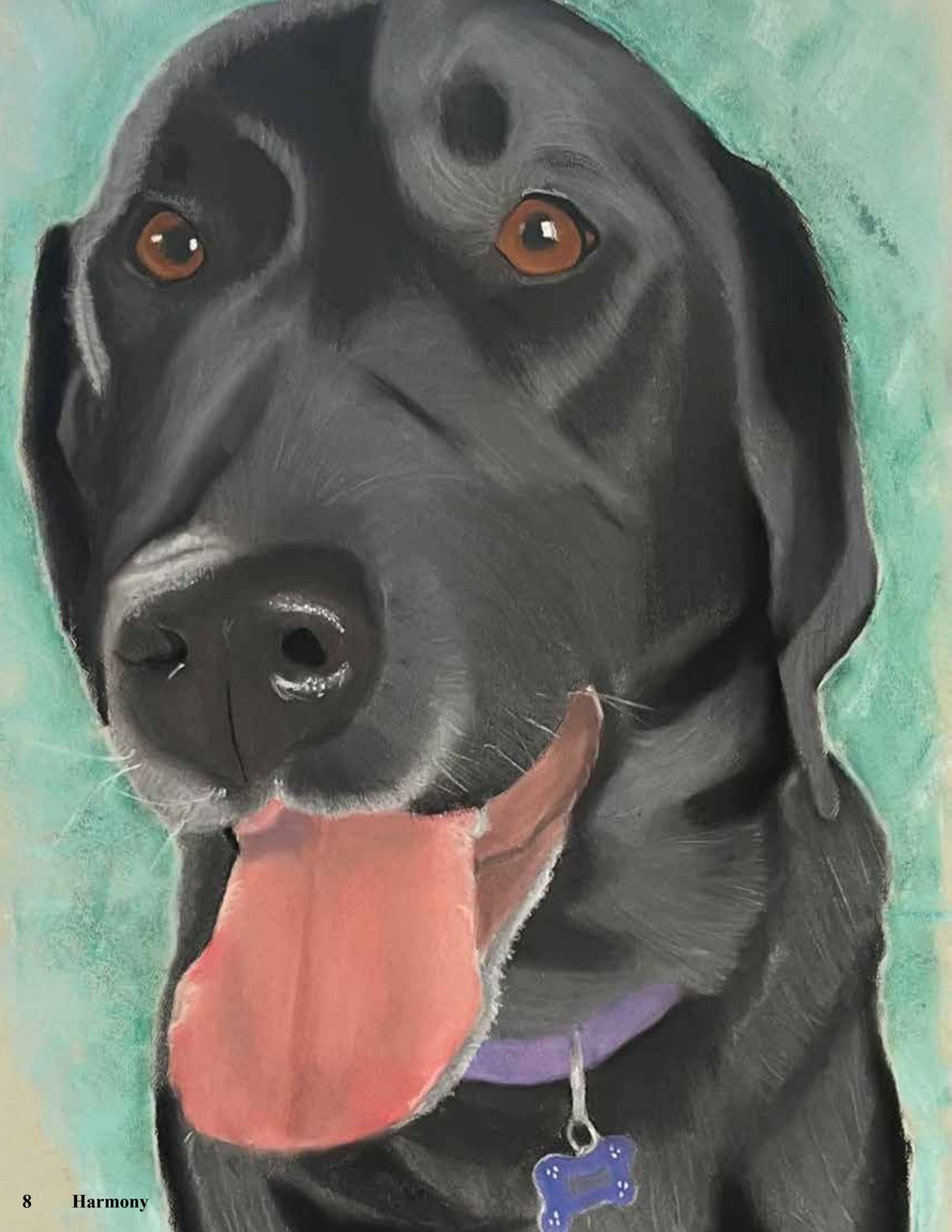
I am from  
Forced independence and growing up too fast.  
A desperate search for meaning and purpose and  
Always needing to dig deeper than the surface.  
Mistakes and problem-solving.  
Late night parties and drunk friends and  
Saying I'll never do that shit again.

I am from  
Fantasy worlds and fleeting time.  
Dreams waiting to be accomplished and  
Dreams that were left behind.  
A little girl who used to cry and  
A woman who locks it all away.  
A God who sees so much more than I.

(right) ***Inspiring Statuary***  
**William Queen**







*Pocket* - Brandi Beckett



(left) *Maggie* - Abigail Bliven

*Ribbit* - Tabitha Haxel



*Brasil Philodendron* - Brandi Beckett



*Philodendron  
Brasil*

*BB24*



## “The Love of an Older Sister” - Ella White

They're shaking. My little sisters, shaking, because they are in shock about the events that quickly unfolded in a matter of seconds. One minute the three of us are standing in the kitchen, chatting, as the sisters make ourselves dinner on a classic “fend for yourself” night. We planned to bring the food to my bedroom and watch a movie together, for the three of us, Barbie movies never get old. That's when it happens, our mother bursts through the door. Looking a mess and covered in blood as if she had just been in a fight. Unbeknownst to us, that is exactly what had just happened. She looked me in the face, her eyes filled with the kind of anger I had never seen before, she dramatically uttered, “Look what they've done to me. They've beat the crap out of me.” I turn calmly to my sisters, doing my best to mask my own anxiety. “Go to your rooms and pack an overnight bag, quickly!” I say to them, I turn back to my mother and calmly suggest she goes to the bathroom to clean herself up and we'll figure out what to do next, she takes my word and turns to go to the bathroom in the back of our house. What my mother didn't know was that there would be no figuring out what to do next. My mother is the villain in my story, I know whatever just unfolded, she was the perpetrator. My little sisters came down the stairs, bags in hand, tears in their eyes, asking me a million questions. I usher them to my car as quickly and quietly as I can. I take their bags, load them into the car, and check that my girls are buckled and safely inside. I start the car and reverse out of the driveway, my eleven-year-old sister takes my hand and squeezes it tight. I don't know where I'm going, I instruct my sisters to get out their phones and turn their locations off, and I do the same. I zoom down the street and dial my dad's phone number. A woman picks up, I'm angry, “Where is my dad” I scream into the phone, “What the hell happened?” I question. The woman replies, “Your mom was drinking and got violent, she started a fight with your dad and me, and we had no choice but to fight back.

Your dad is in the hospital.” Of course, this adds more to my plate for the evening. I drive to safety, a family friend's house. I pull them into the kitchen of the house, explain the situation, and express that I need to leave my sisters there for about an hour while I go to the hospital. We're welcomed with loving arms, I said my thank yous and got back into my car. I pick up my father's phone and head into my house, where my mother is. I quietly pack a bag for my dad and exit. I race to the hospital, give my dad some belongings, exchange I love yous, and head back to my sisters. Once I arrive back, everyone is in a panic. My sisters are sitting on the couch hysterical and in shock. Their teeth chatter as they're covered in dozens of blankets. I sit down between them and take them in my arms. I started to tell them stories of our childhood, happy memories from before our parents decided to act like children and throw in the towel on their parenting responsibilities. I tell them stories of playing dress up, school, and when we would do lemonade stands in our front yard. I tell them stories of softball games and funny memories of practicing together in the front yard and falling down and laughing until our sides hurt. After a while, the girls join in with the storytelling. They tell me the same stories but also mention things that I had done with them throughout our childhood. I see anxiety and panic melt off their faces, tears dry up, and are replaced with smiles and laughter as we recall childhood memories and swap stories. I release a sigh of relief as my girls drift to sleep. I don't know what I would have done if I had to take another trip to the hospital tonight because I wasn't able to calm the girls down. I kiss them both and hold them tight as I lay my head down and drift to sleep myself. I fall asleep thinking about how no matter what happens in this crazy life we were given, I'll always thank God for making me a big sister.

(left) *Finding Peace* - Ella White

# “It Started With a Punch” - Randi Green

## Scene 1

*At the end of the bar in a dimly lit tavern, sits a green-skinned, female half-orc quietly drinking a pint of ale. A black sword with a hilt shaped like a wolf's head rested at her side, along with a war hammer covered in runes. At a table not too far away sat a trio of very different and unique individuals. One fair-skinned female centaur, a dark-furred male bugbear, and a blue-skinned female dragonborn between the two, laughing loudly and drinking a pint of ale.*

*The bartender looks up from cleaning a glass and towards the half-orc, noticing her pint is empty.*

Bartender: Hey Luna!

*The half-orc, identified as Luna, turned to the bartender.*

Luna: Yeah Henry?

Bartender: You need a refill on ale? You've been staring at the bottom of your glass for the last half hour.

*Luna holds her glass up and tips it over, showing that it is actually empty.*

Luna: Well, then you know then that means I need a refill. Now, I'm going to slide this down there and hope that you catch it. Okay Henry? Ready Henry?

*The bartender playfully glares at her and holds his arm out.*

Bartender: Bring it on Luna.

Luna: You're asking for it Henry. One....Two....Three!

*Luna lets the pint go before, but before it reaches the bartender, the fair-skinned centaur gets in the way.*

Katrina: Hey barkeep! Another round for my amazing wife and husband!

*The pint hits her back and breaks, while her tail hits Luna in the face.*

Luna: Hey! Hay for brains! Watch where you're going and whipping that tail!

*Katrina's companions become very quiet and stand. Katrina turns to Luna and frowns.*

Katrina: Excuse me? I was simply coming over here to get another round for my spouses. There is no reason to be rude. Definitely no reason for you to insult me.

*The bartender looks between the two, feeling the tension and sees the other two slowly approaching.*

Bartender: Um...Luna? I-I think I need to leave. So I'm going to grab a bottle of whiskey and leave out the back door.

Luna: Huh? Why Henry? It's just a civil disagreement between two adults. Nothing to be concerned about.

Bartender: Maybe It's because of the tall dragonborn and bugbear behind you that I am currently staring at.

*Luna looks behind her and up at the two individuals.*



Luna: Can I help you two?

Ravenna: Yes, you can leave our wife the hell alone.

*Luna slowly hides her hand behind her back and curls her fist.*

Luna: Oh really? And what do you plan to do if I don't? Hit me?

Aegis: If she doesn't, then I will.

Katrina: I'm just going to push in here between everyone. No need to start throwing punches.

*Luna rolls her eyes, alongside Aegis and Ravenna. All of them knew how this was probably going to end.*

Luna: Enough of this!

*Luna punches Ravenna, who stumbles back into a table. Aegis tries to punch Luna, but she ducks under his arm and tries to grab her warhammer.*

Aegis: Katrina! Stop her!

Katrina: I really wish I didn't have to do this, but you threw the first punch.

*Katrina rears up and kicks Luna at the same time the door to the tavern bursts open. A female tiefling and giant stood there, staring at the chaos.*

Estella: I should've known that Luna was behind all this commotion. Nagini, you take the centaur and I'll take the bugbear. No weapons, we don't want to kill anyone.

Nagini: Why do I always get roped into these things? You and Luna are nothing but trouble.

Estella: Yeah, but you love it. Now, I'm going to slide across this bartop and go ride me a centaur. Yahoo!

*From that day on, a beautiful rivalry and friendship was born. Ravenna the dragonborn against Luna the half-orc. Estella the tiefling against Katrina the centaur. And Nagini the giant against Aegis the bugbear. They fought against each other and if the situation called for it, for each other. And everyone will always remember that it all started with just one punch.*

## Preview "Acquaintance of a Murderer"

Brandi Beckett

My name is Roy and I am the dog of a mass murderer. Denny, my owner, has finally been caught and locked up for good. I have been home alone since the night they came to arrest him. Since no one in Denny's family wanted me, the police officers are taking me to the local dog shelter. I have never been in a car before, or any vehicle for that matter, Denny had never owned a vehicle, not while I was around anyway. It was strange in this patrol car, it's like I'm in a cage! There are bars on the windows, and I can't get to the police officers in the front seat because it's barricaded. It makes me feel sick to look out the windows and see everything moving so fast. I'm just going to lay in the seat with my eyes shut until we get to the shelter. I'm excited to be around other dogs again, it's been so long since I have been able to play with another dog! I will miss Denny so much though! He was a good owner to me, just a bad human towards other humans.

## “I Am From” Zhane Cariglia

I am from  
The broken pieces of an unstable childhood.

The sudden disappearance of a mother.  
An absence of a so-called father.  
Leaving behind four young ones,  
Promises of filling their plates with love.

Forgetting to feed them a proper goodbye.

I am from  
Keeping secrets behind closed doors.  
Where watchful eyes can peer through small crevices  
Keeping the pages hidden away from prying eyes.  
Designing a cover for others to accept fully,

But never to let them openly read,  
A spoiler of the chapter, ending with yours truly.

I am from  
Long hours of endless clashing of  
swords,  
A story begins to unfold.  
Wearing a plate suit of armor behind a glass  
door,  
Escaping into a world of perfection.  
A place where everyone is a hero.  
So long as the controller is held close by for  
protection.

I am from  
One of too many houses.  
A split between foster care and adoption.  
Longing for normalcy over disruption.  
Carrying a sketchbook and pencil that's sharpest,  
Keeps the innovative mind distracted and  
focused.

Dreams of one day becoming an artist.

I am from  
Anger and resentment.  
Ghosting others and breaking  
connections.

The restless city to quiet country roads.  
Bitterness carries a long way.  
Unraveling the chain, learning to let things go

## “I Am From....” Wyatt McCulloch

I am from  
Hushed nothings of  
bookshelves, textbooks of  
distraction and annotations of  
every little detail. Skin-covered  
waxed courts and scars upon  
knees, broken  
record on repeat.

I am from  
lost contact of a  
mother's love and  
longing  
stares across the dead cottonfields.  
Desire of an old man and crocodile  
tears and bruises  
on the hide beneath  
the un-horned kid.

I am from  
the prom queen's prayer closet,  
filled with a nun's tears.  
The wizard's shameful cupboard,  
the escapism of a magical land;  
The skeletons' stolen secrets and  
The spiders' web of lies.  
Journals of telltale signs,  
an anxious beating heart,  
a lump and then a hump  
in the creaky kitchen floorboard  
of the rundown blue crack-house.

I am from  
Holy strait-jackets,  
hindering the flesh of  
demonizing thoughts and  
prayers. An echoing cell of lions  
Adam  
and Eve on repeat:  
Revelations of indoctrination.

I am from  
Fixer-upper trailers, housing  
crackers and noodles;  
Child protective services  
And custody battles.  
A failed drug test, and a mother's  
Final farewell.

# JOIN C-SC Art Club

- Plan events
- Volunteer
- Get involved in the community
- Off campus trips
- Have FUN with art
  - (no experience needed)

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## “The Climb” - Libby Skaggs

There once was a  
hole, It was dark and  
deep,  
Going farther than the eye could  
see, Inky black,  
A feeling seeped  
out, Hopeless and  
despair, Loneliness  
and fear.

In the hole,  
There was a thread,  
Gold and thin,  
Falling down like a  
rope, Straight and stiff,  
A light in the  
darkness, A lifeboat  
in the sea, Of fear.

On the rope  
There was a  
girl,  
She was small and scared,  
With her hand gripping the thread,  
Holding on for her life,  
Red lines appearing,  
Blood covering her  
palm, Dripping down  
her arm, And sticking  
to her hair, Yet she  
held,  
Her hands gripping,  
And her eyes full of  
fear, She screamed up,  
Asking for help,  
For someone to grab the  
rope, To pull it up,  
To somehow help her,  
The only thing that kept her  
going, The small, dim glow,  
Her rope let off,  
The flicker of hope she had.

On the edge of the  
hole, The people  
walked,

A few stood by and shouted  
down, They yelled at her to hold  
on,  
To not worry,  
But they never reached for the  
rope, They just stood on the edge,  
And shared their opinion.

Then there were others,  
Who stood near the rope,  
Knife in their hands,  
Rubbing it on the string,  
Cutting through each  
strand, They don't even  
notice,  
As the girl falls further,  
Their faces  
disinterested, In what  
occurs below,  
Their hands quickly moving,  
But they don't even care.

Most didn't even notice,  
They walked quickly past the girl,  
Their eyes not even seeing the  
hole, Much less the rope,  
And never the girl,  
They continue to  
hurry, Looking  
forward, Focused on  
their lives, Their  
futures,  
Their own  
worries And  
problems.

So the girl hung,  
Her hands  
slipping,  
Her tears staining her  
cheeks, Her eyes glassed  
over,  
Her voice hoarse from  
yelling, And the silence  
filled the room, She looked  
at her hands, Looked at the  
blood,

And began to  
wonder, It hurt too  
much,  
It wasn't worth  
hanging, Soon she  
decided,  
It was time to let go.

Then,  
At the edge of the  
hole, Miles ahead of  
her, Called a voice,  
Urging her to climb,  
To pull her body,  
To use her strength,  
So she called her  
body, Gathered her  
muscles,  
And used her last bit of strength,  
And she began to climb,  
And  
climb,  
And  
climb,  
Her tears still  
streaming, Her body  
dragging,  
She didn't realize how far she had  
fallen, But she wouldn't stop,  
She couldn't stop,  
And slowly,  
It became easier,  
Her hands hurt  
less,  
The tiredness left her body,  
And she began to see the  
light,  
Not just the small glow from the  
rope, But something brighter,  
Coming into the hole,  
Breaking through the  
darkness, That felt  
unending.

Months  
past, Then  
years,  
And she reached the top,  
She felt the warmth of the  
sun, The grass under her  
feet,  
And she looked up,  
At the person who called to  
her, The one who kept her  
climbing, The one who  
saved her life, And she saw  
nothing.

She looked around,  
Wanting to thank  
someone,  
But all she saw was a mirror,

She looked at  
herself, And saw her  
hero, She had called  
herself, Pulled  
herself up,  
And saved herself.

She looked around,  
At the people walking,  
Dodging holes in the

ground, Eyes forward and  
focused, On their own  
lives,  
And she knew immediately,  
They wouldn't help,  
So she went to the first hole,  
And looked down,  
And she spoke,  
Then sat and  
encouraged, As they  
climbed out.

Then she went to the next  
hole, And did the same,  
And the  
next, And  
the next,  
And the  
next,  
She helped them climb.

A few times she  
slipped, Fell back in  
the hole,  
But she always found a  
way, To climb to safety,  
To save herself,  
And in turn save others

*Life and Death - Abigail Bliven*



## “One Fateful Night” - Norah Boggs

Michael stood outside the bar watching as all his friends continued to dance and drink with the random girls they met twenty minutes ago. The bar thumped and exploded with sounds and flashing lights. Suddenly, he hunched over and threw up once more on the side of the old brick building. After losing his dinner for the second time tonight, he dug into his pockets to find his keys. Luckily Michael was supposed to be the designated driver for his friends tonight, but plans changed. Michael stumbles over to his black Honda Civic, tripping over every crack and pothole in the bar parking lot. He unlocks his car and collapses into his cloth-covered seats that are littered with various crumbs and wrappers from previous fast-food trips. Michael fumbles with his keys before throwing them into the ignition. The car roared as it started, it wasn't until this moment that Michael contemplated his decision to drive home. However, the alcohol spoke for him as he continued to buckle his seat belt and put the car into drive. He sped out of the bar parking lot without regarding other vehicles driving on the street. Honking and yelling occurred, but Michael barely noticed.

Michael struggled to stay on the road. Swerving in and out of lanes, the honking from other cars followed him no matter where he went. Eventually, Michael started to recognize the frustration of other drivers. He was too focused on the cars honking behind him to notice the old man crossing the street in front of him. The hood of the car and the old man collided instantly.

Michael slammed on the brakes as the old man fell to the ground. The cars following Michael flew by him, not noticing the man lying on the ground. He got out of the car and ran to the man. The man was lying face-first on the asphalt, unresponsive. Panic filled Michael as he went to flip over the man to only discover his identity. Once Michael stared into those unforgettable eyes, his panic dissolved and turned into a laugh. He couldn't believe it. Michael just hit the one man who ruined him. The flashbacks started to race through Michael's mind. All the things he had worked so hard to forget about were suddenly coming back. The years of therapy, anger management, and time apart, were wiped away in one negligent car ride. Although at the same time, Michael shook it off rather quickly. The man lying in front of him was no old, innocent man. No- he is the human reincarnation of the devil.

Michael got up and wiped his blood-soaked hands on his jeans. He turned his back on the man, who was gasping for air. Michael ignored him as he scanned the perimeter for any other witnesses. While his back was turned, the old man grabbed on to the end of Michael's jeans. He was tugging and begging for his attention. Michael spun around and shook the man off. He then whispered, “Go to hell dad.”. Michael got right back into his car and quickly reversed his car away from his father, who was still lying close to death on the road. Before putting the car back into drive, he deeply contemplated whether or not to hit him again to finally end his life. Michael resisted this urge and instead sped around the man. Michael knew that if he killed him immediately, he wouldn't suffer nearly as much as he had suffered. He wanted that man to feel no mercy. Leaving the man in the taillights of his car, he felt a smile creep across his face. Twenty-four years of suffering satisfied in one drunken ten-minute drive from the bar.

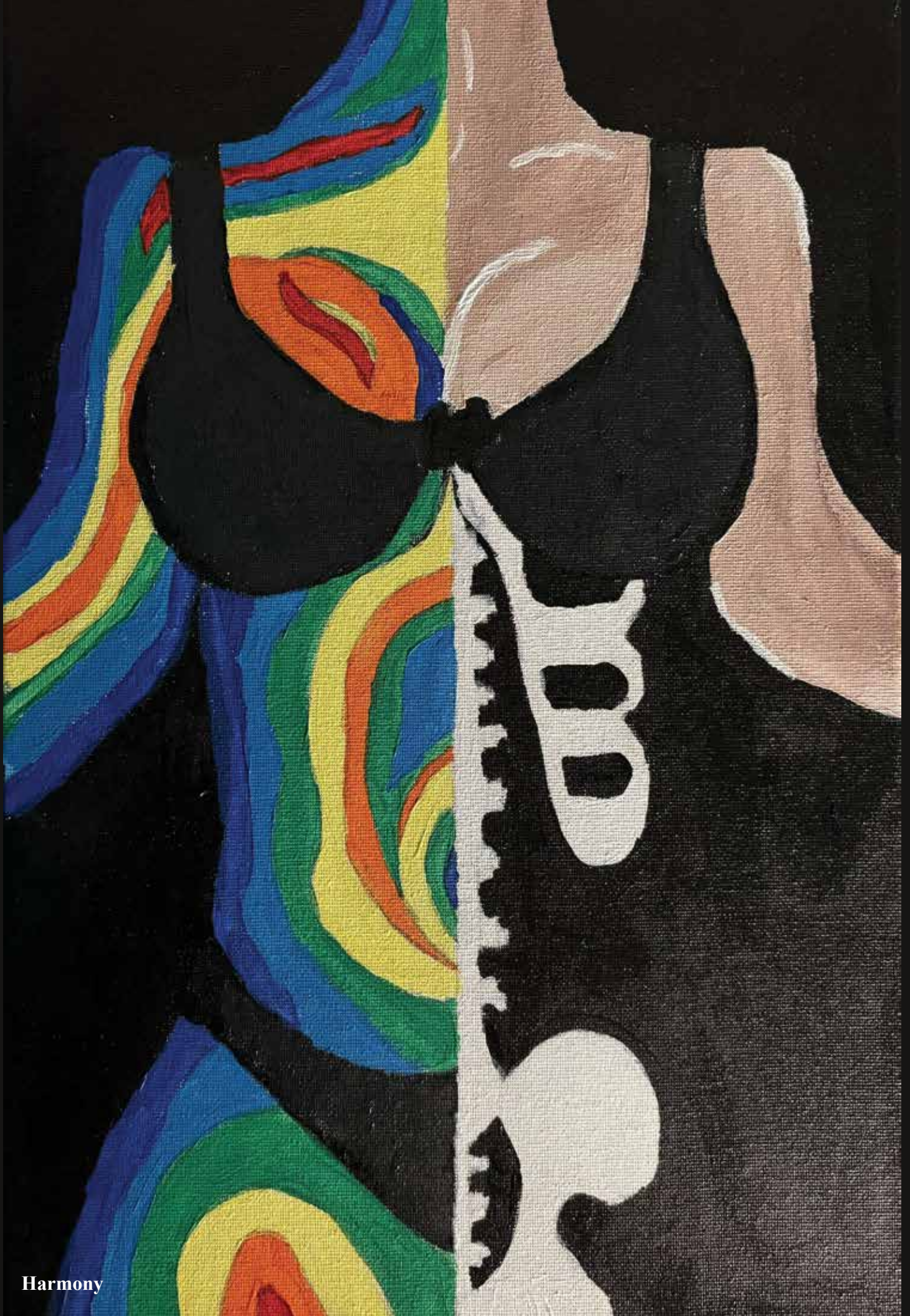
Consequences or no consequences, Michael couldn't give less of a shit about what he just did. He would gladly do it again.

Michael eventually made his way home, to his own surprise he was not pulled over. Not for the huge dent in the middle of his hood, or the tiny spots of blood, or the fact that he was drunk, or even the fact that his tail light was out, but that had nothing to do with what just happened. He got out of his car to examine the damages on his car. Michael quickly decided that he was no longer going to drive the next couple of days. Definitely no more drinking and driving. His phone started to ring, he took it out of his pocket to answer a phone call from one of his friends he left at the bar. Before he even got a second to speak, he was being cussed out by his best friend. While trying to actively calm his friend down, Michael notices a figure approaching him. The loud cursing and swearing were drowned out as Michael observed this figure. He immediately knew who it was. Automatically, he slides the phone back into his pocket.

Suddenly Michael bursts into an all-out sprint towards the figure, pushing the man back onto the ground. The man groans loudly as his body thuds off the concrete. Michael yells “Did you come back for more dad?”. Michael’s dad doesn’t respond. Michael kicks him with all his strength causing his father to curl up in a ball. Michael keeps attacking him “How does it feel?” kicking, kicking, kicking “It sucks doesn’t it? Being useless?”. Michael continues to kick him until he hears a sharp click and the sensation of sharp pain in his leg. He collapses immediately while his dad struggles to stand up. Michael clutches his leg and begins to scream in pain, but his dad shuts him up by putting the end of his glock in his mouth. Michael’s dad starts to laugh as he watches his son shutter in pain and fear as he stands above him. “I am always in control...” he shoves the end of the gun further in Michael’s mouth before continuing “You will never get rid of me. But of course...I can get rid of you.”. His dad jumps as he talks, causing Michael to yelp with fear. His dad just laughs “You’re just as pathetic as when you were a ten-year-old.”. He takes the gun out of his mouth and wipes the end of it on his blood-soaked shirt. Michael still laid on the ground, gripping his wound with both bloodied hands. His dad turns away from him, as if to walk away. Quickly, Michael’s dad turns around and kicks him in the stomach. Michael cries out in pain before his dad grabs his stubbled face with his cold, wrinkled fingers. He whispers in Michael’s face “It sucks doesn’t? Being useless?”. He smirked as he watched Michael’s face turn pale.



*The Wintery Night*  
Caden Saunders





*Chrysidia Rhipheus* - Brandi Beckett



(left) *The Body and Soul* - Courtney Zane

## “Confession of an Ally” - Lexi Tekell

There are monsters attacking the people I love;  
Not their bodies, but their souls and spirits.

They absorb a message that comes in different flavors - false, restrictive, and empty - With a predatory obsession for the weak and the young.

The monsters are then infected with a virus that is hard to combat; You're naive if you're yet to learn, but you're helpless when you refuse growth.

These monsters are wretched.

The people I love produce a beautiful spectacle-

Flowers of spring, leaves of autumn, sparkle of winter, glisten of summer. They glow and sing into my spirit, convincing me that heaven must be on earth. But the monsters hate their color.

The monsters attack the people I love,  
Desiring to make this earth monochrome with each attack.

They don't just bite - they shred, shatter, and decimate.

Sometimes, the monsters pick up the remains and mesh it into one of their kind. These

monsters are wretched.

I lash out at these monsters;

They're undefeatable as a whole, but last night I caught one and healed it. I watched as the monster's outer shell melted off, the person within falling to the ground. She looked exactly like me.

I used to be a monster.

I used to be wretched.

## Preview

### “A Very Long Poem About Depression”

Jacob Kreps

Waking up, to someone like me, is hard  
I have to live the same day in the same year over again  
Like a broken record stopped in its tracks  
Repeating the same broken line until one day  
The record player breaks  
And the world keeps moving  
I have motivators for myself to help me  
My girlfriend, fraternity, teachers and parents guide me  
Though some days they disappear into the fog of my  
mind  
And I am alone once again  
They help the clouds to drizzle  
But when my mind is astray, lightning begins to spew  
Some days it feels like being buried alive  
Everyone walks above me and minds their  
business  
Yet I know they exist, and they know not of me  
Out of bed, I will enter the shower.  
My hair is greasy, so I must wash it  
If I don't, I feel disgusted in myself,  
More than I normally feel  
I sound like an edgy teenager when I project my  
emotions I don't try to, this is just how I project  
And when I project, people stick to that stereotype  
I am laughed at, ignored, pushed away, and bullied  
All for something that is out of my control

## Preview “Why Me?” - Daniel Dover

I still remember everything like it was yesterday. It was mid-way through 2018. My mom got a new boyfriend. I really liked the guy. He always wanted to show me how to do work around the house or how to work on a car. I liked spending time with him. His name was Billy. My mom loved Billy. Billy and I had the same taste in music. He loved newer rock bands and so did I. A really popular band was coming to Saint Louis by the name of Five Finger Death Punch. I wanted to go really bad. I asked Billy if he'd ever heard of them and he told me, “I love Five Finger Death Punch man. I was thinking about buying tickets for their show, would you want to come with me?” I couldn't believe that I was getting an opportunity to go and see one of my favorite bands. I was ecstatic about going. I was in such awe about the concert that I forgot I had a vacation to go on with my father. I was really upset about not being able to see one of my favorite bands in person. Billy wasn't upset with me; he knew I forgot about the vacation. I didn't know this at the time but that is one of my biggest regrets so far in life, not going to that concert.

## “UZU Maki” - Mason Vicary

Uzu Maki had always been a ghost in his own life. The invisible boy or the quiet one.

Somedays he wished he was invisible because he knew he didn't belong. He felt it in school, in public and even at home. The silence that followed him around school, the stares that burned, the way people stepped around him like he wasn't there. Born to a father named Kenji, who worked two jobs, none of which paid enough to make their single-story house look like it wasn't sinking into the ground, and a mother Yumi, who never spoke but always seemed to be screaming silently, Uzu grew up understanding that he would always be different. His parents were dead broke, and his dad was a really angry figure. While Uzu didn't see him often when he did, his father made him feel even more worthless. Saying things like, “you'll never be a good son” and “I should've never had you” just takes out all the anger he's built up on his only child. Yumi was a drug addict. While she loved Uzu and tried to take care of him as much as possible, she was too wrapped up in heroin. Uzu would wake up to his mother almost dead night after night. He loved his mother but understood she was a terrible being. Uzu would watch as his father beat his mother and then both would end up high as a kite passed out on the floor waiting for it all to end.

Uzu hated being alive. He hated being at home, school and anywhere around people.

What he loved was to be alone. On his long 3-mile walks to school it was the only time Uzu could crack a smile and today was one of those days. It was the last day of high school. Which for some can be a very sad day as they reminisce on everything and everyone. For Uzu, this day was the best day of his life. He no longer had to worry about school, worry about getting

stared at or bullied. He couldn't wait for this to all be over. Uzu was walking down the hall when he got pushed into a locker and jumped by what seemed like the whole school. Someone even yelled “I hope I never see you again freak” little did they know what they just created. Uzu said quietly under his breath “you'll see me one last time.” Bloodied and battered, Uzu ran out of the school knowing he'd be back for revenge. Every year they hold a concert and get together at the football stadium for all of the graduating students. The concert was everything he wasn't. Full of energy and life, with nothing but good memories. When he made it back home neither of his parents were there. He thought it was odd as usually his mother is there every day. He didn't care though, more silence for him. He went to his parents' room where he found three different guns. He took them and looked in the mirror and said, “today is my day.” He stood on the outskirts at first, blending into the background, watching the faces of the rich kids he'd gone to school with. The ones who had smiled when they took everything and handed nothing back.

The ones that stared, bullied, and even the group of kids who jumped him today. Their lives were smooth as water, their futures stretched out and planned for. He could see them dancing, carefree, as the beat throbbed through the air, as if the world had been built to serve them.

It wasn't fair to Uzu. The old Uzu, the one who just stood there, invisible, was no more. Tonight, he was going to shine and stand up. He pulled out the gun with calm precision, almost surprised at how easily it fit into his hand, and how natural it felt. He took one more look around and began to smile. When the first shot rang out, everything seemed to come to a silence to him. The music was still blaring, as the collective breath of the crowd gasped in disbelief before

screams erupted. Uzu's pulse raced, not in fear, but with pure adrenaline. He had their attention now. Something he has never had before; it was his time to shine. One by one, he mowed them down. It wasn't chaotic. It was a mission, one that has been built up for years. Some tried to run, others tried to fight. But Uzu had prepared for this. He had been rehearsing this moment in his head for years, and now, it played out perfectly. He mowed down as many people as he possibly could. Walking through the mounds of dead bodies, flowing with blood. Uzu shot at everything that moved.

When it was over, he stood among the bodies, breathing in the silence that was even more satisfying than the noise before it. The people who had towered over him his whole life were reduced to the same level as him, or lower. He sat there listening to the sirens heading his way. He then woke up from the delusion and realized what he had just done. He saw tons of cops running his way and when he tried to take off, all he heard was shot after shot but these were not from him. As his legs lit up on fire, his back pierced with bullets and his blood rushed to the wounds. It all happened so fast. As he collapsed, he said “this was the best day of my life.” He then rolled over and closed his eyes. Uzu Maki was now the ghost he always knew he was.

## *Halloween Fog - Carter Landcaster*



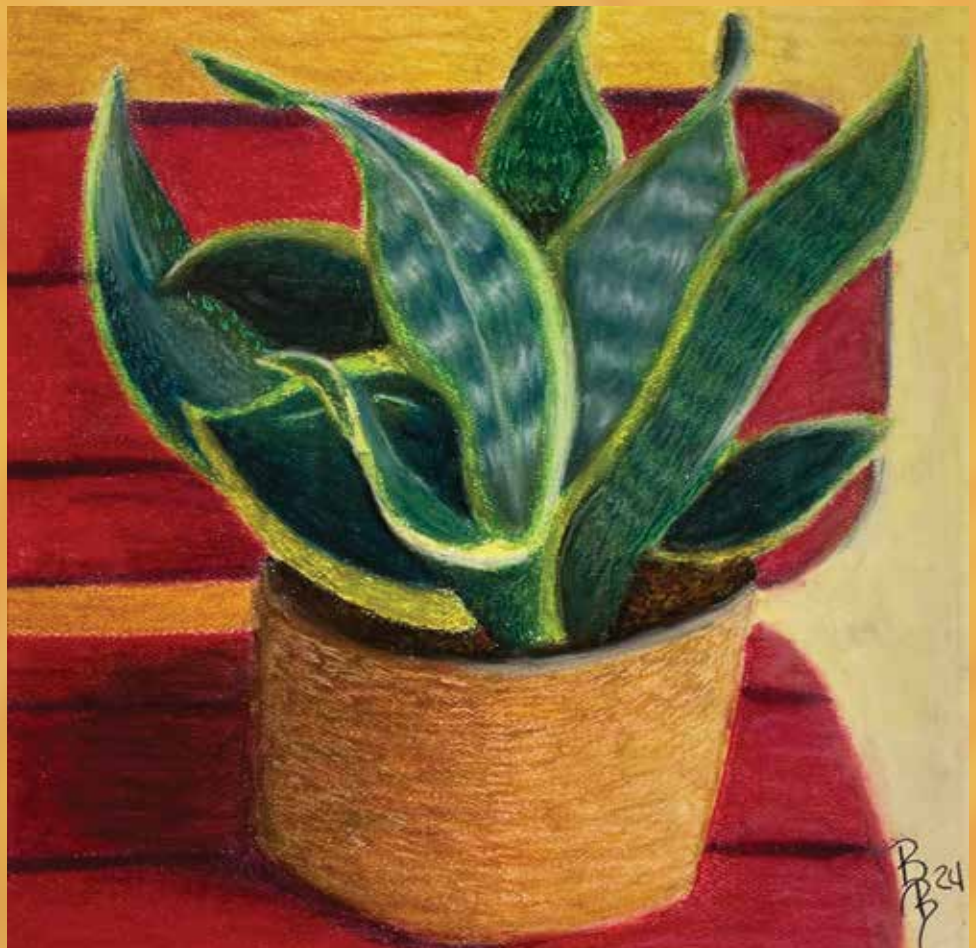
## “Paper Airplane” - Benjamin Wheeler

The paper airplane is a staple of cartoons and childhood mischief. While the ability to construct a paper airplane is often seen as common knowledge to the skilled veterans of the art, many don't exactly understand the philosophy, construction, and the art form that is the paper airplane. We must understand the philosophy of a paper airplane in order to achieve the mindset of a human who attempts this greatness.

When we think of a paper airplane, we must begin with the mindset of a rascalion, a goofball, a knucklehead. An individual that chooses to dabble in this art form doesn't care about the consequences and focuses on the greatness that lies ahead of them. Disrupting a class is just the icing that lays upon the cake of anarchy. We must internalize this mindset and project it out words. The friction that slows our airplane is not our enemy, the establishment is our enemy.

Construction is our next hurdle. We must start with a paper of the common man, 8 ½ by 11. Some say this is what the gods used to construct the earth and its bounty, but we don't have time to elaborate. Initially we take this fine sheet and place it in the portrait form in front of us. We take both corners, at the top and fold them to meet tip to tip, making your paper into the shape of a house. Now we fold this house shaped paper in half vertically, this leaves us with a piece of paper that, when held landscape, represents that face of a bullet train. Then we fold them towards the spine to make the shape of wings. If you can't grasp this simple step by step construction process, then you were never meant to enjoy this art form and lack the childish glee within your heart to introduce some anarchy to your life.

The art of the throw is just as important. When we hold the underbelly of this monstrosity and throw it in a straightforward direction that forces our plane upwards and catches the wind. This step is the most simple and complex motion to understand. Many simpletons can grasp this and therefore fail and also lack imagination.



*Snake Plant*  
Brandi Beckett

*Christmas Frog - Tabitha Haxel*





## “Magical Misfits”

Randi Green

[Verse 1]

Embrace your quirks, let your freak flag fly  
Normalcy's overrated, let's aim for the sky  
Be unique, be strange, let your colors unfurl  
Let's break free from the mundane, let's give it a whirl  
Being weird isn't an insult, being normal is

[Chorus]

We're magical misfits, we're stars in the night  
Dancing to our own beat, shining oh so bright  
Embrace your weirdness, let it be your guide  
Let's show the world, we've got nothing to hide

[Verse 2]

Society's constraints, they try to hold us down  
But we'll rise above, we'll claim our crown  
Let's celebrate our differences, let's stand tall  
Let's be proud of who we are, flaws and all  
Let's redefine normal, let's break the mold

[Chorus] X2

We're magical misfits, we're stars in the night  
Dancing to our own beat, shining oh so bright  
Embrace your weirdness, let it be your guide  
Let's show the world, we've got nothing to hide

(left) *Crazy Daisies*

Brandi Beckett

(right) *Pictures*

Martez Rhodes





## “A Conversation Which Must Be Had” - Quinn Hewitt

Almost perfect, except one regard  
Her son is just like her  
Hiding demons, within the home, freeing it from peace  
he does the same, to hide the shame, a cowardly son I am  
The air heavy, within that home, no comfort, just a bed  
The weight grows heavy, and wears them down  
Large and heavy, feasting on joy, he lets someone else take the plate  
This gluttonous demon, stops at nothing to have its fill  
It will tear down walls, clamor the halls, when it thinks no one can hear  
it She was almost perfect, except one regard  
The pot boiled over, those tensions raged, and her image harshly changed  
The demon had took hold, never so bold, something small, but ultimately, deranged

Fate is a gambler, and a cheat, never will anyone be dealt a fair hand  
Many men had lost their wits, looking fate in its eye  
Many men had lost their way, desperate for what couldn't be  
Many men, themselves disqualify  
Many men could never know, struggle of a woman as she  
Many men am I, I know not her toils, or her shame  
If she could fail me, am I fated to do the same?  
Is it written in my stars, to fight myself, an unending battle, does she feel it  
too? Will the same feelings bubble and stew, will I be so desperate to be right?  
Her moment of anger, stole years of peace, and left no comfort in my bed. The  
toll it takes on me must be tenfold for her, for that, tears I shed

The clouds storm, and it rains on the ridges of my mind  
Frozen, unfrozen, thought and unthought, until it's been too long since I last  
called She needs me, cold without the sun, watching her moon, lose its pull, And  
begin to drift on and on, clear through to the gates  
But the moon clings on, and the moon must persist, on this lopsided orbit

It might pretend to shine on its own, in time, it will  
In the shadow of a fallen star, but not so  
But as a continuum, as a memory, and as a son  
The moon which missed it's sun, must learn to be something new altogether



# JOIN HARMONY

## 2025-2026

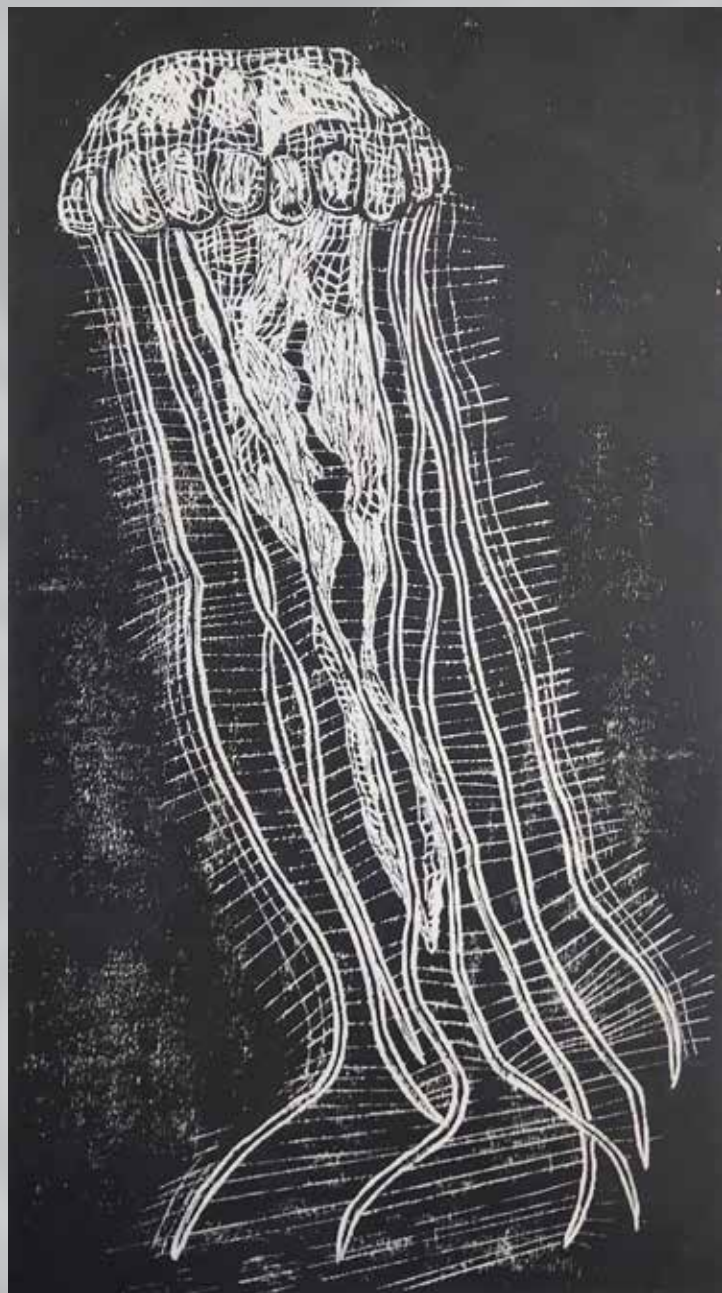
0-2  
English  
Credits

Flexible  
Schedule

Writers  
&  
Designers  
Needed

English  
215/415

*When You Were On the Farm - Tabitha Haxel*



*From the Aquarium - Tabitha Haxel*

## Preview “The Woman” - Emma Hammes

Across the room, she looks at the mysterious man with a sharp jawline and a well maintained dark and handsome beard. Her glass rises to her glossy lips as she takes a sip of her red wine. She has confidence in her like she hasn't had in a long time. Her tight red dress makes her waist look slim and her legs long. She pulled her thick brown hair in a nice, slicked-back ponytail which was freshly washed and dyed. Her fingers twirl her hair as she looks at the man who seems to have no interest in her. He has a tall slender figure; with muscles you could see through his black suit. The woman picked up her glass of wine, tilted it up and finished it all. She was going to need the extra courage if she had any chance of talking to him. She stands up, with her back straight, and her chest forward, one leg after the other. The model walks calmly and modestly to the mysterious man. Her hands rub across his shoulder down to his arm, as she turns to him.

## Preview “The Moment The World Stopped”

Greg Hopkins

My sophomore year of high school I had a lot to prove. The beginning of preseason basketball rankings came out, I was ranked 28th in my class and my team was ranked 20th. I told myself I wasn't going to be done there and was striving to be better. I remember going through the first days of tryouts for the team and I wasn't playing my best. At that time, I had it on my mind to prove everyone wrong and be the best. That led me to not performing the best. When tryouts were complete, we had individual meetings with the head coach so he could place you on a team. My hands were sweating, I was shaking, I just wanted to hear good news. Most of the other schools had their roster already and a lot of my friends made varsity. I sat down across from the coach as my hands were still pouring as if I just played a game. “I think it's best you start on JV this year” truthfully that's the only thing I heard from that conversation. He must have noticed my shock and discomfort from the cold blank stare I gave him and my unresponsiveness to his comments. All I asked was if there was going to be a chance to be moved up and he said of course. Leaving that meeting I knew I had to face the reality of my situation as everyone asked me what team I was on, and I saw the reactions of shock, laughter and doubt. That day I promised myself I would come back better, and I was fueled by a lot of anger and frustration.

## Preview “Fire Upon the Hills”

Alayna Chandler-Gutierrez

A long time ago is such a hard time frame to interpret these days. My current situation is less than ideal, I'd love to think a long time ago was years and years. Unfortunately, my story, my story is the product of the aftermath of crime, envy, lust, love, and finally war. I would also love to say that my understanding of how the world used to be was forged from stories from my great-grandmother, yet again that option does not exist in today's world. The story that most know is that the world used to live a semi-harmonious life. People were not separated by color, race, gender, or anything. Cities hustle and bustle, as rural areas had farmers that would supply food, politicians who would run the country, and people had jobs who were all synchronous. They had a good balance of everything until the red and blues came.

## “His Love” - Ella White

His love is something I have never experienced,  
Unconditional and unwavering.  
He loves me in all my loud, messy ways  
That others would see as less than perfect.  
My attitude,  
My energy highs,  
and the lows that follow,  
And the never-ending noise within my  
head. I love his shaggy hazelnut-colored  
hair, Always tucked within a hat.  
His dark brown eyes,  
And his crooked, goofy smile.  
The clunk of his boots as he walks next to me,  
Hand in hand,  
Is a sound I'll never get tired of.  
His love is something I had never felt before,  
Always a gentle touch,  
A kiss on the forehead,  
The brush of his thumb on my hand,  
And tucking my hair behind my ear.  
To know him is to know he's so much more than his exterior,  
He's not as tough as he seems,  
He likes to nap and watch movies.  
He'd rather stay in than go out,  
Lazy days are our favorite days.  
His love is full of words I never used to believe,  
But now I do.  
“I love you for who you are”,  
“Forever and always”,  
“Me and you”,  
“My love for you will never run out”,  
And “We'll make it through”,  
He says.  
I never thought he'd be so sweet until now,  
I've known him my whole life,  
It never occurred to me that he had such a sweet side.  
I like that he saves that part of himself only for me.  
His love is something I would never ask for in  
life, But he gives willingly.  
Monday Starbucks,  
Letters hidden in my bedroom,  
Doing repairs on my car,  
And my head is being filled with love songs from a playlist made by him,  
Just for me.  
He's not much of a writer,  
English was never his favorite subject.  
But he does it anyways,  
Just because I love it.  
His love is full of nicknames I had never seen myself as before.

“My Love”,  
“Honey”,  
“Baby”,  
And “pretty girl”,  
He calls me.  
Coming from a past that was filled with  
Hate, jealousy, and conflict,  
He eases my mind.  
Ones from the past challenged the way that I was.  
Ones from the past didn't like the way I acted.  
Ones from the past didn't like the way I looked.  
Ones from the past stayed with me,  
But didn't even like me.  
I spent those years questioning who I was,  
What I liked,  
What my values were, and more.  
Ones from the past broke me and made me question myself.  
But not him,  
He picked up my broken pieces and put me back together,  
Even when he didn't have to.  
He loved me through my brokenness,  
Even when he didn't have to.  
He saw me for who I was and loved me,  
Until I was the girl before the brokenness again.  
His love is something I never had to ask for,  
His affection is something that I never have to earn,  
His kindness comes to him as easily as breathing,  
He loves me as if it was what he was created to do.  
His love is something I have never experienced,  
So I always plan on keeping it close.

(right) *Date at Pet Land*  
**William Queen**



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