

special anniversary edition

50 YEARS

50 YEARS

50 YEARS

COLLAGE^{of}

*a journal of creative expression
spring 2018*



C²

Categories

Creative Expression **WINNERS**

pg 34

he vaults onboard the train guerilla-like with a bucket hanging loose around his neck.

pg 32

pg 8

His giggle was like **SUNLIGHT and LIQUID**

GOLD.

pg 12

pg 27

pg 34

Published by
**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
 HONORS COLLEGE**





COLLAGE *SPRING '18*

This journal of creative expression just turned

50 **AGE**

Check out our new audio & video:
mtsucollage.com



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Letter from the **EDITOR**

Throughout my four years on staff, I have seen many changes in Collage, and I am proud to be doing my part for the *fiftieth anniversary edition*. I would first like to thank Dean Vile, Marsha Powers, and the entire Honors College faculty and staff for their continued support—none of this would have been possible without them.

Collage has a long history at MTSU. Since its founding in 1968, the student-led magazine has been a creative influence on the University. When I look at these early editions, carefully filed in the Collage office, I am always struck by how much love has been put into them, and that enthusiasm has not changed with time and format.

Because major funding was cut in 2004, there was fear the magazine would no longer be published. Thankfully, previous dean of the Honors College Dr. Philip Mathis took Collage under his wing. Since then, it has become a cornerstone of the Honors College and has had many loving editors, reviewers, designers, and readers as well as contributing authors and artists.

Our fiftieth year of Collage would not have been possible without the hard work of everyone on staff. I am always proud of the amount of love and labor our members give—creating a semesterly magazine is difficult, but we come together and overcome every challenge. Just this year, we have opened our doors to audio and video submissions, thanks in no small part to our new website. The physical edition of Collage will always be important, but now we can showcase even more students' creativity. I am thankful I can witness this exciting new direction.

I believe that Amy Jones Gray, first editor of the new Collage, would be happy with the current edition. In Volume One of Spring 2005, she says, "I personally hope that this Honors College publication is something that you and the entire Middle Tennessee State University community can and will be proud of for many years to come." Thirteen years later, I am grateful to be a contributor to Collage's longstanding legacy, and I hope we will continue to publish a magazine of which the community can be proud. ♡



REBECCA CLIPPARD
Editor in Chief



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poetry | Mitchell Lawrence

SILENT SAILS

Bereft of captain, missing crew,
 Away from port, the ship did sail,
 As quiet as the morning dew.
 Its sails kept up, the fabric wide,
 The ship's a victim of the tide.
 No hearty men, no merriment,
 And yet so still, she seems content.
 No treasured men, nor treasured goods,
 But a sturdy hull made just of wood.
 She drifts upon the open seas,
 Free to do as she may please.
 The silent guardian of the waters,
 Though many see her, none dare stop her.
 Without a crew to sing their songs,
 She makes no evil, commits no wrongs.

M. F. Lawrence



electronic pop | 4:29
 Dillon Matheny & Alex Parham
HAZE



motion graphics | Jordan Fitzgerald

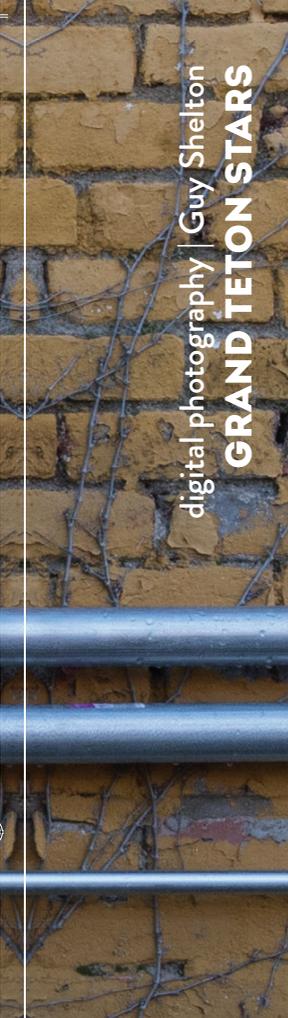
CONTEMPLATION TELEVISION INTRO

poetry | Hannah Berthelson

WEIGHTLESS

Her head lay softly next to his,
 framed by a halo of green grass,
 eyes closing but only just,
 as if the lids were feathers resting upon each other.
 "This must be what it feels like to have no worries,
 and to have never worried before," she breathed.
 "There is no weight in my heart to keep it in my chest anymore;
 it has flown away, light as a bird, right between those clouds."
 Her eyes opened slowly, but again only just,
 as if to peek out at a moment she wasn't sure was real
 and catch it before it fled.
 As they closed again, she smiled knowingly, and he did too.
 They lay side by side, the Earth beneath them,
 their softest of grins mimicking its gentle curve.
 In that infinite moment, all was well.

Hannah Berthelson



digital photography | Cody Uhls
REACHING IN THE UNKNOWN



digital photography | Guy Shelton
GRAND TETON STARS



digital photography | Blair Bandy
INSIDE OUT

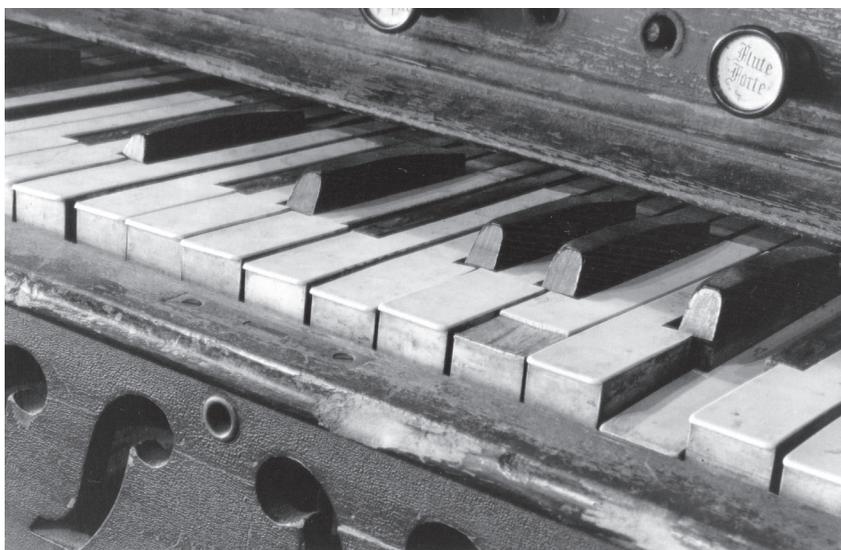




digital photography | Blair Bandy
CAROUSEL



film photography | Jackee LaFever
DEAD KEYS



Stephanie Van Horn

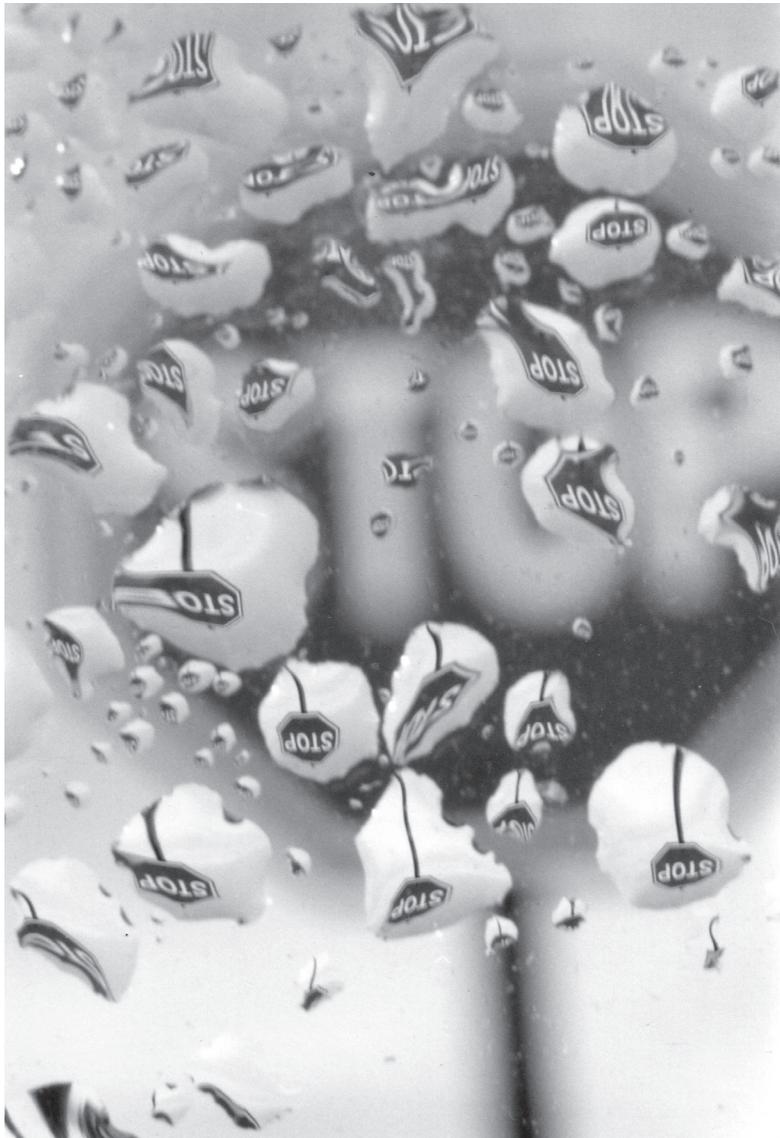
LIGHT MEETS CHALK

digital photography

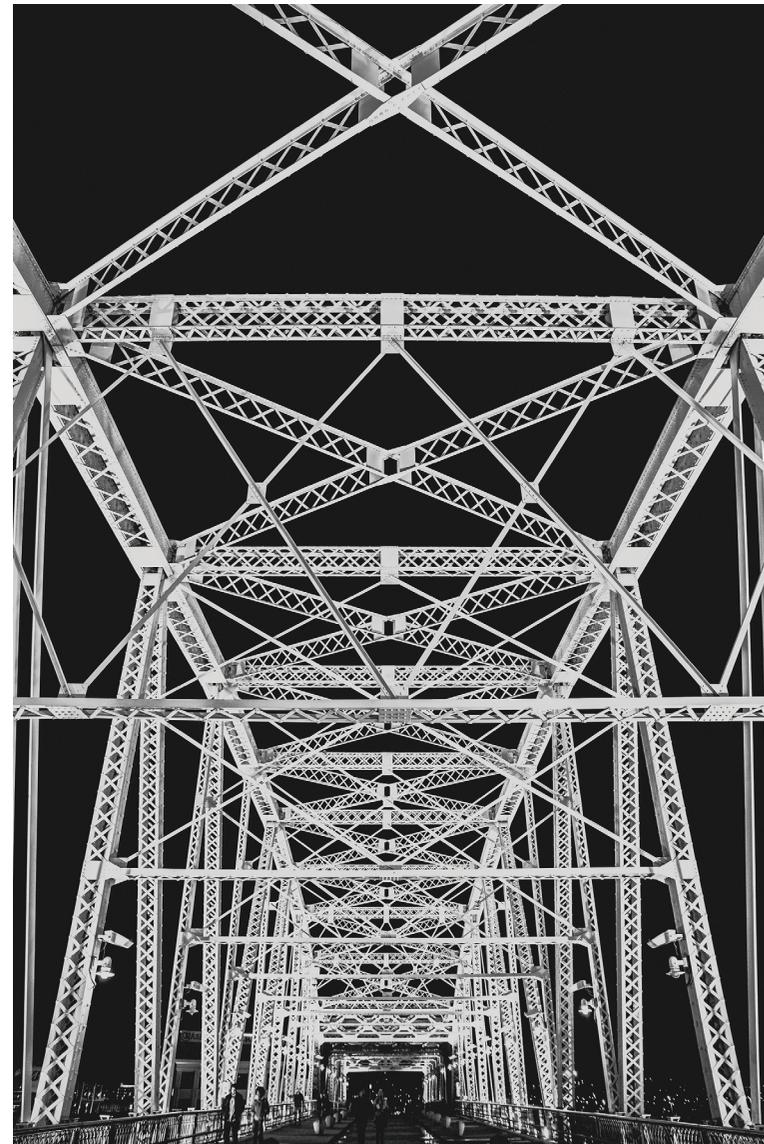




digital photography | Jacob Jones
DOWNTOWN BRIDGE



film photography | Jackee LaFever
STOP DROPS





digital photography | Jessica Byerly
LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER



fiction | Emily Garrett
MY SISTER'S ANGEL

There is a worn, marbled-green document box on the kitchen table in front of me. My fingers tap the lid, itching to open it but equally dreading it. I don't know what possessed me to pull this box out from underneath my bed. Really, today is just like any other day. On a day like this, you make the choice to drag yourself out of bed, to skip the damn coffee. On a day like this, you might finally call your mother or have a salad for lunch instead of that leftover slice of pizza. It is a day in which decisions are made for no apparent reason at all.

Perhaps, I pulled out the box because I'm especially sad today. Then again, I'm especially sad every day. Deep down, I know I did it because today Benji would have turned ten.

From my place at the kitchen table, I can see into the dim living room. Rachael, my sister, is passed out on the couch. Her black bangs brush the pale skin of her forehead, and in the dusky light, the deep-etched lines around her mouth and the dark pools beneath her eyes could be invisible, she could be twenty-five again—innocent.

My sister is sick, and she has been for years; I think she was sick long before she had Benji. But her sickness isn't one that the doctors can fix or even see. The sickness is in her mind, they tell me, and no amount of medication can extinguish it. She doesn't even lie to me about trying to find a job anymore. She just breathes and drinks and medicates and then passes

out on that couch. I let her stay because she has nowhere else to go.

I turn my attention back to the box. With a resigned sigh, I lift the lid. Inside is an array of glossy, rectangular memories. Some of the photographs are vivid—the scenes within full of life and vibration. Others are faded from years of being admired by the sun upon a coffee table or bookshelf.

My hand trembles as it passes over a photo of Benji. I grasp it with both hands as if I can steady myself against the inexplicable sadness bearing down on me.

Benji sits on a park bench, and I can just see the curve of his face and his nubby nose peeking out from the hood of his puffy jacket. The jacket was red, his favorite color. I remember that day. It had been a cool afternoon in early autumn, just months before the accident. I'd taken him to the park, where we fed Cheerios to the koi fish in a small man-made pond.

In the photo, he is looking off camera, a rare moment I'd been able to capture while he was sitting still. He'd been enthralled by the way the fish's mouths opened and closed as they hunted down the pieces of cereal.

"Look at their kisses!" He stuck out his lips to imitate the fish. The curve of his chubby cheek was so soft in the sunlight. He shrieked with laughter when I snuggled closer and gave his cheek a peck. "Make the fish face!"

I did so to his delight. His giggle was like sunlight and liquid gold.

That night, he had a nightmare. He ran into the living room, and I held him in my lap as he sobbed, his warm cherub cheek nestled against my chest. Rachael was staying with me then, but she hadn't been home for a few nights.

His tears dried, and each slow breath told me he had fallen asleep. The clock ticked, and I rocked him back and forth, keeping time with its steady rhythm. Benji's head rested on my heartbeat. Rachael still wasn't home and hadn't even called.

////

His giggle was like **SUNLIGHT and** **LIQUID GOLD.**

After Rachael got pregnant, Mom acted like she wanted nothing to do with her and wanted me to do the same.

"Are you going over there again?"

"She's my sister, Mom."

Mom would just flap her hand toward the door angrily. She would stay angry with me for the next day or so and then ask me how Rachael and Benji were doing.

Rachael was fine; Benji was darling.

Mom would hum as if satisfied, but she only hummed when she was anxious, like some people whistle or chew on their lip. She hummed a lot whenever something concerned Rachael.

Rachael had always been unstable, but after dropping out of college, she spiraled. It was all men and clubs, modeling for this fellow or dating this old man. I lost touch with her a few times, but then she called to tell me about the pregnancy. She'd been in tears on the other end of the line, asking if I'd come see her and if I had any money. I brought her some food instead. She didn't know who the father was.

I'd just graduated college, and I was working from my

apartment as an editor. Rachael showed up on my doorstep, one-month-old Benji in her arms, asking me if I'd watch him for the day. She had a job interview. She told me she was finally getting her life together for her son. This continued for the next few years. Most nights, she'd come to my apartment drunk and crash on the couch—some nights she didn't come back at all.

Through all this time, I watched Benji take his first steps. I toilet trained him. I eased every ache and fever, kissed every boo-boo. Rachael would return through it all, vague and sick, barely there at all. By the time Benji was five, she had completely succumbed to her instability and didn't even try anymore.

For a while, I had been thinking about filing for custody until the night of the accident. I tried to talk to Rachael about it, but I know now that was my first mistake.

"He's my son!" she screamed. She had reached her breaking point long ago.

"Alright, he's your son! He's your son! Then act like his mother."

I was crying because I knew she couldn't, and she was crying because, deep down, I think she knew it too. She just couldn't admit it.

She left that night with Benji in tow. That was my second mistake—letting her take him from me.

On her way to who-knows-where, she crashed her car into a truck. She survived.

She was back in my life a few months later, asking for a place to crash. She had nowhere else to go.

////

Tears blur my vision. I hate her. But mostly, I hate myself.

Rachael stirs on the couch and sits up groggily. "What are those?"

I wipe my eyes. "Photos."

She comes to my side like a phantom, her eyes glassy. She points to Benji in the photograph. "Look, Annie! Look how he shines!"

I look more closely and see that there is a faint, white halo of light outlining his tiny form. It may have been a trick of the lens or maybe some God-given symbolism.

"He's an angel now, Annie. My angel!" She starts to sob and collapses into a miserable pile on the kitchen floor. The circles under her eyes and creases on her face are visible again.

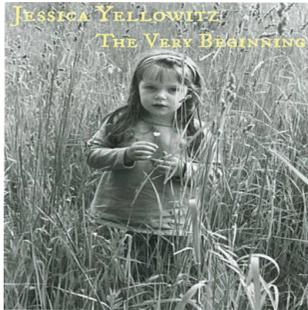
She was right; Benji was her angel.

But he was my son. ♡

Emy

digital photography | Kansas Glasgow
FIJIAN CHILD





folk | 2:42
Jessica Yellowwiz
LIFE IS SWEET



acoustic | 5:14
Jessica Yellowwiz
OLD FASHIONED

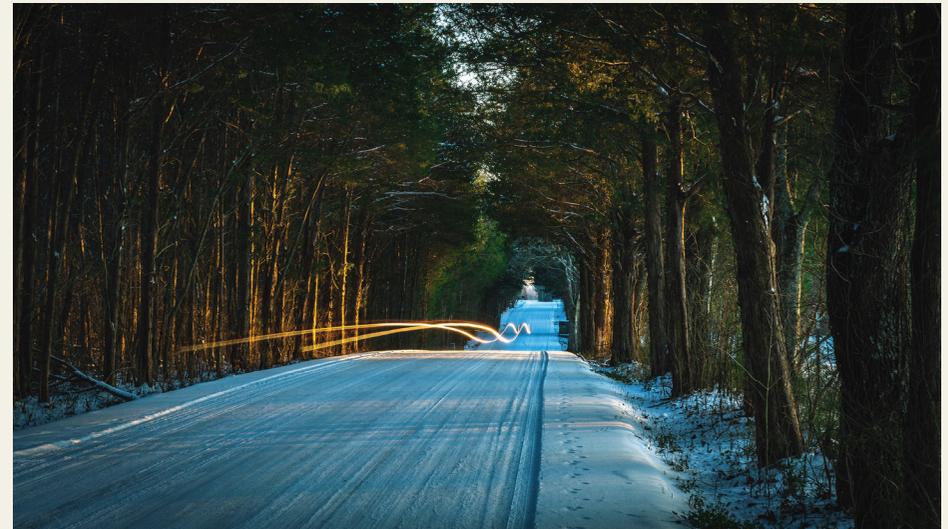


poetry | Emma Bradley
TENNESSEE

When I reached Tennessee,
I drove the roads, through the
Valleys, carefully,
Like a lover running their
Fingers through another's
Hair, tenderly.
This place will always be
Home to me,
And where I find myself,
Eventually.

Emma Bradley

digital photography | Jacob Jones
SNOW DAY DRIVE BY



digital photography | Lindsey Wilson
GRANDPA'S CAR





Rian Archer

STELLA

Film photography

poetry | Olivia Powell
PHANTOM

I didn't realize how many
Chevy Trailblazers there are in the world,
until you stopped being in mine.
They all drive slowly—like you did.
I can't not notice them, as I come up
from behind, probably way too fast,
dangerous even, in your opinion.

I know it's not you,
but I check anyway.

I know that it's 11:52 am,
and you're in an office building
on Thompson Lane
so you couldn't possibly
be driving on the I-65,

but I check anyway.

And it never even looks like you.
It's always a middle-aged woman,
or a teenage boy in a hoodie.
I never see the short, red ponytail
shaking side-to-side as you sing along
to whatever song is playing through
your one earbud. We agreed it was dangerous
to drive with two, but not having an aux cord
required the use of at least one.

I never see your face or your
cute, crooked-teeth smile,
but I can't stop seeing Chevy Trailblazers,
and that car is so unmistakably you.

Olivia Powell



digital photography

PURPLE SUNSET

Lindsey Wilson

country song lyrics | Emma Williams

LITTLE BIRD

Verse 1

Hey there, little bird, why don't you sing?
 I know you don't feel strong with a broken wing
 And oh my, little bird, please don't cry
 I hate to see the tears running from your eyes
 I know you feel alone, and I don't know why
 But someday you'll see it all in a different light

Chorus 1

'Cause the storm clouds will pass
 And you will start to bloom
 And one day the world will see what you have grown into
 I know the night is darker now, and you're afraid you lost the light
 Just hang in there, little bird, and you'll surely fly

Verse 2

Hey there, little bird, please dry your eyes.
 The scars will fade when the sun begins to rise
 And oh my, little bird, get to your feet
 Your knees may bleed, but the victory will be sweet
 The journey will be long and the battles hard
 But a day will come when to Earth will fall the stars

Chorus 2

'Cause the storm clouds will pass
 And you will start to bloom
 And one day the world will see what you have grown into
 I know the night is darker now, and you're afraid you lost the light
 Just hang in there, little bird, and you'll surely fly

Verse 3

Look up, little bird, here comes the light.
 It took a while, but today you will take flight

Emma Williams

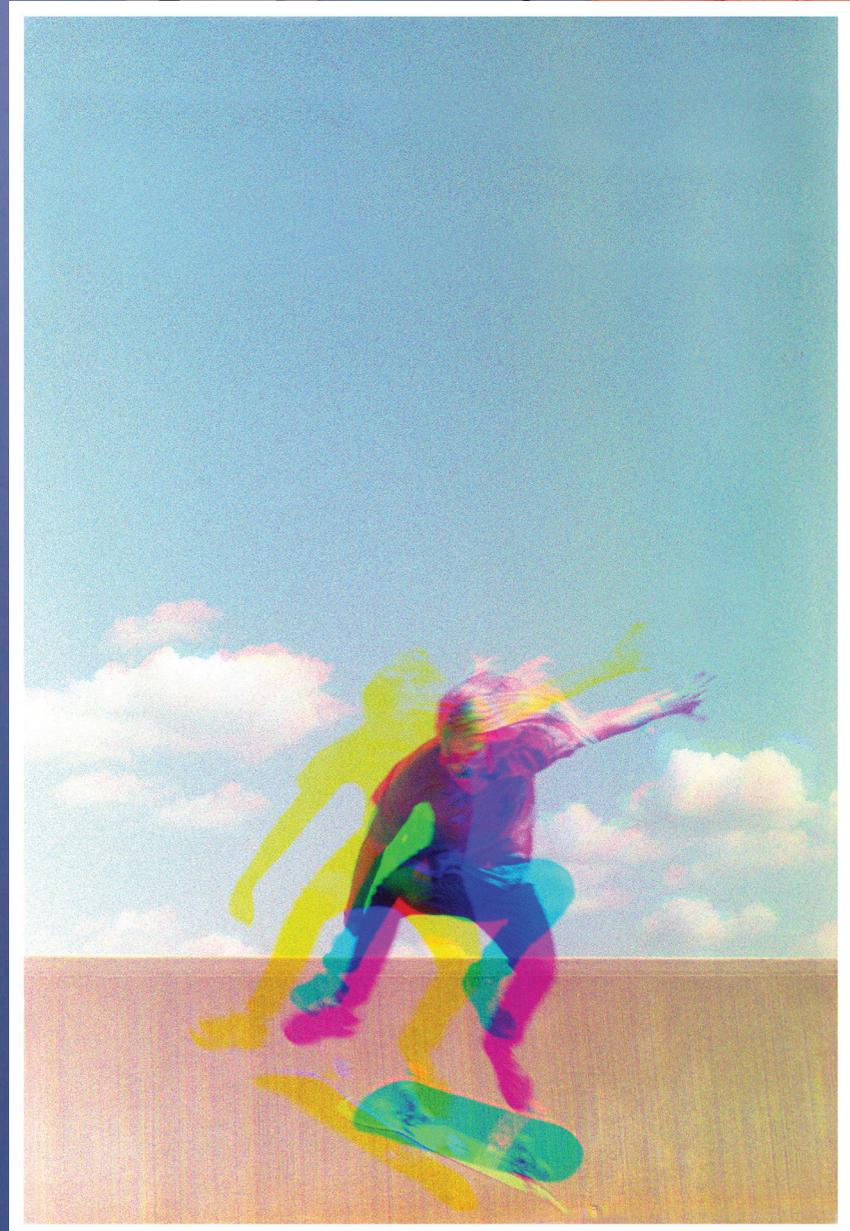


jazz pop | 2:23
Hudson McNeese
HOLLADAZE

Zachery Wright

FLOAT

film photography



kinetic typography | Ryan Barry
STEVE BUSCEMI



poetry | Madison King
**SHAKE THOSE
 FEELINGS OUT
 OF YOUR HAIR**

Shake those feelings out of your hair, darling
 For far too long you've gone
 Without brushing those stress knots out.
 It is unruly and wild
 If you tie it away
 It's only for the sake of letting the sun freckle your back.
 It is the color of rich soil
 Yet you're anything but grounded.
 When you're running away from every street you know
 Strands escape through the crack of the driver's glass
 Fluttering
 Straining outward
 As though the roots of your scalp
 Are as dreadful as your ancestral ones.
 Though it's synonymous to a nest,
 You cannot nurture anything
 Upon your own scalp
 Neither within.
 So shake those feelings out of your hair, darling
 It has caused your brain beneath
 To be unruly and wild.

M adison K ing



documentary | Bingnan Li
2017 'BORO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL



digital photography | Priyanka Modi
SCOOTERGIRL 3



digital photo manipulation | Stephanie Van Horn
TAKE ME TO THE BEACH



digital photography | Priyanka Modi
MANIFESTATION: A TRIPTYCH



1947

Lesley F. Sweeton's great-grandparents, Ruth and Kenneth Sweeton, "drove all the way to Dalton, Georgia to go before a judge and lie about their ages...at the time [they] were 16 and 17."



2015

Ruth and Kenneth "were married for over 65 years and had one of the strongest, Godliest marriages two people can have."

feature | Destiny Seaton

FICTIONAL STORIES INSPIRED BY REAL SOUTHERN WOMEN

Tennessee native and MTSU senior Lesley F. Sweeton's Honors College undergraduate thesis is a timeless work of art. It is capable of transporting any reader on a ride through the rural hills of Tennessee and the eyes of the influential women in her life.

The Women Who Made Me is a creative thesis compiled of seven short stories Lesley lovingly refers to as "inspired fiction" that tell the stories of her mother, grandmothers, and great grandmothers.

Lesley was inspired to archive their stories when, in a discussion with her mother, she realized she knew very little about her own maternal lineage.

All of the Sweeton women were from Tennessee, and the stories portray their perseverance and the difficult life circumstances that they overcame in the South, many in the time directly following the Great Depression.

For instance, the second story is about her great grandmother Beulah who never learned how to read or write anything other than her own name. Having been raised in an extremely poor, rural area of Tennessee, school was optional, and she chose to stop attending after three days of being teased by her classmates. As a result, Beulah lived over 80 years completely illiterate.

Lesley describes how Beulah made her way through life despite her inability to read and her controlling husband and how she finally felt the joys of freedom and independence as an elderly woman living by herself.

“Getting into their stories and seeing where they were at certain points in their life before I met them,” Leslie said, “has given me a greater understanding and respect for not only what they did before I was born, but what they do now; how they act, how they carry themselves, just the things they do and don’t even complain about.”

Lesley will be graduating in May 2018 with the intent to teach high school English. She is pursuing opportunities to publish *The Women Who Made Me* as well as considering other creative writing projects. It was a proud moment when Beulah’s story placed third in the regional Southern Literary Festival Undergraduate Writing Contest.

When describing how her project affected the way she now views the women in her family, Lesley said, “I’ve come to respect the women who have come before me a lot more than I did, and I feel like I have come to know them on a more personal level.

Lesley wrote the stories in such a way that all readers will leave feeling as if they know the Sweeton women on a personal level. Coupled with the biographies at the end, it is easy to envision the photographed women living as stars in their own stories.”



1941

Lesley F. Sweeton's great-grandmother, Violet Boring upon graduation.



1963

Lesley F. Sweeton's grandmother and Beulah's daughter, Lena Raymond at age 14.



1990

Lesley F. Sweeton's mother, Valerie Sweeton as a high school senior, age 17.

FROM "BEULAH"

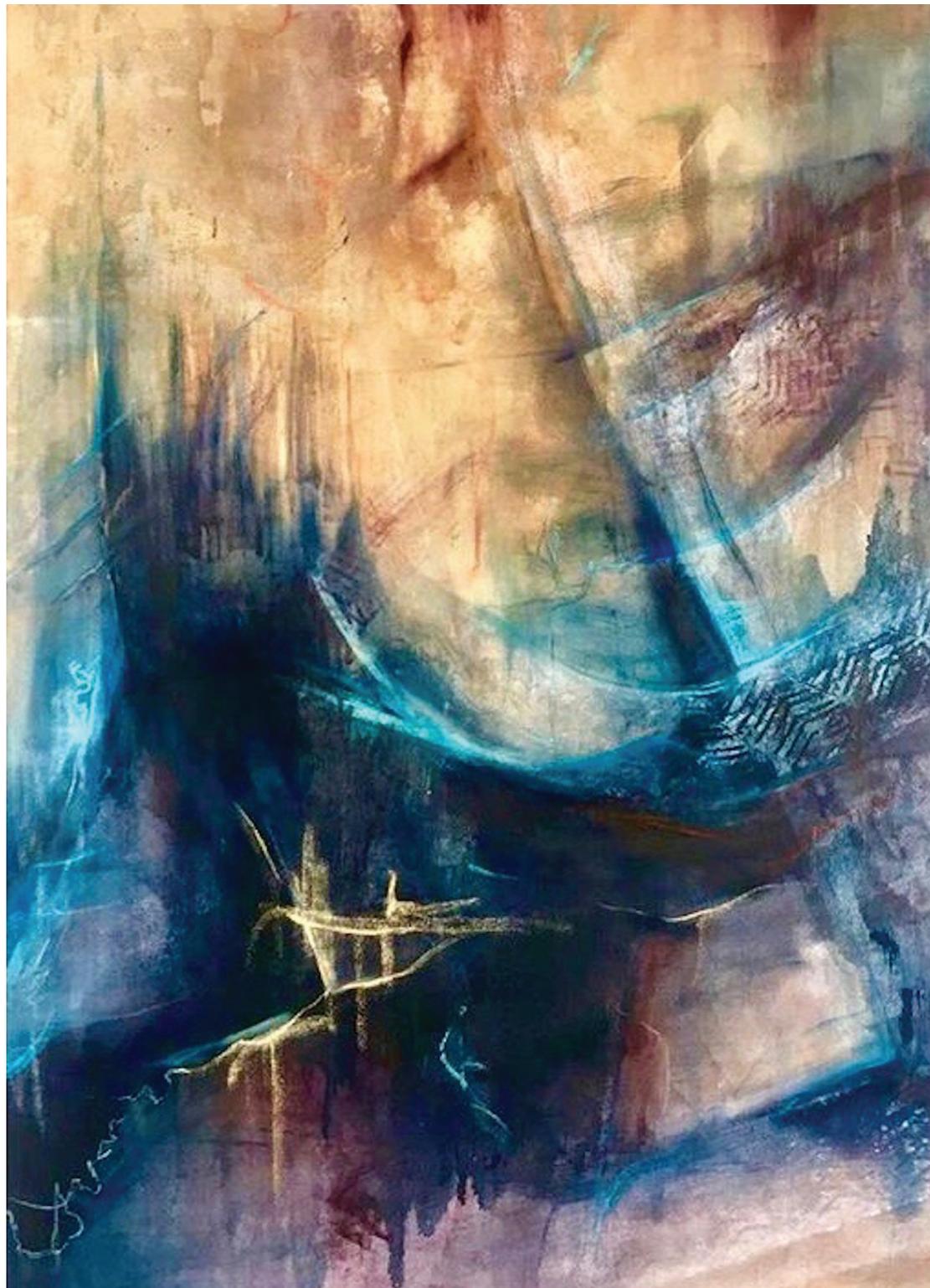
“Beulah always got dressed up when she went to the store. She got dressed up anytime she left the house really. She made sure her hair was in place—she had a bi-weekly hair appointment, so she never had to do much in between appointments except make sure her short, fluffy, grey hair wasn’t sticking out at odd angles. She also made sure her outfit matched; she loved to color coordinate, so if she was wearing a red sweater, then she was wearing red shoes and red lipstick... She loved her outfit to look nice, and the finishing touch was always jewelry. Earrings, necklaces, and rings—she loved them all. Rings were her very favorite though, and she loved adding to her collection. Big amethysts or small emeralds, it didn’t really matter. If she was wearing a particular color, she had the right ring to match it. Today was a red day. She was wearing her red sweater and red shoes, and she had a round, ruby ring with a thin gold band to wear with the outfit. It all matched perfectly, and she felt pretty.

Pretty was something that Beulah hadn’t often felt during her life. James, her late husband, was very controlling from the time they were married. The three months before their marriage, the time in which they dated, James was charming and sweet. But not long after the marriage, he became very controlling. And it only worsened with time. In the prime of their marriage, James controlled almost every aspect of Beulah’s life. She wasn’t allowed to work. She wasn’t allowed to wear pants, only dresses. She wasn’t even allowed to go to the grocery store. James would go himself. Beulah could never find a rhyme or reason to his rules, but she kept her head down and went along with them anyway. That was her life, and it was best to keep it as peaceful a life as possible.

James’s controlling nature was one of the reasons Beulah so loved her independence now. Doing what she wanted when she wanted was such freedom. Dressing the way she wanted was exciting. Going to the store to buy groceries—well, that was liberating.”

-excerpt from the short story “Beulah”
from the creative thesis
The Women Who Made Me
by Lesley F. Sweeton.

”



poetry | Michael Griffith
**TIME IS MEASURED
 IN WEEKS**

When the baby was born,
 my grandfather took
 a picture.
 Me, my wife, the tiny bundle
 full of wonder and amazement.

But he didn't keep it.

The photograph is perched
 on my nightstand
 to remind us about the joy felt
 during the most incredible moment
 of our lives.

We're moving underwater
 in the park.
 Late October leaves scatter
 over the sidewalk.

We've hardly slept in twelve weeks,
 and the crisp air stings
 our eyes.
 Maple leaves flutter to the ground
 as the trees prepare
 for hibernation.

The tiny bundle wrapped warm
 inside her stroller
 squeals with delight
 as a drifting Elm leaf lands
 on outstretched fingers.

Soon, she'll be tired.



At home, when evening shadows crawl
over the hills,
and the sun deepens into the golden
horizon,
little hands make big messes
of smashed chicken and peas.

Night brings with it a long,
cavernous yawn.
Soft melodies hum in the dark,
and she falls like the
cascading leaves,
asleep.

I dreamed of a sapling
sprouted from the dirt
in the warm springtime,
of wind and rain battering
the limbs in a cold
storm.

When morning light
splashed over the bed,
my wife brought over a coffee.
The baby had slept deeply
the whole night through.

Gazing at the photograph
on the nightstand,
I realized the joy
captured
would be the first of many.

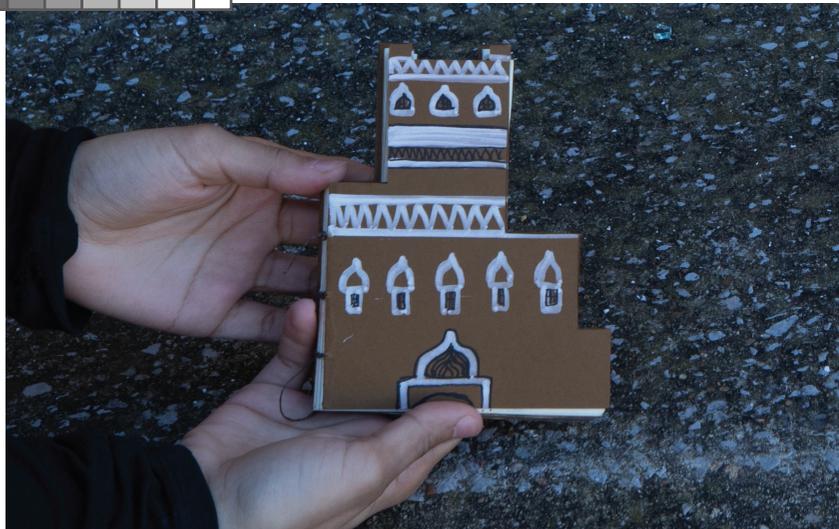
M. G. Huff



mixed media

WYVERN IN FLIGHT

Dana Tri



poetry | StarShield Lortie
PILLOW TALK

oil on wood | Karlie Tankersley



FULL BLOOM

For Will B.

We sat on my porch and talked about the Moon
and Venus because you couldn't say
what you really wanted to say and I knew
but couldn't look at you so we sat in the dark
and watched the Moon and listened to the locust
sing the night awake and talked about the heat
and what the neighbors were doing out in their driveway
so late and how I wished my camera took better pictures
so I could snap one of the Moon as she hung so bright
and close off the edge of my porch that we could
scoop her up with our hands and place her on our tongues
and roll the sweetness of summer around in our mouths
and neither of us wanted to break the spell
she had on us so we sat together without forcing
the other to say what we couldn't and you
lit another cigarette and I went back in the house
and the Moon disappeared over the top of the porch.



country | 3:48
 Rachel Dier
STORY OF ME



oil on board

POWER

Emily Smoot

poetry | StarShield Lortie
ON DEFINING LOVE

I sit stoic next to my mother
only slightly listening to the man
draped in shiny gold robes
hovering above us,
postulating about
the necessary constraints
of love. His black hole of limitation
inflamed my desire to walk out,
shove open the heavy wooden doors,
run full out in my stiff leather shoes
and frilly Sunday dress
to the Dairy Dip down the street
and let the chocolate and soft serve
slip sinfully around my slender wrist
and stain the edges of the lace
rubbing like sandpaper
against my thigh.
I glance upward
without moving my head,
wonder if this man
has ever looked up 'love'
in the dictionary, know he might find
'yummy' listed as a synonym,
consider my definition of love
might outshine his.
My mother touches my hand,
points to the kneeler,
whispers *ice cream after*
and, eyes closed, places her thin
pink lips to her tiny crucifix
as I watch the serenest of smiles
spread across her soft, powdered face.



drawing | Candace Yancey
PASSION



lithium scratch board | Ansley Pearson
ANGELS





drawing

MODERN MYTH

Christopher Banyai

RW

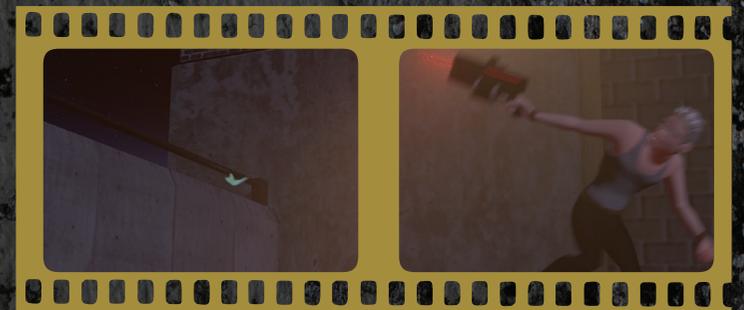
latin | 3:10
Rosa Westfall
DANCE CITY

poetry | Emma Bradley
THINGS TAKE FORM

Hypocrisy is a buzzard
Standing in the road.
Laughing at the dead thing,
Picking the meat off its bones,
Unaware of its surroundings,
As cars approach.

Emma Bradley

animation | Ryan Barry
FLURRY



silkscreen print | Katherine Raymond
COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR



sculpture | Yvette Swain
CONCEPTION OF CORRUPTION



sculpture | Yvette Swain
DEEPEST DARKEST



acrylic and oil on board | Dana Tri
PROVIDING



lithograph | Christopher Banyai
LOST

poetry | Kara Stallings

SHE LOVED US LIKE SCREAMING

It was summer
when I found you, mouth gaping

Wide enough
to plant those cherry-stained dogwoods
stretching the edge of our mute acre.
fat blackberries
Still bleed
through dead thorn bushes
and sticky weeds

Wide enough
to chant the song of heavy blankets
that hung in place of curtains,
shifting in rhythm—
Still alive
against smoke-stained wallpaper
whose age surpassed your own

Wide enough
to swallow up the whole sky
that snaked in through
the duck-taped window frame
Suturing itself
in glinting pools of silk
around milk-crusted eyes

Wide enough
to bury the swollen bones
of weeks old, rotted flesh and seared hair,
overcooked from heat
Onto molded sopping carpet
eager flies buzzing steadily
in the room's gulping silence

Wide enough to have been calling out my name.
If only you remembered it.

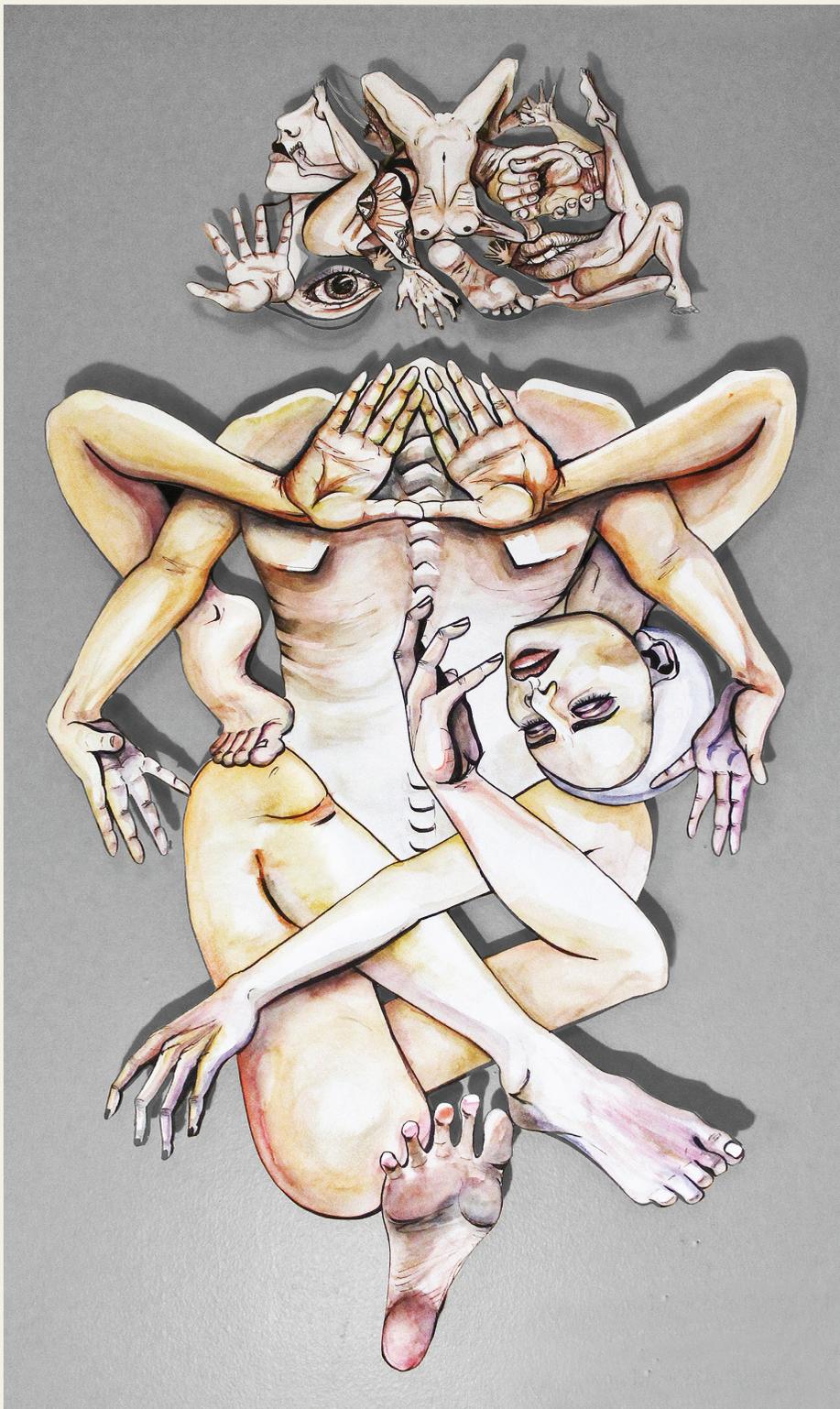


Ansley Pearson

EMBRACE

pen & watercolor





watercolor & ink on cut paper

DIVINELY DISGRACED

Emily Amick

poetry

THIS SIDE OF THE WINDOW

The sky was cold and gray,
like a stone tied by icy ribbons
to the riverbed,
and the morning itself was as still as one, too.
The garden's bare bones shifted
in an errant breeze,
surely lost on its way somewhere warmer
like the rest of us.

For a moment my heart was overwhelmingly wistful
for Spring's hopeful embrace,
but it was as fleeting as are calm, do-nothing days.

I looked down at my hands
folded upon that forest-green table top
and felt that I had all the warmth I needed
on this side of the window.

It was in my grandfather's smile
as we ate breakfast for lunch,
and in my grandmother's laugh
that ballooned from her chest
and filled every corner
this little house had to offer.

So I asked it to stay,
as it sang me its humble song
of silverware clinks and chair creaks,
a melody only heard when hearts
too frequently victimized by distance
are near each other once again.
I asked it to stay,
and would you believe it agreed?
I smiled into my coffee mug
and when I looked out the window,
the sky wasn't so gray.

Hannah R. Bertelson

poetry | Michael Griffith
FOREVER FOUR

My daughter had been dead a year.
I could still hear her voice
singing along the halls.

When I awoke,
the sound faded away.
Mornings were always
hardest.

I wanted to hold onto the dreams
of her in a party hat
trying to blow out trick
candles.

My little singer,
still dancing, still twirling,
still chasing balloons
in the front yard.

My daughter had been dead a year.
I remembered how
she struggled with the Alphabet.

She sang it anyway.
With help.

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
was the same tune
as the ABC song.

My daughter had been dead a year.
I could still hear her voice
in the early morning.

I wanted to hold onto the dreams
of her in a party hat,
laughing at candles,
refusing to die.

Good Morning To You
was the same tune
as Happy Birthday.

I still sing it anyway.
Without her.

Michael Griffith



kinetic typography | Angelica Bennett
DON'T CHOKE

poetry | Olivia Powell
EMPTY NIGHTS

I reach across the cold expanse and come up short.
Remind myself she's not there.
I pushed her out, kicked her to the floor in my sleep.
Shoving her from our bed was so loud she couldn't hear
my sleepy mumblings, begging her to stay,
to wake me from the nightmare
where I thought living without her was possible.
She couldn't hear me. How could she?
She can't listen to someone who can't speak
or to the few, small words that offer
only a band-aid to her broken bones,
contusions, and regretful decisions.

Olivia Powell



oil on board | Karlie Tankersley
WEEP



magazine collage | Hudson McNeese
LUV U 2



oil & acrylic on canvas | Emily Amick
ASCENSION





lithograph

BLOOM

Kaelin Cooper

poetry | J. Perry
VETERAN

For three minutes, he has you
and there is nowhere to run.
He wears the almost army green,
ties together the empty fabric
below his stumps-for-legs.
On his knees, he rides
on wooden slabs with weighted wheels
like box cars, so he can drag
his pathetic body along the beige
flooring and your stomach
through your throat.

We both know what comes next
when he vaults onboard the train
guerilla-like with a bucket
hanging loose around his neck.
“Please stand clear of the doors.”
He bides his time, waiting
for the slam so you can’t
get off, like him, and must
in shame look away or drop
loose change in pity, his charred fingers
leaving black slug trails behind him.

You must decide before
and stick to your guns no matter
the trail of a tear as it strikes
clean skin from the caked dirt
on his cheeks. We both work
what we can and maybe next month
he can earn enough to pay off
the jacket he wears while I
sit here, dreading the slow
clap-shudder of a faulty metro door.

Joshua J. Smith

song lyrics | William Manuel

RAINS OF NAM

Verse 1

Well, I went down to Nashville, when I was just 18.
I fought and prayed for a way to pay the bills and live a dream.
I signed up with USAF, thought I'd see the world,
'til they shipped me off to Texas, and left behind my girl.

Verse 2

Now, I'm out there in Wichita Falls, there ain't much to see,
all I had in my mind was somewhere else to be.
The war was raging many months, and they said it wouldn't be long,
then they shoved me on an airplane and landed in Saigon.

It's been 3 years since I've been home, turned 21 on my own, but I still keep a smile.

Verse 3

God, I ain't the same man, they got me working on the bombers.
And I won't divulge the hell I've seen, living in the rains of Nam.
My best friend got a girlfriend, he calls her Mary Jane,
coping in the poppy fields forgetting his own name.

It's a long, long way from home, facing this hell I walk alone,
but Jack he helps me smile for a little while.

Verse 4

Landed at the airport, they put me on a plane,
and tears fall down as I touch ground, and I feel so ashamed.
A crowd of angry people spitting on me and calling me names,
is this how they treat a native son? Why is it me their trying to blame?

I'm only 20 miles from home; I don't want to live here anymore. God's celestial shore.

It's been years since those nightmares flashed, still trying to shake away the past,
but I thank God for this life every night.

William P. Manuel

Madison Pitts

EPHEMERAL CONSCIOUS

mixed media painting





Listen to the playlist at
soundcloud.com/mtsucollage

Artist	Title	Genre	Time
Dillon Matheny & Alex Parham	<i>Haze</i>	electronic pop	4:29
Hudson McNeese	<i>Holladaze</i>	jazz pop	2:23
Jessica Yellowitz	<i>Life is Sweet</i>	folk	2:42
Jessica Yellowitz	<i>Old Fashioned</i>	acoustic	5:14
Rachel Dier	<i>Story of Me</i>	country	3:48
Rosa Westfall	<i>Dance City</i>	latin	3:10



Watch the playlist at
youtube.com/mtsucollage



documentary | Bingnan Li
2017 'BORO
INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

motion graphics | Jordan Fitzgerald
CONTEMPLATION TV INTRO

kinetic typography | Ryan Barry
STEVE BUSCEMI

animation | Ryan Barry
FLURRY

kinetic typography | Angelica Bennett
DON'T CHOK

ABOUT COLLAGE

Collage is a biannual publication of the Middle Tennessee State University Honors College. All submissions were reviewed anonymously and selected by a student editorial staff. The materials published by Collage do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Collage staff, Honors College, MTSU student body, staff, or administrators. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized in any form without written permission from the editor or adviser of Collage. Inquiries should be addressed to:

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Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression is an arts and literary magazine featuring submitted work chosen by a volunteer staff in a blind grading process. The staff attempts to choose the best work without regard for theme or authorship.

Although Collage is a publication of the University Honors College, staff members and submitters are not required to be Honors students. Staff members are selected each semester from a pool of applicants and must have at least a 3.0 GPA and two recommendations.

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Collage accepts submissions year-round. Submission forms and guidelines are available at mtsu.edu/collage. Creative work, such as art, photography, short stories, essays, short plays, song lyrics, poetry, audio, and video, may be submitted digitally to mtsu.edu/collage or may be turned in at the Collage office, Honors 224, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Submissions are accepted from MTSU students and recent graduates.

Creative Expression Awards

Each semester, six submissions receive Creative Expression Awards, one from each major category: art, photography, poetry, prose, audio, and video. Literature winners receive the Martha Hixon Creative Expression Award, and visual winners receive the Lon Nuell Creative Expression Award. Winners receive \$50 awards.



Light Meets Chalk
Stephanie Van Horn
photography



Lost
Christopher Banyai
art



My Sister's Angel
Emily Garrett
prose



Veteran
J. Perry
poetry



Haze
Dillon Matheny
& Alex Parham
audio



**2017 'Boro
International
Festival**
Bingnan Li
video

COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Gold Medalist Certificates 2017,
2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012,
2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006

Silver Crown Awards 2011, 2008, 2007

Gold Crown Awards 2015, 2013, 2012

PRODUCTION

Technology Apple Macintosh Platform,
Windows Platform, Adobe CC: InDesign, Illustrator,
Photoshop, AfterEffects

Typography Intro | Intro Inline
Rage Italic | Brandon Grotesque

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80 lb. Athens Silk Text

Binding Saddle Stitch

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