

a publication of the Middle Tennessee State University Honors College
Volume 1: Spring 2005

collage
a journal of creative expression



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Supporters and Readers of Collage:

After many months of hard work, I proudly present to you Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression. 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.

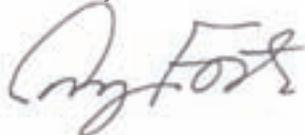
Collage, which has been printed since 1968, has traveled a tough road to get to its new home, the Paul W. Martin, Sr. Honors Building. With a face lift and people who truly care about its success, Collage is now a tool that the Honors College can use to encourage learning, creativity, and team work.

I would like to thank Dean Philip Mathis, the Honors College, and the Collage advisor, Marsha Powers, for their faith in Collage and me. Without their visions, MTSU would have lost a very important portion of its history and its future. The current Collage advisory board and the original Collage Ad Hoc Advisory Committee have also played a huge part in the success of Collage and have supported me tremendously throughout the past few months.

Aside from them, I would also like to thank the Collage staff, my family, and my husband, Matt, for their continuing support and love throughout the past year. As I end my endeavor as the first Editor-in-Chief of this publication, I am will always be indebted to all of you.

As I close, I would also like to inform you that Collage can be viewed in its entirety at www.mtsu.edu/~collage. I hope you enjoy Volume I of Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression.

Sincerely,



Amy Foster

Collage is a student-produced biannual magazine of the Middle Tennessee State University Honors College. A student editorial staff reviews and selects submissions. **Collage** reserves the right to make technical corrections. The materials published by **Collage** do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the **Collage** staff, Honors College, the MTSU student body, staff or administrators. No parts of this magazine may be reproduced without the expressed written consent of the editor of **Collage**.

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Without

Jill Townsend

You've settled into your manhood quite easily
I've clung to my girlhood ineffectively
But you embrace your years shamelessly
It's nice to see someone who feels at home in their body

Why must youth be regarded so precious?
It is filled with mistakes and selfish endeavors
And it is desired only by those who have regrets

To me, the wear and tear of the body is a much more desirable thing
With your every mar, every freckle, every gravitational pull
I feel relieved
To let go of my immaculate self
And become who I am within,
Without

Attempt at Imitative Thinking

Carol Dee Pigg

If the shadows of your face seem grainy,
then I've enlarged you too far in my mind—
a crease, I notice, overlaps with your brow.
These shadows combine and I lose the light of your eyes.

I've taken long walks through the decades of our love,
and I know the compliance of missing your essence,
but there has never been a moment where I didn't long for an echo of it.
You are my greenness, just as I was your flaming red –
The memory of your eyes (glaring under black and white) only intensifies
The color of me—and I reach for photos I've stored in the corners of my life.

We grow together, apart even,
And there's no use running to get out of the rain.



My Shuttering Calm
Tommy Taylor
oil painting



Glorified Flaw
Tommy Taylor
oil painting



Faces of Speaker's Corner
Shannon Randol
black & white photography

Season

Lindsey Leffew

I bury myself under leaves
until spring—
leaves piled and blown
by passing winds

I wait,
feeling nothing
because I do not know the words
for sensation

leaves no words, nor does the wind

I succumb to both
while clouds hunt down the Moon
and swallow it
take the burning jewel into their bellies
turning the world black

and hidden in that dark—
where the stone roses fall
into still pools
white
and red as blood
on snow
even into the death of Autumn,

where vines hide silver water
unless you know how to look—

there lies a glass reflection
I shaped out of illusion
wished out of nightmare

to guide me beyond this world
and the waking dream
in which I live,

to a place
where roses open
like supple water
or anemones

where birds whisper
in echoing voices
and toads sing
full-throated songs
of purple passionate nights

There, he will meet me,
tell me those secrets
that no one else can know

but,
because I want him
he does not come

and I wait here still

under green
under leaf
under snow

From He to She

Amber Curry

muse

about the pale skin of you
rested among the i

m
m
e
n
s
e

bosom of she who loved
pellucidly
when alone as melting one i

n
t
o the other

as white and black becomes gray
so you beca(me)
and i you
he luminescent pearl drowning in black sands of she
creating flames
as lightning fervor
divulges

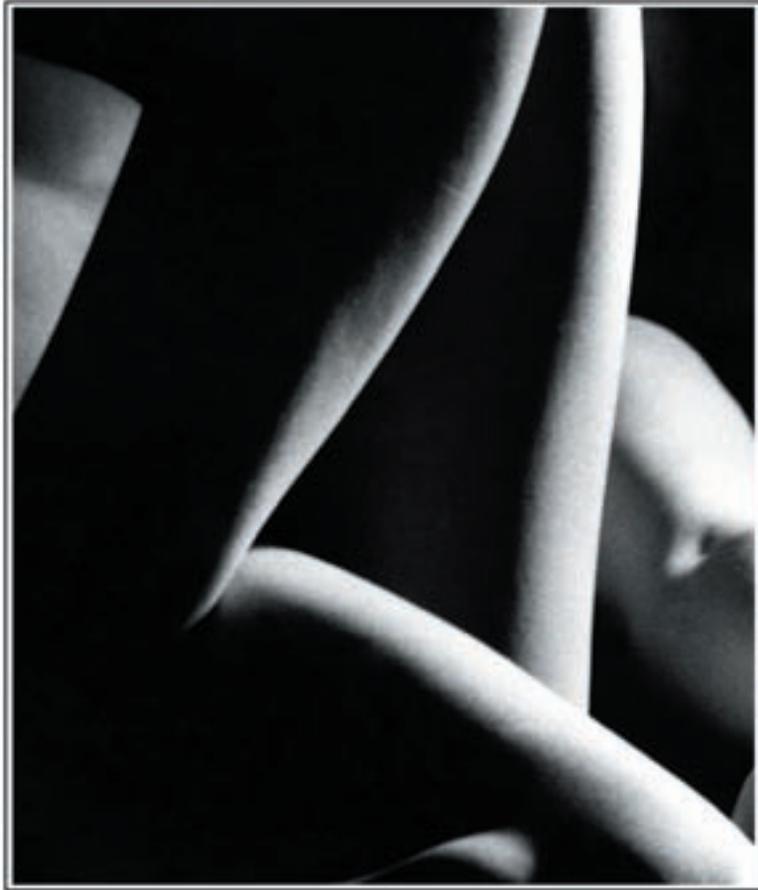
window paned
ecstasy

bodies
sidebyside
as if fitted one for the other
espresso thighs
intertwined through
blushing pale virility
the scent of irish spring
mingled

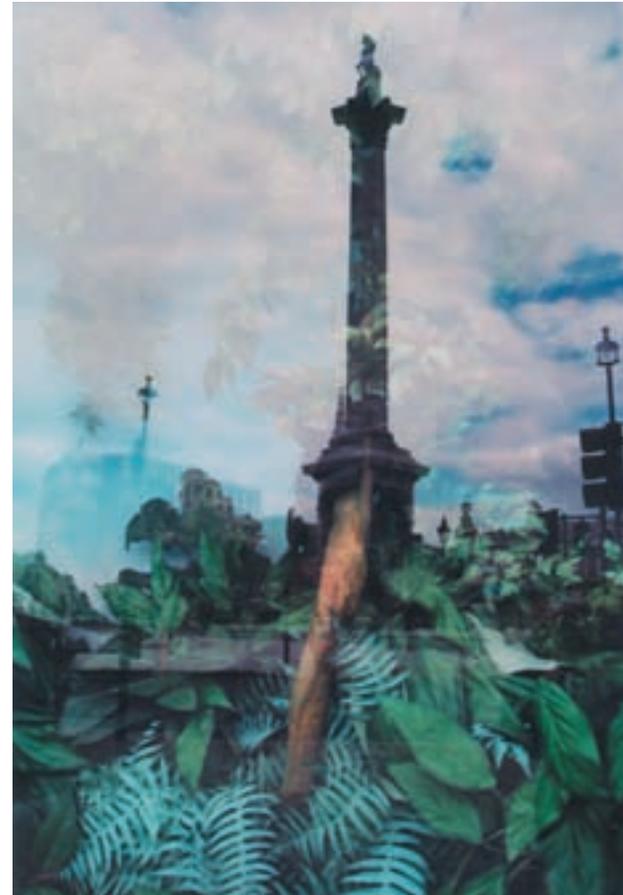
among cocoa butter softness
hip hop soul
to neo soul
he finds rhythm in
she
as she loving dual
-ity
of
he
in ballad of stevie and mccartney
ebony she

d
e
d
a
v
n
i
by ivory he

as pure and sublime
colorblind
disassembling
color-obsessed minds



One Body
Chuck Arlund
black & white photography



Together
Martina Michalova
color photography

10



Rest Area
Troy Dixon
color photography

Man's Invention

Maria Bealer

I ride around in a death trap-
the Grim Reaper's tool.

Man has invented a new dependence,
a new way to die.

Survival
inside this mobile metal cage
depends on "good" driving skills,
alertness of others.

Rare.

We are all risk-takers
on the highway
to hell.

Not every person can
arrive to their destination
on time,
clothes—neatly pressed,
clean, intact.

Crash!
an innocent game of bumper cars.
Rules reversed to the devil's satisfaction.
And the winner is.....
a once talkative lady,
mid-twenties,
now forever hushed.
Cell phone aglow on the floorboard
by her feet.

A uniformed man reveals
what lies behind door #1.
He will announce her prize:
A free ride
 on a cart, zipped up in a bag
A new home
 wooden, padded, 6 feet long
Eternal silence,
darkness,
underground.
The world will not envy her.

Year 14

Catherine Rolan

14 moves.
14 dislocations.

14 years old.

Stealing clothes,
Stealing makeup,
Stealing moments of happiness.

Smoking cigarettes,
Smoking weed,
Smoking away reality.

Lies told for dinner,
Lies told for a shower,
Lies told simply to save face.

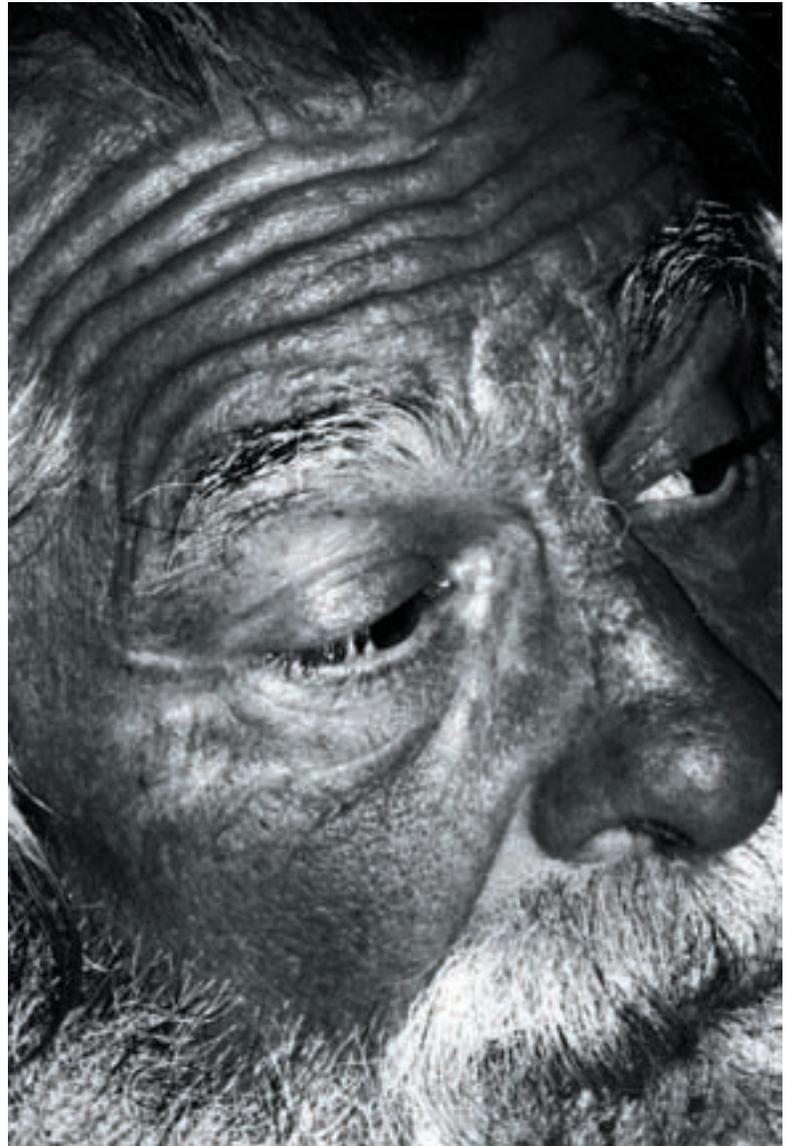
14 years old.

She stood alone,
Stone-cold hands,
In stone-cold water.
Washing clothes,
Red, hot tears streaming,
Streaming on her cheeks,
Dropping, to be frozen.

Thinking.
Thinking, of the time she kicked the dog
Hard.
It ate the last bit of food.
Thinking.
Thinking, of the time she would sleep
Hard.
It took the pain away.



Dishwasher & Me
Linzi Croy
black & white photography



Old Man
Langston Gatewood
black & white photography



untitled (1)
Dustin Meyers
color photography



untitled (2)
Dustin Meyers
color photography

14

Meyers shot these images during a trip he took to Honduras. He traveled there during the summer of 2004 with a missions team to build a house and do medical clinics in some of the smaller villages outside of Petucigalta, which is the capital of Honduras.



untitled (3)
Dustin Meyers
color photography

Idyll

Casey Sloan

All around the mulberry bush...

The children run, screaming and scampering, delighting in their bare feet and the summer's breeze. The leaves rustle and trees creak with age. But the life beneath them is fresh, new. Not so long in this world. Rectangular lawns are excellent playgrounds, and the grass, both needled and bowed, cushions exuberant toes. Mothers and fathers occasionally glance with distracted eyes from windows and porches, going about their cleaning or gardening. After all, spring was just over, and there is much to be done. The heavens stretch on and on, allowing only glimpses of the blue. Time is of little moment, only when the pinpoints of light begin to become visible among the trees—blink, blink, blink—does it become of any importance. And then glass jars become makeshift cages for trapping unsuspecting creatures. But that is not the time now. The dappled light spreads over the expanse, making it glowing and warm where play continues on. The dull grating of rushing traffic is absent. This is a good area, and little does anyone travel this road that does not belong. The ball bounces out into the street, its pursuers giggling after. The strains of song, faint but recognizable, begin to reach smallish ears.

The monkey chased the weasel...

They scatter, yelling for mom, crying out...in excitement, "He's here, he's here!" Mom drops coins in dirt-crusting hands. They are interrupting her cleaning, and there is much to be done before summer ends. Doors slam. The laughing cries become faint and, once faded, no more thought for them is spared. The yellow and white van creeps to a stop, its song echoing through the neighborhood. The deliverer has come. This is a good area, exceptional for this chore. The children are hurrying to be the first to request a melting treat. The window in the side of the van opens, its gaping mouth surrounded by painted lures. Small hands reach up, up, up, eagerly grasping for what it offers. The music plays on.

The monkey thought it was all just in fun...

Dusk has arrived on the scene, covering, concealing. No attention is paid to the vehicle as it glides past, shouting its enticing song. It is harmless in its familiarity, the perfect bait. The mother cleaning her good china starts to realize something is missing. The father in his garden notices the waning light and becomes uneasy. Doors open, tools are abandoned, parents call for their young. They stop and listen. No giggling laughter or bare-footed tromping is heard. They are frantic, searching; the children are nowhere to be found. Faint bars of a familiar song drift to straining ears, a repeated, calling sound. They look left, right, left again, but the source does not make itself known, long gone with its cargo. Coins are found scattered across the pavement, globs of half-melted ice cream gluing them to its surface. Careless. Darkness settles comfortably in, prepared for long hours. Tiny creatures need not fear this night. Glancing out their window, the older couple down the street shake their heads as police cars come careening to a stop, the shrieking sirens, a jarring accompaniment to the taunting refrain of the children's song. This is a good area, and bad things never happen here.

Pop goes the weasel.



Collage gets new home at Honors College

By Jessi Torres, Contributing Staff

Where do students go when beloved publications lose funding? For those involved with the creative arts magazine *Collage* at MTSU, the answer was easy— the Honors College.

Collage had been funded by student publications since its inception in 1968, but lost its home in the summer of 2004 when the university cut funding to the department.

Honors College Dean Philip Mathis heard about the closure of *Collage* and wanted the magazine to have a home in the Honors College. “The journal will be a way of showcasing the talents of our creative artists and writers,” Mathis said.

Mathis also hopes that *Collage* will “become a significant publication that will be noted by scholars and by others.”

Amy Foster, the Editor-in-Chief of *Collage*, is grateful to Dean Mathis for saving the “much needed” publication and said that “without his vision and the Honors College, there would be no magazine.”

Collage stopped the presses for the first time since it began production more than 35 years ago. Even though the magazine did not have a fall 2004 issue, Foster believes that with the magazine’s new home in the Honors College, the quality will greatly improve.

“The people that surround the Honors College want to see *Collage* succeed. They want something to be proud of,” Foster said.

Collage exists to provide a creative outlet for students at the university, allowing all types of artistic expression to be displayed. Foster added that “*Collage* is a chance to let the community see what is offered at the university and the talent that actually chooses MTSU.”

Senior Biology major Chase Block believes that every educational institute should provide its students such an opportunity. "Collage offers a springboard for our fledgling writers to get off the ground," he said.

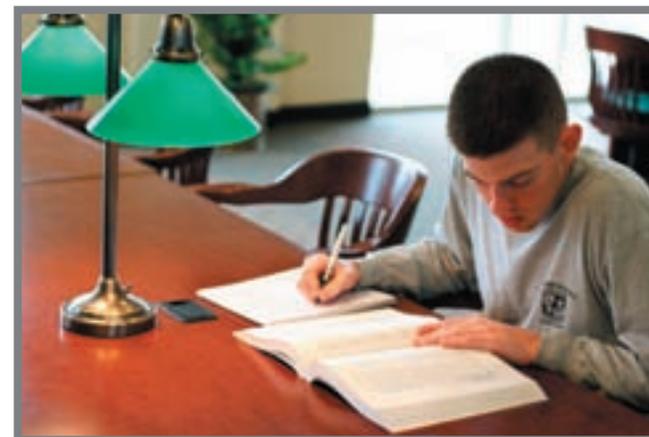
For those students involved in the production of the magazine, it is a valuable tool for learning and gaining experience in publication, said Foster.

The Honors College considers Collage just one of its "points of pride" along with its ongoing lecture series, weekly Rest and Relaxation events, the Native American Pow Wow, scientific online journal Scientia, and a Living and Learning center.

The Honors College boasts that it offers the same learning community and opportunities that students would find at a private university. According to students, it does just that.

Junior Political Science major Michael Jackson said, "Because of the high expectations placed on honors students and faculty, I think we tend to be not only a close-knit group, but I think that the faculty and staff are better able to understand us."

The walls of the Paul W. Martin, Sr. Honors Building offer a respite unmatched in other buildings around campus, with oversized arm chairs and inviting sofas. It is not uncommon to see small groups of students in the commons area curled up comfortably in the living room setting, warming their hands by the fire and engaging in intellectual conversations.



Motherly Love

Audrey Scruton

At five, I swore that I had the best mother in the world. She let me roller skate in the kitchen to Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker," didn't question the existence of my two imaginary friends, Hugsie and Patootie, and never mentioned the threat of salmonella poisoning when handing over chocolate cake batter-covered mixing spoons. At fifteen, I swore that no one else would ever be able to embarrass me as well as my mother could. When she picked me up from my first middle school dance, she brought a flashlight and began shining it over the sea of heads on the dance floor like some sort of off-kilter strobe light. When I marched down Main Street in our town's annual Christmas parade, holding the flute that I proudly played a whopping six-and-a-half notes on, my mother literally stopped traffic – and the parade – just to get several dozen panoramic shots of our marching band. And when the boy on whom I had the largest crush in the world finally worked up the nerve to call my house, my mother answered the phone and, without hesitation, told him, "Just a second, sweetie, she's going tinkle." But at twenty, I swear that my mother was simply getting revenge, because the adoring child I viewed myself as was apparently quite fond of embarrassing her mother as well.

Life is filled with moments of realization, and most of mine have been about my childhood. While I was under the impression for many years that I had been a cute, precocious kid, playing with my Rock-n-Roll Barbie and lamenting the number of Ken dolls on the market, several of my parents' stories have shattered that illusion. I was, apparently, something of a storyteller. Given that both of my parents have made their careers as English professors, I say I come by it naturally.

In October of my first year of Kindergarten, my father received an offer from Syracuse University in New York to read poetry at a weekend writers' conference they were hosting. Excited over the offer and grateful for the opportunity, my dad accepted. When that weekend arrived, my mother and I dutifully drove him to the airport on Friday morning and said our goodbyes. Before boarding the plane, my mom realized my dad had forgotten to stop by an ATM. "Here, take the rest of the cash that I have," said my mom. "I have the checkbook and the credit cards, I'll be fine. Have a nice time!"

And off flew my daddy. With all our money. Just flew away and left us. All alone and broke. Well, not really, but that's what I told my new, young, inexperienced teacher, Mrs. Stone, once I got to school later that day. Horrified that any man would do something so horrible to his wife and child, she waved my mother in from the parking lot after school, determined to get her some help immediately. She sat my mother down in a fluorescent blue five-year-old sized plastic chair, handed her a large box of Kleenex, and positioned herself behind her desk. Smiling sadly, she said, "We like to help women in these situations."

My mother blinked. "These situations?" she asked.

Looking at her kindly, if somewhat pityingly, Mrs. Stone tried again. "Yes, we have several excellent programs here for mothers trying to cope with their losses. I can give you some great references, phone numbers..." she trailed off, searching through the papers on her desk for how-to-cope pamphlets.

My mother started fidgeting. I, meanwhile, unaware of the situation at hand, was contentedly building a Ferris wheel out of Legos.

“Ah, there it is!” Mrs. Stone held the pamphlet entitled “Understanding the Sudden Loss of Our Loved Ones” out to my mother. “This will answer many of your questions,” she said knowingly.

My mother blinked again. “What loss do you think I have endured that I need to better understand it? Is Audrey alright?”

“Oh, Audrey’s fine, in fact, she’s coping quite well. Better than most, I think. She’s such a resilient child.” Mrs. Stone smiled.

“Then what is the problem?” my mother asked, irritation creeping into her voice. “And what is she coping with?”

Mrs. Stone looked at my mother apologetically before replying, “Mrs. Scruton, it’s alright. You can accept it, we all know. Audrey told us this morning.”

“What did Audrey tell you?” My mother was officially irritated.

Mrs. Stone said calmly, “Audrey explained to us how your husband took all of your money, got on a plane for New York, and left you.”

My mother did not move. Mrs. Stone took this as a sign of shock and began searching for her “Surprise & Astonishment in Your Life” pamphlets. Then my mother started laughing. So Mrs. Stone switched gears and handed my mother the “Denial Is Not a River in Africa” brochure, which consequently caused my mother’s laughter to become high-pitched and hyena-like.

My mother wailed. Mrs. Stone looked distressed. I twirled my Lego Ferris wheel.

“But...but...he’s...he’s coming...back, he’s coming back,” my mother explained through shortened bursts of laughter. She used the Kleenex Mrs. Stone had originally handed her, expecting a breakdown, to dab her eyes. “Oh, Lord, that child,” she muttered under her breath.

Mrs. Stone smiled yet again and said, “Yes, dear, of course he is. That’s what they all say.”

“No, really...it’s just a...a...it’s about poetry, his writings...a conference...” my mother was laughing so hard I thought she would break the pint-sized chair she was sitting in. “He’s coming back...on...back on Monday!”

Mrs. Stone called for reinforcements.

After five teachers, four assistants, two secretaries, one mother, and thirty-five more minutes of my building Lego amusement park equipment, my mother was finally able to at least partially convince the assembly that no, my father had not stolen all of her money and hijacked his way to New York, and that, yes, he was in fact returning to town on Monday.

Still obviously skeptical, but somewhat satisfied, the group let my mother take me home, “But not without reservations,” as Mrs. Stone said. She insisted my mother take the helpful pamphlets home, a reminder to this day of my enhanced imagination and flair for the dramatic. And my father, upon his return three days later, was the only one who took me to and from school for the rest of the year. He waved to Mrs. Stone every single time, proof that the abusive husband had, in fact, merely attended a weekend conference. Turns out that kids will say the darndest things, especially if that kid was me.

The childhood adoration I had for my mother disappeared somewhere between licking spoons and shining flashlights and was replaced, more oft than not, with severe bouts of life-ending humiliation, or so I thought. But as my mother has pointed out several times, it was due justice, for, while I was adoring my mother, I was also managing to embarrass her a few times as well.

Burning Bridges

Christopher Henslee

I am the flame that gutters low
All consuming, still unsteady
Seeking vivid incandescence
To see the path that I must take
In the dark you see me dwindle
All the faster for my trying
Behind me all my bridges burn
Carelessly my path was chosen
Lift me from the fading embers
Give me tender warmth and hope
Make for me a hearth of kindness
And I will warm the darkest night
Then at morning I will waken
To slide away from your embrace
And burning brightly once again
I will leave you naught but ashes

True Power

J. Waarvik

When walking at night,
after the painful sight
of seething throngs and
gay songs of the day
have all
gone away,

I Alone

am the only one who exists
under the darkened mists.
The power to quench all life
Lies with the razor at my wrist.



An Italian Cambridge

Mike Jackson
black & white photography



Airport #1

Mike Jackson
black & white photography

22



I Am What I Wrote

Michelle Davis
paint over black & white photography



I'm a Little Teapot

Amy Mauritsen
oil painting

I wanna be

André S. Canty

Mama, mama.
Yes, baby.
I wanna be a thug.
Why do you want to be a thug?
Everybody loves a thug.
I wanna be like 6 pack.
Who?
6 Pack.
You mean 2Pac.
Yeah, can I be a thug?
You can be a thug, but they don't live with mama.
Uh, never mind mama, good night.

Mama, mama.
Yes, baby.
I wanna be a revolutionary.
Why do you want to be a revolutionary?
Everybody loves a revolutionary.
I wanna be like Malcolm 10.
Who?
Malcolm 10.
You mean Malcolm X.
Yeah, or like Martin Luther Vandross.
Who?
Martin Lawrence King.
You mean Martin Luther King, Jr.
Yeah, can I be a revolutionary?
You can be a revolutionary, but they don't live with mama.
Uh, never mind mama, good night.

Mama, mama.
Yes, baby.
I wanna be a pimp.
Why do you want to be a pimp?
Everybody loves a pimp.
I wanna be like Icetray Slim.
Who?
Icetray Slim.
You mean Iceberg Slim?
Yeah, can I be a pimp?
You can be a pimp, but they don't live with mama.
Uh, never mind mama, good night.

Mama, mama.
What now, boy?
I wanna be myself.
Why do you want to be yourself?
Everybody loves me.
I'm too pretty to be a thug.
I'm too nice to be a revolutionary.
And I heard pimpin' ain't easy.
Can I be myself, mama?
You can be yourself, you can stay with mama.
Thank You.

Confessions Before Leaving

Lindsey Leffew

It was a nameless evening, sometime in the middle of the month, and Jeff was giving me a ride home after a long night spent with mutual friends. We'd been hanging out together more often these past months, ever since we'd stumbled on each other's presence in the shade of the quad and realized that not everyone from our past had yet disappeared, off to live new lives, in new places. My own was still in the works, and I was living out of boxes until something finally took hold.

I don't remember what we were talking about that night, or how the conversation ended up where it did, but I knew, as soon as the question was off his tongue, I knew what was going to be explored in the ending moments of the evening.

"Would you rather be disappointed with an outcome or regret never knowing?"

I told him I'd rather find myself disappointed. It was a quick answer; I didn't pause long enough to really think about it, but perhaps that makes it more true—that fact that it was the first thing to roll off my tongue. We so often apologize for not thinking before we speak, but I think those first words to come out of us are usually the most truthful. They haven't gone through the censoring mechanism of the brain. They are us, uninterrupted.

We pulled up in front of my house where Jeff followed me inside, through the labyrinth of packing material, finding his guitar and the music scores sitting on top of a box labeled knickknacks. He'd brought them over to serenade me while I was packing away some of the smaller items, the ones I didn't trust the moving company not to break.

I walked him back outside. He took my hand, like he always did, and kissed the back of it. (The first time he'd ever held his hand out to me I expected a handshake so gave him my own in the appropriate sideways manner. I got used to it later, presented my hand palm down, instead.)

There was a tension between us, standing there in the doorway, and I wanted it gone. "I'm out of it," I said, forcing a small laugh, "So, goodnight..."

"Wait." It was almost a whisper. His voice was shaking. His pupils had gone large and dark in the dim light, and his eyes were shiny at the corners. It had to be painful to be that exposed, and it looked it—as though he might shake, might crack down the middle.

I'm not sure who made the first move. Even now. I think it might have been me, with my usual thought pattern of "If no one does anything we'll be standing here all bloody night, staring at each other like deer caught in the headlights of a hunter's truck." So I moved. Or he did. And his arms went around me and we kissed. I brought one hand to his cheek, felt a rough spot he'd missed shaving. When we parted I saw the silvery track of a tear slipping down the side of his face.

He took my hand with his right, glancing down at the guitar case in his left. "You didn't think I brought this for nothing?"

I shook my head dumbly as he led me down the driveway to the sidewalk in front of the house. Apparently, I wasn't the only one feeling dumb, because he turned to me for a moment, half puzzlement, half wariness on his face, "I did just kiss you, didn't I?"

I nodded again as we lowered ourselves to the ground and he began opening the snaps on the case. He pulled the guitar out, tuned it and began playing a song he'd written. Written within the span of a few weeks, I'm guessing, once he found out that I was truly leaving.

I can't remember the song to tell you. Only a few phrases still have enough form to skim through my head on occasion, and I'd like to keep those for myself.

When the last strains echoed to the end of the dark street and disappeared, we sat in silence for moments that lasted hours. I don't remember what he said after the song, what the exact words of his confession were. I remember time. Six years of not revealing anything. Of waiting. And then he found out I was leaving and didn't want to regret not telling me what he felt.

I didn't say anything. I couldn't. I leaned over and kissed his cheek and put my arms around him and hugged him, so tight. I tried to say with touch what I couldn't seem to get out in words that were really so simple. I don't. I can't.

Eventually I chilled. Even in the desert the nights are cold, particularly at the closing of the year. I formed some sentences and he returned with me to the house entrance, and I hugged him again, one arm around his neck.

I then said good night.

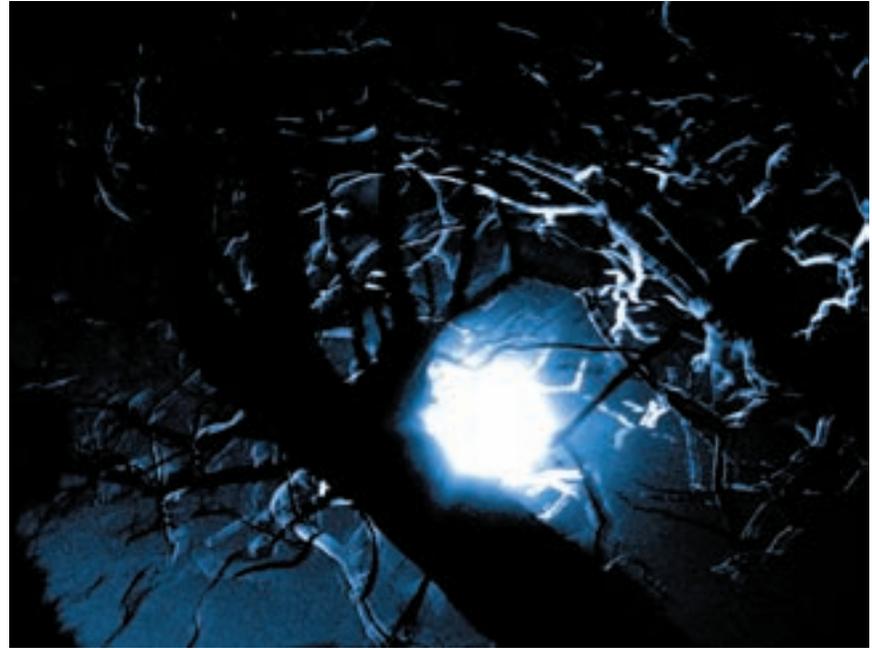
And shut the door.



Framed Romance

Dana Clark

black & white photography



Portal #7

David Angel

digital image

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Venus Over Old Hickory

David M. Lyon
color photography



At the Train Tracks at 5:57 a.m.

Jessica Munal
color photography

Breakfast

Danica Wright

I'm in New York. My first time. I'm twenty-two and feel somehow I've earned the right. They don't smile here, but they maintain furrowed eye contact for eternities, silently convincing me I am wrong for coming. My black, high-heeled boots click in time with the car horns and the wind gusts. It is the first of the winter cold, and I am swept along the scuffed sidewalk with the people in black who are accustomed to bundling themselves against the world. Their serious eyes remain focused on a point, a gray building, a moment replaying only in their minds.

Their eyes are hard, and I wonder if they stay that way during sex, mechanized robots, impaling themselves on each other, gray suits barely undone, frowns firm, eyes hard, hair unfettered. They finish with a handshake. The transition in solidified.

My eyes scan the sterile crowd as I sweep across Broadway. Click-click. Click-click. I run in a formal half-jog that I saw another woman do. Tip-toed and tailored suit, she ran through the sidewalk, the painted corral on which we are permitted to stand.

I see a crowd in knit sweaters. They are excited, hopping and waving outside a television studio where the national series is being broadcast to all their friends back home. I see a head emerge onstage, above the mass. She smiles, silently thanking the crowd for being nothing so she does not have to. My nerves excite at seeing her from only a glass wall away, of telling my small-town friends casually, "Yeah I ran into..." shrugging my shoulders and pretending it did not matter, while pretending I am not one of the nameless masses necessary to give her a name.

I disgust myself at my excitement and focus my eyes back to the sidewalk. I catch sight of a sign barely screaming "Deli and Café" above a side street lined with sleek black cars and drivers standing by doors. They wait for their star to emerge and smile, rolling eyes at them in mock understanding.

I step into the first floor of the bakery. I am confused and know there must be some order to this. I know I am ignorant of the procedure, of the properness. I think back to cafes in Madrid and Tokyo where I understood only pieces of the written menus, trying to glance casually over the strange symbols to find a meal consistent with my desires. I stare now, calmly looking for a word I know, a hint of recognition. I stare a second too long at the overhead menu declaring omelets and plates and sandwiches. The food—hash browns, fresh fruit, piles of shining apples and chilled, perspiring juices—stands across the open cook line, but I do not know what to ask for.

The cook yells at the woman in front of me. I do now know what he says. I only hear the volume. She dictates her order confidently. "Cheese omelet sandwich," she says, the volume of her voice equaling the angry cook's. My turn comes, and without planning to, I say, "The same," nodding toward her. She turns to me and smiles, and I am pleased to not have angered her through my mimicking.

I manage an iced coffee from the open refrigerators and experience the same pride I felt in Spanish chocolaterias of obtaining something, anything. They'll never know if it is what I really wanted.

(cont. on next page)

Breakfast (cont.)

A man in front of me argues about the price of his sandwich. He argues daily, according to the woman with an accent that I cannot recognize, standing behind the counter of Lifesavers and cigarettes. She debates with him momentarily then with a sigh, she moves on to the second register, telling him in broken words and certain motions that she will not do this today. Our line follows her, and I am delighted when I pay and she rolls her eyes in my direction. It is a moment of solidarity amidst the chaos. Surely, I understand her annoyance.

I do. His argument scares me, but I roll my eyes too, tuck my change into my waistband and collect my edible treasures. I see a sign that advertises seating upstairs. I am uncertain if I am allowed to ascend the dirty stairs and dine above the street, but I do not want to ask, to break the moment of success with the relinquishing of a question.

I reach the top. It is empty, and I pick a table by the full-walled window where I can absorb the world without having to walk in it. The emptiness worries me almost more than the crowd, and my memory again travels to a deli in Spain. There homeless women, gypsies, walked—hands outstretched for money or food or sympathy, bitter sympathy. Their heads were wrapped in once colorful shawls. They held children. They always held children, and they always whined in a high-pitched voice,

“Comida para mi hijo, por favor.” (Food for my child, please.)

I would avoid eye contact, nauseated with myself and the guilt of my own homeless father, an ocean away but so close in the image of these women, his hand outstretched where theirs should be, for a dime or a bite. My memory turns to Nashville, years ago, during high school. I walked with my teenage friends, dressed to kill in our Abercrombie, and I saw him, stumbling towards us on the street. He did not see me in the crowd of perfume and too much eyeliner, but my friends saw him, the weight of his Huntington’s wearing him down, pulling tightly on his unraveling body.

“I wish the people of this town would take better care of themselves,” my friend whispered too loudly, flipping her straightened hair over her shoulder and wiggling her nose at the smell as we passed. I ducked, pretending it didn’t matter, pretending the same snobbery. The guilt of never going back to him plagues me as I later journeyed with school through Europe or with my sister across Japan, and it plagues me still as I stare at my ample breakfast. I do not know where he is today, but his memory remains, tucked neatly in my Kate Spade and willing to unfold in a moment in front of me.

I feign relaxation as I spread my food before me and watch the stairs for unwelcome guests. I want to enjoy my breakfast in peace without the guilty reminder that I am part of the problem. Clutching my Gold Card, I can complain angrily, dreamy about how things should be, knowing I don’t want my life to change because I have succeeded at how it is.

I’ve finished my breakfast without tasting it, but I feel the weight in my stomach. It’s time to leave, I tell myself, time to re-enter. I can see the sun reflecting through the clouds now, but it disappears before full enjoyment. I’m tired, but I am here, and I want to see more.



Reflections

Brooke Hamilton
color photography



Necklaces

Marie Martin
color photography

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Linear Fields 16-30

Chris Greer
oil paint & wax

Contributor Bios

David Angel is a freshman Mass Communication major from Knoxville, TN. Angel is interested in audio-visual communications of all sorts.

Chuck Arlund is a junior Photography major from Kansas City, MO. He currently has a Recording Industry degree from MTSU but wants to be a professional photographer.

Maria Bealer is a junior Mass Communication major from Nashville, TN. She was published in Collage two years ago. She plans to work in radio or television after college.

André S. Canty is an Accounting/ Recording Industry major from Knoxville, TN. Canty strives to be the next important poet like Nikki Giovanni.

Dana Clark is a junior Mass Communication major, concentrating in graphic layout design. Clark's minors are Art and Marketing. She plans to be part of a layout team at a magazine after graduating.

Linzi Croy is a junior Graphic Design major from Manchester, TN. Her minor is photography. She hopes to travel and be her own boss as a graphic designer during and after college.

Amber Curry is a junior Liberal Arts major living every day as if it were her last, making love through pen and paper, learning through life on the stage, and simply living through life itself.

Michelle Davis earned a Bachelor's of Fine Arts in 2003 and is presently a Master's candidate in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences at MTSU.

Troy Dixon is a junior Recording Industry major from Knoxville, TN. This is his second semester at MTSU. Dixon enjoys writing and playing music.

Langston Gatewood is a junior Mass Communication major with a concentration in photography. He plans to become a fashion photographer and open his own studio in London, England.

Chris Greer obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting and drawing in the fall of 2004. Greer is currently a student at MTSU in the education program, seeking teacher licensure in art K-12. Greer wishes to teach high school after satisfying certification requirements.

Brooke Hamilton is a senior Mass Communication major with a concentration in photography. She plans to open a studio after college.

Christopher Henslee is a graduate student in the computer science department. His undergraduate degree is in anthropology and he definitely has too many hobbies and interests for his own good.

Mike Jackson is a Recording Industry major from Memphis, TN. He does photography in his spare time and it is one of his favorite hobbies aside from music.

Lindsey Leffew is a junior English major who resides in Smyrna, TN. She plans to either be a starving writer after she graduates or return to school for a graduate degree.

David M. Lyon is a sophomore Engineering Technology major from Hendersonville, TN.

Amy Mauritson has returned to school to study biology in preparation for medical school. Originally from Tuscaloosa, AL, she has lived in Nashville since attending Vanderbilt where she received her bachelor's in mathematics.

Marie Martin is a senior Photography major living and working in Murfreesboro, TN. She has exhibited work at Southern Lattes in Smyrna, TN. She plans to be a professional photographer.

Dustin Meyers is a junior Photography major from Cleveland, TN. Meyers became interested in photography six years ago when he took a trip with someone who had studied photography. This person was able to show him the depth of it. After he graduates, Meyers plans to see where his photography will take him.

Martina Michalova is a senior Photography major. She is an international student from Slovakia. Michalova was published in the spring 2004 issue of Collage. She plans to become a commercial photographer after she graduates.

Jessica Munal is a senior Electronic Media major. She plans to graduate in December of 2005.

Carol Dee Pigg is currently working toward a Ph.D. in English. She is a professor of English at Martin Methodist College in Pulaski, TN.

Shannon Randol is a senior Mass Communication major with a concentration in photography.

Catherine Rolen is an English major from Franklin, TN. She plans on starting the English Master's program at MTSU in the fall. Rolen wants to teach literature after completing her studies.

Audrey Scruton is a senior Journalism major from McKenzie, TN. Scruton has worked as a staff writer for Sidelines, MTSU's student-produced newspaper, since 2003 and has had articles published in the Rutherford A.M. and The Daily News Journal. She plans to pursue a Master's Degree in journalism following graduation.

Casey Sloan is a senior English major from Madison, TN.

Tommy Taylor is a junior Painting major from Jackson, TN. Taylor was published in the spring 2004 issue of Collage and has solo and group exhibitions in Murfreesboro, Nashville and Jackson. Taylor plans to be a working artist along with teaching college art classes.

Jill Townsend is a junior Media Design major from Parsons, TN. Her minors are art and apparel design.

Joseph Waarvik is a sophomore English major from Milwaukee, WI. He plans to teach English after he graduates from MTSU.

Danica Wright is a doctoral student in English literature at MTSU. Her Master's thesis was a creative non-fiction piece entitled "Trail." Wright has also written and produced a number of plays.



From left to right: (front row) Kimberly Jones, Marsha Powers, Amy Foster, Hillary Robson, Jennifer Crigger **(back)** Jessi Torres, Megan Vaughan, Amy Riley, Jessica Dinkins, Suzi Bratton, Jessica Beard, Alison Shockley

Staff Bios

Jessica Beard, contributing staff member, is a freshman from Lewisburg, TN. Jessica was a highest honor graduate from Marshall County High School. She is working toward a degree in mass communications with a minor in geoscience. She plans to stay on staff until she graduates in 2008.

Suzi Bratton is the Literary Arts Editor of Collage. She is a sophomore English major and is minoring in French. She currently holds a 3.7 GPA. After graduating from the Honors College, she plans to pursue a Ph.D. in English literature. Bratton was on the Dean's List for the fall 2004 semester. Her hobbies include reading and writing. She is from Williamsport, TN.

Jennifer Crigger is the Designer on the spring 2005 Collage staff. She is from Columbia, TN (the mule capital of the world!) and is graduating this May with a degree in graphic design and a minor in multimedia design. Besides art, Crigger's passion in life is music. She hopes to incorporate these two loves into her future jobs/careers.

Jessica Dinkins currently holds the position of Visual Arts Editor on the Collage staff. Dinkins, a Murfreesboro native, is working toward a double-degree in media design and Spanish, with a minor in art. She is a senior and plans to stay on the Collage staff until she graduates in May 2006. After graduation, Dinkins would like to travel and eventually work as a designer for a Spanish-language magazine.

Amy Foster, the Editor-in-Chief of Collage, is a senior Political Science major. She is originally from Kingston, TN. Foster has held many different position with student publications at MTSU such as the newspaper Sidelines and the former yearbook Midlander. She has also worked as a photographer and writer for the Roane County News and was Editor-in-Chief of the Roane State Review at Roane State Community College. After graduating in August of this year, she plans to stay in the area working in public relations, law or anything that pays. Foster currently resides in Bradyville, TN with her husband Matt and their four dogs and two cats.

Kimberly Jones, a member of Collage's contributing staff, is a senior Advertising major from Brentwood, TN. After seeing What Women Want, Jones decided her future was in advertising. She hopes to use her minors in art and English to one day become a creative director.

Amy Riley currently holds the position of Assistant Literature Arts Editor on the Collage staff. Riley, a native of Brentwood, TN, is working toward a degree in English with a Spanish minor. She has made the Dean's list every semester. This is her third year working for a college literary magazine.

Hillary Robson graduated from MTSU with a B.S. in Liberal Studies in December 2004. She is currently pursuing her Master's degree in English. Robson is the graduate director for the America Reads program, a contributing editor to the Encyclopedia of Buffy Studies, and has been designing web sites since 1998. She writes fiction and non-fiction creatively and has devoted a great deal of time to the advocacy of creative arts since transferring to MTSU in 2001. In her spare time she is planning her wedding to her fiancé Efrin on August 18, 2005.

Alison Shockley "The Great," as many call her, is a senior English major and Film Studies minor. She loves long novels and weird movies. After she graduates in December 2005, she plans to attend graduate school and seek a Ph.D. in Literature. Many people say she is extraordinarily happy; she credits her cheerful disposition to The Beatles.

Jessi Torres, a Collage contributor, is a senior Journalism major from Austin, TX. She is minoring in both Spanish and English. She has been on the Dean's list every semester of her college career and currently has a 3.8 GPA. Torres studies Taekwondo with her 8-year-old daughter Isabel. She lives in Antioch, TN with her daughter and husband Eliot.

Megan Vaughan, the Assistant Visual Arts Editor of Collage, is a sophomore Photography major from Russellville, AR. She currently holds a 3.9 GPA and plans on staying on the staff until she graduates in May 2007.

— To submit to ***Collage***: —

Collage is now selecting submissions all year. Please check the submission guidelines for details. Deadlines for each publication will be posted on this website. Each submission must have a completed submission form. Each submission must be turned in at the Collage office, Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors College, Rm. 224 between the hours of 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. or by mail. Submissions will NOT be accepted over the internet. Please go to www.mtsu.edu/~honors for the submission forms and latest Collage information.

Collage

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