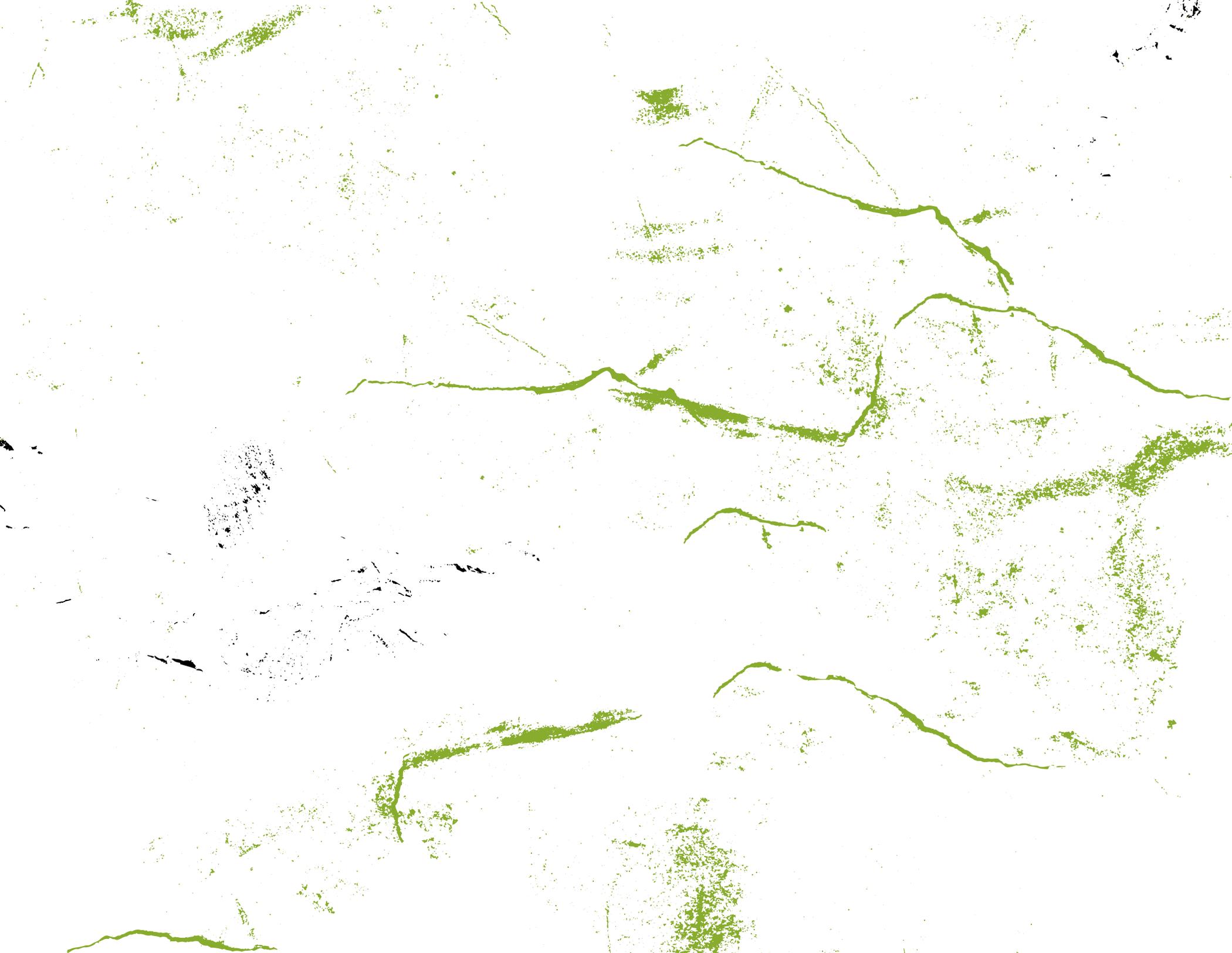


VOLUME 9
SPRING 2009
A Journal
of Creative
Expression
MTSU



COLLAGE





COLLAGE

VOLUME 9
SPRING 2009

A Journal of **Creative Expression**

A PUBLICATION OF THE MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Recent events have made the world nervous. Collapsing economies, yo-yoing stock markets, and budget crises force us, as a global community, to ask some weighty questions, "What is absolutely necessary? What must we keep and what can go?"

Through my six semesters on staff at *Collage*, I have come to know that creativity is an undeniably important thing, no matter the financial conundrum or budget crunch. *Collage* is a great way for creativity to grow: students have an outlet to publish their work, the MTSU student body may view their peer's talent, and the community outside of MTSU can enjoy and admire the abundance

of artistic skill found here at the university. And, in this issue, *Collage* is publishing alumni work. The pieces, done by MTSU graduates, showcase the imaginative spirit that leaves MTSU and goes out to inspire "the real world."

I'm proud to say that this issue reinforces and illustrates how important creativity is: it shows us a different point of view, provides us with different perspectives, and gives us a unique voice. Thank you to everyone who has worked to make this issue. Your creativity is truly important.

Jolene Barto
Jolene Barto

STAFF

Editor in Chief	Jolene Barto
Assistant Editor	Jaz Gray
Designer	Danny McClain
Literature Arts Editor	Jonathan Siler
Visual Arts Editor	Beth Rich
Asst. Visual Arts Editor	Amy Powers
Asst. Literature Editor	Jenna Puckett
Poetry Editor	Dean Andrews
Production Editor	Hannah Green
Fiction Editor	Sam Mallory
Layout Editor	Micah DeFriez
Art Editor	Victoria Ogle
Photography Editor	Jennifer Johnson
Visual Review Staff	Courtney Ferraro Merranda Holmes Leonela Carriedo
Literature Editorial Review Staff	Ashlie Wolfenbarger Tommy Talmage III Caitlin Orman Enitan Aladejana

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ART

- 5 *Treasured Memories* TERI PATTON
- 6 *A Sea's Dream* WENDY RAU
- 7 *Oblivious* EMILY MAY-RAGLAND
- 8 *6:30 AM* TAYLOR HARDAWAY
- 9 *Cast* JASON BARNETT
- 10 *Woolfolk Family* MEGAN WOOLFOLK
- 12 *Heart Problems #1 (Running)* KRISTEN HUBBARD
- 13 *Comfort Zone* JASON BARNETT
- 18 *Limbs and Locks* SARAH SULLIVAN*
- 18 *Transverse* SARAH SULLIVAN*
- 19 *Assortment* SUNDY WRIGHT
- 21 *Kate Pt. 2* MARIE OLDHAM
- 22 *Groovy* RANDY PURCELL
- 22 *Liquid Music* RANDY PURCELL
- 28 *Creature Number 5 (Watcher)* DAVE ROLLINS
- 29 *Self-portrait Number 3* DAVE ROLLINS
- 29 *Untitled* SARAH GOODWIN
- 30 *Lush* CHRIS KENNEDY*

PHOTOGRAPHY

- 4 *Puppet Series* BRETT WARREN
- 5 *Aden's Eyes* NEPHI NIVEN*
- 11 *Haste in JSL* NEPHI NIVEN*
- 16 *Bluegrass Curr's* ANDREW MCNAMARA
- 17 *Red Riding Hood* BRETT WARREN
- 19 *Robots in Soho* MEGAN WOOLFOLK
- 20 *Navajo Arch* CHALIT CHAWALITANGKUN*
- 24 *Jaime's House* BRANDON WOODS
- 25 *Off the Deep End* MEGAN MCSWAIN
- 25 *Tyre* MARCUS LAXTON
- 26 *Honey, Honey* LAUREN ATHALIA*
- 27 *On Her Way* CHET OVERALL
- 31 *The Copa Club Microphone* RORY WHITE*
- 32 *The Branded Sons* RORY WHITE*

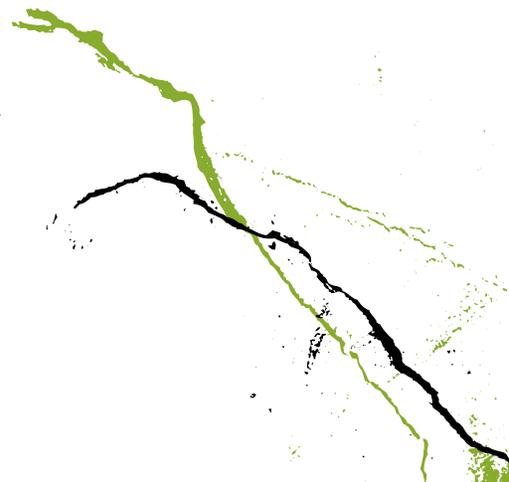
PROSE

- 6 *Something Pretty Spectacular* MEG DAVIS
- 14 *Yellow Signs* MASON GALLAWAY
- 23 *Clarissa's Bedroom* DYLAN MORRIS
- 27 excerpt from *Hickey* HEATHER WEBB
- 32 *Preferences* JESSICA LINDNER

POETRY

- 4 *Image Effects* ANGEL LOUPE
- 5 *D-Daddy* TAFFETA CHIME
- 8 *The Night I Was Cheated* KELA CASIPLE
- 9 *Romancing the Viscera* ERIC BENICK
- 10 *The Dusty Dalton Lane* BEN DAWSON
- 11 *Upon Seeing The Rabbi's Hands* ERIC BENICK
- 12 *Mr. Poet* MEG DAVIS
- 17 *Asking For It* ELIZABETH HUNT
- 18 *Dependency* JOSEPH C. LAMPLEY
- 19 *Scattered* ELIZABETH HUNT
- 20 *October Under the Old Oak* ERIC POWELL
- 21 *Merely, Walking Trees* LANI HENNING
- 25 *Missing You* KRISTEN SWEENEY
- 30 *Buying the Perfect Peach* JEN HAYES
- 31 *Anthony's Abstract* ANTHONY ADEWUMI

*Alumni





Puppet Series (above, right)

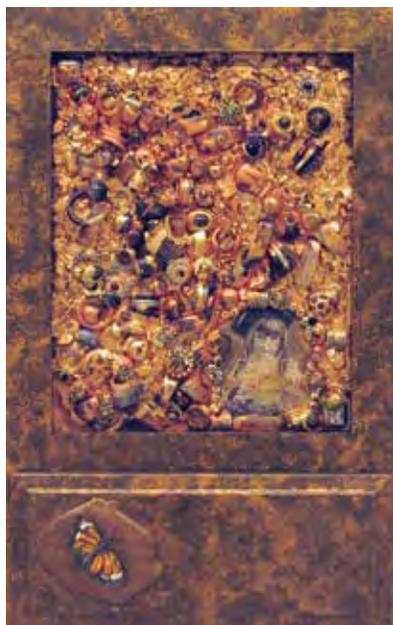
BRETT WARREN
(digital photography)



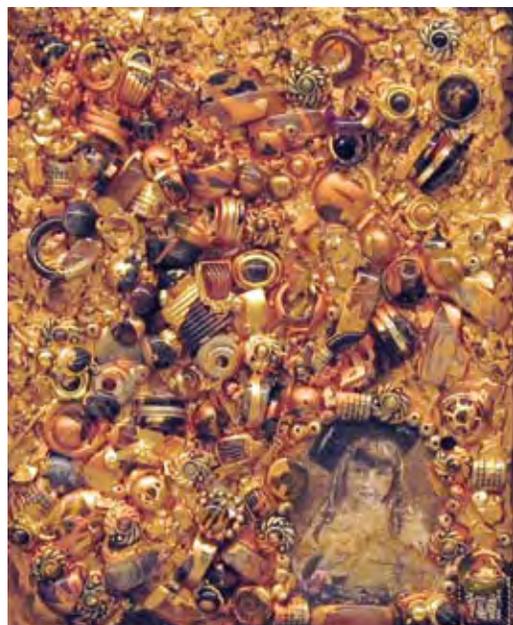
Image Effects

ANGEL LOUPE

Hot, steamy, sweaty, sexy, fishnet stocking legs.
Little boys dreaming dripping, dreamy dreams in bed.
Young men fantasizing, tantalizing spread.
Television incision implanted in the head.
Frustrated, depredated, loss of dignity.
Little girls mimicking everything they see.
Losing self with fleeting worth of lost virginity.
Television incision opportunity.



Treasured Memories
TERI PATTON
(collage & painting)



(detail)

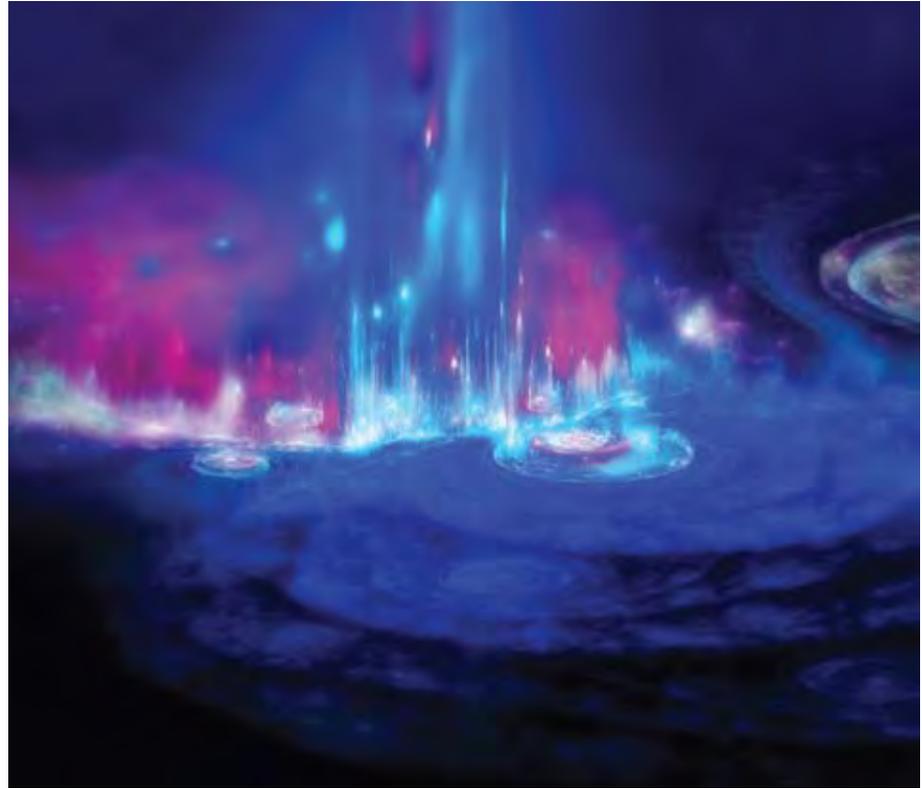
D-Daddy
TAFFETA CHIME

My little fascinated fingertips
were curious about the hair on your leather arm
that hugged my neck while I leaned against
your sunken chest as we sat on the church pew.
A forest covering a desert,
with rugged boulders of desiccated blood
and rusty puddles of perfect imperfection.
The limbless trees bent at my breath,
but when I pushed them against your grain,
they did not fall.
And when I tried to gently
tug them from the roots,
they did not come,
but instead formed tiny mountains
under every tree
and slipped through
the grooves
of my little fascinated fingertips.



Aden's Eyes
NEPHI NIVEN*
Alum (French, 2006)
www.nephiniven.net
(digital photography)

A Sea's Dream
WENDY RAU
(digitally rendered fractal)



Something Pretty Spectacular
MEG DAVIS

July 4th is one of those distinct holidays that isn't about a faith or religion. It's not the birthday of a famous religious figure, a celebration before a fast, or an observance of the dead rising. It's an annual pat on the back for our nation, continually fighting for our rights and freedoms.

That's not what I like best, though. I like the fireworks. We're silly, you know. All of us watching as a few self-claimed professionals try in vain to launch

some of their own stars into the sky. And there's always the hope, that unconscious wish, that one will stick there one day.

On the spot, we witness the birth, maturity, and death of a glowing willow tree. Their golden stems reach down and sprout leaves like diamonds. They're gone in a flash, but there was always that hope that the stars would see our originality and pull ours into their ranks.

And yet, no matter how high up in the air we shoot our stars, no matter what sort of tricks they can do or how loudly they can boom and echo over the city, they always arch back down. They always come back down to Earth, back home, back to their creators. When even stars don't want to be stars—when they want to come back and live with us here on solid ground—it leads me to believe that we must have something pretty spectacular down here on Earth, something pretty spectacular indeed. 🍷



The boy depicted in this piece is Jarrett Steele. He is three years old and suffers from Osteogenesis Imperfecta, also known as brittle bone disease.

Oblivious
EMILY MAY-RAGLAND
(acrylic & oil on canvas)

The Night I Was Cheated

KELA CASIPLE

You are not mine, but hers, yet in that cardboard bed
No one cared because she had drunk too much. I thought
She would feel you next to her, but you turned instead
To face my words, my sounds, rolling from the taut,
Tense turmoil, twisting the space between the steam
That seemed to float, up and off our thighs. Like thin glass,
I fell beneath the sheets to split and crack between
Your heat. I paused to see her face asleep, but fast we
Jumped into the core of what it meant to know who
We were as time lost subtle ache to trust
The crash of lust we fell upon at our hello,
Upon the clothes unfurled about us. "We should just ..."
And so you spoke my heart through how your body swayed,
And how your wrists beat wild, wild down my spine.
The darkness of the room consumed our breath. Betrayed,
She slept so quietly, and I thought that you were mine.



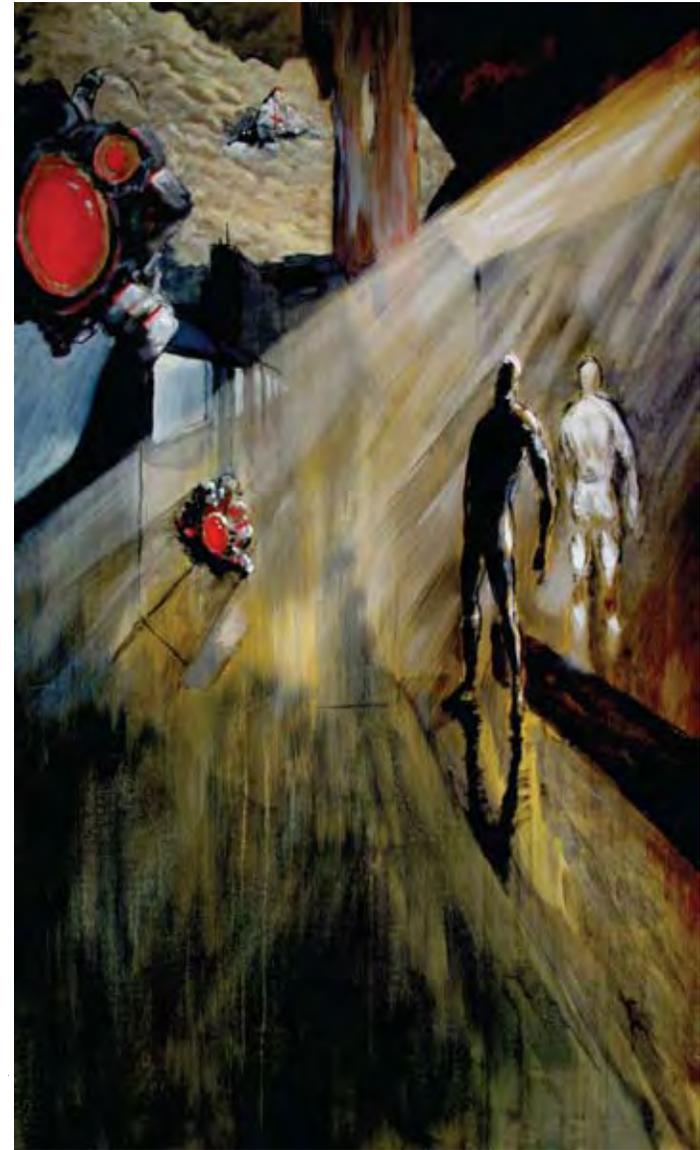
6:30 AM
TAYLOR HARDAWAY
(acrylic on canvas)

Romancing the Viscera

ERIC BENICK

I am writing this poem to talk to you
In the way a child might talk to his magic
Eight ball:
Alone,
Lost in the blue liquid.
I do not do this very often,
I seldom muse
Or dwell
On paltry encounters,
But now I want to recognize you.
I want to canonize you.
I want to animalize you
For your contrasts speak as loud
As your sweaters,
And I want to remove them.
And I am aware that
You may not be who I think you are:
A precocious, quasi-confident
Polymath
Who has read and understood
All of *In Remembrance of Things Passed*
And can discuss it with eloquence
And loquacity
But without sounding too pedantic;
A hard-working, middle-class
Marxist's daughter
Who grew up working on
Endless vegetable farms
For integrity instead of money;
A student of astronomy
Whose eyes brighten like quasars
When caught up in theories
Of black holes.

Yes, you whom my viscera
Presumes to be best only for me
And not for the other ones
Who cling lonely at your hip.
I have pangs for you
Bigger than their entities,
But I am smaller by comparison
And thus inches below the line of
Interest.
Ascribe to me what I have of you
So we can build a knowledge of
Frauds
Bigger than gods,
And I will appropriate that identity.
I will abscond with you
To the fabrications of everywhere
And build a stratosphere of notions
Insurmountable by idle
On-lookers.
If only I could place these words
Inside your ear
Then my nerves might be able to
Sleep.
But I am the child
Of clandestine life
Who will have to settle
For the eternity in your eyes.



Cast
JASON BARNETT
(mixed media)

**The Dusty
Dalton Lane**
BEN DAWSON

'Twas a midnight early morning in the thicket of the night.
A visitor was stirring with a step ever so light.
The town stood still, the doorjambs sealed, the air was crisp and clean.
Slumber danced in the eyes of all except for the one unseen.
Never a worry when all is at rest on the dusty Dalton Lane.

The flowing specter, coattails aloft, sailed gently with the breeze.
Moonlight trailed the enchanting presence, but features it could not seize,
A brimméd hat of twice-common size cast shadows on the bleak visage.
Darkness engulfed his entire self, lecherous toward the mirage.

And up the aging lane he wafted through the gated way,
Past the wood-locked chopping grounds and past the uncut hay.
He crept right by the drafty houses pleading for repair.
Here a roof bent, there a porch stooped, accustomed to years of wear.
Foot by foot his route was clear, and to the fount he strolled.
Quicker the pace now, faster he ran, crafting a move so bold.
With an unbounded leap, he flew through the air, and squared himself on the well.
He cupped his hands around his mouth and shattered the peace with a yell,
"Come one, come all, get out of bed, and sleep yourselves no more!
I have with me a magical treat from the land of sweet galore!"
Eyes snapped open, lanterns awakened, rage resounded throughout.
The townsfolk surrounded the awaiting spirit ready for a vicious bout.



Woolfolk Family, Tennessee, Circa 1913
MEGAN WOOLFOLK
(etching)

The tall dark figure stood his ground and raised his hands on high,
But as soon as he uttered another word, a pain ran through his thigh.
Before he realized the wound in his leg, another arose from the rear,
Piercing his back right to the heart and causing the crowd to cheer.

He slipped and fell into the darkness never to be seen again,
But from within that hole in the ground, his voice groaned out their sin,
"You failed to listen, failed to trust, failed to know my cause,
Failed to realize and understand that I could have mended your flaws.
You failed in me and failed in yourselves, and to this oath I attest,
You shall not sleep for all of time nor blink a wink of rest."

With final words, the specter descended, his vow surpassing vicinity.
Branding the town folk with bloodshot eyes, sleepless for infinity.
And to this day, the beds lay empty, Slumber dances no more.
The curse reassures that the thicket of the night shall never be still as before.
And ever a worry for none are at rest on the dusty Dalton Lane.

**Upon Seeing
The Rabbi's Hands**

ERIC BENICK

Childhood does not boast the richest piety,
But I remember watching my cousin's
Yarmulke stray loose from its pins
As he swayed into his prayers.
I remember my *yarmulke*
Recumbent in its own dishonesty.
My friend told me that his *yarmulke*
Reminded him that God was above him
And he kissed it whenever it fell to
The floor,
But I never felt the same fervor.
I was not old enough to know
That I was not a Jew,
But I was old enough to
Know what a god was,
Though I was more concerned with colors
And pictures

And how to set things on fire by harnessing the sun.
I was obstinate.
Every time I slept over at my cousin's house
I knew that the synagogue would follow.
I arose with consternation
Fearing the rabbis with their long, cloudy beards.
I was selected one day
To sing an appraisal to *Hashem*, so they called him.
My cousin stayed behind
With his face glowing in earnest temperament.
I did not know the prayers.
I was not a Jew.
I was an imposter,
But the rabbi took my finger
And guided it over the words
Singing lowly in my ear.

Haste in JSL

NEPHI NIVEN*
Alum (French, 2006)
www.nephiniven.net
(digital photography)



His hands were honest;
Evocative of everything they had endured.
I could see his beard from my periphery
And I wanted one.
I wanted my hands to wrinkle like shrunken leather
And enclose my dusty bones
With the purity of tradition.
I made sense of the backwards type
Seeing patterns and shapes
That suspended my disbelief.
I did not know what anything meant
But I knew how everything felt,
And that was enough for me.
I belonged to their diaspora,
As I too, swayed into the prayer
Feeling the power in community.



**Heart
Problems #1
(Running)**
KRISTEN HUBBARD
(oil & graphite on panel)

Mr. Poet

MEG DAVIS

I'm in love with a man whose face I've never seen.
I've never seen his eyebrows furrow when he writes.
I've never seen his eyes dance around a room for inspiration.
I've never watched his mouth as he mutters under his breath.
I've never seen him tap his pencil, waiting for just the right word.

I'm in love with a man whose voice I've never heard.
I've never heard him whisper to his newest poem—his newest lover.
I've never heard him swear because she refuses to cooperate.
I've never heard him sing to forget about her.
I've never listened to the bittersweet sigh once he's set her aside forever.

I'm in love with a man because I know his poetry.
I've read it over and over.
I've laughed at the ironies he lays down.
I've wrapped myself up tight in his words.
I've sunken into tranquility and rested my mind after being kissed
goodnight by his intellect.



Comfort Zone
JASON BARNETT
(mixed media)



Yellow Signs

MASON GALLAWAY

He stepped onto a sidewalk that could lead to anywhere. Joined by many others, Sam walked with firm feet and darting eyes. Spring had not yet arrived, but the dominant sun gave Sam the feeling that it might arrive early this year. The grounds were teeming with the excitement of the semester.

He could easily differentiate between the students who were on the verge of finishing their stints of university life and the others who walked with an uncertain, inexperienced awkwardness.

As he took each step towards his destination, he identified with the younger students the most. He saw in their eyes the anxious and unadulterated wonder that he couldn't help but know in himself.

As Sam walked, the ground seemed to roll out for him with every step. Tall trees crowded and surrounded him, casting a welcoming and embracing shade. Beneath the treetops, diverse shapes, sizes, and colors populated the campus grounds.

Sam walked past the union center where two men stood engaged in conversation against the building's thick pillars. One man was aged, with graying hair and a brown sports jacket. The other was younger,

with matted hair and a thin soul patch on his chin. His arms moved passionately, clearly explaining what Sam imagined to be a complex theory or interpretation. The older man nodded, his eyes wrinkled with intrigue, as he puffed on a cigar. As Sam watched, he noticed a familiarity in the speaker. He imagined himself at the top of those daunting stairs, presenting ideas that could keep the attention of any wise professor.

These fantasies continued as he walked on. Building after building lay spread out before him, like an open metropolis of possibilities. A large circular building sat directly across from the union center. Several smaller buildings appeared as he got closer. He imagined the small structures as the circular building's offspring, yearning to grow bigger and more magnificent than their parent.

The dark gray brick of the buildings encased rows of shiny windows. The building's design was a slick postmodern frame that could be fit for the most elite. A large sign was posted in front of the glassy entrance: *College of Business*. Behind the gleaming windows were rooms that could seat dozens of entrepreneurs eager to build skyscrapers that would reach the clouds. Sam could feel himself behind

those windows, absorbing the bits of knowledge that could lead him to the sky.

There was a deep grove of walnut trees beside him that stretched along the sidewalk for hundreds of feet. Within the small wood rested several picnic tables sketched with shade. Various people lounged with open books and pens in hand. Some wore ear buds and earphones while others preferred nothing but the sounds around them mingled with their ignited thoughts. As the grove came to an end, he saw a petite blonde-haired girl sitting against a tree with a red book in hand. Her thin delicate fingers covered the title. He caught a glimpse of her sharp blue eyes as she glanced at him. He nodded and smiled, and she smiled cheerfully back before returning her eyes to the mysterious pages.

He imagined himself sitting under a tree, next to an interesting and beautiful girl. He saw himself holding a book with a title that was covered by his hands, periodically taking his eyes from the pages and onto the pretty piece of luck next to him. As the girl and the tree moved out of his sight, so too did his distant daydream. He turned his gaze to the surroundings once more as he remembered his destination.

A concrete path led him to a bulky building with rusty brick and elaborate trim borders. All this majestic hall lacked were two perched gargoyles above the doors, making sure nothing but good intentions entered. The letters over the main entrance read: *College of Sciences*. In his mind, Sam imagined dark laboratories, morbid experiments, and insane laughter but quickly shook the idea from his head. They were replaced by thoughts of spending hours in the old hall learning about matter with the intention of exploring vast oceans, deep caverns, or the immense intricacies of medicine.

Sam walked and looked as he came upon several different buildings, one of which particularly caught his eye. It was a thin, tall structure that seemed to be made primarily out of glass. The sun cast reflections off of its surface, sending rays in all directions. As he approached, he saw a blue sign painted with a gray airplane ripping through white swirls of cloud. It read: *College of Aerospace*. He felt his weight disappear as he imagined himself ripping through clouds in an altered state of rightness. Still, he forced himself to land and walked on. His final destination was in sight.

As Sam approached his building, the sun slipped behind the clouds over the rooftops and the trees, and the wind stirred up a chill. Maybe spring was still far off after all, or maybe somehow it had already come and gone, and summer was fading hopelessly into fall. Sam grew uneasy as he faced the new stage of his life.

His journey ended at a secluded area of the campus. He stood on the steps of a historic building with four thick pillars guarding the entrance. It was a residence hall where he knew he would spend much of his time. As he walked through the doors, he passed a young girl sitting behind a stained desk.

"Hey there," she said, offering a brief glance and an incomplete smile. Her hair covered her face as her pen scratched the paper.

"Morning," he replied as he walked past her towards a nearby bathroom. The fluorescent, artificial lighting of the bathroom combated the natural light of day seeping through a small window near the stalls.

““ Building after building lay spread out before him, like an open metropolis of possibilities. ””

He stood at the mirror staring at an old, shriveled man with thinning gray hair and bushy eyebrows. His shirt was too big and read: *Sam Jones, Campus Maintenance*. The mirror had smudges he knew he would have to clean.

He left the bathroom and went to the small supply closet at the end of the hall. There were the basics: mop, broom, window cleaner, some rubber gloves, as well as other tools. He mopped the halls, wiped the windows, and cleaned bathrooms, knowing it all wouldn't stay clean for long. He always saved

the main stairs for last, working his way down. He stood at the foot of the stairwell and dragged the mop back and forth. Students rushed or walked by, zigzagging around him.

He was met with a face he saw just about every day. It was the face of his distant youth. He was a young guy in his late teens or early twenties, who moved fast, always coming or going. There was usually some kind of greeting between them, either physical or verbal, but always brief. Sam made sure to lock eyes with him before he passed. In these brief moments, Sam would take advantage of every second. *Remember this*, he would mentally plead as he set out his yellow signs.

On days like this one, Sam believed his purpose transcended ammonia and alcohol-soaked mops. He hoped that the students who hurried by with books in hand and plans for their lives would see more than just yellow caution signs and a dirty uniform. Sam hoped that they would see a man washing away marks of regret. The marks are wide and go on for miles. They wash away, but only inch-by-inch. He leaves a trail of yellow signs as he goes. 🟡



Bluegrass Curr's

ANDREW MCNAMARA
(black & white photography)

Asking For It ELIZABETH HUNT

Went for a walk today—
side street shortcut.
Truck pulls up slow
middle-age bald man
mouths, “How much?”
through a rolled-up window.

What is the going rate
for suburban prostitutes?

Do they look like me,
fully dressed in a
sweatshirt and jeans?

I don't want to
sell myself short,
but asking too much
seems presumptuous,
and I have no reference
to cite my self-worth.

So I wave him off, cut a
corner through some grass;
the New Year's Eve cold
bites right in.

He had the heat on.
It would have been
so warm.



Red Riding Hood
BRETT WARREN
(digital photography)



CREATIVE
EXPRESSION
AWARD WINNER



Limbs and Locks

SARAH SULLIVAN*
Alum (Studio, Art 2008)
(oil on canvas)



CREATIVE
EXPRESSION
AWARD WINNER



Transverse
SARAH SULLIVAN*
Alum (Studio, Art 2008)
(oil on canvas)

Dependency

JOSEPH C. LAMPLEY

I conspire to cut you away,
To excise you in the fashion
Of some quivering malignancy:
Separate your flesh from my bone.
With cold surgical indifference.
You have been my albatross, and I—
I am your mariner no more. Bound to this,
As your carcass is bound to me.
And so I cleave us apart.

To you, the scalpel.
To me, the stitches.

Scattered
ELIZABETH HUNT

Used to be we'd go to Waffle House to watch the kind of people who go there "for real" and to snicker at their beards and tattoos and girlfriends a little too young.

And then we noticed that about half the people at Waffle House were also there to watch the people who went there "for real."

And I thought maybe we could keep going to watch the kind of people who go to watch the people who go there "for real."

And snicker at their artistic scruffiness and dark-rimmed glasses, because it seemed like the postmodern thing to do.

But then I decided maybe it was more postmodern just to go there to eat waffles.

Robots in Soho
MEGAN WOOLFOLK
(black & white photography)



Assortment
SUNDY WRIGHT
(handmade fruit & vegetable paper, thread, wire)



(detail)



Navajo Arch
CHALIT CHAWALITANGKUN*
Alum (Photography, 2008)
(gelatin silver print)

**October Under
the Old Oak**

ERIC POWELL



CREATIVE
EXPRESSION
AWARD WINNER

Leaves in jubilation
float down toward me,
finally giving themselves
to the wind
which has for months
been wantonly wooing them.

I follow one leaf fall
in spontaneous
improvisation worthy
of Thelonious.
Pausing to pirouette
briefly upon my arm,
with a last prurient twist
softly singing—she's gone.

Leaves, like us, are falling—
suspended in the moment
of ecstasy before death.
Only for death and through death
do they dance and whisper
their sibilant song.

We are this leaf-dance
and nothing more, though
we may give ourselves
sooner to the wind.
Yet for all this, we
cannot reduce the richness
of a single leaf-song
or the brief brilliance
of a single leaf-dance.

Merely, Walking Trees

LANI HENNING

We all are, merely, walking trees.

Young—

Bark a fresh,

Smooth and tender;

Weak limbs—

Skew every which way.

Too strong a wind,

Easily uprooted.

With the passing of time—

Wide stridden;

Bark a tough,

Creased and wrinkled wedges.

Stands tall and firm,

Roots anchor deeper

Than the eye can see

Branches outstretched

Gracefully —

Willing to offer shade and comfort

To all in need.



Kate Pt. 2

MARIE OLDHAM

(acrylic & oil on canvas)



Groovy (Above)
Liquid Music (Right)
RANDY PURCELL
(acrylic on canvas)



C

Clarissa's Bedroom
DYLAN MORRIS



CREATIVE
EXPRESSION
AWARD WINNER

larissa was the kind of girl you prayed to see before walking into your first class of a new semester. And there she was, for me anyway. Everyone knew she was beautiful; she could have easily been a pinup from the 1950's.

Back then I considered myself one of the kinds of people that could talk to anybody. I was the guy who made sure the teacher answered my question and didn't sheepishly put my hand down after thirty seconds, trying to act like it never happened. I was friendly, assertive, outgoing, but most of all, I had tact.

So, being as subtle as possible, I made sure to sit next to her without saying a word. I was feeling surprisingly unsure of myself, continually clicking the graphite out of my pencil and pushing it back in like I was an official tester at some Bic factory. I was beginning to severely regret my bold decision, until she finally spoke to me. I didn't register what she said, but I immediately noticed her voice. She had the voice of a hospital nurse: reassuring and soft, yet seeming to quiver as if always expecting the worst. Her eyes were brilliant, green and serene. They seemed to be reflections of lily pads on a cool pond, but they could easily pierce your skin like a gentle nurse's syringe.

Soon we became good friends, almost flirtatious if I could judge so myself. We would ask each other questions, joke about spirituality and the phases of the moon. We had the same view of the world, and the world had the same view of us—forgetful and unconcerned.

I clearly remember the first night she called me over to her apartment. It was a particularly boring Saturday night, and we had no plans; neither of us considered it a date. She told me to bring something to drink, so I picked up some wine at the liquor store. Wine was the only thing we ever drank together (Pinot Noir, to be specific). Everything I knew about wine I had learned from the movie *Sideways*. Basically, I wasn't drinking any effing merlot.

I trotted up the stairs to her third floor apartment, knocked on door number 315, and waited. I could sense all the possibilities there as I waited at the door, dangling the bottle down by my side. I could stand here forever while trains passed overhead, disguised as shooting stars.

I could jump off the balcony screaming, "I am Icarus! With renewed wings!" and maybe actually fly before the ground caught me. Or, I could just wait until the door opened. One must remember the possibilities; there are always possibilities.

The door opened. I stood in amazement at the beauty and aesthetic detail of the interior; it definitely reflected her. We greeted and shared some words before deciding to watch T.V. and open the wine. I broke the bottle opener trying to twist the cork out and eventually had to slam the cork down into the bottle with a knife handle. The cork floated down inside like a bloated coconut on a bloody sea. Clarissa made sure to point out how I could fix anything.

“One must remember the possibilities; there are always possibilities.”

The only T.V. she had was situated in her bedroom. The lighting was dim and

mysterious. The bookshelves were painted lime green with assorted knick-knacks scattered among the books. We sat on the bed talking and sharing the bottle, all the while dreaming and creating.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Clarissa and I were lost in conversation as usual, the kind that keeps going just because you enjoy the other person's company so much that you don't want it to end. As we began to feel warm and more comfortable, we both fell backwards on the bed. She would point at something in the room, and I



Jaime's House

BRANDON WOODS
(black & white photography)

would say the first thing that came to mind that started with the same letter (a little game she made up). If she would point at the clock on the wall, I would say "Criminals! Stealing our time!" She would laugh and laugh and smile.

We lay on the bed like grass on a lawn, with bed sheets as our blanket and ceiling as our sky. At some point, the air between us started to grow thin.

She was closer to me than before. It was hard to keep track of time now that we had almost finished the bottle. It might have been around one o'clock in the morning when she first grabbed my hand. I was surprised at first but then realized the situation I was in, and wondered why I hadn't expected this sooner. Nobody really knows what to expect when things like this happen.

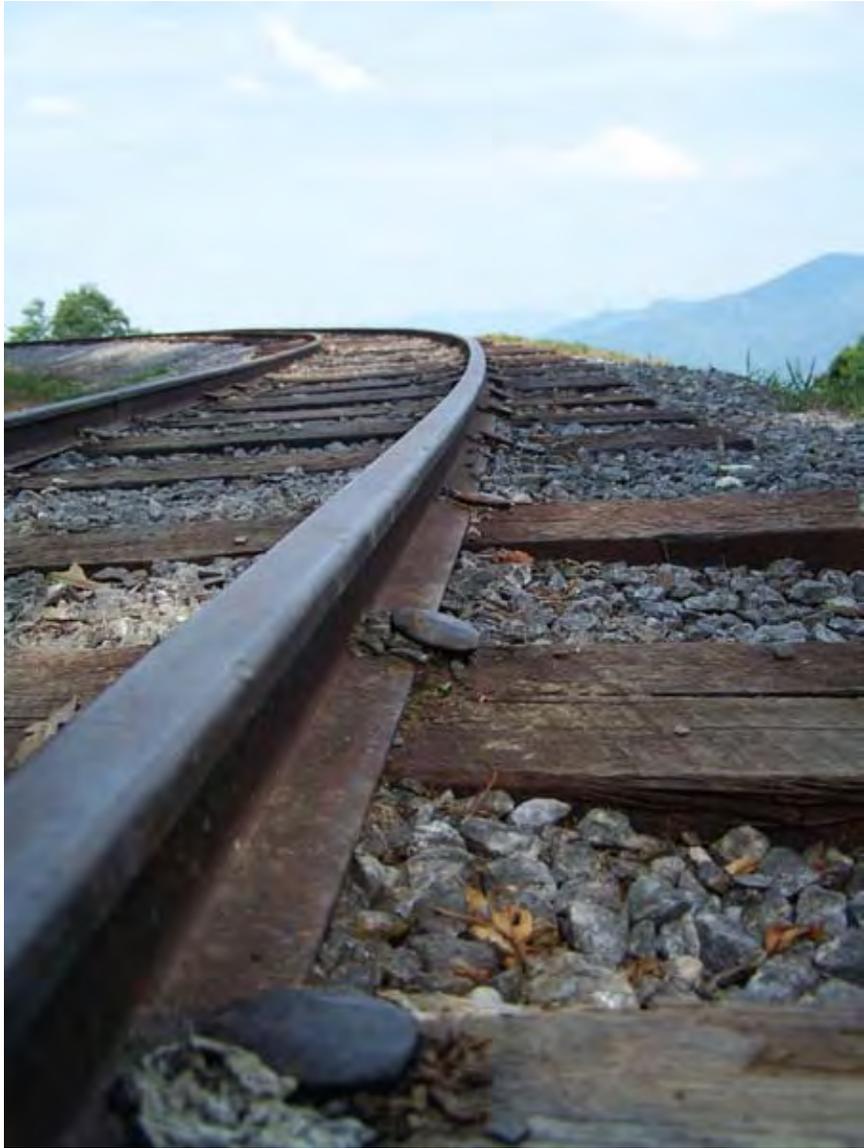
I saw her eyes like I'd never seen them before, enchanting, soft, and comforting, almost like a child asking another, "Can you keep a secret?" Her red hair on the blue pillows was like fire that could burn out the ocean. I felt every touch, every brush. I felt her lips, face, and skin. It was all holy.

I was Sir Edmund Hillary standing atop Mount Everest in 1953 with the harsh, magnificent wind blowing in my face. I was Neil Armstrong taking his first steps on the moon. The earth really does look like a blueberry from this vantage point! No imagination in the world could come up with a better moment to live in. I didn't know whether I was acting Shakespeare or playing Mozart. It was equally beautiful, and I took it all in.

I felt the coarse bed sheets rubbing against me and saw the purple curtains fluttering in the wind. I heard and felt her slow breath in my ears and on my skin. I breathed it all in. This was our moment. She was my muse, my Beatrice, and we would one day make it out of this hell. We would find a paradise outside of this moment, to be saved and corked in this empty wine bottle, thrown out to sea, passing sinking ships.

After we finished, it was just her and me and the background noise of the T.V. I kept thinking of James Dickey's poem "Cherrylog Road" and the line, "I held her and held her and held her." I wanted to be part of that poem. I wanted that very line to be about me. No, I wanted to *be* that line, the physical embodiment of those words, because at that moment, I knew what the poet meant. I was living it.

I like to think back on that night, and what it was like to know that there was nothing in the world that could ever separate us. No person, country, language, or idea could ever awaken us from our lazy sleep that night in her bedroom. These are the kinds of memories that I can look back on happily, as I sit here now, click—click—clicking my pencil. 🖋️



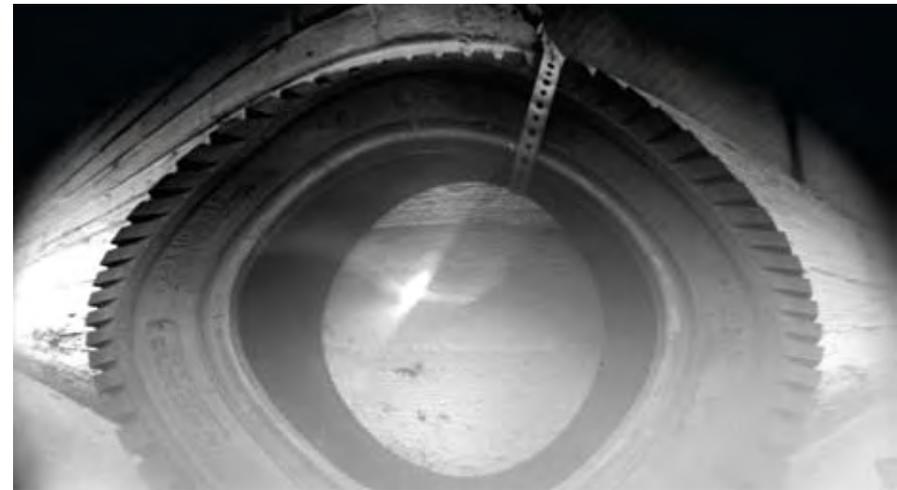
Off the Deep End

MEGAN MCSWAIN
(digital photography)

Missing You

KRISTEN SWEENEY

Miles stretch between us
Like a large, lazy, yellow-black cat
Yawning, slowly, at the two victims caught
On polar ends of his great, speed-less trap.



Tyre

MARCUS LAXTON
(pinhole photography)

Honey, Honey
LAUREN ATHALIA*
Alum (Graphic Design, 2008)
www.laurenathalia.com
(digital photography)



On Her Way
CHET OVERALL
(digital photography)



S

excerpt from **Hickey**
HEATHER WEBB

Stepping up to the bus stop I could feel the steps behind me quickening. I knew that if I didn't make it onto the bus, I would be dead. "Wait! Don't leave! *Don't* leave me!" I tried to shout, but the words wouldn't make it past my gasping breath. The bus pulled away just as I reached it and the mysterious men closed in on me. I broke into a sprint; I *had* to keep running, but my feet seemed to be weighed down by concrete blocks. Salty tears began to sting my face and adrenaline pulsed through my veins—but not quickly enough. I struggled with all my strength to get away from the men that were pursuing me. I had heard in horror their disgusting plans to rape and murder me. I felt

their heated breath on my shoulder and their bony fingers brush against my hair. *I'm not going to make it!* They grabbed me before I could reach out for anyone's help; I was thrown into the back seat of an unfamiliar car.

* * * *

The tears and blood that had crusted my lids had made them hard to open. Everything was blurry; the men were gone, and I had been abandoned in a dark field. No one was in sight. My hand reached out to the weeds around me; everything was cold, wet, and dark. The soil beneath me was a sobering realization that somehow I had escaped the men.

Escaped? Or left to die?

Not far from where I woke lay a corpse, mutilated and bruised almost beyond recognition of humanity had it not been for its arms and legs. I could not help but weep for this victim. Where was her family? What had she done to deserve this? Was this the fate I was thrown out here for? I knew nothing of her and probably never would. Closer and closer I drew myself, feeble and aching, towards this innocent youth. As I neared, I recognized my own eyes, the strands of hair, and the lifeless mouth; the body was none other than my own. "Help! Help me!" I screamed.

➤ (CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Creature Number 5: Watcher

DAVE ROLLINS
(pen and Ink with red
& silver sharpie)



I woke gasping for air, with a fear that everything I had experienced had been real. My mother was sitting by the bed with tears in her eyes asking me if I had been trying to scare her. This had been the reason that I had asked her two nights ago not to sleep in my room.

The doctor had warned me these chemo-treatment pills would cause depression and nightmares. When she had informed me of this I merely laughed it off. After all, I had been depressed only once in my life and swore to myself never to hold such thoughts again. I sure wasn't going to let a pill do this to me.

I was twenty years old and should have taken these pills every night like a responsible adult. I didn't.

Instead, I threw tantrums because I knew my situation allowed me to do this.

The nights I had to take these pills always ended in tears for both me and my parents. Every method that could be used on a young child had been forced upon me. My grandmother was called to ensure that the guilt was placed upon me. They promised to buy my favorite foods. I was given time limits and told the pills would be force-fed to me if not taken before the time was up.

Finally, a way that worked: the pills would be wrapped in bread to mask their foul taste. It had become an exhausting routine. At times I would lock myself in the bathroom and flush the pills

even though I realized they were a vital part of my treatment. The taste had only been part of the evils of the pills; the nightmares and restless sleep that followed were unimaginable. Every night was the same thing over and over: malicious plots by strangers to dismember and violate me, each more horrible than the last. I trembled every night, fearfully dreading when I closed my eyes that I was only escaping the physical pain and being led to another, more terrible realm of mental anguish. 🍷



Untitled
SARAH GOODWIN
(acrylic on canvas)

 CREATIVE
EXPRESSION
AWARD WINNER



**Self-portrait
Number 3**
DAVE ROLLINS
(pen and ink with black
sharpie & red enamel paint)

Buying the Perfect Peach

JEN HAYES

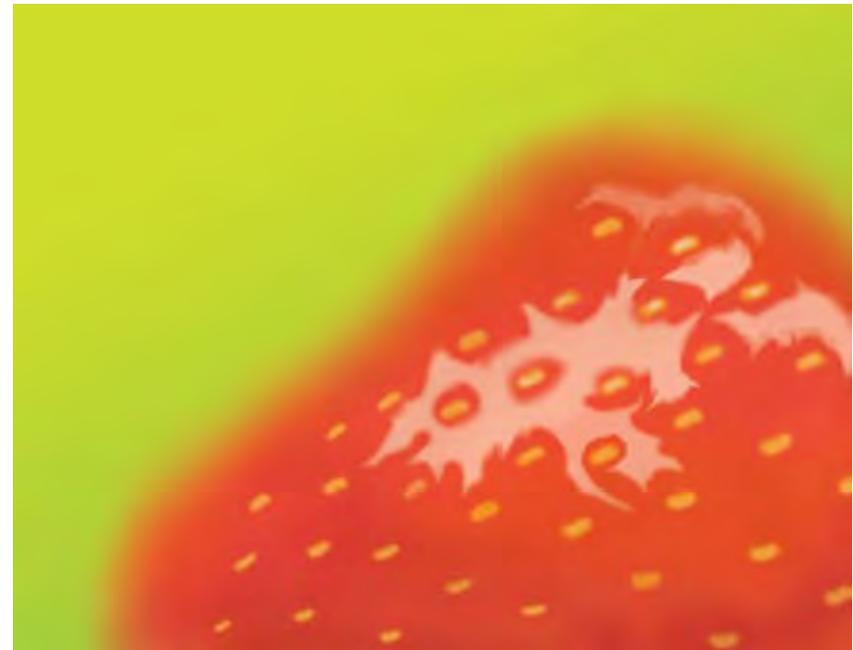
The yellow flesh looks firm and inviting,
fingers push it aside, searching for that perfect choice,
just juicy and soft enough without being too spongy.

Mounds and mounds of rosy flesh, deep reds and golden yellows,
five dollars for a small basket, ten for a large, piled high.
That's where the best peaches are,
not in polished super markets, gleaming white
and sorted neatly into plastic crates, next to apples and oranges.

The smell is so alluring, sweet and smelling of warm days.
We always bought our peaches from roadside stalls
from men in rusty red pick-up trucks.

My grandmother always trusted them, the no-named farmers in overalls,
spitting tobacco in between negotiations, as the asphalt grows hotter
in that stifling summer heat that you can't stand on with bare feet.

Those were the sweetest peaches I ever tasted, as I select one
from the plastic grocery bin, 50 cents for the worst peach I've ever had,
so spongy and over-ripe the pit breaks in half with one bite.



Lush
CHRIS KENNEDY*
Alum (Media Design, 2007)
(digital illustration)

Anthony's Abstract

ANTHONY ADEWUMI

They say to be great is to be misunderstood–
So that means my dreams are detrimental,
Plagued with positivity–
In a world that's immune to the intelligence of an influential

Anchored by ambition; flown with faith,
Crawl with the condemned and sway the sinner into a saint,
Saint Anthony...recovers that which went adrift
Enlighten inspiration for those hidden in the apathetic mist

Be the guide for the blind and be harkened by the deaf,
The cerebral for the senseless so the broke can be helped
Be as heavenly as the cherub but wiser than the serpent,
Be the net to catch a fallen spirit before it hits the surface

The lyrics to a legacy; the pupils of the eyes
That look into the soul and see no fear in my demise,
Ashes I came and dust I shall return–
Only to fertilize the Earth and grow blessings through the ferns

Reincarnated through the rhymes and eternalized in the epics
Speak through the scriptures and convince the skeptics
Put prophesy in the pen and prayer in the poetry
For many can sketch conclusions–
But only I can draw the art that flows through me.



The Copa Club Microphone

RORY WHITE*
Alum (Photography, 2001)
www.rorywhite.com
(digital photography)



The Branded Sons

RORY WHITE*

Alum (Photography, 2001)

www.rorywhite.com

(digital image composite)

Preferences

JESSICA LINDNER

A stream of two-percent milk was rapidly flowing towards the frozen pizzas. Its empty carton lay in a mangled cardboard pulp on the tiled floor. Bits of egg shell floated down the dairy river as gobs of slimy yolk dripped from an abandoned grocery cart. A light dusting of cocoa-colored cake mix completed the scene of a deranged baker's laboratory kitchen.

Tim and Trevor sat away from the chaos, their backs pressed against an icy freezer door, each nursing a lukewarm Budweiser. They took a sip of beer at the same moment, swallowing it down before they could spit it at each other. Trevor gingerly held a bag of frozen blueberries against his bruised cheek.

They were troublemakers, criminals, muggers, and most unfortunately, brothers. The public knew them as the Brown Baggers, petty thieves with a penchant for robbing Piggly Wiggles and Applebarns.

On this particular night, they had gone into the Special Select with the sole purpose of snatching up baking supplies. The brothers always baked their mother's birthday cake, no matter what sort of fight they were in. It was a tradition they started in grade school, and it was the only principle they abided by.

But the shopping had soon turned into an argument, which had escalated into a food fight. They could not agree on the frosting. Tim distinctly remembered that their mother preferred Duncan Hines; Trevor was on the Betty Crocker bandwagon.

But sitting amid the destruction, sulking and reaching for their third beer, they both realized that it was not about the frosting.

"It's my conscience," Trevor muttered after an endless silence. Tim, dragging on a cigarette, watched the smoke as it swirled away.

"It's my conscience," Trevor said again, louder, more forcefully.

"Well then," Tim answered, dropping the butt into his empty bottle. "Well then," he said softer, looking around at the shelves, the pool of milk, his smoke still drifting in the air. He turned to his brother.

"I still say she prefers Duncan Hines." 🍷

TO SUBMIT TO COLLAGE

Collage accepts submissions year-round. Each submission must be accompanied by a completed submission form, which is available at www.mtsu.edu/~collage. On this website you will also find submission guidelines, the deadlines for each publication and the latest *Collage* information. Submissions may be turned in at the *Collage* office, Paul W. Martin, Sr. Honors Building, Rm. 224 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. or by mail. Submissions will not be accepted via e-mail, and you must be an MTSU student to submit.

POLICY STATEMENT

Collage: a Journal of Creative Expression is an arts and literary magazine featuring the best MTSU student work submitted each semester. The volunteer student staff participates in a blind judging selection process and attempts to choose the best submissions 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 letters of recommendation.

COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Gold Medalist Certificate – 2006, 2007 & 2008
Silver Crown Award – 2007 & 2008

CREATIVE EXPRESSION AWARDS

Each semester five Creative Expression Awards will be awarded from among the highest scoring submissions to the magazine. Members of the *Collage* Faculty Advisory Board will choose one top-rated submission from each major category: poetry, prose, art, photography and alumni. Winners of the Martha Hixon Creative Expression Awards (literature) and the Lon Nuell Creative Expression Awards (visual) will be awarded \$50 each.

ART:
Untitled SARAH GOODWIN

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Red Riding Hood BRETT WARREN

PROSE:
Clarissa's Bedroom DYLAN MORRIS

POETRY:
October Under the Old Oak ERIC POWELL

ALUMNI:
Limbs and Locks SARAH SULLIVAN

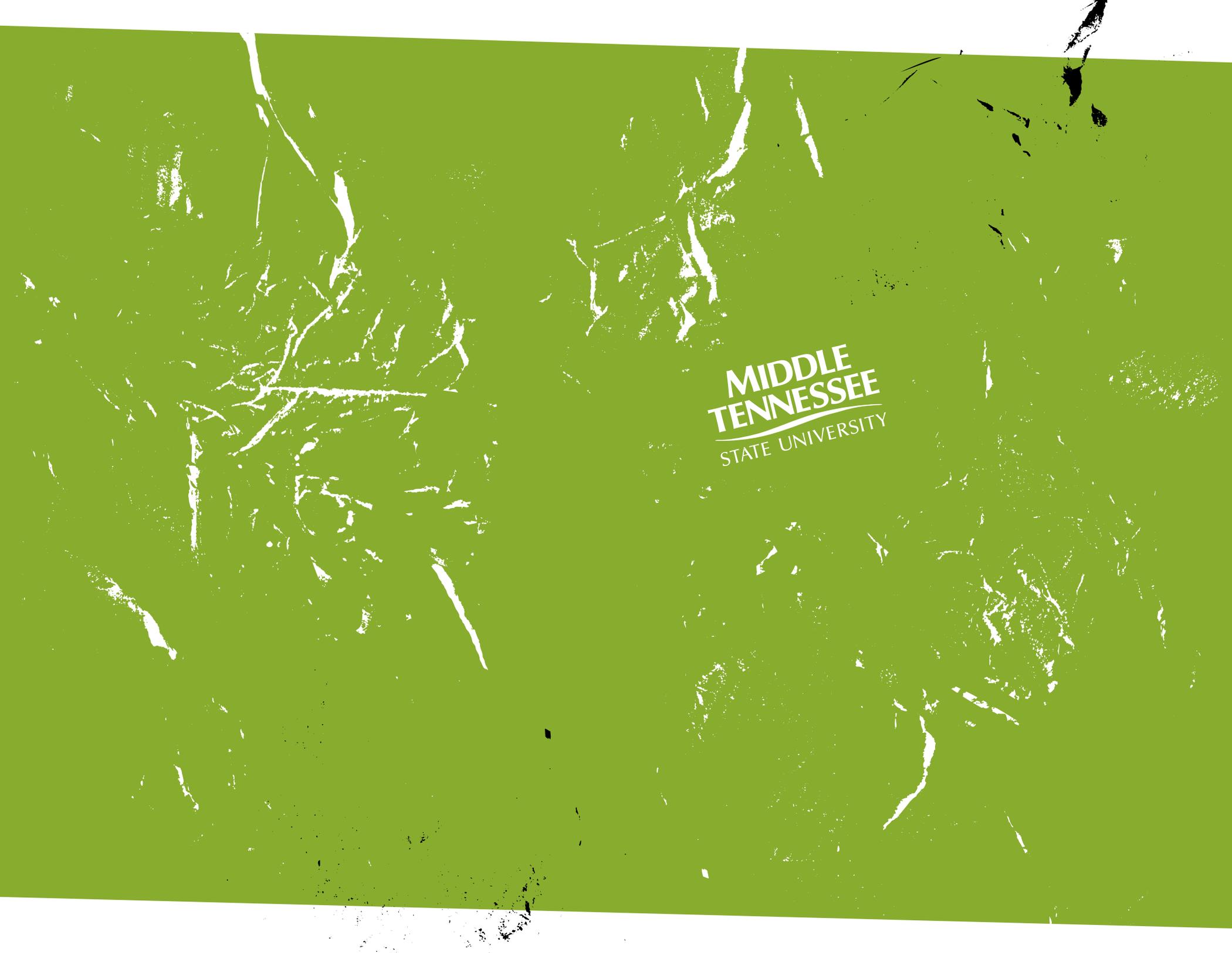
COLOPHON

This publication was produced with Adobe InDesign® CS3, Adobe Illustrator® CS3 and Adobe Photoshop® CS3 using an Apple iMac8. All type throughout this edition of *Collage* is set in various weights of the Trade Gothic Family of typefaces. Cover printed on 80 lb. dull white paper, inside pages printed on 28 lb. dull white paper. Bound using saddle stitch. Approximately 3,000 copies of *Collage* were printed by Franklin Graphics of Nashville, Tennessee. *Collage*, Ninth Edition, Design by Danny McClain.

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 Middle Tennessee State University, MTSU Box 267, Murfreesboro, TN 37132.

COLLAGE

Collage
Middle Tennessee State University
MTSU Box 267
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
(615) 898-5789
collage@mtsu.edu



**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY