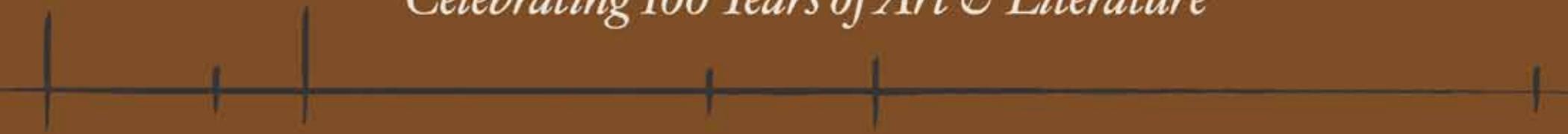




A Journal of Creative Expression | Issue 14: Fall 2011

# COLLAGE

*Celebrating 100 Years of Art & Literature*



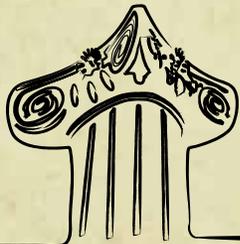


*Published by the MTSU Honors College*

# COLLAGE

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A Journal of Creative Expression | Issue 14: Fall 2011



The Centennial publications of the University Honors College are made possible in part by a gift by Paul W. Martin Jr. in honor of the past and present directors and deans: Dr. June Hall McCash, Dr. Ron A. Messier, Dr. John Paul Montgomery, Dr. Phillip M. Mathis, and Dr. John R. Vile.

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# COLLAGE

FALL 2011 STAFF



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

*To our greatly appreciated readers:*

*Collage* has provided some great experiences during my involvement in the production process over the past six semesters. I have been given the opportunity to collaborate with others and have met some truly amazing friends. *Collage* has been very rewarding because it requires a lot of hard work and creative thought and results in a quality product of which one can't help but feel proud.

The people involved with the journal and the production process make being a part of this team feel personal, fun, and welcoming. *Collage* always trends toward the top of my priority list, as it is not only fun, but also provides a service for our community, however small that service may be. With much pride and excitement, I present to you the Fall 2011 edition of *Collage*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Johnson', located below the letter text.

Jennifer Johnson  
Editor in Chief

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# ART

- 4 DEVIATION  
BRIAN BAILEY
- 4 BARREL JAR  
RHETT MOSER
- 5 LOST CAUSE  
BRIAN HUTSEBOUT
- 7 COLONY  
BRIAN HUTSEBOUT
- 12 ALMANAC I OF 15  
DAVE ROLLINS
- 12 ENGLISH  
RHETT MOSER
- 13 WEIGHTING  
BRIAN HUTSEBOUT
- 14 ALEX MEETS THE OWL  
JOSHUA PETTY
- 15 INNOCENCE  
KELSI CARTER
- 16 DEMON  
NUMBER 1- BAEI  
DAVE ROLLINS
- 22 HAITIAN FAMILY  
KELSI CARTER
- 23 THOUGHTS THAT  
CONSUME ME  
GRACE SUTHERLAND
- 25 OH, JOHN  
KELSEY WELLS
- 27 YOU AND ME  
JOY MCCRARY
- 29 QUESTIONS I ASK  
MYSELF BEFORE  
FALLING ASLEEP  
GRACE SUTHERLAND
- 29 BATTLING FEARS  
RACHEL McCORMACK
- 31 EARTH MOTHER  
TRINH NGUYEN

# POETRY

- 6 PATIENCE  
ABIGAIL STROUPE
- 7 FRAILTY  
ANNA HOUSER
- 11 BLIND  
JARED BURTON
- 12 UNTITLED  
KELSI CARTER
- 13 HOW HARD IT IS  
TO WRITE A SONNET  
CHEYENNE PLOTT
- 14 HIDE-AND-SEEK  
LA KESHA JACKSON
- 16 THIEVING  
ABIGAIL STROUPE
- 17 A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY  
JENNA RUSSELL
- 20 CONFESSIONS OF VANITY  
JOSEPH LAMPLEY
- 22 FEBRUARY'S DIRGE  
JARED BURTON
- 23 COSMIC MEANINGS IN  
TINY BEINGS  
KAITLIN JONES
- 27 SO TURNS THE TIDE  
JOSEPH LAMPLEY
- 29 NOCTURNAL ENDEAVORS  
LAURA MAAS
- 30 HARVEST HOLOCAUST  
JESSICA RUSH
- 31 SERPENTINE SKY  
ARI CONSTANTINE

# PHOTOGRAPHY

- 6 INK AND BLUE  
RACHEL NOKES
- 7 UNTITLED  
KEVIN BERNATEK
- 8 TREE OF LOST SHOES  
ELIZABETH LOOSE
- 11 NIGHT LIGHT  
DAVION BAXTER
- 11 SIX FEET  
DARBY
- 17 MOOSEMEN  
JESSICA CAVENDER
- 18 DAMAGED GOODS  
CHRIS DONAHUE
- 20 RITUALISTIC  
MALINA CHAVEZ-SHANNON
- 21 UNTITLED  
NHU DUONG
- 26 GREAT SAND DUNES  
NATIONAL PARK,  
COLORADO  
AMIEE STUBBS
- 30 WATER NYMPH  
DARBY
- 30 DEPTHS  
NOELLE ANDERSON

# PROSE

- 4 THE BLACK-  
FEATHERED STAR  
ARI CONSTANTINE
- 9 EMA  
TASIA DAVIS
- 18 ONE AFTERNOON  
IN THE HOUSE OF  
NUMB  
NOVA FORD & SHALYNN  
FORD-WOMACK
- 24 LEAH  
TINA REID
- 28 SUMMIT  
WHIT DAVIS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

In this special edition of *Collage*, we have included a timeline to track some of MTSU's most interesting facts, advancements, and success stories in honor of our university's one-hundredth anniversary. We invite you to journey with us through a century of achievements in art and literature in this one-of-a-kind issue.



**DEVIATION**  
BRIAN BAILEY

## THE BLACK-FEATHERED STAR

ARI CONSTANTINE

He slammed his laptop screen shut as he had done countless times before, tossing it aside like a piece of raw fish in the final stages of spoiling. The device made a hollow thumping sound against his carpeted floor. He wished it would have landed upon the tile and shattered into 18 trillion pieces, for all he cared. The apathy invaded him, filling him with a vicious limestone—concrete—lead amalgamation that planted him firmly in his spot upon the bed.

He was a captive of his own body.

He wanted a cigarette. He wanted to write. He wanted to put on a heavy metal record and forget about obligation or drive or the dim, blunt ache of his artistic cramping.

He slouched.

The torture was too much to bear. The blank indifference of a white screen, which did not care whether or not it was filled, flashed across his eyes like a holograph. This venture began (and ended) as all of his seemed to. He thought he might sit down and write about not writing. About his frustrated heart. About his apparent lack of everything he claimed to be.

Instead, he slouched. The pillows behind his head were arranged in such a way that he would have neck cramps within the half hour. And he planned to stay there for a while. There was no sound—no echo, save for the vibrato of his reckless heart, beating with the fury of a house of thunder gods to expel the virus plaguing his bloodstream.

The sloth had invaded. The world had won. Art had died, to be revived and martyred again another day.

1911

Middle Tennessee State  
Normal School (today's MTSU)  
opens its doors.



## BARREL JAR

(pottery)

RHETT MOSER

The inspiration would not come. Too many malicious beetles scurried across his brain, gnawing at the gray matter between the creases. They fed upon his lack of...

These thoughts were too unhealthy to entertain.

The beetles brood.

He rubs his temples: a simplified exorcism.

He imagined a great goblin, cloaked in orange and green, swinging through the darkest of forests, lurching from branch to branch with but one goal

upon his mind: to drive a gracious dagger of inspiration unto the boy's jagged cranium. To split him open and shout inside the words that he could not muster on his own.

He saw, from behind his eyelids, a golden-haired sea woman with eyes of coral and teeth of stone, protecting the sunken treasure of his mind with chains heavy enough to bind even the great Atlas down. The waters of his skull have grown murky with pollution; not even the fishes swim there. They have long since migrated back to the shores, flopping aimlessly about upon sands of pure glass.

A black-feathered star used to hover there, illuminating the greatness within, keeping the waters warm. But it has long since extinguished itself, leaving behind nothing but fragile single feathers, oily and orphaned: mere reminders of what once used to be.

But not now.

Now there was nothing within him that he could reach. The greatest parts of him had dived deeper, as deep as they could, into his very center, to escape the light of day, it would seem. It was as if every creature or symbol

or idea he had attempted to bear hid its face in shame, crying: "Not yet, not yet! I am not beautiful enough!"

And yet he wanted to thread them from his very bones and scream, "But you are! You are, and everyone must know!"

These inner dialogues were not uncommon. They festered in the crannies of his jaw until he began to ignore them, as usual. He wanted to speak, but he could taste only ash and dust and dead remains of revolutions never properly incited; of love songs too vulnerable to sing; of epics cast into the fire around which they should have been celebrated. This riot was his own to bear. Body against body. Self against self.

He paused his contemplation, reaching for his laptop once more. He yearned to hang up his head and dive mindlessly into the soothing waves of the Internet. He yearned to tumble along as the man with the paged face and the little blue bird bombarded him with comforting uselessness.

*But no, he thought. Nice try, but not this time. This time, I will bleed.*

"We must suffer, you and I," sang the mermaid in his head. "We must first suffer and learn to despise the truth before we may emerge to tell our wonderful lies."

He felt the dark heat of a familiar entity bubble up from within the great lake of his mind. This sudden visitor was no intruder; the boy smiled as the warmth of a dark, burning star began to stir the oceans once more. He smiled, and the light burst forth from his thorned throat, engulfing the entire room. The words slid across his tongue and past his shimmering teeth with the extravagance of a musical orgy; the bells, the chimes, the whistles, the cymbals—they all cried at once: "I am ART, and you will soon know me!"

The black-feathered star shone on in resplendence.

From sea and star, ART was born anew upon the shore. And as he strolled, he saw a boy as adventurous as he: a boy who laughed and churned the sands with toes of innocent glee.

"You will soon know me..." ♣

**LOST CAUSE**  
BRIAN HUTSEBOUT





## PATIENCE

ABIGAIL STROUPE

Patience is a bitter brew  
Burning my throat as it goes down  
warm and bubbling in my stomach—  
and I'm—stumbling around—and fumbling—  
around in the dark for something stable  
to hold on to  
But I might have given up on that  
ages ago  
with my bruised shins and sloppy mouth  
throwing another back

blurring vision and spinning and vomit  
but always Patience my drink of choice  
just the same, no matter how I hate the taste  
or unsettling its influence on my body  
—my tear ducts

And isn't it ugly how it just rips right through me—  
too much of a good thing gone sour  
churning like a (((((((shaking))))))))) washer/dryer  
with too many of my dirty clothes inside—  
only in the morning do I realize  
I should have called  
“when”  
long before now.

## INK AND BLUE

*(digital photography)*

RACHEL NOKES

1958

The Todd Library (now  
known as the art building)  
opens, housing books for  
seven surrounding counties.



## COLONY

BRIAN HUTSEBOUT



## FRAILTY

ANNA HOUSER

Walking through your neighborhood.  
The gray powerlessness of city streets  
encompassing life and living all in one.  
Here we stand in suspended disbelief,  
nodding once or twice to prove we're really here  
and not somewhere, or someone, else.

“You're an exact replica of a figment of my imagination.”

A vast and sudden sadness hits us  
with a cold breath of wind and disappears, along  
with our animal longing for home.

Fakery becomes truth, and we hit the concrete realization  
that we survived the leprosy of doubt and doubters, and instead  
are carried upwards toward the ceiling of beyond.

Tell me once, tell me twice, and call my name  
so I remember how to breathe:  
who I was and who I am.

I hope you can see me.  
I've been here all along.

## UNTITLED

*(digital photography)*

KEVIN BERNATEK



1961

Professor Harold Baldwin starts  
the Photography Program.





**TREE OF LOST SHOES**

*(digital color photography)*

ELIZABETH LOOSE

Ema cried softly beneath the wooden floorboards. She prayed to God, begging for Him to save her and her family. Sobs and shouts from above were the only answers she received. A gunshot fired and a loud thump was heard. One of her parents was dead—or little Emil. Ema cried harder, wanting to push the floorboards up and crawl out from under the bed to her parents. “Please, God, please!” she whispered softly, clutching at her dress. Her pleading was in vain. Ema heard three more shots and the sound of bodies crumpling to the floor. Hearing a dog bark, she gasped loudly.

“Take a look around that room again, Faust,” she heard one of the Gestapo say. Ema covered her mouth, trying to silence her cries as she heard the door open. The noise of the dog’s claws and the sniffing of its nose was all she heard. The sound of the dog grew closer. She heard the dog under the bed above her. It began barking furiously and clawing at the floor. Ema’s heart stopped. She would die the same horrible fate as her beloved family, or possibly worse for hiding.

Ema heard the bed being pushed away toward the wall. The only thing separating her from the Gestapo was the wooden floor.

“Come out! I’m going to shoot!” one of them warned. Ema remained silent, not knowing what to do. The man fired in random areas, missing every time, but a scream still escaped her. The two Gestapo officers began tearing up the floorboards. “No! Please, no!” she pled as the officers revealed her hiding spot. The superior officer had blond hair and blue eyes, the stereotype; but the other, there was something different about him. His hair was beautiful sandy blond; his eyes were gray, but they lacked the hatred that the superior officer’s eyes held.

“OUT!” the blue-eyed officer shouted. Ema struggled to come out of the space but lacked the strength due to the situation. The superior grabbed her by her chocolate brown hair and forcefully pulled her out. Ema yelped and clutched at his hand. He released her as she collapsed to the floor. A clump of brown hair fell from his hand. He removed his gun from his holster, cocked it, and took aim. Ema clenched her eyes shut as tears bled from them.

“Wait,” the younger officer interrupted.

“Why, Faust? Do you find this dirty Jew attractive?” casting Faust a smirk without resting his gun’s aim.

Ema looked up into the younger officer’s eyes with hope. She silently begged him to save her. She saw what looked to be sympathy flash through his eyes.

“Look at her, Dieter. Major Wirth might like to have a look at her. He’s looking for an attractive maid,” Faust explained.

Dieter examined Ema’s face and nodded. He holstered his gun and started towards the door. “Yes. Take her over to Major Wirth’s estate.”

Faust nodded in acknowledgement. He grabbed Ema roughly by the forearm and led her out of her home. Outside the apartment, she realized her family wasn’t the only family on the block that had been slaughtered: dead Jews covered the streets. Ema couldn’t breathe. The sight was too much for her. Her knees buckled; she almost fell to the unforgiving pavement, but Faust tightened his hold on her forearm.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered softly under his breath. Ema’s eyes widened with shock. He was apologizing. A Nazi was apologizing to a Jew.

“Why, then?” she asked.

“I have spared your life. You must do as I say. Do not ask questions, and I will make sure you live through this hell.” He spoke softly as he roughly pushed her into the passenger seat of the vehicle. Faust shut the door for her and walked around to the driver’s side. He slid into the car and promptly started the vehicle.

“Why are you doing this?” She asked.

“I told you, no questions,” he responded without removing his eyes from the road ahead.

Ema immediately bit her tongue, afraid of changing the man’s mind about sparing her life. She couldn’t keep herself from staring at him; there was something about him that was very familiar.

.....

“Do I know you from somewhere?” she questioned.

“No questions,” he replied firmly.

Ema quieted and stared out into the open fields of grass. They were far into the countryside. If they continued the way they were going, they would reach the North Sea. She began to wonder how far Major Wirth lived.

“Where does this Major Wirth live?” Ema wondered aloud.

“Ema, please, no questions,” he pleaded as he glanced toward her. Ema sighed in defeat and allowed herself to rest her head against the window. She knew she ought to be frightened, but she found herself mildly at ease with this man. She tried to justify why she should feel calm. He had kept the other man from killing her, and he had apologized. He had also, instead of calling her Jew, called her by her name—wait. How did he know her name? She hadn’t told him her name. He must have known her from before the segregation of Jews and Arians.

“*She would die the same horrible fate as her beloved family...*”

“Do you know me?” she asked, looking toward him for a sign of an answer.

“What?” he asked as shock pooled over his face.

“You said my name. How did you know my name?”

“The lady spoke of her ‘dear Ema’. I assumed it must be you,” he replied without making eye contact.

“I see,” she murmured. Ema allowed her head to rest against the seat and stared intently at Faust. She noticed his knuckles were whitened from his tight grip on the steeringwheel. A bead of sweat hung from his brow. He was nervous, but why? Something wasn’t right.

“You’re not taking me to Major Wirth, are you?”

“Ema, no questions!”

Ema flinched and pressed her body as far away from him as she could manage. She noted a wave of remorse flicker across his face, but it was quickly hidden.

They had seen no car during the two hours that had passed and Ema felt sleep tugging at her eyelids. She didn’t want to sleep, afraid she would miss something.

"You should sleep," Faust murmured.

"I'd rather not," Ema replied softly.

"Suit yourself."

The harder Ema fought sleep, the sleepier she became. She finally gave into her exhaustion and dozed off.

.....

The vehicle was slowing down, and Ema was jostled by the change of terrain. Her eyes bolted open in fear. The vehicle came to a halt, and the engine was silenced. Faust removed himself from the vehicle and entered the pitch-black night. He opened the trunk and pulled out a gas jug. He was going to set her afire. She began to harass herself mentally for allowing herself to feel at ease around this murderer. Her father would have been so disappointed.

Ema then noticed he was just filling up the gas tank, and she released a sigh of relief. A light suddenly flashed over the vehicle. Ema tensed and looked towards where the light had come. It was a German jeep. She held her breath as the vehicle slowed to a halt directly in front of her. Two men appeared from the jeep.

"Car trouble?" One asked.

"No, just filling up the tank," Faust explained.

"Where are you coming from?" the other man asked.

"Berlin," Faust lied.

"What brings you to the coast?" the man interrogated.

"I was told Major Wirth was looking for a new pet," Faust spoke as if it were the truth.

The two men from the jeep laughed and nodded.

"What is it with him and the Jewish scum?"

Faust laughed and shook his head, "I do not know my friends. I only follow orders."

"As we all do," one of the men agreed. The two men returned to their jeep and drove off without another word.

Faust returned the empty gas jug to the trunk and slipped back into the vehicle.

"You were only asleep for about half an hour. You should probably try to go back to sleep," he suggested.

"How can I trust you?" she asked.

"You're still alive, aren't you?"

"Yes," she replied, but it didn't ease her worry.

.....

They drove in silence for another hour before the scenery changed. The open fields were suddenly thick forests. Faust slowed the vehicle and turned off the road and onto a hidden dirt path.

"Where are we going?" she asked curiously.

"No questions, Ema," he answered.

After half an hour of being jostled about, they finally reached the beach. They were meeting someone here she assumed. Faust parked the car near a crowd of other cars. He exited the vehicle and walked around to the opposite side to open the door for Ema. Her bare feet sunk deeply into the cold sand. It was a comforting feeling. As they grew closer to the water, she could make out a small raft near the edge of the beach and a boat waiting farther out. She heard quiet chatter coming from two figures waiting near the raft.

"Is that you, Everard?" a masculine voice whispered from one of the figures.

"Yes, it's me," Faust replied, glancing at Ema.

"Took you long enough," a female figure teased.

"Minor setback," he explained as he and Ema reached the man and woman.

"Who is this?" the woman asked curiously.

"We only have room for one more! The boat is too full as it is. She cannot come," the man hissed angrily.

"Just a moment, Ema," Faust said as he led Ema away from the group. She heard hushed, unhappy whispers, but her mind was elsewhere. Everard Faust. She knew the name. Everard Faust—he was from her school! He was always extremely quiet. He had always appeared as if he had something to say to her but could never bring himself to say it.

"Everard?" Ema whispered.

"What?" Everard turned his head angrily, but then it hit him; she knew whom he was. He quickly turned back to the group, pulled something from his pocket, and gave it to the woman. He hugged her and gently kissed her cheek. He then walked toward Ema. "They're going to take you away. They're going to keep you safe. I promise," he whispered.

"Thank you," she smiled as tears ran from her eyes. Ema hugged him tightly with gratitude.

"We have to go!" the man shouted.

Everard walked Ema to the raft. The man and woman were already waiting in the raft. Everard helped Ema into the raft and kissed her hand. "Auf Wiedersehen, meine Liebe," Everard murmured with a smile.

"Everard, you aren't coming?" Ema asked worriedly.

"I cannot," he answered as he turned and walked back to his vehicle.

"Everard!" Ema stood and shouted.

"You stupid girl!" the woman hissed as she pulled Ema back down to the raft. "You will get us all killed with this shouting."

Ema heard the motor of his vehicle start and saw the headlights come on. Her heart broke with sadness. He had risked his life to save hers; he had committed treason against his country. Ema would never forget Everard Faust, the man who saved her life. ♣

1964

For 35 years, the art department was housed in the *Art Barn*, a barn that was previously used for the agriculture department's cattle.





**SIX FEET**  
*(matte color print)*  
DARBY



**NIGHT LIGHT**  
*(silver gelatin print)*  
DAVION BAXTER

**BLIND**  
JARED BURTON

If the sun were a shadow, and we never grew eyes  
And sight never knew of your beauty disguised

And if sound never crossed any mortal man's ears  
And we walked in a void where all sense disappears

Then that same force attracting, like magnets, our hearts  
Would possess my mute flesh, as God's breath imparts

I'd evolve a new sense, a new sense for you  
And I'd treasure your presence, same as I now do

**ALMANAC 1 OF 15**  
*(found books)*  
DAVE ROLLINS



**UNTITLED**  
KELSI CARTER

Words mean so much, yet so little.  
On paper they last a lifetime, but their true destiny is in the mind,  
Simply communicating for emotion.  
The System works amazingly, without flaw.  
Until the moment when there are no words;  
Emotion is too great.  
This is when words become their author's handicap,  
Their enemy.  
It feels much like a wall,  
Separating two people from each other.  
This is when we as humans become helpless,  
No longer able to communicate with others.  
And it is out of pure fear  
That our emotions begin to  
**Speak.**

**ENGLISH**  
*(acrylic on panel)*  
RHETT MOSER

**HOW HARD IT IS  
TO WRITE A SONNET**  
CHEYENNE PLOTT

Such hard work can a sonnet be to write.  
Why not a limerick or a cinquain?  
Waking me up in the midst of the night,  
Tossing and turning and racking my brain.  
Looking and rhyming and finding the words,  
Ten syllables per line makes for a task,  
I am starting to think, This is for nerds,  
Is a simple rhyme scheme too much to ask?  
My brain wants to wilt, my eyes want to bleed,  
Three quatrains, a couplet, what does that mean?  
My Algebra book I would rather read,  
Or dissect a slimy specimen green.  
Writing a sonnet is such sweet sorrow,  
I think I will wait until tomorrow.

1965

Middle Tennessee State College  
(MTSC) becomes Middle Tennessee  
State University (MTSU).





## HIDE-AND-SEEK

LA KESHA JACKSON

In the tunnel, my favorite spot, I hide  
Because I refuse to swallow my pride  
I just know It won't find me here  
That's what I think as the sound of footsteps draws near

Anxiously I sit, engulfed in darkness, debating  
On if I should take action or continue waiting  
While I hear a scream, a shriek, and a squeal  
Others getting tagged makes my fear even more real

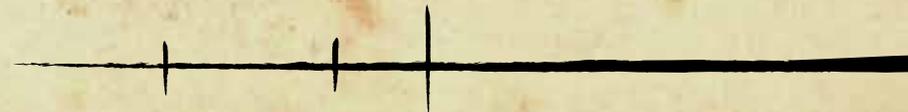
A sudden silence makes me uneasy, and It is right there  
At first the sight of It gives me a little scare  
Then my adrenaline starts pumping  
And I get up and start running  
I look over my shoulder, and Its speed is stunning

Tired and out of breath, I naturally slow down  
If I would have picked a better hiding spot, I would have never been found  
After scurrying around the playground aimlessly, I face the inevitable  
Who knows? Maybe it could be incredible

## ALEX MEETS THE OWL

*(watercolor and ink on watercolor paper)*

JOSHUA PETTY





**INNOCENCE**

*(watercolor and colored pencil)*

KELSI CARTER



## DEMON NUMBER 1-BAEL

*(ink, pen, colored pencil)*

DAVE ROLLINS

## THIEVING

ABIGAIL STROUPE

My pockets were lined only with lint and lost paper clips,  
nose pressed to the window,  
lips pushed against the glass, the sweat of my palms suctioning my  
body in place like a  
kid tormented by the candy store.  
Eyes melting with want,  
hands shaking with premeditated commitment.

I would steal a kiss.

I imagined with girlish giddiness  
the surprise of it on my mouth.  
Would it erupt with immediacy into  
an overwhelming Pop Rocks sensation?  
Or would it begin imported, Swiss chocolate  
that melted into silent satisfaction?

My mouth gone slack envisioning the  
slow encounter of every sticky sweet part—  
taking in every crevice and line—  
savoring and memorizing the motion of it all.

Would I steal a second? A fifth? Twenty more,  
thus beginning my kiss thieving crime spree?  
Well, may I never be brought to justice!  
A bandito of the sweetest confections of affection—  
a modern day Robin Hood stealing the richest kisses  
for the kissless poor.  
I would rifle through my exploits to taste each one,  
leaving half-tasted sloppy and garlic-flavored ones  
in my wake.

But I've heard that thieves go to hell...  
Which led me to wonder,  
If instead of accumulating charges  
You could be so won over  
as to kiss me—

1968

The first issue of *Collage*  
is published.



1973

June McCash is the first  
director of the newly founded  
Honors Program.



## A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

JENNA RUSSELL

A golden opportunity you are;  
There's no telling where or when  
You'll show up—  
But when you do,  
You shine and sparkle from a distance.  
“Look at me,” you demand.  
“I am the muse,  
The beginning of a musical score.  
See all those slight marks  
And dents of each line?  
Those are notes of a song  
Waiting to be written.  
So write it....now!”  
How true that is.  
If I wait until later,  
I may forget all about you,  
Or worse,  
I might—for whatever reason—start to doubt.  
I won't let that happen.  
However, I find you unexpectedly  
When I'm headed for the next class  
Or driving somewhere,  
And you just happen to land right on my windshield.  
Why must you arrive at the most inconvenient time?  
At a time and place where  
I won't be able to take note of you?  
At this fleeting moment  
You could easily slip from my grasp.  
If I lose this inspiration for a melody,  
Someone else might find you  
And keep you for good,  
And I will regret it.

**MOOSEMEN**  
*(digital photography)*  
JESSICA CAVENDER






**ONE AFTERNOON IN THE HOUSE OF NUMB**  
 NOVA FORD & SHALYNN FORD-WOMACK

*May 2009*

“Are you in love, or are you in pain?” asked my shrink, his pen poised midair.

The room grew still. I shifted in my seat to avoid the late afternoon sun cascading through the bay window behind Dr. Williamson’s desk.

I hate questions that have no answers...

**DAMAGED GOODS**

*(color photography)*  
 CHRIS DONAHUE

*September 1964*

The storm came on an afternoon like any other as I was sitting at the kitchen table absent-mindedly finishing my homework for the day. A key turning in the lock signaled my father’s arrival home—unusually early, meaning almost certainly bad news. My father, glancing dejectedly at my mother and me, informed us that there was going to be yet another two-week shutdown at the riverfront foundry where he worked and that, until it reopened, there would be no more smokes for him and certainly no more trips to Dairy Queen for me.

My father sighed and began to outline our new and unimproved state of affairs when his tired eyes suddenly caught sight of a grocery receipt that lay forgotten on

the kitchen table, just inches from my spelling book. He gingerly lifted the white slip of paper and shook his head in utter disbelief.

My father’s normally bright eyes visibly darkened, a sure sign of the impending storm. “Goddammit, Mary Rose!” He thundered repeatedly, knowing how much my devoutly Catholic mother abhorred hearing God’s name used in vain. “I’m fixin’ to be laid off till the end of the month...”

Earlier that day, my mother had spent \$12.62 at the IGA—breaking my father’s draconian ten-dollar budget. She had been strictly ordered not to exceed this meager grocery allowance, but my mother loved to test the limits of my father’s patience: adding a cut of meat here, a few stalks of fresh asparagus there....It almost always resulted in a brutal shouting match laced with profanity when my father inevitably found out. Insults and empty threats where just a part of the vernacular in my home, but things always returned to what passed for normal. Things always calmed down. But not today.

Predictably cursing everyone from my mother and the IGA to God, my father slammed the incriminating sales receipt onto the laminate kitchen table while glaring ominously at my mother, sending my neatly stacked homework flying to the floor. My mother returned fire with cold silence as she backed her wheelchair out of the kitchen and toward the narrow hallway at the back of the house. I closed my spelling book and bent down to pick up the loose sheets of paper that had fallen from the table, desperately hoping that the worst was over.

“How many times have I told you...not one penny over ten dollars,” bellowed my father. His face, already flushed with anger, reddened further as he approached my mother’s wheelchair. His jaw was set now, and so was our fate.

“The meat stays,” my mother replied with icy calmness, adding, “We only have it once a month as it is.”

Stung by yet another reminder that he wasn’t an adequate provider, my father’s mood went from dark to dangerous in less time than it took his fist to connect with a nearby wall, which crumbled instantly from the blow. He swung back around and tipped over the kitchen table with such force that it ripped away a long piece of flooring, leaving a jagged slice of linoleum peeled back in its wake. As an afterthought, he also tossed the kitchen chairs, one after the other, against the nearby wall.

Clutter and condiments spilled onto the torn flooring as I scurried to a safer corner of the kitchen. My mother, realizing a moment too late that she'd picked a bad day to stand her ground over a cheap piece of meat, wheeled her chair further back into the hallway.

Meanwhile, the harsh injustice of an existence that could no longer afford a pack of Camels, much less steak, finally boiled to the surface amidst a fresh round of profanity as my father again cursed my mother, the IGA, and God while punching another hole through the wall that separated the kitchen and the bathroom.

My mother, already crushed by the weight of her own broken dreams and now furious about the damage done to her kitchen, finally retaliated the only way she could—by launching a volley of acerbic, demeaning insults at the man she believed responsible for all the wrongs in her life.

From amidst the wreckage, my father gazed intently at me, his eyes rimmed with dark, vacant circles of loss and guilt. The kitchen chairs, flung almost indifferently into the wall just a moment earlier, revealed the adjacent bathroom. A gaping hole between the two rooms revised the floor plan considerably.

“You’re going to have to pay for this damage...I mean it, James...I’m calling the police, and you know what they told you the last time.” Hazel eyes, bitter from too many years of deprivation, glared at my father, now completely spent.

Everything paused: the hole in the wall; the broken chairs scattered about; my mother’s scathing indictment of a guilty man already serving a life sentence behind the bars of poverty; and me, sitting on the floor. Waiting—for what, exactly, none of us knew. As a family, we were way past our expiration date. We were more like three residents doing time in the house of numb, waiting...hoping...to be released from its death grip. And then, just seconds later, after so many years of waiting, the house of numb finally came tumbling down with the sudden impact of a fist.

My mother must have sensed the impending explosion—she had, after all, lit the fuse with her vitriolic remarks about my father’s chronic failures. But instead of moving back, she suddenly lurched forward in her wheelchair, right into the storm, to stop my distraught father just as he took one final swing at what remained of the pressboard wall, causing him to miss and instead glance my mother just above her eye. Quickly recoiling from the blow, she groaned loudly

and shouted for me to call the police immediately. The storm ended as quickly as it began.

I stood tentatively and wiped a few strands of matted hair from my eyes, the rhythmic tick-tock of the kitchen clock calming my unsteady legs. I felt a desperate need to start cleaning up the mess. It usually took less than fifteen minutes for the cops to show up. So I told myself I had to get moving as I reached for the telephone and dialed the operator.

Sure enough, exactly ten minutes later, the police were pounding on our back door. My father, now slumped into one of the chairs he’d tossed earlier, remained motionless.

I moved gingerly toward the door and then stopped, realizing that if I answered the door, bad things would happen—but if I didn’t, bad things would still happen. My head felt like it would explode as I agonized over the least bad thing to choose. In the meantime, none of us moved; we were mute hostages waiting to be rescued.

Finally, my father, looking more calm and collected than I’d seen him look in weeks, resolved the dilemma by opening the door and confessing to the two policemen standing before him.

The handsome blond officer standing nearest the door reached for his handcuffs, his steady blue eyes never leaving my father as he reprimanded both parents as if they were disobedient children. When he was sure my father was safely cuffed, the police officer glanced in my direction and continued his stern lecture.

After my parents had each told their own version of the truth, the two officers escorted my father to their waiting squad car, and I followed from a distance, hoping to hug my father goodbye before they left.

Halfway down the sidewalk, I turned around and looked back at our tiny, dilapidated blue house, where my eyes came to rest on my mother’s helpless form, now sitting in the doorway, the metal from her wheelchair reflecting the late afternoon sunlight. She had packed the dish towel with ice to ease the pain in her swollen eye and was holding it tightly to her face. To the untrained eye, my mother appeared impassive, almost saintly. But I knew better. Beneath her pitiful facade, I could see the fury building. I realized, seconds too late, that I should not have walked with my father to the police car. From where my mother sat, I had betrayed her.

It was at that moment the truth struck me like a sharp blow to the gut: if they took my father away, I would be left completely alone with my mother and her rage. I overheard the older policeman talking to my father. “This time, you’re gonna have to stay in jail, Jimbo, even if it was an accident.” Their visits to our house were so frequent that several of the older cops had actually taken to calling my father by his nickname.

My chest constricted; it was difficult to breathe. Panic threatened to swallow me whole. Suddenly, the late-summer air felt incredibly heavy and moist, its weight crushing my heart and lungs. There was no way I could survive my mother without my father. The lights from the squad car flashed eerily across my mother’s face, blending together with the warning lights emanating from her own eyes as she glared at me from her place in the doorway.

“*My chest constricted; it was difficult to breathe. Panic threatened to swallow me whole.*”

My father could not—must not—go away. He was the one who had first shown me the rings of Saturn with the telescope he built from scrap metal and glass, who took me on walks to search for fossils, and who even occasionally bought me a dime cone at Dairy Queen. He had told me proudly that I was the apple of his eye after I found a small fish fossil embedded in the sandy shore of the nearby Mississippi River.

I swallowed hard and begged the policemen not to take my father away.

“We’ll all be good,” I promised the older, balding officer. “You won’t ever have to come back again. Just don’t take him away...please.”

"We're just doing our job, Bridget Marie," replied the policeman, who sat three pews up from us at Mass on Sundays. He opened the back door of the cruiser. "You go on back inside, now. Be a good girl, and help your mother."

I ignored the cop's directive and instead flung myself to the ground and, with hands outstretched, grabbed my father's pant leg just as he entered the backseat of the squad car. With my entire body weight deployed to my hands, my father was suddenly unable to move. For a moment, everything stopped. But it was no use. The police officers, anxious to make their daily arrest quota, were not amused by my histrionics.

Once settled into the back of the squad car, my father summoned me to his side and quietly apologized for the mess he'd made. He told me, with an odd mix of regret and relief, that he just couldn't take it anymore. He gently stroked my cheek with the back of his cuffed hand, smiled sadly, and turned away.

My father did not look back at me after the squad car pulled away from our driveway, and in less than a minute, the cruiser turned the corner onto Highland Avenue and disappeared from sight.

Life after the storm, it turned out, was pretty much the same as before. Except that I never saw the brilliant rings of Saturn again.

*May 2009*

"Are you in love, or are you in pain?" repeated Dr. Williamson, as if the correct answer to his earlier query might inspire a breakthrough or perhaps undo the damage, or even give my story a happy ending. The steady tick-tock sound of the wall clock snapped me out of my reverie and returned me to the present.

"Is there a difference?" ♣

## RITUALISTIC

*(black and white film)*

MALINA CHAVEZ-SHANNON



## CONFESSIONS OF VANITY

JOSEPH LAMPLEY

Retreat into the Second Self—an  
Electronic life found in these  
engines of the mind—churnings  
behind the Glass Wall. Conflicts  
of Voodoo science and your  
Genetic Destiny—I am.

A product of these fasting Girls—the  
Life Pulse of quixotic beauty,  
of women and madness and when  
the body says NO—I am there.

I am the invisible plague—a  
betrayal of Lust. Of desire  
to be lusted after. The Empty  
Promise of all things Common:  
mirror—mirror, on the wall...

Am I the lesser Evil?





## FEBRUARY'S DIRGE

JARED BURTON

This is no world for dreams  
 For the awakened won't stop weeping  
 As tragedies like rain  
 Come down dreamers who are sleeping

Who knows when waves will rise?  
 Once caged rivers swell with flood  
 When morning comes again  
 Once white knights lay choked in mud

This is no home for heroes  
 Who in daylight brave the dark  
 Who, once when day's wars have been won  
 Feel night's flood snuff their spark

This is no world for dreamers  
 Not for Lincoln, not for King  
 For their world lies in skies designed  
 Beyond the cold rain's sting

## HAITIAN FAMILY

(micography)

KELSI CARTER

1986

Art Professor John Gibson's  
 "Rites of Passage" is installed  
 on campus.



## COSMIC MEANING IN TINY BEINGS

KAITLIN JONES

Green acorn by the crack,  
Next a stretch of reaching grass,  
Luminescent against the paved sea of black.  
With your cap still on, you look sharp as a tack.

Why did you wander so far from the tree?  
Surely this isn't where you expected to be.  
I'd have gone east to the pond, you see.  
I'd have played with the swans, if it were me.

So why endeavor on such dangerous travels?  
What mysteries were you hoping to unravel?  
In a place where living things know to skedaddle,  
You rolled forth without even a paddle.

Brave, adventurous acorn are you.  
To restriction and fear you say adieu.  
Though most would merely pass, I stop to stew  
And reckon on a lesson learned by so few.

2002

James McBride is the first author  
to speak at a Convocation. His  
book, *The Color of Water*, was the  
2002 summer reading.



## THOUGHTS THAT CONSUME ME

(oil on canvas)

GRACE SUTHERLAND

**LEAH**  
TINA REID

“Sing to me,” she said as she gently squeezed his hand. Even now, his touch still excited her. Sean smiled. He leaned across the bed and kissed her cheek.

“What shall I sing?” He knew the answer, but he always asked.

“I Believe in You.”

“Again?” He pressed the back of his hand to his forehead pretending it would be a burden to sing that song once more.

“Yes, again,” Leah softly answered.

He picked up his guitar, tuned the strings, and started singing. The lyrics were etched on his brain.

As he serenaded her, she sighed with contentment. The combination of his velvet, baritone voice and that melody always brought tears. Not from sorrow or fear. She was past that now. She closed her eyes and let the music carry her away. Away from the hospital. Away from the pain. Away from the cancer.

She fell asleep with a smile on her face. A single tear streaked her cheek.

.....

Sean put his guitar in the case and turned off the overhead light. He bent down and tenderly kissed her. “I love you, Leah,” he whispered in her ear. “I believe in you.”

The evening charge nurse, Sarah, entered the room. “How is she?”

“Sleeping now. I think this round of chemo has been the worst yet.” He swallowed hard, forcing the tears to stay away. He had to be strong.

“She’s a fighter. I haven’t seen many cancer patients with her strength and determination, and I’ve been a nurse for 15 years. If anyone can beat this, she can.”

“It’s so damned hard to watch her suffer.”

“I know exactly how you feel. I lost my father to cancer two years ago. Watching him suffer and not being able to do anything about it...well.... It’s the worst feeling in the world.”

“I’m sorry. How long...”

“Three years from the date they discovered his tumor,” she answered.

Sean didn’t say anything. What could he say that she hadn’t already heard? He gave her a hug instead.

“I know he’s in a better place now, and I believe with all my heart that he’s no longer in pain.” Sarah took a deep breath and stiffened her spine. “Got to get back to work.”

“Goodnight, Sarah. Thank you for taking such good care of Leah.”

.....

It was Wednesday morning, and that meant a trip to the bookstore. Leah loved to read, and every week he made sure she had a new book for her collection. He and the staff at Bella’s Bookstore were on a first name basis now.

“There’s my hero,” Leah said as Sean walked into the room. He reached into the bag and pulled out a new book. “Marilyn said you’d love this one.” He leaned down and kissed her.

“She hasn’t picked a bad one yet, but you shouldn’t spoil me. I won’t be fit to live with when I get home.”

“You know, you’re right. Give me that book.” He reached for it, but Leah moved her hand away.

Giggling like a little girl, she said, “Nope. When you give a gift, there are no take-backs.”

“I see your man has bought you another book,” said Julie, the day nurse, as she entered the room. “Must be nice to be pampered. Foot rubs, serenades, chocolates, new books.” She looked at Sean and asked, “You think you might be creating a prima donna?”

“Yes, I believe he is,” said Leah with a British accent. “Just call me ‘Queen Leah.’”

Julie gave a slight curtsy. “Well, ‘Your Highness,’ I need to take some of your blue blood.”

Leah laughed and said, “Which arm you want?”

“Whichever one they didn’t stick yesterday.”

.....

Intending to spend as much time with Leah as possible, Sean took an extended leave of absence from his job as voice coach at the local university. He was faithful. The days turned to weeks and the weeks into

months. He tried to be strong for her sake, but when he sang her favorite song, he didn’t always succeed. More than once, tears escaped his eyes. Three months later, after he finished singing, Leah quietly slipped away from him, and his world ended.

.....

He cut all ties from family and friends and lived like a hermit for almost a year. Then, one afternoon, he heard a knock at his front door. He decided to answer it. A lovely young woman stood there smiling at him. “Are you Professor Sean Anderson?”

“*She laughed as a soft yellow light enveloped her. He watched—dumbfounded—as she slowly changed.*”

“Yes, and you are?”

“I’m Misty Henderson. I was hoping you could give me voice lessons. I understand you once taught at the university.”

“That was a long time ago. I’m not coaching anymore.”

He was closing the door when she said, “When you give a gift, there are no take-backs.”

He stared at her. “What?”

“I said, ‘There are no take-backs.’ Once, you gave your students a wonderful gift—your time and talent.”

He continued to stare.

“I know you have suffered a tremendous loss, but I believe you still have much to offer—especially to students like me who need your help and guidance.”

Sean motioned for her to step inside. His manners were a bit rusty. “What makes you think I want to help you?”

“You probably don’t want to help, but I’m asking anyway.”

She was a cheeky chit. “So, what do you like to sing?”

“I love the sentimental stuff, like ‘Hero,’ ‘I Will Always Love You,’ ‘How Do I Live,’ and ‘Unchained Melody.’”

“All great songs,” Sean said. A hint of a smile lit his face.

“Yes, but my favorite is ‘I Believe in You.’”

His heart skipped a beat as the color drained from his face. He had neither heard nor sang that song since Leah passed. Suddenly, he was angry. “Get out!”

“What’s wrong? What did I say?”

Sean ignored her questions as he ushered her toward the door. “Leave. Now.”

Misty sighed as she walked through the doorway. She turned around and said, “I’ll be back.”

He shut the door in her face.

Misty returned to his house every day for a month. He had to admire her tenacity. Every morning at 10 o’clock, she would be on his doorstep, holding a sign: THERE ARE NO TAKE-BACKS! She would picket for 30 minutes, and then he would open the door and say, “Go away.”

“OK, but I’ll be back tomorrow,” she’d say with a smile.

In an odd way, she had given him a reason to get up every morning. On day 30, Sean once again invited Misty into his home.

“I was beginning to think I would grow old before you changed your mind,” she said as she strolled into his living room. “Can we begin the lessons now?”

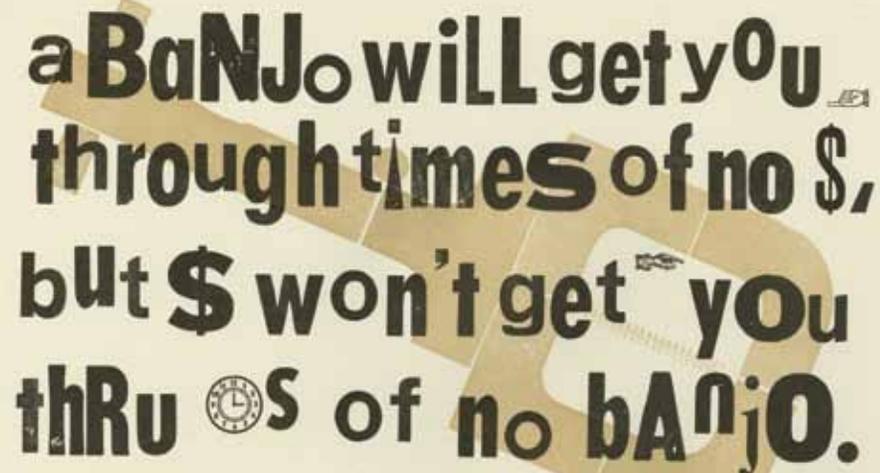
“You have exactly one hour to prove you’re not wasting my time.”

“An hour is all I need. Will you play my favorite song?”

A wave of nausea roiled through the pit of his stomach. He tamped it down and seated himself at the black baby grand. Her voice was hauntingly beautiful, and he struggled to keep the tears contained.

*Follow your heart / let your love lead through the darkness...*

*There’s nothing that you cannot do / I believe, I believe, I believe in you.*



a BaNJo will get yOu  
through times of no \$,  
but \$ won't get you  
thRU S of no bANjO.

-JOHN HARTFORD

*Kelsey Wells #3/12/2011*

**OH, JOHN**  
*(letterpress)*  
KELSEY WELLS

As she sang, the stress slowly leached from his body. It felt good to play again. When she finished, he was momentarily speechless. He couldn’t believe his ears. Her voice was powerful and clear. Her pitch was practically perfect.

“That wasn’t a total train wreck,” he managed to say.

She laughed as a soft yellow light enveloped her. He watched—dumbfounded—as she slowly changed. Misty vanished, and Leah appeared. He opened his mouth to speak, but no words would come.

“You’re my hero, Sean. Never forget that. Heed the words of my favorite song and keep them in your heart.”

She was a blur of soft light. He wiped his eyes with his shirtsleeve. “How is this possible?” he whispered.

She gently squeezed his hand. “In exactly 30 minutes, the real Misty Henderson is going to knock on your door and ask for help.”

“I can’t do it! My life ended with yours.”

“My story is complete, but the next chapter of yours begins today.”

“No! Stay with me,” he pleaded. “Without you, life means nothing. I love you.”

She gently touched his cheek. “And I, you.”

Tears of anguish flowed freely. He grabbed her and held tight as he rained kisses over her face and neck.

.....

She’d never forget how good it felt to be in his arms. There were so many things she loved about him—his sensuous kisses; his clean, masculine scent; his wonderful humor; his gentle soul. While he held her, she whispered sweet, loving words in his ear.

Later, when he was calm, Leah passionately kissed him and then stepped back from his embrace. “I love you, Sean. I believe in you.”

She disappeared just as a knock sounded at his door. ♣



**GREAT SAND DUNES  
NATIONAL PARK,  
COLORADO**

*(digital photography)*  
AMIEE STUBBS

2004

The Honors College begins funding *Collage*, saving it from termination due to budget cuts.



2004

The Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building is dedicated.



## SO TURNS THE TIDE

JOSEPH LAMPLEY

You and I—

Our names are written in waters.

Some are Lakes—

Some, a Hard Rain on a Cross.

Some lap the shores of Bittersweet Memory—

Where I cannot tell if I am

The Tide or its Taker.

You and I—

We are the brine in the sea breeze.

Some are Tears—

Some, the Morning Dew on a Night's passion.

Some is the salt of your brow—

Citrus and Copper.

I never tasted the Cotton Dust.

You and I—

Ours are the shorelines of globe-flung atolls.

Some are mere steppingstones—

Some, the new soil of a Volcanic Eden.

Some are the shores of Bittersweet Memory—

Where I cannot tell if the Separating Waves

Are of a Vast Droplet or a Thimble's Ocean.

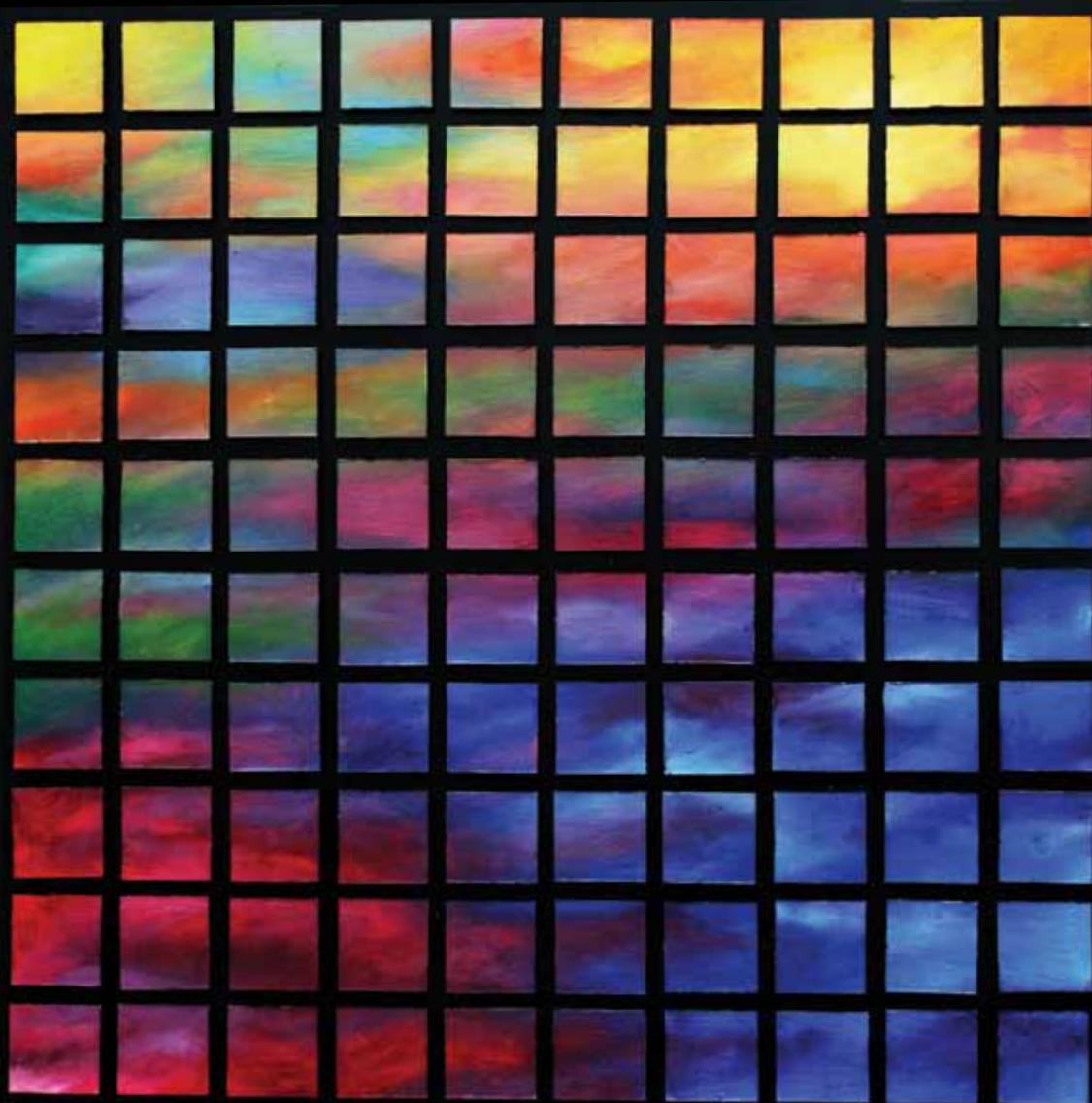
For I am a grainy ribbon twixt Land and Sea—

Gazing toward your distant Charcoal Beach.

Tight little islands caught

In the Heart's Continental Drift—

So turns the Tide....



## YOU AND ME

*(painting: oils, masonite, and wood)*

JOY McCRRARY

## SUMMIT WHIT DAVIS

I remember being broken. The night I was robbed of my innocent glow was my first taste of true pain. He held me down and took what was mine, leaving his evil filth inside me, engraving the dark image of his face into my soul, my heart, my mind. His drug and his crime were excruciating—they turned my family against me. Those who had once loved me assumed his filth was my filth, too.

“You’re what?!” Daddy’s face turned green. What would become of his snow-white reputation? He was a preacher, and he had never raised his voice at me before—except for when he was behind the pulpit, of course.

“It happened at that stupid party, didn’t it?” Momma’s face turned red. Never before had the word “stupid” slipped from her tight, religious, proper lips. “The very thought of you being with a boy behind our backs!”

Daddy and Momma couldn’t see the drug and crime. They couldn’t even see that filth can blossom into something beautiful. Instead, they threw me out with nothing but a suitcase, a car key, a Bible, a slap in the face, and a “never come back!” It was raining that day, but I went straight to the Rock.

I remember being hated. Word travels like wildfire in a town as tiny as that one, so it wasn’t long before showing my face in familiar places meant forcing a hard dose of humility down my little throat and washing it down with the meager remains of my dignity. Shame filled my life as neighbors, peers, and friends would scoff, glare, and hate. Their judgment nearly smothered me, so I escaped to the Rock.

I remember being accepted. Coleman took me into his apartment because big brothers protect little sisters. He didn’t want to know the details about the filth, but he let me do his laundry and cook his meals while he studied. Daddy and Momma warned Coleman that I was no good, but he gave me shelter and friendship. He tried to keep me in school, but the shame was growing with my belly. Only Coleman respected me. The town called me Sinner, but Coleman called me Dinah. I gave myself a pity party, but Coleman gave me peace. When I brought him to the Rock, we shared dreams and

riddles, forgetting the world’s stifling reality. He taught me how to play chess; I taught him how to make flower chains out of the clover buds that grew all around. He showed me how to play guitar; I showed him how to paint. He told me how to forgive; I told him I would try. I wanted to forgive those who hurt and hated me, but my reluctant heart took its time. We made progress, though. I was beginning to smile again. I was beginning to depend on the Rock.

I remember being numb. It was a chilly autumn morning. The sirens cried out; I heard them only slightly, for they were several blocks away. I told myself all day that the sirens weren’t for him, but the crumpled red Toyota on the six o’clock news screen was Coleman’s. Coleman didn’t come home that day—he went to the hospital instead. I hurried to Room 205 to see him, but the rule was “Family Only”.

“Yes, Coleman is my big brother,” I told the frowning nurse, who glanced at my belly every few seconds. She shook her head and closed the door behind her. My parents would not claim me? My brother would, but his blackened eyes were closed, and his hesitant breath was shallow. Doctors rushed in all at once after a page was mumbled through the hospital’s speakers. Coleman’s heart was tired; my heart was breaking. I pounded on the door. I locked eyes with Momma through the window and caught her hateful glance. I shot it back at her. Someone shut the blinds. I stumbled away and ran to the Rock.

I remember being alone. I was alone on my seventeenth birthday when I drove to the cemetery to say goodbye to Coleman. I was alone on the apartment’s cold doorstep when they took away my roof because my empty pockets could not pay rent. I was alone when I parked my Jeep each night, zipped up my coat, and drifted off to sleep in the front seat. I was alone when I sat at the Rock, sobbing for hours on end.

I remember being afraid. My water broke, and I somehow got myself to the hospital. The delivery rooms were full that night, and over the fearful drumbeat of my thumping heart, I heard some crazy old woman say:

“Babies just love to arrive on snow-white winter evenings like this one! They ride in on the snowflakes.”

Snow-white? Like Daddy’s reputation before his “pathetic wretch” of a daughter was raped and immeasurably misunderstood.

They put me in Room 205. The sweat dripped off my face, but there was no one to wipe my brow. The pressure left my body as my hands clenched the sterile, snow-white sheets, but there was no one to match my grip or to share the load of the labor of life.

“*Shame filled my life as neighbors, peers, and friends would scoff, glare, and hate.*”

I remember being speechless. They placed a bundle in my arms, and assured me that he was healthy. The filth had vanished forever, for this living piece of joy was flawless! Was this treasure truly mine? My armband read “Summit, Dinah” and his read “Summit, Baby Boy.” The filth had indeed blossomed into something beautiful. But he wasn’t snow-white. His bronze skin, his midnight eyes, his deep-black hair—all beautiful and mysterious. He had my name; he had my eyes. His skin and his hair were his own, a breathtaking creation that sprang up from a heartbreaking crime, a destroyed innocence, one night long ago. I loved his beauty; I loved his mystery.

“What’s his name?” asked the nurse—a new nurse with a friendly, snow-white smile.

Name? I hadn’t thought about this before. I searched my soul. There was only one right name for this one right moment.

“Peter,” I whispered. Rock. ❀



**QUESTIONS I ASK MYSELF  
BEFORE FALLING ASLEEP**

*(oil on canvas)*

GRACE SUTHERLAND

**BATTLING FEARS**

*(encaustic)*

RACHEL McCORMACK



**NOCTURNAL ENDEAVORS**

LAURA MAAS

clicking pens and rustling pages  
pounding heart, awake for ages;  
for me, midnight is when my mind  
leaves any hope for sleep behind.  
setting sun and frenzied fingers  
sensations of the music lingers.  
I cannot sleep for fear of losing  
the blissful phrases known prior to snoozing.  
pages of ink, eyes longing for rest  
slumber would be a welcome guest;  
characters bound in weary spines,  
raging emotions between the lines.  
closing eyes and aching limbs,  
blooming thoughts and countless whims  
battle it out for that tempting repose,  
until my eyes shut and my breathing slows.



## WATER NYMPH

*(silver gelatin print, large format 4x5 negative, printed 11x14)*

DARBY

## HARVEST HOLOCAUST

JESSICA RUSH

The leaves are the persecuted.

The average lawnman, Hitler

Collecting the dispersed leaves

Bagging, burning, crushing and composting to an untimely death.

Imprisoning the leaves from the very place they belong,

All for the sake of a yard

Free of tarnish

A proud territory pure and uniform.



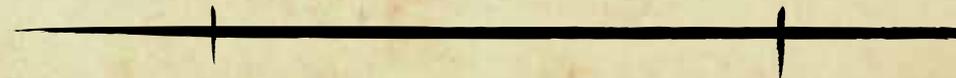
## DEPTHS

*(digital photography)*

NOELLE ANDERSON

2005

MTSU art students and alumni celebrate the demolition of the *Art Barn*.



## SERPENTINE SKY

ARI CONSTANTINE

Great Serpentine Mother,  
The spinner of sky:  
She devours creation while churning the seas,  
She squirms beneath mountains, uprooting the trees.

On one end: the other,  
The other: the end.

She blinks and bears planets,  
Her breath ignites suns,  
Her throat condemns as her gullet-hell churns,  
Flecking honest ears with her vile forked tongue.

On one end: the other,  
The other: the end.

I stand before lavender,  
Clothed in satin sin,  
The natal, pale skin, the blood-flushed cheeks,  
I engorge upon the table laden with the feast  
of the deepest fruits of the universe.

I am the talon and the tail,  
The product and consumer,  
The wafer and the guilty sinner,  
The savior and the self-salvation.  
I am the scale caught forever between  
The unshakable union of  
Low heaven and high hell.

I am the bending of the mind,  
The marble between the Serpent's eye,  
I am the milk, the form, and the will,  
And when I speak the world shall shudder,  
and bones will be shaken from their very flesh.

On one end: the other,  
The other: the end.

She will slither ever onward,  
the Immaculate Serpent Queen.  
And I, in the sacred space untouched  
between beginning and end, will guide her.

I will slither ever onward.

2011

MTSU students and  
faculty celebrate our 100th  
anniversary on the steps of  
Kirksey Old Main.



**EARTH MOTHER**

*(oil on canvas)*

TRINH NGUYEN

# COLLAGE

Middle Tennessee State University  
MTSU Box 267  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

## COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Gold Medalist Certificate—2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011  
Silver Crown Award—2007, 2008, 2011

## PRODUCTION NOTES

### TECHNOLOGY:

Adobe InDesign®  
Adobe Illustrator®  
Adobe Photoshop®  
Adobe Macintosh Platform

### TYPOGRAPHY:

Hoefler Text family

### PAPER:

80# Crown Silk Text  
80# Sundance Felt Cover, Bright White

### BINDING:

Saddle Stitch

### PRINTING:

Franklin Graphics of Nashville, Tennessee printed  
approximately 3,000 copies of *Collage*.

## ABOUT COLLAGE

*Collage* is a biannual production of the Middle Tennessee State University Honors College. All submissions are 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 either the editor or adviser of *Collage*. Inquiries should be addressed to *Collage*, Middle Tennessee State University, 1301 East Main St, Box 267, Murfreesboro, TN 37132.

## TO SUBMIT TO COLLAGE

*Collage* accepts submissions year-round. Submission forms and guidelines are available at [www.mtsu.edu/~collage](http://www.mtsu.edu/~collage). Creative work such as art, photography, prose, and poetry may be submitted digitally from the website or may be turned in at the *Collage* office, Honors 224, along with a completed hard copy of the form, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Creative works are accepted from MTSU students and alumni.

## POLICY STATEMENT

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

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



## CREATIVE EXPRESSION AWARDS

Each semester the *Collage* Faculty Advisory Board selects submissions to receive Creative Expression Awards, one from each major category: art, photography, poetry, prose, and alumni. Literature winners receive the Martha Hixon Creative Expression Award, and visual winners receive the Lon Nuell Creative Expression Award. Winners receive \$50 awards.