



# Collage

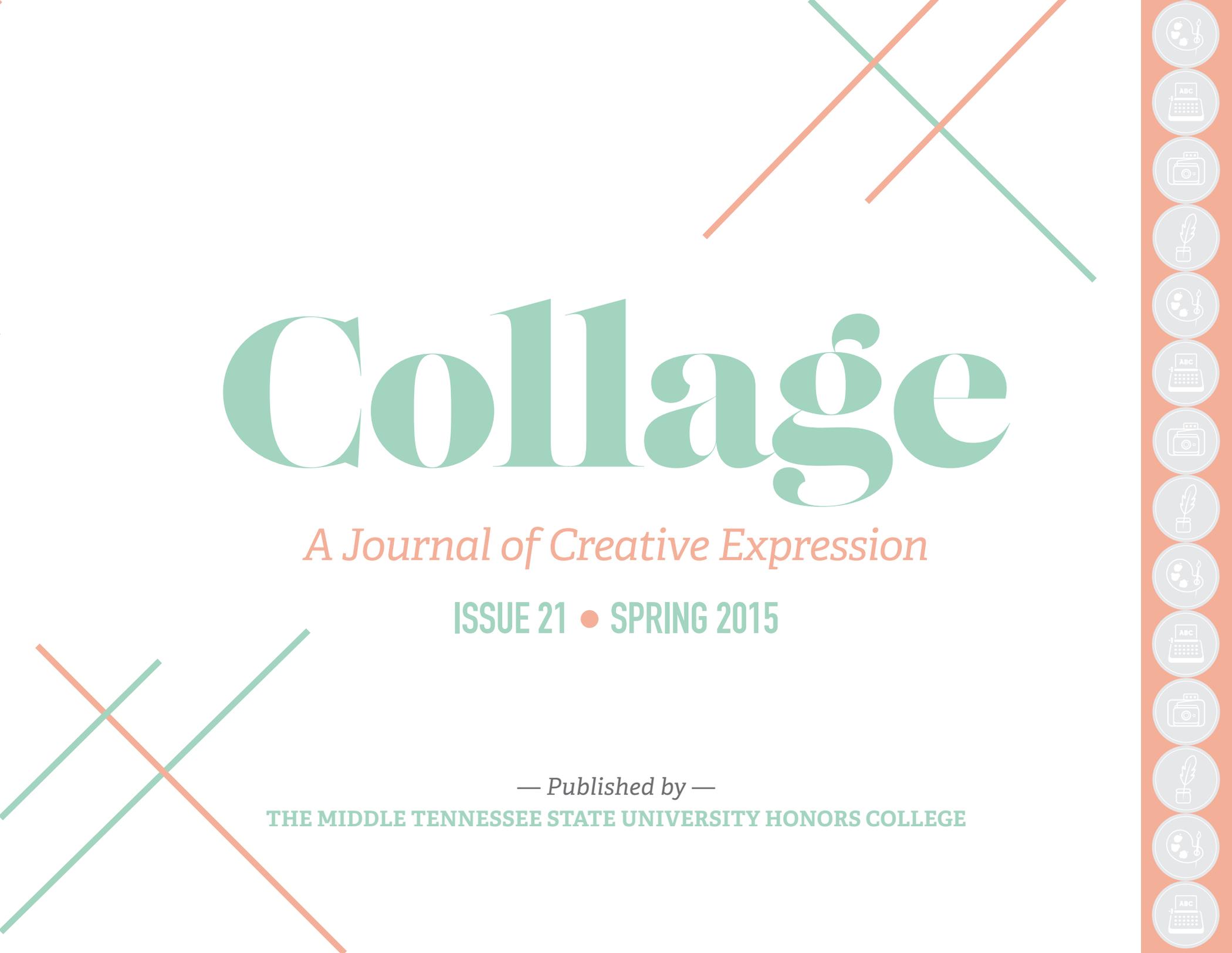
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*A Journal of Creative Expression*

ISSUE 21 • SPRING 2015

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THE MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE



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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It has been such an honor to be a part of *Collage* for three years and to serve as editor in chief for the past two. Working on *Collage* has been a wonderful experience and I will always treasure the time I have spent as a member of the staff. I have learned so much from my time with *Collage* and I am grateful to have been a part of a publication that provides an outlet for students to share their creativity. As I prepare to step down as editor in chief, I look forward to seeing the magazine continue to evolve and reach even more students and community members.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the staff members, our advisor Marsha Powers, and the submitters for their involvement in the creation of this semester's magazine. Every one of you has put so much effort into making this publication as successful as it is. Your hard work is evident in every aspect of the magazine. It is an honor to be presenting this issue, knowing how much work everyone has put into its creation. All of you were essential in earning *Collage* our third Gold Crown Award. It is such an honor to see MTSU being recognized on a national level for the abundant talent and creativity of our student body.

With that being said, I am pleased to present the Spring 2015 issue of *Collage*.

*Caitlin Noonan*

CAITLIN NOONAN  
Editor in Chief

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John Engelman  
*poetry*

It is a virus that  
attacks the higher brain  
functions,  
shutting down the heart and lungs.

It overtakes the whole  
of the carrier's body,  
using the fingers and jaw to claw  
and bite in order to spread  
itself to the next carrier.

It continues bodily movement even  
after the carrier's body has ceased  
normal life functions,  
such as breathing  
and the heartbeat.

It can do this because  
it is itself  
a living organism, merely  
using the body as its vessel.

There is no known cure.

(Love)



**I'M BLUE**  
Starling Sensing  
digital photography

## ALZHEIMER'S

John Engelman  
*poetry*

Four years.  
Four years until graduation  
then start again somewhere  
else.

Only my four years  
Came early. I  
was eleven when we  
moved our lives  
south

to commit ourselves  
to standing by,  
ready to catch what  
we could not carry.

For years we cared  
for, we slowed down  
what we could not  
stop. And it came,

anyway,

regardless,

in spite of.

And now I know that  
lessons,

meanings,

are not always

readily apparent. That

some things cannot be prevented  
and their coming is not your fault.

And that

those are made to be let go of,  
like death to the living.

And that

you don't get a diploma  
for every four years,

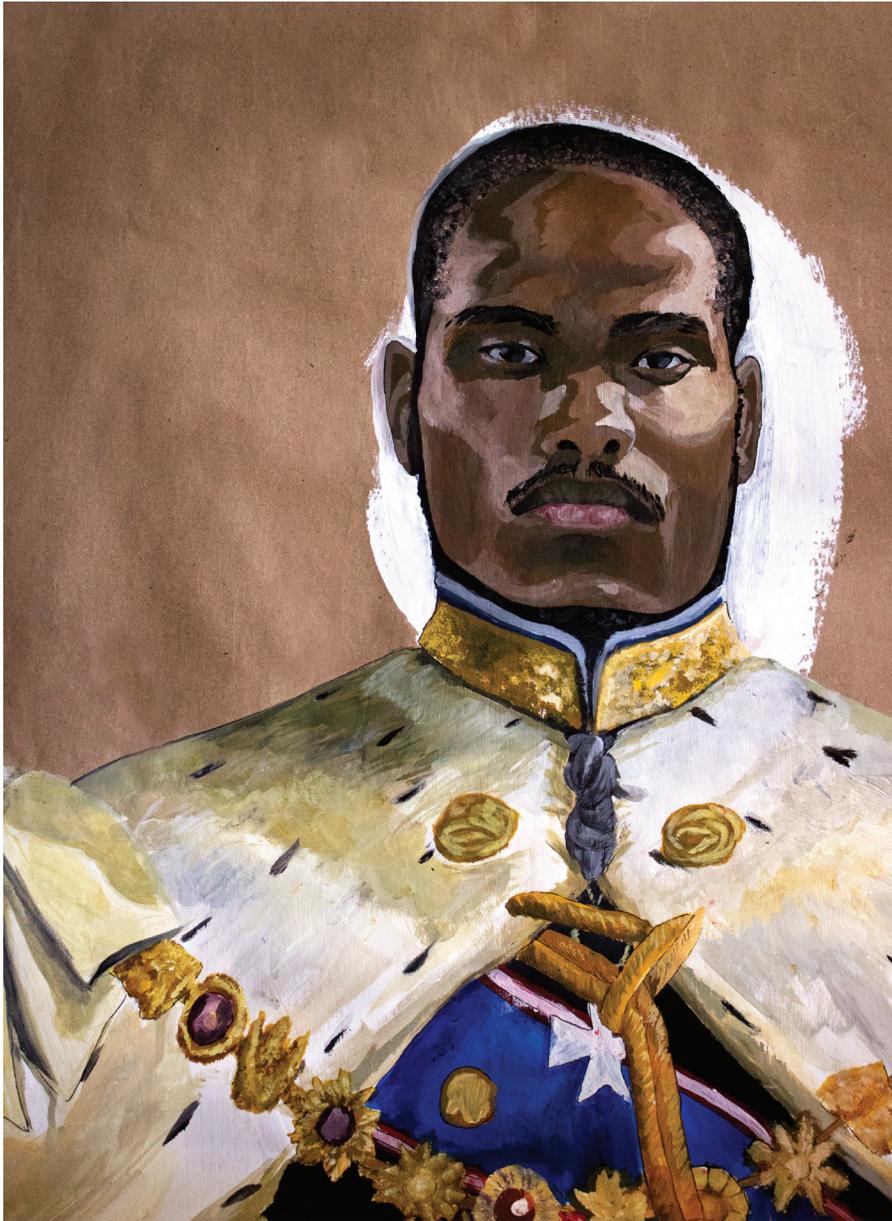
sometimes

you just get to breathe.



## HOLD ME BACK

Jessica Maraschiello  
*acrylic on canvas*



## SELF PORTRAIT

Romerus Greer  
acrylic on paper

## “HOL VAGY, ANYA?”<sup>1</sup>

Heather Hickox  
poetry

Where are you, Mother?  
Still confined to your bed,  
living oracle, vision of death—  
Or haunting Zyklon chambers  
as we starve starve starve?  
“Just a dirty Jew. A thief. Scum,”  
they say. Where are you, Mother?

You are here! In the darkness, eyes shut, teeth clenched.  
When the Russians came to “help”, to “liberate”—  
it was you they met.

“Thin or fat, young or old . . .  
as long as she is woman.”

I closed my eyes and I was you.  
Safe, round, warm.

Wrapped in your arms, my arms.  
Shhh . . . Shhh . . . Shhh . . .

You whisper to me, through me.

You are here.

Fresh air, bliss, small apartment filled with love,  
or *Shavuot*<sup>2</sup> in a train car, screams at selection,  
swirling gas.

You are here.

In freedom, in me, loved and alive.

*Hol vagy, Anya? Ön itt.*<sup>3</sup> You are here.

---

<sup>1</sup> “Where are you, Mother?”

<sup>2</sup> A Jewish festival

<sup>3</sup> “You are here.”



## SHADOWS

Mika Mollenkopf

wood, graphite powder, light source

## TEARS OF THE UNPROFITABLE ENGLISH MAJOR

Melinda Lewis

poetry

All the words in the world and people don't know how to use them  
All the words falling from mouths to the ground with a sickening thud,  
Being spit out or swallowed without even being tasted  
and when you savor and save them you are wasting your time  
Because words aren't worth much to those who don't taste them  
The saved time is worth more even though the lack of effective communication  
really creates more of time wastin'  
See what I did there?

Words. The words that slip quietly through my fingers and onto this page,  
That stem directing from a moon inside of me,  
waxing until it has reached completion  
and is emptied onto this page to make room for a new moon to come into being.  
Words, that play along my tongue and kiss my lips as they fly away to become ideas in  
the mind of another.  
Words that furnish our barren minds with the ideas that separate us from each other.  
How can they be superfluous when you don't even know what that means?



## DAYS OF PARADOX

Amber Lelli

bronze, wood, lens, transparencies, light, backboard, ink





## DAYS OF PARADOX

Amber Lelli

bronze, wood, lens, transparencies, light, backboard, ink



## THE FUNNY THINGS YOU THINK OF DURING A NIGHT AT THE CINEMA

Ross Houser

*poetry*

I knew it was wrong.  
That was why we did it again, though  
the first time we snuck along  
the illuminated hallway dripping with posters,  
Crouched so low,  
Is the only one I now remember.

I felt no guilt, so  
it was also easy, my conscience  
stifled by the sweet promise  
of you. Visitors departing through barren gray doors  
Made entry  
The stealthy work of a single moment.

I do not recall  
the award-winning well-beloved film  
we risked embarrassment or  
worse for, only the excitement of our illicit  
Nighttime jaunt;  
Which led to things they do not show on screen.

But like a movie  
everything must end, though not neatly  
tied up in ways we want;  
and though the credits of Us rolled before our  
Happily  
Ever After came, I still glimpse your shadow  
behind my eyes, a moving picture that plays on and on until I say  
enough  
the tape has ended  
stop  
the projector  
while I carefully preserve the reel in the childlike hope  
that the next time I watch it  
the ending will change.  
Next time, next time, I will not forget to learn from my mistakes.

I can't remember what we saw  
But I can't forget seeing you.



## CONCERTO

Jonathan Thurston  
*prose*

A tinkle across the keys, and I can see my father playing the massive acoustic grand in the living room. I can remember the etudes of Bach skipping through the air on lines and spaces. The room smelled of oranges then, fresh, bright, sweet oranges that my mother would put into almost every meal we ate together. My father used to tell me that every song was the musician's heart saying something to the other listeners in the room. When he played a nocturne, his sadness grieved us. When he played a sweet, sweet sonata, our hearts lifted. He used to tell me that silence has its own beauty, too. He told me that when he died, he would be playing a song of silence so beautifully that the sheets of black and white could not capture its essence. I thought he was crazy then. I really did.

As the years passed, my mind didn't change. Seeing his tomb didn't help. Occasionally, I would brush my fingers across the keys, hoping, praying that by some stroke of luck my hand would play one of his gorgeous etudes, but only dissonance came. One night, I was so frustrated by it that I kept slamming my hands across those stones of ivory and ebony until my mother came downstairs.

"Mom . . . why do I only hear silence?"

Suddenly, my mom smiled. The tears seemed to fade, and the world brightened for a moment.

"Robert, that's your dad in the background."

"What?" I had asked.



## FROM THE HEAVENS

Jasmine Gary  
*acrylic on masonite*

"He told you that when he died, he would play a song of silence. And if you listen closely enough, you'll be able to tell how beautiful it is." She glanced at the piano.

"He spent his whole life writing it, and, now, he is sharing it with you. Listen." When she left, I sat in that dismal, ceaseless silence.

I could not hear wind. I could not hear breath. Heartbeat, static, creak . . . all sounds were lost to me. I could not fathom perceiving nothing and perhaps, I was not old enough to understand. Every night, I imagined my father playing a piano in front of a grand audience with no sound. I could picture every key rising and falling in sync with his fingers, but it was only that—motions, but no music.

There came a time when I quit trying to hear my father's masterpiece, and I tried creating my own. Under the watchful eyes of my tutors, Beethoven, Mozart, Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky, masters all, they came easy to me.

"Play me a G harmonic minor scale," my professor would say, and, sure enough, my long fingers stroked the melody out of the keys.

I played them all. Every scale and every chord filled my repertoire as I sought out the legend of beautiful silence. Notes sang to me, and chords blossomed before my eyes, but rests remained voids with which the song took a break.

One day, I had the courage to ask my professor, "What is the significance of a rest?" It might have been a silly question to ask one's professor, but I needed to know.

He said to me, "Silence is what drives the universe without work."

"Huh?"

"When you grow tired of silence, what do you do? You make music. You can't make silence. Only when you stop trying to make music does silence appear. It is eternal and vast, and it is what makes music so bright."

On the whole, I had thought he had been reading from a fortune cookie.

When I went on to teach music at a local high school, the first kid I ever taught was a little boy who wanted to play drums. I beat that out of him and taught him how to play the xylophone. Mark was a good kid and had all the right passion. He reminded me a lot of myself when I was his age.

"What's a double-flat?" he asked one day.

"And what's a quarter-sharp?"

I smiled down at him and explained to him the mechanics of the strange nomenclature that was rarely used in music at that time. He soaked all that information up, too. He was sharp and never asked the same question twice. I taught him for four years, and he was the best student I ever taught.

During his first year of college, I would hear from him every now and then, but, one day, the messages stopped. A few weeks after that, I got a letter from his piano instructor at the college.

"Dear Mr. Irvington, I'm sure you've heard of Mark Gregory's recent and tragic passing. I wanted to share this with you personally since he spoke to me a great deal about you and your phenomenal teaching. Attached is the last piece of music he wrote. If there is anything I can help with, please don't hesitate to give me a call."

I glanced through tear-rimmed eyes at the music piece entitled, "Mr. Irvington" by Mark Gregory.

Eight measures of soft piano harmonies and melodies started the page, and then, it stopped. It was followed by forty-eight measures of whole rests. I took it home and tried to play it. The first eight measures were a piece of cake, but after that, I kept breaking down.

I couldn't understand it.

I worked at that high school for six years before I met the marvelous Rosa. As her name suggested, she truly was the flower of my life. She could make me laugh, and I could make her laugh, too. I shared with her my grief, my joy, and my passion, and she did the same. We got married after two years and were the happiest couple around. **CONTINUED »**



**WAITING**  
Micah Ramey  
oil on canvas



## HOMELESS CHILD

Emma Stout

torn paper (based on photography by Lee Jeffries)

» My mother was proud of me, and my students were as hyper as ever. I would not have had it any other way.

My first kid's name was Kevin. Rosa and I decided to name him after my first student, and my son certainly lived up to the name. He was curious, adventurous, and certainly musical. He may have lacked a good amount of common sense, but he knew the difference between an augmented and a diminished chord. For that, I forgave him his lack of street smarts. Then, we had twin girls. There was never silence.

When Kev and the twins were old enough to go to college, things finally settled down. I started to see white in my hair, and so did Rosa. I kept teaching, and the music kept coming. It was around that time that I got an unexpected call.

"Is this Mr. Irvington?"

"Yes, may I ask who's calling?"

"Yes, this is John Bellamy, your mother's lawyer. I'm afraid she was found dead this morning at her home. She died of a heart attack, sir. I'm terribly sorry for your loss. Is there a good time for me to speak with you about her will?"

Those were the last words I had ever expected to hear from that telephone.

I wanted to hang up and pretend like nothing had happened, but I realized that no matter what I did, it had happened. She was gone.

At the funeral, a lot of people showed up.

Mom was a well-liked person, it seemed, and I was glad for it. Relatives had asked me to bring a piano and play a song for her, but I just couldn't do it. When I was standing there in front of her coffin though, I wished I had. When Lily, one of my girls, saw me cry, she walked up beside me and gave me a tight hug. I heard her voice whisper in my ear. "It's all right, Daddy. Close your eyes."

I did as she said.

"Listen . . . Grandma's singing now . . ."

My eyes opened. "What?"

"Grandma used to tell us that when she died, she would be singing us a song . . . a song of silence. Can't you hear it?"

I closed my eyes, hoping that the magic had finally been revealed, but no golden answer awaited me. My mother's face did not appear before me. I only cried harder.

We moved into my mother's house; she had left it to me in her will. I didn't touch the piano in the corner of the living room, and after a few years, I didn't play piano at all. I quit working at the school and started giving private lessons at people's houses. I never played the student's piano though.

It kept the ghosts away for a while, and life was enjoyable. The students I taught always smiled and were always eager to learn more. When they were bored with classical, I taught them jazz. When they were having too much fun, I taught them classical again. Most of all, I taught them to love music.

The one thing I never taught them was the meaning of silence. I could not teach what I had not learned. I became tired, and, eventually, I quit.

I quit it all. I stopped the lessons, and I stopped the music. Every day, I stayed at home with Rosa and watched the old television shows and read that behemoth of a novel *War and Peace*. Puzzles and checkers became my idea of adventure, and the silence of the world didn't scare me anymore. I was simply tired of it. I was tired of looking for something that really wasn't there.

Then, for the first time in years, I tinkled a few notes on the piano. All those memories came back like a storm, and I cried. I sat down at the bench, and I wasn't sure if it was the bench or my back that cracked. My left hand joined my right, and both hands found a C note. Gradually, a scale came into existence. The white keys hammered and cracked life into the bowels of the piano, and the off-pitch tones filled the musty air.

With the memories still gripping me, I played one of my dad's favorite Bach pieces. My fingers hit an occasional wrong note, for which I cursed myself profusely, but overall, it stayed recognizable. I could almost imagine him sitting beside me, guiding my hands to the proper positions.

It was there in the living room that I heard the silence. All my life's work had not been to create music, but to create this silence. It was not born of effort. It

was born of life itself. Silence preceded music, and it followed music, too. It was a type of music, the type that stirs the most profound of emotions.

"Papa! Papa!"

My neck creaked as I turned to face my grandchild.

"You can play the piano?" the boy said with apparent shock. "My dad can, too!"

I chuckled. "I know it. I taught him."

"Really?"

I laughed and offered the boy a seat beside me. I showed him how to make his first scale and then his second. By that time, I knew Rosa was standing in the doorway with a wide smile on her face. It was the first time I had touched this piano since I was a boy the same age as this one.

"Yes, really. He was a much slower learner, too."

"Papa, why are you crying?"

"Let me tell you something that my father once told me. Every song you ever hear is a musician trying to tell you what his heart is feeling."

"Really?"

"Yes, and guess what?"

"What?"

I gave him a sly wink and whispered in his ear, "I've been writing a song of my own, too."

He whispered back, "Really? What is it?"



## MR. GREEN

Morgan Beaty  
*film photography*

"It's a song of silence. The day I leave this world, the song will be finished, and I will be playing for you, your mommy, and your daddy."

Through the tears in my eyes, I could have sworn that I could see my own mom and dad standing in the doorway right beside my wife and my son. ●



## THE LAST YEAR

Haley Hannum  
*poetry*

Round and round the lucky go round,  
Great is the future I see.  
Spin and twirl and give it a whirl,  
Be merry, be good, and carefree.

Halfway through and there's much to do,  
Get to it, get through it with ease.  
The fourth long year is finally here,  
It takes work, not only belief.

Hard work and tears and listening ears,  
Windy walks through walnut trees.  
We throw around the caps and gowns,  
Our time to turn a new leaf.

## NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

Chad Lawhorn  
*digital photography*



## AVANT GARDE PLAYING CARDS

Sarah Smalley

52-card playing deck, Art Deco style

## THE DEATH OF ART

Sophia Moran  
*poetry*

---

So many giants  
Giving up their brilliance  
Donning suits and  
Fading into the wallpaper  
Leaving me shocked  
Staring at the door  
And burning alone

## PENILESS POETRY

Joel Hardin  
*poetry*

---

I am a blue dot,  
Mindlessly, I wisp amongst mindless faces.  
A speck of eternity within my limited being.  
Infinite in dreaming, I dream.  
I carry weight of existing upon my minuscule existence.  
I write and want the best of mind's intentions.  
Blissfully happy living in thought, neglect in action.  
My eyes are a trap door for aspiration.  
My body is a trapped fool,  
Never acting on my eye's inspirations.  
Swirling, suffocating, smoky atmospheres.  
Deeming penniless poetry, to my one, my dear.  
Suffering silently inside a day's drowning nature.  
Is life an accident or a memory?



Nathan Abelt with a local man



Coastline viewed from Hai Van Pass

# Waging Peace in Vietnam

*Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future* BY NATHAN ABELT

The question is the same, whether asked by my friends, my family, or my teachers: “Why go to Vietnam?” What could this Asian backwater — where so much grief and horror took place — possibly have to offer to foreign visitors today? The answer, which may surprise people, is plenty. To those with the ability and the motivation to visit, Vietnam offers a beautiful experience that is hard to capture with words. But I will try to do it justice.

The biggest obstacle to overcome is that of framing Vietnam solely through the experience of the war fought there.

Images of GIs leaping out of Hueys, of peasant girls burned by napalm, and of Marines dashing through the streets of Hue during the Tet Offensive, dodging sniper fire: these are the images that have been seared into our collective memory for decades. These pictures have formed the basis of our understanding of Vietnam.

To this day, “Nam” remains a colloquialism that signifies not a country but a general sensation of fruitless bloodshed, apathy, cynicism, and regret. If anything, the word has become even more popular as a way to describe our recent endeavors in the Middle East.

However, Vietnam is so much more than just the backdrop for our favorite anti-war movies. It has a long and colorful history, a vibrant culture, an ancient heritage, and an overabundance of natural beauty. The greatest triumph of its people is not that they successfully defied foreign occupation so many times; it is that they secured their victory and have grown and developed their nation successfully in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In a world consumed with worrisome reports from Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere, Vietnam is a bright spot that deserves to be noticed. It is a country with a unique splendor that deserves to be seen.

Richard Nixon famously said, “We won the war in Vietnam, but we lost the peace.” Those who go there now will notice a profound, heartfelt peace between Vietnam and the United States. Not merely a “ceasefire,” but genuine goodwill and mutual admiration between the two former adversaries.

There are several specific moments from my two-week trip that illustrate and illuminate this reality of modern Vietnam. These are the images that should define this country. They now form the basis for my understanding of what true “peace and prosperity” is. Every nation claims to seek it as they sort out border disputes, ethnic rivalries, religious wars, and old tribal grudges. Vietnam stands out as one of those countries that has actually achieved it. With my words and a handful of pictures, I’ll try to describe what it looks and feels like.

Once, my fellow students and I visited a museum dedicated to the ongoing effort to locate and dispose of UXO (Unexploded Ordinance). The US dropped more bombs over Vietnam than it dropped during the entirety of World War II, and people continue to remove bombs, rockets, shells, land mines, and grenades from the old battlefields today. This is not, however, what made this museum remarkable to me. What stood out was the decoration of the building’s front yard: American bombs emptied of their explosives, sliced in half, and turned into planters. The old instruments of death and destruction have now become cradles of life. It’s an aesthetic decision that rings of cheeky humor, pure irony, and the underlying benevolence of our relationship with Vietnam.

Then there was our stay in Hoi An. I never saw a place in the country that wasn’t lovely to behold, but I believe this old trading town was the most beautiful place in Vietnam. To walk alongside the river as the sun set, watching children practicing martial arts on the pavement, boats bearing their passengers down the river like Venetian gondolas; to see the shop keepers and vendors selling paper lanterns, silk scarves, those iconic conical bamboo hats, and all manner of assorted trinkets and kitsch; to dine on a veranda overlooking the riverbank while lizards dine on the moths on the wall behind you; to watch the multicolored chaos of street lamps, lanterns, neon signs, and lamps shining like the world’s most overdone display of Christmas lights; to hear the cacophony of chatter, laughter, music, singing and dancing, mopeds’ horns and two-stroke engines — to see Hoi An is to enjoy unabashed Old World charm that you can’t help but adore.

In the coastal city of Da Nang, we visited the fabled Marble Mountain. Climbing up the hundreds of stone

steps carved out of its sides and seeing the ancient Buddhist shrines and temples chiseled into its slopes and hollow interior was breathtaking. More breathtaking still was scurrying through a small, twisting tunnel with one of my buddies and emerging on the mountain’s peak, seeing the sprawling city beneath us and the pounding ocean beyond that. At that moment, Marble Mountain felt like the top of the world.

I could elaborate on the quiet grandeur of the Imperial Palace in Hue, the majestic ruins of the Hindu temples at My Son, the villages at Dakrong, the dizzying heights and epic vistas of Hai Van Pass, the hectic energy of Hanoi. These places were so enrapturing and their serenity so pervasive, one could be forgiven for forgetting that there had ever been a war fought here at all. My greatest hope is that more and more Americans will come to this country and see the things that my friends and I have seen. It is my wish that “Nam” will become a new colloquialism, signifying a general sensation of unparalleled beauty, peace and goodwill, reverence for the past, and hope for the future.

I do not intend to sugarcoat my impressions of this country or to whitewash its recent history. Vietnam is still ruled by an authoritarian government, intolerant of dissent and determined to sanitize its own history. There are elaborate museums and memorials dedicated to preserving the memories of the bombing of Hanoi, the abuses of the French colonial masters, and, of course, the My Lai Massacre. There is no memorial to the civilians in Hue who were brutally executed by Viet Cong (VC) enforcers when they occupied the city in 1968 during the Tet Offensive. Likewise, the heroism and desperation of South Vietnam’s lost cause, the plight of the “Boat People,” the horrific torture endured by American POWs at Hoa Lo Prison, and the gruesome terror tactics of the VC are all conspicuously absent from the Vietnamese records.

Having visited Vietnam and observing how the passage of years and the growth of new friendships can heal the deepest wounds of the ugliest wars and having seen the ingenuity, courage, vitality, and hospitality of this small but determined nation, there is one thing I should say in conclusion: the tragedy of Vietnam is not that we lost the war. The real tragedy, when beholding the present peace and friendship between our two lands, is that we ever felt the need to be enemies in the first place. ●



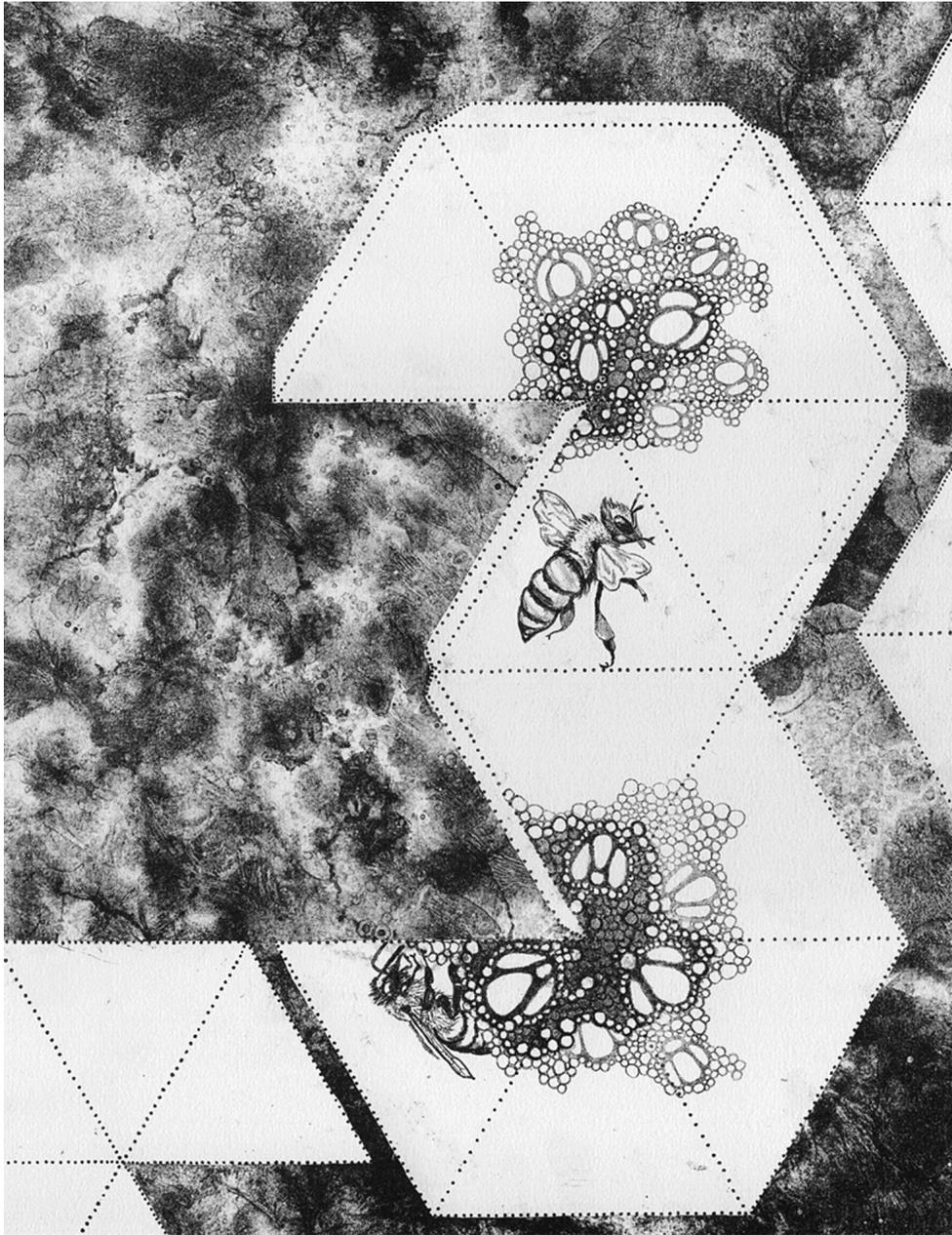
Imperial Palace in Hue



Lantern shop in Hoi An



Study abroad group



## RESTORE

Felicia Cannon

plate lithography on stonehenge paper

## THE INK-STAINED SECRET

Rebecca Smith  
poetry

Ink flows freely from my wounded chest,  
Splattering the floor as dripping blood.  
The carpet disappears under burning darkness,  
Becoming a sheet of shimmering night.

You stare at me with grinning eyes.  
The quill carves smiles into your face.  
Laughing, laughing, always laughing.  
Can you not see that I am dying?

Walls are lined with fading paper.  
Three swift motions bring them to life.  
The quill is slicing deep into drywall.  
Grotesque wounds appear on my spine.

You cannot see past the lines to the canvas.  
My life sustains these worlds.  
I am your savior and your fool.  
More laughter for my efforts.

Devouring the designs with your gaping jaws.  
Teeth gnashing and tearing at knowledge.  
Marvelous beasts reduced to shreds.  
You smile and ask for more.

Still more ink stains my shirt.  
No amount of writing will sate your thirst.  
More, more, more!  
Ink engulfs my trembling form.

It slithers past my lips,  
Leaves scars on my cheeks,  
Ravages my hands until they are bone.  
All for you.

There is no purpose for this creation.  
Destruction awaits my every motion.  
Reaching out is my only choice, however.  
Even if my blood is forever corrupted, I cannot stop begging for help.

For,  
You see,  
I have a secret:  
I am unable to write my own end.  
That power lies with you.



## OLD LADY SHOES

Diane Arroyo  
lithograph print



## BANANA

Starling Sensing  
digital photography



## CANOPY

Anna Houser  
poetry

Cigarettes smell like memories  
I shouldn't have, but gathered  
like the dead grass clippings your father  
made us work for. Sticky summer  
and your whitewashed porch, drinking  
lemonade with too much ice and yellow powder,  
your mother passed out on the parquet floor  
next to a wine glass. That's all that remains  
of what we had together.

We would hang upside down  
out on your swing set, already too old  
but unwilling to move forward,  
even as time dragged us through the dirt  
and knocked our knees.

How the highway felt in my hair was like the smell  
of asphalt, the sound of heavy rollers and a jackhammer.  
How you made me feel was unsettling and new,  
cold and hot all at once like the taste of your mother's  
kool-aid when she forgot to add the sugar,  
serving it to us with a proud smile and weak wrists.

It's years later, but I still remember how it sounds to fall asleep  
to cicadas crying with the buzz of an electric fence.

It's years later, but I can still taste peach pie on my tongue,  
crumbling, messy, raw and fresh and gold.

It's years later, but I can still smell the grass,  
heavy and musky, heated from the day.

It's still warm even as the sun sets,  
the somehow-sharp green blades  
tickling the backs of our legs,  
hands folded stiffly across our chests  
as we lie in the cool shade and watch the empty sky.



## JUXTAPOSITION

A.J. Holmes  
*film photography*

## MANKIND IS MORE THAN MERELY MASS

Travis Stone  
*poetry*

Were you there when the world stood still  
And all that was left was one man's will  
To tame the blade and try to heal  
The heart of the one he taught to feel  
The one who wields that blade so fine  
The one they call the blade of time  
That cuts so sharp it cuts through life  
And cuts down men right in their prime

Oh what a wondrous web we weave  
When all we've left is death and deceit  
To fool ourselves in hopes to believe  
That all we have is what we achieve  
The things we do to prove our worth  
The time we waste here on this earth  
It's all the same from the day of birth  
And what's the point of worthless work

To live and die and live again  
Is a promise certain to all men  
A promise so great that it transcends  
The ways of this world that we've broken in  
Some choose to live each day as their last  
Some choose to live their lives in the past  
But choose to live for it passes fast  
And mankind is more than merely mass

## WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Jemekia Young-Weeden  
*poetry*

I am love, I am hate  
Destiny trapped inside of fate  
Beautiful redemption, unspeakable sin  
I lead some to drown, teach some to swim  
I am the bitter, the sour and sweet  
Victorious triumph after defeat  
  
I am the hunter, I am the prey  
Crimson light in the darkness of day  
I am the queen taking back her crown  
I am the lost that you think you found  
I am spirit, I am flesh  
Rhythmic heartbeat against a chest  
I am the nightmare embracing the dream  
I am the whisper inside of the scream  
  
I am laughter and wasted tears  
I am courage, gift-wrapped in fear  
I am shame, I am pride  
Forgotten knowledge the world tries to hide  
  
I am student, I am teacher  
Ravenous wolf and sanctified preacher  
I am the riot, I am the calm  
After sunshine, the Cat 5 storm  
I am silence, I am rage  
The chapter in verse, stuck on this page  
I am the poet, I am the song  
I am the righteous, most times I'm wrong

## COTTON CANDY

Kiki Kixmiller  
*digital photography*

I am the master, I am the slave  
Sometimes new life, sometimes the grave  
I am the afro, the relaxer, the braid  
Hot like fire, cool as the shade  
  
I am the apple, bruised and diseased  
Strange fruit still growing on Uncle Sam's trees  
I am justice crying out for peace  
I am the fist, beat-down in the streets  
I am judge and I am jury  
The tattered flag that made it back to glory  
  
I am the lies, I am the truth  
I bleed the red, the white, and the blue

I am you, looking back at me  
  
What do you see?  
What  
Do  
You  
See?  
  
I am the puzzle  
Do you need a clue?  
I am America  
In ebony hue



## UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Jason Rogers  
*prose*

**M**y dad was a drunk. He was not a mean drunk, or an angry drunk, or even a happy drunk. He was just always drunk. As a child, it seemed to me that he must have a giant hole inside him that could only be filled with booze. I asked my mom once why he was always drunk, and she answered in one word . . . Vietnam. She said it in a sort of half-whisper that one uses when saying the name of some unspeakable evil. Vietnam. It was always a great mystery to me. I knew only that my father had been a sergeant in the infantry during the Vietnam War. That is all I knew because that is all anyone would ever say about the matter. As a bit of a history buff, I have always been fascinated by war and stories of great armies fighting for glory and honor. My father, however, told no stories. In fact, he never said a single word to me about his time in the army. I had a million questions, but no matter how hard I pressed, he refused to discuss anything related to the war. Later I decided that some questions are better left unanswered.

It was the summer after my freshman year of high school and I was making the hour long trek to my best friend Jesse's house. It was one of those hot Tennessee summer days where the air is so thick with humidity you can actually see it. Because Jesse lived on the opposite side of the interstate than I did, the only way to get to his house was to walk through a drainage tunnel that went underneath it. The tunnel was about four feet high and a hundred yards long. As I stepped into the cool darkness of the tunnel I began my traditional crossing routine of waving a stick around in circles in front of me to knock down spider webs while simultaneously shouting and stomping my feet as loud as possible to



## WHITE PEOPLE CALL ME DANNY GLOVER

Davion Baxter  
*digital photography*

scare off any snakes who might be waiting to ambush me. As I emerged from the other side of the tunnel, I was shocked to find a man in his forties, with an olive drab army jacket and torn jeans, sitting on a log in front of a tent staring at me with an expression of extreme confusion on his unshaven face. I suppose that from the racket I made coming through the tunnel, he was expecting some sort of strange beast or troll to emerge from it, not some skinny kid. When he realized it was just me, he let out a wild fit of laughter that one only sees

from the insane or extremely inebriated. Not wanting to find out which he was, and not knowing what else to do, I ran. I ran as fast as I could the rest of the way to Jesse's house, occasionally looking behind me for pursuit, hoping that the man I had seen was just a normal hobo and not the kind that liked to murder teenage boys.

I was half way through telling my story to Jesse when I realized it was a mistake. Jesse and I were the same age, same height, and even had the same haircut (a glorious mullet) but our personalities could not have been more different.

When I told my story of the strange man living in the woods by the tunnel, it was to convey the danger. To Jesse though, the man's presence there was a mystery to be solved, an adventure. I did not even get to finish my tale before he interrupted me and said "let's go talk to him!" At this point, I had to consider my options carefully. Going back to talk to this stranger was the last thing I intended to do. I knew that Jesse was going to go whether I came with him or not. I also knew that if I refused to go along and Jesse was brutally murdered, I would have to bear the guilt of that for the rest of my life. Even worse, if I refused to go along and Jesse was not brutally murdered, he would return and mock me relentlessly for being scared. Ultimately, I decided to go along with Jesse because I figured that going back through the tunnel was my only way home, and I certainly did not want to confront the man alone later on.

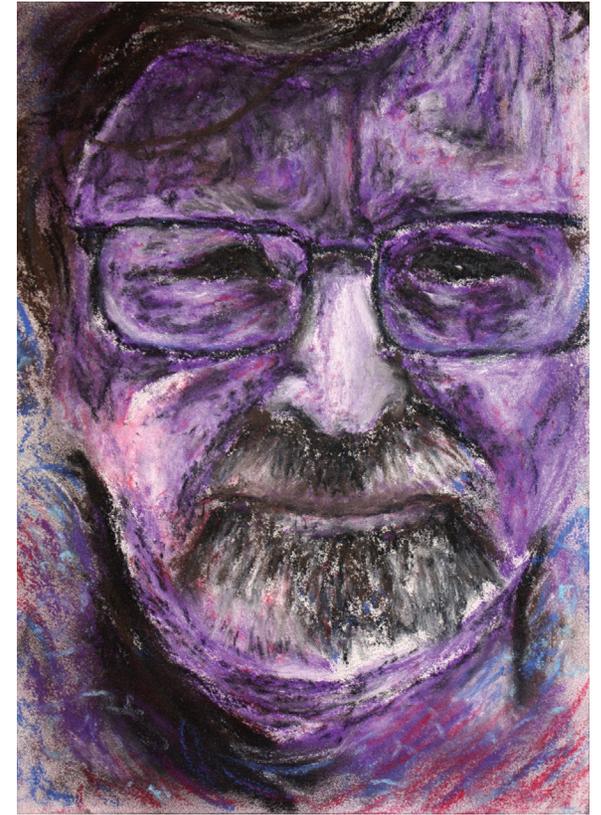


## SWADDLING SWINE

Jessica Maraschiello  
*acrylic on panel*

As we approached the man, he looked at us suspiciously, unsure of our intent. When we got close enough to be heard without shouting, Jesse smiled and said "howdy mister." After taking a moment to decide if we were there to harass him or not, he gave a semi-toothless grin and replied "howdy young' uns." He motioned to a log adjacent to the one he was sitting on and told us to sit down. After we sat he said "what can I do fer y'uns?" As I was scanning the area for escape routes, just in case, Jesse gave our introductions then began his interrogation of the man. We found out his name was Fred and that he was from the mountains in North Carolina. He was traveling west following the interstate and planned on going all the way to California to find his daughter who he had not talked to in some years. He had decided to stop and set up camp at that particular spot to take advantage of the cool breeze that came out of the drainage tunnel. It turned out that Fred had been alone on the road for a long time and was quite pleased to have our company. He was more than happy to answer Jesse's endless stream of questions. After a couple hours, the mystery of Fred's presence was solved to Jesse's satisfaction and we took our leave of him for what we assumed would be forever, but we found him still there the next day, and the day after that. In fact, he stayed almost the entire summer.

Jesse and I visited Fred nearly every evening. During the day, Fred disappeared to someplace that we never found out about, but he was always back at his camp by sundown. As we got to know Fred, we developed what we considered a mutually beneficial relationship with him. We would bring Fred various canned goods looted from our pantries at home and give him whatever cash we were able to scrounge up. In return, he would walk with us up to the gas station to buy enough beer for us all to get drunk. Anyone who happened to be watching during our return from one of these excursions would have seen an aging homeless man in tattered clothing with a case of



## DISAPPOINTMENT

Beverly Warner  
*chalk pastel on Ingres-board*

beer under each arm, marching down the road with two skinny, mullet-haired teenagers grinning from ear to ear trailing behind him. Quite a sight to behold I am sure.

Fred had been homeless for many years and had acquired an impressive collection of stories and advice on how to survive on the streets. He loved telling stories and we loved listening to them. We spent our nights around the campfire drinking beer and listening with rapt attention as Fred shared his hard won wisdom with us. **CONTINUED»**

» Things like how to get a free meal at a fancy restaurant by pretending to dig through the dumpsters when the kitchen staff takes out the trash. And why you should never, under any circumstances, trust a carnie. He even taught us his secret recipe for “julep” which was a type of homemade wine made from fruit, sugar, and bread that he had learned to make during a short stay in county jail and which he considered a lifesaver if you were ever in a pinch.

Jesse and I considered our time with Fred to be about as good as it gets for a couple of country boys in a small town. Our nights were filled with beer, canned beans, and lots of laughter. Every night that is except the last one. Fred had just finished a story about the pranks he used to pull on his buddies in the army, I remarked that I wished my dad would tell me some of his stories about the army. Suddenly, a change came over Fred. The smile faded from his face and it looked like he was staring at something far away. After a few moments he started talking again but he was using a tone of voice I had not heard before. “We were on a night patrol in the jungle.” He said. “My best friend Teddy was walking on my right side and he kept stepping on branches and things and making a racket. I got his attention and started to wave him over so I could cuss him out when suddenly his chest just exploded. He looked at me confused for a second then he fell over. I was trying to figure out what happened when someone pulled me to the ground and whispered ‘sniper.’ Bout the time I looked up I seen a muzzle flash up in a tree so I pointed my rifle and emptied my clip. A couple seconds later I heard a thump like a watermelon hitting the ground in that direction.

Then I crawled over to Teddy and seen he was dead. Back home he had a pretty lil blond headed wife and a son that he never shut up about. And there he was laying on the ground in the jungle in the middle of nowhere with a damn hole in his chest. It was BULL! Bout that time, they called me forward cause they found the sniper lying dead under a tree. When I got up there, I seen it weren't nothing but a little girl, not more than thirteen or fourteen years old. She was laying there in her black pajamas, curled up on her side like she was sleeping. Ya see boy, there's things that a man sees, that a man does in war that ye can't ever get rid of. I can see that little girl's face right now like she was standing in front of me. If your daddy don't want to tell you what happened in Vietnam, then trust me son, you don't want to know.”

Jesse and I sat there in stunned silence, our teenage brains trying in vain to fully comprehend what we had just heard. Fred chugged the rest of his beer then said he was going to sleep. Jesse and I awkwardly said our goodnights and went home. That was the last time I ever saw Fred. The next day he had packed up his camp and left. I do not know what happened to Fred. I do not know if he made it to California or if he ever found his daughter. What I do know is that some questions are better left unanswered. ●

## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Chad Lawhorn  
digital photography



## GEOGRAPHY OF A SEASON

Stephanie Ellis  
*poetry*

My finger guides my eyes  
across your face, like lines on a map.  
Endlessly and effortlessly moving and winding  
through shadows and boroughs  
intersecting each other;  
now our hands parallel and split again:  
yours fast like the river,  
mine steady as the earth.  
It's taken me a year to see your beauty.

In the spring, you were forgotten and bare,  
but a seed, by chance, ripped its way  
into my bosom and buried itself  
under gravel and pinecones and  
old, rotten guilds of colorless leaves.  
Now its blossoms have burst themselves  
suddenly to life like light brigades in my heart.

In June, we had faithfully begun to wilt,  
and I traced the image of my face  
on your eyelids like a staircase,  
guessing at numbers of trees in the orange grove  
where we used to count the mounds of  
purple starts that you buried long ago.



In October, I was softer than a dream.  
Your face is still dust in my hand,  
and I can hear it ringing  
in the roots that once caressed their arms  
through my stagnant rib cage.

In January, I was an evergreen,  
and you plucked my needles  
and ate of my bark  
and I gave you room  
and oxygen to breathe.

## THE ENIGMATIC SITUATION

Amber Lelli  
*bronze, wood, resin, light, transparencies*

I am still forgotten and you are still the river:  
I lie down and let you wash over me.  
But you and I both know that earth and water  
can never really be combined.  
and so you move, and I stay put.  
And you grow, and I stagnate.  
And I remember you when I see  
blossoms in the spring.

## BECOME YOUR REMEMBRANCE

Matthew Holder  
prose

The man looked down at the worn business card, comparing its contents carefully to the storefront across the street. Printed on the card in plain letters was “NEVERMORE BOOKS and Stuff,” with an almost indistinguishable postscript scrawled at the bottom, “inquire about your place of quiet rest.” The man shifted his gaze from the card, staring forlornly at the façade across the street.

The shop was small and unbecoming, a simple space housed between two other stores whose identities are unimportant to this story. The door to the store stood squarely between two windows, displaying a myriad of books thrown together in a haphazard, careless kind of display. Above the door hung a sign, a raven in flight clutching a book in its claws, titled in bold, golden letters NEVERMORE. The man chuckled. *Subtle*, he thought, and, thrusting his hands deep into his coat pockets, crossed the street, opened the door, and stepped inside.

An offensive sensory experience overwhelmed the man upon entering. Noticed first was the smell, a strong, rank odor of musty old books and mothballs that filled his nostrils and clawed its way down his throat into his stomach. A thick cloud of smoke hung about the room from a plethora of incense sticks burning in every nook and cranny of the store in a fleeting attempt to assuage the less-than-appealing native smell. The man tried to swallow, his mouth and throat suddenly dry.

Regaining some composure, the man surveyed the store, taking in its grandeur, which, in this case, refers to its complete lack thereof. The store consisted of a single, large room. Bookshelves hoarded and vied for any and all available space, their contents exploding from their shelves into large, disorganized piles about the room, creating a labyrinthine structure of seemingly endless alleyways of books. Various signs hung from the ceilings, detailing the supposed contents of individual sections in



the store, i.e. FANTASY, BIOGRAPHY, HISTORY, etc.

*I'm never going to find it in this mess*, the man thought. Gingerly, with cat-like nimbleness and focus, the man stepped further into the store, dodging and sidestepping the piles of books that seemed to edge and lean closer as he approached. *Which section would it be in?* The man looked at the signs again, carefully reading each one, trying to piece together a puzzle whose whole picture escaped him.

## OUT TO PASTURE

James Brummett  
digital photography

*No, it's definitely not CHILDREN'S or ADOLESCENTS, probably not LITERATURE or SCIENCE FICTION either. Let's see, not PETS or PLANTS or whatever NEW AGE is.*



## TOM JIMISON

Christopher Hamrick  
digital photography

The man sighed a defeated sigh. *Just forget it, he thought, it's not that bad, and life goes on and all that, and you should just turn around and go home.* The man, at a loss of focus or point, started to turn to leave, but not before his eye caught another sign, a tantalizing, succulent thing just hanging there, like the forbidden fruit itself.

Forgetting his wiser decision to leave, the man, having determined his goal, delved further into the maze, dancing about the cacophony in a decided direction.

Seconds later, and only a few books disturbed along the way, the man stood underneath the sign. The man could feel the weight of it hanging above him, its persecution and judgment bearing down on him. It read, SELF-HELP.

Shaking away his guilt, the man began the herculean task of perusal, daunted but dogged by the myriad of shelves and books spilling forth, promising financial happiness, confidence, and various other methods of self-aggrandizement. His hands glided over the books, absorbing the titles, searching. *What would it be called?*

The man moved to the second shelf, already feeling hopeless, entertaining again the notion of leaving, when a voice pierced the silence. "I think I can help you," it said.

The man's heart leapt to his throat and he started, jumping back and knocking over a pile of books in the process. The voice had come from an old man, hunched and bent.

"Oh! I did not mean to startle you, I do apologize," the old man said. "My name is Samuel, and I own this humble store. I was in the back, regretfully, when you entered. But," Samuel clapped his hands, suddenly

filled with vigor, "I'm here now. So, how can I help you?"

The man shuffled uncomfortably, pushing his hands into his pockets and staring at his feet. "Well, um. I don't know how to . . ."

"This is a book store, yes? Is it a book, perhaps, that has you so bothered? Simply tell me the title, nay, even an elementary description will suffice, and I will find it. It is my personal guarantee that we have exactly what you are looking for." Samuel stepped closer, gesturing for the man to lean in closer, stooped as he was. "Can I tell you a secret?"

"Uh, sure," the man said.

Samuel beamed like a child about to show his parents an exemplary report card. "You mustn't tell anybody, especially my competitors! If those slimy corporates caught wind, I daren't even consider the consequences. Always trying to steal from me, they are. Why, just the other day, one of their spies crawled in here and—" Samuel continued on for some time, growing in frustration and anger at his re-telling of evil conspiracies. The man grew disinterested rather quickly, lost in the craters and creases that cracked and covered Samuel's face. "Anyway!" Samuel shouted and the man jumped. "The secret. Are you listening, boy?" The man nodded, scared to do anything else.

Samuel's voice dropped to a whisper, despite the emptiness of the store. "This bookshop," Samuel gestured with his hands, arcing them out in front of him and circling about himself, "contains every book published, unpublished, and yet to be published." **CONTINUED »**

» The man stared, feeling like he should be more taken aback at such a revelation.

“The store’s rather small,” the man said. “I don’t see how you could house so many books. I mean, there must be millions, right?”

Samuel’s shoulders slumped even further than his broken body already maintained. “That is your bewilderment?” Samuel sighed, rubbing his eyes with his thumb and forefinger, as troubled old men are wont to do. “You, sir, lack imagination. Never mind. What is it you needed?”

Feeling more confident, the man indulged.

“Someone told me — a friend — that there’s a book here that could help me with—” the man stopped, made a gun with his hand, put it to his temple, and jerked his head to

the side, “You know. Is this the right place? I have your business card here, and it says on the bottom . . .” The man retrieved the card and showed Samuel, pointing at the bottom of the card. “So, can you help me with that? Do people come here to die?”

Samuel smiled a coy smile. “You have been misinformed, son. Tell me, do you know the namesake of my shop?”

“Yeah, it’s Poe. Fairly obvious.”

“But how do you know? Have you ever encountered Mr. Poe, supped with him or engaged him in conversation?”

The man shook his head.

“People do not come here to die, sir. Death is universal; it takes no skill or prestige to attain. There is no remembrance in death, simply a moment of feigned

interest mistakenly called compassion. Nobody remembers or cares that Poe died; it is a blip of registry within the collective conscience of people today.

“You see, son, people remember that he lived, and why do they do that?” Samuel picked up the nearest book and held it up. “Because of these. So no, people do not come here to die.” Samuel stared at the man and stepped closer, his voice suddenly containing a slight air of irritation. “I do not care about your story or your woes. Whatever you have deemed unworthy about your life is immaterial. What I do care about is your perspective. What you ask is different from what I offer. Do you understand?”

The man stared back at Samuel. “Look, I’m done,” the man said. “I don’t care what you want me to call it. Suicide, remembrance, whatever, I’m through. Can you help me or not?”

“Help you? You people are so ignorantly wasteful,” Samuel said. “Yes, I can help you.” Samuel turned around and began walking toward the back of the store. “Follow me.”

The man followed Samuel, doing his best to mimic the old man’s deft movements through the chaos. Soon they arrived at the back of the store, a bare wall containing a door at its center. Samuel approached the door, turned its knob and opened, beckoning for the man to enter.

The room was empty, save for a single desk and chair lit by a single lamp in what the man supposed was the middle of the room. On the desk was an open book, its pages stark white, reflecting strongly the light cast on them. To the right of the book, there lay a black pen.

The man asked, “What do I do?”

Samuel walked up beside the man, the two facing the desk together. “I possess this book because it exists, and such is the nature of my shop. Many have come and used it, all of them much older than you.



## LIVING HISTORY: HÚNKPAPHĀ

Helen Wilds  
digital photography



## PEACE OUT TO THE TOURISTS

Melinda Lewis  
digital photography

If you would read the card again, you would see it clearly promises quiet rest. What you seek is either escape or attention, neither of which is admirable. But I perceive I cannot persuade you otherwise.

What do you do? You sit down in the chair, take the pen, and write your name at the top of the page.”

The man turned to Samuel.

“That’s it? I mean, what happens?”

“Does simplicity always surprise you?”

“Will there be any pain? I don’t,” the man stopped and looked at the floor, running his hand over his mouth, “I don’t want to feel any pain.”

“You will feel nothing but the slow slip of seconds passed,” Samuel said.

The man raised his head, some small anxiety relieved. “Okay, I think I’m ready. Do you need to be in here, or do you wait outside, or what?”

“I can leave if you desire.”

The man nodded his head, and Samuel turned to leave.

Approaching the desk, the man took off his coat, draping it across the back of the chair. He sat down, running his hand over the blank page and carefully picking up the black pen. The paper was cool to the touch, smooth like silk, unlike anything the man felt a page should feel. The pen was perfect, light and delicately crafted. The man felt important wielding it.

Lifting the pen, the man was about to write his name when he suddenly called out, “Wait! Samuel!”

Samuel had not yet left the room and turned quickly, an air of hope in his voice. “Yes?” Samuel asked. “What is it?”

“Do I need to write my full name? Like first, middle, and last?”

Samuel hung his head, defeated. “It does not matter. Simply believe the name is yours.” With that, Samuel exited the room, closing the door behind him.

The man shrugged, turned back to the book, and wrote his name at the top of the page.

A few minutes later, Samuel returned. The man was gone, the chair empty save for his clothes. Samuel approached the desk. Written on the page, in beautiful, elegant script, was the man’s story. At the top of the page, in markedly different handwriting, was the man’s name. *Jonathan*, Samuel thought. *Such a strong name.*

Samuel then read Jonathan’s story, tears welling in his eyes. *What a waste.*

When Samuel finished reading, he turned the page of the book and picked up the pen, for it had fallen to the floor. Taking up the man’s, Jonathan’s, clothes, Samuel left the room and returned to the shop. ●

## ISS

Janie Wilkerson  
*poetry*

Beautiful vast darkness floods me  
Open wide with naked need  
Drinking deeply of Betelgeuse, Antares, Andromeda, Mars

Hungry for tender response  
Met with icy indifference  
Whorled white trails tracking  
Inexorable can't-stay-must-go

Cold, cold terrible silence  
Distance unfathomable  
Light travels from fusion gone black so long ago  
It tricks time

Who can touch the Universe?  
Only astronauts, sheathed in protective layers, faces hidden  
Fragile spindle in nonchalant orbit passing unmarked  
But marked

Assignation by proxy  
If I can't have this lover  
I can still watch



## RYAN RED BYRD & THE POLARITY OF HOLOGRAPHIC GLASS

Katherine McGrath  
*collage*



## TANGLED

Chloe Campbell  
oil on wood panel

## INTERTWINED

Caitlin Osborne Parris  
poetry

*There is more to reality than what you are experiencing right now*

Each moment is  
pregnant with happening,  
pregnant with possibility,  
but lacking in promise for the next.

Each moment we, the world, are, united, yet, fragmented.

Islands and continents  
Parts and a body  
Grains and the sand  
Waves and the ocean  
Mechanisms and machine  
Synapses and system  
Words and the novel  
Leaves, branches, and the tree

Breathe and meditate  
Taste and see  
Awaken each cell  
Enliven each fiber  
Energize each synapse  
Soak within the vibrancy of life

The world is humming with the ecstasy of existence.



## NO PICNICS IN GRAVEYARDS

Timothy Rudolph  
Photoshop

## A GOOD DAY TO DIE

StarShield Lortie  
poetry

I decided to die today  
to lie down in the middle  
of everything that I wanted  
everything that I had been chasing  
and transform myself  
into who I really am.

But instead I fell  
face first  
into the chase  
and went back to sleep  
dying instead  
to everything that loved me  
and to the chase itself.

And I slept like Dorothy  
in that field of Poppies;  
drunk on the Beauty I refused to see,  
blind to the Light illuminating my way,  
deaf to the voice of my Heart guiding me home.

I slept and dreamt  
of running in full body armor  
ready to fight,  
fight to the death  
for anything I might want.

And I dreamt  
everything I was chasing  
stood quietly by  
embracing me like my own smooth skin,  
caressing me as I slept.

The trees bowed  
and sighed  
singing lullabies  
to heal my broken heart,  
and the sun reached  
its glowing arms through the trees  
warming the spot where my body laid  
reminding me it is always  
a good day to die.

# Collage

*A Journal of Creative Expression*

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building, Room 224  
1301 E. Main Street, Box 267  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132

## ABOUT COLLAGE

*Collage* is a biannual production 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 *Collage*, Middle Tennessee State University, 1301 East Main Street, Box 267, Murfreesboro, TN 37132.

## TO SUBMIT TO COLLAGE

*Collage* accepts submissions year-round.

Submission forms and guidelines are available at:

<http://capone.mtsu.edu/collage/>

Creative work, such as art, photography, short stories, essays, short plays, song lyrics, and poetry, may be submitted digitally to the website or may be turned in at the *Collage* office, Honors 224, between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Submissions are accepted from MTSU students and recent graduates.

## POLICY STATEMENT

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

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

## CREATIVE EXPRESSION AWARDS

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



### DAYS OF PARADOX

Amber Lelli  
*art*



### CONCERTO

Jonathan Thurston  
*prose*



### CANOPY

Anna Houser  
*poetry*



### JUXTAPOSITION

A.J. Holmes  
*photography*

## COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Gold Medalist Certificates – 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014

Silver Crown Awards – 2007, 2008, and 2011

Gold Crown Awards – 2012, 2013, and 2015

## PRODUCTION NOTES

### TECHNOLOGY

Adobe InDesign CC

Adobe Illustrator CC

Adobe Photoshop CC

Apple Macintosh Platform

Windows Platform

### TYPOGRAPHY

Adelle, various weights

DIN Condensed Bold

### PAPER

100 lb. Athens Silk Cover

80 lb. Athens Silk Text

### BINDING

Saddle Stitch

### PRINTING

Lithographics, Inc. of Nashville, Tennessee printed approximately 2,000 copies of *Collage*.



MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE  
STATE UNIVERSITY