



# COLLAGE

— *A Journal of Creative Expression | Issue 19 | Spring 2014* —



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# COLLAGE

*A Journal of Creative Expression*

*Issue 19 ■ Spring 2014*

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Middle Tennessee State University Honors College

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**JOSH H. AMBROSE**

**1945-2014**

For many at MTSU, the name Josh Ambrose was synonymous with help, encouragement, and solutions to problems that had anything to do with printing. For at least two decades, Josh considered it a privilege to work with each semester's cadre of student editors and designers and advisers to produce a piece that stayed within budget and reflected their creativity.

One such student was Courtney Hunter, the 2011–2012 designer of *Collage* and the 2012–2013 editor in chief. “I met Josh in 2011, when I joined the *Collage* staff as an eager first-time designer who thought she knew everything and wanted to do it all. I vividly remember the first afternoon we sat together in the Honors College and the friendship we immediately forged. He had more delight in his life and in his profession than anyone I’ve ever had the pleasure of working with. I will deeply miss Josh, and am honored to have had the privilege of learning from him and calling him my friend.”

Jenny Crouch, former adviser to *Collage* and *Midlander*, has similar remembrances of Josh: “Josh Ambrose was one of the most genuine people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. From the time he was first connected with *Collage*, he was more interested in helping the student staff produce a quality magazine rather than the bottom line. He made sure that the staff understood the budget and the printing process, but if they wanted something special or unique, he worked with them to achieve their goals. He went beyond what most business representatives would do to understand your circumstances and your obstacles, as well as your long-term objectives, so that he could offer advice and provide options.”

Not only did Josh make life better for students and advisers working on *Collage*, but he did the same on an even more frequent basis for designers and editors in Publications and Graphics (now Creative and Visual Services) and Sports Information (now Athletic Communications). Working with Josh was like having an extra staff member who never had a bad day! He went beyond helping produce publications to sharing his cooking expertise to help raise funds for athletic scholarships. An MTSU alumnus, Josh was a True Blue friend who will be missed.

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# THE EFFECTS OF PEN TO PAPER

**Molly Burnette**

*poetry*

Why is my heart suddenly beating faster?  
Picking up a pen,  
Something flutters against the cage of my chest.  
Aching, longing, to find some sort of release.

But what will come out?

Sadness, pouring out like thick, black ink, staining the white pages of my skin.  
Anger, clawing its way out, ripping me apart, getting ready to beat the world back.  
Confusion, swirling around, crashing against the walls of my heart, drowning me  
from the inside out.  
So many horrible emotions, all fighting to break free from the prison I've locked  
them in.

Maybe that's why I stopped writing.  
All these bad things came out when I did.  
And I made it all too easy.

Using this pen, will *they* be what escapes?  
Will they fight their way out of my chest again?  
Leaving me to snatch desperately as they flee, struggle to push them back inside,  
and stitch up my heart again?

Or perhaps, just maybe, a bird.  
A small ray of hope,  
Hopping towards the light.  
Getting ready to fly.



**DISPLACEMENT**

**Amber Lelli**

*intaglio print*

# ONE TIME I DIDN'T HAVE ANY MONEY TO BUY MY BEST FRIEND A BIRTHDAY PRESENT

Lorél Holsinger

*poetry*

I went to buy you something endearing  
To thank you for existing these past 19 years,  
and  
I realized that there are not enough dollars  
To match the times we spent together.

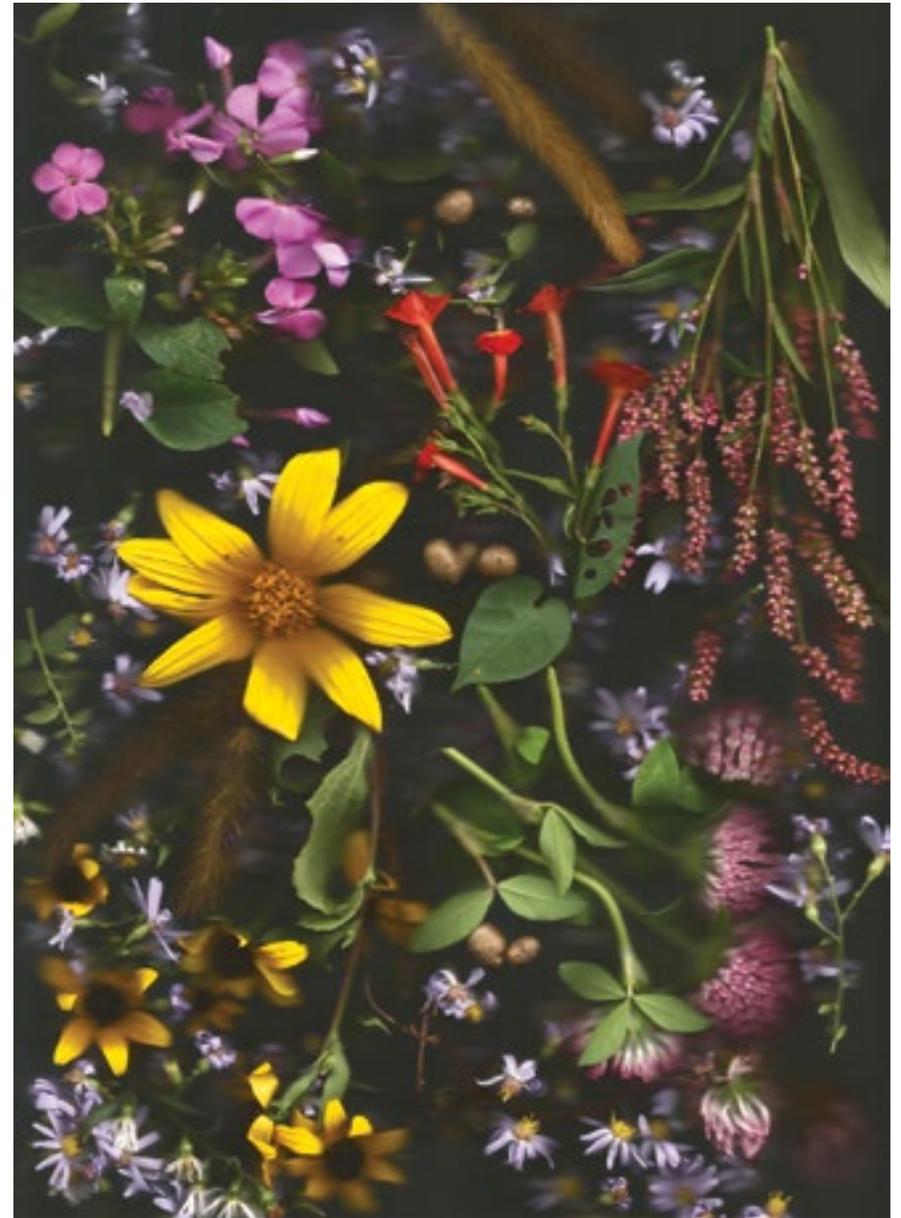
And no gift to explain the significance  
of you  
In the story of me.  
So that if you were plucked out, my memories would replay senselessly  
Missing too many pieces to remain cohesive.

And are not memories central to identities?  
Therefore in the absence of your presence  
my own existence  
Is no more assured than that of a fast-fading lucid dream.

In a warm, mid-morning awakening I could be forgotten,  
without you.

And it doesn't matter that we don't remember  
The secret languages that we created . . .  
Once uttered, they can never be undone, but instead  
remain—  
Artifacts, forever-sealed love letters to our friendship.

The certain continuation of which  
Stretches forward with vast unending perfectness.



**FLOWERS**

**Keli Hardin**

*scanner as camera*



# ROOM 214

Shelby Rehberger

*nonfiction*

## Day 1

It's almost easy to forget where I am, but the details come back into focus. I was sixteen hours, three tooth brushes, and two medications in before I realized why the mirror in the bathroom was so dim. It's a steel plate. I knew why—people like me—Cutters.

I'm a Cutter.

The things I didn't get were less harsh reality checks in the form of building modifications, like the alarm preventing me from hanging my towel on my door—because of Hangers. I'm not a Hanger. I'm a Cutter.

An official diagnosis is not yet released. I'm a cutter with the blanket-term-insurance-company-pleasing "Mood Disorder." Maybe I'll find out what I am tomorrow. I made a friend. She's thirty-six and her name is Sherrie. Her daughter is four years younger than me and has the same name. I know that's why she likes me. I'm the youngest by a large margin. My medication started today. I'm really up, but I think that might just be me coming back to normal.

I want to leave soon.

## Day 2

The sun is shining today. I slept solidly, without nightmares. This had to be the first time in months. Writing down my thoughts seems to help. I feel good;

I'm actually in a good mood. This might be the first time in years. I've been thinking about my plan to kill myself and the song I chose to listen to. I can't decide what the song means.

So many of the other patients here have shock therapy. That terrifies me. I don't want them to ask me to do that.

**“ I SPENT SO LONG THINKING THIS IS HOW EVERYONE FEELS, THEN I THOUGHT THAT NO ONE FEELS THIS WAY, BUT NOW I KNOW THAT ENOUGH PEOPLE FEEL THIS WAY THAT IT HAS A NAME AND A TREATMENT. ”**

The food is terrible. No one here is as food conscious as I am. I guess that's to be expected off the anorexic ward. I think up there I might at least get a vegetable once in a while.

I really miss being in charge of things like food. I'm lactose intolerant, and I drank milk this morning. I guess I have this pathological need for something to be wrong with me. If I'm not having a nervous breakdown, I must be malnourished. I just hope I keep my medication down. Everyone here likes me. They want to hear about school. They want to see my drawings. They keep telling me how smart

I am, and I know they can't imagine why I'm here. Sometimes I can't either.

There is a watercolor on the wall by my room. It has a glass pane. I guess they aren't concerned about internalizing, secretive Cutters-like-me breaking the glass and running. It's sofa art with cool and warm colors and soft lines bringing out the pink and violet in the surrounding wallpaper.

Groups were good today.

I have a diagnosis! I'm a Cutter with PTSD, Disassociations, and Bipolar Disorder Type 2. I wonder if I'll ever stop being a Cutter.

I drew Nancy's picture while I wasn't paying attention in Self-Esteem today. Nancy loved it. So did Sherrie. She asked me to draw a fairy for her. I might. I need a project while I'm in here. My lunch was brown today. Chicken, rolls, potatoes, chocolate. They may heal my heart by clogging my arteries.

When I arrived here, I was strip-searched for anything that could hurt me. I had my drawing case taken away. Sharp, pointed objects I guess. But I just complained to a nurse, and she gave me back my pencils. They kept my pen and sharpener, but that was to be expected, I guess. But I got my pencils back! I feel like I can breathe again. I didn't know how much I missed them. It's been so long since I felt anything like this. I'm coming back.

Some of the people make jokes about shocks.

“Getting my batteries charged.”

Scary.

Cutters are cutters from the first cut. I wonder if I can ever go long enough without cutting that I might stop being a Cutter. Everyone is asking about cuts I made when I was fourteen. Someone drew all my scars during my strip search. I couldn't stop thinking about how obscene my fourteen-year-old self would think that, and she had many fewer scars.

I keep drawing my most and least favorite things.

I can't help but wonder what the nurses think of me. They see me laugh and eat and draw and talk. They read my file. They know why I'm here. But do they know why I'm here? I don't know why I'm here.

I think I just broke. I keep imagining this place as I imagine the American Girl doll hospital. I'm a broken toy sent back to the factory to have parts replaced. I just never figured out which parts were the broken ones.



I can't adjust the blinds because I can't touch the windows. Because of Jumpers. I wonder if the Hangers and the Jumpers are as irritated with the building modifications for Cutters as this Cutter is at the building modifications for Hangers and Jumpers. I think jumping would have been my second choice. But there is nothing like cutting.

**UNTITLED**  
**Danielle Kirk**  
*digital photography*

## CONTINUED

I got flowers before dinner from my family. I, of course, was not allowed to keep them. Because I am a Cutter. I ate dinner alone. I like facing outside. There aren't enough windows here. Blame the Jumpers.

The thing about people here is that they will tell you all the worst places they've been and the worst things they've seen and done like they're telling you the weather outside. I kind of like it. There are no pretenses around here except between the floors. The "real" crazies are downstairs and upstairs. We're normal. I suppose the others say the same thing. I can't help but wonder if I'm crazy enough to be here. I catch the others freaking out and forgetting and lying. I don't do any of that. Maybe this was overkill. But my life has been interrupted by crazy. I have to follow through. It's surreal to be here and know that life goes on outside. I'm in stasis. No. I'm not. I'm scabbing. Because I'm a Cutter.

### Day 3

I'm trying to decide what to do when I leave. I'm taking this semester off school. I'm so behind. I'm the only person here in school. I loved my days in archaeology, but I don't think I can see myself finishing out there. I'm an artist the same way I'm a Cutter. I spent years running and pretending and lying to avoid what hurt, so here I sit. Watercolor flows through my blood. I just had to open my veins and make sure it was still there.

Knowing that I have a diagnosis makes so much difference. I spent so long thinking this is how everyone feels, then I thought that no one feels this way, but now I know that enough people feel this way that it has a name and a treatment. It's real. I'm real. I'm a Cutter, and it's real.

I made a new friend. The new guy. I laughed really hard today. We played piano and told jokes and touched. We're not supposed to touch, but it sure does make me feel better. Touch is healing. So is laughter.

### Day 4

I'm leaving today. I never thought I'd make friends here, but I did. These people are amazing and strong, and they are all mirrors of me. They know what pain is. They know how I feel and how I hurt. There is catharsis in knowing that these other people feel how I feel. I spent so long feeling so alone.

Someone's goal in group today was "try not to die." I have hurt that badly. Everyone here hurts like me, but some hurt so much worse. It breaks my heart listening to people with two or three times my lifetime of pain and abuse sharing their stories. It makes my pain seem silly. Why am I here? My uncle died. My friends suck. My boyfriend left me. Why am I here?

I'm so glad I made friends here. Everyone is so wonderful and shiny, even when broken.

I'm waiting to leave.

This is the best, worst thing I've ever done.

Author's Note:

On September 30, 2012

I attempted suicide. I was voluntarily (that's important) committed to the Parthenon Pavilion at Centennial Hospital in Nashville. I had never received any mental health assistance before my suicide attempt and I had no idea I had a disorder. I spent four days inside, learning about myself and getting leveled out on medication to prevent me from making a return visit.

This is my journal that I kept while I was inside. I shared it, after much flip-flopping and thought. I want you to refer back to the line where I thought no one felt like me. I got put in a place where a whole floor of the building was there for the same reason I was. I shared this and published it because I want you to know that if you hurt, someone else hurts the same way.

Life is hard; love yourself.

Shelby Rehberger

# EPITAPH FOR A STAR (SIRIUS B)

Joseph Hardin

*poetry*

I lie down, strange stars above me.  
Some other Eden's cast off memory.  
Burning blue and silent, waiting  
For their own whispering ending.

I lie down. Sleep, my oldest friend,  
Casts his sand, like stars. All things end.  
The midnight blue of loneliness,  
Exhausted, I find my rest.

I lie down. Even in silence,  
There remains a song, cadence  
Off the shoulders of Orion  
Clouded yet, new lives have begun.

I lie down, dying. Coldness grows  
Dimming now, and heavy, I slow  
Still yearning, remembering fire,  
The bright dawn of youthful power.

I lie down as dawn comes weakly on,  
Crystallizing, stellar diamond.  
Turning slowly, I dream the dream  
Of nothingness, oblivion.

I lie down, and dreaming I can see  
Blazing, dying brilliantly  
The last gasps of my kin,  
Glorious their fire, but never seen again.

I lie down, and dreaming I can see  
Blazing, dying brilliantly  
The last gasps of my kin,  
Glorious their fire, but never seen again.

I lie down, in ghostly company  
Of all those who passed before me,  
Dark and cold, knowing what awaits—  
The final sunrise, all light's end.

I lie down, heavy with the waiting,  
The knowledge of the dusk to come.  
With time's slow and cruel decay,  
Eventuality, final sun.



## MEMORIAL

Lauren Stapleton

*photography*



## MASTER STUDY

Amber Lelli

*intaglio print*

## CIGARETTES

Kendra Lancaster

*poetry*

Flick.

The lighter switches on.  
It is brought up to your mouth,  
and lights your killer.

It gags me,  
it worships you.

I wish you needed me  
like you need them.

I will never be your obsession  
like you are mine.

Flick.

The dimming light falls to the ground.

## COFFEE

Brianna Werner

*poetry*

they look like  
crumbled oreos  
floating deceptively in  
a chocolate pool but  
they are not  
and i really don't have  
anything against coffee  
grounds it's just that  
they're bitter under my  
tongue and gritty between  
my teeth and  
they remind me so  
much of you that it  
breaks my heart  
so as my teardrops join  
the bitterness i can't  
help but think that you  
always did have a way of  
ruining a decent cup of  
coffee



**IO**

**Joshua Petty**

*acrylic, oil, and epoxy resin on masonite*

## THE LATE NIGHT BAR

Brianna Diffenderfer

*fiction*

She enters the bar and is immediately struck with the smell of smoke and sweat. The air is so dense that it suffocates Her with a grimy film. The fat bouncer at the door checks Her ID with a handheld flashlight.

Located on the street corner and sandwiched between a Mexican eatery and a shoddy self-service gas station, this bar captures young adults like Her nightly, as there is only a handful of bars from which to choose in the center of town. It's nothing special. Tonight, the town is drying off from an afternoon drizzle—the kind that makes everything look gray and smell stale—and the multi-colored neon lights of the bar sign emit an invitation to jaded customers in the midst of the downtown drab. It is more crowded than usual, and the thick, white noise of chatter and rapid pulse of some hackneyed, synthesized pop song playing overhead give Her a headache. She squeezes in between two nondescript individuals leaning over the sticky bar and takes a seat.

She orders Her usual drink from a bartender who is wearing too much mascara and notices a television mounted high in the corner that is flashing an advertisement for some nameless soft drink. In it, the tall, thin, and tan young actress in a halter-top holding “Nameless” soft drink is giggling incessantly at an untold joke in a way that says, *This is how your life should look. This is happiness.*

She rubs Her temples. Like a sloshing load of laundry drying inside a front-load tumble dryer, Her thoughts clunk around in Her brain, each idea the



## THE UNTETHERED BALLOON

Kelsey Greer

*silkscreen*

slap of a wet article of clothing against the dryer's metal stomach. She often finds herself comparing the way Her mind feels to the way a clothes dryer would feel, if one had feelings—too full and always spinning. It's not a Kenmore Elite Steam electric dryer, perhaps equipped with Static Shield to eliminate static cling, but a cheap, top-load, grime-stained clothes dryer.

A cheap, top-load, grime-stained clothes dryer in a coin-operated laundromat—just one among a row of similar cheap, top-load, grime-stained clothes dryers.

It is worn from overuse. And She can't turn it off.

The raccoon-eyed bartender returns with a bubbly,

clear drink. She thanks the female who's already moved on to another thirsty and bored customer. She drops a few dollars in the makeshift tip jar, takes a sip, and is met with the familiar pang of alcohol that no amount of sugar or carbonation can conceal.

She relaxes and turns away from the bar. The friends She came with are most likely scattered throughout the room. She spots one by the wall, already sharing the same side of a booth with a handsome male sporting a greasy beard and knitted beanie. The others are undoubtedly submerged in the clap of billiard balls and rings of smoke, present but not visible—the way it feels to miss someone.

A few seats down, She can hear the airy chafe of a girl's voice, so loud it is distinct among the infinite

bandwidth of voice and music. The bleach-blonde is perched cross-legged on a bar stool, balancing a plastic cup on her designer handbag, and surrounded by several other belligerent, young people. She's laughing and shouting out some story but not really saying anything at all.

She would like to consider Herself a free-thinking individual—a person with independent feelings and novel ideas. She likes to think She resists interpretation. However, it doesn't take long before something reminds Her how much depends on Her outlook on life; She is only a chemical reaction to how She views the world around Her, a few neurological transmissions and synaptic responses to stimuli. She's the artifact of a merging of chromosomes, the product of a society, a copy of a copy of a copy. She takes a swig of Her beverage.

To Her right, a sweaty, slightly overweight, balding man in a wrinkled business suit swivels on his bar stool. This particular bar is only a few blocks down from the square which houses several local business offices in the area, and it's a weekday. His head lolls around his blubbery neck in the same way a newborn struggles to support its fat head. He undoubtedly will be sent staggering home following, She bets, one more drink to pass out on the B&B charcoal leather sofa in his living room—the one that is catty-cornered directly beneath the decorative cross that hangs above his mantle which emblemizes his superior sense of moral principles.

She's sure someone here one night will have the ability to forever change Her frames of reference. She gulps down the remainder of Her drink and heads for the restroom.

The restroom door has been so used it more closely acts as a derelict, wooden slab between Herself and others. She holds Her breath so as not to submit to the strangle of perfume and urine. She latches the "door" with a rusty hook that lets too much light pass between it and the frame.

Once alone, She faces the full-length mirror hanging opposite Her and pulls out Her compact to reapply some powder in a muffled and stunted swirl of drunkenness. The mirror reflects Her gaunt face, Her too-thin eyebrows, Her too-full lips, Her bony frame, and Her submerged, hollow eyes.

She returns to the bar to buy another drink. While Raccoon Eyes mixes beverages, She recognizes that She has ordered drinks from her many times before. She recognizes her because her hair looks brittle and withered from years of over blow-drying and bleaching, and she has a thin layer of flab beneath her chin. As she hands Her the drink, she offers a crooked, yellow, and genuine smile. She is immediately struck with how sufficiently this random individual mirrors Her own imperfections, and She is suddenly overcome with an unexplained, baseless sense of sadness. It's a different night full of different faces, but She is arrested with the realization that it is exactly the same—the too-loud blonde at the bar and the pretentious ass in a beanie. The hum of Her electric dryer mind rumbles to an overloaded maximum, and She understands that She is capsizing. It's a feeling She can never adequately suppress, the devastating mass of solitude—the fact that here, surrounded by so many people, She has never felt more alone.

She reflects on the bar and the fact that whether or not She is there, people return to it nightly in the



## EXITING

Sara Snoddy

*black and white film photography*

same way they have for years—with the same doubts and the same pleasures—and She speculates on the ease with which they come and go.

There's little difference between it and the world.

She throws away Her plastic cup and exits the bar. ■

# WHEN MY SISTER ASKED ABOUT THE STAR

Krysta Lee Frost

*poetry*

“Don’t worry,” I said,  
“it’s not dying, but evolving,”  
and it was like walking into  
a mirror, slapped by the  
absurdity of it all. I hate

this tendency towards  
destruction, how we  
can bury ourselves  
beneath the broken  
pieces of our own sky;  
what can we learn  
about life except that  
we have it to lose?

God, I am tired of weaving  
threads of light when  
our sheets are so heavy  
with the nights that failed us.  
And remember when I still  
folded prayers into my sleep?

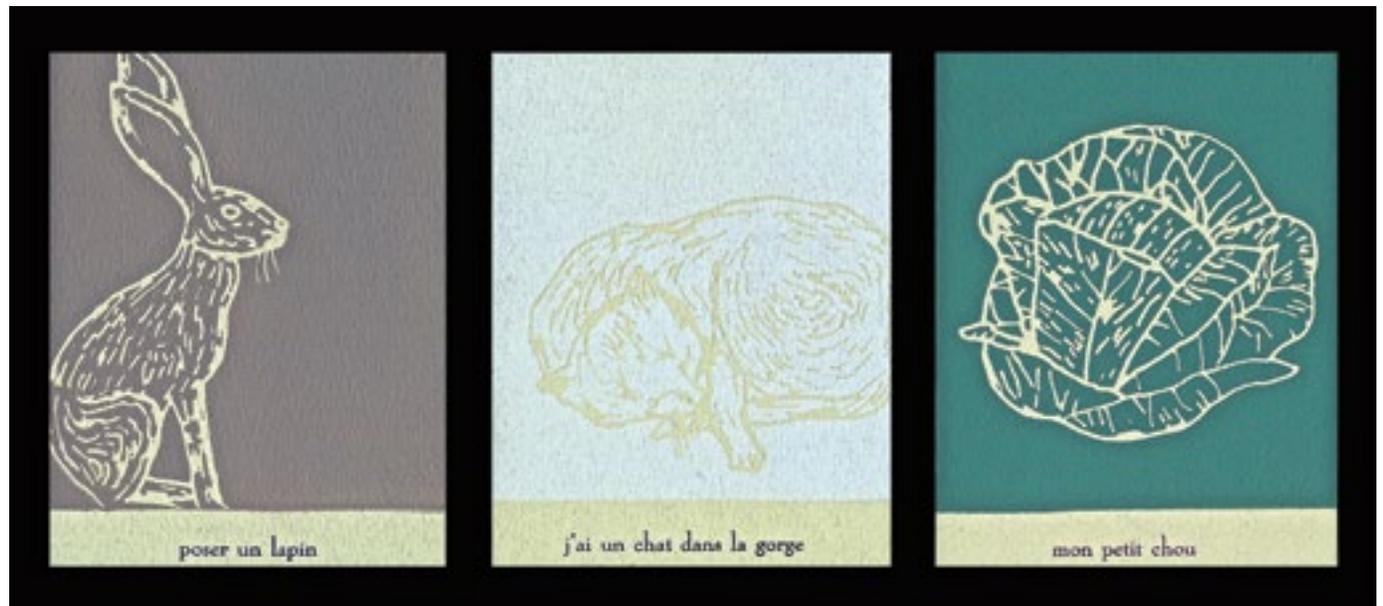
When my sister asked me  
about metaphors,  
we both turned smug,  
thinking we knew  
more than the other.

In the end, she was right,  
because when her laughter  
struck the silence of a room,  
it answered thousands of questions  
at once, filling in the gaps  
that I still struggle to close  
with two languages,  
two hands, and matches  
to spare.

How could she know so much  
without knowing? What we  
hid from everyone but each other  
and the backs of our eyelids,

the art of raising my voice  
or her small hands  
pulling my hair,

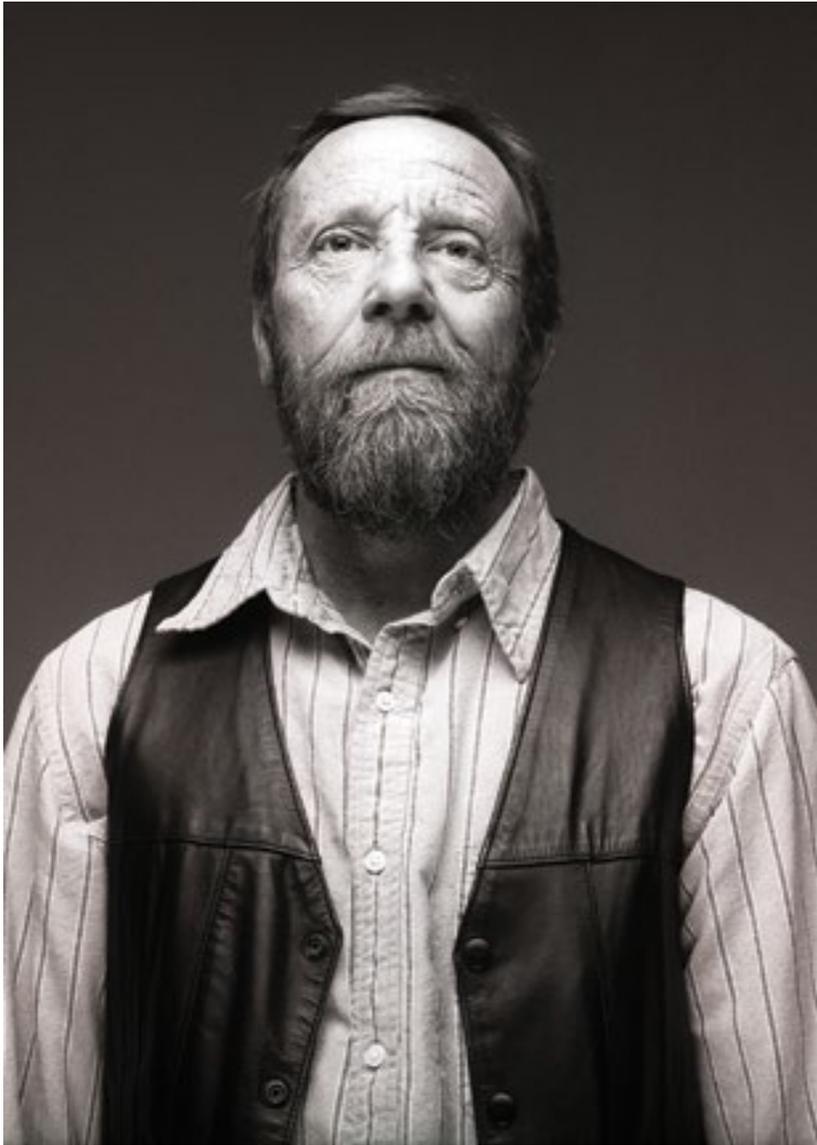
how else could we speak  
of love without shaming it  
with the word, which knows  
of nothing but how to set itself  
on fire?



## FRENCH IDIOM SPECIMENS

Whitney Proper

*letterpress*



## **BLUES MAN**

Melissa Snyder

*digital photography*



## **ENGLISH WOMAN**

Melissa Snyder

*digital photography*

# THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN



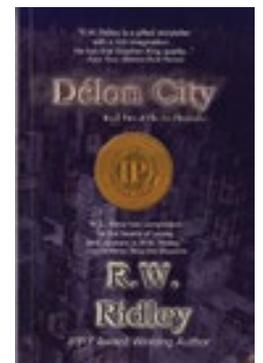
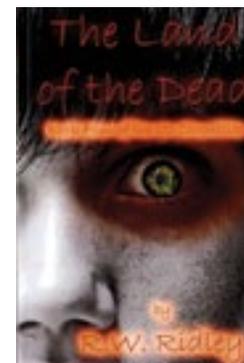
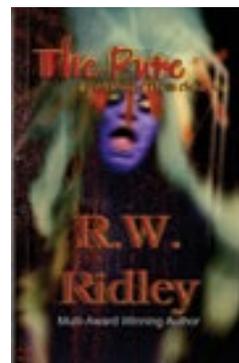
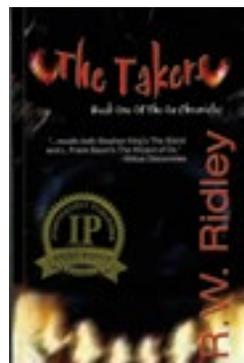
*An interview with MTSU alumnus Richard W. Ridley, author of the IPPY award-winning Oz Chronicles Series*

*By Chloe Madigan*

If you were to stumble across the blog of Richard W. Ridley, it may come as a surprise to find out that his genre of choice is horror. Some of his posts are witty and comedic while others are well-versed critiques on various issues in the world of literature today. Perhaps the shadowy gray and red theme of the blog may divulge the true nature of his work, but post-apocalyptic young adult fiction is not exactly the type of literature I would have ascribed to someone who describes himself as a “professional author, devoted husband, amateur surgeon, enthusiastic procrastinator” and being “38% unnecessary.”

Ridley, a 1991 graduate of MTSU, is an award-winning independently published author. To date, he has written ten books. The first three books of his young adult series, The Oz Chronicles, have won IPPY awards for independent publishing, and book one of the series, titled *The Takers*, was the winner of the Writer’s Digest International Self-Published Book Award in the young adult category.

Coming into college, Ridley admits that he had no real plan. “I didn’t declare a major until my fourth year,” he says. “When you want to be a writer, but you’re afraid to let anyone know, you just kind of go through the motions.” Ridley’s degree was in Broadcast Production from the College of Mass Communication. He attributes his work with the MTSU comedy/variety show ‘33 Flavors’ as the



turning point in his life where he decided he could envision himself as a writer.

“I’ve always written,” says Ridley. “When I was in high school, I did it secretly because I didn’t think I was smart enough to ever be a writer. I’d write stories and hide them in my closet. My parents eventually found them and, instead of telling me I was an idiot for thinking I could write, they encouraged me to keep it up. When I got to college, I took creative writing classes but still never talked openly about wanting to be a writer. I just wasn’t that smart. It wasn’t until I did ‘33 Flavors’ that I actually gained enough confidence to talk about being a writer and considered the possibility that I could make a living of it.”

Following his graduation from MTSU, Ridley says that he “failed repeatedly as a writer for the next fourteen years.” He wrote screenplays and novels that, in his own words, “no one wanted to touch.”

“Any sane person would have given up, but the key to making even the smallest waves in the world of publishing is to be unreasonably optimistic that the next thing you write is going to be the one that hits and puts you over the top.”

His extreme optimism paid off. His fifth novel, *The Takers*, was a success as the first in his young-adult series, *The Oz Chronicles*. The series follows the struggles and adventures of Oz Griffin, a teenager from the town of Tullahoma, Tennessee (incidentally the real-life city where Ridley lived during his high school years), who wakes up one morning to realize

that the world has ended and the blame is on his shoulders.

Since then, Richard has published five additional *Oz Chronicle* books as well as two other novels under the name R.W. Ridley. All of his works are self-published, including the two he has come out with under the pseudonyms C. Hoyt Caldwell and Jackson Goddard.

For his series, Ridley claims that the first line of *The Takers* came to him out of nowhere one day. “It [was] just one of those situations where I latched onto the concept of the story [. . .] It kept gnawing at the back of my head until I had a fully formed story.”

**“THE HARDEST THING [ABOUT WRITING] IS CONVINCING OTHER PEOPLE THAT IT’S WORK. THE SECOND HARDEST THING IS LETTING GO OF A STORY ONCE YOU’VE COMPLETED A MANUSCRIPT. 📖”**

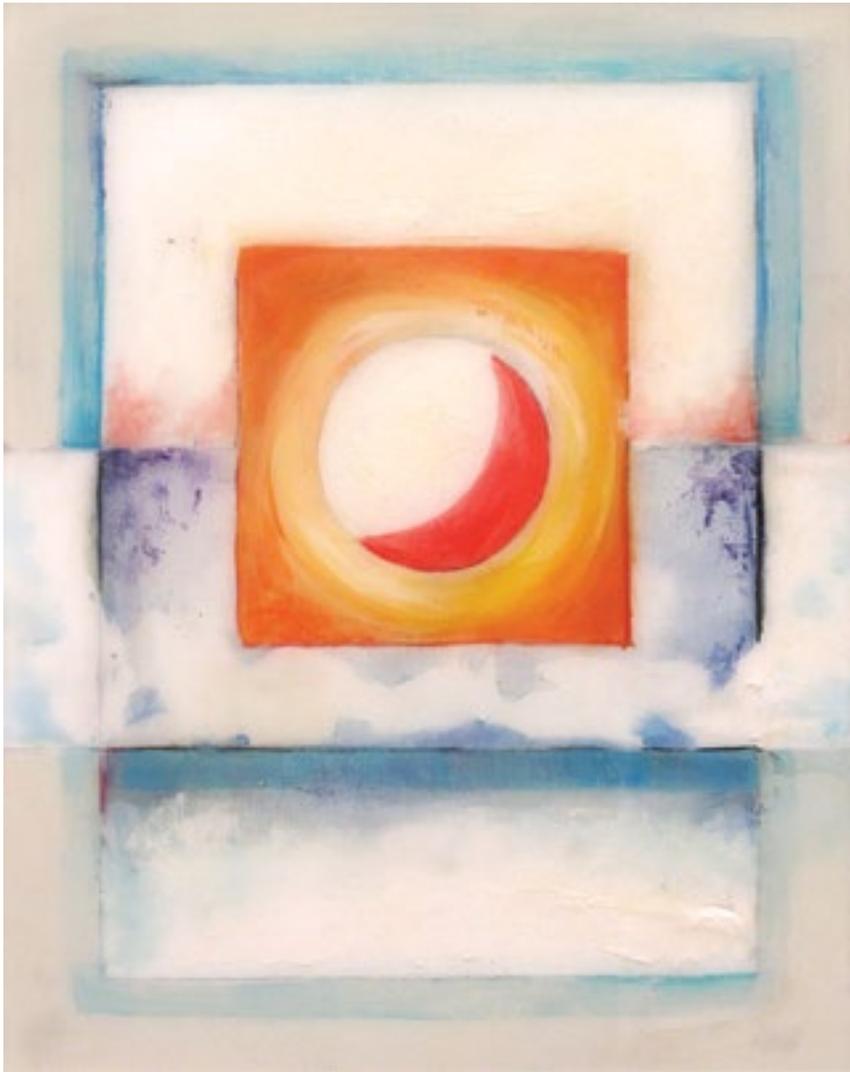
Despite his love for what he does, Richard admits that there are struggles, both when it comes to being a writer and an independently published author.

“The hardest thing [about writing] is convincing other people that it’s work. The second hardest thing is letting go of a story once you’ve completed a manuscript. You live with it for so long, the

characters haunt you until you move onto the next project. I’ve lived with the characters in *The Oz Chronicles* for ten years now, and I’m finding it extremely difficult to end their journey in the next and final installment of the series.”

As an independent publisher, Ridley says he faces many issues, first and foremost being the lack of resources. He says that like other writers, published independently or not, he must focus not only on his work as an author but also on marketing himself. “Gone are the days when writers devoted a majority of their time to writing and a sliver of time to the occasional public appearance. It’s a fifty-fifty split today, or you get lost in the shuffle. It’s a constant fight to find the right balance.”

However, he does admit that there is a silver lining in the world of independent publishing. His freedom as an artist is unlimited. “I can take chances that the bigger publishing houses are afraid to take. I also don’t have to worry about book launches or a short shelf life. I focus more on material that has long-term potential. My books will never go out of print, and that’s a huge advantage.” ■



## THROUGH THE HENGE

Joshua Petty

*acrylic, oil, glue, and epoxy resin on masonite*



## HANDS

Heather Hickox

*poetry*

Those were the hands that cradled my head  
that wiped away my tears  
patted my back and  
stroked my hair in that certain rhythm—  
that called forth the Sandman when sleep wouldn't come.  
Those were the hands that held together our family  
that grew callused with hard work to keep us whole.  
I close my eyes to find the memory of those hands,  
I search and search, but they are lost  
They've traveled with your smile to that faraway place  
That place where I can't visit, where it's dark all day  
They sent away the sun to stay with me and keep me warm  
When, somewhere inside, you knew you had grown cold  
I search for those hands—they are gone  
all I see are hands  
that now stay closed in a hard fist  
hands that pound the table or the wall or one of us  
in frustration  
Those hands that shake in anger  
The hands that now cradle a bottle and  
wipe away the sweat from your furrowed brow.  
I hardly recognize those hands.



## MARISA'S HANDS

**Keli Hardin**

*digital photography*

## AN IMAGIST WOULD VOMIT ON THIS POEM

**Abigail Stroupe**

*poetry*

An imagist poet  
would leave out words  
where I throw them around  
shake them, stir them, kiss their happy little faces.

An imagist wouldn't like for me to mention the  
word LOVE  
because I can't wrap my arms around it  
or smell its minty breath  
hear its whispers  
taste its salty chocolate sweet  
see its rugged hands

But what the imagist doesn't know  
about me—  
When I write Love  
say it out loud  
see it written  
smell it in winter  
taste it in his poor cooking  
fireworks of static and electric swells  
rage through my bones to the cellular level  
with enough feeling to bring  
colorandtasteandsoundandsmellandtouch.

And the word is all I need  
to cling to the picture of it all.

## THE LAND OF CERULEAN GRASS

Lindsey Turner

*poetry*

Scrambled Lite-Brite blueprints,  
Detailing a structure that would have never  
Broken ground beyond the handheld realm.  
Shaken Etch A Sketch masterpieces that would have never  
Hung decadently on artistically papered walls.  
Squashed Play-Doh sculptures that were chipped with a  
Precision equivalent to the dull bronzed figures  
Of dismal, rainbow-colored courtyards.  
Crumpled, scribbled, misspelled stories that would have never  
Gone to print.

Creativity constricted by curricula  
And too-thick dotted black lines.

Let them choose the Crayons  
They desire.

Let the lion be Hot Magenta  
And the flamingo Electric Lime.

Let the sun be Aquamarine  
And the soft grass Cerulean,  
So the children can frolic freely  
In the lush kingdoms they conceive.



## COLOR SERIES: YELLOW

Sheila Smotherman

*oil paint on board*

# LET A LEAF GUIDE YOUR LIFE FOR LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES

Connar Johnson

*poetry*

Forget everything  
you know about leaves.  
I don't care if

you are the world's  
foremost authority of  
Botany, Horticulture, or Dendrology

with Ph Ds and established  
presence in magazines like  
*Home and Garden*

or journals like  
*The Trees Around Us*.  
Forget everything you know

about leaves.  
Just a single paint stroke  
of color on the giants

that sleep standing up.  
The artist of reality chooses  
for it a new color as

he paints it into  
the scene each morning.  
Pick one up. Perhaps

that golden loner  
fallen near the storm drain.  
Notice the map

that starts at the  
stem and reaches  
the five or six

peninsulas of rich ochre  
and the soggy brown  
side, deteriorated after

being stepped on.  
Follow that map  
of veins embedded in

the yellows and golds,  
any vein on the map  
that suits you.

Go there on foot.  
Once you reach  
your destination,

you will be happy  
with where you are.  
Forget everything you

know about leaves,  
you scientific thinker,  
foremost authority of

Paleobotany and such,  
and remember a leaf  
led you to where you are

to feel that warm breeze  
to smell that pleasant scent  
to meet that person approaching

with a brown bag  
and a friendly face  
who will change your life.

**TAKEN OVER**  
Tiffany Murray  
*digital photography*



## PARENTS RAISING DINOSAUR KIDS

Kyle Patterson

*illustration*



## STORM

Lauren Stapleton

*India Ink and acrylic*



## MADMAN INSIDE

Robert Bradford

*poetry*

Click clock click, the time clock ticks.  
I'd break it, if I didn't just have it fixed.  
This cuckoo bird knows me far too well.  
I'd confide secrets to him if I didn't think he'd tell.

This white powder remains on my fingertips.  
If I take enough of it I only need a few sips.  
Then I'm past everything and feel like nothing.  
But if you hand me a pen I could write something.

If I allow music to fill this airy space.  
I might enjoy my horrible tastes.  
But I stay silent inside this box.  
My mind makes up for it with its noise-filled thoughts.

Too many poems and not enough lines.  
Too many stories and not enough lies.  
The madman inside is about to burst.  
I know he'll kill me if I don't kill him first.

## OUR MOUNTAIN SAND

Robert Bradford

*poetry*

Unplug your mind from the system.  
The acoustics are much better out here.  
Unwrapped ideas flow like wind.  
Creativity echoes sound.

Footsteps imprint violently in the sand.  
Salt is flowing freely here.  
Water drowns the feet.  
Water drowns the mind.

Unpaved roads pave the way.  
Misguided guidance guides the way.  
Music becomes the soundtrack.  
Words become the motto.

Birds swim in the sky.  
The clouds cloud vision.  
The clouds cloud judgement.  
The birds dive and we envy flight.

The people swim in the sand.  
The prints imprint memories.  
The imprints print a story.  
The story doesn't end.

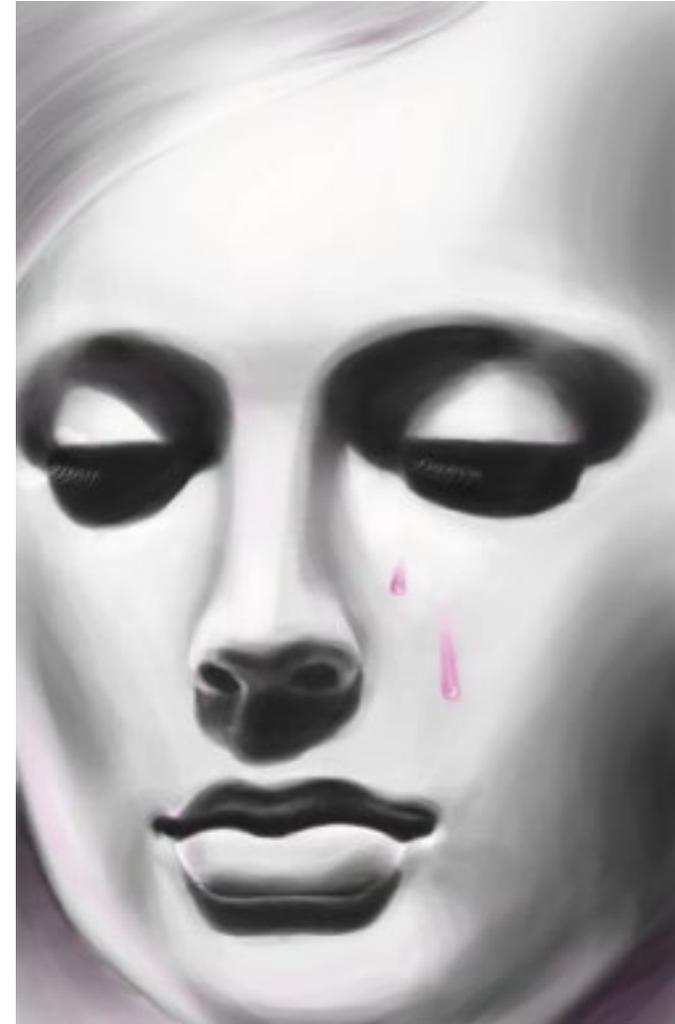
Our Mountain Sand stands tall.  
We're kings of the hill if there was a kingdom.  
Two writers writing in the sand.  
Two souls listen to the acoustics.



## WHISKERS

Jessica Mason

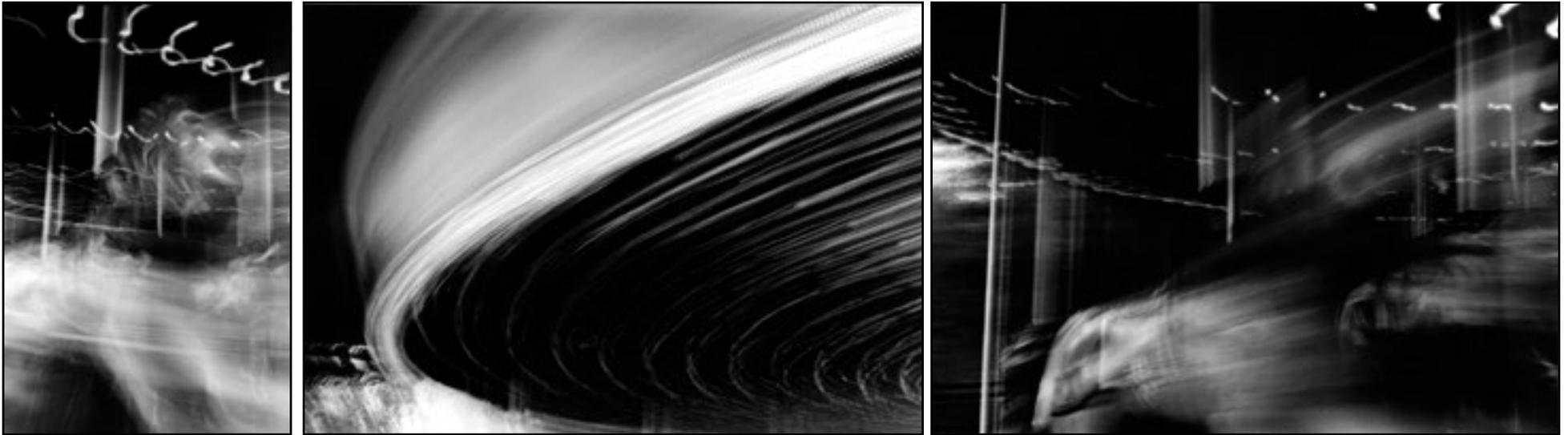
*black and white film photography*



## YOU'VE GOT A LITTLE SOMETHING

Ruby Jazz

*digital photoshop painting*



## THE GUN MERCHANT

Nathan Abelt

*fiction*

*August 4, 2050*

*Leipers' Fork, Tennessee*

*0940 hours*

**H**arry “Lee” McCallister removed his slouch hat, taking care to shake the water off before he hung it on the hook by the door. Outside, thunder growled in the distance like a resentful dog guarding its bone.

“*¡Bienvenidos, señor!* How might I help you this hour?” Danny Menendez smiled from behind his cash register with practiced eagerness.

“Just looking around, sir,” Lee said as he eased his backpack from his shoulders onto the

floor. “Heard about your merchandise from one of my friends, thought I’d take a look.”  
“*No hay problema, señor.* Let me know if I can be of any assistance to you.”

Hanging up his soggy coat next to his hat, McCallister looked around. Menendez General Store had the look of your average post-War “ma-and-pa” outlet. Baskets of fresh fruit were in the front windows, a rack of propane tanks and water jugs on display right next to them. A kid—Danny’s son, he reckoned—paused to smile in greeting before he resumed stocking a little shelf with cheap candy and packaged nuts.

Against the counter was a rack with some local magazines and a couple of newspapers. Further back, there were some pricier goods—shovels, coils of electrician’s wire, basic carpenter’s tools, some simple pharmaceuticals, a drinks cooler, and a bench where a woman was rolling cigarettes.

“*Perdon, Señor Menendez*, but I was sincerely hoping you could give me some advice,” Lee said as he approached the counter.

“Sure, *señor*. *¿Qué necesita usted?*”

“It’s like this, sir. I’m on my way to Memphis to visit an old friend. I can’t afford the train fares, but I’ve heard rumors about the country roads. Bandits, killers, y’know—*hombres malos*.”

“*Es correcto, señor. Muy peligroso*, out there in the boonies.” The kid quietly nodded in agreement. The lady, pretending not to hear, started folding a paper packet, with twelve hand-rolled *cigarillos* inside.

“So, I’m asking you, because you know this land so well,” Lee continued, wanting to be gracious but not condescending, “if you could be so kind as to help me figure out the safest way to travel westward.”

“You know what they say, *señor* . . . ?”

“McCallister, sir. Lee McCallister.”

“*Señor* McCallister, you know what they say: after Big Crash, after *la guerra*—”

“You can never be safe, just safer.” They both cracked up.

*Score one*, Lee thought. That was the first step: breaking the ice. Second step: broach the subject.

“Well, I came through this town, because a good friend of mine said you knew *todas las caminas* west of here, and that you could . . . erm, help a man *acquire* the equipment one would need to be . . . safer—*más seguro*—out there. *Allí*,” he

added for emphasis, gesturing with his hand towards the outdoors.

Danny’s face settled into a half-quizzical, half-menacing stare. Subconsciously, his son inched backwards toward the door. The woman at the bench fixed her gaze on Lee, all pretense of indifference dropped.

“Mister McCallister . . . you are discussing *armas letales*, no? Guns, sir?”

Lee’s mind raced. He could technically back out, say he just wanted to replace his compass or something stupid; or excuse himself, grab his coat and hat, and head back out into the rain. But he’d trudged seventeen miles through the mud to find this guy; quality merchandise was hard to come by in the best of times. And out there in the hills, what you packed could mean the difference between life and death.

**“DANNY’S FACE SETTLED INTO A HALF-QUIZZICAL, HALF-MENACING STARE. SUBCONSCIOUSLY, HIS SON INCHED BACKWARDS TOWARD THE DOOR. THE WOMAN AT THE BENCH FIXED HER GAZE ON LEE, ALL PRETENSE OF INDIFFERENCE DROPPED. 📌📌**

After studying Danny’s face for two seconds, McCallister decided to spit it out. This guy struck him as the sort who appreciated honesty and hated beating around the bush.

“*Sí, señor*, I’m here to buy a gun. I’ve heard scary stuff about the backwater roads, and I wanna be prepared.”

“Prepared? How we know you are not *¿policía?* Bat-fags?” His eyebrows arched slightly, and his hips shifted as he spread his legs apart for balance. A subtle but firm gesture of readiness.

“*Señor*, I’m no cop. You can search me; I swear to God I’m not here to arrest you. I’m just a customer.”

Menendez visibly relaxed but remained wary. “You fight in the Insurrection, mister?” he said, pointing at Lee’s neck.

“Oh, yeah, these,” Lee flushed. He had completely forgotten about his old dog tags. “Yeah, I did a tour with the ASF. The 47th Airborne Brigade, and that’s a whole ‘nother story by itself,” he smiled.

“ASF? The rebels?”

“Aye, sir. My unit was in the action for little over a year before the ceasefire in ‘43.”

“I have cousin, Javier, in Colorado. He join the Seppers.”



## FAITH OF FALLING

Darby Campbell

*digital photography*

men, women, and children that they deemed “traitors to America.” And that was the conservative estimate. Whatever the exact number, the genocide had put an irreversible stain on the Separatist cause.

While he was in boot camp, McCallister’s officers had shouted ‘til they were blue in the face about the code of honor that all true freedom fighters adhered to, about how the rebel leaders had denounced Waltrap as soon as word of the massacres had gotten out, and about how Waltrap had been an anomaly, while the rest of the ASF were honest patriots seeking to wrest control from the fat, oppressive “Govies.”

McCallister wanted to believe the propaganda and wanted to be a good guy. But he had seen too much carnage not to know better. No survivor of the Insurrection, Fed or Sepper, left with their hands clean. Least of all him.

“ . . . I hear about rebellion, I want to help, to fight. But then Waltrap—” Danny fought back angry tears, “—he kill so many people. *Los viejos, bebés pequeños . . . mi padres . . .*”

Lee didn’t know what to say. All he could do was marvel that this man hadn’t thrown him out of his shop in a rage. He felt like a Nazi meeting a Holocaust survivor.

“Mr. Menendez, I’m so sorry. I . . . I heard about the killings down here, and I swear, we were all furious about it. If there was anything I could have done, I swear—”

“Is too late! No one can do nothing.” Menendez sounded angry at first, but he visibly transformed as he let out a series of slow breaths. As if he was determined to exhale

### CONTINUED

“Wow, I didn’t know that. Tell him I said hi; it’s always good to hear from a brother.”

*“Él está muerto, señor. En la batalla por Cleveland.”*

“Oh, man . . . I’m—*lo siento, señor. Lo siento.*” The war, as a whole, had been one bloodbath after another. But the siege of Cleveland had been a special degree of horrible. Lee’s unit had just missed being dropped over the city, but he had spoken with guys who had been medevaced out of there. Everyone described it as an American Aleppo—whole blocks razed to the ground by Federal artillery, pyramids of bodies dumped down storm drains, little kids with their limbs missing, screaming for their mothers . . . the news coverage hadn’t spared any of the horror.

Danny continued, the ghosts of regret dancing on his face as he stared right through Lee.

“I would join, too . . . *pero . . . despues de las massacres, el reinado de Waltrap,*” he spat on the floor, “I say, *al infierno con él. Este es un país justo y libre.* The ASF, *todos son asesinos,* I tell Javier. He not listen . . . .”

Lee’s heart dropped into his gut. Everyone knew the story. In 2037, right as the Insurrection was starting to unravel, a militant nativist named Bart Waltrap had launched a coup in Middle Tennessee, swearing allegiance to the American Separatist Federation. Then he got his butt kicked five months later by loyalist militia and the Green Berets. But in those five months, he and his men killed around 300,000

his pain, return to the present, and forget it all. “The past is behind us,” Danny said with a philosophic shrug and a quiet but firm tone. “So you are after guns, huh?”

“I, uh . . . that is—*Sí. Es verdad.*” Lee felt awkward, talking about war crimes one second and doing his shopping the next. But he didn’t want to aggravate this poor guy any further, so he simply went along.

“*Muy bien. Un momento, por favor.*” Stepping from behind the counter, Menendez snapped his fingers twice, gesturing at the door. Automatically, the kid bolted the door, flipped the Open/Closed sign, and lowered the shutters over the display windows. The woman—Lee couldn’t tell if she was Danny’s wife, sister, or just a friend—followed Danny through a small door into the back of the shop.

For about three minutes, Lee casually flipped through some of the magazines, trying but failing to forgive himself for being a Sepper, for being a part of the nightmares that this man had endured. He had just wanted to buy a rifle, for Pete’s sake. But these days, it seemed you could hardly open a can of beans without opening a can of worms, too.

McCallister could hear scraping and clunking through the wall; they were probably moving furniture to get at their storage space. Then, Danny and the lady came back, laden with backpacks, duffel bags, and trunks.

“*Allí, Maite,*” Danny said, gesturing at the counter as he lowered his load to the floor next to Lee. *Maite.* So that was the woman’s name. His expression gave no hint of the grief that Lee had seen just minutes before.

“Feast your eyes, *señor,*” Menendez grinned as he gingerly unbuckled and unzipped the bags and began laying out his merchandise.

“*¿Ella está su esposa?*” Lee asked warmly, gesturing at Maite,

who was unpacking empty STANAG magazines. He couldn’t change the past, but he felt he could at least try to be a friend to the man.

“*¿Qué?* I—ah, no. *Su primo,*” he said, pointing at the boy.

“Oh. *Perdón.* Just wondering.”

“No worries, *amigo.* And here . . . we . . . are,” he finished, indicating the guns neatly laid out on the floor in front of him on a square of tarpaulin.

\* \* \*

Thirty minutes later, Lee was stepping back out into the rain, readjusting his worn-out hat. Slung over his shoulder was an M1A battle rifle; a Taurus M1911 .45 pistol was holstered on his left hip. Across his chest was a canvas bandoleer loaded down with spare magazines for the two firearms.

The exchange had been pleasant and professional, the price fair and reasonable. Danny had been nothing but gracious and hospitable as McCallister made his purchase, collected his gear, and resumed his long trek.

But deep inside, Lee could feel old wounds reopening. He felt like he had failed somehow, in that shop; like he had dishonored an innocent man, simply by being a Sepper veteran. Slowly, stubbornly, he shoved the feeling of self-loathing back down. He would have loved nothing more than to run back into the store, fall at Danny’s feet, and burst into tears as he bawled out apologies for all the stupid, immoral, pointless things he had seen and done in the war. But now, he had to stay sharp if he wanted to survive. And he had a journey to make.

There were friends of his in Memphis, other survivors of that six-year crucible called the Insurrection. They needed

his help, and he needed their company and their counsel. There were rumors of plentiful jobs on the Memphis docks. But more importantly, there were other men and women who knew and who cared for the sort of pain that McCallister bore. They cared because it was the same pain they themselves had, miraculously, survived.

Come to think of it, that was probably why Danny had been willing and eager to help him. If for no other reason than to talk with an empathetic soul, without fear of condemnation or misunderstanding.

*He was right, Lee thought. The past is behind us.* The best he could hope for was to make it westward to Memphis, to find his former brothers and sisters, to find a solid living, to make a future—hopefully one that was worth living for. And to make it into that future, McCallister needed to navigate a very treacherous present. That was why he had his rifle. That was why he would forget neither the pain in Menendez’s eyes nor the man’s generosity and kindness. This was the best any man could do: to survive, to live each day as fully and excellently as possible, to do the best you could with what you had. Now, Lee knew he had at least one good friend in this town. And that was more precious to him than all the firearms in the world. ■

# STORYTELLING

**Brittany Wheeler**

*fiction*

**W**hen the boy is thirteen, he nearly drowns. The storm-green waves pull him beneath with the force of a possessive lover, leaving a brackish taste in his mouth and an icy dagger in his lungs. When he wakes, he will only remember the story, not the woman who whispered the tale in his ear in the dark world beneath the foam.

*In the years to follow, the boy becomes a man. The year he turns sixteen and can man the riggings of his father's fishing vessel is the year he leaves his home for a life at sea. He does not return, although it is not tragedy or hardship that hinders his homecoming. The boy, now a man, falls in love.*

*Not with a woman, nor a man, nor any creature of mortal blood, but with that most cruel and jealous mistress herself. He is forever enchanted by the glittering spray, cold and refreshing on his face, and the warm glint of the summer sun. By the time he is twenty, the young man has weathered many storms.*

*He tells his tale with the skill of the very old, practiced in weaving fine, soft yarns and coarse, sturdy ones as well. Although it changes ever so slightly from port town to port town, the essence of the story remains the same.*

*The story he tells is old—too old, some say, for any shred of truth to remain. For who can know the tales of a god that does not want to be told of? But the boys that haunt the shadowy places in the rocky beaches come out at night to hear the young man's version of the tale all the same.*

*This is the story he tells.*

They say if you lie awake long after the moon has set and listen to the crash of the waves in the dark, it is not the sea that whispers to you. The sea, her song is soft and inviting—she invites you into her domain with warmth and promise, gentle kisses lapping at your feet. But only the strongest, the cleverest, the most resourceful survive in her domain, and it is said that mortal men are in these qualities quite poorly equipped.

But if you wait for a windless night when the moon has set and only the stars wait above you, glittering like gems in the blackness, you just might hear another sigh as it crashes into



## LEFT OUTSIDE VIEW 1

**Mika Mollenkopf**

*cast aluminum*

the waiting sand. This formless speaker whispers of a loneliness that mortals cannot know; where he speaks, the waves, like startled animals, will soon begin to thrash and surge.

I speak, of course, of the boy-god Nerites, who brings the hateful storm that drowns the weary sailor. And do you know why he does so?



## LEFT OUTSIDE VIEW 2

Mika Mollenkopf

*cast aluminum*

*The children are silent and look to the dark sky and the soft midnight waves. They shift uncomfortably against one another, huddled together in old rags. The young man sighs, and his tale continues.*

There are many tales of Nerites' birth, but when I was a boy, the sea whispered the truest of these tales in my ear, and it is that story I share with you today.

The boy-god Nerites, the sea whispered to me, was once a man, neither capricious nor cruel. A sailor, like myself, and a damn good one at that. Perhaps, in his days of youthful ignorance, he even laughed, although the old winds have lost the sound by now. Handsome, strong, and impeccably clever, the sea herself is said to have fallen in love with him.

She pursued him relentlessly, but each time, the young sailor rebuked her advances. It wasn't right, he said, for one man to claim the heart of the sea—although in truth, perhaps Nerites realized what end her caprice might bring him.

The wisdom in his decision did him little good, however. Like many who sail, Nerites was called to the service of his state in the face of an enemy who would surely destroy their small fleet. With nowhere else to go, Nerites went to the sea and asked her for only one thing—the strength to protect those who fought alongside him. Enamored of him, the sea granted his boon on a single condition: when the battle was done, Nerites would return to her and live ever-after in her domain. Desperate, he accepted.

The day was won, but it mattered little. In her hurry to regain her prize, the sea sent forth waves that swallowed Nerites' ship, drowning all aboard, including his own brother. Immortal as he now was, only Nerites survived. Cheated and alone, Nerites vowed that the sea would never have him for a lover, and in return for her cruelty, he would send to

## CONTINUED

her depths unending hordes of unworthy sailors, all begging for the gift she had given him.

**“ BUT IF YOU WAIT FOR A WINDLESS NIGHT WHEN THE MOON HAS SET AND ONLY THE STARS WAIT ABOVE YOU, GLITTERING LIKE GEMS IN THE BLACKNESS, YOU JUST MIGHT HEAR ANOTHER SIGH AS IT CRASHES IN THE WAITING SAND. ”**

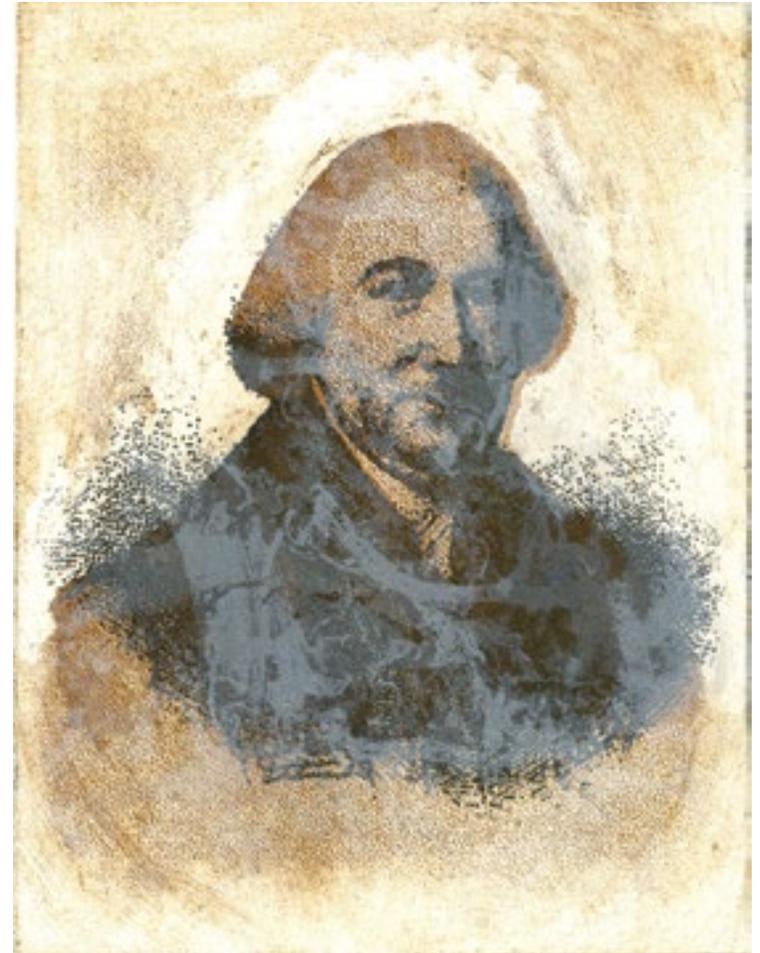
All gods, they say, are immortal, even those who begin their lives as mortal men. The most hateful will die a million deaths before they are finally overthrown or brought into line by their fellows. The boy-god Nerites keeps no counsel but his own; no just hand quells the hatred that he brews in his wanderings. When a god strikes down a man who has given him no insult, he is said to feel the pain of that death tenfold, to the last shuddering.

Nerites has drowned thousands of sailors, but he will never taste the sweet nectar of mortality for himself. And perhaps that is the tragedy carried in the whispers drowned out by the wind.

*The tale finished, the man stands and dusts the rocky sand away from his knees. He leaves them with only a coin (it will feed them for weeks, if they spend it wisely) and the fading remnants of his story. The children sit in silence—this is not the tale they were expecting, but it leaves them contemplating the name they aren't speak. When the wind begins to howl against the rocks, one boy cups a hand to his ear in the hopes of catching the ancient whisper. He hears nothing but the wind, howling like a wild animal or a mother in grief.*

*It shakes him to the bone. ■*

**JOHN HANSON**  
Wesley Blissard  
*etching, intaglio, silkscreen*





## MAMA'S MINION

**Davion Baxter**

*digital photography*

## A LOVE LETTER

Constantine Jones

*poetry*

Sweet Virginia,  
Write to me of the waves.  
White stones in pockets wide,  
Virginia,  
Write to me once more  
of voyages outward—  
Write to me of your room.  
How long will you stay  
in the depths of the deep?  
Is there room in the water for two?

I set pebbles firmly between my toes;  
I am painted here,  
in the shallow glass of the sea,  
as if I were the island itself;  
My ears thirst for natural poetry.

I wish to be that bird, there—  
the only white in a sky of pale blue.  
I will throw broken seashells back  
into the shallows  
& shout your name into the nostril  
of the wind—

Virginia, Virginia,  
Write to me of the flush,  
the flowers, the blankets of salt.  
Sing one more song of Orlando.  
Suck my legs beneath the hull—  
I will trade all my limbs for fish.  
I will wash my fingers  
in the pink seafoam  
& I will not stay away too long.

I will tiptoe back into the crystal;  
I will hang my spine  
from the hook of my waist;  
corkscrews drifting in the river  
through mountains of Katsiki—  
oh, Virginia,  
write to me just once more  
of the sunset and the lighthouse  
and the taste of the ineffable stream.

When the dirt begins to flood  
like light through parlor curtains,  
I will cover every corner in ink.  
Your beast on the strand,  
still stamping and chained,  
he longs for some company—  
Virginia,  
I would visit that room on my own,  
in the foothills down by the sea.

## GERTRUDE IN THE WATER

Evelyn Choate

*digital photography*



# COLLAGE

*A Journal of Creative Expression*

**Middle Tennessee State University**

MTSU Box 267

Murfreesboro, TN 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.

## SUBMIT TO COLLAGE

*Collage* accepts submissions year-round. Submission forms and guidelines are available at [capone.mtsu.edu/collage/](http://capone.mtsu.edu/collage/). Creative work such as art, photography, short stories, essays, short plays, song lyrics, and poetry may be submitted digitally from the website or may be turned in at the *Collage* office, Honors 224, along with a completed submission form between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Submissions are accepted from MTSU students and recent alumni.

## POLICY STATEMENT

*Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression* is an arts and literary 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 four submissions to 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.



### ART

**Joshua Petty**  
*IO*



### PHOTOGRAPHY

**Davion Baxter**  
*Mama's Minion*



### PROSE

**Shelby Rehberger**  
*Room 214*



### POETRY

**Heather Hickox**  
*Hands*

## COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARDS

**Silver Crown Awards**

2007, 2008, and 2011

**Gold Crown Awards**

2012 and 2013

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### Technology

Adobe Indesign CC

Adobe Illustrator CC

Adobe Photoshop CC

Apple Macintosh Platform

Windows Platform

### Typography

Sahara

Sullivan Fill

Baskerville, various weights

### Paper

90 lb. Ivory Silk Cover

80 lb. HannoArt Silk Text

### Binding

Saddle Stitch

### Printing

Franklin Graphics of Nashville,

Tennessee printed approximately

2,700 copies of *Collage*.



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TENNESSEE**  
STATE UNIVERSITY