

JANUS

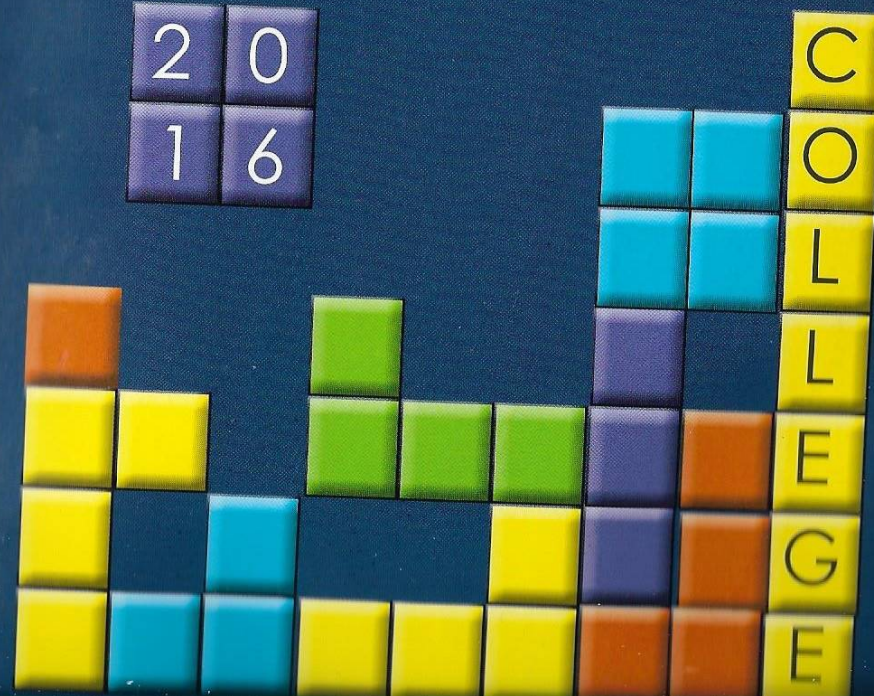
WEST

MINSTER

20
16

Westminster

Janus



Janus

Editorial Staff

Student Editors

Joel Aguirre

Luke Gerau

Katie Koonce

Layout Editor

Veronica Tuthill

Cover Design

Luke Gerau

Faculty Advisor

Dr. Andrew Mulvania

Table of Contents

Poetry

*In Our Village by Tjizembua Tjikuzu	4
Anxiety by Abi Bax	6
Calming Distress by Luke Gerau	7
SADness by Breigh Neece	7
Heavy Dirty Soul by Veronica Lake	8
Exotic by Malisa Chaidez	8
For You, Anything by Clarisse Leech	11
A College Love Twoem by Katie Koonce	12
***My Fairest, All Dearest by Isaac Coronel	12
Red Wine by Kate Sanchez	13
October Night by Mei Du	15
Dreaming of Freddy Krueger by Joseph Nieves	15
Devil in the Night by Emma Kliethermes	16
the dream by Kate Sanchez	16
Beyond the Mind by Isaac Coronel	17
Black as November by Katie Koonce	17
Visiting Pearl Harbor in December by Katie Koonce	20
**Seeing Ground Zero, 2008 by Joseph Nieves	20
The Future by Joseph Nieves	23
Today by Karley Long	23
Freeze Time by Katie Crawford	23
The Camp by Kate Sanchez	27
Teach Your Children Well by Lori Hoertel	28
The Weepers by Tjizembua Tjikuzu	32
The Tarot Comedy by Thomas Miller	32
That Scene in "Jaws" by Joseph Nieves	49
Playing Guitar by Stefanie Eggleston	53
To the armpit hair that is never there. by Veronica Lake	53
This is to Say (I might've eaten the Cheeze-Its) by Lori Hoertel	54
See friend Yuan'er off for a task in Anxi by Wang Wei (Translated by Mei Du)	56
As The Storm Rolls In by Luke Gerau	59
The Story of this Tree by Emma Kliethermes	59

Prose

The Struggle Within by Malisa Chaidez	5
***The Diner by Stefanie Eggleston	9
Fighting The Odds by Karley Long	14
**What? by Courtney Gallagher	18

The Day The Music Died by Karley Long	21
Sunflowers by Courtney Gallagher	
Problem Solved by Karley Long	
Marching On by Lydia Colvin	29
Transcript From Officer Vasquez's Recording	
Device of Stand Off by Clarisse Leech	50
*Too Much Excitement by Karley Long	54
Green Eyes by Katie Koonce	57
The Importance of Teeth by Katie Koonce	60

Graphics

*Mammoth Beauty by Laura Wiltshire	33
**Cast-Away by Katie Crawford	34
***Small Town, Big Color by Ashleigh Haslag	34
Gamla Stan by Tiffany Crawford	35
Fushimi Inari-taisha by Katie Crawford	35
Tribal Owl by Ashleigh Haslag	36
County Fair by Stefanie Eggleston	37
Rainy Eyes by Katie Crawford	38
Morning Drive by Stefanie Eggleston	39
Colorado Summer by Maya Sosa	39
Pomme by Sydney Sexton	40
Reverse Portrait by Ashleigh Haslag	41
Mountain Curve by Laura Wiltshire	42
Scotland by Tiffany Crawford	43
Garden of the Gods, Colorado by Maya Sosa	43
Hidden in Plain Sight by Laura Wiltshire	44
Secrets of the Sea by Karli Dawson	45
Sunset on the Island of Santorini by Jamie Striler	46
Looking Out at the Atlantic from the Giant's Causeway, Ireland by Jamie Striler	46
Tobacco Caye Paradise by Alex Rauscher	47
This Morning by Saurav Singh	48

*Denotes First Place Winner
 **Denotes Second Place Winner
 ***Denotes Third Place Winner

In Our Village
Tjizembua Tjikuzu
1st Place: Poetry

When the sun goes down in our village,
a loneliness that runs deep to the bone
settles—leaving us trembling like
leaves on a windy day.

When the sun goes down in our village,
it's us the young 'uns by the crackling fire,
staring into the abyss—waiting, wistful,
red-eyed, weary, waiting

for mothers, fathers, grandfathers, grandmothers,
uncles, aunts, the whole lot of them,
while they lie still and free in bolted coffins—
leaving us to carry the weight of the
world on our petite and failing shoulders.

When the sun goes down in our village
and playtime can no longer delay the hunger—
we boil the bones of our ancestors
and gnaw them in silent shame.

The Struggle Within
Malisa Chaidez

It was the summer before the beginning of freshman year of high school. I didn't know half of the people surrounding me but they all clearly knew each other. That was one of the many disadvantages of never getting involved in anything. All I knew was that the gym was hot and I was ready for the summer PE course to be over. The one thing I wasn't prepared for was all the cute guys. The boys from the other two schools were uncharted territory unlike the ones from my elementary school who had become like brothers to me.

After that first day of PE, I became a new person...I was determined to become someone new. Certainly I wasn't going to catch any of their eyes with my portly 160 pound physique, frizzy hair, and acne covered face. Little did I know that it would cause a chain reaction that would slowly consume my life.

In that one summer I successfully lost twenty pounds and gave up glasses for contacts. Slowly but surely I was becoming the woman I wanted to be but it wasn't happening fast enough. Things began to spiral midway through my freshman year without me even noticing.

It started with skipping lunch while at school. My excuse was always that I didn't like the school food or I didn't have time to fix myself a packed lunch but they were both lies. The beginning was harder than I thought it would be. Hunger pains would make me sick to the point of nausea but I pushed through for the sake of my goals. Just skipping lunch wasn't enough in my mind so the next step was exercise. If I was awake, I was exercising. When I woke up I would do a thirty-minute Insanity video and when I got home I would do a forty-five minute video. Before I went to bed I would do even more exercises...no matter how exhausted I was.

The weight began to melt off me like butter but I hardly noticed. I would stand in front of my full body mirror for ages, pulling and pushing areas of my body, just analyzing everything that I hated and needed to lose. I would then step onto the scale, further torturing myself. I thought that I would be happy because I was losing weight...but I was wrong.

Eventually I got a boyfriend who knew my struggles and loved me regardless of my weight. It was an amazing relationship but I ended things after three years. At the beginning of our relationship I obsessed less over my weight and actually ate a little bit when we went out on dates but as time went by we saw each other less and he seemed to care less so I relapsed back to old habits.

I counted calories like a pro. If I were to tell anyone my process of counting calories they would think that I enjoyed math...but I don't. A daily routine would consist of maybe a granola bar, ten grapes (because more than ten was just way too many), zero calorie pasta, and whatever else I could find that claimed it was zero calorie. Gum wasn't even allowed because each slice had an average of five calories.

This continued for what seemed like centuries until I saw a photo of myself at my sophomore year prom. I was horrified. I looked like a sickly walking skeleton. I barely recognized the girl in the picture and I knew things had to change before there was no going back. Thus began my second transformation.

Looking back on those years there are moments when I wish I had my old self control and determination back so I could get in shape faster now but I know it wouldn't do me any good. My lowest weight was 105 pounds, which at the time wasn't good enough but now just thinking of a number that low scares me.

Today I still struggle with body image...I don't eat as much as most people but I still eat more than I used to. I still check calories but I don't have the time to count them anymore and I definitely no longer need a guy to let me know that I'm a beautiful person. Funny thing is, my boyfriend of three years, who caused me to relapse because I thought I wasn't pretty enough for him...turned out to be gay.

Anxiety **Abi Bax**

Nights into days;
Days into nights.
A cluster of components claustrophobic in
My mind

Stuck in reverse;
Thrown forward.
Constantly in motion...
Constantly ceasing.

One step forward,
One step back.
The repetitious dance of the dying spirit;
The limbo of fate.

Some day, some way, it may all make sense.
As for now,
It won't.
And I accept that.

Calming Distress

Luke Gerau

The silence echoes throughout the canyon of my mind
Beneath the surface is a man lost in the seas of life
A quiet panic, a sunken rage
Torn between moving forward and moving on

SADness **Breigh Neece**

When the leaves begin to fall...
that is when I begin to worry.

Green withering to brown,
my passion withering to
absolute
disinterest.

Evil little worms,
living in the plot of dark soil
I have been keeping in the back of my mind,
come out to feast.

Between fall and the early summer
they feed on anything decaying:

Leaves
Flowers
Motivation

Squirming,
making warm homes inside me,
eating away until the sun returns.

Sunshine dries them out around June

Until then?
Until then I know what it feels like:

Being in that cedar box
Rotting away
Everyone else envisioning me somewhere
Happy and beautiful and covered in white

Heavy Dirty Soul
Veronica Lake

I tend to shake hands
with the dark parts of my thoughts,
and today is no different as I look outside.
Remembering morning is when
the night dies
I see a whole world better off,
without me in it.
The trees wave their arms,
and the clouds try to plead,
desperately yelling
there's something I need.
Maybe there is hope out the window,
so that's where I go.
Pieces of peace
in the sun.*

Exotic
Malisa Chaidez

Their eyes were always looking; constantly staring with curiosity. Skin like warm caramel in a world different than her own drew unwanted attention. A place accustomed to blonde hair, blue eyes, pale skin, marveled at her almond eyes, pupils the color of dark chocolate, and hair black as night. The whispers of jealousy, the murmurs of desire for something they did not have, followed her daily. She did not see herself as any more special than others but to them she was Exotic.

*A found poem

The Diner
Stefanie Eggleston
3rd Place: Prose

"Thanks," I smile to the waitress as she fills up my coffee. Sometimes she stays to chat a while, but today she lets me get back to what I'm writing. This diner holds so many memories for me. Or really just one memory, written down fifty different ways in this notebook. I usually try to add a happy ending to it, something just tacked on at the end that doesn't flow very well. I was never very good at fiction no matter how many times I tried. I know I should stop reliving this moment, trying to make it something it will never be. Maybe writing the truth this time will help.

We were alike in just about every way, and our friendship came fast and easy. Soon our weekly friendly outings turned into dates that turned into a relationship. We spent these dates at diners trying to find the best one. We came up with a rating system, judging atmosphere, background music, hospitality, and food quality. We thought we had visited all of the diners around the city, but he found a new one, and so on our six month anniversary, he took me out to a diner.

I wore a new cardigan I had bought earlier that week and he picked me up at my apartment in freshly polished shoes. We walked about ten blocks before we came to a small opening that led to a flight of stairs. He gently held my arm as I walked down into the diner.

The red and white checkered table cloths were a little cliché, but it felt cozy. The decorations were a mismatch of 50's and 80's paraphernalia, but somehow it worked. A Beatles' song played quietly in the background.

"Pick a seat wherever you'd like," a smiling waitress with a slight country accent said. I hadn't heard a true country accent since coming to the city years ago.

We walked to a booth in the corner, our go-to spot if we were allowed to pick our own seat. An older couple sat on the other side of the room, which albeit wasn't very far away. The waitress set a couple homemade looking menus in front of us and asked for our drink orders. We both ordered coffee.

While we waited for our food, we talked about the rating of the diner. I fought for a five, the top score, on atmosphere, but he fought back for a three or four. We had slightly different tastes, me preferring something fun and maybe a little colorful, while he looked for modesty and minimalism. After a lot of eye rolling on his part and begging on mine, he let me write down a five on the old receipt I'd pulled out of my purse. I knew he kept the four in his head. The music, which was now Tracy Chapman's *Fast Car*, received a consensual score of five. It helped that we had similar taste in music. I wanted a five on hospitality, probably because our waitress reminded me of my home and the small town I had hated as a child, but sometimes wished for now. He felt the waitress had done nothing to deserve a five, but he would settle for a four. I wrote a five down anyway.

"Are you kidding me? We're supposed to be doing this together. You can't just

write down whatever you want." He was annoyed, but he was always annoyed these days. I kept the five. He kept his arms crossed.

We had ordered breakfast, even though it was late in the evening. Hash browns and eggs and pancakes. It was simple but easy to compare to other diners. We both fell in love with the fluffy pancakes and crunchy hash browns and perfectly seasoned eggs. This time we agreed on the five rating. I looked at the receipt and wrote a big "20" at the bottom. He scoffed.

We held hands as we walked out, and I playfully kissed his cheek. He pushed me away, faking a disgusted face. I pushed him back. We went back and forth like this for a while until I pushed him a little too hard and he fell against a trash can.

"Ow!" He said, furrowing his eyebrows.

I giggled, "Are you okay?" I reached to hug him.

"No, that fucking hurt." He pulled away from me.

"Oh come on," I playfully pushed him into the trash can again.

"Would you stop?" He yelled this time.

"Grow up," I rolled my eyes at him. I hadn't pushed him that hard.

"Maybe you should be nicer to me." We had fought over stupid little things before, but we'd never yelled. People were walking by staring at us now as we stood on the sidewalk glaring at each other.

"Maybe you shouldn't get so bent out of shape about stupid shit," I yelled back.

"Oh, I get bent out of shape over stupid shit? Are you listening to yourself? What about the time you deleted a girl's number from my phone because she texted me too late at night? Or the time you called me twelve times when I had to stay an hour late at work? I think you're the one who overreacts."

"Oh because it's not like you talk about beating up any guy who hugs me or go through my phone when I leave the room for a minute."

He stared at me for a moment, and I thought I'd won this one. Eventually one of us would always shut up and we'd both make a mental tally of how many fights we had won. It usually stayed pretty even. It was my turn to win.

"I think we should stop seeing each other," he said finally. His voice had gotten quiet, and I could hardly hear him over the bustle in the street.

"What?" I don't think the word really came out of my mouth, but my lips moved and my mind thought it.

"This isn't working."

I wasn't sure what to say. Sure we fought a lot, but we had been friends for over a year. I didn't see this one coming. We stood there in silence for another moment, and he turned and walked away.

I'm sitting in the diner now, the only one I ever gave a perfect score. I haven't seen him since that day almost six months ago. I come here a lot though and think about him. I don't miss our relationship. Looking back on it, it was never healthy, never happy. But I miss our friendship. We spent months together seeking out diners and having fun. I don't know why we worked as such good friends while our relationship was fight after fight. Maybe we were just too similar.

The diner hasn't changed in the past six months. It's still a perfect 20 to me. The decorations are the same. The Rolling Stones are playing on the jukebox. The waitress – the same one that served us that night – smiles at me and keeps my coffee filled. The pancakes are warm and fluffy.

I'm looking around, taking it all in, when I see a pair of legs walking down the stairs. It's him, in the same worn, gray sports coat he always wore on dates. His hair is longer now, but everything else is the same. I am about to call out to him, offer to try our friendship again, when I see a woman walk down behind him. My heart stops as I think that maybe they aren't together. Maybe they just walked in at the same time. But she grabs his hand and kisses his cheek, and he smiles back at her. Then, he looks at me.

For You, Anything Clarisse Leech

I know
eight words that can
make someone fall in love
"I need you to breathe for me now."
Convinced?

A College Love Twoem

Katie Koonce

You are like cracking the top of an ice-cold beer
on a warm Friday afternoon. That first sip
of relaxation and bliss.

My Fairest, All Dearest

Isaac Coronel

3rd Place: Poetry

My fairest, all dearest
Shall I, my all, give unto thee?
For no hesitation have I
To do so now and always.

Glorious gentle heart,
Whispers plaint cares and thoughts.
And, though so frightened and nerved,
How could I not desire such feel?

Let me, you, tightly hold
That I may, those fluttered eyes, stare.
And, to you, I speak with no selfish plea
When I say, "I will love thee the end of my days."

My fairest, all dearest,
Shall love carry us home
Together in bright clouds,
incomparable to your beauty?

My fairest, all dearest
What say you, to me?

Red Wine

Kate Sanchez

The deep red liquid swirls around
I casually sip the first glass of wine
I'm trying hard to write my thoughts down
and have a great punch line

I don't discriminate
I love white and red equally
Now it's becoming hard to articulate
the issue with me is always decency

When I think of wine I think of love
Intoxicated with the feeling of joy
Moments you feel like you're floating up above
all because of a single boy

Life is giddy, and carefree
Then in the morning, everything comes crashing down harshly

Fighting the Odds

Karley Long

The statistics of what could happen to each of us were startling. We piled into the auditorium like a flock of lost sheep: innocent, fresh, and new. We took our seats like good little freshmen: excited, apprehensive, and anxious. We quieted down as the student body president began to speak: clear, practiced, and encouraging. My thoughts faded into the background.

The statistics of what could happen to each of us were startling. It is only now after researching them that I can revisit the first day of my freshman year of college and tell you that the odds were not in our favor.

One in two. That's how many of us would graduate in four years. The rest wouldn't make it due to death by research paper, dropping out, insufficient funds, taking a fifth year "victory lap," or "College just isn't for me, Mom." I don't think the boy who sat next to me even made it through the first month. I never saw him again.

One in four. That's how many of us would use and abuse controlled substances while in college. Adderall. Alcohol. OxyContin. Marijuana. Even cold medicine. I wonder what makes people need an escape so badly. Is it college itself, or is it the real world that college students are slowly starting to see for the first time? Some of those sitting in the auditorium had never done anything of the sort. By the end of the year, we all knew who the stoners were.

One in five. That's how many girls would be sexually harassed and/or assaulted during our time spent here. It wouldn't be because of their short skirts, dark makeup, crop tops, or drunken states. It would be because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong guy (or girl, let's not generalize). None of us realized that potential predators were sitting in the auditorium with us, right next to us even, planning their Saturday night attack.

One in six. That's how many of us would participate in binge drinking over the course of the next four years. I don't think this shocks anyone. I honestly think the number is probably higher. It's college: home of Flip Cup, keg stands, rhymes about which alcohols to drink before drinking other alcohols, and Jell-O shots. Little did my class know "just partying" for some was fueling future alcoholism for others. Our livers reminisce to the days like those in the auditorium, when alcohol had never even entered some of our systems.

The student body president stopped talking. We clapped, dropouts, druggies, victims, predators, and alcoholics alike. I couldn't tell you what he said about adapting to college life, studying hard, or making friends. I couldn't tell you what I was thinking at that exact moment, walking back to my dorm with new acquaintances that I couldn't quite yet call friends. I can tell you that we left the welcome ceremony ignorant of what was to come. Little did we know that the odds were not in our favor.

Each year the same cycle begins: a new freshman class, ready to experience the wonders of college life. Four years later, we get to see which statistic each one is unfortunate enough to become. During our own four years (if we make it through all four), we get to see which statistics we are unfortunate enough to become. We can only hope to beat the odds. We can only hope to be the ones who make those odds a little more favorable.

October Night

Mei Du

Winter's breath seeps into my room from
my screen window.
It embraces me and chills
my back.
I've touched
a musky smell of burning firewoods,
and snowflakes perhaps still two months away.

Dreaming of Freddy Krueger

for Wes Craven

Joseph Nieves

When I was a kid, I couldn't stand his face.
The mangled skin stretched tight over his skull,
the leering mouth, the lurid promise of it.

I had this recurring dream of running
through a gray-walled maze, never far or fast enough.
Never seeing him until he got me,

still surprised by all the shapes of death.

But you saw him first, didn't you? His hands
flicking like spoiled food behind your nose,
refusing to leave so you could sleep.

You must've spent so many nights thinking about that man
outside your window – where he'd take you, beyond thoughts,
the rustle of elm leaves fading behind you,

a dangerous place for dreamers.

Devil in the Night
Emma Kliethermes

The rain lulled the dark city to sleep,
but he knows his city never stops.
He listens to its pulse,
as familiar to him as his own,
and hears its people.
They are hailing cabs,
running for cover from the cold shower,
and chatting on their cell phones;
unaware of the rats surrounding them.
They reek of desperation, sweat, and alcohol;
crooked thugs poisoning his city.

He stands above it,
another shadow in the night.
His only company is ugly gray gargoyles
adorning the rooftop.
He's a devil dipped in crimson,
the sinful patron saint of his city.
He will fight for it,
bloody his hands,
to keep the innocent safe.
A fearless vigilante.
A guardian angel.

the dream
Kate Sanchez

someone's yelling at me to hurry up
I walk out onto the wharf
and around the corner I recognize a familiar face
I don't overreact—
I've made that mistake before and awoken too quickly
this moment won't last long
drop my belongings, we embrace and your warmth consumes me
within a split second
the radiant sun is seeping through the blinds
I roll over and wipe the tears away

Beyond the Mind
Isaac Coronel

Huff, puff, the world's a right.
The smell's taste with no sense
That leaves me in confusion;
A state of bizarre.

Where am I now?
Even though I remain,
Among friends in my domain:
I am lost in my mind.

And yet, there is peace,
Through all fears and curiosity.
As if peace were my brother,
Carrying me away in warmth.

And warmth is a boat setting sail,
I am ready! I am ready!
Look now and proud, me lads
How glory pushes warmth.

Oh, how so random these things,
That I can't comprehend in any way.
It's beyond me, this excitement now!
A thousand Christmases ensue!

Higher, higher, higher!
Beyond the clouds, beyond the stars;
The universe is a distance to my eye.
None can prevail against me!

But it's too much for me.
Though so high,
Myself holds me down.
I cannot control me.

Fear is taking hold!
I must relieve it.
Compose the mind.
Be silent, slandering thoughts!

But behold...

A light hits my face,
The smell of early dew in my nose.
I am frail upon my bed.
Who was I?

I am beyond me...
Myself am I my own pain.
I control me, or do I?
I am me, but who was I this night past?

It is beyond me...
I am beyond me...

Black as November
Katie Koonce

The sun hugged the earth tight
begging to stay a little longer.
Its grip slowly slipping
from the edge of the slick crust
as shadows began to fall
from the trees in the forest
behind our empty new house.

*I really think you'll love it
once we are all settled in,
Mom had promised during the move.
Now, all I could see from the window
in the unfamiliar bedroom were*

the long silhouettes, black as November,
of naked branches stretching slowly
across the brittle yellow grass
like gnarled ebony fingers
reaching out from under the thick
charcoal shroud of a long winter's night.

What?
Courtney Gallagher
2nd Place: Prose

"What?! Sorry, I couldn't hear you!" Jane shouted as she tucked her hair behind her ear and leaned across the table closer to him.

The music in the bar was so loud she could feel it in her chest. Her heart was beating fast. She had a nervous feeling in her stomach, and she already felt light-headed from finishing the one drink he had bought her.

"I asked where you work," Chris said calmly with a smile.

"Oh, umm, what? Sorry?" Jane asked again, buying herself more time. She had heard Chris perfectly but was caught off guard by his question. She twisted her hair around her finger. Aware of her nervous habit, Jane abruptly dropped her hands to her side. She wanted to look calm. She wanted to look cool. She wanted to not look as freaked out as she was on the inside.

"I asked where you work," Chris said again, this time louder.

"I'm an insurance sales rep. What about you?"

"Oh cool," he said. Jane took a breath and sat back. Good. It seems like he bought that, she thought to herself.

"I'm an accountant," Chris continued. "I work at a firm just down the street. I know I'm only 29 years old, but I'm working hard to make partner in a few years. How long have you been with your company?"

Jane was disappointed to hear he was 29. She already knew he was older than she was, but she was hoping it wouldn't be by that much. 29? It was just so close to...30... She pushed her empty cup aside and tried not to think about their age difference.

He smiled at her as he waited for her reply, and her heart began to beat faster. Any thoughts she had of telling him the truth vanished the moment she saw that wide smile. She didn't want their conversation to end. She couldn't stand the thought of him getting up and leaving before he had the chance to get to know her. "Well, I just graduated from college in May," Jane said as she reached up and touched her hair. She wiped her sweaty palms on her jeans and thought about what to say next. "I'm 23, so I'm one of the youngest reps. I haven't been working there long."

"What?" he asked. The music seemed to be getting even louder, and Jane had to shout to be heard above it.

"I haven't been working there long!" she said.

Chris cupped his hand around his ear and shook his head. He wasn't able to hear anything she said.

"Do you want to go outside?" he shouted, already getting up to leave.

Jane followed him out a side door and stepped into the cool, October air. The music faded as the door shut behind her, but her ears were still ringing when she sat down on the curb. Chris sat down next to her.

"When you're not working what do you like to do?" Chris asked.

"I enjoy hiking and running."

"Me too. I used to run cross-country way back in my high school days."

"So did I," Jane replied. "I really miss it. It feels like just yesterday I was running in my last high school race."

Jane was amazed at how relaxed she felt talking to Chris outside. He was so easy to talk to, and they had so much in common. They both liked to run, they both grew up near Milwaukee, and they both loved baseball.

As the night went on, she began to finally let herself relax. "He won't care," she thought to herself after finding out another similarity – Chris had also been a volunteer for her favorite charity. She tried to convince herself that he would understand; after all, he was such a selfless and generous man.

"Besides running, I also like reading mysteries," Chris said.

Jane looked out at the parking lot and smiled. She had been a fan of mystery novels since she first discovered Nancy Drew at a young age.

She couldn't believe how perfect they seemed for each other. Yes, this is going to work, Jane thought to herself as she entered her phone number into his phone.

"Thanks, I'll give you a call sometime," Chris said.

They both got up and began walking to the door to go back inside. They reached it just as it swung open.

"There you are!" said the girl swaying back and forth in the doorway. "Jane, I've been looking all over for you. Our ride's here. What a great night! Did you have a great night? Of course you had a great night," the girl rambled on. "Wow, I'm so glad your fake ID worked. Good thing you don't look like you're 19."

Jane froze where she was. She looked at Chris. She couldn't make out his expression in the dark, but he stood there without saying a word. That was not how she wanted him to find out. That was not the reaction she hoped for. That was it.

Looking down at her feet, she followed her friend back inside the crowded bar.

"Wait..." Chris called out, but the music was loud, and Jane couldn't hear him.

Visiting Pearl Harbor in December

Katie Koonce

The palm trees seemed out of place
on the shore, their branches dancing lazily
with the warm breeze in the blue Pacific sky.

From where I stand on the anchored white memorial,
looking out across the ocean toward the naval base, I see
small, black bubbles of oil trickling upward from the wreckage
of the U.S.S. Arizona, coming to settle on the water's surface
creating a rainbow of colors in the light. It might have been beautiful
somewhere else.

I wonder if the crew, on that sunny December day,
was looking out across the ocean, enjoying this view of paradise
before torpedo bombs penetrated the ship's ammunition magazines
before the fuel, now oil rainbows shining in the salt water, caught fire
and entombed them in their vessel under the sea.
Before the infamous day was harbored in history.

Seeing Ground Zero, 2008

Joseph Nieves

2nd Place: Poetry

More than we saw *it* we saw
an empty lot, like those we left
behind in Phoenix, the same
hard hat crews hunched
over tables. We saw
tourists in shorts, taking pictures
of exposed earth like a scab
on the city's arm. We saw
on the wall of a pizza place
a 9/11 timeline and retraced
our own experience. We saw
ourselves, huddled around TVs
in classrooms when it happened,
our teachers crying. We saw,
outside the firehouse on Greenwich,
a bronze memorial of firemen
responding to the crisis—the bronze
towers, with bronze smoke, always burning,
the bronze people always choking,
always about to die, the crowd
futile, watching, taking pictures.

The Day the Music Died

Karley Long

"Your *ritardando* was not convincing," my mother snapped at me. "The 'R' does
not stand for rush. It means...?"

"To gradually decrease the tempo of the music" we finished together, her voice
crisp and instructional, mine quiet and exhausted. I sat with my head down and my
fingers fidgeting in my lap. The piano bench felt hard and cold beneath me, just like my
mother's words. I had finished playing Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No. 14 in C Sharp Minor*
without missing a single note, as I had been able to do for months. It was still not "perfor-
mance-ready" in my half-mother, half-piano teacher's mind.

"Again," she commanded from behind me. This was how our practices always
went: I would sit at the bench and play the same piece over and over again. My mother
would sit behind me, critiquing one note at a time until she finally gave up and rolled
away. Our practices never really ended at a specific time or after a certain amount of work
was accomplished. Some days she would surrender after only a few minutes: others would
have me sitting at the bench so long I thought I might have taken root in the bench.

That day's practice was one of the long ones. She didn't show any sign of let-
ting up either. I began the piece again, thinking of a few places for her to shove that 'R.' I
wouldn't dare say anything, though. That's not how things worked in our house.

I played through the piece and could hear the wheels on my mother's chair roll
back and forth behind me. It was like a kind of pacing for her. Through the sounds of my
music, I could hear the faint squeaks of the wheels changing direction. The noise had been
negatively conditioned in my brain: I associated it with my mother's commanding voice,
a sore behind (from long hours of sitting on a wooden bench), and failure. The sound
infuriated me.

I ended the piece once again. "Who are you even playing for?" my mother spat.
"There's no passion. You might as well stake out at the nursing home. The hard-of-hearing
will just adore your music, if you can even call it that. Again!" I felt my face burn, but I
had had a lot of practice with controlling my temper. I did as I was told and played again.

It was just my mom and me. My dad left us after my mother's accident. I didn't
blame him for leaving: she was unbearable. I did blame him for not taking me too. My
mother and I didn't talk about it, not even on the day he left. It was only a week after the
crash. We both knew when he wasn't home for dinner that something was wrong. He
wasn't there the next morning either, and we knew he would never come back. The only
way I learned that we had a mutual understanding was when she had me set the dinner
table for two that night instead of three.

"Enough!" This time she stopped me halfway through the piece. "I need to be
changed." The worst part of taking care of my mother was most definitely that. Changing
a 45 year old woman's diaper was just as glamorous as it sounds. She could still do some

things; she was only paralyzed from the waist down. Unfortunately, the waist down is where the unspeakable happens. I knew by her tone that we weren't finished yet. Afterward we would come back to the piano to continue the daily torture.

I got up from the bench and walked behind my mother. Grabbing ahold of the handles of her wheelchair, I pushed in the direction of our recently installed elevator. My father didn't even stay long enough to see it work. My mother pressed the call button, and the doors opened quickly.

"What are you doing?" my mother asked impatiently. I hadn't moved since the doors opened. They closed once more. My mother reached over and pressed the call button again. "Stupid girl," she said, not bothering to keep the thought to herself. The doors opened once more, but I steered the wheelchair back toward the piano. "What are you doing now? I need to be changed!"

"I'm doing what I should have done three months ago when Dad left," I said emotionlessly, my body feeling as a dream-like host, someone else must have been operating the control panel to my brain. I parked her in front of the piano and sat down at the bench once more. I played my piece one last time. Her outbursts and shrieks at me did not penetrate my mind, acting like some new, selectively permeable membrane. I played perfectly. Passionately. Professionally. I ended the piece, *ritardando* and all, and waited for her words to re-enter my brain.

"Well?" she asked after a long rant of yelling, slightly out of breath and trying to sound harsh. I could hear a tone of fear in her voice, though.

"That was perfect," I said and leaped up off the bench and walked behind her once more. My statement seemed to have left her speechless. I had never stood up to her before. Our next stop was through the oak doors of the living room, leading to the patio outside.

"The elevator is the other way, you daft girl!"

The warm air of the summer afternoon brushed against my heels and traveled up my spine as we made our way out onto the stone patio. Freedom was coming. I stopped pushing and walked around to face her. My mother's face was flushed from yelling. Her eyes were wide, terror seeping into their dark pits. She opened her mouth to speak and then closed it instead, apparently dumbfounded.

I thought about saying something, but I really didn't have anything to say. So, I walked back behind her, gripped the handles to her wheelchair firmly, and started it at a run. I stopped just in time, my feet inches away from the edge of the pool. I let go, feeling my soul escape from its chains as I did. The splash of the water sprinkled my shins. "That was perfect," I said.

The Future Joseph Nieves

I remember the last teen summer,
turning from the wide, loving mouth
of a Mickey's bottle, secreting
away from the parties to visit
the woman down the hall. We smoked
Parliaments and fantasized about being
well-rounded people someday.

On her balcony we'd sit close, unsure
where to put our hands, always knowing and not
knowing what comes next, swaying together
like palm trees, ends touching, entangling,
wrapped in starless city night,
slowly collapsing the space between us.

Across Rio Salado is the shell of the luxury high rise,
looming massive and silent as a mausoleum.
Later we'd hear the story about the developer
who'd ran out of money, put on his tuxedo
and killed himself with pills in his mansion.

The last night we were together
we didn't talk about the future, opening
before us like a ditch. We just held each other
and tumbled silently into it.

Today Karley Long

I go to bed each night with this one thought,
With sheep and restless words inside my head:
I wonder if the past is as it ought
To be or, if instead, I should be dead.
The day you died instead of me has caused
A frozen life where I cannot move on,
And now it seems as if my life has paused,
That I am nothing more than halfway gone.
The car, black ice, that crash, it haunts me all,
And now because of what you had to give,
Will I decide to go let down my wall
For your last sacrifice and start to live?
I will. I am, today, at last alive.
And in your loving memory I will thrive.

Freeze Time Katie Crawford

If only I could stop the time
Freeze it
For just a moment-

Maybe then I would remember
the way
it felt with you here

Because looking back, hindsight and
lament
do go hand in hand

when I don't know how to allow
myself
to remember you

the way you used to hold my hand
firmly
saying "It's okay."

Even though we both knew that it
was not
nor that we would be.

The trace of your grip is fading
slowly
But my mind screams "Wait!"

Yet my hand let go of yours first
clueless
Thinking I knew best

As the time continues ticking
I lose
What I meant to keep.

Sunflowers

Courtney Gallagher

The smell of burnt toast mixed with the bitter scent of paint and sawdust floated upstairs as Alice motivated herself to get out of bed, get dressed, and go downstairs to face the mess that would be waiting for her there. Recently, she had found a way to make it easier to face the day. Today she thought of the sunflowers. Big, bright, and yellow, sitting in a vase on a table in a bright, yellow kitchen. This was the image Alice woke up with in her head.

As she descended the stairs, the pungent smell was almost enough to make Alice turn around and go right back up to bed. Still thinking of the flowers, she kept walking. She took a deep breath, and pushed the plastic cover aside to enter what should have resembled a kitchen.

Every morning the miserable sight jolted Alice awake. Cabinets were torn from the walls, the tile was pulled off on half the floor, and a single toaster plugged into an outlet in the corner was the only object in the 100 square foot space. Her husband sat cross-legged on the floor, staring at his phone and eating the piece of black bread.

"Look, I'm very busy today, okay," he said to Alice when he heard her come in. "I won't be home until very late. I'm eating dinner with a friend. You can take care of yourself, okay? Alice?"

Alice nodded but she wasn't listening. She looked around the kitchen with a tired expression. The remodel was never-ending. She thought it would be a fun project to work on with her husband, but he treated it like he treated everything else – halfheartedly. That was why their home was full of half-completed projects. The hallway was only partially painted, hardwood floor was only put in half the house, and the new light fixtures that had been delivered months ago were not yet installed. This was the way Alice became accustomed to living. He began everything passionately, creating new designs, and picking out colors, but then he quickly lost interest until the next new project caught his eye.

"Right, dinner," Alice said when the toaster popped and startled her out of her thoughts. "Sure, that's fine. I'll be able to take care of myself."

"I always do," she thought to herself.

Her husband's phone vibrated against the exposed wood on the floor, and he quickly picked it up and lost all interest in talking with Alice any longer.

"So I'll see you late..." he said, walking out of the room with his head down, typing a message for the woman who Alice was sure had most recently sparked his interest.

She watched as the plastic doorway was pushed aside, he walked out, and it dropped back into place, leaving her trapped by the remains of what was once a very lovely kitchen.

Alice pulled her own phone out of her pocket and went to her recent messages. "Dinner tonight?" she typed without hesitating and pressed send.

She spent the morning doing the laundry and going grocery shopping, but in the afternoon, she took a long time to get ready for dinner. She painted her nails, put on makeup, and did her hair. At 6, she put on her favorite dress. Tim rang the doorbell at exactly 6:15; he was right on time as usual.

"You look beautiful," he said when she opened the door. Alice smiled. Tim made her feel important and special, things she never felt around her husband anymore. "Here are all of your favorites," Tim said holding out a plastic bag of takeout food in front of him. "Come in, come in," Alice said, glancing at her watch. She was taking a risk by allowing Tim to come over when she wasn't exactly sure what time her husband was coming home. She made the arrangement while she was upset that morning, but now she wondered if it was a bad idea.

"Tell me again your ideas for the shop," Tim said. "I want to hear all about it." Alice took two plates from the cabinet in the dining room. She had to use her wedding china since all of the other plates were packed in boxes while the kitchen was being done. As she moved around the dining room, setting places to eat, Alice excitedly shared her dream of opening a cheesecake store, and quickly forgot to worry about her husband. She loved that Tim took an interest in her aspirations. Her husband never asked, never cared, and certainly never encouraged. She was talking about the design she wanted to place on the napkins, when two beams of light lit up the Styrofoam food boxes across the table.

"It's 8 o'clock!" Alice said. "You have to go. Right now!"

"Tell him about us," was Tim's response.

"You know I can't do that. I'm sorry. You have to leave right now."

She rushed over to a window in the front of the house and peaked outside. She took a deep breath and relaxed slightly. It wasn't her husband's car. Still, she rushed Tim out the door.

"Bye. Thanks. See you soon," Alice said.

"Sure," Tim said as the door clicked shut behind him, and Alice spun around to collect the plates. She turned on the water in the sink, thankful that at least the water was still working in the bare kitchen.

She began to hurriedly wash the wedding china. "What was I thinking?" she wondered as she looked down at the design she once found beautiful, but would never choose now.

"Who the hell was that?!" a voice boomed from the front of the house. Alice turned around to see her husband ripping down the plastic covering and storming into the kitchen.

"Who was that?" he asked again.

Alice looked around. There was nowhere for her to hide. She stood shaking in a room without furniture, without appliances, and without any of the personal touches that make a home; nothing was left here. It was empty. Vacant. Uninhabitable.

"Who are you talking about?" she replied.

"Don't do this Alice. You know exactly who I'm talking about. Who was the man leaving our house?"

"He must have been lost. He was probably just using the driveway to turn around."

"Don't you dare lie to me!" he shouted.

Alice jumped and the wet plate slipped through her fingers, crashed to the floor, and shattered into pieces.

Both of them stared down at the broken plate in silence. They both stood there, looking at the mess for a long time, as disappointment, guilt, and blame filled the empty room and surrounded them.

"I know you're cheating on me!" Alice blurted out.

"...What? How dare you say something like that to me."

"I'm not naïve. Who did you have dinner with?"

"Don't question me. You're the one who just had a man inside of our home."

"I can't live like this anymore," Alice continued. "I can't keep living out of boxes, walking around avoiding nails, staring at blank walls all day. I thought this would only be temporary. I can't do this anymore."

Silence enveloped them once again. It was Alice who spoke first after what felt like an eternity.

"I think it would be better if I left tonight. We can arrange a time for me to pick up the rest of my things."

He didn't look at her. He remained silent for a while before slowly nodding his head. He moved it up and down once, never taking his eyes off the floor.

Alice went upstairs to pack a single bag. When she returned, he was still standing in the same spot.

"Goodbye," she said.

He remained standing in the kitchen for a while even after he heard her car turn on and drive up the street. Now it was just him – just him and a toaster plugged into an outlet in the corner, the shattered glass around his feet, and the phone he held in his hand.

Meanwhile, Alice drove to Tim's house thinking of the new life she could start. She thought about what it would be like to have a fresh start – to finally wake up in the morning in a house with a bright, yellow kitchen, but when she pulled into the driveway, through the window she could only see a dim light and brown, wilted sunflowers in a vase on the kitchen table.

The Camp **Kate Sanchez**

A three-hour drive from home
To what felt like another world
A right turn at the fork
The barn red, wooden house appears
Glorious pine trees with Spanish moss dripping
Off the outstretched arms of the branches.

Car doors slam, screen doors creak, Abby barks happily.
With a quick hug and kiss to Gram,
I make a beeline for the tire swing.
Hanging happily from the tallest tree,
The rope is thick as a water moccasin's skin
And I leap onto the faded black donut.
Swinging over the edge and glancing down the bluff
into the swampy, Black Lake,
I catch my breath and hold on.

Teach Your Children Well

Lori Hoertel

To Mom and Dad:

Do you remember the time when I was 2,
and decided to "clean" the brand-new, plushy,
90's Plaid, Maroon Couch with Comet cleanser while you were busy?
I took advantage of my momentary freedom
and loaded my plastic McDonalds bucket with Comet cleanser,
courtesy of Uncle Randy.

What about when we went mushroom picking,
in our pasture? My attempts to be funny resulted
in water bottles, dirt, and grass replacing the original search for mushrooms.
The gritty, porous fungi, like a victory prize in my hand, and no one believed me.
But, I, alone, was victorious in the mushroom search party.

Fast-forward a few years. Remember the dormers at the old house?
How neat they were, with their interconnecting passageways
into Heather's room and my room,
and the intensity of the heat on the sweltering July day,
and that the fibrous green and yellow insulation
masked our voices
after I locked us in the dormers together.
I only wanted to play with the better Barbies, Polly Pockets,
and Pound Puppies.
But the door only opened from the outside.

Do you remember your surprise, when I jammed my head
in between
the bed and the wall?
How difficult it was to remove my head
from its lodged position?
I have never heard Heather laugh so much.

I have to say, breaking my arm in McCall's Floormart is one of my personal best.
Those flimsy, Old Navy sandals really failed
me as I fell on the slick, concrete floor,
and fractured my arm.

The countless times you've looked at me and sighed, I had no doubt you loved me.

Problem Solved

Karley Long

It was just another day in pre-calculus. The same boring Mrs. Jensen sat down from finishing her same boring questions on trigonometric functions for the same bored class. The only thing different about the class was Tyler Herbert. Tyler Herbert had, to put it gently, had quite enough.

It was just one of those days where nothing seemed to go right. Tyler had overslept, rushed into the shower only to be out of soap, slipped on the way out of the shower, eaten the floor, and missed the bus. A very angry mother drove him to school, complaining about how she would now be late to work, complaining about other drivers, complaining about songs on the radio, complaining about "kids these days," and (most of all) complaining about Tyler.

After being dropped off and being more than happy to get away from his mother, Tyler realized he had left his backpack in the backseat of the car. There's no way she's coming back for that Tyler thought, defeated. He was already dreading the skeptical looks from his teachers for not turning in any of his homework that day. After a desperate search, Tyler realized all he had in his locker were some shabby pencils, a few folders, a cheap calculator, and a pair of scissors.

After a zero for no history paper to turn in, a lecture for no English notes to review, and some very dirty looks from partners on a group project who suspected Tyler hadn't done any of his work, Tyler was feeling very on-edge. Just one more class he told himself. Then, this miserable day will be over.

It was pre-calculus. People who wanted to sound smarter called the class trigonometry. Regardless, the class was always the worst. Besides the boring teacher and boring questions, Tyler was just plain bad at math no matter how hard he tried. Worst of all was Kenna Jones. Kenna sat in front of Tyler every day. Besides her know-it-all attitude (she was one of those kids who called the class trigonometry) and her perfect scores on every test, her long, black hair always fell all over Tyler's desk. No matter how many times he asked her to scoot her desk up, no matter how many times he pushed the hair off, Kenna Jones would always flip her black whip back onto his desk.

Tyler was not in the mood for Kenna's hair that day. After answering his fifth question wrong in front of the class (Mrs. Jensen loved to call students to the front of the room and ask them her boring questions until they got the answer right), Tyler was mercifully allowed to head to his seat. Kenna's hair was there waiting for him along with the sparse supplies he had scraped off the floor of his locker. The students began their homework assignment with the regular sounds of pencils scratching across the page, erasers furiously being rubbed over wrong answers, and whispers of "Did you get 72 degrees?" and "No, I got 162 degrees. You're in the wrong quadrant, Stupid." This was where Kenna Jones, who was never wrong about anything, was in her glory: "helping" her fellow classmates.

One unusual sound floated around the room as well. It was a very quiet, sporadic snip noise. No one bothered with the sound; the period was almost over, and students were hurrying to get as much done as possible. It's not like they wanted to bring the assignment for homework. For most of them, all they got done in class was all they were going to do.

The bell rang, and the students gathered their things. Tyler was the first one out of the room, speed walking to the door and breaking into a sprint once in the hallway. The rest of the students filed out lazily behind him, slightly interested in the sight.

Kenna Jones had walked all the way to the door before she realized she had left half of her hair behind on Tyler Herbert's desk.

Marching On Lydia Colvin

In the midst of the fall semester, as leaves are falling and my motivation is following suit, I often stroll on the trail that leads off of campus. As the winding asphalt begins to wander into the trees and away from the hustle and bustle of civilization, I start to wonder whether or not I am strong enough for this anymore.

Since I was little, my father would take me on walks both around the neighborhood and anywhere else a trail existed. He would point out the different types of trees and teach me to identify them by their leaves or bark. I could tell a passerby what that white-barked tree was, in fact, a sycamore and not a birch, since those are difficult to grow in Missouri. My father taught me the value of using my legs to travel; they took me to places no vehicle could access and became sturdier with time.

Legs, when properly cared for, could carry their owner anywhere, whether at a fast pace or a slow one, and were dependable. They were as strong as that person's will. I began to take mine on runs, relishing in the soreness that began when I knew they were becoming even stronger; this told me that I would be able to explore even further and even longer.

My mother always told me that my legs were one of my best physical attributes. She often joked that they were so flawless that I could become some kind of leg model. As I grew older, scars began to cross them and they became much less perfect than they once were, but they were still my trusty companions that would take me far away from home when it grew unbearable. They may not be pretty anymore, but sometimes, they were all that I had, so I took great pride in them.

By the time I was nineteen years old, my legs were strong and well-versed in the art of travelling. They carried me everywhere and I was known for my brisk walk both in the workplace and outdoors. One evening in summer, my boyfriend joined me on a walk down on historic Main Street in Saint Charles. We felt the bricks beneath our feet as we traversed the road, paying more attention to exploring each other's past than the shops that surrounded us on either side; we had seen them all about a hundred times. Suddenly, my legs, those faithful companions that carried me through my life in more ways than one, failed me. A sharp pain shot up my left hip and it felt like it was separating from my body. I was forced to stop adventuring and was unable to do anything including sit comfortably in the car without crying.

When my boyfriend brought me home to my parents, I was delivered over to a whole new existence. For the first time in my life, I was confined to the house. I limped from my room to the living room, flopping down onto the first available surface and wincing as I did so, holding back tears from the constant pain. This was now my life. I could not go on adventures unattended. I could not wander amongst the trees and identify them as I watched for woodland creatures. Instead, I tread this same path from my room to the common area of the house, over and over again.

The only adventure I now saw was down the hallway of Metro Imaging as I limped, hindered by the baggy and faded blue hospital pants, to the massive MRI machine. I learned that I much preferred the dreaded sound of clicking cicadas in the woods to the cacophonous click-clacking of the machine. I always listened to music on my adventures, but I had never listened to it as intently as I did on this one. Like a storm played faintly in the background as I held back tears, cursing my legs for letting me down after all that I did for them, angry that they were putting me through this hell. I was confined to the tiny space of the machine, no vast blue sky above me.

I step on a twig, the loud snapping jarring me back to reality. Recovery for me was sudden; no one is quite sure what literally swept my legs out from under me, but I am now able to walk with minimal pain. However, fear is constant, as my hip could give out again at any second. Refusing to surrender, I walk further into the woods toward the promise of some new discoveries, trusting my legs to carry me just as they always have.

The Weepers
Tjizembua Tjikuzu

Their polychromatic Victorian dresses move
like terrible serpents and sweep the soft red sand,
drawing upon it musings of a wounded nation.

Their wailings are piercing sirens
that harken the heart and make the hair
at the back of your neck stand up.

They move slowly in unison;
a large pulsing body of water;
a brood of shy graceful hens.

They approach the holy-fire—
their cries the sound of a river
scraping its bank, and the trails

of tears on their cheeks a hermetic
language that only the breeched sons
and daughters of our nation can decipher.

The Tarot Comedy
Thomas Miller

I began my journey as the Fool who had lost his way.
In the grim Hell I felt sorry for the Magician, Simon.
I heard the heretical priests and Priestesses deny the Son.
I was blessed by the presence of the Empress, Constance.
The violent Emperors were drowned in the blood of their victims.
The corrupt Hierophants were punished regardless of title.
I saw the turmoil of the Lovers, Paolo and Francesca.
The sinful royalty were ferried on boats instead of glorious Chariots.
The giants stood inside of wells, sapped of all their Strength.
The slothful stayed in the river for being Hermits from God's light.
The greedy left their lives to the unceasing spinning of the Wheel of Fortune.
Cruel King Minos wielded the cruel Justice towards the sinful.
The forest of the seventh circle kept the pitiful Hanged Men.
The damned suffered unending cycles life and Death.
My guide taught me to find Temperance with the loss of a life.
I climbed down the back of the Devil to see the light of the other side.
I looked upon and climbed the mountain that stood like a Tower to Paradise.
I saw the winged Stars move gracefully through the skies and spheres.
My guide and I rested when we saw the glow of the Moon.
I met the wise in the realm of the Sun.
I was tested on the virtues and received Judgement by three Apostles.
In the end, I found the World.

Mammoth Beauty
Laura Wiltshire
1st Place: Graphics



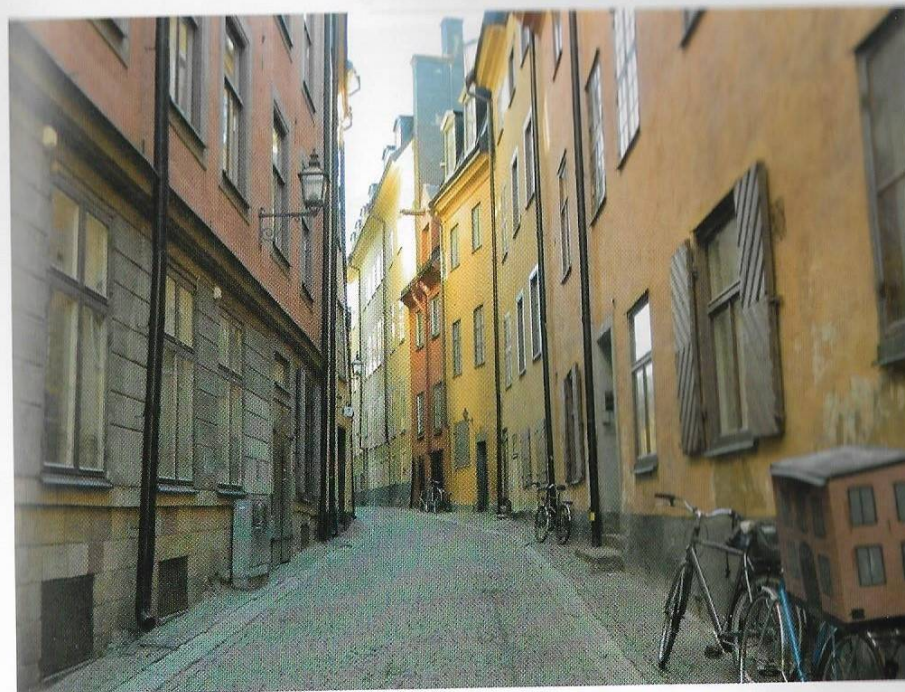
Cast-Away
Katie Crawford
2nd Place: Graphics



Small Town, Big Color
Ashleigh Haslag
3rd Place: Graphics



Gamla Stan
Tiffany Crawford



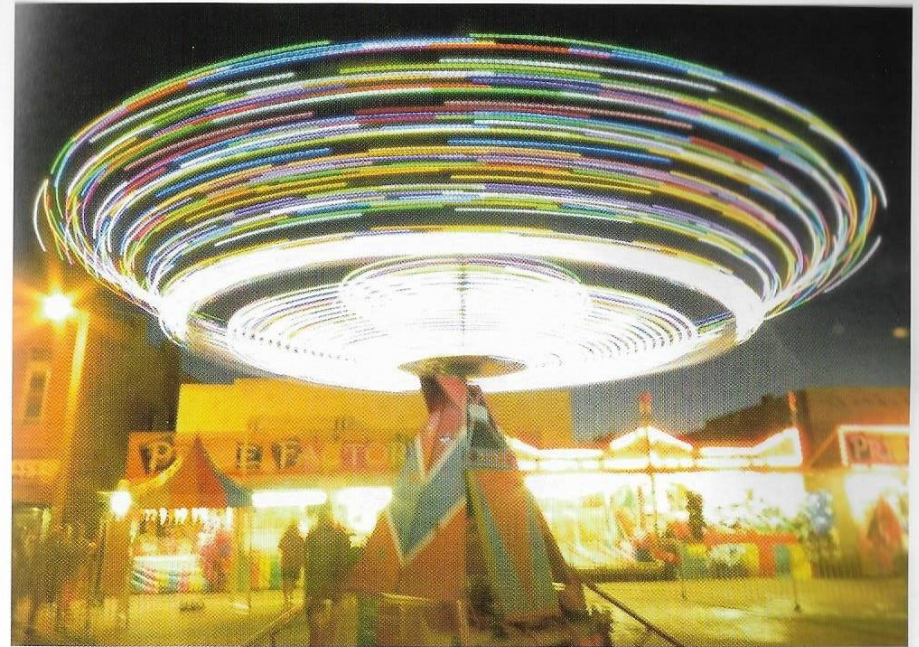
Fushimi Inari-taisha
Katie Crawford



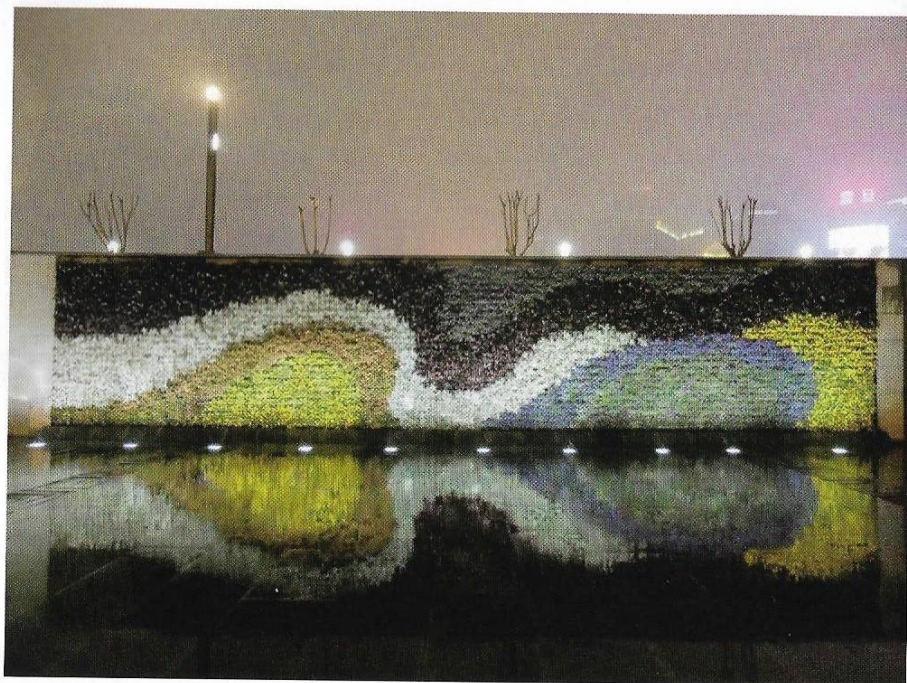
Tribal Owl
Ashleigh Haslag



County Fair
Stefanie Eggleston



Rainy Eyes
Katie Crawford



Morning Drive
Stefanie Eggleston



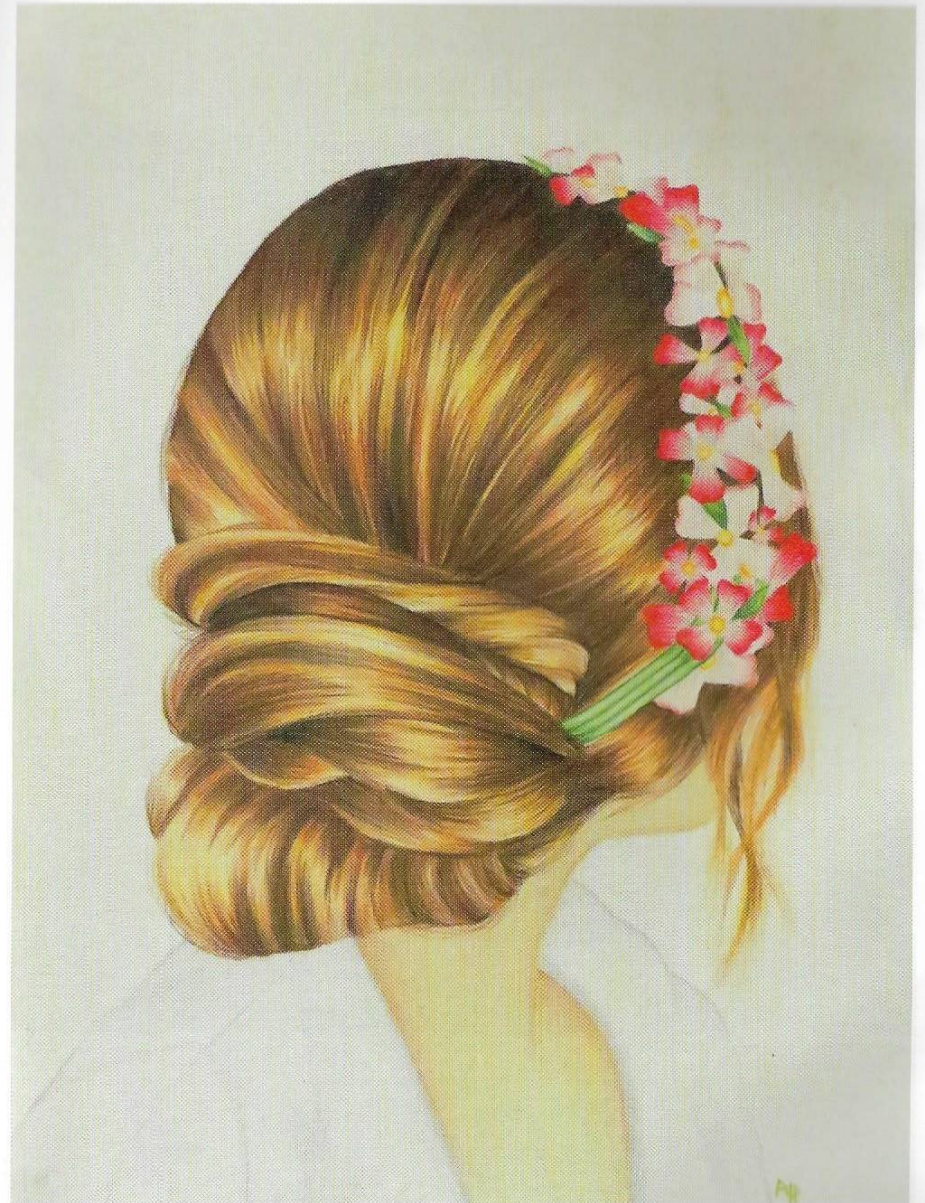
Colorado Summer
Maya Sosa



Pomme
Sydney Sexton



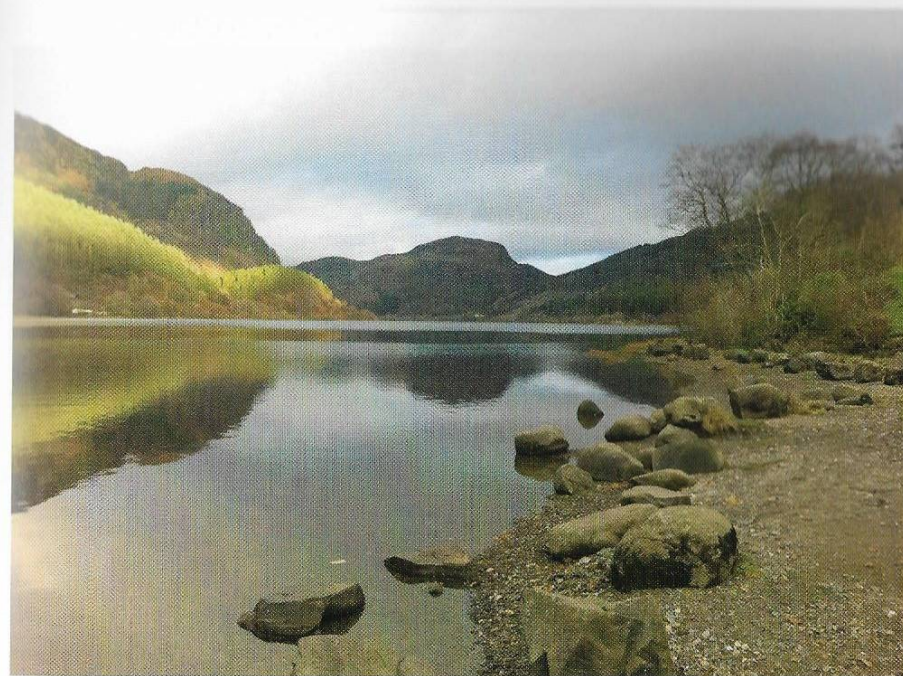
Reverse Portrait
Ashleigh Haslag



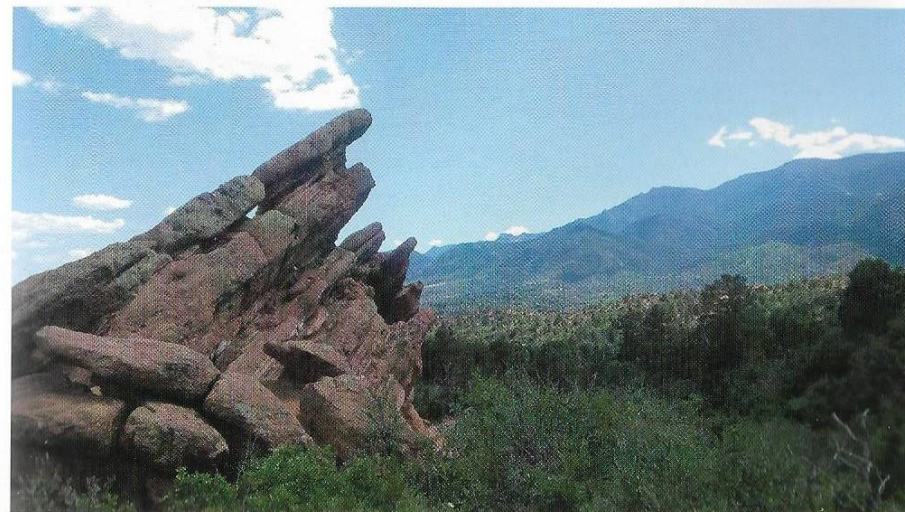
Mountain Curve
Laura Wiltshire



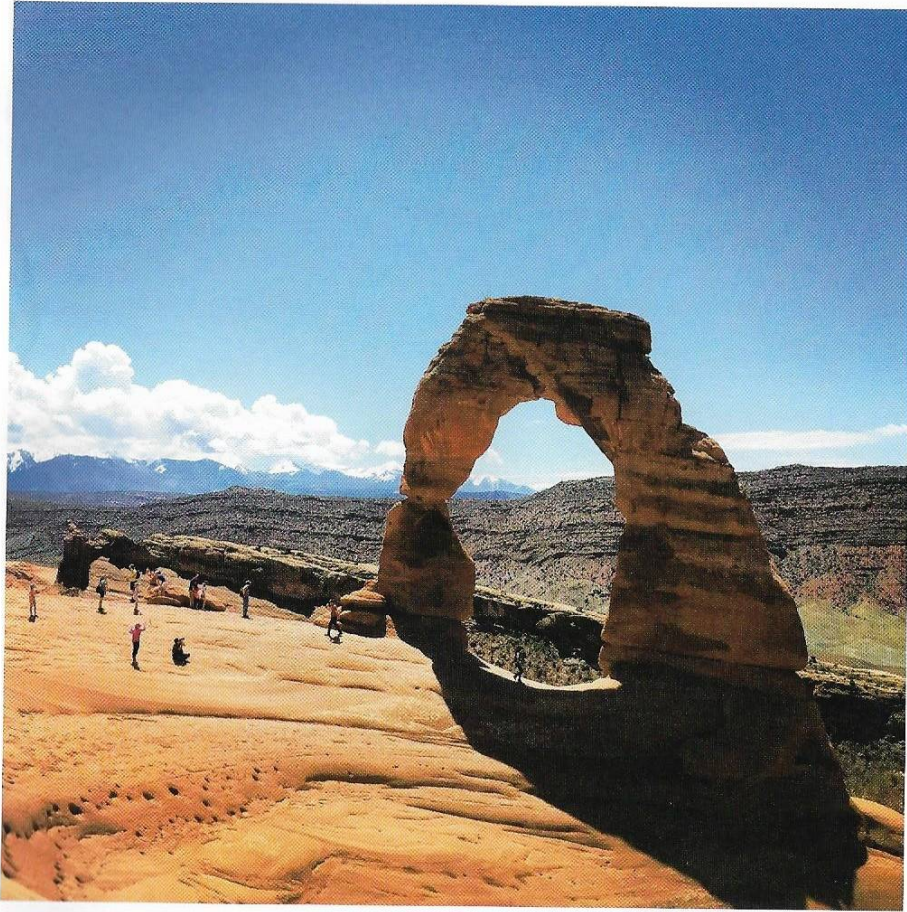
Scotland
Tiffany Crawford



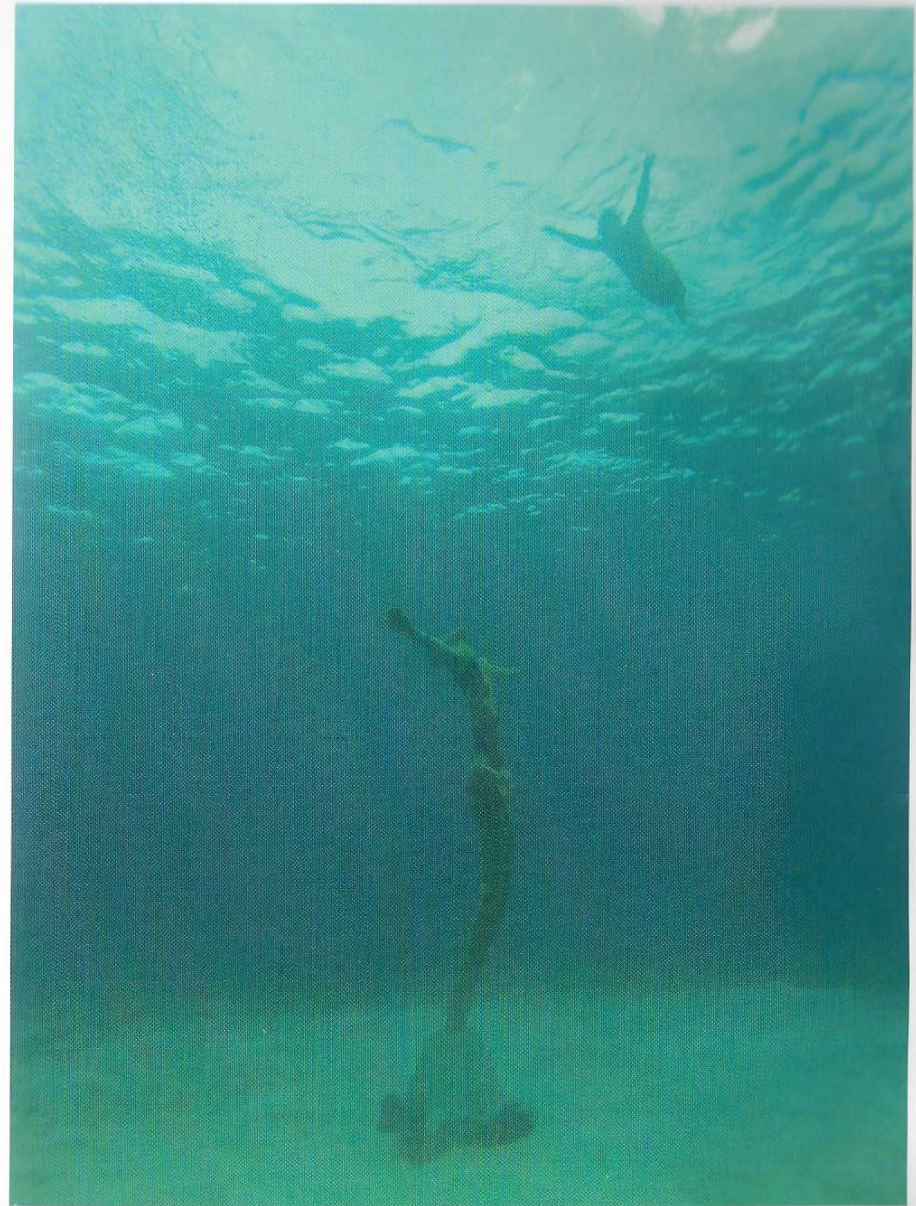
Garden of the Gods, Colorado
Maya Sosa



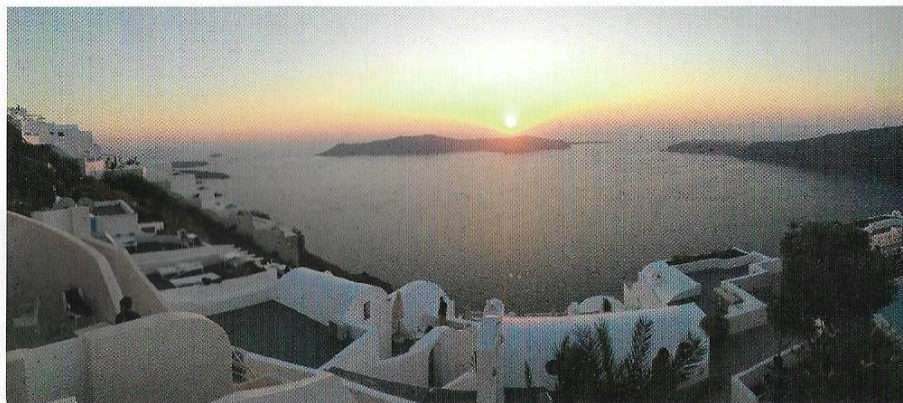
Hidden in Plain Sight
Laura Wiltshire



Secrets of the Sea
Karli Dawson



Sunset on the Island of Santorini
Jamie Striler



Looking Out at the Atlantic from the Giant's Causeway, Ireland
Jamie Striler



Tobacco Caye Paradise
Alex Rauscher



This Morning
Saurav Singh



That Scene in "Jaws"
Joseph Nieves

When Hooper's gruesome vessel
 emerges from the churning, open ocean,
 all mangled aluminum—
 that's what your bicycle looked like,
 twisting out the trunk
 of your friend's car
 in the hospital parking lot.
 I saw like Chief Brody did,
 guts wrenched.
 Inside, you're in a patient bed,
 scared. You don't remember
 what happened, but I picture the whip
 of soft hair on steel panels.
 Hear the smack of skull on street.
 Your bike somersaulting
 behind you. The hushed
 oh-my-gods of witnesses.
 Later, I'll wonder
 what I'd do without you
 and contemplate the stages of grieving.
 Now, I say I like your neck brace
 and think about how much cleaner
 hospitals appear on tv.
 This doesn't look like a place
 where people get better.
 I work at distraction
 while the doodads blink and bloop,
 and we put on this dress rehearsal
 for a scene like this
 we'll play out many years from now.
 We might switch roles. Or maybe,
 if it serves the story, we'll give my lines
 to someone else, and split
 your part into two.

Transcript From Officer Vasquez's Recording Device of Stand Off
Clarisse Leech

"You know, for all that I do, I'm really practical about death. No really.

"See, I think it started with my Uncle Mike, which is weird, because, honestly? I was never close to him. I was, what, five maybe, when he died. He'd been sick a really long time, like back before either of my parents even got together. And he just kicked it. I give him props though 'cause he did it on his own terms. Mom told me way after that he'd been in a lot of pain, and that he was tired.

"I can respect that, you know? Someone decidin' when and how they're gonna die. There's a power to that since we never get to decide when and how we're born, or who to, or where at, so it seems fitting that we decide when we leave.

"Anyways, like I was sayin', practical. Maybe it was my great-grandparents that did it, but I don't really think so either. I wasn't close to any of the ones left, and the one I actually saw didn't really like me. Don't know why, I mean, what could I have done to her? Peed on her? Sorry a toddler isn't fully in control of their bladder, am I right?

"So she died and I was eight, and all I could think was, 'Okay, can I watch cartoons now?'

"To be fair, there was my godfather, but like Uncle Mike he'd been sick since before I was born. Still, spent a lot more time with him, and we were off-and-on close. Parents had a fallin' out with him though, still not sure about what. I hadn't seen him for longer than, like, a day in three years when my dad got the call from Mom. Infection out of nowhere, he was gone in a week.

"I did cry when I talked at the funeral, and it hurt, but only for a week or two, and then it was just lik-

"Oh! There was my step-grandfather. It's so weird to say that. See, I always called him Judge, just like everyone else, 'cause that was his name. Well, actually his name was John, but only Judy, my step-grandmother called him that, and that's when she was angry. Or Bob, his best friend, but Bob always had to be different so, eh, his name was Judge.

"Mom called and did the whole thing where she asked me if I was sittin' down, which made me a hell of a lot more nervous than if she'd just said it. Right after she told me I friggin' sprinted through those stages. Man, I hit shock and blasted straight into anger, like, I think I actually said, 'No he fuckin' didn't,' 'cause he was supposed to see me graduate. Same as my godfather and they died! Like, what am I supposed to do? So then came the tears and the crying and right after I actually asked my mom if she was sure he was dead. Like, what the hell kind of questions is that? But that's bargaining for you I guess.

"And then? Then I got calm. Whole thing took forty minutes, tops.

"And really, I can tell you where I changed the most, I don't mean to shock you or anything, that's why I started off with dying family. That's relatable right?

"I was a sophomore in high school when I put my stepdad's .38 in my mouth.

"See, it's that look right there why I always start with Uncle Mike. If I just threw you in the deep end you'd never come up again. Try to stick with me, yeah? This is important.

"So, I was fifteen, and shit had just gotten a bit too real, feel me? When I was second grade a kid hospitalized me and he was never punished. You know what that signaled to the other kids? Fair game. School didn't care, so why should they? Third grade a girl I idolized "initiates" me into her little wanna-be gang by burning me with a lighter, bad. Fifth grade I get told that if another kid attacks me first, I can't fight back because of "zero-tolerance." What the fuck, right? Sixth grade I'm told I ask for it, all of it. All of the abuse, the pain, everything. By high school I'd developed a lovely set of disorders, but nobody noticed.

"No, that's not true. The truth is no one gave a shit. I'd started cuttin' on myself and doing all that 'Warning signs your teen may be in trouble,' shit, but Mom just couldn't get it, Dad didn't give a shit, and my step parents? Ha! No.

"As you can see, this lead to the .38.

"I'd even told my mom I didn't want my stepdad bringing a gun into the house, but did he listen? No. He "knew better." Bitch didn't know shit.

"So there I am, sitting on Mom's and my stepdad's bed. I got all dressed up and had taken a shower, even used the nice lavender stuff my grandma had gotten me. What can I say? The last impression I was gonna leave was gonna be a nice one, sort of.

"The gun's in my mouth, like way far back, and I can taste it.

"You ever tasted gunmetal? No? Well, not that surprised."

"Anyway. My hand's kind of aching from how I'm having to hold it, and I'm nervous 'bout the angle 'cause I really want the bullet to go right through the stem. Brain stem that is. Instant death and it shouldn't fuck up the parts of me people will see. And I'm sittin' there and sittin' there and sittin' there some more. I keep almost pullin', but it's not quite happening.

"What the hell, right? I'm all dressed up and nowhere to go, kind of thing.

"That's when I hear the door downstairs open, and I realize something. I didn't really want to kill myself. Not really. I wanted to live. I wanted to live a long, hedonistic life. 'Cause fuckem if they thought they got to treat me like shit. Fuckem if they thought they got to ignore me.

"Fuckem.

"So that's when I killed Dumb Bitch 1. Sorry, I mean my mom. DB 2, my stepdad, was only, like, two hours later after he came home from work.

"See, I realized right after that, that everyone dies. Literally. Everyone. And it could happen at any time.

"I could be walkin' and get hit by a bus, or be sleepin' and heart attack, dead. I could be watchin' TV and a plane crashes into my house. There's a million ways to die at any time. No warning.

"That more than anything made me practical about death. Fearin' something that's gonna happen no matter what you do? That's stupid as shit. Like, what? Live in fear every day of my life? No thanks, did that, got the scars to prove it. So now I just don't care. Well, no, I care, I just don't fear.

"And you'd never know. It still kinda surprises me that when I'm ridin' the bus, or just out shoppin' that people don't notice. No one looks at me and thinks, 'That bitch knows the secret to life. She's got herself all figured out.'

"Now, why are you giving me that look? I do know! I'm not scared.

"I'm not.

"So, I guess what all this has been about is this. Did you seriously think, between me and you, you ever had a chance? Knowin' what you know now.

"You still live in fear. I'm livin' the high life.

"Sure, you're pointing that gun at me now, but in thirty seconds? Fifteen?

"You could pull that trigger, and I won't even flinch, Dumb Bitch 43."

Playing Guitar Stefanie Eggleston

Playing guitar in the autumn breeze,
With leaves finally falling from the trees,
My favorite season, here again,
Perfect, just like it's always been,
Singing and playing guitar with ease.

Not one of my friends disagrees,
That there couldn't be better days than these,
With the wind gently tickling our skin,
Playing guitar.

With sheet music draped over my knees,
It couldn't be more than 70 degrees,
And I know there will be a day when,
We all sit around, remembering "back then,"
But for now we'll sit and wait for the freeze,
Playing guitar.

To the armpit hair that is never there. Veronica Lake

The brand-new sweater from the school's bookstore
leaves an artificial fuzz on my normally bare armpits.
Light-hearted jokes of masculinity are thrown by friends before
the fuzz is swept clean, but there it emits.
Threatening "femininity" with its
very existence. Every single stubby strand
gives the smooth curves of my womanly tits
the face of a caveman. If they could stand—
but it must be shaved and feels more like sand.
I am told to hate the hair that grows there.
It's not like the hair that grows to demand.
It lacks the vigor and courage to be there.
I don't think I would mind hair that naturally grew,
but my lady hairs just wouldn't know what to do.

This is to Say (I might've eaten the Cheez-Its)

Lori Hoertel

I noticed you bought a new box
of Cheez-It Party Mix (in Original)

I might have opened the
box

For quality control purposes
of course

And...

The box might've disappeared
within the span of an hour....

Bit-by-Bit

Bite, by Crunch, by Bite
Gone.

Too Much Excitement

Karley Long

1st Place: Prose

It was one of those shifts that just seemed to last forever. The hospital was dead, and paperwork always ticks by much slower than patient care. There were no patients to care for: Old Mr. Peterson was fast asleep and wouldn't wake up for at least an hour to complain about his back pain. Everyone else had been discharged by the previous shift of nurses. I almost wanted to call out, "It sure is quiet tonight," just to get things moving. I needed some excitement to get through the rest of the night.

After accepting defeat from the piles of charts I needed to finish, I decided to take a lap around the hospital. I ditched the outpatient floor and headed upstairs. The second floor hallways were wet on the left side. Soon enough, I caught up to Dave, one of the custodians, pushing his miniature Zamboni-looking floor cleaner. He scowled at me as I passed, something he does to every medical personnel for walking on his clean floors. His scowl to me was better deserved, though. I dropped two packs of O negative in a rush the other week and, needless to say, he took it more personally than my footsteps.

"Hey, Dave," I said too cheerfully.

"Hmm," grunted Dave, checking my shoes for anything that could harm his perfect floors and then glancing up to make sure I wasn't carrying any potentially-disastrous items in my arms. After looking somewhat satisfied, he went back to his Zamboni-ing, and I continued on my way. *So I'm a little klutzy, kill me why don't you?*

Even though I told myself I was just stretching my legs, I knew where I would end up. There's only one place in the hospital that is never boring, to me at least. After passing the nurses' station of the maternity ward and giving Nurse Ronda a knowing wink, I let myself into the nursery.

The coos of newborns welcomed me, and I weaved in and out of the long row of babies, rating them on cuteness, most alien-looking, and most likely to have bum parents. This is where I typically wound up on the night shifts during slow evenings. There was always a fresh supply of babies, and no one cared that I popped in to say hi. The hospital was so big that no one besides Ronda even knew that I wasn't a maternity ward nurse. The first floor just got so boring: stupid outpatient care. I miss all the excitement and send people on their merry ways after their near-death experiences. *Wooh. How exciting.*

That night's batch was about as good as it gets: two sets of twins, a baby with a tooth, and three gingers. I was just about to pick up One Tooth when the sliding doors opened and one of the OBs came in. "Nurse, can you bring Henry down the hall to room 205? His mother is awake and wants to see him."

"Sure thing," I replied. Three seconds after the doctor left, I realized that I probably shouldn't mess with the babies because that's so not my job, but my baby loving got the best of me. *What the heck? Why not?*

It turned out that Henry was Ginger One at the end of the long row of babies. I bent down to pick him up, and Henry decided it would be a good idea to yank my hair. "Hey!" I yelled at him, pulling his tiny fingers apart. "We are not off to a good start here, Sir." Once I freed myself, I took one step back too many and ran into Ginger Two's crib. It was like a domino effect: Ginger Two hit Ginger Three who hit One Tooth who hit Twin One, Two, Three, and Four. Before I knew it, every baby was zig zagged and crying. *Rise and shine everyone!*

Panicked, I rearranged the rows of crying newborns, shushing and comforting as I went. Before long, the OB was back: a chorus of eight babies is enough to get anyone's attention.

"What's going on in here, Nurse?"

"I sneezed. Woke them all up. It's just one of those nights, isn't it?" The words fell smoothly off my tongue, surprising me. *Good cover.*

"Just get Henry to his mom, okay?" She was gone once more.

I turned around to get Henry but my foot caught a clipboard on the ground. I bent down to pick it up and saw three more that had fallen as well. *Oh no. This is bad. This is very bad.*

Not only had four boards fallen off, but I had moved the cribs back before noticing. Two boards were close together and two were far away from any of the babies.

I hurried over to the closest boards. One Tooth and Twin One were close by and missing their clipboards. *Process of elimination here. One Tooth is a boy, Twin One is a girl! Yes!* I calmed down and put the boards back in their correct places: the crisis was averted. *Wait.* I walked over to the other boards that had flown across the room and picked them up. Ginger Two and Ginger Three were both missing charts and were both girls.

"Oh, no," I whined, looking frantically from Ginger Two to Ginger Three. The charts told me absolutely nothing that could help me tell them apart. Both had had the same examinations, both were healthy and well, and both had been in the hospital for about the same amount of time. "Okay, which one is Linda and which one is Katherine?" I asked them. Ginger Three smiled when I said "Katherine," and that was good enough for me. I threw the boards back in place and quickly grabbed Ginger One, I mean Henry, keeping my hair out of the danger zone, and headed down to 205.

"Are you okay, Sweetie?" Nurse Ronda asked as I scurried by.

"Everything's fine!" I practically yelled. I made it to 205 and dropped off the baby. Henry's mom looked like a bum. *Called it.* I headed back to outpatient care as fast as I could and decided I should stay there for the rest of the night.

By the time I sat down at my stall at the nurses' station, Mr. Peterson was stirring awake. "Hey, Nurse! Come give me something for my pain!"

"Of course, Mr. Peterson."

Maybe outpatient care was the right level of excitement for me. Babies are just too much.

See friend Yuan'er off for a task in Anxi

Wang Wei

Translated by Mei Du

Light rain this morning settles the dust in
the city of Wei.

The color of the tavern looks fresher, and
the willows greener.

Before you set off, why not empty one last
cup of wine?

Out west, past the Yang Pass, no more
friends you will see.

Green Eyes

Katie Koonce

In a quaint Vietnamese restaurant on the corner of Main Street and University, a bachelor named Stephen sat alone waiting for an old high school buddy to join him for lunch before he began preparing for what promised to be a long and infuriating rehearsal dinner for his younger sister's wedding. A waitress with knotted, red dreadlocks and a colorful sleeve of ink brought him a menu and asked for his drink order. The bachelor requested a diet coke, easy on the ice, but refused the menu with an open hand. He already knew what he wanted.

"I'd like to start with an order of your shrimp spring rolls, no carrots and can you add an extra side of peanut sauce? Thanks, I'll wait for my friend before I order my meal. He is a large fellow with brown hair, much lighter than mine. Do you mind pointing him this way?"

The waitress responded with a tired, cockeyed look but nodded her head in agreement. The restaurant was a single room with only a dozen tables, most of which were empty.

As she walked away, Stephen checked the Shinola on his wrist and returned to the newspaper he had been skimming. From the look of it, his hometown hadn't changed much. There were a few names in the paper he didn't recognize but for the most part it appeared as if the entire place had been frozen in time since he had left almost a decade before.

Outside, sunlight ricocheted off the fresh January snow and gleamed through the large glass windows that made up the restaurant's storefront. The light illuminated the small room casting a bright, pure glow. The bell above the restaurants' entrance chimed as a slender, attractive-looking woman opened the door and walked inside.

At first, he thought that maybe the dazzling sunlight pouring in around her was obscuring his vision. The woman dressed like those he saw in downtown Manhattan on his way to work; clad in designer labels and sophisticated in stature, she stuck out against the Midwestern backdrop like a model in front of a green screen. She removed the sunglasses that hung over her eyes and placed them on top of her head, pulling her honey blonde hair away from her face. As she moved toward the cash register, the freckles dusted across her nose and cheekbones came into focus.

"Hi, I called in about a to-go order," she said to the waitress kindly with an assertive kick.

As the waitress's red hair disappeared into the kitchen, the woman felt Stephen staring from across the room and turned her head to meet his gaze. Her eyes, a deep seabed blue, caught his. For a moment, she held his icy blue, Siberian husky eyes against her own. A soft, wistful smile slowly formed on her face. She nodded, acknowledging him, and turned away as the waitress returned.

Stephen's stomach sank. He should have said something, he thought. He could have at least waved. Stephen sat in the wooden chair that had suddenly become more uncomfortable, silently cursing his luck and the cliché situation.

"One steak rice bowl, an order of chicken lettuce wraps, a kid's noodle bowl, and an order of shrimp spring rolls- no carrots. Is that all for you today, ma'am?"

The waitress calculated the price of the order while the woman reached down beside her and picked up something that the bachelor had been too preoccupied to notice before.

Long, curly strands of blonde hair cascaded down from the head of the little girl the woman now held. The young girl hugged her mother's neck and nestled her cheeks on soft Burberry cashmere as the mother swayed side to side, shifting her weight from right to left, cooing to the hungry child.

"Thank you so much. Oh! Can I also have an extra peanut sauce? Thanks."

As the mother turned, her daughter in one arm and lunch in the other, and walked toward the door, light from outside reflected off Stephen's watch and caught the young girl's attention. The light illuminated the freckles across the child's nose as her small, green eyes met his. Green eyes. Warm, like a clearing in a forest or oak leaves that have been touched by the golden glow of a summer sun.

Those little green eyes might have been blue, Stephen thought. Had he been able, so many years ago, to stay in this little, frozen town with Claire. It could have been the two of them eating shrimp rolls together, like they used to. Admiring the snow and laughing as their own blue eyed, blonde sat across from them dirtying an extra peanut sauce with her cherub fingers.

As The Storm Rolls In

Luke Gerau

The autonomic bliss that is the calm before the storm,
As the gentle and cool breeze whisks over your skin you cannot help but feel alive.

In awe of the beauty that is life.

The beauty that is the world around us.

Often we focus so heavily on the destruction around us, we forget about elegant sun light softly blinding us as we look towards a better tomorrow. The unforgettable sight of autumn leaves carried into the distance by an unforeseen influence.

And the smell of rain just over the horizon.

As the tress twist and turn in the whipping wind we are reminded of the artsy world painted by the divine before our very eyes.

Each stoke a masterpiece.

Sketched into beautiful imperfection we are creatures of observation not understanding

For natural beauty is enigmatic

One can admire but never fully understand

The Story of this Tree

Emma Kliethermes

I stretch my leaves towards
the sun for warmth,
like raising my hands to the heavens
reaching for the stars.

No matter how much I grow
or how high I climb, though,
my roots are deep and tangled.
They keep me in my place.

I am sturdy and weathered
from the strongest of storms long past.
My bark, chipped and scratched -
my hard won battle scars
from those who tried to chop me down.

But if they sliced me in half
and examined my beautiful rings,
they would realize the story of this tree
is about survival, and inner strength.

I am a tree;
but I envy birds and their wings.

The Importance of Teeth

Katie Koonce

"On the positive side, it's only a cosmetic issue, you know what I mean?" Leo said it so nonchalantly, as if he would have handled the situation any differently. I could have slapped him in the face.

50% of people say that a smile is the first feature that they notice about a person. That means, that every other person you encounter on a daily basis, in the classroom, at work, or passing on the street, immediately stares at your mouth. That statistic can weigh heavily on a woman with a missing tooth and a shattered smile.

Tooth enamel is the hardest part of your entire body and yet, I've broken more teeth in my lifetime than I have bones. My front, left tooth is 80% fake and many more of my teeth have been chipped over the years creating a jagged, imperfect row of white crowns that hide behind my lower lip. I have knocked out the same front tooth three times, and each time it has happened during very different stages of my life. My best friend thinks I lose teeth so easily because I don't drink enough milk (a habit I abandoned about 5 years ago when I started to count calories), but I attribute it to clumsiness and poor decisions.

I broke my front tooth for the first time as a seventh grader. As I am awkward and lanky, my body was changing and my coordination at an all time low. During a soccer game I was hit in the mouth by the opposing team's goalie. Her fist struck me while I jumped up to meet a ball in the air with my head. Only a small piece of the corner of my tooth was lost but I wore my battle wound with pride throughout the weekend, excited for an excuse to get out of class on Monday morning.

It only took Dr. Blum forty-five minutes to recreate the missing piece of tooth with an adhesive liquid material that he hardened with an ultraviolet flashlight. The filling just barely rose up off my original tooth and was almost impossible to detect unless you looked very closely, in the right light. But with time and stupidity, I managed to chip away at the majority of my other teeth. My small bottom teeth and sharp canines took the hardest hits but they were minute changes, too small to fix with another large dental bill.

Teeth serve four main purposes. First, aiding in pronunciation and articulation while speaking. Second, reserving space for the permanent, adult teeth that erupt from the gums when they are fully developed. Next, keeping a pleasant and balanced facial profile. And finally, as well as most importantly, teeth are required for acquiring and chewing food. After I initially chipped it playing soccer, my newly reconstructed front tooth continued to fulfill its purposes and enabled me to eat with ease (while also preserving the "pleasantness" of my original profile). But, as I grew from a carefree preteen into a self-conscious high school teenager, I began to stress over my personal appearance and abandoned the primary function of my teeth - chewing.

Each of the four types of teeth in the human mouth- incisors, canines, premolars, and molars- serve a distinct purpose in order to break down food and assist the digestive process. The four front teeth on the top and bottom rows are known as central incisors.

Incisors have a single root that anchors them into the bone socket and have a smooth, flat crown. The thin edges of the central incisors are used primarily to cut or incise food. The left, central incisor on the top layer of my teeth that I had broken, although less than authentic, was still full functioning. But, my damaged self-worth prevented it from carrying out its job.

Disappointed in the way I looked and lacking confidence in myself, I became obsessed with the food I ate (and wasn't eating). The process of self-inflicted nutritional decay began by eliminating sweets and sugar from my diet. Then, refined carbs, starches, and all beverages except for water (the only true no calorie drink) were all banned. The list of NO grew until eventually I was spitting chewed food into my napkin at the dinner table to avoid my parents' incessant questioning about my sudden change in appetite.

My frail body appeared plump and ugly when I looked at it in full-length mirrors. The pain of hunger fought for my mind's attention but was constantly silenced by the skewed self-perception that plagued my thoughts. My teeth and my body grew weak as a shadow of inadequacy followed me through all walks of life. But, with maturing, finally came the strength to overcome and eliminate the toxic relationship that had caused the large cavity within my self-worth. Soon after, my body became healthier. The days became brighter. But, every so often, something would block the sun, casting a dark shadow back over my thoughts and tainting my vision of myself.

My first couple years of college were spent on a rollercoaster of utilizing social outings to medicate my problems and the states of regret and self-disappointment that followed. It was during one of these Saturday night healing sessions that I broke my left central incisor for the second time. Small, white pieces of it scattered across the fraternity's dirty floor along with broken pieces of the bottle that had caused the damage. Annoyed and intoxicated, I brushed off the accident because only a small piece of the missing enamel was visible to others. I had it fixed later that week.

Less than a year later, I finally said goodbye to what was left of my original front tooth. Surrounded by a dozen close friends and a bar full of people, I had planned to enjoy the celebration of my first legal drink. But, the night quickly turned to chaos when an elbow, or maybe a beer bottle (no one is quite sure), broke the single root that held my tooth in place.

Here is where I find myself, achy and exhausted, battling semi-trucks and commuters on I-70 on the way to California, Missouri, in hopes that a dentist can reconstruct a shiny, bright porcelain replica of my front tooth that has been reduced to a sharp arrowhead of enamel. I am thankful that my friend Leo has volunteered to escort me to the office, for all my time spent in the dentist's examination chair has not eased my fear. But his dismissal of the magnitude of "cosmetics" to a woman with only a sliver of a front tooth and series of job interviews ahead of her, makes me want to give him a first-hand taste of the experience with my fist.

Contributors

Abi Bax is a Junior (Senior by credit) Spanish Education and Spanish Language Major. She is very academically driven, being a member of Kappa Delta Pi (Education Honor Society), Alpha Lambda Delta (Freshman Honor Society), and the Westminster Honors Program. She also spends some time with her sisters from Alpha Gamma Delta, and work with the Westminster Advisory Technology Team (WATT). When she is not doing all of that, she is either working as a Starbucks Barista or relaxing with a good movie and good friends and family.

Malisa Chaidez is a local student from Kingdom City and one of the few Mexican-Americans found in Callaway County, which has been both a blessing and an annoyance. She is currently majoring in Biology and Spanish with a possible minor in Religious Studies. For the future, she plans on going to graduate school as close to the beach as possible to pursue a future career as a Marine Conservation Biologist.

Lydia Colvin is a junior studying Business Administration at Westminster and has always had a passion for both reading and writing. She is from St. Peters, Missouri. Her hobbies of playing and listening to music, in addition to her other hobby of studying bands and artists and the works that they create, show just how much the artistic expression of individuality means to her.

Isaac Coronel is a Junior studying Biology to be a dentist one day. Originally from Arizona, Isaac Coronel came to Westminster College to pursue his biological studies, but became very involved with the Fine Arts community and hoped to expand it. When not writing music or poetry, Isaac Coronel is involved as Vice President for Phi Delta Theta, he is an employee for the National Churchill Museum, and participates in other activities on the campus. He also likes to work out in the early mornings, and then play futsal with friends when he has the time.

Katie Crawford is 22 years old. She is a half English and half Dutch junior at Westminster, but is currently studying abroad at Semester At Sea.

Tiffany Crawford is a junior Psychology student from Jefferson City, Missouri.

Karli Dawson will be graduating from Westminster College in 2016 with her degree in Biology. Karli currently works as PR and Marketing manager and ProStaff member for Safari Unlimited llc, an international hunting and fishing company. After graduation she plans on moving to Cozumel, Mexico to work as a dive master on the coral reef there.

Mei Du is a senior at Westminster College. She comes from China and majors in English (Creative Writing track). From time to time, she considers reading, writing, and talking in English a disaster for her, but as long as she meets books that she loves, suddenly everything becomes OK. Her interest ties with literature, translation, and writing, and she hopes that she can work in either of these fields in the future.

Stefanie Eggleston is a sophomore from Maysville, Missouri, majoring in Creative Writing and Business Communications. She enjoys spending her time reading, writing, playing guitar,

and taking pictures. In the future, she hopes to be able to teach creative writing at the college level and spend her free time writing.

Courtney Gallagher is a junior English major from St. Charles, Missouri.

Luke Gerau is a sophomore majoring in English. He is from St. Louis, Mo. He is a part of Kappa Alpha Order fraternity, and enjoys spending his free time at the Pines.

Ashleigh Haslag is from Jefferson City, Missouri, and is an Elementary Education major. She took four years of art in high school, but has always had a passion for drawing and painting. She typically finds inspiration for her art on Pinterest, then creates her own ideas based on what she has found. Aside from drawing, she also ice skates and teaches skating lessons. At Westminster she is involved in Blue Jay Buddies, WestMO Tutors, Alpha Gamma Delta, and Alpha Lambda Delta National Honor Society.

Lori Hoertel grew up with her parents and older sister on a Cattle farm in Rolla, Missouri. She will graduate Westminster this Spring with a Bachelor's in Elementary Education. She is currently looking into Master's programs for Special Education.

Emma Kliethermes is a senior, majoring in Secondary Education and minoring in English. She is from Koeltztown, Missouri, a small town in the middle of nowhere. Her hobbies include writing, reading, listening to music, singing, acting, directing, and watching her favorite movies and TV shows.

Katie Koonce is a senior from Norman, Oklahoma, majoring in Business Communication with minors in Business Administration and English. In her free time she enjoys running, being outside, watching the Oklahoma Sooners and OKC Thunder play, as well as dining out and spending time with her loved ones.

Veronica (Roni) Lake is from Saint Louis, Missouri. She is a double major in Creative Writing and Philosophy at Westminster. In high school, her parents thought she would go to an art college because she was really into painting, but then she got accepted to Westminster College and surprised them all by becoming a writer!

Clarisse Leech is a junior in the Creative Writing track of the English department, and greatly enjoys supplementing her English education by being a first reader for Apex Magazine. She is working toward becoming a professional genre fiction author and has already started by publishing her first short story, "Knock, Knock" in the online publication DM du Jour. When not bent over her desk she is likely running to an appointment she is almost late for.

Karley Long is a sophomore, Business Communication major at Westminster College. She enjoys writing fiction for her creative writing classes and hopes to keep writing outside of her business work after college.

Thomas Miller is a senior that is attempting to get into pharmacy school. His piece, "Tarot Comedy," is a poem he came up with to help him write a book that he has been working on for the past 7 years.

Breigh Neece is a freshman at Westminster College and an aspiring tattooist.

Joseph Nieves is a senior pursuing a degree in Creative Writing with a minor in Journalism, Media, and Publishing.

Alex Rauscher is a Secondary Education major with a concentration on General Sciences and a minor in Spanish from St. Louis, MO. She is also a member of WHEP, Kappa Alpha Theta, Student Ambassadors, Student Foundations, SGA Senate, Student Athletic Administrative Committee, and the Westminster Cross Country team.

Kate Sanchez is a senior from Lake Charles, Louisiana, and is majoring in Business Communication. Kate has always enjoyed writing. She remembers in 4th grade she had a notebook that she filled with different short stories. However, now she gets a lot of inspiration during her daily life and writing what she knows.

Sydney Sexton is a sophomore from Independence, Missouri. She is majoring in Accounting and minoring in French. Sydney loves France, which is where her photo was taken, and she hopes to return again soon.

Saurav Singh is a freshman majoring in Computer Science. He enjoys computers and playing soccer and the guitar.

Maya Sosa is majoring in Spanish & Secondary Education, and will graduate in the spring of 2016.

Jamie Striler is a senior, Psychology major with a Business Administration minor. She is a member of the Women's Tennis Team, Student Ambassadors, Psi Chi, Peer Health Educators, Alpha Chi, and Kappa Alpha Theta.

Tijzembua Tjikuzu is a senior from Namibia majoring in Environmental Science and English. His passion for writing stems from the desire to find truth in this world and heal the wounds of the past.

Laura Wiltshire is graduating in May with majors in Transnational Studies & Environmental Studies, and a minor in Geology. She keeps busy as a member of the Women's Tennis Team, Student Government Association, Alpha Gamma Delta, the Honors Program, and as a Residential Advisor. She loves nothing more than traveling, reading, going on adventures, and spending time with her loved ones.