



Expressions
2012

ALLEGANY COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

ALLEGANY COLLEGE OF MARYLAND



Expressions
2012

ALLEGANY COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

12401 Willowbrook Road, SE
Cumberland, Maryland 21502-2596
www.allegany.edu

Contributors:

Jeremy Arnold
Joyce Bradshaw
Stacey Cooper
Aaron Furlong
Chelsea George
Johanna Grabusnik
Candi Jones
Rachele Lantz
Katie Magruder
Savannah Masoncup
Rae Mateo
Rebekah Phillips
Sean Rose

Tilia Ryan
Kylie Shore
Telisha Simmons
Shannon Solomon
Andrew Sparber
Ron Stanley
Stephanie Trail
Eric Tyler
Christopher Ullery
Carrie Whetzel
Amy White
Jennifer Whitman
Joseph Willison

Faculty Editor: Dr. Georgia Kreiger
Student Editor: Vann Helms
Advisors: Arts and Humanities Faculty
Editorial Board: Autumn Becker, Carolyn Bond, John Bone,
David Bohnert, Cathy Condor, Joshua Getz,
Jim House, Ron Jenkins, Shannon Redman,
Kim Plume, Robyn Price, Suzanne Stultz,
Nick Taylor, Roger Tuning, Julie Watkins
Printer: Morgantown Printing & Binding

Front Cover Art: Never Lost, Stephanie Trail
Back Cover Photo: Tunnel, Stacy Cooper

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROSE AND POETRY

In Her Eyes, Sean Rose	7
A Chance Encounter with a Good Decision, Christopher Ullery	9
The Opera within Autumn, Sean Rose	12
Absolute Dissolution, Carrie Whetzel	15
My War, Telisha Simmons	17
Tubing, Rae Mateo	20
The Mountain, Ron Stanley	27
Punishment, Jennifer Whitman	33
In the Driver's Seat, Candi Jones	34
Obstacle, Katie Magruder	39
Untouchable, Tilia Ryan	41
Reality, Joyce Bradshaw	47
The Hunt, Amy White	51
Standing Alone, Jennifer Whitman	55
More Dead than Alive, Ron Stanley	57

ARTWORK

Dried River Bed, Joseph Willison	6
Surreal Project, Joseph Willison	16
Untitled, Chelsea George	18
Untitled, Chelsea George	28
Untitled, Jeremy Arnold	29
Wave, Jeremy Arnold & Rebekah Phillips	31
The Little Things Let Me Know, Stephanie Trail	40
Untitled, Chelsea George	49
Untitled, Jeremy Arnold	56

PHOTOGRAPHY

Unabridged, Savannah Masoncup	8
Untitled, Shannon Solomon	11
Solarium, Rachele Lantz	13
Endless Knowledge, Kylie Shore	14
Pining Away, Savannah Masoncup	19
Going the Distance, Aaron Furlong	25
Reflecting, Johanna Grabusnik	26
Efflorescence, Stephanie Trail	30
Hanami, Stephanie Trail	32
Serenade, Rachele Lantz	38
The Out House, Andrew Sparber	46
Untitled, Eric Tyler	50
Not so 'Itsy Bitsy,' Rachele Lantz	54

INSPIRATIONS	59
------------------------	----

STUDENT EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS

Serving as this year's student editor of *Expressions 2012* has provided me with important insights into the production of a literary and arts magazine. After working with the students and staff who have helped to create this year's edition, I now have a wealthy account of how to create a collection of students' creative work. During the fall semester, I scurried across campus taping and tacking posters publicizing our "Call for Submissions." Since January, I have been working to design and edit the magazine. If I were not graduating this spring, I would eagerly volunteer to serve as student editor again next year. The part I played in this work, however, is nothing compared to the contributing artists who offered their talents to our publications.

Picture a river run dry; the water ceased to flow long ago and the condition of the riverbed is beyond mere parched soil. Joseph Willison's drawing *Dry Riverbed* is such an image. An austere yet serene aesthetic is contained within. When the river does run dry, at least the artists will be inspired. Rachele Lantz's photograph *Serenade* and Stephanie Trail's drawing *The Little Things Let Me Know* are more comfortable images. The tinges of jealousy and admiration elicited in me by those two photographs reveal the intensely intimate glimpse creative art offers into the artist and our own lives. Creative works play with color. As you consume this collection, savor the strong flavor of the colors of Sean Rose's poems. They conjure a visual sensation as vivid as any photograph using only black ink on white paper. His poem *The Opera within Autumn* conveys the visual imagery that justifies setting down the camera and, instead, capturing poetically the vast vibrancy of our environment.

Do not be oppressed by page numbers; they are pesky little tyrants—skip around! Set this collection down and return to it. Different states of mind and emotions will yield a new understanding of many of these works. Creative works certainly are not mood rings, yet undeniably interpretations vary. Stacy Cooper's cover photograph *Tunnel* is just so.

Expressions is a summation of what it means to be a student at Allegany College of Maryland. Who cannot connect with Christopher Ullery's *A Chance Encounter with a Good Decision?* As community college students, we each, individually, confront this sort of circumstance. What sense we make of the madness is our own burden—or quest. So with the sense of human understanding and with the myriad routes to that understanding, travel through this collection and absorb.

Vann Helms

Student Editor



Dried River Bed
–*Joseph Willison*

In Her Eyes

she and I—

we drive West—
into the setting sun, whose
rays force my eyes shut
like gnats buzzing around
my head by a rippled creek

blinding me

seeing is difficult
through the off-gray
murk of bug-guts
and asphalt pebbles—
the baked-on

cemetery,
my windshield

I cringe and squint
and sigh, and deny
the sun access to my eyes
thanks be

to the opacity
of sun-visors

yet comes astounding
clarity: I speak to her
“I hate the sun when
it’s in my eyes.”

and she,
wise beyond her years,

says to me, as if
it is common
knowledge, passed
down over eons

and generations:

“Perhaps you can appreciate it
while it’s still free.”

—*Sean Rose*



Unabridged
–Savannah Masoncup

2012

8 *Expressions*

A Chance Encounter with a Good Decision

It was a strange awakening that morning. I opened my eyes, and as if I had been arguing with myself in my sleep, I simply said, "Okay." For the first time in a while things felt clear. I woke up angry and agitated with myself, but focused and certain.

As I got dressed I recounted all of my reasons for putting off this path that I was now so ready to take. All of my arguments against it just didn't make sense anymore. I used to think that college degrees of any kind were just overrated pieces of paper worth only their weight in pulp. I never considered their weight, in actual practice, over my theory.

There I was, 25 years old and working at a job I didn't want and getting paid an amount that was far under my perceived value. If I wanted to go out of town with friends, I would have to consider whether or not I could afford losing half a month's wages. This was when I was living with my dad and didn't have many expenses. This was not the life I wanted, nor the life I thought I deserved.

I hopped up the stairs of Dad's split-level home and found him on his recliner watching television. One of the small rewards of responsible living is the ability to have, and enjoy, leisure time. I had been interpreting everything I saw around me that day as reasons to continue.

"Going to college," I said.

"All right," he replied, eyes on the tube.

On my drive down through Cresaptown and Cumberland, I could only ask myself questions: What am I going to say when I get there? What do I really want to do with the rest of my life? Why did I put this off for so long? Why did I settle for banality and mediocrity in the first place?

Passing through the main streets of my home town, my mind began to flutter with thoughts of the possibilities. Normally, at this point, I would begin to doubt myself and give reasons to turn around. Instead, I was dubiously taking inventory of my strengths and renouncing my weaknesses. This was not the time for negative introspection.

All I could do was imagine myself on a graduation day, running through the streets shouting, "I've got my Golden Ticket! I will never be a cautionary tale! I will never again be undersold, underpaid, underestimated, or overworked! I will be free!" Yes, true freedom.

I would have the freedom to experience new things and challenge myself. I would have the freedom to apply myself and grow. I would have the freedom now to walk up to anyone and say, "I did something to better myself." This was the best of days, and my mind was made up. I was going to college, and I wasn't going to stop until my hunger for education was sated.

I was determined.

I was strong.

I was indestructible.

And, as I learned when I pulled onto the campus on December 23, the college was about as vacant as it could be. I realized I had been flying blind in a storm without a destination. I was allowing myself to fall, unrestrained, into uncertainty. I had no idea what I was doing, or how to go about completing this task.

And I was loving every second of it.

–Christopher Ullery



Untitled

–Shannon Solomon

The Opera within Autumn

You can hear Autumn's dulcet lullaby
when the breeze caresses
the life-sapped trees,
encouraging their coming slumber,
and the mountains trumpet
their chromatic swan-song
in a pleasant bass
throughout the valleys
as the frozen jaw of Winter
encroaches on its prey.
From verdant to crimson and
to fiery orange,
perhaps it's a dance
to the angelic aria
the chilled air carries to us.
Bel Canto:
the most beauty seems to be found
in imminent subtraction.

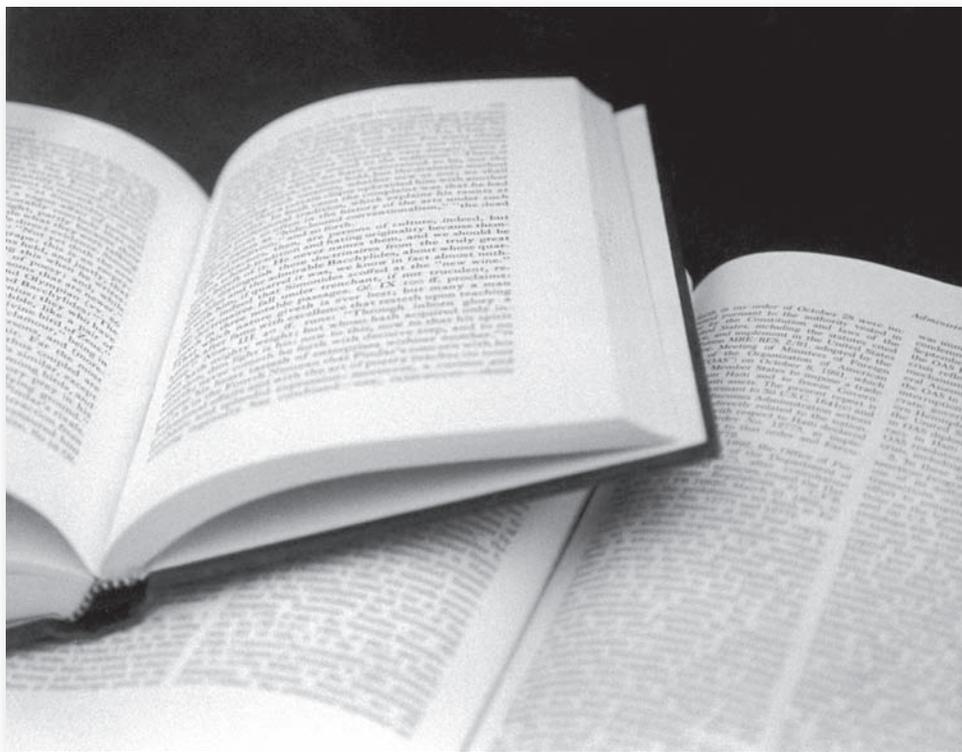
Though it's difficult to hear
the fading sonnets
of the songbirds as they fly
to follow the Sun
to Spring in the south,

their old homes retain
the solemn notes
they uttered through Summer.

–Sean Rose



Solarium
–*Rachele Lantz*



Endless Knowledge —Kylie Shore

Absolute Dissolution

The staff is busy herding us together, making sure we are all accounted for. It is time for our exercise portion of the day, 3:30 to 4:00 pm.

On a normal day, they roll call our meds at 3:00. After we take our meds, we show them our tongues, and then go to the dayroom. I get my meds specially made now. They crush mine and mix them with applesauce or pudding on a plastic spoon. I know it is supposed to be a good day when I get chocolate pudding.

In the dayroom, we stand in front of a flat screen TV and mimic Richard Simmons' *Sweatin' to the Oldies*. On rare occasions if the weather is nice, they lead us outside and walk us around the building through the parking lots. Today is one of those days.

It's been over a week since I've felt the sun's warmth on my skin. I can't wait to smell something different from the medical soaps and lotions. Maybe someone will sweat. People lose their scent after being here for a week.

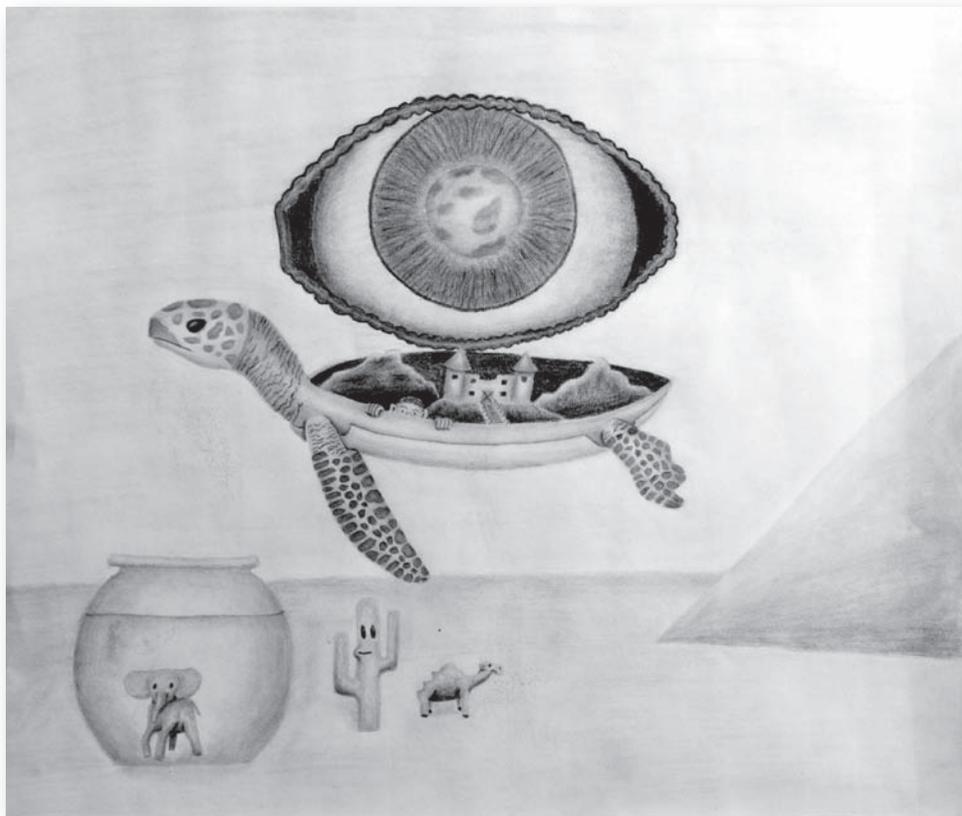
We're all lined up, waiting impatiently at the door. The majority of us are males; they are at the front of the line. There are five girls; we're at the end of the line. While I wait, I can feel a light breeze blow the loose wisps of my untamed hair away from my face. We are all accounted for, and the line moves slowly forward.

Upon reaching the doorway, I notice the sun shining down, reflecting off our white tee-shirts, blinding our seemingly virgin eyes. Mine instantly begin to water. There is pollen in the air. All of us look around, observing the change of scenery.

The mountains look like waves rolling in from the surrounding areas. A velvet carpet, shades of green and hues of blue fading to a hazy gray. The sky is a fresh, crisp blue, a comfort zone for the hawks soaring amid the few whips of white floating lower and closer to their prey with each ring they complete. It's breathtaking.

I feel nothing.

—Carrie Whetzel



Surreal Project
—*Joseph Willison*

My War

Every day I go to war
because my battle
is facing this world,
battling with the fact that
I am from another world,
the world of introverted souls.

Every moment I think
I am alone
facing this world
that is made for communication.

Every evening I wanna die
because I just assume
that would be better for me
than having to keep
facing a world I feel no part of.

Every time I wanna die
it's because of
the dark disease called depression,
a disease is like no other
because
it brings those deep emotions that I just can't keep suppressed.

Every aspect of me
is different from
others in this world
because
I feel odd, strange, and socially
alienated.

Every strange feeling
I go through
makes me an oddball
in this world.

–*Telisha Simmons*



Untitled

—Chelsea George



Pining Away
–Savannah Masoncup

Tubing

Long before I was a mother, in what seems a lifetime ago, I was a child unobligated and carefree. I kept busy with friends and family, going swimming, fishing, tubing, or taking hikes. As a youngster under school age, I can recollect countless times voyaging down the Juniata River on inner tubes. It was exhilarating to feel the rush of cool water running beneath me and the surge of anxious energy as my tube maneuvered down the unknown paths of the snaking water. The smell of sun block and fish hung heavy in the air. Occasionally we made a brief pit stop for a swim or some halfhearted fishing. Dad followed us in his boat along with Mom, who watched us children like a hawk. As the years passed on, those river experiences became a favorite past time and a cherished remembrance of my childhood, and of my parents. Sadly, both of my parents went home with the Lord, but my sister and I vowed to keep their spirit alive.

It was a hot lackluster day, my day off, so stripping beds and cleaning closets was on my to-do list. Around noon I received a call from my older sister Tommi: "It's my only day off; I'm hot and tired of being stuck inside. Let's do something."

After the exchange of the usual small talk, we decided that we were going tubing. The kids were beside themselves with anticipation. Much like their aunt, they were overcome with boredom and were none too thrilled with my agenda of cleaning closets. They were also excited that a friend, Abby, would be coming along for this trip. They could not wait to share this three-hour journey with someone new.

We met up to Mill Creek around four o'clock p.m. and then drove 15 minutes to Huntingdon to launch our expedition at Snyder's Run. The van ride was over stimulating: inner tubes squeaking, a rearview mirror full of rubber, echoes of "I'm hot," "stop touching me," and "I'm gonna be sick." Meanwhile Aaliyah felt it amusing to pound on the enormous truck tire tube as if it were a drum; it was all I could do to maintain focus on the road. We expected to turn onto Snyder's Road, but instead we saw

a dirt covered sign that read: ROAD CLOSED for bridge construction. We soon remembered that there was another launching site five minutes up the road.

Finally everyone was geared up and, at last, we had seven tubes in position accompanied by seven butts. It was 102 degrees outside, and the water felt as if it were drawn for a bath. We welcomed the gentle breeze, the openness, and the freedom from the echoing in the van. The children goofed around and engaged in the routine banter; nevertheless, it was refreshing just to be outside.

"Did you see the size of that fish?!" Abby exclaimed, as she peered into the water with her eyes as big as saucers. I knew this statement would play lead to a dramatic scene, starring my twelve-year-old daughter Alacia. Before Abby could even finish the word fish, a shrill scream carried from Alacia and the words formed "Fish, ugh!" She scrunched her nose and gripped her tube, lifting her back side out of the water.

Yes, I realized that we were on the river, and I did what any mother of a dramatic twelve year old would do. "Fish, Alacia? There are no fish in this river," I said matter-of-factly, struggling to keep a straight face. The screams of disgust simmered for the moment, and we just enjoyed ourselves. Of course, when moms enjoy themselves, children get annoyed. Jenna, my sister's twelve-year-old drama queen was now squealing at the hands of her eighteen-year-old brother who was earnestly trying to tip her. They carried on and we all found ourselves immersed in a sea of cheerful laughter and childlike play.

"Tommi?" I questioned, looking at my watch. "We have been floating for over four hours and, uh, we haven't made it to Snyder's yet, let alone Mill Creek." We came to the conclusion that Snyder's was just around the turn and we would get out there, but around every turn the sky darkened. Still not reaching familiar surroundings, we watched as darkness settled. Blinded by night's mask, we noticed that our sense of hearing heightened. The sounds of the night became abundantly clear: sounds of an African jungle, monkeys bantering, the rippling of

water, growling, screams of a cat, and the bottomless groans of frogs. Heaviness fell on my heart as darkness cast her shadows on the glass water top.

Finding our way to the edge of the water, we docked on an embankment. Land, free from the traveling water. Our tubes were haphazardly thrown to the edge of the shore. Making quick work of the bank, child after child, we hoisted them up. Now we faced the depth of the woods and all she masks at eleven o'clock at night. Terrified, we made a game of Follow the Leader. Hands on the person in front of you, you form a train. I shot silent prayers to the Heavens from my weary heart. Traveling on what seemed divinely positioned paths, we walked, and walked, and walked.

"Aunt Rae" I heard from the front of our lineup, from Trai, my eighteen-year-old, unmoved nephew. "Aunt Rae, come up here; what do you hear?" he said, now with a notable shudder in his voice.

Stumbling to the front of our arrangement, I quieted my thoughts and listened. The sound of water and the croaks of frogs sent a jolt up my spine. Letting out a defeated sigh, I replied, "We have walked for the last forty-five minutes in a circle . . . we are back at the water." Dropping my head, my silent prayers became more of a loud whisper.

"Mom?" Aaliyah whispered softly.

"What is it, Monkey?" I wiped the dirt from her nose.

"Mom, what are you whispering about?" Her voice quivered.

Lifting my head, I answered, "Praying, baby girl."

"Me too," she said.

Collectively, we decided if we were to get out of there before morning, it would be only by the grace of God, so we prayed. Together we asked God to lead, guide, and direct us, a short simple prayer straight from our lips to the man upstairs. Knowing that the depth of the woods

between Snyder's Run and Corbin's Island was not that deep, we just needed to stay straight. Staying straight, a seemingly effortless task in the daylight, was an unattainable goal at night. Just then a truck drove up the road. Hearing the roar of the engine and seeing the beams of light gave us our direction. The road we so yearned for was a mere 100 yards away. This was our break. Thank you, Lord. Keeping our eyes focused on the spot where we last saw headlights, we moved. Swiftly we made our way through the brush and over thistles, hopping burrows, ducking trees and makeshift canopies, peeling the stickiness of webs from our face, vigilant to avoid getting turned around again. In any normal circumstance, this too would have played out a theatrical performance by our aspiring drama queens, but not a word, just diligence in moving onward. Barefoot and in agony from the splinters embedded in his feet, Trai led us to a clearing.

We were desperate to know the road was close but haunted by the feeling that we had been there before. In fact, we had been here before; we searched out this clearing but had become discouraged when it was not the road and did not push through the thick vegetation but followed a path ultimately leading us back to the river. This time was different; we had an agenda, a vision of headlights that once illuminated the road, and we were going for it. Pushing on, slipping down a trench, making our way through thicket, up a hill, we fought the land's attire. Drained and nearly broken, we danced on the warm pavement of the road. Now, how far would we have to walk to get to the van? Three steps onto the road and my sandal broke. Tossing the mangled sandal to the side of the road, we lost no time moving forward. Dense woods surrounded us; I was so thankful to be on a road with clear direction. A commotion to our right made the hair on the back of my neck stand on end. Frightened we were being stalked by something greater than we were, my heart pounded as if Aaliyah's makeshift drum beat within my chest wall. I immediately grabbed the children, thrust them to the other side of the road, ran directly out of my only remaining sandal, and never looked back.

The pavement turned to gravel like daggers under our fleshy feet. We pressed on, searching the road for the opportune placement of our aching feet. Occasionally landing a step wrong made our knees buckle. We trudged on for four miles before seeing the blissful sight of our destination, a welcoming van.

Heartbroken and on the verge of tears, I offered my deepest apology to the kids for having put them in such a daunting situation.

"What an adventure!" they exclaimed. "Now we will have something exciting to write about when school starts and they want to hear about what we did on summer vacation!"

The clock in the van read 2:30 a.m., and my aching bones and burning feet felt every minute of the time that had passed. Silence engulfed the van as it maneuvered down the twisting road. Breaking the silence were the words, "Mom, can we do this again tomorrow?"

A deep sigh resonated from inside me, and I could not muster the words for a response.

–Rae Mateo



Going the Distance

—Aaron Furlong



Reflecting

–Johanna Grabusnik

The Mountain

World of my travels
brought me no peace
frantic searching
no anchor for my soul

Sky is eternal
breadth of my soul
its breath flows gently
and anchors my soul

Trees sway in the breeze
sway with my soul
their spirit lifts my spirit
anchor of my soul

Birds dart through the air
soar with my soul
sing sweet melody
that anchors my soul

I sit on the mountain
that cradles my soul
holds me so tranquil
and anchors my soul

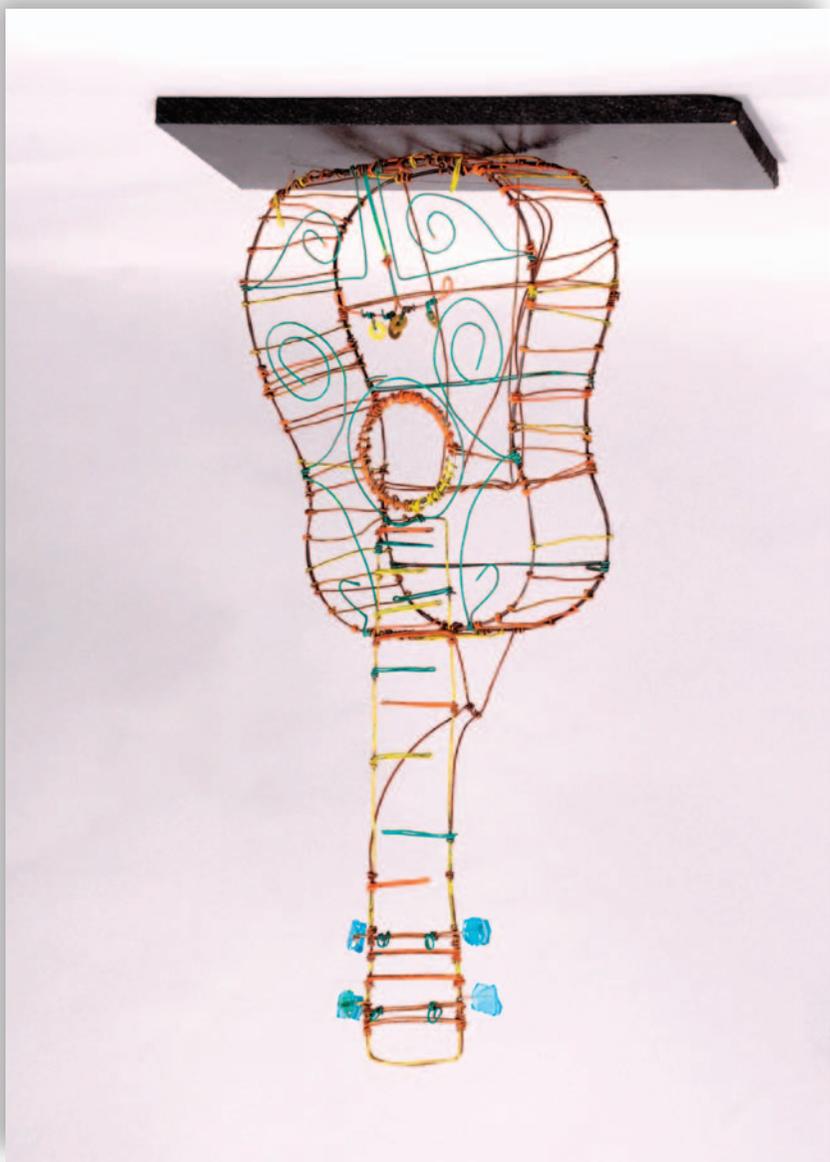
–Ron Stanley



Untitled

–Chelsea George

Untitled
—Jeremy Arnold





Efflorescence

–Stephanie Trail



Wave

–Jeremy Arnold &
Rebekah Phillips





Hanami

–Stephanie Trail

Punishment

I remember when she threw our toys away
because the bedroom wasn't clean enough.
Granted, my sister and I had shoved unfolded clothes into drawers
or hidden them under pillows and quilts.
We never wanted to undertake
the hours-long cleaning marathons.
After our room, we had to clean the living room,
the kitchen, and the bathroom.
This meant dusting every knick-knack, vacuuming, scouring counters,
wiping down every window and mirror, washing dishes, drying dishes,
putting them away, scrubbing floors, window sills, and walls, making
sinks
and toilets sparkle.
She expected us to remove in one afternoon
weeks' worth of dirt and grime.
We rebelled against the stress,
the frustration,
and the anger
that always came with cleaning day.
She threw our toys into a large, black garbage bag.
Twenty books, eight puzzles, twelve teddy bears, five Barbies, Grumpy
Bear, the Ewok,
Guess Who?, ten My Little Ponies, three purses and one set of Lincoln
Logs—
all gone.
My sister cleans now like her life
depends on it.
I despise cleaning.

—*Jennifer Whitman*

In the Driver's Seat

So there we were, spinning the steering wheel, jerking the gear shift, and running the engine with our lips. My sisters and I had made this lusterless, rusty, truck our playground every chance we had since arriving here two weeks ago.

It was early fall on a dairy farm in Greencastle, Pennsylvania. The sweet smell of cattle feed containing crushed apples hung in the air. My mother had just become a single parent, and I was about to embark on a new journey in my own life. Kindergarten was in my very near future. Having just moved away from all our family, we were unfamiliar with everything in this town, with the exception of an aunt and uncle. I slowly began to realize that my two sisters were my closest friends. There was plenty of sibling rivalry between the three of us, but we always reconciled because we depended on each other more than we cared to mention.

My mother cleaned our newly rented home furiously as if she were cleaning the slate for our new start. The house was a large two story gray stone farmhouse that always felt cold and empty, so much so that I don't remember ever furnishing the house with our personal belongings to make it home.

The truck sat square in the front yard as if the engine had stopped there and nobody ever desired to restart it. One day we hopped up in the seat of the old faded truck (once a brilliant blue, I imagine). Thinking this day was like any other, and anxious to pretend and get lost deep within our imaginations, we began our usual argument over who would be driving first. Sunshine, our oldest sister, usually went first, I followed, and lastly my younger sister Misty got the opportunity to try the driver's seat.

On this day things went as usual until we decided it had gotten too warm in the truck and we'd have to move on to playing somewhere else.

In our attempt to exit the truck we realized the driver's door (the only previously functioning door) wouldn't open. We attempted to move the handle every possible way, but the door wouldn't swing open. I then thought of rolling down the windows to climb out, only to find that both window cranks were missing, and all that remained was an open gear that once held the crank. We tried to turn the greasy gear with our fingertips but it just didn't seem possible without the leverage of a handle.

At this point it was just after noon, and the truck sat wide open in the front yard with not a stitch of shade. The temperature inside the cab had risen to an extremely uncomfortable level. I'm sure it had been warm inside the cab from the time we crawled up into the truck seat, but we hadn't noticed because of our enthusiasm for pretending to control our destiny.

We began asking each other, "How can we get out?" Sunshine decided that to shatter the glass windows would be the only way of escape. I hesitated and pondered the punishment we could receive for doing so. After all, the truck didn't even belong to us. It belonged to the property owner, who was an older white-haired man who came to tend the farm every day.

Sunshine began kicking the window. She lay flat on her back kicking like a bug frantically trying to flip itself over. The glass didn't break, but the realization hit like a ton of bricks that we were in trouble and the temperature continued climbing. The three of us took a turn kicking the glass until we'd reached sheer exhaustion. The cab of this truck was becoming an oven, and we were seeming more like a baking pizza with every passing minute. I was trying to decide what to do next when I became aware of the fear in my sisters' eyes and the perspiration on their faces.

Like when you awake from a dream where you're being chased by an angry bear just before it reaches you, my mother appeared out of the

front door of the house with a broom and I was sure this nightmare had ended. My mom was going save us. We attempted to gain her attention by pounding the windows with our fists and screaming. Adrenaline rushed through our bodies making it feel even hotter inside the truck than it actually was. My mother stared at the porch floor as she swung her broom back and forth in short bursts, as if she were

removing a stain. Never having looked up at the truck, she turned and the door slammed behind her as she re-entered the house. We felt as if all hope had been ripped from us. As convinced as I had been that my mom would save us when she appeared, I now was convinced we would perish in this truck. The angry bear had returned, and I considered how devastated our mother would be to discover our bodies in the truck.

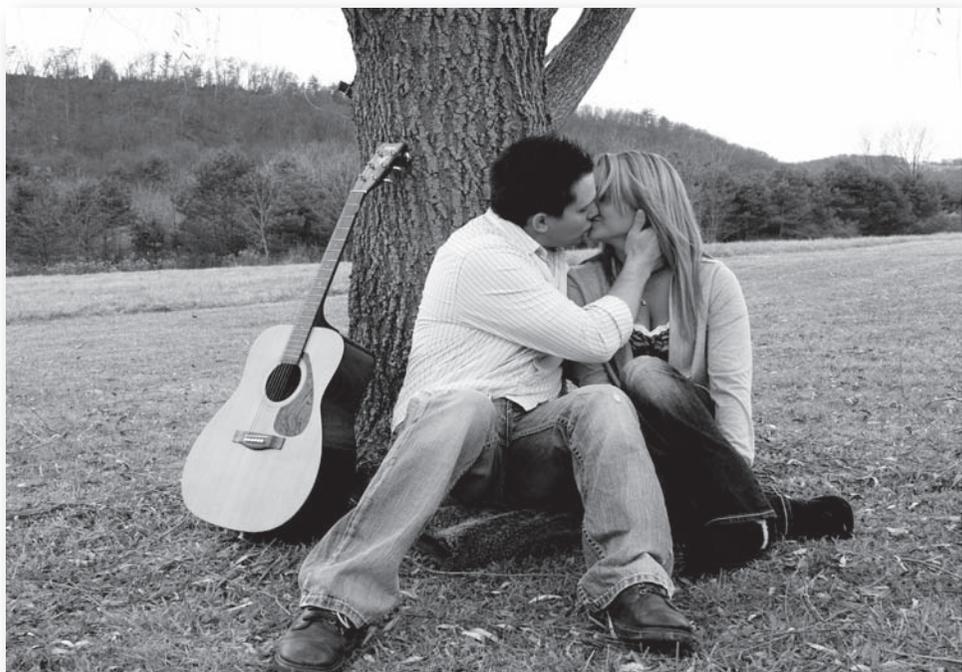
Suddenly Sunshine had a new plan. She had discovered something lying on the floor of the truck that she believed would surely break through the glass windows. Again hope was restored, and our faith rested in Sunshine this time. As she picked up the green cylinder and began smashing it into the rear glass of the truck. Low and behold, the glass began to break. I'd imagined that when we finally broke the window it would shatter and fall out in pieces, sending fresh air from outside in to rescue us from the extreme heat. Instead, it didn't fall apart or even create an opening between the cab and outside of the pick-up. It stuck in place as if there was a sticky sheet of plastic between two layers of glass that would not allow it to shatter and fall out. It now felt as if the sun were perched directly on top of the steel truck cab.

Due to the extreme heat, fear, and the level of frustration we faced, Misty began to panic. I've never felt such hopelessness before. But Sunshine hadn't given up; therefore, she continued to slam the window with as much force as her fatigued and dehydrated body would allow her. In a flash my uncle swung the driver's door of the pick-up open. We had been so concerned with what was going on inside the truck we were unaware he had arrived and happened to spot us.

Finally, the nightmare truly ended. We crawled out of the truck sweaty and exhausted, but relieved that help had really come this time. The outside air felt refreshingly cool as it hit our sweaty bodies, and as I drew it into my lungs I knew we were going to be all right.

I had forgotten about the possible consequences of breaking the glass, that I had so carefully considered earlier, because this experience had become much bigger than that for us. It had meant life or death and our reliance on each other had incredibly increased our unity. We slid down off the seat until our feet touched the ground, and to our surprise my uncle immediately began a lecture on how stupid and dangerous it was to hit the glass with a propane bottle. I'll never know how the propane cylinder hadn't exploded given the extreme heat with the force my eldest sister used to break the glass. What I do know is that our three young lives were not meant to end on that day in 1985. God had lots more for each one of us, including my mom, to explore beyond anywhere our imaginations could have taken us. We managed to escape the bears grip and this memory has spoken volumes into the rest of our lives.

–Candi Jones



Serenade
–Rachele Lantz



The Little Things Let Me Know
–*Stephanie Trail*

Untouchable

I sat on my bed, a child of only four, kicking my little legs slowly. My room was dim with the impending darkness of night; only a small table lamp lit my room. It was late and the house had fallen silent under the reign of sleep. Still I stirred at the edge of my bed, a long cotton nightgown covering me in pastel over my little knees and, down past even my tiny legs.

My gray eyes were set solely on one item in particular that adorned my room. One item alone was strangely forbidden, still I feared little. Only earlier that day had my mother returned home from work. It wasn't anything particularly special; she arrived home daily after all. I never got excited over the ordeal, save that if she was late I might worry. She came in, bringing with her the gust of the fresh spring air of April behind her. It was refreshing even as it still hinted the bitter winter cold that had recently left us.

"I have something special for you," she said to me. My heart fluttered a little. It wasn't often at all that my mother brought home presents or surprises. She ordered me up to my room, and of course I obeyed, giddy with excitement. Whatever in the world could she have brought me? I sat on the edge of my bed, and she told me to close my eyes. When surprises were to be had, this was her usual way. I held my eyes tightly closed until I was asked to open them, and before me she held out a mauve flower-patterned bear. It had jointed arms and legs and embroidered black eyes and nose, and a mouth that smiled benign friendliness at me.

I reached for her, and that's when she pulled it from my grasp. "Ah-ah! No, honey. This bear isn't for playing with." She stepped back and set the bear down on the small dresser.

"But why?"

"She's very expensive."

"But what is a bear for if you can't hug it?"

"She makes your room pretty. Don't touch her, now. If I catch you, you'll get a beating."

It was all she had said before patting me on the head and walking out of my room. I turned my head to watch her leave, then back to stare at the small bear who now sat in my room. And now here I was once more, sitting in the dark of night, staring at this untouchable thing and all she could do was smile back at me. It was forbidden, illegal, punishable, wicked. I couldn't touch the bear I was given as it sat only feet away from me and I couldn't sleep over it.

I suppose this is where my life's worth of dishonesty started. I suppose this is where I learned to sneak, where I learned to lie. After I heard snoring from the other rooms, my small feet slowly touched the floor. Everyone was finally asleep, save for me. I climbed upon a small chair, onto a smaller dresser, and climbed on top of the taller of the two dressers. At my height, it was quite a distance from the floor, but I threw caution to the wind for the chance to defy direct familial orders.

I played gently with the jointed arms and legs, feeling every stitch, every piece of fabric, familiarizing myself with the soft, pliant body. My fingers pulled apart a tag; hand-writing inside had declared her name was Catherine-Anne, but the letters were indecipherable to my four-year-old eyes and mind. I spoke softly to her, so as not to wake anyone, saving myself from the discovery of my horrible disobedience.

"I'm very sorry," I whispered to her. "I want to keep you in my bed with everyone else, but Mommy said you're special. I'm sorry you won't

get as many hugs and kisses from me, but I will visit you some nights so you're not lonely. Mommy said you're 'sensitive, so she won't let me touch you. But it's okay; you don't have to cry because I'll love you anyway. I hope you're not too uncomfortable sleeping here without a bed."

My small fingers continued to glide over fabric and thread, holding the bear close. I sat there all night holding the small bear, speaking softly and singing to her. I started to hear the birds stir outside. The sun was almost up over the horizon, spraying the first rays of sunlight over the clouds that covered it. Panic overcame me as I sat the small bear down in exactly the same manner I had found her. I climbed down and into my bed, and before my parents could wake and find me, I was in my bed feigning sleep. It was something I would become adept at over the years of my youth, but at four I succumbed to much-needed sleep.

For many nights I visited the outcast toy, separated by its expense alone from the other stuffed toys I possessed. I was convinced of her loneliness. I quelled the suspicion that perhaps she was suffering from a sense that she was shunned, alienated, unloved. She was simply more valuable by adult standards, something rightfully misunderstood by children who value things more based on love and friendship than on monetary notions.

I spoke to her and held her close, offered her equal love to those that could remain in my bed. Nights passed like this, undetected by my mother. Many kisses and hugs were given, even if I didn't stay for the entire night by Catherine-Anne's side. And many years later, when my parents decided I needed to be punished for the state of my room, she was disposed of. I arrived home from school, dropping my backpack to the floor, my eyes roaming over the sparse room. Stuffed animals, toys: everything gone. I was left with two stuffed bears, some crayons, a drawing table, and a small, plastic train set.

Tears immediately filled my eyes. They explained that my irresponsibility was at fault for the loss of my possessions. "If you had taken better care of them," they said, "we wouldn't have thrown them away and donated them."

I stared in disbelief. The things I loved most were gone, Catherine-Anne included. A sense of guilt and of having let down my friends came over me as I slowly crossed the room.

"Dinner will be ready in an hour," my mom said before parting the room, satisfied with my reaction to this cruel punishment. I sat on the bare floor, pulling the train set out. I set up the tracks, formed them in a figure eight.

For that whole hour I pulled the small train along the tracks, in silence save for the small wheels roaring over plastic tracks. I didn't cry. The hurt transcended that. I was called for dinner. Spaghetti. Dinner passed by in further silence as the sun set, leaving shadows from the blinds across the walls, across my face as I stared at my plate, slowly emptying it of pasta and sauce. I cleaned my plate and placed it in the dishwasher and, mute, I went to my room. For the next three hours I continued to pull the train along tracks. I was called to bathe, and did so. I returned to my room and pulled on a clean night gown. I sat on my bed, my feet now able to reach the floor at such an age, and I stared at the emptiness. The silence was a horrible, deafening thing. All I could hear was the horrible hum of nothingness. The sound matched the sight, spots barren where cherished items once sat.

I found myself lonely, the toys and stuffed animals that once sat within my room had long been my friends and company. I held close to what I had left, which wasn't much. I realized that, for a child my age, I hadn't many friends. In fact, I had none. I was separated by invisible lines from those around me. The playground was full, but I sat many yards away watching the other children with fleeting envy.

I realized I had become Catherine-Anne. I was set aside; a boundary of value separated me from those like me. It wasn't a value of money as it was for the small bear, but a value of love. As far as money went, I was worthless. Standing alone, lonely, alienated without explanation, I had the high value of love unknown. I was untouchable. It was forbidden, illegal, punishable, wicked. And those who found themselves disobedient enough were short-lived.

But what is the point of man, separated and forbidden from love because of value? What is the point of a stuffed bear who cannot be hugged? And for those brave enough to dare to love against threat of betraying authority, why is the harm of loss fated? There are, perhaps, risks in all endeavors that yield worth. Kindness perhaps transcends the reason for avoiding risk. Perhaps one day each one of us will find that person who cares little for monetary value in lieu of love. Meanwhile, many are still waiting for someone to climb that dresser.

-Tilia Ryan



The Out House

—Andrew Sparber

Reality

Where I'm from is affectionately called "The City of Brotherly Love." For the most part, it is filled with almost everything but love. The first smells are of stale cigarettes, alcohol, old perfume, and marijuana. The first sight a child sees in the morning is strangers lying throughout the home. You welcome the still quiet over the sounds of partying, fighting, screaming and crying that float through the air from the night before. Where I'm from, you creep to the kitchen to make a quick bowl of cereal and pray that you don't wake anyone up.

Where I'm from, parents degrade and beat their children, because they were belittled and beaten themselves. It is not uncommon for children to be beaten with a belt, switch, or brush, so badly that they are unable to sit down because of the sheer stinging pain going through their legs and their bottoms. Children do not cry out; they must bury their cries in a pillow because they know they will receive another beating for crying.

Where I'm from, the adults act like children, and the children are forced to act like adults. Children watch their younger siblings, acting more as caregivers than the parents who had them. Parents succumb to drugs and alcohol, allowing predators or sometimes themselves to sexually violate their children. Where I'm from, it's not hard to find people who is repeating the cycle of abuse, drugs, and alcohol their parents unfortunately brought them into.

Where I'm from the morning streets are filled with rude people. They push, shove, and curse on their way to unfulfilling jobs. As they hurry to their destination, they ignore all the unsavory things going on around them: prostitution, homelessness, and children who obviously have no adults who care about them.

Where I'm from, the women's and homeless shelters are overfilled with families that unfortunately share the same stories of despair, loneliness, and heartache. The homeless wake up to the shocking reality that their few moments of sleep contain the only dreams they have left. They are once again forced to beg and plead for some spare change in hopes of a hot cup of coffee.

Where I'm from, single mothers resort to selling the only thing they have, themselves. They hope to have scraped up enough money to buy diapers and food, or to pay bills. Single mothers are forced to leave their children home alone, and pray that their home doesn't catch on fire. Fathers choose to sell drugs to make money for their families. They feel forced into this situation because they have little education, no support system, and there are no jobs available.

Where I'm from, children anxiously wait for Sunday and Wednesday so they can go to church. Church is a welcomed break. Children long for the peace and positive attention that only the church is able to provide.

Where I'm from, you don't see any beautiful tree-covered mountains, butterflies fluttering in the air, or children running freely. You don't smell fresh-cut grass, barbecuing, or even the cleansing rain.

Where I'm from is unfortunately a reality for many living in the world today.

–Joyce Bradshaw



Untitled
—Chelsea George



Untitled
–Eric Tyler

The Hunt

It is a misty fall morning with the smell of mildew in the air. The foliage is colored with browns, oranges, and yellows. Nature is heading into the cycle of replenishment. The animals are preparing for old man winter, and the hunters are preparing for the chase.

I have been sitting by this pine for a while now. A few squirrels are jumping from tree to tree. Snorts are coming from over the hill. The deer are keeping themselves scarce so as not to be seen, only to be heard and to show their contempt toward outsiders. The buck does not want humans in his domain because he wants to dominate his territory. He snorts louder and scratches at the foliage with his hooves.

What a foolish creature to think this would actually work to scare me away. I plan to have him on our dinner table tonight for a feast, the luscious meal he shall become. I am told that he is in supreme form. His meat is as tender as a baby deer and is to be eaten as a delicacy like prime rib. His antlers would be a great trophy for anyone to claim. A couple of does over the hillside move leisurely toward me. They are approaching with caution. I wonder if they can tell that I covered myself in deer urine to hide my scent. I cannot figure out their behavior. It seems like a front for something else, but what? What am I thinking? They are just dumb creatures on the bottom of the food chain.

I then hear louder snorting coming from all around me, from some of the does in the woods. It is odd that their grazing makes no noise and their snorting is different. I can't pinpoint just why. All at once, they scatter, running quickly back and forth. They are not playing any game.

I sit up to look for the buck. Suddenly I feel a pair of hooves hit my chest cavity. Then there is a loud swishing sound to both sides of me with an ostentatious snort and the sound of antlers scratching at a maple tree. I get myself up on my side, and then I look up to see this

magnificent beast before me. He comes prancing back and forth. I rise to my knees. He then approaches directly in front of me. I can feel the heat from his nostrils upon my flesh. His breathing is heavy. He spits on me in a taunting way. I grab for my rifle. He takes off and stops at the top of the hill. He looks upon me with his eyes of coal, daring me to take chase. I aim my rifle and put off a shot, but it misses him.

How was I an Army sniper? I do not miss. I start running after him. The varmint flees downhill; I go right after him. The open meadow is not too far ahead, and this race is going on forever. I stop to take aim again at my target. Still, I miss. The air began to change. A chill hit all at once. I can see my breath in front of me. The air was thin, threatening to steal my very essence away.

Light shines down, forming a rainbow. The buck stops with his head held high. He has no fear of his imminent fate. I will give this monstrous creature his due. He wants a wonderful display of my talent as a hunter, I think as I put off my last shot. He finally succumbs to the shell that I put into him. I walk through the arctic air toward my kill. When I come upon a spot of light, the area is warm. I bend over my great trophy to slit his heart out. Suddenly, I feel the numbness taking over my veins. I cannot move.

All around me there are hunters muttering to one another, "What a fool he was."

"Who is to say? Who is the dumbest sort of creature?" "Who? Who? Who's to say?" The sounds of their chilled voices get clearer and clearer. What is this?

I am standing over my own body. How could this be? I then hear another snort behind me. I turn only to be faced by the heat of breathing upon my skin. Heat rises around him.

A voice shrieks, "You who dare to take on this hunt. You are now cursed to be in this chase for an eternity! Join the others who yielded to me."

"No, No, this is wrong! You are a dumb beast!" I utter in terror.

The voice continues, "Join them and perish in the fires of Hades."

"Why? Why is this happening?" I cry.

The voice replies, "You chose your fate the moment you began to hunt me. You are a foolish creature, indeed. I must force you to join my ghostly followers. Come, come, now!"

I just stand there. He takes off with the wind, and the others follow him. The brilliant foliage surrounding me darkens, and the flames of Tartarus open beneath my feet with a burning sensation of immortal intensity.

"You must come or fall in the fire pit." one of the ghostly hunters says.

The flames rise waist high. I know that I must keep up with the chase or the fire will consume my very soul.

–Amy White

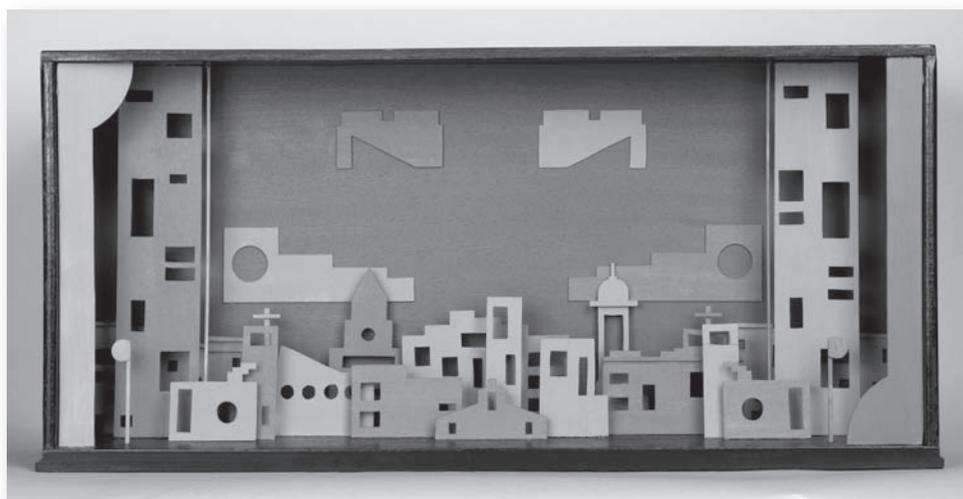


Not so 'Itsy Bitsy'
—Rachele Lantz

Standing Alone

The lawn is green
and evenly mowed.
No weeds,
not a single flower,
except one dandy lion
growing near the curb.
Yellow stands out
against the green.
Eyes are drawn
to it in derision,
despising the lone
weed,
as people are despised
who refuse to conform,
who mar the suburban
landscape,
like the Jewish woman
who puts up no
Christmas lights.
The owner of the house
finally sees and plucks
the lone
flower.

–*Jennifer Whitman*



Untitled
–*Jeremy Arnold*

More Dead Than Alive

Shipwrecked on an isolated South Seas island, our dream vacation storm-shattered on the reef, the three of us had few rations salvaged from the remains of the yacht. I was so badly injured in the wreck that I could do little to help with the salvage operation.

The next day I overheard two of them talking. They had made a crude bed for me out of flotsam and made a roof out of a sheet of something. Maybe they thought I could not hear them, being in the isolation ward to which I had consigned by them.

Thomas, the husky one, reported the food inventory, ". . . only enough for three days . . ."

The tall, thin, well-tanned Greg's words drifted in to me, "But he's a fellow human! Have you no sympathy?"

Then Thomas's voice, "...make it last maybe five or six days."

Greg, so faint, "...rescue...too soon."

Thomas, "We must think of ourselves..."

Greg, pleading, "...could have happened to us."

Thomas retorted with vigor, "We could...last three weeks, maybe even ten!"

Greg, emphatically, "How could we?!"

Thomas, firm and louder, "...not our fault! ...more dead than alive."

Then Greg, with sadness, "Only as a last resort!"

Thomas, conciliatory, "You won't have to do anything."

Greg, in tone of resignation, ". . . will need an explanation."

I drifted off, unaware of any further conversation.

–Ron Stanley

INSPIRATIONS

Aaron Furlong, *Going the Distance*

I was even more inspired to learn photography after taking a course at ACM. It has really opened my eyes and shown me a completely different outlook. I would like to thank my mother for lending me the camera and my instructor, Mr. Terry Feck, for showing me and teaching me the photography techniques.

Sean Rose, *In Her Eyes* and *The Opera within Autumn*

In Her Eyes is actually the true story of a conversation I had with my good friend, Brenna on a day trip. She has a wonderfully different view of the world and I find some of things she says quite inspirational. I felt what she said poetic enough, so I simply recorded the scene in my poem. *The Opera within Autumn* is (rather obviously) inspired by fall, my favorite season. I've always loved describing the autumn colors and smells in different ways. The original draft was written in the Neo-Beats, ACM's creative writing club, in response to a prompt.

Christopher Ullery, *A Chance Encounter with a Good Decision*

This is the first part of the story of my college experiences. It really was just a chance encounter. I could lecture for hours on the pointless endeavor of higher education even in the week before the events of this story. Things change, though, I suppose. And yes, I really did show up when the campus was closed for the holiday.

Jennifer Whitman, *Punishment* and *Standing Alone*

Punishment is based on a real event. My mother always got very frustrated with us when my sister and I didn't clean our room. She threatened many times to throw toys away if we didn't keep our room clean. We didn't believe her until she actually did it. This punishment always stands out in my mind because it is something so few parents actually do. I learned that day to never doubt my mom would follow through on a threat.

I wrote *Standing Alone* because I have never felt like I fit anywhere. Even among my friends, I feel like the person who doesn't belong. I am often the person that other people are trying to make conform to how I am supposed to be. I've been told that I shouldn't be completely honest, I shouldn't cry so easily, I shouldn't want to work with people, and that I shouldn't ever get less than a B on anything. I've tried most of my life to conform to what other people expected because of my desire to be accepted, to be loved. I feel that people always want me to fit and they cut me down when I don't.

Joseph Willison, *Surreal Project*

Surreal Project is the result of the wandering mind. Pursuing tranquility was my foremost thought, while treating other things like isolation. The other challenge was to synthesize as many ideas as I could in one work, while avoiding mess; I wanted to achieve a flow with those unusual, dreamlike images. In total it took eight hours over several days.

Expressions 2012

2012

60 *Expressions*

