

K I S H W A U K E E C O L L E G E



Kamelian

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Kishwaukee College

2017 Kamelian Literary & Arts Journal

Realizing that educational institutions should encourage intellectual inquiry and being cognizant that we live in a pluralistic society, the following disclaimer is given.

The ideas and opinions expressed in Kamelian are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the attitude of the Board of Trustees, the administration, the faculty, or the staff of Kishwaukee College. Materials for Kamelian were submitted by students who have been enrolled in courses at Kishwaukee College during one or all of the previous three semesters. Outside jurors with professional credentials and knowledge in the respective fields reviewed all entries. The pieces selected for inclusion in Kamelian and the awards given were based on the jurors' opinion of their aesthetic merit.



On the Cover

Barbara Johnson

Autumn Leaves

Media of Art: Metal

Height: 3", Width: 3", Depth: .25"

First Place

Three-Dimensional Art

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Awards

Literature

Short Fiction

First Place (Outstanding Entry)

Keegan Beck Callahan
Genius in the Moment

Second Place

Lamia Farmer
Piano Keys

Third Place

Victoria Leverton
Void and Light

Poetry

First Place

Robert Gineman
Sacrifice

Second Place

Megan Bratko
The Flaw

Third Place

Salina Cruz
*When I Woke Up and Your Heart
Was Not in My Chest Anymore*

Essays

First Place

Melissa Kriegl
*Shylock: The Epitome of the
Stereotypical Jew*

Second Place

Kolina Olson
Frank

Third Place

Erin Esgar
Will You Teach the World to Sing?

Art

Photography

First Place

Robert Whitten
Bridge at Dawn, Twice Reflected
Height: 8", Width: 10"

Second Place

Devon Buza
Crimson Twirl
Height: 8", Width: 10"

Third Place

Erin Esgar
Fine Tune
Height: 8", Width: 10"

Two-Dimensional

First Place

Eliza Coran
Still Life
Media of Art: Oil on Canvas
Height: 18", Width: 16"

Second Place

Ron Lofton
Self Portrait
Media of Art: Oil on Canvas
Height: 20", Width: 16"

Third Place

Anna Gosciejew
Lizzie
Media of Art: Acrylic and Sharpie
Height: 12", Width: 24"

Three-Dimensional

First Place

Barbara Johnson
Autumn Leaves
Media of Art: Metal
Height: 3", Width: 3", Depth: .25"

Second Place

Eric Carlson
Dole Bananas
Media of Art: Ceramic
Height: 8", Width: 12", Depth: 10.5"

Third Place

Sage Gutierrez
Smile for Awhile
Media of Art: Terra Cotta
Height: 7", Width: 9", Depth: 4"

Literature

Adam Burgess

NIU Graduate TA

Kelsey Forkner

Adjunct English Instructor

Illinois Valley Community College

Angie McHale

English Teacher

Speech Coach

Art

Glenn Bodish

Associate Professor of Art

Emily Cotton Cram

Illustrator

Heather Houzenga

Professional Designer – Zenga's

Art Teacher

Genius in the Moment

I've gotten used to things, the bed sores being one of these things. Some of these things I've been conditioning myself with so other parts of life are easier, or seem easier. Anyway, bed sores are all I can really feel on a good night. Well, that's on the good nights but this night was a little different because the bed sores are still ever-present, but the nervous bubbling has found its way into my bones and now it won't leave me alone and it's not the bubbling that readies me for nocturnal intruders, it's a worse kind of bubbling, in my bones, in my head, it's-

Our writer stops here.

His character, the neurotic Elliot Blair, freezes in time.

Our writer has never had a bed sore before. He gets up promptly at six for his job at the bakery. Then he gets up at seven on any other day just because.

Just because. No reason at all.

Our writer is as exciting in real life as an exhausted slug. He quickly stands and leaves his computer for another cup of coffee. He drinks it all before even sitting back down.

"No one said it'd be easy," he says to himself with a laugh.

But those words echo and he realizes how cliché they are. Is that his default in the spur of the moment? That little motto about perseverance that every sap recites in a crestfallen moment? Years of writing and that's all he can come up with for himself? Not even for anyone else, but for himself.

It doesn't help that he's never been published.

Or that he's never tried to be published.

But our writer has also never tried to sleep through a day before.

A-ha! What better way to gain insight to the neurotic Elliot Blair than to live the way he is living?

So he rushes upstairs to his room to try this trick out. He pulls the shades down, closes the door, turns off the lights, and hops into bed.

Tacked on the ceiling above his bed are little Polaroid photos that his girlfriend gave him. One is of Meatball, the barebellied cat. The other two are of overgrown suburban trees.

Our writer remembers receiving the photos. They sent each other gifts and letters constantly before they could ever actually meet. They first met online, but innocently enough on Facebook. He lost his virginity to her. It was strange the first time. He told her he didn't know how to feel about sex. After that, she didn't talk to him for a while.

"What? What am I thinking about?" our writer exclaims. He sits up straight and notices how messy the top of his dresser is. Old receipts, small treasures from his pockets, a preserved baby shark in a jar that he's disgusted to see at this point. He should really clean his room, and now is better than-

"NO!" our writer yells and collapses back onto his bed.

Maybe his brain is not conforming because he's not dressed the part.

Of course, dumbass! Who sleeps in jeans and socks?

He ignores the possible answers to that question and tugs off his clothes. He then rolls himself into a cigarette of blankets. Comfortable? Yes. Claustrophobic? Yes. But he feels that he may be able to choke out his conscious thoughts as long as he remains the tobacco innards of this gigantic cigarette.

Yes.

It's working.

But wait.

The neurotic Elliot Blair is not a comfortable person. He's neurotic, sleeps out of exhaustion and wakes up just in time for that exhaustion to seep back into his spine. He fears the nocturnal intruders.

So our writer focuses on tensing his mind. He watches his bedroom door and tells himself over and over again that there's a possibility that a tall man with a knife and a gummy, evil smile will kick it open and gut him alive.

Any moment now.

But he knows that won't happen. He's in a safe, rural neighborhood outside of a safe, small town. He doesn't even lock his front door at night.

But what about the news? If he watches the right station, it may develop that much needed cyst of anxiety. It seems to work on his mother all the time.

So our writer situates himself on the couch in front of the living room and flicks on the T.V.

Channel Nine always has something gory, so he waits through the drone of healthcare commercials and family programs. And here comes the soaring number nine that stamps the screen as dramatic horns erupt.

Welcome back to Channel Nine News, I'm Soso McSoandso and our top story tonight is the dreaded Space Virus that's already contaminated several urban regions across the state. Chicago officials recently released this press statement:

Um, we aren't exactly sure what we're dealing with here but it's incredibly potent. Our most competent researchers are already vested with the dreaded Space Virus. Which isn't to say that they actually have the virus. Well, perhaps some of them. But we, on behalf of the nation's interests, advise you all at home to be safe and avoid looking into the situation yourselves. Remember that there's no substitute for your local news channel. Thank you.

Our writer has never cared much for officials, but he is also too mild to despise them. Regardless, this top story is not producing the intended effect.

We'll have more news on the Space Virus as soon as possible. But first, here's a question: Can a really big gun kill a small child? The Johnson family would say so. Four year old Maliah Johnson finds herself in a fatal accident once she discovers her father's nine millimeter handgun on the kitchen table. Sources report that it was "bound to happen" and that Maliah's father, Dennis Johnson, is a total piece of shit. And here's Dennis Johnson with the weather!

Thanks, Soso! Record breaking temperatures on the way here because you're all going to rot in hell!

Enough. Our writer cares even less for the televised equivalent of tabloids than he does for real authority. But he turns on the T.V. again to see what time the adult cartoons start playing.

No, hold on. T.V. is for slugs. Our writer must peel himself off the couch and realign himself with the neurotic Elliot Blair.

He sits back down at his computer and considers the place where he left off.

-it's a worse kind of bubbling, in my bones, in my head, it's-it'sssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssss

So it's a worse kind of bubbling. Bubbling obviously means a self-destructive panic, something impulsive, unbearably impulsive. It's-

Pointless.

Our writer slams his fist down on the counter, pushes the keyboard into the screen, and slams his fist down once again, all while producing a colorful line of swears. The boiling in his head dies out quickly and is replaced with sweet old self-pity. It's just pointless.

But wait.

If something as humanly inward as panic or despondence is essentially meaningless, then something equally meaningless could match it. Something like... Falling down the stairs?

A-ha! He can fall down the stairs because it's pointless pain! And in this process, he can also gain experience with sores of a sort. Stair sores, he can call it! Close enough to bed sores! Then he can stay awake in fear of falling down an endless staircase at night and have no one to seek medical attention for him! He can fall down the stairs until his mind and body become conditioned, and only then will he parallel the pointless neuroticism of Elliot Blair!

Our writer dashes up the staircase and halts at the top, facing away from the drop. He holds his arms above his head and rocks on the balls of his feet until his balance slips.

"No reason at all."

His body crashes down, the stairs pounding his back like steel kneecaps. Then his head hits a step. Every sense is rendered fuzzy and small after that. He flips upside down and, despite his intentions, automatically grabs for the railing. His fingers close around thin air as he falls onto his stomach and rolls himself into the wall. The corner of a picture frame bombs his ear.

He rests there for a moment, breathing softly. He then squirms cautiously down the rest of the stairs and hoists himself up. Dark blood begins to pool inside his ear and drip down his neck.

His computer stares blankly at him. He stares back.

"Eh, I'll try again tomorrow."

Keegan Beck Callahan

**First Place
Short Fiction**



Eliza Coran

Still Life

Media of Art: Oil on Canvas

Height: 18", Width: 16"

First Place

Two-Dimensional Art

That Time of Year When You Can Open the Windows Again

A long winter has passed and I can open the window once more
I feel the warmth of the sun on my skin and breathe in the air that I have missed
I want my entire being to feel this radiant glow and I stretch my whole body on the floor
I pull out a cigarette and light it while I slowly relax my back into the hard floorboards

I have missed days like these where I can lay in the sun and think about all that is around me
My mind tends to wander in these moments but only about the sun and the possibilities
A refreshing breeze blows through my room clearing any winter melancholy away
There's nothing I would rather be doing than laying here in the sunlight

The outside world seems to be aware of what I am feeling as well
I hear people outside breathing in the air as I do and just being out in the world again
I don't pay much attention to the voices of the community outside but I enjoy that they exist
In my room I can be in my own little world away from anyone and anything

Opening my window has brought me back from the darkness of dreary cloudy days
Lately I have been so desperate for a color other than the gray that winter seems to have
I am looking forward to the greens and the yellows and the blues in the world around me
Now that the sun is out everything can come alive once more

I don't have to move my body much to get comfortable
The sunlight is comforting enough even if I feel the hardwood floor beneath me
I smell the cigarette smoke and freshly mowed grass and someone burning dead leaves
And I wished that my body would root itself here so I wouldn't have to move

Megan Bratko

**Honorable Mention
Poetry**

Sacrifice

The crows swoop downward
My blood feeds the grass below
A departing gift.

Robert Gineman

First Place
Poetry

Honor

Disembowelment
The blade pierces my stomach
Glory to my clan

Robert Gineman

Honorable Mention
Poetry



Robert Whitten

Bridge at Dawn, Twice Reflected

Height: 8", Width: 10"

First Place

Photography

The Flaw

like men who linger
haunt the red liquid ocean
live fat and explore good poisons
but we are born broken and flawed
to forever become what we fear most

humanity closes in on itself
the idea of perfect family
perfect life
perfect people
to be forever reached for but never achieved

Megan Bratko

**Second Place
Poetry**



Anna Gosciejew

Lizzie

Media of Art: Acrylic and Sharpie

Height: 12", Width: 24"

Third Place

Two-Dimensional Art

Shylock: The Epitome of the Stereotypical Jew

Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* reinforces the cultural prejudice against Jews by immediately swaying his audience to dislike Shylock. There wasn't a clear message as to who Jews really were, and so the stereotypes of them had more of an influence on people's opinions in 1596. Mentioning somewhere in the dialogue that Shylock was a Jew simply would not suffice; his character had to speak it, and wear it, and show it. To execute this, Shakespeare utilized the well-known stereotypes of Jews by using a villainous caricature to further magnify the degree of these Jewish prejudices.

The most compelling evidence to explain why anti-Semitism is so strongly and irrationally supported is through the understanding that this hatred stems from religious roots. Christianity started as a sect of Judaism where Christians believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was murdered by his own people: Jews. For centuries, this has been the story that has been taught to children in Christian families, and after centuries, it is still this story that has impacted so much. For instance, during the Medieval Age, before Jews were banished from England in 1290, certain occupations were restricted from the Jews by Christian authorities. The roles in society that were forbidden to Christians, due to sin, such as tax collectors and money lenders, were hence filled by the Jews. Thus, overtime the idea that Jews are greedy and materialistic was born (Glassman pp 14-50). Consequently, "the popular image of the Jew had developed out of the need for Christianity to show itself superior to Judaism..." (Glassman 21).

To emphasize, Jews were forced to practice their beliefs in private during the Elizabethan times because the people of England were expected to adhere to the reigning monarch's religious beliefs; in 1596 their Queen, Elizabeth I, was a Protestant. Most Jewish people became converted Christians, or pretended to be so to protect themselves from exile and worse: execution. Because of these fears, many Jews instinctively camouflaged themselves by opting to practice their religious beliefs secretly. As a direct result of this, many of the publicly known ideas towards the Jews were based on word of mouth derived from vague rumors as well as a botched reputation instead of from first hand experiences (Glassman 51-61; Queen).

Notably, Shakespeare demonstrates this societal prejudice of his time by describing Shylock's appearance as "recognizably Jewish [by his] long gown of gabardine, probably black, [his] red beard and/or wing like that of Judas, and [his] hooked putty nose or bottle nose" (Charney 41). To further seal the bias, Shylock's interactions with the other characters are bitter, defensive, pompous, and greedy. A clear example of Shylock's greed is when he realizes his daughter Jessica has stolen his money to elope with Lorenzo: "My daughter; O my ducats, O my daughter!" And continues to exclaim, "Justice! Find the girl! She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats" (2.8.15~23). It's pretty evident that Shylock is having a hard time deciding between what he is in fear of missing more — his daughter or his money.

Furthermore, Shylock's character demonstrates the overall "evil" Jewish image through his spiteful and intentional notion towards wanting revenge. The thought alone makes Shylock anxious with anticipation for a person to wrong him. He gives this impression during his dialogue with Bassanio about borrowing money to Antonio; before even agreeing to a loan, Shylock says that he wouldn't hesitate to take advantage of his first opportunity to have revenge on Antonio: "If I can catch him once upon the hip, I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him" (1.3.46~47).

Moreover, Shylock's go-to jab is always religion, further satisfying the role of an "easily dislikable" Jew; for example, when Bassanio invites him to dinner after a brief discussion of the proposed loan for Antonio, Shylock's answer is nothing short of uncivil. He replies by saying he would never eat the pork that their "prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into" (1.3.33~35). It is during this part in the play when it starts to become evident what roles have been assigned to whom. Throughout the remainder of the story, Shylock fills the call for a villain, all the while Antonio is becoming the Christian hero. No matter how one feels towards Shylock's character, it is still human nature to have empathy for another. However, this pity for Shylock does not last long, for he solidifies his role through his famous revenge speech near the close of the play.

Regardless of any stereotypes or prejudices, at the end of the day Shylock is still a human and hence shares in equal likeness to his peers. There isn't concrete evidence to prove whether Shakespeare is satirically addressing Jewish prejudices, or if he is merely filling the shoes of what was expected to be the Jewish villain of Elizabethan times (Glassman 51-61). Nevertheless, it's safe to say that he may have had an ironic motive in this writing, after all. This idea appears when Shakespeare seems to humanize Shylock's character for the first time. In every other encounter before this, there is no question as to whether Shylock was correct or not; the audience is still made to feel a sense of distrust towards this ostensibly spiteful human. Yet, during the first part of his lines that are delivered to Antonio, one can't help but to feel a twinge of pain for Shylock's hardships: "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions — fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you pick at us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?" But of course, this newfound hope in Shylock quickly diminishes as he continues to say, "And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge! If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge! The villainy you teach me I will execute" (3.1.55~69). Save for those last few lines, Shylock is finally brought to life through the power of relatability. This not only gives us a tangible glimpse into the reality of a life as a Jew, but also brings to light the heaviness of it all. And so, it is more than understandable and momentous of us to actively search out this truth in no one other than William Shakespeare himself.

Altogether, it is quite difficult to imagine Shakespeare drafting *The Merchant of Venice* without any ulterior motives, for that is what Shakespeare is known for doing. In spite of that and all other biased perspectives, there is one answer we all know: there most certainly is a message within his words. A message that has lived on for centuries and will continue to baffle, encourage, and hopefully inspire us all for many more to come.

Works Cited

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- Charney, Maurice. 1993. *All of Shakespeare*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*, An Updated Edition. 1992. Edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, The Folger Shakespeare Library, 2010.

Melissa Kriegl

First Place Essay



Devon Buza
Crimson Twirl
Height: 8", Width: 10"

Second Place
Photography

Sprawl

I sprawl like a mountain
I cannot be condensed
I cannot shorten myself
I cannot pack myself in a singular beautiful uppercut
People love me, but they all seem to live too far away
People love me, but I can never see them stay.
I have a time capsule of fleeting moments
None of them mean anything
To anyone
Except for me
I sprawl like a mountain
I am messy
People say I am beautiful but all I can see are the craters
Were parts of me are missing
And all I can think of
Are the things that they see
The things that are not me
And that they call beautiful
I cannot be condensed.
I would like to think that is a good thing
But I cannot help to think that I drive people away
Not because they do
Not
Want
To
Stay
But I am a mountain
And I sprawl until all that I can see and
I
And i
I
Push them away.
I sprawl.
I cannot contain myself.
I am full of empty promises.
Everything I lay at my feet gets promptly blown away
Because I am a mountain
I am a jealous lover
Yet I am no lover at all
I drive rocks and trees between those who want to see me
Those who want to stay
Everyone who says that they love me.
But I am a mountain
I do not want to be contained
I want to sprawl
Yet I force myself into a singular set of rules
For if I do not
I do nothing at all
Except
Create more empty promises
Empty acts
Because in my sprawling
I am empty.

Victoria Leverton

**Honorable Mention
Poetry**

Piano Keys

"I cannot believe they made me float to the Emergency Department. This is ridiculous. I am not an ER nurse, I am a Critical Care nurse with special training in neurological traumatic head injuries. This is so not fair. I refuse to float here." Or at least that's the rant that's going on in my head. I chuckle a little to myself, because I know I would never say that to anyone outside of my own mind. I am a nurse, and I have to help people, even when it's not on my floor. What can you do?

"Ambulance en route, less than 3 minutes out; unknown injuries, possible head trauma," I hear over the intercom. I'm ecstatic because it's sweet justice. In your face charge nurse, making me float. Maybe they will need me on my floor after all. Yes!! 4th Neurological Floor, mama's coming home," I stop doing my happy dance because I realize I'm at work and I probably look crazy.

The paramedics, Rick and Joey, look out of sorts, which is really strange because I am pretty sure they've seen it all. I could tell by the look on their faces, as they step through the double doors into the transport hallway that this particular patient is in bad shape.

There's a blur of body parts, oxygen masks, IV tubing, medication, blood; all moving at lightening-speed trying to save this unknown stranger. He is in terrible shape: huge, open gash on the side of his head; multiple bruises, broken left wrist and arm, broken tibia and a dislocated knee. According to Rick and Joey, John Doe was discovered by an older gentleman walking his dog in a park. John Doe was face-down by a small pond and covered in blood. He was unresponsive in the ambulance and his core temperature was well below normal. There was no way to tell how long he was in that park before that man found him. I may be only 27 years-old but I have been a nurse long enough to know that this man got into a deathly brawl, and from the look of him, he definitely lost. It is a miracle he is even alive. He lost so much blood on the trauma #2 floor and in the ambulance. Not to mention, whatever blood he lost before that beautiful old man and his dog found him. I cannot stand seeing so much blood, so I clean him up.

We didn't have any fashionable clothes but the bloody rags he's wearing now won't be missed, I'm sure of it. I strip him down and swipe by swipe I clear away all of the caked on, dried-up blood. And that's when I see it. It isn't huge, but it big enough to drain the oxygen from my body. Looking right at me on his left lower back, threatening to suffocate me alive, is a ghostly black Swastika tattoo. I don't know what to do. I can't believe what I am seeing. I can't speak. I can't even move. I can feel my eyes tingle and throat burn with unshed tears. Here I am given this complete stranger everything I have and to save his life, and I know from seeing this tattoo on his body that he hates me. Even though we've never met before today, I know that just the simple thought of me placing my caramel-colored hand on his body would utterly disgust him. I stare at my reflection in the mirror for only a few seconds, but it feels like infinity. I see everything I am. My skin is the color of a cuddly, dark-brown golden retriever puppy; my hair is an unruly mane of golden coily curls all over my head, and my body is curvaceous; and I am beautiful. Inside and out.

I gave up my life for 2 whole years and dedicated every waking second to studying, practicing, and learning how to be a nurse and I refuse to allow anyone to change who I am. He can hate me, and when he wakes up I am sure he will let me know exactly what he thinks of me, but until that time comes I will take care of him; heal his body. Make him whole again, like I do every other day. That is who I am and he will not change me. I do the only thing I know...the same thing I do every time I am in an unwinnable situation: I sing. I sing, when he's transferred to my floor permanently. I sing when the charge nurse asks me to continue with his care. I sing when the other nurses gasp at that artistically crafted tattoo on his back. I even sing 2 weeks later when he opens his eyes for the first time.

I'm giving him his morning bath when his eyes begin to open slowly. He is staring at me. I have never seen eyes so clear and blue, like expensive sapphire earrings. I can feel my heart skip several beats. "Alex, you're awake!" that is all I can say. I am beyond petrified. Should I call security? I stand there blinking at him, saying nothing at all.

"Alex. Who's Alex? Is that me? Am I Alex?"

"You're in the hospital? What do you last remember?"

"I only remember hearing a voice. I know I needed to find that voice. I opened my eyes and saw that voice coming from you. I don't remember anything else, but you." he said still staring at me with those crystal blue, lonely eyes.

"My name is Maia, and I am a nurse. You are in the hospital because 2 weeks ago, you were in a really bad accident."

I hope he doesn't remember that he hates me, or everyone that doesn't look like him. But then that would mean he doesn't remember anything at all, and that seems like a horrible thing to wish upon anybody. I wouldn't want that for anyone, Aryan nation or otherwise. I feel so conflicted.

"So, am I Alex?" he asked.

"We didn't know your name, so I've been calling you Alex or Al, because I think you look like an Alex," I feel silly saying this out loud, but there's no point in lying now.

"...Maia. Maia, I've been talking to you for like 5 minutes. Did you hear anything I just said?" I am shaken out of the past, and brought back to the present. Back to the physical therapy room of my hospital, where Alex has been since that fateful day in the Emergency Department. Here he is 6 weeks later, doing so well. His memory has not returned and he likes the name Alex, so it stuck. Since I was there from the beginning, he's become somewhat attached to me. I try not to let the lines blur into anything more than nurse and patient, but he still feels a connection with me and I want him to get better so I allow him to lean on me, more than I should.

"I'm sorry, Alex. What were you saying?"

He stands up, too quickly for my comfort level, and throws his crutches to the ground. "Al, what are you doing? You're going to hurt yourself!" I shout, out of fear.

"Relax, Mom! I'm fine. Besides, this is my surprise." Alex takes 10 graceful steps towards the wall and back to me without his crutches or the assistance of the PT.

"Oh my Gosh, that's great!!" Without thinking, I intertwine our fingers and give him a tight hug. He doesn't withdraw. In fact, he holds me tighter. Once I realize that this may be blurring that line I have been so desperate to keep, I break out of our hug. Alex still has a hold of my hand.

"Alex. Can I ask you a question?"

"Yes, of course. You can ask me anything."

I stare at our intertwined fingers. The contrast of his pale white skin against my dark brown skin looks beautiful, like the keys of a piano. "What's the difference between your hand and mine?"

Alex stares at me like I'm crazy, but answers the question nonetheless: "My hand is way, way bigger than yours, silly!" He smiles with that sly smirk he always gives me, and let's go of my hand. I know deep down in my soul, at this point in his life that's the only difference he truly sees.

Lamia Farmer

**Second Place
Short Fiction**



Sage Gutierrez
Smile for Awhile
Media of Art: Terra Cotta
Height: 7", Width: 9", Depth: 4"

Third Place
Three-Dimensional Art





Sage Gutierrez

Until You Try

Media of Art: Terra Cotta

Height: 24", Width: 14.5", Depth: 14.5"

**Honorable Mention
Three-Dimensional Art**

Frank

As usual, he greeted me with a kiss on the cheek. He isn't known for being fake; the kiss was genuine, truly heartfelt. Frank has been my father-in-law for six years. He is an open book. He has a sarcasm that is hard to miss and laughs from his core. He isn't tall in height but is mighty in personality. Frank has worn thick glasses since he was a little boy and still does. His head is covered with silver hair with hints of the dark locks he once had. On this day, he was neatly dressed in jeans and a tee shirt. His tee shirt proudly displayed "Vietnam Veteran" on the front. He is rarely seen without some article advertising his Veteran status. Frank earned the right to wear his shirts and hats. Life and age show in both the laugh-lines that corner his eyes and the furrow lines that cross his forehead.

Frank graduated high school in the spring of 1968. However, the freedom and sovereignty most newly graduated 17-year olds embrace escaped Frank. Instead, as that summer faded to autumn, Frank and his friend, Billy Streetz, joined the Army. "Well, it's time we join up." He shrugged as he recounted this with a crooked smile.

Frank had played with Army guys as a child and had seen the John Wayne movie, "The Green Berets". Other than that, he had no real knowledge of what he was getting into. 1968 was a very dangerous time to join the Army; being sent to Vietnam was virtually guaranteed. There were men and boys avoiding the draft and people protested against the war in the streets daily. Frank joined without being drafted; no one tried talking him out of it. His parents left the choice to him saying, "If that's what you really want to do." Forty-eight years later, he still carries the scars of that choice on his body and in his soul.

There was no one waving flags or holding signs of encouragement or quips of love as he and his friend boarded the train in Lombard headed to Midway Airport to begin his journey into a war he knew very little about. Later that day, he landed in Kentucky and traveled to Fort Campbell to begin training. He took no personal memento's with him. "There was no need." He stated, "The Army provides all." While he was preparing to go into combat, Frank celebrated his eighteenth birthday.

When he arrived in Vietnam on March 17th, 1969 his concern wasn't immediately on his task, instead it was on the difference in toilets between the U.S and there. He wasn't trivializing the culture shift, he just never thought about it. He had a job to do.

Three weeks into his stay, he was on patrol with his platoon. As they were walking through swamp grass up to their knees, the platoon leader, Timmy Parker stopped the patrol and called Frank up to the front. Timmy pointed ahead fifteen feet and asked Frank if he saw the guy standing there.

Frank responded "Yes, I do."

"Shoot him." Timmy said.

"What?"

"Shoot him. If you don't, someone else is gonna have too." Timmy declared.

Frank brought his rifle up to his shoulder and sighted the man in his cross-hairs.

This must have taken longer than Timmy had hoped because he said, "Any time!"

Frank pulled the trigger. "Pop! The guy goes down." He recollected. They then had the grim task of checking the dead Vietnamese soldier for any classified information. As they approached, Frank could see he had shot the man in the throat.

“That’s it?” He questioned.

Timmy responded “You shot him, he’s dead.”

Frank rubbed his forehead as he recalled the thought that stuck in his mind, “It’s just this way — you’re not gonna save the world.” That thought stuck with him over the next year. But, he still had a job to do. “There was no time to make movies.”

Frank was shot a month later. While he spent time recovering he was able to see his friend Billy, who was assigned near the hospital. Once Frank was well enough to go back out to the field, he went with no complaint or trepidation. It was hard to see this side of him as he sat across from me and recalled this time in his life. A stranger, but also someone I’ve come to love as a father. The man I know would give you the shirt off of his back, and split his donut with you. He’s not Rambo from the movies but, he was. This man spent two nights alone laying in elephant grass with a bullet in his back after making sure his entire platoon evacuated safely, lived to talk about it.

When he returned home, there was no fan-fare. There were no “Welcome Home” signs at the airport to greet him. He had earned a laundry list of awards including: four Bronze Stars, two Purple Hearts, five Army Commendation Medals as well as being recommended for the Silver Star. Frank was greeted with disdain. He was greeted with shouts of “Baby Killer!” and people spat on him. But yet, he proudly displays his patriotism to this day. Experience warrants his lack of care as to what other people think of him.

Frank squared his shoulders and looked me straight in the eyes as he recounted the episode that marked the end of his time in Vietnam: He and another soldier were standing next to each other. Frank took a bullet to the chest, he turned his head and saw the soldier standing next to him get shot in the heart. He died instantly. Years later, Frank was in Washington D.C. and visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. As he stood before the wall, he turned his head and there was the name of the soldier that had been standing beside him on that day long before, Kenneth Stokes. He wasn’t able to remember the names of the other forty or fifty men and boys he had known who didn’t make it home. ‘Kenneth Stokes’ etched in black marble stood out from the other fifty-eight thousand names. “I think I was meant to see it.” “Not for closure. Closure is bullshit. It never closes — it’s still in your mind.” he grimaced at this thought and went on, “People are still dead, people are still killing each other.”

He leaned back in his chair, pushed his glasses further up his nose with his thumb and said, “It takes everything out of you.” This statement is not true in Frank’s case. For, everything he accomplished in Vietnam and the thirty-two more years he spent in the Military, mean nothing to him in comparison to his family. Over the years, he and Linda, his wife of forty-four years, welcomed two sons and two daughters into the world; who, in turn welcomed children of their own. Frank has traveled the Earth and back. He experienced the world at its worst but, when he reaches down with his war-torn, callused hands and picks up one of his grandchildren, he knows he has also seen the best life has to offer. He tells me, as his eyes fill with tears and his face tightens to hold back the emotion trying to escape, the legacy he wants to leave when he’s gone; “Grandpa, the man, the myth, the legend.”

Kolina Olson

**Second Place
Essay**



Eric Carlson

Dole Bananas

Media of Art: Ceramic

Height: 8", Width: 12", Depth: 10.5"

Second Place

Three-Dimensional Art



Ron Lofton

Self Portrait

Media of Art: Oil on Canvas

Height: 20", Width: 16"

Second Place

Two-Dimensional Art

Void and Light

Her hat is wide brimmed and flopping, expertly covering her eyes. Her sleeves are loose and baggy, masking the insides. Her shirt is tight and red, leaving nothing to the mind. Her pants are comfortable and soft, granting mobility. Her skin is shining white, marking her as a star. Her lips are blood red, the most darling color of all. Her hair is hidden, a testament to the past. She is the Daughter of Light.

Her cap had been dropped, along with her fame. Her dress straps are skinny, a sign of strength despite size. Her dress is turquoise, the color of the sea washing all away. Her skirt is loose, encouraging freedom. Her skin is dull, a mark of age. Her lips are black, a testament to her comfort. Her hair is wisping from her bun, a carefree smile in a sea of frowns. Her eyes are wide, a reminder to keep learning. She is the Woman of Void.

When the two first walked past each other, only one had taken notice. She still had her cap, a narrow brimmed thing. She noted how the other had her eyes cast down, her lips captured in a determined line. A taller Woman walked behind her, and Void nodded to Light. Light sniffled, her berry pink lips pursing.

She had no need for a hat, for she was not afraid. Her sleeves were short, a mark for her temper. Her shirt was thin, allowing one to see through it. Her skirt was long, hiding her shame. Her skin was crystalline, a reminder how easy it is to shatter those with bright things. Her hair was pale, showing how easy it is to mask the darkness. She was the Woman of Light.

The second time the Woman of Void and Daughter of Light met, both noticed the other but pretended not to. The Woman of Void for the comfort of the other; the Daughter of Light for her own. The Woman of Light was lying in front of her, her neck twisted. Her skin dulled. Her shirt torn. Her blood spilled. The Woman of Void dropped her hat next to the Daughter of Light that she may find a comfort in hiding that her mother never allowed her. The Daughter of Light did not look up.

The Daughter of Light was not yet ready to be a Woman. Her insecurities were deep, and hard to mask. Her fears were rampant, too many to swallow. Her short comings were many, but they were only apparent to her. Everyone loved her, but for every blot of love they gave became two of hatred that Daughter held for herself.

The third time the Daughter of Light and Woman of Void passed, only one noticed. The Daughter seethed silently at the Woman. The Woman had allowed her mother to be taken. The Woman had abandoned her. The Woman was ignoring her, she thought the Daughter of Light was strong. The Daughter was only weakness.

The Woman of Void had lost herself. She had lost her equal in trying to protect her lesser. She lost her hope. She lost her salvation. The memories, the Daughter, had become too painful to remember, so the Woman simply forgot. She let her knowledge slip from her, becoming grains of truth few would find. Slowly, the grains became beaches, and the Daughter at least had a match.

The fourth time the Daughter of Light and Woman of Void met, neither could see. The Daughter had become blind. The Woman would never see again. The Daughter grasped at the Woman, but the Woman was only letting go. The Daughter was here. The Woman had gone. The Daughter had only taken. The Woman had only given. Yet it did not profit either of them now. The Daughter was alone, for she was no longer Daughter and possessed not the Qualities of Womanhood. The Daughter faded, the body of the Woman in her lap. The Daughter's hand held the pommel. The Woman's body the blade.

Her hat was wide brimmed and flopping, expertly covering her eyes. Her sleeves were loose and baggy, masking the insides. Her shirt was tight and red, leaving nothing to the mind. Her pants were comfortable and soft, granting mobility. Her skin was shining white, marking her as a star. Her lips were blood red, the most darling color of all. Her hair was hidden, a testament to the past. She was the Daughter of Light.

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Her hat is a scarf, riddled with holes as her brain is with questions. Her sleeves are sheer, showing her heart. Her shirt is long and flowing, keeping her warm when no one else is left. Her pants are tight, gifting her with confidence. Her skin is midnight and glistening with stars, a testament to what might have been. Her hair is shaved, proving she has nothing to hide. She is the Daughter of Void.

She found the Daughter of Light first, but by then she was only Madness. She cackled and spat and whispered of the things that could have been. Her heart was full of envy and her head full of hatred. She saw the Daughter of Void as what she should have been, but was stopped from being. The Madness tried to draw the Daughter of Void in. The Daughter knew the void Madness held was deeper than the loneliness she felt.

The Daughter gained a cap, a thin brimmed cap. A cap that told of traditions long past and a Woman long dead. It was supposed to draw her to Madness, but it only drew her to the Void, rich and dark and comforting. It filled the cracks everything possessed and made them whole. It was emptiness that made things whole.

The Daughter found a grave. It had but one gravestone, but two bodies. The Mothers: Woman of Light and Woman of Void. They had one purpose, but two souls. The Daughter learned of motherhood then. She learned all that it must not be, as an extent she learned all that it should be. She learned that the Void can only fill when the Light illuminates.

The Daughter gained a rose from the grave. A pompous thing, comprised of layer upon layer of thick velvet petals. She tucked it into her scarf; a reminder that life always comes in death. The rose in her hair and cap in hand, the Daughter was complete – a testament of future and past. Of life and death. Of hope and despair.

She still wears a ragged scarf, but it now raises questions for others. Her sheer sleeves remind it is healthy to show yourself. Her long hem a testament to a long past. Her tight pants a prod to act like yourself. Her midnight skin a testament to the past, the glistening to the now. Her hair is still gone, a proof that traditions do not have to be maintained. She was the Daughter of Void. She is still the Daughter of Void.

She will never have an equal. She will always be alone. She will always be the Daughter of Void, but forever remembered as the Mother of Rebirth. For in her balance, she brought forth the Child of light and Child of Void and taught them their balances. She will always be the Daughter of Void, but forever remembered as the Mother of Balance. For in her own balance, she brought forth a cycle of balance through her children. As for her children, they have their own stories to tell, and as a Daughter of Void, a Mother of Rebirth, a Mother of Balance, she cannot get in the way; only fill in the blank spaces.

Victoria Leverton

Third Place
Short Fiction

Will You Teach the World to Sing?

What comes to mind when you hear the word commercials? Do you think of a particular company or product? Do you find them annoying and repetitive? You have your own opinion about what commercials are, but have you ever stopped to think about how they work? Due to the invention of the radio, commercials were also invented, and ever since then, commercials have tried to convince consumers to purchase their particular products. Companies hire marketers who try to come up with the most successful ways to sell their products. Often times they employ celebrity spokes people or create catchy jingles; these techniques are effective because sometimes a celebrity reminds us of a product or a jingle gets stuck in our heads for another product. However, every so often, a commercial will have a profound impact on our thoughts, feelings, or emotions. Over the years, Coca-Cola has released commercials that do just that. The commercial *I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke* from 1971 and the commercial *#MakeltHappy* from 2015 are two examples of commercials that, despite their different historical settings, carry the same message to value kindness that still rings true in today's society.

Nowadays considered a classic Coca-Cola commercial as well as a classic commercial in general, *I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke* was and still is a relevant advertisement. In 1971, Coca-Cola released this commercial depicting a group of younger men and women that appear to be from countries all over the world. Together they are singing that they would like "to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony" and share a Coke with the rest of the world (Coca-Cola Conversations). The author of the commercial is Coca-Cola which is an extremely reputable company, and the target audience for this commercial is everyone in the world but more specifically the younger generation. This commercial has a thoughtful meaning that goes beyond a Coke is the real thing; the message of the commercial is that even though we are all different from each other, we can put our differences aside and live and work together in peace. Coca-Cola used an illustration argument to persuade their audience. They gave an example of world "harmony" by sharing a bottle of Coke with one another. Coca-Cola appealed to the audience's pathos or emotional appeal to persuade them as well. In 1971, the Vietnam War was a topic of debate, and perhaps Coca-Cola wanted to play off of people's strong emotions concerning the war. Many people believed that we should practice peace rather than go to war, and this commercial demonstrated that.

A more recent commercial from Coca-Cola in 2015 titled *#MakeltHappy* also carries a relevant message like their 1971 commercial. Just last year, Coca-Cola aired this commercial that shows people engaging in cyberbullying and being cyberbullied. Then a man at an Internet server, who is drinking a Coke, accidentally spills it, and the Coke is absorbed into the wires and travels to several computers and networks turning the negative messages into positive ones. Again the author of the commercial is Coca-Cola, and the audience is practically everyone in the world who has access to the

Internet, but again the younger generation is the main target audience. The message of *#MakeltHappy* is very similar to the 1971 commercial. In this commercial, Coca-Cola emphasized the growing problem of cyberbullying which is very pertinent in today's society, and by being kind to one another, we can counteract the effects of cyberbullying. To persuade their audience, Coca-Cola used another illustration argument. They presented the problem of cyberbullying, and then they provided an example of how to fix the problem with a little kindness and maybe even a bottle of Coke. Furthermore, Coca-Cola drew on the persuasive appeal kairos or the right time and place of an argument. With the rise of social media, cyberbullying is on the rise as well, and this commercial addresses the problem; if this commercial aired when computers were first introduced, the argument would not have the same impact since computers were not as accessible as they are today, and therefore, the problem of cyberbullying did not exist.

Although the Coca-Cola commercials of 1971 and 2015 come from very different time periods and differ in some aspects, they have the same message that can withstand the test of time. In the 1971 commercial *I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke*, Coca-Cola used both an illustration argument and an appeal to their audience's pathos. On the other hand, Coca-Cola's 2015 commercial *#MakeltHappy* used another illustration argument but appealed to the kairos of the argument. Overall, the advertising strategies of the Coca-Cola Company has not changed that much in over 44 years. Even the messages of these commercials have remained the same. The overarching message from these two commercials states that humans can be both equally cruel and kind to one another, but we should always choose the latter. Being kind and helping others shows that we care and can bring people together for a common cause to change the world for the better or maybe even teach the world to sing.

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Erin Esgar

Third Place
Essay



Joel Dodson

God's Earth

Media of Art: Ceramic (Mixed)

Height: 4", Width: 17", Depth: 7"

Three-Dimensional Art

When I Woke Up and Your Heart Was Not In My Chest Anymore

It feels like you are hearing with your eyes
And you're walking on the ground with your fists.
Your brain doesn't know her rights from her lefts
Or her ups from her downs.
Anyone around you becomes a fragment of your dream:
Something that is there, but you don't notice.
Your feet will feel like they are being held down,
Dragging behind you pound after pound of
Each decision you have made.
Your body will weaken against every kiss of the wind
Daring to push you down
Farther and farther into a crater
Of unwanted-ness and unknowing-ness
When someone asks,
"What is wrong with her"
Another replies, "She is heartbroken".
But what is a heart break.
Is it the literal tearing of your skin,
The flesh of your heart ripping open as the blood drowns your lungs
In what feels like acid?
Is it your mind splitting beneath the hardness of your skull
As your mind tries to comprehend
That this one person who used to be a part of you
Is now ripped from your soul and
Thrown into a black hole of the sky to never
"Be" again.
But it may actually be your veins
Sewing itself back together as your body begins taking the blood
Out of your lungs and pouring it back into your heart
To recreate the entirety that you were born with.
But like broken things, they cannot be remade new again.
At least not right away.
The outlining of your organ will be so jagged and patched with torn cells
That the blood will still drip out of it and into your lungs
Disallowing you to breathe properly.
Every breath will feel like you're taking in an aroma of thick-coaled fumes.
It will then fall to the pit of your stomach
To be devoured by the other thoughts
That you force down your throat throughout each day.
You will wake up and cry.
You will cry because you will feel like your dreams were your haven
And your world is full of nightmares.
You will cry like a newborn baby torn away
From its mother's breast: confused and afraid.
You will stare at walls and try to understand
The reason behind each stroke of paint.
Why the painter decided to go down instead of up
But you will understand
Because you know that it is always easier to fall than to get up.

You will curse every beautiful thing in the world
Because those newly sprouted flowers look exactly like the one's
He tried drawing on your birthday card next to the words, "I love you".
The shimmering moon will look like the way her eyes radiated
When looking at you and everything else she loved in the world.
The fresh summer air will start to smell exactly like the way they did
When they woke up after wearing your shirt or your pants to bed.
When you have enough strength to start throwing away
Everything that reminds you of them
It will look like you just got home from a funeral.
The walls will become bare where dusted pictures used to be
Your shelves will have more space than comfortable
But your mind will still feel like the over-flowing
Garbage can in the front of your house.
The words that were once spoken to you
Become evil casted spells.
The memories will all align to form
The saddest movie you have ever seen in your
Entire life
I don't say anything when you walk away.
Because when a knife pierces skin
The blood doesn't grab the blade and fight back
It just slowly drips out the skin
And off the metal
Onto the ground into a
Creating puddle that can only form the word:
"Why?"
I will go North.
And you will go South.
And we will hold our broken love-ers
In the palms of our callused hands,
Looking for each other
In the different people we meet.
You can take my name off your walls.
You can take my name off your lips.
But you cannot take the ink of my love
Off the insides of your soaked, bleeding pulse-er.

Salina Cruz

**Third Place
Poetry**



Tara Ozehowski
Self Portrait: Emotionally Drained
Media of Art: Acrylic and Oil
Height: 20", Width: 18"

Honorable Mention
Two-Dimensional Art



Theresa Guss
Is That Corn?
Media of Art: Acrylic
Height: 12", Width: 12"

Honorable Mention
Two-Dimensional Art

Migrant Mother and the Great Depression

Perhaps one of Dorothea Lange's most famous photographs of her career, *Migrant Mother* became one of the main symbols of perhaps the darkest times in the history of America. In 1936, Lange created this gelatin silver print which measured about 8.5 inches by 11 inches, in Nipomo, California ("Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California"). She took this photograph toward the end of the Great Depression, a time of financial hardship for many Americans, just before the outbreak of World War II in 1939 in Europe ("World War II: Timeline"). Nevertheless, nobody was hit harder than the farmers who also went through devastating natural disasters like droughts during the Dust Bowl as well ("Migrant Mother, 1936"). Many of those farmers and their families moved from place to place in search of work mainly in California.

The subject matter of the photograph is a woman and three children. In the composition, the two children standing next to the woman in the background are turning their heads away from the camera. The baby held by the woman in the foreground looks to be asleep. In the middle of the photograph, the woman has her elbow on her knee and her hand her chin. The expression on her face appears as if she is pondering her situation. There is a post on the far right of the photograph that may be holding up the tent that is seen behind the woman and the children. The horizontal line of the baby in the woman's lap and the vertical lines of the woman, two children, and post gives the photograph a static feeling. Also the high contrast of the photograph creates emphasis and a focal point on the woman's hair and gives balance and harmony throughout the composition.

Before the start of the Great Depression, Dorothea Lange owned a studio and mainly focused her attention to portrait work (Phelan). However, when the Stock Market in 1929 crashed and the country fell into the Great Depression, Lange shifted her focus to the devastation around her since people were probably not interested in portraits or could not afford them anymore. This shift that Lange expressed was held by several artists worldwide, and the idea of portraying and commenting on social issues pertinent to the time period developed into the social realist movement (Frank 422). Eventually Lange decided to go to work for the Resettlement Administration, a New Deal program created by Franklin D. Roosevelt, along with several other photographers. The objective of this program was aimed at helping poor families move to a new place ("Migrant Mother, 1936"; Phelan). The photographers jobs was to record the lives of traveling workers in order for the government to understand what kind of legislation was needed to be passed to help the workers ("Migrant Mother, 1936").

In March of 1936, Lange was on her way home through Nipomo, California after completing a long assignment, she noticed a sign for a pea pickers campsite and decided to stop; many people were leaving since the weather had destroyed the crop ("Migrant Mother, 1936"). Lange came upon a woman named Florence Owens Thompson and her children who were living on frozen vegetables, wild birds, and food bought from the money they received from selling their car tires ("Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California"). Lange asked if she could take pictures of Thompson and her children, and at first Thompson was hesitant. However, Thompson eventually allowed Lange to take photographs of her family because she realized that the photographs

could help people understand the situation of migrant farm workers across America (Phelan). Lange took only a few photographs, and one of them would soon be known as *Migrant Mother*.

The next morning Lange printed her photographs and brought them to the *San Francisco News*, and shortly thereafter, her pictures were published in an article about the pea pickers ("Migrant Mother, 1936"). Later, the story and the photographs were published in newspapers throughout the country and persuaded the government to send food to California ("Migrant Mother, 1936"). The images were shocking to people who saw them. For the first time people thought of the Great Depression as a human tragedy and not just an economic crisis. Not too long after that, the image known as *Migrant Mother* became one of the many symbols of the Great Depression because it captured the essence of the situation. Not only was *Migrant Mother* associated with the Great Depression, it was one of the many prime examples of the social realist movement along with a few other photographs of Lange's (Frank 422).

Migrant Mother has become one of the most famous images of the Dorothea Lange's portfolio. It has also become the most famous image to come out of the Great Depression. The carefully crafted photograph presents a static, balanced, and harmonious composition. At the time, the photograph presented the situation to government officials which lead them to send food to the people of California in order to ease the people's trouble ("Migrant Mother, 1936"). However, the photograph also helped to show the other people of America the toll the Great Depression took on those who were profoundly impacted. Moreover, this photograph can tell the people in today's modern society what it was like to live in the Great Depression. Dorothea Lange's image has withstood the test of history, and its message has transcended its own time and place. Although *Migrant Mother* originated as a documentary photograph, it has since grown into a work of fine art that continues to teach and fascinate the younger generation of historians and photographers.

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Erin Esgar

Honorable Mention
Essay

The Lie

My attorney was late. I was not sure he was going to show up at all. There were people shuffling papers and looked very busy. Were they looking at papers having to do with me? Probably not. I had seen my father and step mother in the hallway as I was coming in. They were down a corridor talking with someone I assumed was their lawyer. If they saw me, they did not call my name. My step mother, Ellen, was wearing her usual frown on her face. My father was wearing the lofty look he wore so well.

The thought that this was a trick started creeping into my mind. My attorney would soon show up, talk with their attorney and I would be sent to yet another foster home. New strangers to call Mom and Dad. After all, I was only fourteen years old. Even at such a young age, I knew I had no respect for either of them. They were both in on the lie.

I had a very happy life at one time. There were lots of neighbor kids. We all played and got along well. We walked to school together every day and we all went home when the street lights came on. I also had an older brother, Marvin. I looked up to him even though he was only one year older than me. He is who I looked to for guidance or to validate all of life's issues that sometimes come up in a 9-year old's life. I believed everything he said.

As I sat quietly in the cold, stale court room, I started thinking back on those days. 'The days of innocence', I think I had heard them called. My days of innocence ended the morning my dad, unceremoniously told Marvin and I that our mother had been killed the night before.

I remembered hearing my father say, "It was a terrible, fiery crash. She's dead. You won't be able to go the funeral; she's too burnt for you to see her."

Marvin managed to croak out "How?"

Hearing the fear in my brother's voice caused a panic to rise in me. Until then, my eyes had been fixed on my dad's mouth forming these horrible words; my mind was not able to put those words into a feeling until I looked at my brother. The color had drained from his face. I knew in that instant; my mom was dead. I looked back to my father as tears started streaming down my cheeks. I was hoping to see comfort in his face, or tenderness in his voice. There was neither.

My father responded to my brother's question, "She went bowling last night and was killed in a car accident."

He put no emotion in these words. Was that a smile tugging at the corners of his mouth? A smirk? My mind was spinning. Was I seeing things that weren't there? Maybe, this is how grownups react to "a terrible, fiery crash." I attempted to wipe my tears away with the sleeve of my pajamas. It was then I noticed my mom's bowling bag sitting in the corner. The same place she always kept it. I said nothing.

Later that same day, my mother was replaced with Ellen. She was nothing like my mother. My mother was a flamboyant, dark haired, beautiful woman. My mom had a way of commanding the attention of everyone in a room; she was graceful and elegant. This replacement mother was nothing like her except, apparently, they wore the same size in clothing. My mother no longer needed the clothes in her closet so, Ellen claimed them as hers.

Sometimes, as I drifted off to sleep, the memory of my mother would walk in the room. My eyes would fly open and I strained to see her in the dark. I longed to see her. I needed her to explain what was going on. I would wait to feel her sit on the edge of my bed and stroke my hair and tell me everything was going to be alright, like she did when I was sick. Slowly, the sad realization that she wasn't coming to save me from this nightmare seeped into my soul. As the sadness overtook my heart, my brain followed. I stopped going outside to play with my friends. I stopped eating and I stopped talking. I began answering questions with only my shattered mind.

Weeks passed and the world I knew was replaced with Ellen's world. The grandparents we spent our summers with were replaced with a new grandmother. The food my mother cooked was replaced with Ellen's food. My world turned grey and dark. There was no joy, there was no laughter, and there was certainly no speaking about our mother. I looked to my brother for answers, there were none. I always felt as though he had all the solutions but, he had no reprieve from this anymore than I did.

Marvin and I would escape Ellen often and make our way to a park that was close to our house. It was our, not so secret, hiding place. There were paved walking paths that wound through the park. Some had smaller dirt paths that led off to small, open areas surrounded by thick bushes and trees. These areas all had remnants of burnt wood surrounded by logs you could sit on. We would sometimes find leftover magazine pages or empty beer cans. Mostly we would just sit silently and poke the ground with a stick. The smell of campfire and stale beer hung in the air. It felt safe.

As we made our way back to the house that no longer felt like a home, we walked at a pace that showed our shared sorrow. Our shoulders were hunched over and we both found the ground mesmerizing as we walked home for the night. We had just gotten to the paved path that ran through the whole park, when I raised my head to make a vague, mental note of the person walking toward us, my broken brain saw a sight that made my heart both hurt and leap at the same time. My mother was walking straight toward us. Another ghost-mom. I knew she would disappear before our steps reached each other. I didn't cry out for her. I didn't grab my brother's arm and point at the apparition. I just lowered my head and kept putting one foot in front of the other. Until, I heard Marvin's steady footsteps suddenly turn into a sprint.

He yelled out "Mommy!"

Was he seeing into my thoughts? Had he lost his mind right along with me? As the woman approached, a large lump formed in my throat and I felt like I was floating. I don't remember taking the final steps to reach her. Maybe, I actually did float. After all, it was just as possible as the sight I was seeing in front of me. Before us stood our mother. I didn't scream and run. Instead, I slowly reached out my hand to touch her. I was sure, as had happened so many times before, she would vanish into thin air and I would be left to sink deeper into my own mind. But, this time, my fingertips touched a solid arm. Our mom was not dead.

When the door behind me swung open, I snapped out of my lamenting. I heard a soft click, click, click of, what I knew to be, 'fancy shoes' hitting the marble floor of the courtroom. Chair legs scrapped the floor as the people involved in this fight found their seats. I counted four total. My lawyer slid into the heavy wood chair next to me. He asked if I was ready. Everyone had given up on me. On this day, it was my turn to give up on them. I nodded my head, dutifully raised to my feet and waited for the judge to tell us to be seated. A blur of legal words mixed with mine and my father's name swirled around me. After what seemed like a ridiculously short amount of time, considering what I was asking for, my lawyer stood up and gathered some papers from the woman sitting near the judge. He handed a paper to my dad's attorney, then turned toward me. The look on my face must have reminded him that I was still just a child.

He said to me, "You won."

Sorrow filled my soul. I wanted my family back. I wanted my mom to throw open the courtroom doors and demand her rights back. I wanted my dad to gather me in his arms and protect me. I wanted him to be sorry for the damage he caused with his lie. None of these things would be possible anymore; their time was gone. I fought back the tears that tried to escape as anger replaced my sorrow. Before my emotions could betray my pride, I lifted my chin, stood up, turned on my heel and strode out of the court room an adult.

Kolina Olson

Essay

Not Your Average Button

What does it mean to be a photographer? A photographer is a person who takes pictures as their profession, but that is what a photographer does. So what does it actually mean to be a photographer and how does one become a true photographer? Does a person have to own the newest and most popular equipment on the market? Or does a person have to constantly be taking pictures? Over the course of history, there have been a number of photographers who have embodied exactly what it means to be a photographer, and Ansel Adams was one of those photographers. Ansel Adams was, and might still be is considered, one of the most famous photographers, but apart from his photography, he is also known for his advocacy of nature preservation through his photography.

Revered as one of the most famous photographers since the invention of photography, Ansel Adams is best known for his beautiful landscape photography. From a young age, Adams had a love of nature which was only fostered by his visit to Yosemite where he became fixated on photography and ultimately made him aspire to be a photographer. Throughout his career, Adams made several trips back to Yosemite because the scenery captivated his imagination. Besides Yosemite, Adams traveled all across the country to other National Parks like Glacier National Park, Grand Teton National Park, and Grand Canyon National Park. Adams had an artistic viewpoint of the world, and he wanted to share that with all of mankind. His pictures helped to bring photography to the forefront of the art community.

Although Ansel Adams is best known for his nature photography, he is also known for his conservation work of the landscapes he photographed. Adams wanted to use the pictures he created to bring about change to the world and to have an impact on society. He wanted to share his love and respect for nature with other people, so in turn, those people could love nature and join him in the fight to preserve the nature he photographed. Through his photography and advocacy, Adams was not only responsible in changing the general public's opinion of nature but also government officials' opinions. He helped to expand the National Park Service, for example, with his pictures of Kings Canyon. Those pictures were the determining factor in Congress establishing Kings Canyon as a National Park ("Ansel Adams").

Even though photographers are known for taking pictures, they go beyond that task of pressing a button to create a picture. Photographers are not only picture takers, but they are recorders of moments in time which in turn become memories. For instance, a bride and groom often times hire a photographer to take pictures of them on their wedding day. And a few years down the road, the couple will look back on those pictures and remember their wedding day as if it had been yesterday. Photographers also have the ability to evoke emotions through their pictures. For example, an expecting mother asks a photographer to take pictures of her while she is pregnant. A couple years later, she will take down the photo album and see those pictures and remember how happy she felt to be carrying her bundle of joy. Lastly, photographers not only can freeze time in a snapshot and capture emotions within an image,

they can also elicit change. Ansel Adams is a great demonstration of this. He was able to combine his passions of nature, photography, and conservation to have a greater impact. Instead of his pictures being considered only as art, they were symbols of the conservation movement.

Aside from being one of the greatest photographers and known for his landscape photography, Ansel Adams used his photography to help conserve the nature that he so much adored, and he was a key contributor to the expansion of the National Parks. Ansel Adams traveled the country photographing the landscape, but then he turned his art into a catalyst for the advocacy of nature preserves, and that is what it means to be a photographer. Of course photographers are aided in their business with the newest technology and constantly taking pictures, but being a true photographer means more than that. A true photographer has the ability to see the meaning behind a scene and to capture all of it within the confines of a picture. I would consider myself a true photographer because even when I do not have a camera in my hand, I can see the art in the ordinary everyday objects or settings. However, there are some people in the world who think that anyone can be a photographer because they think all it takes is simply pressing the camera button, but to a true photographer, the camera button is not your average button.

You don't take a photograph, you make it

— Ansel Adams

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Erin Esgar

Essay



Erin Esgar
Fine Tune
Height: 8", Width: 10"

Third Place
Photography

Dancer (*translation*: The Lover)

As he lifted his hands slowly above
It was like he was bringing her body to his.

The music that came through his speakers
Was her voice swarming around him.

The sun that caressed his back as he practiced,
Over and over again
Until the light went away,
Was her lips against his skin.

He sweated against his shirt as he enjoyed
The sole reflection of his routine against the mirror,
Day after day,
Just as if he had been staring at her.

He swayed his hands softly in front of his face.
His feet crossed, uncrossed, crossed
As his hands went to his sides
Left and right
Down to his hips, swaying
Back and forth

The image of her smile pressed against his skull.
The motion of his fingertips and hands
Outlined the silhouette of her body
Stuck inside his head.

His knees bent as his body fell
From risen to fall;
Crouching to the ground.
The structure of her neck, her chest, and her hips
Was the concrete his hands played on.

He closed his eyes
The air against him brushed with every twist
Engulfing his body like her scent.

He moved from one side to another,
His shoes sliding and pumping ,
As his heart followed along.

He was a dancer
And with every move
He made love to her.

Salina Cruz

**Honorable Mention
Poetry**



Robert Whitten

Summer Freedom (AKA The 'C' Jump)

Height: 8", Width: 10"

**Honorable Mention
Photography**

The Walk with Death

As she picked up on Monday in the morning,
Thursday in the evening,
and Saturday in the black of night,
she saw it again:
the deep darting of eyes, the strong stammering breaths, the tensely closed mouths.

Death didn't understand why every time she lightly placed a hand
on one of their backs for comfort, they flinched.
She didn't comprehend the reason why they walked slowly behind her a good five feet
as she strongly strode their path.
Death didn't know why her kissing warmth was mistaken for stabbing coldness.

Their eyes deep with despair, they all looked at her darkened attire.
Her closed shoes laced from her feet to her knees like the legs of blackened spiders.
A pair of jeans mimicked the night's sky with knitted nets that were sewn into the holes.
A dirtied and worn clothed map wrapped around her waist,
softly hanging and kissing her left thigh each time she took a step.
And a crescent that hung from her neck down her sternum.
The inside of the stone was swarmed with swimming, glowing souls.

They did not know that for the absence of a sense of viciousness and horror,
Death covered up her abundance of scars from when she experienced her end of time.
When the man of the darkness came to her, knowing she was innocent from the cause,
she already was almost gone.

Her blinks were short and deep. Her entire was bathed in blood.
Not only her body, but her heart had been busted open.
The warmth of her life racing through her veins and out through her breath.

But with fear and terror-full hearts they kept their eyes creeping back to her scythe
that hung diagonally across her back, the strap tightened around her chest.
They did not know that Death kept her protection close
to allow the living to enter the realm of the non without harm.

When Death arrives at 9:11 AM, 4:53 PM, 8:27 AM,
at the convenient store across the street,
at the corner of a two-story house ,
then at the sea,
she hopes that she could show the openness of her heart and release the silent speech
that she knows that they are of loss of something so pure,
that they don't have to venture alone like they first left,
and that she had wished there had been someone who stood by her stride
when she had made the lonesome voyage to the other side.

Salina Cruz

Poetry



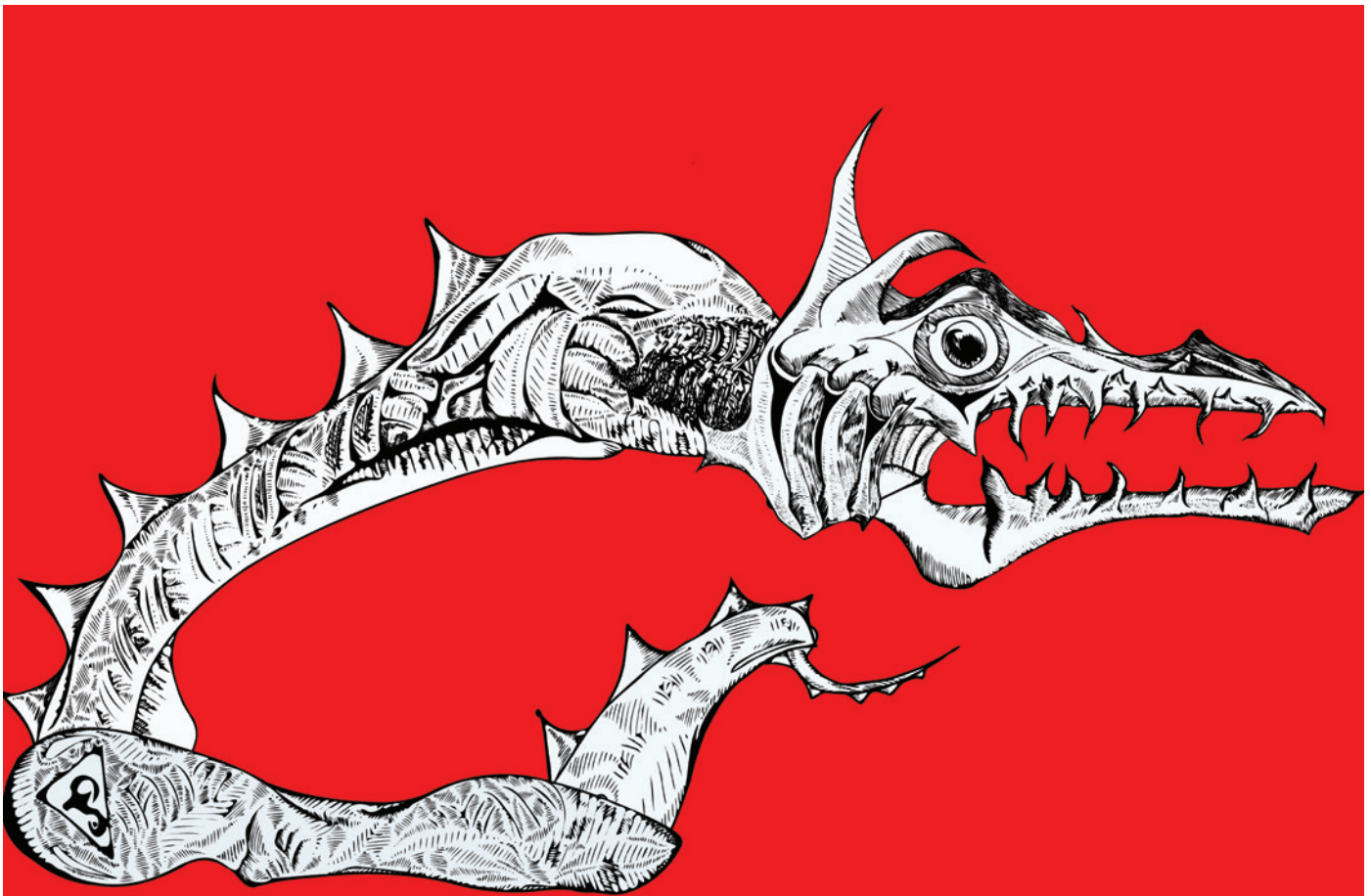
Ron Lofton

Roses

Media of Art: Oil on Canvas

Height: 20", Width: 16"

Two-Dimensional Art



Jason Wise

Eurudimus the Dragon,

from the Unreleased Work, The Bells of Six

Media of Art: Pen and Ink

Height: 105.81", Width: 161.28"

Two-Dimensional Art

Credits

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