

KISHWAEKE
LITERARY & ARTS JOURNAL
COLLEGE

KAMELIA 2011

KISHWAUKEE COLLEGE LITERARY & ARTS JOURNAL

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ON THE COVER...
SARAH GREER
ARITHUSA THE GREAT
MONOTYPE PRINT
6" H X 6" W
1ST PLACE TWO DIMENSIONAL ART



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AWARDS

TWO DIMENSIONAL ART

FIRST PLACE SARAH GREER
SECOND PLACE EMILY GREER
THIRD PLACE COURTNEY SLIGA

THREE DIMENSIONAL ART

FIRST PLACE NATALIE J. CALHOUN
SECOND PLACE DAVID REISINGER
THIRD PLACE RONNA DOTY

PHOTOGRAPHY

FIRST PLACE ALEXSIS CORCORAN
SECOND PLACE RONNA DOTY
THIRD PLACE BRENT CARROLL

POETRY

FIRST PLACE MARI LYNN WEST
SECOND PLACE DEITRA COLCLASURE
THIRD PLACE JESSI HAISH

SHORT FICTION

FIRST PLACE KARL RAND
SECOND PLACE KARL RAND
THIRD PLACE DEITRA COLCLASURE

ESSAY

HONORABLE MENTION OWEN DUVALL



LOVE, LUNCH, AND DINNER

I'm the type of zombie
Who uses napkins
Because I hate having blood stains

I'm the kind of zombie
Who gives you a ten second head start
Before I eat your brains

I'm the type of zombie
Who has a soul
Because I'm just a zombie
Looking for someone to hold

I'm just the zombie
You can love and adore
Because I'll take you out for liver
Then take you back to the morgue

I'm just the zombie
On match.com
Because I'm just the zombie
Hoping you'll log on

DEITRA COLCLASURE
2ND PLACE POETRY AWARD





BRENT CARROLL
CHAIRSCAPE
BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO
5" W X 7" H
3RD PLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

SHADOWS IN THE ROSE GARDEN

The white light was sterile and unnatural in its brightness, much like the light of an operating room. It gave a sick feeling in my stomach and hurt my eyes as they adjusted. A garden came into focus in front of me; a rose garden. Roses the color of the Dynasty's finest red wine were bleeding from the lavish green undergrowth. The colors mesmerized me and I drew closer to them. I had the fleeting feeling of being watched and turned to see who my audience was. Nobody was there. Again, a shadow passed through my peripherals, but after a glance I was sure I'd imagined it. Still the feeling of being watched by beasts and shadows grew on me as I admired the petals and thorns of the specimens in front of me.

What is that noise? Only the wind rustling the flowers' leaves, or perhaps my own bare feet on the grass. Yet, I am almost positive that I witnessed a creature (maybe several) looking intently at me from just beyond my line of sight. *Reach out, smell what we have provided;* the breeze whispers in my ear. *Careful not to touch the grabbing fingers, they are unforgiving.* My arm stretches out, matching the contours of the rose branches. I brush the soft leaves of the plants and slip. My finger pricks on one of the thorns and a single drop falls onto the grass. *Our grass.*

I wake up suddenly, gasping. I am back where I last fell asleep in my own backyard. Lying in the grass, I look above and admire the red autumn leaves intermingling with the green of the recent summer. I always loved my yard, more of a forest than anything; the trees allowed in enough light to read a staff of music, but kept out enough rain so as not to drench absolutely everything.

I sit up and stretch my palms out in front of me, ready for yet another lesson in the ways of life. Brushing the grass off of my coattails I position myself on the bench closest to middle C, *dal niente*. And so it has begun. Without thinking, I allow my hands to run wherever they may. From the keys the voices of birds can be heard. A river glissandos down the ivories. The breeze is blowing the key of G up and down scales bursting into mighty winds, *fortissimo fortissimo!*

The shadowy creatures are coming back though I cannot see them yet. Their bodies are dark and ominous, but I cannot yet perceive their faces.

Sforzando! A tree just to my right bursts into flame. The catastrophic chaos of song birds erupting from the canopy creates a cacophony at my orchestration. *Allegro*, in staccatos bullets whiz pass my head; shatters of bark rain down around me like snow. With each sharp that I play the faces of the monsters come closer into view.

Pianissimo legato. The monsters step out of the shade of the trees. *Magnifico!* The soldiers surround me, their faces covered by helmets and their bodies padded with Teflon. It was ten years ago that I had stopped running, and finally I have an audience to watch me play. *Ritardando arpeggio* as the soldiers raise their guns.

My heart is constricting against itself, yet my fingers continue to birth life. *Decrescendo.* I raise my eyes and focus intently upon the man before me. His eyes are shaded by goggles and an emotionless sneer is staring back at me from his face. Fingers slowly squeeze the triggers. The chorus of bullets applauds my music, and the metal against flesh appraises my work.

Al niente ❖

KARL RAND
2ND PLACE SHORT FICTION

A HEART ONCE FILLED

A heart once filled,

Empty.

The joy once felt,

Gone.

Without a care,

Alone.

Life takes a turn,

Pain.

Left behind,

Lost.

At a distance,

Away.

Wish you were here,

More.

Once a Mom,

Joy.

Life goes on,

Empty.

MARI LYNN WEST
1ST PLACE POETRY



UNDER WHERE?

There once upon a time was a purple elephant named Herbert whose favorite ice cream was chocolate covered sherbet. He loved to sing, rap, and dance, but his favorite thing about himself was his unique pink and yellow polka-dotted underpants. However, most of the animals that lived in his town of Snod did not like the idea of him always having them on. They all found it was strange, bizarre, and odd. They would make fun of him hoping Herbert would take them off.

“Elephants don’t wear polka-dotted underpants! It is only expected if you are a flamboyant fire ant! So please take them off, the moose are starting to talk! I do it only because I care, so please just take off your strange underwear,” Herbert’s mother wimbled. But Herbert loved his underwear so, and how they were free and nimble. So he carried on wearing his undies, and let me tell you, he wore them oh so proudly!

Sally was a hippo, all the way from Kalamazoo! She had just moved into Herbert’s neighborhood. And everyone had thought that she was very exciting and new. Sadly, Sally could not sing, rap, or dance, but Sally did however happen to wear pink and yellow striped underpants. Though the strange thing was she wore them above on top of her head. Why Sally did this? She never said.

Marvin the monkey, who was always in bed, was best friends and roommates with Nugget McNed. They had lots of hobbies that they shared together, like learning moose calls, chewing giant bubblegum balls, and plucking leprechaun feathers! They were best friends with Herbert, even though he was odd. But so were they, and they all got along.

One Springy day, Sally went to the market owned by Little Miss Maggie May. McNed was also there, picking up some wild flaming pears for him and Marvin to share. McNed ran into Sally down aisle five, and her pink and yellow striped underwear caught his eye. Then he saw in her hands was sherbet ice cream, and then he concocted a plan.

“Why, those are some rather lovely undies on top of your head. Hello, my named is Nugget, Nugget McNed. And may I be so bold to tell you about my friend? He’s a splendid elephant named Herbert, whose favorite ice cream just happens to be chocolate covered sherbet. But the strange thing is...well, I don’t know how to begin. But he wears almost the same exact undies as the ones on your head!” said Nugget McNed, trying to make a love connection for one of his dearest friends.

Sally seemed very intrigued and could not wait to meet this rather interesting thing! So McNed set up a date, and Sally proclaimed that she could not wait!

McNed told Herbert the good news about how he set them up on a date for tomorrow afternoon. Herbert was delighted by this girl he described, and he could not wait to go out on their date and have some poisonberry pies!

The next day it was finally time, and Herbert was so dressed up that he even wore a matching bow tie. He walked into the restaurant and took a seat, and Herbert waited to see who this mysterious hippopotamus would be. Then Sally walked through the door, and then they saw each other and their emotions soared!

“Nugget was right, you are out of sight!” “Why thank you, and might I say your underwear is super fly,” they said to each other as they gazed into one another’s eyes.

So the moral of this story is do not be ashamed of who you are, because a matching hippopotamus might not be too far!*

DEITRA COLCLASURE
3RD PLACE SHORT FICTION



COURTNEY SLIGA
ATER
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
14"W X 17"H X 1"D
3RD PLACE TWO DIMENSIONAL ART



NATALIE J. CALHOUN

UNTITLED

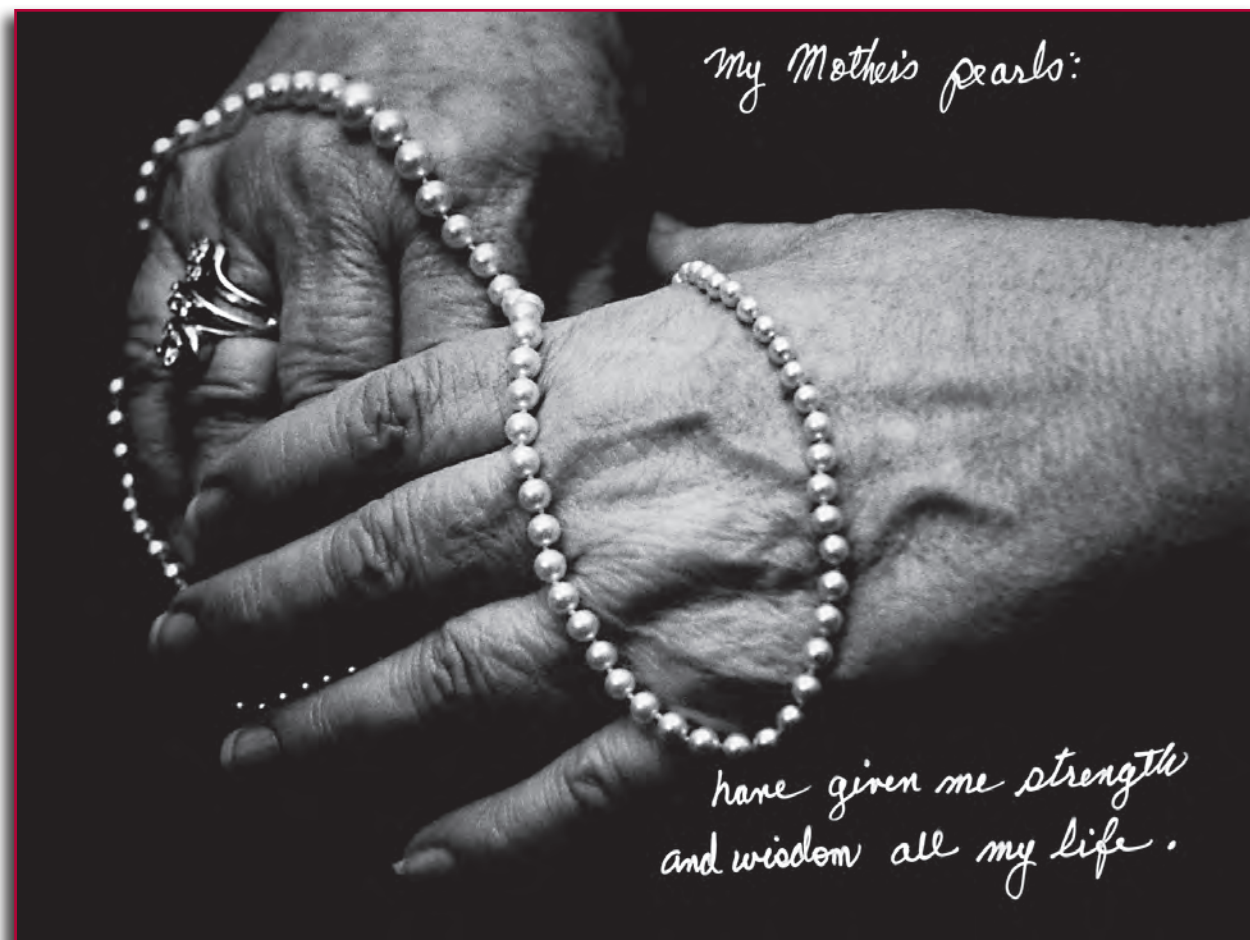
RETICULATED SILVER, SEMI-PRECIOUS STONE

.5" W X 2.25" H X .25" D

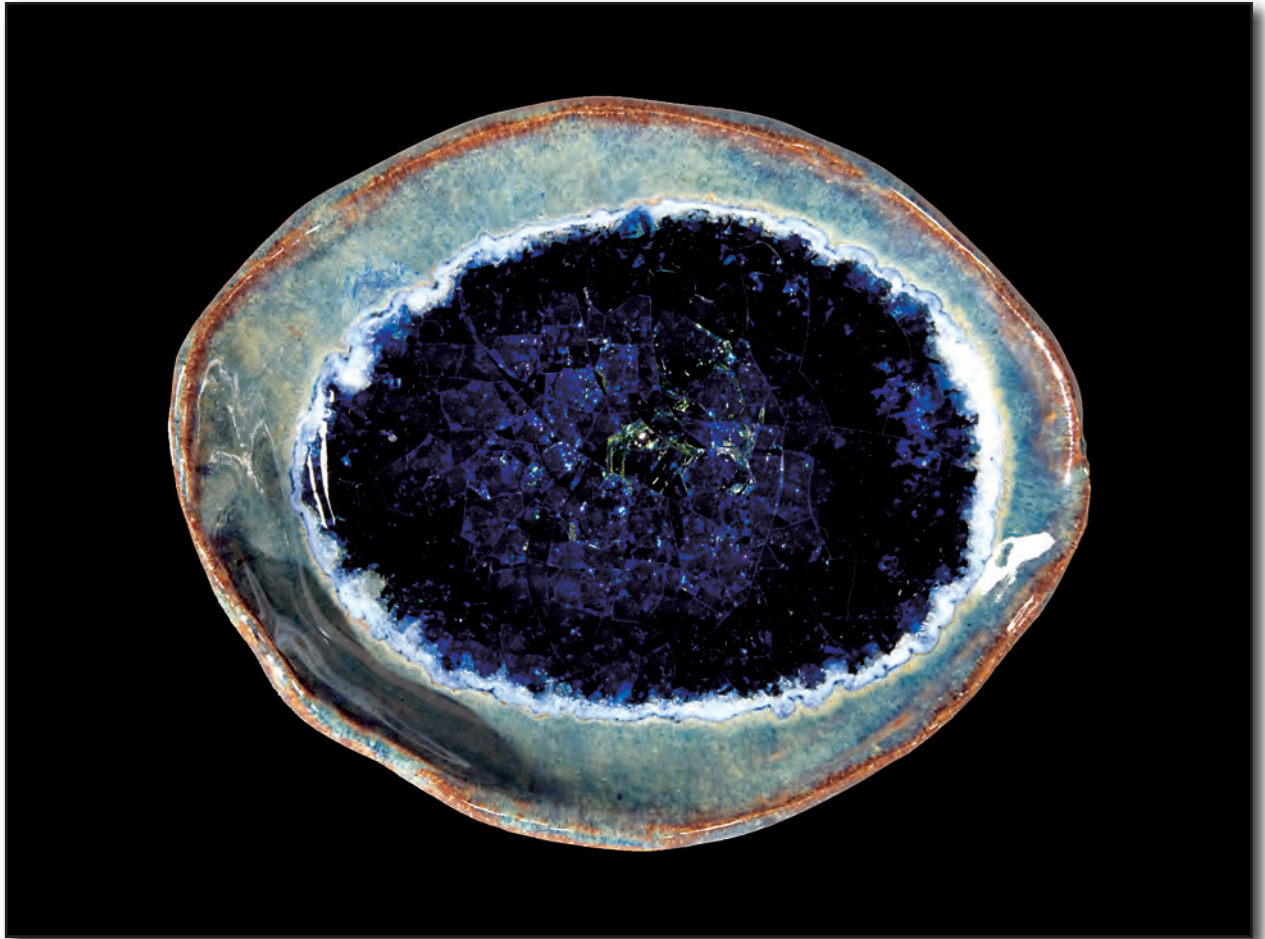
1ST PLACE THREE DIMENSIONAL ART



NICOLE PARLETTE
UNTITLED
OIL ON STRATHMORE
22" W X 29" H



ALEXSIS CORCORAN
UNTITLED 2
BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO
14" W X 11" H
1ST PLACE PHOTOGRAPHY



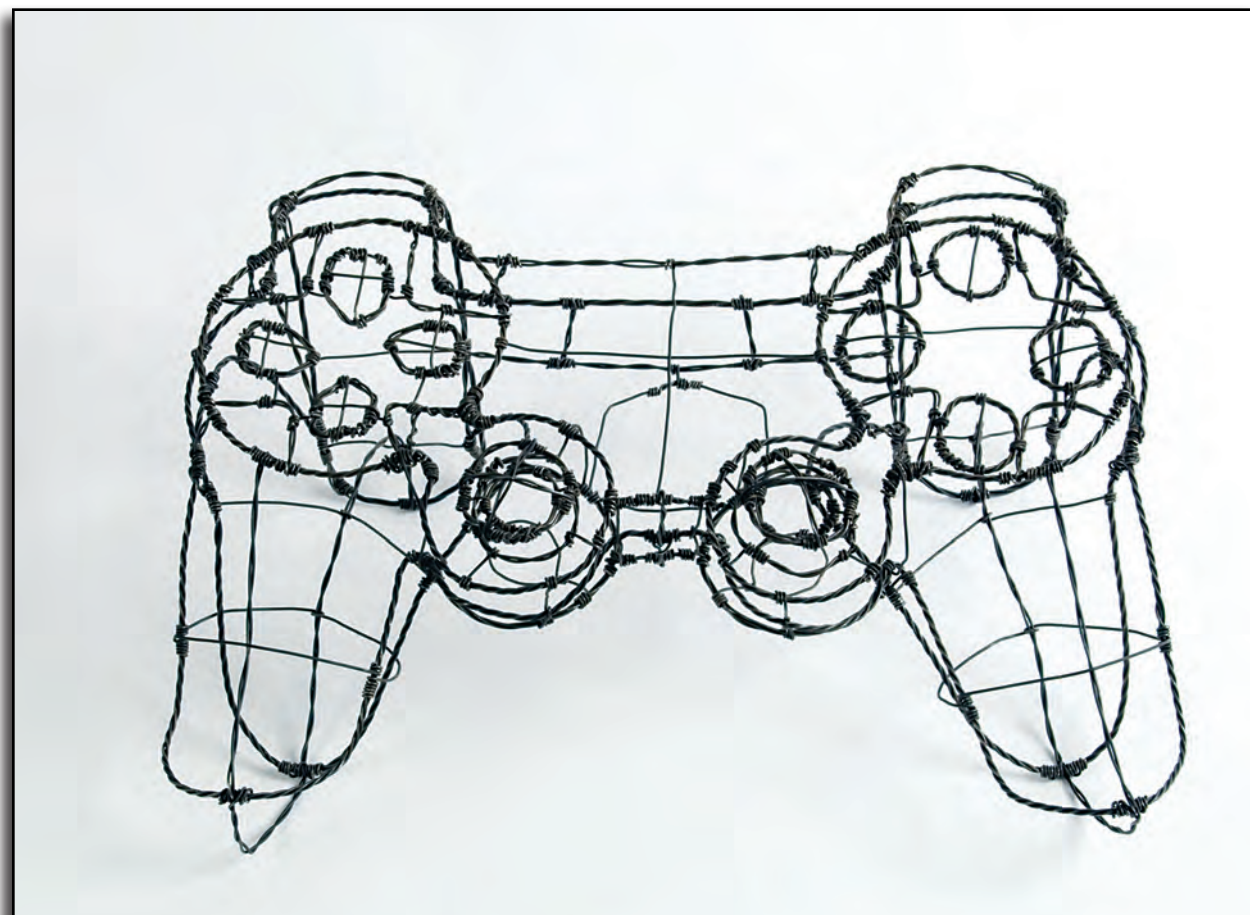
CHRISTINE WILSON
MY KIND OF SOAP DISH
CLAY, GLASS
5" W X 1" H X 4" D

RONNA DOTY
ICED PASSIONS
COLOR PHOTO
6.5" W X 10" H
2ND PLACE PHOTOGRAPHY





COURTNEY SLIGA
BUILDING THE TREE OF LIFE
COLLAGE
14" W x 17" H x 1" D



JUSTIN SCHROYER
ENABLER
WIRE
11" W x 8" H x 3.5" D



JESSICA BROWN
RING WITH A TREE IN A FLOWER POT
SILVER, COPPER, BRASS, PLASTIC RESIN
2.5" W X 4.5" H X 2.5" D



SARAH GREER
ARITHUSA THE GREAT
MONOTYPE PRINT
6" W X 6" H
1ST PLACE TWO DIMENSIONAL ART

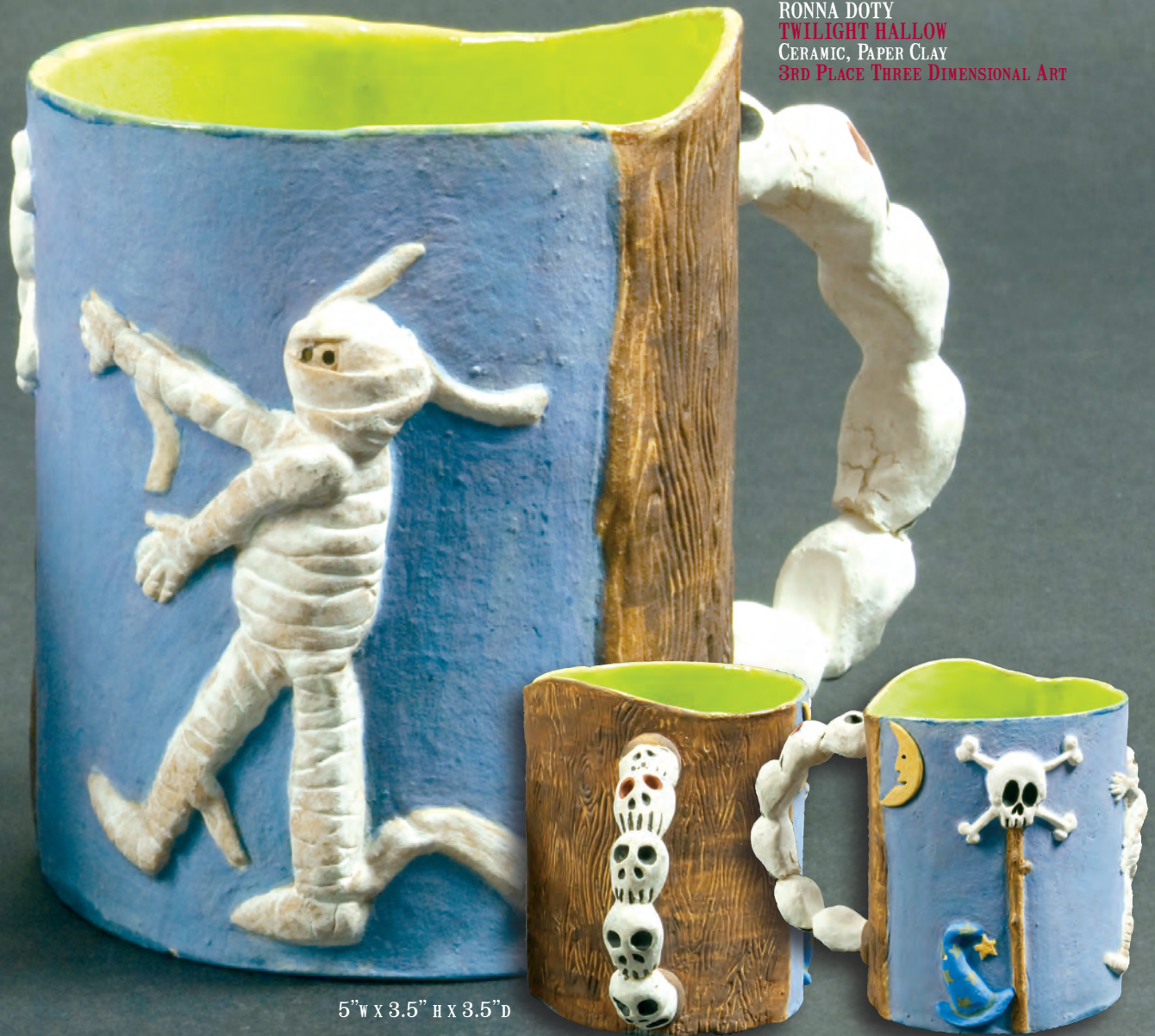


COURTNEY SLIGA
SLOVIC ORIENT
CERAMIC - STONEWARE
16" W X 30" H X 12" D



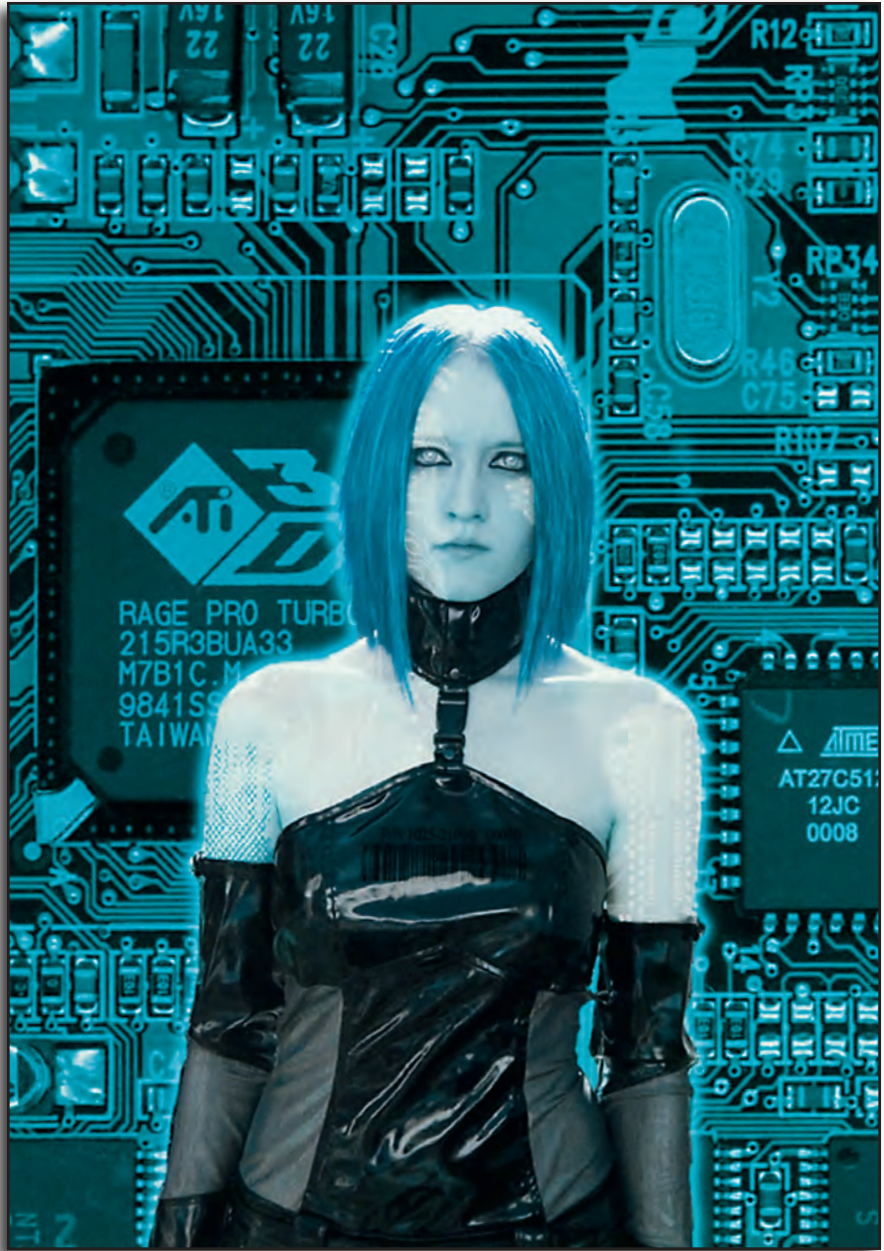
4.5"W X 4" H X 3.5"D

RONNA DOTY
TWILIGHT HALLOW
CERAMIC, PAPER CLAY
3RD PLACE THREE DIMENSIONAL ART



5" W X 3.5" H X 3.5" D

SARAH GREER
BLUE CYBORG
DIGITAL MANIPULATION
7" W X 10" H





EMILY GREER
TEA TIME
DIGITAL MANIPULATION
10.5" W X 8" H
2ND PLACE TWO DIMENSIONAL ART



SARAH GREER
CRYOARI
COLOR PHOTO
10" W X 8" H



ALEXSIS CORCORAN
UNTITLED 3
BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO
14" w x 11" h

MAZE OF REGRET?

Fairness is luxury we are not given,
Driven to find a way to forget.
Fortunate for time stalls.
All these mistakes, all these mishaps
Trap me in a maze of regret.
Fretting at the end I can't see.
Key scenes are entering endlessly.
Pending blindness is fading away.
Tell me. Tell me.
I need to know how much you care.
Stare me down; let me know you're there.
Pair the pain with the happiness,
Happens to be the life I live.
Give me an insight to your mind.
Kindly drop your shield, let go.
Showing me how you really feel.
Deal with yourself and let me connect,
Communication is the key.
Stop making excuses and
Tell me. Tell me.
I need to know how much you care.
Stare me down; let me know you're still there.

ZACHARY KLEIN
POETRY

OF HEARTS AND MINDS

The dust is blown and scattered...
No matter which side of the road I'm on, it's blowing there...
The paint is brushed and splattered...
No matter which canvas is painted it's flowing there...
Thoughts can think of love and hate, war and fate...
But one cannot be both full and despair...
The time is not late to retaliate...
Nothing's too broken beyond repair...
The fog settles in from thicker to thin...
The strokes of coldness turn to strokes of hair...
The confusion within is swallowed like gin...
And I find my life again sweet and fair...
The water is deep, but we can learn to swim...
If we lose an arm we still have a limb...
Thoughts travel far but will return home...
And souls pull apart but will always become one...

The glass is cracked and shattered...
No matter how many panes our pains crash through we're here...
The seeds are strewn and scattered ...
No matter how many gales are withstood the sky will always clear...
Hearts can feel both cured and hurt, moved while inert...
But one cannot be both alive and in fear...
There's not enough dirt to cover our worst...
No matter how far, our past is still near...
The rain beats down, it dampens the ground...
The tears from our eyes mix with tears of the sky...
The crowd gathers 'round, but we hear not a sound...
Spread your wings wide and learn how to fly...
The water is deep, but we can learn to swim...
If we lose an arm we still have a limb...
Thoughts travel far but will return home...
And souls pull apart but will always become one...

Souls pull apart but will always become one...
When the times get too tragic, remember the fun...
If you can't walk by my side, then by yours I can run...
If your knot has been tied, only by you can it be undone...
The veil is torn and tattered...
Though it'll remain white...
The soldier is bruised and battered...
But he will remain to fight...

KARL RAND
POETRY





DAVID REISINGER
UNTITLED
STAINLESS STEEL, SILVER, BRASS
.5" H X 1" DIAMETER
2ND PLACE THREE DIMENSIONAL ART



HUNGRY HUNGRY HEATHEN

Apply my Blistex smack throw that shit in a chapbook
feel the high fahrenheit to write more fuel for fires
papers piled in pyres get me hot - tempered

Segregate my scribbles
they don't belong in the same (what's bigger than a ballpark?)

Can't fucking capture (others or myself)
two separate lives placed on two separate shelves

You talked of God and Cain cause and effect events
linked by chains affect our carbon bodies
more than mere hobbies

I flip through copies of your inked paper
reading incessantly praying to sink
so that they may seep into me

I want to feed off you your talent
eat the airwaves we create with rants
digest and form a conscience but

I can't hold water in my hands
or a belief in god

Took personal walk with Jesus but
the soul is an inside joke (get it?)
it doesn't exist (at least not like this)

I've read too many books
(and didn't find the good one that great)

My hungry eyes tried tongue tied I stumble
struggle to make it audible
but my mind decides it doesn't sound right
coming from my lips I can't apply it to my life
like chapstick to my lips

to kiss
my leaky hands goodnight

NATHANIEL WHITTENHALL
POETRY

THUMBIN' FOR SOME COMPANY

'Twas a cold, rainy day on I-93
When a hitchhiker thumbed for some company
An hour of spray by the passing patrols
Would have driven anybody to crave a warm vehicle

Eventually, a man in a truck stirred to a stop
Says, "You look a little lost and as wet as a mop!"
"To N'Orleans," said the hiker, "oh and what be the fee?"
"N'Orleans? Same as me, so the fee be for free."

Grateful for a ride and the warmth of a friend
The hiker grabbed his duffle and hopped right up in
"Where you from?" asked the man with a questionable face
"I'm not sure. Spose my home, if that's what you'd call the place."

They'd driven all day, with the truck all a'jerk
With not much to say and the radio din't work
Air 'twas so silent you could hear yourself blink
With not much to say, they had plenty to think

Thought the man, "what has this vagrant got in his ol' mind?"
Thought the hiker, "what'f the driver ain't really too kind?"
Though they both grew suspicious, they both kept quite quiet
Besides, if they'd mentioned the other'd deny it

They eyed one another with sure apprehension
Yet, when noticed by the other they'd nod their attention
The driver offered a match and smoked what he lit
"No thanks," replied the hiker, "I'm trying to quit."
"So, how long on your trail to N'Orleans are you?"
I hitched it once, and I know what you're through."
"Ten days and a week, least last time I'd checked,
I've walked most the way since the last driver had wrecked."

Awkward silence again as they sat, God forbid
That they both didn't know what the other one hid
As a precaution, the driver held a gun in his jacket
And the hiker, for safety, held one in his left pocket

Both men's fingers were on triggers pointed in their defense
Just in case the other man were to break the suspense
The scene grew uneasier as the truck hit a stone
I swear what came next chills me right to the bone

The bump triggered the radio, and music began
The sudden break in silence scared the hiker and man
Steady the sun drew near to the ground
And the last day's noise were two distinct gun rounds

KARL RAND
POETRY



MARI LYNN WEST
UNTITLED
COLOR PHOTO
7" W X 5" H

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Did you ever consider walking in her shoes?

Did you ever consider seeing all that she couldn't afford to lose?

To put on her glasses

that made the sky a different blue

but she never meant anything to you.

To even try to dirty her path

to even try to barricade her way

to even try to smear those glasses

you could never see all

that she could never afford to choose.

JESSI HAISH
POETRY

THE REAPING OF THE WHEAT OR DEATH ON A TRAIN

The train rattled on as the vagrant watched the man in the corner sleep soundly. He had been in the box car longer than the hobo, but had yet to wake up. The train had stopped momentarily in Portland, where the homeless man had gotten on; as of current they were speeding through the moon soaked countryside of northwest America.

"You ever wonder what lies beyond them stars mate?" The vagrant gave a start; the sleeping man never stirred. Had he just woken, or had he been watching him for a while? "I've been wondering that for a while y'know. Or are they just painted to the sky?" A thick Irish accent blistered the air.

"I...uh...I never thought about that."

"What's your name mate?" His face came partially into the foul light of the car. A fiery orange Van Dyke beard was in view.

"Graham...uh, Belgram...Graham Belgram." It had been long since he'd heard that name.

"Pleasure's mine Mr. Belgram. T'ain't often I meet people on these rails, since the Depression most people have headed east. Not sure what's more depressing, the Depression or the lack of familiarity. Always hated riding alone y'know." He smiled besides himself, displaying a shiny set of teeth.

"I've been riding these rails for years I'd say," commented the stranger, "meeting new folks a'here and there. Some nice, some quiet, but all of them interesting, even the ones that never spoke a word to me. *Especially* them folks that never uttered a word to me." He struck up a light and lit his tobacco pipe; the smoke was reminiscent of amaretto steam. Normally a poor man's weed smelt stagnant and sour, but the Irishman's was sweet. "I could 'a sat on them trains watching the silent types all day y'know. Ay, but back in the mother island of Ireland I was never in such a state."

"What is it you did in Ireland?" Belgram asked. The man's creased forehead, with his bright hair flooded in tobacco smoke, resembled a forest fire. "And why'd you leave?"

There was a pause lengthened by the Irishman's sudden interest in a loose bolt in the crate he was rested against. He yanked it out and held it to the light; his eyes glittered in the moon. A long while passed without a word said, but Belgram's gaze never left the man. His mind was racing with curiosity at everything beheld before him. He had just presently noticed how well dressed the man seemed to be despite apparently hopping trains often. He wore a silk dress shirt covered in a vest with brass buttons. Celtic designs trailed the surface of the suit. Where had he come from? As if to answer the looming question on Belgram's mind, the man spoke.

"The port city of Galway is where I spent my life. I was a shipworker much like most other men in the area. Had lots of good times in that town, but sadly for men like me and you good times are often bad." He cracked a chuckle; Belgram did not understand what he was getting at. "Ay, I grew up a pleasant lad, but got into trouble somewhere along the way. It had started when I went out to get food for my family. See my father had died y'know, and it was just my little sisters and my mum and I. 'Twas eleven years old when I became a man according to society. I had a family now to support."

"How'd your dad die?"

Without looking up, he exhaled a large stream of smoke, nearly disappearing entirely from view. "Crushed in the lumberyard. Not uncommon in those days really. Jobs were hazardous, but they paid, just like the jobs in your own country here. He had been carrying a load to the ship to place onboard when a rope let loose of the scaffolding. As far as I knew he died fast."

"I'm very sorry..." Belgram was sorry to have asked, but not sorry for it to have happened. A similar thing occurred to his own father when he was a boy, leaving him to man the household as well.

"Bah, it happens all the time, you of all people know just as well as I." Belgram was startled, had he known his father had suffered a similar fate? "Any man confined to the rails knows as well as I." Belgram let out a sign of relief.

The man continued on, "having to grow up a man without ever being a boy t'aint easy for nobody. I matured in the shipyard, working like an Irish dog. At times having to steal for my family, I went out one day for a loaf of bread from the neighbors, rich blustered folk. They refused and we had an argument eventually leading into blows being thrown. I had hit the woman square in the jaw, and after working in a lumberyard for so long your fists become stones." A moment of silence spread like a wake. "The woman died after one hit. To this day I am uncertain whether it was because I was frightened or exhilarated, but when the man came out to see what had happened I took to him with a wrench I kept in my belt."

A flicker appeared in his eyes. A literal fire blazed for not over a second in his pupils; Belgram swore on his soul he saw it. The Irishman continued fiddling with the bolt from the crate. He held it to the moonlight as it reflected back, perfectly shined. "After that day Hell was in my hands. I realized the power of want. Eventually, I got my teeth sunken in with the wrong people and my life deteriorated more each day. Finally, I found an escape route by way of America."

Belgram allowed his eyes to turn towards the passing mountains. When he turned back he was taken aback at seeing the Irishman, now on his feet, standing in the full of the moonlight, watching him. He took a step toward him, and Belgram fought to stifle down a shout of excitement. He choked on his voice and sputtered coughs into the air. Needless to say, he would've felt less foolish if he would've just yelled.

"Don't come near me sir, I have been nothing but attentive," Belgram tried at reasoning.

"I had thought I had Hell in my hands then. But ay there will always be debts to pay y'know." He wasn't looking at the frightened vagrant, but still at the bolt in his hand. "The night before I was to push off for America, three men broke into my house. They killed my wife as she tried to flee out the window. I never fought for her. Never did. And then they killed me."

The sudden horror raced into Belgram's face as he saw the fire

reemerge in the Irishman's face. "The next day I got on a different ship with different motives. Y'see when a man lives wickedly he cannot die at peace. There were debts to pay. Always there are debts to pay. I sailed on my ship through the waters of Purgatory to get here. Seen things that would make a man melt with tears. I got off at New York as I was supposed to, and ever since I've been riding the rails reaping those who ride with me." He opened his hand and blew the crumbled rust that was once a shiny bolt. The broken pieces scattered on the floor.

Belgram looked him in the eyes and found that he seemed very tired; for the first time his eyes seemed grey--faded. He sat back in his corner. From behind a box he took out a guitar. Belgram never noticed it because the man had been resting against it. He strummed and immediately Belgram felt dread.

The reaper grimly sang, "Across the ocean and wandering streets, wandering madly and reaping my wheat. The old man sings brazen while toting his blade, and he keeps on the wheat for the Devil to trade..."

"Shut your damn mouth you demon! You butcher!" No matter the ferocity in Belgram's voice he could not hide his fear. Either way the Irishman paid no attention to the wheat in front of him. At present he was into his song.

"And the women will cry, 'oh bloody hell why?' As their husbands are taken in tears. The debt is well due and the souls of the true are set for the reaping, so cheers!"

Belgram got to his feet and began screaming at the top of his lungs, "Take your deals elsewhere because I ain't dying today!" Veins protruded dangerously in his throat.

"May the cat eat your soul and the Devil eat the cat, always am reaping where'er I'm at..."

Belgram was coughing up blood now as the man sang on. Just as he sang the final verse, Belgram fell dead at his feet. His heart had ruptured from overexertion.

The train rolled to a stop in Virginia, and a vagrant climbed out of a car. Upon exit, he lifted up his guitar case, placed his pipe in his mouth and went on to find a ride west.

KARL RAND
1ST PLACE SHORT FICTION

ARE WE ALONE?

From the dawn of intelligence in our species, we have concerned ourselves with one question; as we looked out from our safe circle of firelight towards a rustling in Earth's primordial forests, as we saw high mountains and deep chasms, and imagined them filled with gods and monsters, one thought has been ever on our minds: Are we alone? Now, in modern times, as we look up on a dark night and see the swath of stars that is our Milky Way galaxy, we pose ourselves the same question; is Earth the only place where life has developed, or are we but part of a single evolutionary tree in a universe-spanning forest of life? With our telescopes trained on the Heavens, rovers trundling along on the surface of our nearest planetary neighbor, and space probes whizzing out to the edges of our solar system, we're getting closer and closer to bumping into one of those other trees - so long as they exist. Until a definitive answer is given, though, we are left with nothing to do but speculate on the likelihood of the existence of alien life.

First, however, I want to clarify that, when I use the word "alien," I am not referring to the idea that is commonly evoked by the term. While it is technically *possible* that little green men in super-advanced flatware have traveled untold lightyears for the express purpose of abducting and probing lone farmers - science never says anything is truly impossible - I do not find it especially *likely*. Instead, by "alien," I am referring simply to any organism that did not originate on Earth; it could be anything from some scum growing on a rock, to a race analogous to our own, to, yes, a galactic federation of farmer-probers.

So, to begin our speculative search, it's probably useful to know just what life actually is on a basic level. Take humans, for instance; being quite sophisticated organisms, it might follow that we should be made of sophisticated elements. If this were the case, then the odds of such rare components converging a second time to produce a similar species would be quite slim. But, actually studying our chemical makeup shows that this is far from being the case. Rather than being composed of caesium or astatine or some higher element, the three primary ingredients in a human being are carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen, which also just happen to be three of the four most plentiful elements in the universe. Even one of Earth's most complex organisms can be made using the most common of ingredients.

Additionally, it's possible that many of our molecules could be swapped out for different ones; it has been suggested that alien life could be silicon-based instead of carbon-based; methane or ammonia could replace water, arsenic might be used instead of phosphorous... The list goes on and on. We even have examples of elements being interchangeable here on Earth: certain species of crab have blue blood instead of our own vertebrate red, a result of their having copper instead of iron in their blood.

All right then, elementally, life on Earth is nothing special, but what about the Earth itself? One of the main arguments against the possibility of extraterrestrial life is that the only reason life was able to emerge on Earth is because it has the perfect balance of conditions for it to do so; it's neither too hot nor cold, there is enough water and oxygen, a planetary magnetic field to shield the surface from solar radiation, and so on. All of these conditions, which fail to be met by any of the other planets in the solar system, coalesce only on Earth to provide the perfect environment for life.

Well, there is some truth to this claim; Earth's conditions are quite hospitable for life - Earthly life. And earthly life developed to fit those conditions - anything that couldn't survive on Earth, didn't. There's nothing to say that life couldn't evolve differently to adapt to a different set of circumstances; and in fact, that is exactly what we see in the case of the extremophiles.

An extremophile, as the name suggests, is a "lover of extremes." Specifically, this term refers to a group of organisms, primarily microbes, which thrive in conditions that would instantly kill most other forms of life on this planet. For instance, one class of extremophile can survive the intense heat of volcanic springs, others the high saline content of the Dead Sea, there's even a class that thrives within the cores of nuclear reactors. It seems that no matter how hostile the environment, life will find a way.

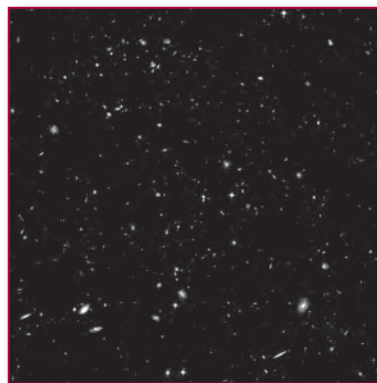
Where, then, should we begin our search? While many would attempt to find a planet as similar to Earth as possible in orbit around another star, the vast distances between solar systems makes the study of such planets very difficult. But, there might not be a need to even look past our own sun. Everywhere from Mercury to Titan, one of Saturn's moons, have been proposed as possible havens for alien life, but perhaps the most likely one is Europa, Jupiter's sixth moon. Despite appearing to be a solid ball of ice from the surface, and lying well outside the area around the Sun where water can remain liquid - the so-called "Goldilocks Zone" in which Earth resides - it is thought that Europa might possess a water ocean, kept in a liquid state by quite different means than the oceans here on Earth.

As Europa orbits Jupiter, the gravitational forces of the planet and its 62 other moons pulls against Europa, subtly stretching and contorting its bulk. As these tidal forces move with the revolution of the other moons, it causes the ice of Europa to grate against itself, creating friction. It is thought that the heat generated by this friction is sufficient to keep the depths of Europa in a liquid state, albeit beneath several kilometers of ice on the surface, potentially allowing simple life forms to exist. This novel approach to heating celestial bodies, one that doesn't require the heat of a star, opens up many new possibilities for life, even within our own solar system. And it seems likely that, if life managed to evolve twice in the same solar system, then the odds are that it must exist virtually everywhere.

The final nail in the coffin for the notion of our being alone in the universe is its sheer size. It doesn't really matter if there is other life in our solar system, or even in our galaxy, because there are just so many other galaxies where it could exist; this is beautifully exemplified by a picture taken by the Hubble Space Telescope, a picture known as the Ultra Deep Field.

The telescope was pointed at a completely black part of the sky, an area no larger than a grain of sand held at arm's length, and left there for a period of more than three months to collect its data. It was quite possible that the telescope would see nothing but darkness, but instead, it returned an image full of colour. Though the size of the image included here fails to do justice to the real Ultra Deep Field, it's still striking; each and every smear and speck and point of light is an entire galaxy, each one containing anywhere from 10 million to 100 trillion stars, each orbited by who knows how many planets, with even more moons, each one harbouring the possibility of life. And this scene isn't unique; one like it exists at every last point in the sky.

The moment I first saw this picture was the moment I was first convinced that life must exist elsewhere; there is simply too much elsewhere for life *not* to exist in, and in abundance. Now, whether we will ever encounter an organism from another tree of life has yet to be determined - but one thing, I do believe: We are not alone 🌟



OWEN DUVALL
HONORABLE MENTION

WORKS CITED:

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ALWAYS YOU

It was like you changed

the words to my favorite song

You took hold

twisted

and made me feel so wrong

JESSI HAISH
3RD PLACE POETRY



HILLARY MARTINEZ
REFLECTING
BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO
10.5" W X 8" H



TAMMIE SHERED
COLLEGE?
BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO
8" W X 6" H

KAMELIAN 2011

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