



**The Bluestone Review**  
**2016**

Dear Readers,

You have given to us the gift of your words and thank you-  
for sharing these deepest emotions. You have given to us  
art, you have shared with the world something new and we  
thank you over and over again.

Thank you for letting us use your words here, we are  
forever grateful.

*-The Bluestone Review*

# The Bluestone Review

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Children's  
Section

# Why Are People Mean, I'll Never Know...

Michael Ayers



Michael Akers is in 6th Grade at Graham Middle School, in Mrs. Roberts' Class



# Cardinal

*Brayden Surface*



*Brayden Surface is in Six Grade at Graham Middle School in Mrs. Roberts Class.*



# Elizabeth

*Audrey Brown*

My sister Elizabeth  
Is truly the best  
She's kind sweet and funny  
It's like she's made of honey

She's so athletic  
She's always kinetic

My sister Elizabeth  
Is really the best  
We are all truly blessed to have Elizabeth  
Who is unlike the rest



*Audrey is a fifth grade student's submission from Tazewell Elementary School.*

# Chosen

*Bradford Hurt*

My name is Nick. The ground had left me, or I had left it. Either way it is said I was going up. It had been a cloudy few hours, and it had just become a cloudy dusk. I had been riding my skateboard when suddenly, a blinding flash of light hit. Milliseconds later I was five feet in the air, rising and accelerating fast.

I assumed it would be the last time I would see Earth, so, forcing tears from my eyes, said my goodbyes, careening toward the heavens. As I broke through multiple layers of atmosphere something amazing happened. When I broke through the final layer of atmosphere I was able to breathe!

I looked in the direction I was moving and watched in awe as the stars expanded and shot past like lightning. The stars hastened, then instantaneously stopped dead in space, or maybe I did. I found myself 'falling' toward an extraterrestrial world. From my viewpoint I could determine a small sea surrounded by a lesser forest. The rest of the planet was a dark tan, which I immediately recognized as a desert. By now I was already in the planet's atmosphere, at a loss for what to do next, so I evaluated the situation and decided to head toward the part of the planet, which will most likely land near water. My Solution to my survival would be to Make shelter, find food, obtain water, and basically, survive. My logic seemed sound.

It had seemed like hours before I would reach the ground, and at first I was looking forward to arriving, but now that I was only mere minutes from the ground I was scared to make impact. I angled my feet toward the planet, slightly bent my legs, and stared at the ground, ready for collision.

'CCCrrrrSSHShloop...POP!' The sound deafened my ears immediately after my feet touched the ground. It came from everywhere at once and dissipated. Before I knew what was happening my legs carried me off toward the sea. I regained control and looked around. There was nothing to be seen. I had escaped.

I decided first, to investigate the water, and second, to build a shelter from the field of small, pointy, bush-like plants I once thought was a forest. After I had come a little ways into the field I began having a rough time trudging through the cascading plants, but being a born

hiker, I was actually enjoying myself, too distracted to think about getting home now.

When I had finally cleared the field, I ran the last few meters of bare soil to the water. It seemed clear, and being thirsty, I took a mouthful of water and swallowed. Suddenly there was a thunderous roar from the sea. A nearly eight foot figure arose from the water. It was misty out over the sea and the figure's visage was unintelligible. The figure bellowed in a deep, boisterous voice, "Nick! Why have you partaken of the sanctified water?!" "Uh....." The figure seemed more threatening every second. "Well, you see I was s-somehow transported here and knew I need water to survive." I tried to force the knot out of my throat as the figure responded in a grave voice, "The chosen one." By then the figure had returned to its bellowing voice, "I am the leader of the remaining few members of a species whose name is unpronounceable to you, boy. Many years ago our planet suffered a terrible drought, so, being water-dwellers, when our oceans dried up, many died. In a last effort to renovate the oceans, the Elders built a machine to bring the chosen one. The one who would restore the oceans." I quickly shot back, "What can I do?" The creature's voice had slowed down, "Give me the seed." I thought to myself, "What seed? The acorn!" Earlier I had found a large acorn and saved it in my pocket. I checked. It was there.

I pulled it out of my pocket and threw it toward the creature. I watched it land in front of him. Curiously, the sea expanded and simultaneously, I rose. Through the planet's atmosphere, the tunnel of stars, and finally, back to Earth. "It's been quite an adventure." I thought, still falling. "What will I tell my parents?"



*Bradford Hurt is a 5th Grader at Mercer School in Princeton, WV. He enjoys reading, playing guitar, baseball and hiking. His gifted teacher is Mrs. Stogner.*

# Flowers

*Carley Hurt*

Flowers here, flowers there  
Flowers all around the square  
Pink, yellow, blue, and white  
Oh what a sight  
Red roses in the meadow  
Yellow tulips by the pond  
It would be quite easy to bond.

Flowers here, flowers there  
Flowers all around the square  
Huge tiger lilies line the castle walls  
Looks like they're planning to attend a ball  
All the flowers stand so tall never looking down  
As if they're trying to take the crown.

Flowers here, flowers there  
Flowers all around the square  
Luscious pink, brilliant blue,  
Terrific turquoise, nothing's bare  
Oh how nice and sweet they seem  
The beautiful flowers lined up in rows  
With pretty petals that look like bows  
The sun will forever shine  
Over this beautiful garden of mine!

*Carley Hurt is a 3rd grader at Mercer Elementary School. In addition to writing, she enjoys competing in gymnastics, playing the piano, and crafting any kind of art. Her gifted teacher is Mrs. Stogner.*



# The Chaotic Time Machine

*Couper Mann*

It all started when I was playing in the woods, just like I always did before dinner. But for some reason, I decided to go deeper than usual. After what seemed like only a few minutes, I was lost. Although I had no clue which way to go, I wasn't about to just stand there and breathe in the autumn air. I started to just casually walk through the forest when I spotted something glowing and bright.

I began to investigate when I heard my dad call, "Marcus! Come wash up, dinner time!" "Okay, coming!" I replied with a yell. I decided to follow his voice back to the house so I wouldn't be stranded. I chose not to tell my parents at dinner about the strange lights, I figured I should find out what it was first. After dinner I asked Mom if I could go back out, trying to sound less anxious than I really was.

"Of course you can. Just remember to get a coat," she exclaimed with a smile. I went back outside and immediately went back to the strange light. I found it at last. Then I gasped at what I was seeing. It was a time-machine! I had so many questions.

"When and how was this built?" "Who made it?" "How has no one found it?" All these questions didn't have many possible answers. Who in the world would be able to make a time-machine without it ever being noticed? I took a deep breath, and tried to calm down. I decided to take a look at the rest of the machine. It was exceptionally large with a cockpit, a few high-powered engines, and an escape pod.

I wondered what the escape pod was for until I noticed the self-destruct button on the inside. Even though I was only fourteen, I had big dreams of becoming an electrical-engineer. I had always wanted to take after my greatest ancestor, Nikola Tesla. All I had ever wanted to do since I

was four years old was to go to the future and see what it was like. Then I realized I'd been day dreaming.

I shook myself out of the la la land my ADHD had trapped me in, and I began to refocus. I continued viewing the time-machine, curious about how to start it. Then it made a huge whirring noise, and sucked me in! I saw the dashboard flash the date 7/1/1776. Before I could scream I was transported to the middle of Philadelphia in the midst of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. I tried to hide, but was spotted by Benjamin Franklin. I didn't know what to do so I ran.

John Adams was on my tail. I couldn't believe I was in the 1700s running for my life. I looked back and realized they just looked curious. I stopped to talk to them. They seemed very interested in my different style of clothing, language, and vocabulary. I told them about how Benjamin would discover electricity, which is what most people rely on in my time. I got the time machine fixed and went back home. I told my mom and dad but they didn't believe me. I knew they wouldn't, but I also knew it happened, and that made me happy.

*Couper Mann is a fifth grade student at Mercer Elementary who loves to participate in sports.*



# The Drowning Detectives

*Goldie Richardson*

Quin dug around in the attic closet looking for some old family recipes. After searching for a long time something caught her eye. It was a newspaper and not just any old newspaper, it was a golden crumbling newspaper. The headline read: WOMAN MYSTERIOUSLY DROWNS IN GREEN RIVER. She read more and gasped. It said that the woman was with two other people, her great-great-great-great grandparents Mary and Jesse Bubbles.

“Quin time for lunch.” Her mom called from downstairs. Quin gently put the ancient newspaper back in the closet. Going down the stairs she started thinking, “Who was Nora Bubbles?” No one ever talked about her.

Entering the kitchen she smelled her favorite lunch: honey smoked ham and Swiss cheese sandwiches. She sat down in her assigned seat and looked around to see who was there. Her parents and older brother Fred sat at the table along with Sue her younger sister and Lucy her twin sister.

After eating lunch together she asked “Can Lucy and I be excused?” “Yes,” her mother replied and the twins rinsed their plates and went to the attic.

“Why are we up here?” asked Lucy. “We are here because of a newspaper from June 17, 1867.” said Quin. Then she handed the old paper to Lucy who read it. “Ahh!” said Lucy. “I know the woman in this picture. She is our great-great-great-great Aunt Nora Bubbles. She drowned in Green River.” As Quin thought about this she had an idea. Green River was just two blocks away.

Quin grabbed Lucy’s hand and said, “Let’s go to Green River and find some evidence.” As Quin and Lucy ran to Green River, Quin explained the old newspaper said that Mary and Jesse told the police that no one could just fall into the river when there’s a fence. It also said that the couple had found a newspaper on the ground and read it. Then they heard a splash and a neigh. Also Nora’s husband had been murdered 2 years earlier by a man named Lenard Snart.

As Quin and Lucy drew nearer to the river they saw a soggy old newspaper. They picked it up and saw that it was old and crumbly. It was dated 1867! Then the twins turned around and saw a man with



a horse that had golden eyes with the biggest pupils ever. The man suddenly jumped on the horse and started to ride away. “Let’s follow him” said Lucy. As they did, they thought he might go to the stable to put up his horse. They knew a special shortcut to the old stable. They took the shortcut and found themselves at the old stable rather quickly.

As Lucy and Quin went in they saw the man waiting for them. “Why were you watching us?” asked the girls. “I was watching you because Sunny told me to.” he said. Quin and Lucy wondered who Sunny was and as if he was reading their minds he pointed to the horse and said, “Sunny is this horse” after a pause he continued “and I am Lenard Snart.”

“You’re the man who killed Nora’s husband!” gasped Quin. As she spoke the horse reared up and spoke, “I am the thing that killed Nora.” The twins gasped as they realized that the horse had killed their great-great-great-great aunt.

Quin was scared. She remembered her cell phone and dialed 9-1-1 but all she heard when she put it to her ear was static. So she told Lucy, “Um, Sis the phones don’t work. So let’s improvise. You get the horse and I’ll tackle Snart.” When Quin tackled Snart she pinned him to the ground. He was trying to escape until he disappeared like a ghost right from underneath her.

Quin looked to Lucy who was struggling with the reins of the horse. Suddenly there was a deafening boom lasting for several seconds. During the booming noise, Sunny the horse had disappeared. Eerily, they could still hear neighing and the sound of galloping hoof prints fading off in the distance. On the floor of the stable lay an old crumpling, soggy newspaper.

*Goldie is a fifth grade student at Mercer Elementary School. She loves to read books and write stories.*



# The Alien Neighbors

*Stephanie Shelton-Pullen*

There was a house on the block that just showed up one day out of nowhere on what once was an empty lot. The family was already living in it and they were so very strange. When they went out they traveled in a flying mailbox. One day someone saw them eat a tire for breakfast and eat lunch out of a garbage can filled with real garbage. It was really gross to watch. This went on for three strange years.

Then one day they flew away. Nobody knew where they went while they were gone. Then suddenly the mailbox flew into town three years later and the father of the family told us that they were going back to Jupiter, because it was too hot here on Earth.

The following day they told people they were packing, but none of the neighbor saw any boxes being packed whatsoever. So one neighbor went to asked where the boxes were. The mother said that they were already packed, the neighbor asks where the boxes are. But to the neighbor everything was exactly where it usually was. The father, mother, sister, and brother told him that they were leaving and he really needed to go.

So he stepped out and started to walk back to his house he looked back and began to shake his head. All of a sudden the family turned off all the lights, except the attic light. The neighbor watched as the house lifted into the air and flew into outer space.

Two years later the neighbor got a postcard with a picture of The Great Red Spot of Jupiter and standing on the postcard was the family he remembered from living beside him.

He scratched his head and said, "I thought they were mov-

ing to Jupiter, Florida. I'd never believe that they were moving back to Jupiter the planet but then again consider this. When you see someone barbecue a can full of rubbish, tons of dirt, and a lot more trash than you can ever imagine from a gas station, you are from Jupiter the Planet".

Anyway the family forgot the flying mailbox. About that time the house had reappeared beside his home, where it was before they moved.

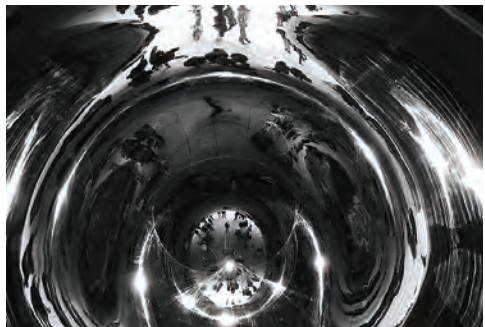
The front door opened and the little girl came out, smiled and waved.

She got into the mailbox, drove into the house, she turned, looked back, smiled and said goodbye to her old neighbor. He was getting his mail. So he saw the whole process of moving happening again.

He turned shook his head and walked back inside as if he hadn't seen a thing.

The End  
Or is it?

*Stephanie is twelve years old and loves to write stories and poems of all kinds for fun and adventure.*



# The Tiny Diamond Ring

*Peyton Terry*

“Don’t judge a book by its cover.” A phrase we all use very often. But do we know that it actually means or how much the little things in life are actually worth? We all have something that is sentimental to us that we keep. Most of them are things like a teddy bear or baby blanket—mine is a little tiny diamond ring.

This is not any diamond engagement ring. If it wasn’t for this ring, my family wouldn’t be who we are today. The ring is very important to my family it is also the only thing we have left of my late grandmother who died when my mother was only seven years old.

This ring was given to my late grandmother, Lisa, by a man named Tim. Growing up, life was difficult for my mom. Her father left her when she was still very young. So her mother was given a small engagement ring by a man named Tim. They all lived in their tiny house near Bluefield Regional Medical Center. Growing up my mother spent most of her time at her grandparents’ house. Then my Grandmother Lisa and her new husband Tim made an announcement that they were going to have a baby. After a few months later, baby Heather was born on April 19, 1980. She was my mom’s new baby sister. Heather was a happy and healthy little baby. Tim and my mom were not very close, he fought in the Vietnam War which gave him a lot of problems and mental issues that he had to deal with. They did not get along very well, that’s why my mom spent most of her time at her grandparents’ house.

Then on May 4th 1982, Tim was smoking a cigarette before he went to bed. Little did he know that he didn’t burn the bud completely out. A few moments later the whole house lit up in flames. Luckily my mother was safely tucked in bed at her grandparents’ house. But the others weren’t so lucky, no one made it out.

I look at the pictures of my grandmother very often. She looks exactly like my mom and one of my brothers. All we have left of her is little items of her childhood and her little tiny diamond ring. She died when she was about twenty-five years old and Heather died when she was about two years old. I may not have known her, but I have heard lots of stories about her. We keep her ring tucked away safely in our family safe. Just like I keep my memories about her tucked away in the back of my mind. I will never forget about you Grandmother Lisa and I know you will always watch over me.

Epilogue;

When Grandmother Lisa died my mother went to live with her grandparents. She lived with them from the time my mother was seven till she became a grown-up and went to college. Where the house burned down a church was built right where the house used to stand. My mom has grown-up to be the strongest woman I know. She can do just about everything. My great grandparents are alive and well also. My great grandmother is eighty seven and my great grandfather is ninety years old. They are amazing and they amaze me every day. I love to visit them and see all of the pictures of my mom, grandmother, and everyone else. We have learned that the world can shake us, break us but nothing can bring us down!

*Peyton Terry is a student at Graham Middle School, she is in 6th Grade.*







Short Fiction

# Crimson

*Jara Armstrong*

Five years is a long time.

It may not seem that long to some people, but to me, it's an eternity. My name is Anna Grace Henry, and for five long years I've felt like a stranger in my home.

My parents walk around like zombies. Have they forgotten how to love? Sometimes it's almost as if I don't exist in their world anymore. They look at me with sad eyes. Sometimes they say my name, but they leave thoughts unspoken and they don't seem to care.

It wasn't always like this. They used to laugh. But then Daddy started drinking and lost his job. Mama still works, but she always looks so tired, like she's given up on everything.

Sometimes they leave me home alone. The little brick house feels so much bigger when I'm alone at night.

I don't understand a lot of things. I don't understand why they speak in hushed whispers, or why the house is so cold, or why Mama cries every time she sees my favorite blanket. Maybe it's because Molly gave it to me, and she's not with us anymore. She was my big sister, but she died when I was baby. Before Molly died, Mama and Daddy weren't so sad all the time. But whenever Mama sees the hand-made crimson blanket that Great-Grandma knit so many years ago, she breaks down in tears and takes it from me.

Sometimes Mama visits Molly's grave. Sometimes Daddy goes, but he usually doesn't. This time, I go with her. Mama looks into the backseat and sighs when I shut the door of the old white sedan. She puts the key in, awakening the engine. The car groans and creaks as if it's in its final days as she drives to the lonely cemetery.

The only thing I notice about the cemetery is how sad and gray it is. Why are headstones always gray? They're never blue



or purple or green. The only color in the cemetery comes from the crimson leaves that fall from gray trees.

The leaves are the same color as my red blanket that I keep draped over my arm as I follow Mama to the farthest end of the cemetery. When Mama stops, she takes the precious blanket from my arms.

Mama kneels in front of the headstone. In bold letters it says, Molly Christina Henry, June 3rd, 2000-October 31st, 2005. A sweet soul gone too soon.

I can't find the right words to say as Mama drapes the crimson red blanket over the cold headstone. The lovingly-made cloth envelopes the weary rock in warmth. Scrawny trees sway in the howling wind. Crimson leaves flutter helplessly on the grass. My throat closes when I try to plea for help.

My body fades like a smothering candle that has reached the end of its wick. An October breeze carries my alabaster ashes into oblivion. Nothing is left behind except for two little footprints in the dirt.

Mama visits the next sad stone, the one that says Anna Grace Henry, October 4th, 2005-October 31st, 2010.

*Jara Armstrong is a junior majoring in English Education at Bluefield College. She wrote this short story for the Terrifying Tales contest in October. Her hobbies include writing, reading, watching Netflix, playing with her dogs, and eating chicken.*



# The Leap!

*Paula Beasley*

The day was gray, but the rain was soft. The child wore a striped pink Supergirl shirt, jeans, and pink rain boots. Her red hair peeked out from under a pink hoodie. She glanced briefly at her mother before looking quickly back at the puddle before her. A smile crept over her face as she contemplated her next move. Should she do it? Would she get in trouble? Was Mommy watching? Taking her chances, she gathered her courage, scrunched down as low as she could go, and LEAPED into the air! It was exhilarating! She was flying! Her feet landed a second later in the middle of the small puddle creating a mighty SPLASH! She giggled as the water rose up past her boots and soaked her socks and pants. Looking back, she saw her Mommy, cell phone raised in front of her, capturing the moment on video, laughing with her in joy.

Mommy watched as her daughter stood at the edge of the puddle. Seeing the thought as it crossed her face, Mommy grabbed her cell phone. Quickly, she opened the camera app and focused the phone on her child. Video ready, she quietly waited for her baby to make the choice. A moment later, red hair was streaming behind her daughter as the little one jumped. It took only an instant, but in that split second, Mommy could see all the leaps, jumps, and falls to come - her daughter's first leap into a classroom, her first jump into love, the first fall of her broken heart.

For now, though, she gathered her baby with the shining face and slightly damp red hair into her arms and put the cell phone away. Together with her giggling daughter, they jumped into the next puddle. The future would come soon enough, and they would face their puddles, small steps, giant leaps, and falls, hand-in-hand until the little girl raced into adulthood and her mother took the final leap into the arms of Heaven.



*Paula Beasley is a librarian at Bluefield College. She loves reading, her dogs, and her family.*

# Running Wild

*Kansas Brooks*

I breathe in the crisp mountain air, with nothing but sunshine on my skin. The jagged rocks roll under the soles of my feet, but I do not stop. There is higher ground to be found. Higher than these mountains, higher than my father has ever been. I've never felt as clean as I feel in this moment. I am naked and alone, but surrounded by forget-me-nots rather than the cigarette stained walls I'd grown accustomed to.

I am not ashamed of my current status as a runaway, I am taking pride in it. Each day, we are all given the choice to run. What the word "run" means is relative to each of us. When danger begins to sashay up my vertebrae, and my wounds cease to heal, I am struck with the desire to run. This is not the first time, nor will it be the last.

My father was an addict, scrounging and begging for anything that would make him feel alive. This constant search to feel alive, left him the opposite. I am often tormented with the memory of his hands. Hands once so playful and light, grasping mine in an Autumn daze turned heavy and hardened. Streaks of blood lined the wrists and forearms attached to the hands of my diligent father. I viewed them with the knowledge that with every relapse, the needle becomes harder to insert.

Each time a situation is left, it becomes harder to return to. I shed my second skin of flannel upon discovering the ashes of the burning building I dubbed "father" for the last time. In the trees, I have become anew.

*Kansas Brooks is a seventeen year old student at Grayson County High School pursuing a career in journalism with dreams of one day writing for The New York Times.*



# The Creature at Oakland School

*Rebecca Edmonds*

It had rained all night. Not just a shower, but a deluge. The rain had come down in sheets, with gusts of wind strong enough to send the dogs into their doghouses. It was a damp and soggy Thursday morning at Oakland Elementary in Pipers Gap, Virginia. The school children tramped in with wet and muddy shoes and squeaked down the halls to their classrooms. The sun was trying to peek out amidst angry clouds, and the wind gusted and whistled around the school building.

As I walked down the lower hall to class, a group of excited children caught my eye. They were gathered around a pair of windows which looked out upon the preschool playground. My curiosity stirred, I walked over to the group.

“It’s a snake!”

“No, it’s a rat!”

“I think it’s a mouse!”

“No! It has to be a fish!”

The children were bursting with excitement! I looked out the window and was astonished by what I saw. In the corner of the playground, up close to the building, a large puddle had formed overnight. Wood chips were everywhere, floating in the puddle and scattered around the ground. In fact, there were so many wood chips in the puddle, that the water was obscured.

“Look, look, look!” cried a little girl, “It’s ALIVE!”

I looked at the puddle, and saw a mound of wood chips form and move quickly across the length of the water to the opposite edge. It then abruptly changed direction, and went back to the other side. The mound disappeared, but then reappeared and began to move in a frantic circle. The children squealed! I shuddered.

## What was it?

Was it a poor creature trapped in the water and too exhausted to climb out of the puddle? Was it dangerous? How long had it been there? I reluctantly went to class but promised myself to look again later that morning.

In mid-morning, I glanced outside and saw one of the third grade classes out on the preschool playground. The teacher and children had encircled the puddle, and were observing the poor “creature” as it struggled to escape from the water. Again, the mound of wood chips would form, swim across and back, and then become frantic and move in circles. At times, the poor creature would become so distraught that it would send the wood chips flying. But it just couldn’t seem to get the strength to crawl out.

I noticed then...that the puddle...was...shrinking!

By lunchtime, the puddle had shrunk even more, and the creature was becoming increasingly frantic. Large waves would form as it churned the water in the puddle. Objects that had been submerged in the small pool were now becoming visible as the puddle receded. A soggy piece of notebook paper appeared on the edge of the puddle.

Soon, the creature would be exposed!  
Soon, it would be able to escape!!  
At least this is what I thought...

In mid-afternoon, I was drawn, once again, to the window. Only a small puddle remained. As I gazed at the floating wood chips, a small, solitary leaf from a nearby tree blew into the corner where the puddle was.

But wait! There it was! The creature again stirred and moved under the surface of the water!

As I watched the puzzling, secretive creature, the small leaf blew over to the puddle. It did not land, but began to dance. It danced and danced across the puddle. It swirled, it dipped. It twirled, and it spiraled up, up and up. As it danced, the puddle danced. The creature under the mound of wood chips met the leaf, and followed it as it skimmed across the puddle. When the leaf changed direction, the creature changed direction. As the leaf circled, the creature circled.

Suddenly, as the leaf twirled and spiraled higher, the mound burst forth and erupted in a spray of wood chips. For one brief, magical moment, the wood chips danced and flew with the leaf. It was an amazing sight to behold. There was no creature.

No mouse.

No rat.

No snake.

No fish.

It was the awesome power of the wind as it danced and swirled across the puddle.

I went home amazed at the power of the invisible wind, and how the human eye and mind can be tricked by what it sees...and believes.

The End



*Rebecca is a Speech and Hearing specialist with Carroll County Public Schools, with a love for the mysteries of nature.*

# Una Taza de Té

Stephen Hoyle

I take a cup of hot English tea, strong and dark. I add three teaspoons of honey and stir. Then, I put the cup on a little plate and inhale. I can smell both the sweet honey and the bitter leaves. I savor it in my hands while I watch the steam rising from the cup.

Such is life. I wish life could always have the warmth and comfort given me by tea, the taste of both honey and leaf. But no. Everything that is hot eventually becomes cold. Life is given and, like the cup, is taken away.

“Virgilio,” my master calls, “is my tea ready?”

“Yes, sir,” I reply. I walk out of the kitchen into the courtyard where the boss sits, watching his daughters as they play in the garden. Long fields stretch like a great carpet, stopping at the feet of the distant mountains. My master owns most of the land – bought by dishonest money. I give the cup to my master.

“Mmm, well done, Virgilio,” the boss says, licking his lips after a sip. “Now, make sure that Eladio has sold the new shipment.”

“Of course, sir.” I go, off to see if my boss is going to have a bigger wallet, if he will be able to buy more land for his workers to plow, more dolls for his daughters to play with.

*Stephen Hoyle is a student of English at Bridgewater College with a passion for writing and a love of medieval literature*



# After the Storm

*Gabriele Morgan*

The village had pitched their tents long ago, before the ground had dried up, when the world was still green there. Over time, the sun came closer and scorched the earth, and the children of the village learned to live in the heat, learned to grow expectant of the bright white skies that blinded, of the light to sear their skin.

They learned to hold the fire within themselves so it could not burn them up.

But the chief's youngest daughter was a storm wrapped up in skin, her body cool to the touch and the veins in her wrists dark blue. The village children would hold their wrists to hers, compare their gold to her indigo and laugh.

*Mama, Mama, look how different we are.*

She learned to hide the rivers flowing through her veins in carefully concealed buckets behind her eyelids, neatly stacked and never toppled, each labeled in perfect penmanship:

*Different, different, different.*

They taught her to have clear weather, told her that her eyes should never cloud over, that brightness was a priority. So she made it her identity, learning to live with buckets constantly poised to overflow from behind her eyes.

When the ocean inside her grew too tempestuous to contain, she was driven from the village, told that she was cursed, her water was unclean, told she should have kept her skies more blue. Floods are not as easy to ignore as



heat.

She ran from them, feet stumbling over the cracked, scorched ground, overturning her buckets behind her and spilling them into the earth, torrents pouring from her wrists, unable to hold the heaviness any longer.

When the water trickled down into the parched earth, she lay, barely breathing in the mud and prayed

*Oh, Light,*

How she prayed, for the sun to dry her up while she slept. The starry sky cloaking for once the unforgiving sun soothed her to sleep with its dark blue, a shade of that color she'd never seen outside of herself.

In the morning, she woke, not to bleached-bone death but to green life, a bed of grass holding her safe as she realized: the water she had tried so hard to contain had taught the broken ground to grow trees again.

*Gabriele Morgan is a psychology and english student at Bluefield College, whose greatest loves in life are people and their stories.*



# Karachi's Consumed

*Hasan Muzaffer*

There was a brush of black leather on my knuckles. Hot, like fever; slick, like skin after a night sweat. I feel a tremor run down my spine, but it's not the chill of night that elicits it. You and I dance in an island of light amidst a sea of dark. The wind sighs in my ears as you move around me. I spin on my toes in the hopes I can keep you in my sights. Quick, like labored breathing; elusive, like a reprieve from the pain.

Darling, your wings may not be as bright as a butterfly's, but they're twice as durable. Your ears adapted for hearing echoes, beady black eyes full of nocturnal hysteria. Your friends swarm around us and I feel like I am the center of your world. But you begin to pull away. I run after them, keeping my eyes in the sky as they all depart. The ground disappears beneath my feet and I feel the cold muck of the fish pond swallow me.

I pull myself out of the algae infested waters and retreat indoors. My uncle asks me what I was up to, and told him I was chasing bats. It was humorous to him. "You know, I've heard of people chasing butterflies, but not bats." He proceeds to tell me of the bad rap they get for being disease carriers.

My mind was set then. Butterflies were always going to be boring to me. Bats were so much more intriguing. Because I soon find myself in front of a TV set watching a news anchor with a pink hijab. Something about the rise of sectarian violence in a city not too far from here.... My uncle and mother meet in the hallway outside and speak of things too insignificant for me to remember, but in that same string of trivialities, he mentions that there has been an outbreak of brain eating amoebas in the slums. Something about dirty drinking water....

That kernel of information stuck in my mind. He had spoken so dismissively of it, as if it were a common occurrence. Maybe it was a common occurrence here in this world. The night turned to day and I found myself exploring the nooks

and crannies of my grandfather's house. Exotic furniture from all corners of the world set up with their own regional themes, ancient school supplies from my parents' youth, empty jewelry boxes, and old perfume bottles.

I climb to the roof in search of more artifacts. There's a closet up there that once was a pigeon coop. I find yellowed newspapers in Urdu, mangled cages, and brightly colored clips for hanging clothes. I step back outside and I look out to the horizon. White two-story buildings and paved streets as far as I can see, and behind a hill, I see the edge of a black scar. There's a column of dark smoke rising from the scar, as if it were cauterized, burned to prevent further harm.

My aunt explained it to me that a man had blown himself up there, leveling a mosque and taking dozens of people with him. I had heard of things like this happening before. But I could not understand. If the man's war was against my world, then why would he kill so many of his own people? I sat there and thought until the memory of the brain eating amoebas came to mind. There had been a sickness at work here too. It had consumed everything that man was – brain stem and rationale alike. At that moment, there was nothing more I desired, but to dance again – to brush knuckles with the bats of the world – to drink that dirty water just to see if I could retain who I was.

*"I am a natural born American of the Asian persuasion. Represent." - Hasan Muzaffer*







Art &  
Photography



## Morning On The Lake

Tresia Barnett

Medium: Digital Photography

*I am a 55 year old mother and grandmother who is retired as a Human Service Worker. I am enjoying my retirement by spending time with my family and I now can pursue my dreams of writing and publishing.*



## Boat

Andre Cardamone

Medium: Pen and Ink

*"I really enjoy art. I am majoring in Art and a minor in Education."*



# Owl

*Andre Cardamone*

Medium: Pen and Ink



# Skull

*Andre Cardamone*

Medium: Pen and Ink





## **True Rose**

*Amber Scaff*

Medium: Digital Photography

*"I write and do photography as often as I can with every piece reflecting something important within my own life."*



## **The Fence**

*Tony Funk*

Medium: Digital Photography

*Tony D. Funk resides in Ivanhoe, VA.  
He is pastor of True Faith  
Ministries in Fries, VA.*



## Flags

Walter Shroyer

Medium: Multimedia



## Photos from Ireland

*Walter Shroyer*

Medium: Digital Photography



## Reflection

*Jaclyn Bissett*

Medium: Oil Paint

*I am a Studio Art major and former student at Bluefield College who is hoping to become an art therapist.*



## Faces

*Jaclyn Bissett*

Medium: Pencil

*I am a Studio Art major and former student at Bluefield College who is hoping to become an art therapist.*





Poetry

# Acceptance

*Melanie Anderson*

Why has worship transformed into warship?  
We advocate unconditional acceptance  
Until we see actions different from ours  
Then we moralize with desistance.  
When did love turn into hate?  
We detest feelings different from our own  
Feelings which are real and innate  
We don't question the norm of intolerance.  
Why do we let skin color determine character?  
Every white crayon is rich and pretentious  
Every brown crayon has ulterior motives  
And every black crayon is to be feared - but why?  
Because it's easier to label him a "Jesus freak"  
Because it's easier to say "Nobody's born that way"  
Because it's easier to assume than to accept  
Our unprejudiced facades continue - but at what cost?





# A Boy and His Dog

*Cortney Bledsoe*

I don't remember why I looked outside,  
but there he was, beaten-down, once-black  
Ford pulled over in the tall grass, up the road  
toward the top of the hill. I went to meet him,  
thinking anything would be better than  
the boredom inside. When I was closer, I could see  
he had his snake rifle aimed at a dog running  
across the far side of the valley. I knew  
what he was thinking: the dog had been spooking  
the cows, might incite them to hurt  
themselves or at least raise worry  
in them. So he was taking the practical  
solution. A rise blocked him from seeing  
the boy running up the other side of the ridge, up  
from Aunt Mary Bob's trailer, chasing  
his dog that'd gotten out. And I ran  
trying to beat that crack of thunder that  
travelled miles faster than I ever could.



# Mainstream

*CL Bledsoe*

John was the only kid with worse cursive writing than me. We had to sit in the corner and practice in our workbooks while everyone else played. I got through it by tracing my letters. He'd just grin and make noise.

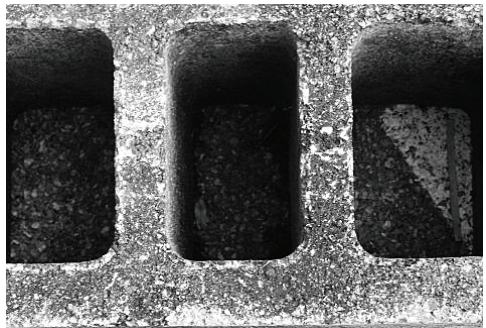
We never called him slow. There'd been several like him, still in regular classes, but the teachers weeded them out when they could. One kid made it to junior high and ran down the hall yelling, "Accident!" when he soiled himself.

Once, John lost a whole tooth—root and everything—in the back of class. It was the coolest thing, but I was the only one who wanted to see it. We came back from lunch, another day, and he'd eaten the whole class's supply of glue and had to go to the nurse.

When it rained, we'd play inside, and I was the only one who'd play with John, or maybe he was the only one who'd play with me. The big table was home base. We couldn't run, but we could walk fast. I sat on the edge, and the thing flipped.

It was the first time I'd had my breath  
knocked out, that I could remember.  
They sent me home which I didn't mind a bit.  
The next day, John was gone. I tried to tell them  
the table had been my fault. His mom came  
to talk to the teacher, but she wouldn't budge.  
From then on, I traced my letters alone.

*CL Bledsoe is the author of  
a dozen books, most recently  
the poetry collection Riceland  
and the novel Man of Clay.  
He lives in northern Virginia  
with his daughter.*



# Invisible Ghost

*Ace Boggess*

*Banner Productions,*

*Monogram Pictures, 1941*

Bela, killer, debonair  
in a haunting suit,  
having dinner with his dead wife  
who isn't really &  
isn't at the table.

Hypnotic insanity—  
nobody plays it like he:  
with his cool delivery,  
how he chokes the air  
out of the screen.

Oh, but police  
can't solve murders for years  
in the same house—  
better to be a criminal  
than an employee.



# 20 Million Miles to Earth

*Ace Boggess*

*Columbia Pictures*

*Morningside Productions, 1957*

So meek, I'd cuddle it  
were my arms like highways.  
Even big, it's still a baby,  
days out of its gelatinous sack.  
Though it looms over buildings,  
trees, a tank spewing fire,  
we are the monsters.  
We kidnap, then try to kill it.  
Listen to it scream (IMDB  
says elephant sounds distorted)  
like a rusted engine  
searching for a spark.  
It's we who must pay:  
we the abductors,  
we the bloody-handed.  
What did we ever offer  
but our crimes? Run,  
child, before we  
set the dogs on you.  
Here, it's never safe  
to be a stranger.

*Ace Boggess is author of two books of poetry, including most recently, *The Prisoners* (Brick Road Poetry Press, 2014), with a novel, *A Song without a Melody*, forthcoming in 2016 from Hyperborea Publishing.*



# To the Memory of Federico Garcia Lorca

*Sal Buttaci*

I tuck your poems under my pillow  
the gasping ones you wrote with blood  
the August night they led you away  
and shot you dead in the dark courtyard

I tuck your last poems there  
safe beneath my sleeping head  
and wonder if in dreams  
you might recite the words to me

I tuck them hidden far from those  
who still try to mute your poet's voice  
as if your words were sharp enough  
to slice deep into evil hearts

I tuck the magic of your cadences  
feel their rhythms dance against me  
feed the open mouth of hopelessness  
make all that is sad happy again

I tuck the poems your Spanish tongue  
will never speak again, poems the wicked  
crushed beneath their heels the night  
truth died in a salvo of exploding fire



*Sal Buttaci, who lives with his wife Sharon in Princeton, WV, is the author of two flash books, *Flashing My Shorts* and *200 Shorts*.*

# Forgive Me

*Harry Casseus*

My apologies worn  
My lies became beyond overwhelming  
I promised you to be better  
But it wasn't such a promising effort

I watched you study people  
I never pictured you to be collective  
I solemnly swore to protect you  
All in all it was me I was protecting

We fought;  
It was never physical  
But the wounds were visible  
Forgive me;  
I didn't mean to leave you in a condition so critical

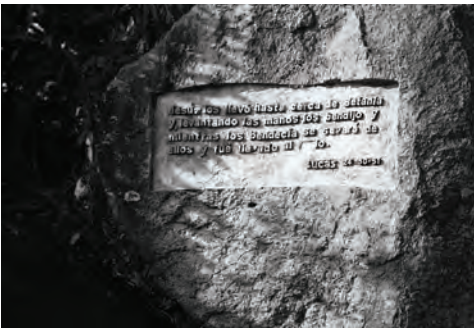
I'm selfish;  
I even talked to myself when I used to visit you  
Something I've ruminated; but never guessed that would  
get rid of you.

How pitiful;  
I even let my mother down  
And blamed my insecurities on not having my brothers  
'round

I've crippled our world  
By hanging on to what's repugnant  
Now To be honest, I see them as puppets now.

I pray for your peace.  
I hope you find serenity.  
And maybe I can find a piece,  
Of goodness,  
For the next to give in to me.

I pray for you sanity  
Your gracefulness and your energy  
That you may find hope  
And be whatever it is that you're meant to be.



*Harry Casseus is from Orlando, FL and a senior majoring in journalism and is currently doing a film internship in LA.*



# I Know Your Name

*Amy D. Funk*

You press down upon me  
A weight of lead bearing down  
Your oppression crushes me  
My lungs burn  
I struggle to breathe  
You force bile from my stomach  
Acid burns my throat  
Nausea overcomes me  
You paralyze me  
I cannot move  
I feel nothing  
You are my enemy  
You are my friend  
I know your name  
You are grief.  
Blessed are they that mourn  
For they shall be comforted.  
Matt. 5:4

*Amy D. Funk is a student in the RN program at Wytheville Community College. Amy resides in Ivanhoe, VA.*



# Sunday May 24th, 2015

*T.E. Gleason*

Night comes on but not dark enough  
Nor dew enough to wet frog hair  
For Pollux has a lover's heart  
It beats as bright as Venus can  
While the Lion sits upon the moon  
A silver slice is all that shows  
And Jupiter in its lengthy paws  
To be its keep for a year or so.

Is Leo the reason it is so dry?  
Or is it something to do with prey.  
The hay is content to lie as it is  
And may not even care for the reason  
Unless it finds itself in December  
Burnt and barren, the pawn of the fool's charade.

We may know then, what we don't know now  
But we'll never know why  
Nor maybe even remember  
And our guess may be  
As misleading as the truth  
Which we'll never really know anyway  
Since Pollux will never love again  
While the Lion roars with Jupiter  
And the moon slips away once more  
On a clear, dry night in May.

# The Eve Before the Day of the Poppies

*T.E. Gleason*

For four dry days in a row  
And as many starry night  
The fairies all danced around  
To the smell of the fresh cut hay  
Slowly curing in the sun.

The wild rose guards the fresh mown fields  
Brought here by the soldiers  
And then by the birds.  
It leans on and laughs at the blackberry blooms  
Its scent is sweeter, there is no doubt  
But its barb cannot compare  
And neither can its fruit  
Of which is has naught any.

White clover covers this hallowed ground  
It came up last August  
In our lovely second spring.  
From how long ago had its seed lay silent?  
Older than I, or older than you  
Or older that the first day of the poppies.  
If it all blooms now, will any bloom later?

Or will the line be broken  
For lack of bees  
Or lack of chance.

*T.E. Gleason has a farm in  
Southwestern Virginia.*



# The Hollow

*Stephen Godfrey*

The gray skyline pinches the mountaintop.  
The wind blows lullaby sounds  
From the end of the hollow to my house.

Leaves scurry without a destination  
To a resting place near me,  
To take up residence on my lawn.

The trees sway in the cold gusting March breeze  
With a Hawk floating on wings  
Strong as steel, but yet, soft as a fur coat.

Rays of light pierce through clouds laden with rain;  
Hoping to dispel it soon,  
But the earth does need to be replenished,

So the flowers can jut through the hard-ground  
To be a new creation!  
To be a joy for God's creatures on earth.



*Stephen resides in South Georgia with his lovely wife Beth.*

# Grey

*Emily Harman*

Good and Evil. Light and dark.  
They are simply two sides of the same coin.  
Imagine a coin flipped in the air.  
The light descends into darkness  
As the dark is brought to light.  
It's the same with right and wrong.  
The lines are too often blurred.  
A line so thin, you can hardly see,  
So obscure you can't tell where it falls.  
So who is to say when you've crossed it?  
When the accuser stands on the other side  
They only see one of the many lines drawn.  
Every day a humble hero sees the world  
Turn him into the villain while  
The villain is praised for his good work.  
This is what happens when Society makes the rules  
You no longer get an option on  
What you say or what you do.  
Some people are so sure they are right  
They push their opinion until blood is drawn.  
Others are afraid. They are terrified of what they say.  
The world gets so offended at every little thing.  
There is no longer good or bad, only grey.  
Maybe this is why people act this way.

*Emily Harman is a college freshman who dreams of someday becoming an author.*



# Memorial Day

*Janice Harris*

There was life behind each monument,  
one, or few, or masses.  
Steel-colored granite, blushing marble  
faded inscription or newly-cut  
surrounded by wrought-iron and  
a riot of colorful blooms,  
or tucked away in a quiet corner  
forgotten by the rare passerby  
a moment of fame remembered  
or long since a lost footnote of history.  
A monument has its moments  
but the heart more so.



*Janice Harris is a graduate  
of Berea College and Eastern  
Kentucky University, now  
living in Somerset, Kentucky.*

# In Her Happy Place

*Linda Hudson Hoagland*

They were like beacons. They gleamed in the summer sun like two brightly shining red lamps reminding us all of a lost friend. Donna loved the beach and all of the tranquility the sea represented.

Honey, let's get some folding chairs and go sit by the edge of the water. I want the waves to roll over my feet. It feels so nice when that happens, she said whispering to her husband that sounded a little weaker this time and each that followed.

John knew the end was near for Donna so all he wanted to do was make her last days such good ones.

She was still able to get around under her own power so he grabbed the folding chairs and led her to a good spot to sit near her beloved sea.

Their house was an homage to the sea. It was filled with coral items, dolphin images, and the colors of beige sand with aqua for the waters.

Now, he was going to remove her bright red shoes so he could hang them on the fence for safe keeping. The sea is apt to carry them away.

Donna sat in her chair, closed her eyes, and breathed her last breath as ocean waters caressed her feet.

John, in his heart, knew she was in her happy place. Her red shoes would remain there to let the world know how much he loved her and the red shoes would always remain near the ocean waters she loved so much.

*Linda Hoagland has won acclaim for her mystery novels that include the recent *Onward & Upward*, *Missing Sammy*, *An Unjust Court*, and *Snooping Can Be Doggone Deadly*. She is also the author of works of nonfiction, a collection of short writings along with a volume of poems. Hoagland has won numerous awards for her work, including first place for the Pearl S. Buck Award for Social Change and the Sherwood Anderson Short Story Contest.*

# The Sins of the Father

*Stephen Hoyle*

Alexander.

Like Philip you drank,  
Made your rounds with brats.  
Not a noble trait for a king,  
The bottle caused the fever  
Which took your life so young.

Hector.

Too noble like your father Priam;  
The hard body of a warrior, but  
The soft heart of a loving father.  
You accepted death like a sage,  
Leaving widowed wife and orphaned son.

Arthur. Like the Pendragon, you fell to lust;  
Loved Morgause, your own half-sister;  
Spawned Mordred, a bastard like you,  
Only you wouldn't share his sire's love;  
He'd turn dark just to see you die.  
My own father, What of yours am I to repeat?  
What fatal flaw, what mortal weakness  
Is to bring me down so low  
As these men, whose fame and glory  
I will never match?





# Leave Me Not to the Wolves

*Stephen Hoyle*

Leave me not to the wolves;  
Not to Loneliness whose fangs bite deep;  
Regret, who lurks at mind's every corner;  
Or Despair, who prowls and does not sleep.  
You paved my path as we went,  
The journey safe, we walked in bliss;  
Or so I did, until you left.  
I know not where I went amiss,  
I see no path nor dawn ahead,  
Just dark trees till my heart absolves.  
Till then, oh joy, spare my life,  
And leave me not to the wolves.

*I am a student of English at  
Bridgewater College with a  
passion for writing and a love  
of medieval literature.  
-Stephen*



# Whisper

*Tom McAvoy*

You want to know my name?  
It's not what it used to be.  
That one no longer has meaning.  
You are not who you claimed to be,  
and I'm not who I thought I was.  
You want to know my name?  
It's not the one Mother gave me.  
That was a falsehood based on a dream.  
She loved me as she lived the lie,  
but she could not face me as I faced the truth.  
You want to know my name?  
It's not the number you gave me.  
I'm not your test subject any longer.  
I learned more than you wished me to know,  
and I can never forgive or forget.  
You want to know my name?  
I was never the son of my father,  
but the offspring of silence and fear.  
I am the Whisper of Death,  
and you shall hear no more.



*Tom McAvoy teaches  
Social Studies and coach the  
Academic Team at Tazewell  
High School.*

# Bamboo Shoots

*Kevin McDaniel*

A terracotta full with variegated bamboo, submerged just below the waterline of a pond bog, the kind that looks like paint brushes showered under a spigot before tucked and pressed inside a paper towel, having flared bristles with dried paint residue hours later, pushing through the pea gravel, above the waterline, reaching for light. Early spring stimulates their proud ascent. Having survived the pond keeper's November pruning shears, icy Februaries, and cosmic koi appetites aroused after a winter slumber, their leaflets spread, bathed by the August sun, while the other bog plants become crunchy as bagged plastic Easter grass. But now, the terracotta lies under a back porch, a home for an occasional transient daddy longlegs and stink bugs—only an empty hull after the shoots became a turnstile for the koi spawning ritual: Half broken and pressed down with egg deposits. Yet, two shoots—surviving remnants of the assault—have taken root in a floating pot, alongside a Corkscrew Rush and moss tufts, floating and determined to stay rooted.

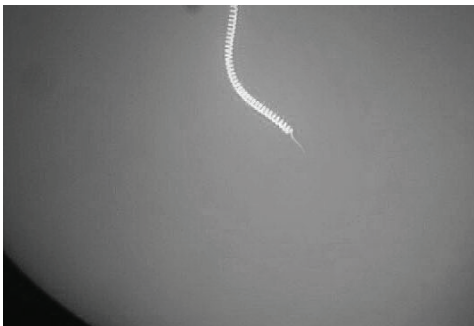


# The Car Wash Vacuum

*Kevin McDaniel*

Always before new things begin, this guy drives to a car wash. He imagines the crumpled gas receipts, the aluminum gum wrappers, and dried up red coniferous air fresheners in the backseat crevices and under the floor mats as dampened, decayed foliage.

The vacuum is a gale-forced wind that sucks up all the matter and pukes it up elsewhere. That elsewhere he conjures as another's car, something for that person to rake loose, to tease out, or to live with like Philip Dick's kipple. A punched-drunk hard-shelled bug from the passenger's floor clogs the vacuum's esophagus. This guy lays his palm over the mouth to check for that sucking whoosh, but feels...nothing. He knows a thing this small can't live in a vacuum.



*I currently live in Pulas-  
ki, Virginia, with my wife,  
2-year-old daughter, and two  
Chocolate Labradors.  
-Kevin*

# Daughter of a Star

*Gabriele Morgan*

She is golden light  
Glowing like a pillar on  
a dark, craggy shore.  
And she owns the space that she  
lives in, arms spread ocean wide.

# Nanjing Summer

*Gabriele Morgan*

The rain is gray blue on  
the pavement of the tented city,  
Reds dulled by dark weather.  
When nighttime comes  
The lanterns hanging from the stalls  
Will shine into the fog  
Raised by cold water and hot earth  
Old men sit under eaves  
Waiting for a break in the clouds  
Not knowing, like the children do  
That dancing in the rain  
Is one of life's treasures  
For now, concrete feet belong  
To the old ones hiding from  
The dark and wet in the shops  
Their grandparents tended  
While their golden-linings  
Puddle-jump in the pouring rain.

# Dying Light (A Tribute)

*Hasan Muzaffer*

*Dramatic Monologue*

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
In the city of Harran, I am the night walker  
I am the terror. I am the infected. But justice  
shall soon be mine in this quarantined hell.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
I've danced with the scorpion queen, watched  
as they cut off her stinger and made her bleed.  
I am her lover. And now, I am vengeance incarnate.  
The sun is setting and the horrors of night  
are coming into play. My wrath blazes  
a burning path through the slums of Harran.  
Embrace, embrace the kiss of night  
Under the cloak of darkness, the man who  
took my lover's sting will have his corpse  
hung from the highest tower.  
Venom, blood, and fire shall reign.  
"This is the Tower, night is upon us.  
Immediately seek shelter in the nearest  
safe house. Good night, and good luck."



*"I am a natural born American of the Asian persuasion. Represent." (Something like that) - Hasan Muzaffer*

# Bridle Nor Bride

*Raymond Neely*

Once I thought you reached  
out wanting me when you approached,  
and I swear that swimming before I reached  
your heart  
you sought to expel me  
and battered me away  
so I salted you with  
tears from cliff facings  
and knew not the treasures of your soul.

As you were the sea  
I thought you were only waving  
but no, you meant more  
even love,  
so I strode into your waves one night  
and was made jealous  
as I caught you so with the moon,  
and salted your beach with my tears.

I returned to you as a suckling  
and found the fanged serpents  
in your swirl  
and noting tame in your lull.

I blew you a kiss  
when shrimp boats docked,  
prayed and wooed her.  
Her cheek turned into  
the outward tide  
and I knew she could be no bride.

# The Indians' Manas

*Raymond Neely*

The indians' manas reside  
in the seoul of the atmosphere,  
as though freshly left,  
as though they recently departed,  
in the haze  
and with the sharpness of the eye  
when I stare into the  
mountain horizon  
with the coming of cold,  
in the rocks and trees.

They gather as the  
circle of a herd in  
the icy fog and fur  
is of the wolf.

The squaw and the infant  
cry behind the log,  
and the warrior raises the liver of the deer,  
of this tribe I seem a seer  
and the hawk screeches in my dreams.

## Breathe In (Part One)

*Janan Perkins*

She is humble, and she is strong  
She is dedicated, and she is wrong but her mind goes beyond the boxes  
it can consume  
She dislikes walking on the beach, because as the breeze caresses her  
soul, and her feet; the sand  
she goes back to December as she stands in April with its showers hov-  
ering her spirit.

She regurgitated all of her lessons, but she would actually like to clean  
up her messes.

She confronts people who declare no or go and row your boat back  
where it came from because you don't belong here.

So she stands, as she bombards herself with spears, and she exclaims  
"There has got to be a way out of here!"



# Now Exhale (Part Two)

*Janan Perkins*

She's free from hurt and anger, but is patient with love.

She's free from heart tearing and open for mending.  
She's found happiness, but she doesn't let anyone carry it,  
she lets someone be a part of it.  
Hear your cry bluebird, hear your cry.

That is what keeps you sane- knowing you aren't perfect.  
Be free with no boundaries.

Be still, with you ears taking the function of your eyes.  
Though you may cross pains bring every blue moon,  
let not the Sanskrit scrape the truthfulness of why you  
revel.

She's free.

She's finally free.

She's free from the shattered glass that barricaded the only  
thing worth living for.

Herself, her skin, her soul, and all she stands for.

Now, she lets someone in.

Now, she finally begins...

Exhaling, living and being at peace.

She held her breath for so long; she forgot how just to be.

She still cant fathom how in love with herself she is.

She has a life partner now, who's helped her find her bliss.  
Reminding her every day, just how beautiful and free she is.

# An Old Pecan Tree

*Leonidez Ruiz*

An old pecan tree in the back yard  
And right corner of the house  
A window mirror of pass years  
Chatting with the wind  
A touch of drafted heat  
Over its knees  
A crisping solitary shadow  
Lethargic and nostalgic  
Its bark similar  
To a snake's dry, wrinkled skin  
Its remaining branches and leaves  
Sadly begging the rain  
To restore it  
The blustery swift rain  
Blows over it  
Ignoring it totally  
In silence the old pecan tree  
Puts down its emptied cup  
And fills it with hopes  
As we all should do  
As we all should do.



# The Idea of Concepts

*Leonidez Ruiz*

Would like to build up and down an empire of ideas  
Controlled by my most inner-senses, they would be.  
Each idea would have tenses with an absolute beginning and  
end  
I would follow no direction,  
OK, just one  
My guide will be my fingertips  
That would be my link and the source of ideas  
It would illuminate my path to excess  
It would enlighten my doubts if any appear  
It would connect my thoughts, and inner power  
Guess what? I would be in perspective  
And if there would be any sudden loss of rhythm...  
Easy, not to fear  
After all, I will be connected with the concepts of  
IDEAS

*I am a new to this  
community of writers, love  
words and I am grateful to  
have lived enough to  
remember most of them.  
-Leonidez Ruiz*



# Anxiety

Taylor Richardson

Anxiety sneaks in the shadows and hides behind walls. She is unsure of everyone, including herself. She has dark eyes that match her dark curls, but her skin is pale. She takes the back seat to Destruction and Trauma. She is not a leader, only a follower of other qualities. She will seep into the almost healed scars after Hurt has left just so she can steal his work. She is not original. She is a thief of Happiness and of ideas. She cannot think for herself. She will never act when you are staring at her. She will hide until your back is turned. Anxiety is spineless. Her path can be offset by one glance.



*My name is Taylor Richardson, and I am an English major pursuing a Teaching License. My passions include child care, reading, journaling, and writing poetry.*

# Her Quilt

*Taylor Richardson*

It resides on the foot of my bed.

Simple material holds unimaginable memories.

Each square of fabric comes from drapes, tablecloths, and clothes of all patterns and colors.

The pieces engage my senses and I feel my Granny's presence.

From the quilt I hear her laughter.

I feel the thread making blisters on her hands.

I feel her warm embrace and the familiar smell of bread baking in the oven.

The sound of the needle breaking her skin fills my ears.

I see the blood pool on her finger as she puts places it on the strip that will determine the next needle's job.

I listen to her cracking voice as her tears fall when the syringe full of insulin punctures her skin.

I hear her ragged breaths as she struggles to stay alive for one more moment.

The emotions pour from me as all my senses are tricked into thinking she is still here.

She is not alive.

Her death came ten years ago.

Her spirit lives on in the masterpieces she made.

Her spirit lives on in the stitches of her quilt.

# Harvest Gold

*K. Irene Rieger*

for AB

Dad liked clean lines, right angles

And those brown shades popular in the 70s.

He thought pastels tacky;

He had no patience for what he deemed weakness,

And so our house was masculine, unbending.

My parents were proud of the striped sofa now consigned to my basement

And the spare coffee table with its pattern of large squares--

It certainly never held mugs of warm coffee, Nor did the hexagonal casier encase a round bottle of red in my memory.

My brother and I made the grooves roads for matchbox cars,

And the same striped streets sliced the head of the bed.

Three oak-framed pictures above the piano

Reigned and restrained,

Boxed prints of beige grain

Descending from the window.

We seldom dared stray from the staves on the sheet music

During our thirty-minute blocks of practice.

The curtains were thick, striped with narrow taupe lines

To shut out the light from fading the furniture.

My brother would hide behind them to pee.

I found Mom's wedding china place settings ugly,

And she later admitted that she felt the same.

The kobicha flowers looked dead.

"I wanted to be chic,

Not too loud or patterned,

But now I think I like pretty things."

Whom was she trying to impress? Her in-laws?

My dad was the artist; Mom deferred to his taste.

When I broke the teapot jumping rope in the house

I really thought dad would have my life for it.

"Geoff, she's shaking," Mom ventured.

It was later I learned of its marvelous provenance: A Japanese dollar store.

There was carpet of course,  
A deep muddy brown.  
Practical: it hid the dirt.  
We were permitted to play behind the couch dividing the living room.  
If you put a ball on one side of that room  
It would roll to the other, toward the television:  
Square-shouldered goalie guarding the garage.  
Although Florida is flat, everything went downhill.  
I hid my child-size chair in my closet,  
Blocking the door with my kinderklavier.  
The harvest gold vinyl would stick to my rear.  
My little chair had been a rocker, my but Dad  
Had sawed off the semi-circular runners  
So as not to scar the walls.  
My own legs would rock  
To the rhythm inside me,  
Primitive, wordless.  
My brother hid too:  
His Rainbow Brite pillowcase under the bed,  
His dolls in my room.  
Later, there were posters of women on his walls.  
But when Dad left  
He took the wine-rack with him.  
We bought yards of Liberty fabric on sale.  
We re-covered the chairs,  
Replaced stripes with florals and draperies with valences.  
I tied ribbons to everything,  
And glue-gunned silk flowers to  
Switch plates, lamps, picture frames.  
We bought a Chihuahua and beribboned her too.  
There were throw pillows now:  
Pink, peach, and peony.  
Rose trellises climbed the Waverly wallpaper.  
Blooms from manure.

*K. Irene Rieger is an English professor, fashion historian, and freelance writer whose award-winning work has been published in Talking Writing, The College English Association Critic, and the Journal for the Liberal Arts and Sciences.*

# The Rising Sun

*Savannah Shrader*

The morning sun shone,  
While the mountain peaks roamed,  
Higher and higher,  
Until the sun became like fire.  
The trees began to droop,  
As the sun began to stoop,  
To examine the world beneath.  
The sun began to retreat,  
Once it had accomplished its feat.  
And, the trees popped back to life,  
Happy they were able to make it through the strife.  
For the sun had shone its best,  
And they were ready for rest.

I love writing and am currently working on a Bachelors in Professional Writing with a Minor in Management. I also enjoy photography.

# A Poem Is

*Debi Swim*

a poem is. it lives, it breathes, it sings, it cries.  
sometimes, it is a whimper in plastic crayons...  
a herald to incomprehension at the bottom of the sea...  
a dirge of dangerous doughy doubts.  
who can live without, within, around, outside t  
he parameters of words, thoughts, concepts, dreams,  
like bologna, all beef, beefy, muscular,  
dainty petit four of hankering and sorrow.



# How to Understand Poetry

*Debi Swim*

... and so you use black to represent despair  
the sun, stars and moon rain a myriad of moods  
a daffodil becomes a child's innocence  
and the crash of thunder an angry retort  
but I'm scratching my head over tender buttons,  
refrigerated plums, and red wheelbarrows  
yet just the movement of a line,  
sibilance of fricate, affricate or even  
Emily's dash to stop or slow the reader  
like a selah in psalms – think about it.  
Sometimes, you need to listen to the music  
just let a poem be  
not to rope and hogtie it to crystal clear significance  
or beat it to a pulp of deconstructionism.  
Just let it be a poem.

*Debi Swim is a wife, mother,  
grandmother and happy WV  
poet.*



# How Scars Disappear

*Hannah Winter*

“Hello my Angel”

Kisses pressed firmly to my forehead  
Permanent, claim staked

“This woman is mine!”

Picks me up and spins me through the myriad of snow-  
flakes  
Eyes bright in the light of lanterns as snow cascaded  
around us

“I want you to be happy”

Wipes my tears away after a long day  
Pain, frustration, and sadness swept away

“You’re not allowed to be sick when I’m away”

Surprises me with coffee and a single tulip  
Causing my medicated self smile

“You make me happier than I have ever been”

Not having any clue just how much he has done for me  
How he made my scars disappear



# Somewhere in the Distance

*Hannah Winter*

Laughter echoes somewhere in the distance  
Light flickers somewhere through the trees  
Snowflakes dusting, softening the blow  
Wind whispers softly to the girl who's on her knees  
Drops freezing before they hit the dirt  
Surrounding black skirt  
Flowers faded, shriveled  
Stone rising casting shadows in the moonlight  
Clouds of breath rising from where she lay  
Blanket of white spreading across her in the night  
The breaths come slower, the tears cease to fall  
She leans against stone, holding it near  
"Beloved husband lies here"  
The sun rises, the keeper comes and sees  
The girl frozen to the stone on her knees  
By the time the moon rose the following night  
Two stones could be seen casting shadows side by side





Send 2017 submissions to:  
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