

life
collage
a journal of creative expression

a publication
of the
Middle
Tennessee
State
University
Honors
College

Volume II
Fall 2005

a publication of the Middle Tennessee State University Honors College



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a journal of creative expression

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letter from the editor

Collage was given an amazing foundation with its first issue under the Honors College of Middle Tennessee State University this past spring. In our first fall publication since our relocation we have assembled a beautiful collection of art and literature of which we are all very proud.

The student body of MTSU is mostly to thank for our success. I was overwhelmed by the originality and imagination of the many submissions we received. I would like to encourage every student to submit work for next spring's issue. Submission guidelines and submission forms are available on our website, www.mtsu.edu/~collage.

I would like to thank Dean Philip Mathis for his support throughout the past few months. Without his appreciation for our creativity, *Collage* would not be flourishing the way it is now. I would like to show my gratitude to Marsha Powers, *Collage's* Advisor, for her hard work and dedication to making an excellent publication. My thanks also go to our wonderful staff this semester, without whom I would have been lost. The Honors College staff and *Collage's* Advisory Board have been very supportive of me, and I have learned and benefited so much from everyone.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my mother for her endless encouragement, undying love, and my education. Her support has been the fuel behind my success. In addition, I am grateful for my family and friends, who have been behind me every step of the way.

I am delighted to present the second volume of *Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression*.

Thank you all,



Suzi Bratton

Collage is a student-produced biannual magazine of the Middle Tennessee State University Honors College. A student editorial staff reviews and selects submissions. *Collage* reserves the right to make technical corrections. The materials published by *Collage* do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the *Collage* staff, Honors College, MTSU student body, staff or administrators. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the expressed written consent of the editor or advisor of *Collage*.

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She Considered Making a Scene
michelle mcknight davis
acrylic painting



Untangled sarafina a. croft

She draws on inspiration at first light of day.

A glass of wine leaves her giggling, falling behind;

A handsome man holds her hand to help her across the street.

She walks close behind observing steadiness of his marching feet.

A little boy and girl brave the task of crossing love's lane.

Unencumbered by loss or pain;

Speaking parables of feelings deeper than surface.

Filial slights create chasms of unleashed desires shrouded in self-control.

Wisdom speaks, "forgiveness," the bridge over which we must all cross.

Cry me a river friend, cry.

Love me an ocean friend, love.

Wisdom has suffered loss to find love again.

Many tears, lessons for him to untangle pain in the most human way;

He wears a mask of unflinching strength.

Wise master say, "Never cry boy."

"Be brave fight until you feel no pain, like a man."

Wisdom says, "Be drunk with the wine of your wife's body.

Honor that man your father.

You live long time brave one, be blessed by God."

Cry me a river boy, cry.

Hands on hearts, fingers entangled in strands of falling hair;

Lyrics of lovers passing musical time;

Pedestrians cross, headlights, screech, grinding metal, rubber, moving feet.

A hand extended, quickly, to ward off danger.

The boy uncovers concealed nature...to protect.

So they talk, so they drive.

She is heady with desire,

He smiles knowing the depth of his own feelings.

Their secret safe with wisdom;

Who says, "Boy, be drunk with the wine of her body."

"You, gal love the boy until him cry."

Searching eyes trace arms that long for embrace

A spirit unafraid of the possibilities;

Love me an ocean man, love.

Once a lifetime love shines;

A sun in a blazing galaxy of miniature stars dwarfed by its light.

Love takes no offense to words spoken in silent denial.

For surface is just that, surface.

Feelings go deeper than sounds.

Intimate vowels written on the fabric of soul;

Carried to the now by light, the highest order of angels, Seraphs;

Dear, I name my husband, evangelic seen in clear light.

So love spins her wheel, a spider at her croft of mixing

Silk, wind, earth, fire, water, life, tears.

Cry me a river boy, cry;

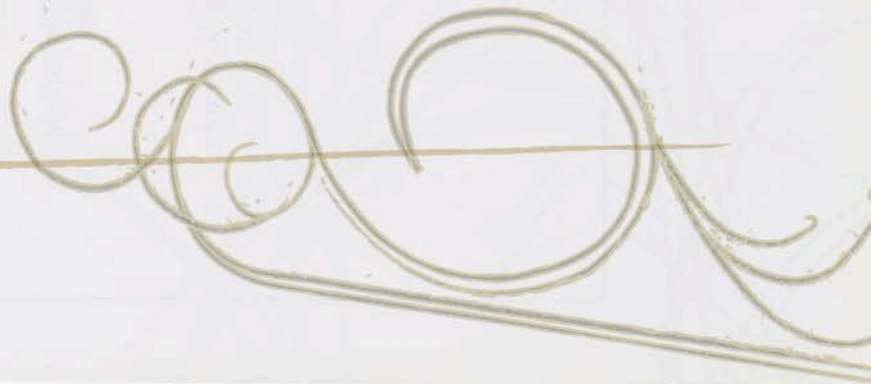
Love me an ocean man; love me, your friend.



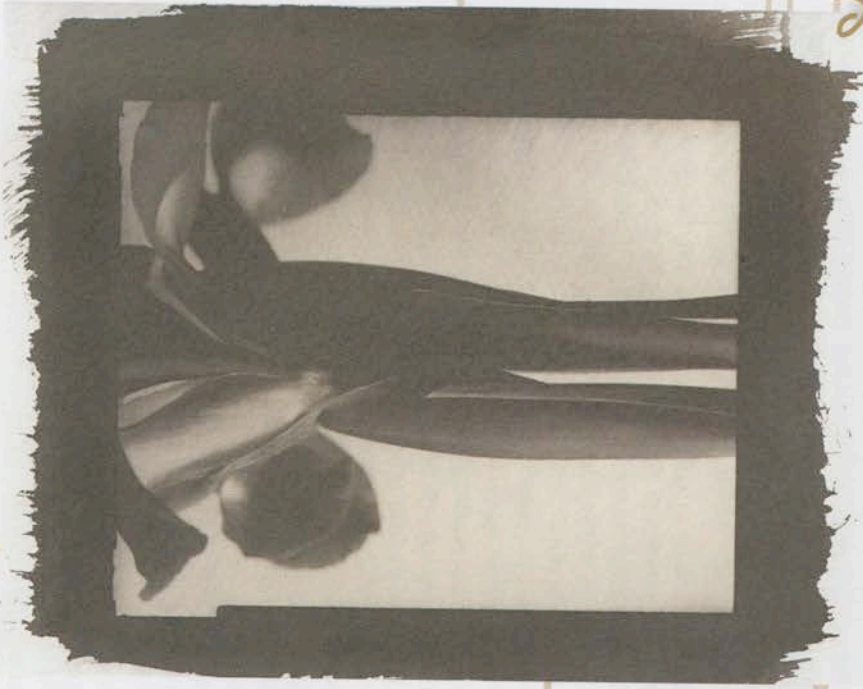
Sunrise on Mom's Shed
cameron clarke
slide photography



Burial Plot
amy foster
color photography



Gateway to New Orleans
amy foster
black & white photography



Iris #6
cameron clarke
van dyke photography



178,274,304 **John Ramsay**

The government has instructed me to leave a letter describing my "day-to-day habits." They said to try and keep it brief too, though I don't suppose many will follow that rule. I will comply fully so that archeologists of the future are able to know what really went on during this time period. I don't think they'll be all that impressed with me, though.

I am a student at one of this nation's many universities. Though accredited, there's nothing to distinguish my school from the rest. I am focusing my studies mainly toward history. I just like learning about how things developed.

I just can't believe this is all really happening, with the disease and all. They're telling us it's running rampant, and a cure isn't likely to be found. They really don't want us using these letters to talk about it, but to not mention it would only acknowledge our ignorance of the situation. We've seen that happen way too often throughout the course of human evolution.

I honestly don't know what to tell here. I mean, I have my nectar everyday. I play sports. Not so much is different from me than any other person. Like I said, I enjoy reading history. Perhaps I'll become a teacher one day if I don't die first.

34,002,079 **Gwenie Lill**

I no exactly what I want to right. What should I right. Well here is what I want to say. getting the disease or not I am going to live the rest of my life the way I want. With all these letters the govermint is making us right it should make for a really intresting book when its done.

Father says my sisters and I have to right a letter describing ourself. The best way to do that would be to tell you whoever what I want to be if I grow up.

But before I tell you what I wish to be let me tell you what I will definitely not be. Out of the blue father one day just decides to start planting vegetabels and rasing animals. You can still buy some old fashioned foods around the city but no body really grows there own food anymore. The other kids laugh at me all the time. And they should. I hate growing. Theres no point. We all have to get up early and help. Sometimes in the after noons on my break from home school I go to my friends and sneak nectar. Its just so good! But as far as what I want to be. My dads a polytishun. Hes pretty hi ranking from what I under stand but his position seems overly stress full. Hes always runing off to the senat or what ever and he barely spends time with us any more. It seems like to long ago he was making time for Karen Jessie and me and even mom. But the last year or so his life has seemed really rowdy. I love father but I don't think I would want all that responsabilittee.

The Disease Its really sick. Peopel develip these blue sacs around there body towards the neck and upper chess area and than they start cofing up bluesh spors all over a period of just months somtimes years. I saw my causin go threw all the stages lass sumer when she came to study here. My causins a nice person but dont bother looking up her letter. I dont want to talk about it anymore. It makes me sick.

Scientists always seem to have the best jobs. They develip things to make our lives run smootheer easer. If I grow up I will definitely consider being a scientist. Father says that scientists arent so great but there making the capsuule going into space and in the ground. Father seems not to make sense some times. It would be so fun working in the lab and doing tests and finding cures for things and i would want to work on The Disease first. I think I mite become a scientist. They wher the cool white coats to.

254,668,390 **Cheryl Grayum**

I was born in Chicago, Illinois, thirty-four years ago. I didn't live there, though, growing up. I lived mostly out West for that. It was hard sometimes, but I muddled through somehow.

We've been married thirteen years, three months now. George and I that is, and I couldn't imagine life without him. He works downtown... but this is my letter, and they said it should be about me. I work in Nectar. I was one of the fortunate ones who retained their job when it hit the shelves. There wasn't any real need for the abundance of stockers and cashiers, because it just didn't make sense. I don't love it, but it's a job. I guess I like it well enough. It pays the bills for me, George and Timmy.

Timmy's a great kid. It's sad to see him growing up in today's society. What I mean is, at his school every child has his or her own cubical surrounded by glass, even though there's no evidence to suggest the damn disease is even airborne. I just don't want the children to have to go through all that, because even if they survive they're going to have some sort of phobia about being close to one another. It's just not good is all. The whole system just sort of irritates me. But I feel even worse for all those children in the public school system. My child goes to private. But in the public system, only the teacher gets to be surrounded by glass, and the kids shuffle from classroom to classroom. I hope this thing isn't airborne. I just hate to think about the public school children.

Timmy, well, he's as rambunctious as they come, always running around playing make-believe and whatnot. Yesterday afternoon, I stopped to watch him in his room. He couldn't see me peering through the hallway, but I saw his whole adventure. I cried. He was jumping and hollering about how all the pirates had to listen to him and that he's the big boss now. He was look-

ing for gold and rupees, using a treasure map his first-mate provided him. "They will pay for hurting those people," and "We found it! We found it! We can save them now! We can save all of them with enough money!" were a few phrases I recall him saying on his quest. It ended happily of course, with him saving all the inhabitants of the infected village having apparently bartered his treasure for the cure.

Whoever reads this should know that I've tried my best raising Timmy, but it hasn't always been easy in our current standings. The WFDA does not recommend this, but since times are so depressing right now, I've been giving Timmy double dosages of Nectar. It always seems to cheer him up. I swear, sometimes he acts like he can't live without the stuff. I remember what it was like living off the food of the land. It wasn't all that bad, but as far as eating goes I suppose things are better now.

I say remember me as an honest, hardworking woman that knew best for her family and provided for them accordingly.

407 **Dr. Tracy Welch**

I will aid this process by not giving in to the natural tendencies that would normally have me writing in scientific parlance. The last thing I wish to do is complicate matters further with my jargon, though I don't know of a worse fate than that which has already happened.

If you've come across my tale, then surely by now, something of our existence has surfaced to you. Perhaps you've heard we love listening to the rain—it's true. Maybe you've read that we enjoy a good competition—I know I do. Some of us love to write; some like to read. Many like to sail, others—they get seasick.

We were a noble people whose scientific greed shadowed our cautious instincts. There were those who voiced such warnings, but none listened. It was just "Progress! Progress! Progress!"

I'd imagine, or hope in a sort of morbid desire, that my letter will draw some careful examination among the intellects of your species. As much as it shames me, I must write of the mistakes taken to lead to such an unprecedented occurrence. You see, I am the scientist whose project GA (Genetic Apple) started the irreversible extermination of man. It wasn't really an apple, rather a cute play on words, or so I thought at the time.

About six decades ago, scientists started tampering around with the mechanisms of life. Gene splicing and DNA manipulation became commonplace. An absurdity became reality when big business corporations started actually patenting genes. But with these uniquely patented items, no recall is possible. You can't recall something once it's absorbed into the bloodstream and welded to the bone. It was all a mistake from the beginning.

Eventually the task at hand was to perfect, or compound, a number of genes with the hopes of producing a product that provided all the proper nutrients, vitamins, minerals...all that good stuff people need in order to function in their day-to-day activities.

As the leading scientist in a neighboring field, I started tinkering around with the notion of such an edible substance. It had to be affordable, of small quantity, palatable, and of course provide all the proper nutrients—the WFDA established the proper standards in each of these categories. I wasn't too worried about the cost, but trying to meet all the other government standards required me to splice genes and manipulate all sorts of little things. When the final result presented itself, a mixture of thirteen hundred species' genes, including animals, plants, bacteria, and fungi, had been used in the process of my creation. After numerous nights in the lab, and countless preliminary tests, my group and I developed substance 1308-B, which was later dubbed "Nectar" by the media. We went through all the proper channels and finally landed a testing group of nearly one thousand. They were the first to die, of course, but not before almost every other living person, and myriads of animals, started consumption of 1308-B on a daily basis.

I was pummeled with grand political parties, praising letters in every language, television interviews, and mentions in every scientific journal. All this and more, all favoring me to some degree. I was overwhelmed. I was excited. There were minor protests, but none that had any revolutionary consequences. Besides, I was too happy. Who wouldn't be? But the one thought that never occurred to me was: "This is too good to be true." I never thought any of it was too good to be true because I was helping so many. I cured world hunger! I helped countless third world countries overcome the feeding barrier.

Over two billion have died in the last ten years alone! And for what? To satisfy a group of scientists' own personal gold rush? I'm almost certain that with the next intelligent species' rule, their Bible shall replace Lucifer's name with Welch. It's only fitting.

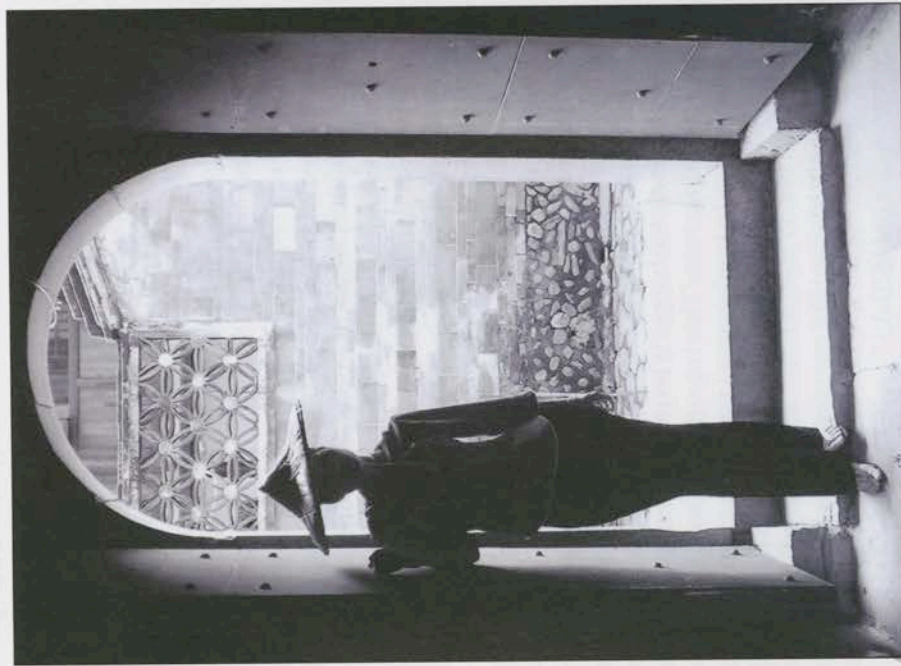
The public does not know Nectar is responsible. There are rumors, but before the upper officials reveal that bit of information, they're waiting for the population to dwindle down, so that those small protests don't turn into large riots. Besides, the leading scientists, including myself, are doing all we can to rectify the situation. Why worry the public?

I am finished writing this letter. To the government: you have your record. To whoever else: just know that we worked on the problem until the end—me, in my basement; others, presumably out of theirs. I swear on the family name that all will be done in finding a solution to this problem before any pleasures on my part are taken.

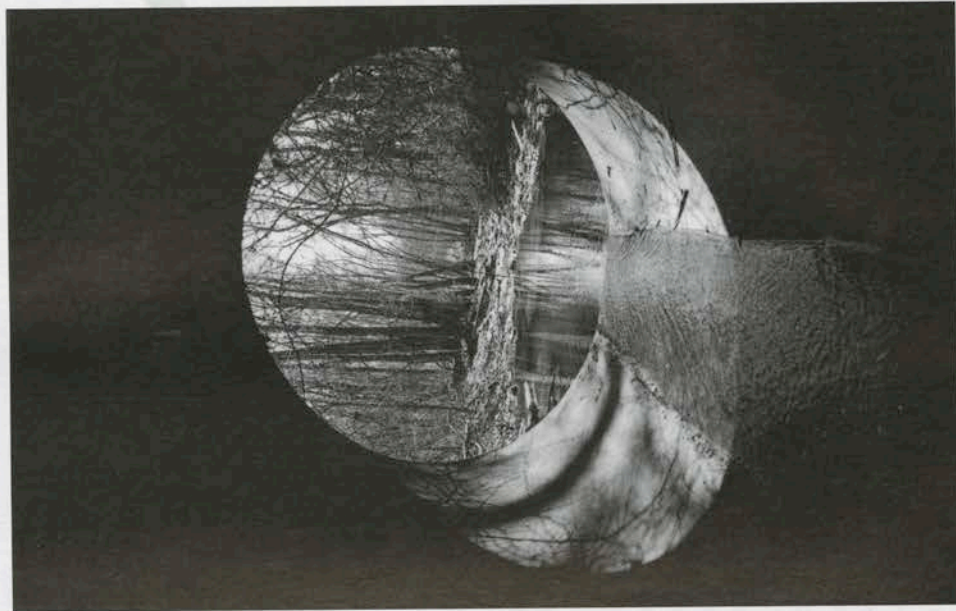
I was only trying to help.



Hakka Guide
brandon home
black & white photography



Culvert
holly stewart
black & white photography



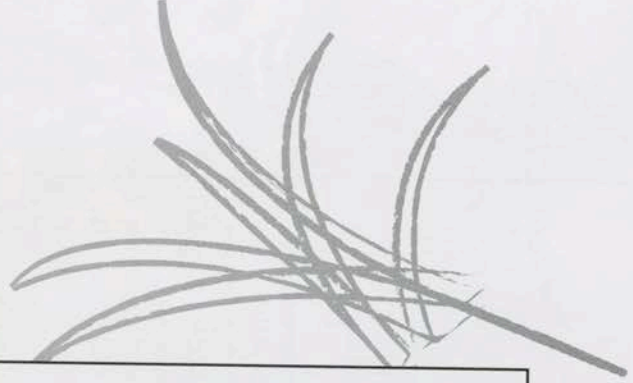
The Long Good-Bye susan hill

I said I wouldn't cry. Her departure had begun years ago. First, a little forgetfulness. "Old age." She called it. Then came utter confusion. Burners left on, water flowing out of tubs, the inability to articulate a single thing about her past. We had to move her. Unfortunately, away from everything familiar. To be near family. For her safety, we rationalized. To a nursing home.

It was there she continued her journey into oblivion and left us for good.

As I sat on the pew, tears streaming, throat too constricted to speak, I stared at the Rent-A-Preacher. Hating him for never knowing her and still feeling worthy to speak on her behalf. As he spoke of superficial generalities I thought of the way it was before—when we would walk on the beach and gather seashells together, how when I was little she would let me lick the cake-mix bowl, I could hear her voice praying for me when she tucked me in at night. When I was older, we sat at her kitchen table and would talk all afternoon. She would say only half joking, "Child you be sure to marry for love, but only date rich boys."

Halfway through the Lord's Prayer, my cousin's elbow jolted me back into reality. The congregation stood to file out past the casket. I lingered. After the church was empty I approached the casket and placed a seashell in her hand. Rent-A-Preacher closed the lid.



Summer is a filling.
 Mouths of heavy moments killing
 doubts and dealing depth
 and beauty in each breath.
 We seize sensations and salvage
 our souls in humid heaving other halves.
 Craving quixotic consummation,
 crying for complete creation,
 ecstatic, each essence flows
 into the higher self it knows.
 Like the deep green growth of trees,
 this deeper green is all we need.
 The *now* of every present spent,
 heavy and bright our lives augment
 like the

g n of the sun.
 i
 s
 i
 r

Autumn is a haunting.
 Ghosts of lost hopes come taunting,
 and all the lips of lovers past
 pierce the picture of the last,
 and memories melt in a dying mind.
 We can almost see what we're trying to find:
 the way the crisp cold sun crescendos,
 and the cool bright wind throws
 dreams away like trees throw leaves.
 And falling leaves are all you need,
 and all the beauty you ever felt
 repeats itself in the dance, the melt
 of one brown leaf and its descent.
 This is all our whole life meant:

a f a l l into beauty.

Winter is a baring.
 Naked trees portray our wearing
 away of a skin called light.
 We shiver through the starry night,
 sensing insignificance
 in the never-ending dance.
 Grey sky eyes and grey sky mind,
 the snow brings visions we'll never find.
 With the biting of the bitter air,
 numb, we wouldn't even dare
 forget our raw reality,
 fickle phantoms of frailty:
 empty
 like the limbs of TrEeS.

Spring is a surrendering
 to the rigor of remembering.
 Bringing blossoms to Bacchus dances,
 opening upward in ecstatic trances,
 lovers leap from every flower
 both full and fuller in each hour.
 Skin is ripe and raw from the vine.
 Green is our need, and red our wine.
 The swallow's song sings our fate:
 a dream daring to consummate
 the sacred promise of Apollo.
 Ephemeral hopes, no need for tomorrow.
 Drunk and drawn to our lover's eyes,
 our minds are grounded in the skies.
 Our vision is as infinite
 as the

*s*t*a*r*s*

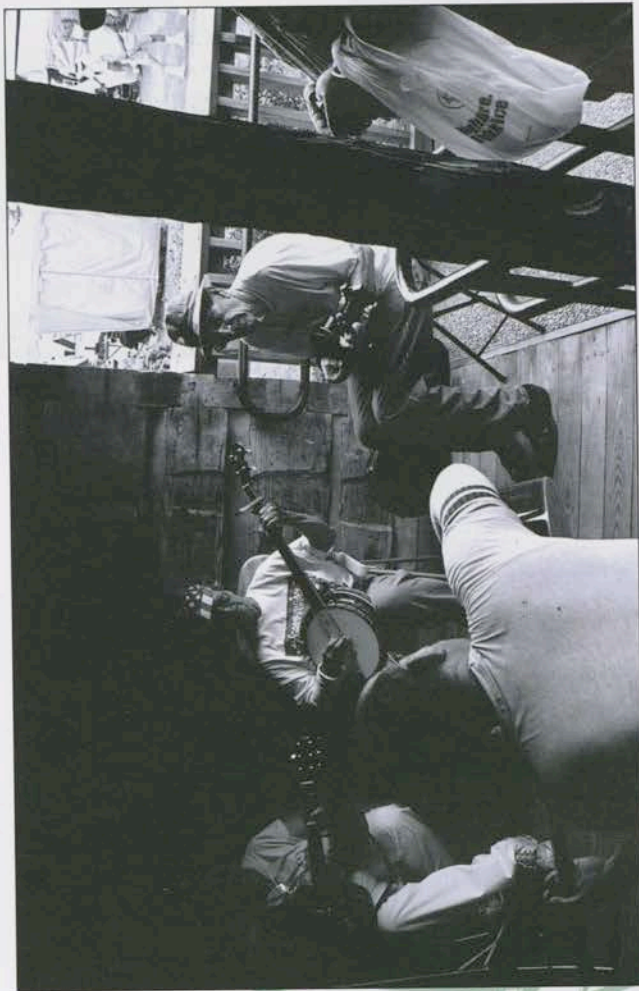
Galoshes Sloshes
meagan n. starnes
color photography



Strung Out Flamingos
meagan n. starnes
color photography



Show
josh alexander
black & white photography



Rock God
molly segers
color photography



What Isn't Mine maria bedler

I don't want to crave your attention.

What I need
is every bit of it.

You are a secret everyday.

Your voice,

your laugh,

your knowledge—

all intriguing.

Your written words

capture me too easily.

You are invading,

Tugging,

Fighting for thoughts

unfairly.

You have stolen words

right off my lips.

I cannot let you be what I need.

I cannot feed off your attention.

Soon I'll regret taking it.

Revelry and Reverence: A Reflection of Home anthony ellis

"When you go to Heaven after you die, tell St. Peter you're a Saints fan. He'll say 'C'mon in, I don't care what else you done, you suffered enough!'"

- Buddy Diliberato

Statistically, I should have died two months ago from a high-speed, three-vehicle accident one rainy afternoon between Michoud and Chef Menteur. The catalyst of the collision, a Mazda Tribute, had lost control at the on-ramp, cutting a u-turn in the middle of the slick four-lane interstate, hitting an ambulance head-on, and deflecting from there to my Corolla, also a head-on hit. As the driver of that Tribute, statistically a ghost as well, emerged from the mangled SUV, he walked to the congregation of specters between the graveyard of vehicles, and initiated conversation, not with "I'm so sorry" or "Are you okay?" but with "I owe y'all some Saints games." Smiles shone and jokes were told and all was well with the world as we waited in the rain, on the neutral ground—New Orleans vernacular for median—for the tow trucks to come.

Type-B is the only way to describe New Orleans and its citizens. It's a regional inheritance. It stems from a history of helplessness and neglect. It comes from being thrown about like a vagrant child

in a ruthless divorce from France to Spain and back again, before finding a home in the United States, belonging to three different nations in an eight-year span. It comes from being given to

the Spanish but not receiving a Spanish governor to take control for three years. It stems from a history of ironies, such as the renowned French Quarter being engulfed by flames and being rebuilt by the Spaniards, borrowing heavily on prevalent Spanish architectural principles of the time. It stems from uniting as one to fight the most important battle of The War of 1812, the Battle of New Orleans, weeks after a treaty had been signed. It comes from having to choose between electing a governor for a fourth term who admittedly took kickbacks on more than one occasion, or David Duke, ex-Klansman, and making bumper stickers that read "Vote for the crook, it's important!" (a common sight around Louisiana). It comes from a decade of rigorous attempts to turn Lake Pontchartrain into an unpolluted body. Now we pollute it with bodies. And, yes, it comes from being Saints fans.

Indeed, New Orleans is star-crossed, but why let that get us down? In an act of social rebellion, we celebrate deaths and revel in debauchery. We are a contradiction. The city is flooded with religion, but we refuse to take it too seriously. A good friend's favorite t-shirt is one he received from his church. Through some unparalleled act of carelessness, or comedic genius, the shirts came out reading "First Unitarian-Universalist Church of New Orleans," with the initials in large, bold print above the church's name. Gays gather atop a New Orleans tourist kiosk, with a breathtaking view of St. Louis Cathedral and Jackson Square, and do things that warranted a caution from a gay friend to never ascend those stairs after nightfall. Some would call that blasphemous; we say live and let live.

And *do* we live! There is something other than humidity in the air, something that ignites a passion within. Something romantic about the city: the mysticism, the spirits that flutter along each storied street and breathe on the neck of each passerby, the way the stars hang in the atmosphere and shine on the city, more European than American. Something prompts you to take walks in the early morning rain, to find a secluded area with a loved one and bask in the moment. It's so authentic.



All pictures taken by Amy Foster in New Orleans, December 2002

There's no commercial spin, nothing to suggest the abstract hassles of life. It's real. It's the feel of the dew-touched ornate black steel of the balconies on your palm and the pink of the sky just before sunrise.

New Orleans is a dynamic of the senses. The smell of vomit and liquor paired with the scent of gumbo or etouffee. It's the sound of those familiar refined hits, "Pour Some Sugar on Me" or "Sweet Home Alabama," contrasted against the raw, enthusiastic wails of trumpets and trombones, coupled with undeniable percussion grooves. It's the flaws of the city, the projects and slums, being used as backdrops to monstrous oak trees and antiquated streetcars. New Orleans is flawed logic; it's the precursor to Dadaism. There is no good section of the city; there is no bad part. It's integrated; a single street will separate the best parts of town with those not-so-desirable locals. New Orleans is the rawness of humanity. It's the loitering salesmen along Elysian Fields, trying to make a buck by selling bottled water or a banana to the cars passing by. It's the homeless strewn throughout downtown, resting against the deteriorating buildings; it's the difficulty of deciding which is more unkempt.

It may not seem like much, but it is home, and I miss it dearly after four weeks. I missed it dearly after four days. And I'm sorry to say, I will probably miss it after four months. I view St. Louis Cathedral in much the same way a child views Cinderella's castle. I was born in New Orleans and then at an early age uprooted to Prattville, Alabama, but New Orleans never left my heart. I knew names like Manning, Armstrong, Maravich, and Domino long before I knew the likes of Washington, Adams, Franklin, and Jefferson. I called 870 AM on a regular basis before and after Saints games, never getting through but never giving up. And I finally got through, at the age of five, to talk some Saints football and spoke more fluently than the broadcaster to boot! God bless you, Buddy D, you incoherent fool! You know you were, and still are, loved by one and all.

I always knew I was going back. Many were the nights when I could not sleep in Slidell, where my family relocated after



Alabama, across the lake from New Orleans. As a result, I would sporadically drive to New Orleans. It didn't matter what I did. Sometimes I'd stop for beignets, sit under the green and white awning of Cafe d Monde and get lost in a Vonnegut book. Other times I'd park along the lake shore and sit on one of the benches facing the lake and just appreciate the musky smells of the lake, the motions of the tide, and the sway of the flap atop a Popeye's chicken box. I can't explain it but there was always evidence of Popeye's in the vicinity. More often, though, I would just drive. Gently, Elysian Fields, Lakeview, Metarie, Midtown, Uptown, Downtown, everywhere. Windows down, doors unlocked. There's nothing to fear when you're home.

Then I moved out of Slidell, found an amazing place midtown along South Carrollton across from Notre Dame Seminary. Those wondrous oaks, the streetcars, the Rock 'n Bowl, all in my backyard. Camellia Grill just blocks down the road with the warm greetings of "You ready to getch 'yo grub on?" as patrons walked in at all hours of the night. I shared a three bedroom, two bath apartment with a good friend I'd known since high school who is under the contacts in my cell phone as "Gay Mike," the same way I was introduced to him seven years ago. A straight man rooming with a gay man in the conservative south; is that weird? FUC NO, as the shirt would say! Not in New Orleans. Live and let live!

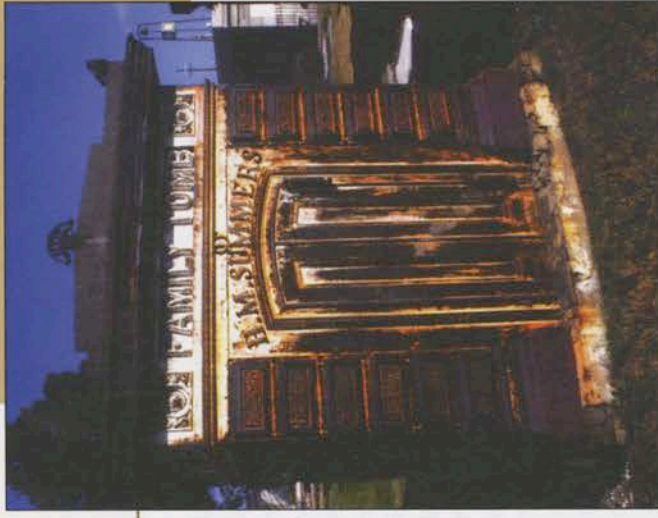
I fully expect to vomit when I go back. It gave me such a feeling of accomplishment when I merged onto the interstate and the first thing I saw, a half-mile in front of me, was the Superdome. It was the first thing I learned about New Orleans. That structure gave me a sense of home every time I came across it whether in a vehicle, or on television, or in magazines, or approaching it to see the Saints play. When I was missing my family, friends, and my city dearly, as I was in Colorado this past Christmas with a now-ex, what could I do but develop a tingling warmth inside at the image of snowflakes falling from the sky, perching on the Superdome's roof for the first time in decades? And now that same roof has chunks missing—a discolored shell, and the inside has become a festering bowl of disease and dead bodies, a microcosm of the city itself.

Yes, I'm homesick. I've been listening to WWOZ "In Exile," the internet-streamed broadcast of New Orleans' signature radio station (wwoz.org) that showcases the music that makes New Orleans' musical culture so stunning. Blues, jazz, gospel, zydeco—it's all there. Accompanying the music are so many anecdotes and tales of the experiences and occurrences that make New Orleans such an engaging and unique city. Perhaps on an afternoon when I'm dealing with a particularly intense bout of homesickness, I will succumb. I may ask the next passerby, "I bet I know where you got those shoes." I've no problems with gambling; I'll place a bet. And if the act becomes commonplace enough, I would make a killing. And when I see pictures of Elysian Fields, a frequent stomping ground, I'm taken aback by something peculiar. Not the jet skis, creating an arc of water as they speed by, nor the sheer volume of water swallowing the streets. Something truly astounding sticks out: the drive thru Daiquiri, for the first time I've seen, is lacking its usual ten-car line.

I cannot help but wonder if the palm tree in my front yard fell into my apartment like the pine fell into my mother's room in Slidell. The apartment was mostly made up of windows and cream balcony doors, twenty-four panes of glass in each. I can imagine the sound of the screen door slamming back and forth against the frame, the

shriek of the glass from the oval viewing area on the front door being pushed through and coming in contact with the tile floor. The wind would speed up the semi-spiral staircase, skipping steps like a young boy after his last day of school, curl into the living room and have its way with the big-screen TV. It doesn't matter that it was faced toward the wall, not with those powerful winds. I imagine the television, bulky as Ignatius J. Reilly, doing cartwheels in my living room, leaving scuffs on the wooden flooring, my favorite part of the apartment, and crashing into the inoperable fireplace. Then the gusts would sprint through the swinging door into the kitchen, tearing through every window it came across, filling the air with more shrieks and moving into the main hall, breaking bathroom mirrors. You know that's bad luck don't you, Katrina? And then into my room, tossing guitar amps and pedals across the room, breaking more windows. Pelting my two-month old pillow-top mattress with sharp darts of rain. It doesn't matter; it was too comfortable for my own good. And where was it when I needed it? I'd only had sex in that apartment once and that was on the hardwood flooring. Where was the bed then? "En route," they claimed. As an afterthought, maybe that's why I liked those floors so much.

I cringe at the thought of the winds picking up my dresser and slamming it to the ground. There were two things of importance in that apartment. One was the thirty-year-old beat-up Guild acoustic my dad had given me at the age of sixteen, which I had the foresight to bring. The other, a scrapbook, given to me by the same ex as a Christmas present during that Colorado trip, was in that dresser. Katrina could pick up my Gibson SG and toss it into the Gulf of Mexico for all I care. Take the amps and my Dean



acoustic-electric and the basket of laundry I had done the day before I evacuated from New Orleans. Take the multiple sticks of deodorant I bought in bulk because they were on sale, and take the five canisters of tennis balls. Practice your 155 mile-per-hour serve at my expense. I promise I won't mind, as long as the grooved ebony covers of that diary are untattered, every letter unsmudged, every picture like new.

The city is inside of me. It's egged me on. The trees and the streetcars, the atmosphere and the aura, once so far away, were at my fingertips. I was a studious child being taught by the elder

city that everything is attainable. This same premise coaxed a lovesick kid with access to a Corolla—and the mindset that anything is worth doing to possess that which you desire—to embark on a slapdash, nonstop 1,800 mile drive to get what he wanted. Why sit at home for Ivan when I can go to California! Seven Red Bulls, thirty-three hours, one hallucination-invoked ghost sighting in New Mexico, and an eye-on-the-prize mentality was all it took to get me to San Diego—where she had chosen to go to school—the next morning. And after the drive back, and three hours of sleep, an emotional phone call was all it took to find that she had her eyes on a different prize. Live and let live; it hurt like hell, but live and let live.

Now I'm in a similar situation hundreds of miles from my prize—my home. She doesn't want me, not right now. She's wounded, insecure, shivering like a child after a winter's rain. She's confused, untrusting. Her veil of self-esteem worn from flooding, fires, and firearms. But underneath, she's still the same. She's still the culmination of all those beautiful flaws, that domestic foreign entity. She's still the mysterious streets and the carefree lifestyle. She's still the woman with the comelighter glare and java eyes. Eyes like you've never seen before and never will again; eyes with a hint of chicory. She's the one that trespasses your mind and refuses to leave. She refuses to surrender the life you had known before her. She's too compassionate to let that happen. The sooner you come to terms with the fact that you're smitten, that you can't live without her, the better off you'll be. I cannot wait to get reacquainted with her, to witness her magic and to hear her distinct voice—those smooth sound waves that are set into motion and brush your ear sending chills through your spine. I'm counting the days until she welcomes me into her arms again, until I hear the chime of her bracelets clanging against one another as her arms collapse over my body and refuse to let go.





Form
amanda crawford
painting



Untitled
amanda crawford
painting

happy sunday

heidi henley

cosmo says hair stroking is a sign of real commitment

the printing keeps printing and i can't decide if you want me here or not.
i hit a car. made a cake. sang to the dog. hormones runnin' strong.
the printer died. finally. we're alone.
i don't know if everybody hates us being together. i don't know if i even
know what's going on in my life right now. it's a whirlwind. the eye of
the storm. the stillness. the moment of real panic. i think i feel
comfortable. i think i'm uneasy in my seat. i just have to keep typing
typing typing until i run out of things to say. wish i had a computer at
my apartment to spill into everyday. the classic pen and pad is failing me
as of late.

stopped typing.

when i think without thinking. without restriction to where my mind
can wander and how deeply it can slither. i find myself thinking...
complete contradictory statements. ideas. i keep it in the forefront of my
mind. my age, status, probability of outcomes and future circumstances.
yet there's an 8-year-old girl dressed up in mommy's high heels. i'm not
looking to get married. not engaged. not horribly—stiffly—serious. i
just want to be happy and not running on hot coals. does that make
sense?? let me reword myself. happy, walking at a pace where it's
possible to enjoy the view, but that is within myself. the only thing in the
world that is constant is change.
i like you and i made you a cake.

happy sunday.



Memories of War Series
david jernigan
color photography

Restoration *kelsey inman*

Mistake

Just this one
Instant of irrationality
And all is eternally tainted

Moment captured, moment gone, stolen
A snapshot
Permanently engraved into your autobiography

No clock can unwind that wretched time
Only reflection and growing lie ahead
Another day

Though wounds plunge deep, they heal
Echoes of sorrow and regret pour from your soul
Perseverance is your refrain

Forgiven

Exorcism *stephen trageser*

Pregnant raindrops give
Birth on my windshield to a thousand
Earnest Custodians hurriedly
Mopping up the milk of human kindness,
Soured and Spilt by cheap beer and hash browns; a thousand
Eager Clergy busily
Muttering incantations and
Spraying sacred distillations and
Driving stakes into the
Demon Dignity who's possessed us and kept us from
Treating each other like People.

Plague of Thoughts kelsey inman

How often do you think of me?
When the wind blows cold
And the sky turns black
When your shadow disappears
And fear lunges at your back
How often do you think of me?

Call me crazy to want to feel this way
My body is weak
But my heart beats strong
Trying to find the surface
That has been there all along

When all that love gives
Becomes shambles in return
The tears fall fast
And the soul begins to burn
But for some strange reason
The heart will never learn

To let it all go
To let it all slide
Because my heart has that desire inside
It never fades away
And I refuse to give it up
When will all I have be merely enough

One last string of hope
Is what I have to give
It all comes down to this
Just to be or to let myself live
My questions incomplete
My life far from dead
I will turn from what I think I know
And look to truth instead

With patience
With honesty
With love
And my thoughts are still on you

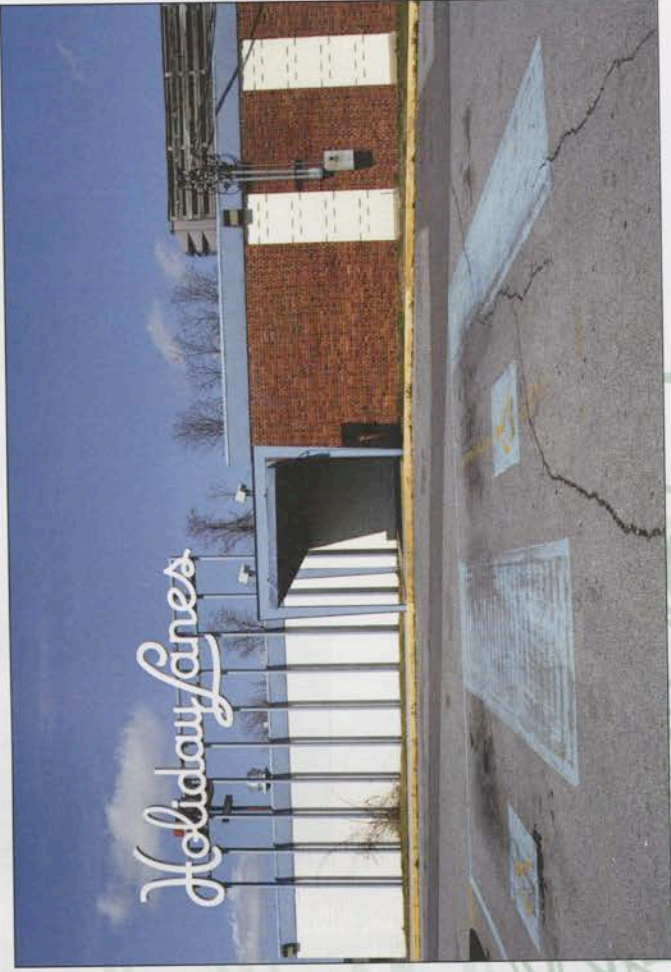
Untitled (pieces from the Granta series)
ryan lewis
ink on mdf



Hopeful Wishing
ben stewart
scratch board

2016

Downtown Kingsport
jessica munal
color photography



Holiday Lanes
jessica munal
color photography

Time susan hill

I can be kind.
I can fill scrapbooks
of smiling faces on
ski trips to Tahoe,
opening pearls on Christmas
Eve, newborn babies
wrapped up like burritos,
dancing at your youngest
child's wedding, that gold
watch at retirement,
eating cake at your 50th
anniversary party.

I can be cruel. I can make
one hour a lifetime. I can
produce pride so intense
siblings cease to speak, regret
that robs you of sleep, bitterness
rooted so deep you become
sick in your body, and fear
so prevalent you don't take
a single chance.

I can make loved ones abandon
you for dirt.

Be careful what you do with me.
I am to be spent wisely. You
are only allotted so much
of me. Once I am gone,
you will never get me back.

Pizzeria jeffrey russell

She said she had met someone like me
at the pizzeria on 18th and Division,
up by the downtown area
close to the park,
yet she could not remember his name.

Wishing she could speak better English
to tell me of this someone,
so goal-oriented,
so proper and well-mannered,
who made her feel so welcome.

Whispering to me that the pizza
was not what she ordered,
pulling off the mushrooms,
as her hair frantically fell
along the small side of her neck.

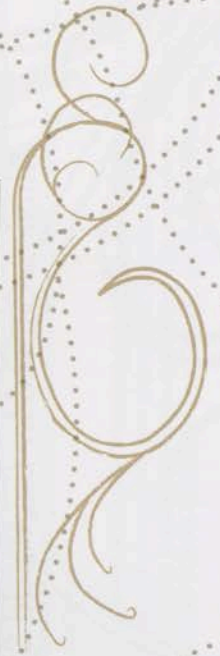
She said that the cheese wrapped around
her tongue like egg drop noodles,
as she smiled with a curled left lip.
She said she could not recall his face exactly
and she was too young for commitment.

Wiping off her crumbs from the table,
she laughed at the sauce
falling from my beard.
Taking my napkin across my chin,
she said, "I should have met you earlier."

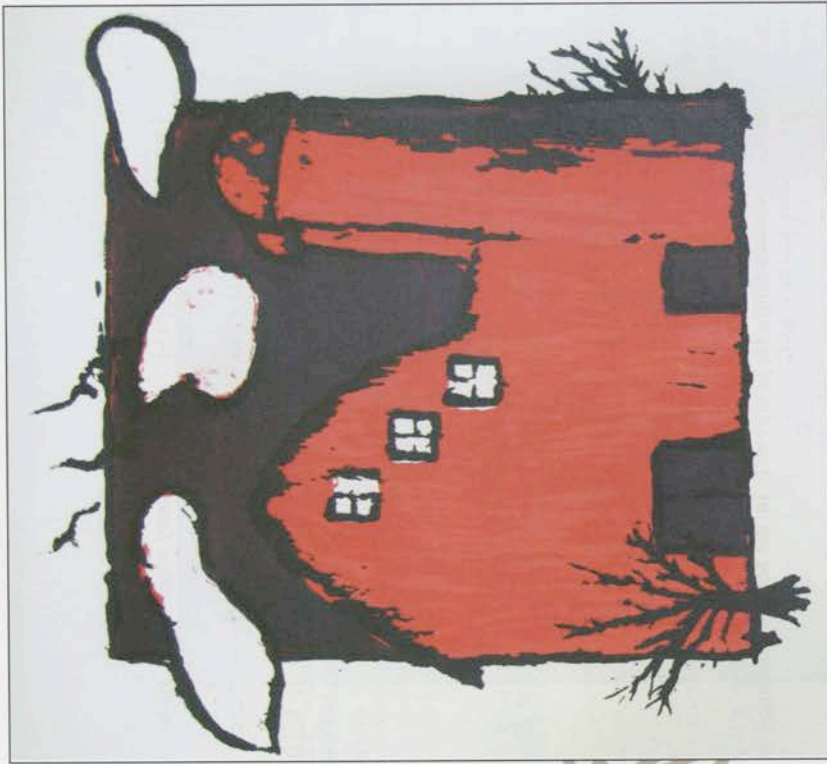
Foolish Girl angipace

Do you really wanna break free
Too much security in the inequity
Or do you just wanna talk about it
What you know
What you should do
What your pastor told you
What you saw your Mama do
And how you don't wanna be like that
"God, *please* don't let me be like that."
Cuz you're so much smarter
Don't be foolish, girl
So much smarter...But oh!
Oh to feel needed
Forgetting all those times
Times you pleaded, heart bleeding
Maternal instincts to nurture, perverted and abused
Self worth at the cost of being used
Not thinking of who loses when
A baby girl sees her worth in your bruises
And while your friends say
You can't stay cuz (love)
Love don't hurt this way
Still you allow manipulation purposely
So easily, so passively
Frontin' like you want to be free
Don't be foolish, girl

Clarity
marina michalova
color photography



A Beginning's End
ben stewart
silkscreen



Illusion Caused by the World Spinning 'Round
troy dixon
slide photography



contributor bios

Josh Alexander is a senior history major. He is a student of MTSU's Honors College, and he will be graduating this spring. His interests include photography and cinematography.

Maria Bealer is a senior majoring in electronic media production. Her work was recently published in the spring 2005 issues of *The Muse* and *Collage*.

Cameron Clarke is a senior majoring in photography. Clarke holds an associate degree in English from Motlow State Community College and enjoys playing the guitar and keyboard in his free time. He shares this love of music with his church where he leads musical worship on Sundays.

Amanda Crawford, from Gallatin, Tenn., is a senior fine arts major with an emphasis in painting and a printmaking minor. Her plans for the future are to become a professional artist, and possibly attend graduate school, enabling her to teach art at the university level.

Sarafina A. Croft is a McNair Scholar and a senior electronic media communication and Spanish major. She plans to go to graduate school to study Spanish. She enjoys writing and praying.

Michelle McKnight Davis is a graduate student who earned a BFA from the University of Alabama in 2003. Davis is currently working on an M.Ed. in administration and supervision in library science at MTSU.

Troy Dixon, currently single, is a senior recording industry management major from Knoxville, Tenn. Dixon's work was featured in the spring 2005 issue of *Collage*. He claims the loves of his life are music, animals, and cereal (in no particular order).

Anthony Ellis is one of the many displaced students coming from New Orleans who have been driven from home by hurricane Katrina. He is entering MTSU as a freshman and remains undeclared. And, if you can talk Saints football, you will become his best friend.

Amy Foster, the former Editor-in-Chief of *Collage*, graduated during the summer of 2005 with a degree in political science and minors in photography and marketing education. The Kingston, Tenn. native currently resides in Bradyville, Tenn., with her husband Matt and their five dogs and two cats.

Leslie Gossett is a senior from Tennessee concentrating in French, English and secondary education. She plans to teach abroad after graduation.

Heidi Hensley is a junior majoring in psychology. She believes in the power of trivial freelance writing. Writing is her passion and will be her life's work. She is published on poetry.com.

Susan Hill is a junior mass communication major, minoring in writing and psychology. She lives in Nashville, Tenn.

Brandon Horne is a junior electronic media communication major with minors in art and design for arts and entertainment. He is from Murfreesboro, Tenn., and hopes to one day work in the creative field. His photograph "Hakka Guide" was taken during a recent trip to China.

Kelsey Inman is a sophomore recording industry major from Franklin, Tenn. She has a passion for music and writing.

David Jernigan is a freshman art major from Manchester, Tenn. One day, Jernigan plans to open his own art and photo studio.

Ryan Lewis is a senior sculpture major from Nashville, Tenn. Lewis has shown his work in untitled shows and at Salon D.6. He plans on attending graduate school after college.

Martina Michalova, a senior mass communication major with an emphasis in photography, was published in the spring 2004 and spring 2005 issues of *Collage*. Michalova minors in both marketing and liberal arts and plans to have a career in commercial photography.

Jessica Munal is a senior majoring in electronic media communication. Her work was published in the 2004 edition of *Collage* as well as shown in the 2005 student photography exhibit.

David Norris is a junior criminal justice administration major from Davenport, Iowa. He plans to volunteer for the Peace Corps once his degree is complete.

Angi Pace is a marketing major from Johnson City, Tenn. She hopes to one day own a Christian hip-hop record label. She enjoys Audrey Hepburn movies and all genres of music.

Jeffrey Russell graduated from MTSU in 1998 with a Bachelor of Science in mass communication. He is currently in the teacher education program pursuing teacher licensure in English.

Molly Segers is a sophomore recording industry major with an emphasis in music business. Segers hails from Southern Georgia and runs her own music blog at LaFreq.com. Her featured photograph was taken at the Butch Walker show at the Variety Playhouse in Atlanta, GA.

Meagan N. Starnes is a senior mass communication major from Union City, Tenn. She plans to pursue her MBA at either NYU or Purdue. Eventually, she would like to become an art dealer, possibly in Chicago, Ill.

Ben Stewart is a graphic design major, originally from Peoria, Ill. Although he enjoys all media, his screen prints have sold at an AIGA fundraiser as well as at the Barn Bash for the former MTSU Art Barn. Stewart hopes to work for a design firm after graduation.

Holly Stewart is a senior mass communication major, concentrating in digital media communication.

Stephen Trageser is a junior recording industry major from Murfreesboro, Tenn. He once had a sonnet about a missing pair of pants published in a contest volume of the American Library of Poetry. He did not win the scholarship. He hopes to be able to feed himself with his degree, but it looks difficult to scoop Ramen noodles with a piece of paper.

staff bios

Suzi Bratton, a junior English major, is the current Editor-in-Chief of *Collage* magazine. Bratton will graduate in May 2007, and she plans to go into the field of publishing. She recently compiled a book of poetry entitled *i am not subtle*, which is being considered for publication. Bratton also helped found the free expression publication, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, for which she works as Editor-in-Chief and as a staff writer. Bratton hopes to one day own and operate a publishing company.

Carolyn Crawford is an Editorial Review Staff member for *Collage*. She is a sophomore English major and an Honors College student. Crawford once held the title Duchess of Finwick, but now she only rules over her basset hound, Higgins.

Dana Clark, Editorial Review Staff member, is a senior mass communication student majoring in journalism, with a graphic concentration, focusing on layout. She has minors in art and marketing and holds a 3.8 GPA. Clark currently works at her hometown's community paper, *The Wilson Post*, aiding in layout/production. After graduating she plans to continue her career in publication design, pushing herself as far up the ladder as she can go. Clark, who was published in the spring issue of *Collage*, currently lives in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Jessica Dinkins is the current Designer for *Collage*. Dinkins, from Murfreesboro, Tenn., graduates in May with two degrees, one in Spanish and the other in media design. She wants to move to Spain next year and live abroad with her fiancé, whom she will marry on June 3, 2006. Eventually she wants to work for a Spanish-language publication.

Alex Ingalls was raised in a traveling circus with her two brothers. Her father is a lion tamer, and her mother is a trapeze artist. Until recently she was moonlighting in the freak show as the bearded lady. Since attending MTSU she has shaved her beard and chosen Spanish as her major, with a minor in art. She was recently inspired to become an art professor and hopes to attend graduate school in a larger city where a car is unnecessary.

Kimmie Jones, a senior advertising major from Brentwood, Tenn., is *Collage's* Visual Arts Editor. Jones, an individual cursed with creativity and opinions, hopes to use her minors in art and English to become a creative director in Nashville, Tenn. Jones has completed an internship with McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations and has devoted herself for many years to the Muscular Dystrophy Association, receiving their state achievement award in 2005. In her free time, Jones juggles her roles as popular culture buff, painter for hire and bargain shopper.

Amy Powers, a member of *Collage's* Editorial Review Staff, is a freshman honors student. Though Murfreesboro has been her home since eleventh grade, Powers spent the majority of her growing up years in Houston, Texas, home of the Astros. In addition to *Collage*, she is also actively involved in Alpha Omega college ministry. She is majoring in electronic media production and is planning to minor in English.

Hillary Robson-Reeder, Online Editor, is entering the final year of her M.A. Program. Her areas of interest include popular culture, fandom studies and creative writing. Upon completing her degree program at MTSU in 2006, she plans to pursue her Ph.D. in textual studies. She currently lives in Murfreesboro, Tenn. with her husband Effrin, along with their overactive Border Collie and two cats. This is her second semester with *Collage*.

Alison Shockey, a.k.a. "Cookie Monster," the *Collage* Managing Editor, plans to become a high school English teacher in fall 2006. In case her career as an educator won't support her obsessions with The Beatles and fancy footwear, she plans to write a novel about a man whose love of ice cream prevents him from maintaining meaningful relationships with others. Shockey's silliness and extraordinary energy level can be attributed to ten hours of sleep a night and a daily dose of hand-squeezed lemonade.

Jessi Torres, Literature Arts Editor, is a journalism major, minoring in Spanish and English. She is a member of the Honors College and the Phi Kappa Phi honor society. Torres also studies traditional Korean Tae Kwon Do. After graduating in May, she plans to work as a freelance writer. She lives in Antioch, Tenn. with her husband, Eliot, and daughter, Isabel.

Megan Vaughan currently holds the position of Assistant Visual Arts Editor on the *Collage* staff. She is a junior from Russellville, Ark., and is majoring in photography. She has held many positions with student publications at MTSU, including the newspaper *Sidefines* and the former yearbook *Midlander*. After she graduates in May 2007, she plans on traveling the world and eventually getting a real job.



Back Row: Marsha Powers, Jessica Dinkins, Dana Clark, Hillary Robson-Reeder, Megan Vaughan, Carolyn Crawford; Front Row: Kimmie Jones, Amy Powers, Alex Ingalls, Suzi Bratton, Jessi Torres, Alison Shockey

To submit to *Collage*:

Collage is now accepting submissions all year. Please check the submission guidelines for details. Deadlines for each publication will be posted on the website. Each submission must have a completed submission form. Submissions are turned in at the *Collage* office, Paul W. Martin, Sr. Honors Building, Rm. 224 between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or by mail. Submissions will NOT be accepted over the internet. Please go to www.mtsu.edu/~collage for the submission forms and latest *Collage* information. You must be an MTSU student to submit.

Collage

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