

ISSUE  
26

# COLLAGE

★ ★ a Journal of ★ ★ ★  
CREATIVE EXPRESSION

FALL  
2017



Published by

## MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE

### IN MEMORIAM

by Kimi Conro

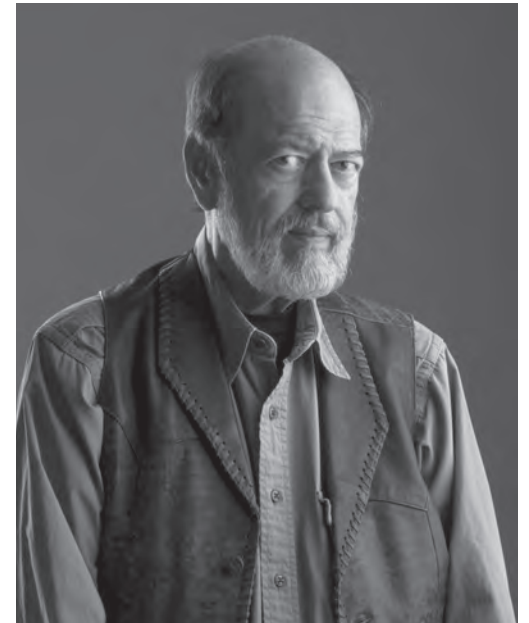
Tom Jimison was the nurturer. Like a bird to its young, he fed his students on a steady diet of creative and contagious inspiration—the inevitable yield of his unique flavor of teaching. He infused each class and one-on-one discussion with a lifelong telling of his many adventures in photography, and laced his critiques of student work with a pragmatic yet kind method of evaluation.

Students who have stood under the lamp of his keen eyes' scrutiny can attest that there was nothing more rewarding than to earn the coveted stamp of his praise—that simple, starred sticky note on the back of a print.

The outstanding technical and artistic prowess of this humble instructor paved the path for countless pupils to pursue their passions. In his unassuming way, Tom Jimison nudged each student who passed through the MTSU Photography Department to look, to see, to feel, to interpret, and to create what could be engendered by no other: pure art from one's own spirit. As one such student so moved and inspired, I stand among hundreds as a product of his kind, guiding heart.

Tom Jimison will forever remain a fixture in the halls of the photography building and, more effectively, the hearts of all who roamed and learned in them.

You are cherished and greatly missed, Mr. J. Yet your spirit lives on. Thank you for bestowing the gifts of art and passion to all who knew you.



**Tom Jimison 1942 - 2017**

# COLLAGE

★ a Journal of  
CREATIVE  
EXPRESSION

PROSE & SHORT PLAYS

ART ISSUE 26 FALL ART  
2017

POETRY & SONG  
LYRICS

PHOTOGRAPHY

# LETTER FROM *The* EDITOR



There is something invincible about art. Unlike human progress, its activity never ceases, and this endless operation strikes an imperative yet dulcet chord in the hearts of those who listen. For those disenchanted with the world or self, art in its myriad forms induces passion, beauty, reflection, and hope. Whether through written word or imagery, song or craftsmanship, art brings life and color to an otherwise dull and tedious existence, and in doing so, becomes a necessity for all—be they artistically inclined or otherwise. Open for all to interpret, art does not discriminate; it truly is the universal experience of a universal language. As an emblem of our existence, there is nothing more innately human than art, and it exists across time as a most worthy and meaningful endeavor.

All of these realities combined make art simply irresistible, and I firmly believe that life without art would be hardly worth living. Its status, necessity, and universality thus woven, there is one remaining thread connecting art to humanity: its accessibility.

It is therefore of the utmost value that *Collage* exists as the medium through which art is tangibly expressed in our vibrant community. Through dedication to open expression and promotion of exceptional literary and visual artworks, *Collage* has for decades upheld and perpetuated what is integral to a rich and democratic coexistence. And for this, I am honored to join the ranks of those who have served as its Editor in Chief. My vision for *Collage* continues to be the preservation of the life and color induced by artistic expression. Through my tenure in this role, I am resolved to advance *Collage* to the height of its value for not only our eager community but also simply for the sake of art. I thank all those who have worked alongside me this semester, and earnestly await the next!

## KIMI CONRO

*Editor in Chief*



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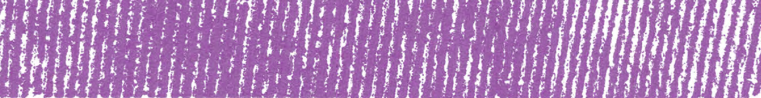
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## WICKED WHISPERING WITCHES

Julian Jennison

*poetry*

Wicked whispering witches wind up with witch friends  
Wanting worries and woe to go wander at ends  
Their will will will wonders with white wisps of water  
And will wake all the woods with their whoops and their hollers

The wreaking rotters wrought rot from their rinds  
And wrapped rats, raw and rare, with ripe rapturous words  
And when the witches whispered words to the windy winter night  
The wind would whisper back with words equally slight

“But why,” one would wonder, “would witches work with such winds?”  
“Why would witches want wind whipping warmth from their work?”  
Well witches as these want warmth to work away  
Leaving woods wild and wet as they wait and waylay

For witches as these, which are witches of the west  
Want worlds to be wicked and won over with pests  
And while they watch as their world withers out  
The witches wither with it without a whisper or shout

For while witches are wicked and wrought with wrong ways  
They will wallow with wonder at their rapturous wake  
Without words they will wander to the width of their whole  
As the whole world whittles away while swallowing them whole



## FIREFLY

Karlie Tankersley  
*oil on board, 8" x 10"*



## THE RAILROAD

Jacob Jones  
*digital photography*



## TENSION

Caitlyn Osborne Parris

*poetry*

The silence of the moon slowly encroaching—  
enlivening  
the sun's already brilliant gaze.  
The two, so long, separated  
dichotomy of night and day  
broken  
united into one.  
I, breathless, fell  
shouting inside,  
“My God!”  
And the tears of horror and joy  
fled down my face at this—  
beautiful and terrifying.  
Here it was, the tension.  
Nature, teaching me,  
once again,  
how to live in it.



## THE LANDSCAPE OF HISTORY

Whitney Wilkerson

*collaged pieces of screen prints on fabric and paper*

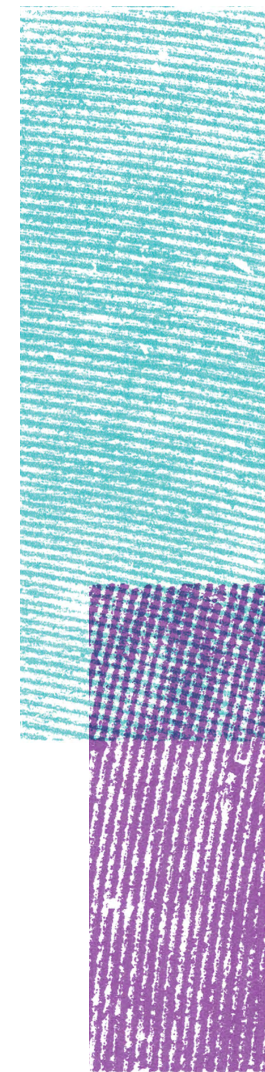
## ALMOND BARK TREES

Heaven Morrow

*poetry*

If Almond Bark did grow on trees  
Then Bubble Gum would grow on leaves  
and Pixy Stix dust would act as pollen  
with Chocolate heartwood they'd grow tall and  
birds would nest up in the boughs  
To get a taste of those sweet flowers  
Licorice roots would grow down deep  
And provide earthworms with sucrose treats.

Maybe if trees were made of candy  
The world'd find them much more handy  
but all they make is sweet breath, sadly.





## SET FREE

Heather Stokes

*oil on canvas*



## ACT 40, SCENE 285: PRAYING... AGAIN

Noëlle Dederer

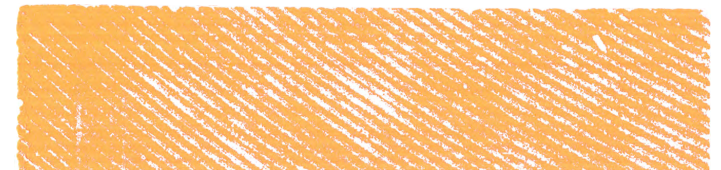
*briefcase, light, string, fabric, wood, and metal*



## INTERMITTENT BICKERING

Noëlle Dederer

*wood, resin, light, metal, roses, poems, and china*





## LYNCHING SELFIE

StarShield Lortie

poetry



You had your picture taken with bodies, bodies that were beaten, drowned in rivers, burned alive, dragged down old roads by their hands, dismembered, or some combination of them all before they hung, creaking from trees, or poles, or gallows specially built for the occasion. In the pictures, you are smiling, smiling like you just won the lottery, certain your invincibility would absolve you of any culpability for a world you helped create. Someone turned those pictures into ten-cent postcards that you sent to your friends up North and out West, souvenirs of your self-imposed superiority. Your legacy, now a collector's item on eBay, shows you holding hands with your high-school date, fingers casually vining together as the bodies hung—silent, separate, properly shamed—

against a dark sky. Your grandchildren find the actual photo in the family picture box, sit both oblivious to and uncomfortable with the smiles and the poses and the stories of what life was like back then. You never told them they would have the same choices to make—what to believe about other people, what friends to surround themselves with, what dress to wear on a Saturday night date. Instead you put those pictures, a testament to your youth and immature choices, in an old shoebox that sat on a shelf in the coat closet until you forgot that you had any part of any of it. You never imagined your grandchildren, with the help of the internet, would make you the reluctant spokesperson of an unrepentant human history.



STEVE

Kenny Page

multi-block woodcut on kozo, 24" x 30"



## MY SLEEPING BEAUTY

Rachel Rosson

poetry

I've loved you from the first moment I knew,  
Nothing more than my mind's recognition of you,  
As a tiny child—  
A sleeping babe.

I wanted you to play dolls with me,  
I wanted you to push me endlessly on the swing,  
A swiftly growing child—  
Alone in the warm summer shade.

I wanted you to be there for each special or difficult moment,  
I couldn't understand why you turned me away then,  
Barely still a child—  
Lost in a whirl, called 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

I wanted to call you, when I couldn't stand up or see straight,  
I needed salvation and a ride home, but was so ashamed,  
No longer a child—  
Frightened, drunk, and underage.

I wanted so badly to cry into your soft cotton t-shirt,  
As I tipped-toed away from him at sunrise, feeling lower than dirt,  
Losing the innocence of a child—  
Regrets building with age.

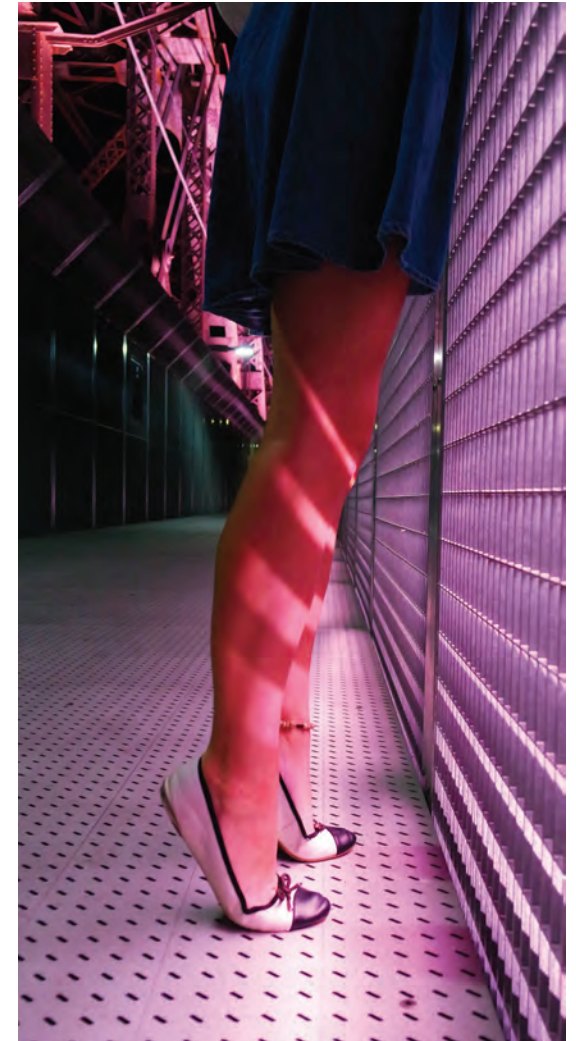
I wanted you to be there, when I walked down the aisle,  
To look out and see you, front row with a pleased smile,  
Happy for your beloved child—  
Who finally forgave.

For telling me long ago that you never really wanted me,  
For giving up on him and leaving us quietly,  
I miss what I couldn't see as a child—  
Who thought not of fear and pain.

Yet, with all that there has been—the  
highs, the lows,  
Disappointment, empty years, and lonely halls,  
I always have and always will—be your child—  
For I live the life—*you* gave.

So, as you lie there, with tubes and machines,  
beeping all around,  
Pale as snow, void of life, nearly heaven bound...

My dear sleeping beauty, your body may go to the ground,  
But my love for you will live on, through that familiar sound—  
silence that surrounds.



LOOKING

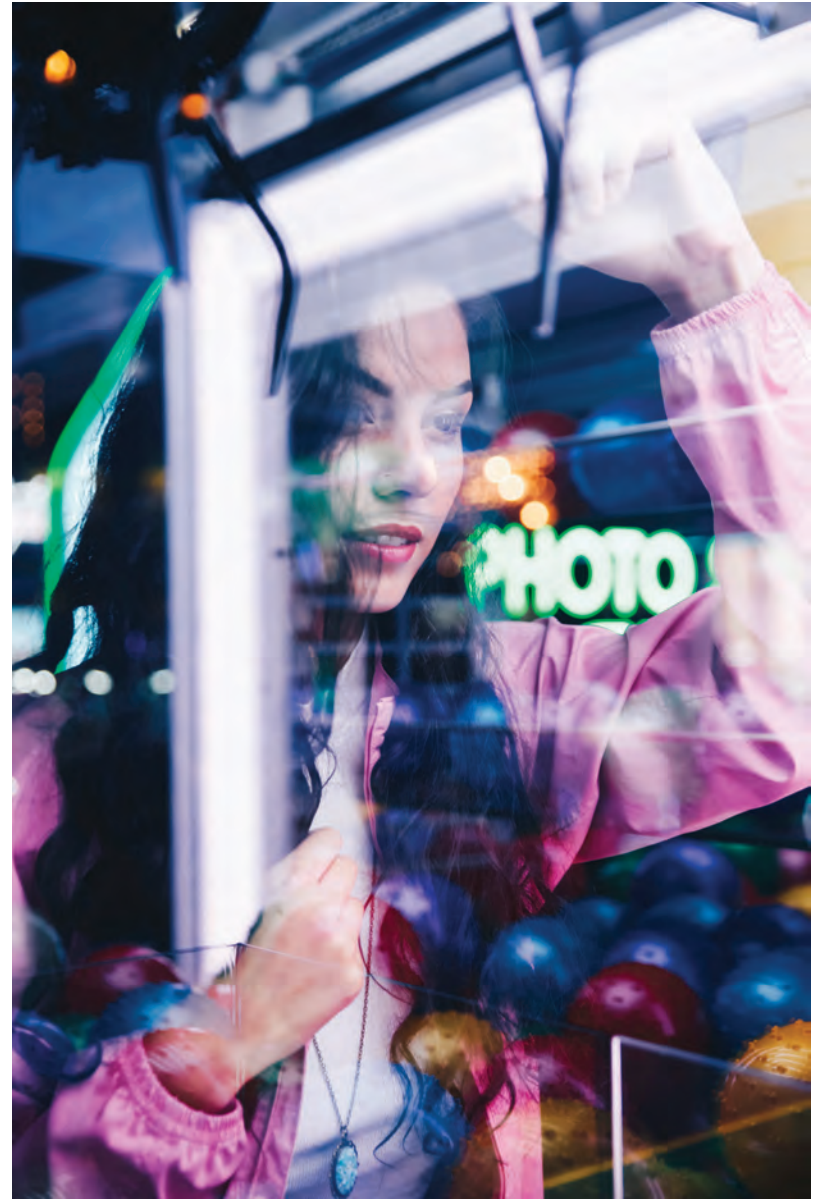
Vann Tate

digital photography

## AGAINST THE STORM

Anthony Bukengolts

*digital photography*



## PLAYING GAMES

Ambre Rogue

*digital photography*

## SOMETHING NOTHING COFFEE

Joshua Tilton

prose



They looked sore against the landscape, at least in his eyes. They sat sheltered in the shade of the umbrella that draped over the glass coffee table, the cup in front of him half-full of a hard native brew. On her side, some delicate, expensive Mochachialatto or something. The harder it is to pronounce, the better it's supposed to taste. It was their last day in "paradise—" her words. He was proud of how he'd done so far, walking day in and day out—glancing at ancient ruins, speaking silent prayers in front of altars and old mosaics. Paying for them, too.

He looked around at the crumbling wall atop which the coffee shop had taken up residence. The wall had been turned into a walking tour through the remains of the Old City, and the vacant homes and boarded up windows had been overrun by T-shirt salesmen and artisan craft shops. The city was an awkward blend of ancient and modern, except now you didn't think about how the Jews had built it, Arabs had inhabited it, crusading Christians had taken it for God, and now it was split among the lot of them. No, now you walked through the roughshod, cobbled streets without picturing the blood pouring through its cracks and crevices. And, you can get coffee with your pretty wife while the local boys sunbathe on the rock face cordoned off from visitors.

She was pretty though, and the way she carried a smile made him almost forget what she looked like when they were alone and forced to talk or not talk. They'd been married nearly a decade now, and only in the last few years had he

learned the difference between not saying anything and saying nothing. He looked at her, at the way the sheer blue dress draped over her shoulders and the slim straps dangled the cloth across her delicate chest. Her legs, long and sun-touched, were crossed in a restless quiet. The dress was light but still decent, and the deep blue strips down her thighs dared you to trace them. He noticed where she was looking now, and he shifted in his seat.

---

**"...only in the last few years had he learned the difference between not saying anything and saying nothing."**

---

He thought at first she'd been looking out over the shimmering waters of the Med, with the gulls diligently circling for their next meal, but her eyes were lower. There, at the edge of the walls that had repelled every kind of person, the boys were basking shirtless in the golden sunlight. Age and heritage had bronzed their skin. He had probably seen but not noticed the homes they'd come from, improvised and squeezed between ancient buildings that defied renovation. It wasn't defiling the history as much as surviving alongside it, and for that, he couldn't help but admire them.

He'd seen the look in her eyes before, at some altar where she'd whispered a hopeful prayer and dropped a coin into a metal collection plate. It was a surprising turn for them—neither had been particularly religious once they left \

their homes. He couldn't even say if she was Catholic or not, just that she wished there was God somewhere but couldn't make sense of Him. This was supposed to be something like a cathartic trip, to give the big guy upstairs a chance. He'd come along not for Him, but for her. Maybe God would hold them together, bridge the gap between them and make them whole again, but when he saw the way she looked at the fading visage of a deity on the wall, he felt jealous. And, he felt it come right back when he saw her eyes give that same look to the young men lying on the rocks.

"Mary," he said.

"Hm?" Her gaze lingered for a moment before turning back to look at him.

"How's the coffee?" said Joe.

"Oh." Her eyes fluttered for a moment.

"Um, it's good."

"Good?"

"Yes," she nodded. "Really good. And yours?"


"Fine."

"Didn't I tell you? They make it better here."

He chuckled and looked down at the mug, the few small grounds that had seeped through the filter, bobbing and swirling, little black specks enveloped by the thick warmth of the dark liquid.

---

"What are you thinking about?" She broke the silence which was otherwise uninterrupted, save for the



occasional siren or small laughter from the street six stories below. They were poised over the balcony, leaning on the metal railing that separated them from a quick death. He was holding, with cupped hands, a cup of the instant coffee mix the hotel had left for them, and even though it was from Israel, it tasted like any other hotel instant coffee mix.

He smiled wide. “Well, I can’t just come right out and say it, now can I?”

“Oh,” she grinned, “but that would make it so much easier.”

“Not too easy?”

“Maybe...” They stood quiet, and quietly together. The fading horizon struck hues of orange and pale blue across the open sky. The sun had just sunk over the horizon, and you could still see its effects without actually seeing what caused it. This struck him as insightful and representative, and he would have said something.

“Joe, I need to tell you.” She was looking out over the sea, the fading light playing with colors on her soft skin. He raised an eyebrow and watched her. “I need to tell you, because it’s important to me, and you’re important to me, and I’m trying to figure out how they play together.”

His gaze sharpened. “Am I competing with something now?”

“Joe, I...” A tear started to well up in the corner of her eye. “What...what would you think of me? I know we’ve shared this for a long time, but...”

“Shared what?” He sounded more hostile than he meant to.

“Our...I don’t know, our nothing.”

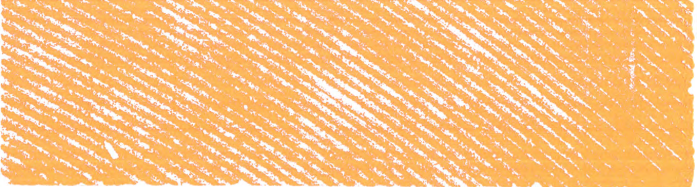
“What’s that supposed to mean?” She didn’t respond, but choked back a tear and kept looking forward, outward. The light was fading quickly, and the wind had picked up so that stray hairs flipped back and forth on her cheek. For a while neither spoke, until Joe finally broke it with some snide comment about the coffee. Really, she told him, it tasted much better when you get it authentic, and she’d heard of this place that really puts in all the effort to make it real and tasteful and simply good, the way he liked it.

They’d go there at the end of the trip, and he could taste the coffee the way it was supposed to be made, the kind you make when you really believe that the beans were there to be pressed into a drink and enjoyed, a real pleasure. They’d have some then, if he came with her now. She promised.

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One of the boys had stood up, the youngest by the look of him. He took off his shoes, and carefully made his way over to the edge of the rocks. They were both looking now, watching silently together as his compatriots clapped and whistled at him. He looked back at them; nervously inching his toes closer to the sheer cliff.

Mary leaned forward in her seat. Looking below, there were rocks sprinkled through the water but in large clumps so you could avoid them if you knew the way down. The boy shook his head, changing his mind and backing away. The boys cheered louder, jeering him now. He looked almost as if he were about to cry.



---

**“For a while neither spoke, until Joe finally broke it with some snide comment about the coffee.”**

---

Something changed in the air, and suddenly, the boys looked much younger than they had been. They looked like the children they were, not the soon-to-be men that shirked their responsibilities to lie out in the sun. It’s one of those things that every person experiences once or twice in a lifetime, where everybody there can just notice and observe in a shared reverie. It’s something you can’t explain, but you feel that you have to, and you can’t. And, it tears you up and puts you back together before you realize you’re any different.

Mary stood up and cheered at him. Cheered at the little boy. All of the ones on the rocks turned quickly to the lady in the blue dress that was urging him on. Joe shifted in his seat and looked around at the other tourists who were watching the spectacle silently. She clapped alone, shouting encouragements and smiling that big contagious smile that sucked you in. He smiled back, and his eyes grew big, bigger than you’d think was real anymore.

The young boy sucked in his belly, puffed out his chest, and launched himself over the edge. Mary threw her hands up into the air and started laughing.

“Mary,” Joe said, “please.” Her eyes didn’t lose their excitement but turned to look at him, locked on his for a moment. There was a splash.

*Continue on page 14*



“Give me this, Joe.” And with that, she turned back, craning her neck to watch the white foam at the bottom circle for a fleeting moment. A few yards away, the boy’s head popped out of the water. She was cheering again, clapping, and the tourists were chuckling to themselves at her, the American. She laughed, clasped her hands in front of her chest, and grinned. The boy’s eyes went straight to where she was, and even from that distance you could see the flush in his cheeks. She laughed and turned back to the table, sitting down without looking at him.

“What?” she said, eyes forward.

“Everyone’s looking,” said Joe, glaring at her.

“Why can’t you let me have this, Joe?”

“Have what?”

“Joe!”

Joe glanced at the tables around them. “Don’t make a scene. And I quickly think we’re reaching the point where you have to make a decision.”

“Me? Make a decision?”

Don’t put this on my plate, Joe.”

“Your boys are calling to you.”

“What?” She looked back over, and the ones who’d been lying on their backs, shirtless and tan and young, were waving their arms towards her, beckoning her to them. She broke into another of her glaring smiles, and she blushed.

Joe soured. “I think they want you to join them.” She looked out at them, considering. “Well?”

A tear started to pool in the corner of her eye again, and she looked from them to him, and back again. She chuckled, reached down to her wrist, unbuckled her watch, and placed it in her purse. Then, without a glance, she rose and walked forward. As she ducked under the railing, they started to cheer. They were urging her onward, closer to the edge of the rock wall.

The coffee really tasted awful, but he couldn’t tell her that. Honestly, it tasted more like dirt than decent coffee. Everyone tells you that things will be better here, because it’s the Med, and the Med is beautiful and fruitful, and the people who work, work hard. It was supposed to taste good just because they’d bought it by the sea and they’d travelled so long just to reach the Promised Land.

When she jumped, time didn’t stand still like he’d thought it would, like he’d hoped it would. Her sheer dress fluttered around her in a perfect, temporary beauty, and her arms hung high at her shoulders. And her smile—that big, beautiful smile. It was the closest thing to God.

When she broke the surface, he reached for his ring and a hundred-dollar bill, placing both in her purse. She would be well taken care of by the boys cheering on the shore. He turned, walked away and said nothing. ■



## IMMERSE

John Peden

*digital photography*





**QUINTESSENCE**

Haydin Oechsle  
*digital photography*



## HALF DOME

Jessica Rigsby  
*digital photography*



## DISTORTION

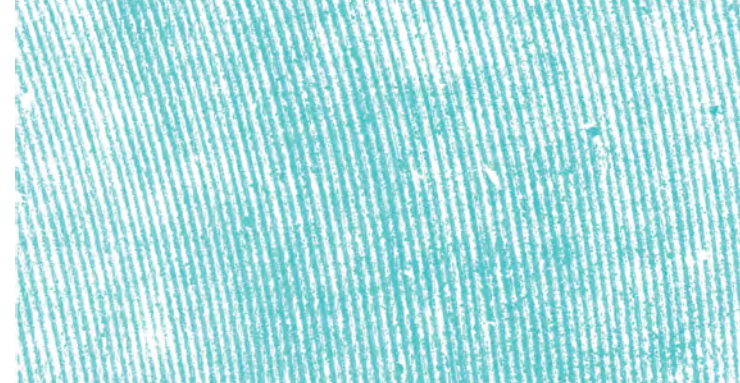
Cesar Pita  
*ceramics*



## PEEK A BOO

Stephanie Van Horn  
*digital photography*





## MOTHER, MOVING BUT STANDING STILL

Beizar Aradini

*hand embroidered, thread (series)*

## FAMILY TIES

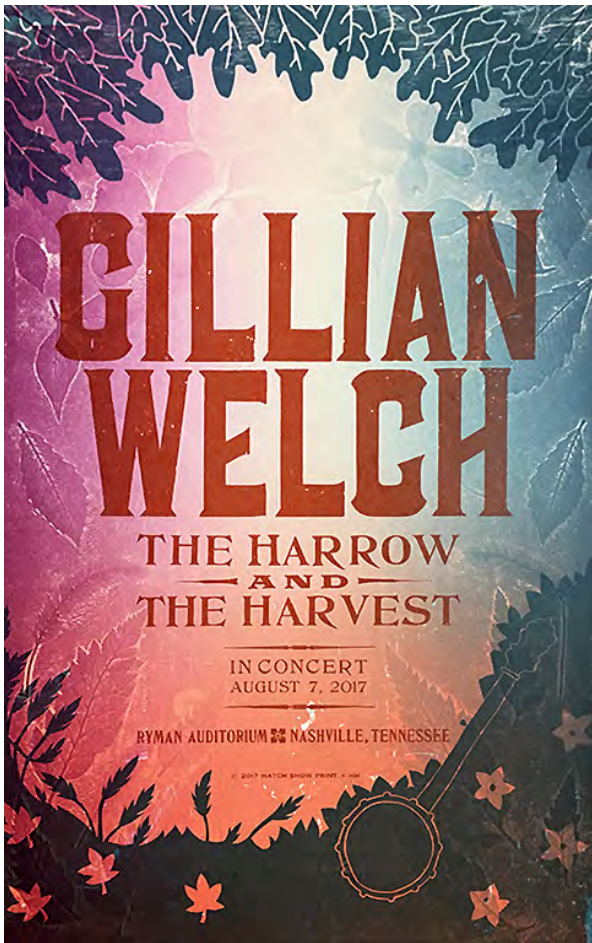
Beizar Aradini

*hand embroidered, thread (series)*



# FROM COLLAGE TO LEGENDARY PRINTSHOP: MTSU ALUMNA HEATHER MOULDER

Feature story by Destiny Seaton



*Gillian Welch Poster by Heather Moulder, Letterpress*

Every morning, when 30-year-old Heather M. Moulder steps into work, she is transported 138 years back in time.

Hatch Show Print has been cranking out letterpress posters since 1879 for a wide variety of artists and subjects ranging from Goo Goo Dolls to Dolly Parton to toilets. Moulder has the rewarding job of being a “designer-printer” for this retro-style printing company.

When a client comes to the massive store in downtown Nashville, Tenn., they bring their desired content to a designer such as Moulder. Next, the poster is designed, approved, and hand-printed with 100-year-old type and unique hand-carved images. The process can take up to three days.

One might wonder why, in 2017, someone would want to wait three days for a poster they could print in minutes from a computer. According to Moulder, in a digital age, “people crave handmade,” and the ability to “feel and smell the ink”

Moulder, from the small town of Woodbury, Tenn., learned the essential skills at MTSU needed to provide the people of Nashville with the original posters that they crave.



*Letterpress Piece by Heather Moulder*



*Letterpress Piece by Heather Moulder*

Moulder attended MTSU from Fall 2005 to Spring 2011. A graphic design major at first, she also decided to major in printmaking after doing her internship at Hatch Show Print. An internship at a place so well-known seemed like an unattainable goal for Moulder until she met Brad Vetter, a former employee.

Vetter was a visiting artist at MTSU who also happened to run the internship program at the legendary letterpress shop. He helped Moulder realize that an internship there was something that could be a reality. Once there, she discovered that the long-time manager of the shop was an MTSU alumnus, Jim Sherraden. Sherraden managed Hatch Show Print for over 30 years before handing over the job to Celene Aubry. He now works at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, where he works with Hatch Show Print History and prints in the archives department.

“people crave handmade,” and the ability to “feel and smell the ink”

Now, in an effort to sustain the decades long connection between the 138-year-old shop and her alma mater, Moulder encourages current MTSU art students to apply for internships at Hatch Show Print. The company has four to five internship sessions a year that she leads.

She loves working with the interns because she not only gets to help them create something new, she learns from them as well. New interns get to exchange unique perspectives and processes with each other while carving new images that will find a place among the thousands lining the walls from floor to ceiling.

Moulder enjoys seeing the work of fellow artists, which is why she was so fond of *Collage*. She loved flipping through the magazine, seeing her peers’ work in print and seeing her own



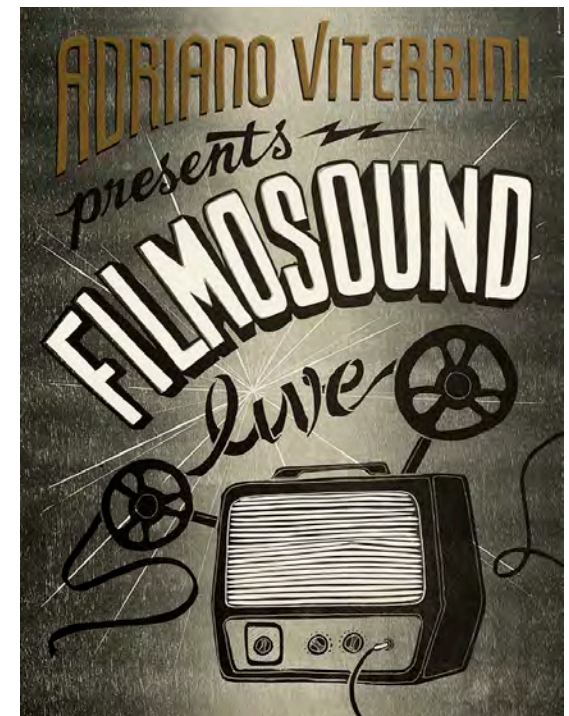
Heather Moulder at Hatch Show Print in Nashville, Tennessee. Photography by MTSU alumnus Dan Lewis.



Gillian Welch Poster by Heather Moulder, Letterpress

work accompanying theirs. To Moulder, being published in *Collage* was “something extra special” that gave her inspiration and helped hone her resume for future opportunities.

“Being published in *Collage* made making a resume way less intimidating,” Moulder said. As well as making posters for some of her favorite artists, such as Gillian Welch, Moulder is currently working on her own music career. She also just rescued an antique letterpress of her own, and she cannot wait to see what that has in store. As for the future, Moulder plans to stick around at Hatch Show Print, where she has over 100 years of inspiration surrounding her daily. ■



Letterpress Piece by Heather Moulder



Letterpress Pieces by Heather Moulder

# DISCOVERING SOUTHERN WRITER AND PHOTOGRAPHER EUDORA WELTY

Feature story by Megan Donelson

In January 2017, I was given the opportunity to work as a research assistant with the primary task of putting together an exhibition of rare books by Mississippi author Eudora Welty.



Painting of Eudora Welty by Mildred Nungester Wolfe, 1988

The materials for the exhibit would come from the collection of Dr. J. Lee Owen, a retired pediatrician who had practiced medicine in Jackson, Miss., for 50 years. Since Jackson was also Welty's home, Owen and his wife Sophia were familiar with Welty's work. For his birthday, Dr. Owen received a copy of Welty's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Optimist's Daughter*,

signed by the author to him. By Dr. Owen's own account, he was "hooked." He began to collect first editions and rare printings of Welty's work, many of them signed by the author herself.

My first step was to get to know Eudora Welty. I read Suzanne Marrs's biography of her, and dove into Welty's writing, devouring *The Optimist's Daughter*, *The Robber Bridegroom*, *One Writer's Beginnings*, and many of her short stories.



Photograph by Eudora Welty, "Mother and Child," 1935

Welty is known for her many literary awards, including the Pulitzer Prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the French Legion of Honor, among others. Most readers note that her characters come to life on the page. Welty attributed this to her keen power of observation, which was intricately related with her work as a photographer. She worked for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the early 1930s, and many of her most famous photographs were taken during her travels for the WPA.

One of Welty's greatest contributions to American literature was her philosophy on how place influences the writer. She objected to the way critics often characterized Southern writers' places of birth as a limitation. Welty had no use for these stereotypes and saw place as a tool that the writer could use to explore the universal concerns of all human beings: love, family, and the passage of time.

Based on what I had learned, I created an exhibit that showcased a variety of Welty's passions. It represented Welty in all of her roles: writer, teacher, traveler, philosopher, and beloved friend.

After developing an understanding of Welty's work and its significance, I familiarized myself with Dr. Owen's collection. I traveled to Welty's hometown with Honors College Associate Dean Philip E. Phillips, his wife Sharmila Patel, and Honors College Event Coordinator Susan Lyons.



Home of Eudora Welty, Jackson, Mississippi

We visited Welty's home on Pinehurst Street; the family moved into the house when Welty was sixteen years old, and she lived there for the rest of her life. We were honored to be given a private tour by Mary Alice White, one of Welty's nieces, who shared personal memories of her beloved aunt along the way. Walking through the house brought to life the mental images I



Left to Right: Dr. M. Kreyling, M. Donelson, Dr. J. Owen & Dr. P. Phillips

had formed of Welty. I could imagine her visiting with friends in the front room, shuffling through drafts on the dining room table, or rearranging the books that covered every flat surface to make room for visitors to sit down. The lavish garden bears a striking resemblance to one described in *The Optimist's Daughter*. We were in awe of the small details of Welty's everyday life that had been preserved, and we felt her presence throughout the house.

Another important stop was the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, where Mary Alice White and archivist Forrest Galey helped us select images to use in our exhibit, including family photos and Welty's famous photographs of rural Mississippians. Ms. Galey shared her own memories of Welty's sense of humor, and with each story Welty seemed less like a mythic figure of literary greatness and more like a friend. Before leaving, we visited Welty's grave, which is not far from her home. Her headstone is inscribed with a quotation from *The Optimist's Daughter*: For her life, any life, she had to believe, was nothing but the continuity of its love.

On the day the exhibit opened, I spoke briefly, giving the audience a general idea of the themes they would encounter and pointing out some highlights. Dr. Owen also told the story of how he began collecting Welty's works, and Vanderbilt professor Michael Kreyling spoke on Welty's literary career, focusing on the development of her persona as revealed in the many iconic portraits of her.

Through my work, I received a wonderful gift—learning about Eudora Welty's life and work. I hope to use what I have learned to design future events for students to learn more about great American writers. Eudora Welty was a gifted writer, but her greatest gift was the ability to see connections—between past and present, between her small town and global controversies, between herself and her readers. Her artistic vision and compassionate way of living is an example to us all. ■



Display from Eudora Welty Exhibit



## BIRTHDAY PARTY

StarShield Lortie

*poetry*

The day I turned ten  
my grandfather died  
arguing over a parking spot.

A heart attack someone said.  
I imagined his heart bursting out  
of his chest, beating him with bloody fists.

As the days drew out  
and the house filled with grieving relatives  
and the hushed tones of their voices, I missed him.

I didn't feel fear  
or wonder about my mortality,  
but it was clear everyone forgot my birthday.

The cake Gramma made  
sat unfinished on the kitchen counter  
as I was shuffled out of the way with the other kids.

An older cousin talked about souls,  
but couldn't answer my repeated questions  
about life, death, and where Grandpa really was.

I told him I wasn't afraid because  
a week earlier, in the early morning mist,  
I saw an angel in my room and I was at peace.



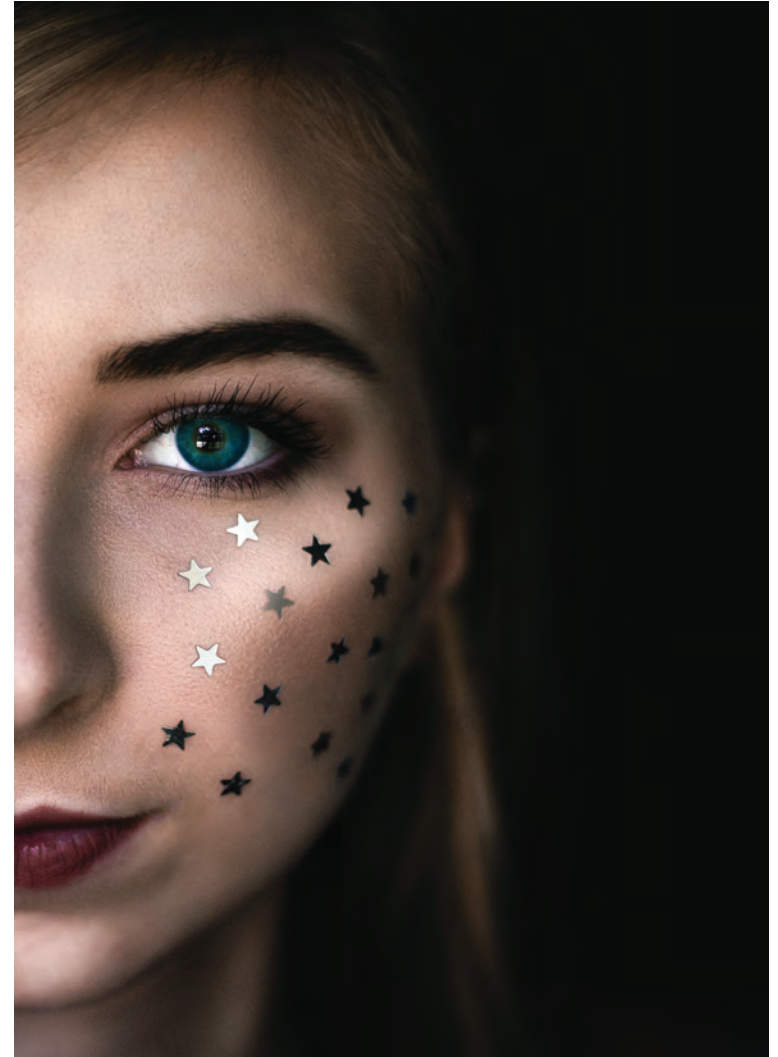
**UNTITLED**

Jessica Rose  
*oil paint, 11"x16"*

After that, the adults wouldn't  
let me shuffle down the line by the coffin  
at the funeral, so I stopped talking to everyone except him.

Later, Mom told me Grandpa  
was out shopping for my birthday present.  
I listened stoically, wondered if she wanted an apology.

The awkward silences between  
the rest of the family and I faded away  
but Gramma never celebrated my birthday again.



**STARS**

Lindsey Wilson  
*digital photography*



## ROBIN'S EGG SOAP

Lucy Haston

*poetry*

The quiet bathroom with the cold tiles  
and the rose-colored bathtub  
was a pristine little sanctuary  
for considerably younger me.

The tall cabinets held stiff white towels  
with a soft, soapy scent  
and comforting heaviness  
for those wrapped inside.

I'd explore each and every shallow drawer  
of matches and lipsticks  
in their tiny paper books  
and black plastic tubes.

My mother would knock, then come inside  
to find me rummaging,  
mouth rimmed with red  
like the stain of popsicles.

She'd wipe my mouth with a damp rag,  
then kneel before me  
to apply the palest pink  
and show me how to blot.

I'd watch her face and decipher the mouth  
that was sitting halfway  
between a grimace  
and an amused smirk.

Her shoulders shimmered from garden work,  
and her top soil manicure  
was a familiar sight,  
but different all the time.

Her sun spotted chest, pale, almost creping,  
uncannily resembled  
the Robin's egg soap  
in the silver soap dish.



## REINCARNATION

Morgan Ruth  
*alcohol marker*

## TEXAS

Chrissy Petrone

*poetry*

I've never been to Texas  
but I know how he feels.

I know when my arms reach  
around him, hands barely touch  
on firm, heavy shoulders.

The dark sweep of black curls  
tickles as we sleep, entangled, on  
Tennessee summer afternoons.

I've never been to Texas  
but when I hear him speak  
I do not think of cowboys, nor  
snake-wranglin' men

but of long lost, coffee colored gazes,  
the haze of dusty setting suns,  
and the barren, deserted lands,  
set ablaze by liquid copper,  
turquoise and gold.

I've never been to Texas  
but he sings with his best twang,  
drunk on love and the big blue moon.

George Strait on the air,  
"Well excuse me, but I think you've got my chair..."

I have never been to Texas.  
But I want to go.

To drive my way into him,  
soft and slow.

To call him home.



Q

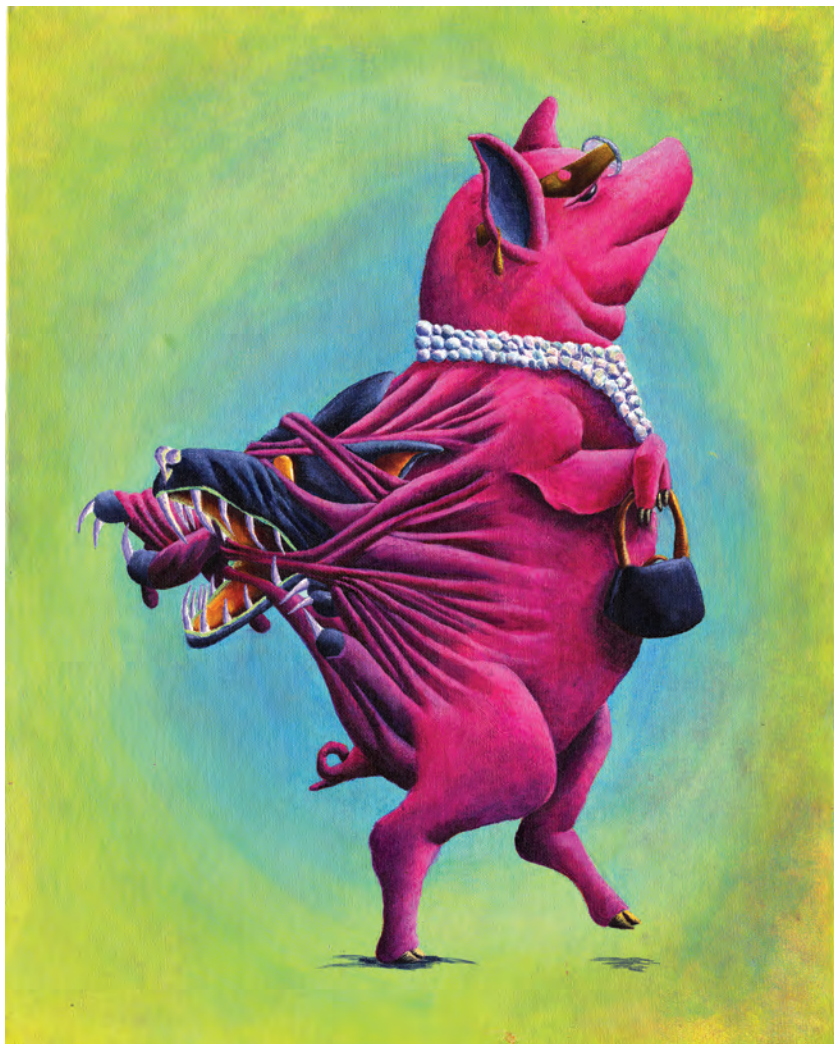
Cynthia Sullivan  
*oil on canvas, woven*

## BILL'S CHAIR

Meghan Kreger

*etching*





## BIG BAD WOLF

Iska Frosh

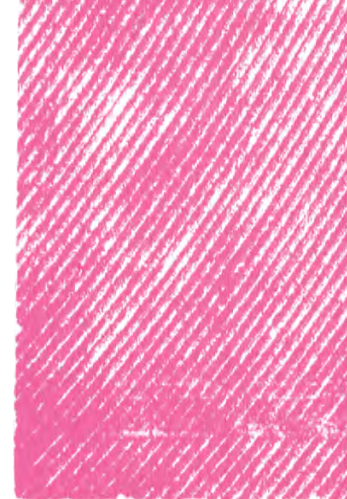
acrylic

## MICROCOSM

Olivia Powell

*poetry*

The perfume family lives in my mother's vanity.  
Seven-year-old me would visit every night  
that she would dry and comb my hair.  
I always had to fix them—bring  
them back to the right spot.  
Dad next to Mom next to  
sister brother & baby.  
Tallest to smallest.  
My mother must not—  
could not—have known that  
they were a family. Perhaps, thought  
they belonged scattered across the surface  
of the dark, hardwood world—alone, all of them.  
Or maybe, they all simply drifted apart on their own.



## OMMA (엄마)

Dana Tri

*oils on clay board*



## DEATH OF A VOICE

Mitchell Lawrence

*poetry*

A piece of me died today  
And though he met a peaceful end,  
There is a missing piece of me  
That I can never mend.

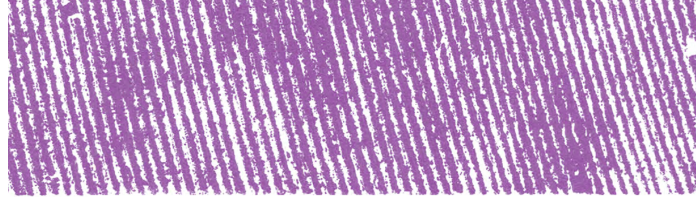
A voice that I grew up with,  
That healed my broken heart,  
Quietly extinguished  
Like a candle in the dark.

The background to the memories,  
All the many I hold dear,  
Changed forever in my mind  
By the voice—now lost—I hear.

A piece of me I never knew  
And a piece that never knew me,  
Vanished from this Earth  
Nevermore to sing or be.

In days there'll be a funeral,  
Where I and a million more  
Will bury the voice that healed our souls  
The days that they were sore.

Though I lost a piece of me,  
His music will remain.  
And thankfully I can call on it  
When I'll need him again.



## MANDUCA SEXTA

Josie Dowd

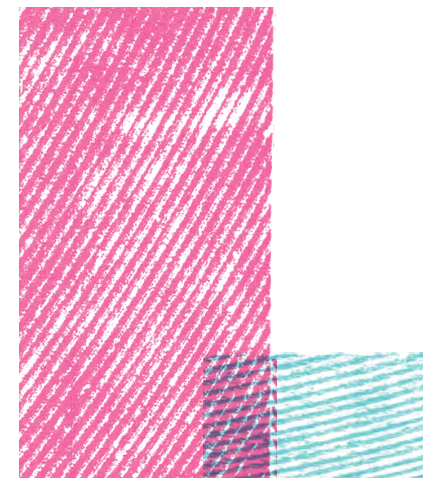
*linoleum block print, printmaking*



## HIS WAR PAINT

Brooke Adams

*digital photography*

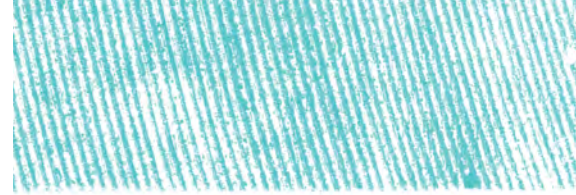




## BEHIND THE ROPES

Ambre Rogue

*digital photography*



## VIKINGS

Christopher Banyai

*pen and ink*





## WAITING ON MR. DARCY

Haydin Oechsle

*digital photography*

## ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WATSON

Sammye Sanford

*digital photography*



## HALF AND HALF

Anthony Bukengolts

*digital photography*





## CONTAINED LILY POND

Whitney Wilkerson

wood block print



## MOTHER SUN

Virginia Holmes

acrylic

## CONFESSIONS OF A VACATIONING BINGE DRINKER

Chrissy Petrone

poetry

I miss getting drunk  
in the woods,  
trees casting reaching fingers  
in the shadows of roasting fire, aiming  
to dip branch tips into milky-star patterns.  
All along, katydids  
sing me their desperate love songs.  
And we talk about how small,  
we all  
are.

But age  
does  
that funny  
thing, changes  
memories—  
making the  
mundane  
endearing, so  
maybe,  
it's not the  
getting drunk  
I miss.

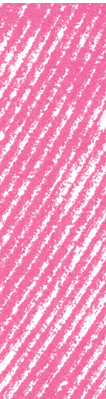
Or perhaps  
It's the 'we'  
who are  
so small  
and yet  
still we lose touch  
not talking in years,  
disappearing just like  
katydids  
when summer  
ends.

I miss getting drunk  
on the patio of an empty bar  
in San Diego,  
in October.  
With the deep blush of the setting sun  
filtering through my lashes,  
legs crossing with little grace,  
shaking my head with a grin, at  
a man, whom I've never loved, and he's  
watching me with the moon caught in his eyes.

I miss getting drunk  
on the beach,  
taking a swig of warm beer,  
thigh-high waves make  
gentle passes,  
hiding swaying intoxication.  
Sand army crawling into dark body corners.  
Laughing as my skin reddens,  
peels, browns  
to a delicious crisp.

Maybe,  
it's that  
moon-eyed man  
in San Diego  
looking at me  
like  
I am God.

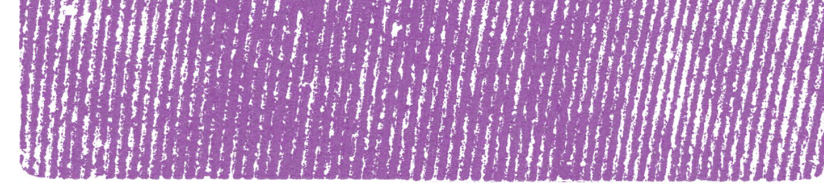
Or maybe  
at least, I think,  
I just  
miss  
days on the beach  
under  
a sun hotter  
than  
mine.





**4 PM**

Martin Davies  
*digital photography*



## ARIZONA SUMMER SUN

Rhane Craun

*poetry*

Mom and dad used to love dancing.  
They loved it so much the floors would shake,  
hooting and hollering pierced through drywall,  
and I would lie awake, happy for mom and dad.

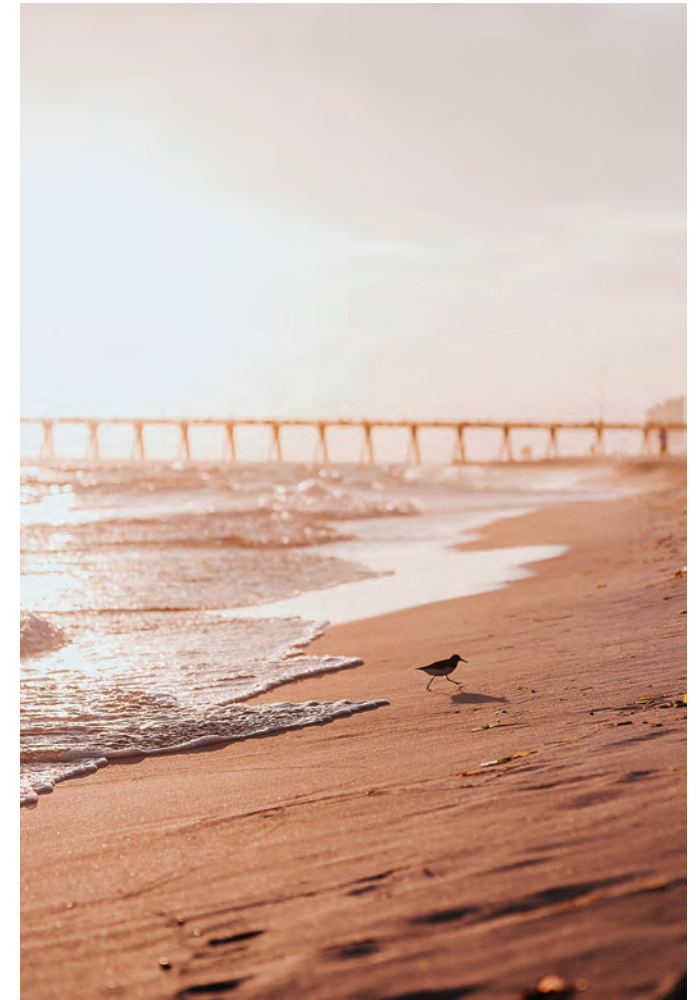
Each evening was an unchanging routine—  
tucked into bed with a kiss from mother,  
the door closes, the lights go out,  
lulled by the sound of lovers dancing.

Mom would get up early—dad, always late.  
She would clean the house before work,  
broken glass and household goods strewn about,  
relics of excitement from the night before.

I remember one particular morning  
finding Jesus broken before me,  
He and His cross removed from the wall,  
shattered, in a thousand pieces on the floor.

Mom didn't clean the house that morning.  
She told me she loved me and left the house early,  
out into the Arizona summer sun,  
wearing a charcoal, wool turtleneck.

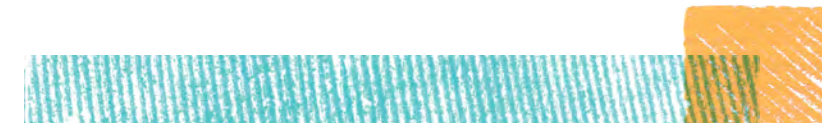
Dad left a few days later and didn't come back,  
Mom wore turtle-necks for a few weeks more,  
and at night there was no more sound of dancing.  
Just a solemn silence to keep me up at night.



## BEACH BIRD

Lindsey Wilson

*digital photography*





## UNTITLED

Olivia Reidl

*india ink, watercolor, and technical pens*

## GRAVEYARD OF DREAMS

Sammye Sanford

*digital photography*



## UNCONTAINED

Karlie Tankersley

*oil on canvas, 5' x 3'*





## THE FLYING TRAPEZE

Emily James

*watercolors and bleach on watercolor paper*



## UNHAPPY ENDING

Sarah Rodriguez

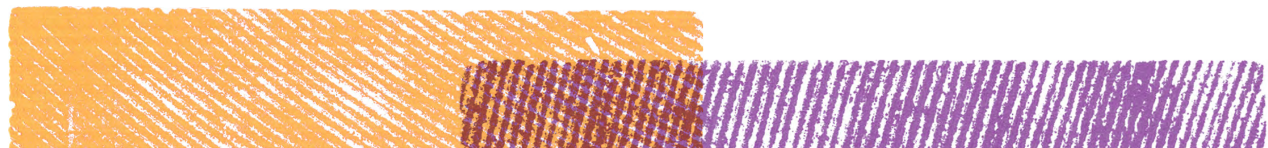
*film photography*



## VICTROLA

Sarah Rodriguez

*film photography*







## EPITHETS

Rachel Lingerfelt

*poetry*

I had this feeling today  
Like I was being watched by you the way you used to  
Sit and stare at me  
Smiling cleverly like I knew the joke you made

On the edge of turning around to see you  
I remembered that it wasn't worth the worry  
I put my head down and closed my eyes  
I cried  
But not like I used to

I counted the footsteps away from me  
One two three four  
Til forty-six and you never looked back once  
I counted the words to a song that sings of you  
So many  
Barely a refuge

Once in the middle of trying to say I loved you  
I choked on the absence I felt in breaths  
I was lost in your  
Something  
Your sometimes  
Your somehow  
Saying I loved you to hear a coughed-up reply

Half-lit smoke inhalation  
Fingernails digging into my palms  
Driving with the windows down screaming to the voicemail  
It's been months  
Why aren't you over it  
Why can't it just be easier  
Why do I keep falling back

I remember the last day  
As clearly as the first  
Both are burned into my memory for this lifetime  
I remember being told about the sadness  
That lingers in your bed for months  
It never occurred to me that it was not just a feeling

## TIMING

Brooke Fitzwater

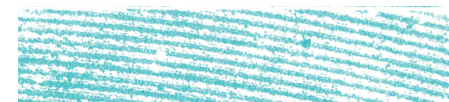
*digital photography*



## WHISPER OF A COMPOSISCAN

Jessica Byerly

*scan of various materials, digital photography*

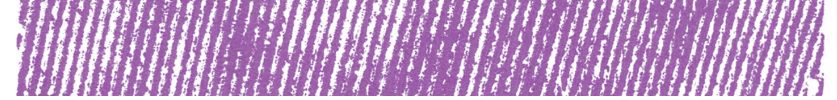




## POLITICAL JUDGEMENTS

Ahib Hauter

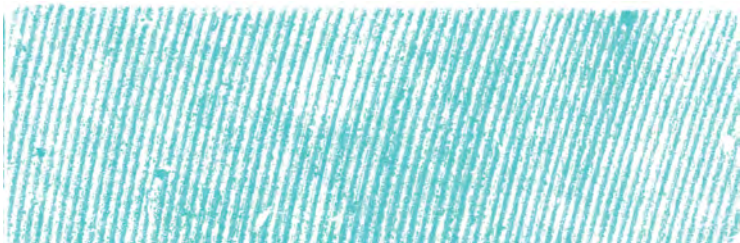
oil on canvas



## AFRO-MILLENNIALS "EMPOWERMENT"

Anthony Alexander

digital photography





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## MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building  
1737 Blue Raider Drive  
Room 224. Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

## ABOUT COLLAGE

*Collage* is a biannual publication of the Middle Tennessee State University Honors College. All submissions are reviewed anonymously and selected by a student editorial staff. The materials published by *Collage* do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the *Collage* staff, Honors College, MTSU student body, staff, or administrators. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized in any form without written permission from the editor or advisor of *Collage*. Inquiries should be addressed to *Collage*, Middle Tennessee State University, 1301 East Main Street, Box 267, Murfreesboro, TN, 37132.

## POLICY STATEMENT

*Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression* is an arts and literary magazine featuring submitted work chosen by a volunteer staff in a blind grading process. The staff attempts to choose the best work without regard for theme or authorship. Although *Collage* is a publication of the University Honors College, staff members and submitters are not required to be Honors students. Staff members are selected each semester from a pool of applicants and must have at least a 3.0 GPA and two recommendations.

Middle Tennessee State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. See our full policy at [www.mtsu.edu/titleix](http://www.mtsu.edu/titleix).

## SUBMIT TO COLLAGE

*Collage* accepts submissions year-round. Submission forms and guidelines are available at [mtsu.edu/collage/](http://mtsu.edu/collage/). Creative work, such as art, photography, short stories, essays, short plays, song lyrics, and poetry, may be submitted digitally to [mtsu.edu/collage/](http://mtsu.edu/collage/) or may be turned in at the *Collage* office, Honors 224, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Submissions are accepted from MTSU students and recent graduates.

## CREATIVE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Each semester, four submissions receive Creative Expression Awards, one from each major category: art, photography, poetry, and prose. Literature winners receive the Martha Hixon Creative Expression Award, and visual winners receive the Lon Nuell Creative Expression Award. Winners receive \$50 awards.



### FAMILY TIES SERIES

Beizar Aradini



### QUINTESSENCE

Haydin Oechsle



### LYNCHING SELFIE

StarShield Lortie



### SOMETHING NOTHING COFFEE

Joshua Tilton

## COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARDS

### Gold Medalist Certificates

2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017

### Silver Crown Awards

2007, 2008, and 2011

### Gold Crown Awards

2012, 2013, and 2015

## PRODUCTION

### Technology

Adobe InDesign CC | Adobe Illustrator CC  
Adobe Photoshop CC | Apple Macintosh Platform  
Windows Platform

### Typography

Futura Std. | Adobe Garamond Pro

### Paper

100 lb. Athens Silk Cover | 80 lb. Athens Silk Text

### Binding

Saddle Stitch

### Printing

Falcon Press of Nashville, Tennessee printed approximately 2,000 copies of *Collage*.

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**MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

*collage*  
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY