Shape Up  •  Painting 1  •  Cassondra Kiley
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by the Students and Staff of
Monroe County Community College

Front Cover Photograph: Blue Tiger • Painting 1 • Claire Long
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This is the twenty-ninth year we have published the creative efforts of our students and staff.

We sincerely appreciate the excellent work submitted this year; each entry has received careful consideration. The editors are extremely grateful to Rachel Eagle, Joe Verkennes, Kari Jenkins and Terry Telfer for their invaluable assistance. Without their diligence and skills, there would be no magazine.

We are already gathering material for our next issue. If you are a student or member of the staff of Monroe County Community College and would like to have your artwork included in our next issue, please submit your material to Ted Vassar.

Creative writing may be submitted electronically to images@monroeccc.edu.

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2.

(there it is) Awake. Consciousness superseding deception. Brisk water lapping at my stomach. My ribs climb out of the river’s reach. Discomfort bullies revelation. Discouraged I retreat to the brush, familiarity. A stream glistens, boasting creatures and their kingdoms. I teeter beside the quickening stream until the maternal river deafens me. I have been wooed. (there it is) Awake. Consciousness superseding deception. Brisk water lapping at my stomach…

*Josh Cappuccilli
Syllables
It’s all a matter
of counting and recounting
syllables. Each placed
strategically,
with the care of tucking in
a newborn baby.

Fool Me Once
They say everything
is going to be okay,
but am I naïve
enough to believe them? They’ve
lied to me once, why not twice?

Windowsill Cactus
Tiny
Little Cactus
wants to know what love is.
Who will show him? Who will be brave
enough?

* Alee Hill
VERB IN NEED OF TUNE

To see her smile, to catch but a glimpse
How to describe when words do not exist the feeling being
To see the focus, to taste that intensity
How to explain when I do not understand the feeling being
To smell the vapors, to breath proximity
How to decipher, when signals are so very many, so subtle
To smell the thoughts, the furrowed brow
How to share those struggles, are the same pages being read
To feel her air, touch the denim or sleeve
How to say what is there, are they the same thoughts to out
To feel her gaze, forces focus and work
How to savor the distraction, the same that progress make
To taste her whisper, gives welcome break
How to work when she is not here, glance at the book, again
To taste the longing, smile at new flashing number

* Anonymous

Girl with the Checkered Hair • Illustration Techniques • Allison Presson
THE WINDOW

The cream colored tapestry, frayed, with an impression of worn, every memory stricken fiber enriched by the reminiscent of yesterdays past; decorated by the inevitable hand of aging, left only defined by a vast memory. A metamorphosis begins, soaring through perilous dimensions of concaving channels, a twisted web of ideologies, the overload of information and personal encounters, -all that is my conscious. The stubborn, obstruct chambers of the mind, never impeding, never ceasing to surrender with its unwavering allegiance to remain in limbo, oh perpetual transition. The urge to implode, under self-annihilation, is compromising the sanctity of my core. So encumbered with youth, the breath of life heaves through my system on its infinite travels. She brings juvenescence galore; a succulent rose at blossom, with an infancy running deep. In only a moment’s time, she is branded by integral maturity; finely encrusted by a faint shade of burnt orange in color, left wilting; inconsequential idle, at the gape of the room. Remaining at a standstill in time, on the verge of retirement burrowing into a symphony of life evoke. The gentle breeze brought upon by the weeping willow, causes her to hinge in subtle unity, side to side, like clockwork in never ending harmony. The repetition, the repetition, the repetition, so routine, an equivalence to everyday life. An unforeseen array of sunshine emerges from beyond the forestation unraveling, seeping through the holes a-many that seem to mimic grandmother’s doilies. Life with the fragile, delicate chemistry of grandmother’s drapery, cannot lead us to fear time, in its entire splendor.

The drapery so endow, houses the family crest, ‘the window’. The window into our lives, a window into our past, perhaps the window into all that is and ever will be. I spent many of hours peering into the face of memories past. The visions of birthday parties, family gatherings, and everyday hurrahs dance amidst my eyes in utter vivacity. Karaoke, snowball fights, ludicrous antics flood my mind, full capacity. I connect with nature; observe the fauna and flora, wildlife free to gaze among our acres. Standing back, inspecting the garden my father and I had tended to so carefully, with blood, sweat and tears, and maybe a few too many carbonated beverages. The moments we spent together were among some of my most treasured. I ponder on through my walk of remembrance, father harvesting cucumbers for his pickling ventures, mom and brother traipsing through the brush, with a smile so true. The scent of cottonwood and crabapples awaken my senses, with an aroma of familiarity. These memories have long since faded, adolescence has departed, and transformed to adulthood. We mustn’t fear the sands of time, growth is essential, may we forever evolve. Memories are not washed away; they remain forever impressed within that of ‘the window.’

* Danielle Brow
Flower Composition # 2 • Watercolor 2 • Cheyenne Schmidt

Bottle Composition • Painting 1 • Diane Billau
GOODBYE TO WARMTH

You put flowers down on the frost bitten ground.
    You don’t know what else to do.
    There’s nothing else you can do.

You want to forget about them because it hurts too much to remember.

You want to forget the way breakfast was cooked every Saturday morning.
    Bacon sizzling in the pan and hot chocolate being prepared.
    Purple and green bendy straws eagerly awaiting to be used.
You want to forget trips to the park to collect pinecones for fires.
You want to forget adventures to the pumpkin patch on brisk October afternoons.
You want to forget the pineapple upside down cakes and rhubarb pies.

You want to forget it all.
    But can you?
    The icy flowers resting on the ground won’t allow you to.

* Alee Hill
Macro Composition • 2-D Design • Katherine McDonald

Pully Interpretation • Art Fundamentals • David Parrott
FREE FALL

The colors and the rocks of the Grand Canyon were beautiful from that angle. It was something about seeing them from above that really was indescribable. And the way the canyon bottom seemed to be getting bigger and bigger? Breathtaking. I was so close to the bottom that I could practically touch it. It felt like I was flying, see, and I was real daring and I kept swooping in and out of the canyon. It was death-defying stuff.

I wake up confused, and I feel like death. My bed is drenched in sweat. Mom refuses to turn the air on, so I suffer on miserably hot nights. And I was having such a nice dream about the Grand Canyon, too. I was probably dreaming about the Grand Canyon because my bedroom’s roughly the same temperature as an Arizona tourist attraction. I’ve never had that dream before, but I like it. I’ve always loved the Grand Canyon. I roll over onto my back and push sweaty hair off my forehead. I kick the blankets off and stare at my ceiling until I eventually drift off to sleep again.

The colors and the rocks of the Grand Canyon were beautiful from that angle. It was something about seeing them from above that really was indescribable….

I wake up confused again. I’m beginning to wonder if it’s the heat or the dreams that are making me sweat. I’ve been having this Grand Canyon dream for the past couple weeks, which is weird because I’ve never had a recurring dream before. All I do in my dream is check out the Grand Canyon, and it’s beautiful, so I’m not really complaining. The way the sun bounces off the rocks makes me want to sing. But I do find it curious that I’m having a recurring dream about the Grand Canyon. I thought recurring dreams were more like nightmares; I thought they were supposed to warn me of an impending doom, make me realize something before it’s too late. I just can’t make this dream out to be a nightmare, besides the fact that I keep waking up sweaty.

This dream is starting to freak me out. Every time I doze off in class, Grand Canyon. Every time I take a nap, Grand Canyon. Every time I go to bed at night, Grand Canyon. This dream is persistent. But, unfortunately, the body needs sleep, and I’m in my room, and my bed looks so tempting. My eyes are hurting me I’m so tired. What could a short nap harm?

The colors and the rocks of the Grand Canyon are beautiful from this angle. It’s something about seeing them from above that really is indescribable. And the way the canyon bottom seems to be getting bigger and bigger?
Breathtaking. I’m so close to the bottom that I can practically touch it. The wind is rushing through my hair, forcing adrenalin to pump through me. My clothes billow against my body. But why wasn’t I flying? I looked left, right, up, down. The ample amount of free fall space is alarming. I flapped my arms hoping they would carry me to safety. The ground is moving closer to me. It’s like a fisherman has cast his line and was rapidly pulling me towards him. I flap my arms harder. Although it’s a dream, I can’t wake up. It’s not like any dream I’ve had before. This is a different state of consciousness. My thoughts are blurry, like I’m seeing them through a frosted glass. Although it won’t help, I scream. My world slows for a brief moment; then I strike the ground, full force.

I woke up dead.

You know the dreams you have where you’re falling from high up, and just before you collide with the ground you wake up with a start? Yeah? Me too. But I’ve heard that if you don’t startle yourself awake before you hit the ground, you die. You die in your dreams, you die in real life. And that’s what happened to me; it is true what they say. I woke up too late. Moments after I hit the ground, I woke up. Dead. It’s like my body just accepted it, and it wouldn’t allow me to fight back. Then there was the black. The black I woke up to was different than sleep black, different in a way that is difficult to explain. All I can say is that I’d never seen anything that black before. It was unsettling.

In retrospect, the recurring Grand Canyon dream should have been a warning. I later found out that recurring dreams hold an urgent, underlying message that demands to be understood.

I’d been struggling with depression, and the only escape I could think of was suicide. Suicide, my mind would whisper in its sweet voice, no one would miss you anyway. I battled with myself for ages. I’d catch myself looking up local gun shops on the web, realize what I was doing, and immediately clear my search history. I was scared. I didn’t want to die, but some sinister part of me wanted me dead. It was hard fighting with myself; there was no escape. The panic I was feeling was overwhelming. I tried therapy, drugs, helplines, but nothing really ever took the sinister away. Then the dreams started. Grand Canyon, Grand Canyon, Grand Canyon. Kill yourself, kill yourself, kill yourself, was what my dreams were really telling me. My mind wanted me dead, but I was refusing to sink into its depths. So my mind increased its attack. If I wouldn’t kill myself, it’d do the job for me. My mind created a serene scenario. And as soon as my guard was down, it pitched me off the edge of the Grand Canyon. I hit the ground in my dream, and died. There was nothing I could do about it. The urgent, underlying message that demanded to be understood was understood. My mind wanted me dead, and it won.

I woke up dead.

• Alee Hill
TWO SCENES

Scene 1.
(She was waiting too I suppose) The sanctuary is populated sparsely, just enough to form about a dozen small circles. I know where I'll find her; she's been waiting without fault for five years. She knew. My obvious flirtation...I steal her gaze from afar, and my lungs ...burn. The congregates buzz and float. Spirits laughing, drinking, I will not give her gaze back. Red, gold, colors I have become impatient for. Purple, amber, my throat ...burns. She giggles, watching me, listening to believers wild joke, only out of courtesy she does hand my journey my focus. A shortening chasm separates her and I. Jokes, wit, banter...entertainment. These patrons divide as my road intersects theirs, until I rest my nose in her locks and whisper...The spirits eyes flash with excitement, and the church grows louder with prosperity as my wife and I exchange pleasantries. Her fingers between mine...my facilities cool with relaxation.

Scene 2.
(Her room is not the same) I call it her room because she furnished it...picked out the drapes, color. I just had the pleasure of sharing. I've always been a light sleeper. She woke me up...her hair taunting my forehead, or her nose could have a slight whistle...Sometimes I could feel her nose warming my eyelids, the ridge of my nose. I tried our whole lives to bring her peanut butter on toast and coffee. I would climb without breaking gaze, and as soon as I lifted my last leg off our bed, my body suspended by my three unoccupied limbs, one of her eyes catches me, the other still buried in linen. A playful eye. An eye that says, “I’ve got you”. I race and I kiss that eye. I squeeze up beside my wife, pull the comforter over our shoulders, and I, exhale...pressed against her, arms intertwined...my chin tickled by my love’s air. My golden-haired love. I watch her curve as the tide rolls in, following locks to shoulders, to waist, to hips, to legs, to toes. She is flawless and flaw full. And I, in this moment, have lived.

* Josh Cappuccilli
FRUSTRATIONS, JUST FOR FUN

Toilet paper with insufficient tensile resolve  
Yummy food that later causes room to mood  
A snowy day that also keeps friends away  
Time to think but no willpower to link  
A wonderful question without any answer  
Seeing the answer but no words to express  
A resounding smile painfully without a voice  
Catching the laugh but no air to breathe it in

GROUND BREAKING

Have you seen what they have done?  
they are building  
large structures of cement and steel  
on the place where we used to park  
now we can never return to  
the same place  
--to relive old memories…  
ignite a lingering flame  
that seems unable to  
be extinguished  
might there be a shadow  
of us kissing in this new building  
will they say it  
is haunted?

* Anonymous  
* Barbara A. Mauter
Spotlight Interpretation • Art Fundamentals • Lisa Moore
YESTERDAY’S END

I took my first steps into this new world, an empty, cold, dead world. Slowly opening the door, being blinded by the brightness. All white, all snow for miles. All you saw was white. Squinting my eyes from the brightness burning, I place my right foot ever so lightly onto the snow. I pulled my foot back off of the snow as quickly as possible. The bone-chilling, wet snow felt like needles, burning hot needles on my skin. I took in a deep breath, braced myself and stepped into the burning snow. Every step more painful than the last. Arms wrapped around my body to keep warm. Slowly making my way away from the spaceship I was on for many countless years. The air took my breath away. Like it was freezing my lungs shut. I stopped. I looked up. This was not the world I remembered. There was nothing in the sky. It was just blue. No clouds, no birds, nothing in the skyline. I look down and spot something. Only noticeable because it wasn’t white. I reach down to pick it up. It’s soft. Kind of warm. It smelled like grandmother’s house. When she was baking her homemade bread. I lift it up to my mouth to taste it, then all of a sudden sirens started beaming through the sky. Through my eardrums. So loud I couldn’t even hear my own thoughts. The ground started shaking and seemed like it was crumbling underneath my feet. I look up as the sky seems to dim. All I could see was military-like planes zooming across the skies. With sound waves so powerful it knocked me to the ground. I just laid there, looking up. Thinking “this isn’t my world…”

* Madyson Rayle
MISSING PERSON

I’m five years old and I’m told to go to bed, but I’m just not tired. I just want to stay up and have some fun, so I start to jump on the bed and while doing so my imagination runs wild. I become a bird soaring through the sky watching everyone walk around doing their ordinary everyday tasks, and the whole time no one even knows I’m above them watching.

While flying I hear a sound, but I can’t comprehend what this sound is. It is constant and it’s disrupting my ability to stay focused on flying. I try to stay focused, but as hard as I try I can’t stay in my dream. Suddenly, I come out of it to find that the sound is my mother yelling at me to go to sleep.

While she’s yelling, she tells me to go to bed or she’s going to leave and never come back. But I don’t go to bed. I watch her walk out the door and drive away. Minutes go by and eventually I see the car pull up into the driveway. When she walks back into the house she looks at me and says, “Go to bed or the next time will be for real.”

That’s when I wake up and realize that I was not sleeping or dreaming. I was remembering a past childhood experience. That was the last time I saw my mother. The pain of her being absent in my life as a child collides all over again. Then I start having that feeling again, that feeling that it’s my fault that she left. All I had to do was go to sleep.

* John Dotson
PHOTOSHOP

I take photographs and photoshop the fetishes that might blueball post arrival, cut surnames and paste sinkholes in their place, burn sunsets with Pall Mall cigarettes and abandon them on trash littered cement, like that stone she plucked at random from the shore of Lake Erie, the one I’ve kept tucked like a dick in a desk drawer atop a condom, or that mixtape, a cutup oroborus distorted to say when there is no real danger feeling scared is fun and it was, but I must have celebrated shackles because she became that condom anchored under that rock:

wrapped

unrealized. So I photoshop farther, faster, crop in clean sheets where once there was coital matter—the speckles of apparition on the lense cleansed with the flare of a Bic flick kindled on the ass of some missed chance, and others addressed in swift clicks that resemble undoing a wedding dress drenched in paint thinner and precum, sandwiched under bedding and prenups. I take photoshop and photograph the fetishes to blueball pre departure, so the divorce is more bondage, less torture.

* Nicholas Vanderpool
TRUSTING IN YOU

The world that I live in seems to crumble
Every time I try to stand tall... I stumble
Nothing seems to make sense
The situations around me remain intense
I lift my hands up in the air
Bow my head, close my eyes
And mumble a little prayer
“Father God, I know you’re there
You hear me when I call
Sometimes I often wonder
If you are there at all
But your word reminds me
That you see and know everything
Sitting on your golden throne
Listening
I’m giving my burdens to you
For I know not
What to do
Besides I know
You will see me through
Because you always do.”
Amen.

* Christina Pippens
Industrial Juxtaposition  •  Watercolor  •  Ted Vassar

Skull  •  Drawing 1  •  Sun Roh
HAIKU OF FOUR SO AS NOT TO BORE

Haiku for Butterfly of Green
Fates reminding me
Life is seldom fair for love
My flower patient

Haiku of Grip
Symmetrical grip
Pausing when the edge comes near
Giving in, joyous

Haiku of Give
Angle valley temple
Reach tend beautiful garden
The gift of giving

Haiku of future Gift
See hear you, no touch
The best that can be for now
Someday, touch smell love

* Anonymous
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