



manuscript 2014

1947

foreward

With this issue of *Manuscript* a new publication is launched on the Bucknell University campus in Wilkes-Barre. Those who have been responsible for its coming into being earnestly hope that through your efforts and the efforts of those who come after you this magazine will develop into a college tradition of which we may all be proud.

The Editors

mission

statement

The Manuscript Society of Wilkes University has been publishing its creative written and visual art magazine, The Manuscript, continuously since 1947. Currently, the student-led editorial staff publishes one issue per year, and copies are complimentary.

In preparation for a career in editing, publishing, or creative writing, any Wilkes student is welcome to submit to or work on the editorial board of the Manuscript Society and critique a variety of creative pieces, including visual art, from the Wilkes faculty, staff, students, and alumni. This process includes creative work-shopping, copyediting, and layout.

Wilkes students may elect to enroll in ENG 190B, Projects in Writing: Manuscript, for one (1) credit of coursework. Meetings are held during club hours each semester. Monthly campus poetry readings are open to the Wilkes community and greater public. The end product is a published, award-winning magazine.

executive editor
Miranda Baur

assistant editor
Gabby Zawacki

copy editor
Cierra Humphrey

members
John Carroll
James Jaskolka
Elizabeth Kura
Emily Leonick
Victoria Rendina
Sarah Simonovich
Melissa Thorne

faculty advisors
Dr. Mischelle Anthony
Dr. Sean Kelly

staff

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Dillynn: A Composite

John Carroll

The heavy smells of multiple dogs and too much hair product hang in the air, the queer feeling of a corduroy couch rubs against my skin, and my arm starts to tingle not from excitement but from lack of blood-flow. My hands are searching his body for something, anything to hold on to, but I know where not to look. His hair gets in my mouth and I start to sputter, laughing. We slide onto the floor in melting giggles that creep up the empty stairs. I don't remember what I'm on. I remember that it makes me nauseous the next morning.

I'm pacing back and forth, shouting over a counter covered in pizzas as Lu puts another in the oven and her father turns up the volume on his headset and sings along in Italian. I talk about baseball bats and vehicular homicide – my face has been flush for hours and I feel light-headed. He says I'm a rapist, and people believe him – no one I know, but people who know who I am and who talk. I'm afraid. I'm afraid because I start to believe him.

We roll around on the floor, hands all over each other's bodies, our giggles reaching a fever-pitch, until, finally, my big-spoon hands start to move downward, down past boundaries and mental picket lines, down past heart-pounding, palm-sweating nerves and into scared-shitless no-going-back mortal-sin territory. I find it and my heart stops. We aren't giggling anymore. He says something and his voice is deeper than I've ever heard. It sounds right. My hand moves like I'm alone in my room and thirteen again. His hand reaches back and moves, without trepidation, to me, and my breath catches in my chest.

We're sitting in the courtroom waiting for the bailiff to find his public defender, making inappropriate jokes and laughing quietly, breathlessly, with the other law-breakers. We sit in the back with those that are too cool to be scared of the future. I think this is where the kids who sat at the back of the busses and the classrooms were always headed. We rise as the judge enters and I smile and wave. I lean over and explain in church-like whispers – he's a friend of my mom's. Though she has no idea where I am, I'm hoping for some of that favoritism I hear so much about in the papers. The judge sees me, and smiles briefly – politely. He gets probation. He would have done, anyway. It was just a K-mart.

My breathing hasn't started yet, but his hand has. He's talking, but I can't hear him over the screaming in my head – it's my mother's voice: you want to fuck men? You want to go out and fuck men! Then go; get out! It's the sound of the bat my father swung, shattering wooden furniture frames. It's my brother's voice through the payphone outside the bar: hesitant and embarrassed, thinking Judaen thoughts and wishing that my parents could have been satisfied with one son. It's my voice, heavy with snot and tears: prayers and verses from long forgotten books that do not read like poetry. It's doubt, fear, hatred: the voice of god transcending language and speaking directly to my soul. My body finally responds and I wrench myself from him, twisting awkwardly as my stomach implodes into a thousand box-knots. My mouth is moving, but the screaming still drowns out everything else and I do not know what I'm saying – it feels like I'm slurring. I button my pants and search the couch for lost car keys. He stays lying on the floor, as if he hasn't noticed that I've moved yet – frozen in anticipation and confusion.

My phone is ringing, and as I answer it we exchange over-dramatic "Guuurrrllll!" 's. He tells me about a new boy he met at a party: how gorgeous he is, how kind, how funny, and how he doesn't know he's into guys yet. We laugh at ourselves, and catch up over the small things, the stupid things. I don't ask him if he's been paying his court fees – because I know he hasn't. He doesn't ask me if I'm seeing anyone – because he knows I'm not. He tells me about his friends, and I tell him about mine – people we've met but who know us only in half-truths and partial stories. It's our own kind of closeted life – as if we didn't get enough the first time around. Though he says he never was in the closet – that there wasn't a closet big enough to hide his gay ass (paraphrasing). I'm not sure if I've ever really left mine.

I find my keys and start for the door. "Goodbye," I say, without looking back. He says goodbye, and I hear him.

We're at the park, and it's well-past midnight. Destiny is playing music from her phone and dancing with her girlfriend. The sky is absolutely clear and a hundred-thousand summer stars watch as I reach out my hand, inviting him to join me. He takes it and we pretend to waltz around the pavement to some Melissa Etheridge sounding crap that I'm convinced not even dykes really like. He rests his head against my chest, and I rest mine on his hair, the smell of dogs and too-much product irritates my nose. He asks "why do the best things always happen with the wrong people?" but I don't think he's talking to me.

Gabby Zawacki



Strawberry Fields Forever

downpour

Victoria Rendina

i crave your love
like a thunderstorm to drought
as it seeps through
the barren cracks of
my hardened soul.

let me blossom once
again with bursts
of life; growing roots
settled in my feet and
buds sprouting out

through my skull.
my heart is parched for
your affection, please

help me grow
help me grow
help me feel.

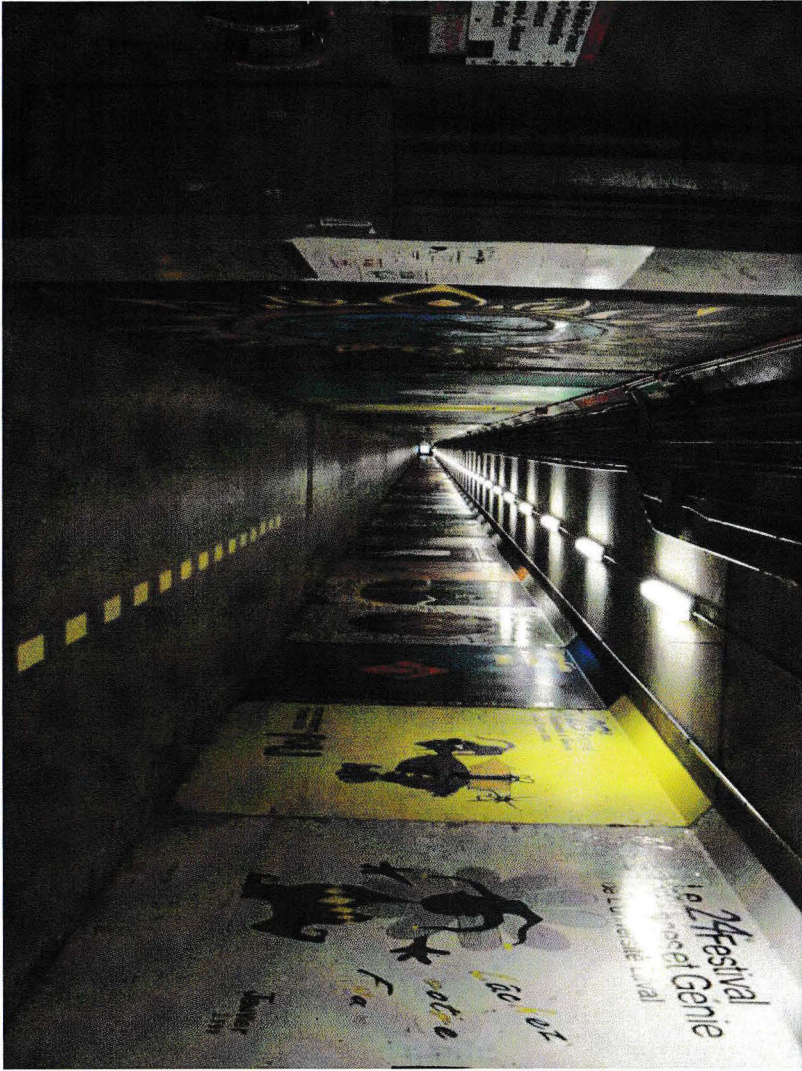
shower me with kisses
and drown me
in your love, turn these
buds so drenched
in death to flowers,
delicate and pure.

help me grow
help me grow
help me feel.

new life.

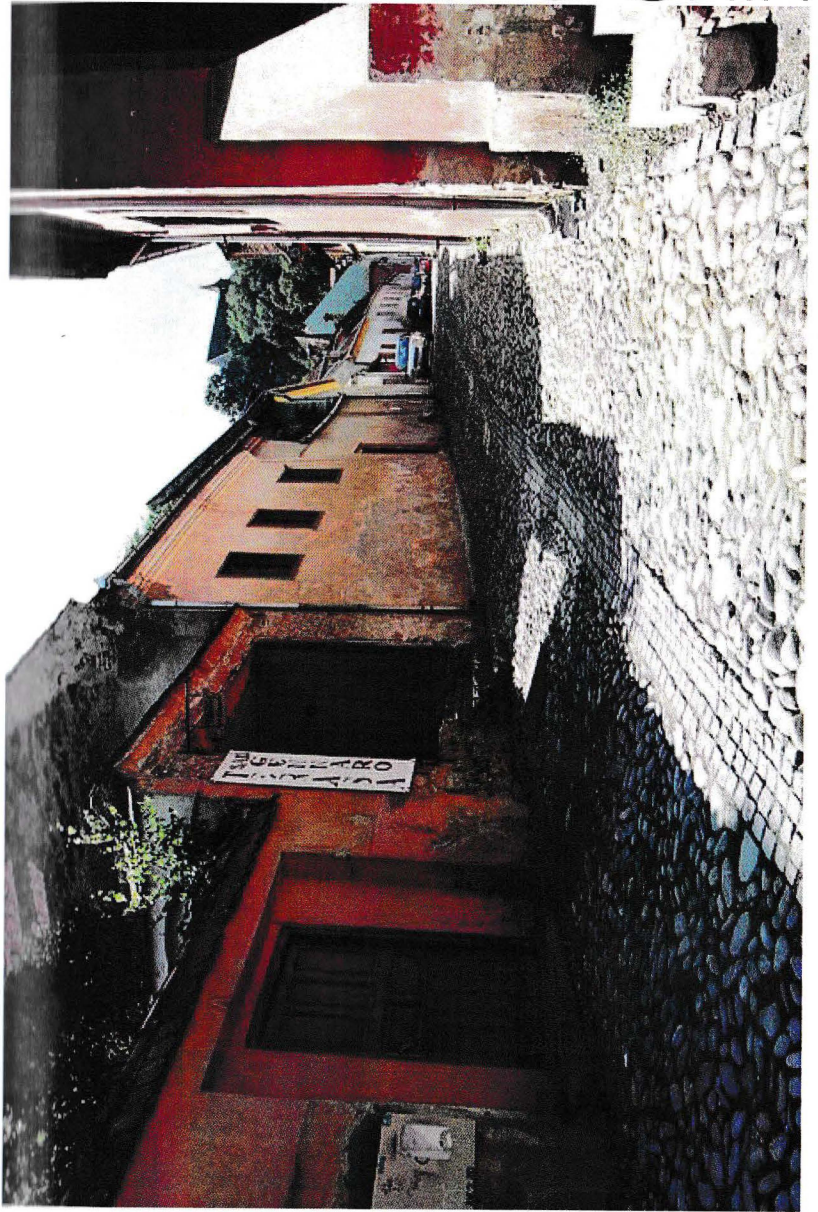
Tunnels

Nicole Kutos



Wander and Shine

Lyssa Scott



Red

James Jaskolka

I toss and turn to your silhouette
Backlit by a sliver of living-room lamplight
And take solace in the reassuring rise and fall
Of a chest better likened
To a diary, with all the secrets my lips have spilled
Into its warmth.

On sleepless nights like these,
When the only certain thing
Is uncertainty,
You are the force that calms the tremor
In my always anxious hands.

You taught me that shouting lines from rooftops
Anthemic and gratified
Like a half-assed, no-talent Pound
Isn't nearly as fulfilling as tucking them into my coat's pocket
Slowing the rhythm of an anxious heart
Where they can grow,
Free from the scrutiny of envious eyes
Who dream to know you the way I do.

And I think that I like you most
Like this,
Our foreheads pressed together,
Your eyes closed,
Sleepy but not sleeping,
Because you don't see me staring back.

I study your eyelashes,
Tangled triangles soaked through,
As the last remaining mascara-colored tear
Dances down your blushing face,
Squid ink in a sunset ocean.
And I hear your voice,
Warm, and delicate
Cracking with that midnight sleepiness
Like silk on sandpaper
Like a petal brushing its thorns in the wind.

I want you,
Eternally and wholly:
I want the early morning annoyance
Of your makeup laying helter skelter
On a shared bathroom counter
And an apologetic smile on the other side
Of a closing door, sweeter than my morning coffee
(And much better at getting me through the day).

Until then,
We'll lay uncomfortably like this,
Sleepy but not sleeping,
And dream
Of a bigger bed to call our own,
Where the corners of the room will preserve the echoes we make,
The sighs of starvation and then satisfaction,
The whimper of curled toes and tightly-wound fingers
And the laughter,
And tears,
And laughter again.

Moments

James Jaskolka

I watch you get dressed, one leg at a time
Slid into my favorite pair of your jeans
Noticing how they hug your hips in a
Way that makes my hands ache with jealousy.

And I think that this is one of the times
That I'd like to remember, so I take
A picture, a snapshot of you in my
Head so I don't forget it, and I say
I wish I could steal just one more moment
From your morning and your math professor,
Whose session started six minutes ago.

And you smile the way you do, with your
Green eyes glistening from the window's light,
And say "no baby, I can't, okay, well,
Just one more moment," before you creep back
Into bed with me, laying sleepy-eyed
And satisfied with the time I've stolen.

And in twenty years, when time will find us
Settled into our different lives and jobs,
Mortgages, car payments and vacations,
When this moment is nothing but an Ash
Of a flame that burnt bright, yes, but burnt out,
As all flames do – I'll still have the snapshots,
Pictures of you in my head that won't fade
Of your ruby tresses lit by daybreak,
Wrapped tenderly around nervous fingers
That cherished every strand that they caressed.

And when, in their awkward adolescence,
My children blush, shuffle their feet, glance down
And ask what it feels like to be in love,
I'll look back on the moments that I stole,
Remembering precisely how it felt
To hold you in the early afternoons
Of our youth; to lay there, complacently,

Speaking sentences through our fingertips;
And how our laughter boomed through glassy eyes,
Shimmering with warm anticipation
At the hint of a promising future --
And smile. And I hope you'll do the same.

I'll smile, and I hope you'll do the same.

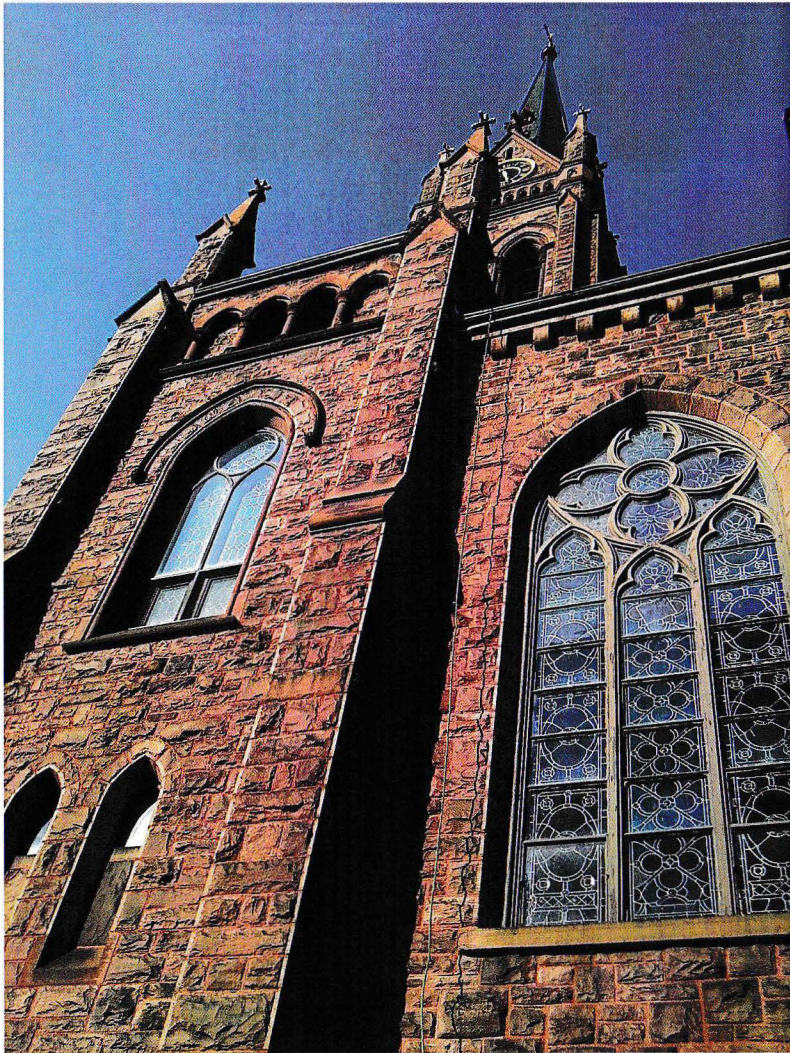
Warm

Ashley Evert

We trek through mountains
with terrain painted in a
rose gold glaze
and I feel the puckered tissue
of a healing wound on your pinky
gently scratching against the flesh
between my fingers
almost as soothing as the pucker
of your lips, ever so slight
when you linger

at the tip of my nose.

Katherine Dodson



Roman Catholic Church

I Dreamt of Thunder

Sarah Simonovich

Last night I dreamt of thunder.
It erupted from your lungs
as lightening danced along your taste buds
and you sang of the apocalypse.
There was no God to stop you, but
I saw the angels cry, their tears fell
from the heavens in chunks of ice.
The devil grabbed your hand and
led you to dance, a macabre waltz,
limbs spinning, lips flashing blood,
the music bled from between your teeth.
I tried to stop the rhythm but
it echoed deep in my heart and
I became a part of the storm.

Living Room

Gabby Zawacki



Pace

John Carroll

I talked too nicely – apparently first graders aren't supposed to do that, aren't supposed to talk nicely. At least not the boys. People start to get ideas.

Can I talk to you, please, ma'am? Manners are suspect at that age, but I feared reproach, feared rejection, authority, like a good Christian should, and this teacher, like all women, evoked thoughts of my mother. *I'm sorry for forgetting my homework. I get confused, sometimes, and I forget things.* My mind is always on the Gameboy in my desk, or the pictures on the walls or the leaves outside on the trees – I imagine the breeze learns to open windows and rushes into the classroom, across my face, scattering papers as I'm supposed to be learning to spell. I'm called on and the wind is outside again – the windows are closed.

The other kids laugh. I always know the answer, though, if the question is repeated.

No, I know it doesn't count. I just want you to know that I'm sorry. I . . . I'm really sorry. I want you to know that.

She has me sent to a room where I put together puzzles and order pictures of a woman buying soda into a sequence that makes sense (purse, change, slot, button, drink), a strange woman asks me questions but does not answer mine (not even when I repeat them). It looks like she's writing down what I say, but it doesn't look like she's listening: her eyes slide from paper to games to stopwatch, never resting on one for more than a few beats, and never on me. I think to myself that she is not very good at making conversation, so I try to help her by asking simpler questions. *Why am I doing this? Are you a teacher? Do you like your job?*

I focus on the 'games' even though they are not fun. I want to leave this room.

I'm missing class.

The next day, or maybe the next week, I hear my parents fighting through the wall. My mom says that it's a good thing, but my dad says that it would make me a freak, would let people know I was a freak. They aren't talking to me.

In class my neck aches from staring at the clock hung over my shoulder, a handmade sign hung underneath asks *time will pass, will you?* My teacher clears her throat and nods in what she promised would be a private manner and says "It's time, John." The

tips of my ears burn like the candles lit in churches under pictures of dead relatives. I shift from my seat and try to slink down the aisle lined with eyes.

We repeat our little not-so-private ritual each day, and for the first time I count the days until summer vacation.

I learn to appreciate my time in the hallway. I run my hands along the tiles and stop to feel the texture of the carpet. I wonder how many other people know what it feels like – course and tough, like so many brillo pads stitched together in strange patterns of maroon and puke green. My heart beat quickens as I stop in the bathroom to pee without permission. I'm a rebel. I go to a new room where older kids are learning about the ocean and the wild west. We learn to tell Indians that we come in peace – I wonder why anyone needed to know that, why they were teaching us to lie. Hey, I'd seen westerns.

They call it Pace, and I think it's a class for slow kids. I think they lied to me like they did to the Indians, and this room is our reservation. I think they sent me here because there aren't any windows. I think about the trees anyway, and dream that the wind has come to find me.

The woman with the games who is not good at conversation *has* lied to me – she did not come in good medicine; she spoke with a forked tongue. I hate this place.

The kids in my old class ask me if I'm retarded – they want a confirmation, not an answer. I tell them that I don't know. Our teacher is angry – she says I'm not retarded; she says I just needed special attention. God, special attention.

I think she is lying.

Menthol

James Jaskolka

The streetlight cast an aura over the cracking sidewalks
Hanging orbs of light that seemed weighted with importance
As he and I warmed up on a night's worth of nicotine.

We smoke the toxins and talk of thoughts despondent,
Speaking of fears in future tense --
The kind that bury in the bones of humankind,
Lurking underneath the surface of our skin:
What if it's all for nothing?

And that old mantra,
"Everybody dies, but not everybody lives,"
Seems truer now than it ever has as I inhale and he says,
"True death
Is a life without a purpose."

And I tell him that it's a shame:
To be so caught up in rituals,
In memorization and repetition,
Repetition
Repetition,
That we let the grace of Autumn evenings like this one
Unravel unnoticed, and slip through our fingers
Like that bluish smoke caught in the wind;
Exhale.

I smile and think
As I ash the evening's last cigarette
That I'm paying twenty grand a year
To learn more sitting on dirty porch steps
Than I ever will behind a lecture desk.

Crab in Net

Katherine Dodson



Katherine Dodson

Gabby Zawacki



These Are a Few of My Favorite Things

The Cloud

Victoria Rendina

Everything had once seemed perfect for Mayor John Balding. His political career was once intact; his family legacy once rightfully lived on; and even with the thinning patches of grays in his once black hair, with lines of age in his face and ounces of flab along his waist, the media (and his wife) once found him to be as charming, intelligent and good looking as ever.

This had felt so distant to the man since that fateful, horrendous day.

One particularly chilly winter Wednesday, at exactly three fifty-two in the afternoon, there was a great disturbance in the tiny town Balding governed. The earth began to shake and ancient buildings started to crumble. Solar eclipses occurred around the clock. Woodland creatures great and small fled the forests on the outskirts of town, leaving the wild that this thing, this *atrocious, most horrible thing* had entered. The initial fear that had risen in the people of the town was unsettling, but their reaction was nowhere near Balding's lasting terror that started with the arrival of this terrible thing: *the Cloud, the Unnatural Nuisance to the Town*.

The Cloud, the Unnatural Nuisance to the Town, was exactly what its title entailed. Unlike most clouds, the Cloud emerged from the depths of the wilderness this cold day, a massive swelling of hazy, crimson red hanging dark and ominous over the trees. On its journey towards the town, the Cloud marked its path through a trail of bloody rain, very distant from its cumulous raincloud sister. The Cloud even differed from normal clouds because of its inability to lighten up or go away after its trail of gore had stained the snow, the town, and even the Mayor's suit on a day he was not particularly careful. The mayor tried talking to it once he realized the Cloud was not going to easily dismiss its Cloudy self from his presence. Unfortunately for him, the Cloud refused to listen as he shouted his pleas for it to leave (although Balding wasn't even certain if it was listening to what he had to say, let alone reply to him with a logical explanation for its staying). In defense of his Constitutional right, Mayor Balding desperately fired a warning shot directly through the Cloud; all that did was make it bleed more. The Cloud was awful and it needed to go.

The strangest thing about the Cloud was that the women in the town claimed it spoke to them. Some men agreed with their wives in that they could hear what it was saying, though they never acted upon it in the same way as their wives. Even the children believed in the talking Cloud, which worried Balding most: how would the children be able to cope with the lies of the Cloud, the Unnatural Nuisance to the Town?

It was unclear to Balding whether the women or the Cloud were the bigger nuisance. The Cloud had no excuse to be in their town, let alone bleed without care or terrify without consent. But, the women changed with the arrival of the Cloud, and prior, these women had every excuse to be in the tiny village, under the pretense of being good and loving wives, of course. Now the women claimed that the Cloud insisted housework to be shared and

that vacuum cleaners defeated the purpose of facilitating their workload. They even stooped to a monstrous level where they thought that they could do the jobs men were built for, where they even suggested that family size should not be expanded upon. The children could not agree more, even stating that sharing their toys with only two of them was more than enough sharing and that any more pesky siblings crawling through the house would simply drive them mad.

It was scandalous.

It was inhumane.

It was witchcraft.

Slowly, the women of the town had become witches overnight, practicing the rituals that the devil Cloud spoon-fed to them. Mayor Balding could not tell for certain, since he locked his wife away in their house with the Cloud's ghastly arrival, but the stories some of the older men reported back to him were barbaric. Their good, pure wives were frolicking with their friends in the middle of the night to the forest, the Cloud following en suite; sabotage and rebellion were passed around the women like the cooking recipes and cleaning tips they used to share.

The mayor had no choice but to put an end to this insanity. Calling together every last man in the town, Balding hosted an urgent meeting on the status of their wives. Just as the mayor had feared, many of the men listened to the nonsense of their women under the dominating force of the Cloud. These men happened to be the younger ones or the newly married ones, but when they found out that some other men— the older, wiser, more experienced men such as Balding himself— had not heard one word from the Cloud and refused to accept the satanic mumbo jumbo of their wives, these boys were brought to their senses and agreed with the gentlemen.

"We must burn the witches to purge us of the Cloud, the Unnatural Nuisance to the Town!" cried old Mr. Smith, hoping to offer a more plausible solution to the problem.

"But just how would these men be able to expand upon their families without their wives?" protested Balding. As much as he disliked the witchcraft outburst, he needed to ensure that family values would still be intact.

The meeting continued at great length, with concerns and suggestions all resonating around the room as one similar song of worry and fear. What were these men to do when their women seemed more interested in themselves, the Cloud, and its dictated overhaul of their perfectly fine, functioning system?

As the group carried on with their debate about what should happen to the women of the town, Elizabeth Balding, the mayor's locked-away wife, found a way to sneak out of their lovely little home: through the window. When she noticed that the window in her designated bathroom— since her husband thought it to be horrifying that they must share a bathroom, especially on holidays or "that certain time of the month"— was the only exit in the house without anything keeping her from opening it, she hiked up her dress, climbed out the window and ran off to the woods. It was cold and her older age had made the journey a little bit difficult, but she was determined to see for herself what this "godforsaken witchcraft" hullabaloo really was.

When she finally arrived to the "most fearful" scene in the woods, Elizabeth could not figure out the debacle here that her husband found. Around a cozy little fire sat the women of the town in a fairly small group; some women were with their children, some were barely older than the children, some were too old for children; but all had smiles on their faces and laughs rolling off their tongues. Above their heads and

over the trees rested the Cloud, the moon illuminating its supposed murky red color into a soft, opaque pink.

After staring at the scene for a bit longer than she expected, Elizabeth was given a warm welcome to the group. She sat down among the women while they filled her in on what happened during their nightly meetings since the arrival of the Cloud. Their husbands had the story all wrong, the Cloud was not dictating them and making them witches, but it had enlightened and educated them on the inequality hanging heavier over the town than the Cloud itself. Their purpose in suggesting change to the structure was to bring this equality to the people, a radical outburst that had started in other cities and towns and was proving to be successful. The women in these towns were happier without having to be the sole nurturer to their families, and the men, after losing their act of masculine stoicism, found happiness in this change as well. They met in the woods to discuss their progress and offer suggestions towards completely breaking the structure forcing men and women into unequal roles.

When the group had disbanded, Elizabeth was elated. She could not believe that she never thought of any of these issues before, or why these issues were highly problematic with the men, her husband included. Sneaking back into the window of her bathroom, the mayor's wife planned to initiate this widespread change.

Balding's meeting had split long before Elizabeth arrived back, worrying the mayor that his wife might have run off to convert herself into one of the witches. And much to his dismay, his nightmare came true.

"You escaped," said Balding to his wife when she walked into the bedroom.

"I was curious," Elizabeth replied, walking over to her bed (because her husband insisted they use separate beds, a Balding family tradition). "And I'm glad I went. Why do you hate the Cloud and women so much?" While waiting patiently for her husband's answer, she slid her heels off her aching feet. It was not the journey that had tired her down, but the endless cleaning she did prior to leaving.

"Sweetheart, I'm not the one at fault here," he retorted. Balding remembered to be stern in his tone with Elizabeth, despite the fact he was lying down in his bed, wearing his pajamas and sleeping cap instead of a suit and tie. A man must be stern when his wife has done wrong, regardless of his clothes.

"I think, perhaps, tomorrow, if I were to cook dinner maybe we both could clean the dishes up after," Elizabeth suggested. On this night, the women planned to try to divvy up the kitchen work, feeling overrun by the intense workload with the only tools meant to facilitate this process being appliances that required more attention than their children. It had been a long time since Elizabeth raised children of her own, but she too felt the strain from her chores.

"Elizabeth, are you insane? How am I supposed to figure out what to do with the Cloud, the Unnatural Nuisance to the Town, if I am busy with women's work? Pleasing it is unacceptable, it will only start demanding more and more. If I can't rid the town of this problem, I must find a way to penetrate it and make it leave!"

Elizabeth realized how difficult this change to the structure would be. "This doesn't answer my question, John," she persisted, wondering why he refused to listen to what she had to say.

"Your defiance has left me no choice, Elizabeth!" Balding exclaimed, jumping up and out of his bed, comforter and sheets flailing around with his movement. As he rushed to put his slippers on, while pointing his finger at his wife (remembering to be even sterner than before), he continued. "You have left me no choice but to regulate

this Cloud! If you come to your senses, I will be in my office, writing laws for the Cloud. If it wants to stay in this town, it must be treated like a citizen!"

The mayor left the bedroom to face the difficulty of turning the Cloud into a law-abiding citizen while Elizabeth sighed at the struggle she, too, faced.

Through a nightlong toil, Balding finally finished with enough time to admire his work. He notified the press as soon as he could, hoping to get the new laws out before things got any worse.

The Cloud, the Unnatural Nuisance to the Town, would have to find some kind of job to officially settle near the town. Of course, a glass ceiling of sorts would be necessary to prevent the Cloud from applying for job, because some jobs were strictly meant for humans. How could a cloud do what any eligible Man could do without a second thought? Regardless of its job opportunities (or lack thereof), if it made the permanent decision to live in the forest and enter the town, it needed some kind of job to pay its taxes. It most certainly could not be a freefloater in Balding's town on his own time or money.

The Cloud, the Unnatural Nuisance to the Town, could only bleed on Wednesdays. Balding was not sure if this would be possible, since he did not know exactly how or why the Cloud could bleed, but he figured that by designating the town to be a non-bleeding zone, except for the forest on Wednesdays, with fines to violators, the Cloud would figure out how to stop.

Any woman seen in the presence of the Cloud, the Unnatural Nuisance to the Town, or talking to other women would be put in jail. Their term would be longer if this meeting occurred at night.

Lastly, the Cloud, the Unnatural Nuisance to the Town, would be forced to separate itself once a year, looking after that smaller portion of itself until it would be forced to leave when the mayor deemed it mature enough. Balding hoped that by forcing the Cloud into this predicament would either make it leave or soften it, preoccupying itself with family bonds over its sabotage on the town.

Once the rules were set in stone and delivered to all the citizens, including their newest, most annoying one, before the crack of dawn, Balding, and those other men who were worried with these issues, waited for the effects to begin.

The immediate reaction to the laws was complete silence among every person in the town. Well, mostly the women, as Balding had noticed, since the men had felt comfortable enough to talk to him while the women avoided him like he to the Cloud.

This was very good. Silence was very good.

The silence pursued. The Cloud was still trying to learn how to bleed on Wednesday, which was a start (those fines had to kick the message in eventually). The wives were listening to their husbands. The natural order of society on Balding's standards was falling back into place.

Or so he thought.

One particularly warm spring day, when life began sprouting up in the forest, the local gardens, some of the wives even, the women of the town started speaking. The words they said and the demands they stated were loud, clear, and had evolved from what they were saying with the original arrival of the Cloud, the Unnatural Nuisance to the Town. They wanted their equality at the price of the mens jobs. They wanted their voices heard even though the law strictly prohibited it. They wanted Balding to realized that the Cloud, along with those people who worshiped

this problematic Cloud, were citizens being severely mistreated. No matter how much the mayor tried, the Cloud would never leave, for the Cloud had impacted the women Balding silenced and the men he conformed to his own terrified beliefs. The women suggested that equality among all the members of the town was Balding's only solution to this problem, yet the mayor refused to listen.

Elizabeth, too, had expressed her sentiments towards her husband that mirrored those belonging to the women of the town. Balding thought her attitude was ridiculous, but no matter what he did, he could not silence her.

He was losing all sense of reality.

His town was being ruled by witches.

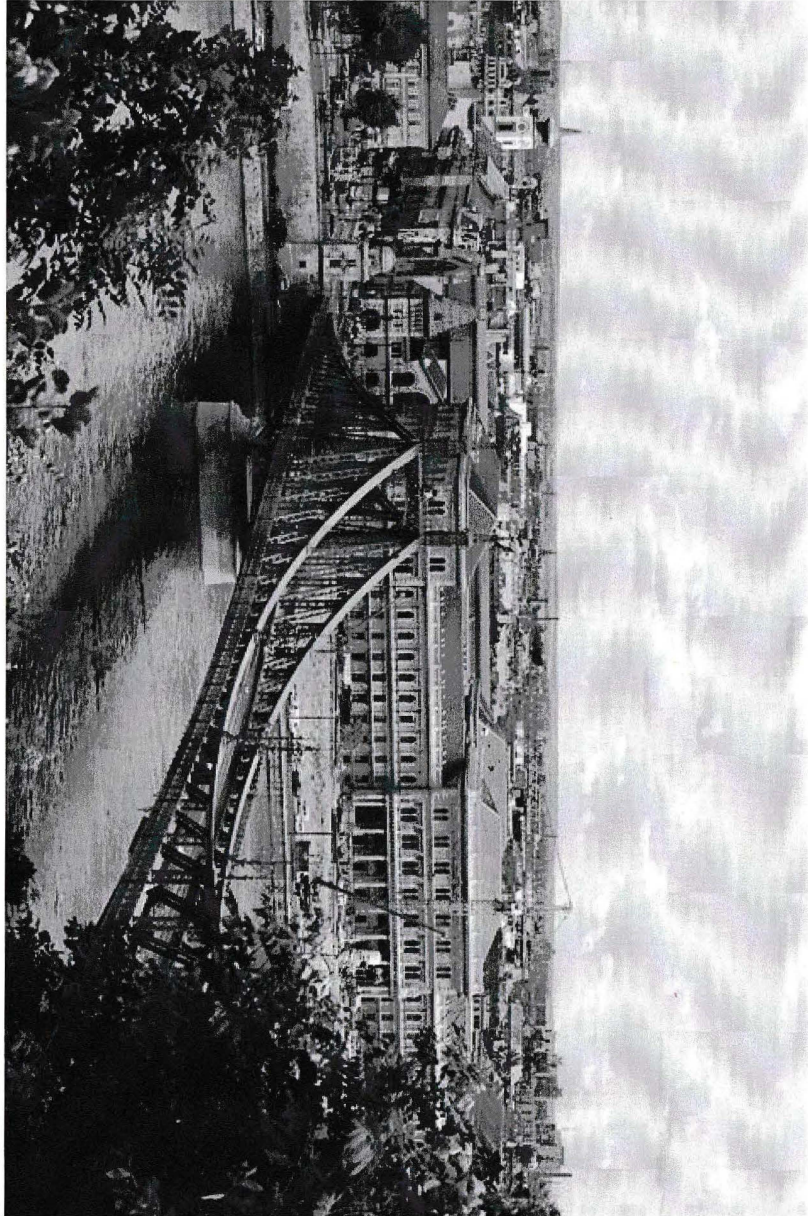
He even found himself married to one of the worst, most evil witches of them all.

On the brink of insanity, Balding knew he had to abandon the town and let it destruct itself. He hoped that the town next to his had not been exposed to the Satanism of the Cloud, since moving was his best and only option to escape the collapse of his mental health. Though his wife begged for him to see where she was coming from and why her insane witchcraft would be best for him, he feared her and the potential her witch powers had in bringing him to his death. He could not possibly stay with this witch; his morality depended on it. So he fled the town in the middle of the night, praying to see its demise one day on national television.

Unfortunately, Balding's wish to learn of the town's destruction was never granted; his heart gave out years later with not a word of its collapse on any form of broadcasting. In fact, he never even found out what happened to the town, good or bad, leaving him to wonder if the Cloud had finally left it in peace. He once found himself tempted to move back, but local gossip in the neighboring town suggested his old town was thriving and that everyone was at peace with each other. Even after his refusal to return, Balding found himself waking in cold sweats from nightmarish visions of the Cloud, the Unnatural Nuisance to the Town. It would bleed and bleed--constant bleeding, a never ending bloodbath-- and when he tried talking to it in these dreams it would response with irrational amounts of hysteria and senselessness. Dreams often bled into reality, where one rainy day, the old mayor was fixated on the belief that it was blood pouring down outside instead of real, normal rain. On a day that the earth beneath his feet was not particularly stable, Balding even dreaded the return of his enemy as it sought to overthrow this town. With all this worry and never-ending stress, Balding could no longer bring himself to care for his old town anymore; his standard way of life in that small village had been greatly disturbed the moment the Cloud, the Unnatural Nuisance to the Town, had infix his citizens on witchcraft.

Budapest Beauty

Lyssa Scott



Kendra Kuhar

Faith Through the Fog

I Dream of Long Trips

John Carroll

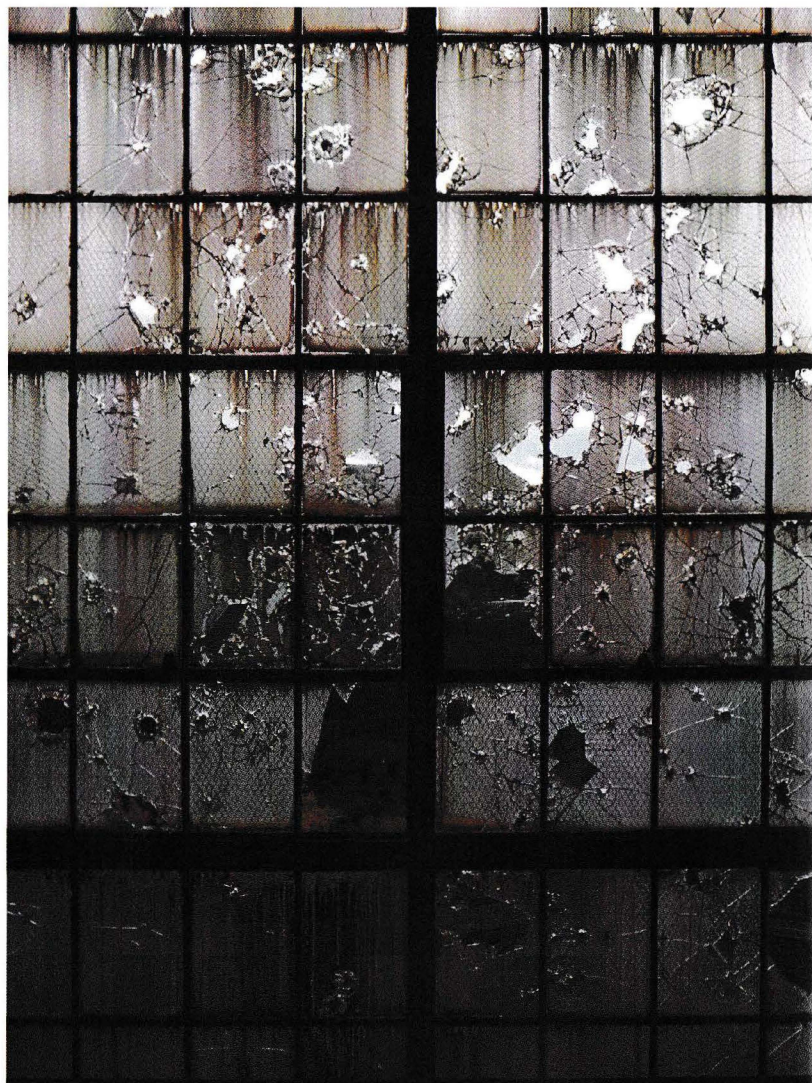
I dream of long trips and motorcycles, and months taken off to tour the back-roads and motels of middle America. I imagine telling of my success, my accomplishments, my freedom –
But there's no audience in my head, and there's no heat rising off of a desert road, no roaring of engines or vibrating of faux-leather seats, no foreign hands of unfamiliar sheets against skin, no uneasy rest pulling eyes from the too-bright screen of a backlight smartphone as I update my status from god-knows-where-Nevada. Everything in my mind is the word of my bragging – I imagine the taste of that truth as it runs from my mouth while overdue papers and readings and the noise of indebted life wait for me beyond the shower-steam, behind the closed-eyelid doors of mental masturbation – climax is in the forgetting – and this fantasy is so intense that the color of the tile as I open my eyes so strikes me as new that I imagine men have been in to redo the walls.



Gabby Zawacki

119 (Satellites)

Gabby Zawacki



[Sight]

Yellow

Sarah Simonovich

Oh Vincent, paint me a picture
and I will write you a poem in yellow.

I am deaf to the humming of
the starry skies and
allergic to the beauty of
the sunflowers.

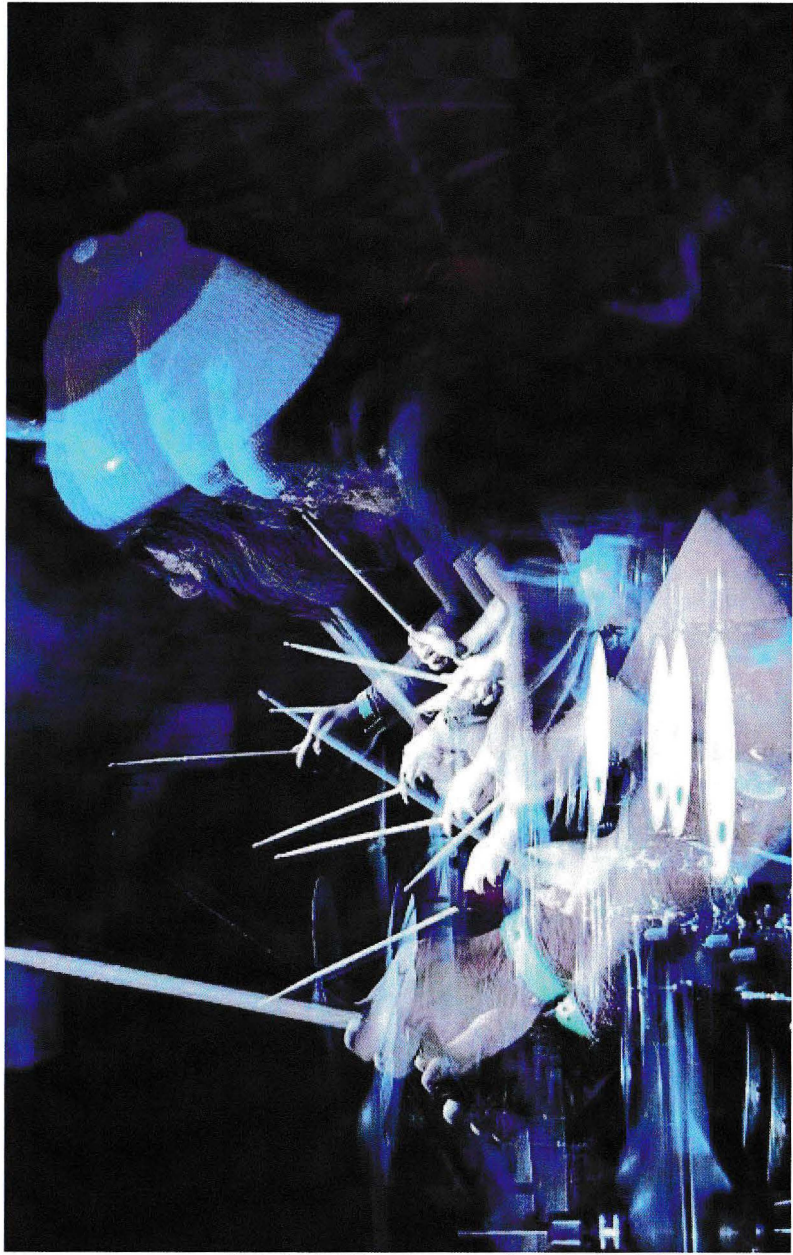
I see the world in ink black words
rather than in watercolor images.

But what I cannot experience
I can still very much feel, for
the universe pounds in my head
the lyrics to the song of life and death.

I eat the darkness because it
is what my body craves,
it fills my inner void with
something other than deceitful color.

I bask in it, and in it I hide
from the world and its terrifying hues.
But there is something I have learned:
if you consume what you love most,
it will certainly destroy you in the end.

Oh Vincent, lend me your ear
and I will surely write you a tragedy.



Freedom Found

Lyssa Scott



Conveyor

Gabby Zawacki

Authors, Artists, and Staff

Biographies

Dr. Mischelle Anthony wasn't warned about this biography.

Miranda Baur never learned how to number pages and wrote most of these biographies.

John Carroll is too busy working on his capstone to submit a real bio.

Kat Dodson is a student at Wilkes University.

Ashley Evert is a sophomore Communications major with minors in English, Integrative Media and Women's and Gender Studies. She is a licensed beautician who enjoys knitting and crocheting when she is not working at the salon. Ashley enjoys lively debates about feminism almost as much as she enjoys ice cream. Her favorite authors include F. Scott Fitzgerald and Chuck Palahniuk.

Cierra Humphrey wants a dog, does not like chickpeas, and has amazing hair.

James Jaskolka is a sophomore communications and English double major. When he isn't writing poetry about his girlfriend, he enjoys his work assistant editing at the Beacon, booking and promoting local shows and playing drums in the progressive rock band If You Will.

Dr. Sean Kelly needs a new watch and also wasn't warned.

Kendra Kuhar went to Wales and only submitted one friggin picture. She's also really great at doodling during class.

Elizabeth Kura is a Gemini.

Nicole Kutos is a freshman planning on double majoring in Integrative Media and English Literature. She is always anxiously awaiting her next concert or trip, taking pictures along the way.

Emily Leonick is an English student at Wilkes University.

Victoria Rendina hates Women's Studies class and loves Creative Writing with Bill Black. She also wears the color black.

Lyssa Scott, self-proclaimed world explorer, whiffle ball champion, avid adventurer, lover of folk music and giraffes. She takes life and runs with it. Favorite quote: "yes is a doing word!"

Sarah Simonovich likes to draw amazing things and then not share them.

Melissa Thorne is an English student at Wilkes University.

Gabby Zawacki is catching bats.

