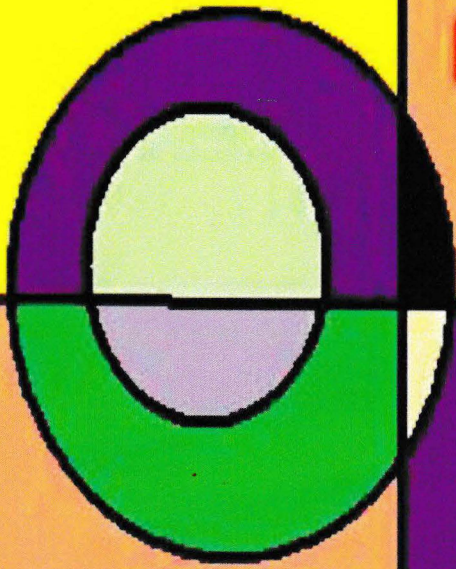
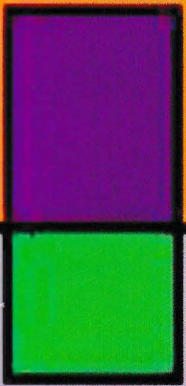
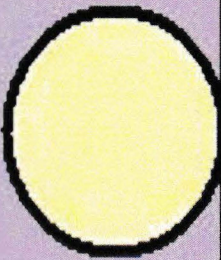
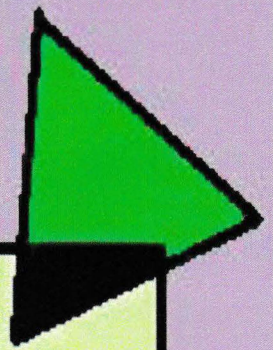
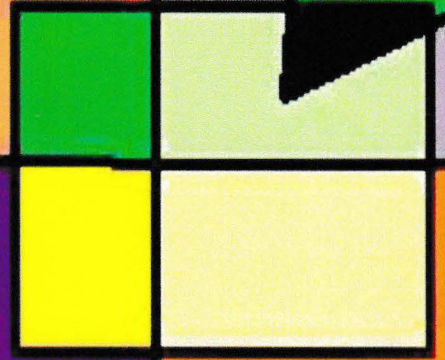


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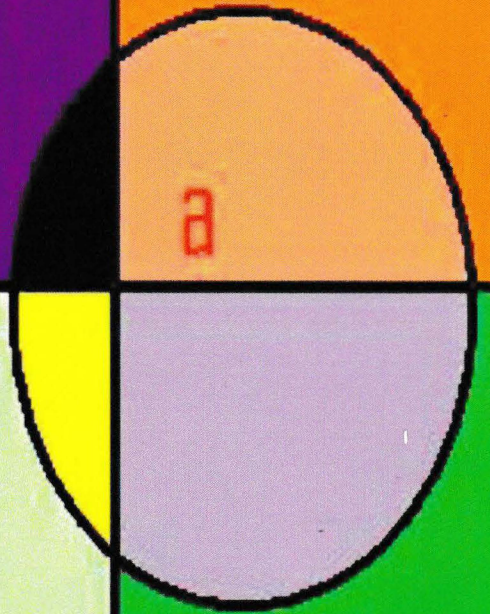


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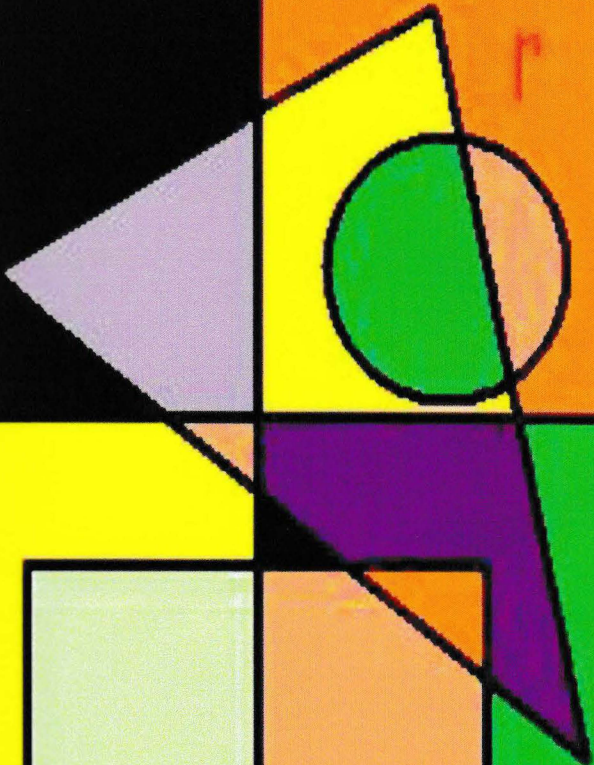


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Manuscript Fall 2011



1947 Foreword

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 be proud.

The Editors

Mission Statement

The Manuscript Society of Wilkes University has been publishing its creative written and visual art magazine, Manuscript, continuously since 1947. Currently, the student-led editorial staff publishes two issues a 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 workshopping, copyediting, and layout. Recently, the Society produced a hardback edition of the Fall 2008 issue and a woodblock cover design in Spring 2009.

Wilkes students may elect to enroll in ENG 390. 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.

STAFF

Executive Editor:

Ashley Bringmann

Assistant Editor:

Holly Evans

Copy Editor:

Bethany Guarilia

Staff Members:

Johnny Azzarelli

Michael Barr

John Carroll

Bernard Dougherty

Matt Endress

Jeffrey Ford

Bobbie Lynn Richardson

Kristina Spaulding

Jonathan Sytko

Lennae Thompson

Katrina Toporcer

Elizabeth Voda

Chris Waugh

Faculty Advisors:

Dr. Sean Kelly

Dr. Mischelle Anthony

Cover by Manuscript Society

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“O, Gypsy Mine”
By Courtney Sperger

That beauty, Gypsy mine,
Her practiced body hers
To bend and stretch it so
She did by many sirs.
Her hair so ravished now,
As every night, in show.
Her skin and eyes that light
Her passion, how they glow.
She dances wild there
And rings in rhythmic beat.
She carries all so well
The music of her feet.
Her hips so move the ground:
Seduction, her affair.
And worthy is the cost
For love that is so rare.
Well, rare is not the word
For what she has to share,
But what it is she gives
Surpasses all compare.
That beauty Gypsy mine,
Her practiced body hers.
Her mind's so unaware
The lust in men she stirs.

Word Bearer
By Chris Waugh

An open book will
Enlighten the human soul
When the pages burn



Tomb By Ashley Bringmann

NEPA Fauxklore: Dundee Creeper

By Jeffrey Ford

Navigate through the back roads of Hanover Township and you'll find some mementos from the coal mining days. Along the roads are abandoned machine sheds rusted blue and brown. Jutting from the dense forests are hills split apart and piled with loose stone and gravel. Cut into one of these hills is a tunnel framed by tree roots and overgrown vines. When the weather is hot, the bugs are attracted by the pools of milky, green water off on the roadside.

There were certainly some bugs scuttling about on the evening of August 31, 1996. Eric Ichor and his brother Sean were driving down the Dundee Cross Road on their way home from a Labor Day gathering. They came up to the tunnel and Sean rolled his window down to yell out the window as they went through.

"It all goes back to when we were kids," Eric explained. "Whenever we went through someplace dark, we'd scream to ward off the boogens. "

Once Eric cleared the tunnel, he and Sean heard something fall from overhead and hit the roof with a heavy thud. Eric stopped the car just in time to see a round bulk bounce off the back bumper. When they got out, they could see the object lying on the ground only three feet from their car. What they found looked like a tree branch roughly twelve feet in length.

"The bark, or whatever it was, looked like tree bark. It had these white spots scattered all over. There were even little twigs sticking out but not a leaf on them, just bristles. I didn't have a flashlight and had to rely on the taillights, which gave the object a kind of slick sheen."

When the brothers went to move the "branch," something peculiar happened that made them jump back.

"The branch, it began to move. It started out clumsy at first, but then it started squirming along the pavement. The little twigs started flexing really fast 'til they touched the ground. Turned out they were just little legs. Then it was zig-zagging like it didn't know where to go. Its forked tail even brushed against my sock. We weren't waiting to see what it would do next; we got the hell out of there."

The next morning Eric surveyed the damage to his car. The roof was dented with a coating of dried mud - or blood - caked onto the creases and a spidery crack on the rear windshield. The residue gave off a stench like "rotten eggs and horseradish." He was still bewildered by what he and his brother saw.

Eric couldn't come up with an answer for what he saw, but maybe the residents of Loomis Park - located just up the hill from the tunnel - have their own stories to tell. An eccentric woman named Ozzie Prushinski has lived in one of these red brick houses since the early 1960s. Of the many pets in her domestic bestiary, she has two Siamese cats and one greyhound, a chicken coup out in the backyard, and a family of rabbits (three are owned by her granddaughter). She argues that it's quite the skill to raise this many animals in an environment like hers.

"More often than not, children would run screaming to their parents about how a 'snapper' almost got them." She continued, "Their parents figured that they were playing around near an old mine well and nearly got bit by a mine rat; grow the size of Dachshunds, they say. So the parents just scolded them not to go near those places and stick close to the neighborhood."

On one occasion during the month of June 1981, Mrs. Prushinski was going for a walk around the neighborhood when she noticed the appearance of two unusually sized "caterpillars" crawling near the tunnel. From a point on the hill leading down to the Dundee Road, she observed "two bulky black things that would move along slowly, like fluid." She also described them as being covered in fine, silky hair, like that of a cat, and mistook them for such until she saw one crawl along the upper interior lip of the tunnel. Of their exact size she commented,

"One was the size and width of a man's arm; the other was half the size of a Chevy. Together they formed the arch!"

When Mrs. Prushinski saw the creeping caterpillars, she chalked it up to hallucination due to heat. There was also the sound the caterpillars made, which she described as "a guinea pig squealing for food mixed with a gurgle."

Other residents of Loomis also claimed to have had closer encounters with the slithering creatures. One such event occurred on the afternoon of March 1998, when resident George McHugh saved his bull terrier, Clete, from being eaten by an "armored cobra."

"I was sitting at home watching 'The Price is Right' when I heard Clete barking outside. I heard a loud whimper like he was in pain and rushed out. This long-tailed thing was biting into him, like it was about to eat him."

Mr. McHugh grabbed an aluminum baseball bat and swung at the animal, causing some damage and "breaking one of its fangs." Eventually, it got the message and "parted its bloody jaws and hissed" before slinking

into the growth.

Unfortunately, Mr. McHugh's dog didn't last too long. The veterinarian who tended to poor Clete said he never saw a snake's tooth with a barb on its tip.

Another sighting occurred the following year, as Dave Raynock woke at 5 a.m. to find a living "video game villain" rolling and splashing in his above-ground swimming pool. When questioned on which game character this creature resembled, he referred to the box art for the Atari game "Centipede." The creature was reported to have left a "soupy mess" in Mr. Raynock's pool that had to be cleaned out.

Since its initial sighting, the Crawling Thing of Dundee Cross has made occasional appearances during the colder months but is mostly sporadic during the summertime. Many often cite the creature as responsible for missing pets and irregular echoes coming from the forest. Of the theories suggested, one posits that it could be a freakish form of centipede that can grow to incredibly long lengths. Another suggests it might be an aberration washed out from the mines - which would explain the acrid, sulfuric smell. In the end, these theories do little to explain the subject in a concrete form, and instead provide a different perspective.

Then there's one interesting case from 2009 that may apply.

During the first week of December, a hunter bragged to his friends at work about the "mammoth land lobster" he bagged while hunting in Bear Creek. He claimed it was crawling on a rock bed when he first spotted and shot it. The hunter, when asked if he had preserved it or kept its meat, said he figured the taxidermist wouldn't know how to dress such an animal. He couldn't trust the meat enough to eat it, so he left the shelled beast in the woods for some other predator. Popular opinion has it that the hunter was just making up stories.

The Axe in the Stump

By Elizabeth Voda

I didn't know that self-defense would land me in jail.

My only friends now, the rats, skitter by my feet. This mattress hurts to sit on. Everything is cold, most likely from the stone walls. No insulation. Sleep.... I feel like I should sleep. But I keep having visions of the ghost me, the me I can't explain. I felt those movements, the warm splatter of blood that splashed on me- I swear the blood had its own pulse... it got faster the more I hacked... Wait... what have I done? I would never do that, would I? K...kill..? Closing my eyes, the gloom of my surroundings sobered my mind. I could think clearly, and yet... Some of my memories remained a mystery. Within my head I relived it, that horrible day. Yesterday, right? Yes. It appeared as if static interrupted my memories. Interrupted my life.

A nature trail. Not so much a trail, though, huh? More like... a nature path. People seemed to go here a long time ago, and the remnants of their footsteps still lingered on the earth. The smell of clean air... of a new beginning beckoned me. I knew I had to leave town, to wander. My life was not meant to help Papa and his blacksmith duties. I didn't want to make the weapons- I wanted to *use* them. Use...How? Well... that path, I was sure, would lead me to my adventure. Worn, almost like a forgotten place of importance. It always held my curiosity.

Fuzzy again... How long was I walking? It felt like no time at all. I could tell the end of my path neared. The closer I walked to the end, the faster my heart beat. I heard my life pounding through me and I ran to it, no longer listening to the songs of birds nor seeing nature's simplistic complexity before me.

Suddenly, I ran into a small circular opening with trees creating a sense of enclosure to this unreal space. One large stump of a no doubt mighty tree clung to the earth in the middle of this clearing. I could see the scars of uprooted stumps that littered the ground around the singular remaining stump.

Time halted here for me. The sickly smell of freshly murdered trees hung in the air, penetrating my being. No one seemed to have visited this area in maybe... one hundred years. As I looked around the clearing, I found an axe in the stump. I decided to use it as a back rest and sit on the stump to catch my breath when I finally realized I had been panting.

With my breath captured now, I examined the axe more carefully. It was simple- an iron axe, rusted, with a vine carefully growing away from the almost too sharp edge, wrapping up around the dirtied wooden handle, the curious grain creating a war-like pattern.

Something compelled me to touch it... to try to steal it from its home embedded in the forlorn and forgotten wood of yesteryear. My hand tentatively touched the handle. It seemed sturdy enough to pull away from its habitat.

Feverishly now, I tore the vine away from my majestic axe. I grasped the handle firmly now, without hesitation and lifted it easily out of its cage. I picked the axe up, and held it in my hand. The enclosure of its trappings melted away, unlocking the cage of my being, allowing me to feel free for the first time.

Static again. My memory likes to give out here. It clears up when I got back home, my return to what I called a dismal life.

The village felt dead to me now, the sense of life within it faded away with the coming of night. But, that wasn't all of it. I saw no lights on in any houses, no sign of people whatsoever.

sleeping soundly for a while. Upon waking from noise, I went to investigate, axe ready to severely hurt whoever intruded into my home. A nearby building on my property, my father's blacksmith workshop, burned with light in the darkness. It must be a burglar attempting to steal Papa's weapons and materials- I heard that a thief was lurking about in a nearby village- one who came when all was silent in houses and plucked the most treasured items from the best homes...

And so I crouched and snuck into the building. A flame produced two shadows that danced with the light grotesquely on the wall where a myriad of weapons hung. I tightened my grip on the handle of my axe. It gave me strength to attack. I leaped forward and swung at the first life form I found.

Blood splattered on my body. It pulsed with my blood, its life giving me more strength to continuously hack at the thief.

The thief that happened to be the town mayor. A bloodied contract for armaments created by Papa lay on the ground. Papa looked ill. His face contorted in a grimace that expressed his shock and disgust with me, his savior.

He held out his shaking hand. I saw his mouth move silently. The smell of the fresh hunt permeated my being. And when Papa walked toward me, I smiled and chopped him, too. Mama screamed when she came in, but not for long. She didn't feel much pain, I'm sure. I killed her while she stared at my crimson masterpiece in horrific delight... it must have been delight. She always liked my artwork.

Some neighbors found me, the next day, smiling in the middle of my creation. I didn't notice them until they took my axe away and threw it haphazardly into Papa's scrap metal.

The haze of my memory brings me now back to my current state. What did I become? And more importantly, I pray that the axe is not found, for it leeched its thirst for the nectar of blood from me. I only hope that no other soul happens upon this axe and, heart pounding, is called to it.



Where We Live Now By Kat Dodson

Stressful
By Ashley Bringmann

Stressful as this is
Lying once again
Hurting much inside
More then on the out
Hides away emotions
Locks them up tight
Storing it all away
Til the moment is right

That Big Ol' Rock
By Ashley Bringmann

Rock on your finger
Bigger then most
Shiny and gleaming
Let's make this a toast
To all the good times
All the memories shared
Your off
Go be happy
With a man quite fair

Red Handed
By Brielle Stanton

She follows him, stepping in sledged prints,
Ducking under the protection of burned-out lights,
sneaking with shoulders covered by her scarlet coat.
Her breaths are like waves slapping stubborn rocks,
gasped back into the mouth.
Her eyes retreat, sinking back into their sockets,
afraid of what more could stun her to dilation.
And with a cowardly glance, two seconds too slow,
seedy eyes turn wide with the catch of red:
His last glimmer of such until the juice would drip down
and pour out from her slow-beating heart.

Blue Shoe Haiku
By Holly Evans

Your hair is messy,
Dirt stains your cheeks like red blush.
Blue shoes sparkle bright.



Reverse Limbs By Ashley Bringmann

Dunk Tank By Chris Waugh

The man hanging out by the dunk tank asked me if I was stoned. He smiled at me, revealing a gap in his teeth, and said, "Come on, you can tell me." I walked past him and continued weaving in and out of the food stands and game booths. I wasn't stoned, just for the record. I was thinking. That's never a good thing for me.

It seemed like everyone in Nanticoke had descended on Patriot Square for the annual Music Fest. Maybe everybody in Nanticoke *was* there. There isn't a whole lot to do in this town unless you're an alcoholic, pizza-loving Christian, so when there's an event with free entertainment, you have to go. Some people were so bored they went on the rides that had been set up in Market Street in about an hour and looked very shoddy in their construction.

I must have walked around that park at least a hundred times that night, the whole time thinking about why I went there in the first place. When my dad had asked me if I was going, I didn't want to. Then I realized that Danielle might be going. Would tonight be the night I finally asked her out?

It wasn't long after I arrived that I saw her. I knew her red hair anywhere. It was early yet, and the crowds hadn't come, so I was able to see her across the park. I took a few steps in her direction, froze, turned around, and began walking in the other direction. I spent the rest of the night walking through the crowd, trying to figure out why I did it. It wasn't like it was the first time I would be talking to her. We talked in class, so why didn't I talk to her? This question bugged me the whole night. It took me a while, but I figured it out as I passed the dunk tank once again: I'm a coward.

Autumn's Night
By Courtney Sperger

Flutter, leaf, and tumble down.
Your color fading into brown
returns you to an earthy state.
Your lofty height is out of date.
The warmth of all pre-winter air
abandoned you for better fare
and left you all alone today
to leave your branch to bend and sway.
The winter winds will, from the ground,
remove your stem without a sound.
So shutter in your weakened place,
until you fall with silent grace
and mingle there among the grass
which soon is covered under glass.
Beneath the snow you'll softly lay,
awaiting winter's final day
when snow will melt, and you will see
you've left the Earth quite peacefully.

Deep Waters

By Ashley Bringmann

Part 1

Jump.

Her heart beat fast as she gazed out at the raging waters beneath her.

“So, what do you say?” Jonathan asked beside her. The water licked the rocks below waiting for her to take the plunge. They stood on the highest cliff of the beach. The sunset was illuminating their silhouettes.

Jonathan fidgeted, waiting to see if she would agree to do this.

Katelyn took a deep breath. The waters below stirred even more, still waiting. She wasn't sure if she could do this. Her heart screamed at her to just do it already, but her brain held her back. It was clearly telling her to keep safe.

Jonathan sighed, “I need an answer. It's getting dark.”

The sun was almost completely gone with only a few hues of pink and purple on the horizon. The sea was swirling black abyss that was getting more aggressive by the moment. She had made her decision.

He was on one knee again looking at her expectantly. The box was once again opened and held out to her.

“Yes or no?” he mumbled.

Katelyn's heart took the plunge and her brain jumped right after it, “Yes.”

Part 2

“Years ago I took a vow, a deep breath, and then I jumped for the last time. That was until this day. I find myself having to take a step back, away from the ledge that held me for so long, for I am now afraid of falling into the lonely dark abyss.” Katelyn stood at a small podium in the front of the room.

She gave a short good-bye and wandered towards the back of the room. She watched as people talked about Jonathan like they could see into his soul. The poor man would've jumped into the ocean had he seen this.

After all was said and done Katelyn was left alone. She walked up the aisle and took a deep breath.

Jump.

After taking one last look at his face she wavered. With another deep breath she closed the lid on Jonathan. She closed the last portion of her heart up and promised never to dive into deep waters again, because in deep waters she couldn't bear to breathe.

Relic By Elizabeth Voda



I Am What I Am
By Holly Evans

The last words you told to me; "I am what I am."

These words not said, but typed,

Typed and read off of a cold screen.

You sent it and I received the message.

I changed your life forever; "I am what I am."

I left the woman who loved me; "I am what I am."

I chose my addiction over my family; "I am what I am."

I decided to never start contact until you could understand; "I am what I am."

Who I am knows what you are.

A Polka-Dotted Flood **By Elizabeth Voda**

Whenever nature clouded up the sky and rained, the ladybug always heard a whistling sound as the drops pummeled toward her. Afraid, she skittered across the minefield, tasting the smell of wet dirt and feeling the mud cake onto her legs.

The buildup of muck caused her to trip- she slid on the slippery ground, screaming as she flew by other fleeing insects. Finally stopping, she quickly set herself upright. What to do? Instinct switched on and she opened her shell. Would this even work with such a down-pour?

With wings spread wide, she kicked up, mud sliding from her body. A sudden flash of light illuminated the world—drops whizzed past her while she flapped her wings. Her determination renewed when she saw her safe haven; the light of a human abode with a roof that directed the incoming flood elsewhere welcomed her from afar. The ladybug knew her friends would be there, attempting to squeeze through any reasonably sized hole to feel the hug of a warm, insulated home. Her wondering led her to worry about their journeys through the treacherous forest and yard to get to their meeting place.

She gazed in front of herself again, returning from the reverie of safety to the cold truth before her: a raindrop headed straight for her. Startled, she dodged to the right, only to face another obstacle. The leaves from a branch smacked into her. She grasped the leaf and pulled herself toward the bark of its branch. This provided her with a steadier grip, where she surveyed the destruction before her. Weaker leaves scattered in the wind while dead branches tore loose from the trees. The forest shook with the wind, shone with the lightning, and clashed like the booming thunder with each other overhead. Such a heart pounding sight of

nature made her creep closer onto a leaf to attain a better view.

Above, the pitter-patter of water collecting in the leaves sounded fatter. Her wonderment was washed away with her as the protecting leaves overhead released their liquids. She slid from its smooth surface and fluttered down through the air when an intense gust of wind blew her closer to safety.

When the current ceased, she noticed the pools of water gathering on the ground, and they were rapidly coming closer. She struggled to fly, finally realizing that she was caught in a fat blob of a raindrop that dragged her through the force of gravity toward the growing ocean below her. The slamming into the water, she desperately attempted to somehow reach the air. Oxygen rushed harshly into her when she reached the top, but she couldn't breathe. Her best friend, Andy, a ladybug like herself, was struggling weakly in the water almost two inches in front of her.

Gasping, she somehow managed to floppily swim to him. She held him, and he opened his eyes slightly. "Alexandria....Alex... is that you?" his meek voice whispered- she barely heard it over the roar of the increasing flood.

"Yes, Andy! It's me, it's Alex," she shouted hysterically. He smiled a little.

"Remember when we'd go to the flower garden by the house to smell the sweet air? I do," he sighed and took a deep breath. "I feel like I smell it now- isn't that... funny?"

Alex puzzled over this; she smelled a mix of sickening water mixed with dirt, of shredded leaves, of the stench of worms poking through the mess to find their own horrible freedom in the mess of events. She noticed that Andy's shell didn't look as lustrous as it once had. It shined with dirt water. How could he be so calm? He used to be so childish- she would scold him for forgetting to show his many younger siblings the best places to find

food. Despite the fact that they were the type of friends who love to hate each other, the two always helped each other when it really mattered. Alex felt the urgency of the moment, and tried to pull him with her toward the deck of the house.

Andy laughed quietly. "You think you're strong enough to pull me there? You're joking, aren't you." He looked at the water surrounding them while she kept attempting to get them both to dry ground. "Please, you need to stop. I can't help you help me. I'm too weak right now . . ."

"You can't give up, Andy. What about your brothers and sisters?" She frantically paddled to the deck, which seemed to keep getting farther away with each moment she inched closer. A wave of water choked them both. They gasped for air on the surface.

"Well . . . I just did, Alex." He pushed himself from her. In the loudest voice he could muster, he said, "You wouldn't have made it with me, Alex." He flowed down with the current out of her sight, almost as if as quickly as she had found him.

She floated, without even breathing, for a little amount of time, hoping that he would somehow make it through this storm. Her quiet moment broke from the sound of others screaming for her. She turned her head in their direction.

The deck, dark where the water crashed into it, was very close. She could barely believe she had made it this far, and that her family were coaxing her to freedom. Her feet moved autonomously, it seemed, as if her body knew exactly what to do on its own without her guidance.

Before she knew it, she stood on the dry plywood of the deck, surrounded by her family. Alex shook off as much water as she could, while her siblings laughed at her silly movements in glee. They flew up the numerous steps, dodging the known leakage spots from the gutters,

and finally found the porch light.

Alex felt the cold through to her core, but the warmth of the light and her family eased her mind from the horrible instances she had just gone through.

Suddenly, the porch light turned off. The humans didn't want to keep it on any more, apparently. Undaunted by the lack of heat, the bugs proceeded to find a small hole to the inside of the house. The window nearby provided such a lucky spot. She let her family enter first, to make sure they were safe.

When she reached the white edges of the window on the inside of the home, she couldn't help but become overjoyed at the thought of peace she now had. Her adventures in the flooding rain had proved difficult, but as she climbed down the pink and purple flowered wall paper toward the grey shag carpet on the floor, her thoughts sobered as she thought about Andy and where he would be at this moment. Like before, her thoughts could only be deterred by a jarring noise or event. This time, the house cat, a calico female named Wiskaz, jaunted happily over to her with the bell on her collar ringing like a church bell.

Alex, alarmed, tried to get to the carpet before the cat could spot her.

Wiskaz spotted her newest victim and scurried quickly over.

Saliva surrounded her before Alex could blink. Then, the fluff of fur tossed her around in the air. Tiny pieces of fur stuck to her back.

Saliva again.

Then darkness.

Last Shot By Holly Evans



The Fox and the Spider
By Holly Evans

The fox smiles, showing his alluring teeth.

From a distance they sparkle,

But up close his jaws are stained with blood.

His prey comes too close.

It's too late, they see his teeth's crimson polish.

The spider weaves her web close to the fox's den.

Bits of his dinner catches in her trap.

She feasts off of the blood soaked morsels.

The spiders legs infatuate the forest,

They are welcoming like a mothers arms.

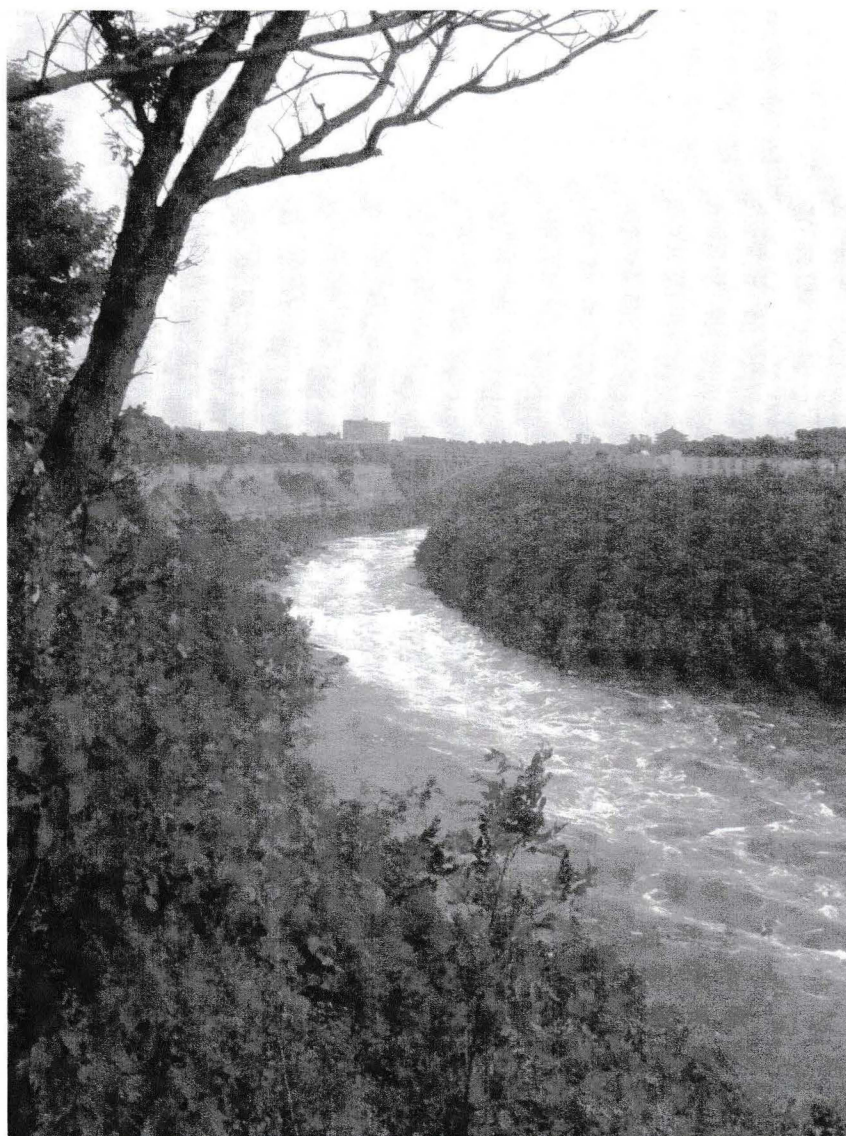
She will soon attract another host,

And only then will she ravage the fox.

Destroyed
By Ashley Bringmann

Destroy your self will
While also destroying me.
Alone with only wealth.
Back handed, black handed
Letters against my beating heart.
They tied me to a pole.
Under a spell
Of the walking dead.
Blood curdling cackle.
She sleeps in the hands
Which keep her cold.
As the cauldron
Bubbles over.

Curve
By
Ashley
Bringmann



A Soldier's Dream
By Bobbie Lynn Richardson

A hill of rolling green seas, untouched by bile or flame.

Fields of rosy buds and lilac lovers dressed in white linens.

Home at last.

Uniforms clean and cut, stance for battle, for the action that will never need to be taken. For a war hopefully never fought.

Free at last.

Lovely clear skies filled with white puffy clouds. Blue starry nights with shooting wishing stars. Our old, faithful symbol of freedom.

United at last.

No more crimson blood shed from the innocent.

Nor death of either friend or foe. Embracing life.

Together at last.

Life, love and liberty. Along the free borders. Seas of shining, golden lights, and hills of silent, silver cities.

Peace at last.

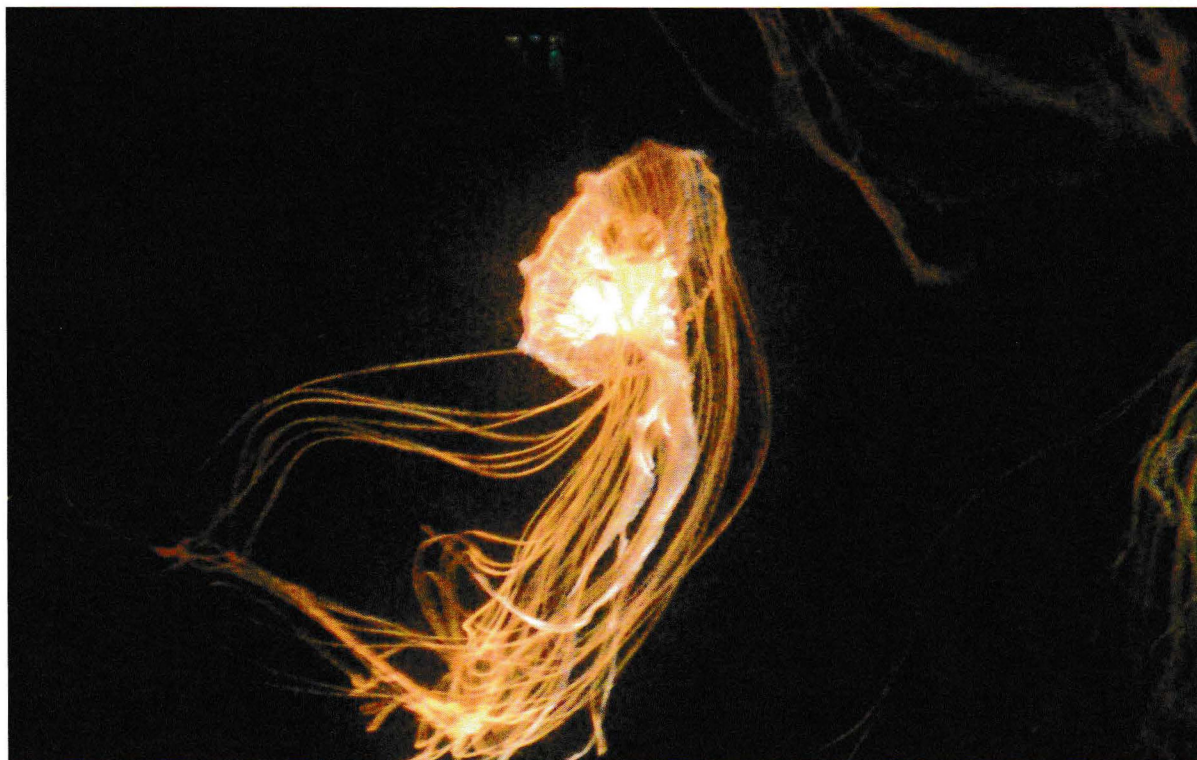
They are heroes of their time.

Sky Sailing By Kat Dodson



Beauty
By Michael Barr

Beauty is described as a characteristic of a place, place, object, or idea that provides a perceptual experience of pleasure, meaning, or satisfaction. That is what the dictionary, a book of lifeless paper, tells us is beauty. But beauty is much more than that. It is intertwined with looks, love, appearances, and charisma. It is about the inward and outward of your body. Beauty is a true human art. One can depict and create something that is beautiful; however, few can actually be beautiful. There are many who believe that a particular brand of clothing or make-up will make them beautiful. This, though shocking, is not true beauty. It is nothing more than a blinded sight of inner beauty.



Davey Jones Harp By Holly Evans

The Cough
Brielle Stanton

Sitting across the table I'm a world apart.

Coffee-stained teeth bite my tattered lower lip.

I'm starving. So which one of my lies will I spit?

The clinking of forks grows unbearable.

Café chatter screeches, hammering

spikes into my skull, my worn watch ticks

20 past my nicotine fix.

My feet tap dangerously, shamelessly,

stomping imaginary bugs on the floor.

Excusing myself, I slip away to the back.

Locked in a stall of solace and etched names,

carved and chipped, I know dinner is mine.

Scrambling through my satchel for a single light,

my hand falls in place around the dirty paintbrush

dipped in black to smother my lungs,

to coat my insides with steady strokes.

I find the warm embrace, a craving's ease.

Worries subside, charred and blistered.

Nothing acknowledges their presence

but a puff and aftertaste.

An easy breath, for a few cold nights,

marked by a smoky reticence,

Taste buds relaxed with the massage of menthol.

Chemicals rise on a hot air balloon tour

through the compact grey folds of my brain,

then plummet, anchor in hand, to tickle my stomach,

tingle my fingers and calm my restless toes.

I return to the table, pushing back the menu,

smiling tightly, shoving the cough

back down into the caverns of my chest.

'The Flab' goes to Taco Bell
By Elizabeth Voda

His servants all went home for the night. He knew that their shifts had ended, but what about now, at midnight, when he wanted to eat food? Who would make him something to eat? Of course, he didn't know how to use that confusing 'stove' thing in the kitchen, and he never had to make himself a meal. His dad always told him that was the servants' job, to do everything for him.

But, his stomach was starved. And so, he threw the remote on the extravagant leather couch to his side, decided that the NFL channel could wait for whenever he wanted, and lumbered toward the garage.

Hmm . . . which car to choose? The Mercedes, the Lincoln, the Audi, or any of the other ten different cars? Decisions kept getting tougher these days, but he ended up grabbing the set of keys for the Audi and shoved himself into his vehicle. One thing he knew how to do by himself was how to drive a car as well as maintain it. Starting the engine, he backed out of his garage with ease and headed out of his gated home into the city to see what kind of grub he could find at this time of the night.

Pale city street lights greeted him while he zoomed by. With his limited amount of patience, he almost gave up when he spied, in the distance, a lone Taco Bell sign, flickering with inviting enthusiasm. "Oh yeah, I kin go for sum of dat shit," he murmured, turning the car in the direction of his stomach's salvation.

In a few minutes he arrived, mostly due to running a red light or two, because, hey, hunger is serious. The parking lot looked scabbed-the potholes gave it a kind of appeal that he in

his youth would search out. And, look at that! Some kids, a racial mix of the city, hanging out in front of the joint, smoking cigarettes and gambling. Childhood never was so sweet a picture. It reminded him of his days dealing drugs in front of the Curry Donuts back at home before his parents divorced. At age fifteen, he knew his corrupted mayor of a mother couldn't get him out of jail anymore, so he quit that scene and went into gambling. Amazing at the street variety of gambling, he eventually moved on to the professional kind. And he got even richer from it.

The kids looked at him. For a second, they both stared at each other. He got out of his car, which then lifted about seven inches from the ground, and walked over. Their faces lit up—of course they knew him.

“Jonny Bones!” they gasped, and knew they didn't have to scatter.

Jonny grinned as he loomed over them. His dark skin glistened in the light. “Yo, man, you shud bet on dis one. That ain't tha way ta go.”

“Oh yeah, mista? You give it uh try, then!” the boy said as he stepped aside, allowing him to give it a try.

Jonny chuckled. The opportunity to dupe anyone out of money was never lost on him. However, the event was interrupted by the flashing lights of a patrolling police car. The kids yelled “Shit!” and ran, leaving their money in their own stupidity. Jonny quickly snatched it up and walked into Taco Bell, humming to himself happily for his ill-gotten gains.

The door rang with a bell as he entered, with the attempt to notify the cashier that a customer came in. Noise had no effect on the cashier's negligence toward his customer. His red hair flopped over his face, while his eyes scanned last month's issue of a magazine before him. A pale hand held up his tired head and he popped Double Bubble as he read.

Squinting, Jonny thought his contacts deceived his eyes. That couldn't be . . .

“Red! Paul Gnashko, how are ya, man?” He laughed at finding his old friend who worked at the first casino he obliterated with his card sharp luck.

The redhead looked up, surprised. “Red . . . ? Nah . . . that can’t be . . . Hey!” he jumped from his stool and reached his hand over the counter. “Jonny ‘The Flab’ Bones! How ya doin’?!”

Jonny grabbed his friend’s greasy hand and shook it vigorously. “Not too bad. Servants all left my home, got nada ta munch on, ya know? So I figured . . . ”

“. . . Why not come ta Taco Bell, huh? Good call, man,” he sat back down on his seat. “So, what do you want?”

“I’m thinking an extra large combo of 1, 5, and 6. And a enchilada on the side.” He scrutinized the menu more, deciding that this amount was good enough for a night’s snack.

“Oh . . . wow . . . Uhm, it’s gonna be a while, dude. I’m the only one here. Just relax and take a seat,” Paul explained after he took the money from his friend. He vanished behind the counter to make the ‘snack’.

“Damn, this is gonna be borin’.” He shuffled his huge feet to one of the booths while his huge mass jiggled with the movement. “How the fuck does anyone sit in one of these . . . ?”

He shoved himself into the booth and tried to get comfortable, not noticing his stomach flabbing over the table. “Yo man, you done yet?” he shouted, ever impatient. No reply came to him, so he sat there and waited.

It was taking forever to get some food. He watched a fly walk by on the speckled metal table. Dust flew before his eyes and he watched that, too.

The smell of the sickening sweet aroma of barely human consumable meat entered his nostrils. Food finally arrived on one tray with many plastic and paper containers.

enjoy your food, just go out of this door here, when you're done," Paul pointed toward the door Jonny had come in from.

"Yeah, man, no prob. See ya 'round," he was barely audible as he stuffed the enchilada into his mouth.

After Paul left and Jonny finished his huge amount of food, he belched. "Man, dat was sum good shit. Time ta get outta here."

He stood up. And moved the entire table up an inch. The bolts came loose a little bit, but it held fiercely onto the grey floor. He realized that getting back up was not possible for quite a while. And he had to go to the bathroom.

"Oh . . . fuck . . ."



Frosted Berries By Elizabeth Voda

Crazies By Ashley Bringmann



Sunshine Flowers By Elizabeth Voda



In Boxes
By Bethany Guarilia

When I enter his heart,
No locks or chains keep me out.
There is only a cheap plastic box
Hidden in a drawer.
Inside, I find pictures and notes,
Their dull edges stained with blood
Where they had cut across his chest,
Her name on every piece.
His heart beats between us as I pull him close.

Dandelions
By Bobbie Lynn Richardson

Who said we have the right
To pluck and kill the dandelions?
We call it worthless, ugly, a weed.
A waste upon our earth.

But what are you?
You, yourself, may be a weed,
Waiting to be plucked
Just for what you are,
Life stopped at the leisure of a ruthless god.

I Have a Dream!

By Michael Barr

“I have a dream that someday . . . I will own my own business, or at least a Dodge Viper, or a Nascar Nationwide series team, or even a room with a dozen plasma TVs, or . . .”

Yeah I better stop, this is starting to make me feel depressed. There are many materialistic things a person can wish for: a new house, a wife who looks just like Halle Berry, a better job or, maybe just a job in general. Of course that is why it is just a dream. Still though, each dream is a goal. A pathway to a life that person may want. Even if the dream is ridiculous, we still strive towards it. Some may make it, others fall short. Sometimes we set realistic dreams and they actually happen. Still though, as a human, I set unrealistic goals. These are my dreams; some will never happen, while others are quite realistic.

I dream of owning a Mark 4 or Victorian style house in the Tokyo or Kyoto district with a room full of Sony lcd TVs and thousands of games to play. Also, a nice hot spring to go with that. Next, there would be a backyard full of dogs, cats, tigers. Of course I would be freaked out if I owned a lion. At least tigers look cute. Lions on the other hand would just kill me. And of course I'd have a trainer to watch them, because if one of the tigers bite me, I'm shooting it in the head. I would also have two huge aquariums. A fresh water one full of turtles and a bunch of other little fish. Wait, I have a turtle and last time I put two goldfish in with it, it ate the poor fish. The other tank would be a saltwater tank with hammerhead sharks and dolphins. I always liked sharks, especially hammerheads. I wonder if the sharks would eat the dolphins; that would make me sad. It would be interesting to watch though. Next would be my garage with

rage with over 43 cars, including a Maserati Mc12 , the 2003 team Oreca Viper, the Crossfire, and the 1970 Plymouth Super Bird. Plus, I'd have hundreds of parts and engines to tune them up with. Now that is my dream.

The Reality of it is I'm 16, living in Detroit near Grosse Pointe and going to a lame school called Whopper. No car, no house of my own, and a long way to my dreams.



Scarred Woman By Ashley Bringmann

Peeking Squirrel
By Elizabeth Voda



Love is a Battlefield
By Ashley Bringmann

An unknown battlefield. A large grassy space surrounded by thick woods. A tall rocky ridge, right. It is just past sunrise. Lights up on Lawrence Heppet, he is a wrinkled and tough old man with grey hair. He is sitting on the ridge staring out into the abyss. He spends the play talking to himself and as a sort of narrator to the other characters.

SCENE

LAWRENCE: And another sunrise goes by, where are the days when time seemed to go so quickly and one could never sit and watch a sunset day after day. The days when love took care of everyone's needs. Ha! Love? No one could even experience true love, not these young people, they don't experience nothing.

(**ELIZABETH** enters, a beautiful blonde wearing an expensive summer dress; she sits in the middle of the battlefield and begins picking at the grass under her.)

LAWRENCE: Speaking of a young mess, look at that girl. A fine piece of work she is, a rich little beauty playing in dirt. She'll never get a man like that. Who am I kidding? Rich girls don't love anything but money, money, and more money.

(**JESSE** enters from the woods, walking quickly in **ELIZABETH'S** direction. He is wearing jeans and a collared shirt. It is clear that he isn't paying any attention to what is around him. He is deep in thought.)

LAWRENCE: Oh ho! Look at this poor fella, going to run right into miss little prissy pants over there. This is going to be the greatest laugh I've had in a long while.

(**JESSE** trips over **ELIZABETH**. **JESSE** falls, landing face to face on top of **ELIZABETH**.)

ELIZABETH: Oh!

LAWRENCE: Poor boy's gone and done it now. He he.

JESSE: I'm sorry. I wasn't watching where I was going and was walking way too fast. Sorry if I hurt you.

ELIZABETH: it is quite alright, I was just going to leave.

(**ELIZABETH** stands and starts to leave.)

LAWRENCE: The fool. Just going to let her leave are ya? Won't find a girl like that near him for a long time, not that he could ever win her heart. He doesn't have the money to even try.

(**JESSE** grabs her arm.)

LAWRENCE: Maybe the boy has some balls after all . . . this just keeps getting better and better! He's going to make himself out to be the biggest moron ever.

JESSE: No wait! Stay here. Please? I didn't mean to disturb you, and I would hate to be the reason for such a pretty girl to be leaving such a beautiful place.

ELIZABETH: Alright, I guess I could stay a bit longer. (*She sits facing him.*) What's your name, if you don't mind me asking?

JESSE: The name's Jesse, and what is the name of the pretty girl across from me?

LAWRENCE: She's blushing? She thinks he's being so sweet down there. Guess she doesn't realize boys that age to love at all, they only want one thing and it sure as hell isn't love.

ELIZABETH: My name is Elizabeth. I come from one of the most well-known and powerful families in the area. I have two perfect siblings, and I am expected to be just like them. I will one day marry and move to the city and be the perfect mother and socialite.

LAWRENCE: She's probably already told him her life's story. The way those kids are brought up, I will never understand.

JESSE: Um, any reason you told me all that? Sounds cool and all, but I only asked for your name.

(**ELIZABETH** turns her head away in shame.)

ELIZABETH: I am sorry. I'm not used to having just a normal conversation with people my

age. Most of them are stuck up and boring. I fear I came off as being quite boring just now, but they do speak like that in my house.

JESSE: It's okay . . . I guess.

LAWRENCE: She's scaring him away just by talking; she sure is a winner. This guy knows how to pick his lays well. Wait . . . what is he doing?

(**JESSE** pushes her face towards him again.)

JESSE: You have nothing to be so ashamed about. At least you have something to look forward to. I've got nothing; it's just me and the world right now. My parents work so much they probably didn't even notice I haven't been home the past two days.

LAWRENCE: Being all touchy feely to get in her right into her pants, oh what a good plan. He's going to break her to-day.

ELIZABETH: Why haven't you been home the past two days?

JESSE: Learning more about a perfectly good stranger, eh? Well I guess I just don't want to go home, I want to feel like I've done something, lived for something.

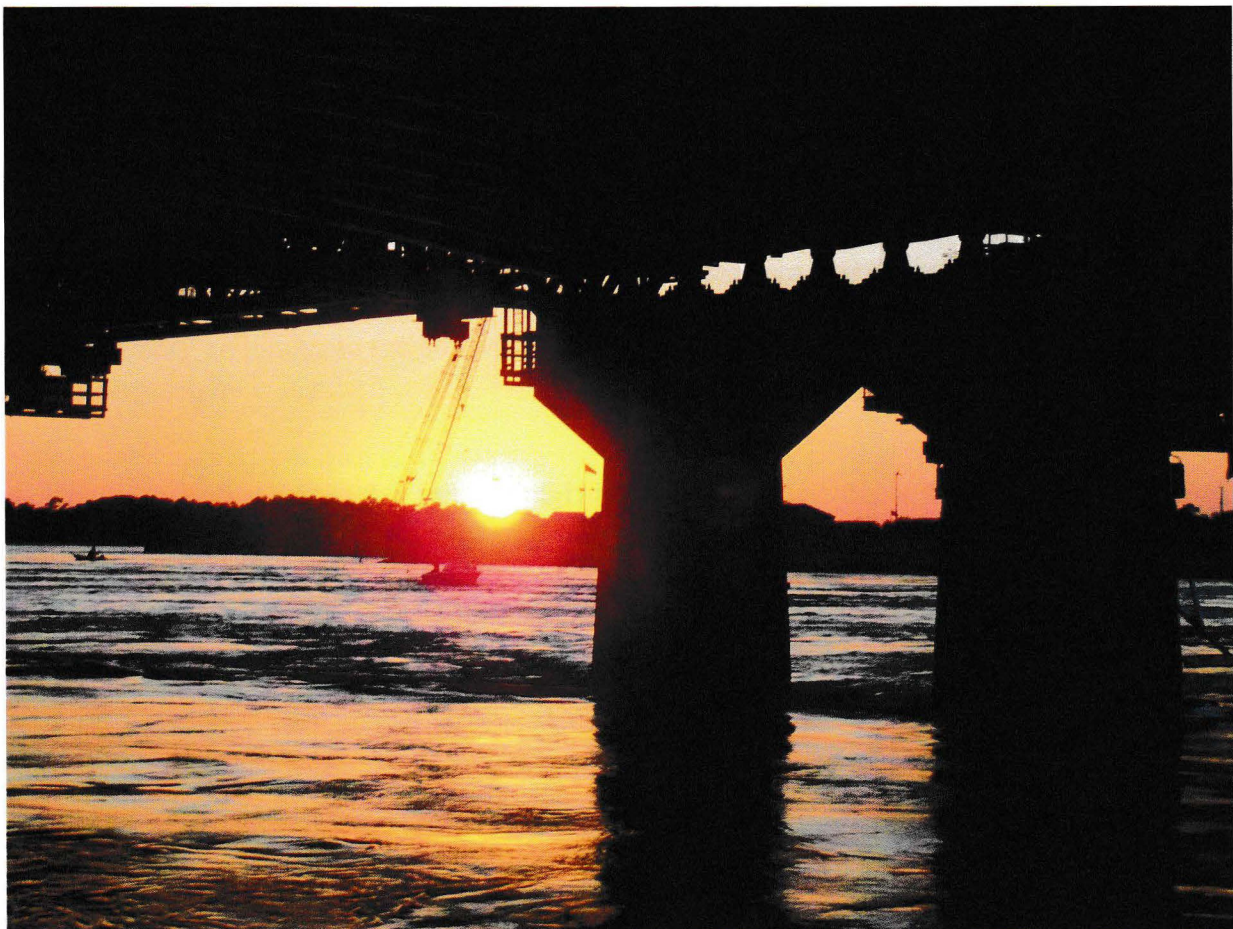
ELIZABETH: Well that certainly sounds exciting.

JESSE: Yes it does. Anyway what are you looking for, happiness? Money? Peace?

ELIZABETH: All those things! And of course love.

LAWRENCE: Ha! Now the girl's gone and done it. He'll run like a cheetah at the word "love."

END



Sunset Bridge By Elizabeth Voda

Garage Sale By Jeffrey Ford



Author and Staff Bios

Johnny Azzarelli spends his time grinding soapstone. He claims he will meet the ghost of Eleanor Roosevelt one day.

Michael Barr is never on time for anything. He does, however, have a loving “family” of other students here at Wilkes University, including a “mother” who slaps him more than she should. But, he spend way too much time looking after everyone but himself and deserves 90% of those slaps.

Ashley Bringmann spends most of her time geeking out over everything Disney. With dreams of being a princess, she will put those dreams to good use once she’s finished with college.

John Carroll is devastatingly handsome.

Kat Dodson is lurking under your bed, waiting to take photos of you while you sleep.

Bernard Dougherty is a student at Wilkes University.

Matt Endress is a senior English major at Wilkes University. He is graduating this semester and will be missed by the rest of the Manuscript staff.

Holly Evans is a senior English major at Wilkes University who forgot to send in her bio. She spends most of her time listening to Justin Bieber and making fun of Prius drivers with her fellow English majors.

Jeffrey Ford was first discovered in the wilds of Australia by a national Geographic expedition. After years of being raised by wild Wallabies, the young bush-critter was cleaned up and introduced into the world of television production. One day, he consumed a whole plate of fried Oreos and suffered a sugar shock. He then hijacked a hovercraft and fled into the night.

Bethany Guarilia is a biology major and secondary education minor. She loves reading, writing, music, and science.

Bobbie Lynn Richardson is a freshman Earth and Environmental Science major.

Kristina Spaulding is a senior English major at Wilkes University. She is graduating this semester and will be missed by the rest of the Manuscript staff.

Courtney Sperger is a graduate of Wilkes University who spends her spare time delving into the arts.

Author and Staff Bios

Brielle Stanton is a junior Biology major, minoring in Chemistry and Dance. She plans on attending Upstate Medical and enjoys writing, dancing, and spending time with friends and family.

Jonathan Sytko is a student at Wilkes University

Lennae Thompson is a education major at Wilkes University

Katrina Toporcer is a soviet spy, secretly indulging in her love of all things artistic. Loves to "skank" while listening to ska music whenever she's not thwarting the abundance of social injustices which somehow manage to follow her wherever she goes. Oh and she loves cookies!

Elizabeth Voda is an English major with concentrations in Writing and Literature, and she plans to graduate in the Spring of 2012 semester.

Chris Waugh has spent his entire life in Nanticoke and will probably die there as well. He has an unhealthy obsession with trashy sci-fi movies and books, and he watches way too much T.V. Christopher attended Greater Nanticoke Area High School and Luzerne County Community College before taking classes at Wilkes.



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