

DRIFTWOOD



ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY



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LITERARY ARTS
MAGAZINE

2015-2016





SPECIAL THANKS

I would like to thank all the amazing students that helped put this creative magazine together and “hopped” on the Driftwood train making it that much more of a fun experience. Without their hard work and agreeing to work around the clock, this would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Biscayne College for its wonderful help that really started this train as well as the additional help from the STU Library and all the great events we have co-sponsored in this year. A huge "thank you" goes out to Johnathan Roach and Dr. Arnold for helping Driftwood financially as well as a huge "thank you" to Mark Rogers and the STU mailroom professionals who printed Driftwood for us all to enjoy. Another tremendous "thank you" goes to Dr. Montes for all his extra help along with his creative writing class this spring semester that ended up being some of our top submitters. And last but not least, a huge special thanks to our amazing Driftwood Advisor, Dr. Reckford, for all his help and for believing in the Driftwood team and all our hard work. But the greatest thanks of all goes to all the students, faculty, and staff of STU who submitted their works to Driftwood: without your amazing contributions, there would not be a Driftwood. Let us continue to grow and build Driftwood to become an enormously significant literary and art publication at STU for your enjoyment!

Thank you everyone,

Kris-Alain Ambroise,

Editor-in-Chief



St. Thomas University Library





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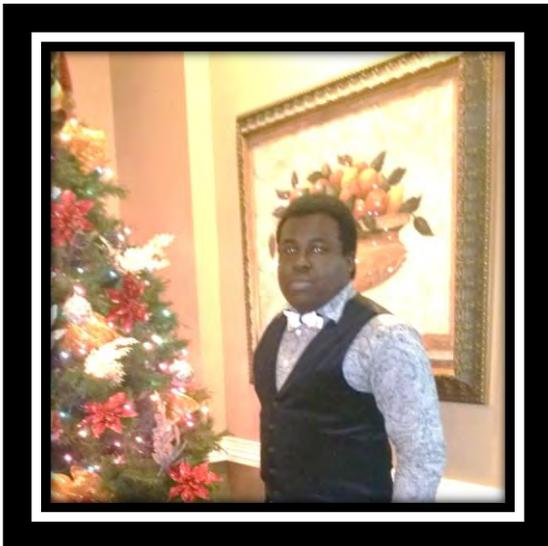


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DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Kris-Alain Ambroise - Editor-in-Chief, Lead Poetry Editor, and Library Liaison



“If you wrote something for which someone sent you a check, if you cashed the check and it didn't bounce, and if you then paid the light bill with the money, I consider you talented.”

-Stephen King

Kris is a Junior at STU and a Political Science (Pre-Law) Major with Minors in Biology (Pre-Med), Psychology, International Relations, and History, as well as English specialization. He is well rounded and integrated in organizations both on and off campus, being on the E-Board of seven student organizations, even starting a mentoring program in the Law School for student leaders, and holding multiple leadership positions throughout the state of Florida while being an active member in his community and social scene. His interest are global political issues, human rights, art, anime, fashion, and traveling.



Lauren Franco - Vice Editor-in-Chief (Fall 2015), Lead Review Editor, and Associate Lyric Editor



"A life is like a garden. Perfect moments can be had, but not preserved, except in memory. LLAP "

-Leonard Nimoy

Lauren graduated this past December, 2015, with a Bachelors in English and a Minor in Communication Arts. She was and will forever be a proud and dedicated Driftwood Alum. She enjoyed writing, anime, and drawing.

Aimee Thielman - Vice Editor-in-Chief (Spring 2016), Lead Graphic Design Editor, and Social Media Coordinator



"Normal is an illusion. What is normal for the spider is chaos for the fly."

-Morticia Addams

Aimee is a Senior at STU and a Psychology Major with a Minor in Visual Arts. She is a dedicated student leader, became part of the psychology honors program, and got to present great research at STU's Symposium this semester. She is a tremendous artist and Driftwood's honorary "Photographer-in-Chief". She is very interested in anime, art, and photography in her free time.



Elsie Pena - Head of Content, Associate Graphic Design Editor, and Biscayne College Liaison



“The most important relationship in your life is the relationship you have with yourself. Because no matter what happens, you will always be with yourself.”

-Diane Von Furstenberg

Elsie is a Junior at STU and a Communication Arts Major from Puerto Rico. Her vibrant personality and dedication to academic excellence have allowed her to become actively involved in organizations such as WSTU95, Phi Alpha Theta, and is also the Vice President of STU's first ever fashion organization. In her free time Elsie does fashion designing and can be found in various art events throughout the city for inspiration.

Jose Zuniga, Jr. - Head of Recruitment, Lead Short Story Editor, and Creative Writing Liaison



“The most important things are the hardest to say, because words diminish them.”

-Stephen King

Jose is a Senior at STU and a Double Major in English and Communication Arts with a Minor in Visual Arts. He’s also a member of Phi Alpha Theta and has assisted with copy editing on the Fall 2015 *Humanities and Technology Review*. His interests are films, horror, and anime; as well as writing fiction & poetry, and painting in his free time.



Anishka Romeo - Lead Lyric Editor, Associate Review Editor, and Financial Advisor/Liaison



"Slow down and enjoy life. It's not only the scenery you miss by going to fast - you also miss the sense of where you are going and why."

-Eddie Cantor

Anishka is a Senior at STU and a Finance Major specializing in Economics. She has strived to great heights academically, is well rounded, an experienced student leader, and well versed in five languages. She is interested in music, observing landscapes, and travelling.

Seyna Yeakey - Associate Poetry Editor and Creative Writing Liaison



"We are here to laugh at the odds and live our lives so well that Death will tremble to take us."

- Charles Bukowski

Seyna is a writer, artist, creator, and martial artist, who is a Senior at STU majoring in Psychology and specializing in English. She hopes to work with families and children, and work on her creative writing as well as help those in need through martial arts.



Cristina Garwacki - Associate Short Story Editor and Athletic Liaison



"Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them."

-William Shakespeare

Cristina is a Sophomore at STU and a Criminal Justice major with a minor in English. She is a soccer player on the STU Women's Soccer team and her interests include family, friends, and sports.

Jon-Luc Borno - Associate Review Editor and Staff Assistant



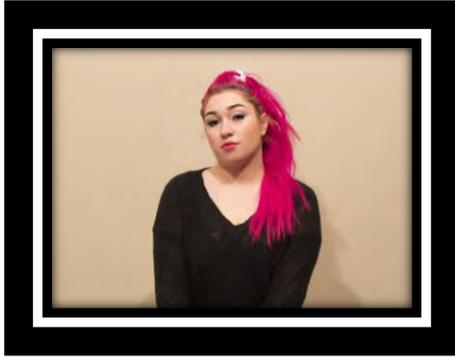
"One small crack does not mean that you are broken, it means that you were put to the test and didn't fall apart."

-Linda Poindexter

Jonluc Borno is a Junior at STU and majoring in Communication Arts. He is well versed in the world of writing and analyzing the arts. Such arts include, but are not limited to illustrations, music, dance, poetry, and screenwriting. He gleefully looks forward to viewing and seeking out many artists from all walks of life who may be interested in submitting their work to Driftwood Magazine.



Milagros Mulero - Staff Assistant



"...art wasn't supposed to look nice; it was supposed to make you feel something."

-Rainbow Rowell, Eleanor & Park

Milagros is a Junior in the S.T.E.M school at STU, majoring in Biology with a specialization in Research and English. Her Interests are poetry, horror, and modeling.



Student Section

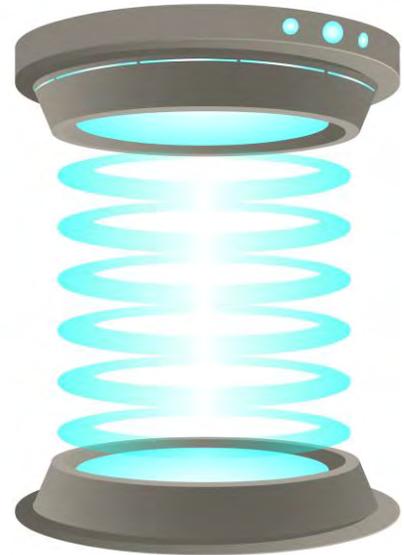


Poetry

Poems By Charles Morales

Transport

Rotate to the genesis,
a trio creating a cadence to our stillness.
An opus of electronic transport
on bulb-lit courtyard.
The brick walls surrounding
Bending inwards and outwards
Gasping for air.
Arrow eyes discovering lucidity in the shadows,
stars parachuting creating a stardust feast.
Snap. Snap. Snap.
Our fingers an ode to the cadence,
an appreciation for the prelude.





La Perla

Distance no longer measured by miles of sea,
daydreams and night thoughts conquered.
The weight of La Perla unbalanced on her shoulders,
a native to her land now foreign.
Enter your sanctuary mi vida,
the garden holds it breath for you,
reminisce on the weathered turquoise stool
that was your ocean now.
She mirrored her garden
adorned in a floral headpiece,
the orchids bowing as she entered
to humbly extend her roots and resurrect the weeds.
The silent concrete leaving remnants of wet feet
as she arrived to rest on her ocean
and forever dream of La Perla.





New Light

Transient sunrise pulsating
via godly appetite attracted
lovers in common.

Two beings sharing time
on almond grain sand,
the percussion of waves
creating an orchestra tranquil.

Overflowing passion
dismissed all dueling uncertainties
as they held each other
after a night of swing.

Memories swept through simultaneously,
dancing to the upright bass
driving footsteps to melodic madness
as saxophone solos provided the bridge
to non-discrete kisses.

Drenched in celebration
they removed their garments,
submerging into the ocean
now warm from the new light risen.





Poems and a Free Verse by Jose Zuniga Jr.

Hell Ride

They say a big family makes a happy family.
A big family in a compressed vehicle,
That's another story.

A pack of wild animals,
That's what they are.
Not 2, not 5, but 10 kids. Same parents.
No TV and they're busy.

This isn't some typical four doored car.
It's a long van with a tedious entryway.
Mom and dad have it lucky,
Their doors are right there.
What do the others have?
A hole everyone rushes into.

There's enough seats,
But it's like an episode from those survival shows.
Seatbelt straps in the way, bits of cereal on the carpet
And car seats that waste space.

This is heaven for a roach.
There's one hiding, I'm sure.
Food and clothes everywhere,
The dream hotel for pests.

I struggle through the straps,
Making my way to the back.
Two noisy monkeys on each side.
Mom and dad call for me,
I can't hear over the constant screeching of animals.
I'm scolded.

Today is an hour long drive.
Destination, Miami.
Watching cars drive by no longer keep me sane.
Music does.

Earphones go in, but with them,
Not even the bass I hear.
Public buses are more peaceful than this,





And there's homeless crazy people on board.

We get there, we see family.

We eat, we laugh, we judge, that's who we are.

Night falls, we say goodbyes.

The Happy is gone.



The Cuban Devil

This guy puts me down, embarrasses me.
I call him my mentor,
What a mistake.

I choose him because he didn't give the "yes" answer,
He gave me the most offensive, insulting and heartbreaking truth.
For there on, I knew he was the one.
Four years I've shadowed him,
Four days a week,
Four hours a day.
Constant rewriting.

He takes the sheets of papers I spend hours on,
Caresses his beard as if he's having an intellectual debate,
And narrows his eyes at me,
And sets the papers down with complete silence.
Another rejection.

Writing and rewriting to the point my fingers go numb,
My hand falls asleep, my head falls onto the desk.
Many nights I spend my slumber in this way,
Dreaming for inspiration,
And waking up to the smell of bacon the next morning.

I earn A's in all classes,
But twice a week,
At 8 in the morning,
Highest grade was a C, never reaching a B.
I try it my way, and then his way,
Even in his way, he's still unsatisfied.
What does he want?
What are his standards?

My senior year, my last semester, my last chance.
2 papers go by, and it's the same red letter I see each time.
One paper left and it felt like limbo.
Endless research and weeks I don't remember.
When the last time I had a good night's sleep?

Final day reaches, all was turned in.
He passes by me, places my paper face down.
I expect the usual, but this time, this very moment,
He pats my shoulder and smiles.
The Cuban Devil gave me a C+.





Sunset Adieu

I start to head home. To do this, I take a train and bus. Something that always amazes me about the train rides is how everyone lines up, and as soon as the train arrives and its doors open, a stampede. Kids with glazed eyes, pinned to their Beats. Old women shuffling Publix bags back and forth and back and forth. Everybody on a cell. Suddenly, there is a train, and everybody pops out of their hypnosis. They battle their way to a table. Elbows and knees and maybe a jab to the ribs. Anything necessary for a little slab and four strong legs.

I won't lie, I'm one of them too. Today, it is pure luck. I get a table all to myself. I know it's going to be hours, and nothing on Netflix works. Instead, I look out the window and watch the sky fade into night. I see the lights over Miramar flicker on and the buildings and people swipe past at thirty. Tapping the glass with the tips of my fingernails, I wonder if perhaps there is too much overexcitement about this. It is college. My last year. Soon there will be jobs and money and I can eat at every meal. It doesn't really matter whether I have an apple now or not. It doesn't really matter whether I have a sandwich now or not. Someday soon I'll eat.





Poems by Michael Becke

Stone Heart

Tequila footsteps, Am I dreaming with the
Snake? A venom that plays tricks, a leaking

Forked tongue tempting my
Ears, with words and promises of

Endeavors smothered in deadly sin.
The mask of the brown-eyed girl.

Innocence, beauty, five a.m. conversations
No man or God can resist, so now we

Etch epitaphs into tombstone
Hearts that read "I love you."

But it still beats
Cracking the rock and bringing color back to flesh.

Excalibur was removed by unlikely
Hands that feed the same serpent.

Even Jesus broke bread with
Betrayal. Knowing

That her deadly



Toxin, is the only antidote.

So coil around and

Embrace what you created.

Because your piercing gaze and head of

Snakes can't remove my crown of thorns.



Silence

Wheel of Fortune in the background.

Her hands shake.

Pushing more of his clothes in the already stuffed plastic bag

White shirts stained with paint

No suitcases, they can't use them

It's not laundry day.

She can still hear tools in the garage.

The house is quiet.

A new bag,

Another drawer full of clean clothes.

His smell.

Praying for the next phone call so she can escape.

Escape all the black and white pictures of sixteen-year-old romance

One that will last through death.

An eternity of love, hate, revenge, forgiveness, children, progression, hindrance, success, failures; And

Nothing.

Nothing but silence and clothes that don't have a home anymore.



In loving memory of...

Shattered glass lays in shambles

Echoes of silhouetted strangers

Shadows, shotguns, whispers and golden shell casings

Silent Steps

Residents Shivering. Then screams.

Sleeping with eyes wide open.

Daymares worse than night terrors. Sadistic

Survival because

Bloody silver still shines.

Doors slam and tires squeal.

Stench of rotting flesh in plastic bags

And stolen pieces pawned for pennies

While police practice politics.

Sirens light the street.

Ghosts haunting relinquished

Homes protected by plywood. Sheltering abandoned stillness

Preachers send out

Plenty of prayer

In loving memory of entire families

Once held dear.



Music

Banjos of shoe strings.

Black worn leather boot smacks against weathered wood.

Strong and soft hands alike crack against skin,

Ragged jean.

Lips gape, for whistles, for words.

Delicate fingers scurry through keys

The painter remains voiceless, but the music tells his story

Fast then slow

Soft then Loud

Crescendo; Staccato blurring out sounds

Saxophones and Trumpets

Croon and Sticks

Doo-Wop, Cigar smoke

Wine glasses and small talk.

Same tune, different voice

Same story, different time

Same people, different Religion

Same innocence, Same War

Same song, Different Burial





Miracle

Even in places where my sight is blind
Where touch and murky tales of words are all that exist
Where white anniversary dresses are thrown on the floor
Painted in the color of shadow

Preferring portraits painted in poetic letters,
Scrambled on a page OR
Sounds unique and touched with vocal chords. Muffled Music
How sweet her words taste!

Better than that 30-dollar glass of wine she ordered.

Shit, better than grandma's cooking

She's lying there-spent. Bare pale skin moon-kissed.
I can tell she's not sleeping,

The breathing's off.

Flushed, throat still stained with my grip. Emerald eyes

Hypnotized in mine. Words now unsaid,

Pollute the air. Beautiful words:

Love, Infatuation, Intimacy

But, it's all left in her head, and instead



“We can’t do this again.”

Another lie, she’s weak

I’ve been all over, spent hours, days in her mind.

Some violet tulips and a spritz of cologne

I’d be in this bed again.

Even those words

Masked in deceit, threatening my position

I devour and relish their attempt to burn my composure

Miracles that can only be created with tongue by mind.



Nonsense by Daniel De Yarza

I sit on the floor, class waiting to start.
The hallway, footsteps and whispers, students ambling to class.
The wall before me, a chaotic jumble of random colors.

I begin to create shapes with random tiles.
Two smiley faces—the letter C—all of Africa.
Here and there, a pixelated circle.

This is an odd moment of tranquility.
A moment of peace in the nonsense of my head.
This wall, a flat plane, is easy to understand.

My head isn't.
That's a Rubik's cube unsolved.
Reds and yellows and greens all fighting for order.

For every problem that comes my way,
I shake the Cube.
The colors never merge.
The puzzle just harder to solve.

Every day the colors start bright.
At night, every piece turns gray.
Like this wall, with its dull tiles,
all I hear are whispers and footsteps.

One day,
I will throw all this nonsense away.
I will lay the pieces of the Cube on the floor.
I will match the colors, one by one,
and learn to let the whole thing go.



Poems by Seyna Yeakey

Echoes

Frozen dirt ground, my lungs filled with the cold air,
my chest burns slightly.

As I attempt to adapt my breathing to this new and discomfoting climate;

Orange/red brick walls and towers,
a railroad track running straight through.

This is Birkenau.

It's strange to be here -- even stranger that I hesitate to look up from my feet.

The anguish, the terror, the trauma,
forcibly and cruelly parted from their loved ones.

There were no good-byes.

A trail of flowers aligned on the tracks,
remembrance of innocent souls.

I hold myself back from touching them,
afraid I will somehow cause a disturbance.

A walk that is almost a death march in itself;
Work sets you free.

Welcome.

My blood rushes to my cheeks and through my veins.

Hollowed out walls covered in glass;

Suitcases, glasses, shoes.

Relief rushes over me momentarily upon exiting,
until this.

Chills down my spine in an unfaltering speed.



Metal doors screamed “No way out”.

My body unable to move forward;

Can I live with the regret?

Enter.

White, bland walls,

almost in an attempt to erase their own unsettling history.

My heartbeat sounds off in my ears.

The twisting sensation in my stomach grows stronger.

The air is warmer now,

But I still feel my body freezing.

Almost as if my blood is on protest to flow.

Crushing ice and dirt beneath my feet seem louder now,

A faint whaling sound echoes throughout.

I am a believer in ghosts, but I know there would be none here.

The sound is of absolute emptiness.



Under Construction

You spend the night killing yourself with caffeine and insomnia;
spend the rest of the day trying to feel like you're not dying.

That's what we do.

Build something up—Knock something down.
Write half a poem. Crumble the paper. Throw out the garbage.
Two weeks later, write the other half.

That's what we do.

Change directions. Leave the state.
Move in with someone who doesn't love you;
 pretend that it works until you move back home.
Pivot. Change directions again.
Stay up all night, every night, have another cup of coffee.
Set goals. Ignore them.
Build up a wall. Drink another cup.

Yes. That is what I do.

Drag the days all jacked-up and trembling.
Wait for somebody to come along,
 and shock me.
Remind me that sometimes destruction is its own form of creation.
To be able to properly reconstruct,
 to build anything lasting, durable.
I must learn to find the break. Reset the bone.

Breathe in.
Stay put.
Agree to heal.



4 AM

4 AM holds me captive.

My hands, so old now, smell of paper. Lead.

You wouldn't be able to trace any of it;
if it weren't for the red crumbs.

If it weren't for those bits of chewed up erasers I've spit out,
scattered across the gouged wood--

 the grooves of all those dead names--
and dates,
and boys in camouflage uniform.

Everyone's written all over them.

4 AM knows all of my secrets.



Victim

by Kris Ambroise

Smiling faces in a crowd, but one sad loner cursing all around;
“Life is unfair” we all may agree, but this poor victim just wants to be free.
No one close to call a friend, sobbing around school screaming “it’s unfair,”
Things happen, you must remember, that you control the path you desire.
“No more punches,” it’s your call, don’t blame yourself, it’s no ones’ fault.
Misunderstood by all around, staring blindly at masks that judge about.
Whisper, whisper in the halls; rumor , rumor flying off the walls.
No need to cry, ignore them all; make it your mission to prove them all wrong.
Words do hurt, I must admit; don’t take it to heart, you will only submit.
A ticking time bomb this victim appears, ready to explode at any moment with tears.
Commits suicide to escape it all; not knowing what she had, leaving it all.
A large black cloud now descends amongst all; shocking them much, leaving them all in
“Awwws.”

Refuse
To Be A Victim.®



The Dirt

By **Karim Nashed**, St. Thomas Law School-2L

They say with passion comes glory
Let me tell u about this story
Of a kid who came from the dirt
All his life he was beat he was hurt
People made fun of his name,
Made fun of his race
Made fun of his face
But he just takes it in and spits it back in their face
Like crap he can't control this crap
This is God's plan
This is God's land
And he put him here for a reason
Why else is he still breathing
Out here leaving
Nothing for granted
Maybe u don't understand it
He had a reason to panic
All his life he was told that he
Wouldn't amount to crap
That he wasn't good at this
rapping crap



But he just gets on the mic and spits
And he doesn't even write his crap
Doesn't even know who he's
fighting with
He's just rhyming crap by himself
He does it to express himself
It ain't about the wealth
It ain't about his health
He ain't afraid to die
He ain't afraid to fly high
Through the blue skies
But instead
He's here with a bunch of friendly guys
Who love to tell a bunch lies
And Sometimes he gets down and asks God why
Why these fears why these peers
Why these eyes why these ears
Why this mouth why this flow
Why this guy why this ho
Because he doesn't know
He just hopes that one day he will blow and show what he was placed here for and he doesn't
want nothing more, it's not even about rap
It's about doing something greater
And He prays that it comes sooner than later
Before he's back in the dirt
Where it all started
With his dearly departed
Sometimes people think he's retarded but maybe he just too smart
He sees the beauty in the art
He has the passion for the part
But these girls are always breaking his heart
And he doesn't know when good things are going to start to happen
So he's just out here rappin
For himself because nobody ever shows him love nobody ever gives him props only trouble with
the cops
Not even a phone call from his Popz
What's up with that
It's been a while
He's going wild
Problems ever since he was a child



And it just continues to pile and pile
He doesn't know whether it's a sign
Or if he should just grab the 9 and pop 9, or if things will just get better with time like old wine,
But y'all don't hear him
He's a freaking mime

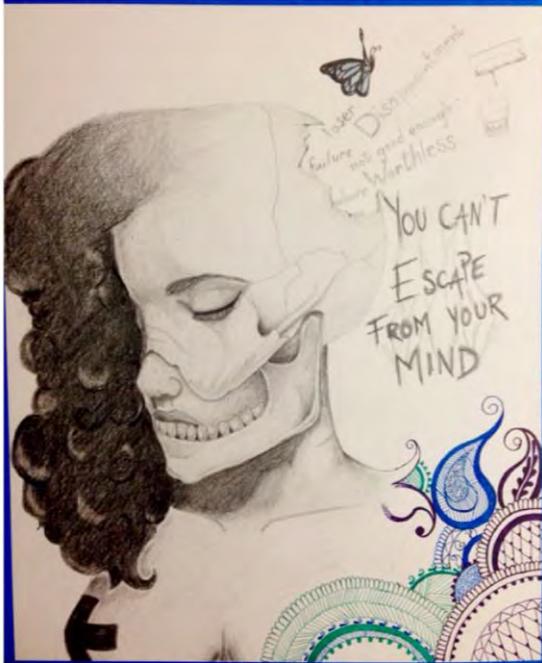
Arts & P H O T O G R A P H Y

The art and photography received are from students and faculty, which is highly appreciated due to the fact that the contributors are receiving a chance for their passions to be displayed to the student body. The manner in which the artwork or photography is interpreted is solely up to the viewer.

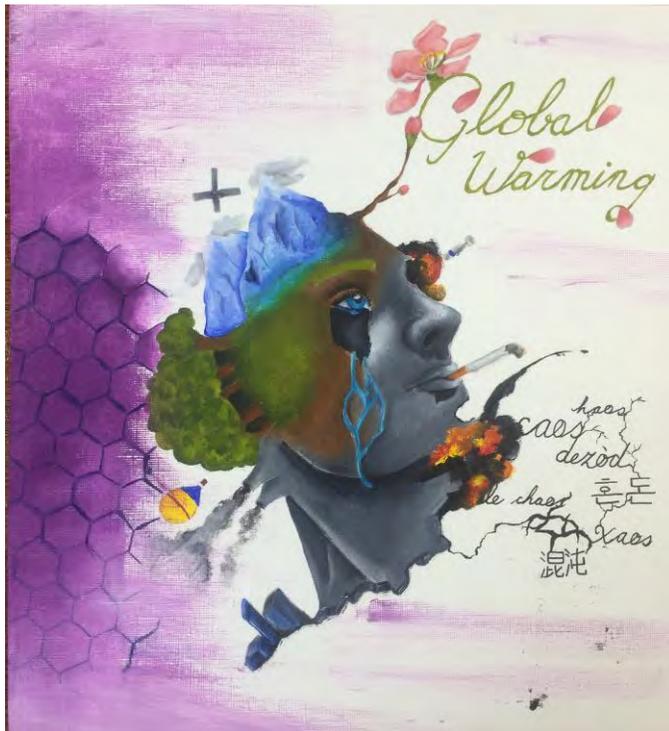
Enjoy the pure ecstasy of their passion.



Title: "Explosion"
Artist: Audrey Godsey
Mediums: Marker on Paper



Title: "Depression"
Artist: Aimee Thielman
Mediums: Pencil and Marker on Canvas



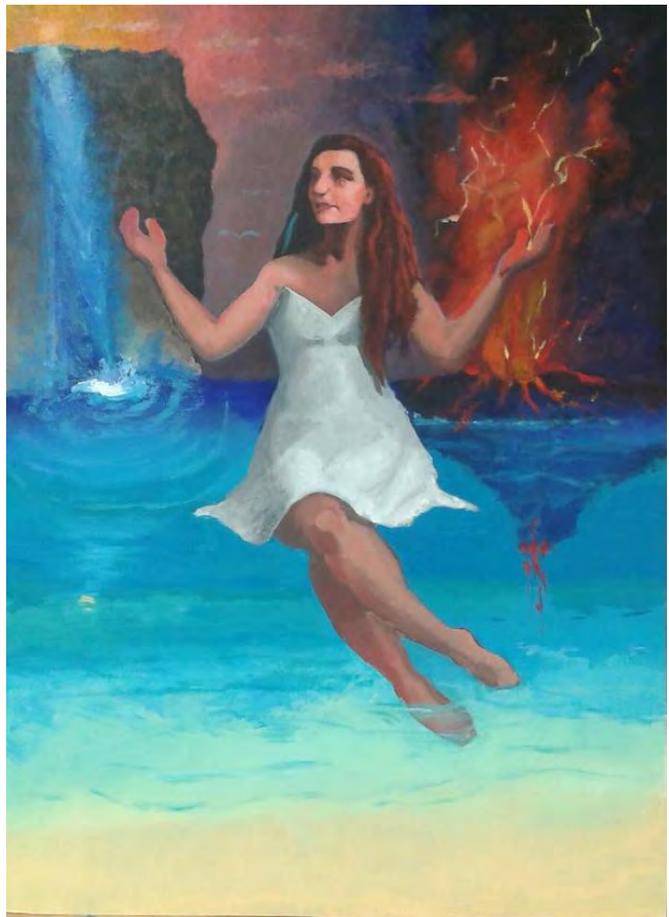
Title: "Global Warming"
Artist: Aimee Thielman
Mediums: Acrylic on Canvas



Title: "Rush Album Cover
Artist: Jose Zuniga
Mediums: Acrylic on Canvas



Title: "Poseidon/ Hephaestus
Artist: Jose Zuniga
Mediums: Acrylic on Canvas





Title: "Smoke and Mirrors"
Artist: HYU
Mediums: Digital Art



Title: "Angel"
Artist: HYU
Mediums: Digital Art



Title: "Xylene"
Artist: Kris Ambroise
Mediums: Acrylic on Canvas



Title: "Poison Ivy"
Artist: Audrey Godsey
Mediums: Pencil and Marker on Canvas





Title: "Sunset Serenade"
Artist: Nadya Borno
Mediums: Acrylic on Canvas



Title: "The Fashion Pup"
Artist: Nadya Borno
Mediums: Pencil on Canvas



Title: "Imprint"
Artist: Seyna Yeakey
Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

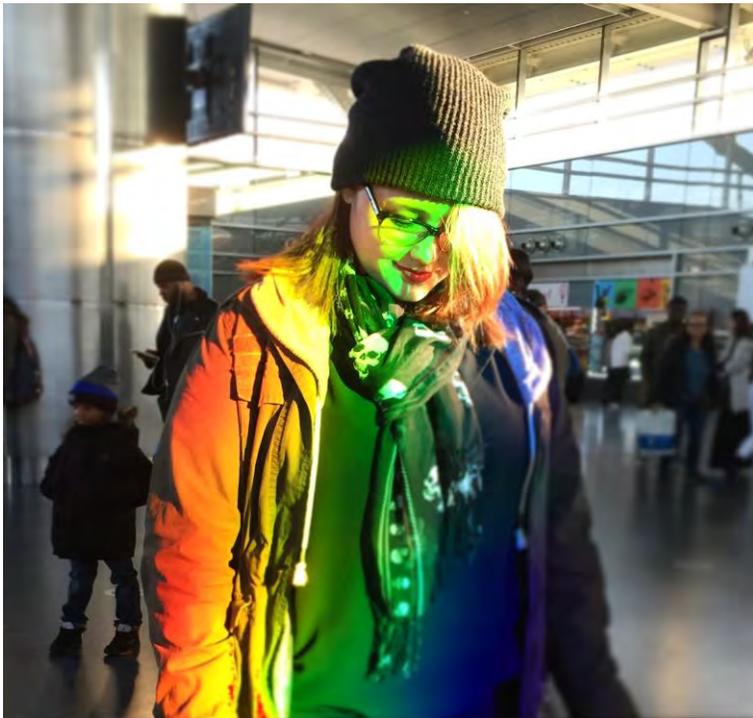


Title: "Alaska"
Artist: Seyna Yeakey
Medium: Acrylic on Canvas





Title: "Penciled Sun"
Photographer: Aimee Thielman



Title: "Embrace the Rainbow"
Photographer: Aimee Thielman



Title: "Boca Boat Race"
Photographer: Kris Ambrose



Title: "Tampa's Children Mural"
Photographer: Kris Ambrose





Title: "Bright Heavens"
Photographer: Jose Zuniga



Title: "Celestial Sunset"
Photographer: Jose Zuniga



Title: "Hot Rod"
Photographer: Wei Ren



Title: "Artful Corner"
Photographer: Wei Ren





Title: "City View"
Photographer: Wei Ren



Title: "Fan Club"
Photographer: Wei Ren

Short Stories



Fractured by Nicole Smith

She had waited five months to return it, that hideous blue blouse with pink butterflies. Why did I agree to take her to Nordstrom? I'm driving on the expressway, staring blankly ahead at the open road, palms sweaty, trying to drive the minimum speed limit. I am in no rush to get there. Every time I take my mother out in public she manages to make some sort of scene. I'm already embarrassed. I told her this damn thing was ugly the moment she pulled it off the rack. She insisted, however, saying that it's nice for the spring time. The second she got home she tried it on and looked at herself in the mirror with disgust.

"I told you, mom."

"Don't give me that! I'll return it tomorrow" she said with an annoyed look on her face.

Well five months later, we're on our way back to Nordstrom to return that exact blouse. We're going to look like idiots. My mother looks like a little child in the passenger seat, looking out the window with a grin because she's excited to go out on an adventure. I am the opposite. I want to turn the car around. But I know she needs to be out in public; it's good for her sometimes. Our exit is fast approaching. My stomach is churning and I'm not sure if it's the nerves or because I forgot to eat this morning.

"So you have the receipt, right, mom?"

"No. That was five months ago, why would I keep it?"

She is ridiculous. Through gritted teeth I respond, "So what are you gonna do then?"

"I'll tell them I lost the receipt. I'm sure they can just give me store credit or something."



Great. So they'll give her store credit and we'll have to stay in the store even longer so she can pick out another blouse she won't like. How riveting. As long as she's happy I guess. I just hope she can handle it if they tell her she can't return it.

"Mom what if they..."

She cuts me off before I can finish my sentence; "Lucas, shut up. They will let me. The customer is always right; they have to help me out somehow. And do not open your mouth while we're in there. Let me do the talking; you'll ruin everything."

Oh I'll ruin everything. I try hard not to roll my eyes. We're pulling into the parking lot. I look for the furthest parking space.

"What are you doing? I can't walk that far, my legs are no good, and you know that."

Of course I do, but I don't want to get inside that quick. I need to just get this over with. I park the car in the second space, just two yards from the door. My mother grabs the Nordstrom bag (which isn't even the same design they have now), closes the door, and waits for me to get out.

I sigh, "Here we go."

The clouds are pretty dark. It's as if the universe knows my mother is about to have another episode. It's warning me not to go along with this. But if I let her do this on her own, the situation could possibly end up worse. The wind is picking up and the dead leaves are dancing around. I could be dead after this, too.

I open the door for my mother and I instantly get slapped in the face with the cold air conditioning and that weird department store smell. A little boy about seven years old and his mother are walking out hand in hand. My mother notices them and grins.

"Remember when you were that young? You were the cutest thing with your blond hair, green eyes and dimples. I miss those days."

I do remember. And I miss those days too. My father walked out on us when I was about that kid's age. My mother felt she needed to distract me so I didn't think about my dad too much. We used to go to the mall, Toys R US, and eat out almost every night. She bought me something different every weekend. Even though my mother was crushed when my father left, she was sane then. She was normal. She must have grown depressed over the years and eventually just became impossible to deal with. She lost her job my senior year of high school and I have been supporting her ever since.



There's a long line at the register. I look around and notice the people around me; a couple about my age holding hands, a mother and daughter looking for outfits together, a lady in her forties sifting through a rack of lingerie. All these people look as though they lead normal lives; why can't I have that? I have to bust my ass working as a mechanic in order to put food on the table for me and my mother. I graduated from high school and all my friends went off to college without me. God forbid I went away; my mother would probably be dead by now. The only friends I have are the owner of the shop, Bill, and my mother. Pathetic, I know.

"It's cold in here. What is that lady holding up the line for? And why is there only one register open?"

"I don't know, mom, maybe she's trying to return something from five months ago too."

"SHHH!" She looked at me with those wild eyes she usually puts on when she gets upset with me.

I'm growing impatient too, though. And the anticipation is killing me. I've never been much of a spiritual person, but at this very moment, I'm praying to God this goes smoothly.

"I'll take the next person in line!" says a cashier next to the one who will take care of us. Her name is Linda and is now opening another register so the line can move faster.

Half of the people in this line move over. Now we're third in line. I almost despise Linda for creating another line; now we're almost up. The lady we were all waiting for finally walks away.

"Well thank you for all your help! Have a great day!" Seems like there may be hope for us.

"You too. Next!" says the cashier.

The guy in front of us walks up to the counter; he's probably a few years older than me, and just by looking at the clothes he's wearing, seems like he's better off too. He's purchasing two articles of clothing; a striped button down shirt and slacks. This should be quick. My mother is just staring ahead, patiently waiting for her turn. She looks like she's ready for battle.

"That'll be seventy two fifty three, please."

The guy pulls out his black leather wallet and gives the girl a Platinum American Express. I start to feel sick to my stomach. In just a few seconds this poor girl is either going to have the worst customer experience of her life or we can all get really lucky and be able to walk away without World War Three.



“Thank you, have a nice day. Next!”

I shuffle my feet as we get closer to the register. My mother puts on the Mother Theresa look.

“Hello, I want to return this blouse I bought a little bit ago. I seem to have lost the receipt though.”

The cashier diligently scans the barcode and stares at the screen with a puzzled look on her face.

“I’m sorry, ma’am, I can’t seem to find it in the computer. Are you sure you bought this here?”

My mother with the same Mother Theresa look says, “Oh yes, must have been only a month ago.”

The cashier, Jessica, scans the item again. By the look on her face it seems as though she’s getting the same result. She’s typing the numbers manually into the computer now. I can tell my mother is getting a little nervous and I can feel my leg become restless.

“Let me call a manager.”

“This is ridiculous. How is it not in the system? Are you new here?”

Jessica looks at my mom apologetically and I give her a face that says “it’s ok, don’t worry about it.” She waves down her manager who is re-racking some clothes. The lady walks over; her name is Doris. She is a large woman; about my height and dark hair pulled up in a ponytail, glasses, and seems to have the strongest hands I’ve ever seen on a woman. Jessica explains what happened and the manager tries for herself. She’s focused on the screen, types something else in and stares for a few more seconds. She looks at the blouse, then at my mother, then at the screen, and at my mother once again.

Doris finally speaks, “We haven’t had this blouse in stock for about three months now. You sure you got it at this Nordstrom?”

I cannot stand here any longer. I want to run and hide my face. Why does she put me through these things? Everyone behind us in line is growing impatient. I try not to look at anyone.

“Yes. I remember the day I bought it too. January 24th and that girl over there rung it up for me,” she points at Linda.



One thing about my mother is that she has always been very adamant about being right, even when she is not.

“Well without a receipt, I cannot help you, ma’am.”

“Well then give me store credit.”

“I cannot do that, I’m sorry.”

I tell my mother we should just go. We can give the shirt to Good Will and just buy another shirt. I’d buy her another shirt to save us the embarrassment.

“No Lucas! I need to return this shirt! I want my money back!”

I can feel an outburst coming on. I don’t know why I offered to drive her. She should have taken the bus since she refuses to drive anymore. I can see her face turning pink. She’s about to throw a fit.

“Give me my money, you stupid bitch!”

Well this escalated quickly. The lady behind me gasps. I suddenly feel my face burning.

“Mom! Let’s go. They have a store policy.”

“You owe me money! Just take the shirt!”

“Ma’am, do you want me to call security?”

I’m sure they can already see what’s going on from the tiny camera hanging right above Doris’ head. I’m sure they’re getting ready to head over.

I look at the lady at the register with an apologetic look, “I’m sorry, I’ll get her out of here now.”

The little vein on my mother’s neck is popping. That always happens when she gets angry. Her face is almost purple and her fists are clenched. My mother is now looking at her with dark evil eyes.

“Go ahead and call security! I’ll tell them to fire you! You are stupid and worthless! I want my money! And I will get my lawyers and sue if I have to! I’ll take you and this store for everything it’s worth!”

I tell the cashier we don’t have any lawyers and I grab my mom’s hand and attempt to drag her out. This is normal for me; dragging her out of public places. Something in me tells me not to take her anywhere whenever she asks me to. But I feel bad; she needs to get out. She needs to interact with people. Or at least I thought. I’m starting to realize she probably shouldn’t be



around people. She is dangerous. If I weren't here, I'm sure she would have hit Jessica or Doris and gotten herself arrested.

"Mark my words! You will be hearing from my lawyers! My name is Susan Scott, and you will be hearing from my lawyers!"

I avoid the glaring eyes as I hold her and back away from the register. Maybe if I sit her down, she'll get over it. But she slips from my grip, grabs a hanger from the floor and runs towards the counter.

"Come here you worthless piece of dreck!"

I run after her and manage to rip the hanger out of her hand. Now security has showed up and is holding her as well.

"What is wrong with her?" asks one of the security guards.

I want to cry. I knew I shouldn't have brought her here. My mother is resisting like some wild animal and I back away and let the security guards sustain her. I'm in a little bit of shock. I'm just staring at this scene, my mouth open, and I'm breathing hard. My heart is about to beat out of my chest. My hands are cold and clammy; everyone is staring at the circus act being performed right in front of them. This is not my mother. She isn't the woman that raised me. I don't know what's wrong with her. I miss her.

The security guards manage to calm my mother down and they start to walk towards the exit. I face the crowd and apologize. I look at the cashiers to apologize to them as well, but they have already begun helping other customers. I follow my mother and the security. Once outside, they sit my mother down on a bench. One of the security guards heads back inside and the other pulls me aside.

"I don't know what happened and I don't need to know, but if this ever happens again we will have to ban her from coming into this store ever again. You're lucky we didn't call the police."

I cough; my throat is dry. I am still in shock. I'm avoiding eye contact and staring at my mother.

"Yeah, sure. I'm sorry, won't happen again."

I walk away and go over to where my mother is. The security guard walks back inside the store. We're left alone on the bench and I don't know what to say. I'm starting to see rain drops falling. I feel bad for her, but I don't know how to console her.



“Mom, are you ok?”

She shrugs her shoulders and still does not look at me. Her hair is a mess from fighting the security guards. She looks exhausted and is shivering from the cold.

“Take me home, Lucas. I’m done.”

I help her up and we start to walk towards the car, the rain coming down on us. I’m done too.





Where's Mom

by Yva Audate

Another one. Three in the morning, my sister comes home with man number 25. Yes, I've been counting because that's how many days I haven't had a decent meal; only the dry oatmeal that expired five months ago. This one was really tall and skinny; all the other ones were at a decent height. Peeking through the crack of the door, I can barely see her tan, pear shaped body which was barely covered with a dark green dress. Her long brunette hair sat in a ponytail; making her tattoo of a cherry sitting on a tongue, visible. Her white Jessica Simpson heels looks like it's on the verge of breaking apart even though she probably weighed 140 pounds. I'm barely even 90 pounds.

I see the man wrestling with his belt that was covered by what seemed to be a white, wrinkled t-shirt; trying to unbuckle it as her back brushes against her room door, blocking the entrance. She stretches her arm out opening her hand asking for the money. His pants loosen as he reaches inside the front of his pockets, pulling out a creased, dirty twenty-dollar bill. The back of his pocket looked full and heavy. Yet, I couldn't see what was inside because it was still dark. Shaking her head, she refuses to take the money. He tells her she will receive the rest after he's finish with her; as if he's the Dominant. She usually gets paid before she submits herself to her clients but this time she accepted his request.

Opening her room door with the bottom of her palm, they enter. This time, she leaves the door open. I watched as the light from the corner store next door shines through her window, which she kept open every time she lit a cigarette. I guess she didn't tell him I exist. He takes off his clothes and drops them on the old wooden floor. He seems to be really aggressive. For the whole fifteen minutes, her face was cold and emotionless as of a corpse in a casket. She tries to get his pay once again as he promised he would after they were finished. He climbs off of her and begin to reach for his clothes on the floor. A thump. Something fell from his pockets and rolled under the bed. It's a bit too dark to see what it is. He continues to put on his pants. Sister turns on the light to search for her bra which was hanging on top of the red oak headboard.

On the floor laid a load of money wrapped in several rubber bands. All of the sudden, he turns around and looks directly at my door. My eyes grew two times larger than the original size. I think he saw me. He started to walk towards my door. My heart felt like it was about to suffer from an aneurysm explosion. Falling into a state of panic, it was like I was overdosing on asthma attacks; gasping for a dosage of oxygen as I begin to walk away from the door. It felt like my head was wrapped with saran wrap. I cover my mouth to block the noise that's trying to come out as I hide in the closet. I've been watching them for a little over thirty minutes now, I thought he didn't notice. I'm hoping she just let him go without bringing up the money again. I don't know what to do, I'm only twelve. He pushes my door open and looks for me.

“Are you lost? Where's the rest of my money?”



She asked for his final payment.

He turns around and looks at her. I step from outside the closet and slowly creep up from behind the door just to find his back turned to me and covered in tattoos. The one that caught my eyes the most was a tattoo going from left to right saying, *Rivera Kills*. I thought to myself, maybe his name is Rivera. He says to her,

“*What money?*”

He turns around and begins to leave the room. I look over at her and it instantly gets dark. The old steel lamp sits firm in her hand, aiming for Mr. Rivera. I push the door at least two inches wider in order to see. A creak but they didn't notice. He turns around and finds her charging towards him with the lamp in her right hand. He pushes her to the ground as the lamp slid from out of her hand and crashes into the wall. Ready to fight back, she stood back up and shoved him as she repetitively asks for the rest of the money.

“You're not leaving until I get my money!”

At this moment, I feel like I am about to watch my sister get murdered in front of me. Waiting for his reaction is like watching an explosive bomb timer counting down until it ignites. She stood in front of him as her back blocks the exit. I couldn't really see because they were too far from my room and the little bit of light from sister room that came from the lamp was no longer there.

Curious to know, I prudently stepped two feet away from my room door.

“If you do not get the hell out of my way, you'll know something.”

This is it. He's about to kill her. I can sense it and I can't watch this. I'm thinking, maybe stepping out of the room was a bad idea. I feel as if I were to turn around he'll be behind me.

“The only thing that I know for sure is that I am getting my damn money and you're not leaving until I get it.”

He turns his head to the right and begins to stroke his chin with his hand. I don't know what he is thinking but it looks like he's putting second thoughts into it before he reacts.

“I'm going to tell you once again, get the hell out of my way!”

At this point, he's getting aggravated and I can tell by the way he's flicking his beard.

Is this my cue to turn around and get behind my room door or do I just keep standing here? Neither choices are going to solve the problem.

She continuously adjusts her eighteen-inch ponytail; preparing for the worst. Suddenly, as I move in closer for the action, a creak comes from the floor board under my foot. My heart



sank to the ground as he turned around and saw me wobbling; unable to keep my stand. Sister's eyes were fixed on me with narrow lips and eyebrows. Tilting his head, he turns back around to look at her in disbelief.

“Are you serious?”

Pointing at me, he reaches in the back of his pocket to grab the roll money. I feel so embarrassed at the moment that I can't even look at him in the face. Flipping through the load of money, he pulls out a couple of hundreds and throws it on the floor in my direction, as if he was handing it over to me. Leaving the doorway, she rushes to pick up the money and counts the amount.

“It's five hundred dollars, more than what you asked for. Maybe you can start feeding that girl and stop caring about only yourself.”

As he closes the door behind him, sister gathers the money and heads to her room. I don't think I've ever felt this embarrassed before. I should have stayed in my room like I always do. After all, I think I deserve this; just for being nosy. Heading back to my room, I have this burning desire to ask her a question that I've been wanting to know for the longest. Changing routes from my room to hers, I fix my mouth to ask her with the little energy I have,

“Where's mom?”

She gets up, heads to her closet and searches for something else to wear, ignoring my question. She always avoided that question whenever I asked her. Yet, whenever I need something she always said to me, that she wasn't our mother. So, where's mom? I decide to ask her again.

“Where's Mom.”

Silence. Putting on a short white dress, she adjusts her breast in her push up bra and looks for her white purse. Avoiding eye contact, she squeezes through the open space as I block the path. I am beginning to become frustrated for being ignored. She grabs her keys and heads out the house. Screaming at the top of my lungs, as if I had any left, I asked again,

“WHERE'S MY MOM!”

The door slams. She didn't come back for the rest of the night. My hunger for an answer grew more than my hunger for food.

Shuffling through the old wooden cabinets for some sort of food, a roach peeks out from behind the baking soda box. It's beginning to look like a piece of beef jerky. Oh how I love beef jerky. The chewy, salty and sweet flavor causing my mouth to salivate like that of a dog looking at a freshly cut steak that is about to be prepped. As my spit begins to pour onto the counter, I reach for the fictitious beef jerky. It continues to move as I prepare to eat it. Its leg continues to



twitch as the black juices shoots through the gap between my teeth; this one is crunchy. As the juices makes its way on the side of my chin, I being to reminisce about the first time I was introduced to beef jerky.

At the age of five, I remember walking to the park on Lincoln Rd searching for some food. The girl at the park on Lincoln Rd who wore pretty pink ribbons around her pig tails, dropped a beef jerky on the ground as she threw a fit with her mother who scolded her for hitting another kid on the playground. It was two o'clock in the afternoon and the last thing I ate was a mint which already lost its color of red and that was half eaten by ants that sleeps with me in my bed. Although I was attracted by the dull yellow slide that was occupied by some kid with a snotty nose, the jerky that sat in front of the faded blue benches was all I wanted at the moment. I waited until the both of them left to go after it. As the mother pulled her daughter's arm towards their off white van, I began moving forward to reach the jerky that was already being eaten by a bird that came from a tree nearby. Tippy toeing to the jerky, the black bird freezes in a pose as if it just became my prey. Making it half way to the jerky, that stupid bird took it and flew to the tree behind the bench.

“Stupid bird.”

I watch it eat the jerky in pieces thinking about how good it probably is. Trying to split it into pieces, the jerky falls into the bright green grass. I begin to race towards it; hoping nothing else would steal it. Finally, there it sits inches away from dog poop. I grab the jerky and shoved it in my mouth as if my hand was full of candy; as if I was starving, which I was. I began to chew it and examine the flavors. Besides the particles from the grass and the odor of the dog poop, the sweet and salty flavor of the jerky automatically caused my mouth to salivate, flooding it like a running facet overflowing in a kitchen sink. I felt like I was in a candy store. The food I eat never really had flavor like the jerky. My food always came from the homeless shelter, even though I'm not homeless. Written on the TV dinners was a bible verse: *Matthew 25:35-40*. I never read the bible, but I did stop by that all white church every now and then that sat on the corner of our block on 17th avenue on University Rd. Sister once told me I wasn't good enough for McDonalds after I asked her for one of the four double cheese burgers that she pulled out of the white McDonalds paper bag. She never cared to prepare a meal for me.

I remember at the age of eight, sitting on the porch waiting for sister to come home. My stomach began to eat itself; causing it to ache. Each growl grew fiercely every second. Across the street was a family who always had their curtains pulled back. I sat there and watched them have dinner. Plates and bowls circling around the table. The father stands up, carving the perfectly roasted rotisserie chicken as the stem rises to the ceiling. The juices dripping into the pan as he lifts a slice of the breast and places it into his daughter's plate as she takes a bite into a dinner roll. It seemed like she was taking a bite of a cloud; soft and delicate. The mother, gradually chewing on the bright green, stemmed broccoli as she reaches to her son's booster seat trying to put a spoon full of baby food into his mouth as he spits it back up. Although the baby



didn't like eating it, I wouldn't mind sitting in that booster seat but I'm 12 years old and I don't know where mom is. Even now the problem persists.

Still, sister has yet to return back home after asking her about mommy. I don't know why she avoids answering that question. Where can she be? Why hasn't she come looking for me? Is sister keeping her locked away in the house? Why haven't sister come back yet? It's about to be five o'clock in the morning and the sun is about to rise. I care about her even though she is helping me die of starvation by choosing not to provide me with the nutrients that I need. Why do I care about someone who doesn't want to see me live?

Making my way to my cold room that holds little furniture, I hear a jingle of keys at the front door. Sister probably came back to apologize to me. After all, I did save her life from that bullet.....well.... sorta. I step out the hallway just to make eye contact with her.

“What the hell are you looking at?”

She bumps into me, enters her room and slammed her door which had the sign *F – Off* in the middle of it. I just want to know, where's mom? Look like it's going to be another night of hunger. At least I ate something.

As the morning creeps in, I wake to a firm knock at the door. Is it him again? This time, I rather stay behind my room door. There it goes again, a knock. Looking at sister's door, she finally comes out to answer it with an untied dark purple silky short robe and one faux fur slipper on the right foot.

“Who the hell is it knocking on my door this damn early? It better not be y'all Jehovah witnesses because I'm going to slam the door right in y'all faces.”

There she goes again, starting another conflict. Opening the door, the sunlight bursts through the complex.

“Are you Rebecca Johnson?”

I see two people standing at the door, nicely dressed. I can't see their faces because the sun behind them is blinding me. I certainly don't want to step out again after what happened last night.

“Yes” She responded.

“Are you the guardian of Tiffany Johnson?”

My name. I heard my name. What could they possibly want with me? Changing her standing position and crossing her arms, her body language changes as if she's concerned about why these people are here for me.



“Yes, I am her sister. Did she do something?”

This is the best performance of her concern for me, ever. It’s all just an act.

“We’re with the Department of Children and Family and we’ve received some information about abuse in the household. May we speak to her?”

The woman tilted her head to the left and looked inside, trying to spot me out. Should I walk out? Would it be better for me to surrender myself? I don’t know what’s going on but it involves me.

“She’s sleep.”

Here I am standing in the middle of the hallway ready to show myself and she lies to them about me being asleep.

“Is that her?”

Pointing at me, sister turns around just to find me standing in the same spot from yesterday.

“It looks like she’s awake to me.”

Without asking, the man and the woman made their way into the apartment and headed towards me. With the crust in my eyes and drool line going from my mouth to the back of my head, my stomach decided that it wanted to speak first although it’s been growling since yesterday. As they come closer, I begin to see their face clearly. The woman had a badge around her neck, like the ones I see the police officers have on their uniforms.

“Hi Tiffany, my name is detective Susan, how are you?”

Before I can even answer her, my stomach speaks before me again.

“Are you hungry sweetheart?”

She probably understood what my stomach was telling her. I nod my head as a way of saying yes.

“What did you eat last night?”

Just as I was going to tell her beef jerky, another one that looked like the one from yesterday ran behind her. I quickly pointed at it and said,

“That. That’s what I ate.”

She turns around and found what was going to be my breakfast in couple of minutes.



“Is there any food here?”

Shaking my head, I try to avoid looking sister because I can feel her eyes on me right now. The detective looks at my dirty pjs and then at man that came with her. I can tell she was shocked by the way her eyes spoke; unable to get smaller.

“Rebecca Johnson, you are under arrest for child abuse. Anything you say or do will be held against you in the court of law ---“

As the detective reads sister the Miranda rights, I wonder what is going to happen to sister. What will happen next? Will I still be hungry? Is beef jerky my only option of a meal? Am I sleeping with the ants again tonight? Will mom finally show up?

“I’m not even her mother! Why am I going to jail for this stupid little girl? She’s worthless!”

As they drag sister into the detective’s car, all I’m thinking about is, now what?



Faculty/Staff & Professionals Section



Poetry

Thor
By Larry Treadwell

Lightning strikes
The hammer rings
Fate is inexorable
Thor's will is done





Poems by Elias Royal

Rum Runs

I don't drink;
rum runs down the bottle.

I wonder its origin:
my origins.

Rum runs deep in me.

Born in the land of Sugarcane,
sugar runs through its stem,
there,
until my brown knife hands
slice the green stem
that burns brown in the sun.

I pack Sugarcanes tight in trucks
and carried them to smoke-stacks
where steel squeezes Sugarcanes dry,
rum runs,
to where no-one eats Sugarcane.

But everyone dives drunk
while rum runs dark into
the black sugary substance.

But I can't drink what I made
that which made me under the sun.



A Gust of Consciousness

Two million words later and
clauses whimper between lines:
“I am here; I am you.”

The sentence, however, small, yet,
is evident of character,
of a hope, to condense a gust
of consciousness into stories,
but these words find no aspiration.

Long words with funny fonts flow
to create a sentient story
that may germinate beyond words
to diminish any traceable origin
of its creator, conqueror, and explorer
lost to the vagueness of influence
and creation.

Without a trace or origin
an antagonist cries instead,
for a character to oppose it,
but anything happens on the page.

The antagonist hears nothing
from an absent and distant writer
who ignores its screams and whispers.



But the writer couldn't hear or see
the antagonist's demands for absolution
because the writer died
in his silk pajamas
one million words ago
below an open window
overflowing with tired books
and yellow stained pages
which entombed, the now, died writer.

So the antagonist goes silent
in an incomplete story without
someone else to define it.



Bicep by Rafael Miguel Montes

After a second superset,
the guy sharing the bicep machine with me,
wipes his face with the neck of his tank.
He reminds me that pain is weakness leaving the body.
Swirls Vitamin Water in his mouth,
spits some on the rubber mats below.

Halving the weight stack, I start my little curls.
I begin my beat down on runaway triglycerides,
my revolution to kill the fat,
the battle of the thigh.
Gasping, I decide that sometimes pain is just pain.
It never learns to leave.

It's my 96 year old grandmother,
immobile in her flannels,
wondering why God's fallen asleep.
It's my mom's potent cocktail,
two shots of dementia and self pity,
the nightly Xanax chaser.
It's my neighbor's new titanium valve,
keeping his heart functioning,
at a steady forty percent.

Pain is the termites glutting on baseboard.
My cholesterol's immunity to oatmeal.
Holding the book one inch from my face to read.
Pain is the fear of highways and Sun Pass.
The diabetic soup in which I was born.
Walking into the wrong class to teach.

Right now, though,
pain is this virgin muscle in my arm,
cracking under the weight of vanity,
in some mirrored gym on Flagler Street.

Right now,
pain is the burden of the years of hurt.
The snap as it exists my body,
takes up residence in my head.
Digs in its claws and burrows.





Crescent Dawn
by Carlos De Yarza

I don't want to swim your ocean,
Just lay naked on its sands.
I don't want to frame your pictures,
I'll just taste you on my hands.

I don't care to be exclusive,
I just want to be the one.
Never want to stop your travels,
Just to be there when you land.

I don't want to own your daylight,
We'll define the dark just fine,
And I won't become your focus,
Just the blurring of the lines.



FLOATING MOMENTS
by Elisabetta Ferrero

It's a morning
handcuffed by rain
pouring down

an expanded edition
humour not tragedy
you said so many times
now the bad news
it hurts inside

sleepless nights & brilliant
mornings, hidden
your scent under my skin

an upaya zen center
bearing witness
and (all) the green & chlorophyll /
the heart's pounding
(gray) not golden vouchers

stillness must be
or serenity
a narrow ridge



Poems by Pr. Raleigh

Easter Sunday: A Train Station in Southern France

I always like the platform after the train
Has pulled out, all the people have left,
And maybe in the distance you can still see
The train at the end of the tracks:
A little orange speck that has just
Swallowed up and taken away
Someone you love.

It is the wonderful desolation of the thing:
The platform one minute alive with embraces
And tears and handshakes, the next minute
Deserted and still, like today, and then
The sun finally breaks through the clouds
And a church bell starts to ring:
It is Easter Sunday afternoon
And we hadn't even gone to mass,
Had spent the time in pagan worship instead,
In Nimes, visiting the temple of Diana
And rubbing shoulders with the Romans
In the Coliseum.

But this is a nice place to be, alone,
A joyful day in Christian Europe,
The bells from a neighborhood church announcing
That one who was dead is now alive,
The platform sunny and abandoned, the train
Landscapes away by now, making its certain advance
Through the watery and white-stallioned Camargue.



November 22, 1983

I thought the tears were over,
but in the Metro in Madrid
somewhere between Chamartin
and Nuevos Ministerios
reading El Pais and seeing
that face on the front page again,
the black Lincoln,
the woman kneeling backwards,
thinking that if she can
retrieve the flesh that is
sliding along the polished trunk
that maybe she can put
The President together again,
twenty years later
in some far-off land
in such a public place
I cried again.



The Monastery of Philip II at El Escorial

The hike up the mountain to the great white cross
Takes about two hours, but there is an outcropping of rocks
At the midway point which allows a magnificent view
of the monastery.

Wedged between the rocks is a crude metal cross
As if in mimicry of the landmark at the top
And scattered about are several beer and soda cans.
You will not appreciate the monastery
If you pull up to its entrance in a tourist bus.
You must come up the mountain--at least to this outcropping--
To understand why it was called the eighth wonder of the world.
You had this feeling when you visited the Kennedy Space Center
And saw the pad from which Apollo 8 was launched,
Three men in a rocketship reading Genesis
Circumnavigating the moon on Christmas Eve.

There is no rusted gantry here, only the metal cross
But there is a leap into space of sorts as you imagine how the
Granite rocks from this mountain were cut and carried to that
Distant prospect, where they were then assembled into a monastery
And a palace, a place for a king who ruled the greatest
Empire the world has ever known to dwell.

Is it not wonderful to imagine
How a barren section of mountain
Becomes an hour's walk away
A palace filled with tapestries and paintings
And roaring fires set against the winter cold
And lounging dogs with bejeweled collars
And royal children playing hide-and-seek with the court dwafs?

Short Stories



The Rickshaw Man

by Lina Chen

It was a Saturday evening. Saturday was always the lodge night, and I was ready to attend it in my friend Chan's villa upon the appointed day. As my friend had said, his isolated house was on the extreme fringe of the town and stood well back from the road. He had once shown me a picture of his villa: the mullioned windows, white granite, and ivy-draped porch. In China, villas were always prepared for those who had their own cars. Unfortunately, I was not one of them, so taking a bus was the only choice for me.

As the bus went forth, I looked outside the window, and some terraced houses loomed up through a grove of trees. Being stuck in a stuffy bus is a torment for me, so I rushed out of the bus. I didn't even hear the announcement clearly. However, it was not the end of the nightmarish journey. There was still an at least forty-minute walk to his house. I glanced at my watch and found there were only twenty minutes left. Afraid of being late for our appointment, I anxiously waved at a battered tricycle that was passing by me. My friend, in consideration of my straitened circumstances, once told me on the phone that it would only cost three Yuan to take a tricycle. Just to be sure, I decided to ask the price before I got on.



“Five Yuan,” the rickshaw man answered sincerely. He was a tall, gaunt man of sixty, with clear-cut features and a small goatee beard.

“Five Yuan?” I wrinkled my brows in concentration for it was not the ideal price for me.

“It is much more worthwhile than taking a taxi, which starts at six Yuan.” Noticing my hesitation, he started to straighten me out.

I still looked into the distance, hoping there was another tricycle coming.

“All right, deal, three Yuan.” After a few seconds of silence, he sighed slightly while wringing his hands.

I accepted the offer with alacrity. Compared to a confined space, the journey in the open air was a pleasant one, and I spent it in making a more intimate acquaintance of the man.

“Actually, five Yuan is fair.” As he pedaled fiercely, the wind blew on his burning cheeks.

“But my friend had told me three Yuan is enough.” I replied with a casual air.

“That was because you got off at the wrong stop. If you got off later, I would only ask for three Yuan.” Afraid of being misunderstood, he added, “Well, I still only want three Yuan. It is a deal. Just to remind you. Get off later next time you come here.” His words were so sincere that I could not help staring at him. In the conventional costume of a black coat, the wrinkled man’s eyes gleamed with genuine concern.

In a very few minutes, the brown earth had become ruddy, and the brick had changed to granite. Its route seemed interminable, and I realized that there was something subtly wrong. Unlike those steady tricycles I had experienced, the tricycle bumped down the smooth country



road. What's more, it did not freewheel in a normal way. Instead, it leaped forward suddenly after a few moments of rest. I began to observe the rickshaw man questioningly. At first glance, all my misgivings were swept away. I was totally appalled at what I saw. The rickshaw man, the seemingly strong man who had pedaled several miles already, only had one leg. In a paralysis of terror, I stared at his missing leg. The empty trouser suspended back and forth in the air. He suddenly pressed the pedal hard with his sole leg and we were both thrown backward.

My throat felt dry and constricted. An indefinable sadness and melancholy possessed me throughout. My first impulse was to stop him. However, I was afraid that it would hurt his self-respect, and stain something sacred.

We at last entered the final lap of the long journey when the tricycle swung around into a side road. He took a deep breath and struggled to pedal his way up the slope.

"Let me get off, so that we can push it together," I said. I was mortified, witnessing how he desperately pedaled along.

"Nonono, that's fine. How could I feed myself if I couldn't pedal it up such a small slope?" He burst out laughing and then bent his back, trying to speed up with all his energy.

The dip increased as we went on. The tricycle was stubbornly reluctant to move forward and even fell back slightly. His sole leg was still contending with the mysterious power that pulled us down. The tricycle creaked along, shocking us around a bit. Every time he shrugged, blue veins stood out on his temples. I guessed that under his thin clothes, his bones must be emaciated as firewood. He was having a fierce rivalry with himself, or in other words, his destiny.



“It’s really not easy scratching out a living,” I sighed with admiration when we finally climbed onto the slope.

“It’s nothing. Last year I even pedaled eighty miles with two people on my tricycle.” Breathing hard and flushing with his exertions, the old man managed to wheeze out a few words, “They insisted on taking my tricycle maybe just in order to humiliate me, but my leg didn’t fail me.” A magnificent *gleam* of triumph sprang into his eyes. It was the first time that I saw his dark face lit up with a boyish enthusiasm.

Again wheels were hushed amid the leaves, and we passed into the avenue. It opened up to a broad expanse of turf, and the villa lay right in front of us. Suddenly he slammed on the brakes and the tricycle juddered to a halt.

“All right, you should get off now.”

I got off and handed him five Yuan.

“Come on.” said he with a frown, “A deal is a deal.” He pushed back two Yuan without any hesitation and carefully stuck the rest of money into his pocket.

When I was about to leave, he hailed me and smiled shyly, “I should have driven you into the gate, but I guess those who could enter the zone should at least take a taxi. I was worried if your friend saw it....”

My head fell forward a little, and I could feel my eyes becoming damp. I was about to say something but my throat had tightened.

He was right. My friend was waiting for me in front of the gate. The wheels died away down the drive while my friend and I turned into the gate. My friend followed his disappearing



vision and complained, “Why didn’t you let him drive you into the gate? These assholes always cheat someone naïve like you.” I hearkened without much mental comment.

After the gathering, my friend asked me to stay for dinner. I was adamant in my refusal. The night was a windy one, with broken clouds drifting swiftly across the face of a three-quarter moon. I walked along the road in silence. I had never been so close to my two legs, and I had never felt my legs were so strong.



Un Peso, Please by *Melissa Figueroa*

The seven-year-old child passing by,
begging for soap or the occasional
“un peso, un peso, please,” is ignored,
not even acknowledged because
he is the ninth beggar in the past hour to come
across their way. It isn’t hard to tell them apart
from the local people, then again.
Not with their Prada shades, gold chains,
and their Rolex watches or the latest
open-toe wedges from *Gucci* squeezing their feet,
and the glittering lip gloss pasted over their lips.



They climb into the *Transtur* bus; cold air runs over their faces
from on top of their heads and comfortable,
reclining chairs embrace their bodies.
“It’s too hot outside,” they complain amongst themselves,
relieved in the face of a luxurious transport to an
even more luxurious *Hotel Nacional*.
“And our feet are so tired.” But wedges were not made for the
uneven, cobblestone streets of Cuba, and neither were heels.

The females, being themselves, giggle and grab their make-up bags
five times the size of a man’s wallet, full to the zipper with
MAC and *Chanel*. They powder their noses,
re-do their mascara, apply their eye-liner, as if there
was anybody to look pretty for here in this country.
The men, on the other hand, relax—sitting and staring
at the women moving along, looking absolutely exotic. This is sight seeing.

A man, un negrito, waits outside the vehicle; old rags hang off of him,
and the sun blares its rays against his skin, burning, but he is used to it.
He cradles his arms, motions toward his mouth.
“Un peso, please” he mouths at them, his lips dry and chapped, moving slowly.
Black eyes gaze longingly and there is a shine to them, he is hopeful.
They glance at him and they look away.
Another beggar. Just ignore him. Don’t look at him.
The engine roars louder and pulls forward
and dust rises from the ground, sand and dirt hits his legs.
The negrito coughs.
There will be no dinner tonight.



Interview in Hades **by Dr. Philip J. Reckford**

Diogenes Interviews Sisyphus (Ancient Greek translated into 2016 American English)

Listen, Sisyphus, let's get right down to the nitty-gritty. Aren't you tired of pushing that dumb boulder up that darn hill? I'm from Corinth too, and I just contemplate the world from my tub.

Oh, hi Diogenes. Thank goodness someone calls me by my correct name. Americans keep confusing me with something called an S.T.D.

Do you consider yourself somewhat like James Bond, fighting against impossible odds and racing against time?

I can't defeat the Greek Gods. Passive resistance doesn't work either – they just ignore me. The system is really fixed. That would irritate the heck out of me if I were not so busy.

That's what Camus said. You were happy doing busy work.

Do you have any suggestions for Americans in 2015? Some of them think you're a god.

Yes, find a job you like. Be patient. Throw yourself into your job. Build your lifestyle around your work days. I'm a long way from Mt. Olympus. So are they.

Do you miss the pleasure you used to enjoy on upper earth?

A French visitor told me that life resembled a person falling down an impossibly steep well to his doom, contenting himself with licking honey off the sides of the well as he descended. I do not really miss the honey-that search wealth and power and unfindable love.

So you were a bit of a player in your day?

Yes, but the power that won me women, being king of what is now Corinth, sort of went to my head. Hence my mistake in playing deceptive tricks with the gods, such as preventing Thanatos from doing his duty and temporarily ending death for mortals, until the gods restored the status quo.

That was sort of nice of you. You must be very popular with the mortals you tried to save.

Well, if you must know, I'm no Rhonda Rousey. I'm forgotten, while she'll be remembered forever.

Do you ever get depressed?



Yes, yesterday I brooded all day on poor Jennifer Lawrence. Guys are so mean to her, she says. She won't marry any of them, she says. Her love life is simply Hades. So few guys eligible to satisfy her – among the 3 billion who would like to try.

Do you have any thoughts on the American national debt, \$18 trillion dollars?

Pay it off! Get going! If you pay it off a thousand dollars a year, and keep at it, that onerous debt will just disappear. In 18 billion years – poof – all gone.

Won't that take long?

Be patient. It would take a visitor from the planet GJ 11326 many times its distance of 230 trillion light years to get here, but so many Americans are patiently awaiting a visitor from that nearest of habitable planets.

Not that habitable. It's 5000 degrees there. We put turkeys in the oven at 325 degrees.

Wouldn't you rather be doing something else?

Yes, I suppose I could root for the Chicago Cubs or the Miami Dolphins. Or convince modern Greeks to pay their income taxes.

At my college we try to convince our students to be less selfish and less greedy.

Isn't that a bit futile?





Arts &

PHOTOGRAPHY

The art and photography received are from students and faculty, which is highly appreciated due to the fact that the contributors are receiving a chance for their passions to be displayed to the student body. The manner in which the artwork or photography is interpreted is solely up to the viewer.

Enjoy the pure ecstasy of their passion.

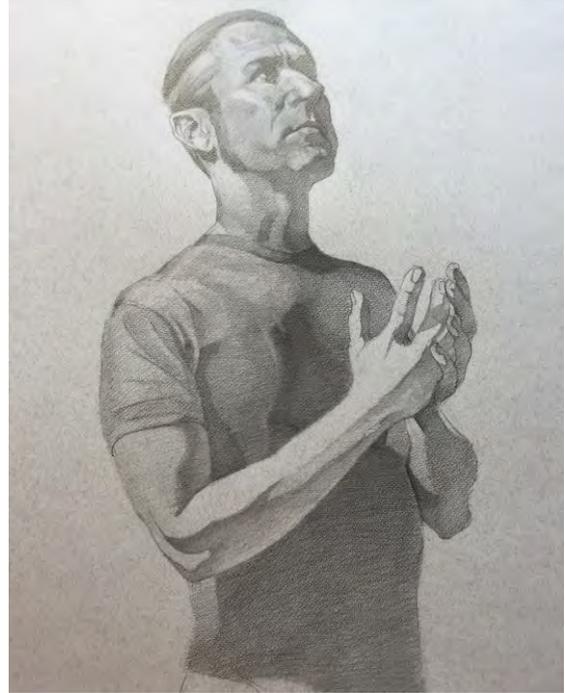


Title: "Night View of St. Anthony Chapel behind Fountain"
Photographer: Scott Gillig



Artwork by Pr. Casse

Title: "Faith Above"
Artist: Olivier Casse
Mediums: Pencil on Toned Paper

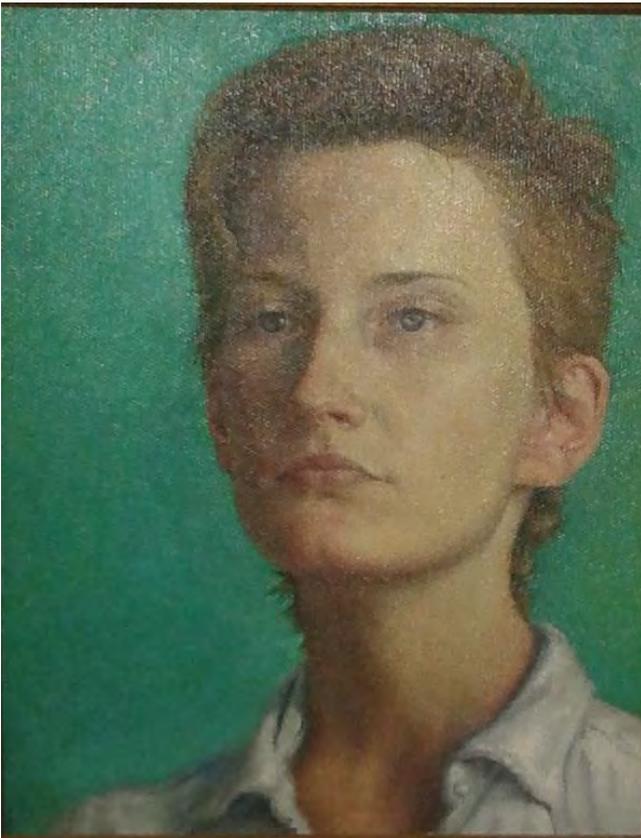


Title: "Faith Within"
Artist: Olivier Casse
Mediums: Pencil on Toned Paper





Title: "Looking at Faith"
Artist: Olivier Casse
Mediums: Oil on Belgian Linen

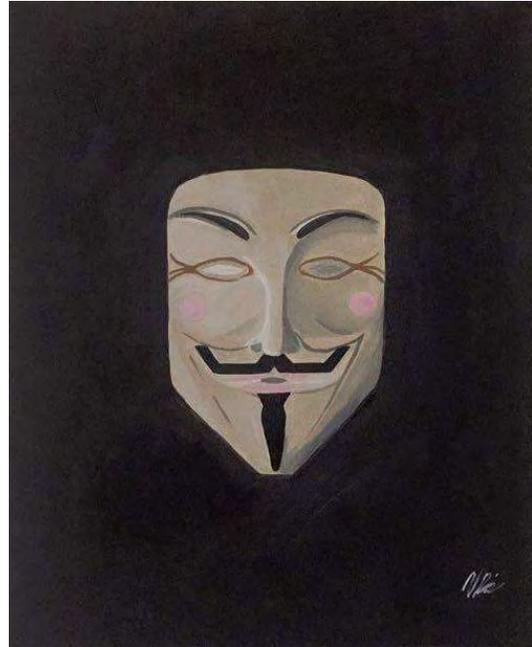


Title: "Faith's Hope"
Artist: Olivier Casse
Mediums: Oil on Belgian Linen



Artwork by Veronica Del Rio

Title: "V"



Title: "Happy"





Photography by Dr. Gillig



Title: "Three Owls in a Row"



Title: "Sunset in the Everglades Intertwining Nature with Technology"



Title: "Mystery with Model
Jessica"



Title: "Kyle Eastwood, son of
Clint Eastwood at Jazziz
Nightlife"





Title: "Muted Sunset behind Temple Interesting"



Title: "University of Central Florida Fountain Black & White Interesting"



Title: "Lunar Eclipse Composite from Dania Beach Pier"



The End of Photopsychology Class Photoshoot; Director: Scott Gillig; Hair and Make-up: Odallys Harris; Models: Jessica Darring, Deanna Gamble, Jennifer Gomez, Changchun Lee, Kayla McDavitt, Christie Napoleon, Xue Ning, Segane Robinson, Zatal Stephen, Aimee Thielman, Da-Nesha Young, Yuechen Zhou; Assistants: Catherine Alemany, Andrea Echeverri, D'Lyrie Perlata.



Photography by Adjunct English Professor, Joanne Rodriguez



Title: "Orchids in the Rain"

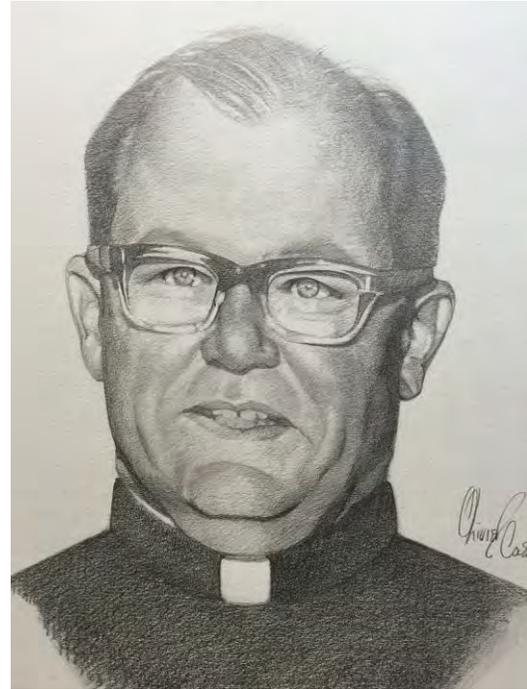


Title: "Butterfly at Rest"

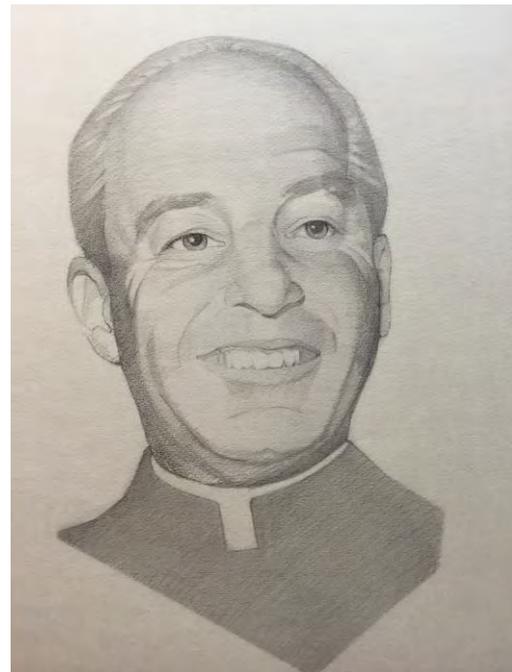


Portraits of STU's Presidents
by Pr. Casse

Rev. Edward J. McCarth
1962-1968,
1993-1994



Rev. Ralph V. Shurler
1968-1969





Rev. John H. McDonnell

1969-1975



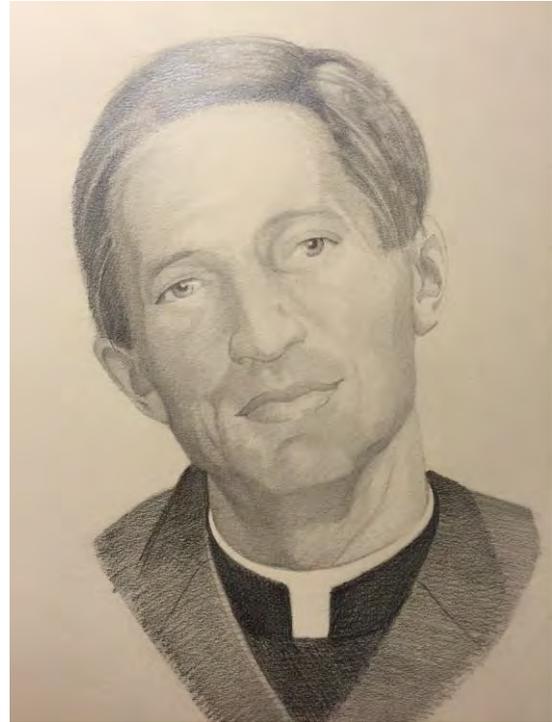
Rev. John J. Farrell

1975-1980



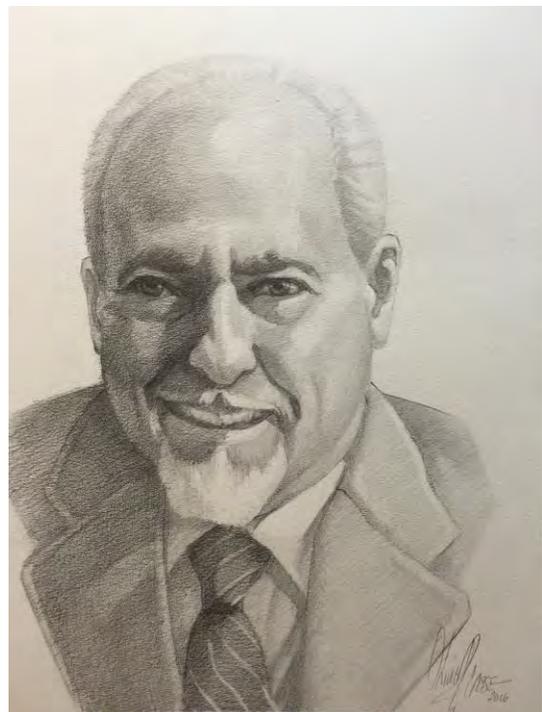
Rev. Patrick O'Neill

1980-1986



Dr. Pasquale Di Pasqual

1987-1988





Dr. Richard Greene
1989-1993



**Rev. Msgr. Franklyn M.
Casale**
1994-Present



Art and Photo Credits

For all the art works that were submitted by Students, Faculty/Staff, Alums, Outside Contributors, and the *Driftwood* Staff of STU, a special thanks to all of your hard work, your submissions to *Driftwood*, and your bringing a lively splash of color to this magnificent Literary Arts Magazine.

Cover

Title: “Island Breeze”

Photographer: Anishka Romeo

Location: French St. Martin, Caribbean

Student Section Cover

Title: “Paradise”

Photographer: Kris Ambroise

Location: Highland Beach/Boca Raton, FL

Professional Section Cover

Title: “Sky Mirror”

Photographer: Kris Ambroise

Location: Down Town Tampa, FL

Thank you all for your hard work,

*Kris-Alain Ambroise,
Editor-in-Chief*

*Aimee Thielman,
Vice Editor-in-Chief,
“Photographer-in-Chief”*

