

# WIREGRASS

EAST GEORGIA COLLEGE 2011





# WIREGRASS

THE EAST GEORGIA COLLEGE LITERARY AND CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE

2010-2011



## Wiregrass

featuring the writing and artwork of  
East Georgia College's academic and continuing  
education students, staff, and faculty

Editor .....Kristi Parker

Assistant Editors ..... Katt Thompson  
Abran Cruz

Faculty Advisor ..... S.D. Lavender

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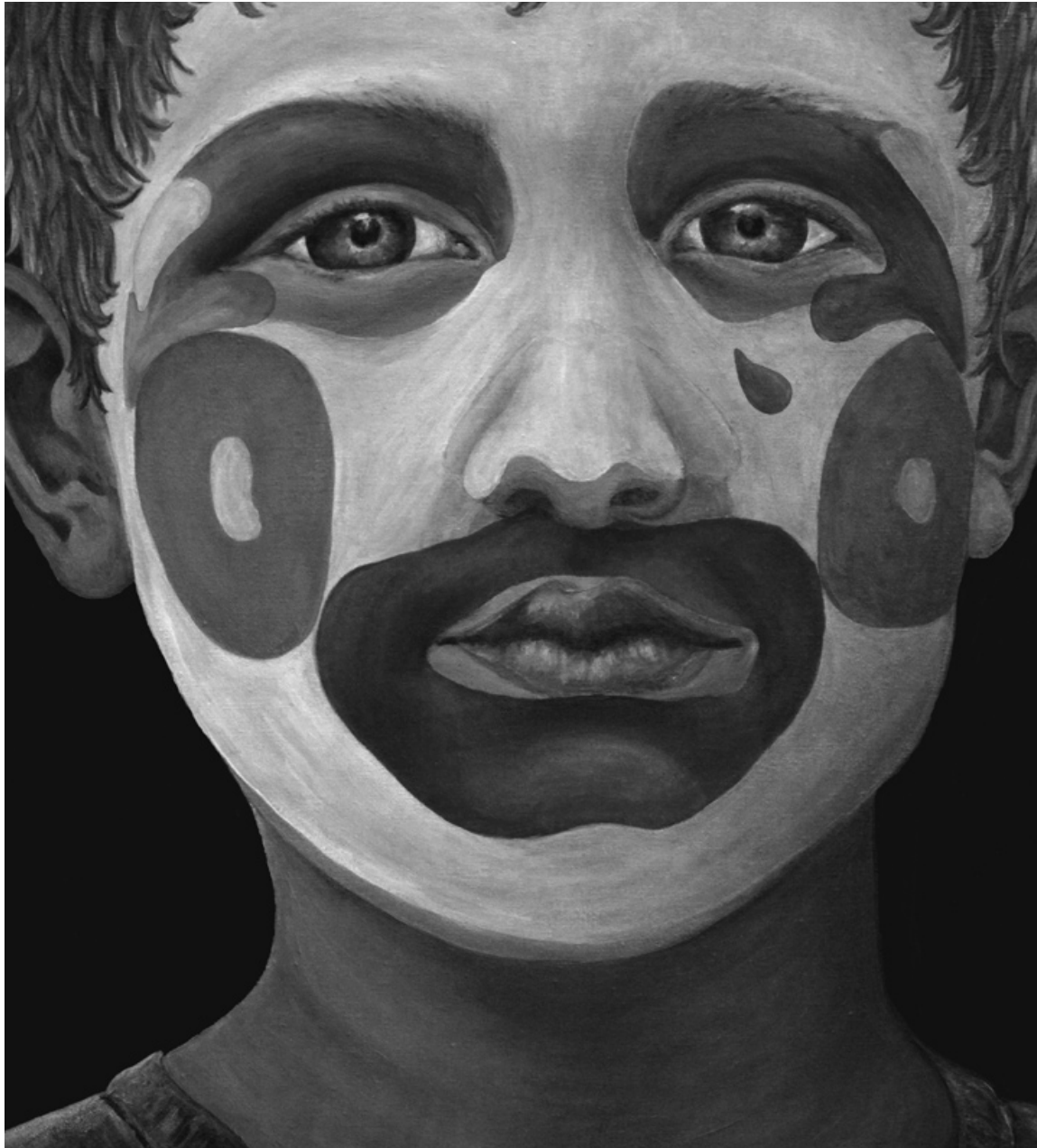
Thanks to Mark Dallas, Alan Brasher, & Valerie L. Czerny

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## Lost

Lost I am. Lost I cried,  
 For I am not but a child inside.  
 How old I may be, how old I may look,  
 Do not treat me like an open book.  
 You do not know all about me.  
 There is more to me than what you see.  
 For you I could be the touch of a hand,  
 Or perhaps a picture in the sand.  
 I could be a song you sing,  
 Or in fact, a Bird on the wing.  
 The time is not right. The time is not  
 now,  
 But you'll figure it out someday,  
 somehow.  
 Hard to figure out, life is.  
 Most of it is like a quiz.  
 A question here, an answer there.  
 A whole lot of everything everywhere.  
 Everyone searching for everything.  
 Everyone wanting to be king or queen.  
 Lost we are. Lost we cry.  
 Lost they are and so am I,  
 But lost is all we'll ever be,  
 Until we're beyond the crystal sea.

---Savannah Parker

oil on canvas by L. Christine Connors

# The Walk

At a very young age she began thinking about who would walk her down the aisle. For most soon-to-be brides the answer is obvious: their father; but she was not most. You see, her father died when she was very young, leaving a vacancy for this important job.

“I’m not kissing you,” her older brother said. As the church doors opened, she looked up at his smiling face. She thought about how much he looked like the pictures of their father: the thin lips, crystal blue eyes. Arm in arm, with heads held high, brother and sister nearly floated down the aisle. She knew the time to let go was growing near.

The Preacher called the ceremony to order, and after a blessing he asked, “Who gives this woman to be wed?” With a strong, solid voice, her brother answered, “I do!” With her hand in his, he reached for her. As his sweet kiss landed softly on her cheek, tears filled her eyes. Looking up, she blinked, trying to clear them away. Still holding her hand, he stepped away. Trying not to let her tears be seen, she felt him squeeze her hand. Against everything inside her, she looked at her brother. As he squeezed her hand again, she saw the small tears in his eyes. He ever so coolly blinked his left eye and smiled. As he let go of her hand, she knew this would be a moment she would always remember. When he squeezed her hand and kissed her cheek, she knew he felt honored to be the one to give her away. She may not have had her daddy to give his little girl away, but she had her big brother to give his little sister away.

---Ashley K. Love

# Through It All

Remember the good times;  
forget the bad.

Enjoy what you have;  
don’t cry for what you had.

Keep a song in your heart;  
never be without a smile.  
Look towards the future;  
your worries needn’t be a pile.

Have a sparkle in your eyes;  
dry should be your tears.  
Reach out for that dream;  
give not a thought to your fears.  
Gaze at the stars in the sky;  
draw strength from the sight.  
Take up a new challenge;  
don’t give up the fight.

---Kimberly Guise

## She is the Ocean

She is the ocean,  
Beauty unending.  
The sun rises and sets behind her eyes,  
And she takes your breath away...

Feel her playing at your ankles  
As you stand on her shallow shore.  
Hear her sighing,  
And she takes your breath away.

But her heart is in the darkest depths.  
You'll never try to reach it.  
Don't try to understand her.  
No one can command her.

She can be tranquil and nurturing—a  
mother.  
Beautiful...rich in wonder.  
She can be terrible, violent, cold.

She is the ocean,  
The mightiest of vessels are lost and  
never found,  
Cast aside like a mere child's toy

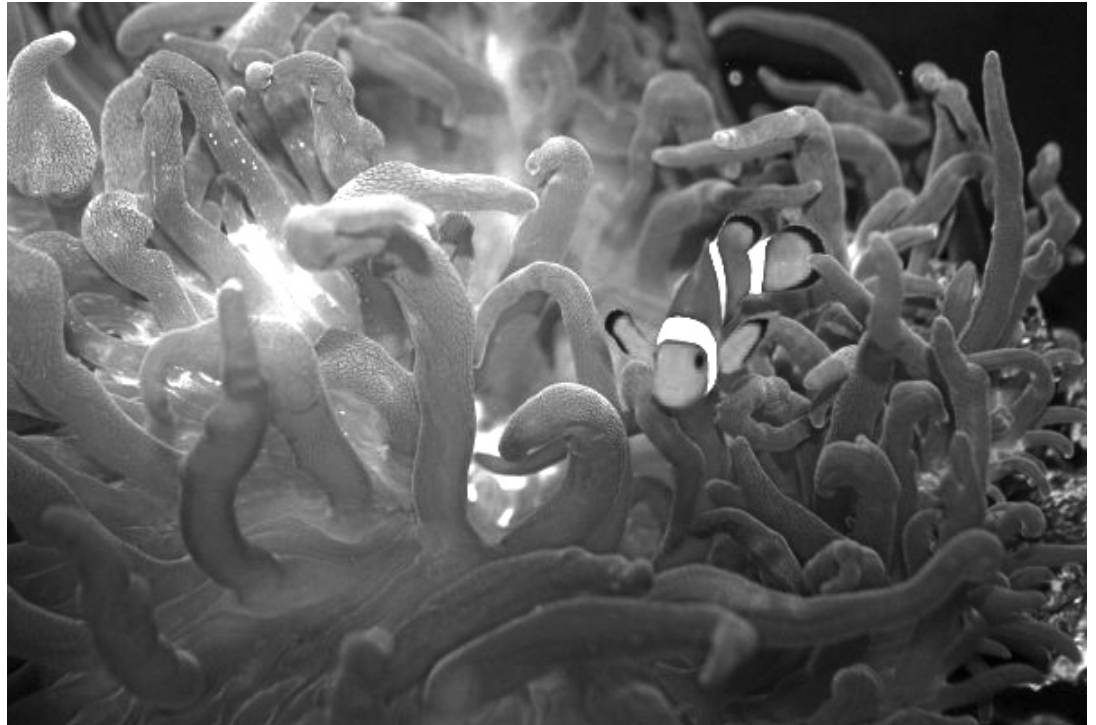


photo by Michelle Edge

With endless life inside...  
The world could not exist without her.  
She takes your breath away...

And I, a mighty sailor, am powerless  
before her.  
She takes my breath away...  
She is the ocean.

Her waves are not man's to tame,  
Not like the land he has claimed.  
You can't swim now. You're sinking.  
And she takes your breath away...  
...She is the ocean.



## Requiem for a Doomed Expedition

The Franklin Ship is stuck amid the gloom  
 All hands immured in an icy tomb  
 It was not cold  
 That killed the men  
 But something strange beyond their ken  
 Some modern food sealed in a modern tin

The deadly lead from soldered tins  
 That men consumed in the icy gloom  
 The silent poison beyond their ken  
 They soon would rest in an icy tomb  
 Killed by the thief that stalked brave men  
 A silent killer in the cold

Strong men could fight the bitter cold  
 But could not fight the poisoned tin  
 It was not ice that killed the men  
 Their spirits buoyed against the gloom  
 They could not see the yawning tomb  
 The silent killer beyond their ken

They could not know; they could not ken  
 The danger in the keening cold  
 They brought such gifts into the tomb  
 Gifts for the ages these shining tins  
 Beside their pallor and the northern gloom  
 Bright angels of death for the many men

The many men, the valiant men  
 Doomed by something beyond their ken  
 And quite forgotten in the arctic gloom  
 Under leaden sky and leaden cold  
 Their hopes all pinned to the deadly tins  
 A folly written upon a shining tomb

A pale white tomb, a frozen tomb  
 The fate of all the men  
 Sealed inside a humble tin  
 A simple thing beyond their ken  
 Beyond their fight against the cold  
 Beyond their courage in the gloom

The gloom remains, the men  
 inside a glassy tomb  
 The cold has kept them to this  
 day—these men  
 Beyond their ken the deadly tin

---Kenneth Homer

## ZombiePocalypse

Though fire and ice would suffice, the world won't end,  
 But in the clutches of those that most pretend  
 Are but imagined dreams which are dead not alive.  
 Read the survival guide; zombies bite, my friend.

When the devil's day comes, how will you survive?  
 Mad skills which from Call of Duty you derive?  
 I hope you are legit, or are you a fake?  
 Can you kill the hordes on Black Ops level Five?

Do not hesitate, there is too much at stake.  
 Camp a claymore by the doors until you wake.  
 Do not sink beneath anguish, repel the gloom.  
 It should be fun. There are undead lives to take.

There are rancid black eyes – There! – Across the  
 Room.  
 Tighten down and you will hear a shotgun's "boom."  
 You can be creative. There are many ways  
 To zealously bring about a zombie's doom.

A flashbang will do – puts the beasts in a daze.  
 Then launch some 40 millimeter grenades.  
 As the pieces fly, do not avert your gaze.  
 When zombies attack, constant vigilance pays.

---Michael Owen Henry

## Chocolates

If life is like a box of chocolates,

Then what are we to do?

For if we're all a piece of chocolate,

Which one of us gets chewed?

Do we start with chewy caramel,

Or coconut macaroon?

Perhaps a truffle or a cordial,

Maybe two—or twenty-two?

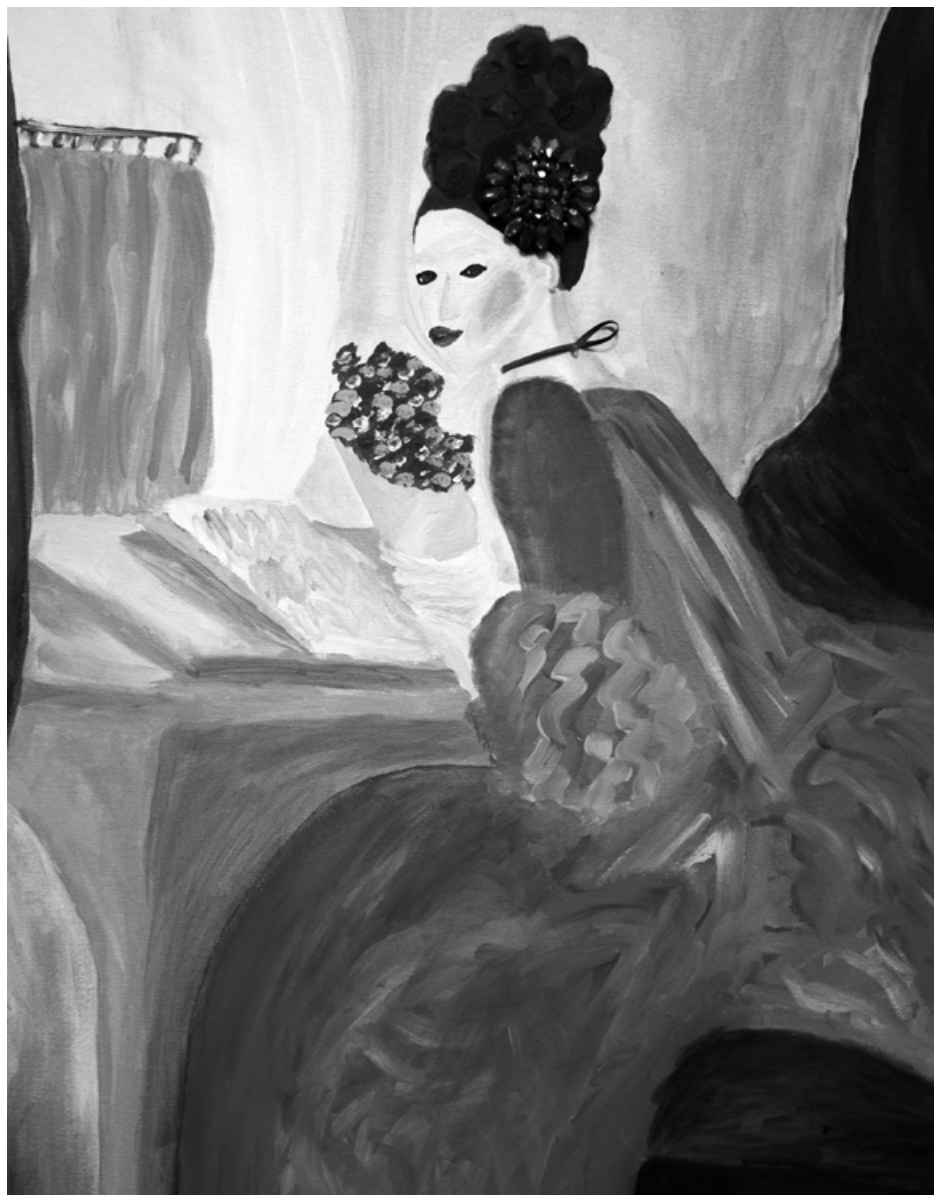
Where do we start, milk chocolate or dark?

It is a choice that is hard to make.

Light, dark, square or round, why not several?

I prefer dark; all chocolate is great.

---Stephanie Daltry

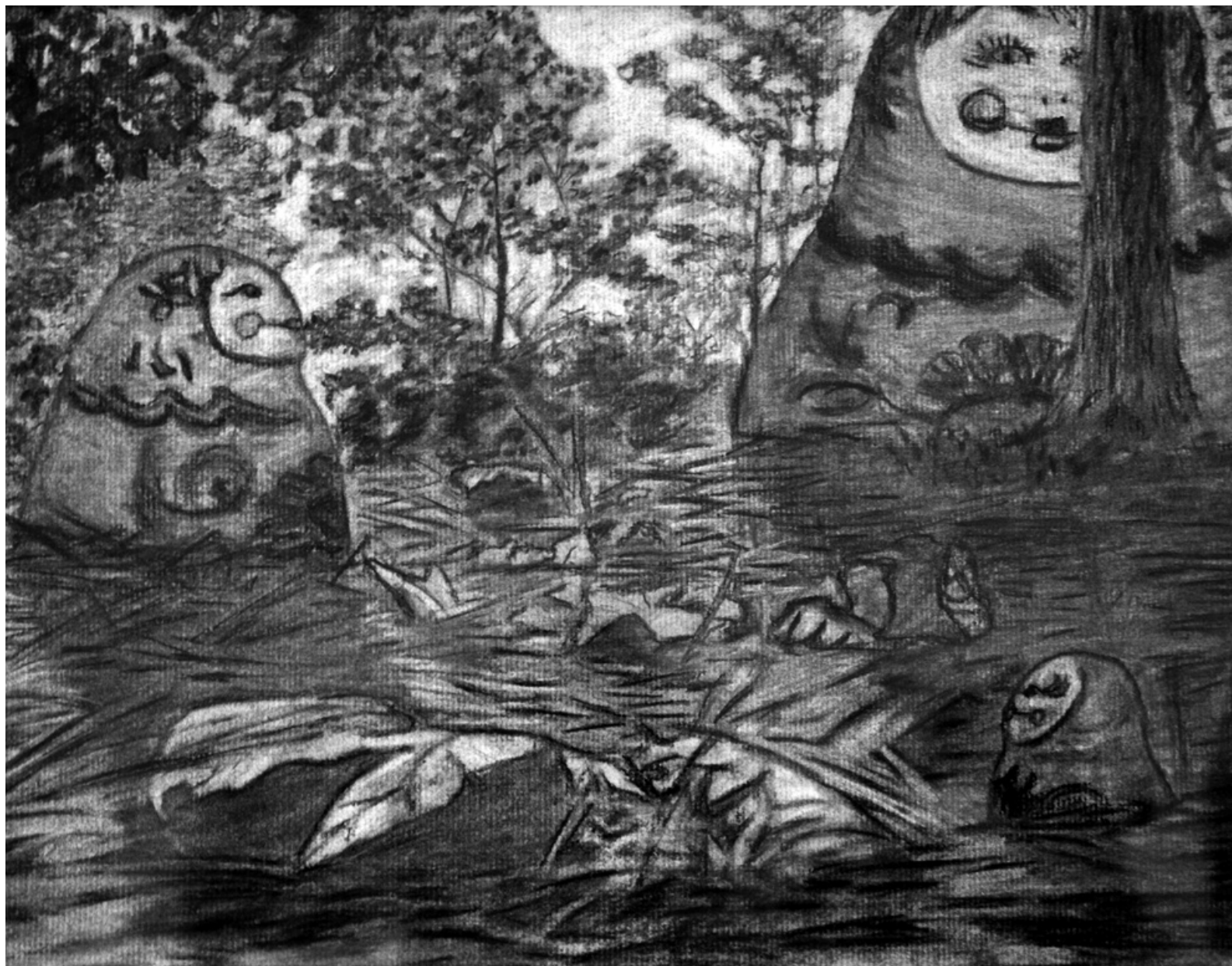


acrylic by Sammy Hall

## I'm Queen

I'm Queen with or without a king;  
 Not looking for the status quo;  
 My standards are set highly above the mean.  
 When you enter my presence,  
 Come noble, Come pure.  
 Leave the glitzy masks outside of the door.  
 Not interested in your couture;  
 Your vernacular is irrelevant.  
 My fancies aren't tickled by your enchanting eloquence.  
 The beat of your core,  
 Does it possess benevolence?  
 No need to confess the fruit your core possesses;  
 The lack there of is quite evident.  
 And thou pronounce thyself to be of royalty?  
 Thou shall be cast into the Lake of Fire for using thy tongue  
 for such blasphemy!  
 Royalty recognizes Royalty just as game recognizes game.  
 A discerning woman knows to distinguish character from a  
 fancy title or name.  
 A genuine king is found within his temple, not the outer gates.  
 Purge the temple, and you will find REAL estate,  
 Priceless treasures that never will perish.  
 The key to my heart depends on what you choose to cherish...

The inner or the outer,  
 The imperishable or the decay.  
 If you choose the latter, then from my presence go away!  
 I know what I desire, and I desire what I say.  
 A woman of my word; yes, that I portray.  
 I declare that my gates remain closed until judgment day.  
 Yea or Nay...  
 My gates I choose not to lift.  
 You shall not approach my temple without a gift  
 The gift that I require is purity of heart,  
 The whole of it, not just part.  
 You say you want to be my everything;  
 Well, not before the Ring.  
 And most definitely not before My KING.  
 My standards are so high they reach the heavenly scene.  
 Though you love to chase, you hate to climb past the mean;  
 And therefore, you choose a dame whose standards aren't as  
 extreme.  
 Though the chase is over, my countenance is still so keen,  
 Because with or without you, I'm still Queen!



charcoal by Courtney England



## Secret Place

Let me describe to you a place I like to go  
When I want to be alone.  
First you see lifeless trees  
And no grass to blow in the breeze.

The dirt is soft  
And on the trees grows moss.  
Down this tunnel I dare you to go.  
The darkness my friend, most likely your foe.

When you leave the hollow place  
I can only imagine the look on your face,  
For what you think is light  
Will surely give you a fright.

A small hill you will find.  
Go climb it; you'll be alright.  
On the other side there will be  
Grass as black as the sea.

A big white moon  
Like you'd see on Halloween  
Shoots down its silver beams,  
Giving the grass a glass-like sheen.

Now sit upon a smooth white stone  
Next to a starlight covered lake  
Where my dreams alone  
Will never be fake.

On the edge, waves drift.  
On the sand they lift.  
Little stars begin to dance  
In a midnight summer prance.

Now look around. You'll see trees  
That stand like soldiers in many rows  
Where they patiently guard the field  
From all hate, fighting, and sorrows.

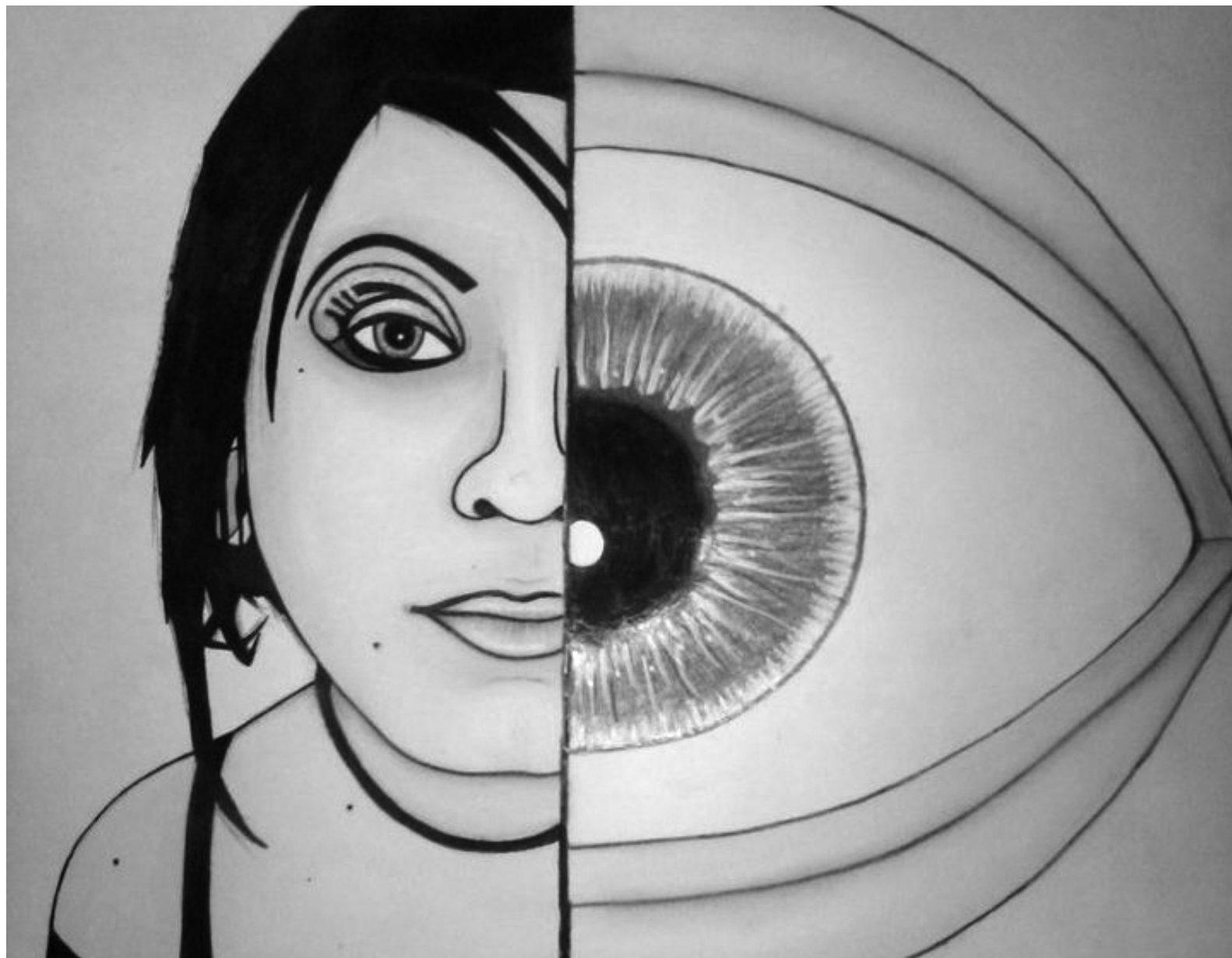
It's always summer here.  
The air is moist and cool.  
If the air changes, my mood has  
Changed.  
My imagination, my strongest  
Tool.

The wind whispers gently,  
A good lullaby.  
You're safe here; sleep in peace.  
Hear the night sing to you sweetly.

This is the place I like to go  
When I want to be alone.  
If you want to see  
Tonight come along with me.

---April Kruppenbach





watercolor by Sarah LeVaughn Ballew

## When Success Calls

The sun shines on those who can see it,  
 And the wind blows the storms toward those who need it  
     Picture a frame with no portrait,  
     Or a sky with no clouds!  
 That's what you have when you think of me  
 Without success,  
     A global tragedy!  
 (Success speaks)  
     "Never forget what has come!  
     And how could you stay the same  
 When I introduced you to change?  
     Is this a question that still remains?  
     If so,  
 Hopefully the voice I hear will turn into a song my heart sings.  
     (Success speaks)  
     "Never forget me even if I leave.  
 Because considering your downfalls you still achieved  
     The impossible!  
 I became a force that's unstoppable for everything you need.  
     Your search for love ended when you found me,  
     The reality of your dream!"

---Cleveland Rainey

## Trophy Plate

At twelve, my brother safaried often, in  
 the woods and meadows of our neighborhood,  
 with BB rifle, pellet pistol, knife, and hatchet.  
 He bagged his game, dressed it, and fried it  
 on top of the stove.

    He offered me a taste  
 of a dove he'd shot, then confessed that,  
 really, I'd sampled "woodpecker." And  
 he fished the river where no catch was too  
 small for the skillet. I declined the eel that  
 he admitted was "chewy."

    Best of all  
 was the young rabbit he'd brought down  
 with our trusty pellet pistol—designed  
 for target practice and accurate for a range  
 of about ten feet. He threw the gun at his quarry,  
 bonked it on the head, seemingly, and rendered  
 it unconscious. Later, it filled a plate, the grandest  
 of fresh-killed, between-meal, sacrificial  
 rites. My father, on hearing on the hunt,  
 opined, "That rabbit was probably sick...  
 or else you'd never have got so close."

Yet he survived, and to this day, he still  
 goes fishing. But his living room boasts  
 no stuffed heads, not even a mounted bass,  
 his fridge holds mostly fruit, veggies, yogurt,  
 and just a little store-bought flesh.

---Mark Dallas



## Decay is the progress

Decay is the progress of string sound. Attack and sustain get all the glory—attack setting decay on its course, sustain drawing it out as long as possible.

Players focus on attack: setting the string in motion, snapping it to achieve the preferred width of vibration, selecting the most efficient striking material: dull, thumpy flesh or bright, crisp plastic.

Sustain is the art of the luthier. Wood selection and bracing pattern transform a wooden box into a bell: a vessel aimed at forestalling silence—approaching perpetual vibration.

For listeners, it is all decay. Attack cues perception, and sustain accommodates the process; with senses heightened, we trace the progress of decay, celebrating the slow art of death.

---Alan Brasher

## I Told the World

I went into the woods today,  
 And told the world my secret.  
 I whispered it to the delicate flowers,  
 Who wept in morning dew.  
 I screamed it to the wind,  
 Who swept it down the lane.  
 I breathed it to the grass,  
 Who quivered at my voice.  
 I told it to the trees, who stood there passively.  
 I shouted it to the sky,  
 Which grew angry and threatened to strike me down.  
 I whistled it to the birds,  
 Who puffed up and chirped their surprise.  
 I grumbled it to the squirrels,  
 Who dashed around unfazed.  
 I buzzed it to the bees,  
 Who seemed too busy to hear.  
 I went into the woods today,  
 And told the world my secret.

---Matthew Hobbs



photo by Whitley King

## Nobody

The old Wild West,  
 More like a ghost town.  
 Here, nobody's a pest.  
 Nobody is around.

Sitting upon what's left of a tree,  
 For its beauty inside they failed to see.

Above the world, though not perched as high.  
 Nobody to leave you high and dry.

Cowboy in a faded photograph,  
 A lone song to sing your cheer,  
 A few soft notes upon a staff.  
 Nobody is near.

---Katt Thompson





photo by Keturah Hollowell

## Never Ending Fight

Why can't we all just be color blind  
And get rid of this black and white line?  
Quit making everything such a racial issue;  
It's only an issue because of you  
Stop being so sensitive about the color of your skin,  
And let this ridiculous fight come to an end.  
You talk about what was achieved by your great  
ancestors,  
But keep tearing each other down with racial gestures.  
This racial fight nobody wins  
Until someone steps up and tries to make amends.  
And until one of you do,  
This fight will continue.

---Paris Pitts



## Part

The circle continues  
 Around it spins  
 With no beginning  
 With no end  
 Faster it twirls  
 Faster it goes  
 There's no light  
 With nothing to hold  
 In the middle  
 A hole appears  
 Down I go  
 Down we go  
 To the dark  
 Where it's deep  
 Never to part  
 We'll never part again

---Charles Tapley



photo by Crystal Jarrell

## Phantom Limbs

Regret is like the searing pain  
 That abides from a phantom limb,  
 A lingering pain  
 From something never realized, never  
 Attempted---  
 The source not palpable.  
 The pain very real.

Perhaps the pain comes from an arm  
 That will not stretch to touch  
 That now extinguished dream,  
 A hand that cannot extend in  
 friendship,  
 Fingers that will never feel the touch  
 Of warm caress  
 Or will not grasp pen or brush  
 Will not mold moist plastic clay  
 Will not build  
 Will not form or fashion as they touch.

Perhaps the phantom limb  
 Is a leg that will not take  
 That first step  
 Of a long anticipated journey,  
 That will not run  
 To feel the sheer animal joy of running,  
 Will not dance,  
 Will not climb that highest peak.  
 The limb has been lost  
 But the pain remains.

---Kenneth Homer

## The Ninth Annual

# Emily Pestana-Mason Memorial Poetry Contest

This is the ninth year of the poetry contest to honor the memory of Emily Pestana-Mason, poet and former English professor at East Georgia College. The judge for this year's competition is Dr. Phyllis S. Dallas of the Department of Writing and Linguistics at Georgia Southern University. She has taught Creative Nonfiction, Writers on Writing, Food Writing, and last year Travel Writing as a Study Abroad course in Italy. Dr. Dallas has chosen "Our Goodbyes" by Amy M. Lee as this year's First Prize poem, noting that "it captures three layers of loss—the immediate goodbye, the fading of memory, and finally the suggestion of death with the references to the 'store-box' and the 'dust' and 'the end of us.'" For Second Place, the judge has named Kayla Johnson's "I Am My Mother's Child" for its depictions of "both the vastness of Africa and the realities and horrors of slavery." In Third Place is "The Playground" by Brittany Horton, which "juxtaposes the magical quality of childhood with images of change that evoke the passage of time."

## FIRST PLACE

### Our Goodbyes

Our goodbyes have faded with time

Commonplace statements, following hellos

They are covered with dusty cobwebs

Expected, prepared for, accepted, forgotten

No longer able to withdraw emotion

Placed inside a store-box of insignificant memories

From our expressionless faces

Where they happily reside, collecting dust

They are as impersonal as any goodbyes

Symbolizing the end of us

Like the passing words of two strangers

---Amy M. Lee

## SECOND PLACE

### I Am My Mother's Child

From the comforting breast of Africa, I laid my head.  
The blood that ran through her scenic spirited savannahs and her  
Roaring rivers is the  
Same I bled.  
She gave me the beauty of my visage and the dark silky shield that  
Flowed over my frame.  
Just like the baby cub bowing to its mother lion, she had me tamed.

Pain, terror, and torment had overcome the terra firma  
When the white, petrifying fiend had come to take us from her.  
I would rather be blessed with death than to lose my mother.  
They captured me, my sisters, and brothers.  
We traveled in agony across the Atlantic waves.  
This torture haunted us for days and days.

When we met at our new location,  
Cotton and tobacco fields gave us a hearty greeting.  
They became a part of us as we suffered in this time of tribulation.  
Our minds rumbled for a plan of escaping.

The coded melodies I hummed from within,  
Wondering if Harriet was coming—  
Coming on that steam-blowing savior to carry me home.  
Home-  
A place of security, peace, and happiness.  
Home-  
Africa was the haven I longed for.  
I longed to see her welcoming, smiling shore.

Until we met again, I would sing out,  
“Oh Harriet. Oh Harriet, please let me ride.  
My heart and soul are bruised and my body is tired.

We can steal away like guilty thieves in the night.  
Our faces will grow grass, branches, and leaves so we can stay out of sight.  
We will wait until the bloodthirsty whips have been laid down to rest.  
Then, with our feet quietly pounding against the ground, we will travel  
West.  
There we will meet the old color-blind lady who will assist us in our flight.  
She will carry us north in her horse-driven buggy.  
Freedom will meet us, hugging us like a newborn child.  
She knows our struggles and our journey of miles.  
The kisses and hugs of freedom will never replace  
The love of my motherland, her comforting bosom, her radiant face”

--Kayla Johnson

## THIRD PLACE

### The Playground

The swing sets follow their gentle chime.  
A sweeping sidewalk hums a rhyme.  
The oak tree whistles to me now.  
The laughing voices cross the ground.  
I hear petals in the wind.  
I know the birds are chirping still.  
The slide grew rust and sand grew old,  
But it's still here, like it was before.  
The grass has grown so tall since then.  
The air has long since grown too thin,  
But still, there's an echo in these walls.  
Still the student voices call.  
This children's kingdom of youth and age,  
Our childhood years written on this page.

--Brittany Horton



## Post the Bail

I wish you could, but you  
 Can't even see  
 You are unintentionally imprisoning me.  
 Though you are sweet and kind,  
 Poor child you are so blind  
 To your own sadistic view of life,  
 Where love is easy and there is no strife.  
 Just follow the yellow brick road to your happy ending.  
 Break my heart on the way. I'm sure it doesn't need mending.  
 Because of you my heart is nearly ice.  
 Every day I feel so cold.  
 I pray to God to break this hold,  
 But now my dream is a figment of my imagination.  
 Her love took an endless vacation.  
 I'm in need of restoration.  
 I've fallen and I can't get up.  
 Your love has got me stuck  
 In this quicksand.  
 You left me broken and unable to stand.  
 Please come back and give me a hand.  
 I really wish you could understand.....  
 Man....I'm tired of this cell;  
 It hurts like hell.  
 I'm in this Love called Jail  
 Somebody Post the Bail

---David Porter



## It Never Ends

There was a time where I never was;  
 Now, never a time where I won't be.  
 That point in time brought my existence.  
 Survive in time, death—my persistence.  
 In time, defeat the dark resistance.  
 Oh my life, so grateful for this gift.

Why am I? They say it's just because.  
 What am I? That He would bring forth me?  
 He resides in splendid omniscience.  
 He decides once more to give conscience  
 In a life: such an experience.  
 Who am I? To receive such a gift?

---Cameron Joyner





## It Takes a Woman

It takes a woman to make a man,  
 To bring him into this world,  
 To teach him to stand,  
 And guide his first few steps,  
 To walk him into class on the first  
 day,  
 Then turn and walk away.

It takes a woman to make a man,  
 To tell him not to be afraid,  
 To show him right from wrong,  
 To make him grow up strong.

It takes a woman to make a man,  
 To make him feel proud,  
 hold his hand,  
 Make him stand up tall  
 On top of the world  
 Where nothing else could bring  
 him down.

It takes a woman to make a man,  
 To be there when he comes home,  
 To patch his clothes and fix his  
 buttons,  
 To correct his speech,  
 To do the things he won't do for  
 himself

It takes a woman to make  
 a man,  
 To break his heart,  
 To put him on his own,  
 Make him learn to stand  
 alone,  
 To make him grow tough  
 inside—  
 Like a man.

---Zach Cowart

photo by Jermichael Fann

## Sleeping Beauty

Every time I awake, you disappear.  
When my eyes are revealed to the world in  
the light, I never see you.

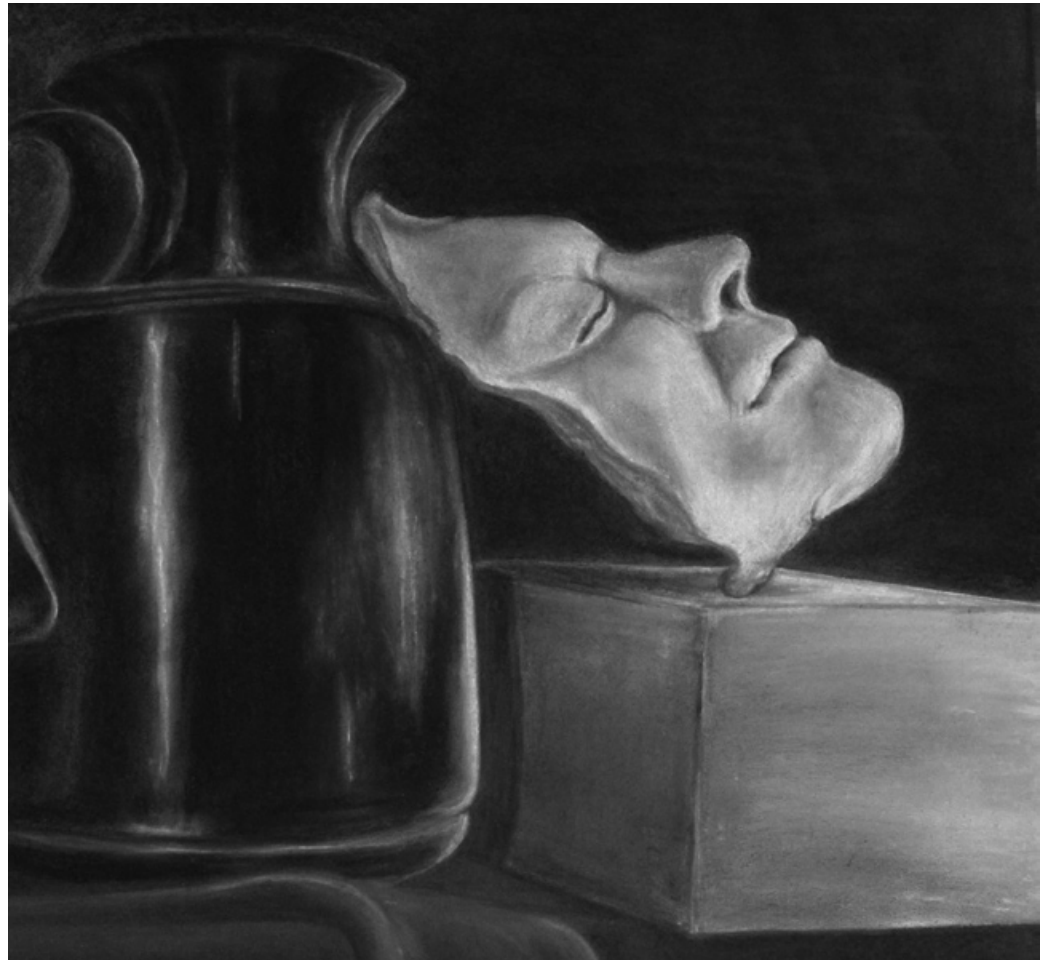
You hide behind my imagination, giving me  
no sense of reality.  
But it's cool; I'll see you again!  
Around midnight or a minute after 2 a.m.  
And when we meet, I hope it's as sweet as it  
always is.

Your eyes and sense of humor are what  
attach me to you more.  
Could I mold you to fit into my world?  
To be along my side to fill the empty place  
in which you belong.  
Would you welcome this suggestion?

Or do you prefer playing with my mind and  
teasing my emotions  
With hopes of touching you outside of my  
imagination?

This world is cold, but you're not.  
You warm my heart,  
But only to break it time and time again  
because of your absence.

But it's ok. I'll see you again.  
Preferably tonight around 12 or early  
morning 2 a.m.



charcoal by L. Christine Connors

And by the way:  
Don't forget your halo and your glass slippers.  
I'll be waiting by the sign that reads destiny,  
Hoping to see an angel walk into my life and  
take her place.  
You are my sleeping beauty.

---Cleveland Rainey

## In Nomine Patris

It all began very quickly. Myself, along with three women and two men, one of whom was a security officer, were in this small town bank when a man entered waving a gun and forced us into the storage room.

“If any of you try anything you will die... do not test me,” he snarled, then proceeded to raid the vault.

As time passed, no one said a word. I looked around the room at all the faces drawn in fear, anger, and sorrow. The tension in the room came to unbearable limits. It was then that I noticed the security officer turning his head violently to look at each person. “We have to think of something,” he said, sweating profusely; I would say it was because of the close quarters, but none of the others had the officer’s symptoms.

“We should just sit here and do as he says.” This time it was one of the tellers, an Asian female. She looked young, but her face was worn with stress.

“It could take him an hour to crack that vault. We need to come up with a plan. I’ve seen too many of these situations work out badly.” The jumpy security officer needed to be in charge. I saw it in his eyes.

“I have to agree with him, Jane,” said an attractive brunette, the only other teller who had decided to come in early that morning. “We saw his face; he can’t let us live.”

“Sir, what do *you* suggest?” This time Jane spoke to a business man of sorts who seemed to be less than interested in the current situation.

“I feel like we can get out,” he answered. “I mean-- it’s only one man.”

“What’s your name, sir?” asked the brunette.

“My name is Michael Lawson-- and your name is?”

“Stephanie Blair--and our friendly security officer is Thomas.”

Thomas scared me more than the rest, his panicked eyes bred misjudgment. Stephanie was just foolish enough to feed his ego; she would give Thomas the control he desired.

There was still one missing, a person who remained unnoticed until this point--a girl my age--around seventeen; she had short blonde hair, cropped almost to her ears. This girl mesmerized me; while the rest discussed things that didn’t matter, I began to focus more and more on this angel. “Don’t be afraid,” I told her softly. It was the first time I had spoken and now I believed that I was more invisible than the girl up until this point.

She just stared at me. Michael broke the awkward silence. “This is my daughter Elizabeth.” A beautiful name, I thought. There was something about her eyes that made me forget for a moment who I was and why I was there.

The atmosphere went from energetic discussion to solemn silence. Everyone was watching the girl and I. Michael touched the top of his daughter’s head. “She has cancer.” Nothing else needed to be said; it was apparent the man had given up on his daughter long ago.

The silence seemed to last forever. The first to speak was Stephanie: “All of our problems aside, we still need to get out of here.”

“Well we can’t,” said Jane. “It’s impossible for us to get to the door unnoticed. You can see the entrance from the vault.” She was now the only person in our group who still argued the theory that everyone would be safer if we stayed.

“We need a distraction,” Thomas said bluntly, as if he already knew how to fix the problem.

What happened in the next few minutes would make anyone question the moral fiber of the human soul. “What are you suggesting?” Michael was ready to give him his power now too, maybe even more than Stephanie.

“One of us has to cause a diversion.”

Jane finally decided to speak up, “That is insane! Who do you expect to volunteer for that? It’s suicide.”

Thomas’ gaze fell on Elizabeth. Silence. Then Stephanie said, “No!”

“The girl is the most logical choice. Look at her; she doesn’t have much time anyway.”

“You disgust me.” Stephanie looked at all the quiet faces in the room. “You all make me sick.”

Everyone now focused on Michael, who sat with a solemn look on his face, but he said nothing. “I’ll do it,” said Elizabeth. “I’ve come to terms with my death, and if I must give my life to save all of you, I will.”

No one could argue with her logic, so she slowly stood up and made her way to the door. Michael wept quietly and all the others turned their eyes to hide their shame. Now it was my turn to be heard, so I stood and extended my arm, and said, “Wait!”

“I have to go,” she whispered.

“You don’t understand.” I quickly pulled back the hammer on my gun. “I can’t let you do this.”

“What are you doing?” said Thomas, his face livid.

I aimed my gun at Thomas and he dropped to the floor; he was just as much of a coward as the rest of them. “That man in there is my father,” I said. “And you all just signed this girl’s death sentence.”

The one that disgusted me most though was Michael. How could he sit there and watch his daughter die? So I gave him a chance, “Michael, if you wish I will exchange your life for hers.” Michael looked into his hands and began weeping. “Yeah, I thought so.”

I turned back to Elizabeth, ready to do my father’s will. Then she turned to me, that sweet face staring at me once again. She took a step toward me, and I flinched; she took another step, and I gripped the gun with much more resolve. “Don’t move!” I shouted. She moved, and I pulled the trigger. Click. I immediately realized my mistake and switched off the safety, but by this time she had already made it to me and touched me on my cheek. My hands shook, and I began to sweat.

“What is this?” I said softly, taken completely off guard by her boldness. Then she kissed me. It was wonderful and tender, what I longed for since the first time I saw her.

Elizabeth ran her hand down my arm and took my gun; she proceeded to toss it across the room, still holding the kiss. I knew what had happened, but I didn’t care. This girl was willing to sacrifice everything to save these people-- from me. She pulled away after a few seconds, but still kept my gaze. There was only one thing that could come to mind, so I said it: “Thank you.”

“It’s going to be alright.” She told me, just before the gun went off. I looked down at her white blouse, now doused with red, and feared the worst. I tried to reach for her, to save her, but when I did, the pain took me to the ground. I felt the wound in my side. My vision blurred. I looked at Michael, who stood above me with my smoking gun. I tried to speak but couldn’t find breath, so I looked upon her one last time. Then darkness followed, all in the name of my father.





photo by Donna Freeman



photo by Michelle Edge

## My pets

Of pets I have as many as ten score,  
sometimes less and sometimes more.

I spend the time to teach them tricks:  
roll over, play dead or fetch me sticks.

The words from my mouth gently pour  
to teach my little tricks and more.

Some of them must wonder why  
I ask them to pretend to die.

Some will wonder why I ask  
to call them forth to do some task.

Some will quit and run away;  
they are missing day by day.

Some of them are not so bright;  
it takes them longer to get it right.

Others have their wits so quick  
that they can soon learn any trick.

I help them increase what they know;  
we think it makes them really grow.

And when the time between us ends,  
they move away to make new friends.

---Bob Marsh

## As She Slept, I Loved

She laid there dreaming, of what I don't know,  
 Sound asleep without a worry in the world.  
 I gazed and my mind went aloft.  
 What was she hearing? What was she seeing?  
 What was she thinking? What was she feeling?  
 I got up and went to her side.  
 I laid next to her to give it a try.  
 Beside her body I felt her warmth.  
 My hand over hers, my legs next to hers,  
 Pressing gently so as not to stir.  
 I felt her pulse. I felt her breathing,  
 Very different from mine, so uneasy.  
 A smile on her face, in bliss, undisturbed.  
 Her vibrations were quiet and steady,  
 All the while mine felt jealous and heavy.  
 She's my angel, delicate, innocent, and sweet;  
 Happy and truly blessed, I want to weep.  
 Then she awoke and I was told,  
 As the covers began to unfold,  
 "Honey, what are you doing?"  
 I replied, "Just loving you, baby."

---Abran Cruz

## Sonnet 1: My Love is Love

My love is not music to his eardrums.  
 My heart is silent, and it rarely beats.  
 When I'm with him, butterflies do not come.  
 His touch can't send me electricity.  
 Rose petals do not guide where our love leads.  
 The route we travel is narrow and slow,  
 And is surrounded with thistles and weeds,  
 Not the common route that most people go.  
 Others prefer to go to Disneyland,  
 Where they close their eyes and then make-  
 believe.  
 Vibes they seek, which last like castles of sand;  
 The essence of love is what we achieve.  
 We do not limit love to circumstance.  
 I'll choose love any day over romance.

---Jasmine Alexis Cason

## I Want to Go

I want to go,  
 But I want to stay.  
 I don't listen to other people,  
 And to everything they say.

I love you,  
 More than you know,  
 But your love for me,  
 Just doesn't seem to show.

I wish that you knew  
 How bad I want to cry.  
 Because you have hurt me,  
 And I want to say goodbye.

I will give it one more chance,  
 But you have to show me that  
 You care.  
 You have to open up.  
 Your heart I want you to share.

---Kila Frank





charcoal by Curtis Clemmons



## Gone

I feel so alone-  
 These four walls bring me no  
 Happiness, no joy anymore-  
 In a room full of people, all I have  
 Is me-  
 I hear their laughs-  
 I see their eyes-  
 None are there in my favor-  
 None are there for me-  
 I've sank to the bottom-  
 Will I ever see the light?  
 Or is this where I'm bound?  
 My body feels it-  
 My heart does too-  
 All I ever wanted was to matter  
 Somewhere to you.

---Ashley K. Love

## Thy Autumn Leaves

O, Autumn tree.  
 Cool, fine mists caress thee.  
 Bright, wondrous colors I can see.  
 All about thy Autumn leaves  
  
 Arms stretching to the sky.  
 Makes me think of days gone by.  
 Heart of wood beats with light.  
 Thy mystic mind glows so bright.  
  
 Fingers reaching toward home high above.  
 A heart so aching, full of love.  
 Thy great form guided by  
 He who is the King of the sky.  
  
 This season you shall shed  
 They beautiful, glorious cloak of red.  
 Ready for night, ready to sleep  
 Peering at an eternity so deep.



photo by Michael Owen Henry

He whispers His grand design  
 Of this world, beauty divine.  
 He, creator of earth and sea,  
 Reveals his plan all about thee.

O, Autumn tree.  
 Beauty and life caress thee.  
 Proof of all that He decrees.  
 All about thy Autumn leaves.

---Dustin Tilligkeit

## Apate and Aletheia

I arose in a tunnel, not by my accord,  
And led to a circle, a stage I came toward.  
There were two figures present, and both held my eye.

The core held one figure, a lady veiled with white.  
Around her danced a girl, beautiful in my sight.  
Adorned with precious jewels, flowing colors of red.

The center figure spoke; I didn't hear what she said.  
The dancing beauty 'round her pervaded my head.  
My mind filled with pleasure, sought my hand in her grasp.

'Round the ring we danced, she sent my life spinning fast.  
She's a mystery to me. "Who are you?" I asked.  
"Never mind my name, for I'm here to praise your might."

She said, "Dance with me awhile. You'll not see your plight,  
For I'm all you'll need to ignore the pains of life."  
I was captivated through her eyes, black as pearls.

But this can't be real, I thought. I must leave this girl.  
Although life's a bore without her seductive world,  
It's falsehood I abhor, for I must seek out Truth.

Moving to the middle: "My Lady, who are you?"  
"I thought you'd never ask; I'm one you never knew.  
Sit quietly. I'll show you. I'm more than mere words."

She was Aletheia, and she surpassed all I'd heard.  
When her veil lifted, my transformation occurred.  
Then she revealed all about the girl in red.

She taught me about the Way, my soul finally fed;  
And then she went away. Her purpose had been met.  
That's when the girl who once danced came to take her place.

Softly she approached, for fear of having to chase.  
Unaware, that I would confront this in her face.  
"I've seen the lady in white, like her, there are few.

I know her now; she is more beautiful than you.  
Rather I'll hear her speak than dance for miles with you.  
You're a mere shadow, dressed with a light burning red.

And out of darkness you come, taking on the dead.  
Oh how many before me you must have misled.  
You make it easy to ignore reality.

But I cannot live that way, it's simply not me.  
And you cannot change me after what I've just seen.  
Away from me now; I want you out of my sight.

I know who you are; the lady is right.  
Her face painted with candor, radiates True Light.  
Foolishly you build upon foundations of the marsh.

Your food is not fulfilling; and the fall is hard.  
She is wonderful, even when we call her harsh.  
As for you Apate, you're not beautiful after all.

---Cameron Joyner

*\*Apate is the Greek goddess of lies and deceit. Her Roman equivalent is Fraus, from which the word "Fraud" is derived.*

*\*Aletheia is ancient Greek for "Truth," while the Roman is Veritas.*



photo by L. Christine Connors

## Hero

Let us go then, you and I,  
 And venture forth into the night,  
 To secure that flighty temptress, adventure.  
 Time is trying to make fools of us again,  
 But we won't let it—no—not here—not now.  
 It will not elude us. It's always near.  
 Ironically adventure is everywhere, even here.  
 We'll make a quest. Be a hero. Shall I be yours?  
 Anyone acknowledges and adventure as worth aspiring  
 to.  
 You say, "So which way now, Sacagawea? Where's your  
 north star?"  
 Well, we all see what we want to see.  
 But the real world is where the monsters are.  
 Heroes fight monsters. Yes, our world is our quest.  
 But monsters are all different, a true hero can attest.  
 The beast could be anything that alters your  
 adventure's fun.  
 That's why there is no glory in repeating what others  
 have done.  
 A raging river does not like to be restrained.  
 And truly, neither should we.  
 But does truth have a moral? And if it doesn't, should  
 there be?  
 For a hero's life to mean anything, he must save the  
 world for himself.

---Michael Owen Henry

## Garry's House

I've gone from balloons on colored string  
and skinned knees

To a white dress, baby food and car keys  
You and I have now moved decades apart.

I remember you as my sweetheart  
Your fizzy grin and bubbly eyes make me  
smile

I wanna hang out with you for a while

Escape from all the guilt and blame

We can do what you and I both crave

Imaginations running wilder than wild

Careless memories laid to rest

Starting fresh, the ultimate test

Let's move into Garry's house

We'll search for cracks in the pavement

Spending our time adrift in the moment

The fun bubbles over in there

You know we're always a welcome pair

You and I can watch for the new moon

We'll see Elvis together, but not too soon

We'll grow old in Garry's home

It will be ours alone.

---Kathy Thompson

## Pen's Apprehension

There is no fight of greater plight.  
Pick up a pen and then to write.

Words in the heart are just a start,  
Unseen to me they are cohort.

Light years away we must begin,  
And put to use the wood's great end.

Until words manifest, you see,  
There's no way made; verbs don't agree.

How dormant is no life at all  
When one holds power to birth them all.

Until hand's rest meets pale surrender,  
What good may all our studies render?

There is a test we must profess,  
Not peas in pod or idleness.

We must put our great finesse  
To the test, lest ink resist

A world much larger than you and me,  
Yet we plot what logos' fate shall be.

Miles away one's thoughts in flight.  
Cloudy skies no stop in sight.

Days away one's thoughts oft seem  
A resting place I dare not deem.

To be gainful as times flies  
When thoughts should heed coaxing  
Cries.

Hours tarry, body bent,  
Progress lingers, truly spent..

Mind's conception, a mere part.  
Term prepares but in the heart.

How does live birth come to pass;  
Pen and paper meet at last.

--- Christle Young



## Model Behavior

I wake to find the fluorescent flickering to life.  
 The saleswomen stream from the stockroom.  
 The hum of the heater hovers across the store front.  
 The daily dollars and cents line up to greet the new day.

Regulars scour the racks for last season's leftover.  
 The hangers rattle as the shoppers shuffle shirts.  
 I clench as the women come closer and closer.  
 Can they sense the terror behind my tinted frames?

My hair is perfectly placed and my scarf is knotted just so.  
 I smile at them but do they really see me?  
 I stand perfectly still and hope that no one feels my fear.  
 I have an itch but my limbs won't move.

Trapped inside a plastic shell, no one can hear me yell.  
 My apprehension is masked behind this grin.

---Kathy Thompson

## Peace

A cloud of dreams,  
 Floating images of string and kites,  
 Glowing feathers of angel's wings,  
 Shimmering glimpses into the spring,  
 Diamond sunsets and clearest nights,  
 Fireflies and butterflies and every creature of the sky.

A whisper in the wind of echoes still to come,  
 Rapture written on a tear, the song the angels hum,  
 Fleeting dreams of rain and snow,  
 Faultless in my eyes,  
 Falling, drifting, kindly lifting,  
 Sliding towards the sun.



watercolor by Sarah LeVaughn Ballew

Peace is this—  
 Dreamless sleep,  
 Waking moments of heaven's keep.  
 It takes me in, breathes me in.  
 Peace, I know your touch.  
 So sweet.

---Brittany Horton

## Villanelle

Poetry is such a pain.  
I never know what to write.  
All this thinking drives me insane.

I hate the haiku and the sinqvain.  
Writing poems takes me all night.  
Poetry is such a pain.

I write about simple stuff like rain.  
I once wrote a poem about flying a kite.  
All this thinking drives me insane.

I made a poem about the presidential  
campaign.  
I thought I liked it, but not quite.  
Poetry is such a pain.

I even composed one about a Great  
Dane,  
Went on and on about his bark and his  
bite.  
All this thinking drives me insane.

Writing these poems makes me want to  
fight!  
I just can't seem to get it right!  
Poetry is such a pain.  
All this thinking drives me insane.

---Brittany Stewart

## The Wrong Poem

There's a poem inside of my head or my heart,  
But it will not come out, it will not start.

I know that it's there I can feel it inside,  
But it will not come out; it just wants to hide.

This isn't the poem that I should be writing.  
The poetry nerves in my brain must be fighting.

I know that a poem is in there somewhere.  
If it doesn't come out I'll go crazy I swear.

Poems come easy when I sit down and think.  
How come it's so hard to put it in ink?

I've been writing this poem for more than a day,  
And I've written it now in quite an odd way.

Now all I need is the end to sound right,  
But the poetry nerves just continue to fight.

---Savannah Parker

## To My Loving Grandfather

You're no longer here.  
Saying goodbye to you  
Was my biggest fear.

I love you,  
But I am still here.  
Everytime I think of you,  
I shed another tear.

You're now in a happy place,  
And no longer in pain.  
There is no more rain.

I will miss you  
Until I see you again.  
You are not only my grandpa,  
You were once my best friend.

Up in heaven,  
Is where you shall be.

And the day when I get there,  
It's you I want to see.

---Kila Frank



photo by Donna Freeman





# Wiregrass Contributors:

**Kristi Parker**, Editor

**Katt Thompson &**

**Abran Cruz**, Assistant Editors



	Crystal Jarrell
Sarah Levaugh Ballew	Joseph Johnson
Alan Brasher	Kayla Johnson
Jasmine Alexis Cason	Cameron Joyner
Curtis Clemmons	Whitley King
L. Christine Connors	April Kruppenbach
Zach Cowart	Amy M. Lee
Abran Cruz	Ashley K. Love
Mark Dallas	Jon Luke
Stephanie Daltry	Bob Marsh
Michelle Edge	Matt McCarty
Courtney England	Savannah Parker
Jermichael Fann	Paris Pitts
Kila Frank	David Porter
Donna Freeman	Cleveland Rainey
Kimberly Guise	Brittany Stewart
Sammy Hall	Charles Tapley
Michael Owen Henry	Kathy Thompson
Matthew Hobbs	Katt Thompson
Keturah Hollowell	Dustin Tilligkeit
Kenneth Homer	Sarah Williams
Brittany Horton	Christle Young