



# Wiregrass

2021 LITERARY AND ARTS JOURNAL



Cover art: The Broken Road - Rebecca Ferron

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East Georgia State College, University System of Georgia, Swainsboro, Georgia 30401

[www.ega.edu](http://www.ega.edu)

## Wiregrass 2021 Literary and Arts Journal

Featuring the writing and artwork of  
East Georgia State College students, staff, and faculty.



Editor: Rebecca Ferron

Faculty Advisor: Christian Kraus

Thanks to:

A huge word of thanks goes to all the students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni who contributed to the content featured in this year's publication. A very special thanks also goes to Mr. Desmal Purcell and Dr.s Alan Brasher and Armond Boudreaux who all contributed heavily and were also peer reviewers in this year's effort. Also a big thank you to Mr. Matt Brown who served as Rebecca's personal editor and resident tech support guru. This year's publication has hit many a COVID-year snag along the way, and we are very pleased to finally be bringing it to press.



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# Broken Pavement

The path you walked on  
towards your dreams  
Broke into pieces  
along with your goals.

You're shattered, torn, and glassy-eyed  
It's nothing but a Broken Pavement,  
where you dry your tears away

Small pieces of you  
Where the edges turn  
black and blue  
Crying out in despair  
The pavement crumbles  
before you fall

Words of hatred fired like missiles piercing the sky  
You cover your ears to block out the explosions  
The words, slowly breaking on the inside  
Is the bed of nails where you lie

Praying you will survive the attacks upon you  
Hoping that your inner soldier won't die  
Crawling into a black hole that keeps you warm  
Even though the road before you starts to fall

Trying so hard to climb to the top, you fall again  
Second guessing your hopes and plans  
Grabbing onto the words of disapproval  
Hoping they will burn to ash

Feeling darkness engulf you where you can't see  
Holding your breath to push away despair  
While watching the scene of everything tearing away  
As your blood runs cold and you cannot breathe

Scars opening  
they pour out your thoughts  
Body trembling as you cry  
Bullet holes shot through at a specific man  
The one you loved now going through a new life span

The path you walked on; towards your dreams  
Broke into pieces along with your goals  
You're shattered, torn, and glassy-eyed  
It's nothing but a Broken Pavement  
where you dry your tears away

- Zandria L. Foreman



Full Bloom - Siere Dejesus

## Don't Change

From loving to fussing to strangers  
Hanging our feelings like hangers  
Keeping our feelings in is danger  
Feeling so numb  
I don't want this no longer  
Funding my heart away like a sponsor  
You made me out of a monster  
I don't want this no longer  
Things don't change things don't change  
My thoughts are loud can you hear my range  
But things don't seem the same  
All I ask you is  
Don't change don't change

- Daquez Brinson

## For a Moment

For a moment, I would have believed  
I was dead, wrapped in a smoking metal  
shroud, twenty miles back, in the intersection

of Empire Expressway and the new Bypass.  
The notion was fleeting, drawn from the  
simple realization of a memory lapse—I

had approached the intersection, but couldn't  
swear that I had crossed it, couldn't swear  
that I had driven the last twenty miles. A seized

caliper brought an abruptly lurching end to my  
funereal reverie. The car jerked quickly back  
from the road's edge, righted as if by magic,

snatched from the riverbed that waited a few  
yards past the white line, white-knuckle  
testimony to my continuing existence.

- Alan Brasher



Broken Narratives Feel Like Teeth from a Baton - Desmal Purcell



Fresh Water - Siere Dejesus



## Watermelon and Crepe Myrtle

When a watermelon goes to Purgatory,  
As they all inevitably will,  
He'll smile at me as a crescent-shaped slice,  
With red, jagged teeth, and say,  
"I was headed that way anyway, Mr. Caretaker."

But he leaves a battalion of seeds  
Scattered around, trying to appear innocuous,  
And each one is a timebomb of exploding  
Green sprouts and leaves.  
And they'll race across the garden floor,  
Waltzing eternally, to be again that  
Plump, juicy womb, walled by rind,  
Whose water will break with the slicing  
And freely share the soothing sweetness of the newborn.

I defy anyone to show me a greater masterpiece  
Than the gnarled but perfect crepe myrtle  
On West Main.  
Actually, no, don't! There's only so much a heart can take.  
Writing a new story every day  
With the changing light on its profound stationary pose  
As it views lovingly the young girl playing  
Alone on the slide in the park down the street.

- Ronald S. Ellison

## Rosemary Moments

Occasionally, a *déjà vu* moment will strike out of the blue and cause us to stop, pause, and wonder—as if time’s backward winking has addressed us for an instant or as if a wave of a dream has splashed in upon our consciousness. That wondering always causes us to encounter ourselves in time—for somehow, we think, this has happened before, or we postulate whether or not we dreamed that very moment, say, seven years back. Flashing in on our busy, everyday lives, *déjà vu* moments cause us to think about our minds and about time—and hook us into considering the fragility of our confidence in our tangible, linearly progressing world. Such incidents, I would say, are the inklings of rosemary moments.

Two years ago, I would not have considered the idea of a “rosemary moment.” Indeed, the fun of talking about a “rosemary moment” is quite recent, for an afternoon’s study of a sprig of rosemary from one of my large rosemary bushes inspired the catch phrase, which I hope to remember and use in the future. My long-ago, limited past experience of rosemary targeted on the dried bits in a spice jar, but I became more aware of the herb when I had the opportunity to interpret, in costume, historical events at Colonial Williamsburg. Historical interpreters used rosemary in the kitchen of the Governor’s Palace, rosemary was generally in the premises of the Colonial Garden and Plant Nursery on the Duke of Gloucester Street, and the herb grew in the kitchen garden of the Benjamin Powell House. But it was one of many vegetables, herbs, and flowering plants and didn’t catch my attention until, tragically, one of our friends died. We gathered at the front of the courthouse, and a friend and co-worker, carrying a basket, passed out pins and sprigs of rosemary for us to attach either to our hats or caps, kerchiefs, jackets, gowns, or coats. “Rosemary for remembrance,” she said. I afterwards learned, after some inquiries, that the word, “rosemary,” has Latin roots and was called “*rosmarine*,” the Old English term, which means “dew of the sea.” That’s the sort of

information that ends up being filed away in the back of the mind, and so I went about my life, progressing into the future, until I recently determined to examine the plant.

Having left Virginia years ago, I decided, about seven years ago, to spruce up my present-day yard with some plants. So, I purchased some small rosemary plants and planted two of them in the sun. They have since grown together into a large, sprawling bush. Naturalists tell us to keep a journal to record observations, through sketches and writing, before they are forgotten. I wanted to find something in nature that was not extraordinary but some everyday item that would amplify my observational skills of my commonplace surroundings, so I decided to learn more about the herb that makes chicken dishes taste so flavorful. Examining a sprig from my plant, I noticed that the bluish flowers had white, flimsy filaments floating about them, casting an iridescent, amethyst glow. The needlelike, leathery leaves were sticky, and rubbing the leaves between my fingers and thumb, I caught their expected camphoric aroma but also picked up a soft, summery, floral echo of the Mary Dickinson shop at Colonial Williamsburg, which always pleasantly wafted a scent of lavender and rosemary, awakening visitors from our century to the ritual of the eighteenth century morning toilette. I sketched the flower sprig and thought it looked like the printed cotton floral pattern of the colonial short jacket I used to wear the most often. Was rosemary entangled in the floral pattern of my pretty jacket? Rosemary is not just a dried up herb in a spice jar, I was beginning to recognize. Spiked and brambly, rosemary is beautiful.

A few years ago, I noticed that a neighbor was growing a rosemary plant. It started out small and then grew into this large, wiry, unkempt tangle of greenery. I liked it. Then, one day, it was gone—removed, dug up, rooted out. It took some time, but my two plants in the sun merged together and have become a great tangle that I hope will flourish. I have no plans to remove it. In my attempt to be an observant naturalist, I took a stand right on the very outskirts of the

bush and rethought the gap that it created, recognizing that it wasn't so much of a gap, but a path. Somehow, the rosemary had plunged its roots underneath the ground and reemerged two feet away from its central unraveling reef. Indeed, as I looked at it from above, I saw that the outer, southerly runners curved upward and in, as if a great wind or wave had shaped it, so that it was not a tidy, refined circle of a shrub, but navigated evidence of some current pushing up against it so that the whole of it was leaning northeastwardly. It was trying to be marine algae or a sea anemone. My rosmarine thought it was living under water as part of a reef. I had been told that rosemary was originally called "rosmarine" because it grew near the sea. My plant is nowhere near the sea, but it seems to remember its ancestor's home, recalling and imitating directional shaping from the influx of salty waves. It was not *déjà vu* that struck me, but a positively good moment of conscious, present wonder—that rosemary was living up to its name. Did the ancient folk who named it know about its drifting "marine" behavior? My newly acquired knowledge propelled me into wonder. Rosemary itself remembers.

The ability to wonder is good because it leads us, most often, not only to be pleasantly astonished, but also to ask why. What about the "ros" part of rosemary's name? Why would the ancient folk who named it consider it as "dew" of the sea? Practically speaking, it's very difficult for the sea to showcase "dew" since the sea itself is an accumulation of water drops. We think of the sea as blue, and rosemary's blooms are blue, but why would blossoms be seen as "dew"? Dew, we know, is always connected with morning freshness. It fades by midday. But rosemary is for remembrance, which is the opposite of fading. It didn't make sense. So, in my journal, I wrote that down—that the "dew" idea was unclear. Immediately after writing it, however, a thought struck me. When we remember lost loved ones, we tend to remember them in the prime of their lives—youthful, bright, fresh times that call up for us their humor, compassion, and their pointers and hints. When we remember a meaningful past vacation, outing, or gathering, we see it as unwithered, at its best, unfaded from the hot

“sun” of the present. Living up to its marine persona, rosemary is a seaport, mimicking the memory of the breaking waves that heighten the echoes of the past that wash up and retreat, wash up and retreat, as we live our daily, present lives. It is a “portal” that opens up for us, with its spirited camphor notes and soft bath-like florals, a crossable path into the past—not as a detour taking us away from the momentum of the present, but as a fresh truth that reverberates with the distant rhythms of old, while it compels us into a real, certain state of fascination and surprise.

When I observed my sprig of rosemary on a May afternoon, I discovered truth in its history—in the appropriateness of its name. But I also chanced upon a truth I have long known, which every once in a while strikes me. There is something magical about writing thoughts down, something that happens to a thought as it moves from mind to written expression—a “rosemary moment” that is called up to convey the sort of wonder that transcends a déjà vu experience. When some Latin-educated Old English herbalist wrote down his version of the word, “rosmarine,” he must have been in the “dew” of a solid past moment. Putting pen to parchment, he fathomed the rightfulness of the name of this terrestrial herb that, mimicking the sea, buoyantly conveys the wisdom of our interconnectedness—where our fresh discoveries are the echoes of ages.

- Val Czerny



Brain Storm - Skylar Jerome





Work - Brian Martinez, Alumni



I Declare - Christian Kraus





Thorns - Siere Dejesus



Solo Sunrise - Rebecca Ferron

## Sea and Sky

Tim skips down the beach  
and chases seagulls while we wait  
for news about my father.

Indignant at a child's joy,  
the gulls take wing.  
They cry to the sea  
and to the sky—  
as if the waves will listen  
or the sun respond

to the cares of creatures  
like us.

- Armond Boudreaux



Simple Life - Skylar Jerome

## Killing the Boy

Lester stood, silent and statuesque in the back yard of his childhood home. Before him, an ancient wooden shed that had been erected by his father and Uncle before he was born. He hated it.

Hated it as a boy, hated it now as a man.

He had been standing out there for several minutes. Surely, Mrs. Reynolds, the house's owner, was giving him curious looks through the windows as she sorted the place out. Renters were coming to look at the old apartment and his parents had left some things behind that he had neglected to tend too. It had to be done soon.

The only things inside Lester really cared about were his father's old guitars, packed away once arthritis claimed his hands and his mother's box of tricks she had perfected by telling fortunes over the years. If he were to ever have children, the box and all it contained, was to go to any daughters who possessed the gift of the grift.

Sadly, that was not the only thing inside that dark, dank half-rotted memory crypt. There was something else there. Something evil. Something that had been growing there since he was a child.

It felt the same. When he looked upon it that same terrible feeling took hold of his legs and clawed upward toward his spine. Suddenly, Lester felt the way he did as a boy, small and afraid. He hated it, but there was nothing to be done about it. His family's treasures were at stake. Sentimentality notwithstanding, he had to do it for himself. To conquer that small part of himself that was still trapped in there. Conquer it and kill it, once and for all.

It took a few good yanks to pry the the old door open. The grass had grown considerably around the base from his willful negligence. As soon as he got it open a wave that smelled of earth and mold hit him square in the face. He tried not to think about what he was breathing in as he forced the jaws of the shack to open fully.

Before Lester could get both feet inside they came at him. They struck from the shadows, hard and fast as if they were part of some guerrilla army. They fell upon him, down around his ears and neck they crawled and bit. Lester slapped at himself violently, too wild and random to know if he hurt anything other than himself. After taking a moment to recon and let his eyes adjust to the room, Lester continued with his task. He felt nothing crawling, which was a good sign but could feel the tell-tale tickle of their silken goop around his ear and neck.

Quickly finding his father's instruments, Lester began tossing them out the door. So long as he stood inside enemy territory, he cared little for their well being. Of course, in the beginning, he had considered setting the whole thing on fire and explaining it to his parents later on, when he was dead.

It wasn't until he came to his mother's trunk that he saw them. Proof that he was not crazy. Over a dozen white and yellow spawn sacs were covered in the same silk goop that was spread across the room. Among them were the shrouded, drained corpses of numerous foes and challengers who, over the years, found themselves trapped inside that dark, cold shed that may as well have been the bowels of Hell itself.

And on the trunk, as brazen as the sun, amongst the sacs of devil spawn stood the great Satan herself. She and Lester locked eyes in a contest of will. It was unfair, given that she had six more than he, but that was the way of things. Nothing to be done about it.

Lester was no fool and had come prepared. For the Devil of the Shed had never beheld the pagan power of chemical foam. A power that Lester could wield like a demi-god. Quickly, as if he were a cowboy drawing at high noon, Lester went for his can and fired from the hip. The Devil tried to escape, as she had from his father so many times before, but she was old and had grown fat and sluggish from her previous victories. The Devil had no time to retreat from her arrogant position on the trunk. The foam was sticky and tar-like. The Devil drowned slowly and in agony with nothing but Lester's feverish, maniacal laughter to send off what had once been such a worth foe.

- Zach Mayo



The Bridge - Skylar Jerome





Ghost Dragon - Skylar Jerome

# Seasons

I am a spring bird  
I chirp to make flowers bloom  
I am summer sun  
I shine to brighten your day  
I am a fall tree  
I grow as my leaves fall down  
I am winter snow  
I bring people together  
Whether what I am  
One season or the other  
I bring happiness  
For everyone and for all

- Connor McGee



Ezra Pond - Siere Dejesus



After the Bloom - Siere Dejesus



Night - Bryan Martinez, Alumni





Alone - Skylar Jerome



Trapped with the Universe - Skylar Jerome

The Ninteenth Annual  
Emily Pestana-Mason  
Memorial Poetry Contest



Our poetry judge, *Chris Mattingly*, holds an M.F.A. in Poetry from Spalding University. He teaches writing, literature, and interdisciplinary courses at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky. His book of poems, *Scuffletown*, is available for checkout from the East Georgia State College Library. From 2012-2014, Chris served as a Humanities faculty member at EGSC.



## THE FIRST PLACE POEM... "The Stars Upon the Sky"

Poetry about the stars goes back to the Greek lyric poet Sappho (ca 500 BCE), and probably father. And like its kissing-cousin, the love poem, dips its ladle into the well-spring of deep poetic tradition. In "The Stars Upon the Sky", the poet continues this tradition. And I love the way the stars are situated in this piece: they appear to set upon the sky as if it were a shelf or mantle or dashboard instead of pinned up in a remote distance. The stars in this poem are within reach, and appear at the speaker's side, upon the sand, and scattered across the sea. This expansive presence of the stars is the great lyric moment of the poem, and it's one that obliterates time and distance. And this speaker is always aware of themselves in relation to the great cosmic phenomena, the great mysterious unknown, always aware that the presence of the stars makes the speaker both large and small. I love that connectedness, but I am ever more moved by the fact that no matter what life's outcomes may be for this speaker, they will always return to the balm and guidance of the stars.

### FIRST PLACE POEM

## The Stars Upon the Sky

Once upon the sky  
Twice upon the stars  
Shines upon the sea  
Lights upon the sand  
The stars upon the sky  
Shines bright upon my eyes  
To gave me faith and hope  
To follow my dreams  
One step at a time  
Two steps to keep up  
Three steps to not give up  
The dreams I must fulfill  
If I don't succeed  
I always try again  
As I know the stars  
Are always by my side

- Connor McGee

## THE SECOND PLACE POEM... "Four Letters"

Love poems go way back and are a part of virtually every written and oral poetic tradition. From Virgil to Petrarch to Shakespeare to Rita Dove, the love poem persists and is always worthy of the lines it inspires. "Four Letters" falls right into this tradition, and I love the moment it captures. It is intimate, personal, fragile, vulnerable. It is the moment in which the speaker of the poem knows that things are going to change based on the response they give to the question the poem implies: do you love me? In clear, plain-spoken lines, each its own complete thought in a chain of evolving thought, we track the speaker's process as they decide how to respond. Part of the terrible beauty of the poem is that once the speaker is given the power, is given the chance to speak, they are rendered powerless to the magnitude of the moment. In the end, it is a poem that reminds me of the power of words, of a single word, and how to speak them. It is to cast a spell that changes everything.

### ← SECOND PLACE POEM →

## Four Letters

You asked the question  
So, I want to say these four things  
But if I say these four things  
Your perspective will change  
Therefore, I want to speak none.  
But I'll at least have to respond with one.

- Tyree Ransom

THE THIRD PLACE POEM... "Beyond the Sky is Where We Cry"

This is a poem that makes the political personal and the personal political, a poem filled with tears, rage, pride, failure, gloom, and hopelessness. Which is to say, it is a poem of love and strength, one that acknowledges what has come to pass as well as what is possible. I admire the way the speaker of this poem stands amidst the stormy chaos of the moment, while gazing deep into the strife. This poem refuses to look away.

← THIRD PLACE POEM →

## Beyond the Sky

For the tears that fall upon our face with the slightest grace  
For the broken hearts that sits in our place of refuge  
We ask for the peace to stop hearing the crashing waves of our  
tears coming to bay  
Though in our minds we contemplate the things we have to  
live for  
Beyond the Sky is Where We Cry in tenfold

Our ancestors hears our pleas of guidance and ease  
They see the way we cry for change  
They see where the everlasting shame stands  
How we as individuals cannot come together  
Because we let our pride get in the way

We can stand to the side and let everything we know die  
Yet we fight each other through the day and night  
Just to go against those who was right  
Whether it's for the good or the bad  
How we fight is purely sad

The children are the key to the biggest future for our people  
yet

But how can they see that when we do not teach them that  
They see the tears of loved ones from the gloomy mist  
They hear our sobs because so much is amiss  
They know every tear is a solid kiss  
It's so far from our only bliss

We cried our tears, fought our fears, and stepped into our own  
light

We gave everything we had to help those in need  
But in the end we were shot down  
Right where we begged and plead  
We die fighting for our last breath  
We die knowing our lives were unkept

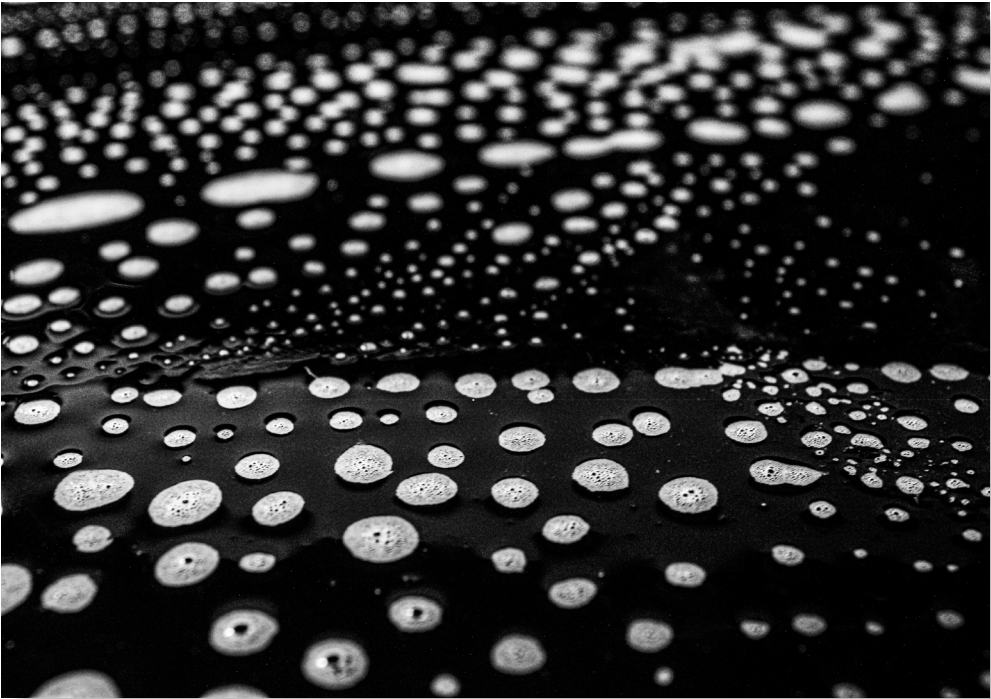
This is our finale to show our strength  
This is the time we open our eyes to think  
A dream is nothing but a dream with no hope  
If we listen we'll grab hold of the rope  
We are the truth to what's beyond tears  
We can finally fight beyond our years

For the tears that fall upon our face with the slightest grace  
For the broken hearts that sits in our place of refuge  
We ask for the peace to stop hearing the crashing waves of our  
tears coming to bay  
Though in our minds we contemplate the things we have to live  
for  
Beyond the Sky is Where We Cry in tenfold

- Zandria L. Foreman



Haiku - Sarah Catherine Kraus



Spot On - Siere Dejesus



# The White Splash on the Black Canvas

The “bully jock,” the “dumb blonde,” the “nerdy glasses kid”: these are all different stereotypes we may imagine. Often, however, there are more layers to a person than what meets the eye. Often, a deeper look must be taken to see the multiple colors that make up our personalities. Often, these different colors can be quite diverse and even seem contrary to each other, but they tend to come together to form something beautiful or maybe something ugly. The black coat of a cat shows this truth. At first, it seemed like an average black cat, but, at second glance, its beautiful complexion revealed a clashing white spot.

On many days when I walk outside, I see the little, black cat named Sunny. I can easily recognize it by two distinct features. The most noticeable of these features are its meows. Its meows are not strange or different, but they are rather like a broken record. They are never-ending. Never stopping. Never ceasing. The other feature that is more disguised in its black fur is a white spot on its chest. One might even say this white spot could be the manifestation of its pure heart. While looking at the perverse patch, I notice the beauty of its shining, smooth pelt. The dissimilarity of the white splotch seems almost to be there to amplify the cat’s black grandeur.

Sunny likes to stay in the barn behind my house, and, if the cat is not there, it can most likely be found somewhere in the field hunting its prey. At night, the black camouflage allows the cat easily to sneak up on its prey. Without the veil of darkness covering the cat, it would have trouble sneaking up on mice, birds, and other critters. I frequently find in the barn the remnants of its meals that I must clean up. Whenever I go out to the barn, the cat will either usually be just inside one of the rooms by the doorway or in the loft napping

on some of my family's storage containers. The black of its coat even blends in well with the little darkness our loft provides. When staying in the loft, the tiny, twilight frame of the cat quickly rushes down to meet me; it begins taking perfect bounds and leaps down the staircase, onto the furniture, and then to the floor; of course, the cat does this all whilst meowing. Whenever Sunny stays in the room by the door, the cat paces over to me and seems to just magically appear from whatever dark corner it was staying in. If I were a delicious mouse, I would never see the shadowy figure prowling from the gloom of the barn.

Sunny first showed up at my house this past summer. It was a tiny cat that was maybe a few months old. It had no mother or siblings with it. My family and I would leave food for it whenever we went outside to the barn. The cat was very shy at first, but it eventually became more and more friendly. My youngest sister was the one who gave it the name Sunny. The cat slowly started hanging around our barn more and more, so we started leaving the barn door cracked for it to come in and out as it pleased. The cat still would not go inside, but, eventually, the cat made its way in. Ever since then, it has been staying in the barn for the most part. The cat can be found randomly throughout the day there.

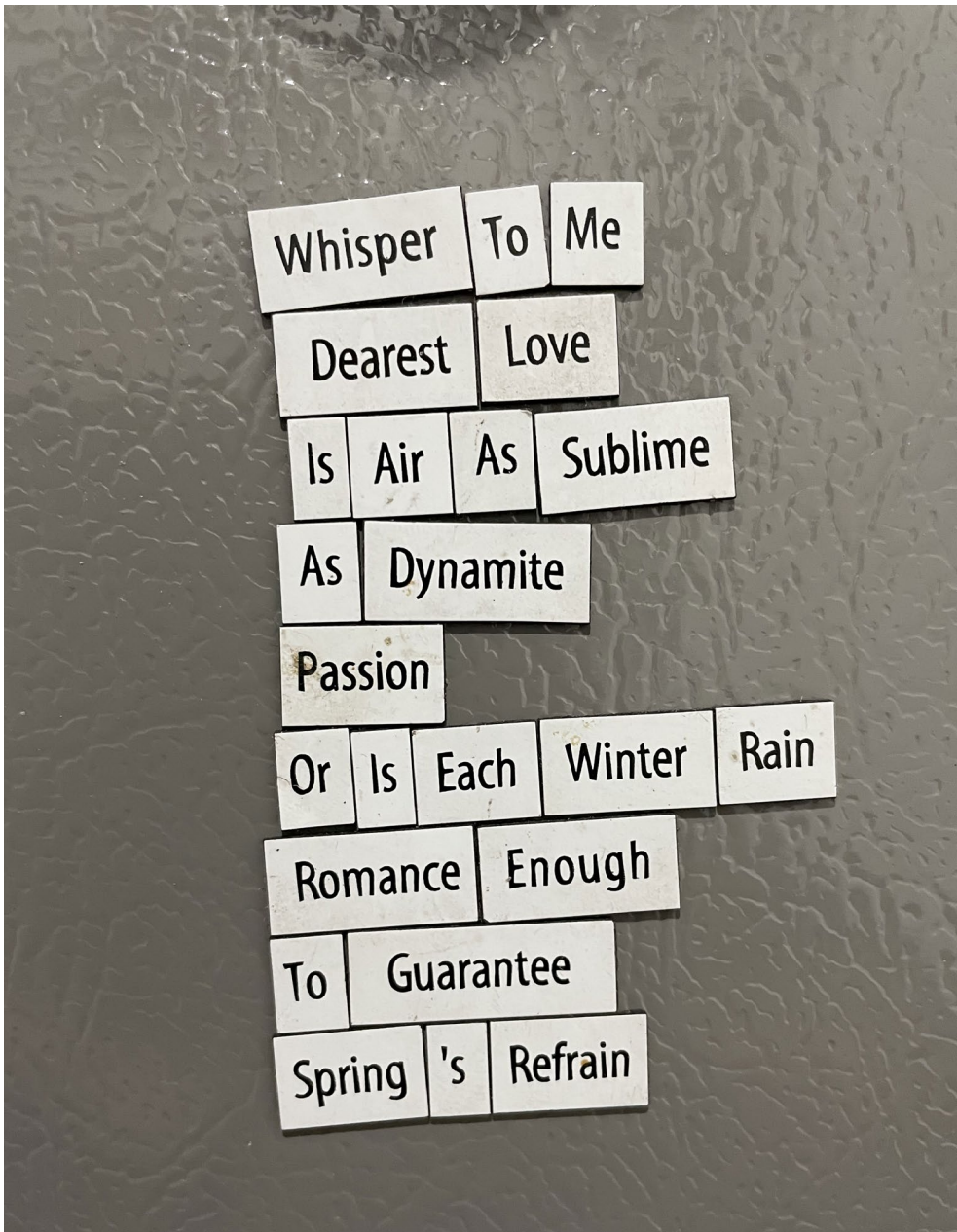
I know the cat stayed with us because my family and I gave it food and water, but why did it first show up? We could have been predators and attacked it, but it showed up anyway. I think even though it was shy on the surface, it had a level of trust and a need for fellowship that compelled it to come. I also wondered to myself why there was a white spot amongst the sea of black. I answer myself by saying it is just the genetics of the cat, but I think this yin-yang combination reveals a truth of everyday life. People are like the cat. Maybe some people are not shy on the surface and are not yearning to have some-



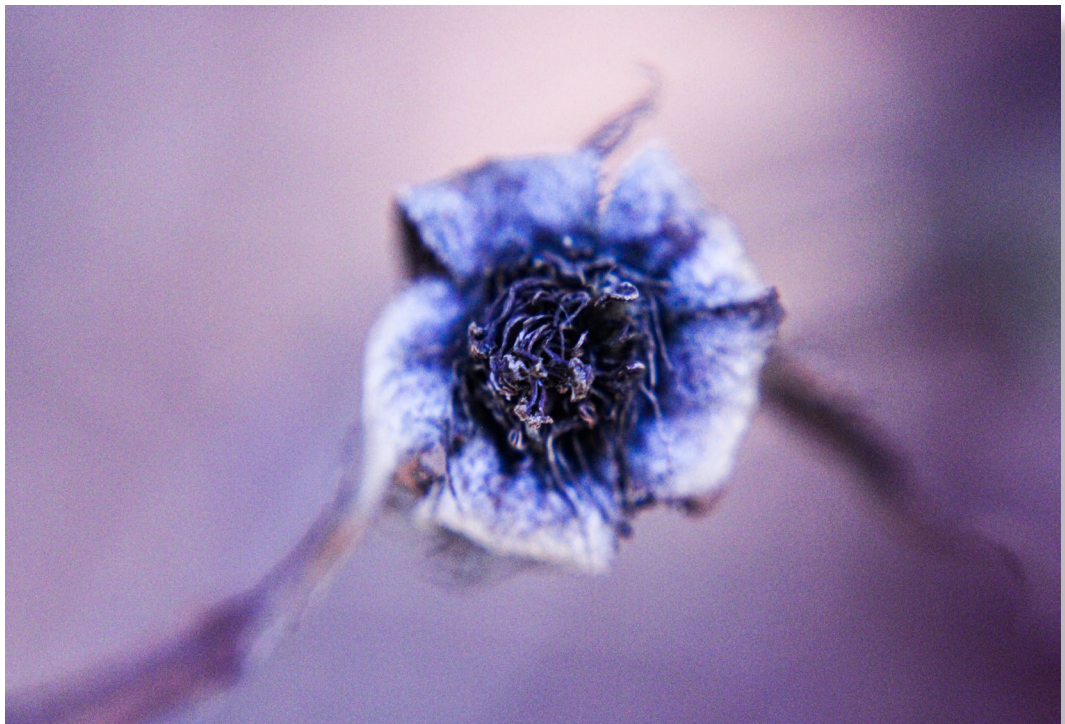
one to trust deep down. Most people probably are not both jet black and cloud white like the cat's coat, but people do have multiple layers. The high school quarterback may want to pursue a life in music or be a scientist. The kid that seems nerdy at school may be having parties on the weekend. The man on the front pew of the church every Sunday may be getting drunk Monday through Saturday. People may not be what they seem at the surface level. More often than not, there is much more to someone than what meets the eye.

Watching the cat's every move and examining its elegant garment has brought me to realize we should not judge a book by its cover. Just because something looks good or something looks bad does not mean it is. It may be quite the opposite. Many times, different aspects of our personality, our lives, our wants, and our actions are like the yin-yang of the black majesty of the cat's coat clashing with the white solemnity of its chest. People are not simple-minded, one-sided creatures; instead, we are complex with many different layers and colors making up our personalities. Sometimes, we must take a deeper look at a person to see the true shades of his or her character.

- Brandon Manville



Spring Has Sprung - Christian Kraus



Spent - Siere Dejesus



Rolling Fog - Rebecca Ferron





There's a Thin Line Between Joy and Sorrow - Desmal Purcell

## Old Photos

The still, sweet silence  
in your “sly, come-hither stare”  
swims in circles

just there

out of reach.

Sometimes I wonder,  
will you look  
at me like that  
again,  
chin tilted down,  
teasing, tempting,  
eyes on me,

looking up from desire

saying everything,

without saying?

- Christian Kraus



Tractor - Bryan Martinez, Alumni



Take Flight - Alanna Thompson





Japan - Skylar Jerome



Square Fountain - Bryan Martinez, Alumni





Shades of Grayton - Sarah Catherine Kraus



I See You - Alanna Thompson





Night Cow - Bryan Martinez, Alumni



Make It Stop - Skylar Jerome



All the Same Inside - Skylar Jerome



# Homage

Unflustered. Adjective. Not agitated; calm and self-controlled.  
Every negative thing just rolls off your shoulders.  
Your easy-going energy introduces you  
before you even speak.  
You do not change who you are  
no matter what people say or think.

Genuine. Adjective. Truly what something is said to be; authentic.  
You say what you think, but without brash words.  
Honesty without cruelty.  
A natural face and leggings or stylish outfit with hoops in.  
Your personality is unfiltered.

Plucky. Adjective. Having or showing determined courage in the face of difficulties.  
You wear that silver Tiffany necklace.  
You let things serve as a reminder of happy moments;  
Not the sad ones.  
You have been through so much.  
You continue to smile every day.

Effortless. Adjective. Achieved with admirable ease.  
Some people can just wake up and look stunning.  
You are one of those people.  
Your sense of humor,  
comforting and free from tension.  
You can break the ice in any situation.

Unflustered. Genuine. Plucky. Effortless.  
These words describe my mother,  
But they will never define her.  
She will choose her own path,  
And no one will convince her otherwise.

A daughter. A sister. A friend. A mother.

- Alexia Nail

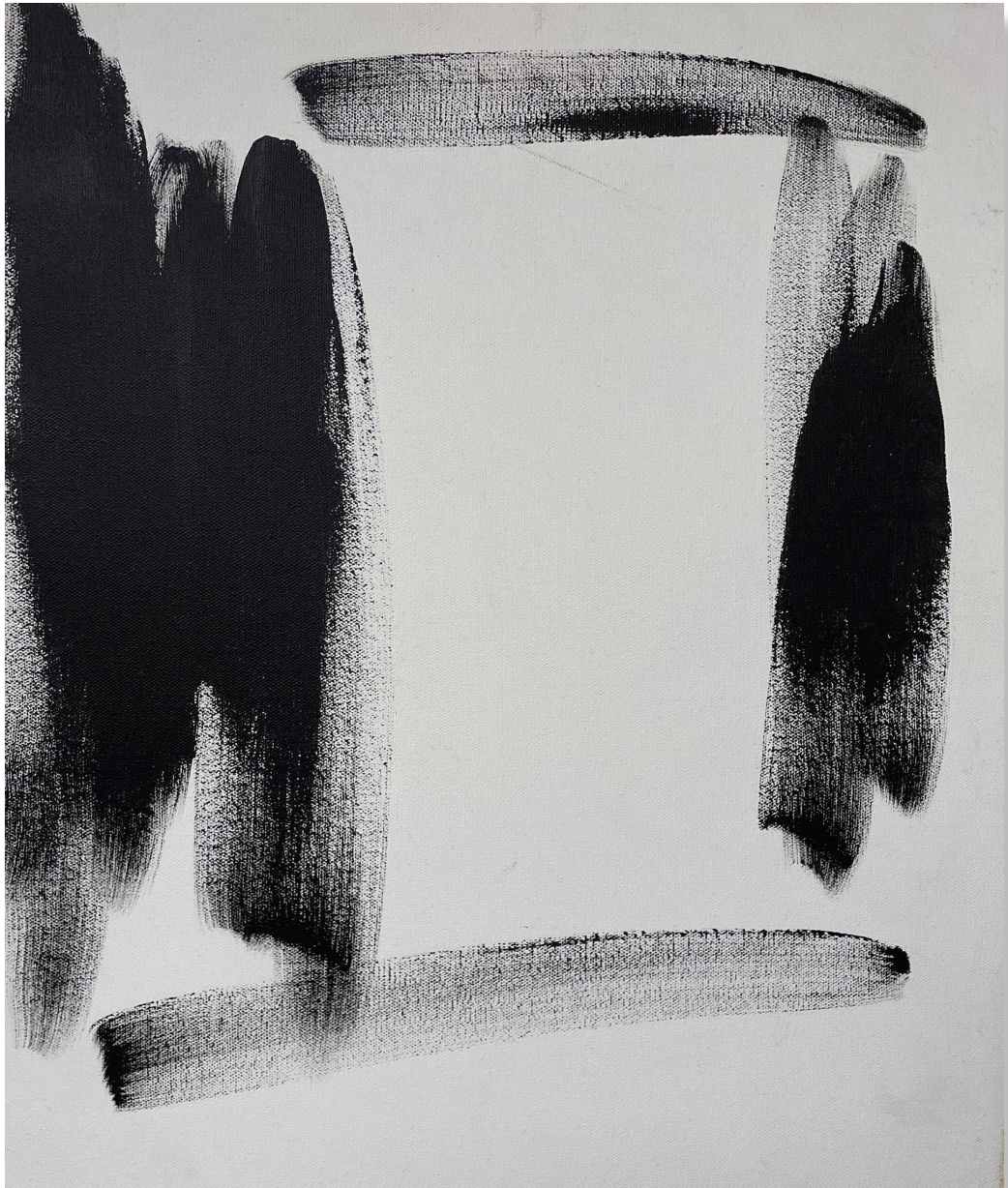
## Haunted

Haunted by the ghost of her kiss on my lips,  
a phantom lost in a moment of true bliss.  
Her words of goodbye, of no comfort they lend.  
My heart pleading to say something before the end.

"Please, don't leave me.," "Please, don't go."

Yet not a word spoken. Just a beat filling her absence  
with woe.

-Hailey Chilcutt



Alone In a Crowd - J. Corey Kraus, Alumni





Portrait - Chelsea Godwin



Joyride - Kennedy Brown





Eyeing One Another - Desmal Purcell

# Not All

Not all hands hold power.  
Not all words are weapons.  
Not all voices are heard.  
Not all ears are deaf.  
Not all mouths are seen.  
Not all people are monsters.  
Not all feet are stomping.  
Not all things are bad.  
Not all these things are negative.  
Not all written words are worth reading.  
Not all comments are bad.  
Not all kids learn to be hateful.  
Not all humans seem evil.  
Not all light is lost in the darkness.  
Not all is lost and can be fixed.  
Not all need time, but all need Love.

- Chelsea Goodwin

## Last Words

Seven steps whose weight has carried the load  
Of men whose thoughts await the cold  
The dark befriends a life whose time  
Is now to swing as windswept chime  
Choose if you will to watch the show  
His kicks at first are fast then slow  
A hood to hide his twisted breath  
Bitten to bleed by dogs of death  
The floorboard drops to deaden the air  
Though he paid the price, it's one we all share

- Eric Wruck

## Get Published!

Your work could appear in the 2022 issue of the *Wiregrass*.  
Please submit your poems, short stories, plays, and artwork  
as Word docs or jpegs to: [ckraus@ega.edu](mailto:ckraus@ega.edu)



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