Sirocco

A magazine of literary and visual art, Sirocco is published in April of each year by students at Georgia Southwestern State University, a senior unit of the University System of Georgia, an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution. Opinions expressed in the magazine are neither those of the editors nor those of the University.

Submissions are welcome anytime, but cannot be read or acted upon except during January and February. Submissions must not have been previously published and must be submitted in electronic format. Authors and artists should have some present or past affiliation with Georgia Southwestern State University. No work will be returned.

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Editor's Note:

March first marked the one year anniversary of the tornado that tore through Americus. Our community has begun the healing process, though few of us can forget what our home looked like in the morning light, a year’s time has brought us a renewal of spirit and development.

So while we re-develop our community, Sirocco has taken the opportunity to reshape itself. The most noticeable change is the new size, but I feel the most important is our inclusion of our bi-lingual faculty and students. We feel that the variety of voices and experiences are what make our university, and our community, resilient.

The process of putting this edition together has been very rewarding, and it has reminded me why outlets such as Sirocco are so important. We exist to foster the truest expression, we exist to share the voices and visions of as many perspectives as our humble pages can hold. This year, I feel we have come closer to honoring that goal than ever before.

I hope this edition brings you many wonderful moments. I have enjoyed being a part of this outstanding digest, and I want to thank my staff: Robert Ashley Grissett, Kimberly Norris, and Latasha Everson for all of their hard work. A special thank you to Dr. Stauf for her dedication to this publication, and to all of the contributors for it is their voices that speak to so many.

Patricia L. P. McCoy
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Imagine
Latasha Everson

Imagine...
A gentle hand settling upon your shoulders motivating you to push forward.
Imagine... A tender and sweet voice whispering upon your ear to never give in to negative temptation.
Imagine...
Your heart beating calmly with the rhythm and sound of the ocean as it plays with each breaking wave.
Imagine...
Your ambitions and dreams manifesting into a masterpiece of reality and possibilities.
Imagine...
The trials and hardships in your life easily lifting off into the air like a mist of unknown tribulations.
Imagine...
Your soul, body, and mind convincing you to take a step into the future of hope without hesitation or regret.
Imagine...
Love as a liquid pouring into every crevasse of your soul, filling a void of loneliness and unhappiness.
Imagine...
God’s hands lying upon you weaknesses and embracing your strengths.
Imagine...
The abstract picture of hope unraveling onto a canvas of understanding and truth.
Imagine...
A world free of hate and destruction determined to break the hold of faith and belief.
Imagine...Imagine...Imagine...
And when your imagination begins to dwindle, begin to believe. Believe in dreams, believe in hope, and believe in yourself. And be prepared to make room in your heart, as well as your soul for God’s love, which is more than you could ever imagine.
Night Sky
Maureen Smith
Watercolor
Left, left, left, right, left. My feet pound the pavement with the rhythm of a boot-camp cadence. I don’t have jack, that includes my lack of a destination. I’m just walking down E. Ponce de Leon. I would’ve been on a bus, but the MARTA police caught me doing my Superman routine, just as I was clearing the turnstile. “Freaking rent-a-cop.” I would’ve had bus fare, but I lost my job when my boss caught me adopting office supplies. “Stingy Broad!” The lady on the corner is staring. She probably thinks I’m suffering from Tourettes Syndrome. “I know I’m sexy, but must you stare!” There’s probably a correlation between my growling mind and the thunder in my gut. I try to ignore them both, especially my belly, as I have no means to satisfy its unspecific craving.

Normally, I curse God in these situations, but that’s never worked. Maybe a little sweet talking will get me somewhere. “Dear God. Big Daddy that sits on lean in that Caddy in the sky…” Left, left, left, right, left. It starts to drizzle. “Big Poppa, up yonder, I know you don’t approve of some of the foul stuff I’ve done or said, but you said you love me unconditionally, and I know you have all the abilities to feed me. All I ask is that you break bread with a brother. Amen! Awomen! A- however you like it!” Left, left, left, right, left…stop! “Hell yeah!” I look both ways and with the grace of a fat man falling, I fall on a five dollar bill. As a child, I would’ve called you a liar if you told me I’d damned near cry at the sight of a dead white man. Upon collecting myself, I see the heavenly lights of the Taco Bell, at the corner of Ponce and Brockett Road. I rush in, order a burrito. “Hallelujah!”

While making love to the burrito, I find a washer in my pocket. It’s from the last construction site that denied me work. All of a sudden, the theme from The Jeffersons starts playing in my mind. I stick the washer in my food. “Motha-! Where’s the manager?” A nasty, big bodied man steps from the back. He alone could be the reason that this Taco Bell’s code rating is only a 78. “What can I do for you?” the manager asks. “I found this crap in my burrito.” He quickly responds, “You didn’t find that in any burrito fixed here. Get the hell out of here!”

I should’ve taken his advice, instead of escalating the issue. Within
30 minutes, there are police and a news team from Fox 5. An hour later, I’m locked up on Camp Circle, in Decatur, looking at the report. I look up at the television screen just in time to catch a glimpse of the manager telling the reporter, “We don’t even use washers here.” Screw him; at least I have 3 hots and a cot.

Lost
Doug Durrance
Mixed Media
**Imitation Piece:**

“Breaking beneath the weight of moving on”  
*Kim Purrier*

Breaking beneath the weight of moving on,  
I live like I am looking for something;  
but I won’t go back to grab at what’s gone,  
knowing your hands will offer me nothing.  
You lay as low as the moon through the day,  
head hurting in harmony with my heart.  
“Why waste these last words on wishes?” you say,  
“They’re just beginnings with nowhere to start.”  
Fragile flickers fade in the dawn of night  
and dreading the dark you take final breath.  
By cursing the day that lost our last light,  
you steal away from what little is left.  

Now that it’s mourning, my whole self is pained  
from chasing a cloud that constantly changed.

*Ms. Purrier wrote this poem as an imitation of William Shakespeare’s sonnets. She has maintained the tenets of his style as well as his poetic form while creating her own message with her own words.*
Missing You Like Hurricanes
Kevin Bethea
Oil on Canvas

Best in Show for Theme
The words stung a little when I heard them, truly heard them. It’s not that I don’t feel loved—just loved less I guess. I am amazed by how long a single moment can last between lovers—an eternity.

You came home with bad news today, and, as I sat listening, I became obsessed with the way you tried to hide the anger in your voice. I sat down next to you and leaned against your chest as you drained a second glass of the hard stuff—sweet tea.

We sat silent for one of those eternities. I caressed your left hand with mine, and said something I’d never said out loud before: “Your hands have always been softer than mine.” The truth slips out as a whisper, “It has always embarrassed me.” I blush, and then—an eternity.

You pulled away and suddenly I wanted to know why you loved me. So I told you about the moment I first knew that I was meant for you—the moment I felt my soul come alive: A kiss during a midnight dance in a parking lot on a cold December night—for me an eternity.

“What is the one thing that is most beautiful about me?” You wait and then say, “You’re a good person.” I think that you misunderstand so I try another approach. “No-like I have a moment and I love the goodness in your eyes. What is it about me?”

“You’re very giving.”

An eternity.

“Do you remember that night—the whole world melted away—it was just you and me, and I knew we were in love. Do you remember?” Your eyes look out the window. Dart to the cat, back out the window. Anywhere but to me, but to the moment I am trying to create. “No, not really.”

An eternity.
Then it hits me. I know you love me, but not the way I love you. I’ve never made your breath catch. I’ve never made your heart race. My mind plays your words over and over as I begin to hear them--really hear them. You’re a good person. You’re very giving. I hear the indifference that you try to hide in your voice, and then this is a moment--an eternity between lovers.

_Sunday Ride_

_Tara Joyner_

Oil on Canvas
Lisa D. was her Daddy’s girl, 
The pride and joy in her daddy’s world.

Kids her age she saw everyday, 
but with someone else she would rather play.

He went by the name of Jimbo Tall 
Who looked like a Giraffe, but twice as small.

With a top hat, bowtie, and fur of blue, 
a big, cheesy grin and sneakers, two.

Daddy watched her play to no end, 
but soon realized that she had few friends.

She is still young and full of wonder, 
but on his own he started to ponder.

Can imaginary friends make kids crazy? 
Will she grow anti-social and lazy?

He then decided to make amends. 
He would force his girl to make real friends.

He picked his moment, in which to reveal, 
to his seven-year old girl, her friend isn’t real.

“He’s here now daddy, I can describe him, too.” 
“Don’t bother, baby, I don’t believe you.”

“Grow up, baby. Act mature!” 
“But he’s real to me, Daddy, that’s for sure.” 
“I’m telling you daddy, Jimbo is great.” 
“He is not real, there is no debate.”
“Now I’m the adult and I know what’s best, 
So go to your room and get some rest!”

She ran to her room, crying and sad. 
Away from the hurt brought out by her dad.

From that day forward, there was a change. 
Lyssa never mentioned Jimbo’s name.

But she also neither laughs nor plays. 
Daddy began to see the error in his ways.

While looking at a picture from happier days, 
In the picture appeared a haze.

He thought it was a smudge or dew, 
but soon a figure came into view.

This figure was strange and hard to see. 
But then he realized who it must be.

In his mind, there was no doubt at all, 
it looked like a giraffe, but twice as small.

With a top hat, bowtie, and fur of blue, 
A big, cheesy grin and sneakers, two.

Yes, beside his daughter right there was, 
the friend she had claimed to know and love.

His excitement he could barely contain, 
for soon he would have his daughter, again.

He ran to her room without delay, 
Though kind of unsure of what to say.

“I saw Jimbo, your very best friend.”
“No silly Daddy, he was only pretend.”
“But I saw him! I believe!” he said.
But Lyssa didn’t move her head.

“Imaginary friends are oh so lame,”
“I’m a big girl Daddy, enough with the game.”

“He’s here in this picture, right here. See?”
“That’s enough Daddy! Leave me be!”

“Grow up Daddy, act mature!”
“But he’s real to me, baby, now I’m sure.”

She walked away, and “loser” she said,
as Daddy watched with hurt and dread.

He dropped to his knees and began to cry,
since he caused her innocence to die.

Now Jimbo is forever lost to the world,
‘Cause Daddy didn’t believe his little girl.

Whether Jimbo is real is not the case.
He’s real as smile on that little girl’s face.

The moral is one you can’t negate,
When your kids want to pretend, participate.
Thoughts Become Him
Kimberly Norris
Mixed Media
August 1958
Tara Joyner
Oil on Canvas
Our Ism

Marcus Johnson

Bruce Buckman created the “Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing” model of group development. It is most often applied to corporate groups; however, this philosophy is applicable to every relationship.

Instantly
Like go-go band musicians at a jam session
At first contact we
Composed our own rhythm
And via ridiculously long
Pointless
“Hang up” “No you hang up first” type chats
By phone
Our music evolved into its own –ism

Then without reason
Nor a single cloud forewarning
Emerged things like dirty linen
And closeted skeletons
Once very well hidden
Reminiscent of decaying squirrels stuck in chimneys
Or of the contents of septic tanks
Seeping into country yards when they need to be drained

But we believe
That what we have created
Is like homegrown crops
And homemade grape or berry jams
Stored in golden-colored, tin-topped mason jars
Worth preserving

So we pinch our noses until we cope with the occasional stench
And march on knowing
That our road won’t always be paved
Or even lined with wildflowers

Resume beating out our rhythm
Carry on spreading the gospel of our ism.
Alive
Alive now
It’s thirsty
The sun streaming through the leaves of trees is dazzling
Remembering one melody
Swinging
To hand in hand with you

Alive
Alive now
It’s a short skirt
It’s a planetarium
It’s Johann Strauss
It’s Pablo Picasso
It’s the Alps
Meeting all beautiful things
And
Rejecting hidden evils carefully

Alive
Alive now
Can cry
Can laugh
Can get angry
Be free
Alive
Alive now
A dog is barking in the distance now
The earth is turning around now
Somewhere, a baby gives a first cry now
Somewhere, a soldier is injured now
A swing is swinging now
Now pasts now

Alive
Alive now
A bird flaps
The sea roars
A snail crawls
Life
Your hand’s warmth
The people love

Small Bowl with Fish Handles
David Griffin
Porcelain
Deep Every Time:
A Treatise on Transcending the Present-Perfect, An Ideal State
Sasah Heller
2nd Place D. Capitan Creative Writing Award

The Present-Perfect is an Ideal State, pure, sublime, not man-made nor made for man; effluvial in Nature, we can't see, itself trapped, lost in a mystery.

Via chance, depressants, or stimulants, at times, man elevates to lofty airs; he catches a glimpse sent by the divine, of a foreign world, flawless by design.

The Present-Perfect, Cosmos' perfect world; Human Nature, Man's perfect enemy; ceaselessly suffering [in itself] a mystery, man's world is filled with pain and misery.

In the darkness, when I close all my eyes, I can see, shining, a thousand bright stars; my feet are gently resting on a cloud and my head remains buried underground.

I remember to breathe, then, to smile; the Ideal State is deep every time; I see the turning, fallen leaves of grass reflecting off the sidewalk's broken glass.

Inside floating clouds, sky-bound cumulus, between symbiotic subatomics; we feel, caress our seeking hearts, breaths of eternal deep; transcension starts.
We are kept hidden by Human Nature from secrets that constantly surround us; from the darkest depths of lamentation, our souls seek their emancipation.

We can put pretty tablets on our tongues, as we taste the sun and then drink the moon; chemical stimulation is one way, to step outside time and escape today.

By grasping the world in a grain of sand, or by leaving footprints on the ceiling, or by humbling ourselves and kneeling, we experience that joyous feeling.

Call me a prophet if I speak the truth; call me a child if I'm innocent; paint me Romantic with your gentle brush as I shake and quiver with every touch.

Capture the spontaneous overflow; recall emotions from tranquility; Imagination is the divine key to transcending our reality.
Picture of You

Ray Manilla
3rd Place Faculty/Staff Submissions

I was six when you
became a cancer stat.
I never got to know you.
Mom tells stories about you, but
I can recite none.
I see you in pictures
on yellowing Kodak paper, but
see no pictures in my head;
save one.
It’s me riding my horse.
Your foot, my saddle;
your pants, my reins.
Each year its focus blurs.
Still it remains
the one photograph in
my picture book
of you.
Aunt Jo & Friends
Tara Joyner
Oil on Canvas
The gray chill reached through the drawn curtains and invaded the dimly lit bedroom. The pelting of rain on the window only served to add to the gloom of Maggie's mood. She sat in her chair holding her tea with one hand and glumly wiping tears with the other.

Here she was, alone, in her house. Her husband Jim was gone, out on the road traveling with a new position that he had gotten with his job. Her father and mother had retired and moved 400 miles away to the mountains. The only other person in Maggie's life had been her grandmother, Mimi, and she had died two months ago. Maggie was heartbroken. Mimi had been her confidant and her best friend. She had given Maggie a magical childhood, one that was filled with grand memories and happy times. Now, all of those precious moments were gone with one person.

With Jim and her parents so far away and no one to talk to, it seemed that Maggie's grief just grew harder and harder to live with. However, for Maggie it wasn't just grief that wracked her conscience, but guilt. Maggie's guilt felt like a bag of rocks hung around her neck. The guilty feelings of her grandmother and how she had let her down haunted her daily.

A year before she had died, Maggie and her family had to put her grandmother in the local nursing home. Her health problems were too many for Mimi to deal with living alone. Maggie hated the place from the beginning. It looked like just what is was, institutional. The place was smelly, squatty and painted green, that God awful institutional green. The "residents", as they were called, sat slumped in wheelchairs or roamed the halls muttering unintelligible words. Their hands were like claws, grabbing anybody that walked by, begging them to be taken home. Their eyes were hollow and glazed either from medication or disinterest; nobody realized or cared that these people were from the greatest generation on earth. Their accomplishments, loves and losses, forgotten, evaporated with time. Now Maggie was adding her grandmother to their midst, promising Mimi that she would come everyday to see her, but she never did. She couldn't bear the place or the thought that her grandmother was there. One month later her grandmother died, alone, and Maggie bore the guilt of her unfulfilled promises.

She wished for happy times, times when she would call her grandmoth-
er for the daily talks. The phone had been their lifeline. God! She missed those conversations. She wanted so badly to pickup the phone and press 924-3516, Mimi’s phone number, and hear her cheery voice.

Suddenly on impulse, Maggie grabbed up the cordless phone. Without thinking she punched in 924-3516. "What in the world am I doing" she said aloud to herself then slammed the phone back down. "Oh, what the hell" she said and dialed the number again. She let it ring three times and just before hanging up, thinking the whole time that she was completely insane, a voice came on the other end.

"Hello?" said the small, fragile voice. Stunned, Maggie said nothing. Her mind was racing; who could be answering her grandmother’s old number?

"Is anyone there?" said the little voice.

"Uh, uh" stammered Maggie, "I’m sorry, I have the wrong number. I shouldn’t have disturbed you."

"Why honey, that’s alright," drawled the voice. The southern accent sounded elderly and kind. "It’s not often an old lady like me gets any calls at this hour or for any hour mind you. I welcome your disturbance even if it is the wrong number."

Silence hung in the air. Maggie wanted to hang up but she just couldn’t. Her hand had a death grip on the phone. "Like I said ma’am, I shouldn’t have bothered you."

The voice didn’t seem to hear Maggie because it went right on talking, "Geraldine Wheelwright at your service," she said, "but my friends call me Gerri."

"Well Ms. Gerri," Maggie replied, "I’m going to let you go now; it’s late and I shouldn’t have bothered you."

"Oh no you are not, young lady, you dialed me up at this hour and now I am in the mood for a chat." Waves of memory flooded Maggie’s mind. That is exactly what her Mimi would have said! Suddenly the truth fell out of Maggie’s mouth before she could stop it and she told Ms. Gerri why she had dialed 924-3516. Ms. Wheelwright said nothing and just sat and listened.

Before Maggie knew it an hour had flown by, and she and Ms. Gerri had talked the evening away and how pleasant it had been. Their conversation ended with Maggie promising to call again the next evening and Maggie went to bed with a lighter heart.

At the appointed hour on the next night, Maggie rang up Ms. Gerri. They talked and talked, like grandmother and granddaughter, covering
every topic with Maggie talking about her family and Mimi and Ms. Gerri just listening. Night after night, their phone calls went on. For Maggie they became a part of her nightly routine. Soon, with Ms. Gerri's sage advice, Maggie's guilt began to edge away and the albatross soon took flight, leaving her feeling free of her burden.

One afternoon, her husband Jim came home bearing tremendous news. No more work on the road! He would now be at home with Maggie, and she wouldn't have to be alone. Elated, but now worried. She had not said anything to Jim about her evening conversations with her phone friend, how would she explain that?

She picked up the phone to call Ms. Gerri and give her the good news. "I hope I won't disturb her afternoon nap" thought Maggie, as she had never called in the afternoon. She dialed the number, 924-3516. Instead of Ms. Gerri's cheery voice, she got the toneless recording informing her that this number was no longer in service. "Couldn't be," said Maggie as she hung up. She dialed again and got the same recording. "I wonder what could have happened."

Maggie called the operator. No information on 924-3516 except that it was an un-issued number for the last four months. Maggie was completely stunned. She couldn't be dreaming. She had been talking to a person at this number for the last couple of months and there had to be some reasonable explanation. She went to her computer and did reverse phone number lookups. No luck there. She thought back in her mind to their conversations to try and remember if Ms. Gerri had mentioned any family, or home, or anything and she hadn't. She vaguely remembered Ms. Gerri saying something about living in Sycamore, an unincorporated township not far from Maggie. She drug out her old roadmaps and began to look for Sycamore. She finally located the little town on the oldest map; strangely enough it was actually Mimi's road map and probably had been printed around the 1960's. "Old people sure did hold on to things," mused Maggie.

Maggie knew she had to find out what was going on. She wasn't crazy or deluded, she had actually talked to a little old lady for two months at a familiar phone number and now she was no longer there. She had to find out what was happening.

She slipped out of the house while Jim was napping, leaving him a note that she had gone to the store. Twenty minutes later she was driving around in the countryside, having no idea where she was headed but determined to find Sycamore. She had stopped at a convenience store about a
mile back but the cashier was clueless and useless, "Ain't never heared of no Sickemore." he drawled out, "I knowed I woulda remembered ifn I had. I done lived here all my life and I sure ain't hered of that place." So, she kept driving in the direction on the map. About twenty minutes later, after driving in what seemed like circles she came to a crossroad with a faded little sign reading "Sycamore" and an arrow pointing to turn left. "Finally!" Maggie muttered. She guided the car left and followed the old pavement. After about a mile she went through a beautiful little grove of sycamore trees, dripping their branches over the pavement and framing the drive. "How quaint. I bet this is a wonderful little place," thought Maggie. Suddenly into view came the town—a ghost town, more like it. The old buildings were completely dilapidated with sagging roofs and crumbling walls. The wind blew and November leaves swirled through the air. Maggie felt like she had stepped back in time. No sign of residents or life was evident. Maggie's heart skipped, she saw a faded out sign that read "Wheelwright's Grocery" and another right under that one that plainly stated "The War is Over—Don't ask for Credit." "Lord, that's an old sign. I wonder if that is Ms. Gerri's family."

The sad little town only served to confuse Maggie more. What in the world was going on? This was a ghost town. Maggie could tell that it once was a nice little bustling place with the railroad tracks that ran through the town. The tracks were now rusted, telling Maggie that it had been a long time since any train had run on those tracks.

At the end of the little street, Maggie came up to an old church. It wasn't as ramshackle as the rest of the town, but it was still run down. She saw an old cemetery behind the church, all grown up with weeds and crumbling grave markers. Some strange unseen force pulled her forward. She got out of the car and made her way to the graveyard. She seemed to be suddenly aware of everything around her: the wind rustling through the leaves, her beating heart, everything.

All of a sudden someone behind said, "Hi there Missy. Are you lost?" She nearly jumped out of her shoes and fairly shouted back, "My Lord! You scared me to death!"

"Quite sorry" he said. "You appear to be misdirected." His accent was not southern nor was his demeanor bespeaking of someone that lived in the country.

"Well, not actually. I was looking for someone. Maybe you know her, a Ms. Geraldine Wheelwright."

He smiled and said, "Know her? Why I am kin to her! She was my
baby sister. Lived right here in Sycamore all of her natural life." The little man extended his hand and said "Gabriel Wheelwright and pleased to meet you. Everyone here calls me Gabe." Maggie thought, "Here! What in the heck did he mean by here! This place was uninhabited." This was becoming more bizarre by the moment.

Gabe asked why Maggie was looking for Gerri. Maggie said "She and I had been getting to know one another over the last few months and I wanted to call on her and have her over for dinner."

Gabe looked very strange and said "Have you been out in the sun too long?"

"Why?" replied Maggie.

"Well young lady, my baby sister isn't here. In fact she hasn't been here since 1964."

"1964!" said Maggie.

"That's right. Honey, she died in March of 1964. Her tombstone is right over here. Have a look for yourself." Maggie's mind was reeling!

"Dead! Completely impossible! I have been talking with Ms. Gerri over the phone for the last two months and she was quite alive yesterday."

Gabe smiled a secret smile but said nothing.

Maggie looked at the tombstone and sure enough, Geraldine G. Wheelwright Born August 13th 1942 - Died March 2nd 1964.

"March 2nd, 1964. That's my birthday," Maggie said. "She died the day I was born."

"Ah, what a fine Spring day that was too," sighed Gabe. "A beautiful day for a funeral if I say so myself. My sister would have loved it."

"How did she die?" asked Maggie?

Gabe took off his hat and mopped his brow, "Why child twas a sad thing. You know Sycamore used to be a bustling town till the bypass came through back in the '60's. Gerri and my Father owned the grocery together. Gerri was married once. She fell in love with a handsome man by the name of Gaylord Smart. Dashing and debonair he was. Knew all the right things to say to a girl. They married on a fine fall day, just like this one."

Gabe suddenly looked sad and continued on, "He and Gerri were inseparable. Then he got a job that took him on the road traveling an awful lot. Gerri missed him to pieces. One night she closed the store early and went to the neighboring town to take a box of groceries to a sick friend, and she spotted Gaylord's car. Turns out Gaylord wasn't traveling but taking up homesteading with a young thing in the next town. Came close to breaking Gerri's heart. When he finally rolled into town again, every-
one knew what was going to happen. But the shouting never came, the argument never started. After that night no one ever heard from Gaylord Smart again. Gerri changed her name back to Wheelwright, and things went back to as they always had been.

Gerri had been the light of Sycamore, and now she was a shell. No happiness or laughter was heard from her again. On March 2nd of ’64, she didn’t show up to open the store. Everyone in the town searched and searched, and then finally we found her, at the edge of the woods on the north side of town. Dead. Just sitting there against her favorite Sycamore tree. She had driven a knife straight into her heart. I knew it was bound to happen, she was so sad ever since Gaylord left."

Gabe looked tired but continued on. "We buried her right here in this cemetery on that same day, didn’t need an undertaker you know. The strange thing is she left us a note about what really happened that night Gaylord came back to town. She explained that she had kept all of her guilt locked away in her aching heart and she could no longer go on. She had instructed us townspeople in her letter where to look and sure enough we found what was left of old Gaylord Smart, 17 years later."

"Gerri had killed him dead, out of passion I suppose and she lived with that guilt for the rest of her life. That’s what drove her to kill herself." Gabe finished the story with glistening eyes. Maggie didn’t know what to say. Her and Ms. Gerri both with their burdens of guilt had somehow connected through time. Maggie was silent for a while. When she turned, she saw that Gabe was no longer there. Somehow she wasn’t surprised. She walked stoically to her car. For a while Maggie just sat there behind the wheel trying to come to grips with what she had experienced. Finally she started the car and drove back past the sad little ghost town, down the shady Sycamore lane and out into the sunshine. She planned to never tell her husband Jim about Ms. Gerri, or Gabe, or Sycamore, and she never did.
Stuck in the Mud: New Orleans as Pompeii
David Griffin
Mixed Media

Best in Show for Theme Runner-up
Морска обич  
*Nedialka Iordanova*

На плажа аз стоях вглъбена,  
загледана във синьото море,  
kогато ти дойде и седна тъй до мене  
i разговора тих поде.

Разпитвахме се нежно ние,  
прониквайки във чуждото сърце  
i търсехме каде се крие  
tова косто ни влече един към друг.

И ето, че любов красива пламна  
edin за друг живеехме така,  
kъм бъдещето светло устремени,  
edin на друг подали си ръка  
не можехме един без други, ни аз без теб, ни ти без мене.

**Sea Love**

Day dreaming on the beach so lost in thought  
While gazing at the blue green sea,  
When you appeared strangely brought  
And softly whispered in my ear.

We gently questiones one another  
And deeply probed each other’s heart  
We searched and wondered where lies,  
The thing that magnetized us.

And love so beautiful was blazing  
I lived for you, you lived for me.  
Towards the future we were racing,  
Together, so we’ll always be.
Thirteen Ways of Reading a Banjo
Dolores Capitan

1
Among jumbled jangled children
It twanged – entered, filled,
Stilled their clamor, bathed sweaty dreams.

2
I was one of them
An open circle on the staff,
Open to interpretation.

3
Sonorous sounds assured his presence and
A trio composed our harmony.

4
Father and children
Alone.
Father and children and a banjo
Alone.

5
I don’t know how I’ll be, what I’ll say.
Tell old black Joe to stay?
Be carried back to old “Virginie?”
Be an instrument played upon?
Listen to me.

6
Masks peered through the front window
Evil lips smiling.
But music
Cleft them with bars and staffs.
Saved us and
Sang against All Hallow’s Eve

7
Oh Monsignor,
Why “Gloria in excelsis Deo?”
Can't you hear the father's banjo  
Suffer little children  
On the moonlit bay of green linoleum?

8  
Handel's Messiah fed His flock  
And I have played the "Minuet in G."  
Though medleys of ballads have slowed to a dirge,  
A constant base deeps strumming.

9  
Out of tune and out of the way.  
Left in a closet then sold.  
Just rummage  
For repeated lullabies.

10  
Hush you kids, don't say a word.  
"Daddy's gonna buy you a mockingbird."  
We heard his song promise us a world  
Now made shadows by flickering screens.

11  
And success comes with white collars in  
The air-conditioned hum of offices.  
Governments and case workers  
Measure the tune.

12  
The banjo is not played.  
But broken strings sing unheard and  
Indelible melodies  
compose sweet silence.

13  
Just before bedtime  
A remembered duet  
Serenades surety.  
And somewhere a son kisses his son  
And a sleeping baby smiles.
Mirror, mirror on the wall...

Margaret Ellington

Passing the hallway mirror, I mumble, “Geez, I need another haircut,”
my natural waves curl up and around my ears,

but haven’t made the appointment yet

No time, not even to the drop-in-no- appointment-needed-low cost-kind of cut place:
Red eyes give away my schedule.

Skin tone: pale, but that’s the norm after giving up makeup six years ago.
   Started teaching Women’s Studies
   Started thinking about my reasons
to apply such products,
took guff for that decision
from my department chair,
from my students,
but chairs come and go
—mine’s gone up the ladder
and students?
Well, hell, they adjust to the teacher they have.
Most are surprised when I put on mascara,
usually just before a TV interview,
Always ask what’s happened,
like maybe I’ve fallen in,
or made,
   love the night before.
I laugh, promise to return the real me
By next class period.

Then there’s the ever-increasing lines, or cracks,
Labeled as such by Ally, my 6 year old
She classifies what’s happening to her grandma’s face,
And the damn age spots mixed with freckles.
   How fair is that?
Youth and aging merging together in a common joke.
Earlobes next, never healed from my dad’s slapping me
He found out I was dating a guy he worked with 😊
Pierced earrings gather dust in a jewelry box
I’ll hand down to my daughter one day

But the mirror will always remind me
Of the time I got back at my daddy
By dating his friend.
Some victories are sweeter than others.

That’s all that’s apparent, but here’s what the mirror knows
But doesn’t reflect

how scared I am every time I share a new piece of writing,
how I want to hear that people like it,
    but won’t believe them if they say they do.
how uncomfortable I am carrying on conversations on topics I have
no interest in
    or
knowledge of.
how often I want to shut out the noise and enjoy the solace.

That mirror image echos my mouth,
    but refuses to track the number of times
“yes, I can do that,” comes out
while I my brain screams
“no, please don’t ask me for one more thing.”

The mirror sees when I’m really depressed
But can’t guess what’s making me unhappy.
At least I don’t think it can.
Can’t see that I need someone to take care of me for a while,
might guess, but never know for sure,
that even if I did get taken care of,
I’d start reclaiming my right to take charge too soon
because my greatest fear is that when I stop doing,
I’ll start dying.
Journal-Domestic Violence
Pam Sparrow
Mixed Media
Aerodynamics II
Kevin McGinnis

I have fallen a few times in my hearts fight for flight.

I first fell for a fantasy that was not real,
Then I fell for a fraud that was.

My next fall was for a feather that floated away; far, far, away.
A firefly found me hopeless,
shedding light on faded memories then blanketing my dreams with darkness as she fluttered away.

After forty weeks, that felt like fifty years,
I have grown fond of a flame who has yet to set my heart on fire,
but I fear I have fallen too far to fathom fresh love in this cold abysmal heart of mine.
That Must Be...

Hyun Jin Lee

Under the pure sky.
On the soft ground.
If you can hear footsteps,
They must be my footsteps.

You feel cold on your hands.
If you hold someone’s hands toughly,
Those must be my hands.

You feel tired.
If you lean against someone’s shoulder,
That must be my shoulder.

You need a warm hug.
If someone gave you a hug,
The hug must be from me.

From somewhere...
Very clearly...
If you can hear....
a throbbing sound...
The sound must be
From my heart that is only for you.
Anonymous

Lee Velasquez

3rd Place D. Capitan Award for Creative Writing

When I went to bed the night before, I was expecting my day to be somewhat enjoyable. Unfortunately, I woke up to three large men who looked liked they only had one syllable in each of their names. “Rise and shine!” said the first one as he grabbed me by my neck and lifted me straight up and out of my bed. “You’ve got a meeting to go to…NOW!” The guy behind him had a bat, and I assume that’s what they hit me with after the second guy threw a hood over my head. Thank the stars I don’t sleep in the nude.

I regained consciousness only to realize that the hood was still over my head and that my hands had been tied down with rope so tight I could only pray that my hands were just numb and attached, rather than not there at all. I felt a crowbar under my head, and heard the sound of rocks being slung up under the car. Something kept hitting me in the back of my head with every turn, and it felt as if someone had peed in the same spot for the past month, which just so happened to be the very same spot that I was laying in. My feet were cold, and I refused to ask the question why they were sticky. By the look of my kidnappers, I didn’t want to know why.

I lay there recalling all the people who I may have screwed over in the past week. I could think of four. Then, upon closer inspection of my situation, I narrowed it down to two, just because the other two couldn’t have done anything like my situation simply because they were dead. Option A is possible, but unlikely simply because she didn’t know it was me who killed her father, hell she probably doesn’t even know I exist (and I’m very careful to make sure that stays that way…or so I thought). Option B is also possible, but this is not his style. No he would’ve killed me by now, or at least come get me in person. Frankly, I could not think of anybody that would do this. I was literally, in the dark.

The car accelerated quickly and slung me forward, then they hit the brakes so hard that I could hear one of them let out a pretty loud “Oof!” My head went flying back and whatever that thing was that kept hitting me in the back of my head had an imprint of the back of my head in it. I heard the doors slam, and a few minutes went by, I was left in silence. Maybe they forgot about me. Yeah, I know, very doubtful. I then heard footsteps approaching, and three knocks. I did
not react.

“Are you still alive back there?” I heard a man’s voice ask. Again, I did not react. Silence. There was a mumble, which I assumed was the man ordering his goons to open the trunk. “He better be alive, and if he isn’t I’m going to tie your hands together and stick them up each other’s ass then fucking cauterize them shut so that when you shit…” I had heard enough, and as soon as that key started clicking open, I swung to my back and kicked the trunk open. I rolled out of the trunk and started running. Didn’t seem like they were following at first, but I could hear the guy who opened the trunk scream “My nose! My fucking nose!” I zigged and zagged and was on a roll. I figured I’m not an athlete or anything, but by the size of those guys, there’d be no way they could keep up. As soon as I thought I was far away enough, I’d try to shake the hood off my head then worry about my hands later. I started doing the math in my head and averaging the distance I may have traveled from my place and estimated how long I was unconscious. Before I could even carry a two, I ran smack dab into a wall. Mind you I was hauling ass, and blindfolded, so after I hit that wall, all I could think about was “My nose! My fucking nose!”

I don’t think my nose was broken from hitting that wall, but when the guy who opened the trunk found me, he made sure it was broken before he picked me up and threw me over his shoulder. He sat me down on a cold steel chair, and they continued to tie me to it. They made sure to get my feet this time.

I heard the man’s voice again, “Well, that was quite a show you put on for us. I love the part when you broke two noses in less than a minute. Don’t worry, I’m sure he deserved it. I keep telling them to treat people better or karma’s going to fuck you like a priest. By now I’m sure you’re more confused than you were ten minutes ago, and probably trying to match my voice with one in your memory. I bet you’re struggling huh? Well let me help you, think back 20 years ago, remember that Italian restaurant you were in, and that waiter you gave a lousy tip too? Yes, that’s right, I am the brother of that waiter!” He yelled after letting out a great big laugh. Of course I knew he was either full of shit, or crazy as hell. I hate restaurants, and I never tip. “HAAAA!” He yelled out again as he slapped me on my arm. “I’m just messing with you. Tell you the truth I could shit quarters before I care who you are. I simply selected you at random, so I’m sorry son, because you were simply at the wrong place, at the wrong time. Let me explain this to
you, and believe me it’s very simple. There are people in this world that refuse to take part in all that jazz they call ‘normality’, and I am one of those people. Unfortunately, being in the line of business I’m in, I do make enemies. And yes, you guessed it, these enemies want me dead. So what is a poor soul like me to do? See my dilemma is that I can’t kill these people, simply because if I do, they then know it was me. But if I let them live, then they have a better chance and killing me first. I thought long and hard about this and attempted many solutions. I found one that works perfectly every time. Do you want to know what it is? Great, I’ll tell you. I find people at random who in no way can be linked back to me, and use them. See people need three things: Love, Money, and Health. Depending on the person, I offer them one if not all of those three things. And from what my associates tell me, you my friend have no need for love, and you are clearly healthy as a bat. So I am willing to pay you $500,000 right now, if you agree to do my bidding. I know we started off on the wrong foot, but hear me out, I pay you, and all you have to do is kill one guy, just one. You never see my face, and you never know my name, and I never see your face, and I don’t give a damn about your name. Of course if you refuse, then I’ll just have to kill you now, and trust me, it will be a slow and torturous death. What do you say?”

How do I get myself in these conundrums? Kill this guy and get some money, or die. What else could I say but, “How do I know you’ll pay?”

“AH! So he can speak!” He exclaims, “Now we’re getting somewhere. Okay, how will I prove to you I can get you the money? Tell you what, I’ll give you $10,000 upfront when my associates take you back home. You do with it what you please. Sound good?”

$500,000 sounded so unlikely, and I expected him not to pay, but $10,000, now that’s a reasonable amount. Even if I don’t get paid the whole amount, this could be good enough for me. “Sounds good, I guess I’m in.”

“Good,” he said snapping his fingers, “Take him home.”

Take him home. Last words I heard before I was knocked out once more. When I woke up I was in my tub, with the water barely dripping on my forehead, an insurance of my awakening I assumed. The side of my head was throbbing, and I was covered in blood. I grabbed a nearby towel, and wiped my nose, which didn’t seem to be bleeding anymore. I walked out of the bathroom slowly, just in case they were still here. I
looked around, and the only sign of them was the mess they left after rummaging my fridge and other various things. What a day so far, and it was only 3:00. I went to the front door and made sure it was locked, then I went back to the bathroom to clean myself up.

Am I really going to do this? Can I do this? This is crazy, I should call the police…right? No they’ll ask about the money. The money! I ran into the living room looking for some sort of envelope they may have left for me, then the kitchen, and the rest of the house after that. There was nothing. No information about what they wanted me to do, and no money. Maybe they forgot. Maybe they would forget about me. After a second of hope, I quickly ran to my bedroom and grabbed my suitcase. I’ll just run, get in my car and go out of state for a while. Visit my parents, maybe even move. Then my heart skipped a beat when I opened my suitcase. There was a black plastic bag in it with a note that read:

Don’t even think about it.

I stood there unable to move, frozen with an eerie tingle crawling up my back. How did they know I would have looked in my suitcase? How did they even find me? My phone rang, and I jumped. A few more rings and I pulled myself together long enough to answer the phone.

“Hello?”
“What do you think you’re doing?”
“Who, wait…who is this!”
“Oh, I’m sorry, it’s your damn boss! You know the guy who hired you to do that job that you’re not doing! Are you planning on coming to work today, or should I just fill you position? I don’t need people who aren’t going to work…”

I’m sure he had much to say to me, but I didn’t need any more filth on my plates. I’ll hear about it tomorrow, or he’ll just delete me off the payroll, either way I had to keep my mind clear to plan my next move. They knew I was going to try to leave, thus the reason for the bag and the note. The bag, I haven’t looked in there yet. I rushed back to my room, and looked on my bed. There the black bag was just waiting for me to open it. If I open it, does that mean I’m officially an accomplice? No, that can’t be right; I mean I haven’t done anything just yet. What am I saying? I’m not actually going to try to do this, am I? I’m getting ahead of myself, maybe I should take a look in the bag first.

It doesn’t feel too heavy, but there’s clearly something in the bag. It’s
money, one hundred $100 bills, and an envelope. The envelope contained pictures of a face I’ve never seen before.

After the Storm
Kimberly Norris
Mixed Media
The Inevitable Act of Abortion
Sunni Zemblowski
Charcoal and Chalk Pastels
Breathing
David Garrison
2nd Place Faculty/Staff Submissions

At the sea on the pier Megan said –
Megan who has no father – said, “Are you an artist?”
And the man in the hat said, “No, I guess not.”

Dolphins were in that sea. One of the stages of wisdom.

Everything goes on happening until nothing happens.

And I’m a lonely man on the edge.
And I’m a woman with no heart.

I bring the small bowl and the fresh water.
Things are so easily misplaced, brushstroke after
Brushstroke, just a form of white promises, plain
Paper promises, like that island,
Like that light at the end of the breath,

Or a blush in the throat from the fact of living.

Everything goes on all the time, but art stops it,
A form of ritualized speech, like the angel
On the road to Thomaston, floating among the gravestones.

Mr. Connor, the blind man, impeccably dressed,
Making every attempt in the smallest way possible
To reject what’s happening. A tortoise-shell hair-
Clip, for example, and the little ear-bobs.

Guilt everywhere – on all sides – like a picket fence.
Pecan orchards on the left, breathless cattle on the right.
Alone

Elizabeth Wood

Black and White Woodblock Print
I Want to Know
Soo Man Kwon

Most people want to know what she has.
Most people want to know what she looks like.
Most people want to know what she does.
However, I want to know her heart.

Most people want to know how to become a rich person.
Most people want to know how to gain honor.
Most people want to know how to seize power.
However, I want to know how to become a true man.

Although my way is different from others, I want to go my way.
I want to know things that are inside, even though other people cannot see them easily.
I want to know more than meets the eye.

Lost
Hank Hart
Oil on Canvas
There are people that I’ve never met,
from places that I’ve never traveled.

Their actions are unknown to me,
and yet, they are things I should have seen.

I’m powerless to halt this trend,
although I feel I really should.

I bear the brunt of guilty dreams,
enacted in life by innocent souls.

The setting sun simmers across distant hills,
while my great inactivity leads others to pain.

I could see the future, I once really did think,
but I lost my powers when faced with the horror.

My compassion has faded, my heart has grown dim,
I can’t do it all, I haven’t the will.

I’ve lost blood, I am hurt, my emotions are numb,
my joys and experiences have left me for good.

In my passionless search, I seek only truth,
I know I can’t find it, I’m lacking the skills.

I continue to work, but don’t welcome the labor,
the motions are empty, the meanings fall flat.

My thoughts are erratic, my karma uncertain,
I look into my words, and hope to find solace.

But I do not.
Casualties of Sin
Kevin McGinnis

I know not whether the events depicted in this piece are works of fiction or not. This delicate literature arrived on my page as a result of a sublime moment of supernatural occurrence. The work was crafted on a spare day in the absence of sunshine with a flutter of wind conducting the masterpiece. The mysterious verse came to a close upon the final strike of lightning found within the text. I saw fit to morally finish the verse as an appropriate conclusion to the whole affair.

- Kevin McGinnis

As the sun rose to beat upon his face, John opened his eyes for the first time in what felt like years. The rock hard clay beneath him clung to his forearm as he sat upright. The sky looked a dull grey as crimson red drops fell from the heavens. He raised his hand to his face. Flinching with each touch, John realized his face was swollen. An infection oozed from his left eye. The warm desert wind blew hard against John’s ribs causing a sharp pain to rise from his abdomen to his chest. He rubbed his ribs gently, pulling back softly in pain. Three of John’s ribs were broken, bending inwards til it felt like the bone was poking at his intestine. John tried to open his mouth, but he could not move his jaw. It too was broken.

John tried to remember what had put him here but his mind was blank. He had no recollection of why he was so beaten and left for dead in this god-forsaken place. In the distance, along the horizon, John could make out another figure lying against the rock hard clay. He began to move towards the shape but with great difficulty, his left leg would not move. Upon looking down John noticed that his leg was twisted from the knee down, so that his foot was facing the opposite direction. He began to crawl towards the mysterious form in the distance. John neared the motionless figure, instantly recognizing the voluptuous frame of the woman laying before him. She was his wife, Scarlet. John reached for her hand, finding only a nub at the end of her wrist. Moving closer he noticed dozens of abrasions across her body. These deep cuts lined her skin, tearing her clothing to shreds. John turned scarlet on her back. He fell back in disgust, her face was gone! The flesh was still hanging from her chin, the blood still dripping wet. It was as though some demonic force had peeled it away, ripping out the eyes and tearing out her tongue in the process.
A tear formed in John’s eye and melded with the ooze seeping from the same socket. Coming from within his broken jaw, John bellowed out a melancholy howl that would make the God's tremble. The sound of movement interrupted John’s howl. He searched for the origin of this motion, as a childish whine started near Scarlet’s hips. To his surprise and horror, a sickly infant rolled along the clay. The small child was still wet from birth. The babe had only one arm and a shortened leg. The head seemed swollen and bruised in the back, but the most horrific feature were the babe’s eyes. One eye was normally, darting left to right in fear. The other eye socket was simply empty. John grabbed the infant and pulled the babe to his chest. He knew the child was his. John remembered the pregnancy of his wife. He could feel the inconsistent breathe of the child against his chest. Looking all around, John realized civilization was too far away for help, if civilization existed in this place. The beat of life in his hands slowly faded. The single eye breached John's soul begging for existence. It was then that the heart within the infant stopped. John howled to the heavens once more. Realizing his own inevitable end, John cradled the lifeless infant and lay along the backside of his wife scarlet. John closed his eyes.

A deafening scream forced John’s eyes open. He was still laying next to the corpses of his wife and child. In the distance he could make out three figures walking awkwardly toward his location. As they neared he recognized the three figures, they were all women of whom he had recently been acquainted and they were all nude. There was something odd about them now. It was as though their entire bodies twitched in one movement. Once closer, John gasped at their appearance. Valerie, the woman to the left was missing all the skin from her chin to her breast, from shoulder to shoulder. Her mouth and her eyes were sown shut by what looked to be metal wire. Delilah, who stood in the middle of this ghastly crew, had no forearms and hands. Her eyes were gushing blood directly from the pupil. Belle, the final woman, had veins sticking out of her head, neck, and wrists. These veins continuously squirted deep dark red blood all around her. The three women crept closer unleashing loud screams of pain and agony. They were above John, reaching out to him, spilling their blood against his face.
John closed his eyes.

When he raised his eyelids once more, the women were gone. A putrid smell dominated the air under John’s nose. The two bodies next to John were now slimy and covered with maggots. In terror, the man rolled away from the decaying sight that was once his family. Facing the opposite direction, John could see a gigantic form approaching. As it neared John’s face twisted in horror. The apparition of this figure was one of a grotesque nature. Its skin was dark gray with stitches lining its entire body. Blood trickled from each stitch, causing a puddle to form with each step the creature took. Skulls jutted out of its shoulders, sides, and three were on the top of the monster’s head. The creature had no lips, only large sharp teeth. The nose of the beast resembled that of a raging bull. The eyes were the most horrid feature. The huge eye sockets were empty yet so deep and demanding. Blood flowed from these empty sockets like flood water moves over a dam. The creature stopped a few steps away and spoke.

“Child of Earth once bathed in the innocence of Heaven, twice bathed in the despair of civilization. I am Lucifer, Lord of Darkness. The Great Oppressor has turned away from you. I will not turn away. The fate you dealt upon Valerie, Delilah, and Belle has shunned you from His eyes. I openly embrace you.”

Lucifer raised his hand. A lightning bolt shot from the dim sky into the palm of Lucifer’s hand. Suddenly, within his grasp, there appeared a blade made of flame. Lucifer spoke once more.

“This mighty weapon is the Heavenly Sword of Fire, stolen from the Great Oppressor ages ago. My heaven will be kind to you if you will only baptize your heart with the heat of this flame.”

John’s strength returned. He rose to his feet and grabbed the sword of fire. Lucifer’s eyes were bright red now. John looked down at the rock hard clay. He looked up at the dull grey sky as red droplets splashed against his forehead. John took a step back, then lunged forward, jabbing the sword into Lucifer’s throat. The Lord of Darkness dissipated into a dense green fog. The ground rumbled beneath John’s feet. The crimson rain fell heavily. The wind picked up tremendously, knocking John
down to the hard surface of clay. A bolt of lightning fell from the sky and crashed into John’s chest.

John closed his eyes.

John opened his eyes. Scarlet was screaming. Sweat dripped from her forehead. Three doctors moved around the bed she lay in. Scarlet’s legs were hiked up and another doctor was in between them. The doctor stood straight up holding a baby girl still wet from birth. John eagerly spoke and yelled to his fellow beings. Yet no one heard him. John waved his arms frantically in front of the doctors and Scarlet. Yet no one saw him. In the corner of the room John recognized a familiar face. It was the horrid Lucifer. Once more the Lord of Darkness spoke.

“Child of Earth, you have spared those you love from an eternity of bliss in my heaven. You however will be tormented mercilessly for your disobedience to your new Lord, every moment regretting the birth of your miserable existence.”

John closed his eyes.
Analogy of Human Sacrifice
David Griffin
Ceramic
What's in a Name?  
*The Effect of Candidate Gender on Vote Choice*  
**Carlisle Rainey**  

**1st Place D. Captian Academic Writing Award**  

Abstract  
This paper examines the unique influence of candidate gender on voter decision-making. Past research suggests two explanations for how voters use candidate gender to determine vote choice. First, voters simply prefer demographically similar candidates. Second, voters stereotype women as more liberal than men, indicating that gender might act as an ideological voting cue. The literature on the topic seldom mixes these two explanations. However, in order to determine how these two hypotheses relate, this paper measures the relative effect of candidate gender by simulating a non-partisan election for the Georgia Supreme Court with no incumbent, isolating gender as the only variable. Despite a small sample size, which limited the statistical analysis, the data support the claim that voters prefer candidates demographically similar to themselves. However, although the data tend to indicate that liberals prefer female candidates and conservatives prefer male candidates, low cell counts make this finding non-significant. Overall, this paper suggests that voters prefer demographically similar candidates, but does not rule out the possibility that voters use gender as an ideological voting cue.
Abstract
Earlier studies on gender identification from facial cues have found that this determination is a configural process. The ability for females to exhibit a better performance than males when viewing female faces has been hypothesized as being influential to the accuracy of gender identification. Here we assess the performance of 14 women and two men in gender identification through the use of a computer program. Results showed a better performance when viewing the whole face and revealed no significant own-sex bias in identifying females. Our findings indicate that the configuration of facial features are important and the accuracy in judging people in a particular view is only slightly influenced by whether you are viewing a male face or female face.
Abstract

Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde occupies a curious position in respect to genre. It has the characteristics of both epic and novel, while also being neither an epic nor a novel. The text has characteristics associated with the epic form: the invocation of the muse, the use of mythical history, and the narrative begins in media res. Simultaneously, the text has many novel like characteristics: the impulse to end, the complex narrative structure, and the theme of love and society where war plays little part. Troilus and Criseyde can not be successfully placed fully in any genre instead it occupies a space between epic and novel. This view of the genre also applies to the text’s approach to religion (pagan and Christian), and narrative (1st or 3rd person).
We lay in bed, audibly breathing...the only sound in the room except for the whirring of the oscillating fan. Silently, we clasped hands out of habit in the darkness, knowing we were each saying our prayers that he either wouldn’t make it home, or would pass out in the car in a state of drunkenness as he so often did. That would not be the case tonight.

The sound of the engine...after many minutes, the sound of the door slams. The lock on the back door rattles and jerks, and the sound of the pounding knocks keep time with our heartbeats. Mama gets up and locks my bedroom door. The back door slams shut after he finally stumbles inside.

He screams...some more...and more, until we finally, in fear, go to him after he has threatened evils. He blurts profanities as he demands that I take his false teeth and rinse ff the vile vomit. I console mama and let her know I can do it.

With his teeth clean, he sets his sights on mama for his pleasure. In the freezing cold, barefoot in our gowns, we panic when mama’s car won’t start...he has ripped the wires from under the hood. Fear and sheer terror set in. I clutch my baby doll, “Penny”, and we run down the grav-eled road to Grandmamma and Granddaddy’s house until his car lights and sounds of gunfire assail us simultaneously. We hit the ground, knees in the cotton rows; we crawl our way to safety one more time...

Various similar scenes play out all around the world on a daily ba-sis. This heart-pounding fear has an intangible grip upon the lives of thou-sands of women and their children stuck in these situations. Domestic Abuse made up 20% of violent crimes against women in 2001 and nearly one third of American women report being abused by a partner at some point in their lives. Domestic Violence cuts across all dividing lines: gen-der, race, class, ethnicity, religion, level of education-there is no stereotype of an abuser. If you are being abused, or you suspect that someone is being abused, please call the National Domestic Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE or the emergency number for a shelter in the government section of your local phone book. Always be willing to listen, you may be the only person that woman can go to.
“Penny” is the winner of the 2008 Sirocco Cover Art Competition. It was chosen because of the force behind the image. We recognize the effect of violence on every member of a family, and because this year’s edition is about scaling the obstacles in our lives, or Scaling the Whirlwind, we could not ignore the very important symbolism that Ms. Sparrow’s painting presented. What happens to families struggling with domestic violence is very much like the aftermath of the tornado we witnessed a year ago—it destroys everything in its path, and it is indeed, “Not a Pretty Picture”.

~Editorial Staff
Deep Every Time, a Treatise on Transcending the Present-Perfect, An Ideal State
by Sasha Heller
2nd Place D. Capitan Creative Writing Award

I.
Definition

The Present-Perfect is an Ideal State, pure, sublime, not man-made nor made for man; effluvial in Nature, we can’t see, itself trapped, lost in a mystery.

Via chance, depressants, or stimulants, at times, man elevates to lofty airs; he catches a glimpse sent by the divine, of a foreign world, flawless by design.

The Ideal State exists outside of time; in this condition, man is man no more; for the majestic, ethereal plane knows not of time nor of guilt or of shame.

A world of chaos with limited rules; the Ideal State is free of all matter; having no properties to recognize, it’s every thing yet hidden to our eyes.

The Present-Perfect, Cosmos’ perfect world; Human Nature, Man’s perfect enemy; ceaselessly suffering [in itself] a mystery, man’s world is filled with pain and misery.
Man’s Imagination is essential
when he transcends his natural world;
the Universe and the Man become one,
now part and parcel of a greater sum.

Supernatural, divine by design,
it is a state that we can’t understand;
it exists not; so, if man’s to be wise,
he must see himself behind his own eyes.

I’ve a secret about the Universe;
feeling it’s greedy to keep it hidden,
this ‘ol Bard’s decided to share with you
a prophecy that’s absolutely true.

With reality left open to close,
Man is left to himself to make a choice;
the prophecy promises timeless joys,
learn’d simply, listening to this voice.

II.

Transcension

In the darkness, when I close all my eyes,
I can see, shining, a thousand bright stars;
my feet are gently resting on a cloud
and my head remains buried underground.

I remember to breathe, then, to smile;
the Ideal State is deep every time;
I see the turning, fallen leaves of grass
reflecting off the sidewalk’s broken glass.

Tonight, it’s slippery; ice on the streets;
I think graffiti; thunder’s in my heart;
I board an invisible cosmic train
and dance a ‘lil slow-jive with my brain.
On the edge, I get deep every time; in these moments, I can taste my heartbeat; nothing matters when everything’s one in the bestowed moments of transcension.

The science behind this is based on faith; to the truths at hand, pay close attention; the secret, nay, the key to transcension is universal law through the heavens.

Inside floating clouds, sky-bound cumulus, between symbiotic subatomics; we feel, caress our seeking hearts, breaths of eternal deep; transcension starts.

The real world disappears fading away; a bridge connects the contrasting Natures; we step slowly from sidewalk to sunbeam and wander between a cloud and a dream.

To escape the mortal chains that bind us, Man must Windex his doors of perception; to visualize this great enigma, we let shine our radiant charisma.

His secret now shared, the Bard will resign to his ancient, immortal tapestry; you possess the power and energy, the source and the heart, Creativity.

III.
Conclusion

We are kept hidden by Human Nature from secrets that constantly surround us; from the darkest depths of lamentation, our souls seek their emancipation.
Through silent meditation, we find peace; our minds drift off to a far away place, eternally gnawing on a free high and dancing on thy fearful symmetry.

We are granted moments of perfection, elusive visions of another sphere; when perception becomes reality, we are lost in benign finality.

We can put pretty tablets on our tongues, as we taste the sun and then drink the moon; chemical stimulation is one way, to step outside time and escape today.

By grasping the world in a grain of sand, or by leaving footprints on the ceiling, or by humbling ourselves and kneeling, we experience that joyous feeling.

Call me a prophet if I speak the truth; call me a child if I’m innocent; paint me Romantic with your gentle brush as I shake and quiver with every touch.

We can walk on water with balanced grace, and sojourn the shores of serenity; Creativity is the guiding light, all ablaze in the obsidian night.

With lessons learn’d, and the secrets shared, the Present-Perfect is yours to transcend; in the Ideal State, it’s deep every time, free yourself of the shackles of your mind.

Capture the spontaneous overflow; recall emotions from tranquility; Imagination is the divine key to transcending our reality.
Biographies

_Latasha Everson_ is from Ashburn, GA in Turner County. In high school she was heavily involved in student organizations and Cheerleading. She enjoys writing, reading, being actively involved, and spending time with friends and family. I have a short story that was published while in high school and was chosen to be featured in the Archives.

_Patricia L. P. McCoy_ is a senior here at GSW. Originally from West Middlesex, Pennsylvania, Patty moved to Georgia in 2001 when she married, Alex, the man of her dreams. They are celebrating 7 wonderful years together, and are looking forward to her graduating in December with a B.A. in English Education. Patty hopes to combine her two passions into an inspiring classroom. She wishes to thank Dr. E, Dr. K, and Dr. S for being the most amazing mentors a future-educator could have. Patty has had previous works appear in Sirocco.

_Kimberly Norris_ was born during the winter solstice of 1985 and raised with her “twin brother” in Americus, Georgia by her grandparents.

One of Kim’s first memories about language involves a car trip to Wrightsville, Georgia with her father. He was explaining to her that a popular British band’s name was not spelled “B-e-e-t-l-e-s,” like many would think, but that their name came from the beat in music, and so it was spelled “Beatles”. Ever since then she’s been interested in how language works.

So, here she is in her fourth year at GSW; majoring in English with Teacher Certification and has a background in art from her last major. She doesn’t know where she’s going in life, and she thinks that’s okay; she does know that she wants to help others. She says, “I guess I’ll just have to live it as it goes, and remember to keep the beat of my music.” Kim has had previous works appear in Sirocco.

_Kaori Morio_ came to Georgia Southwestern State University to participate in the English Language Institute, and she is from Japan.

_Hyun Jin Lee_ is a student of the English Language Institute at GSW.
Soo Man Kwon is a student of the English Language Institute at GSW. He is from Korea, but is living in Americus while he completes his studies.

Sasha Heller is a senior at GSW majoring in Professional Writing.

Malcolm Jeremy King is a native of Americus, GA. Malcolm is a Professional Writing major at GSW, and a self-described creative writer. As an author, he has a penchant for creating characters, and using those characters in tales that are both entertaining and didactic. Malcolm has had previous works published in Sirocco.

Marcus Johnson Jr is a senior at GSW majoring in English. He has had previous works appear in Sirocco.

Kim Purrier is a senior at GSW studying Professional Writing.

Kevin McGinnis is a junior studying Professional Writing at GSW.

Ray Mannila has been the Technical Coordinator in Dramatic Arts since 2001. He has designed the lighting, sets, and costumes on over 20 productions for GSW and The Sumter Players during his stay here. He recently directed Lend Me a Tenor at The Rylander Theatre for the Sumter Players.

Paul D. Shapiro earned his Ph.D in sociology and an MA in criminal justice from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He is currently as assistant professor of sociology at Georgia Southwestern State University where his scholarly pursuits include: Deviance, Statistics, Research Methods, Gambling, Applied Healthcare, and Buffy the Vampire Slayer. His recent peer-reviewed publications appear in The American Behavioral Scientist, The Social Science Journal, and Gaming Research and Review. Prior to academia, Paul worked for ten years as a paramedic responding to 911 emergency calls in New York City. He is also the ex-chief of a fire department in New York State. His autobiography, Paramedic: The True Story of a New York Paramedic’s Battles with Live and Death was published by Bantam Books in 1991.
Cheri Paradise is a nontraditional student at GSW. She is majoring in English while she maintains her position in Academic Services. Her interests are writing, reading, horses, and farm life.

David Garrison is Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, a Professor of English, and Learning Support Advisor at GSW. He received his Ph.D from the University of Minnesota, M.A. from Baylor University, and his B.A. from Appalachian State University. Dr. Garrison is sharing his work with Sirocco for the first time, though he is an accomplished poet.

Margaret Ellington is the English Department Chair and an Associate Professor of English at GSW. She is also the Director of The Southwest Georgia Writing Project. Dr. Ellington received her Ph.D and M.S. from Utah State University and her B.S. from Weber State University. Dr. Ellington has had previous works appear in Sirocco.

Nedialka Iordanova is an Assistant Professor of Chemistry at GSW. She received her Ph.D in chemistry from Pennsylvania State University, and her MS in chemistry is from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.

Maureen B. Smith received her BFA from Georgia Southwestern State University in 1989.

Opa
Stacie Porter
Silver Gelatin Print
Miguel, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 2008
Kurt Peterson
Black and White Photograph
A Brief History

From 1965 – 1983 twelve editions of the Sirocco were published as a literary magazine. The founding faculty advisor was Mrs. Iris Argo. In 1984, the magazine’s name was changed to Clay and Pine A Magazine of Literary and Visual Art and continued under that name until 2004. In 1985 Clay and Pine was the winner of the College Literary Magazine National Competition. In 2004, the editors wanted to return to the original name as it was more in keeping with the themes of Georgia Southwestern’s nickname – the Hurricanes. To augment the name, the subtitle “Catching the Winds of Creativity” was added.

Sirocco Mission Statement

At Sirocco we strive to provide our community an outlet for the unique voices we encounter everyday, and to share our contributors’ personal expressions in order to enrich our environment. Through the years we have witnessed the rising awareness of creative writing and hope to further that cause. Our goal is to encourage new voices, reinforce the creative process, and create opportunities for the winds of creativity to sweep through our community.
This year’s edition of Sirocco is dedicated to Dr. William H. Capitan, President Emeritus of GSW, and his wife, Dolores. Throughout Dr. Capitan’s tenure as president and continuing today, he and his wife have fostered an appreciation for student writing. Dr. Capitan created the Dolores Capitan Excellence in Writing award to honor his wife’s love of writing and to recognize student writing. Dolores has experience in journalism and has penned poems of her own, one of which is included in this edition. Amidst a crowd of “slammers” at Pat’s Place on Poetry Slam night, Dolores once shared a poem of hers with inimitable style. Thank you for sharing your words in this edition; you are an inspiration.

~Lydia Rogers

Photo courtesy Americus Times-Recorder Archives
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