WE STARE. At the landscape full of battered concrete and old buildings. Around the smoky bar filled with broken people milling around. Into space that will always remain vacant. We stare. We take what we see home with us in hopes of creating—recreating—what we felt by scribbling down mismatched words or mixing colors that don't belong so that one person can understand the world just like us. Us. The artists. The writers. The tortured souls who stay up way too late searching for that one true sentence, hoping for that one great shot, that will speak a million words. It's because of passion. It drives us. Scolds us. Pushes us. It is who we are. The 25th issue of Archarios Literary Art Magazine is an homage to that passion that is the root of these pieces of art and literature. It is an homage to every genre, every kind of artist, every medium. Which is why we say, live your art.
ARCHARIOS
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See past illusion.
See past noise.
Just see.
ART
Growing up in the Lowcountry of South Carolina, I was heavily influenced by its history and culture. Ceramic face jugs are native to the Carolinas, while blue is the color used on the Sea Islands to ward off evil. Blue Boy was a result of a face jug assignment in my first ceramics class. My favorite parts of Blue Boy are its extreme textural detailing and blue glazed tones.
from the artist

This pointillism piece came about when I was in high school where I wanted to try my hand at a challenging style of art. This was definitely the challenge I had been looking for and after the long hours and tedious work, I was very satisfied with the end result. There was a photo I saw of a large gentle hand holding a delicate infant, and it really gave me a feeling of security and awe. I thought it would be best portrayed in black and white so the focus would be on both the connection and the sharp contrast between the two objects. The hand acts as a pedestal showcasing the child and I think it is a piece that brings together peace and unity.
HE WAS GIVEN
THE OCEAN
ROBERT BLANK
Medium: Ceramics

from the artist

The piece was an attempt, not a wholly successful one, to gesture towards the spirit of the wave. This wave echoes both the oceans and the waves that reverberate through cosmos. The face within the waves gestures toward our want for these waves to crescendo into a meaning or purpose. The name, of course, refers to Poseidon.
The assignment was to create a Broadway poster for a fictional play based on a book written by Franz Kafka titled, Metamorphosis. We could use any media necessary to convey the meaning of the play to its audience as this was for an Illustration class. I drew the image, outlined it in ink, scanned it in, and colored it using Photoshop. I felt the hybrid image I created and the colors used effectively demonstrated the feel and direction of the play while engaging the audience’s curiosity.
from the artist

I created this poster in my advanced typography class. The project’s goal was to merge type and image. I took this photograph with my iPhone during the National Equality March in October in Washington, D.C. Above the people who stood behind me are thoughts that are rising up and being heard. Being in D.C. on this day I felt like I was a part of history, it’s a feeling I will never forget.

THE REASONS WHY

BRADEN PATE

Medium: Graphic Design
from the artist

My piece, Paint Me Beautiful, is my way of sharing the beauty of tattooing with the world. For so long tattooing has been a taboo, especially in reference to women, so I wanted to fuse the two and show people that tattoos should be seen as decorations for the skin rather than a desecration of it. This is my take on the notion of enjoying your skin while you’re in it.

PAINT ME BEAUTIFUL

JESSICA RITACCO

Medium: Mixed Media
from the artist

This particular logo is derived from a 2009 graphic design class assignment. The objective of the project was to combine two components, a famous designer and a random animal, to create a successful logo for a fictional company. Thus, Colossal Records was born. My aspiration with any project is to make the world a more aesthetically appealing place through graphic design.
from the artist

Anna Stankiewicz, who could be considered a renaissance woman, is the owner of West End Dance Company in downtown Greenville, S.C., a personal trainer, and the Pan America Champion in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu 2008 and 2009 in both white and blue belts. Currently she is training for the World Championships in California, June 2010. Both arts are depicted in a clash amongst each other with torn tights, a black tu-tu and her blue belt draping over her shoulders. Her life’s allure revolves around her depicted in her body language, apparel and background.
from the artist
This shot was taken in San Diego, California with the first roll of film I ever put through a Holga camera. I used Fuji Pro 100 film and had it cross processed for the extreme color contrasts. This trip and this camera changed the way I looked at the world.

SANDY EGGO
KYLE CARLO DIORIO
Medium: Holga 120 Film Camera & Push Processed
GODZILLA EGG
ALEX STASKO
Medium: Ceramics

from the artist

Godzilla Egg came out of nowhere. I wasn’t really trying to go in any particular direction but I wanted to include melting glass in my piece. One thing built upon another and it kinda took on a life of its own.
from the artist

Encaustic painting challenges spontaneous decisions and accepting happy accidents. My inspiration for this piece was a Tarot Card reading I did on a Sunday morning. I have a set of vintage Tarot Cards that were passed down to me and everything in this piece represents the five cards that appeared this day. My intentions were to capture the outcome of the reading with a vintage feel including the textures that can be created with the wax.

SUNDAY MORNING
CASEY JANOWSKI
Medium: Mixed Media
from the artist
This image is an exploration of the origin of mankind. It is a representation of evolution, one purposefully designed and orchestrated by non deities, grounded in a science unknown to humanity.

UNTITLED
WAYNE MARCELLI
Medium: Imagon Intaglio
Language is our world. Explore it.
AS THEY PLEASE
DENNIS HERBERT

It stretches out a significant distance, winding about through the dark, shaded sections of bog and looping back around over the sun stained marsh. A sign out front lets people know they’re in for a four-mile hike with trained guides to lead each group.

“They’ll show you what you can’t find in life,” it arrogantly boasts. The boardwalk is authentic, slightly decayed but stable with a grey hue to match the death on the fallen trees surrounding. It belongs in there, part of the swamp now and the animals know it.

I’m usually the one, at the beginning of the day, who has to start things. It’s one assignment that I have earned. Our manager supports healthy competition, thinks it’s the root of success. I can’t disagree. The Sawgrass Sanctuary and Preservation has been an attraction for fifteen years, but it really got going in the past five, when it’s been in Piedmont’s control, inheritance. Under his management and with the changing of several policies, success has been a familiar tune.

Some guides oppose Mr. Piedmont’s philosophies but I don’t mind them. He believes the visitors should pick the guide who will escort them along the autobahn; you know, what the customer desires and all. When guests first arrive, they see a little video montage of all the “Pathfinders” performing some act in nature. Like Stacie has a little bird on her finger and in Oakley’s he lifts a big snapping turtle from the muddy water and brings it over to the camera to chomp on, just in mocking, people think it’s funny when they watch. But mine, mine is a little different, I jumped on a gator and flailed around with it for thirty or forty seconds. It was docile from sickness but people can’t really tell the difference, I did it just for the filming—that’s what the people want—it gets me chosen. It’s a little cheap, Oakley said it was bad gator karma but then again he also disliked the fame that came my way around the sanctuary because of it.

There are returning visitors and reoccurring student visits and reputation is getting increasingly important. You have to be able to point things out when leading a group around. And out in the swamps it’s all about noticing what’s sudden or subtle, small differences. That’s how you get the job, there’s a test. Not out in the wilderness just on a computer screen. What you can find. How it’s done is there are two nearly identical pictures of something like a swamp or marsh and you have to point out the sections mismatched between the two. Nobody’s really qualified, except Oakley. Mr. Piedmont says it’s something you can’t be taught, the presence a guide has when leading a group. He said he could give us a sharp eye, but control and elitism is something for us to learn on our own.

I’ve gotten quite keen out here now, not because of the computer screens. I know the balance of things, the weather, the wildlife. Some co-workers call out scientific names when directing the group’s attention. Not me, I go for the average Joe, I felt like developing myself as a blue-collar type of guide, I get the guests who come out and say, “Point me out a gator” and I’ll do it too. I can find just about everything that’s out there, but the credit goes to my former comrade.

Now is one of the times I need Oakley, and I’ll see him out there, eventually. New business proposal’s been processed. Piedmont’s been working on this one for a while. “Live Interaction.” He boasted to me. “Safety waivers went through, you ‘Pathfinders’ are eligible for environmental contact. No longer are you restricted to the boardwalk when leading your groups. They want an animal, you go off the walkway and get it for them.” When the news reached a few co-workers, it excited them. Not me, there are some that have bent this rule for some time, just never for our groups.

from the writer

I feel that balance plays a heavy-handed role in existence, on scales both large and small. What I tried to capture with this piece was a character that has fallen into a rut, but not an insurmountable rut, which has ultimately thrown off his balance. It is up to him to piece together the things important in his life and avoid certain doom.
Once, during my first month, Oakley led me off the autobahn. We were friends then not just co-workers. He said it was urgent and we jogged off into the orange, balmy dusk. When we got there I drew a quick breath and held it, Oakley didn’t react he had already seen and thus prepared himself. I’ve witnessed the pythons before, the abnormally large ones, people keep them as pets while they’re manageable then release them into the marsh when they no longer want them or can’t care for such a beast anymore. Now they thrive, grow for years and do as they please. There was a grotesque lump that seemed too large for the snake’s natural girth. An almost paranormal stretch, but it maintained nonetheless. It didn’t move an inch the entire time we were there, for a while I thought it had passed away while attempting the meal. “I’ll betcha there’s a kid in there,” Oakley said, breaking the ice hauntingly.

“I doubt it,” I replied casually, even though the previous statement gave me a chill.

“I’ll jump down there and gut him right now if you wanna put some money against it,” he said with excitement.

“What makes you so sure it’s a kid—and let’s say you do gut him and pull a boy out then what? You gonna call the sheriff?” I asked.

“I heard a family that’s how I’m so sure, over there in the trailer park, other side of the street. One of their kids gone missin for five days now, they used to run around on the fringes of the swamp, I warned them too. And no I wouldn’t call no sheriff, I’d take that boy to his parents explain everything then they’d bury him and hopefully some of their anxiety at the same time. I didn’t say anything back, didn’t spoil his nobility, so we stood silent, staring at the creature slowly living. We went to his place after, had beers on the porch, and talked over the improbability of a snake kidnapping a boy.

That was then. Oakley has since drifted from me.

I found my first romantic acquaintance three years into my living arrangement. She was from a town that neighbored my parents’ town three hours north of sanctuary, but somehow she found herself down here and I found her. By that time, Oakley and I had our trailers rearranged to become side by side so we could grill steaks and burgers, split the cost of some dinners. We took turns negotiating the highway in a self-inflicted daze, when traveling to and from the bars. And rode to work every Monday through Friday together, completely sober. So naturally, Joann met Oakley very early into our relationship. This did not go over well. They clashed a bit. Oakley didn’t like what used to be our time together monopolized by my new interest. She would join us for dinner, odd glances were often exchanged, Joanna was bothered by Oakley’s stealthy mannerisms. She would say those are the kind of guys you find out are pervs later down the road. Sometimes she drove me to work instead of me riding with Oakley and sometimes she kept me from the bar, small things to her. His counteraction to these changes was to sidle, sidle anytime he had the chance, just creep right into our dinner or board game-like he was there all along. Sometimes I couldn’t figure any reason why she stayed this long. I’m not that likeable and we hardly got alone time. But when we did manage, just me and her, I could imagine Oakley’s ear pressed to our tin door or his beady eyes peering between the slits of the blinds.

There was remorse, but it was brutal honesty. I was willing to sacrifice time with Oakley in turn for a lover. It’s a tendency conditioned into the human psyche. Anyone in my position would do the same. Joann on the other hand, well I didn’t know how much longer she was willing to make sacrifices. That’s exactly what living at Key Mobile Village, a sacrifice. These were the things she’d reassure me of: how much of a dump my double wide was and how lucky I was that she continued to stay. But at the time she was mine, and I wanted to keep that.

Oakley and I didn’t frequent the bar as much, but occasions would arise—we would find time—and we would go, clinging to the last threads of our bond. When I had problems, he would still hear of them, eventually, if they had to leak out of my pores accompanied by the stale stench whiskey, he would hear them.

I started this morning with the staff meeting, everyone was aware of the current changes, except Oakley and two others. I could care less about the two; I needed one person, a savior, before a group selected me.

There is no appropriate way to begin conversation with a friend you have renounced. Especially when the manner in which it was done was designed to bring hurt and guilt. There is a balance, I can see that. I told Oakley to stay out of my life in a different set of words, said he ruined my relationship, it meant everything to me, and that he was fully responsible for what happened. I called him a “little fucking sneak” and said I knew he used to peep through our blinds.

This all a result from a while back, relations between Joann and I began to slip dramatically. When her mother
passed our intimacy went with her. The will brought a whole barnyard display of bronze livestock, miniature sculptures. There were cows, pigs, some chickens, and a decorated pen to keep them contained. She kept them right there on the dresser. I could no longer perform and she was never satisfied; it was a major mental block. Joann’s new physical state didn’t help either. Her former, more slender physique, filled up and out.

This was something Oakley found out about at the bar, along with a few other problems, and not in the best dialect.

At first I thought he jumped, like he had an opportunity. When I went back to my trailer a couple of days later, I convinced myself, it was intentional he was jealous. He motivated her to leave. My trailer, emptied of all Joann’s belongings except one little bronze pig perched on the dresser. It stung. She was gone and why would she ever come back. I sat out on the porch that night, with the mosquitoes, and threw the beer cans I emptied into the back of Oakley’s truck. He wasn’t going to come out of that trailer next door, and I didn’t mind, I couldn’t think of anything clever to say.

I’ve thought of a few things to say since then.

My name was called over the intercom. When I got to the front Mr. Piedmont was standing beside a large man wearing a yellowing shirt that read Destin ’86 and under that F.B.I, female body inspector. He was accompanied by two sons, one with shoes one without, and what I assumed was his wife, not equally as large but an appropriate female counterpart. “Explain our new procedure here.” Piedmont proudly asserted. I explained the process of passing out the note cards to the group on which they each secretly write what animal they most desire. How I count them up, and while I’m out with them, try to find them their choice, go off the walkway and get it for them. Now depending on the animal chosen, I can bring it back to pet, maybe take some close up pictures. The large man retorted, “We don’t need all that, gator-boy, we seen your little video there, so you know why we’re picken ya. We wont be doin’ any pettin’” I stared at them, the whole family. And with nothing left to do, I led them out into the crisp morning, where humidity was slowly lowering itself onto our shoulders. The boards to the walkway creaked and moaned, and I hoped with all my might that a few would break and the swamp, seizing the opportunity could swallow up my executioners, but it wouldn’t do that.

With no one but God watching, I navigated the walkway, the anxious family followed, ignoring everything I showed them, waiting. “Birds,” the kids whined, “That’s all you’re showin’ us. We got them at home.” I told them this venture required patience, and calm. Two aspects I had no interest in at the time. “We’re not going to find what you want if you make all that racket.” In saying that, a glint of brown denim caught my eye. I moved them along with no excessive pace. Waiting to hear them cry out, in joy, that they’ve spotted a gator before I managed to. Then that would be my time. I’d ease my way out there, with them expecting “wrastlin”, only to get mauled, entertainment for the locals to contact their news station about, brag of what they witnessed. Right around the time my imagination reached my own dismemberment, Oakley emerged from the foliage. He had a large knife, designed for cutting through brush; he rested the blunt side of the blade on his free hand. “New rule went through.” He said leaping back over the railing from the wilderness into our autobahn.

“I know. Live interaction, this is the first group that’s going to see me encroach.” I said.

“Well I don’t know nothing about what you’re talking, but I think you and that group of yours is coming with me.”
I am bait on a hook
dangling from the rope line
swinging over the black marsh.
The red morning light is harsh
against the sky Southern blue.
I wiggle and wriggle my legs
with Chuck Taylors attached,
waiting for a Georgia gator
to gobble me, swallow me whole.

The cord grass rushed
as salt wind brushed
Savannah’s wheat strands,
yet they fell back in place.

J.M. Barrie’s pages rustle open
from where I left them
on the bench swing by this old elm.
And all I can hear
is the ticking off of things
I did to piss him off,
of that croc’s clock
telling me to get your ass up.

I hope I never land.
OLD ATLANTIC
BLAKE MONROE

Found a broken bottle in the Bible Belt
Cut some rope and carved up all my wood
Made a boat and put it in the closest harbor
Left the coast, planned to never come back again

The first night I watched the sun slowly sink
And knew in fact the moon would come to guide me
Sailed to the edge and stared the devil in the eye
I calmed a storm and made it sing your name every night

Heard the voice of God out on the open water
Felt his wrath and prayed I’d make it out alive
Old Atlantic has grown so cold and lonely
I regret the day I ever left your side

Seven days without wind and seven nights without sleep
Seven virgins dressed in white, one insoluble me
Fought off the girls and rowed the boat myself
At lands first sight, sunk my ship and died

from the writer

Old Atlantic is basically about how everything is cyclical, kind of the “you don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone” type of sentiment. Old Atlantic really isn’t about any specific type of situation, it could really fit anything involving that sentiment.
from the writer

The poem was inspired after an argument with my mother, after which I realized that, as a person, she has her flaws. She can make mistakes just like everyone else in the world. After following her with blind faith for so long, this almost came as a shock to me. I wrote *Secretly Someone Else* not only to convey this epiphany, but to acknowledge that being a parent is a difficult job because a mother must carve out her path while also juggling the future of her child as well, which is a hidden feat in itself. To simultaneously balance her own life as well as the lives of her children is a heroic deed of a mother that often goes unnoticed, and it is this that inspired me to write about it.

**SECRETLY SOMEONE ELSE**

**SOMMER TARABEK**

I got into a fight with my sister over her math homework because her two looked like a seven and her name wasn't straight on the line at the top of the page. My dad was at work and the whole house was a nest of cranky women that hated homework and rocky pot-roast for dinner. My mother was clanging and cracking in the kitchen, molding meat into something edible. The ceiling lights were dim and yellow, but the lamp on the desk was hot and it made the paper very white. Our voices were like the pans in the kitchen. Popping and ping-ponging down the hall. She leapt across the house and joined in our tussle waving around her wooden spoon, stained with bloody meat sauce, like an indictment. Flecks of red sprinkled sporadically in all directions and the heavy stench of meat weighed down the air. She wasn’t my mother, but some woman named Judy, who had graying, threaded hair and a mouth that was always frowning. Her voice at the time was piercing and high, but now I say it was only the voice of a human being, a woman capable of mistakes. Now I wonder what makes a mother right every time and what makes the child believe her. What changes in a person to twist her into something greater than just a woman that is older, grayer, than I? My sister fought back in her traditional, flourishing style and pretended not to feel the rapping of the spoon to her behind. She was too young to notice our mother become Judy and see the world look so different in those few seconds. So young, that after my father came home, she didn’t notice it was actually a man named Walter as she hugged him at the door and we finished her math homework and didn’t correct the two.
SARAJEVO ROSE
WAYNE MARCELLI

A PMC plinks off game-piece sized insurgents
somewhere in the desert, somehow securing freedom
back home. A far-off factory turns pigmented poly-something
into pink cellphones. Blackberry buzzing –
a boisterous bitch bashes away on buttons, distracting
the students around her (they’re wishing hard that she breaks a bone).
Instructors sell themselves while ingrates shuffle sheets of paper,
slamming half-desks before the lecture concludes. Leeches,
doubtful they want to learn anyway.
In the library, two Alpha Beta bros discuss coke acquisition
for their fag-free Friday night frat bash. Flash back a week:
four Colombians cutting cocaine in a crock pot. The product
is pushed onto the locals – impressionable pre-pubescents:
the product of an impoverished people. Poor pricks,
probably didn’t see the primer-colored Pinto
pull up behind them, windows rolled down, gunfire rolling
through. Pink mist poofs into the air,

proof that poor people cost less to kill.
Bounce back a dozen or so years to burning buildings,
artillery barrages blasting beautiful places to bits; this country
blowing holes into that one, neighbors conflicting
over trimmed hedges, both questioning the other’s legitimacy.
A mortar smacks concrete, expanding gases rupture
eardrums six blocks away, lethality lashing out
lives 100 feet in either direction. The blast leaves
divots in the asphalt, a sunburst pattern;
reassurance that a man, perhaps a little girl, lost
life and limb there. Residents fill the scars
with pink resin, the bomb’s pockmark resembling a rose.
The city is a memorial garden devoid of flowers.

from the writer
This poem explores the futility of peace and the concept of cause and effect.
A fire is seeping through the grayish skin
of folded orifices in the mind.

Unorthodox, this manner to unwind,
but you can’t tell if plots are thick or thin.

Of this obscure location you are in,
expecting oddities of any kind,
discover there is nothing left to find
on earth among the gathered dust. Begin,
with mighty hands, to alter empty space.

It is ignored, the genius of your craft,
by endless crowds that, without warning, grew
into an ocean, drowning, every face
identical. In skin, an image graft,
so all that I may ask is: Who are you?

from the writer
I wrote this Italian sonnet during the Fall semester of 2009 while attending a poetry workshop with Professor Albergotti. I had previously written a sonnet for said class entitled 1969 which was moderately praised by the students for its strict adherence to form. It was with the positive feedback that I was encouraged to write Unique. In retrospect, I can’t say what was on my mind at the time I wrote it, though it has something to do with the process of creation and originality. I’m still confused by my own words, but this is why it remains one of my favorites.
KNOCK-OFF NATURE
LAUREN MOORE

Stampedes of stockbrokers,
erds of homeless,
stilettos in strides,
I hum to the buzz of the busybodies:
the unremitting rhythm of the rushes
echoes from Canal St. to Carroll Gardens
honking, rolling, whizzing down
every block in uncountable beats.

They hurry down the sidewalks artlessly
as if each slab of cement
isn’t even a grave for trampled tulips,
dehydrated daisies, poisoned pansies,
and perform these carless concerts
as if deaf to the world.

Only to later plug in overpriced sound machines
and soothe late-night stress with spurious ambience—
“nature’s meadow,” “babbling brook,”
“peaceful seaside,” “rainforest”—
listening and dreaming to the celestial lullabies
they’ve worked so hard to mutilate
in their precious waking hours.

from the writer
“Knock-off Nature” is about
the fierce urbanity consuming
consumer America, inspired by the
entrapment of living in New York.
I taste a store-bought soup
slurping carefully contents puddle
in a silver, hot and bent spoon.

My tongue quivers and shyly retreats,
panting. The taste buds craved fall
spilt sloppily from a can too far away from home.

My mother calls to say at home
there is flooding and our yard is mud soup.
Her voice cools my tongue. I ask, Is it fall
there? Her words collect in my ears like puddles.
Her tone is far and retreating.
Yes, fall is here. I fiddle with my spoon.

There is a man and this night we spoon,
craving the cold while creating heated homes
between our bodies. I begin to retreat
into a fetal form, saying aloud, I’m craving soup.
A hand on my bare side, Your curves are puddles.
Our joining breaths become humid, unlike fall.

I ask, Is it okay at this time if I fall
into a new form, to be liquid in a spoon?
Solidity is too hard and a puddle
could use a drop of me in the sogginess back home,
where I imagine the scent of squash and soup
is seeping through a crack from a lifted window,
retreating.

Like the blossoms, I am in between and retreating.
I wait in a foreign and dusty space for a sign of fall
to crawl to me with cheeks full of cinnamon and soup.
I wait naked and desperate with a spoon
from a set my mother found in a dusty space at home.
Outside the rain has reached us and so begin the
puddles.

Naked and waiting, I have the urge to feel the puddles
against every section of skin, for my feet to retreat
from dryness, to run, to bring me home.
I’m running now, sprinting, careful not to fall,
and waiting home for me is a proper setting, a spoon
next to a bowl of ingredients my father sighs is soup.

I watch the collecting puddles, rain humming, falling.
I retreat from the pitter-tap and I toss the spoon into
the sink (tap-ting), home to foreign bowls caked with the guts
of canned soup.

from the writer
One Can was undoubtedly my most challenging piece of poetry. It is a sestina, consisting formally of 36 lines, with very specific requirements for pattern of end-words. Though daunting, the task of writing a sestina opened my eyes to the world of form as sort of ‘open boundaries’ I had once rejected.
Shine on, baby.
Shine on.
BEST OF SHOW
This work derives its title from Thomas Hardy’s novel, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, written and published in 1891 as a critique of the double standards present for men and women in Victorian society. Throughout the work, Hardy’s (and arguably literature’s) most tragic female heroine, Tess Durbeyfield, falls apart because of the dichotomies present in the society in which she lives. This work, like Hardy’s beautiful yet tragic novel, is also about duality. This idea is present within the textural differences created by the work’s primary materials, porcelain clay and fabric, which allow the work to be both hard and soft. It is perpetuated by the presence of areas of color (almost hyperactivity), and areas of uncontaminated white (rest). There is also a tension between what is immediately visible (the clay, the fabric), and what is only visible through investigation (the beads, the dots). Furthermore, the very size and nature of the piece encourages a tactile encounter while the presentation of the piece as a work of art may prevent the viewer from ever being able to touch it.

**TESS**

**TAYLOR HEMPLE**

Medium: Mixed Media
from the artist
This piece was, above all, a learning experience. Trying to copy Salvador Dali was a challenge and time consuming process. Besides altering the center centaur to resemble myself, I tried to copy it in every detail.
I took this shot in Florence, Italy using my Holga and Fuji Pro 400H film. In broken Italian I told her how beautiful I thought she was. This roll of film cost me 30 Euro to develop because of miscommunication and the language barrier. This was the only shot I cared about.
Kara had aborted her fetus just last week, and already she was back to the burnt spoons and dirty needles. Brandy had abandoned life in rural Virginia to attend Lynchburg College, sleeping with her professor and using blow on weekends.

The two stood in the waiting room of the Lynchburg Medical Center. An exotic dancer they knew had been rushed into surgery after a bag burst while she was balling, a term used when cocaine has been vaginally implanted. Having snorted a line just before walking in, Kara and Brandy pulled at their clothing.

People in the waiting room stared. A doctor, wearing blue slacks and a white coat, approached a group of women in the corner who had been crying. He spoke softly and as he walked away one of the women fell to her knees, sobbing. Brandy and Kara pointed and laughed, and after being asked repeatedly to sit and lower their voices, they were escorted out of the hospital. The dancer died later that night.

Brandy’s apartment door swung open, and Brooklyn, Brandy’s friend who she had recently met at a rave party, stepped through the frame. He looked at the Marilyn Monroe painting that hung above the black futon, and the puppy sleeping beneath it, only her black-tipped tail exposed. A Gene Kelly portrait sat on the floor behind the door. Brandy would later tell me she didn’t think it was appropriate to hang the painting until it was raining outside.

While Brooklyn peeled off his mud-caked boots, he noticed the mirror had been taken down from the bathroom and was sitting on the coffee table. As he walked closer, he could see the razor blades and lined white powder.

“Got blow?” he asked.

“What do you want?” Brandy said, setting down the Rolling Stone magazine.

“Smack,” he said. “We’re going to Kara’s.”

Brooklyn was tall and skinny. His blonde hair was matted and had not been cut for months. He wore a faded black John Lennon shirt, holes in one sleeve.

“You walk here for hero?” she asked. He nodded, walked to the kitchen and opened the refrigerator.

“I just smoked a bowl too,” he said, “I need icing.”

“If you got bale, I’ll take you to Kara’s,” she said.

Brandy walked to the back room of her apartment and tugged at her sequined top, exposing her full-C implanted breasts. Her long hair was thick brown silk; her pale face, black and hollow, with icy blue circles peering through long lashes. The ripples of her ribs pressed against her flesh as she stretched her arms upward. Her hip bones peeked over the top of her jeans, which were too big for her small structure and stained with dirt and ash. She slid a white T-shirt over her bare skin and covered it with a black zip-up hoodie, smelling of cheap cigarettes and pot.

“They’ll take whatever I have,” she said, referring to the people scattered along the street outside Kara’s apartment.

from the writer

My mother won’t read “Brandy’s Story.” And what’s ironic is that for a long time she actually wouldn’t “read” Brandy’s story in real life. Before this was printed, my mother called me and asked that I change Brandy’s name to something anonymous. Obviously she hadn’t read the piece to see that I let readers know it’s about my sister. But I must commend her attempt to keep our family secrets inside the doors of our broken home. My mother raised me in the Lutheran church. We went to school every weekday and church every Sunday. I liked to pretend we were perfect and our hectic schedules of ball practices and dance lessons had some real importance to the world around us. But when my parents divorced, and I left for college, and my brother left for the Marine Corps, and my sister left for Lynchburg, my single mother fought to keep the image of a perfect family alive, and I love her for that. But although I may never really face the reality that our life isn’t a Norman Rockwell painting, this piece allowed me to see life as it really is. And a small glimpse into my sister’s drug world as it was in Lynchburg, may help my mother come to grips that “Brandy’s Story” did exist. Maybe one day, we can all accept that this family wasn’t perfect, it isn’t perfect, and we never really will be perfect, no matter how hard we try. And maybe one day, instead of fighting it, we can allow the imperfections of this family to turn into something really beautiful.
“If I dress like I have nothing, they leave me alone.” She told me she had been mugged three times before; losing a silver necklace, a Vera Wang handbag, several hundred dollars in cash, even the clothes she was wearing.

Brandy set three pieces of white paper on the floor in front of the inner side of her apartment door. She slowly closed it and locked the bolt.

“Footprints,” she said, “I know when people have been in there.”

Brandy and Brooklyn climbed into her black Sorrento. The seats were covered in dog hair and infested with cigarette smoke. The clutter of stained clothing and empty soda bottles crowded the floor. A TomTom sat on the console, the screen cracked and white powder around the edges. She used her dirty fingernail to scratch the creases, then held it to her nose and inhaled.

“Scrape this bowl,” she said handing Brooklyn a bent paper clip and a blue-green swirled glass tube. “You got bud?” she asked. He nodded and began scratching the inside of the glass.

“You smoke this resin?” he asked.

“Fuck no,” she said.

“Give me a lighter, I’ll smoke this shit.” Resin is mostly tar, ash, carbon, oils, and Tetrahydrocannabinol.

Kara’s apartment was at the end of a poorly lit alley, they called it an abandoninium. After walking along the brick building, Brandy and Brooklyn stopped under a broken window, a piece of yellow glass sticking out from the corner of the pane.

“We wait,” Brooklyn said, “she’ll call when she’s done.”

The cell phone rang, sending ‘Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds’ echoing down the passage and into the street.

“Let’s go,” Brooklyn said, silencing the phone.

They walked into the dark apartment building; a light flickered over the stair well. The walls were orange, a trail of ants making zigzag lines across the chipped paint.

Brooklyn knocked on a wooden door three times and a chain rattled on the other side. Four long nails gripped the side of the door, a black eye and smeared lipstick peeked from around the edge.

“I sucked a fat dick for this black tar,” Kara said holding up a ‘dime’s worth’ in a brown paper bag, dirt still on her knees. “How much you got?” I later found out that a dime’s worth is enough heroin to kill a single user.

“Get this,” Brooklyn said pushing open the door and grabbing the crotch of his pants. “You got foil?” he asked.

Brandy chopped at the white power and used the blade to spread the cocaine into four straight lines. In clean sweeps, she lowered her face to the glass and snorted each line, pausing after each one to wipe and inhale. Her eyes glazed with water and red veins. The white powder caked her nose, and she smiled.

Brooklyn speckled the aluminum foil with the white crystals, holding the lighter under the metal, watching it melt into molten wax and inhaling the smoke through a foil tube.

“That shit’s weak.” Kara lifted her hair. “No track marks,” she said, “And the high is insane.” She jabbed the needle beneath her hair line and into her spine.

A guy in the corner tied a rubber workout band around his left forearm, tightening it by pulling one end with his right hand and holding the other with his teeth. His black vein grew and pulsed against the skin. After sucking the liquid into a needle, he pushed it in and emptied the tube.

The room quickly filled with smoke, thicker than fog, a haze with no moisture. The air was dry and blood ran from Brandy’s nose and into the crease of her lips. She licked the gloppy liquid, and sucked on her cigarette. The smoke spun from her opened mouth and she leaned her back against the wall. She sat with her legs spread, a piece of the yellow glass between them, covered with white dust and droplets of splattered blood.

Brooklyn, one eye closed and a corner of his mouth drooping to one side, flicked a lighter and stared at the flame. Chunks of vomit had soaked through his jeans and smelled of spoiled hamburger meat. He hadn’t eaten in two days, so the puke pile consisted of mostly stomach acid.

Kara lay paralyzed on the floor; one arm smashed between the couch and the wall, her right leg mangled beneath her body, and her head balanced awkwardly on one knee. Both eyes open, starring at the floor.

“Let me take you down, cause I’m going to,” Brandy whispered and looked at Brooklyn.

“Strawberry fields,” Brooklyn laughed. “Nothing is real, nothing to get hung about.”

“Strawberry fields forever.” Brandy kicked the glass across the room, shattering as it hit the wall. She stood, smearing the white residue and blood around her nose and mouth.

“Let’s dance.” She took Brooklyn’s hand and pulled him toward her. Stumbling and regaining balance, she pressed her chest against his and looked into his eyes.

“Nothing’s going to change my world,” she said.

“Nothing’s going to change my world,” he repeated and they leapt around the room, dancing to the music in their heads and smiling.
Hot sunlight burned its way into the room. Smoke still fluttered back and forth between the walls, hanging in the air like burnt cotton balls. Dried brown blood coated Brandy’s face. Her ringing cell phone woke her and she shaded her eyes from the light.

“What time is it?” She sat up slowly and looked toward the window, squinting and pushing her long bangs out of her face. “What day is it?” She rubbed her head and fumbled for her phone.

Brooklyn, rustling on the couch, sat up and lit a cigarette. “You were outa your mind last night,” he said. “After railing a few lines of coke, we fucked like jack rabbits.”

“Bullshit,” Brandy said, squinting to read the screen of her cell. Brooklyn laughed and walked to the window. “So where we getting hero today?” he asked, taking a drag from his cigarette.

“I have shit to do,” she said, “I can’t bother with that.” She shoved the black hoodie into her bag and pulled her jeans over her shear panties. “Don’t call me, I’ll call you.” She left the apartment and walked down the hall.

Brandy slid her key into the rusty bolt lock. As the lock clicked, she turned the knob slowly and cautiously opened the heavy door. A full red-clay boot print was smashed into one of the previously white sheets of paper.

“Work boot,” she said. “Maintenance.” She walked straight to the desk and pulled the drawer open. Pulling out a bag of cocaine and a roll of bills, she sighed and closed the drawer. Brandy told me that on three different occasions, red-clay work boot prints had coincidently resulted in the loss of an ‘eight ball’ (3 grams of coke) and over $500.

Brandy pulled a large bag of puppy chow from under the sink and scooped out a bowl, placing it on the floor next to a red water bowl.

“I have class,” she said, patting the small pup on its head. “I don’t have time for a shower, but I can smoke a bowl on the way.”

She grabbed a bag of pot and shoved it into the jeans. She pulled off her white T-shirt and slid on a grey Journey T-shirt.

“Any way you want it,” she said looking down at the puppy biting the dog food, making loud crunching sounds between its small teeth. “That’s the way you need it.”

She pulled her long hair back with a brown rubber band and grabbed a stack of books from the counter. “She loves to laugh, she loves to sing, she does everything,” Brandy sang as she placed three new sheets of white paper on the floor and closed the door.

Brooklyn was sitting on the futon when Brandy came through her apartment door, smoking a cigarette and flipping through the March issue of Playboy.

“What the hell, Brooklyn,” she said, setting down the books. “How do you get in here?”

“Aubrey is a hot piece of ass,” he said, turning the pages and taking a drag from his cigarette. Brandy shoved the cigarette into the table and jerked the magazine from his hands. Brooklyn laughed and kicked up his feet.

“I thought you’d be happy I’m here,” he said. “I brought powder.”

“I said I’d call you,” she said wiping the ash from the burnt cigarette. Brandy nervously looked around, “Where is my dog?” she said.

“We hit the water bong earlier,” he said. “She sleeping that shit off.” Brandy shook her head and Brooklyn pulled out a bag of coke.

“Let’s rail a line,” he said, “And we’ll hit up Kara’s later.” Brandy rolled her eyes.

“Come on,” Brooklyn said, “Free coke, just hit this shit with me.”

Brandy nodded. “Line it.”

Brandy closed her eyes and took a long drag from the joint. She dipped the burning end into the pile of coke, and sucked harder. She held in the smoke, coughed and passed the roach to Brooklyn, hacking and laughing. They took turns spitting in a plastic bowl and taking hits.

“I have a paper due tomorrow,” Brandy choked out between puffs.

“Fuck it,” Brooklyn tilted his head back and wiped the residue from the crease of his nose. “Let’s go to Kara’s,” he said.

“Yeah,” Brandy smiled. “Ok.”

I watched as Brandy, my sister, placed the clean white sheets of paper on the floor and slowly closed the door behind her.
God gave me a baby I didn’t want on June 14th, 1935. A month later, He took that baby away. And let me tell you, gettin’ rid of Sadie took a lot less time than gettin’ her did. That’s the part I hate the most. I put out seven months, two weeks and four days to her, and the only way that child paid me back was with dust and empty pockets.

“Summer babies bring bad luck,” Momma told me that the day I announced mine and Jack’s new arrival. She stood at the kitchen counter mashing potatoes; they’re my beau’s favorite, and seein’ how he had just flown in from the war in France (on an angel’s wings for sure, that’d be the only way he survived), Momma decided to splurge. Four dimes worth of potatoes sat drying in the window sill. “Specially with this drought we’re stuck in.” She shook her head, “You may have built it, but I have to clean it.”

Daddy had just bought a new combine tractor, which he pampered more than he ever did me or Momma. I heard her cursin’ him every night for weeks after he first got it, sayin’ it was a waste of money when all our wheat was dyin’ anyway. She was right, but Daddy kept sayin’ that it was only a dry spell; a little dust never killed nobody or their income. He always had a good attitude of that sort and I listened to what he said because of it.

I got up from my chair at the table and started peelin’ the potato skins into the slop bucket Momma had on the floor.

“That’s a good girl. Don’t let nobody tell you just ‘cause you’ve got a baby in ya, that means you’re helpless.” She wiped her hands off on her apron and pulled my hair back. She ran her fingers through the strands and then let it fall back into place. “You know, red hair is a sign of determination. We best hope that baby gets you and your daddy’s hair.” I smiled at the thought of that, and then started peelin’ again. The blade made a smooth noise.

It was interrupted with, “Take them boots off in my house. You may have built it, but I have to clean it.” My daddy had broad shoulders then, ones that were upstanding and proud. I felt his laugh vibrate through my chest. He kissed Momma on the cheek.

“And a good evenin’ to you too, darlin.” Momma paid him no mind and started cuttin’ a stick of homemade butter into smaller chunks. “And my Maggie-Mae.” He placed one of his calloused hands on my shoulder, the rough creases rubbed against my freckled skin, and he smiled. “Your man just pulled up in the drive.” I looked out the window clouded with dust, and saw Jack walkin’ up the front dirt path. His eyes found mine, and he gave that half smile I fell for over two years ago at the Annual Clearview Auction. His daddy was the auctioneer, but Jack didn’t talk nearly as fast as he did. He had one of them slow drawls that made my heart melt like it was sittin’ under our Oklahoma sun. I sat up front near the stage where all the land owning high class families sat, fannin’ myself with my auction number. He bent forward in his seat, cocked his head to the side, and everything fell into its place after that, up until now.

I never loved Jack more than the day I saw him hold Sadie. “Babies ain’t s’posed to cough, are they?” His twang got even slower when he asked that, and his eyes got real big, too. That was the most I’d ever seen that man concerned. He had his arms ‘round her little body in a stiff, awkward way- he didn’t wanna drop her, you see- but I didn’t say nothin.’ I laughed, and reached out to hold her tiny fingers. She sure was pretty for a baby nobody wanted...you know, I started likin’ her once she got out of me. Sadie only cried once, and after she opened her eyes she didn’t wail unless she was hungry. I could quiet her down, but it wasn’t easy with only a fraction of the milk a baby’s s’posed to have. We’d fill her bottle mostly with well water, then mix it with a little of the milk we had left. I couldn’t feed her from my own self; the doctor said I could hardly keep food in my body, so we shouldn’t chance that. Every day the milk jug got lighter and lighter, and I could see where it had been the day before. She just
got hungrier every day older she got. It was that damned determination. She knew what she had to do to stay alive, so she did it. Pretty smart for bein’ only a few days old.

The man that engraved the headstone didn’t charge us nothin’ for Sadie’s. Pretty amazing, ’cause that drought brought out the greed in just about everyone. I think he just felt bad for me. It said, “Sadie Claremore Infant, Clearview, Oklahoma”. We didn’t have a funeral or nothin’, Momma said there’d be no sense in wastin’ more money on that baby. We put her by the back fence behind one of our old wheat fields, and I only went out to see her the day that Jack was shipped off to the east coast three months later.

We used to have a schoolhouse in the center of Clearview. Before a dust storm took it down in January, I’d go in every other day to learn how to spell words and count money. That was Daddy’s idea. Momma argued, sayin’ I should be stayin’ at home to help her, but Daddy said he wanted his girl growin’ up with more in her head than recipes and soap suds. I was the only girl in the class, and every time I’d walk up to the blackboard all the boys would make asses out of ’em with rude comments and every time I’d walk up to the blackboard all the boys would make asses out of ’em with rude comments and whistles, but I never paid them no mind. That’s ’cause I knew Jack was sittin’ out by the front steps, whittlin’ a butternut branch, waitin’ for me to get out. He’d even carry my books back to my house, where he’d sit on the barn roof and shoot crows with his shotgun. I’d read him stories I got from school; they wouldn’t let him go ‘cause his daddy didn’t own enough land. My Daddy liked him alright, ’cept for the fact that nobody wanted us together, seein’ how we was from different parts of town. Every night, he’d walk back to Ripley County where the average folk lived. That was the first city the deployment Marshalls went to in Oklahoma after the war started.

The sun was already goin’ down, and we were walkin’ back through the field of wheat closest to my house. Jack stayed behind me, followin’ the path I was makin’ through the thick stalks.

“Maggie?”

I turned around slowly. Momma always told me you never wanna let yourself seem eager in front of a boy. Jack was lookin’ at me real careful- I could tell he was thinkin’ hard.

“They’re sendin’ me off.” He reached in his back overall pocket and pulled out a strip of brown fabric. Two silver circles were tied on the end of it. “Jack Claremore, Ripley County, OK USA” was engraved on ’em. I didn’t say nothin’, and thought about the procession they had on Lincoln Street a few days before. They kept the casket open, and in it was a boy who couldn’t have been more than a day older than myself. His eyes were open, just a lookin’ out at the world he couldn’t be a part of no more. He had a metal tag, just like Jack’s, ’round his neck. The other one was in a girl’s hand. I knew her, Patsy-Leigh. She was in my Sunday school class. She just kept a cryin’, and nothin’ nobody did would make her stop. I don’t remember seein’ Patsy in church that Sunday.

“Maggie?” Jack was lookin’ at me, but my eyes went straight to the tags in his hand. The wheat around us swayed with the wind. Their green heads tickled my arms.

“I been wonderin’. Y’think …” At first, he didn’t say nothin’ else. Instead, he picked the seeds from the top of a wheat stalk, the way that made Daddy slap the back of my hand for doin’ when I was little. He popped a seed into his mouth and chewed on it while he thought. I learned a while back that you just had to be patient with Jack. With him, the important things took some time. He squinted at me and cocked his head to the side, just like the day I met him, the way our old coon hound did. His Oklahoma drawl didn’t even shake with the words, “Y’think you’d wanna marry me?”

Seven months, two weeks, and three days before, we had a hundred and thirty acres of wheat any farmer in all of Texas would be proud to say was his. It was the color of my little cousin’s hair—deep yellow that turned a golden hue in the sun. That was the only ocean I’d ever seen, the one that put all the zeros on the end of my Daddy’s account balance. I was born and raised knowin’ to rely on that wheat for everything that came through our house. Momma says that’s even how I got Jack, but I know that ain’t the truth.

Every Wednesday, Daddy would take his old tractor and move back and forth, from dusk ‘til dawn harvesting that wheat. And that’s why it didn’t feel right standing on the front porch, watching Daddy move from row to row, walking in his boots instead. He dipped his hands into a foot of dust, trying to uncover any stalk of gold hidden in-between the others, all dried and brown. Their heads didn’t sway in the breeze no more, the way my church skirts used to on Sunday mornings. There wasn’t even a breeze for them to move with if they had the strength to. Daddy took out his handkerchief and wiped the sweat from his forehead. I looked down at my belly, roundin’ out in one of the sundresses Momma made for me. We’d already sold all my good clothes at the flea market; I’d never seen Momma more ashamed than when she was handin’ off all the good crystal glasses and starched bed linens to people with more money than us. Somethin’ kept tellin’ me that this was my fault; me and Jack’s baby brought all this on. It was just takin’ its sweet time inside of me, in no rush to get out while the world around it was dyin’ slowly under all the dust.
“I can’t tell ya if it’s worth tryin’ anymore, Maggie-Mae, I just don’t know.” Daddy’s boots stomped down hard on the front steps. His eyebrows met into one in the middle of his face. “You alright?” He turned pale as his view shifted. I followed his eyes down to my feet where a puddle had formed from the first water I’d seen in weeks, which was running down both of my legs.

“You sure you wanna be doin’ this Mr. Durant?” I’d never seen my Daddy do anything he didn’t have his heart set on doing. I loved her, but I knew I had to blame Sadie as he handed the title to his compound to Mr. Porter, a man who owned three hundred acres in Dixon County. Daddy’s eyes seemed to glaze over as he glanced sideways at Sadie for a split second, and then back at the paper he held out to Mr. Porter.

“A course I am, Jack. I never second guessed any decision I ever made, and I sure as hell ain’t gonna start now.” Daddy smiled at us, and looked down at Sadie who was watching the whole thing from my arms. “Ain’t that right, baby-girl?” He stroked the few wisps of red hair she had with his index finger, and traced the shape of her face.

“You puttin’ food in that baby’s mouth?” Mr. Porter asked Daddy. He had a big voice, and a wide belly to match it. “She’s a youngin’ to have her own child.”

“God sure thought eighteen was old enough,” Daddy said that real proud-like.

“Any baby sure’d be lucky to survive this heat.” Mr. Porter made his way toward his Ford pickup; the kind only rich folk had– the kind Daddy drove me to the county dance in two years ago. I couldn’t tell which felt better: the sound of the chiffon layers in my dress against those leather car seats, with Daddy smiling at his date as he closed the door behind me; that night, or the wrinkled little fingers that were wrapping themselves around my cherry hair.

You don’t know nothin’ ‘bout motherly instinct ‘til you become a momma yourself. Sadie loved her sleep, now. She hardly took naps, so when the sun set, she was out cold. She kept coughing that night; I swear she just wouldn’t stop. I gave her water, even twice as much milk as I should have (Momma would’ve had my hide if she’d known that), but her little mouth never stayed closed. She panted like the dogs did every afternoon, the ones in the road that their owners didn’t want no more. Like she was so thirsty, but nothin’ was gonna help. I held her, and rocked her, and did all the things a good Momma should do. My teeth clenched together as she stirred in my arms, and I felt the grit of sand in between them. I ran my palm over Sadie’s forehead and found a layer of faded dust left in my hand. I’ll put my life on the fact that I only looked away for a second, one second I swear to you, to notice the gaps in between the wooden boards in our house– the reason behind our filth. And no sooner than I could look back at Sadie, I knew the feeling of holding a dead child. I was alone in that room. It was a dry feeling; a dryness no amount of dust could bring.

Sadie couldn’a only come from one night. Jack’s flight had landed, and I watched from the airport window as lines of uniforms marched in, like hungry ants to their feast at home. I had gotten all done up just to see that boy. My hair fell down in curls Momma slaved over with spray and Coke cans the night before. I smelled like jasmine blooms, and my lips were painted with Cherry Red lipstick I borrowed from my Aunt Jane. Every other soldier boy’s eyes moved toward me when they walked by, but none of ‘em were the eyes I was waitin’ on. Jack found me and ran to hold me against him. His arms seemed thicker than they were when he left. He kept his hand on my back as we walked toward the cab, and all the way to my Daddy’s farm. After dinner we sat out in the old barn, where dust moved in a lazy way while the sunset crept away from us. Mr. Woodward’s radio carried a crackly tune across our street and into my ears. It was all I could do to not let loose and start bawlin’. You gotta understand– suddenly I had what I had been missin’ for six months. It was like finally seein’ with both eyes after you been half blind for too long.

“Y’ sure this is what ya want?” he asked that in a doubtful voice. Jack was tryin’ to be a gentleman, and I was keepin’ my ladylike ways, but that wasn’t so easy up in the hay loft with nothin’ else ‘roundcept fireflies and the clean smell of harvested wheat.

Daddy’s boot box was just big enough to fit Sadie in. Her little arms fell beside her after Momma laid her down. I couldn’t touch her no more, I really couldn’t. Her fingers didn’t cling to mine when I held them out, and she didn’t smile when I wiggled my fingers on the bottom of her feet. She wore the blue dress and bonnet Mrs. Bethel sewed for her the day she was born, and she looked as pretty as a dead baby ever could. Daddy shoveled dry clay and gravel to make a shallow grave for Sadie, and I stared at my dirty feet when he set the box underground. I listened to the dirt hit the cardboard top. Small rocks made a muffled thud against it. Jack put his hand on the small of my back, somethin’ he hardly ever did, as we walked away from the small mound of dirt surrounded by dried grass. Ya know, I didn’t even almost cry. I didn’t even feel some kinda tears come up behind my eyes like I expected. It was just too late; the dust had already dried them up.
I RISE TO MORNING
KENDALL PAKULA

Because the soul is raw, gray.
Because you are more attentive
at hours spread with field dew,
when your faces are still and buried soft
into the morning's humble breast
and we talk through the crack in the window
and the miserable willow
is weeping, best left alone
to be where it may, dear Universe.
Because to keep waking I must know that
a sky may be born from warm
wombs of lonely, dark women screaming
Good morning! Good morning! Good morning!
as they give a pale child
in selflessness, in kindness.

from the writer
I wrote I Rise to Morning in the depths of evening when I was craving the beginnings of a new day. A friend suggested looking for inspiration in some of Mary Oliver’s poetry and after reading Why I Wake Early, I too urged to express my own reasons for rising day after day. I mirrored Oliver’s poem, hoping to express a contrasting darkness.
I’ve had fantasies about giving a speech at the Oscars after I’ve won Best Original Screenplay, or walking up to accept the Nobel Prize in Literature. So writing this makes me feel undeserving.

Here’s a list of people and things that I feel indebted to over this past year: My mum & dad, The Bhagavad-Gita, the whole genre of blues music, Austin, Texas, my friends, my boss Liz, my former coworkers at the Myrtle Beach Wal-Mart, Dr. Ray Moye and Dr. Ronald Green for always teaching me new things and opening up my eyes to a new way of looking at the world around me, Paul Olsen and Braden Pate. Braden, I didn’t only gain a kickass art director, I gained a friend, too. Paul, I hope I made you proud.

Thinking of all the people I should thank for getting me to this point in my life and career as a designer boggles my mind to a certain extent. Nevertheless I will attempt to do justice to these wonderful people. To begin with I would like to thank my fellow graphic designers and friends: Alyssa, Alecia, B.K., Josh, Krista, Leilani and especially Liz Tafaro (whose last name I will never pronounce correctly). To my close friends whom I discovered at Coastal: Kristen, Liza and Krysten, for your spirit, candor and support. To my family, mom, dad and Bryce, Will, Shelby, Matt and Will for accepting me for who I am. To Trey Ingalls, for your endless ear and love of literature and film. To Amanda Kraft, for your incredible wit and infectious passion.

I am grateful for the art department at Coastal Carolina University for showing me that I belong in this creative community. To Daryl Fazio for encouraging and inspiring me in all of my design endeavors. To Paul Olsen for guiding me through these four years and being a great advisor and friend. To Scott Mann for your preaching of conceptual thinking.

Last, but by no means least, I have to thank Stephanie, my partner in this very long crime. Your honesty and friendship has been a cornerstone in bringing this magazine where it is today and I know that next year will be no different. Show issue 26 who’s boss.
“That’s the real power of art, I think. Not to chide but to provoke challenge. Otherwise why bother?” – GREGORY MACGUIRE, WICKED

SPECIAL THANKS

The staff of Archarios would like to thank the following people, places, and things:

Professors Paul Olsen, Easton Selby, Elizabeth Keller, Jason Ockert, and Joe Oestreich.


Sam Kinon and the staff of Sheriar Press, The Office of Student Activities and Leadership, CCU Printing Services, The Art & English Departments for being supportive, and Bill Edmonds.

Everyone who submitted their artwork and literature and the Coastal community for reading this magazine. You made this publication.
EQUAL

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BE NOUN.

Pride

SAY WHAT YOU ARE &
THOSE WHO

THAT

MATTER

HOPE NEVER

ALL YOU ARE

YOU CAN WITH RESPECT &

INNOVATE.

BE NOUN.

1969 ABLE

CA

FOR COURAGE

NEVER BE

SILENCE, NOT

YOURSELF TO

ACCEPT.

AND SIGNS OF...
“Passion, it lies in all of us, sleeping, waiting, and though unwanted, unbidden, it will stir, open its jaws, and howl. It speaks to us, guides us, passion rules us all, and we obey. What other choice do we have? Passion is the source of our finest moments. The joy of love, the clarity of hatred, and the ecstasy of grief. It hurts sometimes more than we can bear. If we could live without passion maybe we’d know some kind of peace but we would be hollow, empty rooms shuttered and dank. Without passion we’d be truly dead.”

- JOSS WHEDON, BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

FINAL WORD

Looking through past issues of this magazine, the final word ended with words like "goals" and "opportunity." "Showcase," even. This magazine isn't any of those things. This magazine pays its respect to art and writing by publishing the best of the best Coastal Carolina University has to offer. This magazine is more importantly you—the reader, the artist, the writer. It becomes a different publication in every hand that holds it.

Outside of the metaphor, this is what we are: Archarios Literary Art Magazine is an award-winning publication that comes out once a year. There are two submissions week periods, one in fall and one in spring. Students, faculty, and staff members are welcome to submit up to five pieces of art and/or literature. The judging committee consists of students and select faculty members who conduct a blind judging of the art and literature. Only students who are not on staff are eligible for the best of show awards. Students who are interested in the magazine should take the one-credit class to be on staff, UNIV 200A, or check out our website, www2.coastal.edu/archarios.