

Trillium

2023

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The *Trillium* is the literary and visual arts publication of the Glenville State University Department of Language & Literature. The *Trillium* welcomes submissions and correspondence from Glenville State University students, alumni, faculty, and staff, and our extended creative community.

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Jenna Williams
Coming Up for Air

Your pale hands, like vines
curl around my ankles
dragging me, drowning me
is love not meant to be coming up for air?
You have betrayed me
tricked me into believing
that if I only inhaled
I would find air in my lungs
Instead, I am frozen
in place where you keep me,
fearful of the ice
breaking beneath me
If I just
stop
being heavy,
you say I will breathe
But what you don't know
is that I am air
and you are what has
weighed me down
So I'll let you drown me,
drag me to your depths
for even when my heart stops,
you will not have me.

Jenna Williams
sacrifice

i try to cling onto these few pieces of you
that i have left, that you didn't use
the ones you thought to give me
and i loved them, however meager and small they were
i don't know how to let them go
float away in the wind
your fog silenced my voice
quieting my need for more of you
it's my fault when i realize it isn't enough
the little bit of love i held
the small place in your heart
all the bigger pieces seem to be the best
you fertilized them with the fruit i bore,
water them with my tears,
nurture them with the love i gave
hiding them beneath my shade
when the hot summer sun beats down
i starve, i dry up, i grow cold, i burn
i suffer so they are loved
i refuel you so you are able to care for them
i wither so they bloom
i die so they live

Jonathan Minton
Strange Flowers

Every summer, my neighbor's trumpet creeper
climbs the wall to my garden.
Some call it hell vine, or the devil's shoestring,
but when it flowers, the first petals emerge
like red crescent moons cutting through green clouds.

The vine is native to West Virginia,
but "ma petite copine" calls it "fleurs insolites,"
because it reminds her of her childhood in Lille,
and the "picot" that grows under fences,
or in "terrain vague," and places
where she wasn't supposed to be.

"Picot" is nearly identical to "ortie blanche,"
the "dead nettle," distinguishable by the bloom.
The blue flower stings, but the white
can be used in balms, potions, or even soup.
When I say "flower," I pronounce it as "flour"
in my southern American drawl,
but she does not always hear the difference.
"Sometimes," she says, "I feel like
I don't know how to speak."

But every word can wither at the source,
like a fallen leaf, or break in half, the way "oui"
divides into the medieval "oil" in northern France
and "oc" in the south. In West Virginia,
the Massawomek natives might have pointed
to trumpet creeper and said "aweiyoy,"
or "beautiful flower," or called it something else
before their displacement. Eden was never the finale
of naming, but a frontier, one word translating
into another, leaving their marks like coal seams
through heaves of rock, or scars
where mountains are cleared of their trees.
It is all carried away, until something like a thistle,
armored enough to hold, calls out "yes" and "yes."

John Prisetly
Roaming Roane County

A boy of town visiting a country farm,
enjoys the rustling corn and animal charm,
stumbles on the carcass of a bloated cow
swarming with flies and maggots now:
a stench that slices like the edge of a knife,
a harsh initiation to an end of life.
O Cow, noble, gentle, and patient in stable,
the source of milk, cream, and butter at table;
what do city boys know of teats and hands
delivering such liquid bounty of land?
Let us pause, and sing the laud
Of such a gift from the sixth day of God.
When moocows die - do they go to Heaven?
wonders the frightened lad of seven,
or do they merely decay into dust
like an iron wagon wheel eaten by rust?
Far better to soothe the specter with salve,
by embracing the consoling wonder of calves.

Briar Stehman
Days Gone By

Flowers lost their shine.
Rivers run dry.
The Moon lost its glow.
Fields of green gone brown.
Mountains Razed to the ground.
And I just sit and frown...

How about a game?

Briar Stehman

Grown

One must always see, the spark that is to be.
Not a dream to know, not a mind to glow.
One is all you are, locked within a jar.
Until life is seen, and has shown it's shining beam.
And the spirit is set free, a lantern glowing brilliantly.
One has seen, and one has known.
What is now, once was grown

Briar Stehman

The Mirror

Past the Mirror in the dead of night.
Far beyond the Red One's sight.
Green flowers do abound.
Where only moonlight is to be found.

As the Grey falls over you.
A gem, glistened with the morning dew.
Hello to all who see it through.
We are here.

Just me, and you.

Jacob Dale Thompson

Honest

Constantly, words drift
They try to be subtle with their departure,
But they always fail.
You can almost tell,
When the next one
Is the big one,
You know he's going to say it.
He's going to say what you've been thinking for week's
 "It's not working out."
"I promise this isn't me dropping you."
 "I just don't have time."
And every time I just watch.
As familiar sentences become unknown,
As something so new, and lovely fades into repetition

Lloyd Bone
Farewell McRib

Farewell McRib, our last moments are very near
Our beginning was in college, a most special year
At our first moments together it became very clear
That my love for you would never die and be forever most dear

Farwell McRib, we've had so many special moments in the past
Like your saucy greatness and tangy sweetness, it will always last
Our time together has been most memorable and precious, truly a blast
But like any relationship that's unique, our treasured moments together went by way too fast

Farewell McRib, how truly I love you so
You were a most precious blessing of life that started so long ago
Here at the end I say thank you, and I truly hope you know
Even though we will soon no longer be together, my love for you will forever grow

Farewell...

Dedicated to Susan Bone

Jordan Pierson

Anima

In your dreams is an admission of yourself

You met her on the streets of your hometown
She was your age but wiser
And directed you to the canopies of the businesses
Where you could jump so high
Even into the sky
Only to be caught
As gravity forgot you
By the cold, sweet fold
Of a sea of lime green gelatin

You saw her again at fourteen
She was your age but sadder
And you found her on the floor of your bedroom
Where she held herself and cried
And you could nearly die
Because you were trapped
You were her and your own captor
Before you woke, sweaty and cold
Afraid you'd one day be a man

This anima, this haunting specter
Dreamed into your mirror
You'd look down and see her body
This time responding as your own
Her hands - palms outstretched staring at you
Her strands of raven hair curtaining your face
So instead, you'd lie awake
Secretly begging her to stay
To never go away

Jordan Pierson
Family Ties

Will they ever love me?
It's really hard to say
The person that they love
Is a convenience of the day
The way they call me "son"
With all the force of public prayer
He isn't real, this son of theirs
But they don't seem to care.

Jordan Pierson
On Former Heroes

She will shout from the rooftops the truth in blood
In bone
And she will not be alone

She will cry from the belfry the song of one who hurts
And knows
That men dealt all the blows

But her rage
Like the rage of my spiteful-tongued ancestors
Will never find its way
To those who earned it

They still have power after all
So she will use hers to crush the small

donmarkevic

When Soldiers Once Bid Farewell at Train Stations

On the platform no one smiled
except for children holding flags
and balloons, to them the day,
a birthday cake, candles burning,
a brief moment of light
flickering off the brass
of a troop transport military band.
Fathers stood stoic,
barber talc still dusting shoulders
in their hurry to remain casual
and sturdy as a mule-drawn plow.
Over the shouts of sergeants to board,
mothers called sons by names
given as the midwife placed the innocents
on chests to suckle;
on chairs swaddling waited for sleep.
Wives and sweethearts waved,
the caps and hands of boy-men,
a wheat field blown by the wind,
the train's engine steam spreading
like the dead-quiet of phosgene.
And they vanished.

In the fall of 1919, the TM&P Railroad
delivered peaches, apples, lumber,
and the body of Darl J. Larke.
They dug him up over there
from a battlefield graveyard somewhere
in France. The people of Keyser,
W.Va. stood with the family at the station
where no band played save for the music
of chisel on stone, an ugly echo,
a short furrow of pierced earth
for a dead seed, the day, an apple tree
heavy with fruit, and time to get at it.

donmarkevic
The Black Earth

They call me coon dog
because I can tell where the bodies lie
in the graves of the Great War battlefields,
the grass a vivid green like tomato worms
my Birdy taught me to squeeze
between my fingers
in her garden in North Carolina.
The first time I got all squeamish,
but she insisted many more had to die.

Today, after a rain in Saint-Mihiel, France,
we wear waders from foot to chest,
kerchiefs over our noses,
the bodies, maybe two
years in the ground, some coffined
in scraps of trench boards, lucky
the men with identification discs,
or inscribed pocket watches,
or engraved rings
to single out unrecognizable faces.

Families want their boys returned home,
so, Uncle Sam orders black boys
like coon dog, to track through sticky muck,
the sacred sodden mud preserving
stacked bodies, tossed into a hell-
for-leather pit before the enemy advanced,
arms, legs, torn off
as we exhume with bare-hand force.

Grave registration cards record stuff
like rank, serial numbers, cause of death,
kinfolk, location of first burial, "isolated,"
the word, "negro," penned above first names
of black soldiers, although when we pull out
bodies from the earth, we find
neither gods nor giants.
They are all black.

donnarkevic
Prodigal Daughter

The girl asked nothing from me,
just left, hitching I suppose,
my car still in the garage,
my wallet untouched.
She looks just like her mother,
relatives say when they learn.

When I search her room, I find her
childhood like a gray cat asleep
on the window sill, legs jutting,
fear switched off like a tightrope walker.

At the police station I wait
to report her loss and stare
at green plaster walls,
pictures of other children
lost ahead of her.
An officer asks for a photo.

On the way home, now a house,
I stop at the cemetery to weed
around the gray granite stone
where her mother rests,
a mother who sang songs like Doris Day,
shared the sacred secret of a girl's period,
eked out a teen's laughter
without a word like Chaplin.

∞

In a home again, I am needless
of a car or a wallet,
the window sill dusty, a snapshot
of an ageless daughter
stuck at seventeen, an odd number,

the title of a magazine in a waiting room,
the number of syllables in a haiku.

yet a long way off
a kid I might make merry
I am perishing

Michael Lee Johnson
Deep in my Couch

Deep in my couch
of magnetic dust,
I am a bearded old man.
I pull out my last bundle
of memories beneath
my pillow for review.
What is left, old man,
cry solo in the dark.
Here is a small treasure chest
of crude diamonds, a glimpse
of white gold, charcoal,
fingers dipped in black tar.
I am a temple of worship with trinket dreams,
a tea kettle whistling ex-lovers boiling inside.
At dawn, shove them under, let me work.
We are all passengers traveling
on that train of the past—
senses, sins, errors, or omissions
deep in that couch.

Michael Lee Johnson
Nightlife Jungle Beat, Bar Next Door

Like all thing's life changes, its melodies fragment.
It breaks pieces apart, then they drift, then shatter.
The singers of songs love bars,
naked bodies, consistencies, and inconsistencies
that makes it burn all turn outright at night.
They like to drum repeat rhythms and sounds.
Poets like to retreat to dens
of pleasure just like these.
Sing poets sing off-key
free verse notes down by the bridge,
near the river as far as their voices
will carry them away.
It is the nature of difference,
indifference a vocabulary of us confused,
minds between insanity and genius.
The hermit asks for
a public forum in shyness,
while treading to the bar
next door for a shot of tequila
no money, no life.

Elijah Davis
Untitled

Between these floorboards lies my lens
Every second an act, each longer than the last
The symphony crashes with every creak
The silence only foreshadowing the sound
Each day, each month, each decade
My bones makes no sound, my muscles make no movement
I am no actor, nor narrator
The dust falls in applause

Faith Hardman

A Series of Notecards: Push

I push people away...I know I do.

I push so that it hurts less when they leave.
That way it's my (illusion of) choice.

I push so I don't get pushed.

I push hoping that they'll pull, but they just leave.
Which I guess is what I wanted?

I can't blame them.

They don't know I don't want them to leave.
They aren't mind readers.

It doesn't hurt less.

Faith Hardman
A Series of Notecards: Old Friends

We used to laugh,
But now we cry.

We used to never say goodbye,
But when did we last say hi?

I should be happy for you.
You have a family now.

Why do I just feel left out?
Excluded?

I thought we were friends forever,
And we were until he showed up.

You fell head over heels,
And didn't pause to look back.

I do hope you are happy,
But I also hope you miss me.

Is that selfish?
Then let me be selfish.

Faith Hardman

A Series of Notecards: Self-Worth

I think people confuse self-worth and self-esteem.

I could be here thinking that I am the prettiest person on the planet,
but still think I am worth nothing.

If I sat here and told you that I don't deserve you-
or love-

or friends-

that is self-worth at its lowest.

And maybe it took me hitting that point to see the difference.

D.G.

Imposter

I look in the mirror,
I see something that is not me or her.
I am disconnected entirely
as if I could reach through and touch her,
not feeling a thing.
Yet, I am all of these things.
Broken apart,
yet molded together.
A stranger in my body,
but a friend within my soul.
I am more than evermore.
Not that she was less before,
but merely that I have grown.

Cassie Hyre
Comfort Zone

I've been stuck. Stuck in a comfortable rut. A vicious cycle of self-sabotage and deprecation. I let my past define who I was, ready to tell the world "I am this way because..." when I should've been focused on getting better. I was allowing my brain to get in the way of happiness, shoving everyone who showed me a tinge of love to the back burner. I told them I wasn't ready for love, I was too hurt by the ones before. I was lost in the torment of my own mind, focused in on the fog. I never felt alive, I was surviving and that's it. I went through life hanging on to things that wouldn't survive the ride. The grand scheme would've crushed them under the weight of fate.

Until
I
met
you.

The fog is slowly starting to clear; I can see the light again. I find life in everything. Music sounds different, I don't care about the words and just listen for the fun of it. Fun. I have fun again. It feels like the summer of '08 again when everything felt free. I feel free. The birds are singing again. It's like you held the key to who I really am. You let me out of the cell. My mind was a prison, the fences were too high to see my future. Covered in electric barbed wire. I never wanted to get close. I now see that the outlet was right there in front of me, I could've unplugged it at any time. I am starting to feel myself again, I can probably never repay you, but you remind me everyday that a comfort zone isn't a healthy place to stay all the time. If you're comfortable, you aren't getting better.

Even though your eyes have not yet opened, and your attention has not yet awoken, you can feel his body move.

His arms that were once, perfectly, set across your chest are now pulling the soft, pillowy blankets to the floor.

You refuse to open your eyes, but you shift your body towards him and prepare to speak, just to hear him say “I’m sorry love, I didn’t mean to wake you.”

With your eyes still closed, the only thing you can consider is how delicately he spoke.

His words softer than satin and lace themselves.

Before you can respond, before you can speak, you feel his lips caress the top of your head.

You can once again smell his sweet, rich cologne, amber and cedar.

With your eyes *still* closed, you reach to him, asking a simple question.

“One last kiss before you go?”

Your voice, not quite as soft or as delicate as his, but almost as comforting.

Without hesitation, you feel his lips against yours, soft and subtle.

You raise your arms around his neck, pulling him closer.

You feel his blonde hair tangled in your fingers; you open your eyes.

You see the ceiling, the blankets, and your pillows beside you.

He’s not there, He’s not real.

Sam Edsall
Writing and Lighting

With a Bic pen
One creates
With a Bic lighter
One destroys
Write a poem
Burn a lung
Draw a picture
Commit arson
Sign your name
Sell your soul
Light a candle
Pray to the Lord
And on and on it goes
Little bit of rock, little bit of roll
Yin...
...Yang

Deron Haught
Being Understood

Being understood is overrated
So I once said
And getting everything you want
Is oft times misled
By the things we think we want
That get tangled up in our heads
And we end back where we started
Hangin' on by the same threads

Being understood is overrated
So please don't waste your time
Pissing in the wind
Looking for words that can never rhyme
Looking for that secret spell
To undo the fatal crime
Being understood is overrated
From Dodgers Stadium all the way to Anaheim

Being understood is overrated
But who am I to say
As we careen so gently
Off this lost highway
And collide with forces beyond our control
Being understood is overrated
Or so I've been told

Being understood is overrated
At the end of the day
As the snow is falling
And the city turns gray
And the subway is howling
With the demons at play
Being understood is overrated
From Brooklyn west out to Broadway

Zoe Yates
(For Helen)

The river is made of sadness.
The fish are flying up and the birds are flying down, and they are all saying her name,
Sadly or with a smile, it is all the same.
The sharp tang of booze, the smell of damp and the shining river.
The slap slap of water on boatside tickles the skin, kisses your cheek, offers a hug.
Somewhere, somewhen,
Mamaw is sitting on a boat, she's getting some sun in Sciotoville, or having a drink
In Titusville,
She's making these places her own,
But the river has dried up now,
And there is no water left.
There's a bar in my head and I've never visited it,
But it's wood and linoleum, the smell of oranges and bad speakers.
The river dried up because of the oranges,
Because of the lack of oranges, because
The thick mud of memory is clogging up the pipes, is all over your hands, unwashable.
You want something no person could do? Fine, this is my world now:
The river runs again, in the opposite direction, and my grandmother comes back to life
To talk to me, to tell me what I want to know,
All the things I didn't know how to ask, that I thought I might have the time to figure out.
She calls me zo-bug even though she never did, she's making the name someone else gave me her
own.
One day the river will have to run again,
Even if there are no boats in it,
Even if the water is dry,
And then it will talk to me and we'll cover the ground I never tread upon.

Nicole Bailey
Best by 8-23-22

I belong to the eggs left on the shelf,
past the best by date,
no one will take me home.

The “best years” are behind me.
My youth has been spent,
What is my value now?

Men won’t look as I walk by
drawn in by my youth,
it won’t feel illicit to stare, to touch.

Women will no longer,
be jealous of the way I frown,
without the worry of lines.

Old enough to know better,
my naivety won’t protect me,
society will cast me out.

Older People laughed,
“I’d give anything to be twenty again”,
but they don’t understand
I’m getting closer and closer to them.

Adlai Chapman

Dystopia

Five pushed open the rusty metal door that his tracker had led him to discover. The room was silent except for the drips of the water above. He walked in and waved the tracker around, waiting for the loud beeping that would alert him of his bounty.

After a few moments, the tracker metallicly shrieked and the light at the end blinked a dim red luminescence. Five followed it to a large, aluminum box submerged in water. He pulled the box out and opened it, peering inside. As he hoped, there were treasures inside. He pulled out an old engine, seven energy cells, and the most important part: packets of food.

He shoved the commodities into his pack and scrambled back out the door. He climbed onto his speeder and shot off through the marshes, away from the structure that the mayor had sent him to search. Eventually, he arrived at The City. The City was the only large settlement left after the apocalypse, and it stuck straight up into the sky.

Five rode in through the gates. He did not see many of the polluted humans on the street. He parked his speeder at the mechanical palace and walked up the concrete stairs, into the grand hall. The mayor's machine-throne pulsed with an eerie green light on the other side of the room.

"Five!" the mayor called across the hall. "I hope you have the valuables."

"Yes, mayor," Five replied.

The mayor was a thin man with most of his corporeal form staying, as opposed to Five, who was more machine than human. Five pushed his wide brimmed hat over his face and tossed the satchel of materials onto the floor. The mayor's mechanical guards whirred over to the bag and inspected the items. They nodded and carried the container into the mayor's quarters.

"Compensation will arrive later," the mayor said.

That night, Five sat in his shelter just outside The City. It was fashioned from wreckage he had found over the artificial one-hundred and twenty-two years of his life. He looked out the window at the black, polluted air before a crash distracted him.

He pushed open the door and saw one of the polluted humans from the town. Strangely, this one was no longer... moving. It got stranger. One of the mayor's automaton guards walked up to the once human and dragged it away. Five decided to follow it, and when it was out of earshot he stepped out.

He pursued the robot into The City and down a tunnel below the palace. There he saw a few more mutated humans. The recently escaped one was tossed into a rusty metal cylinder. That was when Five noticed clear tubes leading up the walls into a machine. They filled with glowing liquid from the human. The same glow that emanated from the mayor's throne.

Five was the mayor's bounty hunter for a reason, and he was intelligent enough to see what was happening. The mayor had been using the townspeople's lives to live longer. It was no mystery how the mayor been alive longer than Five.

Then a black mist swept out of the machine as the human fell out, frozen solid, the same color as pollution. The mist touched the other humans, and they began to mutate. Five turned away, shielding his face with his hat; he didn't need to see more.

He stalked back out of the dungeon and up to the mayor's grand hall. As expected, the mayor sat on his throne at the end, and the green glow of the humans' life force lit the room.

"Five," the mayor said. "What brings you here at this—"

"I know what you've done," Five replied. "The machine."

The mayor's expression soured, and his guards crept towards Five. Five ducked as one swung, but the other grabbed the breathing apparatus on Five's back and crushed it. The mayor hissed out a laugh as Five plunged to the ground, struggling to breathe.

Five crawled toward the throne.

"You've gone soft in your old age, haven't you," the mayor said. "I should have just made you another robot when I found you all those years ago."

Five quickly leapt forward and struck the mayor's machine with his mechanical arms. The mayor coughed and he stumbled from the throne.

"So, what if I use them to stay alive?" he rasped at Five. "So, what if the mutations make the harvest better? They are barely even human anymore!"

Five tore the machine from the throne, sending the mayor toppling over. Mist, like the humans' souls, expanded over the area, clouding around the mayor. When Five could see again, the mayor had disappeared.

Five quickly fled to his speeder and rode off into the marshes, never to return to The City.

Melissa Gish

After the Storm, August 1985

Just over the hill beyond the narrow dirt road that cuts down the middle of the Haftschmidt farm, a massive dark cloud rolled away toward the horizon. The crows returned from some unseen sanctuary and lined the barbed wire along the cattle pasture. Some took up a creaking conversation. Others lowered their heads to preen, brushing away the remnants of rain and whirling dirt. Rocky Haftschmidt stepped out of his truck and saluted, squinting to magnify the details of the vanishing cloud's gray velvet coat. Tension drained from his body. He remembered the spring of '78, when the whirling wind shattered his family's brick silo, toppled a corner of the barn with 33 jerseys moaning inside, and dropped the Allis-Chalmer in a pond a quarter mile away. He was just 13 years old then, but that storm and the cleanup afterwards had made him feel older than his father. He still wakes from restless dreams with the stench of gasoline and burning cattle in his nostrils. This time they were lucky. No downed buildings—only some downed trees and branches strewn about.

He climbed back into his truck and turned the key. The engine roared to life, and the crows exploded off the fence like burnt paper in the wind. He took the dirt road to the unpainted pavement leading to Montdovor. Another mile, and then he cruised slowly through the village, surveying the damage: a tree uprooted at the Clemons' place, rowboats and kayaks strewn about at Evvy's tavern and along the boat ramp, a few of the plastic kayaks drifting in the lake, and fallen branches everywhere. Rocky eased around the corner past his sister's garden center. As he had expected, the pole structures lay scattered, and shredded plastic covered the yard, twisted around shrubs and tangled in trees. Lori was fine; she'd called Rocky as soon as the storm passed. He didn't see her outside at the moment and decided he'd stop on his way back. He drove a bit further and then swung a left into the cemetery drive. The black, iron gate slumped to one side. A tree limb had fallen onto the fence, snapping off one of the gate hinges. Rocky parked his truck and climbed out. The sour, algaic air brought moisture to his eyes and stung his nose.

In the cemetery, Rocky headed for the baby's grave, hoping the new stone—a white pillar topped with a carved lamb—would still be standing. He saw the old woman walking close to the fence. Tall, thin, spindly-armed and wild-white-haired, she looked like a ghost searching for her own name among the stones. She saw Rocky, too. For a moment, they locked eyes across the Hartwigs and the Grieps. The old woman was making her way to a gray, oblong gravestone—one that Rocky knew she visited every Saturday morning. He knew this because he cut the grass on the weekends. Her name was Alice Liljander, but everyone called her Miss Alice. Everyone knew her story—part of it anyway. Two brothers. Jealousy. Death. And maybe murder—that last part, no one knew for sure. Miss Alice never married.

A basket of roses made from folded and twisted paper hung in the crook of Miss Alice's spindleshank elbow. She turned away from Rocky and returned to her wandering. She didn't speak or gesture, which

relieved Rocky because he thought her arm might fall off if she tried to raise it. The top half of a young white pine had dropped twenty feet to Miss Alice's right, across all of the Maguires and half of the Reomhildts. Rocky weaved his way through scattered branches, occasionally glancing at Miss Alice as she drifted along, shifting the basket of paper roses from one arm to the other and then back again. She reached the shattered white pine—a six-foot column jutting from the earth, its splintered trunk looking like a giant version of Miss Alice's arthritic hand. Rocky followed a path to where the gardener's shed once stood. It lay in pieces along the fence line all the way from the Kubats to the Sladeks. Rocky noted that one of the carved angels on Aunt Lillie's stone was missing a wing. It must have been struck by flying debris. Then Rocky made a right and began moving between the rows of Malinskis and Kaiserschatts. He glanced over again at Miss Alice, who was down on her knees, clearing twigs and leaves and, cripes, even a dead fish from the old man's grave. She glanced up at Rocky, caught his eye for an instant, and then returned to her work. Rocky stepped over somebody's bicycle wheel and around a potted shrub rose, which he recognized, with its red blossoms and price tag, from his sister's garden center.

A long time ago, Rocky had seen the photograph of Miss Alice that the old man had kept on the dresser in his bedroom. Her fifteen-year-old face looked flawless, a hint of subdued wit visible in the slight upward curve of her slender lips. But there was a darkness behind her eyes that had made Rocky consider how things must have been for her back then. Miss Alice had always lived in her family's home on Fox Lake just beyond the cemetery. She had long made her way by doing sewing and upholstery, making prom dresses and wedding gowns, giving new life to old recliners and sofas; she also kept bees and hens, selling honey and eggs. She never went to church, but nobody cared about that.

Rocky found the baby's grave. The white stone stood upright in the ground, the carved lamb unharmed. But a leather glove, dark with dirt, was pasted against the lamb's body. Rocky peeled it away. He flung it like a frisbee over the fence and into the underbrush beyond. He stooped to examine the stone. Like tiny birds' nests built into the side of a mountain, bits of grass and leaves protruded and hung from each chiseled letter and number on the baby's stone. He knelt down and began spooning away the debris with his fingernail.

Though the rain had stopped quite a while ago, the smell of dust and churned lake persisted, burning in Rocky's nostrils. Rocky glanced up to see Miss Alice still at work by the old man's grave. She lifted the paper roses from her basket, one by one, and set them on top of the stone, arranging them neatly. It had been more than three years since the old man died, and Rocky missed him. He missed the fishing and the hunting, the stories and the advice, the arguments over pfeffer games, and the taste of homemade crabapple wine. Miss Alice stood up and began walking toward Rocky now. He kept his head down, focusing on the headstone. He never knew what to say to Miss Alice. When he finally looked up, the old woman was walking away, gliding around the gravestones and broken branches like a wraith, heading toward the gate that hung crooked from its broken hinge. When Rocky turned back

to the stone, he found one of Miss Alice's paper roses lying beside the lamb on the baby's stone. Rocky took the rose in both hands and sat back cross-legged on the wet grass. He uncurled the paper. Reader's Digest page 34. He read a few lines: a story about a man who was buried under an avalanche and lived to tell about it.

Alyssa Brookman

A Conversation Between Lovers

“Are you okay?” He asked me after a while of us sitting in silence. I had to resist the urge to roll my eyes at him. He was only trying to help; I just had to remind myself of that.

“Do you really want me to answer that question?” I asked him. Hoping that my biting and sarcastic tone was enough to get him to shut up and forget about it. Luck did not seem to be on my side lately.

“Yes, I do.” He told me. “And you can’t just ignore this forever, Alex.” He said. “You have to talk to me.” And that was the last thing that I wanted to do. Doesn’t he get it? I just want to be left alone right now. I don’t want to talk. I don’t want to socialize or think. Half the time, I don’t even want to be alive anymore now. I just want this to stop.

“Yes, I can,” I told him. “I don’t have to talk about anything I don’t want to,” I said. “That’s what you promised me when we got together.” I reminded him. “Did you not mean that then, Logan?” I asked him.

Logan didn’t say anything to me for a couple of moments. And even though it left a sour taste in my mouth, I knew that would probably get him to leave me alone. I know that he was only doing this out of love, but I couldn’t do this right now.

I was so lost in my thoughts spiral that I wasn’t paying attention to my surroundings. So I was stunned when a pair of arms wrapped around me from behind, and a chin was rested on my shoulder. And I immediately knew who they both belonged to.

“What are you doing here, Logan?” I asked him. Why couldn’t he just leave me alone? Why? I just wanted to be left alone. Was that too much to ask?

“I’m here because I love you, and how you feel matters to me,” Logan said as he shifted behind me to sit. He practically picked me up and then placed me on his lap so that both of us could sit at the bay window seat. I couldn’t help but relax into the hold. Even though I was still pissed at him, I couldn’t help but feel safe in those arms.

“I didn’t lie to you when I said that,” Logan said after a while. “But I can tell how bad you’re hurting now, Alex.” He said. “And it’s killing me.” He admitted. “I just want you to know that you can talk to me about whatever and that I won’t judge you for it.” He said. “I love you.”

I had to close my eyes at this to keep the tears at bay. God, that hit me right in my heart. Sometimes I still wonder how I managed to land someone as kind and loving as Logan. And here I go and treat him like crap. God, I'm such an awful person.

"Alex?" He asks me softly, and I know I have to say something. "I love you," I tell him as I open my eyes. And I turn around to look him in the eyes. And I just saw those warm emerald green colors that I love so much. "I'm sorry," I tell him softly.

Veronica Rowse
Birds Flying Free

Linda didn't notice that the world had stopped again until she tried to print out her paper.

Professor Nasserri had given her an extension on her research paper, thank the stars above, and so she was hopped up on Clang! energy drink and her fingertips were practically bleeding at the speed she was typing. With a definitive and overeager CLACK, she fixed her last spelling mistake and hit the print button.

Focused entirely on getting the warm sheets of paper that would save her grade, Linda walked without seeing much. However, when the darn thing didn't even make a rumbly, concerned noise that meant the paper was jammed, she frowned. Casting her vision around for a librarian, only then did she see the issue: everything was frozen, except for her. And the bird statues on display, of course.

"Aghhhhh!" she groaned. "Not again!"

The poor things were screeching. Wood was clanking desperately against the glass shelves, the birds flapping and trying to get unstuck from the bases so expertly carved to be supports for their feet. She ran to grab her tool set.

The first glass cabinet was locked, and she took out her hammer and tapped at it until decent-sized cracks formed. She then slipped on her gloves and carefully took out each piece, occasionally still getting little chunks scattered across the floor. However, almost none fell towards the birds. "It's a shame. The dude who carved you guys," she looked at the placard slightly above her head, "Claude Kemper, he did a great job. I'm going to miss seeing y'all."

They screeched even louder, uncaring. Birds can't see glass, but they could certainly see the large human looming over them while they were trapped.

"Ho-kaaay," Linda breathed, caffeine drop looming. She counted - over sixty little birds - and wilted. "I just have to cut all your little feet out of the bases and not cut your little toes. Yeah, I can totally do this."

After tapping the glass free on the second and third cabinets so the little guys would have enough oxygen, she got out her knife, and picked up the first statue-turned-birds. The little nuthatches had switched to alternating between screaming and pecking her fingers, which made the process of cutting their feet free extremely hard. But after a while both seemed to get exhausted, and fell into a state of quiet terror. Linda frowned again, but continued her work. "I'm sorry little guys. You'll be free soon." The nuthatches didn't care for her assurances.

She left the first pair of still-wooden feet connected by a piece of wood too thick to be called a splinter but too thin to be called a chip. "Trust me bud, you don't want to be pulling your leftover foot around just because you're half-free. I wouldn't be able to get you outside even if you did get free yourself."

She shuddered, nearly cutting off a toe on the second nuthatch. “Whoops! Sorry. Yooou,” she emphasized, “my friend, do not want to pull your leg clean off either, trust me. Had to cut a toucan out of a painting once, I was just a mite too slow. He flew off, dripping paint and actual blood all over the place until he winked out of existence. The foreign ones do that, you know. Wherever he ended up - probably Central America? I hope he’s okay. It’s not as bad as losing a wing for you guys, but I can’t imagine it was easy to survive like that.”

She finished cutting the second foot nearly loose, and carried the bird outside to the library lawn, the damp March sun doing its best to warm the scatterings of drowned wildflowers. “Especially when you guys become real. It’s amazing, when I can do it right.”

Placing the stand on the picnic table out back, she dramatically whipped out her knife and cut the last bits of wood off the feet of the nuthatches.

She watched as they shivered their feathers fully into existence, a sheen and variance of color spreading over their bodies as they became real.

As thanks, one of them nearly crapped on her gloves. “Oh, you,” she said with a faux-coquettish tone. “You sure know how to thank a girl.” Still, she smiled as they took flight towards the wild hill behind the library.

“A hundred-odd feet to go! Yayyy,” she whined. But still, Linda got back to her work.

—

A hundred and thirty-four feet later, she stared exhaustedly at the owl she had left for last. “What am I supposed to do with you? It’s daytime. And you don’t look like the kind that goes out during the day sometimes.”

It hooted irritably at her, flapping its wooden wings, clearly exhausted.

“Yeah, I don’t know either! I only have five minutes after I cut you free to get out of here - I cleaned up the glass but still, this looks like theft - but, but, oh, I don’t know. I’ll just put you in my car and run to the town library to print my paper out. Then I just have to turn it into the prof, and ... I don’t know. Let’s figure it out later.

This time, it let out a real screech.

“Yeah, whatever.” She sacrificed her sweatshirt to wrap it around the little owl, keeping it secure and unable to escape, and cut the feet free. It immediately grew to its natural size, nearly causing Linda to drop it. Then she high-tailed it to her car.

Sound rushed back into existence three minutes later, nearly scaring Linda out of her wits.

After she turned in her paper, she drove out to Cedar Creek State Park, the little owl tucked in a warm, dark box, and took a nap, finally crashing from all the caffeine. She woke up just as the world turned blue with the evening light.

Carefully, she unwrapped the little bird, but still used her sweatshirt to place him on the table. “I’m a little sad I didn’t watch you become real, but I felt bad for having to keep you cooped up like that. So I figured I’d take you somewhere where you can really roam.”

The owl blinked blearily for a while, shrugged, and turned its head to watch her for a moment. “Hoo,” it said solemnly.

“Indeed,” she agreed.

And with that, it flapped off.

—

Linda studiously avoided the Robert F. Kidd Library while investigations were under way. “I just feel so bad, Bibi Shell,” she told her Bibi one April night. “They were really works of art, and everyone liked them.”

“Oh, I used to feel that way with the whales. But someone has to do it! ‘Otherwise, time won’t start again’, as your grandad used to say.” They said.

“Yeah, I suppose. Thanks, Bibi.”

—

The day after finals, Linda took a walk by the library. The sun was shining, the bees were buzzing, and she was exhausted. But somehow, despite her eyes feeling like they were bathed in sand, she spotted something wonderful.

She saw a nuthatch fly into a nest, noisy with the tell-tale peeps of ravenous chicks.

Marjorie Stewart
Blue on Blue



Sarah Normant-West
Halloween at the Robey in the Night



Sarah Normant-West
Wood Duck Mama, Papa, and Babies



Sarah Normant-West
In His Eyes







Gordon West
The Prisoner's Open Credits



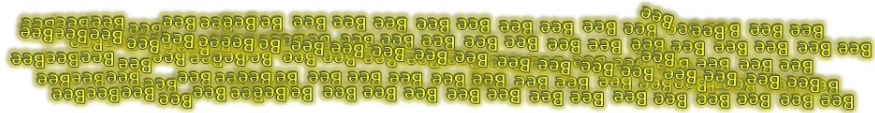
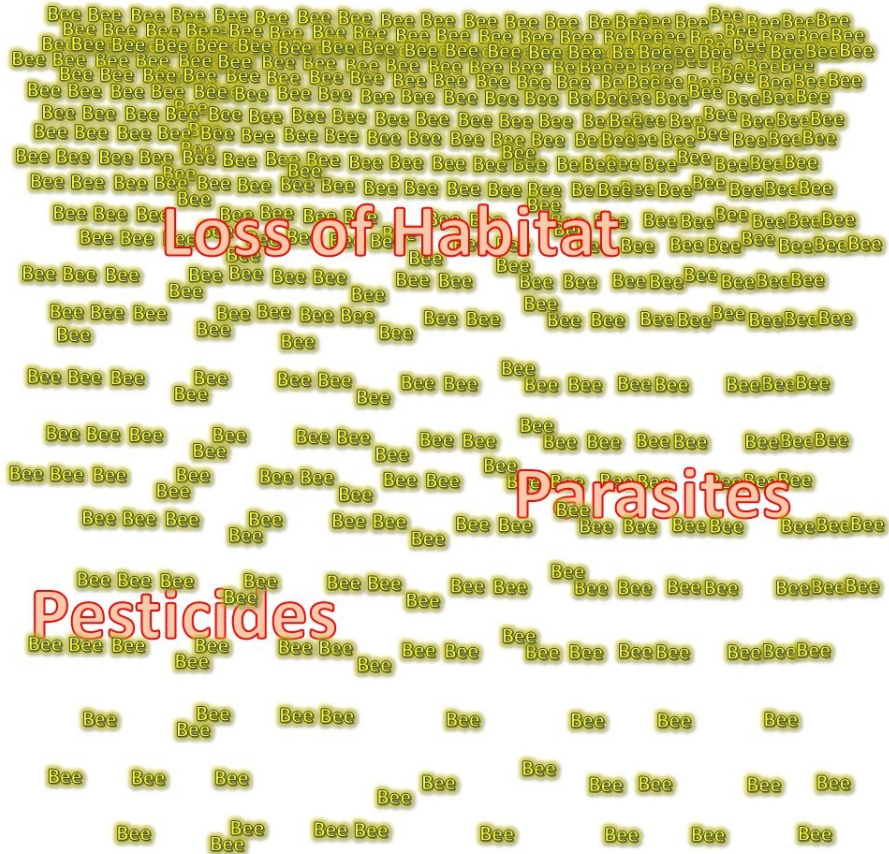
Gordon West
Ship Rock, New Mexico



Gordon West
Cityscape



Mark Sarver
Bee Aware



*Thanks for reminding me,
I don't belong here...*



Nikolas

Dravin Gibson
Claustrophobia



D. 1

Dravin Gibson
Dreamscape #9 - Out of Time



Charlie Adams
Triceratops



Zachary Sumpter
Cigarette Butts in an Ashtray



Megan Drenk
Nature's Flight



Sara Sawyer
Feed Me



Sara Sawyer
Rain



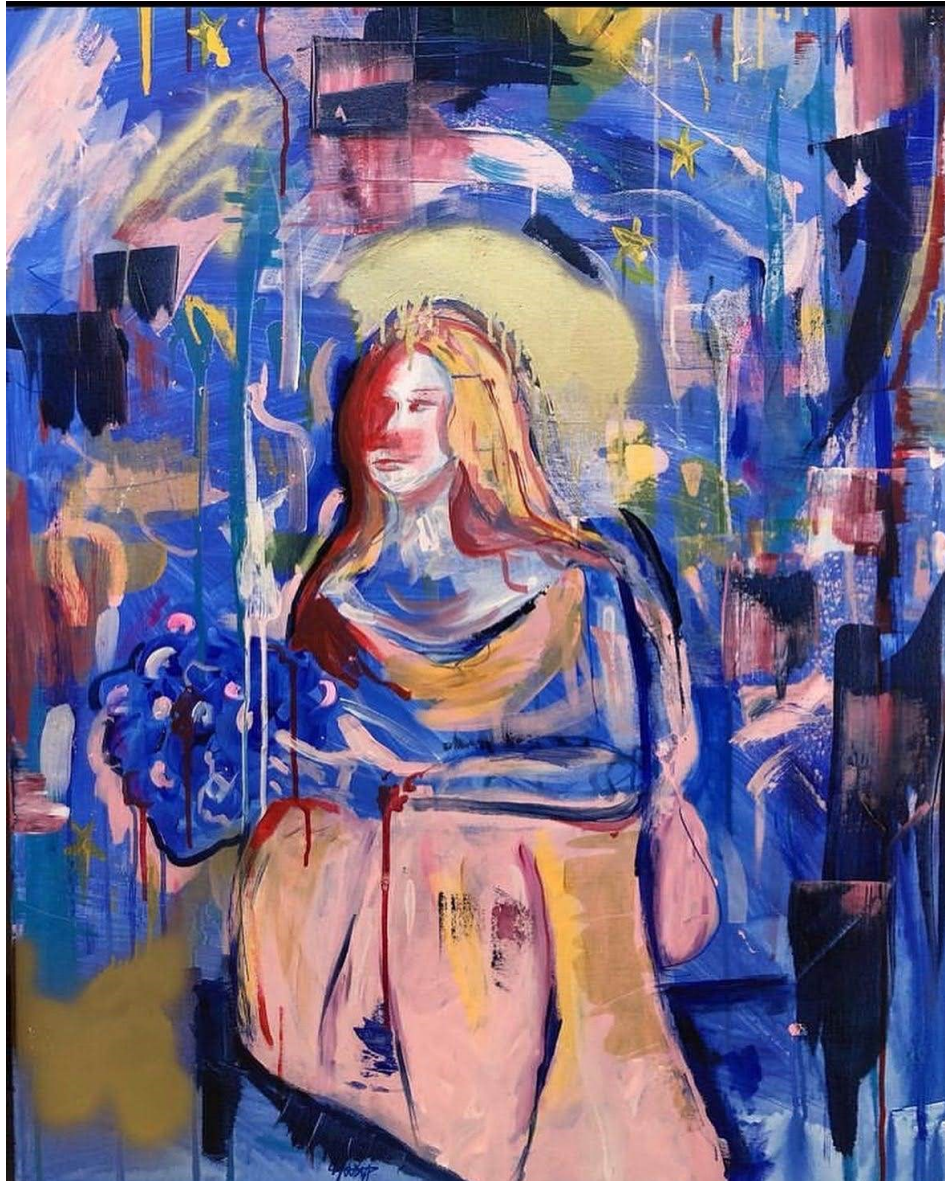
Sara Sawyer
Window to the Present



Zoe Yates
Find You



Zoe Yates
Prom Queen Forever



Kylie Davis
Gripping Onto Door



Kylie Davis
Curled



Kylie Davis
Look Behind You



Contributors' Notes

Adlai Chapman lives in Gilmer County, WV.

Elijah Davis is a sophomore at Glenville State University studying Behavioral Science. He is originally from Cincinnati, Ohio and has lived around Northwest Ohio and Indianapolis before moving to West Virginia in 2012. He is also currently in the Boxing club and a member of Sigma Omega Beta.

Kylie Davis is an art major who specializes in creative photography at Glenville State University

donnarkevic is from Buckhannon, WV. He has an MFA from National University. His current work appears/will appear in *Agape*, *New Verse News*, *Bindweed*, and *Book of Matches*. In 2022, Main Street Rag published a novella of poetry entitled, *After the Lynching*.

Megan Drenk is a California born and raised artist who recently moved to West Virginia. This beautiful state has inspired her artwork with its amazing mushrooms, moss, and wildlife.

John Samson “Sam” Edsall is a graduate of GSU. He creates music under the pseudonym “The Noir Troubadour.”

Melissa Gish is an associate professor of English at GSU. She has authored numerous educational books for young readers; she currently serves on the editorial staff of *Aji* magazine and edits the Department of Language & Literature's biweekly newsletter *News That Stays News*.

Faith Hardman from Glenville State University in May 2022 with a Criminal Justice degree. The following semester she returned to further her education with an Accounting degree. She grew up in Tanner and Sand Fork.

Cassie Hyre is a senior Music Education major. She is from Braxton County, and has been writing for about 6 years now. She loves slam poetry, and one day wants to create her own poetry book.

Michael Lee Johnson lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era. Today he is a poet in the greater Chicagoland area, IL. He is editor-in-chief of 3 poetry anthologies, all available on Amazon, and has several poetry books and chapbooks. He has over 536 published poems. He is a member of the Illinois State Poetry Society

Jonathan Minton is a Professor of English at Glenville State University. His books include *Letters* (Moria Books, 2022), *Technical Notes for Bird Government* (Telemetry Press, 2018), *In Gesture* (Dyad Press, 2009), and *Lost Languages* (Long Leaf Press, 1999). He edits the literary journal *Word*

For/Word (wordforword.info), and is the faculty advisor for the *Trillium*. After he retires, he plans to walk the earth, like Caine from *Kung Fu*.

Sarah Normant-West is a GSU Alumni that earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Studio Art in December 2013. She enjoys painting, drawing, collecting oddities, and volunteering on community projects. You can find more of her artwork on her webpage at www.sarahnormant.com.

Jordan Pierson is a recent Glenville graduate with a Bachelor's in Music Performance, and is from Huntington, WV.

John Charles (Chuck) Priestley II was born and resides in South Charleston, West Virginia where he is an avid reader, Oriental food aficionado, oenophile, gardener, and Tai Chi novice. He began writing poetry as off-duty entertainment while stationed on Hawaii. He is published in *Torrid Literature Journal*, *The Trillium*, *Pennsylvania Review*, and others. He holds a Master of Arts, English degree from Marshall University

Veronica Rowse is a Math Education major who loves writing fantasy on the side. She often dreams of stopping time, though it's usually about having more time to finish assignments, not turning pieces of art into real animals.

Nikolas Rucker is a chemistry major from north central West Virginia.

Briar Stehman lives in Calhoun County WV, and spent most of his early life homeschooled.

Marjorie Stewart, known as Max in social media and art circles, teaches English and journalism at Glenville State University. She is a professor, a poet, a playwright, and a painter who enjoys dangling participles and mixing metaphors in her spare time.

Gordon West resides in Normantown, WV. He enjoys music, comic books and is inspired by Van Gogh's artwork.

Zoe Yates was the art editor of the 2022 issue of the *Trillium*.

Trillium (Issue 44, Spring 2023): Jenna Williams, Jonathan Minton, John Prisetly, Briar Stehman, Jacob Dale Thompson, Lloyd Bone, Jordan Pierson, donnarkevic, Michael Lee Johnson, Elijah Davis, Faith Hardman, D.G., Cassie Hyre, Jacob Dale Thompson, Sam Edsall, Deron Haught, Jakob Payne, Zoe Yates, Adlai Chapman, Melissa Gish, Alyssa Brookman, Veronica Rowse, Marjorie Stewart, Sarah Normant-West, Jesse Kargol, Gordon West, Mark Sarver, Nikolas Rucker, Dravin Gibson, Charlie Adams, Zachary Sumpter, Megan Drenk, Sara Sawyer, Zoe Yates, Kylie Davis. *The Trillium* is the literary and visual arts publication of Glenville State University.