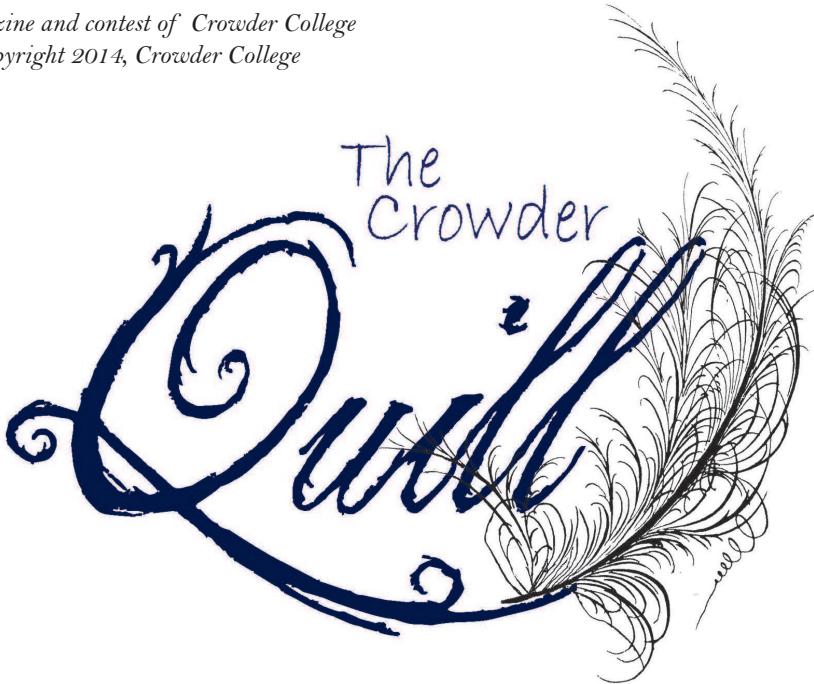


# VOLUME 34 | SPRING 2014

*The literary-art magazine and contest of Crowder College  
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# THE CROWDER QUILL



## MISSION STATEMENT

The Crowder Quill is a literary-art magazine published by the Magazine Production class at Crowder College in order to encourage and showcase the creative abilities of local writers, artists, and photographers, as well as to provide a cultural link between Crowder College and our surrounding communities

The publication is funded through Crowder College as an educational tool and service to the community. Both the contest and publication are free.

The Crowder Quill is published each spring semester. The contest deadline is Feb. 1 each year.



## CONTACT

To request more information about the contest, acquire an entry form or to be placed on the mailing list, please contact the Crowder Quill:  
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## Mexican Village

Tori Murray | Neosho High School | Honorable Mention | 3D Art

*This feather was for my quill pen, and I thought it needed to be more colorful. I am a self-taught painter in everything that I paint. Acrylic*



# The Pen

Ann Jernigan  
Joplin  
Community  
Gold  
Poetry

Click in	Thoughts
Click out	Cascading
Like a tocking timepiece	Thoughts
A black bead comes	Grasping today
Pushing	... yesterday
Through oblivion to now	... tomorrow
Ready to flow	I write
Tentative	

*This poem began as a demonstration of how you can get writing ideas from anywhere. I picked up a pen from the table and began to show my thought process and write. Words can just come from the tiniest bit of inspiration when you didn't even know you had them inside you.*

# On the Morals and Life of Jesse James

In the mid-1800s,  
A baptist was born.  
Though his life he did blunder,  
O'er his motives, we're torn.

Jesse James was his name  
And he murdered and robbed.  
Though for this he gained fame,  
He caused many to sob.

In the late civil war  
Jesse James fought the Yanks  
And began his career  
By torturing their ranks.

The first bank James stole from  
Was in northwest Missouri.  
The cashier he shot some  
And left in a hurry.

Jesse James joined Cole Younger  
In heists east and west.  
Their range grew yet longer  
From stagecoaches to fests.

He'd robbed banks and robbed trains  
Before killed in his house  
By his very own gang,  
With a great lack of prowess.

At age thirty four  
James was shot in the head  
By a man called Bob Ford  
With a bullet of lead.

Bob caused an outrage  
Magnified by a pardon  
For killing J. James,  
A criminal hardened.

*I wrote this poem partly as a set of thoughts on his morals, but mostly as a history of his life.*

What drove James to act this way?  
Perform atrocities?  
Intense love for the South, some say  
or perhaps 'twas just greed.

Josiah Reitz  
Neosho  
Community  
Honorable Mention  
Poetry



## The Hunter

Casey Stueber  
Neosho  
Community  
Silver  
3D Art

*The Hunter* is a figurative sculpture that is conceptually based on the study of interpersonal relationships. This sculpture visually represents deception through implied narrative. Hand-built ceramic.

# “Suffer the Little Children” Doesn’t Mean “Make Them Suffer”

Cynthia Middaugh  
Lamar  
Community  
Silver  
Nonfiction

*The tragic cycle of child abuse must be broken, even if it is just one child at a time.*

The tendency to become mentally ill is genetic, but is usually made manifest by the circumstances in life that are the most stressful, most traumatic.

Sometimes these circumstances happen in adulthood, such as death of a loved one, divorce, loss of a job, or even a move to a new location.

But often, mental illness starts manifesting in childhood, with the major stressor being abuse, and the abusers being the child’s own parent or parents.

Fathers have usually been assigned the guilt of physical abuse, while the mothers lied and covered up for the abuser. But today’s statistics show that mothers are being found out to be the abusers as well.

To a child, a mother is the most important person in their life. It is the conflict between the love of their mother and their mother’s betrayal of them that starts feelings of low self-esteem and confusion. The child feels as if the abuse was their own fault, that they caused their mother or their father to hurt them.

Working in the ER, the occasional abused child would be brought in, usually by the mother. She would tell a story about the child having a bike wreck, or falling down stairs, etc.

But the single most tell-tale sign was the child’s face as the mother lied to protect the abuser. They either stared at the floor, unable to look at their mother, or they could not take their eyes off of her as she spoke.

No eyes on the face of the earth can display heartbroken sadness and the disbelief of betrayal like the eyes of a broken hearted, abused child. They wear a look as if their entire world has just turned upside down. And in their minds and hearts, it has, and life will never be the same again.

Apparently, children who were abused, often times grow up to abuse their own children, repeating the only pattern they know.

Most criminals in prison were abused as children. Most prisoners suffer from mental illness of varying degrees.

Some do horrible things to victims. Others do horrible things to themselves, a sort of self-inflicted punishment, from feelings of low self-worth relating to abuse from their parents.

Most drug addicts and alcoholics were abused as children. Often the parent is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or both when they abuse their child. Therefore, the child grows up in that environment as well, not to mention the genetic tendency of addiction is already in the child.

Most who are substance addicts are also mentally ill to some degree. For some, it is merely a matter of self-medicating, a way to quiet their minds, enabling them to focus better. Others just want an escape.

Most abused children grow to become mentally ill adults. The degree of their illness depends upon their genetics and the events they live through just trying to reach adulthood. Which came first, the illness or the abuse? The chicken, or the egg?

Physical scars heal, but mental scars are the deepest. Neglect and abandonment are of the worst forms of abuse. They leave a scar that says the child is of no importance at all. Not even their father or mother wants anything to do with them.

That’s when they start to feel guilty, guilty about anything and everything, as if it is all their own fault.

They feel they have no worth at all. They feel they must be different from others, and by now, they are starting to be.

So in the best way they can, they begin to conform to the expectations of others, usually after again being rejected when their true self shows through.

They keep their illness behind closed doors, often, and the ones who love them the most are the only witnesses of their tragic insanity.

When a child grows up thinking that they are so guilty of everything, always the scapegoat because they do act out inappropriately, and unlovable by those who should love them the

most, the worst thing that could ever happen sometimes does happen.

The child grows up thinking that if their own parents couldn't even love them, that the Lord God Almighty could never love them. This is totally incorrect, but this is how they sometimes feel.

As children, we associate God's love for us the most closely to our mother's love for us, a love that is unconditional and nurturing.

When our mothers themselves abuse us, or betray us with lies to protect our abuser, we question God's love for us.

As children, we actually compare God to our own fathers. Sometimes fathers are loving, and are always there, providing for their children, teaching them in the way they should grow.

But when our fathers abuse us as children, we think of God as the ultimate punisher, one who doesn't really care for us.

The point is, when parents abuse their chil-

dren, the children often think there is no God at all, or else He is anything other than love.

For the self-appointed bearer of guilt, the child whose father abandoned, it seems that the child is so worthless, it is even unworthy of God's love and Salvation through Jesus.

But if and when that child grows up and is taught about Jesus and our Heavenly Father, when he or she actually understands and knows the Lord, they run to Him. For it is with Him that they find the father's love they spent a lifetime longing for. For He not only forgives them of their own sins and wrongdoings, He helps them to forgive those who have harmed them so deeply in their lives.

What a weight is lifted from bitter, sorrowful hearts, and minds tormented to the point of illness!

"But Jesus said, suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come to me: for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." Matthew 19:14  
American King James Version



**110**

Charlene Bergen  
Anderson  
Community  
Honorable Mention  
3D Art

*My sculpture showed my feelings about addictions and what it had done to the lives of some people very dear to me. The stone spray shows the imprisonment that addiction creates in a life. The large chain and lock represents the hold that it can have on emotions of a human being. The keys at the bottom represent hope. Even in deep addiction, we can have hope that we can break loose of its chains. Found-object sculpture.*

## Iced Glazed Tree

MarLeah Cole | Seneca | Crowder | Gold | Color Photography

*It was a cold December night, and I was rushing from one building to the warmth of another building. But the light shining on the ice covered land inspired me to grab my camera, go back outside, and brave the freezing temperatures to get this long exposure shot.*



## The Blazing Heart

Sophia Miller  
Joplin  
Home School  
Gold  
Poetry

*"Can you understand?  
Someone, somewhere,  
can you understand me  
a little, love me a little?  
For all my despair, for  
all my ideals, for all  
that – I love life. But it is  
hard, and I have so much  
– so very much to learn."*

*-Sylvia Plath*

Brightly burning blazing heart  
Beats lightly on the falling snow.  
The mysteries that lie inside  
Are utterly unknown.

Twisting, hiding, winding ways  
May lead to a secret place.  
Revealed are many troubled thoughts  
Behind a pretty face.

Pull away the dead dark eyes,  
Cast away the pallid cheeks.  
Only one with true interest  
Will know for what to seek.

What no one else would dare to find,  
What none could hold or love.  
A magic that is silk-encased,  
Like a wild, wistful dove.

Catch hold of this winged thing  
Hidden behind her silent lips.  
Do not tame the wild thing,  
But give it a sweet kiss.

Blazing bright her heart was,  
Each thought impending travesty,  
But there hid her inner self  
Of an imagined majesty.

Words and writing, white and grey,  
Hidden in her soul.  
Left unseen through history,  
A tale left untold.

The puppet mask has burned away,  
The trueness in the light.  
Blazing is the remnant left,  
A heart burns ever bright.

# The Flowers in Your Hair

The first time that I saw you,  
We were at the county fair,  
And as you moved from booth to booth  
I simply stopped to stare.  
The supple swaying of your walk  
Was quite beyond compare;  
But the first thing that I noticed was  
The flowers in your hair.

Rudely people pushed at me  
(For I blocked the thoroughfare)  
I couldn't tear my eyes away  
From your beauty raw and bare.  
The russet curls, unbound and free  
Bounced gaily in the air,  
And made the perfect backdrop for  
The flowers in your hair.

Enchanted I approached you  
When you were unaware,  
And shyly asked you for your name,  
Then gave you mine to pair.  
I took you to the cider tub  
And pulled you up a chair,  
So I could study well in range  
The flowers in your hair.

We talked and talked as people walked  
Around us, well aware  
That we were growing quite attached  
And had our hearts to share.

And when the daylight died to dusk  
We had us not a care,  
For in one moment I had kissed  
The flowers in your hair.

I kissed you once, I kissed you twice;  
It made my senses flare,  
And I decided in my heart  
I loved you then and there.  
The brightness and the hope I felt  
Outshone the warmest glare,  
And satisfied, I gently stroked  
The flowers in your hair.

Well glad years passed, and spring rolled 'round,  
I harnessed plow to mare,  
And sowed the seeds of happiness,  
And minded every snare.  
But happiness can sometimes die;  
Aged lovers all beware,  
For Death came by and turned to ash  
The flowers in your hair.

I mourned and wept, I raved and writhed,  
Was cast down in despair;  
And railed at death for having slain  
The Flower fine and rare.  
But you'll not die in vain, my love,  
Forever, this I swear—  
No day will pass that I'll forget  
The flowers in your hair.

Jacqueline M. Cole  
Granby  
Crowder  
Gold  
Poetry

*A ballad-style poem  
that's one of my  
favorites.*



## A Beaut of a Flower

Marie Jones  
Wyandotte  
High School  
Silver  
Color Photography

*This beaut of a flower  
was found on an exotic  
tree in my friend's  
backyard. The vibrant  
colors are phenomenal.*

# Chemistry

Emily Haase  
Neosho  
Staff  
Fiction

**I** noticed her right away. She was beautiful, stunning actually. She had long honey-blonde hair, green eyes, and a small tattoo of a bird on her wrist. I was in luck, because she was the one who came to take our orders.

She had a gorgeous smile, and a soothing voice with a slight southern accent. I asked her where she was from, she said Oklahoma. My grandma lived there, and we chatted for a few minutes about different things in the area she grew up in.

I couldn't tell if she was flirting with me because she would get a better tip, or if she genuinely liked me. I was dressed nice, I looked

good. And to be honest, she didn't pay as much attention to the friend I was with as she did me.

I'm going to ask her out, I decide. I have to. She's pretty, personable, tattooed. I was newly single, what did I have to lose? The worst thing that could happen is she says no!

She came back with our food, and we talked a little more. I asked her about the tattoo on her wrist. She said she was free like a bird, and it reminded her every day of how far she'd come. I asked her what kind of music she was into. All of it, of course. I asked her what she did outside of work, she said go to school. She wanted to be a vet tech.

She seemed nearly perfect, and I had never in my life had such a strong connection with someone I had just met.

When we were finished with our meal, and it was time for the check to come, she left me her number on the back of it. I did a little victory dance inside; I couldn't wait to ask her out!

Then it hit me, the obvious stupid thing I'd forgotten; I was only visiting a friend. I lived halfway across the country.

We never spoke again.

## Timeless Beauty

Mary DuMond  
Anderson  
Crowder  
Bronze  
Color Photography

*I have always had a love for all things vintage. We can draw a lot of inspiration from the past and create our own style from it. I love that I can take a person who feels they are ordinary, take a few photos and make them feel like a rock star! There's something amazing in all of us, and that's what I strive to convey through my work.*





## Cherry Blossom Tree under the Moon

Briana Wilson  
Carl Junction High School  
Honorable Mention  
3D Art

*This piece is in dedication to my grandfather who recently passed away. He had a cherry blossom tree and loved the look of them. Mosaic stained glass*

# 52 Bits of Wit & Wisdom

Kim McCully-Mobley  
Aurora  
Community  
Honorable Mention  
Nonfiction

*McCully-Mobley is a working journalist/freelance writer with a passion for Ozark folklore, Civil War research and storytelling. She is a member of the Ozarks Writers Colony in Eureka Springs, Arkansas and the Ozarks Writing Project at Missouri State University. Last year found her claiming honors in a storytelling contest through Tales of the South. Her story aired on NPR radio in the summer of 2014.*

**I** have learned a few things the hard way. To be truthful, I've learned just about every darn thing worth knowing the hard way. In fact, a colleague of mine once printed up a diploma from "The School of Hard Knocks" and presented it to me with great gusto.

He had heard my story about bashing the back glass of my Volkswagen Rabbit in as it was burning on Highway 39---just to get to my Christmas ham after I had been laid off or fired from my dream job at The Lawrence County Record. If a crowbar will help me get to peas, ham, bacon or watermelon, I am one adept athlete, and no melting piece of plastic vehicle was going to keep me from it.

That diploma means more to me than the other four real ones that hang on my wall. I am stubborn and feisty. I am a gypsy/rebel/cowgirl/pirate. I am a Banshee Warrior Princess, according to the Late Jim Sawyer, who wanted me to embrace my Scotch-Irish roots. He would call me up and ask for a "Kimmy Tale" when he was having a particularly rough day.

I wanted to come up with something of substance to give back to you...the ones I love on my birthday. My mother gave birth to me at 2:30 a.m. on June 11, 1961. I was six weeks early and she thought the pains she was having were a direct effect from the sweet potatoes she had eaten for supper.

So, the joke through the years with my dad and brother was that I was a direct product of "gas." Now, my brother just claims the jokes and pranks made me tough.

Whatever the case, I am what I am and there is great freedom and fun in that knowledge. Here are 52 pieces of wisdom for you (one to represent every year):

1. The best things in life happen when you least expect them.
2. People in Hell don't want water; they want out.
3. Everything can't be fixed. Sometimes you just have to walk away.
4. There is great satisfaction in dancing in the rain.
5. Bigger is not always better.
6. Money isn't that big of a deal.
7. There are worse things than dying.
8. Laughter is good medicine.

9. True love is amazing.
10. There is freedom in forgiveness.
11. The journey is better than the destination.
12. You can't win every battle.
13. But there are times when you must take a stand.
14. Standing alone is only painful the first time.
15. There are worse things than being alone.
16. Sometimes those voices in your head really do make sense if you listen to them.
17. What goes around really does come around...we just don't always get to see it happen.
18. Happiness is a choice you make every day.
19. Nothing is a coincidence; life is a series of small miracles.
20. We learn when we squirm.
21. Good character is doing the right things in the right way for the right reasons when no one is looking.
22. Bullies flinch and run when you bully them back.
23. Don't take no for an answer; just reword the question.
24. Don't apologize for your past. It is a part of your journey.
25. You are never too old to stomp in a mud puddle.
26. A roll of toilet paper in your hands is worth more than any bush.
27. Real faith holds strong to the promise.
28. A good book, a sunset and a bottle of wine can cure anything.
29. Men and children are a lot of trouble; men are usually worth it...children are ALWAYS worth it.
30. Fear will cripple you, if you are not careful.
31. Everyone has a story.
32. Making people mad will sometimes force them to do the right thing. I look at it as if I am doing them a big favor.
33. Yes. You can march to the beat of your own drummer. (You don't even have to have a drummer.)
34. You can wear lace on your socks when you are 52 if you want.
35. Most of the things that matter are risky.
36. The people who stand by you when things turn to "poo" are really your friends. Keep them forever.
37. You can dress like a gypsy/cowgirl/rebel/pirate if it makes you happy.



*His first taste of the game brought passion and intensity to this little five year old. I saw the pregame prayer about to start and knew he really wanted to win. As the team began to pray, he dropped to the ground, squeezed his eyes closed tight and asked God to please let him win. Thankfully, everyone's a winner at the YMCA.*  
ISO 100, 1/320, f5.6

38. Don't work for bosses who have no ethics or integrity. Hold their feet to the fire.
39. Life is too short to let people run over you.
40. Being a North Town Girl is empowering. You will carry those traits for life and they will rear their little heads when you least expect it.
41. When you find faults with others, you are feeling bad about yourself.
42. There is nothing worse than a liar or a thief; if he or she will lie or steal, he or she will justify just about anything.
43. Never mistake arrogance for intelligence. They are not the same thing.
44. You will see better things on the backroads.
45. Follow your passions. If you are passionate about something, you will be good at it.
46. Always root for the underdog. At some point

that will be you...and you will want people rooting for you.

47. People in power are not always right.
48. Being a Christian isn't something you say when it's convenient.
49. God does help those who help themselves.
50. There is no such thing as Free Speech; yet we need to uphold the concept at every turn. Someone somewhere has always paid a price for it. And, if we say it---there is usually a consequence: be it good or bad.
51. Don't accept ultimatums from anyone...ever. If you do, there will be another and another and another to follow.
52. Celebrate the magic moments. Celebrate all moments. There are life lessons in all of them.

Godspeed.

## **Pregame Prayer**

Liz Spencer  
Diamond  
Community  
Bronze  
B&W Photography



# Of Lust and Dark Angels

James Walls  
Neosho  
Crowder  
Silver  
Poetry

*I wrote this poem a few years ago and it has been one of my favorites ever since. It was originally intended to be a set of lyrics in the style of some of the darker, symphonic metal bands from Europe.*

I dream of silent whispers  
Her face upon the wind  
She calls to me in dark imagery  
Like an afterglow of sin  
Her soul seduced the angels  
So pale this rose of death  
That throws away my heart's desires  
And steals my final breath

And now I see her dark reflection  
In the bloodstains of her lies  
For her silent heart's in damnation  
And I see my angel's died  
Yet she speaks to me in whispers  
Her voice a darkened dream  
And in the night I see her standing  
The world is never what it seems

She came one night like a phantom  
Like an angel's silhouette  
Her voice so soft and yet so dead  
The sound just made me sweat  
Her flesh so warm was now so cold  
Her eyes an icy blue  
A soul forever, the gift of youth  
Eternal the chosen few

And upon the winds of darkness  
I lust upon her soul  
The crimson stains inside her veins  
This love I can't let go  
And so we set the pace of our sin  
Our feast upon the world  
So silent is the eternal change  
That all began with a girl

# Why Blame the Box?

Marie Winn's article entitled "The Plug in Drug" is a warning bell of the dangers of spending too much time plugged into the television. Her basic argument is that time spent on this enjoyable enterprise robs people of the higher experiences of reading, learning, bonding with family and friends, and living in general. She even takes it a step further in suggesting that watching television is addictive, and, as such, will become the focus of viewers' minds, rather than doing the things they would choose were a television not available to them.

Some statistics show the validity of her argument. "According to the A.C. Nielsen Co., the average American watches more than four hours of TV each day (or 28 hours/week, or two months of nonstop TV-watching per year). In a 65-year life, that person will have spent nine years glued to the tube." (Herr, Ph.D.) David Barton, the founder of Wall Builders, speaks to the negative influence of TV in saying, "Television seems to teach us that a family or a national crisis can arise and be resolved completely within a 30- or 60-minute program; consequently, we have embraced impatience as a national characteristic." (Barton) Negative statistics on the subject abound, but I wonder if it is fair to place the blame on the electronic box.

While the negative effects of spending too much time on the TV are obvious, I think the argument should be balanced a bit. Just about everyone has heard that the average child will have viewed over 8,000 murders before finishing grade school (Herr, Ph.D.), but what if a visual learner is struggling to retain the boring textbook approach to history? Can the evils of television be balanced when history comes alive in the form of colorful animation? What about reading programs on public television stations set to fun music the children will remember long after they have changed the channel? Is it possible that the television is much like the computer as a source for good or bad depending on the user? Maybe we shouldn't throw the baby out with the bath water just yet.

Yes, there have always been those who will lay on the couch for hours and amuse themselves day after day by choosing not to think. They may pick the most flawed shows available, and become addicted to laziness. However, in my

opinion, the invisible pull of the TV is not the issue. The issue may be the intelligence and self-control of the viewer. There are some days that hours of relaxation spent watching "Pride and Prejudice", or the "Super Bowl", is a just reward for a hard week's work. There are series available on subjects of science, math, and history that can become a habit of viewing every day. Is this detrimental?

Rather than blaming an inanimate object, why not focus on the need for more personal accountability in all areas of choice. Would those who suggest getting rid of the television also want to rid the world of music because some of it is horrible? How about sex because it is so grossly abused in all cultures? Should we abandon the use of drugs as medicine because some choose to become addicted? I think it is time we stop blaming things, and start teaching people to be accountable for themselves in using the things they have been given for good. All of life is full of choices. It is time to choose wisely rather than blame the game.

R.L. Preston  
Greenfield  
Crowder  
Honorable Mention  
Nonfiction

*In a culture saturated with technology it is important that each of us learn to control our selves and the access it has in our lives. It is too easy to blame the TV, games, phones, etc. If we are too connected to machines, and not connected enough to life, we need to look at our selves, not the boxes.*



**Galactic Eye**

Nisa Moss | McDonald County High School | Bronze | Digital Art

*The eye is the window to the soul and I chose to crop and highlight it in my photo. Color change*

# Madison

Emily Haase  
Neosho  
Staff  
Fiction

*This is simply a short story I wrote about becoming a mother in a non-traditional way. Very non-traditional.*

**I** became a mother overnight. I remember exactly where I was when the bad thing happened. Honestly, I think everyone left does.

I ran a day-care. It had started out as an overtly typical day; my husband was at work, and my parents had stopped by for a visit. The day-care was in my home, so the children were outside playing in the cool autumn air. The beautiful smell of a nice fall day, and the leaves rustling when the wind blew.

Then the police sirens blared, seemingly everywhere in town. A cop stopped specifically to tell me to get inside, and get all of these children inside. Lock the doors.

I wasn't sure what was going on, and it didn't appear that the cop was for sure either, but I did as I was told. I rushed all of the children into the house, and locked every door.

We immediately turned on the local news channel, and 'Breaking News' was flashing across the bottom of the screen as the young blonde choked out the words scrolling across her prompter. She was visibly shaken, and obviously her mind was going a million miles a minute. You could see it on her face; where was her family as this was happening? How was she going to get home? Was she in a secure place? And most importantly, how long would this last?

I think that was the biggest question on everyone's mind. How long was this going to last? The news reporters swore that it was being contained; everything was under control; the police had it covered. But, we should all stay indoors with the doors locked, just in case.

Parents started showing up, and one by one the kids were gone with panicked guardians. Plans to go out of town, it was safe a couple of hours away. The rest had rations at home, they would wait it out.

But as the hours dragged on, we kept watching the news breaks. It's spread to this or that area, but it was under control. All of the highway exits were blocked, there was no way out of town, stay where you are. The National Guard had just been flown in, they'll have it under control in no time.

By seven o'clock, all of the children were gone. Except for her.

Her name was Madison, and she was four. She had long, curly blonde hair. Blue eyes, that almost had a sparkly quality about them. She

had always been one of the shyer ones, and mostly kept to herself, but she had the sweetest little personality. A smile that could make Hitler melt. She was wearing pink tights with a pink tutu and a Dora the Explorer shirt. I kept assuring her parents were just late, they would be here anytime.

Midnight, and still no sign.

Two a.m., there was a knock on the door. It woke her up from her shallow sleep in hope it was her mother, but it wasn't. Thankfully for me and unfortunately for her, it was my husband. He worked out of town and traffic was so crazy he almost didn't make it back at all. As he recounted what he'd seen on the way back, I was petrified.

Cars wrecked all over the place, rushed and scared people running across the highways, fighting cops, trying desperately to get out of the city, fires, gun shots. The occasional body strewn across the pavement. Full-scale armageddon.

The day had been filled with desperate phone calls; is everyone okay? Has it spread to your town yet? Make sure to stay inside!

The next morning the news flashes kept coming, as did the sirens from various parts of the city. I tried to call Madison's parents throughout the day, with no answer. The traffic was still backed up, so I held onto hope a little longer.

Until the next morning. No parents. No phone calls. No end in sight to the mayhem that had unfolded seemingly out of nowhere.

I comforted her every way I could possibly think to; I made her cake, I sang her nursery rhymes, I read her stories. But most of all I lied to her. I told her they must be stuck in traffic, the news lady says there's a lot of it. Maybe they went home and lost cell phone service, and knew she was safest with me.

I knew none of it was true. There had been hundreds of fatalities in the last three days alone, the odds didn't look good. Some were car wrecks, some were gunned down by police, some were taken out by others trying to take the same goods as them. But most of it was the infection. We all knew her parents were never coming back, but we let her hold on hope anyway.

Honestly, I don't know if it helped her or hurt her in the long run. But at the time, it just seemed like the right thing to do. To make her

think that her parents were out there alive, desperately trying to get back to her. She held on to that hope for a while, and it brightened her eyes just a little.

By day eight, the power had gone out. We had a radio, a fireplace, and some candles. According to the radio, it had spread to multiple other cities, and was now a few states over. The death toll was in the thousands.

A few days later the radio transmissions stopped.

Madison had gone through a child's steps of grief. Bawling, complete hysteria, not talking about it anymore. She quit asking for her parents by the end of the third week.

I couldn't keep telling her they were coming back, because I knew they weren't. She knew it too. So instead I told her they had probably sought out shelter in another city, and were safe. She bought it on the surface, but I know she knew better. Though I tried to keep her out of the room when the radio was on, she'd walked in a few times. Asked questions. I did my best to field them but we all knew she knew what was happening. Not the specifics, but the surface of it. Hell, none of us really knew the specifics. Just that the world as we knew it was over, and nothing was ever going to be normal again.

But her eyes remained bright and beautiful, and we spent every day together. I spent every day trying to keep her calm, trying to give her a sense of normality amongst the chaos. We had breakfast every morning. Lunch every afternoon. Dinner every night. We had story time, we learned our ABCs and 123s and how to write our names, we had nap time and snack time and play time. We played board games, and did puppet shows and played Barbies.

Eventually we started running out of everything, and my father and husband had to go out in search of food. Lucky for us we were only a few blocks away from a convenience store, and while it was mostly wiped out, there were enough canned goods for us to last a couple more weeks.

After a while a few more strangers showed up at our door, and we figured we could use them. We checked them over for bite wounds, and let them stay with us. They helped the men go on runs, fix things around the house when they broke, and helped us build a fence to keep out the infected. We had our own little community, and while it was far from what we were used to, it was almost like home.

And I fell completely in love. Not in a romantic way with someone new to the home, but



*This delicate bloom is just like an infant: fragile, soft, beautiful, and full of potential.  
ISO 100, 1/125, macro convertor*

in a maternal way with Madison. She was the most wonderful little girl I had met in my life, and while I knew she missed her parents, I was all she had.

No one knew why this happened. No one even knew how. Someone had gotten sick at an area Macy's and bit someone else, and it just started getting out of control. No one was around long enough to study it or figure out what the illness was called. It just ended. Everything. And no one knew why.

I used to care about money. About graduating college and getting a high paying job and making something of myself. About big houses, nice cars, and a flawless future. But none of that mattered anymore. The only thing that mattered to me now was this beautiful little girl, and my only care in the entire world was making sure she stayed safe. I was her guardian now, and my entire mission was to protect her.

So I did this every day. Made breakfast. Played board games. Read stories. Kept her inside and safe. And kept her mind off of what the world had become. I protected her, from everything, because it was my new job. And despite what the world had become, it was the best job I'd ever had.

## Sweet Baby

MarLeah Cole  
Seneca  
Crowder  
Bronze  
B&W Photography



## A Broken Heart

### A Cloud of Tears

I am a cloud  
Like rain drops from the sky  
And teardrops from my dark red eyes  
Trying to keep them from watering;  
Finding that it's going to be alright.

Watering,  
Always Watering  
Taking the lighter side.  
I'm going to fall,  
Ready to drop again  
One last time.

Kaitlyn Gooch  
Carl Junction  
High School  
Silver  
Poetry

*This poem is about the expression of the heart and it shows extreme emotion.*

## The Chandelier of Immense Deception

Payton Atchison  
McDonald County  
High School  
Gold  
Digital Art

*It expresses the release of light and dark within us all.*



## Self Pop Art

Bryce Boyd  
Carl Junction High  
School  
Bronze  
3D Art

*I really love this piece of artwork because it is actually a picture of myself; I thought it was cool to see how I could transform a picture of myself into a piece of art I could use. I drew a pop art inspired image of myself, which I then transferred to a mosaic board and made a really unique piece of 3D art. This art is also functional, which makes it something that can be used for decoration, as well as generate creativity when others look at it.*

# Prisoner of War

**L**ife changes every man, but war can destroy a soldier's soul. It was the middle of summer, and the sun shined so bright that a person could be standing still, and become blinded by the rivers of sweat rolling down their forehead. Paul Jenson had been stationed at Fort Crowder for only two weeks, and when he arrived he was full of excitement. Everyone knew Crowder was a more lenient camp with no reports of their prisoners dying; however, Paul's eagerness had left by June of 1944 as he stood behind a kneeling German soldier named Eric. He was 30 years Paul's senior, and due to war crimes that were unknown to Paul, he was a prisoner of war.

Placing the barrel of his gun against Eric's head, Paul thought back to the last time he'd seen his fiancé. The way Mary Elizabeth's eyes sparkled when she would laugh, and the way her curls fell perfectly around her shoulders came to mind. He regretted not marrying her the day their engagement had begun two years prior. With the things he had now done there wasn't any way he could give her what she needed. Every day he lost another piece of himself as the faces and names blurred together, but never

stopped haunting him.

Pulling the hammer back on his gun, he had a moment of sadness for Eric. He had tried to escape, thus he had to pay for his transgressions by Paul putting him down like the animal he truthfully was. Paul paused, normally not speaking to the prisoners he found himself asking, "Any last words?"

Eric's head dropped, "I'll miss my wife and unborn child."

Paul's humanity peaked through alerting his subconscious there was still hope that his life would return to normal, but caused his conscious mind to question, "Would it not be easier to end MY life than continue taking others in order to go home. Just to worry about the beast that has grown within me ever clawing its way out and hurting my dear Mary?"

Interrupting Paul's confusion Eric added, "I did this for them. We couldn't have had a perfect world until all of..." Eric used several vulgar words, a derogatory name for Jewish people, and ended by saying, "were dead."

Paul grabbed Eric backwards so they were eye to eye, "Some souls can't be saved." He stated pulling the trigger.

**Karissa Wiley**  
Neosho  
Crowder  
Gold  
Fiction

*The inspiration came from driving past Camp Crowder every day, and having to go through many changes in my life, as well as witnessing others endure many hardships that formed the person they are today. We all have to experience things that will effect us negatively, but we are the ones who can allow them to change us for the worst, or for the better.*

## Storm Overhead

**Karen Davidson**  
Pea Ridge, Ark.  
Staff  
Color Photography

*I love storms and clouds, the way they form and change.  
ISO 1250*



# Story Never to be Forgotten

Brysten Duncan  
Pierce City  
Crowder  
Silver  
Nonfiction

*The essay I wrote was about my grandfather's friend who stormed Normandy Beach. He was in the Omaha Beach Invasion, where he managed to live through that horrifying experience. This essay is the story of his experience and how it stayed with him when he came home.*

My grandfather loved telling stories, true or not, to anyone who would listen. One story I will never forget. He, like most grandparents, had that one grandchild who would ask questions after questions to keep the story going. For my grandfather, it was me. I would often wonder what it was like for him at my age, ten. Although I didn't know he was alive during so many wars, I still had to be nosy and learn more. So my grandpa picked me up, sat me on his lap and started to tell me a long story about a friend who went through hell, or so it seemed to him, and how he managed to make it home.

Charles was 19 years old and like all others wanted to enter the Army and of course come home as a hero to all Americans. He arrived in France during World War II as the Allies began turning the war against Germany and the Axis. Charles and his company went with thousands of American troops, to the beaches of Normandy, on a mission which came to be known as "Operation Overlord" or D-Day.

The invasion of Normandy began on 5 June 1944, an invasion force of ships and landing craft that were taken part in the Operation

Neptune, where assembled close to the Isle of Wight. Carefully passing through the German minefields, they established themselves off the coast, and the American battleships began bombarding the German occupied French coast. As they continued this bombardment, the American landing craft began landing at Utah beach around 6:30 a.m. While that was happening another invasion force landed on Omaha Beach, despite underwater obstacles bottling up many of the landing craft and making them and the soldiers inside easy targets for the German machine gunners.

A combination of battleship bombardment and infantry assaults continued. The German defense were finally broken around noon. The aftermath of the Invasion dealt a crushing psychological blow to the Germans in Europe. It caused a great uprising from captives and citizens against the Germans as it showed they couldn't control the western part of Europe.

As Charles and his brothers began their invasion on Omaha beach, the men were nervous. Many of them started to pray while others became sick. Charles looked into many of his company's faces knowing he may not ever see

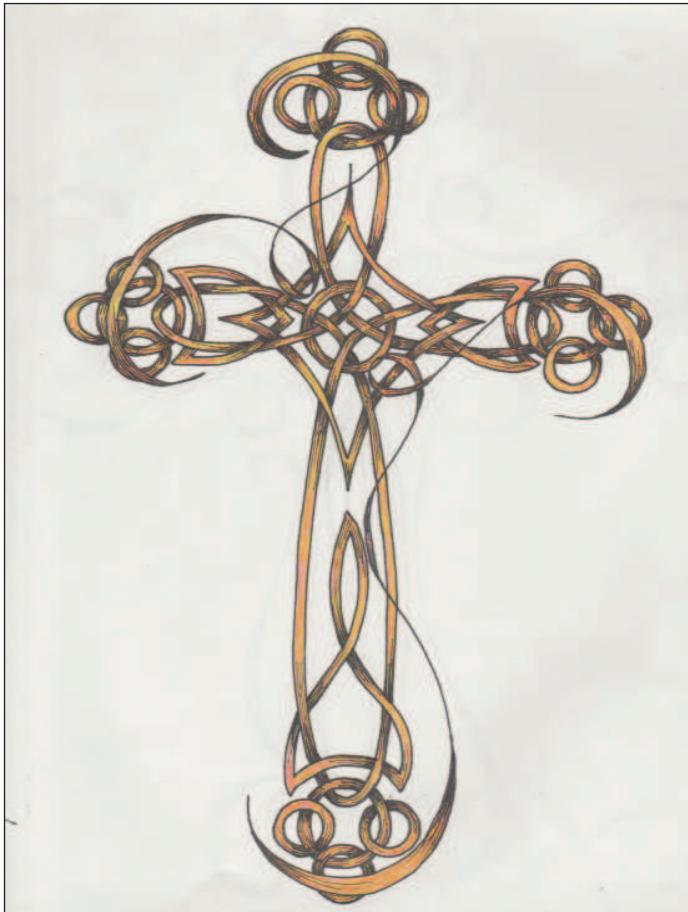
## Aged to Perfection

Shobi Burris  
McDonald County  
High School  
Honorable Mention  
2D Media

*Line is a fundamental element in every work of art. Getting lost in the lines was the greatest adventure of working on this piece.*

*Soft ebony pencil*





## His Gift

Christine Kornell  
Neosho  
Crowder  
Bronze  
2D Media

*Celtic knots have been a source of inspiration for me and blending them with crosses have been my love. The more delicate and more intricate the designs are, is something I strive to create with each new drawing. For the Lord's pleasure!*

*Graphite pencil, Sharpie, and colored pencil*

them again. Suddenly, their boat was stopped by obstacles in the water. The door that protected them from the machine gun fire opened and his brother began to fall as they tried pushing their way through each other to find protection on the beach. Finally, after pushing through the bodies of the fallen and dodging the whistling bullets, he managed to find a piece of metal from a landing craft that had exploded.

Looking behind him was a sight of horror that couldn't possibly be true or allowed by the hand of God. Soldiers began to run onto the beach and were being shot down in murder. One after another with screams of terror and death echoing through his ears as though it seemed to never end. He looked and saw men dying all over the battlefield. Blood covering the ground, and the water began to turn red as bodies floated all around the destroyed water crafts.

As it all seemed a defeat and massacre to him. Shells flew towards the German gunners exploding as the American battleships released hell on the enemy giving the American troops hope and the power to push forward even with the amount of losses taken. As the Allies pushed through the German defenses, the battle worn Germans into defeat ran, ending the great

struggle for Omaha Beach. Charles realized this, and returned to his fallen brothers, crying and screaming to the heavens asking why so many had to be taken from this world and their families. Charles continued to fight on against the Germans until the end of the war. He returned home to a joyful family but he also returned the dog tags to the families of his fallen friends.

After Omaha Beach, Charles never forgot the brothers he lost so close to him. He always returned to each brother who fell in his company and even though each was gone so quickly, he knew they did what they loved and he always smiled while letting his tears run down his face as he walked away knowing he would see them again.

We all are told stories, but what do they actually mean and how much can we use them. After being told this story, I never forgot what my grandfather's friend did. On his friend's birthday and the day of the Invasion of Omaha Beach, we would visit his grave and tell him thanks. This story has been with me for another nine years and even though my grandpa past away a few years ago; this story will never be forgotten.

# Late

Vada Harris  
Neosho High School  
Honorable Mention  
Fiction

*The ending was what came first.*

**J**ohn was dead; he knew that very well. He had been there, after all, and a more disconcerting experience he couldn't imagine. It was a difficult experience for anyone to describe, and John had never been good with words.

The only words he could come up with were...quick, dizzying, and yet—his memory of the whole thing was very sharp. One second, breathing in bed trying to sleep, the next, well...not.

At first, he hadn't felt much different. And then, he realized he couldn't feel much of anything at all. Not the pillow under his cheek, or the breeze from the fan that his wife always turned on a bit too fast. Smaller things, like her breath against his cheek, or his own heartbeat.

He hadn't stuck around his home to see what became of his body—although he had peeked in at his funeral. There was a respectable crowd of black, and John had tried not to feel too pleased at the number of people who

had come out to see him into the ground. The mourners included his children Marie and Henry, his brother and sister, friends, cousins, and his wife of course.

Once the dirt was tossed and the people were gone, John was left to wander around in his old footsteps. And he was still wandering. That and wondering, which was almost the same thing.

He wandered through his home and worried about his wife—but not too much. She seemed alright, and the kids were always checking in. "We raised them right," he whispered to the air.

Whenever he passed by his favorite bench he took a seat, although his legs never seemed to need the rest. He watched the people going about their lives like he always had. Dying hadn't changed him much.

And as he watched other lives, he wondered some more about his own situation. It seemed Death was late, as absurd as that sounded. "I'm supposed to be the late one here."

## Hush

Cheyenne Pickett  
Carl Junction High  
School  
Honorable Mention  
2D Media

*This is a piece on domestic violence. The jaw of the skull is being crushed and broken as it is told to "hush" by the hand of another. The hand represents control. It seems to be a gentle action but underneath you can see the true damage.*  
Graphite pencil



## Alegrias del Hogar

Sofia Sanchez  
Salcedo  
Neosho  
Crowder  
Gold  
2D Art

*These flowers are very colorful and I wanted to express that even on a grayscale.*

*Black ink and paper*



## Dad's Rose

Charlene Bergen  
Anderson  
Community  
Gold  
2D Media

*My dad loved roses so much that before his death, he planted 10 rose bushes in our yard. Even though it has been 22 years since then, I know in my heart he planted them for me. I will forever love the rose. My dad was my inspiration for creating this drawing.*

*Charcoal and pencil on black paper*



# The Promise

Lyda Yang  
Wheaton High  
School  
Honorable Mention  
Nonfiction

*My inspiration for this piece was a purple journal of mine that my sister gave me. It has helped me in many different ways.*

Naeun and Minho Lee are both siblings. Their family was poor and their dad could never hold a steady job. Their mother had passed away when she gave birth to Naeun. That was five years ago. Even if that happened, their dad never blamed Naeun for his beloved wife's death. Everyone loved each other. Naeun was five, Minho was seven, and their dad was thirty-seven. They lived in a beat-down trailer, and lived on paycheck to paycheck. Minho was taught by his dad to always protect Naeun through thick and thin. But in one month, they were all separated from each other.

Minho waited at the school's parking lot for Naeun. They always walked home together. When Naeun spotted her big brother she smiled and ran to him embracing him.

"Let's go," he said.

Naeun nodded and held onto his hand.

"Min-min, do you think daddy will be home today?" Naeun asked as she jumped over a puddle.

"I don't know, maybe."

She frowned.

When they reached their house they saw their dad's truck. Naeun jumped with joy and pulled on Minho's arm to make him go faster. They ran to the house and opened the door. Their dad was cooking scrambled eggs for them in the kitchen.

"Daddy," Naeun yelled, "you're home!"

"Yep, I'm home," he said. "I got both of you something from the store."

"What is it? What is it?" Naeun jumped up and down

They all walked into their dad's room. Mr. Lee picked up a store bag and handed it to Naeun. There were two journals in it, a purple one and a green one. Naeun grabbed the purple one and handed the green one to Minho. Naeun hugged her dad.

"Thank you daddy," she said.

Even though it wasn't a brand new toy or bike that other kids got they were both so happy. Everyone was so excited about the new journals that Mr. Lee had forgotten to shut off the stove and move the eggs. The kitchen had caught on fire and the flames were roaring and crawling their way into the living room. The fire caught Mr. Lee's attention when he started to smell the smoke. Mr. Lee ran into the hallway. The fire was everywhere. Fire trucks were heard in

the distance. Mr. Lee ran back to his room and closed the door.

"What's going on?" Minho asked.

"Nothing," Mr. Lee said trying to sound calm.

The fire was moving fast. Mr. Lee looked around frantically. It was getting hotter and hotter by the seconds. The fire was already making its way into the room. He saw a baseball bat and a small window, three feet from the ground, it was the only exit. It was big enough for Minho and Naeun but too small for himself to fit. He knew what he had to do. He grabbed the bat and slammed it against the window.

"Minho, go first," Mr. Lee said. Minho was still holding onto his journal.

"What about you?" he cried.

"Don't worry," Mr. Lee forced a smile trying to fight back the tears.

Minho nodded. He pushed his way through the small window.

"Daddy?"

"Yes, Naeun?"

"We'll be okay, right?" she sobbed.

"Yes, we will. Go, go with your brother," he coughed. The smoke was getting too thick. Naeun hugged him and went towards the window. She stepped on a piece of glass and cried out in pain. "Naeun!" he yelled. He heard fire trucks right outside his house, but he knew that it was already too late. He picked up Naeun and pushed her through the window. Minho grabbed her and they both cried.

"Dad," Minho yelled, "hurry!"

"I love you, protect your sister." Then a burning plank of wood fell onto him making him disappear from sight

"Daddy!" Naeun cried.

"No!!!" Minho yelled. He held onto Naeun tighter. "I promise," he sobbed, "I promise I'll protect her." And just like that they both became orphans.

A medic team came towards them. One of the medics observed Naeun's foot. Her right foot had a two inch long cut half a centimeter deep. They tried cleaning it and wrapping it. Minho stared at the burning house. Tears flowed down his face like a river. He couldn't accept the fact that his dad was dead.

Two weeks passed. They were put into an orphanage. They always stayed together. Every single night they would write in their journals.



No one played with them, because they always isolated themselves from others. Another week passed and a young couple decided to adopt Minho. Minho sat on his bed and looked at his green journal on his lap. Naeun ran to him and sat next to him.

"Don't leave me," she started to cry, "please? I promise I'll be a good girl. Please, please don't go."

Minho began to cry also, "I won't, I'm staying right here." He patted her head. His things were already packed. His new parents and the orphanage director lady came into the room.

"It's time to go," his new mother said.

Naeun held onto Minho's arm, "please." The orphanage director lady picked up Naeun. Naeun kicked and screamed, "No!!! Min-Min!!!"

His new dad picked Minho up. Minho tried grabbing onto Naeun.

"Naeun!!!" he yelled. His new mom picked up his bag and journal. They started walking towards the door. "Naeun, I'll find you! I promise!" Then the doors closed.

The lady still held onto Naeun.

"No! Come back Min-min!" she cried.

The lady cried with her, "I'm so sorry, Naeun."

Naeun dug her face into the lady's shoulder. Three weeks later Naeun was adopted.

-15 years later-

Naeun Lee, now Naeun Choi, is entering her second year of university. Her parents that had adopted her died last year in a car accident. She had no siblings, so she was on her own. Minho Lee, now Minho Kim is a successful singer. He is entering his last year of university. They have been looking for each other for the last fourteen

years. Little did they know, they were going to the same school.

It was the middle of the school year when Naeun finally noticed Minho. She was sitting in the fifth row of seats. He sat in the row in front of her. She knew that he was popular but never cared, because she never cared about the outside world. All she cared about was school, her journal, and finding her brother. Class started. She looked forward. Something caught her eye, a green journal. Her eyes widened. It looked exactly like hers. She wanted to know where he got it, but she had to wait for class to end. It felt like she was waiting for hours. When class finally ended she managed to stop the person from leaving the room.

"Where did you get that journal?" she asked.

He sighed, "Well this is a new way of flirting." His friends laughed.

"What's your name?" she asked.

"You don't know my name? Well, that's a first."

"Minho! Let's go man! Forget about her!" one of his friends yelled. Then they left the room.

Naeun eye widen, "Impossible," she whispered. She ran to the closet computer lab and searched "Minho Lee". A picture of him showed up on the right side of the screen. She clicked on a link and began reading about him. He was adopted by Ella and Joo-Won Kim at the age of seven. *It has to be him.* She thought. "Min-min," she whispered.

She looked up where he lived. Nothing came

## Peace

**Joshua Smith**  
**Neosho**  
**Community**  
**Honorable Mention**  
**2D Media**

*This painting is in a style characteristic of the Edo Period in futile Japan. The landscape's bright colors suggest a more modern pallet, and aims to delight and relax the viewer. It is a Triptych, or three panel piece.*

*Brush pens on watercolor paper*

[Continued on 26]

## The Promise

[Continued from 25]

up. Then she looked where his agency was. She found the address and scribbled it onto a piece of paper and put it in her pocket. She decided to go talk to him tomorrow.

Naeun woke up and got dressed. She looked in the mirror at herself.

"He'll remember me...right? I know he will." She grabbed her journal and the piece of paper and put it in her bag. Then she headed out. She found the company and walked to the front doors. Two big men stepped in front of her.

"Who are you?" one of the men asked.

"I'm visiting someone."

"Do you have an appointment?"

"Yes," she lied.

The two men stepped aside. She walked into the building and sneaked past the front desk. She went to the second floor searching almost every room for him. She couldn't find him. She was about to give up, but she heard his voice. He was in a room nearby. She ran to it and opened the door. His manager was there with him.

"Minho," she said, "it's me."

"How did you get in here?" Minho asked.

"It's me! Don't you remember?"

"Security!" his manager yelled. The two big men were coming up the stairs.

"Minho, it's me! You promised that—" the two men grabbed her. She struggled to try to take out her journal. When she finally took it out the two men had already picked her up and was about to bring her outside. "Minho," She dropped the journal. The men threw her outside. She sat on the sidewalk and cried.

"Don't ever come here again!" one of the

men yelled.

Naeun ran away crying. *It's not him! It's not him!!! He would have remembered me.*

Minho sighed.

"We should get a restraining order," Minho's manager said.

Minho laughed. He saw the purple journal and picked it up. Then it hit him, *Naeun*. He ran out of the building, trying to look for her, but she was already gone. She was so close to him, yet he let her go.

A few more days passed and he couldn't find her. He felt tired and depressed. He walked to the rooftop of the school. He saw someone sitting on a bench and realized who it was. It was Naeun. He ran up to her and gave her a back hug. She threw his hands off of her and turned around surprised.

"What are you doing?" she yelled. He showed her her journal. She grabbed it from him.

"Do you...have a scar on the bottom of your right foot?" he asked. His eyes sparkled with hope.

"You read my journal!!!"

"I didn't read it! I didn't have to," he said. Naeun walked passed him and was about to leave. "I promised dad that I would protect you through thick and thin. Please let me keep my promise. Let me make up for the 15 years that we've been apart, please, Naeun."

She stopped walking and turned around to look at him.

"Min-min," her voice was low and shaky. He nodded. She ran to him and hugged him.

"I'm sorry, I'm so sorry I took so long to find you," he said. They both cried.

"Don't leave me again."

## Midnight Moon

Rebecca Hance  
Stella  
Community  
Honorable Mention  
Gold

*I personally love moon photos, they bring a sense of peace and comfort.*

*I love to gaze at the moon, and let all of my fears and worries to the "Man on the Moon."*

*ISO 1600, 1/4000, f5.6*



[Opposite page]

## Spring Gazebo

Tori Murray  
Neosho High School  
Honorable Mention  
2D Media

*I was challenged to create my own style, instead of mimicking Bob Ross. This was the result. Acrylic*



# Scarlet Stained Revenge

Tyler Dallis  
Exeter  
Crowder  
Honorable Mention  
Poetry

*This piece is about murder and even though it is about murder, I never wrote the words "death, blood, kill, or die."*

Sitting in an alley way,  
pondering what happened today.  
Sitting in a puddle of red,  
I did it even though she pled.

My hands are stained the color scarlet,  
I did it because she was a harlot.  
I advanced toward her ready to attack,  
I strike her down and she falls back.  
I took a knife and slit her throat,  
now I'll have to clean my coat.

Ruby drops fall from her collar,  
as my own self-consciousness grows smaller  
I put her deep under the ground.  
that cheating, dirty, little hound,  
I thought we would never part,  
now all I have is a broken heart.

Sitting in an alley way,  
pondering what happened today.

Sitting in a puddle of red,  
I did it even though she pled.

I find a spot where I will bury,  
Tell me "Why did I ever marry?"  
The body I began to drag,  
I wrapped her in a plastic bag.  
If it wasn't for her selfish lust,  
my trunk wouldn't have turned to rust.

I tossed her in a six-foot hole,  
on my shoulders weighs her soul.  
Crimson spreads up from the soil,  
smells of raw meat beginning to spoil.  
I hope I didn't leave a clue,  
I left town to start anew.

Sitting in an alley way,  
pondering what happened today.  
Sitting in a puddle of red,  
I did it even though she pled.

## Annihilation

Kayla Hopper  
Carl Junction  
Crowder  
Gold  
Digital Art

*Annihilation is defined as the process of making something into nothing. Self-portrait with timer, edited in Photoshop*





## The Dead Waltz

Aaron DuRall | Joplin | Community | Gold | Digital Art

*I created this image based off of a song of the same title that inspired me. The purpose was to fulfill a vision that I had in my head, which relates to the content of the song. My ultimate interpretation is vast emptiness. 30-second exposure, RAW image edited in Photoshop.*

## Quiet

In the Quiet of the Evening  
When the home is calm and still  
I can feel God in my presence  
I can feel His calming will.  
For the time of children laughing  
And the turmoil's of the day  
Can be a distraction to the heart  
And mind and soul this way  
So enjoy the very moment  
Of your life your love your soul  
But choose the quiet moment  
Let your God lead you to the goal.

Dorice Baty | Monett | Community | Bronze | Poetry

*I wrote this while my son was recovering from heart surgery and I was taking care of four grandchildren.*



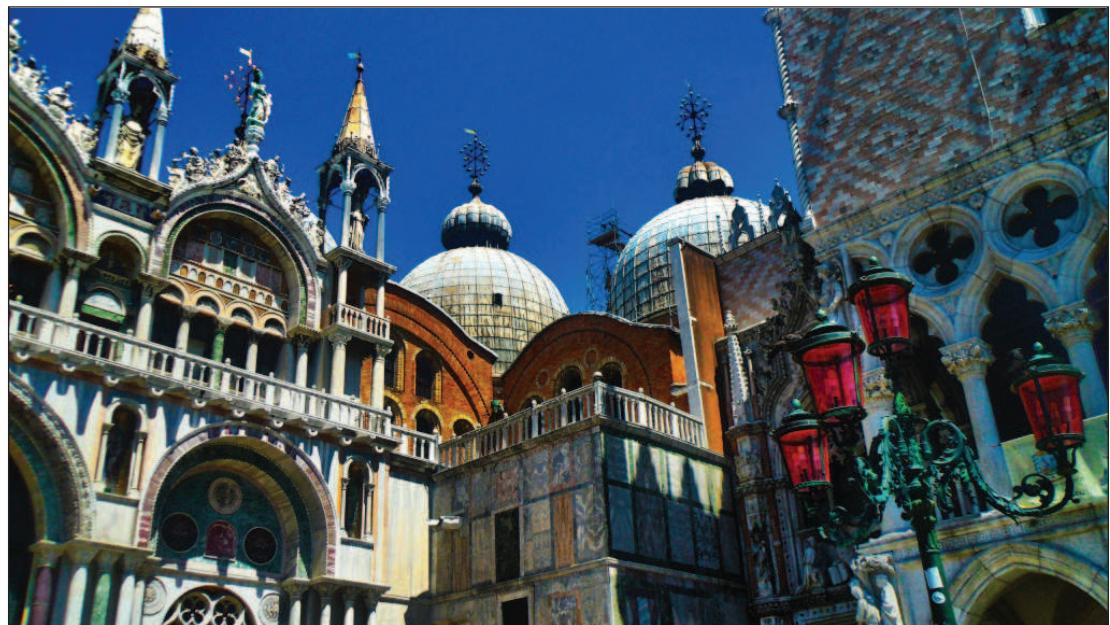
## Bethel Starlight

Amy Sampson | Monett | Community | Silver | Color Photography

*I grew up near and helped my dad maintain the peaceful Bethel Cemetery and Chapel near DeKalb, Mo. When I was learning how to first take night shots, this was first on my places to capture the starry sky. I most recently took this one in December after a big snow. 25-second exposure, f5*

## Saint Mark's Basilica

Aaron Goldstein  
McDonald County  
High School  
Honorable Mention  
Color Photography



*The purpose of this photo is to show the beauty of Saint Mark's Basilica at Piazza San Marco in Venice, Italy. ISO 100, 1/400, f4.5*



## The Tree

Katherine Hackney | Lockwood | Crowder  
Honorable Mention | 3D Art

*"The Tree" was created to show the beauty and mystical nature of the world around us. Hand-built ceramic, red oxide, green crackle glaze*



## Flower Bowl

Erin Kennedy | Joplin High School | Silver | 3D Art  
*I knew this design would challenge my abilities. Painted, fused glass*



## Sunflower Pottery

Charlene Bergen | Anderson | Community  
Honorable Mention | 3D Art

*I wanted to create a piece of pottery that had the color and texture of a sunflower. Wheel thrown white earthenware, hand-built details*



## Trilobite Vase

Jessica Sellers | Carl Junction | Community  
Gold | 3D Art

*Nature inspires me. I have hunted for trilobites in Utah. Fossils and rocks are often incorporated into my work. Wheel thrown and hand-built clay*

# Thanksgiving

Jessica Jenkins  
Aurora  
Crowder  
Gold  
Nonfiction

*An illustrative essay  
showing Thanksgiving  
Day in my household.*

**O**n the fourth Thursday of November, we celebrate one of my favorite holidays, Thanksgiving. The “First Thanksgiving” was celebrated in America in 1621. It was a three day feast after the Pilgrim’s first harvest in the New World. In 1863, Abraham Lincoln proclaimed it a national day of “Thanks and Praise.” It has been an annual tradition in the United States since. My mom has always made Thanksgiving a big deal in my family, and I love it.

Thanksgiving is the one day a year we can gorge on great food. It’s the only holiday we have turkey and my mom’s made-from-scratch bread stuffing. The entire house smells of sage and turkey broth. I’ve always associated those smells with the coming of winter. We get up early and prepare the turkey and make the stuffing. My mom is the one who gets to stuff and sew up the turkey’s butt, but not before “Tom” does his little jig in the kitchen sink. He really does dance! After “Tom’s” in the oven, we sit around and talk, change up recipes, make last minute runs to the grocery store because we have forgotten my brother and his family are vegetarians and can’t eat the turkey! Sometimes they bring their own Tofurkey; yuck! After a few hours, we get to really start cooking food. I’m always in charge of food prep (peeling,

grating, mixing etc.). I really just want to eat it! I love what we consider Thanksgiving foods: mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes swimming in syrup, stuffing, broccoli and cheese, mashed turnips. Then there are the deserts! Pumpkin pies, chocolate pudding pie, Jello and cakes, I love it all!

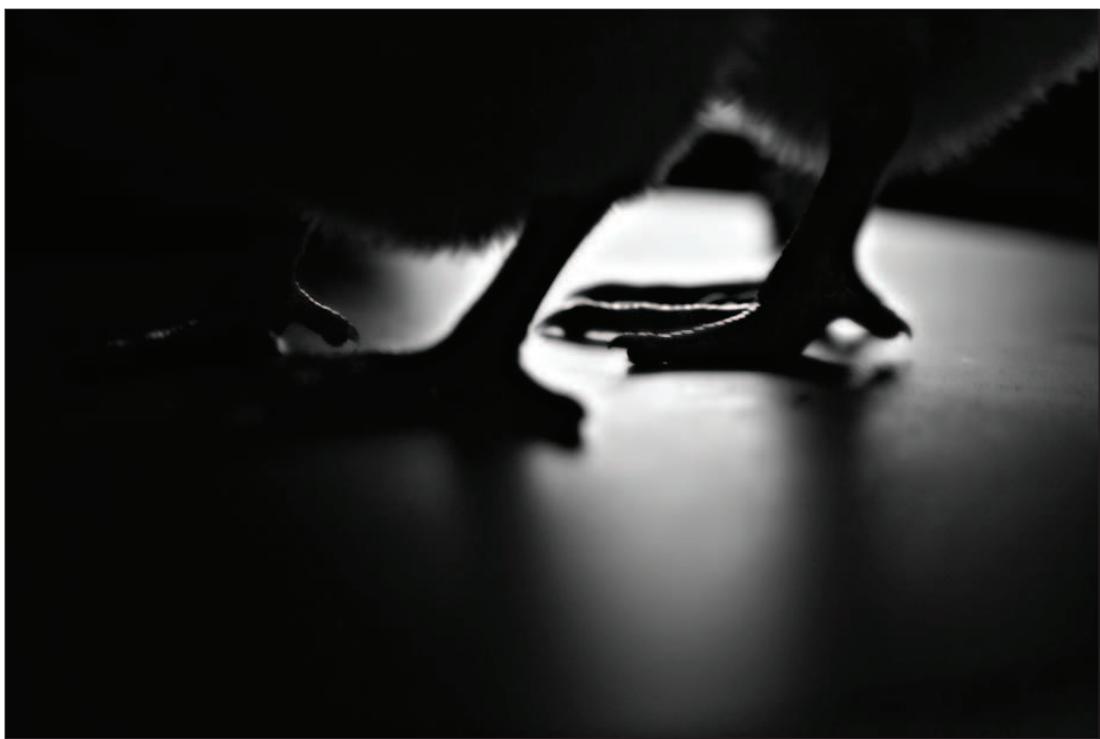
All of our family start to show up around noon. Some we only get to see a few times a year. We all sit around and talk and laugh for hours, reminiscing the past, telling funny stories and some sad.

We talk about our futures and how we need to spend more time together. The kids sit and watch the Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City on the television. It’s quality time that we don’t ever get enough of except on this one day. We don’t seem so torn between our own lives and family. No one is rushed, unlike Christmas, were we all have somewhere else to go, other families to be with. Thanksgiving is laid back and comfortable. I know I don’t get enough of those days.

My absolute favorite thing about Thanksgiving is there’s no money involved, except for food. We aren’t obligated to buy gifts, and we still get to see family. It’s not a greedy holiday. Kids aren’t fighting over new toys and video games. There’s no disappointment when the

kids don’t get what they wanted, and we don’t have to worry about decorations.

Thanksgiving is just a laid back, stress free and fun holiday, and it wouldn’t be the same if it was more than one day a year. Last year was the start of a new tradition. Instead of Thanksgiving at my parent’s house, it was at mine. Even though my mom was still in charge of most of the cooking, it was my deal, and I loved it. I hope to be able to host it every year from now on.



[Opposite page]

## Chick Feet

Ruth Loy  
Joplin  
Classical Conversations  
Home School  
Silver  
B&W Photography

*Spring is one of my favorite times to take pictures, mainly because nature is so fresh and new, and new life springs up all around in many different forms. This is one of my favorite pictures of some sweet little chick feet.*

Canon EOS 7D



[Left]

## Empty Places

Josh Leyva  
Seneca  
Crowder  
Silver  
B&W Photography

*Walking through Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville, Ark.  
f2 preset*



## Wizard of Oz

*While shooting an assignment at a local sign company, I captured this image of a technician working on wiring a sign. I asked him to look straight at me and caught the intensity in his eyes. Looking back at it, I remarked at how he looked just like the Wizard of Oz - mysterious and powerful! ISO 250, 1/125 second, f3.5*

Liz Spencer | Diamond | Community | Gold | B&W Photography

# An 8ft Yeti

Aaron M. Kocurek  
Neosho  
Staff  
Poetry

*This was originally a song that I wrote and then adapted it to flow as a poem.*

I'm an eight-foot Yeti  
Looking for a home  
Along my journey  
I pass a tree made out of lilac  
I stop for a snack  
It doesn't satisfy me  
  
But when my time is up  
And I am free  
You know where I want to be  
On my way  
To places that you play  
Hope you'll be waiting for me

I look up to the sky  
And watch the sunrise  
It blinds me  
Feeling the sand  
Between my toes  
It turns into snow  
The last thing I remember  
Is looking at a picture of you  
  
From now  
Till then  
When I find myself again  
I will long for you in my arms



**Momma Grizz at Yellowstone**

Barry Charter | Neosho | Community  
Bronze | Color Photography

*Female Grizzly bears weigh between 300-400 pounds. I was about 30 feet from this lady and her two cubs. There was a large crowd watching her dig up ground squirrels then flip them in the air for her cubs. Notice the mud on her face from digging and sniffing the ground. Her massive shoulders and strong 6-7 inches claws are formidable for sure. ISO 400, 1/640 second, f8*



## Future Dreams

Alec Fehring  
Neosho High School  
Silver  
Digital Art

*I thought of this idea a few years ago, but it was only now that I put my dream into action. Combination of two photos*



## Light over Garden of the Gods

MarLeah Cole | Seneca | Crowder  
Silver | Color Photography

*This was taken in Colorado Springs, Col. It was a dreary, rainy day, but as we were looking over this valley, the sun broke through and poured out of the clouds onto the landscape. ISO 100, 1/1000 second, f5.6*

# Freshly Brewed Coffee

Joshua Q. Dunn  
Aurora  
Crowder  
Silver  
Fiction

**A**s I staggered into a nearby coffee shop, a feeling of warmth entered my icy cold body. The unkind coldness of New York City seemed to put a damper on everything in sight, except for Flo's Coffee Shop. Inside I observed various sized tables scattered around the room. I noticed hefty long tables meant for large groups of people. Short stubby tables were arranged for those who liked to be secluded from the rest of the world. In a corner were tucked tall, towering tables where a couple of two could sit next to the frost covered windows.

My eyes then gazed upon the extraordinary decorations that had transformed this area into a charming little retreat! Colorful paintings hung all over the square columns and walls of the quaint shop. These paintings ranged from early 1800 masterpieces to futuristic modern looking art. Several enormous antique paintings gave the image that one side of the shop continued on into a lush prairie filled with log cabins. Thick grey smoke rolled out of chimneys.

While gazing on the other side of the shop, I was in a bizarre dream. Paintings with obscure art looked as if someone had accidentally sneezed paint onto a canvas! These lively paintings would cast an indescribable atmosphere between things that had been and things that might come to pass. I observed most customers took the magnificent paintings for granted and never noticed them nor realized that they added character to the small coffee shop.

Suddenly, the shop became as loud as a movie theater or a wild rock concert. People hustled to and fro from the menu, to the cashier, then back to their table. It was lunch time! One could almost feel the tension building up behind the counter of workers. They shoved between their fellow co-workers to do their work, which

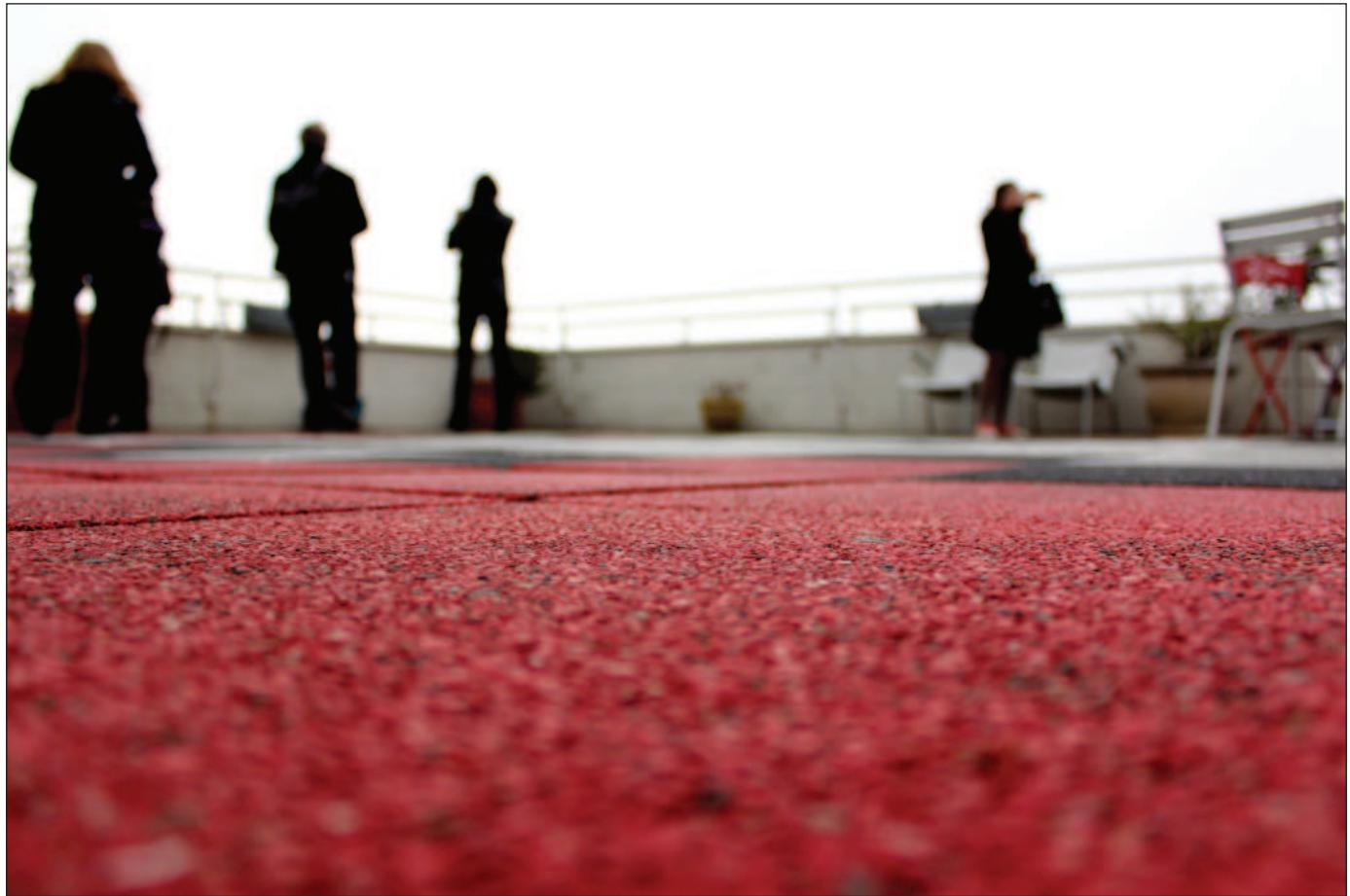
made their actions to please the customers look completely chaotic. Through their determined efforts somehow they quickly produced the customer's requests. Once the patrons settled down with their orders, the noise of chaos gradually faded away. All I could see were smiling content expressions as they sipped their steaming hot coffee.

Flo's charming shop also sold various pastries and doughnuts. It was filled with every type of doughnut possible! All types of doughnuts were being baked, doughnuts glazed with sticky chocolate and tiny sprinkles, doughnuts filled with oozing strawberry or vanilla cream, and countless other yummy choices! Lip-smacking sweet rolls, extra-large pastries, and several other bakery edibles filled the vast glass cabinets. Workers hustled to put freshly baked goods into these showcases, replacing the stale crumbly breads that had been there before.

Time marched forward and customers soon began to throw away their trash and make their way to the exits. With only a few patrons still lingering, the workers started cleaning up after the messy crowd. But alas, many interesting smells were left behind. I could smell the freezing rain coming down, the smell of stale leftover baked goods, and the odors of dozens of people who had just exited. The stench was so overpowering I even had a hideous shiver crawl down the back of my spine. This smell could have turned away the shop's most loyal customers.

Yet over the foul odor arose an overwhelming new smell of freshly brewed coffee. The strong dominant smell of the coffee rose above the hideous stench, inviting the arrival of new customers. Flo's Coffee Shop stayed busy day after day. Yet, very few customers ever stopped to notice the tables, the paintings, the stench, the smell of freshly brewed coffee, nor the unique atmosphere at New York's warmest spot.

*This paper was an assignment in my English 101 class. After writing the paper I began seeing how unique it was and decided to share it with the community*



## **Vue de la Libération**

Liz Spencer  
Diamond  
Community  
Gold  
Color Photography

*The view on the rooftop on the Libération building,  
a French daily newspaper in Paris.*

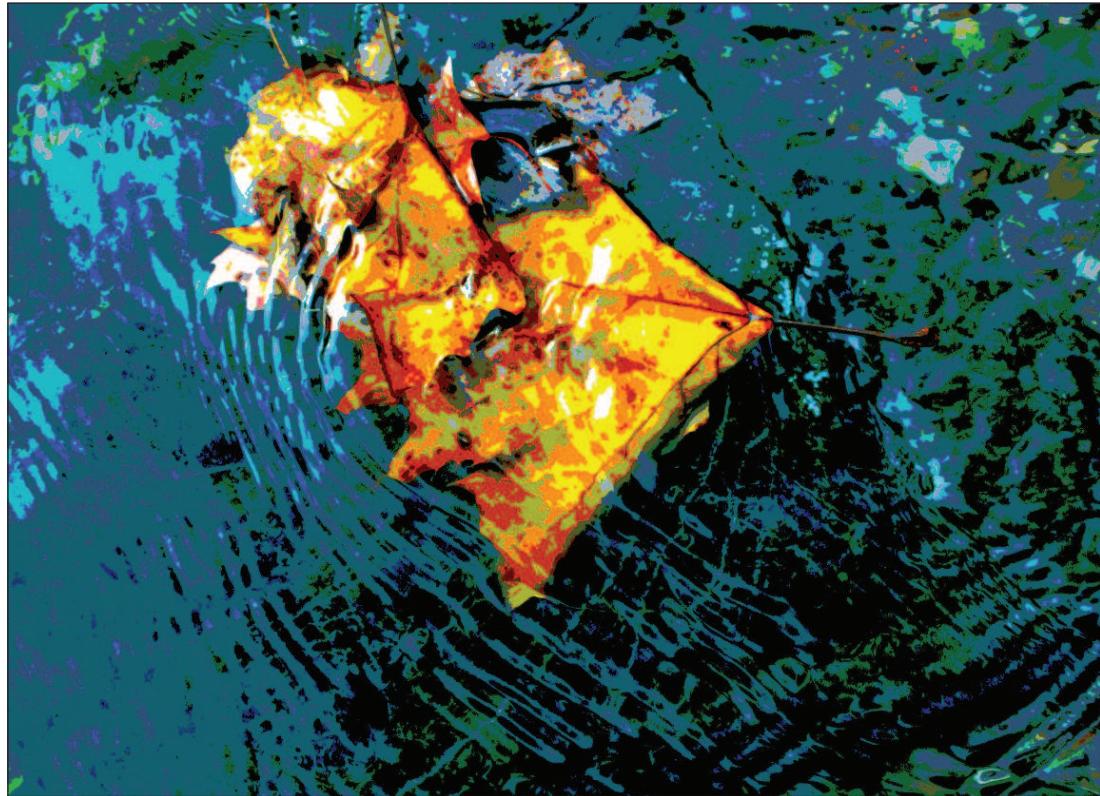
*While people were overlooking the city of Paris,  
I was drawn to the vivid color on the surface of the rooftop.  
The feel of the scattered figures in the background all  
looking in different directions, felt appropriately eerie  
with the overcast, chilly weather.  
ISO 100, 1/250 seconds, f3.5*

## Fallen Wet

Brandi Pool  
Seneca  
Crowder  
Honorable Mention  
Digital Art

*The picture was changed in a big way but I only used about two or three different changing tools.*

*I really like how the colors give the lines more depth.  
Changed colors and brightness*



## Harmonics of a War Piece

Aaron D. Goldstein  
McDonald County  
High School  
Bronze  
Poetry

*I wrote this poem to describe the similarities of music and war.*

A quiet, solemn voice passed over the fallen leaves, creating an unusual high pitched whistle.

The sound could be heard from all over the land,  
and it entranced many of the listeners.

At first, all that could be heard was a single pitch, no variant could be made out.

Then a slow, intense melody could be made out.  
It painted a picture of a farm somewhere in France.

The melodic etude's tempo soon raced with urgency.

The yelps of young children and women could be heard, covered up with the melancholic sounds of gunfire being gunned through the dreadful, gray air.

The deep drumming of the bass and low brass  
signified sounds of heavy artillery colliding with the earthen ground.

The rapid succession of chords and key changes  
slowed the scene down to almost a standstill.

And almost as fast as it had begun,  
it ended with a somber, low pitched note.

The whistling from the leaves discontinued,  
and the memories of World War II were lost.



## **Wondrous Squirrel**

Ryan Land  
Goodman  
Staff  
Color Photography

*Nature's creatures can make for a good photo opportunity at any given time.*

[Below]  
**Just a wink**

Patti Richardson  
Anna, Texas  
*Formerly of Fayetteville, Ark.*  
Community Silver  
B&W Photography



*I was leaving a friend's house when I heard a rustle in the leaves. I looked and a friendly squirrel had run up the tree to try to get away from me. I stood there for quite some time and had a stare off. I noticed that it appeared the squirrel was winking at me.*

*ISO 200, 1/320 second, f3.6*

# Commencement Speech

## Crowder College May 2013

Esther Aidelomon  
Neosho  
Crowder  
Bronze  
Nonfiction

*This creation has affected me in a great way, and it helps me realize how far I have come.*

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

When I was young, my father used to say to my siblings and me, "Do not tell anyone of your plans, not even me except I am the one sponsoring/providing for it; because everyone is two faced and no one really cares about you". I held on to that for so long that I myself became not just two faced but exactly the people my dad warned us against. But today, I stand on this stage with the same questions I have asked myself over and over again- What does it mean to care about someone, what does it mean to be cared for? Two years and seven months ago I remember getting off a British Airways plane in Chicago and feeling like I had just been kept in a freezer. Oh I thought the worst, until I got off an American Airline plane in Springfield and had three Russians come pick me up from the airport at about 1:30 a.m. I slept that night and woke up the next day to dogs barking, cows mooing, chickens crowing, pigs grunting, and tractors welcoming me to this new town I found myself in. You see I was just 17 years old, and I had spent 17 years of my life in a large city in Nigeria. I thought everywhere in America was just like I saw it on television- the sky scrapers, busy streets, nice convertible cars etcetera, but all I could see were bushes, large fields, and lots of animals!

I called my dad and said, "Dad I think I am lost" and he replied me saying "Honey you're in the right place and I wish you the very best. Keep your head up high; make the best of it; and make me proud." All my dad just said went in through one ear and came out the other because I had no idea where I was. No family, no friends, no acquaintances, nothing! Just God and I. I came all the way from Nigeria just to be a student at Crowder College. Oct. 19, 2010 I stepped foot onto this campus and for about two hours I couldn't find anyone with the same skin or accent as me; I felt like I was on another planet. It took me a while to know people, to get to talk to people, to say this is my friend. To be comfortable around them- By the way some of that did not go well. I was asked questions like- "Do you guys wear clothes in Africa?"; "Is Nigeria a state in Africa?" "Do you have Lions as pets in Africa?", and so many other really weird questions.

My first semester came and went by and

I still felt out of place. My first snow experience, I was wearing flip flops! I had no idea what on earth I was supposed to wear in a condition like that. I mean I grew up wearing sandals, flip flops, tank tops and it was a very big deal adjusting to this environment and lo and behold we had a 12 inch blizzard that year! It couldn't get any worse I thought. Jan. 15, 2011 my dad decided he couldn't afford my tuition anymore and that since I am a smart student and in a land of opportunities, I would make it on my own. I was devastated, I had no one. I mean no one. I did not even have a job. I couldn't share my problems with anybody because my dad's words rang a bell into my ears "Do not tell anyone of your plans, not even me except I am the one sponsoring/providing for it; because everyone is two faced and no one really cares about you". Oh how I cried on and on, day after day, night after night. How would I pay rent? How would I pay for food? How would I pay tuition? How would I survive? These questions and many more ran through my head every day.

Then one day I decided to share with someone and that person helped me grow up, and showed me that I can be anything I want to be if I put my mind to it. Today I feel like my meeting her was by divine appointment. She showed me what it is like to love someone else other than myself. She taught me what it is like to care about someone. She also taught me what it is like to serve. I did not care how much she knew until she showed me that she cared about me. That person is my host parent, Mrs. Mary Bradford. Mary Bradford was just the beginning of my support line here. In just two years, I have met so many people at Crowder who have truly showed me what it means to care for someone and to be cared for. I definitely hope these friendships continue forever, as they have set the foundation for success.

To my fellow graduates, some of us have made friends, best friends, better halves, and families in this environment. Some of us became champions, Most Valuable Players, ambassadors and so much more. In addition, some of us have lost loved ones, friends or even family members who cannot be here today to watch us celebrate this victory and see how we have overcome so many obstacles as we receive our diplomas. Some should be here; graduating with us today and they are not. They will always remain in our

## Looking Glass

Alec Fehring  
Neosho Christian  
School  
Gold  
B&W Photography

*I took this picture looking through a glass ball and inside you can see the person with her arm wide open. Canon, no flash, cloudy day*



hearts and may their souls Rest in Peace.

I do not know everyone graduating today, although we might have passed each other in the hallways, had the same classes, same teachers, been at the same gatherings, or eaten in the same cafeteria or the grill. However, I do know one thing and that is that we all have a common foundation, our ALMA MATER, Crowder College. Crowder College is truly a family based environment.

Recently, I was reviewing the missions of the college and this caught my attention. "In each course and program, all endeavors will be concerned about, and committed to the development of each individual's ability to master the

content of offerings, make ethical decisions, develop analytical skills, cultivate physical health and well-being, develop self-worth, and learn the value of working together and serving others." This college has cared for us for two years or more, helped shaped us into what we are today. If that is not a family trait, I don't know what is. They brought us in, accepted us in the various forms we came; every one of us either started out angry, rebellious, shy, awkward, bold, etcetera but today in just a moment we will walk proudly down this aisle to receive our diplomas. I have so much to be proud of today and I hope you do too. We didn't get here on our own; we had a lot of help. Thank you

[Continued to 43]

# Cold

Eric Lazure  
Neosho Christian  
School  
Honorable Mention  
Nonfiction

*This story shows that people are always looking for freedom or a way out, no matter what the freedom may be.*

As the cold settled in. And the lights started to dim, I could feel my heart beating faster. I could feel my legs shake from the cold and the fear of the unknown. I stared into the bakery, with the smell of fresh breads and scones meeting my nose, it was an amusing experience. The sound of the wind whispered through the pines. I waited. I was waiting to get rid of the sorrow. I was waiting to get rid of her memory, to finally move on. Tonight was the night that I will move on, that I will start the long process of recovery.

I quietly thought about what I would say. So many dreams and nightmares rushed through my head. I couldn't move. Every bad incident, every stab-in-the-back I have ever received rushed through my head. My heart pounded faster. Her memory came to my thoughts. It hurt. All of the down time, I was her downtime. The cold gnawed at my body, telling me to leave. I wanted to, but I would not let the terror win again. I looked to my left and saw nothing but trees and gloom. I looked to my right and saw a

friend standing in tedium. I had to do it, that's all there was to it.

I took a single step. Time stopped. She walked out of the bakery. I took another step. My mind was telling me to turn back. I couldn't. She was walking away. I took another step. The moment was moving slow. Everything was telling me to stop and turn around. I screamed in my mind. I didn't want to think twice about it. I wanted to become free from the one who hurt me. I had to do it. I had to liberate my mind. I had to let the good times initiate again.

In one quick decisive motion I kicked through the mental strain that was keeping me from talking to her. The dread of being let down perhaps. But, I pushed through it. I could feel my body thaw, my joints melting. My heart melting... The adrenaline was pumping violently now. I could feel it. It was overwhelming me. But I was at ease. I walked closer and closer. I was doing it. I was going to rise like a phoenix. I was inching in. Step by step I got closer. The cold was fighting me, my mind was fighting me.

## Perception

Kayla Hopper  
Carl Junction  
Crowder  
Bronze  
Digital Art

*The world has been transformed by social media connections. Those same connections have removed the personal visible impact of one's words on another.*



I was a mere five feet away now.

"Ma'am, Ma'am, excuse me". "This is for you". I slowly handed her my number. "Thank you", she said. Then we made eye contact. Like a flood my memory of the other one cut into my soul. As a final goodbye. I nodded my head. Then we both looked away and slowly walked farther and farther apart.

I walked back to my friend who was positioned by the bakery. The night was colder than before. The shadows seemed to move in on me. Dancing in the soft flickering light, I walked up to my friend as we exchanged some words. We walked down the long, peaceful path. We were far away from the car. I was fine with it. It felt like I just ran a long race. A race to freedom,

freedom is never an easy thing to achieve. But, I felt like I was on a good passageway to it. We arrived at the car. We opened the doors and silently got in. The engine started, as we swiftly drove away. I sat there, in silence. Thinking about the great day I had just had. I thought about the freedom, and her face. The face of gentleness, I thought about what I did right, and what I did wrong. The hours passed, as we sped down the highway. My phone received nothing. I wasn't worried. I didn't care if I received a message or not. I was just happy that I was free. I slowly grabbed a mouthful of air. It gently calmed me. In a way it told me I was free. Free from what exactly. I don't truly know. But it put me at ease. It set me free.

---

## Commencement speech

[Continued from 41]

fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, children, cousins, grandparents, uncles, aunties, host parents, for all of your help. Thank you, for reducing the volume of the TV when we had to study. Thank you, for being there when we had questions, and for being there to ask questions. Thank you, for giving us gas money or rides to school and for helping baby sit. Thank you, for helping us with all or a portion of our tuition. I would like to thank all the instructors for putting up with our silly questions, not making us feel inferior, even if we try to make them feel like we know more than they do sometimes. Thank you to the all of the staff members for helping us in one way or the other accomplish our goals. You have all cared for us in various ways and the amount of gratitude in our hearts cannot be quantified with words.

I am sure every one of us has the same questions I have been asking myself. What do we do with what we have learned in college? Did I have to go to college? I mean I could have read my textbooks at home; learned from that and start a business somewhere. But as I ask myself again and again as I look around me, and the answer is staring at me right in the face. College is not all about what you learn in the classroom, it's probably 50-70 percent of what you learn in the classroom, and say 30-50 percent of what you learn in the environment. I have learned so much from just watching our athletes play and win championships, by watching the agricultural students go around the country and win competitions, by watching the vet tech students win the championship bowl for three consecu-

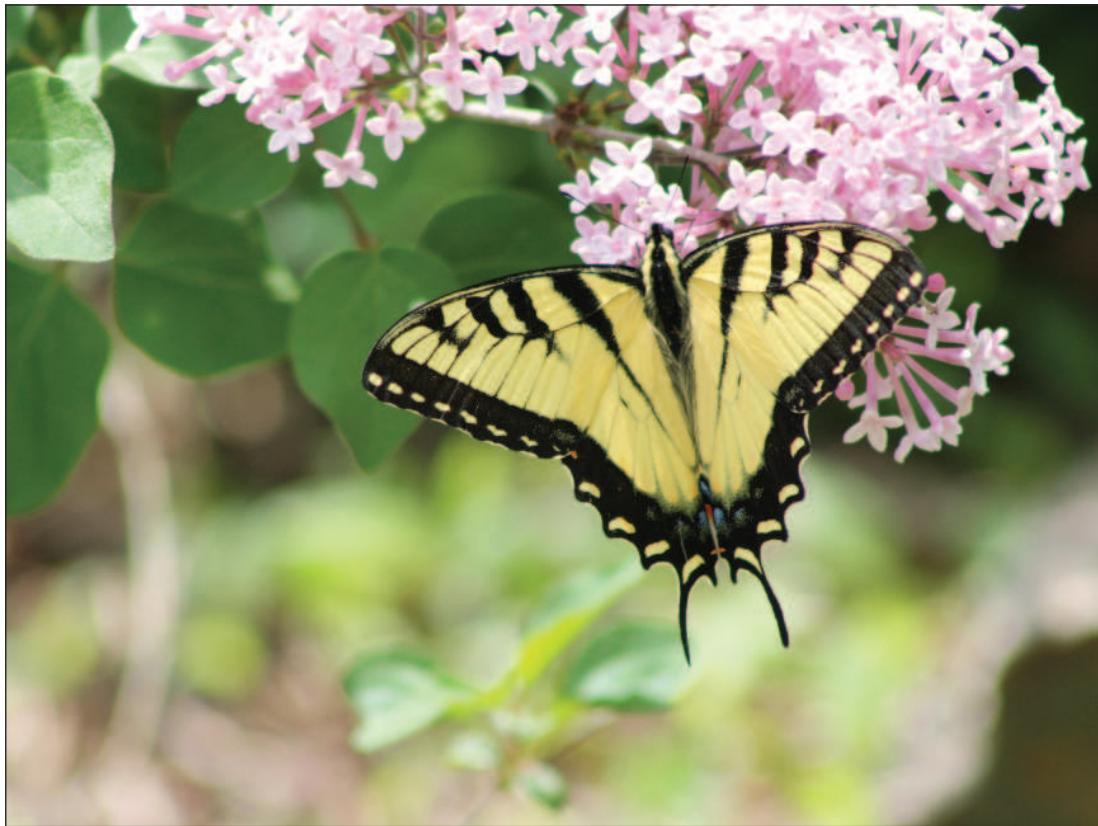
tive times. I have learned from watching, but not only from watching but also by doing. I come from a country where volunteer service makes no sense. No money, no service. But Crowder has taught me and every one of us here today to serve our fellow students, our community, the nation, and now sending us out to serve the world.

As the May 2013 graduation speaker for Crowder College, I want to recognize every graduate for this tremendous achievement. We all now have educational knowledge and skills, and it's time to acquire more life skills. You may be my doctor, my nurse, my banker; you might even be the one to produce the food I eat tomorrow, the governor of Missouri or even the President of the United States of America. But I would like to put one thing in your minds and I hope it stays there forever- People will recognize you and respect you as a result of your level of caring for them, the level of selfless services you render to people around you, not just by knowledge. Knowledge is nothing to people around you if they need your help and support and you fail to assist them. Caring for people is what brings you honor and respect, but having much knowledge and no care in the world makes you useless to humanity. We are all future leaders and leaders lead by example. Now some of us will be furthering our education while some of us will be going straight into the workforce. I wish every one of you success in all your life endeavors. We have come this far and not everyone who started has made it, so congratulations!!! Crowder College has completed its task with us... WE ARE NOW civil, serving, literate, and responsible citizens. MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!!! CONGRATULATIONS!!!

## Lilac and Swallowtail

Pam Dorton  
Verona  
Community  
Honorable Mention  
Color Photography

*This is one of my favorite summer visitors to my flower garden. As the flowers begin to bloom, the butterflies add color and beauty for a spectacular show!*  
Canon EOS Rebel XS,  
1/400 second, 7.1



## Mustang Pride

Julio Gonzalez  
McDonald County  
High School  
Silver  
2D Media

*My school mascot was my inspiration. I am proud of my school.*  
Colored pencil



## Reaching to Something Better

Tiffany Hamill  
Neosho  
Crowder  
Honorable  
Mention  
2D Media

*Acrylic and foil*



# Education That Works

R.L. Preston  
Greenfield  
Crowder  
Honorable Mention  
Nonfiction

*What are young people to do when they struggle to fit into the box of public education? In a country focused on individuality, it's time to ask some hard questions and offer hope to those who want to learn in spite of the fact that they do so differently than the status quo. Education is only a real education if it works for the students.*

“ In recent years, the American educational system has become the object of professional criticism, public speculation, and extensive studies.” While this sounds like a headline fresh from today’s mainstream media, it is actually the opening line of a report prepared by Specialty Research Associates, Inc. over 20 years ago. Just beneath this opening statement, the report cites the 1983 Department of Education study titled “A Nation at Risk.” The statistics showed alarming trends in lower SAT scores and a variety of indicators that pointed to a declining status in American education. (Barton, 1990) That was almost a generation ago. Another more current piece of research shows the United States fifth from the bottom out of 31 countries in average math scores of 15 year olds. (Berk, 2011) One would have to be completely cut off from the world not to have heard that our education system is not accomplishing what it could and should be. The question is what to do about it.

While conflict theorists might blame the wealthy for not paying for better education for the poor, some in the area of education believe it is the process that is broken. A one-size-fits-all system can hardly deal with individual person-

alities and learning styles. Of course, money to support varieties of learning opportunities can always help, but to those gifted to teach, money may not be the biggest issue. For one teacher, at least, the problem is the educational box of uniformity that keeps a healthy block of children from succeeding in school.

Shelly Asher teaches geometry for Monett High School. Before going to Monett, Shelly taught what she lovingly called her “New Hope Group.” Her classroom was as unique as her students. Cubicles made a “U” around the perimeter to give them privacy when it was needed. The center of the room held group projects. Positive posters reminded them that every person contributes something special to the world, but Shelly had the misfits, and they knew it. In their regular classrooms they were failures. In her class they were special. Sitting still for an hour was a tough assignment for these kids. They were verbal and demonstrative. Most people probably thought they were learning impaired, but Shelly saw something different. (Asher, 2013)

She decided to dig deeper with a simple personality test. What she found surprised her.

## Winter Thrill

Anissa Morris  
Neosho  
Staff  
B&W Photography

*This picture was taken outside during the first snow fall of the season, capturing my excitement.*



Every student tested high in the same two categories. They were all highly creative and mechanical, kinesthetic learners. She knew they learned best by doing, but the results showed that they did not just *like* doing rather than reading. That was *how* they learned. She ran with it. Math turned into building birdhouses. Project after project was a success. The school saw the results of their work in completed assignments and grades, but eventually closed the program because their primary objective was to assimilate these students back into the classroom. They were learning, but they were not learning to fit into the educational box. (Asher, 2013)

It is time to ask some hard questions. Are the students there for the system, or is the system there for the students? The answer to that question may well determine the success or failure of our children's education. It is a valid argument that these young people will eventually have to fit into the real world, but is the real world the same for everyone? Our local school no longer offers shop classes because of the cost of liability insurance. So where are these children to go to learn to do what they are gifted to do? Most people will not become accountants who sit behind a desk. According to Mrs. Asher, "Once they learn how they learn, they can use that information to help them use their gifts in that real world." So who will teach them how they learn in a traditional classroom?

Shelly's students fit the profile of another, very famous outcast, Albert Einstein. Einstein is known as a genius, but he was not a student who fit in the proverbial box. His "...parents worried that he had a learning disability because he was very slow to learn to talk." He initially did well in school, but "... hated the rote, disciplined style of the teachers at his Munich school, and he dropped out when he was 15." (History Channel, 2013) Obviously, all these



## Negative Allen

Allen Bishop  
Neosho  
Community  
Honorable Mention  
2D Media

*I usually make nonobjective works, but occasionally I break down and draw or paint realistic things like this self-portrait. There are so many exciting image resources, that I think that you don't need to be so exclusive. Chalk on black paper. This is an inverted version of "Positive Allen." The two pieces are intended to be displayed together.*

students are not of the genius kind, but the loss of their contribution is still a significant loss. Maybe a new approach could offer some solutions.

To make a different point, Mrs. Asher shared the story of another student in her school. Her name is Holly. The year she graduated, Holly was the Salutatorian of her class. The summer before her senior year she traveled to Japan to attend school there on a special scholarship much like our foreign exchange program. When she came home she was asked what the major differences were in the Japanese schools and our American schools. She said the main difference was the attitude toward education. In the United States, education is not just

[Continued to 48]

## Education That Works

[Continued from 47]

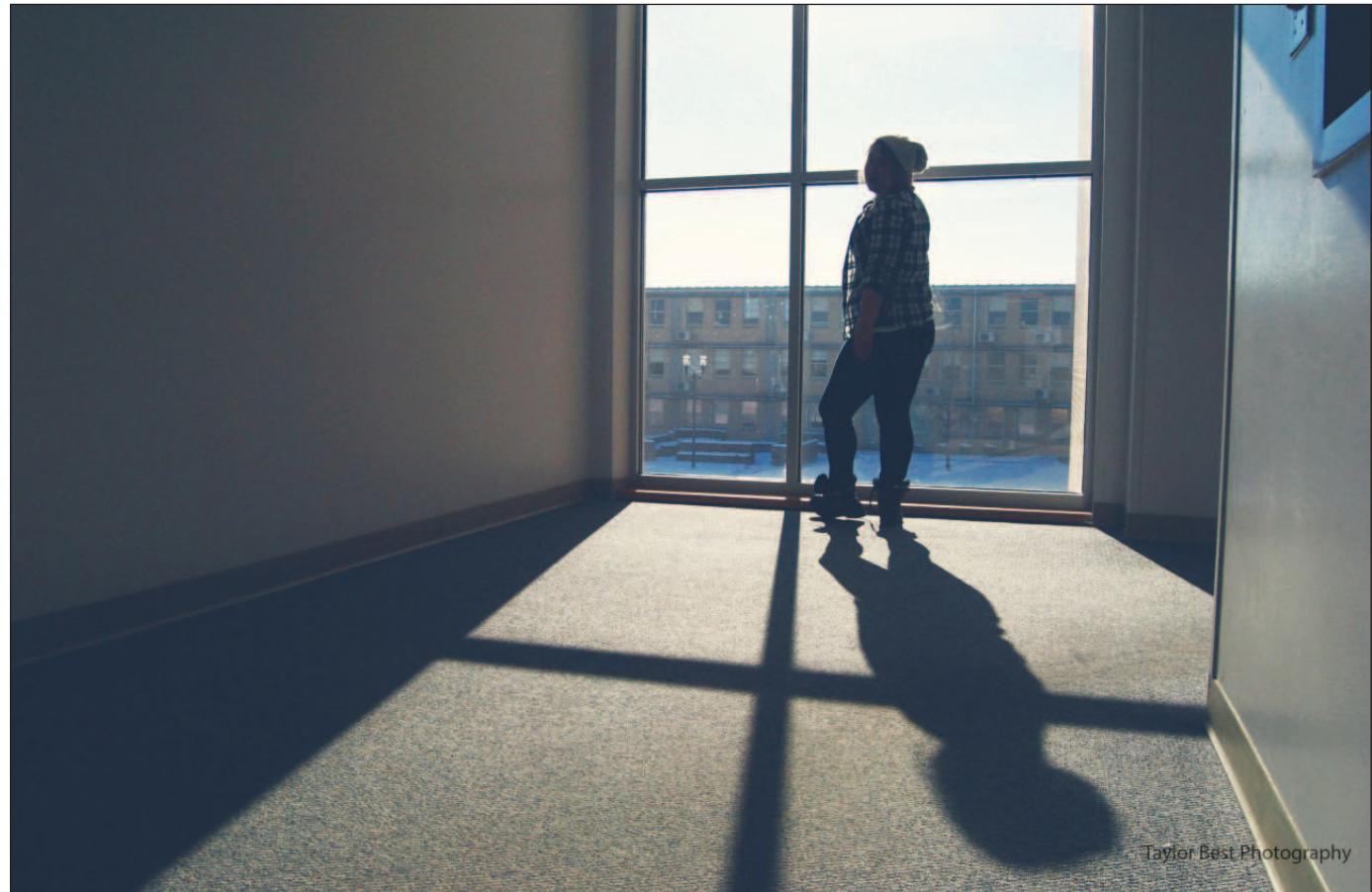
free. It is mandated. It is sometimes hard to look at something as an advantage when you are told you have no choice. In Japan, only those who can afford it and score well on entrance exams are allowed to attend. There is a great deal of respect attached to going to school. Respect is something many of our schools are seriously lacking. (Asher, 2013) It is interesting to note that the same study that ranked the U.S. in the bottom six in 15-year-old's math scores ranked Japan in the top ten. According to our text, "Asian children, influenced by collectivist values, typically view striving to do well in school as a moral obligation – part of their responsibility to family and the community." In Japan, teachers are "...highly respected in their society, and far better paid than U.S. teachers." (Berk, 2011)

So what are we to do? Making education a higher priority than paying politicians for life would be a good start to redistributing the wealth to our schools. Our government should be an example of service, not privilege. More money would definitely help, but probably cannot solve all the problems. Flexibility for stu-

dents to be taught in a way they can learn, and grouping people according to their interests and learning styles, might be an improvement.

A rebirth of respect for knowledge and authority could open a highway of change, but our individualistic citizens seem more concerned with having their own way than doing what is best for the group. Since more is caught than taught, the easiest way for our children to learn respect would probably be for the adults in our country to model that respect. This should filter down into the classrooms. Lastly, those who are teachable would obviously learn more without the distraction of those who resent being held against their will. Alternative schools should be available to deal with the unique challenges of educating students determined not to learn.

Maybe it is about more than a rating on a chart. Maybe it is about: 1) hiring teachers who are gifted to teach, 2) supporting the teachers and students with the funds they need, 3) helping students learn how they learn best, 4) understanding the value of knowledge, and 5) removing disrespect from the classrooms so those who want to learn can. After all, learning to love learning is the real goal. A successful student will learn for a lifetime. That is a real education – an education that will work.





## Web of Dreams

Gracen Frazier  
Carl Junction  
High School  
Gold  
3D Art

*I have always been interested in dream catchers since I was little and I collected them. I thought it would be fitting to have my mosaic go along with that theme.*

*Mosaic, cut glass*



# To Phoenix by Midnight

Emily Cole  
Carl Junction  
High School  
Bronze  
Fiction

*I wrote this story for an assignment in my creative writing class.*

*The inspiration came from my friend, Stormi, whose only request was that I name a character after her. So I did.*

The sun beats down on the leather covered back of the rider as his horse gallops east across the hot dry sand of the Arizona desert. He wipes the back of his hand across his forehead and then wipes that on his pants. He's sweating buckets, but he can't stop riding. The message in his right jacket pocket is urgent and needs to be in Phoenix by midnight.

A vulture circles over him, and he's overwhelmed with a sense of impending doom. Which he thinks is stupid, because it's just a bird. But he knows vultures normally only target dead things, so why has this one been following him for the last mile?

It's close to sundown, and soon the sky will be dark, and he'll have to trust the stars to lead him where he needs to go. He finds himself wishing he'd paid more attention when his father had taught him.

About an hour later the sky's black as tar, no moon and not a single star, and he's completely lost. He isn't worried, though, as long as he continues on in a straight path he should wind up close to Phoenix. He knows he's still on the right path when an hour later he can see the shadow of Fringe Pass looming up ahead. Fringe Pass is essentially two huge cliffs protruding up from the ground with a thin gap in-between. He has to consider his options: he could either ride around the pass and add hours to his time that he simply can't afford or he could ride through and risk getting attacked.

The cliffs of the pass provide excellent hiding places for wild animals and outlaws, he knows, but this message is stamped urgent and although he doesn't know what it says, he knows it's extremely important. He decides to take the risk, and go straight through the cliffs. By the time this decision is made he's reached the pass and a few minutes later he's passing between the first rocks. This is his first mistake.

He's forced to slow his horse to a walk because of the rocky terrain, but he's glad for the change of pace. He can't see a thing, only shadows, and that sense of foreboding is back, giving him chills. Even Ginger, his horse, is braying in what he can only call nervousness, and he pats her reassuringly on the neck.

"It's all right, girl. Nothing to be afraid of out here." He says soothingly, trying to convince himself as much as he is her.

He rides for another hour or so before he starts to hear it: the clattering of rocks behind him on the cliffs looming overhead. "It's nothing," he says aloud. "Just some animals." Even Ginger doesn't seem to believe him because she stops and kicks at the ground with her hoof. He tries to urge her to continue, but she won't budge. Sighing, he climbs off to see if she will allow him to lead her through.

"C'mon Gingy, just a bit further," he urges, and it's true. He can see the slightly lighter area that he knows must be the end of the pass. Just as she's starting to take a few tentative steps, another rock falls and lands right next to her. She spooks and whinnies loudly. He looks up at the cliff face and at that exact moment the clouds part and the moon comes out in its full glory, providing a dramatic backlight to the figure standing on the top.

He can make out that it's a person, and that they're wearing a hat, but other than that nothing stands out. Unfortunately, this means he can't tell if they're friend or foe. And that's slightly concerning.

"Hello, darling," came a soft, teasing purr from the shadows. The voice was clearly that of a female, and so he let his guard down slightly.

"Good evening, miss," he calls back up to the dark figure. She giggles lightly and slips gracefully down off her perch on the cliff. Her boots make a soft *clunk* against the rocks she lands on, and he can finally see her face in the bright moonlight.

He finds himself under the scrutiny of her bright green eyes, and the ease he'd felt at discovering she was a female was slowly ebbing away. She had her unnaturally red hair over her shoulder in a braid and a light brown hat rested on her head. She walked almost seductively towards him until they were face to face.

"Are you lost, sweetheart?" she coos, bringing up a hand to lightly stroke his face. His breath catches in his throat and he shakes his head. "No ma'am," he replies politely and calmly, but his heart is beating at a rapid pace. Her nails, which she's filed into slight points, cut into his face, leaving red marks down his cheek. His eyes widen in fear and he attempts to step back from her, but somehow she'd managed to back him against a wall. "Wh-who are you?" he asks shakily.

She smirks. "Oh, you don't recognize me,



honey?" she asks, a hint of mock hurt in her voice. "I'm sure you know my name though. It's Stormi. Stormi Dawn."

She was right. He does recognize her name, and with this recognition comes another wave of fear. Stormi Dawn was Arizona's most infamous outlaw, the daughter of the leader of the Dawn Riders, the most notorious gang outside of the James-Younger gang in Missouri. After her parents were killed she broke away and rode alone, killing anyone she came across. She only killed men, and no one knew why. Or how. Every corpse they recovered had no wounds or blood other than a few scratches, they were just dead.

Brought out of his momentary lapse he realizes that she is speaking to him again. "... and I just don't understand why a seemingly smart fella like you wouldn't set up camp for the night."

"Well see I have this—" he starts to explain but cuts himself off before he says any more. He doesn't feel it wise to share such important information with a wanted fugitive. She doesn't feel the same.

"Aw, c'mon darlin'," she drawls with a smirk. "You can tell me about your little message. You

can trust me."

"How did you know about it?" he asks incredulously, hand unconsciously moving to touch his right jacket pocket. She laughs, and it's a laugh that in a different situation would be cute and charming, he supposed, but in the dark with her so threateningly close, it's chilling. "I have my sources," is all she says.

She moves to pull something out of her own dark jacket and for a split second he fears it will be a gun. He thinks longingly of his own six-shot, a few yards away in the holster on Ginger's saddle. But instead she produces a shiny silver tube. "Lipstick?" he thinks curiously. She twists off the lid and the blood red make-up gleams in the moonlight. She slowly applies it, making sure to cover every inch of her previously baby pink lips.

He's feeling distinctly more uncomfortable now. Once she's finished she smacks her lips gently and places the tube back in her pocket. "Now, why don't you hand over that note, love?" she says sweetly. He shakes his head and for the first time she frowns. "Give it to me." She demands, sweet tone gone. Once again he refuses.

## **Behold a Pale Horse**

Aaron D. Goldstein  
McDonald County  
High School  
Honorable Mention  
B&W Photography

*The purpose of this photo is to provide a detailed look at an Arabian horse and show off its beauty during autumn.*

*ISO 200, 1/125 second, f5.6*

[Continued to 52]

## To Pheonix by Midnight

[Continued from 51]

Stormi leans in and repeats her order one more time, growling it lowly and he can feel her warm breath against his own lips. "No." he breathes back. She smirks once again and leans in that one last inch and kisses him square on the lips. He's frozen in shock, not kissing back and unable to pull away. When she pulls away, she smiles genuinely at him, and he's vaguely aware of how beautiful she is.

Her lipstick is sticky against his own chapped lips, and he unconsciously licks it away.

It tastes sweet and almost coppery. Almost instantly he begins to feel dizzy, and his vision blurs. Then suddenly he's on the ground; he must've fallen over, and she's smiling down at him. "You should've given it to me when you had the chance." She giggles and his eyes slowly shut. "Good night, honey."

The moon shines down on the cotton covered back of the rider as she pushes the ginger colored horse to ride west across the Arizona desert. Her bright hair shines and her eyes glint as she carries a paper marked "Urgent" further and further from its intended recipient.

## Dark Space

Jessie Collins  
Alba  
Community  
Silver  
2D Media

*The purpose is to  
inspire what other  
people think space  
looks like.  
Spray paint*



# Making History

Rolf watched in disbelief as the other scribes quietly ducked out of the room through a low window. For the second day in a row! Granted, the airball championships could be very exciting, but they had not been given permission to leave their work any more than he had! He frowned at himself, wondering if he was being overly conscientious because of his recent appointment. Though he officially held the rank of Historian, he had eagerly entered the School of Scribes at the suggestion of his aunt, the Queen of the Silver Fairy tribe.

Still wrestling with the decision, he stared at the report he had been assigned.

"The result of the trading negotiations between the Plant Fairy and Sky Fairy tribes was as follows. For the months of February, March, and April, the Sky Fairy Tribes will see that cloud cover is at a minimum. For the months of May through July..."

His mind droned off. In return for the excellent weather, the Plant Fairy tribe had committed to provide the first picking of this crop, and the best of the last picking of that crop, to the Sky Fairy tribe. He could find interesting points to the report, thanks to his background, but this was somehow not what he had had in mind when he dreamed of becoming a Historian.

Suddenly he realized that he had unconsciously picked up a new quill and begun copying again. With a sigh, he put thoughts of the airball championship games out of his mind. He had been given a task. He would complete that task. *Begin today to do those things you so admire in others.* His father's advice echoed in his mind, unquestionably an influence on the integrity of his choice. Also, Rolf could hardly imagine Historian Janet leaving a task incomplete. She had lasted the longest of any Historian ever sent to the distant Sky Fairy capital, Regalis.

He froze, his quill poised above the parchment. He had been about to write "Janet!" An error like that would have meant needing to start the copy from the beginning – and finding a way to discreetly dispose of the evidence of his thoughts wandering. Carefully redirecting his mind, he began reviewing the reasons why Historians were required to first complete a ten-year apprenticeship as scribes. Copying the reports ensured that they were schooled in proper formatting and given the opportunity to practice their penmanship. They also got to

see a variety of reporting styles.

Personally, Rolf preferred Historian Janet that was, he preferred a straight-forward accounting of the events, free from the use of personal pronouns such as "I" and "my" over the lengthy, self-aggrandizing reports that some Historians were fond of writing.

Diligently Rolf wrote on, preparing letter-perfect copies for the libraries in each of the Silver Fairy tribe's eight major cities, and finally switching to the fine linen paper for the last five copies. Historians were certainly thorough. Pausing, he flexed his right hand and inspected his quill. Finding the nub worn nearly down, he reached for his penknife. His already hopelessly inked fingers moved nimbly through the process of removing the weakened barrel and shaping a fresh section into the delicate nib he would need.

"Well, young Rolf," a warm hand came to rest lightly on his shoulder. Its owner restricted himself to a faint smile as he perceived that he had accidentally startled the scribe. "Forgive me," he glanced at the scrap of once-blank paper, now marked by a heavy streak of ink, on which Rolf had been about to test his new nib. Withdrawing his hand from Rolf's shoulder, he reached down to pick up one of the drying reports. "What do you think, Janet?" asked Master Historian Elric, offering it to her.

Janet accepted the document and pretended to look at it for the sake of appearances. More than a scribe who could spell she needed one that was dependable, which this lad obviously was. Unless he just hated airball.

"You write a fine hand, scribe," she acknowledged. She was irked to hear some of her surprise manifest itself in her voice. She did not mean to be insulting, but he was a bit young to have such flawless penmanship. She looked up from the document and found herself again surprised. She was not so very far from her own time as a scribe, near enough certainly to remember the slope-shouldered scribes with scraggly hair who wiped their noses on their sleeve cuffs. This lad was quite different, from his clear, direct gaze to his perfectly creased shirt collar.

"My thanks, Historian," Rolf managed to say at last. He felt dozens of other things crowding at his lips – questions about her assignments, observations about how his sisters would love to be old enough to get their hair up

Lea Carter  
Granby  
Community  
Honorable Mention  
Fiction

*This is a peek into the life of Rolf Wagner, a character created in the Silver Sagas series. He is quite young and has a lot of potential.*

[Continue to 54]

## Making History

[Continued from 53]

### A Step into Starry Night

Susan Covert  
Webb City  
Crowder  
Gold  
3D Art

*From the first time I saw Vincent van Gogh's Starry Night (1889), I've wanted to step into it. I want to feel the wind blow, smell the outdoors, hear the insects chirp and buzz, and be a part of the scene. Since this cannot be, I decided to create my own world of Starry Night. Clay, paneling, caulk, paint, adhesive*

in that kind of a bun, a compliment about how the bun suited her oblong face...he clamped his lips tightly shut to keep from embarrassing himself.

Master Elric was a keen judge of character and had marked Rolf as one of the few scribes who would be suitable for any number of assignments. Rolf's royal training gave him the advantage of choosing his words carefully, even when upset, something that many fairies never learned. It also meant that he understood the importance of tedious things like trade negotiations and military supply reports. And then, there was the fact that Rolf did not just accept guidelines for his life from others, he tested them for himself or watched others disregard them, and then pay for it in one way or another. Elric had even discussed a new rule for the scribes with Rolf before implementing an adjusted version of it. Somehow Elric had been certain they would find him here, hard at work, while other scribes were playing truant.

Janet's eyes suddenly narrowed as she spied the family crest on the scribe's jacket shoulder. There were many from titled families who entered the School of Scribes in the hopes of becoming Historians someday, so at first she had taken no notice of it.

"Rolf Wagner?"

Rolf almost cringed away from the disbelief in her tone. Of all the reactions to his identity outside of his role as a scribe, this was his least favorite. He could hardly interrupt everyone he met and explain he was the Queen's nephew. Surely the Historian could appreciate that. What, then, had been done to make her feel so deceived?

"Leave those copies, Rolf," Master Elric interrupted the thoughts that he could see moving furiously across both Janet's and Rolf's faces. "I want you to accompany Historian Janet to the archives and assist her with some research."

"As you say, Master Elric," Rolf agreed, though he would rather have copied a thousand reports of trade negotiations than have to go with her while she was still angry. Wiping his fingers on a dry rag to remove any excess ink, he swiftly gathered up his things and snapped his case shut. Rising, he bowed. "I am at your service, Historian Janet."

She turned silently away, without looking at Master Elric. "Can you fly?" she asked the lad.

"I have not yet begun my lessons," Rolf answered honestly. It was simpler than explaining his mother's fears and the doctor's restrictions. Besides, Historian Janet assuredly knew the details of his aunt's accidental death.

"Then let us walk." Feeling ashamed with herself for misdirecting her shock towards the





lad, who could not help having been born into the royal family, she resolved to take a softer approach. Thankfully she had at least remembered the tragedy before lifting off.

"As you say, Historian."

"You do not need to address me so formally," Janet said after a moment. "We are both Historians, after all."

Rolf considered the statement before responding slowly, "I am only an appointed Historian. You have earned your title."

Surprised and impressed, Janet said nothing further until they arrived at the archives.

"I need to find records from your great-grandfather's reign," she told him. "Regarding an agreement negotiated with the Sky Fairy tribe."

He felt his heart beginning to pound as they walked deeper and deeper into the archives, passing ceiling-high shelves that sagged under the weight of old-fashioned volumes. His black jacket brushed one of the shelves as they walked but came away dust-free.

At last they came to a stop before a wall covered with doors. She knew most of the compartments had never been used, for there were few secrets in Fairydom that needed such cooperation between tribes or this level of pro-

tection.

"Wait here," she instructed him. She paused. "Master Elric chose you, Rolf, because you are one who understands what confidential means."

Though puzzled as to what might need to be kept secret from so long ago as King Anthony's reign, Rolf nodded.

Lifting off, she flew nearly to the ceiling. Locating the correctly dated door, Janet withdrew two small keys from an inner pocket. One was made of finely chiseled crystal and the other of steel-cored silver. The secret of the keys lay in *not* turning the delicate crystal key, which was designed to shatter at the least application of torsional pressure. Once she had inserted it as far as it would go, she carefully inserted and turned the silver key. The door swung open.

Removing the small box that she found inside, Janet closed the door and returned the keys to her pocket. Gradually she let herself descend until her feet were again on the floor. Looking Rolf in the eyes, she made her decision.

"I have an assignment for you, scribe. You will accompany me to the Sky Fairy tribe and help me record events that will change things for all of Fairydom."

## Dreamer

Cheyenne Pickett  
Carl Junction  
High School  
Bronze  
2D Media

*This is a representation of what broken dreams can become. The image I chose to portray in the strings of the broken dream catcher is a horse. It is a symbol of strength and wisdom.*

*Acrylic paint on black spray paint*

# “Gotcha”

Alexandria T.  
Andrews  
Pierce City  
Crowder  
Bronze  
Nonfiction

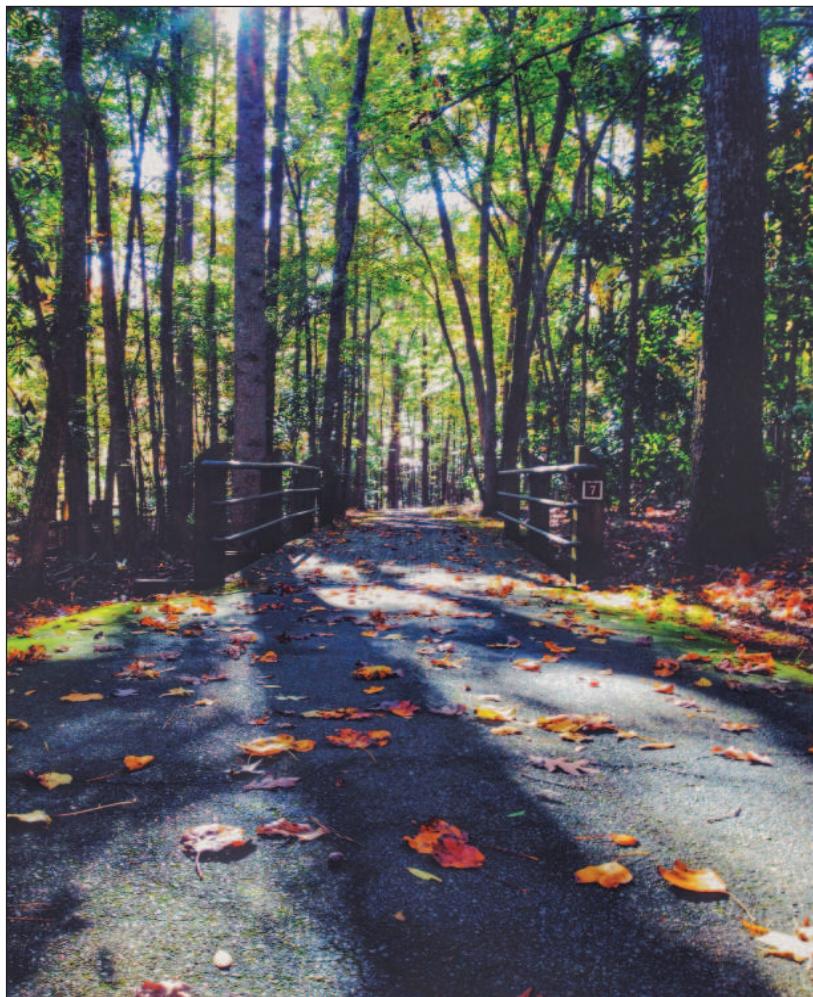
*This is a true story about my beagle “Buddy”, who has since passed, but was quite a character. He made growing up quite eventful and fun. I love remembering the great times I had with him!*

**I**t started out as a typical Sunday morning, my dad and brothers finishing up their breakfast in the kitchen, my mom putting on the finishing touches of her makeup in the bathroom, and my sister Natalie and I, were heading out to the barn to do chores. We pulled on our boots and coats and raced out the door eager to get to the barn and play with the baby lambs before church. As we scooped grain into five gallon pails and filled water buckets for the sheep, we talked, giggling and carrying on like little girls do. Suddenly we heard wild shrieks coming from the front yard. In our alarm we abandoned water hoses and feed scoops and raced to the house to see what the commotion was about. As we rounded the corner of the house, we nearly crashed into my mother, her shrieks now audible.

“Get the dog! Get the dog! Buddy you come here now! Sit! Down! Sit down! Girls, Buddy is loose! Alex get the dog!” Mom exclaimed, as our

little beagle “Buddy” ran circles around the yard howling and teasing our mother first darting toward her, then away, running circles around her in his game of tag. My mother fully clad in her Sunday best, her blue dress was now dirt streaked. Her hair stuck out in all directions as if she had been stuck out in a hurricane, and one of her black heels had clearly been broken in her attempt to catch the absconder. Just then my dad raced down the stairs only to disappear behind the house. Since this wasn’t the first time Buddy had escaped, we had figured out a system. My dad would make a loop around the house and cut him off on the far side, my mother would head down the banking toward the creek, and the rest of us would fan out across the lawn. Once we were all in place, we started cautiously taking baby steps toward the fugitive who, at this point, thinking we had given up on the chase, lay dejected and sprawled in the middle of the lawn.

As we neared him, he sprang to his feet trying to elude us once again. With his tail wagging, he bound toward my mother who by this time was in a state of mental breakdown, collapsed in a heap on the lawn, sobbing and exhausted. Seeing the state Mom was in, Buddy crawled on his belly, legs outstretched over to her, begging for forgiveness. Mom picked up the mischievous bandit as he flooded her with wet sloppy kisses. Who could hold a grudge while being smothered in affection by such a cutie? Mom told Buddy he was on probation. From that day on, every time there was a prison break, protocol was to act as if we were chasing the escapee, and then drop to the ground and pretend to cry. Every time, just like clockwork, Buddy would give in to his guilty conscience and run to the poor soul weeping on the lawn. Gotcha, caught again!



## Changing Seasons

Josh Leyva  
Seneca  
Crowder  
Honorable Mention  
Color Photography

*A walk through Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Georgia  
iPhone 4S*



## Crystal Springs

Latonia Bailey  
Goodman  
Staff  
Color Photography

*I was inspired by the gush of life for which the Crystal Bridges Museum is named. Slowed shutter produces flowing water effect*

# New Year's Resolutions

Fewer regrets, more living

Less begrudging, more forgiving

Less grieving, more accepting

Less doubting, more believing

Not holding back

Reclaiming,

Revising

Dreams of long ago

Sun peaking through the trees,

Warmth of light and love

More living

More dreaming, more achieving

More believing in me, trusting in Him

In the babbling brook,

I hear God whisper a love song

Just for me

More living

in the moment

Being present

In the now

More reliving fond memories

Instead of yesterday's mistakes

More trusting tomorrow

Instead of fearing its course

Taking new paths,

Breaking free from expectations

Moving beyond obstacles, excuses,

and temporary situations

Finding beauty in the day

Taking time for joy

Breathing in deeply

Noticing textures in the tree bark

Rock formations like thrones fit for giants

Water ripples glistening in the sun,

Reflecting the sky above

Loving this day

Wondrous creation all around

Fewer regrets, more living

Latonia Bailey  
Goodman  
Staff  
Poetry

*Written on a sunny day in late December while ambling a peaceful creek-side trail*

# Jack

J. Kent Allred  
Bella Vista, Ark.  
Community  
Gold  
Fiction

*I would like to say  
thanks to all those out  
there who still value the  
art of the short story.*

**A**lthough Jack was not a Langer by blood, he still considered himself a vital member of the family. The Langers removed him from foster care the fall that Garrett began kindergarten and Leigh Ann followed a year later. Jack was fully aware that his degree of intelligence would never reach that level and learned to accept the fact that he had limited faculties. In addition, he didn't quite look like one of the Langers. He was smaller in stature and his facial features didn't look the same. He wasn't grossly deformed by any means; his eyes, nose and mouth were all in the right spot, but his features simply were not the Langer-like, piercing blue eyes and straight blond hair that were so prevalent in the rest of the family. He knew he would never be able to speak, but he could still communicate through signals and grunts, and while his siblings learned quickly, it sometimes took several attempts to clarify the family rules for little Jack.

Jack knew the Langers treated him well (not quite on an equal level) yet still, he was happy. He got to bunk in the same room with Garrett, ate breakfast and dinner every night with the family, and when everyone went off to school or work, Jack laid around on the couch and watched game shows or movies on Lifetime with Judy, who was pretty much in charge of everything in the Langer home. Then the kids would return in the afternoon and as soon as they stepped off the school bus, Jack knew they would include him in their playtime until they were all called down to dinner.

He was, for the most part, a Langer, and introduced as such at family reunions and on holidays when guests came to visit. He realized his emotions were much more sensitive than his siblings and he frequently over reacted. He was prone to getting upset when having to sit on long journeys in the car, had the occasional social outburst and knew he embarrassed the family by his uncontrollable drooling when he got overly excited, in public places. It was one of several physical conditions that the doctors labeled as "chronic," -- incurable.

As Garrett and Leigh Ann grew into their teens, they began developing new friends of their own and including Jack in their endeavors became less and less frequent; in return, Jack also began to withdraw. He knew he was loved but in the back of his mind he was haunted by

the fact that he was adopted. He became disillusioned with becoming a true Langer.

Over the years, Jack had begun wandering down to the convenience store in the evenings to socialize. Judy became worried about his safety at first and then worried about the negative influence of the teens who congregated outside the store and traded cigarettes, but she quickly realized that Jack was growing up and had reached a point in his life where he could take care of himself.

Things changed drastically after Garrett and Leigh Ann went off to college; Jack became more and more independent. He was spending every evening down at the convenience store with the unruly teenagers mooching off of the customers as they pumped gas or went in to buy beer. At first, Judy would walk down to the corner to let him know it was dinner-time, and this embarrassed him to no end. He would turn his back on her, ignore her, and once the message was clear, she stopped "mothering" him and allowed him to come home on his own terms. There were even occasions when he stayed out all night and Judy knew she couldn't treat him like a baby anymore.

And then, one day, Jack became extremely irritated when Judy began constructing a craft-space for herself in he and Garrett's room. It wasn't like she was taking over the entire room, but still, he felt violated. Realizing Jack was needing more freedom, Judy and her husband built Jack his own room in the heated barn. Now Jack could come and go as he pleased and if he occasionally wanted to entertain guests, it would no longer disturb the Langer household. While Jack liked his new, private space, in contrast, he was deeply offended at being forced out of the home like some sort of animal.

One evening, as he congregated outside the convenience store, it occurred to him... how to seek the ultimate revenge -- he would take his own life. The only question now was just how to actually do it. There was a deep ravine about a half-mile away in the neighbor's field that he and Garrett played at when they were young. He could jump off and the fall would possibly do the trick, but they might not come across his body for several days. He writhed while thoughts of birds and bugs eating off his corpse until it decomposed crossed his mind. Then he thought about the train tracks that ran through

town, nothing could survive that. But it would certainly be painful and so messy. Who would ever want to go out in that fashion? Then, he thought about the swimming pool in the back yard of his home; drowning would not be a bad way to go. But then it occurred to him how difficult it must be to hold yourself under water, he knew that once the body was deprived of oxygen that its natural instincts would take over and attempt to survive.

Then he began questioning himself, "How in the world did things get to this point where he was actually thinking of taking his own life? Where had it all gone wrong? As he grew older and less patient, did he pull away from Garrett and Leigh Ann or did they abandon him? Maybe Judy stopped coming down to check on him because he had turned his back on her and treated her so rude in front of his friends. He could still make it right," he thought. "There was still time. He could live with Judy's craft table in his room after all; he just needed to prove to her that he could be a member of the family once again."

Without bidding farewell to his convenience store acquaintances, Jack sprinted down the street towards home. With over-powering excitement in his chest, he was optimistic that the Langers would welcome him back with open arms as soon as he arrived for dinner.

Failing to check for traffic on either side of him, he bound into the street, and he was struck immediately by a minivan. The impact sent his body careening until it came to rest against the curb ten feet in front of the vehicle. He heard the door of the van open behind him, but he was unable to turn and see the driver.

"Stupid dog!"

Jack recognized the insult from when he was a puppy living with his foster family; shame settled in, but his tail was too weak to tuck between his legs. He faded in and out of consciousness -- he was happy to see Judy had found him just moments after hearing the accident in the street. He felt her warm palm upon him as it patted his belly and with all the strength he could muster, he gave one final wag as over-whelming life, over-whelmed little Jack Langer.

## Self-portrait in the Rockies

Amy M. Sampson  
Monett  
Community  
Honorable Mention  
B&W Photography

*On a hike to Dream Lake in RMNP Colorado, I stopped and took this self portrait overlooking the valley. I converted it to black and white to accentuate the loneliness and solitude of a solo hike.*  
Canon T1i, Exposure 1/125, and F11



# Master of the Machine

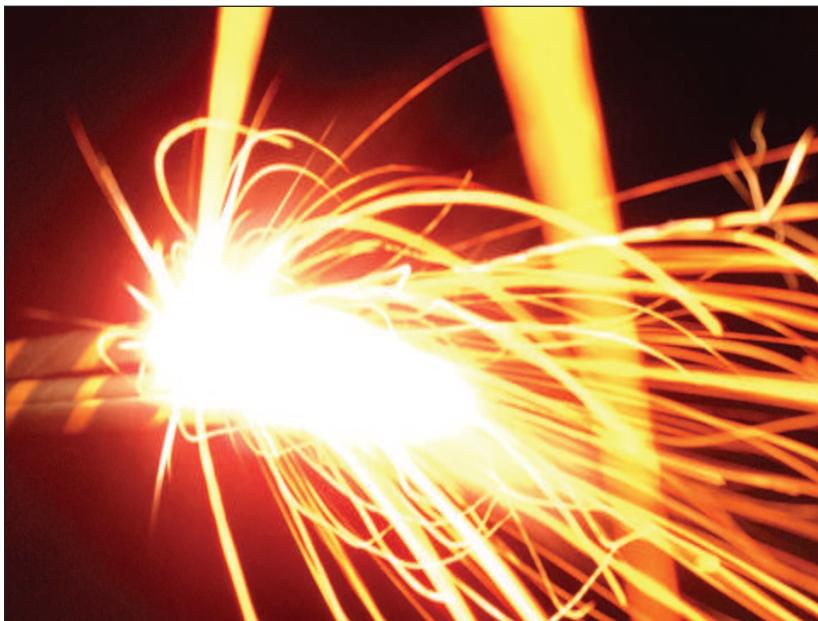
Michael G. Jernigan  
Joplin  
Community  
Silver  
Nonfiction

*This story is true as written. My brother & I had several adventures with the go-kart that summer. On one occasion I fell off and broke my left arm. So, not everything was fun with the go-kart.*

## Fourth of July

Eli Cole  
Granby  
Home School  
Bronze  
Color Photography

*A typical picture of the Fourth of July.*



To me, an eight-year-old boy, having a go-kart was about the best thing that could have happened to me. Even though it was built by a friend of my father, to me it was a fantastic machine. It was made from iron pipes welded together to make a frame. The two rear tires were big and the two front tires were much smaller. A lawn mower engine provided its awesome power. The seat was a rectangular piece of wood covered with white vinyl. The go-kart was painted a bright, sunshine yellow. I was proud to have such a speedster, even if I did have to share it with my younger brother, Buddy.

Buddy and I were only eleven months apart in age. Buddy hated being the little brother and he never missed the opportunity to show me that he was just as smart as I was. I wasn't about to give him the chance to prove it.

My mother was close to shooting my father for bringing such a contraption home to Buddy and me. She wouldn't hear of us riding in the busy streets. She just knew we would end up splattered all over the road by one of the big trucks that came back and forth down our narrow residential street to the cotton mill.

So Buddy and I were confined to riding our go-kart in the yard, a vacant lot next door, and my grandmother's yard which was next to the vacant lot. Resigned to that we set out to establish our race track. We formed a big figure-eight track that stretched from the front of the vacant lot near the road, around the huckleberry

bushes in the middle of the lot, to near the back porch of my grandmother's house.

Buddy and I loved riding the go-kart. That was about all that we did that whole summer. Sometimes we even rode it together. Buddy would sit on the right half of the seat and control the accelerator and I would sit on the left side and control the brake.

Being the older brother I felt in charge of the go-kart. I just knew that I could always start it and I could always fix anything that went wrong with it. I was the master of that machine!

Early one morning, before anyone else was out of bed, I went out to ride the go-kart. I found that it had been left at my grandmother's house, so I went there to get it. I tried to start the go-kart. I took the long white rope and wrapped it around the thing-a-ma-gig on the engine. Grabbing the black rubber handle I jerked with all of my might.

Sput-sput-sput was all the engine would do. I rewrapped the rope and jerked back harder the second time. Still it wouldn't start. I checked the gas tank--plenty of gas. I checked the oil--it looked OK. So I wrapped the rope again and jerked--NOTHING!

I was a very stubborn kid. After all, I was the master of this machine and I wasn't about to let it stump be. I couldn't have Buddy laughing at me for not being able to get it started.

I wrapped the rope and jerked time and time again. I was soaked in sweat and getting hotter and madder by the minute. The go-kart seemed to be teasing me. It would occasionally sound almost like it was going to start. Though my arms and back were aching, I wouldn't give up.

Suddenly, the go-kart roared into life. As stinky, white smoke from the exhaust filled my eyes, I saw the go-kart take off on its own! Momentarily paralyzed with fright, I stared with disbelief as it raced down the yard, plowed right across grandmother's flowers and was headed straight toward the house! I raced after it, huffing and puffing, but I couldn't catch it. With a crash the go-kart slammed into the foundation of my grandmother's house!

I was finally able to catch up to the go-kart. The front bumper had knocked three concrete blocks out from the foundation of my grandmother's house. The engine was still roaring. I managed to grab the spark-plug wire and disconnect it.

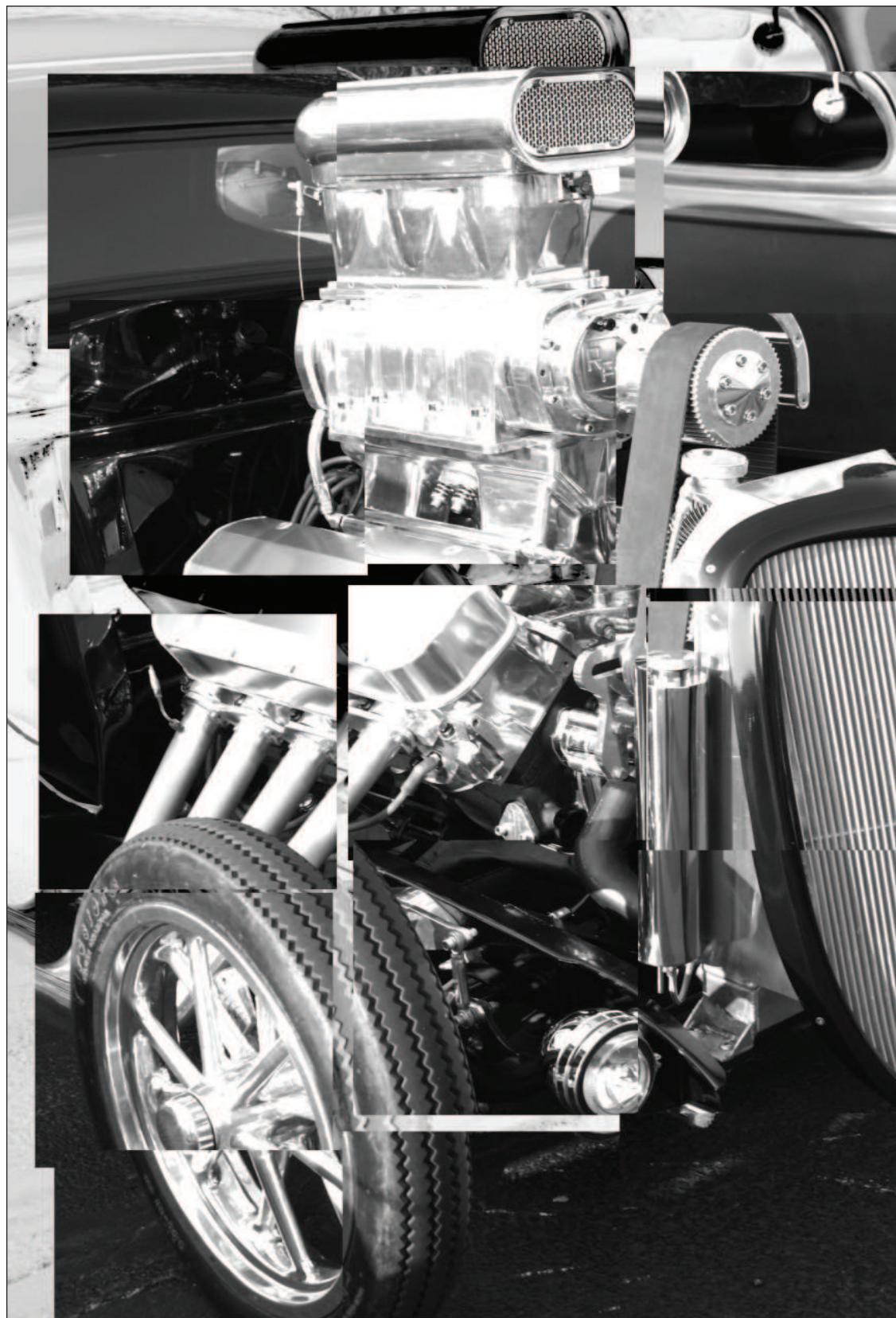
Standing there, heart pounding, out of breath, and soaked in sweat, I could see the two paths mowed through the flower bed where the tires mashed grandmother's flowers. I could see three concrete blocks crumbling from under

grandmother's house. But what was worse—I could see in my mind, Buddy laughing uproariously at me. I guess I wasn't the master of this machine after all!

## Off-set Squares

Leslie Wright  
Neosho Christian  
School  
Honorable  
Mention  
Digital Art

*A black and white photo, cut apart and thrown back together over a negatic like a mosaic.*



# The Lies Untold

Joseph Klink  
Neosho Christian  
School  
Gold  
Fiction

**S**o many lies, so much blood shed to cover up the truth. A truth that had been hidden for years and must now be brought forth. Countless lives taken so that the truth would remain a secret; there were two pieces of Eden, not one like we were told, and we were told it was destroyed. They had carefully hidden one and we thought that we were safe. But the reality of it was that we were not. No one was safe with the piece still out there, and it was only a matter of time before it surfaced again. We had to find it before someone else did; we had to destroy it before it changed the fabric of time. This was finally a piece to a puzzle that should never be solved, for if one man had both pieces he would be able to control the minds of men and bend their will; he could rule the world with these pieces. He could control the outcome of any situation and destroy the lives of many.

Time had always worked against us; we did not even know where to find this piece. The map was destroyed when the creator of the pieces was killed by an assassin. The creator of these pieces intended them to do good for the people, but it corrupted his mind and twisted his soul; he had used the pieces to bring the country to its knees. He was ultimate ruler and his people were nothing. When the creator was killed, one

piece vanished and hasn't been seen since. Time it seems was always working against us; we did not even have the necessary recourses to cross the vast countryside, and after the war most of our manpower was wiped out. With the amount of recourses we had, we could only travel a short distances at a time. This was the year of the blood moon, which meant that our time was very short and that we had to find and hide this piece before the blood moon began.

Our team had only numbered ten people; one group of five were researchers and they watched monitors for any power changes between the rifts. The other group, which I was the leader of, conducted raids of buildings or ruins to find this missing piece of eden. My name is Joshua Raven and I was the leader of the White Clouds; we were the last of what once was a great force that protected this world. A spike in the rift brought our attention to this abandoned library on the farthest edge of the country; it took months for my team to get there. When we arrived we started looking. This library was at least five stories tall and there was a book from all ages starting from the beginning of our time to what was to be the end. As my team cleared the huge library room by room, I found myself strolling through the aisles and running my hand over the dusty old books.

## Simple Joys

Jessica Cole  
Granby  
Crowder  
Honorable Mention  
Digital Art

*This is nothing special, just an old air duct. But if you look, you can find beauty in almost everything, not just in the things that are created to be beautiful. Find joy in the simple things, and you will be surrounded by beauty.*

*Photoshop's "Old Paper" effect*



These books once were held in great esteem by the high elves of this land but now, they lay unused gathering dust.

When my team had finally cleared the library we then began to look for the piece of Eden. We searched floor after floor, room after room, row after row but we did not find it. After about three hours of intense searching, we finally gathered in the great study hall. I looked outside and the moon was high in the sky; we were almost out of time. Our hope was dampened but we couldn't give up. The light from the moon shone through the dark red pane glass, giving the room a dark and sinister look. The paintings on the old walls turned evil and dark. It was getting colder in the room but a small shimmer of light shone from a crack in the wall. I walked over and examined the light. My eyes widened as I realized what I had found. I ordered my men to break down the wall, but as

they went to work my mind began to cloud.

When they had made a hole big enough for me to reach for the piece of Eden, I pushed them aside and reached my hand in the hole. At first I felt nothing, but then like a voice in the distance I heard an ancient voice, and I spoke the words that rung in my ears, and the dagger appeared in my hand. I pulled the blade out and was taken back by how it was detailed. I tightened my hand around its grip and suddenly I couldn't let go of the blade. A darkness, a hunger of greed and power filled me as I lost control of my body, and I then used the blade to take the lives of my team. I was taken, I had become the darkness I swore to fight against. The evil had overtaken me, and now I was a servant of the darkness with its power in my hand. With every life I took, my hunger for power grew. I am darkness, I am death.

## The Very Special Gift

Mary stood behind the crude buffalo-hide curtain drawn across the front of the one room school. Soon the program would begin. On a chair near her was an old fiddle that sounded raspy. Its music was not beautiful but it fit the log school, the Kansas prairie and her sorrow.

Mary never wanted anyone here to know she played an instrument. Coming to Bird City, Kansas, to live with her Uncle Josh had been the end of her world. Last month, she had turned ten. But somehow she felt much older. There had been four older brothers and a sister back home, when her papa had been alive. Papa always had his deep laughter bubbling up at the most surprising moments.

The War Between the States had come, and now her family was not the same. Strange-sounding places like Shiloh and Gettysburg had taken away her Papa and brothers. When her sister Beth had gotten scarlet fever and then died, Mama had gathered the family, the help, and everything they had and they left Three Pines, Georgia.

It had been a long, dangerous trip. Here, in Bird City with her mother's brother's family, they were starting to rebuild their lives. Mary felt lost among these people, who spoke as harshly as the old fiddle. Swedes and German people who often spoke no English seemed to surround her.

She had been only five when she had first taken Papa's fiddle from its place in the music room. Then, her mother played a golden harp while her sister Beth played the piano and Mama's singing rounded out the harmony. The music had flowed like water in a stream, filling the air with images, laughter and feelings that gave one goose bumps. She had wanted to be a part of it and took up the fiddle to play along in the background.

On her sixth birthday she had been invited to play next to Mama and Beth. Shy, she had done it with a heart pounding its own rhythm. Shortly afterwards, the Civil War had begun, and Papa and her brothers had ridden away.

Their visits home had been short, their faces changed from being soft and round with joy to thin, hard faces with lines and wrinkles of sorrow. She didn't understand the reason why people were fighting each other. Papa would say, "Nobody is going to tell me how to live, or what I can or cannot do."

A cold wind blew around her ankles, and even in woolen socks she felt the cold. The voices of her neighbors had grown silent. Was it time to begin? Peeking around the curtain she saw a tall man shaking off snow. His hair hung long in back, while a beard touched his belt buckle. He wore dark fringed leather like so many men did here on the prairie.

Sandy Jordan  
Neosho  
Community  
Silver  
Fiction

*We must mourn,  
then move on  
trusting God  
to lead the way.*

[Continued to 64]

## The Very Special Gift

[Continued from 63]

He had a huge poke sack on his back. He sat it on the floor and a little German girl with golden braids handed out brown paper wrapped gifts. Finally he was coming down the aisle toward the stage.

Heart pounding, she felt the need to run. Run, as she had the day the teacher caught her playing the school's fiddle. That day, she had run through grasses taller than herself. She was running now, running from the pain welling up inside. She needed to escape. Four years of bottled up tears were pouring from her, and ashamed, she ran on and on. Uncle Josh finally caught up with her, forcing her to come back to the school house.

The man was still there. He had pulled out a fringed leather case. Taking the old school fiddle from the chair he lay the new case in its place. Opening it, the man picked up the new fiddle and handed it to her.

Mary stood there, still breathing hard and

heart pounding. She looked up and saw his kind blue eyes, and the deep lines that marked his leathery face. Her hands reached up to take it, her heart was filling with joy. But her mind struggled, as she could not picture herself playing without her sister Beth on the piano and Mama on the harp. How could she play alone?

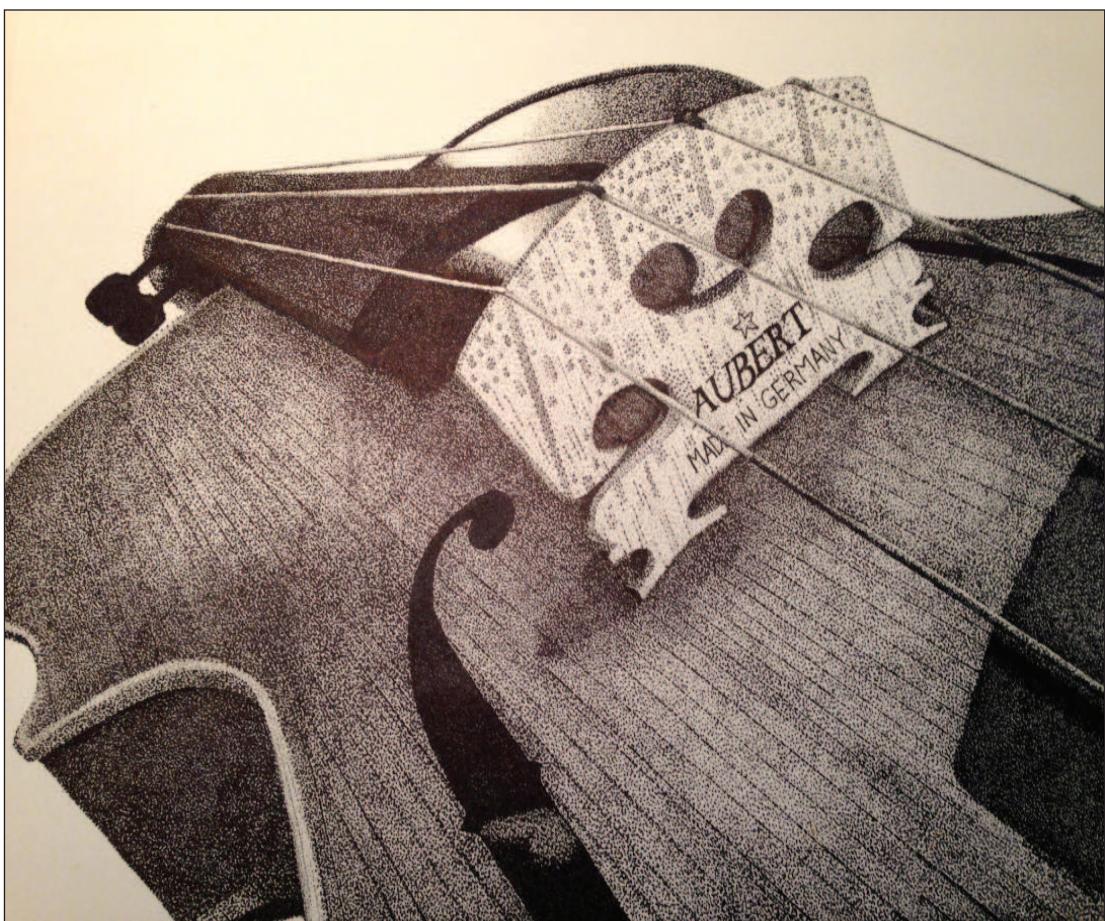
Something deep inside of her made her take the bow. He turned and walked away. Then her music began to flow like water in a stream. The fiddle's voice was beautiful, and she played the ancient carol, "Silent Night." The full sound of the fiddle filled the small school. Softly, voices began singing in English, German and Swedish, all mixing together in harmony.

One voice could be heard above all the rest. Her mother's rich soprano tones rang out for the first time in months. To hear Mama sing again was a miracle, a very special gift. Life was moving on, and the pain of loss was dimming. While the snow piled up around the school house, Christmas magic filled the cold dark night in that strange place called Kansas, so far away from Three Pines Georgia.

## Stippled Violin

Abigail Danley  
Carl Junction  
High School  
Gold  
2D Media

*Every mark of this drawing is a single dot. Different sizes of markers and pens were used to create the variations in texture and variation. It is fitting that a giant stippling that took hours to complete would be an honorary piece to the stringed instrument -- the golden ratio is used in its construction, it takes years of dedication to practice and study its techniques and melodies, but above all else, it takes a musical spirit to play it with the love and emotion it deserves.*



## Road to Nowhere

Charlene Bergen | Anderson | Community | Bronze | 2D Media

*I love to paint in directions and colors that attract the eye and create a focal point. Acrylic abstract using complementary color schemes.*



## Existential Bummer

the temporal stings  
impermanence rages for  
a sad end. Rage back.

Rose-Marie Speck | Joplin | Community | Silver | Poetry

*This haiku was inspired by the idea that impermanence in life should not bring about detachment, but rather a passionate pursuit of connection.*

# The Shadow

Aaron M. Kocurek  
Neosho  
Staff  
Fiction

*I've always wanted superpowers and I felt this would be a cool one to have.*

**D**ark is night, but dark doesn't capture this particular night. Stars were shining brighter than 60 watts. I can still imagine the clarity; it was the ideal night for seizing my dreams. At this time I couldn't actually seize my dreams and I knew I'd have to leave the stars to do that. The big city is where it's at and to the city I went. That was three weeks ago for you but it's been much, much longer for me. I can tell you my secret because I know you won't tell, but it's not something you will accept easily.

I was 12 years old the first time. It took me all of 20 seconds to realize what happened. I was thrown in my locker and I stayed in there until I couldn't hear anyone outside. I opened the door and everyone was frozen. Everyone was still in the halls just frozen in place. I had never seen anything like it. I went to the library and read until a teacher found me. Comic books and

superheroes filled my nights with adventures and excitement so I knew what this was. It was a gift. It kept happening through high school sporadically. I kept going to the bathroom so no one would see me. Then close to my senior year I started to control it. I could stop time at my will; with a snap of my fingers, everything was in my reach. I started small, stealing groceries; I could keep time stopped for at least an hour. I would shop just like everyone else but time didn't pass.

I was 23 when I first robbed a bank; I felt over 30. I stopped for a while and calmed down a lot. I got a job at a restaurant and served for 3 years. That brings us to three weeks ago. Unfortunately, some of the wrong people saw me disappear. You see when I stop time, and I'm not back in my chair before time starts back up again, then I disappear from that spot. I should've made it back by time, but I got caught up looking at the stars. It was the darkest of nights and the stars were shining brighter than 60 watts, and I may have been a little drunk.

As I walked back in the bar, time started up again, and it was the first time I saw myself disappear. Sitting at the bar with the drink in my hand, I vanished. I saw four people notice and walk to where I was. I turned around and walked out of there. I knew I had to leave, and I couldn't go back. I packed up and left. On the train I found out I made the front page, an empty outline of a man with a headline that read, "Person Vanishes."

That was three weeks ago for you. The New York Times headline read today, "Who is the shadow?" And that's me. How I got here, I don't know, but I am going to enjoy it.



## Everything Revolves Around Nothing

Casey Stueber  
Neosho  
Community  
Bronze  
3D Art

*Everything Revolves Around Nothing explores the human psyche with a specific focus on the need to fill emotional voids with items or collections. Hand-built ceramic, mixed media*



## Ophelia the Trophy Wife

Tyler Dallis  
Exeter  
Crowder  
Bronze  
3D Art

*This piece represents hope, grief, and death. This is my take on Ophelia from Shakespeare's, Hamlet.*

*Ceramic head and antlers with wooden frame and base*

[Bottom right]

## Samurai Jack

Aaron M. Kocurek  
Neosho  
Staff  
3D Art

*I wanted to create something unique. I thought outside the box and I came up with Samurai Jack. Cards, rubber bands, paperclips and adhesive*



## Game On

Katherine Hackney  
Lockwood  
Crowder  
Silver  
3D Art

*"Game On" was created to express the feelings and life of a card game, to turn an everyday object like cards into a work of art. Hand-built sculpture assembled with tape, staples, black feathers and gem stones*



# Her Own Hero

Vada Harris  
Neosho High School  
Silver  
Fiction

*Rapunzel saves herself.*

**S**he took the heavy string and tied a hard knot around her hair at the base of her neck. Then, she separated it under the knot into thinner bunches, and knotted string around those as well. Each section of hair she pulled over her shoulder and braided, tight and hard, just like Mother had taught her long ago. It was long and tedious work, and the hair kept getting snarled and tangled, but she had to give it a shot.

"Rapunzel!" called a woman's voice through the window, causing the girl to start. She dropped the hair in her hands and her last half-hour's work came undone. "Let me up, sweetheart."

Rapunzel did as she was told. She wrapped her hair around its post, let it down the side of the tower, and hoisted her mother up.

"My dear," her mother admonished as she stepped down from the window, "what on Earth have you done to your pretty hair?"

"It's nothing," Rapunzel said defensively, running a braid through her hands, "I'm just... trying something new." Her mother gave her the same look as she had when she'd caught

Rapunzel in front of a wall hanging on the first floor with her hands full of bent silverware: resignation with a touch of suspicion. She held her daughter's eyes for a moment, then made a dismissive gesture with her hand and left the room.

Mother didn't say anything more about the braids. She shook her head whenever her daughter was in view, and *tut-tutted* all through dinner, but she didn't say anything. Rapunzel wrapped her hands around her fork and didn't speak a word. When the sun through the window woke her up the next morning, her mother was already gone.

Rapunzel went back to work. Twisting and pulling, left and right, she braided all through the morning until it was almost done. When the sun passed noon and started its way down, she took a break. With a moan, she let go of the heavy hair. "Ach," she whispered, putting her hands to her head and rubbing her temples. "This whole process is only making it all worse."

For a moment she stood there, pressing her hands to her eyes. It was as if the weight of the world was dragging down her skull. She felt heavy enough to sink the whole tower into the ground. After a moment, she picked her hair back up and resumed braiding.

Before whenever she'd tested snipping unnoticeable pieces off the end of her hair, the cut off strands were always weaker than what was growing out of her head. They felt much lighter, and they couldn't bear weight once they were separated from her. Her hope was that the braid would make it stronger once...

She'd reached the end of her hair. After she'd tied a string around the end of her braid she stood, dusted off her dress, and reached for the scissors she'd hidden nearby. With one shaking hand wrapped around the scissors, and the other clutching her hair, Rapunzel hesitated. But in a moment, resolution settled on her face and in one quick motion she sliced off her hair.

The scissors fell to the floor with a clatter, the hair with a thud, and the girl with a gasp. Quickly, she pulled the hair to herself to look it over. Nodding to herself, she went to the window to check for Mother. Seeing no sign of the woman, Rapunzel tied the tapered end of the hair around its post, let the braid down the side of the tower, and then let herself down after it.

## Balconies of Boston

Jessica Cole  
Granby  
Crowder  
Honorable Mention  
B&W Photography

*I loved the mixture of curves and decoration on this building.  
Kodak Easyshare*



# War

**F**lies...one or two are annoying. Five or six get to be a real pain, but what happens when they swarm your house?

You would think I'd be used to the occasional fly after living in Germany for ten years without screens on the windows. Occasional, yes, but on this particular evening there were more swarming pests than I'd ever imagined.

It was a late August Back-to-School Celebration, and I did not invite the flies. They, however, came uninvited by twos and by hundreds. As our teacher friends arrived, generous food offerings first filled the table — scrumptious Mexican dips and chips, fruits, veggies, sinful desserts...and then came the flies. More kept coming, minute by minute.

As the visiting continued, the eating dwindled off and the flies seemed to gather even more control of the table. Only the very bravest of teachers were willing to chance fighting the flies for the food. We closed doors, isolating the heaviest infiltration to the living area and kitchen. The flies were narrowing in on us with little opposition. By the end of the evening, the flies had definitely taken over and leftovers could only be "left" for the trash. Then began the

dilemma of how to get rid of the flies that now had control of my house.

I considered fumigation, but then it was late and where would I sleep. Sleep? How would I ever sleep with kamikaze flies dive bombing my head? I knew I must get rid of at least most of the pesky critters if I was to have even a moment of peace that night. A fly swatter proved a worthless weapon against such a mighty force. The flies seemed to now be full and preparing for sleep as they, little by little, gathered on the ceiling. What once had been a white ceiling rapidly became more black than white.

Then came the plan of plans, the strategy of strategies, the weapon of weapons — the vacuum cleaner. Attaching my long hose, I mounted my offensive. WAR!!! They flew into the hose. I was sucking them up three, seven, ten at a time. There was no end to my relentless attack. I had caught the enemy napping, and there was no retreat now. It was "forward, march" until every enemy was slaughtered.

Once again the battlefield grew quiet. Victorious, I lay down my weapon, and prepared for peaceful sleep, ready to fight another day if called upon.

Ann Jernigan  
Joplin  
Community  
Gold  
Nonfiction

*My 14 years living in a German village and teaching on an American Air Force base led to all kinds of experiences. Most of them were much more enjoyable than this one.*

## Mr. Prickly

MarLeah Cole  
Seneca  
Crowder  
Gold  
B&W Photography

*Macro photography allows us to see in a new way by detailing the texture of familiar sights and objects.  
100 ISO, 1/200th,  
Lensbaby Edge 80 optic  
with macro convertor  
rings.*



# The Itch

Joshua Foster  
Neosho  
Community  
Bronze  
Fiction

*What happens when a  
mind and body lose their  
grip on reality?*

I can never get at this itch. It comes in just the perfect spot on my back so I can't reach it. Sometimes I feel like I found it, only to realize I barely missed it. If Helen were here she could get it easily. She is always able to get it. She instinctively knows when I need a good back scratch. She never has trouble finding the spot. She sits down and gently runs her hand along my back, which intensifies the itch for a painfully exciting moment before it flees into oblivion. If only she were here now to give me some respite. She and the kids are out of town visiting her parents for the weekend. I remind myself that she will be back soon.

I don't like admitting it, but I hate being alone. When I first moved out of my parents' house about ten years ago, I thought I would love the freedom of my own place. For a couple of days the newfound freedom was liberating, but in time I grew apprehensive about my solitary confinement. I wish this itch would just go away. It comes every day and I can't do anything to get rid of it. If she were here she could relieve me in an instant. I then made up my mind that I would not live alone, ever again. I went together with some friends from high school on an apartment. It wasn't anything fancy, but it was ours and I didn't have to spend my evenings alone. It was a bit awkward when I had to ask my roommate to scratch that spot on my back, but he rarely seemed to mind. That was how I met my wife.

One night, I came scurrying out of the bathroom after trying in vain to get rid of the itch with a back scratcher. Before even looking around the room I pleaded with my roommate to scratch it. Only after I made a complete fool of myself did I recognize the stunningly beautiful woman sitting on my couch. Something about the look of her stole away the itch. I couldn't remember why I was standing near to naked in the middle of my living room dripping wet. She was the most beautiful creature I had ever laid eyes on. Of course, I had seen models that were more physically attractive. But something about her was different. Something in her eyes said she understood my fear of being lonely. More so, I could see in her eyes that she shared my same longing for human contact. I couldn't tell her yet, but I decided then and there that I wanted to stave off our loneliness together. The

moment passed and I felt as if it had been an eternity looking into her eyes. However, when I came to, I realized I was still wet and my roommate looked on with an expression of mingled hilarity and horror that I would make such a fool of myself. It didn't matter, she and I had shared a moment and I was determined to share my life with her at all costs.

Over the next several days, she and I spent nearly every waking hour together. The activity didn't matter so much as us being together. I hadn't imagined it, she did share my same passion for human contact. Gah, there it is again. I can't focus on anything other than the itch when it comes. It shows up most of the time when I'm alone and can't do anything. I try to reach for it, but I know the effort is useless. I can never reach it.

Why did Helen have to go and leave me alone? I tried to tell her not to go. Tried to tell her that I was sorry, but she wouldn't listen to me. I don't even know what I was sorry about. Our courtship was short and our honeymoon long. We didn't have much money, we traveled all over the country. We would settle in for a couple of weeks while I would get odd jobs doing manual labor while she worked at a local restaurant or café, the mom and pop kind of places. Never in my life had I been so completely blissful and full of hope for the future. She needed me and I needed her. It was enough for both of us. We glided through life unaware of the world we lived in because at last we both had someone. My wife confided in me her own personal struggle with loneliness. The capacity to feel that empty pit of longing in a crowded room. She didn't have the itch though. That was just me. After a few months, our honeymoon showed no signs of stopping, until we had the most exhilarating reason to stop. Helen was pregnant. I was thrilled in ways that I cannot possibly describe. I was going to be a father and equally exciting was the fact that she would be the mother.

We traveled a little bit longer until we were able to find a town where I got a job working at a small manufacturing plant. I don't even remember what they made. I think it was some kind of tool and die factory but I can't be sure. I lived each day for the moment I could come home and see my wife and the place for the baby expanding. I thought I had known bliss before,

but this was something different altogether. A young life now depended on me, and I would not let it down. I try to scream, but it always comes out muffled, like something is blocking my mouth. This loathsome itch. It follows me everywhere I go and haunts every happy moment of my life with its incessant nagging. Sometimes I fantasize about taking the scalpel and cutting long stripes into the place to cut the nerve. I know I can't do it, I can't even reach it with my fingernails, let alone a knife. Everyday I would head home with the itch spurring my accelerator down further and further. Sometimes I thought I might push the pedal through the floor, the agony of rushing to see Helen was so bad. Sometimes, just seeing her was enough for the itch to go away.

I lose track of the days. How long has Helen been at her parents? A few days? A week? A month? She knows I'm suffering and she still stays away. I try not to blame her. She has a lot of responsibility taking care of our daughters and catching up with her parents. If only she would call. What did I say or do that she won't even call? She always used to call. Eventually I ended up with my own desk and she would call every day, just after putting our daughters down for their naps. Sometimes she would let me talk to the girls about their childish imaginings of princes and dragons. She would tell me of some adorable thing the girls had done and how much she loved me. If I had the itch before, it quietly left during those calls. So now I sit here day after day waiting for her to call, but she never

does. I must have hurt her terribly for her to not call me back.

It must be weeks or maybe even months since I saw her last. It's getting difficult to even remember her name sometimes. The people that come in here do nothing to help take my itch away. I try to reach out to them and make them see how much agony I feel. But, they never notice. How can they not see? They probably enjoy watching me like this. I see them come in and sometimes they try to talk to me, but I can't grasp at what they try to ask me. Their presence is almost worse than being completely alone. I vaguely remember a fight. It was awful! We never fought. Something happened that day. I wish I could remember... In the car, I remember quarreling, the screeching, the screaming and then Harriet... or was it Helen? She told me she had to go see her parents for the weekend.

Why did she leave? I need her more than ever. And she left me. I try to remember but I can't. Did I do something wrong? It doesn't make sense. I know I'm missing the details. It's spreading. It's all over my back. Someone please help me! I still can't reach it. I tell my hands to reach further, but they won't. They lay lifeless at my side, mocking me. I tell her how bad the itch has gotten. I tell her how much I miss her. I beg her to come back to me. But, she can't. She can never come back. The only response is the hurried rush of footsteps, the blip of the instruments and the blinking lights.

The blip makes the itch even worse.



## Nerve Tree

Jessica Cole  
Granby  
Crowder  
Silver  
Digital Art

*A tree's myriads of branches remind me of the complicated pictures of nerve cells. Photoshop color hue and saturation modifications*

# The Ballerina

Cary Crocker  
Carthage  
Crowder  
Bronze  
Fiction

*This story was based on a porcelain ballerina I have, whose story is not nearly as dramatic as the one here.*

Alice touched the object she saw on her grandma's shelf. Of all the times she had visited her grandmother's house, she'd never seen this little porcelain ballerina doll; she had visited her grandma so many times as a child living next door. The doll had a pink dress with a light pink tutu and lace underneath, a pink rose made of ribbon at the bottom of the bodice with light green ribbon as the leaves. Her bubble gum pink ballet shoes were painted on her feet and legs and her light reddish-brown hair was tied up in a bun of curls with a pink ribbon to match. Alice only had to look in the mirror to see that the doll's hair was just a little lighter than her own dark reddish-brown hair and the bodice of the doll's dress matched her own pink sweater, paired as always with blue jeans.

She still couldn't believe she'd never seen this doll in all the twenty years of frequent visits to her grandma's house. Did she buy it recently? Was it behind something? Where did she get it? There was no way to find out now that her grandma was gone. "Hey, Mom?" she called out.

Soon her mother appeared in the doorway of the living room. "Yes, Alice?"

"Do you know where this came from?" She held it up to show her mom.

Mom hesitated a moment. "I'm not really sure. Maybe she got it at a dollar store or a flea market. Or maybe she got it at a garage sale somewhere. You know how she loved to shop."

Alice thought for a moment. It was possible. Her grandmother was in the habit of checking out all the sales at all the stores and buying so many things that she barely had room for in her house. She already knew that her mother had gone through Grandma's clothes last week and had had to throw so many of them away that were never even worn. It was a shame, really.

"Do you need me?" Mom asked Alice, tearing her away from her thoughts.

"Huh? Oh, no, I just wanted to ask."

Mom smiled. "Okay. I'll be in the kitchen if you need me." Mom's task today was to go through the dishes, another thing Grandma loved to collect, to see if she would like to keep any of them for herself or for Alice's cedar chest for when she went out on her own. The rest of the pots, pans, dishes, silverware, and other kitchenware she would disburse among Alice's

three aunts.

Alice looked back at the ballerina in her hand and then put it back on the shelf. She had always wanted to be a ballerina, but her knees were too weak to stand up to the challenges of ballet. Her cousin, Maddie, on the other hand, had become a ballerina when she was about eight and progressed through the lessons quickly; her knees were apparently strong enough for the dance movements. At the time, Alice had been jealous, but she had gotten over it a long time ago. Now, Maddie's dream was to be a dance instructor, which she was very close to achieving. Alice was proud of her cousin. If only she could find her niche so easily.

Alice stared at the doll for a few moments after setting it back on the shelf. She was so beautiful. How unfortunate that her left arm was broken off! If she knew where the arm was, perhaps Alice's father could glue the arm back on, but it had probably been thrown away some time ago. Before she left the room, she spied a small white piece of paper on the top of the bookshelf. Being tall had its advantages, and this was one of those times when it was. Alice only had to stand on her tiptoes to reach it, and when she did she found that it was an envelope addressed to her. It simply said: *Alice*, written in Grandma's neat handwriting. Puzzled, she opened it to find a rather lengthy letter. It filled up both sides of two pages.

It didn't take long for Alice to decide she didn't have time to read it right now. She had just returned from her classes at college to help Mom for about half an hour before she went back home to do her homework. She had a couple of papers to write, so she didn't want to delay her work any longer than she had to. It had already been twenty minutes since she arrived, so went and told her mom she was leaving and then ran over next door to her room to study with some time to spare.

Alice couldn't stop herself from thinking about the letter the whole time she was writing her papers and reading her textbook. What was so important that Grandma would leave her a letter after she was gone? Apparently she had a lot to say to her. She also wondered about the ballerina and where Grandma must have bought it. It was also possible that someone had given it to her. She searched her memory for mentions of such a doll or a small box containing a little porcelain doll that either she, one of her aunts,

or one of her cousins had given Grandma for her birthday or Christmas. She couldn't recall anything of the sort, although as good as her memory was, she couldn't remember all the gifts her family members had given one another for all twenty of the Christmases she had parti-

pated. She couldn't even remember all the gifts she had received last Christmas, much less what everybody had gotten last Christmas or the ones before.

Once Alice finished studying, she took the

[Continued to 74]



## Dancer in the Woods

Ruth Loy  
Joplin  
Classical  
Conversations  
Home School  
Bronze  
B&W Photography

*One of my favorite pictures of one of my closest friends, doing what she loves in an unexpected place. Canon EOS 70.*

## The Ballerina

[Continued from 73]

letter out of the envelope without hesitation and read it. It was filled with memories Grandma had had of Alice's frequent visits to her house growing up and conversations they had had over the years. She mentioned some of Alice's favorite objects in Grandma's house and her favorite home-cooked meals, things she had told Grandma countless times. Towards the end of the letter, Grandma said:

"Alice, I must confess something to you. There is something I want you to have that you don't know anything about. Now, don't get all worried; I have a special place for your favorite figurines and dolls written in my will that gives those things to you. But there's something else I want you to have. I know how disappointed you were when Maddie got to be a ballerina and you didn't. Now, that was a long time ago, but now and again I see that same sad look in your eyes whenever ballet is mentioned. There's a little

ballerina on my shelf that I bought at a dollar store a while back. Maddie may have succeeded in ballet, but to me you'll always be my little ballerina. Remember how you used to twirl around in my living room whenever I played classical music on the cassette player? That's what indicates to me that even though your knees are weak, inside of you there's this little dancer who never got to fulfill her dream. May this little doll remind you to pursue your dreams, whether or not it seems possible. I guarantee that if you follow your dreams the Lord has given you; you will succeed in this life, just like Maddie has.

I love you, Alice, my dear little ballerina granddaughter. May you always remember my love for you even after I'm gone.

Love,

Grandma"

By the time Alice finished the letter, she was in tears. "Rest in peace, Grandma." She hugged the letter to herself. "I'll treasure this always, as well as the ballerina."



## Calm

Deanna Bingham | Neosho High School | Honorable Mention | Color Photography

*I don't think anyone can be corrupt for their whole life. At one point, a sense of calmness and serenity is found. Sidelighting.*

# Don't Ask Me

Don't ask me where-  
I haven't a clue.  
Don't ask me why-  
Do I look like I care?

Don't ask me who-  
I wasn't there.  
Don't ask me---  
Fine. Pull up a chair.

Jacqueline M. Cole  
Granby  
Crowder  
Bronze  
Poetry

*Haven't we all  
experienced this before?*



## Baby J

Taylor Best  
Joplin  
Staff  
Color Photography

*I love natural light  
and I love kitties. My  
two loves combined  
into one photograph.  
Side lighting*



## In the Wild

Karen Davidson  
Pea Ridge, Ark.  
Staff  
2D Media

*"In the Wild" has to do  
with caring for animals.  
This also has to do with  
the mistreatment of  
animals in Africa. Pencil*

## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

The magazine is a compilation of winning entries in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, photography, and art from aspiring authors, artists, and photographers. Entrants generally reside in the communities within a 100-mile radius of the ten Crowder College campuses in southwest Missouri, including Cassville, Neosho, Nevada, McDonald County, and Webb City. They may be high school students, Crowder College students, or community members. The employees of Crowder College are classified as "community" in order to avoid competition with Crowder students.



**Each entry includes an artist/author statement, which is a short reflection from contributors about their goals or reasons for writing a particular piece as well as insight into the creative process, inspiration, or subject matter of their entries. For graphic entries, the technical process is included, if provided.**

There were 75 individuals published, including staff entries. The contributors, divided by division, hail from the following cities and high schools:

## CROWDER STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Alba | Anderson | Anna | Aurora | Bella Vista | Carl Junction | Carthage  
Diamond | Exeter | Goodman | Granby | Greenfield | Joplin | Lamar  
Lockwood | Monett | Neosho | Noel | Oronogo | Pea Ridge, Ark. | Pierce City  
Pineville | Seligman | Seneca | Stella | Verona | Webb City | Wheaton | Wyandotte

## HIGH SCHOOLS

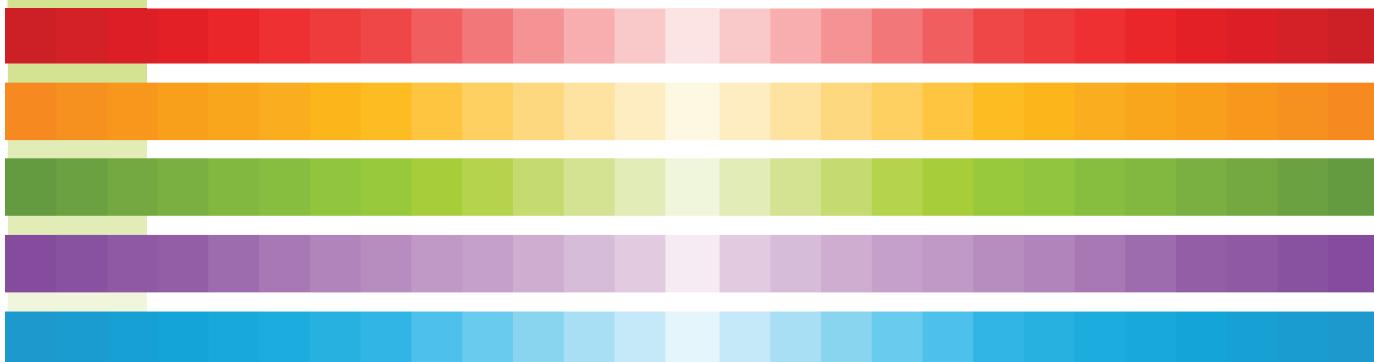
Carl Junction | Classical Conversations (Loy home school)  
Cole home school | McDonald County High School | Neosho Christian School  
Neosho High School | Wheaton High School

## 2014 TRAVELING AWARD

This special award is presented to the most-winning high school for its entries in this issue. The award is calculated on points: gold winners count as four points, silver as three, bronze as two, and honorable mention as one.



**1st Place: Carl Junction High School**  
**2nd Place: Neosho Christian School**  
**3rd Place: McDonald County High School**



## ABOUT THE STAFF JUDGES AND CONTRIBUTORS

The primary task of the *Crowder Quill* staff is to produce the magazine as a result of the contest entries, not produce the contents. However, staff members are required to submit entries as a class assignment to be judged by honorary judges in order to demonstrate expertise in their field of judging.

Winning entries are honorarily published but do not receive awards. The staff entries published in this issue were judged by the following honorary judges:

Fiction and nonfiction entries: *Quill* faculty adviser Latonia Bailey

Poetry entries: Literature instructor Debra Brown and adviser Latonia Bailey

Art entries: Art instructor Allen Bishop

Photography entries: Photography instructor Liz Spencer and students



**Staff members publicize the contest, select winning entries, and design the magazine. A variety of majors are represented on the staff. See biographical statements below for the staff judges. See each entry for additional author/artist statements from each regular contributor to the magazine.**

**Taylor Best** is a second-year student who writes for the Crowder Sentry and will be graduating in May with an Associates Degree in Journalism and Public Relations. She plans on attending Missouri Southern State University in the fall. She judged photography and designed pages 28-37.

**Karen Davidson** is an artist, award winning quilter that has been published twice. She is currently studying photography at Crowder College and is planning to attend University of Central Missouri to obtain a Bachelors Degree in Photojournalism. She judged photography and designed pages 12-27.

**Emily Haase** is a Journalism/Public Relations major pursuing a career as a publicist for musical artists. Her dream job is to be a reviewer for *Rolling Stone* magazine. She judged 3D Art and wrote two stories.

**Amelia Hill** is a Journalism/Public Relations major pursuing a career in new media and technology. She also holds a degree in Culinary Arts and enjoys traveling, sailing, watching documentaries and foreign films, listening to NPR and reading philosophy books while sipping a dark brew. She judged photography and digital art and designed the inside covers and pages 1-3, 76-78.

**Aaron Kocurek** is a musician, writer, artist, comedian, a Scorpio, and full-time lover of life. Out of countless projects, he hopes to finish one of them at some point in the future. He has three published pieces in this year's Quill: "The Shadow," a fiction story, "Samurai Jack," 3D Art, and "An 8ft Yeti," a song converted into poetry. Aaron will always try to be original in his own way. He judged digital art and photograph and

designed the covers and pages 46-48, 65-75.

A second-year Quill staff member, **Ryan Land** from Goodman is currently a sophomore at Crowder College. Upon completion of an Associates Degree in Journalism and Public Relations, he plans to attend Missouri Southern State University to major in Mass Communications with an emphasis in Broadcast. His photograph "Wondrous Squirrel" is published in this issue. He judged nonfiction and art and designed pages 38-45.

**Joseph Mandelbaum** is a Journalism and Public Relations major pursuing a career in print journalism. He plans to graduate from Crowder College in the fall 2014 semester. He designed pages 4-11 and judged the fiction and 2D art categories.

**Anissa Morris** is a Journalism/Public Relations major pursuing a career in public relations event planning. She judged fiction and designed pages 49-55. Her photograph "Winter Thrill" is published in this edition.

**Joanna Savalza** is doing her General Studies right now. She judged 2D and 3D art and designed pages 56-64. Later, she plans on transferring to Missouri State to get a Business and Fine Arts Degree.

A published author and photographer, **Latonia Bailey** has served as faculty adviser since 1994. She holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism from University of Missouri and a master's degree in Writing. Her poem, "New Year's Resolutions," is published honorarily in this edition along with "Crystal Springs" color photography. She enjoys travel and photography.

## ABOUT THE CONTEST

The magazine is a compilation of winning entries in literary and art categories:

**Nonfiction:** Essays, character sketches and other true-to-life writings should be limited to 1800 words.

**Fiction:** Clear plot development and well-defined characters are expected; also limit of 1800 words.

**Poetry:** Whether free verse, blank verse, rhymed or metered verse, poetry should make a point, state emotion, or relate an experience.

**Digital Art:** This graphic art category includes computer-generated art or extensively manipulated photographs in order to create special effects. Photography with only minor adjustments should be entered in one of the photography categories.

**Black and White Photography:** Entries may be reproduced from film or digital files with only minor corrections and adjustments.

**Color Photography:** Film or digital files that emphasize vibrant color reproduction are sought.

**2D Traditional Media:** original paintings, drawings and hand-made prints including pen, pencil, woodcut, etching, screen print, charcoal, oil, colored pencil, pastels, and acrylic creations, both black & white and color. Entries may also be scanned and uploaded.

**3D Art:** includes pottery, ceramic, sculpture, assemblages, recycled materials and reliefs that protrude at least 1/8 inch off the surface. Photographs of the art (front and side view required) may be uploaded online instead of bringing the art for judging.



For more details about the contest and an entry form,  
see pages 79-80. or go to [www.CrowderQuill.wordpress.com](http://www.CrowderQuill.wordpress.com).

## COLOPHON

This publication is designed annually by Crowder College students enrolled in Comm 111, Magazine Production. Text was set in Bell MT 10 point regular. Story titles were set in Papyrus 36 point regular. Other fonts used include Adobe Caslon Pro, Arial, Bodoni, Letter Gothic Standard.

The Crowder Quill was produced using Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign CS5. The magazine was printed in the Crowder College print shop on the Neosho, Mo., campus. The cover stock is Sappi Flo Gloss Digital Cover 12 x 18 80 lb. 7TP coated, and inside pages are on 11x17 70 lb. white Husky Opaque Offset Domtar.

Funding of the publication comes from the college as a means to provide a cultural link with the community and for an outlet for creativity and expression.

For the 2014 contest, more than 961 entries were received, and 115 awards were presented in a public ceremony and poetry reading May 8, 2014 on the Neosho campus of Crowder College. Award winners received certificates and are published.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Special thanks to the following individuals and departments  
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Cindy Brown, Public Information Office | Jon Finley and Marsha Welch, Print Shop  
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Hutchins, Information Desk | Eric Deatherage and Jennifer Johnson, Lee Library  
Cathleen Bailey and Don Johnson, Communication Department

## WHAT IS THE CROWDER QUILL?

The *Crowder Quill* is a literary-art magazine published annually by the Magazine Production class at Crowder College. It is our goal to encourage and showcase the creative abilities of local writers, artists, and photographers as well as provide a cultural link between Crowder College and our surrounding communities.

### GENERAL ENTRY GUIDELINES

- All entries except traditional 2D media and 3D art should be sent online at [CrowderQuill.wordpress.com](http://CrowderQuill.wordpress.com).
- Postmark deadline for traditional art: Feb. 1
- Deadline to be announced for online submissions and hand-delivered entries, usually a few days after Feb. 1.
- Email [LatoniaBailey@crowder.edu](mailto:LatoniaBailey@crowder.edu) or call 417-455-5410 to make arrangements for hand delivered entries, if you have difficulties with the online submission process, or do not have internet access.
- Individuals may submit up to four entries per category in every category.
- Failure to meet all guidelines may result in automatic disqualification.
- The *Quill* is not responsible for technical malfunctions associated with submitting entries.



### VISUAL ARTS

#### Artwork, photography, and digital art

- Digital art is extensively altered digital photographic images and computer-generated art.
- NEW CATEGORIES: 2D traditional media includes both black & white and color two-dimensional entries. 3D art has been added for three-dimensional entries. Photographs of 3D art may be submitted online.
- A model consent form must be submitted for photographic or art entries of live models.
- Art should be created based on real life (still life, landscape, or live model), memory, or imagination rather than copied from published materials. On the rare occasion that an artist alters a previous work of art, credit should be given. For example, an alteration of the *Mona Lisa* could be titled *Mona Lisa's Smile* with source credit given to the original artist: *The Mona Lisa* by Leonardo Da Vinci. "Copy art" used as learning exercises will no longer be accepted as contest entries.
- 2D media should be mounted, matted or placed in clear plastic sleeves for their protection. Please do not send entries in frames or with glass. Attach entry form to the front left-hand corner with single-sided tape.
- 2D media may also be scanned with a high-quality scanner and sent digitally.
- All photography and digital art should be submitted online; see general guidelines.

### LITERATURE

#### Poetry, fiction, and nonfiction

- Whether free verse, blank verse, rhymed or metered verse, poetry should make a point, state emotion, or relate an experience.
- Fictional writings should have clear plot development and well-defined characters. 1800-word maximum.
- Character sketches and personal essays should make a statement, whether serious, dramatic, or humorous. 1800-word maximum.
- All literature entries must be typed and double spaced; multiple pages should be numbered.
- Literature entries should be sent electronically through the website, following the general guidelines.

All entries except 2D traditional media and 3D art should be uploaded online as digital files at [CrowderQuill.wordpress.com](http://CrowderQuill.wordpress.com)



<b>Division:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> High school, grades 9-12 only
School _____	
Teacher _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Crowder student	<input type="checkbox"/> Community
<b>Category:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2D Traditional Media	<input type="checkbox"/> 3D Art
<i>All other categories should be submitted online, except with permission from the Quill contest.</i>	
Title _____	
<b>Source of inspiration for creation of art:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Memory <input type="checkbox"/> Imagination <input type="checkbox"/> Real life	
<i>Real life includes still life set ups, live models*, landscapes, and building interiors or exteriors.</i>	
*If you used a live model, check the box to indicate securing permission of the model, including parents/guardians if the model is a minor. <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Medium:</b> (pencil, oil paint, woodcuts, sculpture)	
<b>Artist's statement:</b> Write 1-3 sentences explaining this art's purpose, process, inspiration, or effect.	
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Attach additional paper if necessary.</i></p>	
Date _____	Phone _____
Name _____	
Address _____	
City/State/Zipcode _____	
Email _____	
<i>Failure to complete all sections may result in disqualification.</i>	

## CATEGORIES

**Accepted via mail or hand delivery with an attached entry form:**

**2D Traditional Media:** original paintings, drawings and hand-made prints including pen, pencil, woodcut, etching, screen print, charcoal, oil, colored pencil, pastels, and acrylic creations, both black & white and color. Entries may also be scanned and uploaded.

**3D Art** includes pottery, ceramic, sculpture, assemblages, recycled materials and reliefs that protrude at least 1/8 inch off the surface. Photographs of the art (front and side view required) may be uploaded online instead of bringing the art for judging.

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**Categories to be uploaded at [CrowderQuill.wordpress.com](http://CrowderQuill.wordpress.com):**

- **Nonfiction:** Essays, character sketches and other true-to-life writings should be limited to 1800 words.
- **Fiction:** Clear plot development and well-defined characters are expected; also limit of 1800 words.
- **Poetry:** Whether free verse, blank verse, rhymed or metered verse, poetry should make a point, state emotion, or relate an experience.
- **Digital Art:** This graphic art category includes computer-generated art or extensively manipulated photographs in order to create special effects. Photography with only minor adjustments should be entered in one of the photography categories.
- **Black and White Photography:** Entries may be reproduced from film or digital files with only minor corrections and adjustments.
- **Color Photography:** Film or digital files that emphasize vibrant color reproduction are sought.

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*Carefully read the category descriptions to avoid miscategorizing. For example, graphic design should not be entered as 2D traditional media.*



## Literary & Graphic Arts Competition

Winners published in the  
*Crowder Quill Magazine*

**Crowder Quill**  
**Newton Hall-2nd Floor**  
Neosho, Mo 64850  
(417) 455-5410

Entry Postmark Deadline:  
Feb. 1 each year

Hand-delivery and online deadline:  
A few days later,  
to be announced each year

website:  
[CrowderQuill.wordpress.com](http://CrowderQuill.wordpress.com)