

BLADEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE



THE INK QUILL 2019



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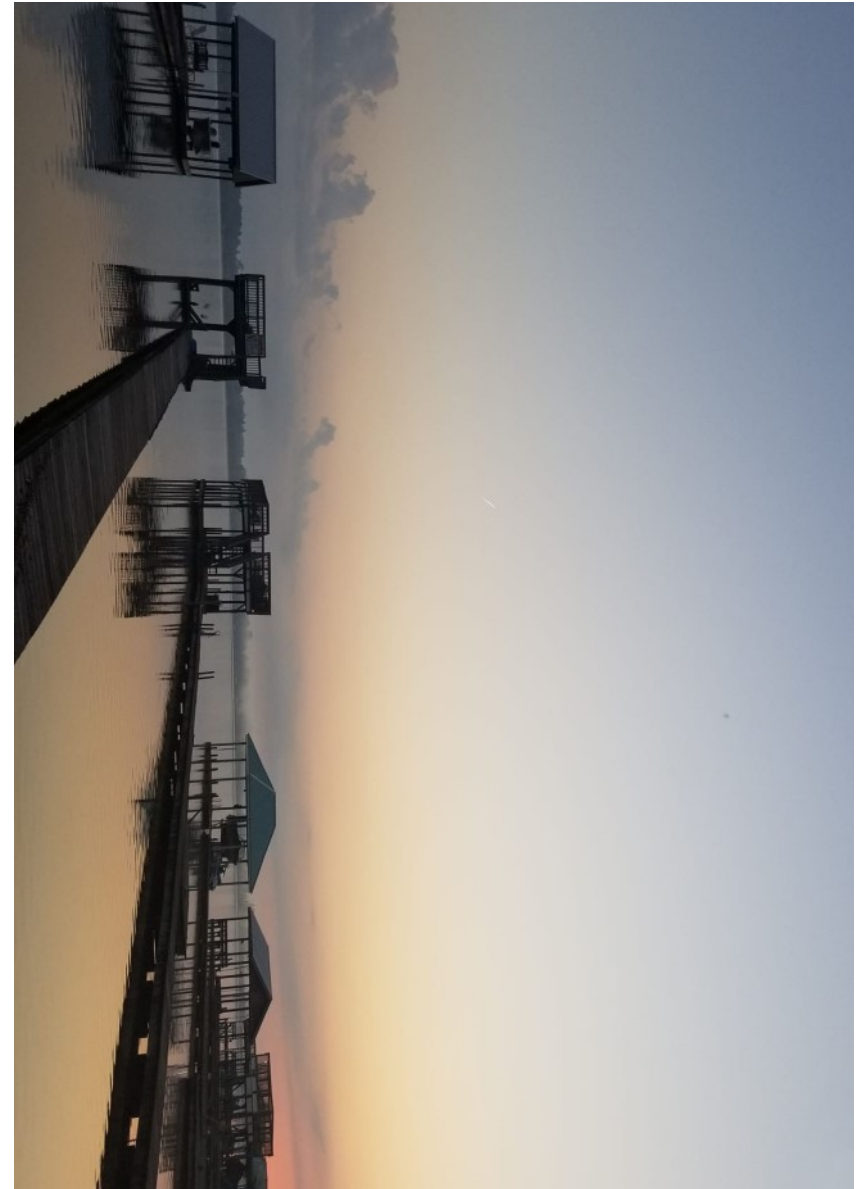
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IN THE STILLNESS OF THE MORNING

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty

TINKER BELL

Maegan Burney—Clarkton School of Discovery

There is a fairy named Tinker Bell
Who with her friends rules the forest floor.
They can only be seen at moonlight,
Where they swing by their tails and soar.
They cannot speak a word
But can read each other's minds
And can fly through the thick trees
Where they hide from all of mankind.
They come in many sizes big and small,
But all have a heart as big as a pot of gold.
They splash through the streams
And change the water to glitter
As the flowers come alive and dance and jitter!
They work through the night
And sleep through the day
To keep their fairytale life from being taken away.



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But they bumped into Jezzabelle.

Jezzabelle asked Hansel and Gretel how they ended up in the woods

Both Hansel and Gretel answered that their father, Adam, Brought them to the woods because They were in danger of being killed by a town

Jezzabelle was shocked because she knew who the mother of Hansel and Gretel was.

Hansel and Gretel's mother was named Anne.

Jezzabelle didn't want to tell them that she knew their mother

Because she thought that they would reject her protection.

She would do anything to help her best friend's children from being harmed.

Jezzabelle was later killed by a black witch who was trying to harm Hansel and Gretel.

But Hansel and Gretel were grown and would try to take revenge from their mother,

And their mother's friend who helped them and cared for them like their mother would.

Both Hansel and Gretel died at age 75 in 1962.



HANSEL AND GRETEL IN A JOURNEY

Enid Santos—Tar Heel Middle School

Once upon a time, there were two young children alone in the forest.

Their names were Hansel and Gretel, children from a powerful white witch.

While they moved further into the woods, so that they could stop to get some rest

Hansel and Gretel were stopped by a witch.

The witch said, “Nice to meet you both. My name is Jezzabelle.”

Hansel and Gretel were shocked and looked at each other. While Jezzabelle went to get water for Hansel and Gretel from the well,

Both Hansel and Gretel lay and looked at the stars shooting from one side to another.

Jezzabelle, Hansel, and Gretel went to sleep near a river and a fire camp Jezzabelle built.

The sunset went to sunrise.

Both Hansel and Gretel were asleep still

Jezzabelle waited for Hansel and Gretel to wake up to a wonderful surprise.

Jezzabelle’s surprise was breakfast for Hansel and Gretel and some hot chocolate.

Once again Hansel and Gretel were shocked by Jezzabelle.

They were starving since yesterday late at night trying to get some food.

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Thanks to the Lord above

We have to have the bad things
To appreciate the good
If we don't, it will be worthless
Like no engine under a hood

When we have hope
It overpowers the greed
And worthlessness
Of all other bad things we go through



YELLOW-BELLIED SLIDER

Johannah Little—BCC Student

PANDORA'S BOX

Kennedy Carroll—Tar Heel Middle School

Pandora had a box
Filled with all sorts of things
She was told not to open it
For sabotage it brings

But submerged with wonder
She lifted the lid
And everything escaped from under
That was once being hid

She never knew the possibilities
Jealousy, greed, outrage, pain
She didn't know its abilities
Hurt, lies, cruelty, strain

She quickly closed the top
Slammed and sealed shut tight
Trapped inside were words nonstop
And all the things were right

All that was left in Pandora's box
Was happiness, glee, and love
To fight off all the hurtful talks

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I'm in love with a man of wealthy gold
Who carries silver as tears
He's in love with a woman of bestial beauty
Who carries curves as weapons

I'm a goddess of my own nature
Cause like the goddess Venus,
I travel with beauty and bewitched love



TWO MACHINES

Micah Daw—Guest Faculty
Davidson County Community College

GODDESS OF MY OWN NATURE

Ayana R. Lacewell—Tar Heel Middle School

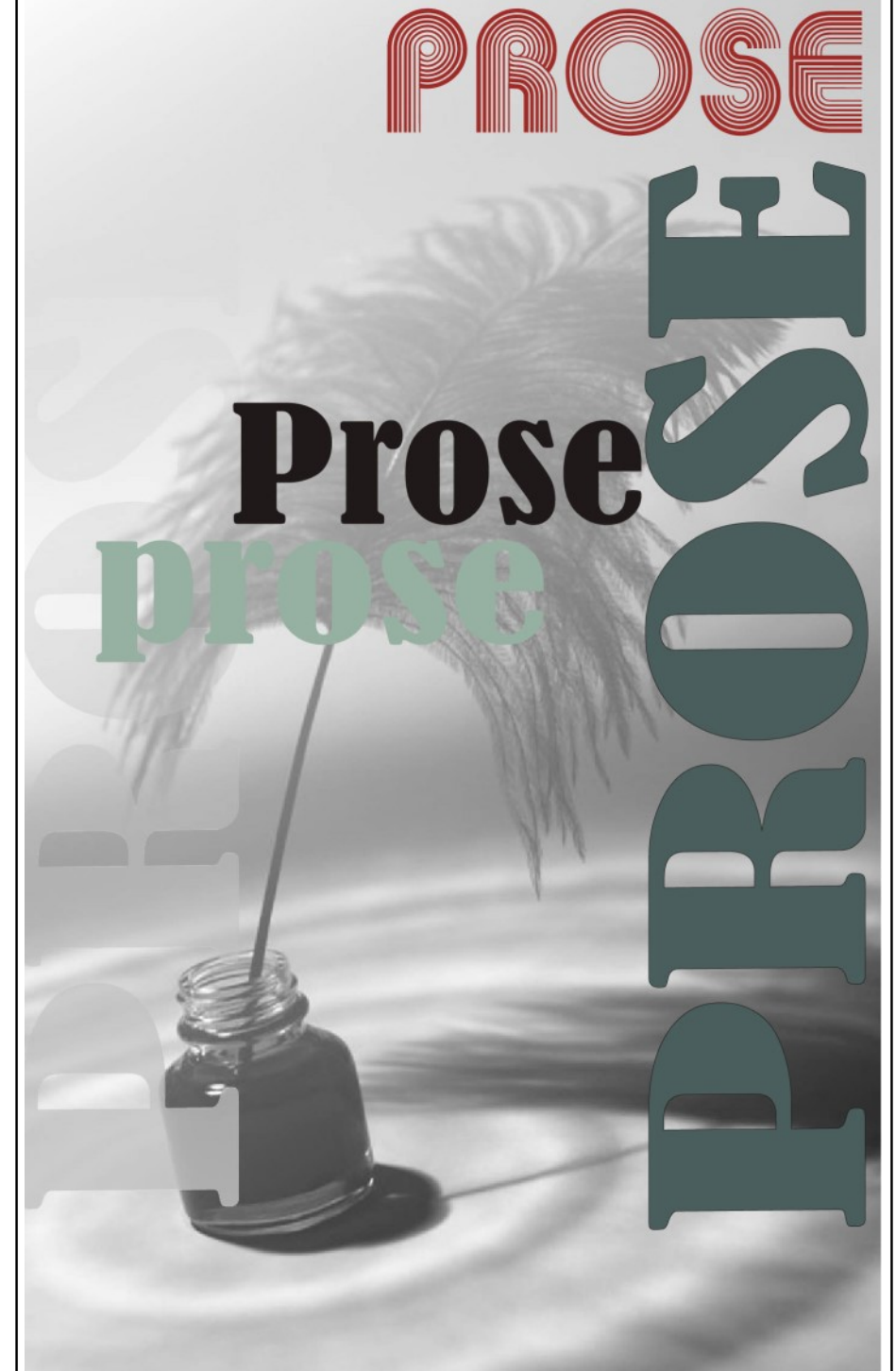
Oblivious to my bestial beauty
I saunter with a ravening ardor
My luxurious curves stand yonder
Curving every citizen with dominating power.

I leave the onlookers agape
With trails of saliva far beyond
Wishing I was traveling in their arms

But I am loyal and witful
I have no love to share
My enchanting hazels are already set
So I wish for no affairs

My heart, my mind, my body, my soul
Belong to a man of wealthy gold
He caresses me so gently, so sweet
He leaves trails of pure desired treats
Marking me as his territorial lover

Yes, he's not one to share
Nor am I to do as such



SHE DRESSES IN LIGHTNING

Jacoby McKeithan—BCC Student

Junior prom started the way it ended for me: with angels and blue hair. I was in the back of a cab, riding silently, hands on my knees. I checked my phone and sighed. My last text still stared me in the face unanswered. “Are you ready yet?” A small sliver of text below it showed *read*, which was still there from over fifteen minutes ago.

Caleb, the curly haired 18-year-old sitting in the passenger seat, looked back at me and let out a ragged laugh. “You alright there, Coby? I know you’re going alone, but that isn’t anything to be freaking out about.”

I looked up at him with a slight smirk. “It’s just nerves, Caleb. Why don’t you pay attention to your phone? I know Sarah’s texted you fifteen times in the last five seconds alone.” He smiled and shook his head before looking back at his phone.

My smile disappeared as soon as he looked away, and my eyes turned to the window. I closed them to watch the black behind my eyelids, which was only disrupted by the headlights of oncoming traffic. My mind was still wrapped around her promises to dress for me. Impure thoughts as they were, I couldn’t help it. She was intoxicating like that, doing things to make my life harder. I doubted she even meant to do them, but I was addicted nevertheless.

I began to hear the voices of Caleb and the driver. Something about which house was hers. I sighed and shook

THE LIFE OF OL’ PINOCCHIO

Madison Taylor—Clarkton School of Discovery

There once lived a boy and his name was Pinocchio
Somehow he always found a way to be the middle of the show

Although he hung from a string
Oh boy how he could sing
Unfortunately a puppet he will always be

Then one day he told of a dream
Of being a real boy and not just a puppet on a string
He always seemed to come up with a scheme
He just tried to impress
But stretched the truth nonetheless

Poor, poor Pinocchio
With every teeny lie
His nose was sure to grow
He never ceased to let his guard down though
And that was the life of Ol’ Pinocchio



A FAIRYTALE REALITY

Jacie Kinlaw—Clarkton School of Discovery

Once upon a time
That's how they all go
Not quite a crime,
But maybe a foe.

Little Red Riding Hood
And Cinderella too,
They're all very good.
You should read a few.

Real life isn't like that
But it provides an escape.
The real hero likely wears a hat,
Rather than a cape.



my head. Once again, there I was, giving in to this addiction, allowing her to control me when she didn't have the right. The worst part? I regretted nothing.

The cab came to a stop at an old Tudor home, the lights showing through all of the windows but one. Two people occupied the front porch. Elijah, a muscular guy despite being small in stature, had his head thrown back in laughter while Josh, who was a few inches taller and much bulkier, told what I could only assume was a joke.

Josh saw the cab first and waved to us as Caleb and I got out. "Took you guys long enough. We were about to leave without you."

Caleb laughed and called out in response, "We prefer fashionably late and ready to have a good time than to be early and have to wait for the worthwhile people. Don't worry, though; we're here now."

Josh and Elijah both approached us from the porch, Josh with a smile, Elijah not so much. His eyes were on my tux, and I knew what he was thinking. The tux I had managed to rent was white with gold trim, the boutonniere a white rose with a black accent. The silken touch of the whole ensemble made it feel all the more special.

Elijah opened his mouth but quickly closed it and shook his head ever so slightly. Then, he put on a smile, fake as it was, and greeted the two of us. "How've you been, man? It's been a while."

I decided to play his game. "That it has. I'm well I

guess..." I looked past him to the front door. "Is everyone else already inside?" He nodded. I whispered thanks and slid past him, heading to the front door littered with patterns of red and black.

Before I could even take a step, the door opened, and a sea of people flowed towards me. Some were excited to see me. Some paid me no mind. I really didn't care. In the end, they were only people I had to know in order to be around her.

She was the last one out of the house, the brandeis blue of her dress a beacon in the crowd of black and white. The smooth fabric was tight fitting to her figure, the silk hugging tight to her skin. It complemented her hair, long and brunette, brandishing a bold stripe of blue matching her dress. She looked like a bolt of blue lightning had touched her hair and found its way down her body through her dress until it hit the ground, her black heels the only remnant of the scorch left behind.

She was far from tall, maybe five-and-a-half feet at a maximum, but the four or five inches of her heels brought her just below eye level when standing directly in front of me.

I couldn't help but smile. "You look gorgeous, River. You didn't lie when you said you'd look just like her."

She gave me a pearly smile. "Tonight, I am her." Her eyes wandered from my face to the white of my tux. She came in close and began messing with the gold of the trim. "And it seems that you are him."

sailed out the window.

It reformed its mangled body, and with a grin, staggered away.

The family returned home, but so had the stranger, and the riches of what once was, were no longer.

As they gazed in shock at the destruction, from the antechamber a blade pierced Father.

He realized who it was and in a broken voice cried, "Leave me, Wendigo!"

With a knife, Boy decapitated the scourge, and its soulless corpse fell to the floor

As Boy watched the blood of a hero and that of a villain mix, Father said his last words,

"Never trust a stranger, no matter how swell things sound, 'cause evil lurks in every corner."



THREE LITTLE BIRDS

Tim Marshburn—BCC Faculty

THE GRIMM REALITY

Luke Barber—Clarkton School of Discovery

In the morn of a brisk summer day
A family of three, the youngest a Boy,
The oldest the Father, along with the Mother
Decided to take a stroll through the woods,
While they waited for their meal to cool.
As they traveled through the woods, a stranger approached
Boy and said,
“Here wee Boy, come with me and I shall show you riches.”
The Father overheard, turned, and said, “Leave my son, foul
beast!”
The stranger hungrily slinked back into the shadows.
As they went on, they heard the snapping of twigs in the
woods, so they rushed to shelter.
The stranger burst out before the Boy, but Father tackled and
fought him.
The Boy dashed to a thatched house, but Mother took him,
and they hurried to one of brick.
When Father finally returned, they went on, found a tall
tower, and ascended it.
There they found a fair maiden with luxurious blonde hair,
and a prince.
“Who goes there?” the prince cried after hearing the sound of
a knife fall,
But the family remained quiet, for they knew who lurked in
the shadows.
With his cloak unveiled, the stranger leapt from the shadows
to attack,
But with one quick move, the Boy dodged, and the creature

I rubbed the back of my neck and looked her in the eyes,
purple with hints of gold in the moonlight. “I couldn’t help
myself.”

She laughed and pushed past me, walking towards Elijah
and the group of people that now surrounded him. My smile
died slowly with each step she took away from me, but I
remained where I was. I refused to make things worse than
they already were. She walked up to Elijah, confident in her
stride and interrupted him mid-sentence, grabbing his tie
and pulling him down into a kiss.

I turned away and reached into my pocket, pulling out
the set of earbuds I had made sure to bring for this very
reason. I put them in and made sure the volume was at its
maximum before blasting my therapeutic distractions. I
allowed my mind to wander once more and found myself
thinking about our book, the one River and I had been
working on almost every day for the last year. When we first
began, we both made characters to be inserted into a
nonexistent plot: hers, a purple-eyed girl with a blue stripe
in her brunette hair; mine, a man who dressed in white and
gold and dreamed of being an angel. Her character’s name
was River, and mine was Theo. They were us, and in their
world of make-believe, they were together. Though
sometimes we’d forget what’s real and what isn’t.

She’d been with Elijah for a few years now while I had
only known her for a year and a half, so I could do nothing
about my desires but dilute them with thoughts and music.
Instead, I was as good a friend as I knew how to be. I was
there when she needed me, and he didn’t like it. I knew that
I had no business being in the position that I was with a

friend's girlfriend, but it was where life had put me.

She strayed from me the rest of the night, so I continued to admire her dress in its glory from a distance. I could see the glances I received from others around and whispers of my "hungry look," but I simply didn't care. We carpooled and went to dinner as a group to some Japanese place on the outskirts of town. They talked, mingled, ate, and I... I listened to my playlist trying to stay sane.

From the Japanese place, we went to the convention center where our prom was held. I handed my ticket to the man standing by the door, took and passed a breathalyzer test, and made my way to the middle of the ever-growing conglomerate of people. We were relatively early, so there were only around 60 prom-goers in the room. The theme to the entire event was "Chinese New Year," so there were Chinese lanterns hanging from the ceiling all over. At the same time, there were Chinese-style dragons performing the dragon dance, swirling around the people to the beat of the steady music. I took out my earbuds so that I could actually take it all in and fell into my group, letting them lead me.

As the night went on, the center easily filled with over 400 people, all dancing to the music played by a mix of a live band and a DJ. The closer the clock got to the end of prom, the further I strayed from the group. Eventually, I found myself surrounded by strangers. I was so close to them, I could taste the sweat and adrenaline. This wasn't exactly my scene, but I forced myself to have a good time. I danced with people I had never seen before. I smiled a legitimate smile that she wasn't there to warrant. For once, I forgot about her. I didn't regret all the moves I didn't make, nor did I ponder on all of the things I had done wrong. She may have

SNOW WHITE WAS SMART

Rebekka McKnight—Clarkton School of Discovery

Snow White was smart

Yes, I do believe so

For she had seven men to help with the chores

Instead of doing them alone

Snow White wasn't oblivious

No, I think she knew,

Her step-mother was after her

So give credit where credit is due

Snow White acted so innocent

And how well did she play the part!

For she made her step-mother think she was dead

Why? Because Snow White was smart.



MALEFICENT

Sophia Masaid—Clarkton School of Discovery

They perceive me as wicked
But I wasn't always like this
Once I saw the ways of the world my skin began to thicken
In some eyes people think of me as a monster
But monsters come in many forms and some couldn't have
made that prediction

When I was a child
With a heart as pure as a child's should be
I met a boy named Stefan, and all he and I did was smile
But one night he broke my heart with all my love inside
From that night on, I was defiled

My soul became black as midnight
My wings were cut off and were no longer of use
And if I were able to see him again, I promised to give a fight
His wife better watch out for me
Because I will take Stefan out with all of my might

I wanted the world to see everything like me
Because monsters aren't always what they seem
I was hurt and I wanted all of my grudges to be set free
But why be mean to monsters
When they're the ones that need to be loved unconditionally

been everything to me; she probably still was, but at least I knew that there was getting away from it. I had a good time. I talked to new people. A girl from out of nowhere grabbed me by the face and pulled me into a kiss, her lips soft and her taste sweet. She was gone as soon as it had happened, and I can't recall very much about her. The only thing I can remember is the brandeis blue of her dress and the matching stripe in her hair...



SUNFLOWER

Johannah Little—BCC Student

PAST THE BREAKERS

Hannah Arnett—BCC Student

Blue has infinite intensity. The blue of the sky is different from the blue of the sea, and yet they are both the same. The sky's blue can be bright in the glistening morning or dark as it turns to night. But the sea's blue has so many other variations of this. As light shines across its surface and the waves brush upon my skin, it draws me. This blue is light and enticing. It lures me in with its colors of addiction. It starts with the waves only grazing my ankles, and as the tide washes away from the shore, it asks me to follow it. I go.

Further in until the ocean has consumed my legs, and the blue is not like the blue that washed up on the shore. Now, I can't see my feet because the blue that was so welcoming before has been forgotten. This blue is defining and becomes only slightly darker as if it has just touched the surface of my secrets. The waves crash harder against my being. Not quite violent, but almost as if they ask permission to be. And yet it can only coax me further in.

Now the water has risen above me if I dared to stand. Angrily, it holds me in its grasp as it tries to devour my existence. As I swim and drive my hands into the water, they become lost amongst the blue. By now, the blue has developed into the darkest shade it can be, almost as if it had fed compulsively on my secrets, and they are now absorbed within this violent sea. It is darkest here, and yet it still enchants me to go further.

The waves continue to carry me farther into this blue abyss, and I let them until the bloody thirsty waves release

WHO AM I?

Karli Priest—Clarkton School of Discovery

I counted the days as I sat and would ponder,
 “Why could my life be like out yonder?”
 As I was confined in that dark tower,
 My imagination grew and grew by the hour.
 Lonely, cold, and afraid,
 Left to grow old only with my hair to braid.
 Feeling safe and warm wrapped in golden locks.
 My company? A brush with paint I found in an old toolbox.
 Often I sang to the world unknown,
 But mostly, to a terrible witch who refused to leave me alone.
 My voice once heard by a handsome prince,
 He climbed my hair and we’ve been in love ever since.
 A slip of my tongue and the witch found out one day.
 She cut my hair, kept it, and cast me away.
 That night my love climbed my hair, but to his horror he would find
 The witch that would toss him out into a thorn bush causing him to go blind.
 He wandered and wandered for what seemed like years,
 Alas! We reunite and he is cured by my happy tears.
 We are finally together living happily ever after,
 Enjoying our twins and each other with lots of laughter.

ORPHEUS

Cate DeVane—Clarkton School of Discovery

Orpheus, with heart overflowing
In strength greater than the lion-skinned warrior
And sweet, enrapturing melodies
A kithara does play
Invoking all essence and lost
To join his chorus and dance.

Orpheus, prophet of the Sun,
You have softened the King of bleak nomads.
The warm weight of a hand enclosed in yours:
A dream so close you can almost touch it.
Orpheus, husband to Eurydice,
Beware the enticing aroma
Of blue flower fields.
Do you doubt the red strings,
Encircling the wrists of you and your spouse?
For when you lose your truth
And turn to see your love,
Frigid fingertips will encircle your eyes.
You will never see your Sun again.

me into an unknown heaven. The waves grace me with a type of cultivated beauty as they wash away the torture bestowed upon me during the venture. They replenish my strength, and they remind me of my existence. The blue here is pale and transparent. And in this hidden paradise, the horrendous journey becomes worth it. The sea rinses me of my secrets, and in return blesses me with the existence of heaven on earth. My essence is no longer stained with secrets and sins as I cherish the angelic space surrounded by turmoil.

But not long after, I must return, and I cry as I am forced to abandon the blessed place, but the divine sea wipes the tears. I continue to head towards the shore, and the vicious sea devours me once more. It conveys my secrets and sins. Without hesitation, it drowns me in them once more. And as I go to step out of the sea, the blue is once more illuminated with the luring call of innocence.



MERMAID'S DREAM

Charlene Mota-Huerta—Bladen Early College Student

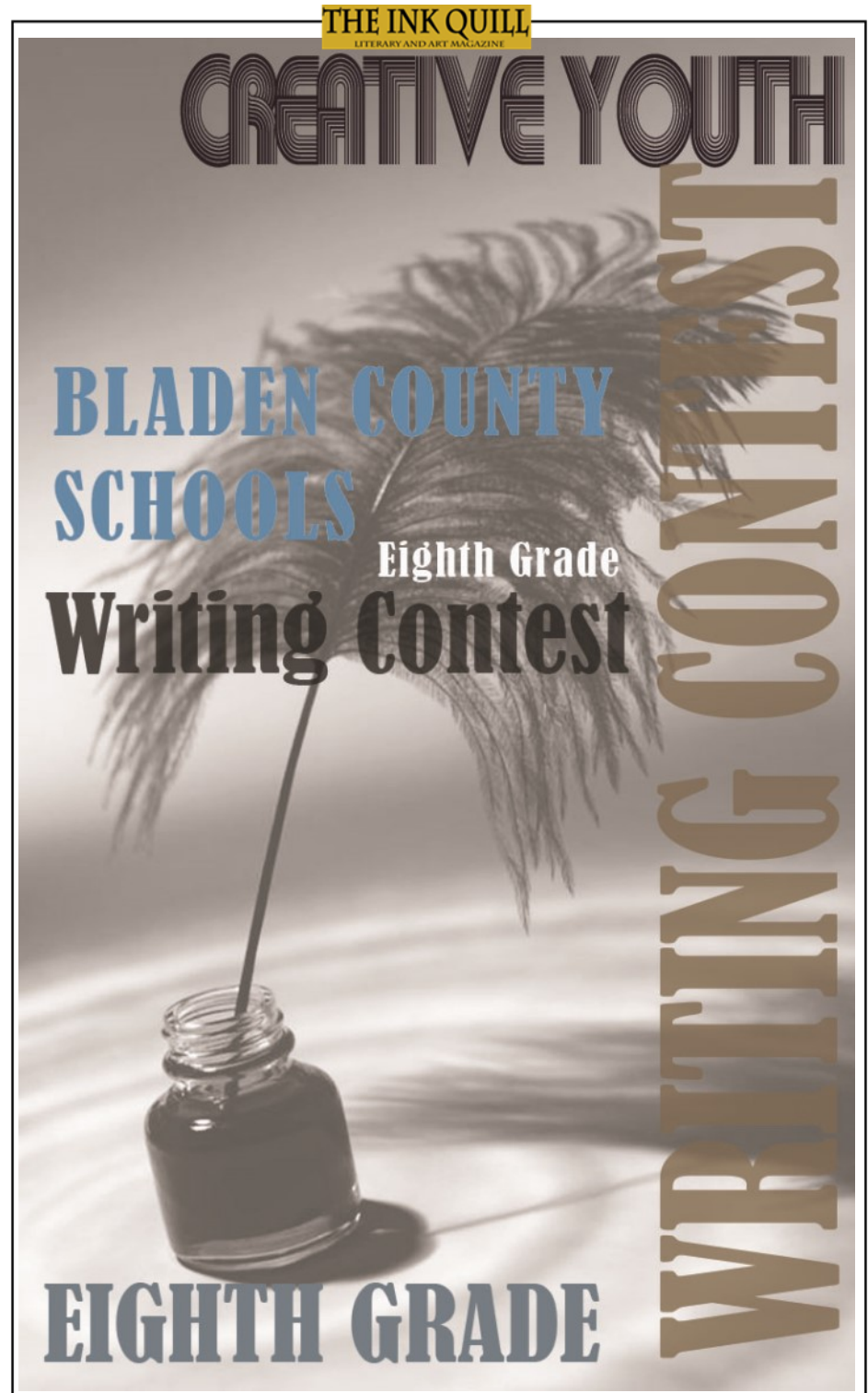
EXCRUCIATING TORTURE

Donovan Flinn—BCC Student

Have you ever had surgery? I have. Since then, I have not been able to forget the excruciating torture that followed. I was seven when it happened. I was relaxing at my old home in the state of Florida when my mother told me that I would be getting my seriously infected tonsils removed. The idea of a doctor sticking his hand inside of my mouth and then using his surgical tools to remove my tonsils in the back of my throat made my skin crawl. I could not understand why they needed to be removed if they were serving their purpose, but I soon realized that there was no logical way to fight this procedure or my parents.

Before I knew it, we were in our old van heading to a medical clinic to get help from the surgeon. I felt nothing but worry and fear. “Was this really happening? Was I going to have my first surgery?” We reached our destination and were walking out of the old van, through the doors of the clinic. I was examined one last time before the surgery. At this point, I was horrified of what the next moment would bring and merely refused everything. Ultimately, the most daring of the staff pinned me down. They needed me to relax, so they shoved plungers of medicine up my nose. The burning sensation in my nose still haunts me until the present day!

When I woke up from my ‘nap,’ everything was fuzzy, and I was just tired and in pain. My mother tried to comfort me by telling me that my tonsils were out and that we were going home soon. My throat was in pain, and I screamed





INTO THE MIST

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty

every time my mouth opened.

At home, I felt the scars the doctor left every time I tried to open my mouth or chew my food. I decided to go on a hunger strike, but my mother ended my protest by threatening to take me back to the hospital if I did not drink and suffered dehydration. I resisted, but finally, I succumbed to my mother's orders.

The scars left behind from this surgery continue to haunt me today. I still do not trust doctors. They make me uncomfortable and stress me out as they examine me. I hope that these excruciating moments, though sometimes necessary, are rare and short-lived.



A NEBULA

Isaac Singletary—Bladen Early College Student

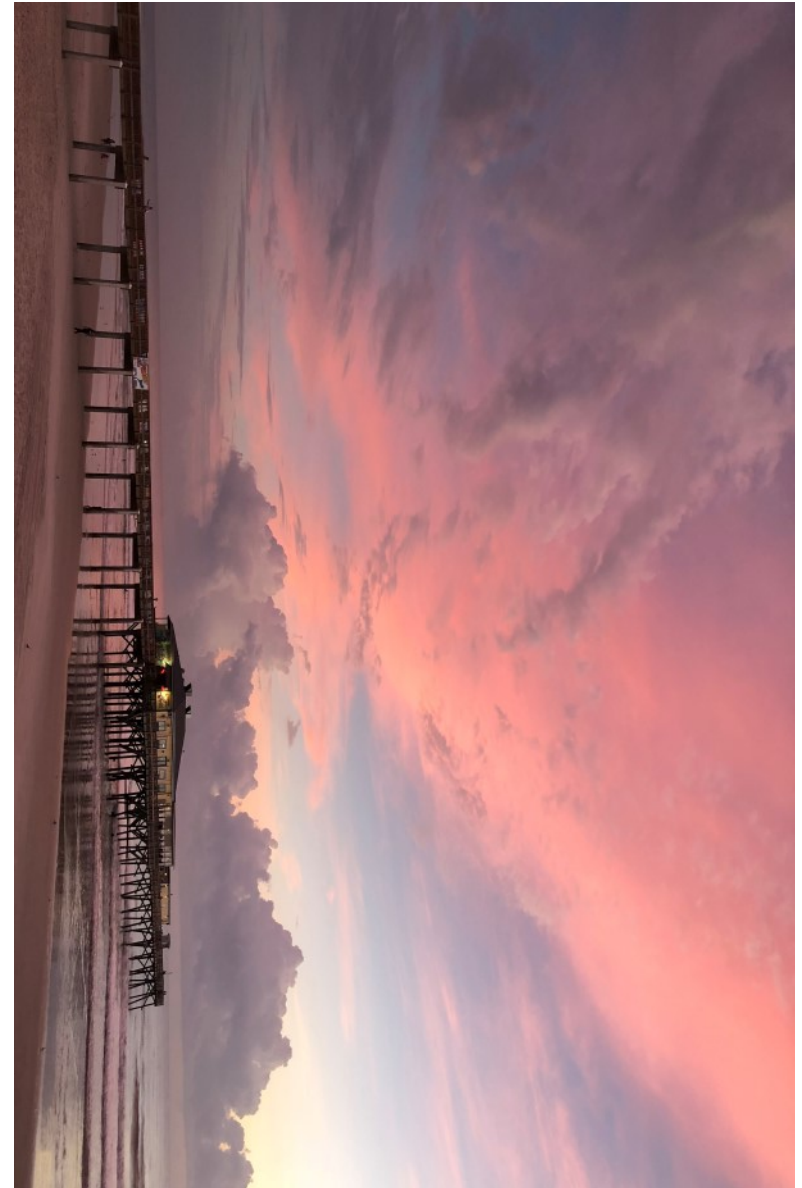
CULTURE CLASH

Joyce Bahhouth—BCC Faculty

The first rule in communication is to know your audience. This is much easier said than done. We want to know our audience's general traits, but we do not want to stereotype. We want to appeal to global readers, but we do not want to leave out individual differences. How do we do that? It may be time to become avid readers, keen observers, and sympathetic writers.

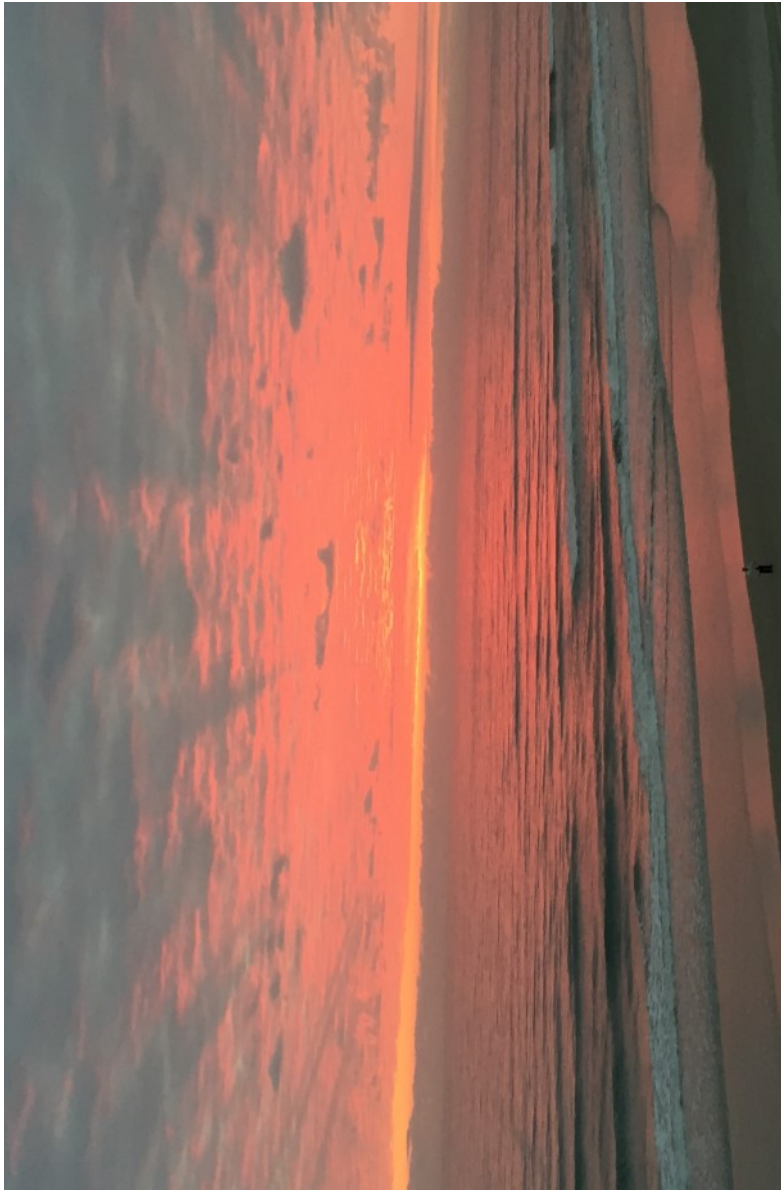
I learned from personal experience that when communicating with others, I needed to try to focus on the similarities among people of different cultures. When I first started teaching at Bladen Community College, a friend of mine from Lebanon asked me about my current colleagues. My response was that we have the Carol, Paul, Amal, and Sami that we had in our department back there. We all have common traits despite our diversity. Drawing these parallels between people who shared my culture and others whose culture I was trying to learn helped me create common ground. We all have feelings, dreams, strengths, and weaknesses.

In my classes, I stress the importance of respecting people from other cultures, understanding how *they* think, and seeing the world through *their* eyes without judging *them* for how *they* think. A simple "thank you" may be highly appreciated in the American culture, but may be frowned upon in other cultures, such as the Indian if used among friends and close relatives because it creates distance and formality. Loud, passionate conversations are common



PEACE IN SHADES OF PEACH

Ann Russell—Retired BCC Faculty



FLORIDA SUNRISE

Ann Russell—Retired BCC Faculty

among many Mediterranean people. To an American, these conversations may lead to “eternal” disputes, but to a Lebanese or Italian, for example, the passion ends with a simple switch in the topic of the conversation.

Hard as it may seem to be, we need to think of how our audience perceives us through their different lenses and address them with respect and compassion as we would like to be addressed.



SUNFLOWER ON WOOD

Johannah Little—BCC Student

SHE CHOSE ME

Teresa W. Carter—Friend of BCC
Loving Mother of Inez C. Whitted

‘Tis the Season of Giving. I give thanks for we are still living. Jesus is the reason that we are still here singing songs of reindeer and holiday cheer.

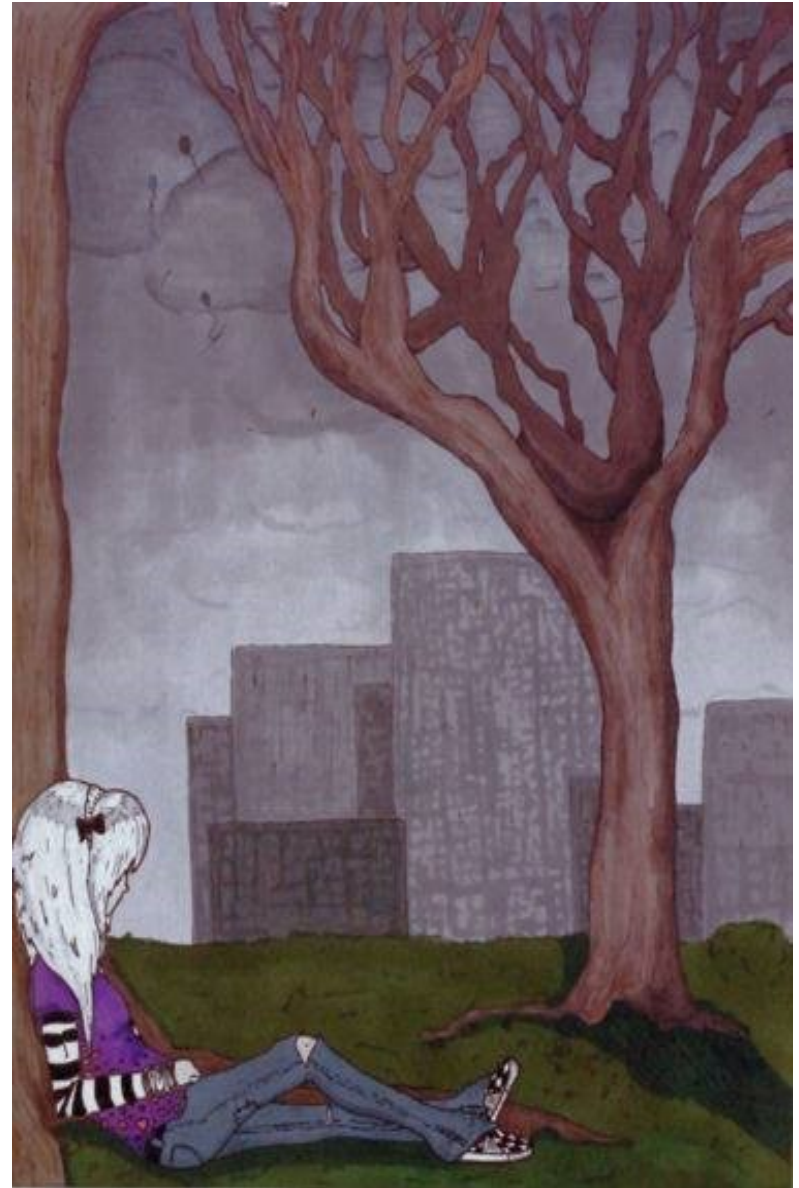
She chose to keep me some 55 years ago in the month of June. I was #8. Some said that was too many or I was too late. Some asked for me to be given to them. They would take me and raise me as their own. Mama’s love was too great, so she took me home.

She chose to keep me by whatever means necessary, walking me to town to the doctor’s office. *Where are we going now?* I thought.

“You have to go to the doctor to get your shots.” Mama made sure I would be ready for school; I would not be delayed for not following the rules.

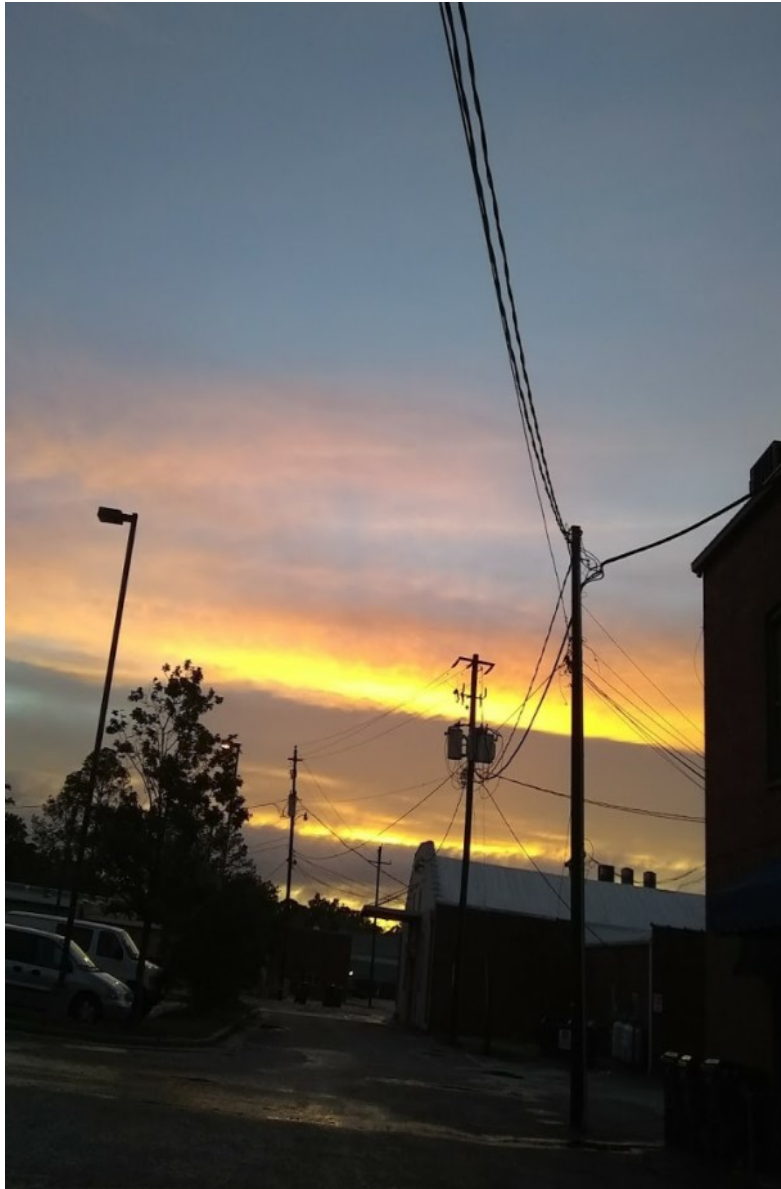
“She’s the baby,” Mama would always say. I am so grateful she chose to keep me and not give me away. Love isn’t an action word until you give it away. You reap what you sow, especially today. While I had tears in my eyes and my heart was overjoyed, she chose to keep me and shower me with love.

We didn’t agree on everything or see eye to eye. That Christmas, when I was 16 with a driver’s license, I was a big teen. Out shopping in the store front, I saw the most beautiful baby doll, black, with long hair or short; that was



EDGY AT EASE

Samantha Stitz—BCC Alumna



SUN-KISSED SKY

Charlene-Mota-Huerta—Bladen Early College Student

an option she had. Baby Chrissy, oh mine she would be; I wouldn't wrap her or put her under the tree.

Mama asked, "Is that what you want?" I excitedly said yes! She replied, "You're too big to be playing with dolls." She tried to delay. "But if that's what you want, you can get her today."

She reached in her purse and pulled out some money; oh boy, it's on now, Honey. She waited outside staring in the store window to see if I might change my mind or even surrender.

I went on in with my big old self and picked up Chrissy from the dusty shelf. Sporting a big smile dressed in pink, socks and shoes, this baby was it. Chrissy is at home with me still sitting on my shelf, forever real. The best gift I was given was the gift from above. God gave His Son; His Son gave Love.

2 Corinthians 9:15 (NKJV) "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift."



A JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

Olivia Sholar—BCC Student

It was a cold night in the middle of March. I stood beside a campfire listening to the rhythmic tunes flowing from my worship leader's guitar. I don't remember the song he was playing, but the slow and soft melody allowed for a quiet peace to surround the scene. A dozen other youths my age stood around the fire; the tips of their noses were tinted pink from the cold. I began to wonder who or what led them here. What led me here? My mind began to slip into thoughts from the past.

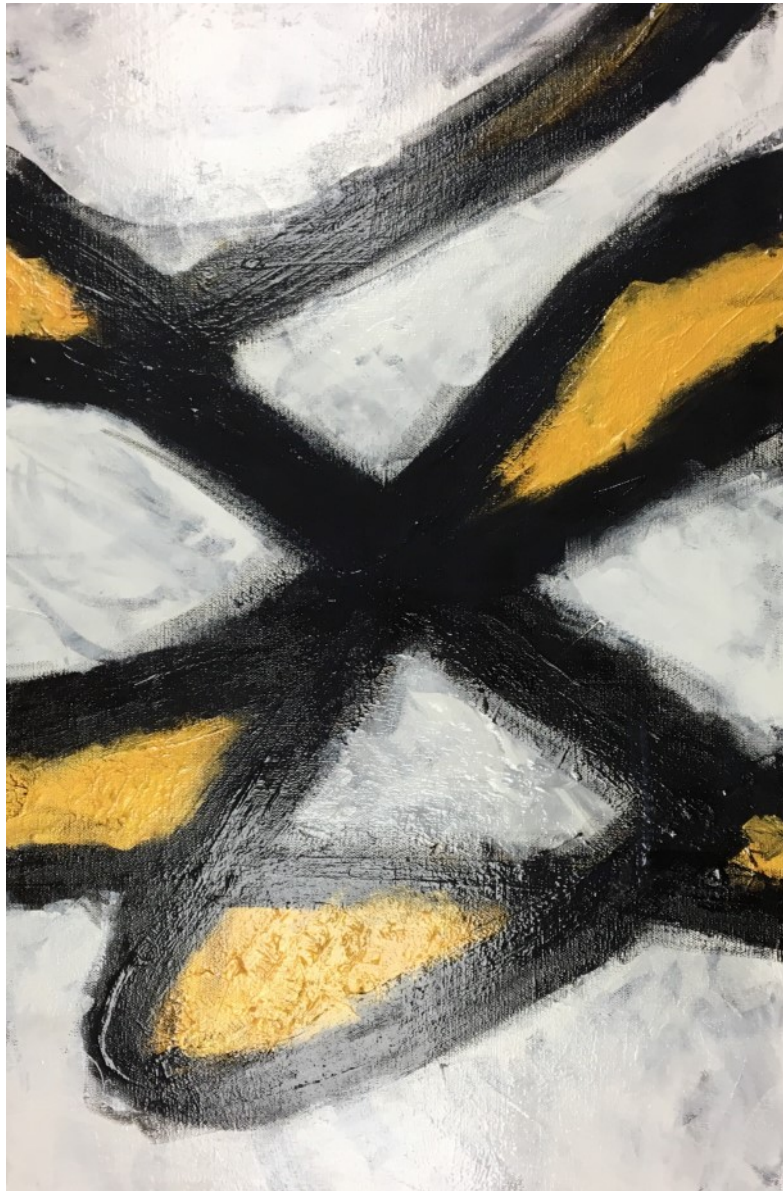
I grew up in a very Christian household. I was christened when I was only three months old. As far as I can remember, I always went to church and participated in church activities daily. However, the older I got, the further I drifted from my church, and consequently, my faith. I still did all the activities I had before, but it felt forced, and I didn't enjoy it as much as I used to. One day, my youth pastor met with me about participating in a confirmation class. She explained to me that confirmation was a class for youths to learn more about and confirm their faith in Jesus Christ. At the end of the class, the youth would go on a weekend retreat to recollect what they've learned before they end their confirmation journey through a baptism. At first, I was hesitant to join the confirmation class, but after talking to friends who had taken the class, my cousin and I decided we were going to give it a chance. After nearly a year of confirmation class sessions, the weekend retreat in Ayden, North Carolina, finally arrived.

My thoughts led me back into the present. The fire was



PEACOCK

Lenore Lacy—BCC Staff



COMPOSITION NO. 3

Ethan Fletcher—BCC Student

still alive and burning, and the hum of music filled my ears. I began to worry. Had I really changed who I was? After all these classes and this retreat, could I truly say that I was a different person now? Confirmation is about rebirth, and I couldn't help but question if I was reborn.

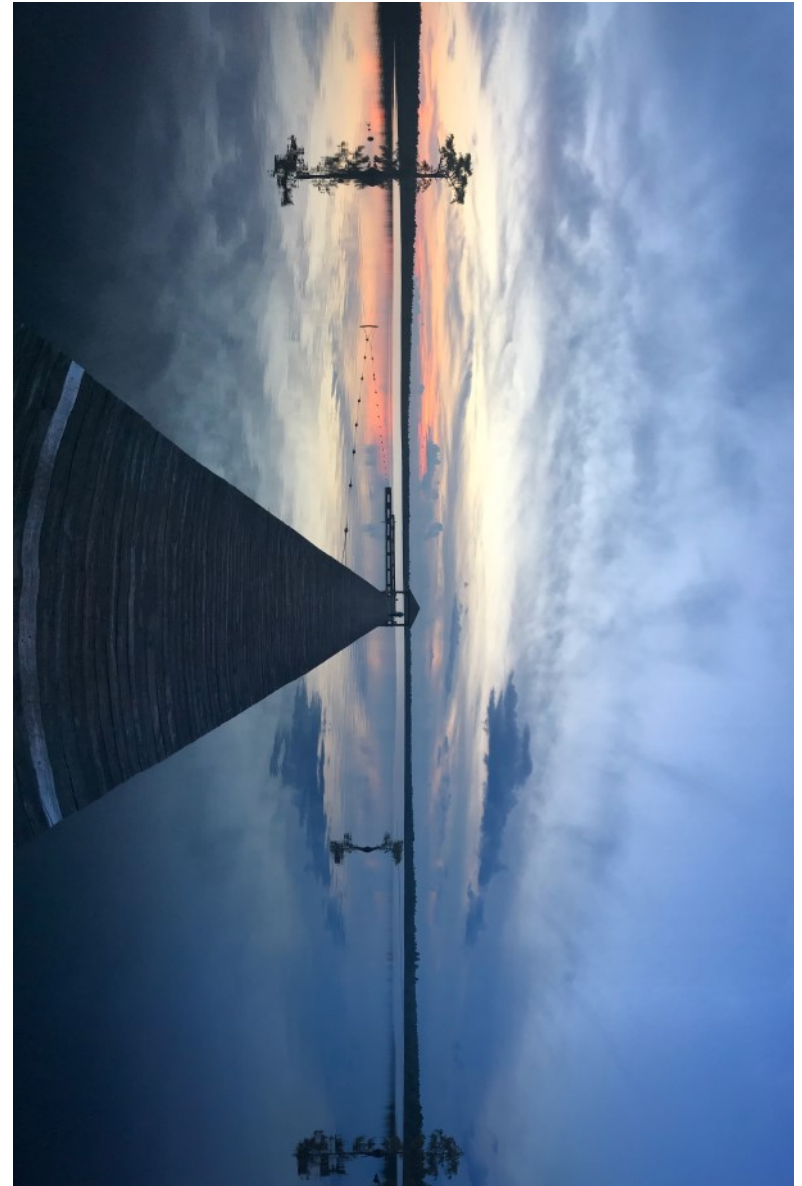
I tried to ignore my growing worry, and I looked up to see that another leader had arrived with dozens of unlit candles seated in small lanterns. He explained to us that we were about to take a very personal journey across the lake with the candles. We were to each light one of the candles and carry it through the trees to the Cross on the other side of the lake. A few candles had already been lit around the Cross, so we could see it from the cabins, but the path to get there was still completely dark. We were supposed to go alone, but not many people did. They wanted to pair up or be in a large group. With my thoughts still bothering me, I decided to go alone and give myself some time to think. The youths lined up to receive and light their candles before they left. When it was my turn, I lit my candle and left the campfire behind as I headed into the woods alone.

It wasn't a short walk. It took more than a few minutes to make it across the lake. There wasn't much wind, but it was still extremely cold. I wrapped my fur jacket around me and took in deep breaths. It smelled damp and almost sweet as the trees around me stood tall and covered in ice. Although it had only snowed lightly, I could still hear the dead grass and snow crunch under my footsteps as I walked. I was nervous; I had never liked the dark. The faint chirp of crickets reverberated from the ground, and I watched as other insects gravitated toward the light illuminating from my lantern. I was alone, and I could just slightly make out the other lanterns guiding my way across the lake. I almost

turned back or tried to catch up with another group, but something kept me going. I wanted to make it by myself. I eventually did, and when I arrived, I was still alone.

The people before me had added their lanterns to the bottom of the Cross. As I set mine on the ground before it as well, I felt the urge to pray. My knees hit the ground, and I bowed before the Cross with my palms together. I whispered, “Lord,” aloud to myself, and instantly, I felt an overwhelming sense of relief and connection. It felt like He was there with me, and He understood everything I wanted to say before I had even said it. It was one of the best feelings I had ever felt. I was brought to tears, the good kind you get when you’re so overwhelmingly happy you can’t do anything except cry. I stayed in that position for only a few minutes, but it felt like hours. My face and neck were wet with tears, and my body shivered from the cold. My heart felt warm and so happy as I stood up from the ground. I try to hold onto that feeling even to this day. Slowly, I dried my tears and turned back to the direction of the cabins where my youth was gathered.

I had lost my lantern. The darkness on the way back from the Cross was even more terrifying than before. I wasn’t worried or afraid this time. The healing I had just received made me feel protected and almost invincible. The dark woods had become a peaceful oasis. It was holy ground, and my fears had been left at the Cross. I began to reflect on the past year and my journey throughout confirmation. I saw how every little moment led me to the place I was then and how it could lead me to the place I wanted to be in the future. I was so blind about who I was then, but as I walked through those trees on that cold, dark, night in March, I knew who I was. I knew who I wanted to



SINGLETARY LAKE

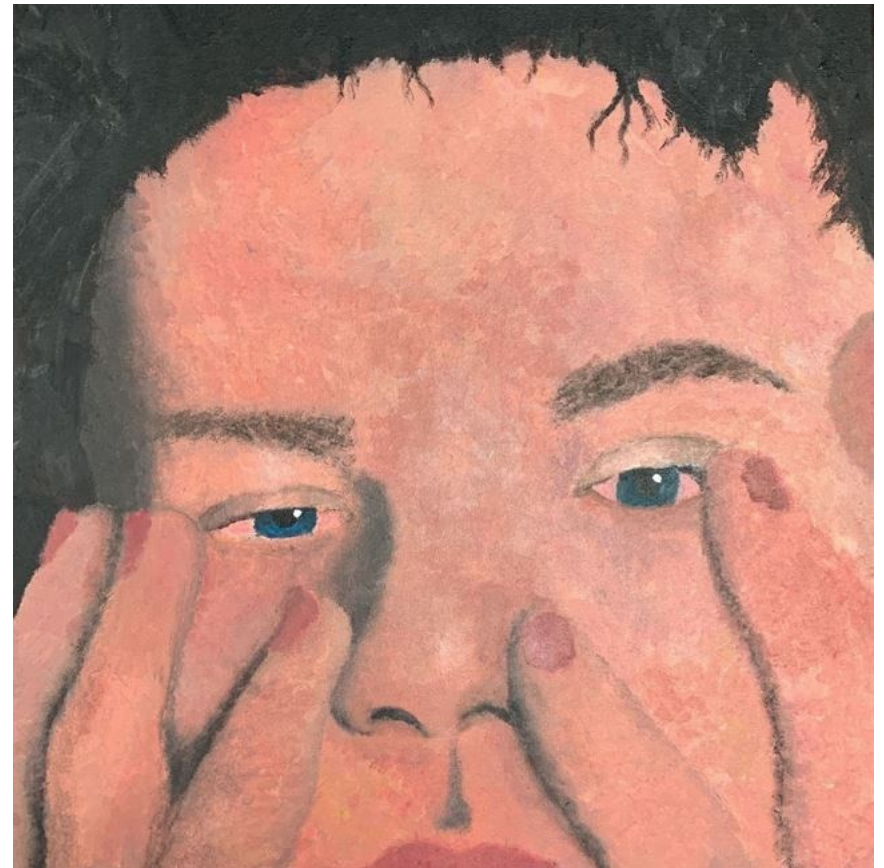
Cara DeLoach—BCC Faculty



TREES AT JONES LAKE

Cara DeLoach—BCC Faculty

be. It only took one journey to the Cross to find myself, and ever since then, I have felt different. I have wanted to be different, and as I arrived back at the campfire, I knew exactly how to be the person I wanted to be. The world felt like it shifted, and I felt so alive in that moment. It truly was a life changing experience that I will never forget.



UNEVEN EDGES

Ethan Fletcher—BCC Student

A FORGOTTEN HERO OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN NORTH CAROLINA

Chris Carroll—Bladen Early College Faculty

At Moore's Creek Battlefield in Currie, North Carolina stands the National Women's Monument dedicated in 1907 to honor the women of the Lower Cape Fear Region, who contributed to the Patriot Cause during the American Revolution ("Moore's Creek Women's Monument"). Also at this site is the grave of Mary "Polly" Slocumb, a woman who willingly accepted her call to duty in the fight for liberty.

Mary "Polly" Hooks-Slocumb was born in 1760 in Bertie County, North Carolina and moved to Duplin County at the age of 10, where her father unknowingly established his family directly in the middle of a vicious conflict between Loyalists and Patriots. Soon after arriving in Duplin County, Hooks' mother passed away and her dad married the widow of John Slocumb, and together they each brought three children into the marriage. At the age of eighteen, step-siblings Ezekiel and Mary Slocumb would marry, and Ezekiel would join the militia and leave Slocumb to oversee the farm.

Three significant events about Mary Slocumb identify her contributions as a brave and dedicated woman during the American Revolution. First, Slocumb demonstrated her fearlessness in her encounter with British soldiers. According to Elizabeth Elliot in her 1848 book, *The Women of the American Revolution*, General Tarleton of the British army arrived in Duplin County at the home of Ezekiel and Mary Slocumb. Ezekiel was out patrolling with the militia



ROSE BUD

Johannah Little—BCC Student



ROSE BLOOM

Johannah Little—BCC Student

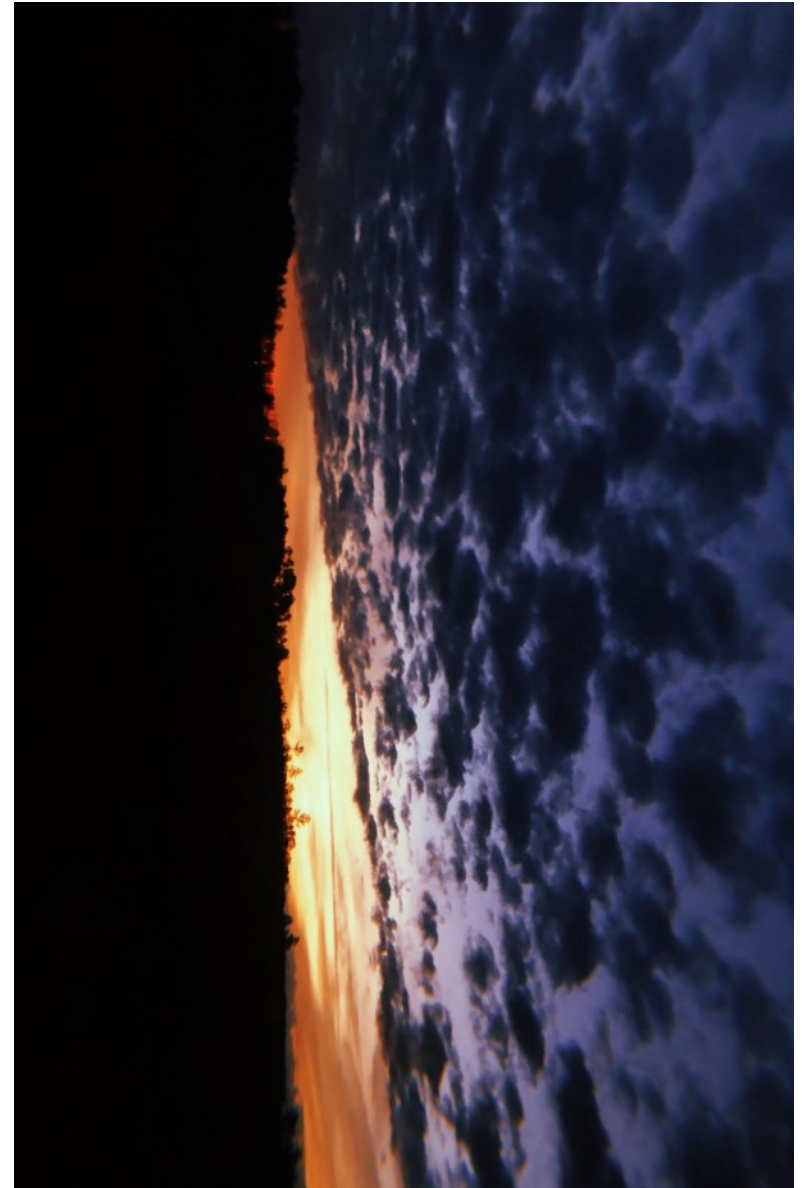
and had no idea his wife and son were face to face with one of the most ruthless generals of the British army.

General Tarleton approached with approximately twenty soldiers to where Slocomb was sitting with her child and a friend. The British soldier asked if her husband was home, to which Slocomb replied no. The officer then asked Slocomb if her husband was a rebel, and Slocomb boldly shot back, “No, he is in the army of his country, fighting against our invaders; therefore, he is not a rebel” (Ellet 306). Tarleton insisted upon his men staying on the farm and took up his quarters inside Slocomb’s house. It is fascinating to discover how Slocomb treated these “enemies.” Instead of treating them with hostility, Slocomb prepared a delicious meal that wowed Tarleton as one of the best he had experienced in America. During dinner, an advisor asked Tarleton if they would receive some of this property when the British won the Revolution. Tarleton answered with an emphatic yes, causing Slocomb to retort, “let me observe and prophesy that the only land in these United States which will ever remain in possession of a British Officer will be measured but six feet by two” (Ellet 309). Despite being alone in the presence of one of the highest-ranking soldiers in the world’s largest military, Slocomb refused to back down, boldly declaring that the British army would lose all land but the graves their bodies would be buried in during the war.

A second story deals with the inspiring role of Mary Slocumb at the Battle of Moore’s Creek in February 1776. Ezekiel Slocomb had moved from being in the militia to serving in the army and was headed off into battle. That night, Mary Slocomb had a dream in which she dreamed of

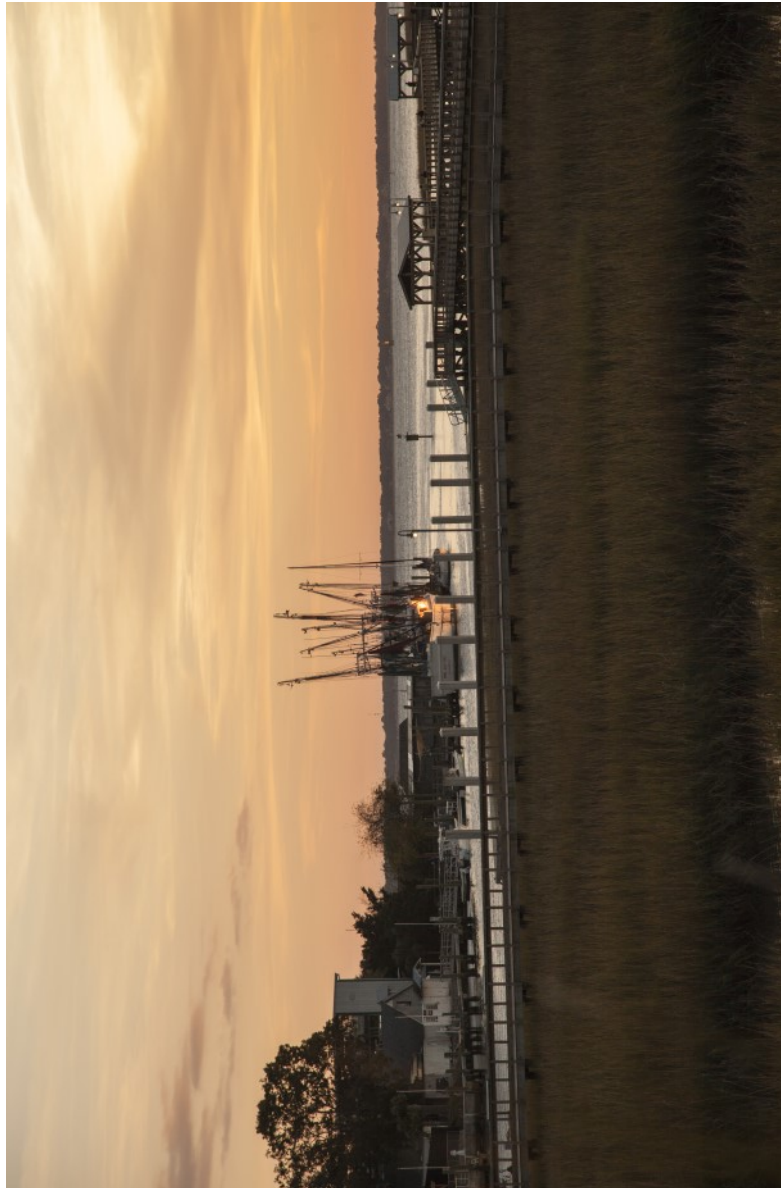
“a body wrapped in [her] husband’s guard-cloak—bloody—dead” (Logan 168). She left her bed, mounted her horse, and rode all night. When daylight came, she had ridden more than thirty miles and had arrived at Moore’s Creek, where she heard the thunder of cannon. As she rode to where she heard the cannons, she discovered twenty wounded men lying on the ground with one body wrapped in her husband’s cloak. She uncovered the head and saw a face covered in blood with a head wound. He cried out, begging for water and as she wiped his face, to her relief, she recognized it was *not* her husband. Instead of going in search for her husband, she stayed in that spot for hours caring for and cleaning the wounds of the men in that group. After some time, Slocumb looked up and saw her husband, bloodied but alive. After checking to make sure he was okay, she went back to tending to the wounded. As nightfall came, she mounted her horse and rode back home to check on her son (Ellet 318-320).

The story of Slocumb tending to the injured men can be found in John H. Wheeler’s *Historical Sketches of North Carolina*, which was the first major historical work detailing the state of North Carolina. Historians must be dedicated to a reasoned and investigated reconstruction of primary sources, and it would seem after one does research that this story is probably nothing more than just a great story written to emphasize the patriotism of North Carolinians during the American Revolution. Reconstructing this story shows that the battle occurred in 1776, yet there are records that show Ezekiel Slocumb did not join the army until 1780, which was four years after Moore’s Creek. In addition, Ezekiel and Mary Slocumb’s son, Jesse, was born in 1780, once again four years after Moore’s Creek. Finally, in a battle that only lasted five



NIGHT SKY

Destiny Robinson—Bladen Early College Student



LONG DAY AT SEA

Diane Vitale—BCC Staff

minutes, there is a report of only two Patriot casualties instead of the twenty mentioned by Mary Slocumb (Capps and Davis). However, it does make for a great story of bravery and heroism.

The final story shows Mary's bravery in life as at the age of seventy-two, she was diagnosed with cancer in her hand and informed by the doctor the only action was to remove it by a knife. She refused to have any medicine and to be tied down by the doctor, saying, "it was his business to cut out the cancer; she would take care of her arm" (Logan 169). After much persuasion, she finally agreed for an assistant to help, but that assistant fainted upon the knife entering the hand. At that moment she instructed the assistants to go away as she braced her arm on the table and "never moved a muscle nor uttered a groan during the operation" (Logan 169).

Upon studying the American Revolution, it is imperative to consider the sacrifice and bravery many women gave towards the promotion of liberty. Abigail Adams once encouraged John Adams to "remember the ladies" when recognizing the rights and liberties of all people in the fight for American independence. When one reads the stories of the heroism and selflessness of Mary Slocumb, not only must one remember the ladies, but also recognize they sacrificed just as much for the freedom of liberty.

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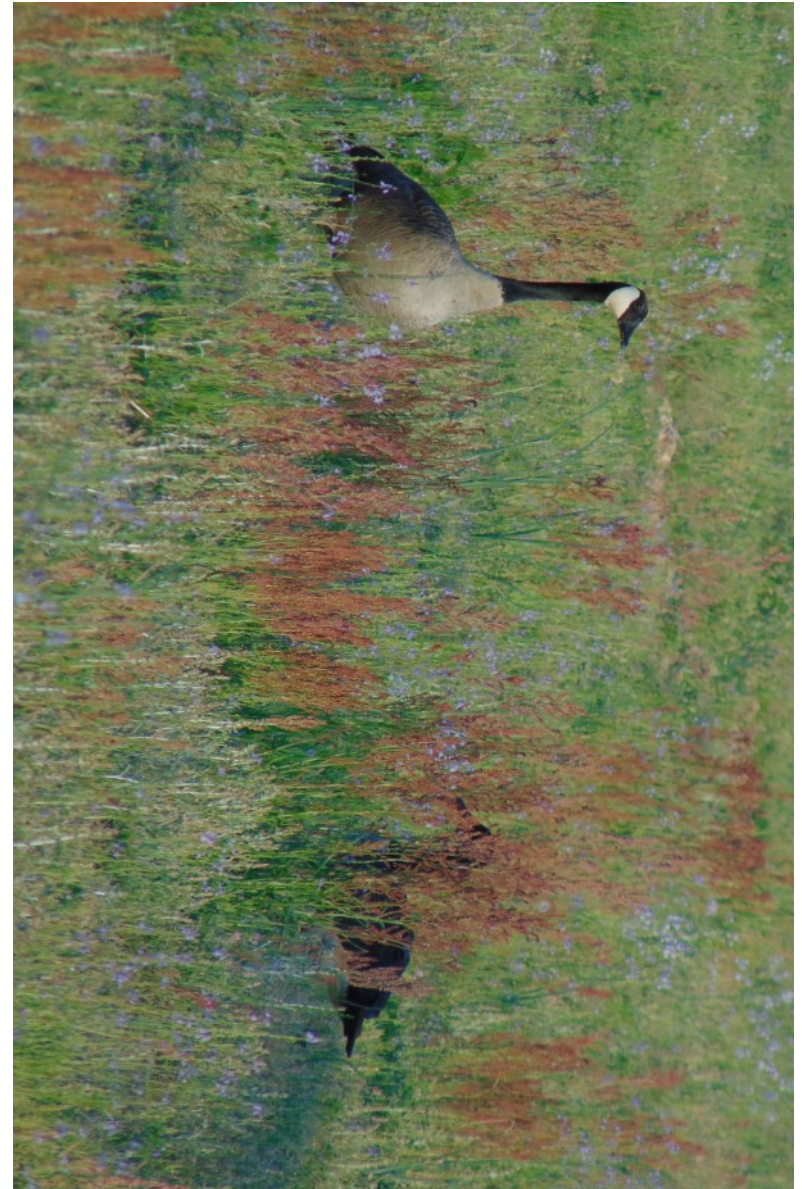
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SURROUNDINGS

Micah Daw—Guest Faculty
Davidson County Community College



LITTLE GEESE

Johannah Little—BCC Student



NASHVILLE

Mary Anne Murphy—BCC Faculty

MY GRADUATION

Corrina Monroe—BCC Student

It was the morning of June 16, 2018, and it was a warm and sunny day. It was the day all the seniors were ready for: graduating from high school. It was the best experience I ever had, and it was a huge milestone in my life. This is how graduation went.

All the seniors were looking forward to graduating from high school and going out into the world and doing what they want to do with the rest of their lives. I walked in the aux gym where we practiced getting in line for the graduation, and I was excited because I wanted to graduate and move on with my life. While I was in my place in line, I started to think about from the moment I walked in the doors in 9th grade until now that I was leaving out those same doors as a high school graduate. I started to think about how I went from a little shy black girl who was as quiet as a mouse and hardly talked to anybody to a black young woman who was leaving high school with three loyal friends. The teachers said it was time to walk to the main gym, and while we were walking, I was thinking that this was the last time that I would get to walk down these hallways and see the people that I see every day.

When I walked in the main gym, the gym was filled up from the bottom of the bleachers on up to the top of the bleachers, and that's how it was around the whole gym. My mother, father, aunts, and my pastor showed up with smiles on their faces as if they were happy to know that their niece/granddaughter/daughter was going to walk across the stage without getting pregnant, fighting, etc. The seniors were in

line feeling happy, waiting for their names to be called. When the announcer called the name of the person in front of me, I knew I was next in line to be called, and it sent a chill down my spine. I was thinking about whether I was going to fall going up the stairs or if I was going to step on my dress and fall going down the steps, but when they called my name, I walked up the stairs fine, strutted my stuff like a model going down the runway while the photographers were taking pictures.

After all the seniors' names were called, we stood up and turned our tassels, and the ceremony was over. While I was walking out, I was like a little baby crying for her mother because I knew that the high school journey had ended. I walked out into the auditorium and saw my family waiting there for me with the biggest smile on their faces as if I had just won a million dollars. I started to cry again, but the tears were both tears of joy and tears of sadness. They were tears of joy because I graduated high school, but tears of sadness because I was leaving behind memories and friends. Everyone was hugging their loved ones and going around talking to the teachers, smiling, laughing, and remembering old times, from getting into an argument with someone to making someone laugh and cheering them up.

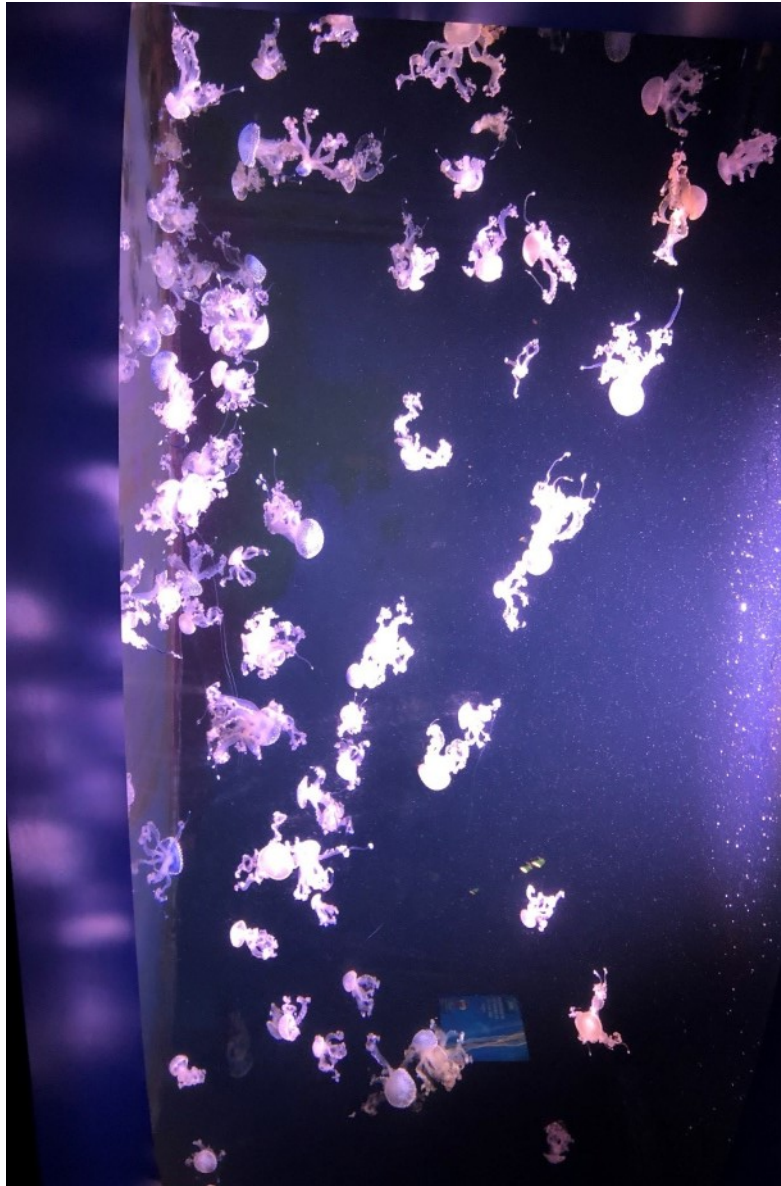
I was leaving the school on my way to the car when a friend of mine whom I hadn't seen since ninth grade stopped me to advise me to continue to do more when I thought I had done enough. She also told me that the shy, quiet teacher's pet she remembered has turned into a young woman who's not afraid to say how she's feeling.

As I was heading towards the car, I looked back one more time at the school and thought I saw a rainbow over it.



DREAM CATCHERS

Stacey Regan—BCC Student

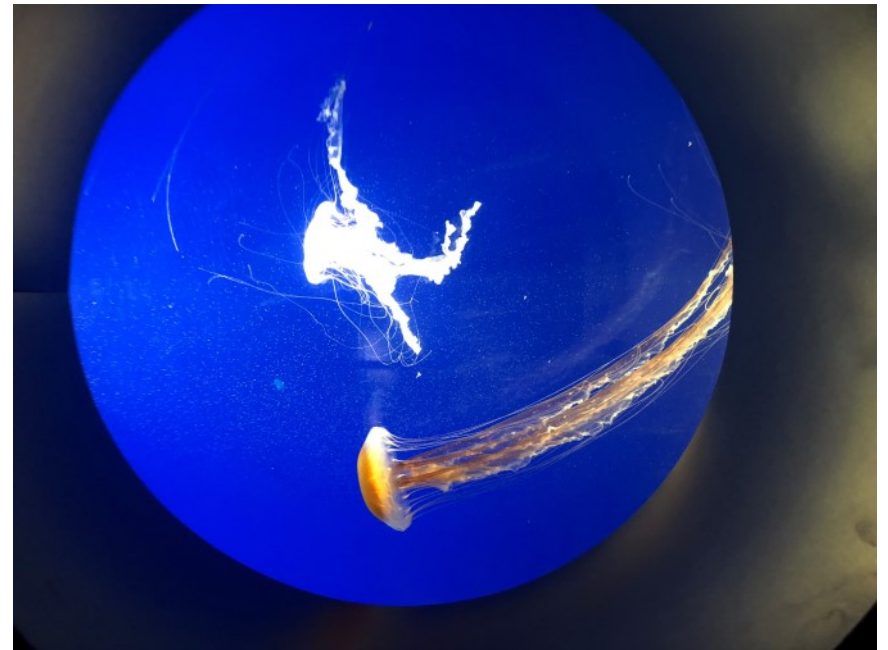


JELLYFISH

Destiny Robinson—Bladen Early College Student

When I looked at the sky, I saw many smiles from my loved ones in heaven and one particular smile I couldn't possibly forget: a huge smile with two teeth missing in the front, my grandfather's smile knowing that his baby girl graduated in his honor.

I learned a lesson from the beginning of high school to the end, and I learned a lot about myself from it as well. The graduation experience was the best experience I ever had. I knew that an old chapter had closed and a new one had just begun.



BEAUTIFUL CREATURES

Destiny Robinson—Bladen Early College Student

A DAY IN A VENEZUELAN PRISON

Kimberly Small—BCC Faculty

The person whose account is told here spent a little over two years in a Venezuelan prison and survived to tell the reality of incarceration. More than three hundred prisoners die each year in Venezuelan prisons. The prisons are run from the inside by gang leaders that have access to machine guns, grenades, and drugs. The information described in this short narrative is based on a series of interviews of a person who was imprisoned between the years of 2011-2013 and wants to remain anonymous.

New Year's Day 2012 started like many others that came and went. I woke up with the renewed hope of a better year. Then I heard my boss screaming and yelling at me. My "boss" was the leader of the pavilion. He's a well-known drug kingpin that could control his industry better from within the bars and make a bigger profit. I do not know why he was yelling that morning; he just yelled not necessarily at me but at the whole pavilion. I made it to the bathroom and managed to take a shower without much interference or problems. When I was leaving, I found one *bolívar* on the floor and thought, "This means I will be lucky in this new year." Of course, I had to use it towards paying my weekly fee to the boss. If someone did not pay the weekly fee, he would, at a minimum, be beaten. Much worse has happened to a person for far less. The boss's crew had collected all the cell phones, but no one knew why.

Lunchtime was here, and everyone entered the pavilion and sat with his crew. We had to find our own food. You either work for someone who feeds you scraps, or you find a way to buy some produce from the others. If you're lucky, you have family or a girlfriend that will bring you food from outside the prison to eat. I didn't have any family in



VIVILYA, MAYA, AND JEREMY

Jamya Tolson—Bladen Early College Student



RAIN AND LIGHT

Jamya Tolson—Bladen Early College Student

Venezuela, and my local girlfriend did not show up today. I cooked some rice in the communal kitchen and borrowed some meat-flavored seasoning from Juan Carlos. The boss had some leftover grilled fish for us to fight over. Five guys tried to intimidate me, but I stood my ground and got a portion. It was good enough to make my hunger go away. Little did I know that the guy sitting across from me would be shot and killed while eating lunch. He didn't see it coming. I didn't see it coming, either. Everyone kept their head down and continued eating as if nothing had happened. After lunch, I was told to clean up the blood from the floor and the wall since I am part of the *aseo* (cleaning crew).

After cleaning, I went to my mattress. Most men slept on the hallway floor. I was fortunate enough to have a mattress. My boss does not like it when I rest. As soon as I sat down, my boss yelled at me to come clean the grills because the bosses under him wanted to cook the meats they had purchased with the weekly fee collections. I cleaned the grills and then cooked the beef and chicken for them to enjoy. After I served them their feast, I returned to my mattress. Jorge shared some pancakes with me, so at least I had something to eat that night. With what little money I had, I bought an aspirin from a guy. My head was killing me. I could not depend on anyone inside and had no one outside to ask for help because I am a visitor in Venezuela; this is not my homeland, but home for the moment. I had to wait to sleep until the *luceros* ate, drank, and finished playing card games late into the night. Another one of my jobs was to pull out the *luceros'* mattresses and set them up for them to sleep on. When this is done, I can try to sleep until sunrise when I have to get up and do it all over again.

HOW A BRUTALLY DIFFICULT GAME MADE ME MORE SOCIAL

Anthony Smith-Roche — BCC Student

"BOOO!!" a looping artificial audience sounded throughout the small room that housed the large metallic arcade cabinet. My eyes glared at the large High Definition screen that revealed the words "STAGE FAILED" in huge orange and white gradient letters. The booing continued until I tapped one of the white buttons on the high-end cabinet. I groaned in defeat and turned to walk away from the expensive-looking monster of an arcade game that just handed my butt to me and told me I sucked.

"Aww. That sucks man, you wanna play again?" Someone next to me asked.

"Uh, sure. I've got some time," I said.

Little did I know that this brutally difficult music game was going to change my life in such a subtle way by making me a bit less afraid of public embarrassment.

What was that brutally difficult game that I played that day? It's a rare little gem known as Beatmania IIDX (said as 2DX). It's a kind of music game that started all the other modern music games. It's played by matching the notes falling down the player's side of the screen with the keys they correspond to. The keys are four white and three black keys arranged almost like a piano. On the left or right side of that seven-key arrangement is a large turntable that is reminiscent of a DJ turntable. What I found makes this



VIVILYA

Jamya Tolson—Bladen Early College Student



MAYA, JAMAYA, AND MEYWICK

Jamya Tolson—Bladen Early College Student

game so popular—as well as off-putting—is the complexity of the note charts and the songs that demand such insane note arrangements. To the uninformed, IIDX looks like a fast-paced, awesome-sounding, but astoundingly hard game that would probably be too tough for general American audiences. There are songs that have note counts in the thousands in just the first 30 seconds to a minute into the songs. I was already nervous because I was daring to try something new, but the thought of failing a song and possibly embarrassing myself was what stopped me from playing it right away.

I was living in Seattle in 2005 and had wandered into a bowling alley near my job. I could hear the almost rhythmic thump of the bowling balls hitting the lanes and colliding into pins before I could even open the door. I had shown up about an hour early for my shift and wanted to kill time. I walked into the arcade, completely uninterested in bowling. I did not even look in that direction. I saw the arcade and made a beeline right for it. At the far right corner of the arcade stood the mammoth IIDX machine. The sound was off, but I could see the games attraction loop playing, beckoning me to pop my tokens in and imagine I was an awesome DJ about to play my set for a cheering audience. I think I stood there for almost twenty minutes before I decided to pop my tokens in. This was also to make sure I was alone and would not attract attention. A chime sounded every time the game noticed a token was put in. *Could it possibly be any louder?* I thought with each chime. I was greeted with a bumping, upbeat techno intro soundtrack with the logo "Beatmania IIDX 8th Style" and "Push Start" flashing on the screen. I took a deep breath, reached out my hand, and pushed that start button. A whooshing noise confirmed my entry. I used the large turntable to select

"FREE MODE" from the selection and pushed the white key to confirm. After a few seconds, I reached the "MUSIC SELECT" screen. There was so much to take in. The background looked almost like I was on the outside of a cybernetics production plant. That must have been the theme for 8th Style cybernetics because I saw a lot of high-tech cyber looking aesthetics throughout this game. My unease and fears of failure intensified when I scrolled through the gigantic song list and found that I could not hear any of the songs before I played them. For a newb like me, that meant I had no idea how any of the songs sounded, even though the information about the song told me what music genre it came from and how fast or slow it is.

What exacerbated this for me was that there was no low-level difficulty song in the game... at all. There was a song that was too easy at level one, but the difficulty jumped right to five after that. Nothing in between. After playing and effortlessly beating the level one song, I decided to see just how difficult a level five song was. Once I found what level five song I was going to attempt, I took a deep breath and pushed the white key. The game reacted and whisked me off to another screen to play the song I picked. I was ready!

No. No, I was not ready for the onslaught of notes. I struggled to hit each note on time, causing the song to sound terrible. Other times, I hit the wrong key for the note and resulted in an even worse sounding mistake than hitting the note late. I looked like a fool flailing about the keys and turntable. The song sounded a hot mess because I could not play it correctly. To add insult to injury, the game doesn't fail me out if my gauge hits zero. Oh no, it kept going until the song ended. Cue my embarrassment and anxiety.



DIFFERENT

Emma Elliot—Bladen Early College Student



INDIGO WHISPERS

Johannah Little—BCC Student

After successfully crushing my soul, the song ended, and the booing began. I glared at the screen, shaking my head with my imaginary tail between my legs. That was when I was asked to play again. That question came from a tall, thin, and nerdy looking white guy. I assumed he was standing behind me, watching my grandiose failure as it happened. After a beat of awkward silence, my mouth opened to let out a bewildered sounding response of "uh, sure, yeah." Hands trembling, I put four more tokens in. He confidently followed with his four. We both entered the game. I decided that I'd let him pick everything and hoped to be able to keep up. I was wrong again, with me utterly failing the next song while he scored a flashy shimmering AA. Was I jealous? No, not at all. I looked at his skills like a fanboy who just met their hero for the first time. I kept quiet, though, my social anxiety the cause.

"First time playing?" he asked with an innocent smile.

I said nothing and nodded my head. A nervous chuckle escaped my lips seconds later. He laughed and proceeded to pick the next song. *What was so funny?* I thought. I stumbled through that one too while he scored an A this time around. In my mind, I was banging my head on the controller, frustrated that I could not grasp a new game as easily as I understood so many others. On the outside, I looked like none of this internal conflict was happening.

"Good game man," I croaked while pointing at his score. Perfect time for my voice to sound pre-pubescent. "Looks like you have been playing this game for a minute!" He laughed and shook his head.

"Nope! I just practice in class mode. Failure is just a part

of this game, man. It's ok to bomb; how else would you learn? I'm trying to play every song on the hardest difficulty. I'm sure I'll fail a lot before I can do that. Do you live in the area?" He popped four more tokens in and looked back at me. I shook my head.

"Nah. I just work at the mall across the street. I just found this place today." The nerdy guy nodded his head and scrolled through the mode select screen, stopping on "CLASS MODE." My heart was thumping in my chest. I wanted to leave the arcade and be alone again, but my feet would not move. IIDX had me enthralled.

"This is what I was talking about," he said to me before he scrolled back to free mode and began his play session. I nodded my head at him and made a mental image of what I needed to play to have any semblance of improvement.

"Does anybody play this game here?" I asked. The nerdy guy shot me a look of surprise.

"Oh yeah! A LOT of people play IIDX here. I play with a chill group. Maybe you should hang with us sometime? We're here just about every weekend." His question was more of a suggestion than anything.

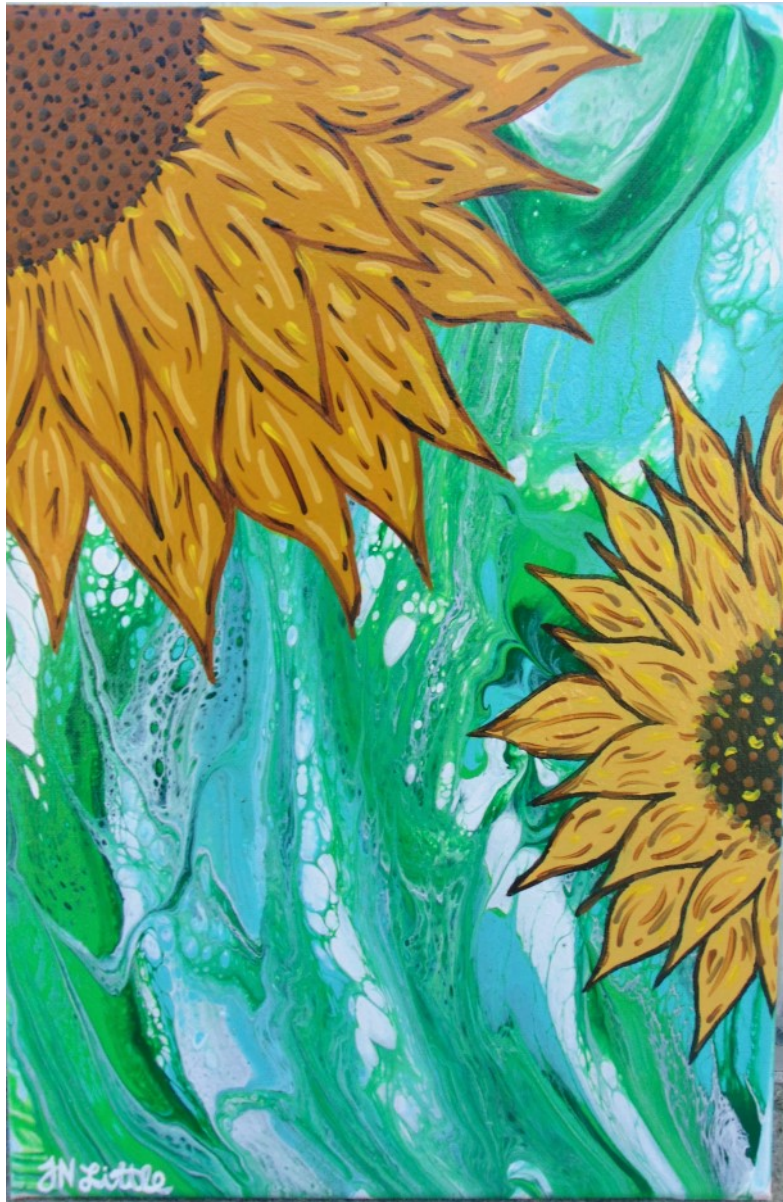
"Ok...Yeah. I'll do that. I could use a busier life than just working and sleeping," I said this as if I was not almost petrified of meeting new people and having to be social.

I had taken him up on his offer. We and his friends were at that bowling alley every weekend night, acting stupid, playing (and failing often at) IIDX. They were basically my weekend gaming buddies up until I moved away. It is odd



TREY

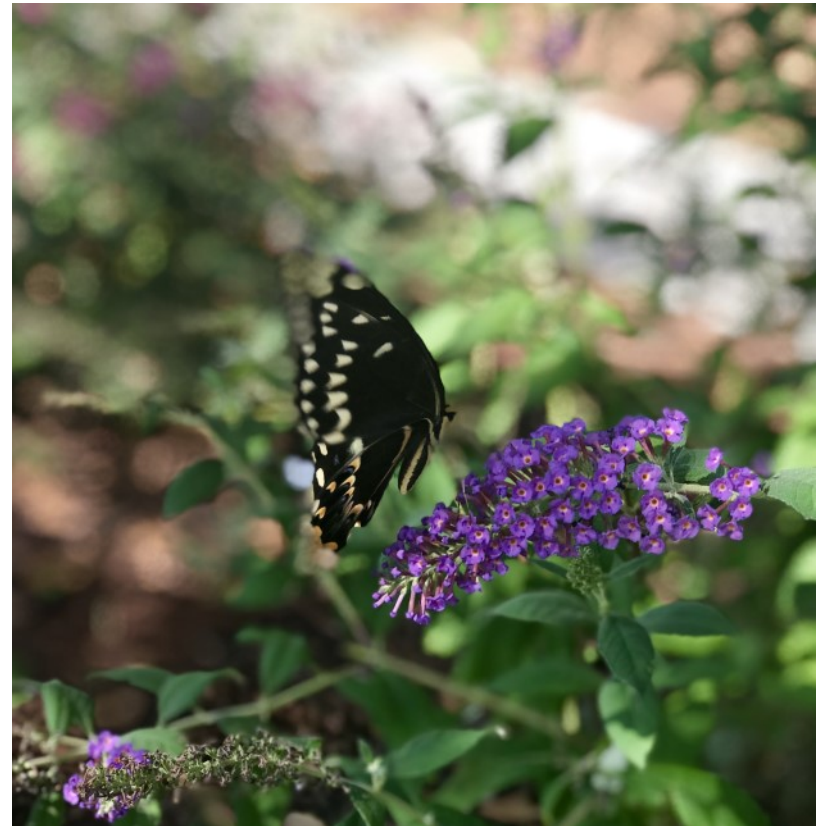
Laura Newman—BCC Faculty



EMERALD GARDEN

Johannah Little—BCC Student

enough to think that a game that has such a high difficulty curve has the potential to make someone deal with social anxiety. For the months I knew that small group of IIDX players, we never thought to exchange names or phone numbers. We all just met up and enjoyed IIDX together.



BUTTERFLY IN BLADEN BLOOM

Cara DeLoach—BCC Faculty

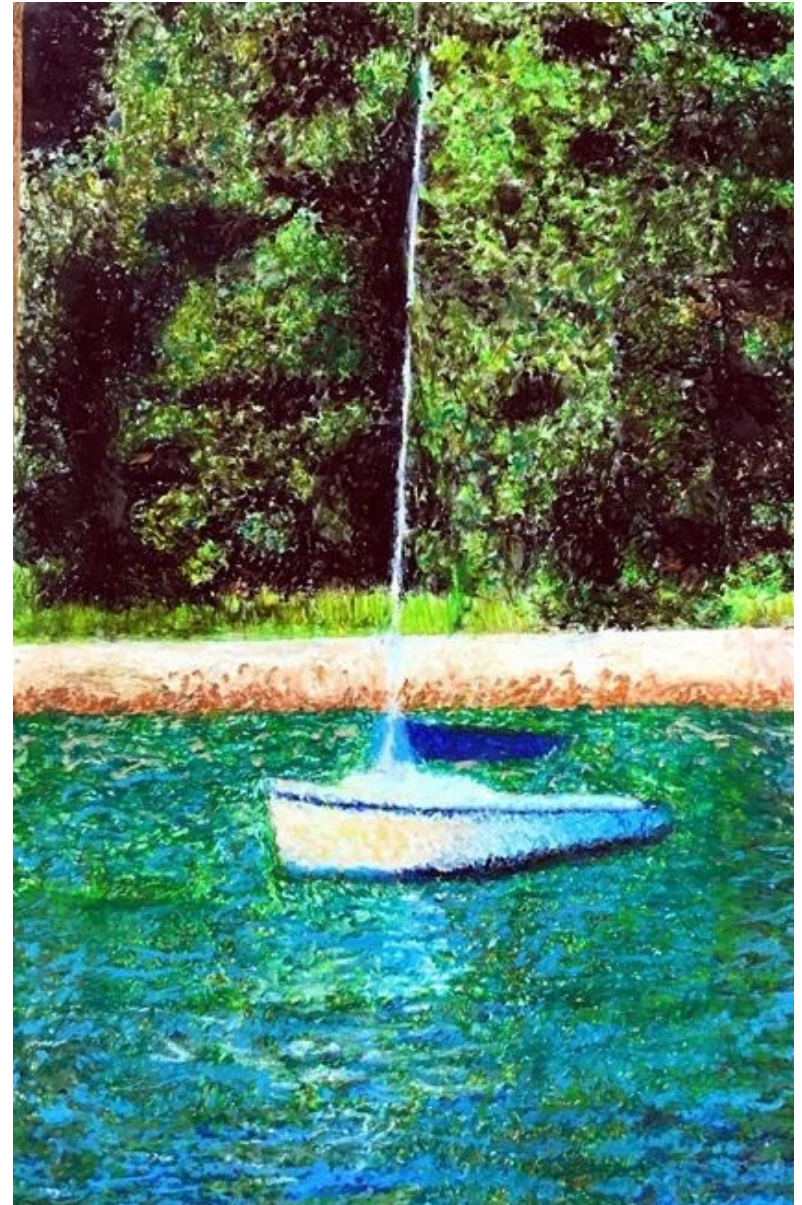
WORST NIGHTMARE

Ashley Leon Orellana—Bladen Early College Student

It all started when I was picked up from school and realized that someone was missing in the car. The news was broken gently to me, yet it hurt me deeply. It was the worst nightmare that came true. Yet, in this moment of sadness and despair, the seeds of inspiration began to spring up within me.

My inspiration came to life when the person on the other end of the phone call informed me that the person who had been absent earlier that day was in the process of being deported. When I heard those words, I knew immediately my calling was to become an immigration lawyer specialized in helping individuals and families who are dealing with this troubling situation. That night I promised my family that I would make this my mission statement and seek to help anybody because I don't want anyone else to experience the pain I went through. I want to prevent this from happening to other young people who watch their parents and family members being torn apart. I want to help people understand immigration and why people choose to come to this country. I want to be an advocate for those who seek to achieve the American Dream.

As I listened on the phone and discovered my inspiration, I immediately reflected on my mother and the inspiration she has been for me. Regardless of the situation, my mom is always there for me pushing me to do good and encouraging me through her optimism. Even though we may have disagreements, I know she cares for me and loves me. I



SEALARK'S SCHOONER

Ethan Fletcher—BCC Student



SUNSET

Isaac Singletary—Bladen Early College Student

am thankful for my mother and would never change anything about her. Our hopes and dreams can come to us in our worst nightmare, but mothers help us to understand what people are going through and find ways to help them. Thus, I'm thankful that my worst nightmare helped me to see my greatest blessing.

“Try to get in people's shoes so you can understand their reasons and what they are going through.”



ORDINARY

Charlene Mota-Huerta—Bladen Early College Student

HOLLOW WOMB

Alaina Bordeaux—Bladen Early College Student

The noisy river nearby roared violently, though its waves lapped lazily at the bank, tugging at the body that was splayed upon the shore. Twitching and stirring, the body of a feline finally was dragged into a frail form of consciousness. “Where am I?” The drenched and stiff lump of fur and bones thought to herself as she gazed around in a blurry haze of water-clotted vision.

“I must be on some bank,” she pointed out as the waves of the river licked at her legs tirelessly, tugging at them gently as if the water were threatening to pull the feline into the treacherous chaos of the river.

Time passed quickly while the feline faded in and out of consciousness. Hours blinking away like minutes, and minutes flashing by in seconds. “I can’t stay here all day.” She stiffened when she nearly grasped a full flash of memory. *My kits! Where are they?* She finally lifted her heavy head from the sandy bank, clearing her vision by blinking the water out of her eyes, and glancing around the area. Upon looking around, and feeling the fur along her spine slowly lifting in alarm, she noticed something about the area in which she found herself.

The grass, the sand, the ground, the sky were all the same color, a tasteless grey. Nothing had a pinch of any other color. The wind didn’t dare to stir, nor did the clouds, for they remained frozen in their place, splayed across the sky like a painting.



SKY

Isaac Singletary—Bladen Early College Student



SUNSET AT THE OCEAN

Isaac Singletary—Bladen Early College Student

The feline got up, shaking, for her legs felt weary and weak. She was confused and alarmed. “What in the name of the stars? Where *am* I?” She croaked, looked up, and saw the bank had stretched upward like a hill. Shaken, she climbed up the hill to survey the scene.

Once the feline made her way up the bank and onto higher ground, she saw what amounted to a lifeless moor. The tall long grass was tilted as though being stuck in the motion of swaying but never quivering in the slightest.

The feline’s amber eyes widened in surprise as she questioned if she had found herself in the afterlife. However, she did not remember dying and immediately began to grow concerned for her precious kits. Confused and weary, the feline decided to travel along the bank in search for any forms of life, answers, or her kits. Her paws dragging along the way.

After what seemed to be a lifetime of traveling along the bank, she could hear distant yelling. Her ears flicked up and rounded in alarm, and her eyes narrowed to catch any flashes of movement.

“You there!” A sudden yell welcomed from the bank. The cat swirled her head in the direction of the shout and saw a sturdy man standing along a dull dock that stretched beyond the bank. “Why, hello!” He beamed at her. The feline merely blinked in return. In all the lifelessness of this place, before her stood a fisherman waving towards her like a madman.

The feline hurried down the bank’s slope to reach the fisherman. It was the first form of life she had seen, and she was too eager to ask questions to fret about the pain in her legs.

The feline got a closer look at this man. He had a hefty build, with light grey hair on the sides of his face that indicated age. He wore a green and brown leather jacket. Its pockets and buttons looked to be made specifically for the river. A tacky hat was placed upon his head, and rubber boots hid his feet from the sandy ground below.

“Are you lost, dear feline?” The man squatted down just in front of her to reach her height.

“Quite so, do you know where I am, and have you seen my kits?” She tilted her head up at him.

“I am unsure of your kits, but perhaps we could find them together?”

The feline’s tail lifted up in delight. “Oh, I would love that! Thank you so much, dear fisherman!”

The fisherman offered to pick up the feline. “Here, I’ll carry you. I saw you limping, dearest feline.”

She hesitated but leaped in the fisherman’s arms. He held her gently, with one hand giving her light strokes upon her head. The feline purred in return.

The fisherman smiled then turned to face the river. “Now, go find your kits!” he yelled suddenly before throwing the feline in the violent river.

The cat shrieked in surprise while in midair. She plummeted into the river, and in an instant, was dragged underneath the crashing waves.



VALLEY

Constance Smith—BCC Student



TREES AT FORT FISHER

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty

The sounds of the roaring water and sudden bursts of wind descended upon the feline. Her vision blinked in and out, leaving her dazed and feeling wounded. Finally, she managed to keep her eyes open and her vision began to clear. A sudden mass whisked past her, ruffling her fur and drowning her ears in its greasy howl. It reeked of grit and oil. She blinked instinctively.

A sudden awakening in her side completely jolted her. She shrieked and yowled in shock before jerking her head to look at her side. The feline's heart skipped a beat.

There she saw that her once beautiful white fur was tainted in a filthy red and brown. Her fur clumped in certain areas on the stain, making her look unkempt, brittle, and matted. Though what horrified the feline more was what was sprawled out just by her belly.

Three bundles, different, yet the same were found lying upon her. The first was a bundle of rot and bone, the other was tissue, skin and blood smeared on the pavement, and the last was an empty cast that resembled the figure of a hollowed out kitten.

My kits.



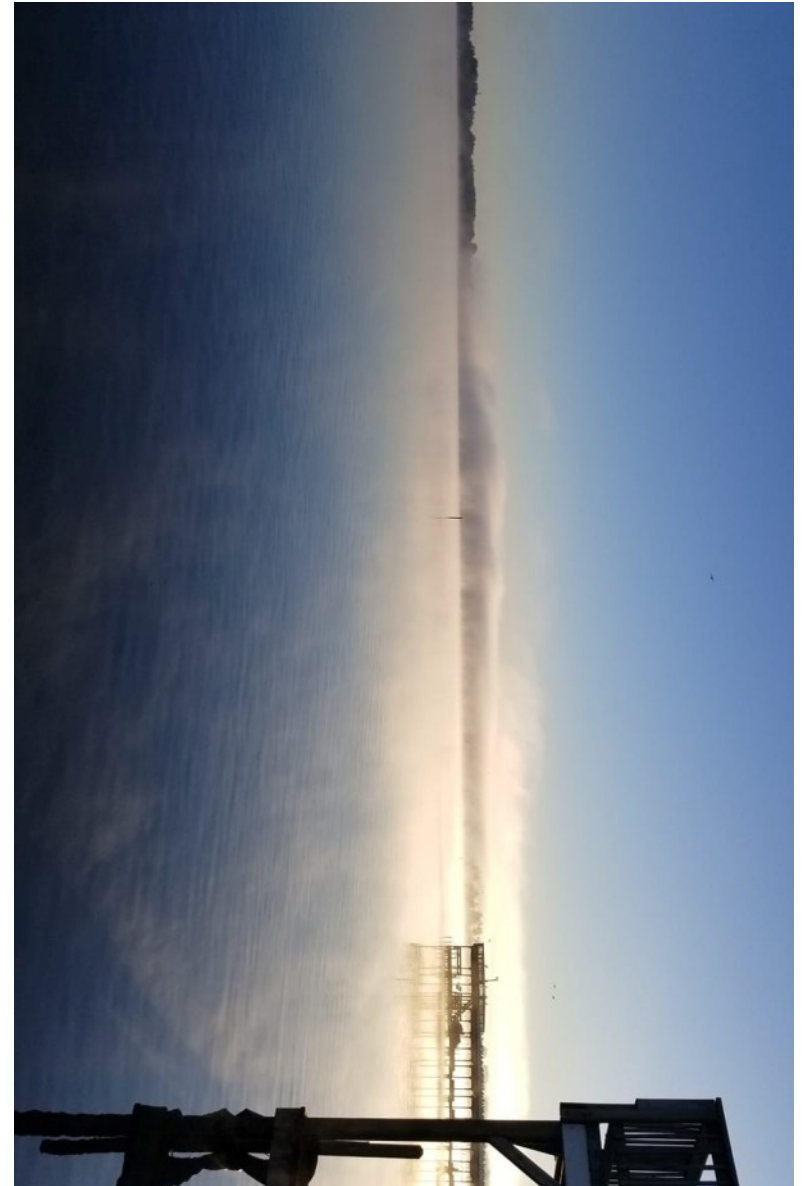
THE PRINCESS

Mary Walker—Bladen Early College Student

The three princesses in the castle, Emma Lynn, Isabella, and Annabella Mouse, loved their parents, Mick and Min Mouse. One day, the king left the kingdom with his men. Min, his former wife, started going out with William. This made Lynn unhappy as she did not trust William who was nice to Annabella but ignored her and Isabella.

When Lynn was seven, Mick came back married to their stepmother, Alice. Lynn did not like that and ran away, but Mick found her and took her to his apartment. A month later, Min announced that William had control of the kingdom. Lynn refused to believe that her father was no longer the king. She left her father's place and headed towards Rosella, a mysterious place where she found the people struggling and looking for someone to restore order. She promised to do so. Princess Lynn declared five rules. Rule one encouraged all to ask the princess or her helper for anything. Rule two barred arguing when kids are around. Rule three prevented stealing, killing, and abuse. Rule four forbade discrimination, and rule five declared that no one is allowed to give punishments except for the princess. In four months, all conflicts were resolved and Lynn became the queen of Rosella.

Lynn knew she had magic in her, so she tried a spell to get herself home. Lynn immediately found herself at a palace, facing King William and Queen Alice. Her sisters led her to her parents who were held prisoners in the basement. Lynn used her magic again to ban William and Alice and restore the kingdom to her parents.



FOGGY MORNING AT WHITE LAKE

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty



KAYAK ON THE BEACH

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty

Lynn was in love with Steven, her helper. This was the perfect time for them to share their feelings for each other. They got married on January 25, 2019. Steven vowed to love Lynn for ever and to protect her from all evil. Lynn thanked Steven for making her feel strong and vowed to do anything for him.



CORNFLOWER BOKEH

Jeanne Butler—BCC Staff

THE DREADED KNOCK

Robert Martin—BCC Student

I've often heard people talk about the dreaded knock at the door that has changed their life forever. I was awakened early one morning by a sharp knock at my back door. That is not out of the ordinary in my household. With four boys it's easy for one of them to forget their key to the house. They usually come to the back door because it's the door closest to my bedroom, and they know I'll always hear that knock. However, on this night, it was not one of the boys knocking on the door. It was a North Carolina State Trooper delivering that dreaded knock.

It was December 5, 2006 and all was well in the Martin household. My oldest son, Darian, was a freshman at Fayetteville State University. He was pursuing a degree in psychology and seemed to be doing well and having so much fun. I worried that he was having too much fun and not enough studying, but he assured me that he was maintaining his grades. I didn't want to seem like a helicopter parent, but I'm sure it felt like that to him. I would call him and leave a message or text him expecting a quick reply. Sometimes that reply didn't come until the next day. Then he'd say, "Hey Pop, I got busy and forgot to call you back before I fell asleep." I always thought to myself that he was a typical teenager burning the candle at both ends. I knew how young college kids loved to party, so I would say to him, "Son, remember no drinking and driving or sleepy driving. I know you have a lot of friends that like to go places, and you may be one of the few freshmen with a car." He knew that having a car on campus as a freshman was a privilege, especially my beautiful Cadillac! Oh yes, she was a beauty. It was a 1998



HANGING OUT ON THE FARM

Diane Vitale—BCC Staff



EATING MY GREENS

Diane Vitale—BCC Staff

Pearl White Cadillac Sedan Deville, and I called her “The Pearl Ghost.” It was his responsibility to keep the car clean inside and out. I have to say, he did a good job when he cleaned her up.

There did come times when I needed the Cadillac because all the other cars were being used. I would often ask him to bring the car home in the evening, and I would drop him off in the morning on my way to work. This happened to be one of those days that I needed the Cadillac. It was late in the evening and after we’d eaten dinner that I called Darian. He answered the phone, “Hey pop, what’s going on?” I said, “I know it’s late son, but I need to use the car tomorrow.” He said, “Pop, I have an early class in the morning and I’m helping someone study right now.” I offered to take him back to school that night. I could hear in his voice that he wasn’t too excited about driving to White Oak this late in the evening only to then turn right around and go back to Fayetteville State! Still he sucked it up and said, “Okay pop, I’m on my way.” This was around 9p.m. on the night of the fifth of December.

Feeling guilty about asking Darian to make that long drive down Highway 53 at night, I paced back and forth from the den to the kitchen. The kitchen was dimly lit by the light over the stove and the house seemed extremely quiet. I noticed, as I paced the floor, the creaking of the plywood under the vinyl rug on the kitchen floor. I could never remember the floor creaking like that before. I looked up from the floor and my eyes fell upon the stove clock and noticed only 15 minutes had passed since I talked to Darian. At that moment, the guilt got the best of me and I called Darian to tell him not to worry about it. His phone rang and rang and went to voicemail. “Hey, son don’t worry about

making a trip out tonight; I'll find another way. Call me back when you get this message, I love you, son." A few more minutes passed by and I tried to call him again and I got the same response, voicemail. I wasn't worried; I knew that he would lose signal if he was riding through the woods. That is one of the benefits of living in the country. Tired of pacing, I sat at the kitchen table and waited for the headlights of the Cadillac to pierce the kitchen window and illuminate the dimly lit room. As I glared nervously at the glowing green numbers on the clock, I remember saying to myself, "Time does move slowly."

An hour had passed already and no word from Darian. I called again and still no answer, straight to voicemail. I believe I spoke more to myself than to him with the message I left. "Son, it's daddy and I'm sure you'll get this message in the morning. I just want you to know I love you and call me in the morning." I did one last walk through the house checking locks and turning off lights before heading to my bedroom. As I sat on the bed, my wife rolled over and asked, "What happened? I thought you were heading to Fayetteville." I said, "Darian didn't make it and I'm assuming he fell asleep; he sounded sleepy anyway." She responded with, "okay." As I slipped out of my clothes and into the bed, there was a sense of tiredness in me. I remember the coldness of the linen as I drifted off to sleep.

"Robert, wake up! Someone's knocking at the door," my wife said nervously. As I clumsily got out of the bed and using my feet to try to find my slippers, there was another sharp rap at the back door. Half asleep, I stumbled to the back door and glanced at the green numbers on the stove in the dark kitchen. I remember the numbers staring back at me and thinking, it's after 1 o'clock in the morning! I didn't



KNOT KNEES

Johannah Little—BCC Student



PURPLE FOCUSED

Charlene Mota-Huerta—Bladen Early College Student

process that thought before I reached the back door. I hit the light switch and the back deck lit up. There stood a state trooper. I opened the back door slowly as if that would hide the fear in my eyes. The trooper asked me a series of questions which I don't remember. They must have been about my son and the Cadillac. I asked the officer, "Is he okay?" His response was, "You need to get to Cape Fear Hospital as soon as possible." I remember thinking this had to be the hardest part of the state trooper's job, delivering that dreaded knock at a family's door. That day changed our lives forever.



BATHERS

Micah Daw—Guest Faculty
Davidson County Community College

ABSINTHE

Jamya Tolson—Bladen Early College Student

Elise held her head down as she walked into her home. She slipped her feet out of her heels and left them at the door. The house was quiet, but there was a whisper in the air... taunting her conscious and laughing at her miserable state. Her feet dragged across the wooden floor. Elise's direction was unknown and she felt like she was going to perish before she reached her destination.

But that was not the case.

Elise traced along the side of the marble island with her left hand's index finger. Still lost in thought, she dropped her purse to the floor. Her eyes caught sight of a letter that was conveniently placed next to where her hand sat. To her own surprise, she picked it up. Elise had believed herself to be too weak to lift a finger. Her eyes glided across the ominous note as the words seemed to bring sudden relief to her current shattering spirit.

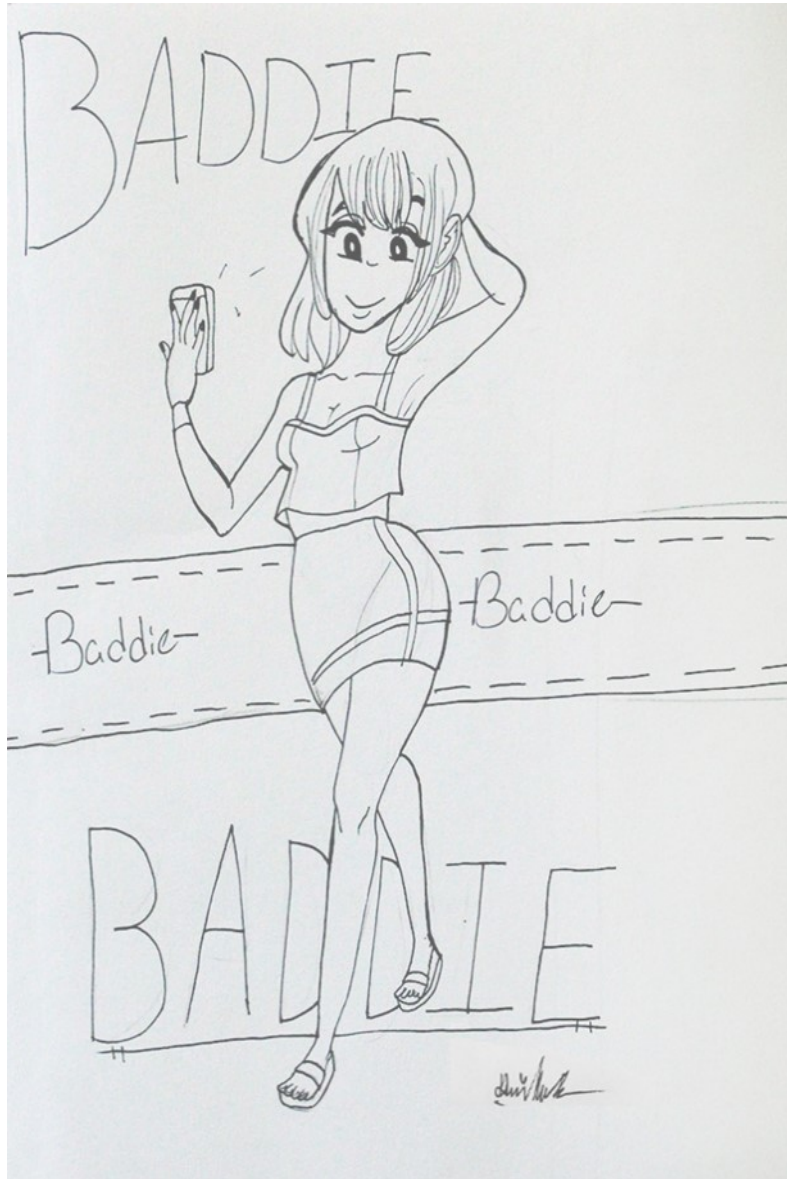
"Drink it, and you will never have to worry about life's cruelty anymore."

Elise looked up and spotted a green glass bottle and a glass next to it. *It's not alcohol...or wine*, she thought as she picked the glass up and examined it. *A sip wouldn't hurt.* Elise opened the bottle and poured it into the glass. "Cheers," she said to no one in particular. A shock of adrenaline hit her. *Are you really going to do this? What if it's poison?* asked her sober mind. *Anything to leave this world*, she replied. Elise swallowed all of the green liquid.



ZELDA

Danielle Brown—BCC Student



BADDIE

Danielle Brown—BCC Student

Closing her eyes, she dropped the glass to the floor. Her eyes opened wide and she... smiled. Giggles escaped her mouth and they grew into the laughter of a villain. Her laughter suddenly came to a stop as she groaned.

She opened her eyes to reveal a grey world. Everything was grey except for the bottle that contained the drink, which glowed a mesmerizing emerald green. The whispers grew louder, shrieking the command “*DRINK IT ALL! WALK WITH US! DRINK IT ALL!*” She then lunged out for it as if it were something she desperately wanted. That is not the word for it, no, not at all; she now *needed* it. She gulped down some more of this drink which was now driving her mad. She broke out into more crippling laughter. It gave her *life*.

The next afternoon, a very close friend of the woman had come over to see her since she had missed the whole work day unannounced. He knocked on her door and heard no answer. When he peeked through the windows of her home, he saw her purse on the floor. His heart stopped when he saw a puddle of an unknown liquid flowing out from behind her counter. The man called the police. When they arrived to investigate the scene, they found her dead behind the counter with shattered glass sprayed on her head. The scene was gory.

A policewoman walked outside to the friend, introduced herself, and asked for his name. “Mark,” he replied. The policewoman asked him if his friend had been drinking a lot lately. He replied with a “yes” and continued to answer more questions about his close friend. After the short interrogation, the policewoman reported that her crew was not exactly sure whether to classify the case as a murder or a

suicide, that she would contact him once they found out, and apologized for his loss. When the man turned away to leave, the policewoman stopped him. She had noticed something in his back pocket and asked him what it was. "It's an engagement ring," he had said. She could hear his voice waver as he said the next sentence. "I was going to propose tonight," he cleared his throat. "Excuse me," the friend said as he held his head down, turning around to leave. The policewoman watched his retreat as he drove off.



A.I.R.A.T.T.T.A.O.O.M.

Micah Daw—Guest Faculty
Davidson County Community College



ANGELS 15

Danielle Brown—BCC Student



SASANQUA CAMELLIA

Tim Marshburn—BCC Faculty

NEW LIFE

Christine McDonald—BCC Staff

I never thought I would feel this way, never imagined how thrilled I would be. Our first grandchild, a boy, entered this vast world with bright eyes and wonder. Micah Dennis McDonald, eight pounds, three ounces and twenty-one inches long, is the newest addition to our small family.

As I stare upon his face, does he have any of my facial features, broad nose, thick lips, and protruding forehead? Forget about physical features, I pray for his health, life, education, contributions to society and the world. I speak blessings over him, just as I did for our son, Micah's father.

My husband, daughter, and I could barely contain ourselves as we traveled the six hours to visit the new parents and of course, the new baby. On his third day of introduction, I cradled him in my arms and inhaled the essence of new life and milk breath. I palmed his little head with my hands and kissed his fuzzy forehead. His eyes opened wide when I began to sing "Jesus Loves Me," and I remember the scripture, Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

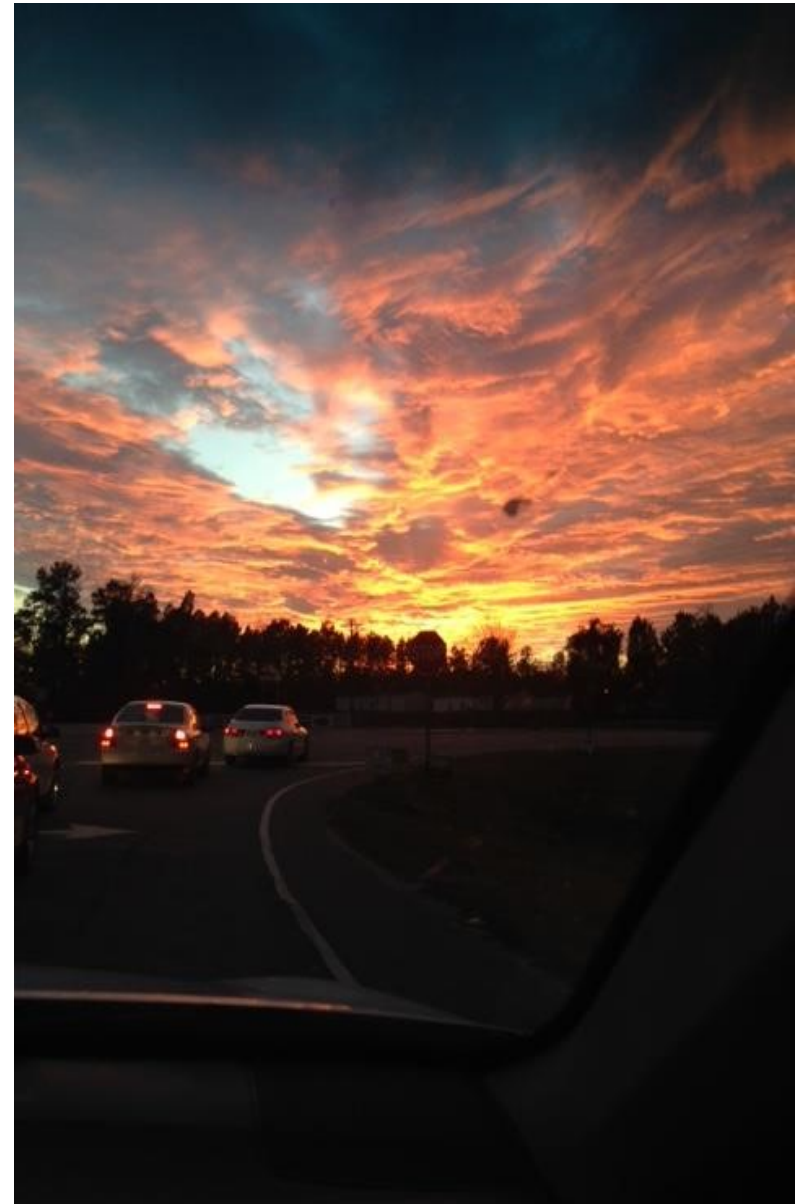


LAFAYETTE AND FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty



Marquis de Lafayette was a close friend of George Washington and the cause of American independence from Great Britain. While there are several cities throughout the United States named after Lafayette, Fayetteville, North Carolina was the first to take Lafayette's name. In fact, for a short period of time in the 1780s, Cumberland County was renamed "Lafayette County." In March of 1825, Fayetteville also became the only city named after Lafayette that he actually visited.



THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD

Candace Hester—BCC Staff



LITTLE TREE THAT COULD

Candace Hester—BCC Staff

Lafayette's secretary noted:

On the 4th of March, we reached the pleasant little town of Fayetteville, situated on the western shore of Cape Fear River. The weather was excessively bad; the rain fell in torrents, yet the road for several miles before we reached the place was crowded with men and boys on horseback, and militia on foot; the streets of the town were filled with a throng of ladies, in full dress, hastening across the little streams of water, to approach the General's carriage, and so much occupied with the pleasure of seeing him that they appeared almost insensible of the deluge which threatened almost to swallow them up. This enthusiasm may be more readily imagined, when it is recollected that it was expressed by the inhabitants of a town founded, about forty years ago, to perpetuate the remembrance of the services rendered by him whom they honored on that day. (Levasseur 44)

Before leaving Fayetteville, Lafayette attended a banquet and toasted the young city, "Fayetteville. – May it receive all the encouragements and attain all the prosperity which are anticipated by the fond and grateful wishes of its affectionate and respectful namesake" (Levasseur).

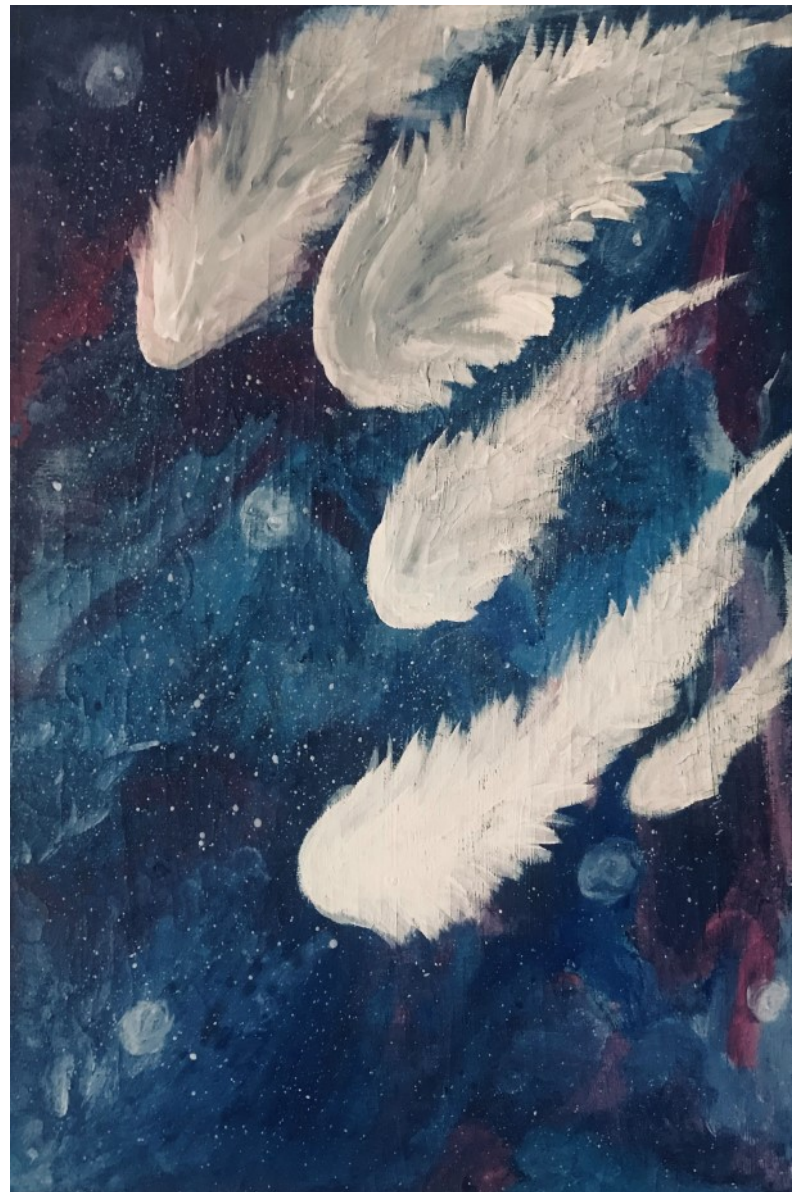
Work Cited

Levasseur, Auguste. *Lafayette in America in 1824 and 1825: Journal of a Voyage to the United States*. Translated by Alan R. Hoffman, Lafayette Press, 2007.



**A COLD MORNING IN A COFFEE SHOP
WITH NO PLACE TO GO**

Warren Baker—BCC Family



THE SPACE SHE CRAVES

Akili Grafton—BCC Student

THE INK QUILL
LITERARY AND ART MAGAZINE

ART

Art

Art

ART

THE INK QUILL
LITERARY AND ART MAGAZINE

POETRY

Poetry

poetry

POETRY

FOR BETTER OR WORSE

Taylor Gore—BCC Student

She was able to change you in just the blink of an eye
Too bad you gave into each lie
For better or worse
She's no blessing
Just a curse

WEAKNESS

Taylor Gore—BCC Student

I wish I wasn't like this:
So easily influenced by his touch,
So easily affected by a look he gives me,
Smiling so big the moment I hear his name,
Wishing I could have him when I know he'll never change.

DARKNESS

Taylor Gore—BCC Student

The darkness I face alone stands before me.
I try to turn and run but feel as if I'm getting nowhere.
I hear the calling of my name getting louder and louder with
every footstep.
I give up and succumb to the darkness, falling to my knees in
defeat.

'Cause their pain calls my name
And we cry
Through a storm of no rain
But eyes filled with pain
And feelings that I can't compel

SHOES

Mark Butler—BCC Alumnus

From: A Collection of Rhymes and Reasons for My Grandchildren.

Hello everyone, have you heard the news?
My mom just bought me brand new shoes.
They'll keep my feet dry and warm
and make me walk in perfect form.

My shoes may help me win a race
or at least help me keep up pace.
My feet can take me places far,
while my shoes make sure my feet won't scar.

I'll need new shoes for work and play
and different shoes for holiday.
I'll need new shoes for playing ball,
or when I grow tall and my shoes get small.

I'll run through life during times of trouble,
over sand and pavements, even rubble.
So many shoes I'm sure I'll wear,
but I'll do God's work in every pair.

GLASS

Marilyn Musslewhite—Bladen Early College Student

My walls are the shell
I chose for myself
My doors are the windows
To my soul
These windows of glass
Ruptured by the past
Hold the last of this life I'll behold

My life is the hell
For which I fell
My name has deceived
Almost all
For roses are red
But love makes me blue
And thorns are the spike in the hall

No, I'm not confused
But since I've been used
What I mean is the thorns
Stopped them all
For selfish as I,
And my heart, with its lies
This toy and my mind have been fused

Their hurt is the well
Where I fall to my cell

WONDER

Taylor Gore—BCC Student

I sit and wonder...

I wonder if she'll find out how you let me play with your
hair as you fall asleep.

I wonder if she'll find out about your feelings for me.

I wonder if she'll ever find out about the first day you held
my hand.

I wonder if she'll find out about the night I fell asleep on
your shoulder or when you laid your head on top of mine,
held my hand in yours and rubbed my thigh.

But I know...

I know she'll never find out because those are things to keep
only between us.

Things that we can't tell anyone about.

Things that will forever be my favorite memories together,
while you're too busy making even better ones with her.



BORN FROM STEEL

Jacoby McKeithan—BCC Student

A broken soldier in the quiet night
Dying to take back the light
Head high in his losing fight
To hide from those who know

With each swing, a child died
Not just his, but the one inside
Fight to the end, he the one who tried
His weakness hard to swallow

He walks this path empowered by hatred
Resentment the key to ignore what is sacred
A reminder of emotion, the demons elated
But it's these words, these... feelings...that carve him hollow

The sword drawn, cold steel his only solace
Lost in humility, his enemies lawless
To love... the cruel goddess
Till weapons fall and blood dries, his
heart my only sorrow



SLEEP WELL, DARLING: A LULLABY

Jamya Tolson—Bladen Early College Student

Mockingbird sleeps peacefully
Mockingbird weeps quietly
Crow sings through the universe

Rest your head
Now in your worst.
Quiet your breaths
Submit
To God's curse.



WANDERING SPIRIT

Shelby Tatum—Bladen Early College Student

BLACK ASH

Nila Simpkins —Bladen Early College Student

I ran, but I was followed by pain and a history I didn't ask for
Everyone else watched silently as I fought off demons
that weren't mine but somehow found themselves attached to me
The black Smoke,
Blacks out my vision,
Blacks out my judgment,
....Blacks out my skin
Bullet from a Black barrel pulling triggers,
Ignites a fire within my conscience more,
Black Ash suffocates me; I can't reach safety
Suffocates me, I can't reach safety
Suffocates me, you're suffocating me
I yell, I can't breathe
Knee on my neck, your blue badge outweighs my will to live
Looking over my shoulder
Being hunted down like an animal
It's only a matter of time
A noose put in place by what's left of my burnt out conscience
more...
Black Ash
Black barrels to Black heads using Black hands pulling my rope
I feel your pain
My body outlined in white chalk
The only White evidence left behind is Red tape

TO MY CHILDREN

Stacey Regan—BCC Student

You are...
The loves of my life
The air that I breathe
The reasons my sun rises each day
The reasons my world is always nourished
The reasons my life is filled with joy
The reasons my seasons change
The reasons my heart overflows with love
The reasons my flowers always bloom
The reasons my heart always beats in perfect rhythm
The reasons my faith grows
The reasons I believe in innocence
The reasons I believe in heaven
The reasons I believe in love unconditionally
My children, you are forever loved and never alone!



TODAY

Hannah Arnett—BCC Student

Winter grows shorter as temperatures rise,
but they continue to say it's only lies.
The animals are dying as the ice melts,
and the harmful sunrays continue to leave welts.

Roe versus Wade was not a game;
this is not an issue that will be tamed.
Women are standing up for what they need;
equal health care is what they plead.

We carry the right to be who we please,
ut those who disagree stand without ease.
No matter religion, orientation, birthplace, or race,
we are all the same at the very base.

The world is in shambles as we know
because it's far past time we reap what we sow.
We all have ideas that should be respected.
After all, it's our differences that keep us connected.



MOTHER

Jalen Wilson—Bladen Early College Student

What can a mother really be
Your creator, your guardian, your responder,
Or maybe all three
Can your mother be your friend?
Maybe not, or maybe so
Because a mother makes her own choices whether they're
right or wrong
You may have problems with her, but they are only so
You can grow
My mom is hard to deal with; trust me I know
But maybe, in the end, it matters
I don't know it all, but I do know this so
My mom never gave up on me
Maybe yours won't! Who knows?
But remember to try your best to succeed
It may be hard; it may be rough, but you'll find someone.
Just be tough, and you'll see what you can really be!



A DEAD ROSE INTO A NEW LIFE

Jalen Wilson—Bladen Early College Student

What a rose could be
Is so much that we can't see
Maybe a rose is a life
Trying very hard to survive
A life of a dead rose can be heartbreak
And a lot more we can't see
As roses grow and succeed
Some don't get to see what life can truly be
But in all things, a rose can still succeed
Give it time and you will see
What a dead rose can truly be
Give the dead rose a chance
Maybe it can be its true form
And succeed
The dead rose may begin a new life
And you may see
What a dead rose can truly be



SOCIAL MEDIA LOVE AFFAIR

Krystal Leggett—BCC Student

I'm in love with you, addicted to you.
Daily, I wake up thinking of you; nightly I must have you
shining back in my face before I sleep.
You validate me, complete me,
Make me feel important. Your notifications show me that
someone took time to notice me.
You fuel my adrenaline rush like some type of drug.
But although I love you, I also know you're toxic.
You meddle in my personal life. You make it public for the
world to see.
You show them what I eat, where I shop and constantly give
them an inside look of my life.
You interfere with my job. You compete for attention from my
spouse.
You've even ended some of my dearest friendships.
Yet...
I can't let you go. I need you. I crave you.
I love you, social media.



SILVERWARE

Andrew Bahhouth—BCC Family

I dug into my burger with a knife and fork.
In this action, I had loosened the cork of rage in the bar.
People from near and far
Zoomed towards me with the torque of a V12 car.
Their arms, like those of beasts
Lunged towards me and my neat take on a messy feast.
My arms rose up in defense.
The crowd stood still and tense.
I asked what was awry.
They said with a sigh that I was too formal.
My propensity for the knife and fork wasn't normal.
I was eating a man-wich,
Not a deli sandwich.
The hands must be used and the silverware refused.
"How are you going to eat the fries?" they queried.
This thrust I parried.
Their lust for revenge was carried
To yet a higher level
When they heard that my level mind
Was to find the fries capable of being consumed
With the presumed silverware.
A blow approached my face
From a lady with no mace.
Her bony hand
Flew to reprimand.
I was struck anew
With an utterly foul shoe.
The dirt formed a layer of grime on my face.

Who said I needed you to tell me who to be?
Tell me who.
Who said I needed to explain who I really am underneath?

Struggling to be normal and thriving to be equal,
I just so happen to be a mixed girl
With a big future,
And that happens to bother a lot of people.

My race may not define me, but it is a part of who I am
So yes, I get offended when you refuse to understand

That I am what I am
White and black
Black and white
A strong African woman resides inside and it's she you see
A white woman is there but will never come to be
No matter what I never deny my heritage and my lines
culturally

Because they are me.



BIRACIAL

Breanna Turnage—Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy
Student

I'm biracial
No, I'm not a double stuffed Oreo.
No, I ain't your zebra.
I ain't the best of both your worlds.
I ain't yo lil racial joke either.

I am white
And
I am black,
Living my life with a sense of inequality.
My race always seems to follow me
No matter the case
Or where I'm at.

White people have comments.
Black people have questions.
My hair appeals to some of you,
While the rest of you have suggestions.

After I opened my eyes, I saw a race
Of people who despised me.
They struck again and again.
As I write with this pen I quiver.
They grasped my hands and I shivered.
I was forced to touch the compendium of bread and meat.
They pushed me into a seat and laughed.
I was chafed by the rough hands.
Throughout all lands,
None suffered greater than I.
They ordered for me a dessert: apple pie.
They went the extra mile
And with a smile full of guile
Forced me to attack the dish.
Its disgusting consistency matched that of a wet fish.
I was made to eat the mash.
I strove to reach my sash
Stocked to the brim with baby wipes.
But they were quicker.
Their thick skulls grew thicker
As they removed my cleansing potion.
They threw my sash away with one swift motion.
I was filthy and gross.
I could be no more morose.
Being defeated,
I strove to flee.
When I retreated,
They laughed with glee.
Their mirthful grins
Reflected their sins.
They destroyed without a care
The last person who enjoyed silverware.

WHEN ALL THE WORLD IS WEIGHING DOWN

Rachel Horrell—BCC Student

My eyes are weary.
My bones are tired.
The world is constantly controlling my every move.

I am trying to please others while I fail myself.
I look at others and scorn at their selfishness,
Yet, I beat myself up for judging because I do not know
anything about them.

Others have it worse, I say to myself and others say to me.
But I can't keep putting myself down for hurting.
This world hurts all of us.

I can only express my hurt to be relieved from it.
Sometimes I wish to keep to myself and pretend it's not there,
But that only helps for a little while.

My openness is what keeps me alive.
I can never hide my thoughts,
For they always appear on my face.

As I sit by myself in the corner of the room,
I wish to go to another time and another tune.
I don't understand why I can't grasp time anymore,
Or why I seem to be off the beat of my own drum.

It has been like this for a while.
Yet, I have just started to realize it,
Suddenly when all the world is weighing down on me.

Iveon was my best friend.

Till this day I think of him all the time;
Hard to accept that he's gone.
I used to think God taking him was a crime
And utterly wrong.

I fully understand now that he's in a way better place
Where he doesn't have to endure pain
And have an honest real smile on his face
Day to day.

If I could say one last thing
Iveon, I want you to know
You changed my life and who I am
For the good and I'm thankful we were friends.

I love you more than you can understand or see
But do me one favor please
And save a seat for me.



SAVE ME A SEAT, IVEON

Breanna Turnage—Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy
Student

Iveon Raeshawn Cooper

Was one of the realest.

Went through things, I couldn't

And did it with a smile

A real trooper.

Made sure everybody had a smile on their face.

Even on his worst days.

That's a true friend

Always had advice, no matter what was the case.

His mouth never timid.

Never sugarcoated the truth.

Kept it 100

Always on the side of what's right.

He was very rigid.

I could cry to him or on him.

Till this day he's the reason why I have no filter

Because again he kept it real.

THE MAN I CALLED PAPA

Faye Turner—BCC Staff

*For Alan in memory of his grandpa (Papa Wayne)
To honor Papa Wayne's first birthday in heaven
July 4, 2017*

When we first met, I was only three.

You were a great man; I could clearly see.

I learned so much from you, like growing vegetables and
driving the golf cart.

You always rewarded me with gifts from Walmart.

For me, the best part of the year

Was to spend my vacation with you near.

I loved you so much,

And I knew you felt as such.

Then one sad day, your heart stopped,

And my head in my hands did drop.

The man I loved to call Papa went over the sunset with Jesus
and the Angels to Heaven in the year 2017.

Many, many things changed that day,

But I know you are still in my heart showing me the way.



ANGE DÉCHU¹

Aaron A. Cox, Jr.—BCC Staff

*Je t'aime mon amour,*² you spoke in my ear.
*Je t'aime aussi,*³ forever my response.
*Aveugle,*⁴ I obeyed each command in fear.
*L'amour fatal,*⁵ we breathed in nonchalance.
*Douleur,*⁶ we felt each second of each day.
*Masque,*⁷ we wore to conceal the growing pain.
*Rappelle-toi,*⁸ you left so much disarray.
*Désorienté,*⁹ love became a chain.
*Battu,*¹⁰ I rest, overwhelmed by your storm.
*Déchiré,*¹¹ denied is my naïve heart.
*Faire de la peine,*¹² your love is my reform.
*Abuseur,*¹³ you've torn our passion apart.
*Maintenant mon amour,*¹⁴ this love must end.
*S'il vous plaît,*¹⁵ trail not, for I must ascend.

1. Fallen Angel
2. I love you, my dear
3. I love you, too
4. Blinded
5. The fatal love
6. Pain
7. Masks
8. Remembering
9. Confused
10. Beaten
11. Torn
12. Pained
13. Abuser
14. Now, my love
15. Please



CAGING FREEDOM

Breanna Turnage—Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy Student

You can't cage something that's destined to be free.
 That's like trying to put a whale in a tree.
 It's not supposed to be.

But yet there are some who still try,
 Some who will do all they can to seize freedom
 From their fellow mankind.

Soon they'll understand
 There are creations in this Earth
 That are unlike man;
 One of the best is a butterfly.

Gorgeous to see
 Especially when it flies,
 For when it does, it's free
 Free to roam the air, the sky
 Do as it pleases.
 This is a prime example
 Of what I mean
 When I say
 You can't cage what is meant to be free.



I KNOW LOVE

Breanna Turnage—Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy
Student

"You don't know what love is."
But with him, I think now I do.
Every obstacle I've been through
He either knows about or was there
All of my emotions and pain I express
He's able to compare
But is still always there.
To either hug me, love me, or just listen
I found the piece of me in him that was always missing.
He completes me,
With him I can be free, be who I want to be
I think I love him
Even when some say our chances of lasting together are very
slim
I will do anything just to be with him
I've never felt this way before
It's like God has opened a brand new door
And I am oh so grateful for that
I pray this will forever last.

LOVE

Mary Anne Murphy—BCC Faculty

Love without any thought
Emotions that can't be bought
Pure as the fresh fallen snow
Honest as the earth's first show
More sincere than any romance story
Forever to be seen as glory
No fear of losing the fire
For love itself my life's desire
The final clue to a mystery unsolved
All doubts to completely dissolve
No longer a dream held deep inside
For reality caused longing to subside
Finally, I hold inside my soul
My love worth more than gold
Forever until the end of Time!



SECULAR ONE

Willie Allen—Friend of BCC

The secular one who all through life,
Pushed forward through trouble and strife.
As through some strange destiny called,
That must be attained before their fall.

Overlooked or ignored are issues of time,
That each must face, but all too often opines,
“Don’t teach me that stuff; I’m much too smart
To pay attention to ‘those myths of the heart.’”

Years and strength are spent in vanity and pride.
Climbing the ladder of success—a glorious ride.
Mountain top highs and deep valley lows,
Their own path they’d take at each fork in the road.

I’ll work it out; I’ll trim my own sail.
The horizon is peaceful; I’ll trim my own sail.
Storm clouds as the years race by.
“Myths of the heart, come back!” secular cries.

But I do not let them affect me.
For I will always hold my head high
Until the day I rest my eyes.
Because I know what I am capable of doing is beyond the
limits of the sky.

My race is me, not the limit of what I can do.
It doesn't define all the obstacles I have been through.
I am a mixed little baby girl.
Black and White,
White and black
And I will always love that.

WHAT THERE IS LEFT

Breanna Turnage—Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy
Student

Clean air, bright green grass
Black smoke, thick fog, and dead grass
All that's left is dead.



MIXED LITTLE BABY

Breanna Turnage—Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy
Student

My race is conjoined
Like the symbol Yin & Yang
Almost exactly like it.
Black mixes in with the white,
White mixes in with the black.

Of course when I say that,
You immediately start judging me like the cover of a book
You accept the white part, but not the black.
All based on my looks.

Yes, I know my skin tone comes off as white or pale
But my skin tone does not define why I have succeeded or
failed.

I accept fully that I am mixed.
I love that about me.
It's who I am, outside of my skin and underneath.

Jokes and comments are common

PARTING WORDS

Willie Allen—Friend of BCC

One was confined in the bed, the other to a chair,
Emotions of the moment, weighed heavy on the air.
Precious time together that day spanned fifty plus years.
Yet not one word needed to be spoken, no remorse,
not one tear.

Each knew this was to be their final parting.
Years passed quickly, ne'er a thought of this day sparking
Passing days had been lived as time and events then
expected,
Not neglecting nor shirking family, friends or other duties
life "requested."

Years had been spent in less pleasure than toil,
Catching fish from a river, pulling food from the soil.
Yet not one word was spoken at their sad good-bye parting,
And each of them knew before long,
new life would be starting.

I LIVE IN AMERICA, "LAND OF THE FREE"

Breanna Turnage—Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy
Student

I live in America, "Land of the Free."

Do I really?

I live in America where we have freedom of speech.

Do we?

I live in America where there is Justice.

Is there?

I live in America where we are all equal.

Are we?

I live in America, "Home of the Brave."

Or are we just being threatened?

I live in America, the most powerful country.

Am I positive?

I live in America with a smart, powerful government.

Is there?

I live in America where you can be who you want.

Well, can you?

I live in America where you won't be judged.

No question for that; that's a lie.

What have we come to?

What are we doing?

Are we choosing what's best for us?

Or have we been making horrible decisions?

Is our freedom gradually slipping from the very palm of our hand?

If we are truly "Home of the Brave," may I ask why haven't more people taken a stand?

I will and I am.

I live in America and if what's going on continues,

Honestly I either won't be able to live in what is now America

Or even live.

We need to get together and make a change.

Not just for us, but for future generations.

Why let a beautiful creation, America,

Slowly deteriorate?

YOU'VE BEEN

Breanna Turnage—Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy
Student

You've been hurt.

You've been lied about.

You've been lied to.

You've been abandoned.

You've been cheated on.

You've been pushed to the edge.

Now, you're doing what has been done to you.