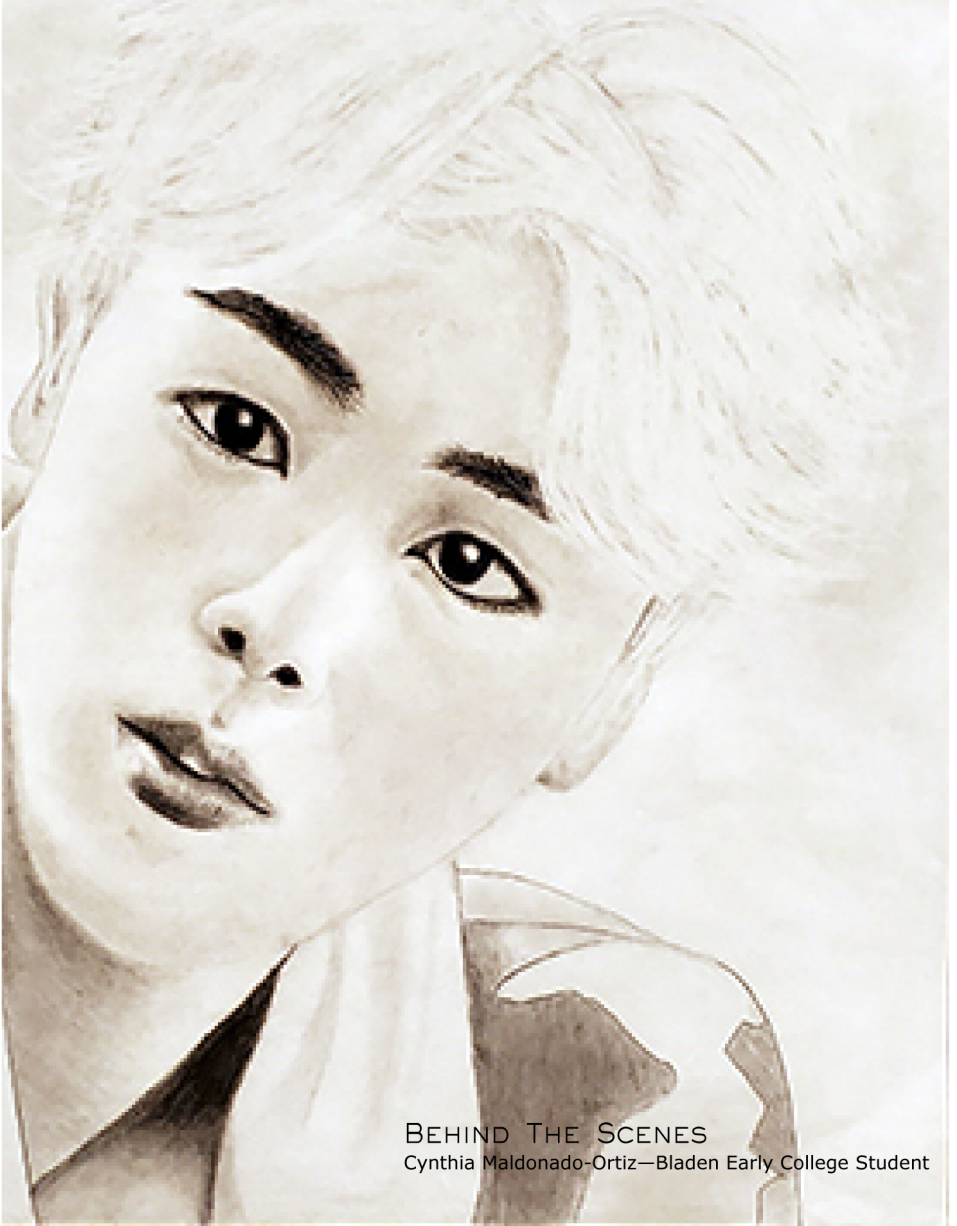


THE INK QUILL

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BLADEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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BEHIND THE SCENES

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The orchid in limbo

Alaina Bordeaux—Bladen Early College Student

The harsh, cold nipping waves tugged and battered at an already failing body of a mammal. It was a silent battle, one which neither could afford to lose. A single gasp of the burning air was a miracle to the canine despite its harsh rewards on his wasting lungs. Each kick, every thrust of the head were desperate actions for survival, but only one was an endless provider of blows in this fray. Dragged beneath the lashing water, the petite varmint ended his struggle.

I possess energy no more; you have claimed victory over me.

Exhaustion piled like rats upon him, and his inanimate body serenely began sinking. Weariness masked the senses, and with that came the absence of pain, the absence of feeling. The water, which clotted his already blurring vision, blinked of dull scales which gleamed shyly.

I am no more for this world; take what I have to provide faunas of the deep.

In his last moments of solitude, the ocean of twilight suddenly lit ablaze. Vibrant, spiraling colors bloomed in the malicious, cold water to welcome the dying frame into embracing arms of euphoric warmth. As if life flourished again, he jerked around like a wild beast in the tempting spring while darts of luminescent figures whisked past from bubbles of a new dawning.

“May the revolution commence once more, for you are our eyes, *beholder of us!*” An abrupt chime of enchanted wails argued against the savage, hauling depths.

Blinding brilliance forced his eyes shut like secretive locks, the once weightless feel of suffocating torrents ceasing to a halt and replaced by the smooth surface of familiar ground.

Murmurs sang to greet the dazed creature of prosperity, though they unsettled his core deeply. The cries were corrupt, strained, almost *distorted*. Trembling, the mammal's thoughts returned in a slow thawing process as he struggled to his soaking, sore paws.

Chilling water ran down his muzzle, ripping away and trickling onto the scarred, intertwined roots beneath him that made up for a layer of grounding.

Breath flows into my lungs once more, though they are husked.

Nevertheless, in a fit of spitting coughs and rasping sputters, he managed to regain himself with a quick quiver of his pelt.

Instincts drown my principles once again, vague instructions of beastly desires.

Shaking his head clear, he gazed along his surroundings, his bleak eyes widening at the terrain that splayed before him.

A barren land, scarred deeply and deserted with not a trace of life, except for the sky above. Massive bubbles stayed afloat in the air, sometimes clashing into one another on their silent journey across the glooming night which was already swirling from the light of the stars.

He stood in utter silence, bewildered by such a sight that his senses were tucked beneath him.

“Canine of prosperity!” A sudden low hum buzzed his

ears, a mix of soothing awareness making his pelt prick.

He craned his head, but only to find this refined, tender gaze was of no other. There was nothing of mortality or even living about these glossy pools of the new creature that trembled just feet away.

Albeit graceful, it was mere seconds before the frail yet twisted figure of the deformed Cervidae murmured once again, her almost needle-like ends for appendages stabbing the ground below for a meek sense of balance.

“Come, we mustn’t waste the twilight,” she urged softly, each word whispered like a daunting secret. In a blend of intrigued enchantment, the mammal listened, padding over to the delicate being.

“It’s quite young, is it not?” He queried as he gave his matted coat another shake.

“Young, and bearing the tears of an infant,” she murmured, a grave tone settling in her already quivering words.

“Were you the howling chime in my last moments of consciousness?” He switched the subject like a spinning axis when he snatched up the familiar, convulsing bellows in her voice.

“I know nothing of the sort. I am nothing but a mere guide,” she answered swiftly with interlaces of briskness.

“Nevertheless, someone has saved my battered soul! They have brought it here for embellishment, no?” A smile curled his lips upon the realization. “Oh, the rejoice!” He hummed.

“Are you the foolish rear of a boar? No being did anything of the sort.” Her cut-throat spats struck him

deeply, for he did not expect such harsh treatment, though the Cervidae had given her final words before any other utterance breached the brisk air. “You have long since drawn your last breath, and your time in that shabby dwelling of a body has reached its end.”



Eye opening

Emma Elliott—Bladen Early College Student

Her Story

Ashani Rozier—Bladen Early College Student

Her story was not bright as she had always wanted. Her story was one of misfortunes and mishaps; nevertheless, she always smiled like everything was alright.

At the age of four, she and her seven-year-old sister were separated from their parents, tearing her perfect family apart.

Growing up without her parents was hard. Going to school was even harder. Listening to people asking her about her parents made her resilient. Coping with her sister eventually leaving to live her life made her determined to continue living with her grandparents as long as she was still pursuing her education.

One day, others will know her story. One day, they will understand that although her parents weren't there to shield her from her insecurities and the bullies that she had encountered, she was successful in turning her negative experience into a positive and promising future.



Hidden GEM

Charles Gooden—BCC Student

That Thursday night was long and lacking sleep, just four hours before I woke at 4 AM, thoughts of missed work and long hikes running through my mind. My father and I had the truck preloaded and quickly headed out by 4:30. After a short stop in Fayetteville for gas, we were set for the long tiring four-hour drive to the little town of Black Mountain, located at the base of the mountain, and the location of the only fishing store within 50 miles.

Entering Black Mountain, I was instantly captured by its beauty. The small town looked like something out of a 1940s postcard. The store yielded the information I needed, a campground located near the top of Mount Mitchell, the highest point in the Appalachian chain. Halfway up the mountain, we stopped to fish by a small stream, Newberry Creek. The stream was beautiful, small and full of waterfalls and deep, clear pools. The moss lining the rocks was all shades of green, soft and fluffy to the touch.

The water was freezing, almost literally, but I jumped barefoot into the waist deep water without giving my actions a second thought. I knew what to expect. After about 15 minutes, I saw a flash under my lure. I pulled, and a miss. I threw my line back in the same area and watched the artificial Caddis float back down, another flash. This time, I had the fish. I was overly excited, but took extreme caution, knowing the fish are delicate. As I lifted the trout out of the water, I quickly realized something heartbreaking. I knew what this fish was, a rainbow trout. My hopes sank.

Even though it was only day one of a three-day trip, I felt defeated. I took a quick picture, put my phone back in

the waterproof bag, released the fish, and turned downstream. The swift water caught me and quickly swept me down. I then made one of the biggest mistakes of the entire trip; I tried to catch myself with my delicate fly rod. I heard the metal reel hit the rock on the way down and knew from the sound that I would not like the result. Sure enough, upon inspection, the reel was busted and there was no possible way to fix it at a store, much less me being able to repair it half way up a mountain. Cell signal was already fading, but I managed to call the fishing store and confirm they had the size reel I needed. Even though the cheapest was \$100 I needed it to continue my trip, so back down the mountain we went.

After getting a new reel loaded up and ready to go, we turned back up the mountain. By this time, it was past noon. We went straight for the campsite, an hour-and-a-half drive, going 20 MPH up a mountain, taking ungodly turns. About seven or eight miles before we hit the campsite, I ran out of cell service, mentally thankful, as I had a good excuse not to answer any messages or calls. We kept going, slowly but surely, taking sharp turns and steep inclines. After hitting the campsite and setting up, I turned my attention to the river right beside camp, with its designation sign NC WILD TROUT. I knew there was at least a small chance. But sadly, like Newberry Creek, the rest of the day yielded nothing but small Rainbow Trout. Time after time, I cast my line toward rising fish, saw a strike, and was disappointed to find a small or even a fair sized rainbow on the end of the line. I had little interest in these fish. That night, I settled into the tent feeling defeated, even debating calling off the trip early and leaving to go home the first thing the next morning.

Waking up in the middle of the night, I quickly realized I was soaking wet. It was raining, and the tent was

not waterproof. The fact that it was cold enough on top of the mountain to freeze in July did not help. I quickly left my father and his expensive waterproof sleeping bag and took a hot shower in the campsite showers, changed clothes, and slept in the truck. The next morning, I was up early to a clear . I ate a handful of trail mix, woke my father up, and we were off. This time, I knew what I was doing. The state did not put the rainbow trout in this part of the river. They had swum up and pushed the brook trout out.

With this knowledge in mind, I checked a map, and sure enough, just one mile up the river, two waterfalls came down into a Y at the start of the river, blocking anything downstream from passing into the upstream portions. Pointing it out to my father was hard. He said I couldn't be sure of a natural barricade, but I convinced him it was worth a try. I smiled, knowing I had exactly what I wanted, and finally feeling hope for the first time since the reel break. After a mile hike through some of the toughest terrain I had ever encountered, we took steep climbs and instant drops. This was not easy with me extremely out of shape and my father aging.

We reached the waterfall, a beautiful sight for sure. The little streams entered the South Toe River with waterfalls over fifteen feet high, but easily climbed. My father and I split up. I went right and he went left after our own fish. At the top of my waterfall, I took a few minutes to get my gear ready, and as I sat down to catch my breath and decide on what artificial fly to use, a Yellow Sally fly landed on my shirt. I took it as a sign and tied on an imitation. The first fifteen minutes yielded nothing, not even a sign of life in the water, but I kept moving upstream, slowly but surely. I was at least covering ground. Then I spotted the sure fire white fins dancing in the crystal clear cold water. My whole

body dropped low to avoid detection by one of the most easily spooked fish on the planet. I slowly and carefully worked line out of the fly rod, and with all the care and ease that I could ever possibly put into anything in my life, I watched the fly float on the water, dance with the flow of the river, and then suddenly disappear into a short lived and barely noticeable dimple in the stream. I sat for a minute, unsure if I was imagining the strike or if it had actually happened, but sure enough, the fly was no longer floating and my line no longer flowing down with the current. I lifted my line and felt the rod jump forward as the trout headed upstream with everything his little body had. Even though he was not nearly large enough to put up a real fight, I took every bit of caution that I could. Trout are very delicate, and the hook was not very large, so I didn't want to lose what might be my only chance at the fish of my dreams. I slowly tired the small 10 inch trout out and gently lifted it from the water. It was indeed a brook trout, and I was astounded at the beauty; the red belly turned a greenish-blue, then gray. Red circles were surrounded by a bright dark blue, mixed in with brilliant yellow spots. Fins showed deep red, outlined by bright white. No picture or painting can ever do such a sight justice. I gently laid him on green moss, took a picture, and held the fish in the water. The gills moved and worked with the current and the fish regained its strength and slowly swam out of my grasp, leaving me wondering if I was dreaming.

The next half mile of stream was a pure joy, swirl after swirl and fish after fish, waterfalls and stream, no sign of humans anywhere. As I hiked back out to meet my father, he was all smiles. We had both caught and released several brook trout, and we still had a day to enjoy ourselves.

The next morning came, and I slowly rose. The two days of hiking and walking had taken their toll, and I was

literally sleeping on rock, which only added to the soreness of my body. I took my time getting ready, watched the chipmunks, took pictures, ate slowly, and then geared up for the last few hours of the trip. I checked the map and saw one other stream entering the South Toe, just below the falls. I figured it was worth a few hours, so we loaded up and headed upstream about half a mile.



HIDDEN GEM

Charles Gooden—BCC Student

As soon as I hit the stream, I knew it would be another good day, and my first cast confirmed my thoughts, providing the biggest fish of the trip. As we walked up the stream catching brookies and sightseeing, I noticed that our path was ended by a waterfall, well over 20 feet tall and not climbable by any means that I had. I sat down and watched, realizing just how lucky I was to be seeing what I was seeing, and doing what I was doing. After about thirty minutes, we headed back down the stream to the little one-lane bridge. I hesitated, not wanting to leave a place that, just 36 hours before, I was so mad that I almost stormed home.

The state of the nation

Chris Carroll—Bladen Early College Instructor

As individuals from both parties seem to be more interested in conflict instead of prosperity, some question whether the Constitution is outdated and in need of revision. As voters seek a political revolution and political leaders pursue their own selfish agendas, one wonders if the founders would approve of the current state of government. As the modern presidency has sought to strengthen its grip on government policy and direction, the safeguards of checks and balances, while not always effective, have maintained a republican government intent on securing equality for all.

In establishing the new nation, the founders were familiar with various world political systems and how a lack of balance within the government had contributed to its decline. Having also experienced the absolute power of the English king, the founders were insistent on preventing extra-legal, supra-legal and consolidated powers that ignored various laws and challenged basic legal rights from becoming a part of the new nation (Hamburger 2). Despite their efforts, the new nation quickly dissolved into a conflict between various factions that sought to initiate various policies that would benefit their particular position in society. As the Federalists petitioned for adoption of the Constitution, various individuals from different states were fearful of a large national government having control of their lives. James Madison sought to assure that within this new republic nation would be a series of checks and balances designed to protect the basic rights of individuals and the states. Writing in *Federalist No. 10*, Madison said, “extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens” (78). Three separate but equal branches would enable the government to secure true happiness to all members of society.

As presidents and congressional leaders assumed various

powers, it did not take long for a conflict over power to infiltrate the executive and legislative branches. Presidents recognized that to remain relevant and have their policies accepted they would need to adjust to the growing demands of the government (Dowdle 46). This same attitude exists today as presidents use different tactics designed to get them reelected or have their legacy cemented in history. Instead of being “for the people,” presidents, and to a lesser extent Congress, develop policies and establish agendas centered more on the applause of the nation and media rather than making America better. With this self-centered approach, the presidents are tempted to lose focus on their defense of the Constitution and the protection of the rights and liberties of the American people.

This significant change in presidential vision accelerated with President Wilson, whose radical views concerning the Constitution and America have recently experienced a Progressive resurgence. Promoting modern democracy, Wilson advocated for a reinterpreted Constitution, focused less on being “grounded on certain unchanging truths about human nature and instead evolve to fit ever-changing historical circumstances” (Pestritto, “Woodrow Wilson: The Godfather of Liberalism 4). While seemingly promoting the power of the government is placed into the hands of the people, Wilson’s philosophy, in essence, created more problems as people in leadership positions were given more power to work on behalf of themselves instead of the people. As Progressivism moved forward, government decisions moved from “traditional branches of government that are accountable to the people through elections, to unelected, bureaucratic agencies that regulate with substantial independence from political control” (Pestritto, “Roosevelt, Wilson, and the Democratic Theory of National Progressivism” 319). This move provided the president and his advisors with greater oversight over respective programs and less accountability to Congress. Inadvertently, Progressivism allowed the executive branch to grow in size to over four million full time civilian and military personnel working directly for the president (Edwards and Wayne 290). Quickly the very thing they sought to avoid, the tyranny of the majority, became a reality as a select group of

unchecked policymakers received greater control. While Wilson believed Progressivism would “break down the walls between the branches, allowing them to work in close coordination for the purpose of constantly adjusting public policy to the current public mind,” it did the opposite as the executive branch was left unchecked (Pestritto “Woodrow Wilson: The Godfather of Liberalism” 5).

What makes this new modern democracy frightening is Wilson’s belief that the problem of factions, having existed during the creation of the Constitution, were no longer part of society but this new democracy was now “not the rule of the many, but the rule of the *whole*” (Pestritto, “Roosevelt, Wilson, and the Democratic Theory of National Progressivism” 327). A quick glance in today’s society shows that the rule of the whole is nonexistent. The efforts of presidents Wilson, FDR, and others to place the government back in the hands of the people through a direct democracy political system has created such a divisive nature that it is threatening the very foundation of this nation. Viewing today’s political climate would suggest that President Roosevelt received what he proposed when he said, “we, the people, rule ourselves, and what we really want from our representatives is that they shall manage the government for us along the lines we lay down (Pestritto, “Roosevelt, Wilson, and the Democratic Theory of National Progressivism” 323). Philippians 2:13 reminds us “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves (Philippians 2:13, NIV). The founders had such wisdom and foresight in knowing the dangers of a direct democracy they were willing to sacrifice their reputations, careers and even their lives if need be to promote a republic form of government. In *Federalist No. 63*, Madison sought to prevent citizens’ tyranny of passions of the importance, when misled by self-centered leaders “to have a respectable body of citizens, to...suspend the blow meditated by the people against themselves, until reason, justice, and truth can regain their authority over the public mind” (Madison 382). Society today does not need a reinterpreted Constitution, but a return to a government that seeks to protect one’s natural rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

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A Letter to my cousin

Corrina Monroe—BCC Student

The day I heard that my cousin, Tajuan, had been killed in a car accident is imprinted in my memory. I cried all day long and asked the Lord why He took him so soon. I heard God say that it was his time to go and that He needed him in Heaven. September 7th was the day of the funeral, and you don't believe a person is gone until the day of the funeral. The funeral was packed with family, church family, friends from school and the community who knew him. Everyone knew that he was always respectful, nice to other people, and funny. He was the best cousin, brother, and friend I ever had.

I remember looking through the photo albums and seeing pictures of him and crying. One day I woke up and decided to write in my journal a letter to him. I knew he couldn't see it or read it, but I wanted to get my feelings out on paper, and so I wrote this letter:

Dear Tae,

I love you and I miss you. You've been by my side since daycare and you and I have always been close. You have been the best brother, friend, and cousin I could ever ask for.

You don't know how much it hurts to wake up and know you're not there anymore. I know that I have memories of you of the good times we had from dancing in arcade rooms to singing in the choir. I'll never forget how you made me laugh all the time in church and how you turned the church service from boring to funny.

I love you and that's never going to change. Even

though you're not here physically, I know you're here in my heart. I know God took you out of this chaotic world because He didn't want you to suffer, and I thank God for that. As I said before, I love you, and I miss you, but I know that you're going to be looking down on me, and I'm always going to say #LLT.

Sincerely,

Your cousin, Corrina



New Life

Emma Smith—BCC Student

STORY OF AN IMMIGRANT

Daniel Arellano—Bladen Early College Student

Maco Arellano was born on February 23, 1970 in Michoacan, Mexico, although his birth certificate says he was born in Guerrero. Life was good in Mexico, but it was hard. He started working at a young age and did not get to experience school as most children do nowadays. His father died when he was a baby, and his mother felt like she needed to discipline her children since their father was no longer around. However, she passed away earlier last year, and Maco is still recovering from her death. He is left with his seven siblings, three sisters and four brothers, but he is not on good terms with all of them.

Going to school only until the sixth grade, Maco had very little education. While in school, he excelled, especially in mathematics. His school carried out an activity where the top five students would gather once a week and the top student would be in the middle holding the flag while everyone sang the national anthem. Maco would always be the one to hold the flag. After sixth grade, he had to quit school because his family needed him on the fields. His mother let him and his siblings finish primary school before having them in the fields. Maco realized early on that he would not be able to chase his dreams. They were going to be just dreams.

Working in the fields consumed most of his life. From 5:30 a.m. he worked until 7:00 p.m. His mother would sometimes allow them to play, but Maco and his siblings realized that they did not have long, so they enjoyed every second they could. They played with yo-yo's, freeze tag, and even made up games of their own. Playing was a reward that

they would not always get, sometimes for days at a time. His mother ruled with a heavy hand, but he still loved her.

Maco came to America in July 1990. He would go to North Carolina during tobacco season, Florida for the oranges, Georgia for the onions, and back to North Carolina for the blueberries and tobacco. Occasionally, he would head back to Mexico. Coming to America was always dangerous. He had to cross a river, travel across the desert, and often walk both day and night. To get across the river, people would use the tubes of tires and inflate them. Their bags of clothes would help make the tubes heavier so they could float across the river.

His worst time was when he went on a train carrying coffee beans. The coffee beans were in bags that came up to the roof of the cart, leaving little room to crawl on top and sleep. Two people called “coyotes” were helping Maco and thirty one others enter America. One was on the inside with them, and the other was on the outside. They knew when and where the train was going to stop. It was very hot, and the train cart did not make it any better. They were losing oxygen, and some were even fainting. They chose the person with the smallest hands to unlock the sealed door from the inside. After it was unlocked, they had to jump out of the train cart and cross the desert, walking for two hours with only a liter of water in a coke bottle to quench the thirst of all. They finally reached the area where they were going to be picked up. However, Maco had nearly died on that trip.

Maco met his future wife in North Carolina while working at Smithfield. His wife, Mary, was a secretary while he worked on the line. They got married on July 14, 1995. Maco now has three children and still works at Smithfield.

Excerpt from the Adventures in the Land of Circencester: The Mirror World

Emma Elliott—Bladen Early College Student

“Welcome back, Rena!” a child’s voice said. Rena sat up and jumped out of bed onto a leaf rug. She looked around her room, a hollow space inside the tree where her home was built. In the center of her circular room was a huge centered rug made of autumn leaves: red, orange, yellow; the colors spiraled from the middle. The bed was wooden, and it was covered with a fuzzy animal hide. Rena stood up slowly and walked to her window that reflected her appearance. Her hair was kinky curly with honey brown highlights. Her skin was tan, and she had a long tank top on.

“Good morning!” Rena spun around fast.

“Where are you at, Nyad?” A small fox climbed from her ceiling beams, and sitting on him was a little sprite. Nyad flew up and landed on Rena’s open hand.

“You’re gonna be late for training if you don’t start getting ready soon,” scolded Nyad.

“Fine,” Rena replied as she walked over to her closet and pulled out a light purple shirt and brown shorts.

She got dressed quickly and then put on her tan leather vest. As she placed her sword sheath on her waist, Nyad asked, “So what were you dreaming about?”

“What do you mean?” Rena asked confused as she pulled on her boots and tied them.

“You were talking about Eddy, but really weird,” Nyad said in a playfully taunting voice. “You like him, don’t you? That’s adorable.” Rena rolled her eyes as she pulled her hair up in a high ponytail.

She walked over to her kitchen area and called her Pele, a familiar, woodland fox to help her make hot tea. Rena threw

wood in a wood stove as Pele opened his mouth and set fire to the wood. She sat her cup on the stove and put some tea leaves in. The leaves were wilting a bit. "Nyad, remind me later to grab some more tea leaves, please."

There was a little tap on the window. Rena walked over and opened the window, allowing a black snake to climb in. Rena shook her head and walked back over to the kitchen, telling Axton, the snake, to let him in and Nyad to put out this fire.

Axton climbed the wall and turned the door handle with his tail letting in Eddy. Rena saw his blond hair in the corner of her eye as he walked up behind her and covered her eyes with his hands.

"Guess who?" he said sarcastically.

She pulled his hands off her face and turned around.

"Why are you here so early? We were supposed to meet in Runswick in an hour."

He sat on her bed and his snake climbed on his shoulders, "It's not a big deal; plus I brought this." He pulled his side bag off his back, moving Axton over a bit. Out of his bag came two muffins wrapped in brown paper. He tossed one to Rena who barely caught it. Eddy laughed it off and then pulled out another brown wrapped object. "Here stupid," he said as he tossed a small square.

"Thank you, idiot," Rena smiled and opened the wrapping paper, and there in the center was a bar of dark chocolate. "This is why we are friends," Eddy smiled back at her and closed his bag checking his watch. 3 AM.

"Well let's head to Runswick now. We can catch a wagon after this training mission and maybe catch a play?" Eddy asked awkwardly.

"Eddy, I would love to," she smiled at him, hurried to the other side of the room, and started packing her side bag.

Nyad started singing playfully "Eddy and Rena sitting in a tree, k-i-s-." Rena threw a book at her, barely missing. Eddy started laughing and stood up eating his muffin.

“Pele, come on,” Rena called him as he walked out the door with Eddy and Axton.

Rena looked around as she locked her door. She lived on the outskirts of Landzow, a spot between the fall and winter territory.

Here in the land of Cirencester are four territories: Runswick, the land of winter, Culcheth, the land of spring, Larnswick, the land of summer, and Xynnar the land of fall. They are also the homes for the four Great Wizards of Cirencester.

Mother Mira, one of the four Great Wizards, was the gorgeous wizard of spring who possessed the magic of the earth and could command mountains to move and flowers to bow in her presence. Eddy, her son, could one day wear the necklace with the earth stone. But he didn’t want to rule. He wanted to be with Rena.

Eddy got on his horse and pulled Rena up. “Shortie,” he picked. Rena rolled her eyes and got on the horse with his help. She hesitantly put her arms around him so she wouldn’t fall off. The horse was white with brown spots. One of the spots was shaped like a flower.

Eddy commanded the horse to go, and they swiftly started toward Runswick. Rena held on as they passed the small town where she resided. She slowly and carefully pulled her fingerless gloves from her side bag and put them on.

Town people shook their head as they looked at Eddy. “What’s their problem?” she asked.

“DEMON!” a man yelled as he approached a bridge.

Rena looked down and put her head on Eddy’s back.

“Don’t listen to them. You’re beautiful the way you are,” he said as he stopped the horse.

“Excuse me, do you know who I am?” Eddy asked the old man in a serious tone.

“You’re the prince, and you’re with a DEMON you

disgusting boy!”

“She is tan like you are, sir. She isn’t a demon. That race was destroyed years ago.”

“You people don’t care about us; you don’t care about the citizens. We are going to rebel!”

They came across a bridge and then crossed it. One moment the air was cool and smelled of pine, the leaves falling from the trees. The next moment the air was cold and crisp; it hit them both in a shock. Snow was everywhere, and everything was still other than the seemingly magical snow.

Rena hugged Eddy tightly to stay warm and he smiled secretly. They headed toward Runwick, entering the training base. “And we are here,” he replied shivering. “I don’t know why they made us train here in the cold.



IT IS WELL

Zoey Lent—BCC Student

Excerpt from Creatively Blocked

Faith Graham—Bladen Early College Student

I figure today, April 23, might be the most tedious of days since all the juniors are meeting in the gym to hear what the guest speaker has to say. I wake to a day like no other, one of which I have never seen before. I get ready for school as usual, but oddly, I see Father is not at home as I walk through the narrow hall of our home and past the rooms of my parents, Halo, and Charles.

Charles doesn't talk much in the mornings, but he does greet me. I can tell Halo probably didn't get much sleep last night as I can hear the creaking of her bed. She's such a sensitive sleeper that the wind keeps her up at night. I walk to the kitchen where Mom packs me a slice of the cake only she can make. We walk out the door five minutes after our agreed time to get out the house.

Twenty-minutes later, we drop off Charles at his school. I try to avoid the morning conversation with my mom, but she joyously tells me the story of what she watched the night before.

I arrive at my school, where I find a small, crumpled, beige slip of paper with only "Edward Albany" written on it. No junior is named Edward. I walk to my empty homeroom and stretch the paper out. I notice it is old, and the writing is cursive. When the bell rings, I rush out of my homeroom and go to my first block success class with Mrs. Violet.

Mrs. Violet takes the class to the auditorium where most of the students are. I sit next to Olivia and her friends, but they don't know me well since I happen to be the most mysterious person at school.

I look to the stage and see a woman in dirty boots, beige pants, and a long trench coat. Immediately, I think she is a detective, archeologist, or scientist. I think of how I wanted to be an archeologist. She grabs my attention. A few

minutes later, she rolls over a colossal stand to present a paper. I realize a piece is missing. The missing piece is what I have in my pocket. I want to return it now, but I can't risk that much embarrassment. As she speaks of Edward Albany's criminal acts, everyone near falls asleep, but I hear serious business.

"Edward Albany recorded his findings of lost worlds. Whoever touches the corner of the paper with his name is destined for greatness finding these worlds," she says.

As Mrs. Violet leads us out at the end of the program, I walk up to the stage, feeling all my anxiety arise. The guest speaker comes my way with a smile, looking at the paper in my hand with apprehension. She hands me a sheet of paper and says, "Get your parents' permission so that you can go with us to the unmentionable."

She hands me the permission slip, and surprisingly, I take it. I feel noticed for the first time. Afterward, I catch up to the rest of my class. I go to the red room for this class and meditate on what the speaker has told me.

I ask myself how I am going to tell my parents I want to go on a trip to the unmentionable, not knowing what the unmentionable is. I open my laptop to go to my art class, and suddenly I see a burst of light and a beautiful face. I feel a deep gust of air, leaving my body. The people sitting at the table next to me see the bewilderment on my face, but can't see what I can. I pull my permission slip out my bookbag. There are no pictures describing the event, but there are the words "She'll be back Tuesday, April 28."



MLK Jr .

bCC Mar tin Luther King JR. ESSAY WINNER

Jamie Lewis—BCC Student

This world has a funny way of dragging you into the dirt and leaving the taste of failure crumbling off of your tongue. Sometimes, it will trick you into believing that you will stay there forever, lifeless and alone. Then, the stars align and a hand reaches through the darkness in an attempt to uplift you. This warmth and familiarity clear the doubt clouding your judgment. Captured memories flow through the nerve endings in your body, and the world suddenly becomes less scary.

Family is something different for everyone. For some, it consists of people who were given to them the moment they exited the womb. For others, it was something found amongst strangers. Luckily, my family was given to me.

In my family, I never have to worry about being insecure. I can count on them to accept my quirks and acts of spontaneity. We fight like any other family and cry when the other is hurting. My mom has had the hardest job. She has had me and my two crazy brothers to handle for so many years on her own due to the loss of our dad. We lost my dad right after I was born, and that tragedy left us broken. My family comes in pieces. Our puzzle will never be completed, and the box will remain warped. But we have each other. Love in a family is powerful. Unity in a family is strength. We have both. The best part is knowing that even when the world comes to an end, I have three people who would be by my side to watch it with me. They would go to extreme lengths to keep me out of harm's way. I call these three people family.

Each family has its own way of handling each other. Moreover, each family has a sense of unity that will always be a shared trait amongst us all. This is like an embodiment of what we have in America. We all have different dreams, goals,

and ambitions. We handle things differently and possess different opinions. However, when the chips are down and you mess with one of our own, we unify. America was once referred to as a “melting pot,” but now, they call us a “salad bowl.” Different wraps of lettuce, sprinkled cheese varieties, and a mixture of fruits and veggies. All it takes is a splash of dressing, and we all mix together under the same flavor of ambition. We each bring something to the bowl, both foreign and delicious.



Inspiration

Faith Graham—Bladen Early College Student

AQUAPHOBIA

Jamya Tolson—Bladen Early College Student

Alone in his home living room, a boy sits upright, his legs folded into his chest on an elegant sofa with navy blue fabric and bronze framing. The room is lit with the fading sunlight that peers through the cream cloth curtain on the windows. He stares across the room at the wood placed in the unlit fireplace. His hands resting on his knees slide down. His head lowered, he remembers how the heat of the fire felt in the winter months. Diminishing the silence of the house, there is a small roar of juvenile laughter outside. The boy looks up towards the door, and the laughter fades into a small conversation, now closer to his door. Growing curious, the boy stands. He is of a slender and tall stature. He walks towards the door slowly; the weight on his bare feet presses on the wooden floors, making a small creaking sound as he steps. The boy arrives at the door made of dark oak with a simple design. He looks into the peephole near the top of the door to see a group of smiling teens his age. Upon seeing the other teens, he smiles. *They must be visitors!* He thinks happily. He turns the lever handle, automatically unlocking the door. Staying behind it, he opens the door with a wide smile and waves.

“Hi-”

Time begins to move slowly as the nearly blinding rays of summer sunlight pour into his home. There, glimmering in the sunlight is a large, threatening wave of a clear liquid that jumps out at him. His eyes widen as it gets closer and closer until a drop of it lands on his arm, and later on his left knee. The boy shrieks; the unbearable stinging pain of the water burns his skin. He jumps back, time returning to its original

pace once again. The laughter of the teenagers becomes irrelevant to him as he quickly dashes into the bathroom and grabs a towel. He rubs his skin almost violently, his breath hitching in his throat as he desperately wipes the water off.

"Hey, where did he go?" His head shoots up, looking into the sink mirror and then to the bathroom door upon hearing the voice of one of the teenagers. He hears footsteps near his doorway. The boy runs out of the bathroom, standing in the middle of his living room again, he looks down at the spill of water at his door and backs away, not wanting it to touch him again. He looks at the group of teens at his door.

"Please, go," he says quietly, in almost a whisper.

"Why? You left the door open. We were obviously allowed inside."

"N-no, I didn't know my door was open, so leave." The boy furrows his brows when the other teens stare at him and then at each other with smirks.

"I didn't know you were this rude, Julian. We only gave you a bath. You probably haven't had one in a while." The group starts to laugh hysterically. Julian's hands ball into fists.

"I said get out!" Julian yells.

The group quiets. The one in the middle steps forward. Julian is reminded of the water on the floor as his boot makes a small ripple in the growing puddle.

"What if we don't want to leave?" The kid in the middle raises his brow.

Julian is quiet.

"That's nice of you. At least you can clean your mess," a male voice sounds behind the boy.

The kid turns around, wearily. He looks into the glaring eyes of a man, a college student.

“Hi, I was just coming to check on him! Y-yeah I’ll leave now.” The boy attempts to walk around him when he is suddenly grabbed by the back of his hoodie.

“Go,” The man says. The other two teens scramble away.

“H-hey!” The kid is pulled back to meet the man’s face.

“You made this mess, right?”

The kid frowns and shakes his head.

“Yeah! So what?”

“Clean it.”

“Wha-” The boy is dropped, his face hitting the wet floor.



COLORS in nature

Kacy Gunter—BCC Student

GOODBYE

Mayra Vazquez-Olarte—Bladen Early College Student

He reversed the truck into the edge of the beach. We got out of the vehicle and sat on the cargo bed of the truck to observe the sunset. My brother, Mason, was leaving early in the morning, and this was going to be the last time I would see him in a while.

Ever since he got his license when he was 16, we would go watch the sunset every weekend unless it rained. Mason and I were really close since we were young, and this was going to be the first time we were going to be apart; we even shared the womb together. My brother was going to leave to join the army; not seeing him for months was going to be the hardest thing ever. We talked about childhood memories, stupid things we did as children, and about what was going to happen once he left. I was supposed to head off to college in two months, and he was expected to leave to join the army around the same time, but it turns out he is leaving a few months earlier than anticipated.

I think it would've been better if our schedules hadn't changed. I could've used college as a distraction to not think about my brother as much even though I know I would've thought of him every once in a while. We stayed there for a couple of hours before getting back in the truck and heading back home.



HOW THE WHITE AZALEAS LOST THEIR COLOR:

A Native American Story

Nadiya Virden—Bladen Early College Student

Long ago on this very earth, azaleas were of all colors, never too bland, always vibrant and happy. A bush of colorful, kind, and jovial azaleas were visited by a gray moth that begged to use just a little of their color. Being that the flowers were so kind, they cheerfully agreed. The moth thanked the azaleas. He took some of their colors and flew away. The next day a dark crow came to the bush of colorful azaleas and asked for their colors just to seem friendly to her prey. The flowers said yes, and without thanking them, the crow took some of the azaleas' colors and flew away.

One night, a severe storm came. The Earth asked the azaleas to give the sky some of its color or the land would forever be damaged from the impact of the storm. The azaleas lost most of their bright colors. If they were to give any more colors away, they would have none left. Since the flowers cared too much about the earth and its wellbeing, the azaleas gave the rest of their colors to the sky. The storm went away and the sky turned a beautiful blue color. The azaleas, on the other hand, gave away their beautiful colors in exchange for the safety and happiness of others. They are no longer bright pink but a glowing white and will forever be that way.



NORTH TO FREEDOM

Sharon Samuels—Friend of BCC

Dark, dark...so dark. Cannot travel during the day.
Too easy to be caught.

Must remember that star...that drinking gourd. There are two of them...a large one and a small one. I think I remember. That small one has the brightest star. It always points north...North to Freedom.

Ahhh Freedom...to work for myself, to have a home, clean, free from dirt floors, free from washing in a river. A place of peace, opportunity, and joy. No worry that Master Man would sell my son, my daughter, my family. No worry of Master Man selling me away from my family. To send me where? Another plantation? More back breaking work? No rights, no liberty...no peace...just terror.

So now, I am here, hiding from the light of day. Darkness is my only time to move, my only time to eat, and to follow that star. Afterwards, to hide from the daylight, to wait with the patience of a saint. Staying steady, till darkness brings back my privilege again to move.

Within the darkness, I may be able to cook—a fish, a possum, a coon—without getting caught by the smell, so enticing that it makes my mouth water. I cannot do a lot of cooking, though. The night is more valuable for moving.

I must stay strong and remember my reason for this escape. There are things along the way that can be eaten. Maybe crab apples, wild strawberries, huckleberries, even wild grapes. Grapes so sweet that you just have to stay there just to eat and eat. But! I cannot just stay. I can take my rag bag and pop in as much as my little sack cloth can hold. And

vegetables, maybe a cabbage from someone's garden, alone with a few tomatoes. Clean them off at a spring along the way.

I miss my Mama's stews. I would love to make my Mama's vegetable stew with just a small bit of meat. I can smell it... Lord that stew...that smell. Then to find a little wild herbs... sassafras, wild onions, fennel, anything that would make a tasty stew. Think straight, girl, now just think straight. I cannot do this. Don't know how close I am. It would be a shame to be caught...caught and so close to freedom.

When I am free, I can have my garden, my pigs, my cows, chickens, grapes, and huckleberries. I can have my little farm with peace in knowing that the Lord has allowed me the rights that nobody can touch. Liberty will allow me to feel this joy.

But! What about my family? My freedom cannot be joy, if my people have no freedom.

Now Moses, from that Bible, with the grace of God, was able to bring his people out of slavery.

I must pay attention to all that is happening, hoping maybe to go back and bring my brothers and sisters to freedom. There should be other folks to help, folks who feel that all of God's children should have the right to breathe the fresh winds of living without fear. No fear of beatings. No fear of losing loved ones when folks are being sold like cattle.

They can feel like I am gonna feel...brand new and bright as a morning star.

Guide me Lord to follow that star, just like the wise men to Baby Jesus. I will follow that star just like you show me Lord... to independence...

to opportunity and joy...

to Freedom.

A VICE PRESIDENT WITH LOCAL TIES: William Rufus DeVane King

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty

The Convention



WILLIAM RUFUS DEVANE KING

Source: WIKIPEDIA

The Democratic Convention in June of 1852 was not going as planned. Front runners Lewis Cass of Michigan and James Buchanan of Pennsylvania were both having trouble gaining the necessary votes to become the party's nominee for President. The delegates at the convention were tired when, on the 35th ballot, a dark horse candidate emerged. The candidate was former senator from New Hampshire Franklin Pierce. At 48 years of age, Pierce had already held several different careers. After

working as a teacher, Pierce became interested in politics to support the administration of President Andrew Jackson. A year after his father was elected Governor of New Hampshire, he won a seat in the New Hampshire legislature, and in 1832 was elected to represent his state in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1836, Pierce became a United States Senator and worked against abolition. He eventually resigned from the Senate to pursue a law career and serve as a general in the Mexican War. Though considered a war hero, his candidacy for the Democratic nomination in 1852 was

seen as a long shot. However, when the major candidates failed to secure the nomination, 15 delegates gave their votes to Pierce on the 35th ballot. Support for Pierce doubled to 30 votes on the 36th ballot and held steady at 29 votes on the 37th through 45th ballots. Momentum began to shift towards Pierce on the 46th ballot, and on the 49th ballot, he received 282 votes and secured the 1852 nomination for the Democratic Party.

Selecting Pierce's running mate proved to be a much easier task. On the 2nd ballot, the delegates chose William Rufus DeVane King with 277 votes. At the time of this victory in June 1852, then-Senator King was ill with tuberculosis. In an effort to find relief and healing, King left for the warmer climate of Cuba in December.

Unusual Inaugural

When Franklin Pierce was sworn in as President on March 4, 1853, King was still in Cuba. Since his health prevented him from returning to the United States to be sworn in as the nation's 13th vice president, a special act of Congress permitted him to be sworn in at the American consul's office in Havana, Cuba on March 24, 1853. Vice President William Rufus DeVane King is the only vice president to be sworn in outside of the United States. Determined to return to the United States, the Vice President left Cuba and went to his home in Alabama where he died on April 18, 1853. He is buried in the City Cemetery in Selma, Alabama.

Vice President King never had a chance to actually carry out any of the duties of the vice presidency. His death made him the third shortest serving vice president in American history. President Franklin Pierce would serve the remainder of his presidency without a vice president.

Respected Senate Career

Before becoming Vice President, William Rufus DeVane King was a highly respected member of the United States Senate. Initially elected in 1819, Senator King served as the Senate Pro Tempore from 1835 until 1841 and retired from

the Senate in 1844. After serving as minister to France, King returned to the Senate in 1848 to serve the remainder of retiring Senator Arthur Bagby's term. Elected once again to the Senate in 1849, King worked to pass the Compromise of 1850 and gain southern support for the measure. While acknowledging that the South had reason to be unhappy with the Compromise, King forcefully argued against taking any actions that might threaten the future of the Union. Because of these and other actions, William Rufus DeVane King was easily chosen to be the Democratic Party's 1852 vice presidential nominee.

Local Ties

Though King served as a senator from Alabama and is buried there, he started his life and career in southeastern North Carolina. Born in Sampson County on April 7, 1776, King attended the Grove Academy in Kenansville and The Fayetteville Academy in Fayetteville. He also attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1801 until 1804. Instead of graduating from UNC, King left to study law in Fayetteville. After being awarded his law license, he opened a law practice in Clinton.

Before moving to Alabama in 1818, King was elected to the North Carolina House in 1808. He resigned that position in 1809, and in 1810, he was elected to the Federal House of Representatives representing southeastern North Carolina. He served North Carolina in the House until 1816. After several foreign appointments, King returned to the United States and moved to Alabama in 1818 and played a central role in the founding of Selma, Alabama.



INVITATION

(an Excerpt from *Bloodbath*, an abandoned book)

Tyler Lewis—Bladen Early College Student

On a plain, ordinary morning in the living room, he hears a car approaching his land. Could it be one of his neighbors? Someone who took a wrong turn? Maybe it's a hostile intruder? He peeks through the blinds to see who it was, but by the time he can lift one up, the car has already departed.

"Who was that?" his wife asks him as she was entering the living room.

"Oh, it's probably just the mail carrier," he responds with an apathetic tone.

"Could you go to the mailbox and see if we've gotten anything new?" she asks him.

He does what he's been told to do. He puts on his socks and shoes and heads to the mailbox. When he opens the mailbox, he sees that it's been filled with a lot of mail—some even fell to the ground when he opened it. He takes all of it and heads in the direction of the house. Before he got there, he looked at some of the mail. The majority of it looked like junk mail—advertisements, promotions, and whatnot.

When he gets back inside the house, he approaches his wife with two handfuls of what appeared to be junk mail.

"Where's the paper shredder," he asks her.

"In the closet, dear," she replies.

He goes to the closet, gets the paper shredder, and plugs it into the wall outlet. One by one, he shreds this unappealing garbage into thin strips. While he was doing this, he sees something shiny in the pile of junk mail. In an instant, he picks this envelope up and forgets about the rest. Cautiously, he slits the envelope open. Inside of it was a letter. He reads it, and it says:

To whoever may receive this letter,

We've invited you to stay in our marvelous mansion for seven days. We've been carrying out this act of kindness for the past three days, and we've not stopped yet! We'll provide you with food, beverages, and a place to lay your head at night. More information will be revealed if you decide to come. Also, we recommend that you bring a guest along with you—the more, the merrier, right? Anyways, we hope to see you there!

Signed,

The Anonymous Couple

Without hesitation, he shares this acquired information with his wife.

“My love, pack your bags! We’re staying in a mansion for a week,” he says with great delight.

She, being too ecstatic to even utter a word, does as she’s told. The two of them get dressed in the appropriate attire for this event. Then, they start to pack their bags with their essentials. As they’re doing this, he decides to bring his revolver with him. This revolver was very sentimental to him, as it was passed down for generations by his ancestors. His father had given it to him before he passed away. It’s now held in a miniature, burgundy-colored case with a mold in the shape of the revolver so that it always fits perfectly inside. Also, it contains one bullet, just in case he would need to use it for self-defense. His wife sees him carrying the revolver. Angry and concerned, she approaches him.

“For what purpose do you need to bring that with you now?” she reprimands him. “Put that back in the house this instant!”

He ignores her request, walks to the car, and gently slides the revolver underneath the driver’s seat. Then, he turns towards her.

“Dear,” he says in a calm manner. “We don’t want to disappoint those who give us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, especially if it’s one like this!”

“You always bring that with you every time we travel

somewhere,” she tells him. “Can’t you leave it here at the house for once? For me?”

He respects her wish, takes the revolver from underneath the driver’s seat, and heads back into the house. However, he doesn’t lose the thought of either of them possibly being harmed going to or being at the mansion. Instead of doing what he is told to do, he slips it into another bag that he forgot to bring with him. He takes this bag with him and puts it in the car. This gives him an idea.

“Before I lock the door, did you forget anything?” he asks her.

“Oops! I think I did,” she answers. “Let me have the keys; I’ll lock the door when I come out.”

He hands her the keys to the house and sits in the car, while she goes back into the house to get what she thinks she has forgotten.

“You never know when, why, or how you’ll leave this place,” he mumbles to himself.

After a few minutes of her searching for her said-to-be forgotten item, she comes back to the car empty-handed.

“Did you find what you were looking for,” he asks her.

“It’s fine. I don’t need it anyway,” she answers.

“Alright! Let’s go,” he exclaims.

She gets into the car, shuts the passenger door, and the two of them are off to the mansion.

According to his GPS, the mansion is located six hours from where they live, so the trip to their destination was going to take a while. Three hours into the ride, he doesn’t speak to her, and she doesn’t speak to him. All you could hear in the car was the GPS telling him where and when to turn and their luggage being tossed around every few minutes. During the fourth hour, to break the silence, she starts fantasizing with him about how the mansion was going to look.

“Do you think they have an indoor swimming pool?” she

asks. “What about outdoors? Maybe even both?”

“I don’t know, dear,” he answers. “Do you think they have a bridge that you can walk over to get to the entrance?”

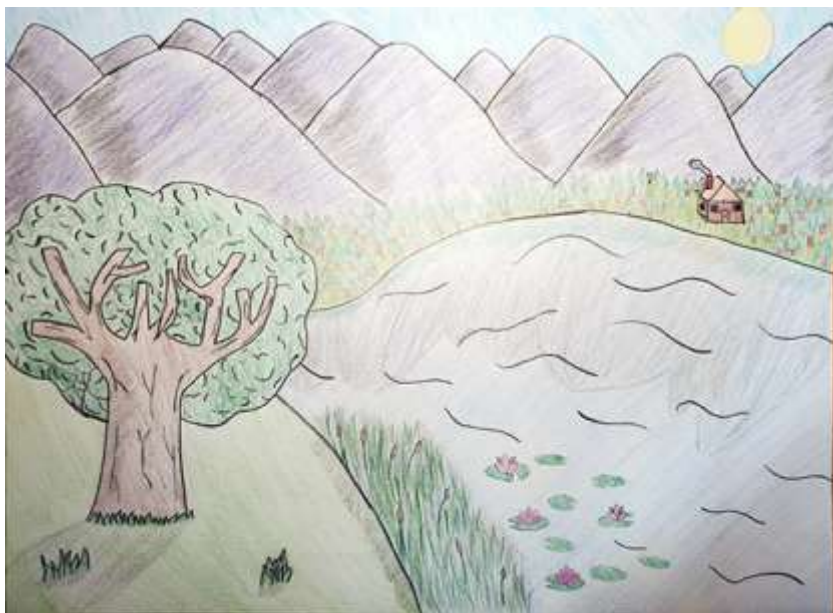
She shrieks with excitement just thinking about it.

“You have a very, very good image of how a mansion would look from the outside,” she compliments him. “Now let’s talk about how it would look from the inside.”

They talk about the interior and exterior of the mansion for the rest of the ride. Then, suddenly—

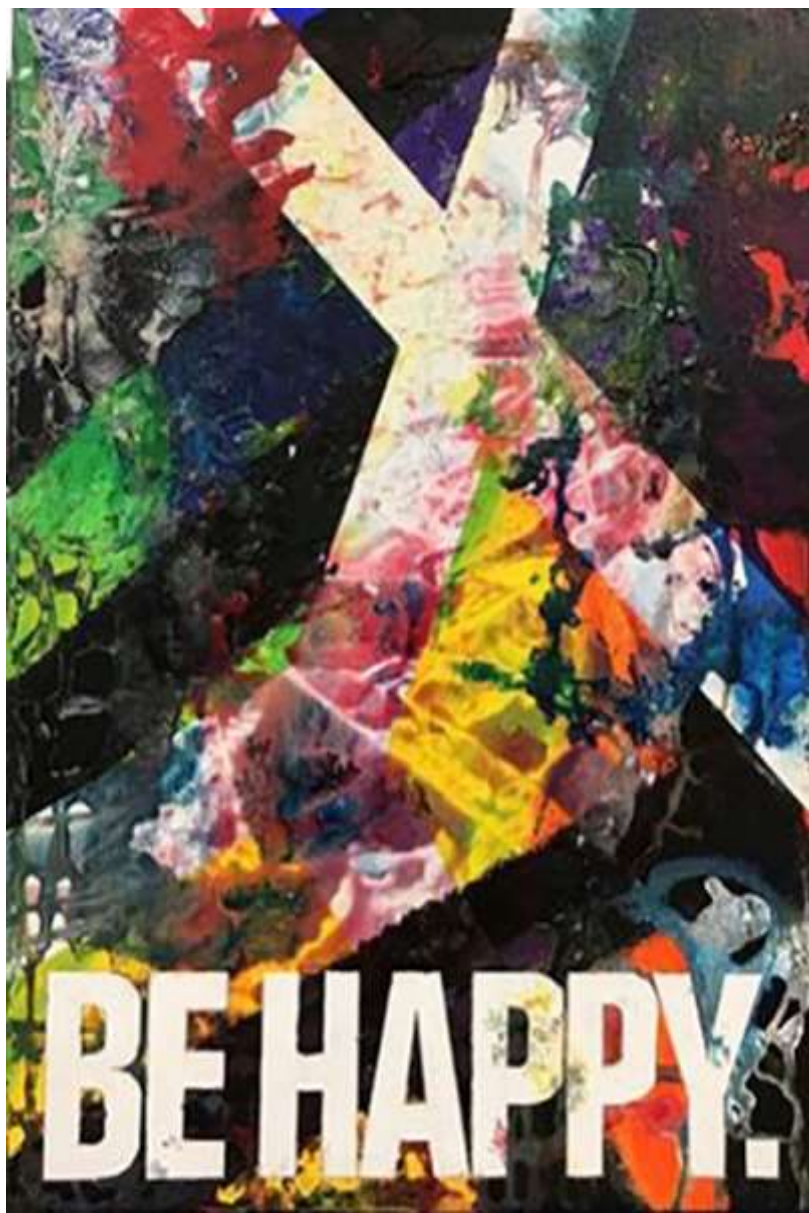
“You have arrived at your destination,” the GPS tells both of them.

“Well, we’re here,” he tells her while turning the car off.



Peaceful mountain landscape

Joshua Benson—BCC Student



Be Happy

Zoey Lent—BCC Student

POETRY

POETRY

Poetry

poetry



My Sweet Angel is forever young

Ashley Norris—BCC Student

In Loving Memory of Michael Moore

01-16-1991 to 09-12-2006

My heart felt broken and heavy like never before.

He looked like he was resting and nothing more.

But inside his body was hurting
and there was nothing I could do.

I prayed and cried more than ever before;

I couldn't accept that it was true.

Dear God, I was supposed to go first,
he still has too much left to do.

He has to get his license, his first car and job;
he needs to graduate, and have a family, too!

Then I realized that those were my hopes
and that's not always how life goes.

God has more in store for him now,
and there is so much more He knows.

I miss him more than anyone could ever imagine,
all the little things he did.

I miss the way he shook his whole head
to move his hair out of his eyes,

The way we'd argue and he'd get quiet and just let me win.

I'll miss having him there to protect me,
when someone hurts me.

It's amazing how fast my little brother turned into my big
brother not so long ago.

Young, strong, beautiful and smart;
all the reasons why I thought it wasn't fair for him to go.

Yet, these are the same reasons why
God wanted and needed him so.

I wanted something to help me to understand why,
I needed something to help me not to cry.
And then I had a comforting dream last night,
and he was there.

I felt at peace, as if he'd never taken that last breath of air.
He held my hands tightly as he said, "I'll always be with you."

My tears were falling freely now,
for in my heart it was true, I knew.
I told him my hurts and my regrets
and how I'd love him forever more.

This dream has no ending like any other dream ever,
For this dream is different and I know it will continue forever.

As I was waking up, a smile was on my face
and a tear in my eye.

The dream has touched me and it's so real,
for once I didn't have to cry.

I had prayed for this dream,
and I knew I had been blessed very greatly.
I felt like I wasn't alone; my heart felt lighter,
and my day less cloudy.

He had to go first this time to show us the way.
I asked him to save my spot and I'll be with him again one day.

I was there when he was born,
and I was there when he took his very last breath.

As I watched a tear running down his cheek
and my hand was holding his,
I spoke inwardly, and thought:
until we meet again little brother, in my heart you'll always be.
My sweet Angel is forever young.

You are always with me
and I'll think of you every moment that passes.

Love Always,
Your Big Sissy,
Ashley

09-14-2006

OUR LAST HOPE

Cynthia Maldonado-Ortiz—Bladen Early College Student

The bird was up so high
But it fell down from the sky
A little girl heard it cry
She was confused as to why
There would be a bird not in the sky
And the bird was so shy
She took care of it so it could fly
But at last she had to say goodbye
She set it free and the bird flew high
Once again in the night sky.

Loving YOU

Emma Smith—BCC Student

Promising him another day was like a chain smoker
lighting another cigarette.
I always knew it would end me, but I was willingly feeding
the infection while expecting it to never kill me.

HUMAN

Charlene Mota-Huerta—Bladen Early College Student

We are two in one

We fight, we love

We seek, we learn

Yet, we never

Stop wishing

For what?

For a better life?

For a lover?

It's just a waste of time

We seek and pray for something

To what? God that only listens

But only delivers if He thinks we're good enough

The thing is we are never good enough

We are more than that

Yet we desire

Why?

Simple! It's because

We are human.

The world

Daliyah Carroway—Bladen Early College Student

The world is beautiful,
But it's dying.
Green trees gasping for air,
But no one seems to care.
Oceans being crystal clear,
But plastic takes over year, after year .
Clear air to breathe in and to breathe out
until pollution came about.
Climate changes every year.
Global warming is here.
Habitats are being destroyed.
We need to come together to fill this void.



Feelings

Donald McAllister—Bladen Early College Student

I give them what they want
All the time, refusing to say no.
I can't anymore.
It's too much for me to bear,
But they demand more.
They don't care about me or what I want.
Though I've tried countless times to escape,
They always find me
And drag me back to solitude.
Then it comes over me.
It controls my entire being.
Suddenly, I can't think straight;
My body starts to quake,
And just as I'm on the verge of tears,
I blackout.



BLIND DATE

Faye Turner—BCC Staff

It happened way back in 1973.
All was so frightening and new to me.

Should I go?
Or should I say No?

What should I do?
Oh NO!! I have not a clue.

But at last,
I decided to go after 30 minutes had passed.

Four years did fly.
And my love for you I could not deny.

We vowed till death do us part.
I loved you with all my heart.

That blind date turned into 40 years of marital bliss.
Then fate forced me to give you a final goodbye kiss.

When God called you home
I felt so lost and all alone.

But, one day we will meet again.
Please know that I will cherish our timeless memories until
then.

An inspired idea

Faith Graham—Bladen Early College Student

Something that flows from your mind so abstract
unseen if you will.

As an inspired idea isn't in the eye,
but born of sparks and captured
when we cast our net.



Water fall on grandfather mountain

Mary Walker—Bladen Early College Student

A PHILOSOPHICAL GOLDFISH:
THE LEAP OF FAITH

Hayden Sasser—Bladen Early College Student

I am inside this bowl

What is outside it I don't know

My entire world is the room in which I sit

But I can only explore through the glass

These four walls are my existence

But I am trapped

Inside my bowl

These walls of glass make my prison and my existence

For I cannot live without the life it contains

I am trapped by my own existence

The need to live keeps me contained

As I watch the god who provided, I start to wonder why I
cannot meet him

If he can live without life, why cannot I?

I weigh the risk of my life to the reward living

I make my leap of faith

As I land on a hard surface that was much different from my
glass walls

I watch the only god who I know abandon me

As I sat on something that I knew wasn't my glass walls

I could feel life slipping away from me
I only had one thought before slipping away
It is still better than being in a bowl

G. R. I. E. F. unimaginabl e

E. Marie Sanders—Bladen Early College Faculty

It's not a **G**iven that you'd die because I thought your
superpower was to live forever

It's not a **R**elief that your healing didn't take place on this
side of Heaven

My tears are not **I**ndicative of getting over your death

They are **E**veryday reminders that I'm here and you're not,
and of how I have to **F**orce myself to inhale, exhale, and
repeat

Life without you is unimaginable, but the reality is that life
continues

You continue through me.



FOREVER AND ALWAYS

Hayla Tatum—Bladen Early College Student

I've made a promise to you,
One I cannot break like the others.
The promise to keep you forever,
To always have your hand.
Although there is pain,
There is always a better result.
Forever and always my love,
Flourishing like sweet flowers,
Stronger than just a ring on a finger,
Stronger than those three words,
Than my hurt,
My fear,
I will always be here.



Floral

Hayla Tatum—Bladen Early College Student

We planted a seed back in autumn,
The seed which led to a beautiful flower,
Sweet and pure,
The flower has wilted,
Another flower begins to grow,
Seemingly out of nowhere.
Another and another.
Each small flower symbolizing us,
How much we've been through,
And overcome.
Although a few may wilt,
There will never be a time the flowers cease to exist.



SMOKE

Hayla Tatum—Bladen Early College Student

You fill my mind like smoke in a clear room,
Replacing the air that is my thoughts.
You replace the air in my lungs;
You save me unintentionally.
Unknown to you,
You keep my mind full,
Fixed.
You keep the smoke from drifting into space,
A space previously filled with more smoke.
The smoke that filled my lungs before you,
You who fixed me.
Me who ruined this body in the first place,
Instead you fixed it.



The MASK

Hayla Tatum—Bladen Early College Student

My favorite story goes:

“A blue-faced person walks around,

Searching for another blue person.

But, he was wearing a mask.

Soon another blue face comes along,

But he was also wearing a mask.

They slowly walk right past each other.”

What if we were the people?

We walk around wearing masks not to get hurt,

Or hurt each other.

Keeping our slight distance,

Waving from across the room,

Or just little glances back and forth.

Nothing more!



The question of identity

Jazmyne Wilson —BCC Student

What are you?

Who am I?

Where did we all begin?

He is,

He is who has no beginning nor end.

How is it possible?

To listen, but never hear

How is it possible?

To imagine, but never see

How is it possible?

To be concrete, but never real

The real is far beyond what you feel

Who is he, that he is?

The sovereign intelligence

That cannot be bested by time

Nor rushed by the painful,

Yet through revelation that we try to unwind

He is that he is

He will not change for our kind

What are you?

Who am I?

Where did we all begin?

You are a generation

I am a vessel

We all began and will rest in him

He is,

That we are in who he is.

-Selah

WHAT DARKNESS SEES

Kayla Todd—Bladen Early College Student

Darkness is often a witness

A witness to the fake sweetness

It sees the anxious and the restless

And the fake quirkiness

The light gets loud and obnoxious

But when night falls they go to the darkness

And the loud and obnoxious

Become part of the fearful and joyless

But the light will come back

And the cycle will repeat

But this is just what the Darkness sees

SHATTERED

Kassie Bagwell—Bladen Early College Student

Every moment of every day
She had one person taking over her every thought
And every moment she hoped he would see her that way
Then her world came to a sudden halt

He said he loved her
If only she knew, his feelings were never true
But suddenly all logic was a blur
And day by day her feelings only grew

Everything seemed to keep them apart
They had more bad times than good
If only she knew he would shatter her heart
Even that day she thought she had misunderstood

A week before she realized something was wrong
She began detaching herself from the boy she loved
Her life was okay until he came along
If only she knew that she was unloved

He told her he never even liked her

She felt so used

He broke her

In the end she knew her heart was bruised

Lemons AND Treats

Kayla Todd—Bladen Early College Student

In a world with millions

Some can be lemons

They're sour not sweet

But others can be treats

The treats are good

But they shouldn't get too sweet

Too much sweetness causes rotten teeth

Mix the lemon with the treat

And you'll be offered the perfect sweet

But don't be fooled

Often the perfect treat is hard to eat

A SONG

Hayla Tatum—Bladen Early College Student

You remind me of a song,
The happy introduction,
Your beat is catchy,
The lyrics are astonishing.
But when you begin to understand,
The song is much deeper.
You cover up with your upbeat music,
But the words reveal your pain.
You know you are my favorite song,
So happy at first glance.
Then I begin to delve deeper into you
And then I understand.
I understand the depth of your hurt and pain.
I could listen to you forever.



ME

Nasheika Kelly—BCC Student

I loved you when I couldn't love myself
I gave you things I didn't even know I possessed.
Times you wanted to leave
And I couldn't let you go
Oh, I was so naive.
I know everyone saw the real you
But why couldn't I?
So many nights I've cried myself to sleep.
Then one day I found me
It was the happiest day of my life.
I found true love,
An unconditional love
I found strength
The strength of a lion
And happiness
I love me and I can't understand why or how I ever loved
you.



REFLECTION OF MY EMOTIONS

Myesha McKoy—Bladen Early College Student

My words are a reflection of my emotions

I can't force them to meet the criteria and the only thing
about me people have noticed

So tired of shady things like umbrellas and trees

Forcing themselves to protect others from a sun that isn't
hurting anybody

So tired of people branding what they don't understand

Like why do my cat and dog have to hate each other

They chill just; they correspond through seeing racism and
being racist (apparently)

I wear my heart on my sleeve

Tattooed there to cover bruises

Sometimes it still bleeds

But only when memories break through scabs reminding me
that if you can't see my dripping tattoo, then we mean
nothing to each other. I wish I could say I was new to this.

Old habits become all people can see when they look at me

I am a walking reminder of suffering and there's not a day I
don't feel it

All of my thoughts floating free like a runaway slave

Unable to be contained, while I try to snatch them out the air
to put in this poem

Even after all these years I still can't express myself clearly
and it's showing through all the open wounds I try to cover
up

I'm supposed to be the one that keeps it all running, so I run

I'm the runaway slave, the hero in everyone of my stories

Even when I know I'm the villain in everyone else's

So I'll play the bad guy for now, if that's what's best for you.

But when my tattoos decide to dry up and wounds learn to
close themselves, my heart will no longer be on my sleeve.

It'll be in my chest beating to my own drum,

So when your snare gets out of tune, I'll just turn up my
music and pretend like I don't see anything

So yeah, my words are a reflection of my emotion, but they
aren't telling the whole story.



Dewed Mushroom

Raegan Blackmon—Bladen Early College Student

INFATUATION FADING

Nila Simpkins—Bladen Early College Student

You're a song and I wrote my heart into your lyrics
But you hate it when I write you into metaphors
You always interpret them wrong

Like instead of writing my heart into your lyrics,
You'll say you're heartless because the only time your heart
beats is when I press pay
But music and metaphors are funny like that

I use my words as a perfume meant to be intoxicating
But instead, you choke to death as if my words were poison
You say I don't try hard enough in the relationship
But to you, my words are a giant pair of scissors that cuts all
of our strings
#NoStringsAttached

I'm dating a realist that spends all of their time in LaLa Land
Or is that short for Los Angeles? I get my LAs mixed up
Because you are a walking oxymoron
A living, breathing contradiction

I can't tell the difference between you holding my hand or

pinning my wrist

We were goals once upon a time

Every couple wanted to be like us

We went from Disney to Madea, Dysfunctional

I guess our connection burned when we ran away together
burning all of our bridges

Our infatuation fading with every moment passing by

And you expect me to be okay with letting you go

MAJESTIC MELANIN

Nila Simpkins—Bladen Early College Student

I didn't have to be taught to be cautious

I grew up with it instilled in me,

Because I wanted to succeed,

Because the times of the now are the hardest.

My skin has a dark shade,

It hides a history of pain,

Therefore, it cannot be considered flawless.

...And I've had to live with that my entire life,
My skin is my closest sibling,
She has a mind of her own,
And sometimes she gets us both into trouble,
Sometimes she attracts too much attention,
But in the end, I would die for her and with her.

So when you kidnap my culture,
Yes, it angers the fire within my naps.

My skin is my most prized possession,
The riches melanin I've ever seen,
Even gold rests on the outlines of the palm of my hands.
A halo rests on my afro,
Sometimes around my neck,
Sometimes it's the only thing holding me up,
And If I'm being honest, I'm kinda tired of hanging out in this
tree.



ANGELS' HANDS

Drewhelen Jones—BCC Student

To look out on the early morning sun beaming through
the bent limbs of a storm damaged cottonwood tree,
standing ever so strong beside the small catfish pond,
were like God's angels holding it up. The angels are
telling that bent, storm damaged cottonwood tree, "We
will help you to be strong. It is not your time to fall."

As the sun grew higher in the sky, that
cottonwood tree came to stand straight and
embrace the wind with a smile.
So I will embrace the day with a smile.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
THE POETRY queen

Serenity Flakes—Bladen Early College Student

With her deep rich voice caressing every
word and syllable She was a poet that was
Unstoppable Very charismatic and
extraordinary Starting her writing career
with a bible And a bottle of sherry

From a dancer to an actress
Script writer, filmmaker She
was an inspiring soul, For no
one could shake her

Through all her success She still had a
truth to tell One that would liberate
others to tell Raped at seven Took her
a while to mention For when she did
she liberated many Not forsaken any

She was a woman who had strength She
added strength and diversity To a great
community Very inspiring through her value

and respect For words or love of poetry

The Queen of Poetry has thus come to an end She
accepted the challenge to say what she means
Through poetry and writing of all means For the
queen Her name was Maya Angelou And by all
means may she rest in peace Spoken in a form from
her words “What are you looking at me for? I didn’t
come to stay” Maya Angelou forever remembered
Day by day



SMOOTH MORNING

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty

WHEN I'M THE MOVIE STAR

Nila Simpkins—Bladen Early College Student

I feel like I'm auditioning for who gets to wear my skin
I really don't know who would even want it
I mean my skin has pain braided into every cell,
It has scars that still bleed; it still recognizes the chains that
every one of my ancestors wore
It bears the weight of all my worst experiences
And it's a target to everyone who doesn't wear it
But it's all I've ever known
It's my entire life story
There's poetry written into every flaw,
Every open wound is a window to who I'm supposed to be
My skin may be a target but only because it's a shield
So yeah, I now get why everyone wants my skin
But it's not a part of me I would give; I recommend you stop
auditioning



MY SUNSHINE

Shelby Tatum—Bladen Early College Student

It can fit in the palm of your hand

Or in your back pocket.

It can go into the land

Or even a locket,

It can be as small as a ladybug

Or as big as the ocean.

It can be a person that gives you a hug

Or puts plans in motion.

It cannot fit in a pill

Or a dollar bill.

Happiness can be any size big or small.

Some people don't have any at all.

I'm glad to call you my sunshine that I can put in my pocket,

My sunshine I can place into a locket.

I know with you happiness will not leave me,

So stay with me and let us be happy.



My BEST FRIENDS

Shelby Tatum—Bladen Early College Student

They are with me every day.
We've been through it all.
Even when I'm "okay,"
I always get a call.
They are there late at night when I should be asleep,
And there when I'm quiet and shouldn't hear a peep.
I call them my best friends or at least they call me theirs.
They always talk to me and always overshare,
My best friends' name is sadness.
Some might call it madness cause it never stops.
I try to contain it or put it in a box.
I gulp down happy pills to forge a smile,
But I forget to take them once in a while.
This is when they show up most,
And then they only come to boast.
You can't get rid of me and yet you try.
I'll always be with you, an eye for an eye.

THE PESSIMIST'S ROUTINE

Tyler Lewis—Bladen Early College Student

Her day
Starts with gloom.
She's just waiting—
Waiting for her impending doom.

She looks through her phone
For sad music to play.
This numbs her bad thoughts
And helps her get through the day.

She gets in her car
And travels to town.
Afterwards, she heads home
With a great, big frown.

And here she is,
Back in her bed.
She goes to sleep
Thinking about nothing but dread.
The cycle repeats.

The Bar n

Willie Allen—Friend of BCC

Its one shelter droops like a single wing plane,
A lonely cockpit window stares with missing panes
Into empty space which changes only with passing time.
But the times, as they pass, are never without nature's
opine.

One single bench sags from lack of care.
Like overworked farm horses with none to share,
The long years of labor, with precious little, needed rest.
But when everything is considered, it has given its very
best.

Four walls peel, exposing its naked frame,
That has been long overexposed to wind and rain.
In spite of best effort, it cannot resist; it can only submit
To the ravages of time that conquers all normal effort to
exist.

Ravages of passing time and elements combined
Cause the demise of all things made by human kind.
Nature's recycling tune seems often out of man-kind's
touch.

The PORCH

Willie Allen—Friend of BCC

In the cool of the eve, so very still,
sitting by himself, his mind in the field.
He wonders, tomorrow, what will it unveil,
Soft showers, or wind storm, perhaps even hail?

He ponders the life he loves all too well.
Surviving the 'thirties' has become pure hell.
But what can he do, and to what length can he go,
A family to feed with mule, plow, pitch fork, and hoe?

In the cool of morning, still the sun rest,
Again by himself, he faces a wearisome test.
He will face today, as other days, alas years before,
To be overcome by the skills, of this dirt farmer's core.

But, all considered, what
would we do with rotten
wood and such?



MORNING LIGHT

Drewhelen Jones—BCC Student

I awoke this morning
Sleep still in my eyes
Staggered to the door
To see the first morning light.
Fog had rolled in overnight;
Everything was very still.
The wind had not rustled
The leaves on the white maple tree overnight.
As I opened the door
To see the sun rise,
I could feel the brilliant warmth of the morning sun on my
face.
Energizing my body,
Stronger and stronger I feel.
Yes, I smell the fresh air of a new day
So clean I thought.

I saw dewdrop fall
From the leaf of the white maple tree
That stands in the edge of the woods.
One drop of morning dew fell
Crashing to the ground
On the dry leaves around the white maple tree.
In an instant, it was gone.
Suddenly more fell.
Was it raining from that tree?
No! It was just their time to fall
One-by-one the maple tree repelled
The dew from her leaves.
I stretched,
Wiped the sleep from my eyes.
In an instant that fresh feeling was gone.
Back to reality,
It's a new day.

THE BREAKDOWN IN THE DARKNESS

Courtney Turner—BCC Student

Depression says hey
I try to say bye
But then she comes back stronger and next thing you know I
have tears rolling from my eyes.
People think this is a joke like it's not real
I only wish it was something that I cannot feel.
Then her sister comes along,
Anxiety,
Now that feeling is just as strong.
I tried to hide it and not think about the worst
But when it comes to attack, it feels just like a purge.
I can't control it and they come in different forms
Sadness,
Exhaustion,
Anger,
It's like you're blowing up a storm.
Bipolar can have you feeling mentally crazy
All the thoughts in your head become hazy
God forbid you get into a relationship
No one can handle you and hold down a companionship
They never understand,
They always want to leave
Then it leaves you in tears feeling discreet.
My actions are just reactions from mental disorders
The things you do cloud my head making me feel out of order.
I suffer from PTSD
that's why I have anxiety.
I overthink
Things get to me and get under my skin
Maybe I should see a shrink

But I can't open up
Not even to the ones I love.
I'm sorry,
I say it over and over again
If you can't accept me
Put yourself in my shoes for a day or two then.



Behind the Scenes

Cynthia Maldonado-Ortiz—Bladen Early College Student

ART

Art

Art

ART



SACRIFICE For FREEDOM

Sabrina Gibson—BCC Student



Wal k to nowher e

Adam Coleman—Bladen Early College Student



The BEAUTIFUL NEWS OF GOD

Adam Coleman—Bladen Early College Student



SEARCH FOR FOOD

Adam Coleman—Bladen Early College Student



COURAGE

Bette Adelle Ross—BCC Student



EUPHORIA

Bette Adelle Ross—BCC Student



Love

Bette Adelle Ross—BCC Student



Free

Bette Adelle Ross—BCC Student



Paradise

Bette Adelle Ross—BCC Student



RADIATE

Bette Adelle Ross—BCC Student



SMILE

Bette Adelle Ross—BCC Student



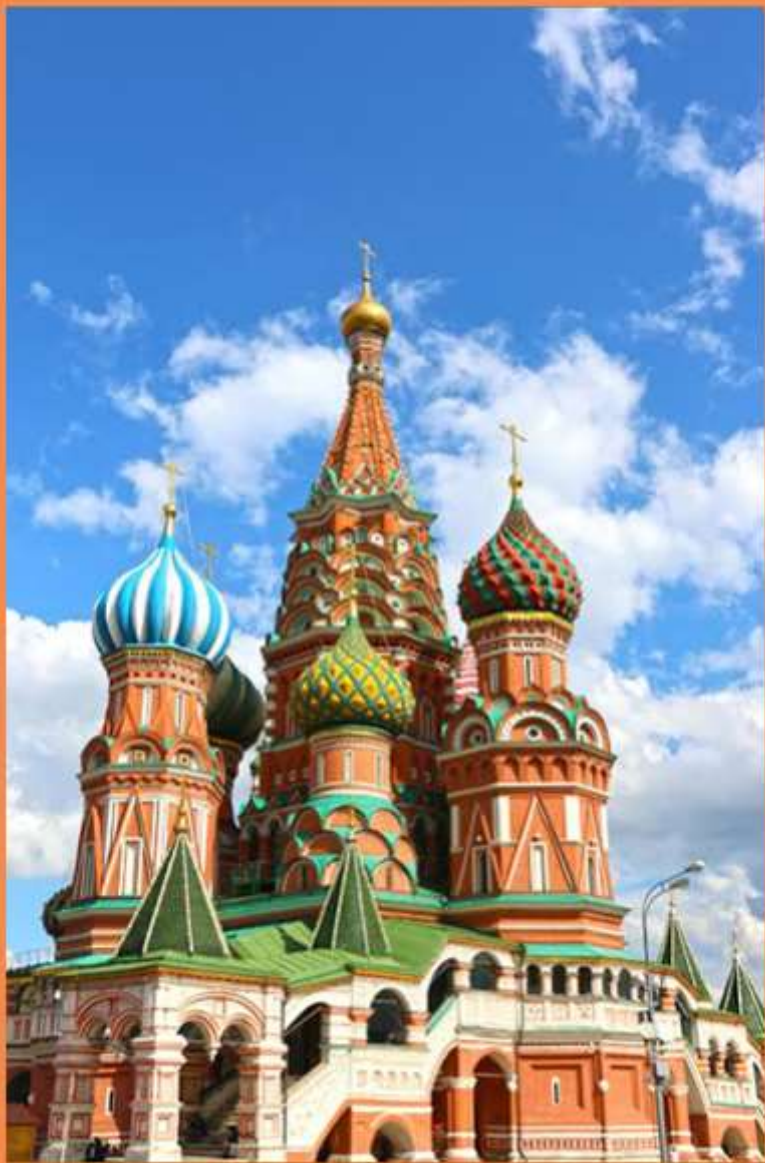
Sky high

Charlene Mota-Huerta—Bladen Early College Student



Abandoned BARN

Warren Baker—BCC Family



St. Basil CATHEDRAL, MOSCOW

Warren Baker—BCC Family



HAPPY DAY

Diane Vitale—BCC Staff



SPRING SHOWING ITS COLOR

Diane Vitale—BCC Staff



YOU WILL BE FOUND

Emma Elliott—Bladen Early College Student



The bridge amongst the shallows

Trinity Bedsole—Bladen Early College Student



tree stump in the woods

Raegan Blackmon—Bladen Early College Student



Hiding beauty

Stacey Gomez—Bladen Early College Student



DEW On FLOWERS

Stacey Gomez—Bladen Early College Student



Standing TALL

Stacey Gomez—Bladen Early College Student



Lights of Christmas

Sayvi Fuentes-Eleria—BCC Student



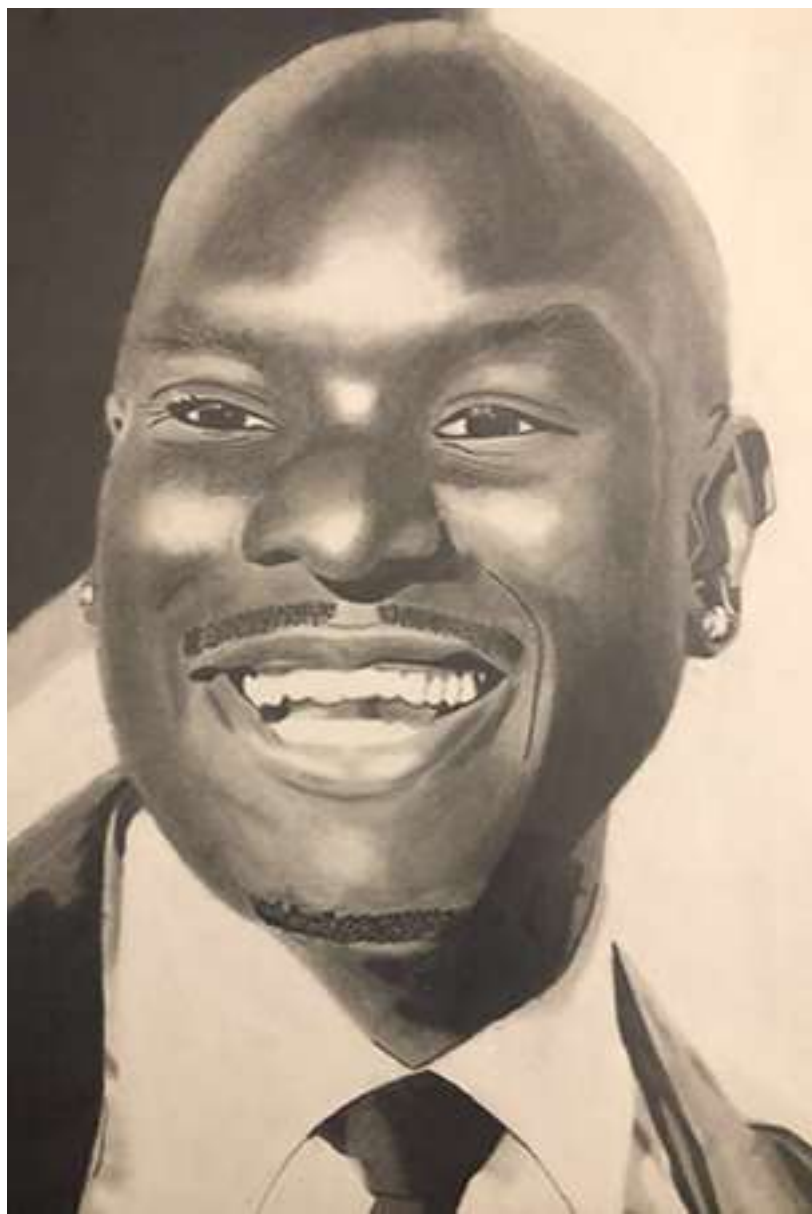
Lake DAYS

Rayna Bryan—BCC Student



Lil Mayo

Emma Smith—BCC Student



Tyrrese GIBSON

Lavada Jackson—BCC Student



DRAGON BALL Z: PAINT on DENIM

Lavada Jackson—BCC Student



TUPAC

Lavada Jackson—BCC Student



emotions

Myesha McKoy—Bladen Early College Student



Copper Birdcages

Jamya Tolson—Bladen Early College Student



The colors of nature

Mayra Vazquez-Olarte—Bladen Early College Student



GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS

Mary Walker—Bladen Early College Student



Blue and green

Billy Ray Pait—BCC Student



A rocky climb

Billy Ray Pait—BCC Student



THE Sky is the Limit

Billy Ray Pait—BCC Student



GRAFFITI BRIDGE

Maurice Mitchell—BCC Staff



LAKE JUNALUSKA DAM, N.C.

Maurice Mitchell—BCC Staff



PRETTY MAIDS ALL IN A ROW

Maurice Mitchell—BCC Staff



GO, KYLE, GO!

Tim Marshburn—BCC Faculty



RED SISTER, GREEN SISTER

Tim Marshburn—BCC Faculty



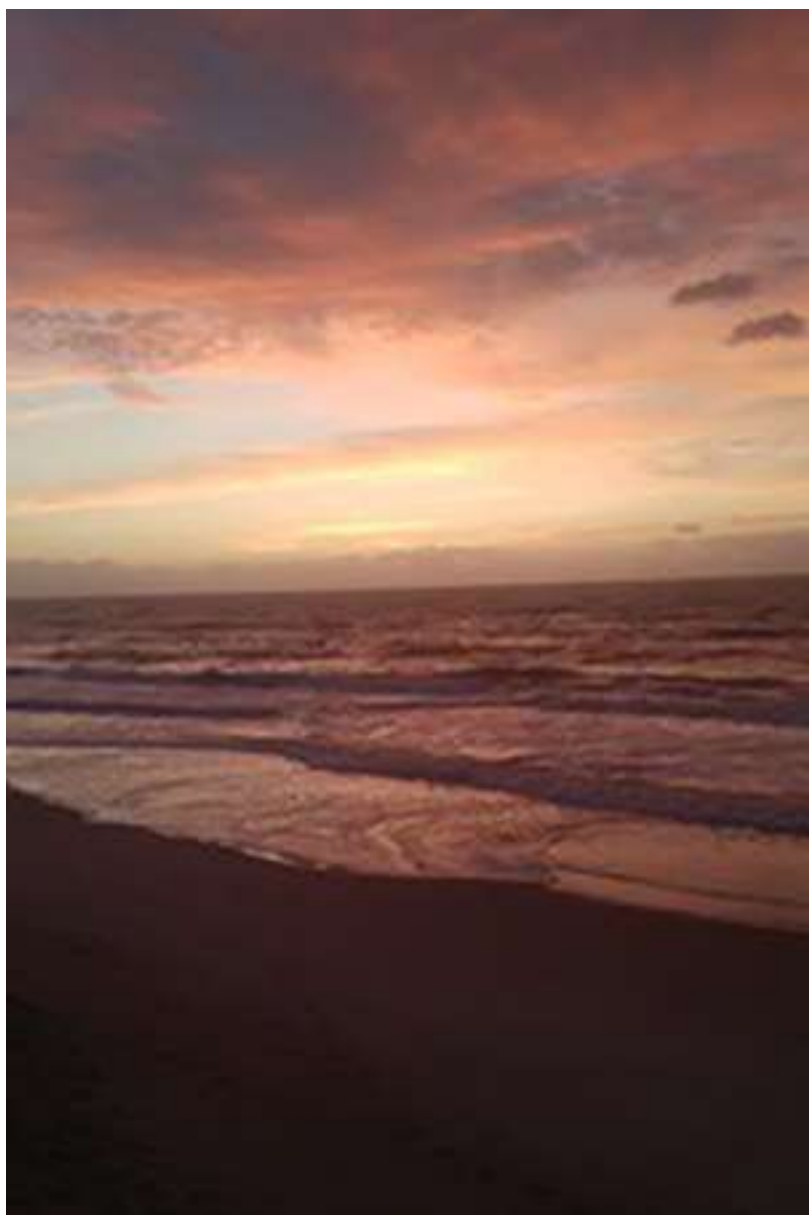
SOUTHERN BALES

Tim Marshburn—BCC Faculty



SASSER'S SUNFLOWERS

Tim Marshburn—BCC Faculty



An Autumn BEACH SUNSET

Noah Feight—Bladen Early College Student



Peachy Sunset

Noah Feight—Bladen Early College Student



PURITY

Isaac Singletary—Bladen Early College Student



HEAVEN'S GATES

Isaac Singletary—Bladen Early College Student



LIGHTS LEAK

Isaac Singletary—Bladen Early College Student



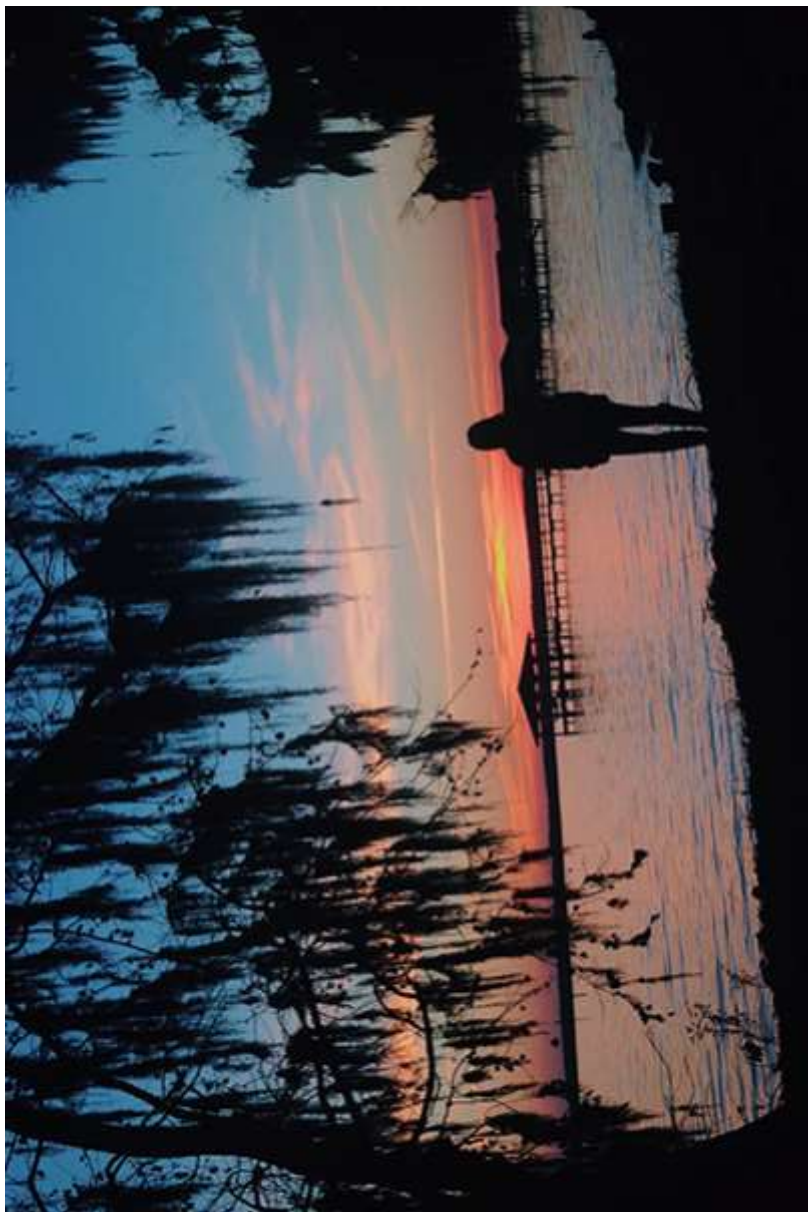
SPLASH

Rayna Bryan—BCC Student



Summer Sunset

Rayna Bryan—BCC Student



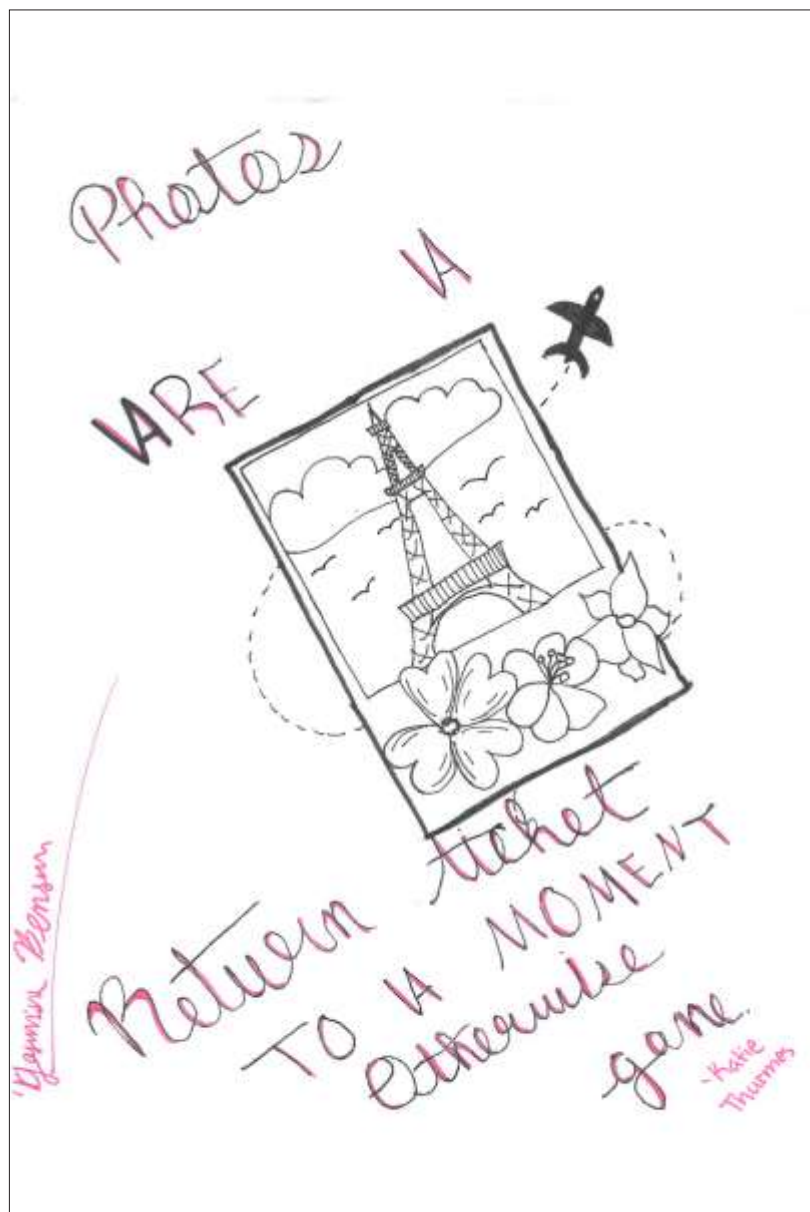
RACHEL'S SUNSET

Rayna Bryan—BCC Student



Black & White TRUNK WITH FLOWERS

Raegan Blackmon—Bladen Early College Student



PARIS RETURN TICKET

Yasmine Benson—Bladen Early College Student



BLOODY MAIDEN

Alaina Bordeaux—Bladen Early College Student



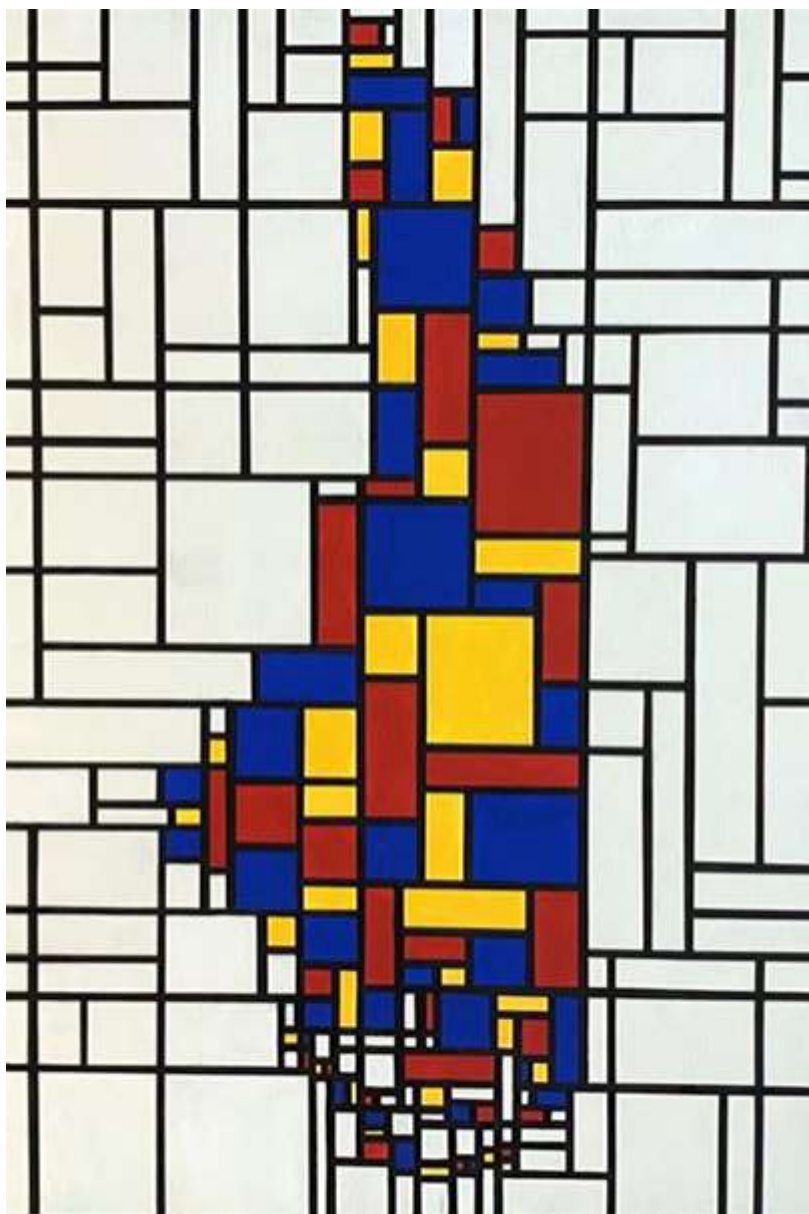
VIRGINIA MOUNTAINS

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty



War Horse, in colored pencil

Brandon Ventura—BCC Student



N.C. PETE

Zoey Lent—BCC Student

ESSAY WINNERS
MIDDLE SCHOOL

BLADEN COUNTY

middle school

Essay Winners

MIDDLE SCHOOL

ESSAY WINNERS

My hero helps me escape

Hailen Croke—Clarkton School of Discovery

I'm unsettled. I struggle to get away from the sinister void that tries to swallow me. But this void isn't unfamiliar; this void is anxiety. The menacing void whispers hateful things to me and tries to overcome me. My vision blurs along with my hearing as my body becomes weak and my temperature rises. The world around me fades as a migraine takes over me. I sit down and am met by my dog. She's trying to calm me down. She lays her head on me and pushes her cold nose in my palm. She helps me escape the void.

The Red Bandana Hero

Abril Mena Martinez—Clarkton School of Discovery

Hopelessly, I look down at my body and see severe injuries and burns which don't seem to register. The fear builds up inside me as salty tears run down my now dirty cheeks. Fire, debris, and bloody corpses are all I see through my blurry vision, accompanied by desperate cries for help. Suddenly a loud crash is heard followed by the ground shaking. The second tower has fallen. "Are you ok?" a young man's voice I hear. We escape the falling tower. I turn around to examine the gentleman who has just saved me, the man with the red bandanna.

BETA

Lena Damasco-Trinidad—Clarkton School of Discovery

After Hurricane Matthew, many people in North Carolina experienced flooded homes and scarce supplies. The BETA club gathered together to collect and distribute supplies to people in need. Once, I thought the BETA club was about academics and performing arts. That day, I understood what it meant to belong in the BETA club. I felt honor in being part of a club whose purpose is to lead by serving others. The BETA pledge was just words until that day when I felt most rewarded for assisting someone in need. It's true, actions speak louder than words.

A True Hero

Julizza Mejia—Clarkton School of Discovery

We ran hastily towards the helicopter that would take us home while being chased by the hostile military. The only way we would make it is if somebody stayed behind. Would I choose to make a run for it? Or, would I save the lives of other soldiers? I chose to run straight at the opposing military and quickly unpin all of my grenades. I thought about the life I was leaving behind. I thought about my son and daughter growing up. I thought about my wife raising two beautiful children on her own. But I knew I chose wisely.

Heroic Act in *The outsiders*

Thad Brisson—Clarkton School of Discovery

A heroic act can be defined as an act of bravery, or you could say, putting others before yourself. One heroic act that I read about was in the novel *The Outsiders*. Johnny and Ponyboy went back to church after hiding from the police, only to find it burning with smoke billowing out into the atmosphere. There happened to be little children trapped inside from a picnic. The boys bravely entered the church with no hesitation. All children were saved, but Johnny was hit by a falling structure. He was paralyzed forever, but for a good cause.

My Hero: Howie Kendrick

Jordan Hester—Clarkton School of Discovery

This story starts in October of 2019 in a seven-game series between the Houston Astros and the Washington Nationals. As the series was tied at three, the Nationals entering Minute Maid Park were not nervous, anxious, intimidated, but were ready and trusting their stars and also their will to win. As Howie Kendrick's at-bat arrived, Howie Kendrick at the top of the seventh hit a two-run bomb to ice the game in and help the Nationals win the pennant. As the confetti came down, the city of Washington celebrated a big win and an amazing hero.

My Hero: Ruby BRIDGES

Dyiamon S. Robinson—Clarkton School of Discovery

When you hear the word *hero*, who do you think of? Maybe characters such as Superman, or the Hulk, but what exactly is a hero? The word “hero” is defined as a person who is admired for courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities. When I hear the word hero, many people come to mind, but Ruby Bridges is one that outstands the rest. Living in a segregated world, six-year-old Ruby Bridges became the first African American child to integrate a Southern white elementary school. Overcoming ostracism. Bridges paved the way for many others and is the reason why I have the chance today to become a hero of the next generation.

My Hero: MICHAEL

Dylan Cain—Bladenboro Middle School

Once there was a star that fell down to earth. Emerging from this star was a being of pure and utter light. Its wings were golden, and this being’s name was Michael. He protected people in need, and when he was in his human form, he was handsome, and he had a heart of gold. One day, a boy was being bullied by older kids, and he went to defend and help the boy, and he told the boy that that if he ever had a problem with them to just call, and they never bothered him again.

My Hero stopped the car

Mayra Guijosa—Bladenboro Middle School

I remember I was six when I was inside of a red truck with my brother. It was a normal Sunday morning when my family and I went out shopping. Our parents went out to pay for gas, leaving me and my brother inside the truck. My brother looked at me, and I remember the conversation we had. "What does this joystick do?" he said as he moved the stick shift, and the car suddenly started going backward. I screamed while my brother tried to stop the car from going into the road. My dad came running to open the driver's door, and he stopped the car from moving, my mom watching from inside the gas store. I have trouble trying to forget what happened that day, but I know what to do when that happens again.

LEFE'S CHALLENGES

Violet Allen—Tar Heel Middle School

I think of a hero as someone I've admired or who was helpful. As a baby, I was diagnosed with a first-degree atrioventricular (AV) block and arrhythmia. I can't even imagine what it was like for my parents whenever they found this out. My parents have been my heroes since the day I was born. They took me to all of my doctor appointments and cared for me. In 2012, I was cleared and wouldn't have to go back to the doctor unless needed. Life isn't always easy, but my parents have always been there for me.

Listening As a Heroic act

Amelia Smith—Tar Heel Middle School

If you've ever gotten someone through a tragedy, there is a good chance you're a hero. My hero is the person who got me through the hardest times of my life. My grandma had cancer for over two years, and last November she died. I was lost, while my Mom was grieving herself, and I didn't want to make things sadder for her. So, I talked to a good friend, Cameron Dowless. He listened to me when I was sad and crying. He helped me to grieve. Sometimes just listening is saving a life.

Rescuing a Driver

Ashlie Kearns—Clarkton School of Discovery

I have not always considered myself a hero, but on one occasion, I had to put that thought aside and act. Driving down a lonely road one evening, I approached a horrific one-car accident. Immediately, I jumped out of my vehicle and noticed a flame inching closer to the gas tank. The female driver appeared unconscious, and I knew I had to work without hesitation. I grabbed a nearby tree branch and broke the driver's side window. Quickly, I unbuckled her seatbelt and dragged her away from her car as it exploded. I called 911, and she survived the incident.



HISTORY DEPARTMENT'S ACTIVE DUTY



CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS AT FORT FISHER

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty



BCC Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer Jeff Kornegay and faculty members Ray Sheppard and Cliff Tyndall show their support of U.S. Veterans in Wilmington's 2019 Veteran's Day Parade.

WILMINGTON VETERAN'S DAY PARADE

Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty

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