

A long-haired tabby cat with a white chest patch is looking out from a wooden fence. The cat's fur is a mix of brown, black, and white. The fence is made of dark wood. The background is a blurred green lawn with some fallen leaves.

2
0
1
7

MIND MURALS

Sigma Tau Delta
Eastern Region Journal

Staff

Editors in Chief.....Kaitlynn Sass
Jenna Burke

Regent/Advisor.....Kathy Nixon

Poetry editors.....Rachel Geffrey
Woody Woodger

Fiction editors.....Therese Holzapfel
Miranda Milillo

Non-Fiction editor.....David Grandouiller

Drama editors.....Emily Halbing
Jonathen Muñoz

Literary Criticism editors.....Tara Fritz
Brianna Maguire

Notes from the Editors

An idea I strive to carry with me in life is that when great people come together and share ideas, they have the power to create wonderful, influential, and lasting products. That is what happened in the creation of the 2017 *Mind Murals*. People from across the Eastern Region came together to submit to, edit, and finalize this year's journal, creating a final product everyone involved is immensely proud of.

I first have to thank the Eastern Region's Associate Student Representative, Jenna Burke. Jenna consistently was an energetic and driving force behind the production of this year's journal. She was more than willing to put in countless hours to find the easiest way to gather applications and submissions, to break difficult ties in judging, and to provide a stunning picture of her cat to grace the cover of this year's edition. Jenna worked hard to ensure the success of this year's journal and was the best person I could have asked to work alongside.

Next, I'd like to thank Kathy Nixon, the Eastern Regent, who worked with Jenna and me to ensure the completion of this project. Despite distance and time differences, she was always available to answer questions and provide support when needed the most. Along with Kathy, the Central Office has to be acknowledged for their hard work in this endeavor. They took files and ideas that were sent to them and used them to create a beautiful final project.

Finally, I want to extend a huge thank you to everyone who helped to edit, submitted to, or applied to *Mind Murals* this year. Our editors worked tirelessly to ensure the work of our submitters would be presented well, and I am forever grateful for their dedication and enthusiasm. The Eastern Region showed drive and companionship in putting together this journal, and I am humbled to be a part of this region and to have been involved in the creation of the 2017 edition of *Mind Murals*.

Sincerely,

Kaitlynn Sass

I am unsure if there is a sacred atemporality that editor's notes should have since this is my first, but I just read Kaitlynn's and will confess I am feeling the heat. Plagiarism is, of course (and at the very least), uncool, but at most I will need you to forgive me for heavy-handed parallelism.

Sigma Tau Delta's sense of community drew me in from the beginning. From our members, our chapters, our regions, and the society at large, there emanates an energy. It is rife with enthusiasm for communicating, connecting, listening, and being heard. It is natural then, that I can think of no better project for the Eastern Region to take on than *Mind Murals*. This journal is the culmination of creative and communicative energies on the parts of the writers and editors, as well as the Central Office and your representatives in the Eastern Region.

The biggest of shout outs is due to your 2016-2017 Eastern Region Student Representative, Kaitlynn Sass. Kaitlynn gave me the freedom to bring my love of Qualtrics and obsession with cats to the Eastern Region, for which I will always be grateful. Beyond indulging my personal tastes, Kaitlynn was truly the partner any leader dreams of. She's the type of person I wish I had been paired with for every school group project. Kaitlynn: the synchronization and sharing of our efforts to produce this journal was invaluable; your confidence to tag in and pick up where I left off any time things got a little busy always keep my worries at bay. Thank you for making this all happen.

Next is, of course, Eastern Regent Kathy Nixon. Time travel is a nice concept, but seeing as we managed to produce this beautiful final product despite our differences in time zone and location, *Mind Murals* never once gave me reason to contemplate it. Thank you to Kathy, as well as the Central Office, for your guidance through all of this.

Finally, thank you to the writers and editors whose work you'll see and learn more about in the pages to come. You are what makes this journal. I am merely a disembodied thank you note voice, invisible Qualtrics creator, and sly email sender. Your hard work is the real content backbone of this publication, and it is about to receive the recognition it deserves. So not only thank you, but congratulations.

And to you, reader, please enjoy!

Sincerely,

Jenna Burke

Table of Contents

POETRY

Rachel Roupp

<i>Vena Amoris</i>	8
Ribcaged.....	10
My Father is a Ghost Town.....	11

Woody Woodger

Grief.....	13
A Confession: 63 Timborwack St., the Living Room.....	15
On shedding day.....	16
A Hopeful Glimpse into My Future.....	18
Headed Back to the Berkshires from Springfield After my Girlfriend Held Me for an Hour.....	20

Michael Landenbach

Car Parts.....	21
----------------	----

Indigo Baloch

Dowsing.....	26
rabbit.....	27
Open: <i>housecat</i>	28

Maggie McCormick

this poem is not autobiographical.....	30
Sleep. Walking.....	31

Savanah Bubite

Almost North Star.....	32
So Two Atheists are Sealing a Barn in Bethlehem.....	34

Therese Holzapfel

In the Land of the Living.....	35
--------------------------------	----

<i>Julia Edinger</i>	
Dance of the birds.....	37

FICTION

<i>Savanah Bubite</i>	
Night Shift.....	39

<i>Jaclyn Reed</i>	
Blackberry Moonshine.....	41

NON-FICTION

<i>Courtney Zanosky</i>	
Bottles.....	45

LITERARY CRITICISM

<i>Mary Foley</i>	
Brutus's Oratory.....	48

<i>Alyssa Clark</i>	
Interpreting Meaning <i>Ad Infinitum</i> : Undecidability in Edith Wharton's "Roman Fever"	52

| poetry |

Vena Amoris | *Rachel Roupp*

I used to love your hands.
I loved their shape, their wide span,
how they once felt safe.

I remember them dry, cracked,
caked with oil,
shucking peanut shells,
driving nails into cradles,
pulling rifle triggers.

When the mortician cut off
your ring finger
so that your son could retrieve your wedding band
I was troubled by the idea of you
entering the afterlife without
two
good
hands.

I didn't know what those hands had done
to the woman you told you would love
“until death do us part”
without disclosing that you intended
to kill her in the end.

But she lived through the beatings and blackouts,
through being smothered with a pillow,
and the time you choked her—
shook her head so hard
that the sound of her teeth clacking
still fills your grown daughter's dreams.

The truth lived, too.
When you were gone and I was nearly an adult,
I learned about what you did with those hands.
About who those hands hurt,
when over my entire childhood
you showed me only
hands that helped.

And now I use my hands
to write about you,
and how I almost never existed
because you tried to douse the flame that birthed me.

You called her crazy Irish fire,
too damn wild to be let
into your heart after you already told her
she was the only one you loved.

Her fire is lit in my green eyes
which my mother says welled up with tears every time
you held me as a baby.
Maybe feeling that ring on your finger
press against my skin when you scooped me up
drove fear into me because I knew
what lies were beneath it,
coursing through the vein
whose path ran straight from your heart.

Ribcaged | *Rachel Roupp*

I've loved boys like you before.
Ones who had one hand in my hair
and the other on a Bible.
Boys who pushed themselves against me,
felt my heart slam into the ribs I grew from theirs
and said that we
were unholy.

And it broke my heart
to think of a love that I had faith in
as nothing more
than simple sin.
I was something to regret,
to repent.
When I had been nothing but devout,
how was my love, my body, not holy?

It scares me to think that someone
who is so dedicated to God
can't recognize the beauty of this world
that is embedded in our bodies
simply because we are alive
and electrified enough to spark off one another.

The cross that dangles
from the throat where I want to lay
the burden of my kisses,
the sin I want you to want,
scares me more than the fires of Hell.
Because nothing could be worse
than burning slow and alone
for you.

My Father Is a Ghost Town | *Rachel Roupp*

All of the men riding into town on their stallions,
strutting into the taverns with pistols hidden under their dusters,
and the women fawning over them,
pouring them drinks and sitting on their laps,
were lost long ago,

leaving only the structures standing,
the skeleton of a body
wishing for time that had already been squandered.

They said it was dead,
but I decided to move into this town.
I brought hammers and nails,
determined to make repairs.
To make a home.

There is the ghost of a boy there.
I don't think he knows he is dead,
or maybe he just doesn't want to admit it.

He followed me around,
pulling out the nails I put in.
Sometimes I saw him dart past me,
catching only the flash of his eyes.
Green. Like mine.
Maybe he runs away from me because he doesn't want it to be true.

Sometimes I hear him
talking to people that aren't there.
He won't speak to me,
but in the dark he prattles on
discussing his favorite drinks
and his favorite women.
As if he is old enough to know anything about either.

My mother's name is on a tavern there.
I broke the lock off the door and went in
where I found trunks filled with trinkets.
One had white lace dresses.
The others were brimming with jars of cherries and peaches,
shirts she mended for him,
blocks he carved for me as a child,
her recipe for spaghetti sauce recorded in her tight scrawl,
and a collection of video tapes with me learning how to walk.

The cemetery there is full.
A husband and wife are buried just behind the gates.
Their names are familiar,
but I can't remember their faces.

Beyond them lie countless women,
none living more than a few years,
some only for one night.
There are no flowers on these graves.
Most don't even have names.

There is an open plot in the back.
It is marked with my name.
When I approach it widens, beckoning me to come closer.
I peer inside.
The bottom is coated in live pansies.

I left the town just in time.
It collapsed behind me.
All of my effort,
and all of its history,
sunk under the rubble.

This town was never what anyone wanted it to be.

Grief | *Woody Woodger*

Let's take a house, from,
say, a relative
I'm none too fond
of. Dissect

its odor—conclude
the smell's left over
from the time it was stored

in a spacesaver bag

under a futon—
with the blankets,
comforter,
yarn, property deed,
undetoned

roach bomb. Kent, are you aware
your vacuum also tried
out for collegiate accapella?

It's still a baritone.
It kept to itself four chairs over.

This poem should be older,
taste like licorice
and wrinkles, color-coded

and label-makered
in the cabinets. That'd give
it credibility—sureness

as crystalline as quartz,
as hardtack,
notepads, bibles.

My poetry's best in excerpts.
Magnetic crumbs all nicked

off that new metal
we'll have to make green
roofs from once we out-use

all the country's copper.

My heart is the rock
that as a poet I should avoid
mentioning—angular

as silica and with that scaly glint
natural only to road signs.

A Confession

63 Timborwack St., the Living Room | *Woody Woodger*

when your cousin came home the first thing we did was drink

and, like always, i felt a sputtering angel
 wrench two meat hooks between my skin and nerves,

hoist me by my oily soul up to the blind spot
 right between the ceiling
 and the crowns of our heads.

On shedding day | *Woody Woodger*

your dead skin
cells tumble
like a kid's blocks.

Don't fret please,

they'll land
and reorganize.
There's enough

of them you won't
lose a region—

a shoulder, elbow,
toe, that gas cap

cover of your liver.

No, you'll stay stagnant,
but they'll silently clink
away—microscopic wine

bottles—toward your
limbs as your finger
tips are made

into salt shakers,
pouring yesterday's
pillow smell

into shoestring
lines for the bloodhounds

to follow after
you escape from jail
or the bathroom.

The bloodhounds
are slated
to count all the flecks
on the way to you.
With what they collect
they'll make sure

you've lost a daily
tablespoon.
With a vintage Chemcraft
in that Cleaners

van that follows you around,
the hounds can test

the teaspoon to see
if you eat right,
sleep, use ergonomic
keyboards.

They'll even lick a bit

of the sample to confirm
you still taste
like a dehydrated
brine pool,
too heavy

for the ocean, too toxic
for crabs.

A Hopeful Glimpse into My Future | *Woody Woodger*

The pregnant woman
at the stove. Does her belly
turn toward me

first or does she? Her hand
holds it at the base
like she's palming a gyroscope.

My briefcase slumps
at the door onto my shoes.
She's still a sliver

at 6 months. She's a stitch
of sea glass under
all this cheap florescence.

And I'm right. She does
expect that gallon
of whatever it is I forgot

and seeing her, I never
can remember why
I didn't remodel. Put a door

on the kitchen. Sell the good
candle holders and call
grandma because she

never gave me trouble about
whatever I was planning.
But her at the stove, she's a spine

with an air bubble.
She's a seahorse.
I heard

from a coworker, it's seahorse
dads that carry
the kids. At least they don't have

to feel the guilt
of watching another get
slowly shucked

like an oyster on the Vineyard.
An oyster in those rubber
gloves. It's cute. She shouldn't

be handling the bleach,
I don't think. I might be allergic
to it, but no woman is.

When did we breed that out
of them? And while I'm preoccupied
with that, she thinks

I've been bred from whatever
letters I can make out
of her brow crinkles, of tin foil

and mosquito anesthetic.
Without warning, she stands
at my earlobe, mouth

cupped. She asks why my eyes
calcify like our faucet
after 9, why it's never ok to skip

Colbert. She wants to know how water,
when it's slow enough,
runs in a single string. If I had

the right pair
could I cut it with scissors.

Headed Back to the Berkshires from Springfield After my Girlfriend Held Me for an Hour | *Woody Woodger*

The fog sashays
just below
the highway bridge.

It collapses paw
over paw,

sudden and shy
as adult braces.

I percolate into the air,
too. It's iron
October. Not frigid.
Hefty

actually. Every breath
like a packing peanut

shoved up my nostrils

for the rest
of the drive.

Car Parts | *Michael Laudenbach*

If there were two parts of you I'd have chosen the blue, cold and rainy
The sky blotted out with dirty bath water, making the world stand still and the
wind stop whispering
Trace all transitions to the source you said and to you a grin and a gun
A gun like your father's and a grin like a lost tourist's
Ambition and a toothbrush from a gas-station-store but nothing to mask the smell
Or the way my eyes water in the cold and grow hives and itch and bleed
If there were two airplane parts cutting across your sky I'd have tied down the magpies that keep
you up at night
But instead you're made from car parts from headlight projections and a movie-reel future
You're made from grainy scenes and the same hives that haunt my eyes and the same ghost-punches
that keep you up at night
Did you see the figures fishing with lights and the ones finding god in a red jeep on empty-stomachs
and fiery tires until the wind's knuckle crack tidal wave loosens their teeth enough to let the copper
taste flow through their mouths?
The biting wind. The piney frame.
If there were two muddy meanings and hymns too high-pitched to count then it's all about where
you place your faith and mine's in the dirt.
Whenever I walk into a hardware store I think about movies and weapons and lonely people looking
for a car-crash-handshake so they can feel made from raw flesh and not flashes of light
Whenever I walk into a church I think of my grandparents
Fire-leaves explode us together us letting Never leave play for fire
Promising forever with your eyes no it's true you never said it letting Never come inside
Your body matching mind you belong matching mine your blue
particles move for you and the oxygen molecules like a frame
or an actor hitting his mark,
you follow a track to square off against it, the fire that is
My body matching swords my unbelonging unmatching yours my opal savior
If there were two sides to every story there wouldn't be one

Signed,
Hal

Never born on a docked lake boat in Michigan during a 29th birthday party and a light rain white
noses suited pigs and a couple bleeding champagne
Never had a father who laughed but couldn't endure and left during an even lighter rain not before
painting his hand on the door and reciting Jeremiads to the foyer
Never had a mother who forged swords out of sadness and cedar and stayed upstairs watching
footage of the Transfiguration or President Kennedy all day: wood-scratch eyes and
splintered stardom

Never's mother looked like a wolf and would use bleach on the mirrors but always set a third place
at the table either for Elijah or Aristotle Onassis always scratching the hallway walls and
eating with tent pegs
Never once heard her speak to another body just disembodied wisps spewing sermons on the
Catechism or Bob Hope tore out her eyes trying to change her camera angle
Never was doomed and knew it and had read all about the pear trees and the honeysuckle the words
like fragments from a backyard dream
Never thought that reading Dostoyevsky after sex would burn crosses onto the ceiling instead it
brought guilt and muscle spasms
Never thought of the south like a church mouth wet red empty and inviting she ate pages and TV
dreams searching for an answer
Never thought of words as powerful or true and that literature could make you high like a postcoital
videogame laughline drunkenness
Never was once in a car accident heard the sound of an oboe drone and smelled lavender ever since
then déjà vu and fault lines
Never woke up in a hospital bed and on a mountain in Peru and in her father's arms ever since then
the picture grainy with jagged lines
Never had to undergo logo-physical therapy and had to give each action a word: each eye twitch
each arm lift each neurological glitch and each cringe ever since then pictures on a wheel
Never saw the gateway saw the dwarf and saw the flat circle and ever since then time clock time
chimes constant like an oboe drone encircles the fire
Never heard her first words and her first moans together with a voice of hers that was hoarse old
and distant wrinkled waves that sounded gray and smelled like lavender
Never felt a black velvet blanket and saw all that had not yet been seen being seen now sure but not
material not here but happening oh happening
Never saw her life fragmented and reflected in Christmas tree ornaments and with each color a
different Never a different moment and Never saw the horizontal movie-reel like syncopated
splotches all the frames folded and layered, separate but simultaneous
Never saw the past present and future together like a white flash or a wedding tape thought of her
life like a book she'd read before
Never saw the completed puzzle as just fault lines and a landscape with no missing pieces all at once
aware of three layers and her mother's silver rings

amor fati

S & H like Rimbaud & Verlaine and like Samson & Delilah and like Sid & Nancy and like star
bombing splotches of sky they bombarded each other's pillow-slobber-stuttering
S & H liked to scrape bark from the trees and howl incandescently at the growing boredom between
themselves the tv and whatever starving prick was willing to stab them to death as a favor to
the neighbors
S & H had pasts and brass horns that they both smashed and sang elegies to eternity in the morning
hours when the walls are breathing for much longer than you intended
S & H fucked each other's effigies until threaded sequin organs fell from the ceiling every hour on
the hour

S & H thought each other's eyes were the moon and laughed at the thought of having to explain thermodynamics to a cat

S & H watched television and had sex arguing about which one bled more into the room until they rigged up an old camcorder and completed the endless loop all holy bodies and sweat and come and wallpaper patterns pixelated onto skin

S & H talked about bad music and had trouble remembering their dreams and life began to feel like a low-budget TV movie

The Bookstore or the New World Order

There is a three to every two

The Autobahn is where they both came to crash out of themselves

One looking for Heidegger one looking for Helmholtz but both find hope in Custer and eroding rock

The bookstore is filled with red and black aisles a fascist sense of order and bent spines and Never suspended in the letterline like a car parked on I-90

Never locked in like tiles and Sonitus diluted by noises not yet made

Rapid City rhapsodies both hoping for the other to help them cohere

Both knowing coherence and consistency are sisters of the undead who left home too young and drove many miles to die in a cave

Both looking for completion in the other but only expecting the raw dissolve of swords

Both caught each other's periphery long enough to step out of the cage and say you you/you are you/I know you/please/know me fuck me consume me and let me in

Sonitus liked guns for their residual ear ringing bombblast that scattered the static for a moment and when Never came into view she did the same

She made the static cohere to a note made a castle from wet sand and made the sunbaked plunging and the desperate gasps seem like a controlled chaos of engine sparks and gasoline combustion

They each followed their line to this bookstore and found some body in search of another body another four-dimensional line in another intersection

A meeting of points

Hitting your mark

Aristotle doesn't believe in luck

Never speaks first: Huxley liked Helmholtz and you shouldn't spend so much time finding yourself in pictures

Sonitus saw it coming but stayed tied to the tracks feeling baptized and warmed by the light coming from her eyes

Never says she hears car parts scraping the pavement and leaving no room for burnt hot cakes or morning after pills

What's your name? she says

Sonitus he says, what color are you

She says that's a silly question and that it could offend a lot of people

Sonitus wants to know why her voice sounds like the static

What static? she asks

I hear things before they happen
Like a backwards telephone?
Like a detuned radio or the screaming from a shipwreck
Voices?
Nothing but
Bummer
Sonitus feels her falling into her lines, feels the static feeding her speech, feels her adapting to the
electrical connections and the spark plugs not misfiring
She plays her part like she's read the script
Never knows his lightswitch and the ways he counts the stairs
Sonitus can hear her voice through the screaming fuzz of what still has to happen
Never can see him checking bulbs and tire pressure watching for passersby to steal away his lawn
sculpture made from old satellite dishes
She said: let's go pretend we're not just passing by
He followed
They drove into the plains at the time when everything looks ablaze and set up an easel down the
sightline of a .38 special and a digital camera
Unloaded a barrage of sweat and lead and light into the unpainted canvas because putting paint to
paper from what's in your head isn't so easy when you hear all the colors at once

Motel 6 Body Museums or The Last Desert Churches

The TV is bleeding and her body slouches
toward drones of revolution and prizes and
heartache. She stumbles through three a.m. on
fumes a maroon carpet and a crumpled map
determined to reach the door with that kind of
movie parting-noise that speaks loudly and
wakes you like a gunshot or things coming
together. 7 nights in a motel 6 feel like several
blips of electric orgasm or the promise of
resurrection—but only *then* because before it's
then it doesn't hit like a truck and you know it
will all be *was* but when it *is* you don't think
about it because when it's finally *was* you'll see
just how the puzzle pieces fit together—there's
a 3 for every 2. Never walked out on anyone
and everyone and Sonitus fit both sleeping
there under a stock velvet painting made in a
Mexican warehouse because for Never it never
was any past or present tense then or now but
more like a script or the way phone-booths
look like Hollywood fixtures. It's about hitting
your mark and Never had to meet them all or

her tree would burn down and the ornaments shatter and so Never had no choice. Like the way Sonitus said the TV keeps talking and shining and demanding a watcher but keeps talking and shining and demanding even when there's no one watching. TV projects the world or we go blank lose forms understand things as shadows on a cavewall. TV bleeds the world and each thing is made of pixelated light and Never had to leave because that's how it happens and that's how it happened and you can change the channel but not the programming because signals stretch out no matter who's listening and they'll be broadcasting through the apocalypse. He heard her door frame valediction 7 hours ago while he was sifting through the static trying to take a shred of tomorrow with him to bed. Ever since that squeaking he could never find her voice in the soup again so he fell back asleep and tried to tune into the dreams he had when his bed felt more full. The room starts off as a room but soon just pieces and readymades ready to be made into magma.

Dowsing | *Indigo Baloch*

Under the cicada-buzz fluorescents,
I am dowsing.
I am barren land wrought
With drought by rusted sickles
And sand tsunamis,
Laid bare in the plains
By beetles and coyotes.

If I were mightier than the sword,
I would strike down
The fear in my fingers—
Tell them gently:
*Your story will come to you
In many shapes and voices.
Do not be afraid of growth.*

rabbit | *Indigo Baloch*

he went out in the basket
tied toes like finger prayers
we held him under our breath
until time came to release
him into the gritty soil
the tumbleweed scratching
dried mud, red dirt of the earth

his skin was that shade
of dull desert brown—
dustbowl bronze
of sunburnt freckles
kissing his cheeks
like mama—his first love

we buried him like a rabbit
shallow—couldn't till the ground
couldn't even plant a seed
of sorrow in the cursed
Great Plains

Open: *housecat* | Indigo Baloch

at times she is so possessed by bestial chaos
that it swells inside of her with instinctual *must*
what a reckless creature
so consumed by its appetite
that it becomes paralyzed with *want*
each muscular twitch
a wrought chasm in the stillness
each anxious second
engorged with eager *desire*

a movement from the spotted prey
sets her off—a bullet down the barrel
of a wild, tangled *gun*
she is a weapon of innumerable
suffers and *damages*
and when she raises herself
to strike for blood
she is overcome
with *terror*
she has never
made a kill

the furious prey is manic
in its retreat and retaliation
she holds herself still as *punishment*
tormenting her skin and fur
with her own claws and teeth
until she is a mangled, animated *wound*
a shredded shell held aloft
by unseen, calloused *hands*

her work is good and *clean*
when she receives the chicken
on its spit—plucked and prepared
for savored sin—the purest *gluttony*
but now the feathers are dry in her mouth
and she wishes He would come
and coax them from her throat
before the ailment overtakes her
and forces her into a *purge*

she begs for rest absolute
a day or more of sweet *silence*
no urge to pounce pounding in her skull
but knows herself as a staple
in the social strata
should she vanish herself in the *shadows*?
his hands would find her
and drag her into the light
for kisses and grasping *fingers*

she leaves her back open when she hunts
an unfortunate *mistake*
when she is attacked from behind

this poem is not autobiographical | *Maggie McCormick*

She's drifting off to sleep when
she hears the drip, drip, drip
of the tap she didn't quite close
sending spurts of water down the drain,
and she's reminded of the tap, tap, tap
of her great aunt's green-painted nails
on the kitchen sink in the house in Ohio,
making a melody that trapped
her six-year-old imagination.
That's probably why she begged her mother to let her dance tap.
Except she wasn't very good at tap,
so she settled for carrying on the beat
by simply tapping her feet
and her fingers on any surface she came in contact with.
And sometimes rain spatters on her window in just the right time,
and sometimes a song on the radio has just the right rhyme,
and sometimes she thinks she invented the whole thing.
She thinks maybe her great aunt's fingernails were red instead of green.
She thinks maybe the memory isn't true at all.
She thinks it might be just her mind sparking and singing
as she falls asleep, finally,
and she thinks,
the water bill is going to be astronomical.

Sleep. Walking. | *Maggie McCormick*

waking and walking
stepping asleep
slipping
falling
daily dreams
ground yourself in the
ground under your
feet as you walk the thirty-five
feet that it takes to get to
sleep no don't sleep you don't have time to
sleep stay awake don't
forget that you have to
forget the things you said you wouldn't
forget now what was I saying I
forget
anyway I'm walking sort of
tired and it's always the same old
tired excuses about why I didn't
go to bed but soon I get to
go outside in the bitter cold and
think about when I'll get to be inside and I
think I need some more
sleep
before I walk
awake

Almost North Star | *Savanah Bubite*

Dare me to return to this ghost town;
you can exorcise demons anywhere,
canting your previous-Catholic boy hymns.
Invade the Southwest like the Yankees before,
a missionary mending my fallen Republic.

Turn the Stockyards pure white,
scrub away the bad memories,
the ones dirtier than bovine blood in the streets.
Clunk down the cobblestone with me, engaging with strangers,
until we relearn the standard “hello, ma’am” and “sir.”

Creep with me to Whataburger.
Bless the hamburgers on your altar
and watch the devils evaporate;
Saturated Transgression fat free,
the new last supper
is at a table sticky with Dr. Pepper
made from your blood.

Race me to the park at dusk,
part the red seas of Republican families
who are on their way home to wholesome values of
mediocre expectations for the kids and
suppressed sexual kinks for the parents.
Dodge a stroller while proclaiming with a stone tablet
that base is the swing set.

We are safe now, breathless, bodies tangled in the chains,
the swings twirling straight,
our lungs sucking down cool Texan breeze.

Will us forward, our legs pumping,
let the momentum swing us higher.
Our feet reach for the stars that are hidden
by Dallas light pollution, the forbidden heavens tantalizing.

I kick wildly, tearing through the delicate atmosphere.
My fingers release from the chains,
my whole self lifts,
I shoot across the sky,
scattering sun-scorched rubber chips,
landing as the fallen Almost-North star,
a meteorite in Bear Creek Park.

Your face is sunburnt by my star shine
as you helped me repair my Republic.
We pack it in a U-Haul destined North.

So Two Atheists are Sealing a Barn in Bethlehem | *Savanah Buhite*

The time we sealed your mother's barn, we wore play clothes like kids
and the sun was sizzling the middle-of-nowhere paradise.
You kept smiling at me across the room, supporting me as I struggled
with the slippery tin of seal, the one with the dent in the side.
I kept blowing my nose in a stained-to-hell handkerchief;
you coulda swore I had the lost Shroud of Turin shoved in my waistband.
Every human and dog kept checking in on us sweating in the barn;
we negotiated with the walls that sucked up the sealant so quickly,
as quickly as we consumed the proffered popsicles, pop, and pizza.
When we started on the ceiling, I was wearing thin.
The rollers sent a storm of sealant down my arms, in my hair, all over me, leaving me glossy and
greasy and angry;
I wasn't taken to the baptism well.
But you called me your whop, and even though I was brewing mad,
I popped a smile at you and was undone for you.
We chattered on and on about our plans once we defeated the barn walls.
The county fair was like providence, offering us promises of Amish donuts, funnel cakes, and
lemonade.
You were gonna take me to see the big horses and cows and bunnies even though the cages made
you sad.
We were getting down to the wire then, both sealant and daylight running thin.
The sealant kept finding its way to the floor and we were down the few drips of the tin.
The wood was so thirsty.
For once, we was praying.
In a barn in the middle of nowhere, we prayed to every deity there was that we'd finish alright.
Lady Madonna, Jesus, Mother Mary, Satan, the whole cast was on our lips
until we managed to eek out the last stroke.
When we hugged, the greasy sealant mixed together with our sweat and pride.
That night, pork chops never tasted so good and well water never felt so cleansing.
That time we sealed your mother's barn,
that night we finished,
you set up in the chair beside the guest bed I was to sleep in, alone,
with you on the couch a lifetime away.
But you gave me enough conversation to fill the space beside me in bed.
We accidently saved room for Jesus.

In the Land of the Living | *Therese Holzäpfel*

There is no
dingy black Underworld
in which I sit enthroned. I don't
loungue around making deals
with men who lean on musical staffs
to beg for their dead wives back.
I know nothing
of nine circles. I
work in the land of the living;
the dead have to start somewhere.
Some people I see more than others.
They put themselves in my way,
I think. Really, if you
insist on caring about
sick,

old,

hungry,

homeless

ones with filthy elixirs
of the street in their blood,
you should expect to see
me more than once. I'm sorry;
sometimes I really hate the living.
Not because I delight in their undoing.
I am not amused by fates
inflicted upon the departed
who pay dearly for sins
against departed gods.
I hate the living because they lie.
The living clasp skeletal hands
of wraiths wasting away, say,

It will be all right.

When cold bones
rattle like wind chimes,
mouths echo screeches
from cavern bellies,
and guns scrawl signatures on walls
already autographed by mortar,
the living say,

Life is precious.

I loathe the lies
that pave the way
to hells not their own.
But I will tell you
something I'd never admit

to any one of the living: if I
were one of them,
I would drown
in a sea of lies
before I drank one drop
of poison truth.

Dance of the birds | *Julia Edinger*

I saw two yellow finches,
dancing through the air.
My heart filled at the sight,
until I watched them disappear.

The next day, I saw blue jays,
two dancing as one.
I felt my soul heal
as I watched them fall in love.

Then I saw one robin,
his chest puffed atop my home.
I wanted to watch him dance, too,
but he waited on his own.

The finches and the blue jays,
they were something from a poem.
But I could not write it yet,
for the robin was still alone.

Several days later,
I opened up the gate
to see the robin dancing,
for he had found his mate.

I gave them both my blessing,
and asked why he was late.
The robin said, “when you love to dance,
the right partner's worth the wait.”

| fiction |

Jeremy's bright blue eyes glistened in the low lighting of the Dallas Metropolitan Art Museum. Beneath his wide, watery eyes, folds of skin were bruised and puffy from nights of restlessness. It had been almost a week since Elyse left him. She and her wild mane of brown curls left after one too many boring nights in. Almost a year of dating with progressively less interesting nights spent either eating Whataburger on the couch or in bed led the self-proclaimed party animal to finally kick the relationship's bucket. In a symphonic display of pent-up frustration, Elyse screamed as she threw all her shitty Forever 21 garments in the bag she got for free after buying seventy-five dollars' worth of panties at Victoria's Secret. Jeremy remembered how the cheap zipper snagged on the cheetah print thong with its bleached crotch, the stretched-out elastic band only hindering her escape. He stood silently against the wall, frightened of the tiny woman and her loud tirade. His tall body felt out of place as she paced about, grabbing whatever she could find and claim as hers. He looked like an ambitious beanstalk in a shady garden, blooming with bright white petals. Elyse always hated flowers. They did not have much, but Jeremy was afraid of what she would do if he tried to stop her. Her departing words echoed in his brain and in the silent hall of American art: "I never fucking loved you anyway." Or was it: "I fucking never loved you anyway!" At any rate, it was a variation of the sentiment. It didn't quite hurt. It more annoyed him, like her entire existence.

He did not miss the way her hair clogged his shower drain, nor did he miss when his foot would be crushed by her falling Pantene conditioner bottle, industrial-sized, because she was "all about long-term commitments." When she left, the three-quarters-full bottle thudded in the trash can along with the collection of glass ashtrays she hadn't thrown at him upon her grand exit. Elyse was a wild cat. Jeremy shifted his weight on his heels in front of the boring nineteenth century painting of some old lady named Mrs. Paul Beck, Jr., the cuts in his feet from the random ashtray glass dully aching. Each day passed and he found fewer and fewer shards in his cheap kitchen. Honestly, he couldn't sleep at night because of the lack of sex. Was he using her? Jeremy considered the half sneer of Mrs. Paul Beck, Jr. and shrugged. Yeah, maybe, but she used him, too. The sex was not great at all, but it was something, at least.

Jeremy frowned, his sunburnt skin glowing hot under the low lights. His security uniform was wrinkled; he hadn't bothered ironing lately. His eyes sunk in his face like two pool rafts, standing out on his sunburnt face. He exhaled sharply, echoing in the hall. He used to love this place. Each painting held a story, an image made by some passionate human. Here he was, thinking about his ex-girlfriend as if she were merely a dumping ground. Surely, she was. She was a real pissant, always smoking pot even after he told her to quit it. She hated how he would describe the paintings he watched at night, post-cunnilingus. She hated how his body hair itched her sweaty skin as he explained how Thomas Sully captured the personage of his clients, how important portraits once were. She was the type of person to never get one-hour prints developed at Walgreens. She held all her memories on the smart phone she couldn't afford, the one with messages from strange men she met on anonymous websites. Once she dropped the phone enough, it would break and shatter the memories, making room to restart. Dwelling on the past was a cardinal sin to Elyse.

Jeremy stepped closer to Mrs. Paul Beck, Jr.'s portrait. If Elyse were here, she would take the keys to her used 1999 Toyota Corolla and stab the twisted nose of Mrs. Beck, deviating her septum. Instead, Jeremy lifted a fingertip to the canvas and smeared it across her face. The human finger contains a range of damaging properties and oils that pose a threat to priceless works of art. Jeremy would give that speech every day to the sticky-faced kids of Dallas who wandered into the air-conditioned sanctuary. They would quickly flee the tall man with the Cost Cutters haircut after getting the lecture. Jeremy had worked at the museum for over five years now, one of the oldest young people on staff. He was alone on the floor at night and never dreamed of touching the art. To be sure, he was no art fiend; the most art he understood was *Calvin and Hobbes*. But Jeremy Singer was the type of guy to pay for produce at unmanned roadside stands. He considered the slight smile of Mrs. Beck, the sweep of her pouting Philadelphia lips, how his fingertip rubbed against her precisely painted blush. He touched her face again, really rubbing the fingertip against the canvas now. The rough and deep pigment at first did nothing on his fingertip or on the art, but soon the heat from Jeremy melted Mrs. Paul Beck, Jr. as he dragged his digit across her face, over her shawl, outlining her form.

Jeremy stepped back from the painting, noticing how the other portraits looked away from him, minding their own business. Mrs. Beck's once clear look was melted slightly, smeared like a sad party clown. On the swirls of his fingerprint, the deep color of ancient paint crested the ridges of his callouses. He rubbed his forefinger to his thumb, watching the paint flicker down like snow to the pristine white marble floor. His safety shoes squawked as he turned on his heel, walking away from the scene of the accident.

Blackberry Moonshine | *Jaclyn Reed*

She turned right onto the bush-lined side road, leaning back as her Jeep trucked up the small incline. The broken muffler rattled the undercarriage; it radiated up through her hands, numbing the injured nerves crushed by the released carpal tendon in her right palm. She shook her shoulder a little, trying to ignore the electrifying pain like a shock running up the length of her arm, seeming to stop and rest, to pulse a bit more intensely in her elbow before working up to her shoulder and rounding down her spine.

Ted's parking lot was full. The warehouse doors opened up as she circled the front lot to release several older gentlemen as it sucked in a group of college students wearing Penn State and Notre Dame t-shirts and camo hats. A silver Taurus's lights turned from red to white. She paused a few spots up, aggressively turning her signal on, warning any oncoming cars that she claimed the spot. The Taurus barely pulled away before she whipped the Grand Cherokee between two four-doors. She stepped out as she ripped the bent key from the ignition and took each step on the balls of her feet towards the grey, paneled building.

As she entered, a short, blonde hostess greeted her from behind a cherry wood stand, barely taller than the papers in front of her. "How many?"

"I'll just sit at the bar," she said, waving her off as she rounded the right corner toward the horseshoe bar. She grabbed a rotating black stool by the back patio. "Captain and Coke with lemon," she said before the barback could introduce himself. He was the owner, she knew that, but didn't have the time nor interest to mention it. She watched the door.

He came in quietly, walking like he always did: his shoulders hunched forward, his chin down. His hair was shorter than the last time she saw him. The Blink-182 shirt hugged him a little, and she wondered if he'd shrunk it while she was away or if he'd just gained weight. She was pleased, in a way, to see his arms and legs were still slender and cut to the bone.

He took the seat beside her without so much as a glance, and she sipped her drink, hoping he would say the first word. She wasn't sure she could manage it.

"Hey," he said after ordering a local draft beer.

"You don't drink beer," she said. The words surprised her as much as they did him. Her voice had changed, become more confident, she thought—she hoped—and yet, the words were terrified, crawling from her lips like wolf pups stumbling out into the wide world from the comfort of a dark cave.

"Yeah," he said, "I like it now."

"Oh, that's good. Good to change." She looked down at her drink and found it empty. The bartender, a taller, more muscular man, set another one in front of her, garnished with a lemon wedge and a suggestive smirk.

He noticed. He angled himself toward her and set his hand by hers. "So, how have you been?"

"Good." Good wasn't the word. Good barely covered it. Tired. Confused. Dazed. Unsure. Terrified. Relieved. All of those words would have been better, and yet, not even they encompassed the person she was now, the way she felt now, or the soul she now possessed.

“How long have you been home?” He was uncomfortable, and that, more than anything, was obvious to her. He spun the frosted bottle slowly between his palms. Calloused as they were, they sounded like sandpaper on the glass.

“A week now.” She picked up the fresh glass and sipped it again. And again. And again. “I was on kind of a . . . probationary period for a couple days.”

“What does that mean?”

“Supervision, mostly. Just to make sure I didn’t do anything.”

He glanced at her wrists, but her sweatshirt covered the scars. His grey eyes seemed like a stormy sky to her. She’d looked out the window of her dorm for months, watching teardrops of rain hit the window and feeling them hit her heart, and every rainstorm made her think of him, of his eyes, of his smile, of this moment.

She pulled her sleeves down more and cupped them together around the glass. The first drink crept into her mind, and the storm clouds gathered in her vision. She twitched a little and smiled to shake it off.

They said the flashbacks wouldn’t last long.

“Are you okay?”

She laughed a little, and he frowned. “That’s a loaded question . . . but yeah, I’m fine.”

“Not fine. I know what fine means.” A knife cut into each word; she felt it pricking her skin like a thorn from a rose. The image conjured blood.

She shuddered.

“I’m getting there,” she said a bit defensively. “I just got out. I’m adjusting—”

“You don’t have to explain yourself.” He turned away and took a long drink, but it seemed to her that barely a sip actually went into his mouth.

A long silence passed between them as they each finished their drinks. She looked up at the flat screens hung above the back bar and watched a baseball game. For a while, she tried to decipher the teams, but the initials were beyond her, and in the end, she realized she didn’t much care. The bartender returned, blocking her view of the next hitter, and from the corner of her eyes, she saw him perk up.

“On the house,” he said as he set a purple-pink drink with a lime wedge in front of her.

She looked up at him, then back at the drink. “What is it?”

“Blackberry moonshine spritzer. It’s gotten some great reviews, but I added something new. Let me know what you think.” He winked as he turned his attention to the group of men across the bar.

She examined the drink as she pushed away her empty glass.

“He probably added a roofie . . .”

She looked over to him staring angrily at the empty bottle, his knuckles white around it. After a moment, he said through chapped, cracking lips, “Just get this over with, will you?”

“I don’t know—”

“Lindsey,” he sighed, “just, please, do it.”

She bit and sucked the right corner of her bottom lip and looked down to follow the trails of water droplets running off her glass. “It’s not you . . .”

“Yeah . . .” He got up slowly without looking at her, dropped Alexander Hamilton on the metal bar, and walked out the back door. She watched him all the way to his black Escalade, backing out of the tight spot and driving away. She watched for a while longer, making sure, for herself, that he was really gone before turning back and taking a sip of the drink.

She expected the harsh punch of moonshine, but a sweet berry and citrus soda met her taste buds. She smiled a little and slowly sucked it down until the fizz tickled the back of her throat. As she paid for the bill, the bartender produced her receipt with his number at the bottom. The top of her scar peaked out of her navy blue sleeve as she reached for it.

He paused when he saw it, when he saw the white hospital bracelet over it. And when he looked up at her, frozen in fear and paranoia, all he said was, “Are you all right?”

For the first time since being with the doctors and the psychologists and the psychiatrists and the other crazy people, she felt normal. She felt compassion from another human being, and she felt he meant it.

“Yes,” she said, confidently, glancing only for a moment at the back door before looking at him. “Yes, I am.”

She left a generous tip and took his number garnished once more with what she thought to be a sexy smirk. As she rounded the corner toward the front door, she ripped the white bracelet from her wrist and dropped it in the trashcan just outside with the cigarette butts and gum wrappers.

| non-fiction |

There's a bottle opener on my ring of keys that I got in Atlantic City when I turned twenty-one. Because of a gluten intolerance, I've never been a beer drinker. When I was a freshman in college, my gluten-intolerant roommate (crazy how fate worked that one out) introduced me to Angry Orchard—a gluten-free cider with the same alcohol percentage as most beers. The three years leading up to my twenty-first birthday consisted of showing up to college parties with a six-pack of Angry Orchard in hand, probably already four shots deep in a Dragonberry Bacardi bottle. It was always a conversation-starter with the boys hosting the party when I needed a bottle opener. It was a sure way to start talking to someone new—living proof of the age-old saying that alcohol is the best ice-breaker. Even if they didn't have a bottle opener for me, they took it upon themselves to open the bottle at any cost by means of trying to smash or pry it off with their teeth (I can't say there weren't ever any bottle—or body—casualties).

When I turned twenty-one, I packed up my car with four of my closest guy friends from my suburban hometown and headed South down the Garden State Parkway, Atlantic City-bound. Growing up, the Garden State Parkway was the never-ending highway that led me to Grandma and Grandpa's house. I would stare out the car window from the backseat and watch as the leaves on the trees turned from the leafy greens of Northern Jersey to the pine needles of Southern Jersey, and watch the clouds race along above me. Even as I took on a new position in the driver's seat in a car packed with booze and heels instead of crayons and one-piece bathing suits, it was hard not to think of my grandparents. They had long since moved to Arizona and out of Southern Jersey, but it's funny how memory doesn't let you forget things when you find yourself in familiar places. At least, for most of us it doesn't. As I sped down the parkway with my brand new driver's license, I couldn't help but linger on that thought.

Grandma had passed away almost ten months earlier from Corticobasal Degeneration, a gradually progressive neurological disorder that is characterized by atrophy of the brain and nerve cell loss. Simply put, I had slowly watched my grandmother forget how to speak, wave, walk, eat, and drink from a disease that combined symptoms of Dementia, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's. In the early stages, Grandma would need wheelchair assistance in the airport during the holiday seasons when they would return to New Jersey to visit us. Her wrinkly hands would tremor as she softly touched my face. As the disease progressed, the duo stopped being able to make the trip at all. Instead, I would sit in front of my computer screen, video-talking with my tech-savvy grandfather some 2,100 miles away. Grandma would sit next to him in silence, her eyes slowly closing and head drooping as she fell asleep out of her own control. Grandpa would try to hold her up as her body starting sagging forward and I silently prayed that he would soon say goodbye—unable to watch the scene any longer. It made me uncomfortable—afraid almost—to see her in that state. She probably couldn't even remember the face of the girl on the screen.

Grandma and I used to end every phone call singing, "I love you, a bushel and a peck, a bushel and a peck and a hug around the neck." The day she could no longer recite those words to me, I remember mentally promising myself that I would write in a journal every day for the rest of my life. If I ever started forgetting, I could just reread the hundreds of memories and rebuild my brain in a way Grandma couldn't. I remember being terrified of one day looking at something that

once had thousands of memories and nostalgia associated with it, and remembering nothing. Of looking into my granddaughter's eyes and not knowing. Of driving down the Garden State Parkway and not being flooded with an array of sensory memories from my childhood. I would do anything I could to avoid such a fate. I was afraid of her as she approached death because I was afraid of becoming her—afraid of forgetting. She always was someone who enjoyed a nice glass of ice-cold beer, so after her passing we all raised a glass in her honor. I raised an Angry Orchard.

When my friends and I hit Atlantic City that warm June evening, the five of us wasted no time in getting a start on the night. After almost six hours in traffic, we were all ready for a drink. I had remembered the Angry Orchard, but, by force of habit, had forgotten a bottle opener, so I ditched the cider bottles for the bottles of Smirnoff vodka that we had stocked up on before leaving our hometown. I danced my first legal night away under a haze of flashing lights and pulsing music, twirling beneath the hands of the people that knew me best—a smile never fading from my face and a mental note written on my brain to invest in a bottle opener so that my six-pack wouldn't go to waste.

The next morning, I jumped on the white hotel beds, greeted with moans from sleepy, hungover bodies that weren't ready for the day yet. Once we finally made it out to a gift shop, I saw the bottle opener out of the corner of my eye and was immediately drawn to it. It was in the shape of a shark, hung with various other keychains and magnets with "Atlantic City" stamped across them. It wasn't anything special. The center of the opener was the shark's mouth wide open, white teeth taunting, so it would look as though the shark were eating the bottle it was about to open. I loved it. I flung it down on the counter where my friend Jason was buying sunscreen with a quick, "Add this to his total," to the cashier.

As I sat at a beach-side bar later that afternoon and ordered shots for four of my oldest friends (because for as long as I could remember they were too cheap to pay for themselves, even though it was *my* birthday), I realized how weird turning twenty-one was—there was a sense of losing my adolescent curiosity, a sort of moving away the veil between carelessness and responsibility. A sense of being able to open my own bottles, instead of needing someone else to do it for me. It's not uncommon to hear people say it's all downhill once you're legal—once you're "old." But I found the responsibility liberating as I clutched my bottle opener, and I didn't feel any less "uphill" or childishly happy as I sat there, doing adult things.

I thought about how Grandma maintained such a philosophy throughout her able life—riding rollercoasters with her grandchildren well into her sixties, never saying "No" to a game of Trouble, and showing up to bring-a-friend dance classes with me with her best attitude and saggy skin unabashedly swaying to the rhythm. I thought of how a smile would spread across her face every time George Bailey's fate was reversed in *It's a Wonderful Life* as we would sit around drinking hot cocoa (her and my mother's spiked with Bailey's Irish Cream) on Christmas Eve nights. I didn't need to fear forgetting; I needed to fear forgetting to live a life like my grandmother's. With my legs wrapped around the wooden bar stool, I rubbed my shark mouth bottle opener between my thumb and forefinger and promised myself that if I could always feel as youthful and calm as I did in that moment with my best friends, or as happy as I felt following the clouds down the parkway to Grandma and Grandpa's house every time I saw it on my key ring, then I was just thankful to remember.

| literary
criticism |

Brutus's Oratory | Mary Foley

Brutus, with great certainty, is the most complex character within *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*. His complexity is defined by his rigid morals, his heinous deeds, his devotion to the people of Rome, and his gullibility. Though it is unjust to call Brutus a proprietor of evil, his involvement with the entire conspiracy to assassinate Julius Caesar, regardless of his intent, deems him a hypocrite of his own ethics, and perhaps even a coward in the face of Rome. Brutus's intentions, however, should be stated as such: "he [Brutus] faces a major conflict between his loyalty to his friend and his loyalty to his country. Although Brutus' relationship with Caesar is strong, his relationship with the people of Rome is stronger. Brutus loves Julius Caesar as a friend but does not want anyone to become so powerful that they are able to become a dictator over the people of Rome" (Thomas). Does his love affair with Rome justify his reasoning in the devastating murder of Caesar? This can only be determined by how he projects his justification to the public, whom he associates with regarding the matter, and the state of the audience he is addressing. In order for any actor to deem a successful role of Brutus, they must attain complexity, must show the grand scheme of emotion and inner quarreling, and have sympathy for their own role, understanding Brutus's strive toward and fall from nobility. In this essay, I will be analyzing Paterson Joseph playing Marcus Brutus in the 2012 film adaptation of *Julius Caesar*, specifically, in the scene following the assassination in which Brutus must face the crowd and demonstrate his oratory skills.

The setting of this film exploits an ethnicity primarily from the regions of Northern Africa, as opposed to the original text, where characters were specifically a part of Rome. Therefore, the actors and actresses in this interpretation were of dark complexion, a striking but progressive addition. Paterson Joseph, playing Marcus Brutus in this film, is expected to instill the characteristics and traits that are in the original text, but also follow newer aspects due to the change of location and ethnicity of all major and minor characters. There is a quirk in the changing of such details, though, despite how progressive they are in this modern era. In the original text, Brutus is depicted in Marc Antony's words as,

the noblest *Roman* of them all;

All the conspirators, save only he,

Did what they did in envy of great Caesar;

He, only in a general honest thought

And common good to all, made one of them. (emphasis added V.v.68-72)

Of course, Brutus's values and traits, along with his intent, remain strict to what Shakespeare originally wrote, yet, Joseph's Brutus is no longer Roman. Not that this is necessarily important, but the characteristics of a Roman and their traditions may not be as heavily stressed when set upon another culture. For example, "[S]uicide was a means of avoiding disgrace for Romans. It was greater to embrace death than to surrender or be punished. . . . Suicide was perceived as a positive mode of dying because it spared its participants of disgrace, and in some cases was associated with acts of courage and bravery" (Harris, *I. Historical Analysis*).

In other cultures, Brutus's suicide may be reflected upon as an act of cowardice or, in Christian-based culture, as sinful. The slight change of setting renders a whole new meaning to a key

scene within the Shakespearian play, taking away pieces of elements that are crucial to overall understanding. Despite this change the directors of the movie made, Joseph still has ample opportunity to fulfill the role of the Shakespearian Brutus,

that dreamy spirit ever busied in self-examination, that disturbance of a stern conscience at the first indications of a duty that is still doubtful, that calm and resolute firmness as soon as the duty becomes certain, that profound and almost painful sensibility, ever restrained by the rigor of the most austere principles, that gentleness of soul which never disappears for a single moment amid the most cruel offices of virtue. . . . (Guizot 211)

With heartfelt expression, delicate dialogue, and wit, Joseph not only captures Shakespeare's Brutus, but also adapts the character, effectively presenting him to urban and more modern audiences.

Now, let us analyze Joseph in action. My focus lies on Act III scene ii, where Brutus is before the Plebeians, his hands tainted with the blood of his friend. He is dressed valiantly in a dark robe, prepared for Caesar's restless funeral and eulogy. With tremendous power in his voice, he calls the ravenous crowd to order, pleading with them to "hear [him] for [his] cause, and be silent that [they] may hear. Believe [him] for [his] honor, and have respect to [his] honor that [they] may believe" (III.ii.13-15). His eyes are wild and bold, his gestures resemble one of a barterer, and his voice, strong yet weary, beg of the crowd to recognize the treachery behind Caesar's ambition: "As he was fortunate, I rejoice at it. As he was valiant, I honor him. But, as he was ambitious, *I slew him!*" (III.ii.25-28). As he roars the words *I slew him*, drawing his raised arm downward in an unforgiving thrust as if he is stabbing Caesar once again, there is an unsettling silence among the crowd. His eyes continue to burn with passion as he barter with his people, whom he supposedly loves so *very* much. His fiery expression, his upright posture with much sternness really makes it seem that he is advocating justice; for that moment, before Marc Antony speaks, before even Caesar's lifeless body of is presented, everyone believes him and finds no fault.

Joseph's delivery of Brutus's speech is beyond powerful, not only in utilizing Shakespeare's words, but in his body language, his posture, and the emotion that engulfs him in this very moment. Brutus seduces and manipulates the audience through his passion and compassion, justifying the murder of his beloved friend. Not only is the crowd at the play under this enchantment, but the viewer beyond the stage or behind the screen is as well. Anyone could just read the speech off the page in a Norton Anthology, but Joseph caresses us, in his words, in the feelings behind those words; he places the face of an innocent man, as Caesar's blood dries on the crevices of his hands. If only Brutus was not so "unpractical" (Roth), allowing Marc Antony to deliver a speech that undermines his own, he may ultimately have been successful. But despite the fixed plot Shakespeare formed, Joseph's performance of this speech convinces viewers.

The scene itself was atop a stage, with a dark background, an elevated plane on which for Brutus to stand, both above the crowd and above the body of his beloved Caesar when he is carried in. The environment in which he conducts his speech is simple, just as he, himself, is simple within his argument. No music guides our emotions in either despite or belief, only the words leaving the lips of Brutus, and the few minor interruptions of the Plebeians, who usher others to listen and take note. The light is fixed squarely atop the elevated plane where Brutus stands, as if he were a sole beacon of light and justice amongst the people, a Messiah of twisted form. The simplistic

surroundings prevent distraction from the main goal of this scene which is to “hear Brutus speak” (III.ii.8). All these elements—the dark background, minimal lighting, and elevated staging—are all intentional to create “a clean and simple composition [placing] emphasis on [the] subject, drawing the viewer’s eye directly to [the] intended focal point,” the subject being Brutus (Wesson).

In *Shakespeare and Film*, Samuel Crowl dedicates a section to discussing the role of a camera and how it adds emphasis to major scenes in film productions of Shakespearean plays. It is important to note that it is quite limiting when filming studio productions of Shakespeare’s plays, due to lack or amateur use of background, confined space, or lack of resources. In turn, most directors who take on the hardship of filming one of Shakespeare’s masterpieces are forced to improvise. Commonly, there are three to four cameras capturing the same scene at different angles, in order to capture different perspectives, focus on multiple characters, and to create drama. Crowl states, “the rhythm in moving between shots from the three cameras and the way he mixes *long shots*, *medium shots*, and close-ups [aids] his visual telling of the Shakespearean narrative” (Crowl 112), meaning that a director’s use of camera angles is individualistic, original, and unlike any other production of the same or similar composition. The use of camera is the director’s fingerprint, which can change the overall meaning of how we view certain scenes. In relevance to my particular scene, the use of cameras is important, as Crowl mentions, “Crowd scenes are difficult to master in the confined space of a television studio. Robert Wise tries to solve this problem in the BBC version of *Julius Caesar* by packing as many actors in the frame of a medium shot as possible to create a sense of mass” (Crowl 112). And this statement is indeed fact, since we, the viewers, can actually see the scene for ourselves, and how the shots try to emphasize “a sense of mass” (Crowl 112), showing the effort of portraying *realism* to the production, especially within this complicated scene.

Overall, the 2012 BBC production of *Julius Caesar* is successful, especially within the scene and the actor analyzed throughout this essay. Paterson Joseph successfully establishes his role of Marcus Brutus, demonstrating the complexity, indecisiveness, and relative honor Shakespeare originally anticipated for the character, as well as adapting to the changes of location and setting, which are notable for their progressiveness. The scene when Brutus provides his oratory in order to justify the brutal murder of Julius Caesar is also well captured, taking into consideration the limitations of a production studio, as well as the limitations of being on stage during the duration of the scene itself. The simplicity of the background and lack of music and the complexity within Brutus (Joseph) portrayed through his oratory as well as the emotion depicted by both he and the crowd provides the perfect balance. Paterson Joseph artfully projects Marcus Brutus, as Shakespeare had intended. Once again, this production, focusing primarily on the scene of Brutus’s oratory, as well as the actor himself, can be safely swayed as successful.

Works Cited

- Crowl, Samuel. "Camera Work and Editing on Television." *Shakespeare and Film: A Norton Guide*. Norton, 2008, pp. 111-13.
- Guizot, M. *Shakespeare and his Times*. Harper and Brothers, 1855. Print.
- Harris, Edward S. *The Moral Dimensions of Properly Evaluating and Defining Suicide*. Thesis, Chowan College, 2001. Ohio University, 2009.
- Mabillard, Amanda. "Julius Caesar Character Introduction." *Shakespeare Online*. 20 Aug. 2000, www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/juliuscaesar/juliuscaesarcharacters.html. Accessed 13 Mar. 2016.
- Paterson, Joseph, performer. *Julius Caesar*. BBC, 2012.
- Roth, Helen M. "Julius Caesar (Shakespeare)." *Shakespeare Online*. 20 Nov. 2010, www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/juliuscaesar/juliuscaesaradj.html. Accessed 13 Mar. 2016.
- Thomas, Shameika, "Character of Brutus in Julius Caesar: Traits and Analysis." *Study.com*. 2016. study.com/academy/lesson/character-of-brutus-in-julius-caesar-traits-analysis-quiz.html. Accessed 13 Mar. 2016.
- Wesson, Kate. "10 Easy Ways to Create Stunning Minimalist Compositions." *iPhone Photography School*. IPs Media LLC, 27 Dec. 2015, iphonephotographyschool.com/minimalist-tips. Accessed 13 Mar. 2016.

Interpreting Meaning *Ad Infinitum*: Undecidability in Edith Wharton's "Roman Fever" | Alyssa Clark

Edith Wharton's short story "Roman Fever" depicts writing as a means of (mis)communication, wherein meaning is lost and constantly deferred, preventing any one meaning from achieving a status as the most true. The narrative structure of Wharton's story is itself woven, knit together with threads of both vivid memory and seemingly insignificant moments of the present. Protagonists Alida Slade and Grace Ansley both affiliate the setting in which they are presently conversing with their youths. Temporal boundaries are violated as the nostalgic setting forces a gradual disclosure of old memories, attempting to create a vision of truth pertaining both to their past and present times. Their interactions, however, unveil an inability for language to convey full meaning or actual intent of the person who is speaking—speaking, that is, through Wharton's writing—and so prevents that whole picture of truth from ever being realized. Language is imprecise; intent will disintegrate when transmitted through language. Examples showing such unreliability are found several times throughout Wharton's short story, both between Grace and Alida and between the readers and the text, and so shows how the surprise ending is not so much a surprise, but rather is open to two opposing interpretations.

It is first worthy to note that the separation between literal and figurative is destabilized through writing, as is so exemplified by Alida's letter to Grace. The letter itself is emblematic of Alida's disdain and jealousy for Grace, yet operates on the world in what seems to be a literal manner by producing actual consequences. The intent with which the letter was composed lies outside the text and operates independently from the significance it generates for the reader, Grace. Alida's written "language [is that] which speaks, not [her]; to write is, through a prerequisite impersonality, to reach that point where only language acts" on reality, and not her intention (Barthes 1323). Alida unconsciously achieves that essential detachment in the very act of writing out her deception, and so participates in the "destruction of every voice, of every point of origin" creating a "neutral, composite, oblique space where [her own] subject slips away," making room for another presence entirely (1322). In attempting to fool Grace, Alida appropriates the persona of her own fiancé, Delphin Slade. If writing is itself an act within which identity of the author is lost, then the choice of inhabiting Delphin's persona seems just another act of removal, furthering both herself and her intent from the letter. After reciting the letter almost verbatim, Alida says "that was the letter that took [Grace] out that evening after dark" (Wharton). She is already acknowledging the independence of writing and the manner of its influence beyond objectives of its scribe, yet still could not predict that her letter would go awry.

The slip of identity through writing is comparable to Grace Ansley's almost incessant knitting, where upon "reaching a delicate point in her knitting," she narrates the "one, two, three—slip two" action of her needles (Wharton). A slip stitch in knitting refers to the movement of a loop from one needle to the other, and is so like the exchange of memory between first Alida, who reveals her role in scripting the letter, and later Grace who informs her that she responded to the letter; they knit together perspectives to make a more complete picture of both the past and present. Truth is made up from threads of thoughts and memories, woven together after each woman's

confession. Weaving each other's knowledge with an aim to uncover that full truth, however, is inhibited by doing so in language, which is itself a mode of communication without inherent meaning. If Grace's knitting is equivalent to the written account of their interaction, then the way in which she proceeds with the mechanical action will seem related to the language itself. When Grace begins to pick up on the truth of the letter's author, her "knitting and gloves, slid[e] in a panic-stricken heap to the ground" (Wharton). This is suggestive of the breakdown in communication that will occur until the end of the story.

One notable example of uncertain meaning in writing occurs after Alida's confession regarding her role as scribe of the letter. The women are discussing the particular reason for Alida's cruel deception and why she is revealing it now, so many years later. Grace suggests it is because she has gone on hating her. Alida does not immediately deny that possibility but goes on to offer another possibility and a peculiar add-on statement: "Perhaps. Or because I wanted to get the whole thing off my mind." She paused. "I'm glad you destroyed the letter. Of course I never thought you'd die" (Wharton). Alida's inspiration for writing the letter came from an old family story of Grace's, wherein a jealous older sister fools the younger into going out at night to fetch a flower, and afterward dies from the Roman fever, which she must have caught that night. It is actually Alida's final line in this particular interaction that again emphasizes the inability of language to portray a singular intention. To say, "I never thought you'd die," can serve as an assurance that Alida did not have the intention for Grace to go the way of the younger sister, but rather only suffer the humiliation of wandering about at night with unmet expectations. It is, however, the word "thought" that is used, not "intended." Alida did not say she never intended for Grace to die, but rather that she never thought she actually would. That statement also is construable as an apology or justification for the action of writing the letter. To say she never thought Grace would die could mean that she actually did die, with that word, in this case, signifying an extreme desire or yearning for something rather than the loss of life. Alida is expressing remorse for the dying which Grace has endured for twenty-five years in desiring Delphin, and thinking that he actually wrote the letter that she so cherished.

The conclusion of this story continues to show unavoidable inadequacies of language to achieve clarity. That which happened the night Grace went out to meet Delphin occurred only because Grace did what Alida had never anticipated by responding to who she thought had written the letter. Alida states a second time that she wrote the letter "in a blind fury," this time reacting to Grace who thought it "odd [she] never thought of it, if [she] wrote the letter" (Wharton). Her foresight was unavailable and, suppressed by a jealous rage, she really could not have anticipated Grace's response. It is noted earlier in the conversation on the terrace that Grace's speech is characterized by an "undefinable stress," which Alida wonders is "not merely accidental, like the random underlinings of old-fashioned letter writers" (Wharton). Since she was already described as speaking like a letter, it seems quite plausible that she would comfortably interact with those words, which are without a direct speaker. Depicting Grace's speech as writing-like is also indicative of the undecidability that will come to distinguish her very last spoken line in the story—the stress is as undefinable as the intent or actual meaning of the statement.

After learning that Grace did actually meet with Delphin, Alida “flings her hands up to her face,” proclaiming that she “never thought of [Grace] answering. . . .” (Wharton). The use of an ellipsis implies either a purposeful omission of thought, or perhaps signifies the futility of expression through language—words simply cannot represent the full scope of her emotions, and as such is better left blank. The reader, forced into active participation, must devise multiple interpretations regarding that excluded thought, but never assign one as the authoritative reading. Alida’s flustered reaction also “reveals h[er] despair when confronted with a structure of linguistic meaning that [s]he cannot control and that holds the discouraging prospect of an infinity of similar future confusions, all of them potentially catastrophic in their consequences” (DeMan 1371). She almost dare not engage the linguistic medium for fear that her words would once again act autonomously and produce undesirable ramifications. Concluding her statement of shock with the ellipsis depicts the anxiety of communication affecting all those who write in language, that system with a center that cannot hold.

As Alida works through the newfound knowledge of her sly plan’s failure, she attempts to ease the pain of her fiancé going to meet Grace by saying “[she] had him for twenty-five years” while Grace “had nothing but that one letter that he didn’t write” (Wharton). The story concludes with Grace countering that she had Barbara, the brilliant daughter who Alida desires in place of her own too-perfect Jenny. The dichotomy of past and present is disintegrated by the act of writing, or rather the realization of the letter’s influence on actual events. This statement is imparted through writing, and is so subjected to multiple interpretations with no one privileged as the most true or correct. The explicit statement is that “[she] had Barbara,” and not just the memory of the letter for those twenty-five years. Implicit meaning, whether intended by the character in question or by Edith Wharton herself, is unavailable and actually irrelevant when operating under the concept that writing is inherently authorless. Since language is at its core a void of meaning, the reader cannot consider writing as a signifier of some ultimate internal truth—an empirical reality cannot be fully conveyed. In exhausting the possibilities of the statement, one can fairly conclude that Barbara is actually the child produced after Grace’s secret meeting with Delphin.

However, it is likewise reasonable to suggest that Grace was saying that Barbara, her brilliant daughter with “rainbow wings,” is merely a source of consolation and support after having lost Delphin permanently (Wharton). She functions as a replacement piece onto which Grace’s love is projected, despite having been (possibly) fathered by another man. The “two entirely coherent but entirely incompatible readings [are] made to hinge on one line, ‘I had Barbara,’ whose grammatical structure is devoid of ambiguity, but whose rhetorical mode turns the mood as well as the mode of the entire [story] upside down” (DeMan 1372). The active reader cannot settle on an interpretation and is effectively prevented from ever definitively knowing because the story ends before Alida can offer a response and inquire about the nature of the statement. Even if the conversation was given space to continue, each statement would create for the audience a chance at making another “reading, not a decoding, and [that] reading [would], in turn, [have] to be interpreted into another sign, and so on ad infinitum” (DeMan 1370). To continue as such would have been a daunting task for Wharton, so like Alida’s ellipses of omission, the conclusion is better left for the active reader to disentangle, identifying all the possibilities and consequences of Grace’s final utterance.

In regard to writing, “[T]he structure [must] be followed, ‘run’ like the thread of a stocking at every point and at every level, but there is nothing beneath,” that is, there is no authoritative meaning that one can aspire to ultimately discover (Barthes 1325). Alida’s written letter and the revelation of Grace’s response depict how the language through which one seeks expression is unreliable because of its independence, its separation from intent. The example statements, one from Grace and one from Alida, support such an idea that language is an independent entity, able to simultaneously contain two conflicting yet entirely plausible readings. Ambiguity defines the written statements of both women, and so emphasizes the formidable yet necessary role into which an active reader is inserted, constantly disentangling all meanings the words may contain.

Works Cited

- Barthes, Roland. “The Death of an Author.” Simon, pp. 1322-26.
DeMan, Paul. “Semiology and Rhetoric.” Simon, pp. 1365-77.
Simon, Peter, editor. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Norton, 2010.
Wharton, Edith. *Roman Fever*. 1934. Print.

| Editors |

Drama

Emily Halbing is a graduate of Misericordia University in Dallas, PA, with degrees in English and Psychology. During her time there, she was a Sigma Tau Delta member, tutor in the writing center, and editor of their literary journal, *Instress*. She has been a panelist at national conferences, presenting on the works of Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Flannery O'Connor, and Robert Frost, among others. She has a soft spot in her heart for British authors, namely J. R. R. Tolkien, whom she used as a topic for her senior thesis. Emily also has written several one-act plays, two of which were produced by Gaslight Theatre Company in northeastern PA. Her university's English Department presented her with the Creative Literary Achievement award in 2015.

Jonathen Muñoz is a senior majoring in English with a concentration in Creative Writing at Centenary University in Hackettstown, NJ. He is the editor-in-chief of his school's literary magazine, *PRISM*, and is also a writing consultant at his school's writing center, the Writing Collaboratory. His conference presentations include the Sigma Tau Delta Convention, the Undergraduate Conference in Medieval & Early Modern Studies, the International Writing Center Association Conference, and the North-East Writing Center Association Conference, among others. His college admissions essay was nationally published in *Best College Admissions Essays 2014*. Jon has been a member of Sigma Tau Delta since fall 2015.

Fiction

Therese Holzapfel is a senior at Clarion University of Pennsylvania, majoring in English and minoring in Spanish and Honors. She is the student director of the Clarion University Writing Center, as well as the senior co-editor of the university literary magazine *Tobeco* and the President of English Club. As a member of the Rho Iota Chapter, she presented at the 2015, 2016, and 2017 Sigma Tau Delta International Conventions. She is currently the Vice President of Rho Iota and was a recipient of an E. Nelson James Junior Scholarship in 2015.

Miranda Milillo is a recent graduate of Lebanon Valley College with a BA in Religious Studies and English Literature. While in college, she published her work in *Green Blotter Literary Magazine* and *Crossing/Boundaries: Experimental Thinking in US Arts, Culture, and Identity*, an anthology for which she served as editor. Her academic focus has been on pluralism, societal inequality—most specifically in relation to gender and race—and the intersectionality of identities. This focus, combined with her interest in world religions, led her to direct the world premier of Muthal Naidoo's *Flight from the Mahabharath*, a feminist critique of the Hindu epic *The Mahabharata*. She enjoys experimental work that plays with understandings of what literature can be and what can be literature, as well as dystopian fiction.

Literary Criticism

Tara Fritz is a senior at Saint Francis University in Loretto, PA. She is majoring in English and minoring in French, Women's Studies, and Social Responsibility, and is planning on attending an MFA program in Creative Writing after graduating in May 2017. Since attending Saint Francis, she has published several short stories and critical essays of her own and became a member of Sigma Tau Delta in 2014. She has worked as an editor for her university's literary magazine, *Tapestries*, for three years, and as a summer intern with a local literary magazine, *The Loyalhanna Review*, published by the Ligonier Valley Writers group. She also helped a professor edit a series of essays for an upcoming publication. She currently is lucky enough to be studying abroad for the second time in the south of France while editing her thesis (a novel) and doing some travel writing.

Brianna Maguire is a junior English major with dual minors in Marketing and Spanish at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, WV. She is the senior editor of Shepherd's literary and art magazine, *Sans Merci*; a writing and math tutor at Shepherd's Academic Support Center; a classroom assistant for math courses; the Secretary and Treasurer of her Sigma Tau Delta chapter; a marketing agent and student liaison for a social media company called Boost; and does a bunch of other on- and off-campus activities.

Non-Fiction

David Grandouiller is a senior English major at Cedarville University in Cedarville, OH, and plans to begin pursuing an MFA in non-fiction next year. Besides working for *Mind Murals*, David is on the editing staff of *The Cedarville Review* and *Cleaver Magazine*. Recently, he's enjoyed avocados, Vampire Weekend, James Joyce, and long, sunless hours in the library. His work has appeared in *Cleaver Magazine*, *Dark Matter Journal*, *First Class Lit*, *Duende Literary Journal*, and *The Cedarville Review*.

Poetry

Rachel Geffrey is a junior at Chatham University in Pittsburgh, PA, majoring in Creative Writing with minors in Psychology and Women and Gender Studies and a certificate in Women's Leadership. She joined Sigma Tau Delta in early 2016 and currently serves as her chapter's Treasurer. She also is president of the campus creative writing club and a member of the editorial board for Chatham's literary journal, *The Minor Bird*. Rachel interned with Inklings Literary Agency in spring 2016 and hopes to gain more experience in the publishing industry before she has to decide what to do when she grows up. Her poetry and prose have been published in *Cicada*, *The Skinny Poetry Journal*, *The Minor Bird*, and *Quail Bell Magazine*; she presented critical work at the Sigma Tau Delta 2017 International Convention.

Woody Woodger is a senior English Major with a concentration in Writing and minors in Psychology and Communications at Westfield State University in Westfield, MA. He has been involved with Sigma Tau Delta for three years, serving as Secretary his first two years and serving currently as President. Along with his Sigma Tau Delta involvement, Woody concurrently served on *Persona*, Westfield State's Literary and Arts Journal, as Poetry Editor and currently as Editor in Chief. His first chapbook, *postcards from glasshouse drive*, is currently forthcoming from *Finishing Line Press* and his poetry has received publications in *Barely South*, *Soundings East*, and *(b)OINK*, among others. Other work by Woody is forthcoming in *Exposition Review*, *2 Bridges Review*, *Descansos Anthology*, and *Postcards Poems and Prose*.

| Authors |

Indigo Baloch is a senior at Chatham University majoring in Creative Writing and Journalism. Her poetry has been published in *The Minor Bird* and *The Undergraduate Indiana Review Online*. Her poetry also won Second Place in College Poetry at Carnegie Mellon University's 2017 MLK Jr. Day of Writing Awards. She has presented her poetry at the Sigma Tau Delta 2016 International Convention and at a number of shows in the Pittsburgh area.

Savanah Buhite is a senior English major at Robert Morris University where she serves as Co-President of her Sigma Tau Delta chapter. She presented an academic paper at the Sigma Tau Delta 2017 International Convention. She also serves as the Editor-in-Chief of Robert Morris's literary magazine, *Rune*. She has shared her work at public readings and it has been published in *Rune* and *Case Reserve Review*. In her free time, Savanah runs a writing workshop at her community library. Her writing influences include Denise Giardina and Andrea Gibson.

Alyssa Clark is a senior double major in English and Women's/Gender Studies with a minor in Film Studies at the State University of New York at Fredonia. She expects to graduate in May 2017 and plans to pursue graduate study in library science and English. She hopes to become a university research librarian, able to provide information, cultivate literacy, and teach research skills as forms of sustenance for social justice organizations and movements. Alyssa currently serves as Secretary for Fredonia's Sigma Tau Delta chapter and as an executive board member for the Fredonia Feminists where she writes articles for the group in the Center for Multicultural Affairs' monthly newsletter. She currently is working on a capstone project for her Women's/Gender Studies major exploring the intersection between poststructuralist theory and feminist practice.

Julia Edinger is a 3rd year undergraduate student at the University of Toledo studying Adolescent to Young Adult Education in English Language Arts. After she receives her BA, she hopes to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing with a focus in poetry and fiction. When she isn't writing, student teaching, or studying, she is probably playing guitar or playing with her massive pit bull: King. She cannot possibly pick a single favorite work of literature, but she is currently reading a collection of short stories by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Mary Foley is finishing her third year as an English Literature major and Psychology minor at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. She intends to graduate in Fall 2017 and continue her studies as a graduate student in Spring 2018. She has been a member of Sigma Tau Delta since October 2016. She presented a literary essay at the Sigma Tau Delta 2017 International Convention in Louisville, KY. Mary is a tutor at her university Writing Center, which gives her ample opportunity to express her writing expertise with students from various majors and grade levels. Overall, Mary intends to become an English teacher after graduating with both a Master's degree in English Secondary Education and a Doctorate in Leadership in Education.

Therese Holzapfel is a senior at Clarion University of Pennsylvania, majoring in English and minoring in Spanish and Honors. She is the student director of the Clarion University Writing Center, as well as the senior co-editor of the university literary magazine *Tobeco* and the President of

English Club. As a member of the Rho Iota Chapter, she presented at the 2015, 2016, and 2017 Sigma Tau Delta International Conventions. She is currently the Vice President of Rho Iota and was a recipient of an E. Nelson James Junior Scholarship in 2015.

Michael Laudenschick is a senior at The College of New Jersey, pursuing a BA in English and Philosophy, and an MA in English. He has been a member of Sigma Tau Delta since 2015, and has presented a paper at the Sigma Tau Delta 2017 International Convention in Louisville, KY, as well as at Caldwell University's undergraduate literature conference. Michael's poetry has been published in *Skidrow Penthouse* (issue 19), *Lyric* magazine, and his own college's literary journal, *Lion's Eye*.

Maggie McCormick is a junior at Mount St. Mary's University pursuing a degree in English with minors in Computer Science, Creative Writing, and Communication. She has been a member of Sigma Tau Delta since fall 2016. Maggie currently is one of the editors-in-chief of the Mount's humanities journal, *Moorings*, and also works as the senior director of new student orientation. She is forever attempting to actually finish writing a novel, with detours into short stories, poetry, and screenwriting. Maggie currently is working on the early stages of her senior honors project, a look at Literary-Inspired Webseries and their source materials.

Jaclyn Reed is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown with a Bachelor's degree in Writing and English Literature. She is currently working as a full-time copywriter and pursuing her Masters of Fine Arts from Carlow University in Pittsburgh. Her flash fiction pieces "Three Diamonds" and "He Kindly Stopped for Me" were published in the 2016 edition of *Mind Murals*, and she has published several other times in university magazines. Her story "Escaped Ghosts" will appear in *Open Minds Quarterly* this year. Jaclyn's writing focuses on mental illness, as she hopes to educate her audience on symptoms, side effects, treatment, and stigma.

Rachel Roupp is a poet and aspiring witch from Pennsylvania. She is a senior English major at Mansfield University. Rachel has minors in Creative Writing and Women's Studies. She is the proud President of the Mu Xi Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. Her work has appeared in *Rag Queen Periodical*, *Crab Fat Magazine*, *Persephone's Daughters*, *Chantwood Magazine*, and *Komorebi Literary Magazine*. Rachel is planning to attain an M.F.A. in creative writing.

Woody Woodger is a senior English Major with a concentration in Writing and minors in Psychology and Communications at Westfield State University in Westfield, MA. He has been involved with Sigma Tau Delta for three years, serving as Secretary his first two years and serving currently as President. Along with his Sigma Tau Delta involvement, Woody concurrently served on *Persona*, Westfield State's Literary and Arts Journal, as Poetry Editor and currently as Editor in Chief. His first chapbook, *postcards from glasshouse drive*, is currently forthcoming from *Finishing Line Press* and his poetry has received publications in *Barely South*, *Soundings East*, and *(b)OINK*, among others. Other work by Woody is forthcoming in *Exposition Review*, *2 Bridges Review*, *Descansos Anthology*, and *Postcards Poems and Prose*.

Courtney Zanosky has been a member of Sigma Tau Delta since fall 2015 and is a senior in the English Publishing Studies program at Hofstra University. She currently serves on the editorial board for Hofstra's literary magazine, *Windmill*. She has previously interned in the marketing

department for St. Martin's Press at Macmillan and in the editorial department at Bellevue Literary Press in New York City. She is an avid reader of creative non-fiction essay collections and memoirs. She will be attending Texas State University in fall 2017 to pursue her MEd in Student Affairs in Higher Education.