



THE Laurel

SPRING 2012

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Cover art by Sara Regal

To Current and Future Readers alike:

In this short section of the Spring 2012 issue of *The Laurel*, we, as the Editors-in-Chief, would like to acknowledge a movement that occurred this past semester here on campus. As plans for William E. & Ann L. Swan Business Center unfolded, students and faculty alike were made aware of the complex's future location: directly between the Reilly Center and the Grotto. In light of that information, the SBU community was made witness to the rise of a movement spearheaded by Dr. Christopher Stanley and Dr. Barry Gan: a push to 'Save the View,' to preserve the famous—even sacred—view of Merton's Heart, a cleared, heart-shaped meadow amidst the looming heights of the foothills of the Alleghenies. The movement received minimal support from other staff on campus and heavy ridicule from students (especially through the use of social media); it was, with the exception of one feature produced by *The Bona Venture*, almost wholly ignored.

As the creators of *The Laurel*, a magazine that, since 1899, has remained a primary advocate of all of this campus' representations of true aestheticism and beauty, we felt that future generations of readers that behold our beloved publication (Laurelites, if you will) should at least be made aware that this movement was, at one time, in existence and that people did speak out against such actions that they thought directly contradicted the ideals and principles upheld by this esteemed university. While our views on the matter—views that will most likely become apparent in the following pieces—are not of much significance and in no way speak for any of the writers or staff members associated with *The Laurel*, we feel that *The Laurel* has always been an outlet for students to share creativity, emotion, beauty, truth and, of course, personal opinion.

The following short pieces all deal with this topic. In no way can we expect you, the reader, to agree with us whole-heartedly about this tender situation. That would be inappropriate and unnecessary—*The Laurel* is to be read, interpreted and shared, like art has been for centuries upon centuries. Please allow these works to act on you in whatever way they may; their aim is true and their message is eternal.

Your Editors-in-Chief,
Christopher Radey & Patrick Hosken

Swan Song

“And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things”
-Gerard Manley Hopkins

“And as the months went on, I began to drink poems out of those hills.”
-Thomas Merton

And now, a building rises from the ground:
the hallowed ground which spawned in centuries past
wise Tom before his head went bare and bald,
brave Mychal (though we knew him as Robert),
and all the rest of Francis’ dappled children.
O Hallowed Ground! Your muddy surface tells
of your vast desecration and your pain.
The diggers come with claws to scratch your skin
and probe and poke around under the surface
with razor-hands and drains and pipes and picks,
and once you’ve been reduced to soggy mush,
they build a monolith upon your back—
vile villains will an urge to steal a view
and lock it in a chamber of commerce.

The monolith named for a delicate bird
turned mad by greed and violent now, complete
with a beak that pecks and tears out gazers’ eyes.
That building with a deceiving moniker—
built for three million dirty silver pieces—
that blocks the blessed mountains and the hills
where Tom once stood and gaped and felt the call;
where Walt declared himself a resident;
where rolling softly on the verdant grass,
one feels at peace to bloom free with his kin.

And when it’s all complete, the masterminds
will flash their plastic teeth and sit in chairs
with roller wheels and make their keyboards clack,
a bloody, base, clanking cacophony
of research on the ways to spend the least
and simultaneously receive the most:
descendants of a shattered way of life
that made Francis remove his wealthy clothes
and flee to the ambling copses of the world.
And now it’s being instructed as The Word
on how to get a dollar from a dime
ten steps from where wise Tom once heard the call
(thickets of trees where leafs shake on their boughs).
Nature is but a painting on the wall,
an oil-on-canvas dangling from a string
to decorate a barren office space.

This is where I first heard Father Gerard
sing gorgeously from pages in my hand;
where grey-beard Walt first blessed me with his lull;
where Tom said what I already knew, but better;
where the Romantics found me on the hill;
where Shakespeare wrote a sonnet of my life;
where bird-music flies on the wind and whistles
mercurially by under the roofs
of Italian villages constructed here
(the melody of the woods that Henry loved),
and slips inside your ear like a warm hum.

I won’t forget you, hills of brown and green,
or you, volcanic sunsets just beyond.
Or you, brave rusty orange shingles dancing
below the fractured magnificent sky.
Or you, solemn foot-fields where numerous

generations have traipsed, have tramped, have trod.
Or you, still sticky grove of cloud-tipped pines,
forever now cloaked black in vast shadows.

I won't forget the seconds I have spent
with all the pied beauty of this fair place,
and though we can't return to what we know,
and though we'll long for open fields and lawn
and see atrocious squares of grey instead,
and though we leave with heads as full and packed
as little pale balloons caught in a wind,
we take our forest with us in our minds
and carry it to lands beyond the hill
to share with the new siblings we might find.

They say, "It's real estate, and prime! We must
bulldoze the brown-robed values 'til they're dust!"
They stomp our verdant prairie with metal spikes—
but we're the Resurrection and the Life!

Patrick Hosken



Merton's Heart
Courtesy of sbu.edu

William's Lament

so much depends
upon

the new business
building

raised by the
administration

in front of the
Alleganias.

Chris Radey

bull·ish [bool-ish]

adjective

1. like a bull.
2. obstinate or stupid.
3. *Commerce*:
 - a. rising in prices.
 - b. characterized by favorable economic prospects.
 - c. *Informal*: regarding a particular investment as potentially profitable (often followed by "on"):
We're bullish on business.
4. reckless in regards to natural beauty, especially plots of land held dear by spiritualists, secularists and scholars alike.



"Tamica"
Sara Regal

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"Figure"
Kellyn Kautz

11

Spontaneity

It all began with water.
The protector announcing the protection—or perhaps the lack thereof.
Flowing, ebbing, projecting from the mouth of one to the ears of many.
So effortless, so passionate, so monumental;
The irrigation of the masses.
A now troubled stream from a once pure source.

Western New Yorker nomads worshipping a west coast golden calf.

Yell! Scream! Holler!
Profane! Profane! Profound! Profane!
Obscenity after obscenity numbing the masses to the jumbled mum-
blings;
The candy-coated words
Oozing out with feeling—with authority
But no substance—no core, no essence.

The high fructose corn syrup of literature.

“Listen to me!” the voice cries.
“Listen to me! Hear my presence! Feel my words!
They rumble, don’t they? They shake you!
They SHAKE you! That shaking is ME! Listen to me!”
The gallery replies to the voice,
Snaps and clicks and nods and hums and drones of agreement.
Audible validation of their intelligence—or perhaps the lack thereof.

At least they brought snacks.

At least they brought snacks.

Christopher Radey

The Smile

The lights flickered on in their usual pattern. She was excited for another day in her favorite place; a classroom cluttered with books rarely paid attention to and admittedly void of any childhood spirit. She had been greeted with silence and felt a little hurt but the smile remained plastered on her thin face.

As tired as she was, the day had to continue.

“Alright class, turn to chapter eight and we’ll go on with our lesson from yesterday.”

She flipped her pages thoughtlessly until the silent room drew her eyes upward. The students had remained motionless. Without a word, she thrust the book into the pallid hands of a small boy in the front. The smile remained.

Heavy footsteps could be heard down the hall and her heart skipped a beat. *I won’t be able to finish my lesson! I just need more time.* Her hands began to shake as she began speaking. The geography of the states was blurring in her mind as it became clear that her time was up and she began to plead with the children. Her voice rang out shrill in the echoing classroom.

“Don’t you want to finish the lesson? We’re not finished!”

The door opened and the heavy feet were upon her now. The smile remained. She said goodbye to the children the same way she had said goodbye to each and every one of them the night before.

Chloe Farmer

eyes

all depends upon
remembering to feel again
until then, nothing.

scanning the skyline
inspiration multiplied
whirling, whizzing, flying by.

Manuela Marin Salcedo

October

Muammar Gaddafi
in a cup of coffee
with some cufflinks
and a good ear.

I'd take a picture,
e-mail it to you, mister,
but I don't get service here.

Patrick Hosken

"Tiger"
Cassie Orlowski



14

"Landscape"
Karla Bright



Grey Scene

Carved into statues
of our favorite idols.
You've covered your eyes in the mud
that you sling on the world-wide
garbage heap.

If I can direct you to the front of the
class,
the lecture has already begun.
I need a new rock bottom,
this town is just another dry county.

My mouth is dry with the same old thing.
I wanna dance, but I don't even know how.
The crown has slipped off my head,
drunk off two sips of the same old thing.

Take in the scene,
cry for the nurse,
cry for the morphine.
We've lost the twinkle in our eye,
I've ascended back into the ground.

Nothing has passed through my ears
that I have not heard before.
I will find my own way.

15

Jacob Fischer



*Friedsam
Memorial Library:
Courtney Cobb*

Playing School

Remember when we'd play school, little brother?

Remember how we were so tiny our feet would swing from our red plastic Fischer-Price chairs, soles just scuffing the rug as we leaned on that white plastic table.

Remember how I'd be the teacher, trying desperately to keep your attention as you'd squirm in your little seat, humoring me as best you could. You'd draw with your too big pencil; carefully connecting the dots in some coloring book we deemed to hold the epitome of our youngling knowledge.

You'd shift around, never settling for long, as I explained some subtraction problem to the class of invisible students, you always being the troublemaker. Your tongue folded up over lip as you scribbled ferociously, making the pencil lead squeak against the paper.

I glared at you.

"Stop scribbling! Aren't you paying attention?" You looked up at me—shocked. Your big brown eyes searched my scrunched up face, wondering why I was so upset. This isn't real, sister, said your expression, don't be mad. But it was real to me. It was my reality and you were destroying it with your childishness.

C'mon, bother, you're four. You should be able to sit still for a few minutes.

You looked back at your paper and then up at me. You'd made me cross now, so you raised your hand, playing along.

"Yes, Bryce." I said, all the terrifying angst of a six-year-old girl built up in my voice.

"Miss Karly, can we go play cops and robbers—I mean, Miss Karly, can we have gym class now?" you pleaded, nasally voice edging on a whine.

If I was a few years older, I would have lost it from all the cuteness exuding from your tiny little body.

I huffed out a breath, crossing my arms and pouting. I'd lost this one, but lessons would resume tomorrow—don't you doubt it.

"Fine. Let's go have gym class."

You were so excited you almost fell out of your chair, and you hugged my belly and told me

"You're the best sister in the whole world!"

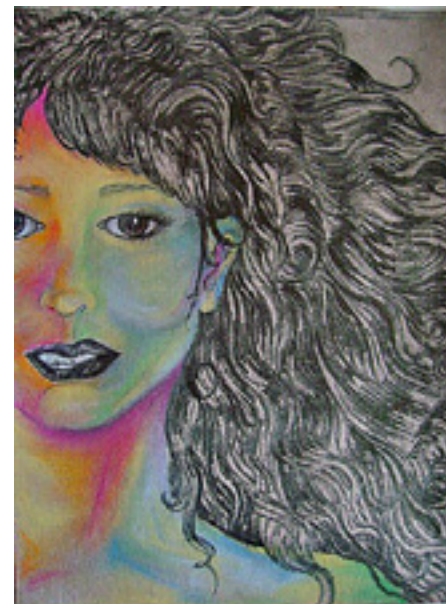
You ran out into the foyer, little yellow knee-socks slipping on the slate floor. You caught yourself and scrambled onward, always with the "bull in the china shop" mentality.

Well little brother, we're older now in some ways.

I'm not so much the teacher anymore, but you're going off to play cops and robbers for real, with real guns and real bad guys that do wanna hurt you.

I just hope you keep that big dumb head of yours on your shoulders, because I couldn't bear to lose you.

Karly Gombert



*"Girl with the Technicolor Skin"
Kara Deighan*

Art 82

*"I ran away, went looking for you
Back to Culver City and the old neighborhood
Need to know if you were really gone
Need to know if you were gone for good
I ran through the projects at night
Hide in the dark from my friends in the light"
-Everclear "Why I Don't Believe in God"*

When I discovered Art Alexakis declared Chapter 11, I knew the voice that supplemented a single-parent household in my adolescence and created an arc in my early adulthood belonged to a man receiving an undeserved tribulation. Yes, it was unfair by my own outlook. How could it be anything else? It could only be this. Everclear contributed such a force in me seeking remembrance as opposed to stability; "Father of Mine" and "I Will Buy You a New Life" delayed a deep sadness and nailed something resembling sanity into my fragmented and incomplete personality. Sixty months later, being in my twentieth year, poor to a serf's position, living in a motel room, alone, for a six-month period, walking four miles to work to wash dishes in a restaurant I couldn't afford to dine at, then five more to the vocational center in attempts to earn a high school diploma, finally making it to my room two hours into the next day with my feet aching, I knew the other inhabitants of this surreal and disenfranchised world were in the later part of life. With their identities stolen and their statues permanently planted on the outskirts of an insider's generosity or warmth, "Why I Don't Believe in God" twisted my emotional state, being in my own company, tears flowed freely, my face still holding stiff as stone, I could escape this; struggling to personal necessity, I did escape it. These lyrics made my tormented and broken childhood feel more like a birthright, and this current situation a rite of passage into an elite society. In the same tribulation, the same moment, the same circumstance, original lyrics were the offspring of my imagination. I had decided to be a rap artist in northern Florida where southern tradition is another term for racial

tension. The white community didn't want to see a white guy stepping out of his stereotyped culture, and the black community thought I had been ripping off their creation. "One Hit Wonder" provided an incredibly thick armor protecting me from the seemingly endless hate that deflates delicate dedication with such a poisonous and pessimistic precision.

Years later, me being a new person, a person with money, enough money to buy class, not that I did, I reflected vividly on the people I let down giving them the same empty promises that riddled my seventh year. The people I should have protected with words and statements that were not introduced to the air and the people that refused to acknowledge my influence, my tone and actions feeling transparent and indifferent. Now I found myself to be damaged beyond repair and insignificant beyond redemption. I had been hurt, and, after the fact, I decided, with a deliberate mind, to hurt others. "The Swing" is the sinner's anthem, for it made me want to burn in hell so desperately! No other song explained me better and could ever. I'm not certain of hell anymore, but Art Alexakis declared bankruptcy, and I'm not sure if I could be certain of anything again!

Philip Nichols



*"Dusk"
Kara Deighan*



Griffis Sculpture Park: Ashford Hollow, NY
Matthew Tack

20



Griffis Sculpture Park: Ashford Hollow, NY
Matthew Tack

21

In Search of Ruben Dario

I break the bindings open upon a century-old history,
of modernist musings reflecting even older ages.
I entomb myself in their words,
hoping their emeralds, rose-colored quartzes, obsidians,
such precious, bejeweled verses will fall from the pages and into my open lap.
But I stagger under the weight of the Pantheon, the Parthenon,
and the Poetic Form of Lugones, of Casal, of heroes gone before-
stalwart, stealthy, and silver-of-tongue.

For a swan with eyes like rubies glides from the pages of my book,
and takes flight along the crisp,
white horizon of my creased binding.
And Artemis draws her silvery bow,
and shoots an arrows of words at my fiery soul.
And I, her prey,
fall victim to the music of her murmurings,
Her lips smiling on a perfect, pale face -
a crimson drop of blood on an untouched field of snow.
Eyes aglow like the Moon Goddess,
they dance in the firelight of my heated heart and warming wonderment,
as I bathe myself in the moonlit pool of poetry.

And women lay back on naked, ivory canvases,
and are painted by poets into ancient Greek Muses,
the Wizards of Words become the Artists of Avant Garde,
Ballet dancers with supple, silver shoes,
Serenaders of Life's complex beauty and Death's simple separation;
and I, their humble pupil,
go in search of Ruben Dario.

Shannon Weiss

Love Is Alive

Love does not die.
It cannot subside
It lives on in the valleys
And the depths of your mind.
Tall dandelion weeds and grass
Brush your skin as you reminisce back.
And you'll go on.

Love wanders through the paths you distanced yourself from,
And remembers passionate kisses and so-longed-for-hugs.
Love remembers the sting of the fluttering heart,
Years after your mind forced love to leave,
Long after your body chose to part.

Love is able.
Love is free.
Unbound by the chains of humanity.
Love prevails when we do not
And love could liberate you,
If you'd let it cast your worries off.
Love is alive.

Love does not sing
It screams in your head,
While you dream of ballerinas spinning alive and undead.
It cannot die
It is forever, eternal,
Love is alive.

Kimmie Bates

Poem 55

Within a tomb was my written word; the laurel became a portal to the outside world. Scribbled letters, misplaced were oppressed, yes, finally given a voice with the ability to express. If conquest had a name, she would be rhetorical the sister of fame. It's strange being here! Intellectual vacancy, it's a vacation from despair. Compared to an upper-class life of obscure agony, poverty and a pen works well actually. Weld consistency; nothing's free charge fees to the industry. Persistently, getting points on the record, back out when the bottom falls out no economic pressure will plague you again. A graduate who didn't walk made his fame from a pen. He's okay to listen to, but he's no EMINEM. Like Bonaventure was no Aquinas, anyone who gets airtime, at some time calls himself the hottest. With my influence being less or at best only temporary, I don't have a need to follow the contemporary, but I will follow the hollow bodies into the cemetery, my body malnourished and looking skinny. It's the end of the line; descending into hell, it's hard to tell if I'm going to have a good time.

Philip Nichols



*"Man in Box"
Neil Durkin*

the wild

i once found a backbeat,
a drum line in the backseat,
used to kick up curves and sways
as i ran so hard and so
far away.

i sought pupils wide and awake,
fresh like caffeine slipped in
a blood stream.
red, coursing,
serving a purpose far beyond
the surface.

but my clothes got rag tag,
my skin riddled with bullet holes
and friction blisters.
i did nothing but find myself
and then ditch her.

i now create from a pile of rubble,
lay bricks with a mortar of smiles
so subtle.

i tweak, i flex,
i bend and bend, twisting my head
back out of this dead end.

in vain and within in these veins,
i search hard for this missing child.

little girl, come back from
the wild.

Kaitlin Lindahl

*"Botanical Diptych"
Hannah Walker*



The Green Hornet

A 1980's Buick Century, an ordinary car in a light green color
With one horizontal red stripe as a taillight
The last thing I would see as my dad drove down on the street on his way to work
He called it the Green Hornet
Bringing home my brother when he was just a newborn
Lasting almost a quarter of a million miles
The rust spots, a symbol of the trek
Covered up with a can of touch-up paint
Knocked over by a 2-year-old boy, that forever left a green splotch in the driveway
Bringing my mom to the hospital to have me

Replacements

A gas tank to fuel its energy, new brakes to help it stop
Both came in handy when it ran out of gas one day coming back from Corning in the morning,
Just a green speck in the middle of the highway
When the day finally came
It broke down in the middle of the street, with my dad and a 7-year-old in the backseat
In 1996
A myriad of memories in one simple vehicle
Its successor, a red Volvo station wagon called The Red Baron

Elizabeth Pray

In Belize

In the third world
A beach is still a beach.
It's no less pristine
Or picaresque
Than the sands of Hawaii
Or Malibu.

But

In the first world
There aren't poor people walking along
Pristine, white beaches
Sugaring up their voices
Peddling their wares
Just for some money to feed their children.



There aren't any glittery, ten cent pony beads
No tiny, black rubber bands
No women who can't speak English
No meticulous fingers to
Braid your hair back
With those most basic of implements.

There are no gently rolling Caribbean accents
No insights into new worlds
No depth or sage-like wisdom
No joy of life unhindered.

In the first world,
You'll find a shadow
Of the third.

Samantha Berkhead



"Blue Face"
Kellyn Kautz



*“Laying on Ideas”
Kara Deighan*

On The Pavements Grey

Perhaps this zigzag—
‘that Shakespearian rag’—
sounds a bit obtuse,
a guitar game of duck-duck-goose.

Chasing meaning, moment, purpose
like a boy and his balloon
through the beer-bottled supermarket
and the thicket of thump between Bob’s barks.

Baggy jeans and piercing screams
in faded-glory T-shirts that howl
divorce, cheeseburgers and gimme
gimme gimme that MTV buzz...just a quickie.

Unity in the form of offbeat quirk
that makes you crack a beer and crack a smirk;
the scene’s been set and lit to go,
so lace your Docs and watch the pumpkin glow:

The woozy jangle of your terrible twenties
and all the bullion of a life coiled down
in a springloaded snap of fuzzy blitzkrieg,
all the soundz you’ve grown to love and hate
served raw with extra dipping sauce,
and a lazy martyr who never had a hair-color identity crisis.

This is your blackout past, the one you can’t recall
to save your spleen, and the revelry’s a hit. You know
you’ve found your closer and you grin. It’s five fingers
of a broken hand, five stitches to the lip, five
smokes left and five hours to go. No more flipping
burgers at the country club. No more reading pages in the dark.

I will arise and go now, and go to California
where the valley quail flies smooth,
where peace comes screeching fast,
and you follow your feet to the sea on the pavements grey.

Patrick Hosken



*“Abstract”
Kelsey Driscoll*

Don't You Put Me In Jail

I've got no beat with repetition.
It's simply what I do.
and I ain't into superstitions

about my own minimalition
which you attribute everything to.
I lay the beats with repetition

filling words with soulful ammunition,
feelings tested, tried, and true.
Yet, they're forsaken with superstition

from a strict personal attrition.
You simply know not what to do.
I feel the beats with repetition

filling tension with addiction
the elation attributed to
the echoing of previous superstition.

I indulge my own minimalition
It's what's tested, tried, and true.
I've got no beat with repetition,
just with what you do.

Jesse Blue Altaville

Weather

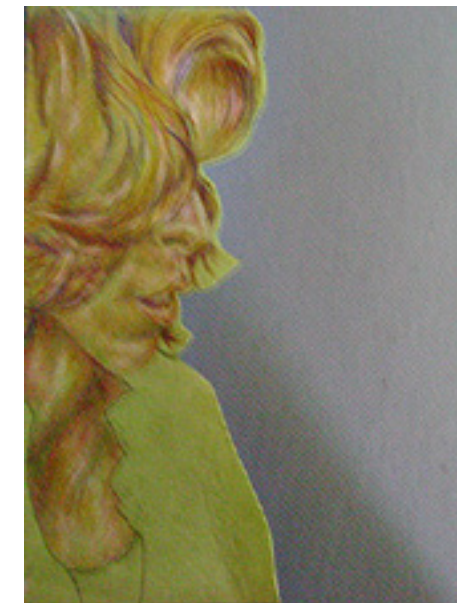
In the night, precipitous rains descend through a black atmosphere devoid of pressure.
Moving plasma lipstick mouths told me so.
But here, in isolation's deep, resounding quiet,
No sounds of nature reach my 75 percent water ears.

Samantha Berkhead

Late August

Leaves on the trees, deep green
tasting yellow.
All things hot and high begin to
slowly mellow.
Twilight whispers, soft pink to
lavender night,
Forfeiting quietly the bright day-
time light.

Kaitlin Lindahl



"Mandy"
Kara Deighan

Ode to the Morning After

Oh ye who shall remain nameless,
For your name is simply unknown,
We live a life that is shameless,
For our feelings need not be shown.

Sephora smeared,
Pregnancy feared,
Bacardi breath still burning,
No Alka-Seltzer to battle the churning.

Entered the night alone,
And
Left the Morning alone.

Forgotten in the night's abyss,
We experienced lust in bliss.
Our memories forever lost,
Our tainted hearts briefly star-crossed.

Boys brag about with laughter;
Girls query the next chapter.
Let's make a silent pact and forgo the hereafter.

However,
Please excuse the absence of this poem's drafter.
If you're reading this, enjoy your Morning After.

Francisco Nieves

"William Blake Paraphrase"
Kellyn Kautz



Classroom 238

I sit alone, an empty classroom watch,
A plethora of students closely looms.
The curséd bell that makes me long for scotch,
The ringing fate that calls them to their doom.
Dank chemistry equipment fills the nooks
And crannies of the oversized hall.
Each student moans and tinkers with a book,
Their thin, oil-soakéd faces filled with gall.
Wherefore do I receive this ghastly chore?
For whose eternal debts do I now pay?
That I should monitor forever more,
Dwindling in educational decay.
Perceptive, clever, witty and astute,
The world's unsung hero: the Substitute.

Christopher Radey

I dreamt
that I was wrestling
an octopus underwater.

Its tentacles found
my face
in that dank place.

I stopped breathing.

One tentacle around
my throat.

Preventing breath.
Close to death.

I fought
and pulled
and screamed
underwater.

Before I became
a shipwreck,
I woke up
with my lamp cord
around my neck.

Emily M. Steves

2/3/12

12:56 a.m.



"Death of the Dancer"
Constance Pierce



"Blues Legend Robert Johnson"
Matthew Ryan

34



"Muddy Waters"
Matthew Ryan

35

backseat

it was just yesterday in years.
too short with brown bangs waved,
my window rolled to an open
unknown wide world. that cassette tape was the rhythm and the rhyme.

next to my legs, along for
the ride, a treasure trove
of hand-me-downs and
half-hearted second thoughts. i held it in my tiny hands
until night broke over the sky
like a shadowbox movement,
unruly, lilac and swayed.

red velvet and cigarettes i still see those stars,
a broken jewelry box dizzy and faint in the backs
compressed in of closed eyes.
sound and time, from the backseat
magnets when we went for a drive.
and hummingbirds.

Kaitlin Lindahl



*"News Invasion"
Kara Deighan*

The Apartment Complex

The banshee's mournful cries filtered through Jonathan's ceiling. He knew the hour based on her song, a dreadful, atonal mess of heaves and sighs. She never stayed in key.

He checked his watch to verify.
1:07 a.m., he thought, right on schedule.

Soon, a piano began to play below. It had started a week prior, always in the spider-like melodies of a nocturne. The player—apparently a dead piano teacher—kept her pitch and had an elegant touch. The two sounded for hours, seeming to battle for attention in his room.

Jonathan drifted to sleep despite the noise.

The sun glowed through a broken window, waking Jonathan. He dusted cobwebs from his shoulders. Spiders always seemed to spin webs on him as he slept. He had given up ridding the room of them.

A warm, sticky liquid hit his forehead and rolled down his left temple. He looked up, saw his light bulb bleeding again, and sighed.

He resolved to talk to the landlord. Jonathan kept his limitations clear and well-defined and knew when something breached them. The apartment had a good price, but three weeks of worsening conditions hardly made it worth it.

After his morning toast and tea, Jonathan slipped on his pea coat and scarf. He entered the dim, rank hallway and locked his apartment door. He shivered in the complex's perpetual chill.

The landlord's room sat atop the complex behind a bookshelf. Jonathan knew this because he had spied the landlord sneaking in one morning with a crocodile-skin handbag once.

Jonathan reached the bookcase. The necessary book had less dust than the others, so he tugged the green volume and waited. The bookcase eased open, revealing a dark hallway.

Jonathan walked down the hallway, a tunnel with walls of heavy stones covered with mildew and cracks. The tunnel descended and a layer of water covered the floor.

Then he recalled that he had never actually seen the landlord as anything more than a silent bundle of clothes and shadow. The furtive gentleman—Jonathan assumed he was a gentleman—communicated in cryptic letters.

Jonathan decided to knock. The door hurt his hand and produced a glum rumble. He waited.

He heard nothing behind the door until something stirred and a frail voice emitted.

“Tenant number 134, I presume,” it hissed.

“Indeed.”

The voice made a horrific gurgle.

“Excuse me?” said Jonathan vaguely taken aback.

“Tea, sir?”

“No thank you. I’d like to make a complaint.”

“Eh?” The noise had a peculiar texture, like a gas leak in winter.

“A complaint about the tenant directly above me,” continued Jonathan.

“Eh?”

“Ms. Mallory.”

“Eh?”

“The banshee.”

“Ah.”

They stood in silence.

“Sir?” said Jonathan at last.

“Eh?”

“Your answer?”

“Very well.”

Silence again. Jonathan began to shiver, realizing his breath condensed into water vapor in the cold. His shoes had gotten soggy standing in the murky puddle.

“Moreover,” said Jonathan. “I’m severely irked by the bleeding light bulbs, the overactive spiders, and the piano teacher. It’s too much.”

“Ah,” said the voice after a generous pause.

They stood in yet another silence until Jonathan heard the distant keening of the banshee made rich and even more dissonant in the tunnel.

He verified the time with his watch.

Two hours had passed. He felt the weight of the time suddenly. Have I been here that long? he thought.

He peered at the door. Darkness obscured it.

“Sir?” he asked.

No one answered.

Jonathan knocked. “Sir?” he repeated.

“Eh?” the voice hissed again.

“Damn you!”

Jonathan tossed his keys at the door and turned back.

“I’m through!”

He stormed through the water, shooting cascades against the wall until reached the bookcase and pulled a lever. It opened into the dim hallway again, the banshee’s tone leaping and writhing from wall to wall.

Jonathan knocked on her door. The screeching ceased a moment then resumed. He pounded on the door.

“Shut up!” he yelled.

She continued. Jonathan turned away and ran downstairs. He forced opened the door. The sun burst through the chill as he walked outside.

“One certainly pays for quality these days,” he said.

Brett Keegan



*“Zombie”
Kellyn Kautz*

"Abstract"
Jennifer Koehler



Cheap Words

Every time we divide,
we garner our words with proof.
Don't think we can't see your lies,
when we left our blinders at the gate.

Hold your fire,
you've shot yourself in the foot again.
Your body will hang in the streets
for all to see.
Oh, what a waste,
another night spent gathering dust.

Wherever you go,
there too shall be grief.
What poise for a hollow man,
what loyalty, what elegance.

You put yourself on an island,
no way off but an S.O.S.
The vultures will warm your body.
Your absence brings nothing but joy.

Jacob Fischer

Serenity

The wind, it passes through the wood, drifting
Over the land, passing trees, lush and green.
Fragile leaves begin to fall from branches.
As wind softly blows them, they float down.
Gentle air moves, the world becomes alive.
The wind, ever peaceful, continues on.

Sara Ward

"Four Directions"
Sara Regal



Release the Neck of the Swan

Release the neck of the swan with his feathers' tense,
the swan whose pearl coat smudges by one's spoiled grip;
experience his radiance without contemplation
and heed the lectures of nature's beauty.

When late Caribbean breezes caress sun-kissed shoulders
and lovers' hands rest interwoven while the Persieds shower,
engage every faculty to seize life with sensation;
for sensations cease at life's end.

Take a break wise owl and watch the swan,
leaving the highest tree tops to fly down to Earth's ground,
for even the most visionary cannot conjure its beauty.

Nocturnal owl seeking illumination,
revealing the night's mystery requires adventure
—grasping every moment with tenacious talons.

Francisco Nieves

Castle Valley Institute for the Arts Vol. 1

Trevor (an audio engineering student) is being introduced to an overweight unattractive female (who is not a student) by his friend Ted (a film production student), and this is what takes place when the girl makes eye contact.

Overweight Female: I'm not interested; I only date attractive men.

Trevor: What? Attractive men!

Overweight Female: I only date attractive men. You're not attractive. You're a disgusting warthog.

Trevor: Well, there's not enough Slim-Fast in the world to make you attractive. I'm committed to having one girlfriend; you're the equivalent to ten girlfriends. Get rid of 250 lbs. and I will think about getting drunk enough to procreate with you. Until then, go find a buffet table.

Trevor and Ted walk away, and as they do, they notice two people, a boy and a girl picking up items that seemingly fell in the snow. Both ignoring it, Ted addresses his friend.

Ted: Are you okay?

Trevor: Of course, I'm okay. A girl that thinks it is okay to be rude and nasty with me, I didn't think I would ever be privileged to such a rare occurrence. I had been under the reasonable assumption that solar eclipses were vastly more common. But today, I was chastised by a troll; an abomination which inhabits the remotest locations of the underworld considers me to be ugly. If the term pinnacle-low ever wanted to separate itself from the indifference of cliché, this moment, my moment, has now presented the elusive elegance of opportunity. Have you ever noticed there are no cyanide pills around when the humidity of rejection has you craving a toxic smoothie with neon painted thumbtack topping? If my appendices were to burst resulting in a slow yet painful death, I tell you, it would be a model demonstration of God's mercy. I

wish I were dead, and since I desire death, I am guaranteed by my predictable luck, or predictable lack of luck, immortality.

Ted: Why do you get to have a pity party? You're a cry baby.

Trevor: Why don't you date it?

Ted: It?

Trevor: Yes, It! It's not a girl. It's an it.

Ted: Cynical remarks and sarcastic gestures will not allow you to conquer the loneliness that barricades atonement from entering your realm. When the bright light of hope shines on you for a limited time, the pessimistic outlook you've projected with such vile conviction will leave you in complete ignorance of the descending gift that has fallen like an autumn leaf from a tree, venturing towards winter, in front of your earthly flesh. Don't step on the leaf, Trevor.

Trevor: Ted, let me ask you an ethical question.

Ted: What ethical question?

Trevor: I have question, you dummy, I have a question.

Ted: Fine!

Trevor: If a carwash is accepting donations to wash your car, and they do not have the requirement to give a minimum donation, is it okay to give them a penny? If not, why not?

Ted: I suggest you don't have your car washed in the near future.

Trevor: Your answer is nonresponsive.

Ted: No! You don't give them a penny! It's not enough money. People do such things to bring funding for cancer treatment or women's shelters. You don't give the minimum.

Trevor: Good! You don't give the minimum. That means when I ask you to provide a pathway to a potential mate, you don't show me a troll with the slightest similarities to a human girl. I should punch you in the face right now.

The overweight girl walks up to them.

Overweight Female: Okay, I changed my mind. I will give you a chance to win my affection.

Ted: Don't step on the leaf.

Trevor turns to his friend and punches him in the face. The screen fades to black and the credits role. "Human of the Year" performed by Regina Spektor plays.

Philip Nichols

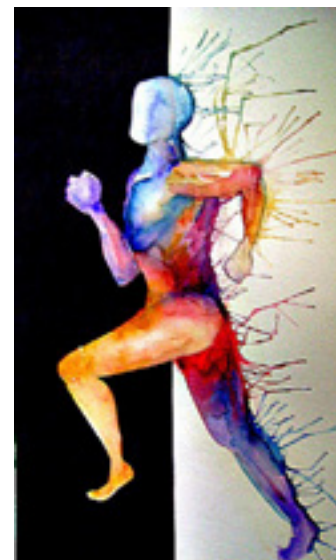
The College Blues

Cramped in dismal rooms
Music idolized playing until noon
But experiences broader than sun's dawn
Tick away until all left is gone
And it's become clear
I need out of here.

Morning are daze with thick fog
lessons from court jesters have the mind bogged
as creativity is boxed in and flogged
let's get out of here

Skittish meals without company
make bland days a severity
while the world moves in festivity
but ain't that clear?

Routine riddled remarks are worn
as I display my sincere scorn
for all those frivolously forlorn
I need out of here.



**Artwork:
"Color Run"
Kara Deighan**

Night erode in silence slumber
masses out manifesting blunders
belittling all of generation's thunder
Ain't it clear?

Weekends mark joyous disaster
as pious students end up plastered
but no man doesn't succumb to fate's master
ain't that clear?

In cities both small and wide
wisdom passes which I idolize
and nothing's left that's not a surprise
I need to get near

On country's farms far and near
all simple truths appear to be clear
illuminated by precious love held dear
aint that clear?

Life's charade needs to be first hand played
as withered statements don't partake
Truths confirmed outside the bedroom one stays
I need out of here.

Jesse Blue Altaville



*“Untitled”
Kellyn Kautz*

No Other Way

I always keep my notebook open
just in case I need to pour my heart
out.
We’ve been singin’ the blues for far
too long,
been devoured by our sadness
and abandoned by our spirits.
I’ve only sang in silence,
never crafting the words I needed to
say.

The phrases for my salvation,
don’t need any articulating.
They aren’t audible by any man,
aren’t comprehensible to any prophet.

Being lost is such an odd expression,
for if we were ever truly found,
what else would we have to live for?

Salvation ain’t a destination.
It rides shotgun with happiness
along this messed-up road.
Resting its feet on the door
as it takes another drag.

“This highway seems endless,”
the first one says.
“Yeah, but we’ll get there eventually,”
the other one answers.

I wonder what it would be like
if my hair parted the other way,
if my eyes were really green,
if I had learned to play the banjo.
But I guess it wasn’t meant to be like that.

I am me,
there’s no use fighting that.

April 17, 2012

We hope you’ve enjoyed the wonderfully creative works in this magazine as much as we have. The preceding pages are filled with pieces created by the students and faculty of this university, but *The Laurel* also accepts works by alumni and other staff members. As such, we encourage anyone and everyone here at St. Bonaventure to get involved, one way or another.

It’s been our pleasure to lead this fine magazine for four semesters as your editors-in-chief. We’ve learned a lot, bickered a little and always loved the feeling of fresh *Laurel* pages in our hands.

We owe a huge thank you to Dr. Richard Simpson, Constance Pierce, Misty Johnson and all others who helped put this magazine together. Congratulations are in order for Jake Fischer and Chloe Farmer, who will take over the reigns of *The Laurel* this coming fall. Their excitement represents new life for this publication, now in its 113th year. Please help keep the tradition alive by submitting your work to laurel@sbu.edu.

Below are the folks who helped make the Spring 2012 issue a reality.

Thank you for everything,

Christopher Radey & Patrick Hosken
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