



# The Laurel

2019

## A Letter from the Editors

Welcome to the 2019 edition of *The Laurel*. We are so excited for you to join us in our 120th year of publication. Please enjoy the talent of these writers, poets, and photographers. We want to thank every student who submitted their art. We are so fortunate to see all of your hard work and craft.

Special thanks to our advisor, Dr. Jeremy Smyczek, for your help and guidance in this process. It was wonderful to experience this year of new leadership together. Thank you so much to our editorial team for your hard work, creativity, and time. This publication would not be possible without your dedication and passion.

We have chosen the photograph “Nighttime Spotlight” by Chezell (Chey) Montgomery as the front cover, as we believe it symbolizes a light showcasing the hidden talents of our peers.

Lastly, thank you to St. Bonaventure University’s students, faculty, and community for fostering the artistic work of students and making a home for artistic expression on this campus. Enjoy!

Love,

Victoria Wangler ‘21 & Maria Ragonese ‘20

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# ***Break-room***

Ashley DelVento

Punch cards bordered a clock-in timekeeper.  
Each instant between my breaths carefully counted,  
as the second-hand grew fond of empty lungs.  
Should I one day remember how to breathe deeply  
between my morning shift of insecurity  
and my evening shift of heartbreak  
may I inhale hope in aerosol cleaners.  
The analog clock's second-hand flickers,  
doubtful of the transit of an hour,  
as neither of us have moved a step.

Was it the way you reheated spices?  
The way paprika revived my skin's blush  
with controlled microwave wafts?  
Did I dare breath in a moment,  
only to learn of the true vibrance of sensation,  
a romance novel between cookbooks,  
one may have thought a bitter divorce by its leftovers,  
but any acute observer can differ affliction from experience.

Self-conscious introductions float on the coat tails of chili powder;  
Care to share a meal over existential recourse?  
Care to have a bite between mayhem and the night shift?  
How could I refuse such an offer  
when your presence has reminded both flaws and ideals  
how to experience the passage of time?

# *Out of Place*

James Matthew Villanueva

the air, stale  
walls: colorful and cheerful  
despite the glum, the  
nurses hand  
out faulty smiles along  
with medication

everything— methodized  
organized  
somehow still

i was out of  
i but there

out of place  
place  
did not belong there

i  
was

reading books  
along with my thoughts, my  
oldest friend,  
crayola font—midnight blue, because  
nothing else was  
allowed

eight and a half days feel like a year  
minutes stagnant as days  
734400 seconds  
12240 minutes  
two hundred four hours  
time moves still  
the defective clock  
stuck

6:34— Do not be anxious  
never flinching  
scared

is that the way It feels?

of change?  
Metathesiophobia



# *Riley's Turn*

Bethany Schoonover

The room had walls of yellow and carpets of a light gray. White curtains fluttered as a gust of wind from the open window blew through, cooling the bed in the middle of the room. Riley's room always smelled of cinnamon and country air, but now it smelled of sick. Not like puke, but of medicine and hospital floors. The room no longer had the feel of home but instead was filled with the ever-looming worry. Not even her worry, but everyone else's.

Riley laid in bed. Nighttime really was the only time she had to herself anymore. She was exhausted, but she couldn't sleep. Maybe she would have been able to sleep if her body was tired, but Riley hadn't left her bed for weeks. Her body was used to adventure and movement. It was used to running and playing with her friends, as most nine-year-old girls do. Photos of Riley and her friends hung on the walls, next to the ribbons from the horse-back riding competitions her parents had forced her to join. Her life was exciting and full of sports, clubs, and activities that Riley's parents had always expected her to be involved in.

At least it had been exciting, and now, no, her body wasn't tired, so maybe she was just exasperated with her family. They kept acting like it was going to be okay. That she was going to be okay. Riley didn't know if her family didn't accept it or if they just didn't want her to know. But she did know. She knew what the doctors had said and why she had been sent home.

Another large gust of wind blew through the room, this time disrupting some of the papers that had been left on her desk, a failed attempt at keeping up with school work. And there, next to her bed, stood a woman. Riley stared at her and after taking in the woman's dark cloak and pale features, a quiet realization came over her.

“Will it hurt?” Riley asked as she shifted in bed, pulling herself to a sitting position.

The woman shook her head in response, long curls moving back and forth.

“Can I stop it?”

Again, the woman shook her head, though more reserved than before.

A flash went through Riley’s mind, shuffling images of her parents and their expectations. Anxiety grew in the pit of her stomach, and her blue eyes squeezed tight, trying to block out the room just as much as blocking out the woman.

After a minute, Riley slowly opened her eyes, staring at the dark figure, and asked her last question. “Will they be okay?”

This time the woman spoke, soft and soothing, dark eyes staring into Riley’s. “Yes. They won’t be at first, but after time it won’t hurt as bad.”

With that Riley was filled with a reassurance she hadn’t expected. She never wanted to bring more pain upon those around her. Riley looked around the room, noting the colors that she had once found cheerful and were now stifling. She saw the pictures filled with memories that had been tainted long ago, and projects that had long since been left behind. Then she looked back at the woman, whose hand now was held outstretched, waiting. Slowly, Riley reached out her own hand and felt a strange acceptance come over her.

Death comes for us all and this time, it was Riley’s turn.



## *Terracotta Roofs*

Joseph Malafronte

Terracotta roofs with your wordless secrets,  
scraping the bottom of Heaven's base,  
eternally entwined with higher being,  
sitting far above the heads of us all.

Myself, I am ephemeral,  
underlay to these roofs,  
replaced by the next generation.

Permit me entry,  
To unlatch the secrets held beneath,  
Consume the knowledge our time.  
You remain ever wiser,  
ever enduring.

Terracotta roofs,  
Succeeding me,  
Carry my secrets long.  
Grant me to accompany the multicolored tiles,  
White of the mountain high;  
Brown of the surrounding trees.  
Dissimilarity bringing forth radiance.

# *The World and I are at a Disagreement*

Maria Ragonese

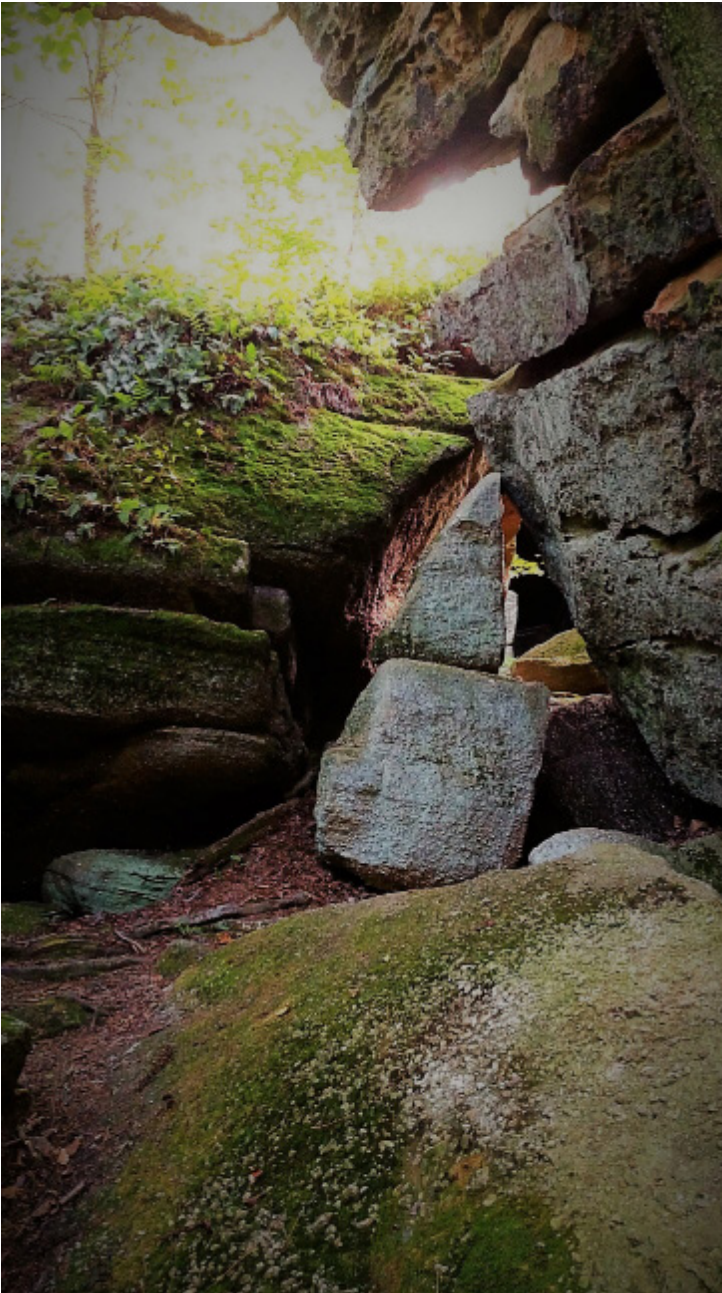
The world and I may disagree  
But I know we'll make it right  
I see life in color  
But they see black and white  
To love not hate seems easy  
But yet we have not stopped  
We pick battles  
And fight wars  
Saying our struggle cannot be topped  
We all crave our neighbors pity  
It's our natural sense of greed  
But fighting such a selfish war  
We'll surely never succeed  
I know it's hard to look past one self  
To see someone else's plight  
The world and I are at a disagreement  
But I know we'll make it right



*Red Edifice*  
Mili Patel



*Abandoned*  
Julia Wesche



*Pathway*  
Brianna Ragonese

## *Take Me Places*

## *No One Will Go*

Christina Giglio

Waltzing down shit-splattered sidewalks,  
Puffing past the plywood walls of plastered homes  
In a city coated in carcasses and cigarettes,

I pause at this wall of purple smoke  
And am greeted by a woman with serpent skin  
The tone of tupelo tree trunks.

With hands of houses meant for building homes,  
Her wonder burned holes in the hollows of my throat.

Those fingers of flame lit way through the smoke,  
And a homely wail whispered:  
“Come with me.”

Ash-tinted toes made way to such tainted tones,  
Past crude caverns carved in mildew and mold,  
She leads me to river-blue skies and pillars of prose,  
Indicating this was the way.

Elephant trunks thrashed through the water,  
Washing away days of soot, rot, decay,  
And floated with us on our way  
Through pore less, perfect porcelain clouds,  
Clearing the smoke,  
And wafting us to a place of hope and peace.

Dustless, dense forests  
Fill the floating, fluid landscape facing our frosted faces,  
Healing the hallows within this form,  
Calming my carbon skin,  
And beckoning my body to breathe and finally rest.

## *Storm Pain*

Tim Walter

My gut has tightened into knots that I cannot untie  
Though I wish to carve open my stomach to try,  
The pain of knife into flesh can only be more soothing,  
And choosing this method seems rational  
While slumped in the shadow of  
Where you once presided.

There's lightning in my showers and thunder  
Thudding the walls which only seem to shrink more  
Each time I think of what once was.  
It's a pity I forgot rubber boots or a rubber suit  
To shield the tender parts of my soul from electric bolts.

I've been begging Father Time to speed my clock-  
Anything to stop the pain clawing in my chest-  
To put to rest this storm of regret.  
His sands fall slower and each hour  
I replay the final dance.

Two boys who loved by chance  
were ripped apart by circumstance.



# *Makeup*

Anahiz Rivera

I stared at my reflection in the mirror, my vision growing blurry as I began to weep. My blue eyes were turning red from crying so much. My hair was in a messy bun, with chunks that had fallen out.

I winced as I heard the door close, thinking he had come home early.

“Don’t worry. It’s just me,” Rosita said, entering my tiny bedroom. I took a huge sigh of relief, but still couldn’t stop shaking. She sat with me on the bed and held my hands in hers to help calm me down. “It’s going to be ok.”

I started to stuff my suitcase, apprehensive that my husband could enter our bedroom at any moment and see what I was up to. I had to keep reminding myself to stay strong, that I had to do this. We’ve been married for four years now, and all of his promises turned out to be lies. He promised he’d change. He promised he’d stop drinking. He promised he wouldn’t hit me anymore. My high school sweetheart since freshman year turned out to be a monster. Now, here I am at 25 years old trying to escape his clutches and start anew.

I was blinded by his sweet nothings when we were teenagers. When we first started dating, he wrote me notes every day, listing the reasons why he liked me, although the reasons were often repeated: “You’re smart,” “You’re caring,” “You’re pretty.” Nevertheless, I thought it was sweet of him. He knew how much I loved them, especially when he told me that I was pretty. He knew that I had always been insecure about my looks. Yet to my surprise, during our senior year, Jacob admitted to me that he thought I looked prettier with makeup on. As a result, I slowly started wearing it more and more often.

As a teenager, I used to hate wearing makeup. It costs too much time, money, and effort to buy various products from a variety of brands and spend hours of my day putting it on and taking it off. But I wanted to make him happy, so I did it. He was pleased, and therefore, so was I. Shortly afterward, I felt as though it was growing harder to please him. Especially once we went to college.

He started classes as a criminology major at Framingham State University, only about 45 minutes away from our hometown of Boston, and I went to study psychology at Columbia University in New York City. It was only three hours away, but he couldn’t stand being apart. I figured it was simply because we were used to being with each other all the time. I was shocked and hurt to discover he would go out with his buddies and drunk call me half past midnight telling me that he knew I was cheating on him, even though I’ve never considered it. The jealous rages got to be too much, and I wanted to break up, but he insisted he would work on it, so I gave him another chance. But from then on, it only got worse.

During college, I hadn't focused on wearing makeup since Jacob wasn't around, but when we moved in together after graduation, he demanded I get back to it. I complied just as quickly and thoughtlessly as I had done before.

My skin started to breakout from wearing too much makeup, so I began to take breaks, but this just infuriated Jacob. He was so angry that he decided he would put my makeup on for me. His fist purpled my eyelids. The back of his hand made my cheeks blush. His hands that used to hold me now applied my bright red liquid lipstick, which would end up running down my face. He somehow got it onto my eyebrow, too. He contoured my face the wrong way, leaving large bumps on my forehead. I cried mascara tears, but he didn't seem to care.

I had to hide his mistakes with more foundation and concealer. I tried my best to make sure people would focus more on my highlight than on my bruises. But enough was enough when he came home drunk, stumbling around and slurring his words. I tried to help him stand and bring him to bed, but he was refusing to because he wanted another drink. I told him a stern no, that he couldn't have another drink, and tried to pull him upstairs. But he was drunk, and he was angry, and he said it wouldn't happen again, but it always did. He began to attack me: throwing punches left and right, kicking me in the stomach, tossing me into the stairs, and ended up breaking my arm in the process. There was no way I could cover that with makeup, but I also couldn't bring myself to tell the truth. So when people saw me in my cast and asked me what happened, I simply said: "It was an accident."

But when Rosita came over and saw my cast for the first time, I couldn't lie to her. She was my neighbor when we first moved to this house, but had slowly turned into my best friend.

"I never thought it would get this bad. He always told me he would get help. I should have seen the signs," I said to Rosita, my voice starting to drift off as I thought back on all the pain he caused me. She just rubbed my shoulders and hugged me. An awkward silence fell as hot tears started to well up in my eyes.

"What if he finds me?" I asked her, starting to shake again. She hugged me again, rubbing my back and trying to hold back tears.

"He won't. I promise you that this is going to be the best decision you've ever made," she spoke softly. She then grabbed my suitcase and escorted me to the car, giving me one last hug before I left this place forever.

"Take care, Lilian. Please keep in touch," she said, a single tear falling down her cheek. Then, I got into the car and drove away. I had no idea where I was going, all I knew was that I couldn't turn back.

A burial took place in the town last night,  
In a somber affair that was hid from sight.  
They say that it died of a bitter disease,  
That it caught on some distant, foreign seas.

***The Death of a Love***  
Michael Makutonin

The death, they say, was drawn-out and pained,  
(In the dusty hospital money was strained)  
They say that it died unwanted, unfed,  
That it died from neglect in a small, dirty bed.



***A Voice Lost in the Crowd***  
Morgan Kennedy

## *The Lung*

Ashlee Gray

The soft click of the switch sounds a piercing scream. Shuddering to life the lung awakens.

Needed, but not wanted, it inhales -exhales- placing sweet oxygen in a suffocating chest.

To me, it is my grandfather's lifeline.

The small machine is shoved into the spare room, but the clear umbilical cord he carries

is a reminder of his aging body. The tube is a tether, keeping him tied to the ground,

tied to me. Without it, he would float away,

Skin and air, into the wind.





***Biker Lifestyle***

Chezell (Chey)

Montgomery



***De La Roche***

James Bjarnar

# *Just Some Unimportant Drabbles*

Jesse Blake

I fear many things.  
But in the same breath,  
I dread love with all my  
Soul, I crave it more than  
Anything.  
In one blink,  
I am terrified of the  
Roiling and deep ocean,  
I want to plunge into its  
Depths.  
In a single heartbeat,  
I hide my Self from  
Others that might tear me  
Apart, I want more than  
Anything  
To be Known.  
So much comes from fear.  
We cowered beneath the  
Constellations, at the same  
Time  
We shot into the stars.  
We flinched from the other  
Side of the world,  
So different and new,  
And yet  
We knew at our core that  
We are the same and  
We are stronger together.

I fear many things.  
I shudder at the thought of  
Being hurt by another,  
So I do the hurting  
Instead.  
I shy away from seizing My Dreams  
Because what if they are  
Not Enough? And  
What if I am  
Not Enough?  
And what if I am?  
And what if none of it  
Means anything at all?  
What if I am  
Dust,  
And in the End I will be  
Dust,  
And nothing  
Will have mattered,  
And no one will  
Remember?

I fear many things.  
And yet.  
In the same breath,  
I love and  
I dread.  
In one blink,  
I swim and  
I sink.  
In a single heartbeat,  
I am Known and  
I am not.  
In a hundred years,  
I live and  
I die.  
And maybe no one will  
Remember.  
And maybe they will.  
Maybe I will  
Know another and be  
Known.  
Maybe I will create  
Life.  
Maybe...  
Maybe.  
The not Knowing,  
That is what  
I fear.  
But I fear many things.



*El flor del sol*  
Hailey Garske

*Run Pup, Run*  
Dominic LoVallo



# *Garden of Eden*

Yoselin Person

Her body becomes like a shield as if protecting her own Garden of Eden from being destroyed by the one who doesn't know how to maintain such a beauty.

# *Home Away From Home*

Calsey Bump





# *Prayer for September*

Victoria Wangler

Motion like surrender: sliding away  
of one thing  
into the next.

Fluid: [exhale, inhale]

I breathe // the world shifts focus.

[yesterday: younglings of May,  
stretching leaves into life]

[today: a cooling of the dirt,  
falling into a gradual, dull sleep]

My heart beats, fluttering;

a whole summer

blinks away.

Where does it go?

Sacred twilight, bleeding closer  
into the day. Stealing into precious hours  
until: winter claims warmth, light.

Each year the same // yet I mourn  
like one unaccustomed to loss.

[fresh, vulnerable // my heart lurches  
into nostalgia's vice:  
a practiced dance]

Still you cling to me  
like a tender mother, dear summer.  
I long for you  
like a frightened child

[need swelling within my chest  
with unbridled strength]

Yet, there is joy in this passing:  
Blessing to days like this.

[holding sweet sun and warmth,  
memories of Septembers past  
sing through my blood]

Dear days, never again to be.

Yet! What lies ahead?

This day?

and the next?

and the next?

The whole world, open.

This world, as limitless  
as my mind  
is willing.

I race to you, unknown!

I will give everything  
to your new days,  
[whisper of faith, of promise]

Grow in me // changing season.

Give me courage  
for newness of life

[let me grow  
in you]

# *Location, Location, Location: AKA Isolation*

Anna Giglio

Home was quiet,  
Never quite crowded,  
Except with thoughts of despair from everyone who lived there.

Small town,  
Certainly not proud,  
Of what came out of this destitute destination.

Bodies aching,  
Minds breaking,  
Only formulating a conglomeration  
of broken homes and empty souls.

Moving in, in turn, dug our graves.  
Very few have clawed their way out of their caskets,  
While the rest rot,  
Not in peace.

Although, none ever actually break free.  
Social isolation infests as a parasite,  
Mental illness claws at the cranium,  
Sadness never dies.

I'm sorry,  
Dear friend,  
But zombies are simply walking corpses,  
Already dead inside.

## *Songbird*

Jess Chastain

I absorb your trill,  
The melody breaking silence  
With your turbulent song.  
Leaving me dry with discomfort.

Don't caw, little songbird,  
Your coarse voice threads around my being,  
Once sweet to the ear breaks me and  
Pushes me too close to the edge of insanity.

Let me fly, vexed songbird,  
Let me flutter from your retched nest.  
Mother don't migrate to me,  
I beg don't hover.

Your song is finished and  
Your chatter irrelevant.  
I'm ready, mama,  
I'm ready to soar.

# *Parachute*

Ashley DelVento

A thrill seeker without a cause, I started jumping when I was 25. They told me life was going to keep kicking me while I was down until I chose to get up. Unable to relapse upon prior methods of coping, an advertisement in the bin between 32nd and 2nd ave caught my attention. Since then, nothing has been able to compare to the feeling of adrenaline filled weightless free falling the jump gives me. Nothing, that is, beyond maybe my wedding day.

The wind should have felt liberating as it tousled my hair, removed all conformity my office dress code and comb had once tried to enforce. But my hair had fallen out years ago, even though I still occupied the same cubicle. The feeling of the coarse air forcing its way over my scalp didn't have the same gratifying feeling I had come to love long ago. Rather, it left me feeling raw and exposed. A trillion tiny papercuts vulnerable to all realities in life I had tried to suppress.

The air should have tasted like summer breezes stewed among unformed thunderstorms, tasted like the threat of rain that loomed on our honeymoon in the Florida estuaries. But instead it tasted the same it had a few days ago, the day I had to bury you: Crisp as it slashed its way down my throat in raspy breaths. Even thousands of feet up, the world felt like death, felt like it knew you had left me forever. Bitter pollution acted as the perfect accent to the pollution that spread through my veins. How had this come about? You had chased away my mental toxins years ago, why were they back now? Acute fear of my own mind's addictions raised up the back of my throat like bile, but I swallowed it back down before it ruptured.

You should have been here while I outstretched my arms on either side. This is when you should have grabbed hold of my hand, smiled at me with those cappuccino eyes.

I should be pulling my parachute soon.

Time continued to slip by, feet continued to slip by, as I laid idle, letting the world around me fight my battles for me.

I should have fought for myself.

I should have pulled the string.

*Flying*  
Maggie Finley



# *Heart-Shaped Forest*

Joseph Giglio

Years ago, there was a forest in my heart,  
sprawling arrangements of sturdy oak and stout pine  
creating canopies in my atria.

Brigades of birds  
brilliant barn swallow and unassuming sparrow,  
adaptive finch and headstrong thrush,  
nesting high in its chambers,  
wily fox and pesky bear foraging deep in ventricles.

They are gone now,  
voices once harmonious now long silent.

Lost to sickness and rot  
the muzzles of guns and heads of axes  
and I tried so hard to bring them home  
bartered with gods both old and new to save my failing heart.

They answered:  
“That which is lost cannot be found,  
but we will do what we can.”  
and they tried,  
and did what I believe was all they could.  
In my heart they built an elaborate facsimile to prop up the failing  
bits of my chest  
with pneumatic trees and clockwork birds,  
cybernetic bears and mechanical foxes  
all calling in discordant voice to replicate a song they had never heard.

It is not my forest, not my home,  
but if what is lost is lost and cannot be recovered  
I should be happy to have something at all.

