

TR tulsa review

A CREATIVE WRITING & VISUAL ARTS JOURNAL



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NONFICTION

Thank you to the administration at TCC and all those who made publishing this year's journal possible.

Thank you to the TCC Foundation for their annual support, for generously funding the student writing and art contests and helping the Tulsa Review continue to function. Without their continued support, we would not be able to create this wonderful literary and arts journal.

We thank English and Creative Writing faculty, Josh Parish, Joseph Boyne, Amy Rains, Allen Culpepper, Dacia Hinkle, and Amy Pezzelle, for taking the time to read, study, and judge the many student contest submissions.

Thank you to Michael Siftar, Miguel Da Corte, and Jona Schweinberg for helping us with the Zoom Webinar presentation and launch party.

Also, a big thanks to the many TCC staff and administration who helped with resources and guidance.

2021 masthead

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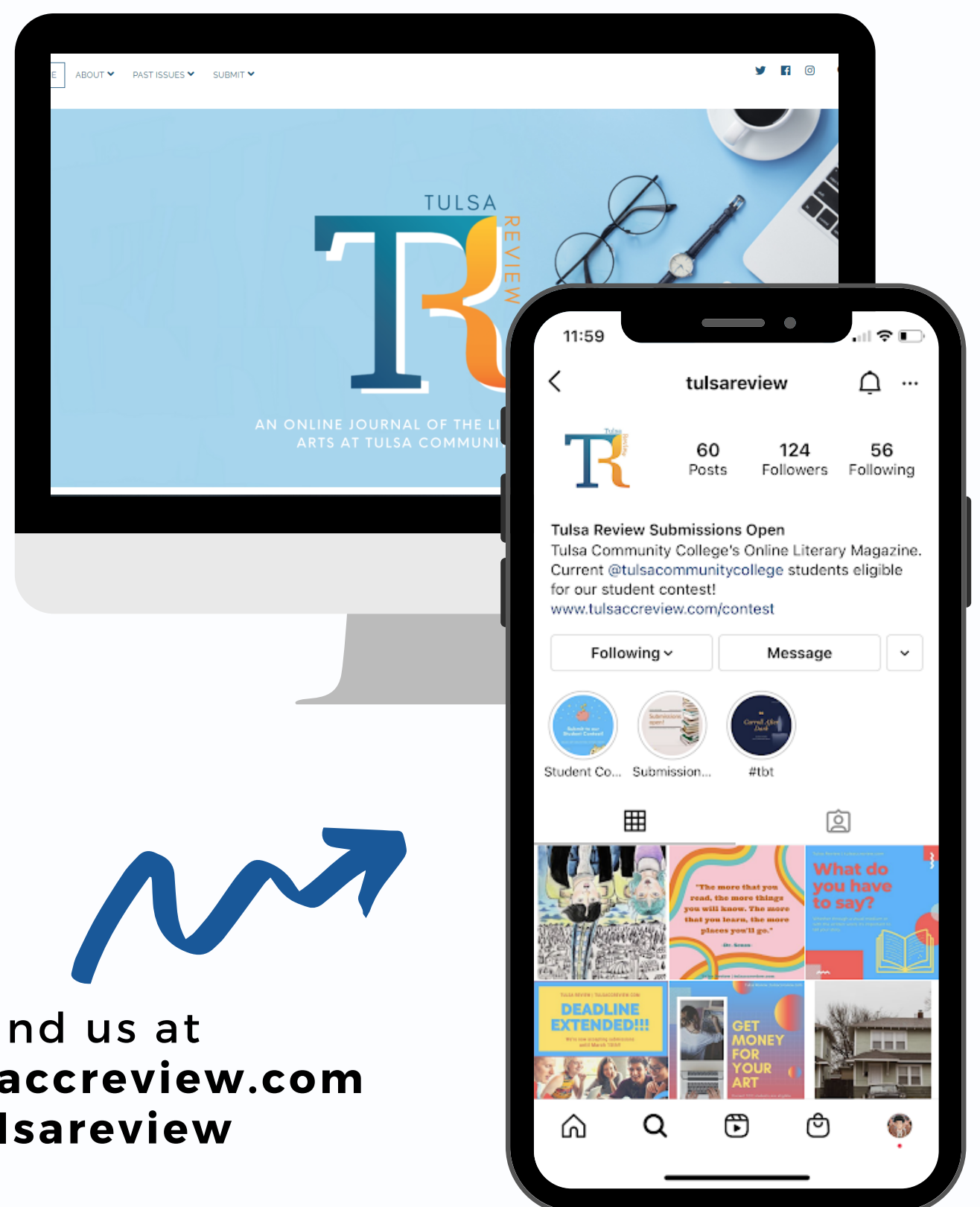
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2021 staff biographies

read more about the people who made the 2021 issue possible!

SLOAN DAVIS

faculty advisor

Sloan Davis is an Associate Professor of English at Tulsa Community College. He received his BA in English from the State University of New York at Albany, an MA in Literature from the University of Tulsa, where he was a Parriott Fellow, and an MFA in Creative Writing from Wichita State, where he received an MFA Fellow in Fiction. Along with a writing partner, he writes and produces films. Their latest project *Lonely Hunter*, the first of a series of short films, was showcased recently in the Red Dirt Film Festival and the 74th University Film & Video Conference. Sloan also writes and performs stories. He has performed live at OKSO of Tulsa numerous times and won the grand slam becoming Tulsa's best storyteller in 2017. He has had fiction and poetry published in *Barnstorm*, *The Wisconsin Review*, *Nebo*, *The Tulsa Review*, *The Aroostook Review*, and other literary journals. He is a singer/songwriter for the band *Your Drunken Uncle*. He travels often and gives tours of Ireland.



ZHENYA YEVTUSHENKO

managing editor

Zhenya Yevtushenko is one of the sons of the late poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko. Currently, Zhenya is pursuing his undergraduate degrees in Political Science, History, and English. He aspires to become a Foreign Service Officer. His work has been featured in *eMerge Magazine*, *Literary Heist*, and *failbetter*. His favorite writers include Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Anna Akhmatova, and Kurt Vonnegut. He owes his inspiration to his brothers, his mother, and to the love of his life, Olivia.

ILONA TOTH

drama editor & social media manager

Born and raised in Tulsa, OK, Ilona took the pandemic as a sign to return to TCC after almost 10 years. As a Communications major, she loves writing and reading everything she can get her hands on and hopes to have her first manuscript completed by the end of the year.



LANA NGUYEN

web design developer & assistant managing editor

Lana Nguyen is a computer science student at TCC, but she is very passionate about the arts and literature. Lana owns an Etsy store for her art and loves to design/draw in her free time. Some of her favorite artists and writers are Elizabeth Bishop, Ross Tran, and Hieu Nguyen. She hopes to become a front end web developer or UX/UI designer one day.

AMANDA GIBSON

poetry editor

Amanda Gibson is a student at TCC pursuing an Associate of Arts degree in English. She's been writing creatively since childhood and still aspires to pursue a career in writing creative fiction and poetry. Her favorite writers include Megan Whalen Turner (author of the Queen's Thief series) and Adrienne Rich (a writer of feminist poetry). You can find her on Instagram by the name she writes under: @andy_morrigan."



REBECCA ERHMAN

fiction editor

Rebecca Ehrman is an experienced writer, avid reader, and lover of the arts. Driven by a strong sense of dedication, she looks for stories that reflect the passion, creativity, and diligence of the author. Rebecca joined the Tulsa Review after leading a team of writers for Tulsa's Courtyard Theatre Production's first original musical based on Rudyard Kipling's "Rikki Tikki Tavi." As an English major, it is Rebecca's goal to make positive changes in the world through the transformative power of storytelling.



PAT WINGATE

art/nonfiction editor

After teaching American history for twenty years, Patricia retired. She took her first writing class in 2019. She loves writing and reinventing her life. She is happiest when she is with the children who call her "Grandma."

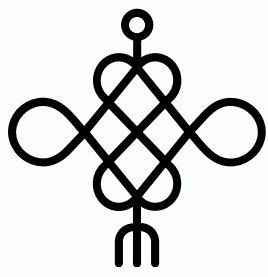
MYRNOSKA SCOTT DE ELEJALDE

copy editor

Myrnoska's father was a musician. She has a degree in Business Administration Account and Business Communication. Currently she is majoring in Business Marketing. She wrote two e-books available on Amazon. She received acknowledgement for some of her poems. She is passionate about learning different languages. One of her goals is to create a business project for writers. Myrnoska's favorite writers are Paulo Coelho, Napoleon Hill, Wayne Dyer, Norman Vincent, Mariana Atencio., Deming Edwards, & Chris Anderson. Her life's inspiration are her daughters and husband.



2021 CONTEST WINNERS



ART

Cameron Shipley "Untitled"

Camryn Edens "Untitled"

Jayce Boss "Untitled"

DRAMA

Charles Stewart "Can't Help Falling in Love"

FICTION

Lavonne May "The Juror"

Stevie Smith "Daisies"

Clayton Tuttle "All About the Whales"

NONFICTION

Camryn Beatie "Do you know how to take a fish off the hook?"

Daniel Oforji "Try to fit in my shoes"

Cienna Oniwa "A Letter to Student Athletes"

POETRY

Conor Culpepper "Tears For Ferlinghetti"

Victoria Chin "End of Eternity"

Megan Brillhart "Dominoes for Pop"

ART

STUDENT CONTEST WINNERS



CAMERON SHIPLEY
Untitled



CAMRYN EDENS
Untitled



JAYCE BOSS
Untitled

SELECTED WORKS

ANGEL ATKINSON
The Great Physician

ALYSSA BARTMESS
Untitled

ANGEL JARAMILLO
Vast

CAMERON SHIPLEY
Untitled

RANDOLPH READ
Untitled

JACOB BATES
Fall

KAYLA ANDRUS
Untitled

JACOB BATES
Passage of Time

SYDNEY BELL
Untitled

JOHN GAGE
Sleeping Fox

REBECCA LUPER
Untitled

JAYCE BOSS
Untitled




CAMRYN EDENS
Untitled

STUDENT ART
SECOND PLACE



JAYCE BOSS
Untitled

 STUDENT ART
THIRD PLACE



ANGEL ATKINSON
The Great Physician

SELECTED
ARTWORK



ANGEL JARAMILLO

Vast

SELECTED
ARTWORK



RANDOLPH READ

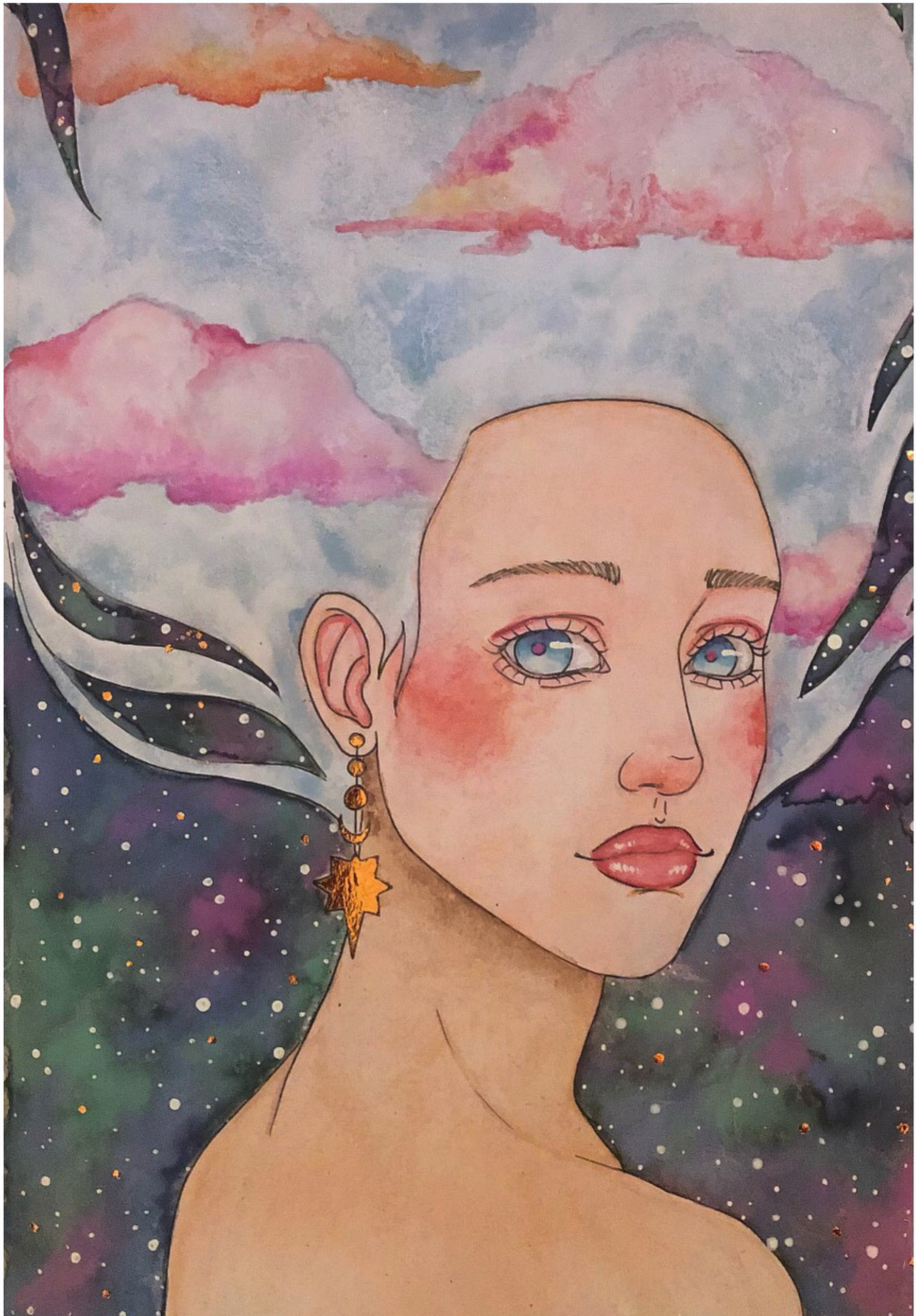
Untitled





SYDNEY BELL
Untitled

SELECTED
ARTWORK



REBECCA LUPER
Untitled

SELECTED
ARTWORK



ALYSSA BARTMESS

Untitled

SELECTED
ARTWORK



CAMERON SHIPLEY
Untitled

SELECTED
ARTWORK



JACOB BATES
Fall

SELECTED
ARTWORK



JACOB BATES
Passage of Time



JOHN GAGE
Sleeping Fox

SELECTED
ARTWORK



JAYCE BOSS
Untitled

SELECTED
ARTWORK



POETRY

STUDENT CONTEST WINNERS



CONOR CULPEPPER
"Tears for Ferlinghetti"



VICTORIA CHIN
"End of Eternity"



MEGAN BRILLHART
"Dominoes for Pop"

SELECTED WORKS

SOONEST NATHANIEL
"Maplewood"

SOONEST NATHANIEL
"When Flowers Grow Teeth"

BRUCE MCRAE
"Talking to Lions"

R. BREMNER
"Parameters"

DEREK GRAF
*"Houses Filled with People
Who Resemble Other People"*

TINA SCHUMANN
"Letter of Recommendation"

TINA SCHUMANN
*"Dear Public Restroom in the
Hospital Lobby"*

ACE BOGGESS
"Empathy"

STEVE BELLIN-OKA
"Prayer for Plant Rot"

KRYSTAL LYONS
*"Living and Dying at the Cross Streets
of Pandemic and Capitalism"*

MEGHA SOOD
"Lonely Night"

ELLI SAMUELS
"Inauguration Day 2021"

MARK FISHER
"Hiroshima's Children"

MARK FISHER
"Dancing on the Ruins"

GRANT JENKINS
"Bearing Traces"

CONOR CULPEPPER

Tears for Ferlinghetti

deep
electric and bright
New York
Nighttime
1953
Night afire
with City Lights
and the life of the city
and Lawrence Ferlinghetti
is in town

wild
free and observant
a young mind
searching
for something
unknown
Crying
for something louder
New York
Nighttime
and Lawrence Ferlinghetti
is in town

Godspeed
now and everlasting
Written words
form the path
that spirals upward
toward infinity-laced stars
toward Heaven as we know it
toward the future
and Lawrence Ferlinghetti
Leads the way



VICTORIA CHIN

End of Eternity

Do you remember the complete and utter ending?
Before the lights flicker to the back of your eyelids
Where all reality shifts tormented and bending
Or do you fight longer than life forbids?

Do you miss the freedom of not knowing?
When it was your time for the tide to turn
Watching your motion picture methodically slowing
And the corners of the film begin to burn

Do you wish to change who you were to be?
To tear out the pages creating anew
Writing the story of your next entity
A clean glass slate for you to breakthrough

While pondering your ending existence
You gave in to life with full resistance

Dominoes for Pop

Dominoes lie on the table
Patient for your return.
You have not visited
For some time.
They do not realize your
Recent parallels.

Liver spots like black dots,
Cold hands like cold tiles,
Empty eyes like the double blank.
Both sit still.
Both rest.
Both quiet.

Now at your end,
Dominoes remain
with you in the dirt.
But I will always
Have a piece of you
Near me.

SOONEST NATHANIEL

Maplewood

Here the lips fail to relay all that the eyes have witnessed,
 so we store some memories beneath the bones,
 and our bodies begin to learn how to pray to a new god
 that leaves us fat and trapped in debts.

I am a man learning his partner's true identity,
 learning my love is a two-edged Gillette blade cutting passion both ways.
 Learning how sometimes the moans on her lips at midnight
 are prayers in devotion to an absent lover.
 Learning that forever is the day after the altar,
 and the tears as she read her creed that day, was in fear
 of a late dawning reality that this union might be a life jail term.

I am a man about to jump off the cliff of his ego,
 I have just learnt of a generation aborted, offered at the altar of exuberance;
 dreams crushed beneath the poundings of a pestle carved from pride,
 dreams squashed into paste in mortars of melancholia;
 I have just learnt of paste made from mashed flesh & blood mixed with lanolin-based creams
 just to keep clay from decay; O, the fantasy of remaining ageless.

I am the man pacing about his apartment, remembering how empty the rooms were
 When I and my young lover rushed in; body surging with adrenaline and passion.
 I am remembering how all we had then was a mat for prayers and love making;
 the walls replay to me every argument we ever had, and I bow my head in shame.
 I notice how big the cobwebs in my bedroom have become,
 I am wondering what the spiders stole from our marriage,
 I think they built their homes from the threads that made up the fabric of our affection.

Seinabo Sey croons her 'Hard Time', and I realize I have woken up too late,
 an eternity has eluded me; but this is not the saddest part;
 what grieves me the most is not her rapture.
 I am more distraught that she thinks I am deeper in love with perfection,
 I am more broken that she believes all I longed to do was pass judgment.
 If only she knew that my existence did and still depends
 on the unusual magic of her imperfections.

SOONEST NATHANIEL

*When Flowers Grow Teeth**.. (for Ronke)...*

I smell death. I tread on blood.

I am last on the procession line; the last line of code.

The light has come and gone, and the programmer will never return.

Some dreams die before they are born. Arrows in flight may never return.

So I ask: 'Who writes the algorithms of our fate?

Who plots the graph of our existence?

How can we measure our lives in binary?"

They aimed for his head,

lodged lead in the nursery of his brain,

and they found out he did not bleed in pseudo-codes.

His mnemonics had their binding time.

They have come again. They always come.

Assemblers, compilers, seeking to decode the language of memory,

daring to dissect destiny. They ask: "when is the end of eternity?"

And some long for a look into the infant's eyes,

longing to read the past of tomorrow;

yearning to know the future of yesterday.

When flowers grow teeth,

Lord, let my flesh not pass for meat!

Who will write the Messiah's iteration?

Who will program the day unknown,

now that the light has come and gone

and the programmer will never return again?

BRUCE MCRAE

Talking to Lions

If the lion could speak,
said Wittgenstein,
we wouldn't understand him.

His pleas for fairness.
His questions concerning
the state of the Earth,
on the perils and upshots
of the human condition.

Nor would we comprehend
leonine philosophy, their take
on the gods, on the stars
and their fiery origins.

Most likely we'd be so terrified
we wouldn't hear a word
or wonder on the marvel
of a carnivore explaining to its prey
the terrible necessity of hunger.

R. BREMNER

Parameters

The new parameters of urban sanctity
perimetered myself in the subway selfhood
of a life with so much meaning.
Lives that matter curtained their sameness,
and making our neighborhoods safer,
clamored for less resistance.
Nowadays it is hard to enforce
distinction and reverence upon a crowd
deaf to mass graves and cowed by mass sacrifice

DEREK GRAF

*Houses Filled with People Who
Resemble Other People*

Every painting in this museum draws me

back to the border between Texas

and Oklahoma: strung-out, broke-down,

walking down gravel alleys in a dry county.

Cockroaches crawling across rust stains

in the bathtub, that's what I remember

about the motel in Ardmore. You were a swarm

of events and I was a shoveled creek.

I was a highway's dream and you were a taste

of earth. That's what I remember,

anyway. I won't admit it was a painting

that made me call you again, that pulled me

into wondering whether you'd gotten married

or stayed sober. I spend my days in houses

filled with people who resemble other people. A few

of them I miss. A few of them I'll never see again.

TINA SCHUMANN

Letter of Recommendation

To those newly born (and those about to be)
it is with great enthusiasm
that I recommend the delusional
optics of the everyday; the camera obscura
that comes with mere existence, its devotion to the sleight
of hand, inverted shadows, a hocus-pocus
inebriation. It will get you through the slog,
the dead-eyed day, the evangelical darkness.
You may be advised to gather at the river,
to mind-the-gap or love the one you're with and so on.
This will help pass the time, but in the end, it is all
a whodunit of obscurity.
Rest assured you are equipped for the trip, your chemical balance
or imbalance will power you through. No need
to put a pin in it, take it offline, or consult the oracle.
In time you will become a master
anticipator, multitasker extraordinaire, enlightened being
of the highest order.
You will slip daily into the waters
of abandonment, give leave to all that is.
This will become a ritual of renewal –
self-prescribed, inevitable, longed for.
In the meantime, keep honing your skill-set, be kind
to the other humans; you will need them.
After years of dedication
this regime may become a relentless habit
that blunts your aliveness. When this happens
walk directly out the glass doors. Speak to no one.
Throw your passkey
in the nearest receptacle. Call me.
Respectfully yours, a fellow traveler.

TINA SCHUMANN

*Dear Public Restroom in the
Hospital Lobby*

You, impartial spectator

to the muffled sobs, the screaming child,
the necessary blood

and debacles of the body.

Every blank stare

into an indifferent mirror

when someone's life will never be the same.

Witness to the mortal and momentous; every fatal

diagnosis echoing in a lover's head...

every breath a prayer pierced with a promise.

Scuffed porcelain and loose locks

rattle the tacit stalls of stasis.

You pass no judgment, or hollow sympathy –

only cold sanctuary that holds the world at bay, a final splash

of water before the brutal light of day.

ACE BOGGESS

Empathy

Starling in bird-speak cusses us
from the powerline six feet overhead,
no doubt worried its nest has been erased
from beside the green aluminum awning
with the likes of us standing here,
quietly discussing your son's time
in the penitentiary, release at last, &
subsequent death. The starling doesn't know
about your son's drug problems
or mine; it has children of its own,
track marks blossoming on their backs.
It wants us gone so it can check
on their well-being.

I don't intend to sound cavalier.
The language of death is as alien to me
as the starling's, voice untranslatable
sadness, rage. I hear impatience
in its pleadings, yet need a moment
to write in my own dead tongue
how I grieve for your son's journey,
though our paths never crossed.
Forgive me for being one who has survived.

STEVE BELLIN-OKA

Prayer for Plant Rot

I look much like my father: that is the truth. Black
lesions creeping over purpling grapes. I want to tell you
I am not like him: that is half-truth. Burn
the fruit if fungus appears, powdery white mildew
that trickles from the leaves to the vine. A father's
open hand against a child's face: often, that was true.
Mold spores coat a grape as it shrivels, atrophies
like a middle-aged man's arm muscles. On
the kitchen table of our house, a bowl of fake fruit,
hard plastic. Acrylic bananas and pears:
that is the truth. Once in Delaware we watched
farmhands set fire to a whole field of corn—
the crop is diseased, my father said. That is
the truth. His sclerotic heart stopped in his sleep:
truth is, none of us mourned. My mother threw
a chipped still life in the trash, to be burned
across town. Every death since his, we've incinerated
the body's bones clean: that is the truth.

KRYSTAL LYONS

*Living and Dying at the Cross Streets
of Pandemic and Capitalism*

Everyone is for sale.

They buy you by the hour,
pay you by the week,
and before you die of COVID,
you have to get someone
to cover your shift.

They told you
you would have to sacrifice.
What they meant was,
“You must be sacrificial.”

When they said
“We are all in this together,”
What they means was,

“Your lungs will fill with earth.
Your blood will water the flowers.
The money will always bloom
and it will serve to remind me
that we live in a world
where anything is possible.”

MEGHA SOOD

Lonely Night

Don't close the drape on the windows
which lets the borrowed sunlight
form shadows in my room
still mourning from the loss of the shadows;
the painting, a little askew
maybe next time,
will get its due

the swollen words hanging low on
the hinges of the drapes
will crack and fall in this room
mourning the death of its identity
never to make a full sentence anymore

those dancing freckles of dust are
inebriated by the sliver of lights
marking their presence
and the room forget its gloom

just for a mere second
those rose tinge glasses have turned
the wine to this ebony elixir
smeared on the face of the alabaster moon

the creaking noise of this lonely armchair
still waits for its resonance
in this moonless
lonely night.

ELLI SAMUELS

Inauguration Day 2021

As we listen to a young poet,
a robust woman,
deliver
our dreams,

it becomes a must to ask
what a good year is,
a good life, like ancient grains
held free,

in the hands
of people hungry
to field answers,
too lost to give up.

If our souls are in this,
listen-
to the good moon-
crooning silent verse:

reminding us
it is not a new thing
to shiver
in cold wind.

To corner the light,
walk away slowly
if you must,
but return,

not to prior hurts,
to bright edged earth,
a re-imagined,
American dirt.

MARK FISHER

Hiroshima's Children

we live in a world of faded magic
and angry superstitious people going hungry
then staring at a Normal Rockwell painting
of family Thanksgiving searching for a vaccine
cultured like germs in our laboratory skulls
callous to the damage of bones, and blood, and mind
that this post-post-apocalyptic world
with all our left-behind fears and rage
that comes down from the mountain like tablets
taken by prescription that do not treat the disease
only dulling the symptoms
just to make it through another day
another performance as the hamburger clown
we no longer want to be
but it's all we have
another object lesson
we refuse to learn

MARK FISHER

Dancing on the Ruins

we're living in the ruins
of overlapping worlds
with mobs playing dress up
in their petri dish orgies
though it ain't all circuses and sourdough
while bourbon pouring Senators throw
our children to the lions
and call it education
'cause we all know
there ain't no redemption without
the shedding of blood in their temple
held up by pillars of nostalgia
singing songs in praise our precious sacrifice
while all the patricians waving fasces
have crossed the Rubicon
since it's so much easier to disenfranchise
than to end the oppression
and the unguarded guardians
fetter the dead
providing all the spectacle
trailer park plebeians need to ignore
the Fates' ill fortune outbreak
while some new Crassus buys up
in some fire sale
the very ruins
we are dancing on

GRANT JENKINS

Bearing Traces

Drinking yesterday's coffee, isn't
so bad, there's a lot

We are all going to have to get used
to, like this honkin' tab

So intentional, the breeze, a time
fucking gone by, like

Any other. yes, that's it—
an Other bears down

On my freedom—bearing being
a constant—and there are

Two ways to deal with it post facto:

Chafe against the burden
and cry, fight, blame

or knuckle under, wear a
damn mask,

A masque, as it were, for the other
always masked in their

Traces. The warm condensation of palm
print, the consolation

Of pulpy breath and the smart of a
kiss urgently taken.

it's all we have, take care of the
absent, indelible
face.

DRAMA

STUDENT CONTEST WINNER

CHARLES STEWART

"Can't Help Falling in Love"

SELECTED WORKS

ALLISON WHITTENBERG

"Untitled"

MARK FRANK

"The Love Zoom Room"

MARK FISHER

"Five Miles"

PAT WINGATE

"The Pothole Effect"

NONFICTION

STUDENT CONTEST WINNERS



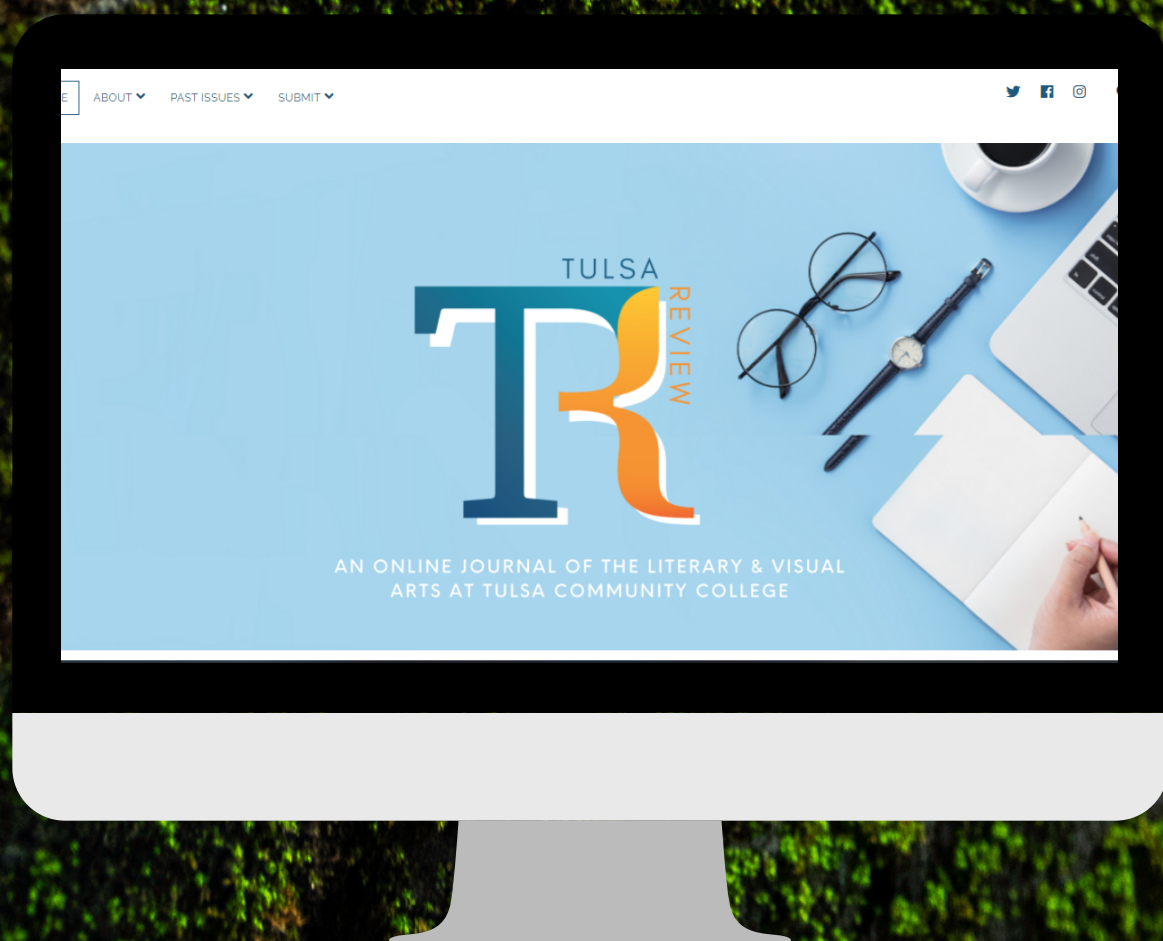
CAMRYN BEATIE
*"Do You Know how to Take A
Fish off the Hook?"*



DANIEL OFORJI
"Try to Fit in My Shoes"



CIENNA ONIWA
*"A Letter to Student
Athletes"*



**CLICK ON EACH WORK
TO READ IT ON OUR
WEBSITE!**

FICTION

STUDENT CONTEST WINNERS



Lavonne May
"The Juror"



Stevie Smith
"Daisies"



Clayton Tuttle
"All About the Whales"

SELECTED WORKS

MARIAM TIEWS
Transformative

CORBIN SHAFFER
A Broken Stroll

B.H. JAMES
Fall

ANDY MORRIGAN
Loose Ends

ZACK MURPHY
Blue Earth County

CATERINA DENHAM-
BRACY
The Storm

CLAYTON TUTTLE
In the Middle of Things

FRANCES CASALINO
To Paint A Whale



READ PREVIOUS ISSUES

