



Expressions 2021

Lamar State College Port Arthur

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Expressions

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Covid 19

Acknowledgement

As the global health community and world came together this past year to face the COVID-19 pandemic, LSCPA stayed strong as well. As editor of Expressions, I wanted to reach out and let our supporters know that through each step of the magazine process we remained committed to putting the health and wellness of our students, staff, and broader community first. The pandemic affected our number of entries, and as you may notice the categories are fewer than other years. Even with less entries to choose from, our judges were able to pick a wonderful selection of pieces this year. We are grateful for each other, and Lamar State College Port Arthur continues to stand together as a family through these difficult times.

Our hearts go out to all those who have been touched by the pandemic.

God bless the frontline workers during this global crisis.

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General Art—First Place

Genesis Hebert



*Short
Story*

Short Story

First Place

Planet Numah

Richard Seth Koppie

Part I:

Planet Numah

I woke to the smell of metallic oxygen in the air. The faint hum of the LS-3 engine slightly echoing through the metal poles in my bed. The off-putting iron smell in the air told me that old man Waters was buying oxygen from the Radians over in C-137 again. I hate it when we buy their stock for trips. Zariel says I'm just being a baby about it, but I swear it makes my head hurt. Slowly but surely, I unlatched my restraints and began floating from my bed. Before I could even reach the tooth brush on my roof Gnash burst through my door. Gnash was a shorter fellow, but he always looked ready to fight. Never in my life had I seen him without his blorb ball hat or with a clean-shaven face. He had kind eyes though and the kind of personality that made it not a total chore to live with him. He told me that the mission was a go in twenty minutes flat and left the room without another word.

I lurched my way around my tiny capsule until I was spiffy enough to go talk to my crew. I used to not worry about how I looked. That was until Zariel joined our squad. When it used to just be Gnash and old man Waters I'd practically go to morning meetings still in my bed. Zariel was confident though. She was almost as tall as me and she knew she was beautiful. I mean so did I but that's not the point. The point was that I got ready now before

morning meetings because of her. I typed the four-digit master key into my touch pad as it lit up. The door slid open with a mechanical hiss. The corridor connecting my pod and the meeting room was cramped and narrow. Hunched over, I meticulously made my way to the other end of the hall. The touch pad was sticky. That meant Gnash had pancakes and didn't even tell me. The door slid open and I was greeted with two smiles and a grimace. The grimace was old man Waters of course but that was regular for him. Gnash was licking syrup off his fingers and Zariel gave me her signature mock salute, something she did often when I came in late. I gave her a smile and turned on my boots ready for the stomach rush that came with experiencing gravity again.

The meeting room was small but it was the biggest communal room we had here on the Artemis. The room was well lit and circular. All the walls were barren except a panel of multi-colored buttons on the back wall that I never wanted nor had the pleasure of touching. Old man Waters pressed a green button on the wall and our table descended from the ceiling with a loud groan. Waters cut his eyes at me knowing he told me to check the belt to see what was making that noise. I gave my best innocent shrug and it seemed to be enough to avoid a scolding for now. Without a word, Waters pressed another button and my vision was filled with the blue tint of my holo-screen. I poured over the images in front of me. I saw a tribal civilization, languages I didn't recognize, and was that a dog?

My thoughts were interrupted by the bass in old man Waters voice. He explained that this pooch had somehow stored himself away in cargo and was left by accident. The only problem was that the planet he was on was inhabited by a civilization only in its tribal stages. People only generally went there to be tourist of sorts. They generally awe at what our species came from and how we began while staying hidden in the shadows. Apparently, the owner of the dog was some big shot oxygen farmer who put a large undisclosed sum of Universal Currency up for his dog's safe return. Gnash said what I assume we were all thinking, and that was something along the lines of why would we risk our lives for a dog. This seemed to strike the old man in a way I hadn't seen. He described the dog as helpless and the owner as powerless in ensuring his safe

return and that he would have taken the job for free. I guess realizing we were all lucky to be getting paid, we bit our tongues and listened as he explained the mission. In the last part of the meeting my holo-screen changed to a stagnant image of what was labeled “Planet Numah.”

Part II: Battle For Gnash

Our mission was on a barren planet just outside the jurisdiction of the Galactic Coalition. The planet was a relatively small rock that went by the name of Serenity-35. We decided to land on the dark side of the planet to avoid muggers and space junkies that were known to hang around outside the jurisdiction. It was impossible to make out anything on the desolate planet during our descent. Though once we were setting up our tent I realized I didn’t miss much. The entire planet’s face was some unearthly dirt with no foliage. While I laid in the dirt that night, I enjoyed the peace and quiet of an unfamiliar world as I drifted into darkness.

The ringing in my ears began to fade as I looked around at the tattered orange shreds that were once my tent. The painful ring was replaced with the blood curdling scream of my partner, Gnash. He was writhing on the floor gripping a stump, where his arm should have been. The blood from the wound was beginning to seep between his fingers and soak into the foreign soil below. I ignored the putrid smelling dirt smeared on my face and began ripping through what was left of our camp. The medical bag, just like everything else, was either stolen or annihilated in the blast. Without thinking I began to rip the bohrium fabric from my outer layer to make a makeshift tourniquet. The adrenaline was flowing through me so aggressively I hadn’t even noticed Gnash had fallen silent. It wasn’t until I was going to administer the tourniquet that I realized the million-mile stare in his eyes. In that moment everything became vividly clear. Suddenly I could feel the pain from the dirt in my eyes, smell the iron and manure emitting from Gnash’s blood in the dirt. The scene was disheartening and I knew I was going to lose my best friend.

The light flooded into my eyes as I strained to see what was around me in the white room. A burning sensation in my arm turned into an unpleasant tugging when I realized I was connected to multiple tubes. I noticed I was strapped to a hospital bed implying I was back safe on the Artemis. I rising feeling of hope filled my chest, and was immediately expunged, and replaced with grief when I recalled why I was here. My eyes fully came into focus, and sitting alone in the corner was Zariel. She must've seen me struggling because she came to my side to calm me down, and undo my gravity restraints. Now that I was finally able to move my body I realized just how injured I actually was, but only one thing was on my mind. Gnash. Zariel's face told me everything I needed to know. My heart crumbled into itself. The pain was almost too much to handle. Lost in my own grief I jumped when I heard the mechanical hiss of the ship's medical door sliding open. Behind the excess steam the door released was a smile. A smile that was attached to a man with only one arm, and maybe even a few less teeth. That man was my best friend. Gnash.

Expressions 2021



Cover Art—Second Place

Lauren Martinez

Short Story

Second Place

Mixed Emotions

Britkne Gallagher

Every mother dreams about what it feels like to hold their newborn bundle for the first time. Will it be euphoric? Terrifying? Maybe both? For myself, it was a delayed process full of dread and apprehension. Having suffered four unspeakable miscarriages previous to this pregnancy, I was left with a constant state of melancholy and never ending, inescapable grief. I was like a ship lost at sea, waiting to hear affirmation from some vast space in the distance echoing from across the water. “Let the waves come,” I would consistently tell myself, for I knew I was not alone in this voyage.

Delivery day is here. A global pandemic is also here. I am steering this ship with no compass, no North Star, treading cautiously through uncharted territory. My heart was apt to jump straight out of my aching chest as I felt the combination of pure joy and relentless anxiety mixing together like sand and sea foam, pumping adrenaline through my motionless body. The monitors stationed arbitrarily around the obnoxiously white room continued to screech treacherous sounds of unforgiving doom. I tried to imagine the white caps of waves as I laid there straight as a board on the stiff hospital table in a pale blue gown that kept me as warm as the inside of an igloo. Any patience I might have had before was now lost in the building anticipation to hold my miracle baby for the first time. My doctor and his unexpectedly somber nurses were chattering about as if I hadn’t just had my entire belly sliced open. All I could do was lie there pondering my current situation is des-

pair whilst trying feverishly to ignore the agonizing pain shooting tiny pellets of shark teeth up and down my right arm. It took two hours for me to see my son for the first time after my surgery. Two hours of laying cold and stiff with nothing but my own dreadful thoughts tormenting me while the doctors sewed me up like a torn sail from resentful winds.

In recovery, we were reunited for good. I cautiously stared into that brilliantly round face of his and began to weep uncontrollably. I had carried self-deprecating feelings of shame, guilt and uncertainty for nine agonizing months. It became the only way I knew how to feel until the moment I gazed at perfection in the closed eyes of this tiny boy with no name. I held him closely in my arms as if he were a perfectly crafted seashell that could shatter at any given moment.

Oliver. That is what I will call you, for finally I felt peace. Oliver signifies fruitfulness, beauty and dignity; but most importantly the name symbolizes peace. Peace that I have been aching for since I set sail on my motherhood journey many years before and many hardships later. I had successfully brought a new life into this world, at last. I was far from being comfortably anchored, but I braved this ocean and together we would nurse each other into this brand new world.



General Art—Second Place

Yoselan Mendoza Becerra

Short Story

Third Place

Getting Sober

Sharee Courtney

I can remember the exact day my life changed, October 4th 2019. I made the call, to a man named Troy, at 8 a.m. on the dot. I had hit rock bottom again, and this was my only option. This wasn't my second, or third time either. Hell, if I was honest with myself, I had smashed into that jagged, black, and empty bottom more times than I cared to count. I wanted to change. I needed to change, and I was going to a sober living house. I found there is freedom in surrender.

I had been up three days prior to that phone call. I was desperate for the mental and emotional turmoil to stop. I had tracked down Troy's phone number through friends, if you can call them that. These were people I had used with occasionally, and been in jail with. When I talked with him on the phone, to me he sounded rude and unwelcoming. I was nervous, unsure how this would play out, but ready for change. To me nothing could be worse than the way I was living.

I stood outside of the Wal-Mart entrance with a black duffel bag that smelt slightly of mildew, due to the many times it had been rained on, packed with as many of my belongings as I could stuff in it. My beat-up tan backpack slung over my shoulder contained the treasures of my heart. Photos of my children, a small stuffed bear that belonged to my oldest son. Even thinking about them sent my emotional state in a downward spiral. "How could you do this to them again?" "Are you ever going to get right?"

“What is wrong with you?” My mind raced with all these questions. Waves of guilt and shame poured over me, and I could feel the tightness in my chest as I tried to suppress the tears and sobs that wanted to escape. “Not yet,” I told myself, and gathered composure.

The sun was blistering hot, and beating down on me by 10 a.m., as I waited to put a face to the unfriendly voice I had talked to on the phone. My heart beat loudly in my chest, and I felt like sweat poured out of every pore in my body. The side effects of another binge. Finally, a jacked-up silver ford, with Christian music blaring thru rolled-down windows, pulled up. The driver shouted over the music, “Sharee?” I nodded yes. He signaled me to get in. I threw my duffel bag in the bed of the truck, and struggled to climb up the side step into the back seat. I managed to, ungracefully.

The truck still had a new smell to it. The seats were leather and polished. The man sitting next to me in the back seat smiled and said, “I’m Marshal.” The driver turned around with his Rayban sunglasses and an arrogant smile, and said “I’m Troy.” So, this was Troy Barrows. A man I guessed to be in his fifties. His white hair styled in a military crew cut. I instantly didn't like him, but I didn't even like myself, so who was I to judge? Then we were off to a destination unknown to me. I was relieved to be out of the heat, and on my way to the place I would call home. This was the very first moment I felt like my life could get better. I had the opportunity to change, and I didn't have to use ever again.

When I arrived at the sober house I was introduced to my house mates. They showed me my room, and I put away my things. I met the house manager, Dalton. He was young, 20 years old, but had a good sense of humor. He read the rules of the house to me, and the consequences of breaking them. I was getting settled in my room when Dalton knocked on my door and announced we would be heading to a meeting soon. I followed my new roommates out the door and crammed into a vehicle with Jen, the only other girl in the house, and a few others. I was headed to my first meeting.

When I arrived at the meeting hall I walked inside and found a spot on an old, maroon colored, soft-cushioned couch

with a matching ottoman in front of it. The meeting started with prayer, and a member read the Preamble. Then someone read **How It Works**. As I listened to the reading I looked around the room. I realized those people were just like me, and had figured out how to live free from active addiction. I said a silent prayer to God, telling Him I couldn't get clean and sober without his help, and I was waving the white flag. That night I admitted I was an alcoholic and addict to myself, God, and the group. Since that day I have worked a 12-step program with a sponsor who did the same with a sponsor. I have no urges to drink or use today.

The day I surrendered my will and my life to the care of God is the day I found freedom from my active addiction. I have learned how to practice spiritual principles in all situations. Not every day is a great day, but this is a great life. I am far from perfect, but I have the opportunity to learn and grow from my mistakes. We do recover.



Cover Art—Third Place

Brian Marsh

Short Story

Honorable Mention

Goodbye Old Friend

Sharnell Hester

It was a Friday in January, and it was a crisp and cool morning. Wayne came to my house to fix my truck. It was an old 2006 blue beat up Chevy that the water hose busted days before. Wayne Hester, early 40's, blonde hair, blue eyes was a short and stocky man of only 5'8 and roughly 220 lbs. He was my ex-husband and a recovering addict. We shared three amazing kids and one grandson. I walked out of my house to see him head first in the hood of my truck. I laughed and said "Hey, did you fall in or are you stuck in there?" He jumped out of the truck covered in grease and whatever else you find under the hood of an old truck. "Shut up!" he said "Come look at this. I fixed your hose so that you can get to work today." That's just some of the things he did for me.

That evening, Wayne calls me. "Hey, I am at the hospital."

Wait, what?! I thought. "What's going on?" I asked him.

"I can't breathe," he told me. "Your mom told me I needed to go. When I find out more I will call you."

That night I was at work so I was not able to check on him. Around midnight he gives me a call to let me know that he was being released. "Shar, so I'm headed home from the hospital. The doctor told me that my heart was enlarged and I will be fine to just go home." At first, I thought nothing of it. Until the next day when I saw my mother before work. "Wayne still can't breathe and he is complaining of severe pain," she said. "Help me to convince him to go back to another hospital." I told my mother, "Mom, Wayne is a grown man you have to let him make that decision. Don't worry he's going to be just fine." Fine? That was not the right word to

describe his actual condition.

Sunday night came along. Wayne called me again. "I need you now!"

"What's going on?" I said. "I am at work."

"I am back at the emergency room," he said, "I need you here now."

"I will be closing the restaurant at 8'oclock tonight," I told him. "I will get there as soon as I can leave here."

I arrived at the hospital about 11 o'clock that night. I was cold and dreary. A slight chill came over me along with a little of fear. Fear of the unknown. Instead of worrying any longer I went inside the hospital.

As I approached the security stand I could see the officer behind the glass. He was an older man, African American, probably in his 60's. He was tall but on the heavier side. "Can I help you ma'am?" His voice was deep like a base drum.

"Yes, sir I am here to see Wayne Hester," I told him.

"I can take you back now, he is in Trauma 2."

TRAUMA 2? What? Why would he be in Trauma 2? Wayne told me it was because he couldn't breathe. Was there something he wasn't telling me? My heart was racing. I was scared. The man opened the door. He said to me, "Here you go, ma'am."

"Thank you," I told him as he walked away.

I walked inside the room. There he was. Wayne. He was trying to sleep. Every time he started to fall asleep bells and whistles were going off. He sits up and looks at me. "Took you long enough," he said.

"Dang, I was an hour away what did you expect?" I told him. "Well, what are the doctors saying?"

"They are saying that my enlarged heart is due to sleep apnea. Every time I fall asleep I stop breathing. My chests hurts so bad that they have put me on morphine for the pain."

A few minutes later a nurse walks in. She's a short, red-headed classic beauty and small frame. She asked me, "Are you Mrs. Hester?"

"She was the first one," Wayne grunted and giggled.

"The favorite ex Mrs. Hester too," I snapped back at him.

“Well Mr. Hester we are going to have to put this C-Pap machine on your face so that you could possibly rest comfortably and still be able to breath,” she explained to him. He looks at me. I say to him, “Go ahead. You need to rest while they try and figure out what’s going on.”

The nurse started to Velcro a mask around Wayne’s head. C-Pap machines force air into the lungs so someone with breathing problems can sleep.

Wayne finally started to relax and fall asleep when suddenly he sits straight up and breaks the mask off his face. “I can’t! Sharnell, I just can’t! I’m sorry! I broke it!” He says to me. The nurse hears the commotion and runs in. “Is everything alright?”

“No, it’s not, he has broken the mask on the machine,” I told her.

“Mr. Hester, if you can’t wear the mask the doctor is going to have to intubate you,” the nurse exclaims.

Wayne is sobbing. This big tough guy I have known and loved since I was 16 years old is sobbing and crying in my arms. “Please don’t let them put that back on me,” he wailed.

“I won’t let them do anything you don’t want. I will strongly encourage you to let them put you on the ventilator to help you breathe so that way they can get you well,” I told him.

He agreed. I held his hand while they put him to sleep. They asked me to leave the room so that they can do the procedure. The pretty nurse says to me, “Mrs. Hester I believe we finally have him stable. We will be moving him to ICU.”

ICU? Those words have never felt good to me. I waited with him while he slept peacefully hooked up to all the wires and tubes. Finally at 3am he is moved to his ICU room. I decided since visitation was at 8am I would come back.

I returned home and climbed into my bed exhausted. 5am rolls around and my phone is ringing. Uncle Claude?

“Hello,” I said.

“He’s gone. The hospital just called and Wayne passed away,” he said.

“No! This can’t be right! I’m getting Brandon up now we will head to the hospital,” I tell him.

I felt it. I felt him. I knew in that moment he was gone. I walked down the hall to my son’s room. I only made it halfway

when I collapsed into a scream. “Brandon! He’s gone!” I have not cried this hard in a long time. My son picks me up and says, “Mom, let’s get up there and see what is going on.”

Brandon and I arrived at the hospital. It was eerily quiet. As we arrived on the ICU floor we pick up the phone and let them know that we are there for Wayne Hester. A doctor comes out. Are you the family of Mr. Hester. Brandon says, “I’m his son.” “Mr. Hester’s heart could not perform any longer at 20% and just stopped. I am truly sorry, we did all we could do,” the doctor stated. “Would you like to see him?” “Yes,” I said quickly. “Mom, I can’t,” Brandon says. “I understand son,” I say to him.

I walk in with the doctor. There he is, my first love, the father of my children. Lifeless and gone. I hold his hand. “I’ll always love you. Goodbye old friend.”



General Art—Third Place

Anthony L. Damron

Short Story

Honorable Mention

The Hunt

Kirstee Trahan

As she came to the end of the woods and the beginning of the water, she stared across the lake. She was exhausted, like she had been dragged by a pack of wolves while fighting the whole time. As she looked out over the frozen, cold, and endless lake, she felt like lying down and never getting back up. After a little time of counting each heartbeat like a clock ticking each second tick, she began to think it was possible she imagined the danger. Maybe she conjured up the sound of someone or something behind her. Then she heard it again, echoing across the lake like someone using a megaphone.

Just as she began to calm herself something was lurking in the shadows. She heard the tiny branches breaking in the dark, and it sounded as if a bomb had gone off, echoing into the night. For a second she was unsure how to make herself move, mind paralyzed with fear, body feeling as though she was packed down in concrete, like her mind was separate from her body. She scanned vigorously trying to see what had made the noises, although unsure of what to do if she did. There It goes again! All of the sudden she willed herself to move. She began running, bolting out like a horse in derby, heart pounding so loud it sounded like drums pounding in her ears. She tried to come up with a plan, she needed a plan. She stopped and crouched down behind a fallen tree, much like a cat does when hiding in fear. She tried desperately to catch her breath, and it was then she saw him. The man she thought had been following her; he had came into every store she visited that day when

she had gone to town for supplies. He followed ever-so-slowly behind her, never fully showing his whole face. Now she watched him from behind the log, he stood there breathing a hard cloud of smoke from the cold every time he exhaled. He carried a gun, and the metal shined under the moon as if shining across smooth water. He called out, "I know you're out there." Not knowing how her heart could possibly pound any harder, she gasped for air, but it was as if she could no longer get adequate oxygen to her brain. She felt her mind slipping into unconsciousness unable to catch herself as she passed out.

When she woke up she immediately began to look around, assessing where she was. She became frantic, she was bound, tied with yellow, and green rope, hands tied behind a chair and feet bound by the ankles. The ropes had already begun to rub her wrists raw, it burned like she had put them on a stove, only to pop the bubble that comes from the aftermath. After some time, her eyes were finally adjusting, she saw a knife perched on the end of what looked like the small, steel tables that doctors use when performing surgery. She rocked herself with all her might, kicking and wiggling her ankles together. If only she could get her ankles free. If she could guess, she was in some type of basement. It was dark, musty, and smelled of mold and stagnant water. As she continued to loosen up the rope around her ankles, she finally broke free. She slipped her arms over the top of the chair doing her best to make not one peep. Quietly she inched the chair towards the surgical table, she turned the chair around in order to grab the knife with her hands still tied behind her back. Finally, she cut the ropes and quickly positioned herself behind the door, this was a one-chance sneak attack. She heard the keys, and as the man opened the door, she reached around and with all her wait and force she stabbed him. Blood began to flood his shirt, spreading like dye in water. She ran frantically, searching for the way out, but he was coming, staggering from the wound she had caused. She heard the grunts trailing behind her. As she looked around, it was like she was in a house but yet underground. She couldn't help but to wonder how many had come before her and how many had made it out. She quickly put that thought out of her mind, she was going to get out, she was going to make it! Continuing to search, she saw a hammer, and right by it was a door. This had to be the door out of

here. It was locked, so she swung the hammer, pounding the lock with the remaining energy she had left until it finally gave way. Just as she swung the door he entered the room, so she frantically began to climb. There were no stairs that lead out of the underground hell in which she had been trapped. As she reached the ground she gave one last push and she was out. She landed on her feet and began to run as fast as her legs would carry her.

Just as she thought she could go no more, lungs raw like they might shatter into a million pieces, legs like limp noodles, she woke up. As she got ready for school she thought about how frightening the nightmare was, and how real the man seemed. She vowed to herself she would be more careful in dreams from now on.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Brian Marsh



Essay



General Art—Honorable Mention

Anthony L. Damron

Essay - First Place

Pulses of Light

Ashley Desmond

Have you ever wondered why there is something rather than nothing? My mind explodes like a supernova when I start to think about such extraordinary questions. A child gazes upon the dazzling, shimmering stars as if it were buried treasure. I find it astonishing to gleam up and beyond, pass the heavens, and stare at such a marvelous masterpiece, as if some almighty beings' hand-tossed diamond dust into the sky. As I squint precisely into my telescope, the molten gold majesties wink at me from an endless arch of void with a mysterious, dark energy. Countless nights I ponder the map of the universe, searching courageously like an ancient explorer through the endless dimensions of space and time.

In the midnight hour, the moonlight dimly glows in the oceans of nebula, as the luminous, spiraling arms of the Milky Way dance from star to star. The frosty blue and purples merge and twist into irregularities that you can't help but admire. From afar, the universe resembles a mouth-watering bowl of ice cream, full of blueberry swirls and shiny sprinkles. The glittering sparks of angel-fire illuminate the sky, like beacons of hope for sailors lost at sea. Our magnificent and destructive galaxy violently accretes matter from high velocity clouds, yet within the storm inside our home, our extravagant neighborhood awaits some twenty-seven thousand light years from the Galactic Center, our solar system.

Formed about 4.6 billion years ago, due to the violent event of gravitational collapse from a humongous, frightening interstellar molecular cloud, our neighbors await us with their marvelous contents. Terrestrial monsters, gas giants, and frozen creatures lurk throughout our home, yet gravitationally bound into a flat disk system around the 'star' of the show. Like the sailors lost at sea, we

feel a warm, snuggling feeling inside. We owe this superior entity everything to feel the security of our cozy, safe home called Earth... this glorious, blazing, fireball in the sky, our Sun.

Nearly a perfect sphere of scorching, immense plasma, the glorious Sun is the most important source of energy for life on Earth. The sounds of symphonies roar as we finally arrive, welcomed with the blaze of crackling fires. What a brilliant sight to see, you can feel the feverish waves hit your skin like a humid summer day. A vital source for all of humanity, yet in approximately five billion years, it will transform into a red giant, so large that it will engulf Earth along with its terrestrial pals. What keeps us inhaling the potion of oxygen will be that which leads to our ultimate destruction, and there is pure intelligent beauty in that.

Have you ever wondered why there is something rather than nothing? Nearly everyone in the world has pondered the question at least once in their insignificant life spans. When you drift off into the clouds and start wondering about the astronomical scale of the universe, it can take a serious mental adjustment. Oh, little star, how I wonder what you are! Rather you are an ancient explorer or sailor lost at sea, never let the fear of such wonders of the inferiority complex of our universe in a nutshell pounce your emotions. Don't be left stranded on the coast, shaking in your boots. Our impressive universe is full of mysteries and misconceptions hindering humanity from exhaustively understanding our nature. Embrace and submerge your mind in the gulf of curiosity and remember to look up at the stars.



Expressions 2021

Cover Art—Honorable Mention

Kynlie Burnett

Essay-Second Place

The Pecan Tree

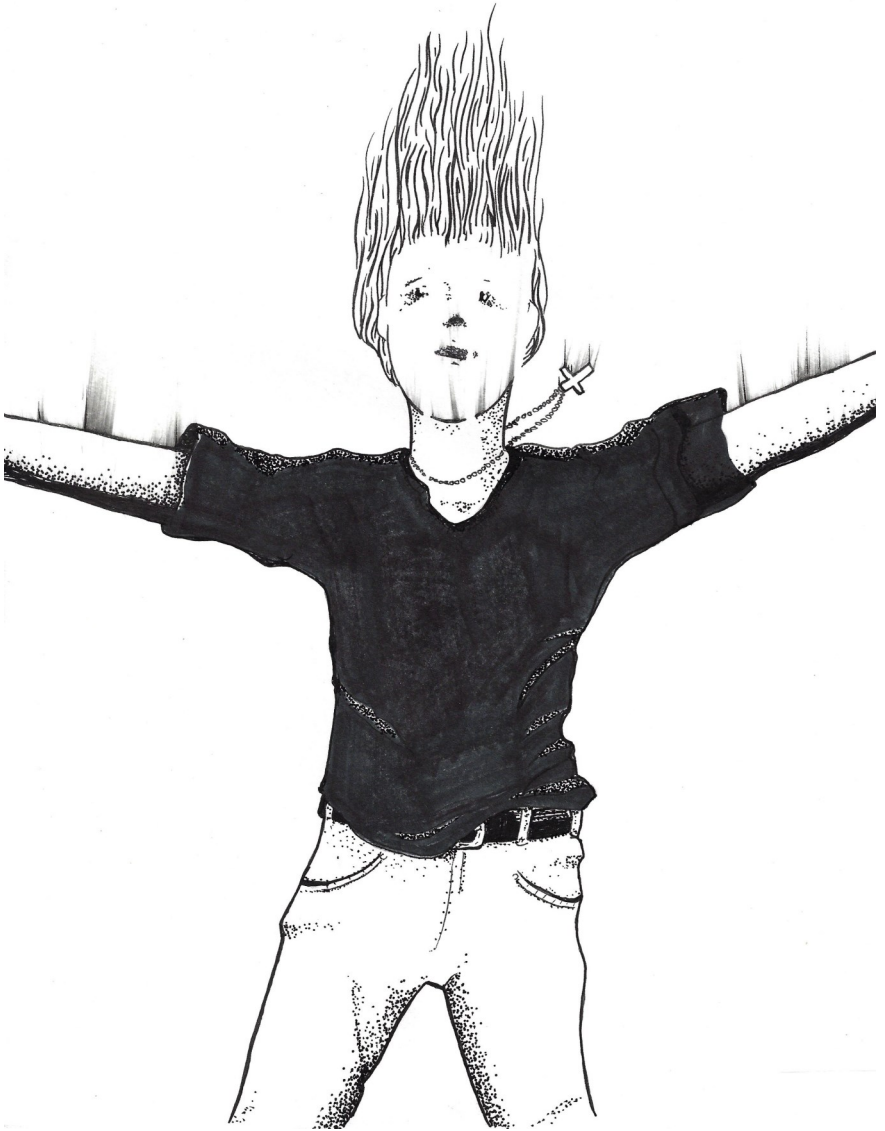
Phung Huynh

Throughout our lives, humans unconsciously collect unusual fragrances that exist in our brains for an unprecedented amount of time. As for myself, the unforgettable scent of ripened pecan trees left an impact on me for as long as I could remember. The tree would be accompanied alongside small, rambunctious children maneuvering the playgrounds, filling the air with laughter and screams. Under the tree's cooling embrace, a crowd would gather—yellow-skinned kids with flushed cheeks. Frantically collecting the closed pecans, the kids would stomp on them determinedly in hopes of tasting the delectable nuts. Faces grew red with adrenaline and dripping sweat; a type of euphoric feeling one experiences only a few times while living. Quite often I feel random films of nostalgia overwhelm me, wishing for time to rewind back into those earlier days. Nonetheless, time is unmerciful and does not wait on anyone.

The cherished pecan tree slowly withered within the memories of myself, and the children who once gathered underneath are grown. When high school finally arrived, our close group began to branch off, neglecting one another unless dire efforts were made to stay connected. Reality settled in when they were not present to guide me in times of loneliness and anxiety. The hands that constantly provided support eventually unclasped and a void feeling arose within me. It was then, my overflowing thoughts began to spoil my quality of life. It was unsettling to discover those charismatic children became quiet and restrained. Often, I would endure an extreme rage that came with the loss of my friends. However, one can only hold out for so long and as a result, I would lash out on people that I cared deeply for. Truthfully, I felt like a needy child craving a mother's attention, not knowing how to express my

emotions properly. Initially, I assumed my anger was wholly caused by the loss of my “friends,” but looking back, I recognize that it was because I was unaware of how to be independent. My personality and appearance were practically all carbon copies of my peers. I had no sense of individuality.

The separation from my previous friends was a form of motivation to defy the limitations they had unknowingly set on me. Gradually, my whole persona began to reveal itself. Finally, able to shine, the shadows that caused my light to grow dim unwelcomed themselves. Their toxicity was something that I was unable to identify until after I was fully removed from the situation. I became too conventional to their condescending attitudes, manipulation, and unpleasant treatment. Soon new opportunities revealed themselves daily, and the void that once occupied my entire body began to welcome a new, internal warmth. Family, academics, and a couple close-knit friends naturally became my primary obligations. Every commitment taught me the importance of accountability, and each community accepted me as I came. Around them, I can arrive in any form, without the need to remold into a different character. Without experiencing countless closed doors, I would not have been led to some of my most enjoyable moments in life. All I have to say is, thank you to the dear pecan tree who gave me cherished memories before reality struck.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Edward Rotan

Essay-Third Place

Root

Britkne Gallagher

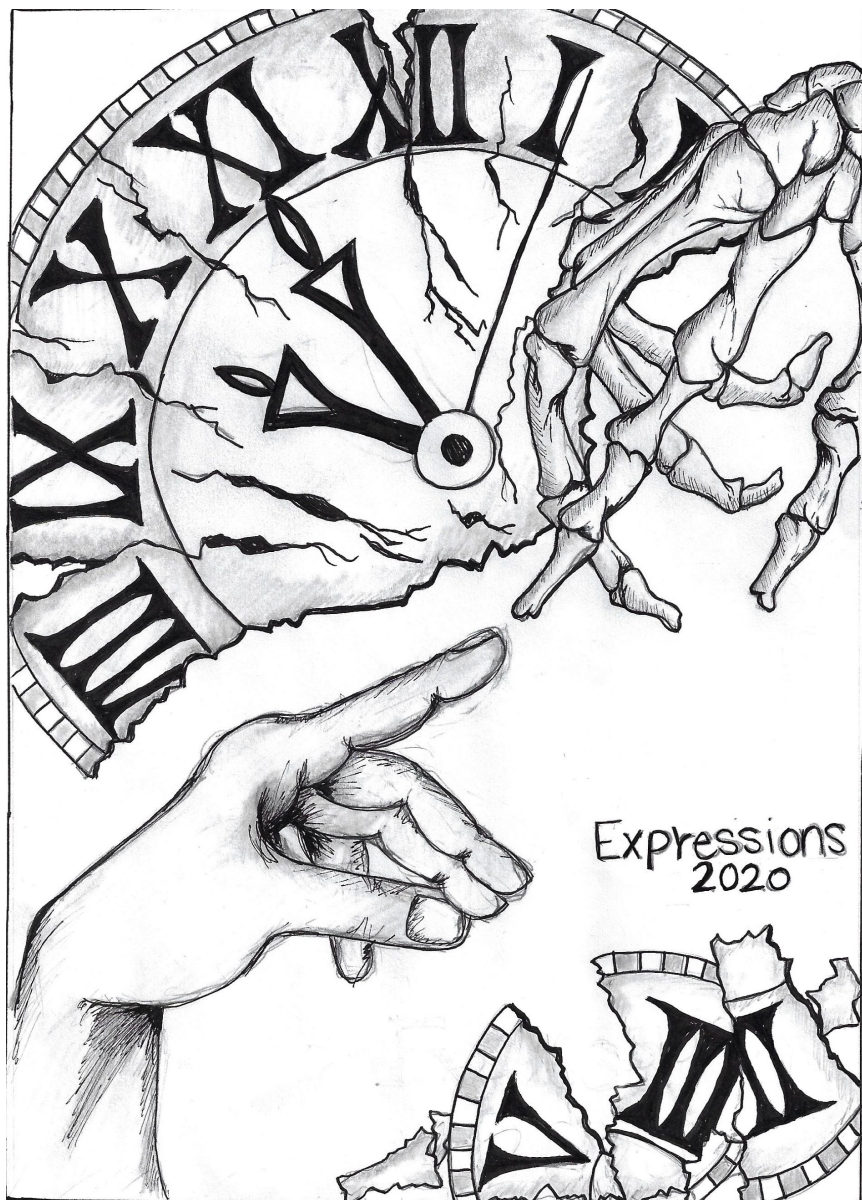
The study of etymology is incredibly important to us today. With an understanding of etymology we are able to identify the meaning of a single word in multiple contexts. It also provides us with the opportunity to learn about the history and culture from which a certain word derives from, and how these words have changed over time. This is an interesting factor because it helps us see the patterns and relationships that form between languages. For example, let's take a look at the word "root." The word itself was a borrowing from the Old Norse language, *rót*, which is cognate with *wort*, *radish*, and *radix*. The Old English words for root are *wyrtruma* and *wyrtwala* and root can be traced all the way back to circa 1175. The denotation for the word root is "the part of a plant or tree, normally underground, which attaches it to the ground and conveys water and nutrients from the ground to the body of the plant or tree." This is fascinating because with that definition alone, it can be made both physical and abstract. One of my favorite poets, Rumi, once said "I seem restless, but am deeply at ease. Branches tremble; the roots are still." This is a powerful quote to me because it brings forth a concrete visualization of a standing tree with branches swaying in the wind, but the abstract meaning behind this quote is one of great strength and calmness.

It is for the vast, contrasting meanings alone that I chose to write about this simple yet complex word. Since I was small child, I have deeply admired trees and their roots. They are one of the most mystical and magnificent of God's creations. You see, roots have four main functions. Those functions are to anchor the tree to the ground, to absorb water and nutrients from the soil, to store the absorbed water and nutrients properly, and to transport said water

and nutrients throughout the tree. Roots give life and sustain it throughout all seasons. Their tangled masses and sculpture-like framework often stay hidden, but at times the roots choose to reveal bits and pieces of themselves. It is my belief that we as humans have more in common with roots than we might think.

Our roots begin with generations of trees anchored firmly to the earth. They have adapted to change over time, inheriting the traits and features of the roots before them. Like myself, I have inherited my mother's blue eyes and her unwavering resilience that I'm sure comes from a background of Sicilian women before her. Our roots are our foundation for strength, but sometimes our roots can be tarnished. We can become rooted in trauma. We can become rooted in shame. We can become rooted in bitterness and resentment, intentionally or unintentionally. When these diseases try to set in and create disruption in our foundation, it is crucial to see these obstacles for what they are. We must take on the role of a root and crack pavement, or even displace earth, because our roots are our lifeline. We must do everything we can to ensure that our trees survive and continue flourishing for ourselves and for future generations to come.

With that, I will leave you with one last quote that has inspired me since becoming a mother. "We give our kids two things in life; roots to ground them and wings to let them fly." A quote by Henry Ward Beecher that has been paraphrased just a bit. It's meaning is so substantial to me that I have engraved the visual image into my arm as a steady reminder when it comes to parenting my children. The roots come first. They provide our children with stability and nourishment, grounding them in a sense of belonging so that they can grow strong and healthy. With strong roots established, children will have all they need to grow their wings and prepare to leave our nests. We, as parents, can rest easy knowing that we provided a strong foundation for them, starting at the very roots.



Cover Art—Honorable Mention
Victoria Soriano

Essay

Honorable Mention

My Dear Grandpa

Eustacia Wagner

Ben Hudson was a tall black man with a baritone voice who loved to cook. He learned from his mother, while watching her in the kitchen when he was just a boy. She would permeate the kitchen with her southern cooking with dishes like gumbo, catfish court-bouillon, smother and friend chicken, and homemade biscuits and gravy. My grandfather became a steward on a ship while he was in his twenties, in less than a year he found his trade and became the head cook on a ship for over 50 years. Traveling throughout the world, he learned many other cultural dishes from Italy, France, China, Australia, and many other countries. When my grandpa finally retired from the shipping industry, he became the head cook at home. In the summertime we loved going to spend time with our grandparents in Port Arthur, TX. "Ooh, boy," I remember my mouth would water and my tummy would grumble just thinking what he would cook while we were there. My grandfather's cooking will be in my memory forever.

Ben Hudson's cooking style came from his hometown, Iowa, Louisiana, mostly French and outdoor southern cooking. There was a bold, rich, spicy taste to all his dishes. One summer I remember every morning the meats and garden food would be fresh, we would wake up around 4:00 AM and go pick onions, green peppers, basil, and herbs from the garden. We'd go milk the cow or goat and pick the eggs. Then we would watch the magic of grandpa cooking, grits, eggs, bacon, pork chop, homemade biscuits, and this gravy sauce that would make you slap your momma!

After he would finish, he'd round us up by ringing this cow

bell. We would say grace and dig in, because we had to store up to be ready to work in the fields and garden later, including feeding the pigs, goats, chicken, and cows for our chores. That part none of us grandchildren liked much, but when it was time for lunch, it was well worth the work. These meals included smothered chicken, rice, mustard greens with turnips a hint of garlic that'd melt in your mouth. Sometimes he would cook several meats like when he made his famous all-or-nothing gumbo. This dish would consist of cooking the season hen in the oven until it was tender, then adding, shrimp, and andouille sausage. He would sauté celery, onions, garlic, okra with seasonings, mix in salt, and white & black pepper. He made a homemade roux which was almost black, giving it a rich smooth texture. He even added gizzards, oysters, tomatoes, and yes, even eggs. Then he would let that simmer for an hour. Along with that he would make potato salad and rice depending on our choice. There was always dessert, either homemade peach cobbler, apple pie or his bourbon pound cake, with a light cream icing. "Ooh, yeah," let me not forget the homemade ice-cream that he'd have us churning from this small wooden bucket and dry ice and course salt.

For me, you cannot beat these memories of my grandpa and his cooking. Those experiences spark joy and passion, along with the memory of good eating, and will always be etched in my mind forever!



General Art—Honorable Mention

Lizzet Valencia

Essay

Honorable Mention

The Importance of Being Earnest

Jackeline Garcia

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was an Irish playwright, novelist, and poet in the late 19th century during the Aesthetic movement (Beckson). Wilde was born on October 16, 1854 in Dublin, Ireland. Wilde's father, William Wilde, was a well-respected surgeon, and his mother, Jane Wilde, was a literary writer. Wilde studied at Trinity College in Dublin, and furthered his studies at Magdalen College in Oxford. After graduating college, Wilde moved to London to pursue his career as a writer. Wilde's work catered to different audiences and provided various pieces such as poems, plays, and novels. Although Wilde's work was broad, his strong-suit was plays. His most popular plays were comedies such as: *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *An Ideal Husband*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Wilde's prime was a dream, but events in his personal life took a turn for the worse. Wilde married Constance Lloyd in 1884, and became a family of four. In 1891, Wilde started to have an affair with Lord Alfred Douglas. In 1895, Wilde sued Douglas' father for defamation after Douglas' father accused Wilde of being a homosexual. Wilde lost the case, and was charged for gross indecency. Wilde was sentenced two years of hard labor, and his wife took their two sons to Switzerland changing their family name for a clean slate and new life. Being homosexual was frowned upon on, so after Wilde's release his reputation had deteriorated (Beckson). Wilde did not live long after his release and died in Paris on November 30, 1900.

Whenever a character's name reflects who they are is called an aptonym or charactonym. Irony is the use of words to express

the meaning of a situation that is the total opposite of what is meant. Satire is to expose a societal concept in a exaggerated and humorous manner. Satire is a very broad subject, so any writer can incorporate it into their work in a unique way. *The Importance of Being Earnest* is didactic by touching on social pressure. Both Jack and Algernon are part of the English upper class, and have reputations to protect. Constantly having to carry the weight of being held high of expectations can be exhausting, which is why Jack and Algernon have alter-egos. Jack's alter-ego is Ernest, and Algernon's is Bunbury. These two men use their false identities to run away from their community to then be allowed to be fools. It would not be necessary to go along and be someone who is not, but being upper class has an image to live up to. Today, young people can relate to this theme by being held to high expectations from parents or school. These same people can act completely different once they're out and about living their best lives.

The importance of being "earnest" is to have genuine intentions, being true to one's feelings, and honest. This meaning was portrayed throughout the entire play whilst Jack longed to propose Gwendolen, and Algernon fell in love with Cecily. Their love was true and full of devotion. The importance of being "earnest" and being "Ernest" are no different. Being Ernest allowed Jack and Algernon to be with the women they loved, giving them the opportunity to be and act how they truly wanted to. Gwendolen, Cecily, and Lady Bracknell were actually earnest. They did not have false identities unlike Jack and Algernon. These women remained honest and truthful to their feelings. Gwendolen and Cecily expressed their love for Ernest, and Lady Bracknell was harsh with her feelings and opinions. Lady Bracknell was very explicit about Ernest not being allowed to marry Gwendolen, and didn't hold back her feelings towards the situation. These character's emotions were overwhelmingly strong.

The story starts off with Jack going to Algernon's estate. Algernon was waiting for the arrival of his aunt and cousin. Jack was in love with Algernon's cousin, Gwendolen, and wanted to propose to her. Algernon asks Lane to bring out the cigarette case that Jack had left in the smoking room from the last time he was over. Algernon opens the cigarette and finds the names of Jack and Cecily engraved. Algernon has his suspicions, but after further in-

terrogation he came to the conclusion of Jack being a “Bunburyist.” Algernon agrees to distract his aunt, Lady Bracknell, by making her go into another room while Jack proposes to Gwendolen in the living room. The proposal was unsuccessful since Lady Bracknell walked into the living room during the proposal. Lady Bracknell did not give Jack her blessing to marry Gwendolen because he is an orphan. After the mishap, Jack was so upset he decided to kill Ernest for good. Gwendolen had been eavesdropping on Jack and Algernon’s conversation and was curious about Jack’s mysterious background. Jack then gave Gwendolen the address to his country estate. Algernon copies the address down and alerts Lane that he is going “Bunburying” the following day. Back at Jack’s estate, Cecily is studying with Miss Prism. Cecily was longing for a break and Miss Prism went along with idea since she was distracted by Dr. Chasuble. After Miss Prism dismissed herself, Ernest arrives. Cecily and Ernest had instant chemistry. Jack broke the news to Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble about Ernest’s tragic death. Right after the announcement Cecily announces that Ernest came to visit. Jack then quickly realizes that Ernest is actually Algernon.

Jack was angered by Algernon’s unexpected visit and orders him to be sent away. Algernon is away to arrange for a baptism, and while he was away Gwendolen arrives. Cecily and Gwendolen go on how they’re in love, only to find out that they’re both in love with Ernest. This information upsets the two ladies, but fortunately Jack and Algernon stepped in. Jack and Algernon reveal their identities and clearly state that there is no Ernest. Cecily and Gwendolen were now more upset than ever and walk away from Jack and Algernon. The two men tell that faking being Ernest was the only way to see each other as much as possible, and the ladies forgave them. After the make-up Lady Bracknell comes to Jack’s estate to take Gwendolen back home. Lady Bracknell notices that Algernon and Cecily are quite close, and asks how big her inheritance is. The inheritance is big; therefore, Cecily has Lady Bracknell’s blessing to be with Algernon, but Jack does not agree to have them married unless Lady Bracknell allows for him and Gwendolen to be married. Miss Prism’s name was mentioned and Lady Bracknell wanted her to show herself and confess. Miss Prism, with shame, reveals that when she was Lady Bracknell’s servant she was caring for a child whenever she had mistakenly put a novel in the stroller and

the baby in the handbag at a train station. To Jack's surprise he was left in a handbag at train station and brings the down the bag he was abandoned in. Lady Bracknell confirms that the baby Miss Prism was caring for that day was Mrs. Moncrieff, Algernon's mother. Making Algernon and Jack brothers, and Lady Bracknell his aunt. Jack was named after his father, and his father's name to be Ernest. The fiasco rests in their favor, and Jack *was* actually Ernest.

Wilde incorporating irony into the title was well executed. To be earnest is to be truthful and honest. Jack and Algernon lived double lives and lie about being Ernest. Obviously Jack and Algernon are not earnest, but are Ernest in the play. The title of the play is ironic because it states the importance of being earnest, even though Ernest was not earnest at all.

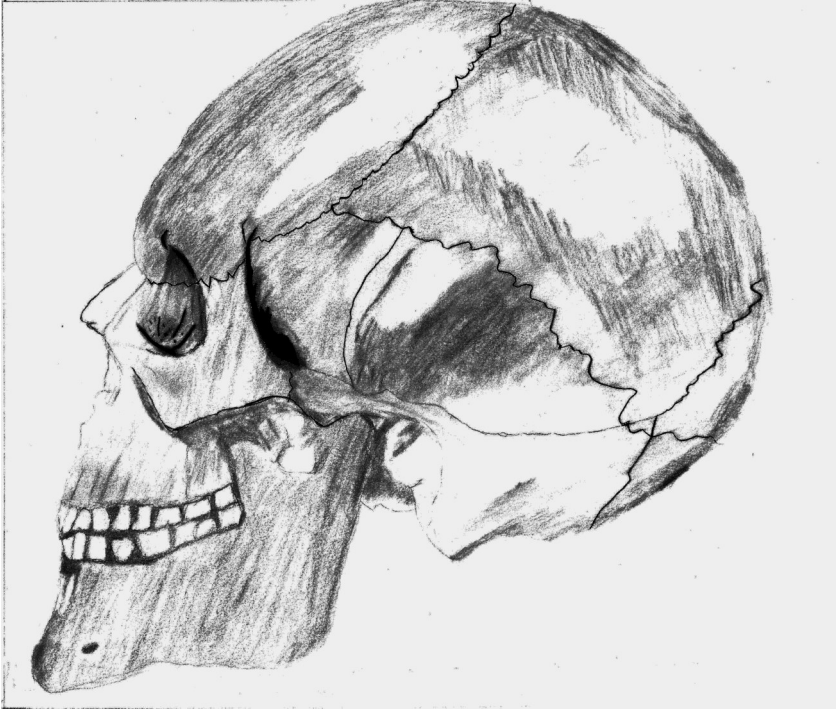
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General Art—Honorable Mention

Isabell Phelps

Essay

Honorable Mention

Waiting for Godot

Gabriel Galvez

We search for where the leaves do not grow, we will always wait with uncertainty for Godot. *Waiting for Godot* was written 72 years ago in 1949, by French writer Samuel Beckett. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is as simple as the title suggests. The play illustrates two men, Vladimir and Estragon, waiting for Godot; yet, the main anticipated character Godot never presents himself. What can be interpreted as a meaningless plot made a lot of the audience scratch their heads. Many minds could not decipher what Beckett's unparalleled work meant; but, through literary analysis, real life scenarios, and evaluations of certain quotes, one will come to find Beckett's work has a deeper meaning.

Waiting for Godot has a lot of figurative elements implemented in the text, thus giving the reader a lot to process while trying to understand the plot. Gallows humor, minimalism, Theatre of the Absurd, and allusion are a scant of literary elements found in Beckett's text. Gallows humor is humor, as one may guess, which is considered grim and ironic in a hopeless or desperate situation. In a setting where there is mere a dead tree upon the vast emptiness, Vladimir and Estragon seems to be in a hopeless situation as they wait for a stranger with no guarantee of his arrival. The next element is minimalism and is a very important one to the story. Minimalism is literature expressed through very simple stories which can be seen as plotless. *Waiting for Godot* is a perfect example of a minimalist story. One would like a plot of drama, suspense, or action; yet, in *Waiting for Godot* the plot is as simple as

two men waiting for Godot. This simplicity is found in the meaning of the Theatre of the Absurd, which is as said by BLW, “Essentially, each play renders man’s existence as illogical, and moreover meaningless” (British Literature Wiki 1). The play is cloyed with questions made by the characters. All of them due to their uncertainty of life, one example is when Estragon said, “What about hanging ourselves?” (*Waiting for Godot* Scene I). The characters arouse from the idea of hanging themselves as a mean to pass the time. An explication, or analysis of the possible meanings and relationships of the words, images, and other small units that make up a poem, can be used to comprehend the idea of man’s existence being illogical.

An allusion is a reference to a: script, setting, person, or idea. One made is to the bible as said in the script, “Suppose we repented” (*Waiting for Godot* Scene I) and followed by, “Did you ever read the bible” (*Waiting for Godot* Scene I). The religious talk throughout the plot ties into the themes and symbols of the story, which depict the bigger picture of the story.

Three themes found in the story are: the uncertainty of time, questioning of existence, and human experience being meaningless. These themes begin revealing the full detail of the story as a story about two men waiting turns to something more meaningful. There are two scenes in the play being in the same setting, but the only difference is a day as passed by. Both Scenes tell the same plot just with different details as one day Pozzo comes in blind the previous he was not. No one seems to remember anything but, Vladimir. Vladimir is the one that questions and points things out as they are familiar to him due to his remembrance of what seems to be a never-ending cycle of time. This cycle times to the second theme of human meaning. We cycle through day-to-day life in a repetitive matter which is the suggestion of the characters to hang themselves to skip this endless cycle, to end the cycle to finally see Godot the wait for the day of one’s uncertain death is the main theme of the play.

Godot, Lucky’s luggage, and Vladimir and Estragon are three symbols in the play with meaning to the further context of the story. Godot is a character that never shows up, but through context clues it can be seen that Godot is actually God himself. The two characters Vladimir and Estragon wait for Godot without

reason and uncertainty of his coming. This symbolizes human's acknowledgement of a death date that may not be today, but perhaps will come tomorrow as the boy represents that symbol in the story as a simple message that one day the omega will come. Lucky's baggage is filled in one hand with sand and the other utilities that only benefit Pozzo. This symbolizes the human burdens we carry every day for others in one hand and for no reason on the other. Finally, the two main characters themselves are symbols as Vladimir and Estragon symbolize two halves of a human. Estragon shows emotions and questions a lot being the heart of a human, while on the other hand Vladimir shows intelligence and drive being the head of a human. These three symbols tie into the meaning of existence as expressed by philosophical theory of Existentialism which emphasizes the existence of an individual person as responsible for their own development through one's own will. That theory tied with the play is something that is relevant to society today as we people live in a loop of life where only by one's self will can; we make something different and meaningful out of life.

Quotes from Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* also explicate further details to better understand the story. Although there seems to be low self-esteem in the characters there is optimism as said in the play, "Tomorrow everything will be better" (*Waiting for Godot* Scene I). Vladimir tells this to Estragon as encouragement to keep waiting as Godot will reward them the next day for it. Estragon leaves his boots behind in scene 1 and said, "... leaving the boots for someone who will come with smaller feet" (*Waiting for Godot* Scene II). It was Estragon's logic for the finding of the boots which Vladimir says it is his and tells of the remembrance of their existence the previous day. This quote could mean that he left his past steps behind as he outgrows his shoes as he is becoming a better or more knowledgeable man and leaves his past steps for someone to learn from his existence. Sometimes people are not meant to stay together that is what is meant by the line, "We weren't made for the same road" (*Waiting for Godot* Scene II). It is better explained by Thea as she said, "The sad, and sometimes irritating, part about this is that they were aware of their need to part and move on, and yet what hinders them is the arrival of Godot" (Kawaiï 1).

They see this as a misfortune as one learns that life does not always go the way one wants it to go. That is what the quote, "...stripped of pretense" (*Waiting for Godot* Act II) means as it is emphasized by the following, "That's how it is on this bitch of an earth" (*Waiting for Godot* Act II). That previous quote is one we all can relate to. Lucky is a character who had little to no words in the play but his one contribution to the dialogue was a big one a quote from lucky, "I speak to avoid thinking" (*Waiting for Godot* Act I) and, "I can't go on like this" (*Waiting for Godot* Act I) are some of the few things Lucky had to vent out in his speech. Lucky, a character full of torment, could mean these as a remark that he is tired of keeping silence. All the time having a sowed mouth and only relying on the mind to express his thoughts, but to who? Only he can hear those thoughts having what could be seen as an endless rant all his thoughts exploded that is what is meant by those quotes. Further understanding the play is a reason of its success.

The play is still produced to this day and the reason being is the same as any other old piece of literature, because it is art. Beckett's composure is a true master piece as many will find no meaning to the plot others may. One example being is a certain audience, the San Quentin prisoners. Many doubted the prisoners as said by Justin Berton, "Some thought (prisoners would) be the last to get it, that it was too esoteric for them to understand" (sfgate 1). It was only in the contrary that the prisoners would understand the meaning of the story better, as they experience the hidden meaning of *Waiting for Godot*. These prisoners will be locked up for years maybe for the rest of their life everyday completing their tasks until the day of their release to society or God. The rich and provided where another audience who may have not enjoyed the play. The reasoning why could be linked to Pozzo's purpose in the story, that the rich and privileged have everything at their feet and do not have to worry about much as life is plain simple for them.

The meaning of the plot may not come to the reader. Some readers were mad and confused that Godot never made an appearance to the play making it ironic. The plot may seem unfinished to a lot of people, that is the reasoning of the backlash. Yet, Beckett added so much detail not to the plot but for the bigger picture.

Aristotle was a towering figure in ancient Greek philosophy,

who said that the best drama story must have one of his three unities; which are: unity of action, unity of place, and unity of time. *Waiting for Godot* has a Unity of all three as the plot mirrors itself in a way, the time seems to repeat itself, and the setting stays the same. As signified by the line, “Yes, let’s go” (*Waiting for Godot* Act I, II) the characters emphasize them leaving as they grow exhausted from waiting, yet they leave nowhere at the end they stay still. As if there is nowhere else to go, but to carry on living. As quoted “What really matters is that we are all waiting” (*Waiting for Godot* Act II) and, “Waiting forces us to confront time” (*Waiting for Godot* Act II) emphasizes that all humans are waiting for the same moment the day of our death that is inevitable. The second quote tells the reader to go and make something out of the time lent to one’s life as if all a person does is wait and repeat the same cycle every day until death there is no purpose in life.

In all said, we are no superior to these characters that symbolize human kind, because we are them. We all share the same faith, as people we have a cycle of life from the moment we wake up to when we sleep everyone follows a similar pattern. We share sleeping, eating, working, studying, and maintenance what sets us apart as humans is what we make out of the limited spare time we have. Samuel Beckett shows us the depiction of human life in *Waiting for Godot*, as through literary analysis, real life scenarios, and evaluations of quotes in Beckett’s work we can understand that message. Now shall we go?

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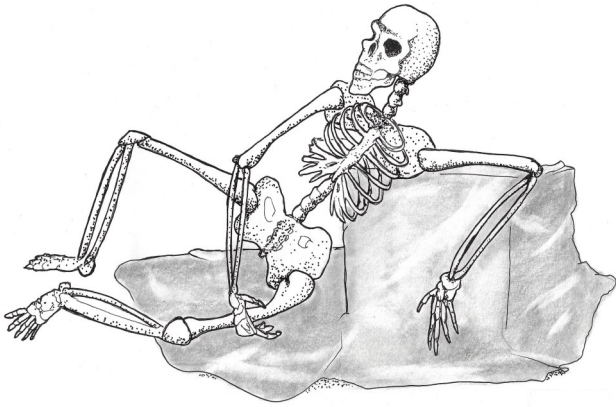
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General Art—Honorable Mention

Edward Rotan



Poetry



General Art—Honorable Mention

Jessica Stanley

Poetry - First Place

Is Love Fair

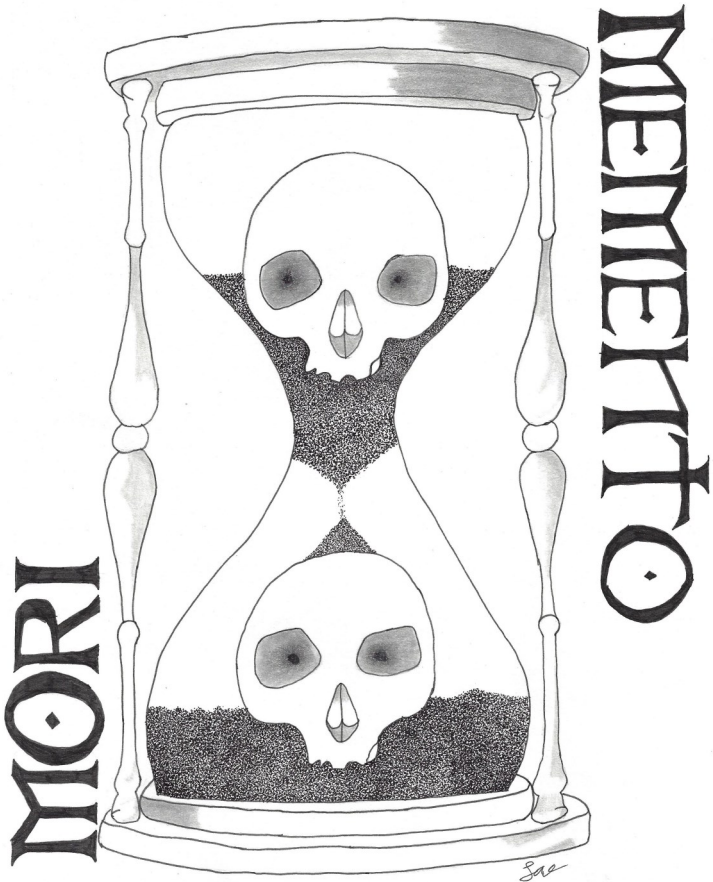
Giovanni Magana

As the sun began to recede from view,
The neon lights came out, and I saw you.
Your beauty had me quickly hide away,
But your eyes called me to come out and play.
The swarms of monarchs began fluttering,
Minds battled feelings from developing.
That cotton candy smile, Ferris wheel eyes,
They sparkled so bright; I was hypnotized.
Laughed so cute, how could I ever forget,
Had fallen in love, though we had just met.
People are quick to talk, news travels fast.
What's the point of love if it never lasts?
Our story ends before it begins.
I still think about what we could have been.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Margarita Rodriguez



General Art—Honorable Mention

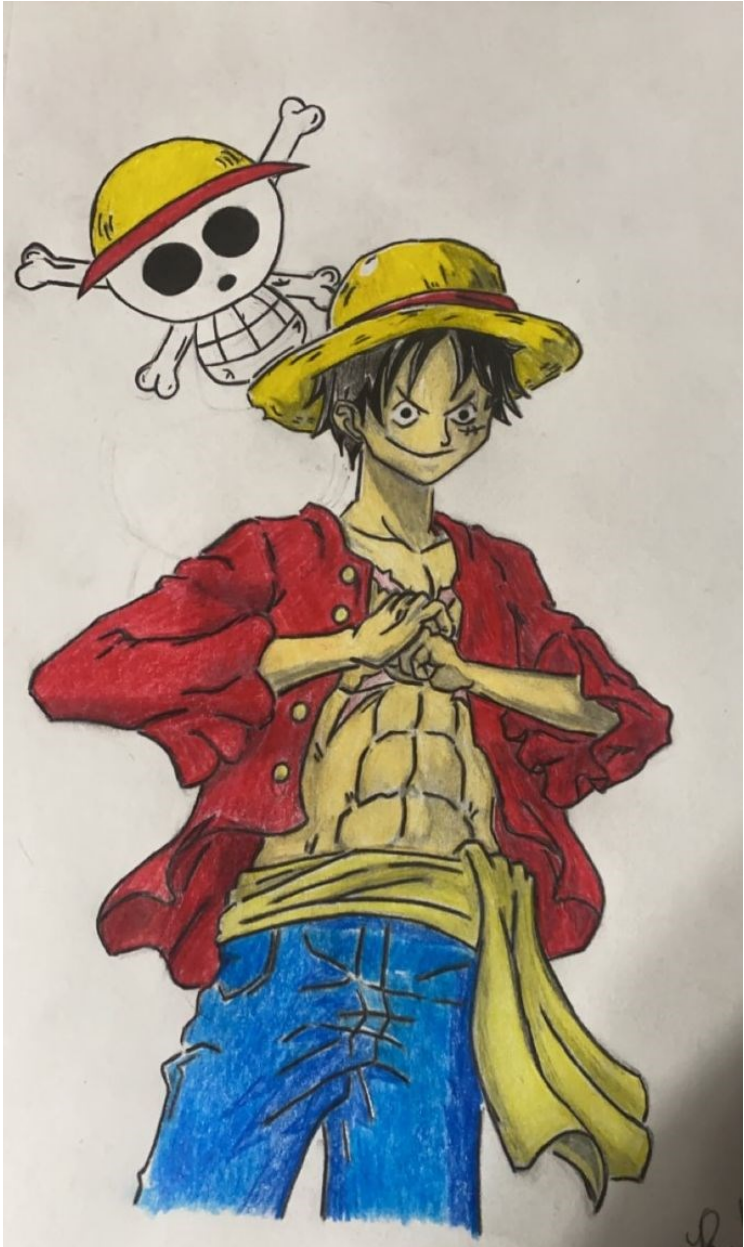
Kaitlyn Morrison

Poetry - Second Place

The Lonliness of Freedom

Andrea Esparza

What follows a breakup is freedom
Freedom to wear whatever, eat whatever, do whatever
You'll sleep in a bigger bed.
You'll get to eat the whole portion of your meals.
You'll get to watch your shows at your own pace.
Being alone never felt so free.
But no one tells you at what cost.
You'll start to notice his absence.
When you roll over in bed, no one is there to meet you halfway.
The other half of the meals you eat will go untouched.
Your shows will lack his additional commentary.
No one tells you how for months, all you'll feel is hollow.
Days will be longer, no longer occupied by him.
The jokes you wish to share will be left unsaid.
And that's when you will realize
How much you actually miss him.
No longer being able to rely on him for happiness
Having to be the supplier of your own happiness.
But that's what comes with freedom.
Loneliness.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Rolando Morales

Poetry - Third Place

Voices and Views

Anthony Galvan

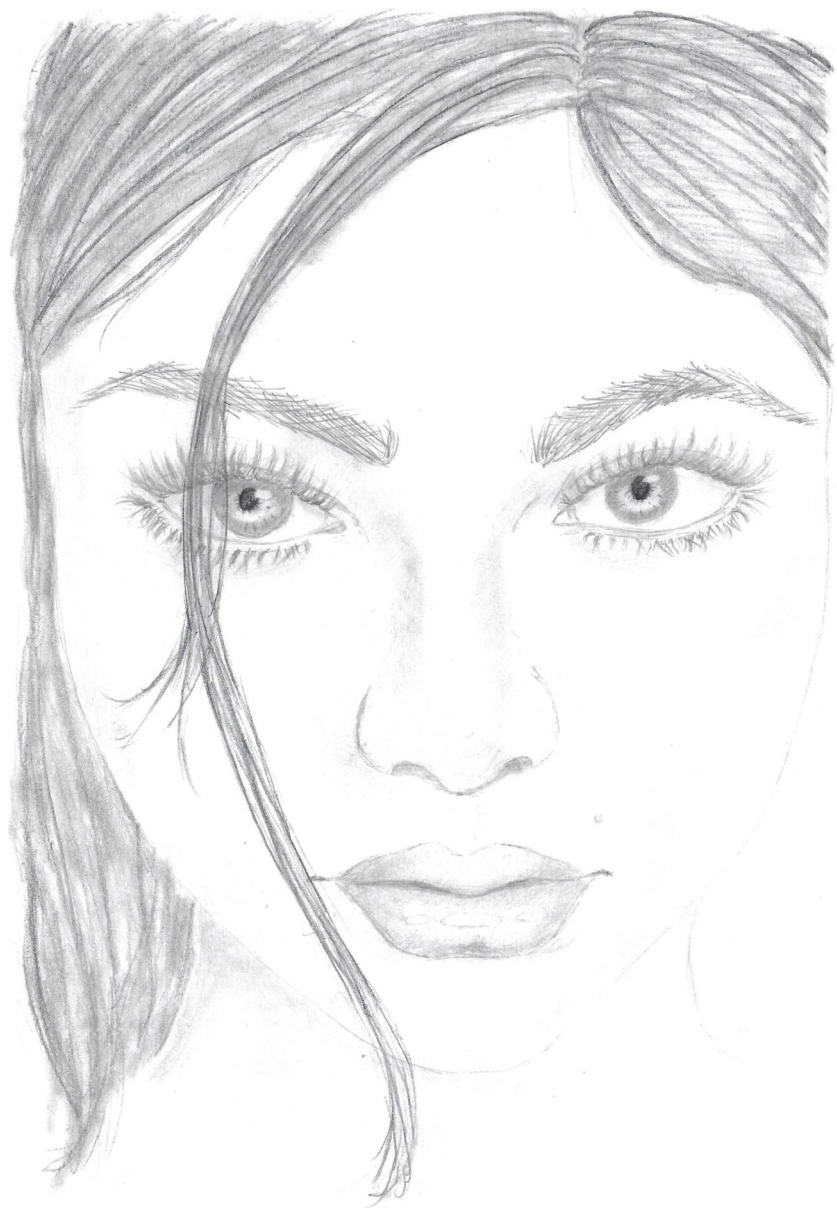
Two sides to choose;
One place with the voice.
Time to turn them on.
Give in to their ploy.

Like a sly fox
with green in their eye.
Your clicks and views
are what keep them alive.

No need to get angry.
Don't leave in a huff.
Posting online
won't be enough.

It'll drive you up the wall.
Leaving you screaming in the street.
No guardian to save you.
Normalize, Bow, Concede.

The solution is simple,
like your ABC's.
Think for yourself.
Turn off the screen!



General Art—Honorable Mention

Kevin Flores

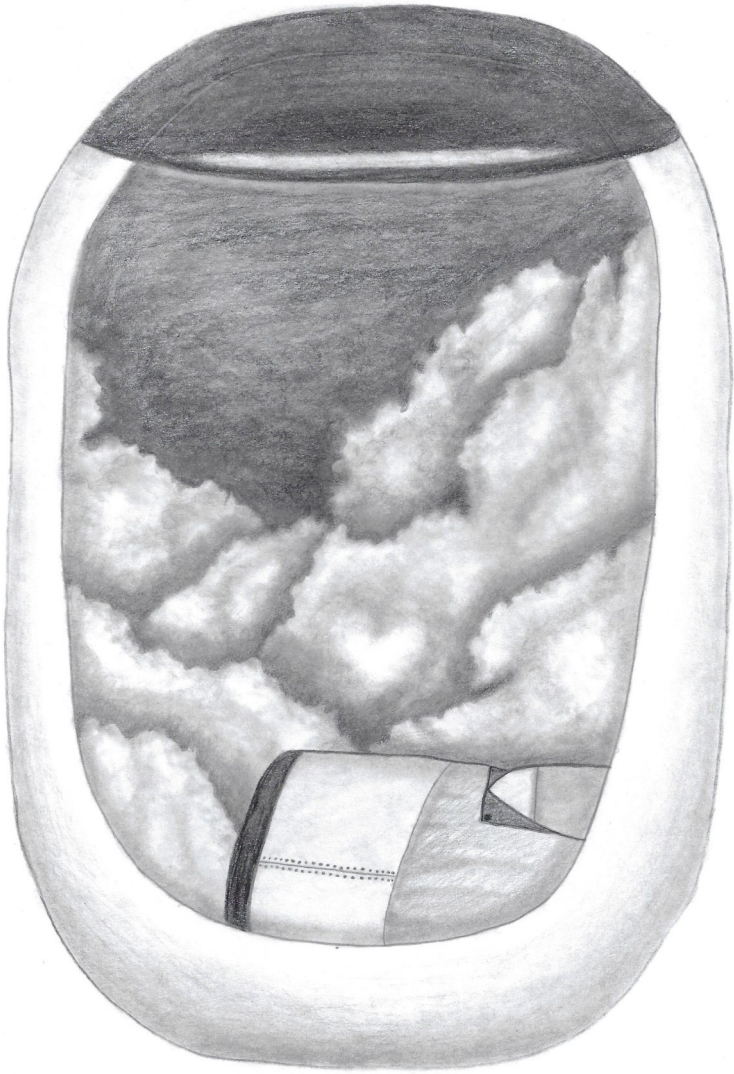
Poetry
Honorable Mention

Numb

Cierra Jones

We played together
Fought together, cried together
I had your back and you had mine.
Now I am numb.
The struggle brought us together,
And every phase in life we took was...
Elementary, Middle, and High School.
When they saw me, they saw you too.
Now I am numb.
We once were happy, sad, excited, mad and nervous together.
But when they took you from me, we were not together-
Now I am numb and alone.
I miss you Joe.

*In loving memory of Champ Joe (Brother)



General Art—Honorable Mention

Lauren Martinez



General Art—Honorable Mention

Victoria Soriano

A decorative border with a repeating pattern of orange and white geometric and floral motifs, including circles, triangles, and stylized leaves, framing the central text.

Faculty

&

Staff

Caitlin James-Mastronardi

COVI
FREE T



COVID-19
FREE TESTING

21st Century Panic

Caitlin James-Mastronardi

We were silenced
By the rising numbers,
Fed by the rising sun.
Unnumbered days in a plague of politics,
None of this can be undone.

It began like a poisonous vine, creeping
Dancing viciously around our base
A dragon of sickness and dread.
Choking society,
See how many dead?

Reality dictates a truth- that we are
Merciless creatures of
Sadness.
Lost in silent
Man-made madness.



Dr. Michelle Judice

Shadowed Path

Ana Cristina Rudholm

I remember camping in the Sierras as a teen-- got lost from the crowd, sat in the melting snow, and wept in the darkening grove sparked by the dying embers of the sun and the occasional cry of the Red-tailed Hawk. And when almost surrendering to sleep with the slim resigned hands of nightfall--the sleep that falls like a scythe-- a black bear appeared. She strode toward me on those gloriously large paws, eyeing me with a certain circumspect and wariness. I froze unwittingly and a strange calm overtook me. She approached, sniffed my foot, gazed at me with a rather startling compassion, glanced down with a wrinkle on her old brow, glanced up again quizzically, and at last ambled away into the thicket, fresh snow falling like ashes on shadowed paths.



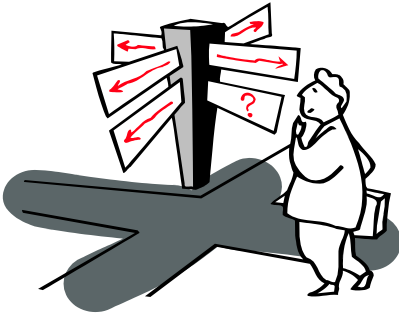
Caitlin James-Mastronardi

When I Consider My Part on Earth

Dr T. Nelson Ikegulu

When I consider HOW my part is played
From within and with pride, I admit,
Ere half my life ...
This pathetic world and wide,
And that one talent, which is hope to abide;
Lodged with me hopeful, though my Mind very sharp.

When I consider WHY my part is played
To serve herewith my fellows, me think,
“My true account ... lest my Soul do rot?”
I politely asked; but patience to preserve,
My real talents, I believe, intact for keeps;
Tucked within my sub-consciousness from without.



When I consider WHERE my part is played
From around and within the universe, I submit,
To ere is human ...
Indifference to mankind, all beasts are,
“But how humane is this universe, thence to blot?”
In askance, to whom no one Spirit I oblige,
I did take the road less traveled;
But I’ve wondered, if to each his path did follow.
When I consider WHEN my part is played

Somewhere I would be singing, far away ...
Among slaves of ruthless slaves, and the earth ever yields,
Wandering in mean graves, in distant fields,
Where all humanity have all space and time to play,
Among fellows with physical and mental acuity,
And being alert from scriptures and sciences;
To sacrifice the food of the **Body**
For the atonement of the **Soul** and the **Spirit**.



Adriane Champagne

Mothers and Daughters

Dr. Tina Capeles

Memories of the past are never vague
Love and friendship we shared
Wounds forever and forgiven
What I keep today is for tomorrow
Those memories I hold

My thoughts of you abound
One of Beauty
One of Mother
One of Friend
A woman full of life
Chasten when needed
Loving all the same

Sweet memories
For all we shared
Dreams and laughter
Tears and sorrow
I love you with a special heart
And memories remain

Through suffering and pain
Always a smile
Never complain
You are free now
With your love
Together forever, all the same



Dr. Michelle Judice

In Dreams

Caitlin James-Mastronardi

In the liquid darkness of dreams
Trees are made of sanguine women,
Hushed in their
Broken virginity.
We are shells of demons,
Cockles of trained laughter,
Violet nights and oceans of chaos.
The trees shed crystalline tears
Over cups of chamomile and honeysuckle.
I flee into shrouds of mist
Far away from the silence
That blisters my charcoaled bliss.



Adriane Champagne

*Thank you to all
contributors
and
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to those
published in
Expressions 2021*

Expressions 2021

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Statement of Editorial Policy

The editorial staff would like to thank all of the students who submitted work for consideration to EXPRESSIONS 2021. Unfortunately, not every entry can be published. In order to insure fair and impartial judging and publication selection, a copy without the author's name is sent to the judges. The judges at no time see the copy which identifies the individual author.

The purpose of EXPRESSIONS 2021 is to publish the best entries for consideration. We are proud of the entries published in this issue and appreciate the support of all students, faculty, and staff who contributed to and enjoy the magazine. As the editor, I will make changes to reflect correct grammar and usage to enhance each entry and the magazine as well.

Caitlin James-Mastronardi, Editor in Chief

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