

ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

The Pierian

Literary + Visual Arts Journal



2024 Edition

The Pierian

Literary + Visual Arts Journal

FRONT COVER

Angela Gordon is an alumni of ASU with a Bachelors in Visual + Performing Arts. Her work has been featured at the Albany Area Arts Council and in the *Bridge the East* exhibition. Her solo exhibition in the Arthur R. Berry Gallery was titled *Zikkaron: Roots + Reflections* and held in April 2024. Gordon is currently a Master of Fine Arts student at Georgia Southern University.

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The Pierian

Literary + Visual Arts Journal

The Pierian, Albany State University's online journal, stands as a testament to the enduring power of creative expression. Drawing inspiration from the mythical Macedonian spring—a source of knowledge that enlightened all who partook of its waters—our publication serves as a contemporary fountain of artistic and intellectual inspiration.

Within our digital pages, readers encounter a rich tapestry of visual arts, poetry, flash fiction, short fiction, and nonfiction. The Pierian takes pride in featuring works from both emerging and established authors and artists, fostering a dynamic dialogue transcending institutional and geographical boundaries. Our goal is to create a diverse mosaic of perspectives, reflecting the vibrancy of our community while embracing voices from across the region and beyond.

Our legacy traces back to 1967 when Emerita Professor Dr. Velma F. Grant established the Pierian Club for English majors at Albany State University. This visionary initiative later blossomed into The Pierian Journal, embodying a steadfast commitment to nurturing literary excellence.

Since 2023, The Pierian has been under the stewardship of dedicated professors from ASU's Department of Arts & Humanities in Visual Arts and English. This collaboration ensures the journal continues to be a vibrant platform, bridging academic rigor with creative exploration.

We invite you to join us at The Pierian, where every page turn promises a sip from the wellspring of imagination. Together, we continue to cultivate this fountain of creativity, allowing it to flow through our HBCU community and ripple outwards, enriching the broader landscape of contemporary art and literature.

CHRISTIAN ANDRADE HERRERA	<i>Hyphens</i>	10
	<i>Madre</i>	12
MICHAEL BONFANTI	<i>February Sunrise</i>	14
FELICIA BOYD	<i>Tranquility 2</i>	15
AMANDA BRITTON	<i>Carapace Capsules</i>	16
	<i>Migration Inquiry I</i>	17
SANDEE M. CHAMBERLAIN	<i>My Heavy Head College 2</i>	18
CHANTELLE CHAPMAN	<i>Controlled Burn (Kirtland's Warbler)</i>	19
	<i>Restoration (Japanese Crested Ibis)</i>	20
	<i>To Each According to His Appetite (Carolina Parakeet)</i>	21
MAYA COLLIER	<i>Black Lab</i>	22
LI FENG	<i>π, a transcendental number endlessly reveals colors in the universe</i>	24
JAMYA MARIE FLEURINE	<i>Love Me</i>	25
	<i>Summer's Rain</i>	26
RICHARD FOREMAN	<i>Honest Reflections</i>	27
	<i>The Bite (Addiction? Vampires? Your One True Love?)</i>	29
EMMA GARCIA	<i>Sing Through Me</i>	32
	<i>Poetry Will Save Me</i>	34

SELMAWIT GEDDES	<i>This I Believe: Hardships Can Be Potential Blessings</i>	36
PERRY GILBERT	<i>Faefei</i>	38
ANGELA GORDON	<i>Igbo Round Pot</i>	39
	<i>Yahudit</i>	40
ANN HAGINS	<i>Dragon</i>	41
SUZANN HAGINS	<i>Untitled</i>	42
JOY HANDELMAN	<i>Midsummer in Georgia</i>	43
	<i>Tell Me</i>	44
MELANIE HATCH	<i>A Random Walk Through Space</i>	46
BOB HOWARD	<i>Untitled</i>	47
MARLANA HUFSTETLER	<i>Burrowing</i>	48
	<i>Curvature</i>	49
	<i>Euphoria</i>	50
JASON KASH	<i>Refraction</i>	51
MICHELLE MARTOS	<i>Still Life</i>	52
ISABELLA MARTZ-CHRONIGER	<i>I Love Fish</i>	53
ADARA McCLAIN	<i>Deep Sea Swim</i>	54
SHUCHITA MISHRA	<i>A Dreamer in SF</i>	55
BRAXTON NEWKIRK	<i>Family</i>	56
	<i>Miami Morning</i>	57
CARLOS PEREZ	<i>SLCF Concert Night</i>	58

MEGAN REÁTIGA	<i>Ramen</i>	59
ACILLIA ROBERTS	<i>Gene Shoemaker</i>	60
DESTINEE ROBERTS	<i>Untitled</i>	61
SAVANNAH SMITH	<i>Turn On the Light</i>	62
SHERRISE STOVER	<i>Arachnid</i>	63
	<i>Morning Sun</i>	64
SARAH SUNFIRE	<i>Love is [Not]</i>	65
LYLA TAFT	<i>Blue</i>	66
CURTIS L. TODD	<i>Color Fatigue</i>	67
	<i>Reason #86 (why I love you)</i>	68
	<i>To Burn Down Temples</i>	69
JEFF VIRZERA	<i>He</i>	70
	<i>Suppression Is</i>	71
JEANETTE WACHTMAN	<i>Floating Villiage of Uros Tribe Peru</i>	72
CHARLES WILLIAMS	<i>Good Life</i>	73
JORDAN ZIEGLER	<i>Pirates Crow Nest</i>	74
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS		75
CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS		82

CHRISTIAN ANDRADE HERRERA

Hyphens

Growing up, I had never seen a hyphen
Not until I crossed the border empty-handed
and suddenly, I no longer had two independent last names
I had a hyphen
My first name
My middle name
And the hyphen

The hyphen somehow connected two rich histories and simultaneously
erased them
Once I crossed the border, I was no longer
Mexican
I became Mexican-American
When I graduated high school, I was worn out
I enrolled in college four years later
I became a first-generation college student
When I crossed that border
I crossed more than an imaginary line
A man-made boundary
And I also crossed to the other side of the hyphen
It didn't just mold together things
It sneakily separated them as well
That little line (didn't let people pronounce my last name better)
My last name was suddenly too long
too troublesome

It stopped being two-seven-letter words separated by a space
It was suddenly fourteen letters divided by a hyphen
And suddenly, fourteen letters and a hyphen became seven
And those seven would alternate depending on people's moods
Sometimes I was my father-son
And sometimes I was my mother's child
People picked what last name I would be given
Because the fourteen letters and a hyphen is too much

No one taught me to navigate those hyphens
The struggles I faced as a first-generation student
As soon as I overcame and charted a new course, the hyphens
disappeared

These hard-won struggles
Each hyphen has stood at a potential crossroads
Of cultural differences, social biases
Each hyphen had different powers
Hyphens worked like bridges and walls
The hyphens have somewhat vanished
The ones that seemed to put me in boxes and labeled me and
my identities
Those hyphens that amalgamated my past and my background
Those words were the ones that tried to combine and explain who I was
From first-generation, non-traditional, foreign-sounding
Suddenly, they are well-educated, open-minded, well-spoken
No one usually teaches you to jump, cross, leap the hyphens
But, you learn.

CHRISTIAN ANDRADE HERRERA

Madre

To all mothers
To the go-getters
The ones that make the impossible possible
The dream makers
Dream sellers
The ones that left their mothers (when they were young)
And their motherland
Migrated, worked, fought, and somehow
They managed to give their children everything

To the mothers who went hungry
The ones that worked two shifts
That ones that were always too tired but still came home and cooked
The ones that sold tamales on the weekends
The ones that hustled
Selling from the catalogs
To the mothers who woke up at 4 am to make lunch for our fathers
To the mothers who were single mothers
To the ones who made sure you had breakfast and made you lunch
for school

The mothers who worked as housekeepers and still made it home to clean
theirs too
To the ones who worked in the fields (picking up fruits and vegetables)
And went to the store to buy them later
To the mothers who stayed up late to make sure you were okay (when you
were sick)
To the mothers who say a little prayer when they think of you
To the mothers that aren't biological but loved you all the same
To the grandmothers who were like mothers
To the mothers who gave their lives for the kids

To the divine feminine!
All men come from the womb!
The mothers that came to every sports event
Who went to every field day and every honors day
To the mothers who pinched money tighter
Then they pinched you when you were falling asleep in church
To the mothers that nurtured their children with the toughest of love
To the ones that cursed like sailors
To the ones that never raised their voices ever

To the mothers who cried every time you achieved a milestone
To the young mothers who were still in their teens
To the mothers who couldn't pursue their education
But made it their mission to let us chase ours
To the mothers who never really said I love you
But somehow made you feel like the most loved
To the mothers that said it almost too many times in one day
But still reminded you even when you rolled your eyes

But most importantly to my mother
Who continues to nurture me, give me advice, support me
Who calls on me to check up and make sure I'm doing okay
The one that shares her 40-something years of wisdom
She still believes in me, my dreams, my hopes, and my aspirations
She thinks I can do anything
To my mother, who had to quit school
Because she had to work and help her parents
The 1980s in Mexico were a different time
To my mother, who was so young when she became one
She was still just a teenager when she became a mother
Who made so many mistakes raising us
But who has never stopped being the best mother she can be

MICHAEL BONFANTI

February Sunrise



FELICIA BOYD

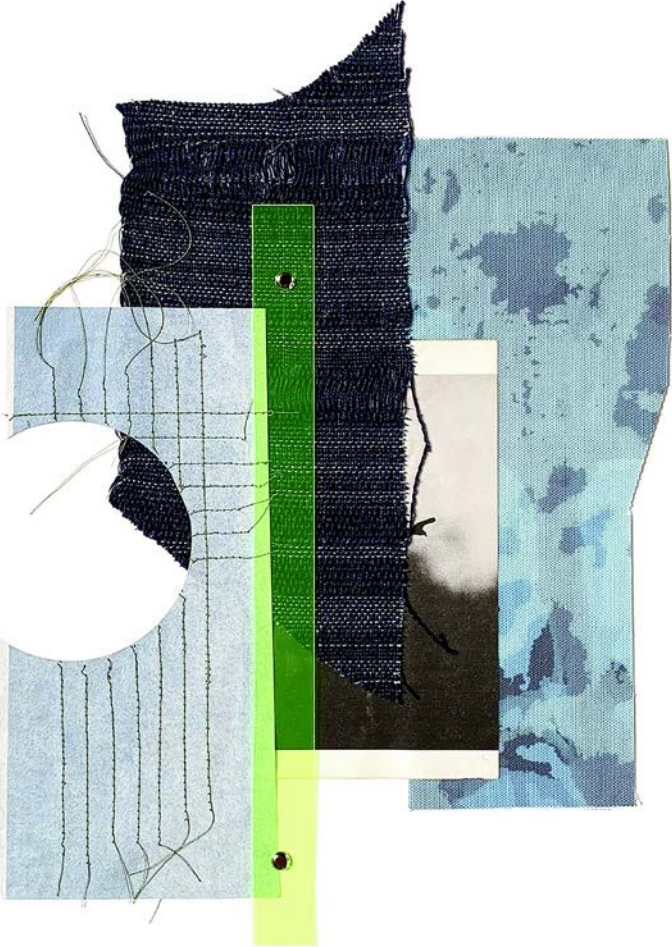
Tranquility 2



AMANDA BRITTON
Carapace Capsules

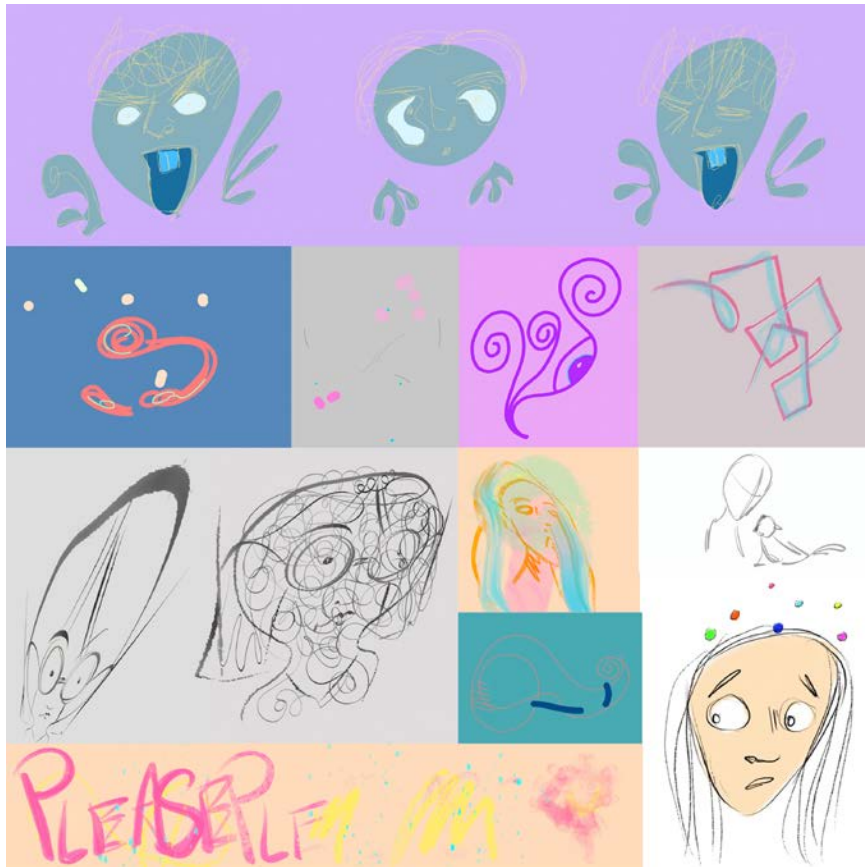


AMANDA BRITTON
Migration Inquiry I



SANDEE M. CHAMBERLAIN

My Heavy Head College 2



CHANTELLE CHAPMAN

Controlled Burn (Kirtland's Warbler)



CHANTELLE CHAPMAN

Restoration (Japanese Crested Ibis)



CHANTELLE CHAPMAN

To Each According to His Appetite (Carolina Parakeet)



MAYA COLLIER

Black Lab

Dawn remembered the day her mom brought him home. She was so ecstatic, it felt like her whole body was vibrating as if a living bass speaker was on full blast. Beforehand, her dad told her and her brother not to get attached, saying that he may not live long. She remembered racing outside to the car, not giving a damn about her father's warning. She didn't care. Adrenaline and excitement were the pushing force of her movements as she raced outside to get even the tiniest of glimpses at something she already held so tightly to her heart.

Her heartbeat thumped in her ears like the ceremonial drums in a Native American tribe celebrating a joyous occasion. Her bare feet slapped against the hard, concrete pathway that led from the front door to the driveway. She stared intently as her mom parked the car. The headlights blinded her as if she was staring directly into the sun, so bright and yet so painful. Soon the lights faded away like last night's snow under the roar of the morning sun. Dawn gave her eyes a moment to adjust back to a state of normalcy before swinging the car's passenger side door open, almost breaking it. She looked in the passenger seat and saw a large cardboard box. She froze for a minute in anticipation. What kind would be in the box? How big was it? Would it favor her or her brother? Would it like her at all? Numerous questions swirled in her mind as she unconsciously peered her head over the box.

The smallest thing she had ever seen: a small little, flea-like speck resided in the middle of the box. It let out the smallest of howls, almost as if a hamster tried to howl. It was so tiny and blacker than midnight, but full of life. Her dad was shocked by how small it was. He compared it to a rat. Her brother was silent, but she could tell that he felt the same. Looking back, he probably just didn't want to sound like their dad as an act of teenage defiance that no one paid attention to. As Mom and Dad's conversation faded into the back of her mind, buzzing like Charlie Brown's teacher, her only thoughts were that she had already disregarded her dad's warning. She loved it. She loved him. Even though he was small and a bit sickly, she adored him. All she wanted to do was

hold him. Not long after, her dad discarded his own warning. They named him Shadow. Shadow the black lab.

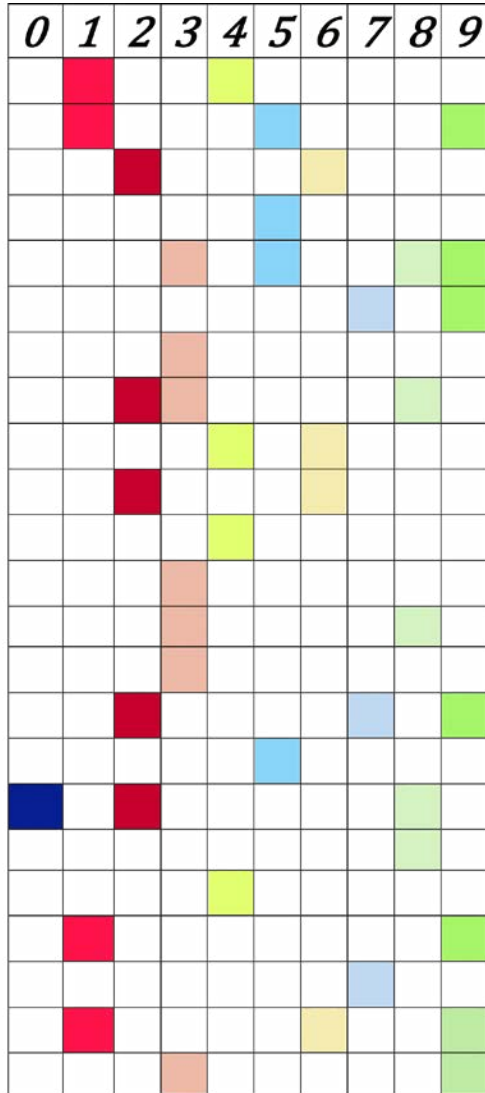
On the days when her mom or dad asked her to watch him, Dawn would gently place Shadow on a pillow and just watch him sleep. He reminded her of a priceless jewel on display in the middle of a museum protected by a glass case. How he switched his nose or ran in his sleep, she watched it all. Shadow was so small, minuscule. He seemed no bigger than a single spot on a massive blank canvas. Yet, to Dawn, he was more precious to her than a scholar's award-winning research. She loved you. She adored you.

One day Shadow took a turn for the worst. Dawn's brother and father rushed him to the vet. Dawn and her mom were at school. With every passing millisecond without an update on Shadow, Dawn's heart sank deeper and deeper. Time moved exceptionally slow that day. At one point, she genuinely questioned if it was already the next day. After an excruciating, painstakingly long school day, it was time for Dawn to go home. When she got home tears threatened to leave her eyes and stream her face. Her brother and Shadow were frolicking in the front yard. Laughing, playing, rolling around in the dirt, the sight was the complete opposite of the depressing SPCA commercials. He was back. He was alive. He was running around. He had low blood sugar.

LI FENG

π , a transcendental number endlessly reveals colors

$$\pi = 3.$$



JAMYA MARIE FLEURINE

Love Me

Love Me

Like the sky Loves the sun

Like the birds Love to fly

Like the river Loves the shape of the land

Love Me hard

As hard as Your final exams?

No, harder My Love

Harder than the surface of a diamond

Harder than breathing in space

Love Me pure

Like the first smile of a newborn

Like my intentions for Us

Like the white light of the heavens

Love Me deep

As deep as the deepest ocean?

No, deeper My Love

Deeper than r&b

Deeper than the feeling in My eyes when I see You

Love Me like I Love You

JAMYA MARIE FLEURINE

Summer's Rain

Summer, the most beautiful of seasons
Shines all day and into the night
She is warm and soft
And She is gentle with Her heat

though She still cries
She cries even while Her beautiful sunlight shines on all creation
She cries even when listening to the song of Her bluebirds
She cries even as Her soft breaths sway the tress

Her tears make the grass grow
Her tears make the leaves glisten
Her tears make the puddles for the little girls to play
You say "She shouldn't cry"
that "Her most beautiful summer days shouldn't be filled with falling tears
from the sky"
but Summer is just as You and I
She shines and grows
but still cries over it all
Summer rains on Her brightest days

You and I cry Summer's Rain

RICHARD FOREMAN

Honest Reflections

Objects in the mirror may be closer than they appear,
Intolerance, mistrust, paranoia, and fear.
America,
Take a look in the mirror.
America,
Tell me what do you see.
America,
Take a good long look at yourself.
America,
Please listen to me.

The poor are not the cause of all of your problems,
Instead, it's the idiots in Congress that you elect to solve them.
And immigrants do not cause your economy to tank,
Rather it's the crooks on Wall Street you need to thank.

America,
Take a look in the mirror.
America,
Tell me what do you see.
America,
Take a good long look at yourself.
America,
Please listen to me.

White supremacist vanity,
Mass MAGA insanity.
You're just playing the chump,
When you listen to Trump.

And if you're looking for some strange views,
You can tune it in to FOX News.
Those cats can twist a fact,
I can promise you that.

There's nothing more perverse,
Than the QANON universe.
Untethered from reality,
Awash in logical fallacies.

Please believe me when I tell you that I'm on your side,
But there are certain truths, from which you should not hide.
And the mistakes you continue to make couldn't be any clearer,
All it takes is an honest look in a full-length mirror.

America,
Take a look in the mirror.
America,
Tell me what do you see.
America,
Take a good long look at yourself.
America,
Please listen to me.
America,
How can this be?
Once the home,
Of the brave and the free.
Now not much more than,
A plutocracy.
You're losing touch with,
True democracy.
Moving dangerously close to,
Autocracy.

America,
How
Can
This
Be?

RICHARD FOREMAN

The Bite (Addiction? Vampires? Your One True Love?)

It could have been better, but it might have been worse,
It all started with an innocent kiss beside a hearse.
She was a raven-haired beauty, with emerald green eyes,
And the ruby red blood on her lips,
Hidden in a shadowy mist,
The ruby red blood on her lips came a quite a surprise.

But I found that I liked it, you know I liked it a lot,
And when she told me how she lived her life, I thought I'd give it a shot.
So, I let her bite me, in the nape of my neck,
The next 48 hours, I was a bit of a wreck.
I got lost in those eyes, blinded by the black of her hair,
Drowning in a sea of blood, but I really didn't care.
And when I emerged from there, I couldn't live in the light,
I had been transformed, into a creature, of the night.

A creature of the night is what I am,
A creature of the night is what I've become.
I gained eternal life,
But gave up the heat of the sun.
A creature of the night is what she was,
Creatures of the night, are what we will be.
Searching the Earth, every night, for other creatures like me;
Scour the world in the deep of the night, for other creatures like me.

The light that guided me in the darkness, was her alabaster skin,
It took me to the place where my old life ended and my new life
would begin.
A faint hint of her aroma, arrived gently on the breeze,
I drank it in, like a sweet sip of gin, and fell trembling to my knees.
And I got lost in those eyes, blinded by her flesh so white,
I knew it was probably wrong, but dammit, it just felt so right.
And when I returned from there, I couldn't live in daylight,
I had been transformed, into a creature, of the night.

A creature of the night is what I am,
A creature of the night is what I've become.
I gained eternal life, but gave up the heat of the sun.
A creature of the night is what she was,
Creatures of the night are what we will be.
Searching the Earth, every night, for other creatures like me;
Scour the world in the deep of the night, for other creatures like me.

Beware the lure of the beautiful creatures,
They'll draw you in with their beautiful features.
They only come out at night, and they emit a soothing light,
They make it feel so right you'll ask for the bite.
Beware the attraction of beautiful creatures,
Their cunning hidden by beautiful features.
When you see them in the dark, they'll hunt you like a shark,
And you'll begin a voyage of blood, from which you'll
never disembark.

Played by a perfect profile, and smile that could light up a room,
She offered to be my guide, as we danced by the light of the moon.
I asked her to be my bride, and happily became her groom,
Some people say I am cursed, that she's brought me to my doom.
But I'm just lost in those eyes, blind-sided by the strength of her mind,
Drowning in a sea of her memories, I feel alive for the very first time.
I'll never return from here; I'll never live in the light,
I have been transformed, into a creature, of the night.

A creature of the night is what I am,
A creature of the night is what I've become.
I gained eternal life, but gave up the heat of the sun.
A creature of the night is what she was,
Creatures of the night are what we will be.
Searching the Earth, every night, for other creatures like me;
Scour the world in the deep of the night, for other creatures like me.

Beware the lure of the beautiful creatures,
They'll draw you in with their beautiful features.
They only come out at night, and they emit a soothing light,
They make it feel so right,
You won't put up a fight,
You'll give up the light,
And ask for the bite.

EMMA GARCIA

Sing Through Me

I use the wood shavings of my pencil to start a fire.

Sharpening the point over and over again trying to form sentences
that'll be scribed on the skin of others.

But my point keeps snapping in half.

Why did you send me this way, Calliope?
Far across the country where the birds don't sing
nearly as much and the trees of oak
don't bend in the breeze.

Why did I leave my family and my child for you?
Just so you could feed me false
whispers in the form of inspiration, when I thought
we'd agreed that you'd sing through me and I'd translate?

Aren't my sacrifices enough?
Do my burnt offerings not reek
of fresh strawberries and unwashed skin?

Please Calliope, sing louder—

I need you in this strange land.
I can't remember what it feels like to have my pencil
hover over paper.

Should I throw myself on the fire to catch your attention?

Watch my ashes rise and form constellations
that can barely compete with the shape of your sisters?
No one would even try to map my stars, a reader would search for eons
for a truth I've swallowed whole along with my intentions and anger.

I give my soul to you Calliope,
because what else am I to do, but remain here
draping myself in lines, twisting the ideas tight
around my finger, watching the tip turn red.

EMMA GARCIA

Poetry Will Save Me

Poetry will save me
 when I'm drowning myself
 in homesickness.
She'll hold my hand
 and soothe any burns,
 help me look both ways,
let me cry when my throat hurts.

 Poetry will help me call my mom every day
 and listen to the voices of my
 family
members laughing in the background.

 They must be at dinner, maybe our favorite spot?

 Poetry reminds me it's my dad's

 birthday.

Poetry will help me
 wonder what they said that was so funny.
 If they laughed feeling relieved I was one less
dollar amount on the check.

 It's ok, Poetry will help me
 not feel left out, shuffling the deck of cards,
letting me eat the last fry.
 Poetry will help me remember their faces
 because I swear my sister's bangs were shorter
and my nephew wasn't missing any teeth
 and my dad's cheeks were more round...

 What if they can't remember my face?

No, no it's fine, Poetry will remember,
 she'll remember my birthday
 and buy me gifts.
She'll follow me to class
 and I'll show her off to my new friends.

 My Poetry playing with their Poetry.
I'll offer her my sweater when it's raining
 and follow the footsteps
 she leaves in the grass.

SELAMAWIT GEDDES

This I Believe: Hardships Can Be Potential Blessings

Traumas can lead to a spur of positive change also known as posttraumatic growth. For me, I see growth in the way I advocate more efficiently for myself. I experienced getting called a liar a lot growing up. I would try so hard to be perfect with good grades and the best life, so I wanted my character to be genuine. I didn't lie about things that were wrong because I would feel bad. When I was in third grade, I got called a liar by my mom's fiancé when I told her about how I found \$100 in the front yard. While my mom wasn't around, he constantly kept telling me he would call the police if I didn't confess "stealing". He swore up and down that I stole it out his wallet, and it got bad enough to where my mom didn't even stand up for me anymore. Times like this made it hard for me to speak up and feel heard. I kept a secret that consumed me for years. It came out in the unhealthiest way, a bad argument. I confessed I had been getting sexually touched by a family member, and I got manipulated again. My mom told me that if it's true, she will call the family member herself and find out. She did eventually find out that it was the truth, after several weeks of not talking about it. Nowadays, I believe that I went through those situations to learn to be more comfortable with my truth.

I always wanted to leave my house, but I was trapped. I would run to my coaches', neighbors', and friends' home for a feeling of connection and safety. The night after I got off work, I was drained in all aspects mentally, physically, and even emotionally. I was tired of having to process my feelings like crying and screaming. Talking could feel like it was an overbearing task. I had a coach who was not someone who showed softness to us, but she truly cared and that was always clear. She was the coach who gave tough love in ways of calling us out when we were wrong but always giving us a shoulder to help improve. She did that for me while opening her home to me without a single explanation of why I needed it that night. Sadly, she couldn't save me when 3am hit and the safety officers of Clayton County came looking to transport me back to my house in Henry County.

I moved out of my house at 17 years old, only two days before my senior prom. I didn't have anything planned; everything happened earlier than I expected. It was the last day I had any communication with my mom. I had a million feelings, frustration with the idea I was the "bad guy". Angry with her family, I felt truly convinced that eventually they would say something about what was going on. I am appreciative that my hardships didn't stop me from achieving my small goals; instead, they allowed me to be in a position where I'm on track for everything I ever wanted. I relearned the value of silence and how to use it to my advantage. Life didn't stop throwing challenges at me but gave me a reason why I should appreciate the few things such as moving out as more of a blessing. I was motivated to get the job that pays my bills, do the work that allowed me to graduate, apply, get accepted, and attend the school I wanted to attend and much more to come. Sometimes you're not supposed to know when change is coming, that's why I believe hardships can potentially be a blessing because things are always destined to turn around with the right actions to make it happen.

PERRY GILBERT

Faefei



ANGELA GORDON

Igbo Round Pot



ANGELA GORDON

Yahudit



ANN HAGINS

Dragon



SUZANN HAGINS

Untitled



JOY HANDELMAN

Midsummer in Georgia

With evergreen nothing
but the scent of
old candles in the closet,
and holiness a dizzying
distance away
further than the shimmering
asphalt of the road
far ahead, never reached,
always ahead in the stinging heat.

Errands you forgot to run,
Swinging the fridge door open -
Oh, for something cold for supper -
Sending fussy children
Out to swim it off.

Their fingers tap a bright ball up and
out of the pool, snarled complaints -
who-will-go-get-it-now-stupid -
the little one does. Her feet
dodge fire ants and stickers.

They crowd the edge of the pool -
she can't throw it very far -
their arms stretched out expecting
the toss from the grass -
as a ram's horn fills the air like an ancient
siren and
-He is there-
the one who called the children,
they reach for Him as the ball settles
on the empty, heaving water.

JOY HANDELMAN

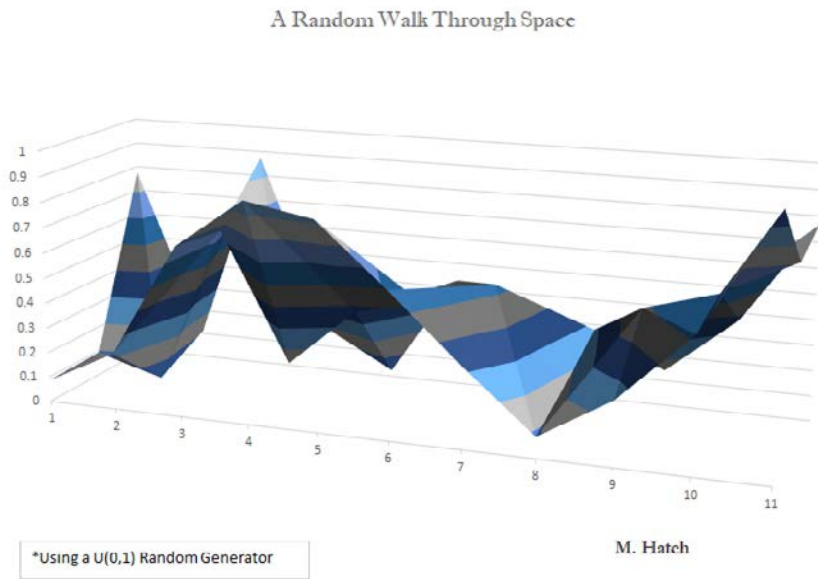
Tell Me

Tell me about Time,
I said to the old man,
Robed in blue and stars.
He smiled, turned, and went back
To the table,
To the cards,
He played with the Badger,
The Fox, and a brown Hare.
Are you Merlin? I called,
but he took no notice
And laid a card.
The Hare's nose twitched,
The Fox smiled, and the Badger
Looked grave and kind.
I turned away,
Down a wide hall,
With windows tall and grand -
With passages and passages
Of windows -
The hope of light-
An expectation, a longing.

Yet, as I go,
Window to window,
The dark presses against the glass,
Like a lover's lips on a white throat.
And something presses me,
Insistent and beckoning -
A plane to catch, and
No one there to fetch me.

MELANIE HATCH

A Random Walk Through Space



BOB HOWARD

Untitled



MARLANA HUFSTETLER

Burrowing

Our skin burned with salt and sun. It was our last summer before high school, and we were on the verge building some new nostalgia for our future selves.

I glance over at you, and I notice your tanned skin and freckles. Your dirty blonde hair had been further bleached by the sun in places, forming a natural coppered ombre to your sandy strands. I always envied your button nose.

I then glance at my toes digging in the white sand. Burrowing deeper and deeper like tiny clams dancing their way through calm waters. I am truly content. I am truly happy. My mind wonders about what our lives will be like later—once we aren't girls anymore but young women instead.

I notice a couple out in the waves, probably in their early to mid-twenties. Evening is readily approaching, and I watch a group of bottlenose dolphins swim merrily on the horizon before my gaze is broken once again by the couple. The man picks up the girl, and she giggles uncontrollably. Her silhouette lifted out of the water is delicate and curvaceous all at once, filled out in all the ways we imagine a young woman to be.

I suddenly envy her adulthood.

Romance, I hear, is about rose-colored lenses, but what about a rose-colored sky? One with splashes of tangerine and pomegranate?

"Do you wanna get the nets and go chase crabs?" you ask, and my gaze is broken for a final time.

"Please," I giggle. A hermit crab crawls across the shadowing sand, dragging his shell of a home with him.

"Let's go grab the bucket too. We can catch hermit crabs at the jetties," I say, and we brush the sand off our bums and go.

MARLANA HUFSTETLER

Curvature

I can see your silhouette in the doorway
The curve of your shoulders
Entices me for hug, but I resist so I can admire the shape.

Standing in the foyer
Right next to that old antique mirror
You're looking right at me, and I'm looking at you—

From where I am
I see your reflection in that old looking glass
I see your profile—the perfect bridge of your nose.

Your mouth curves into that familiar grin
A sharp smile framed by a soft beard
The little curvatures of your appearance—always perfectly aligned.

MARLANA HUFSTETLER

Euphoria

Sometimes euphoria
Is sitting in your car,
In an insatiable state of laughter.

It's the tip of your finger
Feeling for my sleeve and traveling inside
Until it touches the tip of mine.

It's passionate kisses in the grocery aisle
Or stopping between the bookshelves
For just a quick embrace.

It's you grabbing my coffee,
Not spilling a single drop as you walk my way
While I find a spot for us by the window on a Saturday morning.

It's how you move the hair out of my eyes
Your hand gently clutching my waist
Looking at all the art we don't intend to buy.

It's gentle hug from behind
As you let me browse through the coffee mugs—
Just more little things we definitely don't need.

Most of all—
Euphoria is you.

JASON KASH

Refraction



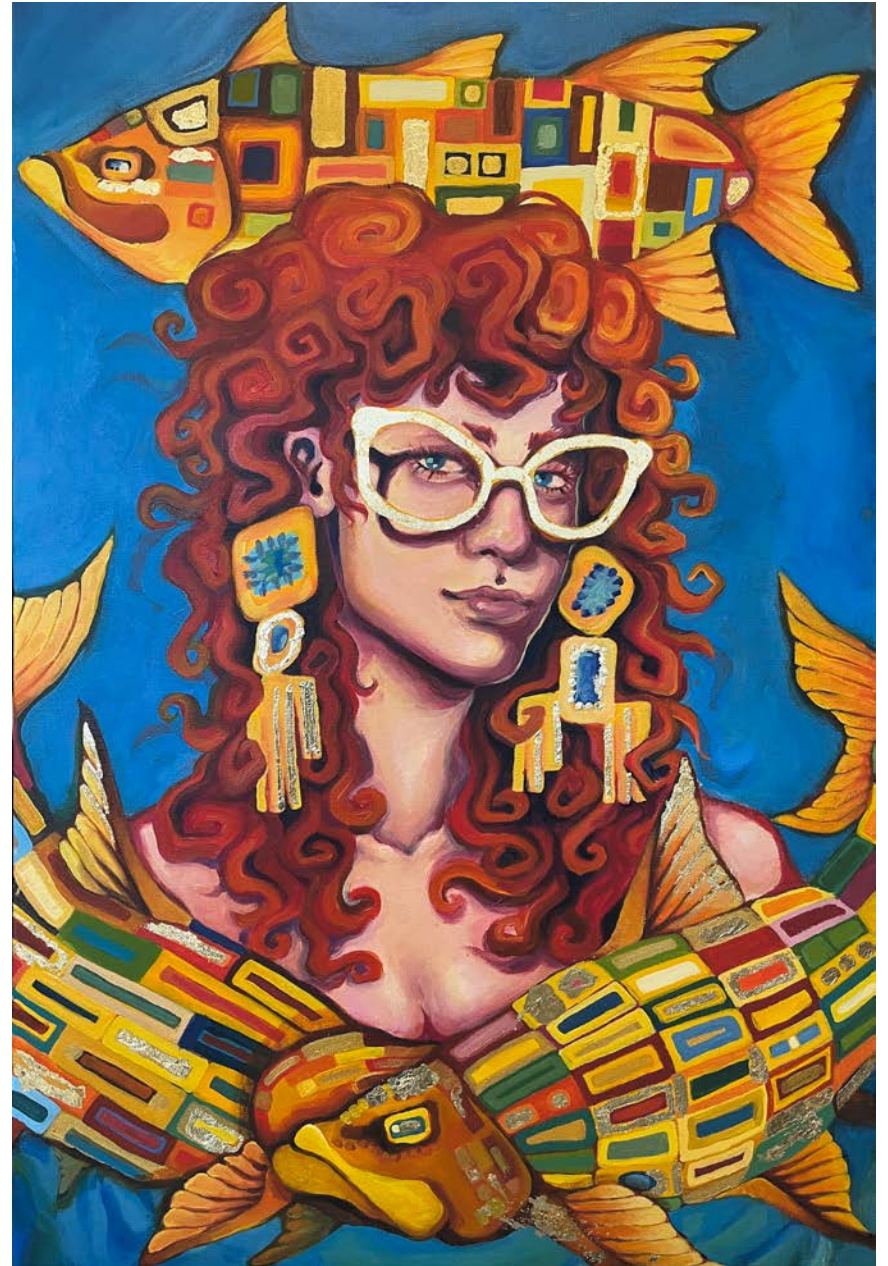
MICHELLE MARTOS

Still Life



ISABELLA MARTZ-CHRONIGER

I Love Fish



ADARA McCLAIN

Deep Sea Swim



SHUCHITA MISHRA

A Dreamer in SF



BRAXTON NEWKIRK

Family

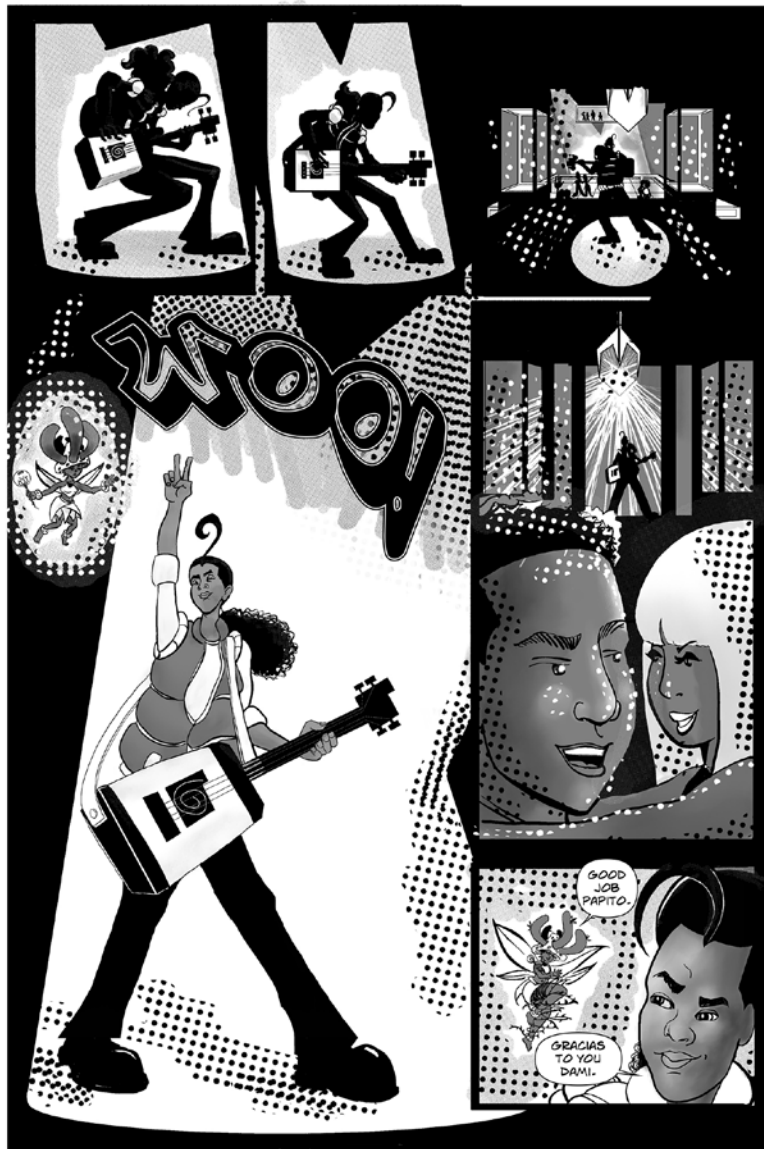


BRAXTON NEWKIRK

Miami Morning



CARLOS PEREZ
SLCF Concert Night



MEGAN REÁTIGA
Ramen



ACILLIA ROBERTS

Gene Shoemaker



DESTINEE ROBERTS

Untitled



SAVANNAH SMITH

Turn On the Light



SHERRISE STOVER

Arachnid



SHERRISE STOVER

Morning Sun



SARAH SUNFIRE

Love is [Not]

To call love a finite resource is false scarcity
But this world couldn't hold us,
Bound by star trails
Caught in the lens of a cracked telescope

We were one of us sun
We were one of us moon
We one of us hovered between planet and star

Daylight obliterated our tri-cornered constellation
before we configured sunset, twilight, moonrise
A blue wave breaking over my face
Pulling reflected light down with the tide
Undertow, celestial heights
Each a half-spin of the same motion

Love sets fire to the need for meaning,
In harmony, we do not hunger for "sense."

Love is not an escape
Love will not remake history
Love challenges us: heal the illusion of lack
Allowing for wholeness beyond
Poetry

LYLA TAFT

Blue

Blue.

The color of the light flashing above the room in the empty hall.

Blue.

The color of freedom as the soul soars towards heaven.

Blue.

The color of the patient's face in the room with the flashing light.

Blue.

The color of forget-me-nots and remembrances.

Blue.

The blur of color as people run into the room with the flashing light with the patient with the colored face to intubate oxygenate ventilate resuscitate.

Blue.

The color of -

Peace.

CURTIS L. TODD

Color Fatigue

Blue blazer

Brown khakis

White button-down shirt

Red rose on the lapel

Tan shoes

Green and orange necktie - tribute to his team

Maroon, cream, grey, and navy statement socks

Too much I know but they were his favorites

And I promised his mother

Purple corsages and boutonnieres

For his best friends

Lavender for the family

No pastels in the spray

Mahogany coffin

Oyster satin lining

High school flower girls and pallbearers

Dress as you please

I am told that I must soon speak

Of his black skin

And the color of the finger

That pulled the trigger

There is an abandonment of colors

For my feelings

They are absent

And will not come

For now

Let me simply bury my son

Beneath a brilliantly yellow noonday sun

To rest among the copper,

Brass, and golden autumn leaves

CURTIS L. TODD

Reason #86 (why I love you)

When the great illness came
and swept through the land
you packed a bag,
abandoned your home,
and sat with me many nights,
watching the locked front door
while we took turns
cleaning the rifles and shotguns,
filling pillboxes
overflowing with vitamins,
and burned candles
and sage for eighteen months.

CURTIS L. TODD

To Burn Down Temples

Come away with me
and let the sun set on our backs,
then rise on our faces
as we journey to a land
with no idols or altars,
absent of thrones
and tides tied to moons.

I do not desire dragon's breath.
It is your fire I want. You are fire,
not the flicker or the promise of flame.

You, the fire that burns down temples
and melts gold for new gods.

You.

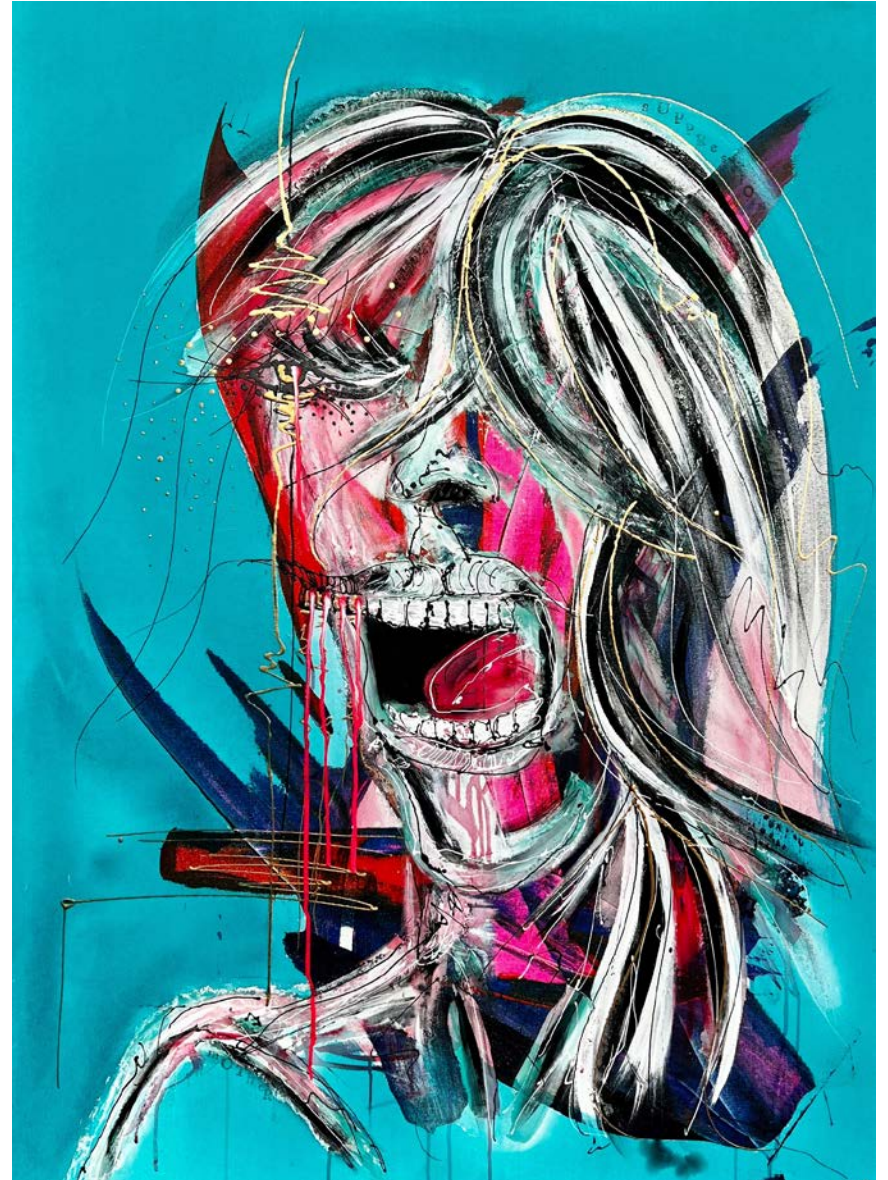
JEFF VIRZERA

He



JEFF VIRZERA

Suppression Is



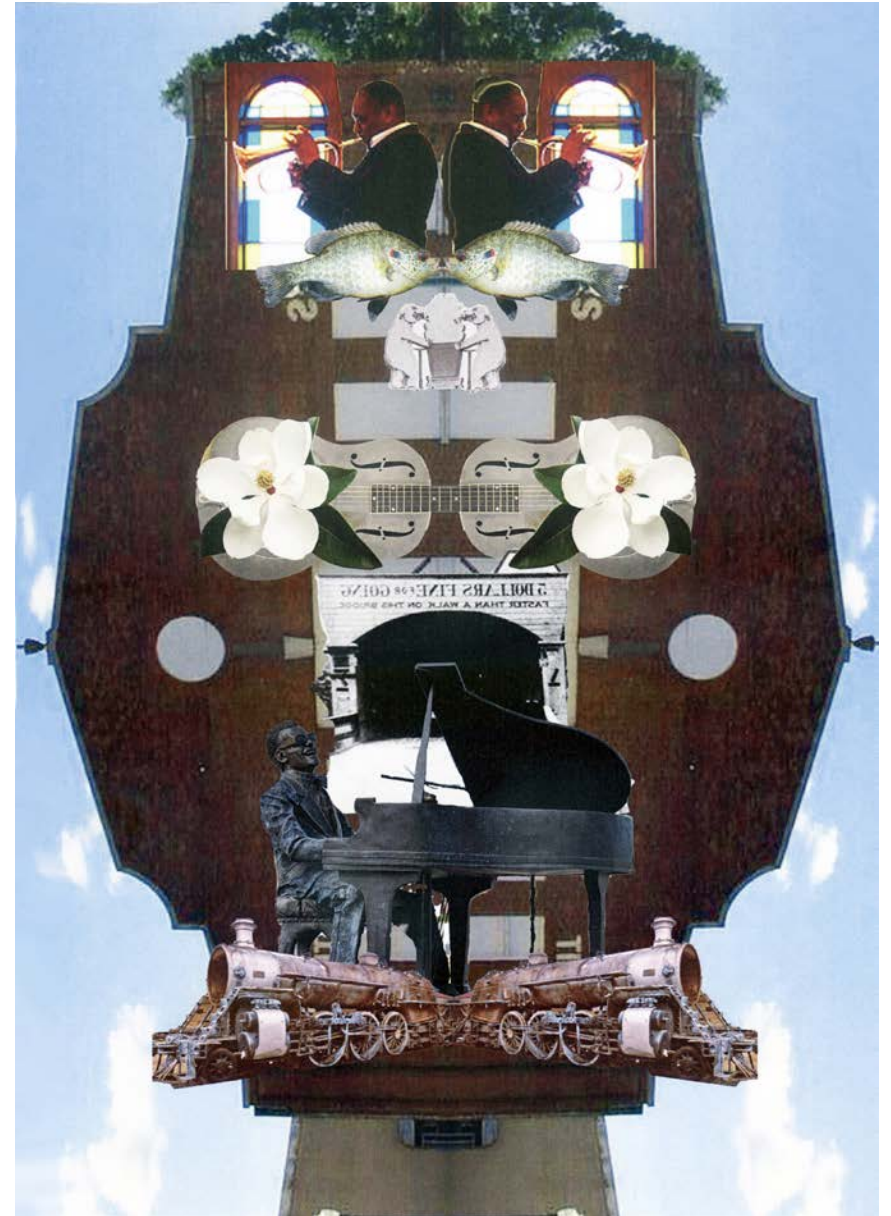
JEANETTE WACHTMAN

Floating Villiage of Uros Tribe Peru



CHARLES WILLIAMS

Good Life



JORDAN ZIEGLER

Pirates Crow Nest



NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

CHRISTIAN ANDRADE HERRERA is a first-generation Mexican-American immigrant raised in Southwest Georgia. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering in California with a passion for science and the arts. They obtained their A.S. and B.S. in Chemistry from Albany State University. When not doing lab work, he bakes, reads, writes, is outside in nature, or travels.

MICHAEL BONFANTI, a native New Englander, moved to Tallahassee, FL to attend the Florida State University. He lives in Leon County, FL with his wife and children on the banks of the Ochlocknee River. He is an attorney, amateur photographer, and writer.

FELICIA BOYD is a photographer specializing in architecture and nature. She holds an associate degree in Design and Media Production Technology and a BFA in Photography. Felicia aims to balance analog and digital techniques while developing her unique style. Her goal is to open a gallery showcasing her work. Inspired by Lynette Jackson, Felicia seeks unusual perspectives and believes her passion will create new opportunities.

AMANDA BRITTON, an Atlanta-based textile artist and educator, chairs Textiles + Surface Design at Kennesaw State University. With degrees from UNC Charlotte and UGA, she explores themes of relationships and place through innovative "woven" works using unconventional materials. Her art, exhibited across the Southeast, has been featured in notable publications and galleries.

SANDEE M. CHAMBERLAIN, an Assistant Professor of Animation & Illustration at Kennesaw State University, holds BFA, MA, and MFA degrees in related fields. With nearly two decades of teaching experience and professional work in animation and illustration, her art has been featured in galleries and film festivals worldwide. Sandee advocates for daily creativity and creating joyful work.

CHANTELLE CHAPMAN is a recent graduate of Kennesaw State University's BFA Art program, with a dual concentration in Illustration and Painting/Drawing. Born in the Smoky Mountains, her greatest source of inspiration is the passion for natural history that was sparked during her early years. Chantelle works in a variety of traditional media to craft narratives of lost and vanishing species.

MAYA COLLIER, a senior English Literature major at Columbus State University, focuses on creative writing. Born in Augusta, she grew up in Griffin and Columbus, Georgia. Maya holds a Film Production certification from Southern Crescent Technical College. Set to graduate in December 2024, she aims to pursue a career in film editing, screenwriting, or literary work.

LI FENG, ASU Full Professor of Mathematics, has served for 28 years. His research focuses on Dynamical Systems, Fractals, and General Topology, with over ten published papers internationally. Dr. Feng integrates mathematical arts into his teaching. He holds a Ph.D. from Wesleyan University, an M.S. from Zhongshan University, and a B.S. from Jinan University.

JAMYA MARIE FLEURINE, a Georgia native, aspires to be a dental hygienist, salon owner, holistic hair care professional, and author. A hopeless romantic, she writes poetry to manifest beauty and love in her life. Jamya hopes her work resonates with readers, encouraging them to love deeply, imagine vividly, and embrace their authentic selves.

RICHARD FOREMAN is a biology professor at ASU and the father of 4 children. Besides enjoying science, teaching, and academic pursuits, he also loves writing songs and various types of literature. He is certain that without some sort of creative outlet that he would feel less fulfilled, and that he would very likely be much less sane than he is at the current time – tenuous as that may be.

EMMA GARCIA is currently an MFA student studying poetry at Georgia College & State University. Born and raised in California, Emma grew up reading and writing near the mountains and the beach! She eventually moved across the country to pursue her academic dreams of obtaining her master's degree. Emma has poems published in *Prism Review*, *Sandpiper Review*, and *The Pierian Journal*.

SELMAWIT GEDDES, a freshman healthcare student, aims to become a travel nurse and US Army Officer. Adopted herself, she's passionate about guiding foster kids. Her multicultural background fuels her interest in global healthcare. Selamawit's goal is to lead with empathy, grow through experiences, and positively impact lives, whether in military or civilian roles.

PERRY GILBERT is a self-taught artist specializing in digital paintings. She starts most of her paintings without a concept in mind and lets her creativity flow freely as she works, resulting in a wide variety of subjects and aesthetics represented in her work.

ANGELA GORDON is a Visual Arts graduate at Albany State University as of Spring 2024. She is originally from Marietta, GA and her main areas of creativity include both painting and ceramic art with occasional spurts of photography and mixed media sculpture. She is currently studying in the Masters of Fine Arts program at Georgia Southern University.

ANN HAGINS is a fresh face in the world of ceramics from Albany, Georgia. With a heart full of wonder, she explores the realms of both nature and myth, infusing her creations with boundless imagination. From the serene whispers of the natural world to the fiery breath of dragons, Ann's pottery reflects her adventurous spirit and vibrant imagination. On her journey, every piece tells a story of magic and discovery.

SUZANN HAGINS, a ceramic artist from Albany, Georgia, finds joy in her Southern roots, drawing inspiration from her garden's treasures. She molds clay into enchanting forms, celebrating the whimsy of hydrangeas and the flutter of butterflies. Through her art, Suzann invites you to stroll through her Southern haven, where every piece whispers the tale of beauty and nature's dance.

JOY HANDELMAN has taught English since 2012. She has struggled with poetry far longer than that and is often trying to quit.

MELANIE HATCH has always had an interest in the intersection of math, engineering, and art. She teaches math modeling, computer simulation and has recently developed an interest in serious gaming.

BOB HOWARD has been practicing photography since 1993 when he was introduced to the medium by his father. He graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor's in Studio Art with an emphasis on Photography. Currently Bob loves in Buffalo, NY but loves to travel and sail. This is where he finds his current inspiration.

MARLANA HUFSTETLER, a wordsmith with an MA in Literature from May 2024, pursues a career in writing, editing, or publishing. She creates both visual art and creative writing, with her first fiction book in progress. Marlana's poetry, inspired by personal experiences, eschews strict rules for sensory-rich language. She believes in the power of relatable, descriptive writing to find its audience.

JASON KASH, from Bowling Green, Kentucky, studies Studio Art at the University of Kentucky, minoring in Philosophy and Art History. His work, influenced by Kentucky's landscapes, explores sculpture's social and transformative power. Jason's experience as a workshop assistant at Sculpture Trails and SLOSS Historic Furnaces shapes his view of art as both individual and communal. He plans to pursue an MFA in sculpture.

MICHELLE MARTOS is a second-year Fine Arts student attending FAMU. Her work concentrates on people, religion, and Afro-Cuban culture and heritage, influenced by her personal relationships with her family, friends, and community. She prefers working in dry mediums like graphite, charcoal, and ballpoint pen over painting but appreciates the vibrancy of color found in wet mediums.

ISABELLA MARTZ-CHRONIGER is a painting student currently attending Eastern Florida State College in Cocoa, Florida. She has been painting for years, but this is her second semester taking a college painting course. She uses acrylic paint and derives inspiration from master painter Gustav Klimt. Her portrait, entitled *I Love Fish*, is a fun exploration of patterns and materials commonly found in Klimt's artwork, along with Isabella's swirling shapely style.

ADARA McCLAIN, a Florida-based illustrator, specializes in digital art characterized by vibrant colors and fantastical themes. Her work explores diverse, magical worlds, reflecting her unique perspective as a non-traditional student. Currently pursuing a degree in Graphic Technology, Adara's evolving techniques enhance her visual storytelling. Her illustrations were recently featured in a collegiate exhibition, with graduation anticipated next year.

SHUCHITA MISHRA graduated with an MFA in Comics from California College of the Arts. Apart from running her comic and basic animation workshops across the US schools, she is also an Assistant Professor at the School of Art and Design at Kennesaw State University. She is a freelancer for the New Yorker and has been published in several comic anthologies. Currently, she is working on her first graphic memoir, *I left my heart in Stuttgart*.

BRAXTON NEWKIRK is a visual arts major at Albany State University. Newkirk has developed a keen eye for visual storytelling while exploring various mediums in his degree program. Newkirk's photography has been selected for exhibition at several local spaces, showcasing his emerging talent and unique perspective in the field of contemporary photography.

CARLOS PEREZ is a visual artist and professor currently based in Kennesaw, Georgia. His work focuses on comics and its various applications. He is the founder and owner of Prime Vice Studios, the premier sequential art company, IP development agency and creator training program.

MEGAN REÁTIGA, a Colombian artist studying at Kennesaw State University, blends photography and printmaking to create surrealist, dreamlike compositions. Inspired by her experience as an outsider in the U.S. and her love for psychedelic rock, Reátiga's work explores saturated, textured universes that find beauty in the mundane through unconventional object combinations and vivid color play.

ACILLIA ROBERTS, an emerging visual artist from Albany, Georgia, creates diverse, energetic works inspired by nature and everyday objects. She employs various media, including paint, colored pencils, graphite, and photography, to capture her vision. Roberts' distinctive style emphasizes vibrant colors and strong compositions, exploring the interplay between visible and invisible elements in her art.

DESTINEE ROBERTS, an Albany, Georgia-based artist, specializes in intricate graphite works. Her art, inspired by observations of the world, reflects the complexity and beauty of human experience. Roberts favors graphite for its ability to render fine detail, using it to create powerful visual statements. Her work aims to connect viewers with their own truths through her distinctive creative vision.

SAVANNAH SMITH was born in Alabama and currently works in Chattanooga, Tennessee as a designer. She holds a BFA in Graphic Design from Jacksonville State University where she also found a love for watercolors. Savannah uses her art to navigate difficult themes such as mental health, trauma recovery, and chronic illness.

SHERRISE STOVER is an artist who is passionate about their work. They wish to further their education and receive their Master's at a graduate school. They have yet to make a decision but they look forward to the future brings.

SARAH SUNFIRE, originally from New Orleans, has lived in every region of the US, most recently relocated from San Francisco to pursue her MFA from Georgia College and State University. Her Substack, *Hot and Disabled*, is an ongoing collection of personal essays focusing on the body in media and beyond. Her work has been published in *Midway Journal*, *Burning House Press*, *Lit Angels*, *Just Femme and Dandy*, and elsewhere.

LYLA TAFT is a Nursing Instructor at Darton College of Health Professions at Albany State University. She has published some scholarly articles in various nursing journals, but she also enjoys more artistic writing.

CURTIS L. TODD, PhD, is a poet, a participant observer and street photographer, educator, and writer. He is a practitioner of narrative and civic poetry. His creative nonfiction, as well as fictional writings explore the many aspects of the human condition, experiences, behavior, and their interplay as navigational and survival apparatuses in the social environment. He is a professor in the School of Arts and Sciences at Atlanta Metropolitan State College.

JEFF VIRZERA is an artist and an educator, with this dichotomy, he has always shared his passion for art through his creations and passed on his knowledge to those who would receive it. He has delved into many mediums from clay to iron and from the humble graphite to the softness of acrylics. No matter the medium Jeff communicates an intensity through a wide range of vibrant emotions we pursue as our deepest need to connect to each other.

JEANETTE WACHTMAN is an art educator, author and artist. She is a part-time Assistant Professor of Art Education, for Kennesaw State University, GA. She has traveled extensively, received numerous teaching awards, and has lectured at international, national and state art education conferences. She lives on five acres in the Georgia Mountains.

CHARLES WILLIAMS, Professor of Art at ASU since 2004, explores symbolism and meaning through collage. Influenced by Southern experiences, his work examines the evolution and appropriation of symbols in contexts ranging from beautiful to tragic. Williams' research spans the co-evolution of Punk and Hip Hop culture, College Rock in the South in the 70s + 80s, and multiculturalism in the European Renaissance and ancient art.

JORDAN ZIEGLER is an artist with an eccentric personality who loves a variety of music. She dreams of become a set designer for movies and theme parks. She taught herself a number of hand crafts like sewing, knitting, carving, and leather work. She did competitive swim team throughout secondary school and is now an advanced certified scuba diver.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

deadline April 1, 2025

ABOUT THE PIERIAN

The Pierian, Albany State University's online journal of literary and visual arts, invites submissions through April 1, 2025. We seek original, unpublished works that challenge readers to look beyond the ordinary, think critically, and explore universally shared human experiences.

Our pages welcome a diverse array of creative expressions: poetry, short stories, one-act plays, personal essays, and visual art (submitted in 2D format). The Pierian is open to all voices. We welcome submissions from writers and artists everywhere, including but not limited to ASU students, faculty, and staff, as well as contributors from across the state, nation, and globe. Our goal is to create a rich tapestry of perspectives that transcends institutional and geographical boundaries.

Since 2023, The Pierian has been published by dedicated professors from ASU's divisions of Visual Arts and English, ensuring a commitment to academic and artistic excellence. Together, we continue to nurture the wellspring of imagination flowing through our HBCU community and rippling outwards, enriching the broader landscape of contemporary art and literature.

SUBMISSIONS

We accept submissions online through April 1, 2025. Each submission window allows for the inclusion of up to three individual works in one submission. You may include any combination of written works and/or visual arts in a single submission. We hope you'll join us at The Pierian, where every page turn promises a sip from the fountain of creativity. For more information and to explore our archives, please visit <https://www.asurams.edu/academic-affairs/college-of-arts-sciences/arts-and-humanities/eng-ml-mc/the-pierian/>

The Pierian

Literary + Visual Arts Journal

ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY