

The
GRACKLE

2013 - 2014



The
GRACKLE

Chestnut Hill College's Art and Literary Magazine

2013 - 2014

THE TEAM

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DEAR STUDENTS,

Once upon a time, William Shakespeare wrote his first play, Emily Dickinson wrote her first poem, Edgar Allen Poe wrote his first short story; Yousuf Karsh and Margaret Bourke White took their first pictures; and Pablo Picasso painted his first picture. Later writers, like Thomas Merton and Seamus Heaney saw their first published pieces in their college literary magazine. Joining the ranks of these authors and artists, the students who find their works published in Chestnut Hill College's 2014 issue of *The Grackle* experience the same joy of accomplishment.

This issue stands as a perfect introduction to the thoughts and aspirations that have formed and guided our writers and artists. Poems are astonishing for their luminous imagery, their rhythmic range, and above all, their penetrating imagination. The short stories rely on various modes of humor, the traditional, the fanciful and the painful.

Unfortunately, there are omissions, but space

and cost – that is the finite qualities of our world – must always have a say in the final choice.

Reading and writing are creative acts. The act of writing entails a life-long creation of the self. The contributors to *The Grackle* continue that noble work and allow all of us to enjoy those efforts. The poet Gerard Manley Hopkins sees each piece of writing and art as highly individualized and different from all other things.

The College community congratulates the editors, staff, and advisers for their time, energy and creativity without which this issue would never see the light of day. These writers and the artist/photographers make us see and hear beauty we might have missed without their eyes and ears. This year's issue of *The Grackle* is an invitation to a select feast of writing. And as the poet William Butler Yeats suggests:

"When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
take down this book and slowly read..."

*Rita Michael Scully, SSJ, M.A.
Associate Professor of English*

DEAR READERS,

The atmosphere at Chestnut Hill College is wholly conducive to the creation of art in all its capacities, be it written or visual. There is an intimate serenity on the campus that allows for moments of introspection and creation. I believe that the pieces in this issue of The Grackle showcase the talent that manifests on the College's campus and in its students.

We had nearly seventy-five submissions this year, and although we could only accept a fraction of them, there is something to be said about the courage it takes to submit a work of writing, a photograph or a piece of art to a review-based publication. There is a confidence in the work that has not gone unnoticed, and I encourage the creator of each piece that does not appear in this issue to not let it effect your craft, and continue your work.

This year, we have a special piece published posthumously on behalf of Ryan D. Lanahan, an Iraq War veteran and student in the School of Continuing and Professional Studies. Ryan had a long bucket list before he passed away, and being published in The Grackle was

of high priority. I speak on behalf of every advisor, editor, and review-board member of the publication when I say that we are honored to showcase his work and to carry on his memory.

Last, but most certainly not least, I would like to recognize the dedicated staff and advisors of The Grackle. The review process for the magazine is a long progression; at weekly meetings we discussed every single piece that was submitted, and some of the sessions lasted hours. This year's editors and review board members are a particularly dedicated batch of students, and without them we simply would not have a magazine, let alone this beautiful publication they worked so hard to create. Also, a special thank you to our advisors, who encourage all of us through the yearlong publication process.

After four years of work on The Grackle I would like give a final thank you to the entire Chestnut Hill College community for keeping this publication thriving on campus, and for celebrating art and literature year after year.

Michael Bradley
Editor-in-Chief

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UNTITLED
Liana Florez
2015



REDDENED FOLIAGE
Andrea Wentzell
2015

The Bluest of Skies

Nick Kowalski

2016

dark suits march below glass mountains,
one loosens its necktie,
to swim, Naked, in the fountain,
and lift its wanting eyes.

Her

Catherine Dempsey

2015

I'm jealous of her free time
She's not making any sense and I'm lying
On the floor in a heap of panic
I'm waking up to horns blaring for me to
Work harder
Stay sharper
Organize the notes by color and
Panic attacks don't swing me to sleep
Like her records do and I just want to fly to
London and watch Big Ben
Crumble into the sea

Summer Stars

Sally Simons

2015

Do you remember that night after graduation when we were sitting on the porch swing? The fireflies were out looking like a second set of stars. You said you were so happy to be leaving here; you couldn't wait for fall and New York. Couldn't wait for frat parties and skyscrapers. Where everything is a joke.

I asked you if you would miss me. You shrugged and just took a swig of soda, looking out at those twirling stars. I stare at the back of your head. The long blonde tresses that sometimes I just want to yank out, hoping you'll finally see me sitting in front of you.

"Hey, you remember that time Taylor got his car stuck in that giant puddle in the middle of the parking lot,?" you ask me, turning back to face me. He was so stupid; drove through the damn thing once then turned around and tried to do it again.

"Do you remember Jake?" I ask.

"Why would you ask that?" you say. "Of course I remember Jake."

"Do you miss him?" I continue.

"Course I miss him," you say, glaring at me. "I don't want to talk about Jake today."

But that's funny because Jake is all we seem to talk about some days. Not directly, but it's when you're silent and you get this look in your eyes like you wish you were somewhere else, that it wasn't me who was sitting next to you, pulling your shirt off.

There is something about that night that's been bugging me. You miss someone you will never see again, but you don't want to miss someone you may see again on those rare trips home that you'll take from college and New York. Can you only miss the dead? Can you only miss those people who you think you won't see tomorrow?

I know you were Jake's girl. But now you're my girl. Or were. Now you're going to New York and maybe you'll make something of yourself. Maybe you'll forget about all of us here. Me, Taylor and his stupid car, your parents. But you won't forget Jake because Jake's dead. You're going to carry him around like a fifty pound weight that's fused to your shoulders all because the last thing you said to him was I'll see you tomorrow. And then you didn't. You won't let him go because he never grew up past fifteen. But you'll let all of us go, those of us who miss you because we never see you even though you're only a car ride away, not an eternity away.



BREAKING WATER • *Andrea Wentzell, 2015*



SHADOWING TIME • *Andrea Wentzell, 2015*



OVER THE MOUNTAINS
Amanda Monroe
2016

Words

Catherine Dempsey

2015

Written word is so much easier than spoken.
I don't fumble with the hem-line of my dress
Or massacre my already stressed fingernails.
Rather my fingers are active in destruction,
Calloused though they may be, they are stringing
Satin paintings and thumbing pages and
Comparing these things to love.
And even though I wish I could speak out and say how I feel,
It's much easier to make you concentrate on my words alone,
Than the sadness in my face,
My insecure eyes and uncomfortable nose.
I want you to really understand what I'm saying,
Emotion set aside with the tide.

On Cold Sheets in Summer Heats

Nick Kowalski

2016

violent noises from my alarm clock,
decimate my ear;
silently in my mind, i gently rock,
"to Live is to fear."

Goodbye

Briana Charlton

2016

Pain tore my soul into pieces
It cut through my heart like a knife
I thought I had known what it felt like to hurt
That was until I lost you.

I sat on the bed by that picture
Of us on the merry-go-round
I tried to call back that girl on the horse
But she was no one without you.

I beheld your face on that morning
I prayed you were only asleep
But what good were prayers, hopes, or wishes?
They wouldn't bring you back to me.

Grief held my hand in that hour
It threatened to whisk me away
I knelt in the mud—I was finished
Part of me was to be buried with you.

I didn't go home on that evening
There was no "home" anymore.
"Goodbye," I said to the darkness.
Too bad you could no longer hear.



UNTITLED

Liana Florez

2015



PALE FLOWER
Amanda Monroe
2016

My Mom's Dead Flowers

Nick Kowalski

2016

When my mom handed me a bucket with a large yellow sponge in it, I remembered that my brother's rehearsal dinner was tonight. I used the green hose on the front porch that my mom uses to water her dead flowers to fill the bucket. I went to grab some dish soap, but my dad handed me some bottle of car soap. As my dad explained the difference, I walked outside and poured half of the car soap into the bucket.

After ten minutes of untangling the hose so that it would reach the curb, I covered my mom's new sedan with grey water. The pollen from the tree above my grandmother's driveway turned the grey water green. I stared at the five-dollar romance novels from the pharmacy on the front seat when my neighbor pulled in the spot behind my mom's car.

While my neighbor got her newborn from the backseat, I tried to read the title of the one with a castle on the cover. When the baby cried, I looked up and decided to add an audible "hello" to my head nod. She asked how college was, and I said

some synonym to the word "good" as I turned off the hose.

I grabbed the sponge when my mom walked outside. As I washed off the bird poop stain on the passenger side that my mom claimed to inhibit her driving when she picked me up at college last night, she asked my neighbor about the baby. With the extra time she had since I was washing her car, she talked about the wedding.

I told her I needed to turn the hose back on, so she went inside to avoid the fireworks of water that spewed from our hose when it was on. I rinsed the car off, and as the suds fell from the car, I looked at the row of houses behind me. Each had flowers on the porch, and my neighbor's flowers started to die when she brought the baby home, but my next-door-neighbor had the prettiest flowers. Her husband died last year, and since she couldn't have kids, she was alone. Sometimes I wish we had nicer flowers, but as I dried the windshield with a ten-year-old towel, I was glad my mom's flowers weren't that nice.

Untitled

Kairi Suswell

2014

The eldest of my Grandfathers
Had an affair with the sun.
He kissed her
& she him.
Remnants of their love were
left on his skin.
And when he passed,
his sons and daughters
took after her.
But they hated the remnants of their parents' love,
And so they hated themselves.
Shunning their mother,
shunning their color ,
they despised the warmth of her heat.
And what her and my Grandfather's love means to them
is not
what their love means to me.

UNTITLED • *Liana Florez, 2015*



SPIDER LEAVES • *Andrea Wentzell, 2015*

Retreat

Amanda Monroe
2016

We are all connected under the same sky.
When the tears on your face finally run dry,
Remember this and the large space,
Will no longer feel so out of place.

On My Mom's Green Grass Lawn

Nick Kowalski
2016

Peace exists
in bright blue hot wheels
protected
from light of sun's sight by
dazzling dew.



UNTITLED
Gabrielle Convie
2015



THE LASTING EFFECT

Helen Squiteri

2015

Coffee

Nick Kowalski

2016

White foam umbrellas
A latte
Suspended upon
A table
Shaking strongly in
A station
Of machine horses

She stands as
Her harvest eyes stare
At the train
“My latte is like
A shower
After a warm walk”
Excessive

Her expression like
A phantom
Longs for coffee in
A tin mug
Resting upon a
Still table
Protected by dew

Boy, Pay Attention

Kairi Suswell

2014

Boy, Pay Attention
Mama send me go ah store for milk,
I comes back wit water.
She send me for water,
I comes back wit juice.
Mama say I hear what I want to.
I tell'er sho me some proof.
She say,
"When I send you for milk
You comes back wit water.
And when I sends you for water,
You comes back wit juice."
Mama tell me,
"Boy, Payattention."



VERY BERRY
Andrea Wentzell
2015

UNTITLED • *Liana Florez, 2015*



LIFE • *Andrea Wentzell, 2015*

Park Corpses

Catherine Dempsey

2015

Where did all the losers go?
Teeth dented and nothing to do
We were stars combusted with too much energy
Spirits soaring through the park we occupied
When we had nowhere else to go

Where did all the misfits go?
We were drama strung too tight
Lights too bright
Movie scripts unsaid starring every
Loveless hooligan with martial arts legs

We were full of Scarsdale rain and impure thoughts
Our hearts couldn't hold all the mistakes we fought
When the sun set we were midnight swigs of
Stolen liquor moving closer to paranoia
And skimmed knees

I thought high school years were hidden in the
Filters of cigarettes and the pressed wood
Of park benches but those years were in the people
Who lived for self-destruction and love
When they gave me every reason not to

The Storm

Sally Simons
2015

I got out of bed to see what had happened in the night. I walked out on the porch in my bare feet and cup of coffee and sat down on the top step to survey the damage.

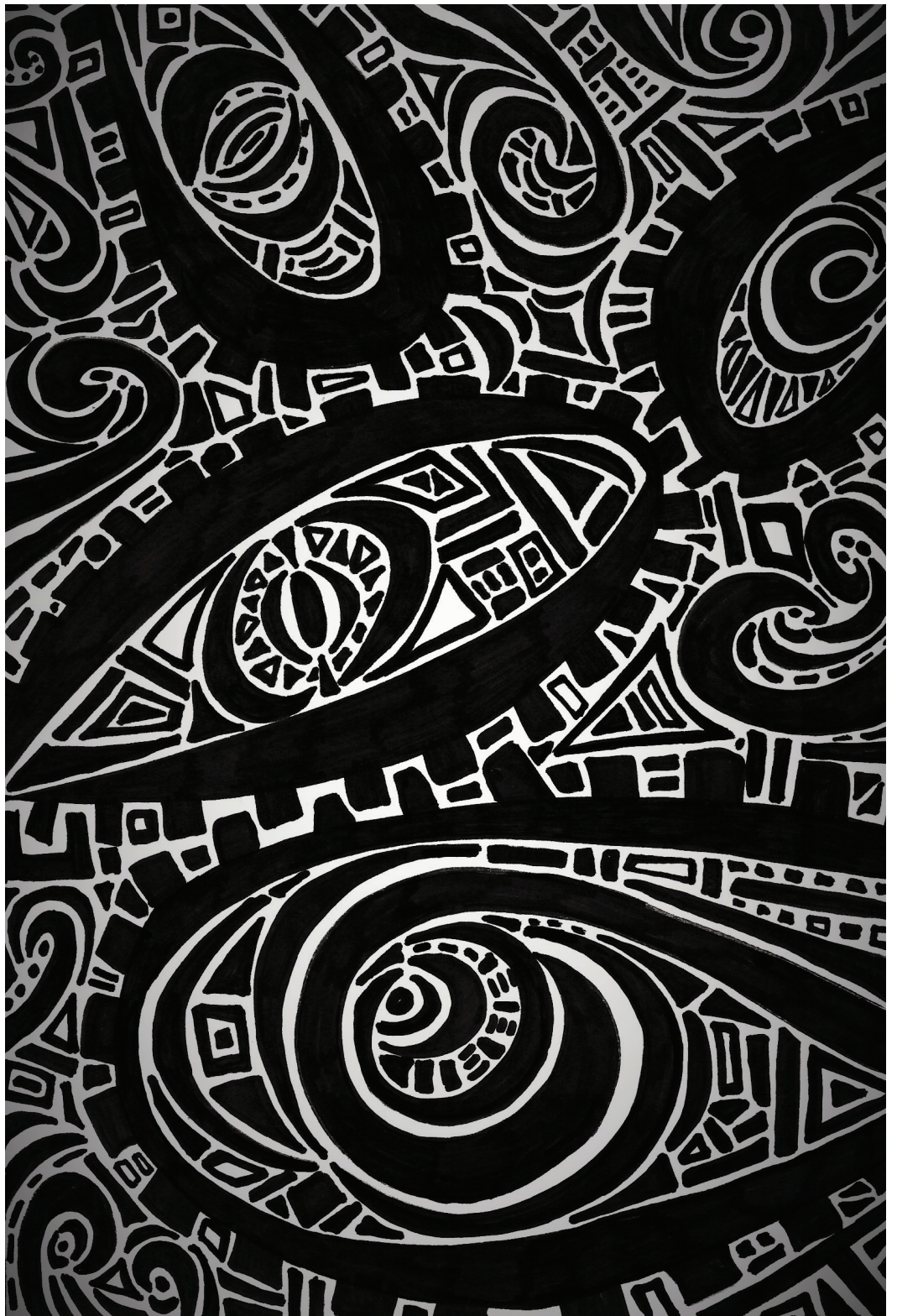
Winds had ripped through trees, giving the impression that Mother Nature was in possession of a blender and had decided to use it ruthlessly. One of the trees leaned a little drunkenly against its neighbor, who was also in a less than sober state. My car had been spared from damage, thankfully, but my driveway was blocked by yet another tree that had come loose from its moorings in the earth.

The tall grass that I had not gotten around to mowing down was flattened like a blanket that had been smoothed out over a bed. One of the plastic white chairs that had been on my porch prior to the storm was in the middle of my yard turned upside down nature's -- version of modern art.

The roof of my house had a few shingles missing, which I would have to replace at some point. The barn looked like a frumpy version of the leaning Tower of Pisa. I leaned to the side mirroring its posture. There. All straightened out.



UNTITLED
Liana Florez
2015



ALWAYS WATCHING
Amanda Monroe
2016

UNTITLED • *Liana Florez, 2015*



POISON BARK • *Andrea Wentzell, 2015*



UNTITLED
Liana Florez
2015

Spring-Winter

Nick Kowalski

2016

you – the seed of woman –
walked into the cosmic forest
clothed in purple flowers
from your Green earth – you breathed the cool
breeze of the universe –
but your skin soaked in yellow light
with your stained clothes – blue
paint on the intergalactic
canvas swam you closer
to the Darkness of your time's end.

you walked interstellar
battlefields during the time of
orange – chilled beams of the
harvest lit your step – spilling
the red and yellow blood
from the dried corpses of wooden
plant's children – victims of
the cold child from the time of
darkness – you walked in the
cosmic forest as earth's child.

your Green and Black high tops
moved your tight dark jeans across the
woods of the universe –
you stepped on the dead victims of
the war – a fight between the Green
children and those born of Winter –
your neon laces tripped
you as entropy slowed you – but
brown liquids and yellow
fruit fueled your walk from life to death.

Color-Coded Friendship

Catherine Dempsey

2015

Last time I saw you, our clothes were heavy
Billowed and full with the winter
Shivers about our finger tips

And we didn't make eye contact

The days are getting longer now
Bring me to the mountain

Awkward pauses, dealing with each other's
Stubbornness, the steps of an old apartment building on Palmer Ave.
Our hands swollen with nostalgia

I miss you much more when you're not here
but you asked me to recite Robin William's speech from Good Will Hunting
And destroy the spaces between the cracks in the sidewalk

This is not the right time or place to meet
And to meet again, quite not the right feeling
We want our teenage memories back
Our silly verbal cues
With less angst and heartbreak

This feels just like the night in the driveway
When you confessed that you're broken
Wanting to get sentimental
"What's wrong with me?"

Now with eyes closed, you walk past me
Remember the smell of paint
And let's get the hell outta here



UNTITLED
Gabrielle Convie
2015



DEATH TO RENEWAL
Andrea Wentzell
2015

Angel

Anonymous

Cracked sun strikes me through velvet curtains
I awake with a groggy brain and heavy heart
I strip off my dreams and dress for a frightening reality
when you walk into my vision you are an angel stretching its wings,
yawning as if your perfection bores you
I slam skin against eyes begging for a new face
A new life
A new me
Broken shards of moon caress me through velvet curtains
I beat my skin red with self loathing
then I lay to rest with a heavy brain and a groggy heart

I Know You

Anonymous

I know you
I know your thoughts;
the good and the bad
all the good thoughts you've had,
you throw them away
and all the bad thoughts you've had,
you tally them on your wrist
reveling in the pleasurable pain
counting down the days
when you feel strong enough
to make this tally the last

Some of 'Em

*Ryan D. Lanahan
In Loving Memory, 1977 - 2013*

Some of 'em, come from row homes in big cities, like Philadelphia.
Some of 'em, come from farmhouses in wide open spaces, like Nebraska.
Some of 'em, come from small towns in the mountains, like Fairmont, West Virginia.
Some of 'em, come from blue-collar neighborhoods in the Midwest, like South Side Chicago.

Some of 'em, want to trade in their blue collar for some Dress Blues; from The United States Marine Corps.

Some of 'em, want to see what the world has to offer; through The United States Navy.

Some of 'em, want to show the world what they have to offer; serving The United States Air Force.

Some of 'em, want to see what they're really made of, and get paid to do it; in The United States Army.

Some of 'em, don't need a paycheck, they would do it for free.

Some of 'em, give up a million dollar paycheck, and do it for FREEDOM.

Some of 'em, do need the paycheck, to send home to their family.

Some of 'em, would give up the paycheck, as long as they're a part of The Family.

Some of 'em have a Father who served.

Some of 'em had a Father who served.

Some of 'em want Respect

Some of 'em want Revenge.

Some of 'em, know that it's a privilege to celebrate freedom, on Independence Day.

Some of 'em, understand that it's an honor to protect freedom, every day.

Some of 'em, know that September 11th will affect us Forever.

Some of 'em, understand that September 11th did not end September 12th

Some of 'em will not let it happen again!

Some of 'em would give up anything!

Some of 'em would give up EVERYTHING

Some of 'em ... do.



UNTITLED
Liana Florez
2015



THANK

You

FOR

READING

