Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others

Jonathan Swift
Perspectives
A Journal of Art and Literature

Published annually by the Creative Writing I and II, Art, and Computer Design classes

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Wentzville, Mo 63385

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Layout, design, and publishing provided by the
Wentzville R-IV School District
Timberland High School
Advanced Business Technology Class
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May 2018

Volume XIV
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Poetry

“Poetry is language at its most distilled and most powerful”

Rita Dove
He laid in those pristine white sheets,
    In that cramped hospital room.
His every breath ragged and ugly,
    Almost as if it would be his last.
His once strong body now a husk,
    And it almost seemed to shrink in that cramped room.
I sang all of his favorite Hymns,
    Trying anything to bring him out of that drug induced haze.
I sang until my voice was raw and ugly,
    But I didn’t care.
Because every time he came out of the haze,
He smiled with a smile that filled the room with happiness.
What I would not give to see that loving smile again.
To go back to when the days had light and happiness,
    Before death and misery stole the color,
Before I lost that spark.
This Fake Life

Do this, say that.
But don’t get attached,
It will all change in the drop of a hat.
Smile till your face is cracked,
But don’t let them see how bad it hurts.
Laugh here, sing there,
We get played along by society’s puppet strings.
We dance with our fake smile with no one really here.
Don’t you crack, and definitely don’t you show it.
Because the instant you do,
You’ll get shoved full of meds from a kit.
So we play along in everything we do.
We work in our “perfect” jobs,
We sing society’s songs.
But I wish people would actually use their minds.
I wish people were stronger.
Everyone lives in their own hazy bubbles.
And no one is any wiser.
Sometimes I try to sing my own,
But I just get drowned out by the hum and drum.
It’s not like I am a good singer on my own.
But I just want to know what it feels like to not be numb.
So I sing a new scale.
Just go Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So done with this fake life.
White Privilege

Jeffery Davis

Why must it be about skin?  
How is my pigment a privilege?  
I am no different from you, I  
Think, cry, love, hate, work, just like you  
Even as you degrade my accomplishments due to my skin  
Perhaps it is because I haven’t had pain like you, or don’t have  
Real problems, because whites have everything.  
I will tell you now that is not true.  
Verily I say to you,  
I know true pain. I watched those I love  
Lose their fight, Dying on those damn hospital beds.  
Everything you say you have been oppressed by, what I would  
Give to have that burden, instead of  
Every demon raging in my head.
We’ll Never Be Different

Kendall Enyart

Your name
Your teacher’s name
The class you don’t want to be in
The date (day first, month next, year last)

They tell me to be different
That it’s better to be unique
But how can I be different
When we are all taught the same thing
   Now pick from a list of topics
   That have already been written
   And research already known facts
So you can write all the same things
   Make sure you look at the rubric
   And have what everyone else has
Because we’ve done it the same way
Every year, so do as they say
   But you have to think on your own
Making sure that you’re different
Yet God forbid that you show it
Anywhere close to this building
   But how can I be different
With this awful Times New Roman
In this awful type twelve font
(And don’t forget to double space)
We’ll Never Be Different  (cont.)

Now we are all thinking the same
As we stare at the blinking cursor
That I’ll never be different
And this is due in three minutes
Now we are all thinking the same
As we stare at the blinking cursor
That I’ll never be different
And this is due in three minutes
All That Remains

Cheyenne Strong

Grass as black as obsidian  
Lined with ash,  
Falling like fresh snow.  
Leaves dancing in the haze above,  
Before disintegrating to nothing more than dust.  
The trees howl in dismay,  
Their branches pulsating like burning embers in the wind.  
The scent of burnt leaves brushes through the atmosphere.  
Silent, steady,  
Stirring waves of ash upon the grass.  
Like a sea of decay.  
Silent screams,  
The call of owls.  
Unsettling eyes drifting from above,  
Waiting for the drop of a hoof.  
As the wind picks up,  
Ash burns at the eyes of a dying elk,  
Stumbling to make it free from the dwindling furnace.  
Once lit,  
No longer.  
Skin exposed raw, flanks of fur-covered skin dropping to the grass,  
He limps towards the light of day,  
Towards the sun that digs a hollow hole through the
grey.
Screeches emit from above,
Horned Birds raising their open wings.
A shadow of death.
Tick tock.
A loud groan, and a crack like lightning,
Up from the sky.
The elk’s throat snaps,
Under the weight of a skeleton tree.
The winged reapers silently meet the earth beside it.
Last breath,
Hot ash,
A cough,
And the forest goes silent.
A gale rushes through the woods,
Taking the owls with it,
And all that remains.
Cicada in the Rain

Cheyenne Strong

It’s raining
Pines are decorated with dew
Their flimsy bark drooping parallel to the ground
It’s a school day
The bus is late, and it’s like winter has arrived
Though it’s only early fall
I wander around the trees
Pace uneven
Mind entranced by distressed thought
Then
Cicada
A falter in my attention
A trip in my thought
A cicada
Climbing
As if its life depended on it
On the damp bark of the pine
It’s as if all feeling of the cold
Of the sadness creeping
Has left
This cicada
Trying so desperately
To reach the opening exposing the tree’s base
I stare
It’s unrealistic goal
Yet it tries
It knows that the sap, in the end, is worth it
Cicada in the Rain (cont.)

To keep it alive
That’s what keeps us all living
I stare one last time, then grab him
And raise him to the opening
Just before the bus arrives
I have to scale my own tree again
Sailor on the Sea
Cheyenne Strong

Across the sky, steely clouds float
Over the midday sun
Above the old sailor, sheltering him
Aboard his old rundown ship

Amidst the sea, as the ship drifts
Along the rippling waves
Beneath the deep, the great white shark’s fins graze
Against the hull of the ship

Through the wind, the ship’s white sails bend
In the soft warm current
Above the mast, seagulls cast their shadows
On the green moss covered deck

Along the waves, the old ship slows
In the placid waters
Around the hull, barnacles stick like glue
Into rough masses they grow

During the breeze, kegs tip over
From the easterly winds
Outside the barrels, little crabs scuttle
Across rotten hardwood planks
Sailor on the Sea (cont.)

Atop the deep, a cool mist stirs
Under the evening sun
Through the fog, pelicans in the distance
Amongst smokey shoreline rocks

Beyond the horizon, hues glow
On the gleaming surface
Of the water, luminous shades of gold
With orange and yellow tones

Amongst the stars, the moon ascends
Into the darkened night
Around it, a dim halo of soft light
Like flickering ice crystals
Withering winter
Pine trees wearing coats of white snow
Lakes of glass reflecting stars from above
The night sky decorated
With winding trails of rainbow light
Must needs end
To prepare for Spring’s
Hummingbirds that sing

Sprouting spring
Foliage flourishing with golden wings of monarchs
Flowers blooming in elegant splashes of color
The Rhythm of the Seasons

Cheyenne Strong

The morning breeze filled
With the sweet fragrance of early rain
Must needs end
To prepare for summer’s
Torrent rains and thunder

The rhythm of the seasons
Sent from above
With beauty and love

Searing summer
Waves rippling from the sweltering earth
Rays burning through the fragile surface of leaves
The hot air standing still
As scorching midday sinks to mild evening
Must needs end
To prepare for Fall’s
Small critters that crawl
The Rhythm of the Seasons (cont.)

Foraging fall
Greenery transitioning to amber and light yellows
Black crows fluttering over the ripened cornfields
The night sky fading
From crystal blue to smoky grey
Must needs end
To prepare for winter’s
Gleaming snow and glitter

The rhythm of the seasons
Sent from above
With beauty and love
Some people believe that when an artist dies, God- or whoever or whatever- lets them paint the skies. Sunrises and sunsets and spectacular cloud formations, all done by a steady hand and acrylics. I don’t know how to paint well enough for the beauties I see in the evening skies, but I do know how to create beauty from ruin. I want to fly. We can fly! We can fly! We can fly! I want to soar through the inky black night, poking holes in the fabric to let light through. After death I want to make the stars.
Baby Brother

Amanda Vannierop

My baby brother,
with eyes wide in wonder
and his hair- a summer sunset.
My baby brother,
with red scars and scabs to match my own
and fingers calloused from wire strings.
My baby brother,
who could touch the clouds,
who smiles with half his face stretched and beaming.
My baby brother,
who puts all the kids to shame
and lives with quiet intellect,
yet never needs to prove himself.
My baby brother,
another, better version of myself,
my father’s reflection in a shattered mirror,
the same pieces and parts
set in different alignment.
My companion through the rocky rivers and torrent seas;
a friend- so alike yet so unique.
My baby brother,
my only.
So It Goes

Amanda Vannierop

Evenings slipped by like honey,
Vast empty skies were colored with crayon and
Even my brother could touch the clouds.
Rarely does the child’s mind recognize pain
Yet I felt it in the air,
Tasted the salt in the breeze that
Hinted at the oncoming storm.
In my dreams I could fly and
Nothing was out of reach.
Ground be damned.

Were we really happy?
Are we ever?
Smiles started to crack.

Beneath the childish facade
Everything ached.
A vice was set on my mind, tightening,
Until I squirmed between the pain.
Try your best to fake it.
If they see what’s happening, nothing will be the same.
Fill your stomach with sunshine
Understand that no pill will make you happy.
Learn how to break where no one sees
And when it couldn’t get worse
Night dragged me under,
Down down down.

Now I know how to swim through fire,
Only relying on my shaking hands.
The dreams of childhood warped,
Hiding any real sentiment and only showing
Insidious nightmares.
No more flying, no more color.
Ground, please catch me.

Here is where my innocence is buried.
Under the tombstone is a coffin
Ripe with laughter.
The stone reads:

(Read the first letter of each line)
Dear God

Cassidee Wakefield

Dear god,
Is that you God? Am i talkin to you god? You better be listenin, cause i got a real big problem with you god.

See you took my daddy away and now I’m just laying here Holding my mama’s hand when she’s talkin to my uncle Stan about my dad when he was young and misguided he thought the love he received was the love he deserved but that was all wrong because you see my daddy was a better man after all the trials and tribulations from YOU god

He thought he was talkin to YOU god so he decided to follow the light from YOU God but that light wasn’t from you that light was the end of cigarette lighter that led him to a life of addiction and disgrace.

Just 7 years old tears down my face my momma had to explain why my daddy wasn’t here while my brothers grew up down the same path i had to watch em all leave for months at a time never knowing why i was cryin I just felt so alone and that’s why i wrote you this poem. I hope you read it and weep like i did.

I was 12 years old when my niece came in my life. She became the light in my eyes i didn’t need any guidance
from you but now i do. I fear I’m becoming just like my
daddy and my brothers and i don’t know how to cope
with all the sh** in my life I’m just tryin my best but my
best ain’t enough cause I don’t want this little girl grow-
ing up like we did.

   Fatherless, not knowin who she is or where she’s from.
I don’t want her knowing that she comes from a family
with no life. I want her to feel like she’s got a home and
a chance to be the change in life. So one day she can be
the light in someone else’s eye.

   I love them all to death but you see i can’t separate love
and addiction because it’s like separatin water and sand
it’s a waist of time and i guess so is this letter if you don’t
exist. ....
Sincerely, me
Artwork

“The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls.”

Pablo Picasso
Drawing & Paintings

Alex Vaughn | River

Alex Vaughn | White
Alex Vaughn | Dog

Lily Henerforth | Steven
Brittany Harrell | Orlando

Cheyenne Strong | Flint Fox
Diana Ovchar | Decomposing

Diana Ovchar | Order, Purity
Diana Ovchar | The Fallen Twins
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Gabrielle Richards | Focus
Gabrielle Richards | I’m Sorry

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Cassidee Wakefield | Horse Blue

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Published by the Students of
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