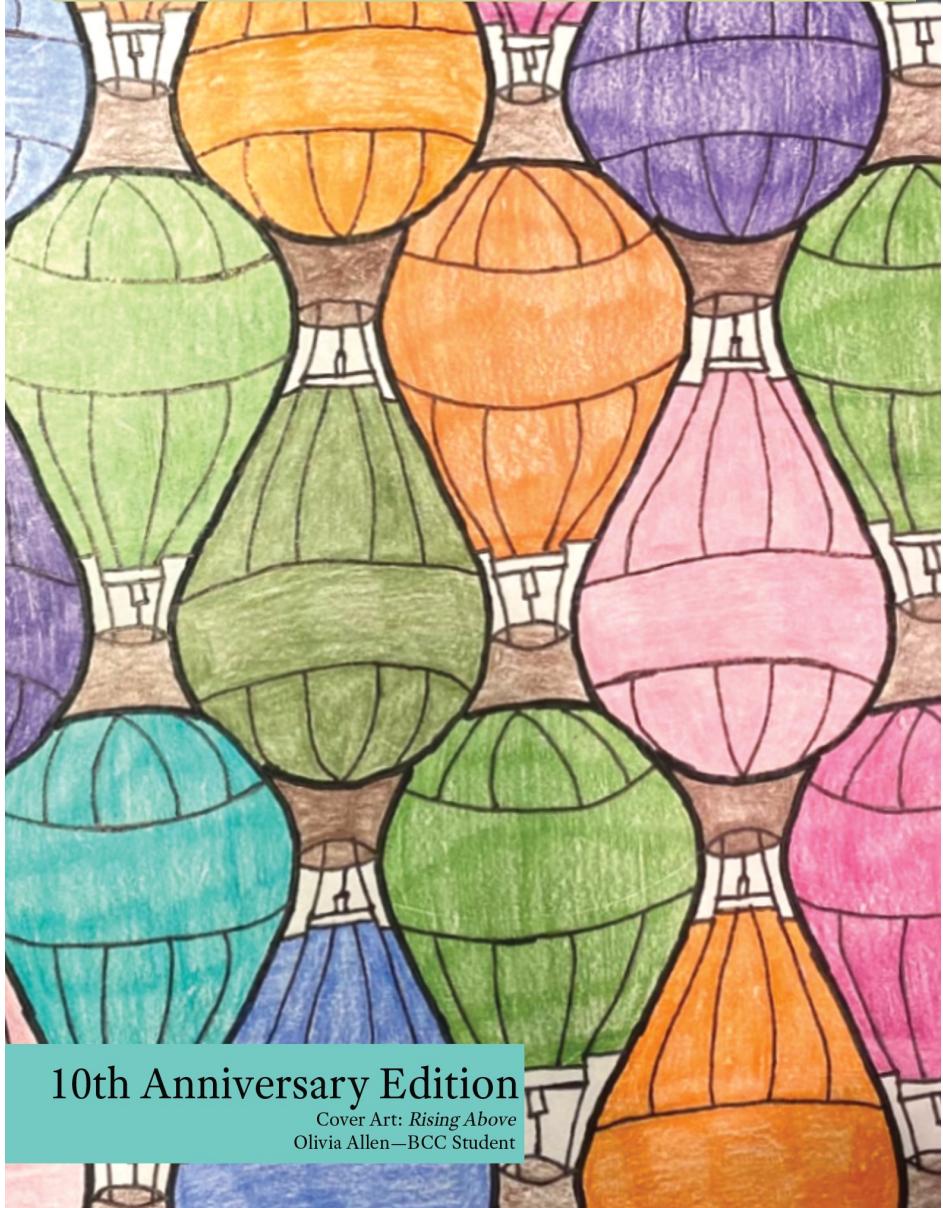


THE INK QUILL

Literary and Art Magazine

2021

BLADEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE



10th Anniversary Edition

Cover Art: *Rising Above*
Olivia Allen—BCC Student

The Ink Quill 2021

10th Anniversary Edition



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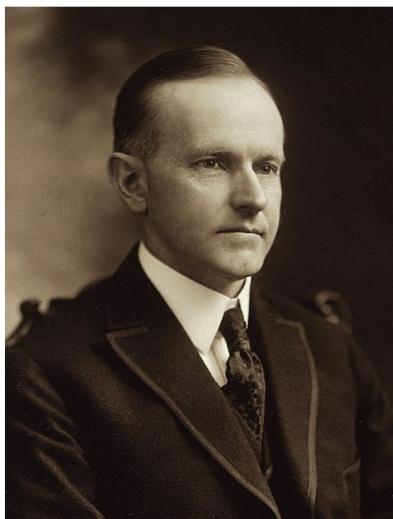


INAUGURATION BY LAMP LIGHT



Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty

It was June of 1923 when President Warren G. Harding set off on his “Voyage of Understanding.” During this trip, he would become the first American president to visit the U.S. territory of Alaska. The official purpose of his visit was to open the Alaska Railroad. Video reels from the journey shows the President riding in a train and in a Dodge Roadster that had been adapted to operate on the railroad. On July 15, 1923, Harding received a golden spike which he proceeded to nail into the track. Throughout the trip, the President can be seen smiling and chatting happily. All seems to be going well. However, trouble was brewing. The President had taken this journey against his doctors’ orders and now he was fatiguing. On August 2, 1923, President Harding and First Lady Florence Harding stopped in San Francisco, California and got a room at the Palace Hotel. That night, President



Calvin Coolidge: Cropped image courtesy of whitehouse.gov

Warren Harding suddenly passed away of a heart attack. It was a sad end to an otherwise successful trip.

Around 3,000 miles away, in Plymouth Vermont, Vice President Calvin Coolidge slept comfortably in the family's farmhouse. Around 2:30 AM, a telegraph arrived announcing President Harding's death. Coolidge's father ran up the stairs to wake up his son. As he did, Calvin Coolidge noted that his voice trembled, "as the only times I had ever observed that before were when death had visited our family, I knew that something of the gravest nature had occurred." After learning the news of Harding's death, Coolidge and his wife quickly dressed and prepared to go downstairs. Before leaving the bedroom, they knelt down together to ask "God to bless the American people and give me power to serve them."

After going downstairs, Coolidge sent a telegraph to Florence Harding expressing his grief for her personal loss. He also issued a brief public statement in which he mourned Harding as "a great and good man" and assured the American people that he would "carry out the policies which he [Harding] has begun." Moments later, by the light of a kerosene lamp, Calvin Coolidge's father, a notary public, swore in his son to be the nation's 30th president. The only witnesses to this historic event were Coolidge's wife, a stenographer, a chauffeur, and a senator who happened to be staying a few miles down the road.

Calvin Coolidge used the radio to become one of the most popular presidents in American history. He delivered regular radio addresses to the American people and held regular press conferences. On December 6, 1923, his State of the Union address was the first such address by a President to

be broadcast. He was so popular that in 1924, he won 54% of the popular vote and 328 electoral college votes. Despite his popularity and willingness to use mass media to get his message to the American people, Coolidge never pushed policy on Congress. He simply did not think it was his job to do so.

Though he used the radio to win support, Silent Cal, as he was nicknamed, was a man of few words. His wife once recounted a time when a young lady sitting next to the President at a dinner told him that she had bet she could get him to say at least three words. Without looking up from his food, Coolidge replied, "You lose." That same brief, straightforward way was seen again when he announced he would not seek reelection in 1928. While on vacation in South Dakota he said, "I do not choose to run for President in 1928."

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FEBRUARY 17th



Amber Singletary—BCC Student

I was bathing my two-year old daughter, Makaylie, when I heard the phone ringing on the wall. Cell phones weren't the main form of contact thirteen years ago. I heard "Amber, your grandma is on the phone; she thinks your mama is dead." I couldn't breathe; I couldn't blink. My beautiful, blonde-haired, bright-blue-eyed baby girl, happy and full of life, was glistening in the tub, yet all my life just drained from my body. I told her to stay right there; mommy would be right back. I grabbed the phone, "What grandma, what's going on?" All grandma could say was "Yes! She's dead! She's dead! She's dead. I'm standing in the road waiting for the ambulance." " Ok, I've got Makaylie in the tub. Let me find someone to stay with her; I will be there as soon as I can." I was numb; my eyes wouldn't blink; my lungs wouldn't move any air. I looked at my baby. "What's wrong mommy?" she asked. "Nothing, baby, come on, let's get dressed." We went upstairs. I called someone to come get her. My brother and his friend came in. I walked with my brother to the bathroom. He was turning sixteen this month, and I had to tell him what I just found out. I told him grandma called; she thinks mama is dead. He fell into the bathroom closet on the floor. My eyes started to sweat.

"John, John, please stay calm till Makaylie leaves. Please don't get her upset. I don't want her to see this." His face changed that day. I saw the dimming of his eyes, tears streaming down his face. I fixed my composure. I called my boyfriend at work and told him to come. As Makaylie was leaving, I was still not crying. I was still so numb, in shock. My boyfriend pulled up. We drove down the road; it was literally less than two miles away. I saw flashing lights and cars already pulling in. There were people in my mama's bedroom, and no one could go back there. I walked outside. I was standing under the carport, my eyes still so wide, and I felt like the world had just ended. I didn't need to hear anyone confirming her death. I looked up, and there was the stretcher, being rolled to the ambulance. I knew my mama was under that white sheet; they rolled over a lump of grass and under the sheet I saw her ponytail flop with the jarring of the stretcher. I hit the concrete and busted my knees. A paramedic came rushing over with a few other people. I was swinging and punching and screaming and crying, and my soul, my aching soul just belted out with the deepest sobs ever heard. My mind was racing, my tears were flowing, my soul was crushed. My mama... that's my mama under that sheet. Mama, noooo, God, mama noooo! Her eyes were so blue; her smile was crooked and unique, but it was my mama's smile. She always smelled so sweet. I heard her voice echoing in my head, her laughter filling the air and making me happy. It's all gone; it's gone. Thirteen years ago today, my mama didn't wake up. Thirteen years ago today, my light got dimmer; the world got colder; my fears grew tall and

strong. There I was plopped down in this big ol' world all alone. Thirteen years ago today, my mama died.



THE CONSTITUTION



Brandon Hunt—BCC Student

CROSSING THE DELAWARE RIVER



Elijah Crabtree—BCC Student

It was a long night; I barely got any sleep due to the pending stress of the night to come. I stayed up watching the stars, hoping to see a shooting star for good luck. I saw the Big and Little Dippers and many more of the beautiful constellations of our galaxy. It was a cool, clear night unlike how it will be tonight. I have heard rumors of cold weather and ice storms brewing close to our area, and I'm sure that's the last thing my men want to hear. Crossing the roaring river is dangerous enough without sub-freezing temperatures and sheets of ice falling from the sky.

The plan for today is to prepare the boats and weaponry. Everything must be checked; tonight will be a turning point in the war and everything must go according to plan for us to be victorious. I have close to 5,400 troops while our enemy has thousands more. It will be a long and strenuous fight, and both sides will suffer tremendous loss. I am doing my best at keeping my men's spirits up and not showing my stress and discomfort. Crossing this treacherous river will be dangerous, which is why I am being so hard on them to make sure the boats, oars, and muskets are in excellent working condition. The gunpowder cannot get

wet in the crossing or from the sleet and rainy mix. I really hope I brought enough clothes to bear the icy wind, but even so, a fall into the moving water would be fatal. This is the riskiest move I've made since becoming the commander of the continental army.

The Delaware River is like a moat surrounding a medieval castle, an almost unsurpassable barrier that, if crossed, could change the tide of the war. My men are as ready as am I, the sun is falling, and the time to execute my plan is drawing near. We will begin to board the boats at 11:00.

The rain has begun, but there has been no sleet as of 11:15. We are roughly 50 meters across the river; my men are fighting to row against the fierce wind of the storm. They say thunder and lightning in winter is bad luck; I hope that isn't so.

We are now roughly a quarter of the way across, and the storm has really picked up. The sleet is hitting my face, and it feels like steel pellets. The wind is chilling the air, and it feels deathly cold. When the lightning strikes, for a moment I can get a view of the slowly approaching bank, and my heart is racing.

We have arrived, but we have already lost 300 men due to the rain and wind. The waves, continuously slapping the side of the boat, threw them overboard. There was no way to save them. Spirits are at an all-time low. We attack the Hessian camp at dawn. Wish us luck.

Based on George Washington crossing the Delaware River on December 26th.

MY PARENTS' LOVE STORY



Regina Valenta—BCC Staff

It was 1958 when James visited town one weekend with friends. He said he saw the most beautiful girl he'd ever seen and wanted to marry her. They dated for a short time and were married before the end of the year. Using part of the seventeen dollars in James's pocket for the marriage license, they began their journey. Family insisted James and his newlywed bride, Dale, stay with them until they were able to find jobs and get a place of their own. Working two jobs and spending the bare minimum, they were able to save enough money to buy land and build a house—God had truly blessed them.

They were inseparable and through the years they yearned for a child. After fourteen years of marriage, they were determined to adopt, but while sitting by her mother-in-law's deathbed, Dale became nauseated. After a little time, it was evident—a baby was on the way. Dale stayed home to care for their daughter. As a result, she started an in-home daycare so her daughter would have other children to grow up with and learn social skills.

After many years, James began to have heart problems; he claimed that his daughter's marriage was the cause, "a

broken heart," losing her to be wed. Yet, when a grandson came, James was renewed; he enjoyed spending time with him and took him to school. James's massive heart attack years later left him with congestive heart failure. Dale was always by his side every time he went to the hospital. Eventually, Dale began to seem tired and worn out, not feeling her best. She fought it for several months, but late one evening, she said she needed help. The "widow-maker" artery of her heart was closing; she was having a heart attack. The family called EMS, but it was not until they called for a second ambulance that it was evident things were not going to end well. Dale coded in the ambulance and had to be intubated. Dale's daughter knew the twenty-minute period without oxygen was not good, but upon arriving at the hospital with her dad, they were told that she would need a heart stent. James was broken and told his daughter that she may be burying both of them because he could not live without her. Several hours later, Dale was stable from the stent surgery, but due to lack of oxygen, she was brain dead. The doctors tried to explain the situation, but James would not give up on her. He told the doctors, time after time, to do whatever it took; he would use everything he had just to have her back. Unfortunately, Dale never spoke or opened her eyes.

James's daughter took him every day to visit, and every day, he would enter the room, sit, and talk to her and tell her how much he loved her. After some time, James began to get tired, or so his daughter thought. She came home one day to find that he had fallen and

was unable to get up. It appeared as if he had hit his head when he fell. After calling his son-in-law for assistance to get him up, he went straight to bed. He seemed so lost; this was the first day James missed going to see his wife, Dale. A couple of weeks later, as he still seemed a little off and thinking he had injured himself in the fall, his daughter convinced him to go to the ER, where James's daughter learned of her father's large brain tumor. He was admitted to the hospital and began daily chemotherapy treatments. Knowing the doctors wouldn't allow it, James pleaded with them to allow him to leave the hospital for two hours to go see his wife in a hospital in another town. He assured the doctor he would come back; he desperately wanted to see his wife. He would daily grow weaker, while the tumor's size was not impacted. After the seventh chemotherapy session, the treatment stopped.

His daughter requested that he be moved to hospice with the intent that she could get her mother's hospital to move her to hospice too, a final reunion for the couple. Unfortunately, hospice did not have a doctor to accept new patients, and James was moved to a rest home. He only survived thirty-two hours and died right before midnight the next day. At his funeral Brad Paisley's "Waiting on a Woman" played. The song references a couple sharing life, inseparable, going everywhere together. The husband would always find a seat where his wife wanted to go, and he would wait for her. And the final moments in the song are when the husband finds a bench in heaven to wait for his bride—the song was very fitting for their relationship. After his death, their daughter had her mother transferred

to the local hospice house, where she lived nineteen days before dying near midnight, on a cold, snowy night. James did not have to wait too long for Dale. God knew he could not accept losing his wife and took him first. The final reunion, fifty-six years later, a new beginning of their love story - Heaven (2015).



BATTLE OF ELIZABETHTOWN



Bradan Austin—BCC Student

MOMMA'S DELICIOUS BISCUITS



Peggy Bell—BCC Student

I think that everyone has a memory of their momma's cooking, or they remember a certain dish. For me, there's always that dish that Momma made better than anybody else: her delicious, and I do mean delicious, home-made biscuits. I remember Momma used to get up every morning before my siblings and me to cook breakfast for us before we went to school. She would make the best homemade biscuits. Oh! After all these years, I can still taste those biscuits, even as I write this today.

Momma had a special mixing bowl, a white large cotton cloth, and a flour shifter. She would fill that shifter up about halfway. Then, she would take the palm of her hand, and tap that shifter as flour sprinkled into the bowl. She would do this again until she got the amount of flour she wanted. Next, some lard was added along with a bit of buttermilk, a little water, baking powder, and baking soda. After that parade of ingredients entered the bowl, Momma mixed all that up with an old wooden spoon until those items began to join together into a firm form. At this point, she would sprinkle some more flour on her cloth to keep the dough from sticking to it. Momma would then roll that dough back

and forth until it was as smooth as a baby's bottom, and then, she would break off pieces of the dough, and roll it into biscuit-like shapes. She would break that dough and pat it, like a sculptor with clay, and once she had molded it just right, she laid the newly-born biscuits into a long greased pan. This would flatten them some, and from there, they were put into a hot oven where they would change from rubbery dough to soft goodness, courtesy of dual 350-degree burners. Finally, when the bottoms were a picture-perfect golden brown, Momma would move them to the top rack so she could give the biscuit tops their golden crowns, which would pronounce them "ready to eat." At last, she would take them out, and gently rub butter all over them.

You could eat Momma's biscuits right by themselves; they did not need any sides or additions. It was as if they arrived straight from God's oven. And like any great culinary package, they would head straight to your lips. They were just that good! Still, I loved to eat them with peaches, crisp fat-back meat, or when the mood was right, both fat-back and old-fashioned molasses syrup—a classic one-two punch of flavor that will knock out any bitterness in a taster's soul.

I will never forget the first time I tried to make Momma's biscuits. One day, I made up my mind that I was going to make biscuits just like Momma. I tried my best to do it just like I had seen her do so many times, but something went wrong. They were so hard that my brothers playedy catch with them. As they did, I jumped up and down like I was on a pogo stick trying to get my biscuits back. I hollered the whole time, saying anything I could to get them to stop:

"Momma made them! Gimme back my biscuits!"

I think often of those delicious meals that Momma took the time and made for us. Sometimes when we are all together for an event, one of my siblings or I might perk up and say out of nowhere: "you remember when momma cooked this or that?" This always leads to discussions of the good ol' days when we would hop off that yellow school bus, jump the ditch between us and the house like jackrabbits, and race all the way home to see who could get to the house and to Momma first. When we got there, most often, we would find her in the kitchen, drinking her coffee with a smiling face that was only disrupted when she had to say, "Don't run in the house, children." That voice, that command would always freeze us because, if it did not, we might miss partaking in the most important thing—finding that warm, familiar batch of Momma's heavenly biscuits perched atop the stove in their cotton cloth where they had been cooling while waiting for us as they always did day after day.



OUR TIME HERE ON EARTH



Shelby Locklear—BCC Student

History is an exquisite topic to talk about. History is what brings us together as humans and the different cultures we have. From the beginning of time, history was made, and even though we may not know exactly every detail of events that occurred, we have a great idea as to what brought us to where we are today as people.

When you think of the word history, you think of the huge sequence of events that has occurred over the years, events from when the Indians and the English began their trading of guns, weapons, and foods to former President Donald Trump standing trial on his impeachment. Each day of events is another day of history that should be treated as such.

The “*I Have a Dream*” speech by Martin Luther King, Jr. is a mark of history that will never be forgotten. This would be the day that both black and white people would come together as one instead of by the color of their skin. The day of May 8, 1945 is a day of history when World War II was over and the Holocaust ended. On this day, the Nazis were defeated in the war with Russia and the U.S.

September 11, 2001 started out to be a day like any other until a brutal terrorist attack began a horrible tragedy. On this day of history, thousands of lives were lost. Despite these horrific events, we find ourselves telling our children and grandchildren stories about how united we still are.

History has made us who we are today. We should all be treated alike and should save each other and help each other. I still have hope and believe that this world will soon be the way I dreamed it would be.



SLEEPING BOG



Christopher Drew—Bladen Early College Student

LAUNDRY DAY



Christine McDonald—BCC Staff

As a child, I loathed laundry days. We didn't own a washer and dryer. As a matter of fact, our four-room house wasn't built for such amenities. This chore was a group effort that consisted of Mom, my three brothers, and younger sister.

Laundry was done once a week, usually Saturday mornings. Our dirty, soiled, smelly clothes were kept in large plastic black or green garbage bags or dirty pillow cases. We all learned at an early age to sort clothing in two piles: one for light/whites and one for dark/colors. There were no such things as delicate or fine washables. Sorting completed, it was time to pack everything for easy transport. As mentioned, large trash bags and dirty pillow cases were used as laundry baskets. We also used a twenty-eight-gallon metal tub which doubled as our bath tub.

Our mode of transportation was a rusty kid's red and white wagon—not a Schwinn nor a Berlin-Flyer. The wagon overflowed with the bags of dirty laundry stacked and pressed tightly to avoid spillage during our journey. My older brothers would hoist up the tub by the side handles, swinging it back and forth to the rhythm of their stride. My mom was the navigator of the non-all-terrain wagon. Everyone had a part to play. The two younger ones, carried a bottle of bleach and fabric softener, while I

carried the huge box of powdered Tide or Purex. After our Mom made her last sweep looking under the beds, sofa and corners, we were ready to hike the path from Axe Alley, through Mt. Zion Church cemetery past Mr. Henry's Auto to Neighborhood Laundromat. The laundromat was owned by Mr. Vance Lewis. Mr. Vance's pockets were always bulging with coins and a ring of keys hanging from his belt. We could hear him jingling and tingling as he moved from one task to another. He was the human coin dispenser. The more seasoned customers knew to bring coins for the twenty-five cent washers and ten cent dryers. The sounds all blended like a symphony: the washers, dryers, people talking, opening and closing of doors and the jingle, jangle of Mr. Vance. As I reflect, laundry day wasn't so bad after all.



HUMMINGBIRD



Robin Novak—BCC Staff

SENECA FALLS



Aubree Jacobs—BCC Student

"July 19, 1848 is a day I will never forget," she always said. The story of my 5th great-grandmother and her role at the Seneca Falls Convention is a story that was always told in my family. Of course, I never had the chance to meet her, but she was always someone I was inspired by. We have her original journal in a small box, but we all are scared to touch it because it is so old. My great-grandmother wrote everything that is in the original journal in a new one so we can read exactly what she was feeling during that time.

"Today is our first day of the women's rights convention," she wrote. "We are fighting for the rights of all women everywhere. We feel as though men should not have more freedom than us. I think that all people, all over the world should be treated equally."

In her journal, she also talked about the Declaration of Sentiments. She wrote that the document "asserted equality for women in politics, education, jobs, family, morals, and religion." She said that the Declaration of Sentiments was inspired by the Declaration of

Independence. "The main difference," she wrote, "is that one was written by a group of men and the other was written by a group of women."

On July 20, 1848, she wrote that men were allowed into the convention to see what the women were fighting for. "Besides the few arguments that were caused, the men really listened to our ideas. I do not think that any of them agreed with us."

As the years passed, my 5th great-grandmother still fought for women's rights, and her husband agreed with her and supported her decisions. It took around seventy years for women to gain complete rights. None of the other conventions or protests were ever documented like the Seneca Falls Convention.

Without the hard work from those women back in the 1800's, women in 2020 would be nowhere. Nowadays, we see women still protesting for what they believe is right. These women in the 19th century not only fought for women's rights, but they fought for the rights of many others as well. We are forever grateful for the bravery of those women.



THE ASYLUM



Nadiya Virden —Bladen Early College Student

I woke up trying to reconnect my senses. Nauseous and dazed in this unusual morbid setting, I looked around and found myself in a hospital bed. There was a distinct heart monitor sound in the atmosphere, but the machine was nowhere to be found.

I slowly began to sit up and hold my forehead. “Ah! What is this?” as I winced in sudden pain. I drew my hand in front of me only to find dark carmine painted across the palm of my hand. As I staggered to my feet, the blood was rushing in my head with an incredibly dizzy feeling behind it.

I turned around to find a mirror before me and gazed in horror. There was an immense gash on my forehead and the hospital gown I was wearing was covered in smudges of my fitful gore.

Suddenly, a cold feeling washed the room. I looked away from the mirror to see if anything unusual was happening. I turned back to the mirror and saw a dark figure quickly brush past me. My heart dropped tremendously.

“I have to find a way out of here,” I thought to myself.

I stumbled out of the room terrified of what was to come. The flickering lights of the corridor were buzzing in readiness to burst. There was a damp choking stench enough to fill my lungs with fear. The area looked chaotic and abandoned as if no one was present in months.

There was an exit on both sides of the hall, the dim end or the light end. I walked towards the exit in the light end. The sound of my bare feet pacing on the tile was echoing through the walls.

Before I could reach the exit, a wheelchair was pushed before me into the hall. The light in this end began to turn darker. Petrified, I turned around and walked faster towards the other end of the corridor when suddenly, there was a terrifyingly deep, creeping sound behind me. "CLINK...CLINK...CLINK." Trembling in fear, I turned around to investigate this horrendous noise. An ambiguous dark figure was following me. I walked faster and faster, but the dark figure was following my pace. The exit felt far away as if I was never going to reach it.

The noise grew louder the faster I ran CLINK. CLINK. CLINK. CLINK. CLINK. The lights rapidly began to flicker. Then in a trice, the lights dimmed away. It was pitch dark, and the noise stopped. My whole body was paralyzed in fear of what's next to come. The room was cold enough where I could see the exhaustion of my breath. A sickening voice that was close to my ear whispered, "Impure souls never escape."

THE GLITCH



Miguel Lopez-Garcia—BCC Student

One late night, the weather outside was as calm as ever, only polluted by the noises of crickets chirping in the night. I was watching videos to help me better play my favorite fighting game, "Combo Gods." I was watching tips on how to improve gameplay with my favorite character. This was my usual nighttime routine. Suddenly, I saw a tab in the video warning of an upcoming ad. I waited patiently for the ad to begin and the skip button to appear. As the ad began to play, I thought it was a new movie; there was nothing but static and the distant sound of a corrupted siren. I found this weird, but that was only the beginning of the nightmare. The timer said the ad was only 30 seconds, but it felt like two hours had gone by with just static and the distant sound of a corrupted siren. I chalked it up to my imagination or some promotion of a horror movie coming out. Nothing happened in the ad; it was just the noise. In the end, I wasn't sure if it were sleep deprivation, but I saw two glowing red eyes. Malicious eyes stared at me before flashing to a grinning smile with a set of sharp, distorted teeth. The mouth was saying something that I could not make out.

Morning came, and without realizing I had even fallen

asleep, I woke to the smell of bacon frying. My mother yelled for me to come down and eat. I went downstairs as soon as I changed into my school uniform. At my high school, things were normal until my computer class. Normally, I would get a video of my teacher with the lesson, but are there usually ads? I thought it was odd, so I called someone over, and they didn't see it. I figured I was probably just tired and imagining it, so I continued to play the video. The ad started again, and it was the same as the night before only at the end I could hear the message more clearly. I could only make out just one word *Is*. I again called someone to take notice. Still, the assistant saw nothing. This process continued over and over for the following week until eventually, everyone got sick of me claiming to see something that they didn't see themselves. Even my own parents chalked it up to insomnia and paranoia. To their credit, I hadn't slept for over a week. Maybe they were right, and I just needed sleep. So, when my parents insisted on a go to sleep. I did.

The next day, everything was perfectly fine. I didn't see that static face or the sound of the corrupted siren. At school, everything was normal, and even when I got to my computer class and saw no one there, I assumed that the class was let out early, so I left.

Night came around and still nothing but as soon as I fell asleep, I was yanked away. My body moved, yet my mind was trapped. I found myself walking towards the kitchen. I figured I must have been sleepwalking and hungry. My body grabbed a knife and walked towards the bathroom. I tried to move my body, but it wouldn't respond. I looked in

the mirror, and my left eye had turned a sinister red, and my mouth was smiling. I could only look in horror as I moved the knife towards my mouth and slit it open revealing sharp teeth behind. The only place that I could scream from the pain was inside my own brain. In my own mind, I kept saying what are you doing? My own mouth replied, "I am the thing that crawls under your bed, teeth grew sharp, and eyes glowing red." In pure terror, I could only shed a tear through my right eye as I watched my body move against my will towards my family's rooms. I could only watch through my right eye what happened to them. The thing that took over slaughtered them, butchered them, gutted them up with the knife. I watched my own father get sliced through the gut and choked with my younger brother's intestines. The slaughter felt like it went on for hours and hours and hours. The final blow came from my own mother. I could only hear and watch what this thing did to her. He chopped off her arm as she was crawling towards the corner. With tears in her eyes, she said, "You are not my son. What are you? What have you done to him? Where is Jason?" The thing replied with a corrupted version of my own voice: "Well, you see, Ma'am, I'm just a glitch, a mistake, something that never should be, yet here I am" and slit her throat. As I felt my existence fading away, I could hear "The Glitch" say, "My infection is complete. You Belong to Me."

THE ABBEY EFFECT



Jeanne Butler—BCC Staff

Most people have a daily routine: they wake to their alarm, put on their coffee, feed their pets, and try to steal a few “quiet moments” to themselves. I try to be like most people, but in the past, I was always interrupted by the desperate pleas of a child, a telephone, or maybe a spouse shouting from the other side of the door. By now, most of my children have left the nest, and on this particular day, my only remaining child is at school, sitting behind a desk; no one is going to call me at 8 a.m.; and my husband has just come off a twelve-hour shift, so, he’s sleeping soundly in our bed. There is no reason—on this green earth—why I could not have a moment’s peace when I needed one, especially in the morning. I used to believe my quiet moments would come after my children grew up, but I digress. I was wrong. Not in Jeanneville. In Jeanneville, my mornings go something like the one I had today.

Upon my alarm going off, I immediately got up and let the dogs out to tend to their needs, at which point I tried to

steal two minutes to myself. I should have known better. In 0.1 seconds after I let the dogs out, and about the time I turned on my heel to head to the bathroom, my black lab, Abbey, was back at the front door having one of her anxiety attacks. See, Abbey can't be out of my presence unless it's doing something that Abbey likes to do, such as chasing the neighbor's cat into the woods, going after the school bus, or chasing a butterfly, all of which can take up to an hour to get her back. If it's none of those things, and I'm out of her line of vision, Abbey's neurosis triggers what is known around my house as "The Abbey Effect."

Today, the "Abbey Effect" started with some standard duplicity on my cats' part, pretending not to be fed by my daughter before she left for school. I was in no mood to stand there and argue, and I really wasn't into them picking the lock on the bathroom door so they could stare at me. This is a mastered skill undoubtedly handed down over the years from feline to feline in my household. Then, there was Abbey's feigning starvation, deprivation, and any other privation to trick me into giving her more food. I knew she was fed by the leftover kibble that dropped on the floor by her bowl, but I also needed to buy me some time. That being said, while dancing a jig, I quickly threw food into dogs' bowls. Then I popped open a can of cat food, their second can in the last hour, shook out what appeared to be half in the cat's dish and left the other half for whatever cat lost the Battle of 'da Bowl. Romeo, our umbrella cockatoo still had food in his dish, and our chickens and ducks will have to wait.

Knowing I needed coffee, and not one who likes to repeat steps, I quickly put water and coffee in the coffee pot and then attempted to run to my sanctuary. At that point, Abbey started doing “the bounce” because she most certainly didn’t utilize that 0.1 second when she was outside. I backtracked and raced across the house, through the living room and into the kitchen, grabbed Abbey, went back through the house, through the living room, took her to the front door and ran back through the living room, and through the kitchen to the back of the house to use the bathroom. It is obvious at this point I was not even thinking clearly because I do have a kitchen door she could have gone out, or I could have used the bathroom near the living room instead. I am clearly reaching delirium.

I no sooner sat down when it happened. I could hear her. I was three rooms away; separated by two thick walls, a closet holding a water heater, and an old brick pillar that was once used as ... Oh who knows what its purpose was! It's thick and big and was between us, and I could hear her through all of that, through the living room to the outside door. She was standing on the front porch in panic mode, master-level.

I was trapped, and there was nothing I could have done to stop what came next. So, I quickly prayed, loudly, “Oh Lord, please give me a few more seconds before it starts. Just a few seconds, Lord. Please?” but I knew it was all in vain. I could have promised the moon and the stars if he had just answered my prayers, but that wouldn’t have made a bit of difference. I knew this.

At that moment I resigned myself to what soon occurred, and in 5...4...3...2...1 there it was, "The Abbey Effect," an event that is repeatedly and only triggered by Abbey. If Mommy doesn't hear her, something else will make sure not only everyone in the house hears her, but the entire town of Dublin, North Carolina. So, in live and in ear-bleeding decibels, my two-foot-tall siren of a bird lets out a shrill screech that seemed to last a minute long...and he screeched...and screeched and continued to screech.

Now, I don't know if anyone has ever experienced the rantings of a parrot or heard them when they go into alarm mode, but it's a sound unlike anything found in the wild. Howler monkeys have nothing on these modern-day pterodactyls.

Non-stop and in repeated patterns, that bird screamed, never wavering in his pitch or octave over and over again like an annoying child. This set off my ducks and the chickens sitting outside my bathroom window. I can hear the panic in sound of their flapping as they ran across the yard, back and forth past the bathroom window as they tried to figure out who sounded the alarm. They heard the calls of their distant cousin and truly did not know what to make of it, but for whatever reason, knew it told them to join in. They stopped right at the back of the house. The only thing between them and my sleeping husband was a pane of glass.

They were squawking, honking, and bawk bawk bakawking as loud as they could. They made sure whoever was outside the house heard exactly what's going on inside the house. As if Romeo wasn't doing that job.

Just as quickly as it started there was dead silence. A few seconds passed when I got a ring on my cell; I answered it. In his normal calm and ever patient voice my husband asked, "Do you have to be so loud?"

Not the ducks squawking or honking, not the chickens bawk-bawk bahkawking, not the cats picking the locks on the door. Not Abbey barking and having a breakdown on my porch, and surely not the bird screeching that wakes him up. It was me.

That is what is known as The Abbey Effect: a cacophony of birds reacting to the desperate cries of a disingenuous neurotic dog, to which I can never seem to divert in time. Nor escape blame for my part.



BROODER HOUSE FIRE



Betty Williams—BCC Alumna

Our brooder houses at the farm (about 1,000 acres) in Pennsylvania were originally ammo bunkers for the military in WWII. They were made of cinder blocks. The main area (2/3 of the building) had straw bedding. A section in front was used to store food for the birds. The sections were divided by chicken wire fencing on a wooden frame from floor to ceiling.

We raised 30,000 pheasants a year for our shooting preserve, so we had more than one brooder going at the same time. The chicks were raised there until they were big enough to fend for themselves. Then they were moved to five-acre pens until needed for restocking the fields.

One summer night when I was about five, an electrical malfunction caused a fire in a brooder house. My parents, my sister and her husband, and I went to put it out. My father told me to call the fire department and bring the fire extinguisher from the house. I took off down the road at full speed. It was a dark night, so I

followed the road most of the way home, afraid I would trip in a hole if I went across the fields.

I didn't slow down until I turned in at the drive. I hurried in the house and picked up the phone. Then, I froze because I had never used the phone. I dialed 0 and got the operator at the local switchboard. That was lucky because the local switchboard was in a room near the volunteer fire department. (In fact, the regular operator was the wife of the local fire chief.) I told her I was at Seley Farms. The farm was the largest in the area, so she knew the general location. She agreed to call the firemen. I promised to meet them at the junction with the main road. I rolled father's office chair to the wall to lift down the fire extinguisher, but I had two problems: I was short, even for my age, and the chair kept rolling out from under me.

My brother-in-law, Tom, came running in. "What's the hold-up?! He sent you???" I reached for the extinguisher again and the chair rolled. Tom laughed and plucked the extinguisher off the wall. We headed for the door, Tom saying I would ride back with him. I told him I was to meet the fire department at the main junction, so he dropped me off there.

I waited at the main road junction for the firemen. The first man had a small car. He couldn't stop for me because the fire truck and four pickups were close behind him! He did slow down and threw open the passenger door. I couldn't get all the way in that fast. I had one hand and foot on the door, one hand on the dashboard and one foot in the car. The car was

rocking because of the speed and road surface. I was giving directions. When we made a sharp right turn, I threw myself into the car. The door closed behind me and I could sit on the seat. We soon arrived at the brooder house.

There was little that could be done. The bird food had been salvaged from the fire, but there was too much smoke for anyone to go into the brooder house now. The 2,000 or so birds had smothered in the smoke. It seemed half the county was parked in the lane since the firemen had joined the procession in their cars. The neighbors all knew what had happened in a day or two.

Father paid dues to the fire department to ensure they would come to any fire we had. That is how the fire department was supported. Without that, the insurance would not pay off.



LUCIDIA



Faith Graham—Bladen Early College Student

Story Concept

A stray cat takes interest in learning more about a middle-aged woman, who's known to feed strays. When a cat makes his way into the house he's known for years, he begins to explore a room he's never been in. When he finally makes his way into a room he's never known, he learns the sad truth of what Lucidia has been mourning.

Lucidia

It has been several months since Lucidia's beloved Luster died. I can feel the shadow of grief that she takes with her everywhere. She stays in her home alone, night and day, surrounded by walls seven foot high. I should know as I'm the only one able to get up there. She leaves the window open, hoping I will enter her lonely home, and I must be frank. It's winter, and it's cold outside, and she takes pity on all us strays; she is a kind middle-aged woman. Though her home is lonely, it's the warmest and most kindred of places, but it is also the saddest. As she

lets me in to eat, I see photographs of her all over her house, even to a point where she would put them on the ceiling if she could. They were all of her as a child. She gives me reason to believe there were other people in the photos, but that would be preposterous to conjecture.

"Are you done?" she says as she notices me looking around, and taking my bowl.

"They're all me, but for some reason they warm my heart...making me feel like they're close by."

Lucidia's known for being found in the middle of nowhere with nothing but photographs and gun pellets in her bag. I know this because her child photo and "child found information" was on the back of a newspaper people rarely read. It was that talk amongst the strays that she's fed numerous generations prior to mine. I was able to tell it was her because the talk of the town claims she is missing her left ear, wears three colored bands in her hair, and has four numbers imprinted in her hand.

As I stand there on her wooden floors thinking of Lucidia, she turns her head and smiles saying, "you can stay if you want. I'll keep the window ajar if you decide to leave."

I guess I can stay a little longer. As time gradually passes by, I wander her house with a scare in my soul. Trying to make my prolonged stay a little more interesting, I snoop my way into the darkest room the furthest in the hallway. As I enter, I feel hands gently grasp my tail and caress my body by the dozens. As I walk even further, I

begin to see faint electric candles become more luminous. The feeling of the hands burden my body to the point I must crawl to reach the only source of light. I begin to hear the creaking of Lucidia's footsteps grow closer to the door.

"Luster?" she says.

"You've never been in this room." With a deep sigh, she opens the door even more, letting in just a little more light. Beginning to see the outlines of dozens of portraits she has drawn and painted over the years, I begin to learn who she thinks is missing from her photographs. They're all like her in a way I can't quite describe. She makes them so believable; she must have worked on this for years. But oddly enough, she doesn't seem to feel phased by the weight of this room. Why is it when I come in I feel ... the hands and the burden of sorrow?



D R A G O N F L Y



Robin Novak—BCC Staff

PIRANHA PROBLEM



Betty Williamson—BCC Alumna

Father worked at the Fort Worth Zoo, Texas for a while. I was there often on my own at six years old. Most of the guys that worked there knew me on sight and knew my father was in charge of the bird house.

The aquarium was being redone to make room for a large new acquisition. Part of the building was roped off with yellow tape: "Keep Out Danger." The tanks in that section had been taken from the wall and put on scattered tables. Out of curiosity, I wandered into that section carefully.

I liked being in there on hot days because it was cool inside. One day, a well-dressed woman (dressed like Jackie O) came in and wandered into the closed area. I watched her wander around. I doubt she saw me because I was about as tall as the table. A zoo worker saw her and headed her way. For some reason, she stopped near a small tank. I knew she was near the piranha tank so I headed closer.

Somehow, the woman's purse fell off her arm into the piranha tank. She jumped back to avoid the splash,

maybe? Then, she moved forward like she would retrieve her purse. I tackled her to keep her from putting her arm in the tank. The zoo worker ran to us. He helped her up. She was furious and wanted me punished for attacking her. She called me a "hooligan" and accused me of trying to steal her purse. She demanded its return.

I pointed to the tank where the metal frames of the purse and change purse could be seen drifting down. The two or three piranha had eaten the purse and its contents. Only the change remained and it was sinking to the bottom of the tank. The woman was still fussing about me. The aquarium employee pointed out that she had been about to put her hand in the tank and the piranha would have eaten it. He pointed out a monkey arm that was in the back corner of the tank. It was clean of flesh. That hushed her for a minute. I moved off.

The employee told her that I knew what piranha could do and that is why I stopped her before she joined her purse. He asked her why she had come into an area marked off limits. She asked him why I was there. He replied that my father worked for the zoo and I was known to be careful. I didn't hear why she was in the area herself.

LAST MOMENTS



Abril Mena Martinez—Bladen Early College Student

This feeling is odd. Why am I so cold? Why is it that no matter how much I try, I can't breathe?

"Shhh...it's okay. I love you, you know that, right?" Blake says and caresses the top of my caramel-colored head.

Not one day goes by without her telling me so. Of course I know she loves me! She seems sad. I lick her wrist as she continues to pet me.

Just moments ago, there were a group of kids her age. I didn't let them harm her. Mom isn't around anymore, so I will protect Blake until she comes back. Neither of us has seen her since she left with a man I hadn't seen before. I always wondered how Mom didn't wake up while she was being carried out the door.

Blake and I lived in an apartment with Aunt Jana; she isn't home a lot. Blake also leaves most of the day. I don't know where she goes, but she always comes back home in the afternoon with bruises. We go on long walks after she finishes writing symbols and numbers on a piece of paper she sometimes complains about.

"Come on, Arlo, buddy. Don't leave me yet!" Blake yells

as her eyes fill up with tears.

She knows I wouldn't. Blake cries a lot. If I leave her, who will cheer her up? What would make her think I'd leave her? Blake never yells at me. She seems angry. What did I do wrong?

"Let me see those beautiful eyes of yours. Don't close them." Blake shakes me.

Those kids. They seem to know her. Maybe they're from wherever she goes to during the day? I didn't like them, though. I could sense something was wrong with them mostly because I could sense fear and sadness coming from Blake. One of the kids held a bottle in her hand. It was similar to the one the man drank from when he placed Mom in the back of the car trunk.

"Aunt Jana is on her way, okay?" Blake says and presses her hand on my side. Ouch! That hurts!

It's getting harder to breathe. What's happening? Blake's cries for help are getting more distant. I can't see anything. Everything is dark. Wait, no, there's a tunnel? Blake, do you see this? It's so bright! And this smell coming from the end of it is strange and familiar. Blake! Blake! It's Mom! Maybe she knows what is going on. I'm going to ask her what is wrong with me, okay? I'll be back! I love you.



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THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLATONIC RELATIONSHIPS



E. Marie Sander—Bladen Early College Faculty

I grew up around males; I have two older brothers, one younger than me, and yes, my father was in my life during those formative pre-teen and teen years. Being the only female in the house other than my mother, I absorbed elements of friendship and comradery by observing fellowship between men-folk. I don't just mean the rough-housing or the grossness most girls and women are appalled by; I mean the tightness, the connection that makes a man call a non-blood kinsman his brother. I knew that I wanted to emulate this in my future friendships; I desired for this closeness, this ability to stick with your friend through the thick and thin, but things like natural femininity objected and revealed just how powerful underlying, alluring capabilities can be.

I grew up as a tomboy: climbing trees, kicking dust clouds, racing down grass hills, earning scars and scabs from falling any and everywhere, catching lightning bugs in jars and chasing frogs for fun. All was well until the three-hundred sixty-fifth day of the twelfth year of my life. I realized I would be a teenager the next day, and I wasn't

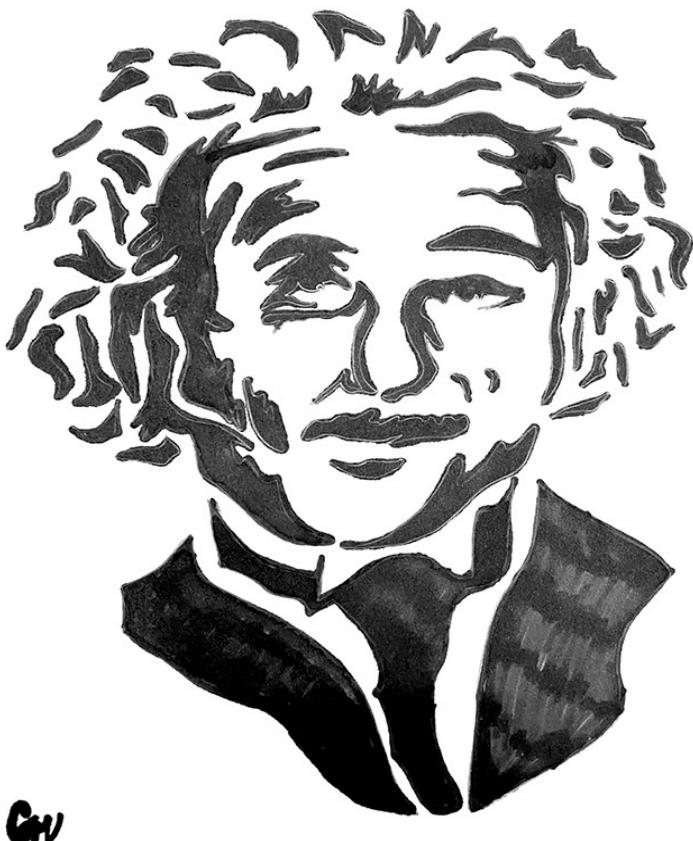
sure if my tomboy ways would fit well into the next region of my life. Overnight, the desire to do all the aforementioned activities disappeared, and I began to shape my female image based on the example I had from my mother, and a lady she indeed was...

... But she was a daddy's girl and gained a ton of her traits from my maternal grandfather. So, again, I gleaned from the male influence, but this time, it had an effeminate element that revealed the benefits of mixing the two. One of the key components I learned was the ability to create and cultivate friendships with the opposite sex. My first best friend was my oldest brother, and from there, I have been blessed with long-lasting platonic friendships. I attribute it to the great relationships I have with my brothers and father because I treat my male friends like they are an extension of my family. I care for and about them from a sisterly perspective and they get it. It's part of my nature, part of my very essence.

However, there are times that an observant woman may think there is more to the story, as if no man and woman can be friends without the possibility of romance kindling in the underbrush. They make their assumptions, and some are bold enough to confront me about their uninformed theories. If I feel as if it's worth the effort, I correct. If not, I allow them to live in the bliss of ignorance since their observations are part of the reason why I do not get along with the female species all that well.

Just the fact that I do not gel with women brings me back to the circumstances of my upbringing, the

constant companion of male influence and my preference for friendships with guys. Most think it strange, but I would have it no other way. After all, how is a woman supposed to have any relationship with a man without first building the foundation of a sincere, pure friendship?



ALBERT EINSTEIN



Garret Melvin—BCC Student

MUSING OF AN EDUCATOR IN THE TWILIGHT OF HIS CAREER



Rodney Smith—Bladen Early College Staff

An old Chinese proverb states, “You will make many changes before settling satisfactorily.” As each of us progress from one life stage to another we are constantly bombarded with a myriad of physiological, psychological, biological, and socio-emotional changes. For some of us, this life experience provides an encounter of psychological and spiritual growth that allows and empowers an altruistic attitude toward others and community. For others, this life stage known as midlife brings about marriage failures, dead-end careers, and unfulfilled dreams.

Daniel Levinson, Yale psychologist, makes the supposition that we pass through a series of stages from childhood to old age. Levinson states that in life we have two major identity crises. The first of these crises occurs when we are adolescents. During the pivotal adolescent years, 12-18 years of age, we are attempting to establish our identity. We want the world and our community to view us as an individual and not to place us into that all familial setting. The second identity crisis occurs at midlife. Midlife is the pivotal point in a person’s life. It is when a person must give up who others think they are and become what they want to become. Simply put, individuals that had dreams of becoming teachers, but did not complete their degrees, will most likely return to complete that dream and fulfill the role of teachers in society.

Erik Erikson, developmental psychologist, proposes that a person's life is broken into stages. These paramount stages of life mold and shape our personality, our relationships, and our needs. In the latter stages of a person's life, Erickson states that there is a time for reflection. He called this stage the caring stage, better known as Generativity vs. Stagnation ("The Theoretical Basis" 49). It is at this stage that people measure their life on the basis of their accomplishments and or failures. During this stage, each individual has a sense of identity. The goal for this stage is for the individual's identity to leave a lasting legacy. An individual at this stage has a desire to help the younger generation by passing on prior experiences. Generativity, simply put, is the notion of establishing and guiding the next generation in a mentor-like model. Just as the Apostle Paul provides a father-mentor role for Timothy, so does the individual approaching midlife want to be a mentor for the next generation. The problem arises, according to Erikson, if the individuals reflect and come to the realization that they have not made any significant contributions to their fellow man or community.

As people enter the beginning stages of midlife, there is a constant struggle of leaving the youthful adult years to encounter a life stage where people begin to evaluate and question their priorities. While this life transitory period leads to somber and serious questions, there are no signposts or global positioning satellites that mark our entry into this Twilight Zone, known as mid-life. There is no Rod Serling announcing in macabre detail, "Signpost up ahead, a once virile man with energy to burn and dreams to fashion now sits somber and melancholy in his Lazy Boy pondering yesterday hopes and shattered dreams. Yet, one can only wander and reflect on what might have been. You will meet him and people like him in this Midlife Crisis we call the Twilight Zone."

Beginning in the 1980s, Dr. Dan Jones, director of the Counseling and Psychological Service Center at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina,

undertook extensive research on the topic of the mid-life crisis. He and his colleagues discovered three key points concerning the concept of the mid-life crisis. The first point he uncovered was no big revelation. He and his colleagues state that a mid-life crisis occurs for an individual between the ages of 37-50 years of age; however, significant life events can trigger the crisis during these years. Dr. Jones defines significant life events as an individual's youngest child finishing college or a zero birthday announcing to the neighbors and the world that one is about to enter a new decade. Jones also states that the death of a parent can be classified as a significant life event ("Midlife Crisis" 1).

As I reflect back upon my thirty-years of educating and working with students from various socio-economic levels, age differences, average and above average intelligence, from the elementary to adult levels of education, I am struck with the thought more and more each day: did I leave a legacy for my students? Will they reminisce about the classroom times, the plethora of field trips, the constant drive that I thrust upon them to succeed no matter what the circumstance as fond memories, or will they not even remember? Will they remember me as a person that was helpful or one that was ambivalent? The next question that I ponder deeply each day is, how will my colleagues remember me? Will they remember me as a kind and thoughtful person that provided words of comfort when their parents were placed in the cold damp earth? Will they remember the times that we embarked on chaperoning 135 8th graders from North Carolina all the way to Plymouth, Massachusetts, with stops in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Maryland, and Hyannis Point, Massachusetts? Will they remember when we took a collective group of middle schoolers and high schoolers to Italy to spend fourteen days taking in the many ancient spots. Sadly, one of those teachers passed away this past week, so all I have to reflect upon is the wonderful times we spent together crying, laughing, and working late hours in the night to make our

classrooms the one that all students could not wait to attend.

We all remember our favorite teachers growing up. They not only taught us the curriculum, but the many ideas of life that we still impart to our students each day. Yes, did I leave a legacy, something that my students will one day share with their children?

Finally, as I sit here and ponder the last five years in the Bladen County School System, I pause to reevaluate my purpose. Just three years ago, I was an assistant principal at a Bladen County high school, thinking that would be my final destination. Why not, I was extremely satisfied, even though I had not reached the pinnacle of my career, a high school principal. Now, I find myself not only as a high school principal, but a principal at an early college high school; not just any early college high school, but the Bladen Early College High School (BECHS), a school that I had the privilege of being its founder.

Everyday at BECHS, I am tasked to create unique opportunities that transform the lives of the students at the school. Now, more than ever, I feel reborn in my career. I now know that my endeavors over the years in education have not been in vain. Each day offers new opportunities to transform the lives of my students and the stakeholders. There is a renewed sense of purpose to leave a legacy for my students, teachers, colleagues, and future generations of students who will pass through these sacred halls.

As the old Chinese proverb states that basically one will have many changes before finding satisfaction, midlife, just like any stage in life, is a piece of the normal development stage. An individual in this transitory stage is able to be happy or miserable regardless of the physiological, biological, and socio-emotional changes. Everyone has encounters with individuals that transform hopeless situations into challenges that they overcome. Second Corinthians 5:17 provides a lifeline for us Christian brethren that are in the midlife mode. The Apostle Paul

writes, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things become new" (*Holman Study Bible* 1997). While this verse is a message of salvation, it may also mean that midlife is a transitory period that allows the opportunity to be transformed. It is evident that the midlife period of a person may be easily denied; however, one cannot easily escape its vestiges.

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RAISING THE BAR OF LEADERSHIP



Christopher Carroll—Bladen Early College Faculty

Throughout various times in history, there has been a desperate need for individuals to accept the noble task of statesmanship by bringing healing, stability, encouragement, victory, and many other important initiatives to ensure success. While many individuals long for leaders who offer inspiring messages of hope, the statesman is dedicated to leading by example through their actions and moral values. Yet, it must be emphatically stated that in seeking individuals with statesmanship qualities, it is not a search for perfect leaders, but individuals who acknowledge their imperfections and strive to “raise the bar on themselves and their followers” (Newell xvi). As leaders enter into the public arena, they bring with them a variety of skill sets helping them to manage conflicts and establish a vision for success and desiring to bring unity to achieve that vision. The role of statesman requires individuals to embrace the basic aspects of leadership but to envelop additional traits and values into their leadership style.

At the very core, transitioning from leadership to statesmanship requires virtue. This concept of being virtuous requires an individual being willing to dedicate themselves to giving their very best, expecting the very best from others while not straying from their principles and morals. A statesman will dedicate their lie to representing “what

human beings ought to be," such as being naturally inclined to demonstrate "humanity's very best qualities, or in other words, being in complete harmony with the will of God" (Cameron 21). As the community seeks a leader, they desire someone who will not simply speak about the importance of being a good person but will dedicate themselves to living a life that offers goodness to all people in all situations. An example of virtuous statesmanship is found when leaders are willing to speak truthfully regardless of the response. Recognizing that mistakes are expected due to the sinful nature of humanity and expressing remorse and the opportunity to learn from said mistake allows the organization to experience not only humility, but an example that is worthy to follow. Tocqueville expressed the importance of this trait by commenting that to act virtuously, one must be virtuous (Holloway 584). Whereas a leader seeks to find ways to explain away mistakes, defend their actions, or place the blame on others, the statesman recognizes the error of their ways, seeks forgiveness, and pledges to grow as an individual and move forward together from the episode.

A second trait that distinguishes a leader from a statesman is a clearly defined vision. While a leader has objectives and goals, the statesman can articulate those objectives into a specific purpose that excites individuals and encourages participation. According to David Vaughn, the statesman is able to understand "the lessons of history and the facts of the present that he can accurately paint the face of the future" (Vaughn 198). To the statesman, there is an ultimate aim to every decision and action that will allow the organization to grow. A period of introspection is implemented to ascertain how the organization has arrived at its current place at that moment in time. Through a careful analysis, the statesman encourages honest reflection on previous strategies with the intention of building upon successes as well as mistakes. After the introspection stage, the statesman works alongside the organization in crafting a vision statement that excites all

parties in developing plans that will move the organization forward in a manner that excites, engages, and empowers the company to work to attain the vision. During this process, it is easy for leaders to share their vision, their goals, and their desires without allowing the organization the opportunity to cast their own ideas. A statesman, on the other hand, allows for mutual accountability in which all members move outside of their respective departments and work together to achieve a blueprint that will be the work of many individuals (Fischer 2018). In order for the vision to become reality, it is essential to provide opportunities for multiple opinions which will create a united effort.

Courage is also a necessary trait to establish a foundation of statesmanship in society. When individuals are willing to stand in the gap during times of various political and moral crises, they exhibit an exemplary form of governance that exceeds expectations. However, one must be careful when speaking of courage and statesmanship as it can be hard to distinguish the leader from the statesman by solely relying on courage. Plato writes that courage is difficult as "you can find many men who are quite unjust, unholy, intemperate, and ignorant, yet outstandingly courageous" (Balot 79). The true way to differentiate between a leader and a statesman is understanding the purpose as to why they are willing to demonstrate courage during the particular crisis. Is it for personal gain? Is it to inflate one's ego and to allow individuals to applaud to the greatness of the particular person? Or is their sincere desire to risk, opposition, ridicule, and even potential physical harm to protect the freedoms of liberty and justice ascribed to each person? Answering these questions through careful analysis of the crisis will help determine if the actions qualify an individual to be a statesman.

In evaluating the actions and character of individuals, one must also consider the effectiveness of their communication. Statesmen are always communicating, through both verbal and non-verbal means. As they

proclaim the God-given vision for the organization, the way they conduct themselves both publicly and privately communicate to individuals their principles and morals. The statesman recognizes that their communication skills must be carefully worked and spoken succinctly in both big and small moments (Goglein 2018). For they must be ready at all times to deliver words that will inspire, console, encourage, persuade, but ultimately lead individuals to accept the task that is before them. A dedicated statesman does not shy away from this responsibility but recognizes the importance of the moment and speaks as if the fate of the world depends on that statement.

As America continues to evolve, so too must the development of effective, honest leadership. Individuals who desire to govern organizations must aim to bring about the very best for the individuals and the organization. Leaders must not settle for average but seek to bring superior leadership that demands a desire to surpass expectations. In other words, it is imperative to embody the aim of Patrick Henry whose “character is inseparable from his accomplishments, and his virtue from his valor” (Vaughn 5). When an individual is willing to incorporate the skills and values of virtue, courage, communication and vision, America will continue to be a shining light of liberty and justice to the world.

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TORY HOLE



Melissa Swiger—Bladen Early College Student



MOTHER NATURE'S SURPRISE



Candace Hester—BCC Staff

POETRY

Poetry
poetry



Y
E
R
T
H
O
P

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE MANIFESTATIONS



Ma'leah Walker—BCC Student

I was broken, pieces of myself thrown in every direction. I remember running, sweat rolling down burning the scars forced in my skin

I heard turn around you'll never make it, nobody cares about you, You have nowhere to go I saw my reflection in a busted car window, focusing on what we have in common, damaged at its best.

I worried someone would see me, I worried someone would ask me what's wrong, I worried about the person I'll hurt who didn't mean to do this. I thought words from my busted lip would leave a scar on the person I love's heart

But I want to change.

I am vigorous, with a lion roaring in my heart
I think the world can't handle the indestructible words I speak

I need passion, faithful fruit to fill my spirit. I'll try to come more easily but I got a roar inside of me that I can't let off easy. I feel obligated to recognize my

new strength gifted to me, from the higher power of all I forgive the hurt who hurt me, the miserable who invited me in as company. Now I can change.

I will continue to grow to be the impossible. I choose my battles without fear and fight until I dream of me soaring through the sky, crying tears of joy. I hope the seeds planted within my belly grow to be better than I am. I predict love will be spread across person to person as they grow. I know the man above has a plan written, his people will speak, and the children will sing. I will change.



STOP AND ENJOY THE MOMENT



Diane Vitale—BCC Staff

DO I SEE WHAT GOD SEES?



Karen Pontak—BCC Student

My eyes rest upon someone not like me...
Will I allow God to help me see?

The rich in material goods...
The homeless family living in the woods...
The addict that needs just one more fix...
The Christian...the one that thinks they don't fit in
this mix.

The child who runs and plays and talks back...
The youth who dresses with taste that we think
lacks...
The mom who can't stay awake for an hour...
The one who looks as if they need a shower...

The lady who always says words that hurt....
The leader who seems to always be curt...
The tired minister, the one we all look up to...
The proud, the lonely, the weak, the shrew...

Dear God, I pray, please open my eyes...
Help me to see what's under the disguise...

I want to see them as You see them...
Your creation, BEAUTIFUL, a true gem.

Help me, I pray, to love just like you...
So CHRISTMAS has meaning all the year through.

DREAM BIG



Mary Murphy—BCC Faculty

If you are gonna dream—Dream Big
Nothing can stop you if you believe
It doesn't matter where you began
Only matters how much you desire
Nothing worth having will come easy
It will take hard work and dedication
You can be your biggest success
As long as you are willing to take the step
Treasure every moment of the way
For every one is one step closer
Don't be in such a rush that you miss the journey
For the road is what makes it worthwhile
If you are gonna dream—Dream Big
Then YOU! Make it happen.

BLUE SKIES



Ayana Lacewell—Bladen Early College Student

Looking up at the sky

Oh so blue

It's filled with gases, water and dust, too

As the sun shines on the moon

The moon smiles

And shares its happiness with Earth

And its people too

As light travels

so do colors

Colors with the powers to make more colors

Just like the sky's ocean blue

As sunlight is scattered by the trillions of tiny peas

Oh so blue sky is reflected by the deep blue sea

As the sun sets

Big wavelengths pass through

As the weather changes the colors just continue
as well as the clouds as they catch hella attitudes.

Tis just like the blue sky
My dearest love for you will never die



LOVE



Emelda Sandoval-Garcia—Bladen Early College Student

The day of love and friendship is almost here
Love and friendship are like the smell of fresh
baked cookies

But you see love is just a feeling
You can love someone and still stab them in the
back

Therefore, I'd rather be safe
I'm not saying you can't love, just make sure you
mean it

You don't want to hurt someone
Or even yourself.

LONG DISTANCE



Shelby Tatum—Bladen Early College Student

Two years ago I met a boy.
I didn't know what would come of it.
We met online and started to talk,
and I knew I couldn't quit.
His smile was contagious,
and his pickup lines were awful.
I felt something I never felt before;
my feelings overflowing like a bottle,
one that you shook out of curiosity,
just to see what would happen.
It was a strange feeling,
like my heart was wrapped in satin.
I made a mistake, and I lost this boy,
all thanks to me,
as he sat there watching me
move on through a screen.
One year later, we started talking again.
This time the words could mean only one thing.
the I'm sorries were felt,

but the I love yous were, too.
but I'll never leave again,
I promise that to you.

ABUSIVE FORTUITY



Ayana Lacewell—Bladen Early College Student

Not physically, no
But mentally, yes
Hurt by fates dreams
But I can only control

Eyes forced of scorch
Because of so called Fortuity
Heart bounded of chains
Because of the Abusive lies

I am a human, a being
I draw my own tracks
Only I can control me
Only I can make me be

Not physically, no
But mentally, yes
Fortuity is my hurt
Abuse is my Fate

FALLEN IN LOVE



Ayana Lacewell—Bladen Early College Student

His beautiful rich skin
That has this electricity every time we touch
His smooth dark eyes
That spark every time he takes a glance upon me
His billion dollar smile
That lit something in me

His all too knowing laugh
That sends a scintilla through my heart
His lips as soft as feathers
That when he kisses me, chills run down my spine

His rough but soft and gentle hands
That caress my body with endearment
His gentle rich fingers
That run tingles wherever he touches
His big tender arms
That he wraps around me oh so warm

His intoxicating smell
That enters my nostrils and circulates in my lungs
His body flushed against mine

Just stops everything in general
Honey, dear!

...

I've Fallen in Love



MY LITTLE CHRISTMAS CACTUS



Sharon L. Samuels—Friend of BCC

My little Christmas Cactus
Grew a little Cross
Limbs straight and firm
From left to right
Not slanted, bent or tossed.

It reminds me of that little child
Born on Christmas Day.
He grew Strong, Straight,
Firm and Tall,
To take our sins away.

A MAN MADE UP OF DREAMS



Ayana Lacewell—Bladen Early College Student

A legendary king
He was
Of thus of
Actor, Poet, Rapper
But a sinner
He was
Death wrongly timed
Even if eyes shown
Sorrowful regret and guilt
He was
A too good to be true
Minded and blooded of
Agathokakological
He was
A Machiavelli of Seven
A Poetic Justice
And a thug wronged
Wronged with no life
He was
Of no reality
More of a dream
Tupac Shakur
A Man Made Up Of Dreams

MASK



Rebecca James—Former BCC Faculty

I stop wearing lipstick
because no one will see it,
and it only leaves a stain.
People give me the coverings as gifts—
prints of fans and phantom masks.
I try to mask another illness
not contagious but as influential,
the symptoms hard to hide:
shaking hands,
tumultuous talking,
or unnatural stillness.
Masking won't save me
but may protect others.
I sanitize my fingers and speech,
careful after all I touch.
Can I contain the contagions I carry?
I slip on the mask,
courteous and compliant.
No one knows my face
is bare beneath.

LIFE



Cynthia Thompson—BCC Retiree

Life is growing in your mother's womb
 Floating there, without a care,
Then, being born into this world
 And held close to a warm body,
 Drinking warm, nourishing milk,
 From a bottle or from a breast.

Life is exploring the world around you,
Crawling, then walking, wobbling—but walking.
 Always exploring—unaware of danger.
 Crying in unfamiliar surroundings,
 Adjusting and starting to learn,
Learning about others, learning about yourself.

Life is becoming a teenager,
Confused, complicated, moody
 Angry at everyone yet
 Angry at no one,
Discovering boys, discovering girls,
Exploding with hormones and emotions,
 Learning to control them,
 and learning to be you.

Life is becoming an adult

Making your way in the world,
Maybe finding a soul mate, raising a family,
Rejoicing in successes, coping with failures,
Hopes and dreams, sorrow and pain,
And despite it all
Learning to live, learning to love,
Learning to rise above it all.

Life is growing older,
Going on despite the aches,
Ignoring the pain.
Feeling lonely, but not giving up,
Slowing steps, graying hair,
Wisdom beyond compare.
Then life on this earth ends where it began
Eternally in Heaven
With Jesus



AN INK QUILL HAIKU



Jeanne Butler—BCC Staff

Our words define us
in tragic poetic form;
love, loss, joy, heartbreak.

HONORING MOTHER



Teresa L. Whitted-Carter—Clarkton School of Discovery Staff

Y'all know what Day it is
And you know what to do
It's time to honor Mother for all that she does for
you.

Y'all know how much you put
her through Running around
late at night doing what you
do No matter how much you
did it,
She was always praying to God to make you
quit it.

She made sure you
knew right from wrong
Never letting go, Her
Love was strong
Remember she said, "You make your bed hard
and you
will have to sleep in it."
She was never wrong. You have to admit it.

So, love your Mother
with all you've got

Whether she's short, tall,
skinny or fat Whether
near or far there is no
dismissing
Remember her Loving, Hugging, and Kissing

A Mother's Love is true indeed; she
was always therewhen you were
in need.



OLD COUPLE



Robin Novak—BCC Staff

BREAKING THE MAKING OF ME



Teresa L. Whitted-Carter—Clarkton School of Discovery Staff

What do you see when you are looking at me?
My brown skin, black hair, and brown eyes. This is
no disguise. I am me, just who He created me to
be. Mind, Body, and Soul, I am somebody, I have
always been told. No mistaking in my making.
Your problem with me is yours you see. That
hidden hatred takes a lot of energy.

Breaking the Making of Me and who I was
created to be is a waste of your time. God
created me in His own image you see; therefore, I
am the color I'm supposed to be.

When He reached into His huge Color Pot, it
didn't take a little, it took a lot. The colors brown,
caramel, and tan. He was the only One that
could make it blend. He knew the perfect shade
for in His image I was
made. My skin is brown in the sun and in the
shade.

He raised me up not to be beat down, He keeps

my feet on Solid Ground. When I hurt and begin to cry, he wipes the teardrops from my eye. I may be broken but not in despair, for My Father is always there.

Breaking the Making of Me draws me nearer my God to Thee.



CHERRY BOMB



Mayra Guijosa Santiago—Bladen Early College Student

A BLACK WOMAN



La'Tosha Melvin—Bladen Early College Student

If you were in a competition you would
have to work
twice as hard to win.

Because in this day and age everything is based on
the color of your skin.

You are protectors and for your families
you have provided
all this while by being racially divided.
At the end of the day you come home
tired, physically,
and emotionally battered.

All of this struggling and this pain is because of
one man
who said your life never mattered.
Society's rules were made against
us from the start.

All because people wanted to keep hatred and
pain in their heart.

You didn't understand us so you took us from our
home and spit in our face.

When we fought back you broke our spirits,

our hearts and now
you tell us not to make everything about race.

Being a young black woman is very
meaningful to me.

That's because it only took one strong
black woman to
set one thousand free.

Just as Maya said "Still I rise"
Yes, I quoted the Maya Angelou
did that come to surprise.

You may wonder how strong a
black woman is even
if her muscles are too old to grow.

Just like that one tootsie pop
the world may never know.

People try to hold us back with chains, with words,
and with the horrible actions
until they hear our cries.

But you won't ever get to hear it because
we're too strong

but after all of this we will rise.

I was asked to write a poem
to introduce me to my class
and so I did if it wasn't clear as

glass for you to see.

I am a young black woman and you will
never silence me.

MEMORIES



Corrina Monroe—BCC Student

My memories aren't all that good
They mess with my head a lot
My memories are in my brain
Sitting there like it's a parking lot
I have a lot of good and a lot of bad
Memories of what we had
I want to say thank you to Left Eye
Because my head will always be held high
I want to say Tajaun that your music
Will always be in my heart
We always had good memories
Right from the very beginning
Sabrina I really miss your smile
Your Smile will always be in style
I know your friends really miss you
Please give them a dial
I'm turning into Harley Quinn
With all these bad memories
But Tajuan and Sabrina will be remembered for
many centuries

THE MOST NEEDFUL BOOK



Willie Allen—Friend of BCC

The fate of man in this one Book,
But all through his life, just a casual look,
His thought, "I can do this without any Help".
Is greeted with joy by Satan, and all of his 'ilk.'

This Book is filled with the issues of life,
With solutions and answers, its pages are rife,
With wisdom and knowledge, its cries go unheard,
Above the bellowing and hoof beat of the noisy
herd.

It is the source to follow, for days lived aright,
Its guidance leads students to walk by its Light,
Encourages traveler's 'be led by wisdom's sure
hand,'
But, only advises, cannot and will not issue the
command.

THE SHEPHERDS CRY



Willie Allen—Friend of BCC

A LONG TIME AGO IN A LAND FAR AWAY,
A PROFOUND MESSAGE WAS DELIVERED ONE DAY.
THE SHEPHERD'S MESSAGE WAS LOUD AND CLEAR,
TO A VERY SMALL FLOCK WHO WERE PRONE TO
FEAR.

**"YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD,
THE SHEPHERD CRIED"!**

AND A FEW SHORT MONTHS LATER,
FOR THIS MESSAGE HE DIED!

IN AN EVEN CLOSER LAND,
IN BOTH DISTANCE AND YEARS,
WHO ARE WE? WHO ARE WE?
THE CRY FALLS ON THE SHEPHERD'S EAR.

IT'S THE LOUD CRY FROM THE FLOCK,
BUT THEIR CRY IS SO TRITE.
"YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!"
THE SHEPHERD STILL CRIES.



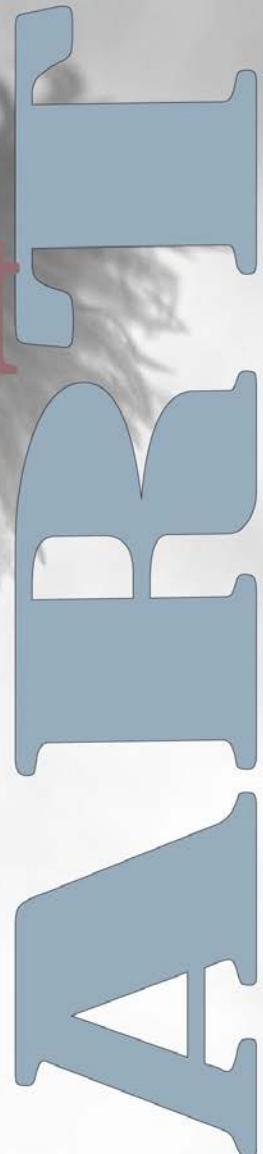
SERENITY NOW

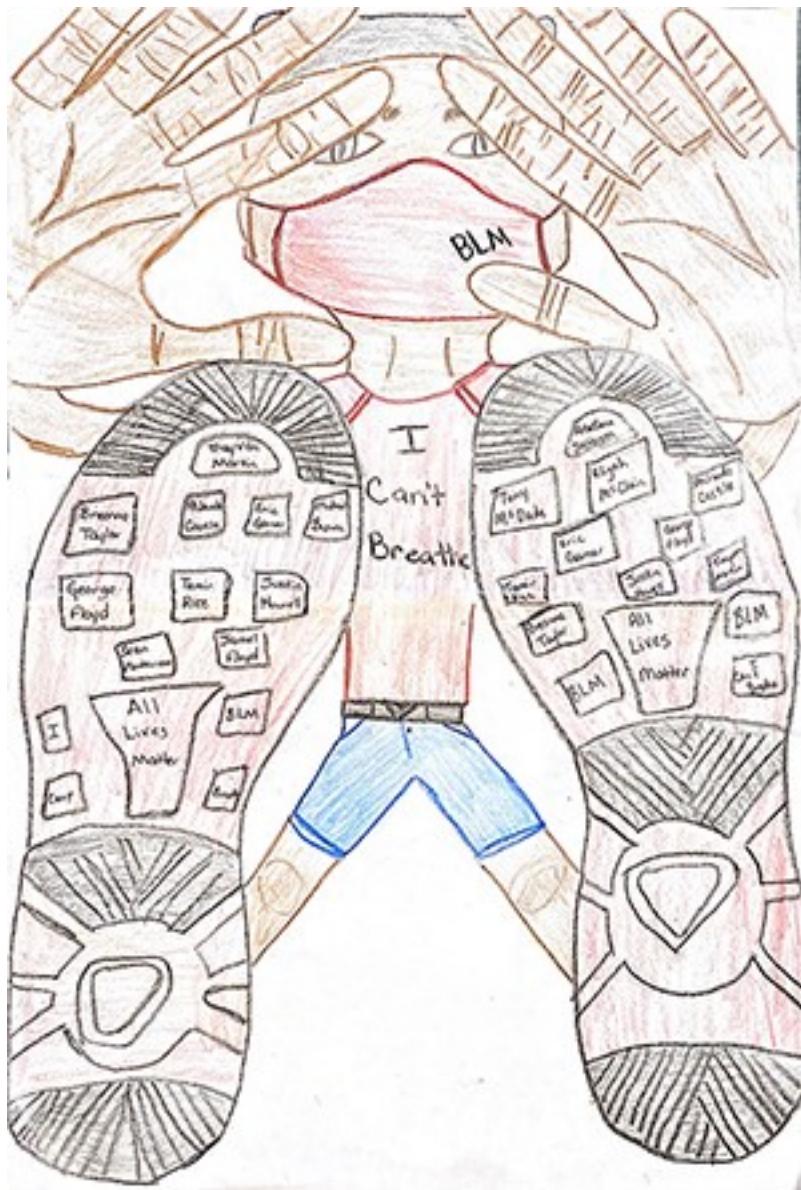


Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty

ART

Art
Art

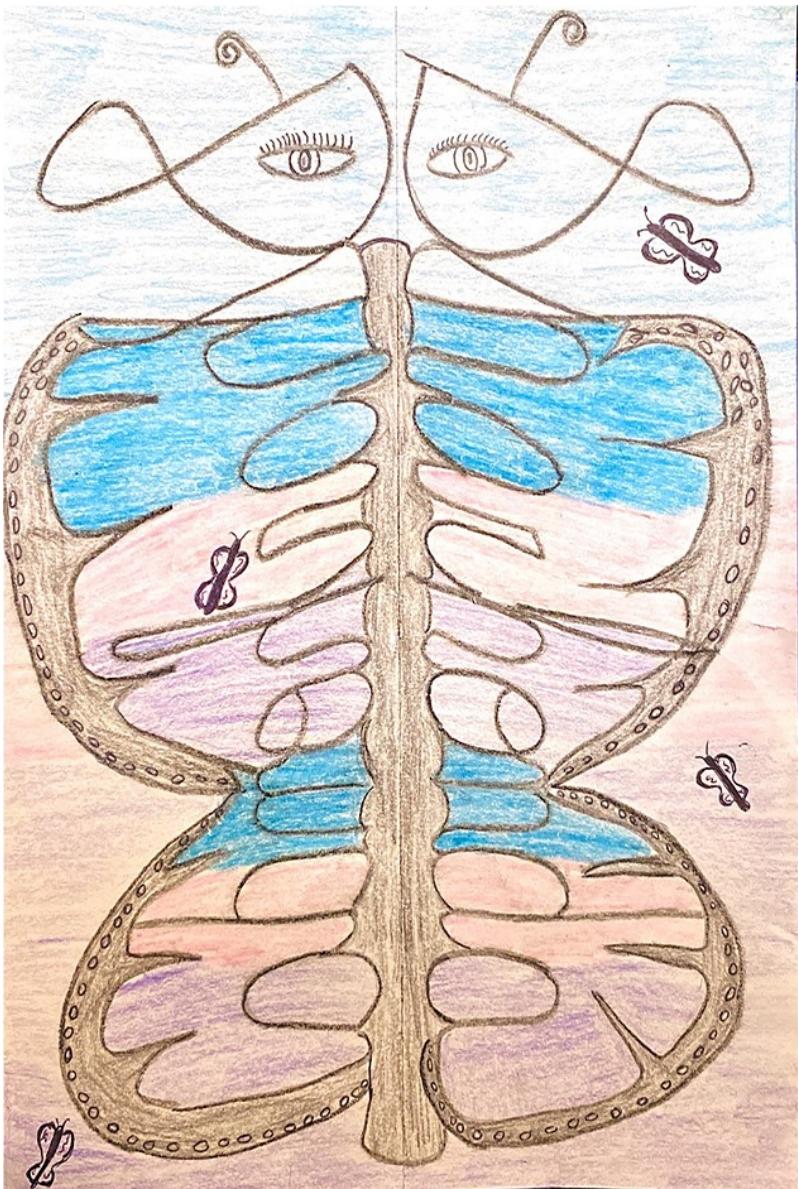




BREATHE



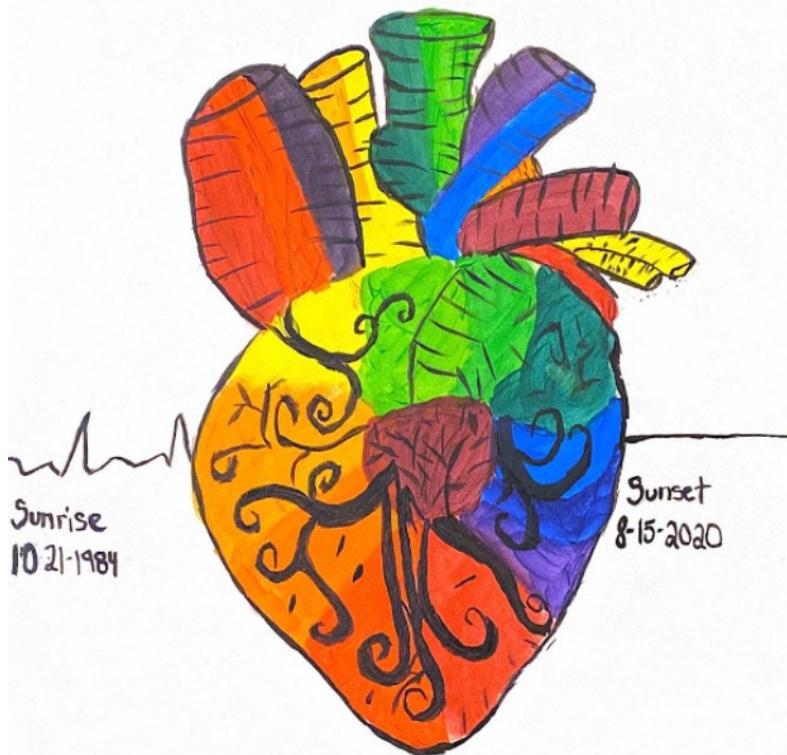
Sharhonda Taylor—BCC Student
93



TRANQUILITY



Sharhonda Taylor—BCC Student



"Niesha"

Taylor
2020

SEASONS OF LIFE



Sharhonda Taylor—BCC Student



SYMPHONY IN SPACE



Michael Guyton—BCC Student



SUNSET



Lindsey Caulder—BCC Student



PROJECTION



Josiah Lucero—Bladen Early College Student



ATOMIC WEIRDNESS



Josiah Lucero—Bladen Early College Student

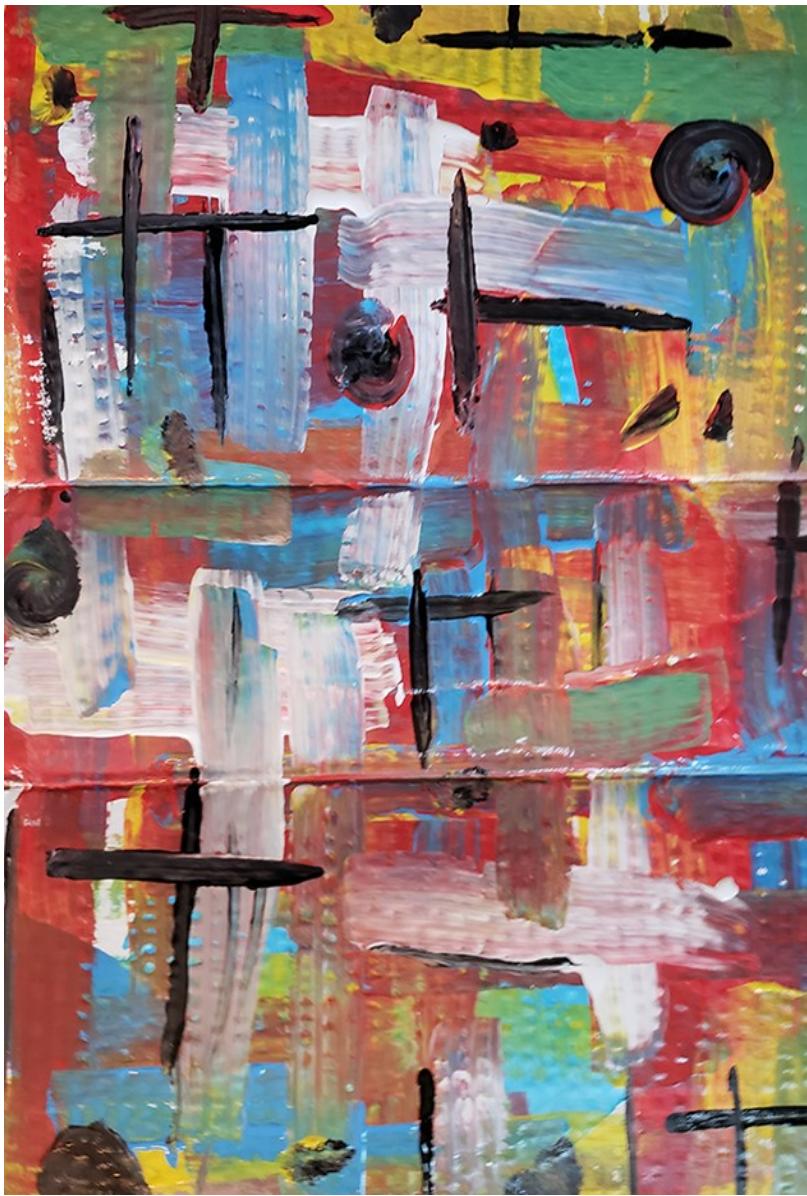
Give thanks
to the Lord
for He is good

His love endures
forever. PSALM 100

GOD'S LOVE



Keana Dowless—BCC Student



EMOTIONAL



Julianne Hehl—BCC Student



WIDDERSHINS



Karen Pontak—BCC Student



RISING ABOVE



Olivia Allen—BCC Student



PATCHWORK



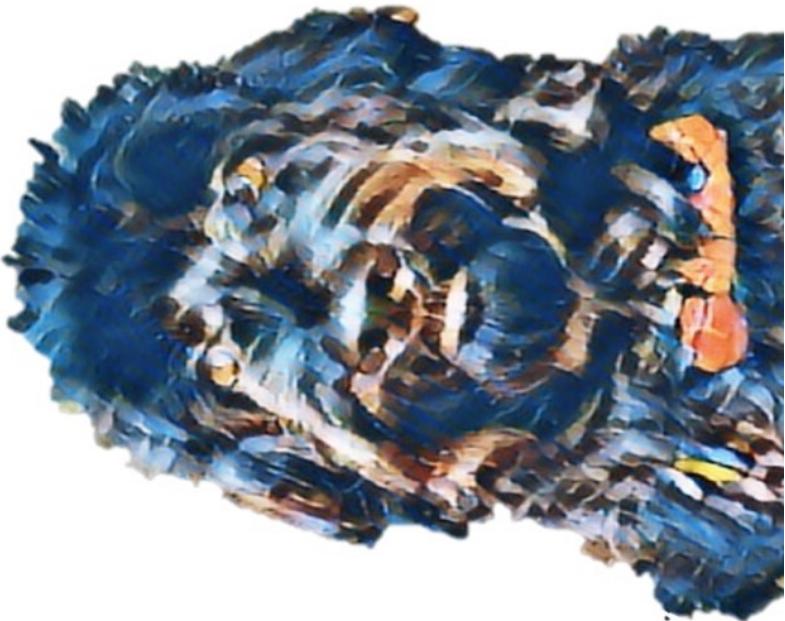
Sydney Gardner—BCC Student



FAUNA COLORWHEEL



Sydney Gardner—BCC Student



GOOD BOY



Tim Marshburn—BCC Faculty



TREES OF LOVE



Serenity Flakes—Bladen Early College Student



CURSIVE MONSTER



Alexandria Blanks—Bladen Early College Student



WOMAN IN PENCIL



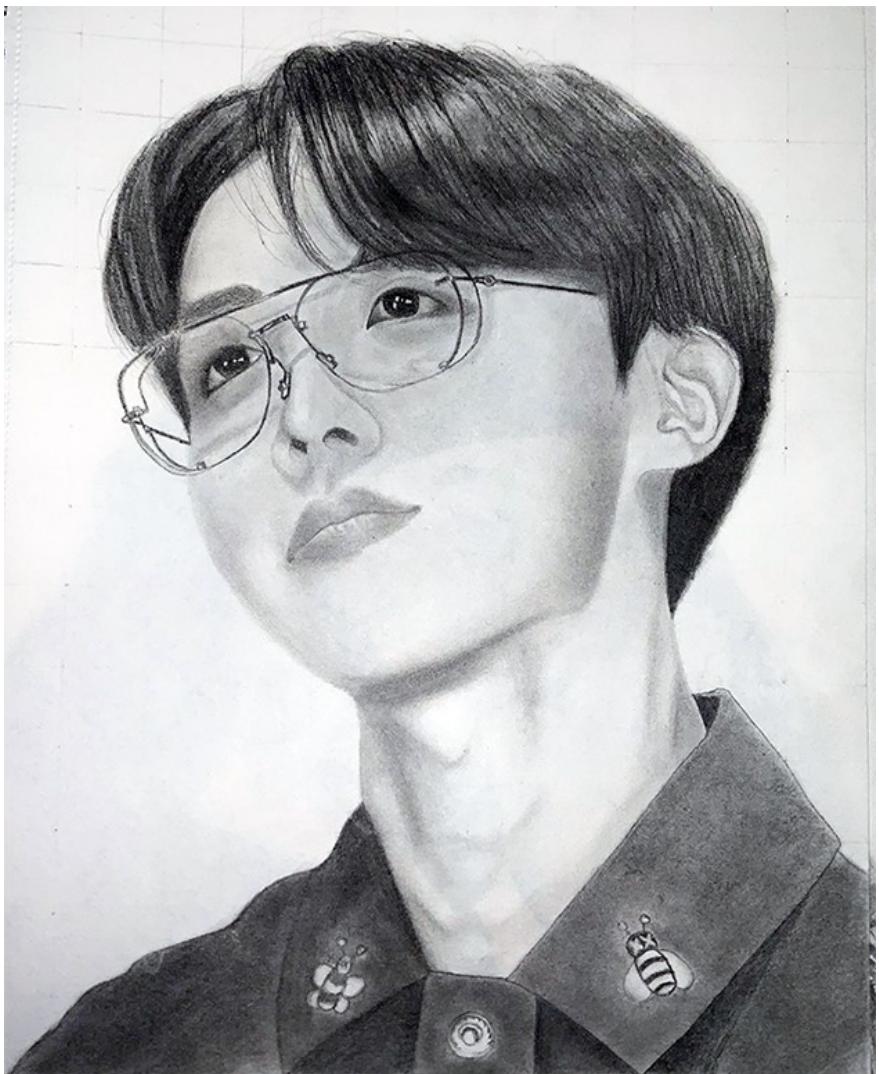
Julizza Mejia-Villalta—Bladen Early College Student



HOPE WORLD



Cynthia Maldonado-Ortiz—Bladen Early College Student



SHADOW



Cynthia Maldonado-Ortiz—Bladen Early College Student

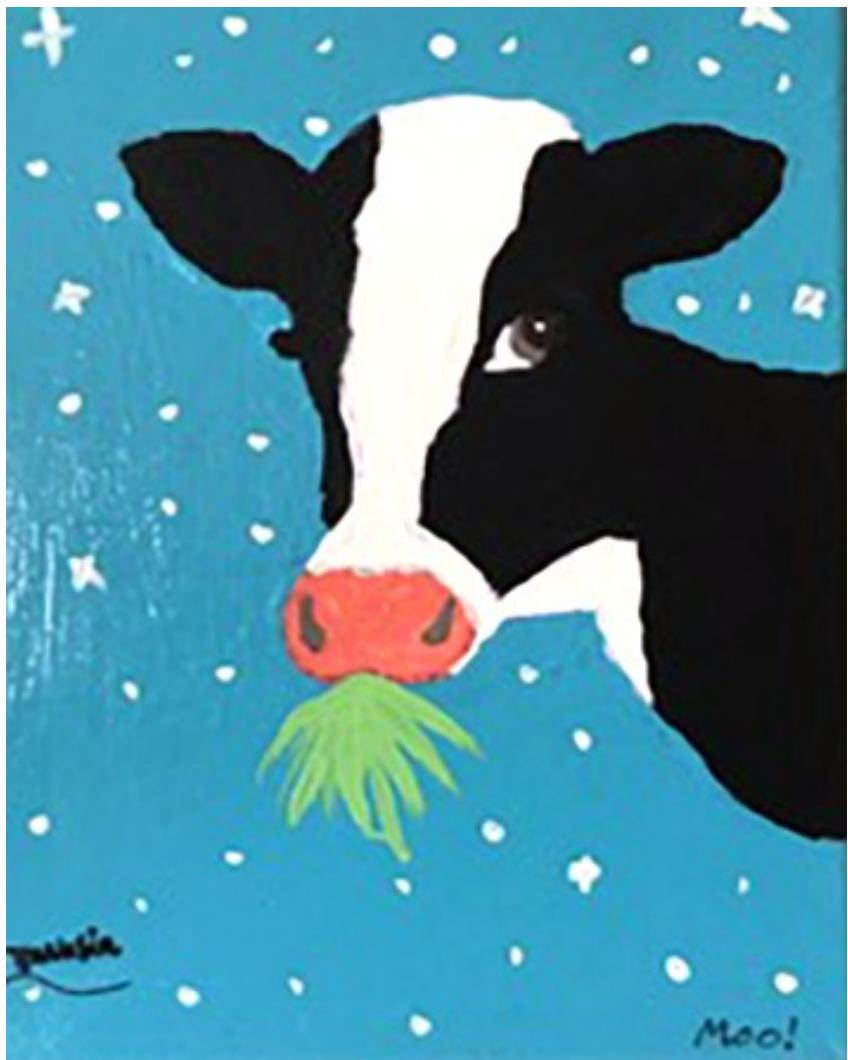


A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashley Leon-Orellana".

WILD



Ashley Leon-Orellana—Bladen Early College Student



THE COW



Tra'Nasia Washington—Bladen Early College Student



BERRIES



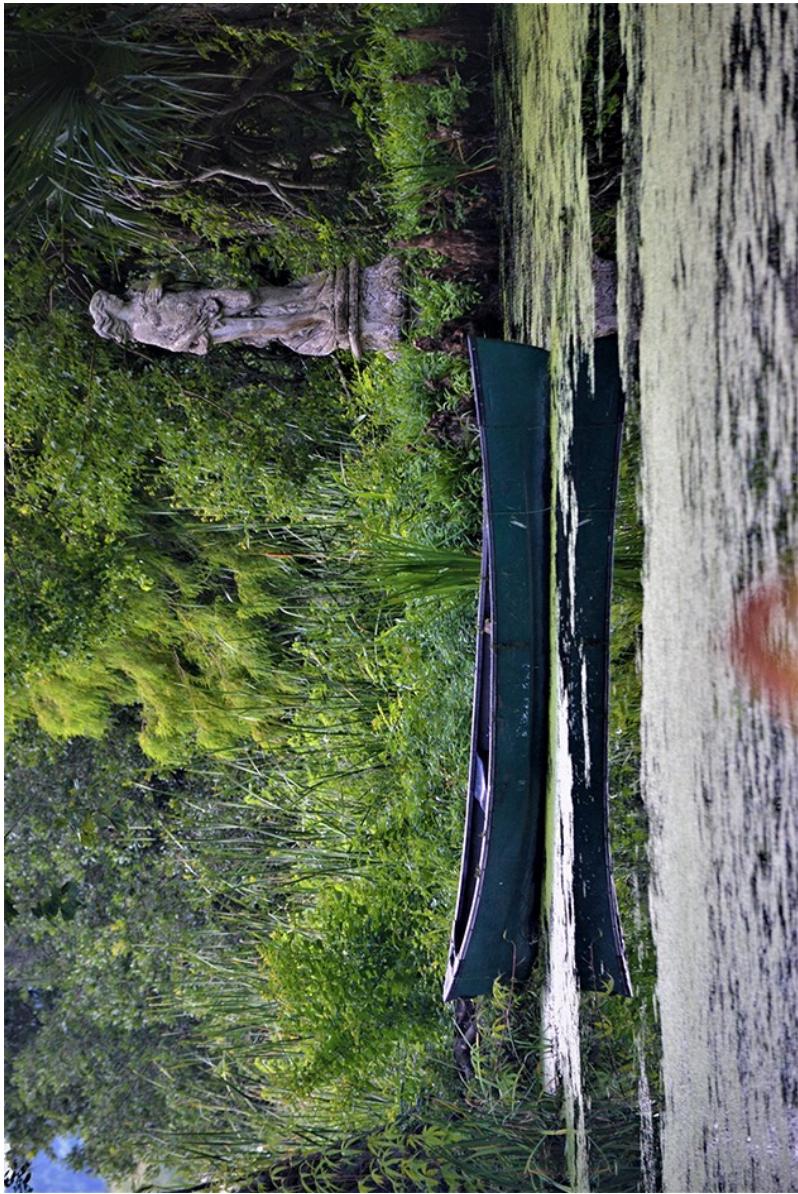
Tim Marshburn—BCC Faculty



LIFE'S PATHS ARE NEVER CLEAR



Diane Vitale—BCC Staff



SERENITY



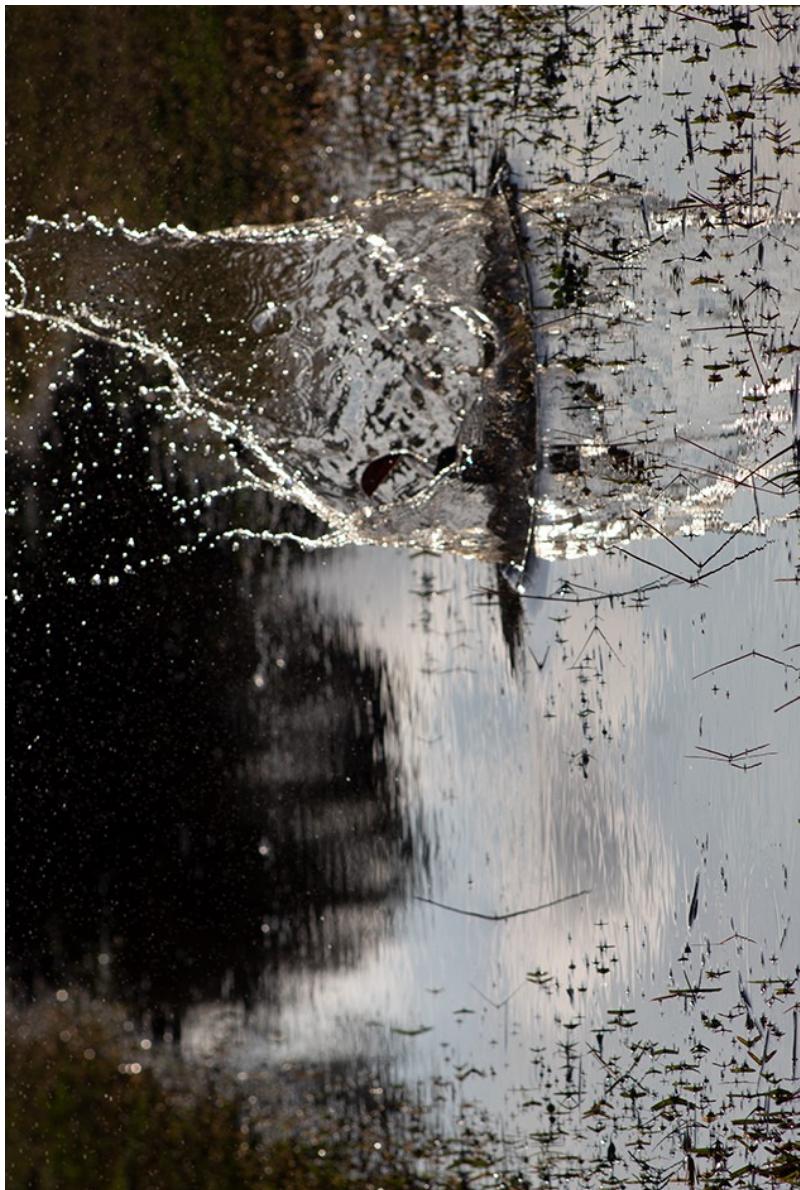
Mary Murphy—BCC Faculty



WINTER SAFEPLACE



Mary Murphy—BCC Faculty



NATURE'S DROP



Isaac Singletary—Bladen Early College Student



SUN AFTER RAIN



Isaac Singletary—Bladen Early College Student



INTERNAL FLAME



Isaac Singletary—Bladen Early College Student



BEE'S BUZZ



Jeanne Butler—BCC Staff



DUCKS



Robin Novak—BCC Staff



MINIATURE PONIES



Melissa Swiger—BCC Student

ESSAY WINNERS

MIDDLE SCHOOL

BLADEN COUNTY
middle school
Essay Winners

MIDDLE SCHOOL

ESSAY WINNERS



THE ROBINHOOD OF PERSIA



Aiden Hargrove— Clarkton School of Discovery

None know my name but, Ali Baba, a man who found my cave in which we filled our riches, will. He was fortunate to have such a clever handmaiden, for he lived to see another day. Here is the actual story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.

My men and I had summed up our 500th successful heist in which we returned with 80 bags filled with gold Ashrafis. Although unbeknownst to us at the time, we had been followed by the low life Ali Baba who cowered, hidden nearby. I shouted the words "Open Sesame" that unveiled a secret door that held our riches. We deposited the treasures that we had just stolen and set off for our 501st heist. When we left, Ali Baba stole our riches and was lucky not to be caught, for his brother was. We killed his brother, Cassim, and used his body as a sign to stay away from our treasures. This was a noble act for these riches are not only for ourselves but also for homeless citizens that need the wealth much more than we do.

Two of my men were sent to find this man but fell

short and in turn were exiled. I found his house myself and supped with him a few nights later to set my plan in motion, my plan to kill Ali Baba. While waiting for a meal, I was notified that my plans were foiled. My men died, but I did not. My brother was not hidden in the oil containers, so when the others died, he did not, and he told me of Morgiana. I have been in hiding for several months now gathering a new band of thieves so that finally, I will seek revenge no longer.

SYMPATHY FOR A WOLF



Erin Hewett—Clarkton School of Discovery

As I sit by the dying fire in her old dusty cabin, I lay pondering the journey here. It was an uneventful trek through the forest, not counting the fact that I was stalked through it. I had only brought a worn and dirty red coat and a basket full of dried fruits and meat for my grandmother. It was in exchange for letting me stay. No doubt the food had gone half-bad and the beetles had climbed their way into the basket to feast, but it

was not completely void of worth.

The Wolf had started following about a quarter into the journey. It was either my misfortune or a coincidence that it was led so close to my home. It could have been led there by the warmth of the no-longer burning fireplace. I only caught glimpses of it, thin and mange-infested. I knew what it wanted, but feeding it could only make it greedy. Winter brings hunger, but if I fed it what would I gain? The snow was to my knees, and I wondered whether it was such a bad fate if it resulted in the happiness and comfort of another living creature.

I was close to giving up; the snow was even deeper, and I was losing the will to keep hiding and running. However, the Wolf gave up with around a mile left to my grandmother's house. It had fought to keep me under its control, but many things depended on my success as my grandmother had not stored her food wisely, and it had rotten mid-winter. As I made it to her doorstep, I could have cried with relief that the journey was done, but now I sit knowing that I will have to brave the forest again and face the Wolf once more.



GARRETT AND THE PIGLETS



Garrett Dunham—Clarkton School of Discovery

Once upon a time, there was a mother pig with three pigs. Hi, I'm Garrett, and I help take care of the pigs when I can. I am not very wealthy and, well, I can't buy a lot for the pigs to help them. Because of this, the mother pig is sending her piglets away to build some houses for themselves. The first pig was very lazy and did not like to work at all. He was not trying very hard, and he just made his house out of straw. I tried to convince him that this wouldn't work, but he didn't believe me, and so he stayed in his straw house. The second piglet was also lazy, but he had a little bit more effort in him. He was becoming greatly bored, so I told him, "this house isn't sturdy enough," but he didn't believe me. After completing their houses, these two piglets danced around everywhere. The third piglet wasn't lazy, and he made his house out of brick. The strongest winds couldn't blow it over.

The next day, I was sleeping in my cabin when suddenly the first pig burst through my door. He was shouting "Help!!! There's a wolf, and he blew my house down." As I got to his house, I could see the

wolf at the second piglet's house, but by the time I reached his home, the wolf had already blown his house down. The first and second pigs were both crying because their homes were destroyed. I then went to the third piglet's home, but it was standing. The piglet explained that the wolf couldn't blow his house down because he had put very much work into it. All of the piglets learned their lessons and lived happily ever after.

HANSEL AND GRETEL FEATURING ME



Jerrah Babson—Clarkton School of Discovery

Hansel and Gretel had lived in this small village far away in a mystical world where creatures came and went, bringing danger and destruction with them. In most cases, I would be the one to fight them off. Even the knights from the nearby kingdom would flee in terror at even the sight of whatever unknown monstrous being would come into contact with the town. The day was a bright and beautiful one; the sunlight of an early morning cascaded over every little crevice of space, slowly travelling about

through the many leaves on the trees and the delicate feathers on the birds who lived upon its branches.

It had spread throughout the many neighboring houses what type of household Hansel and Gretel lived in, one full of toxicity. When the two siblings hadn't been seen for a while, it was only right of everyone to be worried for their safety. Anything could've happened to them and with all of the very troubling occurrences this village has been through in such a short amount of time, it would be easy for people to move on to something else easily.

I ventured out into the nearby forest after joining what seemed to be a search party for the two kids, but soon it was just me looking for them. I was more than happy doing this on my own. I knew that was the only thing to do; I could only assume by coming across a house made from an abnormal abundance of sweets was where they had been.

"Please help us" was the first thing uttered from Hansel when I saw them through a window. It didn't take long for me to slay what evil cannibalistic witch had lured them in with rich chocolates and sugary items and return them home. Or, somewhere safer than what terrible household they had been living in. Hansel and Gretel now live with me, and I am

never letting them out of my sight.

WINTER WONDERLAND LOTTERY STYLE



Megan Byrd—Clarkton School of Discovery

As summer came upon the Kingdom of Arendelle, the temperatures started to increase, and everything started to melt. I looked out the window to see what once was a snow castle and a town full of snow to now be hot and humid. I decided that I would take matters into my own hands to make it look like winter again but in the summer.

I sat there wondering how a village girl like me could have enough money to turn this humongous kingdom into a winter wonderland during the hot heats of summer. Then the idea struck; what if I won the lottery?

When I got home I sprinted to the kitchen with an abundance of excitement to convince my mom to get me a lottery ticket. After a little convincing she said yes! I hopped in the car

grinning from ear to ear, and we drove to town.

When we got to town there were tons of people buying lottery tickets. At that moment, I started to lose hope, but I went up there and bought a ticket anyway. Suddenly, I felt a tap on my shoulder, so I turned around, and there was my best friend Olaf. He gave me an idea for the numbers. I was going to do his birthday 12, 03, and 18. Finally, I got my ticket and went home to get some good rest for tomorrow to see if my dreams of winter in summer would come true.

The next morning when I woke up, I checked my numbers, but they didn't match. My mom bought one when I wasn't looking, and she won! She gave me the money so my winter in summer dream could come true after all!

THE KIND GIANT



Tristan Walters—Clarkton School of Discovery

The giant beanstalk fell. The Giant fell. The mysterious boy ran. That's the day my whole life changed. I have a vague memory from long ago... I

was just a child, probably around the age of six. The Giant, who wasn't much of a giant at the time, found me. I was alone, abandoned, cast away from my family for being different. You see, I was born burdened with a curse. I have an abnormally large body, so large that I was often called a "giant" by others. When The Giant found me, he felt pity for me and took me in and cared for me like a father. It's been almost nine years since that fateful day. Nine years, and The Giant has never told me his name, so I just call him "The Giant." Sometimes, I accidentally call him "father," which amuses him to the point of laughter. We were nomads, traveling around the world, trying to find our place. Then, one day, The Giant found a mysterious man selling these strange beans for very cheap. Thinking that we could have them for supper, The Giant bought some. On our way back to our campsite, he dropped one, which then quickly sprouted into a giant beanstalk! Hesitant at first, we climbed it and found a castle in the clouds. We decided to make it our home. There was a giant hen that laid golden eggs that lived up there, but she decided to let us stay for a while. Over the course of three years, we started a small business selling the eggs. We were living as we wanted to!

But then the boy came... He climbed the beanstalk and stole the hen. He killed The Giant... he killed my father.

WOLF REASONS



Jeremy Landreth—Clarkton School of Discovery

I know you think I'm evil, but that's just not true. I was just hungry. You see, I was driven out of my pack. The part of the wood I was in had no animals or humans, so imagine my surprise when I saw a young girl with a basket of food. I didn't want to bother her because of the woodsman nearby, so I followed her to the middle of the forest where she went into a house. I didn't want to intrude, but I was hungry. Then I heard screams, so I jumped through the window. I saw something so gruesome that even the devil would turn away. I saw The young girl soaked in so much blood you could barely see anything else. I turned and screamed. The woodsman came, so I ran. Who is he going to believe, the scary wolf or the crying girl? I darted through the window, and then I saw my old pack. I pleaded for help, but they turned away. I was so angry and full of rage that I couldn't control myself. I killed them all. The woodsman saw me there drained of strength and power and asked me why I would kill my kin. I responded by saying they attacked me so I had to. He asked why I killed

the old lady, so I told him the truth. And that's when I died from all the loss of blood and starvation.

I don't know what happened to that girl, but I hope the best for the woodsman who heard my story. I wonder his reasons. We all have our reasons, some good and some bad, some true and some sad, but we all have them even if we don't know them.

BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

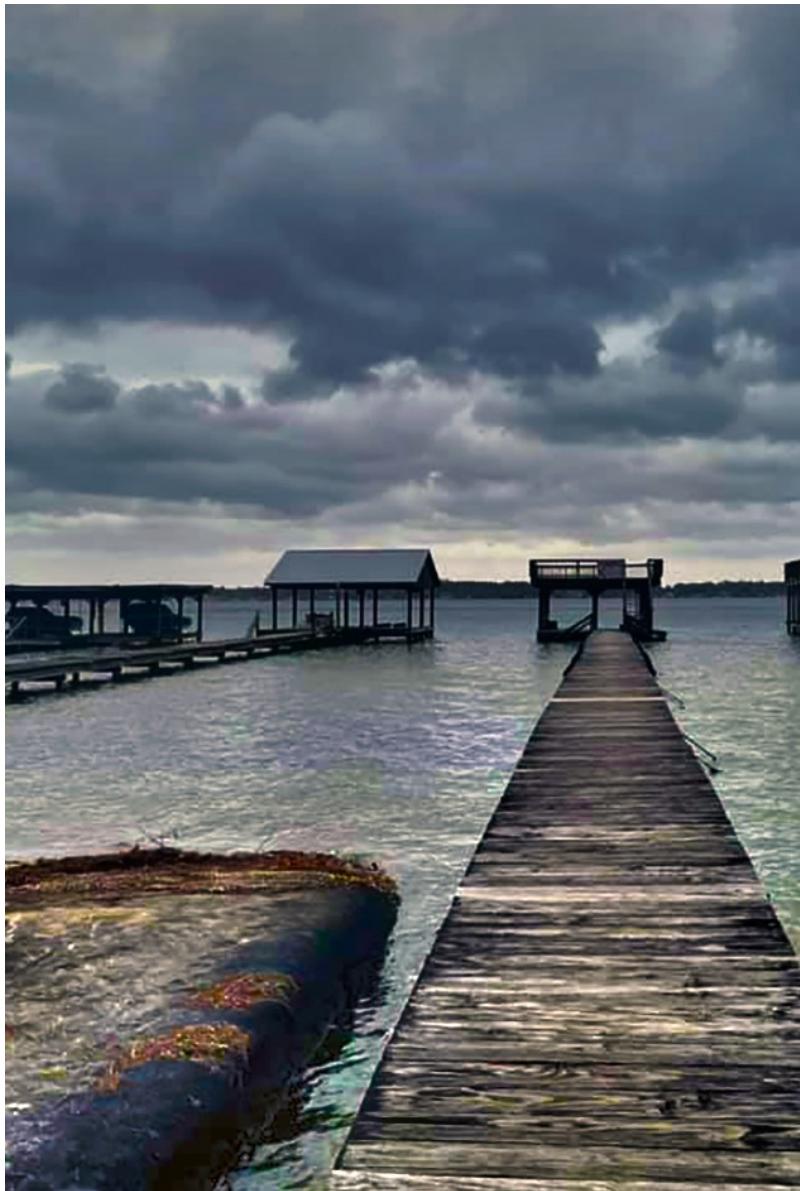


Autumn Churchill—Clarkton School of Discovery

You've heard the story of the three little pigs. Well, they changed a lot. First, I wanted to build their houses out of brick, but the first brother, Nathan, seemed to insist I make it out of straw. He said it looked good even though the point of the house was to keep David the wolf out, but it was Nathan's house, and consumers are always right. The second brother, Ryan, told me to build his house out of sticks. I was very irritated at that point, but the customer is always right, RIGHT?

So, I moved on to making the third brother Dave's house, and what he asked me to make his house out of made me flip. I couldn't even remember what he asked me to make it out of, and maybe just maybe the customer isn't always right. So I yelled "if you want to keep David out, you make it out of something better." He looked angry and said, "fine, brick," and walked away so I built the house out of brick.

I was paid a lot by Nathan and Ryan, but not Dave. I went back the next day and saw that the first two houses had been knocked down with barely anything still in one piece except the brick house, and the cops and the ambulance were there. I saw Nathan and Ryan being lifted into an ambulance and saw Dave talking to the cops. I went up to see Dave looking surprised. He said "my brick house was the only one that didn't go down, and luckily my brothers were able to run over in time." I stood waiting for what I knew was coming; "you were right," he said, "building the house out of bricks is what I mean."



ROCK OF AGES



Ray Sheppard—BCC Faculty

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