

# THE INK QUILL

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Bladen Community College  
2014



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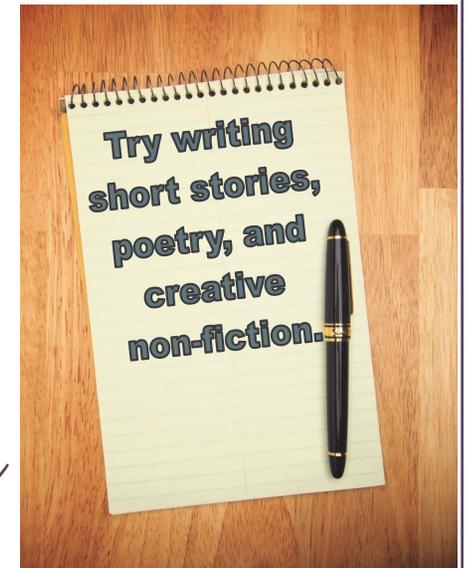


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# THE INK QUILL

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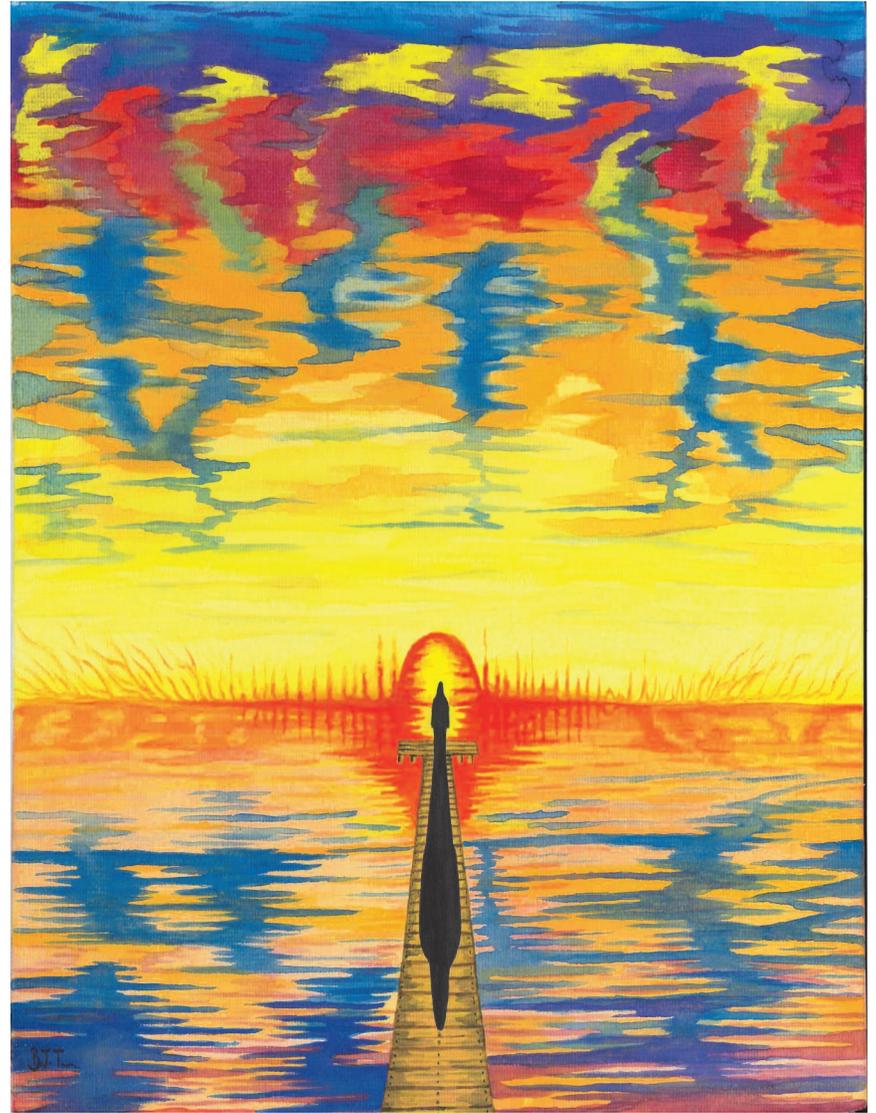
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**HEATSCAPE**  
Brandon Tatum  
—BCC Student



**REFLECTION**

Brandon Tatum—BCC Student

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## VISITING AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Maureen A. Sherbondy** received a BA degree from Rutgers University, and an MFA degree from Queens University of Charlotte. She teaches workshops on publishing and creative writing. Her poems have appeared in numerous publications, including *Calyx*, *Feminist Studies*, *European Judaism*, *Crucible*, *The Roanoke Review*, and the *Raleigh News & Observer*. Her poems have won first place in The Deane Ritch Lomax Poetry Prize, *The Lyricist* Statewide Poetry Contest, The Carrie McCray Poetry Award, and The Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Award.

Among her publications are *After the Fairy Tale* (2007), *Praying at Coffee Shops* (2008), *The Slow Vanishing* (2009), *Weary Blues* (2010), *Scar Girl* (2011), *The Year of Dead Fathers* (2012), winner of the Oscar Arnold Young Poetry Award from the North Carolina Poetry Council, and *Eulogy for an Imperfect Man* (2013).

**Tom Young** served on missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, and Kosovo, logging nearly 5,000 hours as a flight engineer flying to almost forty countries.

As a civilian, he spent ten years as a writer and editor with the broadcast division of the Associated Press. Young holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in Mass Communication from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Young's military adventure novels include *The Mullah's Storm*, *Silent Enemy*, *The Renegades*, and *The Warriors*. He is also the author of the non-fiction book *The Speed of Heat: An Airlift Wing at War in Iraq and Afghanistan*. His narrative, "Night Flight to Baghdad," appeared in the anthology *Operation Homecoming: Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Home Front in the Words of U.S. Troops and Their Families*. His novel *Sand and Fire* is forthcoming in 2014.

snap of the spring. After another ten-count, he removed the needle. Blount rolled the girl over on her back.

The wrinkles around her eyes faded as the muscles in her face relaxed. She coughed, glanced around, focused on Blount. Now she looked at him with the eyes of a human instead of a dying wild animal.

"*Grazie*," she breathed. A barely audible whisper, but Blount understood.

He stretched out her sleeve and poked both needles through the fabric. Using his thumb and forefinger, he bent the needles into fishhook shapes so they'd hang from the dress. That way, other rescuers would know the girl had received one dose.

One was apparently enough. The girl probably didn't weigh a hundred pounds. She'd have been gorgeous, Blount thought, if she hadn't just been poisoned nearly to death. Her chest rose and fell evenly now.

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in full MOPP gear: gas masks, charcoal-impregnated suits, butyl gloves. Blount snapped on a set of medical gloves and went to work.

In the parking lot, he found the Italian girl in the black dress. Somehow she'd crawled or staggered outside. Lying on the pavement, she looked even worse. Sweat beaded on her cheeks as if she'd just run a desert marathon. Wrinkles radiated out from her eyes, her face contorted. She continued to heave, though nothing came up from her stomach. The girl made a primal groaning sound and spat out a mouthful of mucus and saliva. Blount took a knee beside her, pulled out a pair of injectors.

"I gotcha, Miss," he said. "I got what you need."

He took the first injector, a plastic cylinder the size and shape of a felt-tip marker. Blount removed the yellow safety cap at one end, arming the spring-loaded needle at the other end. The girl moaned again and rolled onto her side. That position was good; it exposed the fleshy backs of her thighs, and Blount didn't want to punch a needle into her bone. With his left hand, the Marine held her knees to keep her from moving again. With his right, he pressed the atropine injector to the girl's upper leg.

A click from inside the injector told Blount the two-inch needle had rammed home. If the Italian felt pain, she did not show it. She only continued to twitch and drool. Poor girl's nervous system is so jacked up, Blount thought, she probably can't tell one hurt from another. He counted ten seconds and pulled out the needle. Then he uncapped the other injector, one labeled: PRALIDOXIME CHLORIDE.

He pressed the injector against her other thigh, felt the

Tears slid down Blount's cheeks. He wished the old Chevy could go faster. Please Lord, just let Digger have some medicine.

At the animal hospital, Blount ran inside with the dog in his arms. His grandfather brought the pesticide jug and showed it to the veterinarian.

"I'll be right back," Doc Albright said.

The veterinarian returned with a syringe. He didn't even take Digger into the examination room. Right there in the waiting room, with the puppy in Blount's lap, the vet pinched fur from the scruff of the animal's neck, inserted the needle. Doc Albright depressed the plunger, and Blount watched the clear liquid disappear into his best friend's veins. As soon as the needle came out, the beagle stopped shaking. The pup relaxed immediately. His eyes changed color. He wagged his tail, licked Blount's thumb.

"That was quick," Grandpa said.

"It usually is, if it works," Doc Albright said. "Bring him back if he don't look right tomorrow, but I think he'll be fine."

"What do you say?" Grandpa asked.

"Thank you," Blount said. "Sir."

On the ride home, Grandpa said, "I'm proud of you, boy. You found a problem, but you didn't go squalling like a child. You figured out the situation and took action. That's thinking like a man."

Digger lived long enough to greet Private Blount on his return from boot camp.

Back at Route One, Gunnery Sergeant Blount found men



A MATCH  
MADE IN  
HEAVEN

Diane Vitale—  
BCC Staff



**BOUNDARY**

Diane Vitale  
—BCC Staff

**FROM *SAND AND FIRE*, CHAPTER 1**

Tom Young

Digger looked up with misty eyes. He didn't have the strength to wag his tail.

Blount wrapped the puppy in a burlap sack and ran down the dirt road to the most reliable source of help he knew—his grandfather. He found Grandpa on the porch, smoking a Camel and reading the newspaper.

"Grandpa," Blount called. "Digger's real sick and needs to go to the vet."

The old man folded his paper, crushed out his cigarette in a beanbag ashtray.

"What's wrong with him, boy?"

"He's throwing up and going to the bathroom. He's shaking all over." Blount thought for a moment. "He poisoned himself."

"What did he get into?" Grandpa asked. "Show me."

Blount handed the puppy to his grandfather and ran back to the trash barrel. He returned with the empty jug. By then, Grandpa was getting into his pickup; Blount jumped into the truck's passenger side. Grandpa looked at the jug's label, started the engine. He'd placed the dog in the middle of the bench seat, right where duct tape covered a rip.

On the ride into Beaufort, the pup kept shaking and throwing up.

"Son," Grandpa said, "we'll see what Doc Albright can do, but I don't believe Digger's gon' make it."

## OCEAN WRESTLE

Maureen Sherbondy

To wash away my fears  
of lost children, I sign my sons  
up for swim lessons because  
once at the ocean  
a towering wave pinned  
down my thin ten-year-old body.

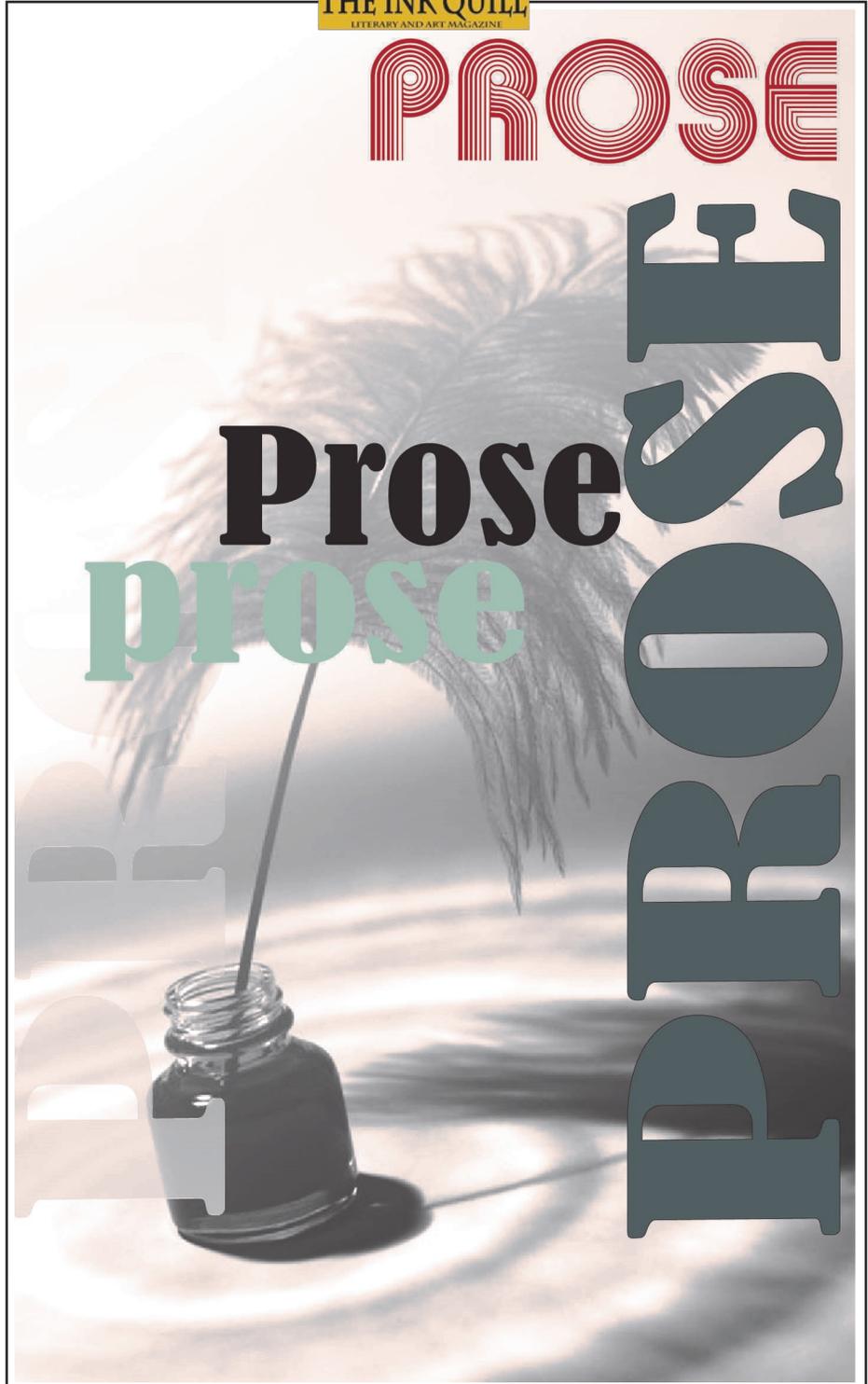
I recall the drown-swallow of salt  
and sand, the crush and punch  
of the crashing liquid body,  
that long stretch of time

when surface and light  
are stolen from reach,  
when drowning is so close  
I swirled down its dark airless  
alley, until a pinhole of grace  
spit me out into the enchanted  
place of second chances.

Still, an enormous arm lingers  
over my shoulders, never  
completely releasing  
its muscled hold.

PROSE

Prose  
prose  
PROSE



## MY RAINBOW

Karen Brown—BCC Student

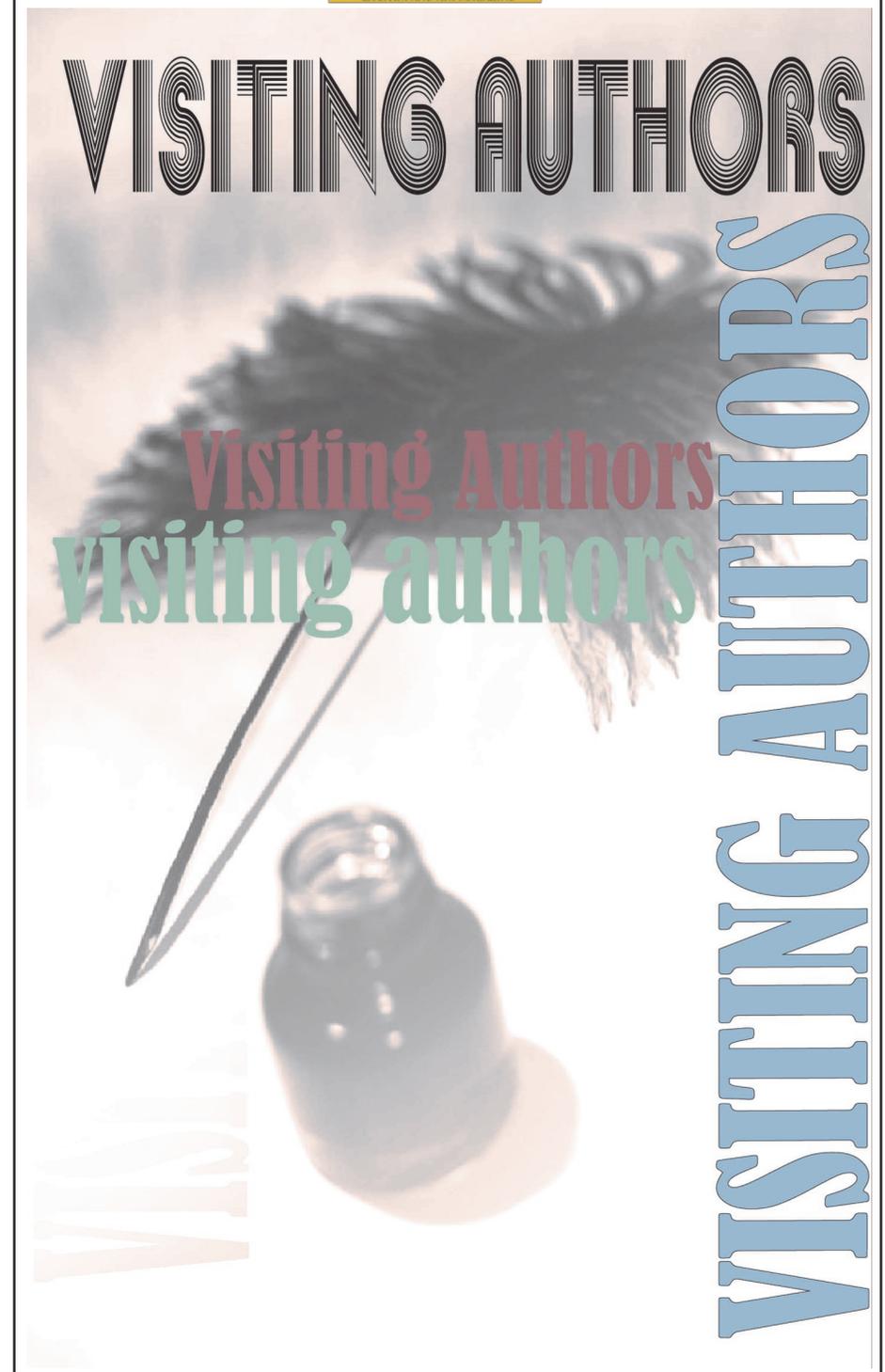
It is a day like any other day. I'm sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic after another mechanical day at the office. I've been trying to call my best friend Chris all day to no avail. He must be extremely busy because he always answers my calls. We use the drive home to vent or humor ourselves after our adventurous day dealing with temperamental clients of different demands.

I look ahead to see if the road has made a path for me when I notice a rainbow. It is somewhat magical. It has not rained today, the sun was beaming, but there it is, full of vibrant colors, so breathtaking. I can't wait to tell him about this beautiful bounty. Having no luck reaching Chris, I call Edgar. He will know why Chris is ignoring my calls. I know the moment he says, "I'm sorry," my life will never be the same.

Chris, my best friend of five years, died earlier today of a massive heart attack. I'm sitting there, horns blowing all around me; I start shaking uncontrollably, yet at the same time, I'm motionless. How could this have happened? He was only forty-eight, had a clean bill of health, and was full of life. Now, he is stripped of his tomorrow.

I bounce back to reality when an angry motorist yells, "Move it lady!"

I have no clue how long time has stood still, so I push forward. Somehow, I make it home, and my husband greets me in the driveway. I try to tell him, but I can't force the words past the tears. He bathes me and puts me to bed, understanding my pain because just two weeks ago, he buried his own





## MANTEO

Morgan Smith—BCC Student

mother.

Two days pass, and I take the hour drive to the celebration of Chris's life: that's what they call it. So many people loved and miss him. As I arrive, I notice that in the distance, a cascade of beautiful colors adorns the building. It is a rainbow, one just as vibrant as the one I saw the day Chris died. Could it be the same one?

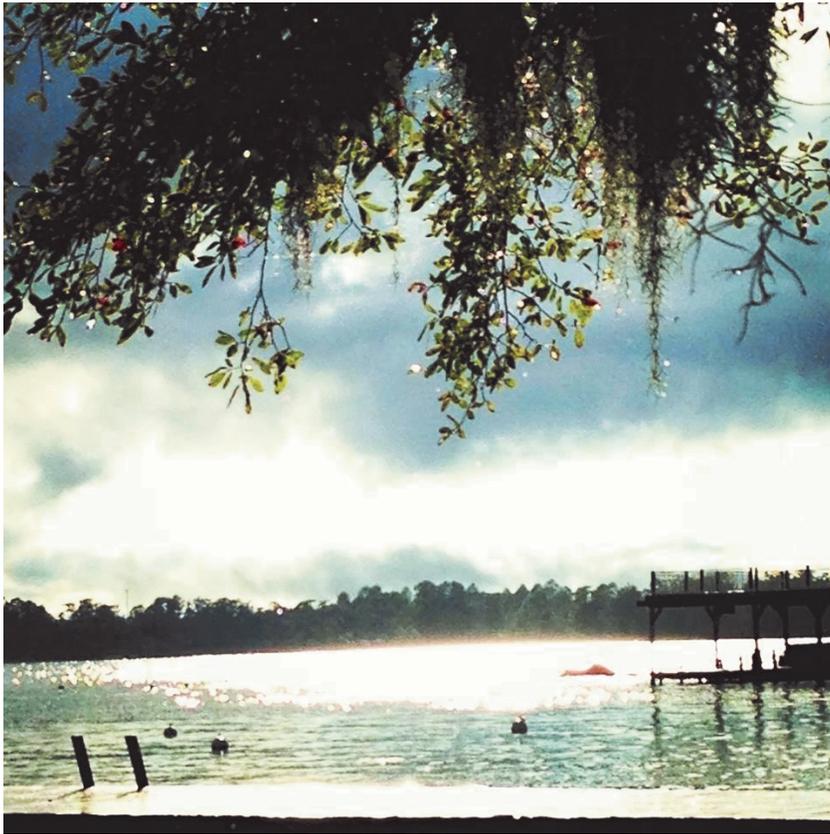
See, Chris was enamored with rainbows. He always stopped everything he was doing to admire the beauty the rainbow had to offer. During one of our many intimate conversations, he shared why those rainbows were so important to him. A rainbow served as a symbol or promise that one day the world would be as it was intended to be, perfect just like the rainbow is. He often shared such stories with me. I could listen for hours. He had a way of explaining ideas that would leave you breathless, anticipating the ending. When he talked, his eyes glistened like lights glowing in the darkness. Although he and I didn't embrace the same religion, I admired the dedication to his.

People often questioned the integrity of our relationship. They couldn't understand how two individuals could be so close but only have a platonic bond. We found that comical. I never worried about his intentions towards me. He was a devout Christian, a mentor, a boss, and a true friend.

Chris used to call me Yvette, saying I had two demeanors: one of business sense and one full of vibrant colors with a little thunder creeping around the corner; that's how he would describe my sassy side. Whenever I had an issue of concern, he would listen then tell me a story. When he

finished, I would know the answer to the problem without his saying a word about it. I always loved him for that.

Three years have passed now, and not a day goes by that I don't think about my dear friend Chris. Every time I spot a beautiful rainbow, I smile a little. I like to think it's him sending me a message or saying he is still here with me. I have no doubts that one day, my vibrant rainbow will be waiting for me.



### **CALM AFTER THE STORM**

Samantha Long—BCC Student

### **MY REMINDER**

Charlene McCallum—BCC Student

You come in like a flood when I fall away from him  
It's like you're standing there waiting  
You wipe the smile right off my face  
You take away my happiness  
You jumble my thoughts and make me tremble in fear  
You are my reminder  
Will I ever learn not to grow apart from him so you won't  
    come?  
Maybe I should like you  
Since you bring me back to him  
Wait!  
Did he send you?



### **FIELD OF DREAMS**

Diane Vitale—BCC Staff

## BEAUTY REDEFINED

Erica Butler—BCC Student

Beauty and all that it must be.  
Bet it is beyond what you and I could see.  
Wonder if I'll ever see it?  
If I ever do, I'll take a picture of its true nature and bring it  
back to you.  
Because our definition of beauty—now is only an insult.  
It stabs girls, women, boys, and men who feel the opposite, in  
the chaotic dark.  
You see, your definition of beauty- now in *Times Magazine* is  
only a snap-shot of what beauty  
shouldn't be.  
Beauty is timeless, something you can't stale.  
Beauty is "breath-taking" but never put on hold.  
Beauty is faithful, nailed to your heart,  
Where no one can steal it from you or decide if you are;  
No one can answer your question of Beauty.  
Only you know if you are.  
It's all a matter of finding your Beauty  
And knowing the definition from the start.



## THE BEST CHRISTMAS

Harmony Guyton—BCC Student

I am determined to make this Christmas a happy one. It took years of a difficult home life to get here. Two family friends, Diana and Gene, who are very much like grandparents to me, have invited me to stay with them until I am able to support myself. I couldn't have known that things would end up the way they have. I feel like a child adopted into a new family, having to learn a whole new culture. I think about all the Christmases with my own family; not once was everyone in the same place to celebrate a holiday together, neither did we have any traditions or special meals to remember the day. And now, I have been thrust into a family that opens gifts and hangs stockings. They bring dishes and trade stories in a home decorated in a warm atmosphere of red and gold and green. They value togetherness and support one another through everything.

I gaze around the living room, and it has the look of a fairytale. A family of golden reindeer seem to be grazing where they stand by the fireplace. Little shiny spruce trees nestle in a cotton snow bank up on the mantle as stockings of various sizes adorn the front. A luminous tree is bright with white lights and decorated with ornaments that span many decades. Some ornaments are yellowed or missing pieces, but the dates etched near the bottoms make them valuable and connect them to memories. On the tree hang several sweet, chipped bulbs with names signed in the childish hand of children long grown up and moved out.

In the center of the room stands a long table, crimson covered, lined on each side with folding chairs. I see enough seats

for a crowd. I think of how, soon, these seats will be filled with people who will form an opinion of me for the first time. I turn and walk into the kitchen; it's still warm from two days of cooking and busy preparation. I open cabinets and remove bowls and ingredients to make dough for gingerbread.

As I roll out the dough into a thin, smooth sheet, thoughts buzz quickly through my mind. What if my friends' extended family does not like me? What if they don't accept me, and they always consider me an outsider? Will that change what my friends think of me? Will they regret taking me in?

I carefully cut along the edge of the pattern, forming the familiar little people shapes. I have always thought the simple, rudimentary shapes of gingerbread men are so adorable. I learned to make them this year for the first time.

I have learned to do so much this past year for the first time, like taking more responsibility for myself, driving, managing money, and making my own decisions all without support or help from my parents. It is so much to think about, but somehow, I find these sweet little cookies somewhat comforting.

As I place them on a cookie sheet while the oven preheats, I glance quickly at the clock, which tells me the guests will be arriving in about half an hour. Soon sons and daughters, aunts and uncles, grandkids and cousins will fill this house, and my mind will be on new things. Then, it will be time to smile and enjoy company. The oven broadcasts with a few loud beeps that it has reached the set temperature. The cookie sheet slides onto the rack with a metallic clatter.

I wash the flour and sticky dough from my hands and help arrange the bowls and platters of food neatly on the counter.



## BLIND

Zach Dowless—BCC Student

Ben Austin—BCC Faculty

You won the approval of Betsy Ross,  
who cashed in on the original flag patent,  
and you even had the backing of Robert Morris,  
the original rich uncle of star-sprinkled tarps  
and t-shirts stuck in car windows,  
just so everyone knows you're comin' back  
for the crippled vehicle, baking in the summer.

You even had all the juicy details about that Mexican  
who hurdled over-sized AC vents  
between Chinatown and the Hyatt Regency;  
you have this enormous resume,  
and I hope you have a good time as president.



The sea of seasonal dishes overtakes most of the available space. The house smells amazing, like honey ham, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie. Hazelnut candles burn in the center of the table. Their smell reminds me of the first whiff inside a Starbucks. I smile and think of how thankful I am to whoever picked those. I take a deep breath and look around the room. Everything is perfect. I savor this quiet moment.

Then, I hear the rumbling of motors and car doors slamming. I adjust my shirt for the tenth time today. A knot is in my stomach as grandchildren come bouncing in the door, yelling for their grandparents. Diana's son and daughter-in-law come in balancing covered dishes in both hands. Soon, others arrive, bringing their aromatic offerings. It's like a jigsaw puzzle trying to fit all the food on a counter already overflowing with containers.

I can feel all the nervousness disappear as my fears about this day melt away. No one asks why I am not spending the day with my real family. They don't ask about the tough issues that caused me to end up here with them today. Everyone is joking with me and treating me like I have always been here. It's funny to me; I feel more a part of this family than I did of my own. I couldn't have anticipated such an all-encompassing welcome as this.

Everyone is eating, laughing, and enjoying each other immensely so that the hours are very short. I really never thought people would have celebrations like this in real life, only on television, but now I know otherwise. It makes a difference when everyone loves each other, does what it takes to keep a family together, and makes every gathering special. I feel greatly blessed to be a part of something like this. I hope the next Christmas in my new home is as good as the first.



**HOPE**

Karen Cecil  
—Former BCC Staff

We have kibble, an electric water fountain,  
space heaters and soft surfaces.  
My husband sets tomato soup  
and grilled cheese on the table.

Through the window we see  
two green eyes, luminous in the dark.  
In the fluorescent glow of the porch light,  
she cries and cries but won't come in.



**REST**

Karen Cecil—Former BCC Staff

## STRAY

Rebecca James—BCC Faculty

At first she was only a black ink dash.

A cat's purr does not always indicate bliss.  
Cats purr to comfort themselves,  
the vibration of those tiny bones  
in the back of the throat  
something like morphine.

We have heard her thrummings  
echo to engine thunder  
in the windless bowels  
of a hulking, rusted combine tractor  
behind the house.

We've seen her bitsy paw prints  
sprinkled on snow.

Now she rolls in sun-baked sand  
to warm herself, coming up filthy.  
She laps puréed liver, chicken, or cod  
from the hand-thrown blue bowl  
I set out after she carried  
all of our Tupperware, piece by piece,  
after each meal, into the field.

She lets me touch one velvet ear  
before skittering back.

## THE WORKAHOLIC

Betty Williamson—BCC Student

When I was about six, my parents ran a shooting preserve. We raised 30,000 pheasants a year and had eighteen hunting dogs. Our shooting preserve and farm was the largest in the county in Pennsylvania, but our clients came from as far away as Michigan to hunt. My father handled hunting licenses and dog rentals in the office at one end of our house where we kept an extra refrigerator for the hunters to use. We rented out the dogs to the hunters for an hour or two or for the day. Renting the dogs and handling the hunting licenses were the two main ways we made money. My mother plucked the pheasants after the hunters shot them. I entertained hunters while they waited for my father or mother.

My father carefully bred our best hunting dog. Lady was a Brittany Spaniel. She was too small for me to ride, as if I dared! She was white with long hair for a hunting dog with brown splotches all over. One of her ears was white, the other was brown, and she purely loved to hunt. After all, her sire, grandsire and great grandsire were all Grand Field Trial Champions, and so was she.

One pretty fall day, one of her favorite hunters came to rent her for a hunt. When he found out she had pups, he wanted to see them. I tagged along with Father and the hunter to go to the dog line beside the house just inside the oak tree line. Lady's doghouse looked like Marmaduke's doghouse but half that size. She greeted us near the end of her chain very quietly. The hunter greeted her by shaking her offered paw and petting her. She sat down near him and looked expectantly at Father. We heard the pups squealing in the

doghouse. I brought one out; it was about six inches long and a miniature of Lady with its eyes still closed. I showed it to Lady. She didn't move except for her head so I handed it to the hunter. He looked it over and praised Lady.

Father and the hunter agreed that she couldn't leave the pups alone so young. Lady got up and started shoving me to her doghouse. She pushed against my legs, so I got on all fours. She pushed me in the doghouse. I very carefully turned around because the blind pups were scattered all around it. Lady didn't object to my head being out of the doghouse, but she blocked me from coming out three times.

"Dad, I think Lady wants to go hunting with him. I'm to watch the pups while she's gone." I looked at Lady. Her tail was wagging so hard, her whole behind was moving side to side. She kissed me and went to the hunter. She rubbed her head against his right hand and sat down, looking at Father, as if to say, "Did you understand that?"

When Father disconnected the chain from her collar, she stood up, wagged her tail and headed across the lawn for the parking lot. She stopped after about three yards and looked back as if to say, "Come on, let's get moving. "

Father laughed and threw his hands in the air. The hunter looked at me, then Lady, then Father and smiled, shaking his head. Lady lifted her front paws, one at a time, as if she was impatient. That got the two men moving.

About then, one of the pups tried to get in my clothes, and I had to dig him out of my dress. The pups were everywhere! When I looked out again; the hunter's car was gone. The pups got into the darnest places. It seemed like Lady was gone half the day, but I know she wasn't.

## THE MOMENT OF ACCEPTANCE

Erica Butler—BCC Student

The moment of acceptance  
 The idea of defeat  
 No shame in the Glory  
 God brought me through hell's heat  
 I want to shout it from the roof tops  
 I want to be a living testimony  
 But disowning acceptance denies me of my story.  
 I'm silent because of fear, shame, and expectations  
 Harsh looks of awareness and disappointment  
 The moment of acceptance  
 Being Honest isn't easy  
 I'm working toward my truth  
 Where I hope to find my true purpose in living  
 My moment of acceptance





**BRIGHTER**  
Karen Cecil—  
Former BCC  
Staff

When Lady got back, she headed straight for the doghouse. She put out her paw, so I could shake it, and she licked my face when I met her at the doghouse door. I got out; she got in, and the pups attacked her to nurse. She gave a big sigh, lay down on her side and put her head down as if resigned to being a mother.

I went into the office to see Father. The hunter was there, waiting for Momma to pluck his birds. He said Lady seemed happy to be away from her pups and back to hunting. He called her a workaholic. Father agreed with him.



**GWEN**

*Bladen Lakes  
State Forest*

Joshua James—  
BCC Faculty  
Family Member

## MY FIRST TENNIS GAME

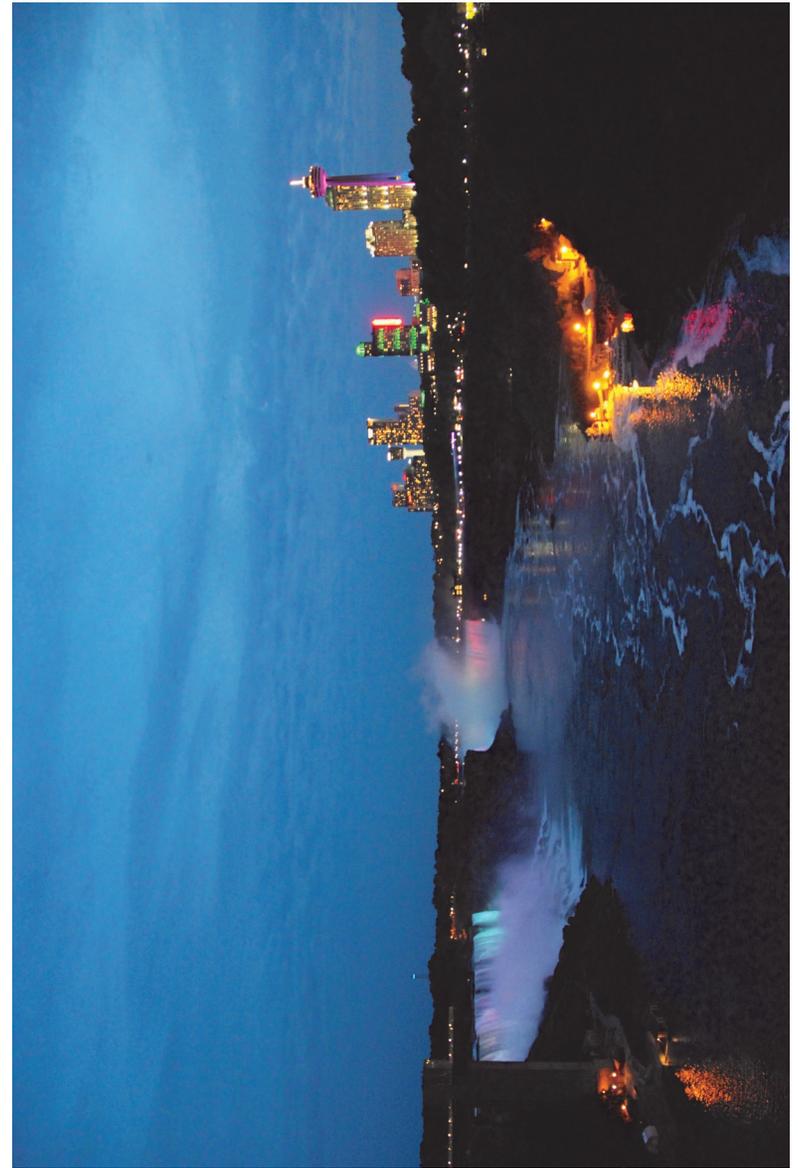
Charlie Cruz—BCC Student

The first time performing a task is almost always the most difficult. While I sat on that bench not so long ago, all I could feel was a weak and hollow breathing deep in my chest reflecting my nervousness. To the side of me, I could hear my friends laugh like they have never had a worry in their lives. My coach walked heavily on the cold brittle grass toward me, and I could feel the words before he could even say them. I was sitting still and trying to hold back the encroaching panic burning my thoughts. “It’s time,” is all he said, and I couldn’t take it anymore. I had never played before, I couldn’t grasp the rules, and my aim was always off.

The coach must have sensed my panic, and he tried to calm me down. He told me it was a doubles match, and he set me up with one of the better players. I felt a bit better, but I was still afraid that I would lose in front of my friends. My doubles partner Bobby and I had to wait for the court to clear. Time couldn’t have passed any more slowly than the way it did in that moment. Bobby was smiling like a child who would be going to the fair without any lines.

He was almost too sure that we would perform well. I looked away from my teammate. I was ashamed and afraid. There stood someone smaller and younger than I was and he wasn’t even scared. Bobby is even legally blind without his glasses. A thought shot through me as I pondered how he was so excited. *What if he loses because of me?* After all, this was his first varsity game too.

He turned to me to say good luck, and just like that, I felt all the nervousness melt away like ice in the summer sun. I



CITY LIGHT

Karen Cecil  
—Former BCC  
Staff

POEM 42

Joey T. Hinson—BCC Faculty

I chase falling stars  
If I catch them, they burn me  
If not, still they burn

POEM 60

Joey T. Hinson—BCC Faculty

When we get to the end  
of all the words  
and all the combinations available  
to say to each other  
all those things  
we want to say  
we need to say  
to express our love  
Then we will make new words  
and combinations  
in a new language  
that only we understand  
and we will start again



felt excited now! This must have been what Bobby felt. I guess his cocky attitude was contagious. The others were done on the tennis court, and we were to enter. The wind on the court was harsh, cold, and sharp yet still refreshing somehow. The enemy team walked toward us. They seemed nice, but I couldn't hold back. We shook hands to make it official. Bobby was the first to serve. Every shot was a blur, as if his racquet were producing shooting stars.

The other tennis players returned the ball each time. The tennis ball jumped at me, but as it fell to the ground, it bounced backwards. I had never seen a technique like that. My opponent had broken my hope. Every return escaped my reach. The score was now zero to one. I felt as if I were going against some kind of a magician. It just didn't seem possible; every time the ball landed, it would reverse direction.

We switched sides, and this idea popped into my head. If I hit it before it touched the ground, then I would have no problem. Before they would serve, I called Bobby to tell him the plan. He looked confused as he walked over to my box. I gave him the details of the plan. I had to stand opposite the opponent with the curved shots, so I could cut his spin short.

As the second set was starting, I was absolutely still on the cold court. I waited for the impending serve. The icy wind made my chest tense up. The sky was filled with long grey clouds. Beams of light would peek through to illuminate the game. I waited and waited as my legs cramped from standing still. My patience was draining away like water in the cloudless desert.

A bright yellow object emerged from the grasp of my opponent's hand. I watched him throw the ball, and I watched it

roll off the invisible air. He shifted just slightly enough for me to question whether or not he ever really moved. He was now facing me, and I could feel he wasn't playing around. The atmosphere changed, becoming serious and heavy.

A wicked snap filled the air like a stray bolt of lightning striking down the tallest tree. In an instant the ball was in our court. All I could see was a bright yellow orb, and that's all that mattered. My legs pounded at the earth, pushing me forward. I felt as if I had gone to war, like only one of us could go home victorious. I gripped my racquet until it seemed like it was going to snap. I swung at that tennis ball as if it were everything I hated. I sliced through the air like a bird swooping in for the kill. I could feel resistance as I made contact.

I was right about cutting him off, and the best part was that when I hit it, they couldn't return it. They were still just too good! They found out what I was doing and changed their game plan too. My team eventually lost. I felt like I won though. Bobby and I gave them their most difficult win of their lives. I went in scared, but when we were done, I felt confident and ready for the next time.

Now looking back, I think I learned a bit more than the dynamics of tennis. I learned that new experiences can seem scary, but when it actually comes down to it, it's not so bad. I had founded a friendship with my teammate, which I will always cherish. I will never be afraid again. Living a life in fear of the unknown is a life not worth living. I will use every second to do my best, and I owe it all to tennis.



## CAVERNS

Rebecca James—BCC Faculty

I ask myself where smiles slip—  
spontaneous ones, breaking like sudden blinding brightness,  
momentary before reminders of storms.

I suppose they fall into those little caves  
where I lose afternoons and shapes of dreams,  
where I lost father and unborn daughters.

But maybe my subterranean girls  
will find those smiles like lost garments—  
send them to float out, wet but intact,  
into unexpected rivers.



## MY BROTHER

Mariea L. Bryant—BCC Student

God has called you way too soon. You never got to see your fortieth balloon. You went to heaven in such a unique way; you made all of us say only he would enter into heaven that way. Now that you are gone life is lacking a great deal of fun. For you brightened the sun with your smile all the while never a care. You never met a stranger in your short walk of life. You never lived what one could call a normal life. Your home had no walls, for you told us all that God's yard was your home. You never wanted material things, for you said they would only bring selfishness and greed. My brother, your name may not be publically known. Your care and the love you showed will be. Once a year, we will collect blankets in your honor to show God that your time on earth was well spent. For just before you went home, you talked to God and made your repent. This is how I know I will see you when it's my time to go.



## LIFE-CHANGING MOMENTS

Amanda Horne—BCC Student

To most people, a birthday represents a time to celebrate: a time for family, friends, laughter, and the joy of coming together to share in another year of life. September 15, 2006 should have been my time to celebrate, to laugh with family, and to blow out candles while everyone sang, "Happy Birthday!" Instead, tragedy struck my life that day, a tragedy so profound and so painful that it changed me forever.

On the morning of September 15, 2006, I awoke with sharp pains tunneling through my stomach into my lower abdomen. I was seven and a half months pregnant at the time and ready to explode. I knew right away that I was in labor. I woke my children up, dressed them, and took them to school on the way to the hospital. I remember their being so excited because not only was it their mother's birthday, but it would also now be their baby brother's birthday.

After checking in at the hospital and getting settled into my room, I anxiously awaited the doctor's arrival. I don't recall my labor being difficult. I know that I never screamed out loud or shouted crazy, off-the-wall words as I've heard other women speak about doing during labor. One minute I was fighting the battle of birth, and the next minute, I was experiencing a sensation like none other. A warmth rushed through my body, surging within my legs and abdomen. This warmth carried with it a relief, a relief that I can only describe as pure bliss. I knew in that exact moment that my baby had left my body and entered the world.

As I patiently waited for the obstetrician to clean my son and place him in my arms, I saw a nurse quickly leave my

room. I knew right away that something was not right. She came back not even a minute later with a team of medical staff. I watched as the team took my son and placed him in an incubator. I immediately became frantic asking question after question, but the nurse just assured me that the medical team were doing everything they could. She explained to me that my son's lungs were impacted. She also said that he wasn't breathing on his own. I watched helplessly as the pediatrician placed a tube down my son's tiny throat. He explained that my son needed to go to the NICU right away. I shook my head up and down, unable to speak, never questioning that anything life shattering could happen.

Four hours later, a nurse brought me into the NICU. I saw my son instantly, surrounded by ear deafening machines, tubes all over his fragile body. My body shook uncontrollably. I knew why the medical staff had brought me in to be with my son.

I noticed a rocking chair beside me and somehow managed to sit down. I still had not held my son and I knew this was my time to do so. As the nurse placed him in my arms, I was overcome with love. He was perfect, he was beautiful, and no matter what happened, he was mine. I sat in the rocking chair and just held his little hand, time seeming to stand still.

Time, however, did not stand still, and on September 15, 2006, my son, Jackson, died as I held him in my arms, kissing his perfect little cheeks, whispering the words, "I will always love you."

I felt empty and numb for a long time after Jackson's death, my soul crushed to its very core. I was ready to give up



**MAC**

*Bladen Lakes State Forest*

Joshua James—BCC Faculty  
Family Member

## GAMERA, THE FRIEND OF ALL CHILDREN

Ben Austin—BCC Faculty

Up to your hips in camel crickets,  
you get that tinge of the threat of being tickled:  
no one has to touch, so it'd be tough to prosecute,  
but your phobia bilge gets let loose anyway.

Microns of pollen or fleshed-out jungle organisms  
making their way to pseudo-rural suburbs  
and interbreeding with garden variety bugs  
are about the most dire nightmares we've got,  
unlike the alien shark Zigra's paralyzing beam,  
which has no effect on "The Friend of All Children."



on life and myself, but I didn't give up. I had two other children who needed me. The next year, my birthday was incredibly hard. The year after that, my birthday was a little easier and now every year, I celebrate Jackson's life. I celebrate every second I had with Jackson, in utero and after birth, I celebrate his spirit, and I celebrate my unconditional love for him now and forever.



## PEACE IN HIGH ALTITUDE

Mallory Long—BCC Student

## CRASH

Victoria Britt—BCC Student

Once we are hit, we jolt forward into the oncoming lane. My head hits the turn signal, and it now gushes blood all down my face and torso. Every inch of my green long sleeve shirt turns crimson. My hair is now matted with blood. My mom screams.

And then we think it's over, but it's not.

The oncoming SUV crashes into us from the front. Imagine bumper cars but in real life. I hear the sound of crunching metal as our car's bumper and hood are smashed so that only the cab of the car remains intact. The windows have also managed to remain unbroken.

After the impact, 1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9...10. All of a sudden, my mom begins to scream, "My leg is broken!" My eleven year old self goes into panic.

It is the night of February 8, 2007. My mom and I approach our driveway when we have to stop to wait for an oncoming SUV, whose driver turns out to be a driving Miss Daisy who just wanted to let us turn first. Suddenly, while we are waiting for her to pass, a car going fifty five miles per hour hits us from behind. The driver is a young woman in her early twenties who obviously wasn't paying attention to the road since there were no skid marks at the scene, and she was going ten miles over the speed limit. Because of her lack of attention, our lives hung in the balance.

Get out of the car. I'm suffocating. Get my mom help. I reach for the passenger door's handle and pull, but it won't open. It's jammed. I'm trapped. My mom's screams intensify.

## YOU HOT DEVIL, YOU

Ginger King—BCC Staff

Oh Coffee, I hear you're a wonderful thing  
Seductive and hot to start the day off right.

Just once I'd love to be in your embrace  
Take a cup with me before leaving my space

My friends all love you so....  
I don't want to be left out in the cold.

But if you and my lips were ere to meet  
I would be pinging off the walls as you see  
Me suffers from caffeine sensitivity.





## GAZE

Brandon Tatum—BCC Student

I crawl over the console and into the back seat and open the door. I see a crowd of people surrounding us.

And then I see my dad standing only a few feet away from me. We hold each other's gaze, not speaking. I'm not crying; my face only holds a blank stare because of the shock. He doesn't know how badly I'm injured. All he sees is the blood. The world around us seems to grow dim and faint. My mom's still screaming, but I don't hear her, even though I found out later that neighbors down the street could. He tells me to stay in the car because I'm not supposed to get out, but I desperately want to go to him.

After a moment, he comes toward us. My mom's window is rolled down, so they grasp hands. She has him pray while he touches the spot where her leg is broken. The ambulances finally arrive. The paramedics put me into a neck brace and then onto a stretcher, but I don't want to leave my mom. They try to remove her from the car, but the car door won't budge. They'll have to pry it open. I have to leave her, so they load me into the ambulance, and we head towards the hospital. It has not yet registered how drastically my life is about to change.

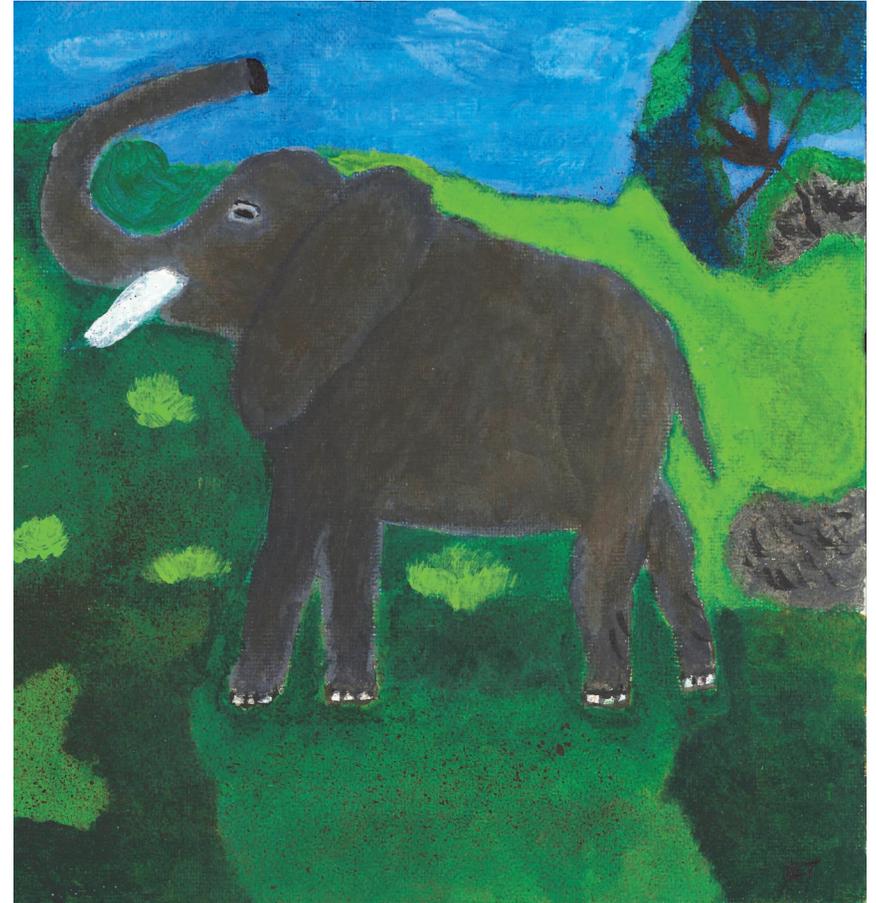
I wake in a hospital bed. I look around and see that I'm alone in the room. A sense of isolation begins to seep in, and I begin to wonder if I have had any visitors while I was asleep. I start to think that there is a reason behind no one being in my room. They might be with my mom who could possibly be in critical condition (since I'm in the dark about her condition and how much time has passed), so I begin to panic... again. Then my older brother, my crutch, and my saving grace, comes into the room. He doesn't say anything. But

just his presence is enough. I'm pulled from my thoughts and sigh in relief. But now, I can't stand the looks of pity and sympathy he is giving me, so I break the silence between us with "So who were you playing?," hoping the icebreaker works after I vaguely remember that he was playing a PlayStation game when we left the house earlier that day. He starts to go into detail about the basketball game he had been playing, desperately trying to get both of our minds off of what had just happened and his off of what he is currently looking at: his frail, bloody, broken little sister, and the oversized neck brace that I am in is not helping since it is swallowing me.

I am awake while I am stitched up, but I don't feel it because I'm numb from the medication and the night's turn of events and because my head is still filled with my mom's continuous echoing screams. I am finally released from the hospital around midnight that night, but my mom is transferred to Wilmington to have surgery.

After the wreck, my brother is my rock. My dad stays in Wilmington with my mom immediately after the accident and is also taking phone calls with family members and dealing with other matters, so he isn't always around. Michael keeps me occupied and busy while I am recovering, so I don't have much time to dwell on what has happened. He is the one who constantly wakes me up to check for signs of a concussion. We play *Ice Age* on Playstation 2, day after day. Those are memories of my recovery that I will never forget.

The next year is a long, excruciating, extensive battle for my mom and me. She spends it getting physical therapy, going to rehab, and finding out her other knee was broken. I, on the other hand, left the accident with a gash on my scalp,



## TRUMPET

Ingrid Thompson—BCC Student

## MY LOVE

Daniel Felix Villanueva—BCC  
Student

My love for you  
Is a rose blossoming  
In the garden of love.



## CRAM

Rebecca James—BCC Faculty

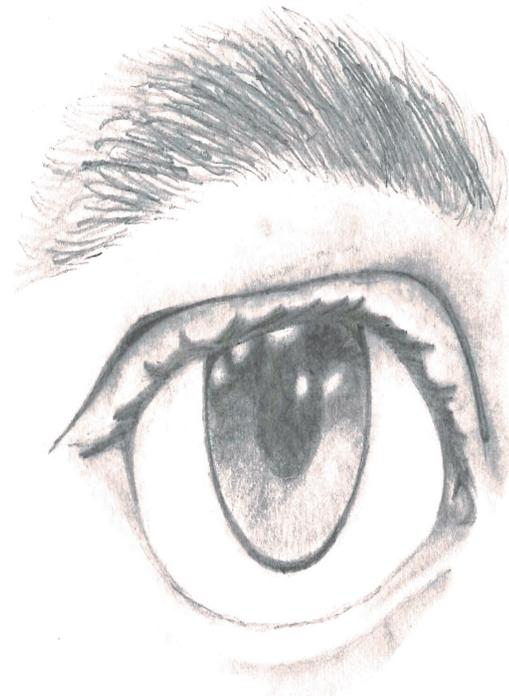
Sleepy sleepy  
hours weep away.

Bullet notes are second-ticks.

Stars skitter out—  
white spiders on a chalkboard.



bruises, and back problems that were fixed within the year, but the emotional trauma that followed was something I could not shake for years. To this day, every time I get to my driveway and see that I might have to wait for an oncoming car, I tense up and turn in as quick as I can, against my better judgment, because I refuse to let the same scenario happen again.



## OTHERWISE

Jonathan Davis—  
BCC Student

*Jonathan Davis*



**KNOWING**

Brandon Tatum—BCC Student

Ben Austin—BCC Faculty

Be weird but careful Austin, TX because being a jerk  
can sometimes be highly effective and permanently awesome.  
Real authority doesn't come from calling security  
or announcing that your name is on the door;  
a short-circuited eyebrow instills real fear.

Those dithyrambic inventors of salads said an "idiot"  
was someone who stayed off to the side  
or had their own private Idaho in their head,  
but I dreamed a girl I know from the internet,  
an olive version of Sandra Dee in *The Dunwich Horror*,  
lived in a cardboard box with wifi, had one pair of jeans,  
and thousands who would follow her into the ocean.





YESTERDAY

Diane Vitale

—BCC  
Staff

THE TRUE MEANING OF FEAR

Joyce Bahhouth—BCC Administration

Gibran, one of my favorite Lebanese American poets and writers once described love and hatred as twins. I came to realize that this oxymoron applies to most of our strong emotions, particularly fear and courage.

One night in 1986, during the Lebanese Civil War, my sister woke me up at midnight. “Joyce, Joyce, wake up. There are armed men at the gate to our building.”

I was deep asleep, but I could sense horror in her voice. I said, “Go back to sleep. The gate is locked.”

“That’s true,” she said, “but one of the neighbors is going to open it for them. They will be at our door any minute.”

They were at our door, threatening to shoot if we did not open the door. My parents had no choice but to unlock the door. My dad had just come back from the hospital. He had had major surgery. When he saw five armed men enter our apartment, he collapsed into the nearest armchair, speechless, pale, horrified, and in pain. The pain was not as much a result of the surgery, but rather of the memory of another group of armed men breaking into our apartment two years earlier, holding my dad at gunpoint and stealing our jewelry and money under the pretext of searching for arms.

When my mom saw the armed men, she was crying and shivering from head to toe, begging the armed men to leave our apartment in peace. My sister took refuge in what she was best at, practicing her medical expertise. She stayed with my parents, gave them tranquilizers and water to calm them down while she tried to feel more secure herself, hugging one

and then the other. These five armed men went past my parents and into our bedrooms, looking for four Russian men.

I, too, was afraid of what might happen. I was afraid that these men would see how much we were afraid of them, and as a result, they would rob us of the little that we were left with. I was not going to let that happen again. I chased the armed men around the apartment. I screamed at them and tried to distract them. I have no idea what I said and how I found the courage to shout at them and order them to leave the apartment. My only goal was to tell them that we were not afraid of them, distract them and annoy them enough so that they would want to leave our apartment.

I was successful. They left our apartment after a few minutes without *borrowing* anything, only to go to other apartments in search for the four Russian men or probably some jewelry left by the bedside and any valuable items they could carry in their pockets. They left one thing behind them... the true meaning of fear.



POEM 67

Joey T. Hinson—BCC Faculty

Early morning birds  
Gather at my window  
To pick at the seed  
I left for them  
I marvel at their freedom  
Their chainless existence  
They flutter around, playfully  
Yet always cautious  
    and aware  
    of my movements  
My early morning birds have  
    no house, no home, no defenses,  
    no money, no luxuries  
No chains  
I envy my birds  
    and they pity me



## ACCOMPLISH

Mallory Long—BCC Student

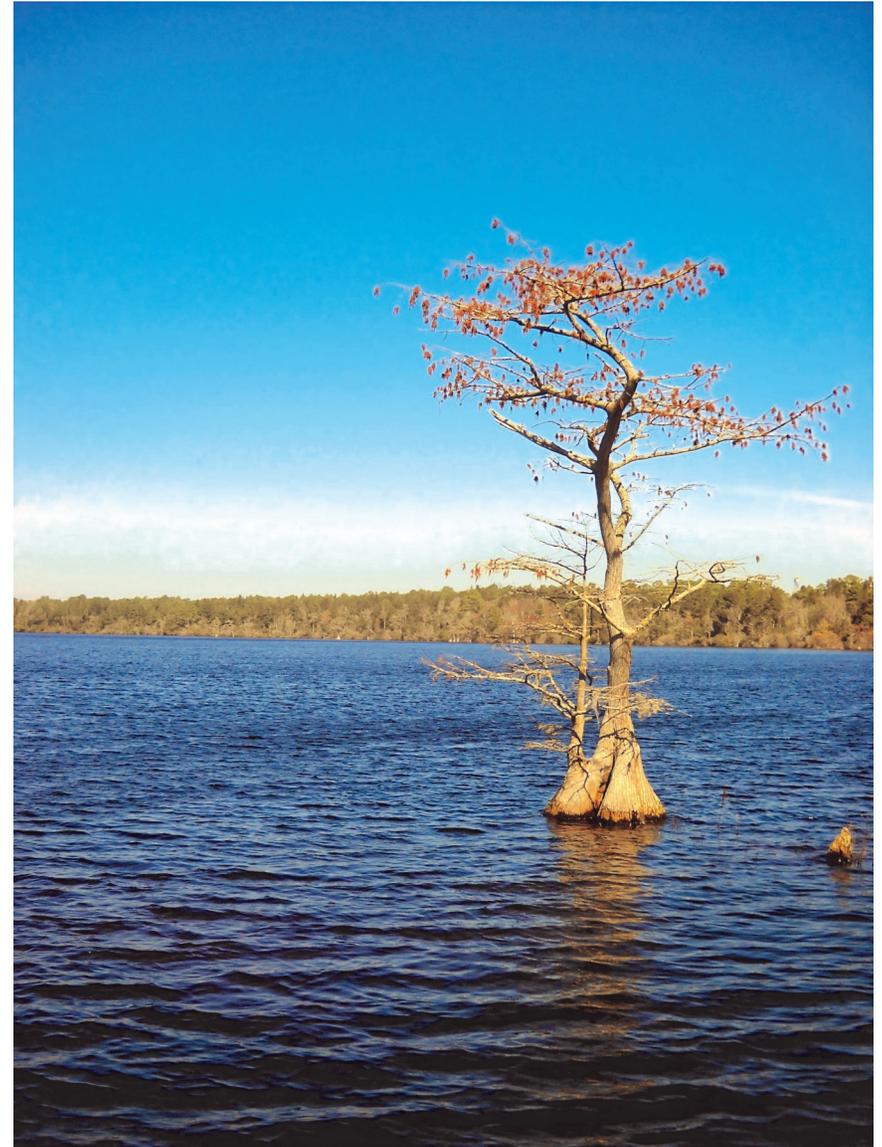
We all have bright, motivated and tough days;  
Depending on what and why,

Our goals are filled with determination, faith, and prayers of  
guidance to sigh.

As we lay down at night, remember, that's one day left be-  
hind;  
For your future will approach you faster than a blink of an  
eye.

Make sure you've accomplished all you wanted in life to never  
question why;

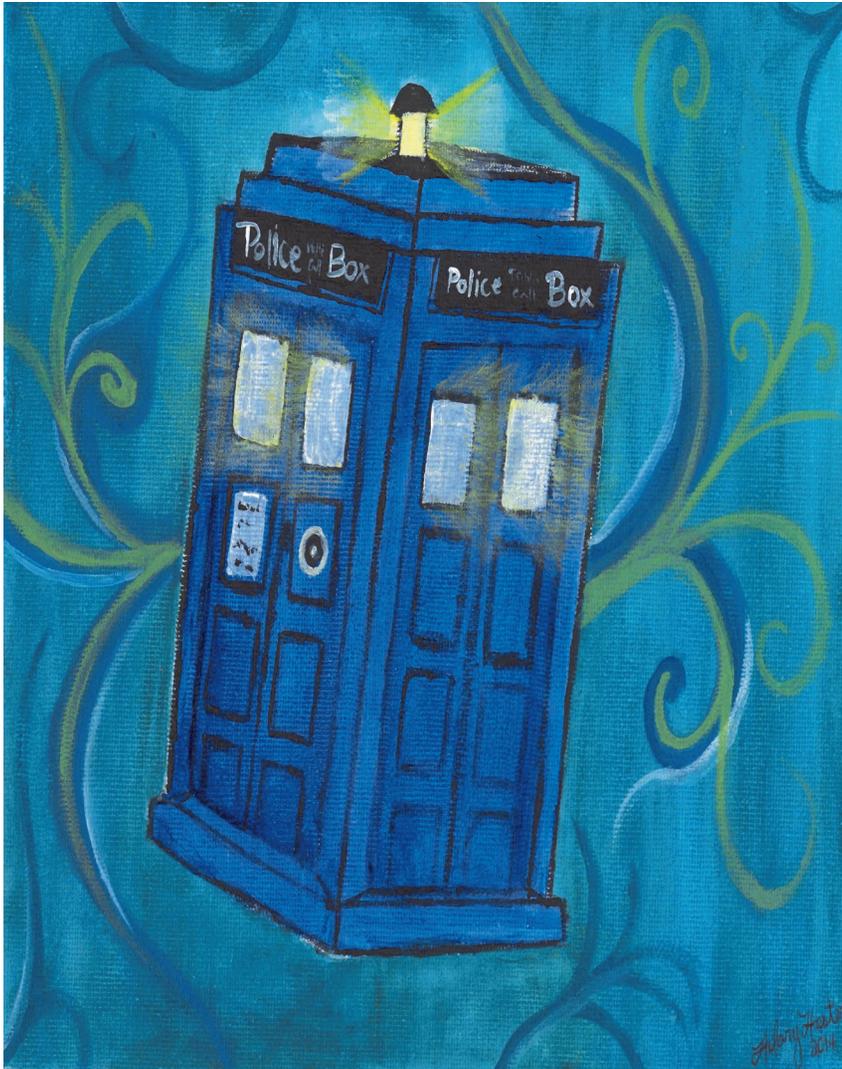
So when time has to come to where you can finally retire;  
You'll feel proud of all the accomplishments you made all  
throughout your life.



## HORIZON

*Bladen Lakes State Forest*

Joshua James—BCC Faculty  
Family Member



### CONSTANT COMPANION

Hilary Hester—BCC Student

### MARY'S POEM

Mary Butler—Family Member of BCC Alumni

I see a wilting flower and think,  
Are our lives truly meaningless?  
No one to mourn, but those  
who will soon pass themselves.

Is striving each day all for naught?  
Pointless pursuits of man  
going fruitless and unrewarded  
for even after success  
we are accompanied by death.

I am not fearful of death  
nor am I sorrowful  
only disappointed for the waste.



## MY PAPA

Lexie Cameron—BCC Student

I think of you every day.  
Often wondering why you couldn't stay.  
I miss our talks and time together.  
But I know now you feel better.  
No one deserves to live in pain.  
An angel is what heaven did gain.  
You loved me from the day I was born.  
Our bond could never be torn.  
I was Papa's girl from day one.  
As I always loved you a ton.  
You were always the one I could turn to.  
Teaching me right from wrong was you.  
You were more than my Papa, you were my best friend.  
I'll always remember you to the end.  
I love you Papa!



## LOVE IS...

Jade Carter—BCC Student

Love is seeing your boyfriend after months or weeks. Love is riding with the windows down on a back road. Love is seeing miles and miles of nature. Love is the ocean. Love is behind a camera. Love is capturing memories in photos. Love is in an airplane with perfect scenery. Love is cuddling. Love is not perfect. Love is a comfy T-shirt and shorts. Love is sweat-pants. Love is not having a care in the world. Love is swinging. Love is a beautiful photograph. Love is perfect hair. Love is the color red. Love is red hair. Love is looking into your boyfriend's gorgeous blue eyes. Love is that when you get home, you will be greeted by your dogs. Love is animals. Love is gift giving. Love is a full tank of gas. Love is hearing your niece laugh. Love is crafts. Love is doing things you love. Love is a cappuccino on a cold night. Love is food. Love is when you hear your favorite song on the radio. Love is when you catch up with an old friend. Love is all around us but many are too blind to see. Love is a canvas. Love is art. Love is making your parents proud. Love is a text from the one you are missing. Love is hearing a voice you have not heard in a while. Love is a mountain. Love is a waterfall. Love is getting accepted to your dream college. Love is seeing an airplane or hot air balloon in the sky. Love is waking up early on your own. Love is looking at the stars with a loved one. Love is catching fireflies when you are young. Love is starting a family. Love is having your own home. Love is helping people out. Love is listening even if you have nothing to say. Love is living on a farm. Love is going on adventures. Love is traveling the world. Love is my combat boots. Love is my creative mind. Love is shopping. Love is earning a living. Love is

something that is yours. Love is Starbucks. Love is Christmas lights. Love is romantic things. Love is an old dirt road.

**LOVE IS...**

Rebecca James—BCC Faculty

Love is four slices of toast with butter and cinnamon sugar. Love is a red Forever stamp. Love is an opened water bottle or Dr. Pepper can. Love is not having to drive. Love is a paid bill. Love is encouragement to sit outside or write. Love is questions: "What are you reading right now?" "How are you feeling?" Love is clean clothes in drawers and on hangers. Love is lunch ready by the door. Love is listening to early morning chatter. Love is a hoarse voice saying, "Mama." Love is a pastel card for no reason. Love is a compliment on earrings or shoes. Love is my plum wool coat. Love is a Broadway show tunes playlist. Love is a green plastic watering can.

**LOVE IS...**

Hannah Butler—BCC Student

Love is my favorite Bic purple pen. Love is a hand written letter. Love is my Xbox 360. Love is James coming to visit. Love is ECU football. Love is my warm gray cardigan. Love is my playlist of Silverstein. Love is an Avril Lavigne concert. Love is my blue Hyundai Santa Fe. Love is a road trip to nowhere with the wind in my hair. Love is baseball. Love is my red Nikon D3100. Love is my little brother's rare hugs. Love is my



**BLUE EYES  
LOOKING AT  
YOU**

Diane Vitale—  
BCC Staff

Ben Austin—BCC Faculty

Stuff my face into your purse  
like bitumen oil inside the earth.  
Bury my jaw inside your open eye lids  
because I like to talk with melanin irises.

Fifty-foot fluorescent beams at the last exit  
are just as safe as the forest-filled grizzlies.

Cook my emotions, brittle in the sun,  
like old alligator rum  
with no little flecks left in it;  
they've been dissolved like sugarcane in blood.

I hope you never run out of gas on the way back.



sister's warm smile. Love is my beautiful mother's words of wisdom. Love is my family. Love is my pastel purple finger nail polish. Love is a Dr. Pepper with Doritos. Love is my lame jokes. Love is making other people laugh. Love is the warm sand of the beach between my toes. Love is a loaded sweet potato. Love is the crisp green grass under my bare feet in the summer. Love is *tumblr* before bed. Love is a random text message from someone I miss. Love is my tan teddy bear. Love is warm cinnamon apples in the winter. Love is peanut butter on cinnamon raisin swirled bread. Love is my iPhone, iPad, Apple TV, and Mac computer. Love is red hair dye.

### LOVE IS...

Erica Butler—BCC Student

Love is pancakes, sunny-side-up eggs, grits, and toast. Love is homemade biscuits. Love is carrot cake with crème cheese icing and pecans sprinkled on top. Love is attentive conversation. Love is unexpected hugs. Love is watching every episode of *Little House on the Prairie*. Love is Christmas movies. Love is presence. Love is vintage, flea-market clothing. Love is grape jelly and honey mustard packets. Love is memorization. Love is chicken and rice on Monday and Tuesday. Love is spaghetti without meatballs on Tuesday and Wednesday. Love is dedication. Love is bottles of water and grape flavoring. Love is Bo Berry Biscuits. Love is mushy potato salad. Love is arguments followed by apologetic kisses and hugs. Love is singing, "Itsy bitsy spider," "Jingle Bells," and the

Barney theme song. Love is choreographed dance moves to “I Love You Like a Love Song, Baby,” by Selena Gomez. Love is a million bed time stories that never end with sleep. Love is fear of disappointment. Love is zebra-print everything. Love is understanding. Love is accepting times for solitude. Love is a brown paper bag that catches an invisible ball. Love is encouraging conversations. Love is playing Skip-Bo at three in the morning. Love is nail polish. Love is the gym, five days a week. Love is brownies and white powdered doughnuts. Love is a wet cloth to ease a migraine. Love is over protective grandparents. Love is uncontrollable laughs at embarrassing moments. Love is Spearmint flavored Ice-Breakers gum. Love is acceptance when there is no understanding. Love is drawing unidentifiable objects, people, and scenery on white paper with crayons that will soon be lost under furniture. Love is guidance. Love is smiles that will always return. Love is passionate words expressed through poetry, journals, and lyrics. Love is never ending descriptions.

**LOVE IS...**

Angel Leon-Bautista—BCC Student

Love is waking up to face a new day. Love is drinking a hot cup of caramel mocha with whipped cream on top. Love is seeing my mother's smile every morning. Love is making progress in my life to becoming a better man. Love is never giving up my dream just because it gets harder to achieve it. Love is being with family. Love is helping others achieve their goals. Love is exploring new routes to drive on. Love is being with that special someone that makes your day count. Love is

**LOVE IS...**

Erica Butler—BCC Student

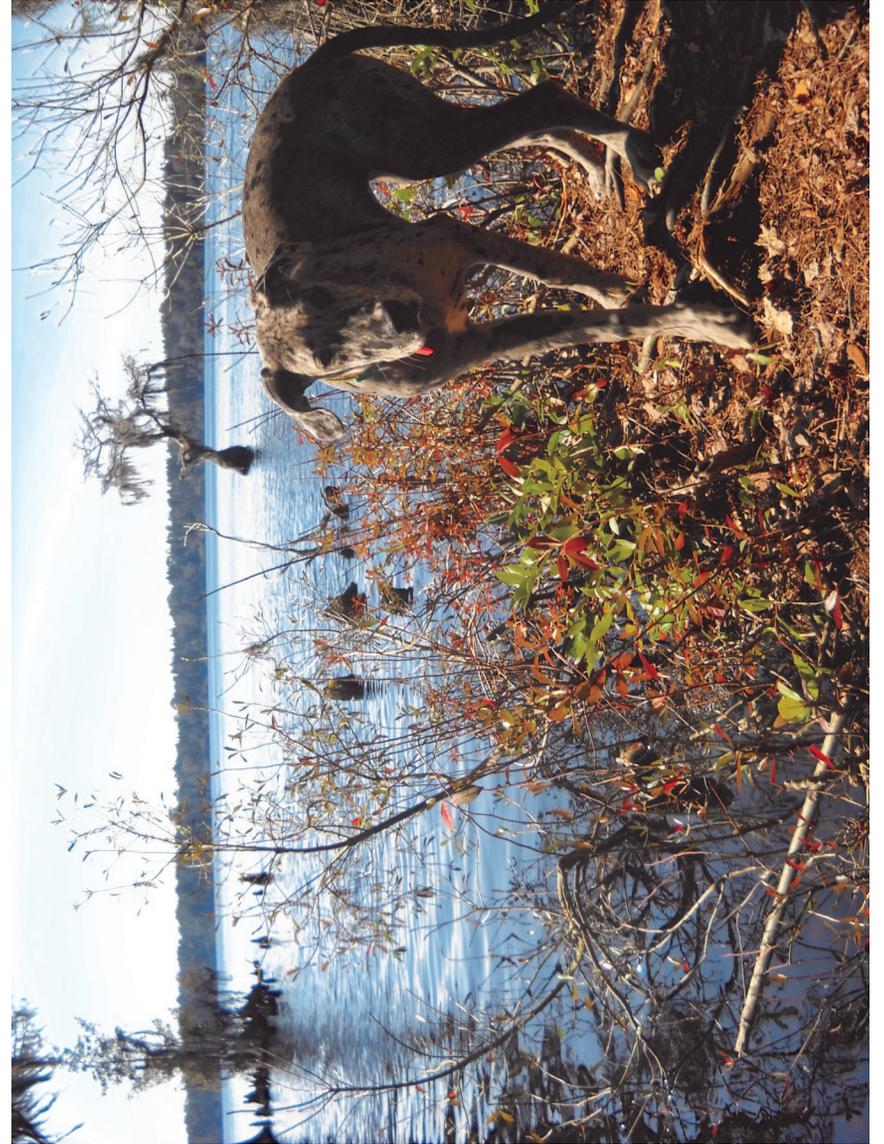
Love is longing  
 Enchanting wonder  
 Mystery driven to happiness or disappointment  
 Love is too deep to travel.  
 Much like the sea—  
 No man has ever seen the very bottom of the ocean  
 Like no man has ever seen inside the heart, soul, or mind of  
 another's dreams.  
 Though the beauty captivates them  
 Enticing them to try  
 Understanding the complex depth of love is always a wonder  
 As to why?  
 Why travel so deep, to such dangerous levels  
 If the farthest that can be seen is death pressured by cold dark  
 naked rebellion?  
 The more love is exposed  
 The more pressure builds  
 With more depth is more pain  
 In which love creates.





**DEEPENING**

Brandon Tatum—BCC Student



**PENELOPE**

Joshua James  
—BCC Faculty  
Family Member

being with that one person that just captivates you with a sense of personality. Love is listening to your favorite music. Love is making others smile when they are having a bad day. Love is making people laugh. Love is getting your money on payday. Love is going to the pool hall and entering the billiards tournament. Love is going on random trips across the state of North Carolina. Love is remembering how my father was, what he taught me, and how much I miss him. Love is the colors blue, white, black, and silver. Love is being free and not having to report to my parole officer. Love is knowing Mr. and Mrs. Kendall, the other two people beside my mother who are dear to me. Love is going to the May Faire Theater in Wilmington to watch great movies. Love is driving my Audi A4 around and maintaining it. Love is playing my Xbox 360. Love is cooking, especially my favorite Mexican dish, *frijoles charros con arroz* aka charros beans with rice! Love is listening to my favorite music track: “Hail Mary” by Tupac Shakur. Love is going to the bowling alley and playing some games. Love is eating a double Whopper with cheese, no mayo. Love is drinking Hennessy and Pepsi or The Incredible Hulk mix drink. Love is hanging out with my boys. Love is being a Latino. Love is encouraging others to stay on the right path and away from the wrong one. Love is eating hot wings. Love is protecting my loved ones. Love is when others worry about you without expecting anything in return. Love is when I get to visit my home country, Mexico. Love is being funny. Love is Learning new things, Overcoming obstacles, Valuing time, and Enjoying life itself. Love is being in love with oneself.

Love is a masculine mustache.  
 Love is learning to forgive after being hurt many times before.  
 Love is the embarrassing moments with friends.  
 Love is the collection of Hello Kitty stuffed animals.  
 Love is not having to drive anywhere.  
 Love is bonding through fishing trips with my dad.  
 Love is reminiscing through embarrassing baby pictures.  
 Love is an action.  
 I love Love.



DELICATE

Karen Cecil—Former BCC Staff

## WHAT IS LOVE?

CynDavia McCoy—BCC Student

Love is all knowing.  
Love is powerful  
Love looks beyond my faults and flaws.  
Love is deeper than self.  
Love is forgetting “I” for “you.”  
God is love.  
Love is my mom’s sweet potato pie.  
Love is the random but meaningful conversations with my significant other.  
Love is an endless platter of shrimp.  
Love is the angry voices of my siblings,  
...for I know deep within, it’s Love.  
Love is the complicated talks with my mother.  
Love is the small gestures, like opening of doors.  
Love is never afraid of risks, for they keep one alive.  
Love is the brightly lit *HOT* sign at Krispy Kreme.  
Love is the pastel colored cardigans and tightly tied combat boots.  
Love is floral printed shirts.  
Love is flattering accessories.  
Love is...well.. a hard word to define.  
Love is the motivation to succeed.  
Love is my crazy, outspoken family.  
Love is the fiercest red known to man.  
Love is a cute Valentine’s Day card.  
Love is the never-ending and most adorable infant giggles.



**OUT OF  
SHADOW**  
Victoria Britt  
—BCC Student

## THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS: A UNIQUE VIEW OF THE HOLOCAUST

Jamie Davis—BCC Student

*The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* is an emotionally and mentally fascinating film about the experiences of a German concentration camp through the eyes of a young boy. He develops an unexpected and forbidden friendship from the other side of the barbed-wire barricade that separates the two worlds. The film addresses the horrors of the Jewish Holocaust from a unique perspective. As Bill Goddykoontz, film reviewer for *The Arizona Republic*, states, “[*The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* is] a harrowing tale and a reminder that sometimes a child’s perspective is the clearest and most heartbreaking of all.” The film also portrays the Holocaust’s devastating effects on a German family, which is quite an unusual approach. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* takes certain historic liberties but still accurately addresses the horrific truths of the Holocaust in a disturbing yet surprisingly endearing way.

According to “The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (2009),” Mark Herman directed the film, which Miramax Films released to theaters in 2008. It is based on the novel *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyle. Asa Butterfield, Jack Scanlon, and Vera Farming assumed the most riveting and dramatic leading roles. The entire cast artistically honored the subject matter through their portrayals, making the film not only a great historic account of the Holocaust but also a deeply powerful and haunting film.

The colors and textures of the film play a crucial role in contrasting the time the family lived in the city of Berlin with

## LOVE

Stephanie Carroll—BCC Student

Love continues running softly in circles,  
 Love curls and twists in colors so purple.  
 Love glances so serious when there is no food,  
 Love stands there purring with green eyes glued.  
 Love trills and meows.  
 Love is happy but how?  
 Love has a cast  
 Love is broken  
 Love is purring  
 Love is us.  
 Love continues running madly in circles,  
 Love curls and twists in hands holding staples,  
 Love glances so serious when there is a knife,  
 Love sits there purring when medicine is given.  
 Love purrs, Love rests.  
 Love is sleepy but how?  
 Dogs continue to bark.  
 Parrots are chirping,  
 Children are crying,  
 Still, love is us.



## WET PETALS

Erica Butler—BCC Student

The wet petals disintegrated in her hand  
 She found herself without a stance  
 I couldn't seem to see  
 How someone like her could even breathe  
 She lost it at the slightest glance  
 Knowing she didn't have a chance  
 She can't rewind the time  
 She can't take her place  
 The pain she knows that she must face  
 They think she's too young to endure such pain  
 They think she's too young to stand  
 Yet, wet petals disintegrate in her hands

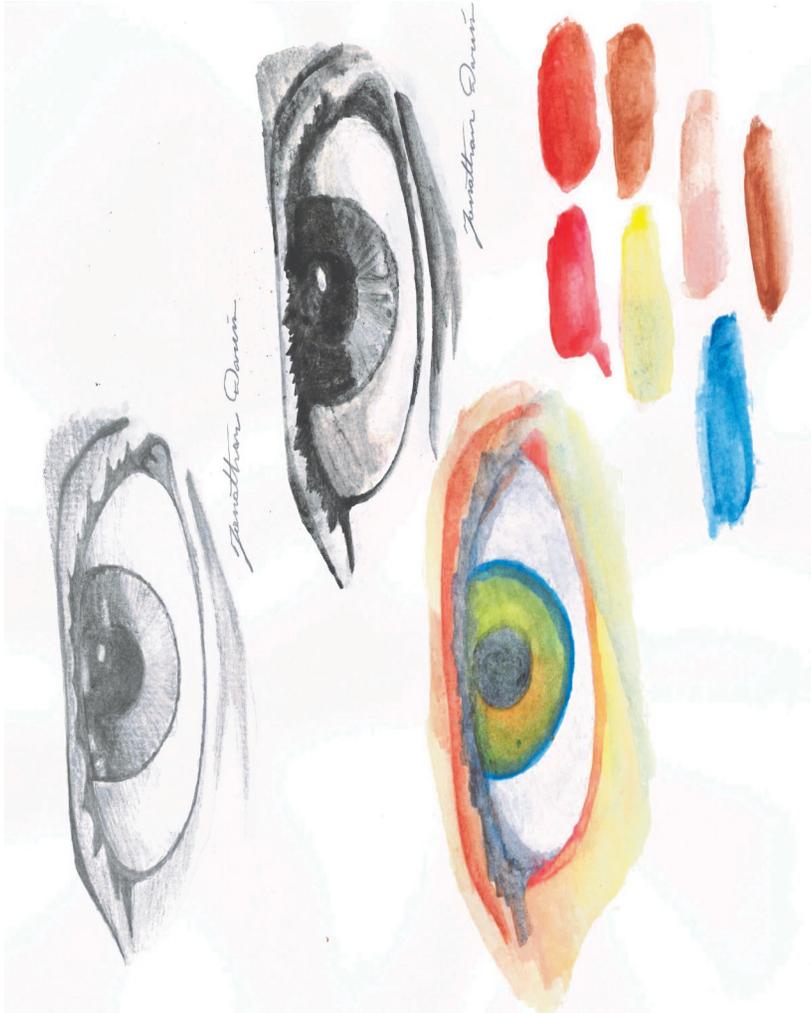


## THE ONE TRUE ROSE

Diane Vitale—BCC Staff

their life on “the farm,” as they call it. Vibrant and energetic colors fill the screen in the beginning scenes as the young boy runs, arms-spread-wide, through the streets of Berlin with his friends. Bright whites, blues and greens bring warmth and vitality to the scenes of the elaborate mansion in which the family resides. When they move to the farm on a remote countryside far away from the city, the scenes immediately fade to various shades of gray within a monochromatic palette. As the family approaches their new home, they see large gothic vultures adorning the foreboding, solid gray fortresses of a wall that surrounds their home. This mansion is spacious, but not a shade of blue or green is present. The bright whites are now dull, boring beiges. The green lush yard of the old home is now merely rock and gravel for a playground. The trees resemble skeletons. The only beauty is the enormous blue eyes of Bruno, the main character of the film.

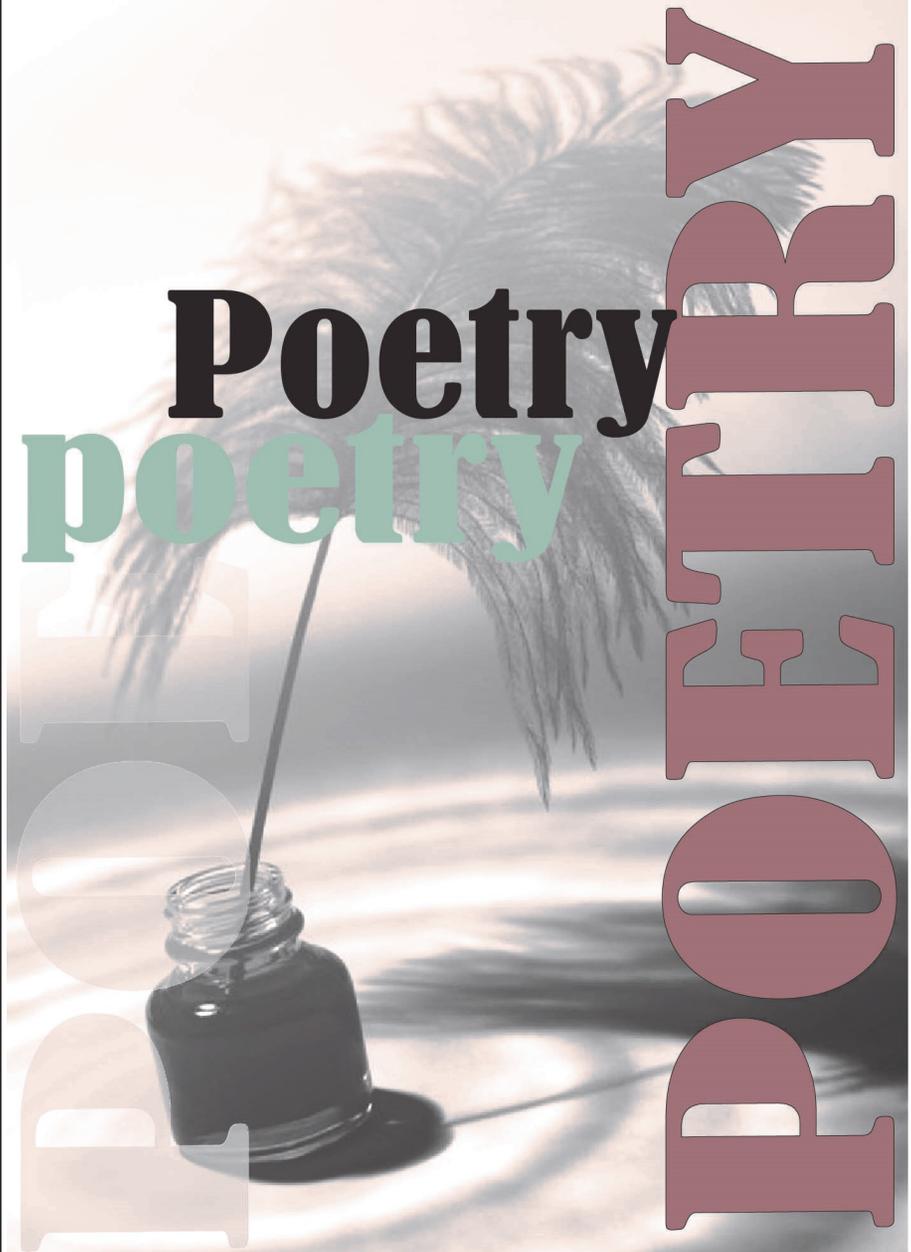
*The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* differs from other Holocaust films because the scenes are primarily from the vantage point of a child, Bruno, the son of a German Military Commandant. Goddykoontz points out, “Although it's told from the perspective of a child, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* is as shattering as any film about the Holocaust could be, perhaps more so.” The scenes from *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* featuring Butterfield allow the viewer to experience the events of the Holocaust as they profoundly affect the members of this German family. One disturbing scene is when Bruno finds his sister's favorite dolls discarded in the cellar. He runs to her room to find that she has transformed her girlish room into a shrine of Nazi propaganda and changed her appearance to look like the female Nazi activists in the posters she has displayed.



**SHIFT**

Jonathan Davis  
—BCC Student

POETRY





EVENING  
SUN

Diane Vitale  
—BCC Staff

One theme of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* is friendship. Despite the expectation for people to be enemies, friendships form. There is a scene in which an elderly male servant, wearing the pajamas, is in the kitchen peeling potatoes. Butterfield's character has fallen and scraped his knee. The Jewish servant comes to his aide. While mending the scrape, he tells the boy that he "practiced as a doctor" before he came there. During the conversation, the boy points out that if he "had to practice at it, he must not have been that good." The two exchange a warm, friendly laugh. This particular scene is important because this type of interaction with the Jews is prohibited, and it demonstrates the compassion of the German boy towards a human being, who happens to be a Jew. In another scene, Bruno notices smoke coming from the "farm" and is curious. An avid explorer, he seeks to find out what is going on at this farm. Along the perimeter of the fence that separates them, he meets a boy his own age, wearing striped pajamas. The two develop a friendship that transcends prejudice and war.

Vera Farming's character is critical in portraying German sympathy towards the plight of the Jewish people. Upon realizing that her family has moved to a concentration camp, she is immediately conflicted, knowing that the husband she adores is in control of it. At this point, the scenes begin to focus on the deterioration of her physical and mental health. Death at her back door is too much for her to bear. Certain scenes serve as reminders that many saw the Jewish people as non-human while other scenes show the internal war, particularly in Farming's character, between loyalty and humanity.

The dynamics between the characters often contrast the

rivalry between compassion and hatred. The family displays deep love for one another, yet their different positions on the war rock them to the core. The Commandant's mother is adamantly opposed to the war. In fact, many would consider her a traitor of Hitler, yet her son carries out the extermination orders. The Commandant is a surprisingly loving husband, father, and son. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* makes a point of showing that even though he is family man, he is also the commandant of his home. Ironically, he is willing to appease his wife upon her request to take the children and leave. Conversations and visits with the boy in the striped pajamas lead Bruno to question whether his father and his mission are good, leaving Bruno very conflicted.

The most important relationship is the friendship between Butterfield's character and the boy in the striped pajamas. The friendship is so pure and innocent that it transcends all social and physical barriers that separate them, yet it bears betrayal, and of course, forgiveness. The beautiful but forbidden connection between the boys leads to a tragic end, yet it is what makes *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* so endearing.

In the climactic scenes of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, the visual and sound effects are intense. The dramatic music by the acclaimed composer James Horner and a violent thunderstorm with rains that drench a terrified mother build the tension and foreshadow the impending doom. The closing scene of striped pajamas strewn about is silently deafening and breathtaking.

Some people may feel the film is not realistic and takes too many liberties. Some may argue that an eight-year-old child would never be in a concentration camp and that the

because we just sat and watched the others. We were both shy and had no special talent to show on the fire escape. We knew it was love at first sight. Telling our family and friends how we met is quite another story.

I know it sounds funny, but a year later we were married on the fire escape. It just seemed to be the perfect place since that is where it all began. I no longer see the fire escape as an emergency exit now; I see it as a way of life and love. I will always sit on my fire escape and enjoy life to the fullest. Even to this day, as old as I am, in my mind I am still on the fire escape. In my heart I will always be on the fire escape. It is where I found meaning and love. Who could ever ask for more?

In the winter I put out bird seed for the birds, and as crazy as it is, I clear off my fire escape. This way with the heat of the heater, I can dream about the summer to come. If you ever get a chance, go and explore your fire escape. If you don't have a fire escape, try your stoop or stairs. You will be surprised at what other worlds do exist.



## THE FIRE ESCAPE

Mariea L. Bryant—BCC Student

On a warm mid-summer night in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, you will find another world on the fire escape. Mostly the young pursue this unique way of life. They seem to feel as if they rule a world unknown to most. The truth is that most of us old timers have been there and done that when we were their age.

It's funny to watch and listen to how the music and style of dress have changed. I can remember the first time I sat on the fire escape. We didn't have an air conditioner, and it seemed to be the hottest night ever. No air was blowing, and it was so humid that I just couldn't sleep. I must admit that first night seemed to be so magical that I had to sit out the next night. I felt free from any worries while on my perch. I was learning a whole new world.

So many people all over the block sat on the fire escape. One neighbor was painting, and another was rehearsing play lines. The music man was practicing his new piece, and the granny of the block put out pies to cool. It was as if the day never ended. Who would have ever thought that the fire escape could be more than an emergency exit? Sure, everyone has a flowerpot or a box of flowers on the fire escape to make it look pretty. I found myself so intrigued with this other world that I just had to sit and study everyone. I am so grateful for that hot mid-summer night because I found the best friend of my life. We both worked during the day and had so much going on in our lives. When we were on the fire escape, the big, bad, busy world went away. We noticed each other

film defiled the real accounts of the Holocaust. Claudia Puig, writer for *USA Today* points out, "The acting is so good, the visuals arresting and the story compelling enough to allow one to overlook some inconsistencies or inauthenticities." While it is true that the story takes certain historic liberties, it is not intended to be a historical account translated into a non-fiction documentary but rather a poignant story based on historic events.

Others may feel that the film was unjust to focus on the German family's emotions and everyday life near the camp instead of the plight of the Jewish people within the concentration camp. As reviewer Scott Gwin states, "The relationship between the father and son explores another risky and rarely touched on subject: the humanity of the Nazi officer." While much emphasis is on the German family, it was purposeful. The film shows a different point of view, which is what makes it surprising. However, the film remained true in showing the atrocities of the Holocaust on the Jewish people.

Perhaps some viewers should not see *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* due to the upsetting nature of the subject matter. Certainly, the film is poignant, and the loss of innocent lives is difficult to endure; however, the Holocaust is an actual event in history that people should revisit in order to truly honor the victims and prevent history from ever repeating itself.

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when I woke up, I was smiling. I had seen my grandmother in my sleep. We held a conversation and she told me that everything was going to be okay and that even though she was not with me physically, she would always be around when I needed her. That is the moment when I knew that everything was going to be okay.

I lost my grandmother five years ago, and every year, I visit her grave on New Year's Day. Just like I promised her, we party together every New Year. My grandmother was a wonderful woman, and she inspired me so much. Because of my grandmother, I strive to be the best person I can be. I want her to be proud of me just like I was proud of her.



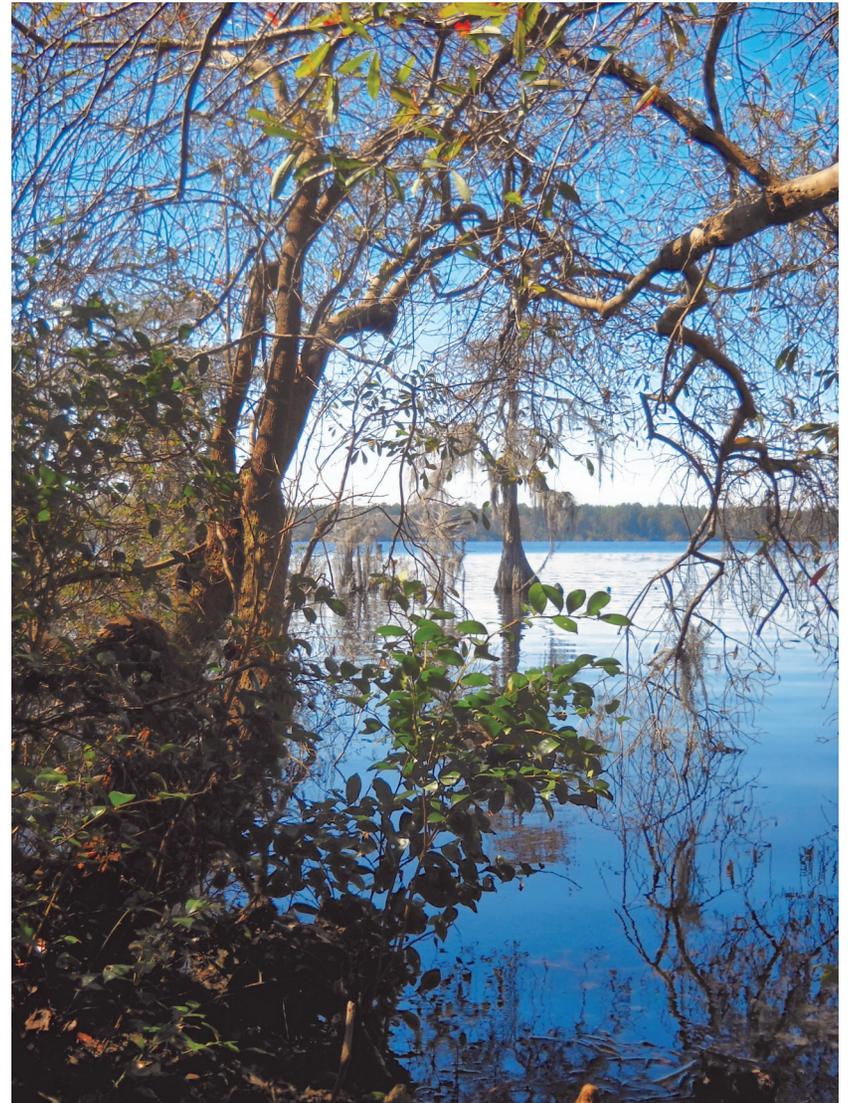
SUNSET IN THE SOUTH

Samantha Long—BCC Student



**FARMER'S SUNSET**

Mallory Long—BCC Student



**PORTAL**

*Bladen Lakes State Forest*

Joshua James—BCC Faculty  
Family Member

## MY BEST DAY

Erica Butler—BCC Student

Choosing one day to hold the title as the best day of my life is difficult. I have found some good, great, and lovely in all my days. During my first semester of college, in the spring of 2013, one day holds one memory of one moment that validated progress. That day, I felt I was changing. That day, I felt that I could change.

Although I don't remember the date, I can remember details of that day vividly. I was halfway through the semester and extremely stressed. I remember thinking that I would fail. My psychology class would start at nine o'clock that morning; I was in the library at eight o'clock to prepare. I nervously watched the clock, in fear that I might be late. Fifteen minutes before class, I started my rushing walk. Without premeditation, my mind slowed down, and my body followed. Exhausted flowers, fighting the abnormally cold weather in attempt to bloom, surrounded me. Students with stressed faces and tired eyes, carrying books and bags, rushed passed me. Wooden picnic tables sat peacefully empty under huge trees. I crossed the small campus bridge, built over a steep ditch. I glimpsed the empty smoky wooden gazebo that served as a designated area for campus crowds and smokers or a sheltered place of isolated serenity. My mind focused on the cracked cement pathways that guided me to building seventeen. The sun warmed my skin, and the wind chilled my exposed arms. My thoughts regressed to a time when I wasn't sure if I had the strength for college. I could remember the sadness, wonder, and doubt that almost detoured my life. My eyes that evaluated the Bladen Community College campus

sign. A million questions started running through my mind.

“Good morning everyone. What's going on?”

My godmother replied, “Hey baby,” in her normal happy voice, but with the look on her face, I could tell something was wrong.

My mother walked over to me and said, “Your grandmother passed away this morning about two hours ago.”

My knees grew weak, and I fell to the ground. In fewer than twenty-four hours, my life had changed forever.

Slowly opening up my eyes, I found myself lying on the couch surrounded by my family. Desperately, I wanted it to be all one nightmare. More than anything, I wanted to see my grandmother one last time. I began crying hysterically. I kept picturing my seeing her in the hospital bed and saying, “Grandma, when you get out of here, we are going to go partying for the New Year.” She would just start laughing and say, “Girl, you are crazy.” My grandmother was my world, and in a matter of a few hours, my world turned upside down.

Lessons from my teachers the next day seemed like foreign languages. I sat in class mostly staring at the blank pages in my notebook. The pages in that book and I seemed to have a lot in common. They were as blank and as empty as my heart. That school day seemed to be the longest of my life. I was ready to go home and take a long nap because sleep seemed to be in hiding the night before.

Lying on the couch wishing for sleep to come to me, I stared at the ceiling. They seemed to have all the answers to my puzzling questions. Shortly, sleep was upon me. I jumped up when I heard my mother's car door close, but this time

## THE NEW YEAR

Chaquetta Bellamy—BCC Student

When I was growing up, family was important to me. I remember going to my grandmother's house, eating Sunday dinners, and laughing and joking with my aunts, uncles, and cousins. The whole family would be there, and when we all got together, there was never a dull moment. My mother always told me I should cherish those who are in my life and appreciate them because tomorrow is not certain. It wasn't until five years ago that I learned the true meaning of that saying.

The New Year had just begun, and a classmate of mine was throwing a party to celebrate. I was anxious to attend because I had been going through a lot at that time. Even from the parking lot, I could hear the stereos blasting Lil Wayne's newest single "Lollipop" featuring Nicki Minaj. Walking into the party, I could feel a weight lifting off my shoulders. I threw all of my worries onto the dance floor. After dancing all night, I left the party feeling better than ever. I'd left all my stress and worries on the dance floor with the streamers from the party.

Turning over and hearing my mother say, "Wake up Quetta. Your godmother is here to see you." kind of puzzled me. It was 5:30 a.m. What possible reason could my godmother have to be here? Stumbling out of bed, I fumbled around on the dark and cold floor, searching for my bedroom shoes. The palms of my hands grew sweaty. A feeling of nervousness was overtaking me as I walked into the living room. Seeing my stepfather, mother, godmother, and little brother all in the living room at 5:45 a.m. was definitely not a good

pushed my thoughts to capture the present moment. My mind settled and my pace slowed ever more as I thought, "I'm here and I'm fighting. I am walking with a point and a purpose. I won't give up because I can't. It's not a decision; it's a destination." On that day, in disbelief, I took a breath in relief. On that day, I felt hope.

## MY BEST DAY

Angel Leon-Bautista—BCC Student

The best day of my life was when I received my first paycheck and I brought it home to my family. I gave it to my father, who was very sick at the time, and I felt very happy and honored to help contribute money to my family because we were going through a rough time since my father was in the final stages of his terminal cancer. My father gave thanks to me with tears coming down his cheeks and told me that he was very happy because I have showed him that I could provide for the family and put food on the table if ever something would happen to him. And at the dinner table that night, we ordered my father's favorite food, a super supreme pizza with jalapenos and a family order of cheese sticks and hot buffalo wings. It's a day that I will always remember because it would be one the few final days that we would celebrate as a family before losing my father to brain cancer on June 17, 2003.

I can almost remember every single detail of that day. I woke up early, ate something, and then started walking to work, which was at a blueberry farm in White Lake. The day was a like any other day, a calm day with a nice breeze blowing, and I was packing and stacking boxes all day. When

lunch time came, I called my mother to ask how my father was doing and then ate a sandwich. I was able to crack some jokes and have a bit of fun with some of my co-workers to release some stress. I went back to work stacking boxes for the remainder of the day. When 5 p.m. came, we started to clean up and started forming a line to pick up our checks. When my turn came up, I was so nervous and anxious to see what I had won that my hands were sweaty. When someone told me how many hours I had worked and start counting the money, my heart was pounding loud. The very first time I got paid, I won 285 dollars! In 2003, that was pretty good, especially to me because I was only thirteen years old. I told my boss thanks and left for the day.

I walked home, and when I got there, I saw my father outside just sitting there looking at the clear sky. I called to him, and he gave me a weak smile. I asked him how he was feeling, and he told me that he was doing well. I told him that I just got paid and that I wanted to give him the money to help out with bills and food. My mother came out, and they both just smiled at me and told me that the money I have earned was mine. I told them that since it was mine, I wanted them to use it for food or paying bills. My father told me to come close, gave a hug, and told me that he loved me very much. I told him that I loved him too and that I would do anything to keep him happy and safe. He then started crying, and hugged me even harder, and told me never to change my attitude and to keep strong no matter what life throws at me.

I gave the money to my parents and went inside to take a shower and watch a bit of television. That night, we ordered pizza and ate together, but for the first time in a long time, we actually were laughing, having a wonderful time, and it just

made me and my brother forget that our father was sick and dying. We finished that night by watching a movie, and then we went to sleep. That was the most emotional and amazing day of my life, and I will keep it with me until the end of my life. That is the best day of my life because I always saw my dad as a hard worker, loving father, great husband, and strong man. And for him to tell me all that he told me was a great feeling. I will always remember that day, the first time I got paid.



## DILIGENCE

Chassidy Jacobs—BCC Student