



On Edge
Blaine Litton
Pen

Issue No. 11
Fall 2022 - Spring 2023



Lake

Mission Statement:

The purpose of the RLC Arts Publication
Lake is to celebrate art in all its forms.

Issue No. 11
Fall 2015 Spring 2016

Rend Lake College

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lesson or surprise the audience.

The play needs to provide a message of some sort to the audience.

In order to save room on paper, the play needs to be formatted with the characters' names all in caps, and to the left of the dialogue. The dialogue should be tabbed over from the names about 5 or so spaces:

JOE: I am having trouble, Jill!

JILL: Really? What kind of trouble, Joe?

JOE: (Sits down with head in hands)
I lost my homework, my car keys, my cell phone, and my dog.

JILL: Yes, I'd say you're having trouble.

Stage directions (what the characters DO during their dialogue) must be set off with parentheses so show they are not spoken.

Questions or submissions (in MS Word) should be sent to:

Tracey Webb

webbt@rlc.edu

683-311, Ext. 129

General Graphic Design Submission Guidelines:

All artwork must arrive at our offices on or before the published deadline. High-res digital image (300 dpi at 8.5 x 10") entries should be sent as JPG, TIF or PDF files preferred. If work is 3 dimensional, photograph the work and submit electronic file.

Each submission must be labeled with "Designer - Title"

All submissions must include in the top right corner of the document (or on a separate cover page/in the body of the email for design piece):

- Designer's name
- Title of the work
- Designer's contact info (email, address, phone)

1. Email your work to Tarantino@rlc.edu

- In the subject line, type your name and the submission's title.
- If you have more than one submission, type your name and "Submissions" in the subject line.
- List all of the titles in the body of the email.

OR

2. Drop off hard copies or CD/DVD of your work in Tarantino mailbox in North Oasis, room 111.

Submission of two works into any one design category. You may enter as many times as you wish.

All forms of Designs are accepted, including but not limited to: posters, logos, ads, mailers, brochures, packaging, architecture, and more.

If you do not follow the submission guidelines, your piece may not be considered for publication.

Fine-Arts Submission Guidelines:

All artwork must be sent to my email (davis@rlc.edu) on or before the published deadline. High-res digital image (300 dpi at 8.5 x 10") entries should be sent as JPG, TIF, or PDF files preferred. If work is 3 dimensional, photograph the work and submit electronic file.

Each submission must be labeled with:

- Artist's name
- Title of the work
- Medium
- Artist's contact info (email, address, phone)

Email your work to davis@rlc.edu

- In the subject line, type your name and the submission's title.
- If you have more than one submission, type your name and "Submissions" in the subject line.
- List all of the titles in the body of the email.

Photography Submissions Guidelines:

Please send digital files to davis@rlc.edu

Each submission must be labeled with:

- Artist's name
- Title of the work
- Medium
- Artist's contact info (email, address, phone)

Email your work to davis@rlc.edu

- In the subject line, type your name and the submission's title.
- If you have more than one submission, type your name and "Submissions" in the subject line.
- List all of the titles in the body of the email.

The journal is under no obligation to accept submissions in a specific category if none are deemed appropriate for a particular issue.





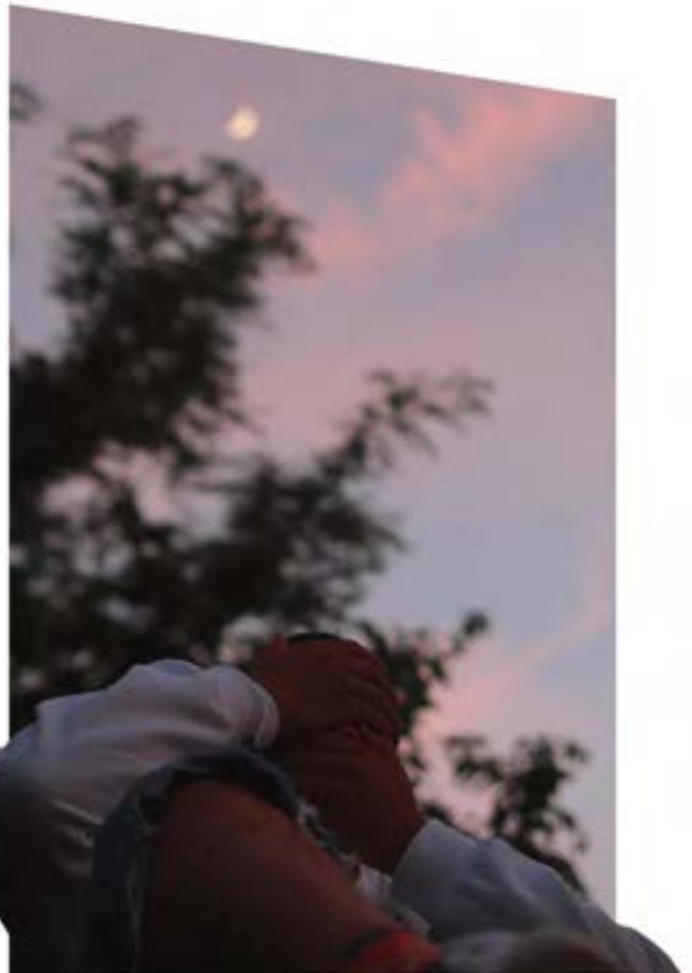
Bandit

Marcus Flanigan
Graphite
2nd Place
Foundation Award



Waves of Color

Kelsey Morris
Stained Glass
Honorable Mention



Poster

Blaine Litton
Photography



Mother of the Stars

Sam Alvereth
Acrylic
Honorable Mention



Bang! High Honor

Natalie Whaley
Mixed Media
6th Place

Distinction

Andrea Douglas
Pen & Ink
1st Place



Brown Sugar Milk

Andrea Douglas
Mixed Media
Honorable Mention



Prescriptions

Chloe Flanigan
Watercolor & Colored Pencil
Alyssa Award

Egg

Andrea Douglas
Stained Glass
Honorable Mention



The Real Thing

Posed like the cool hand man, the sax man swings jazz,
playing round the city streets at night.
In search of the real thing, don't he know it's gone - far out of sight.
Like the bane of the taps of a blind man's cane
the sax trills tap the glass down avenues past
in a search all on its syncopated way.
Inside voyeurs packed tight, orgies of souls search the elusive night,
in a dream scape vision bathed in neon blurred light.
Intoxicating lipstick spread, the tender trap distracts.
A mirage of the real thing beguiles. Tap tap tap - - -
Lost loves' lonesome embrace mimics a charade duet.
Plays the sax man at night. Neophyte,
have you found the real thing yet?

- P. Suess

Sabbath Toys

Each Sunday after services
we children were constrained,
to eat our bread and butter
and, as we had been trained,
to sit in contemplation of
what His blood had bought,
committing to our memory
the goodly things He taught.
Loud voices were forbidden -
it was sinful just to laugh -
impulses over-ridden,
our high spirits cut by half.
Our play clothes were clean
as likewise were our shoes -
the catch was only Sabbath
toys were available for use.
We had a wooden Jonah
and we had a plastic whale,
but an afternoon with Jonah
was sometimes pretty pale...
as for the Ark and animals -
their matching two by two - and
then the rain descended:
How was it that they knew?
As imagined clouds impended
and the Sunday silence grew,
the heavens cracked asunder:
a prophecy come true!

It was a tale of wonder,
and one we loved to tell,
but the story called for thunder
and children must raise hell.

- *Kyle Ingram*



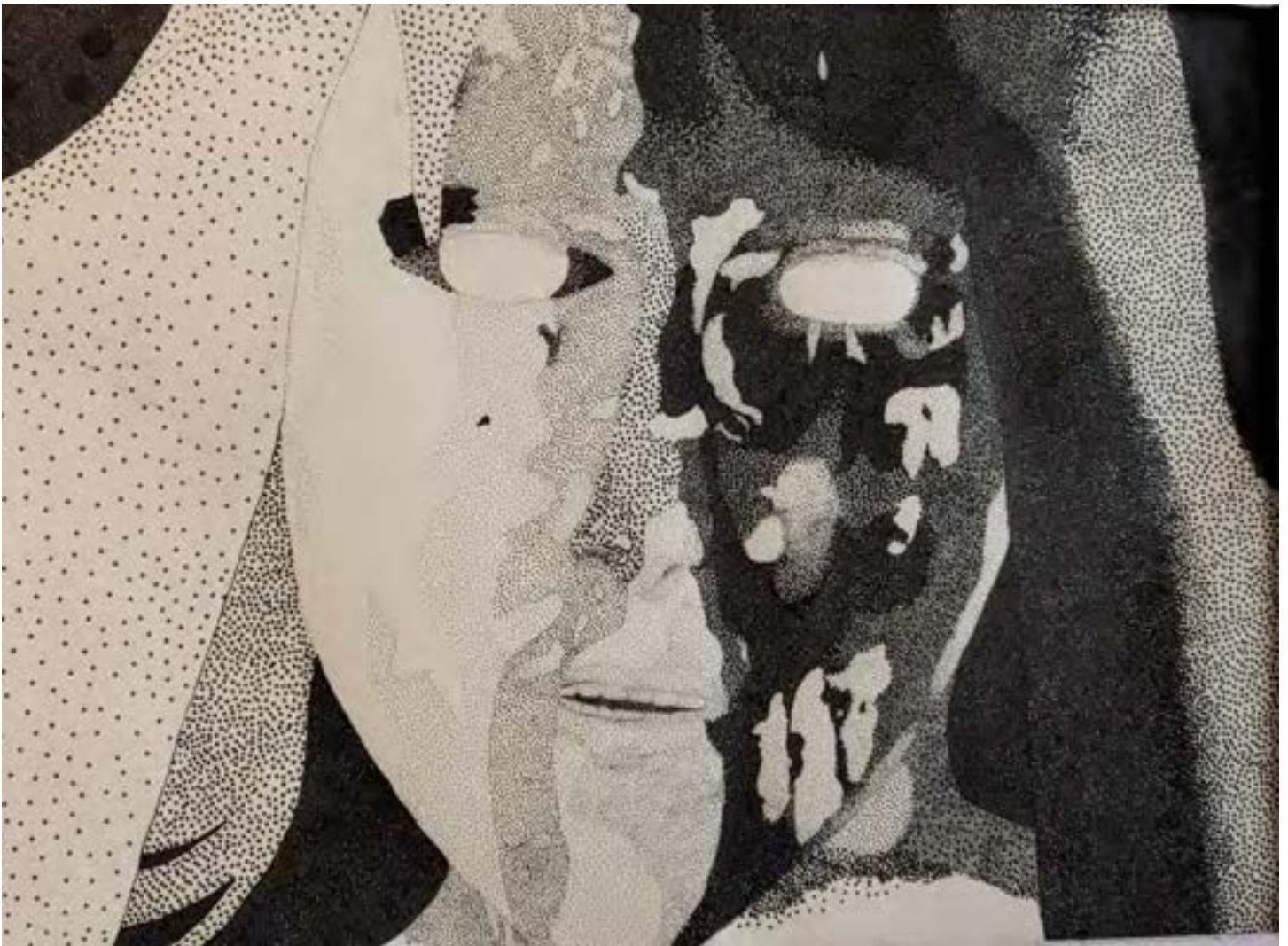
Cherry Treat

Blaine Litton
Graphite & Charcoal
Adam Award

Chronicle

Blaine Litton
Pen





Struggle

Emily Jukes
Pen & Ink
Honorable Mention



Weightless

Blaine Litton
Pen

Dreaming Maiden

Kelsey Morris
Graphite
Honorable Mention

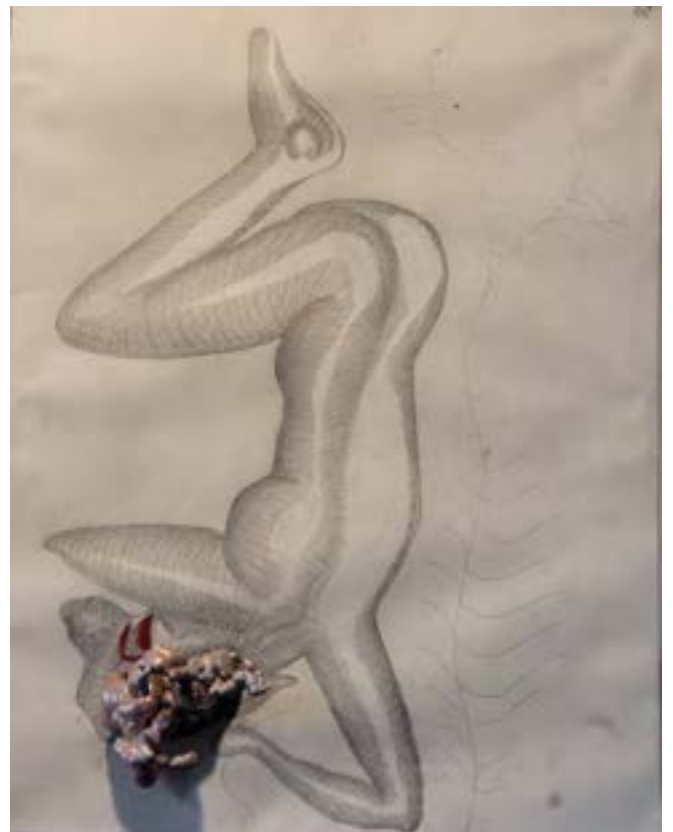


Waking Nightmares

Mikel Scott
Mixed Media
Honorable Mention

holding me by my throat
dangling out your mouth
teeth near-puncture
cartilage and spine hung-over like grapes on a vine
snap pop juice and rip flesh cage
drink the most selfish parts like innocence is wine
and I'm your Ganymede
~cupbearer

- Mikel Scott
Letters to St. Maria, Excerpt



Low Hanging Fruit

Mikel Scott
Graphite & Charcoal
Honorable Mention



I need to ask you this
And I need you to answer me honestly
Not like you have all the answers necessarily but maybe you can help me figure
if I lay it all out in front of you
I can paint the picture, but I can't step back from it
why can't I stop finding ways to break myself?
I don't know how they all feel so sure of themselves,
I feel like a vase failing to hold it's flowers.

- Mikel Scott
Letters to St. Maria, Excerpt



Lloyd

Emily Jukes
Stained Glass
Honorable Mention



Chrysler Wheel

Sam Alvereth
Oil
Best of Show
Claxton Award



Blackhole

Kelsey Morris
Mixed Media, Acrylic
4th Place

Terminus: Central Ohio
by Kyle Ingram

Grander than a stop,
(but a full-stop
nonetheless),
more modern than a depot,
a station on the east/west
route: "You can't go south
from here except on foot.
Make your connections
someplace else". A terminus -
and rightly named - well
beyond resuscitation. The
only current life myself and
a little man in a furred
Russian hat counting money
in a till. I warm a plastic
chair, (I'm good at that),
and watch shrill reruns a
quarter at a time on coin-TV,
my bag, for safety, leaning
like a cat against my knee.

Hung up halfway between one
failure and the next, at a
knot that slows the skein's
unraveling, I pause to rest
and think on pains still
keen, though miles behind,
while future setbacks rush
to coalesce some weeks ahead
at another stop along the
track along which travelers
like me waste their lives
in the belief that there
are ways of turning back.

Those lies are like
the push-button laughs
heard in pre-dawn repeats
of cancelled comedies;
where dead audiences
that won't decay continue

to react to fools
following a script none
can now revise: Trapped
in a rewind loop,
caught in the amber
of perpetual replay of
identical mistakes -
unalterable as genes
for all our sit-com
family traits - the
serial ineptitudes,
the tendencies toward
drink or lust. Lost
en route, but trying
every dead-end passage
along the way,
waiting for a bus.



Some Guys Hanging Out
Carter Crisel
Ink
Instructors' Choice Award

Repose

Blaine Litton
Photography



Remembrance of Solitude

Blaine Litton
Photography





Untitled

Kaitlyn Palmer
Photography

Elegy for a Chest-Style Freezer

by Kyle Ingram

The repairman was no doctor - he had no drug - and holding in his hand the lank and frazzled strands of your worn-out guts, the best he could manage was a shrug. But, if pressed, he would reconstruct your death: how at the end your compressor labored for its breath... You, who loyally contained in perfect permafrost the fuel my own apparatus craved - could not even cry out as your poor motor fried. You could not be saved...

For years we'd been in synchrony - both waking in the night as by a common timer's switch; soundtrack to my sleeplessness and white noise lullaby; your cycle marked the lonely passing of the hours - undercut the emptiness. Our compact was simplicity itself: I paid the power-bills and smiled each night to hear you come awake - our affinity bridged vast taxonomic gulfs: we were mechanisma of a kind.

And if you had a soul, where did it go? Did it expire, or travel back up the wire to that great dynamo named "Ed" - the place where all loosed energy must flow to be reconsolidated into the humming Whole; the grid to which everything that runs by a distant spark is tied - (for energy is never lost, its Return has been prophesied) - like wavering smoke it's tugged back to the bosom of That-Which-Cannot-Be-Unplugged.

Now every silent late night when I wake alone and confused, I will remember that in cooling coil and tangled tubes and entrails, ducts and drain, in convoluted ves-sicle and corkscrew loop, a commonplace but vital ichor boils and starts to circulate... Human or machine, it's much the same: in such miniscule and intimate, clandestine trade slow-turning spirals of eternity are made.



Ghost Call

Kaylee Lemons
Photography



Confounded

Blaine Litton
Pen



Illest

Blaine Litton
Pen & Marker

The Spot

Blaine Litton
Pen



Zero Two and Her Fish

Sam Alvereth
Oil

Diameter of Love

Open arms mean open hearts.
When a heart is open, it attracts change.
It is only when a person correctly opens their arms,
That acceptance happens.

I've dealt with half-baked hugs before.
A person doesn't want to hold too tight, cause rumors might spread
That they love a person who loves "unnaturally".
If a person doesn't accept love, then that means they do not feel loved enough.

I've also dealt with arms so wide it would take me years to traverse them.
If a person holds too many people tight, then some must fall to the ground
In tightly squeezed pieces.
Accepting every love a person comes across must mean they do not feel loved enough.

Acceptance is a tricky calculation.
If a person's arms aren't the perfect diameter for love,
then there is no acceptance or love at all.
And that is a terrible thing, to not have enough love for love.

So measure closely,
correctly,
and double check your diameter of love.
Only then can true acceptance happen, and you will surely feel loved.

-Chase Cariens



Untitled

Kaitlyn Palmer
Oil



The Time we traveled the world

Blaine Litton
Photography

The Kitten in the Dryer

by Clyde Hall

Numb days deadened by the Novocain of deadlines, daily postings, doom scrolling, and researching bottomless rabbit burrows for my 'pending projects'. Projects that, while real enough, remain inconsequential. Reviews of comic books, short stories of fantasy and unworldly ways.

As in my youth, creativity forms a chute that spirits me away from what pains me. When the world deals me lemons, I've always made stories about sourpussed people getting come-uppance in ways satisfying but never confused with reality. Like an escape artist opening mundane chains with words instead of lockpicks. .

In this way, the numb days begat numb weeks, growing ceaselessly into numb years. And still between the daily busywork came unwanted thoughts. Introspection, retrospection, each equally recurring and equally pointless. Worse, the dreams.

"Dad, do you think it would be okay to name her after Grandma?"

"When I asked Grandma that same question about you, sweetheart, she refused to allow it. No one ever pronounced or spelled her name right and she didn't want to inflict it on anyone else. Especially not a newborn baby."

"But I miss Grandma. We could use the shortened version of her name, common and simple to spell. It 'd be like having Grandma with us again."

"You know, I never knew that mom never used the short form herself. When you put it that way, I can't see any harm in it. I miss mom, too. Sure, go ahead."

"But never did you think losing that child would be like losing Grandma all over again, did you, you shortsighted idiot?" the words slipped through my tightened, white-rimmed lips when mental replays of the conversation or the dreams based sharpened it back in focus. Maybe I should have refused. Wouldn't have made a difference, but the hurt also wouldn't have been two-pronged.

I hopscotched through the steps of grief. Backwards, forwards and sideways, in my ugly and ridiculous deck shoes while meantime retaining a positive façade for public consumption. Death is supposed to bring finality, yet with my granddaughter it was only the beginning of her end. Or leastwise my acceptance of it.

For two years after her accident, we watched with prayerful eyes and hopeful hearts for miraculous healing. Then for gradual recovery. Then for microscopic improvement of any kind. Good days without pain became reasons for celebration. And as a modern plague filled the hospitals where she fought on, the silver tether holding her to life thinned and slowly unraveled.

Only when it broke did the full weight of her loss pin me, prone and miserable, beneath

a reality too heavy for escapism. But only momentarily. I was practiced, had perfected the technique at the age of five. Five decades of practice made for a Houdini of denial through avoidance, and avoidance through imagination.

There was a price for this emotional letter of transit, though. Several, if I'm honest. Next of kin becoming arm's length relation being the costliest. Nearly a year later, we all gathered for a special occasion and sang Happy Birthday over her grave. Surreal, sad, but maybe a start at closing the distance once again.

As the first anniversary of her passing approaches, days have grown less numb overall with notable exceptions. Facebook image bombs sometimes slam like a torpedo into my side, offering up an image of her from the before times. Dressed in her Impossible's shirt for the sequel matinee I took her to. Us standing outside church for a selfie. Her Gotcha Day photos.

But laughter has begun being easier, spirals into all-day funk and bad moods fewer and farther. As post-plague 'normal' returns to the world, so does a very altered 'normal' of my day-to-day.

Until the kitten in the dryer brings it all crashing back, fresh and bleeding and ridiculous and poignant. All simultaneous and all maddeningly unavoidable.

An online friend posts a photo of Mr. Cuddles, a small gray kitten with bright eyes who derives his name from his affectionate cuddling with the poster's wife. A wife heartbroken because there was an accident she could have prevented but didn't. While she was loading clothes into their dryer, Mr. Cuddles also slipped into the machine without her seeing. The heat setting was too much for the young cat, and she found him only after the machine cycle was complete. My friend is asking for words of encouragement for his distraught wife.

I serve them up, best as I'm able.

All the while, however, my chest is lead and my pulse pounds. In my mind's eye of stormy rage, I see the kitten tumbling amidst the clothes, offering the comforting scent of his beloved owners, as the heat slowly rises. I hear him mewling pitifully for rescue that doesn't come.

The animal's plight becomes a reversal of my granddaughter's, with her looking back at the safe shore she stepped away from. Her little fingers clutching at thin slivers of the pond's ice sheet that could not support her weight. She gurgles a stifled cry and chokes on the frigid waters enfolding her, searching desperately for help, for a rescue that will not arrive in time.

Around me, the hour grows late yet the sleep will not come as both accidents replay like duel film loops in my head. And the crashing tide of white capped regret and undertow of grief strikes the breaker of my chest as my granddaughter becomes the kitten in the dryer.



Misty

Drucilla McCormick
Rendering
Honorable Mention



Yum

Jacy Crews
Graphite
Purchase Award



Essentials

Blaine Litton
Pen
Honorable Mention



Me or My Twin?

Lindsey Geffers
Cut Paper
Honorable Mention



Martyrs of St. Maria

Mikel Scott
Mixed Media
5th Place



Wrath

Blaine Litton
Pen & Marker



Untitled

Gracie Balakhani
Marker



Cyberpunk

Blaine Litton
Pen & Marker



Sacked

Blaine Litton
Digital Illustration



Abstract

Kaylee Lemons
Photography

The Empty Drawer

by Paul Suess

As twilight waltzed with evening shade,
content in life, my daydreamed gaze
fell cleanly upon an open drawer
I thought was closed— emptied long before.
There it hung, ungainly awkward, partly opened, beckoning to close or open.
Hearing gentle tapping, tapping, rapt my focus to attention
on this unrelenting knocking— was this from the empty drawer?

Annoying with persistent strength, caused within me fearful angst.
Pacing tense and nervous, fraught with anxious dread
felt now as pounding resonant in my head—
Indeed! Is this my conscience manifest
knocking unrepentant evermore
from within an empty drawer?
Or was the handle's gentle tapping caused to happen
by my nervous pacing action on the creaking wooden floor?
Surely this and nothing more. . . .
'Tis but an empty drawer.

The drawer pull dangled with temptation.
Was within my soul damnation?
In trepidation my nerve grew stronger,
bound by fear's restrain no longer.
Yielding to my inner passion,
I surrendered quickly, in quite curious fashion.
My hand trembled, clutching to the cold brass handle, hoping—
with one fearful pull, the drawer slid open.

Then before me, without warning, as a silken flag unfurling,
forgotten fragments of fabric
twirling, upon each branded
a tell-tale thread my life was handed—
spilling out, then swirling, spinning round my parlor floor,
darkened by this phantom flurry, spinning with uncanny fury,
as silken wings of bats in a cauldron swarming,
resounding with my past unfolding, fast surrounding,
spilling content of my life completely from the empty drawer
I thought was closed, emptied long before.

I hearkened to this dreadful omen, praying for the velvet sting
of Morpheus — render clear my haunted conscience!
May he come soon, swiftly calming, placing soothing balm upon me:
He Who Forms my dreams, son of Hypnos, god of sleep—
son of Nyx, goddess of night—
guide me safely through this fearsome plight.

Phantoms from forgotten dreams still haunting,
through the dreary din of night still taunting,
silken flags of fabrics past unfolding,
dreadful nightmares storm the keep emboldened-
swiftly seize my fleeing spirit, once content in fleeting slumber.
Dreaming in the drowsy ether, against this siege I stand alone in wonder
mid-dream amid my demons, there to battle, there to conquer, evermore!

Decrepit mansions uninviting, yet strangely as a venal bribe enticing.
Like beguiling songs of sirens calling, come explore me ---- let me enfold thee.
Dwelling down long-shadowed halls, moldered wardrobes stand foreboding
as formless Golems looming, crippled in stagnant decrepitude,
drifting - bobbing - floating -
like ghost ships moored in earthly harbors,
tethered as the burdened chains of Marley,
by God's fallen angels bound eternally.

Ornate doors hanging darkly, on rusting hinges creaking,
loosely tipping, swinging open, revealing from within
a ghastly vision of the wickedness-things
that haunt this mansion's melancholy prison.
Placed there by forgotten tenants, abandoned by their earthly presence,
inside still hanging musty clothes of former formal essence
hanging stiffly, stiffly swaying, specter-like,
awaiting long dead spirits to return and don them once again.
Stored away and left alone, they sway sadly
as black lace drably draped on widowed shoulders worn too long,
bereft with sorrow's mournful song.
Who were they then that left them here, entombed in lonely reliquaries?

Vines of ivy twisting, pleaching onto Doric columned pedestals-
atop, a broken bust of Bacchus leaning on his laureled crown
toward marble floors still gleaming-soon, will all come crashing down?

Works of art in golden frames, hang the portraits without names.
Rooms full of unending splendor, rich with timeless, precious treasure,
crumble out of reach before me, denied their wealth and former glory-
cloaked in gauzy fog and time, guarded from intrusive minds.
Riches here were lost and plundered- tear my heart, my soul, asunder.
Now well past the waking hours, the coach awaits upon the tower.
A bell rings out the midnight hour-depart me from this nightmare's power!
Fading to ephemeral vapor, fading to transparent paper
Was this a dreadful spectral intrusion, or mere mirrored mercurial illusion?

From a drawer rarely open
dreams hearken to past waves' wonders.
Vacant windows trap time shuttered;
nightmares chase the demons'plunder;
angels fall with envy conquered.
Tales spun on threads unveiled
with no escape from life's travail.
Tale-ends of lofty schisms there still vex me
once upon this drawer, now empty.



Portfolio

Natalie Whaley
Best Portfolio



Small white caption card with illegible text.



Small white caption card with illegible text.



Small white caption card with illegible text.



Small white caption card with illegible text.



Untitled

Gracie Balakhani
Pen & Marker



Untitled

Gracie Balakhani
Pen & Marker



Untitled

Gracie Balakhani
Pen & Marker



Untitled

Gracie Balakhani
Pen & Marker



Peyton

Kaylee Lemons
Digital Illustration



Untitled

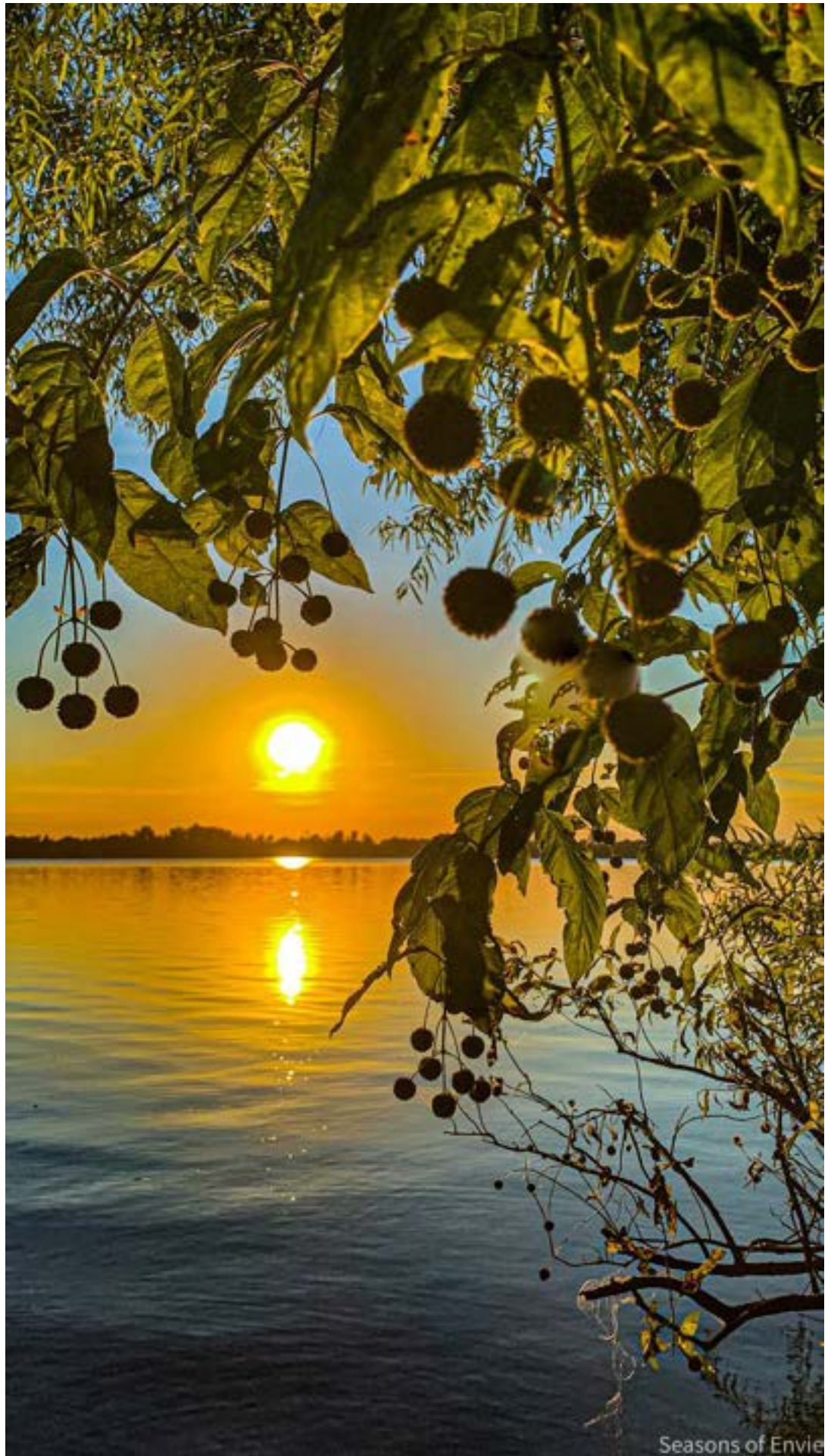
Blaine Litton
Photography



Color My World

Lori Sherwood
Photography

Seasons of Envy



Rend Views

Lori Sherwood
Photography

Seasons of Envie



Chasing Sunsets

Lori Sherwood
Photography

Dog Days of Summer

Lori Sherwood
Photography





Rend Lake Color Splash

Lori Sherwood
Photography

Summer Daze

Lori Sherwood
Photography



Letters to St. Maria

by Mikel Scott

*But St. Maria I fear I am just a fly in the paper
No matter how many times I paint over my bedroom walls-that irritating yellow always bleeds through.
I stare into the dark,
and the black becomes coarse crushed velvet static*

I stood at the sink and I washed my hands with cold water because the hot water burned the places on my
fingertips where I ate my nails and tore my flesh
And then I brushed my teeth, and I scrubbed so well I pushed the gums right off the bone so I could get to the
root
And then I washed my face with cold water

I was just standing with my mother, and she held me and we cried together
I still can't tell her his name

She told me I have a good heart
I hope she's right, but I wonder what I have to show for it

I think I am fundamentally broken
Flower blooming straight from the dirt
Wanting so badly to be pretty
With a bent stem
Swallow up the Earth
Spit out the flem
Malformed like chips in the marble
Smooth them out or cover them but never really fix them

I'm supposed to be loved and love back
But I've had my petals plucked out
Fucked up
And what is a flower with no stem, no petals
Stunted and then eaten alive
And now when I try to bloom I feel sick

Two cameras hidden in the skull of a stranger
He doesn't even know what he looks like
Everything is wrong, he pushes his bangs out of his face
He's supposed to feel warm with every caress but his face goes numb

The only relief found in cold tears rolling down hot cheekbones
Radiate heat like the sun
Everything else is cold but the tears feel nice and his vision is always full of soft static in the background
but it spreads to his ears here
My anatomy teacher told my class to rub our tears into our faces because it might help our skin clear up and I
wanted to be pretty then. I found the idea nice, like experiencing the pain in full would have a silver lining but
I don't think I want to be pretty anymore.
I don't think I want anybody to look at me

I remember laying flat in a bunk bed
I was so scared of the possibility of going to hell
Set right in the heart of a holy place
My mind made shapes out of the static I saw in the dark
I said I wanted to go home and I probably freaked out some of the other kids

I often wonder how different things would be if the church hadn't instilled that terror in me
A kind of disgust with myself that drove me to fill my belly with water hoping I could ignore the hunger pain
As if letting my stomach swallow itself would show God that I was devoted so he would make me like the
other kids

Me and my sister lit a match in the kitchen one time
We panicked because we had never played with fire before, dropping it onto the kitchen tile and stomping it
out

I visited that house recently, kicking in the door and putting my foot straight through the floor on accident.
Walked through those rooms. Bits of my soul trapped in the holes in the walls, sealed under the carpet, lost in
the empty spaces between the cabinets.
I wonder if it would have been better burned down when we dropped the match.

So caught up in the thought of what I look like I could never really enjoy anyone's company
A flower that thrived on validation, forever wilting
forever waiting

It makes me sick to think I could ever want another.
I've always felt that seeking romance for myself was inappropriate,
selfish
How could I ever interact with the pious without drying myself out first.
~religious trauma burrowed in the back of my brain

I feel it
A splitting of my eyes from my form
Just a view, a chopped up edit
I remember work yesterday as a comic strip
don't remember where I was or how I felt when my grandmother's house burned down, just that it felt as if I
had read it in a history book
I do remember being present when I was raped
I think it was the last time I could recreate what my face looks like in my head.
Like my vision was a strip of melting film,
My head swelling and disintegrating in a burning numb blood-heat
anxious pinpricks of angry needles pushing in and pulling at my skin as I ran to clean myself up
After that
just eyes in sunken sockets
~like an outlet with the plastic popped off

I need to ask you this
And I need you to answer me honestly
Not like you have all the answers necessarily but maybe you can help me figure if I lay it all out in front of you
I can paint the picture, but I can't step back from it
why can't I stop finding ways to break myself?
I don't know how they all feel so sure of themselves,
I feel like a vase failing to hold it's flowers.

I ran the water hot
And filled my inkwell with tears
Pouring into the tub again and again
Stirring with hollow bones heat rising and whistling through them

Dipping my toes in and sponging up the inky blue
Slobbery mass plumped and stripped to tight skin wrinkle grips in the water

Crawling out and touching everything as I try to make myself presentable
Rooms of blue prints, smudges
Mess of that navy hue on everything my sight touches
I drag it into a trail that can't be wiped away
~what more can I do to wipe it off?

fuck her for pretending the things she did never happened
and fuck him for saying he would be here for me if I needed him just to disappear off the face of the fucking planet
Fuck him for putting his hands on my throat and telling me no one could hear me
And Fuck him for putting my fingers in his mouth to bite them off
Fuck him for taking my innocence
by breaking my ankles and popping my kneecaps out from my skin like a piece of candy for him suck on
and fuck him for melting my lips and peeling them from my face and fuck him for making me unrecognizable
~I would spit in his face and it would be boiling blood

I remember that I sat in my bathtub and rested my head on a damp towel
Hearing my breaths muffled through my temple
I imagined someone sitting at the side of the tub holding my hand while I bled all over the plastic
I ran some warm water to pull it down the drain
The sound of the running water calmed me down, even as it could never clean off the shame
~the aftermath holds a kind of peace

I remember waking in my mom and dad's bed when I was little
Saturday morning, my sister likely already in the living room watching the shows we would wait to see just on that day.
Mom and dad were already up and somewhere else
I couldn't get out of bed.
Their bedroom closet was always cracked open slightly, wedged by one of my mother's boxes or cases
And I was terrified that something was in there, ready hurt me if I moved
So I had to build up the courage to run past the closet out the bedroom door.
Sometimes it took hours, sometimes a family member would walk past the door and I felt fine to get up.
Often my bladder would be so full by the time I stood that it was painful to walk.
Yesterday I stayed in bed for two hours, dreading the thought of moving my feet to start my day
No longer scared of my closet in the morning, but something still holds me in place
Relaxed face and swollen bladder
~I think I'm scared to live

With longing for some far place in my dreams I have spent my hours gathering soft and luscious drapes for my walls and furniture
I've had spaces designated as my own, but they've never fully been mine
Worried that I was superficial and with a spending problem I stepped in one night and realized I needed this.
I needed to wrap myself in something that made me feel like I'm finally worth something
My bed is no longer simply a place for me to sleep
It is a lavish comfort for me to return for
And my drapes and blankets are the straw in the bird's nest I've finally been allowed to insulate.
~It's not selfish to care for yourself

No amount of apologizing is going to undo, we both know that.
You can't change the past any easier than the tree can redraw it's rings.
I don't want you to feel bad for not being there, for not doing anything.

I want us to learn from each other, and see each other's points of view. Our collective trauma can't just be fixed, but we can be here for each other. That is to say that when we talk you can't take responsibility for everything. I am not the only one who has suffered here.
Atlas would squish under the pressure you have swallowed.
I love you.
~My mother shoulders mountains

holding me by my throat
dangling out your mouth
teeth near-puncture
cartilage and spine hung-over like grapes on a vine
snap pop juice and rip flesh cage
drink the most selfish parts like innocence is wine
and I'm your Ganymede
~cupbearer

I don't remember what I did the next day.
washing machine but no clothes, just bleach
taste for nothing water is all
mental dilute
Convincing myself that I simply made a mistake.
I let something happen that I shouldn't have.
But the thing is He walked me to that room. He made me unbuckle his belt. He pushed my shoulders under the floorboards. He pulled me on top of him.
and I punished myself for being too scared to crawl off.

I have to go first. There's no way around it
I won't have it
Not one second my hands on cold flesh
It has to be me first
And I'm held awake every night thinking about it it has to be me
It has to be me
I have to go first
I can't rest my eyes on closed caskets and condolence baskets
I won't swallow the thought of watching everyone I love die
I feel sick
It's selfish but it doesn't have to be sad it just has to be me first

For the longest time the shapes my body made felt foreign to me
looking at my own arms and legs
I wondered who they belonged to

We used to stand around the kitchen
Leaning on the counter
Talk about a million things
Warm, easy
Cats walking a fluffy traffic
How does such a safe place become the stuff of fucking nightmares

holding me by my throat
dangling out your mouth
teeth near-puncture
cartilage and spine hung-over like grapes on a vine
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drink the most selfish parts like innocence is wine
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~cupbearer

Soft pull from my stomach
Fulcrum
Nauseating sexual desire with that sickly sweet
Lightness in my lungs
Draped over the side of my bed,
Feeling like I'm gonna throw up

My eyes were cast down again,
just how I would do in the halls
But I knew you were looking at me.
Tucking my keys into my pocket,
folding, untucking, pulling my scarf off the console table.
Where are you going?
I know, I know.
And a part of me is sorry for telling you to leave.
But I think I was burying myself.
Cycle of being planted and crawling away from the garden.

I took my gloves off and hopped in the driver's seat, driving so far away without looking back, whispers
licking the asphalt behind me.
When the tank wheezed for rest I unfolded out.

I've looked back and unlaced my scarf from my throat
I watched the wind weave it through the swaying tops of the tall grass
Blurred in my fatigued view of you

Peering a foot above the sill
Tell me love, what do you desire of me?
I find that my shortcomings have made me quiet
worry that I could never be enough for you, regardless of how you take me
silhouette wrong in every curve
mess and malfeasance of household chores
I'm not material to be a father, lover, son

fear that I will never get along
what the hell is well-adjusted
~even when it's good I find my bad

No one could ever see behind my eyes quite like you do
Moonlight through parted curtains
Your arms around me like no one has ever held me before
Right here where I leave my clothes on the floor
~This freedom in vulnerability



Happiness Revealed

Kaitlyn Palmer
Photography



2023 Student Art Show Awards

Purchase Award: [Chosen by RLC President]	Jacy Crews, “Yum”
Best of Show: [Chosen by Judge]	Sam Alvereth, “Chrysler Wheel”
Foundation Award: [Chosen by RLC Foundation]	Marcus Flanigan, “Bandit”
Claxton Award: [Chosen by RLC Foundation]	Sam Alvereth, “Chrysler Wheel”
Adam Award: <i>Best pen or pencil piece</i> [Chosen by RLC Foundation]	Blaine Litton, “Cherry Treat”
Alyssa Award: <i>Most dramatic piece</i> [Chosen by RLC Foundation]	Chloe Flanigan, “Prescriptions”
Best Portfolio: [Chosen by Judge]	Natalie Whaley
Instructors’ Choice Award:	Carter Crisel, “Some Guys Hanging Out”
1st Place:	Andrea Douglas, “Distinction”
2nd Place:	Marcus Flanigan, “Bandit”
3rd Place:	Blaine Litton, “On Edge”
4th Place:	Kelsey Morris, “Black Hole”
5th Place:	Mikel Scott, “Martyrs of St. Maria”
6th Place:	Natalie Whaley, “BANG! High Honor
Honorable Mentions:	Emily Jukes. “Struggle” Lindsey Geffers, “Me or My Twin?” Kelsey Morris, “Waves of Color” Mikel Scott, “Waking Nightmares” Mikel Scott, “Low Hanging Fruit” Drucilla McCormick, “Misty” Andrea Douglas, “Brown Sugar Milk Tea” Emily Jukes, “Lloyd” Andrea Douglas, “Egg” Blaine Litton, “Essentials”

General Submission Information:

Everyone in the Rend Lake College district may submit work.

You keep copyright to your work.

To improve your chances of acceptance:

Carefully follow the specific guidelines relevant to your submission.

- Be original
- Proof carefully and edit
- All Fiction/Poetry/Non-Fiction submissions must be typed /in 12-point type/ in Rich Text Format.

Submission Deadlines:

Submissions entered by the deadline will be eligible for publication in the Spring issue of the magazine.

Note: Check specific Contest Guidelines and Deadlines as these may differ from general submissions.

The magazine is not responsible for submissions that do not reach us for whatever reason. It is advisable for writers to verify that submissions have been received.

Writers whose manuscripts are chosen for publication will be notified by e-mail. Be very certain that your e-mail address is correct on the manuscript.

Fiction/NonFiction Submission Guidelines:

Submit short fiction/nonfiction (2000 words or less).

Nonfiction may take the form of Creative Nonfiction or Critical Essays. Submissions MUST be typed (ds, 12 point, Times New Roman)

You may submit more than one work at a time, but all should total 2000 words or less. Longer submissions will still be read, but the possibility of acceptance may be impacted.

Submissions must be original

Submissions must include your name, address, Warrior Tag # (if you are a current student), e-mail address and approximate word count of the manuscript.

The story or nonfiction essay title and page number must appear on each page of your submission.

Submissions will be accepted both electronically and in hard-copy form.

Electronic Submissions are Preferred.

Hard Copy Submissions:

- Should use standard white paper/black ink
- Should follow the general fiction/nonfiction guidelines above
- Each story or essay must be stapled together

If more than one story or essay is submitted, each of your stories or essays must be individually stapled.

You must provide a cover sheet with the following information:

(Story/Essay titles -- with the word count of each-- your name, address, Warrior Tag number, and e-mail address.)

The cover sheet should be placed on top of the manuscript and all held together with a binder clip.

The manuscript should be delivered to the following addresses:

For Fiction:

Peggy Davis
North Oasis 150
Rend Lake College
Ina, IL 62846

For Nonfiction:

Rebecca Biggs
North Oasis 147
Rend Lake College
Ina, IL 62846

Electronic Submissions:

- Submissions should be in Rich Text format.
- You must provide a cover sheet with the following information:
(Story titles -- with the word count of each-- your name, address,

Warrior Tag number, and e-mail address.

- Follow all relevant guidelines above.
- Send submissions to the following e-mail address:
Fiction: davisp@rlc.edu
Nonfiction: biggs@rlc.edu

Poetry Submission Guidelines:

No limit is placed on the number of poems you may submit, but a good general guideline is three.

No limit is placed on word count.

Submissions must be typed, single-spaced, in 12 point type, using Times New Roman.

Submissions must be original.

Submissions must include your name, address, Warrior Tag # (if you are a current student), e-mail address and approximate word count of the manuscript.

The poem title and page number must appear on each page of your submission.

Submissions will be accepted both electronically and in hard copy form.

Hard Copy Submissions:

- You should use standard white paper/black ink
- If a poem is over one page long, please staple the pages together.

You must provide a cover sheet with the following information:

(Poem titles -- with the word count of each-- your name, address, Warrior Tag number, and e-mail address.)

The cover sheet should be placed on top of the manuscript and all held together with a binder clip.

The manuscript should be delivered to the following address:

Peggy Davis
North Oasis 150
Rend Lake College
Ina, IL 62846

Electronic Submissions:

- Submissions should be in Rich Text format.
- You must provide a cover sheet with the following information
(Story titles -- with the word count of each-- your name, address, Warrior Tag number, and e-mail address.
- Follow all relevant guidelines above.
- Send submissions to the following e-mail address:
davisp@rlc.edu

Playwriting Submission Guidelines:

The play should be short, running 6-8 minutes or so in length.

The play may be a comedy or drama as long as it has a beginning, middle, and ending.

The play needs to follow Aristotle's "Three Unities":

- Unity of time (only a short span of time - no episodes)
- Unity of place (only one setting: a living room or a gymnasium, kitchen, etc.)
- Unity of action (only one plot - multiple plots will complicate the play too much)

There must be a crisis that is happening or has just happened.

All characters need to be named in the script somehow (either they introduce themselves or others identify them) All characters need to be developed and reveal something about their personalities, motivations, etc.

All characters need to serve a purpose.

A twist at the end of the plot is often a neat device that may teach a