

# THE FALL LINE 2010



**Piedmont Virginia Community College**

# **The Fall Line**

**Volume II** ♦ **Spring 2010**



*The Fall Line*: a Fall Line is a natural border between the costal plains and the mountainous region that spans Virginia.

*The Fall Line*, Spring 2010, is the second volume selected, edited, and produced by the PVCC Creative Writing Club.

Katie Ziegler, President  
Jenny Koster, Advisor

Tom Myrtle, poetry and prose editor  
Stephanie Morris, poetry and prose editor

Kevin Ferguson, cover art featuring the Greek mythological character Icarus  
Katie Ziegler, layout and title page photograph of the Blue Ridge Mountains

Special thanks to Beryl Solla for providing an excellent sample of student's art.  
Special thanks to Danielle Johnson for publishing *The Fall Line*.

This year, in addition to our submissions, *The Fall Line* is publishing four essays provided by the college's QEP [Quality Enhancement Plan] Essay Contest.

Rosemary Harkrader's "Water Pistol" was the winner of the QEP Essay Contest.  
Susan Hammond's "The Dinner Party" was the runner-up in the contest.  
April Moeller's "Personal Essay" was the second runner-up in the contest.  
Nalani William's "Enterprise Mississippi" received honorable mention.  
Deborah Poulin's "PVCC Letter" received honorable mention.

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Angela Hancock

# Eulogy

She wanted to be a kite, they'd say,  
With vibrant colors, spreading her wings.  
The fabric stretched taut across the frame,  
Blue, green, red, and yellow.

But my kite would have eyes, she'd say,  
Peering over vast seas of green.  
Her tail as long as the sun's rays,  
And the color of tie-dye.  
The hippies would look up with envy.

I'll go on adventures, she'd say,  
And leave this dreary place behind.  
I'll meet exotic birds and they'll tell me tales.  
They'll put nuts and berries on my back,  
And fly by my side until the sunrise.

Of course she'd meet storms, they'd say,  
And she'd be whipped in the wind,  
And wounded in the rain.  
They'd tell her to come lower,  
To steer clear of great heights.

But I don't mind danger, she'd say,  
Who doesn't long for a little fright?  
She'd laugh down at those whom she left behind,  
The ones who tried to ground her flight.  
I love the wind and the rain, she'd cry,  
Even death could not call her down.



The aim of a value drawing is to create a three-dimensional illusion by focusing on an image's light, shadow, and surface tones. Chilton divided this image into a grid of half inch squares. Each square has a different pattern representing the surface tones from the original photographic image.

Erin Chilton

# Enterprise Mississippi

We were completing the last leg of our trip, crossing the border of Louisiana into Mississippi, the weather mild this particular Sunday. The sun was shining on my face as I lay across the white vinyl back seat of my newly acquired 1977 Ford Thunderbird. Finian was curled up under my legs, letting out a high-pitched squeak every time he yawned or stretched. Pigpen was driving, his black-rimmed prescription goggles tight around his large skull, giving him a look of a muscular raccoon. My boyfriend Zack lolled in the passenger seat wearing his quintessential uniform of a fedora hat and vintage cowboy shirt, cracking jokes to keep us entertained. His music was the reason we were traveling in the first place; and we were on a weeklong mission in the middle of March to play as much music as possible across the southeast. On this particular day, we were leaving our three-day stay in New Orleans and heading north to Knoxville, TN to play our last show and then headed back home to Virginia in the morning.

Fifty miles outside of Louisiana, I was happily relaxing in the back seat of the T-bird, when I heard a loud clunk. I quickly looked out the window and saw a small square piece of black plastic fly out from under the car. The guys in the front seat noticed the noise too and quickly disregarded it. No less than 10 seconds later the car completely shut off.

A 1977 Ford Thunderbird is beast of a car. The big American engine is almost double the size of a Japanese car. From my perspective--as someone who knows nothing about cars--looking under the hood of that beautiful monstrosity was a confusing mess of dirty rubber tubes, rusty screws, and grease. The inner workings of this car created a powerful thunderous roar that no one would ever want to hear silenced while barreling down a busy Mississippi interstate.

Pigpen calmly whipped the huge vintage steering wheel around, guiding what momentum was left in the shiny burgundy corpse onto the off ramp and towards a conveniently-placed, but abandoned, gas station. Luckily, in the vast emptiness surrounding us there was one house one hundred feet away, where an old black man covered in grease hunched over an old truck. Zack walked over to talk to him and ten minutes later I found myself steering the Thunderbird while Zack, Pigpen, and the old man by the name of Robert pushed the Thunderbird next to the dilapidated truck. Robert was obviously a very kind man, but understanding him was difficult due to his mumbled Mississippi accent. Fortunately his wife boisterously came out of the house wearing an animal print sweater with matching animal print sandals. She put out her plump hand and introduced herself as “Miss Mary”.

Hours into watching the guys toiling over the T-bird, Miss Mary offered to take me to some fried chicken. Since the only place to get food was a half hour away, I settled down into the animal print car seat and Miss Mary started telling sad stories: How her family and friends lost their homes in the hurricane and how she lost her brother to a stroke the same week. She told me these things so nonchalantly, it seemed that tragedy was normal to her.

We drove through a little town called Enterprise, which to me was an ironic name for a town that was completely abandoned and torn apart by Hurricane Katrina. I couldn't believe that I was still in America, if I was blindfolded and taken to Enterprise, Mississippi I would have thought I was in a third world country. I wasn't aware of the damage done to Mississippi; most of the damage done to New Orleans came from the levy breaking, not the hurricane itself. Mississippi was hit by the hurricane just east of the eye, which is the worst part of a hurricane with the strongest winds. Miss Mary said she had no choice but to live in the church with many other displaced families for almost a month after Katrina.

When we arrived back at the house, about four other relatives of Miss Mary and Robert were there all working on our car. None of them knew who we were, and yet they were all compelled to help the strangers in need. The problem with the car proved to be very complex and entailed finding a radiator. Robert spent his Sunday making phone calls and driving around looking for a radiator. Finally, just as the sun was setting, the radiator was in place and the car fixed. The only money they asked from us was \$180 for parts. Pigpen later told me it would have cost us more than \$600 at a repair shop.

We had missed our last gig, but we didn't care. We were just happy to get home safely. We all tried not to think of what would have happened without the help of Robert and Miss Mary as we drove away in that Mississippi sunset. An event that could have been a tragedy, turned out to be an eye-opening experience. I felt like I was supposed to meet those wonderful people and get a glimpse into their lives. Despite their tragic circumstances they were helpful and kind. They didn't judge us or ask any questions about our background, they just recognized us as fellow human beings and did what came naturally to them, they helped.



1-5 by Iara Matavelli



Page 10

Crystal B. Lambert

# Posthumously

Sylvia is alone upstairs,  
Braiding ribbons through her hair  
And putting flowers in strategically natural positions.  
Ted, get off your ass and tell her that you need her  
Like I need her. Assia is on the phone, but her voice  
Is distant, and Sylvia's resonates down the stairs like angel.

Sylvia, do you recall that day in the strawberry fields? You were an angel,  
Pink and laughing, sad when I saw you from the upstairs  
Of the barn. I know your secrets from that day: I heard your voice  
Call out in alarm, I saw your hair  
Disheveled and messy. When you catch a glimpse of her,  
You cannot help but cry -- her hands are beautiful in that position.

"Sylvia," he said, "you put me in a fucking awful position."  
You sat, frozen, praying for an angel  
Or a miracle. You thought surely you'd be saved by thinking of her  
Face. In that big house, upstairs,  
You bathe Angelica and smile as you brush her hair.  
You are peace and beauty at the sound of her voice.

Sylvia, I regret that I could never voice  
My true feelings. All I could do was sit each evening, in the same position,  
And watch the light absorb into your hair  
While you carefully boiled our angel-  
Hair pasta. I never followed you upstairs.  
Ted always said, "I cannot stand her

Habits, that Sylvia. The way she changes her  
Voice  
When you come around." I saw your gaze, the way you stared  
At him with nothing but contempt. You had him locked in position.  
You are crying while Angelica  
Sits behind you, runs her fingers through your hair.

When they found you, I ran up the stairs to fix your hair,  
Left you in a delicate position. I never really liked her  
Much -- for me, it was always your voice, my angel.

Kevin Ferguson

# Lonely One

The road I walk is a lonely one  
Where shadows creep and light there's none  
No moon or stars, no bright-lit sun  
The road I walk is a lonely one

The road I walk is a lonely one  
Where friends are gone and life's no fun  
No one can help, no one can come  
For the road I walk is a lonely one

The road I walk is a lonely one  
Where coldness makes my heart go numb  
No feeling's left, not even some  
The road I walk is a lonely one

The road I walk is a lonely one  
Where voices sing and voices hum  
No one knows where they are from  
I fear of what I'll soon become  
Before the end is reached and done  
Of this road I walk, the lonely one



Caitlin Conan

Greg Mika

# Then Silence

Squealing tires on the pavement  
The crash of metal on metal  
Squealing tires on the pavement  
The crash of metal on metal  
The sound of metal on the pavement  
Wrinkled metal hitting earth  
Wrinkled metal hitting trees  
The sound of loud hissing  
Then Silence

Bells ring and horns sound  
Voices yell and boots hit the ground  
A diesel engine roars  
Sirens wail and air horns sound  
Brakes squeal and doors slam  
Voices yell and boots hit the ground  
One young life breathed its last  
Then Silence

A slight moan and the sound of breath  
Voices yell and boots hit the ground  
A slight moan and the sound of breath  
Another young life just holding on  
The whirr of rescue tools and metal crunching  
Voices yell and boots hit the ground  
Doors slam and sirens wail

Brakes squeal and doors slam  
The *whup whup whup* of helicopter blades  
Voices yell and boots hit the ground  
Doors slam and boots hit the ground  
The whup whup whup of helicopter blades  
Then Silence

The ringing of the telephone  
The squeaking of a bed  
The ringing of the telephone  
Feet hit the floor  
Soft voices on the telephone  
The clunk of the receiver  
Soft voices in the air  
The other young life breathed its last  
Then Silence

April Moeller

Runner-up in the QEP Essay Contest

## A Personal Essay

A sense of belonging is something many people take for granted, but I didn't really experience it until I returned to the United States at the age of fifteen, after living overseas for six consecutive years as the daughter of a U.S Foreign Service officer.

My freshman year of high school in Brussels, Belgium ended with a dread of moving; it would be the eighth time in my short fifteen years. But this dread wasn't based on the reluctance to pack up, leave my friends, or go somewhere new; these were familiar feelings, and consequently, much easier to handle. This time it was different. The thought of returning to the United States - my place of birth, but a place to which I felt no real connection - was terrifying. My thoughts were a jumble and my stomach was perpetually knotted. "What if I didn't like it there? How could I possibly call this foreign place my home?" Adding to my frustration, the question, "Are you excited to be going home?" was repeatedly posed. While always responding with a forced smile, I would silently exclaim to myself, "It's not my home, I don't have a home!"

I was also anxious about having to attend a U.S. public high school. I had been accustomed to international schools, where almost everyone knew what it was like to move all the time. I feared that American kids would view me as a foreigner because of my lifestyle or the funny international accent I had acquired through my travels. The dread of being alone, of having no one who could relate to my experiences was overwhelming. A sense of detachment overcame me; I didn't feel comfortable calling myself an American. So, with all these emotions ricocheting inside me, I packed up my life and flew with my family to the United States of America.

Therefore, it was a great surprise, that on the first day of marching band I was surrounded by people introducing themselves and offering to show me around. As soon as they knew that my family and I had just moved from Belgium, everyone wanted to know the rest of the story. I wasn't alone during lunch, I was invited to parties and to the movies, and I was teased as if I'd been around forever. The welcome I received was so warm that I became skeptical of their sincerity. I kept waiting for them to lose interest in "the new girl." But they didn't. The people I met those first two weeks were my best friends throughout the year and continue to be my friends even now that we are thousands of miles apart.

I have truly never felt such a warm welcome upon arriving at any place I have ever lived. Over the course of that year I found lasting friendship and my sense of belonging. I have a place I can call home, and I'm proud to call myself an American.

Edward J. Mattimoe II

## #4

With Laces ties tightly  
And Fingers crossed lightly  
Left thumb on top of right  
Smiles keep you warm at night  
Rosy-cheeked, rosy-hipped  
Fat-lipped, now you're flipped  
Cars, Bars, Men, and Boys  
Life you've traded for some toys  
Get it back, Take a class  
Shake your hips, lose that ass  
We get a prize to come in last  
Smiles fade too damn fast  
Fading in, Panning out  
Hips now sag, lips can't pout  
Greedy smiles turn in flight  
Smiles keep you up at night

Negative Space

by Jessica Roelofs



Susan Hammond

QEP Essay Contest finalist

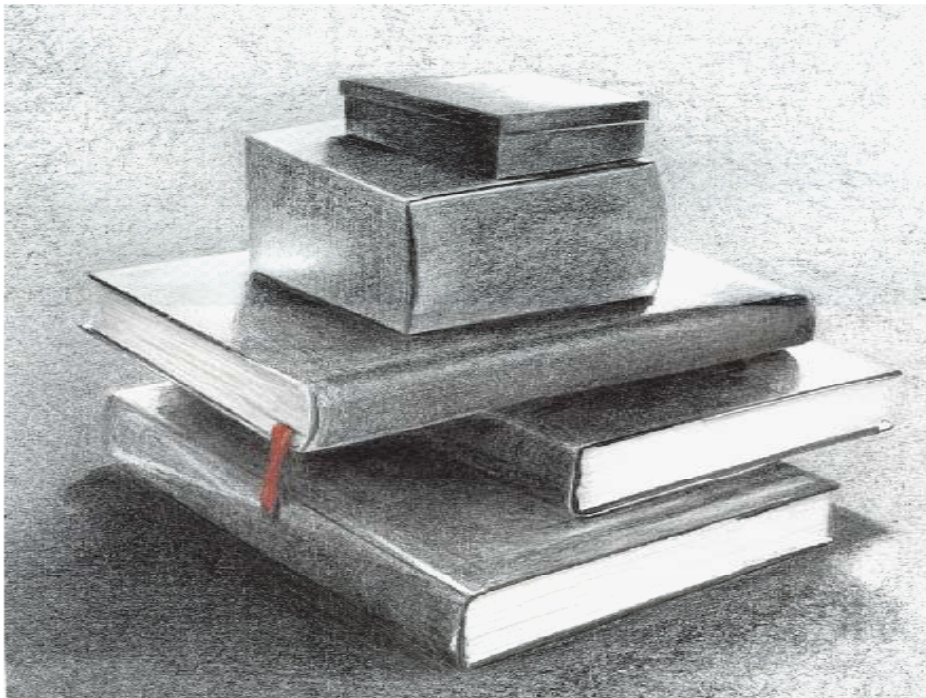
# The Dinner Party

My rich, red rosewood table is set with the finest silverware. It sparkles with twinkling Baccarat crystal glasses and four places are set with delicate white china. There is a bottle of champagne chilling in an ice bucket on the buffet, as I anxiously await the arrival of my dinner guests. Princess Diana is the first to arrive, a vision of elegance in a vintage Christian Dior red silk gown. I offer her a glass of champagne, which she graciously declines. The bell rings again and I am delighted to see James Dean smiling at me through the glass door. The last and most important guest is my teenage son, since this dinner party is especially for him.

We sit down to dinner, and I am relieved to discover that Princess Diana and Mr. Dean seem to like each other, and they chat comfortably together. I signal the caterer to begin serving the first course. My son looks slightly bemused, idly picking at his lobster risotto. He thought it was an unusual request when I asked him to have dinner with two dead people. No doubt he will update his Facebook status later this evening, in an attempt to impress his online friends.

Diana is a charming guest, telling us about her charity work. She seems especially proud of her time spent in Angola, attempting to highlight the daily carnage that occurs around the world because of landmines. She glows with pride as she recounts her experiences, only to break off suddenly and her face clouds over with incredible sadness. With a catch in her voice, she half whispers, "I had so much more to do. I had so many children that needed my help." James Dean looks at her, nods solemnly, and then gently lays his hand upon her forearm. "I know exactly what you mean" he said. "I, too, had so much I wanted to do. I didn't expect to die at twenty-four." They both have tears brimming up in their eyes, but James blinks rapidly to chase his away. Diana lets her tears roll slowly down her sorrowful face, openly mourning the life that was so violently and unexpectedly stolen from her in an instant.

Sadly, it is soon time for our guests to leave. We show them to the front door and watch as they walk to their cars. I look at my young son, fresh faced and handsome. He is on the cusp of such an exciting time in his life. The teenage years are so full of fun, but peppered with important decisions that can change a life irreversibly. Princess Diana climbs into her Mercedes S600 saloon and James gets into his pride and joy – a silver Porsche 550 Spyder. They both turn and look directly at my son as they purposefully put on their seat belts, and he understands what they are telling him to do. Then they both drive off into the cold, black night.



Books by Lali Stums



### **BLIND CONTOUR:**

a line drawing - in this case of a still life - sketched without looking at the paper

A blind contour  
by Hannah Grisko



A blind contour  
by Nalani Williams

Nalani 9/6/11

James Coles

# Furrows of Time

There is a road beyond the black way by the fields  
Heavily traveled by me in my youth  
Farmhands labour, working their ancient fingers to the bone  
Staring listlessly and sadly at me  
I swore never to be like them, caught in time  
Working my fingers to the bone.

In the metropolis I sought a proper education  
To secure a future in the city, not in the sun  
To escape the rustic cycle of my ancestors  
And to hide from the forlorn glances that penetrated me  
In my youth on the road beyond the black way by the fields  
Where farmhands labour, working their fingers to the bone.

One summer, the war came to the East  
Pulled from academia and given a pistol for a pen  
Katyushas and ski teams were all I knew  
Taking a life also takes from oneself  
On the front, I contemplated which was more destructive  
To work your soul or your fingers to the bone.

Peace broke, leaving heroes unemployed and unfulfilled  
Too affected for school and too young for retirement  
Time slowed to a crawl...-- in the beat of a heart  
I was there, along the road beyond the black way  
In the fields, labouring, staring at a bright-eyed youth  
Working my ancient fingers to the bone.

Deborah Poulin

QEP Essay Contest recipient of honorable mention

# PVCC Letter

Dear “I can’t do this”,

August 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, I put my purple suede boots through the annex doors at Piedmont, abandoning my past posture of self doubt and I got my college swagger on. If you witnessed that day, you might have assumed you were seeing a confident, youthful woman in her stride, sporting seriously hot boots. Not likely you’d have guessed that internally, I was emotional wreckage fighting back a full on panic attack with absolutely no self worth to be had. Truth about me goes something like this. Middle aged single mother of four, works 30 hours a week, sleeps rarely, finding Mr. Coffee and under eye concealer, the only two things I can always depend on. My life is really hard and plus or minus details, I imagine yours is too. For more years than I care to admit, I put off my education. I was scared, abused, trapped and hopeless. My fears, as I’d bet yours do, varied from legitimate to downright irrational. What I know now that I didn’t know then, is that fear is wholly unimportant, until it is overcome...

If I denied that my first day wasn’t nerve wracking, I’d be misrepresenting my experience and doing us a disservice. Okay, the droves of kids in crowded hallways totally freaked me out. That literally lasted for all of five minutes, until I realized I wasn’t a sore thumb at all, even with the damn boots. There are enough “mature” students enrolled at PVCC to create a perfect balance to the “youthful”. That is truly one of the things I appreciate most about this college, diversity. The kids bring something unique to my experience by keeping me fresh and awake with their boundless energy. I in turn bring them my wisdom, life experience and enthusiastic encouragement. Already I have witnessed real reflection in the eyes of a peer twenty years my junior because of something I have said. My unexpected college bonus, I dare suggest far more rewarding than beer pong.

The beneficial surprises thus far at PVCC have me eager to experience next semester. Nine short weeks in ITE-119, and Debbie Wenger has cured my irrational fear of computers. Microsoft word, no longer makes me suicidal. In SDV, Annette Williams has offered positive reinforcement and guidance while seeking my true career path, helping me to realize limitations don't exist. And In Ethics 101, Marietta McCarty taught me, my angry voice is not the only voice deserving recognition. All of this gained already, and in an atmosphere as warm and inviting as my family kitchen on Thanksgiving Day.

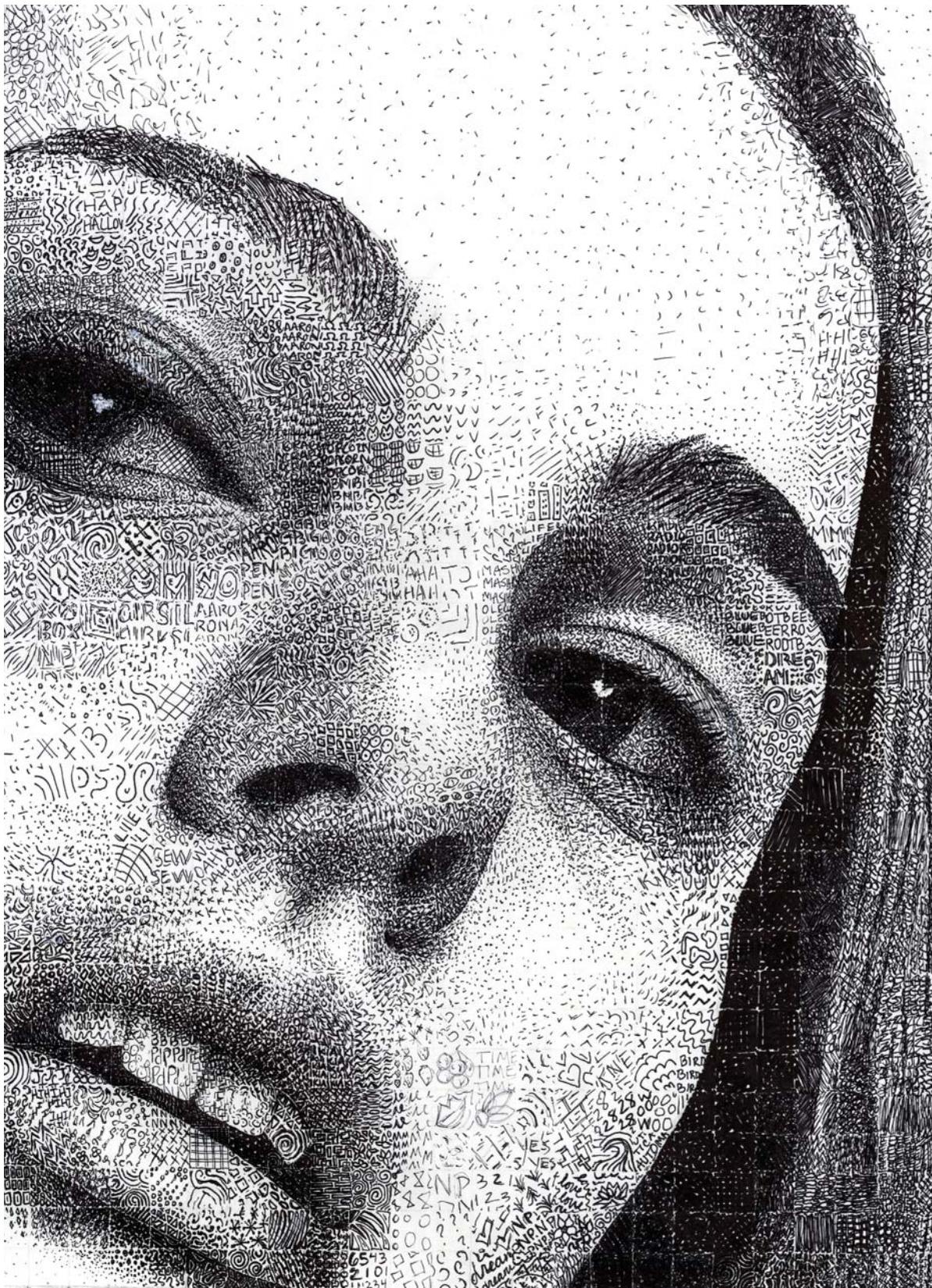
PVCC is the right place to get your foot in the educational door. Especially, if you're in the phase of life requiring good arch support for your practical, comfortable shoes or like me, in your very hot (but very flat) purple suede boots.

If I can do this, you can do this.

Proudly,

Deborah Poulin

P.S. Enroll right now.....



Value Drawing by Jessica Drew

Tom Myrtle

# Coroebus in White

I peer through the peacock's<sup>1</sup> clear, glassy eye,  
And there see a wondrous sight in pure white  
Crystal and sparkling steel, as round they fly,  
Swirling and spinning in circles of light.  
Then next through the eye, I witness on high,  
Someone hurdling to the basin below  
Through the light, airy, azure of the sky,  
As a gold eagle on the wind does flow.  
Would that I could be among the grand throng,  
Whose tumult somersaults down the hills  
And over the hollows like a heroic song,  
Their crescendos chilling the spine with thrills.  
Or that I could fly and twist in the clouds,  
Then alight softly, to delight these crowds.

*Coreobus was the first Olympic champion in 776 BCE*

<sup>1</sup>The peacock is the logo of NBC

Rosemary Harkrader

Winner of the QEP Essay Contest

# Water Pistol

It is impossible to comprehend the vitality of the common nightlight until the bulb blows out and you are left in the dark. When the bulb does blow out, you understand instantly. I understood as I lay petrified under the covers trying to decide which would be better: to live in cowardice or die with courage. I didn't ever expect to take that question so seriously, especially at my young age. But, that's what it came down to: life and death. Since light no longer guarded my room, I feared for my life. I feared the ghouls.

This fear may not have been reasonable. I had no reason to believe that the absence of light would mark the advent of death. I had no solid proof that the murderous ghouls even existed. I had never seen the greasy skin oozing with venom nor smelled the sharp scent of decaying blood and flesh. I had only seen vague forms and shadows in the darkness, and that did not count as solid proof. Nothing was solid proof until an adult agreed with you. Even though my inner senses screamed "Danger, danger!" ghouls did not exist because no adult believed that they existed. Even so, I was not about to believe that these horrific monsters were simply non-existent. Adults could take that approach, but kids could not. It was different for us kids. We were vulnerable and ghouls knew it.

Ghouls were the sort of nightmare that could smell the scent of terror lingering on you and know that your water gun, your only hope, was too far to reach before they would see you move and destroy you. Under rotting hair, glazed eyes snapped through the night and stared hard at my goose pimpled flesh while I considered the water pistol resting on the nightstand. One blast of water and I would be safe. Then, I wondered if I should even consider resisting the plotting of the dangerous ghouls.

"It is too risky," my mind instructed me. "As soon as you move, your hope and life will be eliminated."

“But what virtue is there in cowering before your fears?” my heart demanded. “Surely there is more nobility in facing the enemy with fear checked by courage than in remaining motionless and afraid.” Then, my mind responded with the ultimate question:

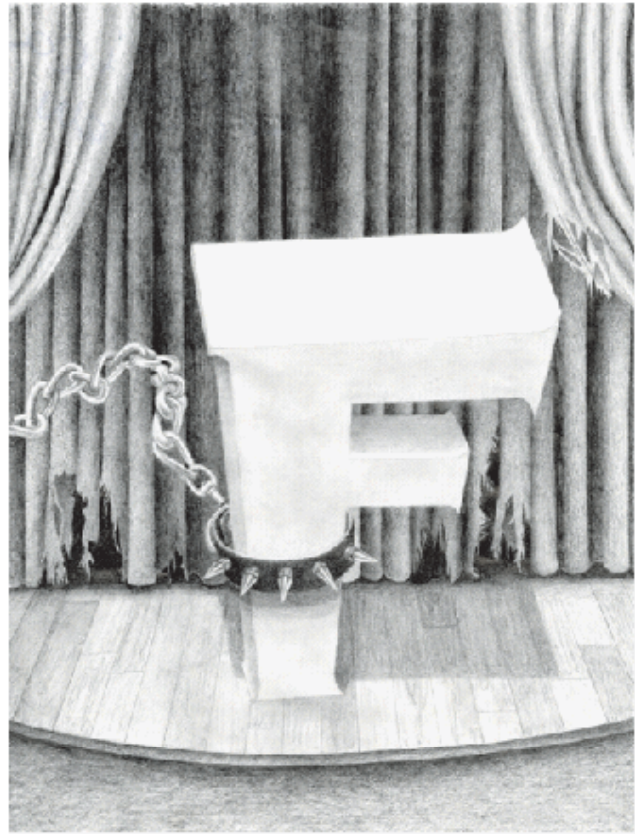
“Which would be better: to live in cowardice or die with courage?” I considered it seriously. Quite seriously, for this was a matter of life and death. But, it was also a matter of nobility.

Spots swarmed my eyes as I strained to see through the darkness. Ten seconds. Twenty. Adrenaline pulsed through my veins and I focused on the water gun waiting on the nightstand. I tensed, then sprang for the pistol.



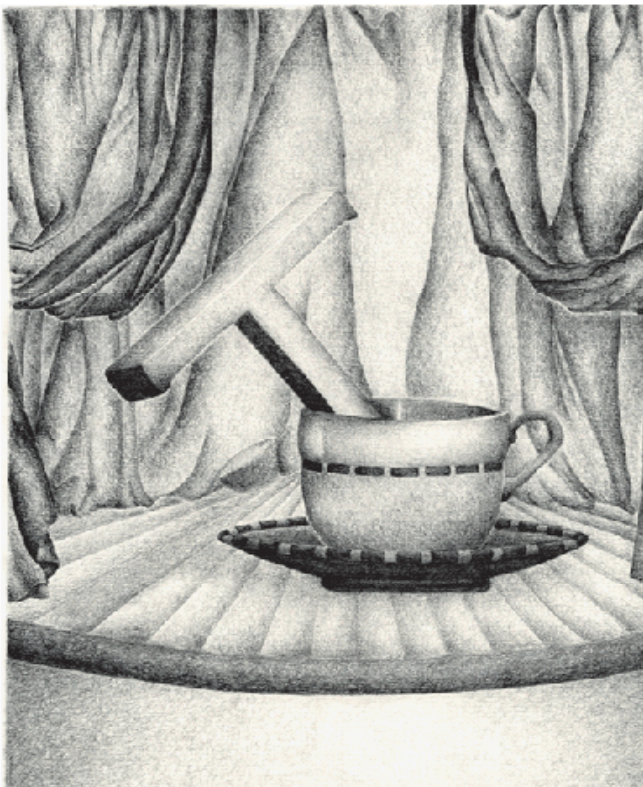
Christine Kidd

Kristen Bingler



Jessica Drew

Jake Tuck



David Ramey

## Granny Smith and My Mamaw

The apple is truly a wonderful fruit. Apples come in many varieties. And each has its own taste, color, size, and use. Some may be too tart for pies, and some are great for just eating out of hand. You can even be the apple of someone's eye. You may be doing work on an Apple.

The apple I grew to love and have a special relationship with was the Granny Smith. When I was a young boy, I lived mainly with my mamaw (my grandmother) until about age seven. There standing so majestically was a huge apple tree at the upper end of the garden. This tree was not to be climbed or abused in any way. Mamaw made sure we were always aware of her presence, and anyone around the apple tree better have a good excuse.

During the summer when the tree was full of lush green foliage, when the apples were appearing on the tree and looking so tasty, I would find a nice round rock to throw up at the tree with the hopes of being rewarded with a nice juicy apple. I could see the larger ones hanging towards the top of the tree, but could not throw my rocks high enough to get the big ones. Sometimes it took several attempts to get the tree to release one of those large, circular, juicy, sweet, and sometimes tart treats. Mamaw sometimes caught me winding up with my rock, and would yell "Rabbit!", I would look, drop my rock, and run for the hills. I knew that when I returned she would tell me for the hundredth time, if I wanted an apple, look on the ground under the tree, and get the ones that have fallen. This noncompliance had gotten me into lots of trouble concerning the delicious fruit hanging out of reach.

The Granny Smith is a great apple for apple sauce and for pie making. I became aware of the many uses early on. I would sit on the porch with my mamaw, mother, and aunts, peeling apples. You have to peel fast, and the peels better be thin—that way you waste very little apple. We would have a contest to see who could peel an apple without the peel tearing. When you were finished, you would have just one long strip of the apple skin. That was usually accomplished by one of the older folks.

I would sit there listening to the women talk about the pies, apple sauce, apple butter and how many of the apples to dry and so on. As everyone would be engaged in gab, I would slowly peel my apple, and, when the timing was right, I would slice a piece off and in my mouth it would go. Then I would turn the fruit over as to hide the sliced area, and continue until I was either caught or the evidence was no more. After all the peeling was done, it was time to cook, dry, and watch the pie making with joy and anticipation.

I knew the following morning and possibly at supper, too, there were going to be fried apples on the table. This was one of those mornings I could not lie in bed. The sweet aroma coming from the kitchen was forcing me out of bed before anyone else. I would make a fast dart to the kitchen, and Mamaw would greet me with plate and fork. I would place a large spoon of apples on my plate, add a few homemade biscuits, and I was one happy young man.

The fried apples possessed a sweet, sugary stickiness that was to be enjoyed as long as my stomach could accommodate. This was a ritual late summer and fall each year. When old man winter set in, we were still enjoying the apple. There would be strings of this sweet fruit hanging on the wall behind the wood stove, which was always warm.

These drying apples were also a problem for me at times. They were somewhat chewy and delicious. You can buy dried apples, and the ones that are packaged are good, but not as good as those that hung on the wall behind the wood stove at Mamaw's. I would never attempt to sneak the ones out of the store, but the hanging ones would always tempt me, and that temptation was far too strong. I was often amazed of how these slices would wrinkle up, look unlike an apple slice, and yet be so tasty. My mamaw would again get the opportunity to instruct me about not taking the apples that were hanging. I would always let her know I looked on the floor behind the stove, and there were no apples to be found. She would smile and tell me about what she wanted to use the drying apples for, and it was usually something I liked more than the hanging apples.

That old apple tree and Mamaw are gone now. After Mamaw left us and I grew up and moved on, there was no one left to enjoy the apples. Perhaps the tree had no more purpose and withered away. A gut feeling tells me Mamaw is still baking somewhere and that wonderful tree is her source of Granny Smith apples. For many years it provided us with a bounty of apples, shade in the summer, and conversation. I still can see it standing so gracefully on the hill near the garden, and if I try hard enough I can still see those large, round, somewhat green with a hint of yellowish hue beauties in the top of the tree, still out of reach. That feeling of Mamaw's presence is more rewarding than throwing the rock in my right hand.



1-5 by Diane Willson



Hilary Mathes

Crystal B. Lambert

# Cousin

one summer you skipped the gap  
and slipped right into thirteen--  
it fit you like an old pair of jeans.  
i hold in my mind the hot nights of july,  
you and i laying under my open window,  
counting grasshopper chirps and the freckles  
poised on the bridge of your nose.  
you spelled out everything 10-year-old  
me could ever need to know,  
like what it means to bleed through your hips  
and the feeling of lips on lips  
why should you ever want to marry.  
my arms grew to match yours, and i  
wished each day that my body would follow suit.  
i did not want to be older, i just wanted to be  
you. once you showed me the scar on your leg  
and you said, "don't you ever think they can  
tell you what to do." i traced it with my finger,  
from your thigh all the way up in curves to your  
hipbone, jutting up like a mountain,  
proclaiming your strength. i imagined myself as  
you, taking the threat of the knife over his  
unyielding desire. i wanted you as my sister.

Cousin | Crystal Lambert

then you were absent for three summers,  
and i started to bleed without you.  
when i had to tell my mother, my face lit up with shame.  
i knew she didn't feel it like you did.  
my legs grew out to match yours,  
but i couldn't remember their shape.  
as soon as i forgot the position of the freckles  
on your face, the phone rang.  
my father held it to his ear for three silent minutes  
before letting it drop  
between the cushions.  
i thought surely my blood would stop cold,  
that i would no longer grow, but remain as  
you would for the rest of my life.  
sixteen.  
it made no sense that i could get that far.  
then 500 miles pass and i am standing  
over your body. i can see keloid mountain ranges  
under the thin cloth of your dress, the look on your face  
when he stopped his car with a lurch,  
leaned over to you. i put my head down,  
adjust the hem of my skirt over my legs.  
and even after that, after they tossed your  
ashes across Maine's frigid coast,  
i could feel you every day, a quick  
pang in my thigh.  
even now, when it's 2 a.m. and the air is cold  
and my sheets are bare  
i can still sometimes smell you in my hair.

# **PVCC LITERARY MAGAZINE**

## **Authors**

**James Coles  
Kevin Ferguson  
Susan Hammond  
Angela Hancock  
Rosemary Harkrader  
Crystal Lambert  
Edward Mattimoe  
Greg Mika  
April Moeller  
Tom Myrtle  
Deborah Poulin  
David Ramey  
Nalani Williams**

## **Artists**

**Kristen Binger  
Erin Chilton  
Caitlin Conan  
Jessica Drew  
Hannah Grisko  
Christine Kidd  
Iara Matavelli  
Hilary Mathes  
Jessica Ritenour  
Jessica Roelofs  
Lali Stams  
Jake Tuck  
Nalani Williams  
Diane Willson**

