POETRY AND ART FROM THE STUDENTS, FACULTY AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITY OF LSU SHREVEPORT
Editor:
Janet Sherwin

Layout and Design Editor:
Shadi Darzeidan

Fund Raising Committee:
Amelia Sanders
Mallory Ford
Lauren Smith
Lela Robichaux

Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Jon Baarsch

For more information about future issues of *Spectra*, including submissions, contact:

Dr. Jon Baarsch
jon.baarsch@lsus.edu

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Cover Photograph by: Janet Sherwin
Cover Design by: Shadi Darzeidan

I often glance backwards. I think that each day provides an opportunity to look at what has already been done so that we can make improvements and adjustments. This edition of *Spectra* has been no different. In last year’s editor’s note, I admitted that I had no idea what I was doing, and when I finished editing *Spectra* last year I was proud, but I felt that it was missing something; it could have been better. I have learnt and grown so much over the past year, and as editor, I am so incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to make those improvements. As with most projects, there are meetings, conversations, and issues that arise and they all seem to dissolve by the time of completion. However, it is important to never forget those things, because it is from that adversity that greatness is born.

Over the past year, there were a number of times that I wondered if I would have enough time for *Spectra*. At times it seems that there is never enough time. But then I think of John Milton, and I wonder “how?”. For those of you who may not know much about Milton, prepare to be enlightened, because, after all, this is my page. Milton had twenty-four hours in each of his days, which just so happens to be the same number of hours that you and I have in a day. Before he wrote the greatest epic in the English language (while blind) he wrote a number of other poems, political essays, was married with children, was Secretary of Foreign Tongues (during Interregnum), and was learned in ten languages. Ten! So, when I am feeling like Bilbo Baggins, “sort of stretched, like butter scraped over too much bread,” I think of Milton and what he did with his twenty-four hour days, and I keep going.

This has been an incredible year, filled with trepidation, which I believe is often at the heart of inspiration. If we stand inside our comfort zones for too long, we run the risk of stagnation. I have had the fortunate opportunity of stepping outside of my own comfort zone on the second floor of Bronson Hall, which led me to meet some truly fascinating individuals. A computer science/English course of all things afforded me the opportunity to meet, work with, and be influenced by some really excellent people whom I doubt I would have otherwise met. The first person I want to mention is my Art and Design Editor, Shadi Darzeidan. I can’t say that I would not have met Shadi (for the past few years, we’ve been existing on opposite sides of a Venn diagram), but the merger of ideas and talents that we’ve shared through this experience has been as Shakespeare would say, ‘such stuff as dreams are made on.’ Shadi’s talent, work ethic, and exceptional professionalism have been instrumental in the production of this journal.

Through Shadi, I met some people from the graphic arts department. I am especially grateful to Jason Mackowiak and Allen Garcie for passing the word along about *Spectra* and for printing additional fliers for their department. I am beyond excitement for having art in this edition, and I thank you both for your
support. I thank my faculty advisor, Dr. Jon Baarsch, who has at times been a reassuring murmur and at other times has been a murmur of another kind. He has shown a great deal of trust, patience, and respect, and he has never questioned my abilities, even when I have. I must also thank Sarah Kennemer. Sarah is the person who reads my ramblings and listens to my lamentations. She is a constant voice of reason and my truly “judicious friend” whose honesty I value above all things. I did not have an editorial staff this year, but I did have something else that I think was equally important, without which the printing of this issue would be impossible, and that is my fundraising committee. I thank you all for your time and efforts. There are so many others who have shown support in various ways and I could probably go on for at least another hundred pages, but now I will simply say, “Thank you!”

I am so proud of our students, our faculty, and our community for supporting the arts by submitting work. It sometimes takes a great deal of courage to send your creations out into the world, hoping that they will be met with love and acceptance. I find that I am surrounded by immensely talented people, and I am glad that Spectra provides a forum for that talent so that the public can see what I see—excellence. It is been an honor and a privilege to serve as editor, and now it is time for me to move on, so it is with a bittersweet smile and a small fragment of a tear that I pass the torch on to the next editor. To my successor, to all future editors and staffs, and to the contributors, I wish you all the best.

Janet Sherwin
Spectra Editor 2014-2015
Amelia Sanders
On Depression

the numbing darkness
suffocating mind and soul
Time’s crippled hostage

breathing once again
though haunted by numbing pain
do not let it in
Dr. Stephen W. Banks

The Pied Piper Returns

Tell the pied piper, the children have all gone
And the little boy blue, has played his last song
The mouse can’t find the clock, the cat has lost the queen
Hickory dickory dock, the time they knew has been

Ashes, ashes, ashes, ashes we all fall down

As childhood fantasies wane, realities form instead
All the beasts are slain, all the dragons are dead
But the rulers in their castle dens, still hold all the keys
Nurseries surround all of them, they’re in search of enemies

Ashes, ashes, ashes, ashes we all fall down

There must be someone out there trying to steal their wealth
But kings and princess don’t fight themselves, they just send someone else
Fantasy stories still come true to guard the prince’s gold
Soldiers they still fight and die like the nursery rhymes of old

Ashes, ashes, ashes, ashes we all fall down

Tell the pied piper where the children have all gone
They followed a fantasy long ago and still they follow on

Dr. Stephen W. Banks

The Sake of Power and Lust

How gentle soars the curving wing
Against the sunlit sky
How softly does the songbird sing
And yet it knows not why

Nature has brought forth many things
On Earth all gathered here
How graceful is the silver fish?
Which, shining like a knife
Knows nothing of the water clear
It swims in all its life

And what of we, wise sapiens?
Filled with knowing pride
Yet ambitious endeavors lead to pain
Where does our sense abide?

We who hurt air, earth and water so
See warnings we do not heed
Where will unknowing nature go?
How will she sow her seed?

Must our very being
Ignore sane learning thus?
And mar the future of all Earthly things
For the sake of power and lust
Brook Boddie

O Harp, Most Beloved

O harp, most beloved from Jubal1 of old,  
Thy power unseen yet powerless not2  
To idle spear and bring to warm from cold,  
To bring metanoia3 lest Saul’s4 heart rot;  
Yet wood and strings alone are impotent5:  
Cecilia’s6 songs from deeper caverns flow;  
Divine melodies from wood are not sent,  
Wood’s an ark7, well-pressed forward by love’s row;  
Pays no mind to old hands and hearts’ desire8;  
Time’s trickery, though, immune to wood’s tears9,  
Sees man’s art, like man, to dust and then fire.  
But harps and harpers will meet again once more,  
Reborn in harmony at heaven’s door10, 11.

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LaTeesha Collins

Shattered

Stones thrown...some going through me like a bullet piercing skin missing what’s important but scarring me within but some stones that were thrown damaged me...shattering my outside cover...pieces scattering onto this cold cold structure of a world and I unravel like pearls on a necklace that didn’t understand their worth...and I battle trying to find the pieces it’s a hassle considering I never put me first...I battle and I fail because nothing is as perfect as it was at birth...and lost and confused you found me drowning in my own sorrow u renounced me as a person capable of being perfect and you searched and searched for the pieces that didn’t emerge...u bleed and hurt from the sharp edges I become but you don’t stop because one day I will be one and I’m one and you look through me seeing the scars from my past but recognizing the potential in my future and as time pass there will be days it will rain and the pain will seep through and reopen past wounds because I’m reminded of what I been through but with you beside me I’m whole you’re the mold that holds together my shattered window.

---

Timothy Keys

The Red Room

Punishment is very severe  
Locking me in this room here  
This place is familiar I know it quite well  
For this is where Uncle once dwelled.

Rattling and noise pierce my ear  
It is my Uncle’s spirit I fear.  
Maybe it is a dream, my mind under a spell  
This room is now an insufferable hell.
Hear My Humble Cry

And I ask, “What must I do to be saved?”
Because everyday I live as a new slave, watching the world stray away from the
promised days that you gave, and I questionably state, “What must I do to be
saved?”

A born sinner of this world,
watching the hypocritical critics critique;
so oblique and opaque,
predicting Your divine love but
displaying Lucifer’s hate.
I can’t fixate!
How can someone so real create things so fake, then take their own life to make a
safe place for them .. and me?

How can you love this . . . us
Take the whip lashes, spits, and cuts
and for what?
Keep a sane mind and a mouthful hush?
I just . . .
can’t handle
can’t fathom
can’t manage
I can’t get over this worldly damage
that You placed me in.

But I know this is not the end; it can’t be.
For You said it yourself, you’re going to return, and that you’ll never leave nor
forsake me, oh, and I thank Thee, but see
I know I’m falling short of your glory, it’s fading.
Please, hear my humble cry, I need saving
from these cravings
of this wicked flesh
my selfishness
these thoughtful messes
I just need your blessings and
forgiveness of my transgressions
the removal of my depressions
Just hear my humble expressions of these confessions that I make.

Please, I’ll do whatever it takes just tell me
what must I do to be saved
by your amazing grace
your warm embrace
and to see your Glorious face
and to enter into those pearly gates
and to live eternally in your Heavenly place.
What must I do to be saved?

I’ll just pray.

Shadi Darzeidan

Twenty-two years

I was born in a small coffin
Twenty-two years ago.
My body was cold and still.
I was never held or touched
Or taught to speak or breathe.
I was left without nourishment
In a box buried deep in the earth.
All other life to be known
Apart from mine
Belonged to the maggots and flies
Who cultured me as the spore my parents
Reflexively dispelled from their home, and
Twenty-two years later,
I outgrew my box and flies.
I sprouted from the earth, and
In my waxing phase,
I bore life anew
Before waning once again,
Retreating to my tomb.
Falling

I never thought of sleep
As a challenge to my intelligence

I lie in bed
My head under pillows
The ceiling fan whirring
My clothes cover the floor
I stop rubbing my eyes
The doorway left open—
Just enough to know the world is running

I enter the ring at 11 p.m.
A no-holds-barred blood bath
The imagery fills me
Crowds cheering, shouting praise
Opponents trade glances
I am thrilled, exhausted,
Bound to the bed with my
Head under pillows, cold
From the fan too harsh, and
The doorway left open
Drowns out my tired distress.
All thoughts come at once, and
I stand my ground, so strong
That I withstand assault
For hours! Resilience
Incarnate, that is me!
I don’t have to beat them.
As long as I stand tall—
I win when I’m awake.
No matter how hard they
Come at me, no matter
Methods or strategies,
If I can stay awake,
I can face all of them.
And I face all of them.
And it’s 4 a.m.
And I have won.
Compass
Anita Widener

Windows
Anita Widener

Old Italy
Elizabeth O’Neal

Zebras
Elizabeth O’Neal
Crazy World
Jessica Ingram

Rapunzel
Elizabeth O’Neal

Our Town
Elizabeth O’Neal
2015 Shreveport-Bossier Addy Award-Bronze

Old Salt
Elizabeth O’Neal
2015 Shreveport-Bossier Addy Award -Bronze
Colours!
Sugary Burns

Masochist
Sugary Burns

The Sorcerer's Apprentice
Sugary Burns

Rainier Rainforest
Janet Sherwin
Angel Albring

Mother, You Are Not Mommy

Reading the works of those women who despised being mommy  
Made me think of you, 
But that’s nothing new. 
I think of you often... Too much... 
And how you hated being mommy, too. 
Is that how you felt holding me? 
Like Sylvia looking at her red tulips that she didn’t want? 
Did I take your breath away with maternal joy? 
Or did I suffocate you, 
Cutting you off from the world? 
We know the answer, you and I 
Don’t let society or my childish hope let you lie, 
Or make you a mom at this stage in life, 
I don’t need you as mommy, anyway, 
And haven’t for a while... 
Or so I say... And will always say, with a smile.

Besides, I am mommy now. 
A real one, though, not the kind in title only. 
I earned that moniker, unlike you... 
Even if it were thrust on me... 
How strange, the differences in how we arrived at being called this ancient term, 
You and I.

You were fourteen 
And chose to have me 
To escape that awful life that your mommy left you in 
As she ran away to live 
Out her dreams, that didn’t include you or any kids. 
And your dreams started with escape by having a child 
That you would later choose to not want 
Because I was just a pawn 
In your twisted game 
That you continue to play.
As I write this, I wonder if I’m like you...
And the baby kicks me, from the womb...
And the baby who isn’t a baby anymore
Lets out a snore from down the hall and behind her door.
The other... so much like me...is also sound asleep
And the third, a boy, also sleeps
A smile on his round face that makes me
Happy

And that’s how I know I am not like you at all
Because if one should cry out from behind their door
Down the hall
I’d heave myself up and waddle to them
No matter how pregnant I may be
Or how swollen my feet.
And when I get there, I’ll lift them into my arms
And they will know... Without a doubt...
That they can call out for me,
Just call for “mommy.”

When was the last time your children gave you a call?
Or spoke to you at all?
It’s been a while, I know.
When was the last time you made them feel like they could count on you?
Never, and that I also know.
And that’s why you don’t deserve to be called “mommy”
No matter that you chose to be one
And exactly why I do deserve it.
I earn it... Daily...
Even if it was a title I didn’t want.

I want it now, and have it, too.
But you do not, will not
And after all you put me through, I suppose that’s a sort of justice
The child who had a mommy who couldn’t be a mother
Has become a mommy to almost four
Hasn’t hit them, left them, starved them, or broken them,
And can’t imagine being less than mommy... Or more...
But I can imagine being more than you.

Jasmine Love

Through Mother Nature’s Eyes

Man stands before me an apparition.
I cannot help my great urge to glare back.
I see not a spirit with contrition,
For a genuine soul is what He lacks.
I sense a deep, pestilent void in Him,
And what a portentous feeling it gives!
I know the perusal He uses never dims,
For He fails to emulate all that lives.
I, for Them, attempt to avouch always
Even when their deeds I expostulate
Or as Their fain heart endures much decay.
Their malefactions darken His realm mate.
And so, on the worldly arras, I tug
Because now I know the dirge must be sung.

Jasmine Love

Unity

Two of the Earth
Met inside a human creation.

Expressions were painted blank.
Voices shifted to symbols.
Eyes morphed into windows.
Emotions lay open.
Heartbeats merged.
Thoughts remain flooded.
Sensation became imagination.

Love, universal.
Location, irrelevant.
Time, inconceivable.
Body, unnecessary.
Soul, connected.

All from the power of electricity.
All from the reach of the World Wide Web.
Oblivion’s Intoxication

I was given a vision-
   The mysterious man spoke of danger,
   “She is the illumination and extinguisher of hope.”
Those words reverberated in my mind incessantly.

Whenever you called upon me I knew I was not living in a realm of illusions.
   With every word we uttered under soft breaths,
   I could feel you, my darling, descending into madness.
I gazed into the future as the Gods weaved the fabric of our destiny together
   Helpless to stop the event that shattered our soul

Under the chrysanthemum sky our fate was absolved as the last petal fell.
Covered by happiness, our frail forms glided together like ink on paper
   Transcending the laws of quantum physics.

   Under the searing smile of the moon I whispered,
      “I will burn into Oblivion to show her how much I truly do care,
      For the tragedy of two hearts beating as one.”

Beth Thompson

Life Tree

We came upon you one spring day
Our journey long and winding
How grand you stood in the month of May
Shading a home we had lost hope of finding
In July you rose to wonder
Your branches bathed in the sun
Beneath you we played and plundered
Games of touchdowns and home runs
When autumn came your colors changed
Into such bold and stunning hues
In September we learned of miracles made
For we were no longer a family of two
As your leaves began to wither
I too felt your loss
November gave way to December
And my heart began to frost
Your leaves were vulnerable to light
As I knelt beside you to pray
A heavenly sight, that starry night
I could finally see my way
Warm air brought new powers
We sought shelter as you braved the storms
But these showers create new flowers
For In April my son was born
Now, our family of three can make memories
To play, to pray, to pass the day
Any month will do
Because we always have and we always will
Wonder at how you grew
Micah Robinson

Quoth the R.....

I sit in the red illuminated dining room alone
Reading my favorite work of Poe, The Raven
Centralizing my practically closed dark blue, dilated eyes on the small tense text
Hoping that I will finish it soon
I must go to bed, I think
I must go to bed
Now the twilight has slowly shivered away as the lucid light struts into stellar space
New nighttime is nourished by the waning moon’s wispy warmth
It is dim
The silence lurches within the room, with the exception of my hostile heartbeat
Beating at an irregular slow rate
Beating fastly
Beating normally
Beating silently
Beating to the point in which I no longer have it in consideration
My breathing however is immensely invading the peace inside the room
Loud, strongly struggling me in my reading
Breathing at an irregular slow rate
Breathing fastly
Breathing normally
Breathing silently
In which I can no longer see my breathing as a conflict
I continue my reading quietly
Until I notice a figure in my large, extravagant diamondplated mirror
Just at this moment, I figure that this trifling figure is following me
Perhaps for certain purposes
A beast of horror, with woeful, wide wicked wings and dreadful violet eyes
A beak of a size that has never before been viewed
A myth of an animal
To escape the drastic dreams of my demise
I start to my bedroom
I look at my austere expression in my reflection
Sadly staring at my own being
Until I notice a figure in my large, extravagant diamondplated mirror
I turn to see nothing
**Destiny Trichelle**

**Attention Whore**

Holier than me
Have stood with
not one look

Attention is false
Forever fading
But it will always be there

As long as
someone is gazing

**Sweet sixteen**

What a fucking joke.

That slimy pink cake being stuffed down my throat.

One for the money. Two for the show.

One more breath and I’ll choke.

Dragged into the frosting. Don’t let go.

Your life is not your own. Too much sugar means you’re too sweet.

Not enough and you’re not good enough to eat.

Just the right Amount and it’s all good.

There will be another slice. But not nearly as good.
Defining My Worth

Once upon a time
My life was a dark hole
I could not escape the cruel regime
Hatred was festering in my soul

It was a never ending ache
Gnawing at my identity
There is too much pressure for me to make
Good grades.. School is not my entity

Each paper I was given and every single exam
Increasing the anxiousness in my spirit
Invading everything I am
Crying out, but no one could hear it

Then it’s over in a flicker
The semester is finally complete
Listen here’s the kicker
I have accomplished this feat

However it means nothing
Those letters do not define me
What counts is that I was learning
That knowledge has set me free.

Anita Widener

Bruegel’s Icarus

Is it just another day
On the brown and crowded shore?
Does the mule in the narrow field
Hear anything odd?
Does the fisherman have a catch?
Do the sheep not startle?
Where rove the shepherd’s eyes—
Towards a bird? A cloud? Your father?
Was it worth it?
Did you see the world from your winding prison walls
In this same crunched perspective—
Narrow edge by narrow edge,
And barely room for beasts or man?
Is it accident that safe and homey shores appear so small,
And skies and seas so vast?
Was it cold? Was it bracing, thrilling, energizing,
To fly among the clouds—
Crystal breaths of ice, storehouses of rain—
Where gods and birds and Pegasus may tread?
Were you drunk with joy to fly so high,
After the claustrophobic horror
Of the half-man monster’s maze?
Why lies the sun so low?
They say you flew too far,
The air too hot,
Your wings clipped by Helios’ flames.
Is it hubris, then, to reach for the horizon?
Anita Widener

Flirting With Fairyland

There’s a price for every wishing well.
Pay a toll, buy a spell.
Fear the rose you’d pluck for Beauty,
For its thorns will pierce you truly.
Seeking a Grail you may lose your soul.
Deep magic bargains can take control.
Still you’ll venture outside of your comfortable door—
Who can resist the lure of more?
The old immortal siren song
Summons you to come along.

If you find a lamp you’ll get your wishes three
No matter what consequence may be.
If you smell hungry glamour of fairies’ food
You’ll sup there in the enchanted wood
And buy charmed pleasures with mortals’ pain.

There’s but a slender chance to halt the clock—
But it’s heaven here between the tick and the tock
And there’s hope to win,
And there’s hells to lose;
And we’ll quest again,
Spite the perils we choose.

Anita Widener

Casting My Silver

I’ve just a touch of glitter and moondust
On my fingertips on the best of days.
I am no Midas to all I see,
I have no Deathwater lure for glory.
Gold have I none, but I have some silver.
I can craft a lovely thing.

I am not reckless in fighting the dark,
And not always patient in my works.
I have some knowledge, but don’t seek it well,
Or as eagerly as some I admire.
But I have a drive to do well tomorrow,
To make it grow greener than today—
And if shadows come stalking I’ll cast my best silver,
Call all my hope to shine for us.

I am no hero, but I have this.

Down the Rabbit Hole
Jessica Ingram
“The Faerie King” or “The Order of the Table Ouvlar”  

By Ryan Sanders

Whilome they liud a mightie faerie king  
Who raynd when Arthur’s princely balls had yet  
To fall, or Launcelot a sward to swyng,  
Or Guinever to bawle. No wight ye met  
So wyse was; _Dispartio_ he was yclept,  
And lyke that worthie British king, he too  
Had table round and warriors adept—  
Well, round-ish, truer be; as for the crewe  
No grail recoverd they, nor ever dragon slewe.

_The Order of the Table Ouvlar_  
That covrtie band was yclept, and oft their lorde  
Wold into grovps them dyuyde and send far  
On qvests to literary londs, where sworde  
Is meeker than pen, and incessaunte horde  
Of uagvely mysspelled words doth ouerwhelme  
The faynt of hart and causse them to be bord  
To death. Few men braue that perilos realme—  
And most haue tayken too many dents to the helme.

And arrownd that elliptical table  
Our heroes, exhastved, gather and feede.  
Wyle _Princess Miltonia_ seeks a stable  
With taller roof to hous her lofty steede,  
And _Dame Ferrynristio_ pays close heede  
To latest gossip strayt from Camelot,  
And all the whyle Ser Sigmund feels the neede  
To put Ser Thomas Wyatt on the spot  
And boldly asks him, “Is the lyte yourdick, or nought?”

ike there is _Filibystero_, the knaue  
At the Siege Garrulovs—that cysed chaire  
Wych, if ye be sufficiently depraved,  
From thy uery lyngs it wote force ovt aire  
And maketh ye talk till uocal choards teare  
And death ouertakes ye. A thousand men  
That seet hath fellen ere that ceorl, on a dare,  
He brashly set his cheekes there; syns then  
His toutng has waggled nonstop, mvch to his chagrin.