

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY- NEWPORT  
LITERARY AND FINE ARTS PUBLICATION

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2023

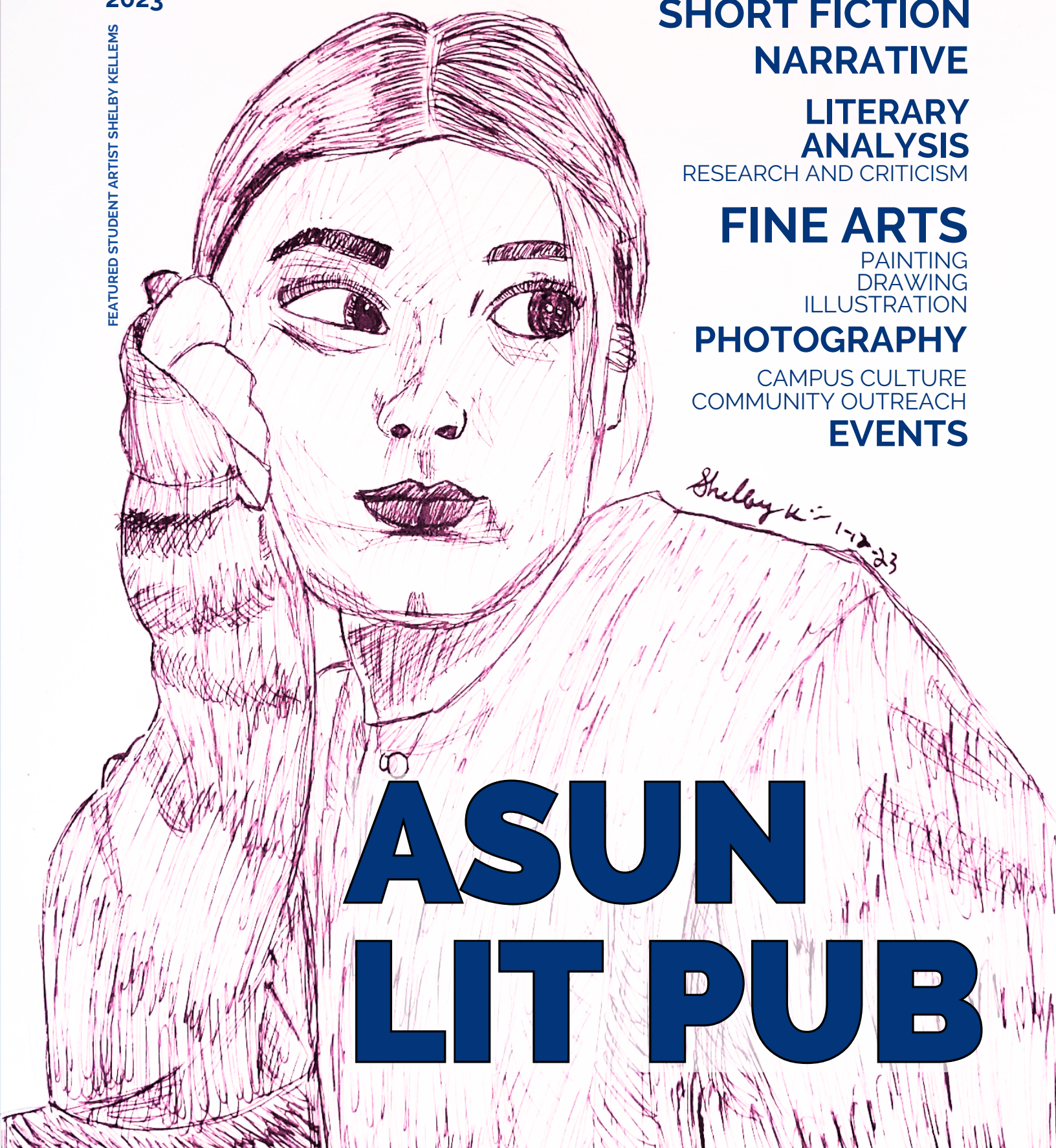
FEATURED STUDENT ARTIST SHELBY KELLEMS

**POETRY**  
CREATIVE WRITING  
**SHORT FICTION**  
**NARRATIVE**

**LITERARY  
ANALYSIS**  
RESEARCH AND CRITICISM

**FINE ARTS**  
PAINTING  
DRAWING  
ILLUSTRATION

**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
CAMPUS CULTURE  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH  
**EVENTS**



**ASUN  
LIT PUB**



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRANDI BOATMAN

# DEDICATION

IN MEMORY OF

CHRISTOPHER MITCHELL



PHOTOGRAPH BY CONNIE CASEBIER  
STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

## COPYRIGHT

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# INTRODUCTION

THIS PUBLICATION INCLUDES WORKS OF POETRY, SHORT FICTION, NARRATIVE, LITERARY ANALYSIS, RESEARCH, AND CRITICISM, AS WELL AS PHOTOGRAPHY, VISUAL ARTS, AND CULTURAL EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITIES OF NEWPORT, JONESBORO, AND MARKED TREE. THIS ISSUE FEATURES ACADEMIC AND CREATIVE SUBMISSIONS CURATED DURING THE SPRING AND FALL SEMESTERS OF 2023 AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT. *ASUN LIT PUB* SHOWCASES THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OUTSTANDING STUDENTS ALONGSIDE THE INSPIRING WORK OF FACULTY, STAFF, FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND OTHER TALENTED ARTISTS, WRITERS, AND MUSICIANS IN THE COMMUNITIES OUR CAMPUSES SERVE.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY PASMORE DOYLE





PHOTOGRAPH BY JAKE EDDINGTON  
DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGER ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

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# ASUN LIT PUB

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PHOTOGRAPH BY CONNIE CASEBIER

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

# F

## ROM THE EDITOR

To our community of readers,

Students at ASU-Newport who are enrolled in the first section of Introduction to Literature of the Western World spend a fair amount of time thinking about heroes. They read and discuss works from antiquity to the Renaissance and consider how the heroes of these stories evoke complicated reactions from readers. They study the ways many stories fit the narrative structure American author, Joseph Campbell called the "monomyth" in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, but they also consider the many limitations of this concept and the contemporary criticism of his research and theory regarding the pattern of storytelling known as the hero's journey.

Literature students appraise the admirable strengths of the heroes whose stories they read while acknowledging each hero's weaknesses and failures. When we come to the end of the reading list, I like to ask students which hero they most admire, which they feel the most sympathy for, and from whose story they can learn the most. Most tend to agree that to earn admiration, a hero must first evoke sympathy in the reader. Even when students despise a hero or abhor his behavior, they become open to know his story once they see the hero himself has suffered. The hero's pain, challenges, and failures are often what give him the chance to grow, and in turn, when students consider each hero's weaknesses and the lessons he has learned on his journey, they see it is the hero's suffering and resilience that invites readers to recognize their own capacities for compassion, integrity, and growth. Students who are working on literary analysis and research papers also engage most with works in which poets, authors, and artists reveal to varying degrees their personal conflicts and suffering. In their creative writing work and narrative essays for composition courses, students evoke sympathy, inspire admiration, and foster a sense of belonging among their classmates when they share the many ways their individual journeys have not been easy. Students in Creative Writing also learn about the hero's journey, and they are encouraged to tell their own stories of adventure, mentorship, trials, failure, and loss that have led them to grow and find the freedom to live better lives.

Among the most rewarding parts of my work at Arkansas State University-Newport is getting to know the stories of students who have arrived from diverse backgrounds to continue their educational journeys here. It is impressive and moving to learn about the challenges they have already overcome and to see them learn, grow, and persevere along the roads of trials they continue to face, gaining more power and freedom each step of the way. I hope you enjoy seeing and reading the work of these outstanding students, as well as the wonderful contributions of ASU-Newport faculty, staff, and community members. Thank you for your readership.

Best wishes,



EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

# STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS



Shelbie Walker is a student at Arkansas State University-Newport pursuing an Associate of Science in Education. Walker plays first and third base positions for the ASUN Aviators Women's Softball team and enjoys reading in her free time. Her essay on heroic strength and weakness in ancient and classical literature is included in the literary analysis, research, and criticism section.



Benjamin Rutledge is a student at Arkansas State University-Newport pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies. Rutledge enjoys reading and literary discussion, and his essay titled, "Four Heroes of Ancient and Classical Literature" is included in the literary analysis, research, and criticism section of this issue.



Gretchen Thomas is a student of Arkansas State University-Newport's Honors College pursuing an Associate of Science in Business. Thomas works as the librarian's assistant on the Newport campus, and she was awarded the Twyford Family Business Scholarship in 2023. Her essay about her mentor, John Twyford, is included in the campus culture section.



Madison Ireland is a student at Arkansas State University-Newport pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies. Her hobbies include photography, reading, and creative writing. Ireland is a recurring contributor to *ASUN Lit Pub* whose photography is featured in this issue.

# STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS



Sklyer Riddle is a student at Arkansas State University-Newport pursuing an Associate of Science in Criminal Justice. Riddle plays third base and catcher positions for the ASUN Aviators Women's Softball team and enjoys reading in her free time. Her poetry analysis essay, "Self-Acceptance in Mary Oliver's 'Wild Geese'" is included in the literary analysis, research, and criticism section of this issue.



Shelby Kellems is a student at Arkansas State University-Newport who earned her certification in welding from ASUN's IGNITE program and is continuing her education by pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies. Kellems is a featured student artist whose work appears on the front cover of this issue and throughout the interior pages. To learn more about Kellems and her work, read the student artist feature included in the fine arts and culture section.



Ashley Douglas is a student at Arkansas State University-Newport pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies. Douglas was a featured student artist whose work appeared on the front cover of the 2022 issue. She is a recurring contributor to *ASUN Lit Pub*, and her artwork is included throughout this issue.



Jady Willie is a student at Arkansas State University-Newport pursuing an Associate of Science in Education. Willie was part of the fall 2023 creative writing class, and her poem titled, "Nature's Eyes" is included in the poetry section of this issue.

# STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS



Ailene P. Adams is a student at Arkansas State University–Newport working to complete the prerequisites for the Traditional Registered Nursing program. She resides in McRory, Arkansas where she works as a certified nursing assistant at Woodruff County Health Center. Her descriptive essay on Frida Kahlo’s *The Two Fridas* is included in the literary analysis, research, and criticism section of this issue.



Jessie Woodard is a student at Arkansas State University–Newport pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies. She was part of the fall 2023 creative writing class, and her poems, “Drums that Enrage the Sun” and “Overload” are included in the poetry section of this issue.



Brandi Boatman is a student of the Arkansas State University–Newport Honors College pursuing an Associate of Applied Science in Surgical Technology. She enjoys spending her free time outdoors hiking, kayaking, and biking. Boatman is also an avid photographer, and her nature and still-life photographs are featured throughout this issue.



Allie Mae Villarreal is a student at Arkansas State University–Newport pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies. Villarreal is a featured student artist, and her artwork appears on the back cover and throughout the interior pages of this issue. To learn more about Villarreal’s work, read the student artist feature in the fine arts and culture section.

# STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS



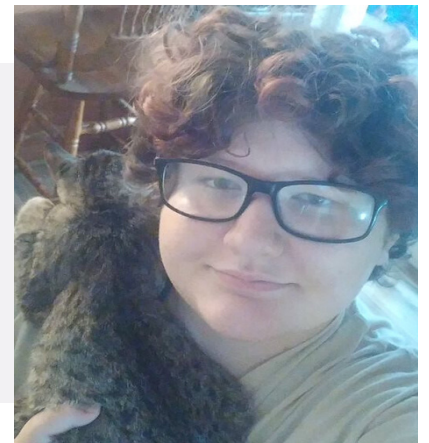
Elizabeth Broadway is a student at Arkansas State University–Newport pursuing an Associate of Applied Science in the Traditional Registered Nursing Program. Broadway resides in Jonesboro, Arkansas where she works as a certified nurse’s assistant at St. Bernard’s Villa, and she aspires to have a career as a forensic nurse. She enjoys reading romance fiction, baking, and spending free time with her family and boyfriend. Broadway’s essay on satire in Sylvia Plath’s “The Applicant” is included in the literary analysis, research, and criticism section.



Elijah Burgess is a student at Arkansas State University–Newport pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies. Burgess is a featured student artist whose illustrations and drawings appear throughout this issue. To learn more about Burgess and his work, read the student artist feature in the fine arts and culture section.

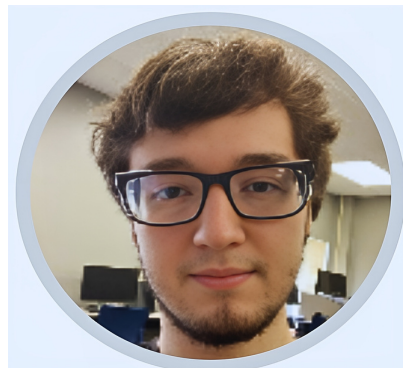


Lucien Cook is a student at Arkansas State University–Newport pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies who plans to continue his education by pursuing a bachelor’s degree in psychology. Cook has been active in student government at ASUN, serving as one of the student ambassadors for the 2022–2023 academic year. He was part of the fall 2023 creative writing class and is a recurring contributor to *ASUN Lit Pub*. Cook’s photography and his poem titled, “Falling Down,” are included in this issue.



Gavin Kiech is a student at Arkansas University–Newport who was awarded his technical certifications in welding from the IGNITE program. He is now continuing his education at ASUN by pursuing an Associate of Applied Science. Kiech enjoys academic and creative writing, and his narrative essay titled, “Firewood and Tea” is included in the short fiction and narrative section of this issue.

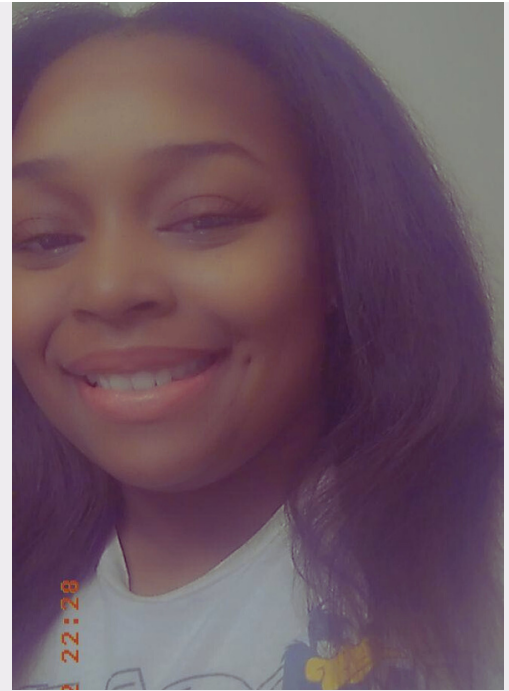
Connie Casebier is a student at Arkansas State University–Newport who was awarded a certification in teaching in the spring of 2023 and is pursuing an Associate of Science in Education Studies. Casebier is a contributing student photographer whose photography appears throughout this issue.



# STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS



Linsey Hendrix is a student at Arkansas State University-Newport pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies. Hendrix enjoys reading and creative writing, and her narrative essay titled, "Jacksonport" is included in the short fiction and narrative section of this issue.



KeY'wana Anders is a student at Arkansas State University-Newport pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies. Anders enjoys reading and writing poetry, and she was part of ASU-Newport's creative writing class in the fall of 2023.

Her two poems titled, "The View" and "What Lies in the Hearts of the Young" are included in the poetry section of this issue.



Merrick Dycus is a student at Arkansas State University-Newport pursuing an Associate of Applied Science in Computer Networking Technology. Dycus was also part of the fall 2023 creative writing class. His short story, "The Station" appears in the short fiction and narrative section, and his poem titled, "Reflective" is included in the poetry section of this issue.



Kenlee Youngblood earned a certificate of proficiency in General Education Studies from Arkansas State University-Newport in the fall of 2023. She is now continuing her education and aspires to have a career as an occupational therapist's assistant. Youngblood is a recurring contributor to *ASUN Lit Pub* who enjoys academic and creative writing. Her poem, "The Mirror" is included in the poetry section of this issue.



# P OETRY

## FEATURED POETS

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT STUDENTS

KEYUANA ANDERS  
LUCIEN COOK  
MERRICK DYCUS  
JADYN WILLIE  
JESSIE WOODARD  
KENLEE YOUNGBLOOD

CHRISTY HEWITT-MANN  
DIRECTOR OF CAREER SERVICES  
ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY PASMORE DOYLE

# THE VIEW

KEYUANA ANDERS

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

To open your eyes as a newborn  
The world is so bright with such colorful hues.  
You look around at everything  
Being pleasing to the eye.  
Not seeing some of its truth.  
You see every color as equal, beautiful, and breathtaking.  
Being so used to the sight of things making sense,  
You have taken it for granted that it has become preposterous.

As life goes on, your perception of sight is different.  
Everything is no longer equal.  
Light is too light, while dark is not dark enough  
Blemished and eye-soreing.  
How you see things is your choice  
how you view them  
Sight can either be dangerous  
through the perceptions of things we have seen  
Or a gift  
how one chooses to view the world.  
Beautiful, colorful, and breathtaking.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRANDI BOATMAN  
STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

# DRUMS THAT ENRAGE THE SUN

JESSIE WOODARD

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

It's one of those usual restless nights.  
*Why can't I sleep?*  
Sleep fails to come  
The mind carries on as if it were a raging sun.  
It denies the request to be ignored.  
It knows there are things to come and more.  
The heart decides to beat like a drum.  
It's as if its job is to help grow that sun.  
There's no refusing it.  
There's everything to think over.  
I'm reminded of how they would say,  
you can be whatever you want to be.  
The response often has changed,  
but the desire to be fulfilled has remained.  
They say you have to be practical.  
That's when they soon became confusing.  
They had said to work toward desire.  
Then expressed that desire as fantastical.  
I entered with this thought of  
*I want to,*  
that had become a *had to.*  
They said to be realistic but find enjoyment.  
Then they said,  
you should already be going somewhere.  
They said everyone goes at their own pace.  
Then they said,  
you should have already made this achievement.  
They said this. They said that.  
I've even heard some say go  
"to the beat of your own drum."  
This drum, however, is sporadic.  
Irritated.  
Agitated.  
Tense.  
Trembling.  
This drum is in fear.  
*Why can't I relax?*  
Perhaps that is why the sun is enraged.



ASHLEY DOUGLAS  
CONTRIBUTING STUDENT ARTIST

# THE MIRROR

KENLEE YOUNGBLOOD

GRADUATE OF ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

What is love  
I cannot be sure  
I do not know it  
I do not feel it  
They tell me I will find it  
You're not looking in the right places, they say  
I will just feel it, they say  
How do I feel something I never knew  
How do I become familiar with a feeling  
that I am taught to be afraid of  
They say love will be hard  
They tell me I will wish I had never known love once I have  
but I will never let it drift, from my grasp  
They say, don't worry, your love won't die  
You won't allow it  
You will burn before your love dies  
I tell them, no  
They disconcertingly demand, yes  
Their faces are marked by confusion and disbelief  
As if they can't fathom why I would say no to Love  
But he will take care of you, they say  
I will take care of myself, I say  
But he will provide for you, they say  
I will provide for myself, I say  
But you will be alone, they say  
I sit in silence  
I wonder, is the fear of loneliness why people love?  
I wonder, will that be my downfall, fear of loneliness?  
Will I let myself burn, to avoid being alone  
But why would I want to be in the company  
of someone, who would let me burn?  
Why would I enjoy the company  
of someone who watches me flinch at my own reflection  
in a broken mirror,  
The mirror he broke  
I tell them no  
I tell them Love is not hard  
I tell them Love is the value of LIFE  
I tell them love is not a placeholder for a lonely heart  
I tell them love is not a dreadful phantom that breaks my mirror  
Love is love  
I will love someone who LOVES me  
I will love someone who builds me up  
I will love someone who smiles at me as I look in the mirror  
The mirror that is clean,  
The mirror that is no longer broken.



BRANDI BOATMAN  
CONTRIBUTING STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER



ASHLEY DOUGLAS  
CONTRIBUTING STUDENT ARTIST

## OVERLOAD

JESSIE WOODARD

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

My ears and I don't always get along.  
They leave me asking,  
why seek that which eventually leads to discomfort?  
I assume that is because there are so many things to seek to hear.  
Beat of drums.  
Chorus of songs.  
A kitten's purr.  
A baby's laugh.  
Smacks of perfect high-fives.  
The rev of an engine.  
My ears seek to hear what satisfies us  
only for the broken tools I call ears to hear too much.  
On my ears' quest to absorb the sounds sought after,  
the rest they are unable to ignore.  
The tip-tap of heels.  
The running AC.  
Chewing.  
Slurping soup.  
Sniffing.  
Buzz of electricity.  
Breathing.  
Stuck with ears that seek to quench their own version of thirst  
despite having just chugged all the water in sight.  
My ears' greed of sound only ever results in my want of silence.

# FOREVER ALONE

CHRISTY HEWITT-MANN

DIRECTOR OF CAREER SERVICES  
ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

I am totally confused, lost in the sea of  
unknowingness.  
Never to know true love again.  
Knowing loss and despair  
Never to know love and trust  
My entire life, and everything I know,  
Never to be mine  
Never to know true love again.  
Always searching for what I can never have.  
Doomed to walk eternally alone in the sea of  
unknowingness.  
My heart, torn from my breast, trying  
to give life where none exists.  
Never to know true love again.  
Forever wondering what might have been.  
Forever knowing it can never be.  
Someone tell me why I must continue  
in this hell you call life.  
Never to know true love again..again...again....



ASHLEY DOUGLAS  
CONTRIBUTING STUDENT ARTIST



MYRA BICE

CONTRIBUTING COMMUNITY PHOTOGRAPHER

# REFLECTIVE

MERRICK DYCUS

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

Shimmering  
cascading  
interloping  
throughout time and space  
Looping a source  
an expression of our being reflected  
out and onto itself.  
A monadic essence  
that illuminates day and night  
Of course, on far distant isles, storms form,  
only another expression  
A muse for itself  
and by itself, a play  
only for those who care to behold.  
A truth of truth, absolute, unwavering  
From source to destination and back again  
An ouroboros of reds, whites, yellows  
Into an infinitesimally small space  
where the metaphysical scoffs  
at concepts of time and matter  
To the observer, a distance infinitely long  
When In fact, it lies inside the tool called mind.  
Reflective

# NATURE'S EYES

JADYN WILLIE

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

Mountain peaks touch sky  
Flowers bloom in vibrant hues  
Sun-kissed meadows sigh



BRANDI BOATMAN  
CONTRIBUTING STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER

# WHAT LIES IN THE HEARTS OF THE YOUNG

KEYUANA ANDERS

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

The distant crying of my siblings starts to fade.  
Before I know it, I doze off  
Just to be startled  
In the need of me, I hear my name being called  
Duties as a young girl oppress me  
with the belief that the needs of everyone become my own.  
Not realizing the duties in the care of my siblings made me selfless.  
The need to make others happy and bending to their needs  
taught by the hands of the young,  
You realize what you wanted never mattered.  
The happiness of others is what you find yourself searching for.  
My inner child screams as I take this selflessness into adulthood.  
I guess, what lies in the hearts of the young never truly dies.



CONNIE CASEBIER  
CONTRIBUTING STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER



BRANDI BOATMAN  
CONTRIBUTING STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER

# FALLING DOWN

LUCIEN COOK

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

The sun wraps me in warmth  
no human could withstand  
Its embrace so pure  
the human mind could never comprehend  
I sit and breathe the fresh autumn air  
My lungs can finally rest  
The leaves above falling down onto my lap  
I know I belong

# CREATIVE WRITING

AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT



*Image Source: Thought Catalog*

## **Course Information**

Introduction to Creative Writing  
Online Course  
3.0 Credit Hours

## **Course ID**

ENG2023 Creative Writing (Online)

Course Description:  
Creative writing instruction and practice  
in poetry, fiction, and screenwriting.

## **Registration**

This 3.0 credit online course may be counted as an  
Approved or Directed Elective on the following degree plans:

**Associate of Arts in General Education Studies**  
**Associate of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences**

## **Instructor**

Emily Pasmore Doyle  
(E Pasmore)  
Assistant Professor of English  
emily\_pasmore@asun.edu

## **Advising Services**

advising@asun.edu

*For help with registration, please contact the instructor or your academic advisor.*

# ASU-NEWPORT ARTISTS AND WRITERS



## ASUN LIT PUB

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT LITERARY AND FINE ARTS PUBLICATION  
SPECIAL EXPANDED ISSUE

FEATURED COMMUNITY ARTIST: BEAU JONES



POETRY  
SHORT FICTION  
NARRATIVE  
LITERARY ANALYSIS  
RESEARCH AND CRITICISM

VISUAL ARTS  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
CAMPUS CULTURE  
LOCAL MUSIC  
EVENTS

STUDENT TALENT AND COMMUNITY ARTS

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

POETRY

FICTION

NARRATIVE

ACADEMIC WRITING

PHOTOGRAPHY

PAINTING

DRAWING

ILLUSTRATIONS

COMICS

DIGITAL ART

MUSIC



**STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
ARE INVITED TO SEND SUBMISSIONS TO:**

**ASUNLITPUB@ASUN.EDU**



ALLIE VILLARREAL

FEATURED STUDENT ARTIST OF ASU-NEWPORT

*S*HORT FICTION AND NARRATIVE

FEATURED STUDENT AUTHORS

MERRICK DYCUS  
LINSEY HENDRIX  
GAVIN KIECH

# THE STATION

MERRICK DYCUS

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

A yellow full moon in its brilliant luster hangs against the firmament unguarded by stars and peeks out from behind a waterless cloud. A free station sits to the right of a conveyor that stretches far in both directions disappearing into the distance, heading toward a light whose origins are only barely visible to the naked eye. Figures of red, white, and blue stretch out like witch fingers, sinking their nails into the night sky. The colors juxtapose the gray of the conveyor in what seems like an endless sea of black separated only by fields of corn that lie on either side and stretch for miles in perfect rows. All along the road, tall grass grows in deep ditches that whip to and fro on the wind, only to be disturbed by a red truck that speeds past kicking up rocks that clink off the undercarriage like moths to a porch lamp.

The moon, now fully unveiled and left naked by the dry clouds that had once entangled it, casts an ethereal glow on the rows that expand in all directions, revealing the intricate patterns of shadows and highlights cast by their stalks. The air carries a faint scent of earth and dried husks, a testament to the agricultural expanse of the place.

The truck continues to speed down the road. The sounds of the truck's constant churning and bucking sends out roars that echo into the field like a chorus of elephant shouts that seem so alien out in this expanse. The truck narrowly makes its way around the next corner and skids into the ditch only to narrowly grind its back heels to kick itself back up onto the conveyor and down the road. A man peers out from the truck's cabin through windows smudged with dirt and mud. He has long, greasy hair and chops that lead down to a mustache that connects over his skinny upper lip. He breathes heavily and darts his dull eyes back and forth allowing himself to take in the depth of the road. They are searching for something up ahead. The flicker of a lone lamppost and sign comes into view, standing sentinel over the intersection. The red truck takes a gentle curve to the right continuing to an old farmhouse nestled among the fields. Its weathered façade tells tales of struggles bestowed onto future generations. Graffiti of crude words cover the outer wall that connects the garage. A singular orange light glows from a cracked window onto the weeds that cover the front lawn. The hue from the dilapidated screen is only stopped by the dark bark of a trail tree upon which dead lichen marks up and down like boils on a leper's legs. The truck speeds past, continuing to kick up soil, leaving behind a trail of dust and debris.

The man's dull eyes find what they've been searching for, a turn hidden between corn stalks. A lone weed pokes out from a drain that lies in the ditch beside this concealed strip of dirt that leads into this dark corridor. The man begins to turn the wheel and eases the red wedge into the narrow space and continues to a large opening. The red truck careens to a stop, its wheels lurching forward. The red truck idles. Inside, the man scrounges around the disheveled cabin. He searches the floorboard, moving old cups and bags out of the way, to no avail. The man opens the dash and looks for his prize. He spots it as it glimmers under the light of the moon through the front window. He pinches the small object and plants it in his hand. The orb wobbles, catching the light and reflecting it ever so slightly back at his own face. He allows the orb to fall back into the curve of his hand. He clutches it and reaches for the cabin door. He grasps the lever, pushing open the door and firmly planting his boot upon the dark soil and weeds that litter the open area. He closes the door with his free hand cupping the orb in his palm. He walks in lockstep, trying to keep track of where his feet are, his every step calculated. He watches his palm and cups one hand over the other. He walks up to the edge of the clearing and stares into the darkness. He bends down allowing his knees to stabilize him. He places the orb on the ground, proceeding to create a circle in the dirt with his finger followed by a much larger circle that encompasses the former. He bends down again, this time introducing his knees to the soft dirt in a position of prayer.



PHOTOGRAPH BY TRACI BURGESS  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY  
ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

The man gazes into the distance, his vision somewhat obscured by the tall monoliths bathed in a bluish hue. The monoliths, tall and standing upright, are soon swayed by something. His eyes are fixed on a lone dark crevice between a patch of stalks. A shape begins to emerge from the pool of dark. In between the section of corn stalks, a creature pokes out its head. The creature in the glow of the headlights is dark green with a smaller frame, but its eyes are huge and encompassed by black lenses that reflect the light in a chromatic menagerie. The eyes are sunken under two huge horn-like appendages that twitch. The sight upsets something primal within him.

"Howdy!" the man stammers out. "I brought this. I'm here to make a trade with your people." The creature walks on four legs, but its abdomen is upright and uncannily humanish. The creature's arms and hands are almost like those of a praying mantis. The creature waddles its way over to the man and picks up the orb. Gliding the calcemic sphere between its spindly fingers, the creature observes the orb and then pockets it into the hide pouch that dangles around its throat.

Lifting its arm, the creature touches the man's face and allows a strange glow to stretch from what would be its wrist all the way to the tips of its fingers. The organic green glow reaches the man's temples, and he sees an image of a gas station linoleum floor. On the floor lies a Powerball ticket with numbers the man recognizes but cannot place. He can feel his temples being squeezed and compressed. The artificial light from the image becomes too much to bear, and he falls away from the creature's grasp.

The man rubs his temples with the palms of his hands. The man looks the creature in the eye and gives it a farewell nod and a smile as it backs up and retreats into the opening whence it came. The man rises from his knees, and not looking back, he sways over to the truck and opens the door. With his hand on the steering wheel, he sits back to rest against the seat. With a sigh of relief and confusion, he puts the truck in reverse, gently gliding it back out of the lone patch of earth, and heads back to town.

# JACKSONPORT

LINSEY HENDRIX

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

Jacksonport was not so gloomy growing up. I never noticed the small population or the lack of things to do. In my little mind, I had two neighbors: a long river and a sun-bleached park. Every sweaty summer weekend, there was a trip down to the river. Running down the hill, not noticing the summer breeze in my hair, nor the copper rocks and white shells splintering my feet, nothing mattered if I got to the river first. I loved the feeling of the cool, sandy water hitting my eyelids as I dove in face-first. I never opened my eyes, so the sand would not enter and make my day terrible. My only real problem was going too far out and getting swept in by the vicious current and meeting the scaly green river monster face to face. I could only imagine the monster so big that it would swallow me whole, and I would die when I hit the stomach acid. Other than the fears of an eight-year-old, times were fun in the small town, the river, and the park.

At the park, the rusty ladders going up to the top of the pink slide would send a powerful blue bolt of lightning through me at the very end. When I ran, the brown pebbles would somehow sneak into my purple and white tennis shoes like they were on a mission to destroy my heels. Being younger, full of energy and imagination, the monkey bars were where my mind went back to the dark, sandy river. I was hanging by a tightrope, and the monster was right underneath me, chopping its jaws loudly and aggressively. If I slipped from the fringy tightrope, it would be a fall straight to my death, and if I did not, I could get ice cream after dinner.



PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCIEN COOK  
STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

My backyard was a whole other adventure with black and white speckled chickens running wild, a hammock on its last strings, a mountain of sand covered with fire ants, a bungee trampoline, and a bright blue swimming pool. The swimming pool was my favorite adventure in the grassy backyard mainly because I had learned to swim at the age of two without floaties, and my older sister was still trying to learn how to swim underwater. The pool had no scaly monsters trying to eat me, only purple sparkly-tailed mermaids with long, dark hair and seaweed tops. Pearl necklaces hung from their tan necks, seashell rings adorned their fingers, and they laughed as their dolphin friends roamed the pool.

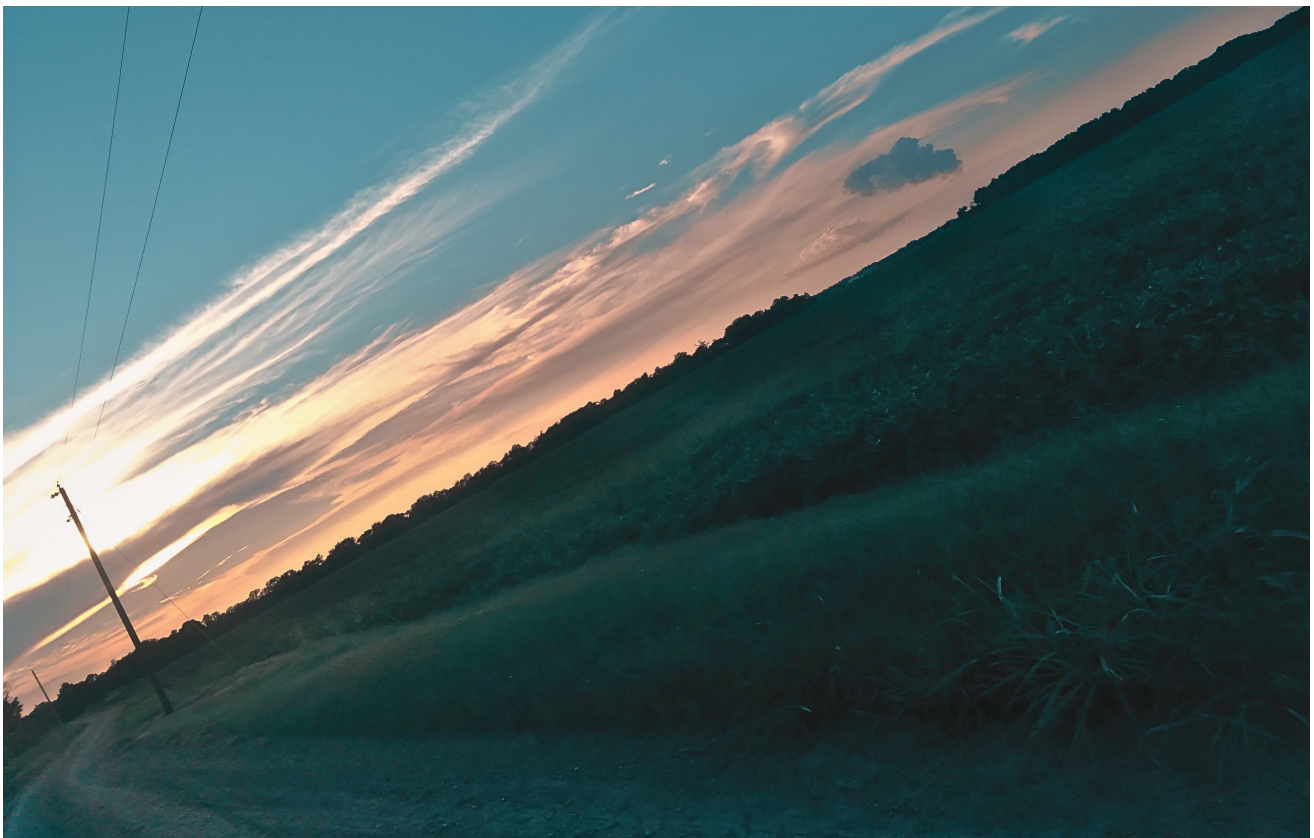
The second-best backyard adventure was the bungee trampoline. I would jump so high on it that I could almost touch the clouds. My head was as high as the birds and the green dragonflies swarming through the air. The trampoline was the only enjoyable piece of equipment to play on together for both my sister and me. We practiced our cheers and dances on it for the crowd of drunk people at our house every weekend. We were sharp and had stunning shows until I fell off and snapped my leg during our final practice of the summer.

I remember the wincing sharp pains and the wind being knocked out of me. The taste of my lunch came back up and out my mouth and nose. I remember that being worse than the actual sound of my leg snapping. My mother frantically picked me up and laid me down flat in the back of her gray Ford. It reeked of cigarettes and McDonald's. I remember being mad that my sister got the front seat two days in a row, and I had to lie down in the back over a stupid fracture.

The tall mountain of lava was never to be touched by us girls. The lava would get all over us again and we would be grounded. To be fair, I never complained about never touching the sand mountain again after the first time I got burned. It felt like hours trying to get every fire ant off me before I could get into the shower to wash the little red bumps all over my small body. The sores itched and burned for what felt like years. Mom told me it was only two days, but it was definitely two years of oatmeal baths.

The hammock was a wonderful place to lie when I missed the park. In my daydreams, under the shade of two trees, there was a perfect view of where I could have been instead of the yard. I would lie back imagining running through the brown pebbles to get to the top of the pink slide, or going all the way on the monkey bars and defeating the monster once again, or watching my older sister flirt and play basketball with the ugly boy down the road before forcing me to play with his stuck-up sister who would later become my best friend.

The small town was never that bad. Only loud four-wheelers would wake me up throughout the night despite my sister trying to convince me our small house was haunted. There were many adventures to be found, even though you had to have an enormous imagination to get there. In my case, all I needed was a park, a river with a monster, a pool with mermaids, a mountain of lava, and a hammock to lie on and dream.



PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCIEN COOK  
STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

# FIREWOOD AND TEA

GAVIN KIECH

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

It was a frigid winter, and my skin shivered as I took my fur blanket off my bed. I grabbed a pot, filled it with water, and put it on a hanger above my fireplace. The cold steel of the pot made my hands feel like icicles. I could feel my blood rush to my fingers as I lit a fire under the pot and watched the water begin to warm up. I recalled years gone by when my father and I would sit in the frigid, cold living room, my father laughing as I shivered. My father was all about the cold. He wore the least amount of clothing compared to the rest of my family. He always teased me about how easy it was for me to get cold, but despite the teasing, he always gave me his jacket for comfort. The only time I could remember my father being cold was in the winter before his passing. He forgot to chop wood for the fireplace, mainly because he was doing some repairs on our home. I was only sixteen at the time, so seeing my father make such a blunder was funny.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRANDI BOATMAN

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

My father had raised me always to be prepared, and for the first time, he was not. He shivered as he chopped the wood. Cold sweat dripped down his brow. It was obvious that his age was catching up with him. His mighty swing was slower, and his once proud smile had turned to a grimace. My own chipper manner changed as I ran out to check on him. It was freezing, and I was shivering when I approached him. I remember him telling me to go inside, but I did not. I tried to pick up the heavy axe, and its heft caused me to lose my balance a bit before feeling stable again. He let a smile peep from under his scraggly beard, but he saw I was freezing. My teeth were chattering as I tried to set up the log. He took the axe from my hands with such ease, and he went to his toolshed for about ten minutes. I spent those minutes stressing out, wondering if he was disappointed. I tightened his heavy wool and leather jacket around me. The jacket always made me feel protected. Even when things got scary, it made me feel safe.

Before long, he came back out with a smaller axe with my name engraved on the wooden handle. I held it gently as my father watched my reaction, and I failed to contain my tears as they began to drip down and freeze on my face. I will always remember his laugh and the slight glimpse of a tear that went down his face as he witnessed me get so emotional over his handmade gift. He began to teach me how to swing, and soon enough, I would be chopping firewood like a pro.

On the other side of me, he began breaking the strongest logs in two. I saw his face strained again, and it motivated me to push myself harder. I could only assume now that it was caused by him overworking himself. I do remember asking him why he forgot the firewood, and his reply was the most important lesson he ever gave me. "We all make at least one mistake per day, sometimes big, sometimes small, but never beat yourself up over it." This brought me closer to him and still resonates, especially since I am an adult now. That is when it happened. My father began to shiver. I honestly thought I was seeing things. I had never been the one to comfort him. I continued to stare as I tried to find the words or actions to help him. I placed the jacket around his arms. He stood there frozen and lost for words. I smiled at him before I went back to chopping the wood, and when I finished, he gave me the biggest hug ever. When we embraced, I could swear I heard him start to cry a little, even though he never admitted it. What I remember most from that moment was him holding me tight. It was hard to breathe. Afterward, he chuckled, and the old smile I remembered when he used to chop the wood on his own came back, a smile of pride and hope. Wiping the cold sweat off my brow, I looked down proudly at all the newly cut firewood. My father and I began to put the wood we needed in the fireplace and stacked the rest in storage. After getting inside to his chair, he collapsed on it and watched the tea he had set up begin to boil.

I sat at the dinner table, where my mother was waiting with a warm meal for us. I enjoyed my meal while the scent of black tea went up my nose. My dad always favored it over anything else. He always told me it was either that or water for him. He brought one of his cups and placed it on the table, filling it up with tea and pushing it over to me. My father was not one to share his tea. I wished he would, but I never let him know that. He worked too hard for me to be much of a bother. I asked him how he knew I would want a cup, and all he said in return was that I had earned it. Never in my life had I tasted such a good cup of tea.

After savoring my reward, I took a seat in the living room where my father was sitting. He asked me how the tea was, to which I responded, "Great," with a big smile on my face. He told me stories that afternoon about his youth and what my grandparents were like, saying his father was just like he was now. The main difference was that Grandpa's older years were not as gentle, and it caused my father to do most of the hard labor despite his father's resistance. My grandfather sounded more and more like my father would become as time passed, which made sense because they had such a close relationship. I will always remember that day fondly, especially since it was one of the few times I saw my father become emotional.

I stopped daydreaming to place the tea bags in my kettle and let them steep. I headed back to my room and lay down, looking at the aged wood ceiling. I broke my stare because of a sleeve hanging out from the closet. The tattered wool and worn leather were obvious. I got up and pulled it out, knowing it was my father's old jacket, the same jacket he had made me put on when I got cold. I put it on then went back into the kitchen to the pot and filled my cup with tea. I was greeted by the cold outside air as I opened the door. I walked out to check how much firewood I had, and when I got to the back, I almost spit out my tea as I saw there was none left. In the warmth of my father's old jacket, I chuckled. I guess, each day we all make at least one mistake.

## SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



**GRETCHEN THOMAS**

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT HONORS COLLEGE  
TWYFORD FAMILY BUSINESS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEE, 2023

### **Twyford Family Business Scholarship**

The Twyford Family Business Scholarship is a one-time scholarship awarded to an Arkansas State University–Newport student entering the Associate of Business program. Preference may be given to applicants graduating from Jackson County, Arkansas. The scholarship is designed to provide aid to students who demonstrate financial need. These funds can be applied toward tuition, fees, and/or books.

#### **Application Requirement:**

- The applicant must have a minimum cumulative high school or college GPA of 2.50.
- The applicant must be enrolled as a full-time student.
- The applicant must write an essay of 200-250 words.

**Award Amount:** Up to \$1,000

#### **Other Information:**

- All scholarship awards are contingent on the availability of funds.
- A copy of the student's high school transcript must be submitted with the application.

## MY MENTOR

In January 2023, I visited the campus of Arkansas State University–Newport for the first time. While there, I met my Introduction to Business instructor, Mr. John Twyford. I take online classes, but every time I am on campus, about once a month, I meet with Mr. Twyford. He quickly became my faculty advisor and recommended me to the Honors College at Arkansas State University–Newport.

Mr. Twyford also informed me of a scholarship he sponsors at ASU–Newport. I applied and was later awarded the scholarship which greatly helped with my tuition bill. I had previously earned a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin, so Mr. Twyford made sure that twenty-seven of the previous credit hours I earned at the University of Texas would count toward my associate degree at ASUN. He let me know what courses I needed to graduate and then made sure I was enrolled in those courses. Last spring, I volunteered at the Tech Depot carnival where ASU–Newport showcases advancements in technology, and I got to help Mr. Twyford with his Arkansas Jeopardy board. When I confided in Mr. Twyford about my past and what brought me to Newport, he was very supportive and replied, "I can only imagine the pain you've been through." Mr. Twyford is an open book himself. He shared with me that his first wife passed away from cancer, but he found love again with his lovely wife, Myra, whom I was pleased and honored to meet. Whenever I show up on campus, he always welcomes me to sit and visit with him in his office, and we chat about how my classes are going and where I am in life.

Mr. Twyford has worked in the banking business and has multiple degrees. He encouraged me to pursue an Associate of Science in Business at Arkansas State University–Newport. He has agreed to be one of my professional references, helps me to network, and always reaches out to let me know about possible work opportunities. I respect Mr. Twyford, and I am grateful to him, not only for the scholarship to ASU–Newport and for being a great mentor and advisor, but for everything he has done for me.

*-Gretchen Thomas*

To learn more about scholarship opportunities at Arkansas State University–Newport, visit:

**[www.asun.edu/scholarships](http://www.asun.edu/scholarships)**

*L*ITERARY  
ANALYSIS  
RESEARCH  
AND CRITICISM

FEATURED STUDENT AUTHORS

AILENE PACHO ADAMS  
ELIZABETH BROADWAY  
SKYLER RIDDLE  
BENJAMIN RUTLEDGE  
SHELBY WALKER

PHOTOGRAPH BY CONNIE CASEBIER



# THE TWO FRIDAS

AILENE PACHO ADAMS

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT



THE TWO FRIDAS BY FRIDA KAHLO

After browsing the collections of paintings and other works of art by featured artists we discussed in class, I was immediately drawn to *The Two Fridas* by Frida Kahlo. The richness and depth of the visual details in the painting captivated me. Specifically, the dresses worn by the two women depicted in the artwork create a sense of sharp contrast and emotional intensity.

The vibrant colors of one dress and the white fabric of the other dress is a sensory detail that adds to the emotional impact of the work. As I observed *The Two Fridas*, the composition also drew me in instantly. The two distinct images of Kahlo seated side by side, both Fridas gazing directly at the viewer with their hands clasped together, resonated with me on a personal level.

The striking contrast of the two dresses worn by the two Fridas commanded my attention, evoking a visceral response that mirrored the inner turmoil and emotional intensity symbolized in the painting. The intricate details, such as the delicate lace of the dresses, the visible veins on the women's hands, and the subtle variations in skin tone, contributed to a sense of vivid realism, inviting me to connect with the emotions suggested in the work. The visual details not only captivated me but also conveyed the depth of Kahlo's introspection and internal struggles. The stark contrast of the dresses symbolizes the duality within her identity and psyche, inviting me to delve into her inner world. Kahlo's use of color, composition, and symbolism in the painting are powerful tools for conveying the tumultuous emotional landscape of her experiences with physical pain after her debilitating accident, her strained relationship with Diego Rivera, and her identity as a Mexican woman, adding layers of depth and richness to the emotional narrative behind the artwork. The vibrant reds and whites of the European colonial style dress, contrasted by the blue and green of the traditional Tehuana dress enhance the emotional significance of the piece by representing Kahlo's ancestry and heritage. The placement of the two Fridas against a subdued background further intensifies the emotional impact of the painting's colors and textures. Many art historians classify Kahlo's work as surrealist. The surreal elements of this painting add a dreamlike and otherworldly quality, accentuating the artist's exploration of the subconscious and the inner self.

Learning about the context of Kahlo's work allowed me to better appreciate the emotional connection between the two Frida figures, drawing me deeper into the intimate portrayal of Kahlo's internal conflict. Completed in 1939, shortly after her divorce from Diego Rivera, *The Two Fridas* is one of Kahlo's most notable paintings for its depiction of the artist's personal conflicts. Learning that Kahlo was also a political activist and often explored themes of identity in her work by using imagery that represents Tehuana culture enriched my understanding of the emotions that might have influenced the painting.

These insights deepened my appreciation for not only the emotional resonance but also the historical and contextual significance of the work, allowing me to view it through a lens of cultural and personal struggles that transcend time. Learning about Kahlo's pride in her Mexican heritage and culture, her personal struggles, her physical and emotional pain, and her unwavering dedication to her art, illuminated the layers of depth and complexity in the painting for me as the viewer. A closer look at *The Two Fridas* prompted me to explore the profound intertwining of Kahlo's personal narrative and the societal backdrop of the time in which she lived.

Kahlo's remarkable story informs the viewer's impression of *The Two Fridas* centered around intense emotional depth and introspection with regard to identity. Kahlo delves into the complexities of human emotion, conflict, and pain, drawing the viewer into a rich and evocative portrayal of both sides of herself. The intensity of emotions and virtues depicted in the artwork, such as vulnerability and resilience, invited me to contemplate the value of pain and conflict within human experience. Kahlo's depiction of the two Frida figures gazing at the viewer creates a sense of connection and intimacy as well. The way Kahlo uses composition, perspective, color, and gaze gives *The Two Fridas* the power to transcend mere visual representation, drawing the viewer into Kahlo's world.



PHOTOGRAPH BY NICKOLAS MURAY

# SATIRE IN SYLVIA PLATH'S "THE APPLICANT"

## ELIZABETH BROADWAY

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

Sylvia Plath's "The Applicant" was published in the early 1960s when gender roles were frequently debated in society. This was and still sometimes is a world full of rigid social expectations and potentially objectifying gender roles. Plath uses a dark tone to portray these social pressures with humor. In "The Applicant," Plath uses irony and satire to present harmful expectations and gender roles within marriages, while also critiquing individual and societal tendencies toward conformity and objectification.

In "Marriage and Gender in 'The Applicant,'" Geneva Tilbury explains how Plath creates an "odd, disturbing scene" of a marriage service that provides wounded veterans with wives in order to show how many women are objectified by men in marriage. In addition to the irony, Plath uses repetition often in this poem. Specifically, "Will you marry it" is repeated multiple times. Tilbury points out, " 'It' is repeated several times, generally to refer to the woman," suggesting that this shows how extreme the sense of objectification is for many women. The objectification of women was an issue Plath was living through and watching others go through as well. The applicant in the poem is told, "It can sew. It can cook" and asked, "what do you think of *that*?" Tilbury indicates, "the impersonal pronouns 'it' and 'that'," referring to the potential bride in the poem are objectifying, as if beyond her wifely duties, the woman is devalued as nothing. Tilbury also claims, "it is important to note that the interaction taking place in the poem is entirely between two men," implying women had no say in these matters. Tilbury claims "man-to-man interaction regarding the future of women is paralleled in numerous ways" throughout the poem and in society.

Plath's portrayal of the marriage application process in the poem gives the impression that men are often expected to be a part of the decisions made by women or for women regarding marriage. One wedding ritual that has carried into this day and age is the tradition of the father walking the bride down the aisle. While many see this custom as sentimental, to others, the action might imply that a man has to give the woman to another man on whom she can then rely. In this regard, the tradition could objectify a woman as if she is being passed from man to man. Even before marriage, Tilbury explains "women often try to pitch themselves to men" because in the households of married men and women, men often rely on women to do mental, physical, and emotional work to fulfill their wants and needs. Women do household tasks like cooking, and cleaning, as well as providing physical and emotional support to their spouses. In "The Applicant," Plath uses satire to show a seemingly incapacitated man applying for a wife who will meet all these requirements.

Another notable theme in this poem is the loss of identity. Plath critiques the social pressures and expectations individual women face when trying to maintain a sense of self. In this poem, Plath shines light on the struggle of a modern woman to maintain her identity in a world full of unrealistic expectations. Although there has been amazing societal growth concerning women's rights, there are still so many gender inequalities because of the strong beliefs people have when it comes to romantic relationships. It seems like some of these beliefs about gender roles and expectations within marriages are there because of the ways individuals are raised. It is still common for working women to be expected to do more of the household cooking and cleaning, while men often feel more societal pressure to provide. As children learn from their surroundings, the cycle will likely continue. Films and television shows still often idolize these limiting gender roles. Barbies, princesses, and baby dolls are mostly designed for and given to girls. Action figures are for boys. There is rarely an in-between. Children should not be told "No, you cannot play with this. It is a boy toy," or vice versa because there are no rules for how to be oneself.

Over sixty years after its first publication, Sylvia Plath's "The Applicant" can help contemporary readers understand that women's rights have come a long way, but we still have far to go in society. Although the idea of a marriage service providing its applicants with wives that might as well be dolls is extreme, Plath uses irony to confront this conflict in a darkly humorous way. By presenting this absurd scenario as satire, Plath shines a light on what goes on behind some closed doors and spreads awareness about the real effects of the social pressures and expectations women face, not only in marriages and romantic relationships but in everyday life.



IMAGE SOURCE: POETRY FOUNDATION/BETTMANN



**ASHLEY DOUGLAS**  
STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY- NEWPORT

# SELF-ACCEPTANCE IN MARY OLIVER'S "WILD GEESE"

## SKYLER RIDDLE

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

Mary Oliver's "Wild Geese" is a free-verse poem with a heartfelt message that explores the human experience of living in a society that does not readily accept flaws. Mary Oliver shows readers that there is a path that leads to a beautiful journey of self-discovery and acceptance in the world. Society makes expectations for people to live by, but Mary Oliver challenges society, letting readers know it is okay to be flawed, and that we can let go of the weight on our shoulders, finding belonging and connection in the vast natural world and within ourselves.

In "Wild Geese," Mary Oliver gives a powerful message to readers to find themselves and be themselves rather than live up to society's expectations. Oliver begins the poem with a direct tone encouraging readers to let go of the weight of guilt and shame they might be carrying. She uses the wild geese to symbolize self-acceptance because they do not obsess over being perfect but rather thrive in their place in nature. Oliver writes, "You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves." She wants us to love ourselves and one another while confronting the conflict between what society wants us to be and what we want to be. The symbolism of the geese going home represents the internal voices to which we should listen in order to remember our place in the world.

Oliver wants us to embrace that we are not perfect and know that our imperfections are what make us beautiful in our own ways. Oliver shows that true belonging can be found within the self, and giving up what society wants you to be will show you the perfect you. Oliver goes beyond beauty to discuss the need to feel connected and accepted while being one's own person. The speaker says, "The world goes on," even though one might feel like it does not go on after doing something that was not authentic to one's identity. Life carries on, and you get another chance to find your true beauty. Oliver implies that society does not want you to be different, but the geese symbolize the freedom you have to find yourself and your place. Oliver's free verse in "Wild Geese" reflects the openness of the world and how we look at it. She does not use a set rhyme scheme but instead allows herself to follow a natural flow to complement the theme of embracing the beauty of oneself. She uses the lines "You do not have to be good" and "Meanwhile the world goes on" to emphasize this sense of freedom and openness to individual authenticity.

Even though this poem was published in 1986, it is still relevant to this day. In some of the poem's lines, Oliver lets readers feel the power society has over the individual, but she also insists that we have the power within to change the way we think about the world and ourselves. Through these devices, Oliver creates a message that will last a lifetime, encouraging readers to find themselves by letting go of what society thinks. Oliver encourages readers to live more like the wild geese, leaving behind much of the unwarranted shame and guilt of the human condition.



PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL GIESE BROWN  
Image source: *Poetry Foundation*

In the end, Mary Oliver wants readers of "Wild Geese" to know that we do not need to follow society to find ourselves. By using vivid imagery of nature, irony, symbolism, and metaphor in her free verse, Oliver invites readers to remember their self-worth and a natural sense of belonging. We cannot let senseless shame and guilt get to us because we always get another chance to better ourselves. By striving to live more like the wild geese, not worrying about our imperfections or feeling confined by society's expectations, we may enjoy the freedom and openness to find a place "in the family of things" while discovering and accepting our true selves.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY PASMORE DOYLE

# FOUR HEROES

## OF ANCIENT AND CLASSICAL LITERATURE

BENJAMIN RUTLEDGE

STUDENT AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT

A hero is someone who struggles against an obstacle, fails or succeeds, and then gains some insight after the conflict. In the case of Gilgamesh, he is introduced as a man of many assets being born half-divine. "Who could be his like for kingly virtue?" Gilgamesh was singled out from the day of his birth. Although he has many strengths, he is prideful to the point of arrogance and violence toward his subjects who despise and fear him. Gilgamesh has an intense reaction to Enkidu's death and ventures on a quest to attain immortality. Along his journey, he meets guides such as Urshanabi, Siduri, and Utnapishtim who advise him to abandon this fruitless endeavor and embrace the life he lives now. After he obtains a plant of immortality and loses it to a serpent, he is left with the grief of his own wasted efforts. Returning to his city of Uruk, the man who had been left with nothing but grief suddenly is overcome with a new sense of purpose. While he may not be able to live forever, he finds immortality in the legacy he will leave behind with his city and how he treats his people.

Odysseus is revered for his quick wit, so much so that the Goddess of Wisdom, Athena, favors him. However, his intellect does not stop his pride, leading to several decisions that put him and his men in peril. When stuck on the island with the cyclops, Polyphemus, Odysseus tricks the cyclops by claiming his name is "no man," blinding the drunk cyclops, and sneaking his men out underneath a flock of sheep. Despite his successful escape, Odysseus bellows, "Cyclops, if anyone, any mortal man, asks how you got your eye put out, tell him Odysseus the marauder did it." Subsequently, the cyclops reveals to Poseidon who blinded him and both Odysseus and his men pay for it dearly.

Oedipus is born with a tragic fate foretold for him. Clever enough to solve the Sphinx's riddle, he became King of Thebes. More than anything he has a determination to see things through to the end, as the chorus implores him to "act as our greatest man... we believe your nerve saved us then." However, Oedipus was prideful and quick to anger which resulted in him killing his father and initially disregarding the prophet, Tiresias. After learning the truth of his birth and identity, Oedipus is thrown into despair as he gouges out his eyes with the pins of his mother's crown. While self-harm is often done to distract from emotional turmoil, the eyes being mutilated also serves a symbolic purpose. Throughout the play, Sophocles emphasizes themes of truth and ignorance through metaphors of light and darkness. For example, the prophet, Tiresias, who reveals the tragedy of Oedipus is known as the "source of light." Once Oedipus understands that he has followed the path that had been laid out for him, he takes his sight from himself because, as he says, "How could [my eyes] bear to look at my father in Hades? Or at my devastated mother?" He further implies his longing for ignorance by claiming, "If I could deafen my ears, I would. I'd deaden my whole body, go blind and deaf to shut those evils out." If he had never heard the truth, had never seen the light of his situation, then he would have lived on without realizing the misfortunes he shouldered. However, Oedipus shows an almost morbid determination to discover the truth. As he approaches the answer to his mystery, he might have been able to infer the troubles that would wait for him if he continued to question his reality, but despite this, he continues to do everything in his power to seek the truth. This characteristic makes Oedipus the most pitiable of these four heroes. If fate is an underlying theme of his story, he had no happy answers waiting for him. He fled from his foster home in hopes of avoiding his fate only to arrive in the belly of the beast despite his best intentions.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRANDI BOATMAN

Achilles is unmatched on the battlefield, as Agamemnon puts it, the Greek's "most formidable hero." While he is valued for his prowess in war, this could not be said about his attitude toward it. The ancient Greeks believed fighting and dying with glory was an essential characteristic of a war hero. However, after Agamemnon insults his pride, Achilles claims, "I'm going back to Phthia now. Far better to head home with my curved ships than stay here, unhonored myself and pulling a fortune for you."

King Priam in his grief over the death of his son, Hector, humbly approaches Achilles with the intent of paying a ransom for his son's desecrated body. Priam appeals to Achilles's humanity by comparing himself to Achilles's father. He pleads "Remember your father, godlike Achilles. He and I both are on the doorstep of old age... Think of your own father, and pity me." The impact this meeting has on Achilles is profound, as "sorrow for his own father welled up in his chest," and he declares an armistice so Priam may hold funeral rites for his son. The interaction between these adversaries shows the humanity behind them and invites readers to see the value of sympathy and compassion, even in war.

As a reader, I found myself most moved by the ending of *The Iliad*. War is a dividing entity, and propaganda so often serves to highlight and inflame the differences between "us" and "them." While Achilles was least vulnerable to physical wounds, the humility he embraces from Priam's pleas serves as a reminder that even when bitter conflict divides us, we are not just pieces of a puzzle, but human beings with our own journeys and stories.

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# HEROIC STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS IN *THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH*, THE HOMERIC EPICS, AND *OEDIPUS THE KING*

SHELBY WALKER

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All the heroes of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, and *Oedipus the King* exhibit qualities associated with heroism, such as courage, strength, intelligence, and determination. Gilgamesh is part divine, two-thirds god and one-third human. This gives him strength, endurance, and resilience. His strengths include fearlessness as a warrior, great intelligence, and the profound knowledge he gains from his journeys. Achilles is invulnerable except for his heel, making him unbeatable in battle. His strengths include being the greatest warrior of Greeks in the Trojan War. Achilles shows his leadership abilities by saying "My place is to fight in the forefront of the battle. Let the rest of you follow me and fight as I do." Odysseus is gifted with exceptional intelligence, cunning, and resourcefulness. He has a strategic mind and can devise ingenious plans. Oedipus also has a keen intellect. He is a capable ruler and a gifted problem solver. He is also dedicated to his people and determined to uncover the murderer of Laius and to lift the curse that has plagued Thebes.

Gilgamesh's weaknesses are his desire for immortality, arrogance, fear of death, and disregard for the consequences of his violent and abusive actions. Gilgamesh is unsuccessful because he realizes he cannot become immortal. Despite this failure, his journey leads him to greater self-awareness, acceptance of mortality, and deeper understanding of the human condition. When his friend Enkidu dies, he realizes that death is inevitable. After he accepts this limitation, he wants to live a meaningful life. He wants to become a better ruler. He also learns the true meaning of friendship and companionship. The most important lesson he learns is true immortality lies not in physical longevity but in the legacy one leaves behind after death. Gilgamesh eventually heeds the advice he receives from Siduri who tells him, "When the gods created mankind, death they dispensed to mankind. Life they kept for themselves." Once he recognizes the truth of her message, Gilgamesh realizes and accepts that he is not going to live forever, but he can live a better life.

Achilles's pride is his biggest weakness because it leads him to selfish vengeance and rage. Achilles states, "I will not make peace until Agamemnon restores my honor," showing his stubbornness and fixation on personal glory. He falls short of many standards of heroism due to his self-centeredness, pride, lack of consideration, and disregard for principles of honor and duty. Achilles also falls short of the heroic ideal of many contemporary readers by being dishonorable in the way he treats his enemies. After Achilles kills Hector, he drags his body around behind his chariot and refuses to allow the family a proper funeral. In his wrath, he violates the customs of war and expectations of dignity, and he is only moved to change his mind by his encounter with Hector's father, King Priam.

Odysseus's weaknesses are his susceptibility to temptation, his arrogance, and his pride which lead him to make rash decisions that endanger and harm himself and others. In addition to Odysseus, the women in Homer's *The Odyssey* play a complex role in highlighting the hero's strengths and weaknesses. Penelope represents loyalty as she waits faithfully for her husband's return. Like Odysseus, Penelope is also cunning which readers can see in the way she tricks and defers the suitors. Calypso and Circe embody temptation and power through their command of magic and their seductive allure on Odysseus. However, Penelope's virtue contrasts Calypso and Circe's roles as tempters. Penelope shows her loyalty to Odysseus by lamenting, "If only the gods would let him know, let him return to his own home, to his own native land, and see his homecoming." Penelope's virtue of loyalty remains strong throughout the hero's absence proving how powerful she is as well.



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Oedipus's weaknesses are his ignorance of his true identity and his powerlessness to avoid the fulfillment of the prophecy foretelling his fate. At the end of *Oedipus the King*, Oedipus blinds himself. This act of self-mutilation enhances the symbolism Sophocles develops throughout the play because all this time, Oedipus had been blind to the truth. In his ignorance, he is determined to uncover the truth, but the truth is in front of him all along the way. This is ironic because he wanted to know the truth so badly, then he blinds himself after uncovering it. He acknowledges his past ignorance by saying "too long I had been blind to those for whom I was searching." Of all four of these heroes, the character I pity the most is Oedipus. He has the most tragic story. He accidentally fulfills a prophecy he tried to avoid, and learning the truth leads to his destruction. He goes from being a respected king to a hopeless, exiled wretch.

The main characters of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the Homeric epics, and *Oedipus the King* qualify as heroes due to their exemplary qualities. Readers might admire them for their courageous actions. However, each of their stories is valuable because of the hero's weaknesses and failures as well. Despite their misdeeds and often selfish motivations, readers can learn from the impact these heroes' journeys have on themselves and their worlds.

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*The Epic of Gilgamesh, The Iliad, The Odyssey, Oedipus the King*. Published by W.W. Norton and Co. in *The Norton Anthology of Western World Literature*, Vol. 1 (2014)



ALLIE VILLARREAL  
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ALLIE VILLARREAL

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SHELBY KELLEMS  
ALLIE VILLARREAL

ASHLEY DOUGLAS  
RECURRING STUDENT CONTRIBUTOR

MIKEL WEWERS  
COMMUNITY ARTIST  
RECURRING CONTRIBUTOR



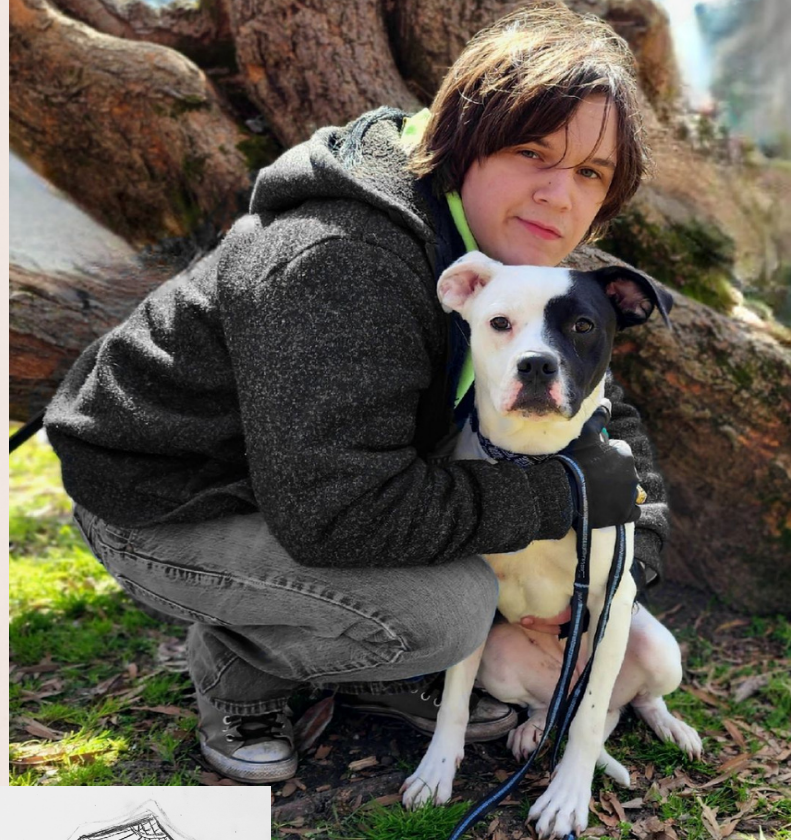
ELIJAH BURGESS

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# FEATURED STUDENT ARTIST

## ELIJAH BURGESS

Elijah Burgess is a current student at Arkansas State University-Newport pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies. He grew up in Tuckerman, Arkansas and currently resides in Swifton. After earning his associate's degree, Burgess plans to continue his education to earn a bachelor's degree in graphic design. Burgess became interested in drawing as a child and enjoyed learning techniques from his uncle and his art teacher in high school. He works mostly in graphite and enjoys creating illustrations and comics inspired by Japanese feudal ronin and samurai cultures, manga, and fantasy genres. In addition to creating drawings like the ones featured in this issue, Burgess is also working to complete his first graphic novel. Some of Burgess's artistic influences include Akira Toriyama, Koyoharu Gotouge, Tanya Aguiñiga, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, and Richard Misrach. Apart from his artwork, Burgess also enjoys reading comics and spending free time with friends, family and loved ones. Burgess shared what he enjoys most about being an artist is "the creativity of it, being able to release my ideas onto the paper" and remarked that he is most inspired by the "infinite possibilities" creating art affords him because "art is what you make of it."





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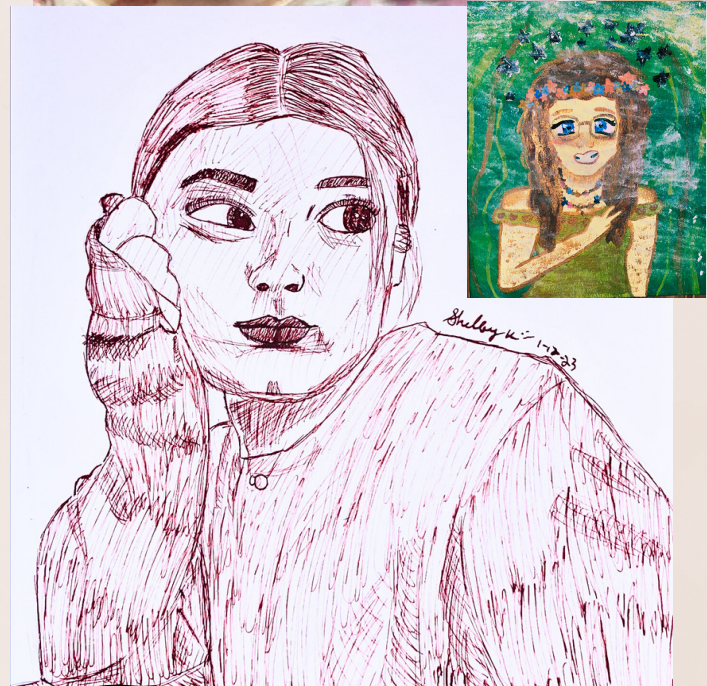
SHELBY KELLEMS

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# FEATURED STUDENT ARTIST

## SHELBY KELLEMS

Shelby Kellems is a graduate of Arkansas State University-Newport's IGNITE program who is now pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies. Kellems is originally from Bradford, Arkansas and resides in Bald Knob. She balances attending classes with working in restaurants and enjoys spending time with friends, family, and her three cats. When asked about her artistic background, Kellems recalled, "I was always the artsy kid of my family. I loved to draw and paint anywhere I could. I've always been a big fan of trying new ideas and seeing what works." In addition to painting and drawing, Kellems also enjoys cooking, crafting, and crocheting garments. "I take pride in being able to wear my art and use it functionally." Kellems's paintings and drawings include portraits and whimsical images of nature, and she enjoys crocheting with a similar aesthetic. "I really like cosmic images and nature themes, drawing/painting people, and crocheting colorful wearables. The rainbow pullover I have on in one of my pictures is probably my favorite garment I've made yet." In her acrylic portraits, Kellems utilizes vibrant color palettes and accentuates the facial features of her subjects. "I love colors, tie-dye, funky art, and eyes have always been something I've really liked to draw and paint because they're so beautiful!" Kellems shared that she relishes the creative expression of working in various artistic mediums, adding, "I aspire to get my ideas out however that may be." Shelby Kellems's work appears on the front cover and throughout this issue.



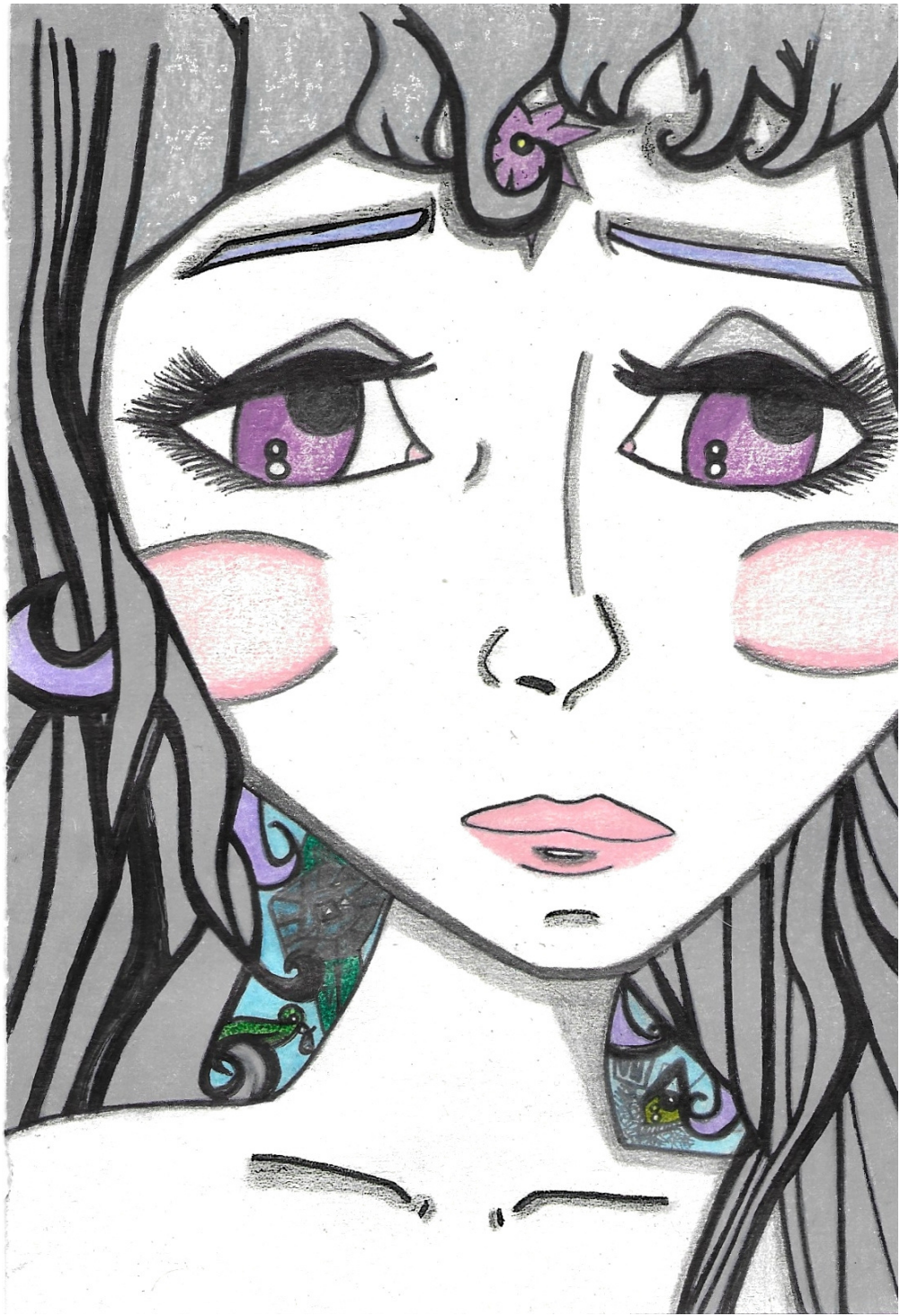
*I* JUST WANT TO BE THE EMBODIMENT OF SUNSHINE IF I CAN MANAGE IT, AND I HOPE MAYBE MY ART CAN MAKE A FEW PEOPLE SMILE."





SHELBY KELLEMS

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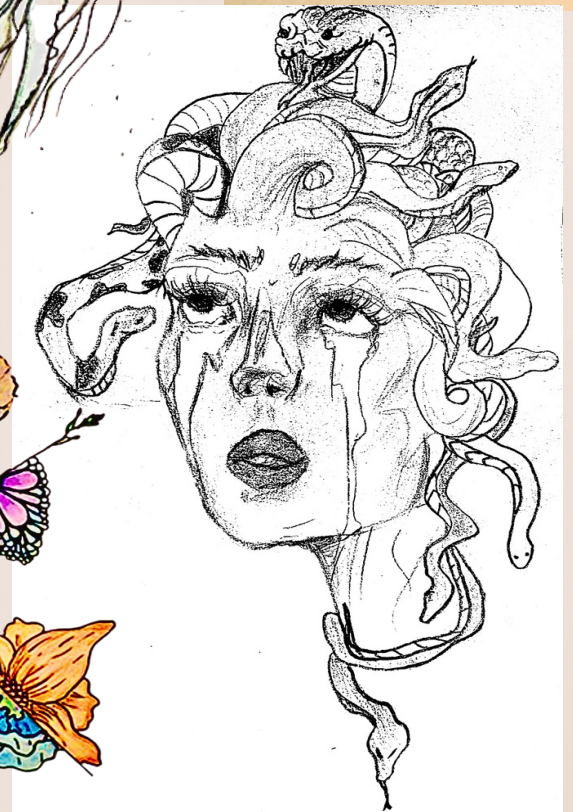
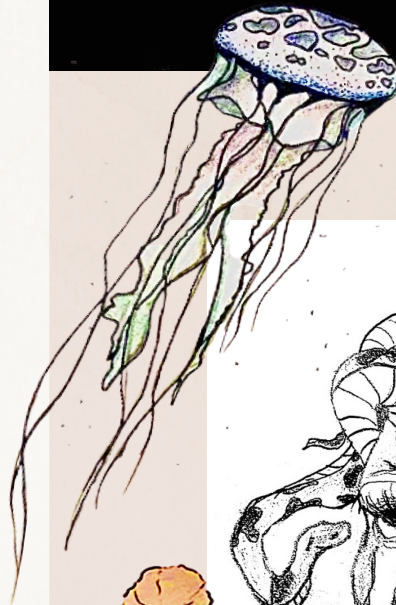
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# FEATURED STUDENT ARTIST

ALLIE VILLARREAL

Allie Mae Villarreal is a student at Arkansas State University–Newport pursuing an Associate of Arts in General Education Studies. She began taking classes for college credit as part of ASU–Newport’s concurrent education program while attending Tuckerman High School where she graduated in the spring of 2022. Villarreal enjoys journaling, sketching, and illustration, as well as graphite, marker, pen, and ink drawing. She works primarily in graphite or colored pencil and ink to create marine, reptile, floral, and botanical illustrations as well as intricate studies in pattern and texture. Villarreal’s work also includes fantastical, expressive portraits of imagined subjects and mythical characters in which she incorporates realistic illustrations of plant and animal life. In addition to her artwork, Villarreal also enjoys reading, creative writing, and spending free time with her family, friends, and loved ones. Villarreal’s drawings and illustrations are displayed on the back cover and throughout the interior pages of this issue.

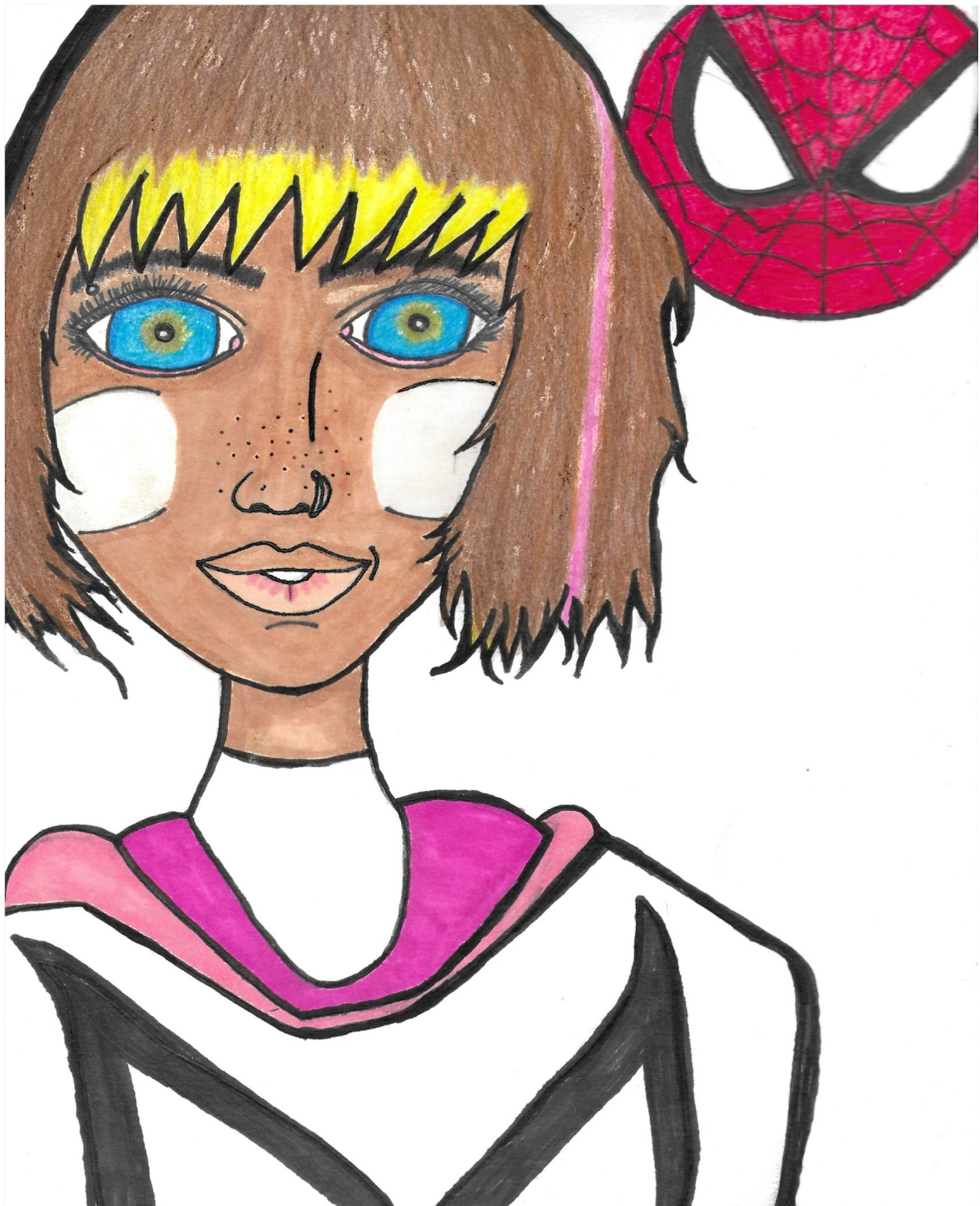




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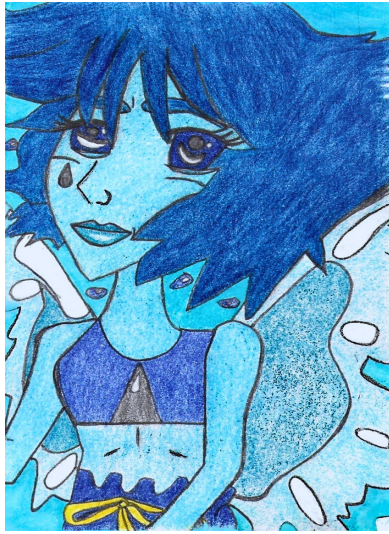
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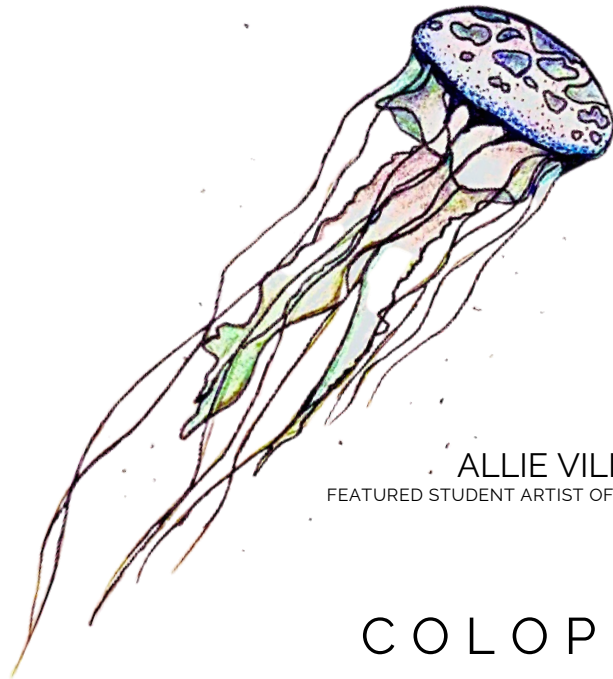
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