Essence Fine Arts and Literary Magazine is a collaborative effort of Kutztown University students who share and express personal feelings, philosophies, and views through the artistic media of photography, printmaking, painting, life drawing, poetry, and short stories. The works contained within are considered by the Essence staff members, some fine examples of creative art and literary expression. The Essence staff expresses appreciation to all its contributors and readers for sharing in this creative student publication.

This year’s Essence incorporates abstract monoprints and linear elements as graphic elements; however, these should not be considered as examples of fine art. Furthermore, the selected pieces of art should not be seen as illustration for the literary selections.
Fromwhere

I see a church steeple
through the distant
pine trees that, not beyond
the rows of callous
tombstones

I sit in the shadow
of a thick, wide trunk
my back pressed against
its rough, apid skin
My fingers caress
the muscular roots
and its
outstretched branches
hover in curiosity

I taste the dry
air and smell
the aftermath
of freshly cut grass
as I watch
the leaves stumble
in the mischiefous wind

My mind wanders
upon a wave
of lifless silence
and I slowly drift across
a painted canvas
of endless mountain
and say.

Ayana Glenn

Mindsstorm

breatheless. is what it is.

it's without time, the kind of night exhalation breeds
with inhalation and melting minds remember:
sitting awkward in car now, knees pushed up to the dashboard
too embarrassed to push away

leaves falling around the car,
verteginous and feminine leg parallels masculine leg,
speeding the familiar hills suddenly colored burgundy, hazelnut
and becoming darker, sun settling behind his cruising:
it's evening and awake, not seeing trees but leaves, individual leaves picked out, zoned.

wonder if anyone else does this.

he who next sees my leaf will be my husband?
my brother, sister, neighbor, lover, gravedigger
or nobody.

a stupid game nobody plays because i alone single out leaves
and i alone will, i worry of this
so i fall in love with his brother— but holding hands isn't what it used to be.
there's not any water yet i swim daily in my mind. my mind
ripples water, water is a dream. this life is liquidous.

he talks of running horses and pregnant mothers and babies birthed with his two hands:
things given up,
perhaps he was once interesting, this dollar-an-hour
man. but he isn't love, he isn't romance, he isn't anything.

i forget him.

i want a love a man holds together with piano wires:
to mend my flesh as i fade, as i wither;
after i've left when

orchids frown at stony-faced angels
bearing my name. engraved.

to love me after life.

not this love that dies with campfires. i want the impossible love of two lovers gazing
"in the same direction," as the poet says.

except upwards. in a tree, at the same burgundy leaf.

Helena Hauchel
sun nestles into horizon
the dance on Church grass
flutters eyes for slumber
three along the fence line
sund, ready to run, race,
charge retreating sun
sunsails on watery edge
sweeps pirouette on prickers
and rakes forgot last fall

flinty stars nip at bare heels
silhouetted three pursue
I sun, erasing from minds
us to be home by bluedark

charcoal on paper by Adrian Hask Jr.

when I die
I want my son to carry
my corpse upon his back
and place it in the earth
again. There is something
in burying a loved one
without pomp or tomp
but the wind and trees,
something about an honest offering.
something to a loved one burying another
void of parlors and real estate
without documents proving his father's
dead to know,
within he grows,
without he knows
our love defies custom
when I die.

Joel Fries

SpiderLady
SpiderLady is 65,
a waitress at a diner, in the middle of
the green,
mold grows in her couch
she's going bald
you can see her scalp
you can smell her breath
prepped with peppermint schnapps
and witch hazel.

Around eleven, the couple
wander in
SpiderLady wonders where her
own husband is
the thought stews her down
she takes a while to bring the
coffee
and the customers roll their
eyes at SpiderLady's gummy teeth
tarantula eyes, and boiled skin
everyone knows she slept on
the floor last night
drunk with the centipedes
Everyone knows that her eldest
daugeth's father goes
ever set
still sits in the leather piano
shadows on the front porch
her dilapidated
shack
there's no foundation, the
porch tans off the side
leering in the small breeze
like SpiderLady with the
corneal.

Everyone knows she didn't sleep last
night
But waited by the window for her hus-
bond
watching through the dusty screens
grimi with insect carcasses
her way-ward antennas tangled like
SpiderLady

She asks me to put away the glass
rack before I go and she calls me Lass
Rolling the Scottish accent she had
thick as a child.
I picture her fresh, running over
meadows with full particulars
her whom the sprawled ahead of her
swimming open like the hills.
The regulars say, 'have you seen
where she lives?'
And on her feet are mountains.
And such a shame that no one else
will work the night shift.

Avery E. Ryan
She is the moment between sleep and waking.  
The morning sunlight that floods into my room.  
She is with me, the water in a warm shower, waking my tired muscles.  
She is a song, so I sing her lullaby in the morning shower.  
A warm sweatshirt on a cold fall day, and Earl Gray Tea that warms from the inside out.  
She is the very first breath of cool fresh air when I step outside, the kind that soaks into your lungs every time you inhale.  
The wind’s wispy fingers wrinkling my face.  
I walk through her, a meadow of daisies, tulips and baby’s breath.  
I pick her from a vine, the sweet flesh of a ripe strawberry,  
Juice-splashing in my mouth.  
tongue tingles.  
bitterroot taste tickles my throat.  
In the distance, she stands proud,  
an ancient chateau,  
she rests in the tower.  
My Rapunzel.  
She is the incoming dusk, the red sky at night,  
and becomes the heavenly sunset at the right moment,  
I lie next to her, she, the other side of my pillow...  
she sits on side, the better side.  
Close my eyes and smile.  

——— James P. Duvall ———
Amber's Sunday Morning

over my morning coffee
I glance at my empty chairs
they can wait.

While I contemplate my
cigarette

"those things'll kill ya"
the old man at the counter says.

I smile at his wisdom
As I refill his coffee cup.

"thanks, sweetheart."

The morning rush
Of hungry church-goers
has yet to start.
The tips can wait,
As I wonder who
is lonelier.

That old man
Or me.

Nicole Natale
I slowly wandered if his younger sister would watch him grow into his lanky frame. As I could control those hot, salty tears were blurring my vision as I sped down Route 22 hoping to lose fear and uncertainty of the snowy-necked 10-year-old life.

I thought of all the events I watched my own brother, five years my senior, experience. The awkward prongs and first dates that I witnessed through the fogged panes of glass of the front of our house. All the fame-calling and sneering we endured as children, watching him grow taller and taller knowing I would never come home again without his new wife. Realizing he would never come home again without his new wife.

With a head of hair so bold, it had no chance but to be called white, this crocking voiced boy had no way to know how much strength was housed in his miniature frame.

It began like all other trips back. But minutes after dosing 2 coins in the toll booth basket and getting my 1983 Reliant up to speed, I began to wonder what would become of the 10-year-old boy whose life I was about to change.

At one o'clock the morning I heard what taped to a bit of paper:

because what

The humidity of the shower reminds me of small things but if your blue robe opens a bit soft slip of your hair on my tongue

and the strawberry kisses and the

what and red, white peering out

that white round of belly peering out

at me and my swollen lips

I'll wait all right to see

Frank Mayers
Fuckin’ Stupid Tattoo

Look what’s happening with our society.
We have a really stupid tattoo.
I take part in it, as well.
But that doesn’t make it any less stupid.
This tattoo is hot.
You can’t see the beauty of people’s faces, eyes, nose, even, everything.
What the fuck are you lookin’ at?
So people think everyone’s judging them.
And people don’t like to be looked at.
And that becomes rule to look at people.
So everyone looks busy.
And everyone looks lonely.
Compared to the people in their glass.
We don’t look at each other.
Ride the NYC subway.
Where the hell do you put your eye?
I can’t look at kids.
Parents will think I’m a child molest.
I can’t look at the elderly.

When I hear fingers falling on Gershwin
I am their master.
pear petals swirling of organized raindrops
staccato on shingle-keys
I dream of hands having
split pea walls
composers crouched in
luckless lubrication
in fingers falling
I laugh
happily master of nothing.

Brett Veltriigner

2001.10

Odcecho

failing on Warhol
I am their master.
wet windfall
accomplished
yellowlight studios
Julian grad

All of this accidental almost.
I sing I sorrow I stumble.

graphite on paper by Jeffrey Tably

Ace Dezmar
ALADIN
I warned me once:
Not every child is of our
breed. It falls but:
Serve a wish.
Every I sit
Rid them out
From the gurgle into my eyes
It down my face
Do they are not different.

THE
Wherefore the urge
To capture this tumor
The inflamed malformation
Bulging out of my head.

Like some ghastly potato-eye
Seeking saturate soils
It longs to spawn progeny
Grows to grow guts.

Swelling red it desires
Like something volcanic
To explode into something molten
And forgotten.

I cannot think but to help.

I lift two thumbs
And close eyelids tightly.
Harder and harder I squeeze the sensation
Like jelly in balloons
That finally burst.

Ahh! The pain, the... slut.
The cleansing blood does flow.
The cruel stimulation of alcohol
The tingling cold creeping into bulderdoox deformity
The punishing joy of perfecting the self.

BABY

Cleaning the attic of his dead mothers house,
Daddy found a bag of baby dolls,
Porcelain heads, broken limbs-
As if invisible, part of legacy.
The youngest baby
Christening gown disgusting
But less,
cried to me,
She needed for her existence.
Antique collectors
Greedily
Buy her history-
Make me sorry for her past.
Past owner, long dead,
Adopted the doll
Never knowing her real name,
Only her history invented
in my mind.
This and a perm will not buy you coffee

A great clip-clopping fills this modern cavern due to the small girl's large shoes. My, but these walls can echo! Now, why on earth would someone willingly wear that? She can hardly walk in those pants and she's quite visibly cold, even from this distance. Ah! She's hobbling over to Guy on the Stairs. I suppose that answers my question.

He seems to like her proficient use of the sweater that doesn't provide warmth and the way her footwork acts more as a hazard than a means of protection. She's likewise blown away by how his layers of sweat-clothing and denim serve to hide his form completely. The fact that he rolled out of bed recently must also count as a big plus. Really, what says "I love you" more than an old ballcap when you can't find a hairbrush?

I can tell they're discussing homework. Allow me to translate:

"Would you like to check your answers with mine?"

"Sure. Did you write them in your cleavage?"

"Yes, I did. Here, let me flip my hair out of the way for you."

"Thank you. You've been super. I am glad my parents are paying for my continuing education."

"Wanna smoke?"

"Certainly!"

Off wanders budding romance.

Erin Evans
I fumbled for a cigarette
after three hours of sex
with a woman's woman
she didn't appeal to me personally
She never drank whisky
or wanted to be a vegetarian
I cornered the market on whisky
I bought it for a cigarette
I wanted to keep it personally,
to trade it for a woman
who'd be a vegetarian
if I told her about sex
I'm no virtuous vegetarian
I gave up meat not whisky
I sell second-rate sex
for the price of a cigarette
I only work with guys I know personally
and they want a personable woman
If you ask me personally,
I like being a woman
I'll always drink whisky
I may stay vegetarian
I'll never quit sex
while I still smoke cigarettes
I'd forget I was a woman
if I couldn't get sex
from another vegetarian
But I'm easy when drunk on whisky,
and if you can spare a cigarette,
you might get to know me personally
I will not be a good sport only to my man

I have a problem with living
you see
I never live with life
every single day is like a preamble, a preview an
Introduction, the first course a rambling, boring presenter presenting an
award that the presenter himself would never win (what would be glory
without good sports like him?)
my days right now
they are like the audience constantly checking their watches
"just hurry up and get it over with!"
"god! nobody cares!"
they are so bored.
And this is my life.
What I wish is to live in the present
like a birthday present, the greatest day of your life.
whatever makes it all worthwhile
a shiny surprise
a new clock radio.
a $10 tip in your apron that you accidently forgot to claim
I want to live in that dollar bill y'all
and enjoy the economic immortality like George Washington.
It's all about the Benjamins
playing in your pocket all day,
resting in a register at night.
As the change in my sock-sleeps, I never miss it, I carry moonbeams to
my bed.
there's a boy sprawled across and tangled up in the blankets and I'm
examining the wrinkles around his eyes
how they scramble when he speaks.
He always emphasizes his T's
he reaches past all the mess to hold me
and I'm present...
Anney L. Rain
Sleeping in your room
This bed smells drunk and sweaty.
I crawl in and envelop myself
in the sticky cool scent
of a drunken cigarette drenched You. I
doze and listen to you move about.
I wonder how it feels to be hung over
and show your.
All I know is this half-awake moment,
the scent of your sheets, and the
sounds you make.
I listen to your pencil scratch across
the paper,
the shuffle of your feet,
and the soft whine of your whistles.
I fall asleep hoping I will dream
that you are beside me, drunk and
sweaty.

Katy Scheppe

On hearing about the death of a young mother

She fell seven stories while
perched on the windowsill
overlooking the small cafes
and in the distance, the cathedrals.

They say, oh good, she felt no pain.
This may be true,
as her small body slipped
from the ledge, from the outstretched
arm of a close friend.

And I wonder, as her young so may,
did she see the face of Jesus
on her way?
And so, had no need to yell,
but perhaps, felt smiling.

Emily Schreier
wholesale PHILOSOPHY emporium

Grab a shopping cart
And begin with the tangible
Aisle one
Hemlock juice for sale
In ten-cent Dixie cups
White paper fortunes for sale
Inscribed “Cognito ergo sum”
Babbling tongues for sale
Muted by sticky price tags
Distilled brains for sale
Labeled Descartes, Aristotle
Stop and admire the
convolutions, won’t you?

Move on to aisle two
Trailing behind bed sheet-clad
Philosopher-ancients
Browse rows of Saran-wrap souls
For sale on rusty wire hangers
Dented aluminum tubes

Of lanolin creams for sale
Indications: “to penetrate
The subcutaneous layer of thought”
A tinkertoy set for sale
With wooden candy sticks
And sanded donut wheels
To approximate Plato's forms

At Wholesale Philosophy Emporium
Perfection is for sale
In the other “real” universe

Heather Bayer

Clayed pastel and charcoal on paper by Jeannot Gangwisch
erection as I wipe my mouth of the drool. As I turn to say something to my scruff-face brother, something stops me.

The tickle twinge lips pucker shift nose crinkles wrinkles. Drip-drop teary-eyed vision stings my sinuses. Eyes slip shut, sloshing stupidly back and forth under eyelids. And then they squeeze tight as my nose becomes bunny-like, quivering pink. And then the power-quick inhalation from my vacuum lungs draws exhaust and fart polluted air...and something jumps into my cavernous mouth. Hmm...tastes like a chunk of Wawa pretzel. Before I have time to savor this delicious pigeon-food, a cigarette butt lands on my drying tongue. And brings with it about 25 of its closest friends. During the sneeze, there is no control. So what's some more garbage? Gravel, loose change, rusty jewelry, handfuls of tattered concert fliers forlornly hop, skip, and spring into my expanding black hole of a mouth. I am now the street cleaner of this street, standing helpless on two feet. The suction strengthens: casually and coolly, I inhale the mustard yellow '79 Gremlin. Hmm, it doesn't taste like mustard. GAG.

At a hundred miles an hour, I purge the contents of my mouth back onto the street: AckPbbAckFRZZTChhkkOOO! Slow-mo sneeze-show sputters and coughs to an empty silent halt. Did anyone see that? Opening my eyes wide and blinking with amazement, I realize I am in my ever-so-ridiculous post-sneeze crouch position. I wipe the slobber off my lower lip and chin. Slowly gaining back my sense of awareness, I stare at the gray sidewalk, intimately close to a hairy ball of freshly discarded green chewing gum. Disgusted, I look up. "Bless you," the guy in the Decide shirt turns and mutters. I rocket upwards, erect, as if I didn't just inhale half the block. Did anyone SEE that?

A dry sniff. I'm cool. A pinching of my nose and a slick cleaning of my greasy septum. A secretive, sly look around. Yeah, I'm cool. Whatever.

Jason Mosheim

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The Sneeze

As I stand in line to get into the $12 metal gig at 10th and Arch streets in Philadelphia, I'm leaning against the window of the closed porn shop, picking my nose. Gazing over motley line, I'm wondering which one of these lunkheads will be sweating upon me. Whole ass will be in my face as the crowd passes another pale, scared 14-year-old over our heads? Anxiety fills me up waiting out here. Damn, I love metal shows. I pull my finger out of my nose and flick a nice one to the curb. Visions and sounds and smells of pointy guitars and minor E-chords that permeate the dank testosterone drenched air; sweaty shirtless metalheads roaring and flashing the Metal Horns, head banging, helicopter-like, the 25-foot-wide pit of jack-ass violence and the pierced-face bouncers dance in my head. It feels like being forced to wait to open your presents on Christmas morning! I try to conceal my
MyBody
My body
My ground
My message
brown hair, green eyes
ovaries, progesterone,
breasts, estrogen
My body
my cycles
pain is a gift
my understanding
my body is
in constant motion
it always has
given birth
by and through
our mothers
my body my ground
My First
in society
equal jobs
equal money
when will we learn what I
should say
My body My ground
my senses
mothers, sisters, lovers,
am raped
should I be scared
when will they stop
my body
My ground
my reactions
my pain
2001.23
Clean-up in Aisle Four

Her attitude on men made her that woman hiding in a pet shop randomly opening all the cages the one weary six am caffeine addicts read about in between bowls of espresso the one the newspapers declare "thrives on puppy pandemonium" that joyful yowling of dachshunds golden retrievers and collies realizing there is a world beyond small metal windows.

All the leashes and collars and water bowls are less prepared than the least of all the boxes of biscuits strown about in slumbered frenzy but aside from that rawhide bone spinning at her ankles she is the only one to watch the writhing sea as it ebbs the only to wonder if the cost of curiosity is really worth the mess.

Luchinda A. Francisco

CIGARETTE connection

Red-orange light
glow from white
paper brown
soaring slowly
through thick
clouds of blue
misty mountains

Red-orange flames
early escape memory
burning leaves cracking
shadows faded
into kitchen walls
yellow paper ripped
still brown
slowly soaring

Orange-red torches
soft hues
glowing glue
silver tarnish
faucet dripping
drops dance
into metal
mouth munching
at blue
handle holding
trivet feet still blender
blending orange red paint

Julie Clark

Mental Hand

The fleshy mound of my lower thumb absorbs the pain that flows from my watery eyes

like the soil of the earth
embracing the rain
from the mourning sky

I let these tears fall
to the brown stained crevasses
of my dominant hand

and with flat outstretched fingers
I show the world the lines
of my weary existence

Alyna Grimm
Jessica's TOOTHBRUSH

At 8:05 AM yesterday, an ambulance pulled up to the front door of our house. There is a lot of suspicion on peoples faces around town, but the truth is we've only had one fidelity at our house, that of Mr. Fish. Mr. Fish used to live in an Alpha Phi Omega rug next to Jessica's toothbrush.

One morning, Mr. Fish, who had plenty of oxygen, wished he didn't have to live in a rug. Mr. Fish was a target he was not physically able to reach. I believe Mr. Fish was saturated with Jessica's anguish. After all, it was he who saw her pick up her toothbrush and return it to its place beside him many times a day. I wonder if he ever thought she would take her Alpha Phi Omega rug with her into the bathroom. I wonder if he would use the toothbrush to clean his teeth and then swallow him down. At least he would know something about her problem.

We must have been hard for Mr. Fish, trying to avoid looking at his roommate. I am no wiser today about the affair. After a while the fire took an odd sort of hope. If he no longer existed, neither could anyone else, nor the memory of them. After his first suicide attempt, Mr. Fish resolved that there would be a second. Therefore the next morning Mr. Fish repeated his performance, except this time something went wrong. Mr. Fish succeeded in systematic self-destruction with the cut of each blade.

Kris Appignani

READY made

Morning sings with freedoms
and plastic beige shades
Airbrushed starshine warm golden pink and
misty, 80s music on my CD player
through the widow wall dust walls
onto pumpkins vases drapery on a box
littered, Little guards streaked acrylic fluores-
cent yellow neon green
natural shade or marman?
My tides change on a whim
I hit the shuffle button and
up pops Cyndi Lauper, so I guess it's gaudy for
now. I'll fix it later in the evening with Paul
Simon and Julio down by the schoolyard.
Drowned in Institution
zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz
lighting floods this hospital room in snow glare.
unknown jazz new newgrist dunes
my charcoal tip poised
above the thin beige sheet tilted.
To make a mark I start on autopilot,
a classically trained dog when the bell rings and
my model freezes for two minutes

In blue ice right white on a box
on my paper.
I hit play so the Beastie Boys
fight for their right, scribbling
elbow angles void breast spine
size negative shape twist.
The thrawn, we mingle. Beck
mutates.
I melt her solid lines into skin
soft grey curving folded flesh
striped from the
skull to the
spine to
the
back behind the door,
stirred chalk powder
rising from thin beige sheets.

Kim Evans
BriskBeach blues

lashhhhhhhhhhhhh
haaaaaaaaa
lassshhhhhhh
swooooooop
methodical soothes
cherishing carress
washed upon my feet
purring liquid peace
crashing foam in forever fury
calm’s essence
hazy lead blue waves
turn’t brown briny froth
lent the prism from the falling
light
protects, haaa
provides, swoooop
soul soothes
lashh
haaaa

Jad Fosel

Growing into THINGS

You left the kitchen
last night,
rice and beans still
on your chipped plate.
Walked down the hill
at sunset,
the first breeze of fall
on the back of your neck.
I heard the shrill of the
bluejays near the cherry tree.
Later, after the smells
of dinner faded,
curry and smoked venison,
you returned.
You had learned how
to call in a screech owl,
across the road at the pond
the lines around your eyes
crinkled even though
no smile came from
your lips,
and I, your new wife,
could already know pride.

Emily Scheidst

Landscape: Elements of TLC painting by Brian Laidlaw
Porcelain

After every shift they sat, eyes and lips obviously painted on, but if one should happen by at three in the morning and stun them out of sleep, there would be pillow creases, bleary eyes, and flaws. She knows daytime make-up is an illusion, and smiles at their reckless banter, like the fun house mirrors twist and bend reality to suit the eyes of some naïve child. She did not delve into their realm—lean towards the honey jar and try to dip a finger in for she saw them for what they would become.

In the drying glasses sitting on the bar, their faces reflected only cool confidence. It was the occasional drops sliding down the sides that she saw a life less ideal, where smiles cease and no one accepts drunkenness as an excuse anymore. She saw their faces and bodies and manicured hands slipping into old as they slid out of bed one morning, porcelain dolls’ accumulations of dirt finally apparent on formerly pristine dresses. The consequences that had added up would be revealed, those growing gray patches on the inside, the attack of that which had no want of defense in the world. But her thoughts are only opinions unheard, and she turns to grab her jacket as they decide to stay for another round, gray smoke welling around their cheeks, each blooming a patch of gray—like roses obscured by twilight.

Lucinda A. Francisco
charcoal on paper by Josh Rickenbaugh
Goodnight Raymond

Notebook paper scribbles
left in the pocket
of a boy’s white
terry cloth bathrobe:
"reading Les Misérables" while
a brick high school swells
ten stories tall

"I do not know
whether there is a God or not"
and the back porch’s
wax-skinned wooden steps
give birth to canals
green water pungent
with chlorine
Waves lap ribs
on a floating gray
plastic boat
no need to navigate
children splash laughing

and the gunshot flies home
dead 17-year-old-boy
canaries swinging above
flowered funeral casket
not the boat
but brass watch hands
stopped: Oct. 12, 1922

unsettled by Darwin,
youth ends his life
—also had a cold—
"I have that feeling
of not living, anyhow"

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