Spalding University’s
Writing Center and QEP

presents

Celebration of Student Writing

2019
**Damian Botner, “Grieving; The Realization and Acceptance”**

Poignant and powerful, poetic prose. Damian’s essay interrogates grief and its impact on one’s daily existence. He questions how humans grieve the living as they prepare for the death of loved ones.

**Whitney Bundy, “I’m Wishing for the Color of the Wind”**

In this feminist critical essay, the author thoughtfully explores the ways in which fairy tales impact and shape perceptions of idealized role of gendered women in society. The author shares with the reader considerations of the evolution of womanhood and deconstructs how fairy tales have changed to mirror women’s current roles in society.

**Brandon Cochran, “Scar Tissue”**

Brandon’s piece speaks to the truth of mental illness and how confusing and disorienting it can be when you try to “get better.” He unflinchingly stares at his mental health and invites the reader into his examination. This is important work for mental health advocacy, which we hope he will continue to share with wider and wider audiences in the future.

**Dakota Embry, “Normalize the Experience and Please, Please Be Decent”**

In an essay both personal and persuasive, Dakota Embry calls on their reader to consider media representation and its impact on self-perception and self-identity. Transgender and non-binary individuals are inadequately represented in mainstream media, and this invisibility leads to erasure of stories, widespread societal misconceptions about trans people, and internalized oppression within the LGBTQ+ community. Dakota addresses complex topics of gender identity, sexuality, and media influence with powerful clarity, and they present a compelling argument for meaningful inclusion of transgender and non-binary people, both for the good of society as a whole and especially for trans and non-binary individuals who deserve to see themselves accurately represented in media.
**Paula Harris, “Women in the Media”**

In this beautifully written feminist analysis of media representations, Paula highlights ongoing gender bias. Pulling together political figures, wives of famous men, and victims of online trolling, she demonstrates how women, while more than half of the current U.S. population, still face substantial discrimination in a so-called “post-feminist era.” Excellent analysis and skilled writing.

**Katya Melgoza, “Glass Stitches,” “A Trip to Nowhere,” and “While I Eat Hospital Food”**

Shadowed, looming, and direct. A synthesis of the familiar, of loss and hurt. Life and death. Tragedy is made sweet in these three pieces by the confidence in the poet’s language. There is darkness in this work and it is enlightening.

**Kelly McCulloch, “Dear Cell Phone”**

Addressing an unhealthy relationship that will resonate with many in the audience, Kelly writes to her cell phone asking for space. A good friend until the end, her tone is compassionate and caring as she candidly recites her complaints and asserts her personal needs and boundaries. While the committee aches for both parties in this changing relationship, we appreciate Kelly’s self-reflective and relatable voice in this letter, and we wish her the best as she explores her life with a new sense of calm and space.

**Andrea Nation, “Victoria’s Secret about Plus Sizes”**

Andrea uses this vehicle to engage in a timely examination of body norms in America. Her words are thought-provoking and her rhetorical style is highly effective. Victoria’s Secret represents the beauty industry’s final gasps maintaining an unhealthy beauty standard when so many people, a majority of women in America, do not fit the mold and are advocating for themselves through visibility and body positivity. Thank you, Andrea, for a sound cultural critique.
**Y-Binh Ngo, “Who Knows”**

This reads like prose poetry and makes a deep impact on the reader. Y-Binh has managed to show the surface of a story that hits home for many women: the cultural pressures of marriage and its financial realities. The poetry laced into the prose works as a refrain for the narrator’s complex emotions. This is a writer with a strong perspective that the world needs.

**Avery Perkins, “The Tragedy of Adria and Brigid”**

In his narrative, “The Tragedy of Adria and Brigid” Avery Perkins imagines a new creation story for the cosmos and for humankind. At its heart this story posits that everything we know in the universe was born from loneliness, sadness, betrayal, and loss – that even the beauty we still see in the world hides an emptiness that was at one time filled. In its mastery of the mythological narrative voice, this story contains a lesson about human forgetfulness and a hope that we might one day see beyond it.

**Sally Rother, “Tackling Yesterday’s Climate Crisis, Tomorrow”**

In her cogently argued piece, “Tackling Yesterday’s Climate Crisis, Tomorrow,” Sally Rother takes us through the reasons that global climate change should be thought of not as an economic or scientific crisis, but rather as a crisis perpetuated by the psychological architecture of the human mind. Her call to us is that the roots of fixing the impending climate catastrophe is to acknowledge the limits of our psychology and to act rationally for the deep future of our planet.

**Chuck Thomas, “No Regrets”**

In this unapologetic reflective narrative, the protagonist grapples with what it truly means to regret misguided actions of the past. This gritty coming of age story challenges the reader to embrace wisdom that is hard-pressed to find in difficult life lessons.
Savasia Thompson, “Love in the Streets,” “Tokenize Me,” and “Walking to Work”

Piercing and unapologetic. These poems are not for the timid or the weak or those who are uninterested in examination of the world, self, and the failings of our society. These pieces are brought to life by razor-sharp language that forces one into introspection.

Jaz’Myne Ware, “Racial Inequity toward African Americans”

Jaz’Myne discusses how racism has shape-shifted in the past century from violence and oppression that was once blatant and unapologetic to that which is now embedded in the structure of our society, insidious and easily disguised. She acknowledges that Americans are socialized to be racist, and therefore it can be difficult for many to identify/pinpoint racism in our own behavior and in our own society. The committee appreciates Jaz’Myne’s expert use of narrative, personal testimony, and media analysis to effectively illustrate examples of covert racism in American society.

Terry Wilkerson, Jr., “Script: Volcano Boy 0, Chapter 20: Something to Fight For”

Energetic, inventive, and fun. Saturday morning cartoons meet uninhabited imagination and creativity. A thread of positivity, hope and sacrifice runs through this piece which adds an additional layer to the fantastic insanity.

Mayteana Williams, “Etheareal” and “Worth”

Provocative and playful. May’s prose poems inspire us to examine our worth both internally and spiritually. They call us to consider our place within the larger world and beyond.