



HILLS REVIEW

A Journal of Student Creative Writing
2024 Edition



INDIANHILLS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Tisha Scott and Felix Grygorcewicz, Editor

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The Body Poem

Walk

One foot in front of the other.
To the next era, to the next
lifetime, within this one,
so I can leave the old one behind.
You have always been good about
leaving pieces of yourself along the way.
Some of your chest bone is still stuck in
the summer of 2018. You left lots of skin on
that white sand beach. Your 9-year-old legs
still clumsily play at the house on Little Soap.
But I need all of you here, now,
with me.
I'm about to leave
for a new home in the fall,
but I can't leave
without all of you.
It's time to replace every broken piece,
even if that means we'll just fall apart when we
get where we're going.
I don't care.
As long as you can hold yourself
together, long enough to arrive.
I know many of your parts live in the past
held hostage by growing pains,
but we have lived so many lives, since then.
It's time to be fully present
in, at least, one.
Let it be this one.

Vantage Point

Like nimbostratus clouds of
a slow rolling storm,
big accumulations
of small realizations
came together for me.

There was no life changing
moment, no sudden realization charged with
a lightning bolt's energy.
No wind whispering
'this is how to find happiness'.
Just small dots of precipitation
crowding one another to form
a pointillism portrait.

Life will always be
what you make it. When you wake up
expecting something great,
the mundane becomes
extraordinary.

A daisy,
growing through the sidewalk.
Birds,
singing in morning light.
92 songs,
listened to throughout the day.
Homemade hamburgers,
eaten for dinner.
An arsenal of perspective, perfectly attuned to
aid in the establishment of

making gratitude
a habit.

Trell Amoss

The Mountain's Muse:

Upon the rugged trails, where the peaks touch the sky,
A lone figure wanders beneath the sun's bright eye.
With each step, a symphony of the quiet earth,
As the mountain whispers secrets of its birth.

Above, the eagle soars in patriotic flight,
Guiding the hiker through the realms of the light.
Through deep valleys and the canyons wide,
Where echoes of old tales reside.

The air is crisp, with a scent of pine,
As the hiker ascends, each summit serves as a sign
Of resilience and strength against nature's might,
A journey of courage, in the morning light.

With every stride, a connection grows,
To the earth below and the sky's repose.
In the heart of the mountains, a soul finds peace,
As the hiker's spirit soars, seeking release.

So let us follow in their path, where the wind blow
Embracing the mountains, where dreams freely flow.
For in the wilderness, we discover our true worth,
As we hike through the mountains of the earth.

Nature's Feeling:

In the quiet of the morning,
I find solace in the gentle caress of the rising sun.
Its warm embrace awakens my soul
to the beauty of the world around me.

I walk among the whispering trees,
their branches reaching out like old friends.
Each leaf is a reminder of the intricate
connections that bind us all together.

The earth beneath my feet is solid and grounding,
a steadfast companion on this journey of self-discovery.
I breathe in the crisp air, feeling it fill my lungs
with the essence of life and possibility.

Lost to Call of Duty

In the quiet solitude of remembrance,
I find myself lingering in the shadow.
Of a man who walked with purpose.
A relative lost to the call of duty.

His presence lingers in the faded photographs,
heavy with the weight of sacrifice,
and the silent burden of patriotism.
A reminder of the cost of freedom.

Memories flicker like distant stars,
each one a testament to his unwavering resolve,
his commitment to a cause greater than himself,
sewn into the fabric of our family's history.

In the silence of the night,
I hear the echoes of his footsteps.
Marching to a rhythm of bravery.
Leaving behind a legacy of honor.

Though he may be gone,
his spirit lives on in the hearts
of those who remember.
Those who carry his memory forward.

And as I stand in the shadow of his legacy,
I am reminded of the price he paid,
the sacrifices he made
for a country he loved fiercely.

So, I honor him not with tears
but with gratitude.
Knowing that his legacy will endure,
if there are those who remember.

House of Glass

I am convinced that I will never truly know what my body looks like. Having body dysmorphia is unlike anything I can describe. It causes one to do crazy things. My body has lived more lives than I will ever. The cool feeling of water hitting my empty stomach will never cease to satisfy me. Having an eating disorder is like slowly lowering yourself onto a knife you have strategically placed, just to cause the most damage. The pain is immense, but the suffering is calming. Deny, deny, deny. I don't have a problem. This is perfectly normal. I don't need help. Instead, I continue avoiding my reflection. One look and it'll swallow me whole. The girl on the other side, some disgusted version of myself. My identity lies within her. And yet, I cannot seem to uncloud my vision enough to find her. And the saddest thought is, I thought I was past this. I thought I forgot how mirrors looked with towels covering them. I thought I forgot how to count my calories. Forgot where I hid the scale...
But here we are again. Huddled in the corner, crying, with a granola bar in hand. Tasting it through the smells and throwing the aroma up. I am convinced that I will never truly know what my body looks like...

My Storms

I haven't always loved thunderstorms.
The thunder used to scare me and
the lightning was too bright. But now
I admire the chaos. I think of it as
a calming moment in time. Much like
me, the sky gets really quiet, it
stills before it breaks. The wind is
imitating deep breaths. The trees howling
is the soul screaming to just
let it all go. The rain weeps with
me, the thunder gives me a voice, and the
lightning illuminates what no one
wants people to see. The storm
is where I find my peace because
I know, I am not the first to experience
this pain.

Ode to America

Back before I was born, being an American was
something to be proud of. Now, it is
seen as something to be shunned.

In the 80's, being an American was
an honor! We preached our freedom and
sang our voices. Now, we are
seemingly more divided than ever.

It's always right versus left,
wrong or right. There is no more compromise.

I often wish we were like the 80's once again;
flourishing in our land, our cultures.

Moving forward in our businesses and inventions,
flourishing innovations and organizations,
not stuck between ourselves.

What We Remember...

I remember love.
I remember wonder.
I remember magic.
I remember my father.
I remember my mother.
I remember an hour ride from one to the other.
I remember fear.
I remember death.
I remember questions.
I remember questioning what it meant to live.
I remember questioning what it meant to die.
I remember not understanding why people would lie.
I remember sadness dampening spaces in-between.
I remember wanting to be a part of nature.
I remember being angry that I wasn't.
I remember that I couldn't remember everything.
I don't remember when love soured.
I don't remember when wonder turned to disdain.
I don't remember when the magic faded.
I don't remember when I let go of my father's hatred.
I don't remember when I picked up my mother's.
I don't remember when fear turned to rage.
I don't remember when I made friends with the mortals' fate.
I don't remember how long I fought myself.
I don't remember what shattered my mind.
I don't remember when I started putting it back together.
I don't remember how much I can't remember.
I don't remember when I learned to love again.
I don't remember when I learned to accept chaos.
I don't remember when I learned to love the rain.
I don't remember when I decided to make a change.
I don't remember when I shifted my thoughts to progress and positivity.
I don't remember, specifically, how many times I needed to force the smile
that kept me going.
I don't remember how I found the strength to keep going.
I don't remember learning to keep going.
But I do.

Haiku's of Progress

Moving place to place,
Graduation a pipe dream,
I must move forward.

Depression around,
Deep holes found all around me,
I must move forward.

Father, friend of Grim.
Brother lost, whispers in wind.
I must move forward.

Follow close behind,
Stumble on stones on the ground,
I will move forward.

Mother, hope is slim,
Sister's need you home, you know?
Can I move forward?

We have to do it.
We are tired and we're hungry.
But we can't stop.

I am closer now,
The pipe dream in reach,
truly I will keep trying.

So much to do,
yet So little time left to prove
I will always—

I am nearly there,
One step closer to a dream
Keep moving forward...

To the Yellow Girl

to the yellow girl
a smile effortlessly pinned to her face
like a gold star on the bulletin board
the one who bubbles over like a bottle of champagne,
just opened
the one who is her own planet with a gravitational pull,
so strong that everyone surrounds her
to the drizzling rain dancer with no umbrella
the one who seems like she's never seen a bad day

I want to be you

but I am the color blue

putting a smile on my face takes more than some tape and
a few staples
my bubbles are more like the kind from
a hot pan
I am the moon circling around the planet but never able to
get close enough to touch it
broken umbrella, dragging through the rain with the legs of my
pants
soaked from stepping in a puddle
I have seen more bad days than I can count
if I try to be you, I only turn green
envy that I don't want to be seen
but who is the color of the jeans that go with everything
who is the color of the sky on a sunny day
who is the color of the ocean, calm.

I am

I want to be you

but if I'm not, maybe that's okay too
sincerely, blue

The Boiling Pot

It's late. I'm awakened in a jolt to the feeling of the muscles in my shivering body. I cannot see much of anything around me. It's dark; too dark. I can hear the water boiling in a pot on the nearby kitchen stove. The sound of the bubbles soothes me because I know that if I can hear them, I'm okay. Sometimes, the calming sound is muffled by the distant whispers and muttering from my mother and father's room. Sounds are easily heard throughout the small trailer; conversations seem to linger for hours in this metal box.

"Just lay your head down and try to rest," My mother had said to me earlier as she laid me down on the couch and covered me up with my SpongeBob blanket. "This is only temporary, honey."

I nodded quietly; I'm not one to complain. I used to sleep in a room of my own, down the hallway. As things got worse, it got too cold for me to sleep in there. I try not to think about the cold. My mother tells me to think of warm things like the sun or sandy beaches.

I continue to toss and turn for about 15 minutes until I let my cold thoughts win and I scurry like a mouse to the kitchen. The only light visible is the dim glow of the stove used to heat the entire trailer. I put my hands above the pot to feel the evaporation of the water on my palms. Immediately, the warmth flows up my arms and through my body. I continue to rub my hands together to gather as much warmth as possible. I glimpse my reflection in the shiny metal pot. My dark thin hair lays over my shoulders. I see my mother's eyes.

"You are as beautiful as your mother," Men who were strangers to me would say as I ran into them at stores. It's a feature of mine I wish I never had.

I hear the door to my parents' room slam. My heart escapes my chest and I run back to my designated place.

"I'm leaving! And I'm taking her with me!" I hear my mother yell.

Footsteps begin to approach the dark living room. My heart rate rises as the steps become louder. I lay under my blanket, frozen in fear, hoping that I was not heard. My mother enters the room in a hurry and shakes me. I jump up to see her bloodshot eyes looking back at me.

“We have to go, baby. We have to get out of here,” she shudders. Her voice echoes throughout the trailer.

“Why, mother? Why?” I respond.

Before she is able to answer, she is struck on the side of her head with so much force

that she falls next to me on the couch. I scream. Behind her stands father with a bottle of clear liquid in his left hand, his right a balled-up fist.

“She’s not going anywhere, you good-for-nothing bitch,” he mutters so drunkenly that I can hardly understand him.

Tears start streaming down my face as my mother sobs on the couch. Father has always been a cold man, but I never knew how monstrous he could be. He begins stumbling around yelling profanities that my 10-year-old ears have never heard. My mother pulls me into her embrace and remains silent. She understands that if she attempts to speak, it will outrage him more.

“Don’t let the cold thoughts consume you,” I think to myself as father moves to the kitchen with his outrage.

“Yyy-you are not going anywhere,” He repeats over and over as he throws every object in sight onto the kitchen floor. First, the bowls on the counter. Then, all our pictures on the wall.

“Don’t move,” my mother whispers. I listen to her order and stay silent and limp in her arms. She pulls me in tighter. I feel her trembling fingers comb through my dark hair to soothe me. It works for a moment until we both hear father crash to the ground. The sound is so loud that it rumbles through the whole box like thunder. Father begins to scream. My mother rushes into the kitchen; a courageous act.

“Oh my god- OH MY GOD! Your father’s been burnt!” She yells.

I run into the kitchen. I see the most gruesome scene I have ever witnessed. Water is all over. Father is motionless on the floor, covered in shades of red. Next to him lies the metal cooking pot, empty and upside-down. Fifteen minutes pass. I see the dark shadow of father get taken away on a stretcher as fluorescent blue and red lights blind me. My mother holds me in her arms as the ambulance drives away. I feel emotionless as the adrenaline of the night plummets. I sleep in my mother’s moving car for the rest of the night, imagining the sound of the bubbles.

Erin Eddy

An Agoraphobe's Attempt

We, students, are asked to read Roethke's "Root Cellar"- this poem, what an old friend-and I recall what I know of Roethke:

Raised in severity, haunted by his father's greenhouse.

I think of my own father's greenhouse.

I think of my self-imposed severity.

Roethke was right about plenty:

It is dank in there, and the air is thick,

and the world comes alive and breathes with you.

The smell chokes you, tomato leaves, and wet dirt,

and peat pots yearning for ground,

and the world grows so, so quiet.

The talented can sing with the groan of thickening stems,

and the stretching of roots.

My father seems to know every song.

I am trying exposure therapy.

(I have been inside for six months straight.)

My mother says, "Some sun would be good for you."

My father says, "Go see what I worked on."

A simple store is still too much, but maybe my backyard is not,
so I creep into my father's greenhouse.

Bright sights, heady smells, familiar warmth.

The sun is killing me, thick, heavy, dank air,

Too much, it's all too much, and

I see the roots bursting from their pots,

burrowing, snaking, leaping over one other,

trampling, intertwining, hungering,

Collecting beneath me,

And digging up through the soles of my shoes.

I feel them, yes, feel them boring into my skin,

Dancing alongside my veins,

Worming between my joints,

And they are anchoring me there until they've had their fill.

I think: Go ahead.

Eat me up, if you'd like.

You might find me to be bitter.

(I can sing better than my father,

But I've killed every plant I've tried to grow.)

I cannot move- I could never move when I needed to.

Now, (Is it these damned roots, or is it just me?)

I am the deer in the headlights.

I am the target awaiting the arrow.

I am the log devoured by moss.

Like always, I stare my fear in the eyes,

And I let it eat me whole.

Tell me,

How am I supposed to run from this terror

When I am not even sure what I'm so terrified of?

How am I supposed to fight or fly

When my pursuer resides within my skull?

I flee the greenhouse, scurry back to the safety of my bedroom,

Hide away, hide, hide, hide,

"It's neat in there, huh?" Yes, it's beautiful, it is truly so beautiful,

I mean it. I do find it picturesque,

But the roots follow me,

Sucking, scraping, slithering.

I'm sick to my stomach, but I'm not even sure why.

When you're born so afraid, you can never escape fear.

Something so sweet as life can scare me half to death.

(Coward.)

Autobiographies

Sunshine Laursen

My name Sunshine Laursen. I am 20 years old and a second-year student at Indian Hills. I have grown up in Ottumwa, Iowa all my life but I look forward to moving to Ames in the fall! After getting my A.A. at Hills, I will then transfer to Iowa State University to get some type of degree in conservation. My love for writing first began when a teacher told me he really loved my story I wrote in the first grade. Ever since then, writing has had a special place in my heart, especially poetry.

Abby Jager

Abby Jager is a senior at Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont. While fairly new to poetry, writing has been a hobby of hers since elementary school. In the future, Abby plans to pursue an education and career within English.

Trell Amoss

My name is Trell Amoss and I am a Class of 2024 Senior at Albia High School. I will be attending Oklahoma State University to major in Agribusiness: Pre-Law & Agricultural Education. After my undergraduate studies, I have aspirations to attend law school to become an agricultural lawyer to serve as a voice for agriculturists and farmers, and to defend the American rancher, locally and nationally.

Chloe DeMoss

Hi, I am Chloe DeMoss, a junior at Albia High School. I am involved in many clubs and sports here at the school. I also got the opportunity to be our Class Vice President. I plan to continue my education through Indian Hills and get a degree in Radiology Technologist. Through this course I have started to love reading and writing poetry. Thank you for taking the time to read my poem!

Alyssa Prevo

I am a high school senior in Albia, Iowa. I enjoy writing poetry and hope to someday publish my own book. My poems are all personal and true to me. I am a mental health and eating disorder advocate for those who feel they don't have a voice. My plans after high school include attending Iowa State in the fall of 2024. I will study criminal psychology and get a PhD in psychiatry in graduate school afterwards.

Paige Waddell

My name is Paige Waddell and I am a senior at Albia Community High School, graduating in May. I plan to attend Indian Hills, though I am still unsure what specific degree I would like to get (something creative, probably!). Thank you for reading my poem!

Frank Sias

My name is Frank Sias, I am 24, and after many years of confusion, I came to Iowa for a new start in 2022. Things have been interesting since I came here. I'm grateful to the friends and teachers who have seen me through the past couple years and I'm far from done. I go to University this fall, 2024, to begin my journey towards my undergrad degree and I hope to be earn my doctorate in English/Creative Writing within the decade! Writing is my passion and I hope to be a master of my craft as I continue to pursue a career in the field!

Sija Laffin

My name is Sija Laffin and I am a college senior going to school for Dental Hygiene. Writing is a great outlet for me from poems to the novel I'm currently working on. I enjoy attending our Creative Writing Club to connect with other creative individuals and let go of the stress of my program.

Maliah Salter

I am a sophomore at Indian Hills. I'm from Ottumwa, Iowa and currently studying Social Work, graduating in 2024. In my free time, I enjoy reading and writing poetry. I play a variety of instruments and am passionate about music. Music is one of my biggest inspirations. I hope to pursue music and art further, as well as get a bachelor's degree in human relations.

Erin Eddy

My name is Erin Eddy and I am from Fairfield, Iowa. As of May 16th, 2024, I will have a degree in English from Indian Hills Community College. I am a freelance artist and a musician, and I hope to further my career in English by writing more and beginning a career in editing. I plan to attend William Penn University in a couple of years to continue my degree.



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Life. Changing.

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