



SPARROW
SUNY ULSTER'S ART & LITERARY MAGAZINE



PREMIER ISSUE 2024



Bryce Casamento



SPARROW STATEMENT

Small but strong, sparrows have a unique voice and thrive in their environment.

MISSION STATEMENT

Sparrow showcases the best creative efforts our students have to offer, featuring poetry, essays, fiction, fine art, graphic design, photography, sculpture, fashion design, and more. The publication strives to reflect the diversity and talent of the SUNY Ulster student community.

THE OUTLANDER

by David Velasquez Sierra

My accent sounds outlandish,
My dreams meant travel but not trouble.
Magnetically calling in
The places I wanted to be in,
But the places found me:
Several lands, after all,
to define me, to shape me,
and behind the opening of all my doors and knocking on some,
I have finally made it here,
The last place I wanted to be in,
meant to be? -Indeed.
But why am I still feeling different?
What have I done but my tone?
Maybe just moving in?
Or perhaps just being me!
No, the problem is not me.
The problem is that I am only a human being.

02/11/2024

Knives Made of Snow and Ice

The pain keeps coming back
The man's tears are heard
Over the sound of the wind.

As the snow falls harder
And the wind grows louder
And colder
The man's pain
Becomes worse
His legs and chest
Throb with white-hot
Unforgivable
Pain.

He wants it to stop
He pleads for it to stop
His tears
Stream down his beard
Like a large river

In the aftermath
Of a terrible storm.

Finally, help arrives.
An ambulance comes along
And he is taken to the hospital.

He is free from the pain
His family is there with him
During his recovery process
So that next time
He won't be alone
He won't be alone
In that harsh
Dark
Cutting
Painful
Icy Darkness.

Flynn Steyer 1/31/2024



M. English



Angel Brown



Flynn Steyer



R.I.P. Best Friend

KD

Drugs took over my fiancé's life and temporarily obliterated mine. "Addiction, at its worst, is akin to having Stockholm Syndrome...like a hostage who has developed an irrational affection for your captor. They can abuse you, torture you, even threaten to kill you, and you'll remain inexplicably and disturbingly loyal." -Ann Clendenning. After four fulfilling years, we were now newly engaged. I witnessed a radical and unexpected spiral amid my best friend's addiction. When we decided to try for a baby we agreed to shape up and improve our lifestyle once we were pregnant. We promised each other to make better decisions. It was that simple.

In January of 2019, I tested positive. Overjoyed with the news, I immediately adhered to the commitment and eliminated the distractions in my life. I got healthy. How could I not? I now had the internal motivation one needs to become sober. I began focusing on having the healthiest pregnancy possible. Unfortunately, that was too big of a cross for Michael to bear. The months before my pregnancy we were partying, moderately hard. Amongst a network of people we had considered friends, we numbed our traumas and poisoned our bodies. Neither of us really understood how self-destructive we were. Unbeknownst to me, over the first six months of my pregnancy, the grip of Micheal's addiction grew hungrier than ever.

On a Tuesday evening in July of 2019, six months in, was the tipping point. I received a call from my beloved fiancé. He claimed to be working late. He was a landscaper. He had been working late on and off for the past two weeks. Go, figure. But I still thought nothing of it. Delusional and blinded by love. I left the front door unlocked, dinner in the mic, and tucked myself in around nine pm.

At approximately six am, sunrise poking through, I woke to find he had never returned home last night. Panicking and immediately anticipating the worst, I called his job. "Maybe he was in an accident." I thought as I dialed and held my breath. The receptionist answered, confused to be hearing from me. I was told Micheal left work early the day before. He had told his employer that *I* had been in a car accident. That he needed to meet me at the hospital and there was fear for the baby. Shocked and embarrassed by the outright lie, I quickly got off the phone. I called him repeatedly. With no luck, I began reaching out to his friends. Expecting to hear about some terrible accident that kept him away last night. I was eventually told where I could find him.

I drove to Kingston, a falling city, and parked in municipal parking. I found him, face drawn in, outside a "friend's" house, wearing clothes different from the ones he wore to work on Tuesday morning. I could tell he had not slept. His loose-lipped speech and obtuse facial expression told me he had been partying since yesterday. Michael's car was gone and his wallet empty. We argued intensely as I slowly coaxed him towards my car. He yanked the chain necklace from around my neck, breaking it easily. As we approached the car, he demanded I give him the keys. He said he could drive and wanted to go to the bank. He had already withdrawn around three hundred dollars from our shared account the night before. I refused to let him drive in that condition and pleaded with him to go to the passenger side of the car. He started banging on the car window, my mother's car window, with the butt end of his closed utility knife. In that moment, an elderly man came out of a neighboring house. He asked us to leave. At first calmly, then assertively. Michael got agitated and aggressive and started shuffling towards the stranger. I grabbed Michael's arm, "We'll go! We will go to the bank! PLEASE, Micheal! Just get in the car!" Just barely getting him there, I shut his door and hurried to my side. I pulled out of the municipal parking and headed towards the bank.

Driving down Broadway during morning rush has never been a pleasant experience. This journey was the worst yet. Although I promised to take him to the bank, I had him in the car. I would have rather taken him home. We argued more as I tried to convince him to just come home and rest. "We can come back out later. Let's just go home." I said anything I thought would change his mind. I was driving down busy Broadway going forty in a thirty, and Michael abruptly grabbed the shifter and slammed the car into park. The car made several frightening noises as I heaved the steering wheel to the right, attempting to stop the car safely. Within seconds two police cruisers blocked us in.

Someone had called the police claiming they witnessed Michael choking me. Maybe they had seen him rip off my necklace. The police asked us questions and I lied. I lied through my teeth, discretely drying my tears and covered for him. I didn't want him arrested. I just wanted him home. I told them we had argued before, but everything was fine now. Michael did not help me during that situation. With his disrespectful demeanor, "Get your hands off me!" he snarls and jerks his arms out of the officer's hands. But I was convincing, and they let us go.

By this time, I surrendered. I pulled into the bank and the drive through appeared closed. I pulled up to the front door. Michael immediately sprang from the car, slamming the car door shut. When he reached the bank's front door and pulled, he realized they were closed and would be until 8am, another twenty minutes. He stomped his feet and callously got back in the car. Michael insisted we wait. While waiting, most likely being the first time Micheal had sat calmly in over a day, he couldn't hold his eyes open. He passed out. With an enormous sigh of relief, I quietly shifted the car into gear and drove home.

When we arrived home, at my mom's house, I, six months pregnant, managed to practically carry Micheal into the house, up the stairs, and into our bedroom. He collapsed on the bed. I took off his hat, his work boots, and socks.

I then tried to locate his car. Another "friend" he was with suggested that maybe Micheal had left the car at one of the hotels they visited last night. While he's completely incapacitated, I go looking with no luck. Little did I know, Micheal had loaned the car to an acquaintance. This acquaintance, this opportunist, drove the car to a different county on a suspended license, was then pulled over and arrested. Micheal's car was impounded. Later that week I paid four hundred dollars to get the car out of the Hudson impound lot. The monetary total for that forty-eight hours was about seven hundred dollars. Cash wasn't the only thing I lost that day.

In the U.S. in 2020, 40.3 million people over 12 y/o had experienced substance abuse in the past year.

Addiction does not discriminate.

The drugs and the people feeding your addiction don't love you.

In the U.S. in 2020, 40.3 million people over 12 y/o had experienced substance abuse in the past year.

Drugs can take over your loved one's life and yours.

Eliminating the person you love and leaving behind a fiending shell.

I hope no one learns these things the way I did.

-2020 National Survey on Drug use and Health

Old Tire

By Michael Griffin

In contemplation of a tire,
Filled with a pool of tepid murk,
And sat in the twisted weeds of an arid field,
I find myself in question.
How has this thing now come to pass,
That such a thing should lie in grass,
And furthermore who's was it then,
That is when it had not been here?
Down endless roads, now forgotten,
Was this field made for things to rot in?
What odd man has placed this here?
A drying rubber torus quite far from roads
Where the buzzing swarms of traffic chorus
Lost in a sea of endless brush,
A symptom of man's eternal rush.



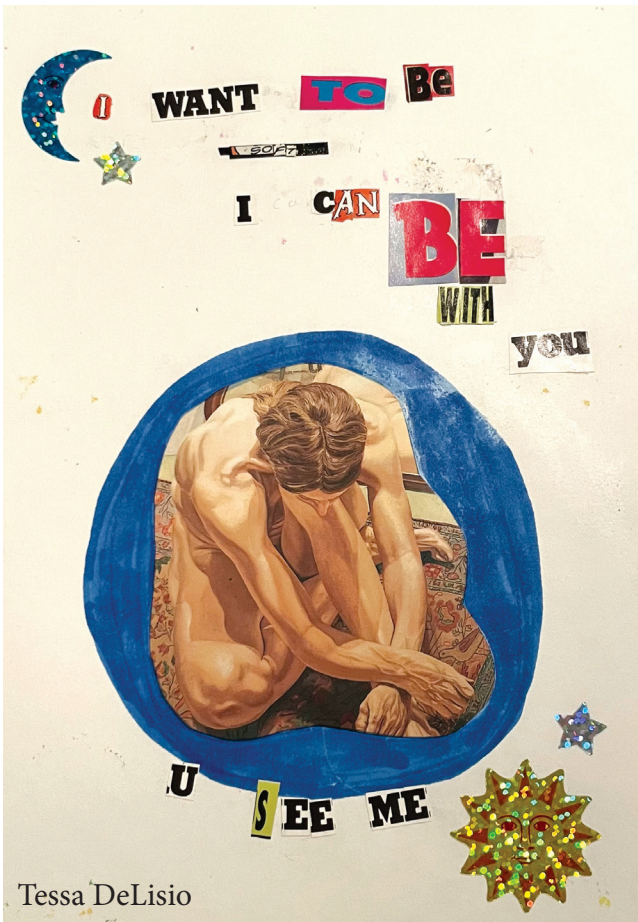
Samantha Olson



Yevett Mireku



Shepherd Schouten



Tessa DeLisio

Late

Why am I always late?
My parents say "You're just
A late bloomer!"

I'm late to the movies,
I'm late to the TV,
I'm late to the music,
I'm late to the clothes.

I'm late to college
2020 is far ahead,
Everyone graduating
Living on their own
I'm here biding my time
I'll know when it's time to go

Why am I always early?
Early to class,
Early to a movie,
Early to a meeting,
Early to bed.

I was told "Early is on-time,
On-time is late, and
Late is unacceptable."

I'm early because I'm late
I'm late because it's my nature
What can we do about nature?
Everything.

Who is stopping you?

By Anonymous



Calico Withall

Chipped Shoulder

By Valentina Femia

How do you let go of something that was never truly yours
I'm saying goodbye to the father i never had, except how should I go about that when his
presence makes me mute
A long list of unanswerable questions,
A tale as old as time
I know there's no catharsis so i dilute my ails with rhyme
Childhood is over
No trees left to climb
I asked you for a dollar and you gave me but a dime
Band-aids lose their potency
I scraped my knee but I'll be fine
The wound won't go away, though
I was only nine
Monkey in the middle
Was supposed to be a game
I can't say I recall the rule
Where the monkey should be maimed
Irreparable scars
Impotent bandages
Cruelty and contempt
You made me fluent in such languages
One more time
Tell me please
Just one more time

The paternal chip on your shoulder both fueled and justified your crimes



Meghan Stone-Wardynski



Candice Kelly



Gabriella Sorbara



Alison Lundy



Delilah Smith



Erica Lunden

“Mindful thoughts = happy mind”

Basking in my own presence,
I feel calm, serene. . .
Warm thoughts flutter my mind,
Like happy butterflies
attempting to socialize.
My mind feels calm, yet full:

Full of *love*.
Full of *care*.
Full of *trust*.
Full of *flair*.

I have so much serenity inside of me
that I wish to share.
I wish I could just share the inside of my mind
with those who yearn:

For *comfort*.
For *peace*.
For *love*,
and for *ease*.

Let me in your walls,
and I'll give you the keys-
To a world of therapeutic wonders
and glorious peace. . .

★

★

I am mindful.

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Maya Farhat

Beyond The Shadows:

I wrote your name in the snow and hoped it would show the
flow of my affection towards you,
But the flurries quickly covered it up as if to remind me you
aren't mine.

I fight your demons by day, and you are on your knees inviting
them back by nightfall,
Envy poisons my tongue and I try to chain my condescending
words for every time you're with him,
Slowly chipping at my soul because I am not the one to
experience the bliss of your radiance.

You have my love buried under the scorching heaviness of
your desert sands,
You really have me building sandcastles with quicksand in the
middle of the ocean.

Withal...

Just in case it ever felt like my feelings made a shift, they never
did.

Your reflections spark in my eyes and ignite sensations that
burn my body with a hunger only your presence can feed.

My heart still skips a little faster every time a memory of you
floods my mind.

And all this just but reminds me that your affection was and is
the purest I've had to find.

I worry a lot when my mind begins to wonder if I'll get to see
the radiance of your smile in real time.
And I'm overcome with so much hate for myself as I can't kill
the distance to make you mine.

by
Takudzwa Muhomba



Gina Garfolo-Goodman



Gabrielle Coghlan



sparrow

SUNY ULSTER'S ART & LITERARY MAGAZINE

A voice to the talented writers and visual artists of all kinds within our SUNY Ulster student community.

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Start Here. Go Far.
SUNY Ulster

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