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A Welcome to Montage

Welcome to the 2013 – 2014 edition of MONTAGE. In a letter to H. G. Wells in 1915, the novelist Henry James wrote: “It is art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance... and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and heart of its process.” The students who created and contributed art to MONTAGE personify this credo, alchemizing poems and stories and visual art from their own experiences into vibrant, interesting, important works to be shared. I was honored to be a part of MONTAGE this year and to work with several of the writers and artists included in these pages. There is so much talent and heart revealed here, demonstrating the centrality of creativity to the human spirit. When we make art, we are our best selves, and it has been a delight to see these students at their best.

This journal would not be possible without the generosity and dedication of several people. BIG THANKS to Dr. Robert Seufert and Dr. Ashley Green for their wisdom and advice, to Khara Koffel for her artistic expertise, to Dr. Allan Metcalf for his support, to the students of our English 250/Creative Writing Seminar for their hard work, and especially to Marcy Jones for her beautiful design and formatting of MONTAGE. Thank you, everyone, and happy summer!

Enjoy this year’s magazine,

Laura Bandy
Professional Fellow
Montage Advisor
The Day I Found Rusty
Molly Herzog

Looking out the car window, all there was to see for miles were farms. Grass swaying, waltzing to a song I couldn’t hear.

The building is brick, inviting, small. A flowerless garden made me feel at home. The doorway invited me, called out my name.

The scent hit me, the sound startled me, the sight, the sight.

He had fur so white like a fresh sheet of paper, brown spots like wet sand beneath your feet. His eyes, drawing me in, eager, hopeful, scared, alone.

It was then, that very moment we locked eyes, that I knew, he would be mine.
America’s Favorite Pastime

Rochelle McElroy
“Richard” Series
Kendra Brown
Pay attention to the cracks in the wall.  
That piece of white paint peeling away,  
Revealing the older, obsolete and forgotten surface.  
Notice the trim,  
Chipped away, defenseless against the sea of white from meeting the ceiling.  
Water, taking its toll, forming waves,  
Disturbances in a once perfect wall.

Pay attention to the detail on the floor.  
A chamber of memories innocently  
Revealing the life before.  
Crimson reds and charcoal grays,  
Flakes of the earth from outside,  
All collectively displayed on the carpet.

Pay attention to the room,  
A seemingly old, desperate abode.  
Attention to the detail,  
To the marks made by man and time,  
Reveal the definition by which some call home.
Mountains, Reykjavik

Kaytlyn Worner
Money
Josh Bracken

Money runs the world.
It runs our life.
It makes us do things
It Controls us.
The way we talk to our love ones
Why does money be so precious?
Every day you worry about.
Take a step back.
And appreciate the real meaning of life.
Go out and enjoy it.
Everything in life shouldn’t be about money.
Money can’t buy happiness.

Mask
Molly Herzog

Hanging from the ceiling
swaying and turning,
as vibrant as the day my
father surprised me,
returning after what felt
like forever to my young mind,
I reminisce now looking at
the dog-like gift,
yet I feel a pang because
he is far away once again.
The First Time I Heard Owl City
Molly Herzog

My eyes grew larger than the moon. Air rushed into my lungs like a waterfall, yet I was still breathless. I had never imagined anything so intensely dreamy. Not even during my deepest slumbers. His words swam to my ears, fish swaying through the ocean. So unfathomable, so lovely. Every sound lifted me up and I stayed there, floating with euphoria. While swirling around in midair I felt unreal, but so indefinitely complete.
The Rival
Josh Bracken

It was a nice warm Monday of September
Playing against a conference foe
Their purple and yellow colors came unpleasant
Were at home with our fans cheering us on
I start off with a 20 yard run
And kept that going on later with a 40 yard run
And just knowing we can dominate them
The game was ours to lose at the end
With a key stop by our defense secured the win

The Gridiron
Josh Bracken

Bloody sweat and tears have been put on that green grass
You start out as just teammates but with what you go through
Together you become brothers
You go to battle with them every Friday night
Underneath those hot lights with your brothers
And playing your heart out there is no better feeling
I was three years old and I didn’t know much
But I knew that I was white
And they weren’t.
I knew that I’d never seen people like them
And it hurt
When some of them sneered at my dad
And called him “White Boy”
Because I didn’t understand
It was just the laws of the land
And every woman and every man there
Had grown up feeling judged
Like the clothes on their backs
Weren’t worth the miles they trudged
Fighting Jim Crow
And his crowd of cronies.
And they resented us
Because our faces were as white
As the sheets they dreaded to see
Worn as pointed masks marching down the street
Screaming “YOU’RE STILL NOT FREE.”

And I was four years old
And I didn’t know much
But I knew that my daddy was a preacher
And he started saying something that annoyed my pre-K teacher
He said, “You gotta color outside the lines.
Because everyone here has been thrown to the lions
Everyone here has had hard times
So we can’t divide
Into black and white
We are A people.
Singular.
We are A church.
One.
And we’re not giving up this fight.”

‘Cause I was only five years old
But I knew that “we” meant “us” not “me”
“We” didn’t just mean “my family”
It meant “everyone”
Regardless of race or creed.
I remember the woman in the corner pew
I remember especially how she would become so moved
By the sermons
That she would faint.
Can you imagine?
Every week
Being brought to your knees
Because something moved her in that pew
And the holy dove was moving, too
And every breath she drew
Was hallelujah.
And I thought…
I’ve never seen that at a white church.

And by the time I was six years old
I was proud of my principal
For throwing up on a white cop’s shoes
After he pulled her over and accused her
Of being black and wealthy
Because that must mean she’s a prostitute.
I was proud the day my church
Intimidated the Ku Klux Klan
Instead of the other way around
I was proud the day my church
Reached around the world
And touched the former Soviet Union
I was proud the day I realized
My church was no longer making history
By simply being black
Just like my father never made history
By simply being white
No
WE were making history
By simply
Being
Incredible.

When I was seven years old
We had to move again
But not before my mother
Received a plaque that said
“Honorary African American Woman.”
And I got to feel proud
All over again.
I live down the street
Kathleen Hammock

Dear old woman with the wrinkled apple cheeks,

You don’t know me
I live down the street
But I see you from time to time
Scrambling about in the daisies
So I hope you don’t mind if I write.
You always seem so animated
Sweeping your front porch
Hustle Bustle   Hustle Bustle
Your tiny blue eyes darting about
Like a little bird looking for bugs.

You like color
Reds and Blues and Yellows and Greens
Lively skirts swishing in time to the tune
Whistle Whistle  Hum Hum
You sing

Your cheeks are weathered
Like orchard apples
Left in the cellar too long
But you sing.

I guess that is why I’m writing.

I heard about Joe
I heard about your Joe
Never came back from the war
I heard you waited a long time
By the train.

Then one day you put on your colors
Pulled your silver wisps in place with shiny pins
And began to sing

I just wanted you to know,

I’m sorry about Joe.
FM
Trina Crew

I drive alone back home a lot.
The path is marked by places I pass,
Trees and water are all around me.
I think about other drives home before
A different vantage not a different road,
Trees and water are all around me.
I wonder how long I’ll drive this road
The road seems to always change with
Trees and water all around me.

Untitled
Trina Crew

The wooly caterpillar is the longest living caterpillar
The oldest caterpillar is the wooly caterpillar
Arctic vampire butterfly
Ice infinitely threatens to solidify
But her veteran cells are fortified
A pretty pop of crimson among black & white
She watches the world freeze as years go by
Everything she knows around her dies
The wooly caterpillar is the oldest caterpillar
The longest living caterpillar is the wooly caterpillar
“Richard” Series
Kendra Brown
Helping a friend, that’s what I was doing
Because I thought that’s what good people did.
It was late,
A waning moon illuminated my once recognizable surroundings.
The porch light defined an unfamiliar place.
A few reassuring words exchanged.
I pushed my limits to make sure he was happy.
It was 12:15,
And a phone call,
A simple 5 minute exchange of technological thought
Was enough to make me believe.
One small error,
A miscalculation, misunderstanding, misguided intention.
I was not good enough anymore.
An Everlasting Friendship
Rochelle McElroy
Painted Nails
Molly Herzog

Sitting on the couch looking at the bright polish as it captivates you, choosing one, you shake the bottle then twist the lid, the smell hits you like a gust of wind that’s strong enough to mess up your hair.

Pull up the lid, revealing the brush, polish drips and you wipe the excess, as you lay out your hand like you intend to draw its outline.

Take the brush and paint your first nail, yell at your dog to stop sniffing you, move on to the next nail.

Now all your nails are freshly painted, as shiny as the metal on the nail clippers.

Until they dry, as dry as skin in the winter, don’t touch anything, smudges are the enemy here, don’t say I didn’t warn you, in fact, just act as if you have no hands.
Microscope Malfunction
Brady Milnes
No matter how hard he tried Jimmy O’Toole couldn’t yet grasp his hands on it. With all of the pressure he was feeling he was certain he finally had the diamond his girlfriend Clara Rose was dreaming of. It had been a year since the couple first discussed marriage and Jimmy trembled in joy at the thought of holding Clara Rose tight. Jimmy O’Toole had awakened extra early this morning so he could finish the chores the administrator had told him of the day before. Jimmy had told his administrator Alease Onour-Ownplace that today is going to be the day he goes down to the ol’ pool to find the biggest diamond anyone in this area has ever seen. Doing so would prove to be a task for Jimmy O’Toole, since the mine that closed years before had started to flood. But today, was going to be THE DAY! Jimmy finished his chores and set down
the long path through the village, past the Melville Farm and Phil’s Creek to the mine. The old sign was leaning on a section of corrugated metal bracing an adobe-style frame to the mine’s entrance. Without hesitation, Jimmy stripped down to his underclothes and plunged into the mine. The water was far above his head so Jimmy O’Toole decided to get a large amount of air in his lungs to last until the next mine branch where the air pockets have been known to hang out and kick it. Jimmy was off! He swam like a trout through the underwater passage to the air pocket gathering place. And sure enough, there was an air pocket just waiting for him. Jimmy took one last huge breath and shot straight down into the abyss under the air pocket zone. It that a good term for where the air pockets hang out? I feel that they should have a place and they’re likely in the zone so why not? So he shot down from what will now be referred to as the air pocket zone and deeper into darkness. Using only his hands to guide him he felt what he had been searching for to make sweet Clara Rose’s day. He tugged and tore and scraped away the dirt and stone in a frantic display. This probably had something to do with the great pressure he was feeling underground and underwater at the same time. Can you imagine? I mean, shit, that would be something I think. Jimmy surfaced with his favorite girl’s treasure first in the air pocket zone and then journeyed back through the long corridor of aqua awesomeness in the dark. He came up out of that hole like a pig trying to get away. When Jimmy O’Toole found his best girl Clara Rose that evening he thought he would think of a smooth line to take Clara Rose by surprise. The best he could come up was blurting out I have a rock in my pants for you. You see, Jimmy had trouble containing secrets; a plague that had stayed with him from early adolescence when he and his friend Paul the Falconer would play in the boiler room at the Senior Citizen center nearby. Don’t ask me why since then, I didn’t get the details on that. Clara Rose being the offspring of well-to-do ruler salesman and his wife Faye did what any girl of privilege would do in that circumstance, she rode him for eighteen hours straight. Moral of the story? Say what you want, you may get laid anyway.
Tree’s Magnolia
Trina Crew

Magnolia
Life isn’t like they told ya.

Well, then I’ll get a cheetah,
Get close an it will eat ya.

Little
I’m stuck in the middle

So you are gonna settle?
Fine my shield is strong & metal.

Baby
The first one I’d ever held,
amazing.

I’m grown; I know; our times gone.
I’m changing.
Train Tracks, *Aushwitz/Birkenau*

Kaytlyn Worner
“Richard” Series
Kendra Brown
Sadie
Kathleen Hammock

I can chuck a rock
Smack dab on yur cheekbone
And you ain’t never gonna see me comin
Mostly people don’t
See me that is
Cause I was raised in the backwoods
Rattlesnake Hollow along Black Bottom Creek.

Ain’t nobody pays attention to a skinny white girl no how
So I got to make um see me
That’s where the rocks come in.

Mama says I ought to be a lady
And they don’t chuck rocks
They sew and stuff
Hell fire and damnation
If that don’t sound just plain tiresome.

But it don’t matter much anyways
Folk don’t come round here lookin for ladies
If they come a’ tall, they’s comin fer trouble
And it ain’t mama’s sewin they’s lookin fer.

But that’s ok
Let um come
Cause I’m a rock chuckin son of a gun.
“Mutual” Understanding
Rochelle McElroy
Dear Jean Stapleton

Trina Crew

Dear Jean Stapleton,
I wish I knew Edith.
Honest human not a myth.
Archie knew he was lucky to be with.
Edith.
I sit here and sip
A coffee I grip
Edith has been good for me.
A kind of mother I’d love to be.
Yet life made me differently.
My arms are jagged
World let me have it.
Red rage blocks open sight
I prefer to die than lose a fight.
Modern mad girl, nothing’s yet been right.
Fuck polite.
She wasn’t so much
That she was.
Jean is there a way?
Actors act but can I portray?
A better person than I am today.
Meekness is rewarded,
Lord make it worth it.
And my word for that is sordid.
Titania and Bottom
Kathleen Hammock

Brickdale’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream

How touching the scene of Titania and Bottom
Their secret moments of love
As seen in Brickdale’s art
Of Shakespeare’s Dream,
In a woodland glade
Leaning against the trunk
Under the apple blossoms,
Surrounded in ferns of lush emerald green
And the shimmer of a mushroom’s fairy ring,
Enchanted Titania, under the flower’s magic drops
Has fallen head over heels
For a dullard called Bottom.

But it is not for Titania and Bottom
To be counted among the world’s great lovers
The renown romances in history
Or the great literature of passion,
Not for them Paris and Helen’s Trojan War
Not for them Romeo and Juliet’s embrace with death
Nor Pyramus and Thisbe’s bloody veil
Or the story of Antony and Cleopatra
Rome embracing Egypt
Limbs intertwined
Until the serpent’s kiss,
Or the tragic tale of Tristan and Isolde
The dreaded black sail
And the broken heart,
Not even to be remembered for their war of wits
Like Scarlet and Rhett
In their stormy love disguised as hate.

No, not for Midsummer Night’s Titania and Bottom
To be the romance plot of all time,
Because the queen of the fairies
By a sprite’s naughty game
Has fallen hopelessly in love
With an ass-headed fool,
Who would rather chew hay
On this dreamy summer day
Than make love to the queen
In the grass where she lay.
Cultural Cross-roads
Brady Milnes
Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled*

Jessie Ligocki

At first glance one would see
A heap of brightly colored cellophane,
With assorted colors and assorted tastes,
A childhood desire,
Or a memoir of happier moments.
Take one if you want.
Enjoy candy from an everlasting pile.

At a second glance one might see
Love and loss,
Temporary but immortal.
Sickness, detrimental to weight,
Just like the diminishing pile of candy.
Take one if you want.
Celebrate the everlasting pile.

*This poem is written about a painting entitled “Untitled” by artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres in his Los Angeles exhibition “Portrait of Ross in L.A.”*
Old Witch
Kathleen Hammock

Beware!

There’s an old witch down the street with an old witch broom, and an old witch hat. She has an old witch eyebrow, and an old witch cat, and old witch bottles full of old witch goo. There’s another old witch around the corner with old witch boots, and an old witch toad. She has an old witch big toe, and an old witch limp, and an old witch closet full of old witch bones. I’m not sure which old witch is worse because there’s another old witch up the hill with old witch boobs, and an old witch tooth. She has an old witch tree-house with an old witch tub, and old witch chairs stuffed with old witch hair. There are three old witches with old witch brooms old witch hats old witch eyebrows old witch cats old witch goo old witch boots old witch toads old witch big toes old witch limps old witch bones old witch boobs old witch teeth old witch tree-houses old witch tubs and old witch hair chairs. Don’t worry, that’s only if you go down the street . . . or around the corner . . . or up the hill. That’s only if you visit us here at witch-ville.
“Richard” Series
Kendra Brown
Untitled 2
Jessie Ligocki

I am the beginning.
I have come to take control.
I will take what is mine
and rid of the broken,
the damned,
the diseased.

All that you know
will be extinguished.
Combust into flames, along
with the kingdom you terrorize.

I am the end.
I have come to take control,
to take what is mine.
To destroy this place of the sin,
the weak minded.

I am the end of your existence.
Frozen Wonderland
Rochelle McElroy
Tower, Berlin, Germany

Kaytlyn Worner
Dear Trixie
Molly Herzog

I have to tell you, I’m mad.
Furious.
I have never loathed someone so intensely in my life. She had no right.
Slithering her way in and erasing you from my eyes forever.
The thoughts of you, your presence still lingers of course. Memories just floating in the air for me to crash into.
I wish for closure.
Relief.
I’m hoping this goodbye will be more successful than all the pennies I’ve tossed in the fountain.
I love you dearly, and I hope you have the greenest grass on that side.
Ready for Pickup
Jessie Ligocki

Is it a human or a car? Is it a bird? A plane? A building, maybe even a landmark? Maybe it’s a park, home to laughing children, scrapes, broken bones, tetanus. Or a parking lot for the angst-ridden teens. It could be a cemetery or a home where the heart is, where words are unheard and actions unnoticed. Is it an animal, a carnivorous monster? Something so terrifying it could send you into cardiac arrest without hesitation. Maybe it’s responsibility, that heart-stopping anxiety that follows an incessant to-do list. Fear? Snakes, spiders, needles, oh my. Or something even worse. A grieving loss, failure, painful death, burning hell. Maybe it’s just imagination turning your surroundings into everything that horrifies you. “It’s just the wind,” you say. “My mind’s playing tricks on me,” you say. Your sorry attempts at reassurance and comfort won’t help you here. Whatever it is, a plane, a home, or even your backyard. It can be your biggest nightmare.
1616 Crescent Street isn’t there anymore
Just a crumbling rubble, a few dingy white boards to acknowledge
its passing
The pink hollyhocks that grew up near the fence are long since
gone too
The wire fence, twisted and rusted, still clings to a few splintered
posts
But the Mississippi, old muddy, hasn’t failed
Just down the hill and over the tracks it still winds
And I can still sit on its sandy banks and remember

I was five years old then, and Jackie O in pink, smiled
The black limo, so slow and smooth turned onto Main Street
He waved and the crowd cheered, pushing forward to see him
The limo reached Elm Street, but by then he was slumped over

And Mom on the vinyl sofa, surrounded in green wall paper,
began to cry
The old black and white television buzzed too, in shock
I sat down, and I cried too
Because something horrible had just happened
And things might never be the same at 1616 Crescent Street

Out the window I could see the pink hollyhocks
They were splattered with blood
The Ghostly Clarinets
Trina Crew
The Beauty/Beholder
Trina Crew
The Skull
Trina Crew
The Bees
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