

# CONFLUENCE



*Celebrating Missouri's Bicentennial*

# 2021

**con•flu•ence** \kən-flü-ən(t)s\ noun

1. A coming or flowing together; meeting or gathering at one point.
  - *a happy confluence of weather and scenery*
2. The flowing together of two or more streams.
  - *the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers*
3. The creative writing journal at Three Rivers College
  - *an issue of **Confluence** in your hands*

# CONFLUENCE

## 2021

*Where Students and Creativity Converge*



"River Dreams" mural by Missouri artist Paul Jackson on the exterior of the Tinnin Fine Arts Center at Three Rivers College  
*Photo by Mark J. Sanders*



The literary journal of

# THREE RIVERS COLLEGE

2080 Three Rivers Blvd. • Poplar Bluff, MO 63901

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Volume Thirteen

# CONFLUENCE

## AWARDS of DISTINCTION

2009

Megan McKay, “Life Is... “  
Corey Lutton, A Short Tale

2010

Paula Robinson, “What Our Future Holds”  
Will Stephens, “My Old Baseball”  
Jessica Downing, “Monster Inside”

2011

Cara M. Sorrell, “Summertime”  
Jennifer C. Wendler, “My Festival Frock”  
Elizabeth L. Twaddell “... I miss you, Daddy”

2012

Heidi N. Sopko, “Defeating Fear of Mind”  
Damien D. Rivera, “The Phantoms “

2013

Damien D. Rivera, “Passion”  
Michaela Smith, “Test Taking”  
Bob Amendola, “The Coven of Incubus”

2014

Mark Herman Deaton, “Adventure Bag”  
Tora M. Ellis, “A Walk on Campus”  
Tom Turner, “Icebergs”

2015

Cassandra Priest, “End or Beginning”  
Alexander Jameson, “Eremophobia”

2016

Damien D. Rivera, “What is Man”  
Sheria R. Macklin, “Don’t Be Blinded By Love”

2017

Bethany S. Colvin, “Smile for the Camera”  
Conner G. Terrill, “The Urchin Sea”

2018

David K. Kearby, “I Am”  
Conner G. Terrill, “Muse in the Stars”

2019

Levi D. Wilhelm, “The Unspoken Pain”  
Cindy White, “Past, Present, Future”  
Emmaleigh G. Stone, “Little Lamb”  
Patrick W. Wheeler, “The Bible: Chapter I”

2020

Ashlee Mathis, “Marvin the Mantis”  
Christopher Pense, “The Strange New World”

2021

Johnny D. Boham, “A Place Where I Belong”  
Marie R. Wheeler, “At the Restaurant”

All students, faculty, and staff may submit essay, poetry, or fiction. Submissions are accepted from November to February. Each entry should be 1,000 words or less, maximum three entries per author. Entries must be submitted digitally and can be emailed to the editor at [confluence@trcc.edu](mailto:confluence@trcc.edu).

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Editor/Designer: Mark J. Sanders

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## THREE RIVERS COLLEGE

2080 Three Rivers Blvd.  
Poplar Bluff, MO 63901  
(573) 840-9600  
[trcc.edu](http://trcc.edu)

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Missouri's First Capitol, St. Charles  
<https://www.boonescolonialinn.com/first-state-capitol-of-missouri/>

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Missouri Capitol Building, Jefferson City  
<https://ufcw655.org/state-capitol-building-jefferson-city-missouri-usa/>

# INTRODUCTION

*Mark J. Sanders*

Confluence Editor

**M**issouri has been my home for most of my life. Although I was born in Virginia and lived briefly in Oklahoma, the Show-Me State is where I was raised, where I went to college, where I've raised a family, and where I've spent my career as an educator.

Comedian Kathleen Madigan, also a Missouri native, originally from St. Louis, once claimed in her act that Missouri doesn't have much that makes it stand out among the other states. While she makes a funny point, she also overlooks the countless contributions that Missourians have made in history, science, politics, sports, and especially the creative arts.

Chuck Berry is one of the founding fathers of rock-and-roll music. Tina Turner started her career in Missouri. Sheryl Crow was raised just down highways 53 and 25 in Kennett. (Fun fact: one of my aunts used to babysit her when she was little). Rap artists Nelly and Eminem hail from St. Louis and St. Joseph, respectively.

Missouri is also home to a number of talented and respected actors, including Betty Grable, John Goodman, Jon Hamm, Jenna Fischer, Don Johnson, Kevin Kline, Ellie Kemper, Brad Pitt, and the legendary Vincent Price.

*Confluence* is a celebration of writing, and Missouri boasts of some of the greatest talents in the history of literature, both classic and contemporary.

Some of the well-known greats include Mark Twain, the prolific author from Hannibal whose works, including *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*, and still widely read today.

Legendary poet T.S. Eliot comes from St. Louis, where his family was one of the primary founders of Washington University, considered one of the most prestigious institutions of higher learning in the world.

Two of the most celebrated African-American authors of the 20th Century are Missourians, poet Maya Angelou, born in St. Louis, and Langston Hughes, born in Joplin.

Among the more contemporary Missouri authors are Jonathan Franzen (*The Corrections*; from Webster Groves) and Gillian Flynn (*Gone Girl*; from Kansas City).

And finally, we have the talented students, faculty, and staff of Three Rivers College who strive to carry on the Missouri tradition of creative and artistic expression. It's an appropriate way to celebrate our state's 200th anniversary of joining the United States.

# FOREWORD

*Steve Lewis*

Professor of Speech Communication and Fine Arts

Every state in the Union can boast of the talents of its sons and daughters; Missouri is no exception. Our state's history is peppered with men and women who have made indelible impressions upon our culture in the broad fields of entertainment, politics, and athletics, to name a few.

Harry S. Truman represented Missouri in the Oval Office, natives Vincent Price and Brad Pitt have graced the Silver Screen, Missourians Nelly and Sheryl Crow have experienced worldwide success in music, Leon Spinks and Jayson Tatum have represented Missouri in the ring and on the court, and our great state has been home to a plethora of professional writers, including poet Langston Hughes, playwright Tennessee Williams, and novelists Mark Twain and Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Missouri was admitted into the Union on August 10, 1821; this year *Confluence* celebrates the bicentennial of the Show-Me State by honoring Missouri's authors; the works contained share the experiences and insights into the human experience of several of our own budding writers. Whether they regale us with stories of the Mississippi, the burdens of humanity found deep in the Ozarks, or the energy and diversity of our urban areas, these authors contribute to the growing body of work that explores life in Missouri and beyond our borders.

Please enjoy these creative writing efforts from our students and staff at Three Rivers College who have accepted the challenge that creative writing provides in giving voice to the diverse lives that we all lead, while still honoring their heritage and home. Happy 200th birthday, Missouri!



Gateway Arch, St. Louis—<https://www.askideas.com/35-very-beautiful-night-pictures-of-the-gateway-arch/>

# AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

## Johnny D. Boham

I am a student at Three Rivers College double majoring in Engineering and English. My favorite authors are H. P. Lovecraft, Edgar Allan Poe, and Ian Fleming. After graduation, I want to write a best-selling book series that will rival James Bond and build an army of robot cats to take over the world.

## Matthew Dowd

I am a Tutor Specialist for ACHIEVE at TRC. Writing composition can occur at any time or any place. This particular poem was composed in my head on my way home from the college. It began when I thought of how I had recently lost my father and how many others I knew had been going through things. So, I encourage everyone out there to heed the call of creativity, no matter where they are or what they are doing.

## Kaila Frampton

Kaila Frampton is majoring in Elementary Education. She has two daughters and loves all animals. Future plans also include counseling for children affected by addictions. She still enjoys hunting with her husband, but would much rather just hike in nature and enjoy mycology.

## Lara Hafford

Hello all, my name is Lara Hafford. I am 24 years old and live in Poplar Bluff. I began writing this when I was irritated with my children and irritated with being a mother in general. I stopped and gathered myself. I realized that life is short, and I need to cherish every moment. I hope to become an RN one day and make my children proud of me.

## Trent Kelsey

Trent Kelsey is a freshman at Three Rivers College. His goals involve pursuing a career in entertainment, be it storytelling or the visual arts. His creative process involves admiring and interpreting the ways of life, nature, the mind, and laws of the universe from all angles. His specific writing goal is screenwriting.

## Steve Lewis

Steve Lewis has been Professor of Communication and Fine Arts at Three Rivers College since 2001. He holds master's degrees in Speech Communication, Theatre Arts, and Higher Education Administration. Steve makes his home in Poplar Bluff.

## Perla Mendiola

My name is Perla Mendiola, I am a Forensic Science major. I graduated as Valedictorian of my class from Clearwater High School in 2020, and I plan to transfer from Three Rivers College to Saint Louis University in the fall.

## Susan D. Miller

Each one of my writings has meaning to me. I hope everyone can enjoy these and let it be a reminder that just because you feel lost, there is always hope. Even when someone you cherish is no longer there in person, they are still with you. I love my family. and my favorite things is drawing and writing.

## Rebecca Rathel

My name is Rebecca Rathel, and I am an education major at Three Rivers College. I recently found that I enjoy expressing my thoughts through poetry. I have never submitted anything to this journal because I have never seen myself as a writer. I wanted to step out of my comfort zone and submit something that came from my heart.



## Tiechera Samuel

Mrs. Samuel lives in Poplar Bluff with her husband, Christopher, and her children, James and Emily. She has been teaching at Three Rivers College for sixteen years. In her spare time she reads, follows Major League Baseball, and takes far too many pictures.

## Mark Sanders

Mark is an Associate Professor of Philosophy and English at Three Rivers College. He earned his master's degree in English/Creative Writing at the University of Missouri. He has written and published two novels, *Dylan's Treasure* and *The Spring of Llanfyllin*, both of which are available to purchase at amazon.com.

## Kate Wheeler

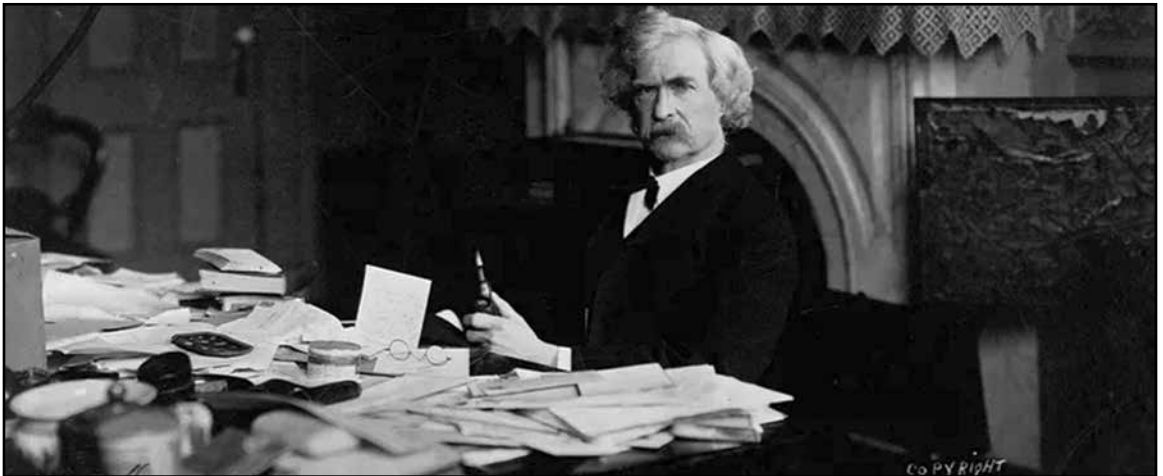
Kate is taking classes at Three Rivers College. She has always loved to write. When she isn't attending school or writing essays, one can find her performing on the stage, cheering at siblings' sports events, practicing and writing music on her guitar, hanging out with relatives and friends, or curled up with a good story.

## Marie R. Wheeler

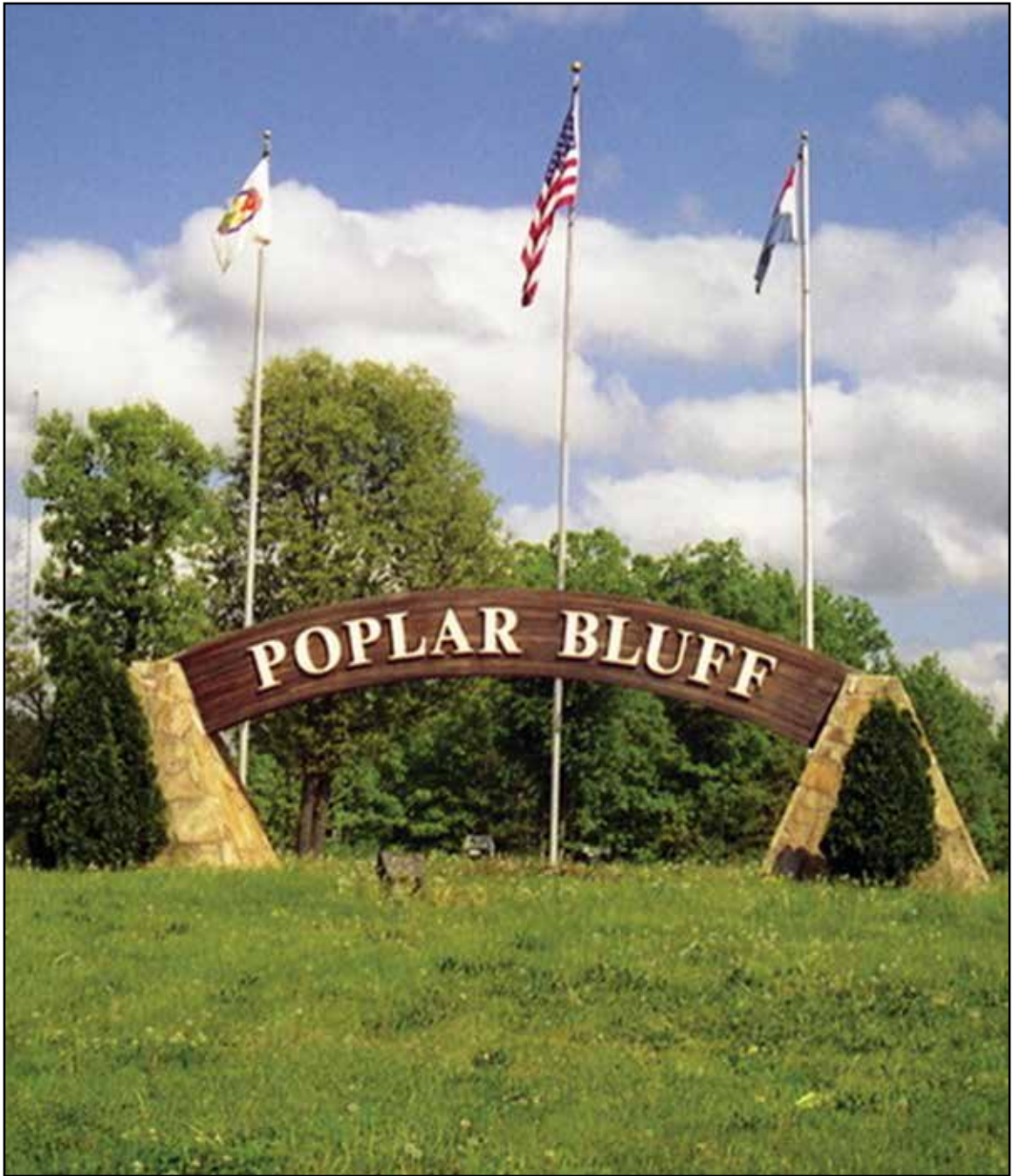
Marie is a 16-year-old sophomore enrolled at Campbell High School. Some of her favorite subjects are math and history, but she always finds time to jam out to Taylor Swift with her friends. She is competitive and involved in volleyball, basketball, and quiz bowl. In her free time, she enjoys baking, spending time with animals, and reading.

## Judi A. Yardley

I am a middle-aged woman who hasn't lived life to the fullest. Don't get me wrong, my family has given me much joy. I am married to a wonderful man, and I am a mother of six brilliant children (three are stepchildren). I have nine beautiful grandchildren who I hold dear to my heart, but I'm not where I want to be in my career due to insecurity. I want my family and others to know that any dream can be accomplished.



Mark Twain sits at his writing desk in a photo taken in 1901. Corbis/VCG via Getty Images/Getty Images



Poplar Bluff, MO—<https://www.city-data.com/picfilesv/picv36228.php>

# The Little Hunter's First Ride

*Kaila Frampton*

I'm ready to shoot a deer!" were my first words that morning. It was the first day of youth deer hunting season; this year I didn't feel the envy I normally had for my cousins, because now it was my turn to go. I was ready to get to the excitement; I really had no idea what I was getting into, though. Hunting for the first time at age 6 is like riding a rollercoaster of emotions. I was excited to bond with Dad, and I already loved walking the hunting property, immersed in nature everywhere. I had never killed anything before, so my feelings were totally muddled, but I was hopeful that I could provide food for the family. We process the deer meat ourselves, so I've seen them dead before, but I'd never killed anything before. This might be a crazy ride...

As I'm trying to sort out my feelings in my head, we arrive at the hunting property. This is just the start of this amusement ride; let's hope it's all we expect it to be. We hop out of the truck, and I realize it's still awfully dark. As many times as we've been here, it has never seemed so scary. It's like I'm sitting at the very top of the roller coaster, waiting for it to catapult down. My heart feels like it will beat out of my chest. I can't help but think of what all is lurking in the darkness. I hear branches moving, leaves crunching, fearing

bobcats and bears and trying to remember what other scary creatures lurk in the dark of the woods. The rollercoaster has started, and there is no getting off now. I didn't want to disappoint Daddy, so I trekked on what felt like miles of endless hills and turns. We come to a huge ravine, and Daddy takes it in one stride. It feels like there's a canyon between us now! As I'm contemplating jumping, he swoops me up and over. My anxiety dissipates, and I know that he will help me face any barriers that come my way. Now that I remember I have my own personal harness and safety bars, it's easier to enjoy the rest of the walk.

We finally make it to the stand. The sun is starting to come up, and I see the truck, just two hills over. That ride was over faster than what I had expected. Behind us, I can see a field of horses and hear a donkey braying. I never should have been so scared. Even though I'm just sitting on top of a little ole hill, I feel like I'm on a mountain, high above the world.

And so begins a bigger, faster rollercoaster. Dad nudges me and points to the corner of the field. I see him there, a buck! I think my brain quits working for a second. I'm taking it all in from the highest point of the park right before I'm compelled downward in spirals.



Missouri Whitetail Deer—<https://www.northwestmissourioutfitters.com/whitetail-hunting/>

Dad says, “Breathe.”

I hear the gunshot, and looking through the scope I see the deer laying on the ground. I can feel my whole body trembling; my heart is racing. I notice I no longer feel cold, but my teeth are chattering. Everything slows down for just a few seconds so I can catch my breath before thrusting forward again.

“Did I just kill that?!” I asked, bewildered.

Yes, yes I did. Here come all the emotions at 180 miles an hour; I think it’s just the adrenaline. We go to the deer’s resting place and take the obligatory picture. The adrenaline has worn off now, and I feel terrible for

taking his life. I feel sanctified that he did not suffer, said a little prayer of thanks, but I didn’t want to disappoint Dad, so I kept it all in. I was ready to be home. It’s like I had ate a cheese-filled pretzel before the ride and was trying to keep it down.

At home, Momma was waiting outside. She immediately saw my discomposure but said so many people would be proud of me and posted my picture on social media. I looked proud in that picture! I was so relieved the morning and that wild ride were over. It was time to let the pretzel and pressure go in the trash. I’m still proud of that picture, but I won’t ever go on that ride again.

# Thunder

*Perla N. Mendiola*

**W**here he goes, I go.  
Willingly trailing behind  
like a rainbow after a storm.  
The thunder, gifts of his love.

You can see the disaster in his eyes.

I am blinded by the thunder,  
the monstrous and beautiful thunder.

You can't see the pain in his eyes,  
but you can see it in mine.

Thunderstorm in northwest Missouri—*khmoradio.com*—<https://townsquare.media/site/464/files/2014/05/Thunderstorm.jpg?w=980&q=75>

# Lonely Little Girl

*Susan D. Miller*

**W**hat happened to the lonely little girl? With You  
The one who cries, wishing for peace? With You  
Wondering why she's not cherished as the sparkling moon?  
What is the point of still living? With You

Wishing for love as warm as the summer sun,  
Hoping for someone to show she belongs, With You

Staring up at the starry night dreaming of You,  
My dear dreamcatcher chasing away the bad. With You

Before my knight came running in the moon light,  
I was alone drowning in the darkness, With You

Before you Susie was ready to leave everything,  
Now she has hope and meaning again, With You



# BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND

*Judi A. Yardley*

**I**t's a battlefield of the mind; the image in the mirror fluently whispers.  
The ambition you seek is not in reach; the goal is exceedingly too high.  
Lay down the aspiration and attend to what has gone.

**I**t's a battlefield of the mind; the image in the mirror sternly repeats.  
Only the rising generation shall seek such a path; you are much too weak.  
Let your feeble mind rest and subdue what is left.

It's a battlefield of the mind; the image in the mirror taunts.  
To conform to such high standards will only cause weary and grief.  
Satisfaction is not yours to reach.

It's a battlefield of the mind; the image in the mirror boasts once again.  
Do you see your reflection?  
Is what I say not true?  
Come closer to reveal the physical you.

I stared vaguely at the image in the mirror for a time.  
At first, it was subtle, then it became clear.  
A battle cry disrupted the ghastly chaos within; the vexing image shattered.  
Sadly, it wasn't the end.

The broken pieces remain as it signifies a lie.  
To pick them up can only cause unceasing pain.  
The struggle is real as I battle the mind.  
The determined person I once knew is going to be hard to find.

Nevertheless, I decide to move toward the line of fire.  
To win the battle is to press forward; I will only lose at a standstill.

[https://st2.depositphotos.com/1030956/5872/v/600/depositphotos\\_58729387-stock-illustration-set-of-reflective-glass-pieces.jpg](https://st2.depositphotos.com/1030956/5872/v/600/depositphotos_58729387-stock-illustration-set-of-reflective-glass-pieces.jpg)

# A Chance for Change

*Susan D. Miller*

**H**ave you ever wondered what it would be like to see as many planets in the galaxy as you can? Just Imagine being able to travel 10 million light years away just by walking through a portal. None of this hassle of needing an Airship. Oh! All the adventures you could go on! You would get to meet new people and see new things. I wonder what all you could learn from the other planets...

Sadly, I never got to experience any of this yet. I have been stuck on my home planet, unable to explore outside of my gates, always wishing for a way to be free. Father never wanted a daughter; he was extremely disappointed when mother had me. He even became violent towards mother, constantly telling her what a disgrace she and I were. As you can tell it is the typical “I got to have a son” syndrome, because a daughter is worthless and only good for bearing children and cleaning the house. Little does he know I have been learning things without his

knowledge and planning to escape. I have been exploring this castle in hopes to find a secret portal somewhere, but to no avail; the search came short.

“I searched everywhere and still did not find a single portal on this land!” I yelled to myself. After realizing what I did, I quickly covered my mouth and hid in the tree. No longer than I got up there, a guard showed up searching for whoever yelled. To his disappointment, he never found anyone, and he never looked up in the tree, either. This made me stop and think to myself, “Have I been like this guard the whole time? Been looking everywhere but not been keeping my eyes open for something unexpected?”

While in the tree, I begin to look around the castle grounds slowly... Suddenly my eyes stop right on the castle. Why have I not noticed this before! The castle has a section that I do not remember exploring; I could never figure out how to get to that side. I was always told that that part





Ha Ha Tonka Castle Ruins, Camdenton, Missouri—<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/ha-ha-tonka-castle-ruins>

of the castle was haunted, and I should not want to go there anyway. Tonight, this changes I am going to figure out how to get in there with or without Jack's help.

It is dark out and Jack (my only friend who would play with me despite all the trouble he got in from father and the commanding general) is on guard duty tonight. Who better to have with me than a guard when I am up to no good? When I get to where he is, I pick up a small pebble and chuck it right at his head. The look he got from the other guard was hilarious due to him not seeing a thing other than just hearing Jack in pain suddenly.

“Jack, what is it this time? And no, you are not getting out of guard duty, so quit playing games and continue to keep watch!” the older guard said sternly.

With this I chucked a couple more pebbles at Jack, trying hard not to laugh at the given situation. The old guard was not happy with Jack “trying to get out of guard duty” but had finally sent Jack off to check the grounds. I never seen the man run so quickly towards me before. To be honest, I was a little scared.

“You have my attention now, Kiera. What do you want?” he rushed out angrily.

“I have a mission for us!” I said enthusiastically.

# An Autumn Death

*Johnny D. Boham*

I love Autumn,  
But whenever I feel that crisp air blow  
I can't help but think  
About the friendly smile  
And the warm soul that I used to know.

When I watch those gray clouds fill the skies  
And blot out the vibrant colors  
Of what had been a tender Summer,  
I feel the pain of change filling-up my veins  
And now I want to cry.

Each time I see a red leaf touch the earth  
My heart sinks deeper into regret,  
Because somewhere out there is another person  
Living a wonderful life  
While I sit here and hurt.

When the great poets wrote about Spring,  
And the blossoming passions that it brings,  
They forgot to tell you about the strain  
Of enduring lost loves and empty hearts  
With each passing of the rains.

For when the warm air starts to fade,  
And the maple leaves begin to change,  
The burning heart becomes distraught.  
But the memories are not forgot  
When the Summer romance drifts away.

Autumn colors near Branson, MO—<https://www.tripster.com/travelguide/top-five-places-to-see-fall-colors-in-branson-mo/>

# What Is Life?

*Rebecca Rathel*

**W**hat is life? What determines its success? Is it fame? Fortune?  
Is it a plaque hanging on the wall? Can our status keep us from the grave?  
What will be said of us when we are lying in the grave?

Is life a singular word meant to be lived within a bubble of self?  
Are we meant to walk a path that only has room for one set of feet?

What if life is meant to be lived with others? For others?  
Not alone, but a hand to hold, a partner to celebrate the wins  
and to cry when the dark times come.

Life is not meant to be lived one held above another.  
Life is about the hearts that can be touched through a kind word or  
an act of love. Life is complex, but yet 'tis simple through the eyes of a child.

A child doesn't see color, they see the heart. A child doesn't see the thickness of  
a purse, but the kindness one shows to them. Have we lost our childhood faith?  
God help us to see the world through those eyes.

Life is a journey, not to be traveled alone. Life gives you family to cherish,  
friends to gain, some to lose. Life throws you roses but watch for the thorn  
just below the bloom. Life is a mystery, exciting and thrilling with a bit fear.

Life is a rollercoaster. There is room for two so grab a friend, buckle up,  
throw up your hands, laugh a little, cry a little, scream at the curves,  
but most of all, enjoy the ride.



Screamin' Eagle roller coast, Six Flags St. Louis—<https://www.sixflags.com/stlouis/attractions/screamin-eagle>

# Home

*Kate K. Wheeler*

Love, that's yours, it fills my soul  
Pain, it makes my heartbeat old  
Could your words sew back my heart, let me grow?

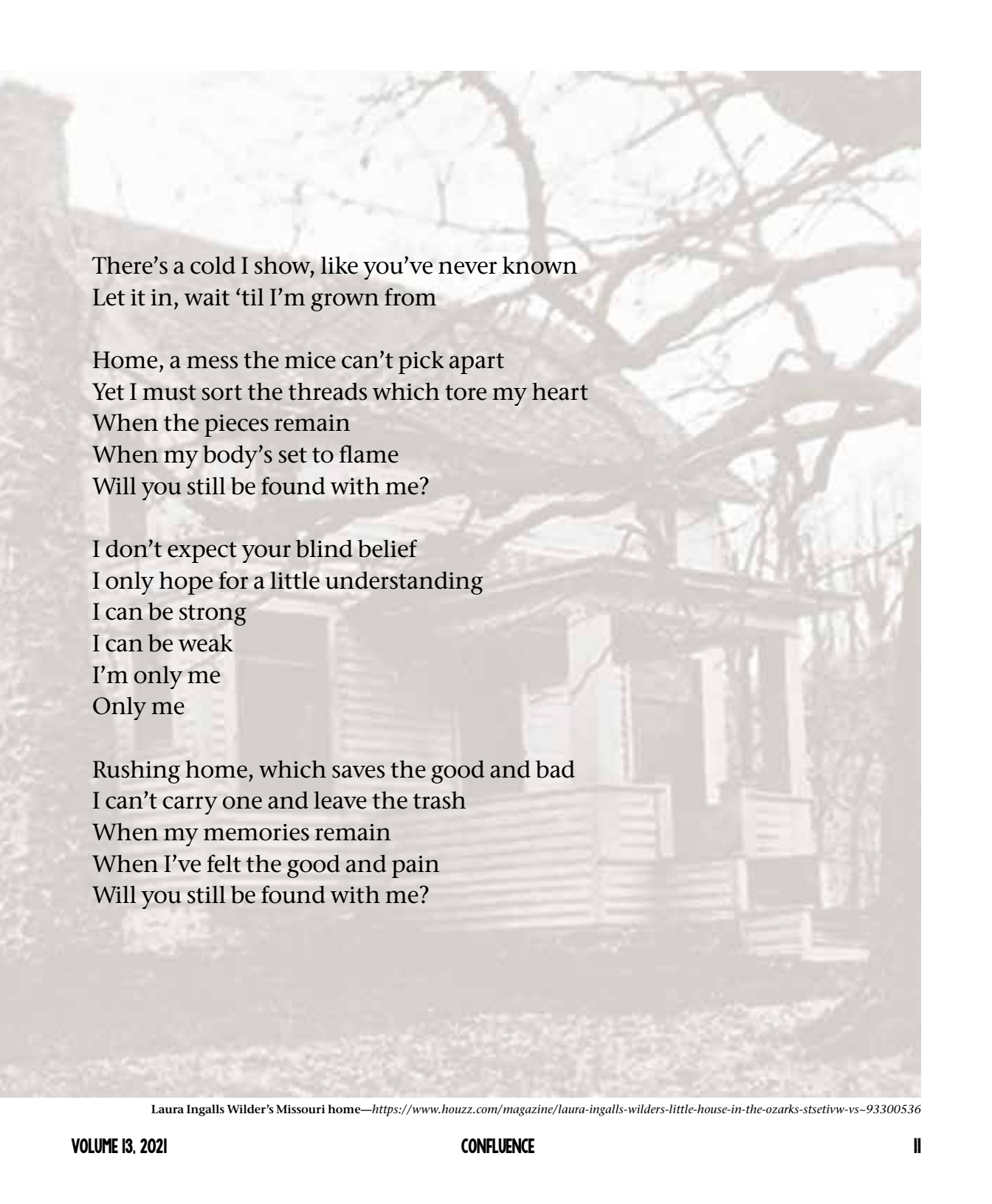
Love which tastes so bittersweet  
That agony surrounding me  
Would you want to hold my hand 'til I leave?

You know my heart was twisted down  
Will you unscrew me 'til I'm found?

Home, that place where my roses thorned  
Can you give meaning, let the place be torn  
When the rubble remains  
When the wood is set to flame  
Will you still be found with me?

Joy, the smile which fills your void  
Break off the petals, show your voice  
Let the chains twist back and lay on the floor

I know the pain may mar my face  
I may feel trapped here, in my case  
Don't worry, love, give me some space  
You'll fill my place



There's a cold I show, like you've never known  
Let it in, wait 'til I'm grown from

Home, a mess the mice can't pick apart  
Yet I must sort the threads which tore my heart  
When the pieces remain  
When my body's set to flame  
Will you still be found with me?

I don't expect your blind belief  
I only hope for a little understanding  
I can be strong  
I can be weak  
I'm only me  
Only me

Rushing home, which saves the good and bad  
I can't carry one and leave the trash  
When my memories remain  
When I've felt the good and pain  
Will you still be found with me?

Laura Ingalls Wilder's Missouri home—<https://www.houzz.com/magazine/laura-ingalls-wilders-little-house-in-the-ozarks-stsetivw-vs-93300536>

# Loved Ones

*Susan D. Miller*

**H**ow is it that when one is alive, we cherish but do not appreciate enough?

The one who was cherished but not cherished enough...

The one who was appreciated but not appreciated enough...

Though you know they are still with you...

You wish you could have given more time.

You wish you could see them again.

To see them smile warmly once more

Once more in your direction

To go back in time

To be able to see them every day

To show how much they are loved

To go back in time to say goodbye

Even though they are ready to leave

But you are not ready for them to

To move on to the next world.

Even though there may be tears shed

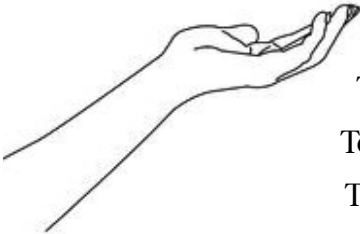
We know you will forever be with us

Watching over us and future family to come

Guiding us through our dark times

Forever loving us for whom we are

No matter what happens



# Rejected Pleas

*Marie R. Wheeler*

**D**arling,” he calls me, and I want to cry. I do not deserve the name, nor any name at all. I am a crippled soul with a crazy mind, but he refuses to realize that, no matter how earnestly I try to prove it.

He gently grasps my hand, leading me down a garden path lined with roses, past a flowing fountain with Cupids spitting water. Starlight brightens the night while a cool breeze sweeps around us, brushing my bleached blonde hair. He gently tucks a strand behind my ear, his chocolate eyes showing an outpouring of love, so obvious it hurts.

“I’ve never beheld a more beautiful night,” he whispers, “and it’s all because of the gorgeous sight before my eyes.” He squeezes my hand, smiling softly, eyes watering with affection. Mine are too, but for a different reason.

“Darling, I love you with everything I am. My whole being is devoted to you,” he murmurs.

“Don’t,” my voice cracks. “I told you we can’t be anything more than friends,” I end with a pleading note.

“Friends for three years, that’s what you call this?” He glances at our intertwined hands and smiles, but hurt is showing in his eyes, breaking through his composure. Good, a dark part of me whispers, this will make it easier.

But suddenly, it’s so much harder as he drops my hands, sinking to one knee, arms shaking.

“I love you, and I always will.” His voice is choked with emotion, a tear running down his cheek. “Please, become more than my darling lady, become my wife.” He reaches into his denim pocket, pulling out a ring made of pearl and diamond that once shined on his mother’s finger.

The stars seem to disappear, swallowed up by the darkness of my soul as if anticipating my next words. The wind is no

longer a loving caress, but a brutal whip, stirring the leaves from the ground, tugging at our clothes.

He was my center, always the happiest moment of my day. The gentle cloth that wiped my tears, the cool glass of water for my parched mind. I never deserved him, not my insane self that cannot think straight and always makes the wrong choices. No, he does not realize the chains that I would become, shackling himself to me. I know better, but he never will.

“I can’t,” I whisper, my heart cracking into innumerable pieces that will never be fixed. The last light in my soul blinks

out as I gaze into his crushed, loving face.

All he sees staring back are my cold, glassy eyes.

“Please, please my darling,” he whispers, and I know his heart has shattered as only my wicked, delusional self could do.

“I cannot drag down the only person I have ever loved, I will not be so cruel,” my voice hitches, “You don’t understand me, you never will,” and I turn, stalking away, indifferent to his pleas.

A cold rain begins to softly fall.



Forest Park, St. Louis—<https://thedasslereffect.files.wordpress.com/2013/10/pagoda-circle-autumn-night-forest-park-2-small.jpg>



# The Crab Poem

*Trent A. Kelsey*

If I was a crustacean  
If a shell would guard my being  
I could live where time doesn't exist  
A floor of sand where the Sun doesn't reach  
And the moss of the Earth is heaven in the sky where I cannot see

I could be strong without conquest  
Sturdy upon a land without fault  
Where the fear of God is shadowed  
By the shadow of uncertain depths

I could lash out at killers  
Frighten those cursed with eyes  
Untouched by anything  
Save for icy pools



[https://images-na.ssl-images-amazon.com/images/I/61zpYXoWXL.\\_AC\\_SL1070\\_.jpg](https://images-na.ssl-images-amazon.com/images/I/61zpYXoWXL._AC_SL1070_.jpg)

Up here I have no shell  
The universe presses hard on my skin  
I have to push back  
Up here, life is uncertain  
Life makes me strong  
or weak should I cower  
Up here I can try

# Story of an Hour and Fifteen Minutes

*Tiechera Samuell*

I cannot remember when I first encountered St. Louis-native Kate Chopin’s “Story of an Hour,” but I clearly remember presenting the work for the first time to a class of my students. Many years ago, I was assigned a late afternoon, oddly-timed section. It was sandwiched between the traditional early afternoon classes favored by younger students who disliked waking up with the sun and the evening classes desired by adult learners who spent their days on the job site. The section held a strange mix of students who couldn’t fit American Literature into their schedule at any other time but needed it for one reason or another. Their imminent graduation required nearly all of them to be there—very few truly wanted to be.

We had made it through approximately half of the semester, and I was well aware of their apathy when I presented a short

introduction to Kate Chopin and her “Story of an Hour.” Knowing my audience, I tried to draw them in by pointing out that she was born in St. Louis and highlighting the short length of the work, but it was evident that they weren’t going to take my word for it that this story was one they could enjoy. So, I gave them twenty minutes and told them to read the slightly blurry photocopies I had stapled before class.

To my surprise, and probably to their own, most of the class finished within fifteen minutes, and whispers were sliding across the aisles.

“...Wait...why did she die? He sounds so great...”

“...Did he beat her? He must have done something to her”

“But he loved her... How foolish could she be?”



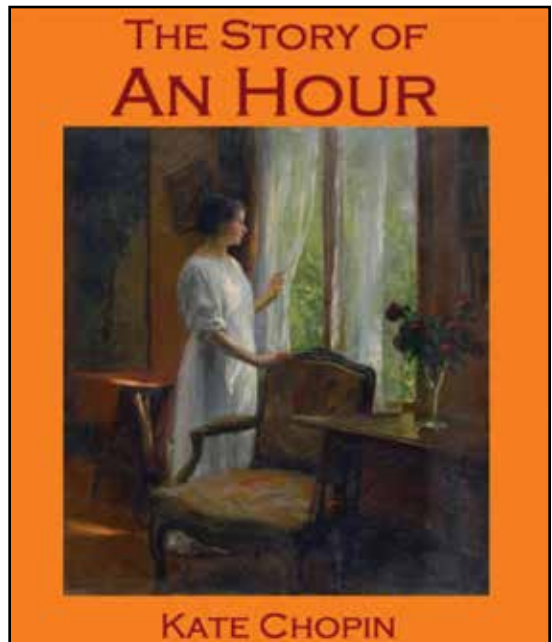
<https://www.literaryramblings.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/katechopin.jpg>

“Why didn’t she love him all the time?”

Some of the more jaded students took offense to the abject horror expressed by the more romantic students who couldn’t imagine wanting to leave a spouse who loved you. In contrast, some of the more idealistic students criticized the cynical students who appeared to understand the main character’s desire for freedom from a marriage to a kind and loving man. Sides were drawn, and surprisingly, passionate arguments broke out. Both sides used words and phrases from the text again and again to support the claims presented by both sides as

the formerly bored students accidentally found themselves drawn into a literary debate over Kate Chopin’s *Louise Mallard* and the last hour of her life.

I stood in the dim fluorescent lighting, knowing that we needed to move on, yet afraid that I would lose the interest, the passion, and even the irritation that had caught from the spark of a short story. Chopin’s “*Story of an Hour*” may be a tale about a single hour of Louise Mallard’s life, but in my mind and my memories, it will always also remind me of an hour and fifteen minutes of my life and a lesson that, for once, went just perfectly right.



[https://m.media-amazon.com/images/I/51McL7SzsUL.\\_SL500\\_.jpg](https://m.media-amazon.com/images/I/51McL7SzsUL._SL500_.jpg)

# A Birthday Poem

*Kate K. Wheeler*

**I**wonder if I'll recognize you when  
I see you again  
I think so  
Then again, my eyes could be wrong.

Is it even possible to forget?  
We lived together for sixteen years.  
Surely our closeness won't fade after...  
I don't know how many years.

My ears have kept up their practice  
But my eyes have fallen behind  
Blurry screens don't count;  
I need to see you through clear glass  
Clean air  
Cleaner than the air now

I don't know when my eyes  
will be restored again  
But it could be next fall  
We could go to school together.  
Like twelve years ago  
When we were six and eight  
A lot more naïve

I know why you want me  
You dread the passage of time  
Before we slip down the slide of oblivion  
I know it hurts you.



<https://www.matttenney.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/a-balloons-floating.jpg>

Maybe it hurts me more.  
I want to go to a place that teaches me more  
I want my faith cultivated  
That won't necessarily happen  
If I live with you

Don't worry; I'm selfish too  
Of course I want to be with you  
Even more so now  
I think I may float up  
And you'll sink down  
We will eventually part, if you don't change your mind.

Whatever I decide, I love you  
From the moment you met me  
To the moment I knew you were you  
We definitely don't always agree  
But I know our love is enough  
Even in the face of unending years

Happy 20th Birthday

# Let It Go

*Lara Hafford*

Let it go, let it go  
I cannot watch Frozen anymore  
Hot dog Hot diggity dog  
The kids eat so much, they act like hogs  
I love my kids  
Please get me two lids  
I have crackers all in my car  
I love them to the moon and back, yes that far  
Soon they will grow up  
And I will think I am in luck  
But deep down I know it will hurt  
Then soon my heart will be a desert.



Missouri Botanical Gardens in winter, St. Louis—<https://i.pining.com/originals/f5/40/c7/f540c717a9b5ae090ecc40a09373e077.jpg>

# At the Restaurant

*Marie R. Wheeler*

**AWARD OF DISTINCTION: SHORT STORY**

Please, follow me,” the waitress ordered, grabbing two menus as she walked to a dim corner of the fancy French restaurant. I followed, eyes trained on her perfect bun, my heels clicking methodically on the marble floor.

“Steven,” I cried, quickening my pace as I spotted him at the cozy table. He was staring out the stained-glass window, a frown etched on his perfect forehead. “Steven?” I called, slightly confused.

“Oh, Martha, hello,” he said coolly and shook his head as if to clear it. He stood, pulled out my chair, and waited for me to be settled before he took his seat. The perfect gentleman.

“Can I get you something to drink?” The waitress asked, whipping out her notebook.

“Oh, a red wine for both of us,” Steven stated, knowing my order, our minds working in harmony.

Steven and I had met seven years back at a college party. During that time, he was wilder, less refined, drawing me towards him. He always recalled how my calmness was the center of his storm and how I had saved him from a dark past.

Steven smiled up at me, but it looked more like a grimace, as he turned back towards the window.

“Steve, what’s bothering you?” I questioned, reaching for his hand, and wondered if his headache had come back in full force. He always worked too hard, trying to accomplish everything in a short amount of time.

Steven shook his head again, rejecting the offer of my hand, and graced me with a genuine smile. “Nothing my Mar,” he murmured, calling me by my pet name. “Just another long day; you know how it goes.”

But before I could reply, the waitress returned with our drinks, setting them down gently.

“Are you ready to order now?”

I opened my mouth, but Steven quickly cut in, “No, thank you, please give us a moment.” She offered an understanding smile and turned to another customer.

I glanced hesitantly at Steven, noting his shaking hands. “What is going on?” I questioned again, more forcefully. “I’m sitting right here, but you seem to be half gone.” I picked up my glass of wine, taking a small sip, and my world’s trajectory changed forever.

“I... what... are you...” I stumbled over my words, mind spinning, not comprehending. Surely my heart was still intact, surely there was not actually a hammer slamming down onto it, breaking it into innumerable pieces. My body continued to shake as if chilled by an icy hand gripping my soul, shredding it to pieces.

“It’s over Martha,” Steven murmured, a tone of regret in his voice. “I didn’t want it



<https://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/sc-social-graces-witness-wine-spill-family-1208-20151204-story.html>

“I... I met someone,” he whispered, bright green eyes boring into mine. “I don’t want you anymore.”

The restaurant seemed to quiet to such a level that it hurt my ears. Then a ringing sounded in my skull, so persistent I grimaced, trying to shake it away. All eyes seemed to face us, the light brightening so sweat began to trickle down my face. Wait, no, those were black tears running through my makeup.

I dropped my glass, and as it shattered on the white tablecloth, Steven flinched.

to end this way, I’m sorry. I really am,” he concluded, staring at my blackened face, the red stains on my white blouse. He stood, gave one longing glance at me, and left.

The restaurant seemed to buzz with noise again, so intense that I glued my eyes shut, arms cradling my body, trying to put back together what pieces of my heart I could find, but there were none.

I screamed.



# A Place Where I Belong

*Johnny D. Boham*

AWARD OF DISTINCTION: POETRY

**I**'m looking for a place where I belong;  
A place that is pleasant and lavishly fun;  
A utopian paradise between the hills;  
And discreetly shaded from the Sun;  
With people from every color of life;  
Who share a bond as firm as a vise;  
Who accept all within their walls;  
And drink joy throughout their halls.  
And, when I pull back the weeds to peep inside,  
I don't want the people to run and hide;  
But to open their arms and invite me in,  
And insist I sit amongst their friends.  
They'll make a toast to congenial peace  
And sate my hunger with a lengthy feast.  
Then we'll join together in harmonious hymns  
Until we faint, flushed, from wanton jubilation.  
And, before I slip back out the way I came in,  
I want them to say:  
"We're so glad you came; we hope you come again!"

Having found the place where I belong,  
I'll rush home to tell everyone:  
"If you're looking for a place where you belong,  
You too may find the hidden place;  
The one that is hidden between the hills  
And shaded from the Sun."



Three Rivers College, Poplar Bluff, MO—  
[https://www.trcc.edu/images/  
facebookog/threeriversmain2019.jpg](https://www.trcc.edu/images/facebookog/threeriversmain2019.jpg)

# Halfway Enough

*Kate K. Wheeler*

**Y**ou died on a Tuesday  
Then I woke up on Wednesday  
Strangled to a nightmare

The week drags me through  
My Tuesday is tangled  
Shoving hours through me

And it's halfway enough to be  
halfway to done  
With all the pieces  
You left bleeding in me

And it's almost too right to be  
totally wrong  
Living my life  
Growing without you

I was born on a Wednesday  
But now every Wednesday  
I don't think of birth

And it's really arbitrary  
Only every seven days  
But you were just seven      teen

And it's halfway enough to be  
halfway to done  
Did you really  
Expect me to move on

And it's almost too right to be  
totally wrong  
Why won't these claws re-  
lease their grip on my heart

My kaleidoscope of feelings  
Swirling down the drain  
When I let go of the plug  
What will remain?

It's halfway enough

And I'm totally done with just  
writing your song  
I need my closure  
You need your release

It's totally wrong

It's halfway to done

# At a Loss

*Matthew Dowd*

**T**wo were conversing.  
One says to Two,  
“What can unite us,  
All as humans?  
We act all islands.”

“Surely dreams  
Being so  
Ubiquitous,  
Must close the deep,”  
Two mused.

One pondered, then retorted,  
“A good postulate,  
Dreams, however,  
Cannot connect us,  
Not everyone aspires.

Some content the  
Self to current  
Stature, not chasing  
Further. Er, I am  
At a loss.”

Contemplation, One  
Broke the silence.  
“What of the appetite?  
Each one of us  
Lusts and hungers?”

Two snickered,  
“Ay, surely each  
One of us  
Chases the urging  
Of our appetite.

However, I lust not  
For drink, others do.  
Hunger is not consistent,  
Therefore, I tarry  
At a loss.”

Silence breaks discussion,  
Both grasp at sparks  
In their imagination.  
The sparks yield not  
Flame. Nay only smoke.

Two cuts through the quiet,  
“What of the love and affection?  
Even the coldest of hearts  
Can feel love. Surely,  
That which everyone feels

Makes us One. The greatest  
Of things we do unifies us.  
That must be it! I have  
Overcome being stuck  
At a loss.”

One scoffs,  
“Love is important  
Nay, absolutely required,  
As its deficiency  
Wounds everyone so.

Reviewing it so though,  
Is falling further down.  
Love is found in many  
Forms. No two are the  
Same in love.

Deficiencies of love  
Affect differently,  
Meaning that does not  
Connect us; we are again  
At a loss.”

Two has a flash of inspiration,  
“Perchance, we examined  
The wrong things. In ev’ry case,  
At a loss.  
That is it! Our great unity!

At a loss unites us,  
We all don’t really know  
And are often At a loss,  
Just alike in life,  
And our own thoughts.

At a loss is how  
One becomes Two,  
Two becomes One,  
One understands Two,  
Two understands One!”

One and Two smile.

“Ay Two, I think we have it.”

“I concur One, together,  
We have found it!”

Concurrent they speak,  
“We are At a loss.”



Three Rivers College, Poplar Bluff, MO—Photo by Mark J. Sanders

# TYPEFACE DESIGNERS

The typefaces selected for this year's Missouri Bicentennial issue were all designed by type artists who have a direct connection to Missouri either through birth, residency, or professional association. Their designs show how Missouri plays a vital role in the development of innovative, creative, useful, and fun typefaces. Missouri has long been a national leader in the fields of printing, advertising, and graphic design, and this issue helps to celebrate that tradition.

## BEN KIEL

### *Cortado*



Graduate of the type design program at the University of Reading, who joined House Industries (Wilmington, DE) in 2006 to work as a typeface designer, director, and developer. He also worked

with Ken Botnick at emdash. He runs Typefounding, a typeface design and production studio in St. Louis, Missouri. He teaches at Washington University in St. Louis and the Type@Cooper certificate program at Cooper Union, and has taught at the Maryland Institute College of Art and the University of Delaware. He is a partner at XYZ Type with Jesse Ragan. (Photo: <https://source.wustl.edu/2013/12/a-career-that-fits-to-a-t/>)

Designer biographies found at <http://luc.devroye.org/usa-missouri.html>

## KIMBERLY GESWEIN

### KG LET HER GO SOLID

### KG Cold Coffee

### Janda Curlygirl Chunky

### Janda Curlygirl Serif

### Janda Curlygirl Pop

Born in Missouri in 1979, Kimberly moved first to Texas and later (in 2007) to China, and now lives in Louisville, KY. She made some free fonts (often handwriting styles), and also ran a personal handwriting font service; those fonts have names that start with KGD. (Photo: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Kimberly-Geswein-Fonts>)



## SUMNER STONE

### Stone Serif ITC Pro



The Stone Type Foundry in Guinda, CA, is Sumner Stone's outfit, which he founded in 1990. Born in Venice, Florida in 1945, Sumner Stone is a major designer, and creator of the Stone family. He studied calligraphy with Lloyd Reynolds at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, and then went to work for Hallmark Cards in Kansas City, MO, as a lettering artist. In 1979, he became type director at Autologic, and in 1984, he became the Director of Typography at Adobe Systems (until 1989). (Photo: <https://www.lino-type.com/562/sumner-stone.html>)

# CONFLUENCE

## COLOPHON

The cover stock is Kromekote 12-point C1S gloss cover printed in full process color.

The text stock is 80# Endurance Velvet Text printed in full process color.

Title heads and initial caps are set in **KG LET HER GO SOLID** typeface.

Fiction and essay titles are set in **KG Cold Coffee**.

Poetry titles are set in **Janda Curlygirl Chunky, Serif, and Pop**.

Author's Names are set in *Cortado*.

Text is set in Stone Serif ITC Pro Medium.

Photo captions set in **Stone Serif ITC Pro Semi Bold**.

Photo credits set in *Stone Serif ITC Pro Medium Italic*.

Folios are set in **KG LET HER GO SOLID** and **KG Cold Coffee**.

Design software: Adobe InDesign, Adobe Photoshop

Editor/Designer: Mark J. Sanders

*Confluence* is funded annually by Three Rivers College

## Submissions

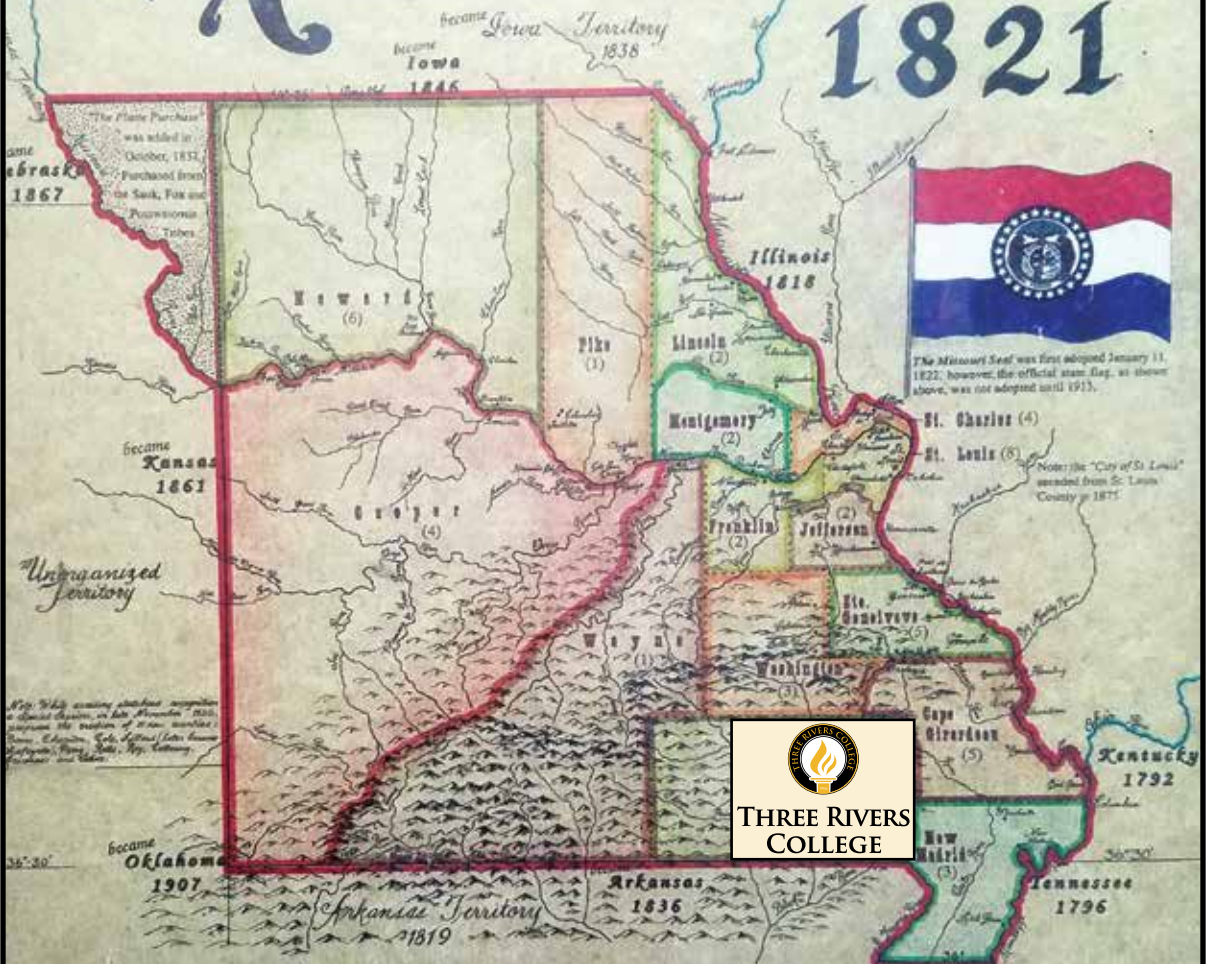
All students, faculty, and staff may submit essay, poetry, or fiction. Submissions are accepted from November to February.; Each entry should be 1,000 words or less, maximum three entries per author. Entries must be submitted digitally and can be emailed to the editor at [confluence@trcc.edu](mailto:confluence@trcc.edu).



# Missouri

Where Students and Creativity Converge

## 1821



The Missouri Seal was first adopted January 11, 1821; however, the official state flag, as shown above, was not adopted until 1913.

Note: the "City of St. Louis" extended from St. Louis County in 1817.



Missouri became the 24th State to join the Union August 10, 1821.  
(admitted as a slave state, however, remained with the Union during the Civil War)

- 1803 - "The Louisiana Purchase" expanded the United States boundaries beyond the Mississippi River west to the Continental Divide.
- 1805 - The new territory was redefined as "Louisiana Territory" and governed by Territorial Law.
- 1812 - The "State of Louisiana" was created and admitted to the Union. The balance of the territory was redefined as "Missouri Territory."
- 1820 - Missouri organized a "State" government and petitioned Statehood. The population of the United States neared 10 million. (4th US Census.)

- 1820 - "The Missouri Compromise" ...The United States Congress voted on March 15 to admit MAINE as a "Free State" and MISSOURI as a "Slave State;" however, slavery would then be prohibited in the remaining area of the Missouri Territory north of the 36° - 30' parallel.
- 1820 - Missouri was divided into 15 counties, represented by 49 Legislators, as outlined above...The Territorial Capital located in St. Louis was moved to St. Charles in 1821 and remained the State Capital until 1826 when it was moved to the more centrally located town of Jefferson City.
- 1821 - Missouri became the 24th state with a population of 66,568.