The Plow

Spring 2015 Issue
The Plow

English Society
Literary & Arts Magazine

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Editorial Board
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The Plow
The Plow is a literary and art magazine for students of the Kent State University at Ashtabula campus and is published online once a year.

Submissions
Submissions may be sent via our website: ksuaenglishsociety.weebly.com/the-plow-literary-magazine.html. Submission deadlines are on the website.

Contact
You can contact us at theplowlitmag@kent.edu.

Letter from the Editorial Board

We would like to welcome everyone to the second issue of The Plow. The creativity of the Ashtabula Campus is evident from the submissions we received. This year’s selections highlight the beauty of our region, the strength of our relationships, and the persistence of our character. We are especially excited by the increase of art submissions we received this year.

We received many submissions and the selection process was difficult, but we hope that the work featured in these pages is of the highest quality. We would like to thank everyone who submitted work to the journal to help our first issue be a success. We would also like to extend a special thank you to the Communications and Marketing department, especially Lindsey Myers, for putting together our submissions pages and the journal itself and to the KSUA administration for their support of our endeavor to showcase the creativity of our campus.

Our goal is to present the unique voices and visions of the students on our campus and we look forward to reading your submissions for the third issue of The Plow.

The Plow Editorial Board

Front Cover Photo
True Colors
Ryan Kinney
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Just like the Movies
Diedre Fleming

My version of Romance says hello my name is, now will you run away with me
It says you look so good when you wear your insecurities
It says T-minus 4 days, 23 hours and 10 minutes until I see her again.
My version of Romance comes with pain
It comes with distance
It comes with the unspoken words between us
It comes with remembrances and regrets
It comes with the ending credits.
My version of Romance takes in every bit of you it can get
It takes the long way around to get one glimpse
It takes 3 hours getting ready just to look casual.
My version of Romance wants to live out its fantasies
It wants to hold you close with scissored hands
It wants to get you honey from a tree in hopes that you might think I’m a little crazy
It wants you as its dying wish.
See because my version of Romance didn’t exist
   Until I met you
And it makes me think that maybe this version of Romance could be
Even better than the movies.
Jigsaw
J. M. Romig, Amanda Whitlock, and Ryan P. Kinney

The first time I watched a man die
It wasn’t a man anymore, they told me
Just like my mother wasn’t my mother anymore

I will never forget the wrong answer
And the empty hours
When the minute hand was always longer

I often welcome sleepwalking through most of the week
In the few instances the machines malfunction
I curse being awakened

I don’t see how anyone
Can smoke at a time like this
When the air is so heavy
It’s like breathing cement

I’m in stressed and panicked misery
And I’m vomiting
Lots and lots of stuff
That stretches vast
And expands to eat up everything

The guilt of my sin
The heft of your innocence
Weighs heavily on my soul
As I drag you down with me

Her lit cigarette burns
So brightly from the porch
Against the darkness
It reminds me of a lighthouse
Or a bug zapper

And what is that moth doing there anyways?
People are trying to sleep
Patchwork Dreams
Aaron Kasunic, Amanda Whitlock, Morgann Blackwood, J.M. Romig, Ryan P. Kinney, and Valentine Berlin

The block is killing me
A million thoughts stopped by a lacking syllable
The start
Could it be? Should it be?
I’ll fill the silence with doubt
Waiting for the right sound
While the deadline looms...

These dreamers in my mind have stopped dancing,
Tired of waiting for the music:

Paint splashes grayscale
Patches together in swatches
Blending to erase the boundaries
I never follow anyway
It’s been years since
My guidelines were straight
Enough to stay inside
Yet it’s where
I prefer to be

I’ve been poor, so poor
That harvesting cigarette butts to squeeze the tobacco out
Was the only way to smoke
So poor that I had to carve a pipe out of a carrot
To smoke that tobacco
Yes, I’ve been poor
Poverty is a misery, but I’m crafty
So-so living, those problems
Making do is how I survive
Yes, I’ve been poor
And I carry the scars to prove it

Loop. Swoop. Pull.
Nope.
Loop. Swoop. Pull
Still no.
Mom’s getting fed up
I’m sorry.
I just can’t do it.

I race through the shop door
The natural light stings my wet eyes
And the chill stops me for an instant
My mother screams behind me,
“Get the fuck out of here.”
I am sobbing, finding it difficult to breathe
As I choke down mucus and blood
My lip is already starting to swell
Tomorrow, she will try to bribe my forgiveness with some useless object
Another fucking worthless sentiment
From a parent who never stopped being a child

So soggy... everything...
The grass, the hay, the sky
And my crotch- presently soaked in blood.
Two periods in one month!!
YAY for me.
Soggy... everything.

Jesus died
Because I am a sinner
I’m on my knees
For the fifth time this week
Trying to find my salvation
On this bathroom floor
Penetrated by the needle
Full of bubbling holy light

I’m drunk and so pissed out right now
There is no God
If there was
He would have saved me
Or atleast given me a bigger dick

Before the arthritis set in,
I could grab a dick,
They called them “handys” back then,
And I was very accomplished.
My grip was magical
And Old Faithful would quietly make a show.

I’m as dead as America in the Fall
The dead-eyed liberal zombies are coming
To knock down the walls of my panic room
Picketing my rights
If they had half a brain
They’d put down those signs
And pick up a gun

It’s already past 11,
The kids are long since asleep
I quietly stick the key in the lock
And try to open the door without the usual creak
I drop my briefcase in the hall
As though the full weight of 70 hour work weeks were stored within
I loosen my tie and walk to the fireplace
There I spot the kids, dead to the world on the couch
“Waiting for Santa”
He’s finally here!
As I bend to slide another present under the tree

Memory corrupted
Trying to recover
Installing... Installing
Installing the good data. Recover the bright.
Installing... Installing
Deleting viruses. Replace corrupted data.
Installing... Installing
Waiting for completion
In-
Stalling...
Ready to carry on
In
Stalling....
Tanka-ka
Or Not Tanka
Ryan Kinney

American tanka: Japanese influenced poetry that ignores rigid syllable guidelines; typified by an individualist, nonconformist sentiment.

1.
You step so cautiously
That sometimes you forget
To take a step
And I am left waiting,
Running far ahead

2.
You don’t realize
That your body
Might just save this one
This body might,
Just kill me

3.
What does all this stuff mean?
What does this world mean?
Long after I am gone
This shit will still be here,
Forgotten by everyone

4.
Internet porn
Seduces mens’ hearts
And objectifies their desires

5.
The destruction of the self is intolerable,
Everyone tells me
To destroy myself is unacceptable,
Little round pills
And Then There Was None
Ryan Kinney

First they came for my things.
And I did not speak out.
Because I had so very little anyways.

Then they came for my mind.
And I did not speak out.
Because I had no thoughts to give.

Then they came for my heart.
And I did not speak out.
Because it was already broken.

Then they came for my body.
And I did not speak out.
Because it was already worn beyond use.

Then they came for my soul.
And I did not speak out.
Because I was empty inside.

Then they came for me.
And there
Was nothing left
For them to take.
Half Life
Ryan Kinney

Welcome to the digital age.  
Where man’s best friend is Internet porn  
And a woman’s only friend is her vibrator.

We’ve traded a heartbeat for an electronic pulse.  
Blips and bleeps in an imagined humanity.  
Forgetting that living means leaving the house.  
And that sandals and boxer shorts are not formal wear.

We live in the information age  
Full disclosure is no longer optional  
We are sharing information.  
We are contributing to the death of the self.  
Or are we finally mastering intelligence?

There is an epidemic of inaction  
Entropied Progress  
The mobius sloth slides down into its own gluttony  
And I just want to have sex with someone who is still alive

Have you seen the latest episode of Walking Dead or Breaking Bad?  
Have you looked in the mirror?  
Reality shows?  
Who’s reality?

We are social creatures  
And social control is how you keep the pigs in their pen  
Until it’s time to offer us up as sacrifice at the altar of decadence

We willingly give them our intelligence  
Our spirit  
For another video game  
Another TV show  
That promises a better reality  
See it all in HD  
While we dubstep to our doom  
Up Jacob’s Ladder  
Built out of the 15 minute prophets

Sell me another artificially derived addiction  
Masquerading as sustenance  
Trading them like baseball cards  
Tell me how much I need it  
Need you  
Preach it with the fear of the unorthodox on Fox News  
While everyone’s getting high on your life

Televangelist CEOs
Sell us the next salvation
The anarchists are screaming,
“Legalize it.”
And the stoners aren’t helping

The half-life of modernization guarantees that if enough of our individuality decays
There ceases to be anything worth calling human
Who Am I?
Ryan Kinney

I am a boy and a man.
I am a son, a brother, a cousin, a nephew, and a grand child.
I was a boyfriend, a fiancé, a husband, and an in-law.
I am a bachelor.
I am surrounded and abandoned.
I am a family man and a loner.

I am a homemaker and a handyman.
I wear the apron and the tool belt.
I am a neat freak and a slob.
I am an amateur contractor and a contracted amateur.
I am a dumpster diver, a recycler, and a decadent waste.
I am a glutton, a scavenger, and a scrapper.

I am a friend and an enemy.
I am fun and an annoyance.
I am a lover and a hater.
I am creepy, cruel, and harsh.
I am tender, loving, and inviting.
I have a foul mouth and tender lips,
Drenched in jagged, soft-serve words.

I am a painter, sculptor, draftsman, sketcher, character designer, photographer, graphic designer, fashion designer, kitbasher, customizer, and crafter.
I am a reader, a writer, and a poet.
I am the Jail Baby, Ryan & Lisa, The Phoenix, The AntiFather, and The HEYMAN!
I compose symphonies of visual and intangible imagery.
I bring form to thought.
I destroy,
I create.
I am an artist.

I am a geek, nerd, freak, and otaku.
I have been punk, goth, prep, white trash, and metrosexual.
I wear glasses,
But only as a sick joke.
I am beautiful and ugly,
Clean and dirty.
I am unique.
I am predictable.
I have changed, but am still the same.

I am a techie,
An electronic junkie.
I am cutting edge and old school.
Digitally signed and sealed.
I am analog and obsolete.
I am an adrenaline addict.  
I can chill, maybe slow,  
But never relax.

I am blue collar, tradesman, and service industry.  
I am peon and pissed on.  
Oh, but I have done the pissing too!  
I have been hired and fired,  
Bought and sold.  
I have worn the uniform,  
I have said, “Damn the man!”  
I am the proletariat,  
I am in charge.

I am a student, dropout, and teacher.  
I am class clown and teacher’s pet.  
I have learned, forgotten, and taught,  
But never learned my lesson.  
I don’t listen to what I’m told,  
But always do what I tell.

I am a genius,  
I am an idiot.  
I have intelligence, but often lack the intel.  
I am naïve, but wise.  
I am right and wrong.

I have philosophies and ideas,  
But no religion.  
I have desecrated and blasphemed,  
Prayed and praised.  
I have lusted, envied, and coveted.  
I am guilty and innocent,  
Pure and soiled,  
Good and bad.

I am a driver and a passenger.  
I am an explorer and a shut-in.  
I am wild and free,  
Caged and stifled.  
I was warmly wrapped in my blanket,  
But burned through it.

I have rode, climbed, and conquered.  
I stood still.  
I jumped in.  
I have fallen and been defeated.

I have been abroad,  
I have been nowhere.  
I have drifted.
I have settled.
I have led and been led.
I have been in and out,
   Here and there,
   Around and AWOL,
   On the run and trapped.
But, not everywhere.

I have applied,
I have procrastinated.
I have worked my fingers to the bone,
I have slept it off.

I have fought and fled.
I have quit.
I have endured.
I am a winner and a loser,
A champ and a chump.

I am fake,
I am real.
I have lied, cheated, and stole.
   I have been honest, fair, and generous.

I am selfish and selfless.
I am a gift giver, gift wrapper, and gift taker.
I am a thief and a philanthropist.

I am insecure and confident,
Confused and absolutely sure.
I am proud and ashamed.
I am complicated and convoluted,
But simple to please.

I have blind faith and guarded suspicion
I have secrets,
But lie rarely.
I accept everyone,
I trust nothing.

I have pointed the finger,
Only to turn it on myself.
I have held grudges and forgiven.
I have trusted and misguided.
I have been Judas and Jesus.

I am a maniac,
I am sane.
I have been strong and weak.
I can keep it together,
But prefer to break it apart.
I have bled.
   I have healed.
I have been abused and neglected,
Coddled and protected.

I have been kissed and punched;
Hunted, wanted, and arrested,
Ignored, overlooked, and invisible.

I have loved and lost,
Lived and learned.
I am a soldier of misfortune and opportunity.

I have blended in.
I have stood out.
I have stood up.
I have backed down.
I have been backed into a corner.
I have all the space in the world.

I have seen, interpreted, and perceived,
I have ignored, dismissed, and been blind.
I hunger, want, and need…
I am satiated and content,
But never at peace.

I have been misunderstood and underestimated.
I have been put down, put up, pushed away, and let in.
I have been known,
But never entirely.

I have raged, cried, smiled, trembled, and laughed.
I have been depressed.
I have been happy.
I have been suicidal. I have felt death.
   I have been lost and found.
   I have been broken, then fixed,
Stitched, yet glitched,
   Scarred, but whole.

I am alive.

I took the chance,
I let the moment slip.
I walked the straight and narrow,
   I ran down the road not taken.
I dream; some whole, some shattered.
I go with the flow, but don’t let the waves take me.

I am shards and reflections,
Machinations and reactions.
I am translucent pieces and parts,
Assembled and disheveled.
I am the big picture still focused on the details.

I am the sum total of heredity and experience.
I am not,
    I am more.
I am everything and nothing.
I am a walking contradiction.
I am human.

I tried to be you,
    But didn’t know what that meant.
I am me,
    It’s all I know.

Who are you?
Untitled
Angela Palmer

my body is shaking from the darkness I am hiding
my hatred isn't for anybody but me
my demons are antagonizing me, reminding me of my eternal battle that is forever haunting me,
my eyes are unfocused and unclear i can't even see past my tears
my mask is torn and broken
my shoulders are sagging showing
my defeat
my head hangs low unable to look ahead
But the fire I feel inside keeps me safe from the dark
but I alone cry out in pain, only to awake!
and see my demons looking back at me
The Book of Stones
Martin Smith IV

Look through me; what might you just find?
I am simply a rock, who has always wanted to fly.
I am not stretching in a shell, I am just striving to be;
I have been shaped by the waves, using my own two feet.
My chemicals have been forced, under pressure for too long;
And you might wonder why, I do stand up yet so strong.
I am not a diamond; I have formed my own place.
I can be skipped if I lay flat, but never will I sink.
I have once been a hammer.
I have been a dusty ol’ trail.
I have at times been an anchor; pulled up to set sail.
On a journey through harsh waves, forced to remain brave.
Who knows the lands I will rock; since I have yet to find when.
Who knows the stones I will meet, for which ones I shall call friend.
Who knows if I will deteriorate through the rapids along my way?
All I know is I am a stone, I know every rock sings for amends.
On the path, on their way, towards their own personal gate.
A stone who knows that, every last rock has a storybook;
One that is uniquely and particularly great.
No matter what walk of life;
Land, ocean, creek, or lake.
Questions
Daryl Upole

What if I treated every day like it was my last?
What would be different?
How do I know that is not today (maybe 5 minutes from now)?
Or tomorrow?
Or one day next week?
Should I prepare?
Or should I postpone?
And does it even matter?
What message should I leave?
  Weep not for me,
  For my suffering has ended.
  Waste neither a moment nor a dime to bury me –
  Shed your tears, instead, for –
  The enslaved;
  The imprisoned;
  The abused;
  The impoverished and the addicted;
  For their lives can change.
I’ve no more time for this..
There is a soul that depends on me …tomorrow.
Walking Nowhere

Virginia Nelson

It’s said that, “Not all those who wander are lost (Tolkien)”, but I wandered most when I was lost. When we were little girls, our mother would take us on adventures. Sometimes these trips were no further than to the backyard, where she’d stretch her hand toward the sky and point at the stars as if she could reach up and touch them. I remember lying on my back in the warm summer sun and wishing I could pull them down, string them in a row, and give them to my lovely mother to wear.

Sometimes she’d take us to the nearby railroad tracks and we’d spend a whole day wandering on what I now know is no trespassing paths. We’d skip from rail to rail, getting the black oil on our clothes, gathering rocks to fill our pockets. Sometimes we found stones covered in gold—fool’s gold, my mother called it—but I remember hoping she was wrong. It might be real gold, and we’d never worry for money again. The sun would beat down like a fist, determined to melt us into the tracks like it liquefied the dark oil. I’d burn my fingertips as I lay pennies or other things on the rails, hoping I could come back and find them squashed flat the next day.

While we walked we would sing songs or tell stories of what we’d learned in school. I remember my sister’s stories always had to do with the people around her while mine were mostly about what new lessons I’d mastered or what mysteries I uncovered from the pages of books. Even then, the distinct differences in our personalities showed through in our childish games, but Mother never judged nor asked us to change. I don’t remember us bickering or fighting—a rarity with us—which might explain why Mother enjoyed these walks.

It wasn’t until I became an adult that the oddity of a woman waking her children in the middle of the night to see the stars or walking them all day long on dangerous train tracks—including bridges—might mean something more about my mother. I didn’t understand, not then, that everyone’s mother didn’t lack a license and behave like a teenager when she was annoyed.

I only knew that the sun was warm, the breeze was sweet smelling—unless something had died near the tracks—and that we were together. It seemed we always would be.

I remember Mother telling us that our grandfather was an engineer on the trains and he rode in the ones that had the cat on the side, so we should watch for the cat. When the cat passed, she’d clap her hands—perhaps remembering her own childhood and her father with the sound of the train whistle. “The train means change, Turkeybird,” she’d say. “When you see or hear a train, it’s time for a change.”

I never wondered if my mother wanted to jump on that passing train, traveling far away to someplace exotic, to escape two arguing children and a life she never planned to live.

I wonder now.
Somber Frost
Diedre Fleming
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Bear with an Agenda
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Blue Eyes
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cANDY man1
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A Winter’s Ghost
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Contributors

**Diedre Fleming** is a recent graduate from the Psychology program with a minor in English at Kent State University at Ashtabula.

**Ryan P. Kinney** is a manic, geek-inspired artist, writer, deconstructionist, and megalomaniac. He finds beauty in the morbid, is self-obsessed, and is on a quest to convince everyone to create a better reality through their own pain and perception.

**Virginia Nelson** Aside from enjoying short walks in the general direction of coffee, Virginia Nelson is the author of more than 40 novels and novellas with eight different publishers. She is also the editor of more than 60 novels for various publishers and independent authors. Virginia has been a bestseller on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bookstrand, and ARe. Her debut novel, Odd Stuff, won Best Books of 2010 from HEA Reviews. Virginia is also a painter and a senior at Kent State University, Ashtabula Campus. You can find out more about Virginia at her website, www.virg-nelson.com

**Angela Palmer** is a single mom of two; her kids are her world and her whole purpose to keep moving ahead. She is working hard to try and pursue a career towards journalism and writing. She is a laid back, easy going kind of person who gets along with everyone.

**Kathryn A. Rhea** believes the best of her comes through in nature. She is a senior English major set to graduate in May 2016.

**Martin Smith IV** is working on his Associates Degree in Network Technology.

**Daryl Upole** is an Assistant Professor of Business Management and Related Technologies and has taught at the Ashtabula Campus since 1992.