

Tenth
MUSE

VOLUME XI / 2021



Acknowledgments

Creative Direction + Tenth Muse Crew

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Cover logo design, by Eric Wold.

The logo this year was a community project done by Eric and four other graphic design alumnus: Laura Reiss, Nick Becker, Alyssa Raver, and Emmanuel Eqwaoje.

Each student contributed to a letter::

M- Laura Reiss

U- Nick Becker

S- Alyssa Raver

E- Emmanuel Eqwaoje

The staff would like especially to thank Professor Emerita Katherine Fischer, an innovator in and beyond the classroom and mentor to many students and colleagues. With her colleague in the English department, Ann Pelelo, Katherine put the idea of a literary magazine at Clarke on the table at which, largely due to the Tenth Muse endowment established in her honor, we'll be feasting for years.

Website

www.tenth-muse.squarespace.com

Editor's Letter

by Nolan Baumhover

Man does time fly when you're having fun, I know this has been true for the staff of the Tenth Muse. This year we're giving the Tenth Muse a much needed face lift, and adding our own twist to it. The new edition is going to be unlike anything we've ever produced before, and will stand out among the past editions. Now that we have it in our hands, it looks even better than it did on the drawing board. So, make sure to buckle your seatbelts because you're in for a ride.

A lot of things have changed in the past year with COVID-19, and the Tenth Muse is changing too. It will still be the great magazine that it has been in the past, but it's going to have a different look and a different feel. Along with this change, there has been a change of faces within the Tenth Muse crew, but with this change come new ideas, perceptions, and abilities. All this in mind the Tenth Muse is still devoted to putting forth our best work yet.

I happen to be one of these new changes within the Tenth Muse staff. I'm Nolan Baumhover and this is my first semester being a member. I have been welcomed with open arms by previous members, and feel confident in the abilities of everyone around me. While it's only my first semester I decided to step up to the plate and take the role of Editor-in-chief. It's been quite an adjustment, but with the help of others and the staff, I've been able to smoothly transition into this position. I personally want to thank all the staff members for everything you've done for me in the short time that I've been a part of the staff.

The staff has worked really hard to be able to produce such a fine edition, and I wanted to make sure they got the props they deserved. Thank you, to all of you who have worked so hard and committed so much of your time to make sure that this edition is the best that it can be. I know that there's no possible way any of this would have been done with such quality and skill. No doubt, that it has taken a lot of hard work to get where we need to be with the magazine but as they say hard work pays off and I know that everyone will love this edition because of the contributions you've made.

Another person that deserves a good pat on the back, is our dedicated advisor Eric Wold. There's no doubt in my mind that you've been there with us every step of the way. On behalf of myself, and the staff, I want to thank you for everything that you've done.

Co-Editor's Letter

by Mariah Pellino

For the past four years I have been privileged to take part in and be a regular contributor to the Tenth Muse. It has been such a fun experience to see both sides of the production. I have enjoyed reading through, looking at, and choosing work to enter the publication. I have also enjoyed the excitement of discovering which of my own works made it to the publication, reading my poetry at live events, and being able to talk about my artwork as well. As the Tenth Muse continues to grow and adapt, I have been able to grow and adapt with it. A few years ago I started out as a helping hand and have transitioned into the role as co-editor. This has been a beautiful position for me to hold as I love this publication and feel so incredibly lucky to take part in bringing it to life.

Last year with the wake of COVID-19 shaking up the world, the publication of Volume X was put on hold. This volume of the Tenth Muse we were tasked with finding a way to commemorate and print Volume X alongside the new publication Volume XI. In recognizing the historical significance and impact COVID-19 has had, we decided it was essential to letting the publication serve as a time capsule for this moment in time and history.

I would like to thank all of the contributors, editors, and designers who have submitted work, edited work, and have spent time and energy to make this publication. If it wasn't for all of the people who continue to submit work to our publication it wouldn't be able to exist as the time capsule that it has become. It is an incredible thing to be able to offer our Clarke and greater Dubuque community a literary magazine with so much vulnerability, honesty, and historical significance tied into it.

I would also like to thank our faculty advisor, Eric Wold. If it wasn't for him and the other members of staff, printing a double-print of the Tenth Muse would have never been possible. He helped us transform this form of the Tenth Muse into something new, fresh, and brilliant. On a personal note, Eric taught me how to be a better leader, designer, and taught me to never be afraid of taking on a new challenge. Thank you for this experience and thank you for reading and contributing to our literary magazine!

Right Direction

by Mariah Pellino

There are so many things going on
in the world around me my once
colossal problems now feel minuscule

Somehow my inner turmoils of self-hatred
and sadness have become a glimmering
reflection of something more troubling

Pulling the layers of my privilege off to
examine them I look through a magnifying
glass attempting to understand the advances
mere color of skin has provided me

I will never understand the struggle persons
of color face on a day to day basis but I have
been made aware of my own privilege

A step in the right direction
I am walking towards change a society
that does not determine the fate of
a person by the color of their skin



Untitled / JJ D'Onofrio



Top A Thorn Among Roses / Emily Boge
Bottom A Bird's-Eye View / Emily Boge



quod me nutrit me destruit

by Holly Beauchamp

it's 8:59 am
and you don't
pray anymore.
nor do you call
for you know both go
unanswered.

yet, you still
dial the number
that forever
echoes in your mind
from the first time
you heard it

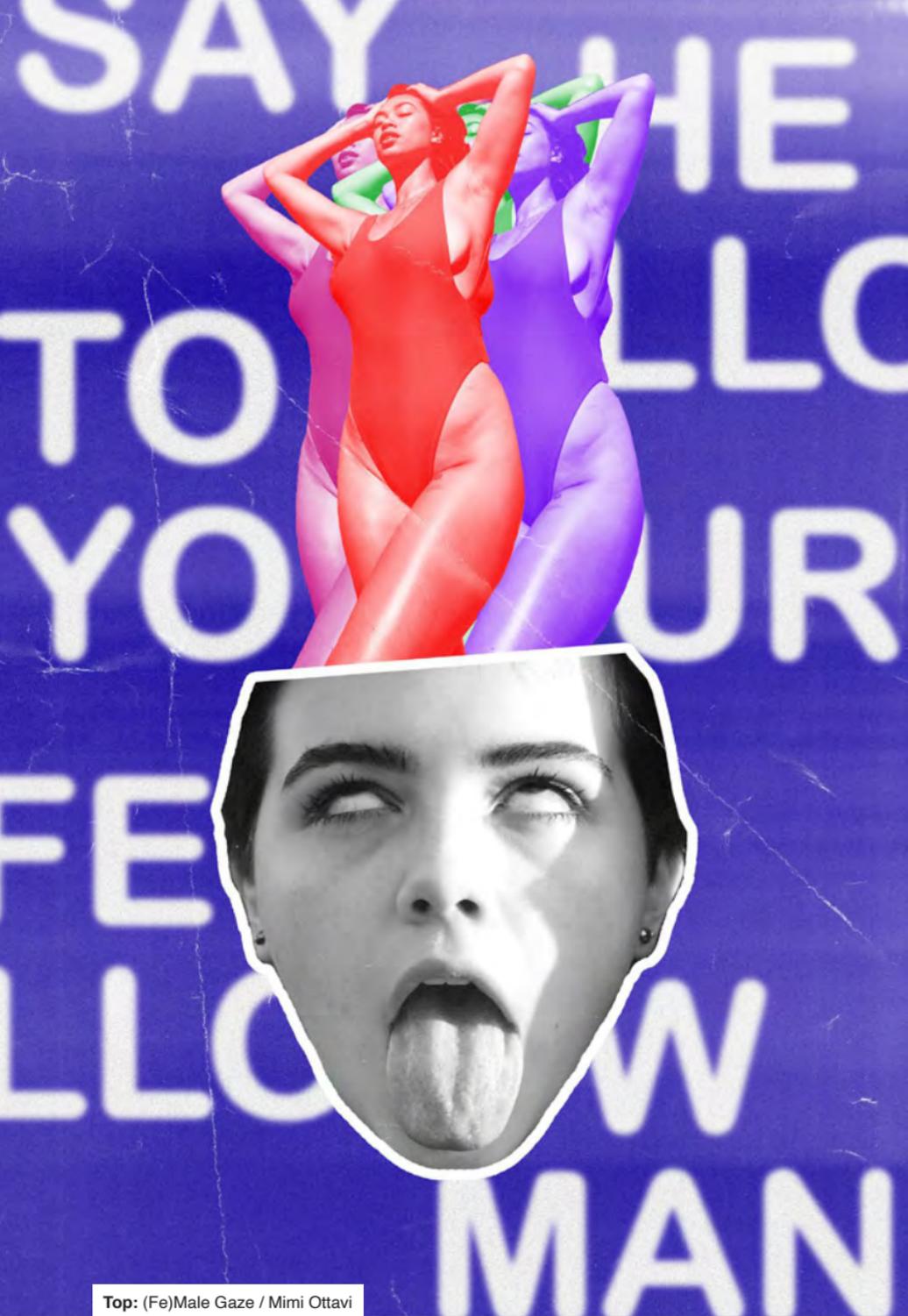
you list off the number
of times it rings
whispering to yourself "7"
as the final tone beeps
and it plays her voice again.
preserved, just the way you
don't exactly remember it

you never really had a
good relationship
with phone calls
the right calls
were never listened to
while the wrong ones
were answered
but you seemed to be lucky
whenever it came
to calls from her
until that fateful day of
screeching tires and
folding metal
and you were left with
the same luck
on this side of the call.

there are whispers of a
deserted telephone booth
an apparent direct line
to the man upstairs.
that question still burns
away your soul
and you do not know if you
can rise up from the ashes.

you count six before the
line picks up.
silence greets you on the other
side and you meet it with
silence back.
jumbled phrases dance on the
edge of your tongue
and yet you hear yourself
speak that question
into reality
in your mother's tongue.
in your grandfather's voice.
how do i say unsaid words to
someone long gone?

it's 9:00 am.
there is no response
there will never be
a response.
that is unacceptable.
you refuse.
you forget.
it's 9:01 am.
you don't call anymore,
nor do you pray.
you dial the number
and hear her voice,
preserved.
unrecognizable.
there are whispers of a
deserted telephone booth.



Top: (Fe)Male Gaze / Mimi Ottavi
Bottom: Untitled / Abbey Howell



at the Café

by Mona Lee Clark

His hand is a funnel
around the cellophane sack of gum balls.
He pours the bright spheres
into a glass globe
that's like a topiary tree.
Then he crouches to gather quarters
at the roots,
drizzles the coins
into manilla envelopes.

The machine twirls heavily
as he dances it back in place.
He fills his leather satchel
with the bag of leftover balls,
the stacks of envelopes,
fastens the catch, lifts the handle.
He nods at his brilliant infusion.

From my table I look at graffiti paper
hung like windows on the wall.
Someone has written "Anna Banana Rules."
I picture my Annie
pedaling her tricycle on a summer sidewalk,
blonde hair clipped away from her eyes
with a butterfly barrette.



Despair / Mariah Pellino



Top: Clara Bow / Abbey Howell
Bottom: Mary Pickford / Abbey Howell



Armageddon

By Rob Luke

For Alfred Hitchcock's Motion Picture, *The Birds*

Bodega Bay, a California coastal town, a fish market for crab and shrimp, where locals breathe the inlet of the Pacific and exhale hearsay. The postal clerk wears horn-rimmed glasses like official capacity, and utters perfunctory language. He is the Pontius Pilate of longhand letters written under both duress and boredom. Groceries and hardware can be had, among other merchandise.

Annie Hayworth, lonely local teacher, dark haired as Magdalene, gardens in the hard soil, wearing her red sweater of scarlet yarn. Her volition close knit, warming the chill of the bay. Melanie Daniels, the blonde outsider, into the lion's den. In her fur coat, she dolled up as Bathsheba's temptation. The two women, strength deriving from their hair, consume cigarettes like loaves. Annie leans on her red mailbox, the color of danger, the hue of bloodshed.

Melanie pursuing Annie's ex-boyfriend, Mitch Brenner, a handsome lawyer, who reads people with jurisprudence. He is an imperfect savior, a false prophet to Lydia, his mother. Lydia fears expiration dates on her chickenfeed. Melanie yearning for an introduction into meaning on a long dock, only reaching so far into a body of water and blood from preceding five holy wounds.

Melanie rents a skiff to surprise Mitch. A gull gashes her prettiness, a revelation of impending doom; nature gone berserk as a treacherous serpent. Mitch treats her injury, yet infuriates her pride. She declares loathing for him, the chemistry of attraction volatile as politics of crucifixion. Schlitz beer can be bought at **The Tides**, a seafood restaurant, equipped with peroxide for cleansing.

The town, built on hillsides, where some drink more scotch than water. A territory of an ailing beauty, golden blonde halo, outliving a brunette, who is reduced to salt by the lopsided grin of Lot's wife. A sleepy place, subject to frenetic fire and brimstone scripture, where the world begins to end.



Jenny of Old Stone / Maggie Christianson



“Until Next Time.”

By Emily Smith

I think people underestimate nostalgia.
When they tell you that you should
enjoy being young, they don't tell you
when you blink you no longer will be.
That when you look back on your life,
you wonder if any of it actually happened.
Wondering what version of reality you truly lived.
People always discuss the “good old days,”
but never tell you when you're experiencing them.
One-timers always seem to happen when you're 13
on the way to your best friend's house on a Friday night;
or when you're 15 years old and your boyfriend says
he loves you for the first time.
It seems that those are the memories we remember.
But what about the things we do each year
which are centered around nostalgia?
Watching Harry Potter while
putting up the Christmas tree.
Playing Phase 10 at family reunions until
it is dark outside.
Saying “Good night, I love you. See you in the morning.”
every time you go to sleep to ensure that
it is never “goodbye,”
but only an “until next time.”
It seems we are comfortable in the past,
comforted by it, even.
But no one warns you when it will be the last time.
2020 seems to be the year of last times.
But as all traditions go,
we will look forward to them next year.
This year is not, cannot, be a “goodbye,”
but only an “until next time.”



Top: Pride Volleyball / Hayden Degross

Bottom: Giant Ridge Kicker / Hayden Degross



[Insert NAME Here]

by Emily Smith

He probably only liked you as
a friend too, but isn't this what
you wanted? To be free of him?
No.

This is not what I wanted.

I want to burn every inch of
skin that he touched.

I want to poke hot curling irons
into my eyes to blind
the memories of the first and
last time we hung out.

I want to burn his name from
my throat,
to remove that first kiss from
his teenage room,
to burn away the pain
he left behind.

They say he looked sad.
Depressed, even.

He wouldn't know the word
depressed
if a razor cut his wrist
from hand to elbow.
He wouldn't know sad
if he found out he wasn't
good enough for the only one
he opened up to.
He wouldn't know love
if he had a girl
broken
try to put herself together and
be perfect for him
just to make him smile,
just to hear him say
her name.

I never liked my name until
you said it. I never liked my
looks until I showed you all my
insecurities, shaking from the
nerves, and all you said was,

"Come here you beautiful girl."

I no longer like my name since
it rolled off your tongue when
you said,

"Please don't hate me."

I will never like my body since
it isn't good enough for anyone,
according to you.

But all of these words, all of
these metaphors, similes, and
how many times I press enter to
make it look poetic, won't show,
will pale in comparison, to the
emotions I have towards you.

Yes, there is anger,

Yes, there was love.

But now there is only
hurt and the numbness

I tried to get out of
when we were together that
I'm now falling back into to
forget the first and hopefully
last time I will ever say your
name.

Ryan.



Top: Untitled / Abbey Howell

Bottom: What I See In You / JJ D'Onofrio



Nourished

by Mona Lee Clark

Grandma kept the spare bedroom so cold
It was hard to get up even for her pancakes.

We smeared them with homemade butter
she had molded with a paddle, whey oozing.

She wore a faded apron bound in brown
over her dark dress, the one with rosebuds.

Grandma had to pad the bodice, had nursed
seven babies there on the homestead.

In old age she sold it, traveled to live
with each grown child for a few months.

At our house she pinned up her wavy hair,
darned sock holes, the thread invisible.

We were in awe of her ranch cooking:
cheese dumplings, floured homemade noodles,

cinnamon cookies baked on a patterned iron,
dinner rolls knotted into tiny birds.

Untitled / Abbey Howell





Top: A Different Place / JJ D'Onofrio
Bottom: Untitled / Abbey Howell



Welcome

by Holy Beauchamp

it's 10 am.
the church breathes in,
before unleashing a torrent of chants
that also escapes your traitorous lips.
a repeated motion
ingrained into the mind.
a ubiquitous presence
in your first memories.

to make sure your brain is not enslaved
to the lulling song,
you start to look around.
the statues stare back at you,
so you do best to keep flitting your eyes
for it could invoke an unwanted response
from those unearthly entities.

10 o' 1.
the air shifts upwards
the seats no longer occupied.
the chant has now been replaced
by a cacophonous melody,
signaling the procession of the instigator
of a ritual marred by controversy.

blinking is no longer an option
for the entities now glare into your mind
unsatisfied
panicking is an understatement
as you yell in your mind,
when will the leaders arrive and witness
the danger they and i are both in?

t-minus 1 minute.
movement has abruptly ceased.
the sound stopped.
and the statues' heads gone.

you wonder if you can breathe
or if the air has tightly wrapped a coffin
around your face,
hostile to the thought of living
'for there is no sentience without the savior, 

the previously-intrinsic phrase rattles
around in your brain
but for the life of you,
the last word has uttered itself
out of existence.

3.0×10^8 m/s.

you realize you have been permitted to function again
as the air swells in greeting
of a creature fixated with oxen, eagle, lion, and
'human' features
you recognize it as one of the statues.

you open your mouth to speak
and yet no word is being uttered.
the creature's stare pierces through you
obligated to crush the disgrace you have
become

you know that this is only
a warm welcome back
to the home you left

your hand is trembling
you don't remember when the sensation started
and the light has been snatched
from the once-familiar surrounding

crumble to the ground
you must
you knew you shouldn't have left

Are You Willing to Love Me?

your body whimpers in response
like a dog banished from an owner's heel
a spoken response will not be permitted
now that you have defiled the air you breathe in
your hands speak for you
crying out for mercy
when you know it will not arrive.

it's 10 am.
the church breathes in,
before unleashing a torrent of chants
that also escapes your smiling lips.
a repeated motion
ingrained into the mind.
a ubiquitous loving presence
in your first memories.



Top: Shadynasty Corolla / Hayden Degross
Bottom: Mississippi River Walk / Hayden Degross







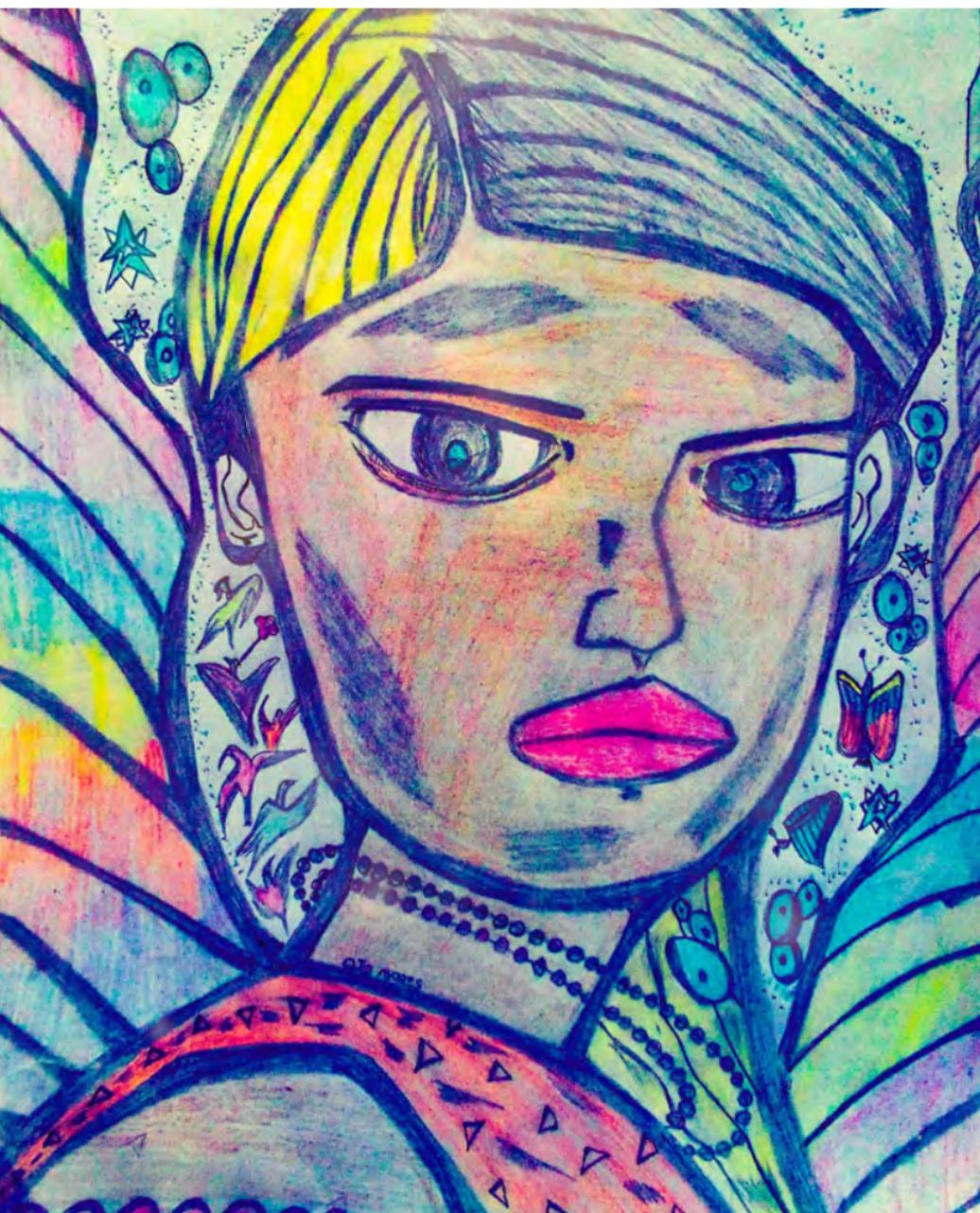
Top: Kurt Douglas/ Abbey Howell

Bottom: Untitled / Alex Smith





Top: Change / Mariah Pellino
Bottom: African Fery / Ojo Moses









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