

Mood Ring



Edition I • 2022



Welcome to the first edition of *MoodRing*, our first art and literature zine for teens! *MoodRing* fits the mood of what needs to be seen and heard. We at the Carnegie Center for Art & History wanted to give teens in our community an opportunity to both express themselves and collaborate with their fellow peers. We received more than 100 art and literature submissions from students in Clark, Floyd, and Harrison Counties, and we are thrilled to present the 30 pieces that were chosen for publication in this zine. To all the talented teens that submitted work, attended programs, and followed us on this incredible journey:

Thank you!

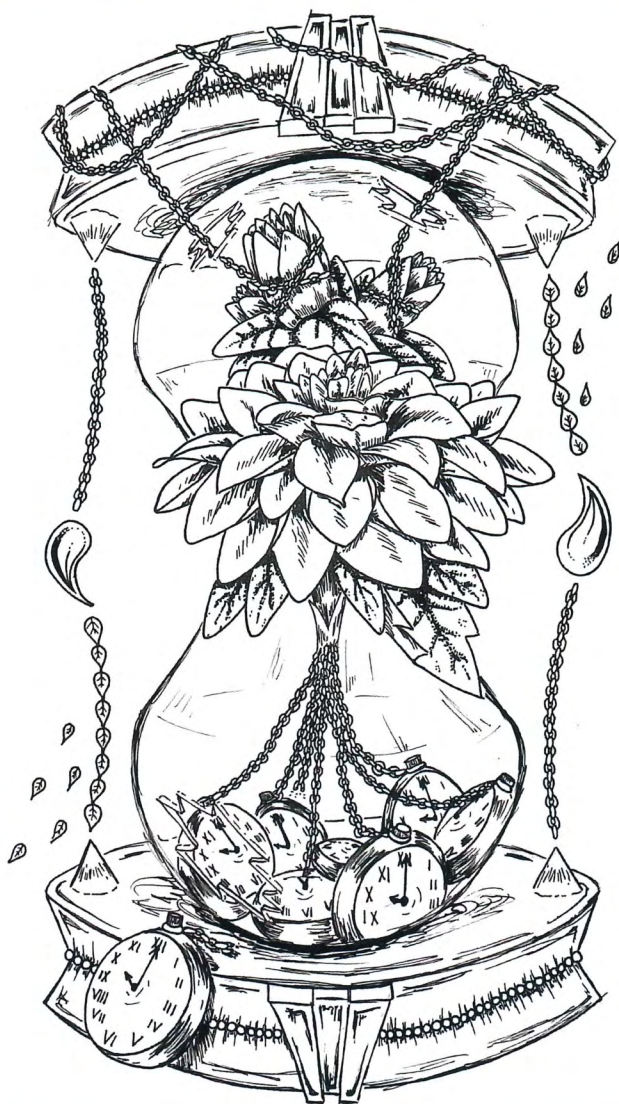


What's the mood?

All zine contributors' names are listed on the last page, in order to credit each artist while keeping sensitive content private.



Staring Down Fate, digital illustration



Hourglass, ink on paper

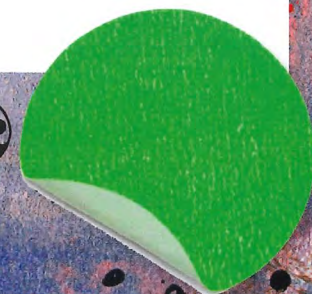
Bug In The Mind

The mind is like a bug,
hopping from one decision to the next,
constantly moving,
waking you up in the middle of the night with a terrible sound sure to
make your skin crawl
yet the mind is like a bug,
a delicate creature
a delicate heart
and when the **pressure builds**,
You can get rid of it with a small simple stomp

When the bug goes silent
so does the sounds
so does the constant movement,
only the peaceful nothing remains,
peaceful silence...

Yet the silence was even worse,
It won't let you get a wink of sleep,
with the buzz of silent thoughts
too squished to be full

The mind may be a bug
but the silence is a monster





Escapism, watercolor painting

Theodore

Theodore has these magnificent dark brown chocolate eyes. When he looks into my soul, all I can sense is the comfort of Autumn. He has this tall, slender figure, with this childish haircut and a cowlick that is somewhat untameable.

We talk an awful lot, he tells me that everyone is beautiful in their own way. He finds underrated traits to be the most striking. Whether it be fiery red hair, a curvy vivacious form, or even the brown freckle specks that lie on someone's face.

I met him at the worst time of my life. Which was the greatest gift of all. I had bumped into him as my life was falling apart, when my friends left, when my significant other lost the love they once felt for me, when I had started despising myself, and when my lack of motivation started consuming me in so many awful ways. I was so lost when I had met him.

He brought me to light. He showed me that just because I had rough upcomings, it didn't mean that I had to simply stop living the life that was meant for me. He got me into new hobbies, and interests, he even encouraged me to get a tutor.

My family and I were starting to have countless disagreements. They did not necessarily enjoy the nuisance I was becoming, and I couldn't blame them. I could hardly stand myself. When I had went to go rant to my dearest, Theodore. He had given me some great advice, so great that to this day, I still encourage my friends and family to abide by it. He said "You can't change the environment around you, but you can change your response." So I had done just that. I changed my response with my family. The relationship that I once had with them was slowly repairing once again.

Sadly, that advice did not help with the fact that I was so deeply insecure about myself. I was so cruel to myself. I would just look into the mirror when Theodore would come over and I would enlighten him about the repulsion I felt about myself. He hated that I felt this way. He told me that beauty is subjective, and that I was beautiful, just in my own exceptional way. He had helped me to love myself, I never realized what an influence he had over me.

We had plenty of arguments as well. He'd tell me I overthink too much and that I needed to evaluate the situation instead of just jumping in with my feelings and no evidence to back them up. He also told me that I needed to take care of myself, when I said that I did take care of myself and that I was fine, he'd tell me "Fine doesn't mean fine, it means the opposite, so just listen to me and try to care for yourself, please." I didn't like that someone actually cared for me so deeply.

Theodore would even be the first person to tell me when I was wrong. I never understood why he wanted to hold me accountable. When he tried to explain it to me, it was something along the lines of "You can't always be right, and it's a step to help you grow." I guess he was right.

He was the first person to understand me in a long time, to love me for who I was, and he actually wanted to guide me to become a great version of me. It was scary to think someone loved me, but also quite comforting.

I told my parents about this Theodore. They adored him, they admired him, they so badly wanted to meet him. I couldn't break their hearts. I mean, I saw him all of the time, every time I saw him in the mirror, he'd be staring back. I just didn't know if that'd be enough for my family.

Save Yourself

I understand you're drowning, and I want to help, but you refuse to grab my hand, much less swim on your own.

I understand that it's tough and brutal, and the water is suffocating and strong, but I too am drowning, and can't pull you up by myself.

I need you to try to save yourself; one cannot expect to survive the water while he relies on others to pull himself out when he doesn't even try to reach the sand.

I'll always be there with a life jacket, but you have to be willing to grab it and make the effort to get back to shore. I'll never abandon you, but you have to *save yourself*.

Save Yourself. I can't keep us both afloat.



Overwhelmed, digital illustration

Wilted Beauty

Brilliantly bright days will always be followed by desolate dark nights. Night and day change just as each creature faces its own. Everything must be trapped in the dark at some point, but not to worry when the day arises to light the desolate path. But it can never be as simple as that. Some will see the mockery of light but never get to have a taste. Trapped in shadows which are cast by the bright and seemingly all good. The sun beams bright for all to see, but only when it's all isn't truly all. For if the sun wasn't so bright, would the dark seem quite so dark?

It is here in the shade of an old tree I lay pondering. With branches big and wide it creates quite the presence. The branches soak up the warm sunset as it slowly descends the horizon. The tree is ancient. It was once swung on by children and fed the town with its fruit, but that is no longer needed. The branches are now too old to swing on, the fruit too mushy to enjoy. The top of the trees harbors many fragrant flowers, but the bottom holds nothing but despair. No matter its decline and lack of use, the tree remains broad and casts a shadow bigger than no other.

In my hand I clench a flower of the tree. A flower I have been told to hold my whole life. "As each woman grows she will hold her flower from the tree and keep it dear." Is what they always told me. So here I lay with the flower in hand, but it is not as beautiful as intended. It was a small and malnourished flower, always sheltered in the dark of the tree. Plus, the petals have cuts and bruises from being held with such force. So now I must lay looking up, up to the top of the tree.

To me this flower is beautiful, but I don't hold it with care. For every time I praise it the tree groans in complaint. As I long to love my flower, I can't quite find it. Perhaps out of fear this love is lost. The wicked tree above me seems to dictate every move I make. Everything under its shade must be perfectly as it pleases, or else it may blow a strike. If I could hold my flower with care I would. If I could show it to the world with everlasting love I would. But the tree of tradition and the sun of the people would never allow such things.

The sun feeds the old trees which stop hope for something new. The sun casts a sharp shadow that gouges the line of shade and light. On the rough ground under the tree I lay always staring up. In my left hand I hold the wilted flower. In the other, I hold a hand. A hand so soft and gentle I melt in its presence. However this hand is simply like another flower. It is not meant to be this way when under the tree. It's meant to be broad and manly, not soft and feminine.

I chose not to be trapped in this situation. I've been under the tree my whole life. Each moment has been under the tree. Every touch of fear and hate can be found under the tree. Every time I've felt unworthy or sad has been from under the tree. On the contrary, there is still beauty under the tree. So here it is that I stand and say enough. We don't have to be dictated by something so old and worn. So now I stand, flower and hand in hand as the horizon softens to a gentle twinkle. Stars shine bright, brighter for me so that my flower can grow equally as the others.



Illuminate, digital photography

SILENCE

Closed in. Locked away. Alone.
Everything was cold. No one there.
I had always spoken how I felt.
Now there was nothing.
Nothing, but **silence**.

Voiceless and desperate.
Nothing could help.
Nothing would help.
No one is listening.
All it is, is **silence**.

Still and soundless.
It hurt. No one was there.
Talking, but still unspoken.
Hiding away from everyone.
Hiding in the **silence**.

Faint, and disconnected.
All I ever was.
No one could talk to me.
All because I began
enjoying the **silence**.

Expectations

A seed lands within a crack in the sidewalk, full of dreams of beautifully colored petals that reach toward the sky. Before these dreams can come to fruition, winter lays its icy hands upon the world, grinding any inspiration to a halt. After months of nothing but stone cold whiteness, cracks begin to form and spring's warmth reignites dreams of grandeur.

A seedling watches as people walk past it on every early spring day. The world of the sidewalk is harsh: rain is blocked by the black awning of a nearby storefront, concrete creates a crushing clutch upon the newly formed stem, and passersby kick, stomp, and ignore the fledgling flower.

A yellow dandelion looks from its home in the sidewalk at a beautiful rose bush in a garden across the street. People don't ignore the roses; they stop and look at them and breathe in their scent. The roses have it easy, they get a square foot of sun-covered soil to take root in; they don't live in a crack between two sheets of shadowy concrete.

A budding dandelion has retreated back into its solitude; it wishes to go back to being a seed when it didn't know that people don't care about it just because it's not as beautiful as a rose bush. It wonders why it was made a dandelion, and why it ended up so different from others around it. It hopes that when it emerges from its bud, it will be a rose, that it will get to live in the sun and have people look at it.

A fluffy white dandelion emerges from its bud, having accepted that it will never be a rose bush because it is not meant to be a rose bush. A rose bush is not nearly as strong as a dandelion, for a rose bush can not grow in a crack in the sidewalk. The dandelion never needed to be taken care of and was able to change into something new. Roses cannot change.

A seed flies off a dandelion followed by many others. Maybe it will end up in another crack in the sidewalk, or maybe it will land in a garden. Either way, it will be happy because it knows that, unlike a rose, it will not be planted, picked up, and planted elsewhere. It will get to live its life wherever it chooses, and one day it will become a beautiful flower, strong enough to face any obstacles it faces.





Ouroboros

You were the snake in the blackberries
The bluebird in the bush
The rain filling my palms and wind tearing through the trees
Sunlight laying words onto my skin
Silver with stars in your hands
We are but strangers in this garden of green
Pressing our cheeks against the warm bones of an old brick house
Worshipping a god we would sooner betray for the love of a few



Light in a Jar, film photography



Rebirth, gouache painting

Forewarning

The self preservation of an animal
 Compared to the vicious hunt of a wide cannibal
 The strongest instinct of sympathy
 Brought to knees by public dignity
 We evolved from grace to unmatched violence
 So much death nothing left but silence
 We turn to betrayal and treachery
 Economies fail with no trust or legacy
 Identity consumed with no working memory
 The world will fall to rubble.

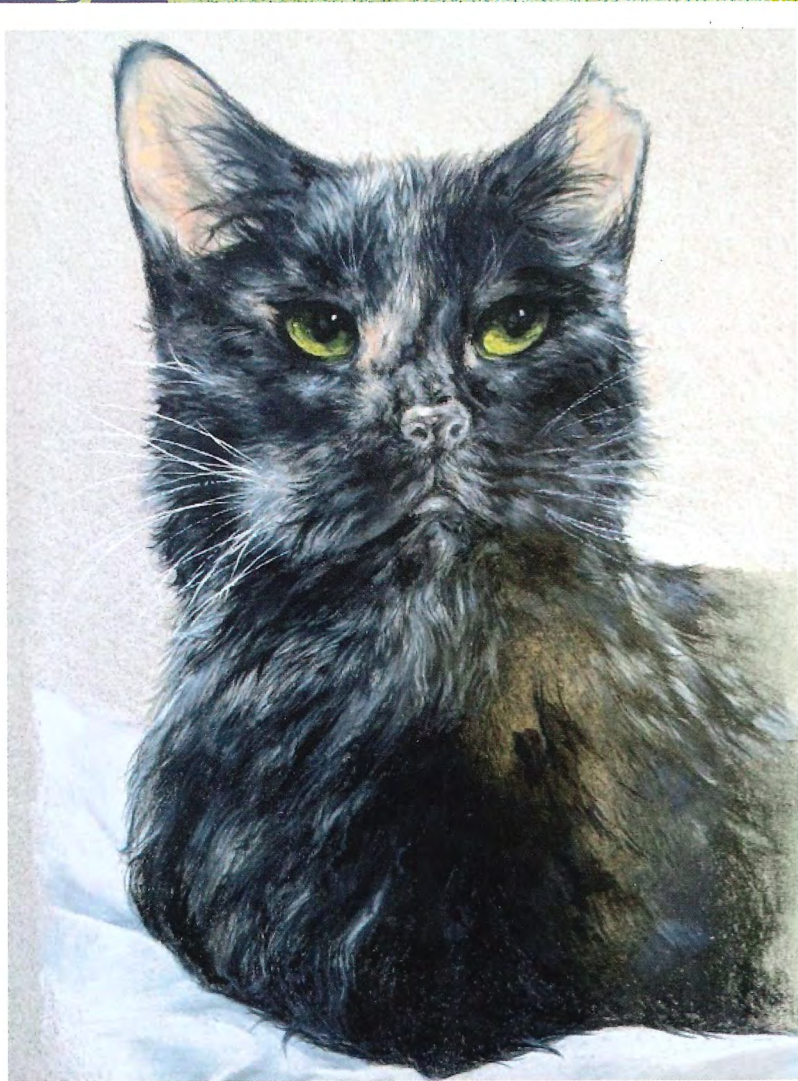


Our Love So Alive

When I think of our love it is moonstruck
it is as fierce and bold as a serpent
your loyalty and devotion is luck
I have never felt something this ardent
our proclivity, a melodic chime
so powerful no one would have foreseen
something so flawless and with much sublime
every moment with you feels so serene
then I remember your face so winsome
and wonder if others were left arcane
you could make my heart beat like a bass drum
and would never let me fall into pain
your perfectly parted pink lips on mine
reminds me of times when we were alive



Penseés, digital illustration



Queen Harmony, mixed media drawing



Koi Ripples, acrylic painting



Fighter, acrylic painting

You've Heard This Story

I know you've heard this story before
The story of revenge
The story of anger
The story of hate for those who hurt you

I know you've heard this story before
The story of heartbreak
The story of headaches
The story of get-love-quick schemes

I know you've heard this story before
But please listen
Listen to the anger and the passion
I'm not looking for a reaction
Just want to tell you what happened
Tell you how I feel
So that you know I'm still real

That I'm not just a snake
that bites its prey
That I'm not just the one
That got away
But I'm the one that will always stay



Until We Meet Again

I can still feel your absent hand grasping mine
Your fingers intertwined with mine just as our souls were once before

The ghost of you haunts me.
Creeping up on me in the nighttime
Stealing the tears from my eyes

Despite how I am, I still worry about you.
My Love, how can I reach you
How can I see you again
How can I make up for my regrets

Your silence echoes in my skull like my beating heart when I pass you
Begging to be set free
Begging to get what it longs for

Will this longing ever stop?
Will you fade from my memory soon

Please stay.
If only for a moment in time
My Love,
Please stay until we meet again



Salty Seaweed, digital photography



The Innocence, charcoal drawing

A Voice

I never have been a big people person but listening to the voice that rings out of their throat is the most peaceful thing in the world. The sound of volume and the amount of expression that goes into each word. There's a story to be told behind each and every voice, you just have to open your ears and listen. The scariest thing in this world is silence. One day the world will grow into an eerie silence, when every voice falls quiet nothing but the dark will fall in, closing in on everything and everyone. I like the voices, it fills the gaps between the natural noises in this world and the silence that lurks behind the corners. If you listen and get closer there's a story behind every voice. How a voice goes from a first squeal to a long speech and a soft mumble then the last air is out spelled and that voice has become one with the world, no longer trapped in its fleshy cave. Silence itself is not evil but the darkness that seeps into its seams is. It follows you everywhere you go, you just don't see them, they hide until the silence begins to follow you. You're not alone, silence will never reach you unless you let it. Be loud and don't let them seep in your head. You can save yourself from them, maybe one day you will come find me in the shadow of the night trying to find a voice to hear and to always keep running from something that doesn't exist.





Oddity, ink drawing



Poor Baby, ceramic sculpture

Two Worlds

I never expected to feel so torn

Between two opposite worlds

I never seem to be good enough for.

I get so insecure, and my mind whirls.

I'm trying so hard;

I just want to belong!

So I straighten my hair to look like my mom,

But my skin will always point out that I'm wrong.

I can never hide the fact

that I'll never really be white, and I'll never really be black.



A Trip Through Amyloid, digital illustration

Thank you and congratulations to our artists!

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Olli Kaiser, Floyd Central High School, 9th grade
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Damiyana Padgett, Jeffersonville High School, 9th grade
Katie Gerritsen, Jeffersonville High School, 9th grade
Olivia Abner, North Harrison High School, 11th grade
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Functional Fashion, digital illustration

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