

**Baylorian**

**2016**



# Baylorian 2016

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Oil on Canvas

8" x 10"

The Baylorian is produced by students in the Department of English at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. Submissions are accepted from faculty, staff, students, and alumni each year.

UMHB Box 8008 • 900 College Street • Belton, TX 76513

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University of Mary Hardin-Baylor Press

Dr. Randy O'Rear, President  
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**English Department Award and  
Scholarship Recipients  
2015**

Bryan B. & Pauline Larimer Binford  
Endowed Scholarship

**Emily Maulding**

“The Golden Arches,” (Poetry) published in the  
*Baylorian* 2015, p. 29

Evelyn McFatrige Brashears Award

**Victoria Culpepper**

“Image,” (Poetry)

W.F. Hutmacher Scholarly Writing Award

**Erin Buerschinger**

“Chaucer’s Venus and the Destruction of Love”

Cole-Taylor-Townsend Outstanding Major  
Scholarship

**Jake Raabe**

**Art Department Award and  
Scholarship Recipients  
2016**

Austin-Burks Award  
for Outstanding Art Major  
**Kateland Pricer**

Jewel Vickers Payne  
Memorial Medal  
**Elisa Hirt**

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*Courtney Myers*

## **Eternal Recurrence**

The phoenix soars on scorching, crimson wings.  
She blazes bright, a flowing comet trail  
adorned in liquid fire feathering  
that flows into her scarlet, curling tail.

Her beauty is undimmed eternally,  
until a day reveals her burning hours.  
Flames then reduce her down to gray debris  
and renew her, free from death like yearly flowers.

Eternal death, rebirth, and life: such grace  
turns loose the bird from man's demise,  
but cruelly cages her also—bonds of space  
and time that drag her down from Heaven's skies.

Despite the glory humans praised and awed,  
the phoenix can never reunite with God.

*Joan M. Gray*  
**Scribblers**

I am not sure what it is, though  
My black body  
Or my nose that  
Meets the paper

Or all my owners' woes  
Maybe because my blood often bleeds blotty  
Mostly because their words fall flat  
But I am not a healer or a word shaper.

They push me deeply into their own pain  
Or leave me aside for days at a time.

I am not to blame  
For break-up letters, smeared words  
Tears ruining my ink.

I simply exist as a drain.

But I am not used in sublime  
Or to sign their John Hancocks in shame  
Or to shove me in the pocket of their sweaters.

From Basquiat to Bradbury  
I have formed beautiful words  
But I am not to blame.

I am a simple scribbler.

I formulate the Hail Marys  
Draw the beauty of birds,  
To me, it is all the same

As my blood is bled for all these 'wise' men.

*Haleigh Daniels*

## **I Can Read**

“No. I don’t smoke,” I say to the third nurse who offers me a nicotine patch.

“You sure?” she asks while purposefully glancing down at my shaking body.

“Yes,” I snap. I’m so tired of talking to people. My parents. My aunt. My uncle. My grandparents. Doctors. Nurses. Counselors. At this point, I’ve realized that talking makes things worse, not better.

“Let me know if you want it later then,” she sighs as she slips the patch into her pocket. After her valiant effort of trying to help me, she trudges back to the nurses’ station and sinks into her chair.

Breathe. You’re supposed to breathe. At least I have the nurse to keep me company. I shift my weight on the hard couch facing a television with a blank screen. The rough material scratches the back of my thighs. I close my eyes. I just need sleep. Everything will be okay if I go to sleep. I open my eyes and look around the empty room. No clocks on the walls. Just blank walls. This is the main room of the adult psychiatric ward in the Providence DePaul Center. And it is a depressing place to find yourself.

“Ma’am, what time is it?” I ask the nurse.

Her head jerks up. She must’ve forgotten I was still here.

“It’s 3 AM, why don’t you lay down and try to get some sleep?”

I pull my arm off the sticky armrest and shuffle to my assigned room. My room is straight across the hall from the nurses’ station. Believe me, you don’t want my room. The nurses’ station has a window that covers the top half of the walls. A massive window allows the nurses to watch over the entire ward. My nurse stares through the glass and watches my every move. I feel like a fish in a glass tank. My blank, wide eyes take in my surroundings.

Light from the nurses’ station streams into my room. The light illuminates the white sheet that covers my twin-sized

bed. Two hospital gowns sit on top of a desk next to the bed. I begin to close the door to my new room.

“What do you think you’re doing?” The nurse jumps up from her chair and speed walks towards me.

“Closing the door.”

“You have to leave it open.”

I turn my head and stare at her.

“Do you understand me?” she says slowly, enunciating each word. Her lips form a tight line as she stands in front of me with her hands on her ample hips.

I shake my head and let go of the door handle. I pick up the two hospital gowns and open the door to the small bathroom on the other side of the room. My new roommate is asleep on the twin bed near the bathroom door. She looks so peaceful with wavy brown hair framing her face. Somehow, the light from the nurses’ station doesn’t affect her.

After I shut the bathroom door, I take off my blue jean shorts and black Harry Potter shirt. I dress in one gown covering the front of my body and shrug the other on like a jacket. Then I throw up in the small toilet next to the sink.

I crawl into bed and stare at the ceiling. Heavy footsteps approach the doorway to my room. I lift my head and see a giant man in the doorway staring at me. He glances down at my body underneath the thin sheet. He smirks and turns back towards the nurses’ station. This is the longest day of my life.

My mind wanders over the events of the previous day. The doctor’s face from the ER is the first image that surfaces.

“So, Haleigh, did you really want to kill yourself?” the doctor had asked. He looked at me through the top of his glasses and arched his eyebrows.

“Yes,” I had responded.

“Well, we’re going to run some tests and get a counselor in here as soon as we can. Does that sound good to you?” he had said with his back turned towards me.

“Okay.”

He flipped through a chart. People in scrubs scurried around, hooking me up to several machines and piercing me

with needles. “Maria will be in shortly, and she will need to see your insurance card. We will take care of that for you as soon as possible.”

Why would I give a crap about insurance? But I knew I needed to be polite. He was taking the time to help me when he should’ve been helping a person with a real sickness.

A heaviness settles on the top of my chest. I can’t breathe. I can’t feel my thumbnail drag across my wrist over and over again. Ten times. Twenty times. Thirty times. Why am I still here? A blurry face appears above me.

“What are you doing?” the nurse whispers harshly. Her blond hair falls in front of her scrunched up face as she stands over the bed.

“Nothing.” I feel nothing.

“Do you want me to send you to Intensive Care? Believe me, you don’t want to go there.”

“No.” My lip quivers. I should probably cry. Why can’t I cry?

“Then stop what you’re doing.” Her white sneakers squeak on the tile floor as she exits the room.

I clasp my hands tightly in front of me and pray. God, please just let me sleep. What good am I doing when I’m awake? Nothing. I’m nothing.

My parents’ disappointed faces appear in front of me. My grandparents. My aunt. My uncle. My best friend. I know I embarrassed them when they saw me on that hospital bed. They all love me. My parents paid so much money to send me to nursing school. They just want me to be successful. But all I can do is be depressed and ruin everything. I need to sleep. I need to not wake up.

An eternity passes, yet I still cannot fall asleep. Eventually, I hear footsteps nearing my bedroom door.

“Good morning!” A nurse in maroon scrubs walks into the room wheeling in a machine with wires sticking out. Her smile does not belong in this room.

“How are you feeling this morning?” She asks quickly.

“Fine.”

“And how would you rate your pain?”

“My what?” I ask.

“Are you in any pain? And how would you rate your pain on a scale of one to ten? One being the lowest amount of pain and ten being the highest,” she asks again while showing a thermometer under my tongue. She swiftly wraps a band around my arm to take my blood pressure and slips what appears to be a white clothespin onto my finger. She proceeds to turn on the machine, and the screen starts beeping loudly.

“I don’t have any pain,” I mumble around the thermometer.

“Alright, and when’s the last time you had a bowel movement?”

“Uh, um, like yesterday.”

“Okay, looks like you’re all set,” she says while taking off the medical equipment and writing on her little chart. “You need to get ready for breakfast in a couple minutes.”

Breathe. Everything is fine. I tell myself as I slip on the shorts and t-shirt I wore yesterday. The clock behind the nurses’ station reads 5:45 AM. Slowly, others emerge from their assigned rooms. At 6 AM, the most depressing group of people I have ever seen gathers in the main room. An old man in a wheelchair winks at me as a counselor instructs us to form a giant circle. Everyone quickly obeys her.

“Good morning everyone,” she says, “I’m Larun, for those of you who are new here. I know it’s early in the morning, but we are going to start this day out right.”

A black man with a blue baseball cap groans and says, “We gotta do this every effin’ morning?”

Larun seems unfazed by his outburst. The corners of her mouth turn up slightly, and she pulls on the edge of her grey vest. “Thank you for volunteering to go first, Dale. Go ahead and tell the group three positive things about yourself.”

Dale scrunches up his nose for a second and says, “Easy. I got a car. And I got a big dick. And that’s all I need.” The group bursts out laughing with Dale laughing louder than everyone else.

“Let’s settle down, guys,” Larun says while hiding a smirk. She turns to the lady sitting next to Dale wearing a pink cardigan with a cat brooch. “It looks like you’re next, Susan. What are three positive things about yourself?”

Then it hits me. We are all going to have to say three positive things about ourselves. I have to say three positive things about myself. My mind freezes. I can’t hear what anyone says over my own heart palpitations. It’s about to be my turn. My throat is dry and my tongue refuses to cooperate.

Larun turns to me and says, “What about you? What’s your name?”

“Uh, my name’s Haleigh, um, I don’t really know of anything positive so....”

She smiles and nods. “I’m sure you can come up with something, Haleigh. Anything.”

We sit in uncomfortable silence for possibly a couple of seconds—or possibly a couple of hours.

“Can you read?” she asks.

“Of course I can.”

“There you go! There’s your first positive thing.”

I stare at Larun. “That doesn’t make sense.”

“The ability to read is an amazing gift that many don’t have the chance to learn,” she says immediately. I blink a few times and rub my eyes. Yesterday’s mascara smears the back of my hand.

“So, um, I guess... I can read. I can—well, I also like to bake,” I choke out. What is she saying? That I have value since I know the alphabet?

“Good! One more.” She is forcing me to answer.

I stare at the black smear on my hand. Is there anything valuable I could say about myself? “There isn’t anything else.”

“Okay, then just give me one more thing you like to do.”

“I like taking walks outside,” I finally respond. For the love of God, accept that answer.

“Nice!” She says and moves on to the girl sitting next to me. I still don’t hear anything the rest of the group says.

I don’t understand this counselor. Who has worth just be-

cause they can read and bake? It's like she was saying that I could have worth without being the best. Without getting straight A's. Without winning competitions. Without being the prettiest. Without having the most friends. Without making the most money. Without being the most Christian. It's as if I have worth just by being alive.

I shrug my shoulders as everyone in the circle stands up and moves towards the door that opens to the outside world. It's way too early for stuff like this. It's like 7 in the morning. The nurse in the maroon scrubs unlocks the door, and we all shuffle down the hall towards the cafeteria for breakfast.

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