

Through Another's *EYES*

WRITING FROM AN
UNEXPECTED PERSPECTIVE



UWHARRIE DREAMS
CREATIVE WRITING CLUB

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Uwharrie Dreams supports and advances RCC student endeavors in all genres of creative writing and the visual arts. We encourage creative exploration, self-expression, teamwork, and the development of skills in current and emerging media.

Uwharrie Dreams is a club for students interested in creative writing, operating under the auspices of the Student Government Association. It began in 2003 as part of the fine arts activities for Randolph Community College students. This group helps students prepare submissions to RCC’s Writers Contests, sponsored by the SGA.

For more information about the Uwharrie Dreams club, contact its faculty advisor: Victoria Davis (vldavis@randolph.edu).



STUDENT
SHORT
FICTION
WINNER

The Final Whisper

Skye Bell

The hospital room is bathed in soft, golden light as the sun begins to set. The last remnants of the day slip through the blinds in soft streaks. The beeping of a heart monitor fills the silence, slow and steady, like a clock counting down. The air is still, thick with that quiet sense of inevitability. The world outside moves forward—cars pass, birds sing their evening songs, life continues. But inside this room, time feels slower, almost suspended, as if the universe itself is holding its breath.

James lies still on the hospital bed, his breaths shallow, his frail frame barely making an imprint in the white sheets. His breaths come in delicate intervals, his chest barely rising and falling. He has been here for days, lingering between two places, his body unwilling to let go. Eighty-four years have brought him here, to this quiet moment between two worlds. His hand, thin and delicate, rests in the grasp of his daughter, Christina, who holds on tightly, as if sheer willpower might keep her father tethered a little longer. Her thumb runs absentmindedly along the fragile skin of James' knuckles. She has been here for hours whispering reassurances through the lump in her throat, tears threatening to spill.

Christina's voice trembles. "It's okay, Dad. You can let go."

James stirs. His eyelids flutter, revealing tired but bright eyes. He gazes past the ceiling, past Christina, past everything in this room, as if seeing something—or someone—beyond. A small, trembling smile touches his lips.

"Debbie," he whispers.

Christina's breath catches in her throat. Her fingers tighten around her father's hand. "Dad? Do you see Mom?"

James doesn't answer. His expression is soft, peaceful, his eyes

distant but full of longing. Christina squeezes her father's hand tighter, glancing up at the heart monitor, which continues its slow, measured rhythm. The nurses had warned her that this would happen—how people often speak to loved ones in their final moments, how they see things those left behind cannot. He reaches out with his free hand, as if grasping for something unseen. Christina doesn't see. She only sees her father reaching toward nothing, only feels the quiet devastation of knowing the end is near.

But I see.

I see her—Debbie, waiting beyond the veil, just as she has for so many years. I remember her well. She left this world decades ago, a young woman tangled in the wreckage of steel and glass. I was there when she took her final breath, when her thoughts were not of pain, but of James. She had called his name as the light faded, as time slipped from her grasp. And now, he is calling for her.

He turns his gaze in my direction, and now for the first time, he sees me. They always do in the end.

There it is—that flicker of understanding, that moment when all the questions fade. His breath shudders, not in fear, but in understanding.

"Is it time?" He asks softly in an inaudible whisper that only I could hear.

I nod. "It is."

He glances at Christina again, his lips pressing together in quiet sorrow. Not for himself, but for the pain his absence will leave behind. He leans down, pressing a gentle kiss on Christina's hand, the one grasping his so tightly. It is a gesture that he has done countless times when Christina was a child, when she had nightmares, and when she needed comfort. Of course, Christina does not feel it, but in time, she will remember—the warmth in the air. The way the light felt softer. The way her father looked so at peace. One day, in the quiet of her own home, in a moment of stillness, she will remember this warmth. She will not know why, but she will close her eyes and feel it. And she will know.

James lingers for a moment longer, then slowly turns his attention back to me. He inhales one last breath. And then he takes my hand.

The heart monitor lets out a single, steady tone.

Christina gasps, clutching at her father's still fingers. Tears slip down her cheeks as she whispers, "No, no, no, please..."

James does not hear her because he is already gone.

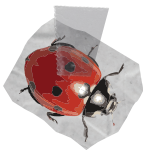
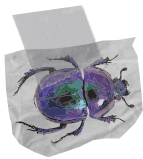
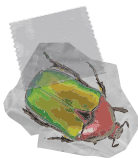
I watch for a moment as Christina presses her forehead against her father's hand, her sobs muffled in the quiet. Her shoulders shake with each sob. The weight of grief settles into the room, thick and

heavy, crashing over her like a tidal wave. But beyond this place, in the space between what was and what will be, James steps forward. For a moment, James hesitates, looking back at the room, at Christina, at the life he is leaving behind. Then, as if something inside him finally gives way, he moves. She is just as I remember her—just as *he* remembers her—young, whole, smiling in the way that always made his heart race. Debbie meets him with open arms, and when he falls into them, he laughs. It is the sound of homecoming, of love that was never truly lost. They both walk into a shimmering glow of light, and I realize my work here is done.

I turn away.

I walk unnoticed through the halls, past the nurses, past the grieving, past those who do not yet know their time. The world continues, as it always does. As for me, there is another hand to take. Another whisper to hear. Another soul waiting. Because I am always here. I have always been here. And when the time comes, I will be there for you, too.





FACULTY/STAFF
SHORT
FICTION
WINNER

Leyndarmálið að fylgjast með áhorfendum ***(The Secret Art of Watching Watchers)***

C. C. von Werklaäg (translated by Dr. G. Warlock Vance)

Vulpes lagopus, otherwise known as the “Arctic fox,” patiently observes *Apodemus sylvaticus*, or the common “Wood mouse.” The latter, its brown fur flecked with crystals of ice, forages in undergrowth. Amid this scrub, the newly falling snow has yet to drift too deeply. This small member of the order *Rodentia* might yet find worms or insects that have not buried themselves below the range of its tiny claws.

The wood mouse hesitates, looks up to scan the open field—an unbroken range of pure white covering gritty volcanic soil as black as soot. Seeing nothing, it returns to its crouch. All the while, the nearly invisible fox looks on, eyes slitted, mouth set, its colorless fur rimed by the coming blizzard.

Waiting some 100 meters away is a fine example of *Homo sapiens sapiens*, her blue eyes, like many Icelanders, are the hue of long-forgotten treasure. She stares at mouse and fox from behind dark glasses. Her thick black mane is tucked into the hood of a parka matching the surrounding pristine snow. The tools of her trade, a camera and its telephoto lens, are also white—both mouse and fox soon to be captured and digitally preserved by the device to await a time when they might find their likeness printed on the glossy pages of some nature magazine.

The mouse anticipates finding a juicy bug to fill its hungry belly; the fox anticipates the savory morsel the mouse will make; the woman anticipates squeezing the cord to activate the shutter so she can take the picture of prey and predator.

Tension mounts as she focuses on this tableau. She sees both animals start. From overhead comes a faint flapping of wings—a smallish

specimen of the order *Chiroptera*, and the family of *Vespertilionidae*. She's no expert on *bats*, thus cannot easily identify its subgenus, but the moment holds great portent as the fox hesitates, exhaling the pent up breath it held. Hearing this, the mouse suddenly darts away from the danger it perceives.

There is a series of whirring clicks as the photographer shoots. Later, when she downloads the images, the woman is delighted by one particular snap in the series. In it, the bat swoops into the frame, the disappointed fox stares directly at her as if thinking, *What can you do?* and the mouse, glancing back to gauge the probability of pursuit, possesses an expression of utter joy upon seeing its winged cousin who flies above like a furry kite devoid of tether, looking for all the world like a peculiar kind of angel come down from heaven to watch over its kin and, perhaps, to save it.

FINIS





STUDENT
CREATIVE
NONFICTION
WINNER

Through the Eyes of a Child

Cindy Booth

I went to school this morning expecting to ride the bus back home. However, the school principal pulled me out of class and had me sit in a chair in the hallway. I just knew in my heart that I was in deep trouble! My peers started coming out of the classrooms and getting on the buses to head home. I felt like I was being stared at and could hear the comments of the students making fun of me underneath their breath.

It felt like an eternity that I sat in that hallway, waiting to see what my fate would be. Finally, the principal called me into his office. He introduced me to two women who were child protective social workers. I was really scared. They asked me a whole lot of questions about my family. Then they asked me one of the dumbest questions that I think there ever was! They asked, "Do you want to go and live at home today?" Of course, I said no.

Nonetheless, I had no idea at the time how much I would regret saying that two-letter word, "NO!" I rode in the back of a cop car to get one bag of clothes from my house. I was not even allowed to get out of the car. The social workers went inside to get that one bag!

That one bag.

My life consisted of that one bag.

No treasures, no dreams, only deep dark pain!

From home to home with no real family.

From place to place with no real bed

To rest my weary head!

But then one day that bag had more meaning than just one bag.

An angel came along to stay by my side,

To be a friend and advocate for me.

When I could not speak, and the words would not come,

My angel spoke up loud and clear.

Her voice was heard over top all the other chaos and noise!
She was my Guardian ad Litem, and she listened to my dreams,
My wants, my desires in life.

So, if you find yourself with just one bag, if you are tired and feel all alone, just remember that Guardian ad Litems are placed in your life to help advocate for the best interests for you. Next time you meet one, please give them a hug, smile, and thank them. Their work is unpaid. It is all volunteer work done out of complete love and dedication for all children in the court systems. I am proof that it only takes one.





STUDENT
POETRY
WINNER

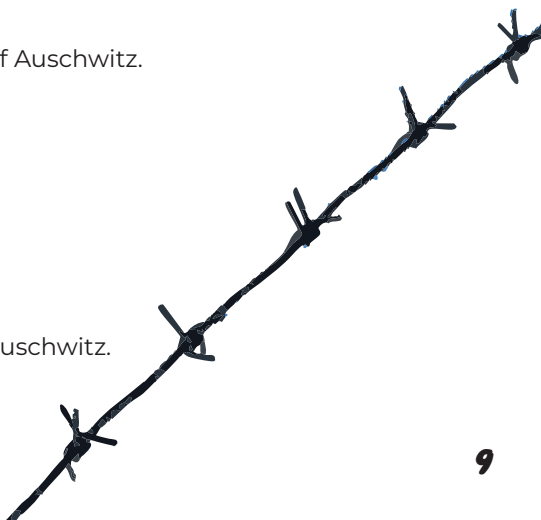
Intertwined and Galvanized

Hannah Williams

Over the ground,
The rocks, and the gray,
I'm placed strung high,
Above the fray.
I am born; I am new.
Silver, shining bright.
I am a mighty section,
Closing off the light.
I am the Barbed Wire of Auschwitz.

On trains they arrive,
But never to leave,
Only themselves,
No suitcases do they heave.
They are ordered into lines,
Dividing the young and the old.
As they shiver and wail,
They do as they're told.
They look at the Barbed Wire of Auschwitz.

The strong are tattooed.
Others are led away.
Into great chambers,
Where their bodies will stay.
The pain and the suffering,
The consistency of death.
Every day, many more,
Will breathe their last breath.
I gaze on, the Barbed Wire of Auschwitz.



Days bleed to weeks,
To months and to years.
As they work on,
Through disease and their tears.
It is agony to be me,
Unable to act.
These innocent people.
The terribly trapped.
By me, the Barbed Wire of Auschwitz.

The animals with swastikas,
Guns and their wrath,
Their pleasure in killing,
What led to this path.
The workers, worn thin,
All skin and all bones,
I hear their murmurs,
Their longings for home.
I hear it all, the Barbed Wire of Auschwitz.

All hope seems lost,
And spirits are bleak.
As the hatred of one man,
Spurs the genocide of the weak.
Bombs explode in the air,
And troops land on the beaches.
But will liberation finally arrive,
At Poland's far reaches
So are the thoughts of the Barbed Wire of Auschwitz.

Millions have died.
Families split; livelihoods shattered.
Generations of religion and culture,
What did it matter?
All our hope is in GOD,
Who is our deliverance.
But one notion still stands:
Does the world view them with indifference?
These are the questions of the Barbed Wire of Auschwitz.



But in the worst moment,
In the darkest hour,
The sound of marching is heard.
The footsteps of Allied power.
They bust through the gates,
Calling these cherished people to rise.
Their faith has been fulfilled.
Now blue is the sky.
The joy of the Barbed Wire of Auschwitz.

I witnessed so much at the end,
In the year 1945.
Eleven million died.
But the Jewish culture stayed alive.
The fire could not be extinguished;
The incandescent strength of resilience.
The people's faces now shine like the sun,
In all of its brilliance.
These are the musings of the Barbed Wire of Auschwitz.

Now freed and overjoyed,
The people set out for life.
Free from the death,
The torture and strife.
You can never truly kill a people,
Their essence will remain.
Even if the trials
Mean their lives will never be the same.
This is the conclusion of the Barbed Wire of Auschwitz.

Decades have passed,
And time takes its toll.
And I have come down,
I have left my unchosen role.
As I lay on the ground,
Of old dirt and decay,
Wildflowers grow,
Peace and renewal have dawned a new day.
So says the Barbed Wire of Auschwitz.

I am old and lost my shine.
But the memories are fresh.
Remember the past.
Turn away from your flesh.
Respect those who died,
Let their stories live on.
I will be a testimony,
Now dividing right from the wrong.
Those who passed
Will not die in vain.
While some are unknown,
The world will remember their names.
I will exist to tell their accounts,
Spreading knowledge to all ages.
History has been made,
Let it be put upon the pages.
I will lay down in serenity,
An artifact of times gone by.
I will welcome the future with hope,
And set my dreams on high.
Thus, the final word from the Barbed Wire of Auschwitz.





FACULTY/STAFF
POETRY
WINNER

The ending.
Maria LeBaron

Vacant eyes glazed in tears of exhaustion,
Staring... Staring...
With weathered look born of cascading years sacrificed to
Pills, IVs, and Bedpans,
And of Love.

Love with undying dedication,
Frozen in the moment of loss.
Eyes grieving me as I gaze weakly in the return,
Open to the close.
Connecting.



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: Thank you all for your contributions to the Uwharrie Dreams Spring 2025 “Through Another’s Eyes” issue. We appreciate all the hard work everyone put into their submissions. Thank you also to Chrystal Rich, the team in the Office of College Marketing (Megan Crotty, Wesley Britt, and Hunter Crutchfield), the Office of Student Life, and the RCC Student Government Association for helping to keep our club afloat. We wish you all the very best in your future literary efforts and hope to see more from you in the near future. Look to the Uwharrie Dreams Moodle page for more information about the club.



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UWHARRIE DREAMS

CREATIVE WRITING CLUB

www.randolph.edu/campus-life/uwharrie-dreams.aspx