

# EX MEDIO

*Sigma Tau Delta Midwestern Regional Journal*

*Volume 2, 2012*

## EDITOR'S NOTE

As the editor for this volume of *Ex Medio*, I would like to congratulate not only the writers whose works have been published, but also all the contributors who submitted their works for consideration. This second edition of the journal features the very best of the submissions received from all over the Midwestern Region – and that's saying something, as I'm sure the Editorial Board would agree.

In only its second year of publication, *Ex Medio* is off to a great start, but let me take a moment to encourage Sigma Tau Delta members of the region to submit their own works for future volumes. Another great way to get involved with the publication is to serve on the Editorial Board; be sure to email the current Midwestern Student Representative, Jeffrey Jett, at [sigmatd.mw@gmail.com](mailto:sigmatd.mw@gmail.com) for details.

Congratulations again to all our contributors!

*--Ashlyn Wells, 2011-12 Midwestern Student Representative*



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## Primal Yell

I see them smiling—  
so I know it happens—  
at least for a moment in gravity  
and forever in pixilation  
until any such fire leaves us all in ash.  
And then, what use will it be to me  
to ache for those perfect arrangements of dots?  
A lot, to ache for anything but ash.  
The splintering pangs of hunger—  
of frustration, irritation, a radiation  
of a primal yell rooted in a place of primal fear—  
outlast ash, outlast images, oh, images;  
others' images, my images ever-aging.

Ever-aging, ever-racing, exhausting,  
ricocheting between life and death.  
Away from blue-green life makes a body  
closer to death. I never ask  
if it's better not to move at all. Never will  
not until this urgency leaves my body.  
A body so raw with heedless energy;  
a body only wanting to meet the flow of another  
in peace and time, in love and knowledge.

I know there's a burial process  
for most bodies quarter-aged.  
I've turned from it decidedly  
as from a false religion.  
Watching the burials begin to force  
the dirt in a throat, countless throats  
until worms breed and crawl  
out of and into any open precipice.  
And I wonder why, why, why  
can't anyone wander shamelessly raw?  
And why of people who can did I  
only know one who flew with wings of steel  
above everyone, above me—merely raw—  
and who was not merely raw, but also ready?



Who was actually buried in actual dirt  
and tears and sorrow and actual pride.  
Why only one?

The fresh body I've met numbers more than an individual  
and to follow its flow I've ripped my  
heart from its cage and give less painful  
promises. The cardiac cords trail highways,  
bloodlines whipping in prairie winds  
and touching gravel with mushy flesh—  
dry, leaving behind but small drops of rust.  
Any movement far strains me greatly;  
any movement near soothes the numbness of pain.  
Sometimes I think about those veins  
rolling about, collecting racks and dust;  
I agonize over their breaking.  
They haven't broken.  
But how there is that strain now—  
worse more than ever—as the body explores alone.  
And I've kept its veins untangled, watered, in sight;  
why can't it do the same for mine?  
I forgive it taking my heart below ground,  
if it forgives me the hurt that vibrates down the line.

I can exist in strain for years, single digits,  
any longer is too much mania for one body,  
my body. I can only surmise that it would be  
too much for the other. I surmise, I surmise;  
I get my news from shifting winds across the plains  
and the milk white letters I collect.  
I lived part of a decade with holes  
in my leg and my stomach—oh, but can  
I exist in here. Where there is nothing of me in  
books, clothes, a bed, can I exist?  
Where there is nothing of me in blood, can I  
exist? Where I am not, do I exist?

I exist with my body alone—my heart,  
away; my tears, away. And my soul  
waits to be met by arms out of picture frames

and my heart after its long journey to my doorstep  
and the spirit of the past who will embrace me  
and let me go.

*Ericka Cherry*  
*Rockhurst University, MO*

## **Ears Full of Hair**

full of age  
spotted and tired  
they sleep most days

they knew the soft patter  
of rain on cracked earth  
the gutter of a tractor  
before dawn

Ears full of sounds  
only a war can conjure  
full of polka music  
feet don't tap to anymore

they need rest  
gray hair grows thick  
sprouting from the Ears  
Untamed, welcome silence

*Danielle Rohac*  
*Saginaw Valley State University, MI*

## Peeling an Orange

I lay it down,  
steady the knife,  
and slice a world  
to hemispheres—  
two U-shaped sighs,  
glistening twin grins.  
I don't stop at two, I make more and more:  
four, maybe eight  
sun-dipped sister ships  
navigate across the plate.  
If not Columbus,  
I wonder who  
first found the round world  
through an orange.

I touch the bumpy skin,  
cut, and wonder  
if there's flavor  
in simple things I can grip.  
Then, after all that careful  
pushing and pressing, I wait—  
it isn't silly, really, to stave-off,  
to stay in that mad love  
longer than I can take.  
Finally, I begin with one  
irresistible corner, tug gently.  
My crude fingers can do this,  
can loosen the tight cover,  
let-up the pent-up parts,  
the starchy sound,  
the juicy spray of the heart.

*Daniel McGee  
Alma College, MI*



## The Typewriter

A miniature grand piano  
sits on the desk.  
No shine or gloss  
or sound at all until  
it's played.  
Letter 'c' pressed,  
tap.  
The chord raises,  
tracing a 'c'  
onto the white composition.  
Tap, tap, tap—  
the notes a stirring piece.  
Tap, tap, tap. Ding!  
Back to the beginning.

*Danielle Rohac  
Saginaw Valley State University, MI*



## Diving

The rumble and shake jumps my heart,  
adds an extra beat echoing in my chest.  
I shuffle to the brink and look out the door  
to the earth so still below me.

One breath and I am  
surrounded by indigo  
sky and wind—so  
incredible I can barely  
breathe, barely  
comprehend  
the veracity of it all.

Until the moment the sky tugs back—  
a split second and the mind catches up  
and the world slows down, meeting  
somewhere in the middle, where I can  
no longer hear my adrenaline or feel my heart.

I am defying reason as my body drifts  
from the sky, watching the seagulls  
glide above the lake, thousands of feet below me,  
noticing the autumnal colors define themselves.

I slide across the grass and look up at the sky  
where I had once existed near the heavens.

*Caitlin Shuda*  
*University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire*



## Werewolf

Nights are bathed new; liquid meanings.  
Once reticent streetlights  
Now howl orange to the sky.

A silver glow's overhanging;  
The heaviness of animal yearning  
Caves-in roofs  
With pressing and panting.

The sleeping fur awoke;  
The blank moon's calling.

*Daniel McGee*  
*Alma College, MI*



## One Life

Breath whispers and shudders as it leaves her lungs,  
her family gathers, tears in their eyes  
welcoming a new arrival.  
She opens her eyes and sees her life.  
Her life of laughter and innocence,  
little girl all grown.  
The carefree woman living and loving  
the selfless man, only sees  
a beautiful life for them,  
only seeing what they have earned together.  
The couple walks the path together,  
hand in hand, as if one soul depends on the other.  
He tells her “I love you.”  
She smiles and says “I know.”  
His eyes say more than his words.  
He sees their future together and  
their family all around them,  
until they see  
the doctor with the words they cannot believe  
as they visit the office and  
she faces those dreaded words:

*I'm so sorry...*

She faces those dreaded words  
as they visit the office and  
the doctor with the words they cannot believe  
until they see  
their family all around them.  
He sees their future together and  
his eyes say more than his words.  
She smiles and says “I know.”  
He tells her “I love you.”  
Hand in hand, as if one soul depends on the other,  
the couple walks the path together,  
only seeing what they have earned together—  
a beautiful life for them.  
The selfless man only sees

the carefree woman living and loving,  
little girl all grown,  
her life of laughter and innocence.  
She struggles to open her eyes and sees her life,  
welcoming a new arrival.  
Her family gathers, tears in their eyes.  
Breath whispers and shudders as it leaves her lungs.

*Caitlin Shuda*  
*University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire*