Department News

Query for Clark University English Alumni Writers!

The Alumni Office would like to promote Clark alums who have become authors. If you are an author, please send your information to GA_english@clarku.edu and we will forward it.
Read About Kaitlynn Chase and Azariah Kurlantzick's Experience Presenting at the New England Modern Language Association Conference

Kaitlynn Chase and Azariah Kurlantzick presented their work at NEMLA this year. Read about their experience on our blog!
Karen Osborn has Published a New Novel

Karen Osborn’s "The Music Book" is out now. Read an interview with her about the novel on our blog! Orders for the book may be placed here.

Announcing the Winners of the English Department Creative Writing and Essay Contests

We are very excited to announce the winners of our Creative Writing and Essay Contests. Below are our posters for each contest for Academic Spree Day. Check out the full text of the winning submissions on our website!
It Will Grow Here
Frankie looks down at the second pink line as it appears on the pregnancy test. She presses her back to the stall door, listening to her classmates rush through the halls to their buses. She holds her breath, waiting for the anxiety to unfurl from her chest like a thick black snake. Turning to the gap between the bathroom door and the wall, she watches a girl smear bright red lipstick across each volume of her lips. The girl presses hard, her caramel eyes fixed to her candy apple mouth in the mirror. Frankie’s chest begins to burn as her body fights to take a breath. The girl leaves and Frankie takes a deep breath, and the snake immediately wraps itself around her ribs, constricting hard and fast enough to squeeze the air from her lungs. Her diaphragm and the snake fight for control in the small space, and Frankie wraps her shaking hands around the top of the stall, steadying her body while it trembles...

And Free They Shall Be
“I have hated words and I have loved them, and I hope I have made them right.”
–Leisel Meninger from The Book Thief

Inside my heart is a nest that holds words. Words lathered in sweet honey, surrounded by bees. I reach into my heart and pull those words out, knowing that I could be stung. But they deserve to be free, and free they shall be.

It begins with a pencil, a thin but sturdy substance that serves as a catalyst for the never-ending race of time. It ends with the tap, tap, tap of flat white letters carved onto a sea of black. The pads of my fingers pressed against a keyboard, waiting for lightning to strike before sending words spiraling down a page blanketed with white...

Wordlessly
Before she understood the power of a word, Jane betrayed someone she loved deep but vaguely and in a way she was wholly unal'
understand. Years before her first orgasm, b'
only months after she had discovered the wa'
lessly place between her legs, she betrayed a'
friend who was more than a friend but whom
didn't have the words to describe.

Jane made this discovery on a Thursday afternoon. She was sitting in a bath that she'
been in too long, a bath that had gone sour at a
cold, a bath that needed new warmth, new li'
She called out to her mother, who came in,
unplugged the drain, and turned on the hot wa'
It choked out at first in a hurling halt way,
then came rushing out suddenly and harshly.

“Tell me when it’s the right temperature,”
mother said. So Jane scooted along the
sticky plastic mat to sit in front of the faucet.
First Place
Hannah Ortiz 23

Ode to Moses

Come split this window’s lavender / to give everything I give everything / I’ll put my head in the hand / subtract it a pretty wash against my calculus / at the bottom the men under God with Corinthians / and tail ruffling ones of there like an anked / you’re all like. There’s a chorus over the street / and can see somebody get shot / There / we waste time mixing television / children fly above their parents like gliders / the arms and legs swinging / the kid usually laughing / grating / well I want everything ingrained growing from the ground / I want a house with its doorway splitting / a heart never splitting / we all know Moses was a murderer / instead of a prophet ship it was a savory / it was a whirlpool / it was the first Sea / but I’ve heard of wheels and chariots in the three / wheels spinning blindly to the sky / I think if it were red / righteous / at first I say don’t come around / the nine are following every one out there / they think you feel like a hellhole / the bottle is a glitzy threshold / we argue here or pass subtly worse / I tell you I hear that mess in the parking lot / I let them drive / I think bring this way in a constant cycle of me, my business / I think I want green grass and sunflowers giggling on my face / but love can tell you to go when / your saliva is flooding / mouth’s / your eyes change frame your eyes like / corona / well news parted the fire here with nothing but his hands / and when / I walk through the doorway of any bodies / you’re everything / everyone needs for me

Second Place
Ruth Fuller 20

Panic

It feels like this / the minute / till instead of right / trips the silence in my brain / no one knows / because the deficiency is internal / no one knows / because they are all in / tiny words / very busy / under / things / wheels spinning blindly / sky / that en / If I must be exceptional / I will red against you / exceptionally / precisely / exceptionally / tragic / watch me see / the sun / the sun / the sun / the sun / in this absurd position / preferably /

Third Place
Danielle Black 21

Truth Split

Tips, my lips / pull apart like wings stretched from sidewalk to shoe / my mouth aspares words taken from me / skin, my skin / blood and bones by my memories / blood and bones into the pockets of rooms made of furniture / I’m sometimes printed, exalted / other times unprinted, rectified / depending on the right, on the drink / if I’m pretty for a black girl / moonstop validating / talk through not talked in / stack between choosing me or you / you want me / I’m not like me / you don’t like me / you just want to try me / a statistic, a grade / another face for the school website / target practice / ego house / a drink, a chair / wrapped for a bad seat /

—tips, drying, dying / from love me, / too much me.
First Place
Mahi Talan '21

Mahi is a junior from the San Francisco Bay Area. She is double-majoring in English and Political Science.

Sexual Identity, Foreignness, and the Gothic Vampire;
The Racialization of Homosexuality in Carmilla

In Carmilla, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu reveals 19th century British anxieties on race and sexuality, especially in relation to one another. The positionality of Carmilla, Le Fanu's primary antagonist, as a racialized "other" within the narrative, is indicative of British concerns regarding the possible corruption of English women, whose purity, chasteness, and moral aptitude were considered to be threatened by the influence of highly sexualized foreign figures. In Carmilla, this is seen through the lens of homosexuality, discourse around which has been historically racialized. Le Fanu employs heavy description of naturalistic imagery, and makes repeated reference to Carmilla's association with mystical, animalistic, and sexual elements in an Orientalized conflation of her alterity and sexual desires. In this way, Carmilla represents 19th century British society's fears of sexual corruption and discrimination of non-Western civilization and social codes.

Second Place
Davina Tomlin '20

Davina is a senior from Oakland, CA. She is double majoring in English and Spanish and minoring in Creative Writing.

Men and Tools in “Ode to a Nightingale”

In “Ode to a Nightingale,” Keats walks the line between what is made through imagination and what is immortal by nature, and questions the particular gifts of both. He finds that the nightingale has abilities that Keats does not, which he imagines create a blissful connection to the natural world. The poem takes a journey through a fantasy where Keats attempts to use man-made tools: wine and poes to achieve some union with what is purely natural. His tools are temperate with nature, but are in essence man-made and created with imagina and “fancy” (57). Here, Keats conflicts with his contemporaries, in their use of the human focused tools he has, rather than join in the creations made by nature. He envies the nightingale, but his solution is not to try to become it, rather, his awareness of mortality prompts him to imagin away he could achieve the same unity with nature.
English Department Events

Loring Holmes and Ruth Dodd Drama Cont

First Place
Maria Connors ’20

Emily Buzza is a graduating senior in English and Theatre double major, as well as in the college-in-chief of Clark College. Her love for the creative performance cultures of the circus and a fascination with its history, as well as five minutes of a five-hour PBS documentary, inspired her play, Kitten.

Nothing Out of the Ordinary

(SAM sits alone at her living room table, a black trash bag folded down in front of her in a way that doesn’t reveal its contents. She breathes heavily.)

COLLEEN enters the apartment from stage right, and puts her bag down on a chair next to the door. SAM looks up, alarmed, as if she wasn’t expecting anyone to come home. She quickly scrunches up the bag and shoves it under the couch, out of COLLEEN’s line of sight.)

Kitten
[MARIA stands alone onstage in no distinct location. She is a pretty girl in her very early twenties. She is dressed simply but does not look plain. She addresses the audience.]

MARIA
I was six years old the first time I saw a tiger. Before that, the circus only had lions. And they were fine enough, sure, but they were dull if you stared at them too long. Lions are a sandy yellow, like fine dirt on a backroad. Nothing much special about that. And they’ll lay their heads down and sleep and do absolutely nothing after a while.

But tigers. Tigers are brilliant.

She was the Sun

(LIGHTS UP on a white room. Against the middle of the far wall is a woman lying on a cot. She is wearing drab, loose-fitting clothes. Her back is to the audience. We hear only her side of the conversation as she talks to what appears to be no one.)

SADIE
I’m going home today. To our apartment. My apartment. It’s not home anymore. Not without you. I don’t know if I’m any better off after being here, but I know if they hear me talking to you, they’ll want me to stay longer, so I have to keep it short. I just miss you. So much...

IDEA
A
I suppose we could...
B
No.
C
Stop.
D
Of course not.
E
Die.

A
No.
B
In the movie...
D
Too specific.
E
Dated.
C
Unequivocally, above all else...

English Department Events

Riley Kay Shelden is a senior political science and theatre major from Hopatcong, New Jersey. After his summer, she plans on going to study acting in a top M.F.A. program in theatre, and the subsequent breathing led to Elements, an anthology of short plays based on Aristotle’s six elements of theatre.
YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT'

Virtual Spring Fling

Wednesday, April 29 | 2:00 - 3:00 PM (EST)

Join us in celebrating the winners of our creative writing and essay contests and the annual English Department prizes!

Followed by induction of new members into Sigma Tau Delta, English Honor Society.

To join the event, contact:
GA_english@clarku.edu
The English Department Hosted Digital Spring Fling

The English Department enjoyed hosting our annual Spring Fling over Zoom. We were able to present the awards for annual creative writing and essay contests, as well as hear readings from the winners. The Sigma Tau Delta induction ceremony was also conducted over Zoom. Please find more information as well as photos on our Facebook! Additionally, ClarkNOW published an article on the event, read it here!

CLARK WRITES

Join our board of editors!

Fill out our Google form application or contact us at clarkwritesblog@gmail.com for more info.

Applications for the Clark Writes Board are Available Now
If you are a current student and would like to join the Clark Writes E-Board, please fill out an application [here](#)!

### Alumni and Student News

- **Ama Bemma Adwetewa-Badu MA '17** At the start of the year, Ama Bemma Adwetewa-Badu (class of 2017) passed her comprehensive exams at Cornell University. She is now ABD and is working on a dissertation that considers a set of Anglophone poets from the late 20th century to the present day, focusing on how these poets fostered cross-national and cross-cultural solidarities.

- **Brett Iarrobino '20** has been named the Student Representative for Sigma Tau Delta's Eastern Region for the 2020-21 academic year. This is the first time Clark has had a student represent the society at the national level. Learn more about this position and what it entails [here](#).

- **Matt Pettengill '08** was recently hired to work in Unum's Learning & Performance Development department as a Learning Consultant (think corporate trainer). He trains new and internal hires on Short Term Disability claims and FMLA requests. But, given the COVID-19 developments, he has been developing training courses and delivering them on the fly due to expansions in the Family Medical Leave Act that were passed with the recent stimulus bill in Washington.

### Find Us Online:

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and The Next Chapter.

If you have any news to share with us, please write a couple of lines about it and send it to Davina Tomlin and Sophie Stern /or to Professor Lisa Kasmer, Chair. Also please remember to send us photos along with the text/post. Now that we are on Facebook, we try to share photos with every post!