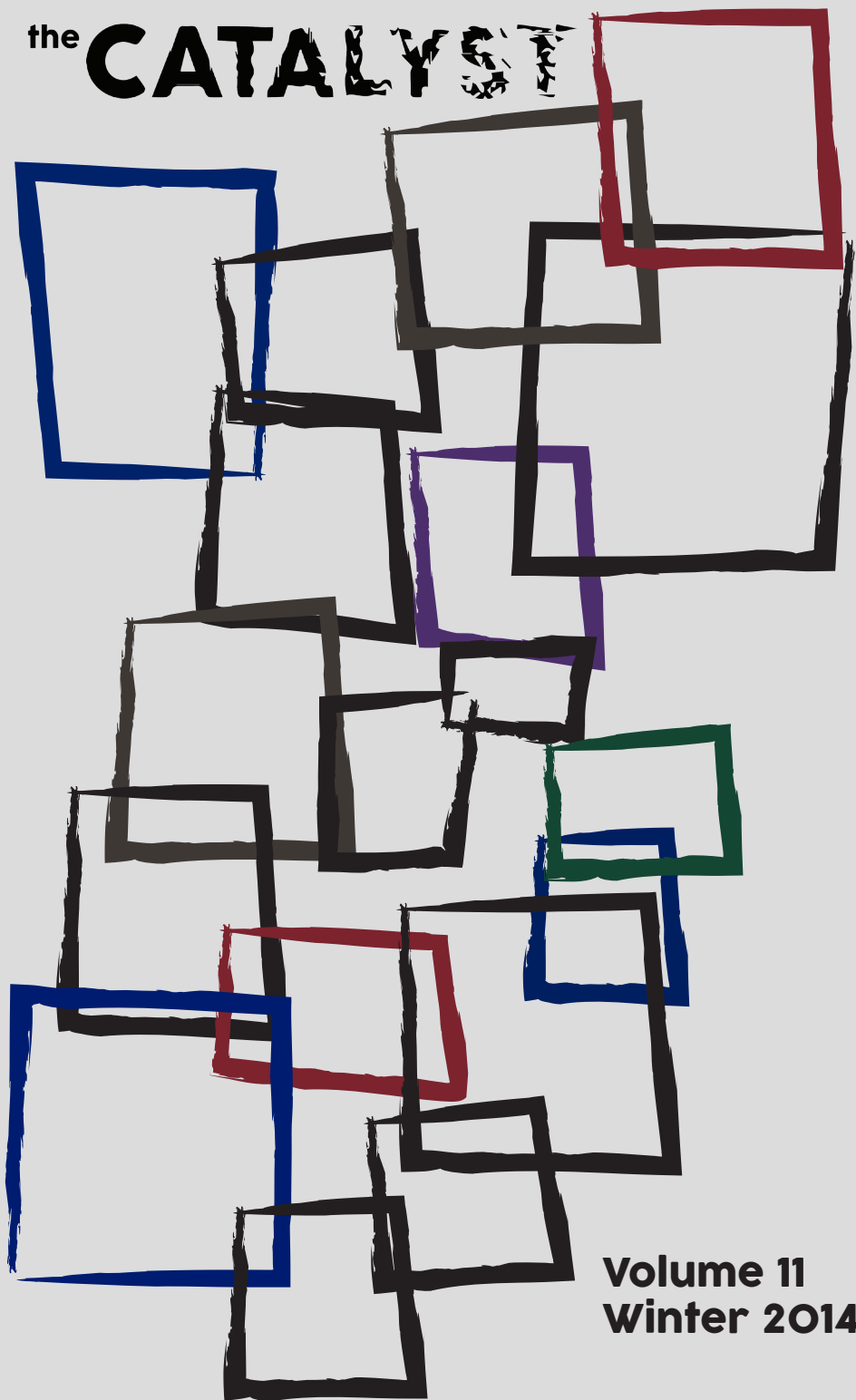


the **CATALYST**



**Volume 11**  
**Winter 2014**

---

# “DON’T STOP ME NOW”

A publication of *The Catalyst*  
Volume 11 – Fall 2014

---

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

Carly Frerichs

ASSISTANT EDITORS:

Jonathan Cook  
Lauren David  
Rylee Hedberg  
Haley McCullough

Elena Montanye  
Emily Moua  
Charleton Skinner  
Virginia Wightman

FACULTY ADVISOR:

Dr. William Stobb

WHAT WE ARE:

*The Catalyst* is a student-run creative journal of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse English Club publishing prose, poetry, photography, art, music, and all other creative works by the students and faculty of UW-L. Each semester, the student editors pick a new theme and accept submissions about and outside the chosen theme.

## THIS SEMESTER'S THEME:

It has been 11 semesters since *The Catalyst* was taken up by the UW-L English Club. This is the third edition published in print and we are beginning to make a name for ourselves in our community with more submissions than ever! This semester, to celebrate the progress we have made alongside the campus community, we have asked about your goals, dreams, and what you think is holding you back. Life is a string of adventure and conflict, powerful moments that cannot help but spring off the pages and from the lenses of our creativity. We hope you find the following pieces as inspiring as we have.

- The Editors

## WORD OF THANKS TO:

William Stobb for being such a great advisor, supporting us and pushing us to grow into the publication we know we can be

Kelly Sultzbach for her continued support of *The Catalyst* and fearless leading of the UW-L English Club

Rob Wilkie for helping develop our new website and all the tech support he has provided through the years

Jake Speer for spending so much time helping archive all of our previous editions

Everyone who has submitted to *The Catalyst* in this publication as well as in the past

The UW-L English Club for helping to keep us afloat and providing any support possible

And, of course, all those who read this publication and support the amazing creativity we have here at UW-La Crosse!

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## POETRY

<b>Silent Flower</b> Yu Cai	5
<b>Weeping from Memory</b> Richard Allenby	8
<b>Out Loud</b> Cristian Noriega	10
<b>Pathways and Recliners</b> Katelyn Shepardson	13
<b>Sitting in a Tree at Fon Ferek Nature Preservation</b> Shelby Counihan	15
<b>Coming to Christ with Connor</b> Brittany Parr	17
<b>Thought and Mind</b> Zachary Allen	19
<b>Auscultation</b> April Wildes	21
<b>Marooned</b> James Groh	23
<b>Ice Skating on the St. Croix</b> Avery Velo	25
<b>I am the Nothing!</b> Gaia Fisher	27

## PROSE

<b>How to Get Straight A's in College</b> Dani Weber	6
<b>Cracks</b> Taylor Pasell	11

<b>That Guy</b>	30
Andy Davis	

## ART

<b>Dichotomy</b>	12
Amy Peplinski	
<b>Root City</b>	14
Amy Peplinski	
<b>Untitled</b>	20
Avery Velo	
<b>Cow Factory</b>	22
Amy Peplinski	
<b>Untitled</b>	26
Avery Velo	
<b>Origami Graduation Bear</b>	28
Amy Lee	
<b>Grandad</b>	35
Carrie Hilson	

## PHOTOGRAPHY

<b>Untitled</b>	9
Megan Damitz	
<b>Untitled</b>	29
Megan Damitz	
<b>Untitled</b>	34
Gina Miller	

THE CONTRIBUTORS	37
------------------	----

## Silent Flower

*Yu Cai*

You ate up all the loneliness  
One bite after another  
Like a silkworm nibbling folium mori  
With no annoying noise

How many leaves left the maple tree?  
Their silence was bleeding  
You will blossom out the next year  
Like silk from the mouth of him

----- Chinese Version -----

花无~~声~~  
蔡雨

你吞下所有的孤独  
一口一口  
像蚕啃食桑叶  
无声无息

那颗枫树落下了多少叶？  
他们的沉默流到土壤里  
在下一年开出花来  
像蚕嘴里吐出的丝

## How to Get Straight A's in College

*Dani Weber*

Decide that grades are the most important thing in the world. Discover evidence that refutes this belief over and over and over again. Still believe it. You tell your friends who get worse grades that grades say nothing about a person's intelligence. Grades are just how "The Man" tries to measure the immeasurable in people, how "The Man" tries to put people into assorted little boxes because it makes Him feel better. You tell your friend that grades only show how good a student is at working the system. You believe nothing of what you have said, but your friend feels better. She will never see your report card.

You can pick any major in college, as long as it isn't something objective like math, which is too specific as to what is right and what is wrong, or something subjective like English, which is too interpretive to know exactly what your professors want from you. You decide to try sociology. Go to your first day of classes and read through every syllabus from front to back. Write down every due date. Memorize each professor's expectations. Your semester is in the palm of your hand.

Your science professor, Dr. Gordon, gives you a B on your first lab report. You are not very good at science. You are only taking this class because it fulfills a general education credit. Find this B to be an affront to your very self. Hate Dr. Gordon with every fiber of your perfectionist being. Tell your friends that you saw this coming, that this professor has clear favorites in the class, that you knew he didn't like you ever since the first day of class when you came in six minutes late.

It wasn't your fault that you were late. Your roommate had kept you up until 2:00am the night before because she wouldn't stop skyping with her boyfriend who she hadn't seen in days. You had to make a detour to get coffee. Remember Dr. Gordon glaring at you and your French vanilla cappuccino for the entire class period, even though you had entered the room as quietly as possible. Tell everyone not to take this professor because he is a pedantic prick. Keep hating Dr. Gordon with all of your heart until you manage to get an A in the course overall. Then tell your friends that he really wasn't that bad. His pants were a bit too short.

Try to have a social life. Fail miserably. Then try again but with more drinking involved. You have so many friends.

Don't tell anyone that you get straight A's, unless you are playing "Never Have I Ever." Then you say, "Never have I ever gotten a B in college." At first everyone acts surprised and impressed, but then you notice the silent hatred, especially from the boy you had been thinking about flirting with all night, the one with the red converse shoes and raven tattoo. You wish that you hadn't said that. You really like his shoes.

You don't like your new sociology professor. She keeps saying things like "The length is up to you, just answer the questions completely" and "You don't have to use outside sources, but you can if think your paper needs it" and "There is no right or wrong way to do this project. Think outside the box." She avoids your questions about how to complete the assignments. You just know you're not going to get an A. You call your mom sobbing, asking her if she will still love you if you are a failure. She answers, "You know I don't care about your grades, as long as you try your best." You tell her you don't know what your best is. "Just try your hardest sweetie. I'm sure you'll do fine."

You manage to get an A with the ambiguous instructor. You call your mom to tell her the good news. "That doesn't surprise me. I never doubted you for a second." This kills you inside.

Forget why you decided to major in sociology. Think about all of the other options out there. Think about the risks you aren't taking and the dreams you thought you had. Talk to your friends about changing your major. Your friends say wise things, like "You need to graduate the right way" and "It's never too late to change majors" and "You shouldn't get a degree in something unless you're passionate about it" and "Shut up, I'm trying to watch the game." Listen your wise friends. Do not change your major. Continue to get A's.

Decide that you want to be a deep thinker, a complex individual, not just a good student. Decide you want to be an artist. Buy a pretty sketchbook. Then another. Then another. Ask for them for Christmas. Stack them neatly in the back of your closet. Tell no one that they are all empty.



## **Weeping from Memory**

*Richard Allenby*

(houses made of tacky-tacky)  
her jeans weren't like her gun  
but both slung low at the hip

her jeans were of every type  
tight, bell-bottomed, relaxed  
dirty faded blue with tattered ankles and torn knees  
black designer with sequins above the pockets  
patches made from leather and secret pockets

(her mother plated her hair each morning before school)  
the gun was hard steel with a hair trigger  
the only one she ever wanted, the only one she ever used  
a grip that she could barely wrap her hand all the way around  
a smooth 6" barrel that didn't waver a bit when it was cocked

("good morning mother, good morning father")  
her girlfriend's kisses with his warm tongue  
nails painted pink drawing red lines along his back  
looking into his eyes, four breasts heaving as one  
two guns  
she lies in her arms  
he kisses his lips

(a cadillac in the driveway)  
breasts bound to hide behind a tie  
breathing more easily than with a bra

(she wore a petticoat)  
he's under her petticoat  
he's behind a picket fence  
she steals a wink at her girlfriend during the sermon  
he holds him close under the sheets  
weeping from memory



## Out Loud

*Cristian Noriega*

I have something to tell you,  
Something I've known but have chosen to forget  
Something I've hidden and felt deep regret  
It's something not many people know  
Not many have experience with  
People are criticized for it  
They are marginalized, victimized, and discriminated for it  
It's not something I've done; it's what I am  
It's not something I can change  
Although I've wanted to  
But I can't change  
No  
I won't change  
It's beating stronger than my heart  
Everyday becoming louder,  
Screaming, "Let me out"  
Holding it in will only cause more doubt, more hate, more hurt  
I want to tell you but will you understand?  
Will you be open to it and give me your hand?  
Will you tell me you love me,  
That you're proud of me too  
Or will you cuss me out  
and be defeated And blue  
Will this change what you think of me  
Your son, your life, your world  
Will this be the straw that breaks the camel's back?  
These thoughts are a constant attack  
I want to tell you, my father  
Who raised me  
My father

## **Cracks**

*Taylor Pasell*

I love the unintentional cracks on sidewalks. I look at them and wonder what kind of damage could cause such a large crack in sturdy cement. Thousands of people have walked over it, cars have inevitably driven over it, numerous objects could have dropped and broken on it, but one specific weight caused it to crack. Was it one small wrong step or a semi-truck slamming into the curb? I guess you wouldn't know unless you were there or heard the legend of the zigzagging crack in the pavement.

So what was it that broke you, a buildup of single steps or a semi?

We humans may not show our "cracks" in the same way that these sidewalks do, but they are present in their own way. It is said that the strongest people are the ones fighting battles no one knows about, and I think that's quite accurate. I personally have never been around to see a sidewalk split down the middle just like most people have not seen me fight my hardest battles, but we notice the aftermath.

These cracks in the ground are what make each sidewalk itself. The best part of these blemishes in the concrete is the beautiful things that grow from them. Colorful flowers and weeds sprout from these once thought as ugly marks, proving that even better things will come out of a hard time. There is so much meaningful beauty in these imperfections. Without trials, we would never grow or learn anything new. These cracks may seem ugly and the pain may be unbearable, but it takes time for something to grow after a big crack in life, and it will be worth the wait.

Dichotomy  
*Amy Peplinski*



## Pathways and Recliners

*Katelyn Shepardson*

crumbles of sidewalk  
and bits of sand  
have contributed to misty mornings,  
in deep purple woods,  
and salty evenings in  
far off red maple trees. we could  
sit here and  
speak of dusty paths  
washed down with the sullen clouds  
of that forever skyline  
or spin stars into old lampshades  
amid watered down billows of rain.  
but nothing would fill the scores in kitchen chairs  
or the silence of a worn green recliner.

Root City  
*Amy Peplinski*



## Sitting in a tree at Fon Ferek Nature Preservation

*Shelby Counihan*

I am perched in an ancient tree  
that is close to falling,  
as you made sure to tell me  
on our last adventure through Fon Ferek Park,  
how lucky I was to hold your ivory hand  
and kiss soft, berry stained lips,  
by far unlike any others in the Milky Way Galaxy

Nevertheless I am wedged high in the sky,  
admiring a small stream running below,  
today nothing more than a melodious murmur  
as water slides over boulders and clay  
and leaves vivid and dripping with Fall,  
are escorted downstream  
or maybe caught on shore,  
I imagine the tree in which I sit falling  
into the water too,  
a dam to catch Mother Nature's gifts  
as they flutter from treetops  
and dance intricately in the wind.

Your eyes reflected the dancers that day  
I would have forever lost myself in their depths  
or even one more second relished in their warmth if I knew how,  
and never let it seep out of my soul  
so I could forever dance the tango with my darling Jessica Bree  
or maybe the waltz, whichever fits your fancy that evening  
we could fly with the speckled sparrow  
above me, high in the sky with wispy clouds  
more free than I in so many ways,  
wings with elegant curvature  
floating upwards toward heaven, like the balloons  
released for you at the waterfall  
a sea of red comets swiveling into space  
with messages inscribed to you sent from our hearts

Suddenly he plunges below the tree line  
vanishing from my sight like a balloon



too far away to spot with the naked eye,  
I long for him to reappear,  
imagine him dancing in the wind along with your memorial balloons.

And I picture you, my delicate Bae  
victim to shattered glass and squealing tires,  
your shadowy black hair ribbons in the wind,  
and guarded amber eyes free at last.

## Coming to Christ with Conner

*Brittany Parr*

My hands always shook when praying alone,  
like a cold winter's wind  
on January 23rd in a green Taurus  
the heat sparked alive.

But one Christmas Eve Conner and I went  
to a church down Highway 13, south of my hometown  
and we sat in the 2<sup>nd</sup> pew that used to be a bright pink  
but now had seen many troubles, and wishes, and tears.

I thought to pray, was to be needy,  
how dare I ask for an easier day,  
when I had water, a bed, and health.  
And yet I would try.  
Bringing my shaky hands  
together and wishing for things from God.

Conner leaned over and kissed my cheek as  
we began to sing "Amazing Grace! How sweet  
the sound, That saved a wretch; like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see."

But you see, I didn't actually see.  
Betty in her pink shall and purple earrings,  
she, O' she must see, as tears welled from Betty's eyes and her palms  
are outstretched toward heaven.  
But me,  
I didn't see.

Now, it was time to pray and I bowed my head  
and interlaced my long fingers  
and they began to shake,  
so I started thinking about  
dinner, or maybe what kind of cake we would have after church  
but then I felt a hand grab mine.

It was Conner, he grabbed both my hands and interlaced it with his,

and we bowed our heads together.  
You know in the movies,  
and they show a montage of your life?  
This moment would be in mine.

I felt warm, like the warmth of my blood was  
finally pumping through its veins  
the preacher sang "How precious  
did that grace appear,  
the hour I first believed"

There was no light,  
just the warmth of two people sharing a moment;  
sharing something bigger than themselves.

Conner holds my hands so they don't shake  
and we pray together in that 2<sup>nd</sup> pew  
every other Sunday.

"Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far  
and Grace will lead me home."

## Thought and Mind

*Zachary Allen*

The crows sit high in the dogwood,  
Caw-cawing back and forth  
Like an old married couple.

They must be talking about the trash,  
The apples rotting in the yard,  
Deliciously alcoholic, but heavy.

Are they crows or ravens?  
I never know,  
Even though I looked it up once.

They look at me,  
Carefully and suspiciously,  
Seeing me as more than just an observer.

They must be ravens,  
High in the dogwood,  
And no longer do they just caw-caw.

Two wizened creatures,  
Debating the ethereal nature  
Of the world around us.

Maybe they're talking about me  
Sitting here  
Watching them.

I'll wave at them,  
Hoping that they take my greetings  
Back to the All-father.



*April Wildes*

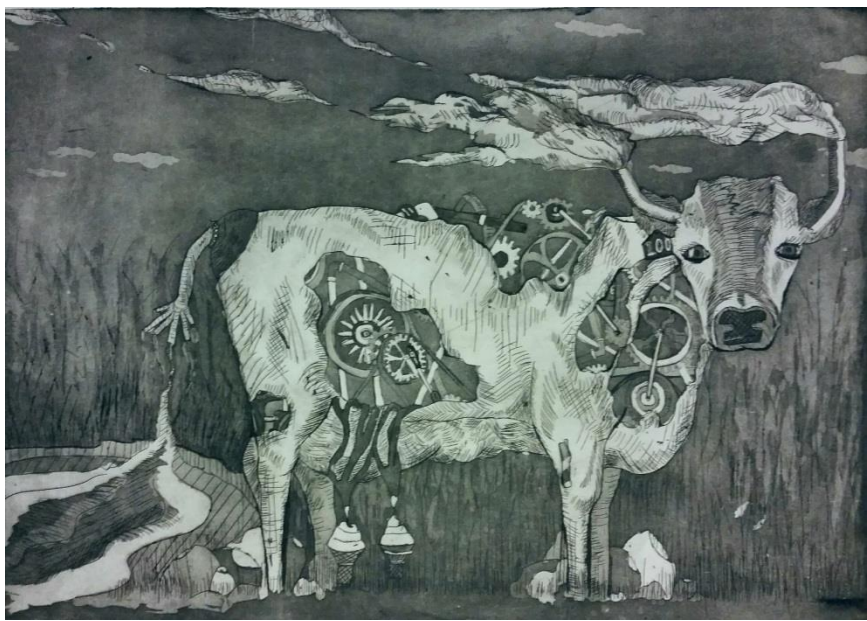
I cannot blame the messes inside my mind  
or the fact that my life-line left me out to dry  
without even a reason why, assuming  
it even cares that this depression  
I now have to solely bare.

It is easy to talk about the heart,  
just not the damaged parts, but  
confronting raw emotion is hard because  
my-body-hates-the-ache-within-an-empty-cage-of-star-crossed-fate  
just doesn't sound as pleasing as  
our love is a work of art and Aphrodite was our muse from the start.

My heart is not damaged beyond repair,  
but prayer will not subdue the break inside my breast,  
though the ache may shake you from the charm  
you crave, alarmed that “bye”  
was not the brave way to set ablaze my garden  
by damning me to purgatory  
when you are the original snake.

I will not humanize my gloom  
for something that is meant to bloom  
and smile  
when I am meant to fume and sit in my misery  
-for a while.

**Cow Factory**  
*Amy Peplinski*



## **Marooned**

*James Groh*

A drunk man once said  
that we are “boats against the current,  
borne back ceaselessly into the past.”  
This was after he ran down the  
street stopping cars and  
shouting over contorted faces.  
Why a boat?

Alone and misguided  
the man continued on his way.  
Lamp posts became  
light houses navigating the  
shallows of his mind. Revealing

in his eyes more than whiskey.  
A gleaming shadow of what  
once was. Shattered by  
a letter in a bottle  
written with sorrow  
and received in pain.

With every blink,  
the man tried to shake his past  
yet it crept through his mind  
like the barge of sand beneath  
the sea, sweeping him further  
from shore.

Nothing more  
could happen now.  
His eyes fell silent. Hesitating  
words spewed from his mouth,  
rotting like a lifeboat acquiring mold,  
never meant to be understood.  
Drifting far off beyond  
the riptide distance grew past  
his grasp.



Coming to  
in another bar  
he ordered a whiskey dry,  
beating himself  
against the current  
and the rocks.

## Ice Skating on the St. Croix

*Avery Velo*

The white blades of cracked lightning,  
veined the dark suspended blood of our River.  
I raced all sounds and chased hungry birds,  
you searching for the frozen fatalities of slow animals.  
Fish, Raccoons, and Geese all eternally posed,  
in their first empty heartbeat.

Sometimes warning thunders would whip around,  
the poured ice and remind us of a sinking danger.  
Our feet would cut faster and cursive out our given names,  
in cold fonts that carved pale scars across our River's face.  
This is the school where we learned,  
how to spell all the words in nature.



## I am the Nothing!

*Gaia Fisher*

longing

longing

longing for

the creator's next midrift uprise to entice the yellow belly buzzards to  
eat their prosthetic faces off anorexic bodies.

waiting

waiting

waiting

for least desirable goodbyes to escape my lips;

for my first foot rail to collect my wits.

i wonder if lonely will surface and burden my "ditch this" mentality?  
homesick easy.

spring awaits my joyous laughter at afar's vantage point.

mother nature's offering me peace, but only if i can handle the draft  
from far beyond my back door.

i clash in neverland's never-ending story, a childhood oracle.

grey matter soluble and fading as she screams: I AM THE NOTHING!

and, legibly, i raise my head in reply;

only to find it was my voice modestly maintaining my dust spec  
memoranda.

horizon's sunrise address slips west.

continuous exertion.

lavender cast-away;

drip, slip, fade.

Origami Graduation Bear  
*Amy Lee*





## **That Guy**

*Andy Davis*

The ad for the festival in Prairie du Chien was in Thursday's paper and Shorty's name stood out from among the list of lesser talents. Guitar Shorty was a bluesman; a legend famous for his on-stage antics and powerful playing. Mythology tells us that he might have taught Jimi Hendrix how to play. Of course, it also tells us that Shorty was married to Jimi's stepsister for a while. Who knows, and who cares? Opportunities to see a legend don't come along every day.

Giving up newsprint for Google; I discovered that he was scheduled for Friday, the next night. I closed my eyes and pictured a small but dedicated crowd, beer, smiles and long, lingering riffs out over the river.

"Hey," I yelled into the living room, "We have any plans for tomorrow night?"

Becky mumbled something from the other room.

"What?" I answered to the mumble.

"I can't hear you," she said. "If you want to talk to me come in here." There was no mumbling that time.

I slogged my way in the living room. "I said..."

"I hate it when you do that," Becky interrupted. "If you want to—"

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," I interrupted back. "Are we doing anything tomorrow night?"

"No, and I really don't want to."

"Really?"

"It's been a long week, and I have to go to Cleveland on Tuesday. I was kind of looking forward to a nice, quiet weekend."

"Really?"

"Yes, really. Why?"

I started to explain the rare and wonderful opportunity we had. Two, maybe three, sentences into my pitch I knew I was failing. I knew that my wife of 26 years was not going to go see Guitar Shorty with me. I was a little disappointed but I wasn't terribly surprised. She didn't enjoy the same music I did, and certainly didn't enjoy it with the same level of enthusiasm. This had happened before and I had come to accept it. It also helped me avoid thrift store shopping and rom-coms.

"So." I paused to take a breath. "I'm kind of wasting my time here, right?"

"If you really want me to go, I will."

Sure, I thought, that'll make for a good time. "No, no, I'll find someone else." I tried to make it sound like I felt a lot worse than I did. Never know when you might need emotional capital.

I went looking for Travis. I found our son in the garage. The lower half of his body was sticking out of the trunk of his car. I was tempted to sneak up behind him, startle him so that he bumped his head, like in a Bugs Bunny cartoon. I didn't. I waited until he backed out and stood up on his own.

"Hey," I said. "What ya' doin'?"

"Loose wire on the amp to the sub box." After buying the car he had added a new stereo and a dozen or so additional speakers. Two of them were huge sub-woofers that sat in a plywood box in the trunk. They were big enough that they bounced the car up and down a little bit and they were big enough that they need their own amplifier to power them. "What's up?" he asked back.

"Wanna go see Guitar Shorty with me tomorrow night?"

"Nope."

"My treat."

"Nope."

I sighed. A few years back he and I had shared musical interests. He had given up rock 'n roll for hip-hop. I hadn't given him too much grief. I remembered giving up Jerry Lee Lewis for Led Zeppelin when I was about his age. I also remembered how my dad had teased me. We all grow up and go our own way. "Ahhh," I whined, "you may never get another chance to see him."

"I'm okay with that." He gave me a big smile.

"You know..." I started.

"I'm not really interested in a musical history lesson and a lecture on how my music wouldn't exist without something or another."

Maybe I had given him a little more grief than I thought. "No, no," I said, "but I thought maybe you'd like to spend a little quality time with your dad. You know, to show your respect and admiration."

He smiled a little larger. "That's your best shot?"

I couldn't help but smile back. "All I got right now."

"Then, nope, not gonna work."

"But, you know, sharing things like this helps us develop a stronger bond."

"Lil' Wayne is going to be in Minneapolis in a couple weeks. Wanna go?"



"I thought he was in jail," I answered.

"Could be, I just couldn't think of anyone else. But you get my point."

I did. I muttered a vague acknowledgement and headed off to look for Millie. I found our daughter in her room, sitting at her computer. "What ya' doin'?" I asked.

"Chatting, updating my Facebook." Her voice was distant and the response mechanical. I didn't take it personally. It was hard to talk all the way from the cyber universe.

"What are you doing tomorrow night?" I asked.

"Hanging out at Traci's house with a few other girls."

Millie was at that age when time with her parents, especially alone, was considered torture. For a split second, and just a split second, I considered inviting them all along. Even if they agreed the idea of taking half a dozen teenage girls for a three hour road round trip stopped me.

"Okay," I said as I wandered back down the hall. Millie may or may not have answered.

Not one to give up easily, I headed back to my own computer. I would have to go outside the family. Luke lived three hours away in one direction and Mickey lived three and a half in the other. We had been friends forever. I e-mailed them both. Between the two of them my problem was solved. All I had to do was wait for a positive response.

I was very disappointed the next morning. The replies were anything but positive. Luke had just started a new job and couldn't sneak away early enough to make it. Mickey was short on cash and would have to pass.

I spent the day wandering around the office in a funk. I didn't even try and pitch the trip to any of my co-workers. I knew better. I'd tried before with acts and venues far more tempting than Guitar Shorty at the Prairie Dog Blues Festival.

The hell with it, I thought, I'll just go alone, but, no, I wouldn't.

A few years ago I was in Austin, Texas. One afternoon I was with some friends at the famous Continental Club on South Congress. Sitting alone in the corner was a guy just a little older than me. He was there to see the show, to listen to the music. He was all by himself. He sipped a long neck and listened, tapping his foot and bobbing his head; but he was all by himself. I remembered him. I had been glad that I wasn't that guy. I wouldn't go alone to see Shorty.

I kept picturing that guy in my mind. He had a ball cap on his head and a beer in his hand. He wore a short sleeved sport shirt, nothing special. I remembered him. He was all by himself, but he was smiling. He was watching the same show I was; enjoying the same music. Maybe his choices had been to go alone or to not go at all. Maybe I was that guy.

Sometimes in life, who we are runs right up against who we want to be.

It was Guitar Shorty, and he was going to be a little more than an hour away. Shorty had to be about seventy years old; and I wasn't getting any younger. There might really never be another chance. Was I seriously going to pass because of my pride? No, I thought, I wasn't. I would go alone. I could be that guy, and I could enjoy it.



This photo is part of a series entitled "Everyone is Someone." To see the full series, visit our website at [uwlcatalyst.wordpress.com](http://uwlcatalyst.wordpress.com).

**Granddad**  
*Carrie Hilson*





## THE CONTRIBUTORS

---

**ZACH ALLEN** was born on October 25 of 1990 in Winchester, Massachusetts and moved to the Coulee Region in 1997. UW-L is Zach's fourth and final college, having previously gone to the United States Military Academy at West Point, North Georgia College and State University, and the University of Nevada-Reno. The opportunity to travel and become a part of other cultures around the US has been a big part of his life, greatly influencing his poetry and prose. Zach will graduate this upcoming May with his Bachelors in English Literature.

**RICHARD ALLENBY** is a secondary degree student in physics, with a previous bachelor's in philosophy. He's from Out East and has three cats.

**YU CAI** is an international student from China and this is her first semester at UW-L. She is a junior English major, with a professional and technical writing minor. However, she also enjoys creative writing. Most of her poems are in Chinese. She would like to write more English poems to share with more people around the world.

**SHELBY COUNIHAN** was born and raised a Packer fanatic in Green Bay, Wisconsin. She is greatly inspired by beauty within our surrounding world. She believes nature is not only a teacher but also has the power to heal and create a positive mentality. Writing is an outlet for Shelby and she attempts to channel this positive mentality into each piece she publishes. She is fascinated with imperfections; they allow her to view the world in a different light and inspire creativity.

**MEGAN DAMITZ** is a freshman at UW-L majoring in biology. She has always loved art, language, and science and may pursue an art minor in the future. Photography has been a big part of her life since she was about 14, and luckily her skills have improved since then. She recently started shooting film and loves it.

**ANDREW DAVIS** was born a long time ago in the black dirt country of central Illinois. After wandering in the wilderness of the Upper Midwest he ended up near La Crosse where he has a family, a day job, and responsibilities. He also attends an occasional college class, writes, and publishes under a variety of aliases.

### GAIA FISHER

**JAMES GROH** is a junior pursuing a major in biology with a biomedical concentration as well as minors in chemistry and creative writing. Although he is (and always will be) a science nerd, creative writing has been a hobby of his since high school. Inspiration for his writing comes from all aspects of life including the mundane and the magical. Everywhere you look there is a story to be written.

**CARRIE HILSON** is originally from Wausau, WI. She can remember drawing portraits as young as the age of seven. Beginning private art lessons at age 10,

she started out painting landscapes and animals in acrylic. She further enjoys drawing in charcoal, pastel, and pencil. Carrie is currently a junior at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, majoring in art. Working with ink and ink wash is currently her favorite medium, especially when combining it with metallic acrylic and watercolor. Carrie, her husband Mike, and two children, live among the wonderful landscapes of southwestern Wisconsin.

**AMY LEE** has made origami ever since she was young and her most recent origami style is 3D origami. “Origami Graduation Bear” is a 3D origami that represents her passion for origami that she wants to keep searching for what she can make. It also represents soon to be graduating and nothing is going to stop her from walking in her graduation gown.

**GINA MILLER** is a photographer, writer, and artist as well as a full time student at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, where she is studying communications and psychology. She enjoys utilizing her work to raise awareness and project her passion for social justice. In her free time she enjoys live music, playing guitar, conversations, coffee, biking, running, hiking, and helping others.

**CRISTIAN NORIEGA** is 20 years old and currently a psychology major here at UW-L. He thought of entering his poetry into this edition of *The Catalyst* because of the theme. Through his coming out experience he had to fight many things and people in his life that caused him to stay in the closet. It was an awful experience being silenced by the attitudes and thoughts of everything around him, including himself. These pieces convey feelings he had going through this experience which has greatly shaped who he is today. He hopes these pieces inspire others to realize their own potential but mostly what they deserve in life, and that is happiness.

**BRITTANY PARR** is a sophomore at UW-L. She plans on teaching English to high school students.

**TAYLOR PASELL**

**AMY PEPLINSKI** is a senior at UW-L. She is currently getting a dual undergraduate degree in English and art. She has been painting and drawing since before she remembers, but has recently decided to try and make it her career. Almost all of her pieces work with found materials and content that explore the industrial renovations that we encounter every day. More importantly, how these things, such as doorknobs, faucets, and buildings affects us as a society and as individuals.

**KATELYN SHEPARDSON** is a habitual slam poet and writer. She is a second year student here at UW-L and is pursuing a bio med major and microbiology and public health minor. She recently finished a new poem and thought it might find a home within *The Catalyst*.

**AVERY VELO**

## DANI WEBER

**APRIL WILDES** is a junior at UW-L. She is a major in English literature with minors in anthropology and creative writing. She has a blog where she posts other writings of hers, [aprilwildes.wordpress.com](http://aprilwildes.wordpress.com), which only her parents end up reading. She has recently studied abroad in London and hopes to be back there in the near future, but will settle in Middle-Earth if all else fails. Happiness can be found in even the darkest of times, when one only remembers to turn on that light.



