

theRev

young pens are even mightier



A MAGAZINE BY CREATIVITYUNLEASHED



'When the Block Wears Off' - Cassandra Bond

As this project is driven by diversity, we use condensed typography to create as much space as possible. We aim to showcase as many of the students' voices as we can, promoting inclusion. If you require this booklet in larger print, please visit: www.creativity-unleashed.org and download our digital version.

The Rev

a magazine produced by CreativityUnleashed
in partnership with Questar III's New Visions

Welcome to our 2024 edition of The Rev literary and creative arts magazine, formerly known as the Russell Sage College Review. This year we received an unprecedented amount of creative submissions across the Russell Sage College Albany and Troy campuses, including current students (undergrad and graduate), alumni, staff and faculty, alongside students from the UK, such as those from the University of Excellence Tottenham. This is why you will find a mix of British and American English throughout this magazine.

Inside these pages you can enjoy a wide range of creativity including: poetry, flash fiction, memoir, opinion editorials, photography, painting, digital artwork, illustrations and more. New this year is even the publication of a film trailer!

Our selection process was driven by the mission to integrate as many diverse voices as possible, focusing on what our communities celebrate, what they mourn and what they hope for in the future.

For a full list of titles and authors, please see the index in the back of the book.

We hope that by the time you get through these pages you too will agree that while pens are mightier than the sword, young pens are even mightier...

This Year's Partners:

Questar III's New Visions Visual & Performing Arts program, located at The Arts Center of the Capital Region in Troy, NY, is a specialized program for academically and artistically advanced high school seniors who are planning to attend college for the visual or performing arts. NV: VAPA students gain knowledge about the business of art and specific techniques through a curriculum that blends college-level education with practical experience. Topics of study include preparing the college application, audition and/or portfolio; filmmaking; song writing and recording; playwriting and performance; and an art show.

CreativityUnleashed is the face of a legacy project that began in 2014 as Haringey Unchained. What started out as a small collective of students aiming to showcase the creative talent of a school in Tottenham, London has now grown to become a not-for-profit working with young people everywhere. We promote social change, tolerance and diversity through community-driven art experiences. It has been our absolute pleasure working with the editorial team of The Rev at Russell Sage College and Questar III's New Visions for our 4th collaborative magazine.

Many thanks to local poet Hajar Hussaini for inspiring us this year with her poetry workshop. We also thank our very own Maverick Douglas for introducing us to the concept of fan fiction.

Thank you to Mark Mathews and his team from Bluekite Creative in Cornwall, England for the design of our magazine. And finally, we thank Brett Petersen for his invaluable support in providing final copy editing for the magazine.

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Cover artwork: Sleeping Beauty, by Russell Sage College staff member and Rev editor: Ethan Alcee.

Follow CreativityUnleashed on Instagram: @creativityunleashed_org for notices regarding future creative workshops and submission windows, or visit www.creativity-unleashed.org to sign up for our quarterly newsletter to receive updates.

International Student Creative Writing Competition:

We are proud to introduce this year's International Student Creative Writing Competition produced in collaboration with Aralia Education. Our editors received over 80 submissions from middle and high schoolers studying in America, Canada and China. Of those pieces, 14 were accepted for print publication in the magazine, including our 1st place winner, Yitong Li, whose artwork: The Environmental Odyssey of Young Carlos Roberto Mejia, was unanimously accepted by all of our editors.

You can identify the international student work in the magazine by this symbol:



Please visit the CreativityUnleashed website for the long-listed creatives who were accepted for publication on our digital blog.

For further information about Aralia Education, visit <https://www.aralia.com>.

Meet the Teams

The Rev Team:

- Ethan Alcee: Flatplan Manager
- Ashley Busby
- Maverick Douglas: Copyeditor
- Victoria Harris
- Kathleen Muller
- Laurel Petersen: Submissions Manager
- Jonathan Reese
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- Angie Smith: Lead Staff from Russell Sage College & Founder of CreativityUnleashed
- Mariah Wright
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CreativityUnleashed Team:

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Questar III's New Visions Team:

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- Peg Danner-Frank: Lead Staff from Questar III's New Visions
- Rachael DeMars
- Bella Gazzola
- Lily Strattman

When Enough is Enough

Ashley Wei
International School
of Beijing

The small vineyard smelled of fresh rain, dewdrops glistening on the perfectly ripe grapes. Their leaves fluttered ever so slightly in the late, summer wind. Will Franks hustled around the vines, dark wine bottles clinking in his arms. Brigitte watched her husband from a distance, chuckling under her breath. Will was supposed to be retired, but that hadn't lasted long. After a career in the police force, he had set up a make-shift vineyard to relax his mind. The results of his labors had been so fruitful, that the community demanded to buy it. The result? A stressful retirement despite Brigitte's protests. That man wouldn't sit still! She smiled to herself, wiping a drop of sweat with her sleeve, and continued to prepare lunch.

Moments later, her reverie was interrupted.

"Is lunch ready? What is taking you so long?" Will sat down grimly at his usual spot at the top of the dining room table like an expectant king.

Brigitte sighed from the kitchen, thought here we go again and took the food to the dining room. He watched her as she positioned the plate in front of him, his face disturbed.

"This pork chop isn't even cooked all the way through." Will poked at the plate. "Anyways, I gotta go. Make sure dinner is cooked when I get back. I'll just buy something for lunch while I'm out." And with that, he left.

When the door swung shut, Brigitte sunk into her chair. Will was always coming and going for the wine. She had to admit, she

preferred the goings - they meant she didn't have to be party to his mood swings all the time. Her husband struggled to accept his ageing. That's what she told herself, anyway.

There were several dishes steaming hot on the table when her husband returned home that evening. Brigitte heard the lock open and hurried to the door.

"How did it go?" She breathed in the smoky smell of his leather jacket.

"Did you steam the fish I bought yesterday?" Will asked abruptly.

"Yes." Brigitte tucked his shoes under the cabinet. "Sit down, I've got something to ask you."

Will sank into his chair and lit a cigarette.

"I was at Josephine's this afternoon."

"Oh? Your useless little sister who never had kids?"

Brigitte took a slow breath. "Mother's Alzheimer's is getting more severe; Josephine does not have the capacity to provide the appropriate care. She has asked us to take her in now."



"Right, a retired nurse who hasn't recovered from her two knee surgeries can certainly take good care of a 90-year-old woman with dementia." Will exhaled, acrid smoke fuming out of his mouth. "I knew we couldn't trust your sister. Brigitte! There are a handful of nursing homes out there ready to take your mother in! Why us?"

Brigitte took a deep breath. "Let's leave this for another day." She lifted herself, bearing the pressure on her knees. Will stopped her. "No no, lemme make this clear. I don't want that crazy woman anywhere near me. Do you think that having a sick lunatic at our house will help with our already struggling social life?"

"She's losing her memory, Will! She'll not remember us soon! Besides, those nursing homes cost a fortune. We cannot afford that." Brigitte sat on the edge of her chair.

"Well, Josephine should be the one who's paying the bill. After all, we were the ones who gave your mother grandchildren and spent all our money raising two sons. We do not owe her anything."

The range hood above the stove hummed faintly and the meal sat on the table, cold, as Brigitte left for her room.

Later that night, Brigitte tip-toed out of their bedroom and headed towards the phone. She dialed the number in a hurry. Her sister picked up after three rings.

"Will said no."

"I knew it! That jerkhead. We need to talk about Will. I've kept quiet for years out of respect for you. I don't know how you've lived with him, but if I have had enough, surely you have too."

The clock ticked on the wall behind Brigitte.

"Listen, you gave him two sons. You gave your hard-earned nursing money to support his children. You cook for him every single day, and yet he treats you like a mouse."

"He's stressed." Brigitte sighed.

"If I were you, I would have left him the moment he gave me that side eye." Josephine's voice trembled. "Are you seriously going to spend the end of your life with him?"

It was grey and foggy as dragonflies soared above the mourner's heads. Through the crowd of relatives dressed in black, Brigitte's wet eyes landed on Will. He was off to the corner, still fuzzy after getting dead drunk from his wine the night before.

A month earlier, Will had rejected Josephine's request to take in their ill mother. In retrospect, perhaps he had realized it wouldn't have been such a big deal anyway. She hadn't lasted very long. Today was her funeral.

When Brigitte had received the call, she had worried: maybe mother wouldn't have died if we had taken her in... and as she sat in the front waiting to approach the podium for her eulogy, she couldn't help worrying about it further. A single tear slid down her wrinkled face.

Josephine suddenly placed her hand on Brigitte's shoulder. "She's watching down on us now with complete love, giving you the strength to do what you need to do."

Later, after Brigitte had finished her teary goodbye to her mother, she glanced in Will's direction again. She felt no worry when she strutted towards him. The guests had all left now, and so would not witness this second death.

"From now on," she told her soon-to-be ex-husband.

"You're making your own pork chops!"



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Visit the CreativityUnleashed website: www.creativity-unleashed.org to sign up for our quarterly newsletter, for further information about our outreach and to see all our long-listed pieces.

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