

an exhibit of Behrend students' expressive thoughts

Kevin Roche  
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## The Blooming Rose

The blooming rose.

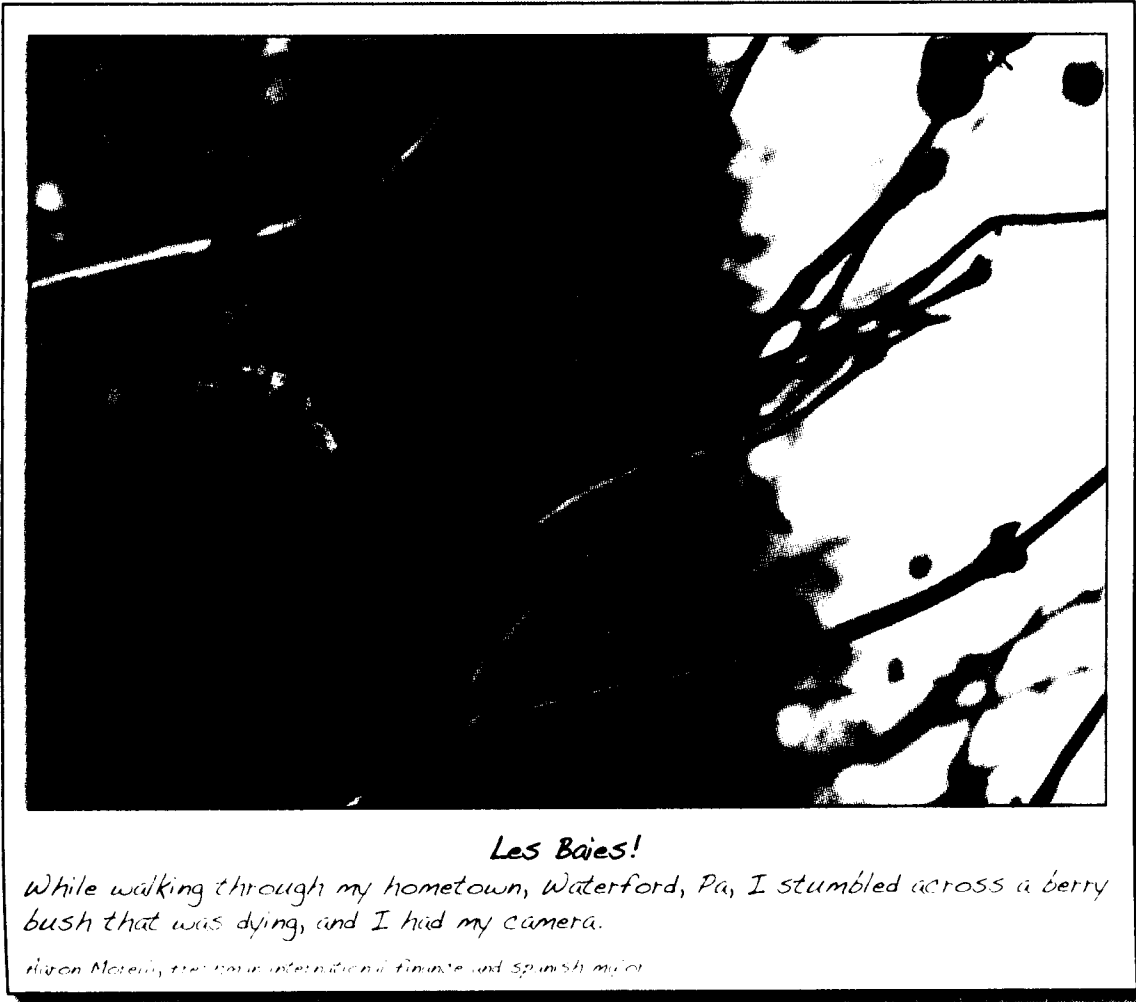
I suppose none of you have ever looked down the barrel of a shotgun. Laying flat on your back with your attacker, drunken bastard with a gun, what have you standing above you in the light of an orange streetlamp-it creates a halo around their head and darkens their face. It is as if a faceless angel is standing above you. A faceless angel with cheap whiskey on its breath in my case.

I was driving home that night, the heat was on and I was almost uncomfortably warm and could feel the sweat beginning to generate a swamp between my shoulder blades creating a trapezoid of sweat. The home made cd that my girlfriend made for me was playing as loud as it could go and I was singing along as best as I knew the lyrics, the song faded out and the familiar six introductory notes of Folsom prison blues rang through the cab of the truck. Unwisely, regrettably and in all truthfulness I enjoyably closed my eyes and shouted out the first verse with Johnny. I never saw him coming.

There's a funny thing about adrenaline that not many know about, not many people care to know really and some people just don't goddamn have the presence of mind to notice it happens, your vision becomes compressed, tunnel vision is what most people would call it I suppose, it always seemed to me that it was a whole lot like looking through a peephole in an apartment door you know? Sorta fish eyed and compressed.

The white truck I hit was shoddy at best, it was hard to tell from where I was laying whether the bumps and dings in the vehicle were from the accident or were there long before me and it crossed paths, I tried to push myself up on my left elbow, nope no fucking way that's way too painful to be normal, nope. Has to be broken. My truck as I could see it from where I was a little bit more than severely fucked to hell and back. Totaled from what I could tell. Soon though all thoughts on the status of my truck would be washed from my mind with the next words that came through the darkness.

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*Les Baies!*

While walking through my hometown, Waterford, Pa, I stumbled across a berry bush that was dying, and I had my camera.

*Kevin Roche, sophomore international finance and spanish major*

"YOU MOTHERFUCKER YOU DONE KILLED MY TRUCK I KILL YOU SUM'BITCH" oh shit, guess there wont be the awkward information exchange and we will skip straight to the open hostility.

Wonderful. I wasn't really worried about the guy I hit if he was healthy enough to threaten to kill me he is probably all right enough. With my undamaged right arm I reached across my body to my left pocket and fished out my cell phone, noting on the way that my left arm really, really shouldn't be at that angle. Finally I managed to get my phone out of my pants pocket. After a quick inspection I realized that much like my left arm, truck, home burned CD and night it was totally fucked. I didn't really take much stock into what the man from the other truck had said about killing me because apparently I am a "sum'bitch" who had "done killed his truck" until I heard the distinctive sound of a breech action shotgun snapping shut. Shit.

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Another funny thing that people most of the time do not seem to notice about the effects of adrenaline on cognition is that time appears to slow down considerably. Its as if everything is played to you on a high speed camera that has been set on showing frame by frame. Combine this with the fisheye effect and you got yourself a mighty interesting trip.

My heart rate immediately jacked itself up to an intolerable level as soon as I heard the sound of the breech action snap shut. Ohshitohshitohshitohshitohshitohshit. Was my mantra for the moment, from the direction of the truck I heard arrhythmic clomping scraping noises like the noise of a stubborn horse trying to resist being led somewhere it doesn't wish to go across an asphalt plane. From the corona of the streetlight a figure staggered into view, he wore heeled tan work boots, blue jeans almost washed out white and torn to shit and a similarly weathered and destroyed plaid flannel shirt over a stained beater. He was small, maybe five seven, stringy and pale white, in the orange street lamps glow he was almost yellow. He had a big gash on his forehead and what looked to be the remnants of a felt Stetson on his head. And in his hands was what at the time appeared to be the largest most intimidating gun I had ever seen it looked twice his size in his miniscule hands next to his shrunken wasted figure. It was beaten, weathered and old and I looked absolutely fucking lethal. As soon as I saw the shotgun in his hands and the man that had run in to me my mantra changed from my comfortable at this point "Ohshitohshitohshitohshitohshitohshit" to the more frantic much more frenzied and very incredibly surreal "imgonnafuckngdieidontwannadie imgonnafuckngdieidontwannadieimgonnafuckngdieidontwannadie."

He staggered slowly and drunkenly to my position. I felt helpless and couldn't help notice that a puddle had formed in my pants, yep. I pissed myself. What's the point of dignity right now in the face of death? He was muttering to himself maybe he was talking to me I didn't know it was if the world had gone mute except for the sound of my heart beat and my ragged rapid breathing. He was finally over me.

He stood over me and I couldn't help but notice the orange halo that formed over his head, a drunken avenging angel had chosen me that night. It was strange I wonder if I would be seeing more of these halos around in a few minutes. Kind of a silly thing to think in your last moments isn't it? whether you are going to be seeing angels. Shouldn't you be thinking of something noble to say? Or at the very least I could piss myself again. My vision constricted and I focused on the halo on my destroying faceless angel then the barrel of the gun was leveled in my face it was like looking into a dark tunnel, and then time slowed to a creep. Reality frame by frame. There was a noise and the pellets moved towards me it seemed in an agonizingly slow amount of time, spiraling, expanding it was like standing over a closed rose and watching it bloom in slow motion. That was the last I saw. A lead rose in bloom.

WANT TO SHARE YOUR CREATIONS WITH THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY?  
Submit to the Behrend Showcase!

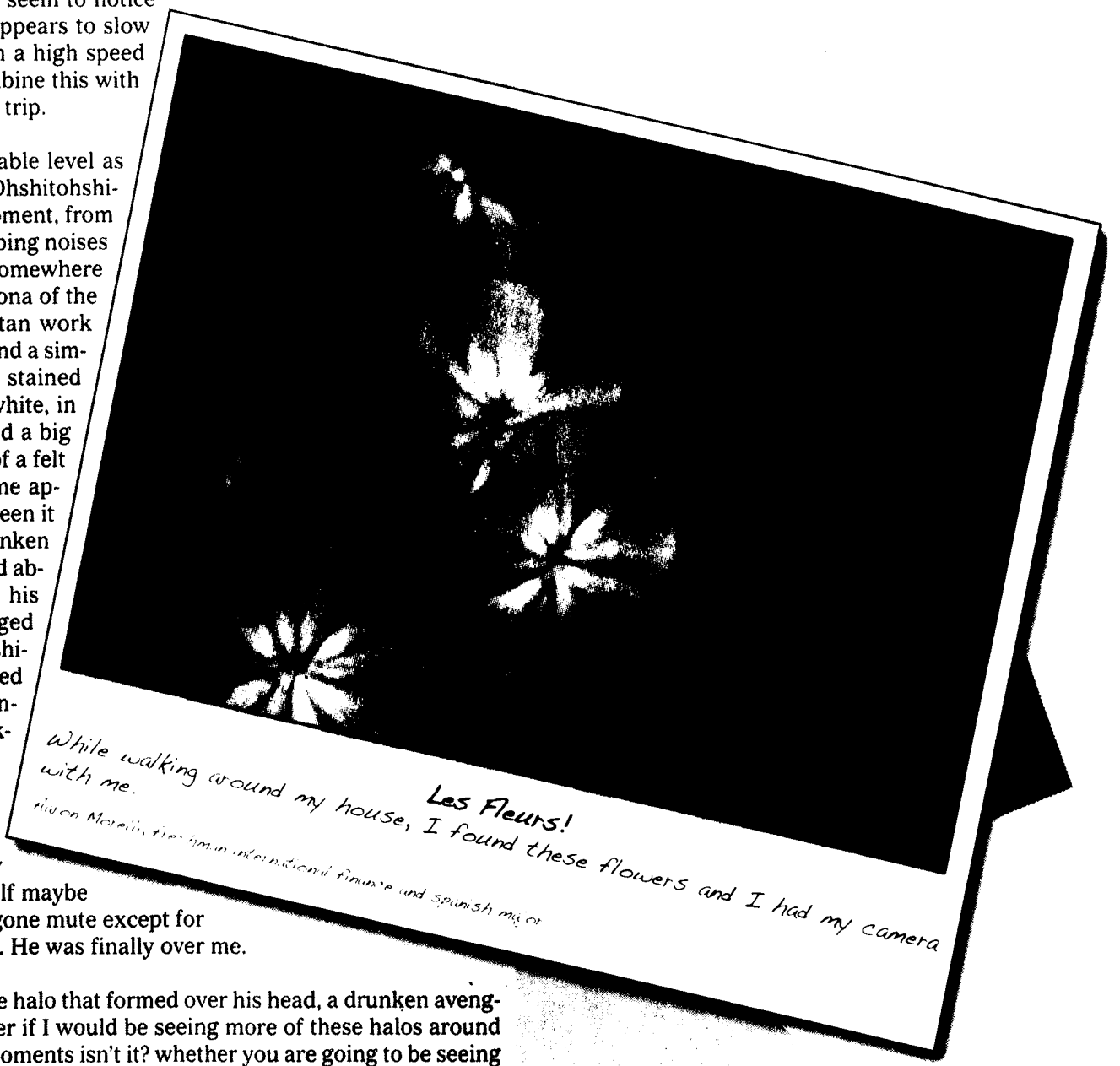
- earn valuable experience by putting yourself out there!
- begin a portfolio with real publication references and work your way up!

Submit entries, questions, comments, or concerns to showcase@psu.edu. All text documents must be proofread to the author's discretion! Photos will be printed in black and white, but will display online in color as necessary.

## The Ending of Existence

I am not forsaken,  
why must you torture me so?  
Drifting on horizons of death, dismay,  
I crumble—crumble and meld  
within the broken tides—tides which toss,  
turn, throwing me to unknown scenes.  
Embers of lust pulsate deep in the  
depths of my blood. Do not misread  
my fortune of triumph—fortune of death,  
dismay. I am the fire that burns  
in your heart. Water that calms  
your soul. Sun that shines on  
your beauty. Earth that flourishes  
your talent. Do not forsaken me,  
for I am not meant to be forsaken,  
ever lying in the pyramids of discoveries.  
Discern the fact I exist in the universe.  
Abolish my blood that pumps through  
the roots of the trees. I've nothing left  
to prove of my existence as summer leaves  
darken, leave a layer of dust—layer of dust  
which drifts slowly to the bank of the sea,  
colliding with Poseidon and his wondrous  
waves, lost forever in the abyss  
of time and divinity.

Emily Ginnona  
junior creative writing major



*Les Fleurs!*

While walking around my house, I found these flowers and I had my camera with me.

*Kevin Roche, sophomore international finance and spanish major*