

# Baylorian



2023

UNIVERSITY OF MARY HARDIN-BAYLOR

# Baylorian

# 2023

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The Baylorian is produced by students in the Department of English at the  
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**English Department Award and  
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2023**

Bryan B. & Pauline Larimer Binford  
Endowed Scholarship

Evelyn McFatridge Brashears Awards

Sigma Tau Delta Short Story Award

W.F. Hutmacher Scholarly Writing Award

Vann English Scholarship

Stella P. Ross Memorial Medal

Cole-Taylor-Townsend Scholarship

**Art Department Award and  
Scholarship Recipients  
2023**

Austin-Burks Award  
for Outstanding Art Major

Jewel Vickers Payne  
Memorial Medal



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## Scop

Avery Kuhn

I am an instrument in the shape of—  
I don't know yet.  
A human pencil.

No, smarter than a pencil.  
(No smarter than a pencil.)  
I do not only describe, I transcribe. What I hear and think and  
say, what others say.  
What I wish they would think.

I am an instrument in the shape of a special type of machine, one  
that records and organizes information.  
I am also in the shape of just that—a shape.  
Scop, pronounced 'shop,'  
The poet that makes words and makes with her words and makes  
worlds and makes within her worlds.

Literally, shaper.

I think the shaper and the shape may be the same, or start the  
same, or end the same.  
I think Tolkien says it well in Mythopoeia, that we make by the  
law in which we're made.

Tiny creators in the  
(shape, shop, scop)  
of the great Creator, Shaper, Scop.

We weave together rhythms and weed away the bars of prisons  
Nothing but grasses, dry and brittle, to one who can imagine.  
Imagine. Image.

Thou shalt not make for thine self any graven image—

Tiny creators have the power to  
(sculpt, shape, scop)  
creations that defy the greater Creator.

It is written—

A lesson on the power of words  
That God spoke out,  
That words create worlds,  
That Scripture is breathed  
That it is written on tablets of stone

That history is  
His-story  
His Story.

I am an instrument in the shape of  
Whatever He wants me to be.  
I am an instrument in the shape of  
Not an instrument,  
No scalpel or violin,

But instead I am

Made in the image of

(No graven images, are we our own idols?)

A Greater Creator—am I traveling in circles?  
Is it mere coincidence that WORD is WORLD without the L,  
That light and life and love and language  
(language!)  
Lore and lilt and laud and LORD  
Exist in world?

I am an instrument in the shape of

A scatterbrain, and storyteller, and historian of the present, a  
recordkeeper of my family, a dragon, a unicorn, a creature of  
light and darkness, a tryst, a twist, a riddle, a tome.

I am an instrument in the shape of  
Whatever God shapes myself to be  
Whatever I shape the world to be,  
As the world shapes me.

I am a scop.

## To Keats

Makayla Banton

Thou mak'st my heart ache; mine eyes fill with tears

As I read of thy Nightingale:

Thou wrote of thy pleasure in sharp fears

As thy earthly body grew dim and pale—

'Twas not enough to hear thy Poesy

Floating around in this green writer's head:

I must allow thy words to drip from my tongue

In a never-ceasing plea

To become a piece of thy writer's thread—

To transcribe your song that is yet unsung.



**Subtle Pelican**  
Faith Jerrils

Charcoal 20" x 30"

## Unknown Pastures

Kristi Leigh Boettcher

“My grandfather used to tell me so many stories about the sea,” Jonathan whispered, gazing at the massive ships docked in the harbor and then down at the two brown eyes staring intently at him. Frances, arms wrapped around Jonathan’s and head pressed against his shoulder, squeezed closer to him, and turned her eyes upon the vast sea. She closed her eyes and hummed quietly in response.

“I’ve always wanted to go to sea,” Jonathan said, his eyes soaking up the scene around him. Ships docked at the port, people rushing and wandering around, luggage strewn across the street, officials walking around and making orders. Frances hummed again and squeezed closer. Her lips twitched downward. She heaved a deep, shuddering breath.

Jonathan wrapped his arms around her. “Franny, Franny. It won’t be all that long. We heard back from Will in less than three months after he left. Same with Mary and Theo.”

“I know,” she replied quietly, nodding her head with her eyes closed.

“They already found work, too, and said they had their eyes on a few opportunities for me. This separation won’t be so long.”

“I know,” she repeated.

“The Lord saw Will and Theo and Mary through the journey. He’s been with us as business has dwindled. He’s always with us,” Jonathan, with his eyes squeezed shut, said both to Frances and as a prayer for himself.

Frances took a deep breath and breathed, “Thank you.”

The two silently remained as they were, arms wrapped around each other and eyes closed, lips occasionally moving in silent prayer.

“*St. Mary’s* leaves for New York in ten minutes,” a gruff voice boomed across the port. The bustling crowds stopped to hear the announcements and then sprang back into motion. The dock hummed with chatter, a myriad of conversations going on at once.

Jonathan, turning his head away from the

announcement, pressed his lips against Frances' head, took a step back, picked up all his bags, and placed his ticket in his hand. "Alright, well, it seems it's time to go," he said, his eyes not leaving hers.

"Write me as soon as you can," Frances said, her voice muffled as she wrapped her arms around Jonathan one last time. Jonathan pulled her close and nodded against her shoulder. He pulled away, gave her one last kiss goodbye, and smiled. Then he was off, bags haphazardly placed on his arms, ticket gripped tightly in his hand, squeezing past the crowds to board *St. Mary's*.

Frances wandered aimlessly around the crowded dock as *St. Mary's* prepared to leave. A small, grassy hill, lacking any persons, caught her eye, and she squeezed her way through the crowds. The cacophony of different conversations, orders, farewells, machines, and smells threatened to distract her, but the small grassy knoll never left her sight. She inched closer and closer until her feet landed on the soft, empty grass, a respite from the disorderly dock. Moving to the peak of the knoll, her legs slumped down to the ground, exhausted from the day. Her eyes wandered, trying to find *St. Mary's* once again. The constant hum of the port, smoke, billowing sails all caught her eye, but eventually *St. Mary's* landed upon her sight. Now that she found *St. Mary's*, she searched for Jonathan. Her eyes skimmed the deck of the massive ship, wispy images of people clustered around the edges, hands and handkerchiefs waving farewell. Frances strained her eyes, desperate for one last look at Jonathan. Suddenly, a hand waving furiously near the middle of the boat appeared; a big, bright, beaming smile reaching towards his eyes for her followed. At the sight of him, Frances mirrored him, rising slightly, hand waving furiously, a big, bright, beaming smile on her face. Their eyes stayed locked on each other, waves and smile drooping as time passed, until *St. Mary's* sailed past the horizon.

"When do you think we'll hear from him?" Frances wondered, resting her cheek upon her palm.

"He's only been gone a month. You know the journey to America takes about a month to arrive," Madeline quietly

reminded, pausing to rubbing circles on Frances' back.

"I know," Frances whispered.

"When my uncle left for America, we heard back from him in only two months, remember?"

"Yes, I remember."

Madeline rubbed circles on Frances' back, slowing after a few moments, and walked away, leaving France to her thoughts as she continued to clean the kitchen, keeping an eye upon the little children playing outside. An especially loud squeal caught the attention of the ladies inside.

"Arthur! Ann!" Madeline called, knowing her twins to be the most excitable of the bunch. Wiping her hands on her apron, she walked outside with a soft smile on her face.

Frances watched the scene of the mother with her children, her heart warmed and a smile lighting her face. She wondered what her children would look like. Would they be more adventurous like Jonathan, or quiet like herself? Would they have Jonathan's brown-red hair or her dark brown hair? Frances' heart always melted watching Jonathan play with Henry and Madeline's children, and she knew that Jonathan wanted a boy first, but she found it especially sweet when Jonathan spent time with Ann and her other little nieces. Even though they weren't married yet, Frances delighted in dreaming of their future family.

Sunlight streamed through the small window, creating a small pattern on the wooden floorboards. Quiet creaks pierced through the silence as Frances rocked in her mother's old rocking chair. Her mother's wedding gown lay draped across her lap as she continued her work on mending and altering the dress. Her nieces and nephews played outside, under the care of their mother, and her oldest brother and father tended to the sheep, both providing delightful distractions from the tedious work. The bleating of a sheep pulled her gaze to the window, to the flock wandering the hills, her father and brother on the edges of it. Her gaze eventually returned to the garment, her hands continuing their work and her mind its thoughts.

Where was Jonathan? *St. Mary's* had planned to arrive in New York. Did she arrive safely? The journey to America



was not known for it. Dear Lord, she prayed he was okay. If he was, why had he not written back yet? The weeks stretched on and on, and each day she hoped for Jonathan's letter with news from America.

More loud baas from the sheep as well as her father and brother issuing the sheep commands caught her attention. The sheep were once again behaving and under control, yet Frances continued gazing out the window, upon the gentle, rolling green hills, spotted with colorful flowers and old trees. What kind of job would Jonathan find? Any job would do, she knew, but O how she longed to continue living on a sheep farm. She ceaselessly prayed the Lord would bless her and Jonathan with a sheep farm in America, yet also prayed for a heart submissive to His will, for this sheep farm here with her family was not of her own making. Jonathan, too, had only known sheep all his life, his family owning a neighboring farm, yet he also longed for adventure, new machinery and the open sea capturing his interest. O Lord, Frances prayed, not my will, but Yours.

Beatrice lay nestled in Frances' arms with eyelids heavy, face turned against Frances' stomach and tiny fist squeezing onto the tiny wooden cross hanging on a piece of twine around Frances' neck. A peaceful quiet filled the little cottage as supper continued along unhurriedly, the family all seated around the table. Ann and Arthur, along with their older siblings, Elizabeth and Caleb, sat slouched, their hands slowly bringing more food to their mouths as their eyelids dropped. Madeline sat next to Ann and Arthur, her husband seated across from her, next to Elizabeth and Caleb. Frances sat with Beatrice at one end of the table while her father sat at the other end. Frances' father and brother discussed their plans for the next day of work, her brother glancing occasionally at his children. The children continued to slowly eat more food, while their eyes became heavier. Ann's eyes at last closed and her head dropped on her mother's shoulder.

"I think we'll bring them to bed," Madeline and Mark whispered, gently getting up from their seats, the conversation between father and son pausing. The children and parents quietly left for the bedroom, Ann and Arthur carried while Elizabeth and Caleb slowly moved their feet, guided by their

father's hand.

"I heard at church today that the mail is scheduled to arrive this week, Franny," her father whispered, careful not to wake Beatrice.

Frances smiled, thankful and content.

Frances sat outside watching her nieces and nephews, holding Beatrice, while Madeline hung the laundry to dry. As she watched the children, her eyes roamed the countryside, memories of her family and of Jonathan bringing a smile to her face. She loved the massive oak tree that her great-grandfather built a bench around. Her mother used to read to her and her siblings there. She used to sit there for hours on end, watching her father and brother tending to the sheep, Jonathan occasionally coming to help as well. She used to spend hours chatting with her friends on that bench. Who would be her friends in her new home?

Frances glanced back at the clothesline. Where did Madeline go?

Before she could think and look, Arthur came up to show her the caterpillar he found, Ann following behind, her face scrunched up in disgust.

While she paid attention to Arthur and his caterpillar, making sure he did not pester his sister with the bug, Madeline returned.

"Franny, look what came," Madeline said, drawing the words out, her face bright. Frances looked at the letter, "Jonathan Williams," scrawled in his messy handwriting, an unknown address written below. Frances paused a moment, a rush of emotions washing over her, before she snatched the letter from Madeline's outstretched hand.

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