I have been privileged to be a part of a number of communities here at Belmont since I arrived almost three years ago. Freshman year was filled with lots of sweating, unbearably long road trips, hours and hours of scouting reports, and miles and miles of suicides when I was a part of the women’s basketball team. That year, I became close to some wonderful ladies, learned a whole lot about myself, and matured immensely. Starting my sophomore year, Belmont’s chapter of Best Buddies has consistently provided me with positivity, friendship, inspiring moments, and limitless warm hugs. Through the ups and downs of my experience last summer in the Pipeline Project, I received unparalleled industry knowledge, newfound confidence, and absolutely wonderful friends. But, to be completely honest with you, no community has supported me or loved me more than Honors has over the past few years.

The Honors program and the people in it have meant so much more to me than I ever expected when I decided to apply on my Belmont application. They have not only encouraged me to produce my best work academically, but they have pushed me out of my comfort zone. I never thought I would be able to lead a student organization—let alone two—and Honors has encouraged me to do so. I also never thought I would be writing a thesis as an undergraduate student, yet you can probably predict where I’m headed tomorrow (you guessed it... the Honors Council). Without Honors, I would not be reaching my full potential here at Belmont, and that is something I appreciate immeasurably.

To me, Honors is the people I have stayed close with since the first week of classes freshman year. It is the friend I spend almost five hours catching up with when we only planned for a quick dinner. It’s the gang that decides to go play sand volleyball at Centennial for fun on a Friday evening and the hours of conversation sparked by classroom discussions. It’s Sonic runs, late-night study sessions, intense rounds of laser tag, and consolation when things aren’t going my way. It’s encouragement, love, and honesty whenever I need it, even when I don’t think I do. I am forever indebted to this community for pushing me to be a better person, scholar, and friend. Thank you, Honors.
A Professor’s Opinion:
A Look into the Fall 2018 Honors Seminar Opportunities

Dr. Boan: The Love Charm of Bombs: Love and Literature in World War II England

This class, much like Dr. Boan’s other classes, will be infused with art and culture. If there is one goal of Dr. Boan’s teaching career it is to share the beauty and depth of the world with his students. This specific seminar is focused specifically on London and “its unique place in the story of WWII.” He will also be teaching this class abroad this summer in London, so this coming Fall will be a challenge to set the context of the course without the actual places surrounding it. He will attempt to by teaching novels such as Graham Greene’s *The End of the Affair* and Ian McEwan’s *Atonement* from which the students will study the culture and people of these stories and also the authors of these stories, who portray the culture of this period just as much as the novels do. The specific details of the war and the literature of the time will provide authentic, rich imagery of WWII’s effect on British culture. On top of all of that, Dr. Boan has a greater goal for this seminar. He says, “Perhaps as a result of that quest, the students will have a lens through which to understand themselves a little better.”

Dr. Finch: Freedom and Justice for All: African-American Perspectives on Social Justice

This class comes at an interesting amidst the heated political climate, rising tensions between people of different backgrounds, and a call to all for equality and kindness. Dr. Finch is not only passionate about social justice and aforementioned issues, but she also has studied these issues for her schooling. She details her involvement and passion with this class, saying, “since freedom is at the core of my work, I immediately knew that I wanted to explore African-American perspectives on social justice with a course community. I’m inspired by students’ knowledge and desire to learn, especially in light of the recent amplified social justice movements, and I want to see what they learn and are inspired by when we think of African-American perspectives on social justice.” She hopes to inform and challenge the students in this seminar by studying the narratives of African Americans and their stories of the social justice movement. Her favorite novel from the class is *The Fire This Time*, which is a collection of tales told by various African American writers circling around the social justice issues with which they have encountered and interacted. She teaches this because she sees it as a necessity, saying, “I believe the more knowledgeable we can become about the range of experiences African Americans have when it comes to justice, the better we can be with recognizing narratives we amplify and marginalize in connection with their experiences.”

Dr. Pethel: Nashville Urban History and Digital Humanities

This course is right up Dr. Pethel’s alley--pun intended! After studying urban history alongside cultural history, women’s studies, and digital humanities, Dr. Pethel wrote a book called *Athens of the New South: College Life and Making Modern Nashville*. This novel parallels this class as they both explore the depths of Nashville’s historical architecture and culture and the hidden gem that is digital humanities. Dr. Pethel explains these opportunities well, saying, “This course will use online preservation, digital mapping, data mining, and geographic information systems to create a new understanding of Nashville.” Her work in this ever-growing, important field has lead to the start of Nashville sites, a digital project that combines her academic passions with public history. Nashville Sites will serve as a platform for the exploration of urban history and digital skills done in this class. Dr. Pethel is very excited; she says, “It is my hope that this course, and two available internships (for course credit, application required, 3900-level), will give the Honors Program at Belmont a new public platform through which to research, publish, and connect with the larger Nashville community.”
The end of the spring semester is a hectic time for any graduating senior, but for Honors seniors, this time means thesis presentations and project exhibitions. For Hope Siler, Katie Murdock, Lauren Weber, and Claire Dugan, April was the culmination of months of hard work in the Project LEAD track as they put on their “Force of Nature” art crawl and fundraiser.

The project centers around the need to educate the community about the improper disposal of radioactive waste. “We initially saw a John Oliver video about the present processes for handling nuclear waste and the future we’re facing,” Hope explained. “It inspired us to take this opportunity and address a terrifying issue we are all facing, especially in Tennessee.” With more than 71,000 tons of nuclear waste left sitting in reactors across the United States—not including hazardous nuclear by-products from other sources—the improper disposal of this waste is a shockingly prevalent issue we can all get behind.

The team chose an art crawl as the basis for their project because of the strong art scene in Nashville already; specifically, the event took place at the Converge Gallery in the Wedgewood-Houston neighborhood. In this way, Hope, who is herself a painter, and the other women “felt that art would be an excellent platform for these issues.” By connecting with local artists, such as Jason Hargrove, the fundraising event saw a great amount of foot traffic at opening night. A letter writing station, which was set up for visitors to right letters to Tennessee Senators and other government officials brought in 52 letters in support of finding a safer alternative to disposing of radioactive waste.

For those who missed the event and are curious on how else to get involved with this environmental issue, Hope said: “I would recommend doing your research extensively and contacting your representatives. Telling everyone you know about what is actually happening is one of the best methods. I know I plan on volunteering at Tennessee Environmental Council events and other events that focus on how we can help. With more research, I plan on volunteering at regional events with other organizations that focus on our safety and what we can do. Don Safer, our expert with the Radioactive Waste Education Project who was present answering questions at our event, can be reached at dsafer@comcast.net. He is happy to answer any questions as well!”
A NIGHT UNDER THE STARS | REMEMBERING THE HONORS FORMAL

Photos by Claire Kelly
Friday, April 13 was a night of celebration under the magical star-like lights of the Adventure Science Center’s Space Chase. Over one-hundred eager and well-dressed Honors students came out to dance the night away at the formal event hosted by HSC.

The night served as the perfect distraction from upcoming finals stress. The picture-perfect venue boasted a stunning view of the Nashville skyline, a sugar loaded dessert platter, and a refreshing selection of beverages. With plenty of room to dance, it wasn’t long before HSC Treasure, Steven Metrejean, and his expertly curated playlist helped everyone take control of their dance feet.

After weeks of planning, HSC was over the moon (pun intended) by the event’s success. Thank you to everyone who came and we hope to see even more of you next year!
STOCKHOLM CONT’D | SHORT STORY BY SYDNEY QUEEN,
PART 5 OF A SERIES

He’s gone back into our bedroom, now. I know him well enough to know he would never freeze me out, never send me to the couch. That’s the scary thing about James—even if he were going to divorce me tomorrow, he would love me tonight.

I sleep on the couch anyway. I would be an intruder in our bed.

I lie there, letting the blue flickers of the TV wash over my body. I stare at the ceiling, thinking I don’t want him to scare my friends or my family because it would complicate things, because they would try to drive a wedge between us. I’m not stupid, I know what a husband on antipsychs looks like. I know how everyone looks at us already, let alone how they would look at us then. But I read enough books to know that everyone looking at us would tear us apart, no matter how much we love each other now, no matter what we resolve as what we had come to call as III’s (Independent Intellectual Individuals).

But, oh, how I want him to scare me.

I need that thrill. I want the day he held that knife to my throat, I want that every day. I want pain, real pain, the kind of pain that would make this monotony of regular life a distant memory. I’ve been lied to, cheated somehow. I had thought that he was going to be my personal freak show and he turned out to be just another lonely boy.

When he decided to let me go, I picked up the knife and pointed it at him.

Playfully, of course. He got the joke. It was my playfulness that made him realize he didn’t have to threaten me. I could tell he liked it. We had been laying on his couch all day, not bothering with formalities, talking about things I was too ashamed to tell my best friends. Somewhere in that vulnerability I knew his knife wasn’t a real threat. He wasn’t going to kill me. He liked me, I could see it. I had made him like me.

I understood him.

I was only missing for twenty-four hours. No one knew I was gone; no one suspected a thing. That was what made it so easy afterwards, to inconspicuously label him as my new boyfriend and pretend we were something socially acceptable. He was the one who invented a story of how we met. We still tell it now, though we hardly need to. After meeting James, I tired of other friends. None of them understood.

Just so we’re clear, he said before he let me go, leaning forward, wrapping a finger in my curls for the first time, I know you’re going to come back. He eyed the knife in my hand with something like lust.

I know you know I’m going to come back.

In the morning, the TV is still on, because James knows I can’t stand silence. He’s in the kitchen, chopping up peppers. I blink away the blurred vision of the revived dreamer, rubbing the sleep out of my eyes, saying nothing about the fact that he shouldn’t have a weapon in his hands right now. It’s better that he does. No one else gets that, not even him.

My hands feel too smooth. I cross my arms on the back of the couch and lay my chin on my too-soft fists. His jaw is set to one side, his hair uncombed. He glances up at me with eyes so indifferent I feel the blood draining down to my toes and through the floor. I wish he would yell at me.

“Good morning, babe,” he says, his voice grating me like razor rash, like concrete tearing bare skin.

“Morning,” I mumble, my teeth gritting against each other and making me wince.

“Do you want an omelet?”

“No, I’m sorry. You’re right. Breakfast is for civilized people. What I meant was, do you want me to go back to college and kidnap you again?”

“James…”

“Don’t try to make it sound better than it is.” His voice cracks, but he’s shaking his head and looking at me like he’s interrogating me about a crime I’ve already been convicted of. An innocent slice of green pepper takes a pathetic final flight onto the hardwood. “Let’s go ahead and stop pretending that that didn’t happen. Let’s get it all out in the open, because I’ve been sitting here for nearly a decade now trying to reconcile my shame for it, and you’ve been getting off on it this whole damn time.” His free hand twitches a little, and he makes a fist the best he can and slams it on the counter. He’s not looking at me; the anger is at the hand. “Am I anywhere close to the truth here?”

The pills suddenly don’t seem to matter. I look down at my hands, the modest diamond on my wedding ring twinkling in the yellow lights of our apartment like Starry Night. My mind is being stretched and wound into Van Gogh’s swirls of sky. And it’s cracking like dried paint.

James slowly puts the knife down onto the cutting board,
gentle and tortuous, without a sound. He swings his hip around the counter and crosses the gap to the couch. He gets down on his knees in front of me, looking up at me. His eyes are emeralds, shattered. “I’ve been good to you, haven’t I?” he murmurs, putting a finger under my chin and looking back and forth between my eyes.

For a minute I think maybe his thoughts have increased again. I want him to talk to me like he used to, to ask me about my worst fears.

That’s what it was all about: fear. James took girls and asked them about their worst fears and they were always something stupid and predictable—like death or losing their boyfriends or cockroaches. Cockroaches! he’d scoffed. But when he asked me, and I told him what I was afraid of, he’d put his knife down, breathed a Me, too, that I’d barely heard but had never forgotten, kissed me, and never picked up the knife again.

I kiss him now, hoping he won’t feel the chill of my tears against his sullen cheeks, hoping saltwater doesn’t drain into our mouths, trying to remember what it was I’d said I was afraid of, wondering if I still am.

Raspberry Seeds In My Teeth

a poem by Alexa Jones

Remembering those moments with you, when
At first you were sweet, now
Stick in the crevices of my mind,
Poisoned by your hands on my skin,
By a green truck in a dark parking lot.
Every no I ever said, however silent,
Rotted under your meaningless promises to
Respect that part of me I could never get back.
You would just smile up at me and

Say, “Don’t you see what you do to me?”
Expecting me to let go,
Expecting me to be what I’m not.
Don’t you see what you did to me? How the
Sour taste of you stills taints my tongue?

I made a smoothie this morning, and there was still
No escaping you. Fresh raspberries with bright hints of

Mango. Tiny hand-held blender, not powerful enough, the
Yogurt stuck at the bottom. I scrape

Trying to salvage what’s left of me, my futile
Efforts to be the me before you.
Even now you cling, a bur beneath
The skin, where you’ll stay
Hidden away until I probe you, unwillingly, back to the surface.

Want to see you work in the Honors Newsletter? Send fiction, artwork, poetry, photography, or creative nonfiction to alexa.jones@pop.belmont.edu