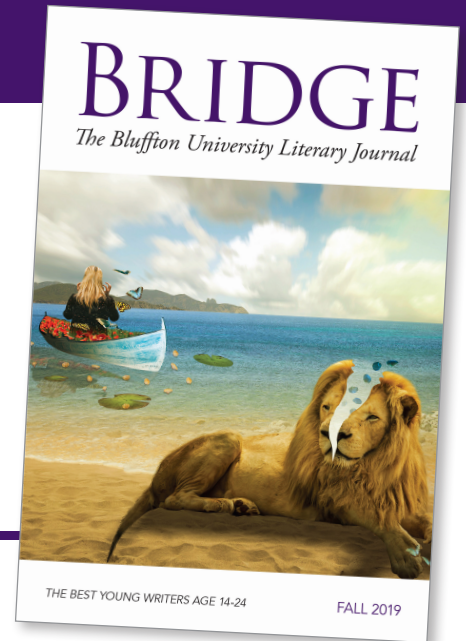


BRIDGE

The Bluffton University Literary Journal



WHILE DAD TAKES NAPS IN THE TRUCK

Liam Wholihan

we tell the desk clerk we're here
(& early this time) for our appointment
to refinance our father's salvation. We've paid
rivers worth of interest on the mortgage
already, Aidan and I even rehearsed our proof
in the truck's backseat: our father's credit
score runs syllables deeper & better now, almost all
his debts have apologized for troubling
us, for following us from living room to living
room as long as they have. There's been food even in
the back of the fridge for two years now,
even snack food, even fruit that risks rotting in a bowl—
we nearly believe in church again, but still need
to work sundays, we'd tell dad *thank you* if it meant enough.
Worst comes to, we're willing to swap a truckload of
his callouses for quarters, or pennies on his rising
with dawn and walking the day home at dusk. For each
dollop of sweat sewn into his brow, we want at least
a nickel, and a day off for everytime
he groans into or out of bed, smiling or no.
We know the tab, inch by cent, he's paid pensions worth
in sweat alone, by our count he's owed oceans
full, retirements worth of back pay. But we know you don't
have enough to cash us out today, so we'll take what you got.
Anything really, except another appointment.



LIAM WHOLIHAN

teaches martial arts, works as a handyman and plays the drums. His favorite place to play the drums is in Annapolis, Md. with his brother and father. He has been published in *Qualil Bell Magazine*, *Catch*, *Quiver* and *Cellar Door*.