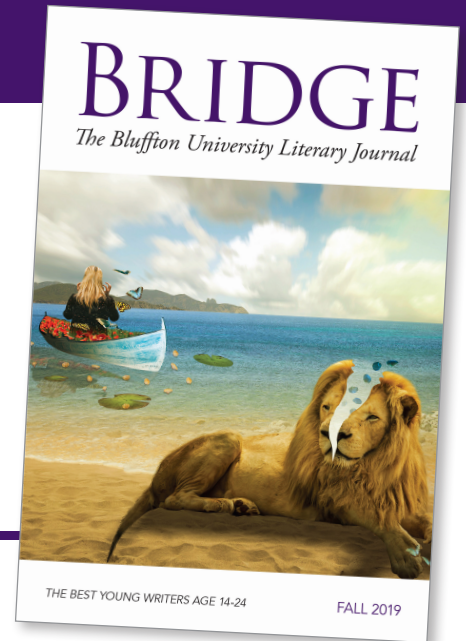


BRIDGE

The Bluffton University Literary Journal



PLEASE DON'T TOUCH MY SONNET

Shamon Williams

I don't always come into work or class with a new 'do,
but when I do, I always feel like some exotic pet.
Co-workers, classmates and company flock
to me like starved seagulls to soggy, salty fries, hands
itchin', fingers twitchin', questions pitchin' at me—
"Can I touch your hair?" "Is that a weaves?" "Do you wash it?"
When locs tumble from my scalp like weeping willow branches,
when a puff ball rests atop, a black hole absorbing sunlight, shea butter and bullshit,
when my 'fro rises like hands stretched in praise,
Please Don't Touch.
My braids are bands of sacred rivers woven together. My tresses are film strips,
holding stories of our past lives like urns holding ashes,
of our ancestors, of our spirit's songs and all that jazz. If you still want to touch,
think Medusa.



SHAMON WILLIAMS is an African American student at the University of Central Florida pursuing bachelor's degrees in psychology and English. When she isn't working, writing or napping, she partakes in acting, research, aerial dance or plays video games. She is currently working on a fiction novel and a children's book.

WHY'S IT ALWAYS ABOUT COLOR WITH YOU?

Shamon Williams

The closer the hand to the glowing lightbulb,
fatter the shadow puppet pressing the walls.

Where the sun hums, the eclipse follows faithfully.
Stars can't shine without darkness caressing their edges.

What becomes of white light pumped
through a prism? Can I take my blackness and do the reverse?

You should be asking
"How has your color affected you?"

Ask the strange fruit for their stories.
Ask the North Star if tolerance tastes like pennies.

Ask the boy who "whistled" at a white woman.
Ask the grey, bullet-holed hoodie holding skittles and AriZona.

Check America's pockets, pat her down and shake free her secrets
like a bully wanting a nerd's lunch money and shoot her still.