

From the Dean



Last year, in my introduction to Volume 4 of *The Quatrain*, the university and the nation were facing an unprecedented crisis with the reality of a pandemic and lockdown. The hope at that time was that the desperate situation would last for a relatively brief time and that by fall things would be returning to normal. That didn't happen. The restrictions, though loosening, are still with us but the number of deaths from Covid-19 has now reached over 500, 000, more than double the number first predicted. What I asked, at the end of that introduction,

focusing on a photograph of a tenebrous cityscape, entitled "from 'Life,'" was whether the disc that appeared above the earth was the image of a setting or rising sun. In many ways, I still don't know. The United States, after a highly divisive election, has a new President, but not until after a contentious summer of protests calling for "social justice," more mass shootings, and an insurrection of the Capitol on Jan. 6th, which shook our country to its core.

So I turn to Volume 5 for direction from our college students, those very people who will inherit both our problems and our promise. It seems to me that the young writers and artists for this volume, all students from Louisiana Tech, are also in a questioning mood—there are no absolutes, no certainties here. They write about occupying a liminal space—no longer, as Wordsworth suggests, in "thoughtless youth," but unsure what lies ahead. Madeleine Adams for instance, in her poem, "Jenny," states: "Seasons bring the change of new life, but I remain in the meld of mourning and celebration." Or Lauren Washington, meditating about the lost childhood attractions of Neverland, finds "Neverland gave me a chance at life again/By giving me a place to which I could get away." Annie Gremillion speaks for so many of these students in her story reflecting on her childhood home: "I'm eighteen years old, and things have changed. They're not my woods anymore. I've grown, and so have they. And I can never go back." Indeed, you cannot. However, my hope is that these students will discover what the protagonist in the story by Kristyn Hardy realizes: "And for one small moment in her life, Fallin was not afraid of tomorrow."

Donald P. Kaczvinsky

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald P. Kaczvinsky". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Donald Kaczvinsky
Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Louisiana Tech University