

## **BLACK HISTORY MONTH ART EXHIBITION:** Collages for Nella Larsen's Short Story, *Sanctuary*

Christine Chouinard, Erica Tapply, Samantha Canesi, Stephen Southerland, Kristyn Stock, Amelia B. Fountain, Skia Laurence, Joseph Thomas III, Jessica L. Senn, Christine Reale, and Sheli Petersen  
Department of Arts, Rivier College

# **Black History Month**

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## **“Sanctuary”** By Nella Larsen

In celebration of Black History Month, students from Professor Sheli Petersen's Illustration I and Editorial Illustration classes have created collages for Nella Larsen's short story, *Sanctuary*.

Larsen wrote during the Harlem Renaissance, creating deceptively simple pieces of writing such as *Sanctuary*. By accurately portraying unique aspects of African-American culture, Larsen poignantly touched on universal themes of human nature.

This story takes place during the early 20th century in the Deep South, and explores many issues, including race and justice. Annie Poole, an older but strong African-American woman, agrees to harbor a fugitive named Jim. He is running from the law because he has just shot a man. Annie agrees to hide Jim because he is a friend of her son, Obadiah.

While illustrating this story, the students were asked to focus on the personality of the characters, as well as the characters' reactions to the different events of the story as they unfold.

### **Artists:**

**Christine Chouinard, Erica Tapply, Samantha Canesi,  
Stephen Southerland, Kristyn Stock, Amelia B. Fountain,  
Skia Laurence, Joseph Thomas III**

Poster design: Jessica L. Senn • Copy-writing: Amelia B. Fountain



Artist:  
**Christine Chouinard**

In the forsaken road a man was walking swiftly.

But in spite of his hurry, at every step he set down his feet with infinite care, for the night was windless and the heavy silence intensified each sound;

**even the breaking of a twig could be plainly heard.**

And the man had need of caution as well as haste.

Excerpt from  
Nella Larsen's  
**"Sanctuary"**

Typography: Joseph Thomas III  
Artwork Photography: Christine Reale



Artist:  
**Erica Tapply**

**“Obadiah—”** the sheriff began—hesitated—began again.  
**“Obadiah—ah—er—he’s outside, Annie. I’m ’fraid—”**

**“Obadiah! git hyah an’ splain yose’f.”**

But Obadiah didn’t answer, didn’t come in...

Typography: Joseph Thomas III  
Artwork Photography: Christine Reale

Excerpt from  
Nella Larsen’s  
**“Sanctuary”**



Artist:  
**Samantha Canesi**

“Obadiah, he’d lemme stop ef he was home...”

**“Yas, I reckon he’d do et.  
Emspecial’ seein’ how he allus set such a heap  
o’ store by you. Cain’t see w’at foh, mahse’f.  
Ah shuah don’ see nuffin’ in you  
but a heap o’ dirt...”**

Excerpt from  
Nella Larsen’s  
**“Sanctuary”**

Typography: Joseph Thomas III  
Artwork Photography: Christine Reale



**Artist:**  
**Stephen Southerland**

**“Oh Lawd! Ah didn’t go to do et. Not Obadiah Lawd.  
You knows dat. You knows et.”**

“Oh Lawd!” he moaned, “Oh Lawd!” His thoughts were bitter and they ran through his mind like panic. He knew that it had come to pass as it said somewhere in the Bible about the wicked.

The Lord had stretched out his hand and smitten him.

He was paralyzed.

**Excerpt from  
Nella Larsen’s  
“Sanctuary”**

Typography: Joseph Thomas III  
Artwork Photography: Christine Reale



Artist:  
**Kristyn Stock**

“Obadiah, chile,” his mother said softly, “Obadiah, chile.”

Then, with sudden alarm, **“He ain’t daid, is he?  
Mistah Lowndes! Obadiah, he ain’t daid?”**

Jim Hammer didn’t catch the answer to that pleading question.

**A new fear was stealing over him.**

Excerpt from  
Nella Larsen’s  
**“Sanctuary”**

Typography: Joseph Thomas III  
Artwork Photography: Christine Reale



**Artist:**  
**Amelia B. Fountain**

She was a tiny, withered woman—

fifty perhaps

—with a wrinkled face the color of old copper,  
framed by a crinkly mass of white hair.

**But about her small figure was some quality  
of hardness that belied her appearance of frailty.**

Typography: Joseph Thomas III  
Artwork Photography: Christine Reale

Excerpt from  
Nella Larsen's  
**"Sanctuary"**



Artist:  
**Skia Laurence**

It seemed a long time before Obadiah's mother spoke.

**“Git outen mah feather baid, Jim  
Hammer, an’ outen mah house, an’  
don’t nevah stop thankin’ yo’ Jesus  
he done gib you dat black face.”**

Typography: Joseph Thomas III  
Artwork Photography: Elizabeth Hamblett

Excerpt from  
Nella Larsen's  
**“Sanctuary”**





**Artist:**  
**Joseph Thomas III**

There was a spasm at his heart, a pain so sharp,  
so slashing that he had to suppress an impulse to cry out.

**He felt himself falling.**

Down, down, down . . .

Everything grew dim and very distant in his memory . . .

Vanished . . .

**Came rushing back.**

Excerpt from  
Nella Larsen's  
"Sanctuary"

Typography: Joseph Thomas III  
Artwork Photography: Christine Reale

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**CHRISTINE CHOUINARD** (*artist*) is currently enrolled in the Fine Arts/Studio program at Rivier College as a part-time student. To her amazement Christine has recently advanced to the status of a senior with hopes to graduate in 2008. Her journey through the art world interminably enhances her personal growth as well as her view of the world which has become a tremendous part of Christine's existence.

**ERICA TAPPLY** (*artist*) is currently a graphic design major. She will be graduating with the B.A. degree in the spring of 2008. Erica enjoys creating illustrations as well as the design work that she does for her major. After graduation, she would like to continue with a job in the visual communication design field as well as working with the conceptualizing of ideas to create design work.

**SAMANTHA CANESI** (*artist*) is currently a Design major with a concentration in Illustration at Rivier College, but after her graduation she intends to go to Digipen to work towards an Animation degree. Samantha is really big on tradition cell animation, and hope to work for Studio Ghibli some day, but right now her art floats around on her website [www.nebthet.deviantart.com](http://www.nebthet.deviantart.com).

**STEPHEN SOUTHERLAND** (*artist*) is pursuing a B.F.A. in Graphic Design with a focus in Illustration. His first love is drawing, but he is also currently expanding his knowledge of different mediums, and has developed a newfound interest in oil painting. His plans for the future include illustration work for books, publications, and "basically any work that involves drawing."

**KRISTYN STOCK** (*artist*) is an illustration major in her junior year. She grew up surrounded by cartoons and books, and has always had a fondness for it. After watching films from Disney and Don Bluth's studios she made the decision to pursue art in college, and plans on becoming an animator after graduating.

**AMELIA B. FOUNTAIN** (*artist; copy-writing*) is a senior year Design major with a concentration in Illustration. She has designed and art-directed a community-painted mural on West Hollis Street in downtown Nashua, and is working on writing and illustrating a graphic novel. Amelia hopes to do freelance illustration jobs in the future, and write and illustrate her own work on the side.

**SKIA LAURENCE** (*artist*) has spent most of her life traveling and living in different places. Her father was a career naval officer and, before Skia injured her back, she was an archaeologist which involved even more travel. After her injury, she worked as a technical writer until her daughter finished college. Skia moved to Massachusetts in 1998, living in Lowell and Arlington, before falling in love and buying an old fixer-upper in Chelmsford a couple Christmases ago. Her piece exhibited at the Black Month Art Exhibition was done for Sheli Petersen's Illustration I class. It struck a special chord with Skia, because in this assignment students were encouraged to promote exactly the same kind of cross-cultural understanding she had been working for when Skia was active in archaeology. She came to Rivier College as a non-traditional student, searching for the next chapter in her life. Skia is very gratified by the attention this piece is getting. It makes her realize that, despite her limitations, there is a core piece of who she is that has not been lost – Skia is just expressing it in a new way.

**JOSEPH THOMAS III** (*artist; typography*) is a senior college student of design with a focus on illustration. To date he has had experience in the business world including but not limited to designing a visual identity for a charity organization, interning in a experiential advertising agency and participating in a community mural project in which he designed and directed the painting of the mural. In his free time, Joseph likes to work out at a gym, play his PS2, read historical biographies and homebrew his own ales and lagers.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH ART EXHIBITION

**JESSICA L. SENN** (*poster design*) is a Senior majoring in Design with a concentration in Graphic Design. She enjoys typography-based art work. Jessica has designed the Visual Identities for Mine Falls Park in Nashua and Presentation of Mary Academy High School in Methuen, MA. She plans to work in designing movie posters or possibly opening up a design firm with a couple of friends.

**CHRISTINE REALE** (*artwork photography*) is a senior studying for a B.F.A. with a concentration in Photography and currently working on a series of black and white images portraying the emotional and psychological state of the individual. Her future plans include further education and working in the photographic field of a documentary nature.

**SHELI PETERSEN** (*instructor*) is an Associate Professor of Art at Rivier College. She is also a published children's book author of several books including *Voladores*, written by Patricia Petersen and published by McGraw-Hill, and *Gigi and the Birthday Ring*, written by Giselle Fernandez and published by Renaissance House. Sheli is the recipient of the Children's Choice Award, the Society of Children's Books Writers and Illustrators Most Professional Portfolio Presentation Award, and the Savannah College of Art and Design International Art Award.