



**Aquinas Scholars**  
HONORS PROGRAM

*The*

# SCHOLARS JOURNAL

november 2023

## SCHOLARS LLC AT THE GUTHRIE



This month, the Aquinas Scholars LLC joined Professor Craft-Fairchild at the Guthrie for the production of “For the People.”

On November 1st, scholars joined the social chairs for a relaxing night of coloring.

## FEATURED

## *Coloring and Cider*

### Scholars Community - p.1

- Meet Dr. Smeltekop
- Tommie Award Nominees

### Scholars Journal - p. 2-7

- “Everything that has legs walks or runs”
- “Abecedarian Poem”
- “Glory”
- “What Girlhood Is”
- “The Reluctance of Compassion”
- “Experiences Abroad”

### Board Contact - p.8



## MEET DR. SMELTEKOP!



Dr. Hugh Smeltekop got involved with an honors program by mistake: when signing up for first-year classes at Michigan State University, the only open English class was an honors section. He loved the class and has been a fan of honors programs ever since.

Dr. Smeltekop studied microbiology and German at Michigan State, then served in the U.S. Peace Corps in Benin for two years. That experience really opened up his eyes to what education can be. He shared, "I learned that transformative teaching and learning happens in the context of relationships of trust. Technological knowledge isn't divorced from history and culture. And education is about changing how we view the world." This experience convinced him that his calling was creating opportunities for transformative education.

After the Peace Corps, Dr. Smeltekop studied agronomy at South Dakota State University and spent the next decade at a rural university in Bolivia, working with a radical Franciscan nun. He explains, "Sister Damon told us, 'Your most important job here isn't teaching, or writing grants, or anything like that. It's witness. It's listening to the students in our care, and showing them that you value them and their stories and their lives. You're not here to solve people's problems. People generally know how to solve their own problems.'" Dr. Smeltekop became part of a community dedicated to the common good.

After running a non-profit and teaching microbiology at the University of St. Catherine, Dr. Smeltekop came to St. Thomas in 2019 to run a program that supports equity and inclusion in STEM fields, then was hired this year to support scholar programs and teach in the College of Arts and Sciences. He is inspired by the sense of community in the Aquinas Scholars Honors Program at St. Thomas, and the sense of care for each other and the earth, and looks forward to continuing on the path of involvement, intellect, and impact that marks Dr. Eric Fort's vision.



## SCHOLARS NOMINATED FOR 2023 TOMMIE AWARD



*Abby  
Kielty*



*Megan  
Kimball*



*Macy  
Meilahn-Kinard*

Congratulations to seven of our Aquinas Scholars on being nominated for the 2023 Tommie Award. The Tommie Award is awarded each spring to a senior who, according to UST students, faculty, and staff, best represents the ideals of St. Thomas Aquinas through scholarship, leadership, and campus involvement. Preliminary voting will take place December 5th through the 7th.



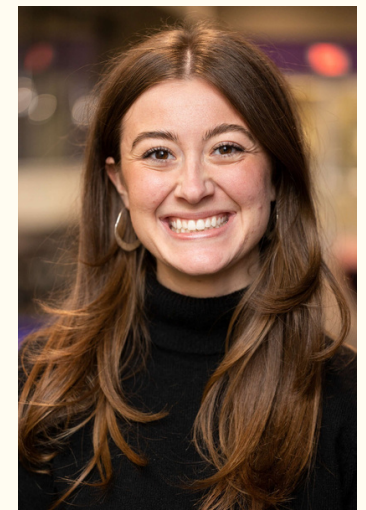
*Ellie  
Patronas*



*Carson  
Pehler*



*Gracelyn  
Riedel*



*Annabel  
Schueneman*



## EVERYTHING THAT HAS LEGS WALKS OR RUNS

*Alex Frimanslund*

I've given you everything my heart has left to give  
And I hope that you, your soul has not traveled so far away  
But if it is, and it's so gone, that you may never know  
When I am near  
Then please just understand...

That when I say that I'm so tough and harder off than most  
I really mean I'm condescending, don't like to buy new clothes  
And if you think that maybe I could be better off without that classic pose  
You only need to object  
But please just understand...

If you could never get behind a talking fantasy  
That means you live your life in strict logic, never even dropped a single knee  
But just imagine the things that would come from cleaning out your truth  
You'd be so new  
And so just please understand...me  
Please understand ... me  
Please understand ... me

Let me lay your ego towards the far distant past  
The things you draw in solitude are kept in mad hatter's far off land  
And as you contemplate the soldiers you commend  
They are so brave  
They are so brave

I've heard a company of travelers speaking their rumored thoughts  
I've heard when you were scared, you dried up, and kept carrying on  
I know you might've cared but you just couldn't speak up  
Without any luck  
So will you ever understand ... me?

They can carry on the sounds of their dainty silver bells  
Like thunderous applause ultimately awaiting the new chorale  
But you've spent the night watching for the sky to clear up  
As I just keep shouting to you I'm not gone

For if you are on your last breath what will you say  
I'm standing right above you hoping you'll return to me  
The time could stop, and arrows rot, and all the knowledge wanes  
I'll still be there  
If you just understand ... me

Dat deus incrementum

## ABECEDARIAN POEM

*Allison Shore*

Around here, the common currency is dealt in whispers  
Strangling our words into something conspiratorial  
Leaving rationality behind, because the quiet  
Teases out a different meaning

Gone are the days of easy laughter  
Rallying us to a common purpose  
Encroaching is the silence sinking in gravity  
You know your every word is marked

Drifting apart isn't an apt description  
Not when there's a motive made public  
Cowardice dresses in a self-righteous cloak  
Keeping its carnal voice low

## GLORY

*Jeffrey Davlin*

When wistful wind whispers  
What wonders which were.  
Once we would woo war and win.

Faded fate finally,  
Fabled far-fall.  
Sunsets so splendid still sin.

## WHAT GIRLHOOD IS

*Ella Drzadinski*

Mom braiding my hair  
Sneaking swipes of her lipstick  
Wobbling in her heels  
Giggling and holding hands and smiling so hard my cheeks ache.

Sitting in the principal's office, head hanging.  
Pulled out of mass at *ten years old*  
for wearing leggings, because I was distracting  
my classmates from their *journey with the lord*.

Slumber parties, nightgowns, jumping on the bed,  
late nights and whispered secrets.  
Hearts at rest amongst the pillows.

Collapsing into my Dad's arms,  
running in the park with my brother.  
But mom pulls me behind her  
walking by the man sitting on the curb.

I lock eyes with him. He grins,  
I shrink back further.  
Hanging my head, I keep walking.



## THE RELUCTANCE OF COMPASSION

*Victoria Kurdyumov*

Must I explain myself any further?

For it seems that I am feared. This is a contradictory paradox; to protest is to show that I am bothered, to remain silent implies I am too afraid. I instead have to speak at frequencies slightly beyond the range of hearing, merely alluding to thoughts, ideas, emotions. Perhaps my tone is just a product of my personality, a relatively inhibited individual with insomnia. Yet such a style appears forced upon me, unnatural language hinging on pseudo-intellectual rambling.

How, then, can I possibly explain myself? To demonstrate that my humanity is rooted in an aching chest while the October sky burns blue? I do not believe this task can be accomplished: if I am already perceived as a collection of politics, then my very soul is debatable. I cannot mathematically prove that I feel a unique type of pain, one that is exacerbated by limp, vague gestures of condolences.

I begin to question my duty to embody kindness. An anger so far contained emerges from a mind unrecognized. I cannot love my enemies if they wish me dead—empathy is quite limited from the grave. But these notions are violent, antithetical to ethics, to rationality, to compassion. I want to fully embrace that the ends do not always justify the means, but my self-preservation screams that I am a fool for accepting my given station. That is, I dislike casting metaphorical buckets from where I am told I ought to be.

Do you understand my dilemma now? My resentment? For it seems that I am not allowed to speak as freely as others. I am feared for my success, for my resilience, for my power. I do not wish to frighten anyone with my presence. Still, I must write somehow.



## EXPERIENCES ABROAD

*Ellie Lange*



This is a photo from my semester abroad in Vienna. As a part of the music program, we visited several historical music sites across Austria, including Haydn's birthplace and, as pictured here, the Esterhazy Palace. Being able to visit these sites after learning about them in my music classes at St. Thomas was a surreal experience. I highly recommend studying abroad if you are able to, as I believe it is one of the best things you can do for yourself and for your education.



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p. 8



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