

The Purple Patch



Missouri Valley College

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The Purple Patch

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Letter from the Editor

As this year's Editor of *The Purple Patch*, I am looking at all the pieces that Valley brings together. Missouri Valley College has a unique way of bringing the diverse student population together into one tradition. Like the cards on the front cover, each person at Valley represents a different face. This year's Purple Patch embodies that uniqueness and the differences that students from Valley bring together. Each poem, photo, and story represents a piece of what Valley has to offer. This is the reason that the first picture in *The Purple Patch* is of Baity Hall. Baity Hall not only stands as our college's oldest landmark, but as one of the pillars for the tradition Missouri Valley shares.

I would like to take a moment and thank my staff, without you this would not have been possible. We are small and our work mighty, but we accomplished all we set out to do. This year's issue would not be complete without each of you. Lending that extra hand, I would also like to thank our sponsor Dr. Eimers. You have provided a listening ear and guiding knowledge when we have needed it. To all the students who contributed to this year's edition: whether you were published or not, your submission and effort helped in the preparation of this issue. We deeply appreciate your support.

This year has been challenging yet rewarding, and I appreciate the opportunity of being your editor.

Sincerely, Lorin Blackburn

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An Insight: MOVAL and Mother Nature

by Rosa L. Guevara Surco



Thunder

by R. Galen Tyne

Thunder boomed and lightning stippled across the sky, threatening to give away his position, as rain in thick heavy drops pelted the top of his helmet. How did the world ever get this mad, he wondered, as sudden, rapid gunfire whirred around him followed by screams of agony from fellow soldiers having been hit. He was safe though, hidden behind a small brick shed just around the corner from where the battle was raging. The war was not going well for them, he thought, as another crackle of thunder roared across the sky, quickly reminding him of how the thunder always helped put him at ease. Ever since he was a kid in that rinky-dink town of Hanover it always seemed to whisper to him, “it’s okay, lay your head to rest, forget your troubles and be at ease.” But that was then. Right now, the only thing that was whispering to him was the little voice in the back of his head telling him to run.

He never wanted to be a soldier; it was just sort of thrust upon him. The war between the Empire and rebelling forces has been going on for years, even before he was born. It was told that in the days of old this country used to be free... a country in which people governed themselves. He would have liked to see that, a country where brotherhood and fellowship weren’t submerged in blood and the chaos of war.

“Take cover!” a voice called from somewhere in the dark.

BOOM! A grenade went off by the old hospital. He peeked around the corner of the shed and thought he saw one of “them” in the window. Nothing seemed to make sense anymore. When they were teaching him how to fight, they told him that war was simply people shooting at each other a bit and when all of the people on one side were dead...the other side won. But that was not how it was. It was not as simple as just “go out and kill the enemy.” Every commander was doing something different with every battle. Every single leader they had was using different tactics and strategies and had the soldiers pushing in every direction. No, killing “them” was not so easy. “They” had the mighty war machine on their side, a whole world of weapons at their disposal against a small group of people who had to make their own, and camouflage themselves to use them.

“Help!” a voice shouted.

He looked around but did not see anyone at first, but then he looked over by a small barricade off to his right and saw a man screaming, holding his stomach. Was it one of “them” or one of “us?” he asked himself. He hesitated a moment and then decided he would check, regardless. He looked around both sides of the shed to see if it was safe to go, then darted over to the barricade and knelt beside the soldier. It was difficult for him to bear, seeing the blood rushing out of the man’s gut and oozing out of his mouth

while tears were streaming down his cheeks. The man looked at him and grabbed his arm.

“Help me,” he pleaded. “I don’t want to die.”

It was too late though. The wound was fatal. He knelt, grabbed the man’s hand, and then prayed over him: “Dear LORD, please have mercy on this poor man’s soul...let him into Heaven...please comfort his family...assure them that he is in a better place...and that he loved them.” Then he rose to his feet, took one-step back, pulled his revolver and pointed it at the man’s head, and pulled the trigger. He wasn’t able to tell if it was one of “them” or not, but it didn’t matter. He didn’t think anybody should suffer like that, and when it came his time, he was hoping someone would show him the same mercy.

He then heard a little unknown voice inside his head laughing at him, telling him, “I’m going to make a killer out of you yet, Boy!” He dropped his pistol and ran. He ran as fast as he could despite the tears running down his face from the guilt of what he had just done. He had to get back to headquarters at the old liquor store downtown. He had to re-group. He had to try to get his thoughts together, but he thought it also important to tell the commander what was going on; at least that was what he told himself. Deep down he just knew he had to get away from the fighting for a while. Bullets began whizzing around him, as the sound of never ending gunfire echoed through the air, wanting to drive him mad. The intensity of it was like a tremendous weight on his shoulders

urging him to kill as many of “them” as possible, but he could not...would not...not anymore.

The commander had always spoken so badly about “them.” He would tell stories of how people used to be able to think for themselves...to decide their own destinies, but then “they” came along. Those who were power hungry and corrupt...those who thought they knew what was better for you than you did...those who decided that “they” had the power to play God with so many people’s lives...those who took it upon themselves to tell everybody what they could eat, where they could sleep, and with whom they could sleep...the same people who decided they could even tell people what to think. The commander always tried to convince them that “they” were bad people, but he never believed that. There was some good in everybody, there had to be, he thought. “They” were just people fighting for different reasons.

When he got to headquarters, he burst through the door panting, gasping for air, “Private Ralf Bellever reporting, sir.” Then he fell to his knees.

“Come up here and sit down, private.” A burly looking old man in his sixties with brightly lit hair and thick eyebrows lifted him to his feet and set him in a chair at a small, square wooden table. “Catch your breath and then tell me what’s going on.” He looked at another soldier in the room. “Fetch some water for this boy,” he commanded, and then turned his attention to Ralf. “Tell me what’s going on out there.”

“I don’t know sir,” he shook his head. “I think we are losing.”

“Where is Private Grouter?”

“I don’t know sir.” He took the cup from the other soldier’s hand and drank.

“What about Robinson?” the commander asked, as Ralf shook his head. “Jenkins...Prescott...any of them?”

“I don’t know sir,” he set the cup down. “I honestly don’t know. It’s as if I can’t tell the difference between “them” and “us.” He watched as the commander motioned for the other soldier to come over to the table.

“Yes, sir,” the soldier responded.

“Have you heard anything from the troupes out there?”

“No, sir,” the other acknowledged.

“Huh.” The commander scratched his scraggly beard. “We will have to assume they are lost.”

“I could radio and get a chopper out there to look for them,” the soldier offered.

“No, that wouldn’t do any good. We already have too much attention drawn to us. Our choppers wouldn’t even make it off the ground before they were detected and destroyed. He looked at Ralf, “How are you feeling son? Are you ready to get back out there?”

“What do you need me to do, sir?” He stood and saluted.

“Recon,” the commander told him. “I need you to get back out there and find our troupes. Be stealthy. Try not to let the enemy know that you are out there. Don’t fire unless fired upon—this is a mission of recon only. Your job now is to find our people and get them back here, got it?”

“Yes, sir,” he nodded, and then headed back into the death trap. The air seemed to have gotten thicker. A dense fog was settling in as the rain died down to a light mist. What was he thinking, volunteering for this mission? Did he not run from the battle in the first place? He didn’t want to fight anymore, all he wanted was to see his family...his mother, father, and brother. He hadn’t seen them since the battle of O’Fallen. Were they even still alive?

Once again, the bullets began hissing around his head. He couldn’t think about that now though, he had to concentrate on his mission, “RECON... RECON ... RECON,” he chanted. The shots continued as he noticed the shooter standing in the second story window of an old, abandoned house. Lousy shot, he thought, as he ducked behind a large elm and fired back. Then he felt blood drizzling from his left arm. In anger, he charged, shooting, putting all of his spirit into every shot while screaming, “AAAAAH!” until he saw the man fall.

He felt good about that kill. In fact, it was the only kill he had ever felt good about. Now all he had to do was to get someplace safe so that he could tend to his wound, and then get back to recon. He ran into the house where the man was, careful to make sure nobody else was there. He climbed the stairs slowly, anticipating another assault, until he reached the room where the man he killed was. His face was torn and broken, blood covered as though it had been shot off.

Then he looked around the room and noticed a single sleeper cot in the middle of the floor surrounded by pictures of a mother, father, and their two sons. His heart sank and tears began rolling down his cheeks. He quickly began searching the soldier trying to find some type of identification, but all he found was a letter, which read:

Dear Father, I write you in spite of these years of silence. I am sorry I left. I just couldn't take the changes we were making, not just as a family, but also as a country. Tell Mom I love her and I regret all the time that I did not spend with her, and last of all tell Ralf that I love him and I couldn't have asked for a better brother.

Your beloved son,

Private

Gregory Bellever

He cried. He cried so hard he could not feel his eyes. He fell over his brother, screaming and wailing, cursing not only himself, but also the war, the government, and all of the destruction “they” brought. “They” have destroyed towns, killed people, and driven families apart. He now realized who “they” were. Then, he felt a sharp pain shoot through his back, “I’ve been shot,” he mumbled as he rolled on his back and looked at his brother. Greg was at peace now, and soon he would be too, he thought, finally understanding how cruel war truly was. Then, his world began to fade as the rain once again began to pour and lightning streaked across the sky and thunder whispered to him, “it’s okay, lay your head to rest, forget your troubles and be at ease.”

Elementals

by Amy Huff

Fire, restless and engulfing

Burns

Water, pure and fleeting

Exhumes

Earth, rough and distrusting

Crumbles

Wind, timeless and hurrying

Breathes

These, as such are

Yours to know,

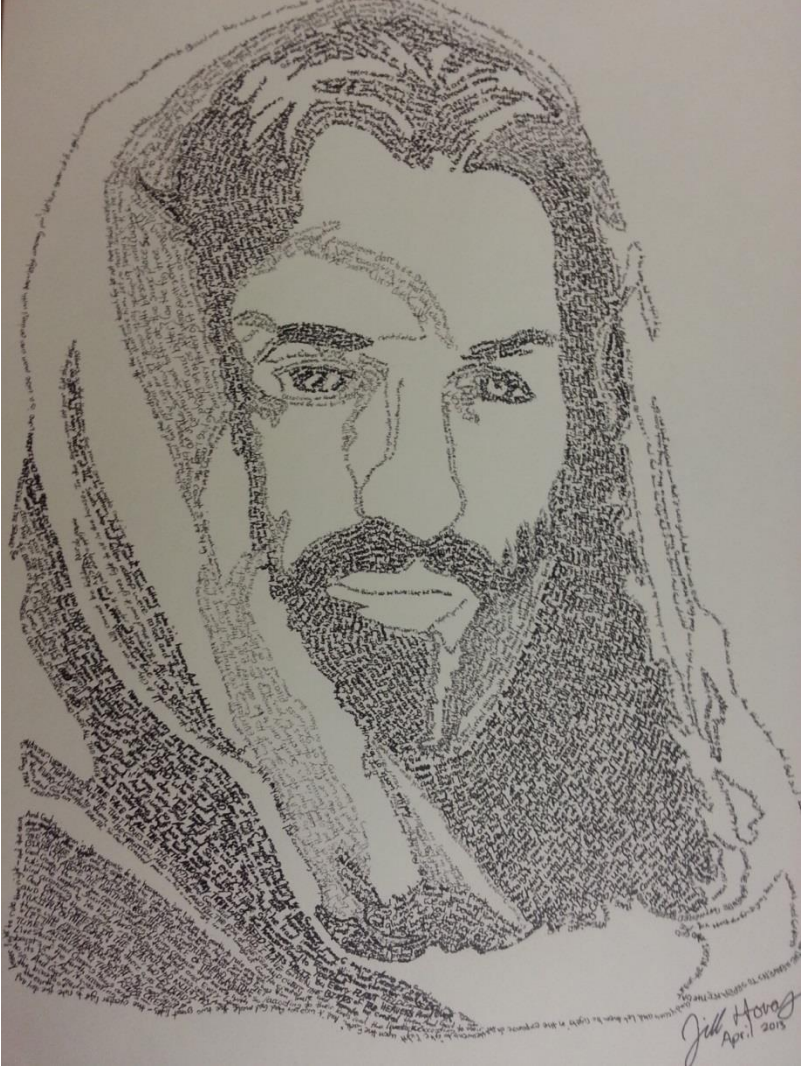
To feel, to touch

Careful, for these are

All simply dust.

Jesus

by Jill Hovey



Freedom

by Christina Bautista

As children, we fear the monsters that hide deep within our closets and underneath our beds. We follow a routine every night. Flicker the lights three times, bang against the closet door, and check beneath the bed. This is what we're told to do to "scare" the monsters away. But monsters are usually outside of us. So what do you do when it's inside of you; when it's actually you?

I couldn't recognize the face that stared back at me in the mirror. Her eyes were dark, almost black like night. They were empty and soulless. Her skin was pale white, almost like a ghost. Her black hair framed her face ever so nicely, yet resembled that of a raven's feather. She held no smile. She wasn't me, was she? There, she held something metal in her hand. I recognized it, but didn't accept it. I would never do this. This person, this *monster* wasn't me.

"You deserve this," she coldly said. Her eyes narrowed and the gaze burned a hole inside me. "No one would care what happened to you. *No one!*"

I shook my head and began to cry. I tried to speak; my voice trembled. "You don't know that!"

A grin began to creep on her face. It held wickedness. “They told you that you were worthless. You don’t belong in this world. All those people, they hate you. They want you dead... and you want it to.”

“No! *Please Stop!*” There were freshly made cuts covering my arms in all directions. Blood began to drip to the floor. Did I do this? No, I would never. *She* did this.

“Admit it, Emily. Every day they beat you, telling you that you’re nothing—a piece of shit. And you believe them. So let me help you end this. Let me set you free.” Her voice was harsh, almost as if she were commanding me. I began to tremble, feeling my legs starting to fold underneath me.

I pleaded, begging for her to go away. This monster was the worst one of all; a demon. Her wicked thoughts began to fill my head. They were loud, screaming inside of me. I looked at the gun resting in my hand. It taunted me, begging me to pull the trigger. “End the suffering,” she whispered. “Let me set you free.”

In that moment, time stopped. I took a breath, my last breath, and laughed. “I want this,” I cried. “I want to be free.” I took the gun and placed it on my temple, begging for forgiveness. And in that moment...I was free.

Power

by Caitlin C. Postoak



Bodegon Frutas

by Christian Poveda



Students Learn From Disability Struggles of Others

by Phillip Fowler

Many students at Missouri Valley College have been positively influenced by someone they know living with a disability.

According to A.D.A.M. Medical Encyclopedia, muscular dystrophy is defined as "a group of inherited disorders, that involve muscle weakness and loss of muscle tissue, which gets worse over time." Some people know the disease, often referred to as MD, because of famous supporters such as Jerry Lewis and Ray Romano. Others are more familiar with the illness because of the personal effects it has had on them.

I personally have been affected by muscular dystrophy. When I was nine, I had the feeling that something wasn't right with my 10-year-old brother. He could never keep up with me whether we were playing basketball, or just picking up our room. Sometimes it would take him double the time to take a shower than it would anyone else.

My ignorance often led to me complaining that he could never keep up with me when we were out. At that point, my parents decided we needed to have a talk. That's when they told

me my brother had a disease that affected him by taking away the muscles he needed to walk correctly.

A few years later I started going to my brother's doctor appointments with him. I was often the only one available to push him around in his wheelchair. At one of the appointments, the doctor told me a something that still affects me to this day. I not only learned that my brother's illness would get worse as he got older, but was also told that muscular dystrophy would eventually take his life.

Learning that my brother would be in a wheelchair for the rest of his life is painful, but knowing that a condition he did not chose to have would be to blame for taking his life is too much to describe. The reason why I'm able to overcome the difficulties that life gives me is solely because of my brother. The hard fact that he'll never have the opportunities that most people take for granted is my motivation to succeed in life.

Because of my brother's condition, my goal in life is to find a way to create equal opportunity for those who are disabled and have no control over the position they are in. Sherri J. Sellini, an Exercise Science major at Missouri Valley, also has a brother with an unfair illness that is potentially life threatening.

Myelomeningocele, most commonly referred to as spina bifida, is a birth defect in which the backbone and spinal canal do not close up before birth. Up until the age of two, Sherri's little

brother was very fragile. Some family members were not allowed the simple pleasure of picking him up at all.

Like me, Sherri was shocked to find out that her brother was born a birth defect. As she got older, the shock wore off and would eventually be replaced with a sense of purpose.

The disability that Sherri's brother was born with has made her more understanding in regard to those living with a disability. As her brother's keeper, she was the one to help with everyday tasks like assisting him to the car and getting him into bed.

She said that in the future, she wants to work with people who are disadvantaged because of the everyday struggle she witnessed her brother endure. She said it has made her more aware of the challenges that come up with being disabled.

Physical conditions such as spina bifida and MD are not the only diseases that have affected the loved ones of MVC students.

Destinee Quinn, an Interdisciplinary Studies major, has a cousin with autism. When she was initially told the news, Destinee said she was shocked but admitted that there were a number of signs that showed that something was different about him.

She said she noticed certain mannerisms, such as a lack of desire to socialize and his lack of affection. These were small signs that led Destinee to believe something was special about her relative.

Later when Destinee was in college and it came time to choose a career path, she decided to major in special education

because she has a lot of patience with children. Her cousin's disability initiated her curiosity in autism and ultimately led to her special passion for those children who need a little more attention than others.

Most people view being handicapped as a stigma that disadvantaged people hold. The other side of the scale would say that a disability can also be the motivation that someone needs.

Students at Missouri Valley College have been influenced by someone with a disability in a variety of ways, from helping with their career paths to becoming more empathetic.

While society's outlook on being physically or mentally handicapped is becoming more supportive all the time, some individuals can turn their own struggles or the challenges of others into an incentive for impacting society by opening new doors that are currently closed to the less fortunate.

Encompassed

by Lorin Blackburn



Listen

by Taylor Peecksen

Can you hear the trees?

They're speaking to you

Whispering secret words

of wisdom.

When the wind blows through

The trees are practically

Shouting

Screaming

I hear them constantly

I know their voices

Do you?

Do you know what they're

whispering to you?

Do you know all their secrets?

All their lies?

You should

But you don't.

You don't want to listen

Don't want to learn

I can hear the trees.

You would too

If you would only

Listen.

The Glow

by Zachary Lee



Malala

by **Mathilde Meyenberg**

It tears through the cavity of my chest
One shot from heaven ends your life at last
She is drowning in blood and we don't want to be blind
But we don't want to believe that hate controls their mind.

She was raising her voice, yelling what's going wrong
If we would look we could see we have waited too long
Her enemies are blinded by their sick hate
Bombs, tanks, and shotguns are their weapons of fate.

There will be a revolution bringing changes from scratch
Let hope rise up for the people to catch
The vast majority already dug up their lies
Let's just end this war before every soul dies!
Destroy the weapons, children continue to scream
You would cry too if you had seen what they've seen.

It tears through the cavity of my chest
One shot from heaven ends your life at last
She is drowning in blood and we don't want to be blind
But we don't want to believe that hate controls their mind.

Still she is raising her voice, by all means won the fight
It remains to be seen if she wins the struggle for life
I admire your strength, I'm amazed by your grit
Please don't give up on the light of hope that you lit.

I do pray and do hope that you will awake
Won't lose your lovely mind, let it not be too late
Witness the light of hope illuminate the sky
So your love can be seen in the darkest of nights.

Let it not be vain hope
Please let it not fall through
After all that you did
Even I call "God Bless You!"

Café

by Christian Poveda



Star

by Caitlin Postoak



The Innocent

by Christina Bautista

Sky painted in blood
Do you hear their cry?
Mother Mary save them
The sweet innocent

Death looks away
They beg for life
Never to be born
Free from this world

Bloody man
Open your ears
Our children scream
Deep within in the womb

Their hands take lives
Selfish mothers
Listen to the sound
Of an unbeaten heart.

I.

by **Joshua Tag**

I look at the people strolling along
and think reflectively.
I spy a couple passing by,
What if I were he?

If I were he and he was me
Could I see that he could be me?
Would we pause, and
Acknowledge subliminally?

Would that beautiful girl
Be with me if I was he?
We might be completely free
Or married... or both, you see.

Were he and I switched at birth
and grew up unknowingly,
This random world surely
Would've guided us separately.

Yet what if that's not the case
And fate works purposefully?
We could toss aside worry
And embrace what we will be.

I look behind as they pass
And wonder, as so does he
A soft smile upon his face
His eyes connecting... knowingly.

Up

by Caitlin Postoak



The Food in My Father's Life

by Gabriel Souza Santos

Food changed my father's life for the better. My father's name is Jose and he is from Brazil, he was born in a little town that is called Borda da Mata, but not really a little town; he was born on a little farm far away from this town, about ten, twelve miles away. So, he was so far from the city you must realize that he was born in a poor family. His family had no money to buy things, and they had just a little money to buy food. Not satisfied with that, my father's family moved to town, but they let my father continue living with his grandmother on the farm. My father never complained about anything, but when he was a little kid he started to work on coffee plantations. He used to tell me that in the morning, the breakfast his grandma just made was weak coffee for him to drink and nothing more; no breads, no cakes, nothing. So he went to work, from six o'clock until the midday and back home for lunch. But when he arrived to lunch there was less than enough to eat.

There was usually a little rice, some beans and some vegetables, and if he wanted to eat some kind of meat, he needed to hunt and kill some chicken or a pigeon in the woods. To drink, there was just water, always water. After lunch he went back to work until almost four in the afternoon. Since he worked during

the day, he just had the night to study, so his grandma prepared him a bag with some fruit for him to eat on way to school, between classes and on the way back home. My father told me that he did this for almost eight years of his life, but it was not a good life for one person, so my father decided to move himself to town to find a job and earn more money.

When he arrived in the town, he found a job in a snack bar. That for him was the most amazing thing that could happen to him. So he started to work in the snack bar, and the way my father ate changed completely. Now he had three meals a day, and they were “true” meals. Now for breakfast he could eat a piece of bread, drink a strong coffee. At lunch he can eat rice, beans, vegetables and some kind of meat. This snack bar is recognized even today because it has the most delicious sandwich of bread and meat of the town. And, for dinner my father had money to buy that sandwich.

Time passed. My father started work in a bank as a security guard and never left his studies aside. He started to earn more money; he rented a house and once more, the way he ate changed, always for the better. Now he could go in a restaurant every day to eat lunch and dinner. The breakfast was in the bank because the banks always offer a breakfast for their workers. And everybody knows it is really good to eat in a restaurant because you have many options and can choose whatever you want. But working in security was not enough for my father. He worked hard and started

to work inside the bank, cleaning, and after cleaning, (like a helping customer) he was attending people who needed help in the bank. Afterwards he became sub-manager and eventually reached the bank's management. During these years of hard work, he met my mother, and they started to date and got married.

One more change in my father's life: now he was married and had my mother, the person I know who knows the most about cooking. I am sure that they love each other, but believe me, one of the things that caused that was the way that my mother cooks. When they got married things were hard still, but time changes everything. My father started to earn more money; he bought a car and his own home. Now my father has everything he always deserved: a home, a wife, a car and all the food that he can buy. Now he wants to give my mother, my sister and me all the things that he never had when he was a child. Every day at my home for breakfast we have breads, cakes, coffee, and milk. At lunch and dinner we have rice, beans, pasta, meat (each day one kind), and vegetables. We drink all kinds of drinks now: coffee, milk, water, soft drinks, juices, beer and whiskey. My father had a very difficult childhood, and now he appreciates everything achieved during life. He knew what starving is, and no one deserves that. The need of food changed my father's life in a way that he never thought possible.

Reflection

by Zachary Lee



Imagine

by Nancy Hendrick

Imagine the flower
garden,

Each flower identical,

The same in their perfection,

Only one color,

One size,

One narrow

Path

of

Conformity.

I Hear Crickets Chirping

by Taylor Peecksen

I hear crickets chirping
The sound of water hitting a tarp
Wind rustles the trees
Crickets chirp louder

Damp grass fills the air
I feel water droplets on my feet
A slight breeze blows them away
And still, the crickets are chirping

I see damp fences
damp swing sets
Water droplets race down a slide
The crickets continue to chirp

I taste a water droplet
Tingling on my tongue
June bugs buzz in my ear
But the crickets drown them out

I close my eyes and feel everything
Spinning around me
It fills me up
Drives all the feelings away
My only thought is

I hear crickets chirping

Zapatos

by **Christian Poveda**



Happy Valley

by **Ethan Williams**

*Editor's Note: The following short story has been edited from its original version.

Once upon a time a kingdom once known for its elegant beauty and wealth was turned into an abysmal wasteland. Our tale starts in the Kingdom of Happy Valley as a local farm boy named Jack arises to start his day. "Wake now Jack, there are many errands that need tending to," screamed Jack's mother. "What would you have me do today?" a weary Jack muttered. "You must sell Anabelle, Jack. We need the money to save the farm," she cried. Anabelle was Jack's horse. Jack merely shook his head and set out for town.

Happy Valley used to be a rather prosperous town rich in farmland and cattle. King Hemp was an excellent ruler. Suddenly, one day the money drunk king demanded a larger profit from each soul that lived in Happy Valley. This law destroyed the land and turned Happy Valley into Gruesome Gulch.

Jack made his way to town with horse in hand. "I wish there was some way to bring peace back to the valley," Jack said to Anabelle as if she were human. Jack was an active thinker with a large heart but lacked some sense. About mid-day Jack arrived in

town. "Horse for sale....I say HORSE FOR SALE!" Jack bellowed through the marketplace. " 'Mere boy, I'll buy your steed," Mr. Kush said with an unkindly grin. Mr. Kush was the town fool, known for tall tales of mischief. Mr. Kush offered Jack a marijuana bud, which he said would change the way we lived forever, as well as restoring wealth in the Valley. "Well, what do I do with this?" said a rather curious Jack. "Take this bud, my boy, and break it into smaller pieces away from the stem." He gestured to Jack how to do it, "then take some parchment and create a cone," again showing Jack through gestures, "then my boy, stuff the crumbs inside the cone...set fire to one side....and puff on the other!" he shouted. He then quickly covered his mouth, "Marijuana is greatly frowned upon, young Jack. You'll lose that shiny head of hair on your head if you get caught with it," Mr. Kush said firmly. He explained to Jack that inside this bud were four magical seeds that would change the world forever. Jack asked the result in setting fire to the buds. Mr. Kush stated, "The effects are different with everyone, only fire separates you and your journey now."

Jack ran home, his mind racing about this magical marijuana and what change it could bring! "Mother!" shouted Jack, "I have the power to change the world! "Your father is probably rolling over in his grave this very instant!" screamed the ENRAGED mother. "You sold our horse for MARIJUANA?!" she bellowed as if inhuman. She went on to explain to Jack that this marijuana was for the devil, and would do nothing but DESTROY

everything it touched. Jack simply nodded his head and went outside. He prayed for forgiveness and help, for his mistake greatly wore on his giant heart. Jack took the seeds out of the bud and threw them to the ground in disgust. After shedding a few tears, Jack drifted off to sleep.

As Jack slept on the porch, something beneath the ground began to take place. What once seemed like ordinary seeds had begun to sprout. This plant grew rapidly; taller and taller it grew with no end in sight. Startled by all the noise, Jack awakened to the ever growing plant and marveled at its beauty. Then Jack grabbed ahold of the emerging plant wondering what awaited him at the end.

At the top Jack met TOWERING statues of mythical GIANTS. The elders of the Valley told tales of giants ruling the earth, until one day a MIGHTY KING took rule over the beasts and banished them all to the kingdom cloud 9. Jack began to wonder if this folklore was true as he leaped off the giant plant. Thankful to have found land, Jack set out in hope of finding answers. "I've smelled this before!" roared Jack. "Marijuana must be made here on cloud 9!" Jack made his way through the Cannabis Forrest, mind racing with questions that needed answering. At the end of the Forrest was a LARGE door to an ENORMOUS castle. The crest on the door read THC, meaning "To Honor Cannabis." With haste Jack knocked on the door. Thunder then grumbled from the ground as Jack felt the world

below him shake. The door opened... “ME HIGH IT’S SO FUN, I smell the blood of an Englishman, be you alive? Or be you here to buy? We're always good and never dry!” roared the giant as he answered the door. “You seem lost, little buddy,” said the rather dazed and confused Ogre. “Come on in! Relax a bit!” he shouted. As Jack entered the castle, he was met and greeted by several stoned Giants.

Jack was led to a room with a large round table filled with Giants. “What brings you to cloud 9, young Jack?” asked the Giant King. “Well, sir, to put it bluntly....” “HAAAAAAAAA!!!” roared the room of Giants. “Sorry, Jack, inside joke” the Giants explained. Jack then explained how he met the man in the market and traded Anabelle for a marijuana bud. He then explained how it's illegal and frowned upon and his mother was really upset with him. Jack bowed his head. “How can something that's thought to be so bad, be so good?” Jack asked. “Marijuana isn't for the faint hearted, Jack. If you don't control it, it will control you!” the Giants explained. “Here on cloud 9 we legalized it! Now we have dispensaries throughout the kingdom, where you can legally purchase marijuana!” boomed the King. “We are the wealthiest kingdom of Giants, hell we’re the only Kingdom of Giants!” laughed the great King. “But if you notice, young Jack, we aren't necessarily hurting for money,” the King remarked. “We tax the hell out of it, Jack! And sky rocket the price as we please.” Jack took a moment to take the King’s knowledge to heart and realized

what he had to do. He enjoyed the laughs and words of wisdom the Giants gave him. He thanked them for everything, said his goodbyes, and set out for the giant plant once more. However, he did not leave empty handed from Cloud 9; the Giants sent Jack with twelve of the most potent medicinal strains of marijuana ever concocted.

As Jack reached the plant to climb home, he began to ponder how he would bring this matter up before King Hemp's throne. "Maybe if I ensure an abundance of wealth until the end of his reign, or that I will forever be his slave," Jack thought as he quickened his pace. Jack then leaped from the final leaf and ran home. "Mother! I've talked with Giants in the kingdom of cloud 9, I have the key to save our farm, and bring joy back to the valley!" cried Jack as he hugged his mother. She merely nodded and smiled at him.

Jack then raced into the kingdom and soon found himself in front of King Hemp. "What say you, boy? Come now and speak your matter," the king bellowed. "Great king, I've just returned from a faraway Kingdom that has legalized the use of marijuana," Jack muttered with fear. "That's a lie, boy! Everyone knows there is nothing good about cannabis!" the king roared. Jack gathered courage and spoke. "King Hemp, if we legalize Cannabis I will ensure you that your wealth will never end." Jack proclaimed, "You can tax it and set the price to whatever you please. My king, I promise you, Happy Valley will rise again. Our people shall call

you a hero!” The king sat and thought for what seemed like hours. “If you are not pleased, sir, I will be your slave here in the castle until your reign as king is over,” said Jack. The king smiled at the boy. “From this day forward I grant the legalization of marijuana for the citizens in the greatest kingdom on earth....Happy Valley!” the king proclaimed.

Jack ran home amongst the cheers of the townspeople. When he arrived home, he sat and pondered his accomplishment. Below Jack’s feet lay the unharmed cone of buds he had rolled prior to this journey. He took it inside by the fireplace and set it ablaze, “Mother,” Jack mumbled, “what's for dinner?!”

The years passed by until the story of young Jack was only mentioned in folklore—“The Boy who Walks with Giants” as they say. Others knew him to be a legend for bringing Happy Valley out of its economic dilemma by way of a euphoric plant. Jack kept his word to the king, clear up until the day his reign had passed. Jack soon passed as well, paving the way for marijuana prohibitionist in every kingdom on earth.

Waterfall

by Caitlin C. Postoak



The First Final Chapter

by **Lorin Blackburn**

“You can’t just sit in your room watching romantic comedies for the rest of your life.”

“Dad!” I turned around quickly on my bed. My dad was standing in the doorway, frowning. “You scared me. I know the door’s open, but come on, a little warning would be nice,” I told him.

He shook his head and turned towards the window. “Your mom would not want you to be like this.”

“Like what?” I couldn’t help the bite in my voice. I had gotten bitchier lately. Everyone had taken notice.

Dad sighed. “Did I ever tell you about how I got your mother to date me?”

“Yeah, your car. She wanted to drive it.”

“No, before that. Have I told you how I got her to even see my car? I was on a double date and she was with my friend Jeff. I saw her and knew I had to get to know her. This had never happened before. I had only kissed one other girl before your mother, you know?” I nodded. I love this story. “Anyway, I saw your mother and something inside me clicked. When that double date ended and she walked away I knew I had to do something. Chances like this don’t always come around and I could tell that

girl was special. So I asked around and got her address. I drove to her house and walked right up to her door. I could barely stand still I was so nervous. Her mother came to the door and I asked for Ann. She smiled and said sorry, son, she isn't home. My heart broke. My big moment and she wasn't even home. I turned around and walked back to my car. On the way back to my car I had a voice in my head telling me to turn around and when I did I saw it. There she was. A little movement in the curtains almost unnoticeable, but I could see her outline in the window. I backed up to my car and stared at that window until the shadow moved away."

I stared at my dad. Seventeen years of life and I had never heard the entire story. "Dad nowadays that is considered stalking."

He chuckled. "Oh Jane, when that shadow moved away from the window I was ready to come back every day until she would go out with me. You know what that shadow was?" I shook my head. "Hope. I had hope, Jane. Minutes, that felt like hours, later the door started to open. I about died right there next to my '65 Mustang GT. I thought her dad might be coming out to run me off, but no. It was her. Ann was walking out and she was beautiful. 'What are you doing in front of my house, Wayne?' she asked. 'I was hoping we could go for a ride.' I told her. I was leaning against my car and later she told me that's the picture that sold her. Mostly the car. 'Why don't you just go away?' she asked. Then she smiled at me. Her smile lit up the dusk sky. 'One ride,' I bargained

and tilted my head back allowing a grin. I was not about to give up. This was my moment. ‘Only if I can drive,’ she said.”

Dad had turned halfway through the story, back towards the window, and I could tell he was caught up in his memories. Before mom had died she had let it slip about that first ride and how they had ended up in a ditch because they had started making out while dad was trying to drive. I stayed silent. Some things I am not supposed to know.

“I didn’t know that, Dad, but why are you telling me this now?” I asked.

“Because I am sick of seeing you like this. It has been three weeks. It is time to either get a pair. . .” He stopped and looked at me awkwardly. I smiled. “Sorry. It is time for you to have your moment, Jane. You need to stop watching these movies and sitting in bed moping. Life is not like it is in those movies. Sometimes you have to make it happen. Sometimes you have to take a chance to get what you want. It might not turn out the way you want it to, but at least in the end you will know that you tried. You put yourself out there and you did all you could do.”

“But, what if it doesn’t work? What if he still thinks he isn’t good enough for me? For anyone?” I asked, whispering the last part. There is no way he will listen to me. He didn’t in the past, what would make it different now? I could make the big gesture and it would mean nothing to him. Then where would I be? Still

sitting here in bed with only Channing Tatum and Zac Efron to help me.

“Maybe he thinks he isn’t good enough because no one has given him the chance to try and be good enough,” Dad said.

“Daddy, I just don’t want to get hurt. I don’t want to love him. I don’t want to be this pathetic.” I started crying—damn it. I swore I wasn’t going to do this. Dad came over to me and wrapped his arms around me. I put my head on his shoulder and just let it out. I hate crying, but there was something about the safety of my dad’s arms that allowed the tears to flow freely down my cheeks.

“You will do what you need to do. You are smart enough to make the right decision. I just want you to know all the options.”

I pulled back and looked at him. “Aren’t you supposed to hate all men who have any contact with me? Isn’t it like Dad code to hate all boys who might want to date their daughters?”

Dad laughed and squeezed me tighter. “Oh Angel, I’m smarter than any old code.” He stood up, patted my leg, and walked out of the room, closing the door on the way out. Normally I would throw a fit. I hate the door closed, but once again he is right. I needed alone time to think.

I was restless in the house. It was pointless sitting in my bed—moping as Dad had said. I got in my car and just drove. I drove endlessly, letting the cool breeze from the open windows direct the direction I chose. I drove for hours all over town. I somehow ended up sitting there, in front of his house. Just like dad

knew I would. I took a deep breath and said a quick prayer. I glanced at the house again, maybe they weren't home. I wasn't sure if that's what I wanted, but I could call it a sign of fate. I took one more deep breath and opened the door. One foot in front of the other. Up to the steps.

This is it. This is the now. In the movies it all comes down to this—the big ending. The big finale when the guy gets the girl. That's the problem, though. In the movies it's always the guys that make the big gesture: The stereo in the air, pebbles tapping on the windows, kisses in the rain. It is never the girl. I took a step backward. I can't do this. Life doesn't have happy endings with nicely wrapped bows on top. But what my dad had said was crashing through my mind. If I put myself out there, then I will know that I did everything I could possibly do. I will have had my moment. Even if I don't get my happy ever after, I still had my chance. I did my part. That was enough for me.

I finally knocked on the door and waited. Nothing happened. I looked around nervously. I took a couple steps to the side and glanced around making sure no one was coming and knocked again. Nothing. I looked down at the brass doorknob. It was rusted in the corner next to the nail and there was a tiny fleck of green paint. Green is Luke's favorite color. Ugh. I had to stop doing this to myself. Sighing, I turned and walked slowly down the steps back down towards my car. Next to my car I heard a voice in my head nagging at me to turn around and look. I really didn't

want to. I was about to cry and I couldn't take anymore. I had tried and failed. It was time to pack it in and go home. I walked around the car and opened the door, leaning against it, I felt the tears coming and tried my best to push them away. Damn it, I thought, not here. I turned and ran a hand over my eyes. Then just a flash—out of the corner of my eyes I saw it. Slowly, I turned around and faced the house. There it was. Second story, third window, flicker of a curtain moving, a shadow—Hope.

