

MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE



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Quirpie Patch

A MAGAZINE OF LITERARY ♦ ART PATCHES



VOL. 1

SPRING 2002

NO. 1

MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE

The
Purple Patch
A MAGAZINE OF LITERARY ♦ ART PATCHES

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A SIGMA TAU DELTA PUBLICATION



Jasmine McDowell

Untitled photograph

The
Purple Patch

A MAGAZINE OF LITERARY ♦ ART PATCHES
VOL. 1 SPRING 2002 NO. 1

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Foreword

The Purple Patch was a dream — a seed of thought — a “wouldn’t it be nice to have our own magazine” desire. Students of the Nu Epsilon Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta accepted the challenge, advertised on campus for everything from art to zydeco, and held a contest to name Missouri Valley College’s new literary magazine. All of this was accomplished on a budget of zero.

Nothing happened. Was there anyone on campus interested in writing and art? Finally, the week before and two weeks after the deadline, manuscripts and artwork, poems and photographs, started arriving. Nu Epsilon members got busy and chose works for publication. But now came the printing costs. This was a significantly higher amount than the students could pull out of their pockets, so they started pounding the pavement. MVC had some serious students on their hands trying to open an avenue to reflect the college’s diversity. The student’s needed financial help and the community delivered. It was now, again, up to Nu Epsilon Chapter.

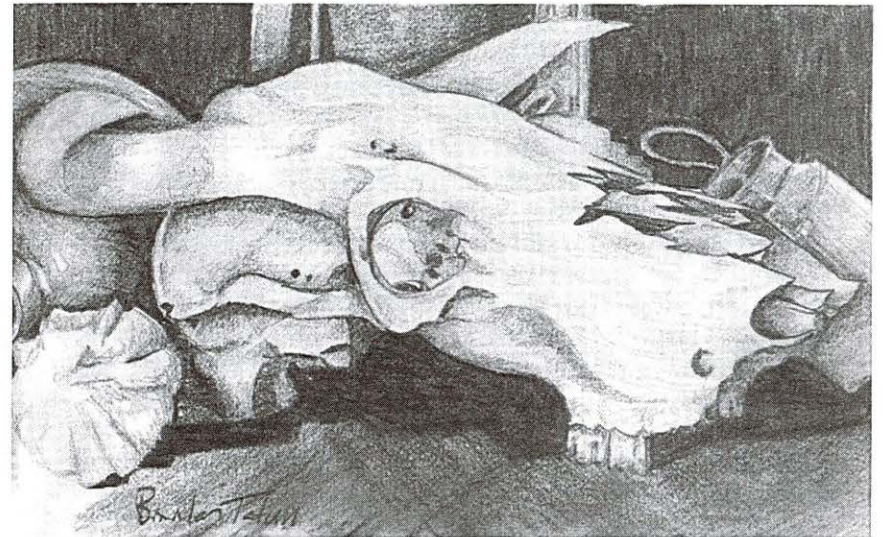
Having never published a magazine before, much less one from scratch, Nu Epsilon members figured the place to start was to ask for help from those more experienced. Letters and requests for help and ideas were sent to other literary publications. Many responded with generous hearts. Samples of their magazines were sent: *The Missouri Review*, *New Letters*, *Owen Wister Review*, *Potpourri*, *The Cape Rock*, *Arkansas Review*, *Afro-Hispanic Review*, *Number One*, and *The Chariton Review*. Most of the magazines were accompanied by invaluable hints, suggestions, check lists, and best wishes.

David Hamilton, Editor of *The Iowa Review*, gave immeasurable encouragement over the Internet and was available for questions throughout the entire venture. We felt unbelievably encouraged by all the help we received and we hope we’ve done you, our believers, proud.

Any new endeavor is fraught with “uns.” Unknown mistakes, unexpected assistance, unaccounted-for costs, and unanticipated serendipitous moments. We experienced them all while we tried to make this magazine a reality. You are holding, we hope, the sublime fruit of that first whispered seed of thought.

Had the Nu Epsilon Chapter members stopped before they even began due to lack of funds, you wouldn’t now be holding the patches of stopped time published here. We hope our first effort brings you moments of unmitigated joy and many purple patches in time.

◆ Melody R. Allee



Branden Tatum

Still Life

Drawing

Sundays

by
April Getzloff

“No Mom. What are you talking about? Look, can I call you later? I’m on my way out the door. I don’t have time to talk. Bye.”

As I pulled up in the driveway, the girls filed out, looking tired and solemn. They all piled into my car and we sped away. On the way to the church I prayed silently over and over, “Please Lord, just let us get through the service and back to the house.” I started to think of ways to minimize any situations that might arise. We’d sit together in our own pew and everybody had to use the restroom before we sat down. Preplanning was a must because all outings were topsy-turvy adventures. I knew it wasn’t right and unfair to expect problems to occur. But the fact is they did. These girls had a hard time staying focused. The slightest irritation could spark short tempers into a fire. If I had learned one thing working in the facility, it was not to take anything personal. One day you were their enemy, being cussed at, hated on, and attacked. The next you were their only friend and they pleaded for your attention. That’s what made today so edgy. Today was the first time I had taken the girls somewhere semi-formal and they were unpredictable.

As we pulled up to the church, I could see the girls tense up and start biting their nails. They were nervous, I thought, because of the public situation, far more formal than most of them were used to. They had all asked if they looked alright to go with me, having put on the best dresses or slacks they had bought with the clothing vouchers given to them by the state. Looking at them had made me feel guilty after complaining this morning of having nothing to wear, leaving a pile of suitable clothing crumpled on my bedroom floor. A tiny voice from the backseat whispered, “Will we be the only black people?” My heart sank as I tried to think of an answer. Such an obvious concern for them had never crossed my mind. Come to think of it, all the Sundays I

had attended as a visitor, the presence of blacks was almost nonexistent. I just hadn’t thought of it before or took the time to notice.

“Black people come to this church,” I lied, “besides God’s happy to have you and I am pleased to take you.”

So, with the littlest one attached to my hip, and the older two timidly following behind, we entered the church. Tripping over each other through the hallway, we were greeted by my pastor, who showed no signs of astonishment, was I’m sure, surprised by the guests I had brought. Their question in the car had caused me to be on the lookout and I was nervously aware of any discriminations. He greeted me by name and shook hands with the girls. The girls shook hands in return but their eyes never made contact with Pastor’s. The fearless girls I had witnessed at the house were suddenly shy.

In the comfortable confines of the ordinary looking house these girls were confident, protected from the outside world. They talked freely, laughed sparingly, and clung to their routine. In their world routine was everything and this was not part of it. They woke in the morning, got dressed, then came downstairs to look at the chart hanging on the wall to see what chore was assigned to them that particular day. After the dusting, vacuuming, and windexing was done, they ate breakfast and lined up to take prescribed medications and then tried to keep themselves busy. Some wrote, some listened to music, some played games, some just talked, all sought attention. Immersing into self-pity, some day it was a drudging task just to get them out of their rooms. Most pretended nothing was wrong, proclaiming day in and day out they were not supposed to be there and would soon be leaving, stating matter-of-factly how much they hated the place. Their truth was whenever one of them got close to being discharged their behaviors worsened. They didn’t want to stay. They didn’t want to leave. What did they have to go back to? Few could be reunited with their families and they would have to start all over in foster care, wondering if this time would be different, maybe this time they’d be living with a nice family, maybe this time someone would want to keep

them. Instability and neglect in their lives had caused them to lack the social skills “normal” kids acquire. They needed guidance and assistance. Therefore, activities off grounds were special occasions, besides the once a week trip to the local Wal-Mart or Dollar General. On Fridays, if they had enough allowance, they were able to eat carryout.

As our entourage entered the chapel, I led the girls to an open pew midway to the front. The pastor gave his opening greetings and announcements, prompting everyone to turn and wish their neighbor a good morning. I turned and shook hands with the family behind us, waiting to see what the girls would do. To my relief, they followed my example and very politely said good morning. They all took deep breaths and finally cracked a

But then again where did she have to hurry off to?

smile, soothed from acceptance. As the opening hymn began the girls scrambled for their hymnals, flipping the pages rapidly. By the third verse, we were all settled on the same page. I watched them follow along silently, knowing none of them were very good readers. All of them had some church songs memorized but none that would be sung today.

Weasel, as I called her, was nuzzled under my arm following along with her pointer finger, but I hardly noticed because of her miniature frame. The way she was settled in, I'm sure someone thought she was mine. For a nine year old she was undersized. If I hadn't read her file I would have thought she walked straight out of a “feed the world” commercial. All of the staff had taken to mothering her because of her age. Her real mother, as she would tell you, didn't want her. She was eight when she came to us, the youngest we had ever had. I had grown accustomed to the problems the girls came to us with. But when she walked in all of the norms were thrown out the window. She was singing a generic tune along with the congregation, but when she looked up and smiled wide at me I let her think I was fooled.

The smile came from the same mouth that had cussed the day before over not getting bubblegum. Before the tantrum was done, a laundry basket was overturned and a shampoo bottle was thrown across the room, all from a nine year old.

The oldest girl was concentrating solemnly on the pages, mumbling along at her own pace, which was how she operated on an everyday basis. Everything was done at a turtle's stride. But then again where did she have to hurry off to? Her mother suffered a mental breakdown and had to be placed in a hospital. That meant Sara was turned over to the state. She was searching for her father but, so far, no luck. She had lost count of the number of placements she had called home. Sara was being considered for foster care but, still, she wasn't counting

She had been ... told too many lies. The only thing constant was inconsistency.

on it. If you asked her, nothing ever worked out in her life. She had been let down too many times, told too many lies. The only thing constant was inconsistency. Her pretty face revealed wisdom beyond her years. When she smiled and found laughter, which wasn't often, innocence lit the way to her locked youth.

The organ became silent and Pastor resumed the service. Along with the congregation, I spoke in response at the marked intervals. I had spoken this part of the sermon every Sunday since I was a child and could practically recite it without prompts. It was identical to my church back home.

Unlike me, the middle girl had never had a church back home. It's hard to have one when you didn't have a home. She was a success story. She had only been in the program a year, but had made great leaps towards rehabilitation. She is the modern day version of The Wolf Boy. Found in an abandoned apartment located in the city, no one knows how long she lived there. The deep scars self-inflicted on her body indicated a hard life. They weren't scars from scratches or scrapes, but deep cuts from a knife. After being used and then kicked out by her

mother, who was given a new home behind bars and an orange jumpsuit after being caught with numerous narcotics, she was left to fend for herself. A mere 100 pounds at 13, she had grown to a healthy weight and healthy attitude. She kept an inhaler close by because of her severe asthma problem and three Tegretol she took a day seemed to level her anger.

After almost a year, her good days out numbered her bad ones. She learned not to cuss every other word, how to use eating utensils properly, how to maintain proper hygiene, and most of all, how to trust. Her first days with us were rough. She lurked around the house cursing and threatening anyone who tried to talk to her. Last month I had taken her to the YMCA. We were playing pool and some "public school" kids walked over to us. They started joking about girls playing pool. Before I

They sat silent and stiff necked like a watchdog looking for invaders.

could silence them, she raised her sharp pointer finger in their faces, calling them bastards who could go and screw themselves. Then she turned and ran out of the building, hiding outside until I cornered her. I was giving her another chance today and I had cautioned her severely.

The girls sat silent through the service. There were no arguments or bathroom runs, as I had predicted. There were no responses or singing with the congregation. There were no pleas to leave.

They sat silent and stiff necked like a watchdog looking for invaders. I had expected to have to give them the "look" at least once. My mother gave me her "look" in church when I was too rowdy. The "look" meant my sister and I had better behave because if we took her past the "look" we'd be sorry. I always knew my mother or father wouldn't hurt us. I respected their discipline but I knew they still loved me. I couldn't imagine knowing anything different. These girls knew it. They lived it. At eight years old I was receiving my first pony and having sleepovers. Weasel was taking Ritalin and asking for sleeping medication, receiving donated birthday presents probably

purchased at Dollar General. By thirteen and fourteen I was preparing for sixteen, begging my parents to let me wear makeup and go to the movies. These girls were trying to stop time. They didn't want to grow past the age of adoption. They thought they already had.

The service was almost over and the girls looked lost. The congregation rose for the final prayer, The Lord's Prayer. As the first line was spoken, the girls smiled and puffed their chests like ducks in a row. In confident, assured voices they chanted the words with the congregation.

"Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen."

I was frozen in bewilderment. They had spoken every word. These "heathens" as I've heard so many call them, knew every blessed word.

When the service had ended, we returned to the house and the girls went about their prescribed routine, like any other day. I went into the office, feeling the need to call my parents after the conversation we had had that morning.

I knew they weren't home. It was Sunday. They would be at my grandparent's house. By now my sister would have poured pre-dinner drinks at the bar in the basement while the men sat perched on stools at the counter supervising, talking of sports and the weather. A Miller Lite, slightly salted, was opened for Dad and a brandy, two fingers high was poured for Grandpa. Upstairs, the women were setting the table and gabbing while the beef roast finished cooking in the oven, commenting on the church service that morning. There wasn't much to prepare except mashing the potatoes and heating the baked beans. The beef roast had been placed

in the oven before church and Grandma had baked fresh bread the night before, to save time. My family spent most every Sunday at my mother's childhood home. The two-story pink house sat comfortably at the top of what we referred to as "the hill." It was the house my cousins and I took refuge in when we had to go home from school sick or needed a place to wait until we had to suit up for a ballgame.

The phone rang for the fourth time and I hung up the receiver. I didn't call my family at my grandparent's home because they were most likely getting ready to eat. The aroma of the cooked roast would have permeated the air downstairs as well by now, and Grandpa and Dad were most likely heading up the stairs. Everyone knew their place at the table. The men sat at each end with their wives to the right of them. The left chair by Grandpa was coveted. My sister, Emily, and I feuded over who sat there. Now that I was gone, there was no competition.

When I was still living at home, Emily and I would say grace in unison, and then Grandpa would start passing the filled dishes around the table, everybody taking more than they should. Nothing compared to Sunday dinner. Eating took much less time than it took Grandma to prepare the meal and then it was time for dishes. Grandpa and Dad retired to the living room to watch westerns and football. Emily and I cleared the table while Mom started washing glasses and plates. I wiped the dishes dry and Emily, assisted by Grandma, put them away.

My thoughts were interrupted by the sound of voices gathering at the table. I was time for today's Sunday dinner. I walked into the dining room and sat down, finding any vacant seat, nowhere in particular. With a quick moment of silence, the girls raced for the nearest serving dish. Today's Sunday dinner — franks and beans complimented with soggy tater tots. The girls ate, obviously satisfied with the grossly under par Sunday meal. I lost my appetite. They knew no better. Dinner was the same no matter what day of the week it was. They didn't know today was Sunday.

These girls didn't know some of the most elementary of living skills and social practices because

the system was their social circle, therefore, they had been labeled as delinquents. They were stereotyped as undereducated, underdeveloped, and under a dark cloud of circumstances. They had been dealt a bad hand in the game of life. Nevertheless, there was good in these children, no matter how much bad had happened to them. They clung to the unconditional love of God because they hadn't received it from people. Even little Weasel had chanted along, not understand the meaning of the prayer, but nonetheless clinging to something spiritual. Feeling proud to have made a connection to the outside world, she felt like she belonged.

That Sunday I had taken the girls to church, hoping to expose them to new social surroundings and maybe teach them something along the way. As fate would have it, they opened my eyes and helped me to find a new appreciation for today's Sunday and those gone by.



Mellody R. Allee

Lost Childhood

Photograph

"Sawed Off Shotgun"

by

Rachel Renee Derboven

It was a day I would never forget. The withering smell of sorrow lingered in the house, followed later by the stench of demented desperation, much like the odor of a decaying animal. I was preparing for the visitation of a friend who recently committed suicide, and as if that were not enough for a high school girl to grieve over, there was more to come. If I had known what that day held, I, that morning, would not have left the comfort of my bed.

It was a cool winter day. The sun was glistening across the snow. For most, that image would have been considered beautiful, but on this particular day, I had no concern, or even interest for beauty. Three days earlier, a friend of mine and my sister's, had taken his own life for reasons only known to him. I remember the depressing tone of the music we listened to as we dressed. It seemed as if the verses dragged on for hours. My sister and I waited for our boyfriends', cousins of the deceased, to drive the twelve country miles to pick us up. They were running late, so I slowly walked to the phone to call them. My bones chilled as I put the cold receiver to my ear, and heard no sound. There was not a dial tone, only a frightening silence. The phone, for whatever reason, was dead. I wandered back to my room in hopes that our friends had not forgotten us.

We thought our waiting was over when we heard the sound of a car door shutting outside. In a way it was a sweet sound, because we lived so far out that not many people would make the trip. We ran to the window, and glanced out only to see that it was not at all who we had been expecting, but instead it was our dad. Our dad had been absent from the home on and off for years, and when he was gone it was always with a woman other than my mom. He looked excited and seemed convinced of something. Even so, panic spread over me. Why was he here? I somehow knew his reason could not be a good one, and I quickly, without conscience effort, assembled

my protective barrier.

My sister and I, adrenaline rushing, sprinted to the living room to warn our mom, but it was too late. My dad had already invited himself in, as he always did. "Girls, go to your room, I want to talk to your mom," he said as he pointed his bony finger. There was a feeling of dread in my heart, and a knot in my throat. "My days of talking to you are finished," my mom replied as we continued to our room. "Just listen to what I have to say for a minute." My dad was trying to convince my mom to forgive him and let him return to our home, but she was not prepared to be the fool this time.

My sister and I listened closely with our ears glued to the thin wooden door. Soon, after my dad had done all the begging he could do calmly, there came a

All she could do was fear for her life.

crash up against the wall that separated the living room from our room. I can still see the look of despair on my mom's face as we threw open the door and saw my dad with his hands around her neck, and her feet dangling in mid air. He was holding her up against the wall, and all she could do was fear for her life. "Let her go!" we screamed bravely, desperate to save our mom. My dad suddenly turned on us, while at the same time dropping her to the floor. He shook me, and violently shoved us all back into our room. When I think back on the event, I can still feel his merciless grip. It was one of a mad man, hands hot, and dripping with sweat.

Then, out of the blue, a sly, evil smile came across our dad's face, and as quick as he entered our front door, he stormed out. I fell to my mom's side to comfort her as my sister scurried to the window in hopes that he was leaving. My mom wept as if she were a child. "He's bringing in a gun!" my sister shouted. In all the chaos, I had forgotten my earlier discovery, and I quickly ran to the phone to call the police.

My dad burst through the door. "It won't do you any good, I cut the wires in the back of the house." That was a fear like no other. I felt faint, as, in my mind, death

drew near. How could a man that we had called daddy, be so extreme, and insensitive? My dad then produced the sawed-off shotgun he held in his hand. He tried once again to talk my mom into letting him stay. "Do you think I'm playing games?" my dad yelled. "I will show you how serious I am. You better change your mind pretty damn quick or the blood is going to fly. You don't know how bad you are hurting me. We should be together, and if we can't be then I do not want to live any more." My dad was consumed with anger. "I will end it right now, don't think I won't, and you are going to stay right here for the show. If you want me to feel pain, I will blow off every damn body part I have until you give in, or until my damn heart stops. Do you really want these kids to witness that, because I'll do it, I swear I will!!

Speaking for myself, I was sure he would do just what he had stated he would, but I could tell by the look in my mom's eyes that she did not completely believe him. She never let down her guard, and ultimately my dad was the one who gave up. His face was streaked red, and there was a vein popping out of his forehead. His facial expression was filled with anger and hatred. Suddenly, he turned, and was gone. When we heard his truck pull away, tires spinning, a sense of relief seemed to come over me. We all held each other praying my dad would not return, and he did not. It would be a long time before we saw him again.

That cold winter day, proved to be a tragic one, but it was just one of many bad days in my childhood. What weighs on my mind even more, is the fact that these things happen to people all over the world, all the time, but a lot of them are not as lucky to survive as we were. Needless to say, when our boyfriends finally showed up, it was hard making the decision to go to our friend's visitation after all we had endured already that day. Although our sadness was overwhelming, we still had to say goodbye to our dear friend



T. F. Williams

Photograph
Afternoon in the Garden of Life and Death

Forever in a Book

by
Erin Dotson

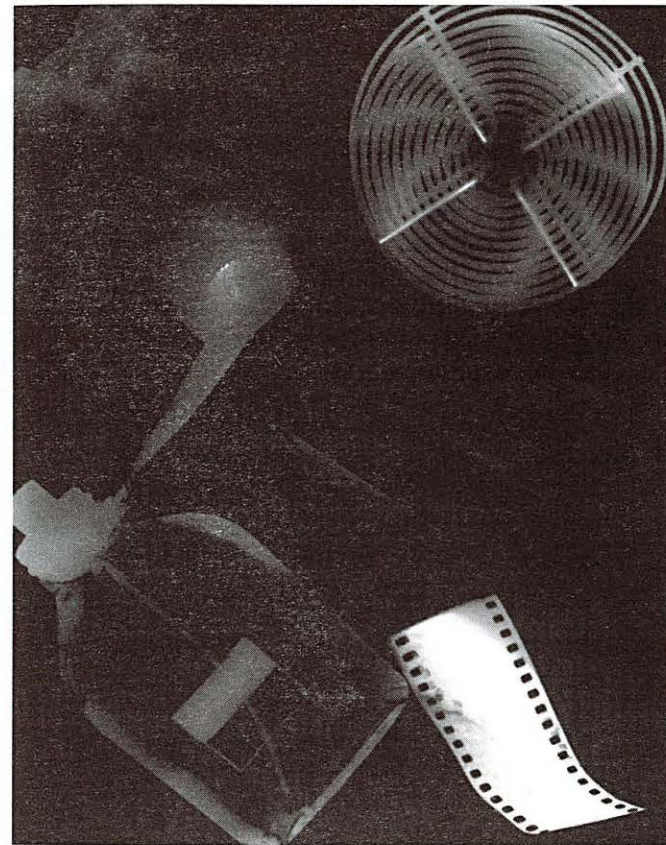
Here, a book, lying on the table.
How intriguing are your pages as I turn them one by one!
How can you bear to just lie there,
waiting for someone to pick you up
And slowly turn your captivating pages?

O my dear volume,
your beautiful scarlet cover catches my eye,
And brings questions to the tip of my tongue.
What do you bear inside of you
for the whole world to see?
What will it take for you to tell me your secrets?
Are the words inside of you worth reading?
Will you give me the answer to any of life's
unanswerable questions?
Speak to me; give me a sign; show me!
Surely you have a gift of knowledge for me!

Perhaps we'll fly to the ends of the earth
And explore the highest heavens together—
Or we will eat with kings and queens in royal palaces.
Then we'll go dance around the fire with the Indians
And race with the wild horses!
Together, we'll step from the Nina
With Christopher Columbus, and discover America.
Then we'll take "one small step for man,
and one giant leap for
Mankind" with Neil Armstrong on the moon.
Let us shiver with Washington at Valley Forge,
and then ride a camel through the hot,
Burning desert with the French Foreign Legion.
We'll stand alone at the top of the world
On Mt. Everest in Tibet,
breathing the cold, crisp mountain air,
As we gaze down
upon the sparkling white world below us.
Then why not plunge to the depths of the deepest ocean,

Watching in amazement
as the creatures of the underwater
Wonderland swim around us in curiosity.
And the best part is, I won't even need a diving suit,
Because I can hold my breath
Forever in a book.

O book, we can go anywhere together, just the two of us.
Reveal your secrets to me, and I will spread them like
Wildfire to everyone I meet.



Michal S. Joachimowski

Untitled photograph

Today
by
Derryan D. Derrough

My favorite day is today,
Because it means I'm still alive.
And I can't live in yesterday
Or I know I won't survive.

People say "live for tomorrow"
"But for what?" I ask.
That day could be filled with sorrow
And yesterday is already past.

Today is not just another day
Tomorrow could be too late
And who knows tomorrow's way?
For today is what it shapes.

Who knows what today brings?
From the first to the last ride
Because today determines a lot of things
That tomorrow can't decide.

Morning Star

A poem by Sarah Casaletto
found in Thoreau's
"Conclusion" of *Walden*

Truly we are deep thinkers, we are ambitious spirits!
Yet we tolerate incredible dullness.
Therefore our voyaging is only great circle-sailing.
Let us become curious passengers,
Exploring our own streams and oceans;
A Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within,
Opening channels, not of trade, but of thought.

How worn and dusty are the highways of the world—
How deep the ruts of tradition and conformity.
The Walden ice, with its purity,
Not muddy, nor tasting of musty virtues.
The path is soft and impressionable,
Trode it lightly, alert not to fall in.
Come forth to enjoy perfect summer life at last!

We will not be shipwrecked.
The world would be just as large
No matter which side of the globe is home.
The snow melts just as early in the spring,
The setting sun is reflected just as brightly.
Love your life, do not find faults.
There is more day to dawn,
More lives to live.
Meet it and live it.



Jasmine McDowell

Untitled photograph

If you want to
by
Sandra Szendrey

If you want to cure my hunger,
Feed me Beef and Broccoli.
It's my favorite dish.
If you want to excite me,
Take me on a roller coaster ride.
It gives me a wonderful thrill!
If you want to scare me,
Make sure I'm unaware
Of your presence.
If you want to hurt me,
Go for the heart.
It's the most vulnerable thing.
If you want to love me,
Then say those three words.
But make sure you mean them.
If you want to pray for me,
Ask God to watch over me.
I'm sure he won't mind.
If you want to comfort me,
Give me your shoulder.
So I have something to cry on.
If you want to leave me. . .
Make sure it's in \$10s, \$20s, and \$50s,
Because a-million-dollar-bill is too big.
If you want to kill me,
Please use a gun.
I like it swift and painless.
If you want me to stay,
Then just say so and
I'll be there for you.
If you want to fight me,
Put on your wrestling shoes,
And step on the mat.
If you want to know me,
All you have to do is ask,
And I'll tell you.



Mellody R. Allee *Sylvia Plath's Elm Tree* Drawing

The Darkness in Me

by
David Hunter

The darkness that surrounds me,
Is not that of night.
For the darkness that surrounds me,
Cannot be cured by light.
It lives in my mind,
It encompasses my soul.
It is guiding my life,
It has taken control.
I yearn to escape
This darkness in me.
I have searched many paths,
I have attempted to flee.
But at each turn I take,
Every time I turn 'round,
That darkness inside me
Can always be found.

My Heart's Disease

by
Jake Singleton

I loved, I lost, I found my soul
At moments weak one half a whole
Black as night, cold winter days
Rays of sunshine forgotten pain
Refreshed by clouds of rainy days
When no love is free to play
In puddles wet reflection blurred
Rippled by the songs of birds
Feast upon the wormy streams
No mortal sin to feed in vain
Flow with life, unpredictable
Joy is found but often grows
Stale as moss on fallen trees
To medicate my heart's disease

Achieve Wholeness

by
Amber Clemens

One of the most misunderstood poets in recent history is Sylvia Plath. Most people believe that Plath's writings could be deemed the longest suicide note ever written (McMichael 1725) but they miss the overriding concern of Plath's writings. This concern is the rebirth or transcendence in order to achieve wholeness (Knoll 5).

Sylvia Plath was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1932, the daughter of a German father and an Austrian mother. Plath started her writing at the age of seventeen with her first poem and first short story. She entered Smith College on a scholarship and finally graduated in 1955 with the highest honors. She received a fellowship to Cambridge University and completed her M.A. degree in 1957. During her schooling, she had to be hospitalized for psychiatric therapy several times and she presented these events in an autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar* in 1963. Plath also wrote several books of poetry, "*The Colossus* in 1960 and *Ariel*, were published posthumously in 1965, after Plath committed suicide in 1963.

Plath is usually assigned the category of 'confessional' poet because of the autobiographical element in her work but Judith Knoll believes differently. Knoll believes that Plath's poetry is not so much literal and confessional as it is a continued system of symbols that unify her mythic vision. Plath's myth can be identified as three sets of polarities: the male as 'god' and as 'devil', the false self and the true self, and death-in-life and life-in-death (or death and rebirth). The motif of a dominant male figure includes the father or the husband. This male figure may appear as a devil, Nazi, or a vampire (Knoll 2). The protagonist (the heroine, victim, Jew), rejected by her god attempts to resolve the resultant death-in-life by transforming him into a devil or her oppressor as a basis for rejecting him. The image of false and true selves derives from the narrator's relation to the male figure, from which her true self has been

alienated, thus giving rise to a false self. Either the false self or the male must be killed to allow rebirth of the true self. Life lived by false self is death-in-life, while the rebirth of the true self promises life-in-death, expressed in the poetry in images of purgation, purification, and transcendence (Knoll 3). Along with her motifs, she uses the characteristic colors red, white, and black used in her later poetry, to serve function as emblems of her state of being (Knoll 2). Plath's mythic system and use of symbolic colors can be seen in the poem "Daddy."

"Daddy" is a poem that deals with the death of a father from the daughter's point of view. The daughter sees her father as a German military man and believes that he is overbearing and evil. "I thought every German was you. . .But no less the devil for that" (McMichael 1735, 1736). She sees her self as a Jew because of the

In "Daddy," Plath was able to use her mythic system to convey her message of finding wholeness.

way her dad treats her like a second-class citizen and as the inferior race. "I began to talk like a Jew... I never could talk you" (McMichael 1736). At first, the daughter wanted to see her father again based on that a false self had arisen due to the treatment she received from her father and so she cannot live without guidance of this false and untrue self. "I used to pray to recover you" (McMichael 1735). Finally, she decided to committed suicide to be able to see her father again. "At twenty I tried to die" (American Lit. 1736). The suicide attempts failed the mission but it did kill the false self enabling the true self to shine through. When the true self was finally victorious, Plath was able to rejected her dad and gain self-respect to live life a second time. "So daddy, I'm finally through... Daddy, Daddy, you bastard, I'm through" (American Lit. 1736-1737).

In "Daddy," Plath was able to use her mythic system to convey her message of finding wholeness. Furthermore, Plath used her characteristic colors to convey the message. The majority of the colors she used

were black and red. These colors enabled her to show the evil and the sorrow in her relationship with her dad. "So black no sky could squeak through. [...] Any less the black man who bit my pretty red heart in two" (McMichael 1736).

I believe that the poem "Daddy" is a reflection not a story of Plath's relationship to her father. I did not believe that Plath wrote this poem to be an autobiographic poem based on some details what were alter. "I was ten when they buried you" (McMichael 1736) but Plath was eight were when her father died. Knoll believed that Plath changed this detail to convey her mythic inevitability necessary to define her state of being. She used the age 10 to show the magical "one year in every ten" cycle. Based on this reasoning, Plath could not be a confessional poet because these precise details she alters or eliminates to fit her mythic system (Knoll 3).

Plath uses her poetry to pursue people in believing her vision that wholeness can be achieved by rebirth or transcendence. She does not use her poetry to mainly tell of her life story, which is done by confessional poets of her time Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton. Lowell and Sexton are the direct voice of the author in an everyday role. In Plath, the personal concerns and everyday role are transmuted by being absorbed in her mythic system (Knoll 4). Moreover, Lowell's and Sexton's poetry relates their narratives and Plath emphasis more on the structure of her state of being.

I believe Plath looked at Lowell's and Sexton's poetry and believed it needed something more of substance in it. I think she used their poetry as a starting base and then added her vision of achieving wholeness. For this very reason, Plath is categorized with Lowell and Sexton. All three writers wrote during the same period and used each other's work as a model for writing their own poetry. So people just assume that their final writings are the same and so Plath is defined as a confessional poet like Lowell and Sexton. These people do not take the time and effort to really explore the writings of Plath, Lowell, and Sexton to realize the major difference in their poetry.

Most people would say that Sylvia Plath and I have

nothing in common but we do. We both have strong beliefs and will not be influenced in changing them to fit the social 'norm.' I also believe that wholeness can be achieved, if a person is able to find their true self. I think that believing in God and yourself is the first step in finding your true self. There is a fine line in finding the true self. If the beliefs are too strong and not able to change because of newfound knowledge, a false self will appear. When newfound knowledge is discovered people must exam it and see if it fits with their belief. If it fits, the person must make alternations in their beliefs to bring in the new knowledge. Even though Plath and I have hardly any similarities in our background, we do share a common belief and hopefulness that achievement of this belief is possible. "The unflinchingness of her gaze, her refusal to compromise the truth, her precision, her intelligence, and her passion-all of these would have qualified her uniquely, in the discovery of her wholeness, to convince us that the achievement is possible" (Knoll 5).

Work Cited

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Laura Fennell

Untitled ink drawing



Laura Fennell

Untitled ink drawing

Red Wood Forest

by
Carrie Birge

Giants
Touching heaven
Drawing peace from above
God's gift for inspiration:
Red Woods.

Lost souls
Inner tension
Universally free
Flows love's light for all
To find

by Jake Singleton

Whisper winter wind
Spread melodious chill
And unexpected warmth

by Jake Singleton

The cicadas pound
Loud music into my ears.
Night falls softly 'round.

by Mellody Allee

Spring's Duties

by
Carrie Birge

Look! Sweet spring breeze sways
Tall leaves of grass this morning.
Lawnmower ends peace.

"Devil, don't you know?
you're as beautiful as an angel"
And you trace your fingers
over
me

as though
I could never
be
anything
more
than writing on a wall.
I worship false idols
creating
a religion
with
a fallible god
Intangible
as you
are
to me.

by Jasmine McDowell

A Golden Day with a Grand Relation

by
Melody R. Allee

I was going to Granny and PaPa's. Grandma had been called "Granny" even in high school. She had babysat, loved and "grand mothered" children her entire life. Today, she was babysitting me, except she couldn't watch me and tomatoes both.

"Dad, we've got Melody today, but I'm canning tomato juice. Can you mind her?" Granny was standing at the kitchen sink skinning blanched tomatoes. She had called Grandpa "Dad" for forty-five years, with the birth of their first child.

My grandpa, PaPa to me, readily accepted. He did have one request, though.

"I'll watch her. I wouldn't want her underfoot while you're puttin' up scaldin' juice. Just remember to save a glass for her. You know she likes the first warm glass from your batches." Grandpa smiled to himself. He appreciated the first warm glass of Granny's red tomato juice also. The heat took the acidity out of their taste. He preferred yellow tomatoes for that reason; they weren't as acidic tasting.

He had barely spoken those words when I burst inside. "Granny, PaPa!" The old wooden screen door slammed behind me as I ran to the kitchen where my grandparents always seemed to be. I hurled myself through the air, confident PaPa would catch me.

"Oomph." PaPa grunted as I landed on his lap. He quickly embraced me to keep me from sliding off his knees. I kissed him on the cheek with a loud "smack," slid off his lap and scooted across the linoleum to Granny.

"What cha doin'?" I chirped.

"I'm making tomato juice," Granny smiled. She was facing away from PaPa, but I'm positive he could hear the smile in her voice.

"Can I have some?" Tomato juice was high on my list of delicacies.

"When it's ready. But that won't be for awhile." Granny glanced at PaPa whose head was cocked in her

direction. He seemed to be staring into space.

On cue, he spoke, "Melody, walk me to the store? Granny needs some milk."

In a split second, my attention was successfully diverted. I darted across the kitchen to stand in front of PaPa and placed my small hand on his knee. "Can I have some ice cream?"

"We'll see." PaPa rose from his chair and headed to the refrigerator humming in the corner where he kept his cane and hat hanging.

Gathering them up, he said, "All right. Let's go." Together we headed out the door. "Give me your hand while we go down the porch steps." I placed my grubby hand in his calloused one. "Can you count the number of steps for me?"

I was just starting preschool and learning to count. PaPa encouraged me to count everything.

"One, two, three, four. Is that right, PaPa?"

"Yes. That was very good. Now, can you count the number of steps to the sidewalk?"

I'm sure PaPa already knew the number, but I started counting. "One, two, three, four, six, eight, nine, ten!" The larger the number, the more excited I got. "Ten" was megablasted. Forget five and seven.

At the street, I let go of PaPa's hand to explore. Walking down the street wasn't as dangerous as it might sound. The entire population in our hometown was 290. We didn't get much out-of-town traffic and natives knew to watch for kids in the streets.

I chattered all the way to the Little Store that stocked the bare necessities for our miniscule metropolis. "PaPa, lookit, it's a flutterby!" I squealed this right next to PaPa. Almost instantaneously, an insect across the street caught my attention. I ran to observe it. "PaPa, it's a wooly worm."

"What color?"

"Brown and black. It tickles!" I was convulsed in gales of laughter at how soft and fuzzy it was.

Almost to himself, PaPa replied, "Well, that means a hard winter. The darker the wooly worm, the deeper the snow."

As a topic of conversation, I wasn't interested in

wooly worm wisdom. I was already on the other side of the road looking down at the stream we had come to, "PaPa, there's a turtle!" I was in discovery heaven.

When we got to the footbridge, we turned right. PaPa always maintained he could tell a difference in the flow of water as it traversed over rocks and under the bridge. Where the stream turned away at the end of the block, we turned left to travel the last three blocks to the Little Store.

The lumberyard was in the first block. The saw-mill blade was singing and the smell of fresh-cut lumber wafted through the air. The second block held the Post Office. The wind was up and the American Flag was snapping in the breeze.

At the Post Office, PaPa called to me, "Come here, sweetheart. We're getting close to the store. Give me your hand." Getting close to the store meant we were getting close to the only street in town that had enough traffic on it to warrant walking on the sidewalk.

I skipped over as he asked, "Are you going to count steps for me?"

Eager to display my knowledge, I didn't hesitate. At the steps to the Little Store, I chortled, "One, two, three!"

PaPa smiled at my silliness and opened the door. I felt the cool rush of the store's air conditioning as we entered the hazy interior. Dust flecks danced on the path of the sunlight made from opening the door. The old wooden floor had a hollowed dip from where people had stepped inside in the exact same spot over the years. Two steps further and it creaked the same way every time someone stepped there. I stopped to step on the creak.

"Afternoon, Ed." The cashier greeted PaPa. "Looks like you've got a helper."

"Yeah, Mellody keeps me straight." PaPa smiled.

Venturing further inside, the smells of food, and wood floor wax, and furniture polish assailed the shopper. The store only had three aisles, but they were filled with every imaginable necessity.

I followed PaPa while he shopped. His cane was draped over his forearm and his straw fedora was pulled

down over his eyes. He wore a blue cotton shirt and a pair of bib overalls. He carried his wallet in the pocket of his bib front. I especially remember where he carried his wallet because I've never seen anyone carry anything in that pocket except a ballpoint pen. And a pen is one thing PaPa didn't need.

We proceeded halfway down the center aisle. Where the boxed cereal ended, PaPa picked up two cans. At the end of the aisle on the back wall to the right was bread. He gently squeezed three loaves before choosing one.

With me tagging along, we went to the opposite corner to the cooler. Reaching in, PaPa chose a gallon of milk. To the front three steps was the freezer.

PaPa handed me the bread and shifted everything else to his left arm. He reached down and lifted the freezer lid.

"What kind of ice cream do you want?" PaPa was leaning forward so the lid rested on his left shoulder.

"A san'wich, please." PaPa lifted two sandwiches out and lowered the lid.

"Can I have my san'wich, PaPa?" I was jumping in anticipation.

"Let's pay first." With me in tow, PaPa proceeded up the aisle to the check-out counter where I placed the loaf of bread without smashing it too bad.

"One gallon of milk, one loaf of bread, two cans of pork-n-beans, and two ice cream sandwiches. The total is two dollars, forty-two cents, Ed." The cashier handed me a tootsie roll.

PaPa was involved in retrieving his wallet but the crinkle of the wrapper being undone gave my prize away. "What do you say?"

I tried talking around the tootsie roll, "Shank you."

"You're welcome." Both men chuckled.

PaPa pulled a five-dollar bill from his wallet. He reached in his left front "pants" pocket and pulled out some change. He handed coins over one by one as he felt the edges with his right thumb. He placed the exact change on the counter. One quarter, one dime, one nickel, and two pennies. The cashier handed him three dollar

bills in exchange. He placed these in numerical order in front of the other bills in his wallet.

Twenties, tens, fives, and ones were organized precisely. Ask PaPa at any given moment and he could tell you how much money he had and how many bills of each denomination.

PaPa handed me my ice cream sandwich, hoisted the brown paper bag (there wasn't a plastic choice back then), picked up his sandwich and we headed home.

The trip back was quieter. I was intent on not losing a single drop of my melting ice cream. Back at Granny and PaPa's, I could hear the sound of grain bin dryers operating across the railroad tracks. PaPa sat me down on the front porch and went inside. The robust scent of hot tomato juice filled the air.

"Juice done?" He didn't think enough time had elapsed, but one never knew. He sat the grocery bag down on the table.

"Not quite. Where's Mellody?"

"She's on the front porch finishing her ice cream. I'm headed there now." He walked over to Granny, reached for her wrist with one hand and placed his other hand on her shoulder. He turned her toward him and kissed her on the cheek, "Don't forget to save us a glass."

Granny jabbed him in the ribs. "Get on with you, I'll save you a glass."

He chuckled and stole another kiss. "Where'd you hide the salt shaker?"

"Right here." Granny handed it over.

PaPa reached into his bib pocket and gave his wallet to Granny. "Put this up for me?"

"Sure." Granny slid the wallet into her apron pocket and turned back to her tomatoes.

"Gotta go. Mellody should be done." He placed the salt shaker in his bib pocket and made his way to the front porch. I was happily finishing my ice cream. PaPa said it was time to check the garden so I hopped up.

PaPa headed immediately to the yellow tomatoes. PaPa never raised red tomatoes. Granny had red tomatoes, yards from the yellow ones, but you never saw PaPa eat them. He even planted the red and yellow globes several yards apart to prevent cross-pollination. He insisted

he could tell the difference between the flavor of a yellow and red tomato and that red ones were second best.

PaPa gently squeezed tomatoes, much like the bread loaves, and finally chose two sun-warmed, round yellow orbs. We headed back to the porch, sat down and PaPa pulled the salt out of his bib pocket.

Sitting there, feet dangling, I bit into my yellow tomato. Warm juices raced down my chin. I slurped a stray drop and giggled, "PaPa, juice is drippin' on my legs."

"That's all right. Here, give me your tomato and I'll put some salt on it." PaPa reached over and gently grasped my wrist. He sprinkled salt and I took another bite. Even better. To this day I have to have something salty after dessert, "to take the sweet taste out of my mouth."

We sat there, feet swinging to a silent rhythm and contemplated the speed of juice drips. I watched with childlike fixation another drop meander from my fingers to my elbow.

Eventually, I heard Mom's car. She drove the only Volkswagen in town and it sounded like an electric sewing machine pattering down the road. I jumped up and gave PaPa a juicy kiss. I ran through the house and gave Granny her kiss goodbye. I sprinted out the door and across the yard.

PaPa plodded into the kitchen and sat down at Granny's table. The world seemed suddenly very colorless.

Granny approached. "Little Bit took off so fast she left her juice. Are you ready for a glass?"

"Sure." Granny did make good tomato juice even if it was red.

"Here you go, Dad." Granny placed the warm glass of juice in his hand and returned to the kitchen window where she observed me bursting into my Mom's arms.

"What did you do today?" Mom was squatting in front of me.

"I took PaPa to the store," I preened.

Mom gently brushed some sticky hair off my cheek. "That's nice. PaPa needs your help to get around, you know, since he's blind."

Running to Reality

by
Sarah Casaletto

"Running away from yourself I've tried that. It doesn't work"

--Ernest Hemingway

The ocean is a great poet-one of my favorites. It writes a sonnet with every wave that rolls on the sand or crashes into a rock. It carries its words to the farthest reaches of the globe and sings a song to those who listen close enough. I bury my feet in the sand and feel the gentle ocean breeze dance across my face while the ocean sings its poetry softly in my ear.

The gentle surf reaches out to touch my toes. I look out upon the edge of the world. Behind me lies civilization, home, and reality. I gaze across the blue water and forget the world that seems to constantly tug on my sleeve. Florida was a random decision. I decided to come here just hours before I arrived, finally redeeming my free flight voucher acquired during the hectic holiday season. I stepped outside of Palm Beach International Airport and decided my best bet would be to head east towards the ocean-my main destination.

As I walked it began to rain. The drops cleansed me, as if their freshness washed away reality, life, and frustrations. I walked a couple of miles until the moist salty air told me the ocean was near. My mind itemized the number of hotels I had seen on my hike from the airport-zero. While considering what items of clothing I could use as bedding, salvation came one block before the beach in the form of the Heart of Palm Beach Hotel. I deposited my bag along with my Master Card before continuing to the beach.

Now I stand here with bared feet and a bared soul-at peace, free, alone in my thoughts and feelings. I had come here alone, to escape life and all the uncertainties that seemed to haunt me. Everything seemed to demand an answer. My parents wanted to know what I planned to do with my life, while the school asked for more money. I

couldn't find a solid answer for anyone, not even myself. The ocean is here; it is faithful. It doesn't demand attention or responsibility-it just listens as I try to chuck my frustrations into its endless waters. I fill the next two days with bike rides in town, body surfing, mingling with strangers at the local coffee shop, and reading my tattered copy of *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau. I write in my journal to collect my thoughts. I watch the city around me and realize that if I were to stay here this would become the reality I am trying to escape from. It is the "real world", as my mother so eloquently says, that I can't run from. I realize the truth in that statement I so often blow off.

Still set on my rebellion to real life, I sit in a park that holds a fountain shooting water from holes in the sidewalk. The area is filled with children running around, laughing at the unpredictable towers of water. Watching them I think about their future. They live so carefree, not comprehending the dread I feel when I hear the words responsibility, work, future, or decision. I often hear people comment on how cute puppies are and they wonder why pups have to grow up. I wonder why we have to. As I jump into the geysers of water I vow never to lose what those children exemplify-free spirit.

After checking out of the hotel I realize my journey is nearing the end; however, one uncertain night still lay in front of me. When I say good-bye to the ocean the waves seem bigger, as if it is processing all of the frustrations that I had thrown into its depths just days before. I turn my back, listening to the crashing waves get quieter as my steps westward increase.

After a quiet afternoon admiring the art created by those who can actually claim the title of artist, I trudge to the airport with my newly acquired Monet print. After finding the right bus, I arrive at my transport back into my reality. I know that my flight won't leave until the next morning, but even the sidewalk outside sounds better than an over-priced night at the Holiday Inn. Inside the airport I pull two chairs together to form a bed and begin the countdown until my flight-I have twelve hours. I try to close my eyes and sleep away the empty hours, but for once the exhaustion doesn't come. I open my new

book and begin to read.

Twelve hours and 465 pages later, I sit in seat 15F peering out the window at Kansas City below me. I have a new job to start tomorrow, and a new semester to start in one week. I realize I still don't have all the answers, and I am not supposed to have them yet. The small buildings seem like a model of life, growing larger as we descend. I am suspended above the world, yet hurdling towards it, being thrown back into the things I thought I ran from. "Reality" is calling. The thud of the tires hitting the runway affirms that.

I remember standing at the ocean, thinking that in some perfect way I could live that way forever. I could stand at the edge of the world and chuck frustrations into the vast unknown, yell dreams into the wind, and listen to the dreams of others that have done the same. I can do all of that, yet the world still stands behind me, looming over my shoulder, demanding my attention. I hated being held accountable to the real world, but now I realize that reality doesn't have to be what society makes it out to be. I can create my own reality-I can move to a pond for two years, I can stay in Kansas City, and I can go to the ocean. I can choose to make each day, each adventure my reality--one I don't have to run from, but one I can constantly run after.



Gerald Clifford Miller, Jr.

Untitled pen and ink

Favorite Selection

by
Stefani Deines

“**T**he True harvest of my daily life is somewhat as intangible and indescribable as the tints of morning or evening. It is a little star-dust caught, a segment of rainbow which I have clutched.” This quote has stuck with me since the day I picked it out among all the other clutter that is known as Walden. Why has it inspired me, or just effected me so much? This quote has changed not only the way I read, write and think; it has changed my life.

When we began reading Henry David Thoreau, I made fun of him, calling him a “tree hugger” and other names. I never really made the time to sit down and read what this man had to say. I was so wrapped up in the original perception of the man I could not see past his myth. Finally after struggling for days, actually I never bothered to struggle with it, because I knew that I would hate it and I am always right. Well, then came what I like to call a “Zank” wake up call. I discovered that I didn’t know everything, probably the biggest shock that I have ever gotten. I sat down to read the chapter that I had been assigned for my presentation and I discovered that not only did I agree with what the man was saying I actually liked it. I discovered this little quote that has completely changed my life.

First of all I look at literature with an entirely new perception. I have begun to read novels, poems, and essays with an open mind, drawing from my mental resources to find what I view as the true meaning of the work. I have discovered that I can come up with some pretty original ideas and that I can actually prove them. I am no longer playing dumb, but thinking about what I write before I write it. In my Literature and Composition class my Freshman year I remember Professor Zank say that you really had to cook a good idea, roll it around in your head for days and than put it to paper. I never really understood that concept until I read this quote. All of a sudden I was applying this quote to all different contexts.

I was really beginning to mull over the meaning in my head. I thought of all different meanings, but most certainly applied it to my life.

When I first read this quote I applied it to the scientific community, genetic cloning and the like, but later that day I started to apply it to my own life. Lately I had totally forgotten to call or contact anyone in my family, I was completely neglecting my relationship to the most important people in my life. This quote reminded me that I must keep in contact, make that effort because I never know what will happen the next day. My mother and I have started to establish a better relationship, I am starting to actually communicate with my father and I am building a firm foundation with my nieces. All the people that are important to me know that I love them and that I still want to be a part of their lives even though I am extremely busy right now.

I discovered this little quote that has completely changed my life.

The quote also taught me another lesson, to seize the day. I have so many dreams that I want to accomplish before I am old and decrepit. I have learned that if I want to have my dreams come true, I cannot just sit around and wait for them to magically happen. I am making arrangements to study abroad in Australia, I am going to live somewhere other than my parents house, I am seriously considering going to England with a tour during the summer and I am looking for a job that I have never done before. I am seriously considering many careers for my post-graduation, but looking into each one carefully so that I can pick the one that suits me best and that will make me happy. This quote has truly changed my way of thinking. I am enjoying the small things, getting more and more accomplished. I am learning to be true to myself and what I want out of life, all from this little quote.

Henry David Thoreau will live on in my memory as the man who changed my life with a few simple words. I want to thank him because I believe that I am a better person and that I can only get better.



Nicole Hawkins

Untitled drawing



Nicole Hawkins

Look into the future

Drawing

Dating Dad

by
Sarah Casaletto

My father has big feet; therefore, he has big shoes. I never really knew how big those shoes were until I had to fill them. Last year, during one of my frequent semesters off, I was asked to fill in at our family's hardware store. For two months I worked ten-hour days and lived in the small office-turned-apartment above the store. Everyday I would retire upstairs, fall into the old leather recliner, and stare at the television to erase the stress of the day.

One night, while the mindless sounds of a sitcom filled the air, I noticed a stack of family photos sitting on the desk. I smiled and chuckled at the slide show of images from my past. Under the stack was an aged piece of notebook paper decorated with my sister's childhood handwriting. My eyes read the simple yet powerful words.

"Dear Daddy,
Would you please give up TV
so we can spend more time with you?

Love,
Angela, Sarah, and Krissy"

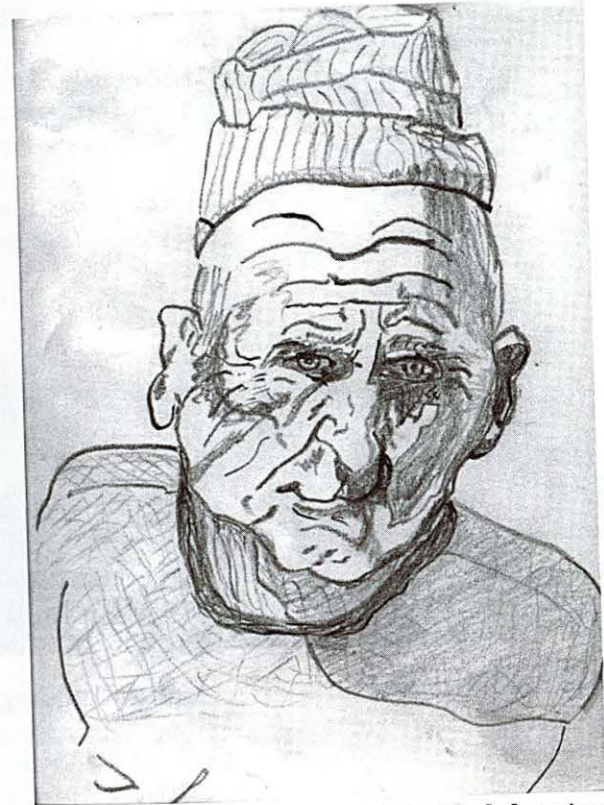
I couldn't remember writing the note. I didn't need to. I remembered my father giving us motorcycle rides in the driveway, helping me create a giant electromagnet for the fourth grade science fair, and taking us to the lake on hot summer weekends.

I looked at the television and realized just how tired I was. My head was still filled with customers' demands. My father put up with this for nearly 25 years, yet he would always pick us up and hug us tightly when we greeted him at the door with our sugar-highs and dirty hands. He must have been exhausted, but instead of relaxing in front of the television he listened to us and played with us.

One tradition that grew out of my father's busy schedule was Dad-Daughter date night. Every week he would take one of us out to dinner and a movie so we could spend time with him; however, the tradition faded

when Dad had to compete with important teenage priorities such as cute boys, pep rallies, and cruises down Main Street. Caps and gowns replaced curfews, and three girls in college demanded more sacrifices. He was still there with financial support, a trailer on moving day, and a never-ending supply of fatherly advice to kill even the worst case of homesickness.

I turned off the television and tried to imagine three little girls running around me. The sheer thought provoked suicide notes. I don't know how he did it, but somehow my father managed to take care of his family and care about his family at the same time. I smoothed out the note, picked up a pencil, and wrote the words "Thank you" across the top. Then I called my father and asked him out.



Vic Granneman

Untitled drawing



Michal S. Joachimowski

Untitled photograph

Rancor
by
Matias Menis

Rancor,
sad, evil and painful rancor.
I have tried to erase you repeatedly but you always flower
in the street of my thoughts.
Rancor,
I give everything to transform you to the past,
in memories that do not hurt me,
neither burn me or kill me.
Rancor,
I'm afraid when I see you in spite of the passage of time.
I am fearful of confusing you with love,
terror of losing the woman of my life because of you.
Rancor,
if I have tried to leave you behind on most occasions,
Why do you come back today?
Why don't you allow me to be the person that I am.
Rancor,
you don't let me see the changes and this new reality,
you have me tied up to acts that will not return.
Rancor,
leave my heart alone.
Let me leave the old betrayal aside.
Rancor,
allow me to be happy with the girl that I love like I was
before.
Rancor,
stay away from me.

"Miss Brill's View"

by
Tony Di Cianni

In the story "Miss Brill," by Katherine Mansfield, the setting is very interesting. Miss Brill was an observer of life, who was content in observing others. Most of her free time was spent watching people interact. Mansfield perceived events and surroundings creatively to form her unique style of writing. When reading this story one can assimilate the setting from the author.

Miss Brill resides in a place that seems to be very dreamlike. "[... T]he blue sky powdered with gold and great spots of light like white wine splashed over the Jardins Publiques [...]" (paragraph 1). This description obviously brings feelings of a nice day. Mansfield uses similes and unique phrases to draw the reader into a surreal atmosphere. "The air was motionless, but when you opened your mouth there was just a faint chill, like a chill from a glass of iced-water before you sip, and now and again a leaf came drifting" [...] (paragraph 1). Even though the place of the setting was clearly stated, the atmosphere, mood, and feelings can be inferred from the imagery.

The setting was at a band concert, and Miss Brill focused on the people who were entertaining to watch. She would even turn the conversations into a play to amuse herself. She was always the one watching. "Little children ran among them, swooping and laughing; little boys with big white silk bows under their chins, little girls, little French dolls, dressed up in velvet and lace" (paragraph 5). The physical descriptions of the setting are effective in describing the surroundings in the story.

The "leaf came drifting" statement while Miss Brill was in the park makes it feel near fall season. The day of the week is Sunday, which seems to be an exciting day for Miss Brill, a day of watching others outdoors, a day where everything is grand. When Miss Brill realizes her non-participatory life is difficult and lonely, the feeling of the life around her quickly changes from luminous and

dream-like, to lonely and dispirited. "On her way home she usually bought a slice of honey cake at the baker's. It was her Sunday treat" (paragraph 17). However, this Sunday she didn't buy her slice of cake. Miss Brill loses her cool for the first time, and goes home without her piece of the pie. Mansfield developed the setting with her own imagery, using Miss Brill as the perfect character to pull it off. And finally, when Miss Brill sees the world differently, the aspects of the setting change. "The box the fur came out of was on the bed. She unclasped the necklet quickly; quickly, without looking, laid it inside. But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying" (paragraph 18). The mood of the story quickly turns, and the feeling of Miss Brill in her home by herself brings a feeling of loneliness.

In the beginning of the story the setting is all happy-go-lucky because the characters are seen this way through Miss Brill. When she was affected, however, the mood of the story lost its surreal qualities and quickly changed to a feeling of despair and lonesomeness. Mansfield uses the setting nicely in stabilizing moods, surroundings, and the characters of Miss Brill's and others' lives. In this way, the reader can use Mansfield's setting to see the story from his/her own imaginative perspective.

The Growth of Creon

by
Jacob Scheve

Throughout Sophocles' play, "Antigone" the character of Creon grows as an individual. The character of Antigone does not. Antigone's heart is in the right spot when she buries her dead brother, but she refuses to consider anything but following the laws of the Gods. Blindly following an abstract idea, like that of a God, is dangerous. Antigone does not question the world around her like a person should. Questioning the world is the only way to grow as a person and truly know one's self. Antigone's ethic states:

The immortal unrecorded laws of God [...] are not merely now: they were, and shall be, Operative for ever, beyond man utterly. (1435)

Antigone believes that the unwritten laws of the Gods are higher than the laws of man. If man's laws interfere with or overstep the laws of the gods then the Gods' laws must be followed. In this play she is not willing to leave her brother unburied. Burying her brother is the right thing to do, but her willingness to die for it is wrong. She does not consider what her death will mean to others, like Haimon or Ismene. Antigone thinks death is nothing to her since she has done the right thing and is such a moral person. She forgets that although her death may not mean much to her, it will mean a lot to others.

She does not grow in character. She stubbornly follows the unwritten laws of the Gods. She is blind to anything but these laws. She follows them because that is what she is *supposed* to do. She is a lot like the grandmother in "A Good Man is Hard to Find." Antigone never considers the others living around her. She is selfish. Creon's ethic in the beginning is:

Whoever is chosen to govern should be obeyed-
Must be obeyed, in all things, great and small,
Just and unjust! (1440)

From this statement one assumes that Creon thinks himself equal to the Gods. He feels that his edicts and

laws must be followed. Anarchy is the greatest evil in Creon's eyes. He must control the people to stay in power.

There is more to Creon's ethic than just his feeling that his laws must be obeyed. He made a grave mistake when he said Polyneices must remain unburied. But, as a new leader, he must stick by his word. His edict about Polyneices was his first action as the new king. If he were to go back on his original word he would show weakness in himself as a leader. He would not be king long if he did this. He had to think hard about whether or not to let Antigone live.

In the end Creon changed his mind. He decided to let Antigone live. He agreed with her that the laws of the Gods must be followed first. He even went to free her with his own hands. This shows great growth in the character of Creon. Due to Antigone's disobedience, Creon has become a wiser man. And according to the Choragos:

There is no happiness where there is no wisdom
[...] And proud men in old age learn to be wise.
(1455)

Creon will become a better leader because of this incident. Antigone has taught him that he is not the ultimate power. Knowing he is not the ultimate power will enable Creon to stay in power much longer than without knowing.

At first glance, it seems that Creon is the one who sees himself equal to the Gods. In the end we find he does not believe this. Antigone, on the other hand, thinks herself to be the most ethical and good person because of her deed. She even says:

I should have praise and honor
for what I have done. (1436)

Perhaps it is Antigone that sees herself as equal to the Gods. After all, she ended up dead, not Creon.

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T. F. Williams

God's Child

Photograph

The Laws of Gods, The Laws of Men

by

Nicole Hawkins

Whe laws of the gods mean nothing to you I have no strength to break laws that were made for the public good" (Sophocles 1427). The laws of gods and the laws of men have always been in great conflict with one another, proved by the dialogue of Antigone and Ismene. There has always been severe, consistent struggle to obey the 'right' set of laws. Several laws of men are taken from the laws of their god or gods. In the work of literature, "Antigone" by Sophocles, the entity fought for is actually multiple gods due to the polytheist beliefs of the ancient Greeks. The Greeks began a form of democracy and fashioned laws to live by. Antigone, who usually only refers to one deity, strongly believes in and obeys the laws of her god. King Creon only focuses on enforcing and obeying the laws of men. Due to the obedience to laws of men, obedience to laws of gods, and the different levels of strength in obedience, beliefs and personalities clash between Antigone and Creon.

The law passed by Creon forbids the burial of his kin Polyneices. Polyneices defended Thebes against the greed and deception of his brother Eteocles and Creon. Eteocles sided with Creon to have the throne instead of sharing it with Polyneices. Creon accused Polyneices of treason because in actuality he was doing the right thing by trying to prevent Creon and Eteocles's rule. Creon gave Eteocles the honorable burial for a hero. Creon's law prescribed that traitors, speaking for Polyneices, were not to be given any honor. He tries to pretend that he is making a law for the good of the public. It appears he does the right thing against those who would commit treason.

King Creon is a noncognitivist character. He does not believe that moral judgment can be true. He thinks that moral judgment is only opinion. Creon represents the laws of men. Men have taken several laws of god or gods and incorporated them into society. However, there

are more man-made laws that secretly oppose the laws of the god rather than those that claim to obey the god. Creon believes that he can decide who lives or who dies for the good of his community. In making his own laws, Creon thinks that he may be higher than the gods. It gives him a power feeling of invincibility. He must fight to keep his laws or he will have no government and no public. His laws are kept in lieu of fear of the people. He will do whatever it takes to maintain order so he does not come across chaos. He can not appear weak to the people. If he appears weak, then they will not support him.

Creon is a blind fop when it comes to law. He does not take the time to consider the validity of his laws with the gods before he passes them. Laws are made only when it is convenient for the lawmaker. He only passes something as a law to make himself look better to the people. He only sees things as benefits for his power, as he states:

I'll have no dealings with
lawbreakers, critics of the
government: Whoever is
chosen to govern should be
obeyed—must be obeyed,
in all things, great and small,
just and unjust {...} good lives
are made so by discipline.
We keep the laws then, and
the lawmakers. (Sophocles 1440)

He refers to himself as he secretly boasts with foolish pride at his 'rightful' crown.

Antigone is the cognitive character. She strongly believes that moral judgment can be objectively factual. She believes that morality is a higher value than any man made law, especially if the law disobeys the laws of morality. Antigone's ethic is made clear in the literature by dialogue:

It was not God's proclamation.
That final Justice that rules the
world below makes no such laws.
Your edict, King, was strong, but
all your strength is weakness

against itself the immortal
unrecorded laws of God.
They are not merely now:
they were, and shall be,
operative for ever, beyond
man utterly. (Sophocles 1435)

She defies the laws made by Creon. His laws oppose the beliefs and conscience of Antigone. In her heart and her mind, she believes that she does the right thing according to her god. She obeys the longstanding, unchanged laws of her god rather than a convenient law enforced by a feeble man.

She believes that some of the laws of men are perfectly legitimate to break if they are unjust and contrast with laws of morality. Her gods are her creators and their laws are the only ones that Antigone must completely obey. She believes that it is only right that her brother deserves an honorable burial, "There are honors due all the dead Which of us can say what the gods hold wicked?" (Sophocles 1437). Antigone believes that both brothers, traitors or not, deserve proper and honorable burials. She can not say whether she is right or wrong. Only the gods can decide who is right or wrong. She can not let her brother's spirit suffer for doing what was right for the people.

Only the gods can decide who is right or wrong.

She justifies her action of betraying Creon's law by finding fault with his law. She knows that there was one motive behind this man made law; it was to keep the 'right' of Polyneices' actions away from public awareness. Polyneices died defending his right and his people against tyranny. In that specific circumstance, there is no justice in the law. The law's passing was only made to present Creon as a fearful man.

Creon does not have a strong belief in anything. He will do whatever it takes to keep his power over the people and the throne. He is fickle in his obedience to the law of both men and gods. His conviction in the laws of man is put aside to obey the gods. The only reason he

crosses over is to please the people and sort of apologize to the gods in case he angered them. He attempted to keep his beloved crown by passing a law that does not appease the god(s). He does not want the gods to harm him or his people so he can keep ruling. He presents an oxymoron type of case as he refuses to acknowledge Antigone's obedience to her god as justification for her crime. After it is too late, he suddenly turns to say, "The laws of the gods are mighty, and a man must serve them to the last day of his life" (Sophocles 1449).

Antigone strongly believes in her obedience to the laws of her gods. Her will and convictions are made of steel. She gives her life for her belief and obedience to the laws of her gods. She sacrifices everything to do what she believes is right in her heart and conscience. She agrees with Creon that there should not be honor to traitors or chaos among the people, but Polyneices was not a traitor to his people or the throne. She had the power that the gods gave her to reason with the heart, soul, and conscience. Her obedience is so strong that she knows she must sacrifice herself to show Creon how wrong he was.

Creon and Antigone clash beliefs and personalities due to their obedience, which turns to chaos and agony for many. They both have one similarity; they both want laws to prevent chaos. However, abiding by the laws of men and abiding by the laws of gods are two very different paths. The weak personality of Creon was never a match for the fire of Antigone. In the end, men fall to the obedience of the gods whether it is from fear, or from wisdom. In several occasions, the different laws of gods and men will lead one on a fierce conflict of morality and mortality.

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Mind vs. Heart

by
Stacy Shutt

Do you want me to agree with you
To tell you everything is all right
Nothing will come of harm
Nothing will be of tragedy

I can not tell you that
For I do not know
I am not sure if you will not hurt me
Or if I would hurt you

Do you want me to love you
To hold you all night
Nothing else matters
Nothing will come between us

I can not completely share that
For you act before you ask me
I am not sure if this feels right
Or if I just think
that it does



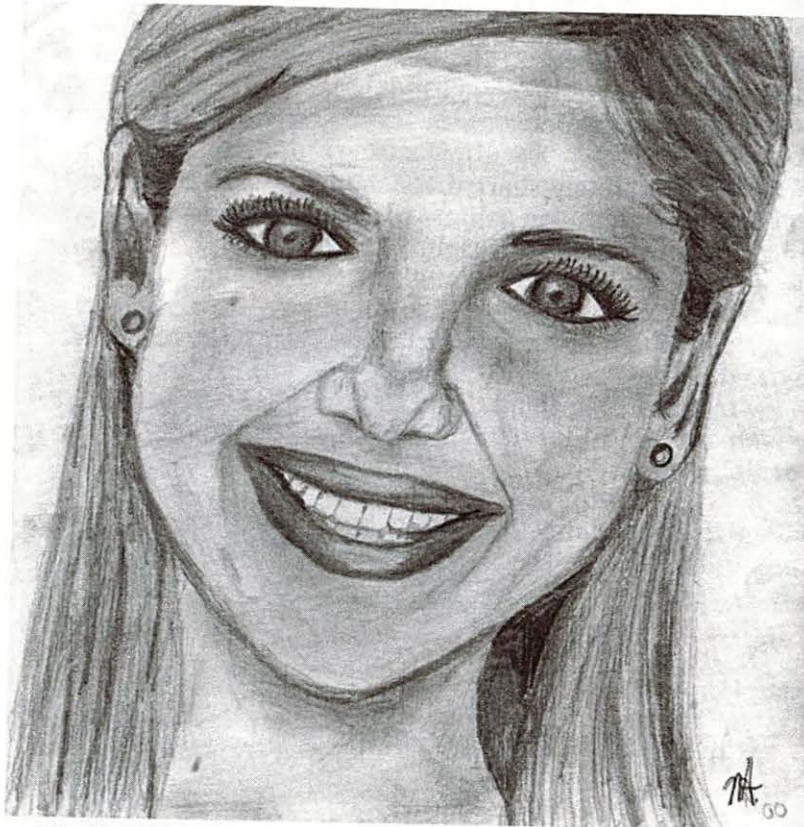
Carrie Birge
Untitled drawing

My Dearest Friend

by
John Winkle

My dearest friend,
Please take me by the hand.
I ask you to forgive my selfish pride,
For I know that I have lied.

Take this hand,
My beloved friend.
Chase away all fears and shame,
Help me to rid this horrible pain.

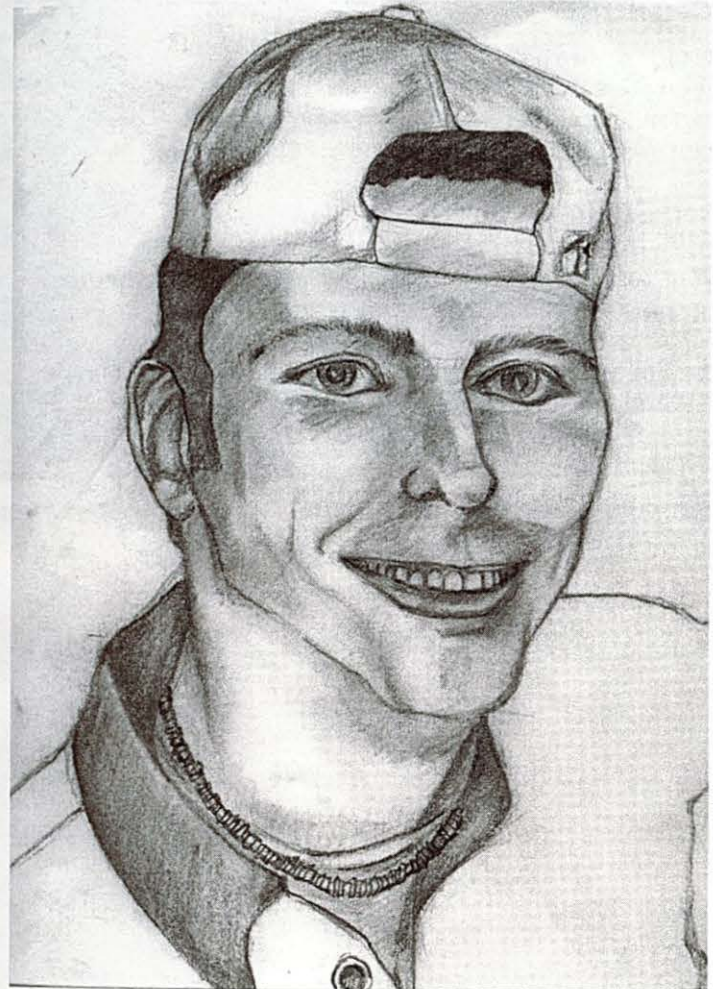


Nicole Hawkins

Untitled drawing

Friend I need help just to stand,
Upon this very shaky land.
I am asking for your hand to hold,
Because this world is so very cold.

Take my very hand
And lead us to the promised land.
With you as my friend each day
I know I will find our special way.



Shane Cristelli

Untitled drawing

Compare Younger and Older Days

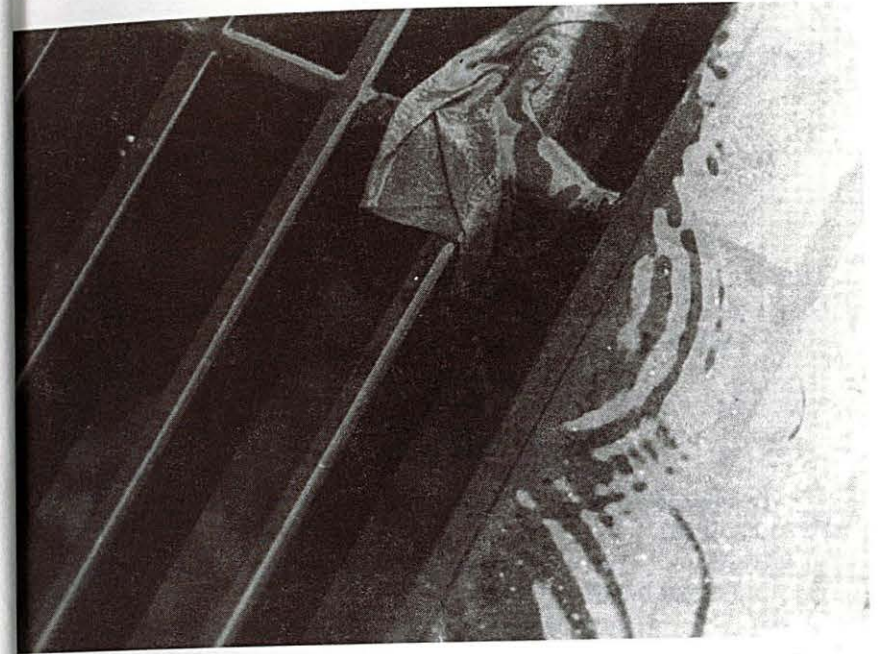
by
Jeffrey Johnson

Shall I compare younger and older days?
The smooth days of my youthful past
The eyesight is always here to stay
My memory is always there, mind is always last

The older of my siblings, I am the heir
When I flew a kite, it always in the air
Now I'm grown in college earning my degree
I been from here to there but I never cross the sea

Now the future but I live in present
MVC bound where I'm working on B.S
Paying for my education all my money will be spent
I'll get my degree and I'll be at my best

Since I'm graduating, now I've been happily married
But I'm old. I see my children and my loving wife



Jasmine McDowell

Untitled photograph

London Night

by
Sarah Casaletto

Darkness falls.
 Friend calls.
 Clothes on.
 Now we're gone.
 Pub crawl.
 Men brawl.
 Sirens wail.
Time to bail.
Disco tech?
 What the heck!
 Throbbing beat.
 Moving feet.
 Shots down.
 What a town!
 Mate found.
Mess around.
Late train.
 Fuzzy brain.
 Dawn peeps.
 Sin sleeps.

Jaded Phases

by
Jason Allen

Once I was a rock star,
So wild and free,
The stage was my home,
For you and for me,
Or so I thought,
And then I grew up.

Then I was an athlete,
Rugged and strong,
Hard work and sweat,
This is where I belong,
My time is up,
And I move on.

Today I'm here,
Striving for a degree,
I am still immature,
But that is just me,
I am conquering mountains,
But only of books,
Learning that life,
Is not how it looks.

Tomorrow is coming,
Tomorrow is here,
Things in my path,
Are not yet clear,
Am I a father? A husband?
Am I even a man?
What is this life,
That I hold in my hand?

Heroes and Legends

by
Jason Riddle

Last snap
Last possession
Payoff pitch
Final heat
These are moments when heroes are born and legends
are solidified.

Now is the time to step up
A chance to showcase your ability
when the pressure is the highest and glory the sweetest
The beginning of total focus and determination
when you put the outcome on your shoulders

The quarterback knows he must take it himself
The pitcher knows that he must throw a perfect pitch
The ball handler realizes improvisation is abundant
The gun sounds
The crowd braces itself

The defense senses the quarterback scramble
The pitcher cringes at the sound of contact
The ball handler runs out of options
Each runner matches each other stride for stride
The crowd begins to grow restless

The quarterback follows blockers
juking his way to the end zone
The centerfielder reacts, races the ball to the fence
The ball handler mentally plans out his strategy
The leader distances himself from the pack
The crowd continues to grow restless
as time seems to stand still

The quarterback, down to the one, laterals as he is hit
The centerfielder leaps above the fencing
to take away the homerun
The ball handler breaks for the basket

drawing multiple defenders
An unexpected final kick from one of the followers.
Time stands still

The recipient crosses the goal line and wins the game
The centerfielder extends his glove
to grab the would be homerun, saving the game
The guard passes off to a wide open teammate
who sinks the game winning shot
The leader gets out sprinted to the finish line
The crowd embraces the new heroes and existing legends
for doing what it took to win



Gerald Clifford Miller, Jr.

Untitled pen and ink

Never Lose Hope

by
Jason Riddle

Suicides and wind sprints,
lay ups, jump shots and free throws.
Over and over again,
practice makes perfect.

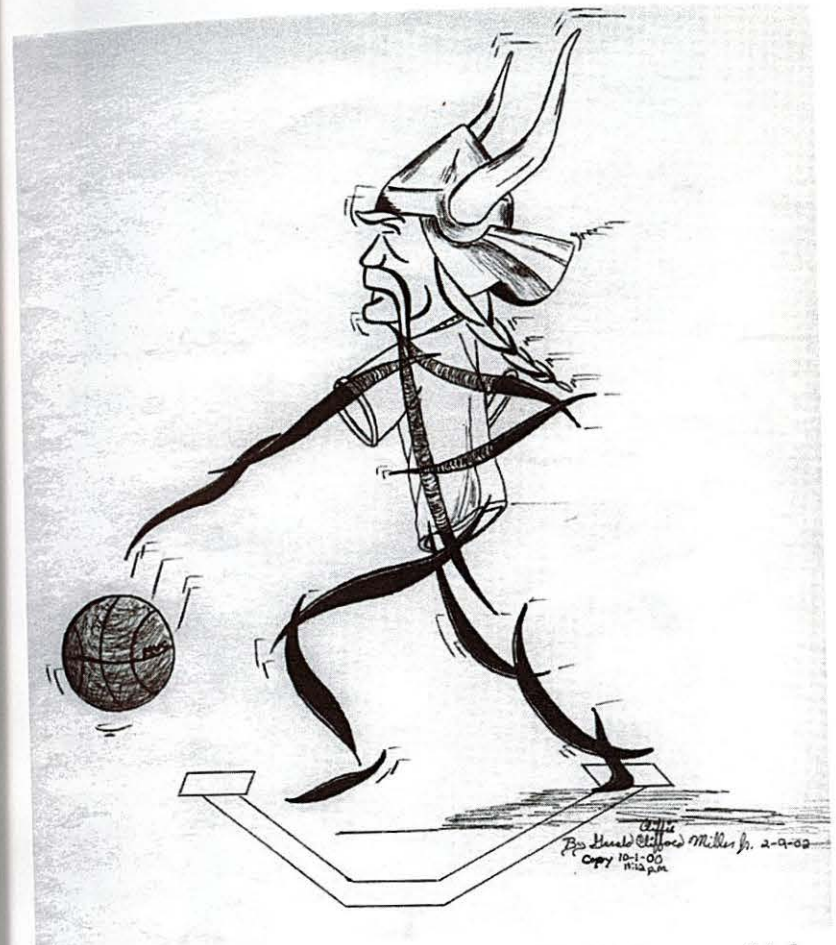
Time to scrimmage,
must compete, no letting up,
impression must be made,
and worth must be proved.

Another practice is over,
another chance lost,
should've spoken a little louder,
and tried harder.

Game after game on the pine,
No longer wanting to exist,
and embarrassed to belong.
Too afraid to speak up.

Continue leaving it all on the floor,
but its still not enough.
It never is or ever will be,
and frustration sets in.

Sudden butterflies, packed house,
First game seen by your biggest fan.
Make the most out of the chance.
Jump shot, clock running out, basket counts.



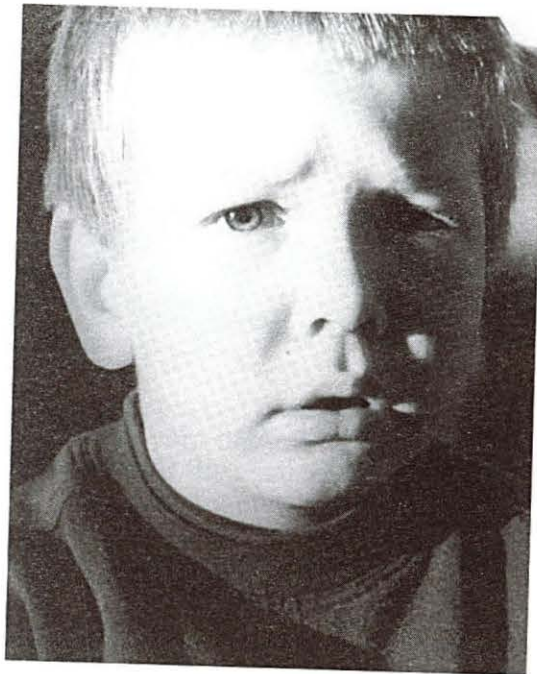
Gerald Clifford Miller, Jr.

Untitled pen and ink

Little Helper

by
Jake Singleton

"Hold you," said he
The little boy
His arms, outstretched
His eyes of joy
And if not at first embraced
The saddest look upon his face
His droopy little arms they swung
"Hold you! Hold you!"
His soft voice sung.



Michal S. Jaachimowski
Untitled photograph



Mellody R. Allee *Silent Snow* Photograph

Side by Side

by
David Hunter

I remember it now!
The memory came back so clear,
I cried.
You were with me again,
On the bank of the lake.
Our poles lined up,
Side by side.
Father and son, the best of friends.
We laughed,
We talked,
We fished,
Standing side by side.
I caught my first fish,
I remember your smile.
You've been gone so long, but I remember it well.
If you were here today,
You would be smiling again.
I'm here with my own son,
Laughing and fishing like we used to do.
Father and son,
Standing,
Side by side.

"... Tell Me All Your Thoughts on God..."

Bono

by

Jasmine McDowell

I cannot sing. I realize this fully. I have yet to find my own voice. So, I remain silent, listening intently. I cannot join the masses. My voice cannot commingle with the (as Huston Smith states on page 2, "The Religions of Man") "God-seekers of every clime [who are] lifting their voices in the most diverse ways imaginable to the God of all men." I am not part of this chorus. Instead, I stand apart wondering how all this must sound to him. I wonder if it is nothing more than incessant chatter or if somehow it blends in perfect harmony-ear candy given to the divine. Perhaps, my problem is that I listen too much. But, since I cannot hear God I listen to the audible sounds around me. I'm listening carefully. And I hear the following: "Man is nothing more than his plan; he exists only to the extent that he fulfills himself; he is therefore nothing else than the ensemble of his acts, nothing else than his life..." Jean-Paul Sartre, atheistic existentialist. I can't help but to wonder how this proclamation must sound to God.

I find aspects of existentialism intriguing but unlike Sartre, I know that I am not an atheist.

I don't think that man alone can create an infallible universe. I realize that Sartre wasn't a religious forerunner and there is an essential difference between philosophy and religion. However, I believe that they're delicately intertwined. To my knowledge, philosophy is comprised of core logic and ethics, metaphysics and epistemology. Religion, on the other hand, is the principle set of beliefs that are deeply and emotionally connected to our being. Philosophy is the walk through the mental labyrinth. Religion focuses on the final destination. This inherently, for me, is the ultimate problem of my personal existence. I do not know what conviction that I adhere to and thus I am unsure of my ultimate objective. Due to my ambivalence, I am unsure if there is an inherent problem that plagues mankind. I see many

problems, but that is simply my personal opinion. I'm not omnipotent or inerrant because I am not God. Therefore, it is not for me to judge.

I feel as though I am in slow emergence from Socrates' chamber in "The Allegory of the Den." I have not attained enlightenment but nor am I encased in a bleak ignorance.

I believe simply, that I am a child of God, whatever form he may be.

The quest for the absolute truth is very much like the task of trying to map a world that is round on figures that are flat. What one is able to see and comprehend is always slightly distorted from reality. Maps are therefore inferior copies of an inferior copy.

I do not wish to partake in the fallacy.

I will not sing until I have my own pure voice to intermingle with the other harmonies. I will continue struggling with my cognitive dissonance, until I can find a middle ground where I can justly balance philosophical arguments and deep, religious sentiment.



Melody R. Allee

Silver Lining

Photograph

A Crash for an Insomniac

by
Nicole Hawkins

The open black stream
with tiny flickers of yellow and white
guides us on our journey.
Feelings of euphoria surround me
as my eyes glowed like a child's.
Your masculinity and sensitivity surrounded me
as I sat in your protective shell.
Nothing could touch us.
We were invincible.

Suddenly,
the blue tint of the sky turned red.

Inside my body,
madness struggled to escape.
Electricity shot through my cells confusing me.
The outside began to take the form
of an abstract painting.
Cold fear caused my limbs to tremble.
The path was lost.
We were flying wherever the commanding winds took us.

CRASH!
Was I alive?
Gasping for air,
feeling the earth,
opening my eyes to a cold white blur.
My newborn eyes found you.
You,
crushed bones and crimson blood
soaking the ivory blanket on the ground,
breathless,
lifeless.

The force of your own machine collided with Mother
Nature to take your life.
Your pain was gone.
Mine was just beginning.
I could do nothing but stare into your empty blue orbs

and scream out for you.
DADDY!
DADDY!!!

Waterfalls of salt ran down my youthful red cheek.
My shield against reality had been ripped from my
innocence.
A father's love,
happiness,
my best friend,
gone to oblivion forever.
You left me alone in this harsh world.



Michal S. Jaachimowski

Untitled photograph

A European Mansion

by
Amber Clemens

The Biltmore Estate came about because of George W. Vanderbilt's travels through Europe, where for centuries nobility had been creating grand country estates. Today, Biltmore Estate is one of the few historic sites in America still privately owned and completely self-supporting. The Biltmore Estate is located on U.S. Highway 25 just north of Exit 50 or 50B off of Interstate 40 in Asheville, North Carolina.

George W. Vanderbilt, son Cornelius Vanderbilt, who was a shipping and railroad tycoon in the 1800's, built this 255-room mansion on 125,000 acres in 1895 based on his European trips. You can tour year around from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and see the 70,000 European objects used in the house. The highlight of your tour will be the library, which contains over 23,000 books in eight different languages.

At first, you will come to Biltmore to see a piece of American history, but soon you will be so captivated by the charm and beauty of the estate that it will come alive. The mansion looks as if the Vanderbilts are merely on vacation, leaving everything intact.

The main floor has rooms to be used by all. The winter garden is furnished with bamboo furniture bought in France by Mr. Vanderbilt, a Viennese fountain in the center, and live palm trees and flowers grown by the sunlight from the glass ceiling.

Next on your tour in the massive banquet hall, over 70 feet long and 40 feet wide with 70 foot ceiling, it has three fireplaces, a 28-person table, and five tapestries, prototypes for the famous Venus and Vulcan tapestries, adorning the walls.

Turning the corner you will find an informal dining area, the breakfast room with Spanish leather walls and a jasperware mantel, found in North Carolina but sent to England to manufacture.

Next, you will walk down the 90-foot gallery and see a large collection of George's treasures and three

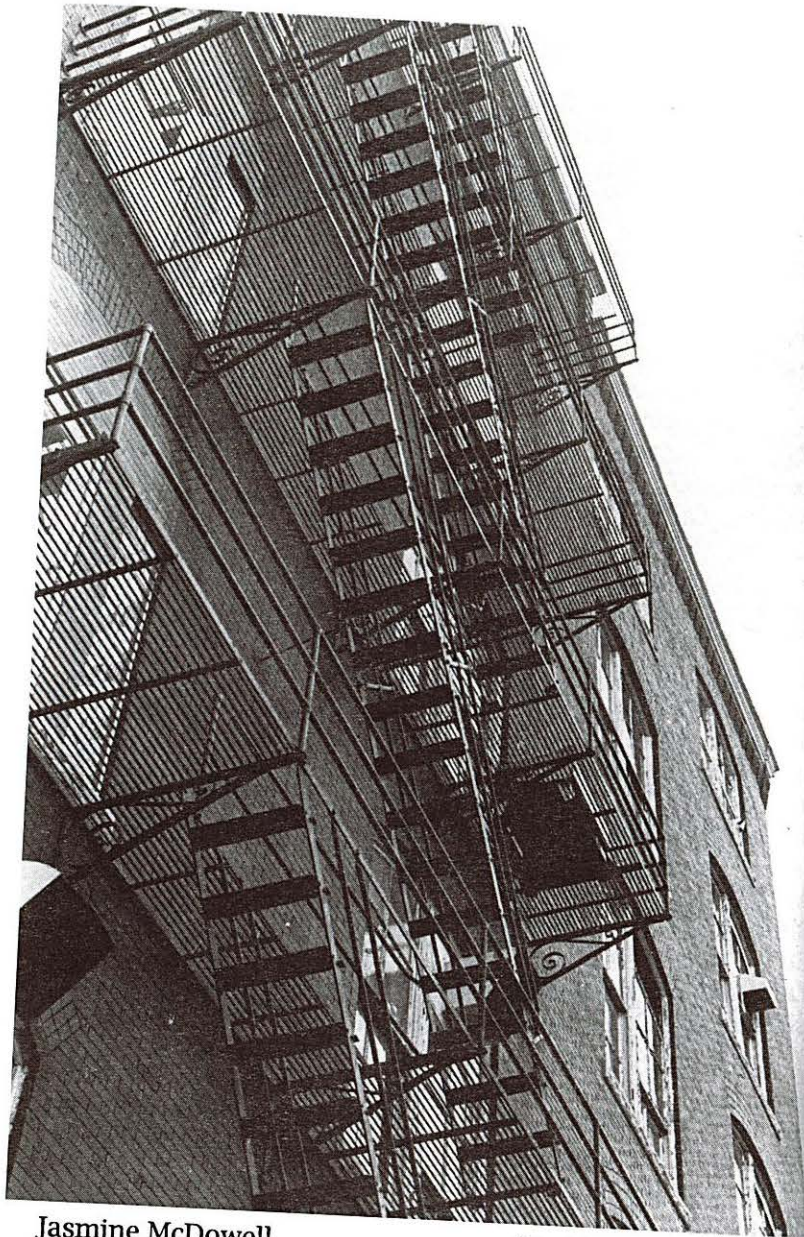
Brussels tapestries representing "The Triumph of the Seven Virtues."

The second floor has seven guest suites, five bedrooms in the Bachelor's Wing, two living areas, and two bedrooms with accompanying baths for Mr. and Mrs. Vanderbilt. You walk into George's bedroom, you see Louis XVI décor reflected by the French tastes for lavishness just before the Revolution. Mrs. Vanderbilt's oval-shaped bedroom reflects the Louis XV style with graceful curves, yellow silk walls, and upholstery in purple and gold velvet.

Traditionally, the third floor was reserved for guests, who could reside in one of the remaining 32 guest rooms of Biltmore. The basement was to represent all the entertainment aspects found in the country estates of England. Guest could make use of the indoor pool, the bowling alley, or the gymnasium. Also in the basement: were the various kitchens, including, a pastry and rotisserie kitchen.

If you still want to explore more of the European estate, visit the extensive gardens and grounds surrounding the house. Also, you may want to see the Biltmore Winery or the Deerpark Restaurant. Originally a dairy barn, Deerpark has been renovated into an open-air restaurant serving a variety of cuisine. Your visit to Biltmore promises to take you back to live the good life.

Author's note: If you would like more information on the Biltmore Estate, read the Summer 2001 edition of "Travel Etc.," the book, "Biltmore Estate: A National Historic Landmark" by the Biltmore Company, or visit their website at www.biltmore.com.



Jasmine McDowell

Untitled photograph

THE BIKER AND THE PREACHER

by
Melody Allee

The biker sat at the cigarette burned bar.
He slumped and rested his tattooed arms on the ledge.
He couldn't remember the journey and falling so far
that he was now teetering on the edge.

Drugs had fogged his mind and ruined his body.
He sat dreaming through the haze of bygone days.
He stood up slowly and staggered out of the lobby,
looking for a new path along the way.

He bumped into a preacher on the road
and started to just pass him on by, when
he thought to perhaps lighten his hard load.
The pastor was more than happy to pray with him,

"Father, give us strength to do your will.
Pain, fear, and loneliness, right now, please kill."

The biker munnured, "Amen and amen."
The pastor shook his hand and said, "Someday,
I know I'll see you with Jesus again."
The biker wandered alone through the day,

but pain and loneliness he did not feel.
He tried to pretend to himself that it wasn't God
who had made the difference - after all, was He for real?
He mounted his bike and he looked at his rod.

He knew God was telling him what to do.
He trekked one thousand miles in that single instant.
He heard Jesus say, "I died just for you."
Back home with his woman, on knee he bent,

"Marry me, please. Let me make you my wife.
I've accepted Christ. He will change our life."

His love thought of the ragged suitcase she'd packed.
She looked in his eyes and she saw something new.
She thought of their life and all it had lacked.
She pictured their baby, of which only she knew.

He begged, "Don't decide, just please come with me."
And out the door to the driveway he led
her hopefully, tenderly, gently, and excitedly.
There sat a new car all shiny and red.

"I've sold the bike. I sold the pistol, too."
Still no answer, so he looked in her eyes,
"I want a new life. I want it with you."
His eyes filled with tears when she did reply,

"God bless us and keep us in love always.
Yes, I'll marry you. Our child's on the way."

It didn't take long to find the right church
where the pastor who'd prayed with him preached.
On the edge of their chairs they did lightly perch,
afraid and not knowing it was God to Whom they reached.

"So you want to get married. And then what?
Do you think you can make it on your own?"
The pastor didn't mean to discourage them, but
he'd seen too many impulses gone wrong.

They looked at him and were kind of surprised,
but they knew he had a very good point.
They looked at each other and realized
that God could indeed their family anoint.

"Preacher, we know we might make mistakes.
But, we also know there's only one path to take."

The years sped swiftly by and their family grew.
God blessed them more than they had ever imagined.
The biker got a good job and they bought a house, too.
And then something sad did finally happen.

Their longtime friend and preacher died of cancer.
They wondered what good God had in that plan,
when at the funeral they received their answer.
Their friend had left a card in his own hand

dated years before when they had just met.
It said, "Father, today I met a new friend.
I know you sent him to me so I'd get
your message loud and clear. I'd forgotten

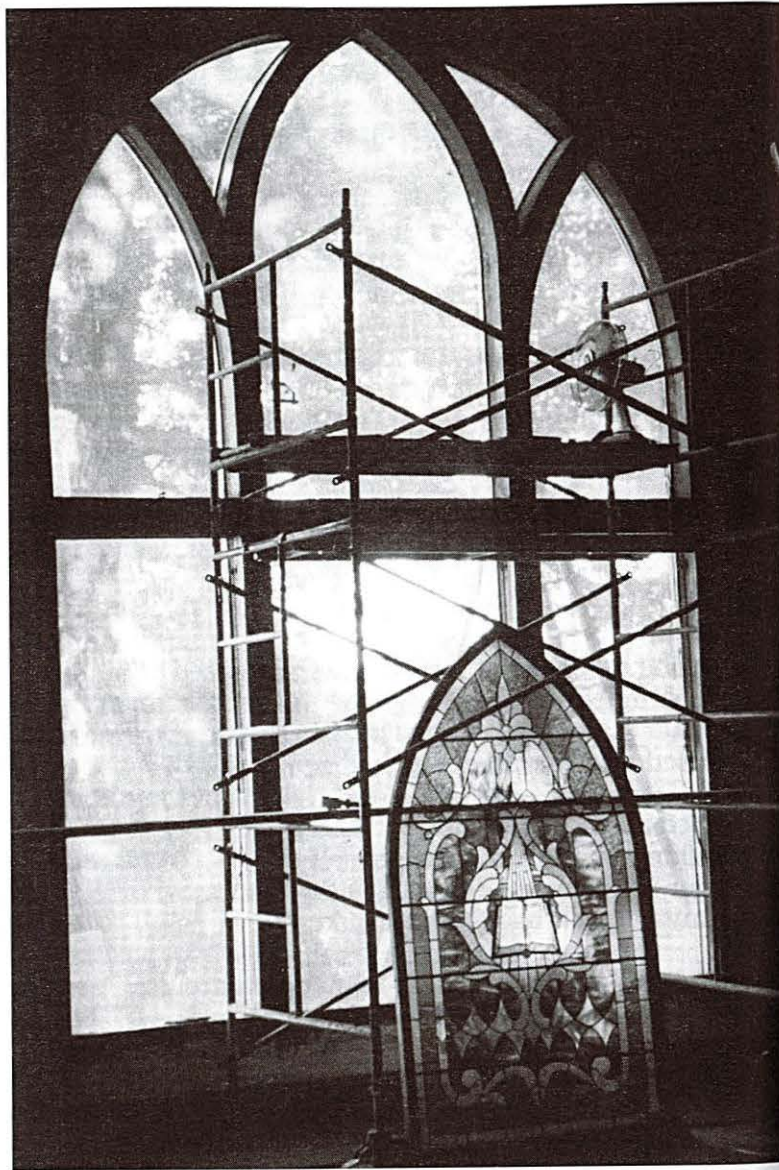
there's something much worse to fear than disease.
Without salvation the pain never leaves."

The old biker looked at his wife and she gazed at him.
They continued to read the note their friend had left.
"The biker started to pass me by, when
he paused on the road. He looked so bereft.

He asked me to lighten his load and pray.
He couldn't know how low, I, myself felt.
But your will I love to do through the day,
so in my mind on bended knees I knelt.

I prayed you would take away fear and pain
and it was lifted away from us both.
So now, Lord, I come to you once again
to ask that on my death my friend won't be wroth.

That he will know that day, the difference he made
in the life of a man with whom he prayed."



Melody R. Allee

Photograph

Under Construction: Window to the Soul

Pancakes and Checkers

by
April Getzloff

There was a time in my life when I couldn't wait to start the day. My mother promptly woke me at 6:45 each morning and I'd jump out of bed, ready to meet the challenges of a wondrous new day. My alarm is now set fifteen minutes ahead, and every morning I struggle to get my feet on the floor. Those minutes allow my body to gradually come out of its coma and avoid morning monstrosities. My reluctance stems from not having a sufficient reason to leave the comfort of my slumber. But when I was ten, pancakes and checkers were all the reasons I needed.

After throwing on the usual T-shirt and faded blue jeans and quickly running a brush over my teeth and pulling back my hair, I gave Mom a kiss goodbye and ran out of the house. The screen door slammed behind me as I jumped on my bike and raced for my grandparent's home two blocks away. As I soared away on my ten-speed, tears puddle in my eyes from the wind blowing in my face. My white mountain bike was my means of transportation, except in the winter when it was hung in the garage. In less than a minute my stomach grumbled, acknowledging the smell of breakfast as I sped up the cement path to the door.

Without knocking, I entered to see Grandma standing over the stove flipping pancakes and scrambling eggs. Molded from Mrs. Claus, she stood only a hair over five feet tall. I teased her that she was shrinking every year. She just said I was growing. Neither side wanted to admit time was changing us all. Almost everyday, she wore loose cloth cotton dresses with printed flowers in assorted colors. It wasn't until Grandpa died that she started wearing slacks regularly.

My grandpa was already throned at the banquet table, which seated four people comfortably, if they didn't move their feet. His seated, giant monarch figure towered over me. Because of a stroke, he had been confined to a wheelchair, thus I never saw my

grandfather stand, but the pictures I have seen provide proof of his great size. Legend has it Grandpa's wedding ring measured the circumference of a silver dollar.

By the time I washed my hands, Grandma had the feast on the table. After grace, the meal commenced. The aroma of freshly brewed coffee and the sound of our voices discussing the events of the newly started day filled the air. Grandma made sure I had orange juice. I was too young to think coffee was any good. When we had finished eating, I would help clear the table and start washing the dishes. Grandma always told me not to worry about them. She said I had enough to worry about at school. They gave me strong hugs goodbye and Grandpa gave me instructions to be a good little bunny rabbit. Then I was on the road again. I met Dennis, a neighbor boy, at the end of the driveway and we guided our bikes through an abandoned grassy field filled with mole holes, the shortcut to school.

Saying goodbye until the next day, I entered through the short white gate, leading to Eden.

The four-room brick schoolhouse, only for the third and fourth grades, stood in the middle of an adjoining field, but the pine trees planted around the boundaries helped to give it some life. I placed White Lightning with the other bikes by the flagpole and went into the third grade. I sat through my classes counting down until 3:05. When the final bell rang the race began. Dennis and I competed back through the minefield hoping to be the first to the paved road. He usually won, but it was always close. Saying goodbye until the next day, I entered through the short white gate, leading to Eden.

Grandma was waiting for me among the smiling flowers that decorated the trees shading the green lawn. Birdhouses, bushes, berries, fountains and figurines lived in Eden and were as sacred as the forbidden tree of knowledge. Grandma had strict rules about her lawn decorations. They were not to be touched. Children could

play in the small yellow sandbox under the big tree. That was it. The rest of the lawn was to be looked at and admired, not played with. Grandma did entrust me with the job of watering her flowers. After handing me the hose, I proudly mazed around the yard, making sure each plant was given a drink. I was careful, making sure no petals were sliced off from the water's pressure. When all the flowers had a drink and every fountain was full, it was time to head inside.

Grandma sat down for a rest and picked up her embroidering while I grabbed the checkerboard from the game cabinet. I set it on a TV tray in front of Grandpa's motorized recliner and slid the beige footstool across the brown carpet to use as a chair, seating myself across from him. He always let me go first and every time I thought I had a chance to win. Grandpa scratched his round chin and grinned, then strategically placed his checker. He trapped me like a cat after a mouse, first playing with me, letting me think I had a chance, but then moving in for the kill. I never won. Nobody ever won. Even after his second stroke he was seldom defeated.

I left with hugs and kisses, thinking there would always be a next day.

Finally, it was time for People's Court. Wheel Of Fortune and The Grand Ole Opry were the only other shows ever on their television. Everything else was considered inappropriate. My grandfather insisted on watching Judge Wapner everyday, even though my grandmother despised it. She thought Judge Wapner yelled too much, and the people involved should have known better. Nevertheless she continued to watch it everyday at four until it was cancelled, even after Grandpa died. After Wapner made his ruling decisions, it was time to go home. Dad would be home from the paper mill by now. I left with hugs and kisses, thinking there would always be a next day.

The morning and afternoon visits ended when it was time to go back to the main school, which housed all of the other grades, in the next town. Occasionally, I got

off the bus at their house even though I was now big enough to stay home alone. I started thinking that watching cartoons was more important than watering flowers or playing checkers and soon the stops ended. Grandpa died a short year after my return to the big school. When I started driving to high school sports, that kept me busy and I never made the time to stop after practices. Now it's too late. My frail grandmother, nearing ninety, had to leave Eden behind, unable to care for herself. Confined to a wheelchair, she can go to the sitting area next to her room at the nursing home to see her precious plants on display, which were brought to her when the house had to be sold.

She has started to give away her things, stating matter of factly that she won't be around much longer. Fortunately she's been saying that for years now. Grandma has given me her embroidered dish towels and Grandpa's worn checkerboard. They are simple items that lie among my prized possessions as reminders of what is really important in life.

Just Life
by David Hunter

I am a simple man,
I have no master plan.
I go to work every day,
Pay the bills when they're due.
I'm obscure; I'm invisible,
I'm noticed by few.
When each day has ended,
I turn out the lights.
I crawl into bed and tell myself,
Goodnight.
This path that I've taken
Was it destined for me?
If I could live my life over,
This isn't how it would be.
But life has no rewind,
There's no second chance.
I just learn to accept it,
And take no backward glance.

Help
by David Hunter

Homelessness, Loneliness
Bitterness, Despair.
Children are dying,
Does anyone care?
Bigotry and hatred,
Hunger and strife.
What do we tell them?
Get on with your life.
There are people out there
Who sleep in the rain.
Women and children
Living in pain.
We can't save them all,
Many will die.
But we need to help them,
God knows we must try.

"Existentialism Spread like Cancer"

by
Jasmine McDowell

She laid in her room on balmy nights
Tasting her own complacency.
It hung about her lips.
Thinking not of today
But longing for a tomorrow
That would always be another night away.
Sartre was her salvation
Content to be forlorn;
Meaningless
Only breathing.

She stood on the porch
Watching ants, by the thousands
Scurrying in standard formation,
Marching violently into battle.
Would they be so valiant, if only they had known
That today's accomplishments
Will soon fade into the nothingness
That separates today
From another balmy night?

Tonight she stirred
and arose from her slumber
Interrupting his dream. She smelled sweetly of sleep.

She rose to light a cigarette.
The sulfur burned his senses
As he watched the shadows dance insolently in her shirt.

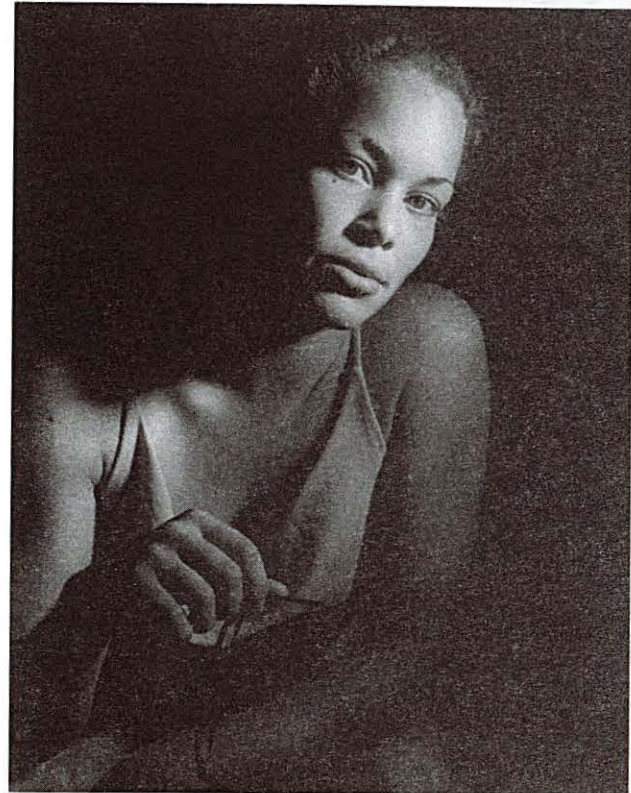
Inhale.

Marching stoically into battle;
Wrestling with her subconscious.
God.
Maybe she's simply been misunderstood.

Exhale.

He lies down slowly, content to settle into the safety
of his dreams,
Breathing sour air.
He stirs for a moment
And falls into nothing.

She rises from the bed, dancing in the air like pungent
smoke
and drifts out unto the porch
Searching for her ants of battle
she finds herself
Sitting and watching the world fly by
When she realized all along ~
She's the one passing.



Michal S. Jaochimowski Untitled photograph



Laura Fennell

Untitled ink drawing



Laura Fennell

Untitled ink drawing

Stand Beside Myself

by
Jason Allen

I stand beside myself,
On a tombstone sidewalk,
Often times, I say hello,
But very rarely will he reply.

I stand beside myself,
On an epitaph of chalk,
There are reflections in puddles,
Where a person has died.

I stand beside myself,
Conversing with a stranger here,
We watch the cars rush by,
Rippling the water and making leaves dance.

I stand beside myself,
As headlights grow near,
Leave glimmers of tomorrow,
He holds my hands.

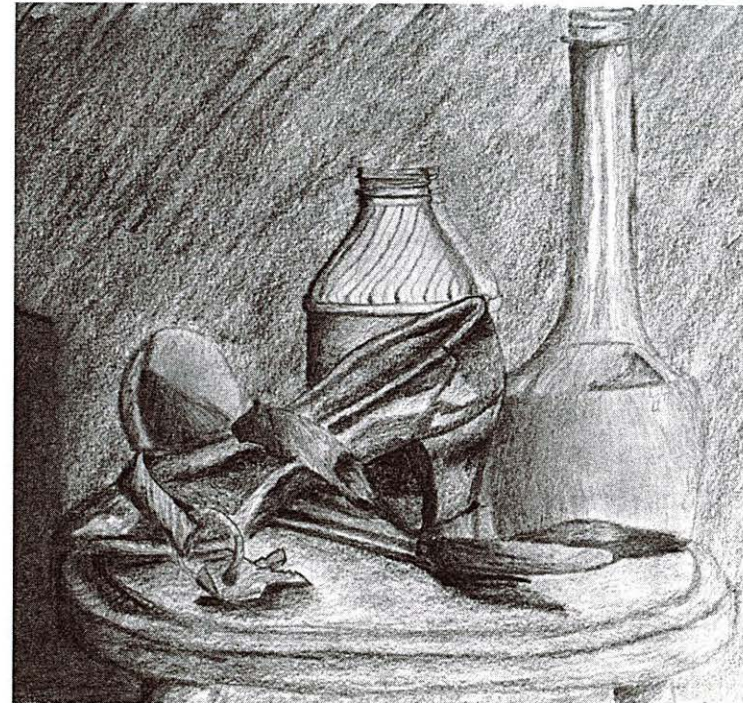
I stand beside myself,
The stranger and I,
His arms wrapped around me,
He consumes my breath.

I stand beside myself,
Inside my mind,
The arms that once protected,
Now bring on death.

Hear My Call

by
Jason Allen

I play my instrument at the dark of night,
To shade my eyes of the afterlife,
My stars are bright, but twinkle dim,
And wait for me to call on them,
I pray for patience, and without a doubt,
The sky is grateful that I call about,
"Speak up," I firmly say to Thee,
And hope that he will answer me,
Through the silence, I sit alone,
Knowing I am on my own,
I must break these chains of pain and guilt,
For the day will come my rose will wilt,
When it's time, He'll know I'm here,
As I play my instrument loud and clear.



Elisa Hutchinson

Still Life

Drawing



Melody R. Allee

Grey-bitten Shack

Photograph

T
H
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Below Monterey
Wild coast,

S

L

O

P

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N

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Acres

Above a cliff

Dropped

To

Brown

Reefs

Hissing waters

Glinting Blue Ocean

Stone Mountains

Against sky

Buildings like clinging aphids

Crouched low

The little shack grey-bitten

Beaten by wind

Color of granite

Horses, a calf

Pigs and chickens

Corn on sterile slope

Short and thick

The farm

Poem by Stefani Deines

found in Steinbeck's "Flight"

"Zankisms" of Life

by
Melody R. Allee

"How big is your universe?"
Investigate your world.
Inner.
Outer.

Laugh at yourself.
It's a "hairy-dog" trip around the sun
and we only have so many tickets.
Laugh at life.

"If life doesn't have a life-lesson by the minute,
it is not worth living."
Life is not just an action and a re-action.
Explore the path — of the dash — in-between.
Life contains some "monkey-ugly" stepping stones.
You can let them trip you or you can trip right on past.

"There is a hunger in each of us for harmony."
Find your own "mini-Walden."
Examine old things.
Value the innovative
and cherish the classic.
Read the "Big Fish" story.

You can be a "tree-hugger" or you can hug the tree.
Stay in the shelter of the limbs or step out into life.
Get cleansed by the rain, burnt by the lightening,
and lost in the fog.
But step out into the sun.

Live.

And laugh at your stumbling and humbling,
bumbling along the way.

"Think your own thoughts."
Invent your own "killer quotes."
Strive for genius.
Never, ever accept moderation .

"Use your mind to overcome matter"
and
"Create your own myth."

These are the "Zankism's" of Living Life.

Editor's note:

Already twice in this magazine you've encountered the terms "Zankified" and "Zankism" in essays. These are, I'm sure, new terms for a lot of our readers and they refer to a school of thought or life criticism (vs. literary criticism) by Virginia Zank, an instructor here at Missouri Valley College. Hopefully, this poem with direct quotes from the "Zank woman" herself, will help you, the reader, to unravel the mystery of the definitions for "Zank" terms.

The Purple Patch

A MAGAZINE OF LITERARY ♦ ART PATCHES

The white paper contrasts deeply with the black ink stamped upon it. The words seem uniform, organized in paragraphs and formatted onto the page. A person reads over the words, leaving the page intact, until he or she sees a portion where the black ink seems darker, as if the passage of writing were jumping off the page. The highlighter comes out, and the page is now marked, the significant passage a new color all its own. This is known as a "purple patch." The Handbook to Literature by Harmon and Holman defines a purple patch as:

A piece of notably fine writing. Now and then authors in a strongly emotional passage will give free play to most of the stylistic tricks in their bag. They will write prose intensely colorful and more than usually rhythmic. When there is an unusual piling up of these devices in such away as to suggest a self-conscious literary effort, the section is spoken of as a purple patch—a colorful passage standing out from the writing around it. (The expression comes from Horace, for whom purple dye was much rarer—hence more conspicuous—than it is for us.) (421)

Generally the purple patches are the "quotable quotes" and the part of the piece which stands out to the reader. Just open any "Zankified" book and one can see purple patches highlighted in many works of literature. A purple patch is often the best writing in the piece of work. The new Literary Magazine for Missouri Valley College represents some of the best writing, art, and photography of the students in the school. It shall be our "purple patch" for people to open and immediately recognize as the best.

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