



Southern Voices

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Southern Voices

Volume Two
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(*Southern Voices* is a magazine of creative works by students at the Mississippi School for Math and Science in Columbus, Mississippi.)

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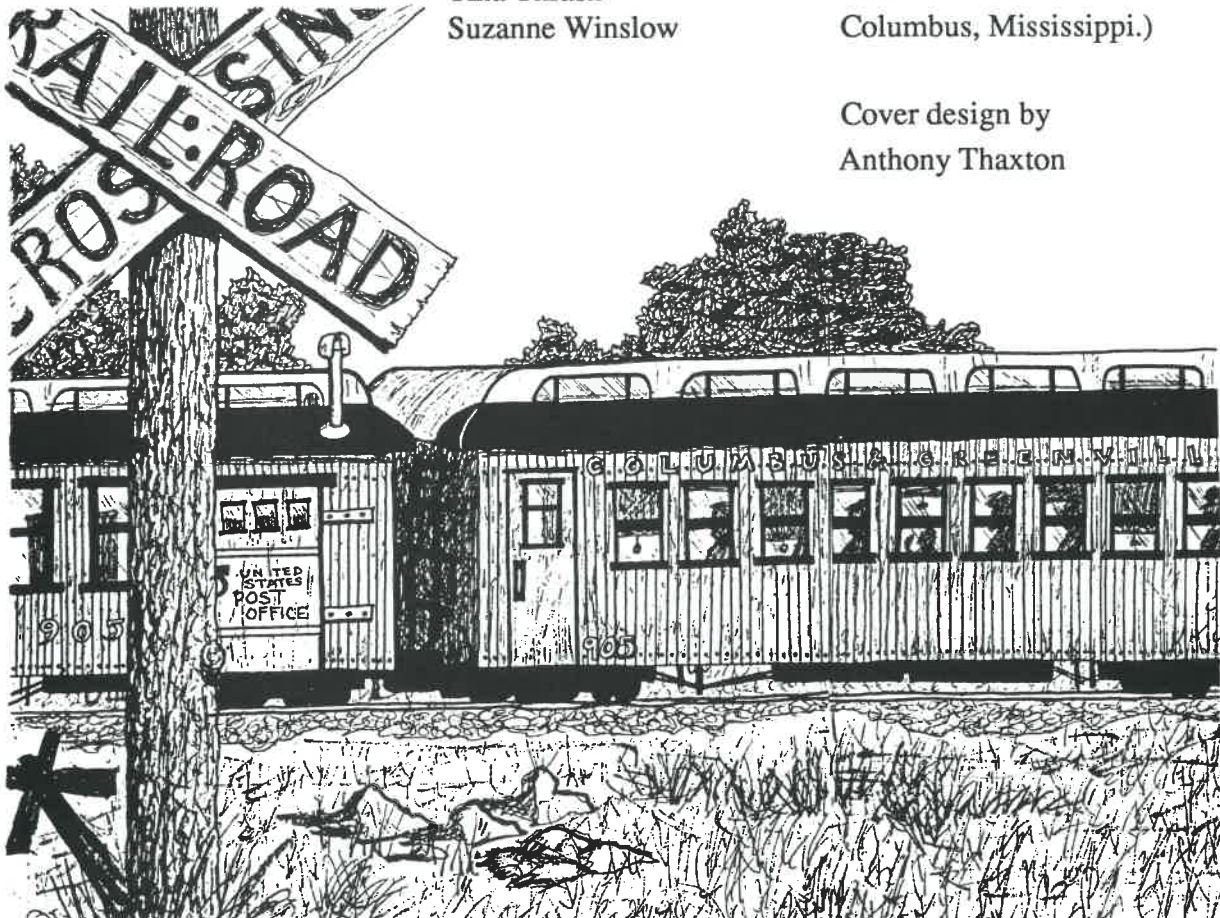


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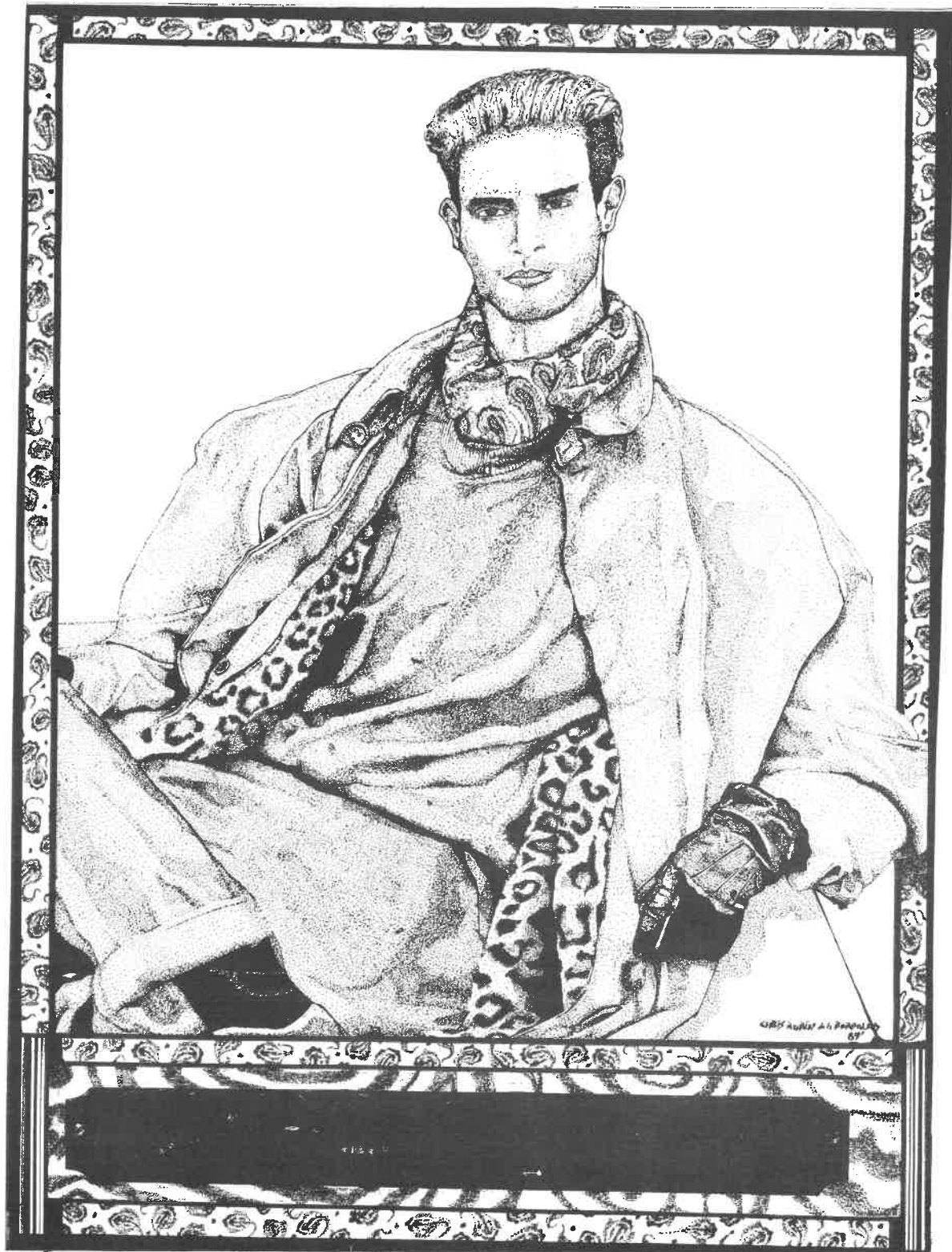
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Ink Drawing

Chris Rubin de la Borbolla

January

Supposedly fresh and
Filled with new resolve,
It's really cold and dead,
Beginning with an end of festivities,
Going back to the old routine,
Just sort of lost in the shuffle.

Terri Blissard

Firewood

Cold splinters stick in my cold hands
Dry from the wind, cracked at the creases.
The wood-cart steadily fills
With wedges of oak
Split several summers ago
When the air was warm.
The warmth has been trapped
In the wedges of wood
And waits to be released
On a cold day like today.

Blake Weathersby

Where Does the Cold Come From?

From under the house, seeping up
Through the cracks in the floor;
And from out of the closet,
Those dark closets that never
Seem to get warm;
And from under the bed,
Where no light ever reaches.

Marcus Moseley

February

The wind roars,
ferocious in my ear.
The rain pounds,
furious against the square
glass panes.
The gray sky stares,
as I prepare to face the
brisk, chilled air.

Kristin Boyd

Microbiology

Mixing up the agar
Playing with bacteria
Oh what fun to study microbiology.

Use aseptic method
Always wash your hands
Oh what fun to prepare wet mounts
Or do a spore stain on an unknown

Oh give me the Bergey's Manual
I shall begin to understand
My little beggar
As he calls the things
My little unknown bacteria.

Dale Howard

Steps of Flight

Michael knows his potential;
He's calm. He waits his chance.
A sneaky wave gets him the ball,
And with a smooth diverting glance
He clears a path straight to the hole.
There's room for five men there,
But only one will take the course,
And that man rides on Air.

He has a step; his man is shook.
The center turns in fear.
"Here comes Michael!" roars the crowd,
Then silence falls each ear.
This bird of sport takes the sky,
Soars over outstretched limb —
Now all that's left for him to do
Is slam and kiss the rim.

Vincent King
First Place
Poetry Contest



Charcoal Drawing

Webster Miller

Lessons in Living

Step into the wind
Pick up the bicycle
That sent you tumbling
Scraped knee stinging
And step into the wind
Step into the wind
Put one foot after another
And climb the old pecan tree
That never let you past the first branch
And step into the wind
Step into the wind
And let it whip your face
As you gallop across the sand
On your cream colored steed
And step into the wind
The warm sea breeze
As you build sand castles
Which will wash away
And collect seashells with color as soft as a baby's skin
And drowse in the heat of the afternoon
Step into the wind.

Daniel Irby
Third Place
Poetry Contest

Bob Monk

My grandfather's wide nose turns red
when he sneezes.
My grandfather's uncontrollable laughter
makes his belly jiggle when he laughs.
My grandfather's big hands cover my entire
back when we hug.
My grandfather's giant frame looms when
he addresses his children or farm animals.
My grandfather's icy blue eyes melt my
grandmother's old heart when he says,
"I love you."

Tina Thrash

Back-up Artist

Stan played bass
in a rock-n-roll band.
At a glance
you'd never know it.
At a second glance
you'd see:
The hardened pink bulges
swelled on his fingertips
told many stories
of an instrument's crippling strings;
the billowy shadows
circling his eyes,
scars
from his battles with sleep;
the long, swampy hair
grew thick, escaping scissors —
the salons always closed
before his encore number.
The music in him
learned to live
in those ragged blue jeans he wore.
The same music he taught
to those who knew him.
Stan played bass
in a rock-n-roll band.

Chandra Harrell
Honorable Mention
Poetry Contest

Guitar Man

David, a guitarist:
Hours on the strings
And his fingers wear
From Hendrix moves;
People come to see him practice
And leave, but he plays and plays
Until everything is perfect
And the day of the gig
Sound Check
Channel A up or
Down:
In the unlit room
Back doors open to the river
With Danny on the mike
"Check, Check"
Over and over
Until everything is balanced
And the gig:
He plays sober
While the crowd around him wanders
in and out
Some not finding their way back
after the break
Not for money,
Only one dollar for every head
But because he is a guitarist.

Daniel Irby



Pencil Drawing

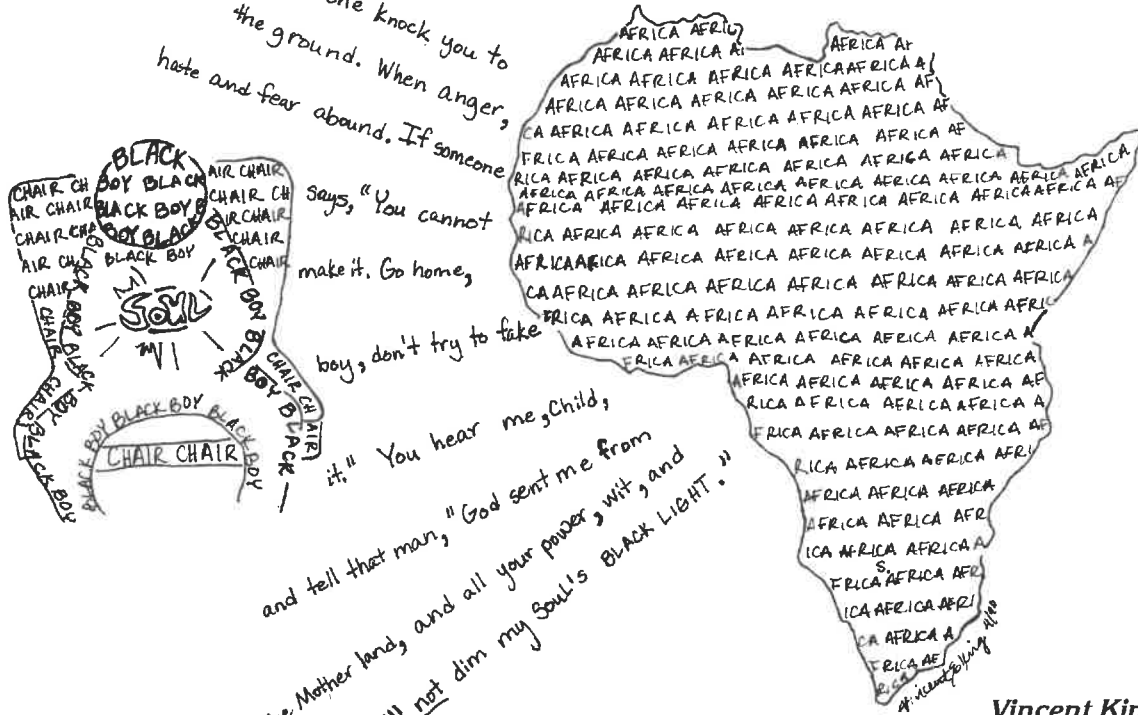
Webster Miller

The Change

The dull dusk sky mirrored across the river
A dampness could be felt in the ground
And a dryness in the air;
This was a time of change.
The trees which in the summertime
forbade man's footsteps
Now gave way to groups,
Both large and small
Recalling the memories
A spirited bonfire whipped the chill of the evening,
A recent development of the year.
The cracking of lips tells us that this
is a time of change
No time in the evening tells -
No stars in the sky tells -
The hot chili for supper tells
This is a time for change.

Daniel Irby

Talk To Me, Mama



Vincent King

Spinning World

The spinning world is fairly balanced
 on the edge of here and nowhere.
 A walker quickly runs
 on the tightrope of past and future.
 So stable it seems, a building planted
 firmly founded, feigning strength;
 But see the ground on which this giant tower stands,
 how dry and dusty and full of cracks.

Bert Kuyrkendall

Remember

Remember the corner stores?
 They had names like John's Grocery and Quik Stop.
 My cousin Tyrone and I used to walk to the corner
 where we lived.
 We bought Now and Laters — strawberry, cherry,
 grape, orange — a fruity explosion.
 We complained to the owner about the prices.
 Took us an hour to buy one package of
 Now and Laters.
 Price never went down.
 I haven't seen Cousin Tyrone for a while.
 I haven't been to a corner store in a while.
 I wish Now and Laters lasted a little longer.

Sonjiala Jackson
 Honorable Mention
 Poetry Contest

Old Barn

The walls are barely standing;
the loose tin on the roof rattles
from the cool spring wind.
I sit inside on the tattered
straight-backed chair
and glance out the paneless window.
Bearing an abundance of miniature apples,
the gnarled old apple tree stands
near the decaying outhouse.
The morning dew still rests
on the newly blossomed buttercups
and the chirping chorus of bluebirds
echoes through the early April air.
For a short moment, peace.

Jennifer McCrory

Schooling

The kitchen window
Frames a world winding
Down to Fall;
Shadows flash on and off
Cemetery stones
At Cool Springs Church;
The sun hangs horizontal
Through oak leaves;
Soon, the bandit winds.
The geraniums bend
From last night's
Frost;
There are no squirrels.
On the back steps
My daughter
Blows bubbles for
The baby,
Teaches him to
Purse his lips and
Puff at plastic pipes
Where rainbows swim.
Tobogganed in the chill,
They learn things
Thin and bright,
Things that disappear.

Emma Richardson

The Car Window

The picture is in fast-forward,
Each scene goes by in
A frenzied pace:
The farmer in the field,
The store in the town,
The roadside vendor. . .
All are seen;
None escape their
Brief, blurry display
In the car door frame.

Anthony Thaxton

Windows of My Childhood

I see my childhood racing away
The hands and arms that used to reach down
to lift me now reach up to hug me
The tears that used to fall as soon as someone teased
me now laugh at the words and tease back
The world of dolls and imaginary playmates has
moved on to the next lonely child
The dentist no longer gives me a lollipop
if I am good
Spelling bees and nap-time no longer
take up class time
Favorite colors of red and yellow have changed to
black and navy blue
My friends live in different worlds —
communicating seldom
I feel my knowledge caressing the windows of my
childhood like the blades of grass caress the hairs of
caterpillars as they wiggle across it.

Tina Thrash

King of Beasts

The rhythmic beats of the talking drums ring as thunder beyond the hills. Here beats a heart—the heart of the African jungle. Deep in the interior, the pulse exists always. It travels from village to village and into the cities that remain untouched in the landscape. There lies Shamva, a small town in the north-east quarter of Southern Rhodesia. The pulse echoes past the marketplace and stirs along the dirt paths. It wisps through wooded grasslands and tropical underbrush eventually reaching the colonial-encrusted forests. It carries off the main trail many kilometers to a small, white house enthroned in a settlement of thorn trees. This is our home. I live here with my husband, Jonathon, and our young daughter, Chloe.

A sliver of light dances about the korango that runs beside our house; a palette of bright flowers lies underfoot. The wind sings her song of summer. The trees throw glances across the yard, and somewhere in the distance stand the silhouettes of Jonathon and his man-servant, Noemachi. A steamy sweat trickles with the mid-summer heat. A pulp of crushed ice eases down my straw and disappears into a ripple in my tall glass of lemonade. The old wooden slats of the veranda moan; my faithful rocker squeaks in reply. I lift my head toward the yard. There, Chloe is playing, dancing upon the soft earth like a bright butterfly under the sun's natural spotlight.

We've watched nearly eight hours come and go since Jonathon and Noemachi's early departure. They left in pursuit of the lion that had been spotted up near the border. Indeed, my husband's fascination with the beast is immense, but I worry for his safety. He is in danger, yet the lion is no longer his greatest enemy. It was but three weeks ago when a dear friend of Jonathon's was killed by the askaris during his last hunt. It seems that he had crossed into one of the newly-established preserves by mistake. The sun in all of her glory could not revive that dreadful morning. Jonathon was cold; his tongue was sharp.

"Curse the government and the bloody King of England. He has no right to rule over us as he does. He knows nothing of Lady Africa or of her people. The killing of an innocent man because he happened across your path," he raged, "is barbaric. Any man, peasant or king, who would do such a thing is no man. He is nothing more than a beast."

Dusk is falling. The sun has left. And with her she has taken the little girl out of Chloe and me. I stretch from my rocker with the empty lemonade glass. Chloe hurries to meet me at the steps. I reach to take her small hand — the small sweet hand barely six years of age — into my burly grip roughened with years of labor. Together we walk into the house.

The front hallway is long and airy. The pictures that hang from the wall cast tall shadows on the pine floor. We walk across the polished floor into the next room. The room is cozy and pale. I slip onto the floral sofa and rest my head against the cushion. Chloe curls up beside me, laying her head in my lap. My back is tight and rigid. I sit and listen only to hear the steady pulse that beats from afar. A quiet despair builds. My stomach begins to twitch. Surely Jonathon will be home soon. Surely he will be home.

The silence lasts — almost toying with me. Finally it stops as the bustle of men seeps from the yard. Mere moments pass until Jonathon makes his way through the door. I tremble as my breathing slows. Chloe awakes. She rubs her eyes, shakes off the sleep, and bounds into her father's warm embrace. He kisses her forehead, then sweeps his hand over her thick, glistening hair.

He looks to me and boasts, "We got him. He struggled with that haughty pride of his into a clearing, and we were able to surround him. He crouched at our threat hitching his hindquarters. His teeth flashed, and a ferocious snarl pierced the stillness. The breaths from behind his stiff whiskers were heavy. Without a thought or question, I fired and fired again. A screaming chill rushed through my body, and I fired once more. The mighty lion collapsed. His roars became whimpers. I knelt beside him and watched the life leave his eyes. I ran my fingers through his coarse, blonde coat. I knew then that he was mine."

Chloe, beginning to understand what her father had done, brought her gleaming brown eyes to meet his, and in the subtle voice of a child she spoke, "Daddy, how could you kill that lion?" Despair showed in the single tear that bathed her fragile face, but her father could offer only one explanation.

"My little one," he pleaded, "no harm was done. He was nothing more than a beast."

Silence returns. The rhythmic beats of the talking drums ring as thunder beyond the hills.

Chandra Harrell

Thunderstorm

The gray-black clouds
darken the pale blue sky.
The winds begin to blow harder,
moving the tree's limbs and leaves.
A lightning flash is seen in the distance,
darting from cloud to cloud.
A thunderclash booms and rattles the windows:
the rain begins.
The drops increase in size
and pound on the roof top.
A thunderstorm begins as
I curl up with a good book.

Jennifer McCrory



Ink Drawing

Anthony Thaxton

Summer Storm

A blue-gray mass rolls over the hill,
Sneaks over the horizon,
Swells like a ripe blackberry,
Covers the sun,
And begins to rumble.
Birds head home in rush hour traffic.
A breeze picks up,
Gentle at first,
But steady.
The deep growling grows louder,
More violent.
The breeze turns cool
And bends the thin treetops
Against the blue-gray backdrop.
One, two, then several
Drops
As big as marbles
Hit the porch with an uneven rhythm.
The rumble has turned into a crash
Making a tearing noise
As it lets out its cry.
Calm
The wind dies down.
The drops fall only from
The droopy trees
And the sun returns
As the birds go back to their business.

Blake Weathersby

Sweet Chariot

Ricky stared up at the bridge trying to make sense out of what had happened. The late afternoon sky was covered with the gray clouds of February. A sharp pain originated in the center of his back and spread through his body. His head lay against a gray stone, the kind they use under bridges to prevent washing. The pain of falling from a swing set lingered in the back of his head. The cold water running below his body gave him chills. It would be dark soon, making it impossible for anyone to see him from the bridge. His stomach trembled and began to roar. He had not eaten since Memphis. He had awakened that morning in his car, on the side of the road, near the bridge. He had tried to reach for some berries beside the bridge when he lost his footing.

"What," he laughed to himself, "would it be like to survive a fifty foot fall and starve to death?" He laughed again, louder. The sound of his sick laughter echoed between the tall banks of the creek, until it was transformed into screams. His screams grew softer and softer. "God help me," he cried and fell into a deep slumber.

Suddenly, he was startled from his sleep by some noise. He opened his eyes to the still darkness of the night. A soft, cool wind rustled the leaves on the floor of the nearby woods. Again the noise came.

"Reeeeeooww."

"Who's there?" he cried.

"Reeeeeooww," it came again.

'A cat,' he thought to himself. "Heeere, kitty, kitty," he called. Maybe he could catch the cat and

someone would come looking for it. The sound of the cat drew closer and closer, until it sounded as though it were on top of him. He lifted his head to see the cat on his legs that he had not felt. He pulled the cat to his chest and held it tightly. A tear rolled down his cheek and he drifted off to sleep.

The bright morning sun shining on his face awakened him. 'I can't die now,' he thought to himself, 'there's so much I have to do.'

"What are you going to do?" his mother asked.

"I'm going to be a guitarist in a heavy metal band."

"You will never be that."

"I will," he cried, "I will."

"Reeoow," the cat replied.

'Maybe she's right, he thought to himself, 'who ever heard of a heavy metal guitarist in a wheelchair?'

He drifted into sleep again.

"Mommy, Mommy," his sister cried, waking him, "Ricky fell out of the swing!"

"I will make the hurt go away," said his mother, kneeling over him.

She offered him her hand and he reached for it. He took her hand and stood. He looked into her face and saw that it was not the face of his mother, but Jesus Christ.

"Where are we going?" Ricky asked.

"Home," said the Saviour, "home."

Daniel Irby

Drought

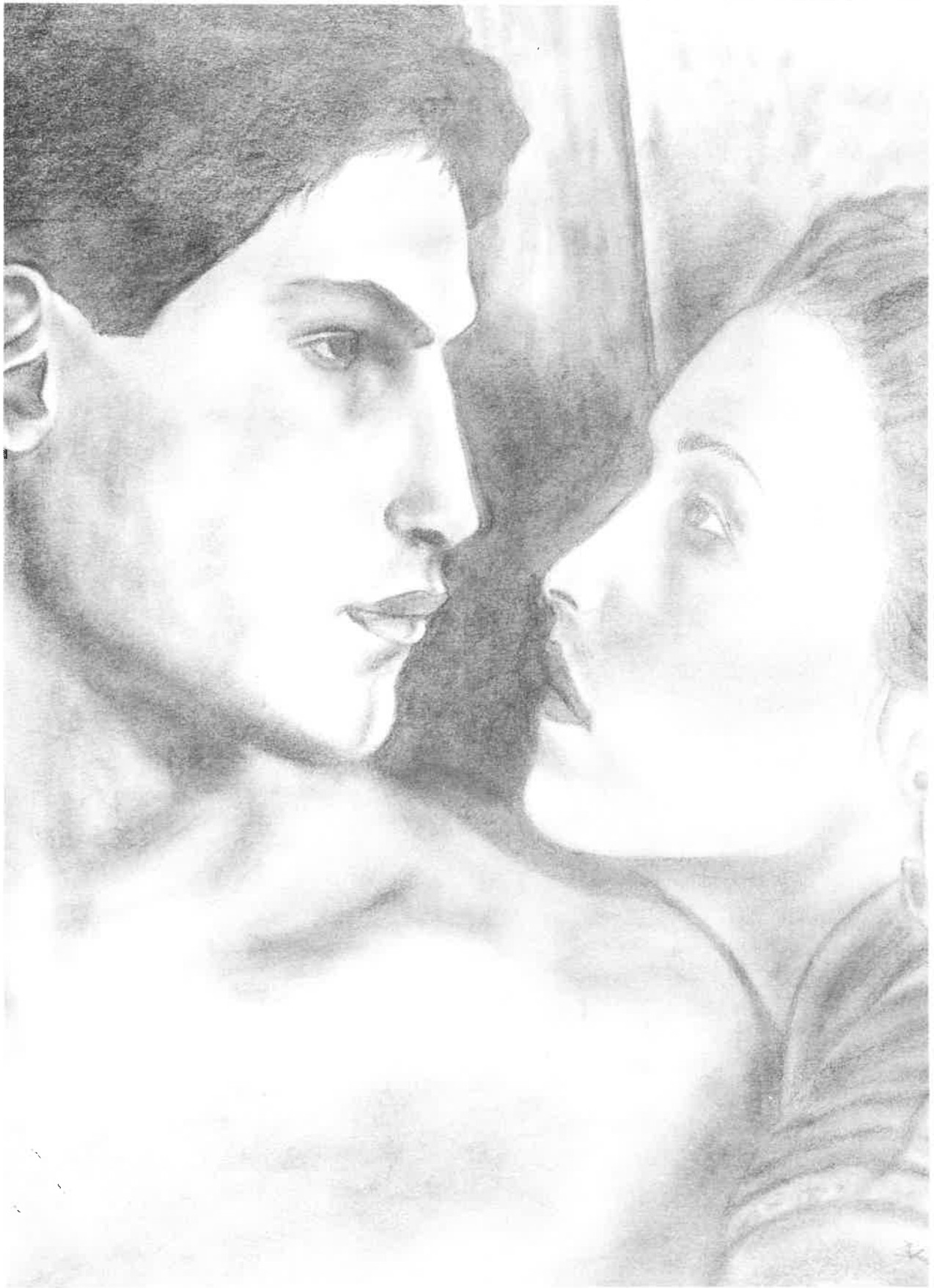
The sun shines bright:
the ground, dry and cracked,
withered garden plants
and dying brown grass.
Panting dogs, searching
for cool relief.
Ponds, empty ponds,
creeks, barely a trickle.
In the depths of a heatwave
in rural Mississippi.

Jennifer McCrory

July Heat

I must rest a while,
While the droplets of sweat
Roll down my back,
And the grass retreats
From the relentless attack
Of my red rusty old mower.
It clangs to a halt,
Bangs to halt,
And the breeze blows cool on my skin.

Vincent King



Pencil Drawing

Rebecca Brackin

The Marriage of Marriott

Fabilore and Marriott walked down the fire escape, peeking into different room windows. They tried to appear calm, as if they frequently took evening strolls on fire escapes, but Marriott was terribly nervous. He tried not to show it; he didn't want Fabilore to see his nervousness. He knew Fabilore was always a bundle of nerves anyway. Marriott mumbled to himself, "Look calm, old boy, look calm. You can't mess up this early in the game."

Then he looked down.

Quite a view. He'd never been out on a narrow fire escape seven stories from the ground. He didn't think he'd care to do it again. He sat down hard on the steps.

Behind him, Fabilore said, "Marriott, dear sir, you can't keep this up much longer or we'll never get past seventh floor. I'm getting a tad irritated about this anyway, especially since we could have taken the elevator." Fabilore calmly tossed his lollipop stick off the fire escape, watching it flutter down seven stories of air and land on what appeared to be a bleached-blonde beehive hairdo standing on the street corner.

It was a gorgeous night. Buildings stood tall and straight, softly silhouetted against the sky's inkiness. There was an odd sort of music, kind of like a far-away alto sax, a muted grainy sound telling a tale. . .

"Marriott, quit that ridiculous whimpering! We've made it two floors; we can do another seven!" Fabilore grabbed Marriott by the shoulder and pulled him up. Marriott started whimpering all over again. Fabilore stuck a purple lollipop in Marriott's mouth and pulled him down the stairway. "You should be ashamed of yourself! A grown man practically crying because he's a little scared of heights! I should have gotten a dog to help me with this case; at least I wouldn't have to buy so many lollipops! Next time. . . Hey! Don't throw that lollipop at me!"

Marriott answered angrily, "I hate grape lollipops, and I'm not fond of pushy people, either! Now come on; there goes our man!" Marriott was already half-way to the sixth floor, going as fast as he could without looking down. Fabilore quit grumbling and followed him.

The man they were pursuing was very ordinary-looking; he wore a baggy brown-tweed business suit, brown shoes, and a brown felt hat. Even his hair was a dull shade of brown. His ordinary, run-of-the-mill appearance was what made him so difficult to catch; no one could remember having seen him because he was so plain. Of course, his use of aliases - Rusty Brown, Chester Mahogany, John Tanner - didn't make him especially easy to track, either. In other words, he was a very slick customer, so Fabilore and

Marriott had been put on his case. They didn't make detectives like Fabilore and Marriott anymore - no, they were a different breed of detective.

And that was why Fabilore and Marriott were after Brown now. They were a different breed of detective, and the Brown case was a different kind of case. Fabilore and Marriott had been hired by Brown's ex-wife, Morgana. And his other ex-wife, Melissa. And also ex-wives Marian, Martina, Maria, Molly, Muffy, Murphy, Melinda, Mandy, and Minerva. And Sue Ellen. Apparently Brown had forgotten to divorce one before he married the next, so Morgana, Melissa, Marian, Martina, Maria, Molly, Muffy, Murphy, Melinda, Mandy, and Minerva were more than merely mad; they had been maligned by marital malpractice mixed with maliciousness and malingering manifestations of Brown's manipulations. And Sue Ellen wanted her silver cigarette case back.

So Fabilore and Marriott were running down a fire escape in hot pursuit of a Romeo in brown tweed. They clattered down the stairwell, half-running, half-falling. Brown, hearing the noise, glanced back, saw Fabilore and Marriott, and took off running.

"Faster!" cried Marriott. "We've got to get him this time!" He sprinted to the bottom of the fire escape, followed closely by Fabilore. They saw the tweed coat go around the corner of the building, and they hurried after it. Just as they rounded the street corner, though, they collided with the beehive hairdo they had seen earlier. It talked. . . angrily.

"Hey! Whadya think you're doin'?" This is high-price merchandise here!" The owner of the hairdo picked up her purse and smoothed her very short skirt. "This is also my territory; you wanna work a corner, go find your own!" She patted her hair and turned her nose up. "But you two clowns don't look like the workin' type anyway. You look more like the married type."

Marriott, impatient, pulled on Fabilore's sleeve, urging him to leave the beehive. "We're gonna lose Brown! Come on!"

Fabilore, who had been staring at the blonde, began to smile. He ignored Marriott's insistent tugging. "Wait a second, Marriott. I've got an idea."

Marriott groaned. "Come on, Fab. Business before pleasure. We've got to catch Brown!"

Fabilore still ignored Marriott. He pulled a ten out of his pocket and handed it to the blonde. Then he grabbed the bewildered Marriott and pulled him down the street.

"Uh, Fab? This isn't the way it usually works. . ."

Fabilore stopped abruptly. "Don't you see?!? It's brilliant! She said we look like the married type, so

that's what you'll be! You marry Brown, and we'll have him! We're never going to catch him if we just chase him all over the country; he's too elusive. No, we'll just play along with his little game. Now let's go get you a dress!"

"Me! Why me?!? You marry him! Why should I have to wear a dress?!"

"You've got less hair on your legs. Now come on."

Twenty minutes later, Marriott was wearing a very short skirt, a frilly white blouse, and as many gold chains as he could drape around his neck. "Do I have lipstick on my teeth?" he asked.

"No. You look beautiful. Look! There's Brown! I knew he'd check out of the hotel as soon as he thought he'd lost us! Start batting your lashes, and flash those gold chains! Show a little leg! . . . No, wait, don't show any leg. . . I'll be hiding back here." Fabilore stuck a lollipop in his mouth and stepped behind an ornate column in the hotel lobby. Brown was at the desk, checking out.

Marriott sauntered over to Brown and said, "Hiya, big boy. What's your sign?"

Behind the column, Fabilore choked on his lollipop.

Brown finished checking out, and then he turned toward Marriott, saying "Excuse me? . . ." He trailed off as he caught sight of the gold chains. Then he found his voice again. "I'm an Aries. What about you?"

"I'm single. Care for a drink?"

Brown was still staring at the gold chains. "Sure." Marriott led him towards the hotel lounge and gave Fabilore the thumbs-up sign. Fabilore grinned.

Two hours and six lollipops later, Fabilore watched the twosome emerge from the lounge. Marriott excused himself and headed towards the ladies' room. Halfway there, he detoured and hurried over to the column.

"It's working! We're going to a preacher right now!

He knows a guy who'll marry us without a blood test or anything. This is brilliant! In an hour, I'll be the thirteenth Mrs. Brown. 'Mrs. Marriott Brown.' Nice ring, don't you think?"

Fabilore grunted and said, "Don't get carried away."

"Oops! Gotta run!" Marriott sucked in his stomach and headed back towards Brown. They waltzed out of the hotel, with Fabilore close behind.

The wedding took place in the back room of a nearby pool hall. In less than five minutes, the "minister" had pronounced them man and wife and wished them a pleasant honeymoon. Then he went back to his card game.

Brown was just about to kiss his bride when Fabilore stepped out of the smoke and said, "Mr. Brown, I think you've made a big mistake. . . for the thirteenth time. I'm here on behalf of Morgana. And Melissa. And Marian and Martina and Maria and Molly and Muffy and Murphy and Melinda and Mandy and Minerva and now Marriott, here. Oh yeah, and Sue Ellen. The game's up, buddy."

Brown knew he was cornered. "Drat!" he muttered. "Drat!"

In the meantime, Marriott had made a few phone calls, and in a matter of minutes, two policemen walked through the door. Brown swore softly. Seconds later, twelve extremely angry women stormed into the pool hall. Brown fainted.

Fabilore grinned. "The ex-wives."

"Fabilore?"

"Yes, Marriott?"

"I'm married to him."

Well, yes, Marriott."

"So. . . what do I do now?"

Fabilore pulled out a fresh lollipop. "Divorce him, Marriott. But I wouldn't ask for a lot of alimony."

Terri Blissard

Kincannon

The constant hum
of the nest
The buzz of my fridge
full of Cokes
The whiz of a car
as it accelerates -
acceleration equals
mass times midnight -
Lights out four-thirty alarm clock
In my dream of my love Lucy and
her angel touch - sunrise
while I work - another day
of eternal buzzing
Another day of dorm sounds.

Daniel Irby

Nightlife

And this is the way
That day turns to night:
The sun retreats
To its desolate place
Beneath the amber sky;
The stars come out to play
In the night breeze,
And the moon begins to
illuminate in golden crescent;
Then the world of men
Shuts down for the day,
While the armadillo and
Possums take their ritual run.

Kristin Boyd

The Truth

The great leader stands above the stupefying sound
Letting his loving power flow from the heart,
Lifting his numerous people to the mound
Where knowledge is given like a tart.

Therefore, the black wind blows upon the mound,
The darkness swells up from the hearts of the few
Overtaking the light and consuming all found,
Teaching them the ways to devour and chew.

Some yet still remain hidden in their fortress
While the winds of hate still blow outside;
They preach redemption while hiding in their fortress
The devourers outside still destroy all who reside.

The strong emerge from their places of hiding
The devourers fearing only reality's eye;
The people learning the rules of abiding,
The devourers being forced to reshape their lie.

Leslie Donaldson



Pencil Drawing

Brad Fielder

Beech Trees

The narrow road is covered
With a blanket of corrugated leaves
That only allows the choicest
Rays of the sun to pass through.
In the spring, the blanket
Is electric green.
In fall, it turns
Flame yellow.
But in the winter
The blanket disappears,
And the lonely road shivers.

Blake Weathersby

The Gardener

As I sit in the garden of my mind,
I think about the times past,
Of what was and what could have been,
Of the love that kept me alive.

I plant all my emotions and wait,
Wait for them to grow strong and tall,
Wait for them to thrive and spread,
But they never do, they never do. . .

Tears form in my eyes, and run down my face,
Forming pools in the cool soil,
Watering the emotions planted there,
Drowning them in salt water and brine.

Wild thoughts run rampant and terrorize,
Frightening the calmer ideas,
Preventing them from reaching their potential,
And making them hide in the shadows.

I bury myself in my garden, feet first,
Then my head. Covering my entire self,
Body and soul, I bury my thoughts and feelings,
To keep others from seeing them.

Gardening is what I do, it is my life,
My one and ultimate vice. I am the Gardener,
Planting love and hope deep in the peat,
And waiting for them to blossom. . .

Reagen Ward

Riley

Riley watched *The Price is Right* every summer. As soon as school let out at the end of the year, those four new contestants would be “coming on down” that plaid-carpeted aisle with hopes of winning valuable prizes like a fur coat or a baker’s rack. Many of the contestants wanted to play so badly that they tripped and fell on their way to Contestant Row, but they kept on coming. For three hot, uneventful months they kept on coming, and Riley was there to watch. He’d be sunk deep in his mother’s special chair sipping on a glass of orange kool-aid with no ice, because orange kool-aid never seemed to get cold no matter how much ice was in it, so Riley didn’t bother. Besides, his mother didn’t leave any ice on the tray beside the chair, only the pitcher of orange kool-aid.

Every now and then, especially at commercials, he’d glance toward the open window across the hazy, beige living room; the chatter of squirrels at play outdoors cut the stillness of the afternoon. Riley gazed on as the squirrels chased each other in spirals around and up and down the big pecan tree in his front yard, but eventually the gray window screens would checker the world outside beyond the comprehension of Riley’s blank stare, and he’d jerk his head back toward the television. He had developed a sixth sense to know when his show was about to come back on, and although he was sometimes off by a commercial or two, most times he would get it exactly right and have his eyes fall on the set just as the dark, silent screen faded into a large, rowdy audience.

The announcer boomed, “If you’d like to be a contestant on *The Price is Right*, write to Contestant Row, 4056 Los Angeles, California 90054.”

“I’ll do it,” thought Riley, his pulse beginning to quicken. He closed his eyes. “I’ll bid the price exactly right, and win a new car, maybe a dress blue Buick, and give it to Mama. She’ll have the car, and I’ll just keep all the money that I win.” Riley felt himself breaking into a sweat as excitement over prizes and riches exploded so strongly in his body that he might have leaped from his mother’s cushioned recliner and bumped his head on the ceiling. Riley kept his seat, though, keeping his ambitious zeal contained in his mind and in the smile that now beamed across his face.

At that instant, Riley felt a stinging, stabbing sensation in his left thigh. The muscle tightened abruptly, and Riley clutched the soft arms of the recliner and

held on as if he were on some wild carnival ride that was making quick, surprising turns and spins. His lower leg jumped from the floor, and Riley watched as his left foot raced toward the T.V. tray next to his chair. The shaky tray gave in to Riley’s swift kick. The plastic pitcher of orange kool-aid with no ice in it toppled and tumbled to the carpet just as Riley’s foot returned to the floor. The pain left his thigh immediately, and Bob Barker kept calling out prices as if nothing had just happened. As Riley peeked over the side of the chair to check the size of the orange stain on his mother’s beige carpet, he heard a loud, knocking motor pull into the driveway. He recognized the sound of his mother’s 1980 Monte Carlo. She was home on her lunch break. Riley panicked for a moment, fearing the anger his mother would have at the extent of damage to her carpet. But he couldn’t clean it up now, and never would be able to clean it up.

“How could she be mad at me?” he thought as he heard her keys jingling in the lock. “She’s never gotten mad at me before.” The front door creeped open.

“Hey, Riley.”

“Hey, Mama.”

“How’s it going today?” She closed and locked the door. “Anything special on T.V.?”

“No, Mama, just the same old shows.”

“Well, I have an idea! After I . . .” Her words caught themselves in her throat as she moved past the coffee table and saw the collapsed tray and ever growing orange, wet blotch on her carpet. “Oh, Riley! What happened? How’d you do this?”

“I . . . I got a little worked up over the television again. I’m sorry Mama! I didn’t . . .”

“How many times have I told you not to let yourself get too excited, Riley?! You’re not deaf . . .” Now she caught her words herself, and remembered not to let herself get too excited. She breathed a deep, calm breath, just as Riley knew she would. “Well, like I said, I have an idea. After I take you to the bathroom, I thought maybe you’d like some ice cream, Riley! Maybe a little treat, a change of pace.”

“Yeah!”

She scooped Riley out of the chair with a wistful exuberance and carried him down the hallway to the bathroom and shut the door behind them.

Vincent King



Ink Drawing

Anthony Thaxton

Pawpaw and I Went Fishin'

Even though he had a thirty minute drive to make in order to pick me up, I am still positive that I got up earlier than Pawpaw did. The alarm ringing the 5:30 call didn't even bother me, for it was something a whole lot better than school calling me: I was going fishing with my grandfather. A boy and his pawpaw need to spend time together, and a fishing trip with him – and being able to skip school – wasn't something I could do just any day.

In the early morning house, all was quiet except for an occasional word from Mama and the clinking sound of the knife inside the mayonnaise jar; she was making our sandwiches. Every once in a while, however, a creak would arise from some dark part of the house, as if complaining about the bright kitchen light disturbing the morning.

Those first signs of daylight were showing when Pawpaw's headlights shone against our house. Peering out of the window I saw the small boat attached to the back of Pawpaw's Datsun, which was surely loaded with fishing rods, a cane pole or two, and life-jackets.

The drive to Bordages Bayou took about ten minutes, but, that morning, filled with conversation from Pawpaw about how big I was getting and how many fish we would catch, it seemed that it only took a few seconds.

When we arrived at the water, the chill was going out of the air, and I reflected that I would just be getting up at home to spend another day in Mrs. Hawkins' third grade class. The thought of school was not a good one, and I decided not to think about it again during our day.

We got into the boat, and Pawpaw didn't even make me put on my lifejacket; I knew that if I fell in that he would save me, so I wasn't worried. Pawpaw Vernon was just like that. Earlier in the school year, my "Favorite Person" report had been written on him. He meant a lot to me, just as any grandchild loves a grandparent, I guess. Now, he'd take the fly-swatter or a switch to me if I didn't mind, but he loved me. I was his eldest grandson, and I loved him.

While we eased our way down the bayou, Pawpaw pointed out all of the birds and trees that he could name. Some of the things he showed me had different names when Daddy pointed them out so I decided then that Daddy was wrong. If my Pawpaw called something a sea-gull, then a seagull was what it was supposed to be called.

Pawpaw eased the bow of the boat up into a corner of the bayou and turned off the Evenrude motor. Blue-ish grey smoke siphoned out as the echo of the previous moment bounced across the marshlands.

It truly was a glorious day for fishing, complete with the steady breeze and the bearable sun – it wasn't harsh.

Pawpaw laid back after casting a line and got his thermos out with his coffee and began asking me all sorts of things – how Little League was going, did I have a girlfriend yet, was she pretty, and so forth.

It was pleasant.

We caught a few fish. The ones we did catch, besides the hardheads, were of a nice size. Speckled trout mostly, a few flounder. Pawpaw shouted over the sizes of some of the early catches in the day, but as time progressed, he talked less and less.

Pawpaw seemed to get tired earlier on this trip than in the other few we had made together. It seemed that it was only just a little bit after lunch when he said, "Well, we better get home and let your Mama take care of these monsters we caught." He took off his hat and mopped his brow with the bandana. "She might get to worryin' about us, where we done went off to."

I wondered why she would think about where we were; it wasn't late, and we had told her that we'd be back for supper. But I didn't question him. . . I was glad to spend as much time with him as I had.

Pawpaw pulled up the anchor and splashed it about in the water to get most of the mud off before he started up the boat. Momentarily we were off, the breeze blowing through my hair as I waved to the flat-boat we passed.

We zoomed through the curves of the bayou with a sense of contentment inside us both. However, it wasn't long before I began to notice strange things going by, scenery that I had not noticed earlier in our day. For several minutes I studied the banks left and right, and I recognized nothing.

I looked at Pawpaw Vernon as we rounded a bend but he didn't say anything – he didn't even look at me. I couldn't tell what he thought, but I had decided that we were lost, lost and going nowhere fast.

"See that over there," said my Pawpaw, "that's a marsh rat." It was sort of in a yell that he spoke, for I had to hear it over the wind and sound of the motor.

"Yessir, don't see them often," he said, still avoiding my looks.

He began sitting up taller, scouting farther and farther over the grass, over the weeds. I could tell that he had been rubbing more and more sweat from the back of his neck, breathing faster as he did so.

Then it happened; we came to a fork in the bayou, one which we had not encountered before. Ahead were two identical waterways leading to destinations unknown, in opposing directions.

I looked up at my grandfather; he had stopped the boat. He left the motor idling, and studied the choice with a worried glow. He was as lost as I had thought, yet he did his best to hide that fact from me.

The lulling sound of the motor and the breeze coming over those marshlands were barely audible; it was as if the moment had frozen, my grandfather and I, captives within.

Tears began to form in my Pawpaw's eyes, the same brown eyes which continued to avoid my know-

ing look.

I reached up and rested my hand on his shoulder. I spoke softly, "Don't cry, Pawpaw."

Then I moved my hand and patted his back as we sat still in the afternoon sway of the bayou.

Anthony Thaxton
First Place
Short Story Contest

Mortality

This is the way we know we are mortal
We go to church carrying food for the poor and
We don't tip the boy who carries bags to the car.
We go to church on Sunday and then leave for the ball game during communion.
We buy gifts for our friends and hope for gifts in return.
We gladly spend the time of others and are unavailable when they call.
We make plans for a castle and
We build a shed.
We start to journey the world and move to the suburbs instead.
We bemoan the man who lets his dog starve and
Watch unmoved as a child lies starving in living color.
We fight constantly the onset of death and
We rarely make time to enjoy life.
We talk of true love and
We say it about the women with whom we are having an affair.
We talk about how our boss is unfair and
We say it while fishing away a sick day.
We talk about draft evaders and
We lie about our taxes.
We call flag burners traitors and
We say it in our Hondas.
We say we care for children and
We give the dying more health care.
We struggle long with the help of many friends and
When we succeed we remember only ourselves.
We get a raise and
We cut into our tithe to pay for the new car.

Lee Hotchkiss

Mausoleum of Music

I enter the dark symphony hall,
And the world outside vanishes.
An immediate hush falls over the
Empty,
Intimidating,
Mausoleum of music.

It smells old and musty,
And it is grave-like:
Somber and silent;
But I listen to the silence,
And it echoes a solemn echo of the past.

This is a place where the past becomes
the present:
The spirits of music whisper in the
stillness,
And the echo of their whispers is like
A melody becoming a masterpiece:
It grows and fills the silence.

The great composers, the masters of
long ago,
They are here.
Frustrated in life,
They wander in death.
They exist in the shadows,
And they speak in the silence.
Their voices are the echoes
That reverberate through the hall.
Restless spirits, they tell their
woeful tales,
But few hear.

These spirits exist forever in this somber,
silent mausoleum.
Somber
Silent
Mausoleum.
Where more than the music lives.

Terri Blissard



Pencil Drawing

Brad Fielder

A Moment of Now

The mysterious monster makes night shadows on my curtains,
Gray hunting shadows that bounce and sway with the wind.
One wisp of arm, thousand needles sticking out, wiggles close to my
bed — calling me to look out into the darkness.
The monster closed its eyes to me
Leaving nothing to appease my longing to share.
Eyes keep stretching, stretching, stretching
Into the darkness until
I feel the cold pane against my cheek.
I turn my head to see the wheelbarrow long ago rusted into a
Tired old brown leaning to one side and digging into the ground,
deep into the ground like the little white picket fence
Gracing the grave of a tomato garden long dead
Little white sticks stark and straight like soldiers guarding the
castle
My eyes pass across the yard to the abandoned doghouse of a dog
I never knew; it was here before I was, long before I was.
A cold draft comes to remind me that my bed lies warm and waiting
for my return.
I sleep until tomorrow.

Sonjiala Jackson

The Witching Hour

It is the witching hour.
There is no sound but silence.
Nothing stirs,
And a hush powders the air.
It isn't really morning,
But it is no longer night.
It's that mystical, enchanted time
When only the shadows live;
That peaceful, dreadful time.
It is the witching hour.

Terri Blissard

Moon Over Columbus

The full moon rises over Highway 45;
Used to its old significance
Wonders why the people of Earth
Worship beacons of lesser beauty.

Golden arches, orange streetlights,
Billboards proclaim
"Jesus can make whatever is wrong
In your life right."

Beads of artificial lights
Line the streets
While the moon is washed out
From my view.

Blake Weathersby

Bring You Peace

"Hey baby. Guess what I've got for you?"

"Is it the stuff I asked for?"

"Nothing but the best for MY girl. Hey, who was that guy you were with the other night? He looked a little old for you."

"He was just a friend. Why?"

"Just wondering. He looks like the narc type. You know. Kind of old looking but with the baby face to make 'em look young enough to seem our age."

"No, he's been going to school with me for years. He's okay. Say, how do 'ya like my new ride? Sharp, isn't it?"

"Yeah, what model is it?"

"It's an '88. My father got it for me, but he wouldn't get it in pink for me. He said that pink wasn't a 'jeep color.' I tried to explain to him that Suzuki Samurai's aren't just jeeps, but he seemed to think that red would match my hair. Corny, huh?"

"No, honey, red looks gorgeous on you. . .even if it is a jeep that you're talking about. Oh yeah, that'll be seventy. I got you enough to last about two weeks if you don't decide to go on some kind of splurge or something."

"Here, here's a hundred, and tip for good service. Just be sure and continue to keep me happy. Well, I've got to run. Track practice starts at four o'clock. Gotta' keep that physique in tip-top. I'll call if I need you."

Alex Timble calmly paced herself. She knew that if she could just make it to her next wind that she would make it through the rest of practice, but it didn't seem to be coming as quickly as normal. Each step seemed to pull a little more from her but she continued to concentrate on putting each foot before the other. That's the way that Mr. Boreau had always influenced her. He always taught them to take it one step at a time and keep their mind on the work that was before them rather than the work that they had already completed.

"Hey he-woman! You're going to exhaust your sweat glands if you keep up that pace. Hit your second wind yet?" asked Amelia as she approached Alex and equaled her pace.

"Yeah, it just came," answered Alex. "I didn't think that I would ever catch it. I got all the way to the third mile mark before it ever came. I thought that I was going to have to stop and take a breather there for a minute."

"Have you seen Eve lately? Mr. Boreau was asking about her before practice. She's not here today. I think that she got sick or something last night. Her brother said it was food poisoning, but in the shape

that he was in I doubt if he even knew that he was bare-footed. Doing the stuff is one thing but consuming enough to kill a herd of obese mother-in-laws is quite a different thing," said Amelia as they turned the corner of their last lap.

"Hey," yelled Mr. Boreau from across the field. "You guys look pretty spry today. Why don't you take another mile or two."

"Humph," they yelled back in unison as they slowed their pace to a fast walk.

"You know," said Alex as they walked over to the bench to get their towels, "Mr. Boreau sure is good looking to be his age and not have a wife. Ever wonder if he's gay?"

They both laughed and started toward the field house.

Later, after both had taken a shower, they walked out to the parking lot of the school where Amelia's boyfriend, Crawford, was waiting. As they approached him, both noticed that he didn't seem to be acting like himself. There seemed to be a sort of dreaminess about him.

"What's up with you, Prince Charming," said Amelia as she put her arm around his shoulder. "I've been waiting all day to find someone to wake me up from my deep sleep, but no one delivered so I've been walking around comatose since this morning. Sad but true, sad but true."

Crawford squinted his eyes as he looked over at his girlfriend. "Well honey, your prince hath arrived. . .but do you take credit cards?"

Amelia slapped him on the shoulder and pushed her sleeves up on her arms. "So," she said, "are you going to obey my every command?"

"Maybe not your EVERY command, but some of them. I'm afraid of what you might demand of me with that kind of promise," Crawford answered as he ran his hand through Amelia's long auburn hair. "Sure do like that mini-skirt that you've got on there. Let me borrow it sometime?"

Amelia snickered and said, "It's not really your color but if you must have one, we can make a quick trip to The Laura Ashley shop in Atlanta and pick you up one in a nice pink. . .no, on second thought, you still have to face my father so I think you'll have to settle with red. He's not real up on guys and pink stuff."

"Oh, you big comedian, you," he said sarcastically. Looking at his watch he realized how late it was getting. "Well ladies, I've got to scat. See you girlies later." He kissed Amelia softly on the cheek, stepped into his car, and drove out of the parking lot.

Amelia watched as he left. She looked over at Alex and then at the sky thoughtfully. "That guy is one spe-

cial little dude, you know. I'm pretty lucky to have him."

Alex smiled. "I'm glad you guys are happy. Say, art thou ready to depart, my fair friend?"

"Yeah, I guess so. Let's run over to Macci D.'s and grab a salad on the way through."

"Are there any questions?" Mr. Boreau asked. "This stuff can get pretty deep, but with a little thought, even you dummies can handle it." A hand went up in the back of the room. "Yes?" he asked.

Danny Astor stood up from his desk and walked over to his teacher. After shoving the massive pile that was so characteristic for Mr. Boreau's desk over to one side he sat down next to him. "Mr. B.," he said, putting his arm around his teacher's neck, "can I call you Steve? . . . was Emily Dickinson planning on kicking the bucket? She sure was stuck on death. That's all the woman wrote about."

Mr. Boreau pulled his knee up next to his chest and looked out the window thoughtfully. After a pause in the normal noise of the average classroom, he broke the silence with a sigh. "I suppose that she could have been, but aren't we all a little obsessed with death every now and then?" He paused again and looked over at Danny. "We're probably all just a little bit scared about what it's going to be like once we join the others in forever."

The entire class sighed and repositioned themselves in their desks. Almost simultaneously, the third period bell rang and two boys from the back row jumped from their seats. Quickly recalling the standard that Mr. Boreau had set early in the year, they returned to their seats and waited to be dismissed.

Mr. Boreau opened his desk drawer, pulled out a pair of finger nail clippers and began clipping his nails as if he was in no particular hurry to let the class go. After a large moan from the class he said, "You're dismissed." Within five seconds the entire class had made it out the door.

After the class had left he noticed a piece of folded paper on the floor. It appeared to be a note. He began to walk over to the garbage can and dispose of it but an uncommon urge came over him to read it. He slowly unfolded it and read:

"Meet me after track practice to get your stuff. Chuckie brought it to the house last night."

Steve refolded the letter and placed it back on the floor where he had found it. After walking back to his desk and sitting down, Amelia came running in the door. She spotted the piece of paper on the floor and picked it up. "My list of physics equations," she said holding it up. "I can't very well keep the pearlies on my parents' faces shining without them. They're a

sucker for good grades, you know."

Amelia left the room. Steve just sat there and thought about what had just been said and wondered why she would feel compelled to lie about a note. She knew that he had never been the type to get upset over things of that nature. "Oh well," he thought to himself. "I guess that she's just embarrassed about it since she sees herself as the model student."

He wandered back over to his desk, shaking his head and continued with his work.

For the next few weeks, Steve started going out with the group after track practices in order to get to know them. For some odd reason he felt that he was needed. Since the situation with the note had occurred he kept in his mind the possibility that it could have been somehow related to drugs but never actually knew for sure.

One day after the girls had completed their laps he walked out to the parking lot to meet Crawford and Danny, but upon arrival noticed that only Crawford was there.

"Where's the third stooge?" he asked as he approached Crawford.

Crawford looked up as if he were startled. "Oh, Mr. Boreau...uh...Steve...sorry, I sometimes can't get rid of that nasty classroom habit that you have so repeatedly reminded us of. Oh yeah. Danny? He's at his mom's I think. He was supposed to move some furniture for her or something."

"Well then," said Steve, "I guess that means that the girls have got us out-numbered this time. We'll have to put up a good defense but with a little thought —"

"— Even us dummies can do it," Crawford chimed in. He hesitated for a moment and then looked over at Steve. "Steve. . . does Amelia seem to be acting strange to you? It's like she's trying to be her normal self but just isn't succeeding very well. You know?"

"Craw," Steve started. "Has she been having mood swings lately?"

"Yeah," he answered.

"Preoccupied, like distant?"

"Uh-huh."

"Making strange excuses for odd things?"

"Yeah, yeah. Now just tell me what you're getting at," Crawford said impatiently.

"Well, see she left this note on the floor of my room a couple of weeks ago and I found it and read it. It said something about picking up some stuff at her house that Chuckie had brought her," he said.

Crawford looked over at Steve. "The Chuckie as in Chuckie Smith?"

"I don't know," answered Steve. "The strangeness

just occurred to me when she came back in the room for it and lied about what it said. That's when I started to worry. It's just not like Amelia to just not tell the truth about something like that. For goodness sake, she's honest if she even skips track practice."

"You don't think —," started Crawford.

"I don't know, but we need to find out without offending her. She may need our help, you know."

Crawford kicked at the dirt in front of him. "For her sake, Steve, I hope you're wrong."

Steve gave his friend a sympathetic look. "Me too, Craw, me too."

"Hey! You guys ready to go grab some food?" came a yell from across the parking lot. It was Alex. "This here girl's got a hunger pain in her gut like nothing you'd ever believe."

Steve reached over and slapped Crawford on the shoulder. "Sure am," he said, "but it's a salad for the three of you."

They all hopped in the back of Amelia's Samurai and left.

"Steve, what exactly did Emerson mean when he said that stuff about the triumph of your principles? You know, the one where he was talking about peace?" asked Alex. "For some reason I kept thinking about that all day. It just doesn't seem to make a whole lot of sense. If you overcome your own principles you won't really know what you believe in any more, so how do you find any peace in that, especially within yourself?"

Steve reached over and grabbed one of Danny's french fries. "Well," he said, "I guess it's a matter of personal interpretation. If I tell you what it means to me then chances are great that you will adapt that interpretation until you accept it as your own." He paused for a brief moment. "You are talking about the quote that goes: 'Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of your principles', aren't you?"

"Yeah, that's the one," answered Alex. "Most of the rest of that stuff hit me as rather uninteresting but that one quote just kinda' stuck. So I gather that you're not going to tell us what it means, huh?"

"Alex, it's all a matter of interpretation, I'm telling you. If I sat here and told you that to me it held the secret to world peace and you didn't believe that world peace was possible, would you think that I was just giving something someone said a meaning that is just off the top of a crazy man's head? Which, in that sense you would at least be half way right, but you still need to think about it and come up with your own conclusion," he stated matter-of-factly as he began to take another bite of his Big Mac.

Alex looked over at Amelia and Crawford and then

at Eve and Danny. She then reached into her glass, retrieved a piece of ice from her water and tossed it at Steve. "Mr. Boreau," she said, ". . . can I call you Steve?" she said jokingly. "You are SUCH a big weenie!"

He returned the favor by throwing another piece of ice back at her. She ducked and the ice continued its journey through the air until it hit a lady standing behind her in the head. The lady turned around quickly and glared at the group. Steve stood up from his chair and acted disgusted. "Look at what you silly teenagers have done now. Can't you see that this nice lady has just come from the salon and looks as if she spent a FORTUNE on her hair! Now don't you think you owe her some type of apology?"

The lady, by now smiling from the apparent compliment that the handsome young man had just given her, said, "That's okay, kids. A little fun never hurt nobody. Besides, you should be thankful that one of you has a father like this. He's very considerate," she said, looking him over, "and kind of cute." She winked at Steve and turned around and walked off.

The whole group of kids began throwing ice at Steve and picking on him about his new admirer. He simply laughed with them and threw the ice back.

"Look, you guys," said Danny, "Mr. Ronald McD is going to come out any minute and assassinate all of us if we don't quit disturbing the peace and vacate the premises."

They got up, walked out of the restaurant and headed to Amelia's Samurai. Once there, Steve asked, "Hey Amelia, care if I drive your ride? I bet it handles well. I'd like to get a feel of it just in case I decide that I need one."

"Sure," Amelia said. "Be my guest."

Steve hopped in the driver's seat, reminded them to buckle their seat belts and drove out onto the street.

After they had dropped everyone else by their houses, Amelia and Steve were riding back to the school where his car was.

"Steve, what has been wrong with Crawford lately? I know that the two of you talk a lot so I thought that maybe you might know. He seems to be avoiding me lately. Is there something that I have done?"

Steve came to a halt next to his car in the parking lot of the school. "Well, it's strange that he asked me the same thing about you. He seems to think that you've been acting strange lately."

Amelia looked down at the ground. "It's very possible that I have been. I've just had a lot on my mind for the past few weeks. You know, girl type problems."

"Are you sure that's all, Amelia?" he asked directly. "I've had the same idea myself. You've been drag-

ging a lot lately in track. Is there something physically wrong? If so, you need to go see a doctor."

"I told you, Mr. Boreau," she answered irately. "It's just girl-type problems. THAT'S ALL."

"Look Amelia, I'm not trying to preach to you and I prefer that you continue to call me by my first name when we're talking as friends. When we're in track I will play coach and when we're in the classroom I'll play teacher, but right now it's just you and me, and I am a friend. One who's concerned as all three. Now, one other question. Why did you lie to me about the note that was left on my floor that day. It may be none of my business what it was about, but it became my concern when you didn't tell me the truth."

Amelia began to feel as if she were trapped. A tear slowly rolled down her cheek. "What are you saying?" she asked in increasing anger. "Are you saying that I'm on drugs or something? Have you and Crawford been talking? Does he share your observation?"

Steve put his hand on her shoulder and said, "Amelia, we're your friends and we only want what is best for you. Please —," but before he could finish she had jumped into her Samurai and started the engine.

"You're just trying to turn my friends against me, but as long as they are MY friends, they will believe ME. They know that I'm not on drugs. They know!" She kicked the clutch in and sped off in a rage leaving Steve alone with his thoughts. He simply shook his head and got in his car.

"Don't forget, your thesis is due in the morning. You're dismissed," said Mr. Boreau as the class looked at him impatiently. "Oh, and Alex, can I see you for a moment?"

Alex walked over to his desk and waited while the others walked out of the room.

"I guess you heard about the little talk that Amelia and I had yesterday," he said while thumbing through some papers.

Alex looked at him puzzled for a moment and said, "No, I haven't seen her since yesterday. Did you guys get into an argument or something?"

"Well, in a way. She was very offended about something I said. I kind of implied the possibility that she may be using drugs and she got pretty upset about it."

"Steve, I don't know how to tell you this," started Alex, "but Amelia has been for awhile now. I haven't said anything about it, though, because I wasn't absolutely sure. I overheard a phone conversation that she was having with Chuckie Smith and from the way it sounded, I thought she was talking about drugs. Now it's fairly clear that she was. Crawford asked me about

it yesterday. I just told him that I didn't know."

Steve put his face in his hands. "I was hoping that maybe I was wrong about this, but it doesn't seem like it anymore. Listen Alex, you need to talk to Eve and I'll talk to Crawford and Danny. We really need to get her some help if she has a problem with it."

Alex agreed and slowly walked out of the room. Right as she was walking out the door Eve came up to her and asked her what the group was doing that night. "I'm not sure," she said, "but I need to talk to you about something really important. Don't you have break now?"

Alex and Eve walked out to the quad and began talking about the problem with Amelia. Eve agreed and told Alex about a time when she had seen Amelia have a nose bleed right after her one of many trips to the restroom. After they had talked a while, Danny came to them and asked them about the situation. All agreed with Steve that she really needed to seek professional help and made a promise to the others to try and persuade her, in the least offensive way, to admit it.

Amelia stopped at the field house and grabbed her stuff for track practice. As she descended the bleachers that encircled the field she noticed that they were all standing in a large circle around Mr. Boreau. She thought that rather strange but understood once she realized that he was just giving another one of his healthy diet talks. She approached the group silently and stood beside Alex. "Sorry I'm late. I woke up with an upset stomach and have been sick most of the day, but I'm fine now."

Alex continued to listen to Mr. Boreau. He soon finished his talk and told the group to start their laps. Amelia, Alex and Eve started, but after only their third time around, Amelia's nose began to bleed. Mr. Boreau ran over to her and asked her if she was okay.

"I'm fine," she said crossly. "I'm just fine. Now if you'll excuse me, I have some laps that I need to do." She ran on and tried to catch up with the others. She then fell to the ground and lay there for a moment. Just as she was getting back up, Mr. Boreau ran to her and began to try to help her. "I told you I'm fine," she said.

Mr. Boreau looked up at her in concern. "Why don't you just take it easy for awhile."

Amelia glared at him. "Are you still hung up on the wild misconception that I'm on drugs? I AM NOT A DRUGGIE!" she yelled.

Alex and Eve ran over to where they stood. Alex walked over to her and put her hand on her shoulder. "It's okay, Amelia. We understand. We just want to help you."

"Have you been comparing notes or something?" she raged. "Oh, I understand. All of you are getting the others to agree with you in order to all be against ME. That's fine. If you're going to believe him over me I guess that just indicates what kind of friends you are!"

Amelia grabbed her things and began to run back to her Samurai. Steve, realizing what was about to happen ran and jumped in his car that was parked on the field and began to go after her. She flew out of the parking lot and onto the street far too fast. Just as she was about to the corner Steve caught up with her. Ignoring the stop sign on her right she ran out into a fairly busy street of cars. Steve saw his opportunity to stop her by making the next corner, so he drove speedily around to the intersection where he would meet her. Suddenly Amelia blacked out and ran off the side of the road. Steve brought his car to a stop and ran over to see if she was alright. Right as he got in front of her Samurai, she punched the gas pedal and unknowingly hit him. He was by this time lying on the ground where Amelia finally saw him at the side of the vehicle.

She stopped her Samurai and ran over to see if he was okay. She sat down on the grass next to him and draped his body over her lap. "I'm so sorry, Steve, I'm so sorry."

Steve, in a blur of blood and dirt, looked up at Amelia and slowly stated the quote that they had discussed earlier. "Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of your principles."

Amelia looked up as Eve and Alex ran over to them. "It all makes sense now. I'm sorry guys. . .I'm so sorry."

Amelia sat in the waiting room of the hospital with Alex and Eve while Crawford and Danny paced. The

tension in the room was incredibly intense. They were all doing a lot of hoping.

The doctor walked out of the emergency room door and motioned for Crawford to follow him outside. Once they were out, he began to sip on a cup of coffee that he had gotten earlier. "What's your name, son?" he asked.

"It's Crawford, sir. Is Steve going to be okay?" he answered nervously.

The doctor looked over at him. "I think so." he said. "But he's going to need a lot of support from you guys. He kept saying on the way over, 'Get her help, get her help.' He said you would understand, that any of you would. I was a little scared for a little while, but he's going to be okay. Just don't give up, okay?"

Crawford thanked the doctor and walked back into the waiting room where the others were looking at him expectantly. "He's going to be okay." They sighed with relief. "He will need our help, though. Amelia, can I talk to you for a moment?"

They walked back out to where the doctor was still standing. Crawford nervously asked the doctor if he knew of any good treatment centers. The doctor persuaded Amelia to come into his office and talk to him about her problem. She almost gratefully agreed.

As Crawford went back into the waiting room he looked the others over and with a refreshed tone in his voice, said, "You guys look like crud. Find a shower, for goodness sake."

They all laughed at the much-needed tension breaker and walked out of the room.

Amber Kidd
Third Place
Short Story Contest

Suspended Sighs

I know I'm home
hearing Stef's familiar sigh.
Severed sounds of a witch humming
float from behind a twitching lip.

Floating in agreement
Floating in approval
Floating in acceptance.
Sometimes floating in anger.

Suspended between two silences,
Stef's familiar sigh.

Chandra Harrell

Society's Web

Society's Web never changes
(Not to me, anyway)
Everything stays the same:
Willie's still on the corner (and the bottle),
"Boo" is still in seventh grade,
Miss Leola still lives next door.
The guys I grew up with dropped out
Of school (and society)
To take up a hobby called
"Easy Money."
They can't escape; they are
Trapped by this web:
Society's Web.

Richard Gipson

Sunday Morning Recital

She practices and plays,
though it ain't quite in tune:
the old black Baldwin
with its teeth pitifully snagged,
delivering miles and miles of music.
My mama's heaven,
learning an offertory hymn.

**I've got a mansion just over the hilltop,
in that bright land where we'll never grow old. . .**

Her face scrunches up,
puzzled,
which finger isn't finding its place
on the thin ivory keys?
Her face lights up
and her stool shakes again,
her feet pumping pedals,
her fingers plunking a joyful sound.

**Some glad morning when this life is o'er
I'll fly away . . .**

Her Saturday night practice
is now Sunday morning run-throughs.
She raises the family between notes,
"Get up and get dressed — don't let me tell you again!"

Rise up, O men of God . . .

The lamp on the piano
points toward the notes of praise,
shows our early eyes
our mother laboring in love,
her occasional happy alto
racing with her rapid chords.

**What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
leaning on the Everlasting arms . . .**

Sunday service through,
her face shows delight,
receives "Amens."
"I liked your song, Linda."
Aunt Birdie says.
"You bless us so."

My heart soars as Mama's does:
Her wages have been paid in full.

**Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
with the cross of Jesus, going on before. . .**

Anthony Thaxton
Second Place
Poetry Contest

A View From My Window

I sit looking out my
window,
Watching the rain gently
fall
And I see how the
ships
On the horizon keep on
sailing
And the waves keep on
breaking
And the gulls keep on
flying.
But I'm forced to stay
inside.

Marcus Moseley

Together

Together.
Knock on wood.
My dad and me. . .
a hammer and nails.
Mom wanted lace.
Lace itched my neck.
Mom wanted ribbons.
Ribbons hurt my head.
Mom wanted powder.
Powder made me sneeze.
But Dad didn't want anything.
He just needed my help.
I helped with the doghouse.
It took twice as long.
But I have never forgotten
those hard wood days.
I learned to steady the nail
without even blinking.
I learned to ask Dad
before I used the saw.
My dad and me. . .
a hammer and nails.
Together.
Knock on wood.

Chandra Harrell

The Model A

He ran his fingers over the left fender, admiring the smooth shine of the maroon paint. Three trails from his fingers were left, which he quickly rubbed off with his handkerchief. "She's perfect. 1929 Ford Model A, the one with the electric starter." Mr. Russell, now retired and pushing seventy, stepped back to admire the car. It sat with a content look in the showroom. The fluorescent lights made pale globular reflections on the car. Mr. Russell looked at the car as if it were a masterpiece in an art museum. "And you say she's fully restored, all reworked?" His question was directed to a young man in his thirties, dressed in a gray suit, whose slick hair shone when he nodded. Mr. Russell looked back at the car and pulled up his khaki slacks around his waist. After a few parting words with the salesman, Mr. Russell walked out of the cool showroom into the muggy New Orleans air.

It had just rained, as evidenced by the slowly draining streets, but the thunderstorm had done nothing to cool the city. Steam rose from the pavement, making the air more humid. By the time Mr. Russell climbed into his car, sweat had beaded up on his forehead. The inside of his LTD was even hotter. The seat-belts were so hot that he couldn't fasten them. He pulled out of his parking place quickly and waited for the air conditioner to work.

It was a little after five o'clock, probably the hottest part of the day in August. Mr. Russell regretted staying so long at the car dealer's when he got onto I-10 eastbound and could see thick traffic. He turned on his radio and listened to WWL. "This is traffic watch WWL," said the announcer with a thick New Orleans accent, "we got two breakdowns on the eastbound expressway, traffic's thick on Airline Highway, and the Huey Long Bridge. . ." Mr. Russell turned it off. He couldn't stand the accent of the announcer. He really wasn't too fond of the city at all.

Mr. Russell knew that he was nearing the breakdown when he had to slow to a stop. The cars stretched across the flat highway in the late afternoon sun; he couldn't see the end of the line. More thoughts about New Orleans came to his mind, most of them unfavorable. He was from Canada and had grown up on the plains of Alberta. Though he had left his native country years ago to live outside of New Orleans in Slidell, he still had vivid memories of his childhood there. His thoughts wandered to the car.

"Come on, Jon, let's take your dad's car out on the ice. It will be really fun sliding around on the ice," the voice of his old friend Lenny called to him. "I'm tired of playing krokeno and being pent up in this house," he continued, while standing up from the table where the game lay.

"Are you crazy? You know Daddy told me not to play in his car. He'll be back this evening," the young Jonathan Russell replied to his friend. It was 1934, early in the spring, and unseasonably warm weather had thawed most of the snow earlier than usual, flooding the flat prairie with icy cold water. As this happened every year, the farmers were prepared with dikes to protect their houses. However, winter was not yet over, and a cold arctic blast came barreling down the plain the next week, plummeting temperatures below zero, and freezing the water surrounding the Russell farm. The plains were covered with thick ice for miles.

"There won't be anything for us to run into, Jon; we can just slip and slide for miles."

"That's true. Well, we gotta be careful; that car means a lot to my dad." With those words, the boys walked to the garage and surveyed the car. Jonathan's father had kept the 1929 Ford Model A in good condition, unlike the trucks he used to do farmwork. The garage was dirty, but the car shone from a dusting the night before.

"Come on, let's go," Lenny cried, but Jonathan was taking his time. He climbed into the driver's seat and started the car, thankful that it had an electric starter. The small engine turned over instantly and began humming.

Mr. Russell's LTD was not humming. It seemed to wheeze in the heat as it idled. He had moved perhaps a hundred feet in the last ten minutes, and no clearing was in sight. This is some delay, he thought.

The frozen prairie was much emptier than the crowded freeway. It was flat, and Jonathan thought he could even see the distant mountains it was so clear. Jonathan and Lenny slid across the ice in the car at thirty or forty miles per hour, kicking up ice in their wake. It was great fun. The sun had just come out, so it wasn't as bitterly cold as it had been earlier. The wind stung their faces, but they were bundled up enough to stay warm.

As the car got further away from the farmhouse, Jonathan felt less and less inhibited. He started turning the wheel sharply and admiring the panorama as the car spun in a circle. The two boys kept on with their mischief in the afternoon sun.

The afternoon sun in New Orleans was still pretty high above the horizon at six o'clock when Mr. Russell finally got past the delay on I-10. Traffic continued to move rather slowly, and he seriously considered getting off of the interstate to find a pay phone and call his wife. Perhaps he would wait out the traffic in a bar in the Quarter, he thought.

"We've gone far enough, Jon, let's turn around

and go back," yelled Lenny over the noise of the wind passing the car. He looked sick; his face had turned a pale green.

"How am I supposed to turn the car around on the ice, stupid?" he answered contemptuously.

"Come on, I'm gonna puke!" Lenny pleaded.

"Okay, but you were the one who wanted to do this in the first place, you chicken." Jonathan slowed the car by slowly letting off the gas and then pressed the brakes, feeling the car's wheels lock up and skid about forty meters across the ice. Lenny jumped out of the car as soon as it came to a stop and vomited on the smooth ice next to the car.

"Are you okay?" Jonathan asked as he got out of the car and walked up to his friend. He helped Lenny up and patted him on the back. "Sorry you got sick."

Suddenly, they heard a deep cracking noise coming from the ice. Jonathan whirled around to look for the source. He saw it. The ice was cracking beneath the car.

"No! The ice is breaking! Quick, let's move it. . ." his words were drowned by the cracking of a huge slab of ice that put the back end of the car under water. Lenny watched silently as Jonathan hysterically ran around the car in vain. Piece after piece

of ice broke off, plunging more of the car into the water each time. His father's Model A, his baby, as he often called it, was slowly sinking. With one last crack, the car sank to the bottom with only the tops of the seats and the windshield poking over the surface of the water. Jonathan and Lenny slowly walked back to the house, dreading the punishment they were sure to receive.

Mr. Russell remembered the summer he had to work to pay for the ruined car. He had to drive a tractor all day across the very fields he had slid across months before. His father had mourned over the loss of his car as if he had lost his only son. The restored car was exactly like his father's car, right down to the color of the paint. "Daddy sure would have liked to get a car like that. I wish he were still around so I could give it to him," he thought as he slowly made his way through traffic. "I think I'll buy that car. Daddy would have liked to see me take care of a car just like his, though he probably would have rather had it for himself." The traffic slowly cleared as Mr. Russell brought his car to a normal highway speed as he headed toward his house with the setting sun at his back.

Blake Weathersby

Consonant Thoughts

The small snake slithers slowly south,
silently seeking supper.

The tall terrier terrifies
the timid tom-cat.

The rambunctious rabbit runs
rapidly along its regular route.

Marcus Moseley

Watch Them Whisper

The weeping willows whisper in the wind,
waving their wondrous winding wrappings,
Wearily welcoming me in their widespread arms,
as they wash me with a flood of warmth.

Kristin Boyd

My Name Was Running Deer

This is the story that I was told about grand-father finding his name.

Night was cool and clear, cloud not showing in big sky. Young Running Deer sat silently on bank of river and looked around him. Sister Moon shone down on Mother Earth, bathing everything in her light. River quietly sang her song while, on far bank, doe and fawn drank from her flow. Somewhere in night, owl hooted as he chased his prey. Smell of smoke came from village fires. Running Deer breathed in cool night air. Tomorrow he would begin journey to Great Mountain to find his new name, name council would use when they called him to meetings. Yet, tomorrow was already near. In east, big sky was turning light as sun got closer.

Running Deer rose and quickly dove into cold water. Holding breath, he sank to bottom until he felt faint from lack of air. Then, he rushed to surface of river where he exhaled and breathed deeply. "Cleansed," he thought. He swam to shore and then stood, watching sun rise. Hearing people moving about in village, he turned and hurried toward his father's wigwam.

As he entered, his mother looked up from cooking pot and smiled. Running Deer almost smiled in return, catching himself as he remembered that he was almost a man. Taking wooden bowl of corn mush from her, he walked over to where his father sat eating on skin of Brother Bear and sat beside him. As he ate, Running Deer listened to his two younger sisters sing prayers to morning and day. "I must bring them presents from Great Mountain," he reminded himself. Just then, there was voice from outside and Chief Eagle Flys High came in. Running Deer's mother and sisters immediately lowered their eyes in respect to chief. Wolf Brother, Running Deer's father, set his bowl of mush aside and stood to welcome chief. Running Deer, seeing from chief's glance that he had come to speak to him, quickly followed his example.

Chief Eagle Flys High gave him deerskin bag of tobacco with a small peace pipe, and said, "Today, Wolf Brother's son journeys to Great Mountain to find his name. We, council of warriors, wish him good fortune in finding name that will represent him well and give him honor." Then Chief turned and left wigwam.

"Sun rises high now," his father announced just moments later, as they sat eating. "You must go your way soon." Running Deer quickly finished his meal, rose, and picked up bag of food that his mother, Singing Bird, had prepared for him. "Goodbye my family. The next time we meet I shall have new name." With

this, he turned and left first wigwam, then village.

Sun had risen halfway to his overhead spot. Birds of all kinds sang and flew about him. Running Deer made his way toward Great Mountain, using path created by passing of many braves in past. As he walked, Running Deer sang songs to day, songs to night, and songs for finding name. Day slowly passed as he walked to, then up Great Mountain. By mid-afternoon, he had climbed almost to top. Stopping for rest, he viewed scenery about him. To north, valley below Great Mountain was green and fertile, like one big meadow with big silver snake for river. To west was deep forest that was his home and great grasslands were many days beyond them. More forest lay to south and many days' journey past them was great water. To east was more mountains and in them were pale-faced people. Above him was arching peak of Great Mountain, below him, Mother Earth. Running Deer sighed in satisfaction. Continuing his climb, it was late afternoon before he reached sacred cave by blue stream. Running Deer hastily stored his food and began to search for firewood. Finding plenty was not hard, and he soon had bright fire burning. After he ate, Running Deer extinguished fire and lay down to sleep.

Running Deer woke early next morning. He rose and bathed in icy-cold stream. As he watched sun pouring over Mother Earth, bathing her in his light, he sighed in contentment. After singing morning prayers, he walked outside cave to explore surrounding area.

Mountainside was covered with blooming flowers on bushes of all kinds. As Running Deer was smelling each different flower, he noticed that there were several large pawprints on ground. Examining them closely, he realized that they were prints of mountain lion. Cold chill rushed through him. Mountain lion! so near his dwelling! "It can not be," he thought. "There has not been mountain lion seen here for many, many summers." Yet, there they were, and fresh too. He cautiously retraced his steps through brush, watching carefully for beast. Suddenly, he froze, for there not five steps from his were several lion cubs. "Lions never leave their cubs," Running Deer thought. "The mother lion can not be too far." Finishing his retreat, he noticed that sun was already more than midway to his setting-place. "How quickly day has passed," he thought. "And tomorrow I shall begin fasting to find a name." The rest of afternoon was spent in gathering firewood. Having ate late meal, he ate no supper but immediately went to sleep.

Waking early in morning was good sign on first day of fasting. After his bath in cold stream and prayers,

he began ritual started by his ancestors long ago. First he painted himself in sacred name-finding designs. Then, facing rising sun, he sat cross-legged on hard ground with tobacco and pipe. After stuffing pipe with pinch of tobacco, he lit pipe with burning twig from fire. As he sat smoking, he swayed to rhythm of chants he sang. Morning passed slowly in this manner. It was almost noon when he heard loud crash in nearby bushes. Remembering prints, he broke out in a cold sweat. Slowly, he turned to see what had made noise. When he saw them, he burst out laughing. Three small lion cubs sat staring at him from dry bushes they had come playfully through. "Where is your mother, little ones? Has white brothers of east killed her?" Lion cubs sat looking at him without trace of fear in their eyes, or so it seemed as they whimpered quietly. Running Deer jumped to his feet, put down his pipe, and walked toward cubs who disappeared. Walking to spot where they had disappeared, Running Deer saw something that made his heart stop. For there, not 100 steps from sacred cave, she lay. Dead. Examining her with probing fingers, he discovered that she had been shot several times by rifle, but had escaped to sacred Great Mountain. Judging from infection, it had been several suns ago. Loss of blood had killed her, along with poisonous infection. Now, her three cubs were defenseless. Running Deer felt anger for ruthless killing of she lion but there was little he could do now, except care for cubs. He chased and then picked up cubs into his arms and went back to cave. Taking some of dried meat from pack, he equally divided among cubs. As they gnawed and fussed with it, he examined each of them by sight. Two of them, one light brown like river bank and one night black, seemed to be healthy and energetic, but other one was sickly-looking. He thought that he would not live long. Cubs, after eating, settled down for small sleep. As they slept, Running Deer did the daily chore of gathering wood. As afternoon sun made his way toward west, he realized that he had already been on mountain three suns. "How fast the suns seem to pass," he thought. "Tomorrow, I will think only upon singing name-finding songs and prayers." Having said this, he went to bed.

Sleep did not come easy, though. After tossing and turning for long time, Running Deer finally fell into deep sleep. During his deep and troubled sleep, he had a Dream about wonderful forest. In this forest, there was no hunger, thirst, or fear of Brother Animals. Running Deer, looking down from mountain-top, saw pleasant villages filled with many satisfied people. As he walked down mountain and into wonderful land, seemly in a daze, he came to outskirts of large village with many people. Elder men came out

and beckoned him into their village. As he was escorted through village, he saw a great wigwam, larger than any he had seen before. Stopping before it, he asked one of elder men, "Who lives in this great house?" Before old man could answer, there came command from wigwam in thunder-voice.

"SEND OUR GUEST INSIDE."

Running Deer felt his knees beginning to tremble as men began to push him inside. Inside of wigwam was brightly lit with roaring fire. Before fire was figure of man with sacred mask on face. Beautiful maids waited on man, serving him royal dishes. The figure said,

"I KNOW WHY YOU HAVE COME TO OUR SACRED MOUNTAIN. YOU HAVE COME TO FIND YOUR NAME, LIKE MANY BRAVES BEFORE YOU. I, AS SUN GOD AND RULER OF ALL THINGS, GIVE YOU NAME. YOUR NAME SHALL BE LEOMAN, BROTHER OF MOUNTAIN LION. GO NOW IN PEACE."

With this command, Running Deer felt himself leaving, and quickly, running back to sacred mountain. Suddenly, he sat up. It was very bright outside. Two cubs were licking his face. The other was dead, like his mother. Running Deer buried both of them at spot where mother lay.

After bathing, he sang songs of having found name. The rest of day was spent playing with two remaining cubs. Oshiman, the light brown one, and Blakits, the black one, stayed with him all times. Days, then weeks, flew by. Running Deer lived by eating good plants that he and brother cubs found. They explored mountainside and found remains of whiteman campsite. Looking among ruins, Running Deer found several strings of brightly colored beads and one gold ring. He carefully saved them to give to his sisters when he returned to village. Village! It was then that he realized that he had been gone for two, almost three moons, from village. Stopping at pond to look at himself, he saw boy no longer. Now he saw man and brave. As two half-grown cubs joined him, he decided he must return to his home.

They started down Great Mountain early next morning. He and his brothers cut distance between sacred cave and village fast. By mid-afternoon, they were approaching outside of it. Stopping on bank where he had many moons stood, he called out his greeting. Men first, then women, came out to greet him. Seeing from their looks that they didn't know him, he rose to his full height. "It isn't wrong to forget me, for I have changed. My name is Leoman, Brother of Mountain Lion. You knew me as Running Deer."

Tracy Moore
Second Place
Short Story Contest

Looking Out

Looking out the tiny window
Of that treacherous carnival ride,
"The Wheel of Terror,"
I see the world go from right-side-up
To upside-down
To spinning much more rapidly
Than it used to.
My eyes get crossed:
I see twice as many worlds,
Spinning,
Spinning,
Accelerated by screams
And by the little man in the carnival uniform,
Who laughs at screams for mercy.
I can see him from the corner of the little window,
Grinning,
Grinning. . .
I stop focusing on him.
I see a blurry, whirling wheel of color,
A terrifying blob of kaleidoscope images
That makes me shut my eyes
And hold my breath
Until it's all over
And the world stops spinning.

Terri Blissard

Softness

Where does softness come from?
Softness comes from the baby's
skin after a soothing warm bath;
It comes from the fluffy, white
pillow sitting on my bed.
Softness comes from the kitten's
warm fur as it rubs against my leg.
It comes from the fresh-baked
loaf of bread;
And softness comes from the cool
touch of my mother's lips
upon my forehead.
This is where softness comes from.

Kristin Boyd

Mrs. Busby

Mrs. Busby.
What a character.
She pulled ears. Hard.
(And she enjoyed it, too.)
She was the terror of the first grade.
The glint in her eyes when she glared at us
Made our little hands clutch our jumbo pencils
A little harder,
Even made one girl cry.
(That was me.)

Now, years later,
When I see Mrs. Busby
Darting around town in her little white Chevette,
A harmless old lady
Just under five feet tall,
I wonder why we were so afraid of her.

Then I wonder if I've lost my mind.

Terri Blissard

Dawn

Chirp Chirp
The sounds at dawn
Morning dew clinging drooping
Plop
The ripples go out out out
Fisherman out to catch a fish
Turn Turn
The soil under
Farmer out to plow the ground
Think Think
The sun calls you from your sleep
Think Think Think
Dreamer out to chase a dream
In the dark
At Dawn.

Sonjiala Jackson



Ink Drawing

Amy Dobbs

Weight Gain Proven Inevitable By Alexander Woollcott and Aristotle

An American drama critic, Alexander Woollcott, is reported to have said that "everything good in the world is either immoral, illegal, or fattening." Aristotle said that "the good has rightly been to be that at which all things aim." Do they agree or disagree? If agreeing, why does it appear that they are speaking at odds? If disagreeing, how would you settle the implied dispute?

Although they appear contradictory to the untrained reader, Alexander Woollcott's and Aristotle's statements readily agree when considered from a scientific point of view. In order to prove this theory, I will use the fate of the infamous Bakkers and the laws of thermodynamics.

According to Aristotle, "The good has been rightly declared to be that toward which all things aim." According to the second law of thermodynamics, all things aim toward disorder. When combined, the philosophic and scientific maxims seem to equate virtue and anarchy. Next, in contemplating Woollcott's statement, I feel that immorality, illegality, and weight problems could all be considered forms of anarchy. Therefore, the two statements theoretically agree. To illustrate, I will now use Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker as examples (without either's consent).

First, Jim Bakker's alleged immoral acts with Jessica Hahn created quite a mess by triggering subsequent investigations and thereby leading to Bakker's eventual downfall at PTL Ministries. Because of the confusion resulting from them, these immoral acts definitely represent a form of disorder. Second, the illegality of Mr. Bakker's various embezzlements also bungled the Bakkers' basically easy life. Mr.

Bakker's prison sentence ruined the couple's friendship with Jerry Falwell and put a serious damper on their televised sermonizing. Such serious repercussions have left Mr. Bakker with little income. However, this problem, a consequence of the disorder created by illegality, can actually alleviate a third slovenly aspect of Mrs. Bakker's life, her weight.

In the preceding paragraph, I have proven that "immoral, illegal, and fattening" activities lead to disorder. As with all processes, the move from order to disorder followed the path of least resistance. Mr. Bakker could resist neither the luscious Ms. Hahn nor the lure of greed, and Mrs. Bakker could not keep her hands off the cream puffs. Again imitating nature, it is difficult or even impossible, as in Mr. Bakker's case, to return to the former state of order. Consequently, as Aristotle said, all things do aim toward virtue (disorder), which results from immorality, illegality, and weight problems. My theory has hopefully been posulated through example. The statements appear to disagree only to the unscientific reader, who does not readily wish to believe that the world is becoming more ruthless and fatter every day.

Kathy Patterson



Pencil Drawing

Chris Rubin de la Borbolla

Reflections: Fall Day

The sycamores sway in slience
And become still.
Soon they sway again,
Sing a soundless song,
And search for serenity.

Blake Weathersby

A Chance Glance

I have a fear of spiders
as they dangle in their webs.

Creepy, hairy eight-legged spiders
dangling in their webs.

Those nests of silk and sparkling dew
look lovely in my yard,

But in the corner of my room
a silk web stops my heart.

Vincent King

Equinox

When the afternoon swelter of August
Gives way
To the duskttime chill of fall,
People start to remember —
The way they do when seasons change.
I ache and it can't be explained —
The beauty of the familiar chill
When the leaves turn brown.

Daniel Irby

Gray

The color that they wore;
Smoke lifting a cause away. . .
Appomattox morning.

Anthony Thaxton
Honorable Mention
Poetry Contest

Christmas and the Advent Candle

When the cold air hardens the colors
Birds and college students go home
Family comes together
And mom and dad put up the tree.

When the cold air hardens the colors
Every one is a little nicer
The outlook on life is a little better
And we trim the tree.

When the cold air hardens the colors
Cold can be smelled in the air
Turkey and pies can be smelled in the kitchen
And mom and sister start the cooking.

When the cold air hardens the colors
The garish red and green fades away
The last candle is lit
And the light of God shines.

Lee Hotchkiss



Christmas Revolution

The yellow screams heard bright and raging,
The blue fire dancing hot,
The red blood streaking staining
All evidence of the struggle —
The sky kidnapped the sun.

A new queen has her reign.
Her brilliance reflects off the white carpet rolled out at
her feet.

A whole heaven of stars bow to worship her —
All but one rebellious sister star
Lighting the path of the sun.
The glorious sun shall rise again.

Sonjiala Jackson

Devotion

Wayne —
night shifts
at the bridge
hoping for some
humongous ship
so he'll have
something to tell
when he comes
to the library;
he rumbles
through People —
almost absorbing silence
like a sponge,
and like a wet sponge
he drips his gossip
all the way to the desk
where he rattles off stats
of his blood donations,
on the steel plate in his head,
only talking
for only listeners —
the library
his shrine —
Wayne devout.

Chandra Harrell

Aspects of Religion in Robert Heinlein's Fiction

To better flesh out descriptions of religion and society, Robert Heinlein created certain axioms to give new meaning to old ideas. Much of his work in science fiction invokes a new perception by such a method. As a tool for verbalization of certain circumstances, he redefined selected terms to relate their connection to religion and the purpose of that juxtaposition. One of Heinlein's shorter definitions in **Time Enough for Love** reads as follows: "Sin lies only in hurting other people unnecessarily. All other 'sins' are invented nonsense. (Hurting yourself is not sinful – just stupid.)" Ordinarily, a member of a certain religion would think of sin as anything that conflicts with some stated or implied principle of the religion. Heinlein suggested there that sin could be classified as the causing of unnecessary hurt to others, and that anything else may be illogical or insensible, but not sinful.

Another saying, in **The Expanded Universe**, questions the nature of prayer: "If you pray hard enough, water will run uphill. How hard? Why, hard enough to make water run uphill, of course." Though prayer is described in terms of a tangible outcome, here is an implication that prayer in itself is useless, since the description of the level of prayer needed reverts directly to the object of the question in the first place. Perhaps Heinlein's purpose was to present the indefinite side of prayer – that side to which no boundaries can be set – as related to the actual use to which it is put.

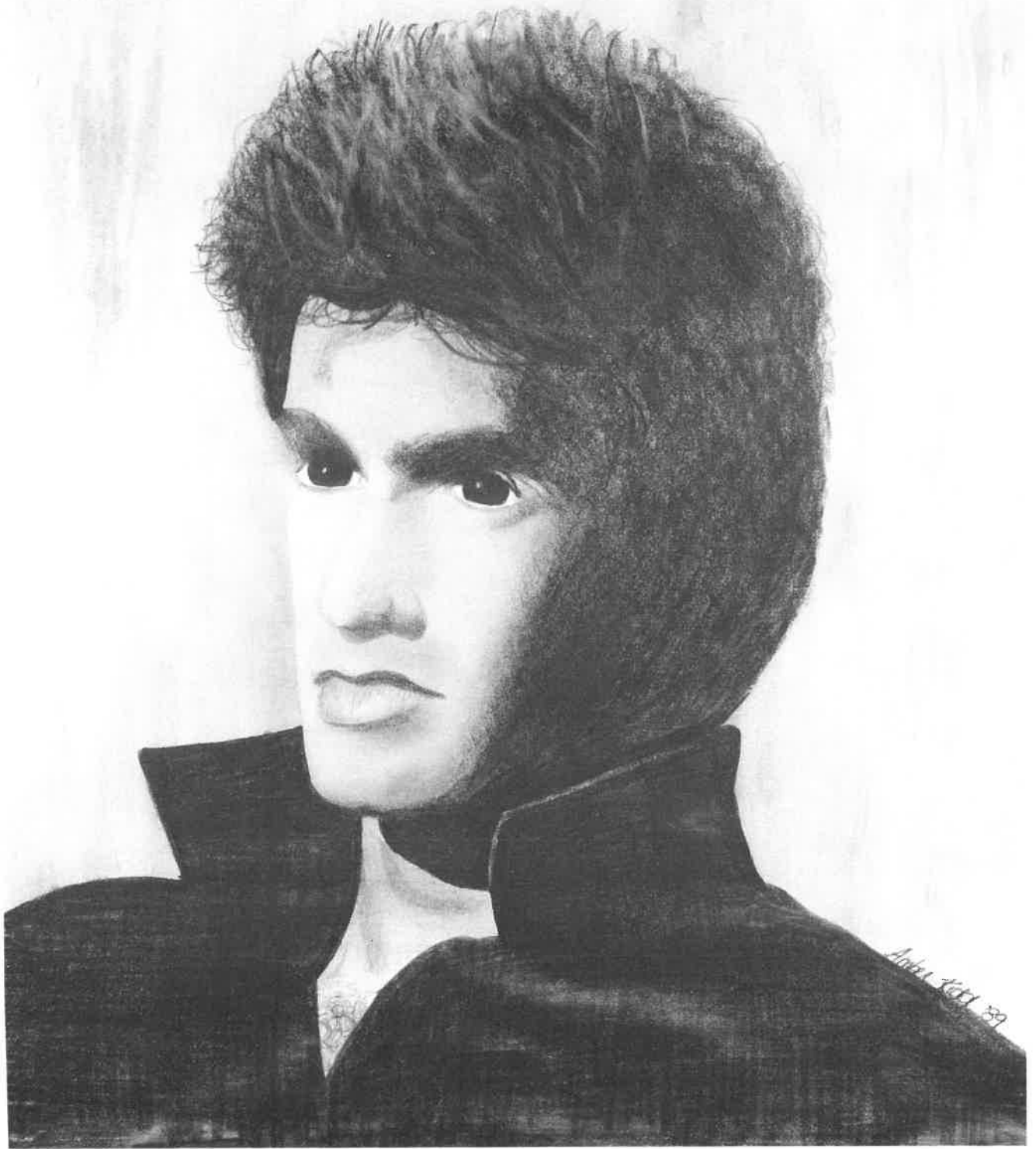
One of the methods Heinlein used to question the soundness of religious principles was the incorporation of solipsism in some of his novels, especially in **The Number of the Beast**. According to Bruce Franklin's **Robert Heinlein: America as Science Fiction**, Heinlein used a variant of solipsism to create imaginative fiction through the travels of four scientists running from the evil beings in the universe. This solipsism also brought about the concept that everything exists because it has a purpose for some intelligent envisioning being, and that anything that does

not have such a purpose simply does not exist. A possible conclusion is that even the reader is a figment of someone else's imagination, and might have no real significance at all. A soul could hardly traverse to heaven if it were not real in the first place; this belief represents Heinlein's presentation of the contradiction between solipsism and the afterlife.

An extremely strong attack on humanity from **Time Enough for Love** demonstrates an aspect of Heinlein's misanthropy: "Never underestimate the power of human stupidity." This satirical remark can be related to the Prophet's control of the citizens of the United States in **Revolt in 2100**; the overwhelming stupidity of the people caused them to become willing or mindless servants of a theological dictatorship. It could also be a mockery of the human capacity for blunder and misstep; he has already pointed out interesting paradoxes in the principles of certain religions. These definitions and short quotations are Heinlein's personalized view of religion and society, and exclusive vocabulary for the development and inspection of the influence of religion upon society.

The unique styles of writing in **Revolt in 2100**, **Time Enough for Love**, and **The Number of the Beast** give insight into Heinlein's thoughts concerning religion, its principles, and its relation to and effects on society. Perhaps most important is the new dimension of thought that he opens in the contemplation of the interconnectedness of religion and society. Through analysis of the foundations of religions, their interactions with society, and certain key words for the revelation of new meaning in old phrases, Heinlein creates both an interesting collection of science fiction novels, and references to the disparity between accepted meanings for certain words, phrases, or conditions, and the meaning that can be deduced through thought unbiased by any religious presence.

Rob Ellis



Charcoal Drawing

Amber Kidd

The Round-up

Rain poured from the midnight sky making the old country road muddier by the minute. Even when the road was dry, you could tell where it had rained before by the ruts in the red clay and gravel pavement.

Blane knew this because he had driven this road many times before to Mr. Braxton's farm. Mr. Braxton was an old, wrinkled man — much too old to work the dairy farm he owned. He was always calling Blane to come help feed the cows or milk the cows or bail the hay or whatever he couldn't do alone. He wouldn't sell the farm because, he said, "My daddy owned this farm, and my granddaddy before him owned it, and so did my great-granddaddy before him, and I ain't got a mind to get rid of it. Family, you know."

Tonight Mr. Braxton's cows had gotten out of a part of the fence that was down. Jimmy Spiers had called Mr. Braxton about eleven to let him know that his cows were on the highway. Naturally, Mr. Braxton called Blane to help him round up the cows. Blane didn't mind helping the old man — just not at midnight during the worst storm of the season.

Blane had to drive slowly down the muddy little road while the rain poured, the lightning struck, and the thunder shook. He grasped the steering wheel firmly with two hands and hunched his shoulders over it. His eyes squinted in an effort to see the road before him.

He narrowly escaped bogging down four times and nearly ran off the road five times before he finally saw the light of Mr. Braxton's farm house. Blane pulled his 1968 Ford Pickup as close to the front door as he could. This was not an easy task, seeing as how Mr. Braxton's house was built. It was a huge one-story white house raised up on tall stacks of red brick. The house had an almost antebellum look to it. It had a huge screened-in front porch with a swing on the second half of the eastern side of the house. The door relatives and friends entered was hidden at one end of the porch. The southern end of the house, which was the front of the house, had a large open porch with two antique rocking chairs sitting on it. The door for strangers was up the steps, positioned halfway down the edge of the porch, and straight ahead. All the way around the house were tall thick-glassed windows that distorted the outside world in a peculiar way when looking out from the inside. Mr. Braxton's wife had a flower bed planted with her prize-winning roses around both porches.

Blane quickly jumped out of his truck and ran to the friendly door with his jacket hood pulled safely over his head. He walked right in, since that's what friends were supposed to do at Mr. Braxton's. He found Mr. Braxton waiting impatiently for him in the

kitchen as soon as he walked in. Mrs. Braxton was drinking coffee in the living room. She waved. Blane was always surprised at the amount of energy a man of seventy-eight could have. He smiled and pulled off his hood.

"I been waitin' for ya 'bout a hour, sonny. What, didja git bawged down or sumthin'?" Mr. Braxton joked with Blane.

"No, sir, but it's a heckuva storm out there," Blane replied, trying to joke as well.

"Well, then, we better run get them cows!"

Blane put his hood back on his head and followed Mr. Braxton out the door. The rain had slacked off a bit, but it was still pouring. The two men got into Blane's truck and drove down another little road that would lead them to the highway.

They reached a little barn close to the highway where they parked the truck and got out. Inside the barn were two brown registered quarter horses.

"Better git these horses saddled up in a hurry, sonny," Mr. Braxton said with a touch of worry in his voice.

Blane nodded and went to get the saddles. He noticed that Mr. Braxton had lost weight since he had last seen him. He also seemed less energetic than he did back at the house. Soon Blane returned with two slightly dusty western style saddles and two plaid blankets. Mr. Braxton was sitting on a haybale with his head in his hands.

"Mr. Braxton, you don't look very good. Are you sure you're up to this?" Blane asked the obviously ill old man.

Mr. Braxton's head popped up as if he had been revived.

"What? Up to it? 'Course I'm up to it!" he affirmed.

He got up from his seat on the hay. Blane had to drop the saddles and catch him as he lost his balance.

"Mr. Braxton, I don't think you should do this. I tell you what, we're gonna get back in my truck, and I'm gonna drive you to the hospital," Blane explained to the old man.

In a raspy voice, Mr. Braxton said, "Wh-what a...bout m' cows?"

"I'll get 'em," Blane assured him.

Blane carried Mr. Braxton to the truck and set him inside. He started the truck back toward the house.

Blane was nervous — partly because of the storm and partly because he didn't want Mr. Braxton to die. Just as the road was about to end, the truck stopped and wouldn't move anymore. Blane panicked and pressed the gas pedal to the floor. Mr. Braxton

passed out. Blane turned off the truck, got out, and ran over to Mr. Braxton's side. He opened the door and pulled the old man out of the truck. I can see the house from here, he thought. He carried Mr. Braxton down the dark, muddy road through the storm to the farm house.

He burst open the stranger's door and laid Mr. Braxton on the sofa. Mrs. Braxton came running in. She gasped when she saw her unconscious husband on the couch.

"Quick, call an ambulance!" Blane yelled.

Mrs. Braxton just stood there staring wide-eyed at her husband.

Blane ran to the phone in the kitchen and dialed 911.

It took the ambulance thirty minutes to get to the

house, which was good what with the big storm.

Everything became a blur to Blane after the ambulance came. They rushed Mr. Braxton off to the hospital. He heard someone mention heart attack. He tried to console Mrs. Braxton, but she was hysterical. She rode to the hospital in the ambulance.

There Blane was all alone in the farm house. He looked around and saw all the antique farm equipment and family photos. He walked out the friendly door, got into his truck, and drove down the little road to round up the cows.

Donya Creel
3rd Place
Short Story Contest

Hands of a Child

Just as the sculptor sculpts,
my hands are a child's in play-doh.
The character within grows
with each wisp of my fingertips,
made in my own image, yet
The face in my hands
is more perfect than my own.
The eyes I mold
see more clearly.
She has wisdom and virtue.
I alone have met her.
She lives within me.
Each day, I mold her anew.
Each indention has my print.
Careful perfection in
each ridge is past and present.
She is my future.
I become her;
She becomes greater.
Only I have the power to change
Just as the sculptor sculpts.

Chandra Harrell

The Loner

I could see him standing all alone,
Dressed black and cold as stone;
The Night seems to make him strong.

When he walked everyone could hear,
Death seemed to be guarding him near;

In the total silence,
I could hear his heart crying out,
Long and emotionally strong was his heart's song,
But strong as a stone was his shell.

From the cut on his thumb,
I could tell that he once again fell;
He had opened his shell to someone,
But in the end he found himself alone again,
The cut adding stones to his shell,
And making one more twist in his heart.

This I know, for I am a loner,
Alone again.

Phillip Ludington

CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

Terri Blissard is a junior from Houston. She plans to major in law, and her special interests include music, softball, and swimming.

Kristin Boyd, a junior from McComb, feels that writing is an art acquired through practice. Kristin plans to major in marine biology. She is interested in music, reading, and animals, and her favorite writers are Eudora Welty and John Steinbeck.

Rebecca Brackin is a junior from Jackson who plans to attend the University of North Carolina. She enjoys drawing, painting, and baking. She says about her art, "I strive to convey a particular emotion or perception and reveal a small part of myself in it."

Donya Creel is a senior from Poplarville who will be attending MSU this fall. Donya will be double-majoring in philosophy and pre-med. Her hobbies are writing short stories and poems, watching movies, playing the drums, and "hanging out" with her friends. Writers who have influenced her are Thoreau, Keats, Lord Byron, and Eudora Welty. Donya's comment: "I've noticed something very strange about writing: when I write something, I write whatever comes to mind - it's a total accident that makes sense and sometimes even has a deeper meaning."

Amy Dobbs is a junior from Calhoun City who plans to major in math or architecture. She makes this statement about her art: "With art, one can see and not see at the same time."

Leslie Donaldson, another senior from Poplarville, believes that "in a boundary of the black and white exist the shadows of creative thought." He admires writers Robert Asprin and Stephen R. Donaldson. Leslie will attend Rose Hullman in Terra Haute, Indiana, and major in computer science. His interests include skating and the Gothic style.

Rob Ellis is a senior from Grenada. He plans to major in engineering and will attend the California Institute of Technology. His hobbies include reading, computer programming, and math and science clubs. His favorite writers are Jonathan Swift, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Robert A. Heinlein. Rob's comment: "I know that my writing is often restricted to logical construction." Rob's essay was written in the fall of 1988, and since then he has enjoyed learning from the styles of writing of other students. Rob says, "It is wonderful to glimpse all aspects of creative writing from a single student body."

Brad Fielder is a junior from Gunnison who wants to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he hopes to double-major in advertising and business. His favorite hobbies are drawing and tennis, and he has been influenced by artists Brian Paundres and Frank Galinsley.

Chandra Harrell, this year's assistant editor, is a junior from Moss Point. She wants to major in psychology at Vanderbilt. She especially enjoys competitive tennis and beautiful music, and she feels that "Reading is the greatest thing one can do for himself; writing is the greatest thing one can do for someone else."

Lee Hotchkiss is a senior from Long Beach. He will major in elementary education at the University of New Orleans. He is interested in computers, writing, reading, and karate. Writers who have influenced him are Lord Byron, Benjamin Franklin, and Boris Pasternak.

Dale Howard, a junior from Leakesville, enjoys reading, writing, walking, sewing, and singing. Her favorite writer is Victoria Holt. Dale says, "I really enjoy writing because it allows me to express myself freely."

Daniel Irby is a senior from Port Gibson. He will attend the University of New Orleans and major in physics. He feels that some of his short story writing reflects the influence of Stephen King. Daniel says, "In writing I am able to show something about myself by putting my words in someone else's mouth."

Sonjiala Jackson is a senior from Cleveland. She will attend the University of New Orleans and plans to major in the pre-med program. Sonjiala admires the work of Richard Bach and Christopher Isherwood. She comments, "The best poetry is those unwritten lines that frolic deep within the soul too big for words."

Amber Kidd is a junior from Enterprise. She is considering entering the Air Force ROTC at Alabama. She plans to major in computer engineering or psychology. Her interests are writing, music, sports, drawing, and computers. Writers that she admires include Emerson, Dickinson, Robert Frost, and Stephen King. Her comment: "A truly genius writer is one who can open the doors of his mind, draw out all of his thoughts in their raw form, and record them creatively. This is what I aspire to become."

Vincent King is a senior from Greenville. He wants to attend Howard University in Washington, D.C., and major in journalism. Vincent's hobbies are meeting people, writing, reading, and listening to the music of Prince Rogers Nelson. His favorite writers are Prince Rogers Nelson and Langston Hughes.

Bert Kuyrkendall, a senior from Laurel, plans to attend Belhaven College. His interests include running and cycling. Bert's favorite writer is C.S. Lewis.

Philip Ludington is a junior from Pascagoula. He enjoys computer programming and writing poems. He wants to attend the University of Maryland and major in computer science. His favorite writers are J.R.R. Tolkien and Mark Twain. He comments that his poems are "not just words in pretty patterns, but life and emotion on paper."

Webster Miller is a junior from Natchez.

Jennifer McCrory is a senior from Kosciusko. She will attend Ole Miss and major in journalism. Her hobbies are sports, journalism, and dancing. She says that she has always loved to write because she feels it is the best way to understand and express her feelings.

Tracy Moore is a junior from Wiggins. She wants to major in biomedical engineering. She enjoys softball, reading, and sewing. Tracy's favorite writers are Mark Twain, H.G. Wells, and Jack London.

Marcus Moseley, a senior from Waynesboro, will be attending MSU this fall and will major in biology. He hopes to attend medical school afterwards. His interests are in reading, listening to music, and being with friends. Writers that he enjoys include Eudora Welty and Robert Frost.

Kathy Patterson is a senior from Port Gibson. She will attend the University of Chicago this fall. Kathy is interested in piano and drawing, and she admires writers Joseph Heller and Sylvia Plath.

Chris Rubin de la Borbolla is a senior from Vicksburg who is planning to attend Northwestern University. He is interested in the arts, reading, skateboarding and music.

Emma Richardson, faculty advisor for **Southern Voices**, teaches English and Creative Writing at the Mississippi School for Math and Science.

Anthony Thaxton is a senior from Caesar. He is the art editor for this edition of **Southern Voices**. He will enter college this fall in USM's honors college. Anthony likes to draw, listen to Southern gospel music, and work with videos/cinematography. He has been influenced by the work of such writers as Margaret Mitchell, Irvin S. Cobb, Mark Twain, and various Mississippi writers. Anthony's comment: "In whatever I draw or write, I simply try to convey a particular emotion through a scene. The key to being successful at this is letting my feelings lead me."

Tina Thrash is a senior from Sebastopol who plans to attend USM this fall and major in counseling psychology. She enjoys horseback riding, visiting friends, reading, and singing with the radio. Tina feels that she has been influenced by the works of such writers as William Wordsworth and her brother, Bobby Thrash. Tina comments, "May the spirit of writing and creativity encompass your soul."

Reagen Ward, a junior from Oxford, wishes to attend the University of Texas at Austin and major in computers or journalism. His interests include music, reading, computers, and rocketry. Writers that he especially likes are John Steinbeck, Ray Bradbury, and Tennessee Williams.

Blake Weathersby, this year's **Southern Voices** editor, is a senior from McComb. He will attend the University of Chicago and major in English. Blake likes to read, write, and participate in sports. He enjoys the work of such writers as J.D. Salinger, William Golding, Larry Brown, and William Faulkner. Blake's comment: "Everyone is a poet, though some people never write a single stanza. Hopefully, **Southern Voices** is an outlet for poets at this school to express what Wordsworth called 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings,' and will encourage others to do the same."

To the students:

It was a pleasure to read your work and to discover that the future of literature in Mississippi is not endangered. That is to say, by indirection, I found genuine talent and artistry among the works. I encourage all of you — whether you won a prize or not — to continue writing. Prizes are nice but not essential. The ability to write creatively, to yoke language and imagination, is a far greater possession. I urge you to read widely, to listen carefully to the rhythms and turns of phrase in Mississippi speech, to use your eyes wisely, and to write daily. Good writers, Henry James proposed many years ago, are those upon whom nothing is lost. Nothing. Observation, practice and discipline are required on the journey toward becoming a good writer. That is a journey I urge each of you to make.

Jerry W. Ward, Jr.
Lawrence Durgin Professor of Literature
Tougaloo College

