

Southern Voices

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Southern Voices

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Gautam Pandey

Two By Two

[The Chris Read Award for Fiction]



He awoke to light feathering through the pinched blinds. The plastic wood grain walls grimaced through owl-eyes and mushroom caps, and the wind twitched a lazy quarter of the window screen. Fwish, fwish, fwish. Clink. Fwish, fwish, fwish. Clink. On a good, windy summer day the mesh would slap the metal and the air would taste like an unwashed spoon -- hot, satisfying, metallic. Fwish, fwish, fwish. Clink. Listen to the scratching mesh, watch the owl-eyes open and shut and open and shut, and sometimes they would turn into wire coat-hangers, like Joey used to make a bow for his arrows. (See./Pull it like this/Like this/Just like Robin Hood/Fwish!) But it wasn't like "Robin Hood," it was like the sleepy owl-eyes or the heavy, wet motions of the nurse's mouth. Open and shut and open and shut and open and

She came in, with a bowl of bread and oatmeal and an orange plastic bottle wedged between the rim of the bowl and her hand. She set the bowl in the nudge between his legs and the two pills high on his upper thigh. One pill was an orangey-pink and slick. Like Ms Lula's lips and the grapefruit at lunch. She gutted it with her fingernail and ate the inside that was raw and limp like a fish. And when she leaned over she smelled like Band-Aids and licorice, and she wanted him to listen to the paper. She pointed at the lines (maybe they were the licorice, black and thick and twisted). They told her things. Things about people, and animals, and families.

Now, sitting in the room with blooming owl-eyes, he wondered if licorice was telling her things about his family. Maybe he should have tried harder to listen, and maybe the licorice would have told him how he could have stayed (he's got to go, Harriet./he's just "not right"/our family can't take it anymore), stayed where the clover opened and closed and flower trees had big, soft, white leaves that fell on the porch.

He could listen to the owl-eyes and mushroom caps

and wire-hangers, though. They told him things to the rhythm of the screen flappings or the woman's padded shoes. They hummed and danced and offered solace as he pressed his bread around the orange-pink pill and then around the blue one and then he pressed all of his bread into tight balls. The next bed didn't know about order and clean; he ate his bread in chunks, and the flat grey oatmeal spilled from his bottom lip. Yes, if he had done better with Ms Lula, his mom would have loved him: the neat, clean, good boy she had wanted.

He ate his oatmeal, pouring the grey smoothly down his throat. The walls reminded him that today was Jim's day. Jim was like him, slow and clean. He wore a suit that was brown like the walls and was a shirt and pants together. A rag hung out of his back pocket, and

he pushed a cart with bottles of plastic-smelling spray. He never said anything, just lumbered around and straightened and wiped. Last Jim Day, he asked if he was so quiet because he was listening to the

Maybe he should have tried harder to listen, and maybe the licorice would have told him how he could have stayed (he's got to go, Harriet./he's just "not right"/our family can't take it anymore)

walls. He still didn't say anything, just nodded and put a finger to his lips.

He looked forward to listening with someone. Someone who understood what he heard about people, and animals, but not families, because the walls didn't like to talk about that. So when Jim arrived, the walls started in with the hum of the screen window, and they told Jim and the boy of animals who ran together in clover and white leaves. They reminded the two of the roaches that scurried in the walls at night, of the mushroom clusters on soggy logs, of the huddle of damp mice underneath the porch. Fwish, fwish, fwish. Clink. And the light scattered in the room, filtered evenly by the crooked blinds.

Heather Chappell
First Place
Short Story Contest

Llover

here goes
how do i start?
this just isn't something you can blurt out.
how can i describe her?
if you have a suggestion don't hesitate to tell me.
it seems like someone who has everything would be
easy to describe
but unfortunately this just adds to the confusion.
maybe i could start out with her eyes,
but that would take away from the whole.
maybe i could start by expressing her inner beauty
no, that would take the infatuation and lust
(taking into account lust does not mean the same thing).
i feel lowly in her presence
but to watch her dance in the rain
i feel as though i would die without her.
I would sit in the rain
and I should watch in the rain.
if the rain would allow it
i would, too, die there
for the rain is the only part of her to love.

Joshua Smith



Watercolor

Heather Gray

That Special Moment

As I sit gazing into your brown eyes,
Feelings arise in me I cannot describe.
Feelings of rapture, of passion, and love,
Race through my body, as moonlight brightens
the night from above.
As I lean closer, my hand brushes your arm,
And I enclose you with my hands to protect
you from harm.
There's a moment of silence as we look at each other,
Oblivious of the world, thinking only of one another.
Together embraced I kiss your lips, as you kiss mine,
Completing this act of love, taking our time.

Levar Richmond

My Eternity??

An invisible breeze ruffles the tapestries
Covering the room,
Enchanting only due to the brilliance of
The scarlet illumination.
The question of my eternity has been
Answered by one true love,
Ending two decades of dwelling in a solitary
Soul.
When, slowly, elegantly, SHE sways towards
The altar of our beginning,
Each candle flickers,
Bowling to their goddess in purest white.
Seclusion abandons me as
i take her hand for the final matrimony,
Ironically accomplished by the priest,
Cradling the method to his madness,
As he dares to question my vow of
Immortality,
Only as SHE has before, yet
All is forgotten.
SHE and i are professed to live, without dying,
As one.
Since each candle consecrates the inevitable
And the god that began me consents,
Due to incompetence of prevention,
The breeze trembles at the magnificence of our love
and . . .
she and i find our Immortality
Together as
One.

Brad Strowd

Tuning



As you enter the church at two o'clock on Christmas Eve, you hear the hollow booming of the piano: a single note, forte, over and over. Coming up the stairs and into the parish hall, you realize that each of the piano's firm plunks is echoed more tentatively by a changing note that starts flat, comes up to pitch, then checks and rechecks. Sometimes this note is alone, sometimes coupled to a lower octave.

Approaching the choir room door, you realize it's me, laboring to tune Amy Massengale's harp.

I haven't been playing harp long and only know enough to accompany the Christmas hymns, can't play solo yet or anything fancy. I haven't even got a harp of my own, but Mrs. Massengale, whose mother is a harpist, does, and so she brings it to the church. "Anyway, you'll look angelic," says Mrs. Gum, the choir director. At this point, however, I'm not feeling very angelic.

With almost as many strings as a piano has white keys, tuning a harp is no picnic. I think that if angels really do play harps, it must be the task of the sufferers in hell to tune them.

Bent close to the sounding board with the tuning key tightly in my right hand, I'm using my left to pluck the strings as Mrs. Gum sounds each note on the piano. Finishing an octave is thrilling, since it allows a pause to pluck a beautifully in-tune chord. Standing in the cold parish hall, you hear me exclaim with relief when we reach the highest octave. You open the door to wish a merry Christmas before you go about your business — and the resulting drop in the temperature of the choir room wreaks a disaster. The strings flat with

an audible ping. You don't seem to notice—you greet us cheerily and tell us how you're looking forward to the music this evening. When you turn to go on your way, I make sure you've not closed the door

I think that if angels really do play harps, it must be the task of the sufferers in hell to tune them.

behind you.

A single note on the piano, booming forte over and over, follows you through the parish hall, echoed by the tentative plucking of the harp.

Theo Hummer
First Place
Essay Contest

Free Binding

Sprinkle a star-dust
Mar a beat-time
Take me to her home
foot-falls in rhyme
caress the pied piper
Linger his tail
watch the night echoes
and hear orchids wail
neck on the outskirts
shimmy through beach
screen on a river
(sand fell a leech)
Crisp out the feelings
Numb them like wine
Anesthesia springs core-nuts
Abound in free twine

Heather Chappell



Stipple

Reco Williams

My Half-Silvered Window

My half-silvered bedroom window,
though small and fragile
Lets in only what it wants to--
those images that mold and shape:
Half-truths, half-lies, half-reality;
through my window, they look like one another.
Confusing pieces in a puzzle I can never solve,
reflect all my wonder
until so amplified become
Everything I say and do
is half of what it used to be,
Glimpses of the outside world.
my hungry mind absorbs
At least until that fateful day,
when my mother barred that window,
from people such as the likes of me.

Jason Carrick

The Roses

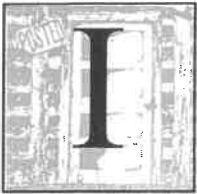
They lived in the olive-green-house
On the corner of Main and Church.
20 rooms for 2 women.

One walked to the cemetery every Monday,
Ivory-knitted beret crowning
White silk hair,
White altar linens over her shoulder
For Sunday Mass,
And velvet flowers under her arm
For her sister's stone.

The other drove a big black Buick
Like a scared elephant
Through town.
Prickly voice
Told little boys and tom boys
Where the biggest frogs were
As her leathery fingers twisted
Sharp hooks into lures.

Beth Fratesi
Honorable Mention
Poetry Contest

The Jenkins Incident



Interest is a mild word. It did not apply to feelings some people have about history. Of course for some it did, but for Henry T. Smith obsession was a more befitting utterance. For fifteen years he had been a non-descript traditional Southern Banker.

Smith retired at forty-five with several million and, having nothing else to do, became a history buff. He also bought a Mercedes since he could show he had money, now that he no longer had to make people believe he wasn't unfairly burdening them with his profit margin, as small town Southerners are apt to believe about wealthy bankers. At first, Smith contented himself with small stuff like dropping a couple hundred to travel to a lecture or buying the history section of a locally owned bookstore.

Reenacting eventually became a passion and he spent all his waking hours parading around pretending he was a general in The War¹. Then it was weird deranged stuff like spending

days in the dark dreary places where records always seem to be kept and having picnics in cemeteries while looking at tombstones. After three years, the real insanity had begun. He would disappear for weeks at a time and when he returned he would show pictures of all the places he had been. Hill, dale, and parking lots all were sites of battles or skirmishes. You never would have guessed—they all looked the same.

Carolyn S. Calvary was his only daughter, being raised in the South by traditional parents and grandparents, believed in making sure your father didn't wander off and do something stupid. Especially since her mother died and made her promise that Carolyn would make sure her father didn't "go senile and get hit by a bus." Her father called her before all of his out-of-town expeditions and gave her a quick overview of approximately where he was going to be and approximately for how long. When her father was two days overdue she began to get relatively concerned, and when a week passed she called his reenactment company, the local historical society, the relatives, and all the lodging

in the area he was supposedly traveling to. Disappearing for a time didn't really bother her, but the fact that nobody had heard from him did. When the airline also reported that he had not used his ticket she became very concerned. He was a quiet person and didn't usually announce his intentions but when he did always ended up at least making an effort in some vague way related to his stated intentions.

Finding a decent investigator was no problem. The local insurance agents all knew Henry by name, since like all his kin he believed in insurance to a rather high extent. "Be prepared" is a motto that lasts beyond scouting. Faced with the prospect of having Henry missing, they immediately volunteered me, their best fraud investigator, since an increase in his business was worth a lot and his death would mean the rather early

repayment of a rather substantial life insurance policy. I was rather busy at the time, but a boss is a boss, and five suspicious fires with insurance claims aside, I set out to find the distin-

After three years, the real insanity had begun. He would disappear for weeks at a time and when he returned he would show pictures of all the places he had been.

guished gentleman.

I immediately followed all the usual avenues of credit card use, friends and acquaintances, and usual haunts and came up with a barrage of questions nearly identical to the ones I was trying to answer. Day-dreaming, despite its costs in productivity, can be a useful tool. So I pretended what I would do if I were a history buff. That which is obsession often grows into many little obsessions, so I determined to find out what the latest was.

Carolyn gave immediate permission to enter her father's house, but she had unfortunately not foreseen the need to enter and informed me I would have to devise my own method of entry. Henry was more clever than most people and hence a key was not under his doormat but ticky-tacked between two planks on his front porch. His house was a mess; copies of old newspaper articles, memorabilia, interviews with the extremely old and infirm were all filed in a rather haphazard way. To find out the most recent happening in something like this, the best indicator next to a journal

is to assume the ones on top are the most recently used.

There was a common thread in all the various piles. On top were articles concerning a local aviator named Harry Jenkins. He had gone on the trip to research a relative, but what if he had come across a reference to Jenkins?

The best method to find out if someone went somewhere is to go there. Accordingly, I went through a two-hour ride to the aviator's birthplace. Given that it was an off-year for county elections, the roads were a bit rough. I talked with the local history person. Every small town seems to have at least one of the sort. I found out that a middle-aged man resembling Henry had interrogated him on the subject of Harry two days before. He commented on how some researchers reminded him of the interrogations by the Gestapo during his days as a P.O.W. in W. W. II. Henry made him feel very uncomfortable, it appeared. To the question if Henry had looked at any files, the answer was yes. So I perused the files and found the article referring to Harry doing a flight above the fairgrounds at the town where Henry lived.

When I returned home I called Mrs. Calvary and informed her of my findings. Her answer was, "Oh, don't bother yourself. I found Daddy."

One word slipped out of my mouth—"where"—thinking of the headache I had gotten driving to Jenkins' hometown.

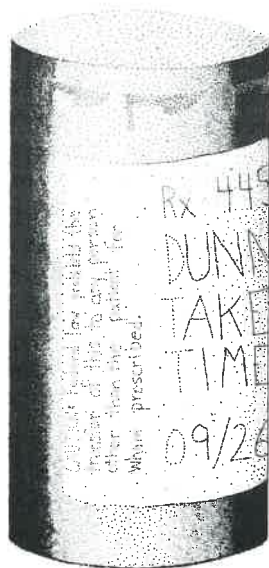
"At the library. He volunteers there and so they let him have a key. He found some really exciting stuff on

a local aviator named Jenkins. And so when he got in last night he went straight to the library. I had to go by the library to drop off a fruit salad my husband made for Marge, the librarian, and she commented that my father had been searching their old newspapers for the last fifteen or so hours. Apparently he drove to Richmond; he decided that renting a car at the airport would be too much trouble." Mrs. Calvary politely explained, further commenting that her father often expected her to have psychic powers and expressed regret for any trouble she had caused.

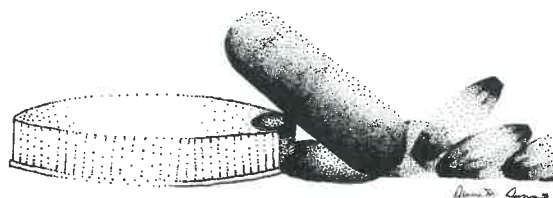
"I hope we were of service." Mr. Smith would one day repay my boss by either buying a new policy or steering a new friend towards him. Me, I would just go on existing; maybe one day I would get to set up a private office. Maybe in Memphis; Memphis was always a neat place to go when you wanted to experience some culture. New Orleans was good, also. The food was great and there was plenty of crime and scandal to generate billings. Vancouver was an option. Mountains would be neat to live around, and the climate was supposedly real nice.

David Sandy
Second Place
Short Story Contest

¹ The War of course refers to The War of Southern Independence.



Stipple



Diane Dunn

Dinosaurs Are Extinct, You Know



The year my best friend died is the year I learned how to draw dinosaurs. I had always wanted to be close to a dinosaur: to see all the little wrinkles that mapped across his skin and to listen to his heartbeat. But the only way I could see them was through my imagination. And then they seemed so distant.

On the Saturdays between Thanksgiving and Christmas, when the Christmas floats were tied out in the middle of Deer Creek, and when Momma was at work, Pawpaw would sit on the bank of the creek, half-buried in bright yellow ginkgo leaves, and watch Doug and me while we played by the water. All down the creeks there were scenes of the Nativity, snowmen, Santa Claus, and even one advertising Leland: The Birthplace of Jim Henson. Pawpaw's favorite float scene was the one that the Catholic Church had put up: one of the Annunciation, with an angel under a foil-covered arch and Mary kneeling down

in front of her. Koury's had donated some old mannequins for the float that the men draped tarpaulins over for dresses. Mary had a puke-green canvas dress, cardboard colored skin, and ridiculous looking bright pink cheeks that made her look like Raggedy Ann.

That was the float that we stood on the bank in front of that year, throwing rocks at Mary and trying to hit her in the forehead. My aim was awful, but Doug did get her every once in awhile, dotting her head with missing flecks of paint that made her look like she had a roach colony on her forehead. Momma got onto us for doing it, but Pawpaw said it was all right; you couldn't see the flecks from the top of the bank where all the cars passed by.

We found out about Doug's cancer before we got out for Christmas holidays. He'd had a headache for awhile, and they had gone back to Jackson to make sure that it hadn't come back again, but it had. His mom pulled me into the dining room one time while we were playing Nintendo and whispered that Doug was going to have to rest more than usual, like last

time he was sick, but the treatments would be over before we knew it.

But I knew that this time was different. I had to get up close to see it, though. He hadn't lost any weight or hair. It was in his eyes. They weren't dull from any treatments, but they didn't shine, either. I could actually see the holes in the middle of them, the irises, where the light went in. Only there was no light coming back out like there usually was. No hope. And his momma didn't see it. My momma didn't see it.

Doug was in treatment the Saturday after Christmas. Pawpaw and I went down to the creek and sat on the bank in front of at the Annunciation float. Pawpaw looked out at the float like I wasn't even there. "That Mary gets more ragged every year. You really have to get up close to see it, though. She's got cracks all down

her neck. I think her head's about to fall off. But they won't give up on her yet. As long as she looks good from a distance. They just keep touching her up every year with that pink paint

before they put her out." He grinned. "That's Pepto Bismol on her cheeks. One day you'll come back here and she'll be Pepto Bismol Pink from her head to her feet." I laughed.

I didn't think about anything for the whole week before we went back to school. I tried not to; I just sat on my bed and bounced with my toes, and I tried and tried to think about nothing. But the only thing that I could think about was

Dinosaurs.

That would do. They were so big and tough and NOT cuddly. No dinosaur ever died of something as wimpy as cancer. But Doug never liked dinosaurs. And he said I couldn't draw them worth a flip.

As long as he looks good from a distance.

Dinosaurs.

I hauled my drawing book out from under the dresser. It was really one of those third grade cursive manuscript tablets with the dotted guidelines in between the regular lines. My mom went overboard one year and bought twelve of them. The lines were light enough

Mary had a puke-green canvas dress, cardboard colored skin, and ridiculous looking bright pink cheeks that made her look like Raggedy Ann.

you couldn't see them if you blurred your eyes. Crayons look cool on them; it pulls the color out like taffy, instead of blotching it on the page like the other papers do. I took it and some crayons and went down to the creek and looked at Mary with the roach colony on her head. I blurred my eyes.

Pawpaw was right; you couldn't see the roach colony, and Mary did look better from a distance. Kind of misshapen for a person—but she would make a great dinosaur. I pulled a puke-green crayon out of the box (Crayola calls it Avocado now), and I drew Mary with my eyes blurred. The cracks on her neck, at least where I imagined them to be, trailed across the green shape like real dinosaur skin. And the dinosaur looked great. So great I took it to Doug's house to show it to him. And he admitted it looked like a dinosaur—from a distance.

He died eleven months later.

The Tuesday after the funeral, I walked down to the creek. The men from the church were putting out the floats. Mary's puke-green plaster canvas spread out around her like before, and she still kneeled on the rickety planks of wood. But one of the men stood in front of her with a paintbrush and paint, slopping Pepto-Bismol pink over the roach colony on her forehead and the cracks on her neck.

Beth Fratesi
Second Place
Essay Contest



Colored Pencil Contour

Anders Carlsson

First Place Art Contest

Untitled

In the evening,
the sun is set.
Nature nods her weary head,
the grass is wet and brown.
The farmhouse groans
in pale tranquility;
the end of the world
over green elfin hills.
The rain
as it plunges long,
dredges dream memories
of the tales of yesterday.
All that's left
of the Grand Plantation
is black death loathing
from the scarecrow
with angry eyes,
like the sky is
a dull mirror
of barren land.

Peter Mayo

Happy Days

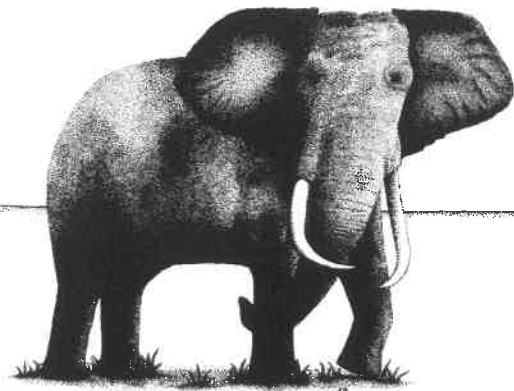
The sun shone bright in the sky,
The sky was blue,
A laugh of a young boy is heard in the distance,
Over the rise under the tree the boy swings.
An Old Oak.
The markings of wear, a name, a date,
Line the elegant trunk.
The boy swings Higher, Higher.
The crackle and spark begin.
The boy flies through the air.
He jumped and rolled.
and relaxes under the protective tree,
A cool dusk breeze wanders into the night sky.
The sky is red,
The blue moon now appears.
Comfort fills the boy's face,
He sleeps and dreams.
His own sweat awakens his deep slumber,
The Heat, the Light,
The boy looks up,
and sees the black sky staring back.
The moon laughs,
The boys screams,
Climbs the swing and begs forgiveness.
She turns and walks away.

Mark Womer

The Ducks

Another thing we always did was
to play with the ducks at the local pond.
Cool and crystal blue,
surrounded by trees and trails,
we would search for the pure white ducks.
Then, we would throw a piece of bread down,
and, as the ducks came,
we would run off with it.
Then, we would throw it down again,
and again we would run off with it.
Soon, the ducks learned,
and didn't come,
except for one duck,
he never played right.
He always came and actually ran after us!
He never ran if we chased him,
and looked like he'd peck our eyes out.
Quite unforgivable, that duck,
don't you think?

Anand Thakur



Stipple

Kim Martin

Second Place Art Contest

Memories

Thoughts of Malaysia linger
Like the thick smell of incense.--
They speak Bahasa, Cantonese, Tamil, German, Spanish . . .

These thoughts sing the words of Negara Ku,
As they sound out across the country
Like the prayer of the Muslims.

These thoughts play like the Orange Utan,
And race like dragon boats
In the straits of Malacca.

My thoughts wrap themselves in saris and sarongs,
As they call out like street vendors
Selling durains and rambutan.

The thoughts hang heavy in my head
Like the morning haze in the air,
As I recall all of the sad good-byes I have said
To friends that care.

But, these thoughts rise
Like the hot sun,
When I remember
All of our good times and all of our fun.

These thoughts hold the scent
Of the Ampang Morning Market
And retain the flavor of nasi ayam and char sue fan.

The thoughts grow wild
Like the hibiscus flower,
And whistle the tune of the mynah bird.

These thoughts intertwine a denseness
Of the tropical rain forest.
Thoughts of Malaysia still linger in my mind.

Anna M. Gayaut
Second Place
Poetry Contest

The Hive



Roell slowly stroked his knife over the textured block of wood. Sitting on the edge of the wooden platform that served as a floor for the mildewed canvas tents, he surveyed the small crowd of boys that had gradually gathered around him.

Dou reclined on the pine straw padding of the ground, content with doing nothing. LeMay was fidgeting unconsciously with the small sticks they used to start evening campfires. Alundis tied bait onto his fishing pole in anticipation of another trip to the lake. He had the lake record for bass and a picture of him holding up the fish hanging in the Tradin' Post to prove it.

The late afternoon sun slanted down through the trees. Even though much of its power was filtered through the pine trees, sweat still beaded on Ta'Boris's forehead. He quickly wiped it away before it got in his eye. He was absent-mindedly reading a book but mostly listening to the conversation going on around him.

"So what did you do then, tool?" Roell asked laboriously.

"I had to steer into a tree to stop the bike," LeMay answered him. The assembly, gathered around Roell's tent like followers listening to a Messiah, laughed agreeably at Roell's probings of LeMay. Everyone was familiar with the adventures of LeMay Baker.

"It didn't hurt that bad," LeMay softly added, more to himself than to the others engulfed in laughter.

"Did you enjoy that, LeMay?" Ta'Boris asked with a grin. Only LeMay could keep them entertained so long talking about his misfortunes.

He quickly changed the subject. "Are you about to go fishing, Alundis?"

"I suppose so," Alundis slowly replied while staring at the gradual setting of the June sun.

Dou raised his head off the ground. "What time is it anyway?" he asked with effort.

"Four-thirty. I'm gonna go to the lake before supper."

Roell glanced down at Alundis from the platform.

"I'll go, too." That decided it for the group. Dou sat up off the ground and brushed off the sunflower seed shells that Roell had been spitting on him for the last hour. Alundis picked up his tacklebox, rod, and reel. LeMay rushed off to get his fishing gear, and everyone fell in line behind Roell.

The road was deeply rutted with tire tracks filled with water. The driest summers could not conquer the mud puddles of Camp Creek. They all enjoyed watching Buick LeSabres become hopelessly mired in the road's ever-present mud. Another fixture of the camp's roads was the scent of horse manure. The boys' noses had long since grown accustomed to it, but visitors always complained.

Roell turned around to the group with a smile on his

face. "Let's use LeMay as bait." LeMay's nervous laugh was louder than everyone else's.

"Fish wouldn't want to eat LeMay, would they Alundis?"

*Bees were instantly everywhere,
their buzz loud in the boys' ears.*

"No, probably not," Alundis drawled.

"Let's try anyway. Help me, Dou." Roell and Dou grabbed LeMay and threw him in a mud puddle. LeMay loudly splashed into the puddle.

He got up with as much dignity as he could. "Yeah, real funny, Roell." The tranquility of the surrounding woods disturbed, some of the birds loudly came alive.

Seemingly prompted by the new stirrings of life around them, Roell exclaimed, "Let's go kill something." Dou and Alundis laughed as usual, but Ta'Boris was far off in thought and LeMay was far off to avoid any other physical punishments that Roell saw fit to administer to him.

Roell saw a beehive off into the woods. He immediately headed towards it with everyone else in tow. A medium-sized rock hurled at high speed had no effect on it.

"Go pull it off that tree, LeMay."

"Naw, I don't think so, Roell. You can."

Without a word, Roell seized him. Dou came over, grabbing LeMay's arms and pinning them back. Alundis watched them his eyes observing but not seeing.

"Stop, Roell. Let's go to the lake. This is a waste of

time," Ta'Boris said.

Roell did not answer. He and Dou lifted LeMay off the ground and walked him over to where the hive hung four or five feet off of the ground.

"One, two, three!" Roell and Dou slung LeMay at the hive.

Bees were instantly everywhere, their buzz loud in the boys' ears. LeMay hit the ground with a loud crack.

His face contorted in pain. The intensity of his screams shocked Ta'Boris into inaction. He stood hypnotized among the noise of the bees, staring at the grotesque position of LeMay's left leg. The first few stings woke him from his trance. The others had instantly fled, and he rushed to catch up with them. They left LeMay among the swarms of bees, unable to move. His screams gradually grew faint as the boys ran farther and farther away.

They eventually stopped when the pain in their lungs became too intense to be influenced by the adrenaline rushing through their bodies.

"What do we do, Roell?" Dou gasped, chest heaving. The boys had been looking at Roell since they had stopped.

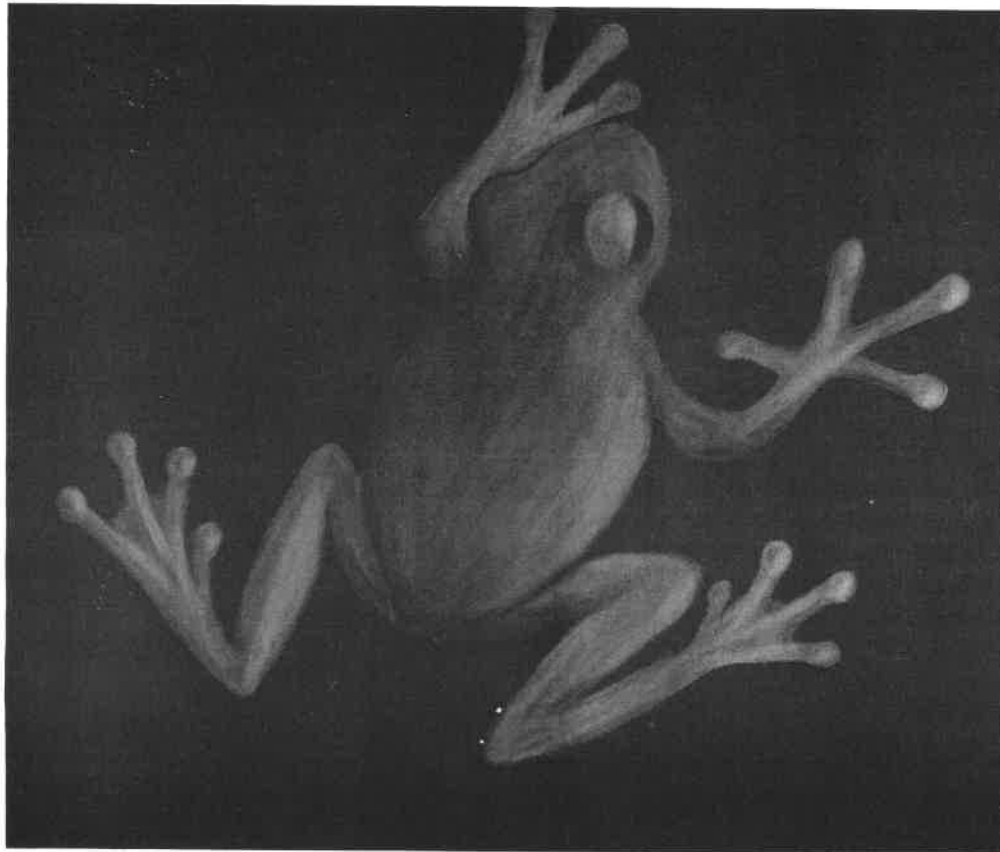
"I don't know what to do. Why should I know? Y'all decide something for once." His gaze turned to the ground and he moved away from the center of the group.

Ta'Boris spoke loudly. "We have to get help now. Dou, you and Alundis go to the First Aid Station and tell them what happened. Roell and I will try to go help LeMay."

"I'm not going back there."

"Then stay here and do nothing." Ta'Boris glared at Roell. He ran back towards the hive, with Dou and Alundis heading the other way. Roell stood, unmoving, and was left to himself.

Bill Jolly
Third Place
Short Story Contest



Charcoal Reverse

Kim Martin



Negative Cutout

Rhoda Holman

Honorable Mention Art Contest

rich times

The riches of the world unite
under one roof leafy
and decide to fight
the crazy madness poor man say
"I wish I had a dollar.
I wish I could have these things."
And pray to the Lord God Almighty
for the riches of heaven
Mr. DJ man
I've got a song to play
and it ain't gonna be pretty
jive, live, & hip to go
no place to go, just be
with my new shoes on
'cause my others torn all up
and they wore a track in
the mud the other day --
been travelin' no place at all.

Rachel Moss

Harvest Reaper

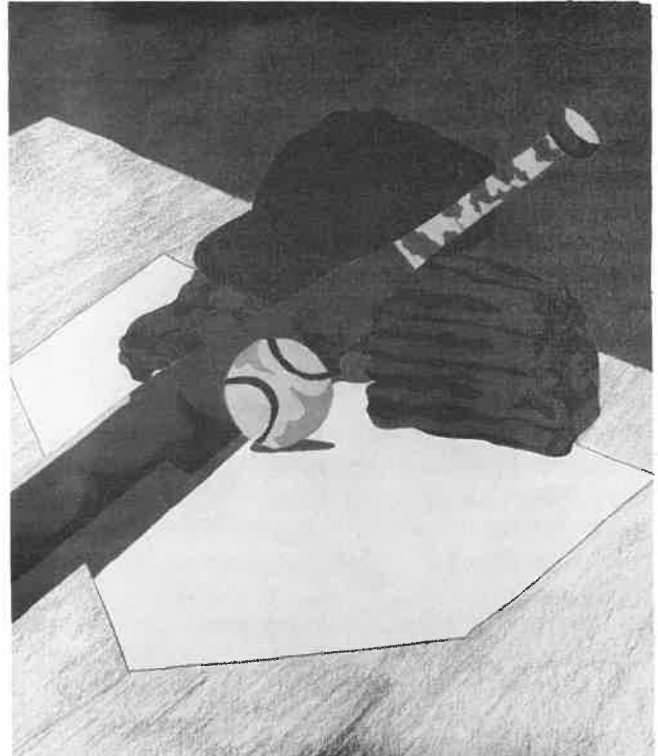
Oh, life, why can't you be fair!
You run us over like we do each other.
Like a tractor does a grain field.
Leaving the trampled bodies behind,
Still,
Quiet,
And what if I could scream
Like the thunder!
And chase all the rain away.
But all I can do is bow down
And let the rain fall,
Silently,
Unjustly,
While the cicadas forage through the fallen grain
And give thanks for a good harvest.

Sara Lawrence

Waking up into Dreams

With innocence of trees and grass,
I cast down the harness of civilization
and caress the undomesticated land.
The radiance of plainness entrances me like
the numbly warm cotton blanket
draped off the corner of my still-unmade bed.
As the sounds of the world escalate through atmosphere,
the unmistakable beauty of the silence of utter
chaos in nature pounds into me.
And you.
Tomorrow the rope will be tied and then,
Nothing.

Ryan Kelly



Colored Pencil
Contour

Matt Taylor

The Negative Thing



he feeds me love and tenderness and macaroons," he sings to himself as he wipes a blue Slurpie ring from the counter. His voice is sweet and scratchy, like sucking on rock candy. Then he looks up at me through the giant pickled pigs feet jar, half of his face contorted in pink liquid. "Thought any more about our talk?" he inquires with a half-smirk.

Cocky, I think. But then, Uncle Don always has been.

"Yes." I take a swig of my Yoo-Hoo. "And I still disagree."

"It's true. Pain hurts worse than joy feels good," he says. "If you asked anyone what happened, say, ten years ago, it would be a negative thing. A death, an illness. That's what people remember. That's what impacts people."

He looks sad, behind the counter of the Kountry Store and Koin Laundry. His eyes are smaller than I

remember, and his beard is sparse and greying. His fingers curtsy over the pile of food stamps as he counts; he only slows when one gets caught in a hinge of broken fingernail.

I still think of Uncle Don as the man in the one picture I have of him: he is sitting atop one of the twin plastic horses in front of the Quintard Mall, his knees bowed to his chest. I am sitting on the second horse, and we are both grinning. I am five; he is twenty.

"Heather, I'm moving," he told me that day, in front of the Orange Julius in the food court. I loved how he talked to me, blunt and even without a hint of condescension.

"To where?"

"Atlanta. I have a job at a movie theatre."

I shifted my frozen drink with a straw then looked up to meet my uncle's gaze. I would miss our days at the mall, trips to the duck pond, or late-night serenades to the mean cashier - woman at Eckerd Drugs, but I knew what the job meant. I had seen his walls, so papered with movie posters you couldn't see paint. I remembered the time we went to see "The Muppet Movie" how he talked about the upholstery and lighting, like the way Mom talked about Brooke before she was born.

"Send me letters. . ." I grinned.

"And movie posters, too," he promised.

He visited the next Christmas, with smudged polaroids of displays he had designed. By the next year, he was managing, and soon he was bringing glossy photos of area-theatre renovations. With folds of burgundy velvet, touches of gold fixtures, and little swirly brass lamps that dotted the walls, he made the places breathtaking.

He dabbled in movie make-up, too, and he was beyond convincing. His eyes glinted and glowed as he showed me his plaster-of-paris casts, his fake skin, his artificial hair. He would tell me the background of each piece—the time his boss went screaming down the stairs, or when the boy running the movie almost ripped a reel. He made a hairy wart on my cheek on Easter, and my mother ran around the den, throwing plastic Easter grass and wondering whether the Emergency Room was open on holidays.

His fingers were magic. He could create anything.

Then he was fired. He was frustrated, so he moved back in with his mother.

He's staring at the deer head entwined in Christmas lights on the wall, in the same Quik Stop where Grandmom has worked for years. I remember when we created together, when we dreamed together. I would write, and he would build, and we would ooh and ahh at one another's work. Now, he totes a big stick to gas pumps, takes inventory of Cokes, and makes sure the Crane game is full of stuffed animals.

"Now," he says, wrapping up his argument. "Do you understand that people remember the negative things?"

But, really. I don't.

Later that night, my mother walks over to my bed to tuck me in. Seventeen years old, and I still get tucked in when I come home. I smile.

"Mom?" I say. "Tell me something that happened ten years ago."

"Well . . . I used to go walking with the next-door neighbor. We always talked about pointless things, but we had a good time." She stops and looks at me with crooked eyebrows. "Why?"

"No reason," I say, roll over, and go to sleep.

"It's true. Pain hurts worse than joy feels good," he says.

Heather Chappell
Third Place
Essay Contest

Oil Man

Cigarette smoke off the railroad track--
Feet tap the rocks below.
The humid air curls the edge of a hat,
Beneath the humming glow of streetlights.
The Depot's porch is fiery red.
Strings are bent and pulled.
Whining echoes yell back and forth,
from the abandoned grain elevator.
Blankets and people spread out like a fan,
Surrounding the pulpit of sound.
The moonlit congregation listens intently
to the hauntingly sorrowful sermon.
The Delta goes to church on Friday nights,
Juke joints: the chapels of the levee.
And the lessons they learn,
from an old raspy voice,
help to forget the hell they endure.

Will Gresham
First Place
Poetry Contest

The Street Artist

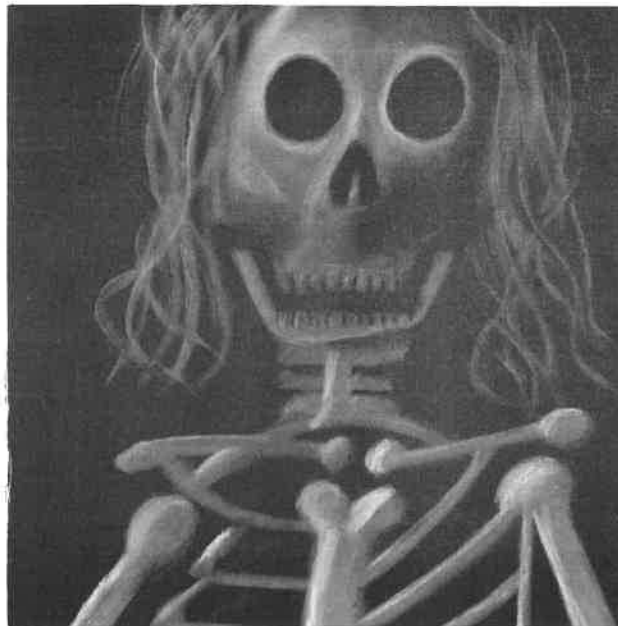
He stands in his oversized
government-issue pants and shirt.
The white name tag is emblazoned with
"E rl" in scripted red letters.
The "a" has fallen off from daily
trips to the laundry, but
the pride he takes
in his work remains.

His face, glowing with sweat,
releases a hearty
unreturned smile to each passerby.
Each blister on his hands is a
symbol of every ditch dug, line
drawn, or street paved.

He doesn't care that people
take his masterpieces for granted.
He doesn't even care that his
hard work is covered with layers
of oil, dirt, and rain every day.

He has no idea that he
saves more lives than any
doctor could ever imagine.
He just admires his work
on his way home.

Shayla Myles



Charcoal Reverse

Diane Dunn

An Uneasy Feeling



W e do it during a major test, in line at the grocery store, in English class, and even in church. While some are embarrassed about doing it, there are those who wouldn't consider not doing it. If anyone is guilty of committing the sin of thinking too much, it's me. I think I must have been born worrying about diaper rash. It seems that every day of my life has been spent either asking, thinking, or worrying about "why." I never concern myself with any particular subject but just "why." I can remember being constantly reprimanded in class for daydreaming. I never understood why I was being punished for doing my work. Hey, I was reading the chapter when I noticed how much the letters looked like the ones on the building along Main Street at Disney World. It wasn't my fault if thinking about Disney World took more of my time than actually reading some history chapter. My entire life has been sprinkled with phrases like, "Let's pay attention now," "Are you with me?" and, "Hey, are you ok?" People never understood that thinking was my only pathway to my sanity. I don't think I could survive if my brain weren't constantly tackling some type of problem, whether life-threatening or not. Most people's brains allot a certain amount of time during each day to wonder about life, how the sky got to be so blue, or why people get such a thrill out of popping the little air bubbles in that clear shipping material. My brain, however, seems to yield itself to curiosity all day, every day.

I've worried several times in the past that maybe I don't worry too much. I figured perhaps everyone worries and thinks about the same amount as I do. I then realized that I should quit fooling myself and face the truth. Sure, the amount of worrying I do may be normal, but hey, let's face it, the things I worry about are far from the norm. I thought to myself, "You're right,

who wouldn't get a near-migraine if they only made a ninety-nine on a major test?" As usual, I had the perfect answer, "Nobody but you."

Like a person trying to quit smoking, drinking alcohol, or gambling, I've tried several times in the past to kick the habit of worrying too much. Needless to say, I have been unsuccessful. Much like a quitting smoker tries to cut down to only three packs of cigarettes a day, I set my worrying limit to only five times a day. I figured this number would help me keep my nerves well alert, yet give my heart and brain a break. Since I could now only worry about five topics a day, I had to pick and choose what I was going to worry about. I then realized that I was hopeless because I was worrying about what I was going to worry about. I also

opened my eyes to see that the things I was worrying about were becoming more and more unusual than the topics I had previously worried about. For example, while I used to worry that the salt and pepper shakers weren't in

Since I could now only worry about five topics a day, I had to pick and choose what I was going to worry about. I then realized that I was hopeless because I was worrying about what I was going to worry about.

the "right order," I now worried that the salt and pepper shakers weren't filled to the same level.

I've been told that my worrying will either be the key to my success or my one-way ticket to old age. Well, it seems as if I'm headed in both directions at once. I can use my habit of overthinking as a handicap or a crutch. I rely on worrying to make myself study for a test, or I can always count on my scrutinizing every aspect of a decision to shut the doors of youth in my face. While everyone else has taken off their suits and jumped on in, there I stand on the banks, wondering if I'll catch a cramp and drown.

Shayla Myles
Honorable Mention
Essay Contest

Pandora

I am seeing Jerusalem artichokes waving
green green green against a turquoise sky, looking
almost like sunflowers. They make a jungle shoulder-high for
me, a child; their very name is rich and exotic--
Jerusalem, Jerusalem: a nostalgic word,
tasting like ginger on my tongue and branded deep on the heart of a
people whose blood flows in the streets, not
in my veins, but whose fire burns in my soul and does not stop --
an all-consuming devotion, a jealous god
not like those of Europe in bright array -- how many of them?
Sparkling religious promiscuity, the sluts of the metaphysical world
Isn't that how heresy is transmitted? We ask shocked at their
frivolity, their wild desperate pleading hedonism,
their color color color
and their need, whose sons chase wood nymphs, so terrified they
jump wholeheartedly and with pride
onto the foreheads of the powerful
whose daughters sell a quarter of their lives and
all their pristine ice-white virginity for three glittering
red like blood-drops seeds of the pregnant-round fruit of
the pomegranate tree that stood not twenty feet away from my own
green shady stand of artichokes, the tree whose orange immodest
ruffled flowers I used to wear in my hair too, shameless
with the pagan innocence of infancy

Theo Hummer
Third Place
Poetry Contest

Wendell

Home from college, Wendell and the gang "borrowed" his Papaw's car.

It was only two weeks old.

(Just having a car was a big deal in those days.)

Riding through the county, looking for trouble,

They dared him to steal a watermelon from a garden.

Creeping through the garden,

The night was quiet except for the sound of his footsteps

And an occasional 'Sh . . . You'll wake'em up."

Wendell grabbed the melon and returned in triumph to the parked car.

The friends sat under the moon.

Spitting seeds, water melon juice dripping down their faces,

Making stains on their shirts.

Talking of love and life with the maturity of men and the wonder of boys,

"Hey Wendell, get us another --"

Repeating his feat, cockiness in his walk --

Except this time, a light came on in the house.

The screen door creaked open.

A voice from the porch booming "Who's there? I'll shoot."

The boys raced for the car.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Speeding down the gravel road.

Throwing the watermelon rinds out of the car.

A few mile later, they pulled off the road.

"Oh man -- you're dead."

Wait, just a little mud here and a little mud there.

No one will ever know the difference . . .

No one did -- until they washed the car.

Wendell swore to Papaw that he didn't know about the dents --

They must have been caused by rocks.

Don't know if Papaw ever learned the truth or not,

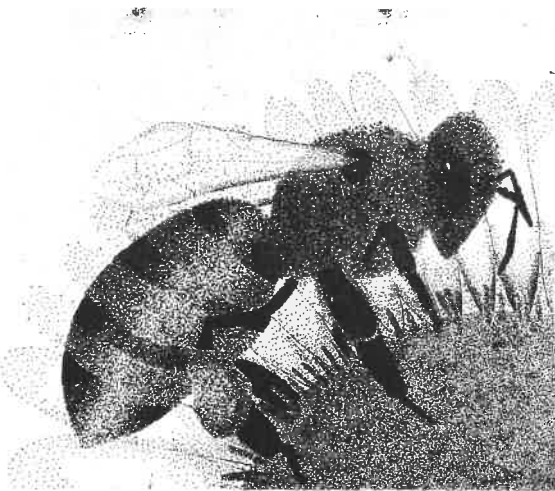
But anyway, that week Wendell joined the army.

Candace Lyn Perry

Summer

The moon
The stars
What does it mean
The clouds
The ocean
More than a dream
The chirp of a bird
The roar of a lion
Listening with grace
A gentle touch
A cool whisper
The sight of a tear on your face
Open your eyes
See the sun
Sit on the grass
Think of the fun
Reminisce of the past
Wonder why
Hold your head in your hands
Prepare for the cry

La-Tanya Ashley



Stipple

Anand Thakur

Me, Tree

J. D. & M. J.
now who could that be
I'll never know,
I'm just a tree.
A tree so solemn,
a tree so proud,
a tree with a heart
(it's surrounded by clouds).
What's that shape
they carved in me?
Something called love?!
. . . it cuts so deep.
Although I'm a tree
filled with feelings and dreams,
my life is quite empty,
my heart often bleeds.
Heard of it, dreamed of it, wished I could be . . .
in love.
but come on, get serious . . .
I'm only a tree.

Brandon Carver

Then . . .

On sunny days we chased
each other like children
with the sound of leaves
crunching beneath our feet
as short bursts of laughter
escaped our mouths.
And when the rain came,
together we peered through
foggy window panes in dreary
silence.
When the moon told day to rest
a while,
we danced on little gravel roads.
As heat washed the July afternoons
we sat under shade trees
in loose clothing
watching clouds go by
wondering what tomorrow had in store.
Cold evenings left us
in thick jackets
and me with a red nose
while we slushed through the
first winter's snow in years.
And with spring there came
greetings from new birds
a thin green branch
a cotton balled cloud
and I learned love.

Aimee Gurganus

Turkey Time



long, long time ago, back in the olden days, my grandmother kept a chicken coop in our backyard. The coop was always filled with at least four or five chickens at a time; where they came from I don't know. Sometimes I would watch them, their heads moving forward and back as they scanned the ground for something to peck at. Sometimes they would peck at me, and then I would throw rocks at them, laughing, as they ran and flapped their wings in a vain attempt to fly away. Though there was no emotional attachment, the chickens became something like pets.

Thanksgiving rolled around that year, and while most people ate turkey on that occasion, the best thing to bring good luck to the Chinese were--yes, that's right--chickens. With all the relatives coming in, five chickens should just about feed us all. That day, I learned how deadly the women of my family were. Armed with cleavers, knives, and the odd machete, they attacked the coop. As I watched with equal halves of horror and amusement, the chickens were grasped by their thin necks, held headfirst into a saladbowl, and slit ear to ear (so to speak, since chickens don't have ears). The blood would drain into the bowl, and the dying chickens squawked and shook and made all sorts of odd noises. After this was done the dead chickens were strung up on a clothesline and plucked. When all the chickens met this fate, their feet (chicken's feet is a great Chinese delicacy) were chopped off. I don't remember what was done with the blood, but that year

the bowl was tipped over and blood stained the entire courtyard.

Through this grotesque spectacle I sat, unbelieving. My family were killers. Chicken killers, yes, but didn't they teach me to respect all life, that life was sacred, something not to be toyed with? The screams and convulsions of the chickens stayed with me for the next few days. And so did the blood. Dried blood was much darker, stickier, and slicker than I imagined. And it was real, unlike the movies or television.

Over the years this practice became customary, and the screams, hanged bodies, disembodied limbs, and blood were with us to celebrate yet another family occasion. But this was a time of prosperity for everyone. Business was good, and people were happy.

Perhaps it WAS the chickens who had brought us good luck. Wasn't it worth it, I thought? I don't think the chickens thought so. As the years advanced, I

grew older and accustomed to the sight of blood, and soon, I didn't really care. I had better things to worry about.

About eight years ago, the practice of chicken slaughter in our backyard was discontinued. I never asked why, but was silently thankful that there need not be any deaths in our backyard ever again.

That day, I learned how deadly the women of my family were.

Sam Chow



La Guitarra

Fret
boards
and
SS
TT
RR
II
NN
GG
SS
formed into
an instrument
for the pleasure
of all those
all around
the player.
The player suffered
to master this beast
in order to grant
to the listeners
a small piece
of music.

Debra Hare

Comfort

The rusty gas heater
ticked through the night.
And the dull hum of the
radio came through those thin walls.
With every move a tiny
squeak peeped from that
single mattress trying
to be acknowledged as bed.
The buzz of the street
light outside was my
lullaby for sleep.
And I could hear my
friend snore reminding
me that someone was
near.
And as the rain dripped
from roof to sidewalk
I smiled and closed my
eyes wishing I could stay
there forever.

Aimee Gurganus

Will You Be My Jerusalem Artichoke?

Will you be my Jerusalem Artichoke?
Cascade through foreign lands?
Trace age-markings
in my outstretched hand?
With words as our quiver,
We'll puncture open air:
Capture maxim in basket-fingers;
Coax an entrance to our lair.
In our cavern we pluck and mold
Toy ink to tower up our fingers.
"Join us as we bask in phrase!"
And the people linger.

Heather Chappell

Fire



he takes a deep breath only to find that she cannot breathe. The forces pressing down on her, even here, are too great: too familiar, and too time-worn to be fought against. Familiarity is what she hates more than anything. That is why she is here, alone

except for the presence of the river and the trees about a mile from what she in the loosest sense of the word calls her "home"; she has walked here in the freezing, bone-numbing cold wearing a jacket she got at the Salvation Army a couple of years ago. She has never been here before; she knew this place was here but has never seen it, has been saving it for a day she knew would come, a day just like today when she needs to see something that is not part of her everyday existence, the cold, hard, gloomy mess she lives in, the cloud cover that is her life.

Do you know what it feels like not to be beautiful, not to even be interesting at all? Do you know how it feels never to have had anybody love you, not even out of obligation, not even for a moment? Do you know what it feels like never to have had any feeling you can remember but that of darkness and misery? You're thinking now, thinking of moods you've been in, of experiences you've been through of how hard it all is. Your everyday struggles would mean nothing to her. There is nothing that she can struggle against. She lives in a house, a two-story white desperately rundown house, with a "foster family" who neither needs nor wants her. It is just a woman, a woman and another girl; the girls refer to each other as "cousins," and she call the woman her aunt, because neither of them is fake enough to consider this woman her mother. She does not have a mother, not one with a face and voice and personality, not one that is real. She has nothing that is real.

To her, intelligent but seemingly apathetic, school is monotony: the same faces she has seen every day for the past twelve years, the same teachers who will never interest her, the same students who will never look at her. The same dead-end town in a dead-end world. She

knows that people -- ordinary, everyday people with nice, warm lives to get them through the day and go home to at night -- would think she is repulsive, because of her lack of feeling. She gives the impression of being cold. She is cold; she's freezing. Years and years and indeed a lifetime of being cold on the outside because of the ignorance of everything she has experienced and everyone she has met have simply turned her cold on the inside: if she weren't this way, she would not have survived.

But she is here now, and it's a struggle, but she finds

that she can breathe at last -- cold, unfamiliar air -- she drinks it in with deep ragged breaths and feels it, a shock to her whole system. She curls up at the foot of a big tree, crisp with leaves all around it,

crinkly brown where once ordinary grass had grown. She feels the sun beating down on her, contradicting the fact that she is freezing, and relaxes completely. Sitting on the gnarled roots of this big tree she clears her mind of all thought, jacket drawn comfortingly around her, safe in her own space in this unfamiliar world.

She had closed her eyes tight and when she opens them the sun and the warmth and the light are gone, and she is left with the chill and the stars and what she can only call the clearest night she has ever seen. The cold goes right through her; it clears her, clears her of her plainness and anonymity and restores what once might have been her to herself. When she was very small she might have been happy. She has dim memories of it. She finds those coming back to her as she sits, feeling her heart beating and the blood flowing through her entire body, and rejoices silently in the cold the only way she knows how to -- inside her head. If anyone happened to come up -- of course they will not since this is the most secluded spot she has ever been a part of -- but if someone were to appear they would have no idea, would see no sign that she was happy and content and in the best night of her life. The most beautiful night she has ever seen. But she is, and it is. Inside, she rejoices.

*Do you know what it feels like not to be beautiful, not to even be interesting at all?
Do you know how it feels never to have had anybody love you, not even out of obligation, not even for a moment?*

But before an hour has passed she realizes that it is impossible, that she will freeze to death out here. Already she cannot feel several parts of her body. She does not even think about going back. This place is hers; this is her place. She reaches into her jacket pocket instead and pulls out her matches. She has a whole box of them. She lights one and holds it barely inches from her face. The tiny spark, the little fire, the insignificant glow it produces feels like a miracle to her freezing face and hands, and she holds it as long as she can, then with a flick of her wrist sends it plunging into the river at her feet. She repeats the process again and again, the little warmth the action produces getting her from one minute to the next. She has always been like this; she is an observer, and she lights up (so to speak) whenever she sees anything that interests her; it is the only way she has ever been able to get out of her clouded inner world. And it always passes. Still she stands and watches the pseudo-fire.

She knows it's no good. She knows that the rest of her body is beyond feeling now. She wants something other than the cold. A match flashes out as she sends it plunging into the river, and she stands there in the complete darkness and thinks for a long, long time.

Then she pulls out her last match and tosses it into the tangle of bushes and trees around her.

She is not disappointed; it builds up and up, and the warmth and the burn and the flames fill her up, all the empty spaces that she hadn't even known were there, because nothing had filled them for so long. It was so perfect she almost wanted to cry. It was the first she had ever seen or felt of perfection. She sighed, and felt the river behind her and nothing, nothing but the fire ahead of her, the future a tangle, an inferno of flames; closing in fast and faster; and her mind whirled overwhelmed with the miracle of it all. She couldn't move or think or speak for just watching. The fire was almost right in front of her face, almost on top of her, almost consuming her; and that one last moment in itself was the best revenge, was what made it all worthwhile, because in her eyes was love and fury, she was alight with life and flame, she was the cause of it all, and in that last amazing moment she was real, and she was beautiful.

Rachel Sams



Watercolor

Martha Bates

Gavin



he was a woman who drank her gazpacho from the bowl and cut her toenails straight with scissors. We met in "Off Square Books," a used bookstore two buildings down from the actual Square Books. I thought it appropriate that we meet there, in the dimmed lights, the redolence of wine, and the scent of library which swelled in the room. We were attending the reading of Olivia Cosmos Montevideo, and I was in the corner, peering at a biography of Margaret Fuller and feeling out of place in a room full of middle-aged writers. I saw her slip past the wine table and head in my direction. Her figure filled out along the middle, and her calves were as thick as her thighs, yet she was inherently feminine.

"My name is Gavin Darcy Tamerlane," she said. The words shot from the cusp of her cheeks.

"Nancy Penn," I replied. I felt my head nodding in awkward reciprocation.

"Are you a student here?"

Invariably, I thought. They always ask me that.

"I'm in high school."

Gavin nodded.

"And you? What do you do?" I asked.

"Goldfish," she said. "I watch goldfish."

My forehead pursed in layers, and my mind flashed with thoughts on how the woman could get safely

home. I hoped she had walked; she was obviously drunk.

Then she reached up and touched my forehead. "You're too young to have creases like that," she said. As she leaned forward, I noticed the faint odor of her shampoo, and the absence of one of alcohol. "Come with me. I'll show you." The words clipped at the end of her unpainted mouth, stable and unslurred. I drove.

She directed me down a half-mile unpaved driveway encased in trees that had yet to fully recover from the ice storm. The path led to a wooden house lined with

stone around the base. A half-deflated plastic ball lay in the driveway; a speckle-rusted slide sat in the backyard.

Gavin took me to the middle of the yard and then she stopped in front of a goldfish pond, placed her belly on the ground, and murmured to herself, "People who look for symbolic meaning," she paused as her knees thudded the soil, and she let out a faint grunt, "fail to grasp the inherent poetry and mystery of images . . ." She bent her legs at the knee and locked her feet, while propping her cheeks up with the heels of her hand. We watched until dusk.

I saw her slip past the wine table and head in my direction.

Heather Chappell

Living Prayer

Sparks shoot up above the boundless prairie,
like red fireflies against the wild blackness:
A warrior prepares to dance.
The singing drum echoes across the grassland
and a blanket bundled brotherhood silently ponders
that which brought it together
on this bitter cold Dakota night.
Patient, but eager, they await the dance to come.
The ice on the lake has started to crack;
the snows have begun to melt.
Tonight they will celebrate the coming of spring
and give thanks to Wakan-Tanka.
The council drum beats loudly
when the elders spring into song.
Buckskin moccasins pat the earth
under the laughing of ringing bells.
Beads and feathers spin into sunbursts of prayer.
For hours they spin and hop and bounce to the rhythmic heartbeat of Mother Earth.
By morning, entranced dancers have fallen in human heaps
around the fading embers.
Physically exhausted,
spiritually exalted;
they are one.

Will Gresham

The Blues Brothers

The Blues Brothers:

Squirmed on Momma's sack in the glaring sun
While she picked cotton.
Scrambled barefoot into the poison ivy
Behind the shop.
Kicked up clouds of dust on the way to school,
Walking slowly
To miss the bus.
Chased a frog into the hardware store
And got painted blue
With crashed cans from the top shelf.
Leashed their screaming sister to a tree
And forgot her for three hours.
Slammed into the screen door
In time for supper.

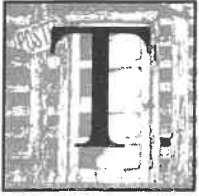
Beth Fratesi

Nineteen

Tenny-shoes still pad
Down the dirt driveway from the house
And onto the road to town.
She sings songs from sixth grade music class:
I had a partner and his name was Sal.
Eighteenth birthday present
Fake pearl necklace goes unworn
In Momma's jewelry box.
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal.
The white graduation dress is
Brought out for Easter
And Confirmation.
He's a good old worker and a good old pal.
State wanted her,
But Daddy misses her more.
So Delta State had to do.
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal.
And no Michael Lee meets her Saturdays
At the Sonic
In his red pickup.
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal.
She's not going anywhere, really.
Just walking.

Beth Fratesi

A Silent Revelation



The sun rose above the horizon and cast hues of orange, red, and yellow on the large white house. Behind the house stood "Da Shed" as it was affectionately called by the children of the rural town. "Da Shed" was not just the place where animals of all sorts were sacrificed; it was where the family gathered for every holiday, birthday, or social event. It was a collage of wooden slats, tin sheets, nails, and old pieces of blood-splattered newspaper. "Da Shed" stood strong and impervious. It had weathered lightning, rain, hurricanes, and tornadoes better than most houses in the town. It was almost as strong as the man who owned "Da Shed," the large white house, and the lands they stood on.

Man Gladney was his name, but most folks called him "Mistuh Gladney." He was a tall, dark man with a commanding presence. He towered over the majority of the town at a little over six feet. He had a laugh that made even the bravest man cower where he stood. His oversized hands were just the right size for holding the large, rusty butcher knife that only he could handle. It was already after seven. The ceremony would have to begin soon because it was not wise to slaughter hogs in the sun. If allowed to sit in the sun too long and crust over like a syrup that was too sweet, hog blood could be hard to wash off.

The squeals and cries of the pigs could be heard from inside the house where the children buzzed with excitement. A slaughter today meant they'd have grits, biscuits, and ham for breakfast that morning. Rushing out, they were met with the decision of who would go and pick the hog to be slain. The fattest of the hogs was dragged from its trough into "Da Shed," and its feet were tied to a hook attached to the top. It squealed and writhed even harder as if it knew death was near. In the meantime, Mistuh Gladney was sharpening his knife on the large grinding stone in the corner. The tip of the knife glistened in the faint sunlight that pushed its way through the cobwebs and dust covering the window. Mistuh Gladney walked slowly to his screaming victim and raised the knife. A hand wiped away a drop of blood which had splattered onto her face; Mercy turned around to go inside

to prepare the morning's breakfast.

As she wiped the blood from her face, she knew what Mistuh Gladney was going to make her do next. Mercy knew she wouldn't have a choice. For her, each time she did it was like selling her soul to the devil. Each time she confronted him about his "hobby," she was always met with the same enraged reply: "Now look, what I do is what I do. There ain't no harm being done to nobody worth something anyway. If you don't like it, you can pack your bags and get out." Mercy knew she only had a few more opportunities to make her feelings known to him before he executed his threat.

Tears rose in the pair of eyes that Mercy's grandmother called "little pieces of soul." The tears weren't caused by the strong odor of hog blood in the kitchen or the fact that she was in charge of the awful task. Mercy cried because she knew that the life she lived would be hers forever. She cried because she understood and they didn't. As she wiped the tears from

her eyes with the blood-spotted apron, she saw the tall, slender figure of her mother heading toward the house. She knew

Man Gladney was his name, but most folks called him "Mistuh Gladney."

her mother would understand. Mercy could tell that her mother had reached the house when she heard the hinges of the tired screen door closing shut. "Mama! Mama! Please talk to him! I just know that if you talk with him --"

"Hush up, child. Everything's gonna be alright, Man knows what he's doing. God isn't going to put more on you than He thinks that you can bear. Sometimes, it's just best if we don't ask any questions and let the Lord work it out."

Mercy couldn't understand why her mother didn't just stand up to Mistuh Gladney and tell him, since he was her husband. The little dollar-store clock on the wall read 10:15. The clock had been the first addition to the house after Mistuh Gladney finished building it. Mercy hated the clock, too. She knew it was wrong to hate, but so was Mistuh Gladney. She steadied herself on the old kitchen stool to get the butcher paper and cutting board from the cupboard. She neatly spread the paper out on the table and placed the heavy oak cutting board near the far edge. As she was looking for the salt, Mercy could hear the heavy footsteps and distinct voice of her father in the carport. She ran to

open the door, and was met by her father's command, "Hey! Open up in there! This here is a might heavy!" Mercy knew what he was talking about, no matter how much she tried to make herself think Mistuh Gladney was talking about something else. She slowly opened the door, only to see him standing there with the victim cradled in his arms.

She couldn't believe that he had done it again. The tears stung her eyes as the salt from her hands mixed with them. She had become immune to his treatment and was almost glad that he treated her like the maid. As he made his way to the back porch, she could see the entrails of the hog sweeping along the ground, leaving a trail of blood. Feelings of disgust, anger, and amazement spun around in Mercy's head. She felt as if her stomach were as exposed as the slaughtered hog's. Mercy pondered, "I bet he's never even wondered how it feels to have your innards toast in the sun."

Inside, Mistuh Gladney continued to drag the hog around the house to the back porch. Mercy couldn't understand why the old fool had to parade around the house like the proud father of a newborn baby. She knew he just wanted her to have to look at the horrible sight as much as possible. He knew how sick looking at them made her feel. To her, it was as if Mistuh Gladney killed them only to see the expression on her face each time he did it. Because she was the oldest of the eleven children, Mercy was the only one that was actually required to participate in the gutting and cleaning of the hog. "Merrrrrceeee! Let's go! Time's a'wasting!" Mercy recognized the high pitched voice of her mother from the back porch.

"Ma'am?" Mercy replied as if she didn't know that her mother beckoned because the time had come to help with the hog. She couldn't bear the thought of sticking her hands into what used to be the hog's side, but was now an open cavity ready to pull her in. Each time one was slaughtered, Mercy felt as if a piece of herself was being pulled out with the insides of the hog. No matter how much she tried to make herself

believe that the hog was only a filthy animal that thrived on the garbage of others, Mercy couldn't help but to think that something more existed in its small black eyes and high-pitched squeal. Even when nothing but the rough pink skin and intimidating head remained, Mercy still felt that something continued to dwell in the limp carcass. The peculiar feeling she felt each time she was left alone to clean up one of Mistuh Gladney's "masterpieces," she scrutinized the dead body trying to understand what it was about the small marble-like eyes and the hollow shell that made her being tingle with curiosity.

Each time she gazed into the opening, Mercy could see images of the past and of the future. She had begun to see an image of a face with deep-set black eyes, much like that of the hog. The eyes remained only to tell the story of the inner workings that had long since existed. Mercy lowered her head in shame for she knew whose story the image told.

"Maybe that's why he's so heartless and cold. He doesn't have any innards, like the hogs." It was at this point Mercy began to see that Mistuh Gladney was only a hardened shell of a man beaten by years of heartache and hardships. He had seen so many slaughters of both men and animals that his soul had closed itself up like a clam and rusted shut.

Mercy opened the back door and noticed Mistuh Gladney leaning over the table trying to reach his butcher knife. Mercy could see the raised veins on his prominent forehead and swollen hands. She knew they were caused by years of worry and backbreaking work. As she looked over at her father, Mercy knew that he did what he did because it was all he knew. "Here, I'll get that for you, Daddy." The wooden floor boards gave sighs of relief as Mercy walked across the porch over to her father, knelt down, and handed Mistuh Gladney his knife so he could continue his business.

Shayla Myles

Red

The sky has opened its mouth
I can see the age in my hands
The time has drifted,
I lost track of fifteen years.
Eyes are like cracks in the sidewalk
I can barely recognize the scene
Smell of a pure breeze
Like a tear drop of water,
My skin is the color of ash--
Fresh ash from blackened wood.
Hair has been thinned
Tattered like an old rag--
A toy for the dogs.
Lips have been slit
Like the wrists of a suicide.
Arms are like dried branches,
Fallen from the dead tree.
As I walk to the edge of the road,
The threat of slashed ankles
And bunioned transportation
Silently threaten my journey,
I do not recollect much about it--
My previous life.
I continue on my way and hope to
Not die on a journey that leads
To a world of better living --
Death.

La-Tanya Ashley

Indecision

A thought
A notion
Ideas spin in the mind

A doubt
A stumbling block
"Will you? Won't you? Will you? Won't you? . . ."

A compromise
A reassurance
"This WILL work."

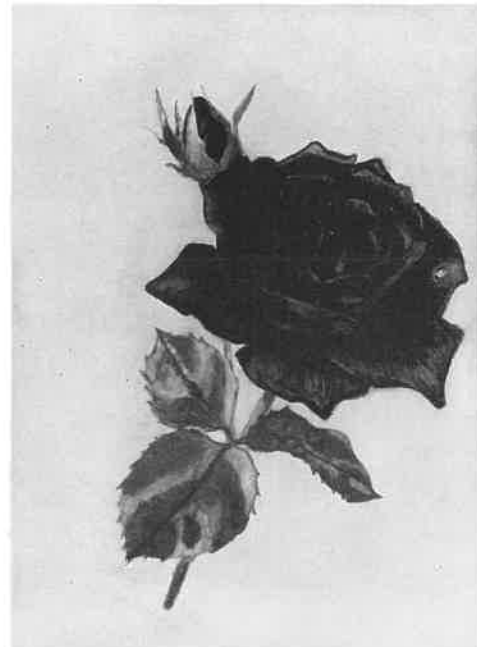
A second guess
A sigh
"Oh, well, just give me a few minutes to think."

Randy Brou

Constriction

The straightness
comes from the horizon
from lines drawn between the stars
from the hard line of your lips
when you're angry
from the folds of origami
from the edges of salt grains
from city skylines and the middles
of highways
from arrows
from backs
from closets.

Theo Hummer



Watercolor

Richard Falconer

Farming

Come in from school,
Walk through the house.
One, two, three, four . . .
Ten young'uns in all.
Stop by the kitchen
Snatch a biscuit --
if you're lucky enough
to get there before they're gone.
Go out the back door and on to the fields --
Cotton, tomatoes, turnips,
Always something in season.
Come in after dark --
Scratches, bites, sunburns, sore backs.
Homework for a while,
then fall into bed.
Get up early and start again.
Neighbors sometimes visit,
if they're lucky enough
to get there before they're gone.

Callie Godshaw

Neshoba County

Awakened by the wind and old Ford trucks,
The scarlet fog engulfs the countryside,
Painting children's faces like too much cheap drugstore
rouge,
Staining wooden barns and farmhouses
Deeper than any mahogany finish.
Tinting the white linens on the line a pale pink,
Transforming the pearly magnolias into wild roses,
Combining with sweat to form a sweet perfume.
The red child dances with the breeze
Until she is rocked to sleep by gentle summer rain.

Candace Lyn Perry
Honorable Mention
Poetry Contest

Lovesong: Green

The green of her eyes is like
Old Coca-Cola bottle glass
Like brand-new grass all
Covered in dew
Like cactus skin or the paint
On the bottom of a fountain
Like the sea like jade
The color of Easter grass
And wedding mints
The last color of sunset
Before the blue.

Theo Hummer



Colored Pencil
Contour

Jeffrey Farrar

Family Reunion



he sun pounded through the car window and filled his lap with light and warmth. The sultry heat made the bare backs of his legs stick to the vinyl seats with humid permanence. The car was almost a part of the family. It had been synonymous with

Grandma as long as he could remember. It smelled like her house: baby powder, cat food, and musty old pictures pushed down between cushions. The big ceramic bowl in the backseat beside him held an enormous pile of potato salad; he didn't like potato salad. The mixed aroma of mayonnaise and southern pride drifted through the cellophane cover and filled the car with a smell he knew he would never forget, and doubted he could even endure.

Past the shacks, past the hills, past the fences they drove. Watching the cows, following the clouds, he wondered what the reunion would be like. He

had grown up hearing tales of these legends, and now he was going to have to meet them face to face. The low hum of the highway and the blurring yellow lines helped him to relax, but he couldn't keep his mind off her. He knew she would be there, and worse yet, she would be one of the few people he knew. Facing Aunt Betsy was more than any eleven year old should have to handle. Yanked from his daydream by the terrible anticipation in his stomach, he looked into the mirror and could picture his cheeks being pulled and twisted to see just how cute his face could be made.

The car slowed and turned off the sweltering highway, across the gravel shoulder, and into the welcome shade provided by the old pecans that lined the driveway. He knew the terror was soon to begin because his grandmother was wiggling in her seat trying to maneuver her old wrinkled feet back into her leather navy blue orthopedic shoes.

Lauderdale, Tippah, Webster; he read the license plates as they rolled down the gravel and pulled nearer to the crowd that surrounded the picnic tables and shade trees.

"Grab the potato salad, hon."

"Yes, ma'am."

He opened the car door, squinting as his eyes were greeted by the bright Mississippi sun. Trying to avoid detection, he discreetly set the potato salad on a table, noticing the fluttering action of the paper tablecloth as it tossed in the wind. Sulkingly he stuck on a nametag and crept to the anonymity of the shadows.

He hadn't seen her, but she was here. The whole place screamed of Aunt Betsy, and he expected to see one of her tacky, flower-covered muu-muus appear from the crowd at any moment.

The fried chicken and mashed potatoes had filled his stomach, and the dark brown crumbs that mingled with the freckles stood as proof that he had found the brownies. The day was winding down; the shadows were getting longer.

He'd been here for a few hours, but it actually hadn't been bad. Sure, he had to shake a dozen hands and give countless hugs to old women who couldn't pro-

nounce his name, but hey, no big deal . . . and better yet: no Aunt Betsy.

Then the words hit his ears, smashing his hopes like a lone dove of a skeet range.

"Group photo! Everybody in front of the flagpole!"

It had been easy. He had been polite, cordial, and inconspicuous. But now he was being pulled into a crowd with everyone, and he knew she'd be there, right beside him.

"Stay low, close to the back, and get ready for a get-away," he thought to himself.

"1...2...3!"

The picture was taken. He quickly turned and tried to melt into the bushes.

"Whoa! Whoa! One More!"

A fake smile and good posture kept the camera happy, but his stomach was turning and his palms were sweaty.

"You 'bout ready?" called his mother in a voice more welcome than the Second Coming.

"YES, MA'AM!"

Bouncing to the car, he noticed the birds still singing and the color of the sky as it faded from blue to violet

Facing Aunt Betsy was more than any eleven year old should have to handle.

to red, orange, cream, and back to blue. Sitting down in the backseat of the car, he set the empty ceramic bowl in the floorboard between his feet, oblivious to the smell of mayonnaise and pickles. His mother sat in the driver's seat in front of him.

"Where's Memaw?" he asked hesitantly.

But before his mother could answer a wave of panic slammed into him. His grandmother was lifting the handle to her door, but in the window across from him he saw the ugliest flower-covered muu-muu he had ever seen. The air spilled from his lungs in quiet desperation while his soul made impossible promises in return for divine intervention, but before he could say "Amen," she was in the car, sitting beside him, muu-muu, straw

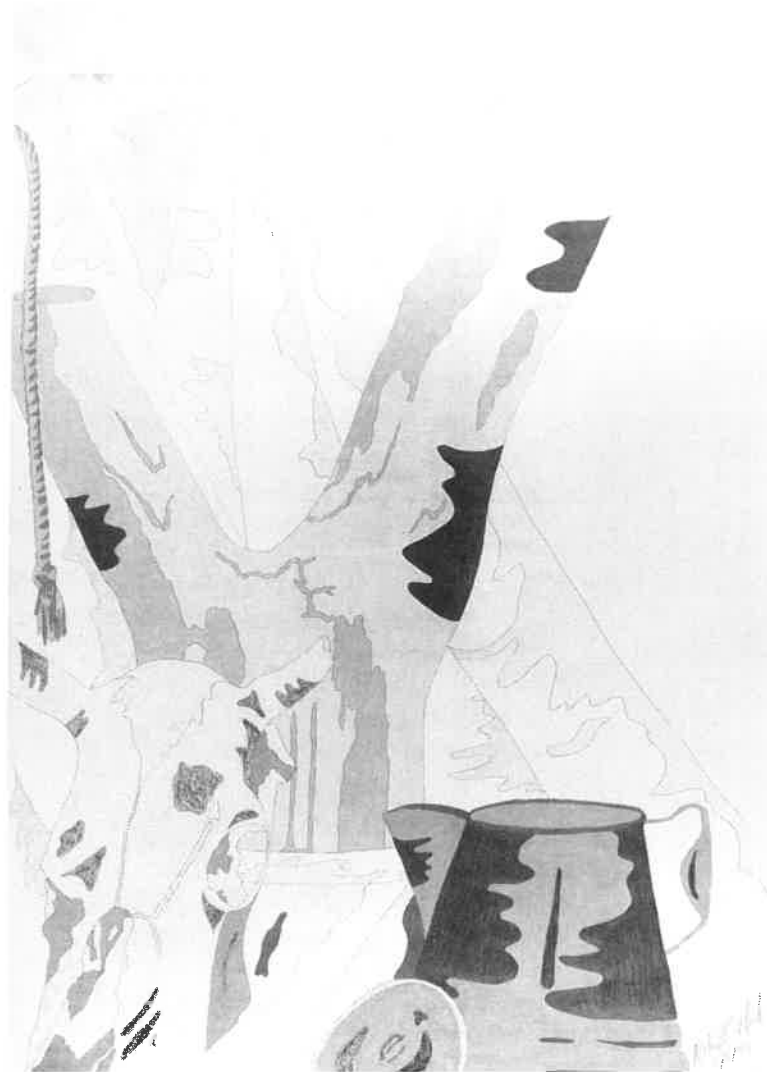
hat and all.

Instinct overpowered manners, and as Aunt Betsy turned to grab those cute freckled cheeks, she saw the boy's head resting against the car door and his eyes closed innocently.

"Awwww. He's had a long day. He's just precious."

It's tough to play possum along 130 miles of rough Mississippi highway, but a boy must protect his freckles, no matter what the cost.

Will Gresham
Honorable Mention
Short Story Contest



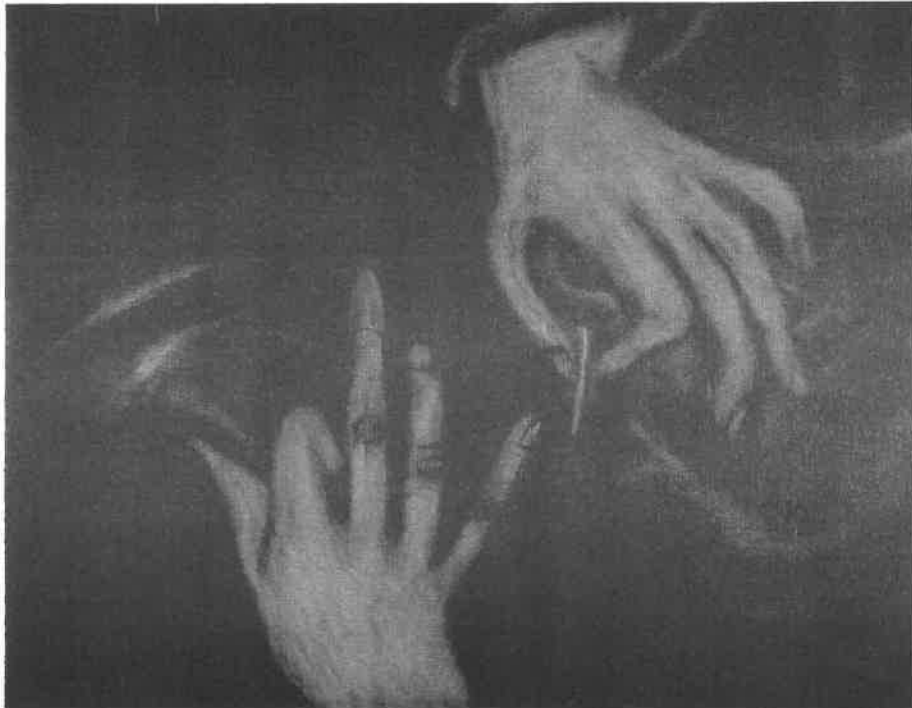
Colored Pencil Contour

Wil Nash

The Lady

An old lady's my godmother.
She's been here for longer than I know.
I've played hours with friends on her muddy front porch
And wept for years by her side when blue.
I frolicked in her lap with my first true love.
And camped near when she swoll last April.
I've seen her turn gray on a cold winter's day,
While she swallowed the tears of the sky.
This lady has known me forever it seems.
Her lullabies shut my young eyes.
The old folks tell stories of her temper and rage,
But I've felt the love of that mighty brown heart.
She keeps us alive and fills us with fear,
Like the god of our everyday lives.
Her soulful songs of love lost and love gained
been heard in every cotton field 'tween here and St. Louis.
She does what she wants and whenever she wants to.
This woman never says she's sorry.
She's surprised me with gifts of driftwood and tires,
With catfish as big as a dog.
But I've given her nothing, for what would you buy
for a lady who sees it all.
Such a wonderful mixture of power and grace,
Such a beautiful princess to know,
But the sun's fading fast on her muddy brown cheeks,
River lover, it's time to go home.

Will Gresham



Charcoal Reverse

La-Tanya Ashley

Shoelaces and a Coffee Table

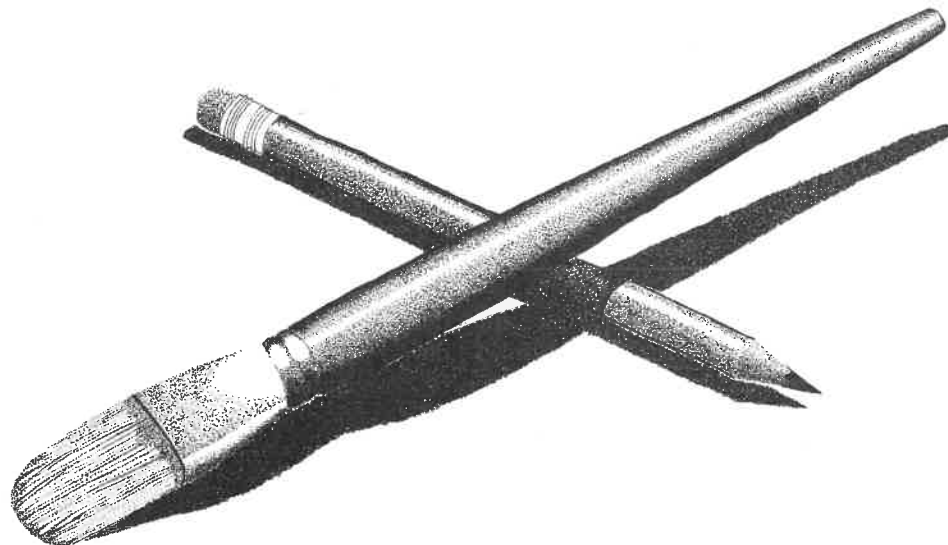
There were shoelaces
And table legs.
Coffee tables.
Those are more romantic
Than just plain table legs.
Says there's different
shades of moisture.
"Yours is thick like velvet."
Velvet.
Roses are velvet.
Like the roses
he sent me for Valentine's Day
Changed beds?
Don't remember.
Says there are folds
And a knob.
My uvula?
Now says these real
romantic things to me.
real sweet
Wish I could remember them.

Rhoda Holman

Mr. Red

Mr. Red was my friend's grandpa.
He always told us
Told us about snakes
And turtles and lizards and
Things we'd never dreamed of --
He told us about the Ladners and
Hicks and Smiths and Malleys
And the feuds and fights;
He told us about remedies that
He didn't even believe;
He told us about girls,
And he told us about school.
he told us about his parents,
and he then cried.
he told us about his wife,
and he cried.
he told us about himself,
and cried.
Then he died.
and we cried.

Joshua Smith



Stipple

Chris Aquino

Third Place Art Contest

The Mozart Museum Adventure



urry up. I hear someone coming. We have enough," Cara hissed at me.

"Just one more. No one will catch us, I promise." I handed Cara the camera and climbed underneath the rope. I sat down on the harpsichord and smiled for yet another picture.

Cara and I were in Salzburg, Austria, on a trip with 45 other students and adults from our school. Since we are both pianists, we had promised each other that when we reached Salzburg, Mozart's birthplace, we would visit the apartment in which he was born and lived as a child while he was not touring the courts and castles of Europe. After a morning of touring medieval cathedrals and castles, our tour guide announced that we had a few hours of free time until we would regroup to walk to the tour bus. While the adults of the group went shopping in Salzburg's shops for its famous chocolates and salt

shakers to carry home as souvenirs and the other students went to eat at one of the pizzerias, Cara and I decided to go the museum.

We walked down the bricked streets of Salzburg, which were alive with tourists taking pictures, vendors selling hot pretzels, and Salzburg's residents going about their daily routine. Cara and I saw the old yellow building that our tour guide had pointed out to us earlier in the day as the museum and stood outside of it, taking pictures of the building itself, the plaque outside of it which said it was the birthplace of Mozart, and the gold guild sign that hung above the door, just as it did during the Middle Ages. We entered the building and climbed up the narrow, dark stairs to the second floor where the museum was located.

After paying for our tickets, we walked into the first of the four rooms that made up the original apartment and the museum. I glimpsed around the room at the bed of Mozart's sister and display cases containing letters and original music by Mozart. This all was interesting, but it was not quite the reason why I had come to

the museum. Cara and I wandered through the other rooms of the apartment until we reached the last one and the reason why we had come to the museum.

In that room, there were two of Mozart's keyboards—a harpsichord and a pianoforte. "Cara, take my picture while I sit at Mozart's harpsichord."

"Are you crazy? Don't you remember the sign that said 'Do NOT Touch Anything. Do NOT Take Pictures.' Besides, there are other people in here, they'll see us." There was an elderly couple studying one of the display cases in the room and a mother and father who seemed to be fussing at their little boy in German.

"We can wait. We have plenty of time before we have to meet the group."

"I don't know. What if we get caught?"

"Are you crazy? Don't you remember that sign that said 'Do NOT Touch Anything. Do NOT Take Pictures.'"

"We won't get caught. Besides, don't you want to be able to say that you sat on Mozart's music bench, that you put your hands on the keyboard that he played his music on?"

"Well, I suppose

we do have a few minutes we could wait."

Cara and I walked nervously around the room, trying to read the materials in the display case, waiting for the people to leave the room. After what seemed an eternity, the room was finally empty. "Here's the camera," I told Cara as I climbed underneath the rope.

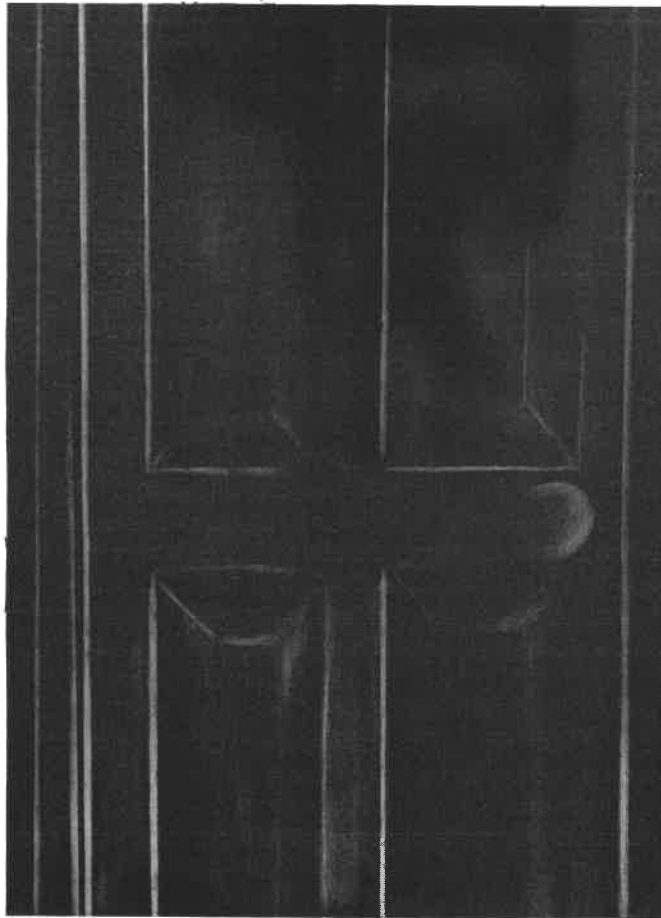
We spent the next few minutes taking pictures of each other sitting at the different keyboards in the room. I was busy posing for another picture that Cara was taking of me when I saw the old German man who had taken our money enter the room. He began yelling something at us in German and we began running. We ran out of the room towards what we thought was the exit—it wasn't. Instead of getting out of the building, we ended up becoming more lost in the twisting hallways and steep stairways of the old building. Panting, we hid in a corner formed from one of the many twisting passageways and looked to see if the old man was still following us. After waiting a few minutes, we crept out and began to try to find our way out again. As we were tiptoeing down one of the passageways, Cara saw a

sign that said something in German that we knew meant "exit." We dashed from the building and ran down the street to meet our group.

When we reached the spot where we were supposed to meet the group, we both began to laugh hysterically at the thought of us being chased through the building by an old German man who could barely walk with a cane. As we laughed about our adventure, I realized that I should take more risks like that--do something crazy every once in a while. Sometimes, the most fun in life comes from doing the unexpected. I also learned

that when I do something crazy that I need to know where the exit is first. Both Cara and I were glad to rejoin the group, and we thought that our adventures in Salzburg were coming to a close. They did, for fifteen minutes until the two of us got separated from the group and spent several hours wandering the streets of Salzburg. But that's another story.

Candace Lyn Perry



Charcoal Reverse

Wil Nash

The Sparrow



Every Sunday while her father, the pastor of the church, worked on his Sunday night's sermon in the church's office, the young girl climbed the stairs to the old Sunday school rooms that the church no longer used since the new family center had been built. Her laughter echoed off the walls that had heard generations of children reciting memory verses and singing "Jesus Loves Me." The girl skipped through the silent hallway into an empty room.

Everything in the room -- the upright out-of-tune piano, the yellowing Baptist hymnals, the rusted metal chairs -- seemed to be covered in a fine layer of white chalk dust

which stirred up into miniature clouds wherever the girl walked. When the girl was younger, she used to believe that it was the trail that the angels left when they held vigil over the church. She moved towards the wall to the decrepit Sunday School Secretary's desk, pushed a box of old red and green Lottie Moon Christmas offering envelopes, and a stack of long forgotten Bibles out of the way and climbed on the desk. She twisted the rusted window lever and it slowly opened.

She peered out the window and looked down on the gravel-covered window to see if it was still there. She

saw it -- the creamy white skeleton of a baby bird -- right where it was each week, right by the rain gutter. This was her weekly ritual -- just as her father prepared his sermon and the choir practiced hymns for the service, each Sunday afternoon, the little girl came to look at the bird's skeleton. The bird's wings were folded up to its body, as if it was crouching in its nest waiting for its mother to bring it food. There were no traces of feathers or flesh left on its skeleton, and the girl could not remember ever having seen any on it. Each week she was drawn to the skeleton by some strange mixture

of horror and curiosity.

As she sat propped on her knees, staring at the skeleton, she did not hear the footsteps entering the room. She only heard the

low voice of Henry, the old black man who worked as the church's janitor saying, "Not one sparrow. Not even one. No, not one sparrow can fall without Him knowin' it. No, sir, not even one."

When the girl was younger, she used to believe that it was the trail that the angels left when they held vigil over the church.

Candace Lyn Perry

Contributors' Notes

Chris Aquino is a junior who attended Pillow Academy in Ruleville before coming to MSMS. He plans to study computer science in college.

La-Tanya Ashley is a senior from Gulfport High. Audre Lorde inspires her writing, and her favorite quote is "For the female of the species [is more] deadly than the male" (Rudyard Kipling).

Martha Bates, a junior from Natchez, attended Trinity Episcopal Day School and has artwork included in Southern Voices. She plans to major in psychology.

Randy Brou attended Bay High in Bay St. Louis before coming to MSMS. Next year he will attend the Florida Institute of Technology and major in physics with a minor in humanities.

Anders Carlsson is a junior from Columbus who says, "I enjoy the techno-organic flavor in H. R. Geiger's art." He plans to attend the University of Alabama.

Jason Carrick, a senior from Cleveland, has been inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien and Leon Uris. He plans to attend Lyon College.

Brandon Carver is from Madison. His plans for the future include "maybe art or literature — if not, engineering."

Heather Chappell is a senior from Oxford. She has been influenced by William Faulkner and Ayn Rand. She plans to attend Wake Forest University and to start a coffee shop there. Heather is the 1995 recipient of the **Chris Read Award for Fiction**.

Samson Chow, whose essay "Turkey Time" appears in Southern Voices, is a senior from Greenwood who plans to attend MSU. His favorite quote is "I like reality. It tastes like bread."

Diane Dunn is a senior from Meridian. She has been inspired by the comic strip "Calvin and Hobbes." She plans to pursue a degree in nursing. Diane has artwork in this issue.

Richard Falconer plans to attend Louisiana State University and major in dentistry. His favorite quote is from Hamlet's soliloquy: "To be, or not to be, that is the question."

Jeffrey Farrar is a junior from Clinton. He contributed artwork to this issue of Southern Voices.

Beth Fratesi, a senior, grew up in Leland and now lives in Starkville. She enjoys reading Gerard Manley Hopkins and Eudora Welty and plans to attend Mississippi State. Her favorite quote is "It's never too late to have a happy childhood."

Anna Gayaut is a junior from Waveland whose favorite quotation is "My silence is my self-defense." Although her future plans are incomplete, she knows she wants to "stay in the South."

Callie Godshaw contributed poetry to this issue. A senior from Runnelstown, she plans to study computer engineering at Texas A & M.

Heather Gray is a senior from Cleveland, Mississippi, who contributed a watercolor to this issue of Southern Voices.

Will Gresham is a senior from Clarksdale who plans a career in journalism. He affirms with Black Elk that "A man not living his vision is living his death."

Aimee Gurganus lives in Columbus; she organized the MSMS Dance Team that performed at pep rallies and basketball games this year. Aimee plans to major in political science at MSU and then go on to law school.

Debra Hare is a senior from George County. She plans to go to the University of Southern Mississippi's Honors College and major in English. She likes Dr. Seuss.

Rhoda Holman is a senior from Jackson. Her favorite quote is "He who thinks highly of himself needs a second opinion." She plans to study business administration and English at Millsaps College.

Theo Hummer contributed poetry and an essay to this issue of Southern Voices. A senior from Meridian, she plans to attend the University of California at Berkeley. Her favorite authors include Toni Morrison and Ursula K. LeGuin.

Bill Jolly is a junior from Columbus who contributed short fiction. His writing is influenced by William Faulkner and Bob Dylan. His favorite work is Willie Morris's The Courting of Marcus Dupree.

Ryan Kelly, a senior from Greenwood, contributed poetry. He enjoys literature that depicts real-life events and is a fan of the works of Jill McCorkle. Ryan will attend Loyola University in New Orleans.

Sara Lawrence, a senior from Meridian, contributed poetry. Her favorite quote is from Ernest Hemingway: "I like to listen. I have learned a great deal from listening. Most people never listen." She plans to study chemical engineering at Washington University.

Kimberly Martin is a senior from Pascagoula, where she attended Resurrection Catholic School. She has been inspired by "lots of people, from Joyce to REM." She plans to be an environmental engineer.

Peter Mayo, a junior from Louisville, has been inspired by William S. Burroughs and Robert Penn Warren. He contributed artwork to Southern Voices.

Rachel Moss contributed poetry. A junior from Hattiesburg, her favorite work is "The Field of Blue Children" by Tennessee Williams. She has also been inspired by Andre Gide and Danny Collum.

Shayla Myles is a senior from Moss Point and serves as Editor of this issue of Southern Voices. Her favorite quote is "The only dumb questions are those that are not asked." She intends to major in English at Tulane University and pursue a career in corporate law.

Wil Nash is a junior from Ridgeland who contributed artwork. He has been influenced by Picasso, Ansel Adams, and Degas. His favorite quote is "Where there's a will, there's a way."

Gautam Pandey is a senior who contributed artwork. He is from Vicksburg and plans to attend Emory University to major in pre-medicine. He enjoys works of science fiction.

Candace Lyn Perry, a junior from Philadelphia, is the recipient of a "Silver Award" for a short story she contributed to "The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards" program. As an award winner in that national competition, she has been invited to read from her fiction at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., in June. She is influenced by William Faulkner and C. S. Lewis.

Levar Richmond is a junior from Tylertown. Levar believes that "poems are a window into someone's heart and mind -- an outlet of feeling."

Rachel Sams, a junior from Greenwood, contributed short fiction. She has been inspired by T. S. Eliot and J. D. Salinger. Her favorite short story is Tess Slesinger's "A Life in the Day of a Writer."

David Sandy is a junior from Corinth. His favorite quotation is from Ferdinand I: "Let justice be done, though the world may perish."

Joshua Smith, from Standard, whose poems "Llover" and "Mr. Red" appear in the magazine, plans to major in psychology at USM.

Brad Stowd is a senior from Columbus where he formerly attended Columbus High School. "What is Love? A passion which sets all the universe on one side, and the beloved on the other" (Napoleon).

Matthew Taylor is a junior from Warren Central. He's been inspired by Ernest Hemingway. He plans to attend Penn State to study architecture.

Anand Thakur is a junior from Rankin County. He was inspired by Douglass Adams, and his favorite quote is : "Boom, Baby, Boom!"

Reco E. Williams is a junior from Bassfield who formerly attended East Marion High School.

Mark Womer is a senior from Oxford. Among his favorite works, Pulp Fiction is near the top. "Friends are forever, and women are, well"

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