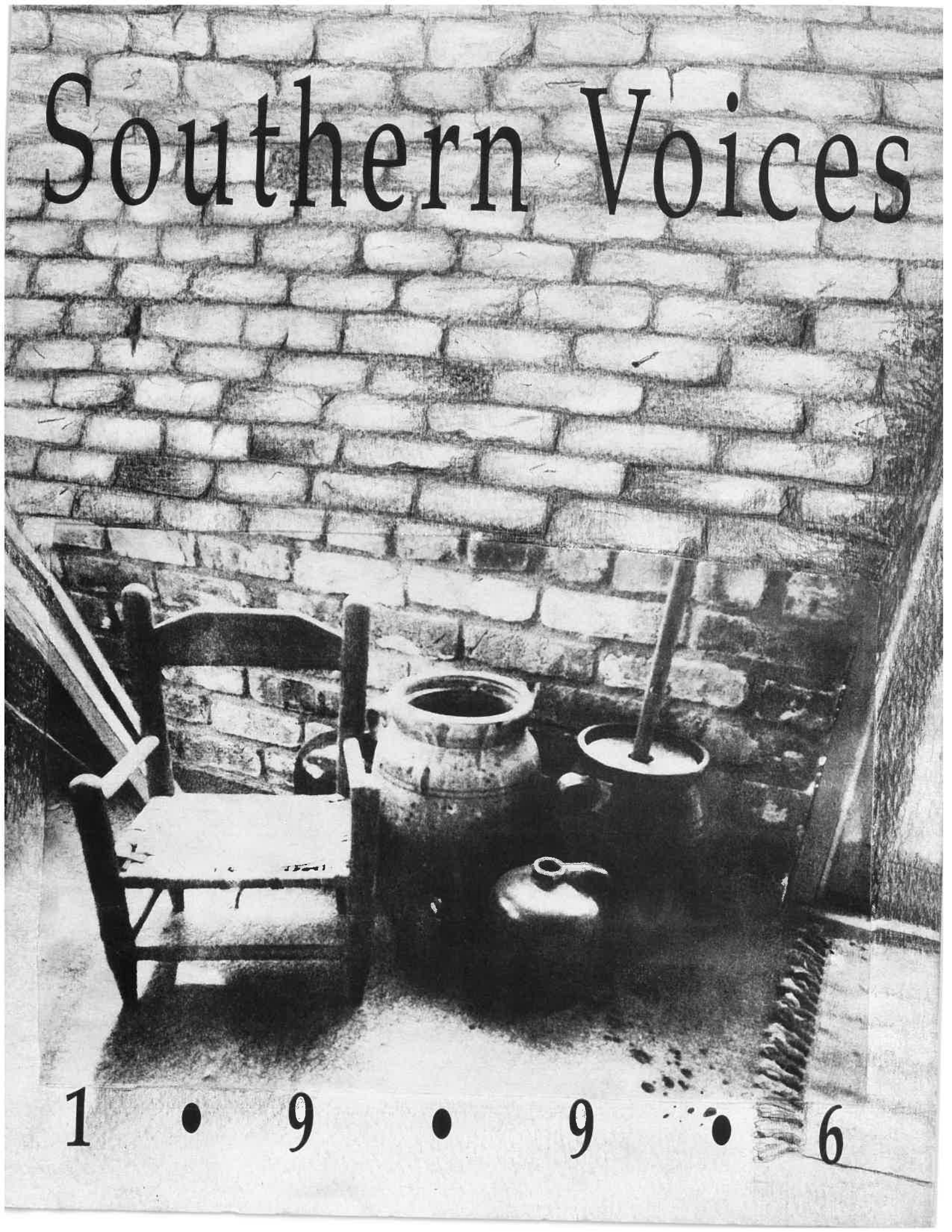


Southern Voices



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Southern Voices

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EDITOR
Rachel Sams

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Erin Christopher

ART EDITOR
Jaime Phillips

ASSISTANT ART EDITOR
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Eric Nail
Ky Palmore
David Sandy
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CONTEST JUDGES
Art
Beth Imes
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Steve Pieschel

COVER DESIGN
Jaime Phillips

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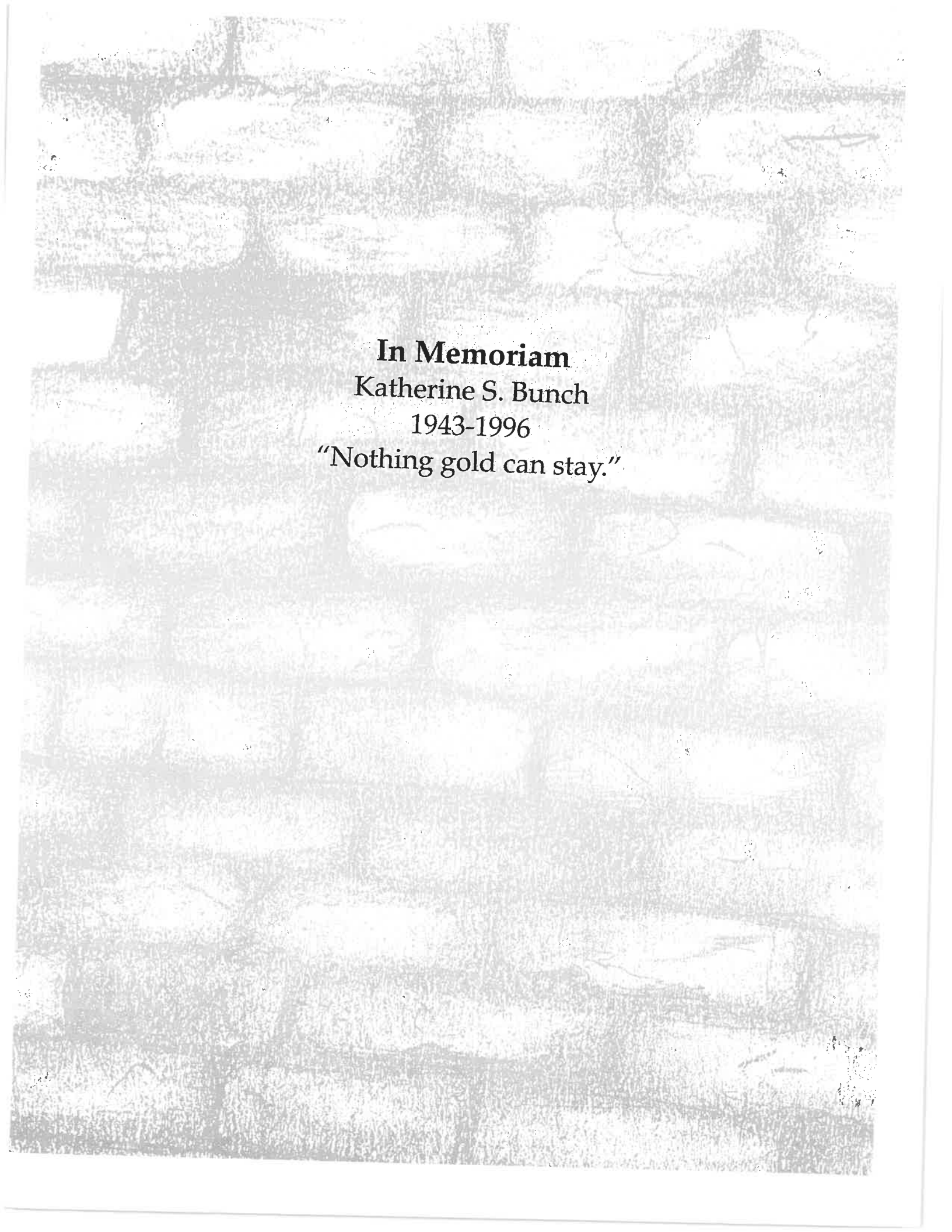
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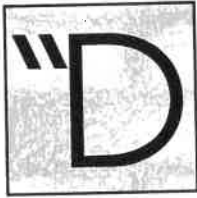
WATERCOLOR JAIME PHILLIPS



In Memoriam
Katherine S. Bunch
1943-1996
"Nothing gold can stay."

BIG LEAGUER

THE CHRIS READ AWARD FOR FICTION



ang ya! Catch the dan' ball!"

His voice cracked through the screen door, battered and beaten with old age, false teeth, and God only knew how many wads of chewin' tobacco. I could just make out a body slumped awkwardly in an old wicker chair . . . just bare-

ly through the screen. His hair was too long, his eyelids batted around, and his hands shook as a leaf in a summer breeze. And before my eyes, these very hands crawled under the chair where he pulled out a battered cup that had once read Ole Miss "Rebs." Into the cup he spat a stream of tobacco juice, half landing in the cup, and the other half landing on the rotting floor.

As he pulled himself up into the chair, his frayed eyes glanced over me, thought better of it, and dismissed me with the bat of an eye. Standing outside, I could see him mumbling under his breath about some

w o r l d - w i d e unknown, occasionally wiping his sweaty forehead with a stained handkerchief. The game blared the news of a home run by the "Rebs,"

and, for the first time, a smile could be seen crossing the old man's dirty mug.

My interest in meeting the old man had come about abruptly two weeks ago. My need for a subject for my 7th grade paper had been thriving steadily for over a month, but procrastination being my "key" talent, I had disregarded it as a future project. Now, three weeks before deadline, a news article had leaped out at me from deep within the bowels of the editorial section of the H-- Daily News. The title exclaimed, "Fifty-Year Anniversary of H--'s First Big Leaguer!" The article read:

Many have forgotten the feeling that swept across this small town 50 years ago. The feeling of belonging was enough to make some lighthearted, other teary-eyed, or still others swollen with pride. When Clifford Ray Boone stepped to the plate in the 1945 World Series, this city felt "weak-kneed" with anticipation, and a good portion of the people with radios turned the volume up a notch to hear what kind of baseball hero had been born in the back streets of H--. People

often wondered how a boy from so small a town could have made it into the Major League World Series, but they would find out a loud report came from the small speakers of their age - old transistors and the commentary announced that a towering sphere had just made it into the cheap seats of Yankee Stadium. Three years later, arguably the greatest player in history would die of cancer, but on the day that the Chicago Cubs won their first World Series by a crack of Cliff Boone's bat, no one in this "burg" would have known who George Herman "Babe" Ruth was . . .

After reading the article, I decided immediately to meet the man whose fame and fortune could turn my research paper into "A" material. Of course, I needed his address, perhaps a phone number, and, definitely, a little more background information than the article could give me. So I turned to the oldest and wisest man that I knew . . . my grandpa.

"Paw-paw, could you tell me a little about Jack Boone?" I asked, sensing my grandfather's immediate disapproval glowing over me.

"Now what would you like to know about the old b--?" my grandpa countered with more than a hint of bitterness.

"The only thing I really know about the ol' bat is that he played pro baseball for eight years, retired over on Grover Drive, and is probably still there. I'm sorry buddy, if I sound like I'm bitin' your head off, but I ain't heard that name in years. Seems like your ol' paw-paw stills holds a grudge."

"Whatcha' mean?" I asked, more than a little excited.

"Well, me and that ol' crow used to compete all the time for your grandmother. God forbid, but I always thought he had the upper hand on your ol' paw. Hell, if it hadn't been for baseball, well I still 'magine he'd a won her."

That night, I lay awake dreaming of meeting Mr. Boone. I dreamed that maybe we could sit down and talk for a while about the great game of baseball. Heck, if he got to talkin' pretty good, I might even ask him about my maw-maw. That one got me to laughing, and I guess I finally fell asleep.

Knocking softly on the door, I pulled the screen door open and stepped onto the dusty porch. I felt a

I left him sitting in his chair, fighting back tears that threatened to shame him in front of a boy at an age of less than a quarter of his years.

sense of fear creeping up my spine, but it was small compared to the awe I was feeling at meeting one of the "greats."

"Hello, Mr. Boone," I began, but being caught off guard, the man swiveled around in his old chair and glared. I could smell him almost as well as I could see him. He reeked of cheap aftershave and had seemingly over-dosed on Ben-Gay the morning before. I knew that if he didn't speak soon I would lose all nerve and go crashing through the screen door by which I had entered. When he finally did speak it was with a voice of little concern, as if he had expected to find someone of greater importance than a frightened teenager with a notebook in his hand.

"What can I do for ya', partner?" he asked, while simultaneously picking up his repulsive "spittoon" and clearing his throat before spitting. "Thought you were one of them newspaper people come to ask me a hunderd' more questions."

My fear of the old man wavered inside my mind and disappeared as I searched for a way to approach the man about lettin' me interview him for a research paper. "Well, sir, I was kinda' wonderin' if you'd let me . . ." I trailed off, embarrassed to be asking, and afraid of an angry rejection.

"Well, boy, spit it out!" he almost hollered. His face was turning red and I realized that he probably knew what I was fixing to ask. "Ain't got all day, boy! What is it!"

"Would you tell me about your playin' days, sir? I, mean, I was just wonderin' what it was like to play with people like Lou Gehrig and Ted Wil-"

He cut me off in mid-sentence. "Hell, no! I ain't got the time to bother with youngen's like you. Can't ya' see that I'm old, boy? Can't ya' see that I'm livin' my last years just how I want to? Sittin' here in this chair all day long with no one around? Why is it that people like you can't understand that just 'cause I'm old don't mean I'm lonely. I had a wife . . . She died . . . I had a boy . . . He don't care nuttin' 'bout his paw . . . Did all the talkin' I cared to do back in the years. Don't care a peck in the world ta' do no more." During this last statement, I noticed his watery eyes about to burst with the tears of frustration that must come with old age. His face had attained a color close to violet and I knew that in his condition, he didn't need to be this upset. I left him sitting in his chair, fighting back the tears that threatened to shame him in front of a boy at an age of less than a quarter of his years.

Walking home, I fought back anger. If the old man didn't want me to be interested, then, by God, I wouldn't! Heck, I'd consider it a privilege if somebody wanted to do a "paper" on me! Fuming, I reached the bus stop and waited for its arrival.

The instant I stalked into the house, my father knew that I was upset. Pretending to be uninterested, he eased past me going towards the kitchen. I guess he knew that if something was bothering me, I would bring it up myself . . . and then again, maybe not.

"Thought you'd be gone all day today?" he asked, awaiting my answer as if his life depended on it.

I wanted to shrug it off, act as if I didn't really care, but my father knew me better than that. "Say, where were you goin' anyway? Run outta' here this mornin' like you had a train to catch. Didn't even eat any breakfast."

I tried to hold it all in, but the old man's rejection had really upset me. "Dad, I went to see him today . . . And, well . . . He acted like he didn't even care to talk to me. He just kept yellin' about how he didn't want to talk to anyone, and how his wife left him, and how his son didn't care about him, and . . . Dad, why was he like that? I pictured him to be a great guy, and tell me all about his life, and . . ."

Finally, I stopped talking and looked at my father. What I saw was total confusion. "What are you talking about, son?" he asked, as I realized that I hadn't even mentioned my trip to see Cliff Boone to my best friend, much less to my father. I guess Pa-paw and myself were the only people that knew, and even Pa-paw didn't know that I was planning to do a paper on him.

"Clifford Ray Boone, Dad, Clifford Ray Boone."

I decided it was time to tell my father everything that happened. When I had finished, my father smiled thinly and went into his study, where he came out of minutes later holding an old newspaper. "Read this," he said, in a not unkind voice.

The year of the paper had been about eight years ago. The article had no title as far as I could see, but it had come from the H-- Daily News. It read:

Sad news has come about at the home of Clifford Ray Boone on Grover Drive, sources from H-- General Hospital said. It seems that H--'s own hometown hero was rushed to the hospital late last night by his wife. We haven't any word from anyone on his condition, but we will follow his progress daily.

Nothing more was said in the article, other than a short biography of his life. I looked at my father questioningly. "What does this mean? Isn't there another article?"

"No, son, there isn't another article. Mrs. Laura, Cliff's wife, called the newspaper and asked for no further articles to be placed. Ya' see, son, your grandpa asked me to check on everything for him. He used to know Mr. Boone, ya' know."

"Yeah, Pa-paw told me he did. I know all about that. What did happen?"

"Well, ya' see, it's like this. I went down to the hos-

pital to see if I could find anything out. I found Mrs. Laura, told her who I was, and who your grandpa was. She told me everything. It seems that Mr. Boone had had a stroke the night before. They rushed him to the hospital. A good thing they did, too, cause they found out something else about him while he was there . . . Son, Mr. Boone has a disease. It's called Alzheimer's Disease. Do you know what that is?"

"Yeah." I sat stunned for a long time. My father just patted my shoulder and left me alone. How could I have been so stupid? Stupid? How could I have been so self-centered? I was mad because he wouldn't talk to me. I was mad because he wouldn't tell me what it was like to be one of the greatest baseball players to ever live. I was mad because we couldn't sit and laugh about how he had chased my grandmother behind my Pa-paw's back. I was MAD because he snapped at me.

Why shouldn't he? Why shouldn't he snap at me? Why shouldn't he be angered at not being able to remember how it felt to hit that home-run during the World Series? Why shouldn't he be upset because he couldn't remember players like Ted Williams and Lou Gehrig? Why shouldn't he be mad because he couldn't remember chasing after my grandmother? Why? WHY???

Because it's not his fault, that's why.

The following day, I took my bike and drove down to a small thrift store in the middle of town. I had recalled seeing something in the back before. Something I hadn't wanted at the time. Now, I needed it more than I wanted it.

He was in the same place that I had left him. The only difference was that the sounds of a baseball game weren't beaming through the screen. He remained glued to the chair even as I banged on the door, so I walked in.

"How are ya'?" I asked, maybe a bit too loud. He spun around in his chair, nearly knocking over his spit cup as he did. "Who are you?" he asked. I could clearly see that he had no recollection of me at all.

"My name is Jason Byrd. I, uh, stopped by yesterday."

No lights flickered in his eyes. Still, no recollection. "Yeah, I remember you. Tryin' to sell some kinda' magazine. I told ya' once if I told ya' a thousand times, I don't want no magazine."

"No, sir. I just wanted to talk with you about your baseball career." Before he could retort, I quickly pulled up an old milk crate and sat down. From behind my back I pulled out *Wrigley's Almanac of the Big "Leaguers."*

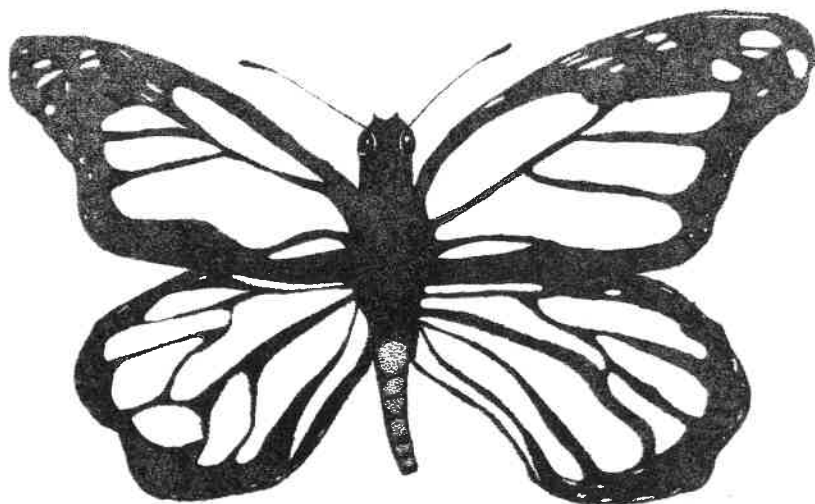
"I tol' you yesterday! I ain't got time—" he began, but didn't finish. I could see his interest building as he squinted at the cover of the book. "Say, boy, whatcha' got there?"

I smiled. "Well, it says here, sir, that back in 1943 you got drafted by the Chicago Cubs to play left field. You started the very first game of the season and you never missed a game for over five years. Says here that your record of consecutive games with the Cubs is still unbroken."

I decided not to go on because the old man's eyes had watered up. He sat for a moment, staring off into space, and in that moment, I knew that those tears did not come from old age, they came from deep down inside. A place this man hadn't been in touch with for half a dozen years or more.

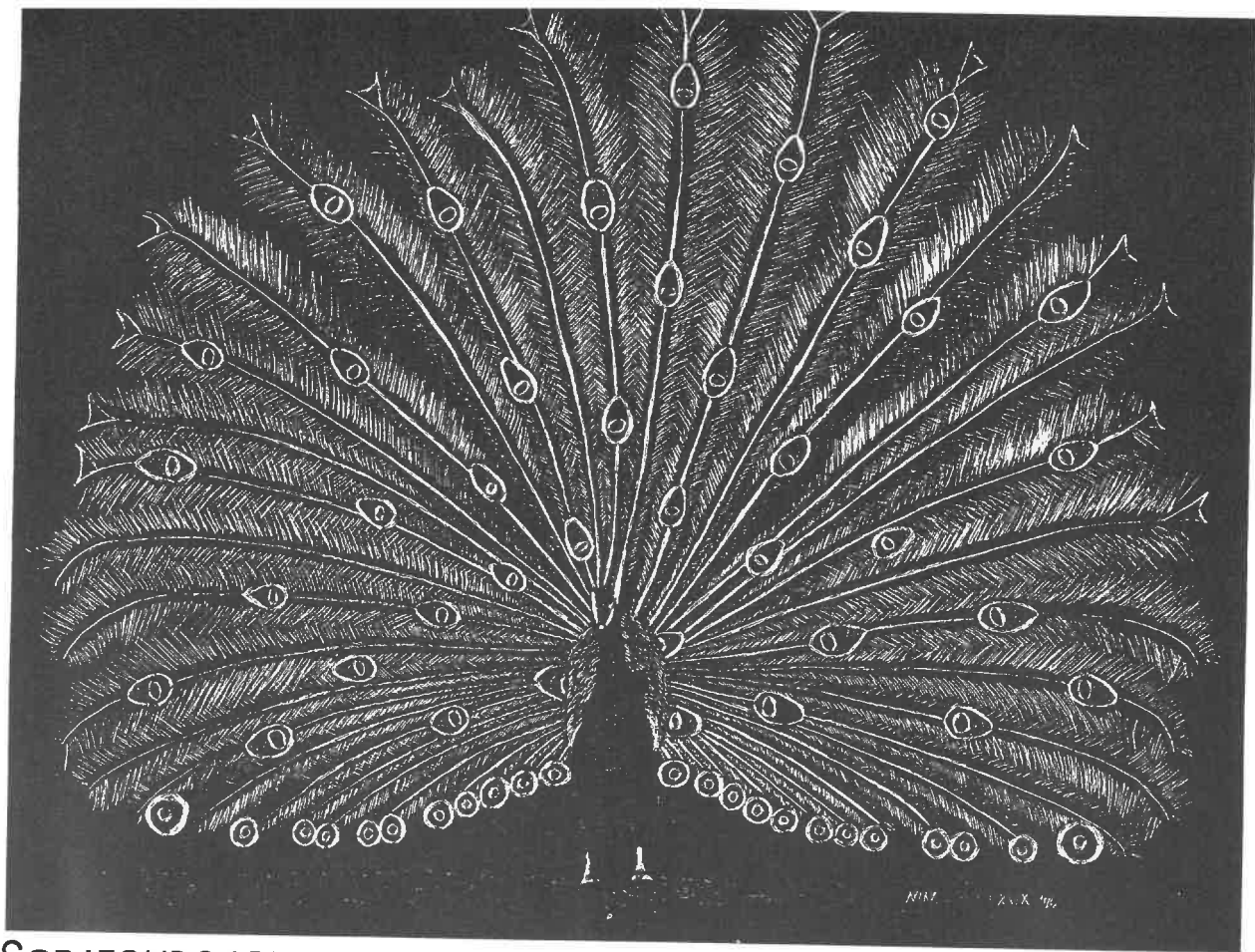
"What'd ya' stop fer, boy? Keep on goin'. They're right so far." ■

ALLAN HILLMAN
FIRST PLACE
SHORT STORY CONTEST



STIPPLE

DESMOND WALKER



SCRATCHBOARD

NIRALI PATEL

m
y
b
o
r
d
e
r
s

Every writer should work the graveyard shift at Double Quick.

Every writer should experience the experimental
hours that belong to neither night nor morning;
observe the wanderers passing through
unclaimed by the sunrise/sunset of this world.

White, black, Asian, Hispanic, young, old, man, woman--
they all need the coffee and donuts, the corn chips, the
cornflakes, the corn dogs; the King Dons, the Snickers,
Slurpees, Mentos, motor oil, Bud Lite, flashlight
or Buddy Holly cassette, all prices ending in .99.

They all need you
as you need them, need to sense that there is life
in this 3:30 a.m. waste land we call America.

In the long pauses when no one comes
you weave their lives together into
one great big tapestry of meaning
scribbling pale-faced and passionate
bathed in a flickering florescent glow,
nerves jangling with caffeine and inspiration.

It's 3:30 a.m. and your shift isn't over yet.

Be thankful;
you're awake, alive, animated
while, across town, the world sleeps dreamless
in warm beds
in closed-fist houses
in darkness

with no acknowledgment of the reality
they could be living now,
as lonely moths beat against buzzing streetlights.

RACHEL SAMS

MORNING

I lie awake in the morning,
still, with no sound or movement.
The peace fills my heart
with wonder and delight.

Distant sounds of cars humming
and birds chirping
fill my ears with their subtleness.

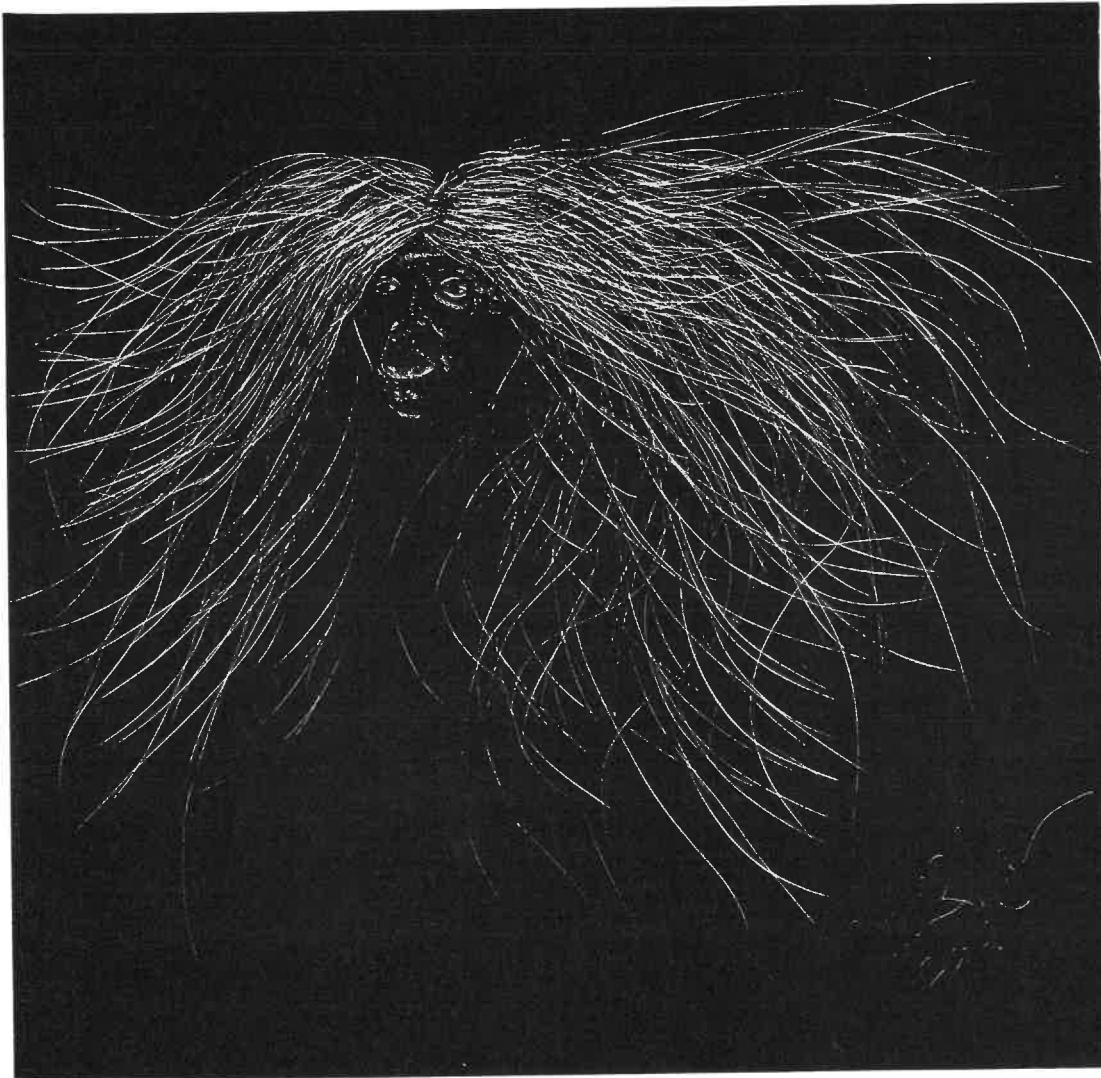
I lie awake listening to these
distant sounds,
breathe a sigh,
and roll back over
to go to sleep.

ROSEMARY EICHER

WINDOW

I shiver, cold, my eyes drawn to the bleak sameness that paints this Southern winter just outside of the horribly mock-cheerfulness of the classroom, dreaming foolish dreams and wondering about all there is left to sing in my life. Barren silver trees, grey on white, claw desperately towards the sky as if in supplication to some cruel deity that smites them down and strips them of their pride and glory. Harsh halogen lights still burn fiercely in the yard, casting an eerie yellowish cold of their own for as far as they can, quickly freezing and falling to the ice-crackling grass, slain, imbuing all with an unearthly quiet and surrealism -- a few scenes stolen from the mists of imagination.

ERIC NAIL



SCRATCHBOARD

WIL NASH

FIRST PLACE • ART CONTEST

Blooming, upturned faces toward the heavens,
drunk off the golden sunlight dripping
from the sky. stretch higher and
farther, intertwining fingers
around all near.
all around
become
tangled
in its
hurtful grasp.
biting, but
the beauty
hides
the
pain inflicted
on the beholder.
bitter regret
from being
fooled
yet again.
blood, ruby
red, color
of the petals
that
brought
the pain,
drips from the
wound. thorns that
dig and tear into
the flesh of
many
others,
also bring
joy. colors
brilliant, seem to
fade in the
emotions
that it
represents.
soft
and fragrant
are the petals,
that always
bring to
mind the
image of
you.

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Losing Robert



I turned in my seat to watch Beach Park recede in the distance. Back there, about to twirl his way down the slide, was my three-year-old brother, Robert. I sat quietly in my seat, smug with the knowledge that my shadow couldn't trail me now. My father, secretly

nicknamed "Screwball" by his father-in-law, whistled tunelessly to the country music on the radio, unaware that he was leaving his only son in a summer park teeming with overwrought mothers, crying babies, and malicious kidnappers.

Screwball left me at the curb and prepared to drive away. Mama, who takes nerve pills, jumped up from the rocking chair as soon as I entered the house. "Where's Robert?" she asked, her nerves already beginning to tighten like the rope in tug-of-war. I could have explained the joy of being unshadowed, how difficult it is to leave a really good slide, or how certain I was that Robert would find a good home after the pound picked him up, but I was only four, so I said nothing.

"Granny," called my mother to her mother, "Jerry's left Robert at the park!" My grandmother, who probably should take nerve pills, immediately went into a frenzy. "I told you this would happen!! You know that man don't know nothing 'bout takin' care of those babies," Granny exclaimed in her nasal Choctaw County voice.

They prattled back and forth, moving in circles. Finally, my mother decided to call the police while my grandmother alternated praying with her hand on the Bible and cussing my father.

They brought my little brother back in a patrol car later that afternoon, much to my dismay. When asked what happened, he merely said that he'd seen the car from the top of the slide, but had assumed it was someone else with a car just like ours. Mama and Granny rejoiced at having their baby back, while I sulked in the background.

As we grew up, Robert seemed to develop and strengthen his ability to tighten the family's nerves. At four, he sneaked into my mother's medicine and took a few of her nerve pills. Mama, who quit driving years ago after a few wrecks, had my Uncle Will rush them to the emergency room. Years later, Uncle Will told me that while they were waiting, Robert would

sit slumped over with his head down, silently, and then suddenly rear his head back in a fit of raucous laughter, only to just as suddenly slump back down. Robert was seen to by a doctor and returned to his usual semi-normal state. This was not the end, however. Robert was to become acquainted with trouble on a first-name basis. I became known as the quiet, well-mannered child. Robert was known for biting and going into fits in which he pulled out his hair.

At five, they finally decided to give him a crew cut, (like Curly on *The Three Stooges*, he was told). As I progressed through elementary school, I received awards for good citizenship and good grades. His grades went from A's and B's to C's, D's, then finally F's, and the only awards he received were conduct reports (which he usually burned in the gutter before Mama could see them).

Today Robert is diligently working on failing the tenth grade for the second time. As my Uncle George put it: "He liked the tenth grade so much he had to try it again." His teachers report that he skulks into class late without any books. At home, he is usually quiet

and easily angered, with eyes that often appear red from lack of sleep. Occasionally, he smells like that funny kind of smoke that all the adults in the family recognize, though

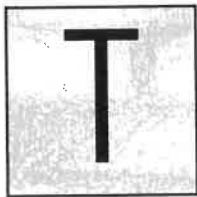
none will explain how they gained this acquaintance.

"You know, Mary," Robert says to me in a particular ambitious mood, "I think I'd be happy just to have an unlimited supply of beer and spend the rest of my life drunk in front of the T.V." As he cackles, I notice the red in his unsmiling eyes. My own eyes pass over the dust-covered drums that our mother worked so hard to pay off, the discarded baseball glove, the unused weight bench. He laughs in the daytime, but at night he cries out my father's name. He has admitted that my father has given him nightmares, though the others in the house sleep too soundly to notice. Sometimes I feel that he is still that scared little boy with the huge brown eyes, wending his way down the slide, while I move swiftly in the opposite direction, glancing over my shoulder. ■

Screwball left me at the curb and prepared to drive away. Mama, who takes nerve pills, jumped up from the rocking chair as soon as I entered the house.

MARY DAVIS
FIRST PLACE
ESSAY CONTEST

GRANDMA'S QUILT



The house hadn't been tended to at all the past few days and it was truly a mess with all the company that had been in and out of the house. My mother's voice kept ringing in my ears, "Shut that door. Stay in or stay out." My mother had a way with words.

She always knew how to get what she wanted. The house seemed so empty. It was almost unbearable. Our house was always noisy and for the first time, you could actually hear the sound of the refrigerator running.

I walked passed the kitchen table and stopped to look at my mother's new work of art. She loved to quilt. Of course, you could tell that from just walking in the house. Our walls were covered in quilts and pieces of different ones were placed in baskets strewn all around. It was as if I had walked into a fabric store everytime I came home. This new quilt was a combination of bright reds, dark blues, and blinding whites. She was going to enter the Fourth of July quilt show this year. She always liked for me to help her. Even when I was a little girl she would let me piece some

of her smaller pieces. Here lately, I hadn't been helping her nearly as much as I used to. She always told me, "I remember when I was your age. I would give anything just to get out of the house. I just couldn't stand to be home with Momma, but I learned what's important. I'm sure you will, too."

I stopped thinking and finally decided to get down to business. I washed what dishes there were to be cleaned and started to straighten the living room. I used to feel so comfortable in my house, but now every sound and creak made my bones stiff. As I started to clean the living room, I noticed that the house hadn't been dusted in a while. I lived on a dirt road and it seemed that just as soon as I dusted something, an hour later it was in the same state it was before. So, I could never really tell when the house had been dusted; I just knew that it was dusty. I figured that I should make the house as clean as possi-

ble, because my family decided that I shouldn't live in that big house all by myself, especially after all I had been through. Cousin Christy was going to come to stay with me for awhile, at least until I found an apartment.

I went into the kitchen and grabbed a dust rag from under the sink and soaked it with tap water. I dusted the table and the old rocking chair my father had made for my mother. As I went to dust the television I noticed that the lint screen from the dryer was on top of it. I stopped for a moment and wondered what on earth it was doing on top of the T.V. As the memories came back to me, I could no longer hold my emotions in, for the shock was now gone. It wasn't a regular Saturday. Everything was all so different now. I quickly wiped my face with my dusty fingers and began to clean again.

Oh, how I tried to leave the memories alone, but I couldn't stop thinking about it. The more I thought about it, the faster I wiped and the faster I cleaned.

The push and pull motion of the vacuum cleaner was fulfilling to me. I finally stopped cleaning after everything had been cleaned at least four times over. I couldn't dust another inch and there was no

I wrapped the dirty dust rag around my hand, over and over again, until my fingers turned blue. I couldn't stop crying or rocking no matter how hard I tried. I gazed, as if I could see the heavens right in front of me.

more dirt to be sucked up in the vacuum. My red hands began to cramp and my sweaty torso clung to my silk shirt. My matted blond hair was holding the ponytail holder at the ends, as I rocked back and forth on the floor. I wrapped the dirty dust rag around my hand, over and over again, until my fingers turned blue. I couldn't stop crying or rocking no matter how hard I tried. I gazed, as if I could see the heavens right in front of me. I could no longer be the strong independent person I was before. There was always someone to fall back on, even though at the time it seemed that I didn't need it. Now there was no one. Reality had left teeth prints on my soul and burn marks on my heart. I kept asking myself why couldn't I have done something, anything, but I knew there was nothing I could have done. The only thing I could do now was to go on living and carry on the family name. I had always supposedly been the

strong one, but now I had to prove it.

I suddenly heard a tapping on the back door. As I jumped, I realized that it was only Christy. I quickly stood, put my hair back in the ponytail holder, and dried my eyes. I slowly walked to the back door and peered out the kitchen window, making sure it was just Christy. She knocked again and I calmly said, "Hold on a minute."

"So how are you doing, Kathleen?" Christy asked.

I replied with a simple, "Better." I invited her in and took her coat. She looked as if she was in a museum. The precaution of touch and words was sickening.

"Be comfortable, Christy. I promise nothing you can say will make me upset." I knew she would ask me details about everything. Even though she tried, Christy never was much of a feeling person. She reminded me of myself in so many ways. Oh, how I dreaded seeing her.

"I'm sorry, you know how I am, Kathleen. I've never been much of a comforter. Momma always asked me when I was going to soften," Christy said in a relenting tone. The word "momma" struck at my heart. I remembered how I would miss saying "momma." The tears again began to fall. I couldn't hold them in any longer. One right after another, they seemed so endless.

Christy softly said "What have I done? On, heavens! When am I ever gonna learn? Katy, are you okay?"

"I'll be fine. It's just really hard to imagine life without my family. I already miss them so much," I whispered. The memories of those moments are the hardest to bear and the most unforgettable. "I was so mean to Momma that day. She wanted me to go and get milk for her and come back to finish laundry, so I could help her finish quilting. I told her that I had already made plans with my friends. She never got to

finish quilting that day. I know it's not my fault, but maybe I could have done something, Christy. Maybe, I could have gone for the milk. It's not fair; first Daddy and now Momma." I sobbed and rubbed my face a bright pink with my silk shirt.

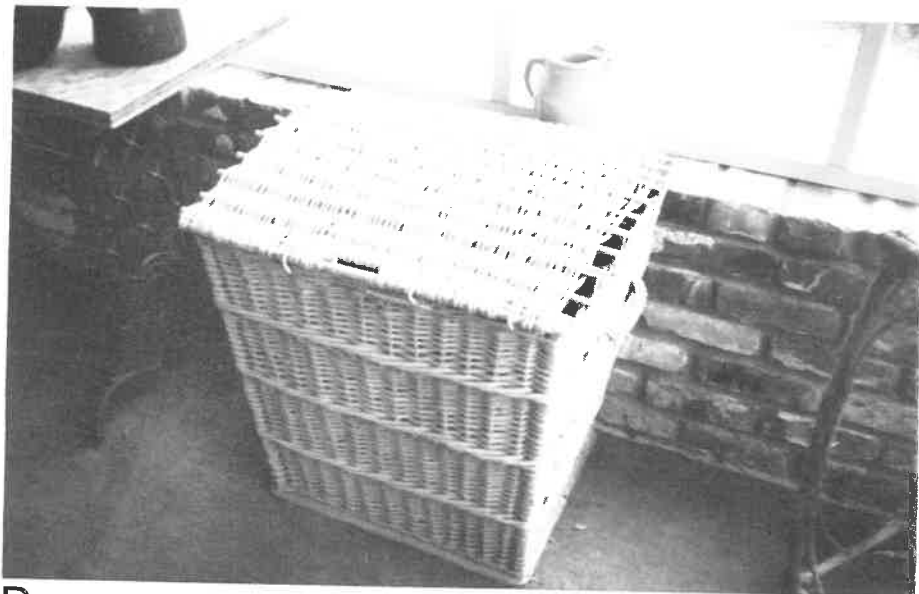
Christy held me and rocked me back and forth. I didn't want anyone there with me, but somehow I was glad she had come. Even though she was never much of a feeling person, she told me something that day that struck to me like peanut butter on bread. She said, "Katy, I know you miss your momma, no one misses her nearly as much as you do, but you can't spend the rest of your life missing her. She'll always be with you, no matter what. You should keep on living. Live your life to the fullest, so that one day when everything is said and done, you can be with her again." I gazed at her.

"Christy," I said. "Where on earth did those words come from? That was the most feeling thing I've ever heard you say."

"I heard it while watching a movie. I said, hey, it worked for them, why can't it work for me?" she said, smiling from ear to ear.

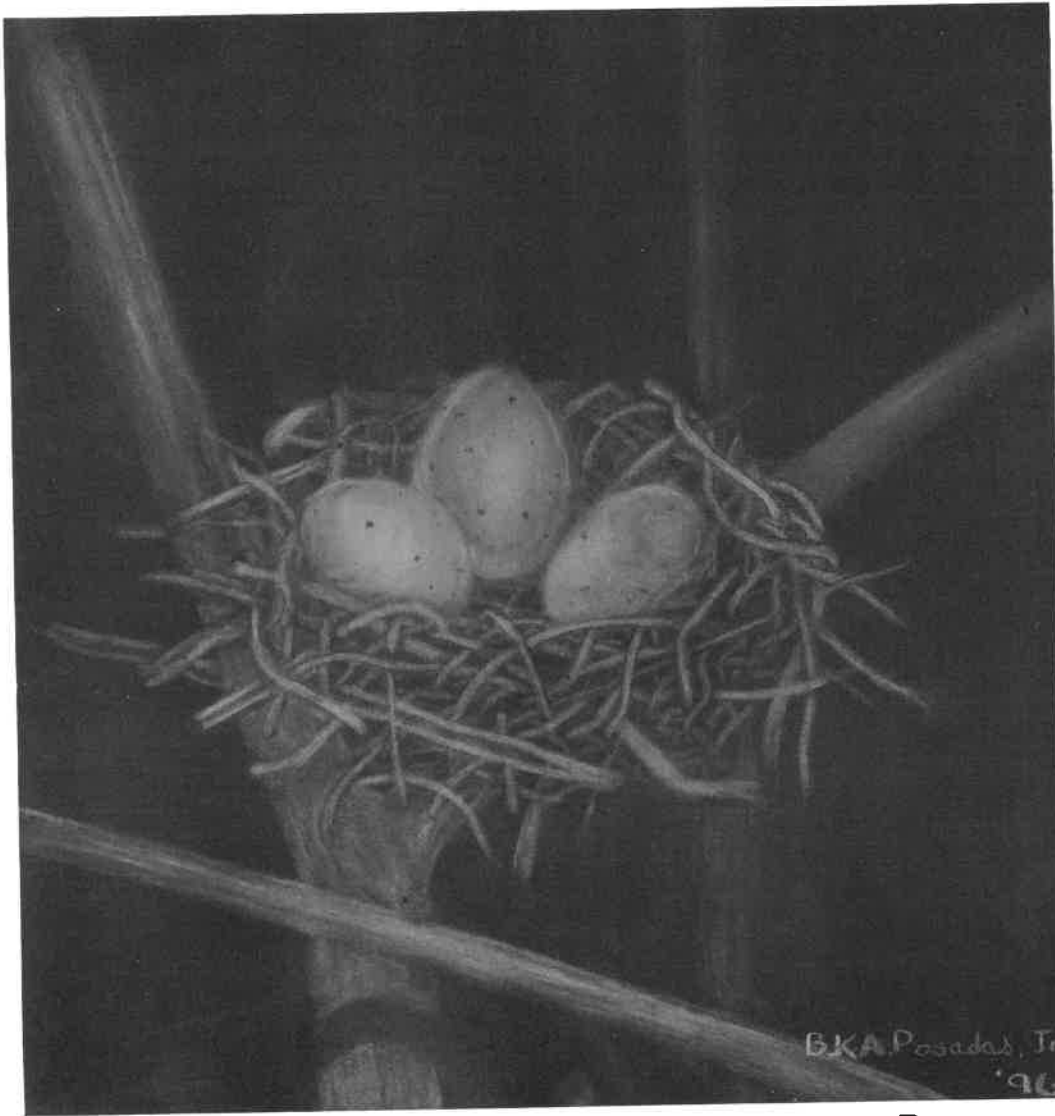
We both began to laugh and I just sat there in her arms. I finally fell asleep that day and Christy quietly put me to bed and covered me with the quilt my grandmother had hand-sewn. It seemed as if that was the only piece of my family I had left. I snuggled with it and let it dry my tears, as I didn't know what I was going to do with my life, but whatever I did, I was sure that I was going to have a family. One day I was going to have a daughter so that I could teach her the art of quilting, the art of woman-bonding. ■

KATHY JO SMITH



PHOTOGRAPHY

JAIME PHILLIPS



CHARCOAL

KIT POSADAS

FIRST PLACE • ART CONTEST

WINDOW PAIN

To almost see you,
walking away the way I've
wished you away . . .
too many times.
Walking into my life from the stillness that
existed then.
you awoke my senses and brought new life,
now you walk away freely.
your few meager possessions tucked under your arm,
as you jump in the car and slam the door.
my fingers reach forward to the window pane
to meet only coldness.
my breath fogs my last glimpse of you in my life.

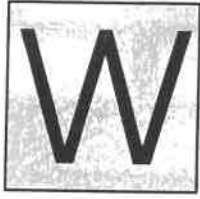
Ky Palmore

OCTOBER

Leaves Turn Red
My bones turn to lead
Retreating through the heart
To rest
For the season
Coldness Comes
An Ice Wind Blows
October is the Gateway
To a different way

DAVID SANDY

EVERYDAY ARTISTRY



When I interviewed Saul Haymond, Sr. during a summer internship at my hometown paper, I was excited; I knew that I would be meeting an artist. What I did not know beforehand was that I would be meeting a self-taught artist, a man who had lived his entire life in the Mississippi Delta -- just like me -- and had created something not only powerful, but beautiful, from his experience in a part of the world that I had always considered lacking in beauty.

I interviewed Mr. Haymond because several of his paintings had recently been featured in a prestigious exhibit at a New York art gallery. He had been interviewed in several New York papers, and the critics loved his work. When I saw one of his paintings, I knew why: it spoke. I am a writer at heart -- I prefer language to almost any other art form -- but even I saw that his work told the story of his life, and of the land where he had grown up, better than any words ever could.

Saul Haymond does not depict the Delta as a polarized land of rich ex-plantation owners and struggling working-class families. He does not show the racial tension that exists there. He paints the land as hot and fertile, the people as determined, hardworking. Anyone who has ever been to Mississippi recognizes it immediately in Haymond's work, and feels the realism of it -- feels a respect, almost a reverence for the place, even if (like me) they do not normally feel that way. Anyone who has never been to Mississippi feels as if they have. Saul Haymond's work is not criticism or praise -- it is difficult to criticize or praise one's own life, after all, and all of Mr. Haymond's life has taken place here. His work is a statement of place, of wonder, of truth.

What amazed me most about him was that he could create art so genuine without ever having been taught how to create art. He sees the same things that I see everyday -- only the way he sees them makes them important to the whole world. He is a farmer; he lives the same life as many Delta men. But, at the end

of the day, he enters his house and paints what he sees, and what he sees is life itself.

I will never forget the conversation I had with him; he was amusing, polite, and even thankful for the publicity our paper was offering him. All the while I was talking to him I was thinking, *I'm the one who should be thankful*. And I am, for one thing that he said will always stick in my head, even after I have forgotten his name and face. It has changed the way I look at not only my daily life or the place where I have grown up, but everything I see.

Mr. Haymond was telling me about the sightseeing he did in New York; he met Whoopi Goldberg and Bryant Gumbel, and went to several art museums. He told me that he had gotten to touch Van Gogh's painting "Sunflowers."

Of course, I was confused; how had he persuaded the museum to let him touch it?

He answered me a little sheepishly. "Well, the sign said "Don't touch," he conceded, "but for \$110 million, I had to find out why."

I love that quote; I ended the article with it -- the piece remains my favorite thing that I wrote at the paper.

I loved the sense of

wonder his words communicated, the curiosity, the unwillingness to accept first impression as fact. In the same situation, I would have looked at the painting as "the painting I've seen pictures of about a hundred times." Mr. Haymond, however, looked at it as he looks at everything -- as something he's seeing for the first time.

This has changed the way I look at things in my own life. My friends, my family, the sights and sounds of every day -- I try to stand back from it all sometimes and think about what it actually looks like, what it might say to an outsider. I try to think about how I might write about it. I try to look at least twice at everything, because I realize that even if it doesn't say anything to me now, it might someday; and if it does I want to be prepared to describe it all as clearly as Saul Haymond, Sr. describes the Mississippi Delta. ■

RACHEL SAMS

HONORABLE MENTION ESSAY CONTEST

Anyone who has ever been to Mississippi recognizes it immediately in Haymond's work, and feels the realism of it -- feels a respect, almost a reverence for the place, even if (like me) they do not normally feel that way.

LISTEN

Listen, Listen and you can hear them blow.
Windsongs teasing an oak's boughs,
Gusts scratching leaves along pavement,
Spirals whistling upwards to shape the clouds
Flurries jabbering news from someplace far.

Until, there whispers one quiet breeze
Remembering cricket symphonies and cows grazing,
Grass stems rubbing against each other,
Steady streams and wavering birdcalls--
All in one uninterrupted moment.
Listen, Listen and you can hear it blow.

LEAH SPEIGHTS



CHARCOAL

BETHANY FERGUSON

WAKING UP EARLY

I remember
One Saturday Morning
I woke up Early
In my little blue pajamas.
Mom and Dad were
Still asleep.

I wanted breakfast
And they were still asleep.
I grabbed my
Wood-carved shotgun.
And headed out
In my little blue pajamas
To Grandma's house.

The winter air
Filled my lungs.
The short distance
Looked huge to a boy my size.
The fog was so thick
That I could barely see
The brown bricks of Grandma's house.

Yet I went forward
Drunk on new-found independence.
As I walked, I felled
Those who would stop me
With my brand new
Wood-carved shotgun.

When I reached Grandma's
I was gladly given
Biscuits and eggs.
She even fried
A few slices of bacon.

The breakfast was worth
The whipping I received
For waking up early
And heading out to Grandma's
In little blue pajamas
With my brand new
Wood-carved shotgun.

STAN WISE

THE THREE LADIES AND LILY DAW

A CONTINUATION OF "LILY DAW AND THE THREE LADIES" BY EUDORA WELTY



Got me a new hat and my hope chest ready to go and then everything changes. Again. Those ladies and bump face drag me all over the town. Just when I was going to Ellisvuhl they drag me off the train and there he is. With his red hair and case. They made such a big deal about that place, too, even bump face. I thought they'd all come down with me and we could all sit around and talk a while. Although if she don't want to go it's fine with me.

And there he is, looking cute as pie, maybe he'd play some on that thing in his case, that zylofohn that's what the ladies called it. He kisses me but I'm a little embarrassed seeing as how everyone is around, especially the ladies and then all the band, such a commotion with all that loud music and those little chicks peeping around, out underneath every foot, better be careful, those chickens. I call out at one scurrying underneath the foot of a big horn player, but can't see it no more in the crowd so maybe it got saved and maybe it didn't. I crane around but all those people scurrying just like them chickens they all chasing after.

So then I see Mr. Carson that preacher man come up and he looks all excited. Everyone's really excited, silly ol bump face especially. Course she's always excited about everything. Maybe that gives bumps to the face. I don't have no bumps, so maybe I'm not excitable as ol silly. Red Hair, he comes up and locks arms with me (why the thought of that, being so fresh!), and everyone is standing around crying and smiling, it looks like a pretty bad lot of folks, but me I'm just fine, waiting for the next train or may be they've got more surprises for me, I got no bumps on my face.

Just then Mr. Preacher-Man opens up His book and so I get all quiet waiting for a sermon like they always tell me to do in the church house and I guess the band is the choir but Lord have mercy on whoever let all those little chicks loose at church. Nobody seems real interested in the preaching except Red

Hair and the ladies and Mr. Preacher-Man, but he always looks interested in what he's saying.

So I show Red Hair all my new presents, on the account of he hadn't seen them and everyone else had, but I see him get real excited and then everybody else, especially Mr. Preacher-Man, he's probably got to the part in church when he's talking about death and life and Jesus and going to heaven and hell when he always gets so excited and usually I start to notice a snore every once in a while, but I don't see how no one could sleep with the racket he raises and all those stories he tells.

But someone messes with me from somewhere, I can't tell who cause I'm still watching after all those little yellow chickens best I can, scooped down and picked one up to make sure it didn't stray under big horn's foot again like it probably done before. And then I notice everyone's looking at me with the same exact face, and I just look back and say "What's up Toots?" because I just remembered that's what Red

Hair always said.

And then Mr. Preacher-Man says, "Lily, do you want to marry this fine young Gentleman?" And I say "Lawd, no! I'm going to Ellisvuhl, you go ahead and preach and I

promise I'll stay wake." And I go back to looking at my little chicken who I think is asleep so I just let him be.

I look up again and bump face is crying and then everyone starts crying, except Mr. Preacher-Man who just looks like he's a little confused and so I just walk off to take a seat and look after Yellow, that's what I just named that chick on the account of he's yellow. All those ladies are gonna have bumps on their faces and I won't, and then maybe they'll all calm down. But I guess if bump face herself won't learn they won't either.

I look up and Red Hair is walking off with his hair and his case and "Bye Toots!" and everyone is looking at him or looking at me or at both as fast as they can manage with everyone mumbling and all those people and the yellow chicks scurrying and everyone looking up in the air at a hat (now why's that hat so nice with everyone looking at it when I just got a new

And then I noticed everyone's looking at me with the same exact face, and I just look back and say "What's up Toots?" because I just remembered that's what Red Hair always said.

one and that's just some straw farmer's?) And the band still playing the hymns, special outside hymns I guess since I never heard none of them in the church before.

And I sat there and waited for the train, or maybe I'm just waiting for all those bump faces to get their acts together so we can go home, or get some ice cream. One of them promised me some and now I remember so maybe they'll go and get me some because now I'm craving it and I got to have it. And Red Hair's out of sight and all those bump faces don't look like they're going anywhere, crying and shouting and pointing and carrying on, so I chase down Red Hair, who I find walking down by the tracks, and he gives me a kiss but nobody's around so I don't feel embarrassed and he says "Change your mind?" and I haven't changed my mind about a thing as far as I can tell, but I tell him I want some ice cream and he looks kinda funny for a second, and says "Sure thing Toots"

and I say "Sure thing Toots" and laugh and he looks funny again for a second and I laugh some more and we walk off together.

I must of gone off and left Yellow somewhere cause I don't have him no more, but I don't see any more chicks running around or any more band or any more people except for Mr. Preacher-Man and all the ladies carrying on down the tracks, so I leave with Red Hair and I can already taste the ice cream and I can't decide what flavor I'll have, but maybe Red Hair will know the best one and I'll get the one, and maybe later on he'll play his zylahfohn and I can listen to him going "Ding-ding-dong-dong" and carrying on. Why, I've got a whole day planned out, now. ■

PETER MAYO

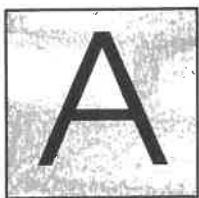
HONORABLE MENTION
SHORT STORY CONTEST



PHOTOGRAPHY

JAIME PHILLIPS

A TEACHER TO REMEMBER



A scholarly person dedicates most of his life to the pursuit of knowledge. After all of this work, it takes a special person to want to spend the rest of his life sharing that knowledge with others. Teachers fall into this category. We, as students, will be taught by so many

different teachers that eventually all the names and faces begin to blend into one. It takes a teacher with wit, intelligence, and personality to stand out in a student's mind. Any student at the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science who has taken a class taught by Dr. Mary Davidson can tell you that she is not a teacher you will forget.

I started Human Anatomy and Physiology with all the enthusiasm of a future doctor. I read my homework; I memorized all the charts, and I still made a C on Dr. Davidson's first test. I decided then that I hated the class, Dr. Davidson was cruel and unfair, and I would never give it another chance. I was overwhelmed by the amount of information we were expected to learn. It seemed like Dr. Davidson knew everything there was to know about biology. I

respected her for it, but I felt like she took it for granted that the rest of us knew everything she did. My friend Jessica and I were so amazed by her extensive knowledge of biology that we decided there was no possible way she could know all of that, so she was making it up. She threw a lot of work at us, and it was all I could do to keep up. I realize now that she was only challenging us, but that was hard to remember while I was fighting to pass when I'd never had lower than an A in my life.

I always thought that Dr. Davidson's Human Anatomy and Physiology course would be so much fun to audit. The class itself was hard as nails, but Dr. Davidson's teaching methods were so unique that it was always a fun class. One day she was in the mid-

dle of her lecture and had managed to wander to the side of the room, next to the wall. The more she talked, the more excited she got. She began moving her hands in huge circular motions against the wall to show how actin and myosin worked together. Then she started pulling imaginary meat off the wall to show how muscles were attached to the bone. Suddenly she realized that our class had never paid so much attention to her lecture. She was so excited that she had our attention, she said she was afraid to move. "I feel like I have all of your attention on me right here and now," she said. "I just wish that I had my chalkboard . . . but I'm afraid that if I move I'll lose your attention . . . oh, but I really wish I had my chalkboard. Maybe if someone could just get me a piece of chalk, then I could write on the wall!"

After months of background work, we were finally ready to dissect something in lab. Every lab group was given a cat which had already been skinned and cleaned. The cats had been used for so long that it was

hard to believe they had ever been real. Still, it was not a pleasant job to dig around inside a cat looking for muscles and organs.

Dr. Davidson didn't mind, though. Nothing seemed to

bother her. She'd dig around inside a well-preserved cat with her bare hands before she'd think twice. This was just one other thing that amazed me about Dr. Davidson.

I'm not taking one of Dr. Davidson's classes this year, but I will never forget the 4 nine weeks I spent staying up every night to study the linea alba or the endoplasmic reticulum. I may not remember everything about the serratus anterior, but I will never forget the lady who dedicated her life to teaching so that one day, we might know as much as she does. ■

I'm not taking one of Dr. Davidson's classes this year, but I will never forget the 4 nine weeks I spent staying up every night to study the linea alba or the endoplasmic reticulum.

ERIN CHRISTOPHER

DAY AND NIGHT

I escape to my world of dreams,
Where man at home can take a rest;
No worry forms upon his face
Of trouble entering his special place.
The evening bird sings his song
And nature taps with the beat
Acknowledging all creatures below
To carefully miss them by the feet.
A fresh breath of air fills the lungs
And all men smile and nod their heads,
Passing at a steady pace;
No one behind, no one ahead.
The world is one, and joined by land,
That forms a united Christian band.
We march together hand in hand,
A pause by one, then all must stand.
But when my eyes upon a blink
Make me come out of my inner sleep,
I realize and begin to think
That all of this is much too deep.
For we are blind to one another,
Seeing only what is black and white.
When will all the rainbow's colors
Turn our eyes to now have sight?
By day we dream, awake at night.

DI'NET HARDMON



NEGATIVE CUT-OUT

KIM THOMAS

SEPTEMBER

The only time I can relax
I finally hear the helmet's crack
The Bands start that BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM sound
The leaves turn from Green to Reddish-Brown
Family birthdays come throughout
Probably because someone had fun in January, no doubt.
My family congregates on my PAPA'S birthday
We never forget how he sings on that day
Sings for us not to share his strife
Sings for us to make Jesus our LIFE.

RICHARD WILLIAMS, II

GREEN

It sprouts from the ground as a blade of grass,
And shoots up a trunk and around the branches of a tree.
It's the stuff Mom uses to clean the toilet,
And the Jell-O in the cafeteria.
It's the girl beside me who doesn't have what I do,
And me when I don't have what she does.
It is Martians, and cheese that is too old to eat.
It is grapes on a vine,
And a happy farmer's thumb.
It was my house as a child,
And my father's eyes.

KELLI MARSHALL

FORTUNE ROAD

"N

o, sir, I wouldn't do it. Not while I still have the good sense God blessed me with. Nope, no way. You couldn't even pay me money to do it. Listen, boy, sure as I have two eyes 'n can spit further than you can see, I'd say you'd be plumb crazy to try." Teller quit

whittling at the piece of wood that he held in his hands and began picking at the cuticles of his long, dirty fingernails. "Ain't no boy that tried to run down Fortune Road made it all the way to the Chickasea Creek Bridge and back. And some of 'em were bigger and stronger than you. A little ole runt like you'd never make it halfway. Your mama probably wouldn't want ya' to anyway." Teller looked up from picking at his nails and laughed.

Now, I should have had enough sense not to listen to Teller and his stories of the Chickasea Creek Bridge. Growing up on a farm teaches you which way

is up pretty quickly, and what lessons I didn't learn that way, my daddy's big leather belt was happy to teach me. Mama always said to me, "You stay away from that Teller

man. He's a no good vagrant, sitting there on the side of the road, doin' nothing but sellin' boiled peanuts and messing with ya'll kids. If I hear that you've been hanging out around him, I'll have your father wear out your hide so bad you won't sit down for a week." I took this threat as seriously as the one Mama gave me when I slammed the screen door or when she caught me stealing an ice cream sandwich from the freezer before supper. Every day, after eating lunch and listening to Mama's warning, I ran down Fortune Road to where Teller's dirty truck always was.

Teller was not just some old bum who sat on the side of Fortune Road selling bags of boiled peanuts for a dollar to men and women driving rattling, rusted pickup trucks down the country road; when I was nine, he was my world. He sat on the tailgate of his truck whittling and carving on whatever piece of wood he could find. He wasn't like the other old men I knew who were actually trying to make something while they were whittling; Teller just whittled away,

just to be whittling. If he ran out of wood to whittle on, he would just begin to whittle on himself, picking and digging at his cuticles, at the dirt underneath his long fingernails, at the calluses on his hands. As the falling bits of wood collected in the folds of his overalls and the hazy sun danced its slow waltz to sunset, he told stories about how he won the three medals for bravery during the war. If he was in a good mood, he'd even show the medals which he wore pinned on the dirty green army jacket he kept up front in his truck. Once, Jack Ryder, one of the boys up the road who went to the high school and played football for the team on Friday nights, said that he got a good look at the medals and that they were nothing more than something Teller had found in some old junk yard. But I knew better. I knew Teller was the bravest man in the world, and that it'd take something pretty terrifying to scare him. I guess that's why I took his dare about the Chickasea Bridge.

The Chickasea Creek Bridge was an old metal

bridge that crossed the creek right where it was its widest and deepest. Most of us kids learned how to swim in the creek, up a little ways, but down around the bridge, it gets

Finally, I took a deep breath, asked God to forgive me for spilling the grape juice on Catherine Harris on purpose during the Lord's Supper at church, and stepped over the rope onto the bridge.

pretty deep and rocky on the bottom. When I was a couple of years younger, Matt Heard, a boy that lived up the road a ways, was fishing down by the bridge with his brothers when he slipped into the creek and drowned. Mama And Daddy made me go to the funeral; I don't remember too much about it except that I kept on swatting at a bee and when I got home, Daddy whipped me pretty hard. I don't know if he whipped me because of the bee or if he was just trying to scare me away from playing down by the bridge. Either way, it worked pretty good, and I'd never gone down there to swim or fish.

It was only about a mile or two down Fortune Road to the bridge; running down there wouldn't be that hard. Fortune Road was one of those old country roads that used to be the only way to get into town from the little hollows out in the country. Back when the state could still use convict labor, some prisoners came over from Parchman and built a new, paved highway into town. After that, Fortune Road

sprawled across the country like a child's outgrown rag doll, unused and forgotten except for the few families who had farms off one of its sides. Teller always parked his truck up where the Forresters had their store. It wasn't too much of a store, just a gas pump and the few items that people usually forgot to buy at the Piggly Wiggly in town, but boy, the R. C.'s and Moon-Pies tasted so good. I'd drink a R. C. and sit there listening to Teller and his stories, letting the condensation on the glass bottle drip on my neck and my hands, tickling my skin, creating a creamy clean path across my dust-covered skin.

"I may be little for my age, but I can make it 'cross that bridge. The other boys just ain't as brave as me. You and me, Teller, we're two of a kind. Running across that bridge, well, it'd be like when you shot down those five enemy planes all by yourself. I can do it, Teller, I know I can."

"I tell you what, boy, you start out for that bridge down here on this side of Fortune, and I'll drive around through town, and come up on the other side of the creek and wait for you. If you make it, well, I'll, I'll give ya' one of my medals," Teller squinted at me and laughed. "But I won't hold it over you if ya' too chicken to try. Nah . . . no one will hear from me how Andy Lipscomb was just too scared to run 'cross an old bridge."

I gritted my teeth and began tracing a large circle in the red dirt and muttered, "I'm gonna do it, Teller. Promise to God, I'll make it to that Chickasea Bridge. I ain't some sissy who can't run down some old dirt road and across a stupid bridge."

Teller sat on the truck's lowered tailgate, head bent down intently on his block of wood, shaping and carving it. The sun blazed down kissing my ears, my head, and my neck, burning them the fiery red color of the tomatoes my mamaw raised in her garden patch. I looked down at the rut I had made with my shoe in the red dirt and watched an ant carrying a piece of food crawl down into it. Slowly, I crouched down to the ground, placing one leg into the dirt so that a fine layer of the red dust covered my knee. I bent forward and slowly untied and then retied my Converse sneakers, pulling and twisting my shoelaces into and out of knots just like the ones in my stomach. A breeze began to tickle the weeds, their tips swaying, their rustling a soft laughter. Teller stopped whittling, glanced up at the sky as if he were judging the time by the sun, and squinted over at me. "Well, boy, don't you think that you'd better get going if you're going to go?"

I stood up slowly, brushing the dirt and bits of gravel from my knees and legs. The breeze brushed against my skin, causing me to sense that odd sum-

mer mixture of sweat and goosebumps. The air was quiet except for the whispering of Teller's knife to his block of wood. My courage that I had had when I accepted Teller's dare had been scattered around me like a game of pick-up sticks. I looked up and down the road. The red dirt road stretched calm and quiet like a cat taking its afternoon nap. I heard the echoes of my mother's warnings and remembered the sting of my father's belt and thought about running to hide myself in the bales and bits of hay in our barn.

"Andy, ya' know, I'd understand if ya' ain't gonna do it. I mean if ya' ain't cut out for it, ya' ain't cut out for it. Like back in the War, some of us were cut out for it, some of us weren't. Ain't every one of us destined to win a medal for bravery." Teller stopped whittling, closed his knife's blade, and placed it in the pocket of his greasy overalls.

That settled it. I knew that I could be just as brave as Teller and I wanted to wear a medal just like his. I drew my body closer to the ground, into the stance that I had seen the runners on the high school team get into. I yelled, "See you at the bridge, Teller!" and began running down Fortune Road.

I pushed my feet off, one after another, first left, then right, then left again as my feet pounded the road's collage of red dirt, gravel and glass shards from empty beer bottles. The road twisted and turned, enticing me farther and farther away from Teller and closer to the bridge. The wood came closer and closer to the road, drawing nearer and nearer before pulling away, threatening to swallow up the road at places, the branches of the trees overhead wove together to form a canopy in a conspiracy to block the sun. I was oblivious to all of this, seeing only the image of the medal that Teller would give me when I made it to the other side of the bridge.

After I had run about a mile or two, the road began to slope steeply downhill and became rockier. Bits and pieces of gravel flew up behind my feet as I got closer to where Fortune Road crossed the Chickasea Creek. The earth began to skid underneath my feet and I slid to a stop, my face red, panting to catch my breath. The only sound I heard was the sound of the creek rushing through its rocky path. It wasn't the cheerful harmonic murmur which accompanied our playful shouts and laughter up the creek where all of us boys went swimming. The pounding of the water reverberated in my head as I walked slowly towards the bridge.

The bridge's rusted metal beams reached up in the sky, like children clasping each other's hands, holding them high above their heads in a game of London Bridge. The floor of the bridge was made up of rotten boards, weathered gray after years of Mississippi sun

and rain. A wooden sign with lettering in fading black paint saying "DANGER: Keep Off Bridge" hung on a rope stretching from one post of the bridge to one on the opposite side. I hesitated at the edge of the bridge, watching the rope and sign swaying back and forth in the breeze. Finally, I took a deep breath, asked God to forgive me for spilling the grape juice on Catherine Harris on purpose during the Lord's Supper at church, and stepped over the rope onto the bridge.

I began to slowly walk across the bridge, walking more carefully than I did when my mama made me help remove the good dishes from the table after Sunday dinner. Each second, each step, each moment was stretched into an hour, a mile, an eternity. I crept forward, continually glancing down towards the bridge floor, watching for cracks and rotten boards. Out of the corner of my eyes I saw that my shoelace had become untied. I crouched down, crossing my fingers, hoping that the bridge wouldn't collapse, causing me to fall into the creek and drown.

I sat there on the bridge, huddled into my little ball, expecting the old wooden bridge to disintegrate into splinters that would fly about in the wind like the dandelion puffs that I used to blow upon to make wishes. I noticed a dragonfly flirting with the bridge, promising to land on this post, then jilting it to sit upon another. Its blue and green body radiated in the sunlight, glimmering and reflecting like a peacock's sapphire and emerald feathers. Enchanted by its dance, I followed it with my eyes, turning my head to the right then swinging back around to the left and up. Before I realized what I had done, I was chasing the dragonfly in its minuet.

As the crickets began tuning for their nightly orchestral concert and the swarms of mosquitoes became denser, I remembered why I had come to the bridge in the first place and skipped off the bridge to over where Teller was leaning against an old pine tree, picking at a blister on the side of his right thumb.

"Come on, boy, get in the truck. Ya' need to be gettin' home. It's late and almost your supper time."

We drove back down Fortune Road, passing by the

Forrester's store, an old burnt-out church, and some farm houses with bits and pieces of cars and trucks strewn in the front yard and clotheslines laden down with the white linens to the side and children of various ages sprinkled through the grass and porches. Teller reached where my driveway met the road, pulled the truck over, and turned the engine off.

"Teller, I 'm sorry it took me so long. You don't have to give me the medal if you don't want. Maybe I ain't brave enough."

Teller reached down to the floor of the truck and picked up his army jacket. Slowly, he reversed the jacket and unpinned one of the medals and placed it into my hand. "I hear ya' Mama callin' after you, so you better get going."

I jumped out of the truck and ran up the driveway to my house, clutching the medal tightly in my hands. Later that night, I sat by my bed, the streams of moonlight slipping through the window reflecting off my hands and the medal. I reached under my bed and placed it in the shoe box where I kept all my treasures -- my baseball cards, my tooth that Jimmy Craper knocked out while we were playing baseball, creased programs from high school football games.

That day was really the last day I ever saw Teller. School started pretty soon after that and the next year, we'd sold the farm and moved into town. The image of Teller sitting in the chair on the side of the road whittling and selling boiled peanuts gradually faded into my memory until it seemed as vague as some dream that you might have during a summer afternoon nap. Every once in a while, I'd open that old shoe box and shift through the baseball cards and newspaper clippings until I found the old bronze medal. Sometimes I could sit really still and squinting my eyes really hard, almost seeing the purplish-blue reflections of August sun and hear the scratchings of a whittler's knife echoing through the dusk. ■

CANDACE LYN PERRY
SECOND PLACE
SHORT STORY CONTEST

SEASONS

(JEFFERSON DAVIS COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI)

In Spring, the birds come back,
New grass turns palest of greens,
And the creek rises,
Flows faster to see coming wonders--
Fresh life breaks the silence.
Baseball season starts--
Stands roar with parents and friends.
Horseback rides last forever,
High and fast, the ground rushes below.
School ends as the air warms to a sweat,
Yelled good-byes fade at 3:00.

Summer colors the world deep emerald--
Every leaf gleams a richer hue,
And the sky looms higher than a dream.
Fish bite, tease the pond surface;
No one cares as long as there's shade.
Life revolves around water--
Afternoon swims to needed rains,
Holds pleasure and life.
Family mows, rakes, gardens--
Too soon cool winds will blow.

Fall mellows the land;
Ripe in smell and rustic riches,
Its colors hurt your heart --
Red and yellow adorn the branches;
Earth's blue canopy holds the branches;
Earth's blue canopy holds no wisp of cloud,
And evening's sun . . . lavender, indigo, scarlet--
Leaves no doubt of God.
Friends greet each other in September;
New fashions, slang, and significant others,
Another year closer to forsaking the familiar niche.
Football brings screaming chants and pep rallies,
Then a whirl of band music and homecomings.
Time for long sleeves and long walks--
Learning that perfect days exist.
Then frost silvers the ground one morning.

Winter bares the branches,
Howls through them like a banshee.
Wet, brown leaves keep steps silent,
Unlike the crisp ones of Autumn.
Children rush to foggy windows,
Eager for the first snowflake--
Each smile a miracle.
The silence bids us whisper,
As animals sleep soundly in deep hollows,
Beneath muddy ponds and cold earth.
Neon lights point toward the stores;
Jingles pour through doors,
While elves and jolly old men grant wishes--
Magic weaves a spell over believers.
Party blowers and midnight kisses call in January,
Firecrackers explode in a rainbow shower.
Second semester as hurried as the first,
Every day tiny dramas unfold.
Wait for warm winds until . . .
The first V-shaped flock flies overhead.

LEAH SPEIGHTS
HONORABLE MENTION
POETRY CONTEST

FEELING

When all senses have failed:
complete darkness
complete silence
nothing to smell
nothing to taste,
One sense remains.
When you come near me,
I close my eyes.
You say nothing.
Even if I can't smell you,
Even before I taste you,
I can feel you.
Even before you touch me
I can feel your presence--
your gaze passing over me,
your hot breath on my neck.
A gentle pressure
Pushes me backwards.
The pillow swallows me
and I hold onto you
To keep from drowning
In everything that I feel.

ERIN CHRISTOPHER
HONORABLE MENTION
POETRY CONTEST

BROWN

A smiling face
Drips
Sticky brown
Chocolate ice cream;
Brown like the
Peanut butter
Nana smeared on
Ritz crackers;
Brown like
Summer skin, or the
Leather jacket
That secured social status
in junior high school;
Brown like Daddy's old
Sunday shoes
That never crackled the
Dead brown leaves
In the church parking lot
Or
Brown like
Nature
Behind all the
Green.

JAIME PHILLIPS
HONORABLE MENTION
POETRY CONTEST

AUGUST

White rows make fields glow like snow in the August sun,
Dust skis across this tundra
Windows open at night
the crickets chirp
the scent of cotton rides the breeze
and opens the curtain
From horizon to horizon every star winks
The moon looks over the harvest
In the morning: the river fog flooded
Monsters move across the open
with great green teeth
and illuminate eyes
puffs of cotton float across the land
Old August awakens to a new day
The sunflowers lift their sleepy heads to see
this year's reap
Sweat rains from every brow
and momma wipes the watermelon
from child's mouth
August heat--
She lifts the river into the air
And makes the poor farmer sigh and
stroke his forehead with his dusty arm
No, August never forgets
She comes every year
bringing with her: fire
tearing white bolls from the brown ground
August pierces the land

SAM EASLEY
THIRD PLACE
POETRY CONTEST

silence

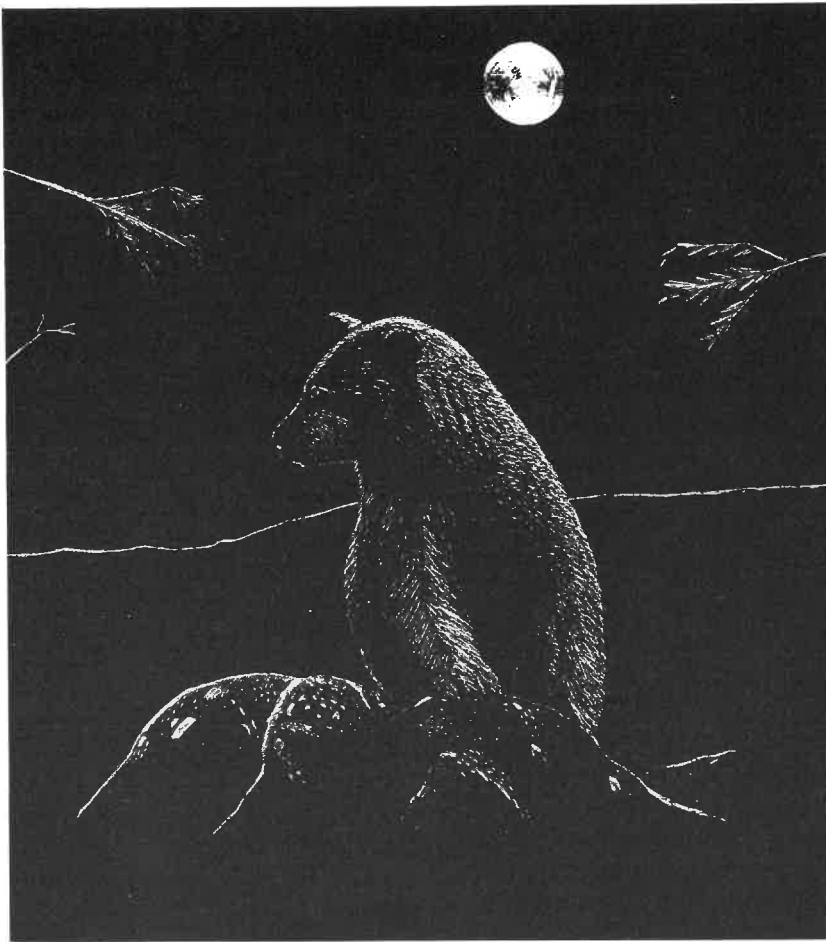
Silence is sibilant, swaying,
spiraling softly down into
the distant past;
silence sings sad songs of yesterday,
suspends a scene in mid-sentence.
Silence sustains sanity.
Silence is subtle, sadistic, sensual;
a subspecialty of surveillance;
a sublimation of sustenance.
Silence is the surreality of one's surroundings
exhaled on a supplicant sigh.

RACHEL SAMS
FIRST PLACE
POETRY CONTEST



PHOTOGRAPHY

JAIME PHILLIPS



SCRATCHBOARD

TOMMY MA

WOODED DAY

Sunrise sails into the sky.
 Squirrels scold and scatter,
 When the silence scares them.
 Songs of streams, sifting sand,
 Silken voices swarm with stories,
 Cats' slinky stalking stays a secret.
 Swallows soar in a shower,
 On soft, sinking breezes--
 Sunset steals over swiftly.

LEAH SPEIGHTS

THE FIELD OF SMILES

The field of poppies
 Flowers blowing in the wind
 The hungry savage grins

The field of gold
 The clanking of coins echoes in my ears
 The day of greed draws near

The field of dreams
 The jumping of joy fills my feet
 The hopes and wants are complete

The field of fears
 The dark and sinister images fill my mind
 The worlds of good and evil coincide

The field of smiles
 The smile of a day of poppies
 The smile of a greedy man with gold
 The smile of a dream come true
 The smile as evil grins with its black hue

KATHY JO SMITH

QUICKLY

following at a chance
 regardless of the means
 blinded by something
 led by nothing
 urgency rising
 desire rising need seeing
 body not feeling
 need to know to
 remember the following
 need to know to remember
 the memories exploding
 electric charges built
 into skyscrapers built into this
 shell it all comes down and you
 can't stop it falling and crushing
 this worthless trial i am blind
 and misled by nothing more
 than me i am blind to my
 ignorance discovering something
 new i take a hesitant step forward
 in the space immaterialized and
 vanished off the face of no planet
 at all i smile to the sun and things seem
 to flow in place again and i
 breathe.

KY PALMORE

WHEN WINTER COMES

When winter comes
the water freezes
and the trees they bare
themselves to the cold
and the people
they freeze too
and everybody is frozen
languid and stiff

then it snows
a deceptively soft
blanket of white
covering the earth
uncaring and suffocating
stealing the warmth
for itself

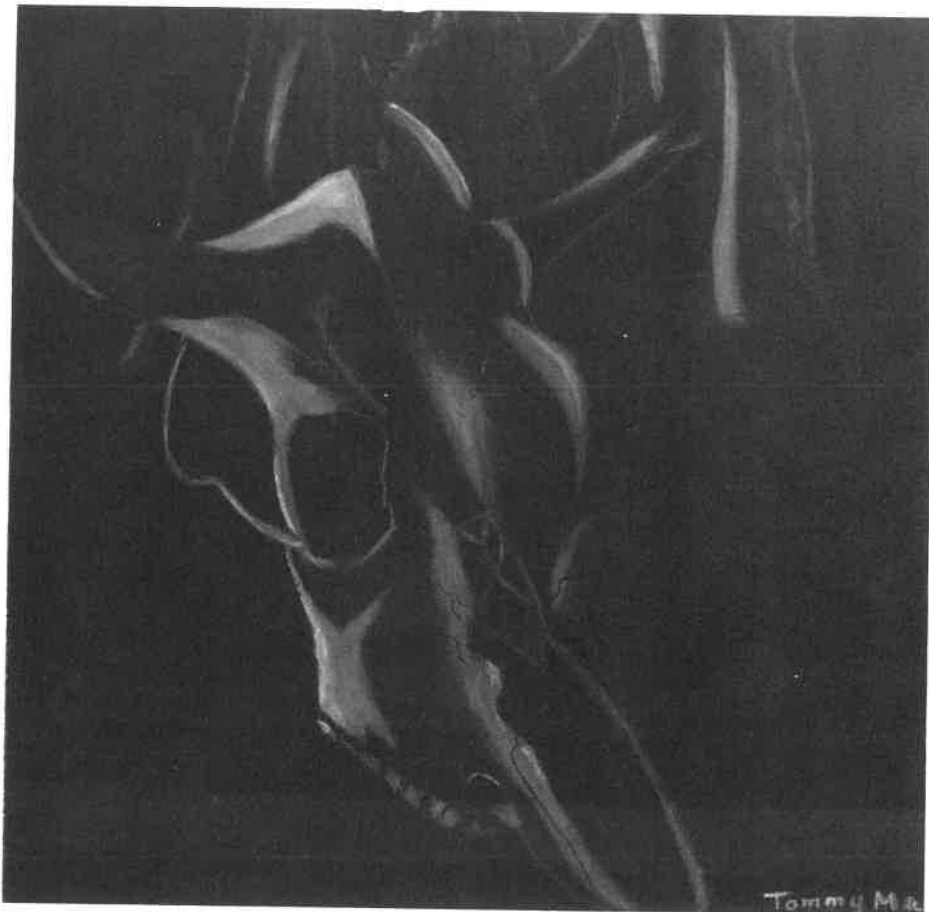
each snowflake that drifts down
is a little piece of sadness
unique and one of a kind
it gets in your eyes
and you want to cry
but you cannot
the snow takes even your tears

PHILIP NGUYEN

DECEMBER

Children gaze through paper snowflake windows,
Blending the lesson with the hum of the radiator
And send themselves into a world with swings that creak
On ice-caked hinges, noses that could lead a sleigh,
And chicken soup Saturdays spent nursing a cold.
A sharp voice cuts through the dream and they descend into
Multiplication tables, Christopher Columbus, and spelling bees,
Back to the unreality of a world encased by walls.

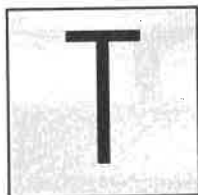
MARY DAVIS



CHARCOAL

TOMMY MA

PROVERBS



The mighty wind caressed my face as I began to smoothly glide into cross-overs. I was in a world of my own; the movement of air around me gave me a sensation that could only be described as how one would feel if she were soaring through the sky. I felt like a princess in the beautiful red dress my mother made especially for me on that special day. It was the day that I would progress to the next level of the sport I adored. The Freestyle 3 test was waiting; I was ready.

There were approximately ten minutes left in warm-up. I continued to practice the various required maneuvers as well as my routine. Midway through my routine, it was time to perform one of my best jumps: the salchow. The entry three-turn was clean; the take-off was perfect. It felt like heaven on ice. Excitement began to build as thoughts of passing the test left me spellbound.

I was ready to land the jump and continue with my program as I'd always done. As I attempted to proceed into the next part of my program, I realized that something was fatally wrong. Suddenly, it occurred to me that I was no longer standing. Noticing that I had fallen, I attempted to get up; I couldn't move. I tried once more - no results. "What's happening to me?" I wondered in panic. Suddenly, a rush of warm energy overwhelmed me. I began to sway. "Mama! Daddy! I can't move! I can't skate!" Two other skaters came to my aid as my father rushed onto the ice. He took me and carried me to the seat where they began to unlace my boots. The vicious power of the heat waves was striking with increasing force; my eyes were able to see the bright red color of them with every blow. I also saw faces drifting in and out of my sight just as the waves were. I heard the voices of my mother and father. I know I answered their questions; however, the questions and my responses remain a mystery hidden away in my memory. The crashing of the waves brought confusion, thirst, and finally, a drain of consciousness.

The diagnosis was in; I had fractured the growth plate bone located in my right ankle. It took a couple

of months for it to heal. I was elated when I finally had the cast removed. After what seemed like years of waiting, I was ready to glide upon the ice once again.

I stepped on the ice, ready to fly around the rink as I used to before the injury. The pain came flying back. My leg didn't feel like my own. My moves were stiff and barely controlled. I left the rink crying that day; however, I went home even more determined to skate better than I ever had before.

"Never give up! When you feel you can't do anymore, do all you can and reach back and do some more!" These words of encouragement passionately rang from the mouth of my loving mother. They describe the very essence of perseverance, a virtue that is often crucial to success. This virtue and its maxim is one I've learned and live by as I strive for triumph in life's endeavors.

"Representing the Figure Skating Club of Memphis - Miss Mary Helene Adams!" declared the announcer.

Competition was tough with eight other skaters in the group, so I really needed to land that jump.

I skated onto the rink to begin my program. Just minutes before the competition, my coach exclaimed, "Just go for it!"; he was referring to

the double toe loop jump. I'd practiced and practiced it; however, I still hadn't conquered the feat of landing the jump. Competition was tough with eight other skaters in the group, so I really needed to land that jump. The time had come - no longer could I worry; all I could do was skate. The music began and transported me to another world. I was unaware of the people watching; I was alone in skating paradise. The beginning of the program flowed freely, bringing me to the critical entry of the double toe loop. Before I knew it, I was soaring through the air. I could hear the creation of my blade's edge as I smoothly landed . . . Wait a minute . . . Landed . . . I landed my double toe loop for the very first time in competition!

That was quite a day. Not only had I surprised myself and walked home with a silver medal, but the virtues of hard work and perseverance had also enabled me to accomplish one of my dreams. "Never give up!" I still hear Mom say. I didn't, Mother, I haven't. ■

MARY ADAMS

SUMMERS ON THE FARM



That day seemed no different than the day before. Yet it was as different as night is from day. It was the last day of preschool. No more standing in line to use the restroom. No more Ms. Allen telling us to be quiet. No more drawing circle after circle on a

piece of construction paper. That day we had a party, but the whole time I couldn't wait for Mom to pick me up. I said goodbye to all my friends. I even let Kelly Swords call me cutie, but I made sure no one was looking. I was just ready to go home. I wouldn't have to wake up early the next morning. I could sleep in all morning if I wanted to. Naahh . . . There was just too much to get into.

Finally Mom came and she drove home just like every other day. We stopped at the store and got an ice cream sandwich just like every other day. We got home and Mom let me go outside and play. It was still bright out.

The sun was still high in the sky and there was plenty of daylight left. Somehow I felt different. I didn't feel like going to

Robby's house. I didn't feel like hearing him tell me that he was another year older even though he told me the same thing the day before. So instead of going to Robby's house, I unchained Trouble.

That day I almost beat Trouble to the pond. I ran as hard as I could all the way down the pasture. He only beat me by twenty feet. Trouble and I played around the pond and the back woods all afternoon. About the time the sun was setting I heard Mom call, "Stan! Stan! You get home right now, or I'll tell your Daddy when he gets in." This, of course, meant that she was serious. So I started walking back to the house.

I didn't notice the heat or the mosquitoes until that long walk back. The air seemed to stick to my skin like syrup, and the mosquitoes were there to lick it off. But after a rain, that's how all summer days are in Mississippi. The eastern sky was already dark blue, and the west was a pinkish orange. The light was strange in the middle. It mixed together to make a foreboding color which made almost non-existent shadows with the trees and bushes. The light filled

the air all around us. I think that Trouble could feel it too. He wasn't saying much. Just walking along beside me. This orangish-blue light enhanced the feeling that new times were now unfolding. It kind of signified the change that was taking place around me. I wouldn't start the first grade for three months. I had all summer to help Grandpa and ride the tractors with Daddy. There was also something other-worldly in the light. Something not altogether pleasant. It seemed to be warning me, warning the world to be wary of the time to come.

When I got home, Mom said the most terrible words that a six-year-old can hear: "Go take a bath."

"Awww, Mom," I replied. "I don't want to take a bath. I don't really need one, do I? I didn't play in the mud. Besides most of the dirt didn't make it through my clothes." These words did not fall on sympathetic ears.

"You march your butt into that bathroom and take a bath before I wear it out." I began to walk grudgingly toward the

bathroom, but she gave me a smack on my rear end to speed up the process. After I had taken my bath, Mom and I ate

supper. Since Dad wasn't home yet, we ate in front of the TV. We watched re-runs of "Happy Days" and a new show, "Family Ties." Around eight o'clock, Mom got a call from Dad over the CB radio.

"Base, this is Wise one, over." I could hear the roar of his tractor in the background.

"Go ahead, Stanley." Mom refused to use the CB lingo that Dad liked so much.

"I'm still down in the bottom close to Uncle Toy's Pond. We still got at least two hundred acres of cotton to spray, maybe more. I won't be in till early this morning." Mom's face suddenly fell.

"Can't you spray tomorrow? I've got supper fixed, here. Why don't ya'll come in and eat?" She was pleading.

"Now, Donna, we've been over this before. I've got to get this cotton sprayed. It's going to rain tomorrow morning. That means I won't be able to spray again for at least a week. By that time, the worms will have eaten us out of a crop." I would have given anything to be with him at that moment. To a little boy raised on a farm there is nothing more

So instead of going to Robby's house, I unchained Trouble.

glorious than driving the tractor all night. "Why don't you and little Stan bring some supper down here? Bring some for Jeff and Phillip, too." My heart nearly skipped a beat. I was going to get to go to the bottom! At night!

"Alright, Stanley. See you in a few minutes." It was obvious that she did not share my joy, so I calmed myself when she looked toward me.

"Ten four."

"Get your clothes on," Mom said. I ran into my room and jumped into my clothes.

Fifteen minutes later, I was watching Dad eat his supper under the tractor lights. Uncle Phillip and Jeff were there, too. All three of them were covered in dirt and grease. They looked wonderful. I felt out of place in my clean clothes and freshly washed hair. Heck, I didn't even have a cap on. When they were done, Dad kissed Mom goodbye.

As we were walking toward the truck, I turned around and said, "Dad, can I stay with you?"

Dad looked at Mom and said, "Well, Donna, what do you think? I could use the company."

"Heck, no! He'll get dirty and he needs his sleep. He's been up all day. He didn't take a nap at Ms. Allen's today. I'm taking him home and putting him to bed."

Dad looked at me and said, "Go with your mother, Son. You can help me cut some land next week." I cried a little on the way home but it was obvious that she wasn't going to turn around and take me back to the field.

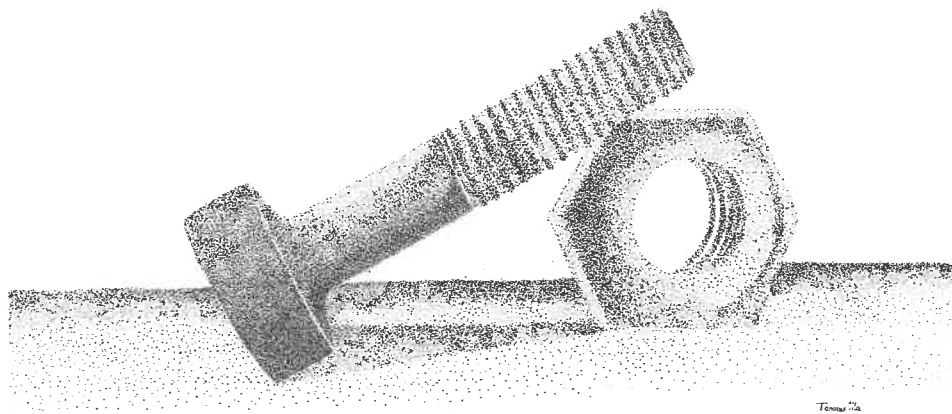
When we got home, I brushed my teeth and Mom tucked me into bed. She kissed me good night and said, "Don't ever be a farmer." She walked out of the room leaving me puzzled. Why, a farmer was the only thing I wanted to be. Driving a tractor was the best thing in the world. I couldn't wait until I got old enough to drive one. I wondered why she would say such a thing.

To my surprise, I heard Dad walk in just before I went to sleep. Mom exclaimed, "Stanley! What are you doin' back here?"

Dad's words were somber. "The spray rig broke. I won't be able to get the part until. . ." His words broke into tears and sobs. It was the first time I heard my father cry.

Only later did I understand what my mother meant. ■

STAN WISE
THIRD PLACE
SHORT STORY CONTEST



STIPPLE

HONORABLE MENTION • ART CONTEST

TOMMY MA



"I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. Toohulhulsote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say "yes" or "no." He who led the young men is dead. Oh, it is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away into the hills, and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are - perhaps they are freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children, and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them all among the dead. Hear me my chiefs. I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever."

CHARCOAL WITH CALLIGRAPHY

ANDY GODSHAW

STORMY

.REACH OUT TO THE SUN GOD.

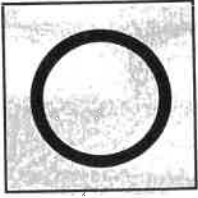
Storm clouds fill the sky
with an angry blackness
as the thunder cracks the vaults of heaven,
releasing the heavy rains.
Bright flashes of lightning
light the hot night,
the acrid scent of wet concrete
filling my nostrils.
A chill wind blows,
whispering through the oaks
and chills me to the bone.
The heavy rain beats down,
each drop a stinging reminder
of Gaia's cruel heart
as she soaks me to the bone.
I stand alone, in the meeting place,
terrified of the storm
even as I scream my defiance
at the storm
and at the world.

ERIC NAIL

look into the light. *The truth* to you is spoken, taking
from your sight. the heat that warms just thrashes with its
FLAMING whip, leaving the red MEMORIES looking for a
fight. INTERTWINE with orange; purple fills OUR minds.
Living our own LIVES becomes so *lonely*, no one to control
but our fading hearts' deepening complexities turn the wheels of
life. ENDING in the darkness. blue. blue. IN stars, the moon. BLACK
cheru BOXES draw the carriage up again spinning wheels into the
red, orange, yellow, purple settling globe.
and here is our final resting place, right above the forgotten horizon

SEPIDEH BAGHAI

GEORGE



ne Sunday morning as I rushed off to church I noticed an empty beer bottle lying on the sidewalk. Since I live on a busy street, it is no surprise to see remnants of Saturday night escapades strewn across my driveway. It didn't even occur to me to pick up that bottle; I

just hoped someone else would pick it up soon.

I also noticed as I hopped in the car that George had begun his morning walking ritual across the neighborhood. His hat (with a lone feather stuck in the side) had the top cut out, so his bald head protruded above the brim. He was carrying a G. I. Joe thermos and a cigarette in one hand, but his other hand was empty. I was almost in the car, and I tried to avoid him so I could get to church on time, but before I shut the door I heard his gruff voice call out, "Look who I see. I see a Courtney." Oh, no, I thought, I'll have to walk into Sunday School late! But I smiled and called back, "Hey, George!" I wanted to drive away, but I saw him approaching and felt obliged to speak.

I remember the first time I met George. We were still moving boxes and furniture into our house. Standing outside I heard a husky voice behind me: "I hope y'all are weird, cause you've got to be weird to live in this neighborhood." I didn't quite know what to think, so I stuttered back, "Well, I think we're pretty weird," and George walked on by. The next day my four-year-old brother found a pair of my dad's old snowboots and put them on; they hit the chubby toddler at this upper-thigh. He staggered outside, lifting first one weighted leg and then the other, dragging both along the ground as if they were laden with cement. Once again George strolled by, took a good look at my brother, and said, "Now that's weird!"

Most people look at George as the town eccentric. He lives in the same house that he and his parents lived in some sixty-odd years ago, and not much work has been done to the ramshackle structure since then. In front of George's house is his "altar." No one is exactly sure whom or what this "altar" is directed towards. Though the contents change often, its basic appearance remains the same, with plastic flowers,

rusty tin cans with holes in strange places, and an odd baseball cap or broken pair of scissors. Three mirrors on their sides form the back of the altar, and they are angled inward as to reflect all of the tacky treasures. Occasionally, in special seasons such as Easter and Halloween, a gnarled, dirty, plastic glow-in-the-dark hand will appear at the altar. Whatever is beautiful to George goes in the altar. It expands daily.

George is a very intelligent man. He has a college education and is book-learned. He reads the newspaper every day, and he keeps a very special journal. In this journal he records all the happenings of our neighborhood and our hometown. If someone moves in or out of a neighborhood house, it is in his journal. George will tell a person all the neighborhood gossip, whether she wants to hear it or not. He even keeps the amount of rain in his rain gauge recorded daily in his journal. George's journal will someday make a great archive.

I have never heard a definite account of why George is like he is. I did hear one rumor that said he was hit by a car when he was about twenty-eight years old, had to have a metal plate put in

*In front of George's house is his "altar."
No one is exactly sure whom or what
this "altar" is directed towards.*

his head, and has been not quite the same ever since. However, I have only known George as he is today, and that is the George I have grown to cherish. His heart is always "in the right place." For the neighborhood to be neglected or for a member of the neighborhood to be ailing is heartbreaking to him. He never asks anything of anyone, except to keep him informed of the daily news. And so this was his request of me as I stood waiting to go to church that Sunday morning.

"How's the Johnson family doing?" I noticed he had just gotten some new false teeth, and they must not have fit very well. They bobbed up and down when he spoke, and he kept pushing them back into place with his tongue.

"They're doing fine. The college is in full swing now, so Dad's busy, and Jeff is in the fourth grade this year."

"Boy, I tell you," George said, "those little ones sure grow up fast. And you're looking mighty pretty this morning. Where're you off to?"

"Oh, just to church," I replied, feeling somewhat

sheepish and just a little guilty for wanting to slight this wonderful, lonely old man. "What's Max doing with his shutters off his windows?"

George told me about Max's shutters, and the new steeple on the Methodist church, and the young doctor's family moving into the mustard-yellow house beside the fire station. I listened patiently. We said our goodbyes, and we each started towards our respective destinations. As I drove away I saw George somewhat painfully stoop over and pick up the beer bottle that had been dropped on the sidewalk.

I was late for Sunday School that morning, but I didn't care anymore. I knew I could learn greater

lessons from watching George than from listening to my Sunday School teacher read the same passages of the Bible that I'd heard all my life. I just wish everyone could look at life as simply and sweetly as George does, and be just as happy for it. I hope that after George is gone there will be another to take his place - to keep tabs on a hometown that needs to take more time to pick up the beer bottles and worship the flowers. ■

CAMERON RICHARDSON
THIRD PLACE
ESSAY CONTEST

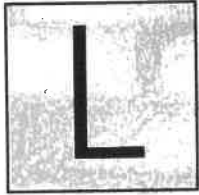


CHARCOAL REVERSE

ELIZABETH DUNN

HONORABLE MENTION • ART CONTEST

OLIVE SMOKES A CIGAR



Little Olive Marceaux sat comfortably in her nightgown on the clean-swept wooden floor in the kitchen, folding the 1924 fashions onto her flimsy cut-out paper dolls. Her mother was out in the backyard hanging up clothes, and her sisters had left the house early in that morning to play with their friends. Mrs. Marceaux had already set the table for lunch, and a big pot of shrimp gumbo was sending delicious aromas throughout the house. The table was laden with *file*, chopped boiled eggs, and other yummys to put in the gumbo. Olive interrupted her play to rebelliously steal a small fingerful of egg (even though she'd been told sternly not to even think about it), then plopped back onto the floor and pulled at the itchy neckline of her nightgown. She was startled then by a knock at the door, and was for an instant afraid. Hadn't Momma told her that the boogeyman would come and give her a spanking if she ever disobeyed?

She giggled, jumped up, and ran to the door. Yanking open the door, she peered curiously through the screen at a tall, lanky, deeply

tanned fisherman with cigar jutting from his mouth and filthy baggy overalls. He lifted his cap a few inches and grinned at Olive. "Hey, *cher!* Where's yer Momma?"

"In the backyard," replied Olive. She stuck her tiny fingers through the holes in the screen and continued to peer at the visitor. "Who're you?" she finally asked.

"I'm Mr. Pitre, baby. Yer Momma asked me ta come on over and fix somethin' out in the yard."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Pitre." Edea Marceaux stepped into the kitchen and waved to him, then gave her gumbo a quick stir. Her hair was loosely pulled back at the nape of her neck, and the pockets of her freshly ironed apron bulged slightly with clothespins. She strode towards the door with a warm smile, fiddled with the latch, and pulled the screen door open.

"Well, hey, Ma'am. If you'll just point me on to the backyard."

"Would you mind leaving your cigar outside on the porch? I don't want to seem rude or anything, but you see there's the little one." She nodded slightly towards Olive, who still stood beside her. "Stop pulling at the nightgown. You're going to stretch it."

"It itches."

Mrs. Marceaux sighed. "I'll show you that table now, Mr. Pitre. You stay in the house, you."

Olive thrust out her lower lip and watched her mother and Mr. Pitre round the corner of the house. When they were gone, she gave her nightgown a nice good yank, then returned to her dolls.

"That's a pretty dress, Miss Sonnier," she said in a deep voice.

"Why, thank you, Mr. Dardar," replied the doll in Olive's falsetto. Olive looked up at the table and decided against stealing more egg. As her eyes returned to her dolls, they stopped suddenly and rested on the cigar resting on the porch. If she couldn't steal egg, and if she was tired of stretching out her

gown, maybe she could play with the cigar. What good would her boogeyman trap do if she couldn't get him to come and get caught in it?

After quickly hiding the paper dolls under her bed so her sisters

couldn't find them, she closed the creaky screen door as quietly as possible and gingerly picked up the cigar, then carried it into the house. Taking a deep breath, she put it in her mouth, closed her eyes, and inhaled.

Olive's eyes welled up with tears and they began overflowing down her violently twitching cheeks. Her throat felt closed and on fire, and her small frame shook with heaving coughs. *Wifts of gray smoke floated around her head, and she collapsed on her knees on the floor of the porch. This must be the boogeyman, she thought as she rocked back and forth and wiped the tears from her hot cheeks.*

She slammed the mean thing on a plate that her mother had left on the table, and sat in a chair clutching her stomach. When she could breathe, she dried her eyes on her gown and reached for the cigar. If her mother found that thing in the house, no boogeyman

Wifts of gray smoke floated around her head, and she collapsed on her knees on the floor of the porch. This must be the boogeyman, she thought as she rocked back and forth and wiped the tears from her hot cheeks.

trap would save her.

In dismay, Olive watched as a brown circle slowly and steadily spread over the surface of her mother's favorite plate. She picked up the cigar, hid the plate in the back of the cabinet, and went outside to the porch just as Mr. Pitre and her mother approached.

"Olive Marceaux! What are you doing with a cigar?"

"It fell, Momma. I think something knocked it off. Momma, I was just picking it up!"

"Oh, all right. Thank you so much for coming, Mr. Pitre." She watched as Olive handed the cigar to the man, then they both went inside.

"I'll run next door and get everybody to come eat," said Olive, wanting to get out as fast as she possibly could.

"Hurry up, and please stop stealing pieces of egg.

That's for the gumbo."

"Okay, Momma." Again Olive turned to go.

"And Olive?" she continued as she reached back to untie her apron.

"What?"

"You're not going to smoke cigars any more, are you? Mrs. Marceaux's face spread into an amused smile as Olive turned and noticed the dainty white curtains pulled back to give a view of the entire backyard.

"No," she replied softly, scuffling her feet.

"Good. Now run along and get your sisters." As Olive left the house, the last thing she heard was her mother's laughter. ■

EDEA BALDWIN



SCRATCHBOARD

RUSS TERRY

HONORABLE MENTION • ART CONTEST

JUST BETWEEN ME AND BLUE

Isn't it lucky that colors can't talk?
Blue alone could write a whole book about me.
The blue of my cat's eyes
Would watch my sister and me
Jump on furniture, or run with scissors
While our parents were at choir practice.

The blue walls of my dorm room
Watched my roommate and me
Play Twister during study hours
Or copy each other's homework.
They listened as we gossiped
About our classmates and neighbors.

The blue bottom of my swimming pool
Has seen midnight skinny-dippers,
Giggling girls in all their glory
Illuminated by the Mississippi moon.

My little blue car.
Oh, the stories he could tell.
Dark country roads to nowhere
Sweaty bodies
Long kisses
Those ominous nights never spoken of again.

It's our secret.
Held forever,
Just between me and blue.

ERIN CHRISTOPHER

THE DEATH OF MY SUMMER

Children playing around a tree.
A symphony of birds in the forest.
Light sprinkling of rain on the roof.
Crackling of ice under hot tea.
The crack of a bat hitting a baseball.
Crickets chirping at twilight.
Leaves falling slowly to the ground.
A soft wind blowing through the trees.
These are the sounds of my dying summer.

KELLI MARSHALL

UNTITLED, UNFINISHED

A steep slope, yet smooth, a cone in shape,
The mountain is undisturbed, calming to see.
Fertile soil supports untouched woodlands;
A green covering formed by many a tree.

Now and again, a rumble is felt,
Stress, pressure built up, now released and loosened.
Shaking soon stops, silenced is the mount,
Once again, the surface calm, forces dampened.

Then constraint is overwhelmed, broken;
Top blown, forces let loosed and control is lost.
Barriers holding back now are open;
Gone are the inhibitions, composure tossed.

Eventually, stoppered is the fount;
Quiet once more, the primal release is curbed.
Order regained from all chaos dealt,
The mountain still, again composed and reserved.

KIT POSADAS

REMEMBERING MAY

The rain stops falling,
May flowers bloom
and fill the air
with
springtime hues.
The vividness of May --
purple, pink, yellow, and blue flowers
with green splotched in all
the right spots
brings memories of
searching for
four-leaf clovers
on early May mornings.
The warm air
with cool breezes flowing
brings back the innocence
of childhood and
playing after school.

ROSEMARY EICHER

SO LITTLE DEPENDS ON A ZIPLOC BAG



life is vegetable soup in a Ziploc bag." Even though Miss Wilhite was teaching cellular structure to a classroom of wide-eyed sixth graders, her words showed more wisdom than science. In the fleeting moments before class, among the chattering voices and loopy

paper airplanes, a vibrant twenty-six year old woman with energetic eyes and a brilliant smile greeted her students as they settled in for fifty minutes of science. Her concern with fashion showed clearly in her teased, moussed, gelled, spritzed, and sprayed, wild, short, blonde hair. Her energy shocked and enthralled the attention of all thirty-two of us.

I can't say I was the best science student. My focus hadn't shifted to academics at that point in my life. Sure, I remember cellular structure: the ribosomal peas, mitochondrial kidney beans, golgi noodles, plastic cell membrane, cytoplasmic juice, and the brain of the cell, the meatball nucleus, but the most important lessons I learned were about strength and courage. Miss Wilhite was always patient and vibrant, funny and smart. She once commented on the pet names students gave each other.

In the fleeting moments before class, among the chattering voices and loopy paper airplanes, a vibrant twenty-six year old woman with energetic eyes and a brilliant smile greeted her students as they settled in for fifty minutes of science.

She remarked something to the effect, "Like I'd want people to call me Bubba or something like that!" So, from that day forward Miss Wilhite was "Bubba" to all who loved her. Her teaching style was unlike anything we had seen. No teacher could drive daydreams, lunchtime longings, and pep-rally excitement out of so many young minds as she did. If the class was especially attentive, she'd do "the splits" for us. Naturally she was the cheerleading sponsor and taught the cheerleaders everything someone who claimed to have been a "Major Geek" could teach. She was outstanding in everything she did.

Bubba's life revolved around her students, her cats, Nintendo, and the love of her life, Chandler. Chandler and she had been engaged for almost a year when I met Bubba. They were to be married the summer

after my sixth grade. The entire class made her promise to tell us about her wedding when we returned to school. As we sixth graders moved into the larger world of seventh grade and gawked at the little kids a year behind us, we were disappointed to find that the marriage was postponed because of money, time, or whatever.

Bubba and I stayed in contact through many of her new hairstyles, Nintendo victories, and adoring students. Then as an eighth grader moving into high school, I lost touch with Bubba because of my new school and her tireless work with her own classes. I returned from my new classes one day when my mom greeted me at the door. Her tone was somber with only the words, "Chrissie, Bubba's Chandler died. He was so young," echoing from her lips. The Sun Herald obituary reported hemophilia as the cause of death, services at a local funeral home, survived by parents, siblings, etc. After a month and the whirlwind of everybody with sympathy and words of

inspiration had gone, I sent Bubba a simple card reminding her that she was still in my thoughts. I heard no more from her for a year or so. Then one morning in my sophomore homeroom a friend told me, "Miss Wilhite's retiring! She has AIDS!" All

homeroom gossip was taken with a grain of salt. I called another teacher from the middle school and got the whole story. The rumor was true. My first thought was that my mom had been right when she said that Chandler was too young to die of hemophilia. One of the many bags of blood he received contained a scary and terrible disease that he unknowingly passed along to his love, my friend.

Bubba had wanted to quietly retire when she developed her first opportunistic infection, signaling full-blown AIDS. As the burning news spread, she escaped to Disney World and did some traveling. When I finally got her home address, I didn't know quite what to expect. Was Bubba still the beaming woman I remembered? Did she look the same? How did she deal with everything? As a junior, I still didn't

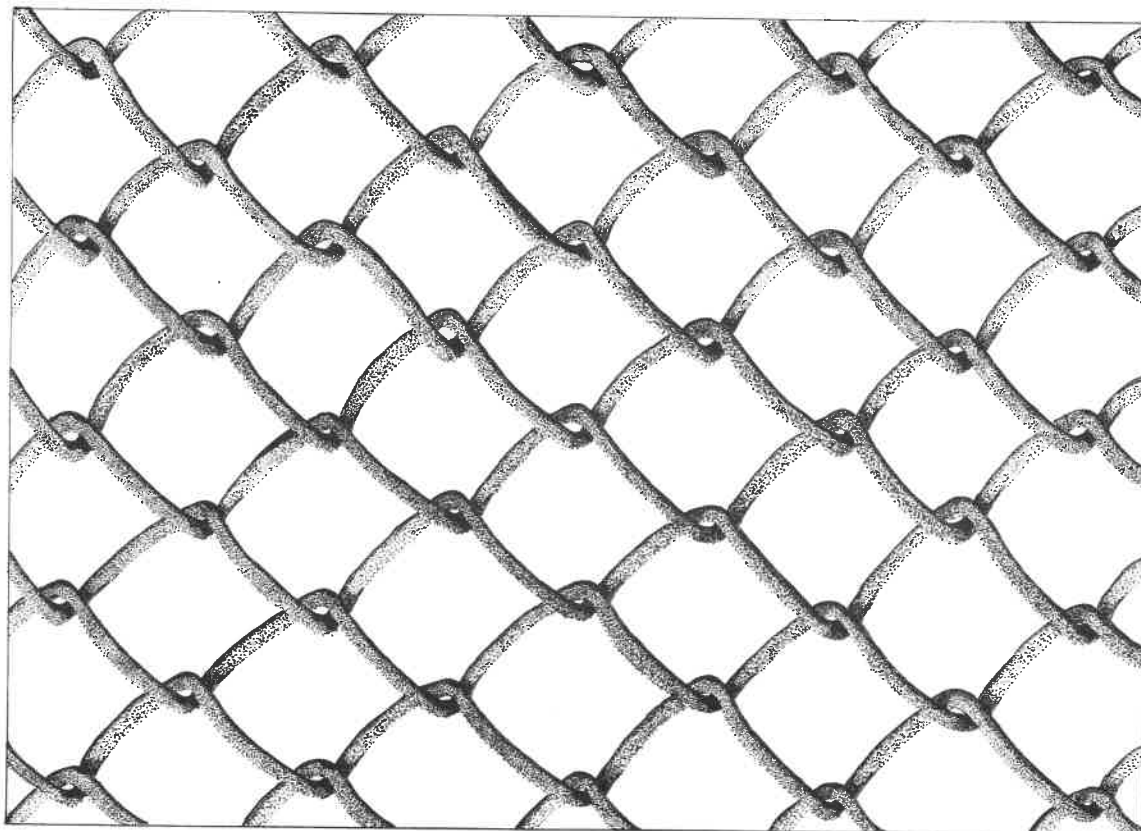
know what to say in my first letter. I simply picked up a navy blue crayon and began writing down everything that was new to me at school. Stories of the dorms, living three hundred miles from home, and leaving my folks before graduating from high school filled the pages until my hands tired of the stumpy crayon. I sealed it, covered it with stickers, and sent the letter on its way. Within a week a whimsical letter commenting on my choice of writing utensils and telling about her own adventures awaited me on wild stationary in my mailbox. The Bubba of old hadn't changed a bit. With a shaky voice and trembling hands, I left a message on her answering machine thanking her for her letter. I didn't even think to leave my own number. As I kept in touch by writing and e-mailing her, I learned that she was heading up the AIDS task force at home. She wrote of workshops, new drugs, and amazing people she met. Mom sent me her articles from the paper. They went from the envelope to my door for all to see.

Then the summer before my senior year I got a letter from Bubba telling me that she had married a man she met after a wedding when everyone was quite drunk. I finally got to see her for lunch one day. I found out that she was the same ageless wonder

from my sixth-grade memory. She talked freely about her new treatments, new husband, and new life as a housewife. She loved it all, except for the long days. She learned to cook and shop for meals besides microwave dinners. Her vibrance never escaped her. Through everything, she has remained the pillar of strength.

Whether she's at an AIDS vigil, or cruising the town with her husband, she demands attention and friendship. No matter when I feel down, I just think of Bubba's strength and gladly endure another day. She still has enough courage and vibrance to share. I am genuinely proud to say that she is and always will be my personal hero. I can't speak for the other thirty-one sixth graders that crashed airplanes in her wildly styled blonde hair, but I know she has touched my life forever. Her statement about the vegetable stew remains wiser still. It's always what's on the inside that counts. After all, the stew is the good stuff, and, in the end, the Ziploc's thrown away. ■

CHRISSE RUTTER
SECOND PLACE
ESSAY CONTEST



STIPPLE

DANIEL BARLOW

THIRD PLACE • ART CONTEST

REVIVAL

In the beginning, all is quiet.
There is only the Word,
Spewing forth from Preacher's mouth
Mixed with spit and sweat swiped off his brow,
Glowing under the spotlights--
Eyes of God in the upper darkness.

Feet shuffle, Baby cries,
Straps are covertly adjusted, thoughts turn to supper,
Impatience descends like a cloak.

But something magical begins to happen.
Preacher raises his voice to the holy word. . .
Heaven.
Yawn-hiding hands move to clap,
Amens start to echo.
The crowd warms.

And the ride begins--
Up to the top of the hill
They creak as Preacher drives on.
Then, as he crescendos--
Down they plunge,
Hearts melt into stomachs, hands lift,
Praises begin.

Preacher keeps on,
Fast as an auctioneer selling Heaven.
Who will bid?

Sold!
As Mr. Larry begins to stretch and wave his arms,
Coming up, up,
(Almost out of his wheelchair.)

Sold!
To Mrs. McKinney
Who calls to God's son,
Then her own.
(Dead a year now.)

Sold!
To the congregation
Who, hands uplifted, bodies swaying,
Uncage their souls and let them soar--
For their Revival.

MARY DAVIS
HONORABLE MENTION
POETRY CONTEST

GRACE

"Fatherthankyouforthisdayandblessthisfoodforthenourishmentofourbodiesamen."

"Thank you, Jack."

She'd smile and nod her lovely head,

nestle the cloth napkin

neatly in her lap--

our permission

to begin conversation and

feasting;

she'd bring the luscious roast

to her painted lips,

savor its flavor and texture--

perfect, as usual;

she'd speak of church

and the hairdresser

(Elbows off the table, darlin')

and Mr. Knight's new wife

(Jack, it's the Albrittons' from Pecan Circle's girl)

and those stupid dogs next door

and McRae's dresses on sale.

we listened when she spoke --

dignified

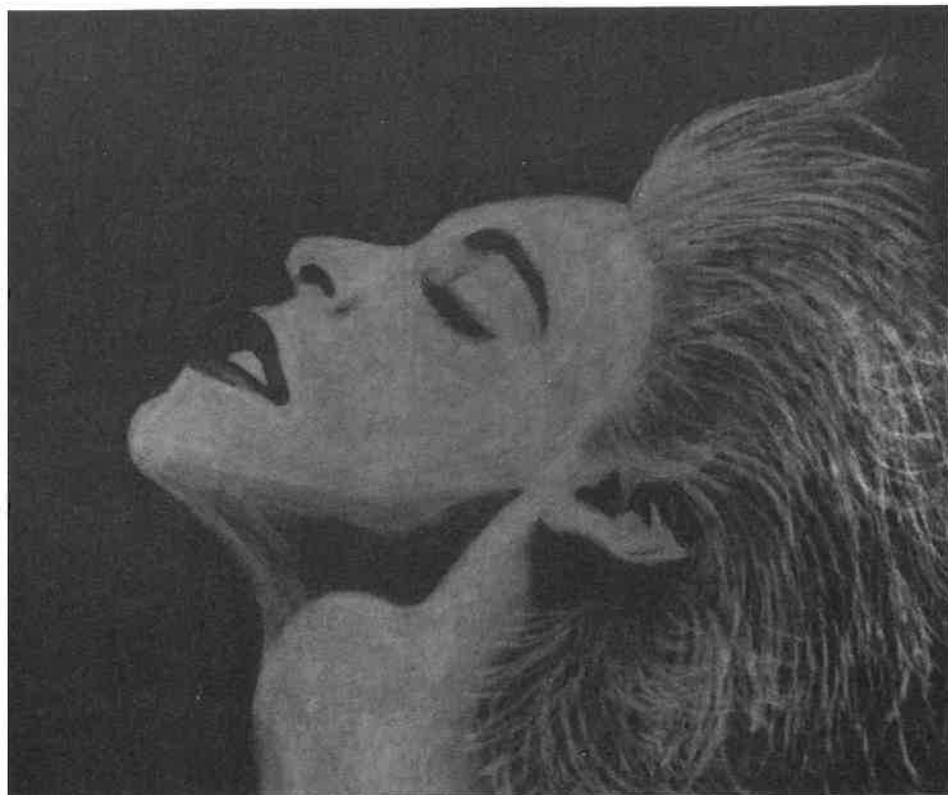
confident--

we respected her babble;

she demanded it . . .

she didn't have to

JAIME PHILLIPS
HONORABLE MENTION
POETRY CONTEST



CHARCOAL

WIL NASH

HONORABLE MENTION • ART CONTEST

HEAR THE VOICES IN THE HALLWAY

Hear the voices in the hallway
crying crying
calling to me.

Feel the aching of the masses
needing needing
screaming silence.

See the empty in their bottles
looking looking
eyes of blindness.

Taste the stagnant blood of God
gulping gulping
dying thirsty.

Touch my face and matted hair
search me search me
never knowing.

KELLY REYNOLDS

TAUPE

I bought stockings, taupe,
The shade of my skin
A rich, creamy taupe
The color of caramel popcorn
On a cool September night
At the State Fair.

Luscious, sticky caramel
Like flowing bronze,
Bronze received as Olympians
Stand proud, triumphant on a platform.

Rough, rigid bronze
Stiff like the copper of a penny
Luminous, intense
Built to billions of dollars.

Glowing penny, radiates like
Autumn leaves
That paint the forest
As Michelangelo painted the chapel.

Falling autumn leaves
I notice on Sunday afternoon
When wearing my stockings, taupe.

JOYELLE JONES

THE COLORS OF APRIL

Bright colors
Colors forever
The blue of the sky
As I look beyond the field
Of hidden Easter eggs
Beyond the yellow daisies
And the green grass
Beyond the orange sun
And the yellow moon
On past Saturn
With its colorful rings
On to the meadow
Of bright cheerful things
Life is forever cycling
Non-ending
Just past every winter
An April springs

KATHY JO SMITH

DIGAMBARA

I danced naked beneath the falling stars that were heroes and gods.
I felt them burning my shoulders and my chest and the bottoms of my feet.
They called it blasphemy.

But I am not a prayer lifted by generations of the mindless.
I am not a trumpet lying silent on an altar because there is no breath.

I took off my mask and turned my eyes to the sky and let the rain fall into my mouth.
I drank clouds, rivers, air. My lungs filled with freedom.
They called it rebellion.

But I am not a spirit forgetting the dreaming.
I am not a book with gold lettering, but no folds, no creases.
I don't smile up at you from the coffee table.

I fell to my knees and cried to the grass.
My tears joined the dew and from their union a river poured, massive,
swift, clear, cool.
I shouted aloud.
They called me a liar.

But I am not a secret kept from myself.
I am not a vow lacking timelessness.

I made love to the wind and the stars and the dirt and they had a name.
It was sweet on the tongue. I gave it my soul.
They called me a whore.

But I am not a train with sixteen baggage cars full of guilt.
I am not a love scorning the closeness.

I prayed to the ocean because it was powerful.
To the sunflower because it was graceful,
To the wheatfield because it was peaceful,
And to the wind because it was wise.

I heard no answers.
Only questions, wailing, wounded questions.

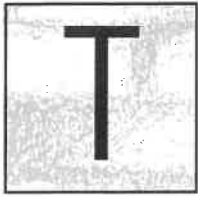
Who are they who have never tasted the wine?
Fall to your knees! Not to offer up your empty prayers,
But to touch reality beneath you.
I call you a coward, afraid of yourself.

I am living,
I am loving,
I am dreaming,
I am embracing.

Tell me about your scars, I'll listen.
But don't come too close, I am flame
And I am sky-clad.

KELLY REYNOLDS
SECOND PLACE
POETRY CONTEST

AMAZING GRACE



The glass door to the restaurant swings open, and a customer enters and sits down on one of the faded, cracked vinyl orange and yellow barstools. The waitress waddles across the cramped kitchen behind the counter to the new customer. The fluorescent lights above the counter play a hide-and-go-seek game on the woman's face, finding the secret places of all the wrinkles hidden by the soft night light outside. Her forehead is shiny and sweaty from the heat of the kitchen and hours of hard work mopping up spills, serving tables, and trying to prevent the head cook and his assistant from fighting. She wears a fragile, crepe-paper apron, once clean and new earlier in the shift, now ruined with grease marks and ketchup stains. Her black, rough, rope-like hair is twisted back in a bun and capped with a paper hat like the ones little boys wear when they play sailors. She wears a cheap pen – one of those Bic pens that is bought in a pack of ten for ninety-nine cents -- behind her ear as if it were an elaborate piece of costume jewelry.

As she waits for her new customer to order, she pulls and pushes a rag across the speckled

counter, her arm and elbow moving in and away from her side rhythmically, almost violently, struggling to remove each speck of dirt, each crumb from the night's earlier customers, and each bead of spilled coffee and water from the counter, pausing only briefly to remove obstacles such as the napkin holders and the glass container displaying the restaurant's slices of their "world-famous, fresh, hot" apple pies. She glances up impatiently from her task at the customer studying his sticky, plastic-covered menu. He finally looks up and make eye contact with her.

She straightens up, places her rag back under the counter where it will hide until the customer leaves, and removes a yellow, pink, and white order-book from her pocket and the Bic pen from her hair. She stands tall, like a general ready to dispense the orders

to her army of cooks and busboys.

She says, business-like, courteously, "Good mornin'. Can I take your order?"

I watch from one of the booths against the wall, my table covered with textbooks and papers for my English class. I push away my half-empty cup of coffee and plate patterned with raisin toast crumbs and cracks and glance around the restaurant. Most of the booths are empty; a policeman sits at one, sipping coffee and reading the papers. A couple of truckers sit up at the counter. The waitress plods across the room to me, her heavy thighs pushing against each other as she carries her pot of coffee.

"More coffee, hon? Gonna be here all night studying? You need anything, you just holler, you hear."

While the crickets' night symphony becomes muted by the sound of distant thunder and the pit-pat, pit-pat, pit-pit-pat of rain, the restaurant grows emptier and lapses into silence except for the occasional yell of the waitress, "Give me a potatoes, smothered and covered."

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As I sit reading, I become lost in the grandeur of the literature of ancient Greeks and Romans. The whisper of the sea breeze caresses my face as I search the Mediterranean horizon for Aeneas' ships with

the forsaken lover Dido. My ears fill with the torturous cries of Agamemnon's daughter as the fire swells around her. The sweet scents of the funeral dance across my nose as Antigone prepares her brother's body for burial. The characters mesmerize me – truly, humanity has not since been as noble as in the days of these ancients.

The sound of the waitress pushing the mop back and forth on the linoleum floor of the restaurant awakens me from my reverie. As her bulky body thrusts the mop in its circular pattern, erasing the night's spills, beads of sweat chase each other down her pudgy face. She begins to sing, using her rhythm of *swish, swish, swish, swash*, to keep time. "Amazing Grace --" *swish, swish* -- "How sweet the sound--" *swish, swish, swash* --"that saved a wretch like me--

"swish, swash.

As the waitress' rich alto fills the restaurant with old gospel hymns accompanied by rhythmic mopping, my mind begins to swirl with thoughts. Is this woman, who finds joy in work that is repetitious and inglorious, not noble? Her actions will surely go unrewarded and mostly ignored; she will not win eternal glory from the gods for her song. She can not be motivated by the promise of a reward of immeasurable wealth. Still she *SINGS!*

As the sun begins its scarlet kiss of the gray night sky and the crackle of bacon frying on the grill for the early-morning regulars rouses the restaurant from its slumber, I sit contemplating the elusive quality that makes one truly noble. I realize that it is not in strength, intelligence, or wealth that the noble spirit is created but it is in quiet dignity – the quiet dignity of a woman singing hymns while she mops. Great feats do not construct an admirable person; the admirable

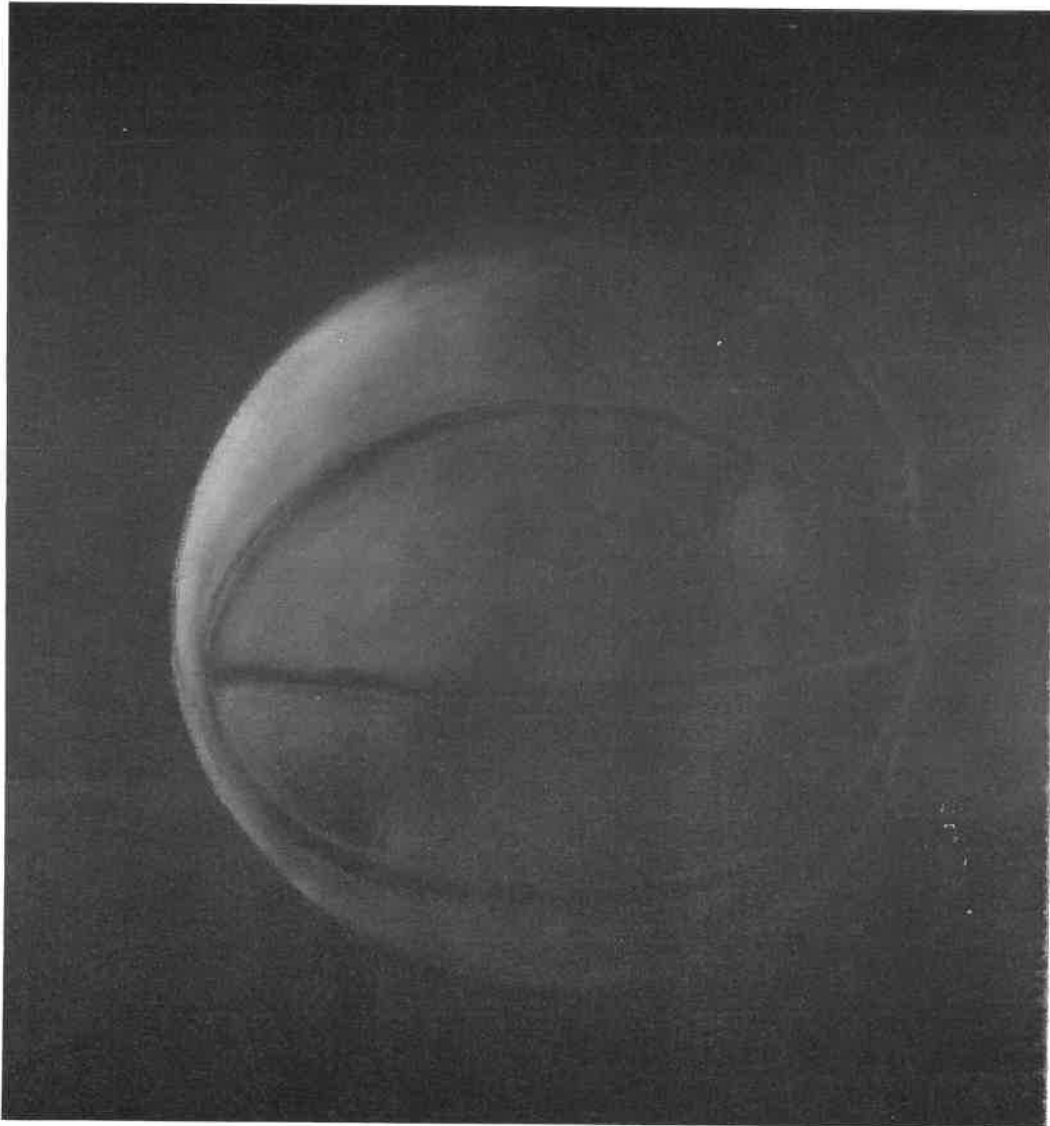
person evolves in the individual who is motivated by grace and dignity in all actions -- both ones whose significance is apparent and those which seem trivial.

The crowd in the restaurant begins to thicken; the crackle of the bacon and the cook's hoarse yell of "Eggs over easy, comin' right up" interrupts my silent reflection. The restaurant fills with men drinking coffee and hiding behind newspaper; it is now morning and time for me to leave.

As I pay my bill at the cash register, the waitress hands me the change and says, "Honey, I sure do hope we ain't been too loud to keep ya' from learnin' anything."

I place my change in my pocket and quietly say, "I learned more than I ever expected to." Humming Amazing Grace, I turn and walk out the door. ■

CANDACE LYN PERRY

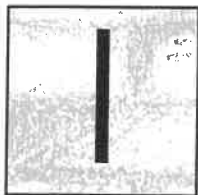


CHARCOAL

DESMOND WALKER

HONORABLE MENTION • ART CONTEST

SERPENTINATA



might as well go ahead and admit that I'm pretty much obsessed with Carey Chaucer. Everyone thinks it's her boyfriend Paul, you know, the reason that I follow them around all the time. But he's nothing really compelling.

He's well made, for sure – you could lay a protractor against his face and measure the angle of his cheekbones – but it's his eyes that leave me empty. The only thing I can see behind them, if his glance passes over me in the hall, is a half-smoked pack of Marlboros. There's no life behind his features. It's obvious that any active brain cells he may have once possessed got exhaled out with remnants of some long-ago joint.

But Carey. There's something moving inside of her. I can't tell what it is yet, but it draws me in with it.

She's more interesting when she's not attached to his hip. You can see more of her, for one thing. Her eyes are big and clear and humble, seeming to say, *will somebody please take care of me.*

Of course somebody always does. I've got to admire that determination even if I don't necessarily agree with it.

Her fingers are small and stubby, hands in constant motion anytime her mouth is moving; and she's maddeningly well-proportioned, her body twisting and turning like the *figura serpentinatas* of the Medieval paintings we're studying in Honors history. Myself, I start at the top with hair like straw and just kind of slide right on down to the floor.

Carey's drinking a Sprite, standing in the middle of the football field in the midst of a small tight group of Paul's stoner friends. Carey and Paul tend to dress alike, not on purpose I think, it just happens, and sometimes it's hard to pick them out in that crowd. I locate Carey by the motion of her small white hands.

I'm standing in the back of the band, one of five clarinets practicing the slow processional to which the beauties and beaux will cross the field tomorrow night, Homecoming night.

Dum, da da dum da da...We stop, start over, mess up again, repeat the process and finally just go on. We're terrible. And until we get it right, the preppy combed-down tight-jeaned Homecoming glitterati will

chortle and flirt relentlessly within their circle, pointedly ignoring the existence of the group near them from whom smoke, while not visible, seems to emanate – homecoming maid Carey, her escort Paul, and his loser friends.

Practice ends at last after five o'clock, and Mrs. Rosetti keeps me late to talk to me about working on some fund-raiser, so the minute she lets me go I'm off like a shot in the direction of my Olds Cutlass. Halfway there I stop, swear, and realize that my clarinet is sitting neatly in its case on the sidelines, where I set it while talking to Mrs. Rosetti.

I turn to retrace my steps, breaking into a sudden, highly uncharacteristic sprint. I see Paul, coming around the bleachers from the direction of the field, and some hidden ball of restless energy explodes inside of me and I just run.

Feels like I've slipped through a portal into some other world – dark, and so wonderfully cool, sprinkled with bare little pinpricks of light and warmth. It suits me. It feels like the night I was going 95 down the two-lane road to my best

Feels like I've slipped through a portal into some other world--dark, and so wonderfully cool, sprinkled with bare little pinpricks of light and warmth.

friend's house. I was certain any minute I would enter a time warp.

I open my eyes and trip at the instant I realize that I'm close to round-

ing the bleachers and Paul's angular loping figure is not two feet in front of me.

I hit the ground, yellow dust splaying everywhere—my mouth, my eyes, face first into the dirt. I'm struggling, but nothing's happening. Paul has stopped and hovers barely within my range of perception.

I bring my face from the ground. It feels as though I am swimming up through molasses. My body does not want to disengage itself from the earth.

I stand there, Paul watching my mouth as though I'm going to say something worth telling; the setting sun bathing the stadium in a near-to-pulsing glow and dust sheeting off my yellow hair like pollen—like gold-enrod, in an abandoned field next to the highway; when the sun sets the whole horizon turns to gold, motes of the flower in the air heavy as sap, yet floating, as twisting and turning in their course as the *figura serpentinata*. ■

RACHEL SAMS

CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

MARY ADAMS, current senior at MSMS, lives by the encouraging words of her mother: "Never give up!" She is from Holly Springs and plans to pursue a career in sports medicine.

A senior from Picayune, SEPIDEH BAGHAI plans to attend Boston University and major in biomedical engineering.

EDEA BALDWIN plans to pursue a history major. Her favorite quote is Elbert Hubbard's "If you can't answer a man's argument, all is not lost; you can still call him vile names."

DANIEL BARLOW, from Crystal Springs, often ponders the quotation, "In this silly life I have seen everything, including the fact that some of the good die young and some of the wicked live on and on."

ERIN CHRISTOPHER is a senior from Brookhaven. Her favorite author is Jane Austen, and she plans to major in pharmacy at Ole Miss.

A senior from Pascagoula, MARY DAVIS, plans to major in English.

ELIZABETH DUNN attended Hebron Christian School in Maben prior to attending MSMS. A junior, she plans to major in biology in college.

Planning to major in drama or English, SAM EASLEY is a senior from Ruleville. His favorite author is William Faulkner.

ROSEMARY EICHER is a senior from Oxford who plans to major in business or English. Her favorite author is Louisa May Alcott.

BETHANY FERGUSON'S favorite quotation is Abraham Lincoln's "I can clearly see how a man can look down on earth and claim to be an atheist, but I cannot perceive how the same man can look into the heavens and say there is no God."

ANDY GODSHAW is a junior. He plans to attend Mississippi State University and major in art.

DI'NET HARDMON, a senior from Greenville, plans to major in biology. Her favorite poem is "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Robert Frost.

T. ALLAN HILLMAN from Neely enjoys the horror stories of Stephen King. A junior, Allan is the 1996 recipient of the CHRIS READ AWARD FOR FICTION.

A senior from Holly Springs, JOYELLE JONES plans to attend Washington University and "live a long and happy life."

TOMMY MA, whose home is Starkville, plans to attend Vanderbilt University after graduation. His intended major is engineering.

A junior from Pascagoula, KELLI MARSHALL'S favorite authors are Hawthorne and Faulkner.

PETER MAYO is a senior from Louisville. William Faulkner and William S. Burroughs are among his favorite writers. His future plans are undecided.

ERIC NAIL, a senior from Richland, plans to attend the University of Washington. His favorite poem is "The Raven" by E. A. Poe.

A junior from Steens, PHILLIP NGUYEN'S favorite authors are Douglas Adams and J. R. R. Tolkien.

WIL NASH believes Madonna's injunction that "Life's too short to be bitter!" He plans to attend Oglethorpe University in the fall. His favorite work of art is "Tragedy" by Picasso.

KY PALMORE is a senior from Madison. His favorite fictional work is "Oh, the Places You'll Go" by Dr. Seuss.

TABITHA PARKS is a junior from Kosciusko. She plans to become a doctor.

NIRALI PATEL, current junior at MSMS, is from Brandon. She plans to pursue a college major in either engineering or architecture.

While a student at MSMS, CANDACE LYN PERRY has been the recipient of local, state, and national awards for her creative writing. A senior from Philadelphia, she plans a career in either medicine or English.

JAIME PHILLIPS, a senior from Quitman, plans to major in journalism at Ole Miss. Eudora Welty is one of her favorite authors.

KIT POSADAS is a junior from Pascagoula. His favorite authors include David Eddings and Robert Jordan.

KELLY REYNOLDS is a junior from Meridian. Her favorite author is Walt Whitman, and her favorite poem is Whitman's "Song of Myself."

CAMERON RICHARDSON is a junior who plans to attend Davidson College. She enjoys the writing of Margaret Atwood and Mark Twain.

A native of Biloxi, CHRISSIE RUTTER is a senior and plans to attend Mississippi State University where she will major in veterinary medicine. Her favorite poem is "Invictus" by W. E. Henley.

A senior from Greenwood, RACHEL SAMS plans to be a writer/magazine editor. Her favorite authors include Sylvia Plath and T. S. Eliot. She serves as the 1996 Editor of *Southern Voices*.

DAVID SANDY is a senior from Corinth who plans to attend Washington and Lee and major in economics.

KATHY JO SMITH is a junior from Oxford. Her favorite short story is "The Black Cat" and her favorite authors are Poe and Dickinson.

A junior from Carson, LEAH SPEIGHTS says her favorite quote is the pope's: "The worst prison would be a closed heart."

RUSS TERRY, a senior at MSMS, plans to attend Mississippi State University with a major in physics.

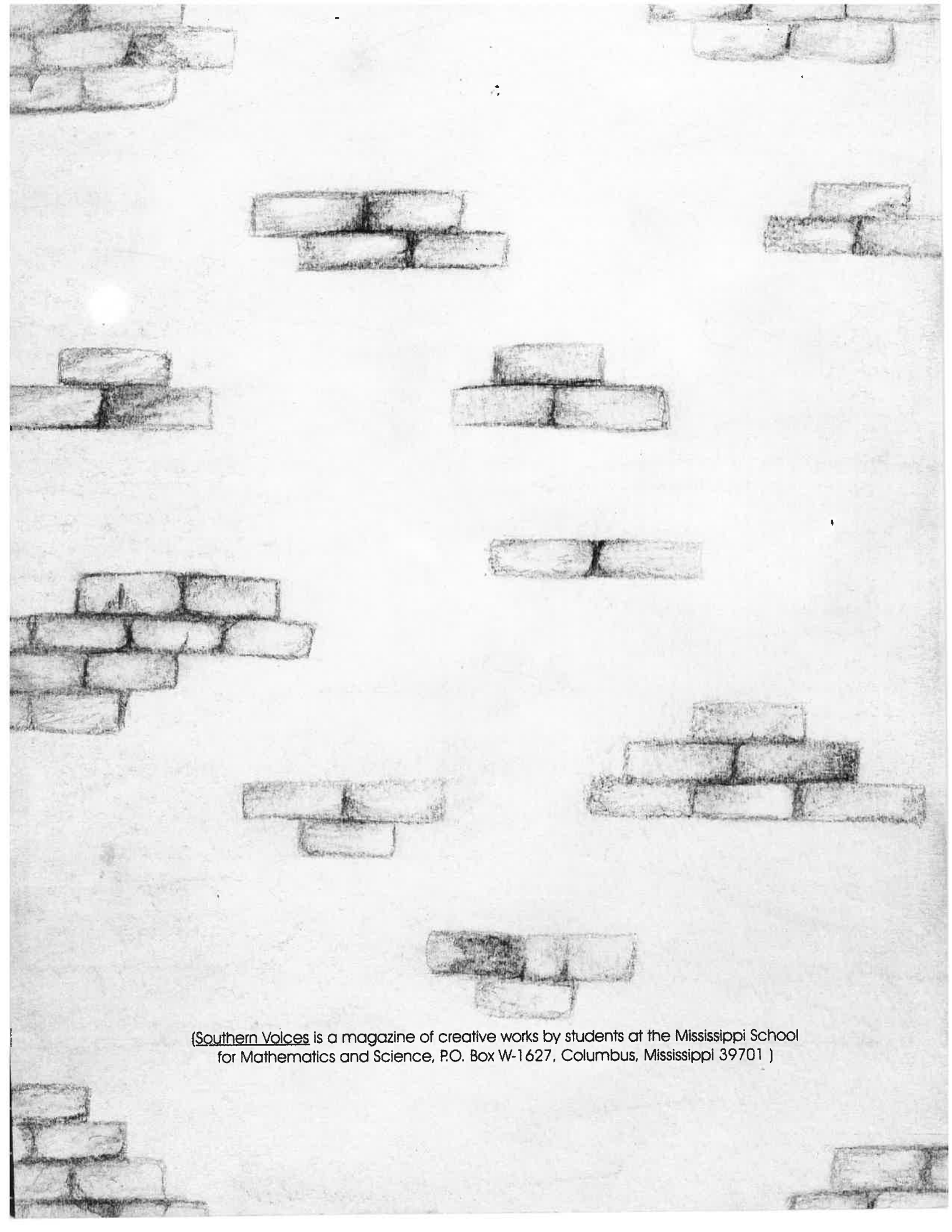
KIM THOMAS believes "you should do unto others as you would have them to do unto you." She is from Greenville, and her favorite poem is "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes.

DESMOND WALKER plans to serve his country after graduating from MSMS as an officer in the United States Navy. His favorite quotation is "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

RICHARD WILLIAMS attended Murrah High School in Jackson prior to attending MSMS. A junior, Richard lists Sonia Sanchez as his favorite poet.

STAN WISE, a current senior at MSMS, is from Pontotoc. He plans to attend Mississippi State University and major in mechanical engineering.

(Contributors' Notes prepared by Mary Davis and Joyelle Jones.)

The page is filled with various pencil sketches of brick patterns. Some sketches show a single row of bricks, while others show two rows with different offsets. The sketches are drawn with light, sketchy lines, giving them a hand-drawn, artistic appearance. They are scattered across the page, with some in the corners and others in the center.

(Southern Voices is a magazine of creative works by students at the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science, P.O. Box W-1627, Columbus, Mississippi 39701)