

Seeing Invisible Disabilities

THE UNKNOWN!



A VOICE



IT IS IN EVERYONE  
THINKS IT IS

Southern  
Voices  
2002

ready for meat



# Southern Voices

VOLUME XIV – SPRING 2002

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# An Order for Compline

KILBY ALLEN

First Place, Short Story Contest  
Chris Read Award for Fiction

The November before I graduated from high school, I saw God in the middle of the Mississippi Delta. Four of us were on our way back from Jackson, me, my friend Felder, his girlfriend Mary-Gilbert, and this girl, Kate Eastland, was driving. The sun was just setting as we crossed the Yazoo River bridge. All the pesticides in the air make Delta sunsets so bright that the sky looks artificial. Like it's in Technicolor. The whole world is pink all the way around the edges, and then it bums off into deep black.

We turned off the main highway onto one of the many little obscure roads that wrinkle the countryside. It was the kind of road that the highway department doesn't

asleep--he's usually asleep. Mary-Gilbert was in the passenger seat sulking because Kate wouldn't let her smoke in the car. Kate was singing along with Joni Mitchell and dodging potholes, completely oblivious to the sixty-five-mile-an-hour speed limit. The dark had descended fully on the Delta. I was slumped down in the seat with my chin resting on the window frame, the same way I used to sit in my father's car when I was five years old. That way, with my forehead pressed against the glass, I could only see the outside. I could forget about being in the car and pretend that I was alone, hurtling through the night. Back in the days of my father's car, I would make up my own constellations and imagine that they were looking back

Back in the days of my father's car, I would make up my own constellations and imagine that they were looking back down at me. But on that November night I couldn't see any stars, only the red blinking lights of the radio towers.

bother to name. The kind of road that is always considered a shortcut even if it may actually be the long way. It was the sort of road that Kate would take.

I had known Kate since kindergarten, just as I had known everyone else, but we had never been really good friends. We hadn't fallen madly in love in the third grade, or gone to the junior prom together, but I knew her pretty well. At our school everyone knew everyone. It was a small town.

Kate was the kind of person who starts drinking her coffee black at the age of seven. She drove an ancient Volvo station wagon and played the guitar. She was the only girl I knew who didn't try out to be a cheerleader in the seventh grade. Kate always took back roads no matter where she was going, and she always got lost. I suspected that she did it on purpose. But that night we didn't get lost. The car just broke down.

I was in the back seat with Felder. He was

down at me. But on that November night I couldn't see any stars, only the red blinking lights of the radio towers. There in the dark back seat of the Volvo, surrounded by night, I felt more small and alone than I ever had before. After spending seventeen years in the same town with the same people, I never felt more like a stranger.

We passed a house standing right out in the middle of a cotton field. I never understood why someone would want to build a house like that out among the rows, without even any trees in the yard. Right about that time, the car groaned and rolled to a stop. Felder sat up and shook his head like a sleepy dog. Mary-Gilbert hardly waited for the car to stop before she lit a cigarette and sprang out of the door. She was used to Kate's car, the way it tried to give up the ghost at least once a week. Kate called that "character."

Felder walked out to the edge of the field with Mary-Gilbert, and I got out of the car to at least make the

effort to look like I was helping Kate. She opened the hood and peered in through the steam.

"Well, it's just overheated again. It'll be okay in a few minutes," Kate muttered, as she fanned her hand in the general direction of the motor as if that might make it cool off faster. She slammed the hood and leaned against the front bumper. Kate's Volvo was the only car I've ever heard of that overheated in the winter, but she said it happened all the time. We waited in silence for the car. I was still thinking about what it would be like to live in the middle of a cotton field without a single tree in the yard. How lonely it must be to grow up without trees. When Felder and I were younger, we built a tree house in my backyard. We spent entire summers up in an old magnolia tree, and then one day we just didn't climb up there anymore. I hadn't thought about the tree house in a long time. Little boys that grow up in cotton fields don't know what it's like to live in a tree house or what it means to forget about one.

I could see the red spark of Mary-Gilbert's cigarette down the road a little way. Felder was tripping along behind her, kicking gravel. In a few months, I would be hundreds of miles away from Felder. He would be at Ole Miss, going the way of the fraternity boy. I would be in Virginia. The girls would scatter to the winds, too. Well, not exactly. Mary-Gilbert was going to Ole Miss as well, but she would probably disappear into the sorority scene only to emerge in about four years for her huge wedding with all the Chi O's as bridesmaids. Kate. Kate was a different story. She would probably end up God-knows-where after college, maybe even living in her car, trying to be a poet. We all knew that we only had a few more months of security before we were thrown out there to the world.

"Hey. Look at that." Kate whispered to me, shattering my silent reverie. She pointed to the sky. I don't know why she whispered. She isn't exactly the type for silent awe. I followed her finger and searched the sky. At first I thought that it was a plane, but then I realized that it wasn't one big thing at all, but dozens of smaller bodies. For a fleeting moment I believed it to be the ghost of my childhood constellations. No, it wasn't that either, but geese, or maybe ducks, in a perfect "V" just like the ones on PBS nature shows. The lights from the house back down the road reflected off of their white stomachs and made them almost glow in the blackness. They did look like stars--little lights.

"You never think about them flying at night," I whispered back to her. She just smiled and nodded, still staring straight up. She glanced away only for a moment to take my hand. Kate Eastland, a girl who was never at a loss for words, just stood there quiet, watching, squeezing my hand as if she needed someone to hold her down so that she wouldn't float away;

something to remind her that she was still there. That night as we watched the geese glide out of sight she didn't say anything profound. She didn't say anything at all. But Kate reminded me of what it feels like to be alive. For a moment we didn't care about tomorrow, about abandoned tree houses, or the expanse of years and miles that would soon separate us. Those things didn't matter. We knew that everything was going to be okay because geese can fly through the pitch black, masquerading as little stars, and still know exactly where they are going.

## No One

Silver Gelatin Print

WILLIAM  
ROSENBLATT



## James Earl White

I still hear the sounds  
Of busted tree stumps,  
Logs for the fire,  
cut in late fall  
So you don't hit the sap.  
"Catch it right on the natural split"--  
That's what he'd always tell me.  
He had giant strength  
Back in those days.  
I don't remember ever busting  
One tree stump,  
But Papaw could bust 'em all.  
He'd swing that double-blade axe  
All day long. Trying to make  
A living.

I remember very well  
The smell of cows,  
a rank, bittersweet stink.  
It cut through air  
And made my eyes water.  
I couldn't command them,  
Not the way he could.  
Whooop!!!  
That's what he'd say.  
When I tried it, I felt like a fool.  
They always listened to him.  
When I told him that  
The cows needed a bath,  
He'd say, "Smells like money to me."  
He'd work them cows  
All day long. Trying to make  
A living.

I remember the pain  
Of his cancer :  
"Sit down, Papaw,  
I know the cows."  
He'd smile and say,  
"I don't have much time  
now son, let me try and make  
a living."

TONY HILL  
First Place, Poetry Contest

## Oz 7 Days Ago...

Kinda funny how one question can change the world.  
Maybe not the entire world  
But my world  
On the day the cycle broke me  
I was transported to another time by the beat  
And woke up in a different present  
You all were there before  
But now it's different because of a simple question you  
asked  
I was stunned but not in shock  
Feeling tired and alone  
I wanted the breeze to engulf me  
Just let me be free  
Because I was ready to start anew  
I wanted to enjoy my freedom  
Bathe in solemnness  
Rest in my loneliness  
And dream in technicolor

JASON HUTCHINS



## Rain Song

The pitter-patter sound  
Of rain on the rooftop is hypnotic  
As it creates a lullaby  
That calms my spirit.  
The raindrops harmoniously transpire  
To form melodies  
Of tranquility and  
Peace that slowly drive  
My worries away  
And put me in dozy slumber.

ASHLEY DRAKES

## Stars

Miniscule  
But furious twinkles  
Dot the nocturnal sky  
Like glitter.  
Observe as they perform their  
Shimmering wonders.  
How marvelous it would be to be a star!--  
Brilliant sparkles,  
They never cease to awe a  
Passerby who happens to look up.  
The dream and fascination  
Of every child,  
They stand out in all minds as  
Travelers of immense  
Blackness,  
Vagabonds of space.

BEN HUANG

## Jacqueline

if I were to see  
long, fine hair bound  
in a braid draped down to  
the waist,  
I'd know it was her  
dribbling a ball and trying to be like Mike.  
if I felt  
small, soft hands reaching for  
mine, I'd know those  
were her hands asking for help  
to cross the street.  
if I heard  
gentle pats on the ground,  
I'd know her steps, and  
I'd turn  
and smile  
and remember.

ASHLEY WILSON

## Tempest

Drag me out into the sea  
And put me on a wooden board.  
Make me feel the icy wind  
And sink me to the blackened core.

I will not fall nor drown in depth  
My heart will be in peace at last.  
A lullaby is sung in storms  
And sweet hymns in the icy blast.

For here among the thrashing rains  
Away from cries of worldly need  
I feel my soul's creator still  
Despite what outer wounds may bleed.

So, speak to me O Savior now  
Though I am trapped in vain desires  
Whip me now with stormy hands  
And rescue me from Satan's fire.

Your voice is all my soul will hear  
Afloat upon the rougher sea  
And helpless is my weary heart  
Until your tempest sings to me.

MARY ROSENBLATT

## Magnolia Tree

Her bowers bend forth to be  
My castle to the clouds  
Her leaves lend for  
A dress of finery about  
Her smooth soft bark  
Never scrapes my bare knees  
And her branches hang in arch  
A jungle fortress to me  
She is my friend when I falter  
And my escape when I need  
My sacred childhood altar  
My beloved magnolia tree

ASHLEY CRAIG



# Echoes Forgotten

Stark reality bites cold,  
Tremors race through hands grown weak with time and heart.  
Fools mistake sight for vision,  
Or drink the bitter wine of life.

Grand dreams age with time,  
Immortality rests in the hands of mortals.  
Ambition lies weak at the feet of tomorrow,  
While the soul mourns memories of yesterday.

Perhaps 'tis better to live a dream,  
Though life may it never know,  
If by tasting those false beauties,  
Yours is lost not to itself.

Though night may come, sleep will not follow.  
Whispers play childish games with the mind's ear,  
Sweetly calling,  
Pressing their icy hands into days long past.

Though the time come when mine is passed,  
May this be said,  
"Never again will I fall, my friend."  
Never again . . . As I lay to my sweet sleep.

JARED MARTIN

5  
5



Norbert  
Scratchboard

MARY  
ROSENBLATT

# Leaving Home

LAUREN KING

Third Place, Short Story Contest

The sound of a blue Pathfinder driving down the road coupled with the grate of rocks scraping between the rubber on the bottom of Landon's three-year-old Doc Martens and the pavement. I didn't want to be there, sitting with my back to the cold brick of the math building, skipping my third block economics class, the cold wind biting through my thin sweater. I was there because he had asked me to be, and I had never been able to refuse Landon. I don't know how many times I ended up in my mother's bad favor for Landon stealing roses from our rose bushes next to the fence. When he looked at me with those eyes and told me that he just had to give this girl at school a rose, I just couldn't say no. I sat there and studied his silent profile, watched him grind his Marlboro light into the concrete, and it reminded me of seventh grade. Somehow, that Saturday afternoon that we crept out to the racetrack in Whynot and picked up cigarette butts, lighting them behind bushes, and taking gasping puffs, had affected him differently than it had me. I glanced at his right hand resting on the sidewalk between us. I wanted to grab it and hold it to my cheek, let him know how scared I was, scared of the expression on his face, scared of why he wanted me to come here. Somehow, though, I knew that we had grown out of the stage where huddling together would chase away darkness. I left his hand lying there, clasping mine together in my lap.

He took a deep breath, and I could sense his hesitation. "I think that I'm going to leave, Caity."

The words didn't sink in right away, mainly because of the fact that he had called me "Caity," something that I hadn't heard in years. It struck me, so it was a few seconds before I managed a soft, "Why?"

He took another slow deep breath, and I figured he was just wasting time, stalling, like he always does. Landon can take ten minutes to say something that could be said in three. "I can't live in that house with him anymore. It scares me when I don't want to go home. Chase just got an apartment in Birmingham, and he said I could

come live with him." I knew how much it took for Landon to admit he was scared, how much it would take to make him run away. It didn't surprise me that his father was the source of this, a changed man since Landon's mother died two years ago. Landon's dad had been gone for two years--all that remained was a shell of a man, a man who valued alcohol first, and Landon didn't even make the list.

I couldn't believe Landon would run away to his brother's. He never ran away from anything. Even when Billy McAllister threatened his life when Landon refused to give him the answers to a test, Landon didn't run away. He just scheduled a fight after school, and sent his older brother Chase to deal with it. "You can stay here, Landon. You know my mom would take you in. You don't have to run away."

I saw him flinch at my words. "I have to get away from him. If I stay here, I'll end up back there, and he's destroying me, Caity."

I sighed deeply, fighting back tears. "Well, what about school? Are you going to finish your senior year in Birmingham?" He shook his head slightly. "So you're dropping out." It wasn't a question, merely a statement of my realization. He nodded anyway. "When are you leaving?" The question was low, and it surprised me that I sounded so calm.

"Saturday."

I didn't have any words, and inwardly I cursed myself as I felt a teardrop splash onto my nose. I wiped it away quickly, but not fast enough. He saw, and I heard his quick intake of breath as he turned to me and reached for my hands. I jerked them away as if scalded, my eyes unable to rest on him. I merely shook my head quickly, got up, and walked away.

Friday night, Landon and I drove out on Zero Road. We hadn't spoken a word of his leaving since he told me, and though we would both have denied it if asked, it was on both our minds as we lay on our backs in the grass, counting the stars. "Damn it," Landon muttered quietly.

Friday night, Landon and I  
drove out on ZERO ROAD.  
We hadn't spoken a word of  
his LEAVING since he told me,  
and though we would both  
have DENIED it if asked, it  
was on both our minds as we  
lay on our backs in the  
grass, counting THE STARS.

"What number were you up to?"

"746."

In that very moment, with no prompting, I came to the realization that there were too many stars to count. One could lie there and count all night. I sighed as I realized that it was too big, too complicated. Some things you just have to accept and leave be. I glanced at Landon and found him looking at me. I reached over and grabbed his hand, lacing his fingers with mine, and he smiled. I knew that he understood. He understood my realization, and it comforted him.

Saturday morning came, and I awoke to bright sunlight. My door opening jarred me fully awake, and I squinted at the fuzzy outline resembling my mother. "Caitlyn, you need to get up. Bob Jenkins has been taken to Rush Hospital. They think it's liver failure." I blinked once, then closed my eyes. Landon's father was in the hospital, and Landon was gone. I glanced at the clock and jumped out of bed, nearly stumbling over my covers piled up on the floor. I rubbed my eyes quickly, pulling on the tennis shoes I had tossed haphazardly in the corner. "Where are you going?" I ignored my mother's question and ran out the door, out of the house, and onto the sidewalk. Chase was supposed to pick Landon up at the park in five minutes. My feet pounded on the sidewalk as I rounded the corner, spotting the lone figure sitting on the curb by the jungle gym. How many afternoons after school had we spent here, digging up centipedes, balancing

on the beams of the jungle gym, playing Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles in the woods.

"Landon!"

He turned at my shout and lowered his eyebrows in confusion. "What are you doing here, Caitlyn?"

I closed my eyes and sank to the curb next to him. "I didn't want you to leave, Landon. I felt abandoned, and betrayed, but that's not why I'm here." I heard his slight chuckle and realized I was trying to be serious while wearing pajamas with butterflies on them. "Your dad's sick."

He nodded slowly. "I know."

"He's really sick, though. They think it's liver failure."

Landon's shoulders slumped and his eyes closed.

"You think I should stay."

"He is your father, Landon."

"That word is open to interpretation," he scoffed.

"He is your father."

The screech of tires on the road interrupted our conversation as Chase's '86 Volvo squealed around the corner. Landon glanced at me and sighed deeply, standing up. Chase parked the car and got out.

"What's going on?" He toed the concrete with his shoe, and I bit my lip, looking at him. Chase was like my big brother as well as Landon's. I'd spent my childhood getting my hair pulled and my ears thumped, but he had always volunteered to be mine and Landon's safari-guide when we explored the creek next to Doc Waldrop's old house. Chase had proven more than once that he would fight to the end for me, and this awkward silence between us now, the fact that he avoided my gaze, could only stem from the fact that he thought I was interfering, like I always did. He thought that I was whining to Landon, trying to convince him to stay.

"Dad's sick, Chase," Landon spoke up quietly. At Chase's raised eyebrow, Landon looked down. "Really sick. He's in the hospital."

"So what are you going to do about it?" Chase asked quickly, getting ready to get back in the car, obviously already convinced that Landon was staying.

Landon glanced at me once more, a pained expression on his face. "I'm sorry, Caitly," he whispered, and grabbed his bags from where they were lying next to my feet. "I just can't."

I didn't say a word, just watched him get in the car and pull away, but I couldn't help thinking that in that small gesture, Landon hadn't only abandoned his father,

he'd abandoned life as all of us knew it.

Ten o'clock found me sitting in the Rush Hospital waiting room, alone except for a young man sitting in the corner flipping through the channels on the tv suspended some six feet in the air. I didn't try to make conversation. I stared at my shoes and tried to rub a scuff off one with the other. I sighed deeply, looking up as I heard footsteps in the hallway. "You can come in and see him now," my mother said, her eyes tired as she beckoned to me from the doorway. Mine and Landon's families had always been close, and when Mr. Bob was left with no one, even his sons were gone, my family became his family. There was a sense of duty that even I couldn't shake.

I stood, slightly hesitant to go in there, knowing that I was left to explain Landon's actions. At the door of the room, I stopped, unable to make my feet go any further, feeling trepidation rise within me. My mother's hand grabbing mine forced me in. I spotted him and smiled softly. "Hi, Dad." I had always called Landon's father Dad, being that he basically raised me when I spent three and four days a week at Landon's house. Landon liked to call my dad Pop.

He looked frail and weak, but managed a soft smile for me. He was sober, and it reminded me of the times when he used to play poker with Landon and me, using pennies for chips, late into the night. "Morning, Caity."

I took the seat next to him and grabbed his hand. "How are you feeling?" I fought down the waves of nausea I was feeling, sensing his next question.

"I'm fine, feeling much better. Caity, do you know where Landon is?"

I looked at him, my eyes running over his face, unable to speak the words, let him in on the fact that his son had run away from him. "I . . ." My mouth opened and closed, but no more sound came out, and I felt tears well up in my eyes.

His hand tightened on mine. "What is it, Caity?"

I closed my eyes and then opened them again, looking at him. "Landon's gone."

"Why? Where'd he go?"

"I don't know." I lowered my head. Mr. Bob closed his eyes, and the room around me jumped to activity within a half of a second. Monitors started beeping, and as nurses rushed in, I was caught in a tide of people that quickly carried me out of the room, despite my efforts to stay. Deposited in the hallway and filled with an immense sense of fear, grief, and helplessness, I stumbled backwards, feeling my back connect with a warm wall. A nurse

came around to steady me, and I turned, looking up into Landon's face. "You're here." I lowered my head to his chest as I felt his deep sigh.



## Columns Pass

Silver Gelatin Print

MARGARET  
MONTGOMERY



# Baptist Preacher

The morning sun sparkles through a stained-glass mosaic;  
It's another crystal Sunday dawn in a buzzing church  
When the good reverend himself begins his preaching:

He starts out slow—a joke here—a scripture there.  
He paces the floor and wrings his hands  
Then slowly his words adopt more fire—  
Passion grips his throat and his voice raises higher and higher,  
Louder and louder.

He stomps his foot once and rolls up his sleeves.  
His face turns bright red as he points and he questions,  
"Lord, when did we see you hungry!"  
Followed by a string of "Truly I tell you..."  
And then he unleashes the drama.

Breathless as the hell fire and brimstone rains upon me—  
Pressed against the pew.  
He rants and he raves and clenches the pulpit until his knuckles go white.  
He barks and he sputters with tangible weight in every syllable.  
He peers at the congregation with a gaze so penetrating  
That every sin seems to pop out of your chest  
And sound the alarm of your guilt.  
He tugs and he pulls at every emotion you possess  
With the constant melody of his haunting voice.

'Til you're overflowing with the weight of his words  
And the zeal in his presence is too much to contain.  
When you just can't take another word,

His dialogue winds down  
And he mops his dripping brow.  
"There is only one way out of this world of sin,  
and that is through your personal Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

And with that he takes his chair.

ALICIA THURBER

# An "Oh, No" Night

WILSON MCBEE

Honorable Mention, Short Story Contest

I met Phillip during the first of his hiatuses from Trinity College.

My friend Rose and I had left a party in north Fondren. The party had been pretty lame, and we both felt lousy. It was at the house of some North Jackson kid, someone who I had gone to elementary school with and whose parents probably knew mine. I never had fun at the Jackson parties but I still went occasionally.

When I got out of the car at Waffle House on the corner of Frontage Road and Northside Drive, I saw Phillip standing outside and smoking a cigarette. At first glance he looked like a relatively typical Northeast Jackson kid, a little old to still be hanging around the Waffle House, perhaps, but he wasn't talking on a cell-phone. He just slouched, smoked, and watched the cars pass by on Frontage Road. His dark brown hair was cropped short, and his face clean-shaven. He wore pants too tight for him and a faded navy blue polo shirt, a style that reminded me of the hipsters I knew the summer before my tenth-grade year. All their fathers were doctors or lawyers or city councilmen and they went to private school, but none of them wanted you to know it. I saw them at the Living Room, a coffee house downtown where people sipped café mochas, talked about books they had never read, and did their best impressions of people who were really cool, like me. I hung around and they really liked me, honestly. I dressed and talked sort of like them, and drove a beat-up Toyota Tercel, but once little things about me, like the fact that I lived in a suburban residential community and had plans for med school trickled out, they started to be almost condescending. I didn't see much of them after August--most of them were at Ole Miss.

Rose's mascara was running from tears, and she probably didn't even notice Phillip when we went in the glass doors. As it turned out, she was having a bad night. She had gotten into another spat with the guy she was dating. I can't remember if his name was Stephen or Tad.

Rose's boyfriends that summer all run together. Most were longhaired, weed types. There was one named Dave, and I liked him alright. I think this was a bit after Dave, though.

We entered the Waffle House and Rose went back to the bathroom. I stood for a second and talked to a couple of women behind the counter. One nodded at Phillip standing outside and asked if he was with me, said he'd been standing out there for a long time. "Looks like he's waiting on someone," she said, "but whoever it is hasn't come yet."

After Rose was returned from the bathroom and sitting across from me, she recognized Phillip. "Hey," she whispered, pointing a finger at the window behind me. "I think he went to Madison Central. That guy standing outside. Do you know him?"

I told her I had seen him when we came in and hadn't thought anything of it. He was wearing a corduroy blazer. Rose gave a "hmmm" and got up from the table. Her mascara had been reapplied. I continued to wait on my diced hash browns. I tried to participate as little as possible in those situations. I always slowed things down. Maybe Rose wouldn't need a ride home. If I could make it back before ten I wouldn't miss Hardball.

Ten minutes later I turned and saw that Rose wasn't around and neither was the slouched stranger outside. I ate my hash browns and Rose's egg sandwich, too. I was getting up to leave when Rose bounded back through the glass door, Phillip following a few feet behind her. Rose one hopped over and grinned up at me. Her stringy brown hair was pulled back into a ponytail and her eyes glowed. I knew this face, had seen it often.

"Hey!" she chirped. "Listen, this is Phillip. He went to MC, I told you. He says he knows your sister."

Phillip approached me and extended his right hand. "Chris?" His handshake was firm, and voice formal, northern almost.

"Yeah," I answered.

"It's good to meet you. I used to know Kelly in high school." I think he could tell that I really didn't care whether he knew my sister in high school or not, and so he spit the sentence out fast. People love to tell me they knew my sister in high school. I guess it's a way to break the ice with me, as if I'm intimidating and hard to talk to. My sister's the one who's really intimidating and hard to talk to, but I doubt anyone has ever claimed acquaintance with me in front of my sister.

"So, hey, how is your sister?" he nodded at me.

"Oh, she's okay. She goes to Ole Miss."

"Ole Miss," he stretched it out, wisely. He'd probably had a crush on her since seventh grade. "I bet she's doing fine there. Tell her I said hey next time you see her."

"Okay," I said, "What's your last name?"

"Let's sit down," Rose said, bubbly, and tugging

longer, I asking questions about school up east and Phillip answering them, and Rose toying with the bracelets on her wrist and trying to sip her coffee. Rose isn't really much of a coffee drinker. She mostly drinks some sort of mochaccino or frappuccino, and that's not even coffee in the first place.

I put one sweet n low in my cup but Phillip drank his black, and I could tell he drank it a lot by the stains on his corduroy jacket. About five minutes into the conversation he pulled out a clove from a silver cigarette case and lit it up. The smoke tickled the hairs in my nose, and I tried to move out of his direct line. I've always been really self-conscious about the smoke stink getting in my clothes and I'm constantly flinging it away with my hands and irritating my smoker friends.

Once I got Phillip started on the whole northeastern liberal arts education trip, it was hard to shut him up. He was enamored of Trinity College: the students, the

The SMOKE tickled the hairs in my nose, and I tried to move out of his direct line. I've always been really SELF-CONSCIOUS about the smoke stink getting in my clothes and I'm constantly flinging it away with my hands and irritating my SMOKER FRIENDS.

at Phillip's corduroy sleeve.

"Martin."

We sat back down, Rose and Phillip next to each other across from me.

"So, Phillip, you in school?" I asked.

"Yeah, well, I was . . ." he stuttered. "I go to Trinity, in Connecticut. I'm just home for a little while."

"Trinity, wow." I said. "I think I might apply there. Good place?"

"Yeah, it's quite a place," he said, and perked up.

I was impressed. Phillip was no Millsaps or Tulane pushover. Here was a graduate of Madison Central who had really stepped out into the world. Actually I had trouble imagining this guy ever attending the Madison. I imagine his crush on my sister had been lined with jealous hatred.

A waitress named Sue Anne took our coffee orders. She brought the cups back and we sat a while

professors, the football team. "Do you read poetry?" he asked. He didn't wait for me to answer. "Before I went to Trinity I never read poetry," he continued. "Poetry's for girls, of course, it's gotta be that the novel is a manly thing. It's not like I love poetry now -- Ernest Hemingway could beat Robert Frost to a pulp -- but it's good when I'm having a short attention span moment. It's like watching TV, but I don't watch TV. I read damned poetry! Do you know William Carlos Williams? You should. He reminds me a lot of Carlos Santana, except a poet of course." Santana? I wondered why Phillip was in a Waffle House in Jackson, Mississippi, right now, talking to a couple of public high school losers and not in Connecticut, or reading poetry.

After a while, though, I tired of humoring Phillip, and Rose had been tuned out. When Phillip, on his third cup, turned to her and made some remark about "a burst of fragrance from black branches," she just stared back in

Rose turned  
back to me  
and motioned with  
her left hand.  
“Come on,”  
she groaned,  
as if I were  
her tag along  
little brother.

1 dumb indifference, and I figured it was time to leave.

2 I still drove the Toyota Tercel. Rose, rejuvenated by the change in setting, sat next to me in the front, tonguing a sucker while playing with the radio and eyeing Phillip in the backseat through the rearview mirror. Of course I had seen Rose do this before. Phillip returned Rose's passes with bored sighs, though, and I kept a tight-lipped grin.

Phillip directed us east on Meadowbrook Road. We took a left on Berlin Road. I had been friends with a few kids who lived in this neighborhood. It was on the fringes of the real Northeast Jackson / Eastover area. The houses weren't so fine here, strictly middle-class people trying to live their lives in relative safety and peace. I saw a few BMW's and plenty of SUV'S, but nothing like I would have found three or four blocks away.

Rose walked Phillip up the steps to the door. I got out and leaned against the car while he unlocked the front door and stepped inside. Rose turned back to me and motioned with her left hand. "Come on," she groaned, as if I were her tag along little brother.

The door opened into a darkened sitting room.

Light from the kitchen cast shadows on the walls and windows. I stood and fingered the corduroy couch and looked at the pictures on the walls: most of Phillip at various stages of his development and a brunette beauty who almost always posed in a ballet or cheerleading uniform. I moved to the bookshelf on the wall and heard Rose and Phillip sneak back towards the kitchen. I heard the crack of a refrigerator door and Rose giggle.

Their book collection was small, and not too impressive: mostly paperbacks -- Oprah, Danielle Steele, Stephen King. I plopped down in an overstuffed leather chair and thumbed through Chicken Soup for the Mother's Soul, my eyes struggling through sleepy boredom and darkness.

Soon I nodded out and dozed on the chair. I was woken by a surge of laughter and light from the front door. Two adults -- I assumed they were Phillip's parents -- stared at the stranger sprawled in their living room with a look of blithe confusion.

"Well, hey!" the mother said and turned on the light. She was short, chunky, and dark, possibly Italian. She settled her fists on her hips and smiled. I hopped out of the chair, the book falling out of my lap to the carpet, and moved to shake the father's hand. By this time Phillip and Rose had entered the living room and were bringing up my rear. "This is, ah, Chris," Phillip announced as I shook the father's hand. "He drove me home tonight, and this is Rose, an old friend from high school. Rose, Chris - - my parents."

"Well. It's nice to meet you," the mother said. "I'm Leslie, Philip's mother, and this is Ted, Phillip's dad. Do you all need anything? We just got back from a dinner party at the church. Phillip, did you eat, are you hungry?"

"Hey, guys, nice to meet you," the dad grinned and walked to the back of the room and through a door.

"No, Mom, we ate something at Waffle House," Phillip said.

"Do you need anything else?" she continued.

"No."

The mom stood, looking and smiling up at Phillip. I could tell she wanted to hang around longer. "Alright, well, it was nice meeting you all; I'm going to



bed," she said, still beaming at Phillip. "I can't believe we stayed over there so long. You know your father started to drink and talk things with Bill Adams; you know how they do, Phillip."

"Yeah, okay, Mom. Goodnight."

"Alright. Don't stay up too late."

"Alright, Mom."

"Alright."

"Alright."

Phillip's mother walked out and the three of us stood stiffly a few moments longer until I looked at my watch and gave a, "Yep."

"Yep," Rose replied. "I guess it's time to go. Probably late."

"Yeah," I said and looked at my watch. I extended my hand to Phillip. "It was nice meeting you. We'll probably see each other around." I walked toward the door and opened it and stood there on the threshold, gauging how long I should need to wait on Rose. She looked up at him and started to speak, and I closed the door and hopped down the steps into the yard. I kicked at the ground and looked up into the moonlight, trying to remember what it was like to live in Jackson. The air was different, a little more exhaust, perhaps, and there were a

lot more sounds. No gunshots or screams or anything really metropolitan, but there were more dog barks, of course more cars, more children laughing.

The door opened and Rose bounded down towards me. "Hey," she said, all breath and no emotion.

"Hey," I replied. "Ready to go?"

"Yeah, let's go."

1

3



## Salty Oaks

Silver Gelatin Print  
Third Place, Art Contest

MARGARET  
MONTGOMERY

# Overlooked Innocence

ASHLEY DRAKES

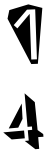
Honorable Mention, Essay Contest

Imagine this: three pairs of laughing eyes with a glint of innocence and wonder in each one. Kara, Tara, and Jayla Jenkins. My mom called them "the Jenkins girls." Each of them attended my mother's daycare, which was right down the street from where they lived. They were very bright little girls, but to be so young, the three girls had learned a lot.

It's hard to pinpoint exactly what it was about the Jenkins girls that made them so interesting. They definitely didn't come from an ideal family home. Their mom was a nineteen-year-old single parent who cared about her children about as much as she cared for a worthless wad

care about these beautiful, smart, innocent little girls? Why was it left up to the daycare supervisor to bathe them, comb their hair, and change clothes that they'd been wearing for nearly a week? They didn't deserve to have to withstand so much. They didn't deserve to have to sleep on dirty mattresses when their legal guardian was employed. It wasn't as if they were poor or anything. It was simply that no one cared.

The youngest of the girls, who was a little over a year old, always had a new scratch or scrape from the countless times she fell because no one was paying attention. And each time she fell, the eldest was always blamed for



I didn't understand. How could someone not care about these beautiful, smart, innocent little girls? Why was it left up to the daycare supervisor to bathe them, comb their hair, and change clothes that they'd been wearing for nearly a week?

of paper. As a result, the girls were transferred into the custodianship of their grandmother. Their grandmother, however, only accepted the girls into her custody for the monthly check needed to finance her "necessities." The girls were usually the first to be dropped off at daycare and the last to be picked up. And each day they'd come to daycare with grimy faces, hungry stomachs, and shoeless feet. When my mom asked why they were so dirty, the eldest would answer, "Ms. Kat, our grandma said you'd wash us up." Barrettes, shoes, clothes, whatnots. Whatever they needed, my mom supplied for them. But once they took their whatnots home, the whatnots were never seen again. Their grandmother would always have a lame excuse as to why the girls' shoes or barrettes were lost. Eventually, my mom stopped sending the things she'd bought them home and started keeping them at the daycare in their cubbyholes.

I didn't understand. How could someone not

her baby sister's misfortune and was punished accordingly. It was never considered that it wasn't the eldest's fault, that she was only six years old and not nearly old enough to be responsible for herself, let alone her little sister. I couldn't help but feel sorry for the Jenkins girls. They desperately yearned for attention. Sometimes they'd wake up from their naps and just come and hug either my mom or me and say, "I love you, Ms. Kat," or "Do you love me, Ashley?" And I'd look into their round, wide eyes and tell them that they meant the world to me. They'd then run around, jubilant, telling all the other kids that I was their best friend.

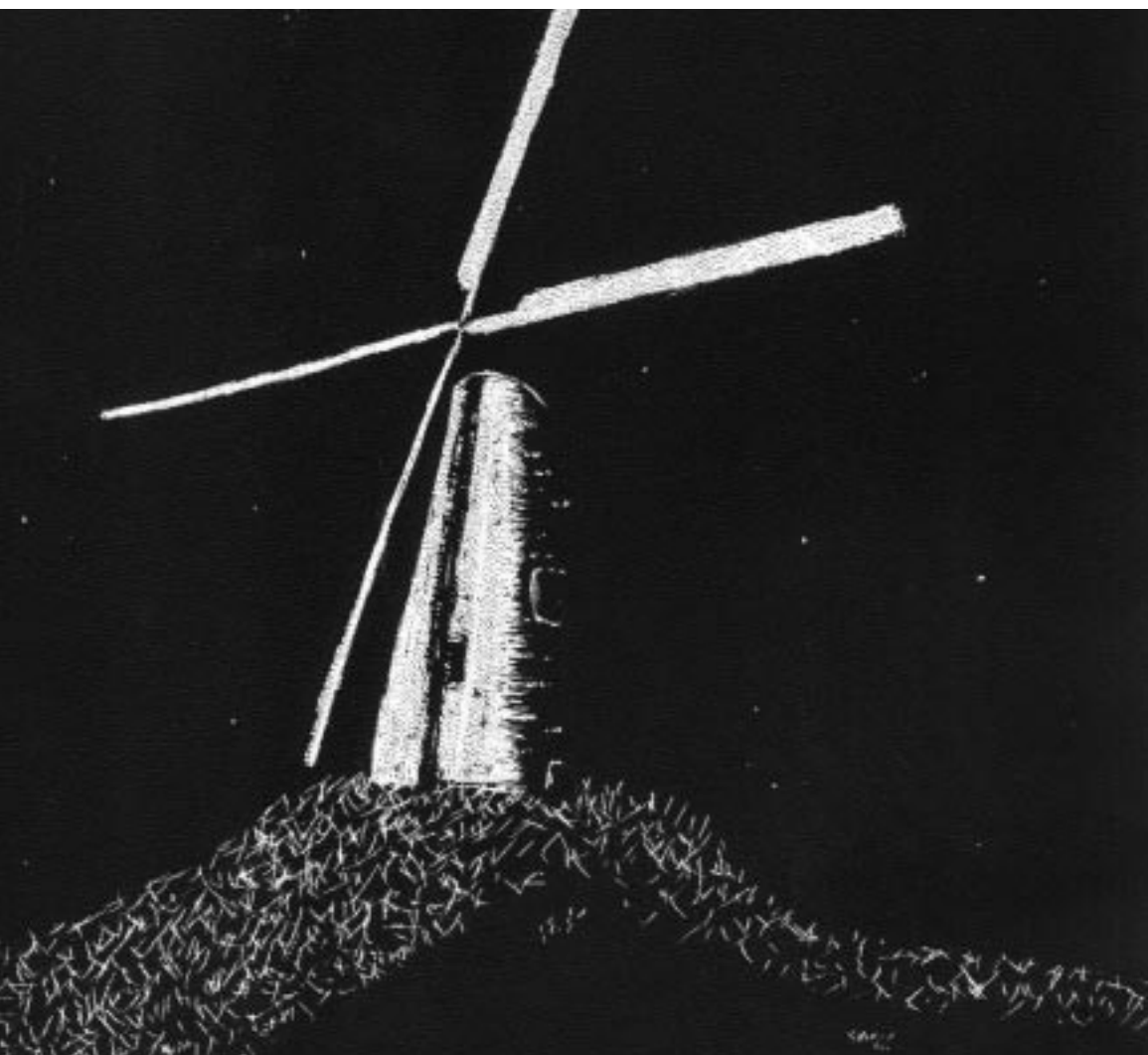
There was something distinctive about the girls. They were forever anxious to learn. The middle child, Tara, was especially bright. Tara had been attending my mom's daycare since she was five months old. I had watched her grow from an infant to a flamboyant four-year-old. By the time she was three, she could put together

anything--from a puzzle made of foam to 25-piece puzzles of entire states. Tara's tenacity particularly intrigued me. She never gave up on anything she started. If it took her hours to do something, she'd stick to it until it was done.

I learned a lot from the Jenkins girls. They showed me the reality of the statement, "Life's not fair." Every child is not blessed to have two caring, sheltering parents like mine. Those three girls taught me that life's fortune is determined by how you live it. Not once did they complain about their lives. Their lifestyle was the only one they knew. The Jenkins girls gave me a perceptive view of life beyond my own limited one. I've come to realize that there are thousands of children in the world that are in the same situation, or even in worse situations, as the Jenkins girls. Each one of the girls has the same potential to make something out of her life. The question is how will she make use of it.

Sometimes I'd worry about how the girls would turn out when they got older. Would they be able to make it out of the unhealthy environment they were living

in? Then I'd think about their pressuring persistence. And I'd undoubtedly know that with the same steadfastness Tara had to put together each of those puzzles, they'd have that same perseverance to survive in life. The Jenkins girls may not have had all the family and moral support they deserved, but they had each other. Although I'd be sure they'd do well in life, I'd still sometimes wonder what was going to happen to those three little girls that we'd pass by each day after work. Imagine it: three dirty, candy-smearing, smiling faces swinging their bare feet on the front porch . . . waving. Doesn't it make your heart sink? Then soar?





Ginger Lily

Silver Gelatin Print

MARY ROSENBLATT

## Tonto

It's been an ongoing mystery to me--  
Where you come from,  
What you do after summer,  
Driving from Fredricksburg to Llano  
Past the Ole Ingram Social Club  
And the Guadalupe nestled in the bottom  
Of hill country valley.  
Everything was a mystery, with your love of twelve-string guitars  
And the dreamcatchers swaying from the rearview.  
"Hurry Hurricane" sounded natural  
coming from the warped guitar  
with poetry spiraling the cracked wood  
of the backside.  
They say you paddled the Guadalupe for three days  
With that old guitar as the oar.  
Lyle Lovett calls you Tonto,  
He says you did the dirty deed for free.  
I call you Tony,  
And wonder where you came from.

STUART DAVIS

## She Doesn't Wear a Hair Net

Tennessee works in the kitchen  
But only when she's not driving the school bus--  
The short kind for Special Ed.  
Sometimes she parks it right outside the screen door  
Down Way Road, past Club Fashion, take a left  
Couldn't miss it--even in a school bus.  
On Sundays she makes fried chicken for a hundred white kids;  
She calls them all darlin'  
Except for me--she remembers my name.  
Once she offered to give me braids  
Because my hair curls just like her daughter's.

KILBY ALLEN

# Where the Orange Grows

DIANA KAHLE

First Place, Essay Contest

March in Moscow. It is a study in charcoal. Blackbirds perch in the barren bones of dusky trees, and rows of grey buildings melt seamlessly into a grim, sunless sky.

Clearly, the old woman belongs here. Her thin, dark coat offers little protection from the cold, wet wind that swirls and blows from all directions. The old boots protect her feet from the ankle-deep slush as small, slow, careful steps carry her down the semi-melted street. She pulls a rusty, two-wheeled wire cart which sometimes rolls, sometimes slides through winter's remains.

And the child holds her hand tightly. She is slight, even fragile. Ivory skinned with white gold hair. Brightly dressed in red, she stands out against the monochromatic landscape like a ruby in a black velvet box. Clear, bright, and wholly flawless she is in the old

They reach the market. Perhaps today there will be meat. Perhaps not. Perhaps today there will be some fresh fruit or vegetables. Perhaps not.

But there are always cans. Stacks of cans. Rows of cans. Canyons of cans. Big cans, little cans, bright cans, drab cans. In Moscow, you can get nearly anything you want -- as long as you want it in a can.

The old woman unfolds an oft-used paper bag and sets it on the cart. As she shops, she counts her money frequently. She must be sure that she doesn't purchase more than she can pay for. She could never endure the embarrassment of making such a mistake. And so, the old fingers move bills and coins from one part of the purse to another each time she adds an item to the bag. Potted meat, cans of green beans, yellow corn, and peas. She picks up a can of peaches, but decides against it. A

In Moscow you can get nearly anything you want –  
as long as you want it in a can.

woman's eyes.

This is their Tuesday trip. One kilometer from the flat to the market. And one kilometer back home. Always at the same time. Always by the same route. A small ritual shared only by two.

They stop frequently. And each time they do, the old woman stoops to the level of the child. She unfolds the faded, old-rose handkerchief and wipes the child's nose. In an expressionless voice she asks, "Are you warm?" The child only nods as the old woman checks every button on her heavy red coat. She re-tucks the child's wool scarf and re-ties the braided yam strings to snug the child's thick knit hat. It is a hat the old woman had made from a pattern she found in a magazine. It is, perhaps, not stylish, but the old woman cares nothing about style. She cares about warmth, and the hat is most surely warm.

bag of flour, a tin of tea, a bony piece of beef for soup, a bag of potatoes, a box of salt. They are all carefully placed in the bag, and accounted for in the purse.

A crowd of women has gathered at the end of the aisle. As the old woman and the child approach, they understand why. There are fresh hens today. The old woman pushes her way through, and selects a fat one. The bird is plucked, but otherwise intact -- head, feet, entrails. As the old woman wraps it in paper, the child knows that she will receive a familiar admonition when they get home. "Never tell anyone we eat the feet. We don't want them to think we are stingy."

The child's favorite place in the market is the long row of brown wooden bins where fresh fruit can sometimes be found. The old woman purposely avoids this area until last. Luxuries may only be purchased after the necessities have been taken care of. As the fruit bins

It is a story of blue  
skies and sunshine.

Of warm sandy  
beaches and trees  
that are always green. . .

Where the orange  
grows.  
A place that, someday,  
they will visit.

Together.

come into view, the child's eyes widen with anticipation. She drops the old woman's hand and begins to run. "Oranges!" she shouts. "Today there are oranges! May I have one?" The old woman smiles, but says nothing. She must check her purse first. Finally, she nods. The child sorts through the oranges she can reach, and selects the biggest and juiciest one of all.

The walk home is long and frigid. But anticipation makes their steps lighter, and the distance seem shorter. They reach the familiar yellow block building at 32 Vernadski Prospect. The child counts up four floors, then eight windows to the right. Soon they will sit inside that window, looking out at the cold. And they will be warm.

Up one flight of stairs. Then the old woman must rest. Up another flight. And another rest. A final flight of stairs, then eight doors down the hall. They are finally home.

The old woman removes her prizes from the paper bag, refolds it, and places each item neatly into a very orderly cabinet. The hen and beef go into the refrigerator.

The orange, worthy of special treatment, is placed carefully in the center of the table by the window. The child crawls up on the chair to contemplate this wonderful treat. She holds it. Feels it. Smells it. How foreign it is. How exotic. How special. Mystery fills her mind. How far has it traveled? What does an orange tree look like? Who picked it? How did it get all the way here? The tea kettle whistles.

The old woman pours a cup of tea for the child, and one for herself. From the top shelf, she brings out her a small knife and her favorite platter -- the one edged in gold with the pastel Monet style garden painted on it. She sits down across from the child, smiles and places the knife and the orange out of the child's sight in her lap. When the knife begins its work, a wonderful fragrance fills the room.

As they talk, the old woman peels the orange, without looking at it even once. Soon she produces a long, single strand of curly orange peel. She breaks off two pieces to flavor their tea, and begins to slice the orange. The child watches and fidgets as each paper thin orange wafer is placed on the platter. The pastel garden is clearly visible through each neatly and artfully positioned translucent piece. And the child wonders how something so small could be made to look so large. And so delicious. A final dusting of each slice with powdered sugar, and the masterpiece was complete.

It can take a very long time to eat an orange. Especially when it is one so rare. And one so beautifully and lovingly prepared. The child savors each sumptuous bite. And asks the old woman to tell her about where the orange grows.

It is the same request the child has made on the occasion of every ceremonial orange eating since she was able to talk. And the old woman responds with the same magical story she always tells.

It is a story of blue skies and sunshine. Of warm sandy beaches and trees that are always green. Of beautiful white birds that soar against fluffy clouds. Of an azure ocean that stretches to the horizon. And of crystalline indigo nights filled with endless twinkling stars. Where the orange grows. A place that, someday, they will visit. Together.

As always, the child offers the last bite of orange to the old woman. As always, the old woman declines.

It has been six years since I have seen Zinaida

Vladimirovna Arkhipkina, my Granny. But I talk to her each week on the phone. She is proud of me. Of my accomplishments. And of what I am making of my life. Our conversations center around me, as they always have. But occasionally, I can persuade her to talk about herself.

Two years ago, I called to wish her a happy New Year. I asked her how she was celebrating, and she responded simply, "By eating an orange."

"But you don't eat oranges, Granny," I said.

There was a very long pause, and then I heard, "Well, I've just recently learned to like them."

It took some time for me to fully appreciate what that brief conversation had meant. For the first twelve years of my life, I was with my Granny twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Never once did she eat an orange. Never once did she even accept the last bites I offered her. And yet she liked oranges. Perhaps she even loved oranges. After all, one doesn't celebrate New Years by eating something she is indifferent to.

For all those years my Granny had denied herself this simple treat. And she had done so for only one reason. So that I would not be denied. And this gave me cause to rethink many things.

I have been treated as "gifted" ever since I can remember. And, at times, this has led me to wrongly con-

clude that I am somehow special. Success, particularly academic success, has come easy for me. And, at times, this has led me to wrongly conclude that I am somehow entitled to success. My family has always placed me at the very center of their lives. And, at times, this has led me to take their many sacrifices for granted.

What I am, who I am, and what I will become are only in small part the products of what I have done for myself. If I am honest, I will say that these are, more accurately, the products of what others have done for me.

And so I owe a great debt. A debt which I am certain must be repaid with helpful deeds, not dollars. I have begun with small payments. Perhaps even trivial payments. But each is important to me.

Small payments. But the time will come when I will be able to make larger ones. I do not know which path I will take in life. There are so many opportunities, so many choices. I believe that I will choose wisely. I believe this because I will be guided, in every decision, not by what I may earn in my life but by what I might accomplish with my life. And because there is an old woman in Moscow who thinks of me and smiles each time she tastes an orange.



Orange  
Essence  
Acrylic

DARCY  
FLETCHER



## Hang Up the Gloves

Color Ink

Honorable Mention, Art Contest

JEREMY ABERNATHY

## Basketballer

I could thump a basketball  
Like that, in between my legs  
And around my shoulders  
Before sending it through the hoop  
By the gentle tips of my fingers,  
And I could leap up, extending my arm  
To throw the ball down in  
A furious slam dunk,  
Like that.  
I could hear a thundering applause  
Of hoots and howls and  
Cheerleader chants,  
And smile maybe, and  
Glance at the crowd, and the opposing  
Bench, and Spike Lee, too,  
If he's sitting there -- courtside,  
Always talking and I'd talk right back at him,  
Point my finger and say, "Like that, Spike?"

WILSON MCBEE

Second Place, Poetry Contest

## Dolls

I never played with dolls.  
My toys of choice were little army men.  
Noble and proud, slightly dog-chewed,  
Standing straight and tall.  
Friends would come over,  
Want to know where my Barbies were.  
I'd sigh with a hint of sorrow:  
She was taken prisoner of war yesterday.  
Negotiations ongoing.  
Sgt. Miller says the outlook's not good.  
Not many friends shared my delight in this game.  
Their eyes would widen and I would nod seriously.  
It's really an appalling situation.  
They would shake their heads,  
This game giving way to others.  
At the end of the day, they'd leave,  
And I'd be left with my army men.  
They were never depressed if Barbie got taken prisoner of war.  
They didn't even care if she ever came back.  
Neither did I.

LAUREN KING

Third Place, Poetry Contest



## *I must...*

*Quick can you not see it?  
Oh, I must be dreaming  
... Wait there it is again  
That feeling...  
But what is it?  
How will I know?  
No one can explain it.  
I have to know...  
Someone must tell me.  
Am I lost?  
I must go back  
Please, someone help me.  
What is wrong?  
Why do I feel this way?  
What has done this to me?  
Love? Hate?  
I have to know.  
- Morgan Stevens*

## Struggle

Acrylic/Calligraphy  
Second Place, Art Contest

MORGAN STEVENS

2

1

## Lady

I've seen you a thousand times:  
Parched, brown-paper skin,  
Coat too thin to really protect you from the cold;  
But you are there every morning on my way to school,  
Sifting through cans and barrels  
With tired, weary hands.  
And for just one instant, I catch your eye  
And I see your shame and your pride,  
Your joy and your sorrow, and  
You speak words that can never be heard--  
And then, I know.

ASHLEY WILSON

## February

Icicle breath on my face  
As I move through  
Toe-numbing crisp air  
The dry crackle of the world  
Around me yearns to  
Melt from frozen prison frost  
And the last snow struggles  
To subdue the onslaught of spring  
But weakened are its cold soldiers  
As the chilly wind gives way to  
Warm breezes  
I revel in these struggling forces  
And take in  
Winter's last mad flight

ASHLEY CRAIG

# Nana

SHANNON QIAN

Third Place, Essay Contest

One of my goals when I was six was to have long hair. When lice season began, my hope was further depleted. My mother dragged me to the local barber whose ability to gossip could be bragged more about than her ability to cut straight hair. The uneven bangs were a fashion statement before their time that drove me to the insanity only chocolate could heal. When I finally could not stand the sight of the barber's zigzag black curtain on my forehead any longer, I grabbed a pair of scissors and executed the hair. The abstract art I created looked like a charitable

made the first days at Nana and Gong-Gong's house the toughest was that I missed the scent of my mother. The tantrums and leg kicks were parts a ritual before breakfast. One morning, I realized that Nana would not succumb to my begging to go home despite the tear-streaks on my face. A little monkey I became: I leaped from table to chair to bed to back to table while holding pillows as my hostages and a one-way ticket back home as my ransom. Nana threw her hands up and said that I would not watch TV for the day if I did not get off the bed.

**My legs were swinging like a bug on its back.**

**But all was lost, I was defeated.**

2  
2  
act done by the blind. My frustrated grunt caused Nana, my grandmother, who sat a few yards away in her wicker chair, to detach her eyes from the Chinese opera screeching on the orange 13" x 13" black and white television. When she saw the incriminating black hair in my fist and a pair of scissors in my other, she shook her head and asked Buddha for guidance. Unfortunately, Buddha did not listen to her prayer. Thus, Nana chuckled and called me a foolish child while wiping my angry tears away with the white handkerchief she kept in her pocket.

Nana was a plump, freckled Chinese woman who never went out of the house without her navy blue sweater vest on and her silvery hair neatly slicked down to her scalp. My father had come to America to study when I was young, and I was a tenacious six-year-old with the tendency to bite and fall on her knees--too tough for my mother. So Nana and Gong-Gong (my grandfather) offered to harbor me at their house during the summer. Their house was built during the days of the emperor with paper instead of glass for windows, oil lamps instead of light bulbs, and a public outhouse three minutes away instead of a flushing toilet three seconds away. I never missed those lacks of modern advancements of the city, but what

Sticking my tongue out was the only defense I could think of at the moment while I jumped on the bed some more to show her that threats did not scare me, even though my heart trembled inside because of fear of Grandma's quick fly-swat hand. Unfortunately, every hero makes a mistake. While I had my back toward her, Nana grabbed me. My legs were swinging like a bug on its back. But all was lost, I was defeated. As a truce, Grandma shoved a fried shrimp into my mouth and I smiled with tearstains on my face and shrimp oil drooling down my mouth.

Nostalgia for home never stayed long, though, because my cousin Ting, who was my partner in crime, lived only a few blocks away from Nana's house. A day did not pass without Ting and me crying, shoving, bleeding, chasing, hiding, laughing, and most importantly--planning to agitate Nana.

Nana was addicted to playing mah-jongg with neighboring old ladies. Every day the old women sat around the square table betting the money they had won the day before while chatting about the sizes of the cucumbers they grew, the way life used to be, the latest soap opera, the weight of their grandkids, and the existence of telephones. While Nana was too absorbed into

the latest neighborhood scandal, Ting and I often snuck into Nana's kitchen to do unofficial taste-tests of her dishes for dinner. We got greedy once and ate all of the boiled peanuts saved for Gong-Gong to drink his whiskey with. When Nana saw the peanut shells surrounding our feet while Ting and I were wiping our soy-sauce-stained fingers on our shirts, she threatened that she would string us by the ankles and hang us from a hook like the unfortunate goose we saw in the market--the one that was most likely roasting in a pot of water as she spoke.

During those lazy afternoons of mah-jongg clinking on the table and old ladies chattering like a chorus of crickets, Ting and I often sat in the corner. We admired the swift arthritic hands of the old ladies moving the mah-jonggs, watched the steam rising from their tea, and listened to the voices of the aging cynics remembering the days that were many generations ago.

Sometimes after supper and cartoon hour were over, the adventures of day still had not dampened our energy despite the sweat dripping down our skin. Ting and I often begged Nana to tell us stories. Nana was never good at imagining fairy tales set in Europe--a place, to her, that only existed on television. She, instead, told us stories of her youth when she was younger and taller with black hair and an ability to skip and run; days I could never imagine existed. She told us of taking care of her infant brother after their parents had died. As he grew

older, her brother would read to her stories from his textbooks, newspapers, and pamphlets she picked off the street to soothe away her aches from the weary day of cleaning other people's homes. The heat always made us sleepier, and Nana's voice made our eyelids heavier, until finally, Ting and I would fall asleep on top of each other like puppies. Before the deep sleep, many times I felt a callused hand rubbing my hair and head a chuckle of "little fools."

The summer months flew away faster than Nana's hands plucking hair off a pig's ear. The summer adventures of Ting and me burning each other's hair, running away from Nana's house to Gong-Gong's hospital, stealing Nana's mah-jongg winnings to support our sugar addiction (we were eventually caught), adopting a chicken that turned out to be supper, and many more stories all combine together like the colorful pictures in a kaleidoscope. Even though Nana and I are more than three thousand miles apart now, Nana's lessons through her simple life never escape me. She taught me to dream big, work hard, be kind to neighbors, count my blessings, try to do good with my life, sacrifice for those I care about, and most importantly--love my family.

Nana was famous for carrying her keys that hung on her side like a baby possum. There are times when I am trapped in the past when the jingle of keys makes me smile for being Nana's foolish child.

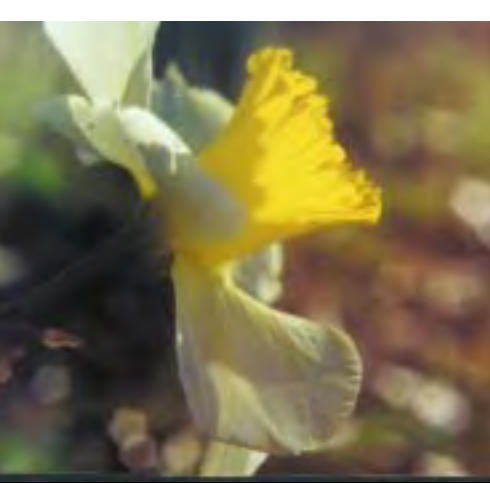
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## Swiss Cows

Color Ink

ANGELA RANELLI



Spring

Photograph

MARY ROSENBLATT

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My father drove along Highway 82 the morning after his mother's funeral and saw DAFFODILS that she planted on the side of the road blooming twenty-three years later. He said she drove around with a Buick full of DAFFODIL bulbs every Spring.

Daffodils

KILBY ALLEN

# The Only Love I Ever Understood

The only love I ever understood was that only of a mother,  
The restless nights,  
The endless screams,  
The comfort of her there with me;

The only love I've ever known was the absence of it,  
The bastard child,  
Fatherless,  
Helpless,  
Yearning,  
Homeless,  
And unforgiving;

Where was the love during the long nights,  
The restless nights,  
The nightmares,  
The gunshots ringing out in the night,  
The long days,  
The taunting,  
The teasing,  
The crying,  
The dying inside,  
The loss of childhood innocence,  
Stripped from within like the ripping away of flesh from bone;  
The only love I ever understood was that which I never received.

ALANA NICHOLS

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5



Bubbles  
Oil Pastel

DARCY FLETCHER

# While PFC Stephens Rides Shotgun

He might listen to John McCain's memoir,  
Or Boston's greatest hits,  
To not remember, to un-idle the time  
When he drives the truck over the icy streets.  
He's skilled now at easing the brakes  
Of the engine that makes his living.  
Stocking convenience stores and grocery stores  
And vending machines with Hostess snack cakes  
Are his mornings and his afternoons.  
He gives the clerks and attendants a hello and they  
Return it and he hopes they really remember his name,  
Don't have to glance at the patch on his left breast.  
Lunchtime he parks near a picnic bench and eats a  
Ham sandwich or at the Waffle House where  
The women in the maroon shirts  
At least know his name.

After a sleep of dreams so loud,  
(Throat, they cried for him, and he sprang after them  
Through the thrashes of red and green.  
Jesus, I'm only a boy, PFC Stephens said.)  
He woke up alone, his wife curled on the couch.  
Now the honking car horns and blinking traffic signals  
Help to amplify the day, reality, and help him forget the dark.  
Listen to this. Look this way.

Later, at home, his wife calls him James  
And even though she was never even there,  
She finds her ways to forget.

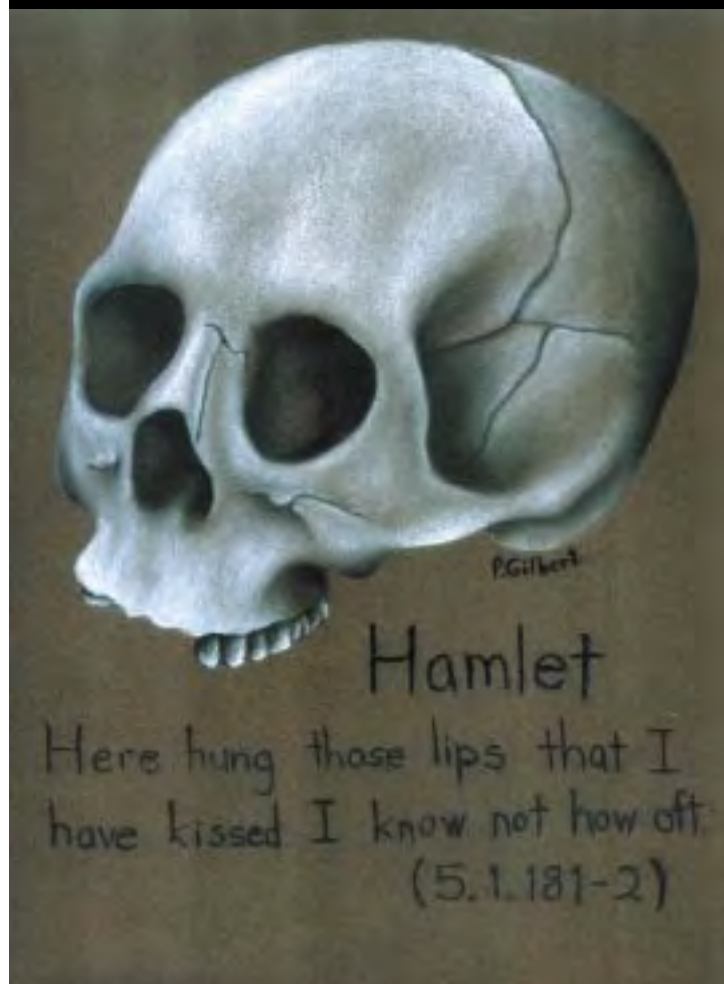
WILSON MCBEE

## The Skull of Yorick

Charcoal

Honorable Mention, Art Contest

PETER GILBERT



# GIVING the Gift of Joy

LEIGH ANN CORLEY

As long as I can remember, I have heard the expression: "It's more blessed to give than to receive." Not until I became a teenager did I learn the truth in that expression. My mom's annual staff students decided they should adopt a local family for Christmas. Although my brothers and I were not old enough to be on the annual staff, we decided to take in the project. By various means, my mom found out the shoe and clothing size of the five kids in the family — ranging from a baby to a twelve year-old. Her students began to gather items of clothing, toys, and groceries for the family. Excitement began to build as the presents were wrapped and plans were made to deliver them to the needy family.

A few days before Christmas, the oldest girl on the staff (no boys were available) borrowed a Santa Claus suit from a neighbor and with just the right amount of stuffing and an exaggerated voice Becky became Santa. Santa, riding shotgun in a pickup driven by my mom, pulled into the driveway of the tenant house on a local poultry farm. I, along with the school counselor and members of the annual staff, followed in another vehicle. Wide-eyed kids peeked out the window to see Santa carrying a full decorated Christmas tree approach their door. The eyes of the next-to-the-baby shone like stars as she watched Santa place the tree in their almost bare living room. First, each child received a stocking filled

with fruits and candy. Before anyone could stop her, the starry eyed little girl ate her apple--core, seeds and all. Then Santa placed some of the presents under the tree with instructions to open them on Christmas Day.

While Santa was busy in the living room, several of the staff members were unloading groceries in the kitchen. Opening the refrigerator to put in the perishables, one of the girls was shocked to find a partially filled bottle of drink--nothing else. Those putting up canned and dry goods found the cabinets bare. Only a bottle containing a small amount of oil was sitting near the stove. Unbelievable! How could anyone live like this? Things like this only happen in big cities, not in a small rural community. Wrong!

I will never forget seeing that little girl eat the entire apple. I will never forget that empty kitchen. Although my heart was saddened that day, I will never forget the warm feeling that I had in my heart when we left that house. Those kids were happy with the simplest of gifts. In giving that day, I received a special feeling that I could not have received anywhere else. Although I did not receive a material gift that day, I received a gift that money cannot buy. That day I realized the true meaning of the expression: "It's more blessed to give than to receive."

**Things** like this only happen in big cities, not in a small rural community.

**WRONG!**

# Once Upon a Time

ADAM HATHORNE

My cousin, Nick, and I have on several occasions become quite lost in the woods that surround my grandparents' land which is about ten miles outside of the small country town of Overt, Mississippi. It is difficult for me to remember how we became lost so many times, considering the fact that we have explored nearly every inch of the area. I can only conclude that we became lost because we wanted to. One occasion does come to mind and involved an armadillo.

The day began just as all our days start: we head for the Branch (a small trickling stream that flows from an underground spring). The Branch snakes throughout the woods, slipping under roots and trees only to bubble

for excitement rather than avoiding pain and crept into the brambles. There before us was a small armadillo. With little or no warning my cousin decided we needed to chase the critter and proceeded to do so. Only a little less enthusiastic, I followed. Around and around we went getting more and more tom up as the chase continued.

Finally tired of the game, the armadillo headed for a hole. Nick saw no reason for us to stop just because it didn't want to play, so he slid in after it. With Nick buried up to his shoulders and me trying to pull him out, the armadillo somehow escaped Nick's grasp and got away. Somewhat disheartened but still eager to continue exploring, we headed toward the woods at the edge of the

[ I hurtled down the steep side of a bank, green-leaved magnolia trees flying past, and brown dead leaves exploding everywhere until I finally rolled to the bottom. ]

back to life a few feet later. Although the Branch is only about three inches deep and is not really good as a swim hole, it does serve as an excellent place to search for salamanders, frogs, snakes, and all manner of small critters. However, today everything seemed to hide away as we crashed our way through the vines which drip from the quiet oaks. The vines have often been an excellent source of recreation, as many of them are strong enough to support our weight. We would swing back and forth across the Branch pretending to be Tarzan and the King of the Forest. Rather than doing this, we instead decided we were intrepid explorers and pushed forward to uncharted lands. Leaving the woods my cousin and I trekked across a cow pasture with yellow flowers sprinkling the rolling hills in an almost picturesque manner. Then we became aware of a rustling in a briar patch just ahead of us. During the summer the sticker bushes would have loads of sweet and delicious blackberries, but all they held now were pain and the chance of some excitement. We opted

pasture. Just at the edge, on the other side of a barbed wire fence, is a junk pile. We bypassed this and just looked at the garbage and talked about how we were going to use all the trash to build an awesome fort.

It was after about three hours--during which we didn't pay too much attention to our surroundings due to conversations which young boys are apt to have when alone--that I came to the conclusion that we were lost. The reason that I became aware of this was that there ceased to be any ground beneath my feet. I hurtled down the steep side of a bank, green-leaved magnolia trees flying past, and brown dead leaves exploding everywhere until I finally rolled to the bottom. The whole scene proved of such hilarity that laughing too hard to stop, my cousin tripped and tumbled after to eventually land on top of me. The ditch provided too much of an opportunity to pass up, so we spent the next hour rolling again and again down the leafy slide. At this point we heard the call which I'm sure any of you who have lived in the country know.

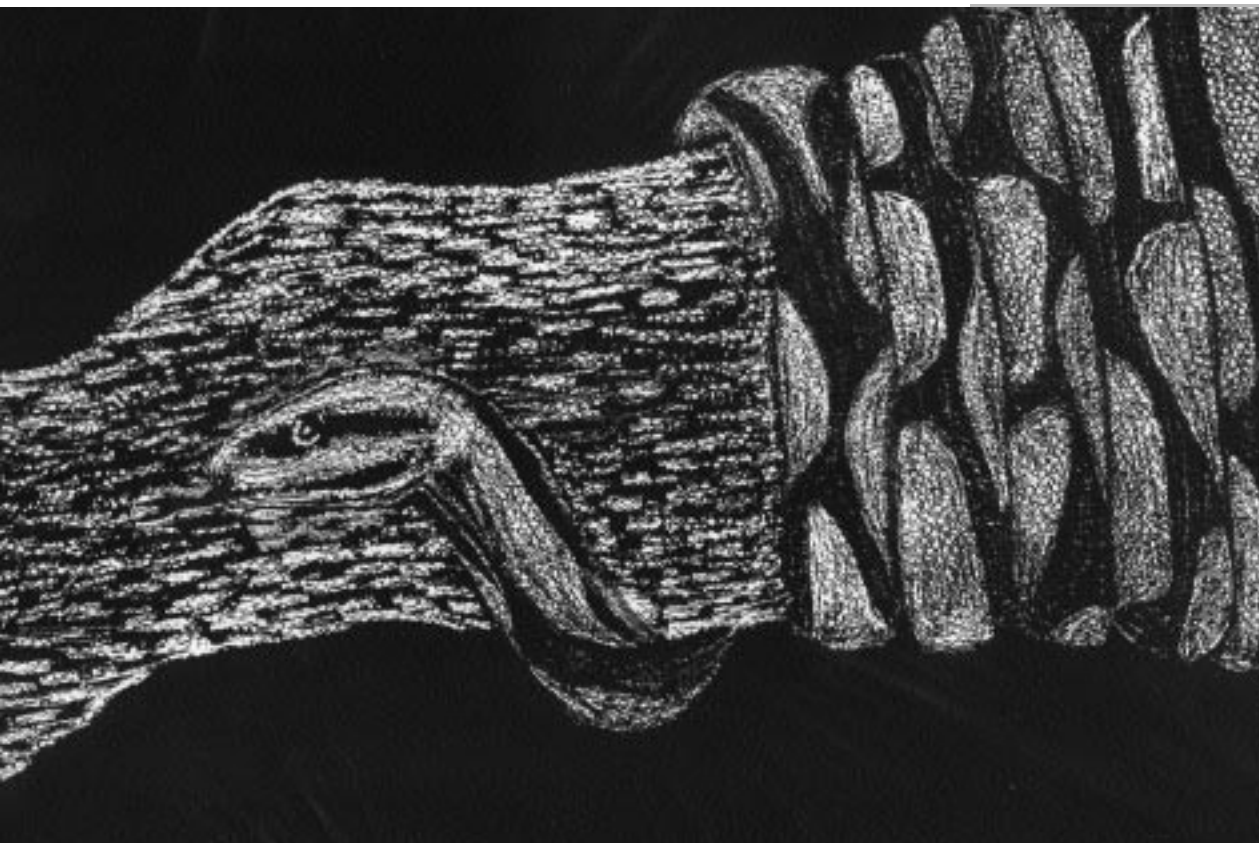


It's that call of your name yelled out by an adult in long drawn-out syllables and which can be heard from any distance. We immediately started walking in what we hoped was the direction of the sound; you just don't ignore the fact when your name gets hollered like that. The landscape of the land changed often and quickly, from towering pine trees with brown needles littering the ground to dark magnolia trees keeping everything in shadow to marshy swamp. We emerged from the swamp nasty and muddy and fearing reprimand. Finally, after almost another hour, we got to something we recognized, the creek. Unfortunately, we were several miles too far up the creek. We weren't looking forward to walking more, and that's when we spied the canoe. Someone had left his canoe on the bank, and after a little deliberation, we decided to borrow it.

Sailing down the creek went fairly quickly until my cousin saw a snake in the water. My cousin loves catching snakes, so with no warning at all, he jumped in. I suppose it was at some point just above the water that he thought about the possibility of the snake's being poisonous. Immediately after entering the water he almost leapt out, but with my help we got him back in. Eventually we realized that we had gone too far, since we were beginning to see the weed plants that Tater Graham

grows below the spot where we usually swim. We looked around carefully to be sure Tater wasn't watching. Nick said he'd probably be in a bad mood because T-Joe hit Tater in the head with a tire tool earlier that week, and we sure didn't want to meet Tater high and mean. Since we didn't see him, we banked the canoe and, not wishing to just leave it, we tried to carry it back. We had planned to paddle back upstream, but we only ended up farther downstream. After close to three miles lugging the canoe through the woods, we got tired and just left the thing. We ran back along deer trails and fire breaks, the dried brush gripping and clutching as if to hold us back. At last we came to my grandfather's cow pond. Now we were quite dirty and thought that it might be a good idea to wash off, which we did for the next two hours. It started getting dark. Wet, and still pretty dirty, we went up to the house where we proceeded to catch hell. For some reason, our parents were worried more about our clothes, the condition of our skin, and--for some reason--whether we were safe, rather than how much fun we had were able to have that day.

That night in bed, after wiping away the faked tears, we laughed and discussed what we would do the next day.



Serpent

Scratchboard

ADAM BRUPBACHER

# Unknown

Exploring the unknown . . .  
New adventures  
Endless possibilities  
Best friend, young love, soulmate  
Trust, honesty, compassion  
Life appears to have meaning.  
Intensely bound by love's power  
Overcome by emotions  
Problems disappear.  
Wishing and hoping nothing will change  
The world again seems safe and secure. Then . . .

Destruction, deception, lies  
Broken hearts  
Unfulfilled promises  
Shattered dreams  
Loss and emptiness driving men and women, boys and girls to violence  
Hate, anger, fear, disappointment  
Your world turned upside down.  
Longing for the night and sleep  
And just when all appears lost . . .

A rainbow appears  
The sun shines again  
Birds sing while flowers grow.  
New opportunities  
Young and old alike take the risk to find love again.  
Support, companionship, acceptance  
The promise of tomorrow  
Bright futures, goals, desires  
Joy, happiness, excitement  
The world is right again.  
You eagerly anticipate discovering the unknown.

FLORENCE DAVIS



# Checking the Lights

MONICA STEVENS

The joys of being a cop. Yeah, right, Dave thought. It was ten p.m., and the beginning of the night shift. He would be riding the same tired route until two the next morning. After he got off work, Dave would go home, crawl in bed with his sleeping wife and get up at eight that morning to go to work at Dixon Vacuum Repair. He would leave Dixon's at three in the afternoon, go home to fix something or another, and go back to work at ten. The vicious cycle never let up on Dave.

He rolled the window down to break his thoughts. That kind of thinking can break a man, he thought. Cool, humid air hit his face. The town was quiet and still as usual. Dixon was a small place, home to a small mix of extremely old people and young families looking for a nice town to start their life in. Small bungalows and antique houses lined the streets. Dave looked at

Dave's wife told him that day that he had changed. There's nothing worse than hearing you've changed because you know that a change is never good when the change occurs during a perfectly happy marriage, Dave thought later. Nevertheless, Dave could not deny a change, but he could not figure out how his wife saw it. He had always thought his growing discomfort was purely internal; maybe nothing is entirely internal, he thought. Dave rolled his window up and jabbed at the air conditioning controls. Too hot. His radio crackled nonsense. He made a right on Main Street and headed towards Dixon Baptist Church. His nightly routine required a stop there. Each week he discovered a parked car, two kids making out, and a new excuse of why they were there. His favorite explanation was that they were "worshiping" there in the woods next to the church in a car so steamed up

Cool, humid air hit his face. The town was quiet and still as usual. Dixon was a small place, home to a small mix of extremely old people and young families looking for a nice town to start their life in.

the houses as he drove down Main Street. The windows of the houses glowed from the incandescent lamps inside. Dave could picture the scene behind that warm glow. A mother might be clearing the dishes from the table. She'd be scraping the remaining butterbeans from her four year old's plate into the garbage can and yelling for her eight year old to get in the bathtub. The father might be sitting in his recliner watching the news, deaf to the commotion caused by his eight year old pestering the other child. True, the scene in Dave's mind didn't paint the lovely American small town ideal, but it grabbed him and made him jealous, almost to the point of hatred, for that group of fictional people. He missed the days when he could come home to his wife and kids to enjoy a meal and relax afterwards. He was becoming bitter.

you couldn't see into the windows. He remembered telling those kids that if they considered what they were doing worship, he hated to know what they called mischief.

He directed his headlights into the woods and through the windows of the small church. No worshipping tonight. He wasn't surprised. It was Tuesday, and if anything ever did happen in Dixon, it happened on the weekend. The church looked sinister to Dave at night. He felt as if God would, or should, strike him dead for being afraid of His House, but he couldn't help getting chills each night when he saw the empty church bathed in moonlight and darkness. It looked dead. Dave stayed only a moment longer to stare at the eerie building and turned around in the gravel parking lot to complete his route.

The lights in the homes were beginning to disap-

Dave almost laughed  
at the possibility  
of actually  
**using his gun**  
in Dixon,  
but as his chief said,  
**you can never**  
**be too careful.**

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pear. A few windows were still glowing, but the lights were now splashes of color from a television tuned to the nightly news or The Late Show. Dave remembered how his son used to fall asleep on his couch occasionally while Dave sat in his recliner watching Cheers reruns. He would always quietly turn the television off and carry his son to his own bed where he tucked him in and kissed him on the cheek before closing the door and getting into his bed. Dave could still watch his son fall asleep on the couch, and he could still carry him to his bed and pull his covers up to his little shoulder, but he missed the part where he could settle into his own bed for the night.

"Dixon 3, Dixon 3, check over at Barnhome. Suspected prowler," the radio crackled abruptly.

"Copy," Dave replied. Here we go again, he thought. Dixon was the most paranoid town Dave had ever lived in. Every night some old lady reported a "prowler," and almost every time the prowler turned out to be an angry teenager who had climbed out of his window to smoke a cigarette. Dave turned the patrol car around in the small parking lot of Sud's Laundromat and headed towards Barnhome Road. He hated to wish it, but he hoped this call might be real. Part of him hoped the person really was a prowler, maybe not dangerous, but a real criminal at any rate. Anything to divert his attention from

himself would be welcome.

He pulled into Barnhome Road slowly looking for any wanderer and seeing no one. Dave crept along the gravel road as if he was a suspicious person but could not see anything except a few overturned garbage cans and the dogs who had caused the disruption. He pulled into the empty driveway of the old grocery store to turn around when he heard a loud bang as if someone had slammed the top of an aluminum garbage can closed. He jerked his car into park and pushed the door open. He reached to his shoulder and turned the volume on his radio down and put his hand on his nine millimeter automatic. Dave almost laughed at the possibility of actually using his gun in Dixon, but as his chief said, you can never be too careful.

Dave walked towards the back of the old store and jumped when he heard a crash and the sound of two feet scattering away in the gravel. He walked faster now towards the sound and pulled his gun from the holster.

"Police! Stop where you are!" He yelled. He couldn't actually see the person, but he knew a person would stop if you acted as if you saw them, especially if you have a gun

"Don't, don't shoot! I'm coming out, coming right on out. Don't shoot me, now!" A wavering voice from behind a mountain of cardboard boxes called. Dave stopped and waited with his gun ready for the person to come out. He didn't recognize the voice and was worried. A few seconds passed before Dave saw the torn tennis shoes of the suspect, and then the dirty, red jogging pants with large holes in both knees appeared followed by the grinning face of Larry Redding.

"Larry! Man, what are you doing? You nearly got yourself shot messin' around out here!" Dave yelled as he replaced his gun in the holster.

"Mister Dave, I just was looking around, ya know. Shirley, she told me to get gone, and I was just trying to find a nice place to sleep, just for tonight. I didn't mean no harm, Mister Dave. Please don't take me in, man. I'm not botherin' no one." Larry pleaded with his head down. He kicked the dirt as he spoke and tore at the already sizable holes in his shirt.

Dave sighed and said, "Larry, I gotta take you in. We won't charge you with anything, but you can't stay around here. Let's ride up to the office and see if we can't

work things out with Shirley. You can call her when we get there. Let's go." Dave walked over to Larry and led him to the patrol car.

"Shirley ain't in the mood for workin' out nothin', man," Larry said.

"We'll see. You never know about women."

Dave opened the back door for Larry and watched him sit down. Larry stared at the wire wall that separates that cop from the criminal. He didn't think he should have to sit in the back. He didn't do anything wrong except get a few old ladies in a flurry.

Dave took his seat behind the wheel and backed up. Larry Redding, he thought, was a constant figure at the Dixon P.D. Not a week went by without Larry showing up some way or the other in the office. Dave couldn't help grinning when he thought about Larry washing Officer Jim White's Toyota. Jim was the sort of cop that took his authority over the top and beyond, and Dave had plenty of reasons for hating the guy. Jim once caught Larry drinking a fifth of Vodka behind Dixon B.P. station and made him wash his truck rather than go to the station. Larry agreed and said he'd do a "mighty fine job, Mister Jim." Oh, he did a great job, Dave thought. Larry got out the hose and the car wash and went to work on that brand new Toyota. Larry didn't, however, notice (at least Dave didn't think he noticed), as he was fervently spraying the truck with cold water on full blast, that both windows

were all the way down. Jim was pretty mad, said he had to let the thing dry out for almost two weeks, and he's been looking for ways to lock Larry up since, but everyone else at the P.D. had a good laugh about that one.

"Larry, we're gonna try to stay away from Officer Jim. I think that's best," Dave called to Larry as he watched him in the rearview mirror.

Larry returned the gaze and nodded his head. Dave saw a little smile begin to form, but it quickly faded when a loud voice came on the radio.

"Backup, backup requested at thirty-three Hemingway!"

Dave reached for the mouthpiece of his radio and replied that he was on his way, forgetting that Larry was in the back. He swung the patrol car around in the middle of the empty street and headed for Hemingway Road. It was clear across town, but that didn't mean much in Dixon, a few miles at the most. Dave's heart was racing in his chest. He legs were alive with adrenaline and fear. Very rarely did he hear calls like that, calls with urgency. Larry was sitting straight up waiting for some command from Dave, but Dave's mind was on the road and the destination.

"Uh, Mister Dave? You . . . you gonna drop me off or something? I ain't much for hustle and bustle," Larry leaned up to tell Dave.

Dave didn't reply because he didn't hear Larry,

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Unity

Scratchboard

MARY ROSENBLATT



and Larry just sat back hoping Dave had not forgotten him but at the same time hoping Dave had forgotten to take him to the police department. Dave began to drive faster and make sharper turns. He forgot his careful, tedious driving pattern and gave in to the one his rush commanded.

Hemingway . . . she said thirty-three, Dave thought, I don't see anything here. The road was another gravel road, lit by a single street light. The woods along the road were overgrown and leaking onto the narrow gravel path. His wheels crunched along the road, and he searched for the dilemma. The road seemed as desolate as it probably always was.

Suddenly, his lights found the trouble. A patrol car was parked with its driver side door open in the middle of the road facing a battered Cadillac, probably an eighty-seven model, Dave thought. Jim White stood in routine stance behind his open door with his nine millimeter drawn and aiming at a huge lump of man kneeling on the

from choking the life outta me!" Jim explained without taking his eyes, or his aim, off the man.

"He doesn't look too dangerous. Let's go talk to him, find out what's the matter," Dave said.

"I'll get your back. You go right ahead."

Dave sighed, straightened his belt and walked towards the man. As Dave got closer, he realized the enormity of this guy. He was bigger than Dave had guessed.

"Sir? Mind telling me what the problem is?" Dave said as neutrally as he thought possible. The man didn't even move. His face was still in his hands, but he had stopped shaking his head and was eerily still. Dave walked closer and put his hands on the man's right shoulder. He could feel the sweat through the thin undershirt and smell that the man had not showered in awhile. He gently shook the man and waited for a reply, but before he could begin to call out to the man again, he felt his whole body turn upside down and slam into the ground. The stranger had picked him up, and Dave had gone fly-

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[ He guessed later that he had been knocked silly, but for the moment he concentrated on getting his face and his gun towards the man. ]

ground. Two of the Cadillac's windows were broken and replaced with flimsy garbage bags that bulged out of the opening like the beer-belly of a middle-aged man. The Cadillac's two front doors also gaped open and Dave looked at the large man kneeling on the gravel beside the passenger door. The man looked as if he could be a professional wrestler. It was hard to tell, but Dave guessed the man was six and a half feet tall and probably weighed two hundred and thirty pounds. The man had his face buried in his massive hands and shook his head violently as if he were confessing his sins to a scolding mother.

Dave got out of his car without a word to Larry and walked towards Jim.

"What's going on, man?" Dave said.

"I don't know. I'm doing my rounds, right, and I pull up in Hemingway, stop to relieve myself and hear this noise, like someone was dying. I get back in the car and drive towards the noise, see this crazy guy, and get out to help. He starts thrashing and screaming. I can't get near him; I won't anyway without a few men to keep that thing

ing. His face slid over the gravel, and tiny slits of pain jabbed at his palms and right cheek.

Dave scrambled to gain a defensive position. He couldn't quite find his feet, he thought. He guessed later that he had been knocked silly, but for the moment he concentrated on getting his face and his gun towards the man. He found himself sitting Indian-style in the gravel with his gun pointed at the colossal figure. Dave looked at the man's face. It was familiar but so twisted with confusion and anger, Dave couldn't tell which, that he couldn't quite remember where he had seen this man. Dave wriggled helplessly as he tried to stand up, but found himself only slipping on the uneven road. The man advanced towards him, and briefly his face became clear of the torment that had disfigured it before.

"Jim! Jim! Don't shoot! It's Andy! Andy, stop! It's me, Dave. Remember? Thursdays . . . I come to the grill?" Dave pleaded with the man when he realized who he was. Dave was amazed that he had not seen who this man was before. He was Andy from Bit's Grill. Dave ate

there every Thursday, and although he didn't know Andy too well, he had certainly held a good share of conversations with the man.

"Dave! Are you okay?" Jim inched towards him but did not come close to Andy, who seemed to be sedated for the moment.

"Yeah, man," Dave said as he finally got to his feet, "Andy? What's wrong with you?"

Andy stared stupidly at Dave and sank to the ground. He hung his arms over his knees and stared into the woods without a word.

"What in God's good name got into him, Dave?" Jim asked.

"Don't know. Don't want to find out if it's gonna get back into him, either. We better take him in."

Jim and Dave grabbed Andy under his arms and walked him to Jim's car. Andy sat submissively in the backseat and stared at his lap. Dave watched him for a moment and turned to Jim with a shrug. Jim got into his car and closed the door. Dave walked back towards his car but stopped as he remembered something.

"Jim! Andy's on medication! Hey, Jim!" Dave ran to Jim's window and pounded on it with his fist, "Jim! We've got to take him to the hospital!"

Jim rolled down his window and said, "What? Are you sure? Can't we just run him down to the station and call his wife?"

"No, no, no! I've seen this before. Andy's not like this. Ever. He's taken something. A lot of it, too. He's got to be pumped!" Dave yelled forgetting that the excitement might cause Andy to burst into another tantrum.

"Okay, man. Let's go."

Jim flipped his siren on, and Dave jumped into his patrol car. Dave's car swerved as he skidded out of the gravel road. He felt panic for this man. He was so unsure of everything. What had he taken, and how much? What if this man died right under Dave's control? Dave wouldn't be able to forgive himself if he let a father and a husband die under his watch. Andy had a family . . . a family that was probably worrying about him.

Houses flew by as the two patrol cars raced to Dixon Regional Hospital. Larry shrieked at the sharp turns Dave made, but Dave paid no attention. They pulled into the hospital parking lot, and Dave threw his door open and ran towards Jim's car. He told Jim to go inside and get a wheelchair and a doctor. Dave looked at Andy. His

eyes were blank and glossy. His pupils looked like dimes. He didn't blink; he didn't move.

Dave opened the door and touched Andy. He wasn't even sure if Andy was alive. Dave breathed in relief when he felt warmth and saw the slight movement of Andy's chest.

"Andy?" Dave whispered, "Andy, everything's gonna be alright."

Jim rolled a wheelchair towards the car, and two men in green uniforms followed. Dave pointed towards Andy, and the men grabbed him under the arms as Dave and Jim had done and placed him in the seat of the wheelchair.

"What can we do, doctor?" Dave asked.

"Call his family, if he has any," the doctor replied without looking at Dave.

Dave watched the men wheel Andy through the automatic glass doors and around the corner. Jim said something to Dave, but Dave only waved him away. He went back to his car and sat behind the wheel staring straight ahead. He watched a young woman light a cigarette and only stand there holding it without taking a drag. An older man walked up to her, and she threw the cigarette into the bushes.

"Mister Dave?"

Dave jerked around, "Larry! Man, I forgot all about you!"

"Well, you know, that can be a good thing. You can forget all about letting me outta this car, and we'll just have a little forgettin' session," Larry said.

Dave sighed. He didn't see any real reason for taking Larry in, anyway. He got out of the car and opened Larry's door.

"Don't worry anymore people, now. Just go grab some flowers and go see about Shirley," Dave said.

"Maybe so," Larry said smiling.

Larry walked across the parking lot, and Dave watched him leave. When he couldn't see Larry anymore, he got into his car and drove towards Main Street. He had to complete his routine. The church, the school, the store, the pastures, and the homes all had to be checked. Dave saw the houses, all dark now, and hoped he had done something good tonight. He hoped he had done something to prevent one of those houses from losing a member, a player in that scene he coveted so badly. He found his place again and began his nightly checks. Soon he could go home.

## Levon's Own

Amidst a festival of sweaty black bodies  
I heard the blues the way they were meant to be played,  
Danced just the way Sonny and Muddy and Howlin' Wolf would have.  
Of course the man on the stage pounding drums  
In split time, head bobbing, a white old man,  
Was the one who brought me.  
It was a certain pilgrimage I made to King Biscuit in Helena, Arkansas.  
Levon Helm, of the Band, grew up not far away, in Turkeyscratch,  
Hearing these fast blues on the radio, the King Biscuit Blues Hour.  
And he watched the drummer's left hand and listened, too.  
Everyone, from Conway Twitty to Sonny Boy Williamson  
To later Ronnie Hawkins, the Hawk, who started things.  
Then Levon left blue Arkansas, and beat back the rhythm  
For a lesser, whiter, more lyrical leader with black shades  
And a high pitched nasal cry, who didn't have the blues but had soul enough.  
30 years later, in Helena, I heard no hits, just Levon's soul stirring  
Out into the crowd of friends and kin.  
I'd like to imagine myself one of them, and I understand why  
He didn't sing "The Weight" or "Up On Cripple Creek."  
Here's home and the blues are King. That's how Levon plays 'em.

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WILSON MCBEE

Honorable Mention, Poetry Contest



Spotlight on  
Charles Mingus

Scratchboard

CHERYL SEE



## Rain

I try not to fall short,  
to stand tall.  
To embrace the winding change  
like a thousand snakes through grass  
I wind

Morning is a comfort, for  
when I wake all I can see  
is the sky in its wonderful kiss,  
lost in its abyss--

I have a dream of falling,  
hitting the Earth, unharmed  
but melting, -- fusion  
into its core, into my core,  
and feeling union with something  
thought to be inanimate, like a rock.

Eventually,  
I lie in a puddle of myself,  
and the sun scorches my skin  
till I slowly fade away into air.

I wait until night falls to be birthed.  
I wait till I can see the moon,  
lashing the sky with its crescent.  
Slowly, I gather myself --  
into a cloud.

I call my brothers for this making: wind, lightning and  
finally,

I summon myself . . .  
and I Rain . . .

I had a dream I was falling,  
hitting the Earth, unharmed,  
and melting away . . .

CLAYTON CAMPBELL

## Wooden Wheels

Clippity-clop clippity-clop  
Almost like a horse  
Then it comes to a stop.  
Once again that same clippity-clop  
upon the cobblestone road

Ratta-tat-tat clippity-clop  
That same clippity-clop  
There is no cobblestone now  
It's the boy with coke bottle lids beneath his shoes  
Dancing near the street  
Ratta-tat-tat ratta-tat-tat clippity-clippity-clop

Flip-flop clippity clop  
Upon a beach sidewalk  
Carrying sand shovels  
Among the sweet salty  
Flip-flop clippity clop

Clippity-clop clippity-clop  
Almost like a horse  
Then it comes to a stop  
Once again that same clippity-clop  
upon the cobblestone road.

BECKY VIDRINE

## Fireworks

We watch on the riverbank,  
Colors light up the sky.  
The bright sky-dots quietly fade,  
But another volley zooms into the firmament,  
A more magnificent blossom than before.  
We sit, entranced  
By the stupendous sky-show.  
The black sky flashes on and off  
Like a child playing with a  
Flashlight in the darkness.  
Each brilliant volley  
Turns night to day  
Like a flare in the black sky,  
Then bursts into miniscule specks of  
Rainbow glitter.  
Each rumbling boom breaks the spell  
That holds us entranced to the previous display,  
As the fireworks soar into the air.

BEN HUANG

# Spot and Solinger

KILBY ALLEN

Second Place, Essay Contest

The first time someone actually asked me the question was nearly two years ago. I was interviewing for boarding school, trying desperately to radiate Mississippi delta charm. The woman across the desk smiled an innocent, saccharin high school English teacher smile, but I could see through the guise--she was about to rip my ego to shreds.

"So, Miss Allen, what book has had the most impact on your life and why?"

My first reaction was disbelief--they actually ask that question? Of all the admissions department stereotypes! They even make fun of that question in cartoons. My sixth grade teacher told me that this day would come.

chosen To Kill a Mockingbird as their greatest influence; either that or Catcher in the Rye. So here I am in a boarding school in the midst of a herd of little Scouts and Holdens, but that is another story entirely.

Honestly, To Kill a Mockingbird is one of my favorite books--I read it at least once a year, but it hasn't really changed my life. Catcher in the Rye, however, did have quite an impact on me, well, my language at least. Every time I read it, the word "chrissakes" and a few other not-so-kosher phrases seem to sneak into my vocabulary. It usually takes a few weeks to un-Caulfieldify my speech.

Literature and reading have had a huge impact on my life. ... it sounds cliché, but it's true. Even before I

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[ So, I did what any self-respecting Southern woman would do--  
I flashed a debutante smile and involuntarily lied through my teeth. ]

So, I did what any self-respecting Southern woman would do--I flashed a debutante smile and involuntarily lied through my teeth.

"To Kill a Mockingbird, of course," I replied, perhaps a touch too sentimentally. What happened after that must have been a purely adrenaline reaction--I poured out a stream of nonsense to the tune of "overcoming the struggles of youth and finding that all human beings have a common dignity." Even Scout would have appreciated the quality of my literary manure.

I personally thought that my little spiel was quite eloquent, and in my idealistic mind I believed it was true, too. My interviewer nodded her head and smirked. I knew then that my cover was blown.

Several months after the interview (which was in some sense successful--I was admitted to the school) I discovered why my interview provoked such snickering. It turns out that almost everyone that interviewed had

could read I carried around a dog-eared copy of The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe -- I thought that if I stared at the pages long enough it would all make sense. Now I stare at the pages of Faulkner in much the same way-- maybe one day they'll make sense, too. Percy, Welty and Vonnegut have all become major influences, but as far as life-changing literature goes, I can only think of one book, or rather set of books, that has actually changed my life (don't worry I'm not talking about the Bible). At around age six, almost everyone is introduced to a few "reading buddies." (That is a direct quote from my first grade teacher, Mrs. Janine Story). You may know them as Tom, Jane, and Spot. (I'm not sure if they are still in first-grade reading primers--the family was not exactly politically correct. The books that I had were probably bought when the school, The Indianola Academy, was founded in 1969.)

Anyway, Tom, Jane, and Spot were incessantly kicking balls, jumping over logs, and climbing trees.



No More School  
Silver Gelatin Print

MARY ROSENBLATT

Spot was up to  
his usual shenanigans--  
"See Spot bark at Puff.

No ~~Spot~~, No!"

(I never understood how Jane could do all of that in a dress and without mussing her hair.) After a while even Spot can only run so far.

By the time that I finished reading the second Tom and Jane book, I was completely bored out of my first-grade skull. We were supposed to read at least ten of the books during the school year, but there was no way that I could deal with anymore hopping, stopping or even popping. One night during reading time I reached the breaking point. Spot was up to his usual shenanigans-- "See Spot bark at Puff. No Spot, No!" See Spot? I still can--vividly. I remember that very page. Spot is standing below a pyramid of pumpkins, atop which is a black cat. The fatal page is emblazoned on my memory.

"I'm not reading anymore of this," I declared to my father. And that, as they say, was that. The very next day I checked out Little House on the Prairie from the elementary library. I never saw Tom, Jane, or Spot again. My first-grade reading rebellion may seem trivial now, but back then it was a big deal. Everyone else trudged through the ten Tom tomes, but I refused. Instead, I read books about dogs and horses--they did more than run and climb trees. In my innocent understanding reading was reading. It didn't matter what I read as long as I could read. I suppose it was my first brush with non-conformity . . . or something like that. In the end I passed first grade in spite of Spot, but I also walked away with a new sense of priority--grades aren't the most important thing in life. Sometimes you have to sacrifice academics to become educated. After all, you can't put a grade on character. See Spot run. Thank you, Spot.

# Our Song of Innocence

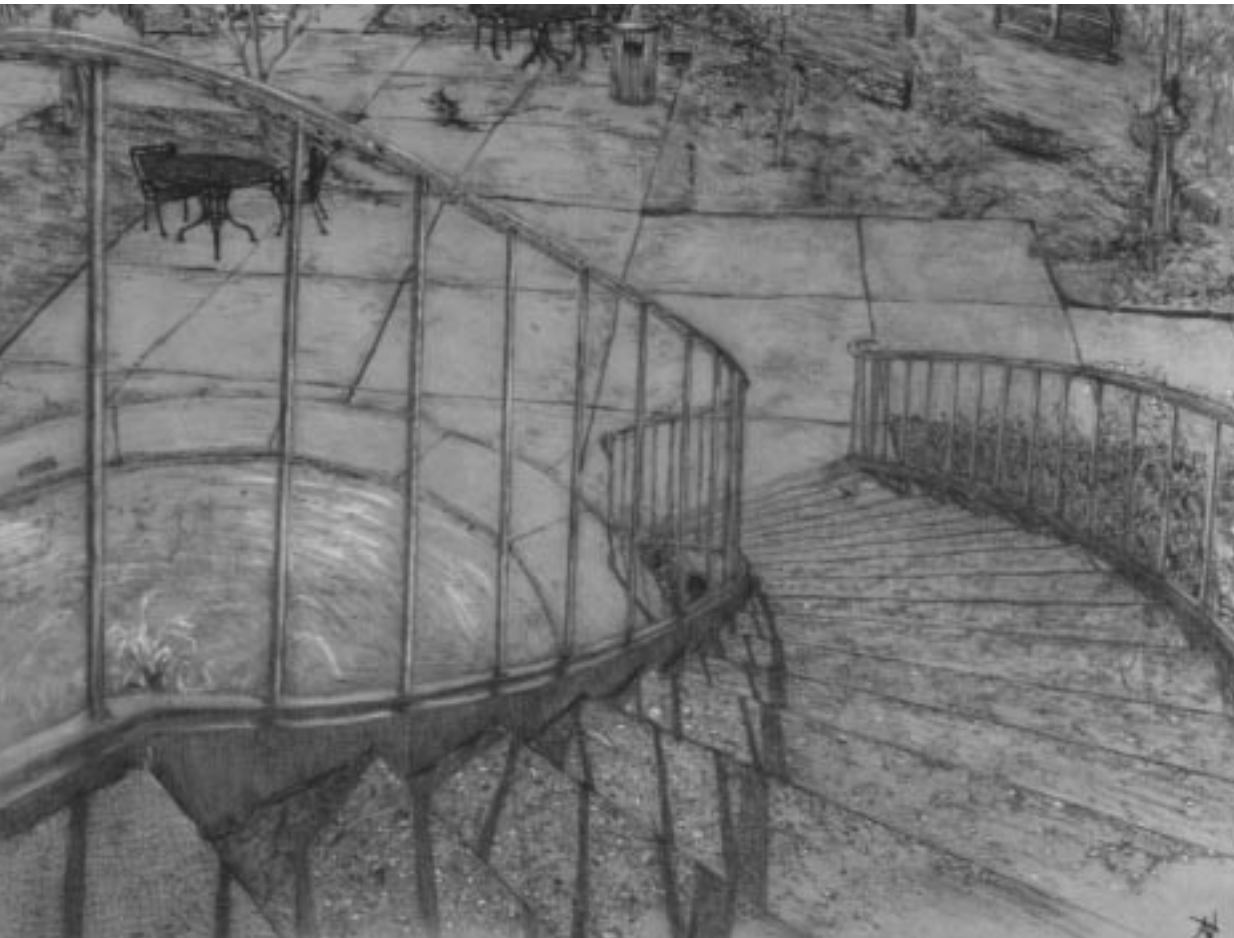
When we were young likes, just a few years ago,  
Playing in the front yard was the strenuous part of our day.  
We smacked on fried bologna sandwiches and plain chips while the  
Captain Planet Marathon kept us entranced for hours.

As time progressed and our ages ascended,  
We made plans for the future, counting the years until graduation on our fingers,  
putting on our mothers' business suits and pumps,  
Carrying a briefcase full of paper marked with scribbled initials.

Soon we moved up to jr. high when our Innocence turned into experience.  
We encountered our first crushes and recounted our childish secrets with  
joy and enthusiasm.  
We made promises to be best friends forever as we planned our double wedding.

Time advanced and we moved to high school.  
We have made new friends.  
I moved to a new school, and now we barely even talk.  
Now in the last year of my youth, finally closing this twelve-year journey, the world  
becomes more insolent day after day.  
When I can't take the stress, and the hassle of this mean old world causes me anguish,  
I know I can turn to the person I shared my first bologna sandwich with,  
My Best Friend.

RACHEAL GULSTON



Asphalt Oasis  
Charcoal  
First Place, Art Contest

JEREMY ABERNATHY

# Thomas, and a Game of Frisbee

WILSON MCBEE

Second Place, Short Story Contest

"Hey!" Lisa shouts, and a few seconds later, "Hey... Lowell! You're up!" She's calling to me, and so I pull myself up out of the swimming pool and get onto the lifeguard stand.

This is my third summer working at Fair Oaks Country Club. The pool is fairly large; the deep end is twelve feet. Most of the patrons out here are either members of the Country Club or residents of the surrounding neighborhood, and anyone who gets in the pool has had more than their share of swimming lessons. Honestly, I've never once had to go in after someone. Mostly kids swim

he looks at you through only his right eye. Usually when he's at the pool Thomas brings along a pair of Power Rangers, flying and jumping them around while making crashing sounds with his mouth. When you see him he looks like just a funny kid, wrapped up in his own world. It's when he starts talking that things really get strange. He's not bad for conversation really. It's not like I have any other options out here.

Thomas usually comes to the pool with his mother, a skeletal woman with bleached blonde hair who chain-smokes Virginia Slims. Yesterday when I was in the pool

[ Thomas creeps closer so as to whisper. "When everyone else leaves, do the lifeguards get in the pool by themselves?" "Yeah," I say, as if I'm letting him in on some big secret. "Sometimes." ]

too deep and get scared, and their mothers pull them out before I get a chance to move. No one ever comes close to drowning.

Before my shift on the lifeguard chair began, I was scrubbing the tiles of the pool, and I still hold the steel wool in my right hand. I squeeze the steel wool perfunctorily, resting my eyes on nothing in particular. Thrusting my chest out Hasselhoff-style, I dangle my arms off of the chair, attempting an air of nonchalance and expertise. It's nice today, not too hot, and there aren't too many kids around. A few toddlers splash in a smaller, more shallow pool, their mothers watching intently from the side. The only action in the big pool is a game of sharks and minnows in the deep end.

A lot of kids come out here, and they're funny in their own way, but a kid that's at the pool today, a nine year old named Thomas, tops them all. His appearance is strange enough. His swimsuit is pulled up way past his belly button. He walks all crooked and slow, one foot in front of the other like every step takes concentration. He cocks his head right in line with the rest of his torso, and

throwing a frisbee with Thomas I looked over at her and she smiled at us. Later, when we were leaving, she said to me, "Thanks for playing with Thomas," she started. "He really loves playing with frisbee with you. He needs more physical activity. It's easier to get him out of the house now." She said the last line while swinging her right arm and chuckling. Maybe she takes drugs. At least she cares about Thomas, for that much I can tell.

Today Thomas came into the pool with someone whom I presume to be his father. Balding and unshaven, he didn't hold Thomas's hand and didn't greet me as they walked in. Though visibly aging, the man is fit and has no protruding belly. He's been asleep nearly the entire afternoon, a newspaper shielding his face from the intense summer sun.

From my time spent watching the different sorts of families that come to Fair Oaks, I've become a sort of amateur child psychologist, and most times when I'm on the stand I find myself just wondering about Thomas. All that I know about him I've learned from playing with him at the pool. I wonder what he's like away from Fair Oaks,



Thomas has moved  
to the deeper end  
of the pool, where he  
clutches the side  
and mutters to himself, legs  
dangling down in the water  
like broken  
branches.

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like at home and at school. I can imagine him as either a genius or a dyslexic; his personality could fit both. A lot of kids out here are pretty spoiled, and I give them some pretty stiff bitching. Most of the time they deserve it. I've never been short with Thomas, though. I don't think he deserves it. Of course I'm a lifeguard, and see him maybe five hours out of the day. I don't really know him. I think of Thomas's parents, and wonder, "how long would it take before I ran out of patience?"

For the past few minutes Thomas has been sitting next to his father, squinting at the sun and humming to himself. He isn't carrying any Power Rangers, and he walks towards the bathroom right behind the stand. I hear him go in and shut the door. A few seconds pass and the door opens again. "Hey, lifeguard," he says.

I turn and answer. "What?"

"The toilet's running," he says.

"Running?" I ask confusedly.

"Yeah, it's running."

"Well..." I look back at the big pool. "Does it not flush?"

"It's running," Thomas continues.

I can't get off the stand, so I turn to Lisa, laid out on a lawn chair, thumbing through a *Cosmo*. She knows more about plumbing than I do anyway. "Hey, Lisa," I shout. "Come fix the john. Thomas says it's running." I can see Lisa's eyes roll behind her sunglasses as she trots past me, sighing. Maybe Lisa doesn't get a kick

out of Thomas's uniqueness like I do, but this summer all I've seen Lisa do is roll her eyes and sigh. I wonder if Lisa gets a kick out of her experiences with the people at the pool at all. It's as if lifeguarding's just a summer job to her. She comes in, she sits on the stand, she nets the pool, she gets paid, she leaves. "So what?" she loves to say.

Lisa comes out of the restroom after a few seconds and shudders under her breath to me. "There was nothing wrong with the damn john."

Fifteen minutes later, Thomas exits the little boys' room. I wonder if he ever used the toilet at all. I never heard it flush. He comes to my side and stands eye level with my elbow.

"Hey," he says.

"What?" I answer.

Thomas creeps closer so as to whisper. "When everyone else leaves, do the lifeguards get in the pool by themselves?"

"Yeah," I say, as if I'm letting him in on some big secret. "Sometimes."

Thomas leans back and chuckles, proud of his own intuition. "Yeah, I figured that." He looks at the big pool a second and then marches over to the ladder.

By the time my shift on the stand ends, Thomas has moved to the deeper end of the pool, where he clutches the side and mutters to himself, legs dangling down in the water like broken branches. Lisa walks over to me, a towel slung across her back, and nods. I leap off the chair and move to check out the boys' toilet myself when Thomas shouts out to me, "Hey, lifeguard!"

"What?" I yell back.

"There's something growing on the bottom of the pool," he says. "I think it's a virus."

I hop in the pool and attempt to lie to Thomas about the algae but he doesn't buy it. Instead, I persuade him to come throw the frisbee with me in the shallow end. I wade ten yards out from Thomas, who leans against the wall, bobbing up and down with the waves. Thomas's mother doesn't joke when she says Thomas could use the physical activity. He has little coordination and even though I've thrown the frisbee with him nearly every day this summer, I still spend most of the time recovering his miserably strewn passes. (Surprisingly enough, Thomas's father looks quite the former athlete, and I wonder if there's a brother I don't know about playing on a minor league baseball team somewhere.) Thomas gives a wide

grin just before he lets the frisbee fly and I swim to where it landed, some feet away. After I've retrieved it, I let the frisbee go, though a little hard this time, and it sails right through Thomas's hands and pops him squarely between the eyes. Thomas yelps as it happens and begins a hysterical breath-sob, like a donkey. I glance at Lisa, who pretends to ignore me, and at Thomas's father, who still sleeps soundly. I swim over.

Thomas is grasping his brow with both hands, eyes staring down into the water. "Are you okay?" I ask. He stops his crying to look up at me, his eyes not all that teary but bloodshot. For a few seconds he just glares at me, his mouth cracked a bit and spit forming at its tips. "I'm sorry I threw it so hard," I say. Thomas continues to sob.

"Hey, you want your dad?" I try. Thomas shakes his head.

I grab at Thomas's armpits to hoist him up out of the pool but he doesn't budge. Thomas isn't kindergarten age, the sort I usually have this problem with. He's nine and pretty stocky, and I can't possibly physically remove him from the water.

"Come on, Thomas," I say, lowering my voice in annoyance.

"No," Thomas shouts back at me. He has stopped crying and now he's just mad. What does he expect me to do, change his diaper? Maybe that's what this is all about.

"Thomas," I sigh now, unsure of what to say, wary of the father, who could be watching me. So far I've been attempting the tone I've seen Thomas's mother use when he's throwing a fit, but I've never seen his father out here with him before, and I'm wondering what his reaction to all this will be, if there is one. "Thomas," I repeat, with resolve, "settle down. I'm going to get out and get some ice cream. Wanna come?"

Thomas doesn't answer and continues to clutch his forehead and stare into the water. I lift myself out of the pool. I get back on the stand in five minutes, and the pool needs netting.

He gets out right behind me and looks as if he has finally sucked it up. He holds his head high and the tears have disappeared from his face. I give an exhausted sigh and walk towards Thomas's father. He sits up and watches me through his Ray-Ban sunglasses, face expressionless. "Thomas got hit in the head with a frisbee," I say to him. "I don't think he got hurt, but he's pretty upset."

I feel Thomas breathing against my back and notice that he's huddled behind me, almost hiding from his own dad. He peeks his head around and speaks, his voice squeaking nervously. "It was a disc, Dad, like in disc golf. I tried to catch it but it hit me here." Thomas points to his forehead with a crooked index finger.

"You couldn't catch it?" Thomas's dad questions. "It looked like it was coming right at you." He has been watching. I see the shadow of Thomas's head point at his feet.

"Well, I guess I threw it pretty hard," I try to explain. "He was doing pretty good before that. Hey, Thomas, remember yesterday when you caught three in a row?"

"Yeah, but you threw it hard today; I was catching 'em before," Thomas pipes up, and I feel like Thomas and I are a team now, and I grow uneasy. I don't want Thomas's dad to think I'm a bully, or a pedophile. Thomas, though, steps to my side, grinning at his dad, beaming of something I can't gather.

The lips of Thomas's father crack ever so slightly, and he stares the two of us down a minute longer. "Wanna give it another shot?" he asks. "The lifeguard said you were doing pretty good yesterday."

"Yeah... I was," Thomas agrees. "Let's go throw the disc. I'll go get it." He turns and begins to hustle down the sidewalk.

"Don't run," I call out. It's nearly my time to be back on the lifeguard stand, so I get my towel and rest in a chair. Maybe I'll ask Lisa what she thinks of Thomas when I get a chance. Probably not, though. "What now?" she would ask. "I was watching the sharks and minnows." It's just as well then. I'm the only person I know who's really interested in these sorts of things.

While I'm on the stand I watch the father and son in the big pool. Thomas's dad cheers when his son finally catches one, and heaves him above the water and swings him back down to the surface gently. I smile and chuckle, Hasselhoff-style.

Later, as Thomas and his dad pass the lifeguard chair on their way out of the pool, walking hand in hand, Thomas's father nods to me, and I nod back. "See ya tomorrow," he says. "Okay, 'bye," I return. "See ya tomorrow."

## Imagination

Stepping up to the plate,  
next to the shiny black grill  
with the face-like vents,  
I envision being in Busch Stadium,  
Jack Buck's voice echoing throughout the bleachers.  
The wiffle ball comes at me,  
hurled by my older brother.  
Swing  
Miss  
Trudge to the swing set  
Toss back  
Ball sent once more  
A shot that sails over the log pile,  
our designated home run fence  
My dog Bacchus retrieves it  
before I have a chance.  
How many is that?  
Who cares, Cardinals win . . .

STUART DAVIS

## Before Curfew

After we put the kids to bed  
Silent sneakers beat the way down to the boat dock,  
Flip over the canoes and skim the surface of reflected sky.  
We are children too--pretending to be parents for the summer,  
But out on our two-by-four island--wood and empty oil drums,  
A blanket keeps out the imaginary July chill.  
A dozen restless souls shoulder to shoulder inches from water  
Only see the sky--the endless stretch of stars  
So small, floating in a sea of fireflies.  
In the musing silence after laughter  
I can only think of the lake bottom far below and  
What keeps us from floating away.

Connected by a chain through the murky depths,  
Anchored by an ancient concrete-filled toilet--  
I know because when the lake was drained last August,  
It sat solitary and stark in a sea of mud.

KILBY ALLEN

## Azzurro

Sifting through her own words as one would find shells,  
I watch her chance the language into a wat'ry cavern  
Where Sirens still sing, and titanic fish swim.  
I watch them float by us both, she and I fall  
Through the sapphire-stained sky we fly through.  
I watch as we gently sink, peacefully sink  
Stalactites run round us as we settle to the bottom  
Liquid metal  
Metallic sheens run down my skin, left by her thoughts.  
Fish dart here and there as I attempt to ignore them  
My scarred eyes  
My perfectly scarred eyes focus on her lips as she speaks  
Exactly what we all know is there, but no one can quite see.

JEFF DEIGNAN

## Airplane

The wind paints the earth with fallen leaves,  
and the water spreads like spider webs  
through the eroded grass,  
making star patterns in the ground.  
and the sun, the moon  
day and night --  
meet in a sweet embrace,  
of twilight.

CLAYTON CAMPBELL



# Contributors' Notes

**JEREMY ABERNATHY** (Mooreville)

Jeremy plans to attend the University of Kansas next fall and study journalism and graphic design.

**KILBY ALLEN** (Indianola)

Kilby is influenced by Eudora Welty, Walker Percy, and Harper Lee. She plans to attend Sewanee in the fall.

**ADAM BRUPBACHER** (Pass Christian)

Adam's favorite artists/writers are Chuck Palahniuk and Edward Gorey. He plans to attend Marymount Manhattan College.

**CLAYTON CAMPBELL** (Greenwood)

Clayton plans to attend the University of New Orleans and is influenced by Marion Zimmer Bradley. "Poetry is an art, the paintbrush of the soul."

**LEIGH ANN CORLEY** (Sebastopol)

Leigh Ann will attend the University of Southern Mississippi. She quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

**ASHLEY CRAIG** (Picayune)

Ashley is influenced by A Streetcar Named Desire and quotes Albert Einstein: "Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world."

**FLORENCE DAVIS** (Columbus)

Florence plans a career in medicine and enjoys the writing of John Grisham, Charlotte Brontë, and Robert Frost. "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened."

**STUART DAVIS** (Tupelo)

Stuart is influenced by Tom Wolfe and Hunter S. Thompson. He plans to attend Sewanee in the fall. "We're blind to the game yet clamor to the finish."- Davis Jones

**JEFF DEIGNAN** (Columbus)

Jeff plans to attend the University of Southern Mississippi in the fall and draws inspiration from Frank Herbert and Katsuhiko Otomo.

**ASHLEY DRAKES** (Greenville)

Ashley plans to attend Tougaloo College and is influenced by Maya Angelou's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.

**DARCY FLETCHER** (Jackson)

Darcy wants to pursue graphic design and advertising. "Everything is ok in the end, and if it's not ok, then it's not the end." -Unknown

**PETER GILBERT** (Starkville)

Peter will attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the fall and major in computer science.

**RACHEAL GULSTON** (Pontotoc)

Racheal plans to attend Buffalo State University and is influenced by Langston Hughes. "Life is like a bowl of cherries, so add a little whipped cream and eat some."

**ADAM HATHORNE** (Raymond)

Adam is influenced by J.R.R. Tolkien and wants to attend the University of Southern Mississippi.

**TONY HILL** (Wesson)

Tony is influenced by Thome York, Anne Rice, and William Blake. He quotes Voltaire: "A witty statement proves nothing."

**BEN HUANG** (Greenwood)

Ben is influenced by William Faulkner and Robert Heinlein. "Accomplishment comes from determination." - Unknown

#### JASON HUTCHINS (Natchez)

Jason plans a career in journalism and economics and is influenced by Robert Frost, Robert Jordan, and Toni Morrison. "My only opposition lies in the mirror."

#### DIANA KAHLE (Newton)

Diana enjoys works by Anne Rice, Robert Graves, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. She quotes Madonna: "Brothers, sisters, why can't we learn to challenge the system without living in pain?"

#### LAUREN KING (Meridian)

Lauren plans to attend Sewanee, and she wants to study microbiology.

#### JARED MARTIN (Silver Creek)

Jared plans to attend the University of Mississippi to study business and law. "We're all going to die anyway; why not have some fun getting there?"

#### WILSON MCBEE (Madison)

Wilson is influenced by works such as Cannery Row by John Steinbeck and The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien. He quotes Bob Dylan: "I ain't no monkey, but I know what I like."

#### MARGARET MONTGOMERY (Pass Christian)

Margaret is influenced by C.S. Lewis and Jimmy Buffet, and she plans to attend Millsaps as an English major.

#### ALANA NICHOLS (Natchez)

Alana plans to attend Georgia Tech to study computer science. "My writing leaves me with a sense of openness ...the freedom to say what my soul would like to."

#### SHANNON QIAN (Starkville)

Shannon enjoys reading T.S. Eliot and Shel Silverstein, and she quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson: "People only see what they are prepared to see."

#### ANGELA RANELLI (Waveland)

Angela wants to pursue business and will attend Virginia Tech University in the fall.

#### MARY ROSENBLATT (Fort Adams)

Mary quotes Anne Lamott: "Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, dawn will come. You wait and you watch and work. You don't give up."

#### WILLIAM ROSENBLATT (Fort Adams)

William is influenced by William Faulkner and Live. "You can stop the world, but you won't change me. I need music to set me free." - Cold

#### CHERYL SEE (Wesson)

Cheryl plans to attend Montana State University to pursue land and resource management.

#### MONICA STEVENS (Laurel)

Monica will attend the University of Southern Mississippi, and her favorite writers/artists are Stephen King and Barbara Kingsolver.

#### MORGAN STEVENS (Bentonla)

Morgan is influenced by Monet, Rousseau, and Matisse. She wants to attend Rhodes and study chemistry and forensic psychology.

#### ALICIA THURBER (Ocean Springs)

Alicia is influenced by her peers and the work of C.S. Lewis. She plans to attend Berry College.

#### BECKY VIDRINE (Woodville)

Becky plans to attend Louisiana State University. "When in doubt go to God; when joyful go to God; when in need go to God--but always go."

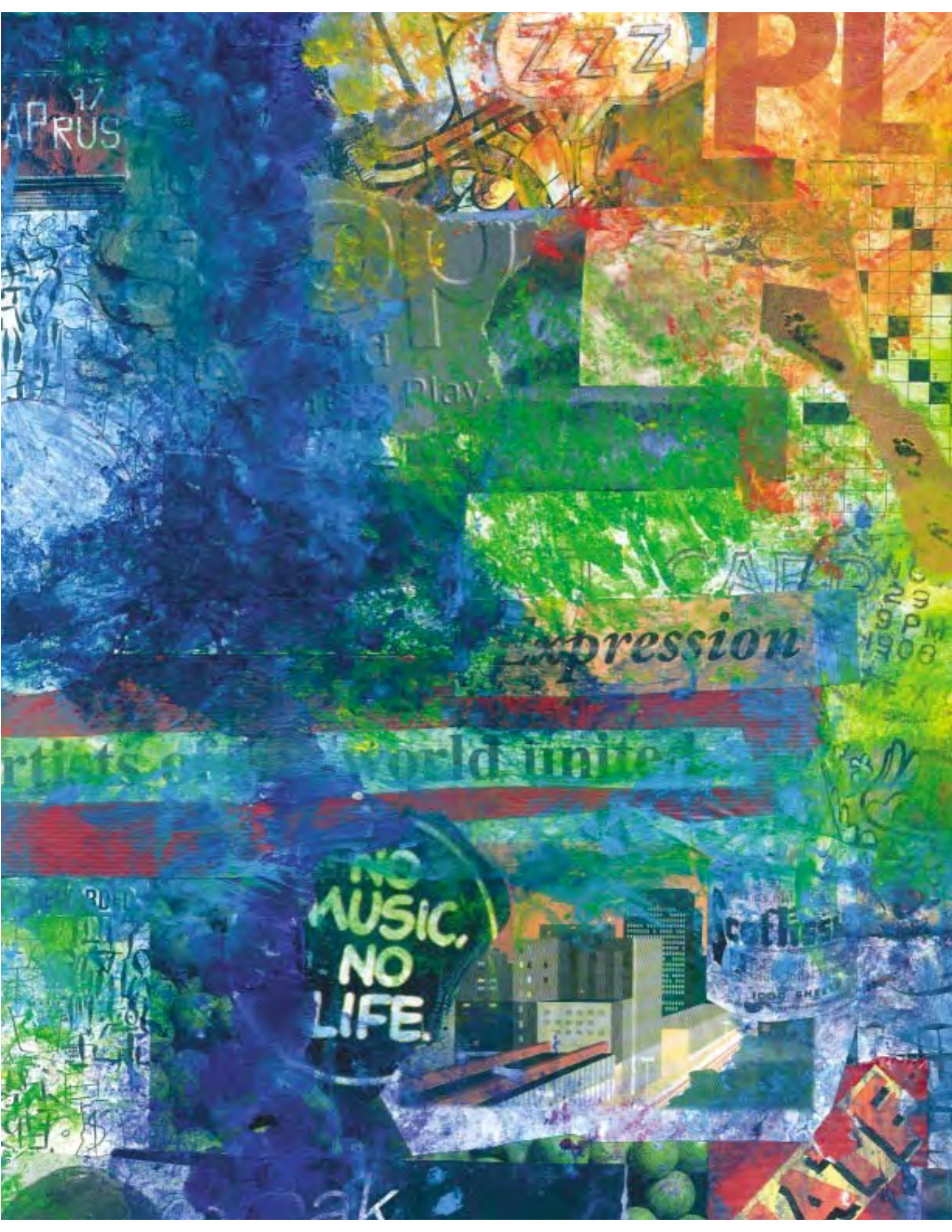
#### ASHLEY WILSON (Greenwood)

Ashley is influenced by Toni Morrison and wants to study psychology. "Life is too short and an eternity too long."

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