Southern Voices 2005

Southern Voices

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Table of Contents

Short Stories Ashley Jefcoat Dear Boy

Addie Leak Beautiful

Cssays Farshad Chowdhury Hint of Frugality

> Rebekah Garrison Dinner Table Church Service

Trev Lyons Playin for the Sanctified ...

Ashley Mackay Simple Rain-walk Slip Slidin' Away

Rodney Morgan A Closed Mouth Don't Get Fed

Poems Laura Chaires Sweet Nothings

> Larry Hawkins 1+1=1

> Kristin Klaskala Cotton Picker

> Addie Leak Les Yeux

> Ashley Mackay March of Waves Waterfall

> Hayley Maxwell Dauphin Island, Alabama. On Display

> **Bess McCafferty** Core of the Contemporary Character . Mexico

In Memoriam

Judith Anne Morris 1942-2005

"And gladly would she learn, and gladly teach."



Le Debut, Watercolor Cassandre Man-Bourdon

6	Elizabeth Wayne Making Waves3
13	Caitlin Wolfe Ends of Goodbye31
42	Willow Nero The Longest Road to Home40
e.36	Klint Peebles Feline Philosophy9
46	Khadijah Ransom The Blues Is Alright29
27 34	Elizabeth Wayne Hair11
	Emily Williams Eating Balled Chicken on a Boht17
19	Jimmy Williams "Give It To Me, Son…" 45
23	Willow Nero Sarah May38 The Last Lament
23 10	Sarah May
10	Sarah May
10	Sarah May
10 8	Sarah May
10 8 10 24	Sarah May
10 8 10 24 25 16	Sarah May

Making Waves

Aut	Amanda Dew Cocker Spaniel21	Kristin Klaskala The Hunter23
	Jonathan DuPont A Desert Scene	Addie Leak Spirit13
	Rebekah Garrison A Certain Shade of Green22 Starmana lip-gloss boost in your America27Andy Guan Faith15 Marilyn Feeling Sexy44	Madison LaFleur Elisabeth
	Clarence Holmes Car 18	Geometric Shapes Still Life
Photography		
Photography	Hannah Bruce12Rover12Bee on Flattened Coneflower24Bumblebee on Shiny Flower24Buzz24Spring24View through the Stone Window24Popsicle Sticks26	Willow NeroFallGreen Oranges24The Cows41Amanda NovotnyCalifornia Waterfall25Half-dome37
Photography	Rover12Bee on Flattened Coneflower24Bumblebee on Shiny Flower24Buzz24Spring24View through the Stone Window24	Fall21Green Oranges24The Cows41Amanda Novotny California Waterfall25

Laura Beth Moore

he clock strikes 7:30 a.m. as Charlene turns on the neon "Open" light illuminating the space around the window of the New Image Beauty Salon. It won't be long before Rhonda comes-her first customer of the day. Charlene grabs a mirror hanging from a nail near the door and checks her hair and makeup. "No one wants their hair done by a woman who looks as if she's been through the storm and back now, do they?" She looks down at Trudy, her collie who whimpers at her feet. After a few adjustments to the scarf tied around her neck, Charlene takes the broom into her arms and sweeps the linoleum floor of her shop, removing the discarded hair from the day before. With motherly care, Charlene tidies the neutralizing shampoos,

scented conditioners, rattrail combs, curling irons, oil sprays, and styling gels that clutter her hair station. She uses the last of the window cleaner on the large mirror hanging in her stall and makes a mental note to buy more. Noticing their dull appearance, Charlene moves across the room and wipes all three of her dryers

A7

"'The world would be a better place if we all just made waves, Charlene, not

until they glisten. Though the dryers are old and tearing, she doubts any of the newer models would be as trustworthy. Next to the dryers is a wooden door with the word "Bathroom" stickered on it in fancy calligraphy. Charlene ducks her head in to make sure there is enough toilet paper and liquid soap. Seeing that there is, decides to water the plants that hang in the front of her shop. Last, she plugs in her most prized possession: a motion panorama of a beach scene which, whenever she plugs it in, makes soothing noises as the animated ocean splashes onto the shore. Charlene wants the

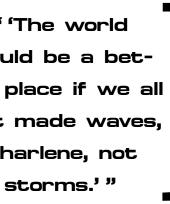
and washed it with her favorite scented shampoo. Ocean Breeze. Then it made Charlene giggle when Sherry dried her hair off with a towel and let it droop over her eyes so she couldn't see. Charlene felt so safe once Sherry began talking that it didn't hurt when she combed the tangles out of her naturally kinky hair. Sherry seemed to possess a power of mind, as if by combing hair she freed Charlene from her deepest of fears.



First Place, Short Story Competition The Chris Read Award for Fiction

panorama to be the first thing her customers see when they walk into her shop. Mesmerizing waves. It had been six years since she bought her own hair salon, and though it is modest, she couldn't have loved it more.

Charlene always wanted to do hair ever since she was little. She remembered those visits to the hair salon as a child and how excited she was to see her beautician, Sherry. Sherry was a mystery. She was slender with long wavy hair that fell like fluffed flapcakes well below her back—a trait she got from her mother who was a Choctaw Indian. But that was all anyone really knew about her. A few of the townsfolk said that Sherry once saved a boy from drowning by letting him hold onto her hair while she



pulled him to safetythough Sherry herself would never talk about it. She just walked to and from her salon, stopping at the grocery store for canned goods or extra conditioner.

Charlene had admired Sherry from the moment she met her. She loved the way Sherry strummed through her hair

Charlene even visited Sherry when she wasn't doing her hair. She helped Sherry around her shop, sweeping the floors and bringing magazines to her customers while they waited.

Then after hours, Sherry told stories while Charlene listened intently. There was rarely a silent moment between them.

But Charlene remembered one occasion when Sherry was unusually silent. There were no giggles or towels drooping over her eyes that day, only the sound of Sherry's comb plow- couldn't mask her parents' unhappiness, ing through Charlene's hair. Charlene grew fidgety but was too afraid to say anything. Finally Sherry spoke.

"Do you know how tides are formed?" Sherry asked. There were few lakes in Neshoba County, Mississippi, let alone an ocean. Charlene had only read about tides in her science book.

But Sherry had seen the ocean. When she was twelve years old, she said her family had won a radio contest, and as a prize they'd spent four weeks rent-free in a beach house on the Mississippi Coast.

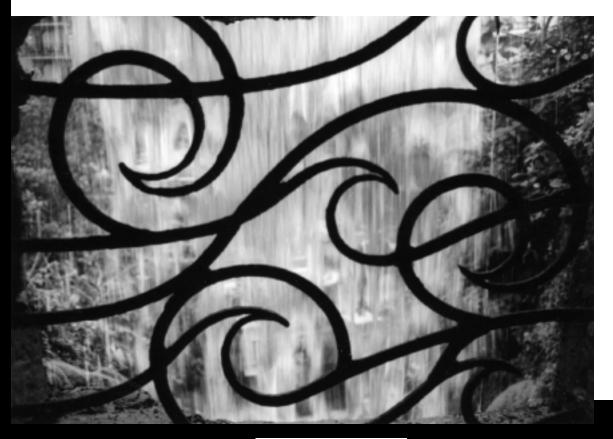
The house looked as if it were cut out of a *House and Garden* magazine, then magnified and pasted into the middle of the street. It was a blinding white beach house balanced by four equally white ten-foot stilts that came with two bathrooms, four bedrooms, and friendly neighbors. The front yard was alive from the bladed

grass to the yellow sunflowers that lined the sidewalk leading to the stairs of the front door. What Sherry liked best about the beach house was the backyard which was an open stretch of sand and ocean.

Despite the glamour, the Utopian getaway Sherry told Charlene. Sherry never understood why they were so angry at each other. Perhaps it was from the alcohol which they always drank before they started yelling. At any rate, Sherry retreated to the ocean whenever they drank, spending hours making sand castles and letting the water tickle her sunburned toes.

Charlene sat quietly, listening to Sherry's words. She didn't care much about tides but longed to break the silence.

"Well, as it turns out, the Sky and the Ocean are brother and sister," Sherry, had said, still combing Charlene's hair. "That's right. Sky is big brother and Ocean is little sister. Now, Sky and Ocean are attention-seekers and hate to be outdone by the other, especially when it comes to getting attention from us humans. So they fight like pirates over a goldwrapped chocolate bar. Now how silly is that!"



The Serene Disturbance, Photograph Jennifer Sloan

THE CHRIS READ AWARD FOR FICTION

The Chris Read Award for Fiction, instituted with the 1994 issue of Southern Voices, honors a member of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science's Class of 1991. Christopher David Read was an active leader at MSMS as a member of Emissaries, the Debate Club, and the Southern Voices staff. Chris's first love, however, was writing. Southern style. Chris often wove his Southern tales late at night. Chris would compose either on the computer or on (his favorite) the old, brown Royal typewriter he had bought from the pawn shop down 13th Street South. Faking sleep, I would watch the grin on Chris's face as he worked out the next great story. When he finished, Chris would always "wake me" and excitedly read his new story to me. He never knew that I had been hiding, watching his creative process with admiration. I was not the only one to admire Chris's work. This award stands as testimony to the admiration that we all held for Chris and his work and as a memorial to the

Southern writing tradition which Chris loved.

Chris had the potential to become a great writer. Unfortunately, Chris never reached this potential: he was killed in a car wreck on January 17, 1993. Though Chris will never attain his dream of writing a great novel, all of those who loved and respected Chris hope that the recipient of this Award, as well as all the other aspiring writers at MSMS, will achieve their dreams.

> Michael D. Goggans Class of 1991

Sherry laughed at her own joke and then became solemn again.

"Sometimes Sky was winning. That's when Ocean was away from the shore, away from us humans."

Sherry had parted Charlene's hair and began to French braid her hair row by row until her head looked like a field of cornstalks. Sherry called them "cornrows." "Then Ocean threw a fit and told Earth, their mother. Now, Mother Earth was no one to mess with! She sent one of her Earthquakes to reprimand Sky. Sky was so upset that he carelessly pushed his sister back, causing her to rush onto the shore. That's a hurricane. For weeks, people were afraid to come outside. Needless to say, neither one of them were happy."

Sherry had stopped mid-braid, and then continued. "So then, they made a truce. Sure did. They said, 'Why don't we share the attention?' And you know what they made?" She had looked intensely at Charlene. "Waves. Nice waves that soothed your whole body and made you feel all warm inside. The world would be a

The shop bell rang, startling Charlene back to the present. Rhonda bustles through the shop door, bringing her children along with her. "Hey, Ms. Charlene, how ya' doin'?" She slumps into the nearest chair while three figures fly past her to sit on the spinning chairs.

"I'm fine," Charlene says, still thinking about her long-ago conversation with Sherry. After chastising her children, Rhonda directs her comments to Charlene. "I hope ya' don' mind I'm a lil' late, but I'm exhausted! I been working all day every day, and Willie ain't had a job since that last downsize." She eyes her kids. "And they won't act right. Put that down!" Rhonda's boys hide Charlene's hot curlers which they've been using as swords behind their backs. Rhonda looks back at Charlene and puts her head into her hands. "I just wish I knew what to do."

Thoughtful, Charlene motions Rhonda to sit at her station and begins combing her hair. "How about waves?"

better place if we all just made waves, Charlene, not storms."



Dear Boy

Ashley Jefcoat

Second Place, Short Story Competition

Dear Boy, I thought you'd like a letter.

Your girlfriend hates you, and you won't pick up your cell phone because it's pulsepulse-pulsing at you in a rhythm that means "Yes, I hate you, come get your clothes." You haven't heard the message I left you, the invitation to a walk, a hug, a friend, but I didn't expect a quick reply. You're afraid to check the caller ID, because the responsible part of you will make you return the calls. As long as you don't know, you're safe, and your ignorance will protect your carefully constructed frame of mind.

The ignorance reflected in that soft smile and careful body language is interrupted by your absent eyes. You are my inspiration.

Did you know that for every star you're staring at, every twinkle white, there are a million moons and a thousand planets, but our little Earth is the only one with you? I want to give them to you, those solar system babies, and show you why they aren't so great, that you should look at me from time to time and stop staring out the window. Most of those stars could be gone, flashed out of existence a million years ago, but I'm right here and so are you. If you want to watch a blinking (something that's not your cell phone), then there are fireflies fly under the moon and they're doing a mating dance just for you. I'll give you them too, if you want, and a jar and a smile.

I don't want you to be afraid to answer your cell phone. I don't want you to come get

your clothes. I want to give you the earth, and let you rule if it would so please you. It breaks my heart when you cry, because I watched you gather yourself before class, and I'll watch you pull yourself apart afterwards.

I'm afraid of this inspiration, and I'm afraid of you, but I don't know anything else to be besides in love with you, and I'm scared of that, too. I'm scared of love and kisses but if I get them, if you give me, maybe I won't be so frightened, and I can be happy and make you likewise. I want to give you the heavens because you deserve to be a god among them.

Just thought you should know.



12122/111

A, Photograph Ryder Taff

Broken Seal

At first a pretty package Frozen in cellophane Untouched; untainted; untarnished Defenseless But you broke the seal And got less than expected Disappointed I'm not perfect You try to wipe off the grime Is it so hard to believe in stains? In scars? Instead of radiant diamond You got a cheap crystal ball Out the window, flying, falling Shattering I hope the shards of my heart Give you a flat tire

Ford Daisy, Silver Gelatin Print, Second Place Photograph, Art Competition Ashlee Oliver





Caitlin Wolfe

7

Cotton Picker

My fingers bleed And the cotton king— Keeps pushin' us on, But my fingers Ain't nothin' Compared to my beatin's So I's ignore the pain— And keep my back bent over And my face—from the sun I can only stand straight in church Even then-my dress'll pull On my beatin's

My fingers bleed— And the cotton king— Keeps pushin' us on Long white bags I wear...like a wedding dress That I ain't never had— The bags get caught in ol' cotton stems— And snags and tugs, like my chilrin's hands My chilrin's faces—what keep me goin' Keep me goin' every day I put up with the man And pick his cotton In the sun-the heat I'd die out here If it weren't for my chilrin'— So I ignores the pain

Kristin Klaskala

Cuz I serve—the cotton king

Feline Philosophy

"Jeancy Feast! Fancy Feast!" I announce, and a dozen purring felines suddenly dart out of the woodwork. Pouring thick, sliced beef and gravy from a tiny round can, I notice each furry tail quiver with excitement. I spoon the delicacy into tiny bowls stamped with cat faces on the bottoms as each of my cats fights to ing, Tiger once again meows into my ear while lick the dribbling gravy from my fingers. My Siamese, Sam, lunges at the waiting meat as if it were a prize from one of his nightly prowls. An orange ball of fur, Pumpkin, quietly chews each delicious morsel, making certain to savor every bite before another sly feline gulps it down. Taking note of each individual personality with- I try to walk. Through Tiger's meows, I obtain a in all of my unique pets, I marvel at the puzzled expressions on each whiskered face while uttering nonsense as I clean the mess left by the empty can of Fancy Feast.

Although language is considered to be unique to the human race, it is definitely a reality in the world of cats as well. Gleefully singing, "Punkin' Skunkin'," to the tune of an unknown melody, Pumpkin gazes at me with sharp, penetrating green eyes, no doubt hearing the nickname with distaste, and focuses once again on his lunch. Frosty, a beautiful white feral cat rescued from a nearby hospital, casts a quick glance at me and then to the sink while chiming a soft "mew," telling me that he wants water, or that the water already in the dish isn't quite up to his standards. With a swift swish of a tail or a chorus of meows, I immediately become a makeshift butler, serving the needs of my pets in response to their ability to speak.

Nevertheless, through all of the chores crammed into each day caring for my charges, I never tire of the labor, enjoying the company of a cat on my lap as I read a French history with a rhythmic purr in the background. Sometimes, however, my cats can be quite frank in their wishes. As I play Scott Joplin's Maple Leaf Rag, Tiger saunters to the base of the piano. As he hisses an aggravated meow, I know to cease my music so he may sleep peacefully. Although this

On A Summer's Day-

Flowers Bloom Up out of the ground they push In the sun

Jacie Williams



Crowded Beauty, Photograph Christy Dyess

Klint Peebles

escapade may sound peculiar, probably absurd, it indeed pays off in the long run when he leaps onto the piano stool, nestling beside me while I play Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* in the late evening.

Bounding onto my bed in the early mornpawing at my hair under a fluffy pillow.

Despite his attempts to wake me from my sleep, I simply roll over onto my stomach and drift off to my dreams. Finally, Tiger's efforts fulfill their purpose, and I get out of bed only to be tripped by another cat weaving in and out of my legs as wealth of information about the status of breakfast, cleanliness of the litter boxes, and an assessment of how many strokes on the back of the neck I owe to each cat to fulfill my daily quota. In many cases, I hear more talking from my pets than I do at the local hair salon or from friends at school. Even though I may not understand all of the distinctive phrases voiced by my cats, the unique language of my felines does not go unnoticed. Finding myself murmuring words I wouldn't normally speak, each encounter with my pets turns into an interesting, and often awkward, situation. Through my steadfast, furry friends, I learn about everything in life: from death and sickness to joy and the reasons for existing on Earth. Owing more than catnip and a devotion to animal welfare to my cats, I learn more from them than many individuals glean in a lifetime from sources outside of the animal world.

Removing the shiny metal top from yet another can of *Fancy Feast*, the resounding echo of breakfast attracts each cat to his own dish. With a broad smile and a throbbing heart, I look down at the herd in front of me, grateful to be a part of their antics and daily surprises. Later, during a fascinating history class at school, I glance at my shirt sleeve and notice a solitary clump of fur. Suddenly, I can't wait to go home.

Away from Here, Photograph Christy Dyess

1+1=1

The intensity of the connection of being intertwined to one entity yet separation continually looming over the entire situation makes one contemplate... the severity of losing another yet the same, the half that makes whole the void unfilled for an eternity that when finally supplied with the mold of the perfect combination, the attraction... so intense fulfilling the need the want of both beings perhaps being too much blindly consuming the unmatched strength of the merging of the two into one where maturation was so hastily found hastily applied hastily used that separation could be the complete demolition of the minds that were connected by chance and... brought together for the complete alteration of them both...



Les Yeux

Crazy curls hiding glasses, hiding eyes— Brown eyes, kind eyes The strength of a thousand years Buried in a measured glance Someday-When I have lived as much, Loved as long As my mama— I want eyes like hers.

Addie Leak

Hair

(spent many tearful Saturday nights as a **U**young girl while my mother combed my hair. On those dreadful nights she would wash my hair and afterwards use her sturdiest comb to untangle my matted hair, then plait it while my hair was still wet. I was a tender-headed soul, and pain went through my head at each yank. Most times, however, I was lifted by the comb. Other times, Momma's comb would break from the tension, but unfortunately for me, she carried extras. It hurt so much that I begged and pleaded for my Momma to cut off all of my hair. But she only said, "Now you don't want to do that! Besides, there are only three more to go." I sighed, knowing the only relief would be whenever she finished. Then the next day she decorated my plaits with odd-



Larry Hawkins

Elizabeth Wayne

Third Place, Essay Competition

shaped berets that matched the itchy, uncomfortable seven-layer dress that she also picked out for me to wear to church that Sunday. I felt like one of those dolls people put on display.

Worse than washing and combing my hair was when Momma would press it. Starting at five o'clock in the morning, Momma led me to the kitchen where two chairs set near the stove. She lit one eye on the stove and placed a metal comb on it, allowing it to heat. My stomach sank from watching vapors rise from the comb. Terrified, I watched her pick up the comb and wave the comb in the air. Although I knew she meant no harm, she reminded me of lion tamer. Blowing on the comb, she ran it through my hair, turning my natural kinks into straight strands. I was afraid for dear life,

> Elisabeth, Pen and Ink Madison LaFleur

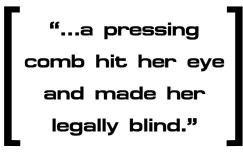
squinting my eyes and hunching my shoulders whenever I sensed the intense heat from the comb on my head. Despite my Mom's confident tones, I crossed my fingers whenever she came close to eyes or the back of my head

heat. It didn't. In fact, it was one of the most painless hair procedures I'd ever experienced. I remember looking in the mirror and instead of seeing the familiar mass of wool on my head, my hair hung loose, straight and free. I jumped

where I couldn't be guaranteed of her movements. To ease my fears, she told stories about when she was younger and her mother pressed her hair. This only made things worse seeing as one of her stories was about how a pressing comb hit her eye and made her legally

blind. After an hour and a half of pressing, Momma would be finished and I would be safe for another week.

When I was older, my mother finally decide ed I could get a perm, something that would permanently make my hair straight. By then, my only question was would it hurt or involve

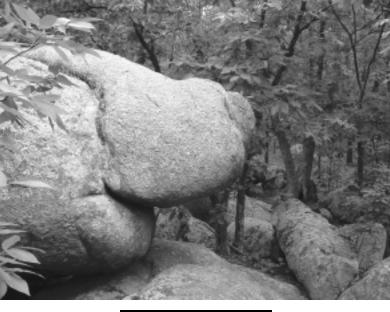


more nights of untangling and hot combs. What my mother neglected to tell me was the constant upkeep that it required. I found myself spending hours sitting under an uncomfortable hair dryer. My hair always did have a mind of

for joy at the thought of no

its own.

Over the years, I have grown an appreciation for my hair. Though it has been a great task to keep it in order, I have grown fond of the memories that are connected with my hair. I only hope that one day, I have a little girl with unruly hair too.



Rover, Photograph Hannah Bruce

Beautiful

Honorable Mention, Short Story Competition

"**Go** what do ya think about *The Return* of the King? Pretty nifty, huh?" It was a deceptively sunny afternoon. A sporadic breeze whipped through the bitter cold and ruffled the long, brown hair of the rosy-cheeked girl who strode casually along the cracked sidewalk next to Main Street.

"Yep. I liked it." Her companion, a tall, solidly built boy, nodded bemusedly. "Not as good as the book, of course..."

"Well, of course, but that Orlando Bloom-whoo!"

George laughed, and Tess smiled. She liked making him laugh. "Yeah...'

They were only friends, but to look at

them, one would never guess. George was extremely shy; Tess was one of the few close friends he had, and those friends he had, he treated with the utmost care. He was always telling Tess how wonderful she was. It bothered her sometimes; she didn't think he liked her—she certainly didn't want him to, so she determinedly ignored it.

He looked over at her, his gentle blue eyes hidden behind the glare on his thick glasses. "Legolas. Right? That's what Mom and Jen said. I had to listen to them through the *whole* movie." He grinned. "Every time he came onscreen they'd sigh dramatically. Katie is starting to do it, too. I guess even ten-year old girls aren't immune to crushes on movie stars."

Tess giggled. "Right. I remember the whole Harry Potter thing. And the Ron thing. And the Ewan McGregor thing."

Tess waved at a passing car, beaming. "Huh?" she asked absentmindedly, still looking after the car as it turned a corner. He tried again. "...the situation with Tristan—are you okay?"

There was a pause, and Tess's face darkened with hurt. She jammed her hands into the pockets of her pink woolen trenchcoat. "I don't know. I guess-well, he still hasn't really spoken to me. I'm trying so hard to forget him. I'm just so tired of feeling used."

"I'm sorry," George grimaced. "You

Tess nodded sadly. "I wonder sometimes if maybe he doesn't like me anymore because I've gained weight. I hate myself for thinking



"Mhm. She's quite the little romantic." He paused and nervously flattened his thick, curly, dark brown hair. "Now—I have a question for you."

"What's that?"

"What about this—"

shouldn't have had to go through all this."



Spirit, Encaustic Addie Leak

thing I did that made him change his mind about me? Am I not pretty in his eyes anymore?"

George frowned and glared at the sidewalk as they walked, finally looking up at her for me..." with frustration in his eyes. "That's why I'm so upset with the boy. He is *manipulative*, Tess. Even if he *wasn't* an irresponsible party animal, I'd worry about your getting involved with him. He twists your thoughts; he'd wind up hurting you. Dangit—he *is* hurting you. Look at me." He reached over to pull Tess' chin up. "You are beautiful. And don't you ever voice that made her pause. think otherwise, okay?"

ing herself from his grip, and shoved away irritation. "Okay..." What else can you say to that, really, she wondered. She'd always been

able to talk about guy problems with George, but in the past few months, he'd become a lot moodier. She thought there was some family stuff going on that he might be worried about, but surely-whatever it waswasn't *that* big a deal. She shrugged it off and changed the subject. "So how about college?"

"How about it? You mean, where should you go?"

"Well, yeah." She rolled her eyes. "It's only six more months till I graduate."

"I don't know, Tess." Suddenly he sounded very tired. "Wherever you want to, I suppose."

"Hmmm... Maybe Dartmouth. Or MIT." She turned to him, playful again-not noticing his lack of enthusiasm. "Whatcha think? I bet I could do it!" She rubbed her nose with a

it, but—I can't help but wonder. Is there some- mittened hand. It had lost almost all feeling; it was definitely about time to start heading back to someplace with central heating.

> George shrugged indifferently. "Why not MIT? You have a 4.0, better than I could say

"Oh, but you never had to worry about it, did you—just a year at the community college. You're not even *in* school this coming semester."

"I might be going back next fall." He glanced at her, his blue eyes cool.

"Really?" There was something in his

"My parents' divorce will be finalized by Tess stepped back onto the grass, dislodg- then. Mom, Jen, Katie, and I are moving to Pasadena. I'm going to start at CalTech as a sophomore in August."

Tess's insides felt as numb as her

nose. "I didn't know your parents were getting a divorce."

He looked at her for a long time, his expression unreadable. "I told you." Tess stopped walking abruptly, and there was

another awkward pause as she digested this information. "Oh." She didn't know what to say. She felt horrible; how could she have forgot-

ten something like that? And how could he be leaving? She'd always expected that he'd still be at home when she came back to visit. It was bad enough that all her other friends were leaving for college too. "I'm—I'm sorry, George..."

"It's okay. You've been... preoccupied." There was only a slight tinge of bitterness in his voice. "You don't need to worry with my problems; you have your own."

She felt as though she'd just been pinched hard. She did have her own problems, but did that mean she shouldn't care about her friend's?

George's jaw softened a little when he saw the expression on her face, and he spoke again, "But really... Don't worry about it. I'm sure everything will be okay. I can write you from Pasadena. Just focus on getting into the college of your dreams, okay?" He took a deep breath and smiled for her. "I know you'll make a fantastic chemical engineer."

Tess' gaze wandered to the weathervane on a nearby roof, and she stared blankly at it for a moment, lost in thought. What would she do without George? He was the one who always made it to her math tournaments, the one who always volunteered to babysit for her when she double-booked dating and a job. He would never take any money for it, either; she didn't know anyone else who would do that for her. He was the one who had sent her a carnation that year Valentine's Day came



"'You don't need to worry with my problems; you have your own.'"

without a boyfriend for her; the card attached had called her "Evenstar." He knew she'd be feeling lonely; and that flower, more than anything, had cheered her up. But what had she contributed to their friendship?

George let her think for a moment. He shoved his hands in his pockets, and stood silent, watching the cars crawl by. Finally, he spoke again, impulsively: "I love you."

Tess whipped her head back around, startled and slightly panicked. Now was not the time for mushy romantic revelations!

He didn't mean it that way, though; she could tell immediately. She gave him a shaky smile; maybe she should quit being so paranoid about whether he liked her or not. She didn't deserve a friend like him. To be perfectly honest, she'd probably never find someone to marry that would treat her as well as he did. Maybe life was like that, though.

"I love you, too..."

Faith Oil Second Place Painting, Art Competition Andy Guan



Abandoned Chic, Photograph Christy Dyess

Dauphin Island, Alabama

 \boldsymbol{v}_{igid} wood 2x4's, likely of the staunch swanky Trees, born 'neath loose soil, shell and sand, latent with moisture

on cycle. Now, conceal, or attempt To—this Mother earth. As my hooker boots are caught in the cracks. Winds

howl, as if to laugh, cunning, tho' playful. My legs are crossed, jeans pressedhair gone to frizz by this...Ocean.

I've given up in pursuit! Locals, goiters sand soaked Skin, scrawny limbs and dialect more British than Southern.

Distinctive in talk. Acting with tender precision and lack of haste. They rock while Tearing crab cakes, breaking lobster digits;

could ever I take comfortin the earthly, humble Arms of coastal scalawags, pirates by my weak Eye-

Verses, well fed Bible-belt rednecks, with their gurgling truck pipes and smug, boiling Testosterone?

Hayley Maxwell

Eating Balled Chicken on a Boht

Emily Williams

Honorable Mention, Essay Competition

ave you ever eaten "balled chicken?" What about a "veggietabel?" Or perhaps taken a ride on a "boht?" Do you say, "Yes, sir," even when your dad is being a pain in the neck? If you answered yes to all of these questions, you are hereby declared mentally unstable and will be immediately transferred to a secure facility with soft white rooms on a tiny island in the middle of the Antarctic Circle. Well, maybe not, but you would be close enough: you would be a member of my family.

Only my family members outside of Mississippi have identifiable accents. All of my Mississippian family lives on the devel-

My grandmother is also from Grand oped Gulf Coast, so we do not have much of Cayman, but she has lost most of her accent. an accent. We do, however,

find certain words or phrases that are unique to one or two members of the family. One such phrase is "balled chicken." Uncle William, my mom's cousin, was visiting from the Caribbean island Grand Cayman and heard Dad

"What is this balled chicken? Do you ball it up?"

talk about the food he was preparing. He then asked incredulously, "What is this *balled* chicken? Do you ball it up? Or is it bald chicken, and you cook it without any feathers? But all chicken that's being cooked wouldn't have any feathers.... Do you cook it without [seasonings]?" For a moment, everyone was confused; his Caymanian accent had made the "balled chicken" comment even more

16

indiscernible. Suddenly it hit me, and I was holding onto the countertop for support while laughing. I managed to gasp out, "Uncle William, he's saying *boiled* chicken." Of course, Uncle William is not without his own strange pronunciation. People from the Cayman Islands have quite an unusual accent: British mixed with Jamaican. He always asks about eating some "balled chicken" whenever he calls, but we just reply by asking about "deh boht." This is his way of saying the boat. He says "Machew" when calling for his son Matthew, and his oldest son, Willie the Third, is "Willie da Tud."

Even so, she is particular in her pronunciation of certain words. She says squirrel as "squirr-ehl" and enunciates every syllable of *vegetable*, making it sound like "veggietabel." She also makes up her own words to songs when she cannot remember the

real lyrics, which is most of the time. I remember once when we were playing old songs on her record player, she sang about "Sister Ritasmarter-than-you" instead of "Sister Berthabetter-than-you" and that she was "hooked on a meaning" instead of "hooked on a feeling." My sister also has a tendency to do this; she used to "play for Him on 'flat' tambourines" instead of *glad* tambourines in an often-sung

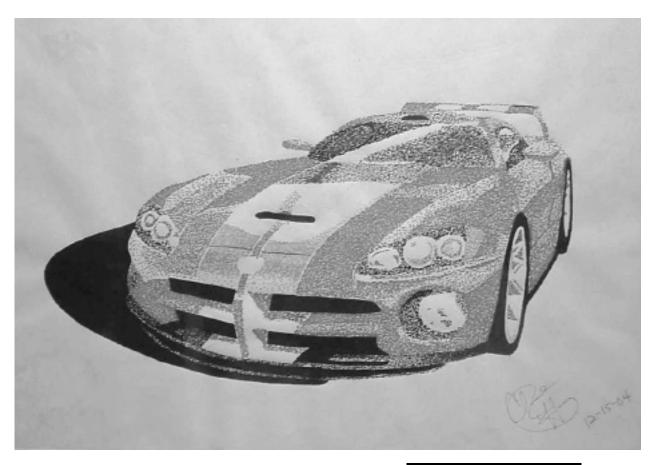


church hymn. Of course, neither will admit that she is wrong in her choice of words.

Aunt Diane's parents moved to Michigan when she was young, and her children are growing up there now. While I was visiting in the summertime, I met my cousin's friends. They were all between sixteen and nineteen years of age, my generation, and found my lack of a Southern accent highly unusual. After a few hours, they became used to the phenomenon, only to lose composure again when I finally said "y'all." They were even more incredulous when they heard me talking with my dad because I kept saying, "Yes, sir," and, "No, sir." They asked if he was very strict. I blinked at

them dazedly for a few moments before I finally realized what they were talking about, and I told them that manners had been drilled into me since I could talk, as with most people in the South. I believe to this day that they still have no clue what I was talking about.

The way people speak can reveal a great deal about their lives, whether it is by the words they say or how they say them. The spoken word can reveal much about personality and culture. From the Caribbean Sea to the Great Lakes, my family exhibits a lot of both.



Car, Stipple/Ink, Second Place Drawing, Art Competition Clarence Holmes

"A Closed Mouth Don't Get Fed"

y throat was swelling and it was get-ting harder to breathe. My vision blurred as I fought away the tears of shame; I heard the mocking laughter. This wasn't a new experience. Shame and low self-worth always followed my chronic stuttering. Being called on to speak in class was the greatest fear in the world, because before the words could penetrate the bottom of my esophagus, my tongue would stall and vibrate in the middle of my mouth as it struggled to produce a coherent sound.

My mother made it a habit to enroll me in any speech therapy program that she could find. I hated going to those sessions. It made me always noticed when I would find an out-offeel as if I had a disease that needed to be cured

or a severe physical handicap. During those long sessions I was shown "mouth drills" and learned somewhat helpful tips on how to control my idling tongue. My problem was mostly words that began with R's and

"...my name didn't come out as 'Rodney' but as 'r-r-hod-ney.' "

S's. The word drills and rolling tongue exercises role of the protective big brother. After one never truly helped. It was spontaneity that caused the stutter to occur; during the sessions was constantly prepared and ready to speak. It was in the classroom that I couldn't say my own name. As the words slurred I would try to breathe, and my name didn't come out as "Rodney" but as "r-r-hod-ney." The best advice I was given was to clench my hands as tightly as I could and concentrate on looking into the person's eyes. This proved helpful once I actually started to talk to people.

The greatest antagonist to my stutter was my brother, who lived with our grandmother. He somehow found time in his busy schedule of pulling ladies, ditching school, and causing

It took a while for this concept to soak into my mind, but I soon decided to drop my shroud of self-pity and fear. In class I volunteered for every question, joined in every conversation, and refused to keep my mouth closed, so much so that I was soon sent home with reports of talking too much. My mother didn't care; she was just happy that I had decided to speak at all.

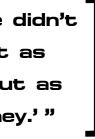
Rodney Morgan

Second Place, Essay Competition

trouble to laugh heartily as I would attempt to talk to him. He would then try to make me feel better by saying that he had once stuttered and that I would grow out of it. I never was the type of person to put my faith in false hope. Even the constant speech programs and exercises I was thrown into did little good. Since I was the only child in my household and didn't have many friends, I mostly kept to myself.

Compound my isolation with a chronic stutter, and you get a shy, scared-of-the-world little boy who never speaks to anyone.

As he and I both grew older, however, my brother started to take me places with him. He the-way place and hang my head low to avoid

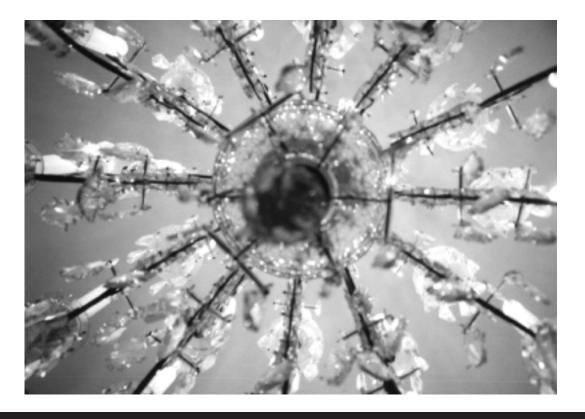


any verbal interaction with anyone. If I talked to people, then they would surely find out my terrible secret and make sounds of sputtering cars and stalling engines to humiliate me. My brother would then have to run in and play the

such occasion he decided to share some of his vast knowledge with me: "A closed mouth don't get fed, Rodney," he said to me, "and you can't learn to talk good by not talking. Like anything, getting rid of a stutter takes time and practice."

Years later, I no longer attend any speech programs and have managed to stay in a social circle. Talking to people without fear has been hard, but I continue the fight and can truly say I have won more battles than I've lost. "A closed mouth don't get fed," so I make sure that I get plenty of food. I attend the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science, where conversing with others plays a pivotal role in life; in fact, gaining invitation to the school entailed a personal interview which I got through without incident. Delivering presentations is also a key component to most of the MSMS classes. These presentations are graded not only on the material being delivered but also on how the information is given to the audience. Fluent and proper pronunciation of words is a must to giv-

ing a presentation. I have discovered that moving my hands and arms as I speak makes the words flow smoother, as well as clenching my hands together. I visualize that my words are being wrapped around my arms as I speak them, and then I give them to my audience. During my younger years I was afraid to ask for help from a teacher, fearing that I would stutter too much. Now that I am at MSMS I see that learning depends on conversing with the teachers. Whenever I need help I do not hesitate to make an appointment with a teacher to discuss the day's lesson. As my tongue continues to pester me, I try to grin and bear it, but I refuse to keep my mouth closed and deny the fulfilling nourishment that I deserve.



Oblique, Photograph Jennifer Sloan

Yellow House

With her hands, she built a house Nail by nail, Board against board Until all was finished, nothing left but paint She chose yellow, "So the sun will never set on us," she said.

With her knees, she bent, Cleaning Mrs. Christine's clothes Then leaving through the back door to cook at Mr. Washington's Never complaining, only praying

With her heart, she loved her seventeen children, Helped them grow, become strong

With her voice, she commanded life into The family garden, The mailman, The neighbors, Even the animals

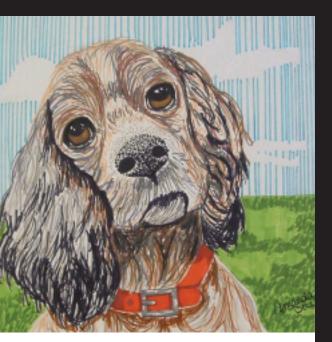
With time, she aged, Her steps slowed, The yellow paint began to chip away

Her knees sank—couldn't bend Her heart, though patient, Had been hurt many times; Her voice craved a tall drink of water

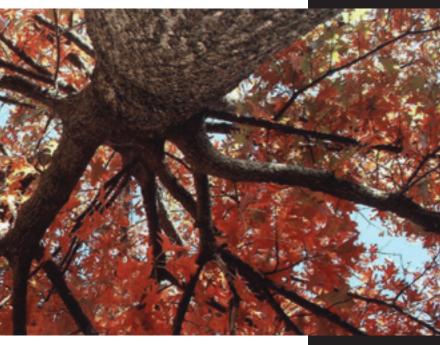
But with her mind, She willed those around her to go on, Gave security in her wisdom

With her last steps, she died, Burning in the yellow house built so long ago On the day when the sun Gave way to night

Elizabeth Wayne



Cocker Spaniel, Pen and Ink Amanda Dew



Fall Third Place Photograph, Art Competition Willow Nero

21

A Certain Shade of Green, Acrylic Third Place Painting, Art Competition **Rebekah Garrison**

Core of the Contemporary Character

"All we need is love," the astute voices sing, So we're busy reading Playboy magazines. Undiscovered is Solomon's lovely Song, We replace lust for love we immensely long. All the pretty flowers wither in the sun, Despite the diversions of all the great fun. Proverbs from Great Kings of Ancient Golden Times, Come after fortune cookies and nursery rhymes. Just remember to take your pill every day, Don't trip really hard, just slowly waste away. Speak poorly of your sisters to heal the pain, That comes from your jealous pursuits, all in vain. Let the shallowness sink ever so deeply, Though the birds and the bees call out so sweetly. Beautiful children, their smiles soon fade away, They cry at night and remain quiet at day.

Bess McCafferty





Starman, Acrylic Rebekah Garrison

Sweet Nothings *W*hisper

you hypnotize me, Paris I love you at dusk your starry, luxurious, prickly rain the bells of Notre Dame, my Quasimodo and I am Esmerelda

you deceive me, love I kiss you at sunrise your wind in my hair I feel your grass between my toes and I am falling

you are ruthless in your silence you glitter you are my infinity, darling Paris I vanish sweetly and I am twirling in your arms

I am coming back to you, Paris you are my Sacre Coeur you pulse never-endingly along the banks of the Seine and I am floating

always

I am your indigo

Laura Chaires





Mexico

Grassy mountains hold me in With the valleys of cool fruits, Burros and dark-skinned children, Happiness—no earthly cause. Illogical, I forget The paved American streets, For the golden barrios With deeply broken windows. Realizing my beauty Because of the compliments Of handsome, hard-working men Who smile in the pick-up trucks And find time every Sunday To worship the Lord at Mass. I'm filled with humility— Finally, I'm finding time For Sagrada Biblia. Using Miguel's guitara, I sing sweet Spanish praises.

Bess McCafferty

Honorable Mention, Poetry Competition

The Hunter, Acrylic Kristin Klaskala

Reflections Watercolor, First Place Painting, Art Competition Cassandre Man-Bourdon





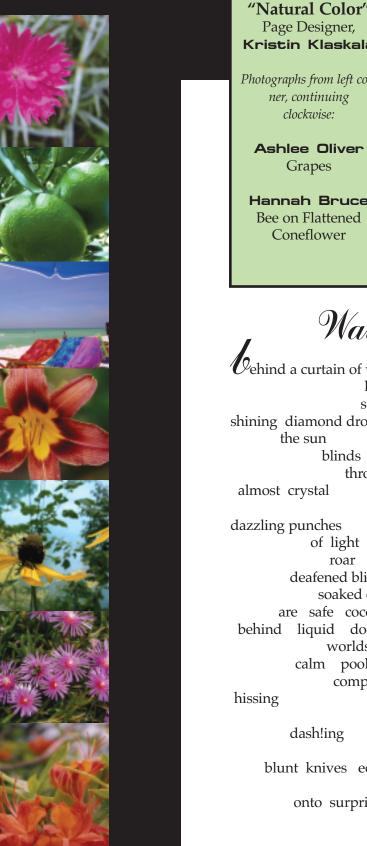
March of Waves

Corrents of tiny escapes of air clear and blue

grey blue green finger-like protrusions with their frothy white collars creeping up the rough sand hills stealing the golden flash and leaving a dull brown line extending shakily stretches —- stretches across of seaweed littered land

Ashley Mackay





"Natural Color" Page Designer, Kristin Klaskala Hannah Bruce View through the Stone Window

Photographs from left corner, continuing clockwise:

Grapes

Ashlee Oliver Flower

Willow Nero Green Oranges

Christy Dyess Hannah Bruce Bee on Flattened Coneflower

Ecstasy Jennifer Sloan Clandestine

Waterfall

behind a curtain of water lacv spray shining diamond drops materialize the sun blinds through his almost crystal magnifiers dazzling punches of light roar deafened blinded soaked evening caves are safe cocoons of rapture behind liquid doors worlds lie calm pools complimenting hissing eternity drips dash!ing splash blunt knives echo (ping) echo (ping) onto surprised cheek turning lakes

chaos exhilarating into mermaid (siren lullabies) calm of

Ashley Mackay

Hannah Bruce Buzz

Hannah Bruce Bumblebee on Shiny Flowers

Addie Leak The Merits of a Long Hike

Hannah Bruce Spring

Christy Dyess Bleeding with Season Ashlee Oliver Violet

Ashlee Oliver Pansy

Laura Beth Moore Memory Lane

Addie Leak Water Babies

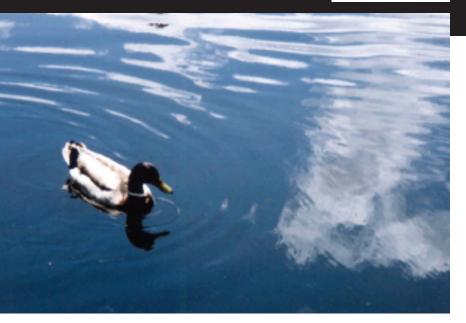
Christy Dyess Reaching for Roots



California Waterfall First Place Photograph, Art Competition Amanda Novotny



Summer on the Lake, Photograph Addie Leak





Echoes from the Lake

The eerie song of the loon, Drifts across the black expanse.

Silent waves echo back to my heart, Weeping willows caress the violet sky.

> And the song of the loon Fills the night air.

A compact boat—wooden and strong, Breaks the perfect rhythm of the water.

Clouds overhead are full, Reeds sway in the moist, thick air.

The thump of a beaver in the distance— Trees collapse and disturb the marsh.

A loon can still be heard, Its family diving under the water.

My dreams glide atop a glassy surface, As Sobek's shimmering reflection appears.

Dew gathers in whimsical clusters. Croaks are heard for miles.

A chorus of nature Celebrates another passing of twilight.

Re's chariot escorts the sun, Silence overcomes exhausted life.

The loons fade into the golden rays. And my heart waits for dusk.

Klint Peebles

Third Place, Poetry Competition

Popsicle Sticks, Photograph Hannah Bruce

Simple Rain-walk

treets shine and shimmering pools collect in the gutters. Rain dances to the tune spun by itself in a world veiled in misty grey, and I walk slowly spinning, drinking in a symphony of images and half-forgotten memories.

Family and friends slip before my mind's eye, tripping eagerly, helping the parade of meshaping memories along.

The Mississippi air hangs heavy, dripping tropically from the leaves reminding me of football games in 100 percent wool band uniforms and soccer tournaments where you have to swim through the air.

I slip out of my flip-flops and childishly splash through the chilling puddles, purposefully ignoring all I know about bacteria, because in simple pleasures ignorance is definitely bliss. My mind wanders, meandering through the sciences as I realize the hold they have on my life, bacteria being only a small portion of it. Physics' grip is especially strong with free-fall evident in the rain and force displayed by the wind. The natural world is not subtle about its physics applications. Once again, football memories crowd in reminding me of when I tried to figure out the distance traveled by the football as it was kicked at a certain angle with a set initial velocity before I realized what a nerd I was being. Now though, the memory brings a golden moment.

As I slide back into my shoes, the colors shift-a kaleidoscope of rainbow images. The rain becomes a prism. Mental pictures float by of a New Orleans jazz ensemble trip. The city was its own pinwheel of color. Sights and sounds meshed together to form a whole city alive with music and electric with jazz. Jazz competition for our little band was exhilarating

> a lip-gloss boost in your America, Acrylic Rebekah Garrison



Ashley Mackay

and my hands never stopped shaking as they held the trombone. The audience was alive and we responded to their enthusiasm. We learned so much walking those New Orleans streets. Jazz came to life before our eyes from the powder sugar-clouded air of Café du Monde to our last glimpse of a saxophonist in front of the great Mississippi, silhouetted against an orange sky.

Soft, plunking raindrops bring me back from New Orleans and I realize the poetry all around me. There are soft lines written by nature evident in the slim birch lines ahead of me, the lone joyous voice of the songbird, and the depth of the surrounding forest. Fragments of e. e. cummings and my own unfinished originals fight for attention in my cluttered mind. Feelings accompany each remembered line. "pity this busy monster, manunkind," cummings reminds me. I'm never too busy to walk in the rain. Alone, my thoughts accompany me. Zephyrs whistle through the collection of rain, and I walk on.



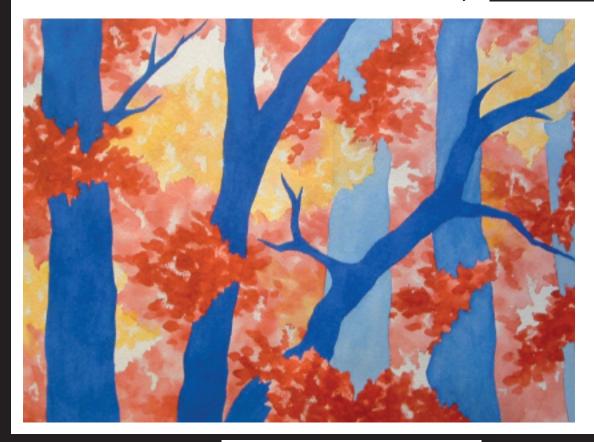
Stains

The clouds were my eyes On that rainy August morning Dropping water On my perfect black suit and my heart Pierced By the acceptance of the fact that he was gone As he lay asleep Surrounded by family and friends Covered by the grief stained Star Spangled Banner he fought for I remembered how true of a soldier he was For his country and the Lord So I smiled and kissed him goodbye Forever staining his cheek with my memory...

Quinnon Taylor



The Blue Girl, Acrylic Katrina Vizzini



Patches of Reason, Watercolor Cassandre Man-Bourdon

The Blues Is Alright

t's 7:20 a.m. on a Saturday morning and ✓ all I can hear is the ear-piercing music traveling from my daddy's radio. At first listen, it sounds like "The Thrill is Gone" by B.B. King; but when my ears fully awaken, I realize that it's really "Soul Heaven" by Johnnie Taylor. Why must playing the blues as loud as his ears

can stand be my daddy's Saturday morning routine, when all I want to do is bury myself deeper into my bed of cotton? I get out of bed to see if my momma knows about this craziness, only to find that my parents are both dancing blissfully away in the kitchen. I stand watching them twirl, and I wonder if the Mississippi Blues will have such a profound effect on me someday, but once I

"It's the blues that makes me willing to bake in the hot sun just to get a plate of fresh catfish or crawfish with an ice cold Coke."

feel my foot involuntarily keeping pace with the beat, I realize that it already has.

I have been listening to the blues ever since I could wobble on my own two feet. Every now and then I even have flashbacks where I can see myself as a little girl dancing to Bobby Blue Bland's "Member's Only." I am outside standing in the soft Delta dirt with my arms flailing crazily around me. It has just begun to rain but as long as the music plays, I dance. I can hear

Khadijah Ransom

my momma yelling, "Come on in the house, Spank, before you catch a cold." Knowing that I'm usually a very mindful child, she only says it once believing that I will listen; but something in the music seems to run away with my soul and I am too weak to fight it, that is until the bloodthirsty mosquitoes attack my caramel-col-

> ored skin and I have no choice but to run inside.

A Kodak moment of my momma and me juking at the B.B. King Homecoming Festival is also permanently engraved in my head. We are surrounded by this huge crowd of people, many of whom are under the influence of Budweiser. Michelob, or Corona. My momma tries to shield my

virgin eyes, but I know that these drunken people are just as much a part of the B.B. King Fest as we are. Since I was eight years old, I can remember them being here, drinking, juking, and just having a dirty good time. I wonder why momma drags me out to see B.B. King, who I simply think of as this old fat black man who got bored and decided to name his guitar one day. I remember saying to her, "Momma, I give my dolls and teddy bears a name all the

time. Why ain't I famous for it?" I didn't under- n't really like the blues, but there was somestand why a grown man who played some raggedy guitar was so famous.

It wasn't until I became a teenager that I was finally able to relate to the Mississippi Blues. It was the weekend of my seventeenth birthday, which was the first birthday I had ever spent away from my family while living at the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science. I can remember feeling sad, angry, and lonely. I was sad because I missed home where all my family and friends were. I was angry because my roommate and I weren't getting along, and I was lonely because my closest MSMS friends had all gone home for the weekend. Drops of grief began to roll down my face. So I decided to call my momma; I knew she could make me feel better even if she was more makes me willing to bake in the hot sun just to than 175 miles away.

"Hey, Spank! Happy Birthday! How you doin?" my momma said. "I'm fine," I lied. I just couldn't bring myself to tell her about my problems, but being my mom for seventeen years, she knew that something was wrong just by the keeps me out all Saturday night so that I can't tone of my voice. "You don't sound like you're okay. Let me play a song for you. Now I know you don't like the blues much, but just listen to the words," she said as she turned the radio on. "Hang on, to me baby. Everything's gonna be alright girl. Just wait and pray. If you just hang on . . . " I heard the song say as it blasted from my daddy's radio. My momma was right, I did-

thing about that particular song that uplifted my spirit and made me feel like my old self again. I could relate to its words and its tone was so comforting that I felt like I was no longer miles away, but right there at home with my momma dancing and having fun.

It is at that moment that I could finally understand why people love the blues so much. It isn't because its artists name their instruments, but it's because the blues simply makes people feel better when they've hit rock bottom and can go no lower. The blues is deeply rooted into every part of my Delta culture more than I've ever realized. The blues can help me see the sun through the lonely clouds, or a friendly face in a room full of strangers. It's the blues that get a plate of fresh catfish or crawfish with an ice cold Coke. It's the blues that makes me forget about the West Nile diseased mosquitoes when I sit out on the porch with my school buddies to see the sun set. It's the blues that go to church on Sunday morning. Some people refer to it as the Devil's music, but we who have seen its true beauty and power know that it's innocent, which is why I'm proud to say that now when I listen to the blues, my foot voluntarily keeps pace with the beat, and that has made all the difference.

"Jwon't be in until noon. See you then." I clapped the phone down.

Wrapped in black, I stepped outside into the lonely gray morning. The shrouded sun began to glance over the trees and the frozen dew glittered and danced among the grass. I cranked the car and the heat blasted my frigid legs. I hated cold weather, but even more I hated being alone. Though, I should have been used to it by now.

Solitude sent my mind drifting...back deep into my memory, my life playing over in my head like a dream it did no good to run away from.

The house I lived in when I was five was not very big at all, but perfect for a family of three. And to me, at that young, imaginative age, the backyard to that house was my world. It was an oasis, a gorgeous escape from everyday. The small garden was littered with living flares of scattered paint; the worn wooden fence was ancient and mysterious to a child that could not grasp the concept of time. And the jewel of this haven was our wooden swing. There, I would chatter on about the most important things to a five year old—losing a toy, finding a dime, inhaling a chocolate smothered sundae. My father would sit, quietly encouraging me, and earnestly working at his latest masterpiece in the spiral bound sketchpad my mother and I had bought for him; he could draw anything I wanted him to. We would sit in that swing for hours, I pointing out things for him to draw and he scribbling them down in penciled perfection.

After my sixth birthday, I never saw that swing again. My parents divorced; my father said his goodbyes and moved out. Two years later, he remarried.

I hated red lights; I hated waiting. I felt a knot of anxiety growing in my stomach with every passing moment.

My life seemed very confusing from then on. This man that had left me seemed to care at times, and others, to not even exist. For my sixth birthday, after my parents had split up, my father mailed me the last drawing from our backyard afternoons, the only one I still had. Now it was old and crinkled, the pencil smudged in places. The swirl of markings created an image of the swing in our backyard, cradling a father and daughter, like I remembered it once had.

At first, I spent every other weekend with my father. Then it became every month or so, then just holidays and birthdays. Then funerals. My father and stepmother's house was small and cramped; I stayed in the guest bedroom when I visited. My stepmother would have nothing to do with me, while my father was usually too busy. The weekend would drag on as I sat around, watching TV, waiting for Sunday night to roll around and bring me relief. More than frequently, my stepmother would chastise me for some minor indiscretion: smacking my gum, getting her sofa dirty, putting my elbows on the table; while my father would get it even worse. With my stepmother's nagging voice rising in the background, I would step out the sliding back door and take in the smell of the sweet pines and crape myrtles with my eyes closed, hoping that when I opened them I would be five again. The funeral home came into sight. A few mourners were dragging themselves from the black parking lot into the building. As I parked the car, I paused. The knot in my stomach deepened. I could leave before anyone saw me, but I had promised I would come. I got out of the car and walked inside.

30



Caitlin Wolfe

Third Place, Short Story Competition

Stop sign. More waiting.

The casket lay open at the front of the room with a line of friends and family trickling by on their way into the chapel. My



father stood beside it, the man that had riddled my life with questions of why and why not. He was a man I had never known and seemed out of reach of understanding. All my life he had been my enigma.

He looked much older than I remembered. There were deep bags under his eyes and a gray beard that couldn't hide his care-worn

wrinkles: he seemed so frail and weak.

As I started toward him he noticed me and smiled sadly, the wrinkles in the corners of his eyes becoming more prominent.

"Hey, Honey," he said as he hugged me tightly.

"Hi, Daddy." I stepped back from his embrace and looked into his tired face. "How are you holding up?"

"I'll be okay. I'm just glad you could make it."

I smiled weakly. "Well, the service will begin in a few minutes. You're wel-

come to pay your respects." He motioned towards the gleaming cherry casket.

I nodded in acquiescence and stepped towards it, peering inside.

My stepmother's cold face looked up at me, appearing almost peaceful. Her blond hair to the cemetery where the preacher made was pulled back neatly, the makeup wasn't too much. She had always had a high standard for appearance. She couldn't stand grays, but preferred brilliant blond instead.

I had expected this moment to feel like

Dorothy must have felt when she stood beside that steaming puddle in the Witch's castle but there was no elation. There was nothing. All I could think about were my afternoon obligations.

I stepped away from the casket and walked into the chapel.

"I had expected this

moment to feel like

Dorothy must have

felt when she stood

beside that steaming

puddle in the Witch's

castle-but there was

no elation. There was

nothing. All I could

think about were my

afternoon obligations."

Throughout the service my mind wandered; I never had

been too good at paying attention. As the tune of some radio song I didn't really know wafted through my head, I found myself rummaging through my purse. I looked down and my fingers held the picture I had tucked away in my wallet, a photo of what my family used to be—my father, mother, and me.

My eyes brimmed with hot tears. There was nothing I could do about my family being broken, but still the whys remained...the whys always remained.

I glanced a few rows in front of me and saw the hypnotic heaving of my father's shoulders. I wanted to understand, I wanted to forgive him.

After the service, I followed the procession some final remarks. I surveyed the nearby headstones, admiring their craftsmanship and the unique life they brought to that dreary cemetery. The newest headstone seemed so dull beside the rest.

The sun was climbing higher, but the sky remained a dreary gray.

A few mourners lingered to share their regrets with the family, but most headed straight for the cars to shelter them from the frosty air.

I stepped backwards to leave. My eye caught my father standing alone by the casket, waved after me. head bowed staring at the lonely shadow cast by the pale sun about his feet.

He looked up as I approached. I stared into his moist red eyes as he smiled again, the crinkles at the corners of his eyes now glistening in the late morning light.

He was truly sad. He had loved his second wife dearly and would miss her; he seemed a broken man.

That thought set me ablaze. All I'd ever wanted was for him to treat me like his daughter, but I was just his past, another life he'd said goodbye to years ago. I wanted to demand from him answers, justification for my loneliness and confusion, to force out every truth ingrained in that man I hardly knew.

But I was cut short by the truth spoken in his glistening eyes. He was a broken man indeed, not because his of cold wife, but because the shadow of his life was full of regrets. He was as aware of his mistakes as I was, and felt them deeper perhaps. He wanted those lazy swing afternoons back.

The soul of a man that had for so long eluded me was beginning to show through his cracking shell. Suddenly, the puzzles, the riddles, the whys mattered no longer. All that mattered was the man in front of me, my father, who had been there the whole time.

"I'll be in touch," I said over my shoulder. "Call if you need anything."

32

"I love you, Lynne."

"I know, Daddy." I truly knew. I hugged him once more. "I love you, too."

I started to walk away.

"Alright," he said. "Goodbye, Honey." He

"Bye, Daddy." The fog from my breath mingled in the air and was lost.

I left my father and climbed into my car. The sun was beginning to poke from behind the clouds and shed a little warmth onto the winter-wrapped world below. As I waited for the cars in front of me to leave, I reached down and dug through the small compartment between the front seats for my sunglasses. When I looked up, I saw my father trudging slowly through the grass, his head down. I glanced ahead; the other cars were gone. I had about half an hour to get back to the office. I started the car.

In my rearview mirror I saw my father look up at the whir of my engine.

"Goodbye, Daddy," I said softly. I pressed the gas and drove to the gate. As I turned out of the gate his image disappeared.

It was only a few months until I saw my father again. His cold face stared up at me, the wrinkles of worry and care still prominent. He was pressed and polished from head to toe. I turned away from him as my tears dropped silently to the carpeted floor. My enigma had left me again, without a goodbye this time without the questions as well.

Slip Slidin' Away

azz. Even before knowing the meaning of the word, that's all I wanted to play. The ophisticated sound of the double z's lured me into a world filled with swing, soft bossas, bright sambas, and bluesy ballads. The names of jazz greats had the same slide and jump jazz beat that kept a listener tapping in time; Ella Fitzgerald with her dusky voice scatting storms of thunder and lightning, Dizzy Gillespie and his trumpet sending us on our own dizzying trips, Duke Ellington writing ballads even the moon lusts after, and a trombonist named Tricky Sam. I add to this list another jazz great, the illustrious Thad Mullins.

I met this steel pole man when I first entered the fast-paced world of changing classes and electives. Gray hair topped off the tall, thin frame of my new band director. His eyes were hidden behind small metal glasses, as opposed to his socks, which weren't hidden at all, but peeked out beneath the edge of his military-length pants. Here was my gateway into a world of colors I did not yet even know existed.

The first few weeks of band were taken up with trying out each instrument to see which one we could best play. We all tried awkwardly to make a noise on these instruments foreign to our small, middle school hands. Those who could not master the art of producing a tone would be as pleased with their drums as two-

year olds among pots and pans. When my tryouts came I couldn't swallow and looked upon our jolly Santa Claus of an assistant director as though he was a nightmare specter.

First he tried me on the flute, thinking that I was a normal twelve-year old girl. Almost all the girls in my class hoped to play flute. I made a pathetic airy sound, hoping that saxophone would turn out better. I desperately wanted to play the sax. The saxophone appeared to me the crème de la crème of jazz instruments. I'd never heard of Benny Goodman and his clarinet or Miles Davis and his trumpet. I had only seen the tenor saxophone stand up and dance, shouting to the heavens with joyful solos.

My young heart was broken when Mr. Mullins told me that he wanted me to play the trombone. The trombone was such a clumsy instrument suited only for the unskilled, highstepping marching bands. Mr. Mullins tried to persuade me, telling me that it wasn't meant for just boys, and that one of his best players at the high school was a girl. I would have laughed him to scorn if I had been brave enough. To think that I would be intimidated by boys! I asked only one question, "Do trombones play jazz?"

Eagerly I gobbled up every morsel of knowledge he tossed my way. In the beginning it was easy to focus for my goal was as bright as the neon lights of Las Vegas and my newly acquired trombone, but my excitement wore off too soon. My trombone was like a Christmas present and as time wore on, the novelty wore off. Playing jazz would have been lost in the black hole of dead dreams if Mr. Mullins had not stepped in. It was time for a chair test, but I wasn't worried. My natural ability had always gotten me first, or at least second, chair before. After thoroughly destroying some song of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" caliber, I found myself four seats from the end of the row.

After overcoming my initial shock, I made friends with the trombonists around me, people I'd never really talked to before. "This is where I belong," I thought, "I've always belonged here at the bottom of the heap." And there I would have stayed had I not found in myself the inability to just let go. I clung with pit bull tenacity to a faint belief in myself.

I practiced. That was all the demanding Mr. Mullins had wanted, a slight effort made to keep my high standards. When the next test came around I was ready. My heart missed



beats and worked as well as a broken record while I waited nervously for my turn to play. I played, and this time I met the cloud-high standards of Mr. Mullins and the standards I found I required of myself.

I failed many times after that, but just as many times I pulled myself up. Mr. Mullins tested me again and again so that my seemingly impossible dream became a reality. By the end of my sophomore year I was the second-chair trombonist out of the whole band, beating many skilled seniors. Better than that, though, I was in the jazz ensemble and played my first solo. Keeping to tradition, I made a royal cacophony of jarring notes out of what should have been a heart-stopping, laughing solo, but this time it took no effort to stand up after my fall. I smiled, and no one knew that the solo was far from the perfection I should have achieved. Next time my solo was ovation worthy, and my feet danced among those high-standard clouds Mr. Mullins pinned me to. In the background I'm certain I heard "In the Mood." Listen to those trombones play.



A Desert Scene Contour/Colored Pencil, Third Place Drawing, Art Competition Jonathan DuPont



Dinner Table Church Service

Rebekah Garrison

don't go to church. I never have, really. True, there was a period when I was about nine or ten when my mom insisted on waking the entire family at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings (our usual day for rest and relaxation). She would force me into cute little dresses and curl my hair into Shirley Temple ringlets, and drag me, my two older, even more unhappy broth-

ers, and my dad to St. John's Episcopal Church of Laurel, Mississippi, a whole thirty-minute drive from our country home. I look back on those days and laugh at my obstinance, how I used to yell and cry for my mother to just let me stay home, please, by myself if I had to, if only I didn't have to go to church! Usually such religious rebellion starts at a much greater age. I can't give myself too

"...those dinner table conversations had done more for me than most churches and Sunday schools had ever done for my childhood friends, those who often asked me, as if there could be no answer besides a simple name, where I went to church?"

much credit, though, for my idealistic revolt. I know in my heart of hearts that more than half of my reason for hating church so much was those stupid dresses.

Nevertheless, so began my spiritual journey. From the very beginning, I was taught to question everything. Brought up in an extremely liberal home considering its location in the middle of the Bible belt, we Garrison children grew up with a wide array of knowledge and ideas to sort through. My Godfather, who lived only a half of a mile down the road, was a retired (or

that's what we called it) Episcopalian priest with an uncanny knack for somewhat trivial, yet very interesting, information on anything from the sinking of the Lusitania to the origin of the gods and goddesses of Greek and Roman mythology. Besides his endless repertoire of historic events and witty anecdotes, Tom was also a gourmet cook. He and my mother would cook like Julia

Child every Sunday, and when the preparations were complete, all six of us would gather round either of the dining room tables: inside if it was dreadfully hot and the air drenched with mosquitoes, or raining; outside on those days when heaven seemed to have descended from its place in the sky.

I would sit and listen for sometimes hours (long after the food was gone) to the others just to appease them and to prevent those arguing, pondering, relating, and discussing the hideous stares and the awful feeling of shame important issues in their lives, the world, the that would come with the answer, "I don't." It took me a while, but these days I am not Bible, molecular biology, or Atlas Shrugged. I was too young to interject my own opinions, ashamed to reveal my lack of church membermostly, besides those conversations that were ship, although I do attend from time to time. I created specifically for me, which didn't happen realize now that I received my own basis of often. And I didn't mind. I have never been morals, ethics, and ideals every Sunday. Only, much of an attention monger. I did, however, instead of from the mouth of a preacher, pastor, love to observe others: their words, their manor priest in the pulpit of a sanctuary, from the nerisms, their ideas, their reasoning. Before words and ideas of my family as we sat around long, I found myself formulating my own the beautifully hand-crafted maple-wood dinwords, mannerisms, ideas, reasoning. I came to ner table set strategically in the middle of our oversized kitchen, all the better for getting secthe realization that, by the definition of religion, those dinner table conversations had done more ond helpings. for me than most churches and Sunday schools



had ever done for my childhood friends, those who often asked me, as if there could be no answer besides a simple name, where I went to church? Against my better judgment, I would lie

Half-dome, Photograph Amanda Novotny

On Display

Neon lights, they give Your lavish mirror a circus, sideshow effectbefore Grandmother's bureau, survived WWII France-A postmodern ordeal at Hand.

toes curled and shoulders slumped, you pretentious Thingstaring through the face seemingly Just, property, of those who Made you.

... by this, time, naked Cheeks have likely moistened that rolling stool, and Mascararivers burn your naïve, Barbed neck of Rose, in turning.

thick Panes and a manicured Lawn separate my Frank wisdom ... of too few Years, and your aching Flesh come Be sandpaper, I steady.

It rains, Not a worry— Vintage boots and a lack of Touch up, thick, unhampered Hair can take the rain my Gaze may be Fixated

a loyal, perhaps I've been The Only loyal confidant. I am your Mother, Sister, I comprehend your Daughter-I look at You...

Hayley Maxwell

Sarah May

*O*h, Sarah May, Head lice queen Of the second grade, You wear That stained Yellow party dress To school every day. Your show-and-tells Are so exquisite: Barbie who's lost Three appendages, A monster truck Smashed in two, A jeweled bracelet That your dog chews. Why isn't your hair Tied back in braids? Mrs. Melbourne Gives you clothes. You never wear them. Your father is too proud, And your mother, You say, Is in heaven.

Willow Nero

Second Place, Poetry Competition

Sister

(after Ray Young Bear)

\mathcal{J}_{f} I were to see Her doing back handsprings from a mile away	ر و E
I would so quickly	I
Recognize the lithe form to be her. The long tan legs	T S
And the blonde ponytail.	Y
If I felt Arms around my waist,	Г
I'd know she was looking	I
For support And comfort.	Г Г
If I heard A voice	N
Singing the wrong words	Т Е
I would chastise her And attempt	`
To teach her the correct lyrics,	ŀ
But I was ignored like Pinocchio did to poor	E
Jiminy Cricket.	F

Emily Williams



The Last Lament of the Little Mermaid

*F*loating in by sea breeze Encircling your bed, I watch The bride Stir in her sleep. You twitch, you sigh.

The princess, whose hair Is not auburn in the sunset, And whose voice Does not reach the heavens, Moves a throbbing toe Towards you, But her feet do not ache.

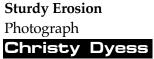
You lie awake, Hand across her breast, Eyes turned to the ceiling; Asking, wanting, For what I hope Words cannot tell.

One deciding night I loved vou. Did you love me not? I could not sink the dagger So now the ocean it severs: A bloodless red tide.

But tonight you search As I wipe away Weights of misery. Instead accepting What you have taken. And biding my time, Waiting for the soul You could have given.

Willow Nero

First Place, Poetry Competition



The Longest Road to Home

Willow .Nero

Hyperbolic Provided States and An Antice Antices and Antices and Unome from school, and it's the first in a series of gateways to the earth's arterial highway wherein my heart lies. Lined with scarlet clover and creeping kudzu vines all summer and a more leisurely vine of kudzu in winter months, the highway runs straight through the Mississippi Delta, only bulging to accommodate car they counted the horses and cows on each four lanes instead of two at parts. That highway is the most difficult to drive with its repetitive landscape. Northern Mississippi has "rolling hills" which can't be more than inverted dents

in the earth, and the alltoo-famous cotton fields are few and far between on 45; however, I find the worst atrocity to be the way the trees cling to the sky. On Highway 45, the tree line, no matter how sickly and dead, always hangs onto the clouds, as if pulling them from the sky. The trees just won't let go

"....my mind just doesn't function on 45-the only direction in my mind is away, as fast as possible."

of the sun or the moon, but cling to them like bored children to a favorite uncle's legs. The sky is never whole and complete, but desperately lacking, unsatisfying; a gap and a question. The sky's intentions are unclear and hidden; my mind just doesn't function on 45-the only direction in my mind is away, as fast as possible.

As I drive Highway 45 I'm always afraid that I'll run out of gas or find myself lost beyond hope. My cell phone roams in and out of service just as I pass a cemetery on the side of a church badly in need of new paint. For me,

from here on out it's straight shooting to Meridian. The gravestones are turned every which way on the hillside. They remind me of my second cousins from South Carolina. I once rode with them from Uncle Tony's in Alabama to Aunt Mary's trailer on Christmas Eve. In the side of the road. Whoever had the most animals on their side at the end of the trip won, but if a cemetery was on your side of the road, all of your animals died. I didn't expect to see any

> cemeteries on the way to Aunt Mary's, but there were plenty. The cemeteries we passed on that car trip look just like this one. On the coast, our cemeteries are large and centrally located. Little cemeteries are the mark of the boonies. My Aunt Mary's doublewide was on the side of a hill in Nowhere, Alabama. When it rained,

the orange clay got so thick and sticky that she couldn't get downhill. Aunt Mary worked at home so she didn't care, but I didn't want to get stuck in Nowhere, Mississippi.

Highway 59 South from Meridian does little to break the monotony of 45, but approaching Laurel the landscape starts to feel more like home. Tall Southern pines shoot up from the ground, skinny and sap-filled, fuller than the dead sticks of Macon and Scooba. Their branches don't pull the sky down, but add to its mystery. On nice days the blanched clouds flow

through pine boulevards mimicking the highways below. Alas, as I pass through Laurel on the last of the scurves, I pity the chickens, wondering how anyone can be so cruel to sit them by the highway like that. They huddle together, packed into tiny wire boxes stacked high on semi-trucks with fans blowing their feathers out onto the asphalt parking lot. The chicken owners might as well just get rid of the fans. There's no point in cooling down the

scrawny birds that will become nuggets within the next few days. This is not my highway; the question of the sky's end lingers. The chickens symbolize a dead end. Nothing so uncertain can continue so far without conclusion.

And so, I meet Highway 603, the winding two-lane wonder that releases my soul and returns to me the ocean, the point at which the sky meets its equal-that relentless stretch of open life. Six-oh-three boasts of Brett Favre from the Kiln, pronounced "the Kill" by the natives. The country drivers cruise around in rusty pickups to Dolly's Quick Stop or the Broke Spoke for a cold one, but their unrefined command of the wheel or "Pray for me, I drive 603" bumper stickers cannot scare me now. I'm nearly home, nearly to my ocean.

On the open water everything inside of me feels utterly completed. I have no loose ends, only endless beginnings. Looking out at the beach's infinite reach always fills me with a great optimism whether the sky is pleasant or scornful. Some days children fly kites from the Long Beach Yacht Club. Their fleet of brightly colored belligerents matches the spinnakers of Flying Scots racing out on the water. In Biloxi it's always easy to pick out the pitiful tourists fending off indecent seagulls from their homegrown shrimp po-boys. On days when the sky pours out rain, the heavens are the most magnificent. Every cloud can be made out, with varying shades of mauve, amethyst, and indigo. They swirl and dance with the wind, parting to show a smiling sun and closing in again to meet the raging seas that reach up in hopes



of touching the marshmallow puffs; yet the ocean can never pull the sky down to the earth. The sky is free and open on the water. Each paramount dreamscape meets the ocean in a calm agreement, finishing off the perfect photograph. The ocean thus becomes the longest, most complete highway of highways. It reaches without bound across the earth, charting pathways followed countless times. The wind fills the sails of my Sunfish sailboat and pushes me from the Bay of St. Louis to the Mississippi Sound, into the Gulf of Mexico, and to the barrier islands and beyond. The sea's changing song lifts my spirits and pulls me in to its side. I can drive west on Highway 90 or Beach Boulevard into the setting sun. The ocean has no mileage, and so my car drives on.

I grew up with this freedom of the ocean, and it calls me home from whatever endeavors I happen to pursue. When I am living in my landlocked dormitory in Columbus, Mississippi, the ocean beckons my return. The trees mar my perfect vision of a sky and tug at the clouds as if to take them from me. Nothing can compare to the open nothingness of a pure black sky spattered with teeny pinholes of stars. No trees close in on this picture from the lazy life of Cat Island. No dams or rivers can replace the long, silent scream of the wind as my body melts into the sea on the underside of the Ulman Avenue pier. Every road leads to the ocean and the ocean calls me to its side, making me complete.



The Cows Photograph Willow Nero

Hint of Frugality

Farshad Chowdhury

First Place, Essay Competition

Uraveling two hours from the airport in Jackson, Nana glides over rolling kudzucovered hills until they flatten into the great pancake that is my home: the Mississippi Delta. I picture his gleaming eves tracing the cotton fields to where they kiss the sky. I see his thin frame sitting erect, legs crossed, in the front seat of our car. I hear his brilliant voice, surprisingly powerful for a man so gentle. I feel my grandfather's warm hug and push-broom mustache before he even sets foot in the door.

Nana has come half way around the world to Greenwood, my hometown. Surrounded by cotton fields, I doubt that it has changed much since my grandfather's last visit. As far back as I can remember, Nana has never arrived emptyhanded. Rather, he always brings a token scented with frugality. This time he brings my brother and me two imposing paperbacks, each one wrapped in a makeshift dustcover he fashioned from plastic wrap. To my parents he presents an my grandfather sat down on his cold terrazzo entire box of plums and apricots from my kindness as it is a means of saving precious fruit from going to waste.

My grandfather also brings with him a frenetic aura that both energizes and exasperates my family. The air vibrates with frenzied energy decries driving and decides that we should as he scours our house in search of scrap paper to recycle into bookmarks and post-it notes. He surveys each room, making an anguished note of every unread book and dust-covered magazine. After somehow finding their way into his

room, the treasures return with creased spines and fulfilled purpose. His simple presence frazzles my mother into nourisher extraordinaire and sends her into powder frenzy. Curry powder, chili powder, cumin powder, all flying through the air, magically coalesce into a delectable Bengali dinner. At the meal table, too, Nana has his quirks. He carefully takes equal portions of the fragrant jasmine rice, the smooth lentil *daal*, the thick eggplant *bhorta*, and the sweet chicken korma, and neatly layers each on his plate. Then he finishes it all, down to the last grain of rice, before even considering getting more.

My brother and I have learned to live with a grandfather who wastes nothing and finds a use for everything. Years before, on a visit to Bangladesh, our newest toys had been shells from a coconut that Nana had picked for dessert. When we wanted a new sketch book, floor and made us one, complete with handuncle's trees; I imagine it is as much a gesture of stitched binding. When we ached for something fun to do, my grandfather sent us around the house collecting melted candle wax to recast and reuse.

> So it doesn't surprise me at all when Nana walk through the Delta heat to Taco Bell. Wearing an old cap (his only submission to my mother's longwinded protests), he leads the way. I watch him, his thin shadow gliding smoothly over hot concrete, thinking of how

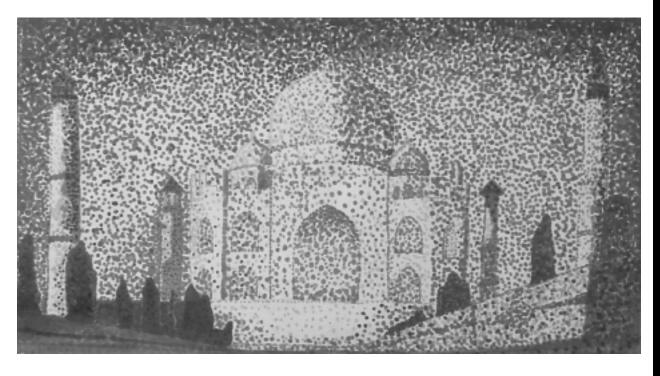
this street might not be so different from one half a world away. There, too, the humidity is so thick that it traps the mosquitoes. There, too,

my grandfather trades modern convenience for satisfying struggle. Now almost straining to keep up, I suddenly ask him why he needs to read it all, make it all, reuse it all.

Without missing a brisk step, he questions in reply, "Why should I waste anything? If I can light fire to the same wax again and again, why should I touch flame to a virgin candle?" And, after an uncharacteristic stammer, he adds, "Why shouldn't I show you all that I have? I can never know when I will see you next."

Suddenly his perpetual message becomes

clear to me: nothing, from a God-given gift to an earthly moment of time, should ever be wasted. He has passed on to me his decades of experience. His worldview has been shaped by British rule and its discrimination, Pakistani inequity and its culmination in civil war, and American freedom with its opportunity; I find that his breadth of perspective mirrors my own. As we round the last corner, I think of how



frazzles my mother dinaire and sends her into powder frenzy. Curry powder, chili all flying through the air, magically coalesce into a delectable Bengali dinner."

grateful I am that in return I've given him reason to be proud. He's found satisfaction in my grades and my awards, my red belt and my

"His simple presence into nourisher extraorpowder, cumin powder,

saxophone, my volunteer hours and my clubs. I have an uncanny feeling, though, that he is most pleased when he sees that I utilize both sides of a sheet of paper, instead of just one.

I watch Nana as he places his order. My mother says that his face is etched with years of wear and illness, but it still looks the same to me. Maybe his glasses are a little thicker still, and his mustache isn't the prickly push-broom it used to be, but I

still think of my grandfather leaping up the stairs and holding the door for me, comforting me when no one else knows I am hurting, and seeing my reflection in his sparkling eyes as he gives thousands of years of history new life with his booming voice. When it comes my turn to order, I decide against the Super Huge Drink; a regular sized one will do just fine.

> A Reflection on Taj Mahal, Stipple/Ink Jonathan DuPont

> > 43

One Once Again

(after Ray Young Bear)

I were to see The golden glow of a goddess I'd know so quickly That it was you The girl that everybody wants to be But nobody has the patience to be If I felt your Soft hands caress my face And wipe my pain away I'd remember why I never wanted to leave you If I heard Or even saw your name on paper I'd immediately be swept away into you Your presence, your soul And we would be one once again

Quinnon Taylor



Passion

The sweet flow of red ink On white copy paper— Underline, slash, rehash. The pen lifts itself And cries out, "horrors." It drifts across the page Highlighting errors in its wake. Left unguided by any hand, It works alone in red. The veined marks spew forth. Edits breathe life. The comments pour, Pointing to the glaring errors: An arrow hitting bull's-eye, A knife straight to the heart. Direct hits; those marks Weep from the page, A million battered wounds Crying out for Band-Aids.

Willow Nero

Honorable Mention, Poetry Competition

Marilyn Feeling Sexy, Oil Andy Guan

"Give It To Me, Son..." Jimmy Williams

s I steady myself vertically after leaning against the tractor tire, I see my papa's hand extended, asking me for the piece of paper on which I've written down the size of the tire. Looking at my grandfather, I see many years of wisdom, wisdom he could have only accumulated through the rigors of hard labor of many years. Staring at my papa's hand, I can only think of one thing that has accumulated in my mind for over a year now: Thank you.

Growing up on a farm, I have been acquainted with labor my entire life. From the age of five, I have worked with my father on his many jobs, from carpentry, to landscaping, and even maintaining his trailer park. My childhood years were not devoid of work, and now I appreciate every single day I have spent working by my daddy's side. Now I have the "best of both worlds"; I have my "brains and my brawn," as my father and grandfather describe me to their acquaintances who ask them how the "Smart Kid" is doing.

About a year and a half ago, I had a really hard decision to make, but it was not a decision that would not only affect me, but one which would also affect the very people I love. When I was accepted to the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science, I was happy, but at the same time, if at all possible, I was upset; I knew that I would be leaving the home I have lived in my entire life, and I would be leaving the people who kept house there as well. I had a lot of trouble deciding, but my papa had a lot of inspirational guidance for me to follow.

My grandfather's words to me were, "Just promise me one thing, don't end up like me." To most people, this might not be a quotation to

44

remember, but for me, it compensated for the password needed to open my heart and my mind, to decide what I thought was best for me to do. Papa feels as though he is dumb, but what I cannot get him to understand is that he has a wisdom that only a man who did not go to school could have. He had to guit school in the third grade and go work on the family farm because his father couldn't afford to hire hands to help bring in harvest or hay; so he never got to learn what most people would at that age. Now that he is seventy years old, he has gotten to the point that he can read numbers and write his name, but he can't do much more than that. endeavors, at least the ones that require mathematical assistance. I am always obliged to help my papa, for the simple fact that I love him and that I would do anything I possibly could to help him.

Now, as I look at Papa holding out his hand, I feel a deep and complete sense of thankfulness, because I am looking at the very inspiration that helped me to become the person that I am standing here, by this tractor tire, holding this piece of paper upon which I have written the very information my grandfather could not. With the deep and caring voice, my grandfather looks at me and says, "Give it to me, son," and as those words fall upon my ear, I simply say to him, "If you ever need me, Papa, I'm here to do whatever I can to help." I hand him the piece of paper with the measurements on it and we begin to walk back to the house. Walking back, I can only think of one thing to say to him: "Thanks, Papa."

Playin for

the Sanctified

/ow it ain't hard to see that this cat com-● **I** ing in to play with us ain't exactly like everybody else! But he's gonna play his heart out for you though, so please give your undivided attention and love to Trey Lyons!" was the last thing I wanted to hear Willie say as I trudged down the center aisle of the Haven Acres Sanctified Church with nothing but my best Sunday suit and an oversized guitar case to speak for me. As I reached the front pew, I set my case down, pulled out my guitar, and strapped it on, only to hear Willie cry out, "Come on, brother! These beautiful people wanna hear us play!"

By drawing attention to the fact that I was late and holding everyone up in this congregation of a little over 400, Willie only amplified the tension running through my blood that made me realize, "You are the only white guy here." As I plugged in my guitar the tension finally climaxed and I found myself hoping and praying that the gates of hell would open up and swallow me whole right then and there. drummer started up.

only the simplest riffs (those of which I was most sure). Then, the tension just seemed to ease up a bit. Little by little the nervousness was melting off of me, and I was becoming the guitar player I am sitting alone in my bedroom.

By the time our last tune was almost over, I was playing my hottest licks and shaking my hips (ever so subtly considering the situation). At last we were finished and to the house we could go. We took our bows and everyone clapped as we walked down and out of the same trail of tears I had trekked earlier.

Trey Lyons

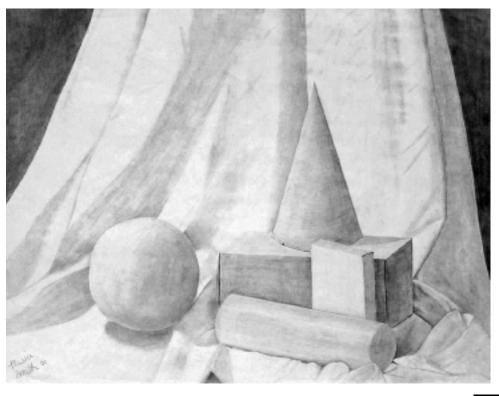
Willie approached me after we were completely clear of the masses. He looked at me smiling, shaking my hand, and said, "Man, you looked like you were playing the fire from out of that guitar, but you weren't comin' through the mix. We checked at the end of the set and it looked like you forgot to turn your amp on." The rug had been jerked from beneath my feet. I worked myself up to a nervous mess and slowly overcame my nervewrenching fears, only to stand in the way of my own accomplishments by forgetting to do something as simple as reach down and turn my amp on.

I walked away with a sense of pride and Amazingly enough though, they didn't and the humility that day, though. I felt proud because I had channeled my self-conjured tension and I started by fiddling around meekly, playing pressure into something productive and uplifting while at the same time making the most juvenile of mistakes by forgetting to do something that could easily be seen as the most basic step of any performance.

Funeral of a Wave

 $\mathscr{W}_{\mathrm{aves}}$ die at the shore. Harmonious lullabies break Distant squawking As the sky whispers black. Crackling jars the calm. Spatters hit the water. Their slow drone carries up The fog from cooled swells. A pair of feet shuffle, Murmuring across wet sand.

> Willow Nero Honorable Mention, Poetry Competition



Broken Nets

 \mathscr{B} right blue posts glare in the sunlight, Their broken nets swaying. The five munchkins Bounce up and down And up and down Until a voice calls. "One at a time!" **Omniscient Mom: 1376** Munchkins: 0 "Maa" draws their attention, And Peek-a-Boo Fred pokes his head Through the electric fence. The little abandoned goat is hungry; He needs to be hand-fed. The broken nets now sway in the wind Instead of in time to jumping munchkins. They have been abandoned for a crying baby goat. I'd feel broken too.

Emily Williams

Geometric Shapes Still Life, Graphite, First Place Drawing, Art Competition Missie Smith

Contributors' Notes

Hannah Bruce (Saltillo)

Hannah will attend the University of Missouri—Rolla with a major in environmental engineering. "My favorite time to take pictures is at the change of seasons... Nature is art itself."

Laura Chaires (Jackson)

Laura's favorite writers are Svlvia Plath and e.e. cummings. "Ducks and geese are foolish things and must be looked after, but girls can take care of themselves."

— Washington Irving

Farshad Chowdhury (Greenwood) Farshad plans to attend Dartmouth College with a major in neuroscience and international affairs. "Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who don't mind don't matter and those who don't matter don't mind." — Dr. Seuss

Amanda Dew (Charleston) Amanda plans to attend Mississippi State University with a major in pre-med / chemistry. "Stand for something or you'll fall for nothing."

Jonathon DuPont (Wiggins) Jonathon plans to attend The University of Mississippi with a major in mathematics and physics. His work has been influenced by "North by East," H.G. Wells' The *Man in the Moon*, and Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth.*

Christy Dyess (Bassfield) Christy plans to attend The University of Southern Mississippi

with a major in psychology and criminal justice. "Learn from me...how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge, and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow. — Frankenstein

Rebekah Garrison (Summerland) Rebekah's favorite writers are Madeleine L'Engle and Orson Scott Card, and her favorite artist is Walter Anderson. Her work has been influenced by Madeleine L'Engle's A Ring of Endless Light.

Andy Guan (Ridgeland) Andy wants to major in graphic design and mathematics. His favorite artists are Van Gogh and Norman Rockwell; Rockwell's works have influenced his own.

Larry Hawkins (Pascagoula) Larry's writing has been influenced by his life experiences. "No matter how many trials you experience in your life, unless you learned the lesson they presented, you'll never be able to advance."

Clarence Holmes (Cleveland) Clarence plans to attend Hampton University with a major in marine biology. His favorite writer is Dan Brown, whose book *The Da Vinci* Code has influenced his own work.

Ashley Jefcoat (Quitman)

Ashley's favorite authors are Neil Gaimon, Mercedes Lackey, and e.e. cummings. "Say goodbye to the whole wide world / We're heading off as far away as we can." — Gackt's "Another World"

Kristin Klaskala (Starkville) Kristin will attend Mississippi University for Women in the fall with a major in graphic design. Her favorite writer is John J. Nance, and her favorite artist is William Adolf Bouguereau.

Madison LaFleur (Gulfport) Madison will attend Southeastern Louisiana University in the fall with a major in environmental science. "Savor every happy moment."

Addie Leak (Woodville) Addie will attend Belhaven College with a major in creative writing. Her work has been influenced by the Redwall series by Brian Jacques and Monet's "The Houses of Parliament."

Trev Lyons (Mooreville) Trey's favorite writer is Walt Whitman, and his favorite artist is Michael Jackson. He will attend Millsaps College in the fall with a major in biochemistry and medicine.

Ashley Mackay (Columbus) Ashley plans to attend Brigham Young University. Her favorite writers are William Butler Yeats, e.e. cummings, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Jack Kerouac.

Cassandre Man-Bourdon (Ridgeland)

Cassandre's favorite artists are Walter Anderson and Leonardo Da Vinci. "Life has been vour art. You have set yourself to music."

Hayley Maxwell (Grenada) Hayley plans to attend Randolph-Macon Woman's

College in Lynchburg, Virginia, with a major in anthropology and an emphasis on biolinguistics. "Our thoughts, the cake which sustains us — our actions, the icing which translates us."

Bess McCafferty (Jackson) Bess will attend St. John's University in Queens, New York, with a major in international relations and Spanish and Italian. Her experience at MSMS is described in Lauryn Hill's "The Final Hour."

Laura Beth Moore (Ridgeland) Laura Beth formerly attended Tupelo High School and will attend The University of Southern Mississippi in the fall.

Rodney Morgan (Verona)

"Cause ever since I tried trying not to find / Every little meaning in my life / It's been fine / I've been cool / With my new golden rule." — "New Deep" by John Mayer. Rodney's favorite writers Missie Smith (Columbus) are Langston Hughes and Walt Whitman.

Willow Nero (Bay St. Louis) Willow will attend The University of Mississippi with a major in creative writing and journalism. "We do not write because we want to; we write because we have to." — W. Somerset Maugham

Amanda Novotny (Starkville) Amanda plans to attend Purdue University with a major in civil engineering. Michelangelo's art has influenced her own. "Better Is One Day" best describes her MSMS experience.

Ashlee Oliver (Senatobia) Ashlee's personal philosophy is "God made this beautiful world; I merely capture pieces of it on

film." Her favorite artist is Don Paulson, and his works "Calla Lily," "Magnolia Blossom," and "Mossbrae Falls" have influenced her own work.

Klint Peebles (Philadelphia) Klint's favorite writers are Harper Lee, Edgar Allan Poe, William Shakespeare, and Frank McCourt. "Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing." — Benjamin Franklin

Khadijah Ransom (Indianola) Khadijah will attend Dillard University, New Orleans, with a major in pharmacy. "Good, better, best. Never let it rest, until your good is your better, and your better is your best."

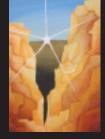
Jennifer Sloan (Starkville) To Jennifer, the song describing her MSMS experience is "Tequila" by The Champs "because it has no words and is very jumpy and crazy. Just like the MSMS experience...."

Missie plans to attend Mississippi State University with a major in chemical engineering. Her favorite writer is Iane Austen. "Never let anyone stop you from doing your best."

Ryder Taff (Jackson) Ryder plans to attend The University of Georgia. His favorite photographer is Korda, whose photograph of Che Guevera has influenced Ryder's art

Quinnon-Rashad Taylor (Greenville)

Quinnon's favorite artists are Aaliyah, Madonna, John Mayer, and Beyonce. "Creativity is a lot like love. Every time you think to define it, you change your definition in some way." — Madonna



Desert Star, Watercolor Cassandre Man-Bourdon

Katrina Vizzini (Starkville) Katrina's favorite author is Neil Gaimon, and Dave McKean is her favorite artist. Her experience at MSMS is described in "Wind" by Akeboshi: "Don't try to live so wise. / Don't cry 'cause you're so right. / Don't dry with fakes or fears, / 'Cause you will hate yourself in the end."

Elizabeth Wayne (Crystal Springs) Elizabeth's favorite authors are C.S. Lewis and Jane Austen, and books that have influenced her writing are *Pride and Prejudice* and Thomas and Beulah. "Don't expect a great day; make one."

Emily Williams (Ocean Springs) Emily's favorite writers are Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, Charles Dickens, and Natsuki Takaya. "The brain is a wonderful organ. It starts working the moment you get up and does not stop until you get to school."

Jacie Williams (Iuka)

Jacie will attend Mississippi State University with a major in engineering. Her favorite authors are William Shakespeare, Anne Rice, and Carl Higasen. "If you don't want anyone to know about it, don't do it!"

Jimmy Williams (Myrtle) Jimmy will attend Mississippi State University in the fall with a major in chemical engineering.

His favorite author is Walt Whitman, and he enjoys the play Hamlet.

Caitlin Wolfe (Jackson)

Caitlin's favorite authors are Ray Bradbury, Edgar Allan Poe, Jane Austen, C.S. Lewis, and J.R.R. Tolkien. "Wait until it is night before saying it has been a fine day." — a fortune cookie