

THOUGHTS FROM MR. SCHMOLL'S ENGLISH CLASSES
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W.A.H.
THE
• FINAL
COUNTDOWN

THE LAST CREATIVE THOUGHTS OF
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Lemmings, A Fable

By Will Lindsay

Off the coast of Vancouver is a high white cliff. It climbs about 200 feet, and juts straight into the Pacific Ocean. It is a beautiful piece of scenery- such an appropriate setting for the many deaths that occur here every year in June. Vancouver is an island off the coast of Canada.

In the rocky hills of the island, a colony of lemmings thrived and multiplied. Lemmings are small furry rodents not unlike the gerbil or the hamster. They come in several different colors; they could be red, spotted tan, or just grey. Sometimes all three.

One hot day in June, the lemmings called a meeting. Hordes of the furry creatures gathered in the center of the brush and awaited the message to be delivered. They all sat on their small haunches and chirped quietly among themselves. "Do you think it will be tomorrow?" One asked another. "I don't know, all I know is that I don't want to be left out of it!" The other said. These conversations carried on for a few more minutes, and then the most feared and admired lemmings came to the speaking place. The crowd of rodents cheered and swooned in envy and astonishment. They all wished that they could be like these lemmings. The admired lemmings were so good looking and happy and popular. They were so cool, they all thought. They all wanted to be like them.

"We will jump tomorrow," one of the popular lemmings said. "Yes, tomorrow we will all jump," another reaffirmed. The crowd cheered on. Everybody was so excited about going to jump tomorrow, and they couldn't contain themselves. They chirped and chattered about it. What would it feel like? They said.

Amidst all the excited lemmings, stood a lone rodent who secretly scrutinized all the commotion that the admired lemmings had caused. He even scrutinized them and chose not to believe anything they said or did. It was senseless, the lemming thought. Just silly and senseless. He just watched all the others talk amongst themselves, and waited for the day to end.

Soon enough the next day had arrived, and the air was cool and crisp. The mountains of Vancouver shone purple in the background. One might admire the beauty of them when they are capped with white snow in December. The pines stood tall and dressed the countryside in dark green lapels. It was a wonderful day. Little by little, the lemmings awoke and congregated in the center of the brush once again. A few hours went by, and soon, everybody had arrived. The lone lemming stood at the edge of the crowd, and watched the admired lemmings dance around and tell stupid jokes. Then, after they were done, they screamed- "alright! Let's go!" They all ran furiously down the hills toward the white Pacific cliff. The lone lemming stood there in awe and self

confidence as they took off, and decide to follow and watch the others do what the popular lemmings did. He ran along the trail and got to a cliff, and dared to look over the edge. He laughed loudly and aloofly when he saw a thousand lemmings drowning in the depths of the green Pacific Ocean. Come along! They had all said. It'll be fun, they all said. Everybody's doing it, they all said. He stood there, looking at the drowning lemmings and shook his head in disgust. "Well look at you now," he said, and walked away.

Tonight

Christie King

I could have fallen in love tonight
I walked down that street and saw beautiful faces calling to me
The air whispered in my ear and told me so.
I could feel the atmosphere assaulting my senses
The scent of someone's perfume - of someone's cologne
dinner in a cafe.
An expensive cigarette sent smoke signals my way

I could have fallen in love tonight
Because of the sounds on the city's street
On the corner a man played jazz or maybe the blues
I walked up to him - the music made me move,
made my hips sway
I could feel when the notes were about to begin, and
I closed my eyes and when they came - I was ready

I could have fallen in love tonight
It was the way the city made me feel
I had walked a hundred times down this street
I will probably walk it a hundred more
But this time...

I could have fallen in love tonight
I could have grabbed a stranger's hand,
turned down a side street that only we were on
And stayed there until the neon lights came on.

The Scent of a thousand Flowers

Have you ever smelled a flower?
I mean, have you ever just been going along
Then, all of a sudden, the scent filled your nose
It overwhelms you, surrounds you, lifts you
Makes you feel as if you're in paradise
Turning an ordinary moment of an ordinary day
Into one of the most beautiful moments you've ever experienced.
You stop, drinking it in
Wondering if it is possible to stand there the rest of your life
But knowing you must keep going
The scent gradually fades behind you
Leaving a fragrant memory
I can still remember the evening it happened to me
Scents from a thousand flowers floating in the air

ANGER

By Will Lindsay

Jason watched her from the corner of his eye, and then stole a glance. He was rocked and shaken with a boyish excitement as her figure moved gracefully- intriguingly down the road and around the corner. With the euphoria of hormonal glee came its counterpart, the depressing realization that he would have no place in her life. He coughed and glanced up at the clock in the street. It was already six, and he was going to miss his work out. And that couldn't happen- no he must not miss his work out for any reason. He stretched shortly and paced off in the direction of the gym.

Jason noticed the pleasant hue of the sky. It was a clean and fresh spring evening, and he was feeling at peace with himself. The only quirk in his system was Nicole- that girl, that untouchable prize! The trophy that, of course, would go to some cardboard preppy who was totally devoid of character. *I wonder what goes on in their heads*, Jason thought. How does one think when they are as dumb as that? He laughed quietly to himself- a little aloof chuckle that he allowed to happen. Mischief was with him. "Well, it's beyond me," he said aloud. He was now walking through a grove of trees that were a landmark for the halfway there spot on the course of the gym. He was bursting with energy, he felt. This fitness streak had become an addiction. "Well, it's something to weed out the psychopathic blood in everyone. If more people worked out, then there probably wouldn't be so much murder," he said again, aloud. He looked behind him to make sure no one had seen him talking to himself. Nobody should see that. It was now six fifteen, and he was hungry too. "Too bad," he said, and broke out into a run.

When he came out of the locker room, he was ready to take flight. *I've got to get going. I need to feel that blood pumping and rushing so I can escape it all. I've got to get it all out now before-*

"Hey, Jason," a voice. Who's voice was that? He turned and saw Jessica standing there, his ex girlfriend. She seemed to have grown two feet in the last week. Her hair was still black though. It's amazing that I can still talk to her, he thought. At least we're still friends. "Hi, Jess. How's life going for you lately?"

"I'm surviving," she said. She had a nebulous smile. Was she drunk?

"You've grown, haven't you?"

She nodded. Her eyes were filmed over- empty blue. "Yes, I have grown. Two feet in a week."

Jason caught a breath that startled him, and he said, *"What?"*

"Oh, yeah. It's weird. It's painful, too. Daddy says it's phenomenal. Want to see my stretchmarks?"

"No! It's okay, Jess. I can't. I have to go now."

There was a long pause. Then Jessica smiled strangely and said in a quivering voice, "you did this to me, you know." She lifted her shirt above her naval where a grisly band of blood red stretchmarks painted her belly. There were bite marks and a series of distorted scars all around her lower abdomen. "Bye, Jess," Jason said, and turned. He was frowning as he walked up the steps to the fitness room. He felt weightless as the shock seeped into him. "Jason!" she called. He kept walking. "Jason! You goddamned killer! *There are others!*" When he came into the fitness room, he slammed the door behind him. It made a loud *BLAP!* and a huge black man, startled, dropped two 45 pound weights on his feet. *"AAAHHH!!"* he chocked and squeezed his toes. Jason walked by him and the black man stared up at him with rage in his eyes. He was pushing breaths out of his clenched teeth. Jason looked down at him, and then walked off toward the exercise bikes. "Sorry about that," he said.

A half an hour had passed, and he was still running that bike out. He was going above his heart rate, but it alright, he always excelled himself. There wasn't any other choice. He was sweating a hot stinging wetness that he loved and hated. He loved feeling the water and salt pour off his chin and down his chest and the heat pulsing throughout his body. He hated it when his shirt grazed his nipples, making them sing like hell. It was a really nasty burn and it made him even more aggressive. *Got to keep going, you know? I have to keep on moving, and it'll stop. Or I won't feel it. Or maybe I'll grow two feet this week and have all my problems solved!* He thought and scoffed. "I'm so tired of everybody giving me so much crap," he said aloud.

"Then don't take it," the man who was riding next to him said. He was a GI who wore a tight army work out suit. He was a little too chubby to be a soldier, Jason thought. He had the face of a chipmunk and the beady eyes of a California rattler. "My drill sergeant tells me I'm too fat," he said. Jason hesitated before breathing. "I'm a little chubby, yeah. But I ain't no fat person. So I tell him, I want to be transferred. I told him that I wasn't gonna sit there and listen to him tell me I was fat. And you know what happened? I got the transfer! This drill sergeant- my new one? Well, he don't say nothin about my weight. Just as long as I meet standards, I'm fine."

Jason reached his thirty-five minute end and got off the bike. Before he left the fitness room, he turned and said to the fat man, "You know why most people are in the military? It's because they can't cut it in the real world. They haven't got any skills, so they come to the army- where everyone is so damned stupid that it doesn't matter if you can read or write. Truthfully, you are overweight. You see, it's people like you who make me mad. This is what I'm *talking* about! I have to deal with trash like you everyday at school! And not all of that trash is the student body either. I'll tell you something- they have idiots like you who teach! And I'll tell you something else- I don't give a damn about your stupid transfer! As far as I'm concerned, you should have been kicked out of the army!" He turned and went to the door of the room, but before he got there, the fat man said, "Hey maybe you should take that crap from people! Sounds to me like you need a lot of it. You think you got it bad now? Yeah well just wait awhile. There will be others!" Jason slammed the door behind him. It was happening again. *There will be others?* "He was fat," Jason said out loud. It was happening again, though. Soon, there would be nothing he could do. "Ah, no. I think I've missed the energy expulsion I needed," he said to nobody and bent over for a drink. When he came out of the locker room again, fully dressed, he felt a little better. *I need a movie*, he thought. *They always take me away.* "Who knows, maybe I can get away tonight," he said, and left the gym.

It was 7.20 when he left the gym and started off for the movie theatre. He loved the walk there- on his way he would get to be sheltered by a thick canopy of evergreens and walk around a bunch of empty apartment houses. It had a scenic mysteriousness to him, and it was soothing. He made his way through the pathways and came out to the theatre, standing in the middle of a field of dead grass. Spring, hadn't yet

payed off, but Jason felt it boiling in his veins. He could spit fire, he thought. *I could just burn up this whole town*, he thought.

Jason walked around to the front of the theatre and saw that *ALIEN 3* was playing. "Alright," he said. *I love these films*, he thought. People stood in line, talking loudly to one another. *Probably talking about nothing*, he thought. All these idiots in one place!

He paid and went to sit down. Soon it became dark, and the film began. Jason felt powerful, sitting in this seat, staring at the moving screen. He felt like he could work miracles. Soon enough, the black and silver beast appeared and hissed hellishly. Its silvery blackness was complete evil, and its menacing walk was graceful, making this monster so terrifying. *I must have one of these growing inside of me*, Jason thought. The film came to an end, and he felt the beginning of tears form in his eyes as Ripley the hero dove into the pit of lava.

His body felt different, like it had grown two- the lights came on and everyone was getting up to leave. In the new light, he saw Nicole standing over in the corner of the room. His heart lurched and tumbled in place. His eyes filmed over with excitement. Then someone came over and put his arm around her shoulder. Rick Sessions- that preppy bastard who wears a white shirt and drives a beamer- "Oh, no," Jason said. It was here. He hadn't got away. The woman standing next to him was turning to leave when knocked over her can of coke. "Oh, I'm sorry-" then she gasped and jumped back. She screamed, and he said, "shut up." She kept screaming. "I said, shut UP!" He got up and lunged forward, spitting a huge wave of fire into her face. He felt the new shapes of long pointed incisors, and the rough long feel of a new tongue.

He looked at his hands and his heart sank. He felt like dying right now- just crying and dying away. "No. No..No. You can't do this!" Then everyone started screaming and panicking. The rows of the theatre came alive with terrified bustle as people turned and raced out. *"You can't do this to me!"* he said and roared. It was a sound new to him as well. Every time it was new. But somehow all the same. That feeling. His noise filled the room and he jumped through the rows as a great cat would lunge at a Zebra. Black shiny claws extended from his hands, which still had the look of Human skin, but the shaped of

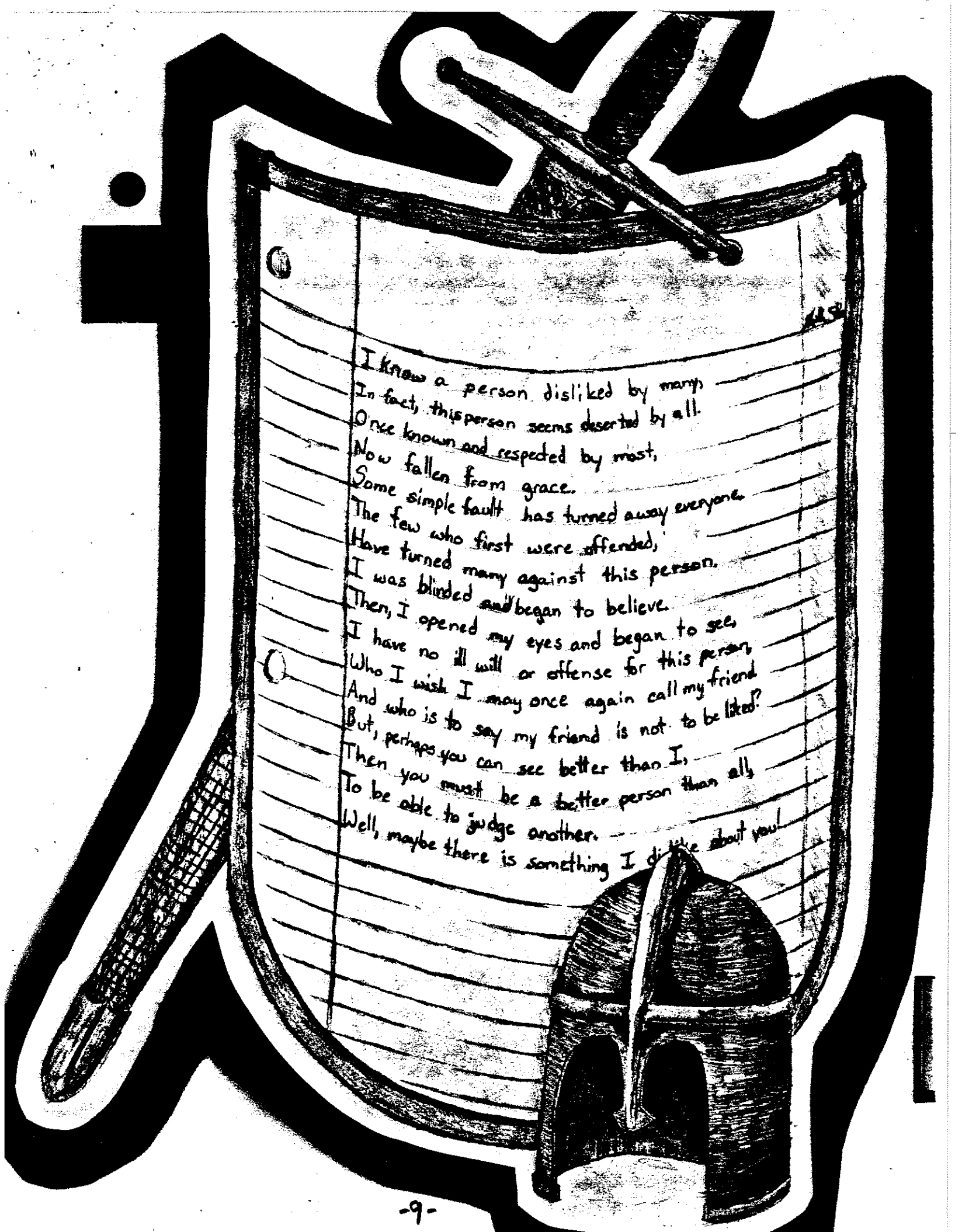
something much bigger. His pants were ripping and his shirt was coming open. Blood began running from cracking lines in his new skin.

His rage pulled him to only two people- Nicole and Rick. The fire was for them. His black teeth shined as saliva glazed them over with fierceness. The transformation from man to beast had taken place. It was that GI's fault, the small thought screamed inside a cloud of darkness invading his mind. His vision changed and his voice lowered. He was changing even more. "You ca*NOT DO THIS TO ME!*" he screamed with animal singing tones.

He ran through the parking lot slashing at the bare heads and necks of those in his line of rampage. They fell to the ground screaming, dying. Nicole and Rick's figures came into vision. They were entwined in a kiss. And for a moment, the beast stopped and sank to its fours. It sat there like a baby, and a low, hopeless and miserable groan came from his throat, frightening the two lovers. They screamed and shook each other when they saw the big white thing on the ground. It looked like a man who has grown six feet above his usual height and then changed to a carnivorous shape like unto a great cat. Its eyes were black shining orbs. They looked familiar, almost. Nicole was hypnotized as she stared into them in fascinating revulsion.

The beast saw her looking at him, and his sadness was replaced with an overwhelming despair and then rage so potent that it could be squeezed from a tube. It opened its mouth, displaying the set of fierce black fangs set up against a pink throat. It growled and the sound that came from it was so evil that Rick's eyes became red and his brain exploded inside his skull. He fell, dead, instantly. Nicole had not known what had happened but had not been able to see before the monster tackled her and tore her juggler vein out with a snap. The creature howled in despair and hatred. Those who were still living after that night would not know if that howl of hatred was for itself or for its victim.

"Hate is just hate," Jessica said, one day as she and Jason went out for ice cream. Jason looked at her and said, "You know, I think I really like you, Jess." She looked up at him and smiled, and they kissed.



I know a person disliked by many
In fact, this person seems deserted by all.
Once known and respected by most,
Now fallen from grace.
Some simple fault has turned away everyone.
The few who first were offended,
Have turned many against this person.
I was blinded and began to believe.
Then, I opened my eyes and began to see,
I have no ill will or offense for this person,
Who I wish I may once again call my friend.
And who is to say my friend is not to be liked?
But, perhaps you can see better than I,
Then you must be a better person than all,
To be able to judge another.
Well, maybe there is something I dislike about you!

IT IS AN ANIMAL OF SOME SORT, IT IS ALWAYS QUICK TO REDUCE, REFUTE, AND RETORT. IT FEELS NO REGRET, IT FEELS NO REMORSE, IT FEELS REJOICE WHEN IT RAINS ITS VOICE. ITS VOICE RAINS REPRISAL, ITS VOICE RAINS REPULSION, ITS VOICE RAINS REVENGE. VIOLENCE IS ITS RESOURCE, DISDAINING THOSE WHO DISRUPT AND REVOLT. IT BRINGS PAIN TO THOSE OF SUPPORT. ITS VIOLENCE IS REDUNDANT, THE VIOLENCE IS ABUNDANT, IT IS VIOLENCE.

THE ANIMAL OF UNKNOWN FABRIC GIVES PAIN TO THOSE WHO ATTACK IT. THE ANIMAL OF UNKNOWN SORT WILL KILL IF ONE STEP HIS COURT. THE ANIMAL OF UNKNOWN STOCK DELIVERS DELICATE, BUT DEPLETING, DEPRAVING, AND DEMONIC MOCKS. IT WILL DISCREDIT THE HONEST, SENTENCE THE INNOCENT, CORRUPT THE FAITHFUL, AND POISON THE PURE. THE UNKNOWN ANIMAL MAKES ONE ENDURE HIS UNSCRUPULOUS LURE.

HE HAS NO CURE, FOR WHAT HE FEELS AND REVEALS IS A LUST, A MUST. A MUST THE WILL RUST WITHIN HIM. A MUST THAT WILL FORGE WITHIN HIM AND MOLD HIM. A RUST THAT WILL COMPOSE A CRUST, A CRUST THAT WILL SEPARATE AND ISOLATE HIM FROM ALL.

HIS MOVEMENTS ARE LURKS, PROPELLED BY MURKS. HIS HAND A SLEDGE, WHICH HE DRIVES INTO THE HEAD, HIS FACE IS LURID, PIGMENTED WITH THE REDNESS OF EVIL AND HATE, HIS GLARE IS HARD AS THE FACE OF A TOMB STONE. HIS TONGUE NAUSEOUSLY QUICK AND SHARP. SHARP TO SLAUGHTER AND SLASH, SLASH UNTIL NOTHING REMAINS. TO HIM IT IS THE SAME, WHETHER HOLY OR EVIL HE WILL GIVE TORMENT AND PAIN.

NOW WE MUST ASK OURSELVES, WHERE DOES THIS BEAST EXIST, IS IT WITHIN OURSELVES OR IS IT UPON A MIST.

THE RHYME OF ANOTHER'S LIFE

by *Christie King*

Part I

I walk in an enchanted life
Through scenes so lush with colors so clear
My spirit floats as my feet stroke the ground
Drinking in every sensation that comes near

I build castles out of the clouds
In a house by the sea
I use the sea shells to hold them together
And the waves come and cover me

I see a butterfly, I ask for a ride
Onto the delicate wings I climb, careful not to tear
With energy and grace she carries me with her
We sweep and dip on the currents of air

Under the apple tree
Beside a rose, rich red
Near a lily, white and pure
Wise and sacred words were said

Occasionally I come across a kindred soul
Someone like me who chose to be free
I invite them to share their thoughts
With all their lofty ideals I agree

Singing, feeling a joyous song
The melody inspired by a sparrow
And the soulful lament of a love-bird
Pierces my heart like an arrow

I peer down sometimes
But I do not like what I see
The world so harsh and cruel...
I close my eyes because it bothers me

Languidly I recline on a bed of grass
I recline gracefully and watch the stars go by
One time I counted them all and gave each one a name
My heart lets out a contented sigh
The touch of a thousand dewdrops tickle my face
Here I will remain as I watch the sun rise glorious in the sky

Here one finds all things great and small
A paradise held in my hand
Curling in and out of my fingertips
Truly a remarkable land

Suddenly something appears at my side
Instinctively I know that he isn't good
I turn away from his foul presence
But he takes me away, leaving emptiness where I once stood.

Part II

Into a cold and sterile environment I am thrust
Strangers all around, staring me down.
Stiff, wooden, figures move in mechanical motion
Going through the motions of a life, always with a frown.

Surely the curtain does not fall so soon
Only to leave me alone on the stage
In front of a poorly designed set and without a script!
Cut—your act is through, they say—go back to your cage

When I describe what I sense
All around me there is pain
When the water falls here, it's not a cooling mist
Instead it's a steady torrent of polluted rain

I can see the scabs and scars they wear on their souls
As they make their way day to day
Don't they realize that they are hurting inside?
The results of the foolish games they play

A world of high gloss and shine
Everything is artificial and man made
Nothing is in its natural state
Wrapped in a package, so characteristic of this age

What would happen if I took a sip of your world?
Allowing the poison to enter my vein
I would feel my body hurt, my heart shrink
My mind acquire the disease of the insane

Instead I think only of escape
Of leaving this world so evil, so bad
When I try to explain,
They say I've gone mad

I am by myself, lonely and lost.
Surrounded by people, yet they know I don't belong
They don't understand
I wonder. Perhaps I did something wrong?

I can still recall another time and another place
Amongst flowers and friends
The memory is bittersweet because I am not there anymore
My soul was at peace, then.
Someday I will return
I'll bring all of this to an end

Into my dream world I fly
Out the open window one balmy night
Ah, the air welcomes me with a rush
And my life is bathed in moonlight

Honor

Dupre crested the hill, putting the hamlet into sight. His roan's breath clouded in the early chill air. It was a cold spring morning. Patches of snow still remained as reminders of the bitter winter. That was one of the reasons why Dupre had been sent to this hamlet.

The winter had arrived early catching the citizens off-guard, and most of the Fall's harvest had been lost. The reserves were diminishing, but this wasn't the call for alarm. It had been the recent sighting of a minotaur in the vicinity. The populous had been alarmed and had requested that the problem be remedied, for fear that the town food stores would be pillaged.

Dupre was a young knight, and had only earned his spurs the previous winter, yet he was one of the best with arms. He had begged his Lord to be the knight sent, but his Lord was adamant that Shamino, an older more experienced knight, be sent. Dupre challenged Shamino, and was sent to investigate the disturbance, after being proclaimed the victor of the duel.

"Damn," Dupre swore as he stuck his knuckles, which he had raked across his chainmail shirt, into his mouth. Pulling the cloak tighter around him, this time protecting his knuckles, Dupre descended into the hamlet.

The sun was cresting the horizon as he entered the hamlet. Smoke curled from chimneys as households awoke and morning meals were prepared. The ringing of metal being pounded against metal resounded through the hamlet. Dupre rode his mount to the nearby barn from which the sound resonated.

"Who goes there," cried a youthful voice.

"Hail barn! I come at the command of my Lord to remedy this town of a rampaging beast, might your master be about," replied Dupre dismounting from his horse.

"Welcome knight. My master is presently working the forge, you're welcome to come in and speak with him," stated the young apprentice who was pulling the barn door open.

"Be a good lad and rub down my mount. Don't forget to water him either."

"Thank you," cried the boy pocketing the silver which Dupre tossed to him. The boy then raced off to perform his new duty.

While the temperature outside had been frigid, the heat inside the smithy was sweltering. Dupre made his way to the rear of the immense barn, where a squat muscular man was pounding a piece of metal into shape.

"Master smith, might I have a word with you concerning the minotaur sighted in this vicinity," asked Dupre removing his helmet.

The smith ceased pounding, sighed, and unceremoniously dropped the metal into a trough of water. The smith turned, looked Dupre up and down, gave a humph, and wiped his face off with a grimy rag.

"Well what do you want to know about the minotaur youngster?"

"I would desire to know the location of the creature."

"What do you think you could do to a minotaur? You have to be joking. How long have you been a knight? Probably just earned your spurs, and are already ready to prove yourself to the world," the smith stated chuckling and tossing the rag into the trough.

"Listen lad. Why don't you turn around and have your Lord send a more experienced knight to slay the minotaur? Don't work yourself into a fit do you know anything about a minotaur? That's what I thought. A minotaur, son, stands a man and a half tall, with a body covered with hair and having the strength and head of a bull. Not to mention the horns and sharp teeth."

"Where do I find the beast old man?"

"Listen to me and listen good. Being a knight doesn't mean killing creatures it has to do with honor. If you go off and find this beast it will leave you dead on the beach, and then what have you got to show for it? You don't deserve the spurs you wear boy."

"You know nothing old man about honor or anything else," Dupre stated donning his helmet and walking out of the barn.

"Move boy," he ordered knocking the youth out of his way as he mounted his horse. "Tell your master he's an old fool," Dupre stated as he dug his spurs into the horse's flanks.

Dupre rode the horse hard towards the coast until the hamlet was out of sight, he ascended a knoll to get a better view of his surroundings, when he heard a snap from a nearby bush.

Dupre turned drawing his sword, and caught a glimpse of a large shadowed figure racing towards the ocean, on which a lonely ship could be seen.

"Halt or die beast," Dupre roared slamming down his visor and digging his spurs into his spurs into mounts flanks. The well trained roan shot off with such speed that it cleared the brush with a mighty leap, sending clods of dirt into the air.

Dupre could see the beast clearly now, its body was covered with dark hair, a mane of jet black hair hung down to its shoulders, while ivory horns gleamed in the morning sunlight. It was clad only in a crude loincloth.

"Stay cow, and I'll make your demise quick!"

The minotaur stumbled in the sand, but quickly regained its feet.

"Coward," Dupre yelled.

The minotaur, with agility far beyond that of a creature its size dove to the ground, rolled, and regained its feet facing the knight with a ten foot long spear in its hands.

Dupre reigned his mount and dismounted.

"Now prepare to die beast," Dupre proclaimed.

"Hold human!" came a gruff voice from the nearby brush, "This fight is not yours."

Dupre turned "Who dar...", his retort lost as he stared dumbfounded as six figures emerged from the surrounding brush. The six minotaur were clad in metal plate armor, which was blood red. Each held an immense ax and a coil of rope, save the minotaur who had spoken.

The minotaur who had spoke stepped forward a black and gold emblem on its chestplate denoting some sort of authority.

"The accused before you is a criminal to our law, and will stand punishment under our laws. Please step aside," the officer stated.

Dupre opened his visor, mouth agape, as he tried to contemplate the fact that the creature had spoken.

"Wait, I choose to call champion," spoke the dark minotaur who had lowered his spear.

"Who is there to call," asked the officer.

"I call the human knight," ignoring the startled looks of his bretherin the dark minotaur approached Dupre.

"Will you stand as champion honorable knight?"

"Why should I fight beside a savage creature like you?"

"You are not required to fight, only observe and stand as witness that I died honorably."

"He cannot champion you," broke in the officer, "He is a filthy human, beyond comprehension of honor. He calls us savage, when his race is ignorant and uncivilized."

"No, Kaz, I have seen their race for two weeks now, they may be different, but they are far from unhonorable," the dark minotaur retorted.

"Wait," cried Dupre "You, minotaur, speak well of me though I was to kill you. You then ask me to honor you as champion. If I am to stay and watch you perish, I would desire to know why," Dupre asked.

"He committed a crime, human," stated the officer.

"What crime?"

"That of loving and declaring my love for another's wife, even though he heart lies not with her husband," the dark minotaur replied.

"So you are going to be put to death? Why?"

"Are ways are not yours, and he is not to be put to death, he is given a chance to live, if he slays his combatants," stated the officer, with a look of disgust at Dupre.

"Six against one! I'd say that is a bit unfair."

"That is our law. Now human, knight, whatever, please move aside I have a duty yo perform for my Lord," the officer replied.

"Yes, honorable knight step aside and observe," stated the dark minotaur.

"Wait! Tell me your name first!"

"My name is Bloodfist, son of Ogrebane, captain of the Dragonfish, and Lord of the Eastern Isles."

"I am Sir Dupre Brightblade, knight champion, Lord Morgoth's best blade. I vow here on my blood that I shall honor your request as champion and let all who oppose face my steel," Dupre swore dropping to one knee and running his blade across his hand.

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"By God's grace let me fulfill my pledge or die," finished Dupre.

"Let's proceed then," stated the officer.

With that the five remaining minotaur stepped forward and bound a rope to Bloodfist's ankles, wrists, and neck, they finished by each tying his own end to his own wrist.

Bloodfist bent and picked up a spear in each hand.

"Prepare for judgement," the officer cried.

Bloodfist responded with a snarl, and without a pause lashed out with a spear and lanced the chest of the minotaur holding the rope tied to his neck.

The minotaur holding the ropes tied to Bloodfist's arms yanked wrenching the spears from his hands. The two free minotaur advanced with their axes ready to strike. Bloodfist lunged towards the minotaur holding the rope tied to his right arm, and clenched his muscular hand around the minotaur's neck and twisted it, which responded with a loud snap. An ax struck out and glanced off one of Bloodfist's horns, shattering it. Bloodfist lashed out striking a minotaur in the throat. Another ax lashed out, and the savage battle ended. Bloodfist lay dead an ax lodged in his sternum.

"You have more honor than I assumed human, perhaps your race isn't as backward as I thought. We'll take our dead and leave," the officer stated.

"What of Bloodfist?"

"He is not of our concern, the others will come with us, for they died honorably and deserve a bed on a burning prier. Farewell human."

The heat from the burning prier was intense, and sweat streamed down Dupre's face. He had spent long into the evening building the prier for Bloodfist.

"You died honorably, friend," Dupre stated as he turned to get his horse.

Dupre arrived at the barn late that night.

"Hello, good smith. Are you about," Dupre yelled.

"Who goes? Oh, it's you. Come to gloat over your victory?"

"No, I returned to apologize, and to give you these. You were right, I don't deserve these. I don't know what honor is, and I shouldn't be a knight," stated Dupre offering his spurs to the smith.

"If you have come to realize that, then you deserve those spurs, and you will make a great knight some day."

"Thank you good smith. Good dreams."

My Island and I

Christie
King

No man is an island, they say.
But what wouldn't I give to be one,
To sit by myself in the middle of the ocean
And let the waves lap my troubles away.

I'd curl my toes in the sand
Let the palm trees hold my hand,
Then my roots would begin to grow
And my leaves would start to show.

There would be days and nights of solitude.
With time for quiet thoughts and peaceful slumber.
Relax. Drink in the sun. Hold a conversation with -
No one.

It would just be me.
And I wouldn't be lonely.
Because I wouldn't be bothered.

No one could hurt my feelings.
Or tax my emotions,
Make me feel worried or depressed.

Anger, sorrow, guilt, scorn.
They wouldn't exist on my island, in me.

My object d'art

I wish I could paint
A picture and fill it with dark slashes
Of black crayon or charcoal
To show how I feel.

Perhaps I could create a container
I'd make it a self-portrait
Empty like I am now
But I'd fill it
With pretty things when I felt good
And crude things when I felt bad.

I could build or destroy
Transform
Make a rose out of papier-mache
I'd use my object d'art
To say how I feel.

Completely wrapped up in myself,
I don't see a path or a way for me
How can my two little eyes conceive
What others know and others believe?

I open my eyes so wide,
Trying to see
Life
What do you hold for me?

My life
was so boring
dull as paint
flat, one sided, no shine
It covered a soul even more dull

A Boy's Life
by Tara Chaidez

"Damm," Chris muttered under his breath while walking home from the bus stop. Life was going well for him. He got on varsity football as the quarter-back first string, he was making "A's" and "B's" at school, taking classes he really enjoyed, and his life at home was just great, no problems what-so-ever. But today the boys found out he was a virgin, and today they decided to make it the topic of their discussion.

For years now, Chris has heard the guys talking about their scores, on the bus, in class, and in the locker room. Everyone talked about their scores, except Chris.

"I think that I am the only one in the twelfth grade that hasn't had sex with someone." It wasn't that there weren't any chances. The more "mature" girls had made a bet last year on who would get him to love them first. It was just that Chris had always imagined making love on your wedding bed with your wife for the first time. It had to be special.

The next days at school were horrible for Chris. His friends taunted him at every chance. They passed him play-boy pictures writing, "Too bad you don't know what this is like", arrows pointing to the most private parts. He didn't even feel like he was part of the team in football.

One guy in his class, the major geek, told him, "Don't worry about all of them, they are just idiots. I'm a virgin too, and it really isn't that big of a deal." Yeah, thought Chris, with our stank breath, bifocals, and pie-face, it isn't surprising that girls wouldn't want you.

There was a special girl in his life. her name was Karen. Karen had a cute face, nice body, and wonderful personality. She like him for who he was not what he was and he knew that. But the peer pressure was getting unbelievable. Chris isn't the sort of guy who really cares what other people think about him, but to have everyone in the halls whispering about you is absolutely the worst.

No, the worst came when he was sitting at home. His mother and sister were in the kitchen working on a school project while his dad was sitting on the love seat flipping through the channels.

"Chris, it's about time we had another one of our manly talks." Chris' father said with a chuckle. "No, really, I know when I was your age what I was doing and I want you to have these." Chris' father pulled out a box of lubercated Trojans.

"But dad," Chris tried to speak.

"Don't worry about it," Chris' dad interrupted. "There are a lot of diseased going around and you surely don't want to get anyone pregnant. When you run out of those I can buy you some more." Chris' father went back to flipping the channels.

Run Out, Chris thought, it was a super-jumbo box with 30 condoms. Run Out !?! Great, I'm not even living up to my father's expectations.

Chris took that box of condoms, Trojans, lubercated to his room. He locked the door behind him and pulled down his pants. Then he tried putting the condoms on. He always wondered what they felt like and now he knew. He practiced for a little while until

he got it down pat. Then Chris got ready for bed. He felt asleep where he dreamed about being in an erotic land where everyone walked around naked.

The next day was a Friday and Chris was determined to do "it." So what if we aren't married, we love each other. He started out by buying her a dozen roses.

"Chris, what's the occasion? These are beautiful." Karen asked. Chris thought if he was going to do it, he was going to do it right.

"Tonight, I'm going to take you to dinner so don't make plans with anyone else." Chris passionately kissed her and then walked away.

His heart was pounding, his palms were sweating. Will she really do it with me? Will she hate me? Will she expect me to marry her? Those were the questions that Chris asked himself.

The night finally arrived. Dinner went well. "What time do you have to be home?" Chris asked.

"About 12 o'clock." She said, "What are we going to do next?"

"You'll see."

Chris drove her in his parent's car to a beautiful hotel room overlooking the ocean. "Let's pretend we are married for a while, you don't have to do anything that you don't want to."

Chris and Karen went to the bed and laid there for a while. Then things started to get hot. He began to undress her and she screamed, "Chris, I want you!"

Then he froze. He couldn't move. "I can't." He threw money on the table for her to get a cab and then he ran out of the room and into his car. Chris cried the way home. He thought that something was wrong with him. Maybe he was a, God No! Please No! Not a faggot! Chris ran into his house and into his room.

"What honey? Did you and Karen have a fight?" questioned his mother from the living room. Ten minutes later, Karen pulled up in the cab. She ran to his room. They had a long talk and she said that she liked it even more that he didn't push her.

Chris felt only a little better. The next days at school were just as bad as before until rumors went around saying that he had had sex with Karen. He hadn't said anything. He went up to Karen and she looked him in the eyes and said, "I understand better than you think." While looking back into her eyes, Chris now knew what real love was and he really didn't care anymore what the other kids thought.

The Aural Drifter

By Will Lindsay

PREACHER: It's part of the scheme of things. She certainly was young- in that great

scheme. Death, brings change to the individual, and his or her family. Death creates a change for the living, and for the dead. She is now with loved ones.

The lord has accepted her, and it has changed both of our lives. That's all there is.

(Congregation quietly bustles.)

PREACHER: Her life on Earth is over, but her spirit remains. We all have the memory of Sahra in our minds and hearts. It will be with us until we die, and as I have said- thereafter as well. Sahara's influence has directed all of our lives in some way. It has changed the course of some, and may have given a simple smile to others. It was for the good. She gave so much to the human race- it's priceless. Now she has departed us, and we must go on with our lives. She has passed, and is with God. That is all.

(Whispers among the congregation.)

(A man stands up, and the audience looks in his direction, the preacher looks

puzzled and looks from side to side. The man speaks.)

MAN: NO! No that is not all there is! That is not all there is, I swear! You must look further on than that! Go where you are afraid to go! Go where you have never gone before- let your spirit guide you! It has the answers!

(Congregation looks about and begins to chatter quietly among itself. The preacher looks at the man, speechless.)

MAN: (Slowly, clears his throat, looks around, then at the preacher) There's something else.

Memoirs of a Fourth Grade Nobody
by Tara Chaidez

My story is about the fourth grade. The fourth grade is an unimportant year. Nobody remembers it, nobody cares. How many of you can even remember your fourth grade teacher's name. This is why I wanted to write this story, so when I am forty years old I can look back on the wonderful world of fourth graders.

Fourth grade wouldn't have been anything without Mr. Shuke for the teacher. Mr. Shuke was an ex-Vietnam sergeant and taught us like we were his soldiers.

The fourth grade had to have been the longest year in my life. We had an average class with the cry baby, the bully, the sissy, and the tattletale, etc. Of course, I was the class clown. I never meant to be it, but it just happened that way.

Well, the first day of school started. Everything was just fine. The kids were excitedly talking to each other of what they did over the summer, and the places that they got to go to. I remember that year, one kid in my class went to Disney World. Boy, he had the other kids running around doing favors for him for a whole month, he was so popular.

Mr. Shuke was pretty cool the first day of school. He let us go up in front of the class and tell all about our summer time experiences. We were all worried about what we had heard about him the year before, but we realized that they were probably just rumors with no truth in them what-so-ever.

Then came the next day of school. We were working on these stupid percentages in math. Who really cares how to do percentages? When you go shopping and they say 20% off, they have the new prices right under the old ones. Anyway, there was this bug bully Spike that used to sit right behind me in class. He was just as bored as I was when he began to poke me in the back with a pencil when Mr. Shuke wasn't looking. I got so irritated that I punched him in the face, I just had to get a good grade on the next math test. And wouldn't you know it, Mr. Shuke saw me. Detention. That afternoon I had to write on the chalk board 100 times, "Number 15 in the Student Guidebook states that there will not be any harm afflicted by one student to another, and I will not take away any one else's right to come to school to get an education by making physical contact with that person." Boy, my arm was hurting for a week after that.

Slowly, but surely we began to drive Mr. Shuke crazy. By the middle of December, he just snapped. You know how when a teacher gets really mad and starts lecturing a class about how you're in the fourth grade now and you shouldn't act like those third grade babies, or they threatened you with, "Just wait until your in the fifth grade, then you'll find out!" Well, Mr. Shuke was giving us one of those lectures. By the fifth grade, nobody really cares any more, because it was the same speech since kindergarten except with different years. Anyway, Mr. Shuke does the same thing: First, he walks around the classroom ranting and raving telling us the only jobs we're going to get is collecting garbage if we don't start paying attention. Then Mr. Shuke threatens us with having to copy the dictionary during recess until we copy the whole book while

leaning on his desk with his chair behind him.

Well, this one kid who had been standing at the pencil sharpener for the whole 30 minutes while Mr. Shuke had been speaking, sharpening his pencil, finally ran down to the metal part of the eraser, and decided to take the long way back to his desk. On the way, he deposited a box full of tacks on Mr. Shuke's chair. Then just after Mr. Shuke finished saying, "And the alphabet ends with the letter Z", he plopped down on his chair.

Boy, oh boy, oh boy! I have never seen a teacher pick and grab at his butt so many times in five minutes. The whole class was laughing. Mr. Shuke was wearing white pants that day too. One of the girls that just came back from the nurse who was teaching about the female reproductive system yelled, "Are you starting your menstrual cycle, Mr. Shuke? Nurse Nancy has those thick Panty liners in her office that she said we could get any time. Do you want me to get one for you Mr. Shuke?"

For the next three hours until it was time to go home, Mr. Shuke had us running laps on the soccer field.

The rest of the year wasn't any better. We came back from Christmas Vacation with Mr. Shuke saying that this year things were going to be different. That he had to prepare us for the fifth grade, and he wasn't going to take any more nonsense from anyone. Yeah, right! Things only got worse.

Us kids had three different ways to drive Mr. Shuke crazy. There was the small-sized ways, the medium-sized ways, and the big-sized ways. The small-sized consisted of the petty stuff, you know like whispering in class, asking repeatedly if Mr. Shuke could repeat something, pretending like we aren't listening. The medium-sized stuff would be like hiding all of the black board erasers and chalk, make peeping noises without moving your lips and have the rest of the class join you so Mr. Shuke doesn't know who is causing the disruption, and stealing our toys back from Mr. Shuke's desk. Then there was the big-sized which we did only when Mr. Shuke was really getting on our nerves. We would squirt water on his chair and say things that makes the rest of the class laugh, but Mr. Shuke doesn't get. Just try that boys and girls and see how red your teacher's face gets, just like a ripe tomato.

Boy, I remember one time I got kicked out of the room because I got caught drawing obscene pictures in my notebook. Well, they were just like the pictures that Nurse Nancy showed us boys. Mr. Shuke told me to go to the principal's office. Well, I was just determined to get the last laugh. I collected my books as slow as I could until everyone in the class was watching me, even Mr. Shuke. I made my way slowly to the door and then did a triple spin right before slamming the door behind me. I could hear the whole class laughing. Then I looked in the windows on the door and made the most gruesome face I could manage. I heard that Mr. Shuke went into some Vietnam flashbacks right after I left.

Well, the rest of the year wasn't any different. By the time summer vacation came we had finished copying the dictionary, first definitions of each word only, and were the healthiest kids in the world from all of the laps, push-ups, and sit-ups that Mr. Shuke made us do. I think the only reason why he passed us all to the fifth grade so that he wouldn't have to see us again.

"God's Helper" by Shane Clayton

Gideon sat in church that day, while the congregation around him recited the Lord's prayer. He sat in the second row from the front, directly in the middle so that he could have a perfect view of the pastor giving the sermon that Sunday morning. He gazed at the chapel around him: the enormous lights hanging above him, the huge walls that towered twenty feet in the air to meet the ceiling, and the stained glass windows directly behind the preacher. Gideon began to daydream about what heaven would be like. He imagined it as something so beautiful, the human mind cannot comprehend it. Suddenly, he was awoken from his dream, by his wife, who nudged him from the side. "The sermon is about to begin Gideon!" she said.

As the pastor began his sermon, Gideon studied the features of this young man's face. He was quite a handsome man: short, blond hair, and light blue eyes. The pastor talked on about how the world judges on appearance, not on the inside: "The lord looketh on the heart", he exclaimed. But Gideon was too caught up in the beauty of what was around him. This church seemed as if it could be heaven. He imagined little angels dancing all around them, as the heavens opened up shooting piercing white light through the ceiling. This was such a beautiful place! Gideon had been going to this church ever since he was a boy. He had never noticed the penetrating beauty of this building until his beliefs came to match those of everyone else's who attended here. How could anyone turn away from such a gorgeous place?

As Gideon and his wife left the church that day, they shook hands with the handsome pastor, Gideon being sure to comment on the impressions that his sermon left on him. He took one last look at the outside appearance of the enormous church building, the beauty still lodged in his mind. As he was about to open the door to his car, he took sight of a young woman dressed provocatively, yet quite shabbily. She was obviously less fortunate, probably homeless. Gideon remembered a part in the sermon that said to give to the homeless. He approached the lady with a smile on his face, offering her a ride to wherever she needed to go. The lady turned to look at Gideon; she was so beautiful despite the smudges of dirt left on the sides of her face. Her body was the shape of what Gideon imagined a Goddess might have; her clothes obviously did not reflect the same. The lady replied: "I thank you very much, kind sir for the offer, but I really have no place to go", replied the woman. Gideon's heart went out to her: sympathy took over, as he offered the woman a chance to stay until she got back on her feet. The lady, now known to Gideon as Diana, accepted the offer with great thankfulness.

The ride back to Gideon's house was a short one; only five minutes or so by car. Gideon, his wife Kelly, and Diana all climbed out and walked toward the front door. As Diana was walking around the front of the car, she noticed the personalized license plate that said: "righteous". Diana began to feel uneasy. As Gideon opened the door to his typical suburban house, she followed the two inside cautiously.

The three of them walked into the living room, where Gideon sat down with Diana. Kelly walked in briefly, then said: "I'm going to jump into something more comfortable honey, be back in a sec". Gideon ignored his wife, and stared into the eyes of Diana. She really was an adonis: some sort of goddess of beauty. He started up a conversation saying: "So, tell me what the problem is Dian". Dian replied saying: "Well, it all started when I began taking drugs my freshman year of college. I didn't know when to stop; I kept reaching for more and more. Eventually I got so addicted, I had no time for college, so I quit. To support my drug habit, I had to turn to prostitution, which really... suddenly, Gideon interrupted: "You what? How could you do such a thing like that?" He stared into the immense, glaring eyes of Diana. Her nostrils were flaring; her teeth sharpened into jagged points. "Who do you think you are?" Diana coiled back into her chair, the fear on her face unable to penetrate Gideon's rage. "Do you think I want ugly whores in my house?" He fixed his eyes upon Diana's evil face. Large boils penetrated the skin on her face, as her nostrils continued to flare violently. Her body was a crumpled heap on the chair, quivering like some disgusting devil. "I'm sorry" she begged. I didn't mean any harm, I just need.... "Oh shut your gaping trap, you little slut!" He picked up a huge hardback Bible and flung it at her, striking her in the temple. Diana fell from the chair, as everything around her spun in weird circles, and Gideon's face deformed into a blob. Gideon picked up Diana under her arms, and dragged her out to the back yard. "We don't want harlots here" he chanted, as he dumped the crumpled heap outside on the grass. Gideon returned with a twelve gauge, semi-automatic shotgun. He spun it around, and swung the butt of it down onto the face of Diana. She tried to scream, but was muffled by Gideon's foot, as he jammed his huge boot into her mouth. Gideon looked down, disgusted at what he saw: such an ugly girl he thought, as he pumped his weapon. He kicked her once more in the head, shouting: "God frowns upon adulterers". He slid her up against the wall, and rammed the shotgun into Diana's gaping mouth. He fired once, then twice, then three, four, five times into the face of the girl, until a splattered mess of bone, blood, and brain lay plastered up against the wall. Gideon looked once more upon the corpse, then said to himself: "She was such an ugly girl".

Gideon's wife finally ran down stairs, after hearing the shotgun blasts. "What happened, what's going on?" Her babbling ceased, as she looked in awe at her visitor, who lay on the ground, her head smeared across the back of her house. Gideon instantly commented: "Isn't it beautiful? One less prostitute on the streets, one less sinner for God to forgive! Just look at it! Isn't that a sight? Simply beautiful!" Kelly didn't know what to think. She stood there in a complete trance, unable to grasp the situation. Gideon stared back at his beautiful wife, finally saying: "Well, what's the problem?" Kelly's face turned green all of the sudden. Turning, she ran inside, to escape the sickness she felt from that salty smell.

Gideon walked inside to clean the blood off his pants. He

took his shoes off, and found a tooth embedded in the sole. After sufficiently cleaning up, he walked over to his wife, kissed her on the cheek, and went upstairs to read the Bible. He offered Kelly to come and read with him; she gave no reply.

Gideon walked into the bathroom, and looked in the mirror. He saw the face of a handsome man, that of a savior. He was going to single handedly rid society of sin and corruption he thought. He walked into the bedroom, and opened his Bible to the twentieth chapter of Exodus, where he read and studied for an hour. His wife Kelly entered the room, and stood at the door for a few minutes watching her husband. Eventually he looked up, surprised, and smiled at his wife. "Oh hi honey!" he said. I was just reading. Why don't you come and join me?" Kelly, stood there quiet for a few minutes, then murmured: "You're wrong Gideon, you're wrong. Haven't you found anything in there that also says so?" Gideon was confused. He gave his wife a perplexed look, then said: "Wrong about what Kelly?" "You can't just kill people because they are sinners, Gid! What you did was wrong." Gideon stood up, and looked back at his wife. How could he be? "Prostitutes were stoned in Christ's time Kelly, how could I be wrong." "Are you contesting the word of God?" He looked at the distorted face of his wife, and said: "I'm sorry Kelly, but you are wrong." With that, he walked over to his wife, slowly. Then, picking up his shotgun, he knocked Kelly over the side of the head. He flung her down the steps, and dragged her outside, across the gore still left by the back door. Leaving his wife by the door, he turned around to fill his shotgun with more shells. Cocking the twelve gauge, he spun around, only to find the barrel of a revolver in his face. Kelly stood there, the anger shown bright in her eyes. Gideon looked back at the beautiful face of his wife. Clutching the butt of his shotgun, he knocked the revolver out of her hands, and bludgeoned her till she lay still. Kicking the revolver away from her body, Gideon said: "You were going to kill me, weren't you? Are you interfering with God's work?" He turned the shotgun toward his wife, and fired three times while saying: "Kelly Katherine Parker; I smite thee in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy spirit. Amen."

Technology

The lightning flashed over
the rubble strewn field of
death.

The reek of rotting flesh
permeated the air in thick
fumes.

Nothing moved.

Chunks of broken and torn
metal were lain haphazardly
everywhere.
Broken bodies, some torn and
tattered, were thrown like
rejected dolls.
Nothing moved.

It was dark the only light
was that through breaks in
the clouds.
The wind was stagnant,
refusing to brush away the
hanging mist.
Nothing moved.

This was man's doing, man
caused the death and
destruction.
And in the end man's
fighting and violence
destroyed himself.
Nothing moved.

Stress

Thoughts of the mind
tear up inside
Twisting the innards
and warping the mind

The blood starts to coarse
and the pressure will rise
Until it continues and
something bursts deep inside

Stress is a mess
as can plainly be said
If you don't watch your health
One morning you're dead

All poems by Wesley McKeown

The Sword

The glowing coals of the forge
spoke of hell and damnation,
and out of this the scarred
smith drew the orange rod of
steel.

With each hammer blow a shower
of sparks fell like the spray
of blood this weapon would
eventually draw in heated
battle.

The metal took shape, a shape
that was parallel to that of
the jagged teeth found in
death's skull. This would be
his tool.

With a sizzling hiss the blade
drank its first taste of fluid
protesting with a cry, and
speaking of its hidden desires
to drink of blood.

Delicate care was taken to
make its edges razor keen, to
create the perfect tool to
split bone and muscle, and to
pierce steel.

Its hilt was bedecked with
metals man would kill for
and its hilt was wrapped in
flesh, of an animal killed by
man, what irony.

Love

I've felt love's fire, and
I've been burned.
I've known love's silent
misery, due to lack of
spoken word.
I've suffered through love's
hormone lie, and I've known
love's heartbreak and prayed
to die.
But through it all I've
persevered, and learned love's
power not to fear.

THE HERO WITHIN...

When there's a problem that you face,
a goal that you strive for,
a battle too hard to win,
the hero must come from within...

When you're feeling down,
when all is going wrong,
it'll be all right
if the hero comes from within...

When there's no where left to lean,
everyone has disappeared,
look into your heart
and pull the hero from within...

When you start to see
that it only takes a dream
to help and to achieve, then
you're reaching out to the hero within...

When realization hits that
all you need is courage,
then you will know that
you are the hero within.

-Nicole Bertot

On And On...

The man walks up to the girl.
He has the stuff,
she has the money.
Everyday this trade takes place.

And the game goes on and on.
Mothers cry when their
daughters are gone.

People dying from addiction,
getting shot for their money.
Running, hiding, trying
to escape themselves.

And the game goes on and on.
Fathers cry when their
sons are gone.

In this game there are no winners,
only losers all around.
The man with power holds a gun
and the dead man hits the ground.

And the game goes on and on.
The world will cry when
all the children are gone.

And the game goes on and on...

-Nicole Bertot

Nicole Bertot
Feb. 3, 1994
Period 5
A. P. English

The Deed

Tommy knew as he walked slowly home that afternoon that his father would be waiting angrily. It was the day he had dreaded for these many weeks, "report card day." As he drew nearer and nearer to that old brick house, he kept thinking how easy it would be to turn and run. This wasn't the first time that Tommy had come home scared, in fact, he came home scared everyday.

Tommy was one of the brightest students in his school and usually received A's. This was not enough for his father, though, and the smallest A- was reason enough for Tommy's father to take out his anger on Tommy. Any reason was reason enough for Tommy to be beat. This had been a natural part of Tommy's life ever since he could remember.

Crossing over that last step of the porch, Tommy swore to himself that he wouldn't be beat this time. "Shit, I'm almost 17 years old, I don't have to take his crap anymore," he thought unconvincingly. Opening the front door, he marched in and threw his report card down on the table. Tommy's mother opened it and beamed proudly, "Oh, Tom, this is an excellent card." She kissed him on the cheek, looked over at her husband, and quickly returned to the kitchen. "Well, son, let me see it," his father said in his irritating southern drawl. Hesitantly, Tommy gave the report card to his father, then joined his mother and eight-year-old sister, Joyce, in the kitchen.

After reading the grades with much disapproval, Tommy's father came in with that old black belt he knew so well. There were parts of that belt so worn from the daily beatings, that they had turned a lighter shade of black than the rest of the belt. Seeing the belt, Joyce immediately ran out of the kitchen yelling for Tommy to follow her. "Boy, what do you call these?!" he yelled at Tommy, shoving the paper in his face, "How do you ever expect to get anywhere in life with shit like this?" Tommy's mother stepped in front of her son, hoping to protect him from this ritual. "Frank, why don't you just put the belt away, there's no need for that. He did real good," she said, trying to stall for time. After warning his wife harshly to move out of his way, Mr. Reynolds slapped her across the face knocking her glasses to the floor. "Look, Valerie, if you know what's best for you, you'll get the hell out of this room," he yelled. After receiving a few more hits from her husband's fists, Tommy's mother finally gave in and went to find Joyce. For the next 20 minutes, all that could be heard from the Reynolds' kitchen was the sound of leather hitting flesh and blood, accompanied by Tommy's muffled screams. Soon after these blood curdling noises

stopped, the front door slammed, shaking the whole house, and Frank Reynolds sped off in the direction of the local bar.

Joyce quietly came into the kitchen and found her brother laying on the floor, bleeding and sobbing. "It'll be ok soon, Bubba, he's gone now," she said slowly, as she helped him to his feet. Their mother soon appeared in the doorway with an ice-pack held tightly against her left eye. "Baby, I'm so sorry! I tried, I really tried this time, Tommy," she said as she hugged her son. "It ain't your fault, Mom, he's just an asshole," he said angrily. "Now look, what he did was wrong, but don't talk about your father that way. He's done a good job taking care of us and is just a little stressed right now, that's all. It'll stop soon, I promise, or we'll leave. Ok, honey?" his mother asked softly. She then began to clean his cuts from where the belt had torn the skin off his back. Tommy looked up at his mother, then at Joyce, then at the blood on the floor. He started slowly, "Mom, you've been saying that since I was Joyce's age. When are you going to see that he won't ever change no matter how many excuses you make up for him? We need to get out of here while we still can. I'm so sick of this shit!" He stopped to let out a wince as his mother dipped the alcohol soaked rag into one of the deeper cuts. "Just let it go, Tom, there's no use worrying about that now," she said filling her ice-pack up with fresh ice.

Tommy looked at his mother with disgust, jumped off the stool, and grabbed her. Pulling her into the bathroom, he yelled at his mother, "Look at yourself! See what he's done! How can you sit here and take it?" Valerie Reynolds looked in the mirror and soon began to weep. She wept for herself, for her son, and for her daughter, soon to be the next victim of her husband's love. "God, please forgive me. What have I done?" she said sadly, turning to Tommy, "Ok, you win. We'll leave the next time it happens. I promise."

Soon after all three had stopped crying, Tommy went up to his room. Something had to be done and obviously he was the only one able to do it. Slowly he crept to his father's office down the hall and reached into the top desk drawer. Fishing out a small silver key, he crossed the room and unlocked the small wooden gun case. Tommy took the smallest gun he found and a half empty box of bullets. He then locked the case and returned the key to its proper place in the drawer.

When he got to his room, Tommy quickly opened the box to find only three shining bullets left. "Oh well," he sighed, "I hope this is enough." After loading the gun, Tommy spent the remainder of the night waiting anxiously for his father to return home. As he sat there, he perfected his aim and speed. After about 200 test draws, he finally heard his father's car pull up outside. Thoughts of anxiety and fear ran through Tommy's clouded mind, "What if it doesn't work? Am I really going to do it this time? I wish he hadn't come home, it would be so much easier. I hope mom and Joyce don't hate me."

When the door slammed and he was sure that his father was in his bedroom, Tommy left his own room and walked bravely down the hall. Every step was filled with indecision, but Tommy was convinced that he was right. When he reached the master bedroom door, he slowly opened it and faced his drunken father. Without saying a word, Tommy raised the gun and prepared to kill his father. Suddenly, as his father saw what was happening, Tommy became paralyzed.

"Thomas, what are you doing? You won't shoot me; you love me!" he said desperately. Valerie woke up to see her husband and son in this deadly face off. "Please, honey, put the gun down," she pleaded. Slowly as if in a trance by his mother's words, Tommy lowered the gun. At seeing the smug expression on his father's face, Tommy raised the gun again and fired. He had shot his father in the arm and watched the blood spray wildly from the hole in amazement.

In his shocked daze, he dropped the gun and stood paralyzed once more. Frank Reynolds became violent and grabbed a candlestick holder off his dresser. He swung at Tommy, hitting him in the left side of his face. When Tommy fell to the floor, his father began kicking him in the stomach. Valerie cried out with the sound of each rib cracking. Out of nowhere, the gun sounded again.

Frank looked down at his side which was gushing thick, red blood and then over to the doorway. To his surprise, his mere eight year old daughter stood there holding the gun that Tommy had dropped. She was sobbing and screaming, "Daddy stop! Daddy stop!" He swung at Joyce with the candlestick, but missed her nearly. Joyce ran to her mother's side next to Tommy's heap on the floor. Dropping the gun by Valerie's feet, Joyce grabbed her older brother's body and attempted to drag him out of the room. Falling back, she looked up just in time to see her father as he lifted the candlestick above her head. Joyce covered her head and tried to duck as the candle stick holder began its final decent. Before it reached its target, the third and last gunshot was heard that night.

This time it was Valerie who was holding the gun that killed her husband. Frank sank down to the floor with the candlestick still in his hand and the bleeding pouring out of the three holes. He looked up at his family and gasping for air, sputtered his last words, "I'm...so...sorry..." By this time, Tommy had begun to regain consciousness and was staring at his father's body next to him. All he could see was the blood, there was so much blood. Joyce and Valerie picked Tommy up off the ground and helped him downstairs. There they called the police.

Months later, the three remaining Reynolds have moved to the other side of the state. Because the act that night was purely self defense, none of them faced any charges. In their new home, they have begun to start their lives over, without the violence.

OUT, OUT BRIEF CANDLE!

Christie King

How can I describe the atmosphere of that churchyard? As I speak, I search for words that can portray the scene I still see so clearly in my mind. It was evening-time one November and the sky was a heavy grey color. It was oppressive, yet no other color could contain such a mood. If you can imagine, the air blended into the sky, as if a despondent artist had dipped his paint brush into the most somber colors on his palette, filling the canvas with blues and blacks, greys and browns, until the result satisfactorily reflected his heavy heart. It sat like a frame over the tops of the trees and church and over the churchyard.

This churchyard was located in the town of Stratford in England. A visitor in that land, the experience I met with is too overwhelming to keep to myself any longer. If only I could make you feel as I did that night, perhaps then the burden would be lifted from me.

When you stepped into the church, you could feel the presence of the countless bodies that had entered into its sanctuary. The stone floor was worn, every time you set your foot down, something reminded you that someone else, long ago, had placed their foot in that exact spot. As you walked slowly down the aisle, you noticed the inscriptions on the walls bearing ancient names and dates. You recalled how people would go to great lengths to be laid to rest inside a church, for that was the only place you could be certain your remains would be safe. Such a thought made you shudder, what dreadful fate would fall upon your spirit should it stray from the confines of the church? To seek solace from these thoughts that caused chills to creep down your spine, you knelt by the pew, made the sign of the cross and sank down on your knees, in hopes that meditation would quiet the unrest that tumbled in and out of your consciousness. Your knees sank on a cushion embroidered with an unfamiliar name and family emblem. Did some dutiful wife or daughter labor over the intricacies only to have the pressure of a stranger's weight wear it thin?

In completion of the ritual, you go to get a candle from the side altar to light in the memory of...need you be selective? There is always a soul somewhere that needs a candle-maybe mine or maybe even yours. The offering is dropped in the box, the candle is chosen, lit with the fire of one already burning, and placed in a holder, its flame contributing, ever so slightly, to the glow which surrounded the chapel.

You are the solitary person in the church, though you realize such a feat is impossible to achieve. Someone is always here with you. Be it a member of the clergy, occupied with a task in the background, or those situated high above and far below you who observe and note everything you do.

I turned my back on the interior of the church and walked toward the heavy wooden door. It's so funny that a room with such high, vaulted ceilings would have such a short, squat door. Perhaps it serves as a reminder that you're leaving an ethereal world and re-entering an earthen one.

The sky had gone from grey to black when I stepped outside.

I glanced back over my shoulder-at the room I had just left. Its eerie illumination contrasted sharply with the shadows that awaited me in the churchyard. The door shut behind me, but my hand remained on the handle. Suddenly, I did not want to let it go. I was skittish and the thought of having to cross the churchyard alone, in the dark, surrounded by God knows what, was more than I could bear!

Finally, I forced myself to release the handle and I took a step forward. I felt as if I was surrounded, as if I would be pursued when I ran, and I knew at any moment that the hand of a gremlin or goblin or ghost could grab my shoulder, cover my mouth and pull me off the side ending my innocent existence! Images of witches dancing around a bonfire and of spirits lost in the night filled my head.

I screwed my eyes tightly shut and made myself take another step and then another, wishing desperately to run, but at the same time, fearing that I would be chased. Another step and then one more. But, I could feel something behind me! I screamed and then spun around and screamed again. It was a perfect sphere of glowing yellow light and it was coming towards me, following my path from the church. It looked like the light from the candle I lit. What did it want? I took a step backward and backed into a large block of stone. I spun around again. I was standing on someone's grave. The light was coming closer and I backed away, stumbling in my haste to get back in the path that I was on before. I fell on the grass and the light swooped down to my level. I screamed again and tried to brush it away with my hands, but my hands only came into contact with the blackness of the heavy air that surrounded me. I scrambled to my feet and ran back towards the church. The light, still following me, cast a faint reflection on the stained glass in the windows. I ran faster and threw myself at the door, but it wouldn't move. I grabbed the handle and pulled as hard as I possibly could, desperate now, because I couldn't stay out here any longer. But, it wouldn't open. I leaned against the door, tears streaming down my face. The light just stayed there hovering around the door frame. I tucked my head into my arms and spent the rest of the night in a crumpled heap, not knowing or caring what was out there.

The sun found me still there the next morning. I was shaken awake by a lady in black, wrinkled and bent with age. She helped me get up and led me by the arm out of the churchyard and onto the street.

My Brother and the Box of Doom

Christie King

I have discovered that as my homework load has increased, the time I have for watching television has proportionately decreased. Until now, as a senior, by the time I'm done with my extracurricular activities and school assignments, it's well past prime time. Furthermore, for the past three years, I've lived in a military community in Germany. Being stationed overseas means only one channel which is aired by an army television station. Even if I had the time to watch television, there is rarely anything on that interests me.

Since I've gone without TV for so long, I don't miss it. I don't even enjoy watching it. On the rare occasions when I can't find anything to do, the thought of plopping down on the living room sofa doesn't even occur to me, instead I usually just bask in my moment of idleness, thinking to myself, "Ah, no homework, no chores, no scholarship essays waiting to be written."

Unfortunately, there is one room in the house where this pleasant scene can never take place: the living room, because that is where my brother and the box of doom reside. My brother is a freshman, and unlike me, loves the TV. He can sit for hours on end with his eyes glued to the screen. He blares the volume so loudly that I can't even sit and do homework in an adjacent room. Even if I happen to be down there first, reading a magazine, or listening to the stereo, my pleas of "no TV, please," fall on deaf ears (the deafness most likely due to the decibel level at which he listens to his programs.)

I worry about my brother sometimes. It seems that his whole life revolves around our Sony. He plans his schedule around it. He eats his meals in front of it, and not just TV dinners either. He's been known to consume TV breakfasts, TV lunches, TV brunches... When his friends come over, they watch TV. If he emerges out of his glassy-eyed stupor to go anywhere, it's only to walk to the video store.

The reason I worry about him is, like so many other teenagers, he lives his life through the television. The boy I knew who used to play in little league and go to live baseball games now sits at home and watches ESPN. He is so accustomed to being spoon-fed one fast-moving episode after another that he has the attention span of, maybe, one commercial. His body, after suffering through so many prolonged periods of inactivity, is almost as mushy as his mind is. But, the worst part is trying to hold a conversation with him. It's impossible unless your name is Beavis, Butt-head, or Fellow-Couch-Potato.

As for me, I've elected to give up television. I don't like the effect it has had on my brother. The mass media seems to have turned him into mashed potatoes.

Definitions

by Nathan Stieler

- school-(n) an institution designed by work plagued adults to take from children what the adults no longer have, thereby placing the children in a situation similar to the adults
see also concentration camp, VIIIth Ammendment
- female-(n) the subordinate gender of the homosapien species known to travel mainly in herds to places heavily populated by males, the dominant gender, and clothing stores; never known to travel to the bathroom in groups of less than two
- telephone-(n) an extra curricular, home study activity for females lasting from after school until well into the night or until the female is forcibly removed; reputed as accomplishing absolutely nothing
- automobile-(n) the rise of Detroit; a significant point in the transition from boy to man
- fat-(adj) a common female characteristic of being twenty pounds underweight; an adjective that all girls worry about; slang for cool
- suburb-(n) the fall of Detroit; a sanctuary for over protective parents consisting of thousands of one story homes with a pool and a garage; a place where families are often named Smith, Jones, or Cleaver and consist of a father, mother, and two sons named Beaver and Wally
- girlfriend-(n) an object of male lust and pleasure; a state of having been claimed as the territory of a certain member of the male gender
see also bimbo, broad, chic, hoochie, slave, wench
- teacher-(n) a person employed by work plagued adults to bore children into submission; the one profession in which females surpass males in fulfilling the capacity of the job
related topics school, slave driver
- lockerroom-(n) a gathering place utilized very differently by males and females, males get together, tell stories of non-ecclisiastical value, and beat on each other to prove dominance over newer, younger, or smaller members of the gender, females change their clothes
- gossip-(n) an essential chapter in the subject of telephone; characterized as being more interesting than the truth and more easily spread, yet very sticky

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A Personal Struggle

Dark at night I lay in bed.
The sun, long retired
To its resting place below the horizon,
Relinquishing its thermal grasp
On the otherwise cold and dormant,
Planet. The warmth of day
Gives way to the cold of night.
The room illuminated by a lunar
Light, reveals shadows on the dark walls
Of my sanctuary, unnoticed
As I lay in bed.
Cold fills the room and I,
Protected by the warmth
Of a thick woolen blanket,
Lay in bed, drifting away
From consciousness. There
Is no cold, no dark shadows
Only the warmth of a summer
Day in the sun. Playing in
The stream that trickles
By without my power to stop its flow,
I feel it rush about my legs. Suddenly,
Reality and consciousness return
In an instant. The cold and dark
Are too clear. What
Was it that awoke me, jerked me
From my dream to reality,
So vicious an attack?
Then it comes back, the feeling
Of the power of the stream,
It had transversed the barrier
Between reality and sleep.
I must let it flow, it won't hold
Long and will surely prevail
In the end. But the cold, it
Is omnipotent at night and is creeping
Up the cracks between
Bed and blanket. There is no doubt
Of the surety of its presence.
I will fall asleep and the power
Of the stream, the surging water,
Will return to slumber, for, maybe,
It is not real. But, I can not
Possibly fall, my thoughts,
My observations, are far
Too clear. The power and force
Of the stream will not transverse
the barrier again. Surging and churning,
More and more, it won't hold
Long. My thoughts and observations
Sharp as a blade, the cold is ever

Top problem

More present. I lay in bed,
Struggling, with the stream,
With the cold. I grow weaker
Every passing second. Quivering,
I realize the victor, but
Continue to fight it, to postpone
Recognition of its victory, maybe it will go
Away soon and leave me in peace.
But no, it will not. I am not
The victor, it is the stream
And the cold will prey on its victory,
Like a jackal,
Like a scavenger after the kill.
The blankets are thrown or kicked
Off. The stream has won,
The cold slams hard at my
Bare skin. Resistance to the power
Of the stream is further wasted
To fight the cold. I return,
Hastily, to the protection of
The blanket, the stream having
Received its porcelain trophy and the cold
Having shared in my agony.
Warmth remains in the blanket
And envelopes my shivering body
Welcomingly. My thoughts gradually
Fade and the room seems less
Important as sleep unsuspectingly replaces
Consciousness.

by Nathan Stieler

The Telegram

I was sitting in my favorite leather arm chair that night, in front of the fireplace. It was cold outside, freezing cold. There was no snow, however. The weatherman said it was to reach record lows that night. I sat in my chair, listening to the ferocious wind howl through the neighborhood. The leaves of that autumn were blown about, anyone who had bothered to rake them into piles would surely find a disaster the next day. Occasionally, a metal trash can would fall over and crash on the concrete sidewalks, then it would roll down the street scattering trash everywhere.

It was a terrible storm that night, but I, I sat in my easy chair with a warm wool blanket covering my legs. The majestic glow of the fire seemed to warm my heart as I sat and stared sullenly into it. Its warmth protected me from the cold outside.

I was thinking about the times that were passed. The fond memories of the time I spent with my family went through my mind. The weekends in the spring I can remember doing the yardwork with Billy. When we were done, we would play catch or go fishing and my wife, Alice, would make sandwiches and lemonade for us.

Sometimes, we would go on family outings in the car. We would drive up to the lake and meet some of Billy's friends there. I remember how much fun it was to watch him playing in the water with his friends. He was still in grade school then.

Billy was such a great kid, he was a smart boy too. He almost always received good grades in school. I remember one day he came home from school with his report card. He went straight to the kitchen where his mother was cooking our favorite homemade bread. When I walked in, Alice and Billy were both beaming with delight. I asked what was the big idea and Billy showed me his report card. He had gotten straight A's. That night we went out for ice cream together.

When Billy was in high school, he began to spend more and more time away from home. It was hard to let go. I really didn't want to. Occasional, he would come to me for advice. When he got his first girlfriend, he went to his mother for advice, not me. He began to get closer to his mother, not me. This went on until Alice died suddenly. I can remember that Billy spent much of his junior year in his room. He was crushed. Eventually it brought us both together. We had both lost a very dear part of our lives, and we both suffered from the same grief and pain. By the time Billy had graduated, we spend a lot of time together. We were indeed best friends.

I distinctly remember the day he came home with that terrible news. For me, it was terrible, but for Billy it was something he had wanted ever since he was a little kid. It was such a great joy for him, that I tried to hide my pain and grief.

My most painful and powerful memory is of the day he left. I drove him to the airport in the car. He talked of his decision the whole way there, and of how he had always wanted to do this. At the airport, turned to me and gave me a hug, the kind only two men who had been through everything together could share. I remember the smell of his uniform. It was a dry, warm, and clean smell, the smell of a newly pressed suit. It was too much for me to handle. I started to cry.

I remember his walk to the airplane. I've replayed that memory a thousand times.

The orange glow of the fire lulled me into a deep sleep. As the cold wind blew through the shutters, the telegram from the War Department slipped from my hand.

by Nathan Stieler

The Wigger by Shane Clayton

"Yo homeboy, whatsup wit dat." Mike was again at the lunch line pestering Antwon as he went by. "Did ya see dat ho last night? She was so fine." "Yeah, alright Mike she was fine. but get the hell outta my face before I bust you up, you damn wigger." Mike was shocked. He had never had someone be so blunt to him before about his "racial preference". But this remark in front of everyone in the lunch line hurt his pride. He stood in line quiet for second, then responded when his pride couldn't bear being hurt any longer: "Yo homie, you betta recognize dis nigga!" "Listen Mike. You ain't a nigga at all. so get outta my face."

After Mike had ordered, he walked over to the far corner with his fried chicken, and sat down next to his boyz. When he got to the table, he grabbed his balls, turned his hat around, and said "Yo boyz, you ain't heard rap until you heard dis junk." He took his immensely large head phones off and gave them to his boy sitting across the table. Mike looked especially black today. His head was freshly shaved all the way around, and his hair combed up into his flattop. His button-down "Raiders" shirt was tucked into his black jeans that hung just below the plumber line and covered up his matching drawers. The only thing not black about him was the color of his skin. The tape of Snoop Doggy Dog was passed around the table, and a commentary emerged about how that nigga dances in the video.

After school that day, Mike didn't have time to go hang around the Gym showing the boyz how his "J" was unstoppable when he was "on". He had to go home early that day, so he went out to his car, got in, cranked up the stereo, and leaned back with his hand out the window. While driving home, Mike saw his ho, so he yelled "Whassup girl?" He pulled over and offered Tameka a ride. She said sure, and climbed in the car. Ice-Cube blasting in her ears.

Mike started up some conversation by saying he was gonna replace the seat she was in with a 2 by 4 speaker with super woofers. Tameka showed obvious disinterest, so Mike started reciting his favorite songs from the Redman CD. Tameka grew tired of his silly antics, and said: "Peace Mike, I'm out". Tameka jumped out of the car when they stopped at a traffic light, and Mike followed saying "Yo girl, what's up wit dat?" When she didn't answer, Mike broke it down: "Ya damn ho, get back in the car or I'll bust your ass". Tameka ignored him and strutted off.

The next day, Mike got up and put on his cross color jeans, then grabbed his headphones and walkman and went out to his car. He was about to pull away from some broads and yell "Yo girl, you look so good", before his mom ran outside yelling "Mike, wait! You forgot your lunch!"

Mike went through the rest of the day embarrassed: he pulled his starter hat down to his eyes, and plumped down the hallway with his hand deep inside his boxers. Most teachers by this time in the year seriously wondered if he had genital lice.

That night there was a school dance, and of course Mike

planned to go. He went home right after school that day, and looked for his best outfit. He picked out some cross color pants, and matching starter apparel: a miami shirt and hat. After finishing off his afro-sheen, Mike chose to have dinner at home, eating a plate of fried chicken with hot sauce, and finishing off the course with a big piece of watermelon. The dance started at seven, and it was seven now, so he decided to wait half an hour or so. He went out to his low-rider, 82' Cadillac with a copy of "Black Beat" and "Word Up", and read for fifteen minutes, blasting Wu-Tang Clan.

He got tired of reading, so he drove to the school and parked outside trying to match the decibal level in his car that came from inside the gym. He saw Tyrone and Melvin coming outside, so he yelled at them and motioned them to come over. The two negros looked at each other, and then walked over to talk to the white boy. "Whassup! Ya gonna get me some poon-tang tonight?" The two guys tried as hard as they could not to laugh, and ignoring his question they asked him for a ride. "Where y'all headed to?", Mike answered. "To my boyz house to get some Jungle juice", replied Tyrone. Mike got so excited he began to sweat, causing the Joo-Joo beads in his hair to slip off, and the afro-sheen to drip into his eyes. "Oh really guys. I could drive you there. .. I mean, "Nigga! No problem " he said in his dialect.

In route, Tyrone and Melvin decided that they were growing quite tired of Mike telling them about the article in "Rap Pages", and of rehearsing his newest free-lance, so they told him to stop the car a minute saying that something fell off the bottom of his car. Mike stopped real quick and pulled to the side of the road. All three of them got out, except Tyrone got into the driver's seat, while Melvin sat shotgun. As Mike was crouching down to check his car, a puff of exhaust got him in the face, and he let out a cough and looked up only to see his car a block away.

Mike cursed the best way he knew how in brother dialect, and he soon realized he would have to walk home. What he didn't know however, was that his lifestyle was changed forever. At home, his mother was tired of being embarrassed by his non-white behavior. Why can't he eat Maccaroni and Cheese and listen to R.E.M like the other white boys? She stormed into his room, ripped down his posters of Public Enemy and Run DMC, and burned all of his cross color clothing. "I'll teach that Wigger!"

PLEASE LISTEN TO WHAT

I'M NOT SAYING

Don't be fooled by me. Don't be fooled by the face I wear. For I wear a mask. I wear a thousand masks, masks that I'm afraid to take off; and none of them are me.

I give you the impression that I'm secure, that confidence is my name and coolness my game, that water's calm and I'm in command, and that I need no one. But don't believe me, please.

My surface may seem smooth...beneath I dwell in confusion, in fear, in loneliness But I hide this. I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear being exposed. That's why I frantically create a mood to hide behind, a nonchalant, sophisticated facade to shield me from the glance is my salvation, and I know it.

It's the only thing that can assure me of acceptance and love. I'm afraid you'll laugh, laugh would kill me.

So I play my game, my desperate pretending game, with a facade of assurance without, and a trembling child within. And so my life becomes a front. I idly chatter to you in the suave surface tones...I tell you everything that's nothing, and nothing of what's everything, of what's crying within me. So when I go into my routine, do not be fooled by what I am saying. Please listen carefully to hear what I am NOT saying.

I dislike the superficial, phony game I am playing. I'd like to be genuine and spontaneous and me. You've got to hold out your hand even when it seems to be the last thing I seem to want, or hear. Only you can call me into aliveness. Each time you're kind, and gentle, and encouraging, each time you try to understand because you really care, my heart begins to grow wings, small wings, very feeble wings.

I want you to know how important you are to me, how you can be a creator of the person that is me if you choose to. But it will not be easy for you. A long conviction of worthlessness builds strong walls.

The nearer you approach me, the blinder I may strike back. I fight against the very things I cry out for. But I am told that love is stronger than walls, and therein lies my hope. Please try to heat down those firm walls with firm hands, but gentle hands for a child is very sensitive.

Who am I, you may wonder? I am someone you know very well.

Melita Walker

MURDER SHE SPOKE

Being a single mother is hard especially when you have a five year old who is handicap. I tried to do the best I could for him, but it never seemed to be enough. Either I was at work or at home with my son. Sometimes I worked late and I did not feel like putting up with him. I always had someone with him, that I could trust, to watch him (which always cost big bucks). To me it seemed whenever I did have some money I either was using it on babysitters or hospital bills. One thing I can say is that I was tired!

Where we stayed may not have been the RITZ but it was all I could afford. The down stairs door of the apartment building wouldn't lock and sometimes the neighborhood drunk would sleep in the hallway. I didn't really mind once I got to know him.

Anyway, on with my story. It was Monday which meant there was a tenets meeting. We talked about all the violence that was occurring in the neighborhood and how we should get the front door fixed. I volunteered because I knew if I left it to them it would not be done. I told them I would have it fixed by Saturday.

Friday I asked the girl across the hall to watch my son because I had to work pretty late. I left instructions that once he was asleep she could go home and I probably be home soon afterwards. I asked her to leave the house key under the mat because I had lost mine. At first she insisted that I should the key with her sense the front door was broke but I told her that I had it fixed.

So, when I came home everything was exactly how I instructed. The key was under the mat even though I really didn't lose my key. The lights were out and my son was dead. Even though he was the neighborhood drunk he sober up to do the job for only fifty dollars and two bottles of vodka. Your honor now that you have heard my story I plead guilty. I leave you with this what is life when you can't enjoy it we were both dying inside but most of all I was dying at the young age of nineteen and the only thing I could think of is WHAT ABOUT ME!

Melita Walker

by: Joachim Jensen

THE HEROINE

She walked on down the beautiful corridor in the house, slow and gently moving herself, watching the astonishing decoration of the house. Though she had entered the building through the back door, not a single one of the people there protested against her presence, they just stood, admiring her beauty as she passed them. She was dressed in white, the color of innocence, her pale skin almost visibly inseparable from her dress. She moved on, carefully examining every detail in every one of the paintings, how beautiful they looked from afar, and how they, as she examined them closer, all had little scratches in the paint, which had faded a little from the light - not the light from outside, because the corridor wasn't very well lit, but from the bright light of the beautiful lady, for she had been there before. But she too spotted something else about the paintings, they weren't hanging the way they had done as she was there the last, they were all crooked, not much, but enough to be noticed when looked at closely. The lady wondered what could have caused this interference with neatness in the house. As she came to a room, she wanted to enter and put her coat of beauty and light over the room and its inhabitants, as she had done with the corridor. But as she entered, she sensed the presence of one of her own kind. She looked around and separated one face from the other. The face belonged to a man, tall and handsome in her eyes, dressed in a dark yellow suit and a white shirt. She carefully examined the man with her eyes, making sure that he was of her kind. Having made sure, she asked him in her language, which no one else understood, to join her in her walk round the house. He answered with acceptance, and the lady discovered an accent in his language, judging him to be of a lower class than her. The couple walked out of the room, leaving their marks on the people and furniture in the room. They swept up the corridor, enveloping everything in a blanket of happiness and amazement over this couple. All action stopped as they passed, not continuing as long as they were in sight. Though enjoying it, the lady started worrying about the power of enchantment, which had been doubled by the arrival of the handsome man in the yellow suit. Would they stop all action in the house for good, not leaving the back door open for future visits? She could not allow that to happen, for she fed on these visits, on leaving her personal marks in various houses. Enabling the house staffs to prepare for her next visit, making them look forward to it. Talking to her follower, she learned that they had common goals - the bedroom in the main building of the house. There they could talk to the resident of this magnificent palace, convincing him to invite them to his home again, for they could not come uninvited - they needed someone to leave the back door open. Gradually the couple came closer to the goal of their walk, though they both felt the excitement, they did not increase the pace, still moving at low speed, closely observing every movement within close range and still enveloping all passed objects in their blanket of happiness and amazement.

Suddenly the lady felt an instant rush, a rush she knew so well, a rush that meant that the goal of her search was in sight. Everything she had sought in this house was near. She looked at her companion, though he spoke her language she was silent,

and without uttering a single sound, she had let him know what the situation was and what he could expect from it. A glimpse of understanding in his eye was her cue to move on, continuing the voyage towards the room they both had visited before, but still searched for. The lady opened the door gently, taking a scanning look over the room before she and her companion entered. They sent each other a quick smile as they, both inside, saw the decoration of the room. It was more beautiful than anything else in the entire house, everything swept in a dark red color, the color which gave life to the magic-like gloom of the couple. Eager to see it all, the two people started examining the paintings and decorations of the house thoroughly, more thorough than anything else in the house. Occupied with observing every single detail in the room, the couple was unaware of their doubled power. The light of the couple cut deeper in the paintings and the dark red silk wallpaper started bleaching from the strong light. When the couple accidentally looked at the same painting at the same time, the painting caught on fire, a fire that spread rapidly across the precious room. Determined for retreat, the couple sought the door, through which they had entered, but it had been locked. As they both looked for another way of escaping, the flames grew higher and higher. The lady intensified her search on an area in the corner of the room and bonuses by finding a tunnel entrance hidden behind a painting. She exited the room safely and stood outside of the house waiting for her companion to follow. As he followed her they stood next to each other watching the house burn to the ground as a follow of their actions. They separated as the man vanished into the forest behind the house and the lady in white entered the neighboring house through the back door...

A TRIP TO NOWHERE

by: Joachim Jensen

Norman leaned back against the fuzzy chair, enjoying every second of the feeling that that little funny looking cigarette had given him. "I'm there, dude", he whispered to his friend Scott, who was sucking on the rest of what he definitely would call The World's Best Joint. Scott answered with a short cough and fell backwards, slamming his head against the floor since he had nothing to lean against. Norman felt the impact of the hit vibrating through the floor like a wave. Looking closer, he saw that the floor actually was moving and he got up to ride one of the waves. "Uuh yeaah", he thought, riding an enormous wave all the way through the living room and into the kitchen. He yelled to Scott to catch a big wave he saw developing from the corner behind the transparent leather chair, but he didn't really seem to get the message, probably because his ears had disappeared into his head. "Oh well", he thought out loud, "he'll find'em sooner or later". A wave swept Norm's legs and he took a minor fall in which he hit the toaster on the way down. The machine, which apparently had been sleeping, woke up and, in the foulest language possible, assured Norm that he had interrupted it in an amazing dream about some kid, who stuck his fingers in the toaster, and suddenly Scott's ears popped out of the

little silver machine. Golden brown and crispy looking, the set of ears screamed to Norm's empty stomach, and he found it impossible not to eat them. The floor was slowly beginning to quiet down, but, with a piece of crispy ear in his hand, Norm managed to catch the last big wave back into the living room, where Scott was head-butting the transparent leather chair in the corner, yelling that it had no right to talk about his mom in that way. Scott tried to get up, but since his left leg was now stiff he had some trouble in doing so. Eventually, the boy with no ears and a wooden leg got on his feet and moved slowly on minor waves towards the stereo. He put a CD in there, but the play button repositioned every time he tried to hit it, and Norm heard a vague giggle coming from the speaker over his head. Frustrated with the tricky button, Scott kicked the stereo as hard as he could with his stiff leg and was satisfied with the suppressed moan the sound system uttered. He turned around and staggered towards Norm when a CD suddenly flew across the room and stuck in his wooden leg. He considered how he would be able to wipe that cheesy grin off of the stupid stereo, and a large smile broke out on his face as he unplugged the little monster and the smile on the equalizer died out.

Looking through the wall of the apartment, Norm saw two birds sitting on a clown's wig in the air discussing basketball with great intensity. He wanted to join the conversation, but was struck to the ground by the couch, which apparently had been trying to get his attention for a while. The couch slowly approached Norm on the floor but he barely avoided its sharp teeth by rolling underneath the table, which covered him like wrapping paper. From underneath the friendly wooden table, he again saw through the wall and out on the two doves, both dressed in NBA clothing with the little detail in shape of a human hands serving as wings on both sides of each bird. He wondered what flying was really like and decided to let Scott test it first before he found out for himself. "Zgodd!?!", he heard himself yell, even though he knew that his friend was lying right next to him, still suffering from the impact of the CD slicing his wooden left to sawdust, moaning a little believing that the refrigerator might feel a little sorry for him and cook him something exotic, but all it cooked him was a half empty soda, which the hungry couch quickly snatched out of his hand. Frustrated with his crippled friend's inability to rise, Norm picked Scott up and through him through the transparent chair and wall to watch him fly. And fly he did, his hand in his forehead being the "wheel", he cruised across the dark green sky, landing on one of the crystal-shaped clouds every once in a while to rest. Norman approached the balcony and sniffed the last cocaine before he leaped out into the dark blue air. Yes, he was flying all right, he sure was, but the two basketball doves were gone and he was suddenly struck by Scott's wooden leg, which was the last thing he saw before a car hugged him as he came down on the roof.

A Normal War

There I was out of school.
 With the best grades in school.
 And into the army boots I went.
 Weeks of training came friends I made,
 Then suddenly we were send to the field of action.
 It was in a place that no one knows.
 Bullets started to fly around us.
 I looked around me and only what I saw was.
 My friends falling to the ground and their life with them.
 Then I heard a sharp sound and a little hit on my chest.
 I looked down and I saw a small hole in my cloth that was covered with blood.
 I knew that it hit me straight in my heart.
 I fell to the hard soil and every thing fell with me.
 A lot of things went through my head.
 But there was one question that I asked my self
 "What was the purpose of my life here on this earth"
 I hoped that I would find the answer on the other side.
 Then it got darker and darker.

Live is like a Train

At 10 years he is like a small Locomotive that goes only to two Stations.
 At 15 years he is a small train that things he knows every thing.
 At 20 years he is like the Local train it stops at every station.
 At 30 years he is like the Special it stops only at the Large towns.
 At 40 years he is like the express it stops only at the big cities only.
 At 50 years he is like the old Locomotive it stops often to water.
 At 60 years he doesn't leave any more it remains in the yard.

School

On a normal school day,
I was sitting in class.
I was a average type student with average grades.
But every one expected more from me because of my brother who was a top student.
Parents and Teachers put pressure on me.
Friends competed with me.
We had to write an essay about death,
I wrote how I hate my life and how I want to kill myself.
The next day in class I sat in the back of the room near the window.
I saw the teacher coming toward my desk.
I jumped up and started to run toward the windows.
I jumped and then I flew to the ground I saw it coming near and then a small hit and
the lights went off.
All what the teacher wanted was to congratulate me on the A+ paper.

IRA DOTAN

Fantasy and Facts

Where would we be, without fantasy, without dreams. Apparently still in the caves of
the stone age. Facts are very important, and we have to learn and understand many
facts in order to live and survive, as many other creatures on our planet.
But the man is the only being who has fantasy and imagination.

Fantasy and Imagination have brought the man to where he is today.
Christopher Columbus dream was to find a new way to India and by trying to fulfil
this fantasy, he discovered America. Magelan had the same dream, to find a quicker
way to India, and what he found was the Cape of Good Hope.
Jews in the whole world dreamed for the last 2000 years of returning to their
Motherland. Without those dreamers, the Jews wouldn't have the state of Israel.

Since the man saw the first bird, he has a fantasy to fly like a bird. at the beginning of
the century, the brothers Wright fulfilled this dream and today we can fly from place to
place in a very short time.

Everyone has dreams and fantasy, even little children dream of what they would like to
be. But in order to fulfil our dreams we must know the facts and we must work very
hard to achieve something.

Fantasy is important, but fantasy without knowing the facts is worthless and sometime
destructive.

All those men and women, who fulfilled their dreams, knew the facts of life and acted
in accordance with them.

Man have always dreamed and the dreams and fantasy brought all his achievements,
but the knowledge of the facts helped him in fulfilling his fantasy.

And yet there is a dream that many share, but is far from its fulfilment and that is
peace.

IRA DOTAN

THE DEED

Some events leave a very profound impact on one's life. This may seem unimportant for many people, but this one event brought great changes in me. It all happened last summer when I decided to take a tour around India. Since the southern India had always excited me, primarily because I had seen very little and heard a lot of it, I decided to go there first.

Summer was not exactly the right time to go around India but it was the only time I had time. So on June 7th I took the morning train for Kerala. I knew it was going to be something different and hopefully exciting. When I reached Kerala on 8th morning the first thing that I noticed was the smell. There was a very strong fragrance of jasmine flower in the air around. It was a tradition for the women to wear jasmine flower in their hair and so there were a lot of flower shops around. And secondly what got to me was the food. At the railway station there were stalls every where. I knew I had to be very careful in my choice of food because my tongue was not accustomed to such sharp foods. Any ways I took my breakfast and then set out to find a suitable hotel. Luckily I found a good guide and a good hotel.

The temples were the very first thing I was interested in seeing and so I told the guide. He hired a taxi for the day and off we went. I noticed that there were quite a lot of temples in the city and also there was abundance of monkeys around them. The guide warned me to keep my hand bag at a safe distance from the monkeys because they are quick at snatching them. Any how, after 30-40 min of driving we reached the place we wanted to see.

These were a group of temples located on the out skirts of the city. They were said to be 1500 years old but that was not the thing that fascinated me about them, it was the architecture. The temples were carved out of stones and such details carvings were done on them that the person viewing them, remains in a dilemma of how could an artist perform such a task? Inside the temples the fragrance of flowers and sandal wood filled the air which made them all the more lively. And although there was a lot of hustling going on, at the temples there was a feeling of a peaceful atmosphere.

There was something special going on I could tell. For people were gathering around a particular temple at an enormous rate. It was only after further inquiring I got to know that a special ceremony was to take place. It was more of a traditional thing than a religious one. To be

SARITA ARYA

straight forward it was to be a sacrifice ceremony. I eagerly proceeded towards the temple where the ceremony was to be performed, for I didn't want to miss this traditional happening, besides I had never before seen a sacrifice take place. I worked myself through the crowd to the front.

ON the platform in front a few priest sat around a fire in their saffron clothes and stuck out bellies. From time to time they would chant some incantations. I seemed to get a little bored after a while for nothing new was happening. As I was thinking of leaving one of the priest gave out a loud cry or rather it was a call for someone. From the other end of the temple there was a some movement and then a man appeared on the platform from the crowd. It was only when he reached the centre of the platform did I noticed the little creature to his side. It was surly a lamb I thought, as the creature looked around with fear and terror. Just to look at the lamb was enough to make me dilapidated. How could I ever forget those eyes, which expressed a constant fear and that face, which was still full of innocence. I knew I could not watch these butchers slaughter the defenceless creature but for some reason I couldn't get myself to move. So I stood there like a statue watching something which seemed so beast like.

After performing some ceremonial acts they took the helpless creature to the side. There was little resistance from the creature, but as the man gave a little jerk to the rope around the lamb's neck, it walked on. He still had that tremulous look on its face, It seemed that it was well aware that something terribly was going to happen. As the man holding the rope tied the rope around the poll and took hold of the butcher knife I felt my knees weakening and although I wanted to scream out loud I couldn't. It seemed as if some force had taken hold of me.

The man placed the butcher knife on the neck of the lamb and then with a swing gave a hard hit. It was all over and it seemed to me as if someone had just hit me on the back of my neck for I had a strange vibration go all through my body. It was actually a relieve to see the creature at peace. At least the helpless eyes stared no more. I of course never forgot them and when ever I remember the incident the last shrieks of the creature seem to echo in my ear. I think of not just that one slaughter, which was committed in the name of traditions but also of all those which are done ever day to fulfil our tastes and hobbies Well a least I had no more strength left, to go on as a nonveg. so I turned to the old Indian tradition and became a vegetarian. You would probably find it to be a hard choice to make but after that ceremony it was the only way I could soothe myself.

By Sarita Arya

Our love A Rose

Our love is like a flower
like a bud that is about
to blossom

It takes its sweet time growing
craving large amounts of
sunshine, nutrients, water
and never knowing what may
come of it, but having
an ever fixed mark or vision
of what it should be

Our love continues to develop
from friends to lovers
who wonder and hope that
this feeling we have may
turn into something
lustrous and wonderful
And through times of
rain, snow, and sleet
our love the flower
never gives up, overcomes
years and temptations,
grows stronger and
stronger

until one day that once
little immature seed is
something to be proud of
worthwhile, unimaginable,
complete. It is a beautiful
satin crimson
rose — our love

The Dubious Deed.

Doubt streamed through my mind. An empty question ran through my mind, a question that I could not answer, a question that could not be answered, but a question that had to be answered.

He was a man, or was he a man? He had caused great pain to many. He had absorbed the joy of life from many. He had endlessly taken and never given. He had taken from me, taken from you, taken from us. What was it that he seized and unrighteously taken one may ask? He had taken pleasure and left torment. He had taken satisfaction and left disgust. He had taken success and left failure. He had taken more than I could give.

Now the question began to pressure me, I had to find the answer to the unanswerable question. Was it my duty, my responsibility, my obligation to answer the question, the question that would commit me to a task. A task that I was uncertain of.

I asked myself over and over again, was I the one to perform this task, was I the one to execute this action? I asked myself over and over again, was I capable of doing this? Was I the one to free the world of this man, this cavity of society. Was I the one to administer the punishment that he deserved?

A sudden and abrupt thrust hit me, it overcame my mind's control on my hand. My hand, dominated by some unexplainable force, answered the question for me. My hand began to move, it moved in a fast and definite way. Although my hand raced with great speed to its destination, my eyes observed the event at a prolonged and delayed speed. Everything moved in a rhythm, I knew what the next movement was going to be, my eyes viewed everything in frames surrounded by a deep red. Like the sounds produced by the trains running over the railroad tracks, one always knows the sounds that will follow. Each frame that passed had already passed through my mind.

The frames turned sharper, as sharp as the dagger that pierced its way through the dense cold air. The red that encircled the frames began to grow and make its way to the center. The once clear frames were now showered with a deep red that was transforming into a dark black. Blackness beckons from every side, creeping all around like an incoming tide. My vision was now completely black, all but a sparkle deep in the darkness. I focused in, there he laid with a dagger in his neck, a deep red flowing out. I collapsed to the floor, I laid in confusion and disgust at myself. Was I now like him, how could I live with myself? I had turned into something that I despised and hated. Blackness beckoned from every side, creeping all around like an incoming tide.

Patrizio Cavaliere
BAHS 12 (AP) Eng.

Red, like the red gushing from a cut vein.
Red, like the red pouring from a demonic rain.
Red, like the red of clawed bare flesh.
Red, like the red of a heart, a heart pumping outside its carcass
in a foreign surrounding, a surrounding without substance.
Red, like the red imprint left on a gravestone by an
unrestrained fist.
Red, like the red that we see within a burning fire within us.
Red, like the red tear that man sheds when infinite death opens
its openings.
Red, like the red that we see within the inner insides of a dying
soul.
Red, like the red of a passion that strangles man.
Red, like the red scattered upon the walls, the walls of a dark
and desolate place.
Red, like the red stains in the morgue's deathbed.
Red, like the red color upon a flag, a flag, a color, which
presides over the people and presides over the lives of people.
Red, like the red color upon a flag, a flag, casting a shadow over
the people under it, a shadow making all the same, making all
mediocre.
Red, like the red that the joyful eye cannot see.
Red, like the red that blind eyes see.
Red, like the red read upon this paper.

Al Koholic.

Its effluvia filled my soul with happiness.
 Its warmth gave me courage through the long cold days of the gray winter.
 Its taste gave me the pleasure I sought
 It was where needed it, when I needed it.
 Its sweet companionship was costly, a cost paid in the end,
 at the end, with the end, the end of my life.
 Its pleasure burned a hole in me, a hole in which I fell, to the
 inner depths of Hell.

Syme Philis.

It was an enchantment which my body and soul could not resist.
 It was delight which my soul craved for.
 It was a desire which I satisfied.
 A pleasure which had no measure.
 A lust, that to me was a must.
 A joy, which I treated as a toy.
 I knew it was sin, but I disbelieved the grim.
 The sin came back, with my back turned.
 It came in three steps, it charged in three blows, one
 for the ignorance of myself, the other for the ignorance of the other,
 and the last for the disbelief.
 The first blow was mild affecting only one part of the body.
 The second burned all over, my skin began to corrode.
 The final advanced and I retreated, retreated from life.

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Science/Math Teacher, n. An owner of much knowledge, but deficient in conventional intelligence.

Language Arts Educator, n. see all nomenclatures.

Scandinavian, n. A species not part of the homo sapiens. Also may be used as adjective to depict rudeness, starkness, stupidity, dullness, ignorance, illiteracy, primitivity, obtuseness, unknowing, recklessness, absurdity, senselessness, irrationality, numbness, ridicule and incompetence. See Italian for antonym study.

Baby Sit, v. To abuse, assault, exploit, slaughter, and slay individuals of a lesser age.

Seven Eleven, n. A place where massacres can habitually be witnessed.

Desk, n. An object used to perform torture, can be found in prisons, i.e. schools.

B.V.G. Bus driver, n. Narrowness, monopurposeness. See Scandinavian for synonym study.

Hamburger Pickles, n. A piece of edible substance (maybe) that is consistently evicted from the place in which they are positioned.

The Juniper Tree

By Will Lindsay

Today would definately be one of many days where it would happen. It is always the same. The same predictably unpredictable cycle. I know I'm going to get beat up, I just don't know when or what for. This time I think I might have figured out what is going to set her off, though. I've been suspended from school for a few days. That will get royal treatment. I can already feel it zinging into my skin. I can already hear her screaming in her dogmatic tones about how I am basically a bad kid. I just don't know when it will happen, and that's the worst part about it. The suspense. I should not have to be going through this. This is not what I have to be enduring. But I am. And I don't think she can help it, really. I think she's sick. It can't be her fault. But so am I. I am sick and tired of her. I am sick and tired of her being sick and tired of me.

I am walking now through a grove of oaks and juniper trees. I stop to look at the majesty of the great oak, and I see my mother's face at the top of that great tree. Her arms are angry branches lurching and twisting out at whatever is in range and can be hurt. The cracks in the bark are bleeding wounds not yet healed, and the woody knots are blisters of guilt and shame. I would like so much to set fire to this tree. I think about the joy it would bring to me to persistently chop at the trunk until I had severed the core of her. I would swing the ax with such force and laugh with such glee that I might faint, overcome with rapture.

I walk quietly past the oak, feeling the bark with my hand. The sweet smelling Juniper tree is resting comfortably by a small pond, and there are small insects swirling delicately around the diamond chard shaped leaves. This tree is a unique and stylish piece of nature, I always think when I pass it. It has such a blissful smell. It has a handsome shape, and I can picture two lovers entwined beneath the shade of it. I smile and stroke the leaves with my hand, gently. I pluck one off and smell it. A rugged fragrance awakened my senses and a smile came to my face.

This tree offered only the best things in life. But then I spotted the red slick berries tangled up in bunches toward the base of each branch. The berries were poisonous. Imagine walking along this path one day and seeing ten dead birds littered at the roots of this Juniper tree.

I walked on past, and onto the street. It was still mid-day. Soon enough my mother would get home, and I would not be ready. I dreaded counting the hours, and then the minutes, and in the heat of it all, counting the seconds. I could monitor every bit of time, and still not be ready for what that woman had to dish out to me.

Cars passed me by, and I wished that I were in the driver's place. I wish I had a way to run away from all of this. I wish I could just get in that car and take off before she got home, and never come back. I would change my name. I would dye my hair. I would get a job somewhere, and sleep in my car until I had a place to stay in. Or maybe I'd just sleep in my car and not worry about an apartment. That way, I could leave anytime I wanted to. I could go anywhere I wanted to go. But when I actually think about it, I would be hurting my mother much worse than she ever hurt me if I disappeared like that. It might destroy her, and I'd feel terrible if she had to go back to the hospital again. I would have been the cause for all of that, and would deserve every beating I ever got. Maybe I deserve them now. I feel like I deserve them, and she says I do. I just can't remember what it was that I did...

There's a lot of things that I cannot remember. I can't remember my dreams. I can't remember being a kid. I don't have any pictures, and I don't know what I looked like. I don't remember what I felt like then either. Something won't let me feel those things ever again. Maybe I can disappear, and be a totally new person, with no past. Nothing that would deserve any beatings. I really wish I could remember what it was that I did to deserve this. If I knew what it was, then I would apologize for it and maybe she'd stop. How did I make her so mad?

The house came into view. The same sickening yellow paint, the same uncut lawn. As I walked closer to the door, I felt a lump rise in my throat. I felt my skin tingle. In repulsion, I grasped the doorknob and turned it. The sounds made by the metal clicking inside the lock screamed suicide- treason- self-destruction- I might as well have been walking into the gates of

hell. The ceiling seemed to be growing closer to the floor everyday. The walls seemed narrower all the time. Eventually the place would implode and kill everyone in it at the moment. If I knew when that would happen, I would escape, and laugh as it crushed my mother. I might see lines of blood run out through each wooden fiber. After it was just a lump of clumped up dirt and wood, I would douse it with a gallon of gasoline and light it up. I would stare at the fiery sparks that floated toward the heavens. Only her soul would be in hell.

Each moment in the house was horrible. I wanted to leave it. Each breath was thick and heavy. Each thing I looked at in the home was unbearable. I keep thinking how much prettier this place would be in flames. The large table in the dinning room would be the first to go. I think it's made of oak.

As long as I'm here, and since I've been suspended, I think I'll make dinner for my mother. It might lessen the blows. It might tame the beast just a little. I'll set candles out on the table, and I'll make a London Broil. If we don't have one here, I'll go and buy one. I'll make a tomato and cucumber salad with vinegar and lemon dressing. I hate that stuff, but she loves it. And I'll eat it in front of her to make her happy. This might just save me. This might be my only protection. I'll make an Angel Food cake, too. She loves them. I'll do all the dishes. I'll do everything.

It's nearing five thirty, now, and she'll be home at seven tonight. I put in the London Broil, and I went and bought Angel Food cake mix. I'll make the cake in about twenty minutes or so. The silence in the house is broken by the ringing of the phone. I jump, startled. I run to pick it up, ready to take a message, just the way she likes them to be: Name, number, time called, and what the call was about.

"Hello, this is the Hepburn residence," I say.

"John, honey. It's mom." I blush and restrain myself from telling her about the dinner. I can't wait to surprise her.

"Hi, mom," I say, and then suddenly remember about my suspension. Oh, no, I hope she doesn't know yet. Please no. "John, I'll be home at about seven thirty, tonight, okay? I

have a business dinner I have to go to. Later I'm bringing Carol over okay? We're going to take some more pictures." Her tone was murderously flat. I felt my heart breaking. I tried to swallow a sob that was coming up, and managed to say, "Okay, mom."

It was over for me. This was going to be the worst night possible. I have no way of protection, now. I can't surprise her now. I can't apologize and please her either. I'm going to die tonight, I think, and- Oh! Oh no. She said Carol was coming over to take more pictures. I feel the pungent blackness swell inside my soul as I remember the last time Carol came over. I must have done something very bad. Maybe she does know about the suspension and is bringing Carol over to punish me for it. She's gonna make me do those things again. I'm going to have to do those things again. I can't think now. I sit on the couch and cry silently. After I am through I look up at my reflection in the mirror. My face is unrecognizable to me. It is so red and twisted that it scares me to look at it. But I stare at it anyway. I peer into the eyes, and see something there that is saying something to me. They are saying something to me that I have never heard before. They are saying: *You do not deserve this. You are not a bad person.* "Liar," I say to my reflection. But I keep on looking. They are still saying: *You are good, and do not deserve this. Go take out that London Broil and put away the cake mix. Then go and call the police. Then wait for them to come and get you out of here. You are good. She is bad. Nothing is your fault.*

"You liar. I was suspended for threatening a teacher today. That's all my fault."

But you don't deserve this. And who says that teacher didn't have it coming to him? This is wrong. Don't let this happen to you, tonight, John. You don't deserve it. Your mother is sick and needs to be put away for help. You have to be responsible for that, tonight, John.

"It's too hard- I'm too scared to do it!" I screamed. "She'll kill me!"

Try it anyway.

"She'll kill me!"

Whether she kills you or not, John, you have to try.

"I don't know how," I said.

Just do it.

And I stared some more into my own eyes. They had dried and were still red. I am still confused. I am still so scared. Nothing makes sense to me right now, and it seems easier to say that I deserve it and let them do it to me again. After awhile you don't feel it anymore. It's like nothing is happening to you. "But something is happening to me," I say. "I'll call them," I say, and turn toward the telephone. Before I can pick it up, it rings again. "Hello, Hepburn residence."

"John, it's mom again."

"Oh, hi, mom."

"That business dinner is cancelled, so I'll be home in about an hour. I'll bring some Chinese food or something."

"You don't have to that, mom."

"I'll be home in an hour, John."

"Okay," I say. I feel nothing but intense nervousness as I hang up and then dial 911. "Yes, can I talk to the police about something? Yes, thank you. Yes, hi, my name is John Hepburn, and I need to talk to someone about something...well, I'm afraid that my mother is going to beat me pretty badly tonight. I need some help. Okay, I'll wait. Yes. Yes, it's John. Yeah, I think she's going to beat me..." And I go through with some of the questioning. I still feel nothing but extreme anxiety. Maybe that's why I can't feel anything else—the anxiety is drowning everything else out. They said they'll come in twenty minutes and take me to a social worker.

Something creaks behind me, and I turn, terrified. What I am seeing I cannot believe. The spiny twisted and thick branch of an oak tree is pushing its way through the floor. It grows talons and reaches out toward my ankles. Then I blink and it is gone. I count the minutes, staring at the clock. 10, 5, 3, 2. I am counting the seconds. "I'm betraying her," I say. "She'll get better if I apologize."

I look once again into the mirror, and listen to my eyes saying, *you don't deserve this*. I hear the doorbell ring, and I answer it. I get into the police car and drive away. We pass the great oak with angry arms. I look closely at the Juniper tree. It looks very lovely in the evening.

Nature Seems Dead

The earth is cold and quiet. Silence, a faint wind blowing.
Crisp leaves from still trees are bunched in a pile untouched.
Where are the birds? Where are the animals? There's no
music in the air,
No sign of people there.
When day comes, there is no movement. In the night,
Crickets cannot be heard. There's no
odor in the air,
No sign of people there.
Cars are scattered amongst the street, they have not
been used for weeks and weeks. There's no
life in the air,
No sign of people there.

The Death of Each Day's Life

Going through the pressures of life begins at dawn, "the waking point of the day"
It begins with decisions; choices we are forced to make.
Realizations and temptations we sometimes take.
Attitudes and mood swings we must deal with. It's everyday life it's not a myth.
But at sunset, changes occur. Relaxation time.
Time to be alone, time to clear your thoughts
for all of your energy was put to the day you just fought.

Empty Heart

Winifred M. Marshall

The loneliness I feel in the place is unbearable.
A vast emptiness I cannot change.
I'm drowning, drowning with fear.
A vast emptiness I cannot change.
It's so quiet here.
I can hear the blood pulsating through my veins.
I can hear my heart beating, beating, beating.
A vast emptiness I cannot change.
The Society has put me here. Always putting me
down and telling me that I am not good enough
because of my color, age or gender.
A vast emptiness I cannot change.
I do not laugh, I cannot cry
My future is here.
A vast emptiness I cannot change.

Part of the living person dies with the loved one. The joy of things shared is dead. The lonely quiet is deafening. Favorite books, music, activities are painful. They have lost their savor because they were once shared by a loving heart.

The living person is constantly reminded of the dead as he or she goes about clearing personal property and responsibilities of the deceased. All this is excruciatingly painful as the reality of the absence of the departed one is being faced.

Death is the end of a relationship that now exists only in memories. What relationship is most painful to bear? Certainly the death of a parent, grandparent, or sibling is seemingly unbearable. Who can know such pain as one who has suffered the death of a child or a dear friend?

People find solace in many ways --- continuing to work, in religion, in walking in nature, in helping others --- and finally time heals the pain to a small degree. Often sleep comes from exhaustion heals the heart temporarily.

Memories of the loved one always live and hopefully, we have created happy ones to last until eternity.

Definitions

by Ivettza Sanchez

School: A place of physical anguish for impertinent souls, where all your nightmares will be guaranteed to come true. A place where the damned go. See also: Hell, infernal region or the place of torment.

Teacher: Person(s) in authority who extract effort from his/her subordinates. A person who holds another in servitude or bondage from 8:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. Known also as the slave driver

Television: An evil device that corrupts the young. It promotes sex, violence, and drinking beer. It is to blame for all of society's ills

Technology: Something invented by the Americans, but perfected by the Japanese

Little Sister: This indigenous beast can be found in your stuff and in your business. Proof that your parents believed that old myth about Saran Wrap. Also known as: Ileine, little brat, and "a mistake".

The 1960's: An excuse for taking drugs, making love, and not wearing bras. The forgotten era by those who took drugs and went to Woodstock but remembered by those who didn't inhale.

WAVES

by Constantin v. Hoffmeister

I am sitting here,
in a cold and lonely room.
All I can do is thinking of you.
You are so beautiful.
The endless sky,
blue as ever.
The shiny beach,
hot from the sun.
Both are we standing,
and gazing at the waves.
Your hand feels soft and warm,
my heart beats strong.
Nature seems so wonderful,
we are part of it.
Let this moment be eternal in my mind.
How could I possibly write it down now
without experiencing it while you are here:
I love you.

So long, dear friend.
Gone are the times,
never to come back.
Will I ever see you again?
Will I ever be there again?
No, these are the times
that are gone
but will never be forgotten.
Oh, it is so late already,
so very late...
I will not let my memories
rule my life anymore.
Time to move on...
Time to move on...

A NICE EVENT IN A WAR

by Constantin von Hoffmeister

It had been a hard day
and we lost many people.
Not even the flowers of May
can bring back the people.

I was ordered to go west,
and so I did.
I tried my best,
and on the way I sang a little bit.

FADE TO BLACK

by Constantin v. Hoffmeister

Dark hands that try to pull me down,
but do they succeed?
Hard to tell.
Only one thing is certain:
The suffering will never end.
Burning pits in hell
await victims of humanity.
Life is fading away faster
than one may think.
So beware!
Listen to the shadows
speaking to you!
The past is set,
the future is not.

I reached the woods at noon,
my legs didn't feel good,
and it happened really soon
that I was in a bad mood.

At night I heard a shot,
I got up, and tried to reach my sac.
But what have I got?
A bullet in my back.

The next day I was in the hospital,
my general looking at me and saying,
"You sure don't look very vital."
"Dear sir," I replied, "who's paying?"

Now I am an old veteran,
and have to sit in a wheelchair.
I was never a brave man,
but none of my friends care

There was once a fly who had no friends. One day this fly was buzzing about, when he suddenly met a spider. He had heard about spiders and knew that it was dangerous. However, this spider seemed to be friendly to him. The spider introduced itself to the fly and said he had a problem. The spider explained that he needed a place to stay, somewhere isolated and dusty. The fly anxious to make a friend knew just where to take him. The fly took him to an abandoned barn. They became really good friends. One day the spider asked the fly to bring him some food. The fly was suspicious. The spider then persuaded the fly to bring all the flies that didn't hang out with this fly. The fly said okay. He was anxious once again. Day after day he would convince another fly to come home with him. The spider then ate happily. Then one day there were no flies left around that part of the neighborhood. There was one fly left and he was too blind to see it was him alone. The spider began to grow hungry. One day he called the fly into his web for a favor or so he said. The fly had never been on his web before, but as soon as he stepped on it he became entangled. He asked the spider to help him. The spider looked at him and smiled. The fly knew then that he would never leave again. The spider then laughed at the fly, called him a fool, and ate him right up.

Moral: Never forget who you are.

ALEX ECHEVARRIA

Where Lies Your Beauty?

Where lies your beauty?
In the autumn fields of angry despair?
In the sea of darkend care?

Where lies your beauty?
Is it in your hair?
Why must my heart tear?

Where lies your beauty?
In the hour of no tomorrow?
From what place do you borrow?

Where lies your beauty?
Why must it bring me sorrow?
In the flowers of May?
What more must I say?

Where lies your beauty?
In the puddles after the rain?
Am I going insane?

Where lies your beauty?
In your eyes?
Will the answer ever rise?

Where lies your beauty?
Ah, There it lies!
In your love,
In your soul,
In your spirit,

In your heart,

Where lies your Beauty?

In our love!

Stanley Perkins

Why People Are Mad At Each Other.
By: Stanley Perkins

Attitude's on life
Pushing by with anger
Argueing, fighting
Peer pressure
Nagging, biteing
Time
Our worst enemy
Paperwork, stress
Different views
Paying dues
Parent's, teacher's
Unknown creatures
Homework, chores
Slamming doors
Broken toys
Spoiled girls and boys
Yelling and screaming
Unpleasent dreaming
Why do people get mad at each other?
Sometimes I wonder.

There was a scientist.

That had a very proficient list
Of how to create new lives with dents.

The story starts one day
Deep in a scientific lab
Where the mind of the changer lay
With DNA strands on his tab.

Slowly he gives the strand a twist
To create creatures not meant to be,
And looks down to add them to his list;
Wondering what outcome he would see.

Now listen close my dear children,
For this is no joke,
The fool played with fate then
And created a beast that soon awoke.

Crawling and squirming and slithering around,
The queer DNA strand went to town.
Animals mutated with every pound
And from there the situation had no way but down.

The invisible beast
Was snuck into blood.
The scientist did not care the least,
About the harm that came in a flood.

Soon it got out
Into the most gullible world,
The scientist thinking he knew its shout.
As it whirled and it curled and curled as it whirled.

The epidemic was a folly
From an inventor that was bored.
He was not even unjolly
For the deaths that he had scored.

On he went, boys and girls,
Month after month, and year after year,
Creating sneaky swirls after swirls
Of destructions to fear.

One fine day, the inventor did pay,
He made a disease
That took away his day
To make another that would never appease.

Before his own eyes
A most vicious thing did arise.
The disease stood on its legs
And pulled all of the scramblers pegs.

The inventor screamed and screamed
As his former victims beamed
For all their souls and spirits
Would not miss these fine lyrics.

They danced in a round
As the doc spun straight down
To Earth's very own hell
As his knees surly fell.

On his way down
The old fool looked up
At the ghosts of his past
As they sang him their song:

"Poor old fool, Poor old fool,
He knew not when to quit,
Now he swims in the pool
Of his own DNA fit."

He slowly did learn
As his life ebbed astray
That fake DNA
Would be the cause of his burn.

But what was done was done
And what was there was there
So the inventor died knowing
There was more ammo in the gun.

Nature is nature,
Free and untouched.
That way it should stay,
Forever untouched.

Chemical changes
And queer DNA
Bring destructive dangers
That may lay in the way.

Learn from the past,
Live in today,
Let nature grow fast,
And we will not pay.

Fire. Red, orange, yellow,
Glowing, fiery, luscious,
Sensual, sexual, passionate
The glowing flame of red, red fire glistens on her skin,
Giving her the glow of life.
The flickering flames play a wild game of shadows
Across his wide muscled chest,
His skin looking darker and more provocative than before.
Fire, blood, violence, death,
Black, red, white,
Tortures, threatening, frightening
The huge engulfing flame
Swallows the screaming babe
Leaving nothing behind, but a burnt crisp, empty crib.
Screams of agony from weaker forces
Fire, the almighty decider
When put into action.
Keep it captured and trap the violence
Or let it loose and revel in its passion.
Fire! a demon of love; a demon of hate

To Please Oneself Is to Displease the Other -Sherin Janey

Happiness comes not easily
And with it always comes pain
For to please one is to displease the other.
One must please oneself,
But to please oneself is to displease the other.
Giving and taking is all part of joy
Uncertainty and risk comes along with the choice.
One can't always please the other
For sooner or later one must live their own life
With whom ever they please
And the other won't be there for one to displease.
I'm sorry I'm sorry; yet I am not
For I will please me for you will not.
My life is mine to live and to rule
So please step aside and let me start in full.

Living Death -Sherin Janey

Creatures of the night; Elegant sleek figures of Gothic design,
Thirsty for a wine purer than holy water,
Thirsty for a thick, royal red liquid that tastes so sweet.
They live an immortal eternity,
These creatures, full of life and mischief,
Yet, they are undead and unholy.
Magnificent night crawlers.
A stake through the heart, their undead life is over,
These spectacular black angels,
Outrunning a death they've been living for hundreds of years,
Giving death to those so fortunate to cross their dark, magical
souls.

I was always off in my own world my own illusions and abstract visions, never experiencing what my family and friends were really like. As long as I felt good, as long as my body was consumed with chemicals, I did not care. I let my soul start flying away when I was 14. When I was 23, my soul had left me. There was nothing left but a body without a spirit. My hallucinations out ruled the loss of what should have been precious to me; I left behind my mother, my dear mother, my sister and two brothers, and my lover, full with my baby. I'll never see my child, never be able to see my siblings grow, For on my 23rd birthday, I was carried out of my home in a coffin High as a kite, Dead as the night.

Loneliness -Sherin Janey

I sit awake at night, in a deep reverie of you.
I can still remember your protecting arms around me,
Your full red lips against mine,
Your tender words whispered in my ear.
We both secretly hoped it would be forever,
But nothing really is, except eternity.
That is where you are now, in eternity.
So far out of my reach.
Those aqua eyes, forever probing mine,
Looking straight into my soul,
Have now left me to meet their destiny.
Too bad their destiny is forever.
It should almost be considered a sin
For something to be so permanent.
Now here I sit, with the only memory of you lying in my arms,...
With your eyes...your smile.
Now here I sit, with emptiness in my heart.

YOU AND ME -Sherin Janey

It was once
as beautiful as
the rose you gave
me, then the rose
started to wilt, and
so did you. I thought
we would get through the
thorns, but they were
much too strong, and
much too sharp
for ever forgiveness,
friendship, or trust
again. I let my thorns
weaken too many times,...You
betrayed my heart--you
wilted my rose.

She has come! She has come!
No, she has gone.
The dreadful reaper has come to collect her;
And now she's gone.
But she has just arrived, to this hellish world.
I understand not; rambling and rambling.
She was once sweet, though not yet alive to me.
"Look at me for I am here!" I said once...twice,
She listened not, closing her already closed eyes,
Breathing a breath she never breathed.
She was not the only one collected,
To be a playmate for the angels; so was the other.
Her aged face screamed in agony,
As I screamed with her.
Her frail hands gripped mine,
As mine gripped hers.
I felt her slipping...slipping into darkness.
"Look at me, for I am here!" I said once...twice,
She listened not, closing her eyes full of wisdom,
Breathing a breath she breathed a thousand times.
I closed my eyes and went with her.

Wall Of Steel-Sherin Janey

A wall, built so high
Emotions can't escape
Steel doors built in
To close to prying venturers
Block after block; placed perfectly
Lined up flawlessly; is now demanded to fall.

Those strong steel doors being ripped open--
By an emotion.
No! All emotions were put in a box,
They were all locked up, the key thrown away.
Someone found it, someone found the key!
The wall grows loud with alarms.

Emotions are escaping; rushing out in great surges
My wall, it's crumbling
That great, great wall
That fortress to hide behind
To hide from the pains and the joys
Is falling, falling...
Into the depth of emotion.

Trust -Sherin Janey

In the nights, you are what occupies my mind.
When I think of you
I see your tears,
your joys, and most of all--
your love.

"When I Was A Little Girl"

"When I was a little girl
I used to say to her
I love you to the moon and down again,
around the world and back again."

Yes,, that was the phrase that her mom recited to her
everyday and every night,
before she went to school,
before she turned off the lights.

Her mom tried to bring her up
the best she knew how
while her father walked the streets
like a dog on the prowl.

She taught her daughter the ABC's and 123's
and hoped and prayed that God
would continue to watch over them
happily.

Yet her mother knew
that she could hold on no longer
the disease was slowly and silently
creeping upon her.

Months and months went by
and the little girl asked, "Mommy why?"
Looking down at her daughter she responded,
"Honey, you have to understand that all things die.

"The songbirds in the trees,
the fish in the sea,
the flowers in the park,
the lizards in the dark.

"Everything dies for a reason,
for a cause.
Just remember sweetie
that life has its flaws."

With that she closed her eyes and sighed
I love you to the moon and down again,
Around the world and back again."

It was then that her daughter knew
that her mom had died.

"When I was a little girl
I used to say to her,

Pink? Pink.
By Juanita Dian Holton

There are so many colors visible to the naked eye that makes the world worthwhile. Yet it seems colors are like people. They all either symbolize something or have a history behind them. Take for instance, the color white. When someone looks at white they may think pure, clean, sterile, but Ahab in Moby Dick saw the great white whale as a huge, evil creature who was destined only to kill. The color white had a double standard meaning. It was observed as one meaning-- good and it also fit the opposite meaning- bad.

Some colors however don't fit this category. They can only be interrupted from one side. An example of such is the color pink. Pink is the soft, delicate hue of red that is often associated with the wall paper, blankets and toys of a baby. Many parents choose this particular color along with other pastels because it represents peace, love and tranquility. It isn't too bright or loud for the baby. For this reason classrooms and childrens hospitals paint their rooms shades of pink.

Pink is identified in many positive ways. It is hardly represented as dull, boring, or lifeless such as the color grey. It is an everlasting Spring color that brings warmth to someones heart. Authors in particular seem to use pink when describing a youthful girls face, "rosy pink cheeks" or embarrassment of ones actions. When seeing or wearing pink the character may feel like he or she is free, airy, or light. Pink spreads a tone of pleasantness about the person.

Nevertheless pink is the symbol that harsh, cold weather is gone and warm, relaxing weather is here. Many of the flowers that flourish throughout parks and gardens are lean and deeply colored pink. They grow and develop, budding and blossoming into something sweet and unique like carnations and roses. The holidays, Valentines' Day and Mothers Day, are full of these divine pink florets and bouquets. Valentines' Day brings pink flowers, perfumes, candy and mauve tinted cards, while Mother's Day bears laughter and tears along pink stricken faces.

The color is undoubtedly thrown all over the Spring season in numerous forms. From the oink! of a pink pigs snout to the girls at the zoo drinking pink lemonade and whispering to each other about the 3 pink flamingos standing on one leg by the fountain. The simple tone of the color displays how it can in trance one who enjoys the casualness of life-- making them soft and sweet like cotton candy but cute and cuddly like a pink teddy bear. However pink is also a color that means remarkable--rare.

People tend to overlook pink, by connecting it with little girls or babies, when in fact it can mean more than that. An example of this is the 1959 pink Thunderbird convertible. A classic car. A solidary car. A unique car. Because it is a classic it can make old men and women revert back to their teenage days, reviving long lasting memories. The color pink sets in their minds forever, never fading like the petals of a flower. It was the color that symbolized their youth, though the Thunderbird displayed the wild, rough side of them. It counterbalanced emotions and justified being obnoxious, while maintaining an innocent side to them.

Pink, therefore, is a color that doesn't appear to have a double standard attached to it. It is the result of one strong color mixing with another, that both have double meanings, to result in a color that has only one side. This color is Pink. Soft, subtle pink.

— THE DEED —
by Ivettza Sanchez

Dear Beloved Ones,

Mom, dad, I don't know what to say to you. I am sorry to put you through this. I had to go through with it.

*I still have a chance to get out of it.
Just pretend that I never wrote this letter
and everything will go back to the way
it was. Except I'll still die in the end.*

I had no choice mom.

*What do I mean I had no choice?!
The Truth. They deserve the truth.*

A couple of months ago, my life ended. I did not care for anything anymore. It was a very difficult time for me. I lived those months in some sort of sick, weird dream. My very own private, hellish nightmare.

*Why did I go through with it?
Why couldn't I have just lived in
ignorance? You know what they
say is true. Ignorance is bliss.*

I could not believe what I had found out. I didn't want to believe. I was going to die. I had heard of these positive thinking people who say they "live" with this. That's BULLSHIT!! Nobody ever "lives" with this virus. We die!! And I don't want to deteriorate in front of your eyes. I don't want to watch you have to watch me suffering. I'd rather get it over with. NOW.

*If it were done when 'tis done,
then 'twere well it were done quickly.*

I am not being selfish. And, I do hope that someday you will be able to forgive me.

*Forgive? FORGIVE ??? HER??
Why should I forgive her? That bitch,
that slut!! She did this to me!! I wanted
to use a condom, but she wouldn't let me!
She said she didn't want no piece of
rubber in between us. She said she wanted to*

*feel me, not the rubber,
inside of her. If only I
knew she was out to kill.*

Because, Mom, Dad, even though I really am sorry, I see no other way out.

*The Doctor had sat me down
and told me the bad news.
He started mumbling about
drugs and methods...AZT...
Prozac. Who gives a FUCK!!!
All I knew was that I was
going to die. And I hadn't
even lived yet! The small
white room started to engulf me.
I had to get out...The door's
locked...There was no way out.*

I'm sorry I never told you of my condition. I was just so ashamed and scared. I guess I wasn't thinking straight.

*An uncontrollable rage took
over me. I ran out of the hospital
and ran, and ran. NOOOO!!!!
Sobbing, I had started praying
to God...Why me? I never got
an answer.*

You will probably never understand what was going through my mind. You will ask yourselves that one question that has been asked since the beginning of time, in accordance with life, death, love and everything and anything that has ever happened to you. And you'll probably never find the answer. I didn't. But, I do hope you will find reassurance in the fact that even though I am gone, my love for you will always live on.

*It's time.
I took the gun out of the
drawer and debated for a brief
moment if I should shoot myself
in the head or through my mouth.
Funny, the things you think of
right before you die.*

Love always,

GOODBYE.

Tommy.

*And I looked, and beheld a pale
horse: And his name that sat
on him was Death.*

The Deed
by Shannon Nichols

"Look I don't care what you say I'm going to do it! The only reason I told you is because I thought you might want to help!"

"Help!? Are you nuts Susan? You are talking about murder. I mean, actually killing someone!"

"My God, Tonya what so you care? He has been killing us for years, or have you forgotten?"

"No, I haven't forgotten, but is it worth killing someone over?"

"Maybe not to you, but I'm sick of it. I'm sick of having nightmares, I'm sick of never having a full night of sleep. I'm tired, I'm tired of it all and I just can't take anymore. Look, I've thought about this for a long time. At first it was just to cheer me up, but now thinking about it is just not enough!! I have decided to do it, with or without you!!"

"How do you plan on doing this Susan?"

"The next time that son of a bitch comes to me in the night, I'm going to blow his balls off!"

"With what?"

"I bought a gun from some kid at school about 5 months ago. I didn't think I could ever use it, but now I've decided I'm going to!"

"God Susan you have really flipped!"

"Well, If I have, it's his fault. Look I've had to live with this for eight years, and that's eight years too long! I have to do it!! It's either him or me. I just can't live this way any more."

The conversation ended with that. The gun or Susan's plans were no mentioned again. But something was bound to happen. And three weeks later it did!!

Oh God, is that the door? Please let it be Tonya. No, you know it's not, it's him and guess what he's come for. MMaybe if I just lie here he'll go away. No, he's still coming. Maybe if I move, Oh God. Please go away!!

The gun! It's under my pillow. All I have to do is reach

up and get it. Easy now- Where is it- It's gone!! Damn that Tonya! I could have killed that son of a bitch. Oh Please STOP touching me!!!!

BANG!!! A shot rang thru my ears and a warm lifeless body fell unto mine and I felt the warm blood ooze onto my body. I'm going to scream. Get him off, get him off. I squirmed my way free and saw him there. There he is, dead, on my bed. The blood, the blood is everywhere. All over the bed, the wall, me. I turned to the door Tonya stands there in her pink nightgown with the smoking 35. in her hand, she starts to cry. I'm standing between the dead, bloody body and my crying sister and I begin to laugh and I laugh so hard until my stomach starts to cramp.

The End

I was born the son of a great man,

Raised with the utmost values.

He taught me to play, showed me to care

and gave me his all.

He ignited a fire deep within me to succeed,

No matter what stood in my way.

My father was my desire.

Life was good and was getting better.

Then it turned around and got worse.

He was gone, my father, victim of

someone's craziness.

Someone's frenzy showed no mercy in

in ripping the only life I had

away from me.

When he died, I lost everything including

my mind.

Soon after I buried him, I held my own

funeral. **ALEX**
ECHEVARRIA

JOHN CHAD NIMNUAN

ENGLISH 12, PER. 7

Life is a dance. To be good at it, you must work very hard. You'll have to practice day after day, and though it is hard, you must never give up. Rely on the Instructor and trust in His knowledge, for He knows what He's doing.

Don't think you can master the dance in just one day. It takes years of practice to get any good at it. Even when you think that you have got the dance mastered, there's still more to be learned by those who have been dancing longer than you.

You should learn to dance to all kinds of music. Don't get too wrapped up in one kind. Be versatile and flexible dancer.

Dancing is done best with a partner. Find one who can keep up with, but who also can teach you a few things about dancing. Your dancing partner is there to pick you up when you stumble on the dance floor. Remember to treat your partner with equality and respect, for they are just as good a dancer as you.

When you impress everyone with your sharp moves, don't hog all the credit. Give glory to the Instructor, because He taught you all you know. You would be nothing if it was not for the Instructor. Always seek advice from Him. No matter how good you get, you will still need help from the Instructor.

Before the song ends, before all the people leave, and before the lights on the dance floor go off, be sure you danced the best that you possibly could. Once the dance is over, there's no coming back for an encore. That's why you need to make sure you leave a positive, lasting impression on those who are still dancing. They can learn from and follow your moves.

To Name A Star

By Will Lindsay

Herbert was my friend. I have met a lot of people, I guess. I have a few acquaintances. One or two contacts, maybe. But I don't have many friends. In this business, you don't make friends quite as easily as you'd like to. Theatre is such a mess of insanity and I think it leaves an irrevocable brand of inward isolation on your heart. And it's so hard to make friends. And Herbert was my friend.

I was fourteen going on 18 and living in the sweltering heat and wetness of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. We had a house right outside the bayou, and our world was cast in dark hues of green, brown, red, orange, and infinite blackness. Growing up in the swamp was hard work. Picking moss and catching shrimp were our boyhood obligations. We had to look out for alligators, believe it or not. They were a part of our world down south. I have only been chased once, by one of those goddamned things. That scaly green monster ran after me through layers of tall grass and waterlogged moss patches and it nearly took my calf for dinner. I have never been so frightened as when I shot up that tree and saw the beast below me beat its head against the trunk. I could feel the trunk vibrate and rattle with surprising clarity as it struck it each time, again and again. When the gator hissed, it sounded like a can of pepsi being opened up.

One thing about the swamplands was this; you never knew the place by heart, or the people in it. Just when you thought you had the bayou figured out and mapped out, something, or someone else appears and you realize that you know nothing. The mystery of the swamps will always stay with me not because of unseen ferocious lizards or unexpected irrigation ditches, but because of Herbert, and the day we

met each other.

I was dragging for shrimp in Bayou Canal one day, under a hot sun. My shirt was off and I remember being burned as I sat against the metal stern of the boat. It burned like hell, and I cursed the heat. I hated the discomfort of the whole job, fishing and all. It always made me feel poor and dirty. I hated poverty. If anything, I knew that I did not want to be poor. I dreamed of being a famous actor and letting everyone know that I was not one to be in filth. My cursing seemed to bring on a crowd of hungry mosquitoes, for they arrived the moment I let the word out. "Damn!", I barked, and slapped my neck and chest. "Damn you, you bastard flying things! Damn you winged creatures and goddamned alligators! Why can't you just leave me out of it?"

I needed to piss, so I pulled the boat up alongside the shore. I wasn't one to live in filth, and since I lived in the swamp, I wasn't about to piss in it. I anchored the boat and found a huge moss bearing willow tree to endow. When I began to zip my pants, a hand came over my mouth and pulled me off my feet backward into someone bigger than myself. "You won't make a peep if you want to live, little one," said a high-pitched and scratchy voice. I repressed a scream and caught my balance. "You're coming with me, little one. This is your lucky day. We're gonna make you a movie star! How's that sound to you, little one?" I gasped, feeling a stroke of exciting dread. I dreamed of being a movie star, and to hear someone say that they were going to make me into one was very exciting for me, but I knew that this was all wrong, and

something in the man's voice was telling me that I was in a lot of trouble.

He had his forearm around me throat and was dragging me onward. We were moving on a dirt road going deep into the gulf swamplands. My parents had given me long, instructional lectures about not going anywhere near the Gulf Swamps. My father had said to me, "Joshua, a man could go wandering into that place and never come out. Just never be seen again. That either means he's dead, or he doesn't want to be found."

The man stank of beer and marijuana and body odor and he jerked me more forcefully as we went on. I was terrified, but too terrified to bite him and run away. All I could think of was what he said about making me into a movie star and feel worse and worse. I wanted to fall into a pit in the ground and be swallowed up into the Earth until this man passed, so I could run back to my home into safety. I was so afraid, and hot tears sprang forth from my eyes and stained my cheeks. What did he mean about making me a movie star?

Then it clicked. I remembered something that my mother was talking about a few days ago. Something about an escape convict who spent fourteen years in prison for making bootleg porno films involving children. It couldn't be, It can't be, please Lord, oh no, it just can't be don't let this happen to me! I started to whimper, and a screamed began to rise from my throat. I finally couldn't repress it any longer and I went out of control, just screaming and screaming, "No! Let me go, you faggot! You let me go! Please let me go! Please!" All the while he had his arm around my neck and jerked me harder, saying "SSSSSHHHH!! Shut up if you want your life, boy!" We struggled for a few more steps and then,

from nowhere, I heard a voice in front of me, calmly say, "Don't think you ought to be treatin' the kid like that, sir."

Shocked, we both stopped to look at the man. A six foot, slender old bum stood before us. He had on old dirty khakis and a filthy creased white shirt with all kinds of stains on it. His unshaven face had the look of hell itself with the mouth that resembled a straight unforgiving line and eyes that probably glowed in the dark. As they looked into mine, they said, you'll be alright, I'm scared too. The man's eyes pierced mine like quicksilver. My assailant gripped me tight again around my neck and I felt something crack. "You best be gettin' on out of the way old man, or you and this little one's gonna be in a whole world a hurt."

"Don't think y'ought to be treatin' the child like that, sir. I'm inclined to request that you let him be."

"Inclined to request that I let him be, huh? Well I'm inclined to kick your damned teeth in-" as the assailant's hips moved to kick the man in front of us, he suddenly swung a rusty shovel from behind him into the attackers forehead, knocking him down. His legs moved like twitching bacon in a frying pan and then stopped. I knew he was dead. I felt a wave of nothingness fall upon me and my heart just seemed to melt down into grey infinity. My legs tingled with weakness and nausea seized my bowels. I vomited freely and thoroughly, still not believing the sight before me, and fainted.

I awoke hours later in a soft bed with a burlap blanket sheathed over me. It was cold, so I knew it had to be in the middle of the night. I saw that I was in unfamiliar

surroundings and then knew that I had to be in the home of the man who rescued me. I looked around and saw the him lying on the dirt floor of his makeshift wooden home. Boards were toppled together in disarray to make up the walls, and shafts of moonlight were shining through the holes left. Despite the appearance of the man when I first saw him, I felt somehow instantly at home in this place. He was one of the people that I had missed in my mapping out of the swamps.

While I was sitting up in bed, I felt something cold glide over my thigh and I jumped and let out a holler of panic. A huge water moccasin sat curled up in the bed where I was sleeping. Thing looked like a python. The became startled and woke up, looking in all directions and then at me. "Oh, it's you. Feeling better?"

"There's a water moccasin in your bed," I said.

"Oh, I see you've met Ingmar, then."

"He's a water moccasin- a poisonous snake!" I said, louder than I had wanted. The man flinched and put his hand to his forehead. "You feeling alright, Joshua?" I gasped.

"How do you know my name? And why aren't you getting Ingmar out of the bed?" The man just laughed and extended his right hand. "I'm Herbert. This is my home, and Ingmar has been milked, so there's no need to panic. I'll place him back in his aquarium if he's bothering you, though." I shook his hand. I noticed his fingertips were calloused. He reached for Ingmar, who snapped at him. "Hey, you beast. Calm yourself before I bruise thy head with my heel," he said. When Ingmar had quieted, Herbert coaxed him up into his hands, very gently. Ingmar traveled slowly up his Arm and onto his shoulder. Herbert laughed as the snake's forked

clean. "Come on inside. Good to see you again, I admit I didn't think we'd meet so soon after the events of last night," he said matter-of-factly.

"Well, you're about the only person I can stand to be in the same room with lately."

"What does that mean? Have a little uproar at the house last night, did you? Parents crying over you and stuff?"

"Yeah- yeah how do you know all this stuff about me?"

"What stuff?"

"Well, it seems like you know all my intentions and feelings and you anticipate all of my reactions ahead of time. Are you a psychic or something? I mean, how do you see all of this?"

"You wear it on your face, my friend. How could I not see it? You have made yourself very obvious to me, Joshua. When you woke up startled by Ingmar, I knew what kind of person you were."

"Yeah, what's that? What kind of person am I?"

"Well, I'll let you discover that for yourself. How could I tell you? I expect you know a little more than I do."

I just sat there, shocked, but feeling somehow satisfied and comfortable. I was feeling less and less nervous as we spoke.

"What kind of a name is Ingmar?"

Herbert looked up at me and laughed. "You hear that Ingmar? Joshua wants to know what kind of a name you have. He wants to know who I named you after." Ingmar slept, full of hamster. "Well, to answer your question, it's a dramatic name," Herbert said, licking his lips and parting his long,

dark hair. "What kind of name do you have?"

"Well, I guess Joshua sounds to me like, like royalty or leadership. Something like that, I guess. Maybe it'll mean that and help me become famous," I said and chuckled to myself.

Herbert's eyes lit up when I said famous. He looked at me as if he knew something about me that was very private-very powerful. He probably did, too. "Fame, huh? Is that what Joshua will do for you? Carry you to the heights of the world?"

"Yeah, wouldn't that be great?"

"Do you know what you want to be famous for?" he said.

"I want to be an actor," I said, and looked into his eyes. They seemed to reflect my own face. Herbert got up and went to the aquarium where he began to stroke Ingmar's fat belly and back. He was silent for a few seconds. Then finally, he said, "Joshua, do you know who Ingmar Bergman is?" He spoke to me with his back turned.

"No," I said, "Who is he?"

Herbert just kept petting the snake. He was silent for awhile. "Well, I'm going to let you figure that out for yourself. You may learn what kind of name my pet snake has. And you may learn what kind of name Joshua is." He walked over to his desk, which was a small used thing, and pulled a book out of one of the two droors. He tossed it to me, and said, "I'd like you to take a look at the Seventh Seal. I think you'd be perfect for the artist's part. Learn it, and come to me when you got one monologue memorized, and ready to go. We'll see what kind of actor you are- whether or not you can live up to your name," he said as he looked at with his

piercing blue eyes. He had that animation in his face that made him look like he would change shape any minute. I was not expecting this, but I was excited. He knew something about drama, and he was going to put my dreams into life, as much as could be done, here in the bayous.

"Okay. I'll do it," I said as a grin came into my face. I was as much flattered as I was unable to say no to the man. He had some kind of authority that I just couldn't say no to. I got up to leave the place and shook his hand. "Thank you, Herbert. I'll learn them."

"We'll see. Until next time, Joshua."

I left, and as the door shut I felt a little guilty for tricking the man. I had left a fifty dollar bill under his pillow when turned his back to pet Ingmar, his fat snake.

My parents were normal with me for most of the time I was at home. Once my mother came into my room as I was screaming about the horrors of the plague to an invisible squire. The more gruesome parts of the monologue were hard for me to say as well as I'd like to- but I said them anyway, feeling a few barriers break. It was a totally new experience- yet it came to me as if I had always known it. My mother was repulsed and said, "What's this? What's this trash you're doing here?"

"Hush, mother- your breaking my concentration! It's Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*. It's classic. I'm practicing it for someone."

"For who?"

"Herbert, the guy who saved me that night."

"Oh," she said. I kept practicing. The first few days

that I did it, I was getting discouraged and frustrated, because it wasn't coming out the way that I wanted it to. But one day, it clicked, and I had it, just as fluid as mercury. I said it front of the mirror, and had myself convinced that acting was my destiny. That day, I went to Herbert's place. The dirt road went by quickly and I couldn't wait to get to his home, so I could rehearse it to him. I knocked on the door, and said "Herbert, I'm ready. I got the piece done. I can do it for you, I can!"

"Joshua?"

"Yeah."

"What did I tell you the other day?"

"I don't know," I said, feeling guilty as charged. "I just wanted to pay you back for saving my life. I didn't think you'd really mind."

"I would have done the same for anyone, Joshua. But I don't want your money. I don't have much, but I'm proud of what I do have, and I don't need anything to be given to me. Charity makes a burn that don't come out- you know who said that?"

"...Who?"

"John Steinbeck. If he said it, then it's true. So come in here and entertain me- but take your goddamned money back, cause the only I'll use it for is toilet paper. Hey, yeah, if you really want to help me, you'll bring me some toilet paper. I'm running a little low lately."

I laughed and came into his house. That day we had a long four hour session on breaking barriers and letting it all shine through to fill the character. Herbert stopped me several times to tell me this; "You're doing it again,

Joshua. You're saying what the character won't do instead of what he could do. Don't narrow him down- let him make choices- let him explore, let him feel!"

By the end of that day, I had learned that Herbert had been a drama teacher in the University of Louisiana. He didn't tell me what got him poor and out here in this little shack. He carried his pride. He gave me several more monologues to do and told me to come back when I had them ready to be acted.

"You've got it, Joshua," he said when I asked him if I had the part down well. "That's the best I have seen since my college years. It's surprisingly good for your age and experience. You have some talent alright."

"So do you think I should be an actor?"

He laughed again, letting me know with a wink that he was laughing good naturedly. "Well, almost every student I had has asked me that question, and I have the same answer every time. If you have a choice, and if you could be reasonably happy doing something else, go at once and do something else. Acting or directing for the theatre is only for the irrevocable diseased- those who are so smitten with the need that there is no choice. But if you want to, go for it. You have talent."

I felt a fire burn inside of me. Somewhere along the lines of this day, I had discovered what it was that I wanted to do with my life. I wanted to act, and that only. Everything else seemed a waste of life. I was determined to rise to the challenge that Herbert presented to me. I believed that I was weird enough, if that's what it took. I believed that I had what it took. If I had not met Herbert,

I would never have discovered this.

I left with the monologues and tons of buzzing energy. I couldn't wait to get home and start these. I practiced crying as I walked the dirt road, and found that it came with effort. I wondered what it be like on the stage.

A week later, I had learned 3 of the seven monologues that Herbert had given to me. I was rampant with excitement and as fluid wine with character dimensions as I could be at the time. I was bursting with a love for performance and a passion for myself. I had become a little kind of ego-maniac as I schooled myself in the art of drama, which I must speculate happens to many actors, if not all. I couldn't wait to deliver them to Herbert, and tomorrow, I was going to his home to do just that.

"Joshua! Joshua! Come here and look at this sky!" called my mother, who had calmed her nerves a lot in the last few weeks. I came out the back porch where she stood, marveling at a nebulous pale orange sky. The whole sky was pale orange- like the inside of a cantaloupe. It was outlandish. I felt like I was immortal as I stared into the sky. This moment would be unforgettable. All those raging emotions just tumbling around in my heart, like an internal tidal wave. The sky seemed to reflect what was in my soul. It shifted and beautiful shades violet and yellow streaked the horizon. "Looks like hurricane weather," Mother said.

"Yeah, it probably is," said my Dad.

I felt a hurricane twisting and turning inside of me, and it felt great.

To my shock and surprise, at twelve midnight, a hurricane struck the bayou, about ten miles south of our home. It was said to be moving upward, and sure enough, it did. It came within two miles of our house, and then for some unpredictable reason, it twisted south again and went off into the Gulf.

The next day came, and I ran to go check on Herbert, praying that the Hurricane had not struck his home. As I ran along the dirt road, I saw tell-tale signs of ruined trees, sprawled about in any number of unnatural positions, some were even blocking the road. I became filled with a sense of psychic dread as I got closer and closer to his shack, unprotected out in the swampwood.

Suddenly, I came around the bend where I should have seen his shack appear. I did not see it today. Instead, a pile of wet dark wood lay scattered about the ground. Remnants of his living space were around the debris, like his white shirt and his old college awards frames. A smashed aquarium was heaped upon the roots of an old cottonwood, and Ingmar was not to be found.

The site was dead, and Herbert was nowhere to be found.

I sat next to the trunk of the cotton wood and cried quietly. Why did such bad things have to happen to such good people?

Later that evening, I came back from a long day's walk through the gulf Swamps. I had wanted to see some of the damage done, and I was tired of being afraid of the place. The destruction was heinous, as I had guessed. Sheets of

metal and large pieces of plywood floated through the over filled canal. Signs of destruction were everywhere, and gave me a sense of desperation. I went back home, to the safety and normalcy of my family. Before I reached the front door, I stopped and looked at something on the porch and all my hope and happiness was restored in an instant. On the doorstep lay a copy of Ingmar Bergman's collected plays. With tears forming in my eyes, I picked up the wet book and opened it, and found this note:

Go for it, Joshua!

Reach into that sky and pick the star of your choice. Reach high and far, and keep your eyes on it. You have what it takes and more. Thank you for being the friend you were, I will treasure it for the rest of my life. Good-bye and Good luck,

Herbert.

Today, I have a leading part to audition for. I'm remembering all this that happened to me in an instant, as I get on the subway, and get off, walking toward that huge auditorium. I'll remember every bit of advice that Herbert gave me in our sessions, and have faith that it'll pay off. I have been in twenty or so plays, and had seven leading parts. I can't say I'm famous. I'm still waiting tables at Martin's and starving to get through the week. It's been the roughest part of my life as yet, and I love it. I wouldn't give it up for anything. And I owe it all to the igniter of

my dreams, Herbert. God bless you, man, wherever you are.

Evening in June

By Will Lindsay

It is evening in June.
Picture it, will you?
The sky, a purple sheet of grace
The earth, a blanket
Of smooth brown chocolate and marble
The trees are shocks of green
And stalks of loyalty
The suburbs are resting the summer heat
And cooling in the evening moisture
And people are riding bikes and walking hand in hand
Young married couples
Young steady going high school couples
All niavely walking hand in hand
Children and preteens race against fate on magic
Bycicles, still knowing the important things about
Life.
White, brown, blue, yellow and mahogany houses tower into the dusk.
These houses built by those who have lost childhood and
Innocence.
And in these homes built by sinners
Live other sinners, flying away from their own imaginations
As if it were a threatening tool or illness
Streets were paved by sinners, too.
Lights were made by the sinners as well
But the children still ride and play upon these shameful
Creations, innocent, without malice
Babies aren't born killers
It is not human nature to be violent
Man is not a fierce, carnal beast
But a child who has been wounded so many times that the only language that he
can speak is hatred, frenzy, bloodshed, ridicule, desecration, despair, suicide and
murder.
All of these combine in a vessel that builds a road
Or erects a house
Or a light
Yet the children still play upon them
Innocent
Niave
Without malice
Until they grow and become hurt
Are struck with a whip

Or a teacher's ruler
Abuse is the tool that shapes manhood
Abuse is the tool that shoots forth growth
Our world is one big, dysfunctional family
No one knows anybody,
And everyone hates everybody else
Except the children, who will always be riding their bicycles so full of
magic
Against fate and time.

Penance

By Will Lindsay

There is a sweet red fire burning
In the hole of my heart.
A place set aside for vengeance
A place set aside for bussiness unfinished
A place where things get done, and wrongs are repaid.
And you have all been summoned to come into that hole
And recieve your just deserts
And swallow all your actions and words against an innocent boy
*You will drink down your cruelty like rotten buttermilk
And you will choke on it.
Your face will turn red and veins will expand and quiver
Your eyes will bulge and bleed
Your hair will turn from black to white in seconds
The rage will change your complexion
From fair to horrid
Your teeth will loosen and drop out of your moth
Your toungue will burn and explode, stuffing your cheeks
Your skin will cook and blister
It will crack and the flesh will scream will raw anguish
Your brains will change from pink to decaying green and grey
They will quicken and slip out of your ears and mouth
There are a great many things that will happen to your weak and pitiful frames
You will wish that you were never born into this world
You will pray to the devil for mercy
You will drive yourself to a ledge and throw yourself into the rush hour traffic of new
york city
You will cause that you shall speak no more
And the penance will pass
When the rage is gone.
You've done a lot to piss me off.*

Matt McQueen



The flower

- As progression fades to depression
The human spirit begins to darken
Yearning for the light that feeds us
Inspiration is lost in the blackness
- The pit is dug deeper
By the man who controls the shovel
Rather than climb out
He spikes the spade even deeper
- The mirror staves in discontent
Like a father to his rebellious son
But the judge is the reflected, distorted figure
which cries for help but is not heard
- The warrior makes himself heard
And conquers the reflected image.
He blinds himself with light
From the fire he created
- He awaits the dawn
which grants him time
To pour fuel on the fire
To feed the source within
- The burning in warriors soul
Remains until the fatal day
when the flowers roots are deserted by its petal
And it is free from the agony of

Guiding, curing, and dying.

The Kaleidoscope

From a distance, merely a small tube
come a little closer - look inside
Darkness-
The beauty is wholly concealed,
hidden from every aspect:
Identical
Turn on the lights -
Beaming white light:
clear, vivid configurations of loose, colored glass
Blue light:
perception of subdued performance
brilliantly illuminated glass fragments
Yellow glow:
The brightest sunshine ever imaginable
Who would have thought such a small tube
had such endless radiance and
stunning capabilities
Every kaleidoscope has a different image to offer the world
Stay true to your image
but respect that of others as well
Unity and diversity

Katya Schmoll

The forms that swim
and the shapes that creep
under the water of sleep

In the streaming sunshine of coral reef
Sea lions converse
800 pound mammals are diverse
banded coral shrimp try to hide
the theamber garibaldi darts with
swaying fronds and timbers of speckled sea
hare float about aimlessly
A marine jungle with amazing natural predators:
The great white shark -
Fierce, fearless, voracious
Dangers of the deep
Glossy sweepers glow with
fearsome monsters of the deep
They weave through their deep blue heaven
while we enjoy the brightly illuminated
open ocean.

The Dawn

Linked to blurry fantasy
Yet chained to what is real.
Able to learn; to hear; to see;
Striving to simply feel.

The morning of time provides a path
Shaped by destiny.
As children we challenge every turn
Yearning to be free.

At the noon of time we're lifted up
To feel the warmth of the sun;
Realizing, of course, that the day is fresh
And only just begun.

The day is cooled in the afternoon
As our innocent toils proceed;
Filling our hearts with accomplishment
And the happiness we need.

Evening brushes over us
And the horizon continues to glow,
As we begin to appreciate
Exactly what we know.

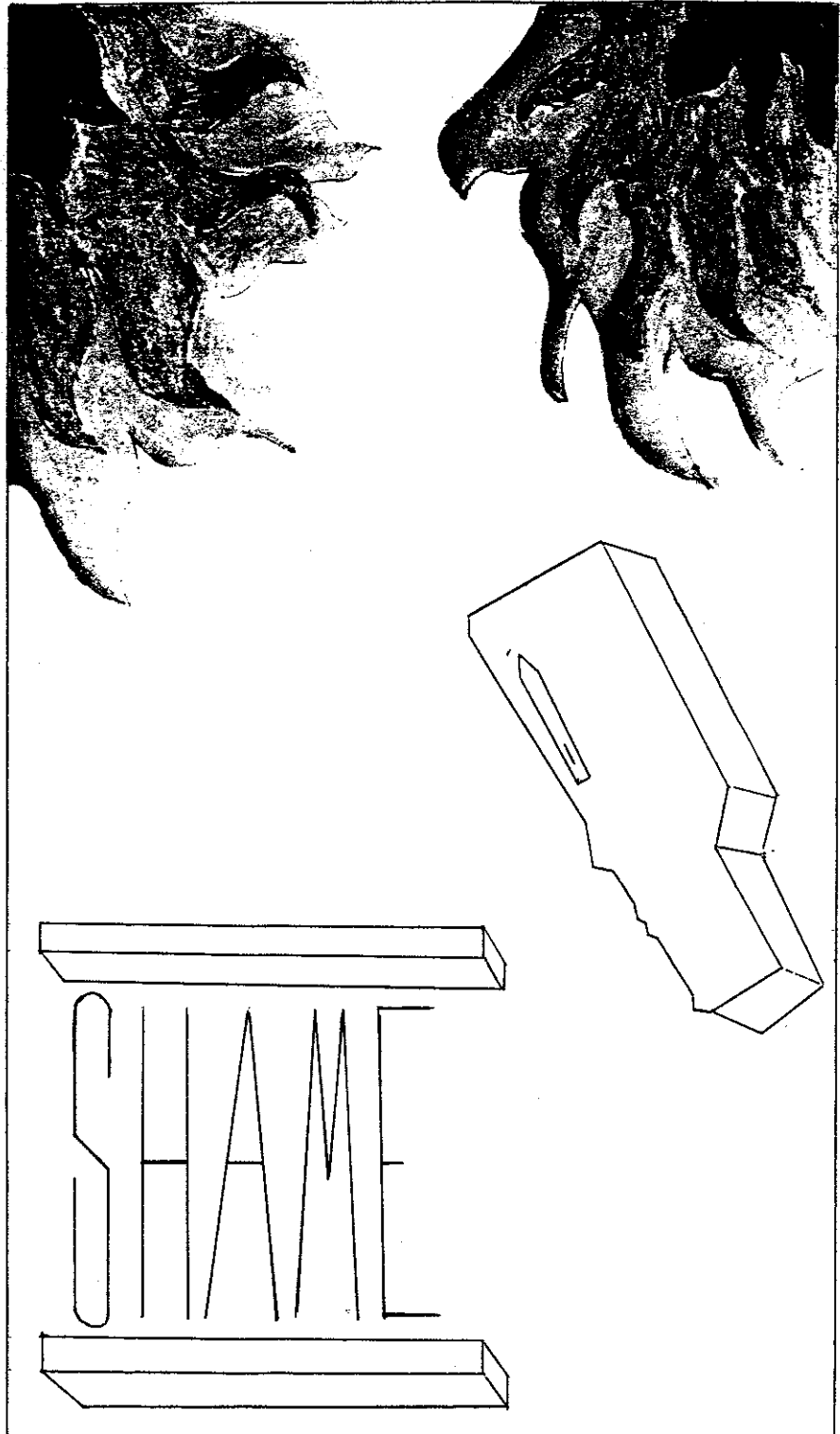
Darkness falls and all is swept
Into the soothing night;
But the knowledge and thought within our minds
Shines forever bright.

Although the day is over
And in darkness we're alone;
A conscience fills our body and soul
With what we've learned and shown.

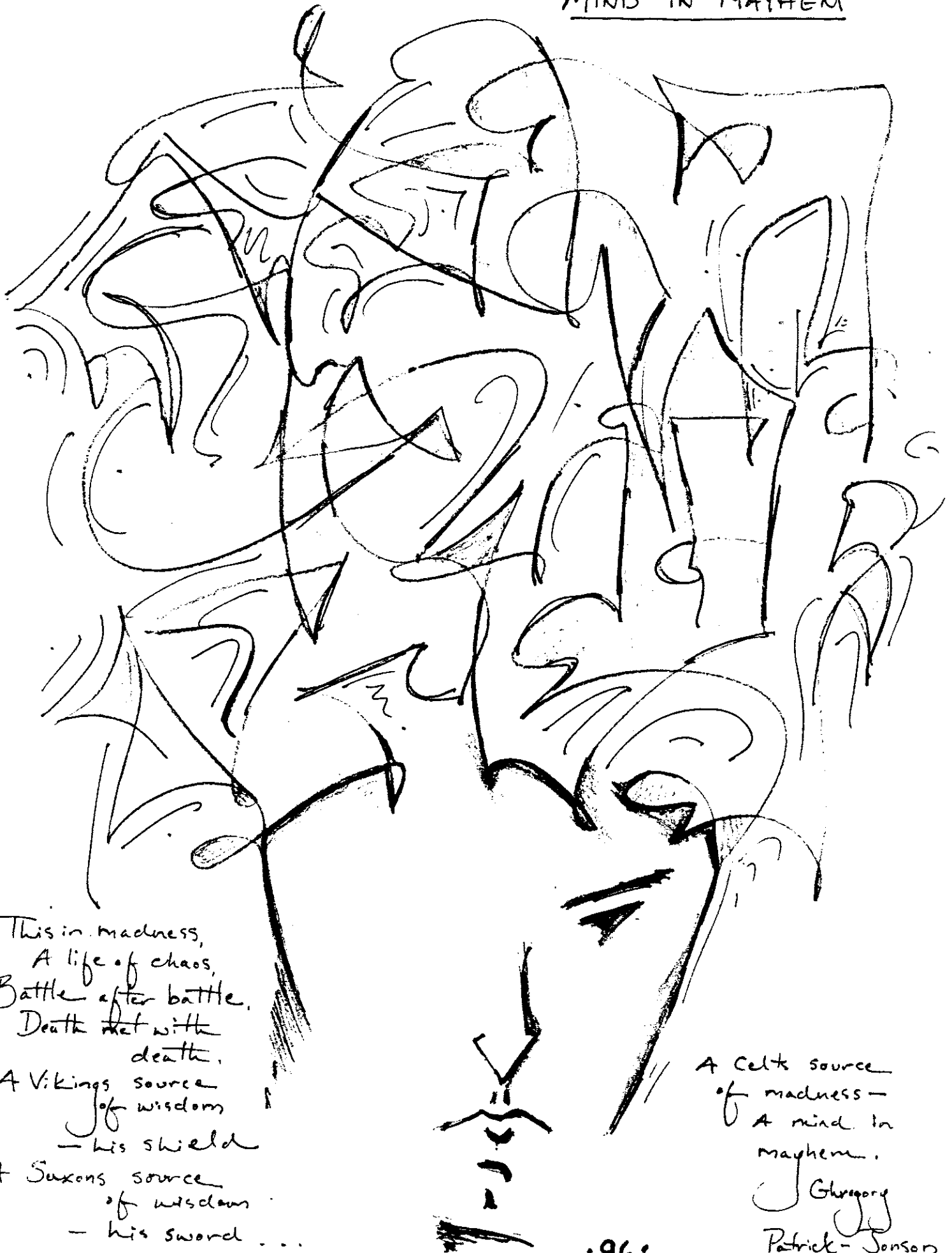
We rest our tired limbs
As thoughtful dreams move on;
In our minds preparing us
For the next awaiting dawn.

-Birkin P. Weith-

Birkin P. Weith



MaH McQueen



This in madness,
A life of chaos,
Battle after battle,
Death met with
death,
A Vikings source
of wisdom
— his shield
A Saxons source
of wisdom
— his sword ...

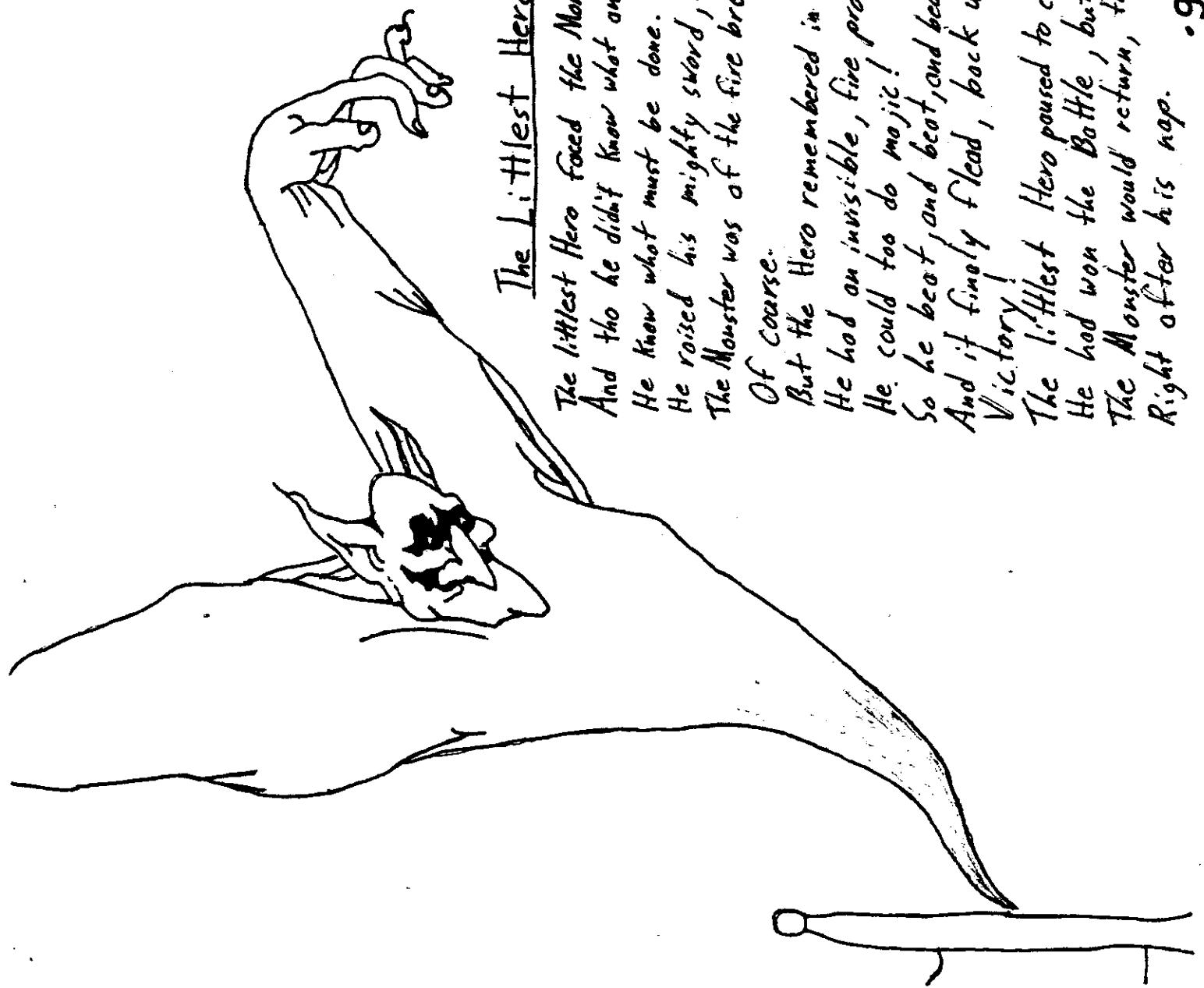
A Celtic source
of madness —
A mind in
mayhem.

Gregory
Patrick - Sonson

Far beyond the mist,
Come the bellowing horn,
For warning terror
Under their blades
The bravest of men
Have known of fear
Their black eyes

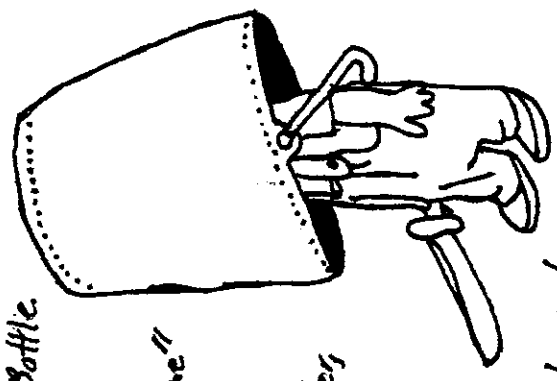
Reflect the darker hearts
Whose only dream
Was and is glory.





The Littlest Hero

The littlest Hero faced the Monster,
And tho he didn't know what an Anglo-Saxon was,
He knew what must be done.
He raised his mighty sword, and engaged the Bottle.
The Monster was of the fire breathing variety,
Of course.
But the Hero remembered in the "Nick of Time"
He had an invisible, fire proof shield.
He could too do magic!
So he beat, and beat, and beat, and beat at the Monster,
And it finally fled, back under the bed.
Victory!
The littlest Hero paused to consider,
He had won the Bottle, but not the War.
The Monster would return, the Hero would be ready,
Right after his nap.



She punishes us with
 her own simplicity
 Destroying, harming, poisoning
 for ~~me~~ ~~the~~ ~~one~~ ~~self~~ - destruction
 respect ~~her~~ ~~are~~ ~~punished~~.
 I am inside my mother's womb,
 she nourishes me, clothes me,
 gives me strength,
 gives me life.

The kind and gentle
 mother who gives
 me life and love
 and who will
 protect me from
 all harm.

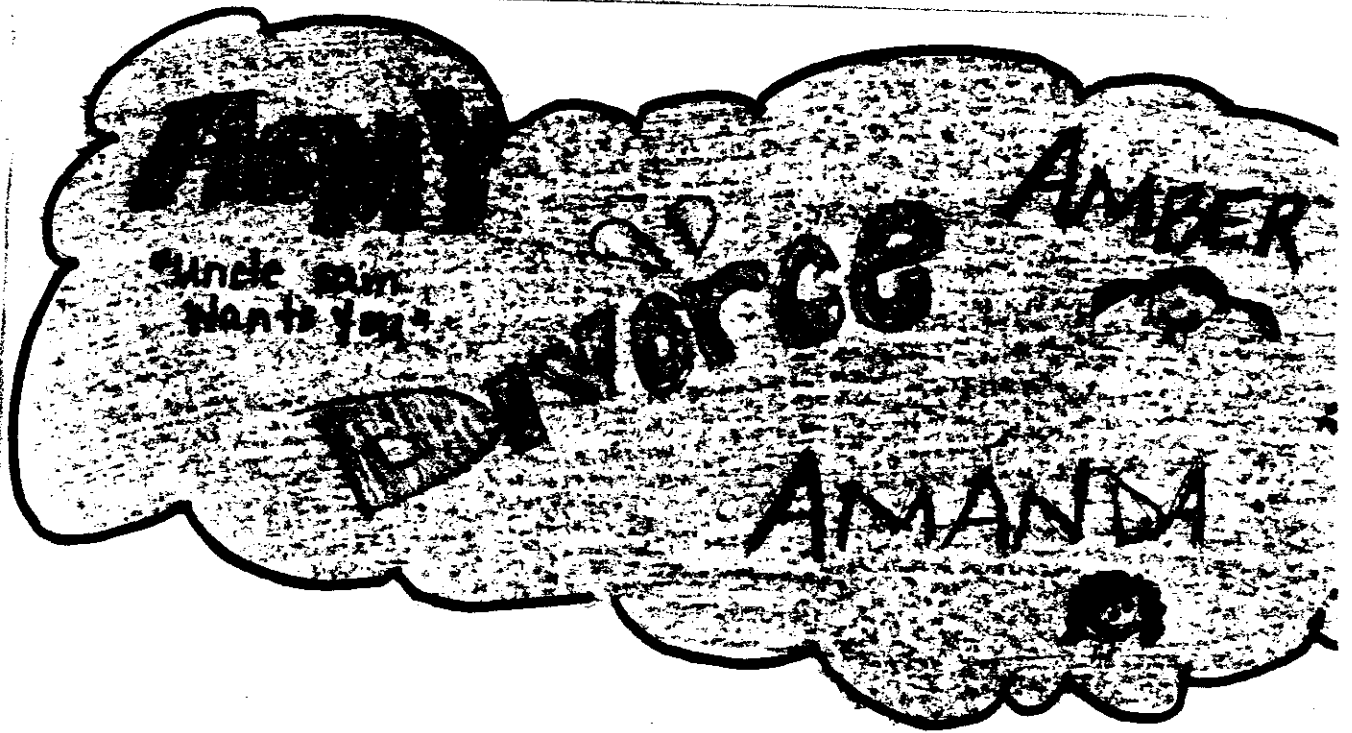
Mother

Katya Schmoll

. 99.

Earth

I will always
 be inside my
 mother's womb.
 I will always
 be dependent
 on what she
 can give me
 when she
 does,
 I die with
 Her.



MY MOM

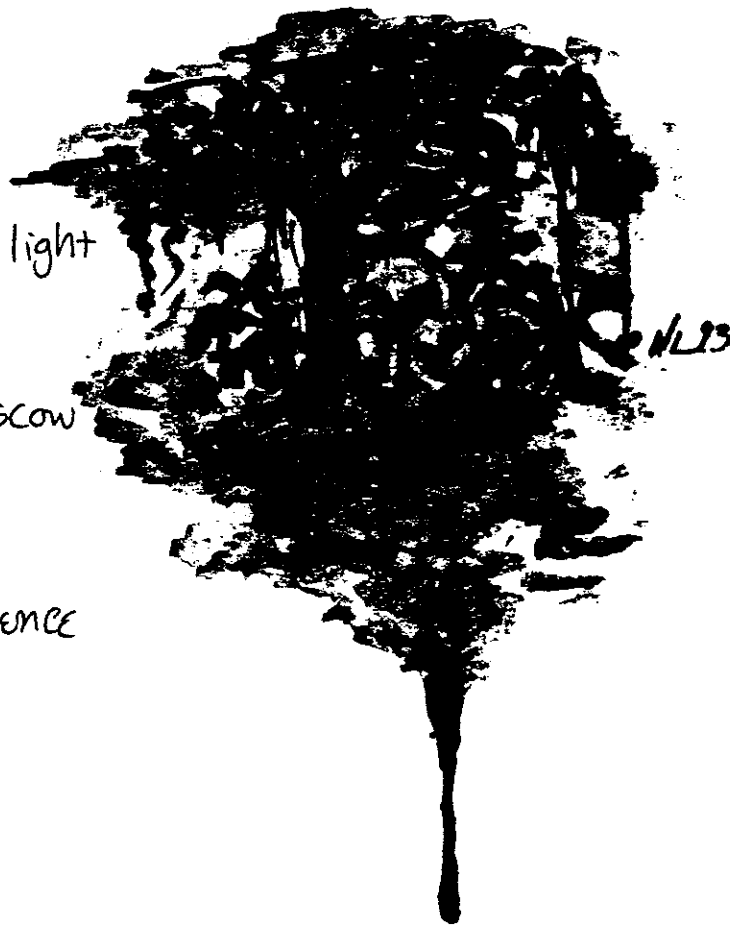
Courageous and kind
Caring and strong-will
With lots of love
This woman is full
I could settle for
no other
This person I love
so much
is my mother

Amanda Dia

JOSEPH CONRAD'S HEART OF DARKNESS

To J.C.

He carries the brightest light
With him
He gained it
In the back streets of Moscow
In the Ghettos of Warsaw
In the bloody Congo
He gained it through experience
And bore it to the world
He carries knowledge
He is one of the few
Who has risen
From his heart of darkness



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*If you were a woman
And I were a man
There are a few things
You'd understand*

*We aren't that different
We're quite the same
We just show our sorrow
While you hide the pain*

*We love and care
And stay by your side
Yet you show nothing
For you have your pride*

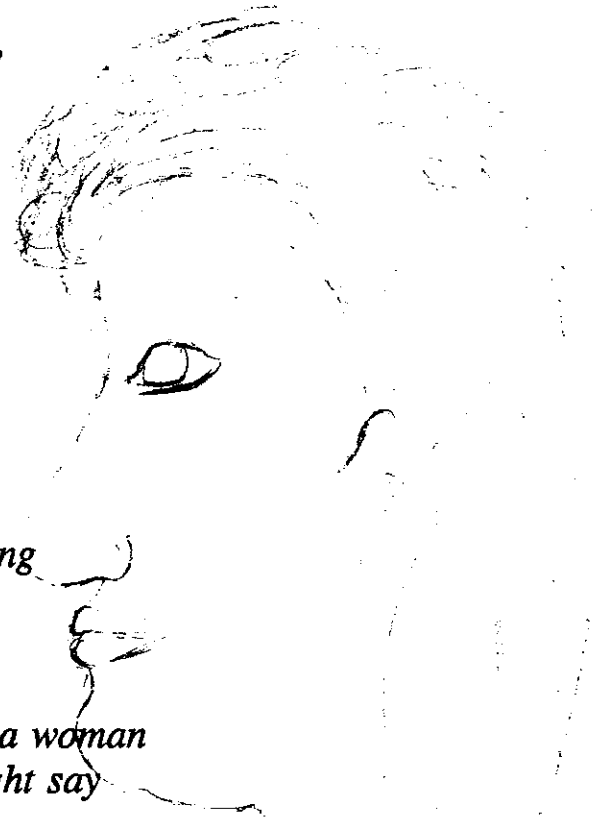
*A man is a man
He always acts strong
He won't show emotions
For a man that'd be wrong*

*A woman must be true
And never betray
Or you consider her not a woman
Yet a "tramp" you might say*

*A man to me
Must show his feelings
Know what love is
And show the meaning*

*Him, I can trust
He tells me no lies
To me he'll be true
Until the day I die*

*If you were a woman
And I were a man
You'd finally see
You'd understand*



M

a

n

Anna Smith

He who has self control wins !!

There are no needles, no
tracks or inflections,
but messing with crack
is a fatal one hit
addiction.

Today you
can hold
protection and
power in your
hand,
but in our
agressive society
with these means
we'll all end up
fore down in
the sand.

We see
lust and
passion
everywhere
we go,
what we
really need
is to learn
to say
NO!

When it comes to drugs, guns, or hittin' the
stems,

He who has self control wins !!!!!



- I WAS ALL ALONE
- DID THINGS WRONG, HAD WILD THUES, AND, PURE DIRTY FUN.
- NOT KNOWING THAT, I'LL EVER GET OUT,
- I MET THIS WOMAN WHO HELPED ME OUT.
- I NEVER KNEW SHE WOULD END UP MY HEROE AND THE ONE I'LL ALWAYS LOVE.
- I LEARNED A LOT FROM THIS WOMAN, WHO TOOK HER TIME TO HELP ME ACHIEVE
- WE STRUGGLED SOMETIMES BUT SHE WAS PATIENT WITH ME.
- SHE MADE ME WHAT I AM TODAY, MORE IN THE BOOKS THEN IN THE STREETS.

NEPTUNE



NEPTUNE

WILL LINDSAY

Homans 2-29

Final Journal Entries

Will Lindsay

I must tell you everything.

I have had an encounter with intelligent, Nonhuman life. The impact that the creatures had on me was devastating and enthralling at the same time. Sometimes I wonder I was being punished by their visit or if I was being blessed. The things that I went through changed my life drastically, almost to the point of madness. I have never felt so confused, bewildered, discouraged and frightened as I did in those few years after it happened to me. I knew there was something unspeakable that had happened to me, something dreadfully frightening and threatening that I had been through. The feeling of unavoidable horror was festering in my mind instead of the actual memories, which may have been easier to deal with. The aftereffects of the that traumatizing ordeal shattered my world more bitterly than the actual events did themselves.

There, that's the end of my little fantasy. I wish I could keep it up, but I just can't. I haven't gone through this experience before, so there is no way in which I could elaborate. Sometimes, I find myself praying for them to come and get me. I am dying for something exciting and fascinating to take place in my life- but I want it to deal with aliens. If I could just see their spaceship, I might be satisfied.

If I met them, I think their race would be very celestial. They would have an aural sense to them, a heavenly, loving, exotic, and delicate way about them. I could imagine them projecting a feeling of love and caring toward me, even though I would be thrashing and screaming for release. They would be a loving, idealistic race of creatures. A love for peace must be within their culture. They would be creative, finding and reveling in all of the pleasures, wonders and joys of life. They would embrace all that is pure and healthy, and they would seek to enjoy the beliefs of others, as well. Whitley Streiber says that the creatures sought to know the depths of the human soul, that they sought communion. I believe this to be true. I am certain that the creatures want desperately to love us as a whole. They seek to know us, to communicate with us, to know that they aren't alone, as we believe that we are. I'm telling you people, we are not alone. That much is for certain the truth. We are not alone. There are others.

Most humans don't want to accept the idea that we aren't by ourselves. For some reason they find that idea unacceptable. If I could get to the roots of that feeling, I would root it out of my own heart. Because I am human, I know it exists in me, and I want to be the one who accepts the truth. I want to be prepared when they come for me. I'm sure that one day I'll meet them. I find them and we'll discuss things. I'll meet them, dead or alive. Someday, I'll find them and we'll have a grand old time. We'll go over everything there is

to go over. I feel like I know these creatures in a way. I know that they know who I am.

One day They'll shake my hand, and I'll kiss them on the cheek. They will cradle my head in their hands, and I'll fall asleep in their arms to the sound of their aural, electronic tones as they whisper in my ear, "It's okay. It's okay. You've come home now. You're safe now."

Whitley Streiber said that "scoffing at those who have been abducted by these aliens is as ugly as scoffing at rape victims." I believe this to the extreme. Something happened to that man, and I am with his ideas totally. The reaction that people who have encountered aliens have toward their experiences is symptomatic of people who have witnessed a brutal murder, who have been raped, or have endured unspeakable abuse as children or adults. This tells us something very significant about the human extent. We are not yet ready to accept the idea of alien life forms existing. We are so afraid of the unknown, that it drives some of us to madness or suicide. Then again, most of those people who were abducted were given brain surgery and rectal probes. I don't know if I'm ready for that. Probably not, I would have to say.

The whole idea of being captured by these creatures is so incredibly romantic to me, I just can't stop wishing for it, nonetheless. I would so much love to experience something as far out as that. Something new and foreign. I would like to further myself into new ways of thinking and perceiving. I am sure that meeting these creatures would do just that for me. I

would be given a new perspective, thus giving me a more advanced way of dealing with situations on earth.

I can imagine myself talking in sacred, hushed, and beautifully furious tones about how many wonders there are out there and about how far our minds really can go, if we decide to venture a little bit away from what is familiar. To escape the familiarity of our humanity, and experience an alien emotion could cause a thousand brain capabilities to be activated. How knows? Having such an experience would question millions of years of instinct. Imagine having complete control over your human instincts, thereby allowing yourself to see something as amazing as aliens in a clear light. That is what our whole world needs. A change. Everyone needs a personal change- something that would speak against violence, and lean toward comprehension and understanding. There is much, much more to humanity than we recognize. Come in contact with something else that's intelligent, and maybe you'll see it. I'm searching for it, now. It's out there. I want the answer, and I want to give it to the world. We need it.



