The image features two hands, one above and one below, cupping a glowing, multi-colored orb. The orb has a spectrum of colors including red, yellow, and blue, giving it a vibrant, ethereal appearance. The hands are rendered in a dark, almost black silhouette, which makes the glowing orb stand out prominently. The background consists of soft, out-of-focus bands of color, primarily blue and red, which complement the colors of the orb. The overall composition is centered and balanced, with the text overlaid on the orb.

Early Expressions
2004



Lamar State College-Port Arthur
A Member of The Texas State University System

Early Expressions

2004
Volume V

Early Expressions 2004 - Winners

DESCRIPTION - PEOPLE

First Place

Loving Memories Maria Y. Carrizal

Second Place

Still My Pa Angela Broussard

Third Place

Through Angel's Eyes Irma Walton

Honorable Mention

For Now Claud Block

My First Pet Omar Chavez

Memory of My Father Earthuel Jackson

The Little Boy Next Door Alvin Williams

DESCRIPTION - PLACES

First Place

Down on the Deer Lease Carey Harwood

Second Place

Rob Bailey's Fish Camp Lori DeRosier

Third Place

This Patch of Purgatory Ta Mara Morgan

Honorable Mention

My Castle Joel Hernandez

My Grandmother's Kitchen Jeanetta Walton

NARRATIVE

First Place

The Day at the Lake Walter Tucker

Second Place

The Little White Box Graciela Alvarez

Third Place

My Brush With Death Carl J. Brown

Honorable Mention

Patient #644521 Joel Hernandez

Hunting Trip Toby Lough

The Canoe Trip Duc Nguyen

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Second Place

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Third Place

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Second Place

Celebrate William Angelle

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Honorable Mention

Home! Home! Sweet Home! Angela Broussard

A Woman Always Waits Carey Harwood

Home Bryan Porter

This Wonderful Place Thang Tran

SPECIAL TOPIC - A PLACE CALLED HOME - PROSE

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Street Life Alvin Williams

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My Memories of a Home Patricia Murray

Third Place

Nederland Angela Deshotel

Honorable Mention

My Family is My Home Thuy Tran

MUSEUM OF THE GULF COAST - A SPECIAL PLACE IN TIME

First Place

Completely Flabbergasted Ruby Scott

Second Place

Breath Taking Carolyn Webb

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The Treasure Trove Fabian Hamby

Honorable Mention

A Hidden Treasure Samantha Abshire

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PUBLISHER'S AWARD

The Day at the Lake Walter Tucker

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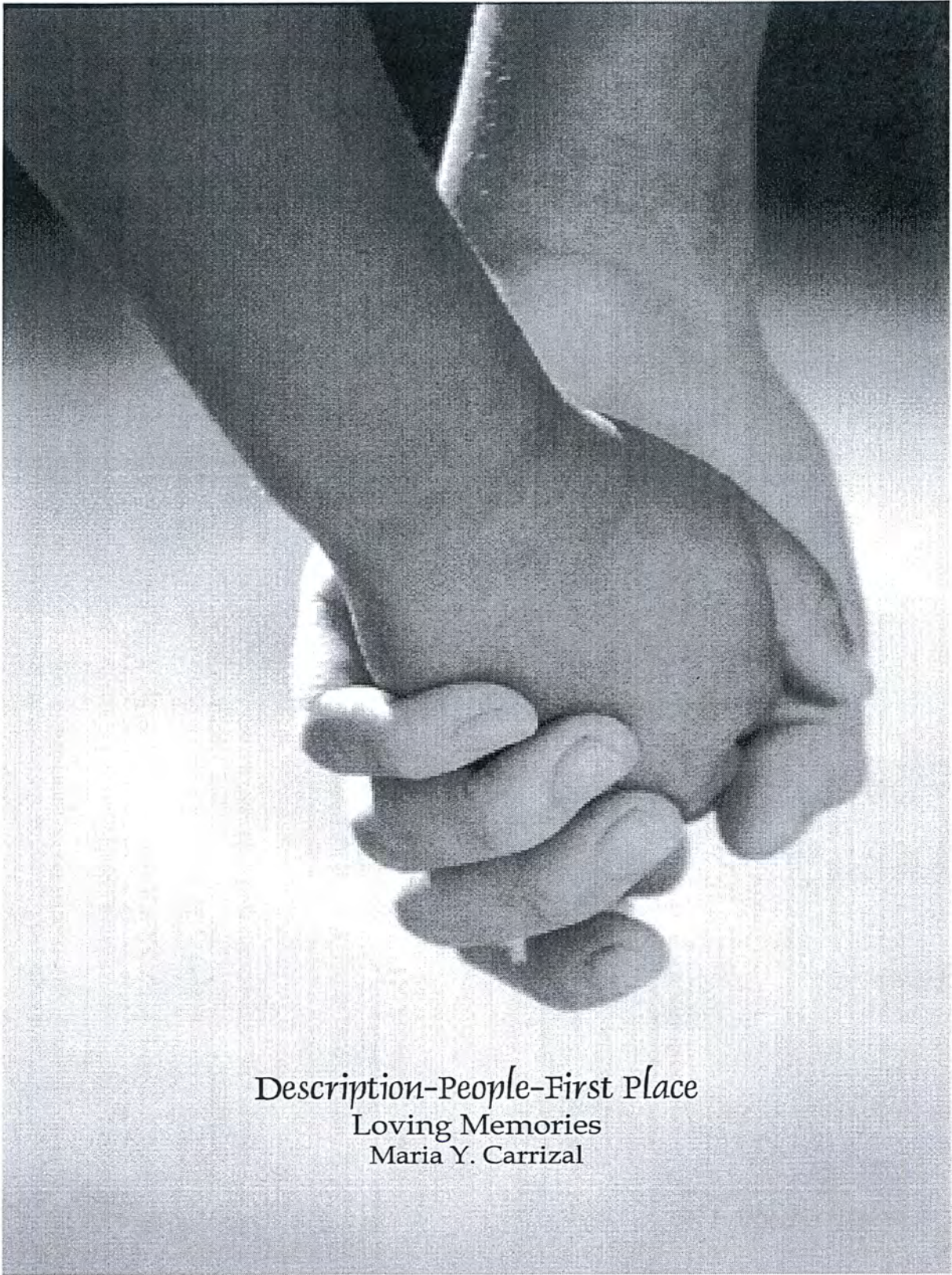
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Description
People



Description- People-First Place
Loving Memories
Maria Y. Carrizal

The worn out home movies is all that I have to remember my brother with, his smile, his love and affection that I can still feel. When I start reminiscing, I cannot seem to forget his walk and those out-of-style boots that he wore. I can still see myself riding on the handle bars of his bike with my pony tails flying in the air always making sure I would not fall or that my legs would not get caught in the bike wheels. I would begin to cry when it was time to board the school bus, and I refused to go. He would kneel at my side give me a huge hug and explain to me how I was going to be all right, and that he would be at the bus stop when I returned. I always knew he would not be there, but that did not matter. The only thing that was of concern to me was his affection and loving words. I can still hear those words sounding in my head.

As we grew he never forgot that I was somewhat shy and spoiled by all my siblings. He knew that he was my favorite brother because of the fact that I resembled him the most. He would go outside and play with his friends, but before he would leave he always took the time to explain that he would be going out to play and would be back shortly.

"I will be back soon to play with you," he would say. Later he would come back and he would put my shoes on for me and then take me outside. He left and joined the armed forces, and I was devastated that I was not going to see him for sometime. Of course he would explain, "I will be back in no time at all." He would call and make sure I was doing fine. He then came back, and we hugged each other. We were so happy, but both realized that time had interfered with that closeness. We had become distant. Our lives went on.

He was thirty-three and was very ill. I had a difficult time dealing with this situation. Of course, I received my usual caring and loving talk. In my heart I felt he would be all right, but my brain said differently. I received the news that he had passed away which left me devastated, angry and hurt. I thought how could he do this to me? How could he leave me? Who is going to comfort me, take care of me? Oh how I miss our talks, my children would no longer have their uncle. I wanted him back now in this world with me. I told my father that he had no right to leave. I wanted him back to be my wonderful brother that I loved dearly.

I could not accept that I had to leave him at the cemetery all alone, go home and go on with my life without him. That was impossible. Then I talked to him in my dream. I could see my brother walking towards me with his big smile; I was elated to see him approaching me. He was so close but yet so far. I could not reach him to tell him one more time how much I loved and missed him. I wanted to touch him, feel his hair, to receive my usual piece of whatever he wanted to give me that day, just like when I was a little girl. Oh my dearest brother, how I have missed you! I pray you know how much I love you. You will always be with me.



Description-People-Second Place

Still My Pa
Angela Broussard

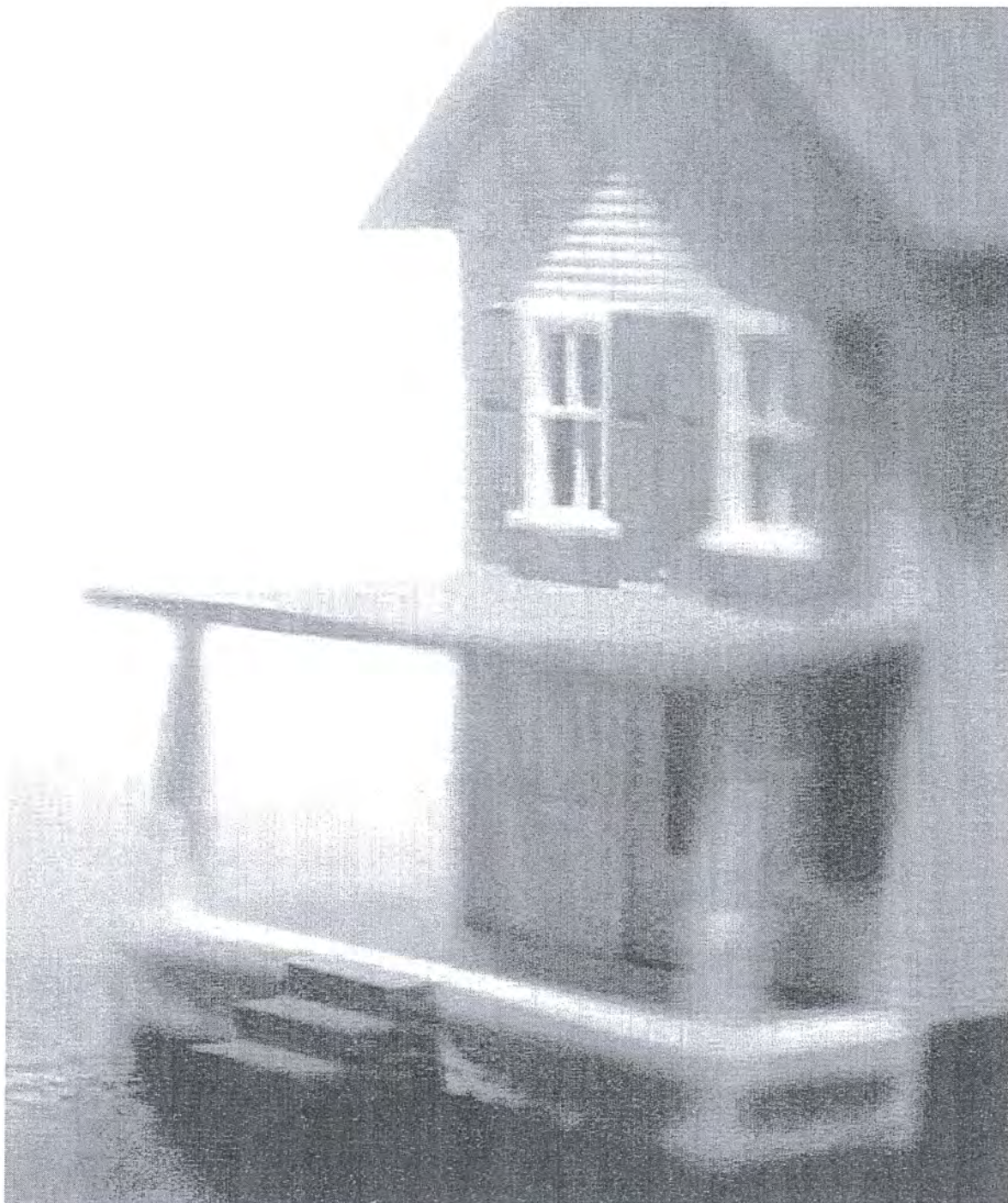
My grandfather's name was Raymond Doucet. He was born in the early or mid-thirties. He didn't go to school because at that time the boys were required to pick cotton and work in the fields. Therefore, he didn't read or write English very well. He didn't have any kids of his own. He married my grandmother and adopted her children, which included my father, his brother and sister. Although, I wasn't his biological grandchild, he treated me as though I was his own flesh and blood. He was a heavy-set guy, and when he said, "No" that's what it was, no questions asked.

As a little girl I had always known him as Pa, and Grandmother and Pa referred to me as Pooh. I would spend the weekends at my grandparent's house. My grandfather would get me on Fridays. We always went to the grocery store to stock up on junk food for the weekend before heading back to his place.

I look back now and all I'm able to see is a vision. I can't recall an actual day of his departure, but it has been about ten years now. I was twelve when he was diagnosed with cancer. The doctor said that it had spread so badly, it was impossible to control. He didn't stay in I.C.U. very long, before he was released to go home. He had always wanted to be at home if it was his time to go. As time had proceeded, his results weren't getting better; they were only getting worse until that day he took his last breath. Only because I knew the day would come soon, I didn't take his death hard. It actually came sooner than I had expected.

Times have changed a lot since the death of my grandfather. The house seems so empty. My grandfather loved cartoons. He would just sit on the side of the bed and watch cartoons all day. After his retirement he didn't move around much. He always had some sort of pain, either in his neck, back, or hands. When he got sick, he forgot who I was. He would also pick arguments with the next door neighbors. His sickness had taken its toll. There were times when I didn't want to go to my grandmother's house because of the way he was acting.

As the years go by, you see the difference and the absence of my grandpa's death has brought upon my grandmother and the house. She retired approximately three years ago. Now she's on a fixed income, and it's hard for her now to maintain confidence. She's never been able to buy herself anything. She can smoke two pack of cigarettes in one day or maybe even more. Sunday dinner isn't the same. The older I get, the wiser I become, and all good things and people shall come to an end. I'm happy now. I know he's in a safe place, and he will always be *My Pa*.



Description-People-Third Place
Through Angel's Eyes
Irma Walton

Our home has been in the family for over a century. The back of the plain white house is looking out on a large green pasture with two pecan trees and a big pine tree. The house is old and is on piers and not on a foundation. You could still hear the house settle and hear the wind blowing on cold winter nights. Many of my friends used to think our house was old fashioned, but I think it is unique.

My mother and father picked our home out when my brother was born. It was only one block away from the old house we were living in before, but it was a bigger house. My mother loved the kitchen. She would say that it was the room that would be used the most, and we were going to enjoy its atmosphere. I never knew what my mother meant until looking back at the past. Our kitchen was the largest room in the house with the dining room included. It had a beautiful wooden cedar archway to the kitchen and dining table. Beside the dining table was a small den where everyone sat before we ate and watched television together until the meals were ready. As a family we would sit together at the dining table, and we would talk about the day's events.

I could remember back when my mother would wake up early in the morning and would make coffee for my father and prepare his lunch to take to work. He would get ready for work and sit at the dining table and drink his coffee. I still can remember the smell. I still love the smell of coffee. I guess that's why I am the only one of six children who drinks coffee. I would see my mother handing my father his cup of coffee and giving him a kiss on his cheek; and when my father would leave for work, he would hold her hand and kiss her goodbye. My mother would wake up early in the morning to make homemade tortillas and cook eggs and bacon. My mother was on a fixed budget for groceries in our household, but she always managed to spoil us once in a while and cook a big breakfast for all her children.

My mother's job had not yet started. She would see us to school and then come back home to clean the house, wash clothes and start supper. When we come home it always smelled so good, not just supper, but the whole house had a good smell. My mother worked hard to take care of everything and everybody in our family. I will always remember the great times we spent in the kitchen with my mother. My mother has told me this is my kitchen now, and I must carry on her legacy. Now, I have to see it through my Angel's Eyes.

Description-People-Honorable Mention

For Now
Claud Block

Now that I can have her only in memory, I can visualize my mother in several different, but all significant, postures of duty in motherhood. None are more delightful to reflect upon for me than seeing her masterfully orchestrating a delicious meal like only she could do. The exhibit my mom put on in preparing such works of art certainly was not understood or appreciated by me in the depths of respect and honor due to Mom and my family for routinely producing such successful team accomplishments in eating delights. Looking back I can see Mom's professional touch in gathering together the ingredients and spices along with the vegetables and meat from their prospective locations and strategically placing them all along the kitchen counter-top and table. This undertaking resembled more like the feeding of an arm than that of a family totaling nine hungry mouths to feed.

Reflecting on the sights of Mom's extraordinary feats in her kitchen, I am reminded not only of her standing in the kitchen preparing meals and cooking over the stove and ovens, but also my eyes have been spiritually opened to grasp more, having grasped the quantity and quality of care that was being expressed.

Sounds tuning more soothing to the heart, mind and soul than favorite style of music or a particular song, were the varied arrangements of sounds caused by the opening and closing of cabinets, jars, ovens, refrigerator, freezers and packages. The snap, crackle, pop, and sizzle of ingredients being mixed together and cooking together was definitely more than enough to arouse interest and excitement, even to the extreme of someone eventually being stirred to dance into the kitchen with the always familiar words of, "how long until it is ready to eat." the blurbing of steaming and boiling food or tea in pots and pans, with or without their cymbal clanging tops, kept a steady beat until the table was set. The sounds set off by the clearing of cooking utensils and ingredients from the kitchen table that was used to prepare our meal and the setting of the table, made such a distinctive chow call that only those out of earshot needed to be called to dinner. If you were located at a farther distance than a proper holler would get your attention, a whistle that any wind powered instrument player would be envious of, certainly would prompt a response.

The ice clanging into the glasses followed by the rushing, popping sounds of warm fresh tea being transformed into smooth iced tea, was and is,

sweet music to the ear. This music was followed properly by an offering of thanks and praise for the provisions provided for by the Creator, the Lord Jesus.

During the time of fixing our plates by serving up the different dishes selected for the meal, the blended aroma of multiple spices and meats, whether of beef, poultry, pork, or seafood, mixed with the vegetables that were either canned from the store or fresh from a relative or friends' garden only added to the anticipation of flavor to the taste buds which they were soon to receive. Whenever Mom's gumbo was prepared and served, this anticipation seemed to increase to new record heights each and every time she constructed her most sought after masterpiece. I could literally taste the aroma. Whatever time of day, Mom was preparing a meal. It usually only took a whiff of air to acknowledge to the senses what she was creating, almost always from scratch, to delight these senses to their deepest satisfaction.

To grasp the plates, bowls, serving utensils, fork and spoons into our hands touched off more than just the signal of physical contact with these items, but also they touched off the watering of taste buds, anxious to receive what our senses have been long telling us what was soon to arrive.

The taste of Mom's creative cooking simply cannot be described by words alone, no matter how descriptive or masterfully chosen they might be. The taste of Mom's creative cooking simply could not have been appreciated or respected enough for the expressed compassion that she put into her sharing of a little bit of herself through her composing this and other Motherhood responsibilities with such frequency as she did them. The taste of Mom's creative cooking simply had to be individually experienced in order that individuals might be able to grasp and communicate with each other the wonder and enjoyment of it all. Am I ever hungry and longing for Mom's creativeness and not just for the physical food she prepared, but for all her Motherhood contributions! We might all live better if we could learn to enjoy one another's contributions before we have them only in memory.

Description-People-Honorable Mention

My First Pet

Omar Chavez

On my seventh birthday my mother gave me the best present I had ever received. I remember opening up the present box, and the cutest dog that I have ever seen came out. It was the German Shepard puppy that I had always wanted. He looked so happy in my arms. I did not know what to do with him at first or what to name him, but my parents had all the answers for me.

We named him Max short for Maximum.

The next day I went to school only because mother forced me to. I wanted to stay home with my new puppy. The day in school went by very slowly due to how much I missed Max. After school, mother was waiting for me, and she had brought Max with her. The first thing I did was run as fast as possible to them. Then I gave Max a big hug. All of my friends saw me playing with Max, and they all wanted to play with him.

The best thing about having a dog was he always wanted to play, no matter how cold or what time it was. The worst thing about having a dog was cleaning up after him. My dog was very important because he was my best friend. Having a dog taught me to be responsible at a very young age.

My father and I built a big doghouse for Max.

Max was extremely happy with the doghouse when he saw it. Max was my pet for about two years. One day before my ninth birthday I went to the back yard to play with Max, but he was gone. I came back inside the house and asked my mother where Max was? She had no clue where he was, so she called Dad at work and told him the bad news. My father was very upset. We looked for Max for months, but we never found him. I don't know what happened to him. I am not sure if he ran away or if someone stole him. The only thing I do know is that I will never forget how happy he made me.

Description-People-Honorable Mention

Memory of My Father

Earthuel Jackson

My father has been gone for over two years, and as the time passed, I can remember all the good in him and what he stood for.

I remember he would wake up all his children in the morning to have breakfast with him before he went to work and would give us coffee even when my mother would say no.

He did not talk much, but all he did was give us that look, and we knew what he meant. I can see my father in my memory as he left for work with his hard hat on and his bag lunch. He would say, "good bye," and "I love you all," and "see you all when I get off work." I will always remember the good and some bad days, too. My father always said to his children our good days always will out weigh our bad days.

Holidays come and go without my father now. He enjoyed cooking and preparing meals for all of them. He loved for all of his family to come and enjoy themselves eating and thanking God for another day and another year.

His last day was his best day. He never complained about pain. He just kept on going. My father never gave up. Whatever needed to be doing, he did it. I remember how my mother called us all together and how we prayed for my father that night. There was so much peace in his face. I believed my father heard us praying for him that night, and we saw how tired he was. He knew that we loved him. He left me with an everlasting memory of him. Now I know he is in peace and resting, no more pain and no more suffering.

Description-People-Honorable Mention

The Little Boy Next Door

Alvin Williams

I have several pleasant memories of my childhood and the people who surrounded me. There was one little old lady in particular who lived across the street from us. She would invite me over for cookies and milk everyday. I still remember the aroma of the sweet potato pie and mothballs the first time I walked into her house. She would bake the best chocolate chip cookies that would melt in my mouth. I can still picture her standing at the stove with oven mitts on her hands and humming "Amazing Grace." her skin was light in complexion, and her clothes had the scent of roses. She had long, silky, black hair that fell loosely over her shoulders. I remember her soft voice and the pleasant smile that was always on her face. I can still picture her kneeling over her flowerbed with me by her side. Her hands were soft on the top, but underneath I could see the callous from years of hard work.

As a child I always wondered why this lady blessed me with so much kindness and attention. At the age of 15, I found out that this kind lady who had cared for me like her own was really my grandmother. She had kept this secret from me all those years at the request, and for the respect of my mother and her family.

The next 14 years of my life I spent as much time with my grandmother as I could. We would sit for hours and talk about the father I never knew. He was a quiet man, tall and muscular, with a soft voice. His complexion was dark, and I was told by others that I looked just like him.

I grew very close to my grandmother over the years. She lived to be 91 years old, and I remember up until she passed away how high spirited and energetic she was. I was 29 years old when my grandmother died in my arms. She still looked as beautiful as ever that night when she went to be with my father.

*Description
Places*



Description-Places-First Place
Down on the Deer Lease
Carey Harwood

Everyone has some kind of special or favorite place that they can go to so that they can get away from everything. They go to this place to free their mind of thoughts or maybe even to be alone. I do have my own favorite place that I can go to when I am having problems or even just want to be alone. This place is nowhere near my house or where I live. My special place is located between the Louisiana state line and Jasper, Texas.

My dad and I often call this place our deer lease, but my place is in a certain place located in this deer lease. It is as if every time my dad and I hit the dirt road going to the camp we feel free of worries and problems. It could be called a heaven away from heaven because of the so perfect smell we love and the beautiful sights. As we creep up the dirt hill slowly over the horizon we see our trailer and camp. Finally, we make it over the hill and drive up to camp where two monster ruts are located between two tall, slender pine trees. It is as if a tall giant is standing over and staring down at us as we exit the van.

As we turn and walk toward the trailer to set up camp, we can see hundreds of beautiful trees standing behind the trailer as if they were watching over us as angels do. Walking toward the trailer we can feel the soft dirt under our shoes and dried grass crunching at every step. As we finally finish setting up camp I cannot help but look at the sky and think of how awesome of a God we have to give us such a beautiful place to live. As I start to walk down the small and narrow dirt trail, I start to free my mind of worries and problems. I take the deepest breath I can, almost where I get light headed and pass out.

When I take this breath, it is like a smell that nobody can describe. It is as if God is present and nothing can ruin it. As I keep walking down a small and narrow trail, off to my side are very small dirt embankments very slowly increasing taller and narrower. Above this embankment are hundreds, maybe thousands of beautiful, green trees and sometimes I can even catch a glimpse of a wild animal running through the woods. As I slowly walk further down the trail, it seems as the temperature is decreasing, and Jack Frost is starting to nip at my nose. The trail becomes narrower and grows taller and taller until finally

I cannot see over the dirt embankment. It is as if I am in a canyon and I cannot escape.

The canyon I am walking through grows so narrow that I start to walk with both arms out as I am flying between these two huge dirt walls. My fingers graze each canyon wall as I slowly walk forward, leaving a trail of dirt particles falling to the cold, hard earth. As I slowly walk forward, particles of dirt fall into my shoes to the point where I stop and clean them out. As the canyon walls slowly start to shrink and turn back into dirt embankments, I finally see this special place where I can sit and free my mind of everything. My slow walk turns into a steady jog as I hurry to finally reach this beautiful place I have been waiting to see for months. It seems as if I have not been there in ages. It is as if the scenery has not changed since the time I have last visited. As I see the dead tree that finally could live no more and fell to its death, I walk over and gently sit down on it and listen to the beautiful sounds of wildlife singing as the day slowly comes to an end.

As I listen quietly, I stare at the sky as it glows with beautiful shades of orange, purple, and pink. I cannot help but pray to God and thank Him for everything He has created and given me. As I quietly sit and pray, I can feel my relationship with God growing closer. I feel His presence next to me as if He was sitting right next to me watching the sunset. As I sit alone with God, the hours pass, I stare at the sky, and it seems as if the stars are waking up and opening their eyes. At that moment in time it is as if I am one step closer to the heavens. Finally, as the night has crept in, I begin to walk back to camp where I can sit around the campfire and share my experience with my father.



Description-Places-Second Place
Rob Bailey's Fish Camp
Lori DeRosier

I have been to a few places in my life - Massachusetts, Vermont, Maryland, and Virginia, but my favorite place I have been so far and probably ever is right here in Texas. This place, Bridge City, Texas, is one of many things. It is a wildlife reserve, a fish camp, and my grandfathers' place; it is called Rob Bailey's Fish Camp.

The reason this is my favorite place is because I am fascinated with nature and the outdoors; I love to see the wildlife and the scenery of the lake my grandparents' house looks over. I have visited this place ever since I could remember, and although time has altered the house and bait house, it is still a beautiful place to be. My grandparent's place is beautiful all year around. In the spring the aroma of blooming flowers from my grandmother's garden fills my nose, and all the beautiful butterflies, hummingbirds and bees come to visit her garden. I can also smell the fresh breeze blowing from the saltwater of the lake. In the spring is when business starts to kick in, and the customers start to come to buy bait and take their boats out for some great fishing. The springtime is also time for all the different kinds of birds to start nesting such as the red-winged blackbirds, grackles, hummingbirds, the rosette spoonbills, great blue, night and white herons, the cranes, white and brown pelicans, sea gulls, and many other spectacular birds.

As summer starts to arrive, the business is at its height, and more customers coming and going everyday. In the summer I like to go swimming in the lake and feel the smooth sand under my feet. It gets very warm and humid in the summertime, but despite that, I would have to say it is my favorite time of the year. As summer comes to an end and fall begins, business begins to slow down, but not for the wildlife, for fall is the migration period for the monarch butterfly and the fish camp is a major migration stop. Tens of thousands of monarchs overflow the trees and fill the sky with their bright orange and black bodies. It truly is an amazing sight to see.

The winter is the slowest time for the camp; the tides become very low, but there is still good fishing. In the winter is when the ducks and geese migrate south to feed in the low tides along with pelicans, sea gulls, loons, and other water fowl. All year round this place shows its beauty, and this is my favorite place of all time.



Description-Places-Third Place
This Patch of Purgatory
Ta Mara Morgan

Throughout the times and places I've found myself, through the rooms remarkably the same, almost every detail confines my attention to Room 17, replete with venomous, burgundy, coal-blackened airs which breathe an invisible yet severe force. Once entered the blinding whiteness of walls, but wait there are too many! Counting them only leads to madness so I concentrate on the door, an enormous black contrast to the impending insanity that surrounds me otherwise.

The floor is littered with books, making walking impossible yet, just within my reach are two volumes - A Season In Hell/The Illuminations by Arthur Rimbaud and a work by C.G. Jung, Psychological Reflections. Are these keys or are they there to further distract. The Jung book is open to the chapter "Between Good and Evil"; synchronistically, my favorite passage my eyes first focused: "it is only at night that no shadows exist."

I look around; there are no shadows here. Suddenly Hieronamous Bosche-like images drip from a wall where the ceiling should be; watching them fall, I see angels rising from where a floor should be. Eyes close where memories wreathed in spider web-like fogs are all the emptied person I have known, that I thought I knew. Now, at last, I am alone, finally.

Description-Places-Honorable Mention

My Castle
Joel Hernandez

My favorite place is my home in Mexico. The structure of the house seems to unstable, cracks on the wall run up and down, and pieces of the roof are missing. Although the physical flaws exist, they are not apparent in the castle that I fabricated in my mind. My childhood memories flow like the cracks on the wall as if they are veins giving my home life.

In the first room, a glimpse of the divinity of the home is shown. Ornaments that have been collected throughout the years surround the room. To the right an enormous old clock stands in the corner. Its age is a testament of all the wonderful time that was spent in there. The next room is mine. It is filled with toys that I have not touched in many years. The collection of dust has spread throughout the room. The feeling of suffocation is overwhelming, not because of the dust but due to the fact that everything has changed.

Located on the left is my grandmother's room, the heart and soul of the home. Her room is carefully decorated with drawings and paintings my cousins and I have done during our school years. Lined up on the walls are pictures of everyone in our family. The bed in the left corner of the room is another one of her personal effects. On the right side of the room, on an old broken down dresser stands her perfume.

The smell of fresh fruit in the kitchen followed by a delicious smell of my grandmother's cooking flood the entire house. The smoke goes out through a large hole in the ceiling, which ironically represents the absence of an entire family. Everyone has left from there except for my grandmother and my aunt. Even though the house is physically falling apart, our old memories and occasional visits keep the castle intact.

Description-Places-Honorable Mention

My Grandmother's Kitchen

Jeanetta Walton

When I was growing up, I remember when my parents would say "It's time to go to grandma's." For all of us kids that meant time to eat. We would have to wake up about seven o'clock to start getting ready, and we would leave about eight or nine o'clock to get to her house by noon. She lives in Louisiana, so it took a few hours to get there. That long wait was like having to wait for the after dinner snack that every kid wanted, only it was the dinner we were actually waiting for. I would remember getting to my grandmas' and being the first one at the door. When you opened the door, there was her kitchen, the first room in the house. As I opened the door she would be standing there waiting for a hug. Besides grandma, the first thing I would see was the kitchen where there would always be food and dessert. Being in her kitchen would be like being in a restaurant only it was homemade food and the greatest ever. Even the loud chattering sound of everyone talking over the T.V. was no different.

On the little square bar there would be mounds of junk food. In the middle of the bar were the candy dishes that had all sorts of candy such as Tootsie Rolls, Laffy Taffies, and suckers. At the end of the bar would always be cookies, cakes, and brownies. You would think that with all the desserts combined, it would smell as if you had just walked into a bakery. The bar wasn't very big, but grandma always made sure there was room for us kids to sit and eat, it was like the kid's kitchen table.

Just beyond the bar was the dining table. There would be pots, pans, and bowls all over the table. There were foods such as roast, rice and gravy, broccoli and cheese, and gumbo. I got a piece of roast and put it in my mouth, and it was so soft that it would just fall apart, and the taste, that wonderful and extraordinary taste it would always have!

There are so many memories I have about my grandmother's kitchen. From the soft touch of my grandmother's skin to the sweet smell of home

cooked brownies. The one memory that stands out the most would have to my grandmother's down-home cooking, and for that it will always be remembered.

Narrative



Narrative-First Place

The Day at the Lake

Walter Tucker

The day was a happy day, starting off with the smell of bacon and eggs drifting up to my room. I hopped out of bed, eagerly awaiting breakfast and what was to follow that day. We were going to the lake; it was a cool spring morning perfect for the activities we had planned for the day. I raced down the stairs, my mom singing as she cooked; she always sang when she cooked in the morning. She looked at me and smiled that look a mother has that I will never forget. As I ate my breakfast as fast as I could, I could hear my dad getting up, smiling to myself as he discovered the cat in bed with him; he hated cats.

I hurriedly ate my breakfast as I had a lot of things to get for the day out. My friends Mike and Forrest would both be there, so everything had to be perfect. I got my B.B. gun and the big box of ammo I had talked my mom into getting the day before. I filled my canteen with grape kool-aid, my favorite. As we loaded the car, I saw my dad put a bottle of whiskey under the front seat. This worried me because my dad could get very mean when he was drinking.

The ride to the lake was enjoyable as my mom and I sang songs, and I aggravated my little brother. My excitement grew as we turned off the main road onto an old dirt road that headed for the lake. As we pulled up to the camp site, I could see my friends already fishing for trout. It was a beautiful lake, the morning fog hanging low over it, the mountains in the background. I noticed deer slowly making their way down the mountain side carefully watching us as we fished. I looked back at the camp site. Our moms were laughing and talking, our fathers huddled around the campfire. I could see they were already drinking. I tried to ignore it, but I had a feeling that it wasn't going to be a pleasant ride home, as my dad always insisted on driving, saying he could drive better after a few drinks than anyone. A wave of anxiety swept over me, but I tried to ignore the feeling and went on to enjoy the company of my friends as we fished.

My little brother played close by, and I watched him as he played, warning him not to get too close to the water. I was his protector. As the day wore on, we played in the woods by the lake, shooting at beer cans and playing like we were in the army. The sun sank slowly over the mountain, and we

knew it would be time to leave. We could already hear our moms calling us to get ready to go.

I was worried because I knew our dads had been drinking all day. I remember seeing my dad staggering towards the car, my heart beating faster as I saw this. My mom was already insisting on driving, and my dad, of course, was telling her to shut up, that he would drive! We all left together. My friend's dad was a drunk as mine. I had a lump in my throat as I had gone through this all too often while growing up.

We pulled up on the dirt road, my father in the lead. My mom was still trying to get my dad to let her drive. I was in the back seat with my brother, standing up beside me. I told him to sit down. I was scared and could feel the tension in the air. We were going much too fast as we went down the road. I could barely see my friends behind us. I asked my dad to please slow down, and he laughed as he said, "Watch me suck him up my tailpipe!", meaning he was going to race them.

My friend's father followed suit and tried to pass my dad as we raced down the road, the trees all a blur as we went by them. It was like a dream everything in slow motion as they pulled along side us trying to pass. As we came upon a curve, my mom was screaming at my dad now, telling him to slow down! I was holding my brother because he was crying, too, as my mom screamed at my dad. I felt our car losing traction as we came into the curve, my dad swerving as we went up the embankment and crossed back in front of the other car. We went over the side and down the hillside hitting a tree head on. My friend's father also lost control and went over the side hitting several trees in the process.

As the dust settled, I could hear my brother crying, and I immediately checked to see if he was all right. I looked at my mother. She had hit the windshield and was bleeding badly; my father was unconscious. I climbed out the back window and pulled my brother out with me. He didn't seem to be hurt, so I carried him up the hillside. I finally got to the top and saw that my friends had wrecked too. I ran down the road to check on them. I sat my brother down on the side of the road as I went down to see if I could help them.

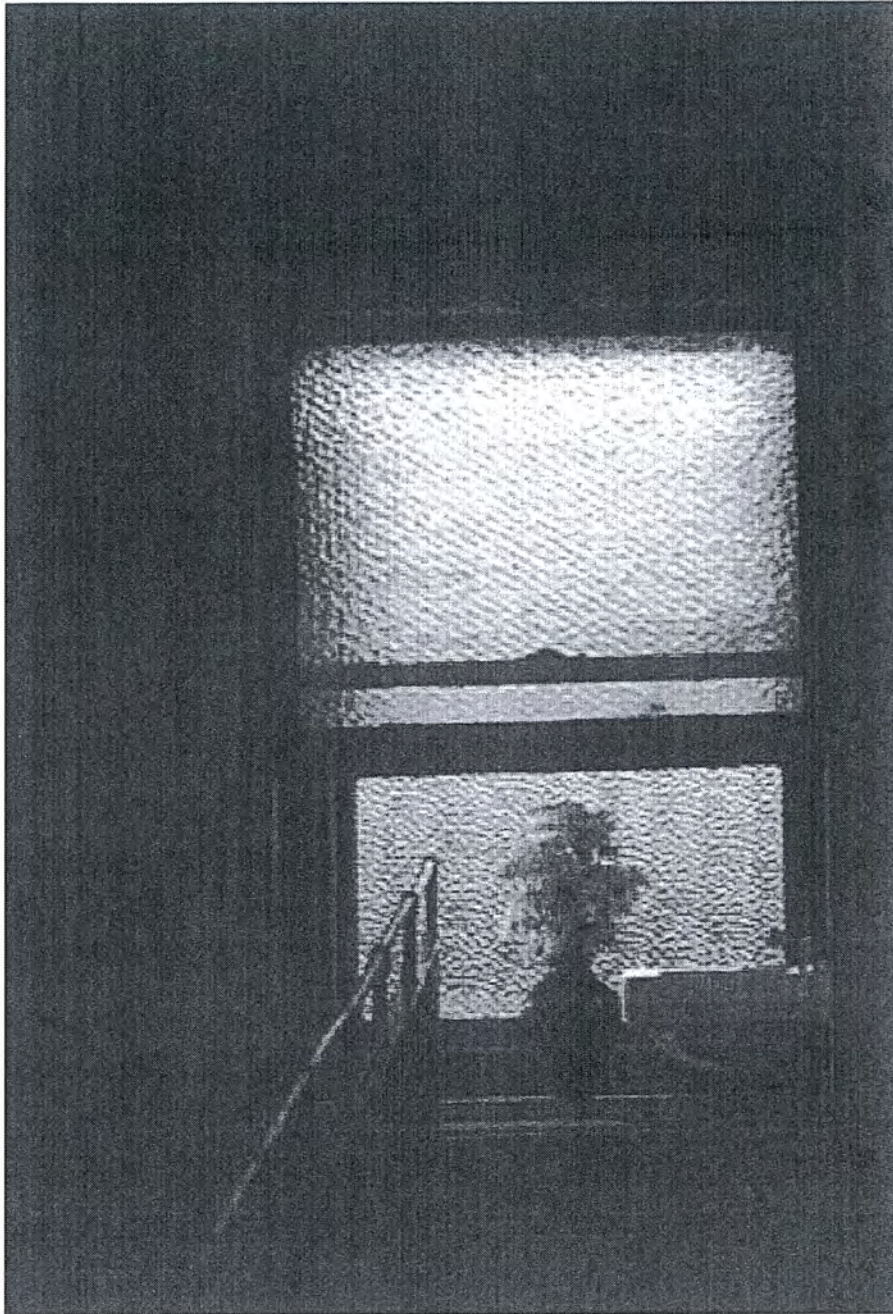
As I got to the truck, I saw that it was in bad shape. They had hit several trees and rolled over on to the side, the front wheels were still slowly spinning.

I remember looking in the truck and seeing their mother. I knew that she was dead. Their father was unconscious. I climbed back up the hill. I had to find help. I waved my arms frantically as I saw a car coming down the road. I was crying hysterically as I explained what had happened, and the lady got out as the man drove to get help. She went to check on my mother first and then went down to check on my friend's mother. She was shaking her head as she came back up the hill.

By this time my dad had made his way up the hill and was sitting on the side of the road with my brother. I could hear the sound of an ambulance coming as I ran back to check on my mother. She was conscious now but couldn't move. I tried to calm her down as I sat with her until the ambulance got to the crash site. My friend's father was sitting by the road with his head in his hands sobbing. When the ambulance arrived, they talked to the lady who had stopped to help, and they went down the hillside together to take care of my mom. I guess she knew that my friend's mother was dead. My brother had a broken leg, and my father had some broken ribs, but otherwise they would be fine. My friends were banged up but seemed unhurt. My mother's hip was fractured and had some cuts on her face, but the ambulance attendants said she would recover well. None of us were wearing seat belts.

A few days later, we went to the funeral of my friend's mother. I remember standing there wondering how I would feel if it were my mother laying there. I remembered how my mother always sang in the morning and wondered if their mom did too, and thought how they would never hear that sound again. I asked God why he could take their mother like that? I couldn't understand why!

I am told that time heals all wounds, but I will never get over the sight of death as I looked down into the truck that day. My mother recovered soon after the accident, but she had changed, for she never sang in the morning while making breakfast; and I have missed her beautiful singing since that terrible and tragic day.



Narrative-Second Place

The Little White Box

Graciela Alvarez

I am left in amazement at myself when I look back on my life. It is almost like looking through a cracked glass window. I guess I see it that way because my life experiences were created by good and bad choices. As a young girl, probably about eleven or twelve years old, I learned a very hard lesson. One that taught me the reason we form feelings of mistrust for ourselves and toward others. Once you lose someone's trust, it is very hard to get it back, if you ever do.

Let me tell you the story of my misfortune. One day, or should I say one evening, I was at my dance school. I was sitting down on a couch in the main office waiting for my mother to pick me up. There were older girls and grown ladies sitting there as well. I glanced down, and to my dismay I saw a pack of cigarettes lying between the cushions. It must have fallen out of someone's purse. I could have turned them in to the secretary, but no, I didn't do that. My curiosity got the best of me. I decided that I was going to take them home with me, but first, I needed to get them into my dance bag. My heart was beating fast because I was scared to pick them up. I feared that someone would see me. The older girls were finally called into class, and other women began moving around the office. This was my chance! I made sure that it fell to the bottom of the bag. My mother finally arrived to pick me up, and we went home. I don't remember what day of the week it was when I acquired the white box, but I do know that it was a Sunday when I got in trouble.

First you must know that my father was an engineer on a ship and was seldom home. He worked for more than thirty years in the engine room where it was very noisy. He was accustomed to yelling or speaking loudly to his shipmates because of the loud noise. As a result, he also spoke to the rest of the world in the same way. His strong voice made me believe that he was a strong man, incapable of being hurt by anyone or anything. It was my bad luck that he was home on vacation when this incident occurred. That Saturday evening, my parents had decided to go to the shopping center and then go out to dinner. I decided to stay home to begin experimenting with the contents of the little white box. I knew what the cigarettes were for, but I didn't really know how to use them. Except for my Aunt Lily, no one in my family had ever smoked.

I was never exposed to them in a close up manner. I lit up a cigarette and pretended to be like the older girls did. Suddenly I began to choke and gag on the smoke. I quickly put the cigarette out and threw it in my father's bathroom toilet. Bad choice! I decided then that they were not any fun after all!

I sat down to watch T.V. for a while and fell asleep. I did not think I had slept for a long time. An hour had already gone by when I awoke; but I could still smell the smoke in the house. I began spraying air freshener to help cover the smell. No sooner had I put the spray can away when I heard the car doors slamming shut. They were home! As my parents came in the doorway, I held my fingers crossed. They never suspected a thing. I thought I was home free. It was around 8:30 p.m., the house was very quiet. My brother, sister, and I began playing Monopoly. We played for awhile. My brother had the most rental property, and my sister had the most money. She never bought anything because she really didn't know how to play. All of a sudden, the quiet was broken by the loud roar of my father's voice. I could not make out what he was saying. It sounded far away, but very loud. I could hear his footsteps coming down the hall towards us. He got to the door and looked straight at me. He asked me if I knew anything about the cigarette butt floating in the toilet. I was so surprised and scared that I could hear my heart beating. I realized that I had forgotten to flush the toilet. He asked the question again. My voice was stuck in my throat. I figured I better say something, and quick. I knew that if I told the truth, I would be in trouble. My father had never needed to spank us because all it took was the thunder of his voice and we would begin to shake. I said the first thing that came to my mind. "Yup, Aunt Lily came over. She must have thrown her cigarette in the toilet." I remember the look on his face very well. It was a very somber but calm expression. He said, "Oh," and exited the room. We continued to play Monopoly for a little while longer. No one brought the cigarette up again, and I slept well that night.

On Sunday morning we got up early to get ready for Mass. As always, we drove to my Aunt Lily's house to pick her up. She always went to church with us. All the way there, I drummed up all kinds of conversations in order to keep my father from asking her anything. After Mass, we drove to our favorite

restaurant, Luby's, to have lunch. To this day we still practice this ritual even if some of us don't go to church. We arrived at Luby's, went through the line, and sat down. I had forgotten that my mission was to keep my father from asking my aunt anything. I was just happy because we were at Luby's. Out of the blue, my father said to Aunt Lily, "We must have just missed each other last night." I turned to my aunt, afraid of what she was going to reply.

With a puzzled look on her face, she answered, "When?"

My father repeated, "Yesterday evening."

My aunt replied, "No, I was at work all day because I pulled a double shift." My aunt was a nurse for St. Mary Hospital. I slowly turned to look at my father through the corner of my eyes; he was not wearing a happy face, but he didn't say a word about it for the rest of the lunch hour which passed very quickly.

We were home before I knew it. I didn't know whether to run inside or to climb up my favorite tree and stay there until it all went away, but my father made the decision for me by sternly telling me to go to my room and wait. I did, but it seemed like hours before he and my mother came to my room. Later, the door opened slowly, and in they came. The look on my father's face told me that he was upset and hurt by the lie. He began by saying, "We can't believe you lied to us. Haven't we taught you better than that?" I remember replying with yes and no answers to most of their questions. I told them where I had found the pack of cigarettes, and that I did not know whose they were. I then gave them the little white box I had been hiding. After about an hour, the awful interrogation was finally over.

There are two things that they said to me that afternoon, that have stuck in mind ever since. They are, "You lied to us. You used your Aunt Lily to do so. How can we trust you now; can we ever trust you again?" that night I cried because I knew I had truly hurt them by lying.

I came to realize that it was going to take a lot on my behalf to rebuild the trust that we shared. It was not an easy thing to do, but in time, I did regain their trust. They never told my aunt that I had used her in a lie. My father said, it was better to just let sleeping dogs lie.



Narrative-Third Place
My Brush with Death
Carl J. Brown

The word death is one of the most final words in the English language. It means nonexistence. I remember the day that I came face to face with death. There are times at night when I cannot sleep because of the visions that still dance around in my head. During lunchtime on my job about six years ago, I decided to go to McDonald's. Halfway there, I heard the sound of screeching tires from a distance behind my car.

As I looked into the rearview mirror, I saw a truck heading right towards me. The driver had collapsed and was leaning forward on the steering wheel. His foot was still on the gas peddle and gaining speed. Just as his truck approached the back of my car, it started to turn away swiftly. Only missing my car by inches, the driver hit the parked car at a red light carrying two people that were unaware of what was about to happen. The truck struck them head-on in the midst of their conversation about ten feet away from me. The driver was traveling close to ninety mph upon impact. It sounded like an explosion. As I slammed on my brakes, I laid down on my seat to escape all of the flying debris.

Seconds after the collision, I hurried from my vehicle and ran to the pile of twisted metal that was once a car. As I stood there nervous, trembling, and full of anxiety, I looked inside of the car and saw the lifeless face of a woman wedged between the car seats. The look in her eyes confirmed that her life had come to an end. It was the first time in my life to ever see a person get killed. Later finding out that this lady had two small children let me know that death is no respecter of person, and that person could have easily been me.

Narrative-Honorable Mention

Patient #644521

Joel Hernandez

I will begin to tell you what happened. Forget what you have heard or read in the media. Keep an open mind to everything that you may think is impossible. All the events that you learn from your church are upon us. You will see the earth tremble in fear, nations will crumble, the skies will fall, and then the world will know who I am. It has been two or three years since I have been here. To tell you the truth I don't really remember how long I have been here. I can recollect being a God-fearing man. Church was the place I would be at every Sunday along with what I think was my family.

My story started in a small town in Indiana. I worked in a warehouse as a security guard. On the drive home I saw a bright light coming towards me from the sky. Then an angel appeared in front of me and told me that I was the chosen one. I was endowed with the power of cleansing the earth from evil. I couldn't move or say anything; I was frozen solid. Then in a flash I woke up in my living room feeling refreshed and full of energy. Are you laughing? I am not mad as you make me out to be. Stop laughing, for you are a sinner and God has no compassion for you. Did I dream this? What kind of question is that? Well, I will continue my chronicle if you don't mind. When I noticed the time, I hurried to get to church.

The house was quiet, so I knew that everyone had left. I felt something was wrong, but what could be wrong in God's house? I stepped on the first step of the church when I heard, "Sinners, don't go in there." It was not a normal voice that you and I are used to hearing. It was like a legion of children crying out in fear. Puzzled by what was happening, I rushed home when the light appeared again. When I woke up I found blood on my head and clothes. In fear I ran into a room then to another and found nothing. As I worked my way through the rest of the house, an unfamiliar smell struck my nose. The smell was coming from the basement. The stench of rotting flesh filled the

room. Paralyzed in fear I tried to run but my legs would not respond, and then I tumbled to the bottom of the stairs. I found two bodies chopped up into pieces. Look up there on the ceiling, the light! What happened? Who are you? Where am I? I want to see my family. Calm down? No I will not calm down till you take me out of this straitjacket. I did what to my family? No that is impossible I don't remember anything. Please let me go. It was not I.

Narrative-Honorable Mention

Hunting Trip

Toby Lough

When I was a little boy, my dad and I would go hunting every weekend. Every time we would go out, he would always tell me everything I needed to know. Such as, having enough food, staying close to him at all times, being sure to have my gun safety on, and watching where I stepped. On every trip I must have heard him repeat all these warnings no less than fifteen times. We hunted at a place called Dam-B, where there is not a hospital for about thirty-five miles from our camp.

It was about a thirty minute boat ride before we got out and walked a good mile through the woods. One evening as we were walking through the deer stand, my father was bitten by a poisonous snake. He started hollering and said we had to get home fast. We had a dolly that we carried the deer out on, and he decided it would be best if he rode on it so his blood would not pump as fast. When we got back to the boat, he could not walk on his leg at all. We got the boat hooked up and left for the camp. We were driving to Jasper and about five minutes from the hospital, my father started going in and out of consciousness. I was fourteen and was afraid I was going to see my dad die right there in the truck with me. All I could do was lay in the back and listen to my mother cry, and I cried right along with her. When we got to the hospital, we had to wait for about six hours before we were able to see him. They kept him for eleven days and almost had to remove the bottom part of his leg. It took him about a month to start walking normally again. Now he is fine, and we are still going to the same place to hunt. My mother will not let him go by himself ever since his mishap.

Narrative-Honorable Mention

The Canoe Trip

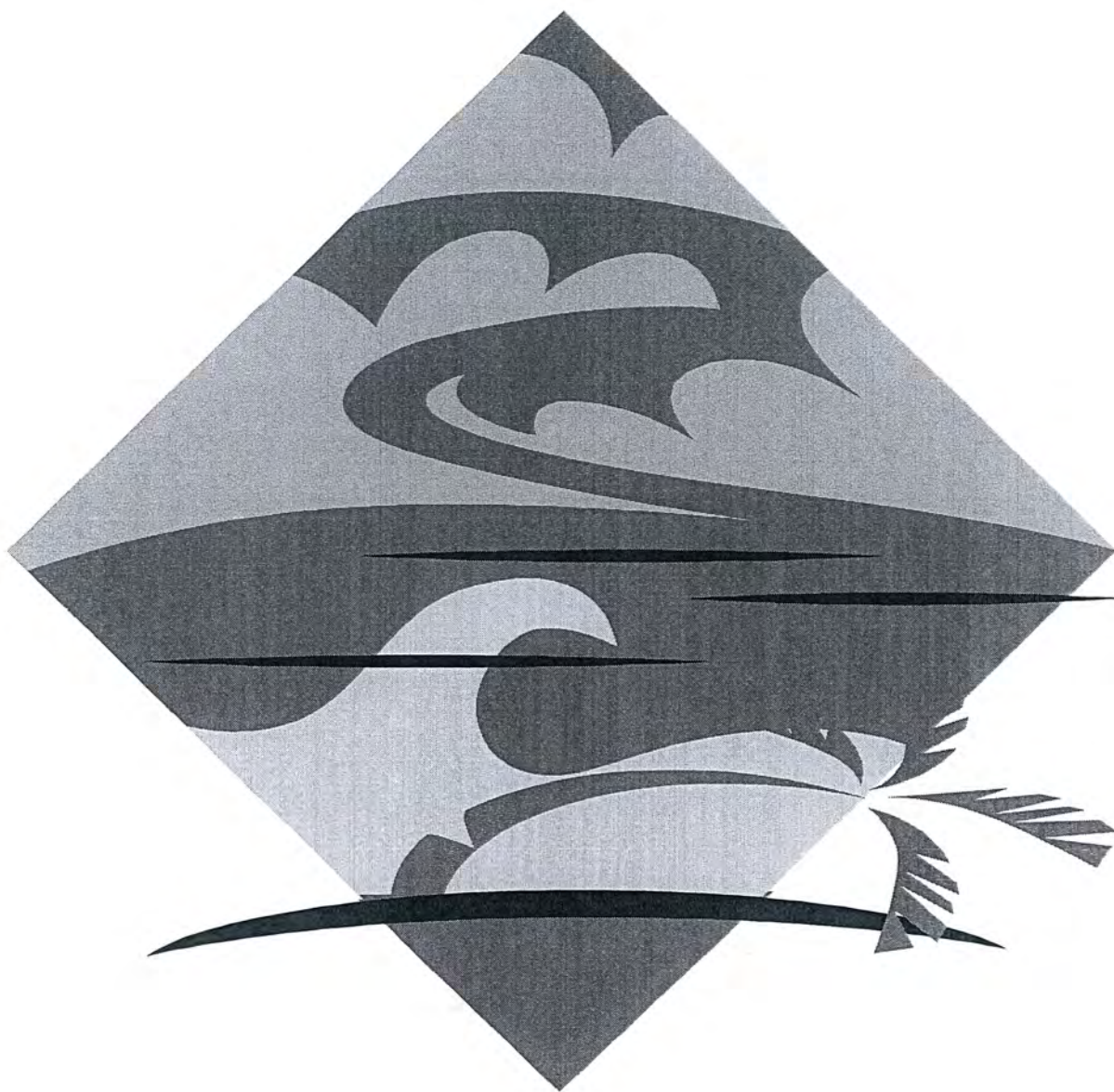
Duc Nguyen

Perhaps the worst personal risk I have ever taken happened more than ten years ago while I was canoeing on the Sechelt Inlet on beach Sunshine Coast.

My cousin and I had canoed up the inlet the day before enjoying the sunshine, gathering clams on the beach, then sleeping the night in our friend's unfinished cabin. The weekend was ideal. It's end, however, was not.

Our guide canoeist had left earlier in order to take care of some business in Vancouver. That was our first mistake, which broke the rule of water travel. Never canoe alone on open water. My cousin and I then made a second mistake and ignored the warning of the clouds above us, indicating that wind would soon be coming our way. We, too, wanted to return to the city and take a warm shower. So we set out to cross the river, a full mile wide of open water. At first we made good time; however, about halfway across, the wind blew enough to create waves with whitecaps. We soon were in serious trouble. I fought hard to keep our line against the wind and the waves that threatened to turn us over at any moment. My cousin paddled furiously in the bow. Then, just as suddenly as it began, it was over. We reached the near side of the shore and were in calm water. We floated along for awhile. Never again have I felt so happy to be alive, yet, felt so foolish. How quickly life can end, because of mistakes. Now I prefer ocean travel in a boat, much safer in the winds and the waves.

Poetry



Poetry-First Place

The Sea Wall

Adiyba Jacobs

There I lay beneath the sky, where
my back rests upon the edges of
the peddle rocks.

Though I cannot reach the sky, nor
float through it, the breath that I take allows
me to inhale the fresh air.

There I lay beneath the sky, where
my body rests, my mind and soul excuses my
body for the moment.

For whatever was around my presence or in
my presence had no longer existed.

There I lay beneath the sky, where
my body rests, it is here on the Sea Wall where my
mind, lets go of all what's tomorrow for today.

So with that, although I cannot physically consume what lies
beyond the sky into reality, nevertheless, it's the place that I rest upon
and my mind that gives me the opportunity to have
peace of mind. In other words, a place that I call home is
where the heart is.



Poetry-Second Place
Country Road
Rose Fowler

You take a country road out of the city
When the sun goes down, you've never seen anything as pretty.

The empty swing on the front porch sways in the wind.

A place I spent a lot of time talking with friends.

As you open the door and step inside,
You remember the rules you are to abide.

The fresh smell of cleanliness in the air,
As I walk over and sit down in the chair.

As memories flash before my eyes of the precious moments I start to cry.

Never forgetting you're not alone, not here.

The place that I call home.



Poetry-Third Place

Beach Days

Ashley Baker

A place called home.

The most relaxing place ever known.

A place where I can be free,
not having to worry about just being me.

No-one there to scream or shout,
nothing much for me to worry about.

A place called home.

You can hear the waves crashing ashore,
Yes, I'm sure you have been here before.

Playing on the beach in the sand,
working on the beautiful suntan,
hanging out at night gazing at the stars with your man.

This place surely sounds like a plan.

A place called home.

Seagulls flying through the air,
it's how I know I'm almost there.

Nothing can quite compare,
to a place called home.

Poetry-Honorable Mention

My Car

Garrett Boudreaux

I will never understand why people are so unfair in life,
[because getting homework on the weekend is just not right]

My favorite place is my bedroom; that I will admit.

However, since we CAN'T write about it my teeth are going to grit.

My only other place is my car,
because no one can get me there.

I can see everything around me, to control without a care.

I listen to the radio cruising along at a normal pace.

Of course, though, everyday, jokers seem to want to race.

The car is a safe refuge when I get a lunch break at work.
[Probably, because of the old guys that only talk about war and work.]

My car has no taste, how could it, it is only metal.
[Although I wouldn't even try to eat it even if it turned to jello.]

This story may not make much sense, but I can assure you that it does.

At least it does to a guy with anger as a motive cause.

The car is a sanctuary even from my family.

Even though my bedroom is better,
I can't talk about that, what a pity.

The care does have one thing over my room.

The activities which do go on are lively, instead of filled with gloom.

Of course, I can't go on with choice #1,
because I can't describe how my room is the true sanctuary,
but it gives some people a bad vibe.

Always, the car will have to do and suffice,
because if I tried to use my room,
I would pay a hefty price.

Poetry-Honorable Mention

Refuge
Carl Brown

When you think of home, it makes you feel good inside,
For it is a place of refuge, from your troubles you can hide.

Life is filled with so much pain, we witness that everyday,
But having a place to run to, is more precious than words can say.

Home is a place where love abides, it has invisible arms,
To wrap around you and keep you safe, from all of your personal storms.

There are many mountains to climb, and many valleys to roam,
But there is a path that we can take, that will always lead us home.

You may be wondering where is this place, it seems so full of love,
This place I speak of is Heaven, my wonderful home above.

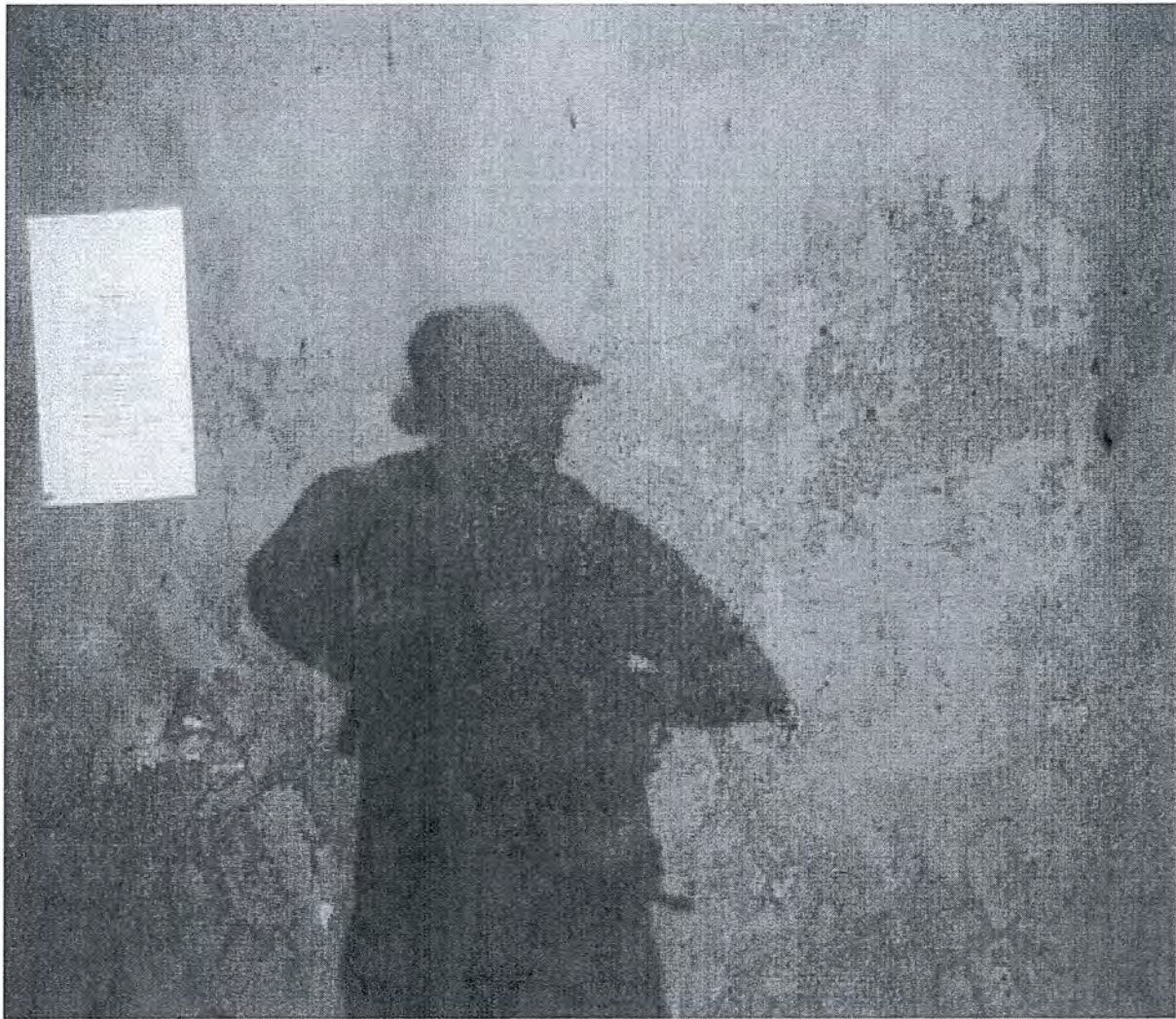
In this home we'll always smile, and will never have to say good-bye,
We'll be reunited with loved ones, who at one time had to die.

Trials of life will always come, but encouraged I'll always be,
For up in Heaven, that place called home, Jesus will be waiting for me.

Special Topic

*A Place Called
Home*

Poetry



A Place Called Home-Poetry-First Place
If Walls Could Talk
Steven Hoang

If walls could talk, they wouldn't say much,
due to the surface of my life, it hadn't even touched.

It only provides a place to sleep,
but memories of me it will not keep.

For there were none presented,
going home I very much resented.

Sleep and storage, it provided,
but everything else in my life was divided.

Things I did never came home,
every night I would just arrive alone (without memories).

Though it seemed a discomfort dome,
it was a place I called home.



A Place Called Home-Poetry-Second Place

Celebrate
William Angelle

As a child during the school year, home is like a prison.

For holidays it becomes the Days Inn.

It holds all memories, good and bad.

If it's a new home, it reminds you of
the struggles you've had.

It is what you leave in hopes of obtaining
a life long dream.

But most important, it's where you come
back to celebrate what you achieved.



A Place Called Home-Poetry-Third Place
This Place
Kyle Sanders

This place I sit broken and cold
This place is where I sit alone and lost
This place is where I wish not to grow old
This place is why my heart feels as if it
is covered in ice
Yet, this place never ceases to amaze me
Because I didn't think it was possible to...
Hate and Love something so much

A Place Called Home-Poetry-Honorable Mention

Home! Home! Sweet Home!

Angela Broussard

Is a home considered to be a condominium, an apartment, or even a nursing facility? Yes, if that's where your spirit lives. After all, "Home is where the heart is."

"Home sweet home," that's what the mat on the rug states.

As we enter the gates, we think to ourselves - how sweet can a home be!

A home is what you make of it, sweet just like Lipton tea.

Home! Home! Sweet Home!

A place full of delight and amusement and caring,

For inside it, there'll be lots of love and sharing.

Home! Home! Sweet Home!

A place that will keep you balmy, when the weather is cold,

Home is where the heart is, that's what I was always told.

Home! Home! Sweet Home!

Your protector from rain showers, your shield in the mid-night hours.

A place where we'll work and love and play,

Somewhere nice to come at the end of each day.

Oh that astonishing place to go just to get away.

A Place Called Home-Poetry-Honorable Mention

A Woman Always Waits

Carey Harwood

My Home,
A place to go at the end of my day,
A place where my dinner always waits,
A place to stay.

A place where a woman always waits,
Who shows her love,
As if it is sent from the heavens above.

She is always there to fix my hot plate,
Even if I show up a few hours late.
She is the one who brought me into this world,
And always said that she could take me out.

Always there for my problems,
My worries,
Always willing to give a hug.

Always there, Always for me,
My best friend God has given me.
The special lady that makes my home,

That makes my life,
That makes me happy.

My Mother.

A Place Called Home-Poetry-Honorable Mention

Home
Bryan Porter

Home

Where I live

Where I sleep

Where my family is

Where I am always welcome

Where I go when I get off of work

Where I can go when I need to feel safe

A Place Called Home-Poetry-Honorable Mention

This Wonderful Place

Thang Tran

A place that I always feel safe and warm,
Every time I come there, I would never be harmed,
This is the only place I feel secure and safe,
Nothing can come between me and this wonderful place.

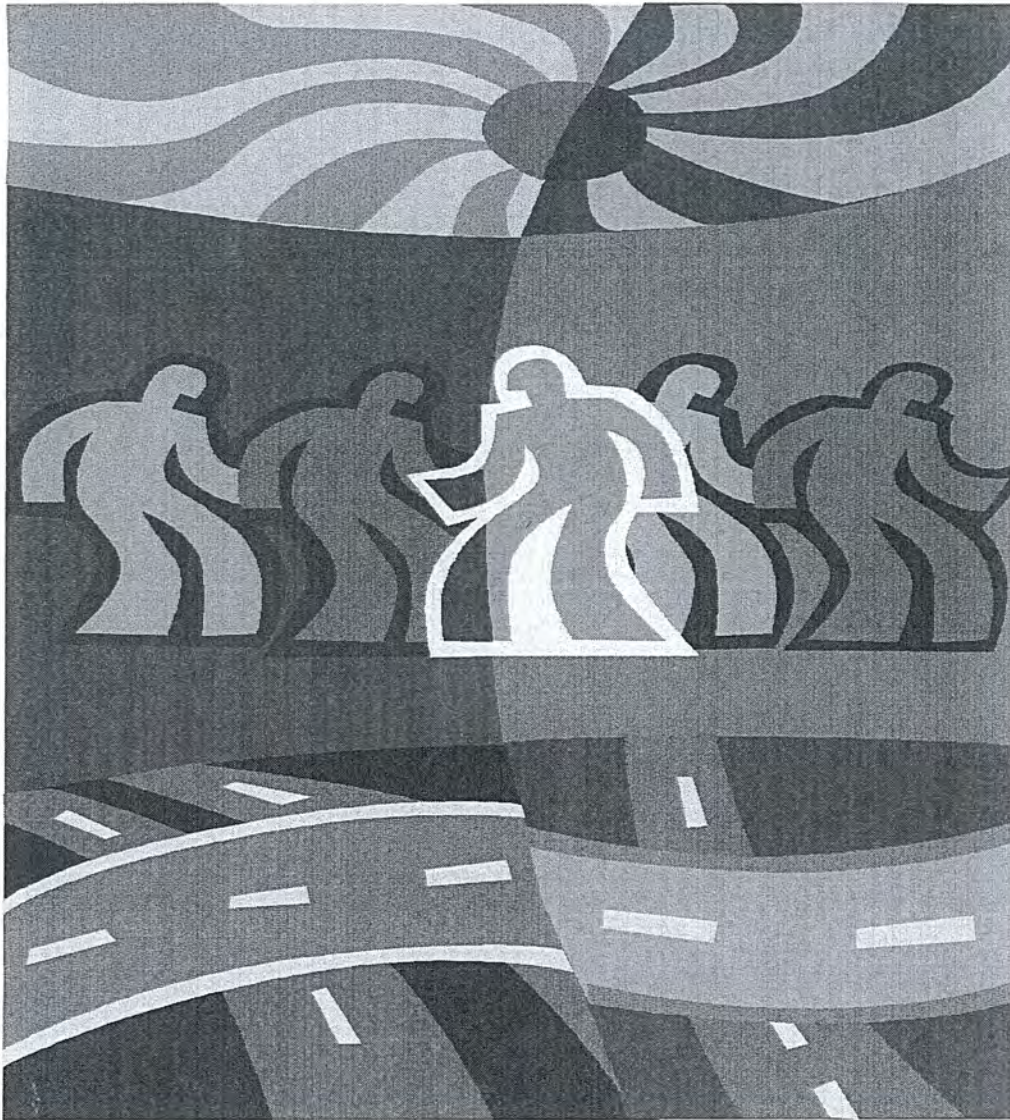
Friends and family come to share love,
Hoping God will watch us from above,
Many tears and joys have been shared,
Knowing there is always a safe place to go to, is all I care.

People cannot come and go as they please,
That's why this place has shared lots of memories,
The atmosphere always feels just right.
From morning til the end of the night.

Special Topic

*A Place Called
Home*

Prose



A Place Called Home-Prose-First Place

Street Life

Alvin Williams

Sitting here thinking about a home, I can remember my life when I was homeless. Street life and addiction made it impossible to call any place home. I was not welcomed in a lot of places, including motels and hotels. Being mentally, spiritually and physically bankrupt, and sick and tired of being sick and tired, I made a conscious decision to get out of my problem of addiction and into the solution of living life on life's terms.

I was not looking for a home when I went into treatment at Franklin South; I wanted "relief" and had no idea that I would find not only "relief" but a place I called home in this treatment center. It was not easy. The fear of failure or success overwhelmed me. How could I get rid of my demons? Eventually things started to fall into place. I adjusted to situations such as following rules and schedules. I forgave myself for many things that I had done in the past. It did not occur to me that Franklin South was not only a place to stay, but my home. I came to this realization after my stay there was threatened.

A period of time had gone by, and I was able to go out on pass. I signed for the pass and had a nice quiet sober weekend with a friend. When I returned to the treatment center, I was asked to take a routine drug test. I had no problem with taking the test; as a matter of fact, I expected it. There were so many times in the past I was mandated to take a drug test, and I did not bother showing up, because I knew I could not pass it.

I felt so good knowing that I would pass this one with flying colors. I gladly took the test with confidence. After waiting about ten minutes, a staff member came into the room and announced that I had failed the test. I felt as though someone had kicked me in my stomach. I was sick! Was he playing a joke on me? I *knew* that I had not even been around drugs, let alone used them. I became frightened at the thought of being kicked out of the center.

I voiced my concern about the test being positive when I knew I had not used. Another test was given, and this test came back negative. It was later determined that the first test material was outdated. Until the possibility of losing my residence, I finally understood that Franklin South had become my home.

I have learned as the years passed that a home is a place of peace and security. I have lived in several places since that time, and I have peace of mind. I know home is where the heart is, and my spirit is no longer homeless. I live life on life's terms. I asked God to help me believe in His acceptance, forgiveness, and generosity, to be willing to see myself in a new way and to help me remain grateful for the gift of my life.



A Place Called Home-Prose-Second Place

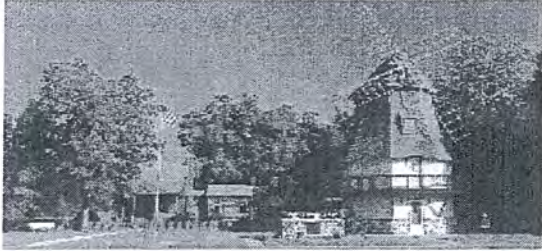
My Memories of a Home

Patricia Murray

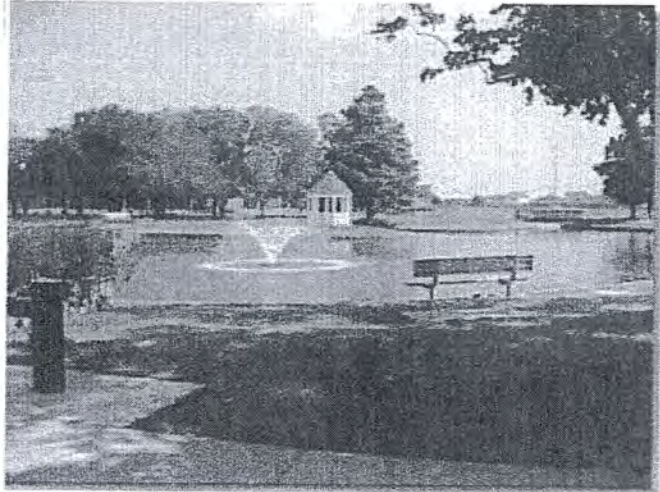
As a woman of thirty-seven, I can reminisce about a place and time that have never faded from my memories. On the corner of Prairie and Atlanta Streets was a six room house which I shared with my parents and siblings. I was second grader at Ogden Elementary, my older sister was in the third grade, and my younger brother was in the first grade. There were four others at home, not yet old enough to be in school. The final child was in the womb. I can remember walking home from school each day hoping that the new baby had arrived. As we walked through the back door, my mother was in the kitchen with the baby still snugly tucked inside mother. The disappointment was short lived because there was always something going on in the kitchen. I could smell pots full of delicious dinner on the stove. My mother always had a snack of some kind waiting for us school kids when we arrived from school. The younger children were happy to see us walk into the house, and I was just as delighted to see them.

For some reason we, as children, stayed huddled around my mother following her into the living room, then to her bedroom, it did not matter where she went around the house, we would somehow all end up there with her. We took baths, ate supper, and my older sister and I washed the dishes before it was time to go to bed.

Finally, the new baby arrived in the middle of the night. The new little brother completed the family. By the time the baby was eight months old, the family that I remember was gone forever. My parents divorced, and we moved out of the house on the corner of Prairie and Atlanta . Other family members took their places in our lives, and things were never the same.



City of Nederland



A Place Called Home-Prose-Third Place
Nederland
Angela Deshotel

My mother and I have moved from place to place so much that I have been to ten different schools. When we moved to Nederland, we moved several times but always within the Nederland city limits. I was in the seventh grade when we came to this area, and I was so happy to be able to spend all four years at Nederland High School and graduate.

I was able to make friends with no worry of losing them because of moving away. While I was still in middle school my friends and I would go to the skating rink on Friday nights. The rink was the place to be! Then during my high school years, we would shop and look around Central Mall or go see a movie at the theater.

In the summer time we went out to tan and then compared each other to see who was the darkest. It was the best. My telephone number never changed, so I didn't have to worry about getting my own phone number mixed up with an old one.

I have always wanted to be able to grow up with the same people around me. It didn't start out that way when I was younger, but I have that now. I not only have my mother but my friends, too, here in Nederland, the place that I call *Home*.

A Place Called Home-Prose-Honorable Mention

My Family is My Home

Thuy Tran

A home is not just a house that has a roof for cover. To me it is a place where I am always happy, feel safe, and am myself. The only place that fit in these categories is when I'm with my family. It does not matter where I am, as long as I'm with my family, that is my home.

My family is like any other family. We are really close to each other because we spend most of our spare time together. Every time when I'm with my family, it is fun because we are so fun-loving and we get along so well. We also have conversations to build our relationships with each other, which I think is great because it helps me understand those around me. My family is not so perfect as it seems. We do get into arguments and disagreements quite a few times. As I have mentioned before we are no different from most families. It's kind of odd, but I like it when I get into an argument with any person in the family because at least I have something to look back and grin about.

Being with my family is the safest place in the world. I am the youngest child out of twelve children. Being the youngest, I am always surrounded by people who want to protect me at all times. Whenever I'm with my family, I feel like nothing can hurt me. Whatever pain I ever have will go away soon after I am with my family. They are like the heroes of the comic books who fight all evils and bring happiness at the ending. I don't think I will ever be safe anywhere or with anybody other than with my family.

I'm very glad that I can be myself whenever I'm with my family. Sometimes I do feel so smothered that I cannot breathe, at the same time they do give me my freedom, but do not hesitate to discipline me for my wrong deeds. By trusting and respecting me enough to give me my free will, they have helped me feel easier to talk and be around them. I am very blessed to be part of this family, and I won't trade it for anything else in the world.

As I said before a home is not just a house that has a roof for cover. Instead, it is a place fill with happiness, safety, and brings the true self in me. The only place that fit in these categories is when I'm with my family. It does not matter where I am, as long as I'm with my family, it is my home.

*Museum of the
Gulf Coast*

*A Special Place
in
Time*



Museum of the Gulf Coast-A Special Place in Time
First Place

Completely Flabbergasted
Ruby Scott

I was told to write an essay on the Museum of the Gulf Coast and of course I was completely flabbergasted. The last time I visited a museum was in middle school, and I have to admit the thought never occurred for me to return. Then it happens, the unthinkable I entered the museum with the preconceived thoughts of a twelve year old, and left intoxicated with pride for what Port Arthur had accomplished. One of the most captivating moments was when I laid eyes upon the mural; it literally sent chills up my spine. I stood there taking in the marvelous detail. I looked at the African stand on the sands as if he was one of my ancestors; seeing the beauty of the gulf transform into my own history. It astonishes me how one painting can provoke one's imagination. Speaking of imagination it was beyond reality when Mr. Alligator came into my view. Estimating 13.5' long, this 50 maybe 75 year old beast was a sight to see. I bet the Crocodile Hunter would have met his match with this animal. To get shot, stun and still keep going is enough to have you running scared; two years is along days work to catch one animal. Little did I know this was only the beginning of my experience at this extraordinary museum.

I visited the Music Legends and Notable People exhibits. I was born in Beaumont and shameful as it is; I never had the slightest idea of how many successful people came from Port Arthur. I can remember watching the shows, The Odd Couple, M.A.S.H., and never knew that G.W. Bailey directed them. I laugh at how he always was the center of all the jokes in the Police Academy movies. On display was a shirt, somehow it made me feel as though he was there.

Next I had seen a picture of Evelyn Keyes. I love the movie Gone With the Wind and here in a little town Scarlet O'Hara's little sister was born. Such profound displays and still there was more to see. Janis Joplin items were neatly laid out. I think her things were the most personal. It was like entering your mother's house; with all your old things kept exactly where you had left them. I looked at yearbooks, letters, and my favorite her Bible. I felt like I knew her; like I seen a part of her life that was hidden. I cannot begin to get into every

detail of the art and works of the Museum of the Gulf Coast, but what I can tell you is what I walked away with. I have been taught a lesson that even my teacher back in the seventh grade would be proud of. That lesson is that you will never truly learn anything until you can grasp history. Not only does the Museum of the Gulf Coast open history to us, but it shows that anyone from any small town can achieve their goals. It shows that the more we support our museums: the more we will learn from them. Who knows you might end up in someone's museum!



Museum of the Gulf Coast-A Special Place in Time
Second Place
Breath Taking
Carolyn Webb

Walking into this place gives you an almost reverent kind of feeling. It was as though we were about to receive a word. Something new and refreshing. I'd been here before, but I was very anticipatory about what I may have missed years ago on my last visit. Had anything been added? Maybe some great artifact or fossil, or maybe even a wonderful hidden treasure had been found since I last visited. I looked forward to seeing what was in store. Upon arrival, it was as though I'd never been here before. This place was full of our history. Mine, yours, and everyone from this area. I've been told time and again, "if you don't know where you're from, then you don't know where you are going." The museum is our huge mosaic photo album. It has pictures of our fathers and mothers and kinsmen. It has our mother's china, and father's tools. I saw a neighbors old cannon. Wow! What a piece of machinery! That pretty red car that our friend Andrew Green built is a stunner, and the Snell Gallery...breath taking.

When I turned around to see the big "Port Arthur" sign hanging over the front door entrance, I was immediately engrossed. This sign looks as though it might weigh about two hundred pounds. It's obviously old and faded, but it has a very strong presence. This wood must be oak. It certainly looks like oak.

The wildlife exhibit is relaxing and nice to look at. I wondered if any of it was extinct. Had I seen any of these birds? The alligators strong and still demanded our attention. The alligator then introduced us to this awesome 1900's mural painted on the museum wall, it is vast and beautiful. I understand that it was painted by a couple from Dallas. It depicts the huge elephants that once walked the streets or grounds of our Jefferson County. Three thousand years ago, here lived huge elephants, not dinosaurs. I could not help wondering if at any time in my life I'd walked where these big creatures had walked? As a young girl, mother, myself, and my sisters used to shop at "Franklin's." the front of the bank on Austin Avenue had a dancing water fountain display that I really enjoyed watching. Had the elephants passed this way? Were the Carocua Indians residents of downtown Port Arthur? Was I related to any of them?

I understand that the Carocua Indians were strong disciplinarians. If you broke the law, you were arrested, and executed. The Carocuas remind me of

myself and my upbringing. My father believed that in order to have order, you must enforce order. He was also a fisherman, and hunter just as the Carocuas were. Maybe we are related to their tribe. If I were, I would be proud.

The mural also displays the discovery of America in 1492 by Columbus. In 1510-1525 the Europeans came to the new world. Mostly the Spanish explorers. They came with gun powder, bows, and arrows. The Irish then came in the 1840's and 50's. they came for religious reasons. They were called "Stubadores." the Stubadores worked along the docks. I'm sure it was hard work for them because even now with all the modern facilities available to us, longshoreman work is hard work. I can only imagine it being the same type of work since it's dock work. I wonder if our longshoremen know that they were one called Stubadores. Dick Cowling came from Ireland with success on his mind, and he fought for it. He was a strong man who wasn't afraid to stand his ground. I enjoyed learning about him. To learn that he had no slaves was refreshing, and knowing that the war he fought only lasted for twenty minutes gives an idea of how tough he was.

When we encountered the big oil tanker, I had to take a deep breath. Ever since I was a little girl, I was surrounded by these things. We lived on Beaumont Avenue and 17th Street. Texaco Oil Refinery was basically or nearly in our back yard. My father worked for Gulf Oil Refinery all of my life. I always knew what time it was because of the refinery whistle that blew so loud for the men to go home or to lunch. This part of the museum really hit home with me. I often wondered as a child what was in those tankers. I even had thoughts of climbing in and finding out for myself. This is Port Arthur. Our oil refineries really epitomizes what made Port Arthur a great place to live. Now, the weather is magnificent, but our success overall is because of our refineries. The oil brought jobs, jobs, jobs. When I attended Lamar Elementary, most all of my classmates fathers worked at the refinery so this part of the museum brought back a lot of good memories. Frank Trost was very lucky to get that picture of the gusher. What a great picture it is. Frank was also our first weatherman and fireman. He was an interesting man. Unfortunately he died in 1940. I'd like to know more about him. Does he have any children still with us?

Man, the Corvette is one of the finest cars I have ever seen! Candy apple red, and beautiful! The very thought that the man that built it is from this area, just blows my mind. Andrew Green built the Corvette, and did it with fiberglass. It is really pretty. Is his family in the business? Are they still building cars? Is it too late for me to learn how to build a car?

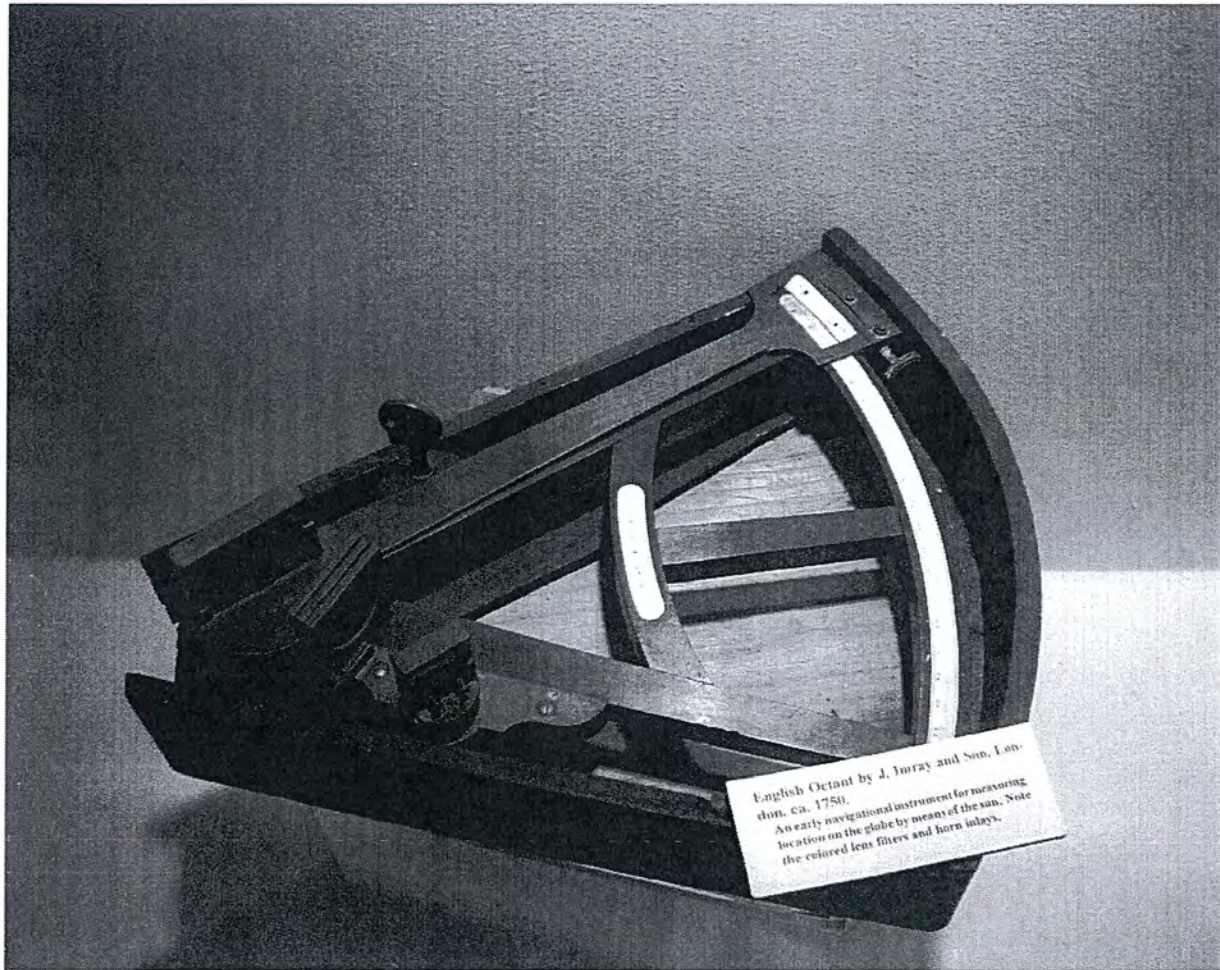
Walking through the museum is so intriguing. We stopped to learn a little about a brave Mexican man named Lucian Adams, and then we moved on to hear about a black man named "Snake Eye." He was a friend of a white man named Chadwell. Chadwell was a prejudice man in the bootlegging business. Snake Eye was his partner in crime. In the notable people gallery, there is Leah Rhodes. She won an Oscar for her costume design in "Gone With the Wind," and is remembered in this gallery, is Evelyn Keyes. She played "SueEllen" in the unforgettable movie. Port Arthur has housed a lot of gifted and talented people that I was unaware lived here. And Oscar. Our museum houses an Oscar.

The Snell Parlor was absolutely my very favorite part of the museum. This place literally took my breath away. I felt as though I was in a dream. This parlor is elegance alone. Every piece standing on its own beauty, having its own story. Mrs. Snell was a grand lady with exquisite taste. The crystals are perfectly cut and colored. And they glow all so beautifully from the light. It was very interesting to hear about how she wanted a particular sculptured piece, and she didn't stop until she got it. It is indeed a great piece of work.

We moved over into the music room where we saw great like Bill Hall, Johnnie "Guitar" Brooks, Janis Joplin, Tex Ritter, Cookie and the Cupcakes, and so many wonderful talented musicians and singers. It was wonderful. I wondered if my father or mother knew any of these people because they were singers also. My dad sang in a quartet for years before I was born. I just know that he would've been able to tell me all about the talented people that I was seeing memorialized in this great place. It's nice knowing that all these great people are from our hometown. It's great knowing that a man from my hometown coached the football team that went to the Super Bowl on more than one occasion.

The sports section of our museum is awesome. Joe Washington went to school with my brother, and as a young girl I had a huge crush on him. He was a good football player. My brother says that he was a good student also. He made good grades. I'm very proud of him. I'm proud to know that Jimmy Johnson, Durial Harris, Tim McKyer, Connie Colt, the power lifter came from my hometown, and the museum does a great job of capturing their greatness.

My visit to the Museum of the Gulf Coast was an interesting and intriguing one. I am so grateful for this very special place where I came from. I can bring my children and teach them about their heritage. Show them why they are so strong. I can tell them about Mrs. Snell and show them how beautiful she was. Let them know how strength and beauty were and can be packaged in one. The museum itself had packaged strength and beauty. From the sign hanging above the front entrance, to the beautiful crystal vase in the Snell Parlor. *This museum is indeed a Special Place in Time.*



Museum of the Gulf Coast-A Special Place in Time
Third Place
The Treasure Trove
Fabian Hamby

A few days ago Mr. Knight informed our class that we would be meeting at the Museum of the Gulf Coast instead of our usual classroom. Being the curious and some-what nosey person that I am, I was excited to leave the classroom for an afternoon and go exploring into my past, into the past of this community. I wasn't really sure what to expect, but I figured that if Mr. Knight thought we would enjoy it, and he seemed so enthusiastic about the trip, it must be something to see.

As soon as I stepped through the large tinted black doors, I knew this would be something to remember. It was as if I had been transported back in time. I wasn't really sure where to start, it really was all so eye catching. Everything standing so still yet it all seems to come alive holding inside its ourn personal roots that had helped shape the future of the area. The mural that hung above the entrance doors was so plain yet so appealing, it had to have been about a hundred years old. At first glance I could make out the Sabine River, depicted in all its glory. The magnificent Sabine Hotel seemed to stand out from the sea of blue and green. I noticed a little man that seemed to be walking towards a bar or tavern perhaps, the little wooden structure seemed to be beckoning to him. It all seemed to capture the area in such a life-like rendition, yet it was just a picture, a view in someone's mind that was put onto canvas. Here it had found a home hung high above the entrance doors for everyone who enter to see.

The whole left wall of the museum was a huge depiction of the area from the year 30,000 to early 1900's, it told a story without words, a history lesson all in itself. When I finally made my way to the end of the wall, I found myself standing directly in front of a large model size oil well, it was so old looking. I started wondering what this area must have looked like filled with them. Out of curiosity I read the story of the Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce, it made me feel good to know that our area has made such a contribution to the growth and support of the coastal region. The thing that really caught my eye and seemed to pull me in was the room filled with Academy Awards. There were so many to look at, but I was really impressed with the awards G. W. Bailey had received, known to most as the obnoxious

sergeant on Police Academy. That right there was worth the trip to me. A person can be told that there has been important and interesting people that have come from this area, but to see it is to believe it and to understand the roots of where we come.

As I took the stairs to the second floor, I found myself surrounded by different shapes and colors of rare glasses, fine china, crystals, a beautiful rainbow of colors from rose to amber to orange and green. Each had its own meaning and past, holding its own story. Amidst all the sparkling things I noticed a handcrafted ivory pagoda against the back wall, it dated back to 1870. It was so hypnotizing just sitting there. If walls could talk or perhaps if all things could, I bet the stories would be worth listening to. When I stepped into the music hall I found myself surrounded by soul. Music in a common bond between people and there I was, right there in the middle of this tiny room holding in its walls the stories and pictures of living legends and legends from the past. Not only could you look, you were given the chance to listen too. From jazz and soul, from rock and roll, to country, there's such a variety, all so worthy of my time. I stayed in there for awhile looking and reading but before I walked out of there I was drawn to the little TV by the picture of Percy Sledge next to it. I felt compelled to touch the screen, so I did and I cannot put into words the feeling I got when I heard Percy's voice come from the speakers belting out, "when a man loves a woman." A feeling only true soul music can give, it awakens something inside me, something in my soul. I could have stayed in that room all day, but I knew there was more to see so I made my way to the sports hall of fame. I'm somewhat a sports fan, what would we do without them? Today I was able to discover a treasure trove of some of the greatest, from football, to boxing, no sport was left out.

As I left the museum that day I left knowing and understanding this community, this region a little better. So many important people have come from here, from where I'm from. That feels good, because it gives me confidence to know that if they can make it, so can I, and who knows, one day someone just might be staring at some of my stuff and my pictures inside that museum one day. When Mr. Knight told us about this trip he was giving us

the chance to explore our past and to help us understand how we've gotten to where we are today. Now that we've seen what has shaped our pasts, hopefully it will help shape our futures.

Museum of the Gulf Coast-A Special Place in Time

Honorable Mention

A Hidden Treasure

Samantha Abshire

I was born a Texan, although; I have only lived in this area for the last three years. This gives me an advantage of being interested in my mother's hometown and my birthplace. When we first moved here, I was very inquisitive of the area's history. I remember my mother trying to fit a visit to the "downtown museum" in our busy schedule. Our tightly woven schedule never budged. I asked a friend on a boring weekend, "Do you want to go to the Port Arthur museum?"

"Isn't that somewhere past Lamar?"

"It can't be that bad," I said pleading.

"I just wouldn't want to park my car there. Someone might watch us go in and steal my car."

"When you get a car, Sam then I'll go with you."

I heard the same nonsense repetitively from anyone I asked to go with me. I still do not have a car. Therefore, this opportunity did not present itself until in Mr. Knight's class. He stated on the first day of class, "Students get in free at the museum with their student I.D.."

I was ready to begin gathering information on my paper. Once I got inside the building, I realized that so many people were missing a hidden treasure. The location is historic, so you must see within the aged stones on the outside. Touring the museum, I thought of the saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover." if you take the time to lift the book's edges, you can see that the information of the museum is trying to seep out.

As I stood in the doorway, I imagined what the figures making shadows looked like. The early morning sunlight was warm across my back. The lights came on while I was still in a daze. My eyes adjusted to magnificent works of art. To my left a mural extended across the size of the entire wall. The scenery

started from the left with prehistoric times in this area. It moved further in time from the Native American, the first settlers, and then the battle of Sabine Pass was depicted. This interested me the most about the wall.

On September 5th, 1863, twenty ships went to the fort in now day Sabine Pass. The fort only had six cannons. However, the men had practiced shooting the cannons for months at buoys. The fleet of ships retreated after only twenty minutes. This is part of history that rarely is told. Now it is told everyday in the museum by the wonderful pictures on the wall.

The journey continued on the first floor. The next thing that I enjoyed was a car. This was not an ordinary car. This was a SPI racecar. Andrew Green made this car.

As I continued walking to my right, I looked into a room form history. The period was the late 1800's. The room was a model of a house of an average family in America. Across from the room was an in the round sculpture of Richie Valens, Buddy Holly, and J.P. Richardson or the "Big Bopper." The majority of the rest of the floor included divisors with artifacts and tid-bits of information. This was not the extent of the museum.

On the second floor, there was an array of sports, music, and antiques. The sports section included athletic figures such as Billy Tubbs, Valerie Manfood, "The Wolfe," Joe Washington, Jr., and Jimmy Johnson. The music section included musicians like George Jones, ZZTop, Tracy Byrd, Edgar and Johnny Winter, and Janis Joplin. My favorite thing in the whole museum was Janis Joplin's Mercedes Benz.

There was also a look into Victorian houses in 1885. The fashions of the Victorian room were lavishly rich. Next to the room was a collection of antique furniture, glassware, and other beautiful objects. I noticed a vase and a goblet cut in a Russian pattern. I admired the light reflecting from them. This room seemed almost enchanted with luxurious items from the past.

I am glad that I had the experience that I did in the museum. I would like to visit it a third time, if not more times than that. I would recommend to anyone to tour the Museum of the Gulf Coast to learn more about Southeast Texas.

Museum of the Gulf Coast-A Special Place in Time

Honorable Mention

Impressed
Brittani Thomas

The Museum of the Gulf Coast is a very special place in time. You would never think that a place in Port Arthur could be so beautiful. Words can't even describe what I thought when I walked through the doors, and I'm not exaggerating, it was beautiful. I guess it was so beautiful to me because I was not expecting it to be like that. I was just expecting a boring museum with a bunch of old things that I didn't care to see, but it was much more than that. Some of the things that stand out in my memory are; number one the murals, they were so beautiful. Secondly were the old artifacts, and the last thing that I loved about the museum was the history in it.

The murals, oh, they were so impressive. The colors and the way they looked so realistic was truly amazing. If you stopped and thought about it, how could someone paint so realistically, and so perfect. When I looked at them I felt like I was living in the actual events. I felt as though they were taking place right then, it was great. The colors and the great detail just brought out the museum so much. I also liked how the exhibits were coordinated with the murals behind them. Another thing that impressed me about the murals was how they told a story one painting lead to another telling a story about history. It started from as early as the dinosaurs until the first oil spilled from our ground. The murals were just one of the things that impressed me though.

Secondly, were the beautiful artifacts that they had. All those things were brought here from all over the world and they had not been damaged at all. I would have to say that out of everything they were my favorite part of the museum. To see the crystals and glass colorful artifacts, it just amazed me. All the old antique furniture was still so lovely. I had never seen anything like it before.

The last and most important thing to me was the history in the museum. Every little thing in there meant something. Such as the mural over the door. That was the actual painting that someone in that time painted of what Port

Arthur looked like at that time. It was great to see, even the big Port Arthur sign over the door under the mural had meaning to it. It had actually hung in the Port of Port Arthur along time ago. Something else that also touched me was how so many famous people originated from this area. Some people who I knew were famous I never knew they were form here. Some of the people in the museum were famous, but some of them were just remember for the important things that they did for their community. That was special to me. It gives those who have dreams and ambitions of being famous the courage and strength to achieve their dreams. Knowing that someone from your same little town did it, it gives you that much more drive to do it. Another thing that really impressed me about the museum was the music hall. It was so pretty and full of famous musicians who originated from this area. I guess that really impressed me the most because I love music so much. There were so many different kinds of people in there all for the same reason, but they all brought it out in different ways. It's really just a wonderful thing if you really think about it.

A special place in time, yes, it is definitely the Museum of the Gulf Coast. Not only because it has beautiful things in it; but it is a place where you can go and learn about the history of your city. It is also a place where you can learn about all the people before your time who did things that developed into some of the modern technology that we have now. There are also people from our time who have been so successful that they have the opportunity to be in there, and that is really something to be proud of. It's really hard for me to write this paper because I went in the museum with a negative attitude thinking that I wouldn't see anything that would impress. I came out being really impressed, and really kind of speechless. It was really great and I not exaggerating. I will definitely bring my child there when she is old enough to understand what's going on. It's a very informative place and if you have never been I would advise you to go. It will help you to see Port Arthur is a boring place and has no history, we're wrong and you should go visit the Museum of the Gulf Coast.

Early Expressions 2004

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Statement of Editorial Policy

The editorial staff of EARLY EXPRESSIONS 2004 would like to thank all of the students who submitted work for consideration to EARLY EXPRESSIONS 2004 this semester. Unfortunately, not every entry can be published. In order to insure fair and impartial judging and publication selection, the copy without the author's name is submitted to the judge.. The judge at no time sees the copy which identifies the individual author.

The purpose of EARLY EXPRESSIONS 2004 is to publish the best entries for consideration. We are proud of the entries published in this issue and appreciate the support of all students who contributed to and enjoy the magazine.

Peggy Gene Knight, Editor

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