

In my fifty-two years of live I have many memories. When they called out our names one by one, my mind..... My favorite place has changed since the ballpark days....both of them in together but in different positions.... When I made the descision to go back to school my fr..... was.....

Early Expressions 2011





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

# Early Expressions

2011  
Volume XII



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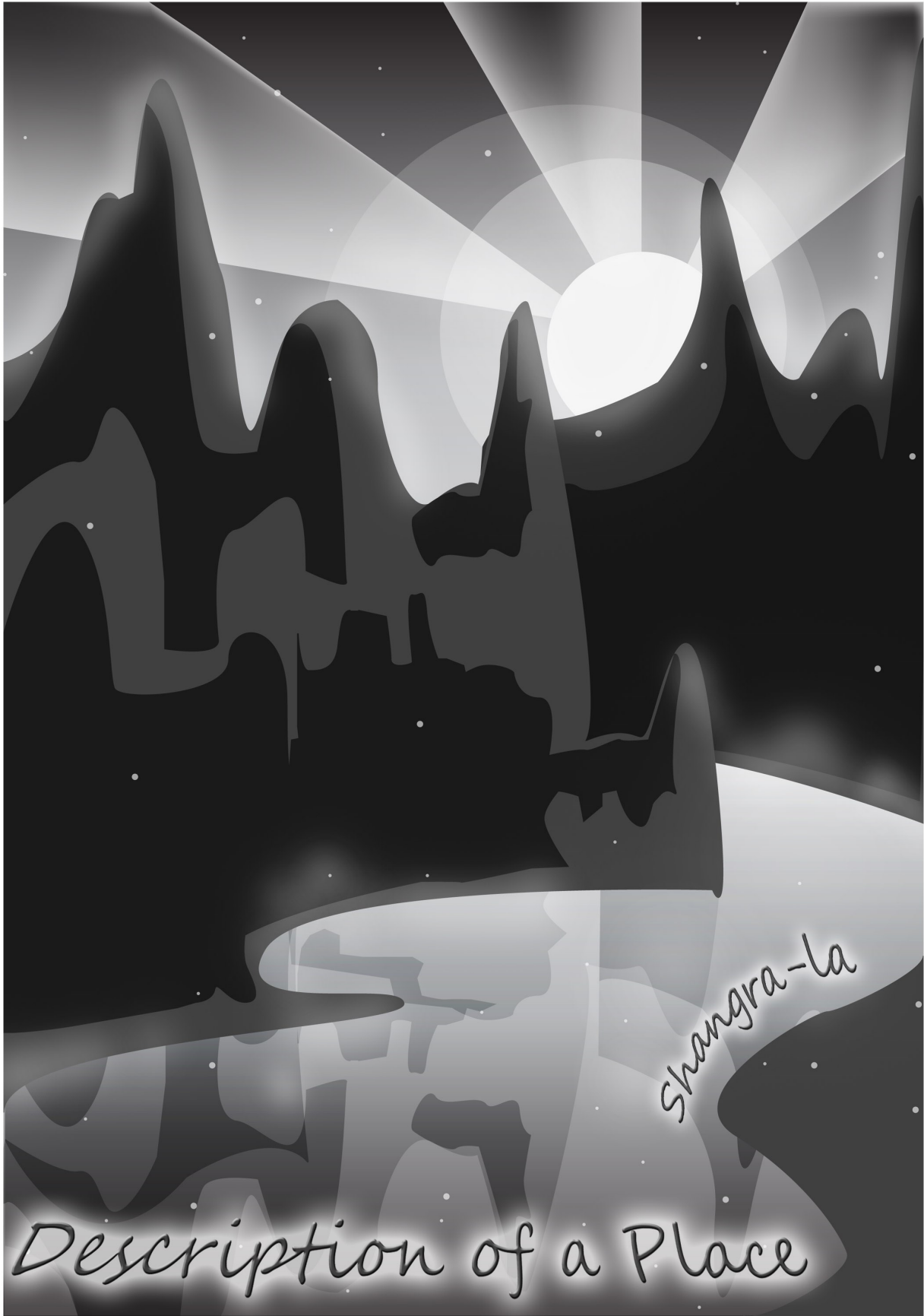
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Shangra-la

Description of a Place



# Shangra-La: Description of a Place

## First Place

August

Antonio Menn

The month of August, what a beautiful month! I can only remember how the great bright sun used to go down at evening time. August of 2010, I was in Nicaragua. The beauty it is to spend August in another part of the world! How amazing it is to be in a different country observing and living in the month of August. Thank God, I can remember like it was yesterday. The month of August cannot be judged. Judge not any other month of the year as well. Time and season must shake hands. Time to be time must have its seasons. Seasons cannot come without the work of time. The past summer of the year 2010, I was at the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua. The state of Texas in the United States of America is hot around the month of August. The same is not so at the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua which is also known as the moskitia. The climate is tropical and colorful in the moskitia, beautiful at its most in the Indian lands especially. The month August in the indigenous lands is also known as the month of rain. The rain starts at morning, and it stops at night. The rain starts at night and stops at morning. The church organ sounds early before the sun shines. The rain drops make melody throughout the day. Thy sleep is sweet and thy waking up how exquisite! Thunder and lightning, the wind and the rain have teased music. Season has brought forth its climate. The organ, the piano, the guitar and the base have kissed the weather with its melody. Time has brought forth instruments by the use of man, and by the command of its "Creator." How marvelous is thy "Creator" who made the heavens and the earth. Time and season have met and bore August. The month of August, what a beautiful month!



# Shangra-La: Description of a Place

## Second Place

### Mom's House

Elora Michel

When I think of the perfect place where I would like to be, I think of my mom's house. It makes me feel warm and safe. I especially love being there when she cooks. When I walk through the front door, the smell of fresh flowers and burning candles tickle my nose. Standing at the door for just a moment, I can hear my mom singing to a Willie Nelson song. I cannot help but giggle at her poor singing, and the goofiness of her voice. I walk up slowly to the bar, but before I can sit down, she motions me to come to her. She starts to dance with me, and I cannot help but grin out of embarrassment, but then I start to dance as well. After the song was done, she gave me a big hug and a kiss on the cheek. She turned to the counter and continued to chop her unfinished onion. My mom was making my favorite; it was my granny's baked potato soup. I walked towards her and asked if I could help. "But of course!" she said. Helping my mom cook was something I have always enjoyed. It was something we both loved to do, and we could still spend quality time together. As I was peeling the potatoes, I was just grinning ear to ear at how my mom felt so carefree and how much fun she was having. I love coming home to my mom in the kitchen because of how much fun I have just seeing my mom. The kitchen was a place for my mom to let go all of the stress from the long day at work or the worries from life. When I was little I remember my mom sitting me on the counter to help her roll out the dough for her chicken and dumplings. I loved sitting there, watching her sing along to the radio as loud as she wanted, being goofy as ever, and just having a blast. She would sometimes want to cook for no reason at all. All of the memories and great times I have had as a child always go back to my mom. I would pick my mom and her house over any trip of a lifetime. Home is my paradise, and it is perfect in so many ways!





# Shangra-La: Description of a Place

## Third Place

### My Most Favorite Place

Wesley McGuire

My favorite place has changed throughout the years. As a child my most favorite place was with my friends playing sandlot baseball all day long. Upon reaching high school my most favorite place was with my girlfriend. When our courtship grew into marriage my most favorite place was with my wife and our families. When we had kids my most favorite place was anywhere we could be together, whether it be at church or at the ballpark. From 1994 through 2002 my most favorite place was Groves American Baseball League. Many a day was spent cutting grass, moving sand, and getting ready for the nightly games. The grass was as green as the Emerald Isle. When other ballparks had plain old San Augustine grass, we had Bermuda grass like the kind at Major League ballparks. Our infield "dirt" was not the usual 60-40 sand that is on most all ballparks, we had crushed brick like the Major League ballparks. We were the finest Youth League ballpark in Jefferson County.

During the years at GABL I was a member of the Board of Directors including two stints as President in 1995 and 2000. The relationships grew, and my wife and I both remember these days as some of our most favorite. We had many friends we still keep in touch with today. Many of the young boys turned into great young men and still speak to me today. These young men are now between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-five, and many still call me Coach Wes. My wife is still referred to as Miss Mary. These names in my opinion rank right behind Mom or Dad. I feel as though I have more than just the three children that I fathered.

My favorite place has changed since the ballpark days. Those days spent with the two boys outnumbered the days spent with my daughter. Now that my/our daughter lives in Austin and married this past summer, my favorite place is when we travel to the Austin area and spend time with her. The Hill Country is beautiful in the spring, and if you have never seen the Texas State Capitol at night you are really missing a beautiful sight. As one could surmise my most favorite place is anywhere that my family is.



# Shangra-La: Description of a Place

## Honorable Mention

### The Last Seven Years

Vasquel Jerry

I have traveled around the world in the last seven years. During my time in the United States navy, I was deployed to countries that my superiors called “In harm’s way.” Going in and coming out of harm’s way was more like two to three day vacations. I have been to England, France, Croatia, Greece, Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, and many other countries. Getting away from the United States and visiting other countries gave me the opportunity to learn more about the world and its history. I learned about other races, cultures, languages, and ways of living. Every country that I visited had some differences and similarities with America, but no place compares to Abbeville, Louisiana. Located south of Lafayette, this is the city that I lived in until I moved to Texas when I was about eight years old.

I was born in Lafayette in 1985, but my family resided in Abbeville at the time. My biological mother and my father separated a few months before I was born; and somehow, I ended up with my grandmother. She decided to take the role as my mother while my biological mother went back to Texas with my two older brothers. I lived with my mother, my brother, and two older sisters which were now of the same relations to my biological mother. My grandmother always told that they were my brother and sisters also. My biological mother passed away when I was four years old, and my oldest brother followed her three years later. My father literally took me from my grandmother in 1993, which was the year that I turned eight years old. I did not see my mother and the rest of the family again until about ten years later when I graduated high school. I felt like I was returning from the dead, and the whole town was waiting for my arrival.

I spent most of my time trying to explore the whole town, so after meeting all of the family again I was ready to ride around. It was an overwhelming experience to see the city that I missed and dreamed about for years. The town actually looked smaller than it was before I left, but everything was still the same. The roads did not have any lines in them. There were two privately owned convenience stores and a tobacco hut in the whole town. I was actually amazed by the fact that these stores were still open. I visited just about everyone

that I could remember and even people that I did not remember. They obviously remembered me. I went to the burial sites of my biological mother and brother. I visited the projects that I used to respectfully cause trouble in from the time I began to walk. I walked around the huge fields that were behind our family's house but belonged to a farmer. My brothers and I used to jump off our neighbor's shed, over the barbed wire fence, and into the farmer's field. We would run and play until we were either chased by cows, or someone stepped in some cow dung.

Visiting Abbeville brought back many memories of the years that I lived there. The thing that I enjoyed most about the visit was the family's traditional cookout. We had fried fish, fried shrimp, boiled shrimp, boiled crawfish, potatoes, corn, and a Creole pot of gumbo. My mother made her famous special sauce for dipping the crawfish and shrimp. All of my brothers and sisters were there with an exception of my biological mother and oldest brother. I had a ball eating, listening to music, dancing, and looking at old pictures with my family. Sitting and talking to my grandmother was one of the best things about the visit. She talked about all of the funny stories and mischief that I got into when I was little. My mother has passed away now, but I keep in touch with my family; and I try to visit whenever I get the chance.

# Shangra-La: Description of a Place

## Honorable Mention

### The Regimen

Charles Simon

The place which is sacred to me is just a thought until I finish my routine regimen. After I change into clothes that I disregard most of the time I set out on a mission. I willingly put my body through vigorous tests, pushing it further than it can go. Feeling the soles of my shoes repetitively pound against the ground in the same repetitive motion brings me peace and emotions which I am unable to express. I strain myself for self comfort in hopes of regretting the pain the following morning. Releasing all emotions, pushing weights three times my own weight gives me pleasure; pushing, pulling, grabbing, and dropping, all while listening to the music that shows no remorse for the emotions I express. Letting the time fly by as I feel the muscles in my body tense with every breath is a sure sign that I am at peace. My body cries for remorse, but I do not give in. One more lap I tell myself, just one more lap! Gasping for air shows me that I am putting forth the effort to better my life in the way that is self esteem. After what seems like a long day's work I head to the peaceful place which I look forward to from the start. I believe this to be my sanctuary. My body forgives me for the torturous tasks that I have bestowed upon myself for self fulfillment. Upon opening the glass door coated in the moist and humid air makes me sigh in relief. I am undisturbed, alone, and happy. "I am finished," I think to myself as I breathe in the cloud that surrounds me. I grab the hose to rinse off the sweat of people that share the same compaction. As I sit motionless I am able to reflect upon my actions from the past and for the future. My sanity calls my name, and I listen.









# Memories: Description of a Person

## First Place

Grandmother

Katrina Johnson

Now that I can have her only in memory, I keep her even closer to my heart. My grandmother was a very important person in my life, and she still is. Her long black hair, high cheek bones and nose showed her to be of Native American descent. I remember her standing in the kitchen; she was smiling that beautiful smile, asking me to clean up after she cooked. I was the only one who could clean the kitchen to her liking. There were days I would come home after being away, and she would be listening to French music, dancing in the kitchen while she prepared dinner. The minute I walked through the door, she would come, and grab my hand, and make me dance with her. I would say I am a pretty fine dancer thanks to her.

There are other times my grandmother was not in the best of health. I remember her in that old recliner she loved so much; looking a hundred years tired, like she could sleep forever, never wanting us to see just how much help she really needed. Many days I would just sit next to her and hold her hand. Her skin was so soft, delicate, like that of a baby, yet very wrinkled. The scent of fresh linen always seemed to waft around her. Her hair was as soft as cotton, but she hated the graying. I always knew she was not feeling well due to the silence. On good days she would be fussing about anything and everything, and that was a sound I grew to love. There were plenty of nights that I would sleep with my grandmother: I was very spoiled by her. She would say her rosary in French, and I would follow along in English. I could understand what she was saying because she always spoke to me in French. There were times that I would just listen because hearing the rosary in French is the most beautiful thing to listen to.

When she died it was the saddest thing I have ever had to deal with. My grandmother was more of a mother to me because I lived with her instead of my mother. I am very proud to be her granddaughter and think about her often. There is not one day that goes by, that I forget to tell her I love her and how much. I would not ever want her to feel like she was forgotten.



# Shangra-La: Description of a Place

## Second Place

### My Dad

Shelbi Pellegrin

I bet everyone can look back and think of somebody that they knew that is now deceased. My father passed away when I was only fifteen, but I will always remember what he looked like, the way he sounded, the way he felt, what he smelt like, and what he loved to eat.

Three years before my dad passed away, he was welding at O.M.S. in a tank. Shortly after he started welding, he saw a huge ball of fire swirling towards him. Before he knew it he was on fire. When he returned home, he had third degree burns on the left side of his face all the way down to the left side of his hip. After putting medication on it, most of it disappeared.

My dad was about five foot three inches tall with brown hair and blue eyes. He was also kind of stocky and he walked around with a cane after his accident. My dad's voice was very deep, but, he was also extremely loud. He loved to whistle and play the harmonica. He listened to ZZ Top, which was his favorite band. Since my father was a welder his hands always felt really rough. During deer season my dad would always have a really rough beard because he would not shave it until he shot a deer. One year he got lucky and found a deer that had already been shot. My dad always smelled different. It all depended on what he was doing at the time. When he got back from work, he smelled of grease and oil. Then when he was just finished bathing, he always smelled of Old Spice. He loved the taste of shrimp gumbo with fried fish.

I have to come to realize it is really hard to let someone you knew go, but God has a time for everyone. It just so happened to be my dad's time, but I will always be able to have him with me.



# Shangra-La: Description of a Place

## Third Place

### Grandfather

#### Huyen Quan

My grandfather died when I was 18 years old. He passed away from my life, but he gave me a lot of great memories. He always will be my model and my pride.

My grandfather was 80 years old, an old man, who was the most intelligent, kind and silent person. He was never drunk, but he smoked when he felt sad and lonely. He always wore a gray shirt and black pants. His clothes made me feel comforted, and I know he was a very simple person. My parents often said Grand-pa bothered them because he talked and moved too slowly. He taught my parents to turn into good adults, who would become their child's model. My parents thought they were enough grown to know exactly what they needed to do. They thought that they did not need to hear anything from him. They did not hear anything from me, either. They never asked me about how my school was going on. I always waited to hear a story before bedtime, but they were never available. They had a lot of parties, coming home at midnight. They were not looking after me and just got in bed. While my parents forgot their responsibility with their child, my grand-pa took hold of it. He took care of me all the time. He checked my homework every day, read a story to me, gave me the best way to learn, and taught me how to become a good child, a good friend, and a good student. His voice was so warm and emotional. I still remember when I came home with my Math test paper. The day before the test, I wasted my time with television shows and entered the class with nothing in my mind. I could not solve the math problem; I got a zero. My teacher needed my parents to sign the paper and return it to her by the next day. I decided I would not attend class and pretended to be sick. I lied to my parents and my teacher. After dinner, I got in my room. I heard someone come nearby to my room. My grandfather knocked on the door, and he came in. He asked me what happened to me because he saw me eat very little at mealtime. I looked at his soft eyes, and I told him my problem. I thought he would be mad and tell my parents, but he just smiled and touched my head. He said, "You had the courage to tell me the truth; you are the best girl. Anyone can make a mistake, but when someone fixes it, they are turned into a good person, they achieve success." After that day, I

made time to learn and relax. I never meant to make my grandfather sad again.

Now, I can never see my grandfather again. However, I promised him, I will study hard to get success and turn into a good person; that is what he wanted from me.

# Shangra-La: Description of a Place

## Honorable Mention

### If I Only Had More Than a Memory!

Vasquel Jerry

There were not many influential individuals in my life as I was growing up. I was the youngest of all my brothers and sisters, and my grandmother kept me close to her because she felt that I was too small to run with the other boys. They were glad that she felt that way because they felt that I was too bad, and that I would get them in trouble. There were four of us boys, but only two of them were my biological brothers. They would sometimes throw rocks at me and tell me to stay home when I tried to follow them. I retaliated with as many fist of rocks as I could until they were out of my throwing distance, then I would run and tell my grandma that they were throwing rocks at me. One of my most memorable moments involved an altercation between me and my oldest biological brother.

One spring day in the year 1991, my oldest brother and I were sword fighting with sticks in the front yard. In an instance we found ourselves mad that our sticks were not the same size. We literally searched for bigger sticks and hit each other with them which also lead to us throwing rocks at one another. My brother had bigger hands, and the bigger stick at the end of the battle which lasted for about fifteen minutes. I did not feel victorious at the end of the battle, and pride was getting the best of me. I walked around for about an hour with the memory of the shameful defeat on my mind; the more I thought about it, the more I wanted revenge. I walked in the house then went to our bedroom where my brother was watching the loud television. His back was turned to the already opened door which made it easy for me to quietly sneak up on him from behind.

Standing behind my brother while itching for revenge, I noticed that he was staring at the television as if he was daydreaming. I balled my fists, took a deep breath, and starting swinging. Unable to defend himself, he put his head between his legs, and his hands over his head. I finally stopped swinging when I ran out of breath. Thinking that my brother would retaliate immediately, I did not let my guard down. He came to his feet with a reaction that I was not expecting. He stood next to the chair with his fists balled, but he didn't swing. He just stood there, three feet and eight inches tall with dark brown skin. His flattop haircut made him

about an inch and a half taller. A light brown birthmark covered his left sideburn, and his bottom lip hung almost to his chin. Even today I picture my brother standing there crying out loud, while I walked away.

If only I had more than a memory! If only just once, I could go back and relive that situation. I would face him, tell him that it would be in best favor to stand up, and then fight him. The outcome probably would have been different if we both were aware that we were about to fight. I was aware, but he was not; and he probably was hurt more than I was at the time. Now it is exactly twenty years later, and I am the one hurting from the same altercation. If I could, I would hug him and tell him that I love him with all my heart. I would tell him that it does not matter if we fight, I will still have the same love for him. I dreamed about him once after he died. The dream was actually a reflection of my reality when it hit me that he was gone forever. I realized how much he meant to me, but he was gone. Now that I only have a memory.



# Shangra-La: Description of a Place

## Honorable Mention

June Delores Webb

Wesley McGuire

In my fifty- two years of life I have many memories. Some memories have faded due to my age. However, now that I only have a memory to write about in this assignment, I choose to write about my mother. My mother was truly an angel that walked the earth. She was born in East Texas July 13, 1935. She was the daughter of a Baptist preacher who taught high school history and a second grade teacher. My mother met my father at East Baptist College, in Marshall, Texas. My mother, June Dolores Webb, was born in Marshall, Texas. Her early childhood memories were of meager means. My childhood memories were always not wanting for anything. Maybe I was a little bit spoiled, but, being the youngest of the two children, the baby is supposed to be treated more special.

My earliest memories were of living at the end of a dead end road in Nederland. Mom was a stay at home mom in my early years. We moved to Groves in 1960 when I was two years old, and lived on Ruby Drive. By the time I was four or five we moved to East Drive where my more formidable teen years occurred. I learned to be kind to people from my mom. She worked at GSU until 1992 when she was more or less forcibly retired. During these years I met my future wife Mary Collins. Mom took to Mary and treated her like one of the family since the first time she met her. I often felt she loved Mary more than me, but later realized she had enough love for the both of us.

Her pride and joy was her grandkids. There was never any program or pageant or ballgame she did not attend when she was healthy enough to go. Our daughter Miranda was the third grandchild and first and only granddaughter. Their bond was a special bond that I hope I would be able to reproduce when I have grandkids. My family consists of a beautiful wife, a beautiful daughter, and two handsome sons. The kids were still in school when MeeMaw passed away in October of 2000. She died at the age of 65, and it was much too soon.



# Shangra-La: Description of a Place

## Honorable Mention

### Whisker Kisses

Charles Simon

My grandfather, Charles Frank Milich was a great man. He was a loving husband at home, and a very dedicated individual at work. I have always looked up to him for most of my life as a hero and a role model. Without him, I would not be where I am today. He passed away December 22, 2007, due to lung cancer.

My most common memory of my grandfather in his everyday life was him sitting in his big lazy boy chair in the living room watching TV or reading the newspaper. A very important member of his life is now a constant reminder of him to me, his dog, Mighty Mouse, who always perched himself on his left side in the chair. As my grandfather, he thought it was his duty to teach me as much as he could before his passing. His words have shaped the man I am today. One of the fondest memories I have of him is his love to teach me things. He taught me to fish, how to play chess, how to have patience, and how to be a man. I admired all of his wonderful skills including catching fish. He could always make me smile and loved to give me “whisker kisses” to cheer me up when I was little.

I am writing about my dearest companions. This person has helped me throughout the years. He has showed me the right path and let me make my mistakes in the process. Over the years of my life his ability to help me balance the fun and responsibilities of my daily existence has helped develop me. He was constantly a part of my life as I saw him every weekend. He was more of a father than grandfather to me and showed me many things. I believe my grandfather was the greatest person for me to look up to.





Gravyard

*Description of  
a Place*



# Graveyard: Description of a Place First Place

## Graveyard Experience

Antonio Menn

The great man and the poor man have one thing in common: they all go down to the dust. The rich have it all! They boast of their wealth and they say in their hearts, "I have built my house above the stars; who can bring me down to the ground?" The foolishness, if only he would have known that the wages of sin is death. The poor man and his poverty, he has nothing to gain, but yet he chooses to follow the path of the rich; what vanity! The graveyard is the end of the road, the boundary line that has been set against man. Nicaragua, the largest country in Central America along with its neighbor Honduras was the victim of Hurricane Felix. On the fourth of September 2007, Hurricane Felix made landfall just south of the border between Nicaragua and Honduras, in a region historically known as the Miskito coast. The Miskito coast is a region where the indigenous tribes such as the Pech, Lenca, Chorti, Mam, Garifuna, Wanki, Miskito, Tawahka, Mayanga, Rama, and the Sumo Indians still live the same way they used to centuries ago. Television is very rare in a household because of poverty, and there is no electricity in the jungles. Hurricane Felix came through as a thief in the night, destroying everything in its path. Winds were blowing 160 miles per hour. Felix was a category five hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson hurricane scale. Houses that were made out of wood did not stand a chance against the monstrous winds. For the Indians who were living in bamboo homes in the jungle, God bless their souls, there was no mercy. The Nicaraguan news did not report the truth about the deaths in the Miskito coast. The seamen and the fishermen who were out on sea, all died. Only a few were alive to witness what they had seen. The day of mourning and tears, you could hear the weeping of mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, the old and the young. Dead bodies were piled up one from another, one by one: thrown into the great ditch that was dug by the remaining people, not knowing who died and who lived but themselves. There were the rich and the poor, the great and the ungreat, the wise and the foolish, the just and the unjust, death respects no man. My God why? Our great elders have said we have forgotten the instructions on how to live on the earth.

I am grieved in my heart to know that I am also man! The sting of death comes like a thief in the night; I cannot endure: "Prepare yourself and make ready," the Creator has announced. The clock is ticking. I cannot foresee my time or the end of time, but I am ready. One day the silver cord shall break.



# Graveyard: Description of a Place

## Second Place

### The Graveyard

Andrea Almonte

The grave that comes to mind is my grandparents'. It is so vivid in my mind. My grandparents came from Niagara Falls, New York. They would come and visit a lot. They always said, "We are going to move to Texas to be with you kids." Their last wish was to be buried at Oak Bluff Cemetery in Port Neches, Texas.

My grandfather loved trees, birds, and nature. We picked out the plot. The plot is underneath a beautiful tree. This would be a restful place. My grandfather died eight years prior to my grandmother. My grandmother and I would go visit my grandfather on a regular basis. A peaceful feeling would always come over us. We would talk about all kinds of different things, for example how pretty the flowers are on the grave.

The tombstone is grey granite. It has a picture of praying hands in the center, and underneath is scripted, "always and forever." The script was something my grandmother always wanted. The tombstone has a flower vase on both sides. We would put new flowers out there each season. It felt strange looking at the tombstone because my grandmother's name was on it. The date was not filled in yet. She would talk to my grandfather and say, "Joe, I will see you soon, but I am not ready yet." Eight years later, I was going to the cemetery alone. The date was filled in.

I still visit the grave. It brings sadness to me. It is not the same, like when I went there with Grandma. There is a peaceful feeling that comes over me. They seem to be protected, as all the graves do. The flowers are always there, no matter how the weather is. There is never any trash. The graves always look like they came out of a picture. The grounds are mowed and manicured.

I miss my grandparents dearly. I am content knowing they are together again. I am glad they are buried in Port Neches, where I can go visit them at any time although I should go see them more often.



# Graveyard: Description of a Place

## Third Place

### Graveyard

Angelia Kimball

Tuesday at 1:30, the weather was very beautiful with a light breeze. The sun shone very bright. The air smelled so fresh and clean. I pulled up in the graveyard. There were thousands of tombs with flowers on every tomb. The tombs were very old. Some tombs were white, grayish and marble. There were several oak trees all over the graveyard. The oak trees were big and tall and leaves were all over the top of the trees. It was very pretty. I walked up to the two grave sites with two tombs. On the tombs, there were names. The name was "Williamson". I looked at their name. I was thinking about them. Who they were, what had they looked like, were their lives easy or hard? I wondered how many children they had. As I was thinking about them, I noticed that their tombs were white with some grayish color. There were some chips on them that shone in the daylight. There was a flower vase set in between the two tombs. The tombs were white with a grayish color on it. It has some edges chipped on it. There was a flower vase in between the two tombs. The grass was flat with a green-yellowish color. The big oak tree sat behind the two tombs with a bench close to the tree. It sat very close to the oak trunk. I stood by the two tombs and looked at them, and again wondered about that family. I then looked up and looked at all those thousands of tombs on their grave sites. It made me think about their lives when they were alive, and I wondered who they were and how they lived. It made me think about my own family and how lucky I was to still have them. I prayed in silence. I prayed for the people in their graves. I looked one more time, and I left.



# Graveyard: Description of a Place

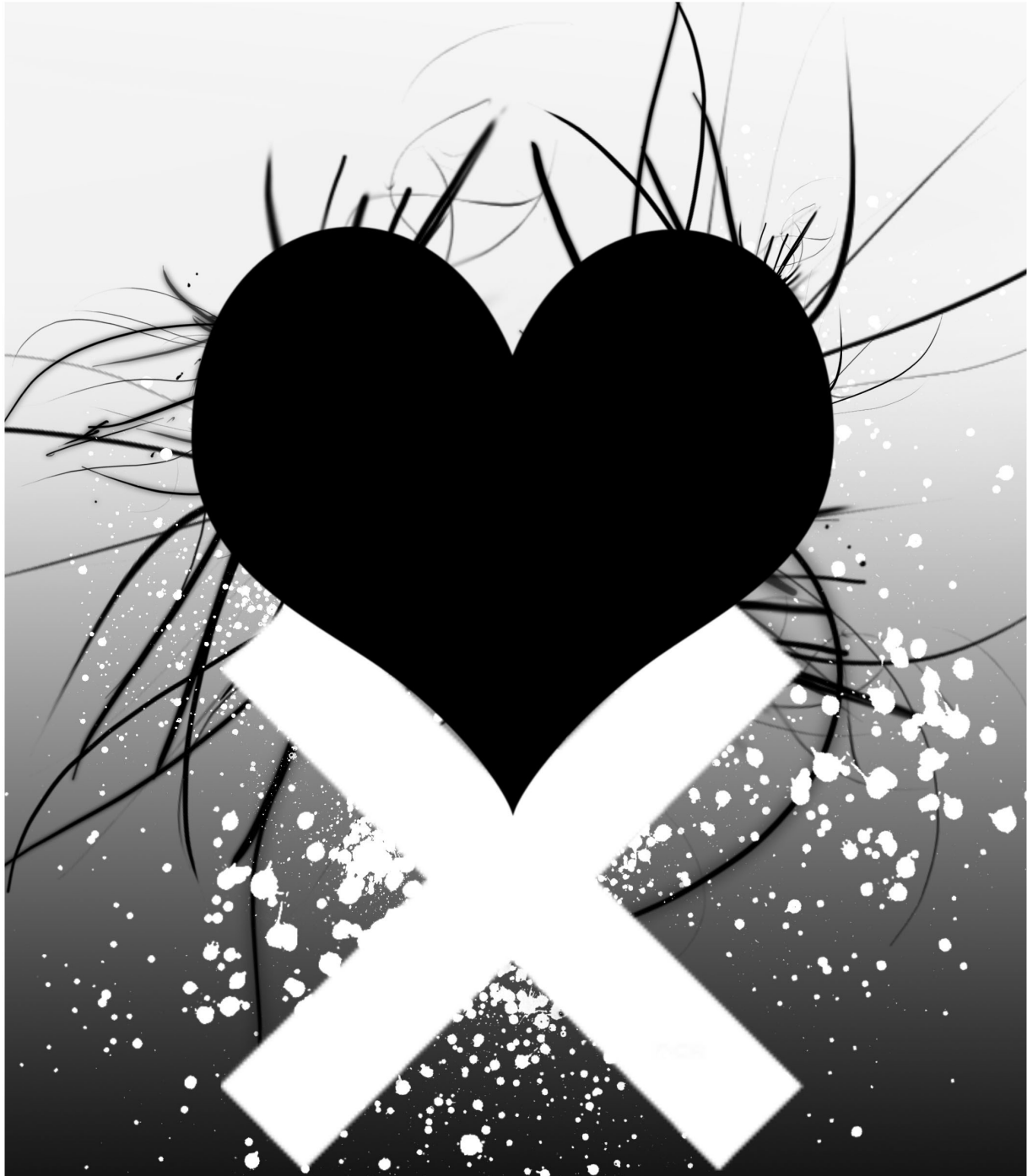
## Honorable Mention

### The Late Ethel Hopkins

Danielle Trahan

I inhale a deep breath of the evening air and exhale the built up tension. I journey through thousands and thousands of head stones. They were some big, some small, and even unmarked graves. The sun is shining a brilliant bright ray, the birds chirping drowning out the motors of the local cars on the nearby highway. I walked pass familiar graves of people who I encountered during their visit on earth. I traveled through fresh graves and some as old as I am. Mothers, fathers, kids, grandparents, it was quite a discomfoting feeling being the only living being. I arrive at the final head stone I have been searching for. Ethel Hopkins sunrise 1952 sunset 2004. "A loving mother, we miss you dearly." I have never visited the headstone of Ms. Ethel since her death. The sight of her head stone brought up many feelings that have not occurred since her funeral in November of 2004. I avoided this visit for some time. I was not sure if I was emotionally strong enough. I stood at her grave, spoke with her a for a brief minute and expressed how much I missed her and only wished to be in her company once more. My experience at the graveyard was quite peaceful and tranquil. At one point I had an eerie feeling about visiting the graveyard and the present of being there with the dead. I once heard the saying, "Don't be afraid of the dead; be afraid of the living!" This experience has given me a peace of mind about the graveyard. I think I might make it my special spot, to shut the world out and have a conversation with the late Ethel Hopkins.





*I Love & I Hate:  
Modern Twist on an Ancient  
Topic*





# I Love & I Hate: Modern Twist on an Ancient Topic

## First Place

### I Love and I Hate

Vasquel Jerry

I hate to see you go, but I love to watch you leave.

I hate your list of wants, but I love to fulfill your needs.

I love the compliments I get about you as well as the rumors.

I hate your annoying laugh, but I love your sense of humor.

I love when you're compromising, thoughtful, and considerate.

I hate when your actions are hateful, spiteful, and belligerent.

I hate when you are upset, but I love your angry face.

I hate the thought of separating because our love cannot be replaced.

I love to watch you peacefully sleep, but I hate to watch you snore.

I even love the rainy days as we lie and listen to it pour.

I hate the fact that you question your trust in me, but I love that you're concerned.

I hate that I went through so much to find you but at least I can say that I've learned.

I'll love you after God calls me, or he comes to take you.

I love you for the person that you are. I even love to hate you.



# I Love & I Hate: Modern Twist on an Ancient Topic

## Second Place

### I Hate You I Love You

Eduardo Lopez

Only to know that you exist makes me  
hate you. I hate you for how you look at  
me. For how you speak to me. For how  
you worry for me.

I hate you for your eyes. For your  
voice. For your smile.

For that it hurts me to listen how you  
laugh. For that it hurts me to see that  
you remember me. For that I am  
important to you.

I hate you because you got into my  
world and now I cannot extract you.

For that before I could live without  
you. For that I did not need to see  
you. It did not matter to me where you  
were.

I hate you for that you make me feel  
very well, yet I cannot say it to you. I  
hate you because you have my heart.  
You for whom I cry for. Because for  
you I laugh. Because thanks to you I

feel. Because for you I love.  
I hate you because you don't love. I  
hate you because I do not have you.  
For that you do not want me. I hate  
you because you know me and you know  
what I feel.

I hate you for that I cannot say to  
you what you already know. That I love  
you.

And I do love you.

# I Love & I Hate: Modern Twist on an Ancient Topic

## Third Place

### I Love I Hate

Wesley McGuire

I love the fact that I found the love of my life at seventeen years of age. I love the many years of happiness that we have spent together. I love the dates we used to go on. I love the wedding we had thirty years ago. I love the three children we have together. I love a medium well rib-eye and baked potato from Texas Roadhouse. I love pork-a-bobs from the Pecan Festival every year. I love Christmas time with my wife's family every year. I love watching Diners Drive-ins and Dives on the Food Network. I love common folk with common sense.

I hate that my job came to an end before I reached full retirement age. I hate politics and the politicians that seem so righteous but are crooked as a scoliosis patient's x-ray. I hate conservative and liberal cable news stations ala Fox and MSNBC. I hate having to make classes just because I have never been to college. I hate not being given the benefit of the doubt as to my intelligence. I hate the fact that thirty years on the job means nothing as far as college is concerned.



# I Love & I Hate: Modern Twist on an Ancient Topic

## Honorable Mention

I Love I Hate

Jacob Bland

I Love I Hate.

I sleep and wake.

To walk the road we all must take.

I hate and love the same as you

for that is all I know to do

but if I speak and you don't relate

at least we all can love and hate.





# I Love & I Hate: Modern Twist on an Ancient Topic

## Honorable Mention

I Love I Hate

Robyn Jones

I love – I hate the struggles of life

I know without them I could not be who I am today-but I could do without the bumps and bruises of life's hard journeys.

I hate and love the day in and day out routine of my existence up in the morning to get the kids off to school, then school myself and then off to work at night.

On one hand it gives me purpose, something to be proud of.

On the other hand I work hard everyday just to pay taxes and be denied social security at 62 due to lack of funding.

I love I hate-working



# I Love & I Hate: Modern Twist on an Ancient Topic

## Honorable Mention

### Twin Friends

Dulani Kuruppu

I have twin friends,

In my life,

One gives me life,

One gives me death.

One helps me to my affair,

it was broken

because of the other one.

One gives me relationships,

The other one breaks my relationship,

The other gives a key of hell.

My twin friends are like a coin,

both of them in together,

but in different positions,

They are my friends called love and

hate.

I love my love friend,

but I hate my hate friend,

because he makes me hate.



# I Love & I Hate: Modern Twist on an Ancient Topic

## Honorable Mention

### My Life

Mohamed Abusaleh

I love my life in many ways. I hate my life in many ways. I love my life because I have a family. I hate my life because my family does not help me. I love my life because I have two jobs. I hate my life because I have two jobs, and I never get a day off, and work all day. I love my life because of the jobs I have. I hate my life because I cannot quit my jobs because then I cannot pay for college or my way of life. I love my life because I have something's I want. I hate my life because the things I really need I cannot get. I love my life because I am in college. I hate my life because I never get a chance to do my homework because I am always working. I love my life because of my mother, sisters, and brother. I hate my life because my father never helps me with anything but helps everybody else. I love my life because I try my best. I hate my life because when I try my best, it is not good enough. I love my life because people say I am good at something. I hate my life because the things people say I am good at is something I hate doing. I love my life, and I hate my life. One day I will find out what more to love or to hate.



# I Love & I Hate: Modern Twist on an Ancient Topic

## Honorable Mention

### I Hate and Love

Ebony Woodson

I hate and love. Why?  
What's a life of platonic love

I hate and love but I feel the  
scorn and self loathe you left  
me with

I hate and love the battle scars  
because they remind me of you









# Once Upon a Time: Narrative

## First Place

Yvonne  
Yvette Pena

Yvonne is a woman who has long black flowing locks, deep red plump lips and skin as soft as a rose peddle. She dreams of a lavish and fun filled life. She is working at Wal-mart when Leon bumps into her life. They bumped into each other as she was replacing the Snickers at register eleven. Leon is as tall as the peaks of Mountain Everest. His hair is thick and dark. He has a firm bottom and strong calves.

Yvonne has never had such a connection with anyone; except that one time when the mailman waved hello to her. She loves cats and cares for five. Yvonne spends her nights watching I Love Lucy reruns. Her life is going to change forever.

They married in a Catholic church; she wore a dress with diamonds from the top of her train to the eight foot end. The church was filled with white roses and a sweet aroma of honey suckle. She and Leon loved each other so much. They had two children; a daughter they named Jessica and a boy they named Jesse. Their children were healthy and beautiful. Yvonne and Leon bought a five bedroom mansion in Orange County. Her maids clean and organize the house while she is out with her assistant. Yvonne spends her days in the spa. She and her assistant shop at all the most elegant boutiques. Her husband is an energetic top selling real estate agent in Orange County. She is happy.

“Mam,” can you please hand me that box of cigarettes behind you?” She looks at the guy at the register and comes to. “Yes sir.” She realizes that she did it again. Her shift ended, and she clocked out. She just had another ordinary day at work. She returned to her one bedroom apartment in Oakland. Her five cats rubbed against her leg and showed their affection for her. Yvonne sat on her over worn out couch that had a cheese stain from the nachos she had on Saturday. She turned on her television set and watched her “I Love Lucy” shows.



# Once Upon a Time: Narrative

## Second Place

Finally  
Jared Hickman

May 20, 2010 was the day I graduated from high school, and I was done with it forever. That morning I woke up, went outside, and sat on the front porch. The sun was beaming in my face, but it did not bother me because I knew today was the day I was done with school and leaving that dump for good.

Later on that day I went out with a few of my friends. They were Zach Giles, Lauris Phelps, Garrett Phelps, and Will Heironimus. We were watching Youtube. There were some metal bands doing some crazy stuff on drums and guitar. Garrett had to go to work and told his little brother that he would be at his graduation later on that night.

Later that evening it was getting close to the time for graduation to kick off. Then my cousin Jake Bland from Bridge City, Texas showed up and brought his friends which were mine as well, Jacob Buffington, Cameron Anderson, Lauren Quarles, and Corey Giles. I have never felt so excited to see them. I ran up and hugged them all.

When they called out our names one by one, my mind was thinking, man, I cannot believe I am graduating. I knew it would probably be a long time before I ever saw some of these people again. When they called my name, I shot right up, received my diploma, shook hands with the principal, moved my tassel from right to left, then walked off stage knowing that I was done with high school forever. Finally, I was a high school graduate.



# Once Upon a Time: Narrative

## Third Place

### First Love

#### Deborah Trahan-Hendrix

Aunt Holly believed in telling the story of her first love, who will always have a place in her heart. The home town high school has a large tree in front, and on it reads “Derrick loves Holly”. We know how it really looks, with a large heart and their names were carved in the center of it. Aunt Holly would sit in her lounge chair with a cup of tea preparing to tell her love story. My aunt would tell of her first love as if she is living it all over again. I remembered the story as if it was yesterday.

The McBride’s, were a very popular family in Longs, Texas, rich in land and of course with land comes money. Holly McBride graduated from Stone Creek High School, at the top of her class. Although everything was hand given to her, Holly did not want to attend the local college. Holly dreamed of attending college a few hundred miles away from home, so her family would not control her friends any longer. She enrolled at Texas State University, two hundred fifty miles from home. Holly was the captain of the dance team in high school, and she also joined the TSU dance squad as well. She dreamed of dancing on the football fields, and the basketball courts; however she only could choose one.

A week before spring semester began, Holly had dance practice. Grades were very important to her, Holly decided to perform basketball season only. Basketball season started, and she had a chance to show off her dancing skills. It never crossed her mind that she would meet the man of her dreams. Holly fantasized about her lover, imagined him holding her hands, looking into her eyes while her heart raced faster and faster. Standing six feet three inches tall, the point guard for the team, and the most valuable player on the team was Derrick Lovely. Derrick noticed Holly one night after the game. He introduced himself, and she responded soft and tenderly, willing to melt in his arms at any moment.

Aunt Holly and Derrick began a relationship together. They did everything together. Derrick dreamed of their future, how their love would grow stronger. The tears would form in

her eyes when Derrick spoke poetically of his feelings of Holly, as if she was a wish come true. Holly smiled inside out at the thought of him. Immediately she could feel his embrace never wanting him to let her go – almost as if she was in harm’s way, without his arms wrapped around her. Derrick loved to run his hands through her long silky black hair. Holly loved the way he loved her back. Things came to life in her body when she drowned in love looking into his deep dark brown eyes. She said every time Derrick kissed her she explored a new feeling inside that would last until the next time. Aunt Holly and Uncle Derrick’s love continued throughout their lives. They grew old and grey together, and still act as if they fell in love for the first time yesterday.



# Once Upon a Time: Narrative Honorable Mention

## Once Was Enough Trevor Edelen

Looking back over the years, I think of the first time something was truly expected of me. I never scored the game winning basket, nor did I ever score a touchdown. I never even got the chance to walk the stage. Eleven years, six months, two weeks and three days I went to school, and I did not even get to graduate with my senior class; but that is okay though because my day to shine came the summer of my twentieth birthday.

I had been toying with the idea of going back to school ever since I got my GED. You see my grandfather is the only one in my family to have a college degree, and he has his master's degree in architecture. Talk about some big shoes to fill! I had discussed the idea with my grandpa. He was tickled pink at the idea of his grandson "going to college and making a man out of himself". We planned a day to go speak with the college advisors and get registered for college. Little did I know that I had a big challenge ahead of me. Trying to get registered in college is like trying to get an old lady to eat Chinese food. On Monday April 26, 2010 I woke up extra early and had a big breakfast consisting of what I like to call brain food. Eggs, bacon, biscuits and gravy, and it would not be breakfast without toast and jelly. After finishing my breakfast I was on my way to becoming a college student. I had found out from my grandpa that I would need to speak with a college advisor to figure out what classes I would have to take. Since I already had a good idea of what my major was going to be, I figured that this all would be a breeze. Little did I know.

When I arrived at the student center, my heart was beating so fast I thought it was going to jump out of my chest. I noticed a young man wearing black slacks and a red flannel shirt if he knew where the advisor's office was, and he responded third floor. We pushed the up button and waited on the elevator. Stepping into the elevator, I noticed an elderly woman wearing a bright red dress, with matching lipstick and a set of pearls around her neck carrying a book bag. Surely I thought to myself she was a professor, but as it turned out she was working on her first degree. I guess it is never too late, I thought to myself. Ding! "Third floor", I told my grandpa as the doors opened to the elevator. I could not help but think "Am I

going to be able to do this”? As the door opened I saw what looked to be a hundred people packed inside a cracker box. This would be fun, I said to myself as I signed the sign in sheet.

I waited and waited, and waited. I was beginning to think that maybe college just was not for me, when a pretty blonde haired young lady wearing a vibrant red dress called my name. “Finally”, were the first words to come out of my mouth. After four hours of waiting finally I was getting somewhere. When I sat down she asked me if I knew what my major was. I told her that I had been considering instrumentation. She pulled out a big book and explained the requirements to me and told me I had to take an assessment test. When I told her I did already and handed her my scores, she took a quick look at them, looked back at her computer for what seemed like a split second, and handed me a schedule and told me to bring it to the registrar.

When I got to register, two hours later I might add, they needed information stating I had lived in Texas for over twelve months. They also needed a Texas ID, my GED scores, and my last high school transcript. Trying to get registered for college was like trying to break the bank. It took four long agonizing months of fighting tooth and nail with registration and financial aid, but here I am four months down the road, a registered Lamar Port Arthur College student.

# Once Upon a Time: Narrative Honorable Mention

## The Lesson of Prodigal Living Antonio Menn

Wisdom cries out, and understanding lifts up her voice! The Wise One speaks, “Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.”

When I was a young lad, I wondered if there was a purpose to everything; not knowing, but yet learning. I am understanding. I have learned my lesson. I am an American Indian from the Miskito tribe. I can remember the day I was leaving my Native land. I was in a small canoe that led to a bigger canoe. Everyone in the small canoe had to jump on to the bigger one. As I looked back I saw all the village people. I saw all my family, friends, cousins, and elders waving at me sorrowfully. I did not know why or where I was going, but I waved back; that was the last time I saw them, the last of my remembrance.

“The trees are all gone. The jungle has disappeared. Where am I?” I asked myself. “America,” my mother said. I was enrolled in Franklin Elementary that year. On my first day of school I walked in class, and the teacher asked me all kinds of questions in English. I spoke to her in my Native tongue. She thought I was speaking Spanish, so she called the Spanish teachers. The next thing you know, I was surrounded by all sorts of bilingual teachers, but no one could figure out my speech. Fear was in my heart as I thought about home, and now I was surrounded by different skins of people.

Dad would always discipline me and teach me scriptures from the Bible. He raised me on Christian principles and the Tanakh. We were very poor. I remember when the other children used to criticize me because I wore the same girl pants every day. I did not have much, but Dad gave me three meals a day and disciplined me enough. He corrected me from my errors and did not spare the rod. I was doing good until I started middle school. Middle school was different. A lot of ungodly deeds were done by my fellow contemporaries. As I continued my life, I felt the peer pressure weighing down on my soul. By the time I reached high school I was destroyed. “Evil company corrupts good habits,” Dad always told me, but

the evil company is who I followed. I did not want to listen to Dad's instructions anymore. I was sick of it, sick of Dad and sick of God. My heart grew rebellious. I started cussing, lying, cheating and stealing. I wanted to make Dad feel miserable. I wanted him to feel the pain; not knowing I was only hurting myself. As I grew older I became more and more rebellious. My heart was the Devil himself. Dad grew tired of correcting me; for the first time in my life I saw him mourn. His heart was broken to see the failure of an undisciplined child. I did not care for his sorrow or anything else but sleeping around with women, partying, and living how I wanted to live. I gave up in school, I gave up in life, and I gave up my walk with Christ.

The real world was more difficult than I thought. I was hired on to a shipyard as a fitter helper. Work was hard and tough, "Everyday you wake up to a warm breakfast before you, but the day will come when that day is no more," Mr. Porter would always tell the class and me. I had my welding hood on cutting steel with a grinder inside the ship. The sparks burned my skin, and the heat was unbearable. My tears slowly ran down my cheeks as I remembered Dad's teachings, "My son, the job I do is the work of the lowest dirt man. Heed the instructions of your father and embrace education. One day my son when you become a man there will be two instruments set before you, a machete and a pen; it is your choice." I did not heed my father's instruction. The machete is my livelihood; great pity I am whipped with. My tears are many as the sand and fall unceasingly as the rain. As a lad, dad instructed me not to hang with friends and drugs, but I partied with thugs and crooks. Dad taught me to not give my honor to the wicked one and my years to the cruel one, but the harlot is who I seeked. "My son, do not let thy mother's tears run as the river, but honor thy father and mother that thy days may be plenty." Great sorrow weighs upon me for I am guilty; I have a price to pay that no man can take away.

When Dad whipped me he would always say, "My son, I whip you not because I enjoy beating you, but because I love you." Now I know what Dad meant by this. Many nights I thought to myself if I could have a second chance: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." I now walk with God, my Lord and Savior "Jesus the Christ." There is a purpose to everything!... "Great Spirit, give me wisdom to walk the True Path." Jesus is the second chance in this life that leads to eternal life.

# Once Upon a Time: Narrative Honorable Mention

## The Lesson

Andrea Almonte

Six years ago, I decided to go back to school. It was a great decision, but I was not ready for college. I did not show any self-discipline. I was only seventeen at the time. That was my excuse. I enrolled into an English class. I attended the class late, or sometimes I was not even there at all. Despite my attendance, I made it to the end of the school year. All I had left to do was my final. Needless to say, I did not show up for the final. My teacher bent over backwards to give me a makeup test. I did not show again. I failed the class. Now, six years later I am in the same English class and also have the same teacher.

When I made the decision to return to school my family was so proud of me. I was proud of myself. I let down my family and friends who tried to support me. They were disappointed. My family tried to justify my failure by saying, "Maybe the time was not right." My life is different now. I am more mature and understand the importance of a good education. I also realize the consequences. For example, I am going to have to take an extra class called learning framework. I also hope that my teacher forgives me for wasting her time and does not look at me like a failure.

One day when I have my own children I will have to look back on the decision I made, whether good or bad, and hope my mistakes will help me instill good decisions in them. I will try to support all their decisions as my parents did for me. I will let them also learn from their own mistakes. It is funny how sometimes your past comes to bite you in the butt. It sure is the best lesson learned though. It made a believer out of me.

I guess the outcome, is not too bad. I believe I am doing a lot better now. My family and friends believe in me as well. I am married now and want to finish for myself. I want that degree now. I also believe I am learning proper English. The lesson I learned is when you start something, finish it! It will save you money and time.



# Once Upon a Time: Narrative Honorable Mention

## Demon Rum Keith Capps

My lesson learned happened a few years ago on the day before my birthday. My buddy Jared's mother was throwing out some boxes while I was there visiting. I was curious and started digging in the boxes. I thought it was my lucky day when I found a bottle of rum! I asked his mom what she was doing with it; and when she said she was throwing it away, I saw my opportunity and took it. Since the following day was my birthday, I decided to start celebrating a day early. We jumped on our bikes and headed to the corner store to buy some Volt. We mixed our half Volt and half rum drinks and continued to ride our bikes around town. When we had finished off half the bottle of rum, I was drunk enough that I tried to pop a wheelie and fell flat on my butt. Being young and stupid, I laughed off the fall and continued riding my bike until we finished off the bottle of rum. Now being completely drunk, when I tried to ride my bike, I ran into a parked car and scratched the paint on the car. We decided it would be best if we got off the bikes and just walked our bikes back to his house. Since I could not ride my bike home, I had to call my sister's boyfriend to come pick me up. Unfortunately for him I got sick on the way home and threw up in his truck. When I got home my friend, Evan, and my sister, Cheyney, took care of me. Not only did they take care of me, but they also decided I deserved to be tortured as well. They lit my heels on fire, shot me with an air soft gun and even hosed me off with the water hose. As they were hosing me off, my grandfather came outside and saw what condition I was in. My grandfather decided to ground me for a month to teach me a lesson. Being grounded for a month did teach me a lesson, but looking back and realizing how lucky I was that I wasn't killed or arrested taught me more. It taught me that drinking responsibly is not just a good idea, but something I plan to practice the rest of my life.





# Once Upon a Time: Narrative

## Honorable Mention

### Sunset at Crystal Beach

#### Jordan Davis

“Hi, Jordan,” Alexis said, as she dashed off to History class one Thursday morning.

“Hi, Alexis,” he replied, with a lump in his throat. Alexis Scott’s jewelry sparkled, and he gazed in awe at her shiny hair as her cell phone ringtone rang his way. His pulse was racing and his body froze when he saw her. He was absolutely crazy about her. School would be out in less than two weeks, and he still had not asked Alexis out. Time is moving, and he had to act fast.

That night Jordan tossed and turned, wondering how he would ever get the nerve to ask her on a date. Should he call her, leave a note, or send her flowers? Alexis has wavy auburn hair, the kind that turns bronze in the sunlight. He longed to hold her hand, look into her eyes, and watch the sunset at Crystal Beach with her.

The next morning he saw her in the hall. “Alexis, how are you doing?” he asked. His tongue was in a knot. “Pretty well, Jordan,” Alexis replied with a smile. “Alexis, what are your plans for this summer?” He asked. “I’ll be working at Camp Stars for the Handicapped. What are your plans?” “I’m going to apply at World Gym, since I enjoy working out. By the way, Alexis, when’s your birthday?” “It’s July 23<sup>rd</sup>. I’ll be at camp then. Jordan, I’ve got to get to Trig class. See you Monday,” she said, as she slipped away, again.

All weekend Jordan thought about Alexis Scott. She was a down-to-earth girl and genuine, unlike a lot of girls at school. There was one problem though; she was dating Nathan Miller from the basketball team. He was always dumping her. Alexis was blind to Nathan and always giving him another chance. She deserved better, and Jordan was it. Now if only he could ask her out.

The next day Jordan overheard Alexis and Nathan talking. They said something about Crystal Beach and 8 o’clock, so he decided to go and do a little innocent spying. A lot of school friends go down to the beach to hang out. As he drove down on the beach he saw Alexis and Nathan. He sat in his car close by and watched them. Jordan could see that Alexis and Nathan were arguing. He was boiling inside. The girl of his dreams was right in front of him, and she

was with a loser. Meanwhile, the argument was escalating. He heard Alexis tell him that he was pushy and didn't like that she said, "I'm saving my first time for someone I really like." Jordan respected Alexis for standing up to Nathan. He too was a virgin and had planned on waiting. Meanwhile, the quarrel raged on. He saw Nathan push Alexis to the ground,. Her face turned white and tears streamed down her face. The adrenaline shot through his body. "Let her be, you lowlife," Jordan shouted, as he jumped from his vehicle.

Jordan offered Alexis a ride home and out to have a soda. They talked for hours. When he dropped Alexis at home he gave her his phone number and encouraged her to call.

The next several days passed quickly; they took exams and the semester ended. Jordan decided he would call Alexis. Trying to work up the courage, he finally dialed her number. "Alexis, this is Jordan Green. How have you been doing since last Friday?"

"Pretty well, just very busy getting ready for camp. Sorry I haven't called, I've been so busy! I'll be back from camp in two months. I'll be in touch in late August!" Late August was two long, long months away. He had to see her before then.

Meanwhile, Jordan had gotten a job at a gym. The next few weeks went by slowly. He had decided he had to see Alexis Scott. Her birthday was coming up, and he was going to surprise her at camp that day. The night before her birthday he tossed and turned. He was wondering how that next day would turn out.

Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> had arrived at last. He and a friend drove to Camp Stars. When he arrived he asked the receptionist to see Alexis. He explained it was her birthday and he was there to surprise her. "You're out of luck" the receptionist said. "Alexis is off today and gone with a friend to celebrate her birthday." Jordan was crushed. His face fell and his heart ached. After thinking for a while he decided he would leave Alexis a note:

Dear Alexis,

I know you will be surprised to hear from me. I wanted to visit you on your birthday, but you had gone for the weekend. I hope you had a good day. Please drop me a line.

Sincerely, Jordan Green

Several days passed by. He buried himself in his work, wondering if Alexis would ever write back. His mother became worried about him. She wanted him to see a counselor. Jordan refused and explained he just had a crush on someone and would be fine.

One day his sister was checking the mail. When she came back, Jordan asked if he had received anything. "Let's see. The phone bill, a Taco Bell ad, a John Mayer Fan Club letter for me, Reader's Digest for Dad, and a letter for you from a Scott with a Houston, Texas

Texas postmark.”

Jordan had received a letter from Alexis. He snatched it from his sister’s hand and ran to his room. His heart was racing and legs were trembling as he tore open the envelope. He then read:

Dear Jordan,

Thanks for remembering my birthday, what a great surprise! It was so good to hear from you. It gets lonely up here, even though we’re busy. I’d like you to come up for a visit sometime next month. And maybe we can catch the sunset at Crystal Beach.”

Sincerely, Alexis



# Once Upon a Time: Narrative Honorable Mention

## Baseball Tyler Davenport

When I was younger, I played baseball for ten years. My first home run was during our undefeated season in Port Neches little league, Major league age group. I did not think we would get that far in our season. I was not a starter either. I was often a rebel, and chose to go on vacations over practice, but one game changed that. I was on a team named the Twins that year. We had one of our early games against the Oakland A's. That was when I got my first home run, and it convinced me to devote more of my time to baseball. It was one of the few times my coach let me play, and I took advantage of it. We were winning, so I guess that was why they put me in. I was so excited that when I hit the ball and saw it go over the fence, all I did was run. I did not even think about touching the bases so much as I only thought about getting to the home plate. I was a natural at baseball. I was one of the tallest and gained momentum when I ran. It was an amazing feeling. From then on I tried my hardest every day in practice and in games. We won that season undefeated, and I knew I would be a starter on the Pony league. All the hard work paid off, and I became a starter my last two years in baseball. I never made it to high school baseball though because my back problems began making all sports unthinkable, but the glory of baseball back then has left me a great amount of memories.









# What's In a Name First Place

## Powerful Mohamed Abusaleh

When people say my name they think of the Islamic prophet, the messenger. There are some who think of the boxer, the Olympic gold medal winner, the world heavyweight champion.

In New York the women say it like the guys; they talk with deep voices and use anger as they talk. In other countries they say it in a way I have never heard before. It may seem like it sounds that I am saying it wrong, but it is my name.

When my family get together, and the boys are all sitting together; and one of the elders say my name, more than half of the boys turn to answer. There are so many people in my family who have the same names; but some of them spell it differently, and that makes me feel like a special one because of the way my name is spelled.

In school and everywhere my friends call me Moe, and they also call my brother Moe as well, so it gets confusing; and I tell people to call me little Moe because my brother is older than me, so he gets the Moe.

My name is simple, my name is powerful, and it is a name that I think I am not ready for because it is so powerful that I do not think I could keep up to it. I am hoping I will be ready for it soon. My mother says, I am just perfect for my name, but that is my mother; and she has to say that, so I hope she is right and try to stand up to it.



# What's In a Name

## Second Place

### Origins

#### Antonio Menn

In America my name is common. Everywhere I go the way people say my name is not right. The way they pronounce it is very odd. In English, the way people say my name is dull and dry. I feel as if I am trapped inside a box. I cannot go anywhere. In Spanish, the way people say my name is sharp and wet. The exact opposite of the English language, I feel like I am sinking in the Pacific Ocean, and then slipping inside the water. I do not feel right when my name is pronounced in English or Spanish. In my native tongue the way my name is pronounced is right. I feel peace and rest, the way it feels in winter when you go under the warm blanket and lie on the soft and cozy bed. My name is a Spanish name. It is very popular to the Spanish speaking people. My father was the one that gave me my name. I am an aborigine of the Americas. I speak the Miskito language. It is one of the many American Indian languages of the Indian race. It is also known as Miskitu, Bahwika or Wanki. Miskito is also my name, not my real name but my nickname. I was called Miskito because it is the tribe that I am from. In high school my contemporaries criticized me far beyond my boundaries. They thought Miskito was the mosquito that sucks blood causes malaria or yellow fever. The Spanish kids called me "Sankudo" which means mosquito in their language. If I could change my name, I would change it to Antauhngniotonio. "An" stands for the first two letters of my name. "Tauhngni" means flower in the Miskitu language. "Otonio" is the last part of my name with an o in front of it. Antauhngniotonio means: The rose that I have been seeking has been discovered. It means that I have found my other half. People say my name in different ways. They call me Tonio, Anthony, Tone, Antonio, Anton, Ton or An. However, my name on my birth certificate is Antonio.



# What's In a Name

## Third Place

### I Am Blessed

#### Kristina Allen

My name is Kristina.

My full name is Kristina Michelle Allen. My first and middle names have the meaning Christ and God in them. I believe in God and try to be a good follower of Christ. I have been raised in church all my life and have learned a lot from my parents, grandparents, and elders in the church. They have taught me to live life for God. I may not get to go to church as much as I would like to, but I read the bible and pray every day.

My first name is Kristina is a form of Christina. The origin of Kristina is Latin, and the meaning is "follower of Christ." My middle name Michelle has a French origin and the meaning is "who is like God." Knowing the meaning of my name makes me proud to know that this name was picked out for me. Even though they may not have known what the meaning was, they still felt the name was special.

My father came up with my name when my older brother was born. My parents thought he was going to be a girl, but to their surprise it was a boy. So from there he said that he wanted a girl, so he could give her this name. However, they tried to have another child for over ten years, and finally, to their surprise, my mother got pregnant with me. I was born on my grandmother's 70th birthday. My grandmother and I have a very special bond because of our birthdays.

My middle name Michelle is after my older sister. I look up to my sister and respect her. She is an amazing sister, and I am proud to carry her name. She has been there for me in good and bad times. She is having a baby, and I am very proud to be called an aunt. I feel like she will come up with a name that is special as mine.

My name is so special to me so, I want to carry my name throughout my family. I would like to have a girl, so I could give her something similar to mine. The meaning of my name explains who I am and my religion. My name sometimes is quiet, but when excited it is loud. Sometimes it is lazy, but most of the time it is busy with school, work, Christ, and a child. I am a total follower of Christ and always will be.

I am very blessed to have such a special name. I would not change my name for the world. My parents gave me this name, and it will stick with me forever. I want other people to meet Kristina Michelle Allen.

# What's In a Name

## Honorable Mention

### I Am Passionate About My Name

#### Harpreet Akhter

In English my name "Harpreet" means "God's Love". Harpreet originated from a small state in Northern India called popular name in Punjab. It was a unisex name: however, people used this name for girls and boys. The Indian people had gully celebrated this occasion with joy. The parents took their baby to their holy place which is called "gurdwara." The priest and baby's parents went inside the gurdwara. The priest and parents sat with the holy book open in front book which gave parents the letter for the child's name. It was a very unusual and different ritual in India. My name was so passionate about my name because it related to God. I will not change my name at any cost.

In English my name "Kaur" means "Princess." The Sikh women did not have a last name, so everyone called them a festival called "Vashaki", which is celebrated by farmers when their crops are harvested. They wore new clothes, distributed, cut their harvest, and sold them at a good price. In 1699, Sikh women were given the name Kaur the first time by been given Sikh women their identity. India had a caste system, and the name Kaur freed women from the caste system husband or fathers. Kaur also meant "Crown Princess" on who laid great responsibility. I was very proud of my last name independence. I did change my name, since I got married.





# What's In a Name

## Honorable Mention

### Victory of People

#### Nicole Pinell

My name Nicole, means Victory of People, It came from the Greek Goddess Victory which is German for Nicola. It is another name on the more feminine side for Nicholas. My mom named me Nicole because she did not know anybody else named Nicole, and she thought it is pretty and different, and nobody in my family had that name, so when she thought of it she did research to see if it was common, and it was not. My name can be spelled and pronounced several different ways because some came from a number of countries, but all have the same meaning. My middle name Zshanee', my mom got from one her favorite television show actresses Zha Zha Gabor. She liked it because it also was different, and it was not really common when I was born. One meaning that I have found behind Zshanee', is that it came after a music group lead by two young ladies name Jean and Renee' and they put the two names together and came up with Zshanee' for short. I have a tendency to want to help people with their problems, and I get so caught up in that I worry about them more than I should, and that is the real meaning of the name. The definition of the name is, if you like to help people with their problems; you tend to worry a lot because you tend to get caught in sticky situations. Some say it means you are idealistic, like to handle your responsibilities, generosity, and a strong desire to help others. I guess it is in my nature, because I love helping people, and I like handling my responsibilities.



# What's In a Name

## Honorable Mention

### A New Name - A New Start

#### Keith Capps

My name given to me at birth was Keith Rodney Collins Jr. That name was given to me by my father. He wanted me to share his name. My name Keith means forest. My middle name Rodney means Renound Island. Unlike most people my name given to me at birth is not the name I go by now. When I was thirteen, my name was changed to Keith Michael Capps.

My name was changed because I was almost adopted by my foster parents. The reason for changing my middle and last name was to rid myself of the reputation that my birth parents had given the name. My parents had ruined the reputation of the name through their criminal behavior. I wanted to change my name and leave their past behind me. This gave me the opportunity to start an new life with a new name, a name that I plan to uphold the reputation of so that one day my children will be able to say that they are proud to carry on the name Keith Michael Capps.



## What's In a Name Honorable Mention

### No Need to Change Katherine Hardy

Pure or unsullied is the meaning of my Greek origin name, Katherine. In Europe, it was a very popular name amongst royalty. It was also the name of Henry VIII, first wife, Katherine of Aragon. However, I was not born into royalty even though that would have been a fairytale.

Coming after two brothers, my Mom wanted a feminine name. However, every name that my Mom came up with; my Dad was determined to shorten it into a boy's name. For instance, Samantha became "Sam," and Jessica was shortened to "Jessie." Eventually, my Mom won out and named me Katherine, which she has always called me. My Dad on the other hand, found a way to shorten my name from Katherine Christine into K.C.

There have been many variations of my name. On the soccer field, my teammates and coaches found it easier to yell "K.C.," from the sidelines. My friends from twirling called me: Kitty, Kat, Kathy, and Katie. Whatever name my friends choose to call me, I will answer.

I have always felt that my name has fit me well. When I was younger, people thought my name was too long and always shortened it, myself included, especially when I had to write it. Now that I am older, Katherine sounds more grown up.

Whether it is the long or short version of my name, I have always liked my name. I am sure everybody has fantasized about changing their name, including me. However, I will just wait until my little girl comes along to name her McKinley,



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## **Statement of Editorial Policy**

The editorial staff of EARLY EXPRESSIONS 2011 would like to thank all of the students who submitted work for consideration to EARLY EXPRESSIONS 2011 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 2011 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.

As the editor, I will make changes to reflect correct grammar and usage to enhance each entry and the magazine as well.

Peggy Gene Knight, Editor

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