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

Early Expressions

2012
Volume XIII

Early Expressions 2012 - Winners

“THE GUY IN THE GLASS”: DESCRIPTION page 1-2

First Place

Mr. Smooth Royce Bagby

Second Place

My Thoughts of “Guy in the Glass” Scott Thompson, II

Third Place

The Girl in the Mirror is Me Maria Mendoza

Honorable Mention

Staring Back at Me Dennis Blakeney

I Have Pursued... Richard Cloud, Jr.

Smile Everyday and Mean It Betty Cochran

I Hope You See What I See Benika Gamble

Accelerating Bryce Higginbotham

Striving..... Nancy Martinez

This is the Man I Can See..... Eric Voegele

A Prosperous Young Man Cedric Wade, Jr.

Overcoming..... Vincent Wilson

DESCRIPTION OF A PERSON page 27

First Place

With Grandma Tracie Butler

Second Place

Grandfather Maria Mendoza

Third Place

Mother..... LaQuisha Washington

Honorable Mention

Memories..... Royce Bagby

Mrs. Helen Betty Cochran

Memories of Maw-Maw..... Tyler Heflin

DESCRIPTION OF A PERSON page 27

Honorable Mention

Remembering My Titan..... Bryce Higginbotham
Nicole.....Priscilla Kyles
Maxine PrevostDarrian Provost
A Special Person.....Julia Rowland
A Special Person..... Sarah Smith
My Paw-Paw Michael Thomas

DESCRIPTION OF A PLACE page 53-55

First Place

Patzcuaro Edith Martinez

Second Place

A Visit to the Graveyard Michael Thomas

Third Place

Friday Night Lights..... Jarrod Castille

Honorable Mention

Roselawn..... Dennis Blakeney
Rode-side RemindersTracie Butler
Secluded and Forgotten Taylor Duncan
Intoxicating Maria Mendoza
The Accident Sarah Smith
Graveyard.....Vincent Wilson
Cemetery Amanda Zamora

NARRATIVE page 77

First Place

Shady Lady Michael Thomas

Second Place

A Lover's Game Jarrod Castille

Third Place

DISCLAIMER: This Story is 100% Original..... Betty Cochran

NARRATIVE page 77

Honorable Mention

All's Fair in Love and War Margarita Ochoa-Alvarez
The JournalAmber Depew
Relationships..... Cedric Wade, Jr.
All is Fair in Love and War Darrian Provost
Orders Eric Voegele

POETRY page 101

First Place

Foolish.....Maura Tony

Second Place

Life Chastity Jade Bell

Third Place

God is Good!Amber Depew

Honorable Mention

Remain Chastity Jade Bell
Forbidden LoveMaura Tony

Table of Contents

ALL CATEGORIES

Alvarez-Ochoa, Margarita.....	89
Bagby, Royce	3, 35
Bell, Chastity Jade	105, 109
Blakeney, Dennis	9, 63
Butler, Tracie	29, 65
Castille, Jarrod.....	61, 81, 85
Cloud, Richard, Jr.....	11
Cochran, Betty.....	13, 37
Depew, Amber	91, 107
Duncan, Taylor	67
Gamble, Benika	15
Heflin, Tyler.....	39
Higginbotham, Bryce.....	17, 41
Kyles, Priscilla	43
Martinez, Edith.....	57
Martinez, Nancy.....	7, 19
Mendoza, Maria	31, 69
Prevost, Darrian	45, 97
Rowland, Julia	47
Smith, Sarah.....	49, 71
Thomas, Michael.....	51, 79
Thompson, Scott, II	5
Tony, Maura	103, 111

Table of Contents

ALL CATEGORIES

Voegele, Eric	21, 99
Wade, Cedric, Jr.....	23, 95
Washington, LaQuisha.....	33
Wilson, Vincent	25, 73
Zamora, Amanda.....	75



Description

This poem was written by our father in 1934, is, without a doubt, his most well known work. It has touched the souls of millions of people the world over and it is with great warmth and remembrance that we present the original version just as he penned it. In grateful memory of our father, the author, Dale Wimbrow, 1895-1954. www.theguyintheglass.com

The Guy in the Glass

By Dale Wimbrow, © 1934

When you get what you want in your struggle for pelf,
And the world makes you King for a day,
Then go to the mirror and look at yourself,
And see what that guy has to say.

For it isn't your Father, or Mother, or Wife,
Who judgement upon you must pass.
The feller whose verdict counts most in your life
Is the guy staring back from the glass.

He's the feller to please, never mind all the rest,
For he's with you clear up to the end,
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test
If the guy in the glass is your friend.

You may be like Jack Horner and "chisel" a plum,
And think you're a wonderful guy,
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

You can fool the whole world down the pathway of years,
And get pats on the back as you pass,
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears
If you've cheated the guy in the glass.

Cover Credit:
"The Man of Los Angeles"
www.thecoolist.com

Description-First Place

Mr. Smooth

Royce Bagby

As I look in the mirror for five minutes I see Royce Aaron Bagby on this present day, a young middle-aged man staring at himself. I am a dreamer by day or night, so it does not take long before my mind goes on what I call a trip. Either in high school or middle school, I did an exercise similar to this one, so now I am in the mode of comparing past and present. When I did this exercise back then, I was much younger and immature, I remember smiling most of the time; but as I did the exercise today, I noticed that there was no smile. The cheerfulness is all gone, and I began to think why no smile. I guess when I was younger there was a lot less weight on my shoulder physically and mentally. I looked at most things in a positive way. Even if something bad happened, I tried to find the positive in it, if there was any to be found back then. Some would say I was looking at the world through rose colored glasses; but now for some odd reason, I tend to notice the negatives before the positives. Since graduating from high school, I have probably gained a pound or two each year until I started working out two summers ago. The second thing I noticed was that this is a much fatter face but more grown up than before. You could not find a string of hair on my face back then; now there is a mustache with a shadow. I was hit by a car in the third grade which left a scar on my right cheek, and that was the only thing on my face when I was younger. When I do not shave, hair even grows out of that scar. I used to be Mr. Smooth or at least that is how I felt about myself when I was younger. I am still Mr. Smooth, just hidden by an image that now looks almost the same but a little rougher around the edges. There is still a twinkle in my eye, but an older image stands before me now with bits and pieces of the younger me still here. Aging is like a fine wine; it gets better with time. Maybe when I do something like this again, my smile will be back.

Description-Second Place

My Thoughts of "Guy in the Glass"

Scott Thompson, II

Dale Wimbrow's "Guy in the Glass" and Michael Jackson's song "Man in the Mirror" are talking about looking at the person in the mirror and seeing a change. Every time I look in the mirror I see a change in myself and how I look at things. I see a person who likes to go out and help people and enjoys doing it. That poem and the lyrics made me realize that the guy outside of the glass is trying to be someone **he is** not. When I see the guy in the glass, I see a different person. The guy in the mirror makes the guy outside of it understand that it **is** time to try and make a change in the world. He knows that he can make a difference in what he does and how he acts. I understand that I am not a perfect person, but I know that I can help make a change. Michael Jackson was the king of pop: but in his song "Man in the Mirror," he talks about how his life changes and talks about how he wants the world to change. There are a lot of people who have started to try to change the world all because of his song. I have started trying to make a change to help the fight to end bullying. I would really like to see the world change the most and just put an end to all of the wars going on overseas and bring back world peace. I also hope that one day people start to realize how many teens commit suicide because of bullying. I do not know how other people feel about that, but it just kills me inside, knowing that there are kids my age out there killing themselves all because of bullies. I understand how they feel, and I am tired of sitting around watching it happen. It is time to make a change to this world. It is time to stop all the hate. It is time to take a stand and do something about it. It is time to make a change.

Description-Third Place

The Girl in the Mirror is Me

Maria Mendoza

The girl in the mirror is a beautiful girl who feels alone and forgotten by those who once were her future and now are her past. She is afraid of what people might think or say about her. She is very friendly, yet she is reserved. When she is alone, people think she is quiet; but when she is with friends, she is the loudest one.

This girl in the mirror has long wavy hair that flows down like waterfalls and travels down to her waist. Her brown eyes are like open windows in which you can see everything that is going on inside of her. Her eye lashes are like feathers that help her imagination to fly around the world. The girl in the mirror is very sentimental, very compassionate. Even though some people say those are virtues, she thinks of them as burdens. Her back is tired of carrying so much pain because someone in the past tried to take advantage of her heart, but now her heart is hidden in a secret place. Her heart is as fragile as a glass that, if not handled with care, can break in a million pieces.

The girl in the mirror is a very loving person who is afraid to love and to not be loved in return. She is afraid to give herself, only to end up with a shattered heart. She is a person who likes to stand up for herself and does not like to depend on people who may want to control her. She is the boss of her own life. The girl in the mirror tries to be as responsible as any adult, but deep inside she is still a little with hopes and dreams. Sometimes she tries to make things perfect, but she ends up messing things up. It is not that she is careless; it is just that she is perfectly imperfect. People think they know her, but they only know what she wants them to know; and what people do not know is that the girl in the mirror is me.

Description-Honorable Mention

Staring Back at Me

Dennis Blakeney

The guy in the mirror is capable of becoming anything that he can dream of. When I sit down in front of this mirror, I see a big barrel of ambition. Who would not want to own a 1,000 acres covered in livestock and those amber waves of grain! Acquiring such a piece of land and responsibility can take years to accomplish, but the mirror tells me something different.

By sitting here and reflecting on my life and my accomplishments, I say to myself, "What can I do to make my dreams come true?" The first thought that came to my mind was to take a good look in this mirror and tell myself that I could do it. Being in the Army taught me values that I could not have learned anywhere else. Going through basic training was not an easy task at all in my book. Waking up every day to a screeching sound of a Drill Sergeant in my ears made it tough to motivate myself to get up and get going with a head of confidence. By the end of the third week, it did not even faze me when they made their entrance in the morning to let us know that the nocturnal rooster was crowing. One of my goals while I was in Basic Training was to lose as much weight as I possibly could. I was starting to take notice that my pants were starting to fit loosely. The next thing I knew I was walking across the stage forty pounds lighter. My very first "Life Goal Achievement" was finally accomplished and all over with. I looked at my new self and was amazed on how easy I thought it was after I had proved myself week in and week out through those challenging times.

From then on I became more honest with myself, by simply being more disciplined. I started to look for new ways to improve myself after my Army career of five years. I wanted to further educate myself specifically in the

chemical processing industry. By reflecting on what I was trained on in the Army, hazardous materials were sort of my bread and butter. The only thing that threw up a red flag was my knowledge in math. Thinking that I could not meet my goal because of the required math classes, I found a new way to motivate myself. All I had to do was pick my beautiful daughter up and put her in the mirror with me. Seeing her in the picture made me want to provide a life for her that I never had, so math was no match!

By sitting in front of this mirror in such a short period of time, made me realize that I am ready more than ever to be a college graduate. So why should I not be ready to make the journey across the college stage, as my character and values are good. The only thing that is holding my confidence back now is looking at my transcript and seeing that I am not so good at math. When I look in the mirror, I tell myself, "It is not about what the mirror shows behind me, but what is staring back at me."

Description-Honorable Mention

I Have Pursued...

Richard G. Cloud, Jr.

I stand in front of the mirror, and I search deep into my mind, and I analyze the person that is looking back at me. I see a 53 year old average man. I see a dedicated father and family man who have worked hard all his life. I see a man who has many unfulfilled goals, and he is attempting to gain a higher education degree in order to enter a corporate management position in the IT field.

My name is Richard G. Cloud, Jr. I was born in 1959 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; I lived and went to school in Oklahoma City until 1979 when I joined the U.S. Army. After returning from my service in the U.S. Army, I moved to Corpus Christi, Texas, and I obtained gainful employment in the Petrochemical industry. I have been employed as a journey man single hand welder, boilermaker, and pipe fitter. I have enjoyed a very good career in these three industrial fields.

I have been married three times, and I have three children, three step-children and nine grandchildren whom I love very much. I always look forward to visiting with them and watching them grow up, mature, and experience life as they see it through their own minds' eyes. They face adversity and conquer their life's challenges very well, and I am very proud of them, and I wish that they all have long and successful lives.

I have pursued many goals in my life, and I have enjoyed both success and failure in pursuing greater knowledge and financial success that has helped me live a satisfying life. After careful evaluation of my career, I have learned now that I have entered middle age, I believe that my age and future physical condition may impair my ability to continue my current career path, thus, I have returned to school in order to add a college degree to my credentials.

In closing, I believe that I have met with success in my career objectives and have earned good money throughout my life. I have enjoyed my family as much as can be expected when taking my two divorces into consideration. I believe that pursuing a college degree will be one of the best things that I can do with my life because a college degree will open many doors that have been closed to me in the past thirty years.

Description-Honorable Mention

Smile Everyday and Mean It

Betty Cochran

Perhaps the first things I notice when I look in the mirror are the tired, hazel eyes looking back. Upon further investigation I see the purple bags underneath my eyes that I have known for years. I see my frown, and my uncontrollable hair. My hair, held back by a copper and black headband, is wavy brown with natural flips on either side of my face, flips that I know can only be controlled by a very heated straightening iron. Looking closer, I see a silver necklace in the shape of a four-leaf-clover, the leaves shaped like hearts. I then see my navy blue polo t-shirt, which is a part of my everyday Wal-Mart uniform. I see my hand tugging at the silver necklace as though wanting some bit of luck to actually shine down on me, a habit I have formed whenever I am concentrating on something.

Next, I see my brown pants, another trade mark of my Wal-Mart uniform. I then see my Wal-Mart lanyard draped around my neck, the words, "ask me how to save \$20" scrawled around the lanyard. I see a silver clip holding my name badge, which reads my middle name "D'Ann," my clear card-holder behind my badge, containing more than a black strap and a few coins. I see the words "Sales Associate" written across the yellow portion of my name badge in black ink, indicating my position at Wal-Mart. I then see the yellow and black box cutter hanging from my lanyard, something I must do considering that my uniform pants do not have pockets. I see a yellow circle on my box cutter reading 'L' on the edge, indicating that the box cutter is locked for safety purposes. I look back at my face and see a soft smile, and I know that I am putting an effort in my life in an attempt to make it better. I smile because I know that one day I will be wearing a real uniform, and that these bags and tired eyes that I see are only temporary, that I will smile everyday day and mean it.

Description-Honorable Mention

I Hope You See What I See

Benika Gamble

As I sit motionlessly in full view of myself, I see a caring person, quiet, and an easy going person who is optimistic. I see that I have become a much deeper person over the years due to my spirituality. For example, I pray a lot more, and I have joined a church that I enjoy going to every Sunday. Looking back on my younger days I was wild and really did not care much about the things that I was doing to myself and others. My personality then and now has changed in many ways reflecting who I have become over the years. I still make mistakes, but I try to learn from them and move forward with my life.

People often describe me as always being kind and considerate of others. I think it is in my nature to be kind. I have always been willing to help others in need. For instance, I have volunteered in schools helping young kids and making their learning experience fun. I have often times sat and talked and listened to the elderly just giving comfort and reassurance to them. Caring for others has its rewards both personally and spiritually. It is gratifying when you give of yourself to others. Spiritually, if you believe in a higher power, your true rewards will come from the heavens. So you can see, I like being this caring person I see in the mirror.

Being shy and quiet has its ups and downs. For example, quiet people are thought to be sneaky persons, and in some cases this is true about me. I can be sneaky at times like going and purchasing things on my mom's credit card and telling her later or just before the bill comes in the mail. Other times it can be useful, like planning a surprise party or surprising someone with a gift. I tend to use my sneakiness for good and not evil. I think of myself as easy going getting

along with almost everyone when it comes to people. Some may say that I am a people person. I have to get to know a person sometimes in order to be a little relaxed. It takes me a little while to warm up to people, but after that I usually find friendships to last. Sometimes being easy going means that you have to get along with everybody. That is simply not the case all the time.

Overall, my face to face view seems to be what I see inside myself and on the outside. This reflection is the best of me. In the future I hope to polish my image only to make it better each and every day. Looking at all of my features, I hope you see what I see looking in the glass mirror.

Description-Honorable Mention

Accelerating

Bryce Higginbotham

When looking into the mirror, I see myself accelerating in the plans I have for my future and growing up having very few regrets. As I grow older I am finding myself as a person; and college has molded me in some ways that I am now, and I have only been a college student for almost a full year. I feel I am proud of myself and my accomplishments but by no means satisfied. Being in a three year relationship has definitely made me a better person. I have taken the role of being honest, trustworthy, and responsible, and that has changed my whole outlook on life and has turned it into a positive direction I did not know existed. I know I can grow from what I have received from my relationship to help me make better decisions. What I see when I look into the mirror is a nice guy who does not say a whole lot to anybody if he does not know them; I really do not like being the center of attention. I love my family and friends and am very close to both. I would do anything for them and they would say the same thing. I also see an athlete who played a little college baseball in Dallas and came back home because it was just too far for me at the time. My time in Dallas on my own, not knowing anybody, has made me more independent but also made me realize that my roots are in South East Texas, and I am very proud of where and how I was raised. I am one who gets jealous when I feel I am being "out-done" or someone does something better than I. I am very competitive. I have two great parents. I see my dad in me, and I want to do and be just like him. He is very successful, and I get all my motivation and support from him. Looking at the mirror and seeing "me," I know that I am pleased but have a long way to go, and am ready for whatever life throws at me next.

Description-Honorable Mention

Striving

Nancy Martinez

When I sit in front of the mirror I see a young woman slowly striving upwards to be successful. The young woman in the mirror is focused on having what is needed and best for her. I see someone who makes mistakes, but that is something that any human being would do too, because nobody is perfect. She takes those mistakes, learns from them, and makes the best out of them. The only mistake she really makes is the one she does not learn from. She is also a caring, honest, and a strong person who will not let anyone bring her down. One other thing I see is a passion for teaching younger children, and that is something she has wanted to pursue since she was a young girl. I notice she has the patience and love to be around children and loves them like her own. Another thing I see about her is she is willing to do anything for her family; her family is her all, and without her family she would be nothing. I see she is an older sister to a brother and sister and is there to help them every step of their way in life, and to set a positive example for her siblings. What she is content to do is to make her family proud of all her decisions and accomplishments in school and at home. Not only does she seek to make her family proud, but also she has the desire to know that she feels proud of what she has become in life. Her whole world does not revolve around school, work, and family; she also makes time to have some fun with her friends. Sometimes even besides friends, she likes some aloe time to relax away from the busy world. [Like taking long walks and just enjoying the fresh air and the wildlife around us that we never take the time to notice.] Ultimately, I see a young woman who is well set for what there is to come in the future and well assured that she will accomplish her goal.

Description-Honorable Mention

This Is the Man I Can See

Eric Voegele

There is a pretty tall figure looking back at me, he is not abnormally tall but of a decent structure. This young man is not fat nor is he particularly skinny, just a medium build. His build suggests he probably does not work out much, if he even works out at all. His hair is brown and very short and it is pretty thin in the front. I see some facial hair, but not very much. The young man I see has probably shaved a few days ago, maybe a little longer. He has dark-rimmed glasses that frame his hazel-colored eyes. One of his eyelids seems slightly lower than the other. His difference in eyelids is only noticeable if he focused closely on it since his glasses usually block the view of his eyes. His eyebrows are sort of bushy, but not anything particularly eye catching. He has above average-sized ears compared to his head. His ears stick out quite a bit and are one of the distinct features on his head. His nose is normal looking, except that one nostril is smaller than the other. He has some red around his cheeks and the rest of his face is pale. His lips are sort of big and also red. They look dry and cracked. I see his neck is long and skinny. It looks kind of out of place with the rest of his head. The shirt he is wearing is a white and black t-shirt. It has an eagle perched on a tree. His arms are tan and lanky. They have a bunch of freckles all over them. The pants he is wearing are a dark brown color. There are keys hanging from one of the belt buckles. His shoes are brown tennis shoes. They are fairly worn out and dirty. It appears this guy has rather large feet. This is the man that I can see in the mirror.

Description-Honorable Mention

A Prosperous Young Man

Cedric Wade, Jr.

When I look in the mirror I see a young man, a young man full of pain and happiness. When I look in the mirror, I see the eyes of pain, but not the pain on the inside of me. Those dark brown, spider eyes remind me of my dad sometimes because our eyes are almost identical to one another. When I look in the mirror, I see a reflection of a handsome guy, an honest and prosperous young man. The reflection I see in the mirror is a guy with caramel apple complexion, with smooth skin like a newborn baby. Sometimes when I think about my nose, it reminds me of Pinocchio. The only difference is that Pinocchio lies, and I do not. I must admit I like my slim Jim head shape. I like it, and it appears ladies love it, two for one. My amazing smile sometimes shows the happiness inside of me. My ears might seem mammoth to some and adorable to others, but I love them. Now on the other hand, my fraud face or sad face can be a bit scary. My sad face makes me look like an evil, mean person, I am not evil. My lips look like two Popsicle sticks. They are very narrow, slim, and long. Nice white teeth sit behind them. The bottom teeth are all in order, and in a single file line just like the top. None of my teeth are behind one another or on top of each other, nice and perfect. "Smile for me!" I have one of the sweetest smiles anyone can ever see. The most gorgeous eyes that could attract any woman on earth, and the biggest ears I could imagine. I like my looks that God has blessed me with. When I look in the mirror, I see me a prosperous young man—Cedric A. Wade, Jr.

Description-Honorable Mention

Overcoming

Vincent Wilson

Looking at myself in the mirror, what do I see? I have on a black shirt, blue jeans, short hair, and shoes that are priceless. However, as I pay more attention, I see more than just my appearance. I see more than just the color of my skin. I see a man with high potential. I see a man who wants to be successful in life. When I stare into my own eyes, I see the happiness and joy of overcoming something, overcoming the fear that the world will not accept him. Looking at my right arm, I notice a name with little hand prints. These prints symbolize the birth of someone who would change my life dramatically. These represent the birth of my son. Looking at my neck, I notice a small necklace. It was a necklace that my grandfather gave to me just before he passed away. This image in the mirror is not just an image. It is something that is helping me to grow up to be a man. Looking at my hands I notice that they are rough and hard. Hard and rough hands are sign of hard work. Looking down at my high priced shoes is my way of saying hard work pays off. Looking back up at my hair, I notice that I keep it short. I keep it short simply because my father always told me that appearance is everything. He said that when you first meet someone, he or she will judge you by your appearance, but I have learned not to judge others by appearance only. The most important thing I notice about myself is my heart. Most people may think that their hearts are not visible; but father always told me that mine was, so I believed him. He would always say, "Son, you have a good heart and people see." I never knew what he meant until now. Now when I look into the mirror, what do I see? I see my father looking down from above guiding me still.



Description of a Person

Description of a Person-First Place

With Grandma

Tracie Butler

I had to be four or five years old, and it was one of my weekends at Grandma's house. Do you remember those shows or movies where the Grandma always had homemade cookies baked? That is the memory playing in my mind right at this very moment about the time I spent at my Grandma's and PawPaw's with my cousins. We had cookies that we baked with Grandma and the candy dinner mints that we all could not keep our hands off. It was the way the mints would melt in your mouth, how soft they were to chew, and the taste was not half bad either. The memories play back like wonderful movies in my mind, and I can feel the warmth as much today as I did back then. I love to travel down memory lane and have flash backs of my past as a child, and the times I spent over at my grandparents'. My cousins and I would always be watching cartoons on Saturday mornings while Grandma was cooking breakfast for us, and she would always sneak a dessert in for us afterwards. She amazed me and my cousins every weekend we spent with her. My poor PawPaw, he had to spend his days off with a house full of girls and a lot of late night giggling. I would have weekends by myself as well, and those are the ones where Grandma and I got some one-on-one time. I learned to make cakes, candies, pies, and puddings when I was over at her house and got to visit my other family that lived near by. It was one of the best times in my life, and I cherished every single moment of it. Now that they have both passed on and I am grown with my own children, I see so much of her teachings in me. I spent my whole young life with her and lost her when I was fifteen years old. I was glad that my mom pushed me to go when I was younger and made me see that it would be the best time ever. It was, and I kept going

back to have weekend visits. Now I have treasured memories I get to keep and pass on to my kids and then their kids. That is how stories, tales, poems, and legends get started and how they get passed on through the times and centuries. I hope I can be blessed as well as all my family and loved ones to have my story remembered in that way. I would be happy with a small tale if possible; but if not, then I have been blessed and still am.

Description of a Person-Second Place

Grandfather

Maria Mendoza

My grandfather was a wonderful and brave man. He was very healthy. My grandpa was tall and slim. His eyes were small and brown. He had dark brown hair which as time went by turned gray. His hands were rough from working the land his whole life. He was a hard-working man. One of his hobbies was hunting. He loved to hunt in his free time. From what I remember, when I was a little girl we used to visit my grandparents every weekend. My grandpa used to go hunting for birds just so that I would eat because he knew how much I loved to eat them, and he knew that if I did not eat a bird, I would not eat anything else.

My grandpa loved his truck. It was a red Chevrolet truck. He never got rid of it, not even when it stopped working right because that truck was a gift from his sons. Even when he passed away nobody suggested selling it because it may not be worth a lot, but to us, his truck is worth much more than money. I remember when we used to go to the river and help him wash his red truck. He did not like his truck to look ugly and dirty. Every time I hear a whistle, I remember him. He had his own way of whistling. I never heard anybody else make the same sound he used to except for my uncles who picked up the sound as they grew older. My grandfather died in a car accident. It was a much unexpected death because he rarely got sick. He was on his way to hunt deer; when, in an intersection, another car hit him from the side. He was taken to a hospital. The doctors did everything they could, but he did not survive. I like to think that God decided that he needed another angel to help him look after us, and that is why he is not with us anymore. I regret not being able to tell him I loved him one last time. Also, I regret that I never got to spend a lot of time with him when I could. I have not

gotten used to the idea of him not being among us. Sometimes I still think that he is alive and that whenever I go to Mexico, I am going to be able to see him; but then reality strikes me.

Rest In Peace,

Francisco Gonzalez Diaz,

April 8th, 2011

Description of a Person-Third Place

Mother

La Quisha Washington

As I take a moment to reflect on the time we shared together, my heart gets heavy. Then I think about the things she used to do, it puts a big smile on my face. I remember it as if it were yesterday. I would wake up in the morning to her grits, eggs, breakfast sausage, and of course hash browns and toast. Thinking of that breakfast gets me going. I can still hear her shouting from the kitchen for me to hurry out of the restroom so I could eat before I left for the school bus. She made sure I went to school on a full stomach ready to learn. When school was over, I would see her standing at the bus stop waiting for me to get off the bus so she could walk me home, and we would discuss my day at school and whatever homework I might have. She was such a loving, caring, and generous person. She would do anything to help anyone is she could. She had a weakness for sick and elderly. Anytime someone close to her would get ill or need any type of medical attention, she would be right there with them and sometimes brought me along. She also loved kids, but only had one daughter. However, that child would bring many kids over to her home to play and have parties and sleepovers. Her appearance meant a lot to her also. One could not catch her without her dressed in the finest of clothes, matching shoes, purses, and belts. She kept her hair done, and she loved to wear curls. She made sure she was ready for any occasion. Her makeup would be so pretty that one would think that she had it professionally done. The sound of music was joy to her ears. She also loved to dance. She did not have the best voice, but would sing as if her life depended on it. I am so honored and privileged to have had her as my mother. There is not a day that goes by that I do not think of her and the memories that we shared. She will forever be in my heart.

Description of a Person—Honorable Mention

Memories

Royce Bagby

The relationship between my grandfather who is now deceased and me was a great one. When I was brought into this world, I started out in Houston, Texas. My mother's parents stayed in Beaumont, which is about one hundred miles outside of Houston. According to my dad it seemed like they stayed in town. I remember spending a great deal of time with my grandfather. Some people call their grandfather: granddad, gramps, and grandfather. I called my grandfather Paw Paw, and I loved him very much. I miss him still to this day. I can see him now standing at about five feet five or six inches with a milk chocolate complexion and brown eyes with his glasses on. He always had a hat on his head. He lost all of his hair on his head many years before I was born. He was forty-eight when my mother was born, and she was his only child. That made it a big deal when I was born because I was the boy he never had. I can recall sitting in his lap playing in his black and white chest hairs. He sometimes smelled of old spice mixed with Winston full flavored cigarettes. I can hear him cracking pecans he picked up out of the yard. Let us just say I have had more than my share of pecans and fresh ripe tomatoes straight out of the garden. He had a plum, pear, banana, and fig trees. When he was alive and I was in town, if you saw him, you saw me. During the day he was either working on something for the yard or his garden. Meanwhile I was right there observing, playing and experimenting with whatever he let me get my hands on. He really allowed me to explore and witness things in a yard and garden that a lot of kids would not. Paw Paw passed away when I was seven, and I sure miss him.

Description of a Person—Honorable Mention

Mrs. Helen

Betty Cochran

Thinking back, I have been fortunate in my life. The only death that I can recollect is that of my previous neighbor, Mrs. Helen. I grew up next to this sweet old woman, who was always eager for company. Her dog, Biscuit, was a white poodle with the curliest fur you could image, and a sweetheart just like her owner. Mrs. Helen was the typical elderly women like you see on the TV shows like the Golden Girls, but she was so much more. She had the short, golden colored curls in her hair that you would half expect, and the wrinkled skin that only comes from obtaining a certain age. Despite her elderly features, her smile was kinder than that of most youth today. She always wore suits, kind of like the casual suits you would find at JCPenney, or the Christmas shirts you would see an old lady getting picked on in the street for. I remember this one time when I was a little girl, I became very upset with my parents over something I cannot even remember. It was something trivial, a common thing that children get upset about, I am sure. I did something that most children do; I cried and made up my mind that I was going to run away. I went to pack the few things that truly mattered to me. I was thinking rationally at the time, or as rational as an upset eight year old can think, and grabbed a set of clothes, my favorite toy, and a large red teddy bear Mrs. Helen had given me before. Now, I am pretty sure that my parents were laughing on the inside at my scheme, especially when I came to the driveway and wanted to cross the road, which they had told me I was not allowed to cross. I remember thinking to myself, how am I supposed to run away if I cannot cross the road? Then I came up with the solution that I would run away to my next-door-neighbor's house, and live with her for the rest of my life,

as any 'rational' child would do. My parents eventually talked me out of it, despite the fact that Mrs. Helen was going along and would have let me move in. This is a vague memory for me, as it happened so long ago, but I remember being upset with my parents, tired, and wanting to live somewhere else. I remember Mrs. Helen smiling at me, standing in her driveway right next to ours, and waiting for me to make up my mind as to whom I was going to live with, and my parents standing next to me in my own driveway. This is perhaps one of my favorite memories of Mrs. Helen, as I have so few left now.

Description of a Person—Honorable Mention

Memories of Maw-Maw

Tyler Heflin

The person that I remember most would be my grandmother, on my father's side. All the grandkids called her Maw-Maw. I was sixteen when she died in a car wreck. I came to know her very well from the time I was born, having spent many nights at her house. There are many things I remember about her until this day, for instance, when I see a red rose it reminds me of her because it was her favorite flower. When I hear a Charlie Rich song, even though it is not my kind of music, it reminds me of her. It is only my opinion, but I think she made the best tacos I had ever eaten. All around Maw-Maw's house were many throw pillows. Most of these she made for the grandkids. I still remember how the material felt when I laid on mine. Every Thanksgiving, we would split our time between my mom's parents and my dad's parents, since they both lived close to us. Both Thanksgiving dinners were really good; but when I would go to Maw-maws and open the door to her house, the smell would tell me before I ever got inside that she had cooked a full course meal. Of course, there are many more examples that I could give of things that remind me of her. I am sure that I will be remembering these things to tell my children and their children because I think it is important that our family heritage be remembered. Maw-maw made a big impact on my life, and all my memories of her are pleasant ones.

Description of a Person–Honorable Mention

Remembering My Titan

Bryce Higginbotham

A relative of mine, my Uncle Will, was recently killed in a parachute accident while dropping out of a plane in California when on vacation with some old friends. Uncle Will was very close to the family and attended every sports activity of my brothers and me and was just always there for us. He was always the one to show up at our house unexpectedly, load up all my brothers and me and take us to the lake to go fishing or just to go ride four-wheelers on his ranch. Uncle Will did not have any kids, but treated me like I was his own. He and his wife, my Aunt Cindy, lived in Livingston, Texas, where they owned fifty acres and raised cattle. He was a very tall man: He stood about six foot four inches and had the voice of an iron giant. All the family get togethers were at my Uncle Will's house, where they had lots of activities for all of us to do and never seemed to get bored. His favorite movie was Remember the Titans and that has grown to be my all time favorite movie also. Uncle Will always seemed happy and never let anything get in between his time with me or anyone else. He was just a big kid. He always had the energy to keep up with me, and I had to second guess myself sometimes just to keep up with him and his crazy energy. Uncle Will always gave the best advice and could always turn a bad situation into a good one. His death was especially painful for me because of my recent graduation. His inability to attend was one of the hardest things I had to go through because I know how proud he would have been of me. Losing my Uncle Will has been very hard on me and my family, and he will never be forgotten.

Description of a Person—Honorable Mention

Nicole

Priscilla Kyles

The person that I think back on is my sister, Nicole. She has been deceased now for two years. She was a beautiful young woman, who died at the age of thirty-three. She had short black hair, brown eyes, and a smile that would melt my heart. Nicole always had a small frame, and was trying to gain weight. Nicole was not just beautiful on the outside, but her beauty showed from the inside as well.

Nicole had kids at a young age, her first child being born at age fourteen. By the time she was twenty-six years old, she had a total of five kids. The children's father was not in her life or her children's lives. She worked very hard, and always did what was best for her children. She could not always give her kids everything that they wanted, but she made sure that they had what they needed.

My sister was a very gentle, sweet, and loving person. You could truly see God in her. She worked as a manager at a local restaurant. She would talk to many people who would come in to eat. She often prayed with people that she did not know. Nicole would always invite customers, employees, and friends to the weekly services at church. I believe God put her here on earth for a short time so that she could make a difference to the people she touched and came in contact with.

Description of a Person—Honorable Mention

Maxine Provost

Darrian Provost

Maxine Provost was the grandmother that some people only dream about and others wish for. She always tried to make me smile every time I would come over. She would have my favorite meal made or have a basket full of every piece of candy that she had either seen me with or ever seen me eat before. As I look back, I cannot remember myself ever being mad at her; and whenever she and my grandfather argued, I was always on her side. I would say we needed each other like pastor needed his Bible. She needed me more than I needed her not because I was smart, helpful, and charming, but because my father was out running the streets. My grandfather was always laid out somewhere drunk, and I was the only good relationship she had with someone. Our relationship was like white on rice. You could not separate us. Now by the way I have described our relationship, you would think that she was in the best condition. She was handicapped, but I cannot remember what exactly was wrong with her. She could get around the house with use of cane or walker. Someone always had to be with her, but neither my father nor grandfather took that responsibility. I was so young at the time that I needed a baby sitter myself. We needrd each other.

Description of a Person—Honorable Mention

A Special Person

Julia Rowland

I remember Uncle Joe. Uncle Joe was simple man who loved Elvis Presley and Mickey Mouse. The house he lived in was Nederland with his sister and her husband. Uncle Joe was my great uncle. Every time we went to see him, he would get out of his chair to give hugs to my dad, brother, and me. The best thing about Uncle Joe is that even though he was slow, he always seemed happy. Another great thing is that people did not expect him to live past the age forty-two. Uncle Joe had a great impact on our family's life. At his funeral was the first time I saw my dad cry. The way he said words sometimes pretty funny. Every time he would say something in his way, I would just smile at him. Uncle Joe had big square glasses, and he would sit in what he thought was his chair. I just wish I could be as happy as he was. The weird thing is, I do not know what made him so happy; but it made me happy too. The times the family went to the beach were nice. Now he had an elevator to get up to the bottom. I liked to swing with him in the big swing and enjoy the time we had. In his room at the house in Nederland, the comforter was Mickey Mouse. Mickey Mouse and Uncle Joe to me have similarities. Mickey makes people smile, and that is what Joe did. He made people smile. I miss him. He died during Easter break. Uncle Joe was a happy man, and I am glad I got to enjoy the time with him. I still get sad every time my family passes his house. Now Uncle Joe is in a better place.

Description of a Person—Honorable Mention

A Special Person

Sarah Smith

Melvin E. Smith was my grandfather. He was tall probably about '6' '0'. He had hair that was white as snow. He always wore the same kind of jump suits everyday. Some people call them nomexs. Mt grandfather was a loving, caring and funny man. He was a husband, a father, and a grandfather. I will never forget everytime I called his house to ask my grandmother a question he would always say, "What you want to talk to that ugly old woman for?" of course he was joking, but he always knew how to make me laugh. My grandfather owned two 1929 Ford Model A trucks. Everytime I would go see him, he would always do his best to take me riding. We would go rain or shine. There was a beautiful morning I woke up smelling something. He had made breakfast. We sat down at the table together and ate. After breakfast, he took me to this place called "Percy's," that was where he and all of his friends would sit around and drink coffee and talk about the latest gossip. It was kind of like a ladies hair salon but for guys. He would always introduce me as his sweetheart. "Hey fellas, this right here is my true sweetheart." It would make me smile, no matter how many times he would say it. He was like my best friend, someone I could count on. Then the day came that he became sick with cancer. As each day passed I could see him getting more frail and weak. It hurt me to see him that way. I tried my best to be there for him and help him when needed; but as time went on, it got harder and harder to hold back my tears. Within his last two weeks or so, I received a phone call from my grandmother saying he had a heart attack. My parents and I rushed to the hospital as quickly as we could. I followed slowly behind my daddy, not sure what I was going to see. As I prepared myself to go inside, I all of a sudden saw my

daddy drop to his knees screaming. I stopped and stood against the wall thinking this cannot be happening. This is not real. I got weak in the knees and could not keep my balance. Everything then began spinning, and I fell. I started crying and was hurt. I finally came to realize that it was better that way. He is now in no more pain and is always with me no matter what. There are a lot of times I am reminded of him, like when I smell Old Spice cologne or when I ride in the Model A with my daddy. It is okay, though. He is always watching over me.

Description of a Person—Honorable Mention

My Paw-Paw

Michael Thomas

If there was ever a man in my life who deserved for me to discuss, it would have to be my grandpa, Jarvis B. Scott.

My grandfather was born on July the 18th, 1932, and passed away June the 1st, of 2007. My grandfather who we fondly called “Paw-paw’ was a man of many trades. He was the fifth boy of ten brothers and five sisters. PawPaw did not finish school, but went to serve in the Korean War. He was discharged as a drill sergeant. After leaving the army, he begin working in the refinery but did not stop there. PawPaw also went on to get his G.E.D and encouraged my grandmother to get hers and a nursing degree. They married June 21, 1969, and had my aunt Monica that very next year.

Although he was not the man who gave birth to my mother, there was no other man who could have fit those shoes so smoothly, and PawPaw is the only man I recognize as such. To me my grandfather was lifesized in thought and presence. From him I learned quite a lot about being a man: values, principles, and morals. These are things that will not ever go away no matter how old I get.

The sad thing about all this is there was so much more I could have learned from him. I guess, I thought he would always be around here for me. It was a very hard pill to swallow, his passing away while I was incarcerated. I still cannot believe he is gone. The last thing I remember about him was some advice he tried to give me about a car. I was trying not to listen; now I regret that everyday. I miss my PawPaw. That is why I am writing about him today.



Description of a Place

The Outdoor Symbolic Memorial is a place of quiet reflection. Designed by Butzer Design Partnership, this Memorial honors the victims, survivors, rescuers, and all who were changed forever on April 19, 1995. It encompasses the now-sacred soil where the Murrah Building once stood, as well as the surrounding area devastated during the attack.



Gates of Time

These monumental twin gates frame the moment of destruction – 9:02 a.m. – and mark the formal entrances to the Memorial. The East Gate represents 9:01 a.m. on April 19, and the innocence of the city before the attack. The West Gate represents 9:03 a.m., the moment we were changed forever, and the hope that came from the horror in the moments and days following the bombing.



Reflecting Pool

The pool occupies what was once N.W. Fifth Street. Here, a shallow depth of gently flowing water helps soothe wounds, with calming sounds providing a peaceful setting for quiet thoughts. The placid surface shows the reflection of someone changed forever by their visit to the Memorial.



Field of Empty Chairs

The 168 chairs represent the lives taken on April 19, 1995. They stand in nine rows to represent each floor of the building, and each chair bears the name of someone killed on that floor. Nineteen smaller chairs stand for the children. The field is located on the footprint of the Murrah Building.



Survivor Wall

On the east end of the Memorial stand the only remaining walls from the Murrah Building. These walls remind us of those who survived the terrorist attack, many with serious injuries. Today, more than 600 names are inscribed on salvaged pieces of granite from the Murrah Building lobby.



The Survivor Tree

The Survivor Tree, an American Elm, bore witness to the violence of April 19, 1995, and withstood the full force of the attack. Years later, it continues to stand as a living symbol of resilience. The circular promontory surrounding the tree offers a place for gathering and viewing the Memorial.



Rescuers' Orchard

Like the people who rushed in to help, this army of nut- and flower-bearing trees surrounds and protects the Survivor Tree. An inscription encircling the Survivor Tree facing the orchard reads: To the courageous and caring who responded from near and far, we offer our eternal gratitude, as a thank you to the thousands of rescuers and volunteers who helped.



Children's Area

In the aftermath of the blast, children from around the country and the world sent in their own expressions of encouragement and love. That care is represented today by a wall of tiles painted by children and sent to Oklahoma City in 1995. In addition, buckets of chalk and chalkboards built into the ground of the Children's Area give children a place where they can continue to share their feelings -- an important component of the healing process.



The 19 children lost that terrible day, 17 years ago, would be high school and college age now.

www.oklahomacitynationalmemorial.org

Description of a Place— First Place

Patzcuaro

Edith Martinez

Patzcuaro is a small town in Michoacan, Mexico. It is a town full of color and culture; every year my family used to go there. It is a wonderful trip. If you pay attention to the road, you could see the Sierras; and if you take a deep breath, you could catch that wonderful smell of wood all over. In downtown there is this small plaza where you could sit and enjoy an ice cream. It is not regular ice cream. Instead, it is made of different exotic fruits even tequila and zapote. The street is made of smooth rocks, and the houses are made of sun-dried brick. It is like being in another time, lost in history. You could see real Tarasco people, who still wear their traditional attire, knitting on the street with children on their backs. The cathedral is stunning, one of the first churches made in the Mexico; in every room there is a piece of history. The paintings on the wall are more than a hundred years old, and some of the sculptures were brought from Spain when the first monks came to Christianize the Indians a long time ago. Our Lady of Health is the patron of the church; she has two rooms filled with pins and photos of people who have received favors from her. There is also a hall that passes right behind the sculpture. If you like, you could touch the veil; some people say if you have enough faith you will be cured just by touching it.

The air of Patzcuaro is marvelous, so peaceful and quiet. The town has a lot of museums and convents. Every step you take you will find people selling all kinds of candy, wood toys, and food. While walking on the street, you can smell the just made bread. After having breakfast, you could go to Janitzio, a nearby island with the same flavor as Patzcuaro, but with a smell of fish; if you like fish, you will love it. There is always someone selling the really small fried fish called,

“charales”; everybody loves them, and to most of the people they are like potato chips. I always take a boat trip to the island. It is a very famous place, because on November the second, they celebrate the day of the dead in a special way. On the top of the island there is the statue of Jose Maria y Morelos, one of the most important characters in our history. If you get to the top, you could see the whole valley and a wonderful view of the lake. I had some precious memories in that place, and thinking about it makes me so happy.

In my town we have a saying, “Remember is to live again,” and in my case it is true. Oh dear Patzcuaro, small town, maybe someday I will be back, and those days I once had will come back as well.

Description of a Place— Second Place

A Visit to the Graveyard

Michael Thomas

This was a first for me I was asked to write about a visit to the cemetery as a class assignment by my wonderful teacher, Mrs. Knight. With that said, this is why I stand in Calvary cemetery right now.

As I walked through the cemetery plot trying to gather my thoughts, I was struck by how somber the mood was. There was no noise to speak of , like this was a place of serious business. I was assigned the job of picking a plot to write about, there were so many to choose from, BIG ones, little ones, old ones as well. There were some buried in the ground, and some tombs set above the ground. As I continued my survey of the grounds, I even saw some caskets in the wall; however, all the plots were not that grand. On the site I saw several with no marking at all, and I seriously wondered how that could be.

Finally, I was struck by one that was simply titled, “Unborn Child.” It went further to read “In memory of all innocent victims of abortion.” I just stood there trying to figure out what that actually meant. Was it in reference to all the innocent victims killed that way or just this one case scenario. That evoked a sense of emotion to feel like an injustice had been done. “One day you are here; then the next day you are gone.”

When I looked at the tombstone, I wondered if this creation of God was not better off going straight to heaven than to begin here anyway. Sometimes, I ask myself the same question, and I still have not come up with an answer.

This all was a first for me. I have never been to a cemetery before in my thirty years of living. I am trying to let the thoughts flow freely, but outside worries and cares seem to still have me in their grip. I assume that comes with being part of the living. When you really look at it, who got the better end of the deal?

Description of a Place— Third Place

Friday Night Lights

Jarrood Castille

Everyone remembers his first football game. Lights are beaming from every side of the football stadium, bands on each opponent's side facing off to show who is better, cheerleaders practically standing on each other's heads in pyramid stunts, and last but not least, the football players. These are memories that I will forever hold.

I remember the first game I ever played in. I was in the ninth grade at Central High School, and we were playing against West Brook High School; a local team from one of the other high schools in Beaumont, Texas. We were just a block from Babe Zaharis Football Stadium when we could see lines of cars piled up waiting to see us play. As the cars piled with visitors and buses filled with anxious football players, cheerleaders, dancers, and bands rolled in, the adrenaline in my body began to rush through my veins at the speed of **lightning**. I just knew that the energy from the fans in the stadium would definitely make this game one that I would never forget.

As kickoff time approached each team charged onto the field full speed ahead making our way through the crowds of cheerleaders cheering us on. Our minds were completely on defeating our opponents. I stopped for a brief moment just to take in the whole experience, and what I saw was phenomenal. Both sides of the stadium were filled. The bleachers looked like a can of sardines with everyone bunched up together to see the festivities. People had signs that said "GO, FIGHT, WIN, and WE WANT DEFENCE!" They even had a man with a letter D and a picket fence made out of white poster board. When it was put together it meant defense. Their support added to the adrenaline rush that each

player had. We knew that we could not let our fans down. Even the snack vendors who walked through the bleachers selling food had signs and hats to show their support as well.

The ball was ours, and play after play we kept scoring. The scoreboard read Home (Central) 21 Visitors (West Brook) 7. We were ahead by two touchdowns. The more we scored the more the crowd screamed for us. Just hearing the school's fight song after each touchdown was enough to keep us going. It was as if we owned the field. We were practically unstoppable. The entire stadium was on its feet chanting and screaming for both teams. By the fourth quarter we were still winning and were up 56 to 21. We knew this game would set precedence for the entire season.

The energy from the fans in the stadium stayed the same the entire game. They were with us whether we won or lost, and that is what we needed the most. They gave us the motivation to go out on the field and play like we have never played before. In all sincerity anyone can have a football game, but it is the fan who gives the stadium life.

Description of a Place— Honorable Mention

Roselawn

Dennis Blakeney

Visiting cemeteries is an easy thing for me, unlike most people. Here in Southeast Texas we have a lot of beautiful ones to choose from, but none of them compare to my favorite, Roselawn Memorial Park in Vidor because of its simplicity. Not only do I have a best friend buried there, but my father also is as well.

Goliath oaks and sky scraping pines are scattered throughout Roselawn. The first thing that I notice when I pass through the gates is all of the old oaks that canopy the roads and burial sites. When I finally get through with making my lap around the cemetery, I arrive at my favorite burial site.

Getting out of the truck is not optional. Sometimes all I want to do is just sit there and cry my eyes out, but I always find the courage to open the door and step onto the thick southern San Augustine grass. As I approach Matt's grave, I always seem to build up one tear for sorrow. His headstone always has something new placed in or around it that freshens it up. Standing over the side of the headstone always lets me know that he is staring down at me, laughing, because he knows he is in a better place than I.

When I finally decide to leave, I always put my fist to the headstone and say, "Pound it." As I make my way back to my truck, a flashback of my brother sitting on a limb in an old oak tree plays out in my head. The thought that floats in my head as I navigate the twists and turns of the oaks and pines makes me realize that life can slip away from me in a blink of an eye. Visiting my favorite cemetery not only gives me a reality check, but cures me in an emotional way that no one thing or person can. As I accelerate onto the highway, that lurking tear catches up to me and falls to the floor as I smile.

Description of a Place— Honorable Mention

Roadside Reminders

Tracie Butler

Last semester I was driving down highway 62 heading to school when I came upon an accident involving two cars. It was early in the morning, so I assumed that the accident was the cause of drinking and driving or at least fatigue. That particular road has no lights to see at night, and it is one of two major roads that were used by the people who travel to Louisiana and back for gambling and drinking, so the auto accidents are quite regular. That one wreck caused the loss of two lives and horrible memories for the survivors. It was as if one car cut the other in half. They had a white cover that was covering one side of the car, which was opened up like a tuna can. The officers signaled us by slowly, so I was able to see what they were doing at the time. I saw that the paramedics were trying to retrieve the bodies without others seeing the victims. The other vehicle was intact, but badly crushed in the front, and two tires on the driver's side were completely torn off. There were two more wrecks down the same highway within a month or two after the first wreck I came upon. I was unfortunate to have been there to see all three, and from my view it was a nightmare. I came upon one just minutes after it happened and no one was there yet dealing with police or ambulance. There were other witnesses, so I was not needed to give a statement on the matter. It was a good thing, too, for I saw nothing of the actual crash, just the aftermath. It seemed to be a sad time during the three or four months there we dealt with the accidents. The crosses that mark the spots are sad reminders that we all are on a time line; and that when our time comes, then it is our time, no if, ands, or buts in the matter. It made me become more aware of the other vehicles around me, and I was more careful even if other people were not.

I felt sad and hurt for the loss of the family members and thought of having to go through or have my family go through the pain of a loss like that in a manner like it was. I was lost in the fact that it could have been I in a couple of them due to the fact that I was upon the wrecks only minutes after they happened. I thank God every day for being just a little late on those days and not on time. I feel that if I was, I would not be here today to tell you about the story.

Description of a Place— Honorable Mention

Secluded and Forgotten

Taylor Duncan

Many people have been to a grave yard, whether it be to mourn a loss or to lend support to another. No matter the reason, everyone is visiting a grave yard. It is often a sad experience. My family owns a lake house up by Sam Rayburn lake. The house is in a little secluded area of about fifty or so houses. In the neighborhood, three streets down from the house, there is a little grave yard with about seventy headstones. When we were younger, we used to wait for it to get dark and take flash lights and walk to the cemetery. There were five of us kids, so we thought it was funny to go there and try and scare each other. What made it even spookier was the fact that some of the head stones dated as early as the 1800's, none going above the 1900's. when we visited the grave yard during the day, it still had a scary feeling, but it also had a sad feeling as well. The grave yard was surrounded by pine trees, and a chain-link fence that was broken in some spots. There were birds chirping and small animals scurrying around. Surrounded by all the beauty of the nature, the place still has a brokenness about it. The headstones were cracked and weathered, stained by the years they accumulated. Some graves had fake flowers on them, but even then the flowers were dirty and misshapen. The look of the place made one wonder whether the people there had anyone left to visit them, or if they were all alone, even in the after life.

Though the graveyard looks awful now, one can see that in its prime, it housed beautiful, intricate works of art. The one with the most beauty belongs to a mother, father, and child. It's probably the one that brings about the most sadness. Being a mother, I cannot imagine losing my child, and to think about my

mother losing me, my child, and the father of my child is just heart breaking.
No matter someone's reason for visiting, whether it be for support or to play as a
child, the feeling one gets from grave yards is confusing and sad.

Description of a Place— Honorable Mention

Intoxicating

Maria Mendoza

I can still feel the cool breeze hitting me on the face, as I stepped out of the car. The smell of the salty water was intoxicating. The sound of the waves crashing on the beach made a relaxing sound. The sun was radiating its warmth to the fullest. It was a beautiful day at the beach.

The water had a beautiful tone of blue, as blue as the sky. You could not tell where the ocean ended and where the sky started. I remember how the white sand felt against my feet, and how it traveled between my toes. The first thing I thought of doing, was to make a really big sand castle. Therefore, I grabbed my bucket full of beach toys, and started to work on my masterpiece.

After a few attempts at making my sand castle, I decided to take a break to go into the water. The water felt so good. It was warm; however, it tasted awful. I tried to wipe it off my tongue, but I ended up realizing that I was covered in salt water. I ran towards the car and felt how the sand slowed me down.

I grabbed a bottle of water, and drank it all to get rid myself of the salty taste.

After a long moment of contemplating the beautiful view of how the sea reflected the sun rays, and the bird's songs, I decided I wanted to lie on the sand and let the warmth of the sun kiss my skin. I lay there for a long time. I was so relaxed that the time passed, and I did not notice that it was almost time to go back home.

I got a really bad sun burn that day, but it was worth it because it was my very first time at a beach. I have good memories of that day, and I would never change anything about that great day.

Description of a Place— Honorable Mention

The Accident

Sarah Smith

It is a sunny day. I am arriving on the highway, and I see the most horrifying thing I believe I will ever see. I am coming from Houston to Beaumont. There is a big cement wall on my left with traffic traveling the opposite direction. There are two other lanes of traffic to my right. A bit ahead of me there is an on-ramp to the Highway, which a dark blue Honda Accord is about to take. In front of me there is a red Nissan Titan. As the Honda sped up, he seemed to be changing lanes quite a bit. We later discover he was swerving because he was drunk. He swerved right barely missing a motorcycle. He swerved left and was not so lucky this time. I slammed on brakes as the Honda slammed into the Titan in front of me. Brakes were not enough; I had to pull the emergency brake. I sat there and saw that Titan flip and hit that cement wall. The Titan burst through it like a wrecking ball going through a building. It kept slipping two or three more times into oncoming traffic. When I looked closer there were little children in the back of the car. The Honda just sat there in front of me now. The hood dented in, the driver's door was almost off the hinges. The windshield was busted, and the driver's side windows were broken out too. Looking at that Titan, it was upside down, the windows were out. The children were screaming in the back seat. The lady in the front seat was unconscious. The guy in the front seat, not seemingly worried about his own well-being, was trying to get the little girl and the little boy out to safety. Behind me there is what seemed to be the longest line of traffic. As I looked in my mirror crying I could see flashing lights coming towards me. The police, ambulance, and fire truck finally showed up just as that man got his kids to the shoulder of the road. He dropped to his knees like all his strength

has been drained out of him. Before they let traffic start moving I noticed that lady was still there unconscious, so the firefighter started cutting to get her out. There was glass everywhere on the street. There were fluids on the road like radiator fluid and other different kinds. It was a mess. The drunk driver only had a few scratches and bruises, while another man may have lost his wife or even his own life. After seeing all that up close and in person, it was almost impossible for me to finish driving home. I was crying so hard, I could not see straight. My arms and legs were shaking so badly I felt like I was swerving. My insides were turning, and I felt sick. It was amazing to finally reach home!

Description of a Place— Honorable Mention

Graveyard

Vincent Wilson

Walking up to the grave site, I noticed a name. It was not just any name. It was my name-Vincent Wilson. Do you have any idea how scary it is to see your own name on a tomb stone? The reason for this was because I was named after my uncle who had passed away just before I was born. This was my first time ever seeing my uncle's grave site, and I was horrified. As I got closer and closer, my heart started to race. I could see different people's tombstones with many flowers and all sorts of colors. Finally I reached my uncle's grave site and his tombstone read: "In Loving Memory of Vincent Wilson." My father would tell me stories all the time about my uncle and his life, but this was my first time visiting his grave. For some reason, it seemed as if I knew him, or maybe he knew me. I do not know, maybe it was just a feeling. As I watched my father cry, tears from my eyes started to fall also. I just wish someday I could make my father as proud of me as he was proud of his brother.

Description of a Place— Honorable Mention

Cemetery

Amanda Zamora

As I sit here on this gray bench that is carved with the last name of Zamora, I face five family members' graves. The sound of the rain makes everything around me peaceful. People are standing crying, praying, talking to departed loved ones, open and free feeling. The burial site is protected by God, and well – maintained. I look around and see tons of white or gray tombstones. While I sit down I think to myself, how could they fit so many tombstones into this area? What if they run out of room? Where will they bury next? I am surrounded by many trees, and leaves are slowly falling to the wet pavement. Each tombstone has its own gifts brought by their loved ones. As I sit and stare at five family members' graves I wonder if they feel like they don't get enough visitors. I wonder if they even listen every time I talk to them. I always talk to my grandma, uncle, and my three cousins. Sometimes being at a burial site makes me feel scared, but then again why would I be scared when I am surrounded by good spirits. As I sit on the bench I think about how I may die and what I would like on my tombstones. All of the tombstones are lined up row by row. Whenever I walk around I make sure I walk on the edge. I feel like if I step on top of a grave, then they are disrespected. I feel safe and protected by God and the spirits. It is really quiet here when the birds are not chirping away, and the only sound you hear is the rain. The sun would usually be reflecting on the tombstones. All of my family's tombstones have pictures and a quote that says "Forever in our hearts," and "Never forgotten." I love reading the quotes off the different tombstones. I feel like each one describes the personality of the loved one. I like seeing the pictures on the tombstones and seeing what their family brought them.

A burial site is just another peaceful and protected place one could go to when he or she needs to talk to someone, even if that person is dead. The spirits are always there to listen.



Narrative-First Place

Shady Lady

Michael Thomas

Do women really know the lengths a man will go through just to get with her and keep her? I can actually sit here and think of all the foolish antics I have done just to get a smile from some pretty women's face.

Take for instance this one female in particular whose name was Monique Thornton, who I liked for many years. The first tactic I used to make my intentions known to her was acting like I really did not like her at all! Yes, I know that one is very prehistoric, but it has worked since the beginning of time. Everyday after the Lincoln High school bell rang to dismiss us, I would walk across the street and wait for her to come walking down the sidewalk. No sooner than we saw each other, Monique and I would automatically start telling each other how much we could not stand each other. This went on for half the school year, and I could see this was not going to get me anywhere. One day I was sitting around thinking about this, and an older friend told me I should try a new approach. He suggested that I try saying something nice like all the things I really thought about Monique. That did not go too well in my mind, plus I was not very good at expressing myself; so I decided to write her a note which ended up being a poem titled "Shady Lady."

The next dilemma was how to give this poem to Monique. Writing it was one thing, but actually handing it over was another. That was when God smiled down on me. Just as she was crossing the street, her books fell from her hands. Everyone began to laugh, figuring I was going to capitalize from the situation. Little did they know I had other things planned. I quickly stepped off the curb, walked over, and began to pick up her books. As she looked up to receive her

books from my hands, there was a look of shock on her face, I assume from my unexpected act of kindness. There was not much to say so I took the rest of her books from her hands, turned, and walked her home.

Millions of thoughts were running through my head; but before I lost my nerve, I turned, looked her in the eyes and said, "I wrote you a poem, here!" Then I attempted to put it in her hand, but she would not accept it. Instead, Monique went on to say, "If you wrote it for me, then read it to me!" I swear I almost fainted, but she was able to recover from that statement. With a shaky hand I began to read the poem to Monique. The whole time I read she was quiet. Then she looked at me for a few minute, smiled, and kissed me on the cheek. Before I knew it we were at the curb that led across the street to her house. As she walked away I just stood there at the curb wondering what the future may hold between us.

Shady Lady

The way you make me feel is so unreal,
so why can't we just chill
The way you talk but most of all the
way you walk
What can I say, I love to see your
smile everyday
It's better than the sunshine's rays on
a beautiful day
There's something about your style
that makes me want to go
This isn't a line to get a little bump and grind
Just a lonely heart trying to spend some **time**,
So why don't you quit acting shady and be my lady?

Narrative-Second Place

A Lover's Game

Jarrood Castille

Have you ever heard the story of how your parents met? I am pretty sure it makes you sick to your stomach when you think about your dad attempting to woo and convince your mother that he is, in fact, the best guy for her. My parents tell me and my siblings the same love story over and over again. After twenty plus years of listening to it, I am pretty sure we can recite the story just as if we were there.

Their love story started about twenty-six years ago. My dad, Jose who is the baby out of sixteen kids was sort of the “big man” on campus, so to speak, at what used to be French High School. He was extremely thin, beautiful hazel eyes, smooth caramel skin, and a huge afro that looked as if anything came anywhere near its vicinity it would definitely be stuck.. Everyone loved hanging with my dad. He knew how to really get the party started back then. Apparently those hazel eyes had every girl pining over him while he had his heart set on my mom, Yvette. My mom was just the opposite of my dad in certain ways. She did not come from such a large family; in fact, she was the middle child of six children and quite reserved. However, when she spoke you were sure to hear her. My mom was very beautiful and captivating. She had long beautiful jet black hair, a very petite body frame, and a smile that could light up the entire world. According to many of the other stories I have heard about my mother, her killer looks and stellar body was just a façade. She had a bit of a mean streak. My uncle who is my mom's baby brother always tells me the story of how he would get picked on at school, and my mom would have to come save him and beat up the guys who were picking on him. My parents initially met in school at French High

because they had taken a few classes together. When my dad saw my mom around campus, he would always tell his friends, "I am going to make her mine one day" while pointing at my mom. I am pretty sure no one ever took him seriously every time he declared that statement. Little did he know he would actually get the chance to get to know her that very night. Just about the entire graduating senior class of 1985 at French High was having a graduation party. Still to this day it is said to be the biggest party of all times. Both of my parents were in attendance and dressed to impress. My mom had arrived at the party while my dad was still in the living room playing cards. When my dad finally arrived at the party, he immediately began to canvas the area hoping to find my mom. It did not take much searching. After looking in the back yard patio, he then checked the house. Still to this day my dad describes the scene of him walking in the living room and seeing my mom at the table completely pulverizing all the guys in a game of deuces wild and how at that very moment he had fallen in love with her.

My dad had a really good game plan. He knew he would have to be quick on his feet because this was do or die for him. He walked over and started making small conversation with all of the players. After a while he moved his attention to my mom where he began to put his plan into motion. He started asking my mom to show him how to play the game even though he knew very well how to play. He and my grandmother played deuces wild every Sunday evening. My mom had taken the bait just as he planned. She invited him to have a seat next to her and play her hand of cards with her. After about three rounds of them beating the other players unmercifully, my dad told her, "How about the next round I play my own hand and try my luck?" She agreed, not knowing that my dad was already a champ thanks to my grandmother. After about four minutes into the round, my dad had won. The cycle of him winning kept going for hours and hours until my mom finally had enough, stood up completely enraged and said, "If I did not know any better, I would say that you already knew how to play the game pretty

well.” My dad who did not know what else to say due to the fact that his entire plan had just unraveled before his eyes, jumped up without hesitation and shouted, “Will you go out with me?” My mom was astonished but somehow managed to piece her words together to form a complete sentence and say, “It only took you all of high school to finally get the guts and ask me out.”

After much relentless torturing of my dad, my mom told my dad yes. She still makes fun of that night to this very day. Twenty-six years, three adult kids, and two grandkids later they are still very much in love. Who knew that a little deceitfulness in a card game would lead to a love everlasting and beautiful growing family?

Narrative-Third Place

DISCLAIMER: This Story is 100% Original

Betty Cochran

DISCLAIMER: This story is 100% original, inspired by a woman on the streets addicted to crack. When the drug dealer enters the picture the language does have slang in it and the manner in which they speak is fairly poor, although it is not so much compared to actual street slang. Also, as you noticed there's a twist in the tale "All's fair in love and war." I chose to do my story on the lies and stories a person will tell his family in order to get what he wants, and the things he will do when it is something he must have. Anything goes on the streets, especially if addiction is involved.

My name is Abigail Warren, and there are a few things you should know before I tell you my story. I am twenty-two years old and addicted to crack cocaine- one of the most common and addictive drugs on the street. I am 5'4', with dirty blonde hair. It is rather obvious to others on the street that I have a problem because when you use a drug as addicting as cocaine, it tends to have a few visible side effects. Namely, it makes you very fidgety and gives you bloodshot eyes. I found that out the hard way when I first started at eighteen. I thought I could hide it from my family; but soon my father was asking about my eyes, and my mother was asking why I always bit my nails or made sudden movements, or why my fingers could never sit still. I tried to cover up the bloodshot eyes with contacts (even though I do not wear glasses), but then they started to notice the contacts... especially when I accidentally forgot to put one in once and one eye was brown and the other was red. I tried to pass it off as allergies, but they found the contact lenses in my underwear drawer. Thanks for the tip, Sandra. When I get out of rehab, I will have to tell you it did not work. It

soon became obvious to my parents that I was wasting my early adult life on drugs, and that the only alternative was to go to rehab or live on the streets. The problem with rehab is that I have a problem, and I am not ready to get over it. My parents would not listen, and I could not live on the streets, so I spent half a year in a rehab program close to home.

During rehab, I was only allowed to travel from home to rehab and back. I had no time to spend with friends, no phone, and no times for parties, which is what got me into this mess in the first place. My parents could see an improvement in my overall appearance, cleaner hair, no contacts, and my eyes were not as red, and they began to show a little more trust in me. The only problem was that I was still nervous, still jittery, and still looking to get my fix by any means necessary. When a person is addicted to any drugs, he will do whatever is necessary to get what he wants. One night I stayed up until after my parents went to bed, and climbed out the bedroom window. Fortunately for me, my bedroom is on the first floor, so it is not like I have to climb lattice work or anything. It only took me three hours to make it just over half way across town. I knew who to see and where to find him. I knew what they charged, and I had been steadily taking ones and fives out of my mother's purse and my father's wallet to save up for it. "Yo girl! Where you been?" Luke asked, and I frowned at him. Luke was the local dealer on this corner, and he had been my best supplier before my parents forced me into rehab. Incidentally, he was the one who had gotten me hooked in the first place. "My 'rents found out," I said, shrugging as I dug in my pocket to gather all the money I had saved.

"What'd they do?" Luke asked, opening his passenger door and reaching inside. I produced a solid fifty, and he began taking apart the caret on his passenger door, until he was able to reach his hand in just enough to grab a few rocks. "Told me rehab or streets," I said, shrugging as though it had been no big deal. "You outta rehab now, girl?" Luke asked as we swapped, money for crack and crack for money. I shook my head and looked over my shoulder. "I gots

another month to go, I had to sneak out and walk,” I told him, frowning lightly. I realized I did not have my pipe anymore and sighed, producing another ten from my pocket. “I need a pipe,” I said, and he laughed as he lifted up the rug on the floorboard holding a pipe in his hand. He tossed me the pipe and offered me a ride back to my place on the other side of town. “Yeah, thanks man,” I said, surprised as he had never offered me a ride before. “If you wait until tomorrow night to smoke it, and you wear contacts, they shouldn’t catch you,” Luke said, and I nodded my head. We drove several more streets down before a cataclysmic chain of events occurred. The first thing I noticed were the red and blue lights in the passenger mirror, and the next thing I knew, an officer was walking up and tapping his light on my window. Luke cursed before he rolled down the window and smiled politely at the officer. The Officer took a step back and waved his hand in front of his face, indicating that he had smelled the drugs. “There a problem, officer?” Luke asked the officer, still smiling. To make a very, very long story short, the officer ended up having us step out of the vehicle as he searched it, and not only did he find the rocks hiding in the passenger door, but he found the rocks in my pocket along with my crack pipe. The officer was able to figure out that the rocks in the door were Luke’s, and it was pretty obvious that he was my dealer. We both got taken to jail in separate vehicles; and within four hours of being there, I was able to call my parents. “Mommy,” I said on the phone, tears rolling down my cheeks as my hands twitched nervously as they drummed against the phone. “Mommy, I am sorry, I couldn’t help it. Please come get me,” I begged and there was a long pause. “Maybe this time you have messed up enough that it will do you some good,” she said, before hanging up the phone. It was the worst night of my life and forced me to actually come to terms with my addiction, and all the wrong things I had done to get my fix, all the lies I told my parents, the sneaking around at night in places I should not be, and seeing people who were no good for me. I was forced to stay in jail for another six months, where after another shot at rehab, I was finally able to kick the habit for good. In short, life on the streets is not pretty as you can see from my story.

Narrative-Honorable Mention

All's Fair in Love and War

Margarita Ochoa-Alvarez

I do not agree when people say that all is fair in love and war. People should always do what is right no matter what the circumstances are. People should try to achieve what they want without making other people suffer. You cannot be happy while you make people suffer.

Bianca was a nice girl. She has always had a crush on a guy she met a couple of years ago. She never told him her feelings towards him and neither did he. They were always together and spent a lot of time with each other. She always wanted to tell him that she really liked him, but she never did. In addition, she never told him because he went out with her best friend, Jessica. Jessica was a little brat. She always made fun of people and was so spoiled. She always had what she wanted and did not really care about other people. Even though, they broke up a long time ago, she never told him anything because if she did, she knew that she was going to feel weird with Jessica, and she did not want to lose her friendship. She did not say anything at the time.

Bianca talked with her friend, Jessica, and she told her about the guy she liked. Jessica told her that she did not mind if she went out with him since it happened a long time ago. Jessica explained to Bianca that she was okay with it and that their friendship was not going to change because of that. She decided to tell him. On the other hand, he always liked her too and never told her anything. They started to talk and they started to go out. They became the happiest couple ever.

One day she called Jessica, but she did not answer. Bianca was upset because she thought that she was mad at her because she was going out with her ex. Jessica started to ignore Bianca in school, and she was always trying to avoid her.

Bianca tried to talk to her, but she never wanted to listen. Jessica never talked to her again even though she was still going out with the guy. In addition, Jessica tried to do anything to get back with her ex. Of course, he did not want to go out with her again. He could not do that to Bianca because he really loved her. Jessica tried to everything she could think of. She even threatened Romeo that she would kill herself if he did not go out with her again. She stalked him, and she kept on ignoring Bianca who was supposedly her best friend. Finally, Jessica realized that what she was doing was wrong. She started to talk to Bianca again and apologized to Romeo and to Bianca. They then became best friends again.

Narrative-Honorable Mention

The Journal

Amber Depew

May 14, 2010

I was sitting in the cafeteria. I looked up as Coach Reagan walked by; the food I put in my mouth turned to mush. Heather and the other girls were talking about how cute he was, how lucky his wife was to have him. Yeah right, I thought. I felt like I was about to die. "Heather, I need to talk to you. Now!" She gave me a funny look and told the others that I did not feel well, and she would walk me to the nurse. Instead we went to an empty area of the library where I unloaded the whole story.

April 6, 2010: School

I always hated math, and it was never my friend. No matter how hard I studied or went in for tutoring I would fail the tests or I would barely pass them, and that was luck. It could have been that my infatuation with my teacher had something to do with my lack of attention during tutoring. He was just so cute. Even in class I would dream about what it would be like to be married to him. Today, I got the bad news that my grade for both semesters was not high enough for me to pass for the year, and that meant I would not graduate. Fantastic, I thought. After class, I went to talk to Coach Reagan, hoping that he would have a little sympathy for me. "Coach, I cannot fail." I began. "I have to graduate; my parents are expecting me to go to LSU in the fall, and I cannot let them down." A weird look came into his eyes. It made me uncomfortable, but I waited to see if he would give me a chance to get my grade to at least passing. "Come with me down to my office, and we will talk more about it. I will write you a pass if you are late for next block." At least he was thinking about giving me another chance. I followed

him down to his office, and he closed the door as I sat down. "I will help you get a passing grade for the year. You are a pretty girl." My heart was pounding, and I wondered what he was thinking? "I think that we both would like it if you came to my apartment. Have some fun; get to know each other. Think about it and let me know at the end of today. It can help you graduate." I felt dizzy when he gave me my pass. It was only second block. How was I supposed to pay attention in class when I did not have long to give an answer? I had gotten in a bad situation. However, it could help me graduate. Yeah, I am going to do this, I told myself. Graduation is more important than a moral. After all, who needs to know?

April 6, 2010: Evening

I parked my car outside of the apartment. These were the types of apartments that I would dream to live in. As I walked up to the door, I could feel my legs shaking. I pressed the doorbell thinking "Crap! Why did I do this?" I started to leave when the door opened. There he was. "Come on it," he said with a smile on his face. I gave him the best smile I could and walked in. I stopped at the foyer when I noticed the candles that were on the table and the dinner that smelled amazing. Then my stomach turned flips. I turned around, and he was right behind me. My mind went to the safest thing to say, "Where's your wife?" Instant mood killer, I thought.

"Oh, she is out of town on business for the week. So we will not be interrupted." After the dinner, which did not last very long, we went into the living room. Everything happened at once. I could not stop it, could not possibly resist, and could not say no. The night was ending, and he walked me to the door. "I love you," he whispered.

"I love you, too." Wow, all the times I dreamed about saying those words to him. When it happened, it did not feel anything like I thought it would. It felt wrong, dirty. I left feeling empty and used.

April 30, 2010

It was a quiet Saturday at my house. My parents went to the lake to take a break before the week started. I had been noticing crazy things, like I missed my monthly. I never, ever missed it. I was also tired all the time, even though I had regular exercise and a good night sleep. I had also begun to gain weight. It was not a major noticeable change in my weight, but it was a change that should not have happened with my healthy diet and set exercise routine. I went to the drug-store and bought a test. I got home and took the test. Not even five minutes later my world came tumbling down.

May 14, 2010

Heather stared at me as I finished my story. I could tell she was angry at me for making such a stupid decision. I never thought about summer school to help me graduate on time; that is, until now when it is too late, and the past could not be changed. "It is just not fair," I complained. "Why do I have to deal with these consequences?"

Heather replied, "Claudia, you made the decision, and when you made that decision, you basically accepted full responsibility for what would happen. After all, all is fair in love and war."

Narrative-Honorable Mention

Relationships

Cedric Wade, Jr.

What goes around will always come around. Since early childhood I used to always hear my family say the cliché “what goes around comes around,” meaning,” whatever you do that is wrong will come back around on you. After a year and a half of separation from my child’s mother, I was introduced to a new lady friend by the name of Mary. About a year and a half ago, I moved back from Houston, Texas, to be with my newborn son and his mother, Jasmine. When I moved back I thought my child’s mother and I were on good terms; but I soon discovered the day I moved back that she was involved with someone else by the name of Josh. She told me that she and Josh had been in a serious relationship for over two years. I was shocked, stunned, and heartbroken; but I had to be a man about it and move on. It was hard for me, but by the grace of God I made it through my pain. It took me about a year to start back dating again because I was trying to get myself happy again. Like I said, by the grace of God I made it, and God is really good. Now that I have found someone else to be with, Jasmine seems to hate the fact that it is true. What goes around comes around; I finally see for myself what the cliché means. After Jasmine found out about Mary, Jasmine started calling Mary in the middle of the night, texting her phone throughout the day, asking very childish questions. I have told Jasmine several times to grow up and behave like an adult. I am sick and tired of her nonsense and entertainment. I told Jasmine she needs to accept the fact that she needs to let go because after all, she was the one who cheated on me. I hate to see Mary go through this because of Jasmine’s nonsense, but Mary understands the

situation of Jasmine being childish and sticks by my side. I am thankful for Mary's support. It will pay off later on in the end, but for now I am thankful to have met her. The cliché can be painful at times depending on the situation; but it is so true what goes around will come around, so be careful what you do to others.

~~Narrative~~ Honorable Mention

All Is Fair in Love and War

Darrian Provost

They say, "All is fair in love and war"; which at first seems to be true. However, when taken too literally, that phrase just might kill you. This is a story of love and war, betrayal and loyalty, life and death.

In the 1940's there was a boy named Jacob and a girl named Ally. Jacob and Ally grew up together. Over their younger years they got very close and eventually decided to become a couple. After being together all throughout high school, Jacob and Ally decided that they would get married after their graduation.

When their graduation came, the two were filled with excitement. Not only were they through with schooling; but the two were about to embark on a new journey of life together as a now married couple, and they could not wait. However as another old saying goes, it was just too good to be true.

The country was going into the Second World War, and Jacob was drafted. He was excited with the thought of fighting for his country but leaving his new bride was too much pain to bear. He was distraught. Jacob loved his country, his freedom, but the thought of leaving Ally and never knowing if he would see her again only caused his heart to ache.

Jacob did not inform Ally that he would be leaving for the army until only a day before his departure. She felt betrayed. The man she waited her whole life to be with would soon be leaving to fight in a war. That was not the fairy tale she had planned, but what kind of woman would she be to ask her husband not to fight for the country they live in. there was nothing left to do but enjoy the time they had together before he would be gone. The next day came as surely as the

night left. Jacob departed early that morning leaving Ally with a promise that he would soon be home back in her arms, a promise he would soon break.

Jacob was shipped off and quickly became an active soldier. He was shot on the first day of his second week at battle. With only access to a few medical supplies, there was not much anyone could do. He was pulled off the battle field by his fellow soldiers and left to die peacefully.

Back at home, Ally was informed of his death three days later. She cried and cried until she had no tears left and later on that night, Ally died of what the coroners stated as a heart attack but most knew it to be of a broken heart.

What Ally did not know was that Jacob had been found by locals of a village nearby; and though he was near death, he was nursed back to health, and Jacob eventually found his way home to fulfill his promise to his wife. He opened the doors of their home only to find emptiness. He could feel something was wrong. He went door to door searching for his wife, but only one neighbor had the heart to tell him that his beloved had just recently died. He thanked his neighbor for his honesty and went home.

Jacob was too depressed and guilt ridden to take another lover, so at home he sat, waiting on death to bring him away from the cold world and back to his wife. He lived to be 83 and died of natural causes. Yet not many mourned his death; he had finally kept his promise and could now live forever in the arms of his beloved Ally, where no war could ever again tear them apart.

~~Narrative~~ Honorable Mention

Orders

Eric Voegele

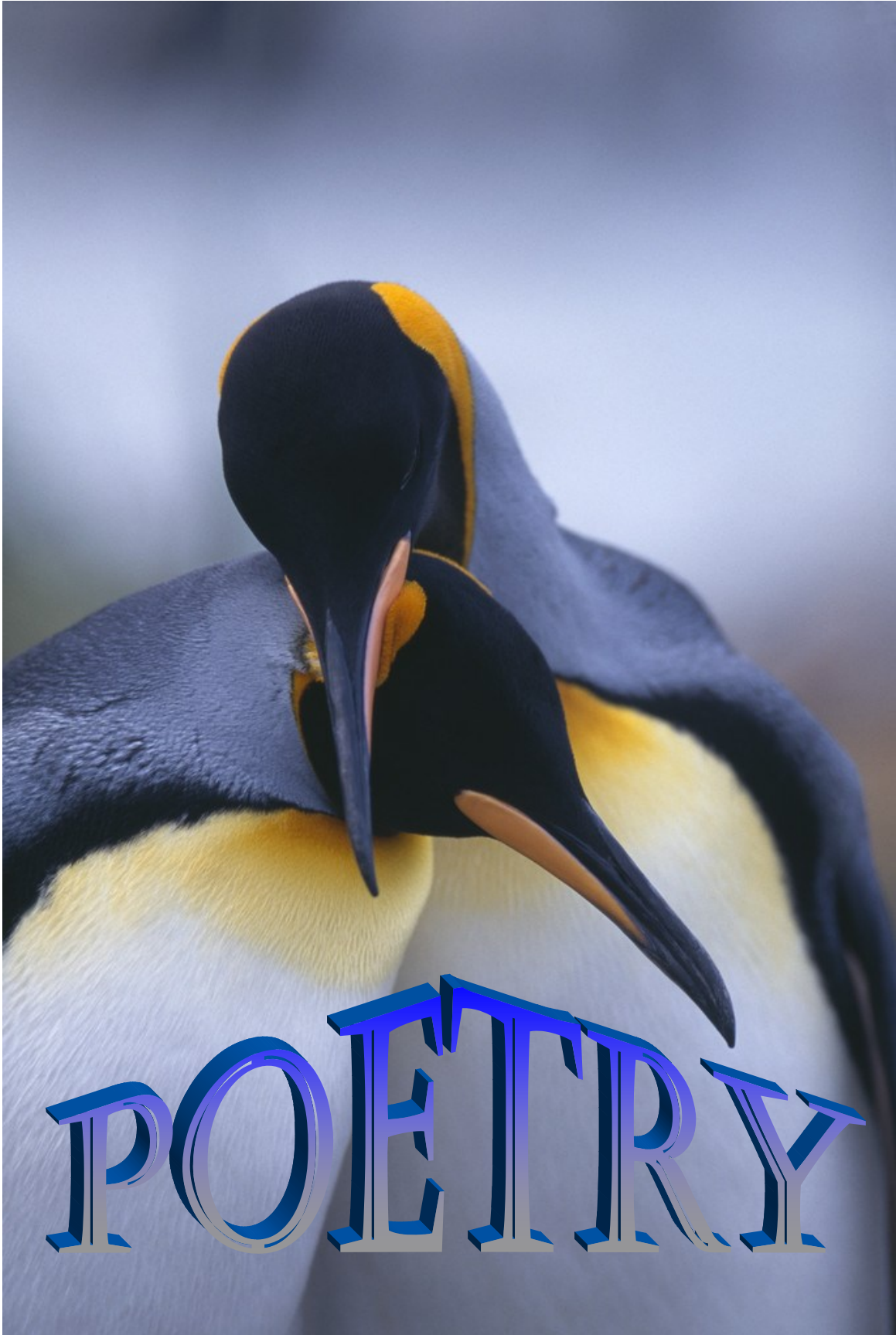
John was a young man, maybe nineteen years old. He had lived a relatively normal life. Nothing particularly good or bad had ever been experienced by him. His parents were like most parents at the time. They had worked hard to raise John and his other siblings. Mike had been John's best friend since they were children. Not long after John had finished school, the war started. A few months later John and Mike were drafted into the army.

It had been around a year since John and Mike had entered the military. To John it had seemed much longer than that. He had been so ignorant in his thoughts about war. Now that he had experienced it first hand, he wished that he could go back to his childhood. He and his other friends had spent so many days at the pond near his home swimming. Such carefree and joyous times those were, he thought. There were no men barking orders or late night guard duty. Just then John was jolted back to reality by a superior officer shouting at him, because he had not shown the officer the proper respect. John began apologizing immediately and hoped that doing so would help avoid any sort of punishment. Luckily, the officer had an important mission for the squad that John was a part of. The officer asked John to tell him where his squad captain could be found. He pointed to a dugout around twenty-five yards from where the two were standing. The officer hurried off towards the dugout and disappeared inside the small building.

John and Mike were gathered together with the rest of their squad. Around fourteen men were gathered in a group. They were all wondering why their captain, Paul, had wanted them to gather. After a few more minutes of waiting,

Paul showed up. Paul was only a few years older than John. He had been promoted to captain after the previous one had been killed by a piece of shrapnel from an artillery shell that exploded near him. Paul began telling his soldiers what their mission was. He explained that there was a small village near the base where they were stationed. There had been information that the enemy had been staying in the village. They were to go there and eliminate any enemy combatants they encountered. Paul dismissed the soldiers to go gather their equipment, because they would be leaving as soon as possible.

John was standing at the edge of a forest and up ahead was a small village. From what he could see there were only five or six small huts. John did not think that the enemy would ever use such a tiny place as a base. Orders were orders, John thought to himself as Paul ordered his squad forward. As the squad entered the village a man exited his home to see why these soldiers were at the village. As soon as Paul saw the man he lifted his weapon and fired two shots at the villager and hit him twice in the chest. The man fell to the ground dead. John was extremely scared by what had just happened. Why did Paul shoot a man who was clearly unarmed? Just then Paul ordered the soldiers to split into groups and eliminate anyone they found. John just stood there in shock, and he could not move at all. What was he supposed to do? Join the others or should he run away? In the end all he could do was stand motionless in disbelief. John found out later why they had really gone to the village. Apparently the people had been supplying the enemy soldiers. In order to stop those enemy soldiers from being supplied, the higher-ups decided it was best to just kill everyone in the village. John was not sure if that was necessary or even practical for them to kill an entire village just to stop them from supplying the enemy soldiers. It seemed to him that the men higher up in command decided that even if it was not ethical for them to kill those people, they were willing to do anything to win this war.



Poetry-First Place

Foolish

Maura Tony

I'm writing this poem, you see,
It's going to be about you and me.
It's going to tell what I feel inside,
And I promise not to cry or even sigh.
You walked away and left me empty.
After all, I gave you plenty.
Satisfied you
In every way that she slacked
I should have been strong
but all I did was opposite of that
How could I not see?
Blinded you had me!
Don't say you don't understand
Because that's a lie, true love never gives up
Or even subsides.
Foolish I was
To even think
How a man like you
Could just cherish me
You're a coward and a fake
My heart was not there for you to take
But you abused it and then you ran
Now, does that really make you feel like a man?

Poetry-Second Place

Life

Chastity Jade Bell

Life is so complicated.
Everyday something new.
Something different.
Something unexpected.
What changes life overnight?
Things are never as they appear on the outside.
Lives are ruined.
Lives are destroyed.
Lives shatter like broken glass out of others mouths.
Life can only be lived once.
Life seems so cold.
Life seems so dull.

Life

Your life is in your own hands.
How can you sum up the term life?
Unexpected.
Because of a touch.
Different.
When the sun comes up.
Changing.
The word sums it all.
I bid you farewell my friend.
Life fades away in a blink of an eye.
I'll see you someday.

Poetry-Third Place

God is Good!

Amber Depew

God is good

God is great

He gave us life and His love

He gets us through bad

And praises in the good

He does not steal

He does not kill

But He does heal

He loves the weak

He loves the wealth

And all the ones in between

All colors, all sizes

He does not judge

So you should not,

Love your neighbor

Love yourself

Love God and put Him first

Just like He did for you

Remember the scars and the pain that He sacrificed for you

He could have turned His back on you.

He saves us all if you choose

Fear not, He is with you

Though big and small

Rough and tough
He is One GOD, ONE FATHER & ONE HOLY SPIRIT
When you talk, talk in love
When you walk, walk in love
Dress to impress your Father in Heaven
Talk as if He is standing by you
God forgives and forgets
Repent if you fall in sin, God forgives
Fear not because God is bigger than your fears
Live life more abundantly and never forget the one reason why you're on Earth.
Put down the cigarette and the beer
Because it's not worth it in the afterlife.

Poetry-Honorable Mention

Remain

Chastity Jade Bell

Lying on the ground while death remains all around.
The knife struck from behind through the heart it'll remain.

Let's end this now.

It was either me or you.

You said it was my time to go.

But I will not die so soon.

My spirit will remain.

Welcome to your fears, where I'll drown you in my tears.
You tore it all apart what was supposed to be our start.
Stabbed through the back, was where you last attacked.

Blood all around, this is where I lay on the ground.

This is where I draw the line.

With one last fatal cry.

The brokenness is contained.

It is driving me insane.

It wasn't my fault, you broke me down.

You killed me first. My spirit will get revenge.

This demon inside has nowhere to hide.

It's eating at my soul.

You unleashed the beast with the murderous blow.

My spirit will survive as long as you die.

Stabbed in the chest, there goes your last breath.
Welcome to your fears, where I'll drown you in my tears.
You tore it all apart what was supposed to be our start.
Stabbed through the back, was where you last attacked.
Blood all around, this is where you lie on the ground.
This is where I draw the line.
With one last fatal cry.
Break through the crowd is where your body is on the ground.

Deception, Despair, is all that's in the air.
The time we both had is soon to fade away.
Memories are hidden, secrets never to be exposed.
Who knows what happens when a mind blows
Insanity has gotten the best of me.
The anger is no longer contained within.

Welcome to your fears, where I'll drown you in my tears.
You tore it all apart what was supposed to be our start.
Stabbed through the back, was where you last attacked.
Blood all around, this is where I lay on the ground.
This is where I draw the line.
With one last fatal cry.
I'll be seeing you oh so very soon.

Poetry-Honorable Mention

Forbidden Love

Maura Tony

Their love seemed so perfect
Beyond its compare
When they were together
All people would do is just stare
It was undeniable
As they could see
This love that they shared
Was also bitter sweet
Or maybe forbidden
As I would say
Their love had to stay hidden
Most of the way
As they would see each other
They could not delay
Their time was cut short
Since they always had to go
Their own separate ways
But this did not matter
As you can see
Because this love they shared
Had them wondering things
And asking themselves
How could this be?

A love so strong
That should not be
Puts a feeling inside
That of misery
How did this become
I will ask
It's a story of deceit
And should not last
For better or for worse
Is what we say
So this forbidden love
Must just go away
For the real thing is there
And we should not stray
It has been said
In its own special way
We shouldn't fight
For what isn't real
Just hold close to our hearts
What is truly dear
That forbidden love is not worth a fight
So give it your all with every bit of might
Real love will always matter
It's such a delight.

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Statement of Editorial Policy

The editorial staff of EARLY EXPRESSIONS 2012 would like to thank all of the students who submitted work for consideration to EARLY EXPRESSIONS 2012 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 2012 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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