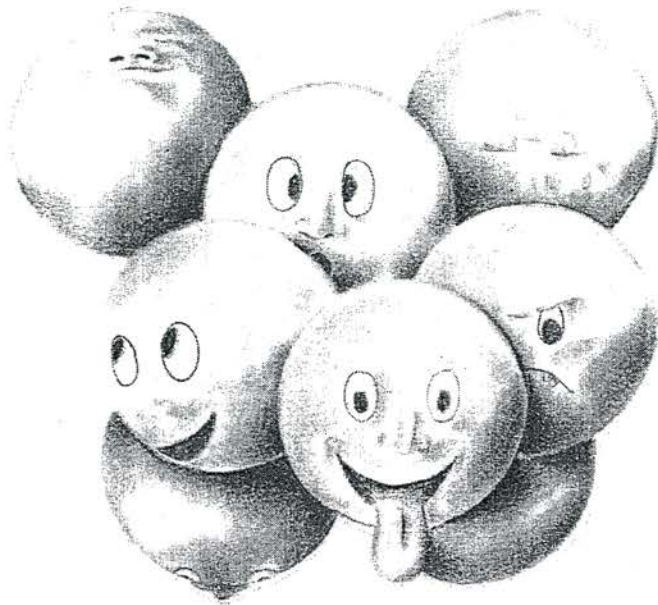


# expressions



2000-04

Lamar State College-Port Arthur



Lamar State College-Port Arthur

*A Member of The Texas State University System*

# Expressions

Spring 2004

Volume XVIII

## In Appreciation

April 22, 2004

This has been a year of transition for Expressions. In order to be able to make changes more easily and print the magazine in amounts as needed, we decided to publish the magazine in house this year.

This would have been impossible without the exceptional work done by Janet Polk. She has typed, edited, removed, and added to the magazine on a daily basis for several weeks. I am extremely proud of the magazine and the entries that it contains.

I hope each of you will enjoy this publication and give a “thank you” to Janet. Without her, you would not have this magazine before you tonight.

Thank you, Janet

Sally Byrd  
Editor

# Expressions 2004 - Winners

## SHORT STORIES

### First Place

A Fine Line Between Lust and Hate . . . . . Jason LeLeux

### Second Place

Sleepyville . . . . . John R. Nosler

### Third Place

Stolen Moments . . . . . John R. Nosler

### Honorable Mention

The Therapist of Heaven and Hell . . . . . Bruce Wright

Students . . . . . William H. Davis, Jr.

## ESSAYS

### First Place

Is It Entertainment-or Propaganda? . . . . . Ryan Andrew Hanson

### Second Place

Fifty is Nifty . . . . . John R. Nosler

### Third Place

The Sound and the Fury in Me . . . . . Terra Creekmore

### Honorable Mention

Is Man Free? . . . . . William H. Davis, Jr.

A Search for Truth . . . . . William H. Davis, Jr.

## POETRY

### First Place

Transcendental Rhythm . . . . . Dustin Vickers

### Second Place

Ode to English Comp . . . . . Brent Sherrill

### Third Place

The Attic . . . . . William H. Davis, Jr.

### Honorable Mention

Excuse Me, Sir, the Monkey Said . . . . . John R. Nosler

Cycles . . . . . Anna Wueller

Take Your Time . . . . . Chris Orlando

Sensing You . . . . . Debra G. Reasonover

I am . . . . . Crystal Meaux

Recycle . . . . . Alfred Roberts



*POETRY*

**Honorable Mention**

- The Builder ..... Keith L. Demps  
The Bloody Ground ..... Bruce Wright

*LITERARY CRITIQUE*

**First Place**

- Visions of the Daughters of Albion ..... Warren Martens

**Second Place**

- Victory in Death ..... Kevin W. Knowles

**Third Place**

- Critique of Mathilde in "The Necklace" ..... Carley Dodson

**Honorable Mention**

- The Influence of Point of View in a Story . . . Aimee Myers Lynch  
An Explication of "Dulce et Decorum Est" ..... Anna Wueller

*SPECIAL CATEGORY-Funded and Sponsored by: Phi Theta Kappa*

**First Place**

- By Nearly Dying, I Came to Appreciate Living . . . John R. Nosler

*COVER ART*

**First Place**

- Expressions 2004 ..... Darcy Darrell Demby

**Second Place**

- ..... Juan Cardenas

**Third Place**

- ..... David Lauhon

**Honorable Mention**

- ..... Christopher Jolley

- ..... Darcy Darrell Demby

*GENERAL ART*

**First Place**

- A Fighters Expression-Magic Johnson . . . Darcy Darrell Damby

**Second Place**

- Zeus ..... Henry Lovelady, Jr.

**Third Place**

- ..... Christopher Jolley

**Honorable Mention**

- Hands on Fence ..... Juan Cardenas

- Let There Be Light ..... Henry Lovelady, Jr.

- ..... David Surls

- ..... Nathaniel Taylor

*PHOTOGRAPHY*

<b>First Place</b> .....	Karla Gonzalez
<b>Second Place</b> .....	Karla Gonzalez
<b>Third Place</b> .....	April Arredondo
<b>Honorable Mention</b> .....	Erin Titus Karla Gonzalez April Arredondo

*PUBLISHER'S AWARD*

**Short Stories**

Students .....	William H. Davis, Jr.
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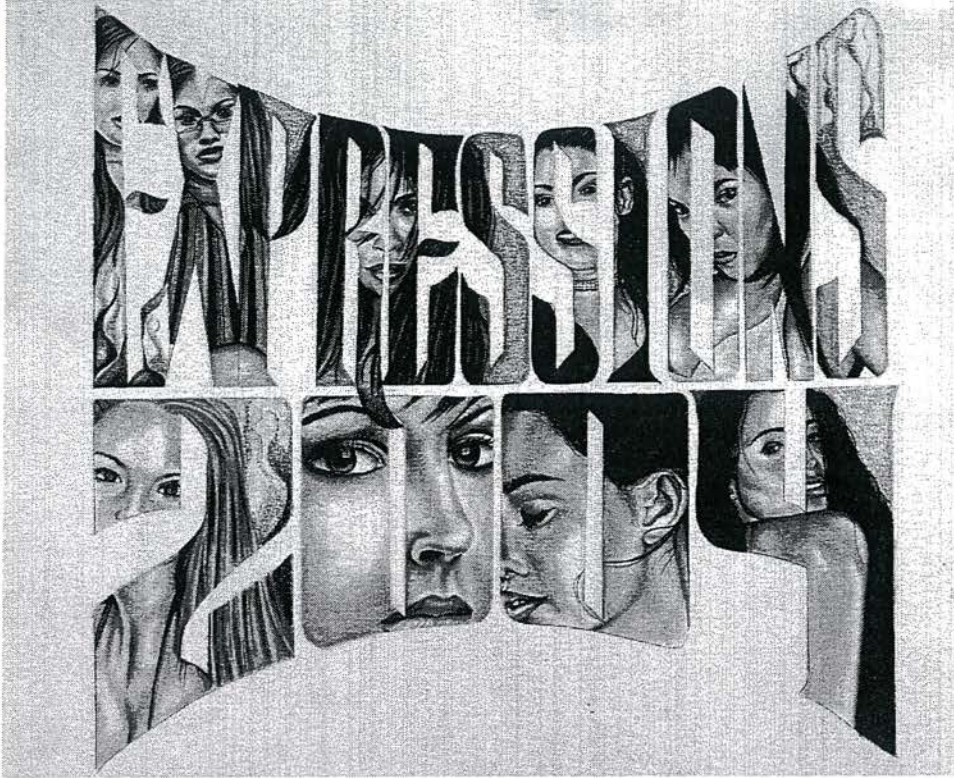
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## Student Contributors

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Cynthia Goudeau	Trinh Pham	
Connie R. Gradney	Ruben Plata	
Linda Guillory	Debra Reasonover	
Ryan Andrew Hanson	Alfred Roberts	





*Cover Art-Second Place*

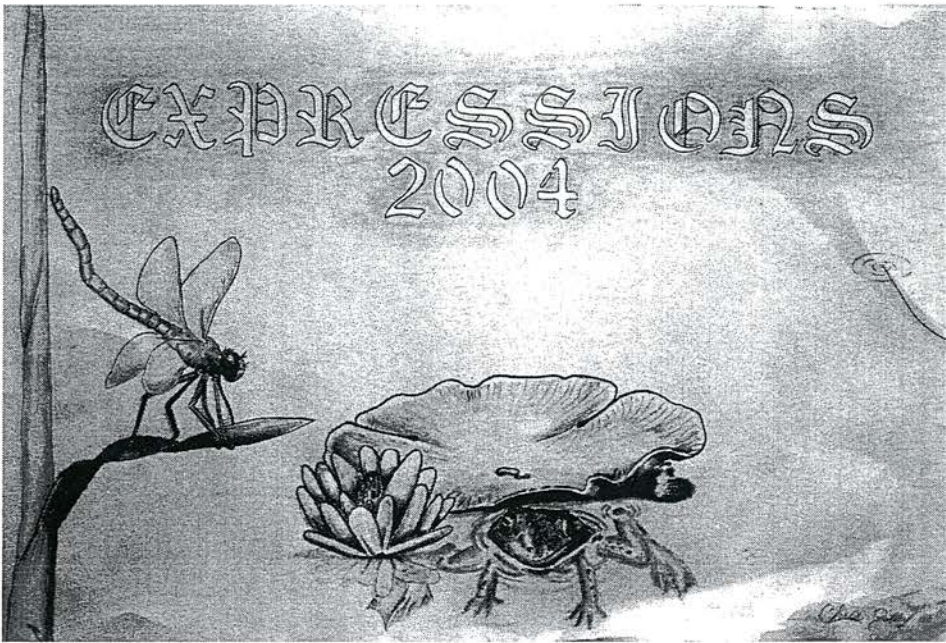
Juan Cardenas





*Cover Art-Third Place*  
David Lauhon

*Short  
Stories*



Cover Art-Honorable Mention  
Christopher Jolley



# Short Stories-First Place

## A Fine Line Between Lust and Hell

Jason LeLuex

"I'm tellin' ya Vinni, when I get home, I'm gonna kill the bitch." George was a stocky man of medium height and a stout looking chin. He fit the profile of most of the current police department. All of them were squatty, tough guys with no necks.

"Oh, bull shit, you don't even know that she is really cheating on you." Vinni, on the other hand, was a tall lanky man with no visible bulges anywhere. This fit the profile of most of the department's detectives.

"I've seen the e-mails; I've seen the vid-phone bills. I'm not getting any action anymore. Come on man, I'm a cop, for Christ's sake, putting pieces together is my job." George fiddled with the leather strap on his leather blaster holster.

"You're a street cop; you deal with the obvious. I'm the detective; puzzles are my bit. Look, all I'm saying is to listen to her side first, man; you don't want to go off and do something you will regret later. She's not worth your job, or worse, an exile sentence. Besides, in situations like this, I find that a lot of the time emotions override your brain." Vinni was watching the holster out of the corner of his eye. He hated when George got all strung out about something. Many times in the past he had thought that perhaps George was a little too high strung for police work. He was a good cop, no doubts there, but sometimes he got an idea into his head and just let it run with him until he did something bad. Vinni had a strong suspicion that this could easily turn into one of those times.

"What are you trying to say, Vinni? You takin' her side again already?" George's eyes burned with a rage usually reserved for the criminally insane. His stare burned a hole that he could almost see through Vinni's forehead.

"Now, George, you know it isn't like that. You're my best friend, and you know I'm behind you. I'm just trying to make sure you don't go too far. I care about you, man." A tiny bead of sweat collected on Vinni's cheek. God, he hated when George got like this. The past they shared was almost worth erasing if he would never have to go through this again.

The vacuum lift stopped at Vinni's floor, three floors under George's. Vinni stepped out of the lift and turned to try one last time to

talk sense to his friend, but was interrupted before he could even start by the door of the lift closing in his face.

George fingered his blaster and murmured to himself as he waited for the lift to reach his floor. The veins in his forehead began to bulge and redden. By the time the lift reached his floor, he had drawn his blaster and was swinging it by his side. He stormed out of the lift and double timed it to his door. He reached into his pocket and yanked out his keycard, slammed it into the reader lock, and swung his gun arm stiff out in front of him as he stormed through the threshold.

As soon as his head broke the threshold, a warm calm swept over him. His subconscious was flooded with images of ocean waves slapping in the background. In the back of his head, George could hear crickets chirping softly and a gentle breeze rustling through tree tops. He calmly holstered his gun and took a deep breath. A smile crawled up into his face. He hadn't forgotten that he was angry; it just did not seem to be all that important anymore.

George walked down the hall that spilled into the living room and saw his wife Sharon lying on the couch. She looked up at him and smiled. Standing up from the couch, she hurried into his arms and kissed him. Her arms around his large frame, she leaned far enough back to look into his eyes. "I'm sorry, love."

"Well, dear, I was coming in here to kill you, but everything seems okay now. Sharon, might I ask why I feel like I am in Mr. Roger's neighborhood?" His smile had not diminished at all. He was completely calm and collected, simply curious now.

"Mr. Who's what?"

"Never mind, it was an old television show my grandfather used to make me watch." He stood still, smiling away, waiting for Sharon's answer.

"Well, I knew you would be angry, so I went and picked up a Neural Emotion Enforcement Device. I thought if I could keep you calm enough to explain, maybe you would forgive me." Sharon's eyes were turned up in pity. She tucked her chin and pouted out her bottom lip. "I love you, George, and I'm sorry."

George's smile would not let up; he led his wife to the couch and sat her down. He sat next to her and held her hand, stroking it gently. "Why, Sharon, I hate to ask, but why?" Though totally calm, he could still feel the hurt and anger he had felt on the way home.

Sharon looked deep into his eyes "You were never home anymore,



George; I got lonely. I know I should have come to you about it, but it all happened so quickly. Just as the loneliness was getting to me, poof, there he was. I was swept away by the new attention and affection. I'm so very sorry, George it was just a little pick me up really; it meant nothing. Nothing you can say to me will make me feel worse than I already do; I betrayed your trust and the vows we made to each other. I swear it was a one time thing and will never happen again. I'm going to spend the rest of my life trying to make it up to you, dear. I love you very much, and I feel just completely stupid for messing this up." She hung her head and stared at the couch, tears welling up in her eyes.

George reached over and placed a hand under her chin to lift her face. He looked deep into her eyes and saw true remorse. The anger in his heart subsided to guilt for not seeing how he was ignoring her. "I'm sorry, too, then Sharon, I didn't realize I was taking you for granted." He leaned in and kissed her hard. "I'll never do it again. If you really meant what you said, this may be a good thing. Maybe we can be closer than ever because of this. I'm sorry, love." He hugged her tight to him. Tears began to fill his eyes in response to the release of all the hateful, raging emotions he had built up since he had found out about the affair. Sharon hugged him back just as tightly, and the two could almost feel each others hearts begin to chime in unison.

After a few minutes they released each other and began to wipe their eyes. George looked up at Sharon. "You were right to get the N.E.E.D's dear. You are much more than I ever give you credit for, and I'm sorry for that. Can we start from scratch?" A smile came back to his face, this time genuine.

Sharon returned his smile. "Oh, yes, dear. That is exactly what I was hoping you would say. I swear to you, you will never, ever have to feel this way again because of me. I love you more than ever." She laid her head in his lap and began kissing his hand and rubbing his legs.

George stroked her hair and basked in the warmth he felt in his heart. The calm and love were genuine, no need for a machine anymore. "Honey, not to change the subject, but N.E.E.D.'s are only allowed to aid in calm and relaxation. This one completely one-eighty'd me. You didn't get this one at Solution World did you?" He bent down and kissed the back of her head.

"No, George. It's an illegal one. I got it on Plinkett Street, near the arcade. I'm sorry, I know it is not acceptable for a policeman's wife to shop on the black market, but I had to have the strongest one I could find.



Also, the illegal ones have added features that I have been more than a little interested in.” She sat up and looked into his face.

“That’s all right dear; I understand why you did it. But, these things are outlawed for a reason, dear. Shut it off. I’ll have to bring it into the station in the morning and make sure it is destroyed. In the wrong hands, these things lead to rape and murder.”

Sharon’s face grew into a mischievous grin. “Rape was the exact thing I was thinking of when I mentioned those ‘added features’.” She reached over the edge of the couch and twisted a knob on what looked like an old egg timer.

Simultaneously the two felt an explosion of heat in their loins. Lust leapt into their eyes. George stood up and began undressing frantically. “Sharon, I hope you know what you are getting us into. These things aren’t regulated in their construction. Don’t take it lightly.” He spoke while violently tearing at his shirt and boots. His brain was overwhelmed with all of the sexual fantasies he had ever had in his life. Pictures of half naked dancers, transvestites, and huge orgies clouded his thoughts and stopped him from speaking. If he could take his brain out, he thought it would reek of sex and French perfume. He was almost blind with the passion trying to explode out of him.

Sharon was standing, helping tear his uniform off. “I know the risks, but I have always wanted to try one with you. Now shut up and take me.” Pulling off his underwear, she reached down and was none to gentle with groping his genitals. George found the pain stoked the fire burning down below, and he began ripping Sharon’s dress apart. She took him into her mouth and felt the heat from him prod at the deepest fantasies of her imagination. Finally unclothed, the two collapsed into a pile of heat and sex on the couch. Sweat dripping off them, they did things porn actors would blush at for well over an hour. They finally stopped and lay clenching each other when their muscles began cramping and aching from the gymnastic feats they were attempting. Panting heavily on each other and still groping for the last ounce of energy and ecstasy. Sharon finally succumbed to the exhaustion and lay still. George forced himself to take his attention off her and reached up to turn off the N.E.E.D.. As he reached for it, a spasm wrenched into his back and his arm jolted forward, knocking the device clattering to the floor.

Vinni cracked his eyes open at the sound of the vid-phone ringing. He shifted his glance to his alarm to see what time it was. “Four o’clock is a hell of a time for calls” he murmured to himself. He pushed his way out

of bed and staggered over to the vid-phone. He reached down and flicked the answer button. The face of one of the deputies from the precinct winked onto the screen. Vinni could not remember the man's name off the top of his head. "Well, what is it officer? It's too damn early for this to a pleasure call." He reached down on the desk beside the vid-phone and grabbed a cigarette and lit it.

"Yes, sir, it is. The chief requests you meet us immediately. We have quite a mess on our hands."

"Fine, where the hell are you? If you give me good enough directions, you may see me before noon." He took a drag from the cigarette.

"We're on the ground floor of your complex, sir. I wouldn't take too long, sir; you are definitely going to want to see this." Vinni nodded then reached down and turned off the vid-phone. George came rushing into his mind. He stubbed out his cigarette and rushed to get dressed and down the lift. At the ground floor, he could see the crowd of policeman and onlookers through the glass walls of the building. He hurried out the front door.

As he passed through the door, the first thing to catch his eye was a bloody badge lying on the pavement; the breath left him, and he dropped to one knee. Scanning the scene in horror he recognized bits and pieces of his colleague and his colleague's wife. He dropped his other knee to the pavement and began heaving uncontrollably at the sight. Tears steamed down his face, reddening his shocked expression. The deputy from the vid-phone ran over and helped him to his feet and began trying to calm him.

After three cups of stiff coffee and thirty minutes of looking away he was able to gain control of himself. He thanked the deputy and pushed the blanket off of his shoulder. "I'm okay. Now, tell me what happened."

The deputy handed over a gallonsized baggy with what looked like an egg timer in it. "This happened. Apparently they were tearing each other apart with their bare hands when they fell through the window."

Vinni held the bag up to the street light to better see it. He twisted his hand to rotate the bag so that he could see the front of the device. As it spun around he read the first word out loud that he saw. "Calm." He continued to read them as they passed. "Love, Lust, Depression, Anger." His eyes widened as he read the last word and saw that the indicator arrow on the box was pointing to it. "Hate."



# Short Stories-Second Place

## Sleepyville

John R. Nosler

There's an old adage that changes come at the time when least expected, and from the unlikeliest of sources. I'm a CPA, and at the height of tax season, I had to make an emergency trip-which was punctuated by a day spent in the eclectic hamlet of Sleepyville. My life was forever changed

It was late on April 12. Tax Day was approaching like a runaway train, and I was burning the midnight oil. The phone rang. "Yes, dear," I said, a call from my home.

"Chuckie...Daddy's dead," came the sobbing voice from far away. It was my sister. After years of grade school jokes about 'chuck' this and "chuck" that, the names Charles and Chuck had all but disappeared from the radar, replaced by the initial C. No one else had the chutzpah to call me anything less than Carl, my middle name. C. Carleton Rush, CPA extraordinaire, the taxpayer's Messiah.

I called my mother and then I called my wife. The night was shot to hell, so I went home and planned an unwanted vacation. My wife and the kids would leave the next morning. I would leave the following day, just having enough time to get everything done-provided I worked late-and probably slept at my desk. I was going to have to speak to my father about his having the audacity to die during tax season.

When I left, I had a breakfast-on-a-bun-in-a-box, courtesy of the near by drive-thru. I had calculated my drive time at 5.75 hours, with two stops for gas and food. I really didn't need this. I had driven for several hours when I heard a whining under the hood. The whining gave way to a howling, and a cloud of steam soon followed, I was about to be stranded in the middle of nowhere. Great. As I topped a hill, I saw a sign which said *Sleepyville-Next Exit*, and it was less than a quarter-mile away. It wasn't much, but it was all there was.

I exited and drove over the hill to find Sleepyville. It was a decrepit village with 4-Way yellow stop signs and the look of early Norman Rockwell. There was an old feed store with a *Wayne Feeds* sign

on it. It was falling in-literally. There was also a gas station with ancient pumps out front, an old grocery store with a *Butter Krust* sign in the shape of a loaf of bread on its parapet, and an old General System “Superman” phone booth out front. It was probably where Clark Kent donned his first pair of red tights. And, to my complete amazement, it had a push-button phone in it. Around the corner was a café, a barber shop with a faded red-and-white pole, a pool hall, a hardware store, and an old church. There were also several old but well-kept houses beyond the shops.

As I pulled into the gas station, my car was snorting steam like a cartoon bull. I was greeted by a middle-aged lady in Big Smith overalls. She gave me a rousing “Howdy,” a little short of Minnie Pearl’s trademark greeting, but quite audible nonetheless. “I’m Betsy Mar-lowe,” she brayed. “That’s Mar-Lowe with an ‘e’ on the end of it. My husband, Horace is over at the coffee shop. He’ll be back shortly.”

“I’m on my way to Varley’s-Burgh,” I said woodenly. “My father passed away, and I’m going to the funeral.”

“Well, ah’m really sorry to hear that mister. We had to drive from Dee-troit back to Hawkins, Texas, when Horace’s daddy kicked the bucket back in seventy-three. The car broke down on the road, but Horace fixed it, him being a mechanic and all.” I was sure she meant they had driven out of the Ozarks, where they ran moonshine. I couldn’t imagine Betsy in a large city, certainly not the Motor City.

“It looks as if you’ve ruptured a hose, or perhaps your water pump has failed.” Behind me was an elderly gentleman who introduced himself as Barney Longfellow. I introduced myself as Carl Rush. Somehow *C. Carleton Rush* would be just a bit too sanctimonious for Sleepyville.

“Just call me Barney,” he said. I told him to just call me Carl. He looked old enough to be Horace’s father, but I already knew he had “kicked the bucket back in seventy-three.”

Barney invited me to join him for a cup of coffee and Danish at the local eatery. It was an offer I couldn’t refuse. As we entered the diner, a middle-aged lady greeted us and showed us to a table. They had menus from VC menus in Eastland, Texas. Each one had a calendar on the cover. Surprisingly, the month was *current*. I also met Horace, who was wearing a clean, but worn set of coveralls similar to Betsy’s. We talked shop and then he left to investigate.

Just about the time the Danishes arrived, Betsy came in and announced to the whole diner why I was in town. “Just like when Horace’s daddy kicked the bucket back in seventy-three,” said the whole



crew in unison. I had to laugh. This was very familiar territory.

I also met Maynard, the barber, Old Zeke, the hardware store owner, Nathan, the pool hall's proprietor, Rufus, an elderly black gentleman who was the town's shoeshine man, and Jason, a handsome, lanky kid with a riot of curly brown hair impossibly tucked under a baseball cap. The town was a definite cross-section of mid-America.

As I finished my third Danish, I asked Miss Mac about them. "Whah, it's mah mamma's recipe. Ah brought it with me from Savannah." Definitely Southern Home Cooking. The Danishes were good and fattening, and at fifty cents apiece, it was a cheap way to the fat farm. My wife would have a fit...but she wasn't here.

I had forgotten to shave, so I sought out Maynard. His shop had an array of every bottled hair tonic known to modern man: Wild Root 66, Vitalis, Butch Wax, Brylcream ("A little dab'll do ya"), and numerous others. The barber's chair was an Emil J. Padar, just like the one I used to get my hair cut in when I was a kid. It even had a razor strap. I hadn't had a shave this close in many years. Oh, nostalgia. Maynard's wife, Eunice was the town's beautician, and Rufus had a shoeshine stand in the back—just like the old days. Rufus was my next stop.

I next stopped at the pool hall and engaged Barney in a game of snooker. He was an accomplished player, but I expected as much. He said he was a retired English professor and that one night his car broke down just outside Sleepyville, just like mine had. He spent the night and was on the road the next day, but he never forgot the place, so he retired here. "I teach and occasionally chair a symposium," he said. He had to combat the boredom. The retiring lifestyle of Sleepyville wasn't for everyone. I agreed to meet Barney back at Mac's diner for lunch. The allure of chicken and dumplings was irresistible.

I next reconnoitered Zeke's place. I opted to buy a few dollar's worth of workbench decorations to compliments my growing collection. My wife would not understand. The workbench ritual is a male thing. Zeke had a full array of every color and quantity of Mautz paints, plus a host of other archive-grade novelties. He even had radiants for gas heaters, Venetian blind repair kits, and paint can openers that had a bottle opener on them. I really felt sorry for the old guy, but the place was long paid for and the paint company had disappeared off the scene back in the Seventies, so Zeke was quite solvent as the Fred Sanford of Sleepyville.

Horace updated me. The water pump had gone out, and he had to remove half of the front end to get to it, but a replacement was on the way.

“They don’t make them like they used to,” he grouched. Indeed. He went on to relate that he got a disability retirement package from GM and bought the station. He understandably wanted out of the city.

I heard air brakes and noticed a semi behind Horace’s. as I went to the diner, I saw several other rigs parked in the clearing behind the old feed store. I now knew the secret to Sleepyville’s success. The town was a veritable truck stop. The truckers stop for meals, fuel, haircuts (their wives visit Eunice). They can play pool with Jason at Nathan’s, and shop for road provisions at the old store. They keep Zeke busy out of sympathy. They can also avoid the morning and afternoon traffic. Amazing, and truckers love to eat, so Mac’s is a natural.

After lunch, Barney gave me a quick tour. His house was neat as a pin and was virtually a library. He had a Ph.D. and numerous other degrees. Professor Emeritus Longfellow, Dean of Sleepyville. It was time to go. “You will come and see us, one of these days, won’t you?” he asked. Although I sensed an entreaty of a lonely old man, I realized the town needed its visitors, and I was wondering about retiring after the kids grew up.

“Of course,” I said, “but I don’t think the town would stand up to my kids-they’d wreck the place. Maybe I’ll retire here in a few more years.” I was a little more serious than Barney realized at the time.

It has been many years since I spent that eventful day in Sleepyville, and I have never forgotten it or its people. I get mail from Barney occasionally, and I write him back, so I know Nathan has since died and Jason now runs the pool hall. I still think about returning to that eclectic old town someday to give something back to a group who gave generously, with no strings attached. I’ve even thought of building a motel there for the truckers. I could call it the *Rush Inn*.





*Photography-First Place*  
Karla Gonzalez

# Short Stories-Third Place

## Stolen Moments

John R. Nosler

Justin and Mort had finished their workout. It was a “workout” in prison terms, sans free weights and very much else, but it had to suffice. Both were solidly built. Nobody ever messed with them-twice. They refused to get into the gang game, and they stood alone as their own men. Neither of them had any tattoos. Either of them could bench press the entire weight machine.

With their workout done, Mort got Justin’s attention with a sneer. “Would you look at that?” He said, pointing to the hoe squad. Forty youngsters paraded by-all with their oversized shirts tucked into their boxers-with their pants sagging. They all walked with that drag-hop-limp, thinking they were cool. It reminded Justin of the movie *Cadence*-almost. He went off and found a stretch of grass he could stretch out on until count cleared. He lay down and drifted off...

He was returning from visiting his grandparents in Texarkana, something he tolerated, Justin’s own *Osterman Weekend* in hell. He had to return to the office on Monday and after a Texarkana Weekend, the office was very inviting. He had taken his 5.0 convertible and had to endure endless lectures from his grandmother, mother, aunts, and others about the dangers of such a *fast* car. Little did they know. Near the exit for Pittsburgh, Justin decided it was time to put the hammer down. He switched on the nitrous oxide and waited a few seconds for blast off. His cruising time would now be just over an hour. He was flying merrily west on I-30, knowing the truckers were all jealous of him, but cautious nonetheless. His flight was slowed just east of Commerce when he heard on the CB there was a wreck in Greenville, and cops were everywhere. Justin shut off the gas and slowed to eighty.

He decided to stop in Greenville for a bladder break. After he finished, he decided it was time to go topless. After all, it *was* a convertible. Justin doffed his shirt to catch a few rays. The looks he got from the local girls were worth their weight in gold. Between Greenville and Royce City, it was Hammer Time, once again. Justin took it to the max, and he was again piloting Trans-Nitrous Airways. Justin slowed down prior to the Rockwall hill, knowing if he were to hit a parked car or



a slow-moving semi, he'd be driving a 5.0 liter Accordion. After he reached the Garland city limits, it was on again. Naturally, there was company waiting.

Justin wasn't deterred by cops-he knew all the back roads, turn-offs, and exactly how to lose a city cop. In his eyes, Garland's finest were on par with Hazard County's Roscoe P. Coltrane. The Garland cop's lights were getting fainter and fainter in Justin's rearview mirror. He was in Dallas within minutes.

He slowed down after the Loop 12 exit, took the Dolphin Road without any interference, and pulled his shirt halfway on as he pulled into the parking lot of a liquor store. He raised the top and had barely gotten out of the car when gunshots erupted, shattering the window of the car next to his. He landed in a pushup position on the concrete and next saw a hand-tailored pair of cowboy boots that probably cost a fortune. "Get your ass up. You're driving!" said a female voice. Justin slowly looked up as he rose up and swore he was looking at Shania Twain's evil twin. By the time he was back in his car, she was in the other seat with the gun in his face.

"Where to?" asked Justin.

"I don't care. Let's go to your place." She barked.

"You're flying Trans-Nitrous Airways," Justin drawled as he backed out of the parking place. "Please fasten your seatbelt. There will be no smoking on this flight. Your choice of refreshments is no coffee, no tea, only me..." He slammed the car into 1<sup>st</sup> and floored the gas, sending her flying as he laid rubber onto Samuels Blvd. The gun and the money bag went flying into the back seat, with her straddling the seat. Justin thought it was quite amusing, although he was seriously preoccupied at the time, so he tried not to laugh. He sailed down Samuels onto Beacon, hung an impossible right onto Lindsey, and then veered left onto Tennison Drive. All the while, the lady bandito was trying to orient herself. Justin next hung a hard right onto West Shore and flew through the light at Gaston. He continued up to Lakewood Drive and hung another harrowing left. Almost in a gingerly manner he made the turn into the driveway into the mansion he lived behind and drove up the eternal driveway to his place in the garage. He already knew the doctor who owned the house was out of town, so he could do as he pleased.

Once he was in the garage, and the door was closed, he jumped out of the car and bounded up the stairs to his upstairs apartment. As he reached the door, he hollered back to her, "You gonna spend the day in

the cah or what?” in his best New York imitation. She climbed out of the car, her hair now a total mess, and sheepishly ascended the stairs.

Justin’s place was an exercise in decorative deceit. It was originally a carriage house, but he bought it and spent a small fortune remodeling it, so it was now a luxury bachelor pad cleverly disguised as a garage with a loft apartment above it. He petted his two Russian Blue cats, retrieved a bottle of champagne from the wine cooler, and put two glasses from over the bar on the piano with a note telling her to make herself at home. As she entered the Palace of Justin, she muttered, “I don’t believe this.”

Inside was a Steinway grand piano with a vase of yellow roses on top of it. The floor was slate, and there was a breathtaking view of White Rock Lake beyond the picture windows Justin had installed for that purpose. The whole place looked like something out of *Architectural Digest*, and it was immaculate. Justin called out from the loft, “I’ll be down in minute.”

Once Justin had showered and toweled off, he put on a pair of shorts and pulled an Izod over his head. When he exited the bedroom, she was atop the piano, a cat at either hand, receiving full attention from experienced hands. She had nothing on except for her auburn hair which was cascading across her voluptuous breasts. A Duke Ellington CD was playing softly in the background. “I won’t need this,” Justin said, as he peeled off the shirt and descended the stairs. He brushed the cats aside, mounted the piano, their bodies entwined, their lips met, and the two melted into one...“Get up, you dummy.” A disembodied voice called as it got nearer. Justin shook his head to dislodge the cobwebs. As Mort kicked his feet, he said, “Count’s clear. Let’s hit the showers before those clowns get in there. That must’ve been one hell of a dream!”

“Stolen Moments,” Justin said, smiling.

# *Short Stories-Honorable Mention*

## The Therapist of Heaven and Hell

Bruce Wright

I sat at the bar of The Mid-Point, nursing a beer and thinking about my job and my existence. When you're half angel and half demon, you find yourself doing this a lot of the time. My mother is a typical biblical angel; she has blond hair, blue eyes, and white feathered wings. My father had the typical black hair, black eyes, and black bat like wings, which are associated with demons. They met twenty-five years ago, and my mother told me it was love at first sight. Later when I asked dad if he had felt the same way Mom had, he gave me a nasty grin and said for him it had been lust at first sight. They had been together five years before I was born, and after I came into the world, the trouble started.

I'm sure you can imagine that having lived one's life in Heaven, Mom had certain ways in which she thought children should be raised. Dad having spent his life in hell had his own ideas of what to do. For most of my life I was being told to do good by my mother and mischief by my father. My mother didn't realize that I wasn't angel, and my father couldn't see that I would never be the hell-raiser that he had been.

Finally, after twenty years of being told what to do and what not to do, I picked a profession that could please them both. I became a shrink. My mother approved of my choice because she saw what I was doing as a way to help people solve their problems. Father saw being in a profession that dealt in secrets, fears, desires, and weakness, worth while if for nothing else than blackmail. Personally, I think dad thought I used my therapy couch to do more than just talk to my female clients. If I had, I'm sure he would have been proud. Being a lust demon he would have thought that I was a chip off the old block.

Once I set up my office, the business poured in. Angels and demons alike came to me about their problems, desires, or just to have someone to talk to. I think my practice did so well for two reasons. First, I could listen and help most of my clients work out their problems.



Second, I was the only therapist there was. I mean how many beings can really take being told about all the faults of humanity? Let me tell you human-related stress makes up about ninety percent of my business. In truth, I guess I should thank them for being how they are. Until today, I thought I had a pretty sweet job. I got paid for listening to others' problems, and I could do that pretty well, but today when I went into my office my secretary wasn't there. That was unusual because until today she had never been late. Demons and angels don't get sick, so I knew she didn't have the flu. I picked up the phone on her desk to call her, but noticed a note stuck on her computer screen. I put the phone down and unfolded the message she had left me.

*"Morgue, you need to get away from the office and lay low for awhile. I just got a call from the D's secretary. She told me his darkship is going to visit you tomorrow at noon. Look, I don't know what he wants you for, but it can't be good. I'm going to visit my mother for a few weeks. I hope the building will still be standing when I get back. I'll pray for you, Morgue.*

I felt my legs give out, and then I suppose I passed out. When I came to, I canceled all of my appointments, locked up the office, and went to the Mid-Point. Have you ever just wanted to get good and drunk and forget your troubles for awhile? Well, that was my plan. But when I arrived, I found I didn't even have the will to drown a single beer. I was still starrng into my beer when Rig and Celeste found me. Rig and Celeste are my two best friends and are pretty much your basic angel and demon. Rig is always trying to drag me to earth to possess a few humans and go wild. Celeste is always trying to get me to be a guardian angel like her and save human souls for a living. Neither of these options appealed to me. I mean after seeing what humans do to my patients, why would I want to be around them?

Usually when the three of us get together, I'm stuck in the middle. Big surprise there, right? I mean part of me can understand Rig wanting to cut loose. But the other part of me can see where Celeste is coming from with her ideas of peace and harmony. If all this wasn't bad enough, the two of them are in love with each other and won't admit it. I've lost count of how many times I have tried to get them to confess their feeling for each other; instead they deny it. So far I have been unsuccessful, and it



makes me wonder if I am as good of a therapist as I think I am. Rig and Celeste came into the Mid-Point arguing as usual. They spied me and hurried to my side, each one trying to reach me first to earn my support.

Rig started in first, "Hey, Morgue, tell Miss Naivety that humans aren't born into the world with pure souls and intentions. I mean every demon by the age of five knows that! The only humans born that way are reborn angels."

"That's not true, Rig," Celeste countered, "Morgue and I both know humans are born innocent. It's only what happens in their development that determines how they'll turn out."

Both of them turned to me waiting to see which one I would support. I raised my head and looked at both of them for a moment, before I mumbled a short, "Work it out for yourselves" and put my head back down.

Rig and Celeste stood in shocked silence looking at me, with their eyes wide and mouths hanging open. Rig was the first to speak, and he did so in his usual calm collected way, "*What in Hell is wrong with you?*"

Okay, so he's not calm or collected. Luckily for all of us Celeste is. "Take it easy, Rig; you won't find out anything by yelling and shaking him up."

"Okay, Morgue," she began, "tell us what's wrong. Whatever trouble you are in the three of us can put our heads together and work it out." I looked around doubtfully at the bar, before going to a table in a deserted corner. I slumped into a chair against the wall and after making sure no one could hear me, I began to tell them of my problem. The longer I talked the whiter Celeste became, until her pallor matched her wings. The indication that Rig was listening was the widening of his eyes.

When I finished, Rig gave a low whistle, looking amazed and interested. We talked long into the night, trying to decide what I was going to do. Rig's suggestion was to run to earth and hide in a human until the heat died down. Celeste disagreed, feeling I should seek sanctuary from the Big G. When we left there, we still had not plan of action for the coming day, so I said goodnight and went home. I overslept and reached the office a little before noon. At twelve a black limousine pulled up outside. By the time the car had pulled up to the curb, the streets were deserted. No one wanted to be around if the Big D lost his temper.

Flood, fire and unrelenting pain would just be the beginning. A succubus in a chauffeur's uniform opened the Big D's door and followed him inside. Sweat broke out on my forehead as the echo of the D's footsteps came closer and closer. The door opened, and the D walked in. The chauffeur closed the door and stood guard on the outside. The D looked me over, his gaze calculating. I felt like a bug under a microscope.

After a moment of silence that seemed to be endless, the D spoke.

"Do you know, why I am here?"

"I suppose I have done something to upset you, and you have come to punish me," I replied. The D laughed, seeming to be pleased with my answer. "I hoped you would, and if I have my way, that is what everyone else will think as well."

Puzzled, I asked, "If you are not here to punish me, why are you here?"

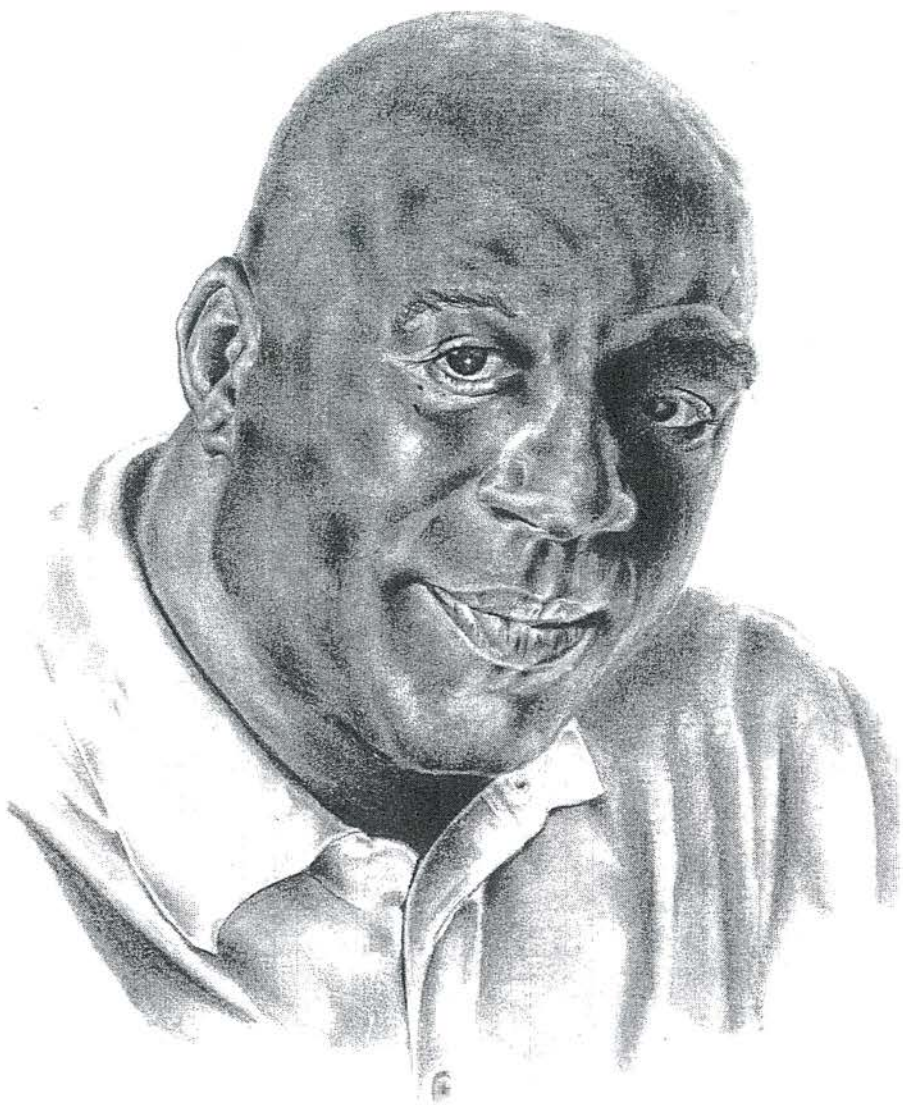
"It's simple really," D said as he took my chair and put his hoofs on my desk, "I have come here for the same reason all of your patients do." I looked at the D in shock, as his meaning became clear; "you need therapy, the Lord of Hell needs therapy!" I guess I really shouldn't have been surprised that being the cause of eternal suffering to billions would certainly have issues.

"But why come to me? There has to be someone else you can talk to." I questioned. The D snorted and shook his head, "Do you really think there is anyone in Hell that is trustworthy? Anyone I talk to would sell my secrets to the highest bidder. By the end of the week, my children would be plotting to overthrow me. Also, there is the fact that you're the only therapist in Heaven or Hell, so my choices are rather limited. So if there are no more stupid questions, shall we begin?"

Big D walked to the couch and stretched out, crossed his legs and folded his hands behind his head. I took my seat, picked up my pen and tablet from the desk. The session started slowly. D was setting the pace, and at first he was hesitant to disclose the issues that were bothering him. The hours passed as he began to speak more freely. By the end of our session, the D had unloaded several of the concerns that troubled him the most, from plots to overthrow him to his fears of losing touch with what was considered hip. The session ended with the Big D telling me to remember my oath of secrecy and to keep my schedule open until further

notice. After the D left, I went back into my office, being sure to put the closed sign out and to lock the door.

I fixed myself a drink and had just sat down when the phone rang. After regarding it silently for a moment willing it to stop, I finally picked it up, and heard "Hello this the G's office. We need to set up an appointment."



*General Art-First Place*

A Fighters Expression - Magic Johnson

Darcy Darrell Demby



# Short Stories-Honorable Mention

Students

William H. Davis, Jr.

It was an officer Vasha had in his sight picture, though he couldn't be sure of his rank. His breathing slowed. He was aware of his new spotter, Anton, reaffirming the range...approximately two hundred meters.

This would be Vasha's thirty-fifth kill, though he knew he had only wounded the last eight or nine. His comrade blamed the American rifle he used, but Vasha knew better. He knew the Springfield, chambered for 30-06, was every bit as accurate as the Russian Moisin-Nagant in 7.62.

His instructor, the famous Russian expert sniper, Master Sergeant Vasily Zaitsev knew this as well. Zaitsev had over two hundred and fifty kills now and was a Soviet hero.

Zaitsev had picked Vasha for special training in the Cauldron. The Cauldron, as it was called by Russians and Germans alike, was a perfect hell. The broken, burning ruins of Stalingrad had once been home to nearly a million people. Now, after four months of fighting, only demons and mad-men resided there. Like a giant disembodied spirit, a choking cloud of dust and burnt cordite hung continuously in the air. The stench of death was everywhere. Day by day, men killed without thought until they died at the hands of an enemy, succumbed to frostbite or starved to death.

As Vasha took another breath, he let the crosshairs drift a little. His finger increased the pressure slightly on the trigger. For a moment he thought he would lose the shot. But the officer just stood still. Didn't he know better? Vasha knew that Zaitsev was expecting a clean kill. Seconds passed...he squeezed the trigger and felt the American rifle buck in his arms. Regaining the sight picture quickly, he waited for the bullet to strike. A distinct puff of dust exploded from the officer's hip.

He heard Anton's cold and professional voice announce, "Low, to the left..."

Vasha was afraid of this. The new spotter was good and gave exact reports.



“Vasha, come with me.” Zaitsev spoke with sharpness. They crawled to a nearby wall and stood. Already German machine gun fire was being sprayed in their direction.

“Why, Vasha? And don’t give me that rubbish about a wounded soldier being more trouble than a dead one. Have you lost your nerve for killing?”

Vasha did believe the military doctrine of wounding being more costly to the enemy than killing. But that was not what started him wounding German soldiers. In the midst of this brutality, his early Christian teachings had returned to him—the belief that all life is sacred. It had come to him as he sighted in on a young German Corporal a couple of months ago. All of a sudden he saw himself in the crosshairs. He realized this young blond infantryman had no more understanding of the catastrophe that had befallen the world than he. For some reason he let the crosshairs drift. The young German who had exposed himself so foolishly had been spared. Saved by a flak jacket and the drifting aim of Vasha.

“I know that is not the reason for you missing such an easy kill. Tell me, Vasha, how can you respect the lives of these gray-green slugs that have so devastated our country?”

Vasha remained silent.

“Do you know what it would cost you if were it known you spared a German officer? Execution or a punishment battalion. Do you want that, Vasha? Do you think a German sniper will only wound you?”

Vasha leaned the Springfield rifle against the wall and spoke. “I only answer for myself, Sergeant.”

Zaitsev touched Vasha’s shoulder and spoke softly.

“Perhaps God will spare you in your weakness, Vasha, but I doubt it, not here. Know that in showing mercy, you risk your life in more ways than one.”

Zaitsev turned and walked away leaving Vasha alone with his thoughts.

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On in the front of the German lines, young Corporal Schmitt handled the bullet Doctor Kroner had removed from his body two months ago. The bullet had penetrated the flak jacket and lodged between two ribs. Doctor Kroner had expressed surprise at the corporal’s survival.

Schmitt was one of the few to survive the sniper who used the American rifle. Others had expressed surprise as well. Among them, the famous German sniper, SS Colonel Heinz Thornwald. Colonel Thornwald had been assigned the task of eliminating the Soviet hero, Zaitsev.

It was Colonel Thornwald's visit to the aid station when young Corporal Schmitt's proficiency with the Mauser rifle had been called to his attention. That was two months ago. Schmitt was now the Colonel's top student. He was hoping for his twenty-first kill. He carried the American 30-06 slug as a good luck charm.

The no-man's land between the ever-shifting front lines was a perfect hunting ground for snipers. Square miles after square mile of rubble. Burnt out buildings by the hundreds.

Artillery spotters, radio wire men, forward observers...all targets. Any lost soul, a target.

The psychological damage the sniper does is even more important than his kills. Corporal Schmitt understood this and wondered about the recent string of woundings his squad had suffered. Eight...or was it nine now in the last month or so. All were shot by the sniper using the American rifle. This fellow had made well over twenty clean kills from as far away as four hundred meters. Why was he now missing? Or was he? Schmitt knew the report on his own injury had been from less than one hundred and fifty meters. No, the Russian had not missed. But why would he spare a German soldier?

Colonel Thornwald had commented that the sniper using the American rifle was just demonstrating the barbaric Russian mentality, enjoying the suffering he inflicted. But every victim the Russian had not killed was back in Germany convalescing, except for Schmitt who had volunteered for Thornwald's sniper team.

No, this Russian was wounding deliberately. The rounds were too well placed. Schmitt, as all German soldiers, knew of the Russian punishment battalions. Men used to clear mine fields and to draw enemy fire. Humans who were totally expendable. Why would a Russian soldier risk this? The question had plagued Schmitt until it was affecting his concentration.

"Achtung," the low voice of Schmitt's spotter called his attention to shadows at the base of a pile of rubble about two hundred meters away.

As Schmitt rested his sight picture on the rubble, a light flashed in the shadows. Moments later he heard an impact and a cry of pain.

An officer crumpled to the ground, shot through the hip.

In the ensuing confusion of administering aid, Schmitt was made aware of the officer's "luck" to have only been wounded. He knew it was not luck, but a well placed shot. Why? Why would he spare a German officer?

As Schmitt surveyed the area, his sight picture focused on a piece of broken wall where two Russian soldiers stood. Then one walked away. The lone soldier reached for his rifle leaning against the wall.

Then Schmitt noticed, the rifle was not a Russian Moisin-Nagant but a Springfield—the sniper who used the American rifle.

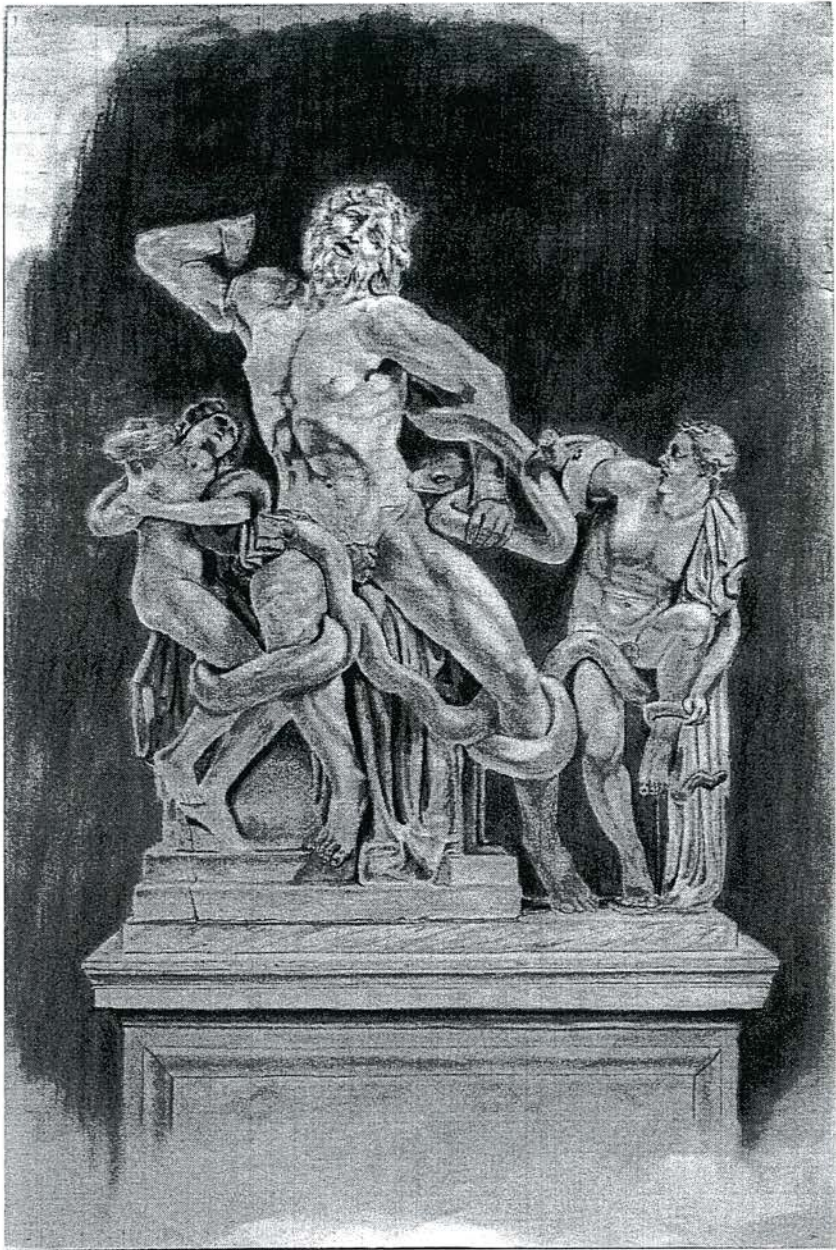
Schmitt quickly drew a bead. The crosshairs of the telescopic sight rested on the center mass of the target. An easy shot and his twenty-first kill.

But as Schmitt took his three-quarter lung-full of air and began to squeeze the trigger, his crosshairs dropped slightly and began to drift. The Mauser roared and jarred Schmitt's body.

When he regained his sight picture, he saw nothing.

Corporal Schmitt's spotter reported, "Low and to the left. It's a hit but I can't confirm a kill. Better luck next time, eh Schmitt?"

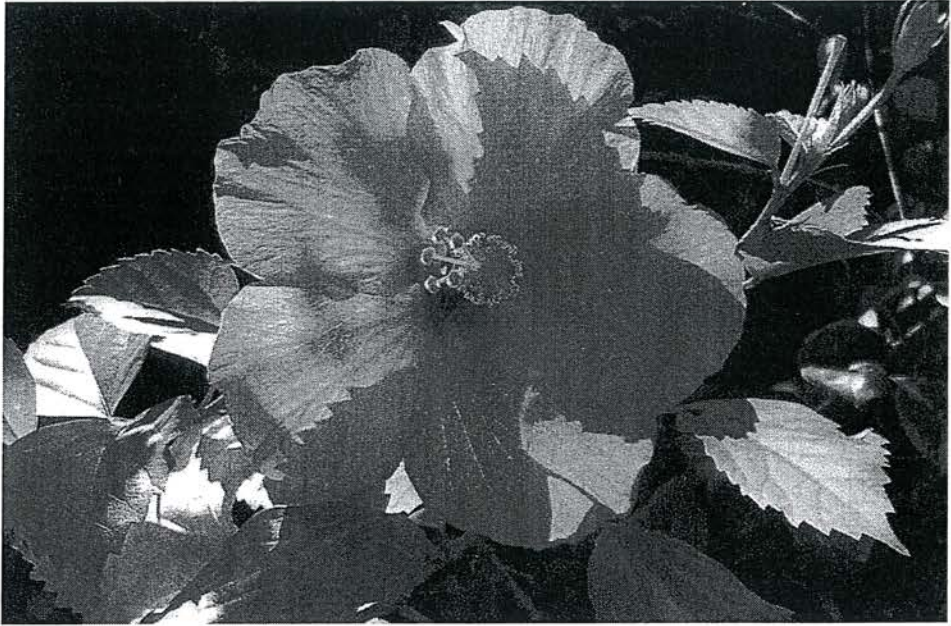




*General Art-Second Place*

Zeus

Henry Lovelady, Jr.



*Photography-Second Place*

Karla Gonzalez



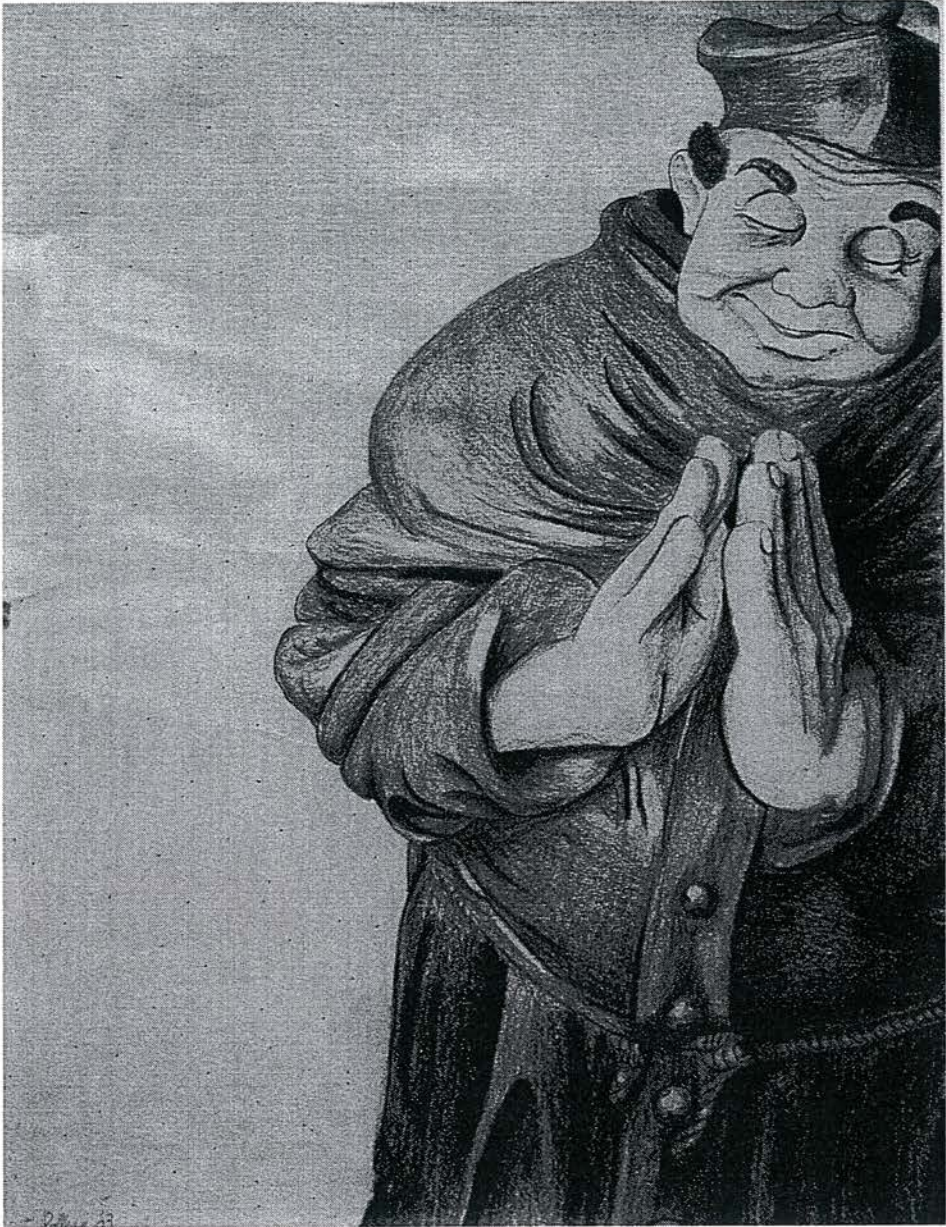


*Photography-Honorable Mention*

Erin Titus



# Essays



*General Art-Third Place*  
Christopher Jolley

# Essays-First Place

## Is it Entertainment...Or Propaganda?

Ryan Andrew Hanson

There can be little, if any, doubt that the mass media is a major player of social and cultural influence in America. Very few homes, schools, and other institutions in our nation can be found without a television, radio, and/or computers linked up to the Internet. With millions of megabytes of information at our fingertips, it's no wonder a substantial number of avid watchers, listeners, and users exhibit short-term attention spans, memory lapses, and are in growing numbers, being diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). How can the average friend, colleague, or passing acquaintance compete with the professional attention-grabbers employed by the top advertisers to drive Nielson ratings through the roof? Is it any wonder that our own communication skills are sinking to new lows? Ponder the fact that our leading politicians are becoming increasingly dependent upon tele-prompters in order to get their messages across with spectacular oratories written by paid speech writers; yes, especially the White House. Notice the tremendous amount of energy and funding used to produce a mere message. Make no mistake, as there is persuasive power in the transmission of information.

It seems almost natural for us to make it a goal to purchase the latest digital model computer or television, as if it were a moral imperative to own one! The tools of the media empire are all mentioned above, not forgetting the importance of the motion picture industry. Buried beneath the surface of mainstream America is one of the deepest roots of social and moral decay, which is going almost unnoticed by those caught up in the latest shapes and forms of *accepted* entertainment in this post-modern world. Who determines what is entertainment, news, or true educational programming? Can the masses even tell the difference between subjects being broadcast simultaneously, whose programs are many times viewed mid-program without any introduction and sometimes in the form of commercials? One would hope so, but the direction that programming has taken with an increase in violence, profanity, and sexually explicit subject matter with little public outcry, speaks otherwise. What such passive acceptance of mass media immoral programming says of our culture is



good portion of our population has forgotten the once supremely valued moral standards set down by our founding predecessors. Shall we now push aside our traditional family values that promote closely knit family relationships built on trust, and accept this new hedonistic lifestyle that thrives on individualism and materialistic gain? This is no doubt dangerously unstable ground that puts little value on the importance and necessity of the family unit, which is generally accepted as the foundation of any civilized society.

Although we have a choice in what channel, program, or movie we watch, we can be sure we have little voice in the message being sent out by the major broadcasters run by huge conglomerate corporations, entangled with the most bizarre forms of inter-departmental politics. What we are experiencing is nothing more than a power struggle for *political correctness*.

Can anyone define this all-inclusive philosophical standard known as *politically correct*? It seems to lead us into a Utopia where no one offends anyone and truth is subjective. The only problem is that this can never be, since truth ceases to be truth if it not objective and absolute! *Relative truth* would suggest *no standard* whatsoever, which would pose somewhat a problem in determining *right* and *wrong* behavior! Since it is this doctrine that is so prevalent in our present culture and promoted by these mega-media outlets, it would stand to reason that some of us try to return to traditional values in outrage. If our crumbling social-moral fabric is not obvious to all in this age where the very institution of marriage is being questioned and redefined, then just watch and see what comes next. The shock value is lessened as we watch the latest *taboo behaviors*. The incremental strategy of the marketers is to increase ratings. After awhile, we may be so desensitized that absolutely *nothing* will shock us. *They wouldn't show it on television or in the movies if it were not okay for us to see, right?* And here we are in the very crux of the real problem. We accept purely fictional, however idealized, storylines produced and directed for profit as present socio-cultural entertainment value. Those who choose to speak out against the down spiral, they are immediately categorized and stereo-typed as *conspiracy theorists*.

So, it is ultimately up to all of us to determine what the message of each program or movie is trying to say, and what world view it is attempting to promote. What if that world view is contrary to the promoting of our core traditional values which are so essential to a growing, thriving society? Our core values are the values that strengthen

family relations, encourage the building of tightly knit communities that support one another toward a common goal, and enable and secure liberty in truth for all present and future generations. Such attainable family and community relations are the model of American society, which was once, unquestionable in identity. When the mainstream media crossed the line from *entertainment to propaganda*, which only served to corrupt the good character of us and our loved ones, should that not be a clear signal to do something about it or to fall victim to the corruption of media institutions? Are we not morally and socially obligated to take a stand against such incrementally corrupting mainstream propaganda or do we simply continue to be barraged left and right by their incessant media blitz, which looks as if we are condoning their behavior? I invite you to simply continue to watch as those around you slowly conform to the standards of morality set by the programs they choose to watch, accepting whatever world view is presented without regard to morals or ethics. "It's just a movie!" should not be a viable pretense or excuse, as a justifiable response to this progressive medium of information.

It is no longer just a movie. The motion picture industry today represents the pinnacle of entertainment mediums. Millions of people worldwide are drawn into local movie theaters by the most extraordinary, attention-getting methods and tactics ever designed, only to be presented with the most bizarre, violent, morose, degrading audio and visual messages that are deviant world views. People go to theaters to be entertained, but are subjected to subliminal messaging. The advertising hype is meant to shock, pushing the adrenalin levels upwards, but at what cost? Society collapses. We must learn this lesson from the fall of Rome, or be doomed to her fate of internal destruction. Learn from history or stand by to repeat it and regret it.

The moral obligation of movie directors and producers has never been greater; digital technologies are able to transport the viewer into an almost virtual world where the senses are alive with emotionally charged scenes. We can almost believe we can reach out and touch the actors. These actors are referred to as stars and enjoy celebrity status. They are, in large part, symbols of modern day idolatry, working to the detriment of our society. Directing techniques, having evolved to this standard of virtual reality, give further evidence we are no longer just here to be amused and entertained. Some of the moviegoers are now watching to find answers to life and death questions far too difficult and embarrassing to ask among themselves. The real question is do we want to allow a

media source to answer those delicate questions *for* us in such a detached, impersonal way? Do we want to have life decisions we make shaped by fictional characters and actors?

I, for one, am not and will not allow anyone with clearly immoral and socially destructive world views, as evidenced in their products, to influence what I know to be good, sound, moral, and socially responsible choices. All of us are now experiencing what is best described as an ethical slippery slope of mainstream media that continues to pervade our post-modern society. What will you do about it? Will you accept the images and messages before you as the norm or progressive politically correct world view, or will you take a stand and speak out against these *clearly* corrupt forms of *entertainment* without compromise in the public forums afforded to us as citizens by right? Let us all exercise such rights, and play a part in reemphasizing the importance of guarding traditional family values in order to secure the future well-being of generations to come. Our children are our future; they will carry the flame, which is a symbol of their birthright, and their inherent right as Americans.



# Essays-Second Place

## Fifty is Nifty

John R. Nosler

People have a fixation with age. We can't wait to turn *sixteen*, and then *eighteen*, and then *twenty-one*, and finally *twenty-five*. However, people tend to go into a manic horror at the idea of turning thirty. The idea of turning the Big **FOUR-OH** is enough to warrant a Valium prescription. Remember the Rolling Stones' song, Mother's Little Helper? ("What a drag it is getting old...") and once you're *fifty*, you're said to be "over the hill." I distinctly recall becoming incensed at age 15 when I read a newspaper clipping that said, "This may never occur to a teenage boy, but someday he will know as little as his father." Now, thirty-five years later, those words are gospel.

This fixation with age is distinctly Western and particularly American. Every day we are bombarded with commercials for products that will make us younger, prettier, sexier. The same woman who will shop frugally for a bar of bath soap will spend lavishly on a beauty bar. Ponce DeLeon died in pursuit of the mythical and elusive Fountain of Youth. Millions today search with similar zeal and equal futility. The late Mary Kay Ash made her fortune in cosmetics. Thousands of her sales representatives drive pink Cadillacs as proof of their successes.

So it's a curious, amusing paradox: After you are fifty, age seems to matter less. Has anyone cracked up over turning *sixty*? The sixty-year olds I know are looking forward to retirement. If you make it to *sixty-five*, congratulations! And *seventy*? No big deal as I hear it. The octogenarians I know aren't age conscious at all. I personally know a minister who is *ninety*, and he's in the full-time ministry.

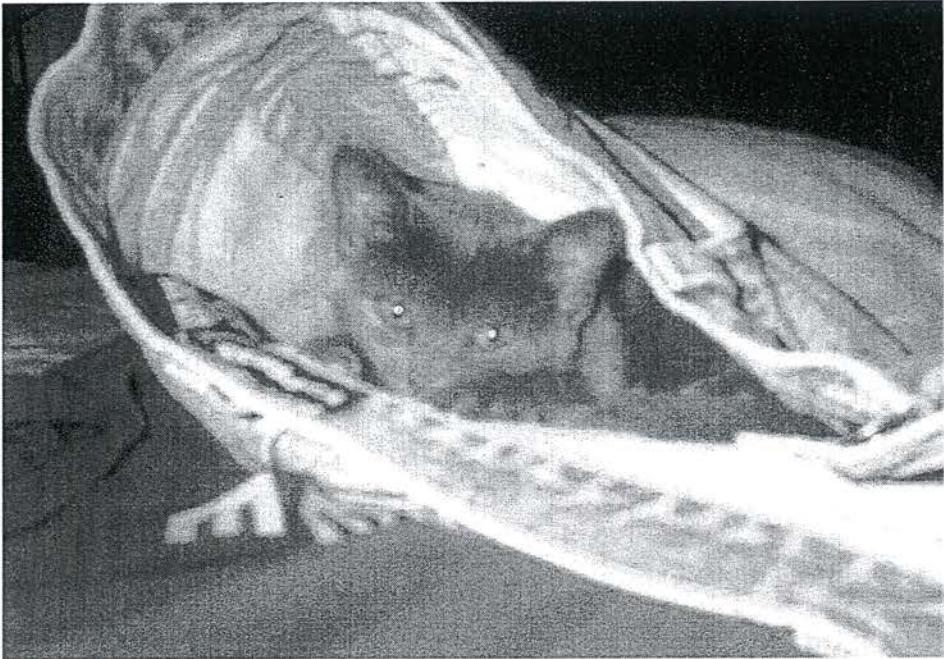
According to the Genesis account, Adam lived to the age of 930 (Genesis 5:), and Methuselah lived to the ripe old age of 969 (Genesis 5:27). Nowhere is it written that Methuselah was dreading the big nine-seven-zero.

So what is it about *fifty*? As the half-century milepost gets smaller and smaller in my rear-view mirror, I say it was significant, yet at the same time, it wasn't that big a deal. I didn't get any extra grey hair for my birthday—my hair has been frosting itself for the past thirty-one years. I didn't get any new aches and pains; I have enough already, thank you.

And I didn't look any worse in the mirror. Nor did I look any *better*...

Therefore, to all you kids under forty out there, take heed:

**FIFTY IS NIFTY.** I may be *over* the hill, but I'm not *under* the hill. I have found that elusive, esoteric mental nirvana that comes with age—sort of like John Galt's secluded mountain hideaway in *Atlas Shrugged*. What's more, the view from this side of the hill I'm now "over" is great! Of course you're all welcome to join all of us old folks and enjoy the view, but it takes years to get here. We'll leave the light on.



*Photography-Third Place*  
April Arredondo

# Essays-Third Place

## The Sound and the Fury in Me Terra Creekmore

Standing alone at the cash register, steadily pulling strands of garland from boxes that someone delivered earlier today, I catch myself thinking.

Thinking about what? I have no clue. It's like my mind is blank, but then I'm still thinking. I just don't know what it is I'm thinking about. I don't know how much more of this I can take. I go to school 'til approximately 12:00 everyday, and then I have to drive straight to work to stand for eight long hours on my tired feet.

*Mental note:* study for government test, read way too much for American Lit...too much to think about and too much to do.

*BLANK, just go BLANK.*

I wonder how Momma's doing. I should call her. Not now. When am I going to be able to call her again? AAAHHH. I want to talk to my mom. She can make my mind go blank...lol. That's funny. I wonder why I say lol in my head when I could really laugh? Why do I say lol at all? Why don't people just type in hahahahaha instead of lol? Who knows. That's a pretty picture over there. I wonder if Mom is still going to redecorate the dining room? I know she said that she wanted a bistro theme, which really pisses me off. I told her when I lived with Eben that I was going to decorate my kitchen in the bistro theme. She stole my idea. I guess she can, though. I don't even live with Eben anymore let alone have a kitchen or dining room that I could decorate. Dad wouldn't let me. Wonder why he doesn't trust me to decorate? Could it be that my favorite color is red?

Yes, I want the red Honda Civic, not the black one. Who cares if cops pull over red cars? I'll just drive the speed limit; that's what cruise control is for. Red dress, red lipstick, red shoes. Black purse? That's what we forgot. Guess I forgot to add the purse to my list of red things to get for prom.

*BLANK, just go BLANK.*

*Man, I stayed up way too late last night. My eyes are already*



crossing and it's only...3:20. How many more do I have left to do? I hope they all fit in their slots. This place is too crowded. Do the owners not know that if too much stuff is on the floor someone could trip and fall?

"Sir, are you okay? Are you hurt?" Man, this guy is old. Now why would he tell me that he just got new glasses and that he just had a radiation treatment? Does he not know that he could probably sue us for falling? Guess not. Better write up an injury report. That is weird. I heard a thump, but didn't see anything. Turned around again and saw a bald head wobbling below the counter. Poor old man. I want to hug him.

Wonder if Paw-Paw is ever going to make me that cookbook of his secret recipes. He's getting so old. Still kicking though. But his breathing is getting weak. Wonder if he is taking more breathing treatments now. I'll have to call him later.

*Mental note:* call and check on Maw-Maw and Paw-Paw.

*Man,* my back hurts. I'm either sitting or standing for way too long. I need to run. Don't think I could sue the store if I fell though...lol, there I go again.

*Finished.*

Why isn't anyone in the mall today? Man, I want to go home! But when I go home I have to study for a test and read. Same thing every night. Wake up at 5:00, read a little, get dressed, go to school, no time for lunch...going to be late for work, get off of work at 9:30, go home and do homework until 2, fall asleep, and then start all over again. Same thing over and over and over. I'm a walking zombie. Okay, time to sneak a quick break. That little ladder looks comfy.

*Go BLANK, just go BLANK.*

# Essays-Honorable Mention

## Is Man Free?

William H. Davis, Jr.

Does man really have freedom of thought? Freedom of choice? Freedom of action?

The question of man's freedom is a deep one indeed. Freedom can mean many things to many different people. The perception of freedom, mental or physical, is, of course, one of the most perplexing and varying of all human lines of thought.

In today's world, there are so many people living under such different extremes, with such contrasting beliefs that even asking the question boggles one's mind.

Who is the most free? A despot dictator, who through absolute power controls every aspect of social, economic and military life, yet can trust no one? Who, despite his total control, must at all times be on guard against assassination?

Or the political prisoner he had imprisoned for speaking out against him in defiant disregard?

Who is most free? The paraplegic confined to a wheelchair, unable to work or move freely and cannot participate in regular social activities...Or the able bodied man that is illiterate and unemployed, imprisoned by his ignorance.

Who is the more free? The one with physical freedom, but mentally imprisoned because of emotional difficulties or someone with a clear mind but limited physical freedom?

The very concept of freedom in human existence is paradoxical. The inevitable conclusion is that the more freedom of thought one has, the more one realizes the limitations that the world places on everyone, Still, despite all the limitations placed on mankind from moral laws, physics, society, and his own physical and mental frailties, I personally believe that anyone, to a large degree, is as free as he makes himself. No matter what one's lot in life, anyone is free to think, to philosophize, free to speak the truth.

I also believe that freedom must be exercised. Whatever freedom

is to anyone, it must be exercised. Complacency is one of freedom's worst enemies -the enemy of mental as well as physical freedom. There is no absolute freedom, but complacency threatens all concepts of freedom everywhere.

History is replete with examples of men and women who were intellectually free. Winston Churchill, Alber Camus, Martin Luther King, Jr., Joan of Arc, Clara Barton, Esther, and Bob Hope, were free thinkers who used their freedom in a very real way to inspire millions of their countrymen at a time when inspiration was badly needed. They used their physical and intellectual freedom to fight for freedom for all.

Despite the great dangers involved, they exercised their freedom. They refused to let their freedom be restricted because of the possible danger involved. They refused to become prisoners of fear. In doing so, they gained a form of freedom not commonly known. They made their freedom by their actions in support of free thought.

Freedom is attainable for those who are willing to search for it, for those not afraid to exercise what freedom they have, and to take risks...

For those who have struggled to attain it, freedom has meaning that others may never know. Perhaps that is real freedom-freedom that one has to struggle to attain.



# *Essays—Honorable Mention*

## A Search for Truth

William H. Davis, Jr.

By definition, science is a search for truth. As with any reasonable, sincere search, one should follow the facts no matter where they may lead. This has not always been the case with science, yet the truth has a way of surfacing when least expected. Discoveries by people who refuse to give in to their personal theories or the theories of others continue to act as a corrective and keeps science from stagnating. Just as the theory of a flat earth was dispelled by new facts being brought to light, so other theories have fallen by the wayside.

Spontaneous Generation, the five perfect solids and attempts to turn lead into gold, are examples of ideas that seem ridiculous today. Yet, in earlier times they were the science of the day, theories not to be questioned.

A ruling theory that has been accepted as fact for over one hundred years that seems likely to crumble soon is that of Darwinism and Macro-evolution. Built on a good many assumptions, Darwin's theory is now being seriously reconsidered by a new breed of scientists who no longer accept the rhetoric of evolutionism—scientists from a wide range of fields who base their ideas on recent findings. Two fields of study have made Darwin's theory of evolution harder and harder for the inquiring mind to accept. Paleontology and microbiology are leading man away from the traditional concepts of life's origins on this planet. In 1909 the Burgess Shale discovery in the Canadian Rockies yielded what is referred to by paleontologists as the Cambrian Explosion.

Richard Dawkins, a leading Darwinist himself, says of the Burgess Shale fossil record, "It is as though they were just planted there, without any evolutionary history." Then came an even more significant find. The Chengjiang discovery in China offers even more varied life forms, all suddenly appearing within the Cambrian Explosion. Even in Darwin's day, the absence of fossil finds representing transitional stages posed an embarrassing enigma for his theory of evolution. Darwinists have long depended on, and anxiously awaited, fossil records to vindicate their theory. Exactly the opposite has happened. This now offers up a major stumbling block for the theory microbiology has presented even more

compelling questions for the Darwinists.

In only the last few years, discoveries have been made that could not have been fathomed a decade ago, much less in Darwin's day. Very recent discoveries reveal that even single cells are far more complex than previously imagined. Parts and functions of single cells have been discovered that are still unexplained. Microbiologist Michael Behe of Pennsylvania's Lehigh University has developed a theory of Irreducible Complexity. This theory was developed as he made breakthroughs in cell research. According to this theory, an irreducible complex system cannot function without each of its constituent parts. The system does not acquire function until all parts are in place.

The significance of this is brought into sharp focus by the fact absolutely no one—not one scientist—has published any detailed explanation of the possible evolution of any complex biological system. Any scientist that claims to have explained something when, in fact, he has not should be called into account. The universal absence of opinion on this subject would not be accepted in any other field of science, and it should not be accepted in explaining the origins of life.

While Darwin could not have known of the complexity of the single cell in his day, he did acknowledge the problem in the fossil record. Darwin, to his credit, has left us a method to test his theory. In Darwin's book, The Origin of Species, he states, "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down."

As Mr. Behe's research has shown, a single cell could comprise several, if not dozens, of irreducibly complex systems. It is therefore difficult to imagine how they may have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications.

Even if Darwin's theory is disproved and we are left with no theory at all to replace it, we are better off than to continue in error. At the least we will be free to pursue new ideas...which of course, is what a search for truth is all about.



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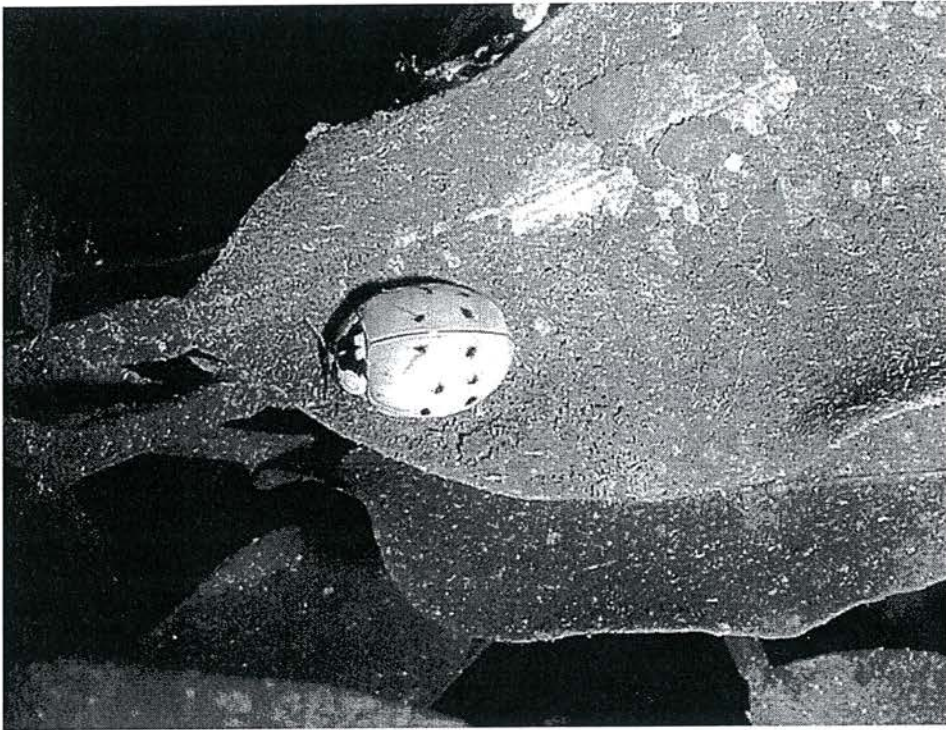
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*Photography-Honorable Mention*

Karla Gonzalez





*General Art-Honorable Mention*

Hands on Fence

Juan Cardenas

# Poetry



*General Art-Honorable Mention*

Let There Be Light  
Henry Lovelady, Jr.



# Poetry-First Place

## Transcendental Rhythm

Dustin Vickers

Hands red and swollen from keeping the beat  
The drummer with head of unkept dreadlocks  
Releasing himself from sinew and meat  
An ancient rhythm from forgotten clocks  
Night resounds with an organic cadence  
From hidden sources that just will not stop  
With heart open he plays with abundance  
With no pain, no fear from the riding crop  
He continues on with hands that are split  
Sweat pouring from brow, within the moment  
His lights shines from inside, eternally lit-incident  
With hands so busy no time to foment  
Releasing himself from all space and time  
Traveling on emotion that's sublime

# Poetry-Second Place

## Ode to English Comp

Brent Sherrill

Sometimes I curse. Sometimes I stomp  
What is it with this English Comp?  
Birdcages? Quilting? Ropes not rifles?  
Who, in their right mind, would understand Trifles?

Gilman's wallpaper grinds me as well  
For I've never smelt...a yellow smell  
And what's up with the Misfit?  
Now there's something wrong with this twit  
Kills children and Old Ladies  
He's definitely bound for Hades!

How it sometimes does evade me  
This poetry and prose  
Miss Delia with her snake charming husband  
And all those loads of clothes!

And don't forget Miss Emily or Granny Weatherall  
Both jilted by their fiancés before their wedding bell  
Granny lost hers at the start, though Emily did well  
She kept her fella till the end, though she had  
to mind the smell!

We've read enough about life and death and the  
stages in between  
As Oedipus, Creon, and Antigone played out  
each tragic scene.  
With smiles, hyperboles, and symbols full of power,  
No wonder I spent three days analyzing  
"The Story of an Hour."

And of the poetry we've read  
Some of those guys are better dead.  
There's Tennyson, there's Slavitt, and of course  
Adrienne Rich  
With poems about heroes, sinking ships and...  
How son's a Bitch!

So, I haven't got a clue about this English stuff  
Except it's time we're through. I believe we've had enough!  
No more Creeley, no more Poe, not one more  
Aesop's fable.  
Not "Sweat" or Joe Turner's Come and Gone—  
I just don't think we're able.

Our brains, you see, are like pudding.  
Our minds are all a jam.  
So what's this you now are saying...  
about a final exam?



# Poetry-Third Place

## The Attic

William H. Davis, Jr.

I don't go in the attic much  
it is a cluttered place, you see  
full of thoughts, of long lost things  
and of wants that cannot be.

Somewhere in the attic's reaches  
exactly where, I do not know  
lying deep beneath the cobwebs  
are things I stowed there long ago.

Memories of things I've lost  
and of others I wish to lose  
still lying there beneath the dust,  
abandoned dreams and unpaid dues.

Still stored among the clutter  
the, "I love you's," left unsaid  
stored for keeps, the bitter pain  
of this wayward life I've led.

Feelings stashed there through my life  
hidden...but never concealed  
stacked one on top another,  
in this attic ...that is my mind!

## Poetry-Honorable Mention

“Excuse Me, Sir,” The Monkey Said

John R. Nosler

*An evolutionist and a monkey were conversing one fine day.*

“Excuse me, sir,” the monkey said. “There’s something I must say:  
“This theory of evolution your friends and you continue teaching,  
“Is such a bogus doctrine; and yet it you persist in preaching.  
“Did God not say, Let there be light, and then light came to be?  
“He lit up Earth for life to come, and that means you and me.”  
“Your point’s well-taken,” the evolutionist said. “I agree with  
    what you’re playing.”  
“Excuse me, sir,” the monkey said. “You truly don’t understand.”  
“The food we eat is freshly picked: The food you eat is canned.”  
“You see, O man, we’re all in place; we monkeys are in our niche.  
“God created us to swing and play. We’re neither poor or rich.”  
“And yet you denigrate our breed: You really disrespect us.”  
“It’s men, not apes, whose legacy is pollution, disease, animus.”  
“So excuse me, sir,” the monkey said. “I was created this way,  
    that’s true.”  
“But your own theory of evolution—why it’s made a monkey of  
    you!”

# Poetry-Honorable Mention

## Cycles

Anna Wueller

Time tells birds to sing  
While green grass grows up freshly  
Newborns come alive.

Sun shines down with smiles  
Heat, sweat, beach balls, swimming free  
Men reach mountain peaks.

Slowly heat disperses  
As leaves plunge closer to Earth  
Men begin to rest.

The light has left now  
Ice cold gray engulfs laughter  
A casket lowers.



# Poetry-Honorable Mention

Take Your Time

Chris Orlando

“Why are we here,” sometimes I ask  
For hurry and rush to finish some task?

We get all geared up and hope we’re not late  
There’s no time to stroll or procrastinate.

It seems so silly to me to get so fanatic,  
about situations that aren’t problematic.

Why don’t we relax, and enjoy our life mile,  
We dance around only for a very short while.

# Poetry-Honorable Mention

## Sensing You

Debra G. Reasonover

The leaves whisper as the wind blows through them  
the invisible voice of nature.

*And I feel you...*

My eyes are lavished by the beauty of a sunset,  
a gift from the sky.

*And I feel you...*

My senses come alive with the smell of the ocean  
meeting the sand, Carried to me with kindness  
by the warm hand of Nature.

*And I smell you...*

I jump into the ocean,  
letting its endlessness surround and caress me.

*And I feel you...*

Wherever there is beauty, wonder and inspiration,  
there are you.

*And I love you...*

# Poetry-Honorable Mention

I am

Crystal Meaux

If you see me in a crowd, I will not stand out;  
you will not remember me.

I am a dream.

I am the wind that blows around you.

You will never see me; but I am there.

I am the feeling you get when you cannot stop  
looking over your shoulder.

I am every person who has ever felt alone, hurt by life.

I am the pain that everyone must face in life.

I lurk in denial and I swim in guilt.

I pick on the weak and tarnish the souls of the rich.

I am a part of everyone.

I am you.



# Poetry-Honorable Mention

## Recycle

Alfred Roberts

Mankind is here for all he is worth  
Intelligent, dangerous and so proud  
His feet on the ground, his head in a cloud  
Born the bastard child of Mother earth  
Determined to rule her from his birth  
Proclaiming his petty triumphs out loud  
Soon he is wrapped in his burial shroud  
So ending his foolishness and mirth  
Nature will choose herself another  
Restore what man's foolishness has destroyed  
Listen my sister and my brother  
She will not be ruled, she is but annoyed  
The earth is our ultimate mother  
Not to rule nor exploit, but be enjoyed

# Poetry-Honorable Mention

The Builder

Keith L. Demps

I would like to build a bridge,  
that crosses to your heart.

Passing over the loneliness,  
which sets our world apart.

Afterwards I'll build a paradise,  
where our hearts can reside.

With peace and harmony,  
to keep our love alive.

# Poetry-Honorable Mention

## The Bloody Ground

Bruce Wright

As I sat in the hospital surrounded by red, I saw many a good boy lose their legs, lives, and heads.

And as I lay there trying to endure the pain that continued to grow, I picked up a paper and there words began to flow.

I had seen many people killed as we went along fighting our battles and singing our songs.

But today was different; there was something in the air that seemed to cry out pain, death, and despair.

We formed our lines, raised our flags, and went into battle with cheers for what lay ahead.

But as the day went on the cheers turned to cries as many a lad lost their lives.

And when the battle was over, the ground had changed from a pleasant green to a red soaked plain.

In the end the wounded were carried away, and the armies retreated to fight another day.

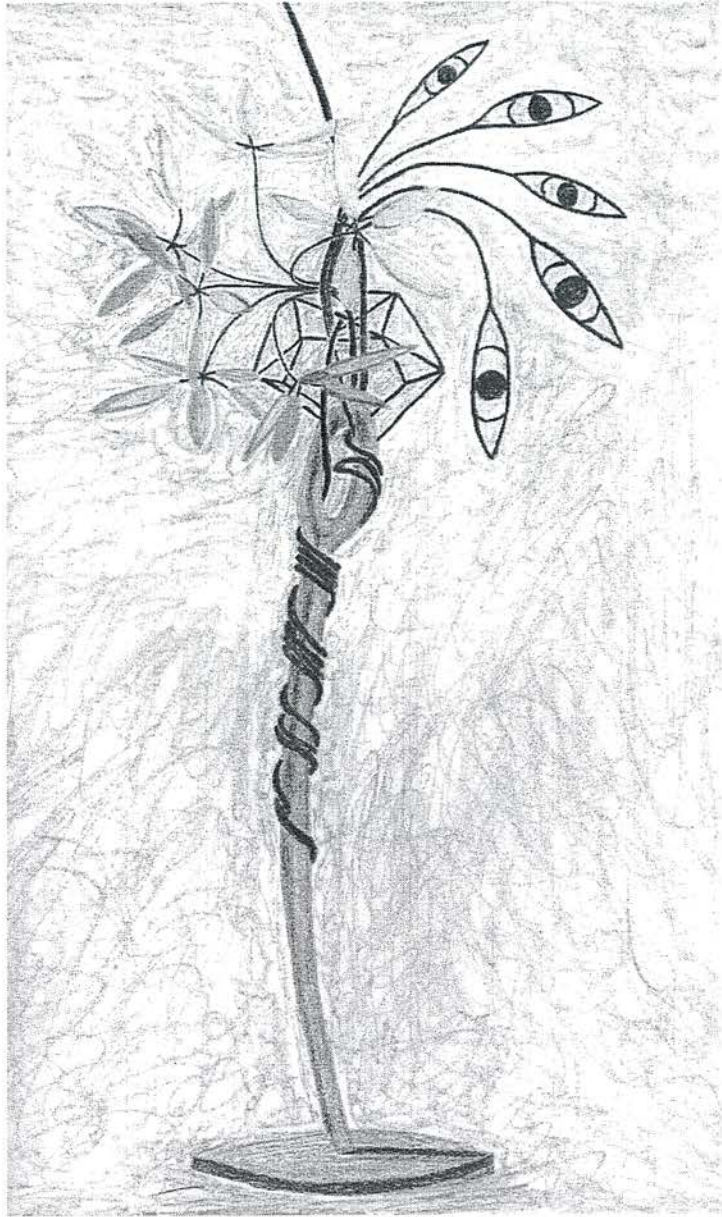
But the dead remain and always will on the grounds of Antietam which are blood soaked still.





*General Art-Honorable Mention*

Nathaniel Taylor



*General Art-Honorable Mention*

David Surls

*Literary  
Critique*





*Cover Art-Honorable Mention*

Darcy Darrell Demby

# Literary Critique-First Place

## Visions of the Daughters of Albion:

### More Modern Than Romantic

Warren Martens

Written in 1791-92, and influenced by the French Revolution, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* was to that date William Blake's deepest foray into his own mythical universe. Beginning as a simple romantic hymn of free love, the poem soon evolves into Blake's polemic study of rape, women's rights, slavery, and religion. Blake audaciously attacks each of these concepts, intertwining them with multiple meanings, compressed allusions, and revolutionary convictions.

Of the three complex characters, it is easiest to discern the nature of Bromion, for he is purely evil. Given the role as Oothoon's rapist, he is also presented as the American slave owner who chillingly boasts: "stamp'd with my signet are the swarthy children of the sun: They are obedient, they resist not, they obey the scourge" (1.21-22). It does not concern him that he has violated and impregnated an innocent woman. Indeed, to him she is as the pregnant slave girl who is more valuable and worthy of greater protection because her fertility enriches the master, often a rapist himself. More than once, Bromion refers to the "harlot," as if it were she who provoked his lust, making her feel dirty and responsible for this fate and offering her no hope of release from his lair. This inculcation daunts her and evokes in us the hopeless cause of generations of slaves bred for labor and conditioned to believe that life in chains was their destiny.

Ironically, Bromion recognizes the existence of God, His natural laws, and a punishing hell. However, he has too long ruled by force and is too shortsighted to change, despite the wails of Oothoon and the possibility of his own damnation. The analogy is clear: it is certain many slave owners saw their institution as a necessary evil, and for centuries discounted the inherent cruelty of bondage because the material profits were too high and there was relatively little challenge to their overwhelming oppression.

As revolting as Bromion is, the ineffectual Theotormon is even more distasteful. His name literally means "God-tormented" and Blake uses him to represent the tyrannical nature of a male-dominated Church

unsympathetic to the cries of women and slaves. Theotormon rules the Atlantic, yet is unable to punish Bromion for the rape of Oothoon. Indeed he too seems to at least partially blame her and resigns himself to binding them in his imaginary cave while he wails of his own misfortunes.

Theotormon mirrors the weakness of man and a church that is supposedly man's conduit to God. He wallows in self-pity asking Oothoon to "Tell me what is the night or day to one o'erflow'd with woe?" (3.22). Realistically, one pictures the selfishness of a man whose wife is raped only to jealously bemoan how it has affected him, disregarding the much greater suffering his spouse has endured. Symbolically, Theotormon is the Church of England lacking the doctrinal fortitude to rebuke slavery and women's oppression. Blake tells us of "The voices of slaves beneath the sun, and children bought with money. The shiver in religious caves beneath the burning fires" (2;8-9). This was the situation of blacks and women of the day. Not only were they physically tied by slave masters and lorded over by a male-dominated society, they were also bound by a Church who refused to come to their rescue; a Church that distorted Biblical context to perpetuate injustice.

Because Blake so often speaks through Oothoon, it is she who must bear the load felt by her sisters living in such an oppressive world. Initially believing herself unclean because of the rape, she calls upon "Theotormon's Eagles to prey upon her flesh" (2.13). However, this despair is somewhat simulated, as she soon asserts her purity, telling Theotormon a new day has arrived, and she is willing once again to come to her lover. She eloquently encourages him to "Arise my Theotormon, I am pure. Because the night is gone that clos'd me in its deadly black" (2.28-29). The "breaking day" of which she speaks is a new age of an awakening man where political and domestic tyrannies are quelled, and all men and women are encouraged to reach their full potential. She passionately explains how each of us has individual characteristics meant to make up a symbiotic universe, not one where we are destructively at odds. She attempts to discern the unique beauty and harmonious diversity of nature by questioning "With what sense is it that the chicken shuns the ravenous hawk? With what sense does the tame pigeon measure out the expanse?" (3.2-3). This is Blake's flowing romanticism at its best, yet even here do we see it as the underpinning of his modernity. We are saddened (and frustrated) because she credulously expects too much of Theotormon and Bromion. They are too self-absorbed with pity and their own selfish ends to recognize the world beyond their senses, or the



potential of their fellow man. No matter how mighty and unmatched in their physical prowess, they will always be cowardly and weak in character.

Blake makes it abundantly clear the Church is centrally culpable, and Oothoon recognizes this complicity in the oppression of men and ideas. She berates an institution that would regard her as unclean and is angered by the thought of men who would judge her while turning their heads from the cries of those enslaved.

The heroine speaks out against the system of tithing, seeing no sense in farmers working the land only to give their profits to the parson "To build him castles and high spires, where kings and priests my dwell" (5.20). She scolds a Church that recognizes arranged marriages (another form of slavery) producing generations of offspring not conceived in love and "Theat live in pestilence and die a meteor and are no more" (5.28).

Oothoon does not omit God from her blame. "Urizen! Creator of Men! mistaken Demon of heaven" (5.3) gives God who does not recognize the anguish of his children. Tragically, those enslaved misguidedly praise the vicious God responsible for their plight. In frustrated anger she chides Him "Thy joys are tears! Thy labor vain, to form men to thine image" (5.4). To consider these lamentations heretical would be inaccurate. Rather, they are a veracious, understandable response to the distorted Anglican doctrine of the day. In a romantic flight of fancy, she dreams of a mankind recognizing all joys as holy when "each joy is a Love" (5.6). Her naiveté taxes our patience, for the love of which she speaks will forever be subverted by Bromion's cruelty, Theotormon's jealousy, the Church's complicity, and a God who will not acknowledge her in her cave of desperation.

# Literary Critique-Second Place

## Victory in Death

Kevin W. Knowles

A friend of poet Robert Browning, when commenting on Browning's allegory "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," suggested the poem's meaning lay in a Biblical reference, "But he who endures to the end will be saved." Certainly, those words of Jesus cannot be disputed. However, "Childe Roland" holds a far deeper meaning found in another of the Savior's quotes as recorded by John the Revelator:

Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed the devil is about to throw some of you into prison...and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.  
(Revelations 2:10)

The concept of enduring truth in good literature mandates both universal application and timeless relevance. While, on the surface, "Childe Roland" tells of a man's journey to the Dark Tower, a place embodying the very heart of evil, the real nature of Browning's poem is an internal struggle for the courage it takes to swallow fear in the face of terrifying circumstances and press on. Ultimately, all conflicts are fought upon the fluidic battlefield of the human mind.

The nature of Childe Roland's quest becomes lucid in the seventh stanza as the heroic narrator laments that he has "so long suffered" some seemingly impossible task and continually "heard failure prophesied so oft" (37-38). Browning does not convey the exact nature of "The Band's" reasons for seeking the Dark Tower (39-40). Nor does he reveal just what the Dark Tower represents. Perhaps stanzas five and six foreshadow its meaning with their symbols of death and funerals. In another line supporting this possibility, the narrator remarks that, once the "safe road" vanishes, he goes on for "naught else remained to do" (52-54). Certainly the plight against mortality is a common one and the journey every human takes inevitably conveys one and all to "that ominous tract" (14). However, the narrator internally questions not how to defeat that dark force, but rather wrestles with that ubiquitous question, "should I be fit?" (42). In this, he expresses a nuance of self-doubt concerning his worthiness to journey with those "knight" and recognizes that "to fail as

they, seemed best” (40-42). Success and failure matter far less than facing life’s obstacles with conduct befitting a hero.

Not unlike the opening of John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Browning’s Childe Roland sets off on a plain to face certain unpalatable encounters which seldom become outright dangerous (48). In stark contrast, Childe Roland’s plain is populated by weeds and burrs further described in this morose passage:

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair in leprosy; thin dry blades pricked the mud which underneath looked kneaded up with blood. (73-75) Next, the sight of an emaciated horse catapults Childe Roland into an inward search for happiness from times gone by. He rightly observes that “One taste of the old time sets all to rights” but he cannot discover such comfort (90). He instead sees a vision alluding to Saint Cuthbert’s Monastery on Lindisfarne Island, which the Vikings desecrated in AD 793 (91-95). With this, the hero’s “heart’s new fire” is snuffed out and leaves him cold. He then sees a fellow knight, Sir Giles, but the “scene shifts” and he witnesses Giles’s hanging as a traitor (97-102). To these visions of destruction, Childe Roland concludes that “better this present than a past like that” (103). The lesson here shines through clearly enough: have thankfulness for one’s circumstances—things could always be worse.

As if in response to Childe Roland’s epiphany, his path’s terrain changes abruptly and serves to “arrest” [his] thoughts” (103-107). A veritable river of death crosses his path filled apparently with bodies—not entirely dead—which he must walk upon in order to ford (121-126). On the other side, he finds not “a better country” (128), but a battlefield where all died consumed as it were by the “engine...fit to reel / Men’s bodies out like silk” (140-142). He next crosses many dismal terrains in succession seemingly making much progress. Yet, “just as far as ever from the end” as evening falls (157-158). The scene elicits a sense of uselessness as might be felt by one “very near to death” (25) and finds “failure in [his heart’s] scope” (24). The narrator discovers “some trick / Of mischief” heralded by “a click / As when a trap shuts—you’re inside the den” (169-174). At this he rails against his own lack of vigilance (173-200) and questions his lack of vision (stanza 32) and hearing (stanza 33). Here stands the strongest proof that Childe Roland’s quest is simply that walk of life common to every man or woman:

Of all the lost adventurers my peers—How such a  
one was strong, and such was bold, and such was  
fortunate, yet each of old Lost, lost! One moment



knelled the woe of years. (195-198)

Facing his final moment with the fallen heroes of old looking on, Childe Roland sounds the battle cry in the victory over death (stanza 34). He did indeed remain faithful to the end—to that sacred quest.

Accepting at last that death is but a part of life, one must also conclude that courage is not the absence of fear, but the acquiescent following of that path in spite of fear. Learning life's passage, Childe Roland, acknowledging his own human faults, recognizes that no amount of training, experience or even education can prepare one for every eventuality (180). Still relating to his question of worthiness (42), perhaps Childe Roland's ending in "a sheet of flame" (201) further solidifies an image of ignoble death in Browning's dream. Also, life is never rendered invalid by the failure, but rather by the lack of trying to succeed.

# Literary Critique-Third Place

## Literary Critique of Mathilde in "The Necklace"

Carley Dodson

Guy de Maupassant's short story "The Necklace" has always been one of my favorites. The first time I read the story I found it to be quite humorous and was actually pleased with the ending, which many find to be sad. This was because I found the main character, Mathilde, to be self-centered, ungrateful, and extremely materialistic. I had very little sympathy for the woman. However, this was also before I realized that this story reveals something much deeper about all of humanity than what seems obvious upon first glance. As the editor of the text points out, "what a character says and does is...motivated by his or her desires, temperament, and moral nature" (Kennedy G4). I had been watching this woman's outward behavior and had missed what was going on inside her mind and heart. I now see the characterization of Mathilde as a masterful display of the human heart's inner most desires, the lies we believe that lead to great discontent, and the solution we long for but never seem to find. I find myself empathizing with her and enjoying the story for its applicable truths to my own life.

Maupassant introduces Mathilde as a woman with great desires, who "suffered ceaselessly, feeling herself born for all the delicacies and all the luxuries...[but seeing only the] poverty of her dwelling, the wretched look of the walls, the worn-out chairs, [and the] ugliness of [her] curtains" (Maupassant 178). She dreams constantly about luxurious things, and even though she does not work herself and has a maid, she is quite discontent with all she does possess. Some critics, namely Gregory Weston, claim that Mathilde "deserved more, unlike her husband and most other, [and] was one of those rare human beings capable of enjoying life's finer pleasures" (Weston 2). I disagree strongly with this conclusion. I see at the heart of Mathilde's desires her heart itself. We know from the story that she was a woman who "had no dowry, no expectations, no means of being known, understood, loved or wedded by any rich and distinguished man, and [so] she let herself be married to a little clerk" (Maupassant 177). She obviously felt that because she had nothing to offer in a material sense, she was of very little value with the hope of

increasing her personal worth. Proverbs 19:22 states that “What a man desires is unfailing love; better to be poor than a liar” (Bible). I see Mathilde’s greatest desire as unfailing love—a love that is unconditional, unwavering, radical, demonstrative, broader than the horizon, and deeper than the sea. Yet I see her having accepted the same lies that most people seem to at one point or another. She became blind to her own desire for love and was deceived about where she might find satisfaction that would put an end to her ceaseless suffering. Mathilde “had no dresses, no jewels, nothing. And she loved nothing but that” (Maupassant 178). Yet, the reason she sought this was because “she would have liked to please, to be envied, to be charming, and to be sought after” (Maupassant 178). She thought that if she could acquire enough, these latter things would be hers, and she is unable to see the folly in this.

The modern culture daily puts unsupportable, idealistic and totally false ideals that we seem to accept as achievable standards for life. We live by such credos as “the clothes make the man,” and “you have to keep up with the Joneses.” It seems to have been much the same for Mathilde. When her husband comes home with a party invitation, instead of being elated, “two great tears descend slowly from the corners of her eyes” (Maupassant 179). This is because she has nothing to wear and believes that there is “nothing more humiliating than to look poor among women who are rich”(Maupassant 179). This story takes place in an era where the poor were deemed unworthy of being regarded. Her humiliation would be like that of a young girl without an acceptable gown at prom dancing among others gloriously adorned. We also know that Mathilde has done little else with her days than comparing herself with others in despair over all that she lacks. This probably contributes to her dissatisfaction. Yet, upon receiving all she deems necessary for the evening event, a pretty new dress and “the necklace,” Mathilde attends the party. We see that Mathilde “was prettier than them all, elegant, gracious, smiling and crazy with joy” (Maupassant 180). Mathilde “danced with intoxication, with passion, made drunk by pleasure, forgetting all, in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success,...[with] awakened desires, and that sense of complete victory which is so sweet to a woman’s heart” (Maupassant 180). Mathilde believed that these things were not always so grand within her, and that they would cease to be when she removed all that adorned her, like Cinderella and the glass slipper. Her illusion vanishes as her husband “threw over her shoulders the wraps which he had brought, modest wraps of common life, whose poverty contrasted with the elegance of the ball



dress” (Maupassant 180). It is as if she believes her whole person only amounts to the clothes on her back.

Mathilde resembles countless others who have been duped by the false advertisement of material possessions. The sad ending is that she never seems to live in the truth about her inner beauty and worth. The glory that is exposed in Mathilde at the ball had been there all along but was evoked by a new confidence she gained through her apparel.

Eventually many years spent trying to pay for this one night of glory, years that made her into an old woman. I find my self wanting to scream at her through the pages “Grab your husband who loves you and dance, dance in your kitchen and find the passion buried within your souls, exhibit the grace and charm you do possess even if you do it in rags, and by all means love the person you are without checking your status in society!” Those years did not have to be wasted and neither did Mathilde’s desires. How sad and how true that “[such little things] are needed for us to be lost or to be saved” (Maupassant 183). Yet, even with the sadness those ten years bring to Mathilde and her husband, I am glad she did not find out about the necklace until the ball was over. I think that if she had, she might have never allowed herself to dance!

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# Literary Critique-Honorable Mention

## The Influence of Point of View in a Story

Aimee Myers Lynch

The point of view, or perspective, from which a story is told can have great influence on the interpreted meaning of the story. A story told through the eyes of a child could be interpreted as a whimsical or innocent view of a situation, but it could be interpreted very differently if the same story were narrated by the child's grandmother, hardened and ripened with knowledge and life experience. The crucial differences created by different perspectives of the same story make point of view a very important literary element and an equally important writing tool. William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" is a good example of the importance of point of view as a writing tool.

In "A Rose for Emily," Faulkner tells the tale of a woman's life as viewed by a narrator with limited omniscience. All that is known about the narrator, or rather eluded to, is that the person is one of the townspeople where the main character, Emily, lives. The narrator is omniscient because he or she knows not only the actions of the other townspeople in the story, but also their feelings, thoughts, and emotions, and seemingly speaks on behalf of the entire town, but this omniscience is limited because the narrator does not know the inner thoughts and workings of Emily's mind. Considering the implied interpretation of this story, and the theme of society's continued neglect, it is apparent that Faulkner's choice to have a partially omniscient narrator was no coincidence, but his choice to use of point of view as a writing tool to help give deeper meaning to his story.

As the narrator recounts the details of Emily's life in this story, the complex emotions that the townspeople feel about Emily become more apparent. Many events of Emily's life that are described in the story are such that would normally induce some type of intervention or reaction, but while these events do not go unnoticed by the townspeople, her community fails her by doing absolutely nothing to intervene or help in these situations. This is a recurring theme in this short story, and a possible influence for Faulkner's choice to have a narrator with limited omniscience and a point of view that is all knowing of the thoughts and feelings of the townspeople and closely associated with the society

associated with the society surrounding Emily, but completely unable to understand or recognize the poor woman's thoughts and needs. For example, in the story, the townspeople smell a foul stench coming from Emily's home, but none of them want to directly approach her or "accuse a lady to her face of smelling bad" (58), or rather than address the problem of where the stench is coming from, they stealthily sprinkled lime dust to eliminate the horrible smell, even if the source was not dealt with. Although the townspeople began to feel sorry for her, they also neglected to act when the entire town was convinced that Emily was going to commit suicide. Rather than help the old woman they all pitied, the townspeople only marked notice of the event and commented that her death was probably for the best, completely abandoning Emily's obvious need for some companionship and also abandoning the basic human desire to preserve life.

At first glance, the story that Faulkner has written about a pitiful old woman and the neglectful, seemingly uncaring townspeople might seem a mere dark story, documenting the callous citizens of this fictional town, but when coupled with Faulkner's choice to give the narrator a point of view with limited omniscience, knowing all the thoughts and feelings of Miss Emily's community and not with Miss Emily herself, a deeper meaning can be interpreted. The fact that the narrator has this partial omniscience, almost completely unidentified, and speaks on behalf of entire community suggests that the qualities and actions demonstrated by the narrator, who is one of the townspeople, in this story are representative of the qualities and actions of a larger body. The larger body that this narrator represents is society as a whole; in effect speaking not only for the values of an entire community, but our entire society. This use of point of view afforded Faulkner the opportunity to show the harshness of our civilization in its entirety to mental illness and pitiful situations like that of Miss Emily's by exposing the neglect of the entire town through his partially omniscient narrator's thoughts and words, such as the utterance by the town people the empty, pitiful words of "Poor Emily" (32) while discussing her life troubles, but the constant denial of communal duty saying almost in the same breath that "her family should come to her" (31), refusing to offer any help or friendship to Miss Emily themselves.

When Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" is examined in terms of both actual characters in the story and the narrator's point of view and what that point of view represents, it is evident that Faulkner intended a deeper



interpretation than a simple dark tale. Faulkner obviously chose to present this story via an unidentifiable and all knowing character as a writing tool, to lead the reader to interpret the story's more pertinent meaning, thus revealing the importance of point of view, and its influence on a story's interpretation. The important limited omniscient narrator in this story shows Faulkner's distaste for the "obliterated August names" (28) and fallen monuments of a civilization lost at the end of an era.

# Literary Critique-Honorable Mention

## An Explication of “Dulce et Decorum Est”

Anna Wueller

Wilfred Owen was a young poet who fought and died in World War I. He only published four poems during his lifetime. However, another war poet later edited a collection of his work, and they, too, were released. All of his poems are antiwar works and warn of the terrible fears which soldiers face during war. “Dulce et Decorum Est” is a perfect example of the message Wilfred Owen wanted all people to realize about war and its supposed greatness. Every word, phrase, and poetic device used in this poem further develops its antiwar theme.

The first notion in this poem comes from the title. Dulce et Decorum Est is taken from the last two lines of the poem, “Dulce et Decorum Est/Pro patria mori.” It is an allusion of a famous Latin statement from the Roman poet Horace meaning, “It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.” Therefore, knowing Owen’s opposing views on war, the title is extremely ironic. The entire poem battles with the very idea that battling in war is no where near sweet, so to title such an opposing view with a statement meaning the complete opposite of what the poem is about is using verbal irony. The reason for Owen’s use of this title becomes clear as one approaches the closing lines which faults those who tell youth that fighting in war is such a great honor.

“Dulce” is not written in a specific form. It has four uneven stanzas but maintains a constant rhyme scheme alternating every other line, while the majority of the poem is written in iambic pentameter. The first stanza sets the scene. The very beginning line of the poem contains the first simile, “like old beggars under sacks,” which compares “we” from line two, which is the soldiers, the old beggars. Beggars carry sacks upon their backs just as the soldiers are bent over carrying supplies on their backs. In the next line we find but another simile stating, “Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge.” this compares the soldiers to hags, whose connotation is that of a sickly old woman but in actuality refers to an ugly elder woman, female demon, or evil spirit. The soldier’s knocking knees resemble the elderliness of an old woman while their curses are spit out as if spells of evil towards the “sludge” or mud that they have to make their way through. The soldiers turn their backs

upon “haunting flares.” The “flares” are guns that continuously frighten the minds of the soldiers just as a ghost would scare someone as it haunted a place. The soldiers continue to trudge toward their “distant rest.” in this situation, “distant rest” is double entendre. One believes the “distant rest” refers to death, which is a certain possibility being on the brutal battlefields of war.

“Men marched asleep” presents a paradox. One is unable to march while in sleep, yet this shows the extreme lack of energy and the tiredness of the soldiers as they attempt to move towards safety. “Many had lost their boots/but limped on, blood-shod.” the conditions for the soldiers are unspeakably poor, but they will perish if they stop to rest or recover lost items, so they continue on with blood covered feet moving mechanically as if un-awake. “Blood-shod “ seems a dehumanizing image. One often thinks of horses shod, not men, therefore this image stresses another negative aspect of war that Owen is trying to communicate to readers. The soldiers are wounded, can hardly see, and hardly operate sufficiently because of “fatigue.” The soldiers are in such a poor state and moving involuntarily towards their “distant rest” that they are “deaf even to the hoots/Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.” The shooting and bombs are incredibly loud around the soldiers; however, they are so frazzled that they do not even notice the sound or the danger of the gas shells that are gaining on them.

After the scene is set in stanza one, stanza two moves forward to present the actions experienced in the described warfare. Line nine exclaims, “Gas! *Gas!* Quick, boys!” the green mustard gas from the “Five-Nines” reaches the soldiers. A frenzy of panic brings the soldiers to life as they each clumsily fumble to put on their protective helmets. The line itself sounds of cacophony, “An ecstasy of fumbling/Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time.” However, in the next line the reader learns that one soldier is not quick enough and becomes consumed by the gas. The lone soldier flails around thrashing wildly, “flound’ring like a man in fire or lime.” The simile in that line compares the soldier to a man unable to escape the intense pain from boiling flames or burning skin from contact of lime on the skin. In the lines twelve through fourteen an underwater metaphor is introduced, and Owen places himself into the actions of the poem. Owen watches the soldier through “misty panes and thick green lights.” The “misty pains” are created from looking through the helmet, and the “green lights” are an image extracted from the sight of the green mustard gas that has surrounded the soldiers. Line fourteen, “As



under a green sea, I saw him drowning,” contains the same image of the gas, this time presented as “a green sea.” Owen watches the soldier die.

At this point in the poem, the reader proceeds to the two-lined third stanza. The perspective in the poem changes at these two lines. Time has passed, and now Owen is haunted in his dreams by the images of the dying soldier. He is haunted by not only the sight of the dying soldier but by his inability to help him. This event can refer back to the previous “haunting flares” from line three, which could have foreshadowed the haunting that Owen undergoes in his dreams.

Owen then refocuses his poem in stanza four to stress to civilians the horror of telling youth that fighting in war is great and honorable. He begins the stanza challenging those supporting war as honorable by asking “if they dreamed the same images that are in his ‘smothering dreams’ would they still encourage others to participate in warfare?” The “you” whom Owen addresses in line seventeen implies people in general, but it is thought that Owen addresses one person in particular, the “my friend.” from line twenty-five, identified as Jessie Pope, children’s fiction writer and versifier whose patriotic poems epitomized the glorification of war that Owen so despised. Owen continues in line eighteen to describe in detail the sight of the dying soldier. The soldier was “flung” into the back of a wagon, carelessly, since no one could do anything to help him, and they were in such frenzied haste. His “white eyes writhing in his face” shows the unnaturalness of his eyes that are twisting in pain. Hell seems close when the simile, “like a devil’s sick of sin” is introduced. In line twenty-one, Owen again challenges war supporters saying, “If you could hear,” and continuing on to describe “blood gargling” from lungs filled with the gas and foaming like the mouth of a rabid dog. The lungs continue on in physically repulsive agony, unstoppable as if a sore on a tongue that is continuously bitten and messed with just as cattle chew over and over their food that they eat. “My friend,” which Owen uses to address Jessie Pope is undoubtedly ironic. Pope is Owen’s foe. Owen would not under normal circumstances refer to him as a friend. He comments to his “friend” that he would not, with excitement, tell children who are passionate to run and join a noble cause fighting in war that it is so glorious. His “friend” would not do such things if he were haunted by “smothering dreams” filled with extreme vulgarity of death. Owen then exclaims “*Dulce et decorum est/Pro patria mori*” to be “The old lie.”

Ultimately, Wilfred Owen’s “*Dulce et Decorum Est*” was effective in portraying war in a negative light. Although his poem is harsh in its

images, the plot and devices used to develop its theme are exactly what are needed to make his point clear to readers. "Dulce" is a negative yet inspiring poem in that it discourages readers to wish to take part in warfare. The saying, "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country," must be truly fictitious.

# *Special Category*

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*Photography-Honorable Mention*

Empty Chair

Linda Guillory

## Special Category

By Nearly Dying, I Came to Appreciate Living

John R. Nosler

**L**ife-It has been discussed its philosophies and platitudes- both positive and negative. Almost every adjective imaginable has been used to describe life. Plato said, "The life which is unexamined is not worth living." Thoreau said, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." Arthur Miller gave us the unforgettable Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*. Like so many others, I pretty much took my own life for granted—until February, 2003—when I was faced with two major health crises. The latter was far worse than the former. My perspective of and appreciation for life were changed immeasurably.

I had been admitted to UTMB/John Sealy Hospital in Galveston on Tuesday, February 4<sup>th</sup> for a couple of gastroenterological procedures. One was cancelled; the other held promise of a future visit. I was discharged on Friday the 7<sup>th</sup>. Barely twenty-four hours later, my bothersome umbilical hernia strangulated. I was returned to John Sealy by ambulance. Someone had let the games begin.

The surgery and post-op went well. After a seemingly eternal stay in the recovery room, I went to a room and was able to feast on surprisingly good hospital food. I now sported a six inch column of staples and sutures in lieu of my beleaguered navel. The stark realization was upon me: my days as a swim wear model were over. I was discharged on Tuesday the 18<sup>th</sup>. Four days later, at 0930 Saturday, all hell broke loose.

I awoke with my gut on fire and as swollen as a week-old road kill awaiting the carrion armada. I promptly sought medical attention, and after every available delaying tactic known to modern medicine was deployed, I went to Hermann Baptist Hospital in Beaumont in one ambulance. I later went to John Sealy in another ambulance.

I arrived at 0100. Although the traditional Mardi Gras was still a week-and-a-half away, the Galveston version was in full swing. When I finally arrived at John Sealy's Emergency Room, I really thought I had entered the Twilight Zone, sans Rod Serling. Everyone was wearing plastic beads and there was a carnival atmosphere—a far cry from the usual



atmosphere of a hospital ER on a Saturday night. I was quickly admitted and then transported through the labyrinth of hallways to a room on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the TDCJ wing. With the litany of requisite paperwork done, I could finally get some sleep.

The now-familiar surgeon greeted me the next morning. He looked like he had just lost his last friend. He informed me, morosely, that they could either *'keep me medicated and comfortable for a couple months until I died,'* or they could proceed with the surgery and all its incumbent risks. My maze had deposited me on the bank of my own personal Rubicon: I could either rot on the shoreline, or ford the river. I decided it was time to take the plunge. I cordially informed the surgeon that I was within six months of my fiftieth birthday, and I wasn't ready to lie down and die just yet.

When I awoke after the surgery, I was quickly aware that I was paralyzed from ankles to mid-neck. I had no idea what was happening, but I had to fight off a panic attack. Presently I heard the surgeon tell someone they could "D.C. the paralytic." As I began to regain movement, I was ready to begin dancing—horizontally. My spirits lifted like storm clouds giving way to a beautiful, sunny day. My prayers, formerly solemn entreaties, gave way to laudatory praises. I was soon wheeled through the Skinnerian maze of corridors to a room in the Intensive Care Unit.

After I arrived in ICU, the surgeon came by, grinning like the Cheshire Cat. "You have more lives than a cat!" he said. I was too sick to meow, although I certainly felt like it. I would spend nine days in the ICU in relative comfort, save for the peripheral attachment: IV tubes, a Foley catheter, more wires than Miss [Ernestine] Tomlin's switchboard, and naturally, *a bedpan*. Since my small intestine had perforated (was leaking), the surgeons had to drain and flush my abdominal cavity. I would shed some forty pounds of body fluids, blood, fecal material, and body fat—the body's repository of toxic substances. As my body was purging itself of physical toxins, I was busy purging myself of emotional, mental, and spiritual toxins. It's truly amazing just how much soul-searching, housecleaning, praying and crying you can do in a twelve-by-twelve ICU room on a sixteen hundred dollar hospital bed. It wasn't a Clinitron, but it certainly was nice. A near-death experience is a real heads-up for most people; it certainly was for me. I peeled away many years of unwanted and ungrateful baggage like so many leaves off a massive head of lettuce.

By the fourth day of my ICU cruise, I began to receive intravenous feeding. The infusion of proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, trace elements



and Colonel Sanders' eleven herbs and spices bolstered my sense of wellness considerably. I couldn't taste anything, but I could certainly *feel* the difference. But, damn the comforts! I was awakened nightly at 0130 for a chest X-Ray and at 0400 for blood work so the surgical team could review it during their morning rounds. I once got a walk around the ICU as physical therapy. The perhaps three-hundred foot trek seemed like a slow marathon for one. The nursing care in ICU was extraordinary. There was one RN for every two patients; help was never far away. But all things must come to an end. After my stomach finally cleared on the seventh day, I sensed the end of my ICU stay was nigh.

On the morning of Day Eight, after the surgeon reviewed my progress, he asked: "Mr. Nosler, so you want to eat?" Naturally I said "yes," but it was accompanied by an appropriate rejoinder about the question being rhetorical. I was put on a "Clear liquid diet." Solid food would follow the next day provided I had no complications with this diet. I received juices, broth, iced tea, and orange Jell-O. You cannot fathom just how wonderful those concupiscent little wiggly orange cubes tasted after nine days without food. I was to remain in the ICU for one more day.

Though my arrival in a regular hospital room was uneventful—the food outstanding, it was an oasis in the vast desert of a no-frills hospitalization. I pretty well had the room to myself, hence control of the TV, so I didn't have to argue with anyone over who wanted to watch what, nor did I have to endure any soap operas. I was also able to watch Jeopardy! every day. Naturally, this too would pass.

I would be discharged from the hospital nine days later, but a couple of days prior to that, I had a real comeuppance. I lost my footing in the bathroom and landed squarely on my arse on the floor, so I had to depend on the nursing staff for assistance. It is really embarrassing for a grown man to have to legitimately say, "I've fallen—and I can't get up!" I now have great empathy for all the Mrs. Fletchers (and others) out there who repeatedly go through this, and who must depend on others for assistance. Even having to navigate my way across uneven pavement was a real challenge.

Although I chuckle about it in retrospect, I realize I was afforded the luxury of being only *temporarily* impaired. I was able to leave behind what many others have to live with. Such are the lessons of life, and I've learned well from this one.

The recovery process has been long and arduous, and I now have a residual hoarseness as a remembrance. My new appreciation for life has

led to better ways to use it—both to benefit others and myself. My fiftieth birthday has come and gone without any fanfare. I'm not on a crusade: I'm examining my life and finding it well worth living, indeed.

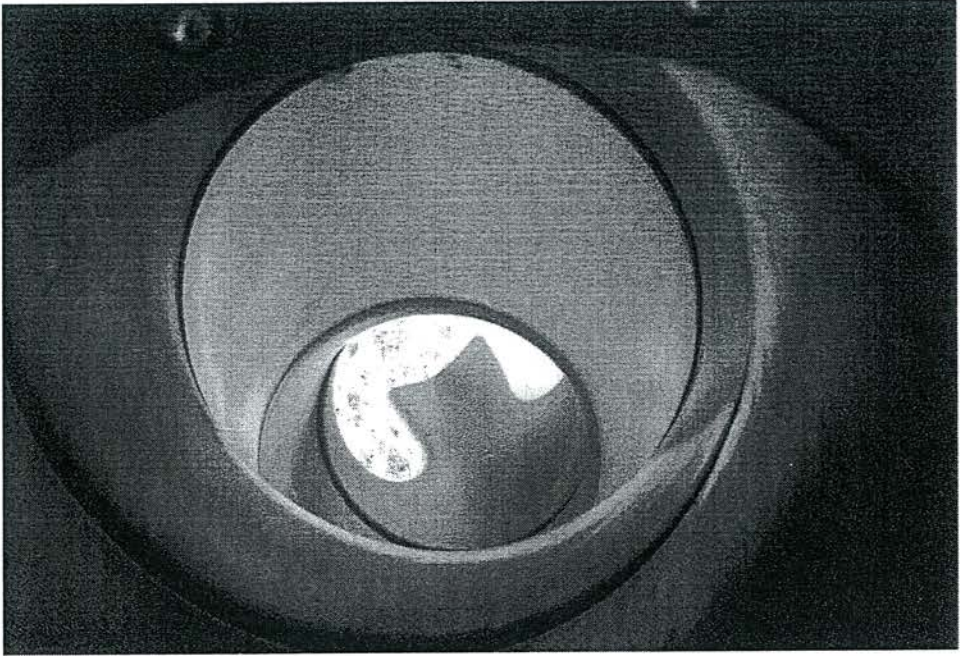


## *Photography-Honorable Mention*

April Arrendondo

*Faculty  
and  
Staff*





He squeals with delight running to and fro...  
Swing me higher he demands as I send him into near flight!

With his toddler run...  
hopping and skipping all on balanced tip-toe...  
He scampers up the ladder with all his child-like might!

He gleefully dives feet first into the colorful  
mouth of a downward swirl  
Leaving his Grandma to peer into the wide-eyed, wild face...  
*Inside a Child's World!*

Janet G. Polk - Staff

# Where Exactly is Pretoria?

Sally Byrd-Faculty

Moving toward an inspired vision  
Facing always insidious derision  
Bounded by positive inarticulate indecision  
Marching to Pretoria

Offered up a new way of thinking,  
They give the lie while never blinking.  
At known wrongs, plain evil, winking  
Marching to Pretoria

Aiming for the future while marching toward the past  
Doggedly supporting a life that's dying fast  
Willing to fight only for things that never last  
We're marching to Pretoria

Remember the hungry masses, give suckers to the poor  
Stick not to just one issue, dive for any lure  
You'll be drug into deep water where there's no high ground, that's  
sure  
While marching to Pretoria

Avoid then, all united fronts; always fight alone  
For if you ask for succor, they'll hit you with a stone  
So march on single handed; take defeat without a groan

When goals are made for new direction  
Waste not time on right reflection  
Don't worry if your plans may vex some  
Just march on to Pretoria

Stretch your every resource, do it—if it's free  
If it costs a dollar, don't you come to me

Saving money always is the quintessential key  
While marching to Pretoria

Row, Man, Row! While tied up to the dock  
Try to get a paddle-you'll find it under lock  
And they're filling up the boat with ever larger rocks  
While marching to Pretoria

*Yes, we're marching to Pretoria, Pretoria, Pretoria*  
*Yes, we're marching to Pretoria*  
*Pretoria today.*



# Mr. Gillham's Watertower

Tim Knight-Faculty

It had stood there straight and tall for some eighty-three years. Towering one hundred and fifty feet into the sky in a circle called Gillham, it was a beacon taking on an almost human soul as if it were offering encouragement and guidance to the human spirits struggling with their daily lives at its base.

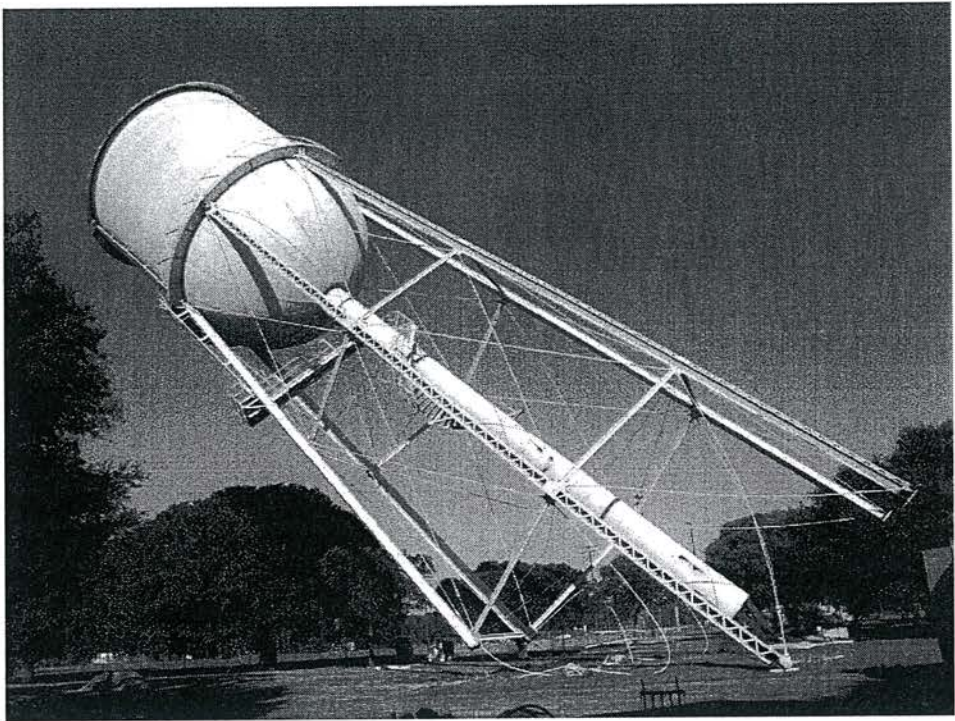
It was a symbol of stability and strength, man-made and engineered for durability. "They don't make them like that anymore" was the often-used phrase. It was brought down in a cloud of rusty reddish-brown dust beneath a clear cool October sky. It was a piece of history stepping aside for progress. As a child I would refer to the water tower as "Mr. Gillham's Watertower" It was a symbol of protection always reaching into the sky high above my childhood fantasies, providing water, clean and pure, the guardian of one of man's most precious resources.

During the roaring twenties, J.O Dockery, a pioneer aviator, would take flight from the Texas Company's Air Landing Field pointing his Fleet Bi-Plane powered by a 75 horsepower Kinner Engine into the sky. Dockery used the water tower as an outer marker as he took flight in a north by north easterly direction. Sometimes he carried a young passenger, Volney Pinder. The boy would silently hold his breath praying that his aviator hero would clear the top of the tower by fifty feet, and he always did.

It was silent witness to man's activities casting its great shadow over vaudeville tent shows-one sinister episode of Jekyll and Hyde comes to mind. During the summer of 1956, a group of German aerialists attached a steel cable to the platform around the tower stretching to the ground and secured it to a huge beam down at the sidewalk. A Harley motorcycle with specially constructed tires sat on the steel cable. Suddenly its powerful engine revved up causing a stir among the large crowd of curious spectators. The Harley's oversized tires bit into the cable, and slowly the machine began its climb higher and higher with its human cargo on board. It was a spectacle few of the large crowd had ever witnessed. There was no safety net to catch the aerialists had they made a fatal misstep, three men on a motorcycle high above the crowd. When they reached the catwalk around the tower, they dismounted; and to the strains of the American National Anthem, they waved American flags. A

mighty roar came from the crowd enveloping the entire proceedings with a sense of patriotic emotion. When the death-defying air show was complete, the aerial trio slowly edged the Harley down the steel cable descended to the earth. A state of excitement enveloped the crowd taking a long time to finally settle itself down into the evening darkness.

The Gillham Circle water tower served as silent witness to hundreds of family gatherings and picnics. Many children gazed in awe while holding tight to their father's hands. I certainly did, and so did my son. It is all history now, locked into a dreamy reverie of days gone by.



October 3, 2003  
History Coming Down-Memories Still Linger  
Tim Knight - Faculty





Port Arthur Boardwalk - August 2003  
Janet G. Polk - Staff





Did she...?

Naw-w-w-w she wouldn't forget to draw in the other eye!

There she lay stretched out under the caladiums looking up at me while I was sipping my coffee. Both of us were enjoying an uncharacteristically cool August morning, as I was admiring how beautiful Kitty had become. Yes, beautiful even with only one eye.

She came to us five years ago, too young to be from her mother, underweight, skittish, and easy prey for the feline bullies of the neighborhood. I wanted so much for her to *just disappear*, but with my daughter Diana feeding and loving her clandestinely, the kitten became a fixture at the back door. "Kitty," then became her name by default. One morning Diana found Kitty injured, her right eye severely scratched and infected. I removed her from the arms of my tearful daughter and took the kitten to the humane society. Half an hour later I returned, and then I surrendered my checkbook at the veterinary office. The doctor assured me that Kitty would be able to function normally with one eye.

"Yes, dear, I *know* that I could have a purebred Persian for what I spent at the vets, but I just couldn't leave her to die! With that, Kitty became *mine*.

Kitty has become a sleek and stealthy hunter, *gifts* are left at various locations to show her appreciation. Now the mistress of the neighborhood since all the bullies have died or moved, Kitty is free to roam without being assaulted. She is my companion while I work in the flowerbeds or when I rest. She stands guard at the edge of the pool whenever my husband and I are swimming, and lets us know she is *quite concerned* that we are wet.

When winter comes, the mistress of the neighborhood becomes the mistress of the house. She is miserable when wet or cold, for comfort she will curl up in my lap, to remind me, of course, that I am *hers*. However, with winter four months away she can remain

### *Kitty Under the Caladiums.*

Janet G. Polk - Staff  
August 2003



Rainy Day at the Park  
Angela T. Machado-Staff



## Moments with My Grandmother Dr. Laura Stafford - Faculty

Dressed to the “nines”  
Spike heels  
Jet-black hair - fashionably set  
An “eye” for what you could wear

Coffee at 5:30 with Aunt Bill  
Dinner on the table by 6:30 (always a potato dish for Clarkie)  
Coffee milk, coke floats, candy dishes full  
Spoiling me, and loving every minute of it (until the tummy aches came)

Full closets - with open doors for sharing anything you wanted  
A new outfit would cure any ailment  
Love of music - accordion and organ  
Friday night dinner and TV with a walk around the block

The luckiest bingo player at Pinewood  
(one more 1<sup>st</sup> place TV would have to go in the bathroom)  
Sported a Red Mach One Mustang - Spunky!  
My first gift-wrapped job at Mark's  
I watched you work tirelessly to please the customer

“Wolfer,” the beautiful white Samoyed was the only dog  
in your life  
And “Petie” the parakeet had the run of the kitchen  
The stray Siamese, Mr. Poo, you coaxed out of the neighborhood and into your  
heart for 18 years  
But it was Mr.Foo whom you spoiled in these later years purring for you till the  
end  
Sunday lunch with a care bag to last the week  
Toy treats for Lauren every Sunday on the Chinese chest  
Saturday shopping after lunch with Gran  
Thanks for all the feathery, glittery, shinny, slick, outfits that you knew I  
wanted

No matter what, I knew you loved me in your own way -  
and I love you,  
**Grandgene! 1909 - 2003**



The Barn  
Patricia Granger - Faculty

Upon Falling Asleep While Reading Robert Frost's Poetry  
After a Late Night Snack of Pepperoni Pizza,  
Pickles and Pistachio Ice Cream  
Sue Wright - Faculty

A *Late Walk*, in *The Long Night*, *After Apple Picking* with Frost, took me through *The Pasture* past *The Black Cottage* We were *Looking for a Sunset Bird in Winter* among *The Birches*.

There was only a *Dust of Snow* as we wandered *In a Disused Graveyard*, and watched as others were *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, and shivered as the dark woods murmured, *Come In*.

We took *Time Out* for *A Time to Talk*, while sitting on *The Woodpile*, until we heard *The Demiurge's Laugh*, and quickly we went *Out, Out*.

Fearful of an encounter with *The Witch of Coos*, or the other *Two Witches*, And lacking a *Directive*, we soon became lost in *Desert Places*. But, being *Neither Out Far nor In Deep*, and not wishing to become too well *Acquainted With the Night*, *My November Guest* and I proceeded *Up the Mountain* fearful of *The Trial by Existence*.

I soon became tired, and with some *Misgiving*, I cried, *Provide, Provide!* But my cries went only *To The Thawing Wind*. We felt *The Fear*, and *A Need of Being Versed in Country Things* to be able to find our way. But we consoled ourselves by saying there was only *An Empty Threat* in the *October* wind.

Frost then said that we should *Take Something Like a Star* to find the *Vantage Point*. It was with some *Reluctance* that we decided upon the overgrown and weed-choked path, *The Road Not Taken*, with only the whispering *Sound of Trees* to guide us.

After awhile we found ourselves *Bond and Free* in a *Blue Butterfly Day*. Frost just smiled and said that after our sojourn in *An Old Man's Winter Night*, that I should give *The Generations of Men* this message from him:

*"Happiness Makes Up in Height What it Lacks in Length."*





Lightening Strike  
Patricia Granger - Faculty



Taormina Amphitheater  
Angela T. Machado-Staff





Inside the Radio Tower  
Janet G. Polk - Staff



## Do you know...

1. ...the official name of the tower on the campus of Lamar State College-Port Arthur?
2. ...how tall the tower is?
3. ...when was it constructed?
4. ...which community leader was responsible for bringing the tower to Port Arthur and for what reason?
5. ...the name of the company that the tower purchased from? Why was that company important to Port Arthur and the Golden Triangle?
6. ...what the tower was adapted for later?

Not sure of the answers? Why not take a little break from your desk or stop by on your way to classes and read the *Texas Historical Commission* plaque? The plaque was recently refurbished by Dr. Jeff Haven's Historical Club, and not too long ago the tower itself was dismantled and restored to keep from rusting away. Through the efforts of the college the tower will stand yet another 100 years.

Most of these questions can be answered there and "*for the rest of the story,*" you could visit either the Gate's Memorial Library, or the Museum of the Gulf Coast for more information on *who, what, where when and why* of the Port Arthur College Radio Tower.

Janet G. Polk - Staff

# Room for You

*for Kiva*

At twelve you think you're grown,  
old enough to choose the life you had  
    --away from me, towards your big brother,  
your old dance class, your dad.

I use the emptiness like sourdough starter  
to disassemble your wrought-iron bed,  
converting your bedroom to my  
clubhouse, your temple.

Sheepskin rug, grandpa Joe's rocking chair,  
your Japanese umbrella—upside down—  
mutes the hundred watt bulb overhead.  
The built-in bookcase blocked by photographs:

    your face painted like a black spotted dog:  
    your first skate on our cracked sidewalk;  
    you and I digging for starfish in the silent sand.

Vanilla candles, jasmine incense, recorded  
lullabies create more than a shrine  
    as your younger brother, his cat, and I  
    play our favorite game:  
    we roll each other up in the sheepskin

    to form human/feline burritos;  
    the maker then lies on top  
    unwilling to let the other go  
    until the filling cries, "Uncle!"

Yet love seeps through like liquid God  
greasing the hide of the animal,  
boiling the confines of time,  
and melting the boundaries  
of unrecoverable distances.

*Wherever you go, I shall be there with you.*

Mysti Rudd - Faculty

# The Gender Gap

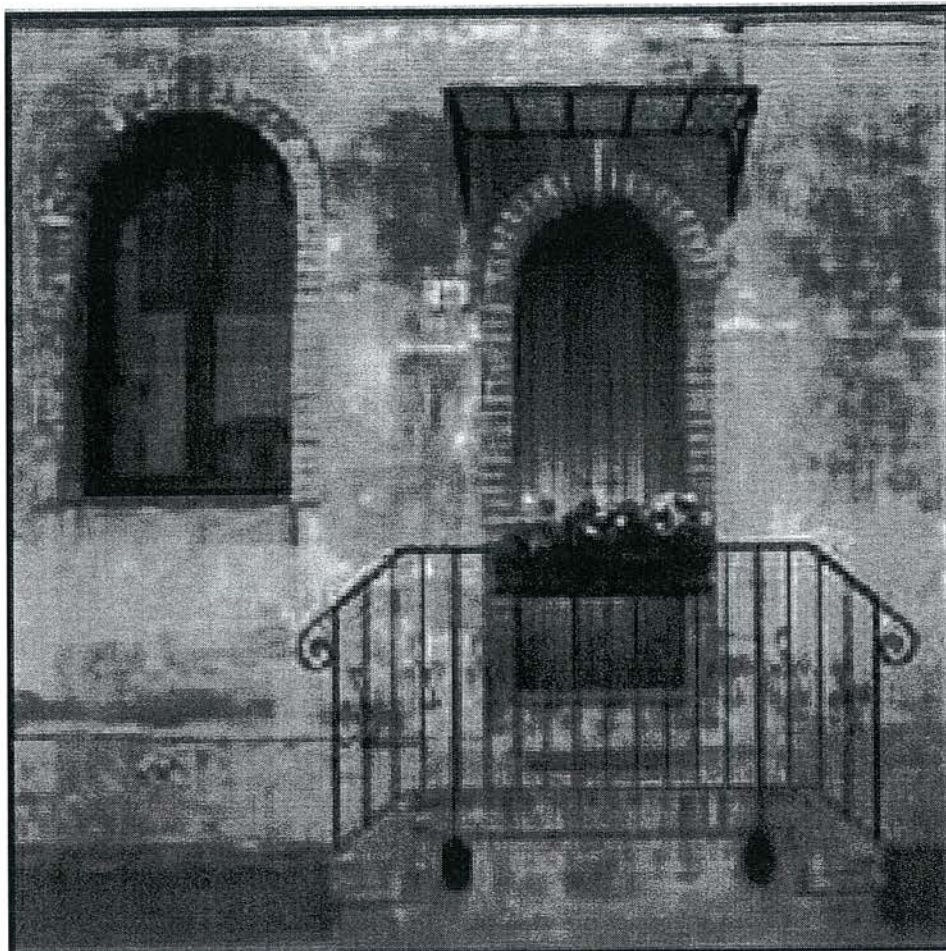
Mysti Rudd - Faculty

Have you ever been  
more afraid of the morning  
than of the darkness the night before?

You come to me.  
But to whom do I turn?  
Even when you smother oil in every crease  
of my cracked soles and heels,  
there's a whole underside of me  
that never gets rubbed—a spot you miss  
like a sigh unheard, a lyric unsung,  
a color crayon lost beneath the cushion;  
Is it a dimension beyond you,  
like sight to the blind  
or time to the tardy  
or femaleness to men?

And what can I do except  
dance it away  
write it out  
sing it down  
pour it slowly  
drain it off  
scream into my shoes  
cry into my wine glass  
unbutton my soul  
and try to show it to you?





Sicilian Portico  
Angela T. Machado-Staff

# Alzheimer Kim

Mysti Rudd - Faculty

I see her everyday,  
2:45 at the gym,  
as she makes her way  
from pool to sauna  
to hot tub and back again,  
wondering where to go,  
forgetting where she's been.

Her turquoise suit hangs loose,  
fibers worn from chlorine pools.  
Her pageboy bangs when wet  
line up obediently like a child  
frightened by her teacher  
even though she is fifty-eight.

Her face displays the fog she lives;  
her body moves in waves  
between what is, what was,  
what might have been.  
When she doesn't know  
what to do, she resorts

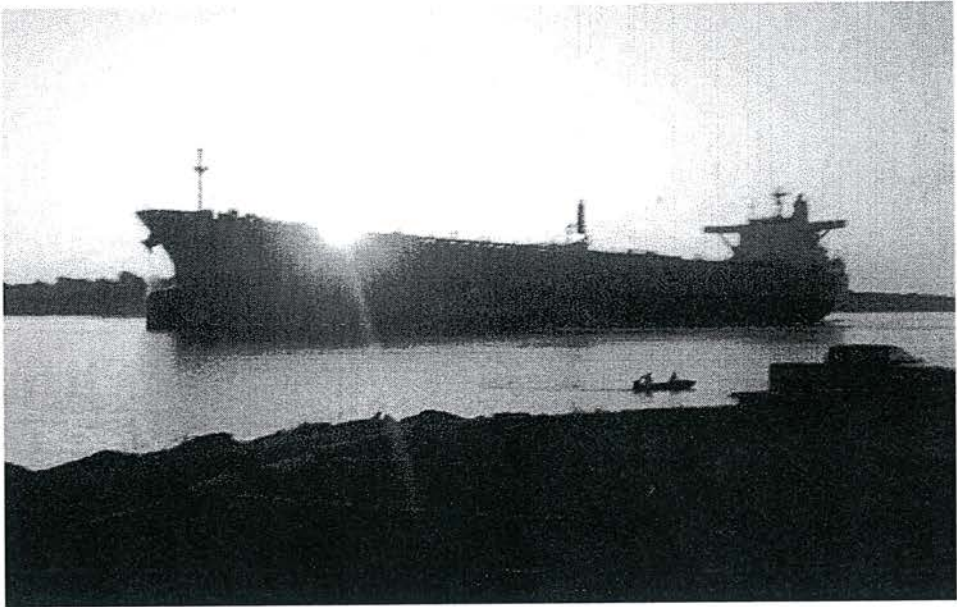
to memorized choreography—  
three shuffles to the right,  
two baby steps to the left—  
she faces the towel, the hook, the key.  
But today it's not the number  
That gives her trouble;  
The key is the wrong color.  
In a dressing room where  
all the locks are purple,  
her key is black.

She undoes and redoes the dance perfectly,  
like a video reversed, then replayed,

as if this ritual will transform the key  
into the one she wants it to be.

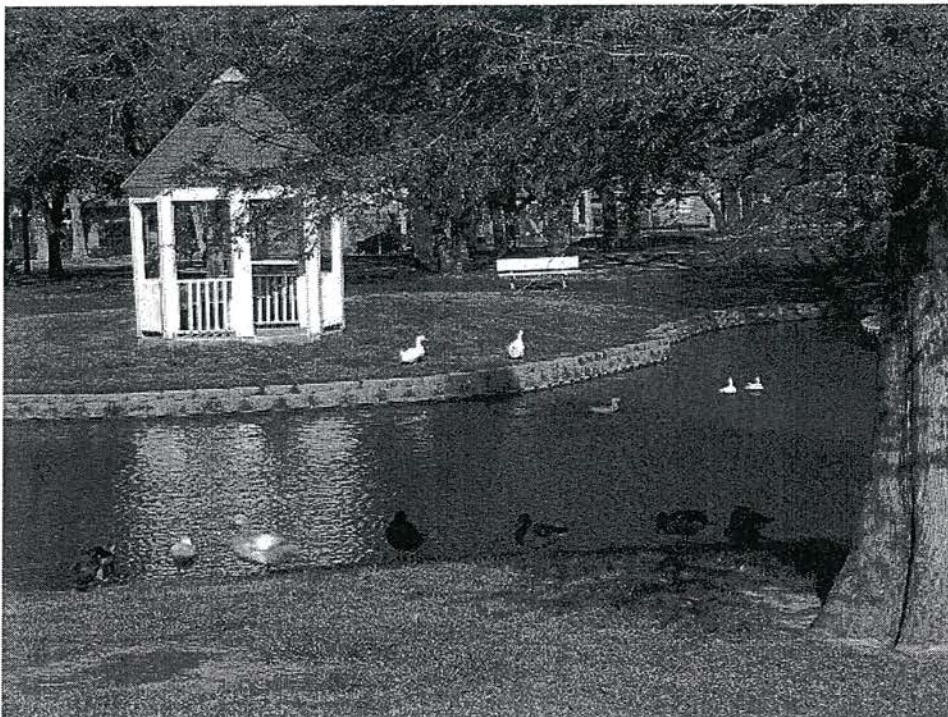
Finally, I intercede.  
Leaving the soundproof steam room,  
I explain to her that she must have reached  
for the wrong key after her swim—  
grabbing a man's key accidentally.

She looks at me as if I am crazy,  
then grasps my towel from my chest,  
exposing her purple key.



The Ship  
Dr. Jeff Haven - Faculty





Dornbos Gazebo  
Angela T. Machado-Staff



The Blimp  
Bobby Summers-Staff



Silhouetted Gull  
Bobby Summers-Staff



# A Reasonably Prudent Nurse

Sandra Taylor, R.N.,MSN,ThD. - Faculty

This poem was originally written when I teaching Math for nurses in the LVN program at the very beginning of my career as a nursing instructor. The first twelve lines were designed to create an atmosphere of relaxation while teaching the steps of ratio and proportion.

As the years passed, new issues in nursing responsibility arose. The poem was then updated to reflect the changes in nursing as well as an advancement in my career as an instructor at the baccalaureate level as well as the associate degree level.

The first twelve lines are the instructions to the procedure of drug and dosage calculation.

First you must identify  
the label side and the dose prescribed

Now change metric apothecary  
to household formulary

**OR**

Change household formulary  
to metric apothecary

Now that you have changed all things that are not alike,  
keep the label side to the left and the dose prescribed to the right

Remember, ratio and proportion is what we must demonstrate  
so, means by extremes is how we calculate

Now divide quickly one, two, three  
and there's the answer as you can clearly see

Because once medication is given it is difficult or impossible to retrieve,  
and because it is preservation of life and health the nurse desires to  
achieve,

You must check the order again, the lab work then reassess  
then ask yourself this question or one similar as such  
Is it logical to give this much?

Every client that is medicated  
must also be evaluated

to determine the response of the treatment given  
or to recalculate the drip rate being delivered  
to document all affects  
of this medication  
as well as the rest

to determine if the drug reacts  
to make a professional decision, in fact  
about whether or not this same drug should ever  
to the same client be given  
or even another one that might resemble  
its chemical character or its derivative

Yes, we hear from the public, of course  
and then again from the payor source  
who tell us to get the clients out of the hospital setting  
and suggest that sending the client home would be financially better

But, please excuse me while I contend  
that overseeing medical economics  
Is still another nursing trend

Safe discharge planning starts the day of admission  
until further recovery comes to fruition.  
With premature discharge the nurse must us another strategy  
Now, for this one we must call discharge management  
to make one last and final request  
to move the client to another level  
like SNIF, rehab or 4<sup>th</sup> floor might be better  
then when all of those days are fully used  
and the insurance or medicare has ultimately refused...

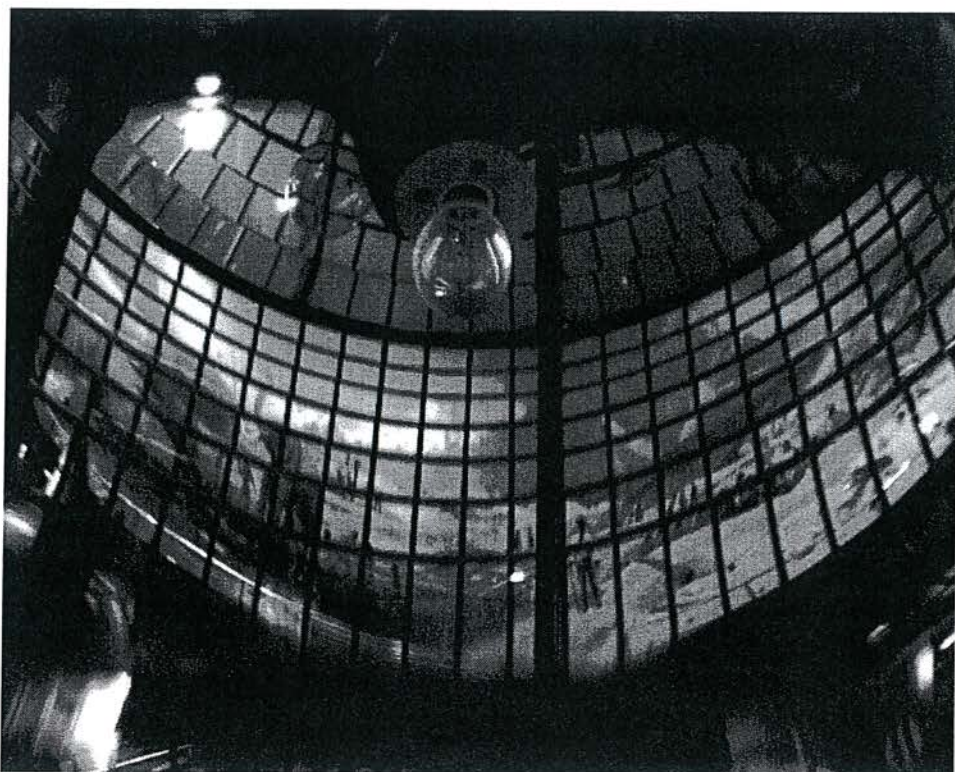
We look at the client who is childless and eighty  
who three weeks ago had been intubated  
His wife, the care-giver is ailing and tired  
She by the way is seventy-five

Why, she just had a stroke last July  
and she still slightly paralyzed!

Medicaid? They have not qualified  
“Not the nursing home” the client adamantly replied  
But we need to continue the nursing process  
Maybe home health can be of some help

Every client will not survive  
Neither can we promise that all will be revived.  
But as we nurses go about our business  
whether its giving meds or just talking to family and visitors.  
We are still very much committed  
to making reasonably prudent and competent decisions.





The View Inside the Lighthouse Beacon  
Museum of the Gulf Coast Mural

Bobby Summers-Staff

# Expressions 2004

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## Statement of Editorial Policy

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

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

Sally Byrd, Editor

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