







*A Member of The Texas State University System*

# Expressions

Spring 2012

Volume XXVI



# Expressions 2012 Student Winners

## *SHORT STORY*

### **First Place**

A Darkness-Beyond-Black ..... Christopher Clinton Hussey

## *ESSAY*

### **First Place**

Prosecuting Minors as Adults is Immoral .....  
Whitney Boeckmann

### **Second Place**

My Words ..... Lily Burleson

### **Third Place**

The Imagination of Perception ..... Kristeen Reynolds

### **Honorable Mention**

Dreaming ..... Katherine Waterbury

### **Honorable Mention**

What I Want My Words To Say ..... Melissa McMillan

## *SPECIAL ESSAY CATEGORY*

*Sponsored by PHI THETA KAPPA*

The Culture of Competition ..... Steven C. Hatfield, I

*POETRY*

**First Place**

Slow Dancing Under the Autumn Moon .....  
Christopher Clinton Hussey

**Second Place**

Her Dance ..... Maya Stevens

**Third Place**

WHITNEY D ..... Whitney Boeckmann

**Honorable Mention**

I Wanna Be ..... Tiffany Schwartzenburg

Love Is..... Ryan Vierkant

I'm in Denial.....Mario Torres

My Friend Bea.....J. D. Crabbs

Life is Short ..... West Jackson

You..Her..Me/Slam Genre .....Jillian Wimberly

*LITERARY CRITIQUE*

**First Place**

To Hell and Back: A Soldier's Tale .....  
Christopher Clinton Hussey

**Second Place**

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sleep?.....  
Philip K. Dick: Visionary and Realist

Steven C. Hatfield, I

**Third Place**

Flannery O'Connor and The Science of Believing .....  
Steven C. Hatfield, I

*COVER ART*

**First Place** ..... Jose A. Martinez

**Second Place** ..... Tyler Cox

**Third Place**..... Jose A. Martinez

**Honorable Mention**..... John Thomas Salinas

**Honorable Mention**..... Martin Sigur

**Honorable Mention**..... André Batiste

**Honorable Mention** ..... Mary Beth O’Neal

**Honorable Mention**..... Jeff Menem

*GENERAL ART*

**First Place** ..... André Batiste

**Second Place** ..... Skylar Webster

**Third Place**..... John Thomas Salinas

**Honorable Mention**..... Martin Segur

**Honorable Mention** ..... Katherine Parker

**Honorable Mention**..... Jeff Menem

*PHOTOGRAPHY*

**First Place** .....Kayci Clark

**Second Place**.....Danielle Treadway

**Third Place** ..... Unknown

**Honorable Mention** .....Kayci Clark

**Honorable Mention** ..... Almin ‘Ronnie’ Thakkar

*DIGITAL ART*

**First Place** ..... Shante Williams

**Second Place**..... Shante Williams

**Third Place** ..... Suzy Garcia



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Ryan Vierkant

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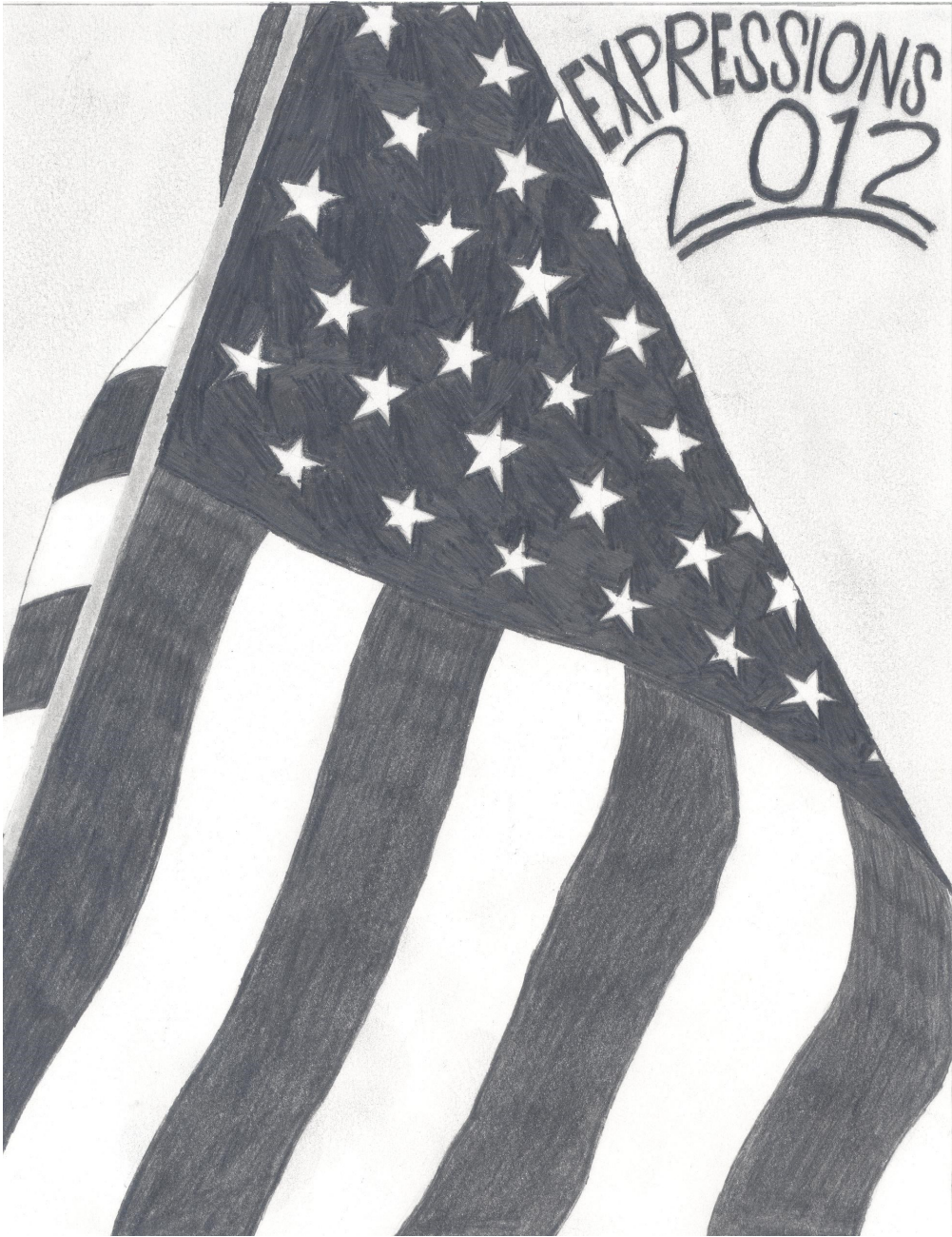
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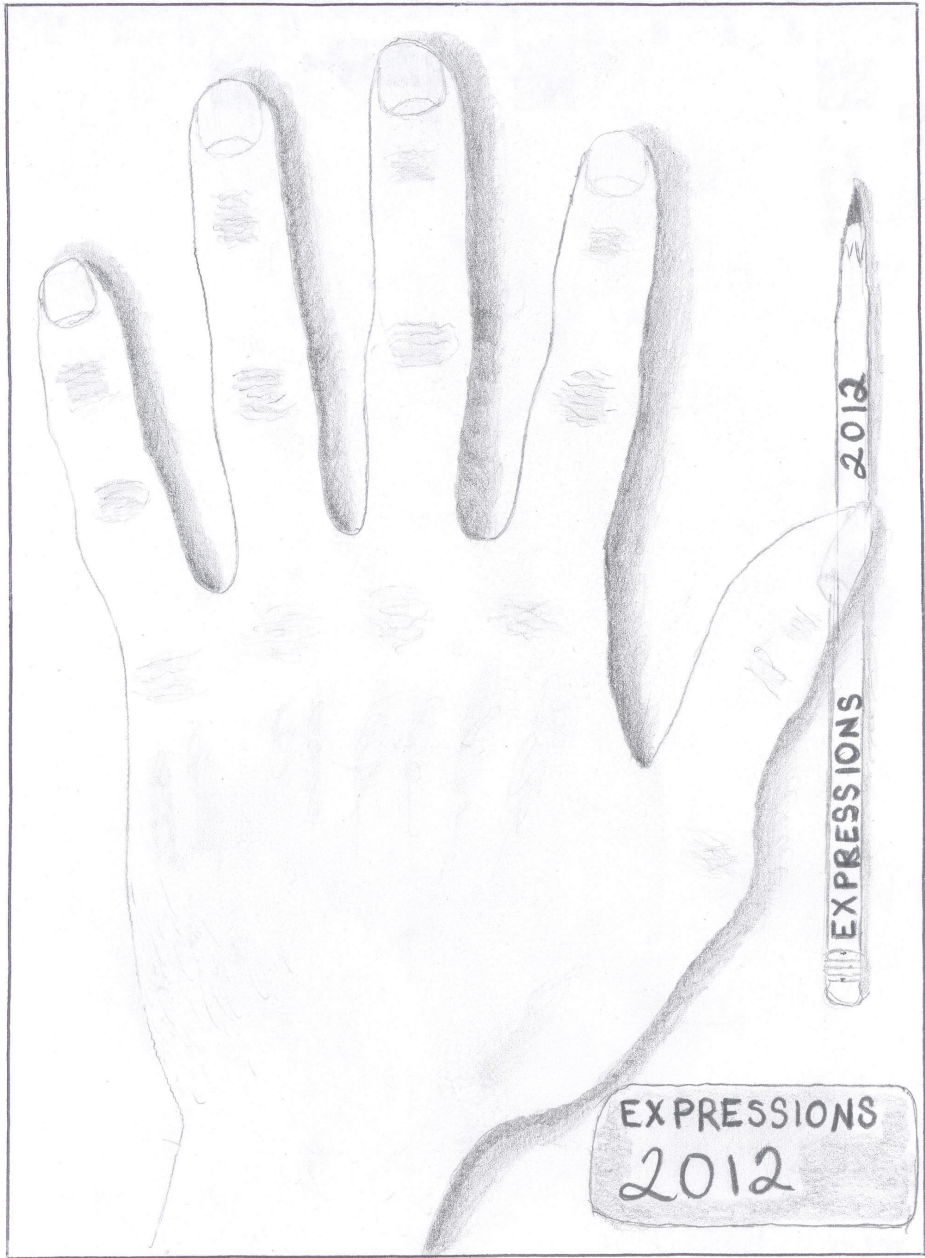
Shante Williams

Jillian Wimberly



*Cover Art-Second Place*

Tyler Cox



*Cover Art-Third Place*

Jose A. Martinez

*Short  
Story*



*General Art-First Place*

André Batiste



# *Short Story-First Place*

Christopher Clinton Hussey

## A Darkness—Beyond—Black

In 2005, when I was twenty-two years old, I became an inmate assigned to the Huntsville unit of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice – Institutional Division. The Huntsville Unit, known widely as “The Walls,” is one of the oldest penitentiaries still in use by the state of Texas. This large, mostly brick, mortar, and steel-built facility is the primary location for the multitude of executions carried out in the past century. “Death row,” is located at the nearby Polunsky Unit, but the condemned are transferred to Huntsville for their eventual execution.

Most “convicts” will tell tragic tales of murder, death, and suicide mixed into the chronicles of this historic institution. Rumors of phantoms, ghosts, and other apparitions are plentiful within Texas penal system “lore,” but nowhere more so than at “The Walls.”

As a general-population inmate, I was not given routine access to the execution-areas, but I still experienced numerous weird, creepy, paranormal-type events inside those prison walls. These strange occurrences seriously changed my conceptions of life, death, and the world-in-between.

I will not pretend to be any form of psychic, clairvoyant, or “ghost whisperer”; in fact, skeptic would probably be a better attribute for me. However, I strongly believe that while incarcerated at the Huntsville Unit, I experienced profound interactions with the spirits of the vengeful-dead.

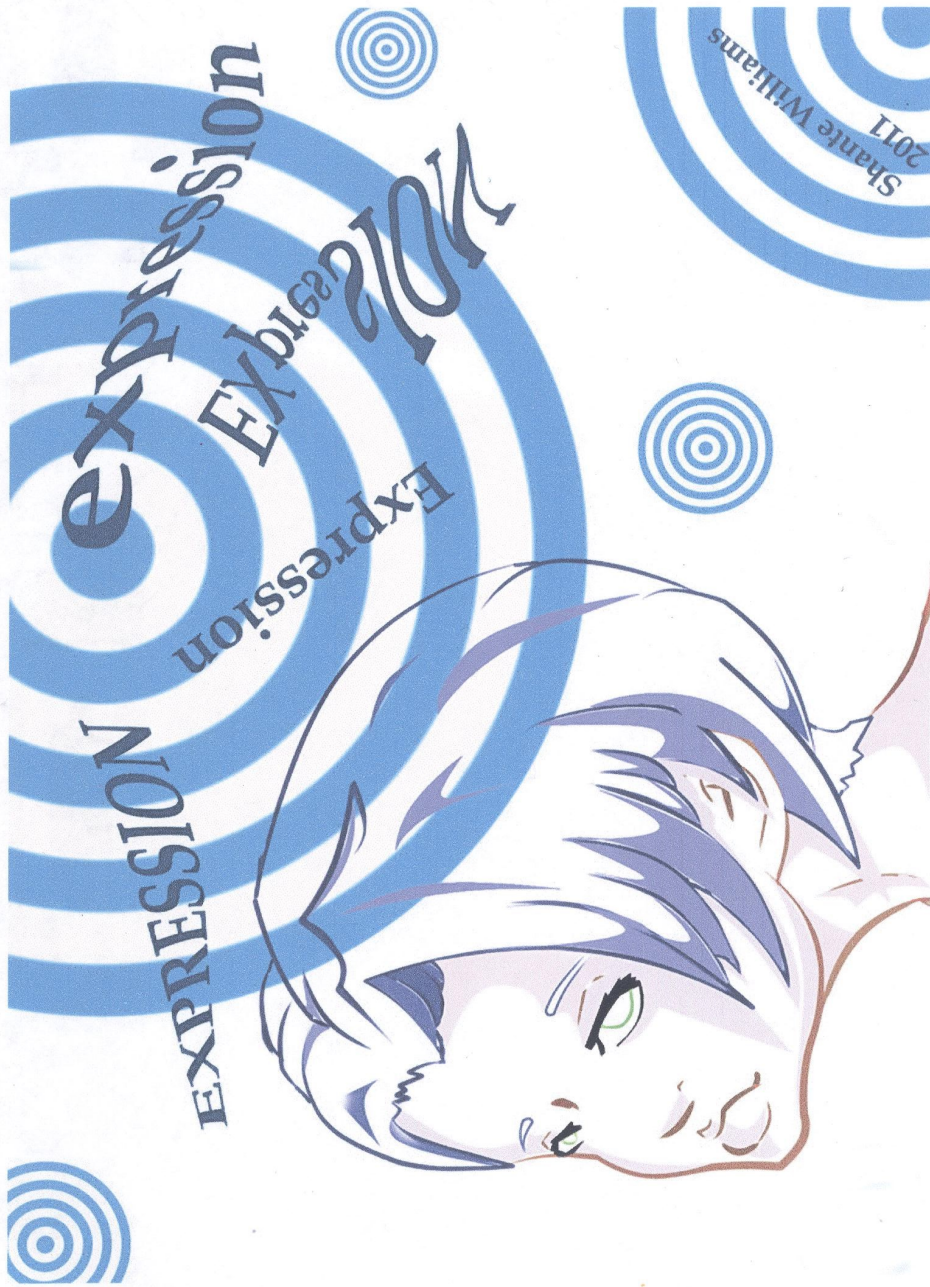
While in my cell, it seemed as though strange murmurs and other faint susurrations would emanate nightly from the vents, cracks, and holes, deep within the stone walls.

Unprovoked feelings of pain, hatred, rage, or profound sadness seemed to come upon me suddenly. These heightened sensations suggested that spirits of the dead drift to and from inside the steel and concrete confines. Actually, strange cold-spots, and other forms of supernatural-phenomenon became somewhat common-place during my time there.

Once, on a cold December night, as I lay sleeping, I awoke to the feeling of some “presence” standing over me. I opened my eyes to a large human “silhouette,” made of what I can only describe as a darkness-beyond-black. As soon as my eyes and mind began to register the shadow, I distinctly saw a man’s features, twisted in rage, and then I felt a pair of ice-cold hands quickly tighten around my throat. I immediately tried to knock my attacker away and get to my feet. At the same instant, as I crouched in a fighting stance, the shadow, and feelings of menace dissipated into the icy-winter night, leaving me panting with confusion, my breath visible on the chilly air.

Was it the raging-spirit of someone long dead, or just a manifestation brought about by my own stressed-out, frustrated mind? I may never know the answer, but I will say for sure-the Huntsville Unit, a harbinger of broken-dreams, hatred, and other despair, might contain enough “pent-up,” negative energy to provide a platform for any type of conceivable emanation.

*Essay*



*Digital Art-First Place*

Shante Williams

# *Essay-First Place*

Whitney Boeckmann

## Prosecuting Minors as Adults is Immoral

A crime is a crime, no matter who commits it. Although if the violator has yet to develop the thought processes of an adult, this demands that the system treat him differently. Age is a factor of consideration in important issues such as marriage, voting, and jobs. So why should it be acceptable to execute harsh forms of punishment upon minors equal to that of a mature individual? Because juveniles are of different mental capacity, they also have different potential to change and merit an attempt at rehabilitation. Therefore, subjecting children to adult punishments is an ineffective deterrent to crime.

Because society does not expect children to be criminals, nor expect crimes to be committed by them, the intersection between childhood and criminality creates an unforeseen dilemma. One must either redefine the offense as something less serious than a crime, or redefine the offender as someone not really a child. Because an adolescent is intellectually, socially, and emotionally under-developed, he cannot be held blameworthy as an adult for a particular crime. Therefore, as a minor, he is truly are 'less than adult.'

Brain development research illustrates the differences between adults and juveniles. The human brain undergoes continuous development until the age of twenty-one. Juveniles find it more difficult to make knowing and intelligent decisions. It is impossible for them to have the same mental abilities as a full grown adult. In addition, youth lack the capacity to perform critical adult functions such as planning, anticipating

consequences, and controlling impulses. Due to the lack of power to understand the results of their actions, and delay their needs, it is considered unfair to treat children in the same way as that of adults.

The guiding belief that juveniles have different competencies leads to the idea that they need to be adjudicated in a separate venue from adults. Many states have recognized that conduct alone should not, by itself, determine whether to invoke the heavy hand of adult criminal justice system. In recent years, there have been widespread changes in policies and practices concerning the treatment of juvenile offenders. Juvenile courts are vital because children cannot be tried in the same manner as adults. A child does not comprehend the gravity of the charges facing him.

An approach that merely advocates locking up juveniles is shortsighted and expensive. Public protection is best ensured when the system is not retributive. Juveniles tried as adults and sentenced to adult facilities are more likely to revert to even more serious crime upon release. Also, most youthful offenders will be physically or sexually assaulted within seventy-two hours of admission into adult correctional facilities. The psychological scars inflicted and endured will lead the offender back to crime. The results of such abuse, carried out over the course of incarceration, can lead to suicide and severe psychological damage. Punishment is a failed strategy for changing behavior, teaching new skills, or developing new and more positive attitudes and beliefs. Most reasonable people agree that a response that precludes a rehabilitative approach may not be a very sensible public policy (Steinberg). Many adolescent experiences have a tremendous cumulative impact. Adolescence is a period of potential malleability. It is an inherently transitional time which developmental trajectories can become firmly established. Even the most violent offender can be rehabilitated with proper treatment. Those in trouble with the law should be taught accountability and provided with the tools he needs to become productive

members of society. The United States Juvenile Justice System is designed to be beneficial to the child's well-being.

Early intervention and prevention programs are cost-effective solutions for reducing the juvenile crime rate. The system must teach adolescents the consequences for violating the law while taking into account their unique physical, psychological, and social features. An ongoing program in Orange County, California, which provides intensive delinquency supervision and such services such as mentoring and tutoring, has reduced repeat offences by fifty percent- at one-third the cost of incarceration.

In Boston, a three prong program of prevention, intervention and enforcement aimed at violent youth offenders has, over five years, reduced the number of youth homicides by eighty percent.

Also, a Florida study suggested that juveniles tried in adult courts were likely to be rearrested more quickly and often more than juveniles who went through the juvenile court system. Youths that were transferred to adult correctional facilities were rearrested within 135 days of release, compared to 227 days for youths processed in juvenile courts.

By this reasoning, the act of punishing a juvenile as an adult is counter-productive. The United States Juvenile Justice System is theoretically designed to recognize the special needs and immature status of young people and emphasize rehabilitation. The study of psychology indicates that there are scientific reasons to warrant the differential treatment of young people and adults within the legal system. When the wholesale transfer of juvenile offenders to adult criminal court become the rule, rather than the exception, this represents a fundamental challenge to the very premise that the juvenile justice court was founded upon- that adolescents and adults are different.

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# *Essay-Second Place*

Lily Burleson

## My Words

As children, we were taught that there was good in the world, and then there was evil. It was black and white. There was no in between gray area. We learned that if we were bad, we received a punishment. Punishment as kids meant being sent to time-out. We had to sit in the corner and watch all the other "good" children continue to play to their hearts' content. Whether it was ten, fifteen, or twenty minutes, at the end of our time, we were released to go back and play with our friends. Second chances were given by our parents as easily as candy on Halloween night. As adults, we are not so lucky. There are no second chances. Punishment now means months, years, or even a lifetime in a time-out that we call prison. If one is bad enough and unlucky enough to live in a state that still allows capital punishment though, that time-out could mean receiving the most absolute sentence of all: death. I want my words to lead others to explore the idea that even after we condemn these "evil" people, maybe even behind those steel bars, they still have so much to contribute to life.

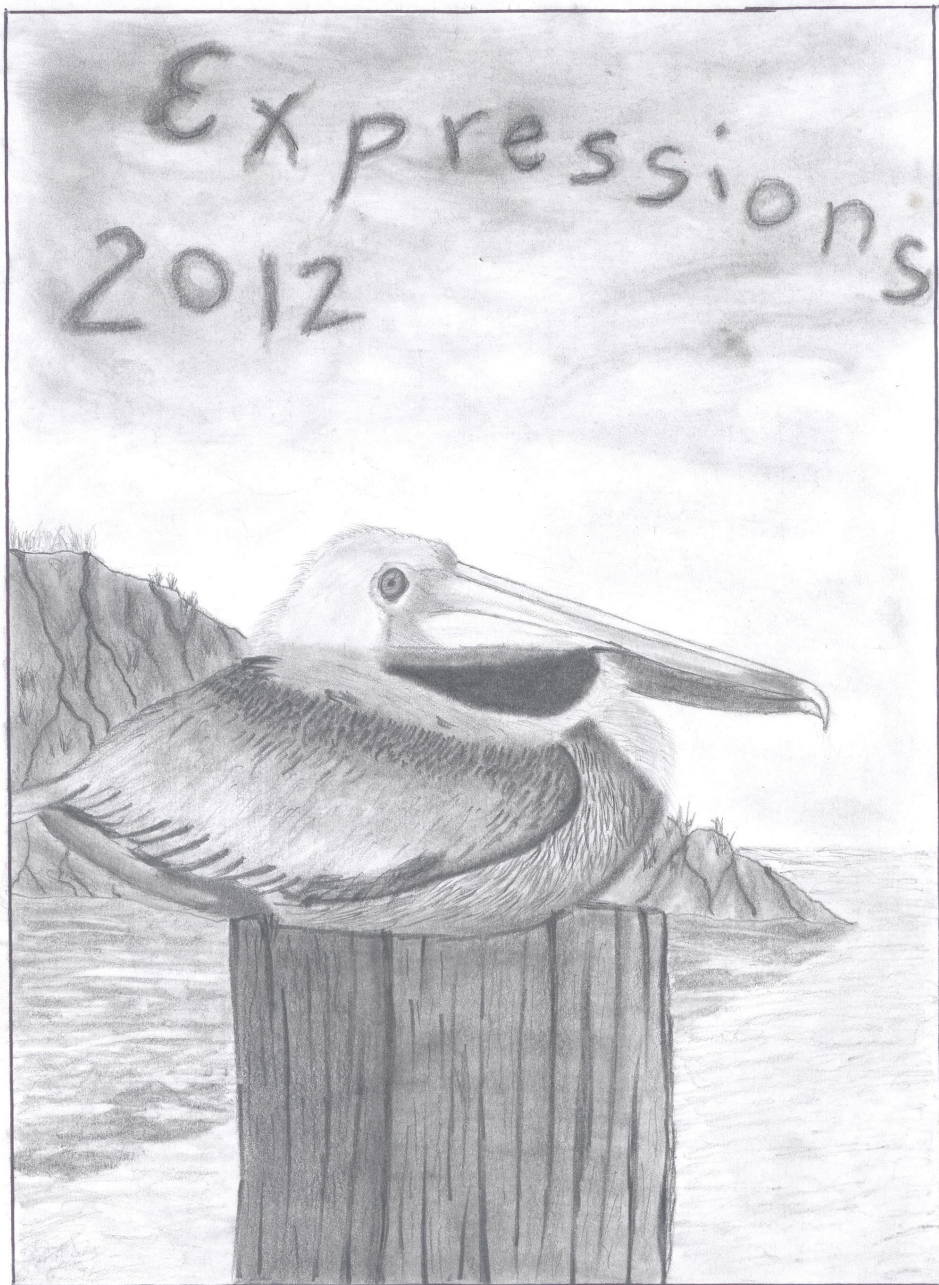
I used not to give much mind to the thought of Death Row. To me, it was a place that housed the men who had committed the most heinous of crimes. I envisioned serial killers and master-mind murderers like Timothy McVeigh. Sitting at work one day, the topic of Death Row came up between another employee and I, and he informed me that the list of offenders and their offenses was accessible on the internet. I was beyond surprised. I had no idea a database like this existed. As I looked over each face and the story attached, I came to the realization that this was something I knew nothing about. Yes, some of these men had committed

very horrible, unspeakable crimes, but they weren't the old, evil faces I had expected. Some of them were young, barely out of their teens. One in particular caught my eye. His name was Damon. He was young, only eighteen when he arrived on Death Row, African American, and reminded me of the majority of the guys I had attended high school with. His profile said he had killed a man while trying to steal his car, and had been on "The Row" six years already. He was society's definition of evil.

I could not get Damon out of my mind over the next few days. His young, sad, familiar face kept finding its way back in to my thoughts. I looked for more information about him and found a letter he had written and posted on the internet for the world to see. It was a plea for a pen-pal, anyone to write him and help fill his long days. After almost a week, I finally decided I had to write him. There was a reason I could not remove him from my mind and I had to find out why. My hesitance in that first letter was obvious. I'd had pen-pals before, mostly older relatives, but never in a million years did I think I would be writing a letter to a man in prison, let alone one on Death Row. I told him who I was and what had led me to write him, and hoped he would write back. After over a week, I found a response in my mail box from him. His excitement from receiving my letter radiated from every word on that page. From there, a friendship was formed. I wrote him every chance I had and he did the same. I learned about him, his past, his family, and his future aspirations. Yes, even though this man knew death was imminent, he was still dreaming about the future. He became an inspiration to me, and I wrote to him like I was writing in a diary. I put every frustration, dream, and daily thought into those letters. No matter how hard I thought my day had been, how much I wanted to give up, here were these words giving me advice and telling me to keep my head up. Letters from a man who spends twenty-three hours a day in a tiny cell and knows his death will one day be celebrated by the family of the man whose life he took. If he still was able to see the bright

side of life, who was I to be so negative? He taught me a lot about life and how to stay positive when it seemed like this crazy life had got the best of me.

I had written that first letter hoping I could offer help to someone who seemed to be doing far worse than me, but it turned out that I was the one needing help. I think we all could learn something from this man who has had years to sit and think about his evil deeds and the consequences his actions have rendered. He sits and ponders how, if he hadn't made the choices he did, his life could be so much different. He faces every day the sober reality that there are no second chances in life. He will eventually know the exact time and day his life will end, yet he still offers words of hope to anyone who cares enough to listen. I hope my words encourage others to think outside the box and contemplate that maybe there is a gray area in between the definition of good and evil.



*Cover Art-Honorable Mention*

John Thomas Salinas

# *Essay-Third Place*

Kristeen Reynolds

## The Imagination of Perception

A quote often applied to life is, “Don’t judge a book by its cover.” Figuratively, it means that we should not judge someone based on his or her appearance. Growing up, I have watched this sentiment proved factual several times. There is often much more to people than what meets the eye. For individuals who choose to wear a “mask,” it may take years for their true self to be revealed. It is a proven study that people judge someone based on his or her appearance within six seconds of making their acquaintance. I feel so strongly against this notion because I am often perceived wrongly. In today’s society, image is everything. I have been judged based on my attire, skin color, and even my hometown.

Just as the author in “Black Men and Public Space,” I was scarcely noticeable against a backdrop of gang warfare, street knifings, and murders. I grew up one of the good [girls]...(2).” I stayed in school and off the streets. The “Westside” of Port Arthur, Texas, is often perceived as rugged, ghetto terrain. It has graffiti and the appearance of several gangs’ presence. There have also been several deaths at a nightclub on this side of town. Individuals who reside in this area of the city tend wrongly to cast aspersions on the other city dwellers. I live near Nederland in a secluded residential area. People react to me as stuck up because I do not live in the projects nor do I act like a thug.

I attend a predominately African American high school. There is also a fairly strong Hispanic and Asian population. These different races often clash over minute things. I play soccer with over forty Hispanics and one black person. Because I chose to play the “Mexican” sport, my peers have

criticized me for not acting “black.” because I go to school early, then leave late, I am seen as a teacher’s pet. I am constantly judged merely by my normal behavior. People react this way because it is human nature to judge others. It is very seldom in life that people lack an opinion.

As an African American, I have unfortunately experienced numerous cases of racist acts in my short eighteen years. I work as a referee at the Gulf Coast Soccer Fields which border Port Arthur and Port Neches. There are very few black people who participate in soccer. The infinite numbers of Caucasians I encounter on Saturdays has led to interesting reactions. One day when I was running to get to my field in fear of being tardy, I took a shortcut through the sidelines of another game. I will never forget her face as she “set it on neutral, and with [her] purse straps strung across [her] chest bandolier-style, [she sat there] bracing [herself] against being tacked” (2). I often think back and wonder why she found me threatening, since I was at least six feet away from her. I then hurtfully recall that being black was enough by itself for her to feel scared.

Time as evolved and there are less racial discriminations than there were back in the 60s and 70s. However, people have still found ways to discriminate against one another. I remember walking into a store in Groves once looking for a birthday present to buy for my mother. The lady followed me with her eyes everywhere I went throughout the establishment. There was a black girl working behind the counter, so I surmised that her sudden interest in me was not racially driven. When I opened my mouth to speak to her, her entire demeanor changed. She had assumed that since I had on baggy clothes, I was an illiterate thug. She had reacted to me wrongly because of her previous experiences. She let the size of my clothes determine her opinion of me.

My image and behavior have produced intriguing reactions in a business setting. Because I look like I am twelve, but speak as if I am twenty, I have amazed some people. I have also been ignored and treated

like a child, even though I legally am a adult. I am constantly amazed at how people react to me daily. Some are hurtful; others hilarious. When faced with those unpleasant reactions, I like to tell myself I am a remarkable individual, and not everyone knows how to handle me. My mother always tells me, “[we] never know who is watching [us]” I try to keep this in mind and conduct an image that I would be proud to have displayed.



*Photography-First Place*  
Kayci Clark



# *Essay-Honorable Mention*

Katherine Waterbury

## Dreaming

When I graduated from high school, the world was to be mine. I had a degree from one of the best schools in the area, a college prep school at that. I had received my acceptance letters and scholarship offers Thanksgiving break the year before. I had letters of recommendation from every teacher with whom I had ever taken an English course. I was on my way. Then, in a weird twist of fate, I went stupid. Looking back, I truly feel, that somewhere, my brain must have fallen out of my head, landed on the sidewalk and was then trampled on by a heard of angry elephants starved for peanuts. I turned down all of my scholarships, declined invitations to attend school, moved out of my parent's house; I was ready to take on the world and needed no help in doing so. Oddly, every member of my family was irritated with me. That is, of course, with the exception of my uncle, Jim. Jim has been my support system as far back as I can remember.

Growing up, Jim was the cool one. He was only thirteen years older than I was. I can remember staying the night at my grandmother's house and Jim taking my brother and me to see whatever new kid movie was playing at the theaters. During the summer, he would swoop in to save us from a dreaded day at the day care. We would go to places that I remember thinking were so grown up and glamorous. Coffee shops where I had lattes, concerts on campus at Lamar, hanging out at his apartment watching movies and eating popcorn -- it was little kid heaven. The progression of the years brought another level to his utter coolness. For example, on my twenty-first birthday, he flew home to take me out, insisting that I needed his expert advice as a former bartender in order to

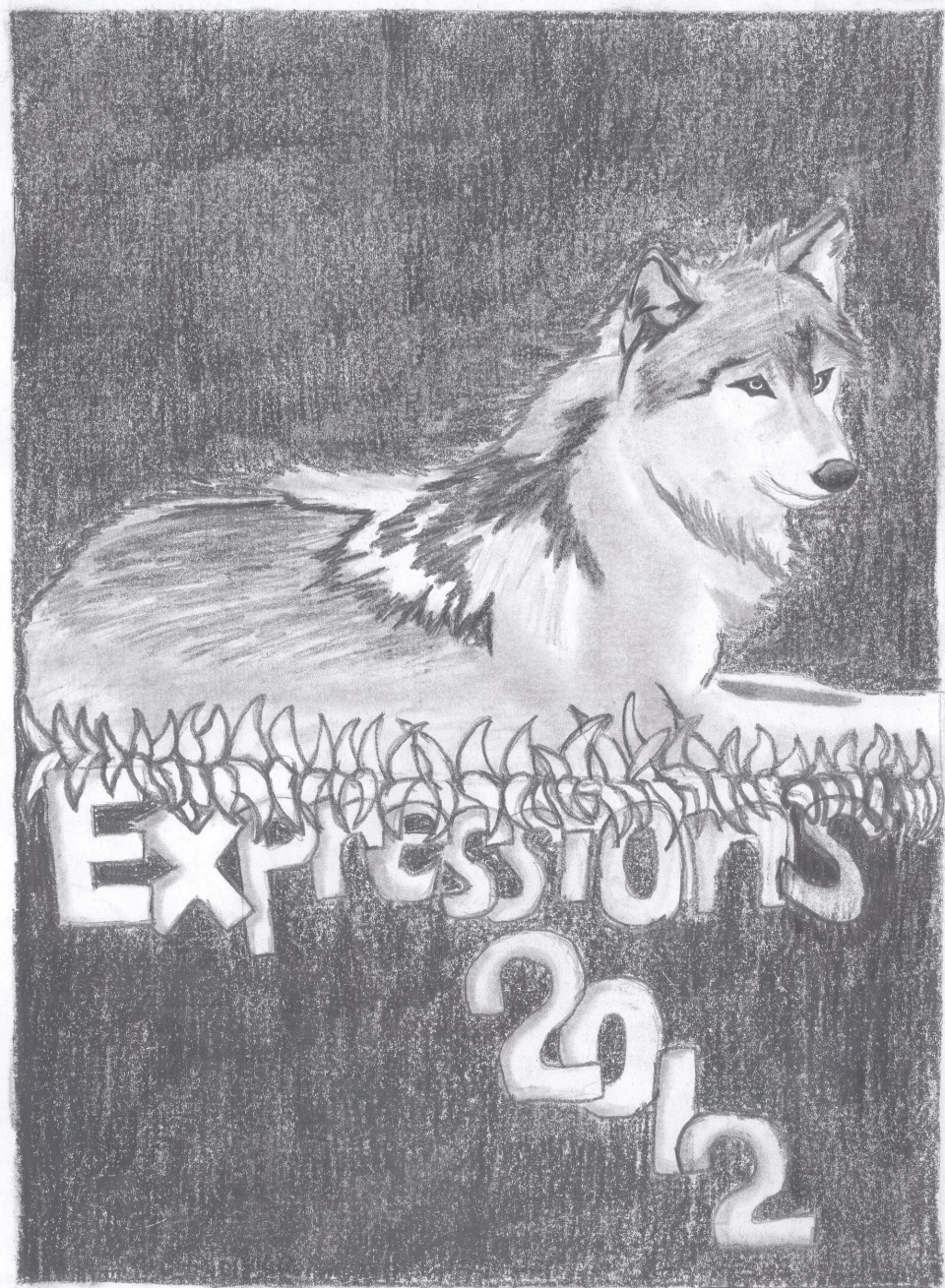
know exactly what to partake in. I must say, pineapple juice and Malibu rum are great for a beginner.

As I transitioned into adulthood, Jim became the one that I could depend on, no matter the situation. Jim graduated from Lamar University and moved away to work at Microsoft. When I decided to marry my ex-husband, Jim was right there, expediting details in a fashion one would normally see from the Maid of Honor. As I sat at the salon getting my hair done, we suddenly realized that the flowers the stylist picked would clash horribly with my dress. In typical saving- the- day fashion, Jim rushed out and returned twenty minutes later with the perfect combination of colors. When my son, Isaac, was born, I remember asking Jim if I could put him on hold because I was being told by the nurse to push. As it became apparent that divorce was imminent to my survival, Jim's phone bill skyrocketed, and he went to work often sleep deprived from our late night conversations. I cannot recall a time when he was ever more than a phone call away.

Two months ago, I asked Jim if I could borrow nine hundred dollars. Never in my life had I ever asked this man for any monetary sum. It was unthinkable, something that I would never do. Two days earlier, however, I had gone into work managing a pediatric speech clinic and walked out that evening unemployed, leaving a note on the door stating that the clinic was permanently closed. After discussing it with my husband, returning to college seemed like the only logical choice. We visited Lamar the next day, and I was devastated. I could not bring myself to take the amount of money out of savings that it would take to cover tuition and books. I was up the whole night weighing options, making pros and cons lists, smoking cigarette after cigarette, defeated. At some point, I fell asleep. When I woke up, I knew instantly I had one shot, one glimmer of hope. I made the call. I was prepared to read him my pros and cons list, fax him a copy of the budget I had written out showing a repayment schedule, and sign a

contract stating that I would maintain an A average. I was prepared as well to show no disappointment, shed no tears, and take it like a big girl if the answer was no. The phone rang once, then twice, then his voice on the other end. Before I knew what I was doing I blurted out, "Jim I want to go back to college but I only have half the tuition. I need nine hundred dollars!" I heard nothing; my outburst was met with silence. It was deafening, I couldn't believe that I had done this. I had asked the one constant in my life for money. It was selfish and unfair of me to do so. Suddenly, all I wanted was to take it back, and then it happened. "Katherine, there is no college in the world that you can go full time for a semester for nine hundred dollars. I'm sending a check for twenty-five hundred. Let me know if you need more for books. So how are the kiddos?"

In my lifetime, I have learned that people, family included, come and go without rhyme or reason. Being judgmental is not something that only a stranger can bestow upon me. My uncle is the exception to the rule. Never once has he looked at me with disappointment in his eye. He has never told me that there was a goal that was unattainable to me. He has never let me down or steered me in the wrong direction. He has been my constant, always there, always encouraging, always willing to listen. He is the reason that I still have this dream of a Master's degree.



*Cover Art-Honorable Mention*

Martin Sigur

# *Essay-Honorable Mention*

Melissa McMillan

## What I Want My Words to Say

Growing up in a strong, trusting, loving family has its advantages. A child receives many gifts from having a stable home that sometimes go unnoticed until he reaches adulthood. People seek out the American dream of someday meeting the right man, getting married and have a big house atop a hill with a white picket fence. Later, children are added to that dream, and parents fantasize about the happiness that they will bring to our daily lives. Everyone has some idea of how life is supposed to work out for him. But when life does not work out to one's expectations, does he give up or does he hold his head high and move forward? What I want my words to say to anyone is keep going, no matter what life hands you, hold your head high, take it all in, and never give up.

My entire childhood was perfect. I had a nice home, a mother and father who loved me as much as they loved each other, nice clothes, several close friends, and a faithful dog that greeted me at the door each day after school. I could not ask for much more than I already had while I was growing up. But I did have dreams, big ones. I dreamed of marrying and having children, obtaining an education and making tons of money. I dreamed of how my children's lives would someday be. I dreamed of how my life would soon take on different roles I became and aunt, a mother-in-law, and finally a grandmother. All of my dreams were dependant on my making them happen. All I had to do was live the American Dream, and everything would fall into place, just as it was supposed to.

I married my high school sweetheart, and one year later my first child, a daughter I named Lauren. Life seemed to be going just as I had dreamed it

would. I had a great job, a strong family much like I had as a child, and a wonderful daughter. Lauren added so much joy to our lives. I was such a proud mother and as I watched her grow from an infant into a toddler I dreamed even bigger dreams for her. I could see her going to college, starting a great career, and, lastly, meeting the man of her dreams. I envisioned her dad walking her down the aisle and giving her away, and I could even hear the pitter patter of little feet as she grew into a mother herself. Life seemed perfect, I was content, and life was going along as I had planned.

It was a cold January morning when life decided to take all of the dreams I had for my daughter away. It was like someone hit me right in the face and then walked away, leaving me there to feel the sting of reality. A car accident left Lauren unable to move, eat, or even breathe on her own. For a long time, she could not even speak words to describe how she was feeling. As I sat by her bedside in the day following the accident, I felt as my heart had been ripped out of my chest and all of my dreams for her had been stolen. I sat there and cried thinking about how my dreams for might never come true and how unfair life suddenly seemed. How could life seem so perfect one minute and a split-second later so horrible? This was not part of the plan or the vision I had for her life. She was supposed to a wife, mother and even a grandmother. As I sat there in that cold, dark hospital room, I felt helpless; I prayed every minute that she would get up out of that hospital bed so we could go home and resume our normal life. As the days turned into weeks, and the weeks into months, she didn't get up, she just lay there. I felt as if I was in a horrible nightmare and that soon I would wake up and everything would be perfect again. Just when I thought I could not take anymore, a doctor came to visit me. He told me that I must forget the past and live for today. He explained that life as we once knew it was over and that we would have to learn to live a new life, a different one. That even though it wasn't going to be anything like we

were used to living, that we would adapt and we could try and make the best out of it. I sat there a long time after he left and tried to picture this different life he was talking about. I asked myself several questions that I knew I couldn't answer. It was that moment in time that I stood up, held my head high and vowed to support Lauren in every possible way. I accepted the unknown and was very thankful to God for sparing her life and allowing us to move forward.

It has been almost ten years since that life-changing event occurred. We have since made new dreams and adapted to our new way of living. There have been moments that we will never forget and some that we wish we could. We have had several opportunities opened up to us that would probably never have been possible before. We have made friendships with people all over the world and heard stories that make our tragedy seem small. We are very blessed to have each other and to be able to share life's experience together. Sometimes we make our own plans and we dream our own dreams. We fall into all of the traditions of what we think the American Dream should be. What I want my words to say to others is keep going, no matter what life hands out. Each of us must hold our heads high, take it all in, and never give up.



*Photography-Third Place*

Unknown



*Special Essay  
Category*

SPONSORED BY  
PHI THETA KAPPA



*Photography-Second Place*  
Danielle Treadway

# *Special Essay Category*

## The Culture of Competition Steven C. Hatfield I

Our lives have become an entire series of contests. From the moment we wake up until we fall asleep, from prekindergarten until retirement, we are busy trying to outperform others. At work or home, at school or play, competition is the common denominator of American life. And although there are societies that function without any competition at all, social psychologist Elliot Aronson (1976) says that “we manifest a staggering obsession with victory.” Others have said, “Competition is almost our state religion,” and that it is “an American cultural addiction” (Strick, 1978; Wachtel, 1983). Our economic system is predicated on competition and our schools often train us not to just triumph over others, but to consider them obstacles to our success. Even families have rivalries with unspoken struggles for approval causing love to become a land of trophy. So the question is not “Do we live in a culture of competition?” rather, “How did we let it get to this point?”

Now, this is not to say that competition, in and of itself, is bad. Indeed, it is often good. It promotes improvement in ourselves and society. It can avert the kind of complacency that once spawned t-shirts saying, “I’m #1! Why try harder?” and its reciprocal, “I’m #3! Why try at all?”

But let’s take a look at where this has gone in our society. Reality TV is designed for betrayal and criticism in front of a notion. A writer’s strike exposed just how of it is actually scripted but the whole genre is designed for people to use any means necessary to win including lies and physical relationships. “Real Housewives” has resulted in a suicide and the shows now have to vet out those with criminal records. The title “Survivor” plays

plays on the myth that we are controlled by animal instincts and an innate survival-of-the-fittest nature. So apparently doing it on television for money is just our nature as well. And, of course, let us not forget a grown woman throwing a tantrum and insulting a kid who won a singing contest instead of her.

If we think our youth are not watching these shows –and learning from them – we are deluding ourselves. Youth sports that are supposed to teach kids teamwork and sportsmanship have denigrated into a dog-eat-dog world causing them to compete on the same level as professionals. This is manifest in several ways. An example is, injuries and performance-enhancing drugs. In November 2011, there was a news report on the dramatic increase in the number of children as young as ten receiving the same sports injuries as college and professional athletes including concussions and torn ACL's among others. (ABC News). Sociologists and child psychologists are concerned that so many kids are being put into sports as young as five and never having time just to play.

Our high school athletes are still taking steroids to the degree that, according to a Houston news station, coaches at Sterling High School were caught illegally giving their players notice of tests for steroids and other drugs (KTRH Radio). The fact that they have to be tested is very telling. The coaches' helping them avoid testing positive proves the depth of the problem.

Several years ago the news was buzzing about two fathers who got into a fight at their sons' hockey practice over a disagreement about a coach's decision. The children (and adults) watched until the fight ended with the death of one of the fathers. AND THIS WAS PRACTICE! It is any wonder that as professional athletes have begun getting into fights with fans and coaches that more and more college and high school contests erupt into bench-clearing brawls complete with students "cleating" each other? Those fans are beating and killing other fans outside of the

stadiums?

“Play” doing something just for its own intrinsic value – just for the fun of it, is a rare thing among adults in our society. It is becoming increasingly rare among the youth as well. And more telling of just how the competitive actions of adults in America are affecting our youth, consider an experiment with seven-to nine-year-olds. It found that 78 percent of Anglo-American children “took the other child’s toy away for no other reason than to prevent the other child from having it” (Kagan and Madsen) Mexican children, whose socialization was less competitive, did so only half as often.

Things are no better on the academic front. The scandal that was exposed in a major metropolitan school system (Atlanta, Georgia), again shows the depth of the problem. A system – wide conspiracy of cheating on standardized tests that included students, teachers, supervisors, staff, and presumably some professional) to compete for Federal dollars Aronson writes:

For two centuries our educational system has been based on competitiveness. ...[I]t is likely that you will sit there hoping and praying that the one called on will come up with the wrong Answer so that you will have a chance to show the teacher how smart you are... Indeed, [children’s] peers are their enemies – to be beaten (1976).

And to support this we see that not only do many parents fill out applications for the best daycare/pre-k facilities resembling college applications complete with testing, NPR reported that children as young as twelve are now involved in SAT training courses (NPR News). And none of this addresses the social implications of competition in regards to “designer babies.”

There is an even seedier side to the way we teach competitiveness to our kids. All of the “talent” contests that our young girls are entered into

compete with suggestive walks, poses, gestures, dances, and clothing at ages as young as six and seven. Few will forget how the reality of this was revealed when Jon Benet Ramsey was murdered and the pictures of her in the contests were made public. Everyone was outraged, but not outraged enough apparently. Not long ago we all saw the pictures of another girl about her age after her mother subjected her to Botox® injections. Again, for the contests. Of course, all of this came with new reports of twelve-year-olds having plastic surgery on their noses and breast augmentations just for looks, but not the contests or due to medical problems or disfigurement.

When these things are part of the social norms with which we are raised, it is easy to induce that they shape our psychological state as adults. We are competitive because we are taught to be as are most of those around us. It never occurs to us not to be competitive precisely because success in our culture demands that we be.

All of the stress on our individualism and achieving material success that marks our society also generates intense pressure to cut corners. It causes motives that impel many to participate in duplicity that they would otherwise resist. “The more widespread they judge these practices to be, the stronger will be the pressure to join, even compete, in deviousness,” which our current reality shows demonstrate (Bok, 1979).

Our values and beliefs shape our society and its institutions and vice versa. Escaping the trap that comes with being in a competitive society – the more we compete, the more we need to compete – means finding better ways of building our self-esteem than beating others to prove our own worth. Comparing ourselves to others is not the only way to measure progress and success. The notion of my success and security needs to be replaced with our success and security. An individual may lose out in some respects by refusing to take part in what has become a mutually destructive struggle, but a group of people in a school, office, or anyplace

can join forces. By helping others to see the consequences of a system that predicates one person's success on another's failure, we can act together to change that system, then that society, and then maybe the world.

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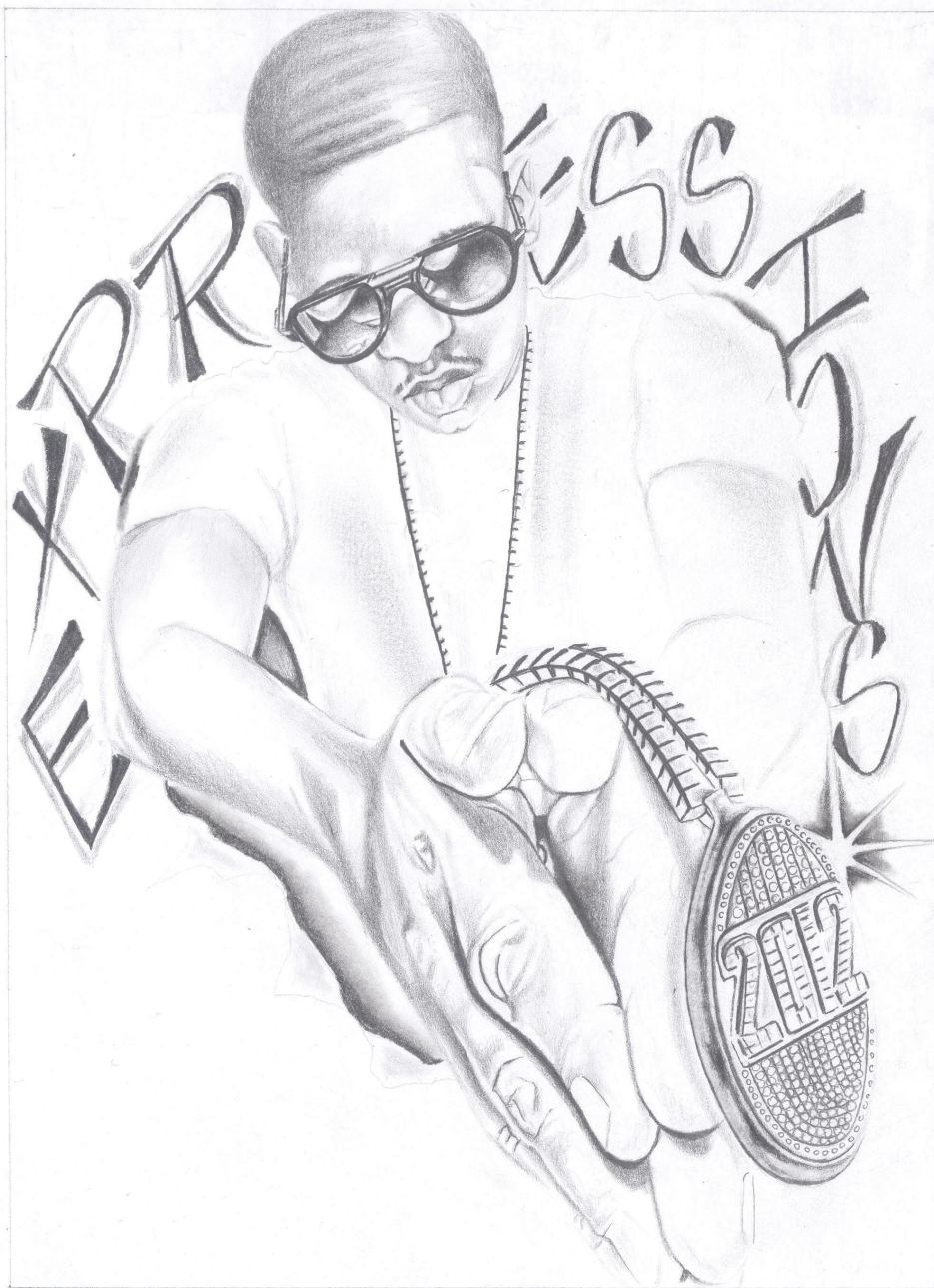
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*General Art-Second Place*  
Skylar Webster



# *Poetry*




*Cover Art-Honorable Mention*

André Batiste

## *Poetry-First Place*

Slow Dancing Under the Autumn Moon

Christopher Clinton Hussey



Leaves blow  
Through the rushing bars  
To tangle in a dying bouquet

At the witching hour  
She comes  
Twilight shining in her hair

I feel her treading lightly  
With love's lament  
Underneath the autumn moon

To hear her sorrow  
Through eternity's black embrace  
A silent scream unheard

Please one more dance  
Just one last dance  
Softly and slowly  
Under this autumn moon



## *Poetry-Second Place*

Her Dance  
Maya Stevens

The way she moves is beauty to the eyes  
When she leaps, she makes people cry.  
The music she hears bring joy to her ears.  
I love the way she moves  
Her kicks are high as the sky  
Her moves are like a heart beat  
I see the passion that she has for this  
This she does very well  
I fall in love every time I see her dance.  
She is me and I am her.  
I love the music and I love the sound  
My dance tells a story  
My life is in my dance  
And this is what I love.



# Poetry-Third Place

**WHITNEY D**

Whitney Boeckmann

**W**

Wimpy when forced to receive shots. I despise injections, blood drawing, and needles.  
Whimsical dreamer of the future, indulging in the promises of tomorrow with forceful desires.  
Wisdom beyond the age of 18, maturity from childhood.

**H**

Honorable in actions, I embrace a true value of character, conducting myself respectfully.  
Hungry for southern Cajun food, lover of Tex-Joy, seafood gumbo, and crawfish.  
Honest eyes reflecting true emotions, I can never hide or lie. Truth is strewn across my face.

**I**

Intelligent with personal standards of excellence. I strive to achieve success.  
Inherited genetics, propensity to addiction  
Inspiring attitude, a strong belief in redemption. I'm not the person I once was.

**T**

Thoughtful, attempting to understand human behavior  
Talented, displaying adept pieces of writing, I love language.  
Tedious, chromatically arranged closed and drawers.

**N**

Nascent perspective, a desire to constantly learn and grow, and evolving mentality.  
Nautical passions, technique, skill, and knowledge; that fish is mine!  
Notable accomplishments-I graduated high school a year ahead of my class.

**E**

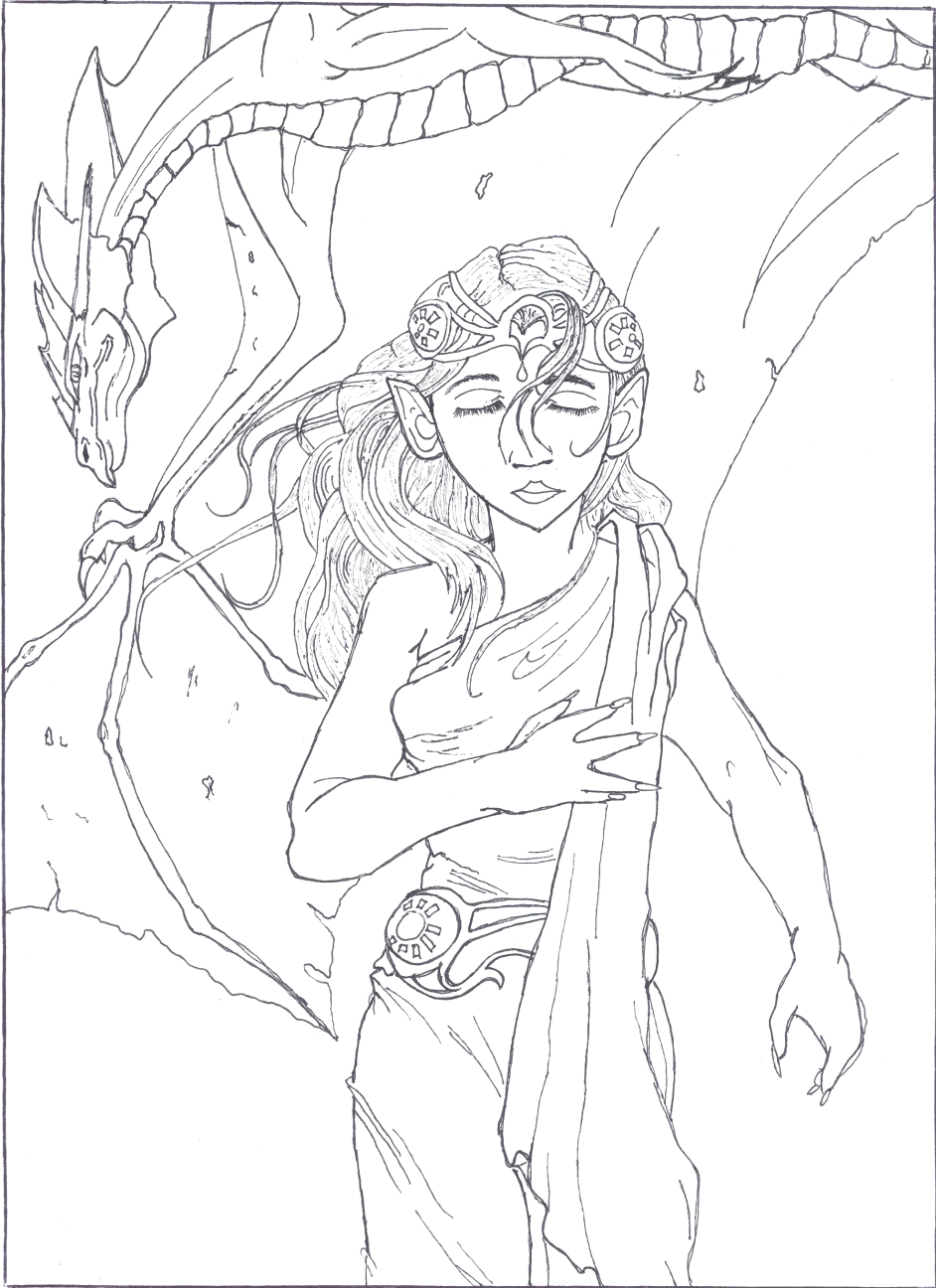
Eager to obtain the treasures of the "real world."  
Effective communicator, choosing words precisely  
Enthrancing currents of love, blessed to have found unending affection

**Y**

Youthful appearance, a fit, yet calorie-devouring body. Chocolate and Redbull are #1.  
Yearly resolutions, intended for a renewed life, eventually once in for all, eliminating cigarettes.  
Yielding to the things I cannot control, I accept my position in life.

**D**

Determined to achieve success and happiness  
Diligent when it comes to academic studying  
Dedicated to Joshua Wade, my life-long love



*General Art-Third Place*

John Thomas Salinas



# Poetry-Honorable Mention

I Wanna' be.....  
Tiffany Schwartzenburg

Age 3-What do you want to be when you grow up?

-Mommy, I wanna be a PRINCESS!

Everyone giggles.

Age 6- What do you want to be when you grow up?

-Mommy, I wanna be the PRESIDENT of the United States!!

That's awesome honey...

Age 10- What do you want to be when you grow up?

-Mommy, I wanna be a professional athlete.

That would be pretty amazing!

I've always been told I can be anything I wanna be!

Age 12- What you do want to be when you grow up?

-Mommy, I wanna be a DOCTOR.

The next day a LAWYER, next month a VET.

Age 16- What do you want to be when you grow up?

Oh crap...I'm growing up, what do I say??

-Mom, I don't know what I want to be...

Blink your eyes, HELLOOOO GRADUATIONN! The question changes...

Age 18-What are you going to major in?

-Hell if I know...

One person says, "you would be GREAT at PHYSICAL THERAPIST, lots of money there."

Another, "Oh, hey, my best friend's sister's aunt does SPEECH THERAPY, it sounds interesting. They make good money."

Again, "you should be a doctor!" "a nurse!" They make good money...

Age 19- What are you going to major in?

-I haven't quite decided, I have two years of basics then I will HAVE to decide.

"You should do something that will make you a lottttt of money"...

I really think I want to be a TEACHER! J

"A TEACHER! Have you lost your mind?"

Excuse me?

"They don't make any money?"

And...

“Why would you want to do something like that?”

Why not?

“You need to do something that will make you money”

I’m sorry my life doesn’t revolve around money.

I would rather not sit behind a desk all day in an office like you do!

I’m sorry I want to help other people.

I’m sorry I want to influence other people’s lives, and not be  
cooped up in an office.

I’m sorry you just wouldn’t be capable of doing what I want to do  
with my life.

If you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say anything at all.

Age 19-What are you majoring in?

Education.

I can be ANYTHING I want to be, remember?

I WANT to be a TEACHER!

## *Poetry-Honorable Mention*

Love Is  
Ryan Vierkant

Love is not physical – the body is.

Love is not spiritual – the soul is.

Love is not blind – vision is.

Love is not bound – we are

Love is a power  
more powerful than life.

Love is a time  
more timeless than always.

Love is transcendent  
of all that is tangible.

Love is not defined alone.  
But when defined by two – love is.



*Cover Art-Honorable Mention*

Mary Beth O'Neal

# Poetry-Honorable Mention

I'm in Denial

Mario Torres

Indeed

I am

Isolated-fire-water-steel

Impelled-imbedded-injected

Imperceptible decay-Impotent abstinence

Impetus unrestrained

Isolated-fire-water-steel

Immediate disease-Innocence interred

Imbued reputation-Impalpable reality

Illusive character-Insatiable desire

Imminent death-Immature spirit

Inconsiderate-Irredeemable

Irrepressible-Ineluctable-Inalterable

Impenitent-Irrational-Insecure

Indignant-Immanent-Indeed I am

In

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*Photography-Honorable Mention*

Kayci Clark

# Poetry-Honorable Mention

## Her Eyes

Whitney Boeckmann

Scratched and faded,  
Her eyes resemble an antique mirror.  
Rusted from an endless dosing of chaos,  
The child-like purity is no longer there.  
If inspected for long, her eyes will never confess to it all.

Glazed and cold,  
Her pupils have a dull, shiny stare.  
Instead of white innocence,  
Her eyes reflect a soft, intimidating pink.  
If inspected for long, her eyes will deny it all.

Destroyed by the devil of addiction  
Penetrated by adult substances and lies  
Tortured by a constant quest for identity

Strange enough,  
The eyes are her most beautiful feature  
Wide with wisdom and sharp with strength,  
They tell mouth-dropping stories.  
If inspected for long, her eyes will confess to it all.  
They speak of joyful memories  
They share powerful secrets.  
If inspected for long, her eyes confess to it all.





# Poetry-Honorable Mention

## My Friend Bea

J. D. Crabbs

I met her about fifteen months ago,  
On a cold day in December.  
We were introduced by a mutual friend.  
What a wonderful day to remember.

There were others in that big room,  
Meeting for the very first time.  
As I gazed into Bea's soft dark eyes,  
I knew out love would be so fine.

And from that day in a city far away,  
She has been my faithful loving companion.  
Our love has grown by leaps and bounds,  
Enough to fill the beautiful Grand Canyon.

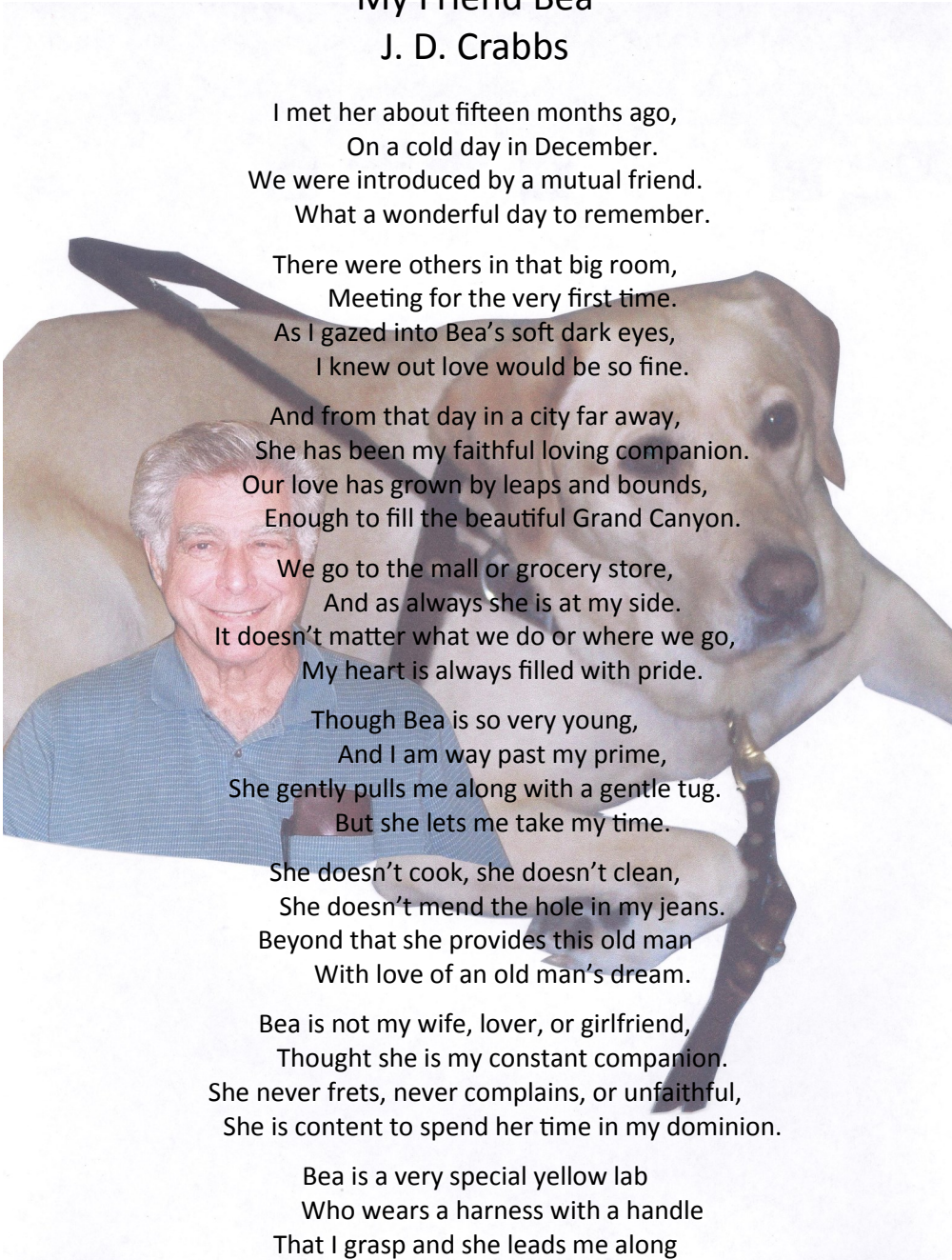
We go to the mall or grocery store,  
And as always she is at my side.  
It doesn't matter what we do or where we go,  
My heart is always filled with pride.

Though Bea is so very young,  
And I am way past my prime,  
She gently pulls me along with a gentle tug.  
But she lets me take my time.

She doesn't cook, she doesn't clean,  
She doesn't mend the hole in my jeans.  
Beyond that she provides this old man  
With love of an old man's dream.

Bea is not my wife, lover, or girlfriend,  
Thought she is my constant companion.  
She never frets, never complains, or unfaithful,  
She is content to spend her time in my dominion.

Bea is a very special yellow lab  
Who wears a harness with a handle  
That I grasp and she leads me along  
Because I can barely see the light of a candle.





# Poetry-Honorable Mention

Life is Short  
West Jackson

I stood beside  
the river,  
its water deep  
and wide,  
and thought of  
how my  
life,  
like this water,  
is passing  
by.

I know it is  
for me  
to make this world  
more just.

I know the smile of  
others can affect the  
rest of  
us.



# Poetry-Honorable Mention

You...Her...Me  
Slam Genre  
Jillian Wimberly

The way you loved me, the way you held me, the way you talked to me and the way you looked at me. It was as if I could feel every emotion swimming through the depths of your soul.

Your love was like a warming embrace. Sympathetic, compassionate, understanding. For a moment I felt as if I was the only girl who was in existence because no one else in the room mattered.

Until she caught your eye, I was betrayed with trust, lies, secrecy and more. I trusted that you'd be faithful; I trusted that you'd be honest; And, I trusted that you wouldn't sneak around behind my back.

The least you could have done was let me go. Let me go so that I could have moved on, but instead, you became the enemy I never wish I had acknowledged.

I should have left when I had the opportunity. As I became empathetic, I fell into your trap as you mislead me with your compassion.

I forgave you, I took you back, I loved you and I trusted you. I believed that you were sorry and wouldn't do me wrong. I wanted nothing more than to believe your words.

As I forgave you, you were behind my back the way you were before. As I took you back and loved you, you were fake and pretended to love me back.

As I believed that you were sorry, I'm forever so sorry that my misjudgment, self doubt and empathy lead me in the wrong direction.

Oh how your game plays on and on. The game you thought you'd never lose to. I have the controller now so, it's your turn to sit back and watch me beat you at your own game.

The girl you've been sleeping with. Yeah, she text me and we've been hanging out. Little do you know I'm the one she's leaving you for.

I told her the truth. Your lies, your secrets and your deceitfulness. You've played us both and it's time that we play you.

Your girlfriend. Yeah, she played me too. Lies, fraudulence and mendacious stories. What's a girl like me to do when it comes down to loving you.

As she continued to connive in her actions, she had not a clue as to everything I knew. In fact, karma plays too.

For months and months I let this game play on because I knew I'd have my turn. Your love wants me back.

My long lost love, oh, I have waited for you. With time trust grew stronger, lust turned into love and heartache became joy. Moments with you were better than I ever knew.

How she knew everything about me and you. I became the worst enemy she ever knew. As she felt anguish and distress, I took you away from her.

Guilt and neglect. I felt no empathy for the girl who took you away from me. You and I will always be.

Because karma plays fair, ignominy and self pity is where you now stand. You've learned a valuable lesson.

*Literary  
Critique*



*General Art-Honorable Mention*

Martin Segur



# *Literary Critique-First Place*

Christopher Clinton Hussey

## To Hell and Back: A Soldier's Tale

My father inherited, from my maternal-grandfather- a longtime City of Plano Judge, an actual, nickel-plated, Polish, semi-automatic 9mm pistol. Embossed upon the crimson-carved handles is the Nazi-swastika. This gun is an authentic, captured, souvenir of World War II, and was given to my Grandfather by the United States' most highly-decorated WWII veteran, U.S. Army 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Audie Murphy.

I have seen this gun numerous times growing up, knowing it was given to my Grampa by some famous, Hollywood-"golden era" film cowboy, one of his buddies from the bygone "wild-west," Dallas-lawman days. Unfortunately, I never before understood who the real Audie Murphy really was. Recently though, after coming across a small magazine-article, I became curious about the man, and read his autobiographical WWII memoir, To Hell and Back. This book is the most explicit and brutally-realistic depiction of the general-chaos, which is the mechanized-warfare. Still required reading in some institutions, this book, first published in 1949, which subsequently became the classic war-film starring Andie Murphy, as himself, and featuring a young Steve McQueen, is a harrowing account of battle, and a testament to courage, resilience, and incredible luck.

Audie Leon Murphy was born on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, 1924 – one of 9 children to a poverty-stricken family, on a farm near Kingston, (North) Texas. He was a young, "baby-faced," adventure-seeking, eighteen-year-old "buck-private," when he entered the service in the United States Army, at the beginning of WWII. During the war he received 24 U.S. combat-medals throughout his distinguished tour of duty, serving with the 3<sup>rd</sup>

Infantry Division, beginning in North Africa.

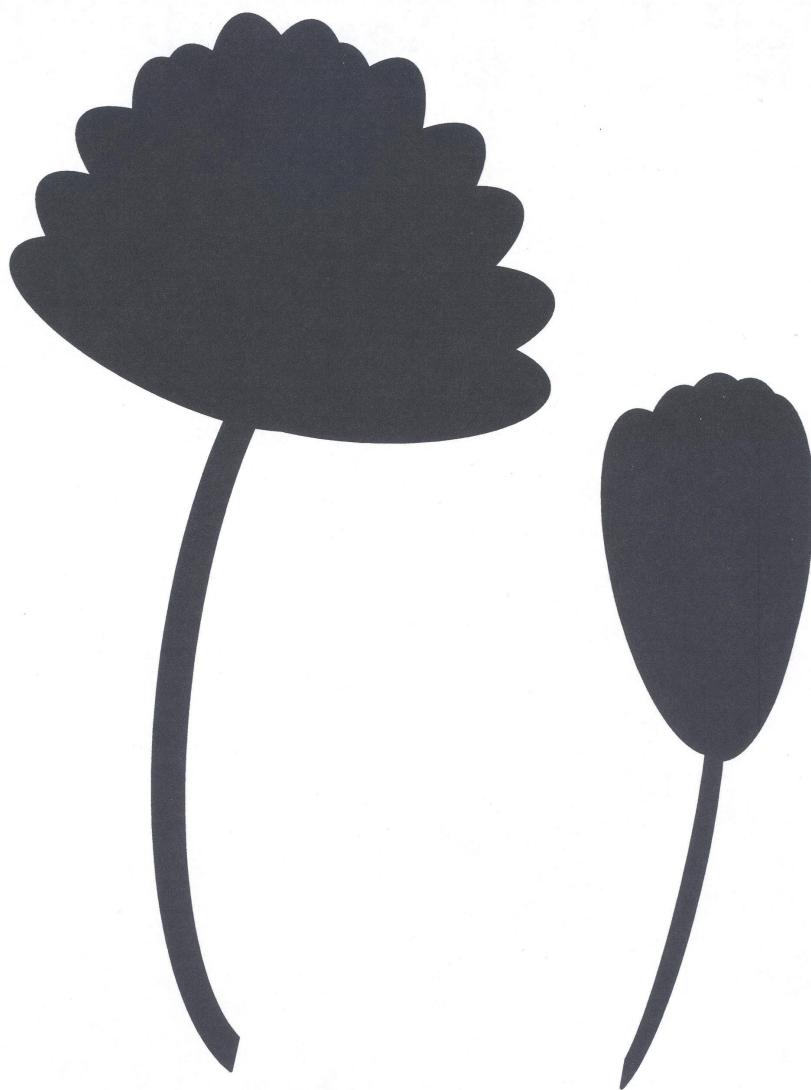
His heroics, chronicled in To Hell and Back, go beyond mere bravery. During close-fighting in North Africa, Sicily, and the hard-push into Nazi-occupied Germany itself, he is credited with having killed, captured, or wounded 240 enemy combatants. He received this nation's highest military- accolade, the Congressional Medal of Honor, for climbing on top of a destroyed, burning tank-destroyer vehicle during an ordered retreat from attacking German forces, and simultaneously using the vehicle-mounted machine gun to shoot down 50 attackers while calling in an artillery strike in and around his defensive position. This selfless action saved the lives of countless Allied soldiers. It has been said before that an ordinary man is involved in action, yet the hero acts. Lt. Murphy's exploits in To Hell and Back show the true measure of a hero. World-famous television journalist, Tom Brokaw, an expert of WWII history, has written that he cannot recall another story "that involved so much up close and personal fighting." Being shot twice, hit almost directly with a 170 mm cannon shell, and contracting malaria three times could not stop Audie Murphy, who was called the "most lethal one-man weapon the Army had on the ground against the Fascist forces, "from marching, bayonet-first, through the "gates of Hell," and victory in the European Theatre of Operations.

Lt. Murphy was also a very talented writer, and this memoir shows the real-life sensitive man behind "the legend." Often cold, hungry, and extremely battle-weary, he wrote of the horrors of a war which claimed some 57 million casualties, and became the largest, most expensive, and widely-destructive human endeavor in history. Viewing first-hand the deaths of numerous civilians, friends, and fellow soldiers, while fighting the lingering effects of "shell-shock," he nevertheless pushed onward, never complaining, and never stopping. In times of utter devastation, he would turn his mind as he said "to faraway things: the meadows at home

with the wind in the grass; a forgotten moment of laughter; or a girl's face," but still get the mission-accomplished. The book exemplifies a man whose faith was placed in not only the "American-dream," but also the infantryman's "frontline religion: God and the Garand (Standard-issue M-1 rifle)," which held so firmly that he was able to survive to become a Hollywood movie-star, and skillfully-draft this classic volume.

Far from being some kind of unemotional "super-soldier," Audie wondered sometimes if the blood and ruin he experienced had somehow stripped him of "decency (normalcy) and belief." Yet he knew, as long as the fight continued and he could march on he would believe," believe in the power of artillery, the accuracy of a Garand... in hitting before he got hit, and that dead men do not look noble." More importantly, he was a stoic model of solid-perseverance, never faltering in the presence of danger or defeat.

The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, claimed that "we make war that we may live in peace; "this resounds wholly within To Hell and Back. Lt. Murphy and the rest of "the Greatest Generation's" combat veterans knew the danger of the fascist uprising, sacrificing their lives in defiance of tyranny – to secure world-peace. I am grateful to finally understand my grandfather's friend and in doing so to understand the kind of values and belief both men stood for. To Hell and Back is the greatest written chronicle of modern-combat. Americans must never forget the sacrifice of soldiers, of men, like "silver screen," or more so, real-life war-hero Audie Murphy. Though he was killed in a plane-crash in 1971 at age forty-six, his astounding life will forever be memorialized in print and on film, through this story.



*Digital Art-Third Place*

Suzy Garcia

# *Literary Critique-Second Place*

Steven Hatfield, I

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

Philip K. Dick: Visionary and Realist

Philip Dick's writings were largely ignored by the critics of mainstream America. However, since his untimely death in 1982 at the age of 53, the growth of interest in his writings has been extraordinary and they are now part of the curricula for modern American literature as well as an illuminating presence in world culture with his works being translated into the major languages of Europe and Asia.

And the interest did not stop there. In 1982, when his novel, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, became the basis for Ridley Scott's movie, Blade Runner, his writings took another transformation that led to eight major films based on his works including, Screamers, Total Recall, and Minority Report, at a rate of one every three years since his death; a rate surpassed only by Stephen King. And if one has the advantage of never having seen the movie, as this reader did, it is apparent that Dick wove all of the elements of the story together so seamlessly that the only way to show his skill is to examine them separately.

## Humans v Androids

The mass extinction caused by World War Terminus not only reshaped the natural world, but it redefined the relationship between humans and animals. The reason is guilt. The phrase "You don't know what you got until it's gone" is an apt analogy. Mass extinctions have happened before, but we caused this one. Notice, too, that most of the pets – real or robotic – were not traditional pets i.e. cats and dogs. They were livestock and wildlife and still being used as status symbols. In this case it is being

justified by the fact since so many are extinct, or nearly so, we are preserving the memory of them as if in a museum.

In juxtaposing this with the difference between humans and androids, Dick exposes a bit of the duplicity in human: robotic pets are acceptable: robotic people are not even though we made both. Life – Created or Evolved – is not the same as life that is built. Androids are part human, part machine, but fully neither. It kind of makes one feel sorry of them. The taboo of messing around with life on this level has been shown in stories like Frankenstein (trying to recreate it) and Godzilla (destroying the environment).

The introduction of the Voigt-Kampff Mind Test into the story truly brought morality to the forefront. It shows empathy as the defining human quality precisely because of the difference between it and sympathy. Sympathy is an emotion – androids have them – but emotions experienced because of being around others with them are not the same as emotions shared and felt simultaneously. Empathy means, “I know that because I have felt it internally and externally; that has happened to me. “This difference was (wrongly) used as the justification for “retiring” the androids.

This is also where we see the first clues that the androids are actually the ones in charge. Not only do we learn that “Buster Friendly and His Friendly Friends” are androids, but we see that the Rosen Association was trying to make the test itself obsolete by throwing off the results before the testing began. And, a question that I asked early on: why would humans keep going to so much trouble to convince other humans to “emigrate or disintegrate” (from the radiation) on a network run by androids? At some point they would have said, “Hey, you had your chance. Bye.” (One of Dick’s skill’s, leaving some things for us to figure out) Besides, it made absolutely no sense for the Rosen Association to keep building androids if humans did not want them. The only logical

explanation is that the androids can tolerate the radiation and want the planet for themselves, but only because we refuse to share it with them. Another clue is that no one seems to know war was started leaving the possibility that the androids did; they can tolerate the radiation.

Whatever our intentions when they were made, the androids were being treated as property. They were an exploited people, had become aware of it, and just wanted to be left alone. They were accomplishing this to the degree that they had an Underground Railroad – complete with human accomplices, a television network, and a bogus bounty hunter organization set up to save themselves and root out the real ones. The odds are good that the whole emigration to Mars thing was a ruse too (another clue).

One could argue that we did too good of a job in making them. Dick uses this to illustrate a concern of his that has indeed come true in our world: we often create technology without understanding (or having concern about) how it will be used by and its effects on others in the future. In the world of the novel, we knew that exploiting people was wrong so we built people to exploit. Humans did not change what they do, just how they do it.

### Religion and Empathy

The presence of Buster and Mercerism in the future of the novel shows some very consistent things about human nature, Belief, and the bigger picture.

Buster is nothing more than a type of state-sponsored tele-evangelism; a type of mind control designed to keep our thoughts away from anything truly human and the living world itself. Much as television – type of virtual world – and other technologies are used today though usually without the malicious intent.

Mercerism and the Empathy Box are the antithesis to Buster. It has all

the underpinnings of faith, hope and love – things very near and dear to humanity – with its “don’t-give-up, fight-the-good-fight, we-will-win-in-the-end” beliefs that exist across so many cultures and religions in some form.

In using this Dick shows that the “big picture” – the teleocosmic drama – is part of who and what we are. It is a peculiar thing about humanity that we only seem to be able to exist with some kind of belief (or hope) that we will continue to exist either as a species or a Being (Evolution or Creation). We have no trouble believing that there was a point in time that we did not exist but we refuse to believe that at some point we will not have evolved into a higher form of life or reached some kind of Nexus or other dimension.

With so much of life in the world of the novel either dead or dying, the Empathy Box is a two-fold thing: it is a way to stay connected with both hope and our humanity. The purpose of keeping humans connected in an empathetic way is very much linked to robotic pets because they, like the Empathy box, are a substitute for the real thing. We have empathy for the animals we destroyed because in destroying them, we destroyed part of ourselves.

#### Plot Twists

Dick uses the Empathy Box to bring in one of three plot twists. There was an enormous connection between Rick’s experience on the hill and what everyone experienced in the Empathy Box. Not just the journey with others, not just the unseen force throwing rocks giving real injuries, this experience happened in the real world. This completely disproved Buster’s allegations that Mercerism was a fraud.

Phil Resch was the perfect plot twist because he blurred all the boundaries and changed the rules, This was tough on Rick because even if Phil was an android (Rick’s terse response left this a bit of a question), he did not know it and, therefore, could not be held to the same standard of law. His innocence of who he was made him innocent of what he was.



Rick then had no choice but to question who he was as a person and a professional. His entire world changed because in admitting their possible innocence, he had to admit his possible guilt in “retiring” them. Rachael Rosen revealed that androids have all of the same character (of lack thereof), motivation to succeed, and identity (or duplicity) as humans including senseless killing as a form of revenge. But Pris, the equivalent of Rachel’s (good) twin sister, and the Baty’s brought in some other all too human qualities. Again, all of the lines were blurred because humans and androids were helping each other survive and neither wanted any part of the fight.

### Technology

This aspect of the novel is fairly straight forward. So much of our current technology (save nuclear) had its origins a little either side of when this novel was written. Yes, technology has come a long way but little of it is new but, rather, the latest version of something already being used. Perry Mason had a radio (radio) phone in his car – that did exist – and we landed a man on the Moon in 1969.

Dick seems to reject, accede to, and revel in all technology.



*General Art-Honorable Mention*

Jeff Menem

# *Literary Critique-Third Place*

Steven Hatfield, I

## Flannery O'Connor and the Science of Believing

Flannery O'Connor was a devoutly religious writer of what has to come to be called "Southern Gothic" fiction. In fact, editors have argued that "O'Connor is unusual among American writers in the depth of her Christian vision" and one "whose works, usually set in the rural South and often depicting human alienation, are concerned with the relationship between the individual and God" (X.J. Kennedy, 390; Webster's, 286). In her story "Good Country People," O'Connor wove her Roman Catholic beliefs into the story by combining her "keen ear for common speech, caustic religious imagination, and a flair for the absurd" (Webster's 286). She also used Characteronyms – one of her specialties – in both obvious and cryptic ways as well as a Faith versus Atheism and Science conflict.

The first name, "Mrs. Hopewell" – very self—descriptive—followed by "Mrs. Freeman," which uses a touch of irony given that she is a tenant farmer, are both fairly obvious. Then there is Mrs. Hopewell's daughter, "Joy" and "Many Pointer," which very accurately uses "male anatomy" to describe the kind of person she is. Mrs. Hopewell discusses the possible reasons that Joy, whose leg was amputated as a child after a hunting accident and replaced with a wooden leg, had her name legally changed to "Hulga" but – and here is where O'Connor is at her cryptic best – a close reading will show that "Hulga" is an anagram of "laugh", something that goes with her given name but that her mother never sees her do; a sort of "anti-laugh" if you will.

One important moment of foreshadowing occurs when Mrs. Hopewell, in discussing her concern that Joy-Hulga had a Ph. D in Philosophy and that

philosophers were a thing of the ancient past, said that although she thought it was good for girls “to go to school to have a good time, “ Joy-Hulga had “gone through school” (O’Connor 393) (emphases added). The depth of her daughter’s despair is revealed when her mother reads a short passage from one of Joy-Hulga’s philosophy books that stated, “Science, on the other hand, has to assert its soberness and seriousness afresh and declare that it is concerned solely with what is. Nothing – how can it be for Science anything but a horror and a phantasm” (O’Connor 394), This could easily be interpreted as not even believing in science and this is confirmed when, in the final exchange between Joy-Hulga and Manly he tells her, “You got to say you love me” to which she replies, “I don’t have any illusions. I’m one of those people who see through to nothing.” (O’Connor 402).

The battle between Faith, Science, Nothing, the Science of Nothing, or whatever it would be called, was not truly a battle as far as Joy-Hulga and Manly were concerned. Both of their means and goals would be considered sinful – or just plain wrong – and Manly only used Christianity as a tool of manipulation. In this, and when Joy-Hulga tells Manly, “You’re a fine Christian! You’re just like them all – say one thing and do another!” it seems that O’Connor is taking a (somewhat unfair) shot at some Evangelicals who, in the mid-twentieth century were tossing around so many different Christian beliefs will-nilly (O’Connor 403). Neither Joy-Hulga nor Manly had any faith of any kind, All either of them had in the end was their lack of belief in anything but themselves, their belief in their own superiority, and that they were each manipulating the other to prove it.

Maybe, from a certain perspective, one could say that Faith won because all of Joy-Hulga’s belief in Science, Nothing, or any combination thereof, only got her used and humiliated when Manly left her stranded in a hayloft by taking her wooden leg while bragging that he had once done

the same thing with someone's glass eye. Faith won by letting Pride, and Nothing destroy each other. Pride is its own enemy. Science never has been the enemy. The belief in Nothing is. One cannot "believe in nothing." That is only the refusal to believe in anything (save, possibly oneself) and regardless, no good can come of that.

O'Connor once said, "The Catholic novelist believes that you destroy your freedom by sin; the modern reader believes, I think, that you gain it in that way. There is not much possibility of understanding between the two." The operative word here is "believe" and whether or not one agrees with her, at least it is a belief. O'Connor does not ask the question, "To believe or not believe," rather, she simply wants us to believe; believing in anything is better than having no belief.

In writing this and so many of her other works, she also showed another belief of hers:

The novel is an art form and when you use it for anything other than art, you pervert it. If you manage to use it for social, religious, or other purposes, it is because you made it art first.

(Bartlet, 755 citing O'Connor: 1956)

Her stories and messages still resonate true even in the new millennium and only exemplify why she "came to be regarded as a master of the art form" (Webster's, 286).

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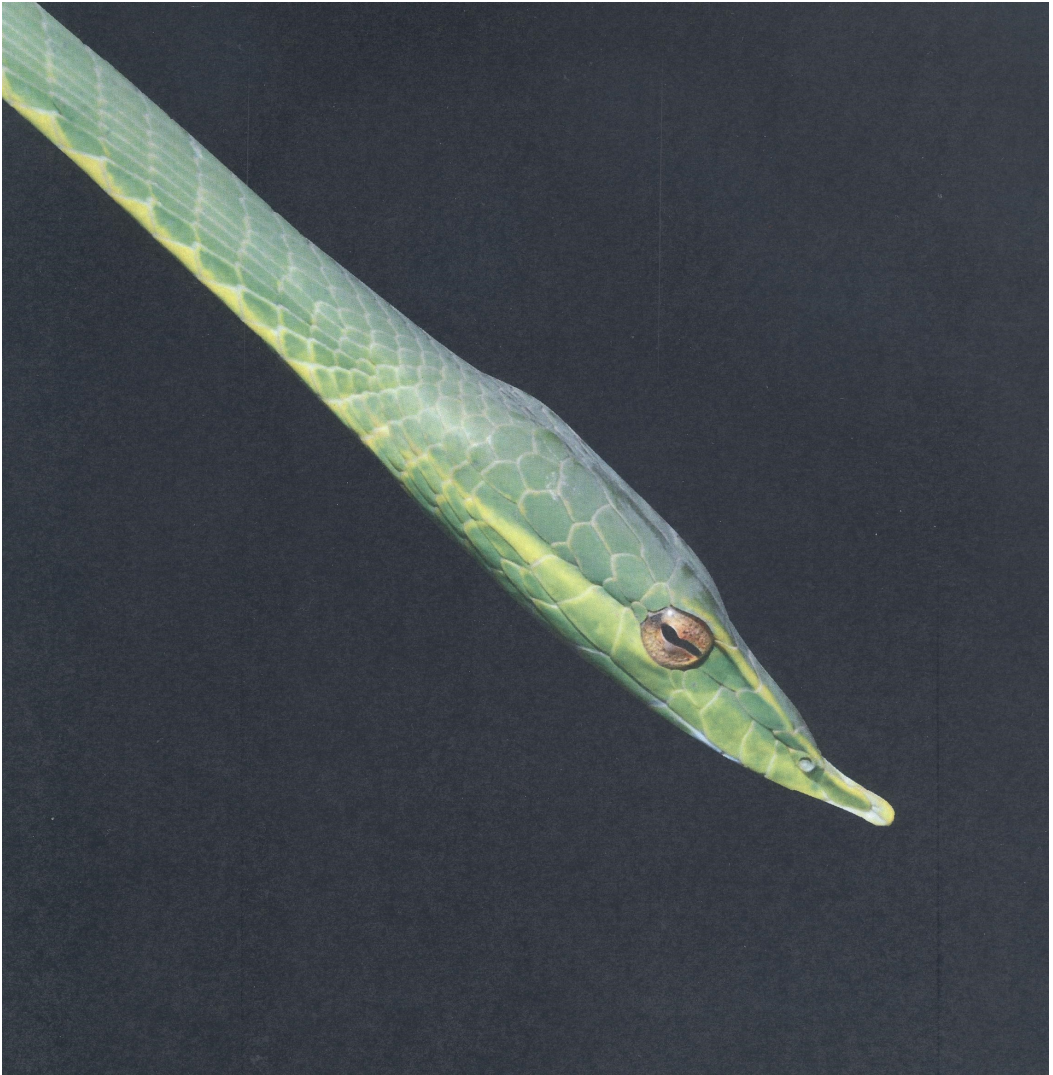
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*General Art-Honorable Mention*

Katherine Parker



*Photography-Honorable Mention*

Almin 'Ronnie' Thakkar



*Faculty*  
*and*  
*Staff*

## “Farmer Browns Chicken Yard” William J. Address Sr. - Faculty

The Sun came up, and the Sun went down on farmer Browns chicken yard. All was fine and dandy. Everything had been so handy. In the hen house every day two eggs each the hens would lay. The old Rooster crowed, but not too loudly. He walked about but not too proudly. Then one day there was a stir, a new rooster who was just a blur. The new young rooster came, and on the hen house took his aim. He scratched the dirt and tightened his girth. He crowed quite loudly and strutted very proudly. He walked into the hen house with a little wobble and produced quite a squabble. He said to the hens “Two eggs a day is what you lay, but after today four eggs you’ll lay!”

In the hen house there was talk of what to do, until someone said how about a big rooster stew. “I’m not sure we can produce four eggs a day, when only two is all we lay?” The young rooster said, “That’s your problem ladies, from this day on four eggs you’ll lay, and by the end of the day!” Was it possible? No one knew.

Quick girls drop an egg here he comes now! I just can’t, I’m going to talk my way out of it. “Ok sister where’s the egg?” “Well, I’m a little flustered, those eggs are so big, and well, it takes a lot to produce an egg you know!” The young rooster said “If you would stop all your clucking, and sit on the nest, you might keep up with all the rest. Now get in there and give it your best. Remember four eggs a day, they best be double AA.”

So the hens left that day, looking for a way to end his big day. She would like to roast a rooster, while he was figuring the output and how to booster her. Complain as they may, it turned out to be quite a big day. Some were dreaming while others were steaming. “Our feathers are flustered our brows are all wet, we are no longer considered a pet.

And so it went, in hen house heaven, the Sun came up and Sun went down, and the new young rooster is all around. The hens laid seven, but it should have been eleven. Fret as they may the hens must lay four AA each and every day.

*Tea Time at the London Ritz*

*Michelle Judice-Faculty*





*Georgia O'Keeffe*  
Grace Megnet-Faculty



*Frida Kahlo*  
Grace Megnet-Faculty



*Kara Walker*  
Grace Megnet-Faculty



*King Memorial and Eternal Flame*  
Dr. David Sorrells-Staff

## “Perfection”

SOME SAY PERFECTION IS UNATTAINABLE  
FOR MOST THINGS THAT'S EXPLAINABLE,  
BUT IN YOUR ARMS AND WITH YOUR HEART'S AFFECTION  
I HAVE FOUND A BRIEF MOMENT OF PERFECTION.

I'M THE LUCKIEST MAN TO WALK THE EARTH TO KNOW A LOVE LIKE  
YOURS LOVING IS SO EASY NOW YOU'VE OPENED ALL MY HEART'S DOORS.  
AND I'LL LOVE YOU 'TIL MY LIFE HAS CEASED AND STILL MORE WITH MY  
SOUL BECAUSE THAT FAITHFUL DAY WE MET, MY HEART YOU FOREVER  
STOLE.

AS I GAZE INTO YOUR PERFECT EYES,  
DOWN INTO THE DEPTHS OF YOUR VERY BEING,  
I CAN SEE THE LOVE YOU FEEL FOR ME,  
AND THE VOID YOU ARE COMPLETING.

IT'S SO PERFECT, AND IT TOUCHES ME SO DEEP  
FIRST THING IN THE MORNING, WHEN I HEAR YOU SPEAK  
AND LAST THING AT NIGHT AS YOU BID ME SWEET DREAMS  
THE BRUSH OF YOUR LIPS LETS ME KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

LOVE IS INDEED PATIENT, AND LOVE IS KIND, AND WHAT OUR LOVES  
EXPRESS' IS TRUE. NO AMOUNT OF TRAGEDY CAN TEAR OR BREAK THE  
LOVE I HAVE FOR YOU.

NO RIVER'S SPAN IS QUITE AS VAST, NO MOUNTAIN'S REACH SO HIGH.  
NO ROSE'S SCENT IS QUITE AS SWEET AS THE LOVE I HOLD INSIDE.  
EVERY TIME I SEE YOUR FACE AND EVERY TIME YOU SMILE,  
EVERY TIME I KISS YOUR LIPS, MY LOVE GROWS ALL THE WHILE.

ALL OF THE HOURS THAT PASS THROUGH THE DAY  
THOSE SPENT TOGETHER AND WHEN YOU'RE AWAY  
I THINK OF YOU STILL, AND I IMAGINE YOUR TOUCH  
I THINK OF MANY WAYS TO SHOW YOU, I LOVE YOU SO MUCH.

SO WHEN WE'RE APART, AND YOU LONG FOR ME NEAR  
JUST TRY TO REMEMBER, YOU AND I ARE ALREADY HERE  
SO DEEP WITHIN MY HEART, WHERE NO ONE CAN SEE  
THAT IS WHERE YOU ARE, AND TOGETHER WE WILL BE.

Damon Gaspard-Staff



## “Pages”

IF I HAD A THOUSAND PAGES,  
I COULD NEVER NAME THEM ALL,  
THE REASONS THAT I LOVE YOU,  
FOR THE LIST WOULD BE TOO TALL.

HOW BLESSED I AM THAT YOU ARE IN MY LIFE  
NOT A DAY GOES BY WHEN I DO NOT THINK OF YOU  
YOU MAKE EVERYTHING SEEM ALRIGHT  
TO YOU I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO PROVE.

HOW BLESSED I AM THAT YOU ARE IN MY LIFE  
HOW HONORED I AM TO BE A PART OF YOURS  
MEMORIES MADE WILL ALWAYS BE SHARED  
I AM LED TO YOU WITHIN EVERY DOOR.

I LOVE YOU FOR THE MELODY,  
I HEAR WITHIN YOUR VOICE.  
THE WAY YOUR EYES HOLD ME IN,  
I AM A CAPTIVE, BUT BY CHOICE.

I LOVE YOU FOR YOUR GENTLE HANDS,  
THAT MELT AWAY MY PAIN.  
I LOVE YOU FOR YOUR LOVING HEART,  
THAT MADE MINE BEAT AGAIN.

I LOVE YOU FOR YOUR LOVING SMILE,  
WITH WHICH MY OLD HEART SOARS.  
LIKE PAGES, THESE ARE SOME OF THE REASONS,  
EVERY SECOND BEAT IS YOURS.

YOU MAKE ME FEEL SPECIAL,  
YOU MAKE ME FEEL NEW,  
YOU MAKE ME FEEL LOVED,  
WITH EVERYTHING YOU DO.

YOU HOLD ME CLOSE WHEN I AM SAD.  
YOU WIPE THE TEARS FROM MY FACE.  
EVERY TIME WE ARE TOGETHER,  
IT SEEMS LIKE THE PERFECT PLACE.

MY EYES LIGHT UP WHEN YOU ENTER A ROOM.  
I SMILE WHEN WE ARE TOGETHER.  
NO MATTER HOW BAD THINGS ARE,  
YOU ALWAYS MAKE THEM BETTER.

I LOVE THE WAY YOU KISS ME,  
THE WAY YOU HOLD ME TIGHT.  
I LOVE THE WAY YOU TOUCH ME,  
I AM WITH YOU ALL DAY AND NIGHT.

I LOVE THE WAY YOU CAN MAKE ME LAUGH  
FOR ABSOLUTELY NO REASON AT ALL.  
I LOVE HOW NO MATTER WHAT I DO,  
YOU WILL BE THERE TO CATCH ME WHEN I FALL.

I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW,  
THAT EVEN THOUGH WE SOMETIMES FIGHT,  
MY LOVE IS WRITTEN JUST FOR YOU  
A NEW PAGE WE CALL "LIFE."

Damon Gaspard-Staff

Unreferable  
*For Jim*

When I was a wee boy I knew  
My life was destined to be unbearable.  
My Mother wouldn't let us call it fart,  
But required instead that we say unreferable.

She had grown up as Southern ladies should  
And had not nasty bros to mar her way  
She never would acknowledge a bad smell  
But with her eyes would refer us all to hell.

In time to drive my silly mother crazy  
I learned to maximize my noxious unreferables  
And with my new-found skill not to be lazy  
I'd make the supper meal most unendurable.

And the joy of unreferables in a car  
I'd speed along all doors and windows barred,  
Then release them potent with great glee  
Gasps, groans, tears - set not my captives free.

Brothers, sisters, friends were all my victims  
Everyone who drove with me--I'd sic 'um.  
But soon I bored with these and sought revenge  
Upon an unreferable mother and her friends.

But those Southern ladies, dressed up and looking fancy,  
Weren't easy to be moved or manners thwarted.  
For when I let my prize go forth--and it was rancid  
They never paled, gasped, gagged--they just ignored me.

Oft would I give my friends a little respite.  
When threatened with a broken window or chaw spit.  
But not for long could I their warnings heed,  
And soon was back to doing dirty deeds.

As youth to age does so inexorably progress  
So did my interest in the opposite sex  
And then a wide variety of lovely lasses  
Were by my evil habit obnoxiously vexed.

Then came one gal into my life to stay  
Although my habit vexed her, she did not run away.  
Into our home she brought two would-be hounds  
Whose appetite and growth were out of bounds.

While running in the park with them one day  
The dogs--whose only thought was play--  
Tripped me and I fell upon the path  
Where then I screamed out loud in pain and wrath.

My sweetie came and helped me get back home.  
I found myself unmoving-flat in bed.-  
The pain was ever real how I would moan,  
And day by day I stayed at home alone.

One day to give me ease the dogs remained  
Shut in my room with me --I was so pleased.  
But there arose to rouse me such a smell  
I thought for sure I'd died and gone to hell.

The dogs had farted at so fast a pace  
My face was green- my stomach hugely ached.  
Then on the floor I spied the room-sweet spray  
But all I could do was cry for it and pray.

As tears ran from my eyes, I thought of Mom  
And wished I 'd never made her smell my bomb.  
I think I'll trade the dogs in on a gerbil  
And always call a fart an unreferable.

Sally Byrd-Faculty



*Office Mascot*  
Michelle Judice-Faculty



## ON THE LITE SIDE

### If It's Argust, Can We Have Oysters?

Sue L. Wright-Faculty

The oyster. This edible mollusk is defined as belonging to the lamelli-branchiate genus, and is characterized by an inequivalve shell composed of two irregular lamellated valves, of which the under one adheres to rocks or to the shell of other mollusks. Notwithstanding the scientific definition of an oyster, this curious bivalve has both fascinated and repelled men for centuries.

"He was a bold man that first ate an oyster," said Jonathan Swift, although because of their purported aphrodisiacal qualities, they have remained a popular food. Louis XI was so impressed with their reputation as a "brain food" that he forced his advisers to consume enormous quantities of oysters with the idea that they would be smarter and better able to serve him. The basis for this myth involves the oyster's high phosphorus content which was thought to increase brain power. Of course, Louis the Eleven most likely didn't know this scientific explanation, having confused the words "phosphorus" and "prosperous."

They were so popular in the last century that people were known to consume oysters in enormous quantities. The story goes that an English lord died after partaking of a meal that consisted of 29 dozen of the phosphorus laden bivalves, which turned out to be not the smartest thing he ever did. He is buried in Paris in the famed Pere-Lachaise cemetery where his friends each year heaped piles of oyster shells on his grave. His epitaph: "Here lies\_\_\_\_\_, dead of a duel with the oysters of Rocher du Cancale (the restaurant where he consumed his gargantuan last meal). William Makepeace Thackeray, on a trip to Boston in 1857, managed to swallow a large East Coast oyster in one gulp. When later asked by a friend how he felt, he responded: "Profoundly grateful, as if I had swallowed a small baby." **We** assume he was accustomed to the smaller English variety. Oh oysters-- not babies!

For many years in this country, oysters were not on menus in months that contained no "r" in them; i.e. May, June, July, August. Because oysters are non-selective filter feeders, they filter everything out of the water including bacteria. And since bacteria grows more readily during the warm months, oysters were thought to be more dangerous at that time. are

However, today, with improved refrigeration and transportation, oysters available on summer menus, though the risk of ingesting bacteria still exists.

Even without that knowledge, it was still a bold man who first ...





# Expressions 2012

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The editorial staff of EXPRESSIONS 2012 would like to thank all of the students who submitted work for consideration to EXPRESSIONS 2012 this semester. Unfortunately, not every entry can be published. In order to insure fair and impartial judging and publication selection, the copy without the author's name is sent to the judges. The judges at no time see the copy which identifies the individual author.

The purpose of EXPRESSIONS 2012 is to publish the best entries for consideration. We are proud of the entries published in this issue and appreciate the support of all students, faculty and staff who contributed to and enjoy the magazine.

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

Sally Byrd, Editor

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