



Member **The Texas State University System™**

Expressions

Spring 2013

Volume XXVII

Expressions 2013 Student Winners

SHORT STORY

First Place

My Burning Bush Below the Sleeping Ute William Bowlin

Second Place

Reporter Discovers Gruesome Scene Steven C. Hatfield, I

Third Place

Moonstone Manor..... Steven C. Hatfield, I

ESSAY

First Place

Meme's the Word Steven C. Hatfield, I

Second Place

The Convict's Song: Life Beyond the Wire
Christopher Clint Hussey

Third Place

Uncivil Union Steven C. Hatfield, I

SPECIAL ESSAY CATEGORY

Sponsored by PHI THETA KAPPA

The Culture of Competition Alex Hetherington

POETRY

First Place

Way Back When..... Rebecca Wilkinson

Second Place

Flesh Eating Pain in My AssKatherine Waterbury

Third Place

Small Town..... Eric Adams

Honorable Mention

I Only Thought You Were My Friend Chelsey Jennings

No Specific Place Rebecca Westbrook

Being a College Student Alyssa Bonilla

I've Gone to Hell Before Eric Adams

Runaway Teen.....Katherine Waterbury

Living the American Dream.....Marianne Hunt

Haiku John Abalos, Alexander Albair,
Ronnie Arline, Brandon Beard, Brittnie Blackburn,
Gabriela Ceja, Haley Denton, Lindsay Duff, Kiesha Fletcher,
Sandra Galvan, Brandon Gray, Shalandra Guillory,
Christina Humphrey, Ashley Inagaki, Tiffany Jacobo,
Bryant James, Domonique Luchin, Travis McCoy,
Nahn Nyguen, Megan Odom, Javiean Pierre, Martin Sigur, Jr.,
Evan Sims, Calvin Thomas, Craig Veasie, Crystal Venegas,
Brittany Viramontes, Kendall Williams, Jennifer Zambrano

COVER ART

First Place Caitlin Thompson

Second Place Juan Martinez

Third Place..... West Jackson

Honorable Mention..... Aniceto Sanchez

Honorable Mention..... Africa Jacobs

Honorable Mention..... David Lo Pinto

GENERAL ART

First Place West Jackson

Second Place Shawn Raborn

Third Place..... Robert Bell

Honorable Mention..... West Jackson

Honorable Mention Colonel Lewis

Honorable Mention..... Bobby Sears

PHOTOGRAPHY

First Place Chelsey Jennings

Second Place..... Chelsey Jennings

Third Place Savannah Faulk

Honorable Mention Danielle Spurlock

Honorable Mention Loni Prouse

Honorable Mention Marisol Lua-Figueroa

DIGITAL ART

First Place Marisol Lua-Figueroa

Second Place..... Gloria J. Williams

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Cover Art-Second Place

Juan Martinez

*Short
Story*



General Art-First Place
West Jackson

Short Story-First Place

My Burning Bush Below the Sleeping Ute

William Bowlin

When I arrived home from church, my mother was waiting. I looked dreadful, my face was dirty, smeared with black, and I smelled of smoke. My tears had turned the dirt on my face into mud and then had dried along with the blood on my hands and shirt. I wondered if my mother would ever forgive me for what I had done earlier that day. The police were probably looking for me, yet an odd, peaceful, calm had come over me since leaving the church.

Life was simple at thirteen; there were no laptops, cellphones, microwaves, or video games. Our church had no locks on the front doors. I suppose locks were not needed back then; there was an accepted trust and faith that God was looking over us. At that age, I had not given much thought to any possibility that He might not exist. Daily prayer and hard work were routine. I could not know I was in store for a spiritual affirmation that I would not realize until sometime later.

The foot hill region in which I lived was populated with

piñon trees, sheep grass, and sage brush (a peculiar aromatic bush that emits a combustible gas when set afire).

I had several jobs including cleaning up a drive-in theater each day before it opened for the evening feature. The theater was located on the edge of town inside a small canyon basin. My earning plans included buying my first car, putting aside a little for college, and asking Claudia out for a date. She lived in one of the nice homes just above the rim of the theater basin.

One windy afternoon in the fall, I was burning trash at the drive-in; the wind caught a smoldering piece of paper from the burn barrel and whipped it into the dry, parched sheep grass. It instantly caught fire, I frantically began throwing dirt on the blaze with my bare hands, I continued until they bled without my being aware. Stunned, I watched as the flames lit the first sage brush, as it burst into flames; I knew then it was too much for me. The bushes flaming and the gaseous display beckoned me to go ask for help. As I jumped on my bike, I was horrified as I observed a wall of flames heading up the canyon slope toward the beautiful homes on top of the ridge.

Pedaling hard against the wind, I topped the hill. I heard the sirens and then met the fire trucks. Knowing I no longer needed to call for help, I headed straight to the church. My mind began

to race with questions: What had I done, would Claudia's neighborhood burn, would I go to jail, would I ever be forgiven?

Tears were streaming down my face as I entered the church; I knelt at the altar and prayed as never before, in complete and total solitude. As I calmed, I left and headed home ready to face my consequences.

Stepping into the house, I heard my mother's soft, concerned voice: "Are you okay? The fire department called and said not to worry. I did nothing wrong and everything is all right." I felt relief yet wonderment.

Someone must have been watching that day for the fire department to have responded so quickly. However, the firemen had not had much to do after arriving. Shortly after I had left, the winds had shifted and then completely died. A brief, light rain settled and cleared the air. The fire had burned itself out as quickly as it had started.

I was being watched that day, although I was unaware of who it was. I remember the warm serenity I felt as I hugged my loving mother. Then from far away, I heard the distinct, soft, rumble of a thunder-cloud-echoing, through the distant canyons of Sleeping Ute Mountain.

My prayers had been answered.



Photography-First Place

Chelsey Jennings

Short Story-Third Place

Reporter Discovers Gruesome Scene

Steven C. Hatfield, I

U.S. Army veteran and investigative journalist Derek Heath, 28, was on an assignment in his home state of West Virginia looking into the disappearance of a twenty-five-year-old woman and her six-year-old-daughter in Greenbriar County. His assignment was to look into any possible connection between the abduction and the Mountain Man Legend, generally believed to be an old myth of the region.

“I honestly thought it was a wild goose chase. I like hunting for Bigfoot or something,” he commented. “But when I researched things before arriving, I realized that people have been disappearing for over a century. Still, “he added,“ In an area that rural with its history, it’s difficult to separate fact from fiction.”

Things changed, however, when he was having lunch at the local diner and made a joke about what he was searching for. According to Heath, most of them were upset thinking he was there to “mock a bunch of hillbillies” but a few were nervous.

“One guy with a vicious look on his face threw his money on the table and left.”

One of the waitresses, Erica Haines, 23, slipped Heath a note with directions to her home and the words “after dark” underlined. He met her there that night. She was caring for her father whose tongue had been cut out when she was four after trying to look into the legend himself.

“He was the only person ever to have been done that way. It was meant as a message to anyone else who got nosy. His family has been a pariah ever since. Haines’ mother died in an automobile accident when she was seven. They’ve been through hell,” Heath said.

Based on information from Haines’ father, some research using geological maps, and “a little dumb luck,” Heath hiked over three miles and found what he was looking for.

“I grew up in the mountains and I was a Forward Observer at Ft. Lewis, Washington. Getting there was the easy part.”

The site was anything but what he expected to find. Inside a circle of trees was an area about fifty feet across and a horror scene that forensic investigators and cultural anthropologist Paul Martinez believe is a site of religious activity dating back more than a century. Martinez said the sheer variety of items

found indicate that this was a local cult and not any known religious group.

On the north end of the circle was a five-by-three foot slab of tree bark set four feet above the ground on two large stones that served as an altar and contained several items: a field mouse with leather strings tied to each leg; a deerskin pouch containing barley seeds; four sharpened stones – two chert and two obsidian – one with blood on it and all large enough to be used as cutting tools; a piece of flint and steel; a hollowed out ram's horn; a wooden bowl containing a human heart; a statue of a woman whose breasts were too massive for the four-inch figure carved from bone; a six-inch dagger made of jade; and a leather scabbard holding a sword with a four foot blade. Leaning against one side of the altar was an intricately carved five-foot-long staff and against the other a bone-tipped spear the same length.

Set into the ground on the right side of the altar was a five-foot tall wooden pole about six inches in diameter. Mounted on top of it was a set of antlers that served as a clothing rack and the items on it were just as eclectic as those on the altar: a bearskin cloak; an overdress (modern day tunic); a scalp with bits of red hair still on it; a braided rope sash; two

necklaces-one of shells, the other of wooden beads; a pair of leather leggings and sandals; and a leather thong undergarment which, with the statue, lent a sexual tone to the rituals practiced there.

Another five-foot-long pole was set on the other side with 105 notches of various ages cut into it, one very recent. Mounted on top of it was a human head with long, blonde hair and likely that of the recent victim.

The scene only got more gruesome. In front of the altar was a pair of remarkably well preserved legs in a kneeling position also believed to be those of a woman given they were shaved and had painted toe nails. Next to them was the shoulders and neck with a blue scarf still wrapped around it, something the missing woman was last seen wearing.

In the center of the site was a fire pit roughly five feet across surrounded by four benches made of sandstone and set about two feet above the ground on other stones. Among the ashes was a set of arm bones and a rib cage.

Oddly, given the area, there were no other trees within a hundred yards and those surrounding the site were all very old live oaks. Scattered in the surrounding brush investigators had so far found the remains of over sixty bodies.

More tests are being done and the area is still being searched for more remains and evidence of other religious activity, but investigators hope they will find neither. No trace of the missing girl was found.

During the interview Heath commented, "It's kind of crazy that reporters are writing about me in a story I was supposed to write, kind of a hunter-becoming-the-hunted sort of thing. Being on this end of my profession has given me a new perspective. I hope it makes me a better investigative journalist."



General Art-Second Place

Shawn Raborn

Short Story-Third Place

Moonstone Manor

Steven C. Hatfield, I

Everyone said the house was haunted. I really didn't know what that meant. I was a kid. Haunted houses were either in movies or the ones that showed up every Halloween.

It was a large, three-story Victorian house built in 1898. It was surrounded by a three-foot-high stone wall with a wrought iron gate that a sidewalk from the end of the street led up to.

Nobody lived there, but it always looked perfect. The only person that anyone ever saw was the guy who kept the grass and hedges inside the wall cut with a sickle mower, clippers, and a pair of shears. It was a large yard with a sidewalk in the middle that circled the house. There was wrought iron benches with lamp posts spaced along it. It looked like a mansion to me.

My house was the last one on the right, and I could see it from my bedroom window. I would watch it at night looking for spooky things, but nothing ever happened. It looked beautiful in the moonlight.

One Halloween when I was thirteen, I decided that I was

going to be inside of the house at midnight. I figured if it really was haunted, that's when I would see something. So around eleven-thirty I got a flashlight, climbed out my bedroom window, and walked to the door.

The place was even bigger up close. Everything looked new and perfect, even magical. The door was huge. I slowly turned the latch and pushed. It was unlocked. I was surprised that it didn't creak.

The hallway looked long and dark. I turned on the flashlight and shined it inside. The hall was two stories high. I walked in leaving the door opened just in case. As I walked and shined the light around, I saw big rooms with tall, wide doorways, each with a set of wooden doors that slid out of the walls but weren't closed. I passed four on each side before it opened up into a bigger area.

I stopped in awe of the place. There were more rooms on both sides and a big chandelier hung in the middle. A set of stairs led to rooms on the second floor with a walkway in front of them. It really was like something from a movie.

As I shined the light around something reflected on the other side in front of me. I walked closer and saw a grandfather clock to the left of a hallway that continued to the back of the

house. What shocked me the most was that it was still working. It showed two minutes till midnight so I waited.

As soon as it struck midnight, the entire place was full of light, furniture, and people dressed in clothes covering the past hundred years or more. They all stared at me.

“Oh, heavens!”

I turned to see an older black woman with a kind face and even kinder eyes.

“Child, what are you doing here?”

“I... uh...”

“You can’t be here! You have to go!”

I just stared at everything.

“If you don’t get over that wall before those chimes stop, you’ll never be able to go home.”

“She’s telling you right, son,” came a man’s voice.

I panicked. I took off down the hallway and out the door. The people outside stared. I fell in the grass but got up and dove over the wall. I ran home and climbed in my window then realized I didn’t have the flashlight. I looked out but didn’t see it. I laid on my bed to think. I’d watched that house since I was little and never saw anything. But there were people. Not ghosts,

people! It was hard to sleep.

The next day I was coming home from school and saw the man that cut the grass sweeping the sidewalk in front of the gate. As I reached my house he called to me.

“Excuse me. Can I ask you a question?”

I was nervous. “Sure.”

We met in the middle.

“Have you seen anyone in the yard or messing around the place?”

I looked embarrassed. “Yes. It was me.” I looked up. “I’m sorry. I was just curious.”

He smiled and pulled my flashlight out of his back pocket.

“Then this must be yours. I appreciate your honesty.”

I took it. “Thank you. I won’t do it again. I promise.”

“It’s okay.” He looked at me a moment. “What’s your name?”

“Carroll.”

“I’m Michael.”

We shook hands.

“I know what you saw last night. They told me. You have nothing to worry about.”

‘He knows then?’ I thought.

“Carroll, would your parents allow you to work for me doing

yard work?”

“Probably.”

“Good. I’ll show you how to do everything. There’s only one rule. You have to use those tools.” He pointed. “Nothing electric or gas-powered. You’ll work every Saturday and I’ll pay you fifty dollars. I’ll do some work on my own and sometimes help you. You’ll still get paid. Sound good?”

“Sure.”

“Good.”

We shook hands.

“See you Saturday at nine.”

“Okay.”

I met him on Saturday, and he showed me everything including how to sharpen the mower and tools. Using the sickle mower was hard work but fun.

We were finished and putting everything away when he began speaking seriously.

“I know you have a lot of questions, Carroll, and I’ll answer them...when it’s time. But I need you to make me a promise. Never go inside. What they said was true. You would’ve been stuck there...forever.”

“I promise.”

He paid me, we shook hands, and I went home.

That's how it went for the next seven years. There were other things to do during the winter. During that time we became close and he told me about the history of the house and the area. But little by little I saw him less and less.

By then I was twenty and still living at home while going to college. One Saturday morning he was there to work with me. As we worked he began speaking as if I'd asked a question.

"Everyone you saw that night is here right now. Out here, inside. They can't see us or the houses. To them it looks like it did when it was built. It isn't haunted. They're not ghosts. Everyone in there is special and chose to come before - he died." He paused and waited for that to register. "The lady you saw was the housekeeper when it was built. You were the first person to ever be there by accident. She knew what to do but no one is sure why. They've been waiting to meet you. Would you like that?"

"Yes, but...how?"

He looked at me. His eyes were tired. "You're about to become part of something very special and important." He paused. "It's time." Somehow I knew what he meant.

He handed me a skeleton key. "I won't accidentally leave the door unlocked this time." He smiled. "Come back before midnight and wait by the clock."

"I'll be there. I can't wait."

We shook hands and I left.

I went back early just to walk around the grounds in the light of the full moon. It looked and felt just as magical as it did the first night.

Just before midnight I went inside. I used a penlight to find my way to the clock then turned it off. My heart raced, not with fear, rather, anticipation.

All at once everything appeared. Waiting there was Michael, a girl on his arm, the lady I'd met, and the man whose arm she held.

Her face lit up. "Well, look at you all grown up and looking so tall and handsome." She hugged me. "I'm Loretta and this is my husband, Harold. Harold this is Carroll."

We shook hands.

"Any man who would marry her must be a good man."

He smiled. "Thank you, Carroll."

Mike spoke. "This is Anna."

She greeted me with an old fashioned kiss on the cheek.

“We’ve been looking forward to meeting you.”

Another girl walked up and greeted them the same way. She was a fair-skinned, raven-haired, green-eyed beauty who looked at once twenty and forty. It’d never seen anything like her in my life or my dreams. Everything about her was elegance personified.

“Mariah, this is Carroll, the man I’ve been telling you about,” Michael said.

She greeted me then took my arm. “Hello, Carroll. I love that name. It was my grandfather’s. Would you take me for a walk outside. I want to get to know you.”

“The call the wind Mariah,” I smiled, repeating the words from the musical.

Her face lit up. “Yes, they do.”

“I would love to walk with you. Excuse us everyone.”

We left. I thoroughly enjoyed all of the formalities.

This was a courtship in every sense of the word during which we fell in love.

Essay



Photography-Second Place

Chelsey Jennings

Essay-First Place

Meme's the Word

Steven C. Hatfield, I

In my exploration of the social sciences one of the things that really caught my interest was cultural memes and this led to memes in the spoken language. What's a meme? In this case it's a word or phrase that takes on a specific meaning in a society or culture, often from a source completely different from its original usage.

One good example is the word "macho." From its roots in the Spanish word "machismo," it has taken on its own meaning in English as a colloquial term with little resemblance to its true meaning. There were three memes that caught my attention so I decided to look into them. In the process I learned that even though they exist in every culture, there are those who do not think they should ever be used.

"Okay" is one such word. It is the only survivor of a slang fad in Boston and New York c.1838-9 for abbreviations of common phrases with deliberate, jocular misspellings such as "KG" for "no go" as if spelled "know go." In this case, "oll korrekt." (This has a similarity with the slang in the Cockney district of London,

England.) It was further popularized by use as an election slogan by the “O.K. Club,” the New York boosters of Democratic President Martin Van Buren’s 1840 re-election bid in allusion to his nickname, “Old Kinderhook,” from his birth in the New York Village of Kinderhook. Van Buren lost, but the word stuck in part because it filled a need for a quick way to write an approval on a document, or bill.

The noun is first attested into 1841 and the verb in 1888. It was spelled as “okeh” by President Woodrow Wilson in 1919 based on the assumption that it represented the Choctaw word for “it is so.” There is little historic documentation of this.

This was quickly ousted by “okay” after the appearance of that form in 1929. “Okey doke” is student slang attested to in 1932. Greek immigrants to America, who returned home early in the 20th century, having picked up U.S. mannerisms, were known in Greece as “okay boys” among other things.

Next comes a more colorful phrase: “I don’t give a damn.” There appears to be two origins of this phrase. As a “tinker” in the mid 13th century who was a mender of kettles, pots, pans, and a surname of uncertain origin. Some connect the word with the sound made by light hammering on metal. The verb meaning “to keep busy in a useless way” (to tinker around) is

first found in the 1650s. “Tinkers dam” is probably just preserving a tinker’s reputation for casual and free use of profanity. It’s also as “I don’t give a tinker’s cuss,” mostly in Europe and even in books as recent as The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo.

Another origin comes from when the British colonized India. The Indian currency at the time was the “dam.” It was worth nothing when compared to the pound sterling. When someone tried to sell a shoddy product to the soldiers, they would sometimes respond by saying “I wouldn’t even pay a single dam for it.” Corruption of the term because of misunderstanding its etymology brought. “I don’t give a damn” home to England meaning “I don’t care.” Given this, it’s easy to see how the two terms merged in the England of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and, of course, exported to America.

This brought me to a meme that I never really liked or understood: “I’m just saying.” And after a story on NPR, I realized why. According to the story and paraphrasing the definition given then by the Oxford Dictionary of English Phrases, “I’m just saying” is a phrase added to punctuate a statement after it has been proven to have no merit. In other words, it’s what someone says after he has shot down an

argument. And, when listening to it with this knowledge in mind, it is literally how it's used. The phrase doesn't have the slightest bit of meaning (or etymology). They might as well say, "Well, you're right but I'm sticking with what I said." As soon as you hear that, you know you've won and the other person is trying to save face or think of something else to say.

So I don't give a dam, a damn, or even a tinker's cuss what anyone says, like it or not, using memes is okay. Well, except in Oklahoma where it's ok. Hey, I'm just saying!

Essay-Second Place

The Convict's Song: Life Beyond the Wire

Christopher Clint Hussey

“All men dream: but not equally. Those
who dream by night in the dusty
recesses of their minds wake in
the day to find that it was vanity;
but the dreamers of the day are
dangerous men, for they may act
their dream with open eyes, to
make it possible.”

-T.E. Lawrence

I lay awake at night, like most of us do, and let my thoughts wander as far and wide as the ends of the earth. Yet, it always comes back to two things: What the future holds, and what might have been. Most prisoners envision a life after their release, the freedom that waits for the weary traveler of this long, dark penitentiary road. Maybe the first thing you plan to do is to hold your children in your arms, hugging them tight and

starting to make up for lost time. Perhaps you just want something as simple as a decent meal at a favorite restaurant, to make love to your wife, or just to wander at night under a brilliant canopy of dazzling, long-unseen, burning stars.

With freedom comes what you desire most, a fresh start, to hit the reset button and give the game-of-life another shot. Serving time changes your perspective on life. Some come away with a new cynical outlook. The “I don’t have a chance” mentality signals a man who has given up before he can even start. For others though, release brings them one step closer to a goal, something that has been burning inside them, like a brand upon their very soul. The “I have to do this” once released kind of driving force that some men hold. It could be a job, a business plan, desire to enroll in college, a former love, or maybe just the simplest thing of all; purpose.

These familiar songs ring in the heads of every man inside these walls, even those whose hope of release has long since fled. What is truly dangerous is the dwelling-thoughts of the life that might have been. You have to break yourself of this habit as it will only drive you mad, this creation of a secret life within a life. What is done, is done – and the only option remaining is to accept it and move on.

Most correctional facilities have some form of pre-release or “reentry” programs which would help inmates reintegrate into society. For some, twenty-years or more have come and gone, since they left “the world.” This lapse creates a gap in respect to technology, economy, and modern life in general . Programs like these help to ease the “fish-out-of-water” feelings that some men may have, and hopefully send them down the path towards successful living.

You have to get your head together, what do you want, what do you need to do to make that happen, and what is the first step toward realization of your goals? With freedom comes responsibility, and that is the main thing to remember. Only you can live your life with nobody to tell you what to do, or when to do it, no one to feed and clothe you anymore. The structure of your life is once again entirely up to you. It is as Jose Ortega Y Gasset wrote “Life is a petty thing unless there is pounding within it an enormous desire to extend its boundaries. We live in proportion to the extent to which we learn to live more.”

Leave this place behind you whenever it is they release you from this concrete and steel prison. Dream beautiful dreams, those of a life you can be proud of, a free and productive life. The past has come and gone, washed away in the stream of

time, so let go of the “what ifs” and look to the distant horizon of possibility and purpose.



Cover Art-Third Place
West Jackson

Essay-Third Place

Uncivil Union

Steven C. Hatfield, I

All of the arguments about who should and should not – who can and cannot – get married is getting to the point of idiocy and, it seems to me, is taking its toll on America as well. Moreover, even when one side gets its way at any given time, both sides are doing one thing: pointing their finger at the other.

The Red group has two subgroups. The first is theological and uses the Bible to define marriage as “between one man and one woman.” (For the purpose of focus we’ll skip the various instances of polygamy). This group would have almost every law based on “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” (which would only leave us blind and dipping bread in broth) or “cutting off your hand and gouging out your eye” if either does something wrong. Notice here that the metaphoric blindness of both leaves you physically blind. I often wonder why, if this group wants to live in a country governed only by religious law, they don’t move to one. There are plenty to choose from.

The other subgroup is theological disguised as ideological and tries to use the Bible as their definition all the while telling

the government to stay out of their religion; the “separation of Church and State” as it were. Am I the only one who sees the hypocrisy in this? It’s hypocrisy even by the biblical definition. A kind of ironic non sequitur. I would like to ask both groups a question: Why do you care? There are people and religions who disapprove of eating meat, but they aren’t telling the government to ban carnivores. For the record, I’m Catholic and eat meat – except on Fridays.

Then there are the Blue people. They, too, have two subgroups. The anti-theologists of this group would have the government force religious groups to marry everyone and “recognize” their marriage. Those who don’t are religious bigots. Here again the government is being told to put its nose into religion but, in this case, instead of telling one side to obey a law based on religion, they’re telling the other to violate a religious belief (or law) all the while professing their belief in the separation of Church and State. This brings us back to hypocrisy.

The other subgroup is somewhat interesting. I call them the quasi-ideologists. They like the term “civil union” which is simply a euphemism for marriage. They believe there is a difference in legalizing it based on the word itself. There is a lot of irony in that, too. This does solve the problem of churches being forced

to perform the ceremony, but here is a problem with it. A civil union is in this case, a same-sex marriage (yet another euphemism) performed by civil authorities. But my wife and I were married in a courthouse. Many people are. Does that mean we have a civil union? How is that possible? We're hetero. (I use that term here to fit into a world of labels. My way of thumbing my nose at it. To say "straight" or "normal" implies that others are "crooked" or "abnormal") Anyway, do we have to come up with another word to differentiate ours as a marriage or just say that there are civil unions and then there are civil unions? At this rate we'll have to create terms like "Euphemology: The study of euphemisms;" and "Euphemists: groups or individuals whose ideology (and possibly theology) is predicated on the use of euphemisms."

As if all of this weren't enough, we have the Green people. I have a special dislike for them. They are the various insurance companies and government agencies / bureaucracies whose only objection is based on a monetary ideology. Spousal benefits only go to spouses of the opposite sex. Income Tax benefits work the same way. And for some ignorant reason, even hospital visits are included. The operative word here is "ignorant." Just try and "euphemize" that. (Another word for

our lesson in Euphemese.)

Why should they care? If someone pays for an insurance policy, give them what they paid for. Otherwise, charge them less. I suppose you could eliminate the term “spousal benefits” but that would only require another euphemism. (That’s our homework for our lesson in Euphemese).

So for the IRS, hospitals, and bureaucracies, unless you’re going to refuse to recognize common-law marriage – and you’re not – they paid their taxes. Give them what they paid for. If I’m nineteen and marry a seventeen-year-old, am I required to claim her as a dependent on my health insurance and Form 1040?

What does all of this mean? The Red people need to stop telling people who don’t believe in their god to obey laws based on that belief. Blue people need to stop telling people to do things their beliefs tell them is wrong (my only beef with President Obama). And the Green people need to stop being so damn greedy. When you make billions, what’s a few million to the people who helped you make it? (Hospitals, get real) If everyone would do this, we might just have a little more civility in our union.

One thing I know: The pursuit of happiness can never involve selfishness. Ask any couple.

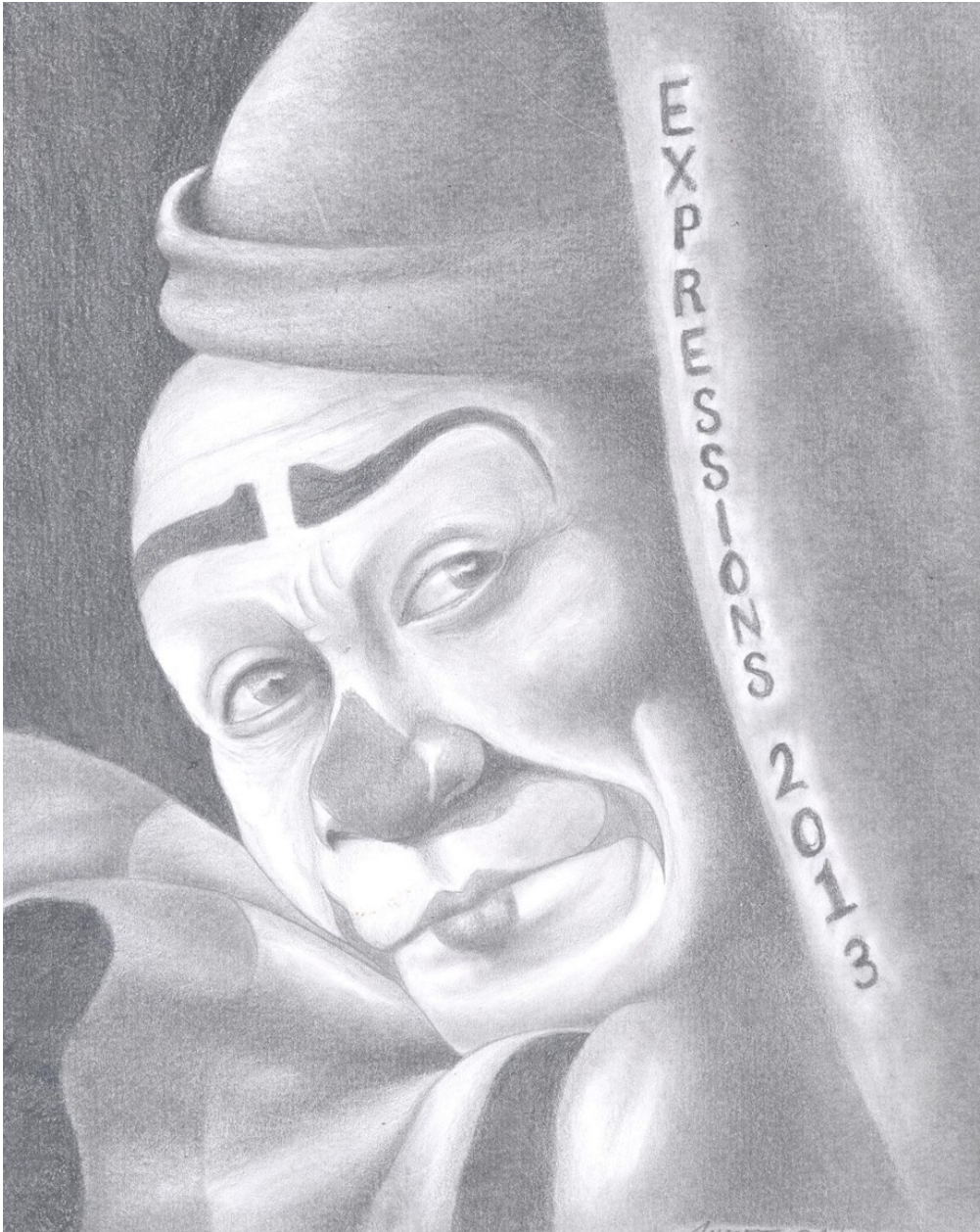
One thing I know: The pursuit of happiness can never involve selfishness. Ask any couple.



Photography-Third Place
Savannah Faulk

*Special Essay
Category*

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Cover Art-Honorable Mention

Aniceto Sanchez

Special Essay Category

The Culture of Competition

Alex Hetherington

If you've been in line at the Mexico/U.S. border waiting to return north, or have waited at the local traffic court to pay a fine, you know how excruciating it can be to wait in line for hours in the heat or cold for a transaction that will take only a minute or two.

Today I'm waiting in line for the commissary at the federal correction institution I'm housed in. There are a hundred or so people in front of me and about five behind. Yeah, I'm practically last, and it really sucks. The day is particularly hot and after twenty minutes of standing in line, I put my mesh shopping bag on the concrete and sit down. It's so warm that even in late November no jacket or hat is necessary, yet looking like a fool I wait in line with my jacket and hat on, sniffing and coughing every minute or so because I have the flu. I ache all over and have chills, which is a slow torture that's nearly unbearable.

But I have to go on. I must triumph over the anguish and accomplish my goal. As I sit outside in the heat of the Texas day,

bundled up like I'm in Chicago in mid-January, I cough, sneeze, sweat, shiver which leads to malignant looks from those around me. I blow my nose constantly, sounding like an infant blowing saliva into bubbles. I'm worried because I'm running out of tissue and will be in line at least two more hours, including the brief wait to pick up the item I'm in desperate need of. As I sit in line, miserable, I ask myself, is all this anguish worth a single item? Why am I enduring this torture for a ninety-cent pack of cough drops? Really, as if living in prison isn't bad enough, why do I have to wait hours to do something those on the outside can accomplish in mere seconds?

My pounding headache is about to cause me to erupt, to let out screams as thunderous, I imagine, as the sounds of St. Mt. Helens when it blew its volcanic top. Around me all I hear are arguments about who will watch what on TV, that and all the other idiocies that are part of prison life. I convince myself that I must triumph over my agonies and remain positive. Due to my illness and the lack of sleep, I begin to doze off as I'm asking myself if matters could be worse.

Suddenly I'm awakened by a warning coming from another guy in line. "Hey man, watch out," he warns, and I lift my head up and see a small mouse on the cement wall beside us. His

sudden appearance startles me, and still half dazed I jump up with my mesh bag in hand. The last of us in line watch this cute mouse run back and forth along the cement wall, dodging the inmates. Suddenly out of the corner of my eye I see an inmate mowing the grass around us with an old style rotary lawnmower. It's a large push mower made of steel with blades that could cut down a small tree. This is extra duty for him, what people in the outside world would call punishment. Perhaps he took a couple of bananas or piece of chicken out of the kitchen in an effort to suppress the hunger that is inevitable in prison. Short rations are a part of life in here. Whatever the reason for his punishment, he's in full uniform, sweating, and obviously embarrassed by the taunting of the other prisoners. His frustration induces him to push harder; ignoring all that is in his path and leaving the grass cut short. I feel for him in his predicament, but I'm sick and my situation is worse.

My attention swings back to the little mouse, who's actually quite energetic and athletic. He climbs about nine feet up the wall, where he's about a foot away from a crack that will lead him to another adventure within the confines of what I call my "inferno." We inmates have come into this humbling and isolated life called prison, so we are in awe of this little escape

artist. We are like children who sit in anticipation, waiting to see their first acrobatic act in a live circus. As children, we ooh! And ahh! The energetic little performer falls what would be the equivalent of one of us falling ten or fifteen stories to the ground. Amazingly, he bounces off the ground, gets on his feet and continues to run back and forth looking for a way out. For those of us in line, disconnected from society as we are, the tough little fellow is larger than life.

My flu symptoms amplify the gravity of my circumstances, and I think of how pathetic it is to be amused by such a small creature, a creature dumb enough, I thought, to be voluntarily locked up, eating the worst food under the worst conditions. The mouse is a prisoner by choice. Ultimately, so am I. Desperately ill and waiting in the interminable line, I wonder if my life could get any worse.

Our little friend, the acrobat, is still the focus of our attention. He runs close to us, keeping near the wall, for safety I suppose. Trying to shoo him away, some of the guys stomp their feet, and he speeds off in the opposite direction as if doomsday had arrived.

In life misfortune happens to us and those we love. Sometimes it happens to those who don't deserve it.

Sometimes it is caused by ignorance, sometimes by plain bad luck. In the case of the little acrobat, ignorance probably played a larger role than luck.

Someone scares the mouse back towards us. Whether the inmate who kicks him is just fooling around, or purely malicious, I don't know. But the little acrobat is kicked hard enough that his leg is broken. Unable to walk or run, he stumbles a few steps before giving up. Someone else tries to urge him along by kicking him from behind, but he drags his body lamely. A wave of sadness overcomes me as I watch the crippled little mouse. Another prisoner is upset over the event and picks him up with some paper, but he accidentally drops him. He picks him up again and carries him to the warm grass; a nice gesture perhaps the warmth of the sun will alleviate his pain.

As I watch the injured mouse I see in the background the two black wheels and green blades of the lawnmower, chewing up everything in their path. I see the exhausted young man who is paying restitution for taking a banana or a piece of chicken to ease his hunger. Since I'm sitting in front of the injured mouse, I can see the mower coming directly toward him. Just in the nick of time, a couple of prisoners save the fallen acrobat, stopping the mower and preventing a brutal death.

The line moves forward again, and we quickly forget about the mouse. As I waste away the time, I think to myself how very important it is for people, whether in prison or out, to keep up with the mad pace of the world, and as a result we forget what is genuinely important. Keeping up the pace makes us a little crazy, I think. We rush to the store and fight to get the closest parking space so we can get in quickly. We rush to be first in the check-out lane or the prison commissary line. We compete with family and friends for the latest fashions. We want the latest technology. We rush to grow up and be adults, only to regret the bills and responsibilities that adult life thrusts on us. We want it all except the bills that come due.

Many people misquote the bible, saying, "That the root of all evil is money." It actually says, "For the love of money is the root of all evil." It's not the money, but the love of it that is evil. We can't blame it on the money. It's us. We vainly compete for valueless paper and coin. Why? Why are humans so vain?

Still in line, I ask myself again, can life get any worse for me? Will this line ever end? It occurs to me that my eagerness to get ahead in the line has made me ignore the plight of the little mouse. I look back to see how he's doing. To my despair, he's surrounded by blackbirds that are making a meal of him.

I imagine what his last thoughts must have been. Why? Why me? Why must I die amongst fools who compete with each other because of their vanity?



General Art-Third Place

Robert Bell

Poetry



Cover Art-Honorable Mention

Africa Jacobs

Poetry-First Place

Way Back When

Rebecca Wilkinson

Love

Way back when I loved that you would call me to tell me what you liked about me. Way back when it felt good to hear the words from your mouth.

Way back when I loved that you would ask me to go to the store with you. Way back when I liked that my opinion mattered. Way back when I loved that we would just sit around and watch movies with your roommate. Way back when those little cat naps mattered.

Way back when I loved the way the slightest touch from you gave me chills. Way back when I felt like the only one in the room.

Way back when I loved that your best friend became my best friend. Way back when I thought I was always safe between the two of you.

Way back when I loved that you were you and I was me and it seemed perfect. Way back when you loved it too.

Way back when I loved the way your lips moved when you talked. Way back when your laughter was so special and unique.

Way back when I loved that we could laugh, play, and joke about anything. Way back when we had our own secret language.

Way back when I loved that you would listen and soak in my advice. Way back when my thoughts counted for something.

Way back when I thought we were happy.

Hate

Way back when I hated that you would call her and say to her the same things you told me. Way back when I pretended you would call me first.

Way back when I hated that it was only the store where we could be seen together. Way back when my opinion only mattered while I was around.

Way back when I hated that I was never good enough to take out to the movie. Way back when we took those cat naps I knew she had been there too.

Way back when I hated that I could be so persuaded by the slightest touch from you. Way back when I was the only one in the room I knew it was she you wished was there.

Way back when I hated that the only reason I liked your best friend is because he would tell me things I wanted to know about her.

Way back when I hated that I liked the you for who you were and I knew you were far from perfect. Way back when I was just the side choice.

Way back when I hated the compliments you gave me because they never felt sincere. Way back when you acted as if I was so naive and knew nothing that was really going on.

Way back when I hated that I would picture our playfulness as something that was only our thing. Way back when you would do it with her too.

Way back when I hated that you made it so hard for me to let you go.



Photography-Honorable Mention

Danielle Spurlock

Poetry-Second Place

Flesh Eating Pain in My Ass

Katherine Waterbury

You eat at my world. I watch you do it. You tear away at them. I watch you do it. Body, soul flesh, spirit. You eat it. You devour. And I watch you do it, while I smoke a cigarette. I'll quit one day.

The first time that I saw you creep in I was young. You stalked her. Her. My hero, my strength. The one who never cried, who never yelled, how never showed fear. I watched you do it. You ate pieces of her. But she beat you.

You struck again. I was older this time. That didn't help. You surprised me. Slapped me in the face with your trickery. You bit him this time. HIM. The uncle I adore. I don't know how you got to him. He was away and young and strong. Your appetite doesn't care I suppose. I watched you do it. He kicked your ass. I lit a cigarette and watched. I'll quit one day.

Damn, you're a sneaky bastard. You got in again. I watched you do it. You're just trying to show off with this one. Flex your muscles and make us tremble. You power, your strength. Yeah, you're a real bad-ass aren't you? Not only eating this time though. This is a full blown feast for kings. Not just a little snack. You want the whole damn thing. I watched you do it. Break him down and make him hurt. But I lit my cigarette and watched you do it. I'll quit one day.

Months you ate, ripped and pulled. Beat him down. I watched you do it. Made him hurt. Made him ache. Feasting like some insatiable monster, never full, never tired. I watched you do it. I

just sat and smoked a cigarette. I'll quit one day.

Must have been pissed when he won. Couldn't take it could you? You had to come back for him again. I watched you do it. Found a new way in. A piece you hadn't tasted yet. I watched you do it. Guess you thought he was too weak to fight back again. Thought you broke his will that last time. Stupid you. Lost again. I sat back and watched you do it, smoking my cigarette. I'll quit one day.

Now you are just playing dirty. I watch you do it. Back again. You're never freaking satisfied. Some monster, some evil. Some THING. No purpose. No reason. No purpose. No reason. And I watch you do it. Him. Again. You've changed him. He's a better man. He's a smarter man. He loves now. But you don't care, and I watch you do it. You come after him, again, again and again while I smoke a cigarette. I'll quit one day.

I've been watching you more closely this go around. I know your game. It's not just him you want. No, you're smarter than that. You want a piece of all of us. Make us all fear your name. Shudder when it's mentioned. You like to see us wait. Baited breath, scared to talk about you. Scared of what you're gonna throw at him this time. I watch you do it. You get off on it. I light my cigarette and curse you're name. I'll quit on day.

I sit here at this desk. Typing. Getting more pissed at every click this keyboard makes. You take and take. You eat and eat. I don't get it. It's not like you're something anyone can make sense of. Doctors. Priests. Shrinks. Higher power. Reason for everything. I'm about six cigarettes in just typing. Fucking cancer. And I've watched you do.

Just lit another cigarette. I'll quit one day.

Poetry-Third Place

Small Town

Eric Adams

I am from a small town,
where trees grow tall and mock the sun.
I am a dream that seems hard to fit;
too little to care
I am from Satsuma Valley.

I am from a dirt driveway, a place
where little green men fought valiantly.
I am from a snake in the tree,
that scared my mother into cursing
I am from ageless innocence.

I am from a yellow house with a green door,
where a storm with a name gave it color
I am from a room where a tree fell into,
a place where fingers learned an instrument.
I am from continuous inspiration.

I am from a loud family,
celebration turns into insults.
I am from a calm family,
celebration turns into insults.
I am from ironic, witty blood.

I am from a hippy-metal neighbor,
a broken and ill man.
I am from a Russian neighbor,

who moved for a hippy man.
I am from a Tall blonde widow.

I am from a neighbor whom I called uncle;
Uncle Joe is my cousin.
I am from the smell of pipe smoke,
Captain Black tobacco.
I am from a lingering reminder of my grandfather.

I am from over 4 acres of land,
where money could be made mowing.
I am from a slanted smile of my father,
Where he gave me the news of his mother.
I am from a day spent hot and teary eyed.

I am from a railroad city
a town that echoes with a train.
I am from a close call of death,
but a patient wait for the engine to pass.
I am from a traveling train car.

I am from a small newspaper
nicknamed with a rhyme
I am from a summer editing papers
a small town stress for gratitude
I am from the smell of ink.

I am from a weekend of car enthusiasm
where a town yells, "Burn Em'!"
I am from money spent on tires,
incapable of not pleasing the people.
I am from a feeling of togetherness.

I am from a pen and paper,
a sparking passion to write songs.
I am from *Freewheellin Bob Dylan*
where I didn't have to think twice.
I am from new dreams and passions.

I am from a creek that sits below bridges
a place to gather with friends and relax
I am from time spent in a canoe
where phones and lighters were lost
I am from the brown sand.

I am from a sports crazed society
where football was what I "needed"
I am from a head ducked too soon
a trip to Houston for assuring health
I am from the new found appreciation for the girl trainers.

I am from a small town
where my life has been shaped
I am from a big family
where my life learns more every day
I am from Silsbee, Texas.



Photography-Honorable Mention

Loni Prouse

Poetry-Honorable Mention

I Only Thought You Were My Friend

Chelsey Jennings

You tried to act like you were my friend.
Not really caring if I was alive or dead.
We go way back to when I was young and started off with a
simple puff.
I would inhale what you had to offer
Never knowing our relationship would only go farther.
You always made me feel so good and took away all my pain.
The only problem is that there was really nothing to gain.
Years went by and you took away so many things.
My mind, my connection with God, my self confidence and
peace.
Eventually you led me to more difficult places in my life.
Introducing me to others and again not caring if I were dead or
alive.
You led me down a dark scary road with no hand to hold.
It never mattered to you how I felt because you were strong
and bold.
I became lost and confused with no end in sight
you didn't care you would rather put up a fight.
Days upon days I would go without sleep, I was so blind and in
to deep.
You would make me see things that weren't really there
and had me believing that no one really cared.
I wanted to let go so many times but you would always change
my mind.
When my kids came into this world, all I wanted was to give

them more.

Like every other time though you would win the war.

Always thinking that something was inside me crawling around

Sometimes wondering if I would be better off in the ground.

All I wanted was for it to all go away.

I never wanted my kids to have to pay.

You took away their mother and precious time together

I wish I could go back and do it all over.

So much of my past lost because of you

But I finally found a way to say out with the old in with the new.

I've moved on and left you far behind, never again will I give you
the time.

God has gave me a second chance and I truly believe that you
were brought in my life for a reason.

He has a plan and I guess you were meant to be

But I must say I know now I hate you with every part of me.

If it weren't for you I wouldn't be who I am today

All I can do now is "just say no" and continue to pray.

Poetry-Honorable Mention

No Specific Place

Rebecca Westbrook

I am from no specific place, because I don't know where I stand. I am from the influence of life's hardships, and the scars of my past. I am from the life that's gone through everything, but keeps on going.

I am from hiding behind the couch and holding my breath at three years old. I am from an alcoholic father, and a drug consumed mother. I am from the death of an 18 year old brother and simultaneously any care I might have had left in my body.

I am from lying about the bruises on my face, and the tears in my eyes. I am from being left alone too many times with him, and not knowing how to ask for help. I am from dragging my mother from the couch to the bed, and putting out her half lit cigarette.

I am from public humiliation, because you can't be a normal kid when you have to be an adult. I am from being told I'll never make it, over and over again.

I am from moving out at sixteen and trying to make it on my own, because my one parent didn't know how to parent. I am from emancipation. I am from wanting to give up ninety percent of my life.

I am from no hopes or dreams, because you can't dream if nobody's ever taught you how to hope. I am from not being able to wait until I got home, so I could pass the time in my room alone. I am from no importance.

I am from the mental picture of my dead brother in my head. I am from the regret that sinks in every time I remind myself that

I wasn't there. I am from the screaming on the inside that tears through the outside. I am from my scarred knees that have given out from beneath me so many times before.

I am from social anxiety. I am from the shortness of breath that overcomes me every time I walk into a room full of happy people. I am from the fear of being judged, and the hope of going unnoticed.

I am from the nightmares that interrupt my sleep. I am from the reality of my life, and the disbelief that it turned out the way it did. I am from the regret filled conscious of a secret abortion, and the miscarried twins my karma took away from me at 18 shortly after.

I am from the desperate need of a shoulder to cry on, but after 19 years of keeping everything inside, letting it all out becomes the biggest fear. I am from my sadness that turned into anger. I am from barely making it to graduation. I am from hopelessly looking up in the stands and feeling stupid for thinking that they might actually show. I am from the tears that smudged the ink on my diploma.

I am from the realization that the opportunity to feel like a kid is gone, and the pain I get in my chest that says I'll never know what that feels like.

I am from the decision I made to turn my negatives into something positive. I am from the self-pity that I threw away with my past. I am from the ambition that derived from any doubt that anybody ever had in me.

I am from the sincere thank you that I give to those who told me I couldn't make it. I am from the experiences that have made me, because I am from the many lessons in life that I have learned.

Poetry-Honorable Mention

Being a College Student

Alyssa Bonilla

Love

I love the feeling of going forward in my life. I will be able to eventually get a better job. I will be making a lot more money as a nurse. I will be able to take care of myself without the help of anyone else. I will be independent. I will be a better mom. I will be able to do anything I want. I will be able to buy everything I need. I will have a better life. My daughter will have a better life.

I love the challenges. Many new challenges arise that I have not encountered before. Keeping my grades decent is one of the hardest ones; it takes a lot of dedication. Working and going to school full-time, while being a single mother is my greatest challenge. Being able to stay awake in class, being present in every class, and paying attention in those classes after I have been up all night studying are definitely challenges I face as a college student.

I love the atmosphere. Seeing how the professors and students interact with one another intrigues me. The security guards make you feel safe, except those few times while they are sitting down eating their cupcakes and right outside the doors marijuana is being smoked.

I love seeing the newcomers during the first week of the semester. It doesn't take long to figure out who is new and who isn't. The newcomers never know where they are going or what

to expect. They look like lost sheep trying to find their herd. They never know where the restrooms are. I can see the nervousness in their eyes. Their bodies are tense and they walk quickly so they won't be late to class. They want to make a good impression on the teachers.

I love being a college student.

Hate

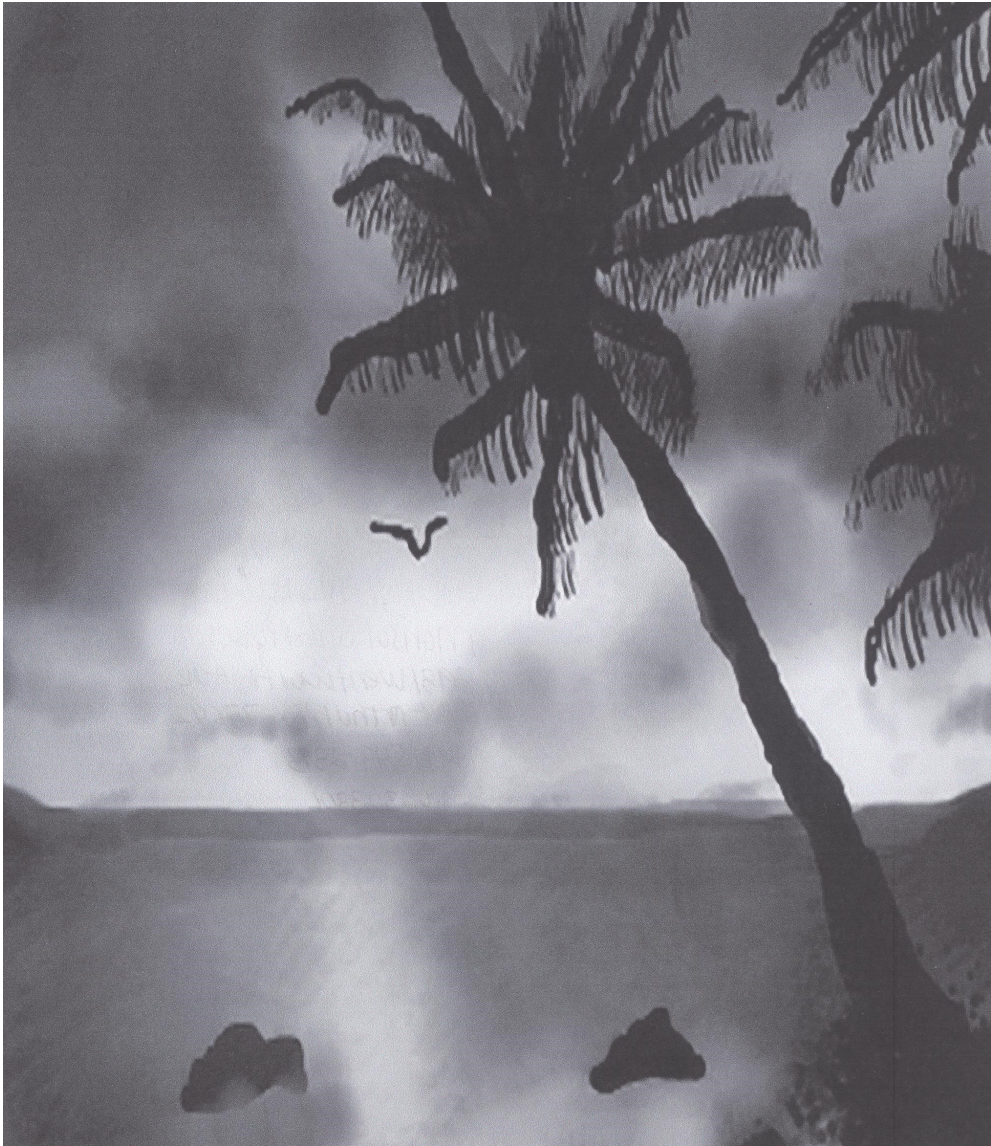
I hate all the studying I have to do. There are many nights that I don't sleep at all just so I can study for an exam. I have wasted hundreds of hours studying for pop tests, quizzes, major exams, and finals. All that time could have been spent with my daughter, Amari. There are numerous events that I have to miss because of studying. I have had to miss birthday parties, dance recitals, gymnastics classes, and soccer games. Studying takes up too much time in my life.

I hate thinking about the money I have spent to be able to attend college. Thousands of dollars have been invested into my college education, and all I can think about are the countless people who aren't as fortunate as me. It's a shame to think about all the money I have given up to buy books that are required for certain classes, but are never even opened or touched after they are bought.

I hate the emotional stress. Constantly worrying about homework, tests, and if I will have enough time to fit everything in to my jammed-packed schedule really takes its toll on me. Emotional stress is much worse than physical stress. I get very strong and painful headaches often, and it takes what seems like an eternity for them to subside. I worry too much. I care too much about school, but I can't help it. That's just how I am and I'm not going to change.

I hate being an over-achiever. I'm a perfectionist and always have to make the highest grade. I have to keep my straight "A" record. I will not accept anything below an "A" average. That is my standard, and anything below that is not my best.

I hate being a college student.



Digital Art-First Place

Marisol Lua-Figueroa

Poetry-Honorable Mention

I've Gone to Hell Before

Eric Adams

I've gone to hell before
It wasn't the time I had my face and hands burned in a fire
Nor was it the time I passed out drunk with unfamiliar people
It was in a field-tent-church-revival hoopla

Tall men wearing suits and black ties in the summer
Yelling at everyone, "FEAR THE LORD!"
My peer's red in the face with similar sadness of death
I was young and afraid of cooties

Loud music of praise shakes the tent in a rapid movement
As this happens the people throw their hands in the air
More crying, more yelling, even more death filled eyes
rubbernecking

I closed my eyes in fear of my whole fourteen years of existing

As a message begins to sit into the ears of the good
men and women

Dialogue of all the things wrong with them and I begin
It is only that of luck shall we enter heaven

I am broken, cursed, evil, childish, and bent for hell

The heat of hell begins to increase with every word
People are now broken, cursed, evil, childish, and bent for hell
Family whom never shows signs of sadness are shaken with
each inhale for air

I am learning. I am learning.

The night last for one hundred dog years
The grass from the ground could be given a week's worth of
nutrients from the weeping
The sound of Bible pages shuffling sounds that of a
helicopter landing
My Bible has my name in it and an assuring message
from my mother

Time begins to slow down and the message is in its last decade
A word begins to repeat, saved, saved, saved...
The good men and women are not saved, so they walk
to the front
I am not saved, but my legs are tired.

I came back to earth from hell and have learned much
from the trip
Sinning is what I do, on accident and on purpose
I am human. I am human. I am.
I am still not saved

I am not in fear of the one who made this world
I am not in fear for I live to give good times to others
Men take words and make them mean what they want
them to mean
Fear is a terrible way to enjoy and give thanks
I have gone to hell before, **but I'm back**

Poetry-Honorable Mention

Runaway Teen

Kathrine Waterbury

I am from the knocked-up, runaway teenage bride, no more Indianettes for her. I am from the father on the oil rig, resenting a paycheck spent on diapers and formula, nights spent in bars picking up new girls.

I am from coming home one afternoon to find a new father, older, not a fan of children. A new house. Too nice for babies to play. Put them in their room and keep them quiet. A new brother, 16. "You have to do it to be my sister." Late night blow jobs. Details not worth remembering.

I am from a suicide attempt in the fifth grade. It's my fault. "Of course there are no problems in the home". It's not about what you know, but who. CPS in new daddy's back pocket. He will handle his son, no need to bring in the law. Stick her in therapy. She'll be ok.

I am from the legacy of disappointment. She didn't finish school, but he will. He didn't finish school, but you must. I am from, "You're getting fat. Gotta do something, not acceptable." Weight Watchers at 9 years old. "No one's gonna love you looking like that." I am from starvation. Lose fifty pounds in one summer. "Atta girl. Good Job."

I am from leaving this house. Leaving their tyranny. "I'm fourteen, what's the worst that could happen?" A night on the streets. I am from moving in with Gramma, too bad it only lasted a month.

I am from screw the scholarships, screw this house, screw your money, screw you. I am from eighteen means freedom and it's my world now. I am from Strawberry Hill some guy outside the store bought us. Smoking a joint makes it better. The powder, not so much. Makes me want to fight. "Breath in, don't blow out. You'll get the hang of it."

I am from 24. No more drugs, no more fat, working hard. Making money. No college, but at least I'm doing good. "Mom, I'm pregnant."

I am from, "Get an abortion, or we won't speak again." She kept her word for a year that time. I am from the first miscarriage. Mental anguish, losing my mind. Write about it. It's cathartic.

I am from, "I do." "It's a boy!" "I've been sleeping with her when you thought I was at work." "Shut the hell up!" I am from another lost baby. Not as bad this time. I am from cleaning the blood from my busted face off the wall after I throw his crap into the front yard and change the locks.

I am from healing myself. Raise my son to be a man. Don't need a daddy, don't need anybody. "Me and you against the world Little Man." I am from, "I love you Mommy!"

I am from a text from Scott. Damn, he's patient, waited fifteen years. "Coffee sometime?" "Seriously...lol?" Wow, he's persistent. I am from, "I love you, Katherine, trust me. I won't hurt you. You're safe here."

I am from, "I do." Water broke, its time. "Gotta cut! No time, heart rate is dropping! Cut now! Cord is around the neck! Do it now!" I am from their drug induced sleep. I am from, "It's a girl! Happy and healthy."

I am from the husband at the ship yard over joyed spending paychecks on diapers and formula. I am from walking into class a year ago afraid. Too old to try again. I am from laundry and dinner and kids with homework. Late night moments with a man who loves me. I am from a spirit not broken. I am from me.

EXPRESSIONS



2013

Lo Pinto 12

Cover Art-Honorable Mention

David Lo Pinto

Poetry-Honorable Mention

Living the Dream

Marianne Hunt

American born and bred I am, land of dreams and possibilities
I can accomplish anything in this day and age
As I grow older I can only see impossibilities await me
My dreams seem farther and farther out of reach

Where is this dream I thought could be
I look around but all I can see
Is pain, destruction, and limitations around me

Little children are homeless no coats, clothes or shoes
on their feet

Parents without enough money for bills
Good hardworking people don't even have money to eat
Hard times day in and day out

Why can't we just help a fellow American out

You don't worry about college tuition or danger
for your kids at school

The scores on the STAAR test are more important than
real learning, you fool

I beg to differ, reading, math, playing and social interactions are
more important to me

Play 60 each day, right, my kid is at home studying until night
You think it's more important to change what they eat
Butt out and leave what my child eats to me

Our safety is an issue, our streets are unsafe
Gangs, guns, drugs, and deadly immigrant trafficking
seems to be a bigger fight

You are afraid that putting more police on the street
will put you in the red
If you don't good citizens are dead

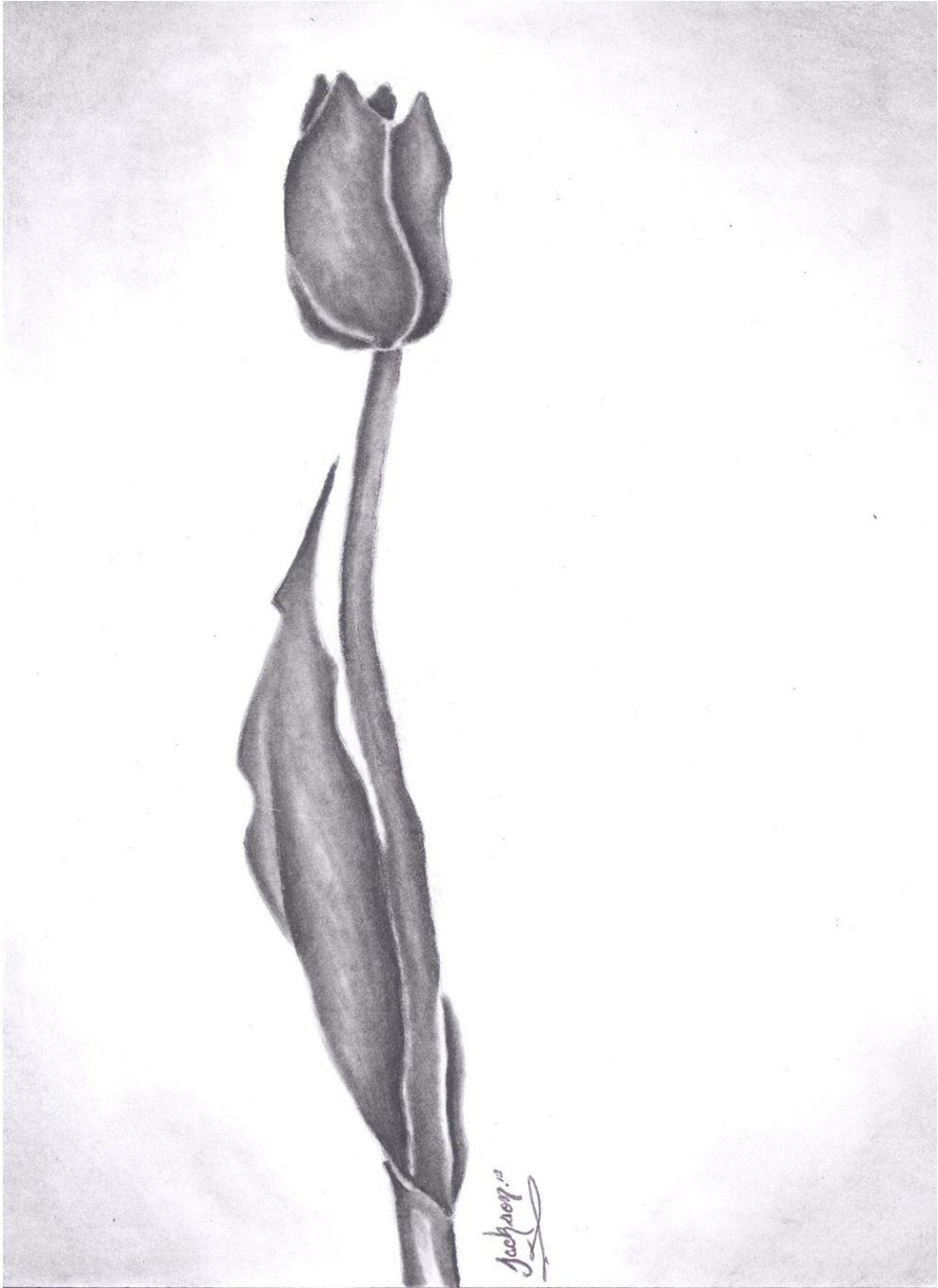
Balancing the budget seems easy, it's clear to me
Cut your paycheck and benefits in half
then maybe you'll see
There's plenty of money for you, law enforcement,
the military and me

On Capital Hill you're the big cheese dressed in a suit
while I wear jeans
I wash my own clothes, but you're the dry-cleaning type,
nicely ironed no wrinkles in sight
My home is simple no housekeeper, pool boy or landscapers
just little ole me

Taking multiple vacations a year, that's you not me

The lawmakers and elite are the only ones I can see
Making more rules and financial burdens for me
Tougher and tougher for me to be
Living the American dream

They have the best salaries, healthcare and retirement
But me I struggle from paycheck to paycheck
I want to see the hardworking people succeed
Where the hell is our American Dream?



General Art-Honorable Mention
West Jackson



Haiku

In the Spirit of Haiku

The Japanese poetry of Haiku is often introduced to young children as a means of experiencing the halcyon of nature and describing a transcendental moment via a structured 3-line description, the three lines consisting of 5, 7, 5 syllables. The art of haiku writing revolves around connecting the beauty of nature with the discipline of pithy poetry. In fact, the practice of composing haiku can help a person relax and form serene bonds with their environments. Traditional haikus contain a *kigo*, or a word that simply hints at a season, a part of nature, or even the weather. Haiku bridges the careful construction of syllables with “painting a poem.”

As a lesson in both meditation and poetry, I brought this peculiar yet captivating Eastern philosophy to my Composition students, requisitioning them to try their hand at haiku. Indeed their haiku lesson metamorphosed into my own modest project, but please note that the concept came to me after the judging for the Expressions 2013 was already completed, hence each haiku’s honorable mention.

The following pages are the fruit of my students’ personalized facsimile of an ancient art: I present to you a feast for the mind! *Enjoy.*

~Caitlin James

Lost in outer space
I see a lost of unknowns
Someone rescue me.

~ ~ ~

As we move forward
I bounce around like a sphere
Never to return.

~ ~ ~

Extremely mislead
Like a man with no vision
I repeat mistakes.

Calvin Thomas

Wild blue silence paints
Heavy hearts like fire written
Across Heaven's door.

~ ~ ~

He who expects no
Reward shall never be broke
Or rich in Heaven.

Ronnie Arline

Sand between my toes
The salty taste in the wind
Ocean, *my* escape.

Crystal Venegas

Sound of kids crying
Due to their mother's dying
Pray for Israel.

Haley Denton

A dove is in flight
The airborne are resting snow
The wind is a bed.

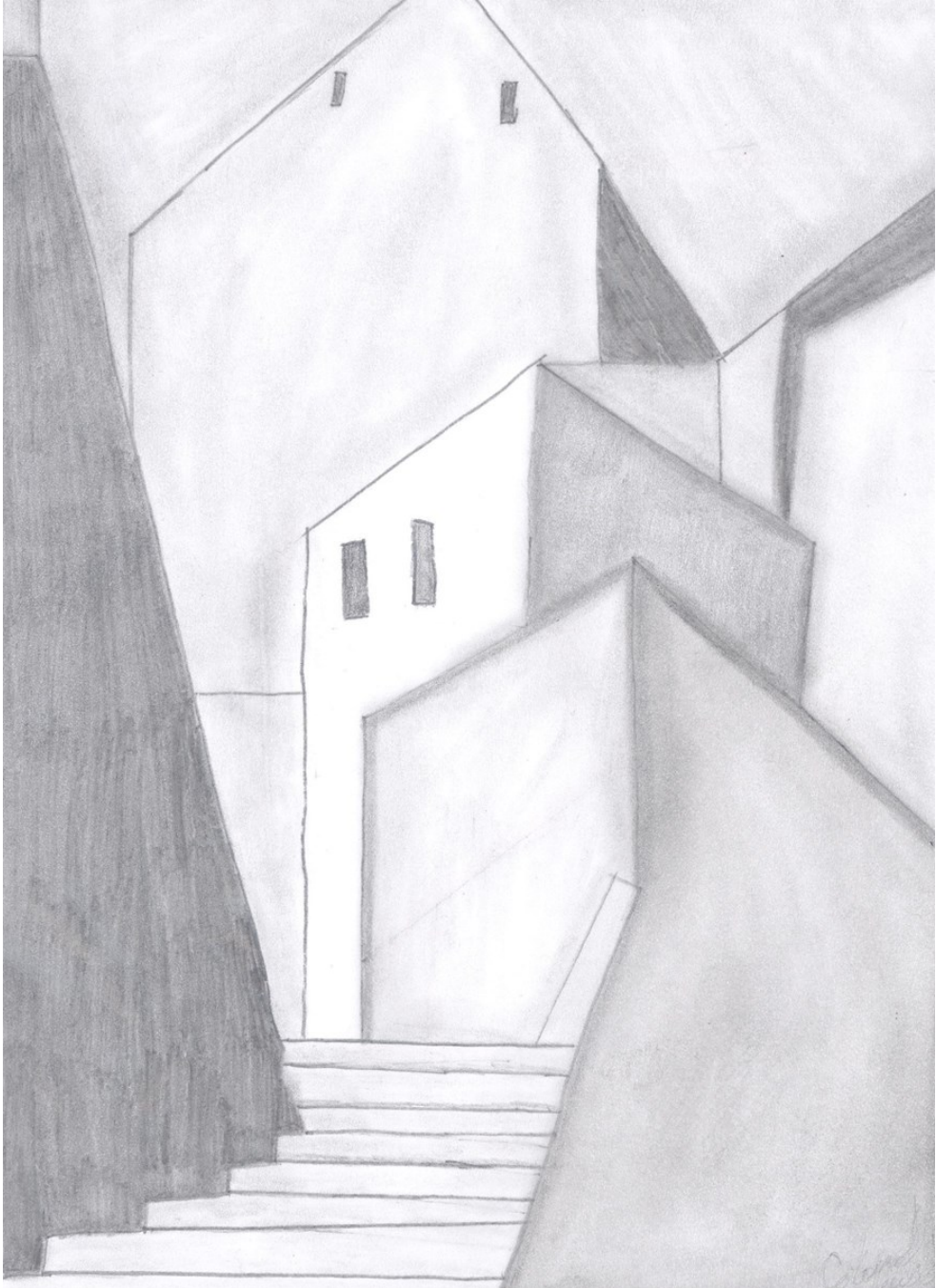
Javiean Pierre

A flower in bloom
Music to the bumble bee
Beauty to the eye.

~ ~ ~

Buzzing in the spring
Hovering over flowers
Honey is its trade.

Martin Sigur, Jr.



General Art-Honorable Mention

Colonel Lewis

Hostess got shut down
No more Twinkies or Ding Dongs
Now what will we eat?

Brandon Beard

Puddles drying up
Molecules become dark clouds
Big clouds get heavy.

Tiffany Jacobo

Five syllables here
Seven syllables are there
Are you happy now?

Brittany Viramontes

Round ball, simple touch
Skilled players run on the court
Shoot, he scored we win.

Evan Sims

Clouds cover the sky
Shaded spots we find to lay
Rest your head on me.

~ ~ ~

Water filled the quest
Days of wind blew from the west
The Captain won't rest.

Kendall Williams

Light reveals my secret
Illuminating my soul
I long for the dark

John Abalos

Watching the sunset
Makes me think where the time goes
Looking through these bars.

Kiesha Fletcher

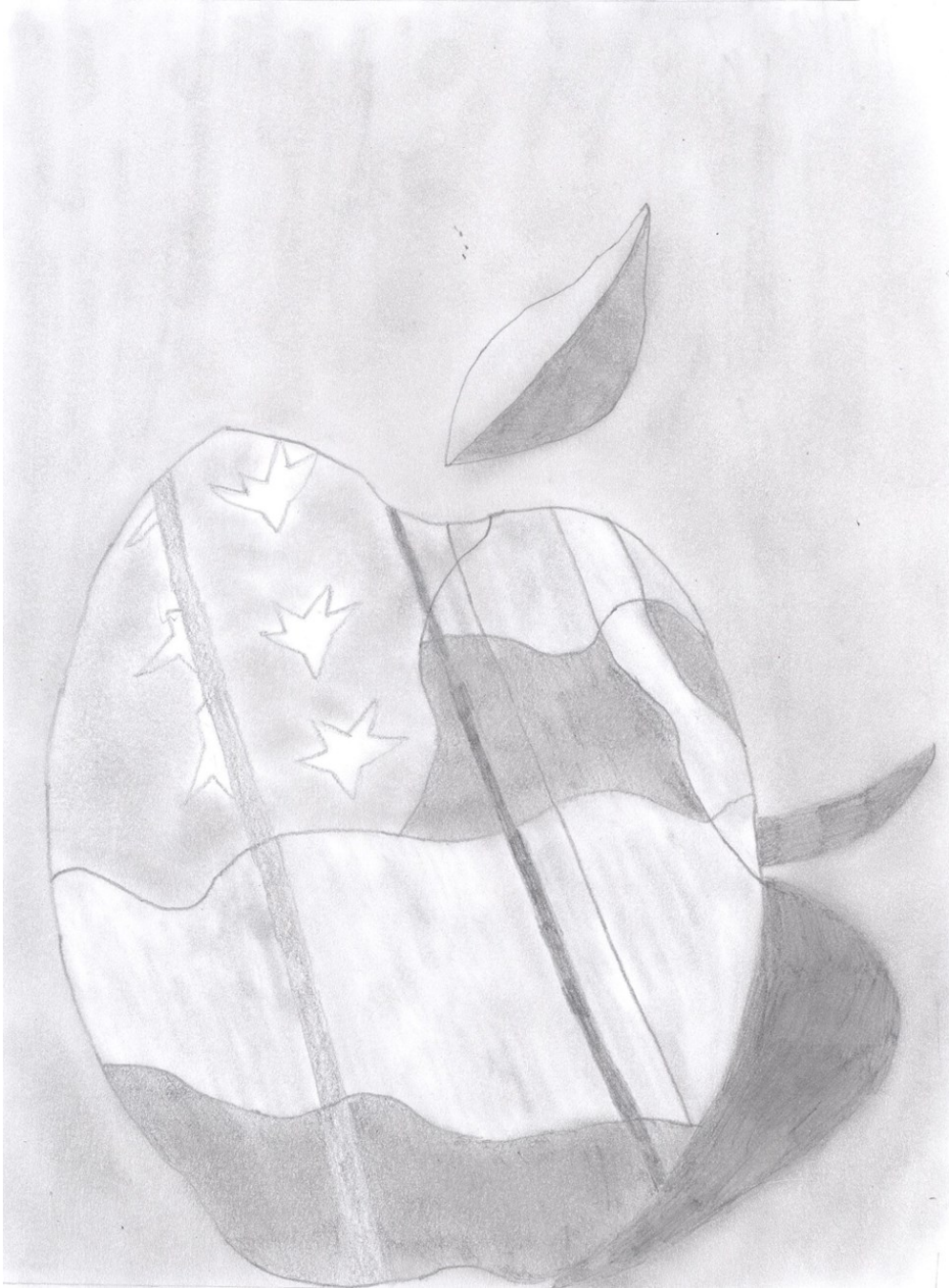
Make yourself today
No one can take your beliefs
Hope is where they stay.

Right by the ocean
A breeze through the emotions
Holding back a smile.

Warming, tender love
Such a gentle touch to feel
Is this forever?

In a complete mess
I will now retrace my roots
To erase my past.

Travis McCoy



General Art-Honorable Mention

Bobby Sears

The house is silent
The family is sleeping
I ate a cookie.

~ ~ ~

I smell the bacon
I awaken from my slumber
It taste amazing.

~ ~ ~

I hear the calling
To Waco I must go to
Air traffic control.

Alexander Albair

My hair was so long
But I chose to cut it off
Oh how I miss you.

~ ~ ~

Burgers so juicy
Tomatoes, lettuce, pickles
Make my mouth water

Jennifer Zambrano

Hot like fire sweet
Bitter taste, slowly poison
A kiss meant to kill.

~ ~ ~

Passion overwhelms
Beautiful flames consume,
The heart's claimed by lust.

Christina Humphrey

Dripping down water
Beauty running deep within
Fast pace gushing streams.

Lindsay Duff

Hips don't skip a beat,
I hear music move my feet,
Music I find easy to beat.

Sandra Galvan

United People
To fight for their Liberty
Rose one of Many
~ ~ ~

The circus is great
Elephants and juggling
Away scary clowns.

Brandon Gary

The petite clovers
On the hillside dance about
Their own Wee Sean-Nós

Brittnie Blackburn

Winter is frosty
Chilling through my head to toes
Leave me today.

Megan Odom

Frost this morning and
Cold winter, scatters leave like
Broken promises.

Gabriela Ceja

Nothing compares to
the Texas weather endured
And the winter mood.

Domonique Luchin

During every year
Although never a surprise
Winter comes and goes.

~ ~ ~

Lying in the sand
My body slowly heating
The summer sun beams.

Ashley Inagaki

She grabbed both my hands
We sank our toes in the sand
The came her ex man.

Craig Veasie

My name is Bryant
Better known as Brother James
Middle name is Paul.

Bryant James

We reap what we sow
No bad thoughts, no bad actions
Purify your soul.

Nhan Nyguen

Winter is now here
Snowflakes fall against the world
Hello Santa and elves.

~ ~ ~

Close your eyes to dream
As flowers fall from the sky
A beautiful day

Shalandra Guillory



Digital Art- Second Place
Gloria J. Williams



Photography-Honorable Mention
Marisol Lua-Figueroa

Faculty
and
Staff



Love my students, all
Some try, some don't, hope all learn
I try, but do they?

Can teach good writing
Can't teach thinking, so sorry
Must arrive with thoughts

Michelle Judice
Faculty



Bloom where now planted
Rooted too deeply to leave
Memories of another

Michelle Judice
Faculty



Storm's thunder was gone
I told her it would return
She said, silence then.

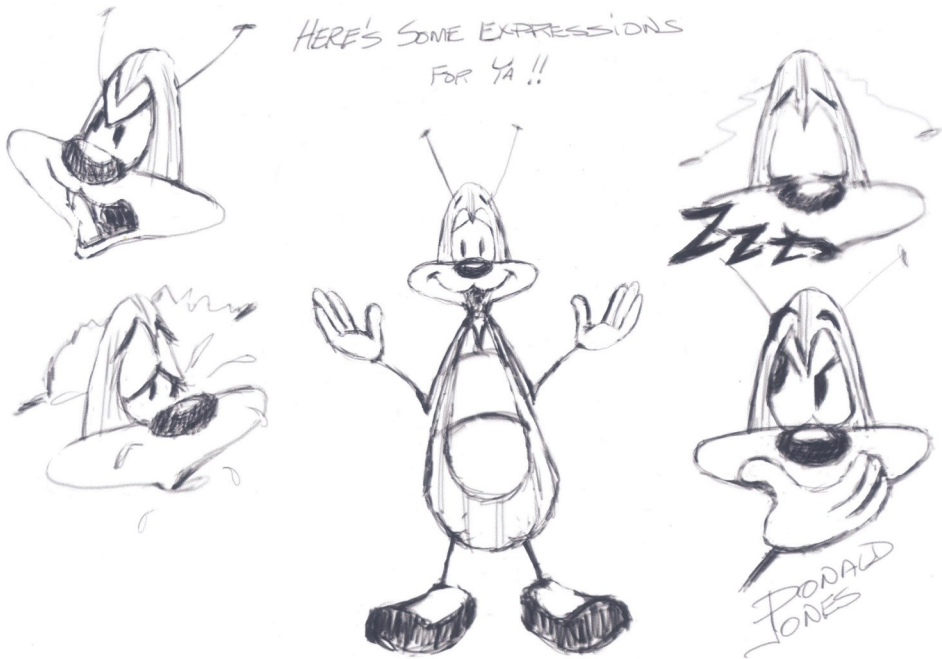
Windy are the plains
Flat, gold-covered fields of grain
Summer winds blow home

Caitlin James
Faculty



Danced an Irish jig
Never find my heart again
Lost in New Orleans

Caitlin James
Faculty



Donald Jones
Staff

LITE SIDE

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE...

William Cowper Brann was a writer and journalist who lived in Texas in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. He was editor of at least four Texas dailies, and in 1891 he founded a periodical in Austin, which folded within a year due to financial woes. Two years later, he reactivated the monthly magazine, which he called the *Iconoclast*, in Waco, where it met with immediate success and within two years had a national and international circulation of more than 100,000.

A self-educated journalist, he crusaded against many issues, social, political, and religious. As a result of his stand on a local squabble involving a scandal at Baylor University, he was assassinated on the streets of Waco by an ardent Baylor supporter on April 1, 1898. However, as handy with his gun as with his prose, he returned fire, killing his attacker.

He was a wizard with words, rivaling H. L. Mencken. (who was to follow him) in his satirical wit. He anticipated Molly Ivins in publicizing the antics of Texas "lege" labeling the legislators as "crap-shooting, chippy-chasing freeloaders, " and saying that "nature makes no mistake-when she finds a man who's good for nothing else in the universe she sends him to the legislature to make laws."

The following anecdote concerning the Texas twenty-third legislature comes from one of his issues of *The Iconoclast*. According to Brann, "there were some queer characters in the Twenty-third legislature." With a cut in their per-diems from \$5.00 to \$2.00, many of the members became economical and left their hotels for private rooming houses. One gentleman, "who had been living on the fat of the land," found a boarding house "whose chef was not imported from France." As Brann told it:

His epicurean stomach could not stand it, but he'd go in every day

with other guests, survey the banquet board, and sorrowfully murmur, 'Thirteen-eight' then leave without touching his fodder and fill up on free lunch at Charlie Cortizo's . As he was a Populist by profession, the household soon sized him up as a dangerous lunatic and the landlord became greatly alarmed.

"Here," he demanded, "what the devil do you mean by this 'Thirteen-eight'' business?" With a sorrowful countenance, the frustrated diner replied, 'I always call to mind a verse of scripture when I sit down to meat, and the eighth verse of the thirteenth chapter of Hebrews invariably occurs to me first when I tackle your table.' Then he moved to other quarters, while the landlord borrowed a Bible, turned to the designated verse and read: *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*

(The Complete Works of William Cowper Brann—Vol 8)

To prove that some humor is timeless,
when the menu at a Minnesota
Elderhostel relentlessly featured corn,
potatoes, gravy, and pasta for lunch six
days in a row, my husband was heard to
mutter in a low voice, "Hebrews 13-8."

Sue L. Wright
Faculty

Alternate colors
Rainbow hues in blocks
Cozy blanket made

Janet Polk
Staff



Now, She Was Ready to Begin Her Morning....

The alarm went off promptly at 6:00 a.m. Immediately she punched the button to stop the incessant reminder that her morning was about to begin. Though she knew it was time to “get up and at ‘em,” she rolled herself tighter into her covers and happily dozed off to finish her dreams.

In what seemed only seconds later her eyes flew open. Her aging eyes could no longer clearly see the numbers on the clock. She fumbled for her glasses, puts them on, and focused through the lenses and the remainder of last night’s dry eye ointment. It is apparent *3600 seconds* had passed since she rolled over and turned her back to the alarm.

Great oogalee-moogalee, she muttered.

She threw back her warm blankets and swung her legs over to the side of the bed. While she was working out the kinks in her back and feet, Dottie, one of the black and white tuxedo felines, crawled out from under her lady’s casted off covers while head bunting the arm that supplies her morning “lovins.”

When Dottie was satisfied, she effortlessly jumped down off

the bed. She joined her twin sister, Trouble and the Maine Coon, Boots; the trio took off for the “office” to take care of business.

On the other hand, while the girls trot off, their “gal” cautiously put her feet on the floor, testing to see if they would accept her full weight. The feet are sore but she can stand; then she gingerly hobbled toward her “office.”

The warm water of the shower and lavender soap did their job by relaxing the muscles and soothing the senses that had been earlier assaulted. The aroma of fresh brewed French vanilla coffee wafted through the house; the glorious hot brown elixir was slowly sipped and experienced.

Now, she was ready to begin her morning....

Janet G. Polk
Staff

*Thank you to all
contributors
and
Congratulations
to those
published in
Expressions 2013*

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Statement of Editorial Policy

The editorial staff of EXPRESSIONS 2013 would like to thank all of the students who submitted work for consideration to EXPRESSIONS 2013 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 2013 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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