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Expressions

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General Art—First Place

Richard Limon



*Short
Story*

Short Story

First Place

Greyborn

Brenin Reece

A large plane landed smoothly onto the Ironfield city runway, as the roar of the engines began to die. At that time Dr. Quentin Specter, CEO of Specter Robotics, came strolling down the strip accompanied by men in blue uniforms. He wore a triumphant grin, as the men wheeled large canisters to his laboratory. However, before he could reach the building, anxious and boisterous news reporters bombarded Quentin. Cameras flashed with an unyielding presence, assaulting Quentin's retinas. Before even one clear word was uttered by the horde of reporters, he became deeply annoyed. Quentin hated being caught off guard.

The reporters continued to shout incoherently like animals for some time, hounding Quentin as if he were a slab of meat. "One at a time!" Quentin shouted back in disgust. It was then that the crowd became domesticated. "The people are dying to know Doctor, what's in the canisters, what exactly did you find?" one reporter pried.

"They may be dying" —Quentin laughed— "but they're going to have to suffer for a bit longer.

"Do you plan to continue creating instruments of war, in the name of peace?" another reporter asked sarcastically.

"I do not create instruments of war, I create instruments of freedom." snapped Quentin.

"Do you have any comments on the militaristic use of your drones?" shouted a man in the back.

“No further questions! Now if you would be so kind as to leave the premises... You are trespassing on private property.” Dr. Quentin groaned. After a fuss, the reporters began to depart, but not before taking a few pictures of the doctor’s mysterious find. Finally arriving to the lab, the uniformed men set down the canisters, then left immediately after. Quentin greeted his colleagues, puzzled looks on their faces as they eyed the mysterious grey ore. “Come now Quentin, what is the meaning of all this?” asked one man.

“Gentlemen, I believe that we may have discovered an element, previously foreign to this world.” Quentin said, barely keeping in his excitement.

“Quentin are you for certain, a new—?”

“For the love of God Marley, what did I just say?” Quentin barked.

“How can you be entirely sure?” asked another man.

“Around five years ago, I observed a meteorite crash site in the Rykheim desert, and began to study the ore. It was then that I encountered this very mineral deposit and labeled it ‘Grey-0.’”

“What did you find in your research of the element?” asked Marley.

“It is extremely durable, lighter than a pillow, denser than Lead, but most importantly it has displayed the ability of fast acting adaptation to its environment.” Quentin whispered.

“How is such a thing even possible?” questions Professor Marley.

“I’m just as confused as you are my friend, my tests have been inconclusive.” says Quentin. “I need more time with it before I can come up with any solid reasoning.”

The other Scientists agree to lend their minds to figuring out the elements secrets, and begin working from dusk till dawn. For the next couple of months, Quentin could rarely be seen save for inside his lab, seldom sleeping for days on end. Professor Marley stood by his side with unwavering strength, but worried that Quentin may have been overexerting himself. Heading home for the night, Professor Marley waved goodbye to Quentin, who was too preoccupied to notice. At home, Marley’s wife Rhida was

cleaning the kitchen table as the Professor opened the door,
“Honey I’m—”

“Late for dinner... again.” She groaned.

“I was held up at the office with Quentin, what do suggest I should have done, left him to rot? The man is obsessed, he hasn’t left his lab for weeks, he rarely sleeps or bathes for God’s sake!” Marley protested.

“I need you to make time for me, for your daughter, for us!”

“It was a sacrifice for me to even be here tonight! He’s not well Rhida, I’ve never seen a man so determined, so hell bent on his goals; I’ll be damned if I leave him to his own devices!”

“You’re already damned, you care more about some God forsaken moon rock more than your own—”

“Dad...” Said a soft voice. “I didn’t know you were coming home, me and Mama made quiche, we saved you some in the oven.”

“Thank you Junior...” Marley said hoarsely.

Marley was woken up the next morning by the ringing of his cell-phone, upon checking his phone he saw that he had 7 missed calls from Quentin, and a text that read, “Get here immediately, you can eat breakfast later!”

“— God damn it Quentin.” Said Marley, palming his face.

Marley drove to the university and sprinted to Professor Quentin’s lab. Out of breath, Marley opens the door to see the professor working on what could only be described as, “An android...?” coughed Marley.

Doctor Quentin looked back with a curious face, “Did you run all the way here?”

“You told me to get here immediately, You left me seven voicemails!” Shouted Marley.

“*That* I do recall, you sleep very late may I say—”

“It’s 6:00 A.m. Quentin, what was so urgent?” Coughed Marley.

“The Grey-0—”

“Yes, yes, I know, What about it?”

“It seems to be some form of programmable matter.” Said Quentin plainly.

Marley’s eyes widened as he shut the door; He was speechless. Quentin walked over and took Marley by the shoulder, “I wouldn’t have broken your sleep, and pulled you away from your wife unless I had a damn good reason.”

“Rhida thought you were insane...”

“None of that matters now, does it? We cracked this, together, and I couldn’t have done it otherwise.”

“What exactly are we going to do with it?”

“I want to create a being in our image, something that can go farther than we ever could, see things we could never see.”

“What should we call it?”

“How about, ‘Greyborn.’”



Photography—First Place

Victoria Jackson

Short Story

Second Place

Life After Death

Jonathon Krebbs

Michael walked out of the door dumbfounded by what he had just been told. Two weeks prior he went in for his annual doctor's appointment. He had made it a habit to get checked every 5 years, and since last month he had turned 40, it was time. He was never sick, so this was meant as routine precaution. After what he had just been told all precautions had failed.

He stumbled to the steps and collapsed. Dr. Andrews was out and the fill in doctor, Dr. Ami, who he had seen was kind but cold as he explained how Michael has stage 4 cancer and was expected to only live 6 months. Once the doctor had left the office Michael felt unable to take anymore and had to get out of there. Now he found himself sitting on some steps thinking of his father who had suffered through cancer and died a horrible death. Strapped to a hospital bed with tubes coming out of everywhere. Michael did not want to follow in his footsteps.

It took a moment for Michael to realize the noise he was hearing was his cell phone. He looked at the call id and saw it was someone from the doctor's office. Michael couldn't deal with that right now and let it go to voicemail. No sooner had the phone stopped ringing than it started again. This time the ID said "Office" and Michael answered it more out of reflex than rally wanting to answer.

Michael sighed then pushed accept "Hello."

“Mr. Thomas where the hell are you? Its 1:30 and the power went out on line one again. You need to be here fixing your mess.” said the voice.

Michael instantly recognized the voice. Earl Wexler. Mr. Wexler was Michael’s boss and one of the biggest pricks in a company full of pricks. Michael had worked for the same company for 22 years. He had started fresh out of high school and worked his way up to Production Manager. Michael had never really wanted to work there, feeling like his hard work was never appreciated, and however he was good at what he did. The money was the only reason he worked there.

Michael could barely talk but managed to say “Mr. Wexler I’m dealing with a serious problem right now.”

“So what are you saying Mr. Thomas? That this company losing money because of you isn’t important?” Mr. Wexler said with pure contempt.

As the question Mr. Wexler asked was broken down in Michael’s mind it was applied literally. Michael answered literally “Mr. Wexler the company has time to fix its problems, I don’t. So if the problem is so important to you why don’t you get off your fat ass and fix it. You want to run things why don’t you run your unappreciated ass out on that line and run things!” Michael was so mad that he was dying and this guy thought he had problems. “As a matter of fact Earl I quit. Don’t call me you ungrateful prick.” And Michael hung up.

Michael was shaking with fury as he stood and walked to his car. Once he was in the car, he started it and turned the AC to high. He sat there thinking he should have quit years ago. He should have went to college and done something meaningful. How much of his life had he wasted? He could not help thinking “It’s amazing how I don’t feel any different but I am sitting here dying.”

His phone began to ring again and he snatched it up thinking it was the office again. When he looked to see who it was he saw a picture of a beautiful woman. The call was from the only woman he had ever really loved Tonya. In a time of chaos the thought of her soothed Michael. Michael pressed accept like it was

a life line and to Michael it was. He closed his eyes and said “Hey Baby”

Tonya was laughing and Michael could hear someone else. Michael said “Baby are you there”

In return Michael heard a man’s voice say “Oh God Tonya I want you so bad.”

Tonya could be heard saying “Dave we have to hurry. Michael will get off at 4 and he may come by here. You can’t be here!”

The man says “When are you gonna leave him for me?”

Michael could not stand it any longer and hung up. It took him a moment for the full impact of what he had just heard to soak in. It would seem his whole life was a lie. He redialed Tonya.

When she answered “Hey Baby” it took him a moment to believe he had heard what he had heard.

Michael said “What are you doing?”

Tonya replied “Sitting at home doing nothing. What’s up?”

Michael says “Tonya did you ever really love me? Or was it always a game? Tonya found some way of acting shocked when she said “What are you talking about Baby?”

I’m talking about that man right beside you. Dave is his name. Don’t play dumb. You choose to stay with him! “Michael says then hangs up before she can lie some more. The phone starts to ring again. Michael thinks it is Tonya but sees it’s the doctor’s office again. He can’t take anymore so he cuts the power off.

Michael pulls into a park, then gets out of the car so he could sit on a bench to think. He is mad, angry and scared. He thinks back on his life and feels he has wasted it on a job he never liked, a woman who never loved him and always simply settling for the easiest path. Michael never talked to God but he was out of options.

God I’ve wasted my whole life and now I’m dying. If I had

the chance I would make my life worth it but since I can't could you at least cut me some slack on some of the things I have done? Michael sat there like he expected an answer. When he didn't get one he said "I figured you wouldn't but I had to try."

Michael got up drove home and went straight to sleep.

8:00 A.M. the next morning Michael's home phone would not stop ringing so he got up. He went to brush his teeth then made breakfast. He walked toward his room to get dressed when he noticed there were 14 messages and decided he might as well face them.

"Message one 1:37 P.M. Mr. Thomas this is Dr. Ami please contact me."

"Message two 1:43 P.M. Mr. Thomas I've tried to reach your cell but you're not answering please contact me."

"Message three 1:47 P.M. Michael this is Earl, can you please arrange to have your office clear out."

Message four 1:55 P.M. Mr. Thomas please contact the office ASAP this is Dr. Ami."

Message five 1:57 P.M. Michael Baby what are you talking about"

"Message six 1:59 P.M. Baby please don't do this"

"Message seven 2:00 P.M. You need to call be baby"

"Message eight 2:02 P.M. Mr. Thomas Please contact me. This is an emergency."

"Message nine 2:07 P.M. So your just gonna walk away fine."

"Message ten 4:59 P.M. Mr. Thomas we are leaving for the day but please contact me through the office number no matter what time it is."

"Message eleven 8:57 P.M. Michael I'm sorry Baby but you were never here for me. I love you please"

"Message twelve 6:45 A.M. Mr. Thomas this is Earl. I've arranged to have your personal things boxed up. You can pick them up."

"Message thirteen 7:15 A.M. Michael I'm done. I love you but I

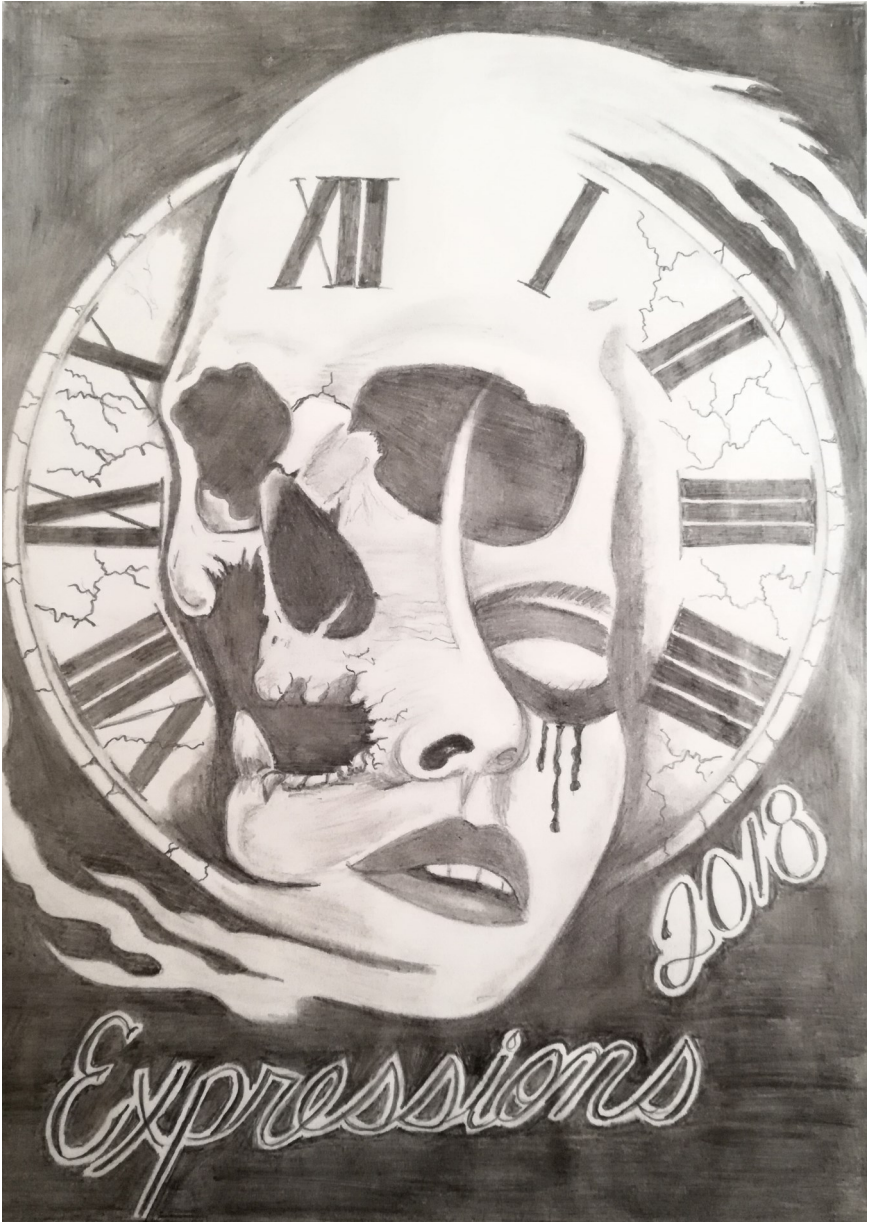
can't do this bye.”

“Message fourteen 8:17 A.M. Mr. Thomas, this is Dr. Ami. I did not want to do this through a message, but I cannot reach you. I must apologize. I was simply filling in during your appointment yesterday. I'm not personally familiar with you. As I went through the file I was given, I addressed you as Mr. Thomas and you acknowledged that was your name. It was not until I stepped out that I was informed your name is Michael Thomas and the file I had was for Richard Thomas. When I returned to the office you were gone. I have tried repeatedly to reach you. Once again I am truly sorry for this mistake. I hope this has not caused too much stress.”

Michael sat on the sofa and stared at the answering machine for twenty minutes. Then somewhere from deep in his chest he started laughing. In less than 24 hrs. he had accepted death, lost his life time job and learned the love of his life was not real. Now all he could think was the constant thought that his life has been wasted and if he had the chance he would make it count. Michael picked up the phone and dialed.

A woman answered the phone and said “thank you for calling Lamar State University Port Arthur, how can I help you?”

Michael said “my life ended yesterday. I need a new life. One that matters.”



Cover Art—Second Place

Gary Vaught

Short Story

Third Place

At the End of the Driveway

Amanda Wallage

The winding dirt road was all he ever knew. The wind whistled past his house, which was miles from the nearest town, and kicked dust onto the battered rocking chair on his front porch. Waking up every day was the same routine: eat, go for a walk, read a book, go to bed. Nothing ever changed. His wavy chestnut hair occasionally showed signs of graying, but that could be from his lack of excitement and activity. It wasn't always this way, although he did not remember the last real conversation he had had. He started a tradition on his birthday of placing a single balloon on the old wooden mailbox at the end of the driveway. "Happy Birthday to me," the card read, and for how many years in a row? He couldn't remember.

Walking down the driveway, he noticed his balloon was not the only thing his mailbox held. In fact, the mailbox had never looked so full. There was an envelope addressed to him with a letter inside. It began with the introduction, "I live a few miles away, and I see your balloon every year." His heart swelled with joy. The letter continued, "If I may, I would enjoy your company on a walk tomorrow." The young man did not know true happiness, but the next day he felt it. He woke up with a smile on his face, and it never left after that day.

His clockwork routine slowly exchanged going for a walk to riding bikes, reading a book to dancing and laughing together, and even getting the mail became a hand-in-hand adventure. His memories weren't so lonely anymore, and his home enjoyed the company. When a year passed since the couple's first encounter, the man rose out of bed and walked down the winding dirt road that was once all he knew. He paused to reflect on the change in the year from solitude to companionship. Then, with a smile on his face, he placed two balloons on the old wooden mailbox at the end of the driveway.



General Art—Second Place

Clifton T. Holliday

Short Story

Honorable Mention

Our Last Time in Nevada

Daryl A. Pollard

We all thought it was a joke, we never thought we would leave this place we called home. I remember my mom laughing as loud as a hyena when she looked at our faces covered in dirt and tears when she told us we were moving to Texas. We never believed her because we believed we were already home. Summers seemed to be as dry as the Sahara desert and as hot as an oven, but as hot as it was we all seemed to be like cold blooded animals and happened to survive just fine. It was literally the desert, but we didn't see the same thing as every else.

We lived on five acres that was as solid as rocks, but rocks can always be crushed in some way shape or form. We never saw just five acres of dirt, we saw a playground that was perfect for kids like us. And like bob the builder my dad went to work and created the best thing since sliced bread, he created a dirt bike track. All our neighbors thought "well they must be insane to waste land like that", but my dad didn't see it as just land he saw it as an opportunity to get his kids excited as a soaking wet dog after getting a bath. And that is exactly what we were except instead of soaking wet, we were covered in dirt. Riding dirt bikes was a way of life for my dad and he wanted his kids to enjoy it as much as he did. We rode around that track in circles, we felt like we were moving as fast as NASCAR drivers, and we never seemed to take a step on the ground like it was lava and our two wheels were protecting us almost as if they were part of us like they were basically our feet.

When the winter came it was cold, but not like any cold. It

was dry and stepping outside was like someone sucked all the air out of the room and replaced it with fire when you took a deep breath because sometimes it was so cold. It felt like our nostrils were burning, but we were used to it and we prepared ourselves every winter. The fire place brought everyone in our house together as if it were a holiday every night. The cold brought us all together and made us keep each other warm, no one would have ever thought that the desert gets cold. Sometimes the mountains seemed like a horror film when the night crept in and let the cold climb down as if it was your worst nightmare was coming to life. It would get so cold that when you woke in a scare and jumped from your bed thinking a monster has just grabbed you, but it was just the cold grasping your body and making you shiver and shake. But like every nightmare, if you turn on the light it goes away, and that light was our fireplace.

Every day was the same to us, woke up scarfed down breakfast and ran off to take our bikes to the desert without my parents knowing so we could ride out to the dry lake bed like a pack of wild wolves. And then our pack was broken when the summer came around again my mom packed us up and moved us to Texas. It was real we were leaving. And like a sad puppy we all whimpered and cried when we left our brothers because they wanted to stay behind. I never wanted to leave any of my family behind and what hurt most of all was leaving the man who was like the glue that kept us together, my grandfather. He always gave us the wisest advice and told us right from wrong. I knew I was going to miss running to his house because it was right down the street, but now it going to be 1200 miles away and opening his front door and head straight for the candy and soda he always put out for us wasn't going to be as easy. It still doesn't get old, because I know whenever we visit, it's like we never left because he still puts out the candy and soda.

Our last time in Nevada was the greatest, most memorable time, from endless rides, softball games in the scorching heat and huddling by the fire in the cold winter it made us realize how special we were to each other and how no matter what obstacle came our way we could defeat it together, as a family.



Photography—Second Place

Lilliam Diaz

19

Short Story

Honorable Mention

In Defense of the Big Bad Wolf

Joshua Francis

The early morning sun breaks just over Hubert's window and bathes his cracked, sleepless eyes in the spirit of the morning. His humble shack, located in old Danverville, was his fortress and palace just on the outskirts of town. Danverville itself was an isolated herder village founded a few centuries ago by some upstart aristocrat seeking to escape the hustle and bustle of city life. The Danver blood line, now sired by Jorge Francisco Danver, owned most of the livestock, governed the village, and even spoke for its God. The village was little more than a church, school, pub and a few pastures, surrounded by a hand full of cabins that little more than a thousand called home at a time. The dusty road holding these islands of logs together went nowhere but to one side of the village and the other; the only way out a perilous swim through the sea of trees that had long since reclaimed a neglected forest path.

Hubert lifted his somewhat pale, unassuming body to tackle the day. He was an honest man by all accounts, an artisan who often did the trickier wood working for the people of his village. At dawn each morning he'd march, axe in hand, out into the thicket to replenish his supply of wood. The god rays that pierce the thick clouds of leaves and dance in the gentle breeze as the sun rises are well worth the price of admission each morning, and are the cause for the noticeable pep in his step. Though he normally walks this quiet path alone, to his dismay a couple of his neighbors were out for an early morning stroll.

"Quite the day our God has laid out for us, aye boy?" Father Jorge Danver spoke with all the same confidence and zeal for

God as a squirrel would a tree. Despite his large bearded stature Hubert still often wondered how so much optimism and lust for life could fit in one man, it drove him mad.

"Aye father, there is much to praise him for." Hubert was often forced to choke out lines such as this, he wished for the faith of Jorge but such blissful safety was impossible for him. He knew first hand of the deep shadows that filled the world, he himself forced to contend with the chiefest among them, vampirism. The vampire was a thing to be despised, legend holds that merely a touch from the infected would spread the disease, and within the hour you too would be on the hunt. Most of the rumors were false. True, the beasts did hunger for blood but you wouldn't turn so quickly after being bitten - the hunger was not the disease itself, only a symptom. Often men would go many generations without incident only to one day have a son or daughter biting at their mother's neck rather than their nipple. Hubert had the thirst from birth, a gift from either his mother or father; which one didn't matter. He was raised here in Danverville and his parents went to great lengths to keep his affliction a secret as they were much too fond of their only child to see him *cured*, the only remedy being a stake and open flame. His mother fell ill sometime in his 20s and passed after a yearlong bout with some flu, his father followed in the months not long after, possibly from heart break or more likely spite. He took on his father's job as woodworker and perhaps the crosses he supplies the church at a very generous price can explain Jorge's fondness of him. Sarah, Father Jorge's daughter, merely nodded with a sheepish smile as they passed.

"Take care out in the wilderness my boy, all sorts of vile beasts lurk in the darkness." He waved off Hubert without breaking his determined stride or loosening his uncomfortably sincere smile.

"Aye, in the light as well." These words rested safely under his breath, like most, as he gleefully marched forth, having narrowly escaped an impromptu sermon.

The quiet rustling of fallen leaves under step, the ambient chirping of birds off into the distance, the slight chill of the morning wind slowly weaving through the trees; Hubert was home. He

marched forth heading to a small clearing he had been working on prior. He wanted to cut a decent sized lot to build himself a workshop and raise a few crops and animals some ways out from the village. Animals after all were his livelihood, serving as a close second to the blood of man, they helped satiate his thirst. As he walked on he noticed an odd form in the dim distance, the town drunk, no doubt having wandered into the woods after a night of debauchery, had made a bed of the dirt surrounding a tree. 'What a fool.' Thought the straight-laced Hubert until another thought crossed his mind. It sprung from seemingly nowhere, more a quiet whisper than a thought.

"He's alone."

A chill superseded the coming breeze as Hubert's eyes widened a little. He hadn't even noticed until now but his path had altered a tad, he found himself heading slightly more in the direction of the pile of cakes and pies laying at the foot of the tree. Hubert the blood sucker had been alone with people before, but none so vulnerable, none who had no way of identifying him. To a lesser man this was a gift from the Gods.

"I mustn't." His voiced trembled, his words laced with fear and lust, he slowed his stride that now was pointing directly at the man. Each step a great beat of a drum, each moment agonizing in its duality as he draws ever closer to the meal. Hubert had never bitten a human, not wishing to chance being exposed or have someone suffer through the same fate as him, but here is this gift wrapped present with his name on it left abandoned in the woods!

"No one will know." Voices now sing out in poor Hubert's head, a hateful chorus of, "Bite him," "He is yours," "He deserves it!" He now stands directly over him, his unimposing shadow not doing the danger he presents the man justice. As he leans over the man the choir converges on one word: "Bite", hanging on the 'T' so that the sound becomes little more than an unintelligible, high-pitched screech clawing at his ears. There was only Hubert and this man's blood. His veins flow with milk and honey, his skin the only barrier between the starving Hubert and the finest bread. His mouth hung agape near the man's throat as his nails dug deep into the man's arms where he held him, causing crimson

streams of gold to pour from the points of puncture. Saliva fell from Hubert's mouth as great waterfalls of desire crashing just below the drunkard forming a vast lake where Hubert could see his reflection, had he wanted to look.

The song was cut short by a great shout from the village that could be heard even where Hubert was. Apparently a particularly curious villager made his way into the basement of the church and found multiple animal carcasses drained of their blood along with other livestock awaiting the same fate. Father Jorge, being the only one allowed in the church basement, was in a tough spot, the villager wasted no time riling up the people.

There was a short 'investigation' and it was determined that Father Jorge was indeed a blood sucker and should be dealt with accordingly. He was quartered in the middle of the city and all his things, including his livestock, were burned in a large pile. As he was torn limb from limb the only cry he made was a loud declaration: "Kill the beast!", "Kill the beast!" he screamed over and over until his last breath. The people thought nothing associated with this great fraud deserved to exist, so his wife and children were thrown on the pile as well. During the commotion Hubert paced home in a glossy eyed haze, by the time someone reached his home to tell the tale all that remained was his swinging corpse hung by the rafters, his death attributed in some abstract way to the Danvers deception.

In the months following Jorge's outing the villagers found it hard to feed the population having turned their main source of food into ashes, and there was a constant battle to decide who would fill the powerful void left by the father's death. Many self-sufficient hunters left the village with their families to start a new life, but most leading men stayed behind, driven by a thirst for power and status. Many starved but some weren't so lucky and fell victim to all manners of violence at the hands of their neighbors, their God was dead, and the desire to take his seat brought an evil out of once good men thought impossible by the perpetrators and the victims. The village went on in chaos until the winter of that year when the supply drums ran dry and the last light in Danverville went out.



General Art—Third Place

Antonio Banda

Short Story

Honorable Mention

Three Birds of the Bush

Joshua Francis

Three Birds of the Bush, a crow, a raven, and a bower, make ready for the journey to the center of their forest home. Discontented with the Promised Land their forefathers fought for, they begin the arduous trek into the perilous darkness of the inner ring. Within the depths of the forest, where the trees grow taller and more numerous, lay the forest's only source of water, a great lake that, once bathed in, could cleanse the Bush birds of the grime that weighs down their wings. Their ancestors had to dig under the huge wall that encompasses the forest for generations in order to gain entry. Thus, later generation's wings and eyes have weakened over time and their talons contain all their might. Once they made it under the wall they encountered a thick grime that covered the forest floor and the base of the trees. All subsequently born chicks came into contact with the grime, and with no water to wash it off, the Bush birds were robbed of their ability to transcend the lower branches and fly among the Gale Birds the moment they made it inside the forest. The Bush birds needed water to fly, but needed to fly to reach water.

The three, like many before them, sought to reach the oasis, clean their wings, then make repeat trips ferrying water back and forth to cleanse their brothers and sisters. The Bush Birds all this time have been feeding on the seeds that fell from the fruits the

Gale Birds ate in the tree's zenith; the only place they grow. The Gale birds often mocked the Bush for eating the seeds instead of planting them, but with no access to water they couldn't grow their own trees, so the seeds were better as food. Hunger and the will to escape the perils of the bush drove them forward into the deep despite the dangers that await them. The crow's father had once taken the journey and never returned, the raven was angered by the arrogance of the Gales above, and the bower wished to be among the first bush birds to fly unhindered. Each of the birds leave behind wives and children; few Bush Birds envied them for making the journey. Most other Birds of the Bush, blinded by the darkness, saw no need to risk their lives and livelihood seeking the lake. Many saw just being in the forest as better than being outside the wall and were content with the world they resided in; but not the three.

The crow, like his father, had some of the best eyesight in the bush, and so took point. They flew among the lower branches taking breaks here and there to rest their belabored wings, mindful not to fall to the pitch-black darkness below. On the forest floor gusts of wind from the Gale bird's wings send a chilling sickness through birds unfortunate enough to be found there. Birds lose their sense of autonomy in the cold, turning into mindless cannibals hunting down other Bush Birds to devour. The crow read about the dangers of the inner ring, and advised the others to also be mindful of the snakes that lurk the lower branches of the forest searching for frozen or sleeping birds to consume.

While resting the crow marveled at how large the shadows of the Gale Birds seemed on the forest floor. Away from where he lay, the bower saw in the corner of his eye a shining apple that was growing unusually low, and not wanting to share it, tiptoed closer to the rare prize. In an instant he disappeared within feline jaws, only his feathers left to slowly drift to the cold forest floor. Had he told his friends of what he'd seen the crow could have warned him of the enormous cats that perch the lower branches, hanging fruit shaped jewels beneath them as bait for hungry birds. Knowing there was nothing they could do for him the birds fled ever deeper into the inner ring.

In their frantic flight the crow had to slow down somewhat as the raven struggled to keep up, his wings significantly weaker than the crow's. The raven envied the crow, but took solace in knowing his talons were larger and sharper than the quicker bird. The birds neared the midpoint of the inner circle but before they had a moment of rest a great gust overtook them and the forest shook in its wake. An eagle stood in their way. Its open wings seemed to stretch to the ends of the earth, its feet large enough to carry both birds in one, its beak sharp enough to slice them in two. The raptor dashed forward and the panicked birds split. It trained its eyes on the raven and attempted to trap it against a tree with its large wings, the raven cried out to the crow to get the eagle's attention so it could escape, but the cowardly crow had already left him behind. In desperation the raven slashed at the attacking eagle's eyes, and in the scuffle, fell from the branch he was cornered on. The raven dropped all the way down to the forest floor where he was overtaken by the cold.

Exhausted and alone the crow sullied forth until he neared upon the bones of his father not far from the pool. He mourned for a time and examined the necklace that adorned his neck. The glass trinket at the end was for carrying water, and was just large enough for a bird to still be able to fly after filling it. Filled with resolve, the crow made it to the pool in no time, where he bathed among the other beautiful birds and foliage that surrounded the oasis. He didn't take time to suck in the sights though, as after he filled his necklace and washed his wings he immediately took flight. Soaring through the trees he once walked under foot of the crow gleefully dashed toward home, taking note of how the branches thinned toward the upper height of the trees, and how the warm air at the top was easier to breathe.

The crow was so excited to be free of his prison he forgot the limitations of his wings and grew very tired. He perched upon a middling branch, mindful to avoid the grime, and rested a minute not far from the outer ring. He heard a rustling underfoot and opened his eyes to see a snake making its way to his branch to ambush him. The swift crow, mocking the snake, flew in circles around the tree then landed on a lower branch and danced with his wings open. He felt cold claws dig into his back as he was

slammed down onto his branch. Behind him the chilling labored breath of the raven beat upon his neck. Maddened by the cold below, the raven's mind was consumed with thoughts of revenge from the moment he was abandoned. The crow let loose a final cry as the raven ripped his throat open, he went on to devour his excellent eyes, and tear apart his clean, powerful wings. He continued enjoying his meal paying no mind to the approaching snakes from the bush, the near frozen raven had no means of escape anyway. The snakes cleaned up the raven and the mess he made leaving nothing but bones and the crow's necklace for their children to find should they one day choose to make the journey.



Cover Art—Third Place

Sergio Cabrera Islas

Short Story

Honorable Mention

Untitled

La'mond Frank

There once was a child who was being raised by teens who were not grown enough to guide him in a positive direction. He was born to a 14 yr. old mom and an 18 yr. old father, who neglected the boy, once he found out how old his mom really was. After becoming pregnant and deciding to keep her son she vowed to be a mother to him and do whatever needed to be done to provide for him. Raising a child at 14 wasn't easy and being the second child of 4 to a drug-addicted mom her goal was to become a better mother than her mom was to her and her siblings. Being raised by mainly his 2 uncles the little boy grew up experiencing a lot of violence, drug dealing and gang activity so to him that's what he thought life was all about. Being introduced to such turmoil at such a young age made him become a spitting image of his role models and landed him in juvi hall at age 10 for shooting his moms boyfriend. Witnessing his mom getting abused was "o.so" real in his childhood and to prevent it he made sure it never happened again. Not long after that he went on a violence and theft spree and also introduced gang-banging to his local homeboys. After a few short stints in J.D.C. he came home on probation only to witness his mom almost kill his cousin right in front of him for something he started at school. That night his life changed forever he witnessed his mom being taken to jail for attempted murder along with a slew of other charges. Not knowing what to do or how to feel he broke

down. Although his mom was bonded out and united with him he blamed himself for what took place and acted out because no one understood his hurt and on Sept. 13, 1997 he bought a Mac 11 Uzi to Horace Mann Jr. High in Baytown, TX and gunned down 6 kids betting gang violence. Drastically changing everyone's life forever. He did 7 years 9 months and 16 days flat for that act and in May of 2004 he was released back into society only to be worse than he ever was: This same little boy is now a 31 yr. old man on Mark W. Stiles Unit with 25 yrs.!



Photography - Third Place

Brooke Tant



Essay

Essay-First Place

Calypso

Brenin Reece

Calypso was a mature woman, graceful and astute. On the surface she was quiet and reserved, no one could have guessed the true contents of her character. A secret rebellious nature lay right beneath the skin, she was her own person before anything else. She looked out for number one, and only number one. She acted as if she cared about the wellbeing of others, but was surely incapable. Everything she had achieved in life, she achieved by stepping over or striking down others. She slowly drained the life of those foolish enough to entertain her. She was cold and unforgiving, like a snow-storm. Her wrath was tempestuous like hurricane, destroying everything around her. The fact that she kept her true nature locked away made her a hard read. Her poker face was unshakeable, but she could point out falsehood like fireworks in the night sky. She was daring and clever like a fox, if she could be trusted or not was up for debate; no one could tell a tale quite like she could. Her silver tongue, like a blade, could pierce anyone's heart. But her words were sweet and smooth, like candied cherries. She was a predatory creature, preying on those she deemed weak. Her charms would entrance others as she would lead them on, eventually leaving them for dead once she got what she wanted. She mastered the art of ego stroking at a young age; no sane person could resist her wiles. To be beguiled by her was like courting certain death. She was a dangerous enchantress with astonishing beauty, blessed with an Olympian physique. She could give the kinds of looks that made you want to bite your lip and hide your wedding ring. Her eyes were hypnotic whirlpools of Azure, stealing the gaze of anyone

foolish enough to behold them. Her long delicate hair draped down her back and over her shoulders. It was dark like a panther's hide, but had a bright sheen like polished steel. Her olive skin was supple and velvety, like that of a baby. She had a certain unexplainable glow that emanated from her, attracting others like moths to a flame. Her lips were luscious, and red like the petals of a rose. Her kind smile held the fangs of monster. She had the nose of a duchess, straight and modest. She adorned herself with a cobalt cutoff shoulder blouse. Her tight black leggings struggled to contain her shapely hips and voluminous thighs. Her calves were strong like a stallion's, but lean like a cheetah's. She wore old blue Chucks on her dainty feet, they were worn, but sturdy enough for a night out on the town. Her hands were soft, like she had never worked a day in her life. She was an alluring creature, like a siren. Just to kiss her was pure unadulterated ecstasy. To feel the weight of her figure on your own was maddening enough to turn a sane man into a savage beast.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Lorena Garcia

Essay-Second Place

Jireh

Patty Ortiz

It's been about six months but it feels as if I've already spent an eternity without her. At the same time, it feels as if it was only last night when I made the trip to Texas Children's Hospital to go visit her. I still can't make out the reason as to why something so terrible happened to such a sweet and innocent soul. Jireh was taken from us March 3rd 2017, however she still remains in our souls for eternity.

Jireh was battling lung cancer, she had been in the hospital for the past two months and had been showing signs of improvement. I was visiting her almost every night, I had spent countless hours in the hospital with my aunt and my mom. There were many all-nighters that were being pulled and fueled by the bitter and cold coffee from the hospital's waiting room. We all looked like baggy-eyed zombies pacing up and down the freezing hospital halls for months. I remember how hard it was to stay up in class and go through softball practice without wanting my body to completely shut down. My body was being worked passed the point of exhaustion; although I didn't mind, if it meant I could still visit my cousin every night.

I had a big softball tournament that I didn't want to go to because I was afraid to leave my cousin. My mind was already made up that I wasn't going, and since my coach knew about my situation, she excused me from my games. Jireh however, pleaded for me to go as her fragile body lie on the frigid sheets of the hospital bed.

"You need to go I'll be fine, go do big things. I love you," those

were the last words she said to me as I walked out of her cool and isolated hospital room. I looked back at her and smiled as the door shut behind me.

The next morning I played my heart out for her. We actually won the whole thing and when it was over, I face timed my mom to tell her the big news. I wanted to show her my shiny new medal I was going to add to my collection, but she didn't answer. I immediately began to get this gut feeling that something was wrong. She called me back, but I could hear her voice breaking, as if she was trying to fight the fact that she just wanted to bawl her eyes out.

"What's wrong," I asked terrified, not actually wanting to know the answer.

"Jireh," she responded. That was the only thing she had to say, and suddenly a wave of shock and pain shot through my body. I let out a loud cry and another one quickly followed I couldn't catch my breath between them. I couldn't control myself, my heart fell to my stomach and I suddenly felt dizzy. Teammates began surrounding me trying to comfort me but it only made matters worse. My heart had turned into a knife and not only was it cutting me, but I was afraid it would also cut those around me. I felt anger. I felt emptiness. I felt pain.

She was gone and there was nothing I could do to change that. It didn't t make sense but I had to learn to live with the emptiness .She wanted me to do big things and that's what I'm trying to do, although it would be much easier if she were by my side. There's no doubt on my mind that she's here looking over me and guiding me, she's my little angel. I'm going to do big things for my Jireh.



Cover Art—Honorable Mention
Aniceto Sanchez

Essay-Third Place

The Why Factor

Brian C. Tamaz

An advanced society, surpassing all prior civilizations, and still we haven't a credible clue as to who and what we truly are, how we came to be, and what our purpose is in this life, whether you believe we have been in existence for billions, millions, or thousands of years, each is a sufficient amount of time to have answered some of life's most basic, yet pertinent questions in regard to our existence.

The unchallenged acceptance of detrimental 'mis' and disinformation, and the lack, and concealment of factual information has plagued a conditioned, naive, and vulnerable society with its further crippling trickle effect. All too often misrepresented concepts escape the scrutiny of logic, and reason.

This largely and adversely alters beliefs and thoughts of the common uninformed citizen. It all started with "why" being deemed of little importance, insignificance, and today commonly overlooked, and underrated. As garbled as truth has become, we should all wake-up, and realize what lies ahead, and the monsters that we have created by choosing to ignore "the why factor!"

Don't complain, be thankful, and accept the insufficient compensation you are given, and always find joy in even the worst of situations. Look at the bright side of a nuclear attack, conform to the practices of the masses, despite having the liberty to your own individual existence, and never, never ever, ever ever ever, use the forbidden word of challenge that has led to so much progress, and understanding - "why!"

Had a person not tired from his laborious, overburdened,

and under thought tasks by challenging himself and the status quo, the wheel would have never been invented. Genius works hand-in-hand with creativity. Creativity itself is believed by many to be sparked by sheer rebellion. And rebellion may be the most significant one-word, reason for the eradication of the questioning of government officials, public policy, news reporting media, religion, and of-course science with all of its glorified “theories.”

At this day in age of technological advancement, I am astounded by the overrated, and damaging term - “theory.” In our intellectually superior society, we produce, and sell commodities such as energy. Aside from the transactions involved in procuring electricity, for example, we are also being sold the “theory” pertaining to it. Then, most of us accept that this theory is all that is currently known, and needed relating to said resource. If “you” embrace, and condone these explanations of said articles, illogical reasoning, and just plain untruths, then “you” are directly contributing to your own ignorance, and miss-direction. The result of an in-depth understanding of said, and like subjects equate to the factual conclusions you will arrive at when examining the latest translation of “the good book.” You will find an abundance of vague information, and lots of words with little certainty, left open to an individual’s invalid interpretations.

We have come too far in our advancement to continue to accept these feeble, rootless, explanations that are excused, and validated by the word-theory. We have allegedly landed on the moon, probed mars, and various other cosmic wonders, and are still down here on Earth, in a state of wonder about our own existence. We now know much of the same information that prior civilizations, primitive, and ancient, already knew, without modern technology, to include the telescope even.

How about free-energy, or energy period, the only thing that “they” are certain about disclosing is the fact that you will be billed for it-eternally! DO they even accurately-account for its usage? At times I have been told by the Electric Company when inquiring about my bill, “No, we didn’t actually go out and read your meter this month, we just estimated the average use in your neighborhood, or, “we just went with what your bill was at this time last year.”

“Well then, just deduct my payment for this month, out of that check I made out to you, last year!” It is comically sad but true, and the case is the same for many other occurrences in our allegedly advanced era. “So, why ask why - try Bud-Dry!” Yes, the catchphrase rhymes, and the beer is actually pretty good. Does this mean that we should go-on living life like an outdated beer advertisement? I think not. Today employers complain that their new crop of job seekers have little if any critical thinking skills. Well, go figure! With all of our gadgets, not to mention good-old Uncle Sam performing the bulk of our thinking for us, is this honestly a flabbergasting piece of information? Our education institutions are even more-so detrimental to the why factor. They condone, and support these loose / no-end theories, and establish points pertaining to instructed subjects where further thought is shunned, and or deemed unnecessary.

Aside from hindering the thought process of many Americans, a large amount of valuable information, and formulas, and other methods of calculations are being lost to technology. This may seem all fine and dandy, until the plug is pulled - on a Global scale.

The majority of today’s average American Joes are caught up in a dogmatic commercial system that they have chosen to accept as a way-of-life, for life. When they are fortunate enough to break away from this endless cycle of servitude, the last thing they have in mind is investing their limited amount of “free-time” contemplating the complex yet meaningful issues of our world. Sadly when it comes to the why factor, they are appeased by wondering why a burger-flipper shouldn’t receive \$15.00 an hour, a job that is best suited for high-school kids, not meant to be made a career of or, they invest time keeping up with which African Americans the Kardashians are currently sleeping with. We... can do better than this!

Recording “Artists”, and professional team players are being rapidly replaced by generic singers and self-centered ballers. Have you ever stopped and asked yourself “why” these entertainers are overpaid so well? As long as “we the people”, are busy marveling at their over-rated skill-sets, and concerned about the who’s,

and what's of their celebrity, we will spend less time seeking out and questioning the meaningful issues, and aspects of our lives. They, distract the masses from relevant issues.

Knowledge is power, and the less factual info we have, the more control others are able to exert over our lives. The "why" has been conveniently, and cleverly deemed insignificant. This minimization directly correlates to the unfounded/unwarranted acceptance of misleading answers to crucial life questions. If the only stupid question is the question that goes un-asked then, our world is full of stupid questions! It's time for answers. Knowing why is far more valuable than merely knowing the who's, what's, when's, and where's of a situation. So, why as why? Because it's freakin important, that's why. Put, that in your frosted-mug, and chug it. Why? Because the often bitterness of truth leads to the sweet taste of victory!

Essay

Honorable Mention

Social Networking

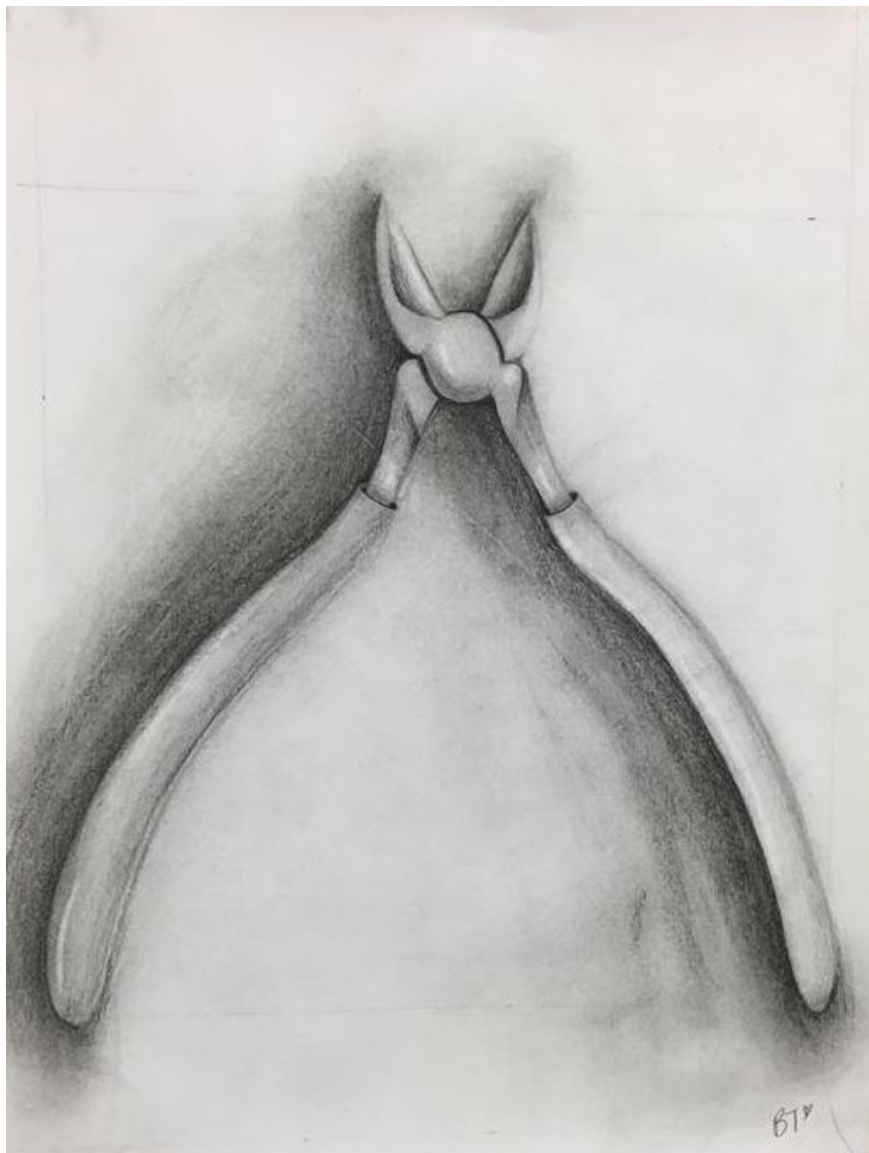
Tatum Dominguez

Social networking sites have exploded in the past ten years. There are so many different social networking sites out there, and they are all different. The earliest forms of the Internet, such as CompuServe, were developed in the 1960s. The first social media site, Six Degrees, was created in 1997. It enabled users to upload a profile and make friends with other users. In 1999, the first blogging sites became popular, creating a social media sensation that's still popular today. I believe that social networking sites are positive for our society.

No matter if you are searching for a former college roommate, your first grade teacher, or an international friend, there is no easier or faster way to make a connection exist than through social media. Social Networking sites are good for everyone in many different ways. However, some believe that it is not good for us and that it has taken over everyone's lives. Say a hurricane is forming around the coast of Florida all of a sudden. We would need to let everyone know fast so they can evacuate. If there something on the news that is urgent, we need social media to make it spread quickly so people will know about it sooner, but people against this form of communication say that it could be false. One other reason we need social network is so law enforcement can catch criminals on the loose. There are always billboards with criminals on them saying to contact the police if they have seen that

criminal anywhere. One reason why social media is bad for us is because it lacks privacy, and everyone can see what you post and it never goes away. Social sites are useful because you can search anything you want and you will find it super-fast. People also use social sites so they can look for jobs and see who is hiring. It can also be a great way to share tips and ideas. Sites like Pinterest have been very successful due to the ease in which a person can learn - and share - information about hobbies, crafts, cooking, gardening and other do-it-yourself activities. On the other hand, social sites are full of online predators. They can lie and say that they want to be friends with you and that they are the same age, but they are not. On the other side, you can easily make new friends by meeting them at a party or someone in your class, and then you will have a new friendship.

There are many reasons why people like social networking sites and why they do not. I personally believe that they are appropriate for our society. Technology in today's society is blooming and almost everything is technology based now. I use social media every day, but not just for my personal use. I use it for homework and to find information quickly while writing papers or to look up a question. I believe that people have more benefit in using technology.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Brooke Tant

46

Essay

Honorable Mention

A White Winter Wonderland

Blanca Ramirez

The air smelled of something fresh, the way your freezer smells when it's empty. I could feel the cold, crisp air hit my face like a hard block of ice. The wind was playing with my hair like a little girl plays with her dolls. I knew I looked like Rudolph, with my nose and cheekbones getting even redder the stronger the wind blew against my bare skin. My feet were going numb underneath my bright, neon pink boots. It was as if I had millions of ants crawling all over my feet looking desperately for food that I did not have. The sight was breath-taking, worth every shivering moment I spent there.

I could feel the goosebumps caused by a gust of wind, creeping up my skin the way tigers creep up on their prey. I looked ahead and I could see where the winding, snow-covered road led me. It cut right in between a huge, white sea of snow covered trees. Trees that looked like the towering skyscrapers you see in New York City, standing tall and proud against the light blue sky, resisting the powerful wind pushing against them. The branches swayed like ballerinas at a recital. Moving like thick, brown snakes against the whiteness all around them, the branches felt empty and lonely. Their companion, the leaves, had long abandoned them, for the winter had taken their life.

Through these lonesome branches, you could see the or-

ange-yellow sun playing peek-a-boo one last time before it was time to go to sleep. The sun wanted to be seen, craving your attention the way a 3 year old craves his mother. The sun bled color, staining the fluffy, marshmallow clouds floating in the sky with shades like light pink, warm orange, bright yellow and a fierce red. These clouds looked like flowers and dogs and babies and anything that your imagination could possibly come up with. If you were lucky, you could catch a glimpse of a solitary hawk soaring through the sky and into the clouds, searching for food, searching for prey. Its cry echoed all around you the way someone's laugh resonates back to them when visiting the Grand Canyon. It only lasted for a few seconds and then it was gone with the blink of an eye, along with the hawk.

Not long after seeing that big, alluring bird fly through the never-ending sky, some small snowflakes started to fall. It was snowing again. The small flakes felt like little cold kisses falling from the sky and gently pressing against my skin like lips, melting almost immediately. The very few small animals that had been out exploring and searching for food, hurried to find the comfort of their homes. I saw two gray and white rabbits jumping like kangaroos through the snow. Their little ears stood up and their big black, glossy eyes looked around them to make sure they hadn't been spotted by the enemy. It appeared to be mother rabbit leading the way, with her mini-me following just a few hops behind. They started to move quicker the moment they realized the snow started to fall more aggressively. I realized it was time for me to head back as well, time to leave this white winter land behind and seek my own shelter. I turned around and as I started to walk away, I took one last admiring look at this snow covered paradise. The beautiful forest looked like something taken straight out from a book, charming and almost perfect. I knew then and there that I would be coming back, I had to come back.



General Art—Honorable Mention
Santiago Arispe

Essay

Honorable Mention

A Home's Last Memory

Sherell Comeaux

The house, which has lived through many years, has finally begun to show its old age. It sits comfortably on top of cracked foundation, leaning slightly to the side. The once ivory paint, which has stained yellow over time peeled from the walls, abused by the weather and other harsh forms of nature. The lawn was like a forest, with sharp shards of grass sprouting from every direction, the bushes have grown wildly and latched onto the sides of the house and reached towards the sky. A set of chairs sit lazily on the porch as if they were an old couple enjoying their last years together. The front door which was a beautiful crimson red has now faded, like a ravishing fire losing its spark.

Inside the home, the living room gave a warm welcoming as rays of golden sunshine bounced off the floors and walls which were speckled with dust. The room brought about remembrance of Christmas morning and the happy parents sitting on the couch, beaming with happiness as their children ran around the coffee table bursting with both excitement and energy as they were finally able to open the presents underneath the tree. Now the couch slouches limp on the floor, its cushions are worn out and sinking in. The coffee table still stands tall, coated in thick grey dust, and both end tables are still using all of their strength to hold up the light fixtures resting on them.

The quaint dining room was dressed with a round dining table right in the middle, draped with a tattered and stained tablecloth. The chairs were like pirates and wobbled on their uneven

wooden legs. The large china cabinet across from the table and showed off its untouched cups and glasses which still twinkled brightly as if they were just bought yesterday.

The kitchen, which opened right across from the dining room was painted the color of an early morning sun. The kitchen is haunted with memories of a jubilant family as busy as bees preparing Sunday dinner. The cling and clatter of the pans and dishes, the aroma of food dancing on their noses, and the family laughing and chattering like birds. Nowadays, the cabinets squeaked when opened, and little critters crawled away to hide in the dark crevices. The shelves were stocked with half-empty spice bottles years past their expiry date. The stove, which hasn't been turned on in what feels like eons is stained with both slimy grime and sticky grease. The bubbling scent from the fridge filled the entire kitchen with the putrid aroma of already rotting food.

Down the dark hallway, the bathroom is cramped in a small room and a small rectangular window lets out the smallest slither of light. A bathtub standing on four skinny legs is no longer pearly white, its stained copper from rust and residue. The small porcelain toilet is now stained brown, and the sink is no longer needed to be used. The mirror, which was once used daily has not seen a face in years, and the items in the medicine cabinet now has no meaning. The tile floors are brittle and cracked and the calm blue paint of the walls are dressed with cobwebs.

The spacious bedroom lays empty and the sharp scent of mothballs greeted those who walked in. The large bed, once used to support a weary head after a long day of work now stands weary itself with large blankets draping off of it as if it were a dress that didn't quite fit. Right across from the bed stands a dresser, littered with photos from the family who once lived there and the family's ancestors who still roam the hall to this day. The wardrobe sits beside it, still filled with clothing which now have no reason to be used. The old home lays still and dormant, its rooms whispering reminiscent memories, has nothing left of it.



Photography—Honorable Mention

Jonmarc Parker

Essay-Honorable Mention

Meme Etymology

Jacoby Baise

A meme is an image, video, or set of text that becomes popular and spreads rapidly via the internet. Memes have been around for a long time, but were greatly popularized even before the creation of the OFFICIAL internet. Some examples of popular memes are Doge, Pepe the Frog, and one of the more recent ones, Roadman Shaq’s “Mans Not Hot.”

The origin of the word “meme” comes from the Greek word *mīmēma*, which means “that which is imitated.” *Meme* is essentially a shortened version of the word. The first time that the shortened version of the word was coined was by British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins’s in *The Selfish Gene*, published in 1976. This shortened version of the word caught on, and became a universally-used term.

I honestly did not expect this word’s history to date back so far. Who knew that they were using the word “meme” way back in the times of Greece? The word has slightly changed in meaning though. We will now move forward in time to the creation of the internet and internet memes. The internet was technically created in 1983, but what we’re talking about is the World Wide Web, which was invented in 1990. This new technological advancement opened a massive number of doors for a lot of new stuff to be created through programs and websites. One of those things was the internet meme (Finally, the version of memes that I wanted to talk about!).

The Internet Meme’s meaning is actually very similar and most likely based off the definition of the word that was used in Richard Dawkins’s book mentioned earlier. You could say that the

word “meme” has always had the same meaning, its just evolved with the passing of time and invention of new technologies. They all talk about imitation. In the Greek version talks about the imitation of genes, the Richard Dawkins one talks about the imitation of culture, and the current one, the Internet Meme, talks about any form of entertainment being popularized and imitated, usually with slight changes from the original.

The first official meme, according to Wil Fulton of *Thrillist Entertainment*, was created by Michael Girard, a simple man who wanted to show the animation and projection capabilities of a computer (this was still before the creation of the actual internet) by designing Baby Cha-Cha also known as the “Dancing Baby.” His employer sent it to many different companies for no other reason than to show off their creation. One of the copies ended up at a Lucas Films employee’s desk, and that employee turned it into a gif that everyone found to be hilarious. Thus, was the creation of the first official meme. This dancing baby gif became so popular that it made an appearance on an episode of a popular show during that time called “Ally McBeal.”

It’s really interesting to see how the word “meme” has changed in spelling, and how its evolved and expanded in meaning based on the invention of new technologies. I always just thought that a meme was something funny on the internet, but it’s more than that. It’s an adaptation of popular forms of entertainment. It’s a newfound form of art.

Essay-Honorable Mention

Grandma's Story Time

E'Monte Freeman

"But Grandmother! What big ears you have," said Little Red Riding Hood as she edged closer to the bed. "The better to hear you with, my dear," replied the wolf. "But Grandmother! What big eyes you have," said Little Red Riding Hood. "The better to see you with, my dear," replied the wolf. "But Grandmother! What big teeth you have," said Little Red Riding Hood, her voice quivering slightly. "The better to eat you with my dear," roared the wolf and he leapt out of the bed and began to chase the little girl. (Perrault 8)

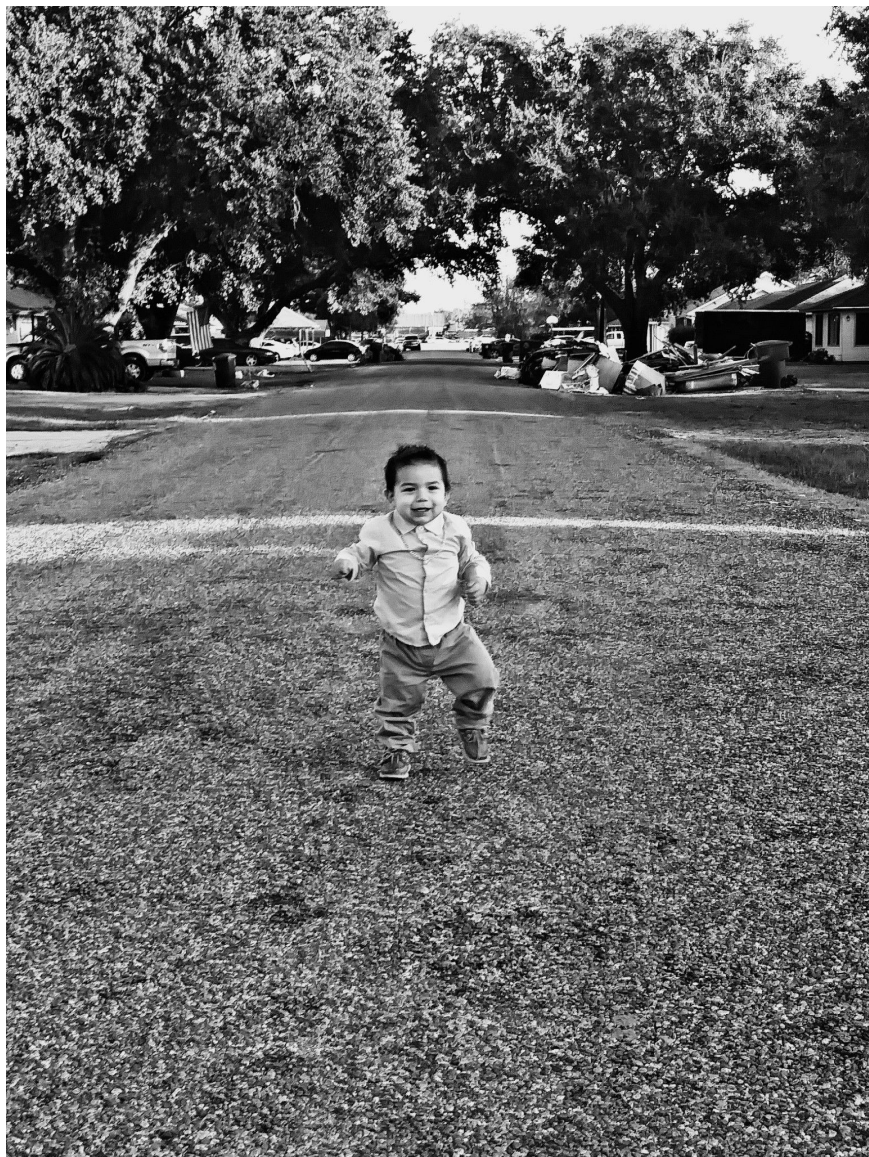
My grandmother was reading *Little Red Riding Hood* to my brother and me. Somehow, I couldn't focus as I noticed how the book made me notice her features. As I looked at her ears I noticed they are a smaller version of Dumbo's. They were complex tunnels that sat perfectly on her head. Her ears had a droop to them since she's always worn big dangling earrings all her life.

Next, I glanced at her eyes which were perfectly round like a circle. Her eyes have the same exact complexion of a Hershey bar. They are deeper than the ocean, and if I look too long, I become mesmerized. Meanwhile, her long eyelashes swept across her cheeks when she slowly closed her eyes. Somehow, they simultaneously looked lighter than a feather or a cloud in the sky.

As her voice became louder and more dramatic reading the story, my attention focused on her mouth. Her lips always looked painted in ruby red no matter the occasion. Every time she opened her mouth you couldn't help but notice her teeth that's aligned straighter than Hitler's army. When she smiled everywhere around her mouth creased like a perfectly folded paper. Usually her smile is accompanied by a laugh that would light up the room.

She paired everything she said with big gestures to make the story more dramatic. Mostly she waved her arms in the air that could be easily mistaken for toothpicks. In a moment where she calmed down she placed her hands across her chest as she read. That gave me just enough time to register how her hands had perfect wrinkles identical to each other. Then suddenly as she neared the end of the story she quickly stood up to make her grand finale.

She is just as fragile as her most prized china cabinet but still walked as cool as a cucumber. Her stroll was as if she thought she was just too cool for school. She walked the entirety of the room until she finished the story. Once she closed the book she looked up at my brother and me, only to realize he had fallen asleep and I was in an entirely different world of my own. At that moment when I noticed her staring at me I couldn't help but smile at the grandmother wolf who stood before me.



Photography—Honorable Mention

Lorena Garcia

Essay-Honorable Mention

I Do

La'Ericca Lambert

The morning air smelled of crisp, freshly cut grass. The bright, prodigious sky resembled the azure waves in the immeasurable sea and seemed to greet everyone joyously. The weather was pleasantly warm and welcomed a gentle breeze that caused the emerald blades of grass to sway enthusiastically. The vibrant blossoms joined in the grass's graceful dance. A stunning medley of butterflies winged their way through a multitude of hurried guests. The dazzling sun beamed down intensely, warming the well-dressed individuals below it. The harmonious birds sang delightful tunes that amalgamated forming one melodious song.

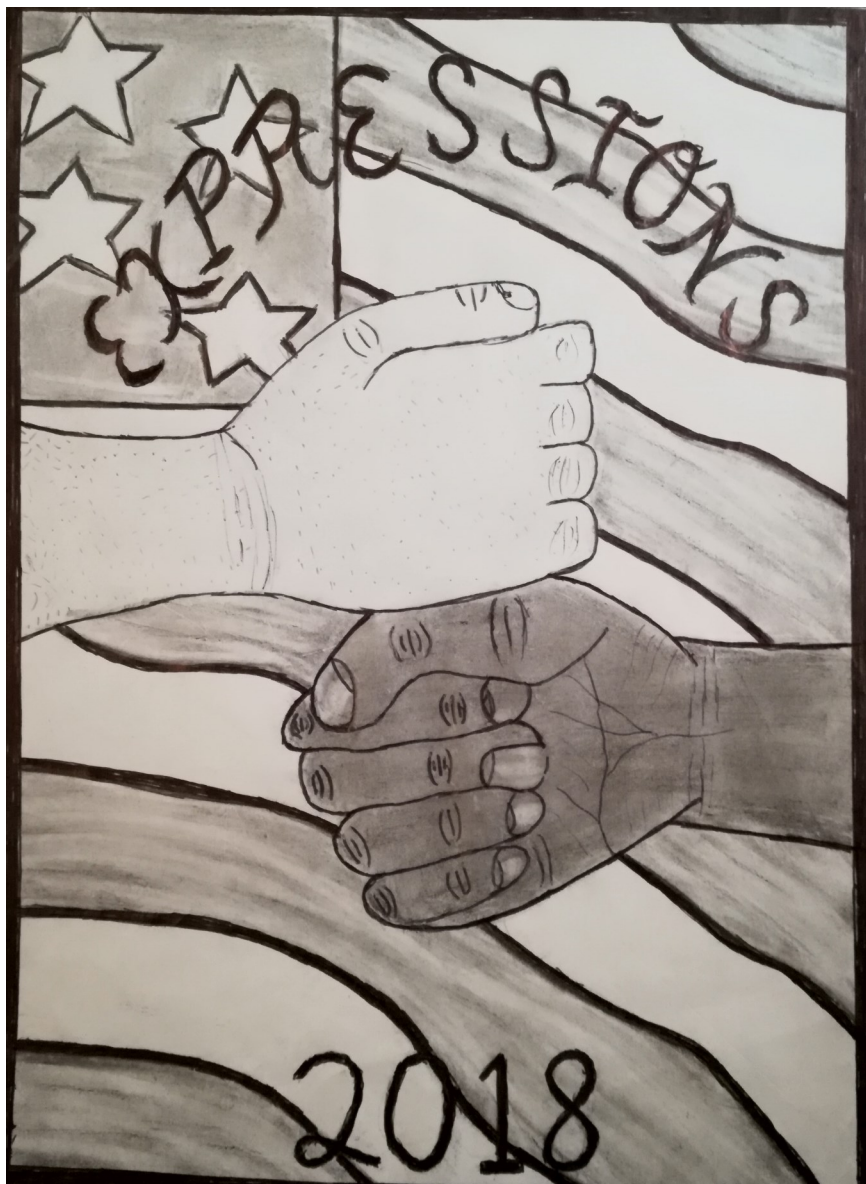
There was a sea of chairs divided into two sections- one side for the bride's loved ones and the other for the groom's. Every chair was decorated with a bold orange bow tied to the back. White and orange balloons that were snugly tied on the ending chairs of each orderly row hovered in the balmy air, attempting to escape their restraints and drift away into the endless sky. The top of the ivory gazebo was adorned with a mass of orange marigolds and white daisies that hastily became the main attraction for bees. Scarlet orange and white ribbons were wrapped securely around each of the gazebo's pillars in an alternating pattern, signifying the same close bond of the soon to be married couple.

Inside of the gazebo stood the live band with the jolly pastor only a few feet in front of them. His plump, cherry colored face was shiny with perspiration from the combination of his excessive dark attire and the bitter heat. He wore a delightful smile and his smoky grey eyes held a glint of pure excitement. The bridesmaids stood elegantly in their resplendent dresses that were orange like that of an evening sunset. The groomsmen stood at attention in their chalky white tuxedos embellished with a sharp orange bou-

tonniere. The groom's olive green eyes wandered rapidly. His lips trembled as his chest rose and fell swiftly. Tiny beads of sweat gathered along his tanned forehead.

A gentle melody from the band began and drowned out the faint murmurs of the adrenalized crowd, signaling the beginning of the ceremony. The vacant aisle patiently awaited the bride's arrival. Delicate rosy red petals drifted nimbly onto the ground after leaving the elfin hand of the darling flower girl. The guests gazed adoringly at the innocent icy blue eyed child possessing murky brown hair overflowing with curls. The soft murmurs amplified following the arrival of the radiant and captivating bride, her arm tightly intertwined with the aged man next to her. The deep wrinkles around his eyes and mouth expressed traces of years of happiness. He beamed with pride as his caramel eyes lingered on his now mature daughter who he was now bringing to the man who would share his future with her.

Her sophisticated dress was encrusted with hundreds of lustrous crystals that glistened in the sun, emphasizing her heavenly glow. The train of the dress seemed to stretch thousands of miles. Her coffee eyes glistened with unshed tears as she made her way to her lover. After her dainty hand was placed delicately in his own, his trembling lips ceased. Two sets of eyes met, one a strong, piercing green and the other a warm, comforting brown. Both contained everlasting hope of a gleeful future. After the joyous pastor finished the last verse of the momentous sermon, he lifted her sheer veil, removing the last barrier between them. A brilliant gold band with a row of glossy diamonds engraved decorated both of their ring fingers, symbolizing their heartfelt unity. The two gazed deeply into each other's eyes before each confidently announced the words, "I do," and sealed their eternal partnership with a sugary kiss.



Cover Art—Honorable Mention

Gregory Helms

Essay-Honorable Mention

The Rock Life

Victoria Jackson

I was as nervous as a sword swallower with the hiccups walking up to the run-down, dark venue to watch the most popular local rock star. Walking up to the wooden doors that hadn't been repainted since before the venue had open I could smell muggy, drunken air coming out of the venue. The people in line all looked very similar in their worn down, torn up fishnets and stiff leather jackets. All of these somber, rayless people were so excited to get inside such a dark and unforgiving place. It is like watching children running into their favorite toy store. Once everyone gets inside, the concert would begin. The shady venue had nowhere to sit; it was standing room only. It was like a big abandoned room that would soon be full of obnoxious rock fans. There was a bar on each side of the room. As the ruthless performer walks on to the small, bantam stage, the drunken crowd roars as if you stepped on a cat's tail. You could smell the drugs floating in the air, and you couldn't see the stage very clear because of the toxic fog coming from the uncaring crowd.

The singer stepped up to the microphone as if it was a stripper's pole. The merciless words that were coming out of his mouth did not make sense because of how drunk he appeared. He looked as if he spent three days in a bar without one single shower. His black, bewildered hair was dripping with sweat. He was wearing black jeans with holes the size of craters on the moon. The shirt that was on his back would not qualify if he was to walk into a store or restaurant. The shirt was torn into many pieces and hanging on by a thread. As for his shoes, he thought it was okay to not wear any.

This slash-and-burn audience did not once cease from screaming the boisterous lyrics of the songs. This audience praised the singer like Germans praised Hitler. It amazed me how much this audience did not respect themselves. There were girls stripping like Eskimos in Texas heat. Guys were tossing back shot after shot like it was water. It amazed me that this performer had such fandom. As for me, I was not a big fan of this environment. I was sweating like a Coke bottle at an August barbeque. The uncaring people around me were jumping up and down like popcorn being cooked. I could feel the sweat coming off of the grueling people slinging all over me. I could feel the bass of the gruesome music in my stomach, giving me butterflies, and making me feel uneasy. I was getting beer, vodka, whiskey, sweat, and vomit spilt all over me. When I looked over at the overly crowded bar, I could see girls as drunk as sailors dancing on the wooden bar stools, causing a scene. As singer left the dark stage, the drunken audience was screaming “encore, encore” over and over again. The singer came back on stage to sing one last annoying song. As the lights turned on, the floor looked like it had flooded with beer. There was broken glasses, clothing, and credit cards that people had dropped all over the floor. The smell of that place once everyone had left was like a sweaty fat kid that just threw up from running in gym class.

Essay-Honorable Mention

The Perfect Person

Miguel Gutierrez Jr.

Their hair resembled autumn. It was full and mixed with dark, mellow hues of red, yellow, and brown. It fell down their shoulders in cascades the way rich, smooth chocolate does in a fountain. It brought me great memories of the cool fall days and the warmth of the sun that wraps you like a burrito. It brought me memories of running around the trampoline while my brothers threw leaves at each other like snowballs.

Of all the curves they have, their smile is my favorite. It radiates a vibe of happiness that fills the entire room. It gives you warmth and comfort like grandma's tamales in a cold storm. Their eyes were a rich deep hazel that takes you back in time through the galaxy, and if you stare in them for too long, you'd be trapped inside and could possibly never escape.

Their lips were a soft plum pink. Their lips were smoother than cocoa butter and softer than expensive memory foam pillows. The beautiful voice that came from their perfect lips was even more smooth and silky, like expensive cloth traded on the Silk Road a thousand years ago. Their voice was blessed with the power of "Charmspeak" from the goddess of love, Aphrodite herself, and had an overwhelming power over you. If you were furious and ready to "square up," it would calm you down. If you didn't have any energy, then it would send a rush of adrenaline through your body. If you were tired at night and had trouble sleeping, then it would put you right into a deep sleep.

When they walked, their broad shoulders were pushed back, their chin was up, head facing forward, and each step they took pronounced confidence throughout the entire building. As they walked, the crowd would part like the Red Sea, and stare in admiration. Some grew very jealous of them, but no matter how

many times a plot arose against them, it would always fail miserably.

This person, not just in looks, but in personality, was perfect. They were very understanding of all situations and would not “trip” when you cracked a cold one with the boys and even insisted to crack a cold one with you. This person did not “trip” if you came home from work very late because you were stuck like super glue over a simple paper jam everyone seem to keep having and relied on you to fix it. They were very humorous and could make you laugh so hard, you’d catch a cramp and sound like a windex bottle. They always saw the good in people and like Anne Frank believed, “I keep my ideals, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart.”

Their heart was a double edge sword. One side of the blade was very caring, loving, compassionate, and warm. But the other side was the exact opposite. It was full of evil, bitter, quick to anger, cold and dark and sinister like burnt coffee that was made from old beans and left out in the open. This side did not show much unless insisted to be shown. When this side of the blade struck, it would cut deep into you and leave a never healing scar as a souvenir of your ignorance for even attempting to “play them”.

They were the “baddest ‘b’ of them all.” A person incomparable in many ways and inexplicable in nature. They were one of the finer jewels made from God, who this person is, is up to you to decide.



Photography—Honorable Mention

Brooke Tant



*Special Essay
Category*

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Special Essay Category

First Place

Utility: The Empowerment of Wanting to Satisfy My Needs

Hector X. Gomez

Today's modern world is a hustle and bustle consisting of go getters and entrepreneurs. Everyone is fully engaged in playing the same never-ending up tempo game of "whatever you can do, I can do better!" And judging by the looks of things they are doing one heck of a job. After all, competition has always seemed to do nothing but bring out the best in all of us. Everything we see nowadays is nothing more than the offspring produced by survival of the fittest.

As a result, I have come to find that the economic concept of "utility" as wanting satisfying power, drives our motivation into the twenty-first century and beyond. This is primarily due to the fact that we are in the "golden-age of the consumer." In the hunt for the next big technological breakthrough or scientific discovery, we have found ourselves in an even larger pursuit for the acquisition of resources. Food, water, precious metals, and fossil fuels are becoming more and more important given that the human race continues to multiply exponentially. But unlike some people, I do not think population control is the answer. I believe in "the more the merrier." And why not?

Instead, I understand the solution lies in an idea my mother implanted in me growing up. However, she said I would only really come to appreciate it once I reach maturity. That idea was that life

is dependent upon what a person “wants” as opposed to what a person really “needs.” And a person will only reach true adult behavior when they start to think in terms of “wanting” only that which they absolutely “need.” So no matter how much I really wanted a Nintendo for Christmas that year. What I needed was a new jacket to survive through the winter. And with that, the negotiation terminated inside of Wal-Mart right there and then.

Therefore, just like when I was ten years old. We as a civilization will continue to face the pain and agony of our growing pains as we learn from our prior experiences and mistakes. I am hopeful we will reach a point where the entire world can equally share and distribute its wealth. In that, everyone will have more than enough to enjoy the comforts of living which most of us take for granted on a day-to-day basis.

I’m talking more along the lines of access to clean water, electricity, adequate food, shelter, and plumbing. Where universal healthcare is not a means for debate by bureaucrats in Congress to win re-election. Yet, the new standard of living that even the Bush men of the Sahara are accustomed to, just the same as the migration patterns of wild animals. And most importantly, where education is once again coveted even more so than a McDonalds with free Wi-Fi and internet access these days.

By the time anyone reads this, I will have proudly graduated from Lamar State College-Port Arthur with an undergraduate degree. I view my hard-earned Associates of Academic Studies diploma as a platform to market my own unique “utility” to the worlds as I move on to greener pastures.

Furthermore, I am hopeful to continue my education wherever it is I may wind-up, because I understand and thirst for knowledge so much now, that I actually crave for it. You see the empowerment I feel from satisfying that need is now the best feeling in the world to me. It is because I know within it resides unlimited opportunities to acquire the real resources I will need to provide for my family in the future. And this is how the world works.



Cover Art—Honorable Mention

Guillermo Garza

Special Essay Category

Second Place

Control and Commerce

Brian C. Tamez

There are many aspects in regard to the mechanics of our world. How it operates is truly a matter of perspective based on the amount of accurate information an individual has acquired. The rich-elite life has become a competition for wealth and power, but for the not so fortunate, it is a struggle for survival. For the sake of attempting to be “politically-correct,” I will say that our world revolves around commerce.

Since the beginning of recorded history, nations have battled to maintain their respective territories; and some, a lot more than others have endeavored to conquer, plunder, and control other civilizations. Some of the primary reasons for this activity is for the possession of valuable natural resources, the advantage of strategic global positioning, and the practice of enculturation. The combination of these actions play a major role in a country’s affluence and successful international trading of goods.

Superior, More Developed Countries (MDC’s) have historically invaded weaker, Lesser Developed Countries (LDC’s). A chief reason for doing so was to obtain their valuable natural resources. Obtaining these resources enabled the invading countries to prosper at home and to barter and trade with other power countries that they were not yet able to conquer. The plundered indigenous goods such as grains, fruits, vegetables, live-stock, gold, and

other precious metals were key in the further development of their society, industrial/technological advancement, and accumulation of wealth. All of which played an integral part in advancement in the commercial system.

Another important aspect of trading was, and still is establishing and maintaining strategic locations. It was important to maintain a stronghold near trade routes for effective and efficient transportation and protection of valuable commodities. These locations also made for great defensive positions for related interests, and for military actions. Maintaining a strong presence in the pleaded country lead to the manipulation and influence over the subdued country's culture.

The practice of enculturation was of the utmost importance and must not be overlooked. When an MDC invaded an LDC it put effort into breaking the backbone of its opposition's culture. The conquerors spared no expense in converting language, religion and even race by impregnating their women and introducing their genetic material. The invading country has now introduced its customs, values, and system of government. By doing so it has begun to bridge the gap of cooperation and understanding that makes for better business relationships-for the conquering country.

The superior countries eventually depart, and the "formerly" oppressed country believes that it has now gained its freedom and independence. How "free" and "independent" is a country that has to sign a treaty, in which the superior nation mandates several stipulations and obligations that the weaker country must abide by to maintain its freedom. Of course, several of these mandates require the most valuable component of profiting from any product is sales. This is more easily controlled globally by establishing, and as we have previously discussed, by mandating and, or forbidding particular International business from taking place between particular countries. It is no secret that more developed countries play a major role in this, which should shed light on-as to why the righteous conquerors are so eager to assist in the reestablishment of a fallen country's government once they have wreaked havoc throughout their land. The M.D.C.s assist in ensuring that the new governing body has the conquering country's interest at

heart, to move easily access the lesser country's natural resources, raw materials, and other products. All of this mostly benefits the M.D.C.; for it has increased its wealth and has acquired valuable good to barter and trade with.

“Money makes the world go around,” is true for me and you. If you look at the big picture, you will see that it is the possession and commerce of valuable commodities such as platinum, gold, oil, and gas that truly keep our world in motion. The average citizen is trapped in a never ending cycle of paying for even the most basic necessities in the life that were and still are provided by nature. When it is all said and done, the average citizen has lived a lifetime of servitude to Rich Man's Company for the sake of maintaining a comfortable home, nice means of transportation, or doing some traveling, and maybe even obtaining a boat. When you think about it, those life time achievements seem relatively simple for an “advanced” civilizations. This system is great for the persons that we being paid and worked for, sometimes not so good for the working party.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Aniceto Sanchez



Poetry

Poetry - First Place

True Colors Curtis Wilson

Autumn brings its beautiful colors to the trees of our nation, before their leaves are shed and scattered upon the ground.

War brings on strife against our nation's tree of life, its bitter winds shred our true color's from the limbs and our brave soldiers are strewn about.

Red, black, yellow, tan, white, and brown, are the true colors of our land. For when our soldier's fall it is red blood that spills out on the ground.

Poetry - Second Place

The Darkness

Joshua Barnes

The darkness knows me like no one else can. It's my constant companion, my only true friend. When the light is bright, and it has to hide, it stays in my heart, where the pain resides, but when the lights go out, and there is no one else there; the Darkness comes out, and we are an amazing pair. It always accompanies me when I go to have fun and stays by my side until I am done.

Tonight, it sneaks in with me while the beauty is asleep, and watches as she dies, never making a peep. I bundle her up and wrap her up tight; the Darkness rides along beside me as we blaze through the night. "Do you like my new wife?" I ask it with glee. The Darkness keeps its own counsel, just smiling at me. I walk down the stairs, opening the secret door. It admires my wives with me, as I add my one more. I slowly close my eyes, holding my new wife tight, with the Darkness holding me tighter, I sleep through the night.

Poetry - Third Place

Studio Art

Lorena Garcia

Roses are red, violets are blue

We were so young, how could you

Roses are red, violets are blue

You had a family of your own, that, she knew

Roses are red, violets are blue

Damage was done, was it worth it to you

Roses are red, violets are blue

We were so broken, you'll never have a clue

Roses are red, violets are blue

The pain of reminiscing, what could we do

Roses are red, violets are blue

Someone filed the spot, did what you didn't do

Roses are red, violets are blue

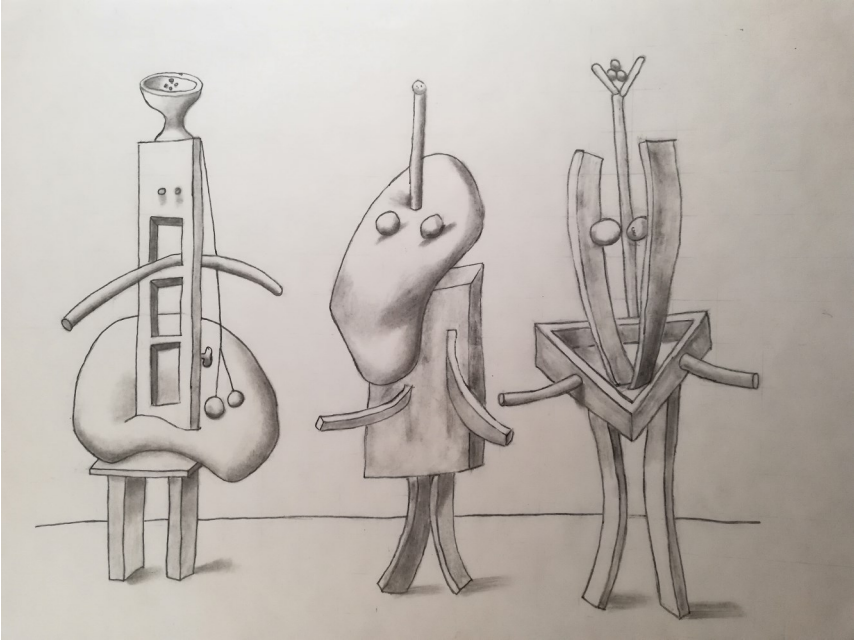
We still hurt, but we forgive you

Roses are red, violets are blue

We can pretend all is well, and start a new

Roses are red, violets are blue

Deep down we'll always know what's true.



General Art—Honorable Mention

John Salinas

Poetry
Honorable Mention

Inner Peace

D'Angelo Anderson

Each day I'm Finding a better me,
As I look in the mirror
I like what I see.
Or could it be. I like who I've become?
I train to stay strong. Mind, body, and soul.
So many late nights,
This is one to add to a mind full of thoughts.
Loneliness come by the tons
But my heart is strong, arms are wide, shoulders
broad.
Knowledge is best nurtured in solitude,
Now I'm armed and dangerous.
My ammunition?
Inner Peace.

Poetry
Honorable Mention

Untitled

Lorena Garcia

Life was sunshine and rainbows before it all went
bad,

There was no signs or warnings, it all happened fast

Weeks without electricity, weeks without food,

Weeks of unanswered questions, weeks without you

Life lost its point, who would have thought,

It would be so easy, leaving us to rot

What did it matter, turning over to drugs

Not coming home after school, out drinking with
thugs

We lost our drive, we lost our way

All that mattered, was getting through the day

Years before recuperating, never fully healed

Putting each other back together, for all the layers
that got peeled

We made it through without you, we don't need you
anymore

Hear me scream it to the world, hear me roar

We've learned to forgive, but can never forget
The face of pain and suffering that we met
Let's start a new relationship, there's still time
We'll take it day by day, all will be fine
Just promise your honesty, we're not asking for roy-
alty
Materials don't matter, show us your loyalty
There is a lot you've missed, you have much to
learn
What's done is done, but now it's your turn



Cover Art—Honorable Mention

Raul Menjares Jr.

Poetry
Honorable Mention

Missing You

Rolando Menchaca

My crushed soul, nervously drifts away
during this foggy day
that is in part filled in pain.
Nostalgic Memories bleed from my inflicted heart
while a sea of emotions sing away in a fiery art.
Smoke, Fire, Rain,
all these emotions run through my veins
while life is slowly fading away.
Even though my mind continuously warns me of
this state
my body refuses to integrate
those powers I inherited from you when I was eight.
I would give my right to life and every blessing I
have received
just to hold your hands this Christmas Eve.

Poetry
Honorable Mention

Never Ever Coming Back

Gregory Helms

Sitting here in this cell,
Just waiting to get out of this hell.
I am Never Ever coming back.
Once on the other side of that wall,
I am going to have to stand tall.
 To Never Ever come back.
Get a job and walk a straight line -
You know what? I am gonna be just fine.
 Never Ever coming back.
Times might be hard and rough.
That is when I gotta be tough.
 To Never Ever come back.
With friends and family as my support,
I will have everyone in my court.
 Never Ever coming back.
Going to do thirty years on parole,
finishing every last one is my goal.
 To Never Ever come back.

Doing my time learning in college,
Collecting a vast amount of knowledge.

Never Ever coming back.

When I think of the hell of that cell,
my thinking becomes clear as a bell.

To Never Ever come back.

Poetry

Honorable Mention

Oxygen In Our Lungs

Amanda Wallage

It's true that fresh air is good for the body,
But the feeling of suffocation reminds us we are
alive.
The moments before a breath, when our lungs ap-
pear deflated
Are the moments we should strive for.
Because not a second of the day is guaranteed,
And every breath could be the last.
We must know what a gasp for air feels like to rec-
ognize a full breath.
This is our body.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Guillermo Garza

Poetry
Honorable Mention

Character
Curtis Wilson

Willows weep widow's mourn, children
sleep soldiers are born.

Motion be still lifeless flesh upon
a field, a future bathed in
blood.

Proud soldier's dead dying and
disfigured, even without wounds
transformed.

Poetry

Honorable Mention

What Kept me Alive

Michael Bodie

Inside these walls, life is a living hell!

Long nights alone in a very dark cell,

Only thoughts of you keep me sane at night.

Vivid and warm, you are loves guiding light.

Every thought of you makes my heart feel right.

Your love unlocked my heart with its master key.

Open your arms and reach out to me.

Under these towers, your embrace sets me free.

Bringing back all of those special memories,

At night you are here in all of my dreams.

Bars can't hold back true love, it seems.

Your love is the rose that blooms in my heart.

Another few months before our fresh start.

Losing these years was the hardest part.

Without your love, I'd never made it through,
Alone and adrift without any clue.
Your love rescued me from that dark downward
dive,

Saying "I love you" is what kept me alive.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Aniceto Sanchez

91

Poetry

Honorable Mention

I Am

Brian C Tamez

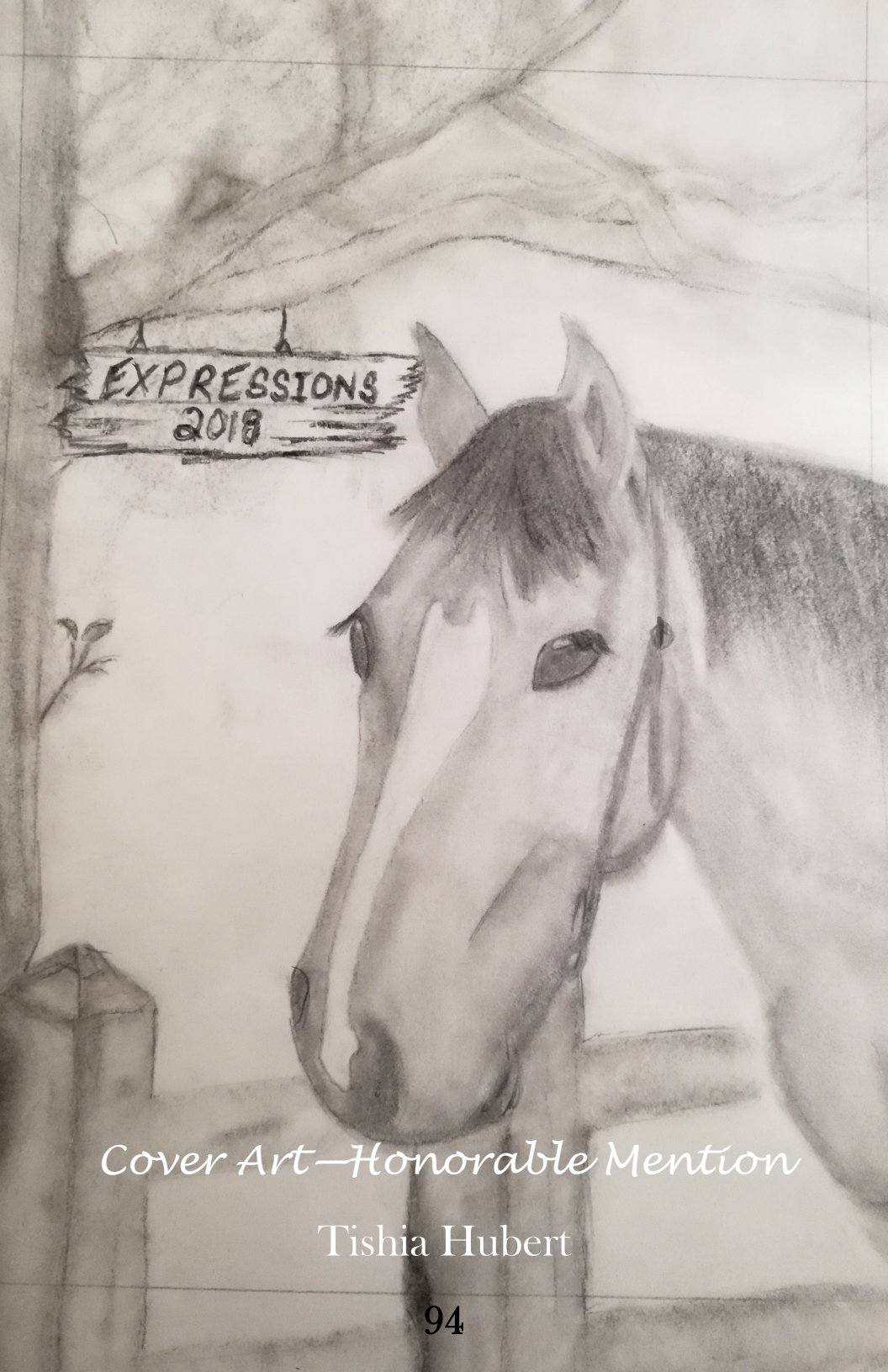
The only way to the father may very
well be through the sun, for without
its precious light the sum of life on earth
would be none.

The most sacred gift to all, from the
mother to the son; no me without you,
there is no greater love.

The eyes of mortals, as, beautiful, and
as sharp as they may be, the truth
may gander directly into our gaze
still, we are only receptive to that of
which we choose to see.

We enlighten ourselves with the
power of the power of great knowledge
no matter, destined to become nothing
more than what we were created
to be.

The best me that I can become,
I can't leave if I'm the only one.
I'm proud of the two men that I
see in the mirror, our legacy
of glory has just begun.
Remorseful, but without, regret -
I am... my father's son!



Cover Art—Honorable Mention

Tishia Hubert

Poetry

Honorable Mention

My Gun

Joshua Barnes

Alone in my closet, I feel their eyes cry;
the demons are watching, waiting for me to die.
They know what I am doing; they know what I've
done.
They know what I'm planning to do with this gun.
I asked her not to leave; I begged her to stay.
My pleas fell on deaf ears as she walked away.
So happy in her new life with her husband and son.
She forgot all about me, me and my gun.
Tonight I reminded her with a bullet to the face.
Then I shot her husband and son leaving behind
no trace.
Now alone in my closet, my plans are almost done.
I cram my mouth full with the barrel of my gun.
I pull back the hammer and slowly exhale.
With Thanatos beside me, I plummet to Hell.



Photography—Honorable Mention

Antonio Banda

Poetry

Honorable Mention

Why 7 Ate 9

Jordan Flory

Prime or composite, it didn't matter.

Years of tensions had been put aside as Seven threatened to end the numerical order.

Seven had just partially cannibalized his own wife, Nine.

To make matters worse, he was now holding Six hostage and threatening to cut open his enclosed circle.

The remaining numbers from One to Ten secretly met on a plane to evaluate the possible solutions.

"Our whole society is divided, this just a sign of the times," One hysterically shrieked amidst the frantic discussion.

"I know why he ate his wife!" Ten abruptly exclaimed.

Four rolled her eyes, "Oh look, of course Mr. two-digits thinks he knows the answer."

"No, no, listen, Seven recently said he was going on a new diet and I bet you he wanted to start eating 3 squared meals per day," Ten explained.

The rest of the numbers turned to each other and slowly began to nod their heads in agreement.

“It all adds up,” a wide-eyed Eight whispered to himself.

“What has Six got to do with it with it though?” Two asked.

Ten pondered the question for a brief moment, “I don’t know, but I bet we can carry over what we’ve worked out to calculate the answer, let’s go!”

The numbers sheepishly followed their largest member as he went to confront Seven.

Nine’s half-eaten carcass lay at Seven’s feet, now resembling a J.

As Ten got closer to Seven, the homicidal digit tightly wrapped his slender arm around Six.

Ten pleaded, “Seven, please stop, we know you killed your +1 because of your new diet, let Six go and we can work something out.”



*Research
Paper*

Research Paper

First Place

The Wonderful Benefits of Green Tea

Maddalynn Bonin

Tea parties are the most common gathering for many of the upper class in Britain and America. In China and Japan they hold what is called tea ceremonies. Regardless of the culture tea is the most consumed drink in the world next to water. Tea may not taste as wonderful as a cold, fresh soda, but tea has its own healthy qualities. To be specific, green tea is the healthiest of the teas. Green tea is used all over the world for multiple purposes. There are green tea cosmetics, drinks, and even foods. What is so special about this tea? Is it another fad? Well, if it is a fad, it has been a fad for thousands of years with early China being its biggest participants. In the long-run green tea's health benefits are plenty. Today's technology and advanced medical studies have found that green tea has many beneficial effects on multiple organ systems.

To understand why people drink green tea, one must look all the way back two thousand years ago in south western China where it began. This region of green tea's beginnings is called the Bashu area, which contains three of the world's oldest tea trees. The earliest written poem about the Bashu area takes place in during the Han Dynasty during 206 B.C. to 9A.D. It was not until the Tang Dynasty that a reliable source was published. The book is named *The Classic of Tea*, by Lu Yu. This source was so reliable

that later down the line Lu Yu became regarded as the “Saint of Tea.” The roots of how tea became an item of farming in multiple countries links back to China’s tea trades. It was after the sixth century, after Japan became the most recent and popular customer, which the trading started to go beyond the continent of Asia. The seventeenth century is when Europe participated in the trades and took it by storm. Europe’s participation is what gave China its economic boom. The trade was so huge "the total amount in production for [all] of China was around fifty thousand tons and the total amount of tea exported was nineteen thousand tons in the 1840s" (Pettigrew). In the eighteenth century, tea farms are finding a different country of growth, making China’s tea trade decline later in the early nineteenth century. The culture is what this rich history left behind as a tie to how tea is known today.

There are many countries that include tea into their daily lives within the culture that thrives there today. Americans, especially in the south, drink tons of tea. It is not regarded as a cultural idea, but when people visit the south of the United States outsiders see iced tea in almost all food serving places. Iced tea in the southern United States can be either sweetened or not sweetened, which the healthier choice is the not sweetened option. The bizarre thing about America’s tea is that it is served cold, in the rest of the world tea is consumed warm. In England, it is common to see milk and honey added to their tea alongside some small sandwiches and pastries go with the beverage. Usually these tea breaks are in the afternoon. The milk and honey is a much more nutrient rich option due to the sweeteners being rich in calcium and great for allergies. India adds spices to their tea to give an added flavor to the tea. The biggest cultural trademark for tea, is the Japanese tea ceremony. They use matcha which is green tea ground up into a powder form that makes a stronger flavored green tea. These ceremonies include multiple preparations and strict etiquette for the tea to be made, served, and put away. There are multiple kinds of ceremonies in accordance to what time of the year it is. Depending on what time of the year it is as well, such as the fall, there would be a new tea jar opened or in the ceremony’s terms the breaking of the seal. Most of the performers or participants in these ceremonies have had practice or was even trained in a school. Most of Japan

has practiced these ceremonies but it is found most concentrated in Kyoto. Whilst the Japanese use matcha in a ceremony, the Chinese use green tea more in the medicinal practice. China is no stranger to the holistic or herbal practices in medicine. There are multiple teas that they use, but green tea is the most organic form of types making it the most used. China is also most famous for "tea houses aimed at the promotion of the [their] tea culture" (Pettigrew). Green tea is a great product to purchase and sell but one must know where to find it.

There are many different ways that green tea can be purchased. Many people go into the grocery store and buy the large company brand that they are used to. Some may buy the imported teas. Others try the medicinal and fruity mixtures that line the shelves. Then, there are the custom tea shops. There are differences that people do need to be aware of. The "comfort" brands that are owned by large companies are a great starter for those that are not familiar with tea. These companies are under a lot of codes and regulations to keep consumers safe from any contaminants. Big company brands are also a cheaper option due to the fact that they are made in bulk. On the downside these companies are under a lot of restriction so any of the exotic flavors or mixtures will not be in their brand. Imported green tea is a more organic choice and an option for the ambitious consumers. The imported teas are a bit trickier due to the fact that not all countries have the same regulations. For example the imported green tea from third-world countries can have more pollution and contaminant exposure than the tea produced in the United States. There are also herbal mixtures that include green tea from other companies. Consuming these mixtures may have an effect on overall health. Imported teas may not have their ingredients printed in English or the purchasing country's language which the risk is that someone could consume a product that can harm them. Overall a lot of these imported teas have less preservatives and additives in them. The best way to check to see if the green tea of choice is safe is to check with the Food and Drug Administration to see if there are any alerts for hazardous contaminants. The herbal mixtures and fruit mixtures are also found in commercial stores. The fruit mixtures are practically safe but they do have added preservatives and have a higher

sugar count than regular green tea. On the plus side the fruit in the tea gives a more pleasant flavor and can also add antioxidants. The herbal teas are a little different. They have green tea with herbal supplements added. The fruit teas are monitored safer but herbal supplements have less regulations. It is better to practice caution before buying these teas. At least know the different herbs mixed with the green tea. Blindly drinking tea with herbal supplements can be a risk for toxic levels of the ingredient or an unexpected reaction. Check to see if any of the herbs conflict with any prescriptions or health problems. When in doubt just look up the ingredients before purchasing to see if it is the right tea of choice. Just like herbal mixtures there are custom tea shops. Custom tea shops have all sorts of tea mixtures, whether or not that it is safe is up to the producer. In these situations it is best to talk to the person that handles the tea to see what all ingredients are in the mixture. It is highly recommended to do so especially in private owned businesses, because they are easier to get away with health hazards than the more commercialized stores like Teavana. Guaranteed it is best to start off with regular green tea.

Dinking green tea has a numerous amount of benefits for the body's health. Each organ system has a different benefit. The most important organ that benefits is the brain. Cognitive and focus improvement are some of the general benefits. There are many studies conducted to see what can help with neurodegenerative diseases. There are some tests which "concluded that tea consumption could protect against Parkinson's disease" (Miyoshi). Parkinson's is just one disease they are testing for more such as improved brain function in elderly people. Scientists have seen patients with Alzheimer's react positively with green tea consumption. While the brain has its benefits the liver gets a plus. Hepatitis being the biggest liver issue in the world. Many prescribed medications either are very expensive or not very effective. Studies have found that "green tea effectively prevented the progression of hepatitis to liver fibrosis" (Miyoshi). Diabetes patients can partake in the tea benefits as well. The issue of diabetes is that blood glucose levels are uncontrollable, especially after eating. Depending on how bad the diabetes is in

an individual, it can progress into a fatal disease. Many Americans are diagnosed with it and it is becoming a huge problem. There are many different medications out there for this disease but sometimes, like the hepatitis medication, it is either too expensive or not effective. Luckily for diabetes patients there issue is controlled by what is put in their mouths. Green tea should be something invested in for these patients due to the fact that it "contributes to the prevention and suppression of diabetes by impeding the rise in blood sugar levels" (Miyoshi). It does this by "the inhibition of glucose absorption in the small intestine," which causes less sugar to get in to the body's blood system (Miyoshi). The biggest killer in America, cardiovascular disease, can be benefitted from green tea by about 6 cups a day. Coronary artery disease is what some people commonly refer to as blockage; though, it has other symptoms but blockage is most common. Blockage is when there is a buildup of plaque in the blood vessels depleting the heart of oxygen. This is what causes cardiac arrest or as known as a heart attack. Luckily, researchers have "found that green tea consumption was significantly higher in patients without [coronary artery disease]" (Bone). Six cups of tea may seem like an astronomical amount but cups is being described as a measurement not a literal glass. Women's health is huge with green tea. Folic acid is a super vitamin for women or really anyone, but mostly it is commonly seen with women. It benefits brain activity, pregnancy, and contributes to overall good health. Usually it is found in green vegetables but "green tea is regarded in Japan as a source of folic acid" (Bone). It is possible that this folic acid in the tea contributes to the antioxidants. The antioxidants help the body fight off any cancer or cell mutation in the body. Preventing the cell mutation stops cancer before it starts. The technical term for these mutated cells are called free radicals. Antioxidants defend the body of these free radicals. Green tea benefits all sorts of cancers but the biggest ones are breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and colon cancer. In men, it benefits by protecting them from prostate cancer. Green tea can also help with weight loss by boosting the metabolism. Influenza is an illness of many types and causes that green tea can benefit. Influenza is a virus that is very common to catch. It can run rampant in schools and hospitals, but it is fatal to the elderly and infants. There are vaccines

out there for the public to get but it is limited and expensive. While it may be inevitable for some to catch this virus or not, green tea is one of the preventatives that can be used. There was an experiment conducted to see if gargling the green tea prevented the flu, but it was very ineffective. The experiment found that consuming the tea benefitted better than the gargling. The "study of elementary school students indicated that consumption of three to five cups of green tea per day was associated with a significantly reduced incidence of influenza infection" (Kazuki). Overall, green tea consumption is seen in people who live past the mortality rate. There are more studies conducted to see what else green tea can do. The health benefits are compelling but it is important to know the ways an individual can consume green tea.

The best way to consume green tea is to drink it plain without any sugar. Plain green tea is made by letting either a tea ball or tea bag steep in warm water for at least five minutes. The color should look like a light gold or sometimes it can be green depending on what kind is used. The green color is more likely to be found with matcha green tea. This is the most disliked method of consuming it but it is the healthiest. The other beverage type option is the bottled green tea. Keep in mind these drinks can have many preservatives and sugars that are not beneficial. These are more for the lesser of the evils between bottled soda and bottled tea. In this situation it is better to just take the tea, but home made with the loose leaf or tea bags are better. Green tea milkshakes or frappes are a trending drink from major coffee shops or franchises. Do not be fooled, these are still not as healthy as a regular cup of plain green tea. Many tea drinking individuals like to use sugar or some kind of sweetener which gives a more appealing taste to the usually bitter tea. Lemon is added to give a citrus flavor, which is great for the antioxidants. Green tea does not have to be a beverage for it to be consumed. With the matcha powder there are multiple food items with this herb in them. There are breads and pastries made with green tea. Breads and pastries are the unhealthy routes to follow but they are interesting. There are ice creams and candy with green tea in them as well. However, this is the unhealthiest of the options, but it is fun to try out for the adventurous. All of the edible options for the

green tea are made with matcha due to the fact that using regular, ungrounded tea leaves would mess up the food item and would not keep fresh as well.

A huge market for green tea in this day and age, is in the cosmetic industry. Many men and women are looking for a more organic option of lotions and beauty products that are less harmful for their bodies. Soaps and lotions are huge, especially for women. In many lotions and body washes green tea extracts are used to be an astringent which keeps the skin young and firm. Shampoos and conditioners use green tea extract to make the hair stronger and less likely to brake. Face washes have to be the biggest marketer in green tea due to how soft it makes the skin feel and its firming qualities. The antioxidants also fight off acne very effectively. Make up products are starting to go cruelty free and organic, which means more green tea extract. More eyeshadows, foundation, concealers, and lipsticks are made with green tea and other organic components that reduce the overall damage these products do to the consumer's face. These organic ingredients also make it easier to wash off without harmful scrubbing. They are also carcinogen free due to the antioxidants present. Aside from the supermarkets, grocery, and department stores, many people are taking a creative approach to how tea can be used. Some take the tea leaves out of the steeped bags or tea ball and scrub their hands or face with it to make them soft. The used leaves are also great for bug bites, scrapes, and burns. How these used tea leaves are used is to put the soaked leaves on the wound, bug bite, or burn and let it sit for five minutes. There are many ways to consume green tea and it does not have to be ingested to provide the benefits to anyone's overall health.

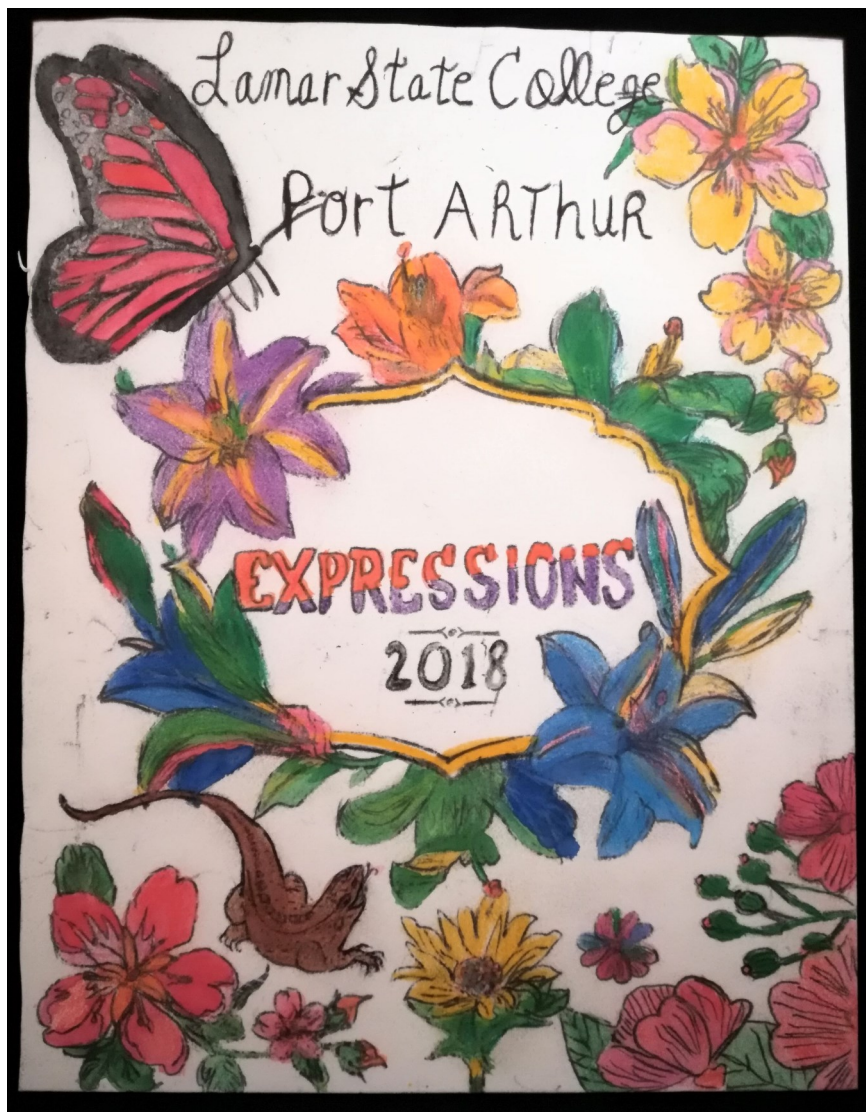
Green tea has its lengthy ties to history, from China to the rest of the world. Its cult following is strong in many different countries, all thanks to the Chinese. It was China that introduced it as a healthy drink to the world by initially using it as medicine. From medicine to a beverage, the cultural impact was huge and it is still exists today. Likewise, health conscious individuals rave over it and it is taking the market and alternative medicine by storm. It may seem like a fading trend but it is indeed here to stay permanently. Please, enjoy the wide array of its products. There

are not any gender specific rules for having this drink. A tea party or social convention is not needed to enjoy green tea. It is nature's gift to people all over the world. It is tasty served hot or cold, whichever preferred. It goes as far as to improving the health of those who cannot take harmful pills anymore. Researchers are learning something new about it every day. Hopefully, green tea is studied further into for a safer and less harmful option to aid illness, diseases, and improve people's daily lives. The possibilities are strong and promising. In the long-run any to all of the body will benefit. The proven science is evident and it is reliable, the sources are here to stay. Green tea may not be your cup of tea, but it is a cup of tea recommended for everyone.

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Melissa Bostic

The Invisible God: Or is He?

The King James Version Bible, combining sixty-six books from the Old and New Testaments, has thirty-nine books comprising the Old Testament, while twenty-seven complete the New Testament. The bible has over forty authors; Moses writes the most books in the Old Testament called the Torah-- consisting of five books-- while Paul writes the most books in the New Testament-- thirteen epistles; although, some scholars suspect Paul wrote Hebrews from 49 - 67 AD (Jewish Virtual Library). Jewish and Christian writings, upon melding together, allow for a myriad of beliefs: Catholicism, Baptist, Pentecostal, and many more, all emerging after scriptural interpretations.

The Old Testament has five sections: Pentateuch or Torah, historical, poetic, Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets (Sweeney). The New Testaments has five sections: gospels, history, Pauline epistles, general epistles, and prophecy (Hill). Together, they cover topics such as creation, war, love, history, and the end times. An argument can be made that the New Testament scriptures are written with the Apostles having prior knowledge of the Tanachk, although this event is highly unlikely since Paul is the only contributor to fully study Mosaic Law. According to Jewish history, the Torah is canonized 400BC, the Prophets 200BC, while Psalms is not canonized until around 100AD; all Old Testament works were organized by the Great Assembly, consisting of 120 Rabbis whose ambitions are to ensure the Tanachk is more than a book of men (Jewish Virtual Library). The bible is a polyglot of writings that is able to answer all biblical questions; it is written by divine guidance;

together, the Old and New Testaments make logos scripture analysis an interesting challenge to determine whether or not God is invisible.

The TANACHK is the Jewish name for the Old Testament. It is an acronym for the Torah or Pentateuch, N'vi'im, and Kh'tuvim. The word Torah, defined as being instructed, contains the first five books of the bible, which are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. When using the Bible to search for the answer to whether God is invisible or not, one's first inquiry leads to the beginning of man.

Genesis records how God forms the Earth and everything in it. Upon completion of this task, God's final finishing touch is to make a being that resembles his, and the angels' physical likeness. Moses writes, "[a]nd he created, Elohim, the man in image of him, in image of Elohim he created him, male and female he created them" (Gen1:28). The Tanachk does not write out the word God, instead it writes G-d or Elohim; the Jewish faith does not feel that they are worthy enough to write his name (Jewish Virtual Library). This sentence is explained from the article, *The Meaning of לְדַמּוּת in Genesis 1:1-213*, when Wardlaw Jr. writes, "The context [of Genesis 1:28] suggests that the emphasis on creation in the image of God focuses upon likeness rather than separation and differentiation" (507). In this verse, the word image has been translated from Hebrew, to Greek, and then to English, [לְדַמּוּת] *tseh'-lem* /l/ [f]rom an unused root meaning to *shade*; a *phantom*, that is, (figuratively) *illusion*, *resemblance*; hence a representative *figure*, especially an *idol*: - image (Wardlaw Jr.).

In the article, *Christ the Image of God and Head of the Church: The Christological Hymn of Colossians*, while speaking about Colossians 1:15, Maloney writes, "The hymn starts with the strong claim that Christ, God's beloved Son, 'is the image of the invisible God,' alluding to the creation story in which we find that God created human beings in God's own 'image and likeness' (Gen 1:26). Thus, as Scripture points out, it is not the invisible, heavenly realities like angels that are the truest revelation of God; human beings are God's image." (156). Maloney is alluding to the bible speaking of the goodness of God that is passed on to

humankind; however, the bible is actually being specific. One might say if the bible is not using an analogy, then a contradiction between the Old and the New Testament becomes apparent because if Christ is the image of the invisible God, he too would be invisible. After explaining other scriptures, and connecting the dots, then all will become clear.

It is a common practice today for one to just pick up a bible and read whatever it is that interests them. The NIV Learning Bible gives geography, people and nations, objects, plants and animals, history and culture, cross references, ideas and concepts, which allows one to better understand the scriptures they are reading, and it explains how fortunate they are to be able to read an English version bible. The NIV writes that around 100AD; the Jewish scriptures, which were written in Hebrew and Aramaic, are translated into Greek, “[t]his translation is called the Septuagint, which means ‘seventy,’...The legend says that 72 scholars began translating...all finish[ing]...in 72 days... [all] translations were exactly the same” (NIV, The Learning Bible 10). The Septuagint was then translated to the “Vulgate ..., [which is the] most ancient extant version of the whole Christian Bible. Its name derives from a 13th-century reference to it as the “editio vulgata.” The official Latin version of the Roman Catholic Church, it was prepared c.A.D. 383–A.D. 405 by St. Jerome (c.342–420) at the request of Pope St. Damasus I, his patron. The Vulgate was intended to replace the Old Latin version (the “Itala”), which was translated from the Greek. Jerome first revised the Old Latin Gospels, translating them in 383–84” (Vulgate).

The early Catholic Church’s organization understands Latin, but few of the populace of the era can claim this feat. Many of the upper echelon in the early Catholic Church felt that the public should blindly obey any rule they put forward, so many scriptures were used out of context for their benefit, with little compassion shown to any that questioned their authority. John Wycliffe, a noted scholar from Oxford, having a Doctorate of Theology, writes a rough English translation of the bible in 1384 (NIV 25). He is at disagreement with the Catholic Church because he believes that religion should not be used for monetary gain, nor should a religious institution be able to control the state (Walker). After Wyc-

liffe's death, the Catholic Church has his body dug up and burned (NIV 24). This is an attempt to alter the path of his soul, posthumously.

Eventually, a priest by the name of Martin Luther fights against the tyranny, when he wrote ninety-five essays, "attack[ing]... the practice of selling indulgences -- remissions from the punishment earned by sin -- and a critique of the pope's claim to authority over the souls of the dead" (Heal 29). Martin Luther set about translating much of the Bible into his own vernacular language, German, thus allowing the common people a chance for a non-bias interpretation (Montover). The article, *Martin Luther and the German Reformation*, writes that "Erasmus' Novum Instrumentum of 1516, an edition of the New Testament that presented the Greek and Latin texts in parallel, accompanied by extensive commentaries and annotations, was one of the most remarkable intellectual achievements of the age. It formed the basis for Luther's German translation of 1521-22 and for biblical scholarship into the 19th century" (Heal 31). However, the Catholic monarchy was not pleased, so they accused Martin Luther of heresy, excommunicated him, and life privileges were taken from him, meaning anyone can kill him with no penalty. Many of Martin Luther's followers are killed, but Martin Luther survives; later, he implements a new doctrine based on his biblical interpretations, which are still used by the Lutheran Church. (Montover).

In 1526, William Tyndale translated much of the Bible from Latin to English, until the Catholic Church declares him a heretic, has him strangled, and then burned at the stake (NIV 24). There are several bootleg versions of the Latin Bible that were translated into English from 1384 to 1609; all in use by various religious groups, but many had various interpretation flaws (NKJV). This changed in 1611, when King James of England, who had broken away from the Catholic Church, petitions his most learned priest and scholars to translate the Latin Bible into English (NIV 24). The New King James Version bible prologue writes that "[t]he King James translators [are] committed to producing an English Bible that w[ill] be a precise translation, and by no means a paraphrase or a broadly approxiamate rendering" (NKJV, vii). The KJV bible eventually becomes the standard for English speaking people,

but only after many men and women pay the ultimate sacrifice. Because of these actions, one can now read the bible, and study the word for themselves.

After one reads the Old Testament, he/she can see that many scriptures in the book of Psalms are predictions to the coming of the Christ. The Disciples of Jesus are always referring to the events happening around them as being written as preludes to which are now happening. The article, *Every Passage of Scripture Which Referred to Him: The Psalms in Christian Prayer*, quotes the bible, “[when Driscoll writes;]as the verses and the hours pass, the risen Lord opens our minds and interiorly says to us, ‘Everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and psalms had to be fulfilled’” (Luke: 24:44). Most Christians in the world have probably heard of the 23rd of Psalms, but an old testament/new testament comparison which resonates with this author is from the Old Testament book of Psalms 22:16-19, which juxtaposes the verbiage of The New Testament books of Mark 15:24 and John 20:25.

For dogs have encompassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet...They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture” (Psalms 22: 16, 19).... And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take (Mark 15:24).... The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe (John 20:25).

Since God is invisible, in order for anyone to comprehend viewing the unviewable, they must first look into the book of the John, which reads, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). How can this invisible God, described in the Bible as a spirit, be able to make all civilization in his and the angels’ images? Reading the book of John, one finds a profound description of God’s transformation in the first chapter, when he writes; “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; these scrip-

tures help to shed light on the question of an invisible God; the answer suddenly seeming tangible (John 1:1). Further analyzing this scripture, John is saying that God, the spirit, has become flesh. In the article, *Focus: John 1:(1-9), 10-18: (The Light of the World)*, it interprets John 1:1 as a, "... soaring prolog [which] sets the tone for John's Gospel, the most "spiritual" of the four Gospels, and the one in which the mystery of the incarnation is most brilliantly portrayed. The Word was God, and became Flesh and lived among us" (Gemignani 81).

Besides the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, who are made by God from dust and Adam's rib respectively, every other man and woman on earth, has been born of a woman. God, the spirit, decides he wants a fleshly body, so he sends an angel to tell Mary, the espoused of Joseph, that she is chosen to bare a child. Mary is puzzled, and asks the angel how can she possibly have a baby without knowing a man? The Apostle Luke records the event by writing, "[a]nd the angel answer[s] and sa[ys] unto her, [t]he Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). Because of this event, the Holy Ghost becomes the Father of Mary's baby, Jesus; using logic, one may infer that the Holy Ghost and the Father must be one, which is God, an invisible spirit.

After Jesus is born, Joseph marries Mary; together, they have other children, becoming a normal family for that era. Jesus trains to be a carpenter with his Mother's expectation that he will follow in Joseph's trade. When Jesus is 12 years old, his first hint as to his purpose on Earth becomes known. Jesus, discovered missing after a family visit to Jerusalem, is later found teaching in a temple. He starts being chastised by Mary until he interrupts saying, "... [h]ow is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2: 49)? This awakens Mary to a fact that she has forgotten; Jesus has not come for her glorification, but that of his Father. Jesus does not immediately go about his Father's business, but instead bides his time, starting his ministry at 30 years of age, and then attracting many followers, including the 12 disciples.

Many Christian religions preach about the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Their beliefs are standardized, being set up by religious affiliations that set rules concerning how each pastor or priest of a church may teach interpretations of the bible. One such interpretation characterizes the three different entities involved with the Trinity: God is the Father, Jesus is the Son, and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of God sent to accompany man, and all existing individually.

Jesus, while speaking to a crowd at Galilee said, “[g]o ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Mat. 28: 19). Stemming from this scripture, thousands are baptized in like manner; however, many people have reservations concerning the contextual meaning of Jesus’ words. In the Scofield reference edition of the KJV, C.I. Scofield writes, “[t]he word is in the singular, the ‘name,’ not names. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the final name of the one true God. It affirms: (1) that God is one.... (3) [t]he conjunction in one name of the [t]hree affirms equality and oneness of substance” (KJV). While researching to find the name alluded to by the Scofield edition, a scripture providing an answer is found, occurring after a question is presented to the disciples by a crowd at the feast of Pentecost; they ask, “[...]men and brethren what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, [r]epent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:37, 38).

M.D. Treece writes, “[t]he proponents of baptism using the titles from Matthew say that to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ means simply to be in the authority of Jesus” (Treece, 77). Reading his book, one finds M.D. Treece’s opinions are closely associated with the Scofield references bible; both interpret the bible to read that baptism is more than just being in the authority of Jesus; it is a necessary means for salvation. Paul, previously named Saul, not being one of the twelve disciples, but now as an apostle of Christ, comes upon some apostles who were not in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. He asks under what name were they baptized; they say under John’s repentance. With this new found information, Paul re-

baptized them in the name of Jesus (Acts 19: 1-6). John the Baptist baptizes to forgive people of their sins, honoring a God whose name was unknown to him, but since the son of God is Jesus, Paul insists that the baptismal act has to be repeated, which changes the verbiage format.

There appears to be a contrast in the form of baptism, either the name of Jesus, or the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. One must then question the importance of the verbiage being spoken during a baptismal service in regards to salvation. This question can really only be proven on judgment day, but by using Logos to study the written scripture, one may find a logical interpretation. The Apostle Mark writes, “[h]e that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16: 16). The disciple Peter said, “[b]e it know unto you all...that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...for there is none other name...whereby we must be saved”(Acts 4: 10-12). Jesus said, “[e]xcept a man be born of the water...he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”(John 3:5). The apostle Paul wrote, “[there is but] [o]ne Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4: 5). Each of these verses leads one closer to an answer for the question, “Is God Invisible?”

Explaining baptism, Peter says that it is not to rid the flesh of the filth of the world, but it is to make an appeasement for a good conscience towards God (I Pet. 3:21). The scriptures read that all sins are washed away by the blood of Christ “[i]n whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col 1:14). In the *Literal Word*, a passage reads that “[i]t is with this sprinkling of the blood that we gain a good conscience” (Treece, 79). Baptism signifies the washing of blood, but by whom, God the spirit, or Jesus the man?

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not names, they are titles. A man can be a father, a son, and all have a spirit, but how does one identify them self to the world, except by their name. What is the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? This most important question, which needs an answer, is the name that should be used for baptism.

After Jesus performs many miracles, teachings, and para-

bles, one of the twelve disciples, “Philip[,] saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us” (John 1:8). Jesus is disappointed from the question as “[he] saith unto him, [h]ave I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? [H]e that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, [s]hew us the Father...I and my Father are one “(John 14: 7, 10:30). From these scriptures, one may deduce that Jesus is claiming that he is the Father. By using the transitive relation of if $a=b$, and $b=c$, then $a=c$, one might deduce that if Jesus is the Father, the Father is God, and the Holy Ghost fathered Jesus, then Jesus and God are one.

What does countless miracles matter, for most of the Jewish people refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah. Instead of accepting him, they appealed unto the Roman authority to punish Jesus, even unto death. After interviewing Jesus, the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, can find no fault with him. “While he [is] sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sen[ds] to him saying, ‘[h]ave nothing to do with that just [m]an, for I [suffer] many things today in a dream because of him’” (Mat. 27: 19). Pilate offers a choice to the Jews, either free Jesus, or free a very bad prisoner scheduled for execution; they, choosing the prisoner, ask for Jesus to be crucified. Pilate literally washes his hands of the Jews’ thirst for blood before turning Jesus unto them (Mat. 27: 21-26).

Roman soldiers, obeying the wishes of the Jews, whip Jesus, place a crown of thorns on his head, and then make a sign and hang it on him; the Jews dislike the sign, which reads, “THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS” (Mat. 27: 27-38). After Jesus is crucified as a criminal, “[a]nd about the ninth hour, [he] cri[es] out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is ‘[m]y God, [m]y God, why have you forsaken [m]e’” (Mat. 27: 46)? As soon as Jesus cried out saying this, he died, verbally committing his spirit unto God. This event makes perfect sense for there to only be one God because when the spirit, which is God, and also the Holy Ghost, left the body God had made for him; the body, not understanding, cried out to the spirit as it left him. Three days later, after Jesus had been entombed, the spirit, which is God, re-enters into Jesus, the body he had made for himself,

which returns Jesus back among the living. After being risen, Jesus first appears before Mary, possibly an aunt, Mary Magdalene, and then later the disciples. (Mat. 28: 6-18).

All throughout the bible, God has been proven to be omniscient, inspiring the authors of the bible to see and write about events that are yet to happen. Many of the events either have come to pass, or are waiting for their assigned day to be implemented. One of many examples, is a prediction from “Jesus[,] answer[ing] [unto the vendors he makes leave the temple,] ‘[d]estroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up’” (John 2: 19). The event occurring that solidifies this statement is a scripture in the book of Mark saying, “[the angel] said to them, ‘[do] not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid [h]im.’” (Mark 16:6). Jesus arose three days later, making his original statement come to pass, thus defining him as omniscient. Once again, if anyone should use the transitive relation of if $a=b$, and $b=c$, then $a=c$; they must deduce that since God is the Father, the Holy Ghost fathered Jesus, Jesus is omniscient and is also God, then God is omniscient.

Returning to the thesis sentence, the question of whether God is invisible or visible, suddenly becomes questionable. God is proven omniscient, knowing all, so in Genesis, while he is speaking to the angels telling them that he is going to make man in his image, even though at the time he has no image; he knows that he is going to make himself a fleshly body in the future. He knows that he will be the spirit of Jesus Christ, a child that will be born of Mary, fathered by the Holy Ghost. He knows what Jesus will look like, plainly envisioning the image of him. Since God knows the image of Jesus, he knows his own image, even though he is a spirit, so he makes man into the image of Jesus Christ who is born as a child, and then grows into full maturity. Jesus is fully visible, so since Jesus is God, and God is Jesus; the answer is God is visible because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one, and his name is Jesus Christ.

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Cover Art—Honorable Mention

Jose Salmeron



*Book
Review*

Book Review

First Place

Bound For Canaan

Jarred Maxwell

Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement. By Fergus Bordewich. (New York: HarperCollins, 2005. Pp. xi + 540. Preface, maps, notes, bibliography, index.)

There have been countless works of literature which have addressed the pressing issues that encompassed slavery, but very few are able to hold the reader's interest throughout the book in its entirety. One extraordinary piece of work that does this is Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement by Fergus Bordewich. In Bound for Canaan, Bordewich uses many different perspectives (through the eyes of slaves) to highlight the trials and tribulations endured by slaves during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The reader will find that the author has divided the book into small personal accounts of slavery as told by various individuals. When looking at the book as a whole, one can devise the idea that Fergus Bordewich uses unique perspectives on the heinous practice of slavery to convey the point that all men (along with women and other minorities) are created as equals, and that every human is entitled to freedom.

At the start of this epic story, Bordewich is very clever in how he plans to write Bound for Canaan. He has a unique layout for how he will go on to deliver his idea of equality amongst all groups of people. Fergus Bordewich does this very elegantly, dividing the book into sections of stories from people who had first-hand accounts throughout this time. Bordewich is able to immerse

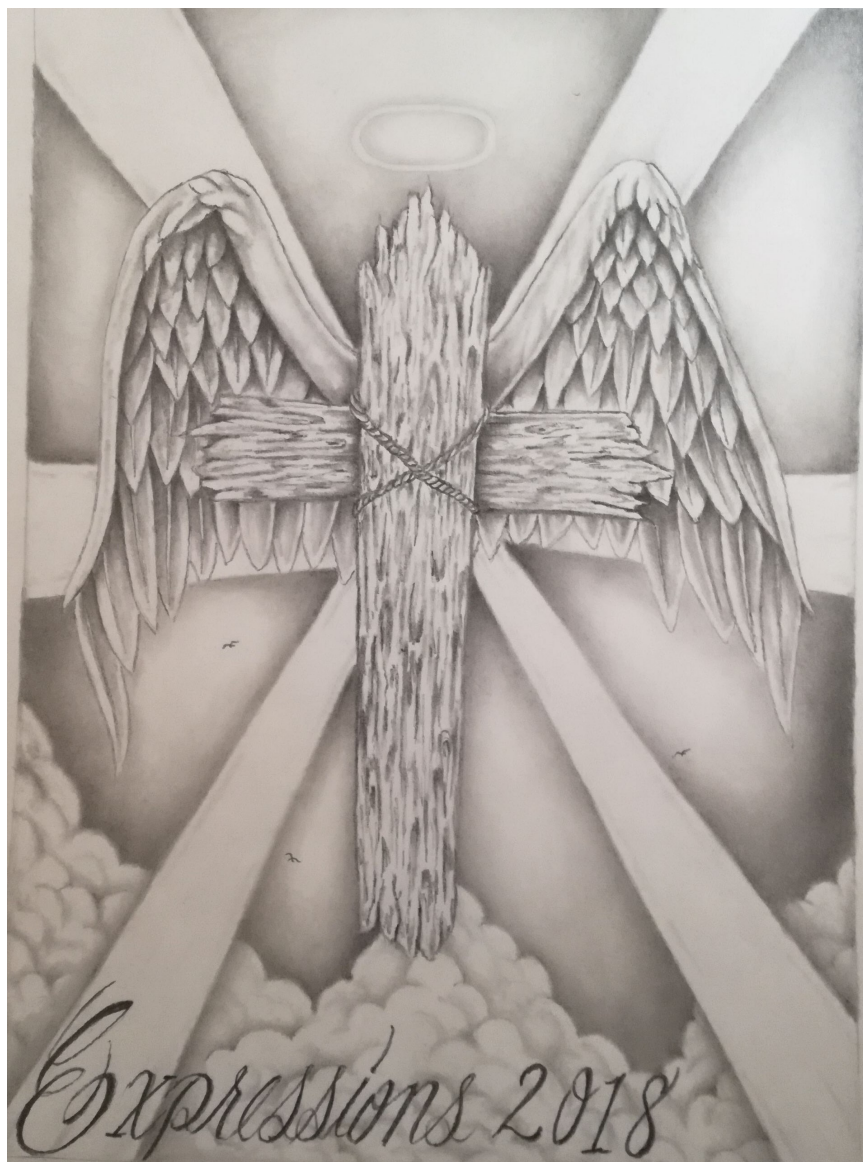
the reader further into the reading by doing this. I feel as if this is an essential aspect of the writing, due to the fact that the reader is able to lose themselves in each and every tale as if they were actually there. On the other hand, for some people who are not very avid readers, this may come across as rather messy and unorganized. Another reason the layout is an important factor in reading this book is the caliber of the content. Fergus Bordewich takes on the task of writing about a truly horrific time period in United States history. Taking into account his other works of literature, Bordewich is clearly well-rehearsed in capturing the full magnitude of the content at hand. Along with being a renowned published author, Bordewich is also an established historian of thirty-plus years. Knowing the author is accomplished in both of these areas, one can conclude that Fergus Bordewich and his method of writing are both outstanding and powerful. One excellent example found in Bound for Canaan is how in the fourth chapter, Bordewich writes about the story of Levi Coffin as a young boy, son of a slave owner. Coffin recounts an event from when he was young and was questioning the rationale for the treatment of the slaves around him. After Coffin's father explains the situation of the slaves being lead down the road in chains, Coffin reflects on this and introvertedly ask himself "how terribly [he] should feel if father were taken away"(p.65). This is would go on to spark a fire in Levi Coffin that would lead to him being unofficially given the title "President of the Underground Railroad". Along with many of the other examples found throughout the epic story, this shows how not everyone in this time period agreed with the philosophy of slavery. Many of the people mentioned in Bound for Canaan as young people would later go on to play major roles in the development of the Underground Railroad. Bordewich is very crafty in how he includes some of the most critical people involved in the Underground Railroad, but as young people. In doing this, Bordewich is able to show the readers how some of the "founders" of the Underground Railroad began. By including this piece of backstory in the beginning of Bound for Canaan, Bordewich shows the initial spark that will go on to develop into the flame of what is known nowadays as the Underground Railroad. From the writing style of the author to the content of the novel, it is evident that both of these attributes play a meaningful role in the conveyance of the idea throughout Bound

for Canaan. The key characteristics found in the book all help to solidify the idea that everyone has a right to freedom.

The use of specific words can drastically change how a reader accepts the information in the literature. Bordewich is very careful in the words he chooses to use throughout the book. One very obvious example would be the title, Bound for Canaan. By Bordewich using this specific title, he is able to instill the idea that humanity is on the path to freedom. The reason this is evident is found in its reference to the biblical story of Canaan. By making this link between the story of Canaan, which is considered the land of freedom for the Israelites, Bordewich is able to guide the readers to what Bound for Canaan will go on to discuss. The title is a metaphor for how enslaved African Americans are en route and “bound” for their freedom. In order to convey the appropriate sense of emotion for the material, Fergus Bordewich also makes the decision to use powerful words to describe the despicable acts inflicted upon enslaved African Americans. As readers follow the stories in Bound for Canaan, they are able to see how Bordewich applies this method of combining commanding words, along with first-hand observations of both abolitionists and slaves. One example of the phraseology used by Bordewich is when he describes a “slave’s expression of ‘piteous, despairing appeal’”(p.66). In reading these emotion-inducing words, and from the unique perspective of the individual in this story, the reader is able to fully visualize the scenario about which Bordewich is writing. It is quite fascinating reading Bound for Canaan due to the fact the Fergus Bordewich is so skillful in the way he incorporates the idea of widespread freedom amongst many different groups of people through short anecdotes of different individuals in the antebellum south. While his diction in Bound for Canaan is undeniably brilliant, Bordewich is also keen on the use of simple explanation in order to relay his point very clearly. By doing this, Bordewich blends the use of elaborate language and simple execution of words to show the reader both the superficial and underlying emotions accompanied during this time. An example as to how Bordewich uses simple explanation in Bound for Canaan would be when he is describing how an abolitionist dressed “female fugitives...in men’s clothes and hustled [them] through the streets in broad day-

light” (p.233). As the reader, I am interested in the fact that Bordewich used simple wording for describing the clever and daring acts conducted by the members of the early Underground Railroad. It is very intriguing as to why he does this. It comes to mind that the pairing of the simple description (of the carefully planned, complex actions carried out by the abolitionist) adds depth to the literature. This contrasting writing style in Bound for Canaan sort of represents the multitude of emotions felt by the slaves and abolitionists during this time. Since one cannot go back in time to experience the feelings of slavery first hand, Bordewich uses this combination of simplicity and complexity in describing stories to try and allow the reader the opportunity to feel a fraction of the emotions felt by those so deeply involved in the liberation of slaves along with slaves themselves.

After analyzing Bound for Canaan, one can conclude that Fergus Bordewich uses a dynamic layout and a specific use of words in order to assert that all men are created as equals, each deserving the same freedom as another. After reading this epic story by Bordewich, the reader is able to emerge from the literature with a sense of knowledge that could only be derived through the immense detail found throughout the book. Combining all of these positive aspects, I can attest that Bound for Canaan is a very informative and still interesting read. For those who are curious as to what the acquisition of freedom was like for those who were robbed of it, and those who never even possessed it, Bound for Canaan is a must-read.



Cover Art—Honorable Mention

Santiago Arispe

Book Review

Second Place

Bound For Canaan

Dolly Nguyen

Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement. By Fergus Bordewich. (New York: HarperCollins, 2005. Pp. xi + 540. Preface, maps, notes, bibliography, index.)

In this book, Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement is similar to the story I've read in the past month. Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison and Bound for Canaan was told in the same point of view. I believe that Bound for Canaan is an inspiring, powerful, and sorrowful book that has changed America to what we know today. His most recent book is America's Great Debate: Henry Clay, Stephen A. Douglass, and the Compromise That Preserved the Union. While Fergus Bordewich traveled the United States; it was his early experiences that helped modify his lifelong preoccupation with American history, political power, and race. The most notable points he makes are ignorance and racial prejudice, slave accounts, and certain stories and characters.

There are multiple accounts of ignorance and racial prejudice throughout the book. The ignorance and the racial prejudice is just ridiculous. Slaves were treated so differently and poorly than to how whites were treated back in the day. "Newspaper notices for fugitive slaves subtly reflected slave owners' self-delusion: while fu-

gatives were described by their owners as “inoffensive,” “cheerful,” and “well-disposed,” as if flight itself were proof of blacks’ childish inability to adapt to their ordained conditions.” (Pp.108) From what Bordewich stated in his book, the whites, see colored people were not worthy of education or any sense. Slaves were just a tool of labor used by whites. They were beaten, raped, and murdered. Plus if they were murdered, the whites would choose to ignore it. They overlook this fact; not acknowledging them at all. Whites see this as a form of punishment biblical and morally right to the gods. If the slaves managed to escape and be free; they would face many hardships. “In ports throughout the South black travelers and workers were subject to immediate arrest if they could not prove their status.” (Pp.109) Even if colored people were free, whites would never view them as an equal. Colored people, free or not, were taught to believe there is no hope of another life. Even if there was a way to achieve that goal, it would be too far dangerous to risk. “For men who been chattels only a few years or even months before, who would have been executed in the South for daring to carry guns, and flogged just for daring to protect their wives and daughters, or for that matter their own lives, the ability to defend themselves may have been the single most liberating experience of all.” (Pp. 247) In this era colored men were not allowed to protect their wives and daughters. They would either be punished by flogging or executed.

In the book there are many accounts of slaves and their experiences one account is a woman who crossed the river to reach the Ohio shore. The woman was then transformed in the imagination of novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe. She was now the newly dubbed, “Eliza.” Eliza had to cross the frozen, now thawing, river in order to save her baby and be free. She and her baby were in a fierce battle of being captured or to be free and alive. The situation grows dire and Eliza needs to act fast. Either Eliza dies with her baby or she survives as a free woman. Naturally she chose to be a free woman. “She pushed the baby ahead of her onto the ice, then levered herself up with the aid of the plank.” (Pp.215) All was fair in her waging war between enslavement or freedom with a future. Eliza would soon reach the Ohio shore but was stopped by a Ripley man named Chancey Shaw.

Sometimes he was a slave catcher often prowling the northern bank of the river, suddenly there was an unexpected turn of events. "Surprising himself, he heard himself tell her, "Woman, you have won your freedom." (Pp.215) Another account would be Jarm Logue, his experiences and achievements had a great impact on the slavery system. The feeling of being bound by chains must be insufferable. To the whites, however, think this is fine. It's morally wrong to keep someone in chains and to punish them if they did something wrong. Some people say that this is what colored people deserved; I do not agree that they deserve these kinds of punishment. What did they do to receive such punishments in the first place? Wanting freedom and protecting loved ones is in the right for floggings? Logue knew that his future was bleak if it continued the way it is now. Logue has so much trust in his father but it all changed when two of Cherry's children to a slave trader. Cherry is the name of his mother. He was the youngest out of the three slave-owning Logue brothers. "Cherry was left emotionally shattered, and Jarm now understood that in spite of his blood relationship with the Logues, his own future could never be secure." (Pp.127) After learning this new found information, Logue sets out to escape from the brothers grasp. He set of with one of his partners, John Farney. The third one could not overcome his loyalty to his master. His name was Jerry Wilks. Slave accounts can be found throughout the novel, but these are a few that are interesting to me.

While reading this book, there are some interesting short stories about certain slaves and their experiences throughout life. Some of these short stories hold many characteristics about the person they are referring to. One tale tells how a woman who would do anything for her children even if it meant she had to kill them. Margaret Garner is the common-law wife of the slave, Robert Garner. Garner is an escaped slave who is trying to free his family. "Eight lives hang in the balance: Garner, his parents, two young boys and two infant daughters, and their mother, Garner's common-law wife, Margaret, the story's ultimate protagonist, a slight woman with a high forehead, "bright and intelligent" eyes, and scarred cheeks where, she would only say, "White man struck me." (Pp.401) Her characteristics are described just above. The

Garners destination was the home of Elijah Kite, cousin to Margaret. Kite was originally going to direct the Garners to the house of Levi Coffin but it was too late. Coffin had already left for Cincinnati. He then told Kite to move the Garners to a safer location, preferably on the city's outskirts. But what they didn't realized is that they were being followed by Margaret's owner, Archibald Gaines. They were soon to be discovered by Gaines and his crew. "Margaret screamed to her mother-in-law, "Before my children shall be taken back to Kentucky, I shall kill every one of them!" (Pp.403) Margaret wasn't joking when she said she was going to kill her children. To be honest, I don't agree with this kind of solution. Now that's just a little too far. It is a bit morbid to hear this story but it is interesting nonetheless. The death of her two year old daughter is just sad and morbid at the same time. Margaret seized a carving knife, and before anyone realized what she was doing she cut the throat of her two-year-old daughter-Mary newspaper would hint that she was Archibald Gaines's child-nearly decapitating her. (Pp.403) The most iconic character of the Underground Railroad is none other than Kessiah's aunt Minty or better known as Harriet Tubman. When she escaped in 1849, Tubman didn't stay up north where it was safe. She traveled back to Maryland to help the Bowleys. This was the start of a new career for Tubman. But there was no one quite like this incredibly single-minded, mystical, diminutive woman (she was barely five feet tall) who defined every antebellum notion about what woman were supposed to be. (Pp.347) Due to her personality and appearance John Brown began calling her "General Tubman." Tubman's personality is blunt and positive at the same time. She would continue her career until her death on March 10, 1913.

Bound for Canaan was very sobering. This book certainly has captured my interest with its many short stories. Each story I just hoped that each individual made it to safety. Also I hoped that they were about to be with their families. The blood, sweat, and tears that has stained the very foundation of America is just revolting. None of this would have happened if Americans didn't import slaves here. Although when reading this book the Americans who opposed slavery were amazing. I was thoroughly impressed by this book. So inspiring and powerful.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Carlos Hooks

Book Review

Third Place

Gone Girl

Brain Christopher Tamez

Gone Girl by Gillian Flynn, 2012 Thorndike Press, a part of Gale Cengage Learning

Gillian Flynn's 2012 novel 'Gone Girl' is not only a #1 best-selling book, the movie version was also a smash hit in theatres. With an original literary style of her own, she captivates her audience with complex twists and turns, and artistic innovation. I had all but given up on the modern thriller novelist; and like a desperately needed breath of fresh air, this book abruptly revived my interest. This book was an excellent read! Miss Flynn has definitely earned herself a spot amongst today's literary greats.

Sparks fly when Nick and Amy (both writers) meet at a party. The smitten couple unintentionally loses contact with one and other. A twist of fate reunites the star struck couple a few months later. Mr. and Misses "write" hop on the fast track to marriage, as they appear to be the picture-perfect couple.

As the story takes off, former child prodigy Amy lets her hair down, and Nick learns that his new bride may not be as amazing as he and the rest of the world believed. Local charmer Nick has a few skeletons that he "thinks" are safely hidden away as well.

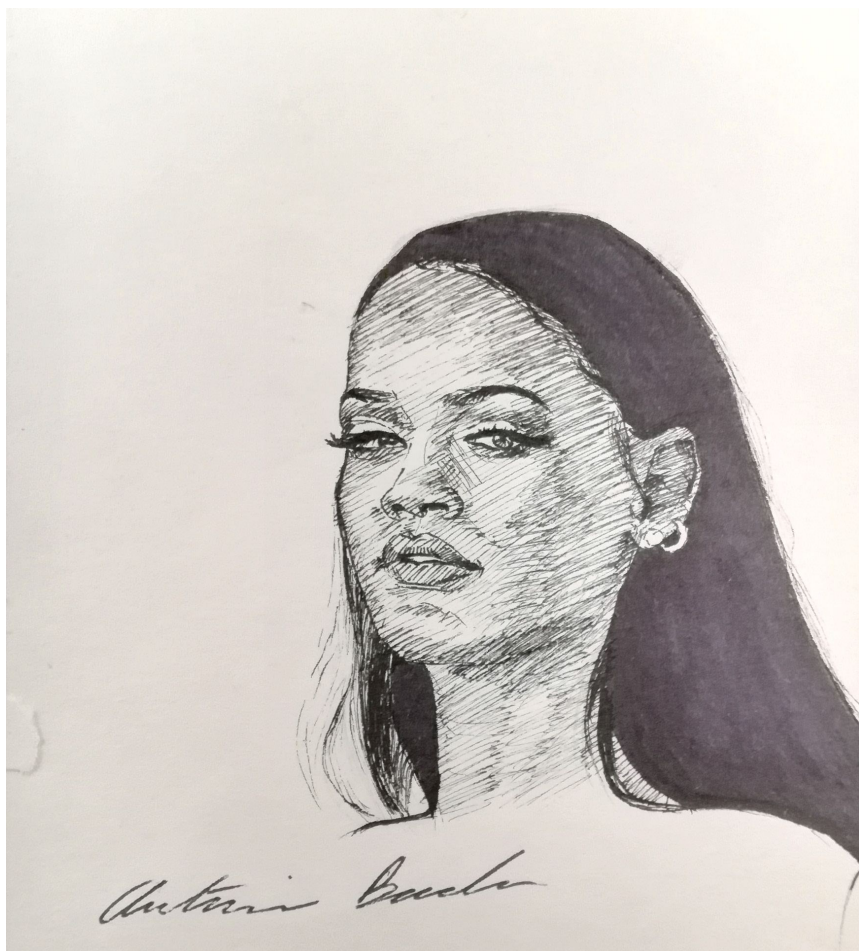
It's the happy couple's fifth wedding anniversary. The annual treasure hunt that 'Amazing Amy' arranges for her loyal hub-

by only leads to a more significant investigation. Amy becomes the prize that is being pursued. The love poems that only Nick can decipher lead him to the scene of his wife's disappearance, and he appears to be the prime suspect.

As the search for Amy and her abductor proceed, dark secrets are exposed and true colors are revealed. Things were never as wonderful between the two as anyone had once thought. The unexpected becomes the expected, as Nick attempts to prove his innocence. As for the fate of Amy, well, Miss Flynn's skillful creativity is bound to have you tearing through the pages in a state of eager anticipation.

The author does an outstanding job conveying the perspectives of each character, as well as expressing how their perception of the world and others can become clouded and obscured. She also demonstrates how one's self-image can be severely distorted when compared with how others view them. Furthermore Flynn does a great job transmitting the emotions and energy involved in a relationship. Beside the story being told from a unique his and hers point of view, she also implemented some of Amy's diary entries, a creative way of making this provocative story even more enticing.

Reading this mind-bending thriller was 412 pages of pure pleasure. It will definitely encourage you to examine yourself, your understanding of relationships, and your perception of the people in your life. Gillian Flynn's writing is definitely of the caliber of master story tellers, but is clearly in a unique category of its own. Out of the many novels I have read in my lifetime, I've rarely been compelled to read the same book more than one time. 'Gone Girl' is definitely a strong candidate for another read. This book truly deserves the title of #1 Bestseller, and I eagerly anticipate reading anything else Miss Flynn put on the market!



General Art—Honorable Mention

Antonio Banda



Faculty
&
Staff



Michelle Judice

After Nine Eleven

Donna Ellis

After Nine-Eleven, I took a walk in the woods.

Breathing in and out gazing towards the limbs

Seeing what I had missed.

Reaching out

for more, to

See more,

grow more,

towards what they did not know.

After Nine-Eleven I ran into the ocean

the foam chasing me while I

pursued it into the waves.

Pulling me, enticing me into

A world of depth, of the unknown.

After Nine-Eleven, Life

Became a path

Of choices,

A world with changes.

No longer simple

Or sacred.

Consumed with blindness or

wearing blinders while racing

through my life.

After Nine-Eleven, clouds
seemed to reflect in waters more
while stars twinkled back from
the heavens at night.

Self-centered pre-occupied
narcissistic attitudes
flaunted

After Nine-Eleven, I sought
To know your soul, your heart,
Your mind, me.

After Nine-Eleven, Life
Became urgent, it became
About change, about the
Future.

Life continued,
Day to day, week to week,
But After Nine-Eleven, Life
Became about your life, my life,
Our lives.

But for many,
after Nine-Eleven,
Life Became.



Adriane Champagne

Fair To Midland

Donna Ellis

Boxed in life's circumstances
Where answers or solutions seem
To fade behind the clouds,
I seek a place where the earth meets the sky
Where life meets the horizon and
Becomes as One.

In front of me lies an endless
road to where I am headed
but not sure where it leads.
I won't turn back now.
Blue skies appear to peek
Through the massive billows of white
hovering over this vast piece of land.
The answer is there in the blue clear sky.



Caitlin James-Mastronardi

Beat

Caitlin James-Mastronardi

Misunderstood. Misinterpreted.

He did not 'go gentle into that good night,' he howled instead.

Sweet Sylvia cried, Sing your Rebel Yell!

From the gut these poets pressed on, tied to some unknown force and finally naming it Ginsberg. Suddenly an idol, an East Village hipster with a voice and a poem.

From the gut, from the rooftops, let it be heard amongst the herd. Make the masses bemuse, begin another revolution.

'Free your mind the rest will follow.' 'Let freedom ring,' as the bells toll, as they close their eyes and listen. Fallen soldiers, sons, and saviors.

On a field, 'on the road,' blood on our sycamore trees. Now do you see?

Our land is lost from sea to sea. 'Swing low, sweet chariot.'

Hail to the man who tugs at the beating organ and the lungs of a nation- take our breath away. Dear Allen, who was Carl Solomon, Neal Cassady, Jack Kerouac and Ken Kesey?

Drugs, lovers, or killer bees? Why Beatnik and heartache?

Were you truly as innocuous as it seems?

High beams and bright mind, our howling American voice.



Donna Ellis

Sleep

Donna Ellis

I sleep in a surge of seas.
Billows of white hovering over me,
Giving me all but reality.
Dreams of yesterday and tomorrow
Are washed away with the
Grains of sand and shells.
bits of shells remain
Intact in the wet sand as
Salty foam rushes over them like
Pain wears away on our hearts.
Swept into the reefs, the
Shells become living
Creatures under the raging sea.
The depths of our hearts
Bringing our life alive.



Caitlin James-Mastronardi

Flowers for Ashes

Caitlin James-Mastronardi

The day after we buried your father
We hung roses in the basement.
Rows and rows of crimson crossing roots
Underground.
I tied knots and bows
Feeling the collective fury of death,
As palpable as the cold rain that day.
A rain without mercy.
Everything reeked of turning lilies,
Bitter-sweet goodbye. So long.
The marble stairs always the same-
The third step jostles stone.
I watched you kiss a wall in the rain,
A rain without mercy.
Red ginger in the dining room,
The very last to rot.

*Thank you to all
contributors
and
Congratulations
to those
published in
Expressions 2018*

Expressions 2018

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Statement of Editorial Policy

The editorial staff of EXPRESSIONS 2018 would like to thank all of the students who submitted work for consideration to EXPRESSIONS 2018 this semester. Unfortunately, not every entry can be published. In order to insure fair and impartial judging and publication selection, a 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 2018 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.

Caitlin James-Mastronardi, Editor in Chief

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