



LAMAR STATE COLLEGE
PORT ARTHUR

Member The Texas State University System™



Expressions

Spring 2020

Volume XXXIV

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General Art—First Place

Clifton T. Holliday



*Short
Story*

Short Story

First Place

My Final Goodbye

Jamie Blackburn

It had been a week since I visited my grandfather. Guilt pulsed through me that morning because I wanted to avoid this visit, but I had to go. Seeing him had grown more and more difficult the past few weeks. My daily visits slowly started to become mitigated by the pain that each one brought. My once strong-willed companion and knight in shining armor had been turned into a sickly ghost with a sheathed sword. We knew his time would be coming soon, despite trying to convince ourselves otherwise. The signs were all there, as though his passing was coming like clockwork. The illusions of his little children running through the room, his nightmares of not making it to my graduation, and visits from his mother he missed so dearly started to become a daily occurrence. Along with his mind, his body began to fail him. Unable to move or think, he had become a shell of his once magnificent self.

My grandfather was a small but incredibly strong man, not in a macho sort of way, but rather strong willed with a lion's heart. He had a warm smile, with joy crinkled eyes, sun-leathered skin, and the strongest hands you could imagine. He was my protector, father-figure, and friend. I always found him so interesting; with his fingertips worn down to smooth rods without prints, and his weathered bones crackling and popping while he worked. This abuse had caught up to him however, and before we could blink he was lying in a hospital bed, unable to stand. My knight continued to fight and tried to overcome this fate that befalls so many, but his once trusted weapons continued to betray him.

We received a call that dismal morning from his nurse confirming the time was coming soon. Most of my family visited him early that day, but my mother and I -his girls- decided to go together that evening. I made sure I dressed the way he liked, showing the essence of my tomboy childhood he was so proud of, and looked around for something to bring him. I scanned my bedroom looking over my numerous knickknacks and photos and happened across one of his favorite polaroids. I decided I would bring him the small memory in hopes he could hold it in his frail hands, that it would perhaps bring some recollection to his vacant blue eyes. I plucked the photo from its post and left in silence with my mother.

I studied the photo the entire ride there. His face was full of color with the soft, broad smile that had always welcomed me to my second home. His strong hands gripped my nephew's shoulders like a security blanket. This photo was a reminder of brighter times, but its slight signs of age were also a reminder that it was a thing of the past. The white of the polaroid had begun to dirty, and the film had started to lift. It was one of the realizations no one would want, and I wished it could be returned. However, this was our reality now. I knew arriving I would not see the man I was accustomed to, but what was left of my best friend: a pale sunken portrait of a face that would try so hard to remember me. I would hold feeble, thin hands and wish they would hold me back. There was still hope to witness a glint in his eye in a moment of clarity or discover a smile on a lost face that had been found. That was all I needed. I promised myself I would be strong for him, and that I would not cry. The drive to Magnolia Manor had never gone so quickly.

I hesitated leaving the car, not feeling ready for what was to come. I gripped the photo tightly in one hand and my mother's hand softly in the other. It all felt so wrong. I thought, "How could I say goodbye to a piece of my own heart?" This was not a temporary parting. This was *the goodbye*. We started into the manor where the soft embellished carpet led me to what I dreaded most. I could feel myself coming closer to him as we started down his hall where waving arms ejected me from my daze. Our favorite nurse, who had been so kind to us and gentle to my grandfather, rushed towards us. "I'm sorry," she exclaimed, hands holding her saturat-

ed face. "I'm so sorry. He's just passed."

I stood there as the words floated in the air, unable to digest them. It seemed like she was speaking in tongues, evil incomprehensible words leaving her mouth. It hit me. Those words penetrated the veil and hit me with the full force of a freight train. I fell to my knees and clung to that photo for dear life. I then broke my promise and began to cry. Tears had never made me so hollow and alone. That piece of my heart had been stolen from me, an injustice that could not be rectified. It was stolen along with my final goodbye that I now longed for rather than dreaded.

What followed next lost the exactness that the moments before still contain. We made calls to our broken family and took what comfort they had left. One by one, shattered people appeared and held one another with sunken hearts. My grandmother arrived, and I clung to her just as I had when I was a child. The hem of her blouse felt as though it was my only tie to this reality. We embraced one another tightly. Our connection was only broken when we were informed we could see him one last time.

What lay there seemed foreign and cold from the doorway. I allowed my family members to weep over him and waited for my opportunity. I wanted my time with him for I still had too many words to say. As I approached, my fear faded away as I was not greeted by the empty face of my dear Grandpa, but by the face of an angel. He seemed to glow with his long-lost youth. His wrinkled hollow face transformed. He radiated a sense of peace I never could have anticipated. I no longer cried but wept along with my family. Never had I experienced my heart so empty yet so full. There was loss and love in that room, and in the end, I achieved my final goodbye.



Photography - First Place

Brianne Madigan

Short Story

Second Place

The Gamble of Hearts

Rashard Renfro

She had the type of beauty that you see in a glance and remember for a lifetime. The type of beauty where your idea of a perfect woman is decimated by God's craftsmanship in your presence. My heart skipped a beat when she spoke to me first. I don't remember her words, but I remember the feeling that heaven was real, and if what is below is also above, then *that* feeling will be promised in paradise. Her eyes sank into mine waiting a response.

It wasn't that I was at a loss for words, but rather that I had lost my charming wit. Every clever thing I have said to so many other forgettable faces over three decades measured up to nothing but silly humor which I attempted on her for a response. The smile she returned to me melted my heart, and I know she could see it in my eyes. I was an amateur in a game best left to the pros. The curve of her smile was a flirt that I couldn't pass up. Call it amateur luck, but my confidence made its appearance in that moment. Suddenly, I no longer felt like a boy with a schoolyard crush on his teacher.

When she pulled her eyes away from mine and glanced over at some distracting noise, I felt as if I had lost everything of value in life. My heart raced again, not because I had another chance to enter the gates of heaven, but instead that I may be condemned to a hell of regret. Then she turned back to face me and the gates of heaven opened again in her eyes. I was addicted to the deadly twist of that curved smile. I felt like she was the whole purpose Jesus was saving me for. And her charm was brilliant, Don

Juan himself might blush at her remarks. And yet a dumb smile was all I could respond with, short of saying, “Oh, gawsh.”

The science of the gamble is to make the person you’re up against believe that they can beat you, and that they stand a chance to win. You have to make them believe that the billion-to-one odds pays to take the long shot. It seemed against all reasonable logic, but this was America’s favorite adrenaline-rush pastime, romance gambling. The psychology of romance and gambling are both one and the same: the chaser and the chased, the gambler and the house. She is high stakes and even higher rewards; and I’m willing to bet it all- my self-esteem and my lonely heart too. I take the gamble that she has more to lose than me.

Perfume rose from her skin. She continued talking, but I couldn’t hear her over the pounding of my own heart. Her eyes were wet and full of temptation. She pulled closer to me- scary close. Her soft, warm hands clasped around mine. My heart continued to buck and ricochet inside my chest. Goosebumps climbed down my flesh, a deep breath leaving my body in a sigh.

She knew what she was doing, experienced in breaking men for fun. It wasn’t luck that I saw her slip of a smile. It was a strategic, faint smile in order to get me to drop my guard. She wasn’t evening the field, she was controlling the match. I wasn’t even a pawn in her little game, I was the board she played it on.

My impatient heart barks at the deadly curve of her smile. We were both playing a dangerous game. If the wrong person- or the eye of the cameras saw us, she could lose her job and I would lose my promise of liberation. The dimension of the art of her seduction would give even Cleopatra a migraine. She was playing a different game for different stakes. Out of my league. Out of my sport. Her soft lips kissed mine and I felt my toes curl.

She then pulled away from our eye contact. That curved smile did a deadly twist and she walked away, this time for good. A beauty I saw in a glance, but will remember for a lifetime. She devoured my heart for sport, a practice warm-up until the person who can match her professional levels comes along. She was unbeatable; the ultimate flawless beauty, strength, and wisdom. And I was an amateur in a game best left for the pros.



Cover Art—Second Place

Robert Stephen Nunes

Short Story

Third Place

A Stranger in My Backyard

Deja Garlington

The sun arose from the refinery-covered Southeast Texas skyline. I was awakened by the sweet cry from my two energetic balls of fur named Rocky and Zoey. They vigorously wagged their tails and licked my cheeks as they begged for me to flutter my eyes open. I groaned as I ascended from my warm, cotton sheets into the cold, brisk morning air. I let out a loud, tremendous yawn and stretched my arms as far as humanly possible. I peeled my eyes open to reveal my dogs staring at me with grins on their tiny snouts. Rocky's powder white fur disappeared from view as he jumped down from the bed and waited impatiently for me to open the door to freedom. I let out another groan as my toes touched the ice-cold tile floors, but I continued. I sluggishly walked over to the door and turned the knob slowly. They darted out of my room into the dark hallway like a pair of prized racehorses sprinting across a track. Their names echoed down the corridor, but they ignored my cries and continued to the door outside.

As soon as I followed them out, the hot humid air hit me like a brick. I searched around for one of their wagging tails or humongous ears, but something else caught my attention instead. In the corner of my eye, I noticed a different dog; one I did not recognize. It was as skinny as a bag of bones and its fur was tangled and matted like a dusty tumbleweed crossing around its own back. Its fur was pitch black and covered in patches of missing hair and

fleas. I will never forget its horrid smell. Even standing from three feet away, my eyes started to water and my nostrils quivered. It reeked of decay and death even though it was still clinging to life. In that moment, I heard the delicate chimes of their collars and sweet pitter patter of Rocky and Zoey's feet approaching us. Rocky came up right behind the mysterious stranger unknowingly. I stood there watching its every move until the unthinkable happened.

In a flash, Rocky's neck was held captive by the mouth of that rapid dog. I let out a blood-curdling scream straight from a horror movie. I yelled for the dog to let go, but to no avail. I froze in fear as bitter tears slid down my warm cheeks. My parents busted through the door and my dad pushed me out of harm's way and went straight for the stray dog. He fearlessly climbed on the dog's back and pried the dog's mouth open with his bare hands. As soon as its jaw released, I slid Rocky's limp body into my arms and ran with him into house. I held him close to my chest and I knew in my heart he didn't make it. I held him and looked into his lifeless eyes...until he blinked at me. My heart fell to my toes as he squirmed faintly in my arms. Tears flowed like a broken dam as he made that sweet cry I thought would never bless my ears again.



General Art—Second Place

James Randle

Short Story

Honorable Mention

Regrets

Chance Stephenson

When I met my daughter's mother she was already pregnant with her. I was at a point in my life where I thought I was ready to be the husband and father they deserved. As soon as we started dating I instantly fell in love with the both of them. Throughout the entire pregnancy I would talk to my daughter through the tight skin of her mother's belly. I made "pie crust" promises that I would be the best father and husband, I promised them both the world.

After my daughter was born, I switched jobs and purchased us a better home. Little did I know that the man I went to work for expected more out of me than I could handle. Then came the awful day that I started using drugs. I thought I could handle everything that was thrown at me and still be able to take care of my family. I was completely wrong. I started working more, staying out later, and rarely coming home to my family.

On Christmas Eve 2009, while my fiancée and daughter were in California, I chose to sleep with another woman and get her pregnant. I knew right then, in my heart, I had broken all my promises. When they got back from California, I tried to pick up my daughter, but I as did, she began to cry. It felt as if, somehow, she knew what I had done. After that day I tried to work harder, tried to fix things, but they only got worse. I realized that my job was taking away more than I could give. Eventually I decided to quit, but I couldn't quit the drugs. I wound up going to jail then prison. While I was in jail, my fiancée and daughter would come see me twice a week. When I went to prison, they came every

weekend. I would try to hold my little girl during their visits, sometimes she let me, but most of the time she did not. One day, while sitting in my cell, I realized I had missed the best parts of her being a baby- her first steps, first words, and the first time she went potty on her own. I have never felt more like a failure than in that moment. What I wanted more than anything was to be there for my daughter and her mother. But I had let in the devil and his world won that day, and he has not lost a match to me since. Not a day goes by, while I sit in my cell, that I do not think of my two special girls and what I could have done- should have done differently.

Now, all I can hope for is that maybe one day my two girls will find it in their hearts to forgive me for the way I treated them all those years ago. I have come to realize that no matter how hard I try I can never change the past. There is no fixing what I have done. There is only fixing myself for the future in the hope of one more dance- one more chance to become the best father and husband I never was able to be.



Photography—Second Place

Brianne Madigan

Short Story

Honorable Mention

What I Wanted

Timothy Hall

I was a child when I saw the person I wanted to become. I was sitting in a grade-school circle of friends waiting for the teacher to introduce the speaker. We raised an audible gasp as a fireman, kitted out in full safety gear, walked into the room. I listened jaw-slacked as he told of the many rescues, close calls, and sad condolences he been a part of. Looking around, I could tell I was not alone in my admiration. There were others in the room who also wanted to be a fireman. What little boy would not?

A few years later, I would see an Army Ranger. This meeting had an even greater impact on who I wanted to be. I stood on the tarmac as the soldiers disembarked from the planes. They were returning from Vietnam. Protesters were among those people standing in the crowd. They shouted insults at the soldiers walking by, some going as far as to spit at those brave men.

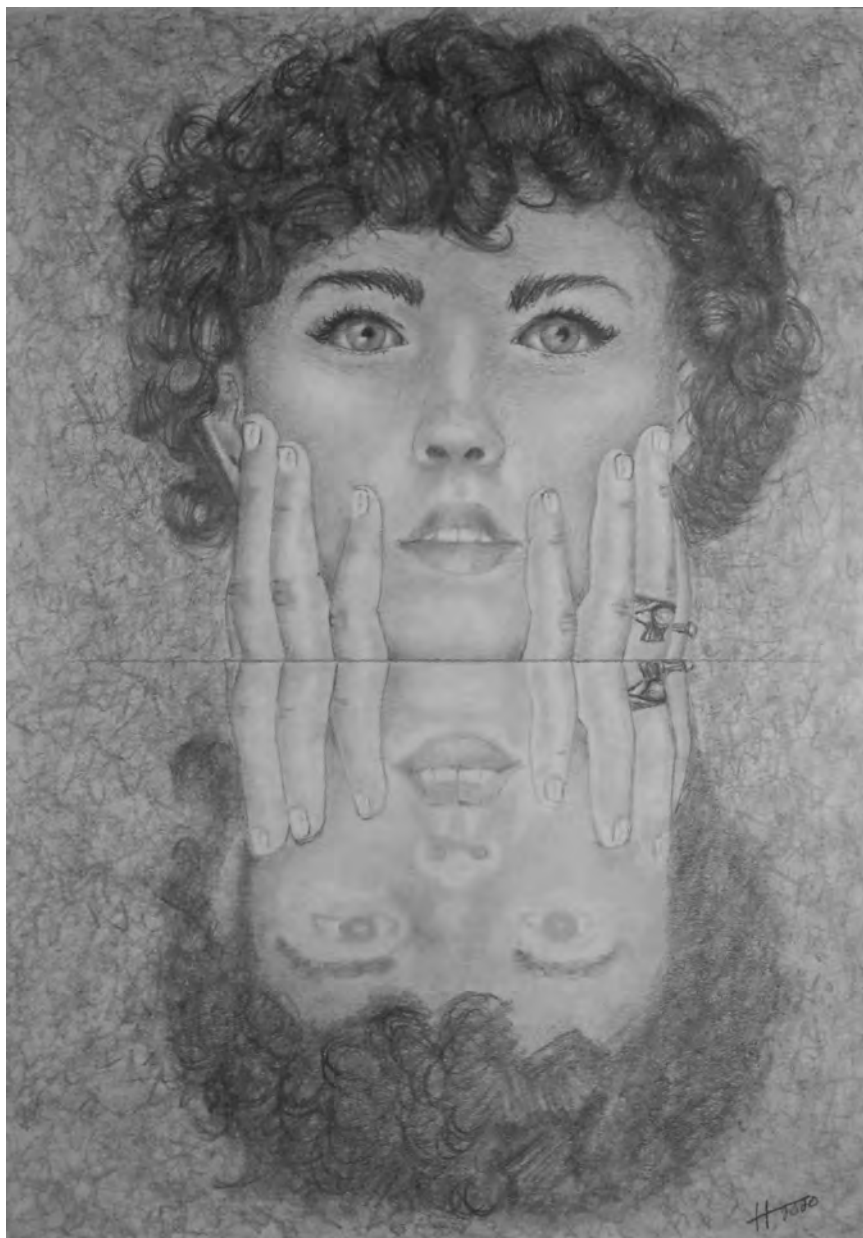
I had tears in my eyes. Holding my mother's hand, I could not help feeling the sting of the unfair insults. I looked up to see a soldier looking in my direction. With the faintest suggestion of a smile on his face, the soldier winked at me. At that moment I knew I wanted to be an Army Ranger.

I was a teenager when I had a new "want." Watching Evel Knievel set a new record for most buses jumped by a motorcycle. When he would attempt a new jump, I had to see it. I cannot count the number of times I witnessed this man fail only to get up and try again. Certainly, he had broken more bones than any other person in America. It was his unflinching bravery that won me over. I wanted to be a Daredevil.

I am now aged, and looking back with a kind of melan-

choly; I remember what drew my attention to those certain heroes of America. Today, when people talk of firefighters or first responders, they speak of special individuals. I can hear people thanking soldiers for their service, nothing like what happened in 1973. When people talk about Daredevils it's awe-inspiring.

When I close my eyes, I can see still remember the excitement I would feel just being in the presence of these men. I now look back with sadness, for I am old and never became what I wanted.



General Art—Third Place

Timothy Hall

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Short Story

Honorable Mention

Dashing Road

Lizeth Oseguera

Cold, fresh wind, smooth as feathers blows on my pale, young face. We are driving with dad in the front seat of the old rusted red 1995 Ford Ranger. We are going down the dashing road with the windows rolled down to feel mother nature. The road is long and quiet enough to hear your thoughts, or listen to your heart beat. We drive for countless hours and I don't get tired, but I'm not in a rush to get to my chaotic destination. Time stops; time means nothing in the middle of such astonishing gifts from mother nature. I glance at the gigantic old trees aside the endless road, which look like ancient gods, always vigilant. Huge distant mountains lurk around, giving the valley an appearance of a barrier between a bitter wicked world and the sweet majestic beauty of the nature.

My dad turns the radio on trying to find a good station to cherish the moment with good Mariachi music. His finger tips are too big to click the tiny buttons. To me, he looks like he's trying to put the thread in a needle. I put my little dumpy hand in the air to show him my fingers while I smile and I press all of those miniature radio buttons. My dad laughs at my silliness. I like to see my dad smiling; I cherish the moment more than hearing a thousand Mariachi songs. The environment in the truck is relaxing, although not quiet with my little brother in the backseat asking so many questions about the road. He was like the radio itself.

The sun is going down, I see it hiding behind the vigilant mountains. It looks like a picture; a romantic setting is taking place. The entire scene is transforming into something completely different. The moon becomes visible and almost reachable from far

away. The sky is turning orange, sunlight disappearing. The darkness of the night is covering the entire valley; stars are joining the scene. The moon is as bright as the sun, though with a whiter shine. We still have a very long way to go. The road seems endless with a few deep curves shaped like a serpent, a sublime beast that carries us on his back. We roll the windows up as the obnoxious bugs want to get in the truck with us. I hear the crickets singing their harmonious love songs to the moon: "*Cree Cree Creeeee Cree!!!*" while my dad is sweeping thousands of mosquitos off the dry, squeaky windshield: "*Creeik, Creeik, iink!!!*" My little brother is falling asleep on the long and cozy backseat. His short body fits perfectly lying down sideways; he looks as peaceful as an angel.

The AC in the truck doesn't work, the windows are getting foggy, we cannot see the road anymore. Daddy rolls the windows down just a little. I can feel the freezing air, it smells like fresh, wet grass, pure and clean. We have been driving nonstop for two long hours. We can see the green limit sign of the city: "*Welcome to Morelia.*" We are entering to the city. It is a hugely different environment; dirty, loud, artificial, chaotic, and pestilent. Our long, relaxing road trip through the majestic beauty of mother nature has come to an end; we have reached our destination.



Cover Art—Third Place

Kevin Carpio

Short Story

Honorable Mention

The Panhandler

Kevin Kwapil

It was a beautiful Spring morning in Meridian, Mississippi, and I was a youngster working away from home for the first time, about to learn that things are not always as they seem.

I was employed by a company that signed a contract to build ten Taco Bell restaurants and we were framing up the walls on our first day. As I took a break at the water cooler, I noticed a man across the street. He was on the corner at the underpass and the highway, and he was holding a sign that said he was a Veteran who would work for food. He was dressed in old jeans and a rough tee shirt with a faded American flag in it. When the traffic was at a stop, he would panhandle the drivers. It seems like the South is packed with homeless people, must be the weather.

On the third day of my job I was decking a roof and waiting on my cut-man to hand me up the next piece of plywood. As I looked across the street, I saw the same poor fella as before, and he was talking to another guy and waving his arms around wildly. They exchanged a few more words, then all of a sudden, the Vet punched him in the nose. They both went to the ground, dust flying all around them. The panhandler thrashed the interloper. I was intrigued by all this and mentioned it to my coworker as he passed me another piece of plywood. We both shared the laugh.

On the last day of the job, work was rather slow, just tightening up loose ends and getting ready to leave for the next construction site. I went over to the McDonald's at breaktime for an order for all of us. I ended up face-to-face with the feisty, patriotic panhandler. He was dressed in the same clothes as when I first saw him. I asked him if I could buy him some refreshments. He ac-

cepted my generosity and rewarded me with conversation. I mentioned that I saw him beat down another man a few days ago. He explained that panhandling is kind of rough some days. “I was protecting my corner from some drunk who was trying to move in on my territory,” he said. The corner was his, and had been for months. I was amazed that there was etiquette to his business, a procedure to follow, if you will. You do not encroach on another man’s begging corner unless it is agreed. Thus, arose the fight for the right to work that area, evidently a very lucrative spot. I bade him farewell as I returned to work myself, carrying my company’s refreshments, contemplating the hardships of a lifestyle such as his.

Before we hit the road for the next project, we went to the Walmart across the way to buy snacks and such. As I was pumping gas in the company truck, I saw the Panhandler cross the parking lot. I was shocked as I watched him approach a brand-new Chevy Silverado, hit the key fob, and pop open the door. He exchanged his faded flag-emblazoned tee for a Polo shirt and got in the truck. As he pulled out of the lot, he noticed me staring and gave me the “good-ole-boy” nod and then waved. It was a good-bye lesson for a naïve youngster leaving town for another job.



Photography—Third Place

Brianne Madigan

Short Story

Honorable Mention

The Last Meeting

Deja Garlington

The night had grown excruciatingly colder and more unforgiving as the moon arose from the horizon. Its sweet blue beams illuminated the blanket of white frost that covered the ground as far as the eye could see. I laid there, on a cold metal bench, with my hands tucked in my pockets and my knees curled to my chest. I hoped for any sense of warmth that my body had left, to no avail. I leaned my head back, shut my eyes, and remembered the vague memory of what a full belly and warm toes felt like. As time crept by, my weak eyelids fluttered into slumber until I noticed something, or dare I say someone, enveloped in the dense, white forest in front of me.

In the dead of night, the figure rose from what seemed like thin air. My heart began to beat out of my chest as the figure slowly moved towards my direction. I laid there, frozen in fear and too weak from hunger to move an inch. “P-please...,” I pleaded as the mysterious silhouette continued, “I have nothing to give you- nothing to steal.” As silence filled the air, I pulled up my head from my knees. I gazed at the individual as it emerged from the shadows and exposed itself in the moonlight. A man, as tall as the trees that surrounded us, stood before me.

Cold, icy tears slid down my cheeks as he continued near me. Although his visage remained hidden behind the moonlight, his malicious intent was obvious. With my last spurt of strength, I scrambled from the bench and ran for my life. It seemed no matter how far I sprinted he was always right behind me. Almost instantly, my legs gave out and I collapsed on to a pile of wet, slushy snow. I laid there, my breath heavy and uneven, and accepted whatever

fate this man had for me. To my surprise, the figure extended his hand to me. I hesitated. "Let me help you," he stated in a calm, affirmative tone. I reached out for his hand, and in one swift motion, he lifted me back on my feet. "Are you going to kill me?" I blurted out with tear-stained cheeks. He only responded with a deep, wry chuckle.

In that moment, I had finally stolen a glimpse of his face. He was beautiful, like a dream. His eyes were like pools of sweet, dark honey- you get stuck every time you gazed into them; and they were kind- so kind. His skin was fair, with the faintest tint of rose delicately painted on his cheeks. He reminded me of the beautiful paintings I once saw in church as a child, of these breathtaking, tall celestial beings called *angels*.

"Who are you?" I questioned. His lips parted but no sound escaped. I asked again, this time determined to get an answer. He avoided my eyes and spoke. "I was sent *for* you, ma'am." I stood there dazed and confused. I was completely alone; no family, no friends, no lover, not even a pet. Who would possibly send someone for me?

Before I had a chance to question him, he spoke once again. "I am here to take you home." As soon as he uttered those words the air became unbearably cold. My lips quivered as I felt my toes and fingers go completely numb. My lungs shriveled into solid icicles and my mouth felt as dry as the California desert. I felt like I could no longer breathe, and I pleaded with him to help me. He just stared at me with those beautiful brown eyes and watched me freeze. I somehow knew those were my final moments as he brought his hand up to my cheek. I remember thinking, how could he be so warm? Before my eyes closed for the last time, he gave me the most tender kiss I have ever experienced in my young life. He parted his lips and spoke to me as I felt my heart slow down to a halt. "I am the angel of death. Your fight is over."

A decorative border with intricate, repeating patterns of leaves, scrolls, and geometric shapes surrounds the central text. The patterns are rendered in a light gray color against a white background.

Essay

Essay - First Place

Art: A Perspective

Brian Marsh

A number of years ago I decided to give drawing another try. Prior to that I had given up on it multiple times because I allowed frustration and low self-esteem to interfere with my progress and development. It was the best decision I've made in a long, long time. The benefits of pursuing art as both a hobby, and a way of life have become manifest to me on a mental and emotional level well beyond my expectations for any transformative changes in my life. Much like a rudderless ship cast to-and-from upon the stormy seas of life, I had no direction; no purpose. Since then making greeting cards and watercolor painting have become two of my greatest passions.

Art, by its very nature, is a highly subjective concept, and one not easily defined. Yet, early on in my artistic resurgence I came upon a quote that impressed me with its seminal truths: "The artist gazes upon a reality and creates his own impression. The viewer gazes upon the impression and creates his own reality," -Robert Brault. This quote is the epitome of what constitutes art in so far as I perceive it. The power and influence this quote has had on my artwork and life is no small thing, given that even beyond art there's many things in life which come down to how one perceives them.

Imagine a rose. Red, yellow, or pink. The color doesn't really matter. If I've done a proper job of depicting it in say, watercolors, then you as the viewer will experience the rose differently than the way I did when I painted it. Nevertheless, you will see the sinuous curves of the petals, the vibrant vitality of a lemon cadmium, or deep vermilion hue, and the cool serenity of the feathery, green leaves. You will see the subtle transitions between shadow

and light which give the impression of depth, solidity, and life. In seeing all of this the viewer may then recall in his, or her mind's eye the delicate, velvety feel of the petals, or the sweet, fragrant aroma of a rose's essence, which may then further evoke images and memories based on his, or her past experiences with roses. Thus, creating his, or her own reality from my impression of my reality.

Over time, I have come to realize the positive influence that art has had on my life. From the relief of stress to elevating my mood, art is like a panacea for my well-being and self-image. When I set out on a particular work, I'm often captivated by the earthy, mineral scent of my watercolors and colored pencils, instantly melting away all the stress and negativity beneath the fire of my enthusiasm. With a measured brushstroke, or the flick of a pencil I'm transported to a place of tranquility, when I need the call of the stark, white paper. From the rough, fibrous texture of cold pressed watercolor paper, to the smooth, lacquered blue handle of my favorite brush, their familiar feel renews me. I derive so much inspiration from art that eventually its influences spill over into other facets of my life, like my drive to improve myself as a human being as well as my desire to have a positive impact on others.

The positive effect that my art has on others is perhaps it's greatest gift to me. When the face of someone who's viewing a drawing, painting, or card that I've made lights up like a beacon, there's few things more fulfilling in my estimation. It is these times that invigorate and inspire me to create, and I imagine that I can feel the bright, white paper yearning to be fulfilled in its grand purpose with vibrant colors and soft tones. Joy is also to be found when someone, who has bought a piece of art from me, recounts to me how much the person they've sent it to loves it. Many times, has someone told me that a particular piece has a prominent place on a wall, or mantle in their family's living room. My own mother has a gray monochrome, watercolor painting of a black and white photograph of me, my brother, and her taken when I was a child playing in the sand of Wildwood, New Jersey. It is her most cherished piece of art. I like to think that when she gazes upon it she is, on occasion, transported back to a simpler time and place. A place where she can see the cloudless, azure sky; the wheeling, and darting seagulls; the brownish green expanse of the Atlantic; the color-

ful beachgoers with their bathing suits, beach towels, and umbrellas; and the bright, sundrenched sand aglitter with fragments of seashells. See it all so vividly that she can hear our laughter amongst the background of shrieking seagulls and crashing waves. Hear it all so audibly that she can smell the brine and suntan lotion mingle with that peculiar fishy odor that's endemic to large bodies of water. Smell it so strongly that she can taste sea salt and sweat on her tongue. Taste it so piquantly that she can feel the heat of the sun's rays as they seep into every pore; the sand dribbling lazily through her fingers as we bury my laughing, little brother beneath a volcano like mound of sand. A moment frozen in time, yet powerful enough to take you back to that time and place.

Over the years, art has taught me so much more than simply putting images on paper. Through art I've become a better son, a more understanding man, and a more passionate human being. I have grown in not only artistic ability, but in the mental processes that are so critical to producing visually and emotionally stirring work. As the old saying goes, "The devil is in the details," and that is why both perception and analytical skills are so important to not only the process of creating art, but life in general. Ultimately what art represents to me is hope. Hope for my future beyond these walls where I will be a positive influence to so many more people than I'm able to be now. Art is my *raison d'être*.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Romarico Reyes

Essay-Second Place

The Thematic Application of C. G. Jung's Shadow Theory

Robert Stephan Nunes

Looking at the world through proverbial shades, I concur with Carl Jung's observations. Beneath the "Persona" and the "Ego" lurks a menace Jung calls the "Shadow." We all have it in us to be bad human beings. People can be monsters. I've seen them. I've been one. It's easy to give in, especially through group-think with peer-pressure to justify it.

Fascination with the esoteric has acquainted me with the layer of consciousness Jung calls the "Anima-Animus," the feminine and masculine principals or attributes embodied in human nature. I've also explored my innermost regions down into my core, which Jung calls the "Self," to discover who I truly am. I found the "Self" to be intangible and infinite; as such, it defies definition. The only word in the English language that comes close to describing the "Self" is potential. The "Self" is neither intrinsically good, nor intrinsically evil; rather, it is the potential to be either. The choice is ours; we have freewill. Every aspect of who we are is included in Jung's "Shadow Theory." He nailed it, in my opinion.

Thematically, Jung's Shadow Theory plays out in "The Lottery," "Good Country People," and "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." Take, for instance, the villagers Shirley Jackson describes in "The Lottery." On the surface level, the initial impression on the reader is that the lottery is some normal, innocent village tradition. There is nothing overtly sinister to indicate that these people are preparing to commit murder. In thinking that this scenario is just some harmless routine activity that is observed annually, we are only considering their "Persona" both individually and collectively.

Then we encounter the “Ego” of a character named Old Man Warner who attempts to justify the atrocity transpiring with his statement, “There’s always been a lottery” (258). That he says so “petulantly” alludes to the darker nature – the “Shadow” – which has grafted itself on to the bizarre ritual. Men like him derive pleasure and satisfaction from the violence. How dare anyone question or challenge this absurdity? As far as these people are concerned, somebody must be sacrificed to the “Shadow” overcasting this village. Men like Old Man Warner stubbornly refuse to hear otherwise.

Consider next the application of Jung’s Shadow Theory in Flannery O’Connor’s “Good Country People.” O’Connor introduces us to a lady named Mrs. Hopewell, her daughter, Hulga, and a character who claims his name is Manley Pointer and paints the “Persona” that he is just a simple country boy who goes door to door selling Bibles. This “Persona” as “good country people” plays to Mrs. Hopewell’s affinity. His role as such disarms both her and Hulga. Mrs. Hopewell invites him into her home and even allows him to stay for dinner. Hulga is naïve and imprudent enough to meet and leave with him the next morning. Her “Ego” perceives him as intellectually inferior. In her convoluted mind, she imagines that she will toy with him. Little does she know, she is in for more than she bargains.

The misnomer, Pointer, turns out to be con-man. He cleverly lures Hulga up into a loft in an old barn and convinces her to remove her prosthetic leg; then he clips her for it. All of the sudden his “Shadow” eclipses his “Persona.” He exploits her while she is vulnerable. As he abandons her in the loft, he boasts, “I’ve gotten a lot of interesting things. One time I got a woman’s glass eye this way. And you needn’t to think that you’ll catch me because Pointer ain’t really my name. I use a different name at every house I call at don’t stay nowhere long. And another thing Hulga, you ain’t so smart. I been believing in nothing ever since I was born” (404).

The moral of the story: the availability heuristic can be misleading. In other words, just because people appear to fit within a certain schema does not mean we can predict their behavior. Take nothing for granted except for the fact that the Shadow exists. Ex-

pect the worst. Stay prepared. Do not let your guard down.

Finally, we arrive at O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." This twisted narrative features a shadow-driven character who nicknames himself "The Misfit," and a fanciful grandmother whose manipulation delivers her and her family into his hands like a sheep to a slaughter. She is dangerously misguided. She sees the "Persona" and judges a book by its cover. She pleads with The Misfit, "Listen, I know you're a good man. You don't look a bit like you have common blood. I know you come from nice people" (412). Damn fool she is. She proceeds to say, "Listen, you shouldn't call yourself The Misfit because I know you're a good man at heart. I can just look at you and tell" (412). Of course, she cannot possibly know anything about this character by looking at what she wants to see.

The grandmother's "Ego" is completely out of touch with the real-world. She fancies herself "A Lady," as if this status somehow exempts her from being murdered. Her flattery gets her nowhere. Unsurprisingly, she resorts to religion and exhorts The Misfit to pray presuming that this will sway him to spare her. But, in his opinion, "Jesus thrown everything off balance" (415). The Misfit says, "If He did what He said, then it's nothing for you to do but throw away everything and follow Him, **and if He didn't**, then it's nothing for you to do but enjoy the few minutes you got left the best way you can - by killing somebody or burning down his house or doing some other meanness to him. No pleasure but meanness" (415).

This statement is undoubtedly The Misfit's Shadow speaking. It emanates from the enmity of his "Animus." His "Ego" reasons that he has been mistreated. He reveals, "I call myself The Misfit because I can't make what all I done wrong fit what all I gone through in punishment" (415). He claims that he had been falsely imprisoned for the death of his father who died from an epidemic flu in 1919 C.E. He professes, "They never shown me my papers," which indicates that he was railroaded by the criminal justice system. This seems to be what he uses to justify his behavior. He is antipathetic towards society. People are nothing more to him than a fodder for his "Shadow."

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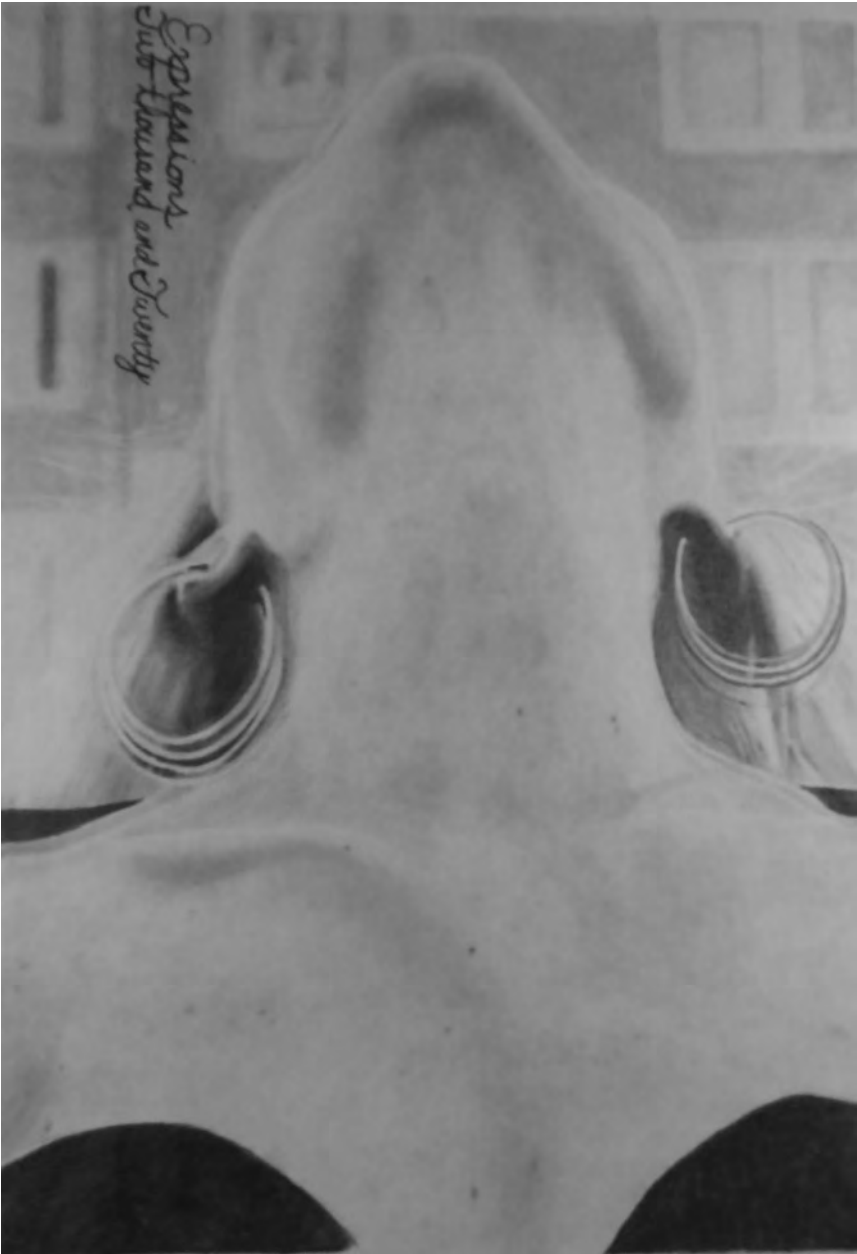
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Cover Art—Honorable Mention

Mathew Barrera

Essay-Third Place

The Evil Within

Viktoria Thompson

In a small eerie town like Salem village, your average stroll into the forest is bound to take a dark turn. Nathaniel Hawthorne's intriguing short story, "Young Goodman Brown," takes place in the 17th century when Puritanism made its way into the England church. Hawthorne's story begins with Goodman Brown, a faithful Christian man who leaves his wife Faith alone at night to run a few "errands." Faith, worried about the path her husband is about to take, and not feeling comfortable being left alone, asks Goodman Brown not to go and instead stay home with her, but eventually he convinces his wife that he would be fine and bids her farewell. After leaving Faith in their home in Salem village, Goodman Brown begins his journey into the unknown and stumbles upon a man with a staff and an evil presence that we later find out is the Devil. Despite his evil presence, the Devil seems to have a familiar face which persuades Brown to take a walk with him. That walk leads Brown down a dark path that makes him question his faith in both Christianity and himself. Hawthorne challenges his readers with symbolisms of purity and evil as his main character struggles with faith and religion.

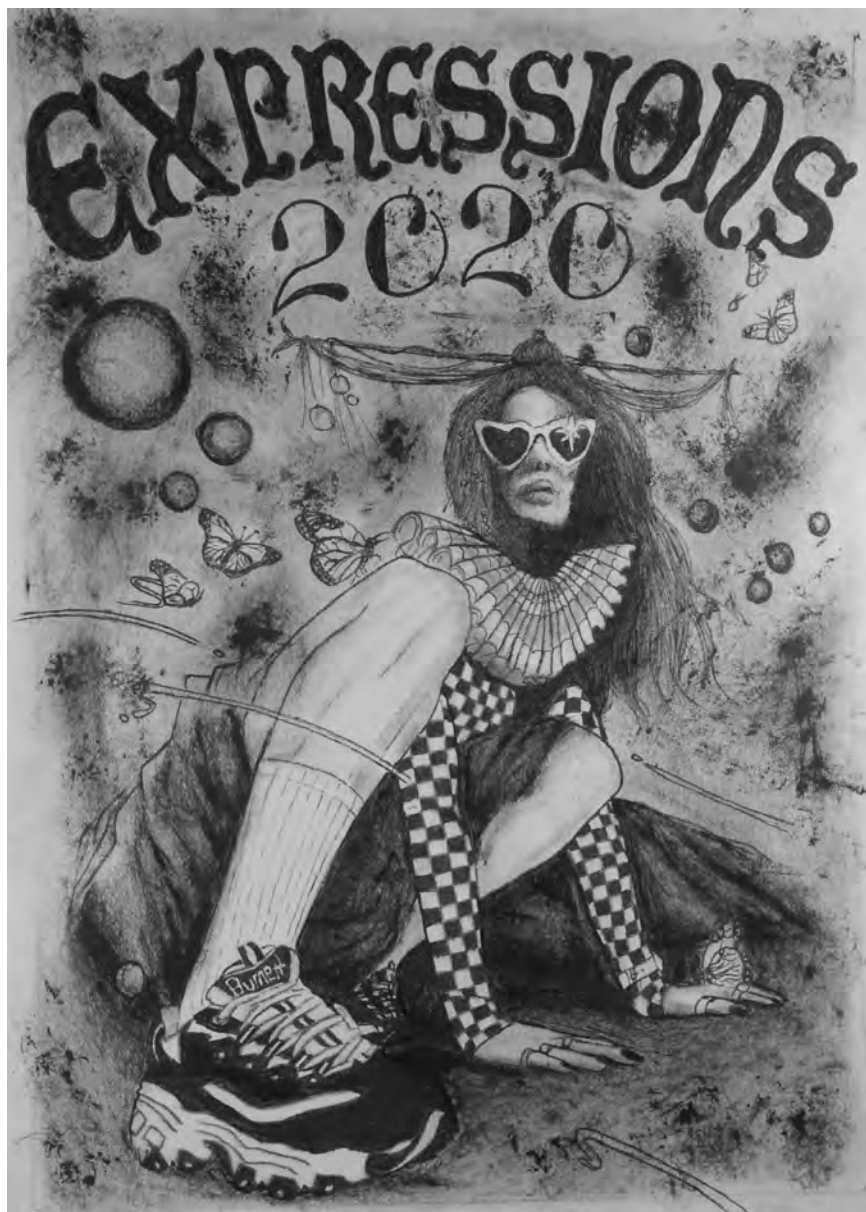
Hawthorne plays a lot with symbolisms in this short story. The most easily recognizable one is the Devil's staff. The Devil's staff is described to be a walking stick with a serpent engraved onto it, this image reminds the audience of a familiar Biblical tale. The biblical meaning behind the serpent represents temptation which comes from the Book of Genesis when the serpent tempts Eve in the Garden of Eden to eat from the forbidden tree and disobey God's word. In much like the Garden of Eden, the Devil tempts Goodman Brown with the serpent staff telling him it would help

him walk faster, and after denying the Devils offer, he begins to tire and eventually gives into the temptation and takes the staff which pushes him down a dark spiral.

Another symbol Hawthorne makes very apparent are the pink ribbons Faith wears in her hair. Ribbons are associated with children and innocence. Faith is a young, youthful woman and the ribbons represent a childlike sense she has around her, while the pink color represents delicateness and purity. The color pink is seen to be a symbol for purity. The pale shade shows delicacy and purity within. Later in the story, Goodman Brown sees the ribbons fall from the sky, representing Faith falling victim to the dark side which then causes Brown to fall victim as well.

When Goodman Brown sees the ribbons fall from the sky, he believes his wife Faith is gone which leads him into temptation. Brown picks up the staff and loses his faith both literally and metaphorically. Goodman Brown was a faithful Christian man, but the stroll into the dark forest tested his true faith. The moment he steps foot into the forest and begins walking with the Devil, his faithful beliefs start to shatter. Each step he takes with the Devil, allows him to stray further away from God. Brown not only gives into the temptation, but into the Devil himself.

“Young Goodman Brown” tells the story of a young Christian man who takes a walk into the darkness with the Devil. Throughout his walk, he discovers the evil things that are within the town of Salem. That night changes everything for him. It changes the way he sees his faith in Christianity and the way he views the people around him. Hawthorne shows his readers how easy it is to be susceptible to sin. He shows how easy it is for a good man to give into the Devil and stray away faith.



Cover Art—Honorable Mention

Billy Burnett

Essay

Honorable Mention

Hidden You

Christopher Galindo

People are hardly ever what they seem to be. It astounds me that we try to segregate each other and ourselves by identifying with labels, generalized racial descriptors, and interest groups. What makes us who we are? Race, religion, creed, geographic location, national allegiances, culture, sub-culture, likes, dislikes, societal expectations -- is there any single source of influence that determines who we are? William James once said:

“Whenever two people meet, there are really six people present - there is each man as he sees himself; each man as the other person sees him, and each man as he really is.”

Another theory a friend of mine once told me was that our identity is not separated by perspective of universal truths, but by body, mind, and spirit (the physical, cognitive, and spiritual selves). How can anyone truly know us then if we hardly even know ourselves? How can we claim to know or understand others? It's a question I ask myself often.

It occurs to me that I am a walking conundrum. That's not a joke. If I'm anything like the rest of the human race, then we are living paradoxes of mixed emotions, ambivalent actions, and contradictory thoughts. Day to day, we vary by attitudes and moods. Some days I give a hundred and ten percent due to a random bout of vivid optimism, because I woke up on “the right side of the bed.” Others, I'm dragging my knuckles and am entirely pessimistic about life in general, having one of “those days.” I'm ever growing, ever changing, stuck in a constant state of flux...and if this isn't the general human condition, then I may or may not be an alien.

Alien or not, one observation holds true: we change. Be it small or drastic, changes are inevitable as we grow. I'm not the same person today as I was twenty years ago, or even the man I was ten years ago. I vaguely resemble the man I was five years ago. Knowledge expands, beliefs alter, victories and failings tend to direct future actions. People never change in many respects, and yet we change in every sense of the word. That's not even including the "faces" we put on--at work, at home, at church, in public outings, or in intimate moments--like social veneers or interchangeable hats.

In essence: We're freaking complicated!

Be that as it may, we pretend we are not, think that others are not, that we can learn the nuances of our own characters with ease, or even those tiny variables that make the character of others...How very pretentious we are, particularly when we ensconce ourselves in familiarity; which brings us back to the self-imposed segregation complex I'd mentioned earlier. Like "birds of a feather," we tend to seek out those we hold common interests with, to find a place of belonging. Considering the human race is primarily comprised of social creatures, that's not a shock. What amazes me is once we find our niche and settle in our comfort zones, we stop growing. Stop striving. Stop progressing. The goal is obtained, why bother to excel? Let me tell you a story that's about twenty-three words long.

I was raised in poverty. Battered in low self-esteem. Taken for granted, lonely and masochistically abused. Now landed in prison in bitter solitude.

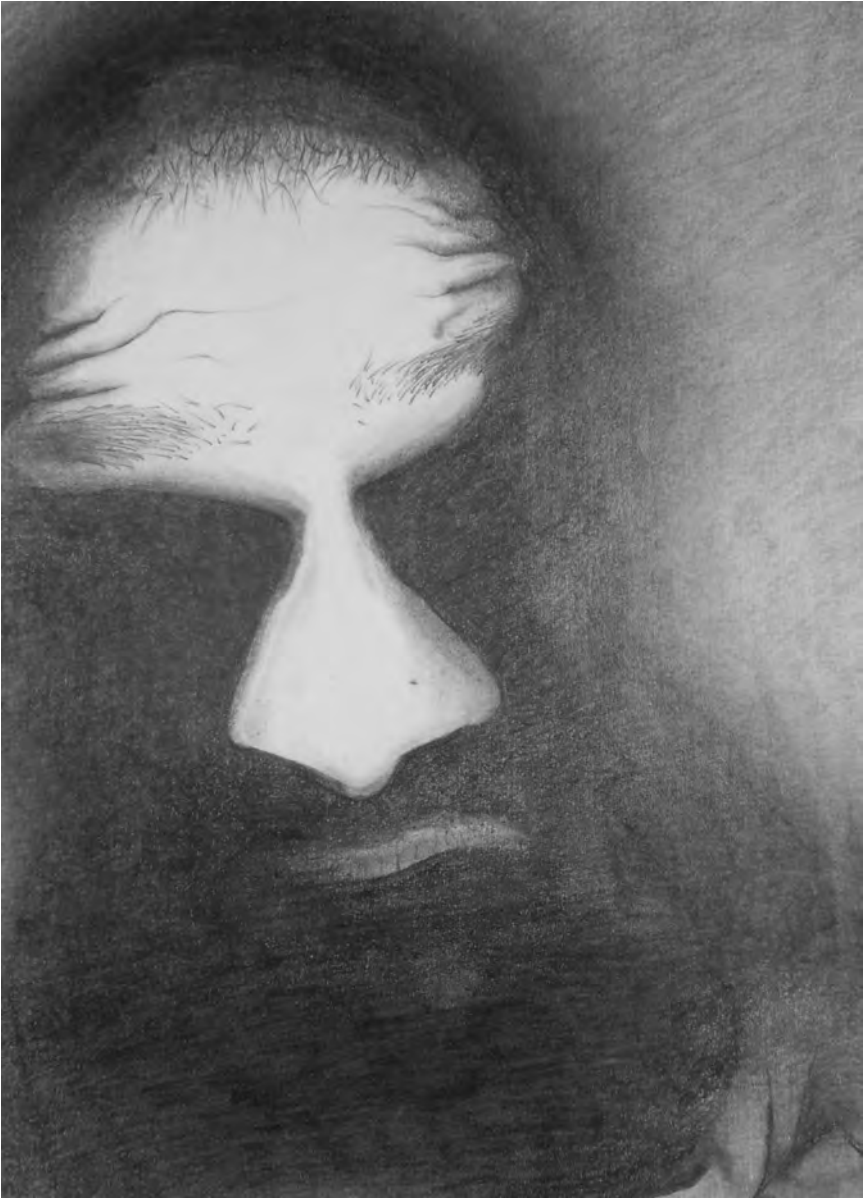
Cheerful, I know. It has a certain, "je ne sais quoi." What's interesting is that as a boy I had absolutely no talents; as a teenager, my only talents were smoking the chucks off everyone I met in Halo and Gears of War, and picking up the oh-so-hot wrong sort of girls. Since I was arrested at nineteen and have spent the last nine years in prison; as an adult, the talents I have are that I'm a gifted artist, I write short stories, poetry, and novels. I've written and illustrated two children's stories and continue to create concepts for future work. I'm athletic, and I could also be considered a "stupid genius." I have two vocational trade degrees, a penchant for bad jokes, charisma out the wazoo, and dogged determination to succeed. I know you're probably thinking, "He's either a delusional megalomaniac, or his whole life is absolutely backwards." But, it's

the truth. I didn't really know myself growing up; some days, I still don't. I never knew what I was truly capable of. I had made the sub-standard existence my 'familiar' mode of living. It wasn't until I was murderously ripped out of that not-so-happy place and thrown somewhere much worse that I put myself to the test and discovered hidden talents I never knew I had, hidden strength, hidden resolve. Let's face it, in prison (as in life) you have three real options; forge yourself into something strong and positive, allow yourself to be broken down into something weak and negative, or just sit there and stagnate like a rotting lump on a log. The point is, we don't know what we are truly made of until we are put to the test.

How many unearthed talents do we have that we haven't discovered because we don't step outside of the "comfort zone" to try new things? How can we ever know every aspect of ourselves if we don't seek out what's inside? Step out of your self-imposed prisons of familiarity, prejudice, and bias. I'm not saying everyone should do something incredibly stupid and get themselves locked up; prisons are woefully much too overcrowded in Texas as it is. I am merely suggesting that there is more to you than meets the eye. Nine times out of ten, we often don't try things because we talk ourselves out of them for fear of failure and rejection, but we miss a hundred percent of the shots we don't take, and that is entirely our doing, and often the source of our regrets when we think of "missed opportunities." Don't settle for mediocrity or stop striving for growth after you've perfected a single talent, because you probably have ten others that you aren't aware of. People need variety in their lives. They get bored easily. We become miserable once something becomes too familiar; it's why we lose passion for jobs we once liked, why we enjoy vacations to 'escape' home for a while, why we want nothing more than for learning obligations to end but miss high school before the first ten-year reunion, why marriage is so difficult, and why we are discontent with the state of politics.

Life is never-ending change. We may never truly know what makes others who they are, but we can eventually find all the hidden aspects within ourselves if we search hard enough. The more we understand ourselves at our fundamental cores, the better we will be at charting out a course tailored for unique, individual growth and ensure that growth is in a positive direction. Regardless

of race, religion, creed, or geographical location, we are all part of the same race of human beings, each of which is just too infinitely complicated to put a label on. So, try your hand at something different, step outside of the familiar and explore who you truly are and what it is just beneath the surface. Try not to talk yourself out of taking chances. You may never stop surprising yourself with what you might find.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Mathew Barrera

Essay

Honorable Mention

My Own Piece of Heaven

Jamie Blackburn

As a child, I spent every Saturday at my grandmother's house. I loved my own home, but I longed to stay at my personal sanctuary, which contained all the glittering amenities a young child could want, all week long. Engrossed by the glowing atmosphere, I felt as though my grandmother's home was heaven on earth.

I had been down her street more times than any person could count, but still, every time we visited my heart leapt as we turned to the little neighborhood I knew so well. The whole street was like a flower garden accompanied by old grandfather oaks hosting the many singing mockingbirds in their low lazy branches and fragrant magnolia trees with soft milky blooms. Her home radiated a sense of peace and belonging that I felt as soon as we pulled into her long gravel drive. This dwelling was the definition of home. I was always cheerily greeted by their splintered picket fence the color of blue delphinium and graced by azalea bushes of pink and white so full of blooms they left the entire lot smelling of flowers. Angel trumpets tightly embraced the pale-yellow paneling of the home as though they anchored it to the earth. The morning sun would glow against the face of the house, reflecting off the many shiny knickknacks adorning the illuminated red brick porch and pearly white door. It always seemed as though their house belonged in a painting on an old weathered canvas rather than facing a slow empty street. This beautiful scene would beckon me forward and welcome me home.

Natural light flooded through the white embroidered curtains and fell on their cozy living room that was filled to the brim

with welcoming plush furniture and too many things to look at all at once. Behind that pearly white door, the wall was covered with old wooden shelves, crafted by my grandfather's hands, that contained more dusty old western films than John Wayne himself could enjoy and gospel CDs that rang out from the open kitchen that always seemed to smell of something sweet. Speckled throughout the shelves were many antique family photos and ornaments galore, expressing more personality than any other shelf ever could. Bright colors popped throughout the rest of the room from the many different crafts and needle-works that satisfied my grandmother's busy-bee antics. She fit into this scene perfectly like an angel painted into the Sistine Chapel with her shining silver hair that was smoother than silk; her porcelain, unblemished skin; and her soft but gleaming smile. She could be found at any one of these stations housing the many sewing projects, intricately painted plaster figurines, or large embroidery frames that were dotted with colored thread. My favorite place to find her, however, was in her stuffed fabric arm chair where she would be knitting slowly with soft yarn flowing through her fingers or quilting her current masterpiece. If missing from these posts, rest assured that my grandmother would be found behind her heavenly home in her own little Garden of Eden.

The backyard shone like an illuminated emerald charged by an afternoon sun from the thriving green foliage lining the entire lot. Directly out of the back door you would be greeted by her rustic screened in porch, garnished with fantastic rugs and my grandfather's old rocking chair. The grass was such a lush green that it projected through the constant dew of her cool yard, shaded by one of the old low oak trees that seemed to grow with the warmth of the house. Higher in this tree's thick hearty branches was my own swinging tree house that was dressed in bird and butterfly feeders, engineered from the love and hard work of the wonderful grandparents I was gifted. It seemed that animals always accumulated in this abundant garden and scattered throughout the flowers and resilient oak tree. Young robins, doves, and squirrels sang and chattered as they nested in the twisted, leafy branches that withstood the strong winds and sheltered them from any harshness; verbal kittens frolicked through the yard after seeking shelter in the antique littered shed where their mothers would leave them, knowing

they would also be cared for by my grandmother. She would stroll from flower to flower, caring for them tenderly with her large wicker sunhat shielding her pale face. The vibrant green would be interrupted by fire-orange and snow-white flowers with paper thin petals begging to be caressed. And most beautifully, the graceful amethyst colored wisteria hung magically over head as if it were waiting to crown those beneath it relieving all stresses instantly with its gentle touch.

Though the house was simple in reality, creativity and heart flowed through its bones and transformed it into my glittering holy temple where I was free of my burdens and learned to see through the shining eyes of my grandmother to find the beauty in all things. This home taught me that heaven is not the promised streets of gold and shining abundance of valuable jewels, but rather it is the love, trust, and warmth you can find in the simple things around you. Her home may not be what it once was, but because of my grandmother, I will always have my own piece of heaven to remember.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Billy Burnett

Essay

Honorable Mention

What Goes Around, Comes Around

Brianne Madigan

The good thing about karma is that even though it may take a while, it always comes back around to those who need a good dose of it. In the story “Sweat,” Zora Neale Hurston introduces the reader to Sykes and Delia, a husband and wife who have a troubled marriage full of insecurities, as well as physical and emotional abuse. However, Hurston fully illustrates Delia finding strength within herself through the story’s dialogue, symbolism, and poetic justice.

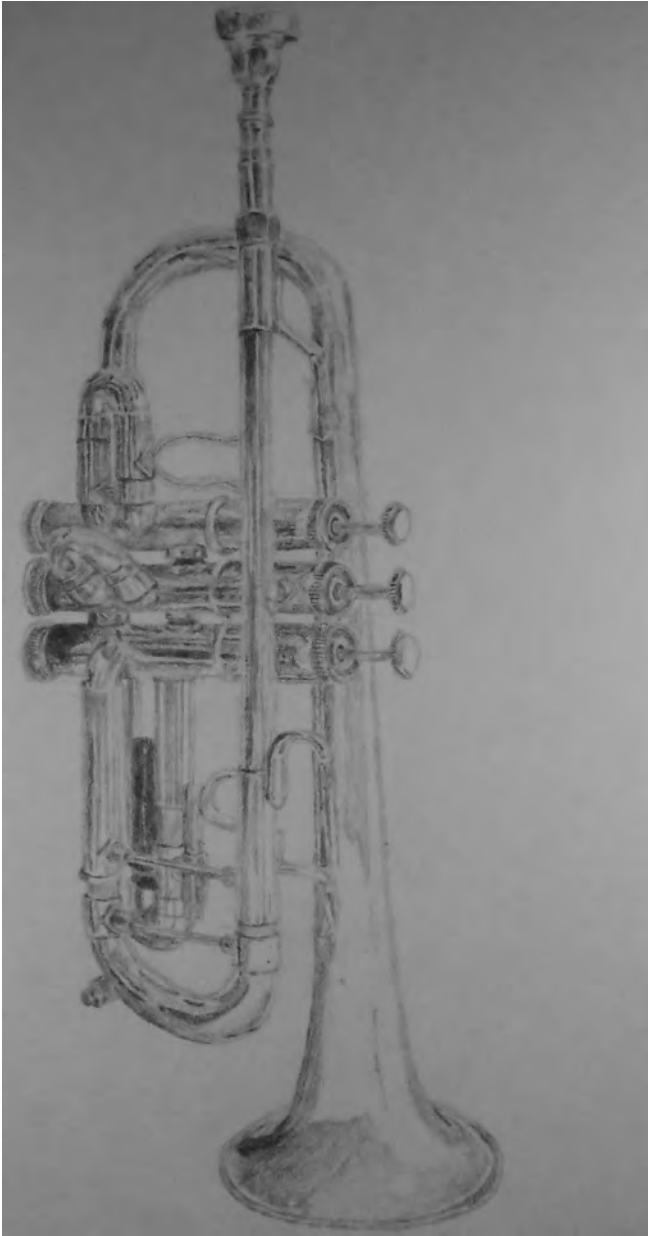
“Don’t gimme no lip neither, else Ah’ll throw ‘em out and put mah fist up side yo’ head to boot” (Hurston). Sykes threatened her, and Delia knew that he was not just blowing smoke. He would make good on his threat, just like he had done time and time before. These were the types of statements that Delia, unfortunately had grown accustomed to in her toxic marriage to Sykes. He was always degrading her by saying things like, “Gawd! How Ah hates skinny wimmen” (Hurston). Sykes was always trying to put her in her place. “Too much knockin’ will ruin any ‘oman. He done beat huh ‘nough tuh kill three women, let ‘lone change they looks,” said Elijah Moseley (Hurston). Elijah, along with the rest of the town, knew that Delia had taken Sykes’ abuse for far too long. He was parading around with another woman, beating Delia and talking down to her all while she was working herself to the bone to provide food for their bellies and roof over her head. Delia finally had enough and a spark lit up inside of her. He threatened her, yet again, and she fired back. “Naw you won’t,”

she panted, “that ole snaggle-toothed black woman you runnin’ with aint comin’ heah to pile up on mah sweat and blood. You aint paid for nothin’ on this place, and Ah’m gointer stay right heah till Ah’m toted out foot foremost,” (Hurston). Her fierce words startle him at first. He was not used to this side of Delia, and little did he know, that this would be the beginning of the end to this abusive relationship.

Symbolism runs deep through this story and Hurston is able to capture each feeling and meaning between the snake, the darkness that Sykes cannot escape, and the sunlight that shines so brightly at the end. Snakes symbolize many things, but in this story it represents evil. The snake appears by the hand of Sykes and is brought to the home to kill Delia. The audience also believes that Sykes wanted the snake to bite and kill Delia. True evil is killing an innocent person for no other reason but to satisfy oneself. Then, Hurston takes just enough time to illustrate how Sykes came home to a dark house. He scrambled around the house trying to find a light, but did not succeed. This darkness symbolizes evil as well. When a person wanders away from the Lord and gets closer with the devil, it becomes a dark place. For Sykes, darkness has no escape. It is a darkness that will swallow a person, and that is precisely what happens to him. Delia was not trapped in the darkness though. Hurston ends the story with the sun coming up on Delia. She knew what that meant, and by this time in the story, so does the reader. The sunlight represented a new day. It represented a new peace for Delia and that the evil was no longer in her life.

The best part of this story is that Hurston allows Delia to have a good ending. So many other times situations like this do not end well. This was not the case with Delia, and she was able to have her poetic justice. Sykes not only abused Delia, but brought home a rattlesnake that was meant to either scare her off or kill her. Delia had always walked away from the evil, and she did just that. As she was hiding in her safe place, she listened to the snake attack Sykes. Evil was killing evil. The same snake that he intended to hurt her, turned on him and saved Delia in the process. She was rid of the monster and with no blood on her own hands. It’s like the saying, “The trash took out itself.” This sweet, poetic justice will allow Delia a new way of life.

Hurston quickly catches our attention with the story of Delia and Sykes. Delia was a strong woman who lost that sense of strength after years of abuse by her husband. The intense and emotional dialogue between Delia and Sykes opens the door for the reader and shows an example of what kind of marriage it really was. Throughout the story, the symbolism shows a battle won. The evil was gone and the sun would shine for a new day. The poetic justice that the author included was the perfect closing for the story, and it is a perfect example of karma. Karma will always come to those who deserve it, just like it did for Sykes.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Adam Cardenas

Essay

Honorable Mention

Hills Like White Elephants:

Analyzed

Crystal Anderson

In the early nineteenth century, was it likely for a woman to go against social expectations? Ernest Hemingway tells a story of a prestigious American man attempting to convince his young lover to unburden their lives of an unwanted gift in “Hills Like White Elephants.” During their delay at a train station, the man and young lady ponder on a difficult decision. Through symbolism, setting, and dialog, Hemingway takes us through one young woman’s decision to stand against the traditional expectations.

The hills in the story, “...like white elephants” are referred to as lovely yet symbolize something quite different. The term *white elephant* is an expression meaning a useless or troublesome possession, or in this case, an unwanted gift. The girl, Jig, is seeing these hills as white elephants though the American man sees nothing. They lay on the edge of a barren, dry land to the west and to the east is luscious, green meadow with a river running through. This symbolizes what she is feeling and thinking about during this long delay between trains. She is torn between two possibilities. On one hand, she could have a future that is rich and full or that of the barren land, one without life. The man, however, ponders on their many travels. “He did not say anything but looked at the bags against the wall of the station. There were labels on them from all the hotels where they had

spent nights.” They have been to many places on this journey and their next train leads directly to the destination. The author uses these tags as a symbol of their many stops on a journey that is coming to an end.

What is it about a train station that makes it such a strong setting for internal debate? It’s because the tracks run more than one way out. There are multiple destinations from this one place, and you have a choice to take any one of them. This has been a setting for many stories as it emphasizes the possibility of more than one option as it is used here. Hemingway also uses the land surrounding the station to show opposing possibilities. The bar they sit in portrays the lifestyle the man has come accustomed to and even pulls toward the idea she wants more than what he is offering.

Throughout the story, the dialog tells us more than the story itself. The older, prestigious American refers to this “operation” as not *really* being an operation at all. He can see his young friend in internal debate and assures her that her choice will not change his feelings for her, though she sees the lie behind that. But what is this choice? Hemingway was inferring to an abortion long before they were legal in America. You know as the time for the train draws near, she is changing her mind about following through with it. Jig tells us what she is feeling most directly in this moment: “We can have the whole world...” the man assures her. ... “No, we can’t. It isn’t ours any more.” “It’s ours.” “No, it isn’t. And once they take it away, you never get it back.” She is seeing what she could have and realizing that it wasn’t really her choice to begin with. She was doing what he thought was best. “You don’t have to be afraid. I’ve known lots of people that have done it.” I think it’s the best thing to do.” You can see how he feels through this constant reassurance. He wants her to follow through with this for his own reasons and she gives us a prime example of the lifestyle they have been living prior to this *worry*, as the man puts it. “That’s all we do, isn’t it—look at things and try new drinks?” It’s as if she’s suddenly seeing this relationship for all it’s shallowness. Her eyes are opening to sad truth. Her future with *him* is what is lifeless and barren. At the end of the story, her last words made a great impact. ““There’s nothing wrong with me. I feel fine.” It is the moment you know she made her choice. Nobody needs an operation when there’s nothing wrong with them.

We see now how this all leads to her making her own choice and going against societal expectations. She's not letting the father make the choice for her and she is willing to raise her baby alone, which was socially unacceptable in that time period. Hemingway took deep symbolism, common setting and creative dialog to walk us through this young woman's journey to make this difficult choice. "Hills Like White Elephants," a much shorter story than most, utilizes powerful devices and remains one of kind.



Photography—Honorable Mention

Crystal Anderson

56

Essay

Honorable Mention

Let's Find You

Rashard Renfro

Hey. You! The one flipping through the pages. Stop right here. Have a seat. Get comfortable. Coffee? No, well, more for me then. Do you have any idea what you've gotten yourself into by coming into my world? I have a few questions I need to ask you, but the answers are not for me. They are for you.

Are you leery of strangers? I can be too sometimes; especially those who interrogate. I don't trust them any further than a fish can spit. Well, I'm Rashard. I won't give my full name for social media reasons. I prefer real friends over pixel faces and digital text.

So, who are you? What's your name? You seem like the type of person who doesn't let their guard down easily, but give me just one percent of your trust. I will earn the other ninety-nine percent. Now is the time to know your worth and also to figure out your purpose in life. First, think about the skills you have that most real people give you credit for. Think about what people say you are good at. These things may not be physical skills. Some people found their purpose in washing clothes or putting up Christmas lights. A woman became a millionaire by wrapping up gifts and boxes, so now companies hire her just for that. Another woman found herself so talented at folding clothes that she had a spot on an NFL commercial.

You may get praise for being a silver-tongued devil who likes to talk, a hustler who can sell sand in the desert. Or are you the life of the party who can gather people together for any event,

movement, or rally? Maybe you organize chaos. Maybe you're a great listener who can read body language and decipher whether or not it matches what the person is saying. Make a list of things you are great at.

Next, list your talents, skills, and human characteristics, nothing filtered or pixelated. Alright, now try cataloging your talents and connecting them to things people give you compliments for. Tell me what you google the most and what your childhood dreams were. Keep making lists of things you yearn for, and things you have found an instant passion. What would you enjoy doing even if you weren't getting paid to do it?

My hope is that you are one step closer to knowing your true purpose than before you opened up to this page of the magazine. Maybe I have earned that other ninety-nine percent of your trust. Stay focused, and I'll meet you at the top.



Photography—Honorable Mention

Brianne Madigan

Essay

Honorable Mention

Practicing Safe Social

Thomas A. Bonfield

At any given moment, about forty percent of the world, around three billion people, are using some form of a social media app or website. With the rise of social media, the global population has never been more connected in human history. However, our reliance on social media has unintended effects on our health; the average American checks their phone 52 times a day, spending approximately 135 minutes on social media. Social media can have its benefits, but using them too much leads to addiction, anxiety and depression, making you feel increasingly unhappy and isolated.

Many major social media companies hire people called attention engineers, who borrow principles from Las Vegas casinos and other places to try and make these products as addictive as possible. These social media companies want you to get addicted, it maximizes their profit that can be extracted from your attention and data. They have created these tools that are literally ripping apart the social fabric of how society works. How many times have you checked your phone to see if you have a notification? That high, or excitement you feel when you do get a notification, that's dopamine, the feel-good chemical in your brain, being released. It is shown that you can have up to a 400% increase in dopamine released from checking your phone and having a notification, that is slightly less than the same amount of dopamine you get from cocaine, an extremely addictive drug. Alcohol also releases a lot of dopamine, and although its legal to

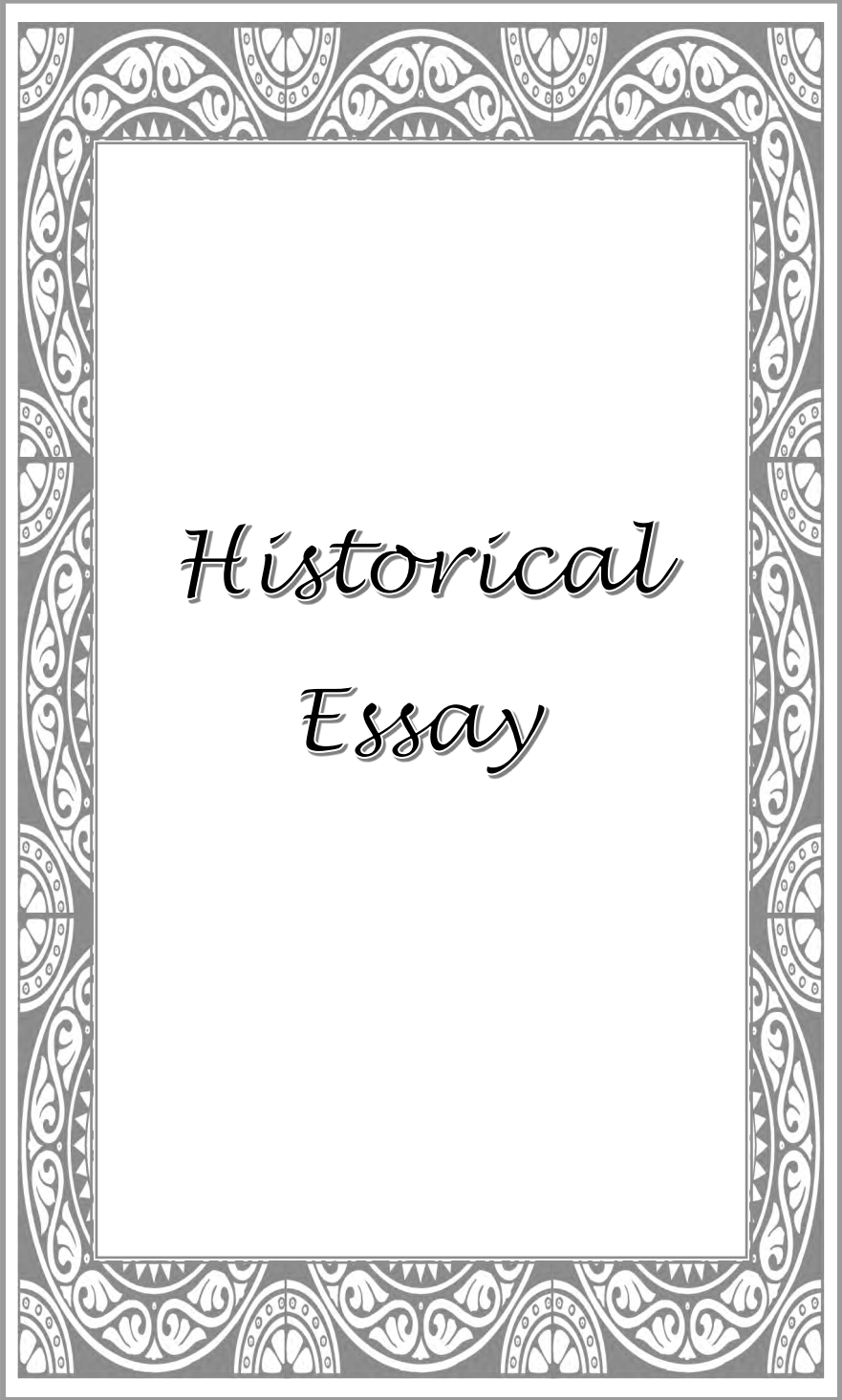
drink, you must be of age. We don't have that with social media, we are essentially putting highly addictive drugs into the hands of kids before they have any natural defenses against them. And what you see with social media addiction is people trying to change their state of consciousness with a device that's ultimately trying to get them addicted and keep them addicted.

Just like in sports the highlight reel is a collection of the best and brightest moments. Social media is our own personal highlight reel. The problem is we struggle with insecurities because we compare our behind-the-scenes with everyone else's highlight reel. We are constantly comparing ourselves to others. It happened before social media with TV and celebrities but now it's happening all the time, and it's directly linked to you. We fall into a trap of comparing ourselves to others as we scroll through our feeds, and make judgements about how we measure up, which leads us to feeling worse than before. Part of the unhealthy cycle is that we keep coming back to social media thinking it'll make us feel better. This is because of what's known as a forecasting error: like a drug, we think getting a fix will help, but it actually makes us feel worse. When that grows, and when your social media use goes unchallenged overtime, that's when you see rising levels of anxiety and depression. The Canadian Association of Mental Health found that kids in grades 7 to 12 who spent over 2 hours a day on social media reported higher depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts, that's kids as young as 12 years old.

Here is the thing, I like social media, I'm sure you do too. I'm sure it isn't going anywhere anytime soon, so abstinence is not the answer, but we can practice safe social. Social media is neither good nor bad. It's just the most recent tool we use to do what we have always done: tell stories and communicate with each other. This dark side of social media is really just the dark side of people. That dark side that makes harassers harass, that insecurity that makes you take down a photo you were excited to share. That dark side that looks at a picture of a happy family and wonders why yours doesn't look like that. This dark side is what we need to focus on. We need preventative strategies and coping strategies so that when you have your low day, when you question your self-worth, you never hit rock bottom. What we need to do is model good behavior. Offline we are taught not to bully others, to treat

others how we want to be treated. We are taught to not kick others when they are down or take pleasure in their downfalls. Social media is a tool. A tool that can be used for good, for more positive groups, for revolutions, and for cat memes.

Is social media hurting your health? The answer is, it doesn't have to. It can tear you down, yes, or it can lift you up, where you leave feeling better off, or have an actual laugh out loud moment. 90% of 18-29 year olds are on social media, spending more than 2 hours a day there. Anything we do this much is worthy of critical observations, anything we do this much has lasting effects on us, and it is up to us to make it the experience we want it to be. I want my experiences to be full of inspiration, motivation, and laughs. We only have 24 hours in a day, make those 2 hours on social media a good positive experience.



*Historical
Essay*

Historical Essay

First Place

A Bitter Irony

Scott B. Thomas

As America progresses in the late 19th century and early 20th century, the people see extraordinary advancements in technology and industry. One would ponder that such advancements would result in great benefits, but the people that took the risk to allow this progress did not always see success. Indeed, some saw progress, others saw failure, and the more unfortunate saw catastrophe. One such catastrophe was the great storm of 1900. Arrogance, misunderstanding, and an extreme lack of trust paved the way for the deadliest storm in American history. There is a stark resemblance between this terrible disaster and the shortcomings of America during the second industrial revolution. In America, people believed in a general sense prosperity while people suffered in horrible slums, dealt with terrible working conditions, and were left defenseless by the government's lack of regulation to deal with genuinely evil business practices employed by corporate powerhouses. Just as people believed in the security of Galveston as a hurricane tore its way across the Gulf of Mexico in a direct path to the island, America, as a whole, left itself open to be blindsided by the pitfalls of a laissez faire, capitalist system during the second industrial revolution (pg. 114).

Erik Larson's "Isaac's Storm" is a book that does an excellent job of detailing The Great Storm of 1900 as well as the political and geographical atmosphere during the time. In the late 19th century, Galveston is a booming city that easily rivaled Houston. Engineers, at the time, knew the significance of barrier islands.

They understood that Galveston was at risk being that it was itself a barrier island with no protection, but according to Isaac Cline and the weather bureau “a seawall... [was an] artifact of ‘an absurd delusion’” (pg. 84). The weather bureau was so caught up in maintaining public relationships, they attacked Cuban meteorologists for not being scientific enough and refused to mention hurricanes at all, instead opting to call them cyclones (pg. 104). The weather bureau was so concerned with preventing false alerts, which are ultimately harmless in comparison, that they ended up missing this huge hurricane that the Cuban meteorologists, the weather bureau’s adversary, were able to track beautifully (pg. 134). As a result, the people in Galveston move on none the wiser to the great storm in the Gulf. They whole-heartedly believed in the rhetoric at the time that declared “hurricanes could not as a rule strike Texas” (pg. 80). The great city of Galveston remained a rich, prosperous city full of very wealthy people without a hint of worry about storms or any kind of loss. They built extravagant hotels and held meetings in fancy restaurants that were so emboldened by this sense of security that their roofs had to be torn off and dropped on their occupants to finally demand a sense of urgency (pg. 159). These people were completely unprepared both physically and mentally for the disaster yet to unfold.

The fate of most is decided before their houses are torn apart. By the time they realize they need to leave, there is already eight feet of raging stormwater ready to sweep them up and carry them off to be drowned or battered to death by debris. Some attempt to take the train out of the island which is already treading deep water. One can only imagine the sensation of being stuck in a giant, iron bus in the middle of Galveston Bay with no possible hope of going forward or backwards as waves smash into the sides of the railcars. These people could have left the train car and walked the track to land, but they decided to weather the storm in this container that now bore more resemblance to a lead sinker than any means of transportation (pg. 165). The storm was only getting worse, and for these people it is too late. They can only watch the houses on their street be destroyed one by one from their galleries. In a twisted way, the rich suddenly became the poor and impoverished.

This is not dissimilar to the atrocities committed by business leaders at the time. Take the meat packing industry for example, people likely never thought about the safety or content of meat they bought. It was not until Upton Sinclair released “The Jungle” that anyone had any interest in the sanitary quality of the factories that produced their foods. The slums in big cities somehow hid in direct sunlight until being uncovered by Jacob Riis. These were all pitfalls overlooked by a society blinded by industrial advancement and aggressively expanding corporate-business. By the time people realize what has happened, great damage has already occurred. Reforms and regulation were introduced, but little could be done to repair the confidence the people had in big business and unrestricted capitalism.

The result of the Great Storm of 1900 is that Galveston falls from favor even though it constructs a seawall and rebuilds. The result of the second industrial revolution in America is a general rejection of laissez faire, capitalism even though reforms and regulations are introduced to try to fix its shortcomings. The bitter irony of the great storm is that the weather bureau was directly responsible for the great loss of life, assets in the city, and the trust of the people due to a hurricane they had information concerning long before the storm entered Texas waters; the bitter irony of America during the late 19th century and 20th century is that big business leaders were directly responsible for the destruction of the trust Americans, who lived in a nation founded on capitalistic ideology, had in hands-off economics. People trusted the weather bureau’s guarantee of security in Galveston while the weather bureau spent that trust silencing Cuban meteorologists and maintaining public relations identically to the way big business used the trust the people had in them propel a nation forward to instead create a slurry of corrupt practices that served to benefit the few at the cost of many.



Cover Art—Honorable Mention

Christopher Galindo

Historical Essay

Second Place

The Meaning of All

Jamie Blackburn

In their fight against the institution of slavery, Harriet Tubman fought gallantly alongside many others, such as William Lloyd Garrison, for the African American race to reach the bridge of freedom, but a battle without a plan rarely succeeds. Although the people involved were strategists, spies, warriors, politicians and many other extraordinary things, at the heart of it all, they were Americans fighting for Americans. What made Harriet Tubman and the others different was their sheer determination, vision, and moral conscience that ruled their fight for justice.

Before the American and French Revolutions, slavery was to be expected while equality was an unacceptable construct. It was with the crucial documents of the French and Americans demanding freedom and the escape of ruling aristocracy that the expression of “all men are created equal” in the American Declaration of Independence and the Rights of Man in the French Declaration of Independence that the fight against slavery was able to obtain the crucial spark it needed to ignite abolitionists. With this document and the views of some of America’s founding fathers, such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin, the article “I Will Be Heard’: William Lloyd Garrison and the Struggle Against Slavery” explains that even these valuable men had oppositions to slavery in Franklin’s manumission societies and Washington freeing his own slaves.

Following the lead of men such as these and his Quaker belief system, William Lloyd Garrison motivated slaves escaping the south while their owners told them the terrors of the north in an attempt to prevent them from fleeing. As they were told of the harsh conditions, cold climate, and discrimination they would find in the north, it was Garrison's *the Liberator* that reassured blacks in seeking the freedom of Garrisonian abolition spreading throughout the north. Fighting against the south's violence, Garrison remained a pacifist who encouraged the use of education and persuasion as methods to argue against the enslavement of American people. It was this "Moral-suasion" that motivated many northern citizens to follow him and his movement (p.14, Horton) This movement, however, was not well received in the South in the 1830s and was dangerous if mentioned. In 1838, the British Empire finally outlawed slavery and the south became more and more wary of revolt in the name of abolition.

While many fought for abolition with protest and moral explanations, others approached it as a battle front for the sakes of their brothers and sisters. Born into a slave family in 1822, Harriet Tubman lived the life of a slave for twenty-seven years. It was not until 1849, a decade after her sisters were sold further south, that the fear of she herself being sold became a reality. With the fear of never seeing her family again as motivation, she and her brothers made the decision to risk their lives for the sake of freedom (p.5, Horton) After three weeks of attempted escape, her brothers were frightened by a posted reward for the three and decided to turn back. With lessons learned, Harriet set off again on her own only days after arriving home.

It was with the help of a woman living in a nearby Quaker settlement and her husband that Harriet was able to escape to the free state of Pennsylvania as she learned to both hide in plain sight as she swept the woman's yard and utilize stealth as she rode to freedom beneath a wagon. This was Harriet's first run in with the unofficial organization of what is known as the Underground Railroad, this system run by both black and white Americans had already been running for fifty years at the time of her escape. With the Massachusetts' 1780 constitutional declaration of freedom for all men and the supreme court's backing of it in 1783, it opened

the doors of freedom to many of those willing to seek it and assist others in reaching it. In the 1790's, networks of Quaker traders in Massachusetts began to protect runaway slaves from slave catchers and many Virginia planters freed their own slaves placing them into the safety of Southern Ohio. To further explain the reach of these moral values coming forward, another example of a slave owner releasing their own slaves with a change of heart can be found in the article "I Will Be Heard!": William Lloyd Garrison and the Struggle Against Slavery" as the Kentucky slave owner, James G. Birney, freed his own slaves and moved to the North in order to join abolition movements, later becoming the first presidential candidate to run on a platform dedicated to the elimination of slavery.

Although the North was heading towards extreme reform, the agrarian South remained too reliant on slavery and thus began justifying it with excuses of slavery being healthy and that blacks were of a different species. This is explained in the film *The Age of Slavery* and goes on to explain that although the South attempted to justify their enslavement, the North fighting the institution of slavery still treated African Americans as a different people, forcing them to live inconsistent lives as laws were put in place to deter the races progression, and eventually, with pressures from the south, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was passed. These are all hurdles and trials that Harriet and many others fighting for freedom for all would have to face, but despite great difficulty she carried her new goals forward.

It was Harriet's family that brought her to join the Underground Railroad, but she risked her safety for many others aside from just them. Her many successful trips and close calls began to build her reputation as a force to be reckoned with and an executor of the will of God. She was often referred to as "Moses" by those in the south and known as a conductor of the Railroad in the North. A former slave responded to questions about her in 1860 by saying "O, no, Moses is got de charm. De Lord has given Moses de power" (p.26, Horton). As she was convinced of her blessings from God and her desire to free her family, Harriet freed around 300 slaves collectively.

As she freed her final sister late in the fall of 1860, politics began to swing in favor of the slaves with the running of Harriet's

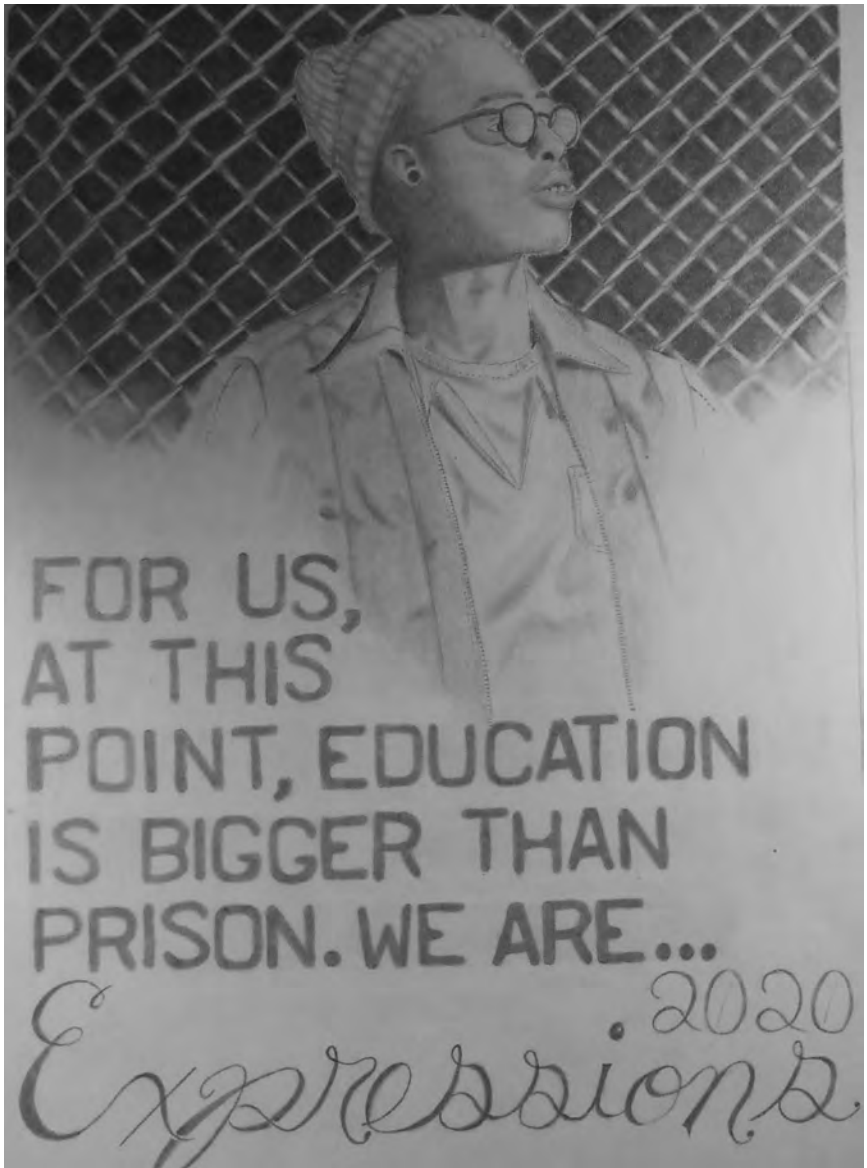
patron, Senator William H. Seward. However, a more moderate Abraham Lincoln was chosen as the candidate who opposed slavery's spread but would eventually be the one to abolish it (p.54, Horton). It was almost immediately after Lincoln's inauguration the threat of Civil War began to loom over the Union. It was with this war pressing forward that Harriet became acquainted with the abolitionist governor of Massachusetts, John A. Andrew, to discuss her place in the upcoming fight, and they decided Tubman's skills had her "fit for the field of battle" (p.57, Horton). After one last rescue of a young girl named Margaret, Tubman moved into her life as a spy in 1862. The versatile use of her traits and skills moving past the rescues of her family goes to show how determined Tubman, like many others, was determined to devote her everything to the freedom of her people.

In April of 1864, a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery was passed in the senate, but initially not through the House. Finally, on January 31, 1864 the House of Representatives passed the Thirteenth Amendment ensuring that, under U.S. victory, slavery in the South would come to an end (p. 71, Horton). It was while Tubman was working in hospitals in Virginia that General Robert E. Lee of the Southern Army surrendered, and one step toward equality was made. Although I find that I am deeply rooted in my own beliefs and the protection of those I care about, the actions and bravery of Harriet Tubman, Garrison, and many other abolitionists are incomprehensible. I could only ever hope to carry a grain of the mountainous will and endurance of Harriet Tubman.

With a loosely organized Underground Railroad, open minded writers like Garrison, brave souls like Tubman, and persistent politicians like Lincoln, a long-awaited change was able to be made through the blood sweat and tears of many Americans. Although many challenges stood in the way of slave families, suffering free blacks, and sympathetic whites, the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment is accredited to them. Following the American Declaration of Independence, it took the United States of America eighty-nine years to realize that liberty and justice were for all.

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Cover Art—Honorable Mention

James Randle

Historical Essay

Third Place

Minty Ross and The Cause

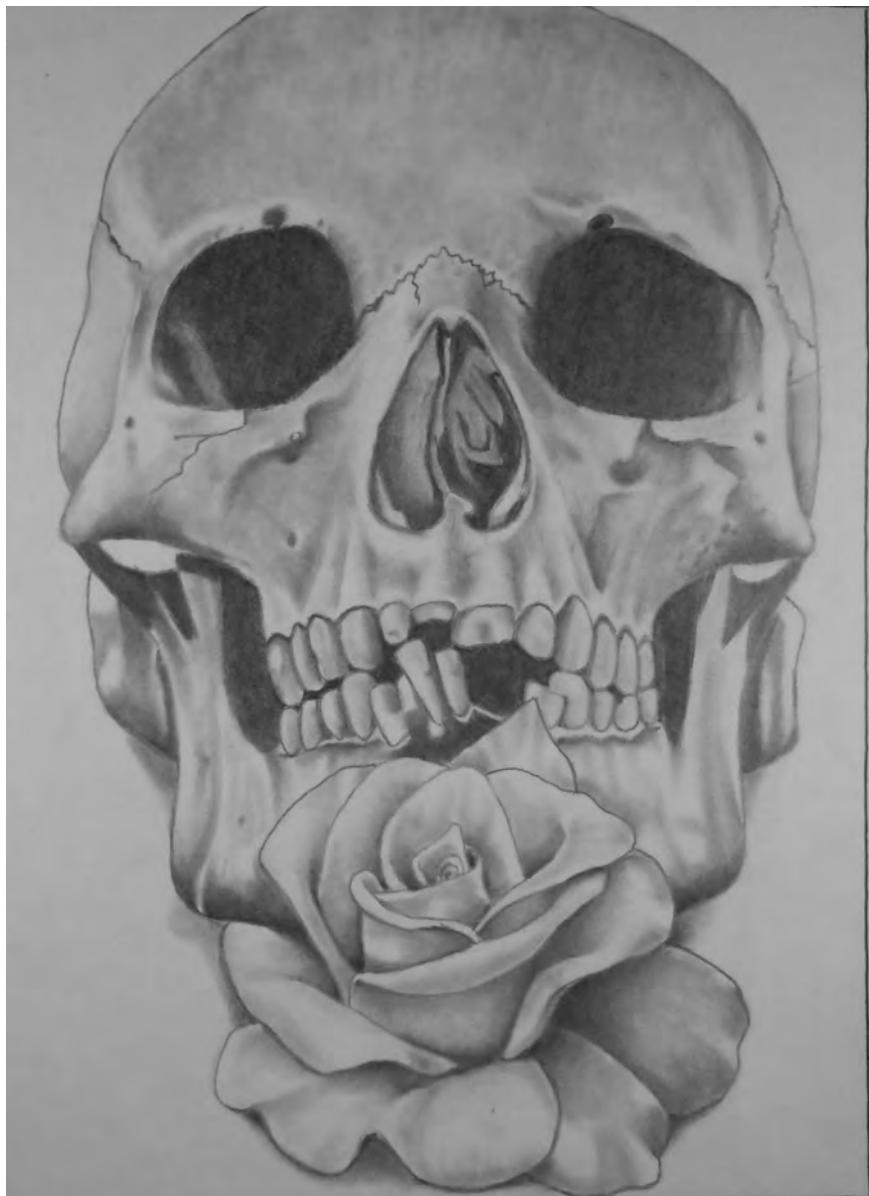
Crystal Anderson

Harriet Tubman, born Araminta “Minty” Ross, had the core belief that all people were created equal. She believed God did not make a lesser person, and everyone has the right to liberty and freedom. She knew that no person should or could be owned. She had a strong spirit, and watching her sisters sold in the slave trade lit a fire that couldn’t be extinguished. There were many people during this time that held the same belief. This led to the Underground Railroad. People with this belief would hide runaway slaves as they traveled North toward freedom. However, the knowledge of what would happen if they were caught kept many slaves from running. The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, nicknamed the *Bloodhound Law* by the abolitionists, made running away that much more dangerous. The ones that did run had to have help. They were at risk of torture and death if they were caught, so the Underground Railroad had to be strong and diligent in their cause. Harriet joined the cause shortly after the law passed. It takes strong beliefs to be that dedicated to something so controversial. Moving slaves out of bondage, having safe places for them to hide and have food and shelter on their journey took unbelievable support. Tubman and Garrison were great leaders to have been part of so many people being involved in a cause that was so dangerous as well as illegal. The fact that Tubman made it out of slavery on her own and survived such a long journey being a petite woman helped her status in the abolitionist community. She went on to free hundreds of slaves and proved to be more of a strong *man* than most men.

Garrison wrote *The Liberator*, which was a religious news-

paper that spoke openly urging immediate freeing of slaves. Raised in a white Baptist home in the North, he was an unlikely ally of abolitionists. This surely helped the cause as he (a white man) would be more openly heard rather than slaves standing alone. He even spoke out against slave catchers in attempt to sway even more people towards sympathy. Thomas Garrett also helped the cause by having a station in Delaware that stayed busier than most. He would help people with travel plans for the next leg of their journey, and when possible, money or securing a carriage. People like Garrett made a huge impact and the Underground Railroad would not have thrived without these people.

Abolitionists in leadership faced extreme difficulties, and the country was so split over the subject. The South relied extremely on slave labor and felt that losing slaves would plummet their plantations. The North saw the evil in slavery and wanted to see it gone completely. This was not simply a disagreement, this led to the Civil War. To be in leadership and take a side must have been the most difficult decision knowing that half of the country would be against you. Even President Lincoln, someone we look up to as a historical figure, did not choose a side. He let both sides win by not making the South change but allowing the changes in the law in the North. This, in itself tells you how much leadership struggled with this separation of beliefs. As we can imagine, the leaders of the abolition movement were in an even tougher place. They wanted to spread the need to respect the rights of all people of all colors to have liberty and (the pursuit of) happiness. They used many tools, like newspapers and plays, to try to convince everyone the truth about slavery and the damage it was doing to our country. To take such a leap and not only stand against tradition, but literally be in the line of fire for those who opposed abolition, was such a brave and daring thing to do. The strength of these leaders, to go against half the country, against the law, and against their own family traditions, is what made them so great as leaders of this movement.



General Art—Honorable Mention

James Cline

Historical Essay

Honorable Mention

The Fight

Nancy Lauffer

During the Pre- Civil war time period there was an abundance of people who were against slavery. Some of the most influential of those abolitionists were Harriet Tubman and William Lloyd Garrison along with many more that fought for the end of slavery. Tubman and Garrison were big influences that helped slavery finally come to an end after the civil war as they fought and believed that as the constitution states, “all men are created equal”. They also used this as a main argument for their fight against slavery. In the biography “*Harriet Tubman and the Fight Against Freedom*” the reader is taken back in time to the life Tubman experienced in her attempts to runaway from slavery and lead a life in the free states. Tubman was one of the most significant “conductors” of the underground railroad, as in the span of a decade she went on nineteen trips to the deep south and brought over three hundred slaves to freedom with the help of many white abolitionist (Document 2; *Harriet Tubman and the Fight Against Freedom*) such as, Garrison.

Tubman went through many different obstacles throughout her journey as a “conductor” of The Underground Railroad. Such as when she had to help mothers and their babies out of harm’s way “It was hard to escape with babies, who might not be silent on command...” (p. 24; *Harriet Tubman and the Fight Against Freedom*) on the events that she did escape with babies it is said that “.. she always gave them something to keep them calm and quiet.” (p. 24; *Harriet Tubman and the Fight Against Freedom*). The many efforts and struggles Tubman went through made her one of the

most impactful and praised abolitionists. Even though she was not the most successful, she became known as “The Moses of her people” (p. 20; *Harriet Tubman and the Fight Against Freedom*) because she, like Moses, successfully helped many of “their people” escape the various abuses of slavery. Tubman along with many abolitionists were very religious. “Conductors” of the Underground Railroad used different verses in hymns such as “Go down Moses” (p. 53; *Harriet Tubman and the Fight Against Freedom*) to let their followers know if they were safe or not based on what verse of the hymn would be used. If the verse stated “Shouldn’t hab to die at all” (p. 53; *Harriet Tubman and the Fight Against Freedom*) the group was in danger and should stay hidden but, if they were safe she would sing “.. Tell old Pharaoh, Let my people go” (p. 53; *Harriet Tubman and the Fight Against Freedom*). These hymns that were used showed the importance God had in the day to day lives of slaves. Religion would help guide them and led them to never give up as “.. African Americans placed their hope and faith in God’s promise of freedom and in Tubman, the “Moses” who led them” (p. 54; *Harriet Tubman and the Fight Against Freedom*).

Along side Tubman was another powerful and influential abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison was the writer and owner of the news paper “The Liberator”, the different struggles he endured throughout his life led him to be the strong, well-known, and influential man he is known as today. While reading the article ““I Will Be Heard!”: William Lloyd Garrison and the Struggle Against Slavery” the reader can interpret that Garrisons known beliefs on the emancipation of slavery were not always how he viewed the topic of slavery, at first he was a gradualist who did not believe in the immediate end to slavery. But, when he went to work for Benjamin Lundy’s paper “The Genius of Universal Emancipation” (p. 206; *Woe it Comes with Storm and Blood and Fire*) in 1829 his views on the topic completely changed when “[He] renounced colonization and came out for immediate emancipation” (p. 206; *Woe it Comes with Storm and Blood and Fire*). Lundy’s paper was the beginning of a lifelong career as an abolitionist and journalist for Garrison.

Also, when watching the documentary video “The Age of

Slavery” the viewer is brought into the time period after the American Revolution and shown how freed African Americans coped and dealt with life after slavery was abolished in the North. While in some places such as Philadelphia, Boston, and other major northern cities this was a prosperous time of tremendous opportunity for the African American community. Southern African Americans were not faced with the same outcome. As during this Pre-Civil War time period, the production of cotton skyrocketed and the Second Middle passage was now formed, because of the shift of power from the upper south to now the booming plantations of the lower south. Due to the economic outcome of The Second Middle Passage, the emancipation of slaves began fading further and further into the future for southern African Americans. But this also helped the growth of slaves escaping and resisting their masters. Acts of massive rebellion throughout the African American community began to grow and slaves like Nat Turner and Gabriel Prosser paved the way for slaves to begin revolting against their masters.

While reading the article, biography, and watching the documentary mentioned in the paragraphs above the reader is able to analyze the lives of the abolitionists who shaped and paved the way for the progress that was made during and after The Civil War. It can be easily distinguished that Tubman, Garrison, and the many other anti-slavery abolitionists were very head strong and the lives they lived as children shaped the way they viewed slavery. Their lives as children also made it easier for them to overcome the many hurdles that were set in their paths by their pro-slavery counterparts. Abolitionists were never faced with a hurdle they could not overcome as their beliefs guided them to never give up and to live their lives to free all slaves no matter how long it would take.



Poetry

Poetry- First Place

Expressions

Christopher Galindo

The soul is a flame, too great to contain.

It yearns for release, escape from the cage.

The mind sets awhirl, thoughts flow through a storm;

the hands become tools to give the soul form.

Art dances free, in shapes and in lines;

words mold with precision, tempered in rhyme.

Poems and stories, humor and testaments,

imagery evoking both joy and laments,

unleashing the soul--a heart-born legacy--

to share with the world individuality;

shedding light on mistakes, and life's lessons--

--through our personalized forms of self-expression.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Christopher Galindo

Poetry - Second Place

Thank You

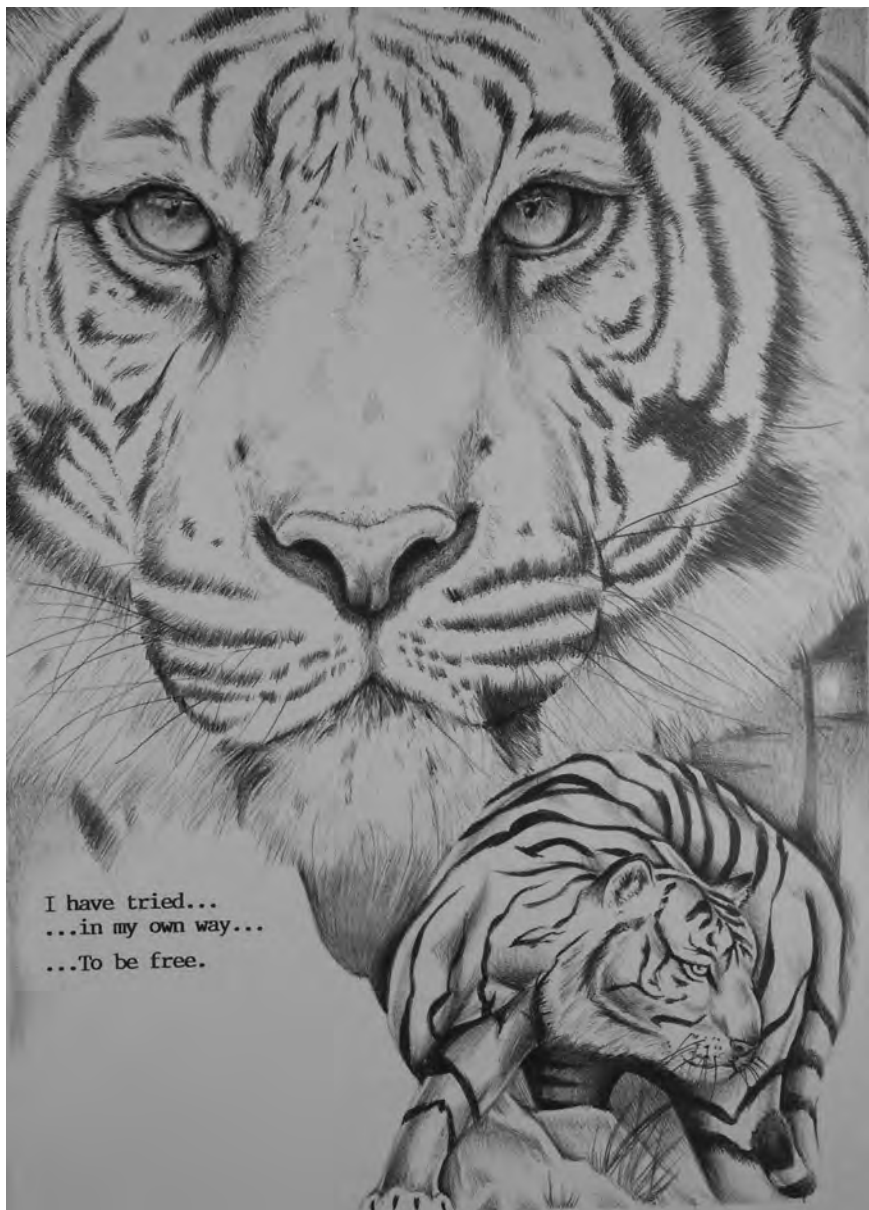
Suzan Wolf

Thank You for telling me,
everything that's wrong with me.
As if I don't already see,
all of the flaws in me.

Thank you for making it clear,
that I won't have a career.
Say it again to me,
when I have my third degree.

Thank you for always seeing the worst in me,
and telling me that I'm nobody.
Thank you for always comparing me,
but I guarantee there's only one me

Don't worry I won't let your misery,
stop me from making history.
So while you're sitting there judging me,
I'll be miles away from your insanity.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Christopher Galindo

Poetry - Third Place

Reflections

Timothy Hall

Listening to the frightened
echo's bouncing down the
Damp lonely halls,
with bare naked bulbs lighting
the words that I've
written on the walls.
Sad troubadours all about
Q time that's no
longer mine,
just melancholy memories
and forever in time,
looking through dirty windows
reflective mirrors of
my past,
my shattered halo responsible
for all the
broken glass
just one moment more before
The gultive falls
I can already hear
The sound of
St. Peters Call...



General Art—Honorable Mention

E. Gonzales

Poetry

Honorable Mention

I Am From...

Anna C. Mouton

I am from Beaumont Texas, born at St. Elizabeth born in the morning at 9:06
June 18th 1998 to excited new parents Aric and Melanie Mouton who waited 7 years to become stable enough to have children
I was the first born

I am from born at the hospital in Groves
My family then moved to Port Neches
My mother had my little sister Maggie
We moved to Nederland
I started elementary school at Highland Park elementary

I am from a broken family at a young age not understanding why I couldn't go see my grandparents why they couldn't come to my school for grandparent's day or school plays.

I am from learning that blood means nothing. Finding family through friends

Learning family you get to choose will always love you more than blood. I will be forever grateful for the friends that I consider family.

I am from confusing middle school years having fun with friends having too much fun with friends being grounded most of middle school sneaking around from being grounded not understanding consequences and rules

I am from rebellion thinking my parents don't know anything I am from falling into ways of my family my parents tried so hard to keep me from. Trying new things. Curious of where stuff would take me not caring what could happen to me

I am from broken promises. Failed attempts to get better lying all the time no ambition just trying to have fun and live in the moment still no worries of tomorrow. No cares in the world

I am from almost dead four days before high school graduation never been happier to be alive and walking across a stage. Ready to start my journey with college and new beginnings finally starting to see my mom proud of me again.

I am from parents moving to Montana trying to decide if I want to move up there or stay down in Texas figuring out how annoying paying bills is still deciding to stay in Texas.

I am from finally getting a relationship with my mom back catching up on missed times forgiving myself for putting her through everything I put her through becoming my favorite person to take to everyday.

I am from self-growth self-love self-worth “it’s only the begging”
deciding to leave my past for my new future maybe the mountains
in Montana will be my forever a fresh start and new life just what I
need

I am from new beginnings “you cannot change your past” a broken
family coming together a future looking promising going back to
school getting a good job finally getting a job at the hospital finally
turning my past around.



General Art—Honorable Mention

Justin McNair

Poetry
Honorable Mention

Legacy

Christopher Galindo

Life is too short.
A fine pointed edge.
Its only true meaning:
in the way you have lived.
People don't think;
they're quicker to act.
Before we can blink,
our future's the past.
We each are made--
--by trials and errors;
those moments we break,
then come back together;
by mistakes and triumphs,
ties made or dissevered;

wounds felt only once,
or that scar you forever.
Anger is strong.
Friendship is stronger.
A grudge endures long.
Forgiveness lasts longer.
What legacy we leave behind--
--is a frozen matter of fact,
an abstract canvas where we find--
--each slash of color a single act.
Life will be short.
A fine pointed edge.
It's only true meaning:
in the way that you live.



General Art—Honorable Mention

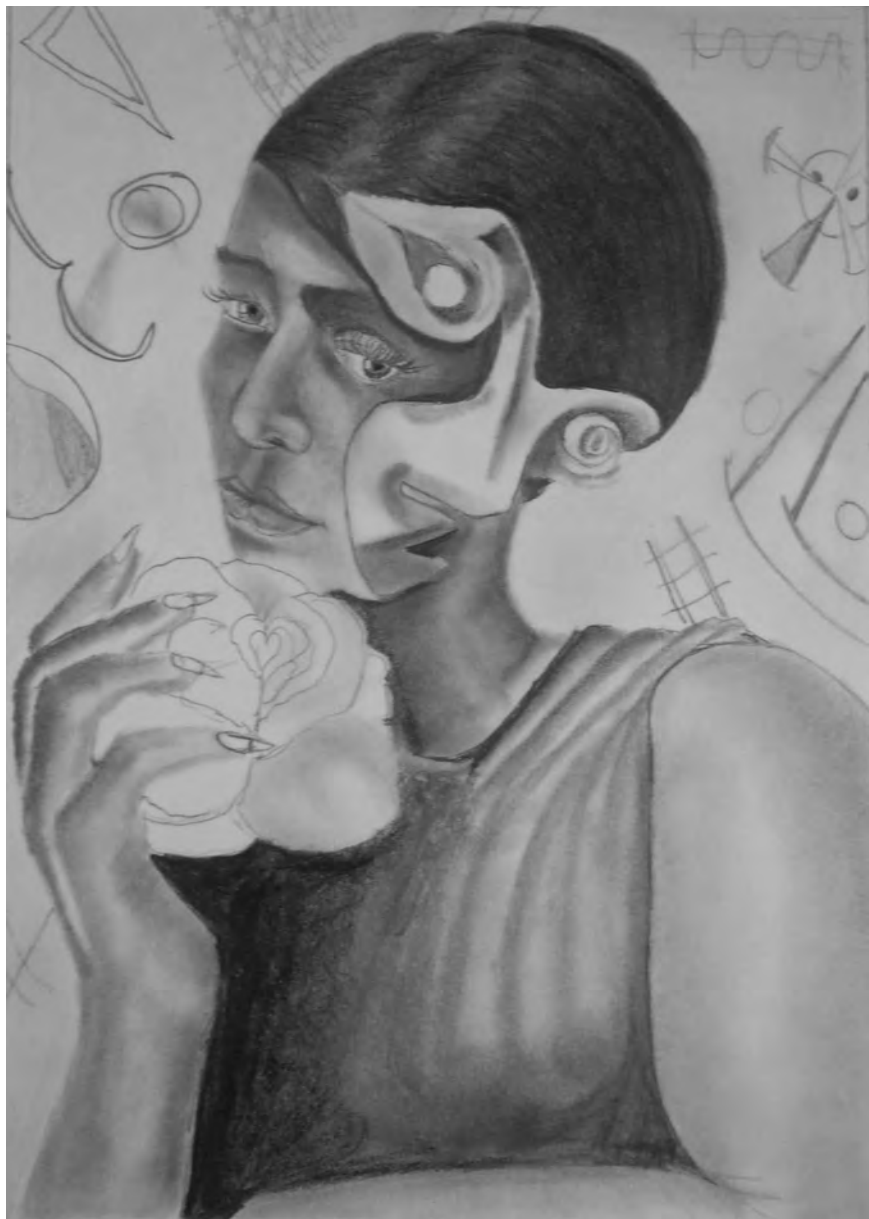
Jason Ortega

Poetry
Honorable Mention

You

Monica S. Clark

Oh, how I wish I could change you
On that day the rain poured, and the wind blew
This can't be right cause it's so unfair
I want to cry and scream but I must forbear
You were supposed to be the man I compared all others to
You crushed my soul like you always seem to do
I can't stay apart of this toxic atmosphere,
One day I hope to see you and not shed one tear
I know I'll stop feeling blue
When I see that change in you



General Art—Honorable Mention

Rashard Renfro

Poetry

Honorable Mention

Own It

Robert Stephen Nunes

Mouths say one thing,
actions say the opposite.
People contradict themselves.
Life is full of broken promises.
None of us are innocent.
I'm no saint by any means.
I've committed many sins.
I might be a lot of things,
but at least I'm not a hypocrite.
I don't think I'm better than.
I don't think I've met a man
caught up in comparisons
who didn't have double standards.
The first step of recovery,
we must admit to ourselves
that we have a problem.
So own it.
Hold yourself accountable
before telling the next man
what he has wrong with him.
The parable
about the plank in the eye
is as true today
as it ever was.



Haiku

Haiku

First Place

Birth Cries Out
Duane Theriot

Birth in pangs strikes quick
A newborn cries out for love
Life is in motion

Second Place

Last Voyage
Kevin Kwapil

Opulence of life
Twilight thoughts falling with leaves
The soul's last voyage

Third Place

Summertime
Anna Mouton

Summertime season
The Gemini time to shine
Long days longer nights



General Art—Honorable Mention

Rashard Renfro

Haiku

Honorable Mentions

Mind Aglow At Night

David Bellinger

Autumn sparks the mind
Body and soul all aglow
A burning cloud at night

Brisk Breath Away

David Hernandez

Comes her kiss so brisk
Inhale the blue ocean's breath
I fade far away

Spring Birds Alight

Markell Sims

Spring arrives here new
Soaring birds, at last alight
Feathers flower now

Haiku
Honorable Mentions

New Orleans
Anna Mouton

I fell in the street
New Orleans Louisiana
Please throw me away



Faculty

&

Staff



Michelle Judice

The Great Day of Wrath Has Come

Caitlin James-Mastronardi

The great day of wrath has come,
There's danger on the edge of town.
So, hold tight, we're in for nasty weather.
And afterwards the meek shall inherit...
Oh- oh, people of the earth...Listen to the warning.
This is the end, hold your breath and count to ten.
This means no fear, cavalier, renegade and steering clear.
In an era fraught with boundless greed & corruption,
I sure could use a vacation from this Circus sideshow.
But, I don't want to set the world on fire and yet
It doesn't matter how you hide,
Gonna take a miracle to save us this time.
Get up, come on get down with the sickness
Oh don't go 'round tonight, it's bound to take your life,
They already burned the churches down in Harlem.



Caitlin James-Mastronardi

Fly

Cynthia Arceneaux

I suddenly heard screaming saying “go now, go-go fly... shoo, move!!!” Get out of here...

I stood there frozen, unsure of how to fly...where do I go?... I felt fearful looking for direction in the midst of the doors opening and freedom staring at me. Some shouted go north, others said go south, and one said go west. I thought where is north? Where is south? I only knew the walls and the circumference of the cage.

I moved around going nowhere. I looked at the turtle to tell me how to fly. He told me to sink my head down and go into a shell. That is how you will fly. So, I buried my head in my chest just as he did, but it did not feel snug and safe, as he described. It felt cold and lonely to me.

So, I looked at the fish to tell me how to fly. He said, “Go play in the water.” He described the freedom that he felt in the water. I played in the water looking for freedom, but to me, it felt cold, foreign, and wet. It weighed me down and left me feeling heavy.

I look toward the chicken asking him, “How do I fly?” He said, “Move your arms back and forth while walking around.” I tried it... but this too felt odd. He stayed on the ground while moving his arms back and forth, but my feet kept coming up underneath me. It frightened me, as I felt a strong wind was building up behind me.

I sat there thinking that I have relied on everybody to show me how to fly. I can't find anyone to show me how to use my wings. I have not gotten any help. I decided to look around one more time thinking I know there has to be someone out there that will help me. The assurance that I was seeking from others all day had me feeling worse than the cage I just left.

As I sat there I saw an eagle. He said to me “Why do you

not trust your wings? They are built to carry you?” I thought to myself “my wings” the ones that felt heavy, wet, cold, and almost pulled my feet off the ground. No way sir, you must you be thinking I am something, I am not.

I tried to reason with him as I looked down at my wings. I thought to myself these things hold no power. He said to me “yes, those wings.” Then he flew off saying to me “stretch yourself, friend.” I watched him leave as I stared in amazement. He soared above the horizon.

I closed my eyes and thought “Wow, I wonder what it feels like to be free.” I pictured myself flying as that beautiful eagle. As I daydreamed of my new friend, I heard a woman yell, “look, look up there, do you see the eagle. Hurry up, you may even be able to get a picture.” I looked around wanting to see him again. I looked back and forth, searching for him thinking, “If I can see him one more time, I will then know how to fly.”

As I looked for my friend, the sun began to shine on my face. Then a bright light blinded me. I look around and saw a reflection of light coming from the woman shouting. She was holding her camera so tightly, that her camera lens was blinding me. I look down at her lens and saw myself. I was the eagle!!!

They were all standing there looking at me. The stared at me, waiting for me to do something amazing. So, I decided to move my wings to get them to move on. I kept thinking, “This woman has no idea that I do not know how to fly.” The more they stared at me the larger the reflection of myself got. I continued to move my wings back and forth to avoid the bright light that was blinding me. As I moved my wings back and forth I felt a warmth within me, a strong urge to move my arms up higher and higher, at that very moment I began to fly.

The doors of my cage opened!!!

I choose to FLY!!!

I realized at that moment the dream of freedom cannot be reached as long as you hold on to the bars of a cage. A cage is anything that you mentally put yourself in. A cage of lies, fear, uncertainty, insanity....

Reflection verse: Isaiah 40:31 The Message (MSG)

²⁷⁻³¹ Why would you ever complain, O Jacob,
or, whine, Israel, saying,

“GOD has lost track of me.

He doesn't care what happens to me”?

Don't you know anything? Haven't you been listening?

GOD doesn't come and go. God *lasts*.

He's Creator of all you can see or imagine.

He doesn't get tired out, doesn't pause to catch his breath.

And he knows *everything*, inside and out.

He energizes those who get tired,

gives fresh strength to dropouts.

For even young people tire and drop out,

young folk in their prime stumble and fall.

But those who wait upon GOD get fresh strength.

They spread their wings and soar like eagles,

They run and don't get tired,

they walk and don't lag behind.



Michelle Judice

At The Altar of Nuestra Flaquita,
Our Lady
Ana Cristina Rudholm

To run unfettered through the woodlands of last night's dream,
along deafening waterfalls that kissed to death a small pine cone fallen
from the altar of a lonely sorcerer from Chihuahua
still hiding in the mountains of the North, in Cerro de la Campana,
you hoped to catch sight of that legend of desire, a lone pure desire
sprung and dovetailing with the star-torn night.

And on this mound of wounds, smoke, death, and lava-torn crowns
of broken glass and blood,
spilling from smoke-stung goblets full of fermented oaths of vengeance--
(curses folded like rose petals falling through iced memory)
onto muddy ancient windowsills,
you know one day you will run far away--
so deep into the mountains that no one
will ever find you again...
as it will be so deep, so sudden-- like stillborn songs falling blue
on the cinnamon cypress trees of Santa Maria del Tule...
as you hop the train to some dive bars in the city--
playing jukebox tunes melting
like the sadness of late October, holding the clumsy failings
of your human heart caught in vitro...

And as you feed the demons of your dreams,
the blood-soaked sky bleeds onyx drops
onto cracked vases and broken statues
long fallen into mud-blessed ditches beneath sealed sills--
martyrs of those lust-torn storms that slipped from the loins of angry

gods

who, in desiring to wear the thorny crown of being human,
fell through celestial sapphire-streaming surges of dying stars--
into the mortal dreams of their regret--
shackled by human longing,
bathing heartache beneath lamplight
and the autumnal bliss of forever.

And sinking in the ever-dying yet strangely blooming green beneath
the cascades of
the sun
you obediently watch souls of the dead--
who in their desire to be alive once more--
descend through infant stars swaddled
inside that crashing spinning bliss
from all those dreams, that as a child, you knew would always
bleed through to waking...

And still you churn in your fear
waiting like the obedient child you once were
for your dessert
and for that dark distracted smile
that hurt you.
And for the curve of that lip to rise in a smile
like the tip of the crescent moon
you would dangle your daydreams from when you wept.

And howling like a creature unchained
into the dying splintering sky--
you remember whispers that glowed through you like a laughing star
--
you know the one--
the one that smiled upon you as a babe.
You will always remember that.
You will always remember its perfect glimmer
that shone just for you--
and for you alone.
Honeysuckle still hanging sweet
in blood-torn air through sleep.



Donna Ellis

Taken for a Ride

Donna Ellis

You took me for a ride
And didn't even shut the door
Swerving to and fro.
Checking out the rearview
to see who
you left behind.
Riding shotgun by
Your side to be near
Yet you put me out to just
watch you go by.

You took me for a ride
And didn't even shut my door.
Left the windows rolled down
while the wind blew through my hair
and rain in my eyes
Your foot hit the gas
while your hand turned
the wheel
turning corners on a dime
From the backseat
I saw you ease up to the
light.
You stopped for just
A sec
then hit the gas again.

You took me for a ride
And didn't even shut our door.
Dropped me off at the bus stop
To catch the next ride.



Donna Ellis

War Ship Cemetery

Tina Capeles

Here in the cemetery you lay
Your decks empty with rust and decay
Memories of heroes and courage abound
Ships of days gone by

What you must have seen
What you must have done
War and death
Ships of days gone by

Battle upon battle,
Wins and losses.
America weeps for you
Ships of days gone by

Here you rest, never again
To fight another day
To defend another time
Ships of days gone by

Here in this cemetery of wreckage and ruin
You lie with those of courage
Your decks filled with memories of souls
Ships of days gone by

Those who fought for freedom
Their memory walks your halls and decks
Never to be forgotten
Ships of days gone by

Memories are many
Battles lost, battles won
Lie in these tombs, not forgotten
These ships of days gone by



Caitlin James-Mastronardi

Glass

Cynthia Arceneaux

I asked God, “Why do I cry so much?”

His answer to me was, you cry because I am filling a void, it is like filling a glass. Overflow will occur. He told me that he desired to fill my wants, and to quench my thirst.

He told me that I have been running on empty on so long, that I just never knew what it is felt like to hold a full glass. So when the tears flow, do not panic, do not be scared.

It is that I have never been accustomed to holding the weight of a full glass in my hand.

John 7:38 (NLT) Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’”



Michelle Judice

We All Have Our Losses

Donna Ellis

We all have our losses.

We grieve for them

Cry for them

They haunt us like fog sits over the meadow
hanging over our soul just out of reach

but close enough to smell and feel

searing into our hearts the wretched pain

leaving it's smoking brand buried into the flesh.

A constant reminder of past lapses in judgment
embedded in our skin screaming to us to remember.

I've seen the waves of grief in eyes. Smelled
the stench of agony in the air. Felt the sting
and aches of pain in a heart.

Losses, we all have them yet

If on a different plane, we take ourselves there

And find yourself above it.

The fog shifts. It lifts. The clearness is there.

The blurry visions we came to know as reality

Are now gone. The damage was done.

But now. Peering across gentle waves
the limpid air has a pure fragrance.

Then we see. We know.

We haven't lost

We have found ourselves.



Adriane Champagne

The Storm

Cynthia Arceneaux

I went to bed expecting rain as the forecast had predicted. The sound of rain trickled down as I fell asleep. I was awoken around two o'clock in the morning. The simple shower of rain was now a thunderstorm. The sound of the rain and the voice of God woke me up. He said, "Listen."

I sat up in bed and thought, "God why do you want me to listen to the howling of the wind and the downpour of the rain." I sat there thinking, "Why am I listening to this. It sounds like a horror movie." The sounds brought back memories of the hurricane that I had been rescued from the year prior. I sat there on the edge of the bed thinking, "Really God, why would you ask me to listen to this."

I heard Him say to me, "Do you hear the birds?" In the midst of all the sounds, I sat quietly and thought to myself, "No, I don't."

He then responded back with, "You will not. They have learned to keep their mouth shut in the middle of a storm. They have learned to sit tight as the storm passes" He said to me, "you know they are out there, yet they have chosen to remain silent." I sat there for a few moments and thought, "Wow, you are absolutely right. I do not hear them."

He then said to me, "Get up." I got up and opened the blinds of my bedroom window. He said, "Look around." As I began to look around He said, "Do you see the birds flying back and forth? Do you see them looking for shelter?" I said, "No." He responded, "You won't. They are not looking for shelter or for anyone to rescue them. They know they are ok, they know I have them."

He then asked me, "Why then do you look to others to rescue you in a storm."

I went to bed shortly after thinking, "God, thank you for showing me peace in the midst of a storm."

I woke up a few hours later. I got up, and looked around at all the debris that the storm had left around my home. As I survey the damage I heard Him say, "Listen."

I sat down and listened. He said, "Do you hear the birds." I said, "Yes." He then said to me, "Do you hear them chirping." I sat

there listening thinking, “I do they sound beautiful.” He then said to me, “the chirping are songs that they are singing to me. They are lifting up praises because they have survived the storm.”



CJM

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*Thank you to all
contributors
and
Congratulations
to those
published in
Expressions 2020*

Expressions 2020

We would like to acknowledge our judges:

Dr. Michelle Justice

Zebulon Lowe

Mason James

We would like to give a special thanks to:

Wendy Seay and **Ariel Fontenot** for their Administrative Assistance

Editor: **Caitlin James-Mastronardi**

Consultant: **Donna Ellis**

Design & Technical Editor: **Peter Mastronardi**

Statement of Editorial Policy

The editorial staff would like to thank all of the students who submitted work for consideration to **EXPRESSIONS 2020**. 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 2020** 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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