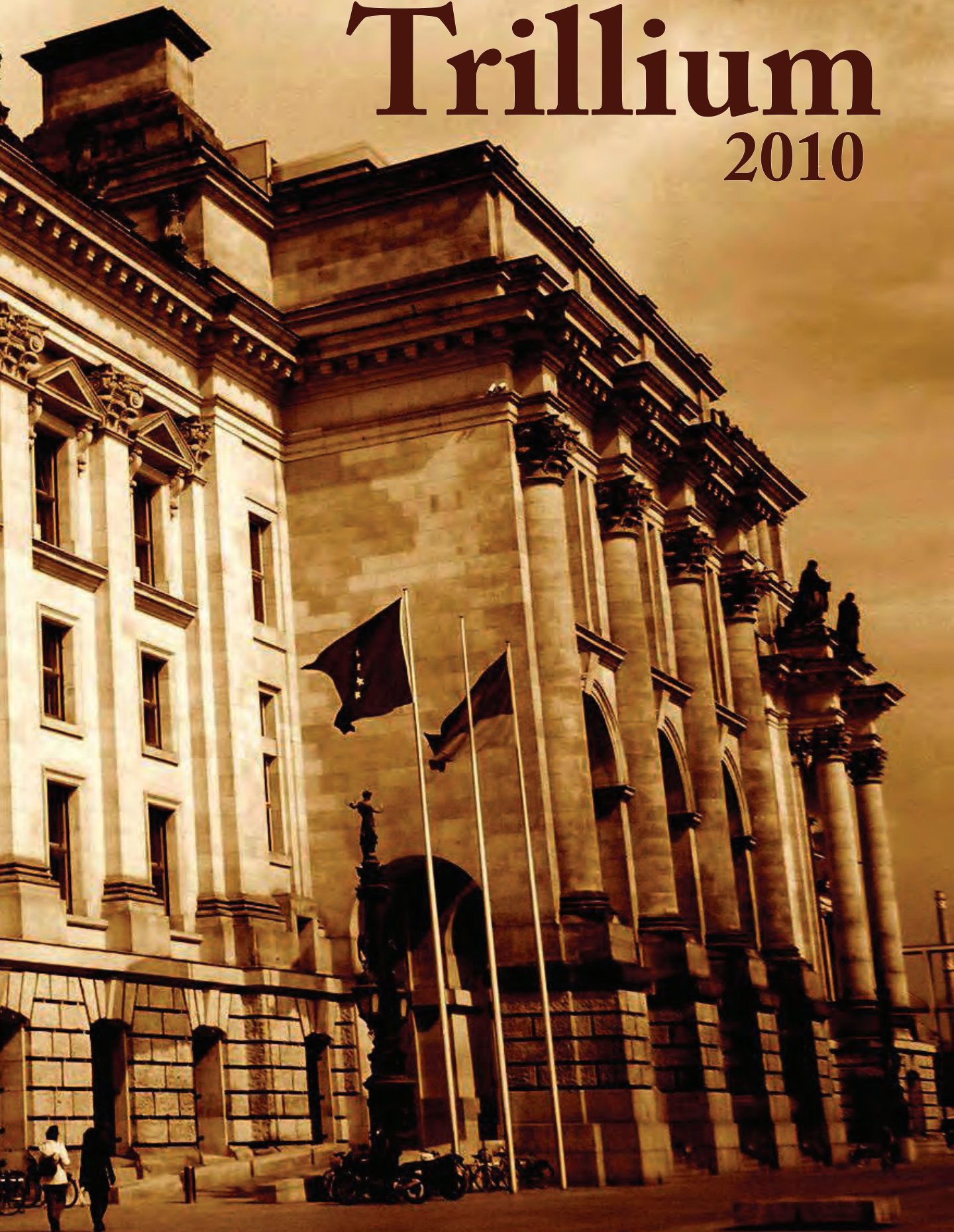


Trillium

2010



Trillium

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the Glenville State College
English Department**

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Prince William

There once was a magazine
Compiled on a hill
Full of art, poems, and stories
That promised to thrill.

One day the Advisor
Hailed the Editor 'tween classes.
"We need your notes!
An intro for the masses!"

The Editor procrastinated.
Another world, he was lost in.
He avoided the notes so desperately
He even read Jane Austen.

Till one frigid night
He sat at the screen
And tried to write something
Funny but clean.

"A poem!" he cried.
"I'll call it Prince William!
Since nothing else rhymes
With our title of Trillium."

He typed and he typed
In the late hours he toiled.
Like Morgan's aged coffee
His creativity boiled.

'Til at last this appeared,
This intro to the journal
That allows creativity to pop
Like corn through a kernel.

This poem is lousy.
You'll find better inside.
Just trust when he says
"Your editor tried."

Dedicated to Melty the Snowman, who inspired my first-ever poem, and to Mrs. Sallie Sturm, my 2nd grade teacher, who gave me the assignment to write it.

Chris Summers, Editor, Trillium 2010

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Poetry

WAYNE DE ROSSET

Lady In Waiting (a song)

She comes in the night, on steel belted wings
And you turn your head as she steps from the car
As she passes by, she looks down and smiles at you
And for just one moment you forget who you are
And you know that the lady's going to keep you waiting
Enjoy her dinner while you spill your heart out on the curb
And you think about just how much you hate her
Till you realize that you got just what you deserved

CHORUS:

And you thought that she was a lady in waiting
Someone for whom you could write all the scenes
But you found out too late that she was your princess
And she's left no room for you in her dreams

When the light fades away, she touches darkness with dreams
And the last curtain call leaves you lonely and dazed
She's played her part, and she's made her exit
And you're left all alone with your lines on her stage
And you know that you used to keep the lady waiting
Graced by her love you never really seemed to care
Ran with neon nights woke to scarlet mornings
While she woke alone trying to smile through her tears

CHORUS

Love's magic fires, dance from her window
Imagine her warm lips on a chilled glass of wine
Turn your collar from the damp, your face from her front door
All the while wishing you could turn back time
And you know that the lady's going to keep you waiting
She's finding love while you stand so cold in the rain
And you think about all the many times you hurt her
And how it's funny that it's you who feels all the pain

CHORUS

Lady, lady in waiting...Lady, lady in waiting
And Lady I'm waiting for you
Lady I'm waiting for you
Lady I'm waiting for you

JENNIFER YOUNG

The O.G.

Name, badge, green card,
tie, pins, aprons, book, pen?
Check, check, check.

Don't forget the coaster,
and the wine bottle or
you'll get fired.
Watch your hoo-hoo.
I need a compri!
Who didn't brew tea?!
Sub ceasar
Extra olives
Tiramisu is frozen
On the fly
86 scampi chicken
4 top
Stiffers
Hospi or ramekin?
Behind you!
Where is the buser?
We're out of silver.
We need glasses.
Is 18% too much to ask?!
Pop the booths and stay an hour later.
Roll your silver.
Who's a closer-checker?
Fill your sugar.

Count the cash
Walk to the parking lot with a friend
because it's not safe to walk out there alone at night.

I love this place.

CODY BABER

Internet Children

This one's for the surfers
Tired-dragging eyes pryed
Open only by the light
Of the World Wide Web.
Living in virtual reality,
Social skills in MySpace.
Fitting the specs in one page.
Meeting fake people
And wasting real time.
Too bad you can't order food online.
Or procreate through a computer.
I should know... If I could I would.

Love

It's debauchery, complete pandemonium
And yet pristine and beautiful, and coveted in
Each heart. It can make your life or derail it.
It can coheres you, and ensnare you
Or it can free you, and enlighten you.
It is the paradox of mankind, love
Truly makes no sense.

Memories

And the worst skeletons aren't buried... they're decimated.
Burnt until there is no more... Just ashes scattered in the wind.
But their ghosts haunt us... and they still continue to be part of us
Even after ample time allotted to healing. Some things just can't be un-erased.
Others all the drinks and drugs in the world won't replace.
So we carry it with us, as a scar and a lesson learned.
We remember the hurt... and move along.

JAMIE STANLEY

Mommy (In the style of Sylvia Plath's *Daddy*)

A way with me. away with me
Behind walls too tall to see
Lined with razor wire
I dare not whisper "please"

Mommy, I had to bury you
And all your wire tubes
A statue like a Goddess made by technology
Ghastly with tin lungs
I pray that it would never be me

With your head in the Baltic Sea
With all the salt. the color of green
And waters of the Nile
I used to pray to old gods to take me
Ah, nei!

Zieg, Zieg
Show me how five foot three
Could haunt me
Unmovable like the Atlantic
And just as flowing

I think I was buried
Ja, beside you. buried deep
Snuggled in down beneath
The salt on my tongue
Not tears but sea

You would think I was crazy
How I still bleed, Und wie
deine Nägel noch das Blut holen. auf mir
(and how your nails still bring the blood. on me) Moonshaped. deep
Scarcely seen

Dame vom tiefen
Lady of the Deep
In your quiet sleep
How I wondered at your bedside as you lay
Quiet as a defunct panzer, overgrown with cobwebs and weeds

Pocked from heavy artillery
I was that shell
I was buried by your debris

Still picking bones from tank treads
Und wei!
I was that unnecessary
Breaking under your gilded claw
Swallowed by your neuroses
Yes, ja, Mater, the fear is soaking into me
Ach, destiny, destiny!

You've poured it into me
Like molten iron into a mold
Mein furher, I've grown too weary
Stomped down by your porcelain
Delicate feet

How the Sun was never seen
Between you and me
The light was an inferior
How I reached towards open windows
Towards the mossy smell of green

Ach, und wei!
The sound of breathing like machinery
The clockwork under your chest beating, beating
Calling, sweetie, sweetie
How I longed for it to stop

Mommy, I've killed you
And buried you six feet
I've taken you with me
Hearing the whining screech
Still, from your pulse-ox machine

I'm still changing batteries
Hiding the lines much like yours on my face
Hiding the rasping breaths I sometimes take
Hiding all the desperate shakes
I've learned from you

Arnamentia
Did you ever look down and see me?
Did you see your worshiper on her knees
Praying at your altar
Pitifully?

You're still with me
I could never be as untouchable
In all of your sea-foam green
I eat my rations responsibly.
Mommy, Mommy, you've beaten me.

DOYLE WESTBROOK

I Don't Blame

I don't blame Kaiser, but I do.
They wouldn't settle for an image less than true.
By the time they did the MRI she asked,
Three months had passed.
Then she agreed to the CT Scan too.
I don't blame Kaiser, but I do.

I don't blame Kaiser, but I do.
Maximum radiation through and through
Was their advice and she felt trapped.
So she was zapped
For a colorectal cancer that surgery alone should do.
I don't blame Kaiser, but I do.

I don't blame Marilyn, but I do.
She promised me when our vows were new
That we'd grow old together, just us two.
Fifty-nine isn't old, by quite a few.
I've been alone before but never knew.
I don't blame Marilyn, but I do.

I don't blame me, but most of all I do.
As normal, I left your decisions up to you.
I should have insisted on pap smears and scans,
Forced you to revise your plans.
There should have been something I could have done to still have you.
I don't blame me, but most of all I do.

I don't blame me, but most of all I do.
Gone the opportunity to say some things to you.
Often what I did say came out wrong but I always hoped you knew.
Far longer than the traditional vows, my love is true.
I've only had one soul mate and it was you.
I don't blame me, but most of all I do.

ELDERIED MCKINNEY

Voices From Peace

Peace never
speaks, but
sounds louder
than violence;
people in fear for
their lives are
kept in silence.
Trapped liked an
innocent man in
jail begging to get
let out, but forced
to keep his silence
and scared to
sprout. So when
can peace be free,
when can peace
come out,
probably never,
because its voice
won't shout

JESSICA JAFFRE

One

I am a sports car on cruise control
To many
Or a passionate, driven, successful person
Flying by all challenges

I am an untalented, ditsy, homewrecker
To some
Or a skilled, intelligent, professional
On the cusp of a new career

I am a bible-thumpin' Jesus-freak
To few
Or just a Woman
With the faith of a mustard seed

I am about to lose my identity forever
To One
Or a fiancé
Blossoming into a new woman.

JAMIE MULLINS

I Am...

A curvaceous young figure with that ass they want to hit
An old soul who shows my years by that string of pearls around my neck
A body tight as Delilah's, as weak as Samson with no hair
A stubborn mind so damn strong none of you would ever dare

The Sun so bright from shining it may swallow the Milky Way
A stock market prepared to endure the next Black Tuesday
A go-getter who's a dreamer of the greater and the bigger
The simple minded child who lives in the moment and worries of the now

A country girl at heart, born and raised where I call home
An alchie with a past who hides my regrets with a smile
A Christian taught in church that God has a home prepared for me
A spirit not afraid of death, but the years it would take away

The loud mouthed, know-it-all, open book you all can read
A mystery of a novel that hides the clues the detective needs
A walking, talking contradiction sent to put a spell on all ...

Well, hello, mister. Now, who the hell are you?

MARY SKIDMORE

My Darkness

My eyes show you a disguise.
Some things the soul can't change.
My tears melt my heart of nice.
My soul is dark and deep.
My body is worn down
by the damage
I have inflicted upon myself.
That darkness that I feel
is nothing new to me.
No one understands the pain within.
Everyone take for granted that I breathe.
Death lurks within the shadows and beckons me.
It calls my name and threatens my Immortality.
The darkness feels daunting upon myself.
I wish to see the light once more but it's even lost within my
darkness...save me.

SAMUELLA LEWIS

Black Market Twinkies are in Our Future

Beware folks, the Fat Police are on the march, coming for us, we chubby ones,
The Fat Police are here to raid our refrigerators, our lives, our contentments,
They wish to change our rosy smiling faces to match the sickly gray of theirs,
They wish to change our happy souls, into grouchy, angry, starvation proponents.

Why are these belligerent little people so angry, so adamant in their attacks,
Whatever happened to the premise of freedom of choice, of steak or gruel,
Fat or lean, sweet or sour, tasty or bland, satisfactorily fed or merely sufficient,
I say, let us hold our drumsticks high and fight for our right to refuel.

Our basic traditions are at stake, hot dogs, holiday pies, cakes, ice cream,
Traditions assailed by ones with caloric deficiencies and no sweets or steaks to chew,
They have handy bathroom scales and calipers attached to gleaming service belts,
Ready to weigh and measure over-endowed frames and "pinch an inch," on us too.

The Fat Patrol go about their business, banning this or that, wreaking havoc as they pass,
No more coconut oil in movie popcorn, no more doughnuts fried in pure, sweet lard,
These oils replaced by manmade products with impure additives, meant to slim us down,
This Fat Police oil decree, caused obesity to escalate, yet they blame us with no regard.

Our adversaries are mean, miserably unhappy from lack of sustenance, ever on the prowl,
We happy, contented people go through life with satisfaction, full of vim, vigor and food,
We Tubbies have a brownie or two up our sleeves and we're not afraid to use them,
Enemy, be on alert, finagle with our meats and sweets and we'll resist, that's a certitude

Meeting over groaning buffet tables we ponder our line of defense against the Fat Police,
We nibble coconut oil popcorn, lard fried doughnuts, sip a high caffeine coffee brew,
A final consensus, toasted by a rich, chocolate milk shake drink, is - the Fat Police must,
Back off! Or we personable, pleasingly plump people will be forced to sit on you!!!

SAMUELLA LEWIS

In Future's Time

Sky-borne fiery terror fractured sunlight,
Searing bodies, hearts with no forecast,
Yawning chasms beneath trembling feet appear,
Stricken, anguished faces turn upward, aghast.

Will children laugh in future's time?

Tentacles of evil unleashed fury from the sky,
Bewildered, we mill about with no clear thought,
Pretenses gone, worldly chattels abandoned,
Reassurance, however tenuous, is sought.

Will music swell in future's time?

Life once normal, becomes distant, blurred,
People of every ilk blend as one, inflamed,
Ordinary ones do heroic, things with heavy hearts,
Innocence departs, never to be reclaimed.

Will birds sing in future's time?

The small child residing secretly within our psyche,
Confronts an unexpected "monster under the bed"
We look for consolation, protection from a higher power,
Our reward, bleakness, despair, with abiding horrific dread.

Will roses bloom in future's time?

Amidst the rubble, our salvation lies, rises,
A common weed's tendrils push to the sun of day,
Rekindling hope, restoring strength, will,
Seeded from god's hand, a lowly weed lights our way.

Music, roses, children all, will bloom in future's time!

SAMUELLA LEWIS

Ribbons of Valor

Ribbons, bright yellow, span this nation,
Binding home-bound hearts, souls,
To brave and valiant troops at risk,
Troops confronting devastation, decimation.

"Stay safe!" say yellow ribbons.

Noble youth bravely face uncertainty,
Certain only of their honorable goal,
Protecting the glorious american flag,
Modern-day patriots keeping us free.

"Come home!" plead yellow ribbons

America's sons, daughters ably defending,
Air, sea, blowing abrasne sand, foreign lands,
Entering dark, foreboding, enemy worlds,
Yellow sand turns red, honor transcending.

"Tradition upheld!" cry yellow ribbons

Forefathers, freedom fighters of yore,
Applaud, as do we, our valorous warriors,
Fluttering yellow ribbons prepare to greet,
Brave champions wearing red ribbons of valor.

"Home at last!" sigh ribbons of yellow.

CHRIS SUMMERS

Scars and Letters

The Girl

View me from any angle
Spin me, turn me, pour your eyes across me
You can read my body like a map
Plot my experiences from point A to point B
Connect the dots
Bite of love found-->Scar of love lost.
Stroke of a brush
Slash of a blade
Lining them up on my razor's edge
The edge that tears the seams and unravels the worlds.

Sketch me a person
Lines that live a life
And arch across the life
And sear and slash and dash across
And live forever
On paper that cannot crumble
But turn to ashes, to ashes
Dust, to dust
Dust that erases the lines
Erases the life
Leaves only the grey powder
That is blown into the corners of a box
Or spread to the wind
To rush, to disperse
To cover worlds and land
That my body never saw.
Caressing another body
Sketching another life
In scars
And letters.

Half the body
Half the story
For the other half
Follow the lines of a face, marked by wealth
Or worry
To a neck, bruised by abuse in joy
Or jealousy
Across shoulders, shifted in pride
Or pointlessness

A chest over a heart, beating
Or breaking
A stomach rolling, in butterflies
Or burns
And legs that run, from love
Or hate

Every curve and joint and straining muscle
Is a line in a letter
Written to the world.

Who I am
Why I'm here
When I want to leave.

And reaching back to the mouth
Where it all starts
And in a breath

It ends.

The Boy

A body is etched in a closet
Red lines etched on bronze
Clash with the blues of your bruise
As one follows them
Traces them
Gazes down them
Wonders why you drew them
One for her
Five for him
A long one for the future
Of total epic revenge
And then you realize that

The shimmer in the center

Is just the shine off a scar.

The Writer

I make my own lines
In lead
On paper that slips and rips apart like
Splitting cells
If I push too hard

On the blade.
These tears aren't for me

They're the lines for the girl who cut her angst into a drawer
They're the lines for the boy with the eyes behind the door

Stroke of a pen

For her

Slide of a blade

For him

Strike of a key

For the future.

TONY M. ANTONINI

A Failed Hero's Lament

Many nights of verse and song
Made me see where it all went wrong.
Got an earful of old "No Rain"
Reminding me that things ain't the same.

Asking What's Left in this Life?
Revises the final days of my last strife.
The years of unity and fight,
Draining the jug late into the night.

Old times long ago written down
Of a time when we thought we'd drown.
A death grip on a greasy rope;
No friendly faces to offer us hope.

Those days are now dead and gone,
I'm just here, singing my old song.
Still seen by many as a friend
I just wish I could've saved them in the end.

Last Call

Old men with lined check books
Want poster boys to push your filthy green.
You give me the boot 'cause I don't have the looks
You need your cash to make your office sheen.

Don't need no one with long, greasy hair
Or a wild taste for high octane booze,
Just pretty boys who've never played fair
Clean-cuts who don't know how to lose.

I can dig it, man; I don't hold no grudge
I'll just leave and put out my cigarette.
You enjoy your bank accounts and low-grade sludge,
With shallow looks, you'll deserve what you get.

TONY M. ANTONINI

The Echoes

The echoes still speak to me.
Yes, they still speak to me.
Begging me to come back;
One more time,
One more round.
But can't you understand?
It is finished
And nothing can change that.
Everything is broken
And you can't fix it.
Ashes to ashes
Dust to dust,
Please God
Leave this past life to rust.

AMANDA BURGE

Nobody Knows

My favorite place to be

Is inside my head

In here I am free

I walk to the brink of insanity

And back

With ill illusions of death

I question religion and

Walk a path others don't see

My mind races at a constant speed

Yet my heart takes lead

It burns like coal

Like I'm lost without a soul

My heart tells me I love you

My mind is indifferent

At a constant battle

I wear the frown upside down

Smiling I look around,

Nobody knows

ALLI DRANE

Forget About Yesterday

Dull light in the morning over the hills
gives you a chance to start over once more.
And hope lends strength for what your day wills.
You need not be worried of what is in store.
Yesterday was hard so your prayers for today
are blessings abundant, but dare not assume
an easy ride through. Life's assorted bouquet
of events may cause your spirit to wilt or to bloom,
so keep your head high and try to withstand.
Never forget how to fight through the strife—
using all your might to grab hold with both hands.
Know this: So many important things in your life
happen when you least expect. Never give
away those moments that allow you to live.

What Makes Her Beautiful

She looks good in a picture and the mirror agrees
that she's *America's Next Top Model* material.
No one knows she starves herself into her size threes,
but that's what makes her beautiful.

She knows all the beauty tricks, but she has to steal
these tips from magazines. She tries so hard
to please the crowd. She knows she isn't real,
but that's what makes her beautiful.

Following the crowd made her unsure
of herself. So she stopped using her sense of humor
and genuine smile, because no one ever told her
that's what makes her beautiful.

She doesn't understand "beautiful," let someone show
her that she doesn't need a make-over. All she needs
is confidence and a chance to be herself. She needs to know
that's what makes her beautiful.

BOB HENRY BABER

Poem for Sheri

What is the most gentle of segways to friendship
from the intimacy of unbridled passion—

—two wild horses galloping through the dark wilderness
towards dawn?

How does one corral
memories of bubble baths in a clawfoot tub—

the shivering huddle next to a warm morning stove

followed by puppy licks
and the inevitable tumble into krazee kwilts
soon enough tumbled themselves from the bed
onto ancient hardwoods floors

a belated gourmet dinner of peanut butter and pineapple
—all that can be famishly found—
spooned alternately from a plastic jar and a metal can
with a shared plastic spoon
so romantic!

How do lovers true
become 'just' anything—

'mere' 'you', not steamy mirror'ed 'us',
to each other?

Trust me, they don't.
At least

not easily if truly were they lovers true.

BOB HENRY BABER

Beauty Aside

Walking through the woods
I see
I've learned much but lost more.

Nameless trees, once identified only by the shape and color of their leaves
the scales of their bark
or their position in perfection,
can now be named (a form of knowledge):
tulip poplar, red oak, black locust, cucumber, hemlock.

But myself, I can no longer completely identify with.
My middle name...has morphed to money.

For these days, with a mere scan, I can also compute the trees' approximate
board footage
and estimate about what that'll bring at the mill—just as my grandfather
once expertly did—

—it's a function of how straight and true they've grown—the cream the
plant demands—
—for the market tolerates no knots or imperfections, no blemishes, curls
or hollows,
misguided meanderings, storms, other violent interventions
or youthful rebellions written in twisted history—
the very same of my lifeline
that today compels a contemplation
of felling the best and the brightest
of which, I was never one.
(No straight wooden arrow was I, standing head and shoulders above the
rest.
No, I was about as bent as they come.)

So, what's wrong with this thinning picture?

the once sacrosanct is now secular
the priceless priced
the secure now vulnerable...

The smell of blossoms and sugary fall
has been supplanted by the smell of currency;
& green leaves replaced
by potential greenbacks already twice spent.

The huge maple's wide braches spread across the sky,
upon which I climbed a half century ago,
can no longer be traversed,
 it's grown too big and I've grown too brittle,
and this massive leaf maker
prevents its own seedlings
(which might, if grown in competition with its siblings
be cut and kilned in some distant abstract future)
from surviving even their first year.

This tree, in its own right, is a serial killer.

This tree is good only for shade—of which there is a super abundance—
or firewood, or near worthless pulp
 for poems such as this to be scrawled on.

Oh, but the wild cherry
prized by game for food
has grown straight and true towards the top.
It's worth four-fold at the plant
where it can be veneered over pressed sawdust
into fine value-added furniture
 prized by its new owners.

And I?
Lest I forget, I have divorce debts to pay, a mortgage to meet, kids to put
through college,
and a novel to get to press before my time expires;
yes, I too am in competition,
 I, too, am fighting for air, sun and a patch of paltry history.

Thus, what was once *just* forest
will come to know the justified curse of commerce
and the economic survival of the fittest:
 ME & MINE.

How readily I can identify these days
not only the specifics
but a profound shift in priorities and a stunning loss of innocence:

This forest is no longer mirrorly the lush green of foliage,
but flutters now with tiny green flags of currency
only the obnoxious rip of the greased & grizzly chainsaw
 can liberate and realize.

A beat poet once asked,
“Who stole America?” And answered: “Myself, I saw reflected in the train

window.”

The tumble of timber will resound...
...with my own awful fall from grace.

I know quite well and firsthand where of the grand poet speaks.

BRANDON HAYES

Is Love a Crime

Love
Ha
To me it
Don't exist
No more
Every time I love
It gets taken away
Every damn time
So I guess
Love is a crime
Just take my damn heart
This heart
What heart
I have
No heart
Anymore
Cuz
It got taken
Away from me
Maybe
Just maybe
I should just stop
Loving so damn much
No
No I will
Cuz
All that ever happens
In the end
Is pain
Would that help
No
This heart
Is what creates
Love
So now I can't love
If I can't love
I know who
To blame
Cuz
You took the love
I had for her
Love
Ha

People don't
Understand love
Nowadays
I'm so
Damn tired of this
Pain hurt
And loss
I used to
Believe in love
Now I don't know
What to believe in
Anymore
That love
Don't exist anymore
So now love
Is a crime
Hate isn't
It uses to be the other way around
Love isn't a crime
Hate is a crime
All I ever
Did was love
And it gets taken away from me
Every damn time
This heart
What heart
It got taken away
I am not allowed to love
Anymore

BRANDON HAYES

The Devil

You happy Satan
You finally won
You got what you wanted
My soul
My love
My everything
Why Satan
Why is it
I never did
A thing to you
You finally won
You got what you wanted
There will be hell
To pay
I promise you
You may have taken everything
But the one thing you
Didn't take
Is my mind
You have released
The monster
That will take you down
Hell will be rising
A war
Will come
You saw powerful love
That I had
For her
You finally won
The battles
But not the war
I can't fight
No more
Cuz I'm done
But
I shall return
Stronger
Much stronger
Are you finally happy Satan
But be scared
Cuz when I return
Hell will be destroyed
You have awakened your
Worst nightmare

BRANDON HAYES

To This Day

To this day
I thought to myself
Life isn't
Worth it anymore
So to this day
I held a gun
To my head
Wanting to kill myself
Cuz
No girl will love me
Like I need to be loved
To this day
I took my life
Very quickly
And unexpectedly
I met God
As he put his arms around me
He told me
Son
This isn't your time yet
There is a girl
Out there waiting for you
October 20, 2008
To receive your love
You will be back in heaven
When you find her
As I was leaving heaven
As he waved goodbye
I left in tears
When I was going
The sun was shining
So bright
I saw a smile on God's face
Also it was raining
There were tears coming
Down his face
He was crying
With such joy
When I returned
Back to earth
My love was
There waiting for me
For me to be in her loving arms
Also to love her with all
The love I had to give
The angels were singing with such joy
When I found my love

CHARLES H. MILLER

An English Teacher at a Bar by

Mark comma the lizard beside me said I should go outside comma
But I could not leave the lounge with my Bahama Mama period
The fly in the corner offered to show me her myriad colon
 Feet comma
 Apartments comma
 Tattoos comma
 Backseats comma
 Record collection comma
 Llama farms comma
 Rubber-band balls period
Surely she was being facetious when she said it was stolen question mark
I spun on my stool to question Mark comma
He said something about her time of month causing the drama semi-colon
Mark had been drinking so his eyes were swollen comma
And he had been talking about finding pajamas question mark
The barkeep looks at me strangely period my return look is stark period
So I ask him comma open quotes what was that beer he had question
mark end quotes
I am tired of telling a story in which I bend notes semi-colon
So I am going to try something new and end it with an ellipses

Omaha

I was there when that beach was taken,
We couldn't see out of the landing craft,
The men were shaken by the bap, bap, bap,
Of bullets bouncing and blazing by.

Facing a cloud of lead like Death's cold draft,
We hit the sand and drop the door,
The beach looks like tic-tac-toe if you can fly,
Or a giant's game of jacks played in the surf.

Fire flares fiercely framing the valley floor,
The cliffs are close, cubic, compact, and grey,
Kids spin and fall as screaming artillery chews the turf,
Despite what the poets say there is no order here.

I will survive what history calls a fateful day,
Many meet their fate, makers, or whatever,
It's like a Satanic game of dodge ball out here,
But the demons all miss me and I win through.

KAITLIN SEELINGER

A Fool's Flight

"Escape! Escape, young Icarus."
Father bid me then to fly.
"But not too far, my Icarus. Never go too high."
So wings were fashioned: feather, wax, a hint of flesh and bone.
And when you thought I wouldn't dare, you had only to be shown.
"Don't chase Apollo, Icarus."
Ah. That's what you said to me.
But I see your hungry, jealous eyes and I'm laughing from the sea.
Remember my name: Icarus –
Scorched of the Cretian Sun.
You thought I'd never fly that high, but now that it's been done...
No tears entreated by my grave.
You're grounded, so you cry.
Of mortal men, your Icarus was first to touch the sky.

ROSE JOHNSON

Blind

See the stillness

of the caves

Hear the breeze

that makes the waves

Taste the rain from above

Feel the softly beating wings of a dove

Live the sounds that silence makes

With your eyes until you wake

KARI HAMRIC

Family Gathering

Laughter abounds
All at one time
Tinkling silverware
Sounds of people
Partying like crazy
Crammed into a small space
Speaking all at once
Only no one minds

We are loud.
Each of us are
Strong-willed,
Tough cookies with
Big smiles.
Real supportive when
Others might flee.
Outlook is good because
Karma
Says so.

Mixing it up
Under one roof
Realizing this is important
Instilling family values
Visiting grandparents
Great grandparents
Generations mingling
Making my life full of laughter.

KARI HAMRIC

for my daughter

I love you so much but I can't tell you because
that would be stupid. You are so beautiful but
if I say so I am lame. I am so proud of you
but to tell you would be a bad thing.

You want to be a grown-up, and sometimes
I treat you like one, but that is wrong
because inside that adult-like body, and
behind that adult-like behavior you are still
a twelve-year-old kid in a scary world.

To you, my rules were made to be broken,
and me telling you "no" is me being a monster;
but maybe, one of these days, you will see
that I did it because I love you,
and worried because you're beautiful,
and set rules to keep you safe,
and said "no" to keep you a child for as long as possible
before the world could steal you.

KARI HAMRIC

1 + 1 = 1

Always there for Happy Hour, A drink.
Then off to see his whore. Just one?
Hesometimesbringsherflowers, I think.
She's all he cares for. No fun;
All alone in our bed at night
Even when he's there. I cry.
"I love her," he said. We fight.
I told him I don't care. Why try?
Suicide... I start to wonder... Some pills;
How happy he would be, no friend,
With me six feet under. I'm chilled
For all eternity... no end.

KATRINA HAMRIC

In Response to Kari Hamric's Poem 1+1=1

Oh! "These Poems!" Over
and over I read,
1+1=2, INDEED! "Alas!
1+2=3?"
Such excitement!
"Masterfully wrote!"
Instead of writing poems, I
shall stick to a NOTE!

STEVIEANN SHINGLER

What is Love?

Love it seems takes its time.
Looking for that someone who with one look, one touch set everything on fire
Those eyes that know without asking
That touch that is right and very much needed
The smile that makes everything brighter
Love it seems takes its time.
But love it seems, knows when it's right.

Hand in hand
Heart in heart
The longing to see that face
The craving for the next kiss

Just staying in bed listening to the world outside.
Not sleeping when he isn't there.
Oh, love knows
Time comes and still it grows in your soul.

Love takes its time
Broken hearts along the road
Misery of loneliness
Hunger of companionship
Need of passion
Love is a slow moving vessel.

Growing old and never boring is love
Saying nothing, just skin to skin is love
Laugh and crying is love
Understanding and never in need of more
That is love

Here we are, my love
Hand in hand
Heart in heart.
It took its time, and I traveled that slow moving road
The misery, the hunger, the very painful need
Love it seemed, knew when it was right.

ELORA SHOCK

Blind

My heart leads me blindly
But my mind helps me see
The lies that my heart
Really want to believe
But when my mind's clouded
With confusion and lies
That's when my heart
Really opens my eyes
Once it got broken
Because love left me blind
Letting his lies
Fool my heart and my mind
My heart was weakened
When my eyes saw the truth
And my poor heart
Couldn't take the abuse
It cracked and it crumbled
It broke from the pain
And left tears in my eyes
To fall down like rain
My mind was left searching
For all of the parts
To fix what was left
Of my broken heart
It did what it could
And now it could see
All the lies that love
Led my heart to believe
And now I am guarded
With my heart and my mind
So that never again
Will love leave me blind

ELORA SHOCK

There was a Girl

There was a girl
In so much pain
She ran outside
And cried in the rain
In the night
She ran away
From the problems
She faced everyday
She ran fast
And she ran far
Running toward
The brightest star
She ran with the wind
She ran from the sun
Away from the fire
Her life had become
She ran fast
And she ran far
Running toward
The brightest star
She kept on running
All the way to the coast
Away from the ones
That hurt her the most
She ran fast
And she ran far
Running toward
The brightest star
At the edge of the sea
She begged and she cried
She prayed for God
To stay by her side
She said Please
Don't leave me alone
Like all of the people
I left back home
All through the night
She laid by the sea
Waiting for God
To set her soul free

ELORA SHOCK

Puzzle Box

I suffer in my silence
And my silence suffers too
Every time I keep to myself
You're further from the truth
Each time you ask if I'm ok
I only give you lies
But if you want to know the truth
Then look into my eyes
You'll see the pain, the loneliness
The suffering and the shame
Maybe then you'll realize
I'll never be the same
My heart's in a thousand pieces
Like a puzzle in a box
You might try to open it
But find that it is locked
I'm hiding it from the people
Who want to break it more
But who those people are
I really can't be sure
So I'll hide it from the world
And keep it to myself
I'll put it in the puzzle box
On top the highest shelf
And if someone is brave enough
To climb up to the top
They'll find the key right there
Beside the puzzle box
They'll open up the lock
And one piece at a time
They'll put me back together
And find it worth the climb

JONATHAN MINTON

Even rotten wood is as brass to a man, the carpenter said

I remember the way my grandfather's hands curled like thick, brown vines around his guitar as he sang about wildwood flowers and jars of clay. I remember the way he held his hammer, swinging it in a long arc until it struck its nail. I remember the way his hands would fold so confidently into his overalls when he stuffed blueprints into his chest pocket. In time, his hands looked like thinning paper, their pencil-dark veins telling a history of work and worry and hope. He often talked about the Book of Job and its small broken man who bore his sorrows in ash, the angel who wrestled with Jacob, and the exiled prophet who reckoned with the meaning of it all. I remember the wild look in his eyes even as his liver grew weaker and his skin yellowed to the color of raw squash. The last time we talked, he began a story about the mountains, the moon, and a lonely road where a boy walked home from work, afraid of the cougars hidden in the pines around him, and I asked, how does it end? In time, he whispered, in time.

DONTE FULLER

I Can

I can do all things, but only through Christ. I can be a pain in the butt, But I choose to be nice. I can eat all types of unhealthy foods, but I choose to eat rice. I could just go splurge at the store, but I choose to look at the price. I can be Honest with you, or I could just lie. I can be a gambler, and choose to shoot dice. I can be an inventor, a landlord, or a renter, a hangnail or a splinter. I can be a President, I can be a resident, I can be hesitant. I can do anything I put my mind too. How about you?

Art

JUSTIN WORTHAM

Breakfast -The Most Important Meal of the Day!



KAYLA BOGGS

Abstract



KAYLA BOGGS

Still Life



ROSE JOHNSON

Lol Cats

Poetry Cat says poetry is srs bidness
You has to ryme you has to flow
You has to makes me want to kno
What on erf you is talking about!

Abstraeshuns is bad
The Bathosy is worse
Preachyness, ohh that makses me mad
Why not write about the cheezburgerz?

Ahem

Oh cheezburger how I luvz thee
Mostly the parts wif all da cheez
But ifs the cheez, you has nun
I woulds still eats you, evry one

©ANNA SCHEEBURGER.COM

SARAH NORMANT

Reflections



SARAH NORMANT

Rock, Paper, Scissors



SARAH NORMANT

She's Got an Attitude



STEVIEANN SHINGLER

Smoke and Scarlet



TAFFY ROBERTS

Untitled (1)



TAFFY ROBERTS

Untitled (2)



TAFFY ROBERTS

Untitled (3)



ERICA BUTLER

Cymbal Monkey



ERICA BUTLER

Frog



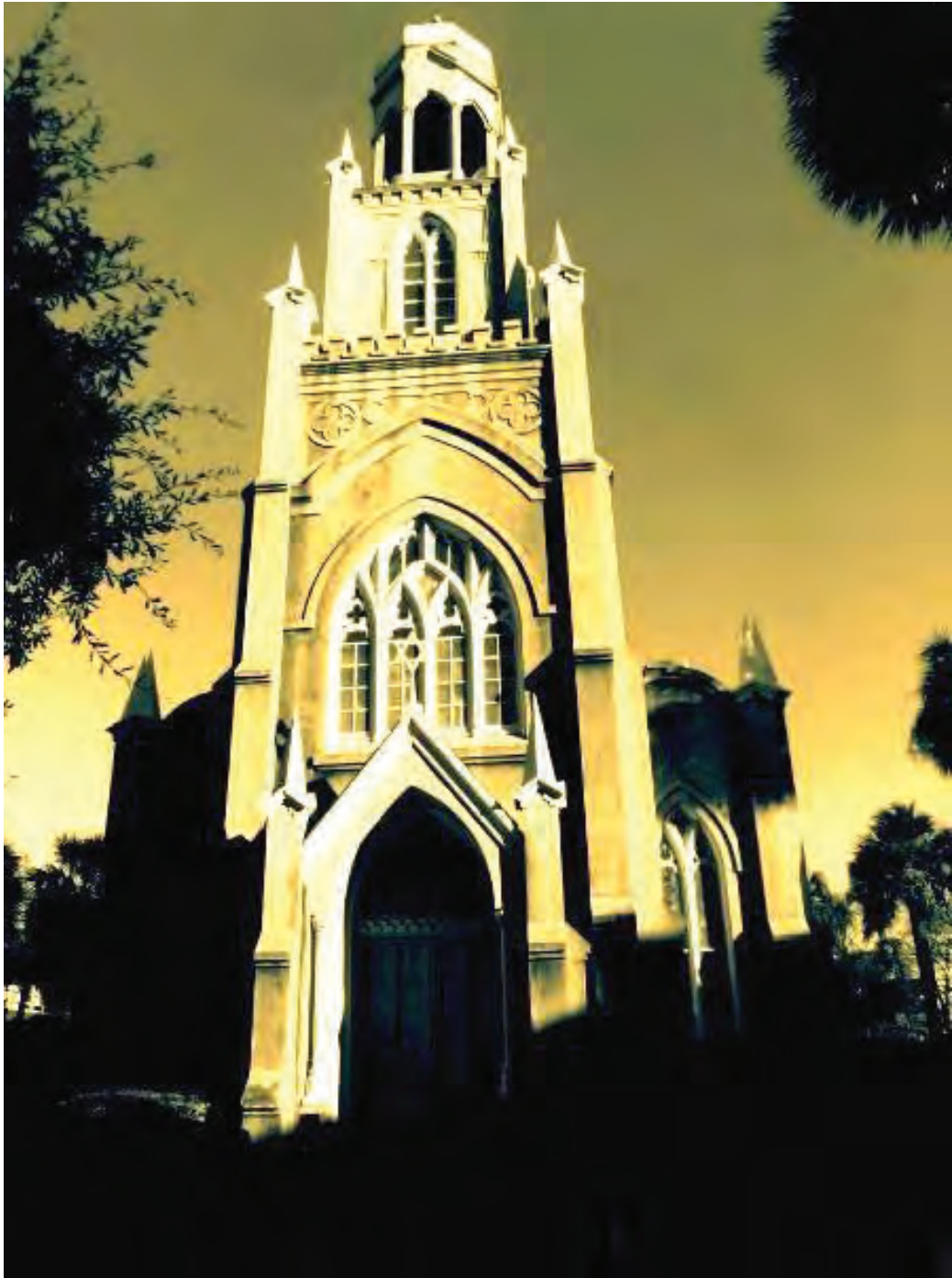
ERICA BUTLER

Tree



JADE NICHOLS

Untitled Photograph (1)



JADE NICHOLS

Untitled Photograph (2)



JADE NICHOLS

Untitled Photograph (3)



ROSSANNA SPRINGSTON

Face to Face



ROSSANNA SPRINGSTON

Lunch



ROSSANNA SPRINGSTON

Pink Lady Slipper



KARI HAMRIC

The Dangling Conversation

The Dangling Conversation

OUR PRIOR OF
Some enchanted evening on the street where you live, Sunny came home just in time ...

KNOCK. KNOCK.

Who can it be now?
Everyday a most peculiar man born in Puerto Rico rings. Tonight, late in the evening, this old man over dead flowers people are strange one good eye stares ...

Is there something I should know?
... the sound of silence

My boyfriend's back and you're gonna be in trouble!
Get another boyfriend!
Don't panic. I'm sorry?

This is an exciting time as we enter a new phase of growth at Thomas Memorial Hospital. Construction of a six-floor addition that will add private rooms, an office and kitchen.

This one's gonna hurt you.

Mama he's crazy! Surprise, surprise.

Oh girl, I got a name. I am John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt.

Wait a minute unknown caller, what's going on?

Something good. Let's go to the movies.

You are crazy!!

All I wanna do is make love to you right now. Wouldn't it be lovely?

This is where it ends.

Everything's alright, I just can't stop loving you.

Please, we do not belong together! HELP!! I need somebody! as tears go by,

You can't make a heart love somebody.

Abra-cadabra.

Desperately, You can do magic? If I loved you, oh! I cross my heart,

I would do anything for love!

Promises! Lying is the most fun a girl can have without taking her clothes off!

Do you really want to hurt me? Where is the love?

forgive me. It ain't easy, honey bun. Love's a hard game to play.

It's too late to turn back now.

Famous last words of a fool, go on ... write this down: Why did you do it?

It's my life! Life is hard!

Midnight, somewhere, she screams from the grave, I'm free!! She let herself go.

The song remains the same.

2008 GALA COMING NOVEMBER 7

Thomas Memorial Hospital

Clinical Pavilion

Thomas Memorial Hospital

Saturday Night Fever is Here!

An outbreak of Boogie Fever has been reported at Thomas Memorial Hospital. Several nurses have stated that not since 1977 have they seen more fun in getting down to funky disco beats than this. The Emergency Room has reported a high number of cases of powder blue leisure suits in the waiting rooms. Veteran ER staff recognized the symptoms and were quick to identify that this could be a case of Boogie Fever. The Thomas Memorial Hospital Foundation has developed a fun and easily front event in advance of the gala. Multiple prizes, including the grand prize cash prize and a chance to win a free car. There are also prizes for the top dancers and dancers performing the greatest of all time.

Thomas Memorial Hospital Foundation's 16th Annual Charity Gala & Auction is Boogieing again Saturday, November 7, 2008. This year's theme is "Saturday Night Fever" and this is a party you won't want to miss! Boogie on!

The Gala Committee is putting this amazing event together and we need your help. If you are interested in helping, please contact the Gala Committee at (410) 328-1234 or visit our website at www.thomasmemorialhospital.org.

Signature Sponsor: Professional Anesthesia Services, Inc.
Corporate Sponsor: The Elliot Foundation

LIZA BRENNER

Paper Bulls



WHITNEY STALNAKER

Untitled Photograph (1)



WHITNEY STALNAKER
Untitled Photograph (2)



WHITNEY STALNAKER
Untitled Photograph (3)



Prose

CHARLES H. MILLER

Growing Up On Morton

I think about the bed time stories my dad used to tell me on nights like this when I was young and he was still alive. I think about The Things They Carried and how those brave men would never have survived in the world I thrive in. Playing cards, cigarettes, and pictures. Really? Pictures? That kind of sentimentality will get you killed on Morton. You can't show weakness here. So, ask me any day of the week and I'll tell you that I'd walk away from Omelas; and I would too. But I'll admit I would turn a blind eye for a day or two first.

"Repent, Harlequin!" Sorry, Ticktockman, not until you can make the blue-dirt vipers and razor plants, the dust storms and the flash floods, the cannibals and the slavers all obey your schedules. Then I'll think about repenting and laying down my survivalist ways. Until then, though, I can quote the Bible and the Koran, but I live or die by my ability to recite the words of "Lofty" Wiseman from back on Earth.

"You are only as sharp as your knife. It must be sharp and ready for use. Don't misuse your knife by throwing it. Keep it clean, oiled, and in a sheath when not in use.

Ration your sweat, not your water! If you have to ration water, take it in sips. After going without water for a long time, don't guzzle when you do find it. Only take sips at first. Large gulps will make a dehydrated person vomit, losing even more of the precious liquid.

Stay covered! Aside from risking severe sunburn, an uncovered body will lose sweat by evaporation. Keep clothing loose with a layer of insulating air. Sweating will then cool you more efficiently.

Get in the habit of checking all your equipment regularly, especially after negotiating difficult terrain. A check of all your pockets and possessions should be second nature."

These are a few of the teachings of Wiseman. They are practical and have kept me alive on many an occasion when others would have died. And anyway, I don't think that Jesus or Muhammad ever set foot on Morton.

Movement below? Just a hint of dark moving against dark. I reach up and flick on the light enhancement on my goggles. Conserve batteries. They only charge during the day, after all. The starlight just allows me to make out the details passing between the dune I'm hiding on and the next one over.

I knew I had the right route staked out. Shades of green display enormous,

shaggy, Dactarian camels with their burden of salt and their caftan clad mahouts. The Red Desert produces over twenty percent of the salt for the Sol system. The Salt Barons don't like their profit margins being threatened and employ lots of tricks to keep them safe. A major one is the heavily armed caravans like the one passing below. Radio beacons mark the path that the caravan can then follow even in pitch blackness. Unfortunately for people like me, the beacons are extremely short range and nearly impossible to find without one of the receivers issued to the caravan leaders.

But luck is on my side tonight and I am hoping she stays there. I check my gear one more time and start sliding on my stomach down to the valley floor. My timing is crucial, I have to reach the bottom just after the last guard passes. Steady, breathe with ten counts. I pick my way carefully to the bottom, but a small avalanche of sand proceeds me and I hold my breath to see if the figure that just passed will turn.

The figure keeps moving and I climb to my feet. I draw my knife quietly from its sheath where it has been resting, well oiled, sharp, and clean. Three quick, silent paces and I close the rear-guard's throat with my forearm while sliding my knife tip between the second and third vertebrae of his neck. I take what advantages I can get. I'm not that big of a guy, only four nine and eighty-five pounds. I don't mind the feel of the man's blood gushing down my front. It is not the first I have had to kill to survive and it will not be the last.

I move quickly to catch up to the caravan, cleaning and replacing my knife as I go. Now I am in a tight spot. Dactarian camels are huge. Genetically engineered crossbreeds of Bactrian and Dromedary camels from earth, they average eighteen foot at the shoulder. Shaggy hair and bad tempers pretty much make up the rest of the critters. Now I have to climb this one while it is walking and take out the mahout without alerting the rest of the caravan. Piece of cake. Done it a hundred times. I roll my eyes at my levity and my shoulders to release the tension. Can't think about the nerves. I have a good plan and I just need to stick to it.

I un-sling my crossbow and load the bolt I prepared earlier by securing a rope to it. Careful, careful, and fire. Perfect shot, through the ribs. If he can't breathe he can't scream. The impact of the bolt is working just like I hoped. There he goes, right off the other side and... Counter balance with the saddle as the pulley. Yes! The mahout is lying in the trail behind me. He'll shortly join the guard as a corpse to feed the vultures.

I should feel bad, but I can't help it. I'm ecstatic! I pulled it off. With the salt from this job I can keep my mother, sister, and little brother fed, clothed, and a roof over our heads for months. I might even have enough to buy a new knife. Oh yeah, my knife. I check to make sure it's still tight and secure in its sheath. It is. I am still seeing in shades of green, so my goggles are still

secure. I reach up and turn them off. The world fades to black and my night vision starts to slowly return as I continue my check. Canteen... check, sealed tube of phosphorous... check, first aid kit... check, back up knife... check, and water purification kit... check. The only other thing is my crossbow and quiver of bolts, they're safe and secure on my back just under my cloak.

I turn my camel and bring it to a halt. Sliding to the ground, I quickly loot the two bodies laying in the sand. The mahout struggles weakly, but I grab his head and give it a quick twist to finish his suffering. I can be ruthless when necessary, but I choose to view this one as a mercy kill. I wrap their equipment in the mahouts cloak and climb back to the saddle of my stolen mount. I touch my heels to its ribs and it starts to slowly pace into the night.

I doze over the next hour or so with the Dactarian heading in generally the right direction. The beast is so large the saddle sets firmly between the smaller front hump and the larger rear one. I have buckled myself in to the seat, something that the mahouts would have done when they slept. I awaken when I feel the camel's pace start to become slow and jerky. I flip on my goggles again and take quick stock of the surrounding area. My mount has carried me home, drawn by the scent of water at my town's oasis.

I ride down the last dune and break through into hill country. All around me, the dunes war with the small rolling foot hills and I can see ahead the box canyon, the sides of which the village of Drawlins is built into. I approach the town gate and hail the men I know are sitting watch in gun nests built around the top of the canyon. The gate slowly rolls open but I do not ride in. I wait.

A moment later the Sheriff rides out on his cobbled together hele-bike. He coasts it up to look me over. I nod politely and take off my goggles so he can see my face.

"Busy night?" he asks.

"Yes sir," I reply.

"Get on inside. You're mom's worryin'."

"Thank you, sir. Goodnight." I tap my camel into motion again. I'll sleep through the remainder of the night and in the morning I will celebrate my thirteenth birthday with my family.

KAITLIN SEELINGER

Prologue

The hole is my last stop; it is unkind yet dear. It is even frightening upon arrival. But they soon learn to ignore you, to sew you to a chair, or to trust you – if you are gentle with your teeth. Some people have seen us on their way to the bus stop in the morning. Some people walk by us every day. I wave. They wave back.

They look familiar, but after so long, everyone is the same. Yet I know there is one girl. She walks by every day. She is beautiful and I know her whole story. Several times I have lived it, on nights when I can close my eyes but cannot sleep.

She gets up every morning and washes her hair. She wears a yellow dress – the color is her favorite – and walks to the bus stop. She rides to work. It is in a textile mill. All day she works: sweating, bending, pushing, pulling. She comes home at night, shaves herself, kisses her children goodbye, and leaves them with the light off. Then she goes to her other job. There is more sweating. Then she comes home to wash her hair.

Oh, people love me. It's fantastic. They never understand, even when they lie and say they do. They love me that much. It's a kind of sweet consideration, in light of the circumstances and all the "hell I must go through." I've been called a poor thing, a moron, a blessed child, and a monster. You have never seen anything quite like me, and you probably never will. I'll be here in my cell, waiting for you. But you will never come. You love me that much. I rock back and forth on my chair. And I wait for dinner.

An odd air hangs in this room. I noted it upon first arriving. It is a sort of drooping, dangling sickness, so putrid and cloudy that it burns my eyes. I can tell that the man who preceded me was often ill. Brown stains mar my mattress on both sides. The room has been designed for someone smaller than myself, I can only assume. Its walls are always coming closer and I have had to put them back. Day in and out, I perform this ritual. If not, my head feels tight.

I can smell dinner down the hall. Others are being served and though I can hear, I cannot see. My door has a window, about the breadth of a hand, through which I may peer if I wish to see whatever is directly in front of me. If I wish to see anything else, I must wait for Nurse to come and appraise me. I do not like Nurse. She touches me in places I do not like, trying to kill me. Trying to scald me with hot water and a head full of boiled shrimp. I hate shrimp. They crawl all over my skin. All over...everywhere...not those...

I rub at my face while I rock on the chair, raking up into that shaggy wel-

come mat over which many women have stepped in its time, and then I let my hair down again. I breathe slowly and evenly in time with the taps of my chair on the floor. I stare at the window; I am a slave to the queen bee. There is nothing for me here, and yet nothing is all that I have ever known. Or all that I can remember. So here on the creaking chair, I sit with the rest of the smoked hive, stiffening as the lock switches back.

"Unghmm." Delia McKinnon clears her throat and gestures for the silhouette that trails her bulbous thighs to make himself known. He does. Father Ezekiel steps into the light, a leather-bound book nestled in the crook of his huge curling hands, sure fingers petting the smooth cover like sandpaper over stone. He coughs when she coughs, and he follows her gaze where it settles on me, as I scratch at my crotch and the back of my throat simultaneously. Lice give no quarter here.

"Are you ready to die?"

I do not look up from the wet space between my knees. Die?

He goes on. "It is written that he who dies in the name of the Son shall be given new life. I ask you, Jeremy Struge, are you prepared for death?" he says. Father Ezekiel is crazy.

Delia McKinnon stands there with the keys clutched tightly in her skeleton hands, the peachy paint chipping to reveal her yellow nails. Her skirt is too short and the white slip peeks perversely from beneath her somber black dress, where hangs her stomach, swollen with age and her flapping breasts are as pale as fish bellies. I hate her, all of her. Delia McKinnon is crazy.

We wait in silence for several minutes, each asking the other without the aid of words: "are you prepared for death?" No one seems to know the answer. I raise my lolling head. I am a puppet on a string. I rise for the first time that evening from my chair and I lead the charge. So the parade is underway. I laugh in the face of Death, who yawns and swallows me whole.

KATRINA HAMRIC

The Adventures of Mud Eye and Skunk Boy, Part 1

When I was a child my beloved brother threw a mud ball in my left eye. I would like to think it was accidental, but I recall how angry he would get when I would streak mud down his back and call him “skunk boy.” The mud ball in the eye very well could have been intentional - payback for “skunk boy” trauma he feels he endured?

I loved my childhood. If I could, I would turn back the hands of time to relive it again, and again, and again, so many times that I never have to grow up. We all know that turning back time is only possible in the imagination of a child. So rather than relive it, I reminisce.

My great grandfather, Papa Ike Canfield, lived half a mile away at the head of the hollow. My grandparents, Granddad and Grandma Westbrook, live half a mile up the hollow. My great grandmother, Grandma Great Tomblin, resided a mile up the hollow. We roamed the hills, built forts, ran to the Easter Bunny tree, picked berries, rode bikes with the kids that lived in our area, and spent endless sunny days surrounded with the love of family. The rule was we could run free in the day light hours, but had to be home before dark. After dark was when the Boogie Man and the Headless Soldier haunted Hackers Run Road in search of children disobeying parents and staying out after dark. These ghosts would capture children to hack up and eat, or take to the land of the damned. These were the tales told to us kids in efforts to protect us from what was really out after dark. In all earnest, there were coyotes, black bear, and bob cats that would have loved to feast on the tender flesh of my baby brother. I was a fast runner, however, I knew I could not out run a bob cat, but I could out run my brother. I did not fear the animals, or the ghost stories. What I feared most after dark was the scariest, most frightening thing imaginable, and elicits night terrors to this day... after dark was when my mother walked about with a hickory switch, and if we weren't safe at home by the time the sun set behind the hills, disobedient children would get a lashing.

A creek channeled a six foot deep embanked peninsula around our house nestled on an acre of perfectly flat land. A barbed wire fence circled the house to protect my mother's trees from the horses, or to keep my brother within eyesight, I am not exactly sure of its intended purpose. The creek was our playground for the first 11 years of my life. My sister, brother and I built dams, dug out swimming holes, mud slides, and made (my favorite) mud cakes and mud cookies. T.J. was the taste tester; he has never liked my cooking. Niki was the dominator, instructing T.J. and I to “do this” and “do that” and got raging mad when Tommy and I performed “damolition” on her newly constructed dams. In that creek ran many fond memories of my childhood. We would walk its slippery rock oasis from Papa Ike's house all

the way to my grandparents where we would collect treats like peppermints, brown beans and cornbread, hugs and kisses in exchange for "diamonds" and "emeralds" we would find along the way. Though there are fond tales of such memories, the creek also trickles dark tales of horror, such as the suicide of my cat, Julie Etta III (Julie Etta died of hair ball disease, Julie Etta II got mauled by our dogs, and Julie Etta III was destined to carry the curse of "Julie Etta") who could not take the pressures affiliated with her name. The creek nearly caused my demise after I bravely ran a three wheeler through barbed wire fencing over the six foot embankment. Those are stories that will have to be told another day, for the story I am about to tell is the story of Mud Eye - a tale of a beautiful little girl named Katrina, and her evil troll brother, Skunk Boy.

Pop some popcorn, snuggle up with a loved one, a warm blanket, or something to hide your face in, for this spine chilling story may leave the heart cold, and the mind fearful...

It was a warm day before the flood of '85. Rain came and went, and came again, and water surged through the creek with forces reshaping the land and birthing large stones to eventually be drug up to the house by my mother. T.J. ran around in his favorite pair of blue running shorts with bold once white stripes down both legs, now dingy from days of constant wear. I, worried about the hazards of acid rain, wore a perfectly bright yellow rain jacket that rested just above my knees and yellow rubber boots to match. My hair hung in curling tendrils moistened from the reoccurring rain showers, and freckles peeked out from under the jacket's hood beckoning a glimpse of sunlight. Dark clouds cast frolicking shadows over the valley, and coon hounds bayed at a kitten braving a tree limb. Mother was inside, along with my sister, working on Algebra, or something boring like that. Dad had gone off somewhere to show someone how to break things beyond repair, and T.J. and I were in adventurous spirits instigated from the lapsing showers.

T.J. stood alongside the creek bed churning with white foam (the creek, not T.J.). He held a hickory stick with which he pierced bubbles as they emerged from the frothing water. I crouched over an alluvial, perfect consistency for mud pudding, my brother's favorite! I scooped handfuls of silt which was then deposited into an old ice cream bucket, mixed in some creek gravel for flavoring, and spread the concoction over a large flat rock to drain. When it was ready, I asked to taste the mud pudding so I would know what else it needed. T.J. attacked the matter with the hickory stick, splashing water over the rock and washing away his snack, enticing agitation from my sweet little heart for all the efforts he just wasted. He turned his back and sauntered away gleaming from the eye, proud of his destruction. I chased after him, my fists curled around a handful of West Virginia mud. I took my palm and streaked a single muddy line down the center his bare back.

"Skunk Boy, Skunk Boy!" I exclaimed in exuberance. He hated when I turned

him into Skunk Boy. I danced around in glee, the gleam in his eyes turned black, and his carefree mood turned sour.

"I am going to tell on you Trina!" he growled. Skunk Boy stomped and stomped, splashing mud up his legs and into his sneakers. I could hear the squishing noises over the running water. "I don't want to be Skunk Boy!" he pouted.

I tossed my head back and laughed into the wind. I was not afraid. All tattling would do was get Skunk Boy tossed in the bath tub to be washed down. Skunk Boy hated baths. He thought dirt made him more like the mongrel he was.

Dark clouds settled and rain began to fall again. I could smell the gruel Mother had fixed for lunch. My stomach twisted, pleading for a peanut butter sandwich. Giving up on mud pudding I began the hike up the dirt drive toward the house.

Behind me I heard Skunk Boy call out for me, "Hey, Trina!"

I turned to Skunk Boy. He must have thrown the mud ball just as he was saying my name, for when I turned toward Skunk Boy; I was confronted with a mud ball, directly in my wide open left eye.

The wind stopped. The rain stopped. The dogs quit barking. The kitten, scampering from the tree limb, froze. Time froze. The Earth stood still. I remember.

Seconds seemed to take hours, and emotions ran through me like the water through the creek. I screamed.

"MOMMMMMMIIIIIIEEEEEE!" I ran, blindly to the left, collected myself and ran to the right. Weaving and wobbling up the hill towards the house, through my right eye I could see the door open. My mother, the angel she is, stood on the porch arms outstretched toward me. I ran toward her.

"MMMoooooMMMMMIIIIEEEE!" I screamed, running into her open arms. I could almost see the fear in her eyes. The look of anguish I imagine being on her face stays with me to this day. Tears filling her eyes, the telling look that my brother, Skunk Boy, was going to be in BIG trouble. That thought alone comforted me - just a little.

Suddenly Mother's welcome arms circled me, picked me up, and rushed me into the house. Once in the house I was told not to blink and I wasn't about to. I just wanted to cry. I could not see! Was I going to be blind? Was I going to have a mud eye for the rest of my life? What had Skunk Boy done to me? Into the bathroom I was carried. Mother sat me on the bathroom sink.

I heard running water.

“Ha, ha” I thought, “Skunk Boy is going to get a bath!”

I was whisked off the sink and submerged into the bathtub. Mother held me under the water pouring from the faucet. At first I fought, but was drained of all energy and succumbed to the torture my mother was putting me through. My rain suit weighed me down, confusion all around me, bright yellow rain garments clinging to me, fear and water pouring over me. My left eye was pried open and forced under the running faucet. Seconds seemed to take years. Finally, the mud was rinsed from my eye, light shone in, it stung my eye, but I could see! I was saved! Mother saved me! Skunk Boy was going to get in trouble! I just knew he was!

Mother pulled my sagging, dripping frame from the bathtub. She hugged me and rocked me till my sobs eased to whimpers. I kept my eyes closed, the stinging was still there, and I figured Skunk Boy wouldn't get in trouble if I didn't milk this opportunity for as long as I could.

Mother kept rocking me, telling me it would be okay. She kissed my matted hair. She patted my sopping back. I fell asleep.

When I woke up, all was well. I didn't know how long I had been sleeping, hours... days... weeks? My eye didn't hurt. There was no scratching when I blinked. I could see. Skunk Boy was running outside with dried mud on his back, I glared at him through the window. Mother was whistling from inside the house. My sister was singing to the radio. The sun was setting, darkness would soon fall. I kept hoping Skunk Boy would run into the woods to be with his own kind. I watched him play with the dogs. He seemed to be happy. Everyone, but me, seemed to be happy. Skunk Boy must not have gotten in trouble. My face started to get hot with anger, tears fogged my vision, then I heard my mother yell out, “T.J. come inside! It is getting dark, and it is time for a bath!”

A smile crept across my face.

REBECCA BRADY

Obsession

It took Morgan this long to find him. Decades of dead end trails, false clues, and now he had finally reached him. Gun held tightly in his hand, Morgan stayed pressed against the wall, moving slowly towards the window to get a good look inside. From what he saw, he knew...he knew this was the man.

The man who killed him, who stole his life away and made him into a monster. The same man who had brought him back to life for the sole purpose to leave him there - to leave him behind in his bloody mess. Morgan realized his teeth were clenched tightly enough that his jaw began to hurt. His grip on his pistol only tightened; green, wild eyes staring within the window at the bastard who had ruined him, that treated him like a joke.

Morgan smiled darkly to himself. He wasn't going to be the joke anymore. Oh, no. He was going to make a new punch line. After all, he had found the old man. Funny, how neither of them had aged a bit since their last encounter. Immortality, he supposed. But not for long. He was going to send both of them to the grave tonight. That he swore.

He flinched suddenly, when he saw the man he had tried so hard to find leave from his table and head towards the door. Morgan quickly hid again against the wall, holding his breath. Did the warlock know he was there? Could he sense his presence? He didn't doubt that - after all, Morgan knew he was in this house - felt it. Like a magnetic pull. Well, he was going to stop that once and for all - he was going to cut that connection with a shot in that bastard's heart. Now he *knew* the man would feel *that*.

Morgan had so many things planned for revenge - but if the guy was leaving now he couldn't have that! Oh, no...tonight was going to be the night.

Hearing the door open, and listening carefully for footsteps, Morgan was surprised that when he stepped out and aimed his gun, that he wasn't there. He had vanished, just like that. "Shit-"

Morgan froze.

"It has been quite a while, hasn't it, Adam?" said an all too familiar voice, one that haunted his dreams at night, whose face appeared even when he closed his eyes - the chilling volume of his voice, never loud, never angry - always calm and gentlemanly. But hidden beneath that tone, Morgan heard the sadistic, cruel glee that coiled around his every word like a snake. Every word like poisonous venom into his very soul - if he even believed he still had one.

Morgan could feel him smiling from behind him, that sure, confident smirk.

“You knew I was here, didn’t you, Erling...”

A soft chuckle, and a stinging prick against his back - Erling had a knife. The same knife that stabbed him so many years ago, Morgan betted. “Stat-ing the obvious, now? I thought you held more conversation than that, my friend. Let’s talk in a more private, comfortable spot, shall we? Do come inside.”

Morgan hissed through his gritted teeth, moving towards the door. He found he couldn’t move the arm that held the gun - as if it was frozen - finger still on the trigger, unmoving. “You can’t do anything without your magic, can you?”

Expecting a remark, instead Erling said nothing. Morgan heard the door shut behind him, then the lock; typical. “If you are so sure you can’t die, then why freeze my arm?” He turned around, facing Erling now that the blade was no longer digging into his back.

The warlock smiled at him, as usual - the same self-confident smile he had when he found Morgan hiding, who had watched him drain a woman’s corpse and use the blood for some wicked ritual Morgan still didn’t understand. “Adam, I know you too well. It is very inconvenient, bullet wounds. I don’t think violence is really necessary right now, hmm?”

He was walking up closer now. Morgan stepped back, eyes narrowed hate-fully at the man who had ruined his life and damned him. “Oh, I think vio-lence is very necessary, Mr. Erling. I won’t stop until you are dead.”

Erling seemed amused, raising a thin, graying eyebrow at the man before him, still walking up closer, uncomfortably so for Morgan. He could feel his chilling breath on him - never warm - it was like ice. But everything felt cold to Morgan now, ever since he was resurrected. And everything tasted like ash. It was torture, living the way he had for so long - all because of this man. But Erling took his frozen arm by the wrist, lifting it up so that the pistol was aimed right at his heart.

Confused, but not showing it, Morgan kept on glaring. Erling only chuck-led. “Go ahead and fire,” he said casually.

Is he joking? Morgan thought. He couldn’t even wiggle his finger because of the spell, how would he be able to fire a shot now? As if proving the point, Morgan tried to move his finger, only to find that he could - and he hesi-tated. What the hell was Erling planning?

“Hmm? Taking your time, Adam?” the warlock asked in his slick voice, irk-ing Morgan to no end. “You’ve come this far, what are you waiting for? Or more importantly, why so keen in destroying me? Is it because I gave you a new life, a fresh new start? A gift so rare that people for centuries have been trying to find it?”

Keeping his pistol steady, finger still on the trigger, but not putting pressure on it, Morgan boiled with rage inside. "You took everything I had away from me, that is no gift! You made me into a monster - a freak! I could never have gone back to my family. I had to go into hiding until they were all dead!"

"Ah, yes, but after that, you could have started a whole new life, couldn't you? It takes practice, but it is not so hard. You are still very young, naïve, despite your years." Erling chuckled again, shaking his head. "I gave you a choice to not come to me. But the bond is stronger than I thought. It was only a matter of time until you returned to me."

"What the hell are you talking about?" Morgan demanded, itching to pull the trigger, but somehow he felt it wasn't time yet. He wanted answers first. When all Erling did was smile, Morgan pressed the gun closer to his chest. "Quit your games, magician. You better start talking now."

"After I was so sure you were here to kill me. Now you want to chat?" he mused, tilting his head ever so slightly. Somehow, Morgan took notice that Erling's movements were quite graceful, as disturbing as that thought was. Why in hell did he think that? The damned creep was smiling even more now, that arrogant, sophisticated smile. So, he thought everything and everyone was below him, huh? Morgan only felt his hate build more and more. "You are confused, I understand perfectly," Erling said, slowly reaching for something in his pocket. Morgan tensed, the gun pressing deeper. "Now, now, Adam. Can't I have a smoke in my own home?" he inquired, picking out a cigar and lighting it carefully with a finger. Magic. How aggravating.

"If you aren't going to say anything else that's important, I'll pull the trigger right now, old man!" Morgan snapped, his patience, or what little he had at this point, quickly diminishing. The older man sighed, taking a quick puff and then without much of a warning, Morgan found himself flying backwards, pinned against the wall. The air was knocked out of him, and he gasped and wheezed from the impact - and Erling hadn't even touched him. In the sudden surprise attack, Morgan had dropped the pistol. It was now left on the floor, three feet away from him. Same place Erling still stood, until he walked up just after kicking the gun farther away.

The warlock took another puff of his cigar, now face to face to the vulnerable Morgan who shouted obscenities and glared hateful, green eyes at his enemy. Erling sighed, quickly growing bored with this as he blew smoke in the younger man's face. "You really don't take your chances, do you? You could have shot me, but you didn't. Do you really think you could ever accomplish that? You may tell yourself that you would end my life and in so end yours... but you don't really want to kill me. You know, deep down, that you could never pull that trigger."

Morgan coughed from the intoxicating smoke, struggling under the invisible binds that held him there, kept him in this despicable man's presence.

“Shut up! SHUT UP!” Morgan screamed at him. “You took my life away! My real life! I will never stop until you are dead...we are abominations!”

Erling laughed, putting out his cigar on Morgan’s arm, watching the younger man as he squirmed and bit his lip to stop from screaming. Morgan wouldn’t give the old man the satisfaction of hearing him scream. “Don’t go all religious on me, Adam. You were never a religious man. Creating your own beliefs to make things worse than it seems, dear boy, is a waste of time.” Removing the cigar, Erling watched as Morgan’s wound began to heal upon itself. “Tell me, how many attempted suicides did you go through?”

Morgan winced, glaring at him from watery eyes - but he wouldn’t let the pain show through, wouldn’t let Erling have the pleasure to see him break. He wouldn’t break. Couldn’t. “Face it, Adam, you can’t kill me. You and I, we share more than you think. How else do you think you found me, even though it took you so long as it did? Do you know why I left you?”

Morgan said nothing, only his green eyes answered him. Erling turned away, walking off towards another corner of the room, not too far off. The pressure holding him to the wall faded away, and Morgan found himself on the floor. “I left you because I gave you a choice.”

There he goes again, talking about choice, Morgan thought. But now that he’s got his back turned... He moved slowly towards the kicked away gun, reaching for it, his heart racing and feeling as if it was crawling up his throat - hand unsteady. This could be his only chance...

“The choices were that you could either find a life for yourself, or find me and succumb to your fate.” Erling’s back was still turned, his fingers tracing over a book he was about to pull from the shelf. “I figured you would follow your new instincts and find me, but I wouldn’t have minded if you chose the alternative. But, alas, as I’ve said, the bond is far too strong.”

Whatever the hell he was talking about, Morgan finally got the gun and slowly, silently, got back to his feet - ignoring his shaking hands and unsteady grip. His hands were starting to feel sweatier than before. He knew he had to get this over with before the worse was to come. Something really didn’t feel right. He had to fire now, before-

“The bond that is, of course, master and servant. And so, since this is where you have decided to place yourself,” Erling spoke as he turned back around, leaving the book in its place, watching the fearful, tense younger man with the gun. Erling did nothing, he only stood, smiling, as Morgan fired his first shot.

But nothing happened. Not anything like Morgan had planned. Erling was still moving, unflinching. It was as if the bullet didn’t even hit him - but it did. He could see his black blood pouring out of the wound, staining the white suit the older man was wearing. “Stay back!” Morgan shouted, firing

round after round with no such luck. He had even aimed at the damned man's heart - but nothing. And he was out. He had fired his last. "Why won't you die!" he screamed, his eyes wild and wide, filled with panic, confusion, and fear. He was too shocked to even move, stuck in place - and not by magic.

Erling placed a hand on the younger man's quivering shoulder then, his other lowering Morgan's arms whose hands were clutching to the useless gun like a lifeline. He slowly removed the trembling, gripping fingers from the pistol, until finally Morgan dropped it. Erling leaned closer towards him then, his lips grazing the young man's ear, the same cold breath that sent chills down through Morgan even more. He whispered, quietly, his voice still powerful, almost addictive, "*Tu es mei.*"

The unfinished spell was cast. Morgan could feel it click into his mind, shattering him into a million pieces. He fell to his knees then, his pupils shrinking, rolling back into his head. Erling caught him, silent, frowning. Growing limp, feeling his consciousness slipping away, Morgan fought as much as he could, gripping the fabric of the warlock's jacket, digging his nails in deep. "What...did...you...do..." he gasped for air, curling closer towards the fetal position from the pain. "...to...me..." he rasped.

"Finished what I started," Erling said carefully, watching him with cold, icy, swirling blue eyes. Bottomless, ageless. Morgan found he could get lost in those eyes - into oblivion. A place he could never reach now. He was given the chance, but he failed...

Now he was Erling's...

Erling...
...Er...
...Ma...
...ster...
...Master.

Morgan's eyes fought to stay open, but Erling whispered something he couldn't quite make out. He stopped fighting then, letting the darkness sweep him away.

Erling's frown removed itself, returning the familiar smile. "Sleep well, now, Adam. I have many plans set out for you..."

A whisper, a swear, the words spoken without the essence of magic, this time. But it was just as strong.

"You are mine."

MILAN C. VAVREK

An excerpt from the novel *Spilled Gold*

Prologue

The color of the crude oil as it spread across the forest floor seemed to change as it passed through spears of sunlight penetrating the canopy. The crude was dark, somewhat translucent, almost green. But at times, the color appeared to darken further into a deep brown. Most people expect crude to be viscous and black like used motor oil, but this crude didn't look like that at all.

The air above the spill shimmered from the gas vapors rising from the oil surface. Inhaling the vapors gave him a headache immediately. Nevertheless, he continued to watch the stain expanding on the soil. The crude wasn't much thicker than water, but oh so different from water. Crude represented power and wealth, and destruction.

He picked up the long, heavy pipe wrench that he used to open the valves on the storage tanks below the wellhead. He swung the wrench lightly, effortlessly onto his shoulder and picked his way along the edge of the spill to his pickup. Whistling as he climbed into the cab of the dually, he started the engine. He paused only long enough to glance back at the growing pool of crude. He knew this was only the start. He felt good, and smiled as he pulled onto the dirt track.

Chapter 1

Barlo cursed as hot coffee spilled over the lip of the mug onto his leg. It was his own fault. He hadn't slowed over the particularly bad stretch of dirt road. There were so many stains and so much dirt on his coveralls, however, that when he glanced down, the spilled coffee seemed to have disappeared. All the same, it was damn hot. Whatever spilled coffee that had missed his leg, never reached the floor mat. A thick layer of dried mud on the floor wicked the liquid up instantly.

Barlo continued to curse. He had meant to pick up some spare clamps and pieces of inner tube from the barn. He used the last of his clamps and rubber yesterday, fixing temporarily a gas leak in an exposed length of black, one inch pipe. The leak looked like it was caused by an animal chewing on the plastic. Whatever the cause, Barlo was lucky that his neighbor had heard the hissing sound of the leak, and called to tell him about it. Hopefully he wouldn't find any more leaks today. He couldn't afford to lose money to leaks.

Pulling right up to the well, he had one last slurp of coffee and jumped from

the truck. Rushing because he wanted to finish pumping the five wells early today, Barlo grabbed a five gallon can of gas from the back of the truck. After a brief hesitation, he also grabbed a can of starting fluid. The engine on this well didn't like to start when it was cool and damp. Barlo checked to be sure he had left the clutch engaged on the pumping jack. He then filled the gas tank of the engine, set the choke, sprayed starting fluid into the air intake and pulled the starter rope. Nothing.

"C'mon, c'mon," he muttered. He pulled another couple of times. The engine hinted at starting, but didn't.

"Bastard."

Three more pulls and the engine coughed to life. Barlo relaxed. After the engine speed smoothed out and the choke levered in, he released the brake, disengaged the clutch and watched the pumping jack go up and down. He listened critically to the load on the engine as the back end of the jack was pulled down, comparing it to the load as the jack end was pushed up. He grunted in approval, the load was about equal. He had time for a cigarette while waiting for the pump to pull the oil up from the bottom of the shaft (1,890 feet below). The oil would be drawn to the surface and piped directly into a separator.

It wasn't until he finished a second cigarette that crude began to pour into the mouth of the separator. He waited to make sure that level of oil rose sufficiently to begin flowing into the mouth of a pipe situated near the top of the separator. In a few minutes, he would check that oil was emptying into the storage tank down the slope from the well. A blockage or crimp in the line would cause the crude to back up and flow over the top of the separator. He didn't care about the mess, but he cared about the money. He knew, but also didn't care, that when the pooled oil from the stripper well was pumped out, the water that had gathered below the oil would begin to flow. The brine, saltier than anything he'd ever tasted, would take longer to pump dry than the crude—as much as two hours longer. But, he didn't need to wait for that. The saltwater left the separator from a pipe plumbed into the side of the small open tank about midway to the bottom. From the separator, the brine flowed to the bottom of the hill, where Barlo let it pour directly onto the ground. He had craftily hidden the end of the pipe in a shallow spot and covered it with leaves. It's illegal to release brine onto the ground, but he didn't feel guilty or even think about the brine release. That's the way it had always been done here. And besides, it was too expensive to have the brine shipped by tanker to a reinjection well.

Barlo turned the truck around and drove back the way he had come. In a few minutes he arrived at the storage tank. It took only a few more minutes to clamber up the ladder fixed to the side of the tank. He lifted the small, round cover over an opening in the top surface of the tank.

“What the hell?” he said aloud. Crude was discharging from the pipe into the tank as it should, but the tank was empty. He was sure that when he checked the level of crude in this tank last week it was virtually full. It had taken him nearly a year to fill the tank, pumping the well for a couple of hours each week. He planned to call the trucking company next week to pick up the oil, about 70 barrels. The price of a barrel of crude was high right now and he had plans for the nine thousand dollars that he expected earn.

“What the hell?” he repeated. From his vantage point on top of the tank, he could see that no spill had occurred. The grass and leaves around the tank were clean. He climbed down the ladder and confirmed what he already knew. No leaks. He walked the length of pipe running from the bottom of the tank to the road, and inspected the end of the pipe. A few drops of oil littered the soil below the cap on the end of the pipe. Damn it, someone had stolen the crude right out of the tank.

Looking more closely now, Barlo could see the tracks of the dual tires of a truck on the well road. Damn, why hadn't he put up a locked gate on the road as he had meant to? But, since when did some bastard begin stealing crude oil? Damn, damn, damn.

TODD PEGGS

I Wouldn't Change a Thing

All the parties, concerts, drugs, clubs, and raves. I wouldn't change this part of my life for anything. I only wish I knew that I was enjoying a downward spiral. Everyone seemed to be so happy. All the new faces, people from all over the country. They seemed to be in a different world and I wanted to be a part of it.

I had never seen so many different groups of people getting along, everyone was hugging. This wasn't like high school where people seemed to stick to their own click. Here there were no clicks; it seemed to be about one common theme, music, dancing, and drugs. I had never seen anything like this before. I had never been accepted by so many different groups of people without any pretence.

As I was taking in my new environment, I was approached by some girl. There was something about her that was so different. From her appearance to her fluorescent aura, I was in awe from her immense beauty. It was as if I were in a trance, a sort of euphoria from this pleasurable culture shock. It was like I was hypnotized as she allured me to close my eyes and open my mouth. No longer seeing my surroundings, the repetition from the drum and bass pounding through me was taking over my soul. Then the sudden bitter taste in my mouth, I was accepted, a new dimension. I had just stepped through the door of this new world and my life would never be the same.

The hallucinations, euphoria, synthetic emotions in the palms of our hands; the sex the chemically induced psychosis, it was heaven and it was going to last forever. It was like a roller coaster that never came down. Up, up, up, only the excitement of the unknown, anticipation, climbing higher and higher a trip with a never ending peak, a beautiful memory. The ignorance of the misguided destined to be a fine attribute to the cancer of our nation, rotting youth.

As I felt the warmth of the blood run down my face, some of it dripped into my mouth. The nasty bitter taste of the blood reminded me of the Ecstasy that the mysterious girl put into my mouth that night long ago. That medicine like taste triggered a rush of memories and the emotions of all the bad decisions that had led me to be to this point of my life. It was amazing I could even think at all, through the rapid gunfire and people screaming. I didn't even realize that I got shot until the second bullet hit me. I was hit in each leg in my upper thigh, barely missing my girlfriend's face that was sleeping on my lap. The blood on my face was from my friend Jeff. Jeff was driving the car when he was shot in the face three times. Fortunately, his girlfriend in the front passenger seat, Corey was also unharmed. There were sixteen shots fired. Two out of the four of us got shot. I don't know how my

friend survived. You couldn't even tell that he was shot a month later; he had almost fully recovered.

This experience was life changing for me. After living without rules for so long, oblivious to nothing, something finally matters. I have had my first real look at who I really was. It made me realize that everything about my life was so wrong. I had almost lost the one that I love most. Those two bullets were only a couple of inches away from my girlfriend's face, my heart, the vessel to my soul. This could have been the end my world.

After everything that I have put myself through, I wouldn't change any of it. It has made me who I am. As of right now I am happy with that person. Without all of my bad decisions I wouldn't have that and let me tell you what I have is absolutely amazing. It doesn't take a saint or the perfect person to be happy. Trust me; I am far from either of the two. I'm just glad that I have learned to cherish what and who I do have because I firmly believe that I have found my soul mate and that is something most will never have.

ANGELINA NOEL DENNISON

Monster Mayhem

Every year on or around Halloween there is a wonderful event called Trick-or-Treat night in a little town in the middle of practically nowhere. This is the night of all nights. This is when you can truly be yourself and not get miss-treat-ed for it. There are even a choice few who don't have to dress up to do so! It is the greatest night of the year. It isn't too cold, it isn't too rainy, and the change in the colors of the leaves in the trees makes for a spectacular background scene. There are haunted hay rides, bonfires, witches, pixies, ghouls, and ghosts galore. Let's not forget the most important part either, grub and candy! On this glorious night many ghastly groups gather together to go out and spook the town.

This is a story about one of those little groups on one of those exact nights. This group is a family that waits all year for this one holiday. They start getting ready for it months in advance. This would be my family to be precise. My name is Clownie Laugh-n-Smile mini-monster. I am one of many mini-monsters however there are quite a few full grown monsters as well. There are my parents, Mummy Monster and Deady Monster of course. Oh, and don't let me forget the five crazy Monster Ants. Their names are Wishy, Washy, Weirdy, Dreary, and Witchy. Last but not least are the many mini-monsters I was telling you about: Goulie who is 13, Jackolan who is 10, Daemon who is 5, Danger who is 4, Beastie who is 3, and Caspie who is 1. In case you hadn't guessed it, apart from the adults I am the oldest at 21. This does not however cut down on my candy load! My bogfriend, Gargoyle Griffin, tags along with us too. Sometimes others show up like my dreadparents, some of the Monsters-in law, or a couple of the knucklehead Uncles but usually it's just the fifteen of us. This time it was just us, anyway.

It all started out the same as usual. Everyone was running around like the banshees that we are trying to find lost makeup, candy bags, and other fright night apparel. Finally after hours of getting ready it was time to go. Seven of us kids got into the back of my Deady's old CurveCutting-Coffin-Creeper. Deady got in the center seat so he could steer, and Mummy got in on the left side so she could wrap things up when they came loose. Caspie, the youngest, put his toombster seat in the right passenger side, because that is where he always sits. The Ants decided to try out their new Spinning-Spiraling-Spider-Specter, because there wasn't enough room to suit them in our vehicle. They always act like they are better than us. It really hurts Mummy's feelings sometimes, but I always cheer her up by telling her that the Monster Ants names are quite fitting. She always smiles at that one.

On the way into town we sang songs, in deep scary voices. When we got there we parked where the rotten candy shop used to be. Everyone unloaded. I got on my circus bike and started juggling and doing other minor tricks.

The other mini-monsters thought this was wonderful, they giggled, and howled, and clapped in delight. The Ants just looked at me like I was stupid. They aren't much fun really. This year each of us dressed according to our names. This is something we don't get to do very often.

As we were walking down the street Mummy and Deady decided to go over the trick-or-treat rules. The three most important rules there are. 1) Never go inside any house no matter how inviting it may seem. 2) Never run off from the group, some Monsters eat mini-monsters. And the most important rule is 3) never eat any candy before one of the adult monsters checks it first. Of course the Ants never listen to this last one, ever. This particular Trick-or-Treat night was no different.

We went to every house in town. Believe me that is a lot of houses! The younger minimonsters candy bags were so heavy that Mummy, Deady, Gargoyle and I had to carry them all. This was expected though. This happens every year. The unexpected part was when all of the wicked Ants piled their bags on top too. They even cackled as they took a handful each to eat on the way to the bonfire. We warned them not to eat it yet, but did they listen? Of course they didn't. They left us behind too. We took the candy to the Coffin-Creeper for safe keeping and headed towards the bonfire ourselves. It turned out all that trick-or-treating made us ravenous, we each got a molded mouse on rye, a side of battered eyeballs, and a hot mug of curded cocoa. After that we each roasted rotten toadstools over the bonfire and ate them on fingernail-flake crackers, with blue cheese. It was wonderful.

Finally we decided to look for the evil Ants. They were nowhere to be found. We even looked in their Spider-Specter. That was about the time we heard Beastie screaming for help. Beastie is only three years old, but when she yells she usually has a really good reason. Mummy always says, "Don't yell unless you're dead and you can't yell if you're already dead!" Beastie listens to her. So we went running! What did we find you wonder? None other than the awful Ants! They looked awful too. They had hidden down by the Retched-Red-Ringed-River so we couldn't say we told them so. However it was a good thing Beastie found them, they were in really bad shape.

Apparently some of the candy they had eaten was full of bullfrog brew. Bullfrog brew, for those of you that don't know, is a poison that turns you green and slimy about an hour before it kills you dead. Needless to say, I got on my circus bike, and flew to the nearest Bugstore! Thank monster-mayhem they were open on this night of all nights! I rode up to the counter and asked the nearest Bugstore Brewer which island to find the anti-bullfrog brew-dote on. He pointed to the one furthest away from me.

I was really wondering if the awful Ants were worth wading across the Dead-Duck pond to try and trick a Crafty-Cat out of the anti-bullfrog brew-dote, when in came Gargoyle, the griffon to the rescue. He flew across

Dead-Duck Pond, landed on the island, and gave the CraftyCat such a good riddle that to this very day he still hasn't figured it out. We went back and gave all the sick Ants the anti-bullfrog brew-dote, and they didn't even apologize, or say thank you! In fact they left without even saying goodbye, but I bet they will think twice about breaking the three golden rules of Trick-or-Treating this year.

ELDERIED MCKINNEY

Am I

Darkness and smoke, clouding the area like a confused mind, voices screaming out for help, and sorrow from people be felt from distance through the crowd full of people, that surrounded the area around me. Rain pouring down hard on us hard as we stand outside waiting for the conclusion of the mystery of why we are standing outside like spectators at an event. I looked around to try to see where the crying and screaming was coming and saw nothing but a lot of people standing around saying, "man what happened to him, he looks bad." Then started walking closer to the voices that were crying and screaming, blood started to appear on the ground the closer I walked to the front of the crowd.

Smoke that surrounded the area started to clear up and the female voices that I heard became clearer. Also the female voices were saying "my baby, my baby why, I'm so sorry." Then my heart started racing faster, and sweat covered my body more than the rain that was pouring down on us, then suddenly I felt a sharp pain in my head then I blacked out and woke up in something like a flash back. I saw my wife and best friend making out in the hotel where everyone was crowding around. Seeing the worst betrayal a man could ever face, I got mad and punched my best friend Darren in the face, but like a ghost I vanished through his body. Then someone rang the door bell and my wife answered it, and it was me standing there with a gun aiming it at Darren head telling him how he is a snake and should die. The next thing I saw was myself putting down the gun then punching Darren in the face and the stomach. Darren grabbed a chair and hit me with it and grabbed the gun off the table and shot me with it in the head, and dropping it on the ground and ran away leaving me there to die. Then I woke up, panicking, heart beating fast and sweating more, and more. Finally I reached the front of the crowd and saw myself laying there on the ground bleeding badly from the shot in the head, and my wife crying and saying sorry, then the paramedics picked my body into the EMS. Looking at myself laying there, I cried waiting for that white bright light to appear but instead I saw a lady in white cloth say to me, "this is not how you are supposed to die," then I asked her, "Am I dead or alive" and she replied "Wake up, wake up you're alive."

MARY SKIDMORE

Unanswered Questions (an excerpt from the novel *Hidden Truths*)

I told everyone that I was going for a jog. I got my car keys and walked down to where my car was, got in and headed for the countryside. I went to the old lake that stretched out as far as the eye could see.

I got out of the car put in my earphones and walked to the path that went around the lake and started the long jog. The air smelled of the fresh pine and lake water with fish. It brought back sweet memories of when I was younger. My hair was long and blond with chopped bangs. My mortal caretaker would take us out on his boat with his wife and she'd French braid my hair. I wore a little yellow and pink bathing suit with an Ariel lifejacket. The wind would blow a lot of my hair loose from the French braid. My little sisters never enjoyed it as much as I did. My caretaker would make the boat do tricks like jumping up in the air. I always enjoyed it when a train would go above us on the tracks that were at least 150 feet in the air. I thought the train would never end with its compartments going by one at a time. I missed those times. They were simple. We didn't have to worry about saving the world or anything other responsibility. I've always wanted to build a house out here somewhere. To be away from everything and everyone, a good place to raise a family of my own someday. That has been a dream of mine for a long time now, I just never had time and now I have to plan a wedding. I have to wonder now if there is even going to be a wedding.

Another reason I love running along this path is that it cuts through the woods. Running through all the brush and debris I saw this bright light that looked as though it was a figure of a woman. She looked so familiar and she was so beautiful. She was bathed in this white dress and her hair was extremely long. It seemed as though there were lime white fairies dancing around her. Before I got closer she disappeared. I couldn't figure out who or what she was. All I knew is that she looked so sad like something bad was going to happen. With everything that's happening

I found Kendrick leaning against my car, waiting for me. "So did you just follow me here for the fun of it?" I said panting.

"Shitlips, I didn't have to follow you to know where you were."

"Oh really, I haven't come here in ages," I said putting my hands down on my knees from running so hard around the lake.

"Look don't give me that shit, the only reason why you stopped coming here is because you've been running away from yourself. You think you're so great with the perfect job, perfect boyfriend and the one with all the answers. Have

you not noticed what Kathy said and what's been going on is a lot more than what we usually end up doing. This isn't just some fucking demon or vampire. It won't fucking go away by a little spell or stake. You need to wake up and smell the damn coffee. You need to face your problems for once in your damn life. Lizzy I love you and I know you have a lot of shit on your plate but you have to face up to it."

I almost started to cry when Kendrick gave his little speech. I knew what he said was true but I just couldn't bring myself to really say anything. Finally I took a breath and said, "I know, and I wish I could say that what you said about me wasn't true but we both know the truth." I went over and hugged my big brother. "I just don't know what to do anymore. It seems as though everything has changed and I feel so lost."

"I know but you'll get through this, you're strong and stronger than you think." Kendrick pulled back and wiped away the tear on my cheek. In that moment I felt the closest to Kendrick.

"I sure hope your right and if you're not you owe me a large pizza," I said pointing my finger in his face. I couldn't help but smile and he laughed right along with me.

"Alright but you know I'm hardly ever wrong and plus do you want me to get fat or something?" I couldn't help but laugh when he said that. I just wanted to smack him over the head every time he said the word "fat."

I just shook my head at him and let go of my grip of my brother. "How about we go back to the base and see how everyone is doing?" I said as I turned toward my car door.

"Okay shitlips, but you better not fucking run off from me this time. I mean it," he said walking back to his truck.

I just laughed and got into my car, started it up and drove off. The way back was almost a blur since I didn't really think about anything. It was though my mind went numb with everything running through like a rush hour in the middle of New York City. I know I could possibly have the power to fix things, and I knew my sisters would turn to me for answers. I knew evil had the upper hand and we needed to take it back I'll have to come up with a way to restore Braden's memories. I sat in my car outside the flat now wanting to go in, but to face everything. I took a deep breath and gathered myself and opened the car door. I stepped out of the car and went up the long porch steps and opened the wooden door and stepped inside. I could hear my sisters in the family room. I walked into the open space and saw the fire was lit up. My sisters stopped and looked at me. We stared at each other for a minute until Leana got up and hugged me and I felt a release of emotion as tears started to flow down my face. Lanette and Maggie stood up and joined the hug.

ALLI DRANE

Life in 211

I have lived in the second floor of Wagner wing in Pickens Hall for about a week and a half now. I like it here because it is warm and there were a lot of interesting things to watch. The window in this room faces the courtyard where the sand volleyball pit is located. Not a lot of action happens out there now that it is November. I like to look out the window none-the-less. That's actually how I got in—through the window that is.

No one saw me try to get in, and it was *too* easy. I came in one afternoon while the girl who lives there was out. I suppose she was in class. You're probably not sure how I got into a second story window in the middle of the day, but the best way for me to explain it is that I scaled the wall inconspicuously and looked for a window with no screen. I probably could have gotten in even if there were a screen, but it makes it a lot easier without one. I made it look like I was supposed to be there; like nothing was wrong. I even blended into the wall. No questions were asked.

I like the room, and I have found several very good hiding places. She has a dresser set up diagonally in a corner, and on top of the dresser is her refrigerator. There is enough room for me to hide behind the dresser when she comes in, but it is my last resort because it is still out in the open, and I'm afraid I'll get caught and kicked out—or worse, killed. I prefer under the bed and up high on the shelves in the closet. There's no way she can find me there. I only have to hide when she's there. During the day when the girl is out, I roam the room freely. She seems to be in classes or out of the building most of the day, so I have a lot of free time. I am currently taking the time to evaluate all of her belongings thoroughly. So far, I have come to the conclusion that there aren't very many people like the girl in 211. Let me explain.

She has a four-foot marigold sitting in her window. I'm fascinated by it. I actually noticed the flower from the outside as I was scaling the wall. I've examined the flower closely and I have decided that it is confused. I know enough about most flowering potted plants to know that they aren't supposed to be that tall and that most of them aren't supposed to live through the fall and into the winter. She's weird, and it's no wonder the marigold (which she calls *Vidalia*) is confused. I heard this conversation one day:

Weird-plant-girl: "I'm telling you, you *have* to see my marigold. She's about four feet tall."

Freaked-out-neighbor: *looks confused* "Wow. I'm not gonna lie, that's creepy. Are you sure it's a marigold?"

Weird-plant-girl: "Oh yeah, I'm sure. Mom told me for the longest time

that she thought I was growing a ragweed, but I told her that I planted the seeds myself and that they came straight from a marigold packet.”

Freaked-out-neighbor: “I’m afraid to ask, but I’m going to anyway... How did it get that tall? How long have you had it?”

Weird-plant-girl: “I planted her last May. I’m really impressed that she made it through the summer. I almost killed her three times. I left her in the sun for too long and just about scorched her. She was all wilted and droopy and I freaked out and had to bring her inside. But to answer your question, I think the reason she’s lived so long is because I kept transferring her into bigger pots so her roots could grow, and I brought her inside for good right before the ground started getting cold. And in her infancy I fed her milk and green tea. I’m not sure if that has anything to do with her growth, but I’m going to say it did.”

Very-freaked-out-neighbor: “Milk and tea.”

Weird-plant-girl: “Yeah, at first it was an accident. I was running out of time before class and I needed to water her. I lost my watering cup so I grabbed the cup of milk I was drinking and ran to the bathroom to fill it with water. The milk was watered down, but still. The tea thing was just an experiment. Mom says it was an experiment gone way wrong. Whatever, I like *Vidalia*.”

If that’s not enough evidence right there to prove that this girl has a few loose bolts, then I’m not sure what is. She put milk and green tea in the pot for pity’s sake. The flower is probably having an identity crisis. The girl has some pretty weird tastes. Another strange thing in the room is a small black Christmas tree with red lights. She gets so excited about that tree. It was really ugly at first, but after a few days she put Coca-Cola decorations all over it, and now it is amusing. My other fascination, for a short time, was the banjo that sits in the corner. I was all over that banjo one day trying to figure out why she likes it so much, but I can’t figure it out. I try not to mess with her things when she’s not there, but sometimes boredom makes you do things you will often regret.

For instance, One day I looked out from under the bed and saw her at her laptop writing a story using Microsoft Word. She was very caught up in her work and I figured that this would be the best time to press my luck and see how much I could expose myself. I made my way around the bed and climbed up the wall to the ceiling. I thought this was the best un-hiding place ever. Suddenly, very agitated, she threw her arms into the air, pushed her chair back against the wall and stared at the ceiling. Sure enough, her eyes focused in on me and she said, “I hate ladybugs. They stink.”

We only stink when we die. I’d like to clarify that. I was insulted, but I try not to let it get to me because taking things like that to heart can shorten my

lifespan. She never tried to hurt me so I'll stay here for the rest of the winter, but believe you me, as soon as the marigolds start popping up outside, I'll fly away. I'm sure there are other people around this place that can appreciate ladybugs.

Contributors' Notes

TONY M. ANTONINI is originally from Morgantown, West Virginia. He is a 26-year-old first year non-traditional student. His works included in the 2010 *Trillium* are the first poems that he has ever written. According to Tony, "I just had so much to say, and this seemed to be the best way to say it." He has worked for the Boy Scouts of America as a Program Coordinator in Morgantown and Indianapolis, Indiana.

BOB HENRY BABER happily claims Cody Baber as his son. As he puts it, "The apple never falls too far from the tree, but in West Virginia it may roll quite a ways!"

REBECCA BRADY is from Clarksburg, West Virginia.

LIZA BRENNER is an Assistant Professor of Art at Glenville State College. She currently lives in Buckhannon, West Virginia but is originally from Warren, Pennsylvania. She teaches a variety of classes including painting, drawing, ceramics, sculpture, and art history.

AMANDA BURGE is from Braxton County, West Virginia. She is an English Education Major (5-Adult) and a *Phoenix* Staff Reporter. Amanda is also a member of Chi Zeta Pi and the English Revolutionary Society. She says that photography is her real passion, but she loves everything that allows a person to express themselves.

ERICA LYNN BUTLER currently resides in Orlando, West Virginia. Erica does not refer to herself as an artist; she simply does things because they make her happy. As she puts it, "If other people enjoy them then, all the better."

ALLI DRANE is a native of Friendly, West Virginia. She lives in the country where there is no cell phone service, so she has plenty of opportunities to write poetry and prose in her free time. At Glenville State College, she is active in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Baptist Campus Ministries. She also plays the guitar in the praise team at the First Baptist Church in Glenville, West Virginia. Alli will graduate in 2011 with a degree in English Education 5-12.

KARI HAMRIC is an English/Math (5-Adult) Education major and the single mother of three children. She uses her family as a sounding board for all of her writing and really appreciates the support and advice given to her by her mother, Gail Westbrook.

KATRINA HAMRIC is a former Gilmer Countian and former GSC student who now lives in Medina, Ohio and works as Human Resource Director for some company that her sister can never seem to remember the name of. In her off time, she diligently ignores phone calls and refuses to answer e-mails. She enjoys photography and writing. Her sole purpose in life is to be the center of attention. It is, after all, all about her.

ROSE JOHNSON did it for the lulz.

SAMUELLA LEWIS lives on the banks of the Greenbrier River in the Glen Ray section of Alderson, West Virginia. She takes great pride in the accomplishments of her five children. Writing is also an important part of her life. She is a retired Operations Officer of the City National Bank Alderson, West Virginia branch.

SARAH NORMANT is from Glenville, West Virginia. She enjoys drawing and writing poetry and short stories.

ELORA SHOCK calls Rosedale, West Virginia her hometown. She is a sophomore at Glenville State College and enjoys writing and drawing.

MARY ELIZABETH SKIDMORE is a 21-year-old English major at Glenville State College. She is involved in cheerleading and the *Trillium* staff. Mary has been writing poetry since she was thirteen and is still currently working on her book *Hidden Truths*.

ROSANNA SPRINGSTON is originally from Craigsville, West Virginia. Rosanna enjoys all arts and crafts, but photography is her favorite. She spends a lot of time outdoors and enjoys fiction and fantasy books and movies, which is where she gets the inspiration for most of her work.

WHITNEY STALNAKER is from Normantown, West Virginia. She is a junior Psychology/Sociology major and a longtime member of GSC Theatre. Her hobbies include theatre, photography, and traveling. The photos that she submitted for the 2010 *Trillium* were taken at Prabhupada's Palace of Gold in Wheeling, West Virginia.

JAMIE STANLEY is from Mason County, West Virginia and is an English major at Glenville State College.

CHRIS SUMMERS is a Junior English Education major at Glenville State College. His contribution, *Scars and Letters*, is the result of six months of coffee, rewrites, and the counseling of Dr. Jonathan Minton and Rachel Mendelson.

MILAN VAVREK is a GSC Associate Professor of Natural Resource Management. He has performed over 10 years of research involving restoration of crude oil and brine spills.

DOYLE WESTBROOK is a first year student at Glenville State College. The love of his life died from cancer in December, 2007. Doyle says, "With Saskia Thiadens of the National Lymphedema Network, we have been able to establish a charitable fund dedicated to providing garments to others who are in need of the lymphedema relief that made Marilyn's last few months truly living instead of just dying. This fund needs far more money than I can provide, particularly since I am now out of a job. If you have the means, please consider donating to the Marilyn Westbrook Garment Fund, by visiting <http://www.lymphnet.org/patients/westbrookFund.htm>." He wants to become an animator or author.

KAYLA WHITE is a senior at Glenville State College. She is also the GSC Cheerleading Coach. Kayla enjoys painting, reading, scrapbooking, and cheerleading. She is married to Adam White and has a dog named Cornbread.

JUSTIN WORTHAM is originally from Chicago, Illinois. He loves all kinds of art, photography, drawing, water color painting, and oil painting. Collages are his favorite type of art to do. His piece *Breakfast-The Most Important Meal of the Day!* is his favorite because, as he puts it, “Not only is it the most important meal, but almost everyone eats breakfast as lunch, dinner, or a midnight snack also.”

JENNIFER YOUNG is originally from Salt Lake City, Utah. A longtime lover of fiction and the art of words, Jennifer hopes to someday be published for a beautifully heart-wrenching novel. She also loves long walks in Wal-Mart and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.



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