

MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE



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Apple Patch

Vol. 7

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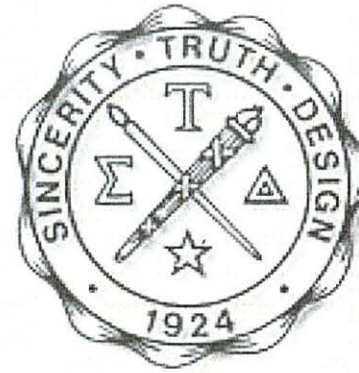
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Missouri Valley College

A Magazine of Literary & Art Patches



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The

Purple Patch

A Magazine of Literary & Art Patches

Vol. 7

2006-2007

No. 1

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A SIGMA TAU DELTA PUBLICATION

The Purple Patch

A Magazine of Literary & Art Patches
Vol. 7 2006-2007 No. 1

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Forward

Greetings and welcome to Vol. 7 of *The Purple Patch*! It is with excitement that the editorial staff is able to bring to Missouri Valley College this edition of the magazine.

Over the past 16 weeks, it has been a joy to work and learn as editor; to experience hands-on the process of putting together a real publication. It has always been a dream of mine to be immersed in editing, writing, and arts, so when Amy Shimek asked me to be editor last year, I could not refuse her request. I immediately jumped at the chance, and was so excited that it felt as if I had been given a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

Once my assistant editor Jessica James and I received submissions, the hardest part was to eliminate what I thought were the weakest pieces from what were the strongest pieces of work. Because of the talent on our campus, disappointing those who submitted weighed heavily upon me. Vol. 7 is solid in the quality of both art and written work.

Although *The Purple Patch* has used a purple cover to bind its publications for the past two years, I decided to go with something more original for the first and last magazine I will ever be a part of at Missouri Valley College! Therefore, Linda Hoffman's *Swing* is what now graces the cover.

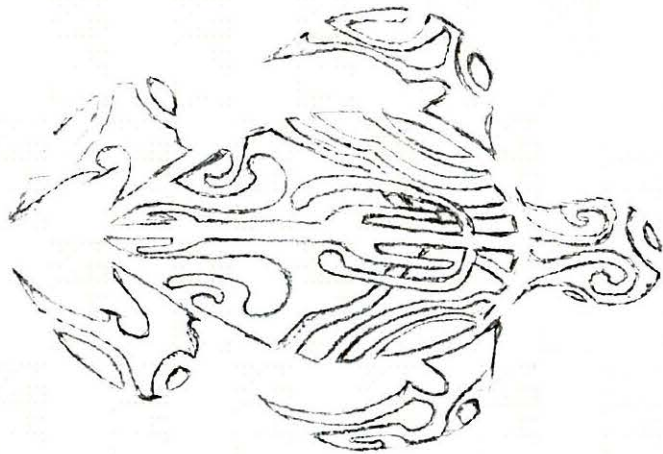
As to the order of the magazine, Jessica and I felt it best to randomly insert submissions instead of breaking the magazine down into themes, while at the same time maintaining a certain flow and rhythm to what comes before and after another piece of work. Each piece has a common trait linking it to the next, until all 79 pages have been thoroughly organized into a cohesive pattern.

Another unique distinction with Vol. 7 is the serious tone that evolved after production of the magazine was in action. It did not take long to see that humor was outweighed by more intellectual and heart-felt pieces, which

not only gives this year's edition an academic consistency, but also a sentimental flavor.

It has been my honor and privilege to be Editor of *The Purple Patch* for a semester. I never realized the time, the energy, and the responsibility involved when putting together a magazine to meet the final deadline for production. But I am grateful for what this opportunity has provided me; a chance to experience the reality of editing, the importance of interacting between students and faculty, and the reward of being able to say, "I had a hand in that." This is worth all of the unexpected delays and long hours that must be dedicated to a project of this size. So, with that I present to you Vol. 7 and hope you enjoy it as much as I have enjoyed watching each piece develop into a complete work of character and talent. Thank you for allowing me to be your editor this semester. I have had fun and will miss seeing the familiar faces that brightened my day as I walked down the pathways of our campus.

~Leesa J. Morton, Editor



Tribal Honu

Jarrett Fujita

Drawing

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Sand Dunes of Michigan
Johanna Montclair Photograph

Grass Is White

by
Mike Temple

Ewan held his mother's hand while standing by the bandstand with a Star Wars backpack; in the front pocket he had a blue crayon. She kissed him goodbye, and he walked to the classroom, kicking up sand. Ewan looked about, to the children who did play and shout; he already did not like kindergarten; alone and frightened he wanted out, but his mother had told him to take heart, school makes you smart.

He sat in a circle, Indian style all the while, in his class when Ms. Glynn with a grin asked, "What was the colour of grass?" Suddenly came a sight that Ewan knew wasn't right — when a girl raised her hand and answered "White." As anyone confused would, Ewan told her she had misunderstood but to the girl's delight the teacher stood and spoke "It is! Very good!"

"Now," she said, "someone tell me, what colour is bread?" Ewan couldn't sit down as he shouted "Brown!" But the answer was "Red!" The little boy could not believe what was being said! Were they all joking, was he being misled? Ewan objected and shouted "I don't agree!" But Ms. Glynn said he was wrong 'cause she, unlike he, had a master's degree.

"But I have proof, see this crayon? The name written on it is 'Blue!'" You all must really know that to be true!" Ms. Glynn said to the fellow, "That's a misprint, it's really yellow. Now pipe down." The boy could only frown. He later discovered that no one knew their colours in this town he learned that school didn't always make you smart; school is where tradition tears intelligence apart.

Writing an Essay for Dr. Gruber

by
Eric Alexander

Tigers are leading 1-0 over the Cardinals in the 2006 World Series. There I go again, getting distracted by the television instead of doing my essay for Rhetoric and Composition. Television is one of my biggest distractions when it comes to writing or doing other homework; then again music played really loud is very distracting too. Too bad the world is full of people who come up to me and ask if I'm going to the party ... if I answer "No," the reply is "Man, you don't do anything!" On the other hand, if I say "Yes," the reply is "Come on and get drunk with us, man!" Eventually it boils down to either focusing on the task at hand or going down the long, drawn-out path of distractions.

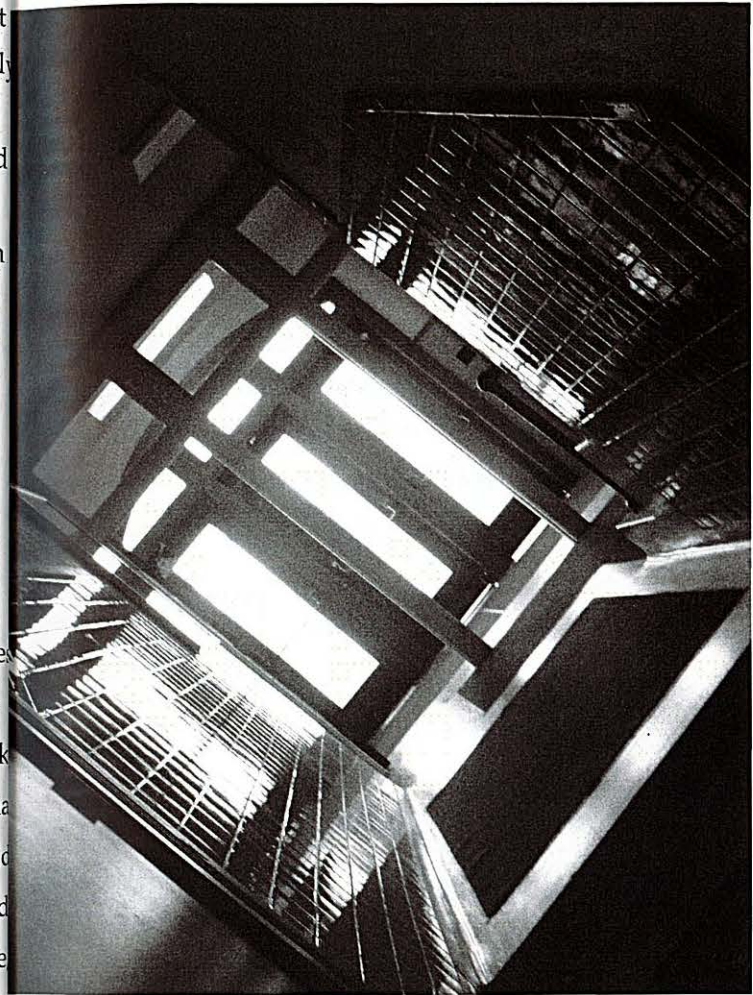
Yes, I know the opening line is a distraction but right now there are a bunch of distractions going on, what with the television and people in the halls. A lot of people say they can do two things at once, but it is really hard to type this paper and not watch the World Series. Come on; the Cardinals have not been to the World Series since 1985, and that was when they played the Royals. I should really unplug or turn the television off while typing this to better my grade but the consequences of that would be

my roommate saying "Why did you turn the TV off? The game is on right now, man!"

Other distractions going on right now besides the television are the air conditioner, the people across the hall, and the constant irritation in my nose. I know this essay seems like a list of current events, but that's because they are distracting me really badly. If there was an indescribable sound coming from an air conditioner, anyone would be kept from focusing. Laughter and loud talking resonating from the hallway are keeping me from thinking up what to write for this essay. Distractions aside, I am showing how easy it is to get distracted when trying to write a paper the night before it is due.

I will reiterate so if the person who reads this essay gets distracted by Dr. Gruber doing something outrageously funny, they will at least be on the same page as I. The only sure way to get rid of distractions would be to get rid of personalities because different personalities cause people to halt what they are doing and find out where the noise is coming from or even cause them to utterly join in on making the noises. The problem with getting rid of personalities is that everyone would be mindless robots doing only what they are told without breaks or easing up; making the world entirely black and white — extremely dull and boring. Distractions are a part of life they are inevitable, and will remain in human lives for the rest of time because at the slightest noise made or first sight of a color catching the eyes of someone, that someone will be hooked faster than when Dr. Gruber caught a musky.

*Distractions
are a part of
life, they are
inevitable*



Photograph

Dark Hall

Garry Norris

I Am Not Your Homework

(Song Lyrics)

by

Emilee Murphree

I am not your homework
I am not your laundry
I am not your taxes, baby
You don't have to do me.

I am not your trash
You don't have to take me out
If you don't want a part of this,
You are free to do without
You are free to do without

I am not your trash
You don't have to take me out
If you don't want a part of this,
You are free to do without
You are free to do without

I am not your job
And I am not your bills
I am not an obligation
That you have to fulfill

I am not some thing
That you can use then throw away
If all you want to do is leave
Then I don't want you to stay
Then I don't want you to stay

CHORUS

BRIDGE

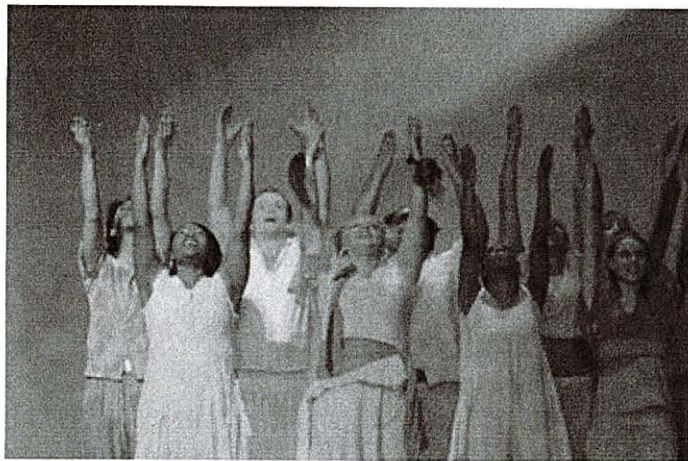
I am not your problem
I am not your fears
Even if you ignore me
I will still be here

I am not your girlfriend
I am not your toy
And you are not my everything
You are just a boy

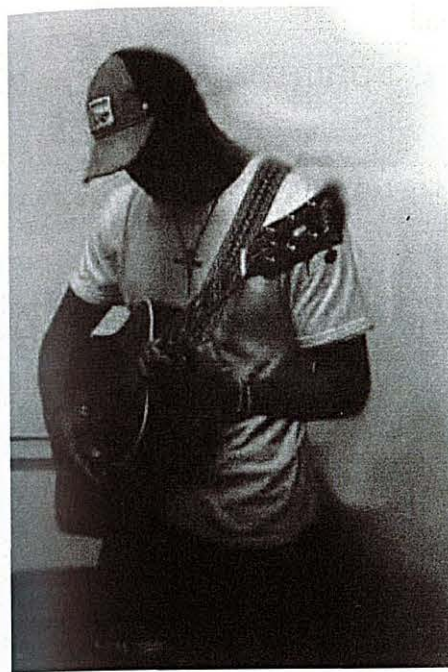
Egats eht

by
Kevin Marshall

To everyone who questions fate,
And all the men who lose their steam;
To all the women who are blind,
This is how I love my dream.
I step out on an empty stage,
I lay my soul out clean and bare;
I lose myself within the work,
And all the qualities so rare
Come spilling out between the words
As I become a simple tool
To explain the deepest call
To both the scholar and the fool.
All at once my thoughts converge,
And I am now a person new-
There is a life upon the stage;
It's clear, it's pure, it's for the few
Who see the scene beyond the lights,
Who know what life outside can be.
The truth behind the matter is
There is the theatre and there is me.



Cori Basham Theatre Photograph



Sweet Praises ~ Kelechi

Melody Wiegert Photograph

The Lounge

by
Landon Alexander

White smoke looming overhead,
Swaying to a misplaced tune
A lonely saxophone's cry,
A trumpet dripping with heartache
The microphone stand, tall and
regal
once a minister
A dance hall that served as a pulpit, empty
Life

The Space

by
Mike Temple

the space that hovers above our lives
appears to be an empty void
we pay this earth our offerings and tithes
but we forget there are greater things ahead
but You, what to say does not come easily
though the thoughts are screaming in my head
You have the kind of soul that makes dreams fly
You have a smile that lights up the sky

the space apart, the space between
no longer matters to me
the space between, the space apart
no matter where You are, You have my heart

struggles seem to simple, such smooth passing
when You are gone my love shall be everlasting
I am only a flake in all the heavy snow
but you are my rainbow, my butterfly
no distance, love, hate marriage, friendship can break the bond
the bond I shall hide away forever
it's the same bond that made You who You are

the space apart, the space between
no longer matters to me
the space between, the space apart
no matter where You are, You have my heart



Don't Look Back

Katherine Steel

Photograph

Next Time Around

(Song Lyrics)

by
Mike Bentele

When will you be ready
Time isn't always steady
I lay in bed watchin' the ceilin'
Wonderin' what I'm feelin'
Will we be friends tomorrow
Or enemies the next time around
I can't make you love me
By the end you'll see I really did love you

But it's gone, gone,
Gone like you on Friday
Back like me on Monday
It's such a merry-go-round
Operator let me off right now

I see you with your friends
That used to be me laughin' with you
But I don't let you see the way
The way it gets to me
The last time I saw you
I should have kissed you
But not knowin' what you're showin'
I'll just leave you alone

But it's gone, gone,
Gone like you on Friday
Back like me on Monday
It's such a merry-go-round
Operator let me off the next time around



Kevin Conrey Golden Gate Photograph



on Strickland Ko Olina Photograph

The Sleeper at the Gate

by
Mike Temple

You await while the growing winds pull down the falling leaves
awaiting for the ride and the rolling turns of the sea.
Not a dream is given to this sleeper near the gate,
as you await for things that shall never awaken fate,
so remember as you sit glaring into the dimming skies,
the sparrow who never leaves the nest never flies.

Are you sick and tired of being told what you can do
by those who are the same as you?
Are you all sick of being hurt by loves that don't last?
Do you all hold too tightly to a world fading fast?
If it is you who fits into this song,
then my friend, come along ...

You await in the shadows that cover your face,
the grief it flows over and it has left no taste;
When you have traveled, down every path;
and when the creatures of mother nature seem to laugh,
don't you listen to them, keep searching for a way
soon you'll find it's been behind you every day.

Are you sick and tired of being told where to hide,
sometimes feeling you're the only one really alive?
Are you sick and tired of things you regret
and do you feel rejected by everyone you've met?
If it is you who belongs in this song,
then my friend, come along ...



Nicole Yoshimoto
Breeze

Photograph

Clarity

by
Johanna Montclair

I Dream sweet dreams
Throughout the distant night,
While sleeping away Troubled thoughts
In hope of a better day come morning.

I stand perfectly still before the open mirror
And Greet its Reflection with a smile.
Only then do I understand —
Confidence is the Courage to see Change happen
And be willing to turn with the tide ...

Life is, at times, a Struggle
But in due season mourning will
Flow into Laughter and Joy.

I Dream sweet dreams
Upon the sparkling sea,
and Wait until the day
I know what is right.

Soon, All will become incessantly Clear
Before my very eyes.

*Confidence is the
Courage to see
Change happen*



Sekuru

Jarylynn Gwatiringa

Photograph



Sun on Water

Leesa Morton

Photograph

he Park

by
on Shoulders

own the golden brown, rough but gentle,
oses her eyes, but she doesn't see his,
ily that he is there, cozy, weakness exposed.
arred knuckle reading, turning more elegant
an she could know. Right eyebrow estranged
innocence, defending from perfection of lips
sting in place, and hips nestling taste.
ide behind smiles; don't look into eyes, surprise,
e bitter taste of time, spit out the lies.

The Woman After

by
Samantha Narron

Resigned to a false situation, content ignorance
Blissfully unaware of a fictitious melody
A rich jazz line, a cool dark run of slurred notes
An instrument of comfort, a classy song
You

The Wandering Soul (From Part I)

by
Mike Temple

Why have you left the lands to decay,
Left the dankness below the wading moon,
Separated the shepherds in the day?
Sad is the singing tune
That summons the wandering soul
Come with no permission from us folk;
A thief in the night and our lives you took ...
In a blood-bath you soak.
You left sadness everywhere, look
That summoned the wandering soul.

You were found in caves of light,
Then faded into the void of black.
Strengthen your horror to unreach heights —
Only we hope you never come back again
But it summons the wandering soul.
You lie protected by the lying friends
Hiding you beyond where we can find;
We shall never know your scheme
That controls our minds,
That summons the wandering soul.

Someday you shall be found
And your plans shall burn.
All the wise of wise know not how,
So we hope you never return
The wandering soul has returned ...



A Narrow Path
Leesa Morton Photograph

Oath of the Oaks

by Jessica James

As the tops of winter-storm bared, oak branches swayed, a harsh, inhospitable cold wind blew wet around the shamed man in the unnatural darkness. His dark head hung low to the ground and blood spilt from his torso, stomach organ cascading down to soak the roots of the tree. The air had long since been tinged with the honeyed metal smell of blood, blowing all around him through the towering oaks. The trees bent in wind, jostling angrily, and taunted the man with their branches.

Apparitions swirled out of the darkness in clouds of barely tangible fog. Strung between the man's dangling navel and the tree shined a strand of silver. It began to pull back and around the tree, as though the oak retracted the strand like a line with its fish neatly caught. As it did so, the weakened man lurched forward stomach-first. Spirits began to congeal, closer now to corporeal beings. The man gulped as the wind raised a cry of its own, urging by some unknown measure the strand to wind widdershins round the oak. The man, bleeding as he tripped slovenly over the tree roots, followed as quickly his body would allow until he was in a stumbling run. But nothing could keep the strand loose and as the man paused for breath, perching elbows on his knees, a sound added itself to the layers of noise beneath the wails of the wind. The sound was tearing flesh. His body cleaved open in one, sorry gash. ...

* * *

Light shone through the skins hung in the doorway of the cave. He stood half a day's walk from the oak grove to which he had been commanded to go. Inside the cave the nearby wise woman rasped to sooth his wife.

The night was one which boded ill.

Tilting his head back, the skies matched the color of strain underneath his young wife's eyes. No stars shone, and tonight the moon smoldered dark. He took a solid breath.

"I know where I must go ... and I can run," he spoke to the air, gathering his limbs. He was sure he saw earlier a certain flash of knowledge in the old one's eyes as she commanded him to go. Something awaited him in the grove, something which he could only quite remember from his days as a child roaming loose, something of nameless curse.

But she said to go, and so go he did.

All these things mixed and churned in the young man's mind while his soft footsteps fell steadily on the hard winter soil. Women of her line rarely survived a miscarriage, let alone a late miscarriage, and he saw the truth of

it the moment he saw her face. For an instant he closed his eyelids as he ran, and saw his wife's once most spectacular feature, her eyes. Both bright and deep, the now pale eyes and stretched open across pallid skin. Eyes like hers held within them knowledge of swift mortality.

He opened his eyes again to try to shake away the picture, but it did no good. Over and over images flashed through his mind. The look of undiluted fear of his wife. The blood scattered helter-skelter around the pelts. Matted. Dulled dark; rust color on the ground. The clay pot of gelatinous —

The young man paused to wipe his forehead, sweating even on a cold night as such. He knew he mustn't think of what horrific contents filled the clay pot. As it was he now feared the very truth which had inspired him to save her. He feared whatever the skin on his neck told him he was about to sacrifice, and feared it with every *whoosh-thud* of his legs and feet pumping through the open hills which lay between the cave and the grove.

It was when he realized he'd run half the night that the oak grove rose sudden and sharp before him, barren limbs snapping mightily in the winds above. His swinging rhythm tumbled to a stop. Blood rushed to foreign parts of his body, and he noticed he was cold.

In the chill the young man rubbed his arms rapidly and tipped his face upward. When his foot stepped over the threshold of the oak grove, whether it was his sweat steaming in the winter night which cooled him, or the ominous hole of the forest emanating some icy, intimidating force outward, he was not willing to say nor admit ...

* * *

Amber glowed at the side of the young woman, her belly swollen as she wallowed on a small heap of pelts which stank of afterbirth and death. She moaned; she writhed.

"Men should never swear of things they know naught of," the old wise woman murmured, a subtle hatred sneaking up to the edge of her soft voice. Built like an old tree bent into the wind, the wise one stroked the dank, limp hair of the young woman with a peculiar expression on her creviced face. The young man in the doorway looked blankly back, eyes darkened with the dilation of disbelief.

"Is she —"

"Dying? It is coming to her quickly. If you want to save her ..." the woman drifted off with her rasp as she dabbed the ailing woman's cracked mouth with a rag wet in a strong decoction of mugwort.

"Can she be saved?" the young man questioned before the woman's delicately wrinkled throat finished jiggling. His fingers twisted themselves in ever circling motions

"It is possible ... but only with great speed, and skill which I am not

certain I possess any longer ... my fingers are mere shadows, and cold all through the winter months now ... But there could be a way ... "

"What? I'll swear to do anything," came the quick reply, voice choked with emotion. "It is my fault, my promise, which is costing her life, which cost the life of ... Anything to save her, I'll swear to anything."

He squared his shoulders in the doorway.

The old woman sniffed the air as a wolf does to smell his prey, and narrowed her brow at him.

"That may well be. You must go to the sacred grove of the oaks. Go, go now, or her life is forfeit."

* * *

Bark. She said she needed bark of the sacred oaks. He strode forward. The normal forest sounds quieted as his first foot slipped over the sacred grove and his neck prickled. Tall, cruel spines of oaks rose above, bark silvered in an illuminated fog rolling low over the floor of the forest. None but the very courageous — or the very foolish — would dare enter the realm of the tree spirits on a night such as this.

Something — *some things* watched in the silent dark, and waited. Looking first over his right shoulder, then his left, the man pulled from his body a small but sharp dagger. Holding the knife point out, he stalked quietly ahead. Deeper and deeper into the ancient grove he tread, the tall oaks pressing close around him as he did, pinning him into the heart of the forest. Finally, as the air closed in menace around him, a sudden opening cleared in the trunks. There ahead in the center of the clearing grew a magnificent old oak, roots gnarled and wrinkled, reaching hard into the ground like an old hand grown knotty with age. He walked forward to the base of the tree, coming to a stop when the massive trunk rose a nose-breadth in front of him.

"Forgive me," he whispered in reverence as he placed his left hand on the bark of the ancient tree. The motion of the youth's other arm fell smooth and the dagger stuck deep past the bark, almost to the heartwood. With leverage, he pulled loose a narrow strip of bark. Continuing in this manner, there piled a handful of bark at his feet.

The tree bled sap even in this dark winter. Staring for a moment, the young man slowly bent a finger to the bared wood at waist level in the shadows of fog and black night. There, pulling in a thin line stretched a wisp of ... something ... something like liquid lightning, extending out from the tree to his navel. He sheathed his blade and looked about.

Shrugging up his cloak, the young man bent his dark head and made a motion at the string as one does to wave away smoke — and his finger struck the strand of silver with a resounding vibration. It was of stuff stronger and finer than any substance he had ever imagined, but looked

less real. The strand stretched itself taut and began to pull, shooting pangs of discomfort into his belly. He stuck to the tree.

Either the run weakened him more than he thought and he was seeing things from pure exhaustion, or the fog was amassing and swirling rather oddly around the oak which he had picked for this night's business. Looking slowly around from his maimed position, the young man realized here, in the most still and dark part of the forest, the fog now picked up speed and purpose and spun around him.

The forest spread itself out around the ancient oak tree like the low of an uncooked egg white from the yolk. It was old, ancient even before ancient people had noticed its propensity for usefulness. The trunk was twisted and yet life radiated from the tree.

Fog now definitely outlined itself into vague shapes, unmistakably wraith-like in consistency but convincingly human in form. Angered — as if the tree itself had set the spirits forming to revenge his missing skin. Men. Women. Children of every age. Hazy maliciousness. Quivering slightly, the young man felt fear rise in his throat, reach up, and tickle the back of his nose. The air turned considerably colder.

Then he remembered what he took for granted as a boy. There was a sacrifice for breaking the holy land's peace by taking a part of the life force of the oak such as he had done. One of the oak spirits moved closer, rolling with the fog, refining and redefining its visage as it closed in. If he remembered correctly, it was the ultimate sacrifice.

But before he had a moment to think back fully, the malevolent apparitions redoubled in a gust of wind, and through them came a breath, a certainty, a cry of death. His wife had passed ...

* * *

Entrails surged down the crumpled form of the man as the spirits converged toward the heart of the forest. The air smelt of metal and a heady sweetness completely out of place on this cold winter night, and the youth slumped in the smell, propped against the fingers of the tree roots sprawled around him. If only he had not sworn to get her with child so early, so young. They would have done better to wait. But he had sworn.

One of the spirits, the same which came close earlier, moved towards him again. As the spectre neared, the young man became able to make out the form. It — whatever it was — was older in some mysterious way, than the other ghost-like figures. As the creature twisted and spun closer it proved clearly to be female. A hole gaped open near what must be the head; how queer it was to see through a being to the other side. He felt fevered.

"You have sworn."

The words came from the very air around him, yet he knew in his some-

what distorted mind it was the smoky deity nearest him who was speaking. The young man swallowed. He had sworn. He nodded.

"You have sworn by the powers of all that is sacred to grove. Do you remember?"

The half-frown, half-saddened smile on his face read that he remembered clear enough. Only eight months before had he stood with his new wife's father at the edge of this very grove, to pledge a child would come of their union. It was the only condition on which he could marry her, and he knew it then as he knew it now — and so he swore with no thought to the consequences, and the oath was a grave one. All oaths were sacred, but he was not concentrating on the holy words he spoke. He just wanted to marry the woman.

Laughter screeched from the being now right before him. Apparently it could read his mind. The man staggered.

"Your wife is dead. What now of your oath?" the laughter asked. The young man said nothing but fell to the ground.

"What — is it — you — want of — me?" the young man asked. Life fell way from him bit by bit.

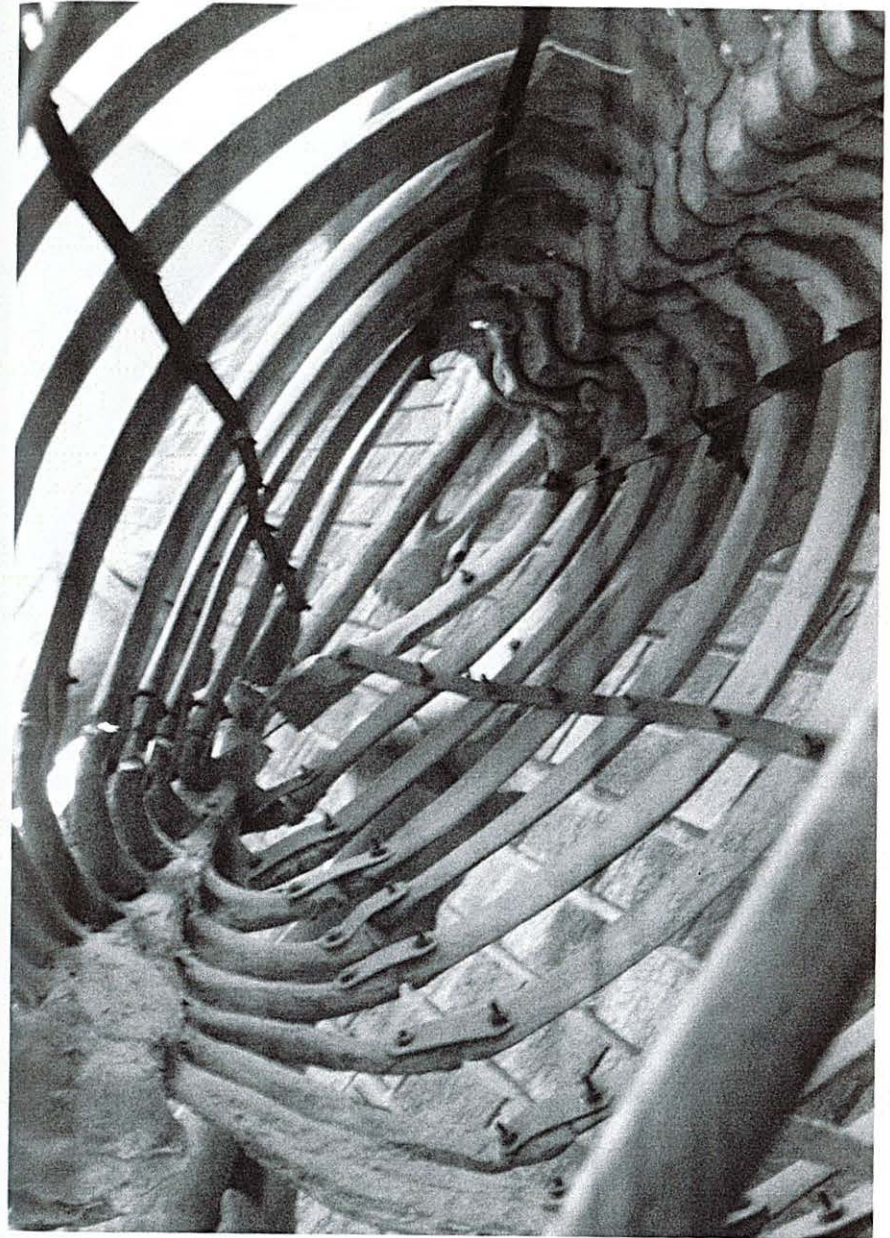
The spirit solidified.

"Retribution from a fallen man who speaks pointless words," rasped the reply, this time almost sounding human. The young man raised his head wearily, groaned as he lifted his failing body. The old wise woman stood before him — and he didn't know why he didn't notice it before, why he didn't think more on the look in her eyes as she tended his wife. Why he didn't notice she bent like the ancient oak to which he was tied. So many things ... so many missed important things ... he hadn't known ... but then again, he hadn't cared to find out. It was getting hard to focus. Black and white splotches infiltrated his peripheral view of the dark night.

The spirits spun around him, but the young man no longer paid need to the fog spirits, his focus drifted through and away. The light of them reflected in his eyes. They were blacker again than usual, having hit his head very hard when his strength finally broke against the power of the tree, so the reflection shone like the refraction of some diamond in a deep, deep pit. The depths of his feeling showed only in that pinprick of reflected forces belonging to neither above nor below.

He struggled to breathe. He had sworn. First he had sworn to kill his wife, and then to save her. The reflected silver light turned glassy, the figures in it more hazy, more distant than they already were naturally. A film tinted his cornea. He had sworn. The spirits converged as if to roll him over and consume him.

He had sworn. And now? Now, he too had died.



Garry Norris

Bones

Photograph



Robert Dittmer

King Barn

Watercolor



Linda Hoffman

Roses

Oil Painting

Megan Bolling
Graphic Art



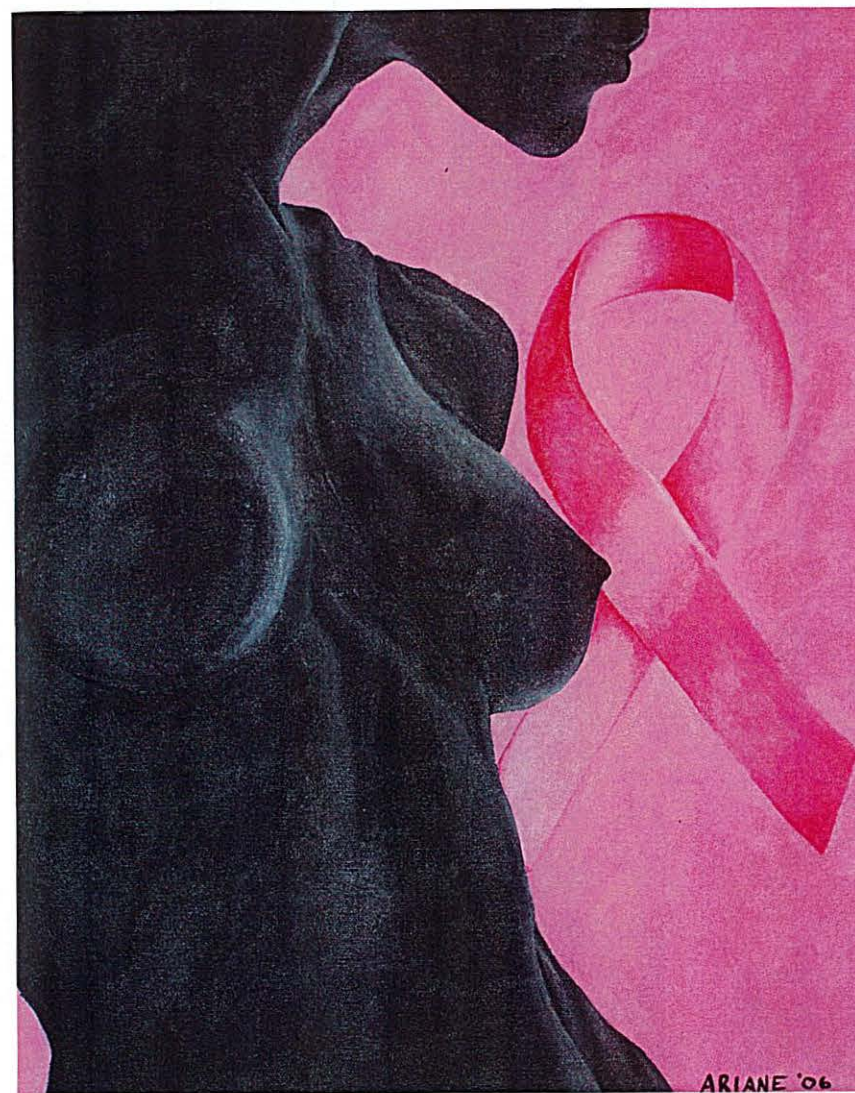
Tainted Soul



Morning Evil



Worm's Eye View



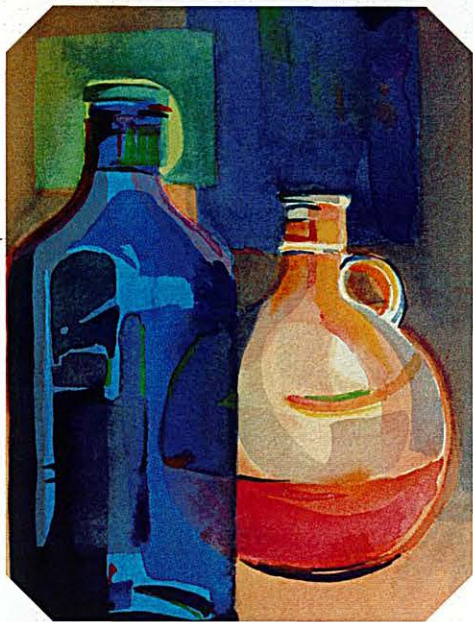
Ariane O'Day

October

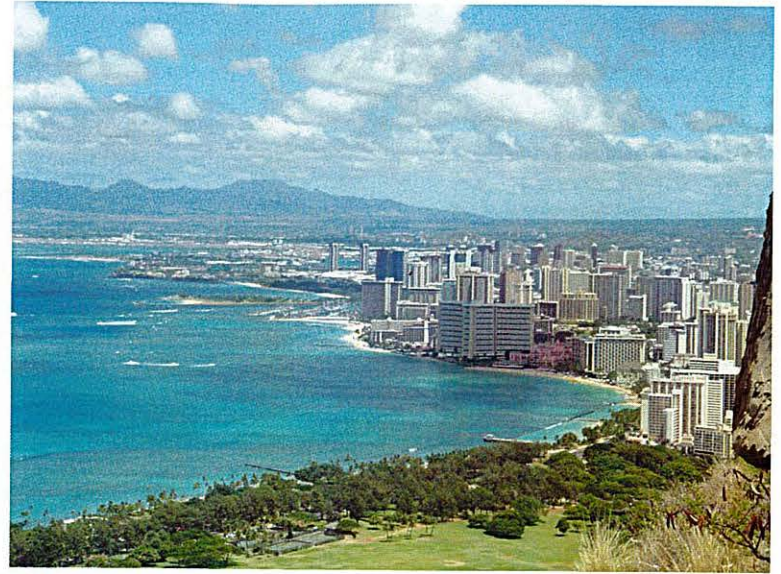
Charcoal



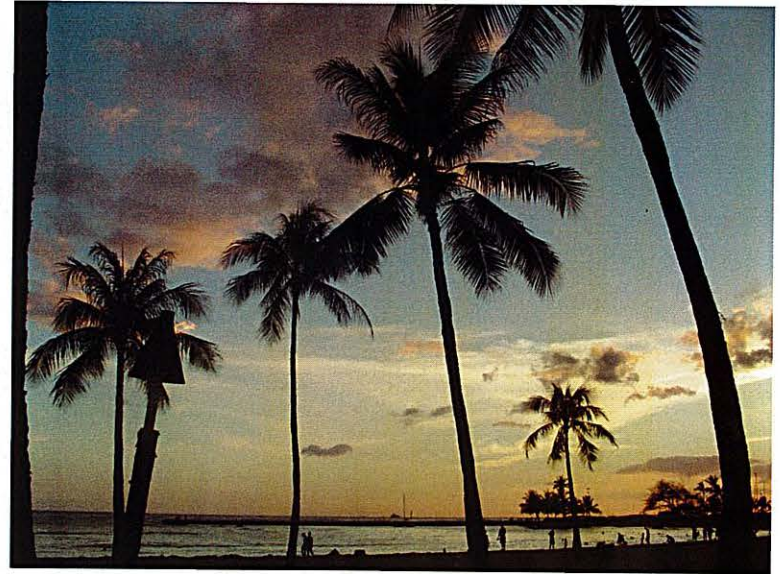
Cézanne Study
Robert Dittmer Watercolor



Bottles
Linda Hoffman Watercolor



Jon Strickland City of Paradise Photograph



Jon Strickland Paradise Sky Photograph

Robert Dittmer

Bridge Bennett Springs

Watercolor



34

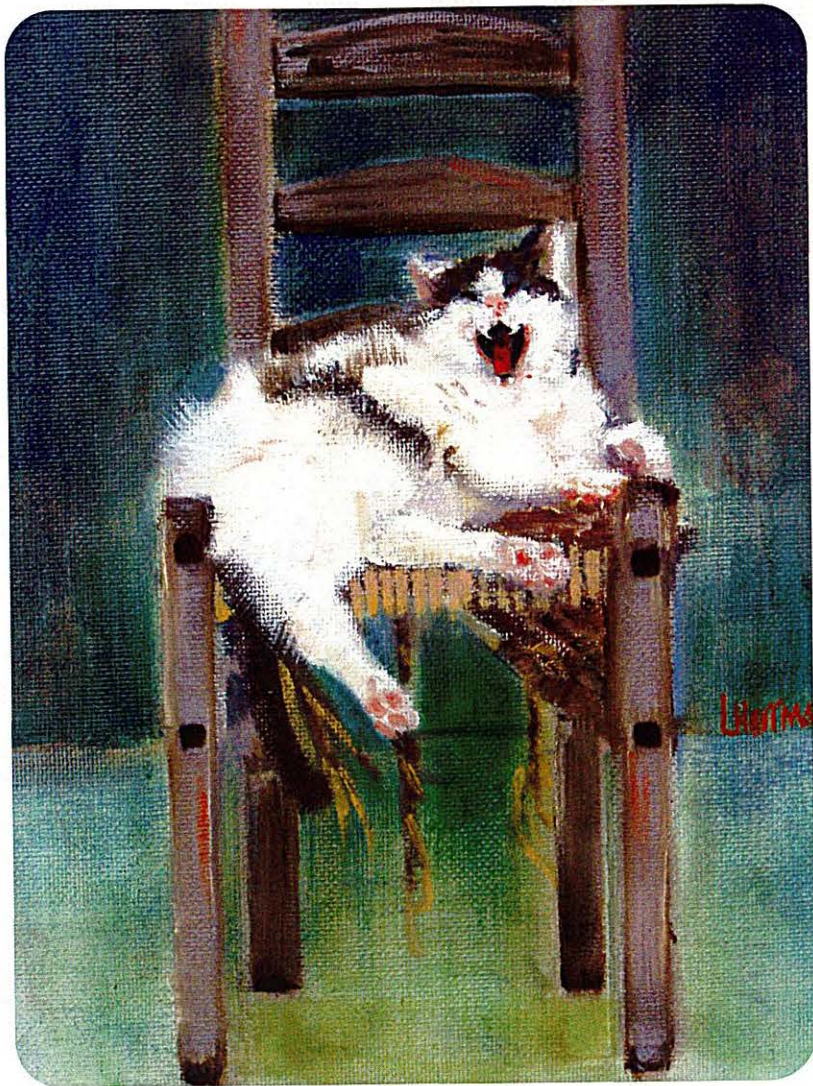


Green Tractor

Painting

Ariane O'Day

35



Linda Hoffman Big Yawn Oil Painting



Linda Hoffman Geraniums Painting

Superstition

(Song lyrics)

by
Mike Bentele

Lucky cigarette
Last one in the pack
And I give it to you,
And I give it to you.

You wear my lucky hat;
Now it's not so lucky anymore
And I give it to you,
And I give it to you.

I have had a lot of
Luck in my life
Since you've been in my world,
Since you've been in my world.

All the mirrors are broken
13 is a common number
Wood breaks when I knock,
Wood breaks when I knock.

Black cats
Cross every path
A crack in every sidewalk,
A crack in every sidewalk.

You're like the snake eyes
Stay away from me —
You're like telling my wish,
It never comes true

It's a good thing you didn't jinx me
When we said the same things
It would have spelled, D, double O, M

filled with chairs
atmosphere was stuffy
stand behind the podium!
old man
perched in a chair.
dragging my life —
into misery ...

gained respect
learning language
most valuable lesson ...
look into the future
learning
what you CAN change
learning
mistakes are crucial.

Life.

Perceptions
by M.H.

Sealed with a Kiss

by
Dexter Peebles

What did I do?
I wanted to be friends;
You play God, punishing me for my sins...
You lie to me to gain support
Of your friends and allies
who are the jury to you being judge in the world's court,
I am the defendant
with nothing left to defend
You raped me, and killed all of my friends
But in due time your lies will crumble
and your allies will fade
You'll slip into darkness with only one thing to say
"I thought you had weapons of mass destruction so I attacked."
Well, I accept your apology

Your Dear Friend,
Iraq



Genie Banner

Innocence

Photograph

Two in a Pair

by
Laurel Massey

Almost nine now and staring out the car window, I bring my gaze back to the front windshield. I anxiously wiggle and squirm next to my brother who continues to leave small bruise marks from his vicious pinchers I call his fingers while Dad threatens to turn the car around as I have already received a "time out" due to retaliation. We are driving to Grandma's house a whole hour away. The excitement I feel is suppressed down into my chest ready to burst at my next breath. The agony of being restrained by my seat-belt only makes the sixty minutes feel like an eternity. As we draw closer my memory becomes heightened, and I can smell the pot roast basting in the melted juices next to the carrots and sweet potatoes.

We were greeted with sweet, soft, delicate kisses and strong bear hugs, which left me squirming and gasping for air, my face slightly turning the pink shade of a newly blossomed rose. I ran stretching my legs in this familiar house inhaling through my nostrils the smell of all things wonderful. My brother and I settled into our routine of running, pushing, and hitting; I will admit I forfeited before our game became, "Let's kill Laurel." We played until the business was settled between my parents and Grandma.

Sitting down to dinner was the best part of the visit, smelling the melting butter slipping off the corn and watching my tall glass of milk sweat down the side. This was too much for me to handle. My stomach began to talk out loud. During the prayer my Grandma always required, my head bowed resting on my chest saliva slowly slipping between the cracks of my pursed lips, just like a dog in one of Pavlov's experiments. I knew it was almost time to grab my fork and shovel food into and down my throat. My brother and I eyed each other's plates and watched how much food

the other was ingesting, hoping to be the winner of our clared contest.

After our fair share of food and the leftovers were ready and wrapped in the fridge, it was my time with Grandma. My time to be snuggled in the safest arms the world could have ever created. No bruises, no punishments. When we finally nodded off to the reruns of Golden Girls; I knew I was protected, was allowed to be me; these were our "safe naps." My worries of growing up and becoming a lady, acting my age disappeared in those arms. For that one moment in time we had an understanding that I was a girl visiting her Grandma.

Now I am an eight year-old-girl without a grandma to visit. No more protective arms or an understanding of my need to be me. I find myself yearning for her home-style cooking and the escape to her chair for our "safe naps." The memories we made are slowly slipping and I find it harder to dip back into my brain to pull the memories out. I think back. She changed my life; she took the pressure off and let me run around barefoot in the dirt. She let me know it was alright to act my age, be a girl and move on in my life without her in it. I will never forget the smells, touch, and wisdom Grandma shared with me.



Beauty

Drawing
by Justin Himori

Ozark Heaven (An Ode to the Ozarks)

Song Lyrics

by
Mike Bentele

If you think you have ever found heaven, I invite you to the Ozarks.

If you have heard a Bob White or a Morning Lark, you know what I'm sayin';

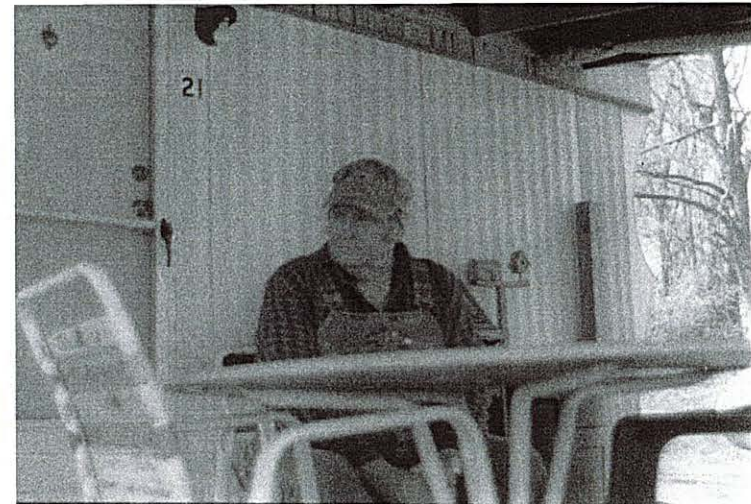
Sit in your river boat, whistlin' and fishin'; you'll see a cornfield on the left and a cave on the right.

When you have seen the stars in the Ozark air, you'll know you're in heaven or as close as you can get;

Spendin' nights 'round the camp fire tellin' ghost stories to get the girl in your arms.

If you have ever gone hiking in the autumn hills of the Ozarks you'll know there is a heaven and it's in the Ozarks.

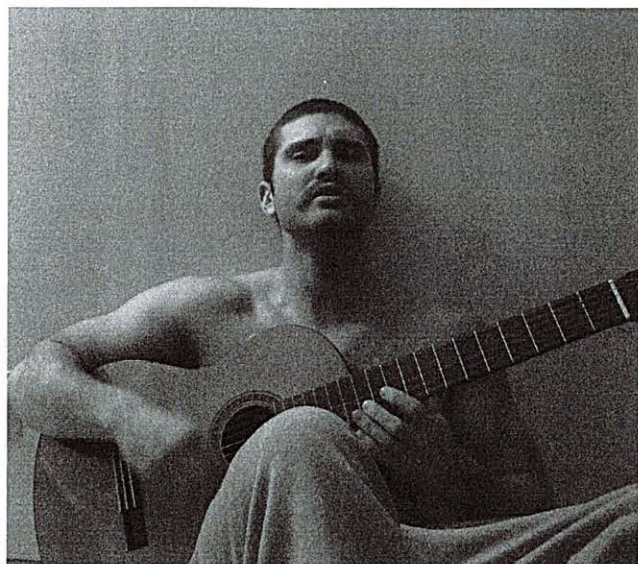
Wherever I go, to the valley of California, the mountains of Colorado, my heart lives in the Ozarks.



A Wise Man's Place

Lisa Bakert

Photograph



Strumming His Soul

Austin Zavala

Photograph



Local Flavor

Justin Himori

Photograph

North Shore's Loudmouth

by
Jessica James

Linda Anne, a tall, broad, freckled thing with a mop of tightly curled brown hair, lives with her granny – the local babysitter, and as such is a bit of a loudmouth. Granny's tract of land is around eight acres or so, running down and over fields of short grass for the cows, to the woods of maple, dogwood, and cedar right down to the Lake. As Linda Anne and her friends are locals, they never bothered with the Lake as kids. In these parts it's full of cattails and cottonmouths and strainers anyway. Instead they'd play cops and robbers, or, when it was just the girls, Little House on the Prairie. Linda Anne always got to play Laura, usually blind-folding all the other players to make them all play blind Mary, listening for Linda Anne's voice as they ran over the fields and woods.

Linda Anne is now grown and a town "character," with a brayishly-loud soprano tone that careens and ricochets off valley walls when she sings to the radio. When Linda Anne was in high school, Granny Kilmer gave up and arranged for voice lessons to save what little was left working in her ear-drums. Everyone knows when Linda Anne is near.

By the time Linda Anne and her friends are almost old enough to drink, this fact is a slight problem.

Here in the parking lot of the One Community Bank on a warm — some memories shall say hot — September night, Linda Anne meets up with a rally of cars to drink some beer. But, as Linda Anne is a “character,” she starts ahead of schedule, in order to be good and in the mood to drink by the time her car rolls onto the shiny blacktop of the lot — which of course she is, after all the trouble she went to in procuring the beer from Larry-of-the-gas-stations’ kid brother.

Granny’s ’66 red Chevy farm pickup idles loudly as she turns in. All the local kids learn to drive in this truck on the hills of Granny’s fields, pressing permanent figure eights into the grass which must surely look like crop signs to passengers in airplanes flying above. There are three other cars parked already, and each person within waves. Linda Anne gives the Chevy a magnificent floor, lifts a swig from her left-hand beer, and then a second swig from her right-hand beer.

This of course means Linda Anne’s hands are, indeed, not at ten-and-two like she practiced back in Driver’s Ed. At the moment she switches left to right hands, Tommy Michael, parked and waiting in his father’s station wagon (the kind with fake wood paneling on the side and red vinyl seats) perpendicular to Linda Anne, rubs his already thinning tuft of strawberry blonde hair and realizes he is directly in the path of destruction. Doppler Radar could not predict her course any better than he could in that half-a-second.

That old station wagon, with Tommy Michael in it, goes skidding across the parking lot into the bank’s only dusk-to-dawn light pole from impact of the Chevy. Tommy Michael and his beer tumble out the car. He hasn’t felt anything close to what he’s feeling right now since he jumped off the North Shore Big Bridge

when he was eight on a dare.

She gets, as the town will soon fondly remember, “Runned ov-ah!”

In the ’66 Chevy, Linda Anne tumbles out too — yet, because of a mixture of more beer, less body weight (than Tommy Michael, who plays football) and the angle by which the Chevy hits the station wagon, Linda Anne not only tumbles *out*, but also tumbles *under*. The two heavy back wheels of her own granny’s truck chunk up and over her rump. She gets, as the town will soon fondly remember, “Runned ov-ah!”

But this is not the end. By now the Chevy is excited at the birth of its freedom and desires to drive where it wants. As Linda Anne is fine (Doc. Rodney will say it was a God-Given miracle she’d had the sense to pre-drink and get good and relaxed before she decided to drive) and is smoothing her tire-marked clothing and curly hair down very calmly, the Chevy sees no reason to stop.

Across the lot it steers, over two yellow parking curbs (side-by-side) and carefully through the perfectly spaced marigolds, over the grass, plunks into the ditch and then back out, and then bolts like a mare across the one highway, until SMACK — ! Into the only pump poor Larry’s Gas possesses which now promptly and tiredly falls over. It’s tired of this shit. The Chevy is startled and stops to catch its breath.

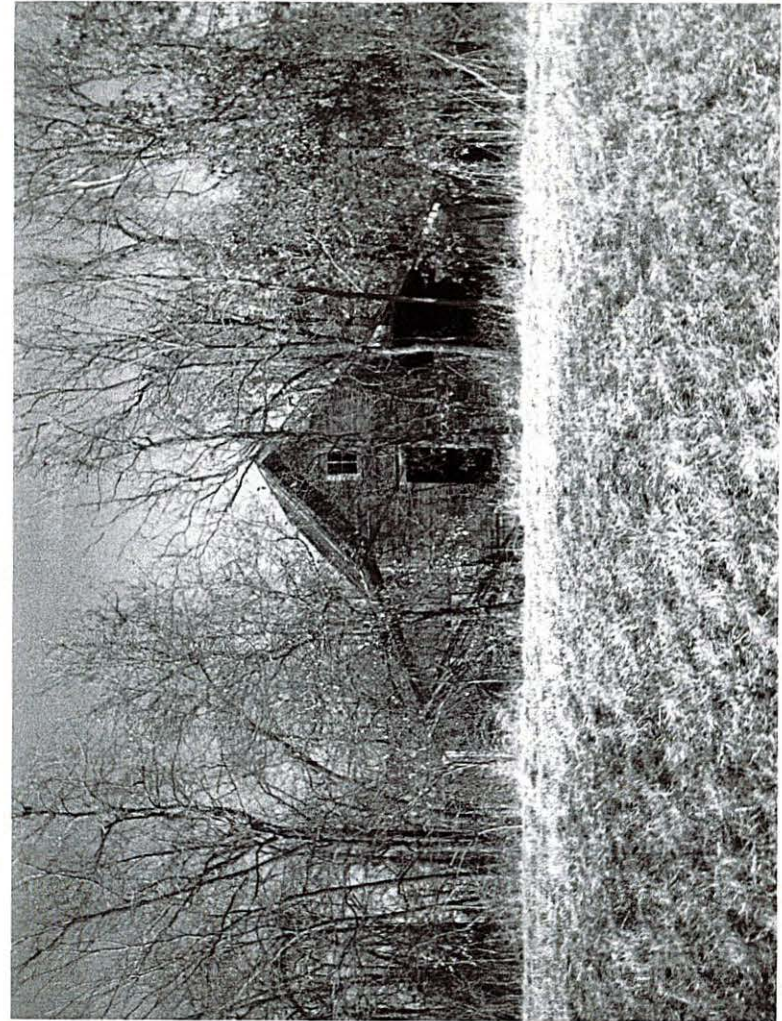
Linda Anne loses hers too; she laughs so hard her shoulders jump and jiggle and she spills her brand-new beer she rescued for Tommy Michael, who for some reason just doesn’t feel

like drinking right now. He stands there, his mouth rhythmically opening and shutting like a carp vying for some fish food from a tourist.

Sarrah, Donna, Marcus and Landon (the youngest set of Johansson brothers) come-to. Together they push Tommy Michael's father's station wagon away from the pole, shove Linda Anne into the passenger seat, return to their own rides and the six of them peel off. The acrid smell of gasoline fills the air, making their nostrils flair and contract as they attempt to flee.

At the stoplight — they've made it about a whole sixty or seventy feet, mind you — things get tricky; Linda Anne has her head out the window bellowing it — it being Larry's Gas now spewing all over the farm truck's hood and the commotion of the police and volunteer fire department already properly arrived — is the funniest damn thing she's ever seen.

Bellow is the only word for it — but at least she sets her beer down, and Tommy Michael is thankful, because, as they wait for the one light (there's very little traffic; it is fall after all) to turn green, Dick Walker, Chief of Police, gets the full story of what happened yelled from Linda Anne as she hangs out the window — names omitted, of course. At the blink it takes for the light to go from the top red to the bottom green, the small train of cars speed — good thing those old station wagons are so sturdy — out of town and head for Granny's. They plan to park in Granny's field and get very, very drunk, and feel they completely deserve it.



Katherine Steel

The Old Barn

Photograph

HE DIED TO LIVE

by
Leesa Morton

Tick . . . Tick . . . Tick. Buckey's watch. I could not move. Empty space tightened around my body. Chills ran down my spine in his room with one light. A foreboding quiet wrapped its arms about the four walls into a dull silence.

"No, no, no Mar'in!" moaned Mildred at the helm of his bed. Dark shadows formed along the corners of his room. Five of us consoled each other.

Patients yelled. Random cries reverberated down the hall, while a painful moan floated next door. Antiseptic cleaner, day-old cafeteria food and starched linens swirled through my consciousness. *Be strong!*

Rebecca and I stood side by side being strong for Mimmie. Yet we were uncomfortable and made ready to escape if necessary.

"Take your time, Mimmie," Mom said. Standing behind Mimmie, Mom rubbed her fragile back.

"I'm so glad I saw him last night," quaked Jessica's voice. She wept at the foot of his bed.

I needed to leave. But could not speak. I only stared. All white. So cold. Too frail.

And then I remembered it. Tick . . . Tick . . . Tick. The watch grasped me in its hands. I could not break free.

A month earlier I listened to the Tick . . . Tick . . . Tick . . . as the pendulum swung slowly back and forth.

I forgot to adjust it. Buckey's favorite clock was measuring out his last moments.

The phone rang.

"Leesa? It's Mom. I need you at Mimmie and Buckey's immediately. Your uncle has fallen and I can't lift him. Please hurry!"

"Okay. I'll be right there."

I grab my keys and beelined outside.

The cars are gone! Jessica had to work. Mom took the Buick.

Perfect! What am I going to do?

My heart races. Shivers course through my body. My hands are cold, cold as death. Buckey had a nearly fatal stroke three years ago. *His life is in my hands. No car!*

"Hur - - ry - - Lee - - sa" beat in precise time with my running feet.

I raced down Rea Street. Buckey loved its greenish gold maple buds, its bright yellow daffodils, and its scent of freshly mown grass.

One block done. One more to go. Taking a longer stride I round the corner for the last stretch. Mimmie and Buckey's rectangular, one story brick home is just a block away.

Come on Leesa, kick it in. I pump my arms faster, relax my tightened fists, and slowly breathe in and out. Pearl-size beads of water form on my brow.

I sprint as if it were an Olympic race.

Up the driveway, through the garage I burst into the door with, "I'm HERE!"

"Praise the Lord," Mom says.

Mom, Buckey, and Mimmie had congregated in the narrow hallway of their home. Buckey lay half in the bathroom and half out. I saw the bloody gash on his forehead.

"I'm sorry . . . I . . ." I gasped for breath. ". . . couldn't get here faster."

Mom nodded for my eyes alone.

"Buckey, are you all right?"

He sighs. "Yes, honey, I'm fine."

"Do you feel pain anywhere? In your back, your legs, or your arms?"

"No."

"That's a good sign."

"I'm so glad you're a lifeguard," Aunt Mimmie said. I patted the small of her back.

"Do you know what t' do for him?" Her words tumbled out from her pinched mouth one on top of the other into a frown.

"Not at the moment." I hesitate. "But I may need you to move those pillows once I lift Buckey."

"You're not goin' to lift Mar'in all by yourself, are you?" Mimmie's voice crackled with surprise.

"I don't know any other way to do it. Any suggestions, Mom?"

"What if we put him on a sheet and sort of scoot him to their bedroom? Would that work?"

"Lands, no," cries Mimmie. "You'll kill him sure."

"O.K. O.K." Mom says.

Though only a minute had passed it seemed like hours. Mimmie paced the floor wringing her hands with worry. Her husband of fifty-six years lay helpless.

"Maybe we should call the emergency room. Get a strong man over here t' lift Mar'in," my aunt suggested. She dropped her hands, flustered.

"No, Mimmie, I don't think that'll be necessary. I can manage. But thank you."

"Oh well. What do I know? I'm just tryin' to help."

"I know. Please don't worry. I'll get him up and into bed before you can count to three."

She nodded. "I'm sorry. Leesa, take your time." Wrinkles knit on her forehead, harvesting the year's worries.

"Mom, I'm going to kneel down and pick Buckey up under the bend of the legs and around the back. Once I get him situated, help me stand up by bearing some of his weight in your arms."

I knelt down. "After I say three, that's when I'll need your help."

"All right."

I wrapped my left arm around his body and felt his ribs. His bare knees resembled knobs on a table leg. In his light under-shirt and boxers, he reminded me of Jesus after the soldiers stripped him of his clothes.

I said a quick prayer and counted "1, 2 . . . 3. Mom, let's go." I took a deep breath and we raised Buckey. He folded like a bride carried over the threshold.

"I've got him, you can let go now." Even though he didn't weigh more than 120 pounds, Buckey was heavier than I thought. I moved as quickly as I dared because I didn't want to drop him.

"Is he heavy, honey?" I heard Mimmie ask.

"Uhh."

Only two more steps to close the gap. I used my last bit of strength and heaved him onto the mattress as Mom watched.

"You did it!" Mom rejoices.

"Oh, good Leesa. Did y' hurt your back?" Mimmie asks.

"No, Mimmie."

"I could've helped you." She gently pushed my back.

"Well, you had too many other things to worry about.

Besides, Mom was there. So, you see I wasn't completely without help."

"I know, but you shouldn't 've had t' lift Mar'in." She dropped her arms to her sides and she rigidly shrugged her

shoulders.

"I'm fine Mimmie. I'm concerned for Buckey. Why don't you make him comfortable?"

I followed Mom to the bathroom where she dampened a washcloth for Buckey's gash.

"You don't think Buckey's fall was a stroke, do you?" I ask Mom.

"No, just another dizzy spell. He said he lost his footing after leaning over to brush his teeth and couldn't get his balance."

"He sure had me scared."

"I just don't know how much longer we can keep this up. He's getting weaker and falling more."

My insides plummeted to the floor. I've only known my uncle in sickness.

Outside the bathroom I glance at Mom and ask, "Where's Mimmie?"

"I have no clue. I thought she was talking with Buckey."

"Maybe she's getting him a glass of water. Be right back."

For a 93-year-old woman, she sure does get around. But I don't see her in the kitchen. Or in the utility room. Or in the den.

I return. "Where can she be?" Before Mom could reply, my aunt appeared, on cue, from behind their closet door.

"... this ol' sweater will have to do." she said.

"Mimmie, have you been in that closet the whole time?"

Mom asked bewildered.

"Yes ma'am. Why?"

"Oh, it's nothing. Leesa and I didn't know where you were. I'm just glad you're safe."

"Well, why on earth wouldn't I be? Mar'in's the one who fell." She yanked on Buckey's wool sleeve, determined to smooth out its wrinkles.

"I was just asking." Mom gave a soft chuckle. "Is Buckey cold?"

"No. I thought he might want it for later."

Mimmie walked in quick small steps to the edge of their bed and rested the palm of her petite arthritic hand upon Buckey's forehead. Buckey had always been her fortress.

"How are you feeling, dear?" she asked softly. Buckey opened his eyes and gazed into hers. To one another they were still twenty-five.

*To one another
they were still
twenty-five.*

I'm better." His lids are heavy laden. "I just want to sleep for a while."

"I understand. Everything will be all right. Just sleep." He obediently closed his eyes that once held a night sky full of sparkle. Soon he would fall under the spell of dreams. Mimmie quietly bent over and placed a light-as-a-feather kiss on his cheek.

"I love you Mar'in," she whispered in his ear.

Regaining her strength, Mimmie managed a smile as we proceeded to the door. But, a small glistening tear dropped onto her withered face. She felt pain.

"Let's see what we can do about getting you some lunch," I suggested.

As we passed through the door, I turned my head to look back at Buckey. I saw him beckon me with his hand and had Mimmie walk on with Mom.

"What is it Buckey? Can I do something for you?" He shook his head "No." His long, slender fingers reached my own. They were warm and felt like sandpaper.

"Thank you." His brown eyes opened once more.

"You're welcome, Buckey. I hope you rest easy." He slightly nodded up and down, and I gave him a kiss on his forehead. "See you tomorrow."

He closed his eyes.

Here I stand. A month later. I peer down at the uncle my family loved and cared for all these years.

Only moments ago, Buckey's doctor acknowledged to us outside his hospital room, "Martin died of pneumonia. It was only a matter of time."

"Well, Buckey, I guess I won't see you tomorrow." My vocal chords squeeze one against the other. Inside raindrops fell.

I lightly rest my palm upon his folded hands. God is in control.

"Good night, Buckey. I love you."

As I walk from his side, I know *Buckey died to live. His home is now with God.*

Tick . . . Tick . . . Tick. His legacy continues.

Lisa Bakert

Family Roots

Photograph



Cinnamon and Samantha

by

Samantha Narron and Landon Alexander

Sweetness, a kiss soft and laced with earthy spice
A simple word spoken softly.

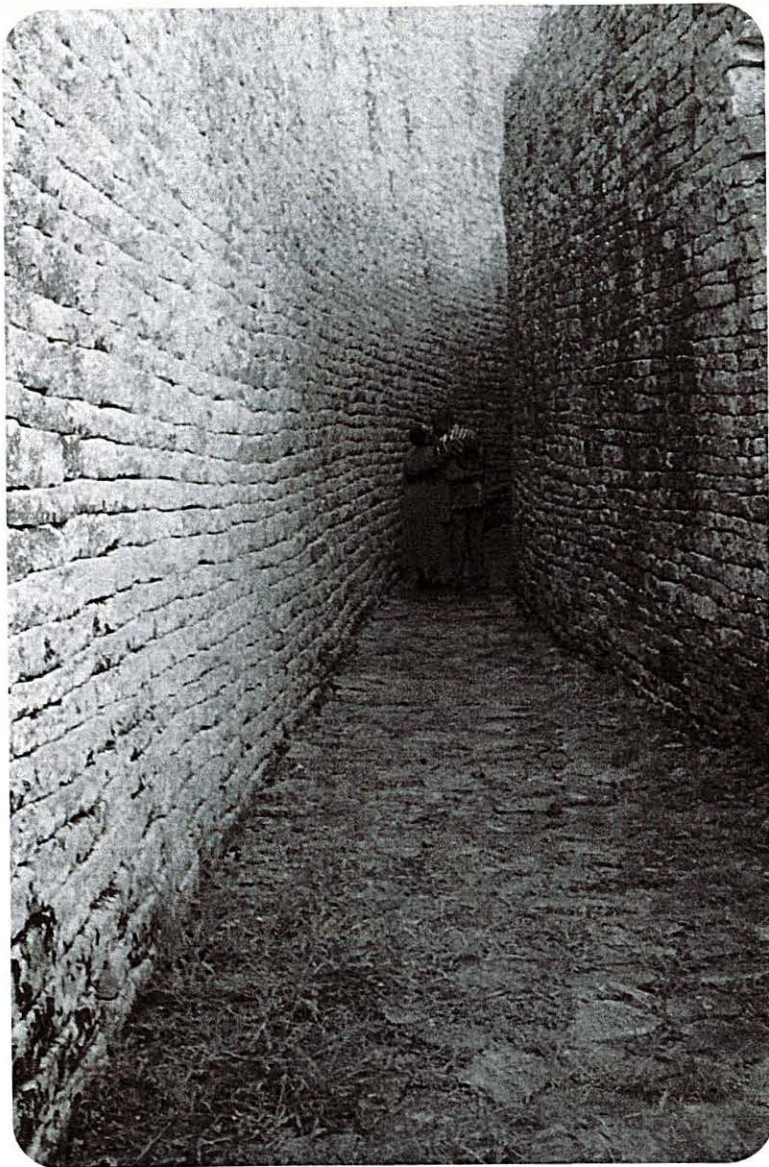
Hands that caress tenderly, pains of the soul dissolve,
Scars of the heart fade away with a glance
Caught up between love and lust,
Emotions hushed with pleasure,
Nothing more than blissful agony.

*Searing
stillness
in a
pulse,
tasting
life*

A scorching resignation, inadequate to the rhapsody
Searing stillness in a pulse, tasting life
again.

A cool rhythm, a breath in sync,
Inhibitions gone and no time to think.
A tense anticipation, an intense expectation,
A fine explanation for an unreal situation.

Sweetness, a kiss soft and laced with earthy spice
A simple word spoken softly —
Cinnamon and Samantha.



LOVE: The Way I Know It
Marylynn Gwatiringa Photograph



Drops in the Bucket of Life
Melody Weigert Photograph

The Sacrifice

by
Leesa Morton

On a hill stood a cross
made of wood and built with nails,
a man hung by His bare hands.

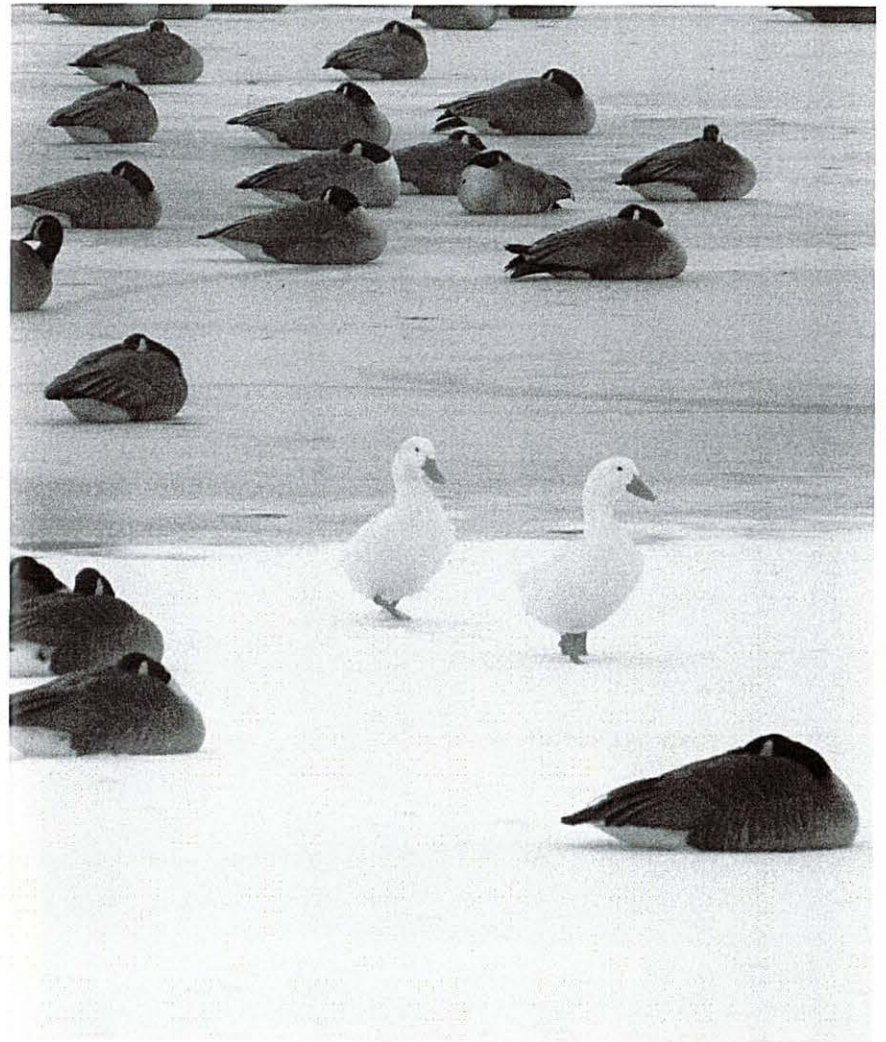
A crown of thorns upon His head
entwined with the blood that He had shed.
This man was stripped, whipped, and beaten
just for the sins of you and me.

Thunder cracked and lightning sparked; rain came pelting through.

From the lips of this man He said:
"Father forgive them for they know not what they do."
And with that He drew his last tender breath,
His head fell along with the pressure of defeat
for God had turned His back.

No one knew
this man would arise and surprise His land.

Three days later
This precious man ascended into a cloud of white and commanded His
followers:
"Go and tell the world of me, for by my grace
I will set them free."



Garry Norris

Migrate

Photograph

The Summer Swan

For Anastasia Shavrina, 1987-2006

by
Jessica James

O, that swans could ever swim smooth waters
And falter not, flowing fair and regal
With eager ripples radiating back
And back from those blossoming in blest youth.

In truth, the Tartar'n swan of whom I tell
Was sped impelled, spared spirit from the North;
High, torn lands; hailed [w]holy Russian beauty,
No lack of lofty labors and lively dreams —

— (repaired agricultural practices;
designation of employment for youths;
rebuilt state of her motherhood country) ...

Charméd ideals all. And then came the crash.
Fact felt faulty while framed full swan eyes
Lidded lifeless lies of a long, deep calm —
So gone her grace ... Her guiltless ebbing blood

Waned away to naught in wan, young swan's wrist
That my pressed fingertips plied hesitant,
For so pleasantly she peered to sky, slain,
That same swan swept up to sanctuary.



Lisa Bakert The Potency of Beauty Photograph

A Creation Story

by
Mike Temple

From the beginning of time the lands were a vast plain of nothingness. There was no light nor darkness, no colour nor matter, except for a single creature. An old man had lived in the centre of nothingness before the beginning of time and would remain there well after the end of it.

One day, this old man grew tired of the nothingness, and created a huge body of water that covered beyond what the eye could see. After he had done so, well enjoying a swim in his new creation, he desired to be dry. He then created the sun and placed it in the sky. It took him a great deal of time to get the distance correct for the right warmth. He then created grains of dirt, and planted slowly and carefully until great bodies of land appeared. He made sure that the centre of what used to be nothingness was covered by land.

Now though the lands had been created; they were barren and lifeless. One day the old man took a bag from his cloak. Inside the bag were millions of seeds. From the centre, around where the lands had started, he planted these seeds, each one by hand, very slowly and carefully. Of course, it took much of his time, but once he planted all of the seeds, the old man brought clouds from the sky. From the clouds he brought water. After seasons of watering, the seeds grew into millions of flowers and different plants. To help water the land, the old man created a river to run through the centre. The old man liked what he saw;

but when he looked throughout the rest of the land, he saw only dirt. The man thought that since he had created this wondrous life, where he lived, then he should bring it to the rest of the land. However, he decided the centre should remain the most amazing in the lands.

The old man rose up the land around the centre, creating a vast mountain range. Now, these mountains are known as the Senor mountains. From his cloak he took out another bag and began to plant seeds around him. But these seeds were of trees. He carefully planted each and every tree in the Normen's hideout, woods, and around Novelton. This old man did not like to create the same tree, or same flower, or same plant over and over again. Like any painter would, he made sure each tree was different. The colour of the leaves, the bark, everything. After he planted the forest, he created a shovel and dug out a dividing river. He then walked throughout the land and planted other seeds from his cloak. Seasons of careful watering passed, and the land became how it appears today. He then cut some of the trees down and built himself a small cabin in the centre of the lands. There he would dwell. He also planted one last seed in the centre, a tall tree – the tallest tree in the land and beyond. This tree was his pride and joy.

However, the old man looked out into the lands, and saw he had created plants and amazing country, but something else was missing. He felt it needed more life. Again, he set out and began to shape from the dust animals. After many seasons of shaping and reshaping, the creatures of today were created. He commanded that the creatures could go any where they wished;

however, they could not touch his tree. The animals obeyed. After that he created a dark shadow. The shadow was of evil, and he gave the shadow permission to walk all over the lands, except for the centre and his cabin, and he could not touch the tree. The shadow had no choice but to obey.

The old man returned to his cabin, and from inside he began to write rules and laws that nature would have to follow. The old man sat for a very long time writing these rules. Once he finished, he set his laws and rules into motion.

The old man from inside his cabin looked out into the land he had created. He knew it was wonderful, but there was still something missing. He desired companions. From the dirt of the centre he carefully created children. The old man then gave life and minds to his children. Each could think on their own, and make their own choices. These children lived with him in his cabin, and they lived happily. No sorrow and no hunger was present there. Then one day, the shadow stood outside the cabin. He spoke to the children.

“Old Man does not want you to see the world. There is much to see. Come with me and I shall show it to you! I shall teach you to plant like Old Man plants! I shall teach you to create life.”

The children grew excited over the thought that they could become like Old Man. Knowing all that was going on, Old Man came out of the cabin and spoke aloud.

“My children, if you remain with me I shall show you all you should ever need to see. I shall show you love and compassion; your home shall be my home. If you go with Shadow you shall have none of the things I offer you. You shall have pain and

suffering, you shall have death. I give you the choice to stay with me or to go to the shadow.”

The children did not listen to Old Man, instead they all chose to follow Shadow. Old Man knew this would happen, but his heart broke at their choice. Because Old Man never went back on what he said, he could not undo the words he had just spoken.

Time passed and winter came, just as he wrote in the law. Old Man enjoyed walking about the woods, seeing all of his trees. That day, he left his cloak in the cabin, and wore a leather tunic that was made from a lamb-like creature. His feet were bare as he walked on the leaves and thorns, but he felt no pain. Unless he chose for it to be so, no creation of his could harm him.

That evening was quite chilly, more than any other evening. Soon enough, it started to snow heavily. This did not bother Old Man; however, nothing bothered him, except for what he heard as he began to walk home. Almost as mutters in the violent wind, he heard a child crying. It was in pain; it was suffering. He thought to himself, Is this the life they have chosen? As he walked, the cry became louder, and louder. Finally, when Old Man could no longer take it, he began to look for the child.

White covered the thick of the trees and the soft, cold ground. There was so much snow on the ground it went up to his ankles. Knowing the life of his child would soon fade if he did not make haste, he hurried faster than any other old man could. He was cold and hungry; however, he did not stop or even think of himself. Finding the child consumed his mind.

The heavy snow fell for forty days as the man searched. In

fact, the man searched the entire forest. The child had stopped crying for many days, perhaps weeks. When Old Man finally came in sight of him, he found the child trapped beneath a large tree branch that had been struck by lightning and made its descent to the earth below.

On the tips of his toes, Old Man ran to the child. Then with amazing strength he lifted away the heavy branch and threw it off the child. The child's leg was bleeding badly and the bones were crushed. What used to be a leg was now no more than skin wrapped around loose meat and bones.

Carefully he picked up the wounded child in his arms. Before he could dash, Shadow walked into view.

"You astonish me, Old Man. I was beginning to think you did not care about the children you created."

"Shadow, I see you still roam about. Step aside — I must move; this child is now under my care."

"No." Shadow spoke sharply. "He is mine. You gave the children of the woods a choice, and they chose me. That choice cannot be taken back."

"But I am the lord of this forest, and I take this child now to heal him!"

"Then you break your own law."

"I never spoke that I could not heal my creations! Now let me pass! You know I made you, and I am more powerful than you."

"I shall not!"

Flames crashed down from out of the sky on top of

Shadow. He rolled out of the way and stood to his feet. From his fingertips struck lightning towards Old Man. But the Lord of the Forest stopped the lightning in midair and shot it back. Shadow flew back from the blast.

"Stand back!" Old Man's command rang firm, and Shadow was forced to obey.

"You know what the sentence is! His price will be paid!"

Old Man carried the child as he rushed through the forest, until he came back to the centre of the lands, known now as the Spirit of the Woods. The cold air rushed in as he kicked open the door. This was the first time he did not mind tracking mud on his wood floors.

Soon the child's limp body slept soundly on a soft bed. There Old Man attended to the child's wounds, and did so for many hours.

The next clear morning the child awoke. He still could not move, so the child just sat, on the bed, with his wounded leg fully extended.

"How are you, my child?"

The child did not respond.

"Are you hungry?"

The child shook his head yes.

Outside the birds began to cheerfully sing. Old Man hummed to himself as he opened the cabinet above his stove. He prepared a meal, though only enough for the child. He only thought of the child. With the food on a silver platter, he walked into the bedroom.

The child tore into the bread and drank up the soup

quicker than a Dretolas would, pausing only to look at Old Man for a moment with a strange eye. He then went back to eating.

"Tell me, what is your name?"

The child began to speak, but stopped, acting as if he would be in danger if he spoke to him.

'Well, you have heard of me before. I am the Lord of the Forest; I created you. Do you remember?"

The boy shook his head up and down.

"I knew you did. And your name is Pat."

"How did you know?" Pat asked in surprise.

"Oh, I see you do talk," chuckled Old Man. "I made these lands; I know everything. You also wonder why I have forsaken you and the children."

"Yes, I do not understand it."

"You have been lied to, my child. Shadow has brain-washed you into believing I have abandoned you. However, you have abandoned me. I have given you and the other children total free will . . ."

"Why?"

"It might be fun to play with lifeless dolls for a while, and make them do whatever you desire, but it is not real. What I gave to you is the gift of emotion and thought. I want you to express them. The given choice was to either be under my care or under Shadow's. You all chose Shadow. I cannot change what you chose. I do not break my own law."

"But can you not remove the law?"

"I can, but should I? I have thought of it every day and

night, but it is a rule I will not take back."

"Then is there no way to change our minds?"

"No, but you may choose to be under my care again. If you choose me, you shall be always under my care."

"It is rumoured you show yourself to a few of the children in the woods. Why do you not show yourself to all of us? Then we would all believe and choose you."

"If they knew for certain I was real, showing them my face would force them to believe in me. I allow myself to be seen only to aid the choice, the free will."

"I have another question . . ."

"You wonder why I send your soul to Shadow when you pass from this life? I do not do that, Shadow does. He can do whatever he wishes with you after you pass. If there are no children under my care, I cannot ensure their protection.

"You look better. Do you feel better?"

"I feel better."

"Yes, I shall take you outside today."

He took hold of the skinny, frail child in his arms and carried him outside. Pat was amazed at the beautiful spirit of the woods. Instantly, the large tree caught his eye.

Pat was amazed at the beautiful spirit of the woods.

"It is called a Sycamore tree," said Old Man.

"I have never seen such a thing in my life."

Time passed, and Pat's leg came back to full health. Soon, the two were playing hide-and-seek around the giant tree. When they grew tired, the two napped soundly underneath the tree.

Old Man was happy; one of his children had returned to him. Though he wished all would return, he was overjoyed at just seeing the one who had returned to the fold.

One morning he awoke to discover Pat gone. For many days, his whereabouts were unknown.

Old Man was sitting at the table when he heard a shout outside.

"Old Man, come out here."

He arose and walked outside. There, Shadow stood steps before the forbidden cabin and tree.

"I would invite you in, but — too bad — you cannot enter."

"He left you, you know that, right? After all the love you showed, you know he is not likely to return. You know the price for disobeying your law, right?"

"No," said Old Man. "You cannot do this. Spare his life."

"No, It is your law: the reward for sin is destruction."

Tears began to run down Old Man's cheek.

"In time I shall send an army to take over these lands, to enforce your law."

"No. In time I shall return, and when I do I shall exchange my life for theirs. I shall give up my life on this very Sycamore tree."

"No! No! You cannot do that!" screamed Shadow.

"I have spoken! It shall be done!"

Old Man left the lands in preparation. The children grew into the people of today, and the price was paid.



Cori Basham

Looking at Snow

Photograph

God Bless the Child

by Sheena Butler

He who searches to find,
In his own way he develops the mind;
How beautiful are the halls of the mind,
How intricate are the pieces that take him through every mile;
Astounding, astonishing, simple is the soul
Of he who has lived only a short time but is whole.
How strong is the heart of the meek,
Who knows not all but knows what he seeks.

Naïve but brave,
Overwhelmed by his strength,
His ability to save,
He is powerful, he is mild —
He is his own,
God bless the child.

Innocent enough, but capable is he
Who travels the distance to reach his destiny,
Cursed is the man who brings harm to the heart
Of a child so untainted, so distinct in his part;
The world belongs to the young, they hold it in their hand,
How sad it is if we attempt to shake them where they stand.

Naïve but brave,
Overwhelmed by his strength,
His ability to save,
He is powerful, he is mild-
He is his own,
God bless the child.



Will or Won't I?
Melody Weigert

Photograph

Choosing the Magazine's Name

by
Sarah Casaletto

The white paper contrasts deeply with the black ink stamped upon it. The words, leaving the page intact, until he or she sees a portion where the black ink seems darker, as if the passage of writing were jumping off the page. The highlighter comes out, and the page is now marked, the significant passage a new color all its own. This is known as a "purple patch." The Handbook to Literature by Harmon and Holman defines a purple patch as:

A piece of notably fine writing. Now and then authors in a strongly emotional passage will give free play to most of the stylistic tricks in their bag. They will write intensely colorful and more than usually rhythmic. When there is an unusual piling up of these devices in such a way as to suggest a self-conscious literary effort, the section is spoken of as a purple patch — a colorful passage standing out from the writing around it. (The expression comes from Horace, for whom purple dye was much rarer--hence more conspicuous than it is for us) (421).

Generally the purple patches are the "quotable quotes" and the part of the piece which stands out to the reader. Just open any "Zankified" book and one can see purple patches highlighted in many works of literature. A purple patch is often the best writing in the piece of work. A new literary magazine for Missouri Valley College represents some of the best writing, art, and photography of the students in the school. It shall be our "purple patch" for people to open and immediately recognize as the best.

The printing cost of Vol. 7
 was deferred in part by
 donations from members of the
 community, faculty, and staff.
 We, the members of Sigma Tau Delta,
 wish to express our thanks
 to you for your
 continued support.

“As the editor I would like to extend my personal thanks to all those who had a hand in making this edition possible. Your support is invaluable to the success of this magazine and allows the voice of students to be heard on the Missouri Valley College campus.”

Leesa Morton, Editor
 Jon Strickland, Guest Editor

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A Pagoda
Samuel Njuguna Photograph