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The Purple Patch

Vol. 8

2007-2008

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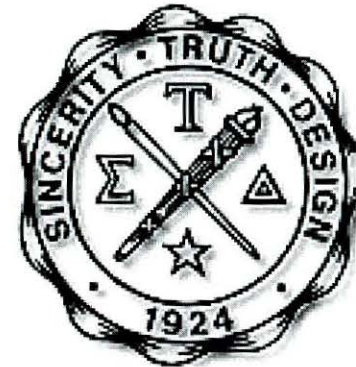
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The

Purple Patch

A Magazine of Literary & Art Patches
Vol. 8 2007-2008 No. 1



A Sigma Tau Delta Publication

Editor

Jon Strickland

Editorial Staff

Cori Basham

Megan Bolling

Sheena Butler

Norine Cruz

Samuel Njuguna

Lindsey Stapp

Austin Zavala

The

Purple Patch

A Magazine of Literary & Art Patches
Vol. 8 2007-2008 No. 1

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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.

Forward

It is with great pride that I present to you *The Purple Patch*, Volume 8. It was an honor for me to embark on this journey as the editor for the second year.

In the beginning of this project, it was not clear the direction the magazine would take. It was not until late in the process that the idea came to me ... diversity.

As students on the Missouri Valley College campus, we are blessed to be surrounded by a group of culturally and ethnically diverse peers. Not only do we have the opportunity to learn in the classroom, we have the opportunity to learn from each other.

The cover of this magazine was intended to represent the diversity of the college, displaying campus snap shots from the 2007-2008 year in the background, and photos of student's hometowns and countries as the foreground.

Typically the cover of the magazine has consisted of submissions that stood out during the gathering process. This year, I decided to ask the student body to help me out by submitting photographs representative and that remind them of home.

I am grateful and excited for all those who submitted and have work published in this edition of *The Purple Patch*. Literature and art are powerful tools with capabilities to leave a lasting impression on their surrounding world. Once a piece of work is printed in this magazine it may last forever. Years later, a new generation of students will open these pages and see what is important to today's student, possibly able to still relate to the works on its pages.

The Purple Patch is a strong Missouri Valley tradition. It is an important tradition. Throughout these pages is an outpouring of emotions and thoughts. This magazine provides students with an opportunity to speak and be

heard where they may otherwise never have the chance. There are lessons to be found in this magazine, lessons that cannot be learned in any classroom. There are stories waiting to be read, artwork ready to be seen.

Thank you to the reader for your interest and support in this magazine. Without you, this tradition would quickly die. Keep reading, writing, and creating art. Think creatively. Open your mind and enjoy *The Purple Patch*, Volume 8.

Jon Strickland
Editor



Drawing

Vikings

Austin Zavala

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Moments of Desitny

by Lora Persinger

We're approaching that moment
That moment we've been hearing about all year
We're looking down the barrel
Of a cannon that is filled with hope and fear
What are we supposed to do?
While we sit back and wait for you ...
We're approaching that moment
That moment that's been called auspicious
We're waiting for the call
And our goals right now are ambitious
Can we make it through?
And achieve all we're meant to do ...
These are the moments that scare me most of all
The moments of destiny – where we rise or where we fall
These are the moments when our will rules our fate
Moments of Destiny – where our love must beat our hate
Come with me on this amazing ride
Friend of mine, the one who knows me deep inside
Together it is time that we embrace
The moment of destiny that we now face

Visions of Royalty

by Brittany Jones

Six years old and a tomboy on the loose, I loved to be outside. I could be found climbing the tallest tree on the block, racing the boys at top speeds down the street, and riding swiftly downward on the steepest hills of the neighborhood.

Outside, I was unstoppable, but inside I entered a whole new world. Inside my room passions of pink flowers blossomed along the white walls. On one side rested a dainty wooden chest. This chest held the treasures that waited to unfold as dreams of a young frizzy haired tomboy.

No treasures of gold so valuable, jewelry exceedingly precious, candies that make the mouth water, and coins of remarkable significance.

But inside the chest, white as a cloud on a sunny afternoon, gowns transformed me into the most enchanting girl in the entire world. Each sparkled my imagination.

With ruffles fluffing out all around me, I paraded through the house just as an English princess promenading through her own gardens.

As the sheer fabrics touched my face and the satins graced my delicate skin, I closed my eyes and became an Egyptian queen having the most exquisite fabrics laid over me.

With the richness of the dresses against my porcelain skin I was the stunning movie star on the famous red carpet.

I dug through the abundance of fabrics, carefully choosing the dress to reflect my inner feelings. My emotions would be reflected through the gown's extravagant colorings.

The splended accents and shapes conveyed my hopes to escape from who I was outside of this gown and become a radiant princess awaiting coronation. When I opened the chest, I sat mesmerized awed by possibilities. As I slipped on a dress, my eyes twinkled, glittering and beaming. The skirts rippled around me like the still water of the sea. Opportunities flowed outward from this gown as endless as the deep blue ocean.

I strutted fearlessly down our narrow hallway as if I was the top supermodel walking for Donatella Versace herself. Then I sashayed over the glorious floors of the ballroom. Our spacious living room.

Every evening, at sunset I strolled outside and climbed onto our giant trampoline and positioned myself with superb posture. As the sun sank beneath the horizon I exploded with ambition toward the distant stars. I jumped so high I touched the promises that stars held eternally within. Up here my childish dreams were left behind and I transformed into an eminent queen crowned with glory.

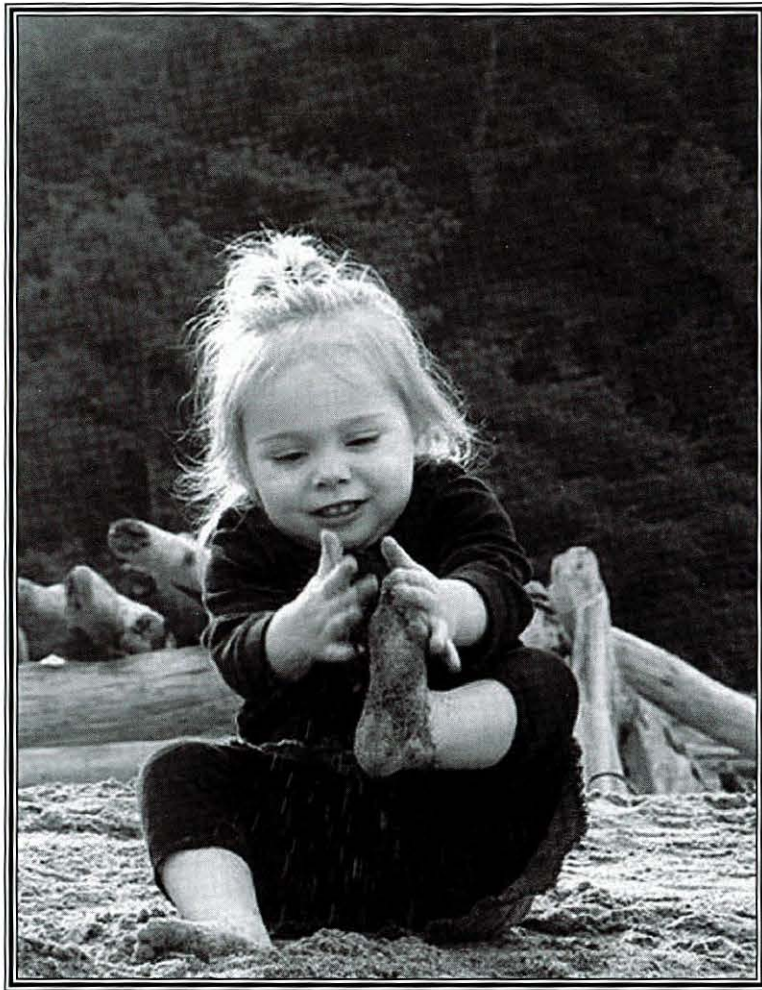
On my way back down, the air rushed up under me and took my breath away. My pristine gown was swathing my body and sending me floating back down to Earth, I gazed all around me so as not to miss one second of it.

At impact, I ricocheted upward yet again, dazzled by the stars encircling all around me with a crown of majesty.

In the midnight sky, the stars reflected off the sequins of my dress and shined like diamonds in my eyes.

Laying my head down to sleep, I closed my eyes. Visions of bright shining stars brought dreams filled with glorious images of fabrics and colors. The splendor of where I had gone, consumed my mind with majesty. The dreams assured royalty yet to come.

The splendid accents and shapes conveyed my hopes to escape from who I was outside of this gown and become a radiant princess awaiting coronation.



Photograph

Sand

Cori Basham

In It Together

by Juan Garcia

Those were the good years, when I was no taller than five feet and my carefree attitude and happiness could reach the sky. The summers seemed to last forever, but there was one that will remain stamped in my mind.

I was exiting my fourth grade year getting ready to be a big, mature fifth-grader. Typical summers included riding around on skateboards and bicycles throughout the neighborhood sidewalks, seeing who we could see and what neighbors we could irritate.

There was one neighbor in particular, Mr. Wong, who was very meticulous with his rock garden. Every single rock had its special position, and he checked them regularly.

When he was away from home, my friends and I would get a thrill out of rearranging his rocks. We never seemed to get enough laughs out of watching him come home and replace his rocks to their exact, original positions.

The excitement of this summer wasn't irritating Mr. Wong. As soon as summer hit, the filter stopped working in the pool my family had put in earlier that year. The crystal clear water turned murky and white.

As repulsive as the water may have appeared, it did not stop me and my friends from getting in. At first we were concerned about the way the water looked.

"There's no way you could ever get me in that gross water," one of my friends said to me.

It didn't take much convincing from everyone to get him in the water.

We entered the water very slow, cringing the deeper we got, until eventually we were all the way in.

"I feel like I'm swimming in my breakfast," another friend said.

Our faces looked as if we had just eaten rotten eggs, and

when we looked at each other we couldn't help but break out in laughter.

"This is so weird." We all agreed then laughed at one another.

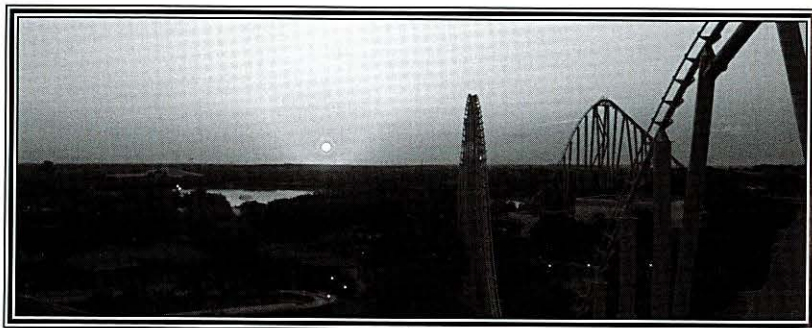
Nearly everyday became an adventure in the pool for us. The fun in it all was the fact that we could not see each other under the water. It was like swimming through curdled milk, which any other time would be revolting.

Eventually, the fun thing to do would be finding anything that sunk and throw it in. Coins proved to be most challenging. The goal started off to be who could find it first, it quickly turned into who could lose it best.

Like the white pool, the excitement in life comes from not being able to see what is ahead, plunging into the depth not knowing where life is going to turn next.

Like the white pool, the excitement in life comes from not being able to see what is ahead, plunging into the depth not knowing where life is going to turn next.

Life is not about rearranging rocks for fun, riding along the surface only partaking in what is in sight. It is about what cannot be seen, what is below the surface. The swim, although hazy and occasionally leaving a feeling of disgust, is all about the fun made of it.



Riding The Sunset

Photograph

Cory Petersen

Magic

by Lora Persinger

Through the sands of time we sift
With our most beloved gift
Time will rush and time will slow
But we have magic wherever we go

Magic is

the smile of a friend,
the gift of a flower,
the power of a storm,
an April shower,

Magic is

to know you helped
'cause you knew you could,
And if you'd keep trying
The world will edge closer and closer to good

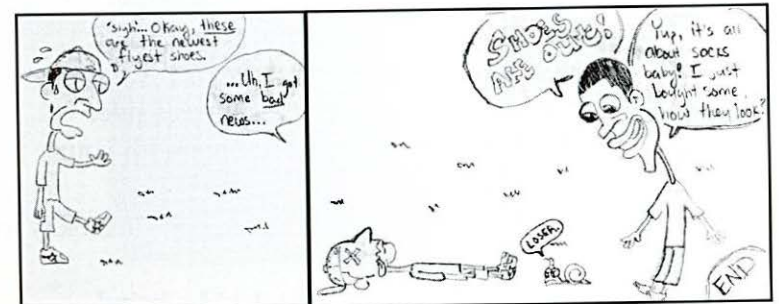
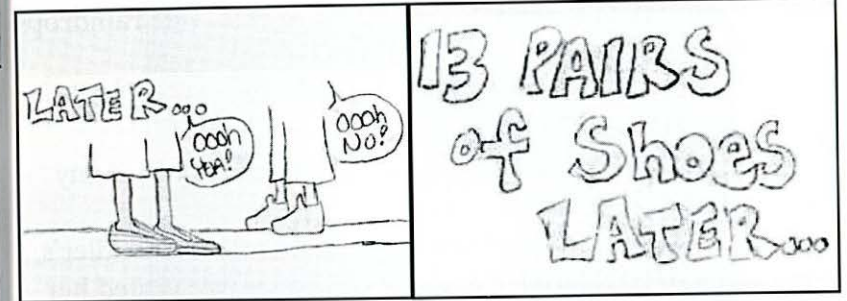
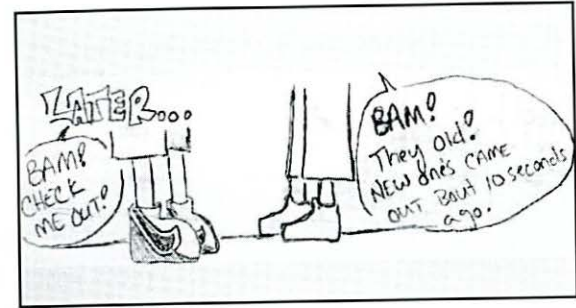
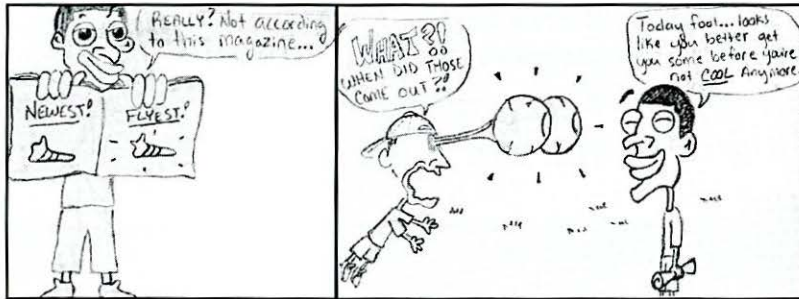
Magic is

the stars in the sky,
the moon and the sun
It's what you and I are
Mortal or witch
It's in everyone

That's magic

Shoe Crazy

Cartoon by Chris Mosley



I Am Grown Up Now

by Brittany Jones

It was dark and all the lights were out. The light from the full moon shone through my window brightening my entire room. As I looked in the corner, there lay my fuzzy teddy bear. Teddy and I had been best friends forever, until yesterday. Yesterday I decided to grow up.

At recess Judy told me I was a baby. Judy always made fun of everyone. It is because she has no friends.

But a baby? Me? I knew I was "sensitive." That's what Mommy calls it.

But NOT a baby.

Miss Jones told me my picture was not "my best work." Not good work? My picture was the best in the whole class, and finished first! What's not good about that? That's when I felt it coming; and I tried to stop it, but they just came. My eyes welled up like water balloons. Tears rolled down my face like raindrops. That's when Judy said it.

"You're a baby! You are a BIG baby. I bet you still sleep with your teddy bear!" Judy shouted.

Oh my gosh. How did she know? I couldn't take it any more.

I ran out the room, down the hall. Into Mrs. Chandler's room I went. Mrs. Chandler was our counselor. We visited her twice a week, and she always understood.

"Well, maybe Miss Jones has a point."

I could not believe she was saying this. Mrs. Chandler liked Miss Jones better! She was taking Miss Jones's side.

"Don't cry. Next time just take more time with your work," Mrs. Chandler said.

Didn't anyone know that it was okay to cry? It is okay to cry right? Right?

That's when it hit me. Judy is right. I AM a baby!

That's when I decided. Teddy is no longer my best friend.

He just can't be.

That night I lay in bed all alone staring at Teddy in the distance. Did it really have to be this way? Teddy had always been my best friend. At nights I would hold him close and everything would be okay.

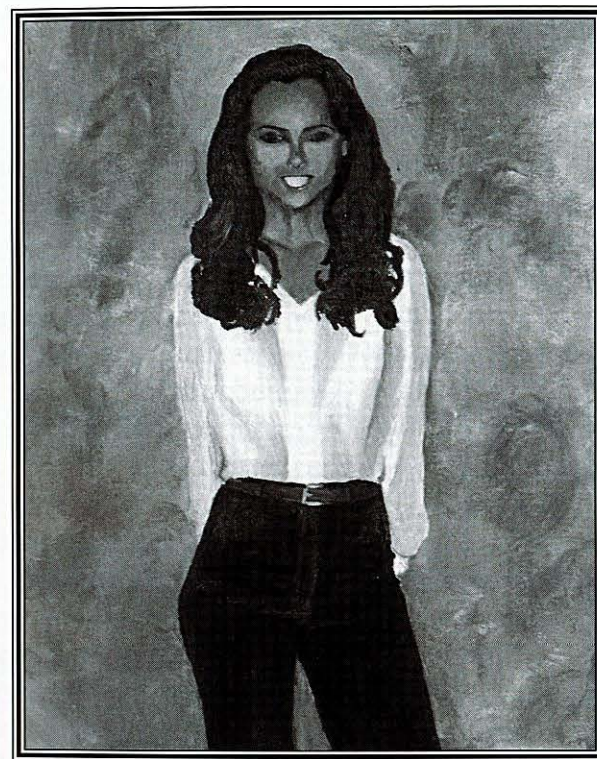
Now I was all alone in this dark room. Then the words of Judy played back into my mind.

"You are a BABY!"

I couldn't be THAT baby anymore!

Staring at Teddy sitting in that lonely corner all by himself, I yelled out "Goodnight Teddy. I love you."

I closed my eyes to sleep. Now, I sighed, I am NOT a baby anymore.



Inspiration

Painting

Brittany Jones

What's the Point?

by Joshua Schwartz

What's the point? In "The Tell-Tale Heart," Edgar Allan Poe gives us a murder with comic insight. To relate this story to one's own life experience at the simplest form, it is, let's face it, trivial. Putting down one's regrets, which would become one sentence or 20 pages, has no real purpose. Another point of fact is that the narrator in "The Tell-Tale Heart" did not regret taking the man's life; instead, he feared in his madness that he was hearing the victim's heartbeat. All he wondered about was what the two police officers would do if they could hear the heartbeat as well. If the police had not been there, then he would have pushed it out of his mind and moved on with his life, never thinking about it again.

It is doubtful that anyone here would be able to accurately compare themselves to this man. Our pathetic life regrets do not stack as high as murder in our culture. Then again, we can all compare to the fact of wanting to kill someone, that certain individual that bugs the living crap out of us.

It is like having those select good-for-nothing teachers, the ones who never gave a damn about you because you never played sports. Those who put on sports movies like Remember the Titans or The Longest Yard on game days, and assigning a paper worth half your grade on play and concert nights. You want them to pay for their unfairness, but soon you just call them a dumb jock and move on.

Perhaps you could take that high school bully that made you cry. That damn bully was always a pain. The bastard made fun of you every single day during high school, calling you every name in the book. You want to get even, you want him dead, and above all you want it to stop. You come so close to killing him with a pencil, you think it would help that it would scare him into backing off, but it doesn't. Everyone else stops but it doesn't sway him, he knows your heart will not let you do it, that your Christian

conscience keeps saying no. Then there always comes that one small break of insanity where you want to help your school, you do concessions at a basketball game and you get to go to the prom as a junior.

Not only that, but you are in the choir that sings the national anthem. For motivation your director tells you that if they did not sing the anthem, your team would be penalized. You are stressed out, you do not want to be there, but wanting to take your girlfriend to the prom is more powerful. So your there, your working and you are stressed out. Then that same bully, star of the basketball team, walks by wanting to degrade you one more time.

You try to be the bigger person. You ask what you can do for him and without missing a beat he asks for a blowjob. He leaves and you finally snap. You cannot take it anymore, he has got to die and you stop at the first step. Your heart will not let you move, it takes all your energy and says, "Not a chance in hell." What else is there to do? Then you have to turn around and sing so that his team does not get penalized. All you can do is stand there and mouth the words.

Then there is the big event of your dad, the man who abandoned you and your mom when you were two, taking everything except you while putting your mother through waves of debt and hell. Takes your mom ten years to get over it; it takes you sixteen just to consider it. Then out of the blue, you get a letter from him wanting to know how you are, and if he can come and see you. It takes a split second for your mom to stop you from ripping it up.

Then you are a senior, it is your last musical, Beauty and the Beast, and you are the Beast. It is your dream role and for some reason you want your father there. You do not know why, but you call and invite him to come and he says sure. Then you go weeks, not hearing anything from him. You think he blew you off.

The first night comes and he is not there. You are disappointed but you figured it would happen. Second night comes and it is your best performance ever. You go and sit down to shake the audience's hands and thank them for coming and there he is, standing in front of you. You spend the next two days just sitting, talking and watching movies. You don't ask him about the

“incident,” you don’t want to ruin the great time you’re having. Later, you find out that your mom had to threaten him to get him out here, and his calls slowly stop coming. You realize that he never gave a damn about you, he was just afraid of your mother and rightly so.

Dare we admit it, even that ex-girlfriend? The one who started out as your best friend throughout high school, someone you could tell anything to. Going to the mall in Columbia, walking around getting her everything she wanted. Going to junior prom and dancing for the first time, where you tell her that you love her and she says that she loves you too. Plans start forming in your mind. You do not want to ever let her go. Then an idea pops into your head, you will ask her to marry you at the end of senior year.

Then, after everything you had been through together, at the end of junior year, after taking a poll on whether she should or not, all of them saying yes. She dumps you over the Internet. Then at the very end to top it all off you find out that she was a lesbian and was cheating on you with a seventh grade girl. You try to confront her about it, and in a fit of annoyance, she says that everything you had together was a lie.

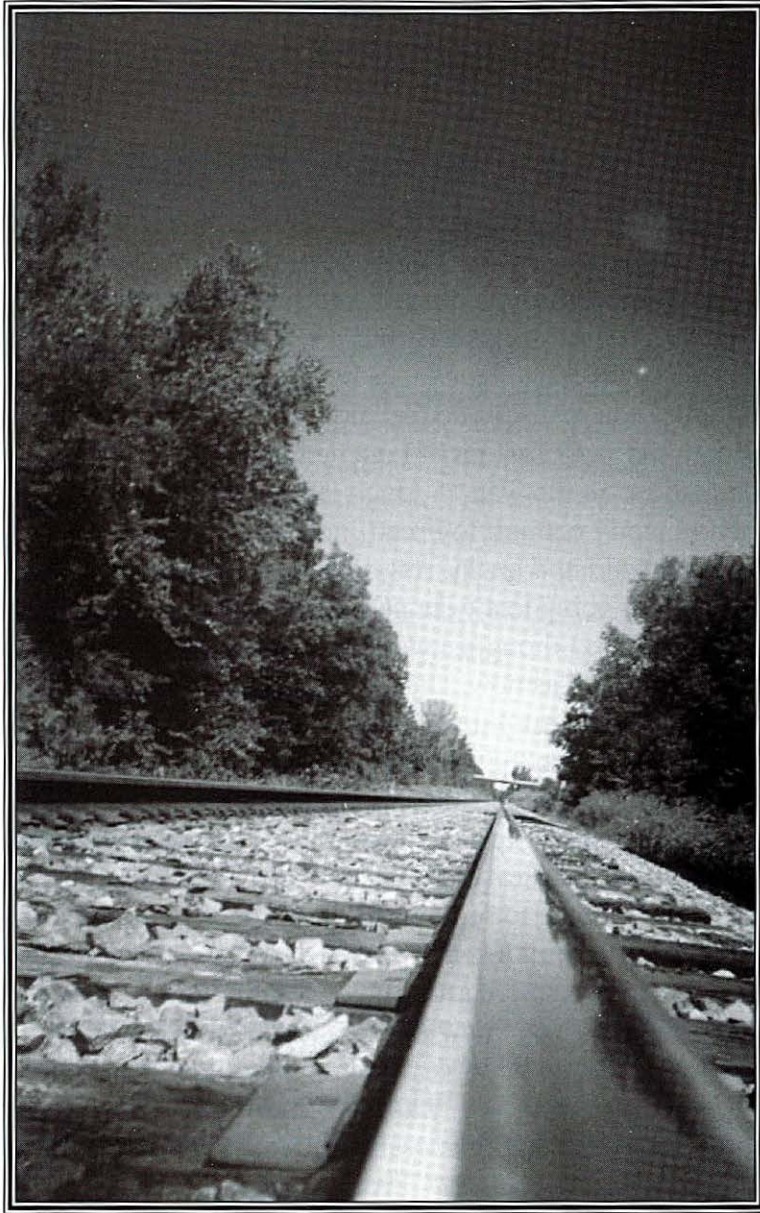
This brings us to our self, the wanting to kill ourselves. You want to so badly, but now it is your brain stopping you, reminding you of the punishment for such a crime. So there you are, spending every day of your senior year wanting the world to end, finally becoming so numb that you cannot feel anything but hate anger and fear.

However, we do not dwell on these laps in sanity for very long and for a variety of different reasons. Whether or not it is a social or religious taboo for most of us, we push it out of our thoughts and dare not think it any more. We keep it, however, in the back of our mind letting out every time we lose control keeping it on a short leash and not letting it get too far. This can be considered a good thing, for if we kill all of those who piss us off then there would not be anyone left.

Let It Out

Monologue by Cydney Carl

Let’s see if I remember how to do this. Okay. Hello again? No. No. (pause) Do I rant? I’ll just talk. Talk ... I don’t know if I can do this (begins to stand, sits back down) I can do this! All right. Uh ... sometimes when I run out of clean underwear, I go buy some instead of doing laundry. (Pauses) And sometimes when I don’t know how to begin I spout off random facts about myself. I’ve been trying really hard. I mean, as hard as I can try right now. Shit. (Realization, pause) I do feel alone. Didn’t think I’d ever admit that, did you? Last night I opened my eyes and saw my hand’s shadow on the wall ... touch lamp behind me ... and the girlfriend I won’t commit to breathing unevenly beside me. Awake and afraid and angry. Angry that she’s asleep peacefully and most likely going to awake peacefully, afraid that I am missing out on the life I thought I was suppose to have. Life. It’s funny what I define “life” as now. That it takes the congestion of a cold to remind me that I am human. (Pause. sudden outburst) What do you want me to do?! I’m closing down. Everyone around me is drowning, I’m struggling for air too – I’ve only got one fucking life jacket! It’s just like you. You say your piece – you get your stab in and then you leave! You want me to talk? Well, I’m finally talking, Ma! (Sobbing to self) And I am sorry, if it’s worth anything! (Can’t quit thinking) I’m not supposed to be satisfied with an over-priced apartment and patchy beard! I know this isn’t about me. No, it is. You know it is ... I always make it that way, don’t I? I want you to know ... I – I’m sorry and the pain has always been mutual. I know my animosity was out of line and I know the neglect wasn’t purposeful ... I know you had us young. Hell, if anything you did me a favor, ma. Never had my heart broken ... and I’ve always thought for myself and put myself first. You did give me that much.



Photograph

Train Tracks

Beatriz De La Vega - Galacia

Runaway Prodigy

by Yalimar Vidal

In a letter to her father, the Runaway wrote about her destiny. She embraced the prophecy that guaranteed the death of Alucard at the hands of an Aferin. It was never anyone's idea to tell the children that the prophecy may hold some truth, but at the turn of the century when Alucard returned, they saw no other choice. Time was against them. All they could do was send the children away.

Dear Father,

I have prayed to Spirit of Heaven and Hell, and the Mother of all Saints, I have invoked them. All in the name of Santa Loiza, I called to them. I pleaded with Saint Hildegard of Bingen to join my fight. Tonight I asked for guidance. Lead the Aferin as you always have, I said to the spirits. Hear my vow to you, lady of the night I pleaded again. I have always loved the night and hated the day.

I will trust myself with you. My spirit will protect you. I have let myself rise and fall to your will, Father. Thus I call on you to pray for me. My hideous intent is yours to acknowledge and keep alive. Ha. Life. Something no one will ever see in my line of work, right? Not me. Not a Runaway. Oh Father, I remember the story you told me. The tale of "The Runaway." You used to sing it sometimes. Runaway from the years

Runaway to the night. Runaway from Death, for he approaches. Runaway from all the things including the voices. Call upon me when Santa Loiza falls beneath the horizon Father. The sun will rise again when Alucard falls. Good bye.

—Runaway Prodigy

At night the Assassin clan awakens. They wait in the shadows of their guilt. All assassins live in the shadows for the lack of forgiveness that light has cast upon them. On pain of death they prepare for the hunt. They have no pity for the people whose souls they must send to Hell tonight. Demons wait for them in the shadows. When the time comes, they don't care who it was that called them. The assassins invoked them for the right to claim another soul tonight as they wander protecting themselves in the shadows.

On the same night, a clan of renegade Neferi stalked these assassins. They watched them walk in the shadows trying to reclaim the night, which they so treasured. Their beloved night was one of many that gave way to day in an amazing array of blood showered with their sweat and tears. Their swords in love with the blood of their "guarded" targets, mostly men who had fallen victim to their cunning tongue and charm. Later, these men fell in love with their swords as well. They are well known throughout Europe, but hardly ever mentioned. They are notorious for their ability to bring death upon an individual without leaving the shadows.

The hunters versus the hunted in a game of blood and lust day and night. There have been many tales told throughout the years, mostly at the turn of the last century. People had heard of the Assassins and the Neferi, but only a few have heard about the Aferin. The Aferin are a clan born of deceit and unwelcome couplings between the Assassins and the Neferins. One such couple led to the creation of the Runaway Prodigy. Those nights signified

the end of the Golden Age of Vampires. The nights when all vampires were at peace with each other signaled the beginning of the war.

A long time ago we all lived happily for there was no true master vampire. That was, until the return of Alucard. With Alucard came the prophecy of the ages. This prophecy spoke of an Aferin who would defeat Alucard in a fierce battle for the survival and hope of us all. This vaticination spoke of a battle to end all battles amongst us. That day would determine tomorrow's reality; our future. I can't imagine what life would be like if we all believed that tomorrow would never come. That there would never be another night, only 365 days. Which we couldn't tell apart.

Look out into the night children and tell me that those beings outside deserve to live more than we do. Can any of you say that? Do they deserve to live any less than we do? Well? A little boy raised his hand.

"They're mean. Why should they live? I think they should die," he said.

The man looked at the boy and shook his head disapprovingly.

"Have you learned nothing boy? Has my time been wasted on you?"

The boy sat back and looked at the ground.

"I didn't mean it. I'm sorry. I'll never do it again."

The boy started to cry, disappointing the man.

"Learn from your mistakes boy. You don't need to cry."

The children watched the boy wipe his face. The man took a sip from a flask before he continued his tale.

As a child the Runaway prayed that death would come and release her from her Aferin fate. Her keepers wished they could grant the Runaway's wish. They knew the fate of the child would surely be death. Even then none could ever bring themselves to kill one of their own. Not one that was so young.

The masterpiece. That damned prophecy, I should say, was written in an age at which we could extinguish that which would become the Runaway, but instead we chose to let it live. We forgot

our own rules. We compromised everyone's lives. At the time, we thought the Runaway would fade like the others had done over the years. Instead, she came back after we tried to protect her by sending her away. At the time we weren't prepared for the event that would take place the night she decided to come back.

It was then that she became the Runaway Prodigy. The Runaway's spirit ran rampant and rebellious, the perfect time for a transformation. She grew to be the mistress of troublesome affairs and angry disputes. Her hair color was blood red as well as her nails. Her lips were so saturated with blood that she never needed the red lipstick like most of the other girls. She was, in fact, a true Aferin. Our race was not one to make a fuss over the Aferin amongst us as long as they showed everyone respect.

Then Alucard returned and, in his paranoia, tried to destroy all the Aferin. The ones who were too young to fight went into hiding. The ones who could fight were given code names. They were trained in the ways of the Neferi and the Assassin Clans. In the months that followed she trained harder and harder. Then they were sent to fight. We had no choice but to do it in this manner. My daughter could fight, so she did. For days I hoped things would happen soon, so I could finally get some rest and see the end of this war.

The Runaway watched them. Those who had shunned her had to die. There was not enough blood in the world to feed all the vampires the shadows could house when Alucard returned. Hahmm hahahmm. The evil in her eyes came from her father. The vengeance in her heart came from her mother. There was a time when she was just a happy little girl of sorts, as they say.

The Runaway Prodigy was sent to war and never heard from again. What I do know is from the accounts of her fellow Aferin. They say that she led many rebellions against Alucard and his Vampire Army. Her last known battle was against Alucard himself.

It began in the middle of an uprising she had led. The Vampire Army let no one doubt their power and absolute hatred of the Aferin (some being Aferin themselves). They marched on

through the city with an ever deepening bloodlust. The Vampire Army needed more food. Drinking an Aferin's blood was not allowed, so many of them turned on each other. They need motivation, but no one was there to help. With these obstacles, they destroyed themselves from within. They brought about their own downfall hidden by great clouds of pride. The Runaway Prodigy knew to use their pride against them. Once they reached the center of the city the second wave of the Rebel Army attacked. The constant fear of day was upon them as the clock struck 1 a.m.

Runaway Prodigy seized her chance to attack Alucard himself. She met him with her sword, named for Santa Loiza, the patron saint of many Assassin and Neferi alike. The sword was embellished with spiritual magic that was born into the metal the same way we are born with a soul. They say she held it to his throat and refused to be turned down for a duel. After a long wait on both sides, Alucard accepted. In this long period of darkness a special kind of evil was born.

They each readied their weapons with a baptism in blood. Alucard takes the blood of a young and beautiful virgin. He believes that the blood of an innocent will bathe his sword in a fierce purity. Runaway Prodigy takes the blood of a sadistic Blues singer that likes to torture women. His blood boiled with a thousand demons in it. Some say he sold his soul to the devil for Blues Fame at the southern crossroads.

With their weapons ready they begin. They play for the first few minutes. Taking random stabs at each other and making witty remarks about it. This went on for a while until Runaway Prodigy decided that it had been enough play and she attacked Alucard head on. He reciprocated with full force. She blocked him taking all the force from his attack. They were in a tournament of twisted metal. The winner may or may not live. The loser simply dies.

She goes for his head. Missed. Alucard is sneaky and wise for having lived a thousand years. He knows the tricks of the sword too well. She, an Aferin of only twenty-five years is at odds with fate. She fought hard. Steel on steel for many hours. Some

was four hours, while others say it was nine hours. I believe time simply stopped for these two. Alucard would win and maybe live or lose and simply die as is the life of a Vampire. The old man paused and licked his lips. Unlike other vampires, Aferin stopped ageing at twenty-one and is forever young. At least, on the outside.

They say Runaway Prodigy struck the first deadly blow to Alucard. He dealt one to her as well. They both seemed to be fighting in a pool of their bloody desires. I can only imagine the taste of blood on Runaway Prodigy's tongue. Her need to eliminate him when she saw a chance or a slight fault on his part. Her drive could be seen with every blow she dealt or tried to deal. She wanted him dead.

She wanted to be certain that he was gone. Sadly, I am told that she dealt a blow to Alucard's neck when he got too cocky, but his army stepped in and took him away. In the confusion people scattered away from the scene of death, as the orange horizon crept out behind the dark night far past the edge of the town. Night faded, taking its minions with it and we lived to see another day turn to night. All that for a tomorrow that we may still hate.

Runaway Prodigy was never seen again. Nor was Alucard. The Prophecy was fulfilled with the forfeit of both their lives, is what we think. We tell our children to walk along slowly and watch their backs, because Alucard may want to suck their blood. We also tell them to look up at the sky for any sign of dripping blood for Santa Loiza is close by. And maybe, just maybe they will get a glimpse of the Runaway Prodigy.

"Now I am weary with stress and lack of sleep. Go, for the Runaway walks with Death tonight. May Santa Loiza protect you and Hildegard always watch over you. Now go."

In a small room with only one window in a Catholic convent Hildegard Bingen recovers from a sad vision of the future. She speaks with enough fear to make her voice quiver.

"Dear Father," she prays. "Why have you blessed me with these visions?"

She waited for an answer, hoping God would speak to her.

"Hildegard, may I speak to you?"

It was Mother Superior. All of Hildegard's fear faded away.

"Yes, please come in."

Mother Superior knew that Hildegard just had another vision and needed some comfort.

"Oh Mother Superior," she paused staring deep into her eyes. "I saw something terrible. I don't know why I was blessed this way. They invoked my name. I'm so confused."

Tears came to Hildegard's eyes.

"Don't cry child," said Mother Superior. "God has blessed you. Accept it. Embrace it. The future will occur as God wills it. Now let us pray."

Hildegard looked at Mother Superior, then she faced the ground and began to pray. She would mumble about her visions in between every few words of prayer.

"Oh Father, who art in Heaven," she paused.

In the corner of her room she saw a shadow.

"Oh Father, protect me. Show me your will."

Her eyes opened wider and wider as the shadow grew bigger.

"Mother Superior, do you see the shadows," she asked.

Mother Superior turned to her.

"No, Child."

Hildegard's face twisted in horror.

"Don't you see it? The shadows, Mother. They moved."

Mother Superior prayed harder.

"Oh Father, who art in Heaven, guide this little lamb. She is not lost to you and your grace."

"Mother!"

The shadows grew all around the room. Hildegard sat on her bed praying harder and louder. Mother Superior asked for guidance.

"Oh Father, what do I do?"

The two women looked at each other. Hildegard was the first to look away. Mother Superior walked over to her and held her.

"You are safe now, child."

Hildegard closed her eyes.

"Oh Mother, the things I have seen. The horrid things."

"Rest my child. The morning is coming and God shall graciously us with his light again."

"Days of darkness are upon us. They drink our blood."

"Child," Mother Superior scolded. "Such words are not those of God. That is the activity of a demon. Speak no more of this. Rest."

Mother Superior left the room hoping Hildegard would listen.

Hildegard tried to sleep. She thought daytime would come soon. She wanted to sleep and forget these terrible visions. The future was dark. She asked for forgiveness. She sat on her bed wondering when light would break the threshold of her window and the night would turn to day. She prayed with her eyes closed. She could feel the shadows growing bigger. She prayed for light. It still had not come to her. Her breath became heavy with stress.

"Father please. Save me," she pleaded.

Tears ran down her face.

The shadows came closer and closer. Light was far off in the horizon. The shadows turned to men. They reached for Hildegard. She struggled. She was afraid. She prayed harder. The last thing she saw was a girl. Her hair was red. Her lips like blood. Hildegard closed her eyes again. The shadows touched her. She had the taste of blood on her tongue.

"Don't hurt me!" No one answered.

She remained quiet.

"Please, don't!"

The shadows closed in and Hildegard vanished. Mother Superior returned at dawn to find Hildegard's robe on the floor and one tear shaped drop of blood.

"Hildegard," she called.

No answer came.

She looked out the window. Nothing. There was nothing she could see. Hildegard was simply gone. Mother prayed for her return, never to see Hildegard again.

Cancer

by Michelle Querin

A lump, a bruise, a *life* change
The phone rings ... the doctor

CANCER

rotting the inside, out

How could this happen to *her*?
Will she die? What will happen?

... needles, tests, doctor after doctor

1st chemo down

all her hair is gone now, why doesn't she cry?

laying in bed ... helpless and peaceful
How long can *you* be so weak and she is so **strong**?

... months go by, your 2nd home is a hospital room

PAIN, SUFFERING, so many unanswered questions

see her laying there; vulnerable, weak ... holding on for life

would give up everything in my life for her pain to go away.

Please end her suffering ... *she* doesn't deserve it.

... holding on for hope and *I* find strength through her

My mother, my best friend, my hero

CANCER ... gone ...

stay in awe of her miracle for the rest of my life

When I Think Of You

by Lora Peringer

Dedicated to my father who passed away
November 15, 2007.

When I think of you
I think of how much you missed
I think of what I lost

When I think of you
I think of what I needed
I think of what I wanted

When I think of you
I think of what I gained
I think of what I came to know

When I think of you
I think of people I came to love
I think of my new life

When I think of you
I think of the future
I think of the way it could be

When I think of you
I think of all you will miss
I think of a time this past summer when we had fun

When I think of you
I think of how proud you were
to see me walk across that stage
to receive my diploma, being the only one with grace

When I think of you
I think of all the lost memories
I think of what could've been

When I think of you
I pray to God, that you watch over
the baby girl who will no longer
get to see the face of a proud father
who knew that one day his baby daughter
would change the world and live for the memories

When I think of you
I think of how much I loved you
even if you never knew

When I think of you
I think of how you will always
now and forever keep us safe

There Is Hope

A feature news article by Brittany Jones

It is just another ordinary day in Marshall, Missouri. The sound of snoozed alarms ring every five minutes through the dormitory halls. Students rushing to their morning classes dread the early lectures from their professors.

Before Joshua's eyes opened, sweet utterances of thanks pour out like an overflowing fountain. Praise fills the heart and hope is restored. Another morning to wake up and see the glory manifested. Every morning is a new opportunity and he seizes it with all that is in him.

"Thank you Lord, for letting me see and live another beautiful day."

Joshua, 25-years-old and a business major at Missouri Valley College, Joshua is a survivor story. Many of Joshua's close acquaintances have doubted him.

There were few that believed he would graduate from high school. Even less entertained the idea of College; not to mention being an *independent student*. He has proved man wrong because that is not who he seeks to satisfy. Through it all, Joshua has relied on God for his final answer.

"Joshua!" his mama Joann shouted.

"The lazy man works the hardest!"

Joshua lived with his mother. His parents divorced when he was four.

After his parent's split, money was no luxury. His mother worked hard to support Joshua in Dallas. At times there was no money for rent, "Mama would give it to the Lord." When the money was due, God always provided. Her faith was undying and her trust in the Lord stayed fast. Mama instilled the Word of God in Joshua from a baby.

Lessons of strength and perseverance still remain in Joshua.

"Put it in the Lord's hands!" Mama would remind him. Joshua can remember leaving to be with his father for a week or two at a time for parent visitation rights. He would leave the house praying for God to keep his Mama safe.

"Take care of her," Joshua prayed. "Nobody was going to be there with her, and I had to do that."

"She showed me love," Joshua reflects.

Love was endless. No matter the situation love was always the answer. Joshua would be taught, directed, and disciplined. Lord knows those whoopings were important.

"Put that on your whoopin' list," Mama would say.

All were out of love. Everything Mama did was out of love. Even when there was no extra money, and Mama was very weak, she would be in the kitchen for hours cooking homemade chicken noodle soup when Joshua was not feeling well. Sacrifice came with love and Mama knew that. Sacrifice meant making yourself vulnerable to make someone else feel wonderful.

When Joshua was one-year-old, his mother had been sick with Sarcoidosis, a disease that affects the body with deterioration and destruction. She later recovered. When Joshua was 9, the illness reappeared, attacking her lungs. Joshua was forced into early maturity, having to take care of his Mama. Before, Joshua was too young to understand, but now he is totally aware and conscious.

Joshua did all he could do.

"I knew I had to take care of her," Joshua recalled. "To the best of my ability."

Life was not going to be as easy as it had once appeared.

School was an emotional escape for Joshua. At school he could joke and play around without consequence. He had no responsibilities and was mentally relieved from the demands at home.

At home, Joshua's normal chores would consist of cooking, cleaning, and washing clothes. At times his Mama was too weak to complete everyday tasks and Joshua filled in her place. She also required attention. He would give Mama her medications on schedule. During this time, Joshua was always praying.

"The lazy man works hardest!"

“Spiritual Warfare,” Joshua calls it.

Joshua still remembers playing catch outside with Mama.

“We played in the parking lot,” he said.

Even though she was sick, she would sit outside and throw the ball back and forth, over and over again.

“She was my only friend,” Joshua comments.

After six years of battling, Joshua’s mama went to be with the Lord.

The remainder of Joshua’s childhood, he moved from home to home, living with many different family members. At eighteen years old he graduated high school. For many, graduation is a door of independence. For Joshua, graduation was another accomplishment done on his own.

Trials and tribulations were present for the next seven years of his life. After a long rocky road, Joshua is anticipating graduation this May.

After all of the struggles, Joshua perseveres with strength reflecting in his eyes.

“You can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” Joshua quotes.

Every morning is a new one, with new blessings awaiting



Smiling Man

Painting

Jon Gerhold

Flickers of Light

by Zach Aulbach

Trembling quakes reside deep in the cave,
Absorbed in the darkness failing to brave,
Just those few tiny steps it takes for the day,
You think you are fine and you know you’re okay,
But a feeling resides and it shuts you away,
To a forest deprived of laughter and life,
The trees being unreal like fingers to feel no zest and no zeal but strife,
The core of this world throbs on,
Possibly all hope for light isn’t gone,
There’s a lantern that flickers but flickers it does,
Its reason seems lost,
But the amount you would pay isn’t measured in cost,
But if fire!
Your heart space pulsates then fills with desire!
So as long as you move yourself forward and on,
Your light, love and laughter will never be gone.



Happy Trees

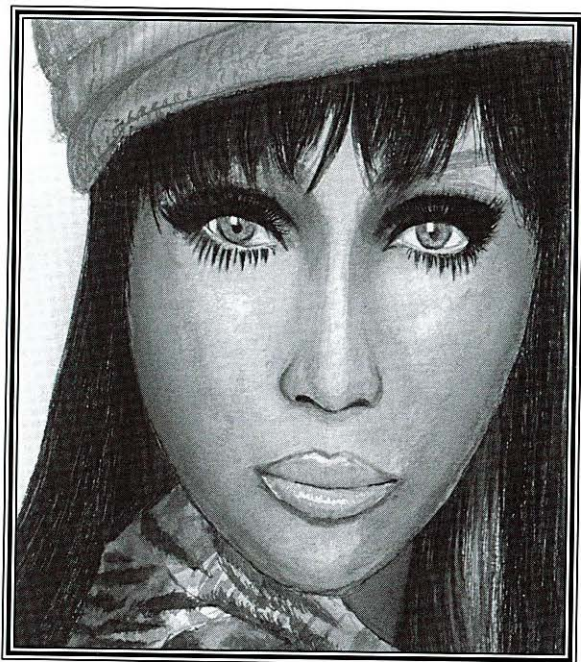
Photograph

Casey McNamara

Eye Contact

by Jackilyn Andersen

Eye contact
Need I say more?
Eye contact
Just what I've been
waiting for.
Eye contact
A language of its own.
Eye contact
The look I'll take home.



Cat Eyes

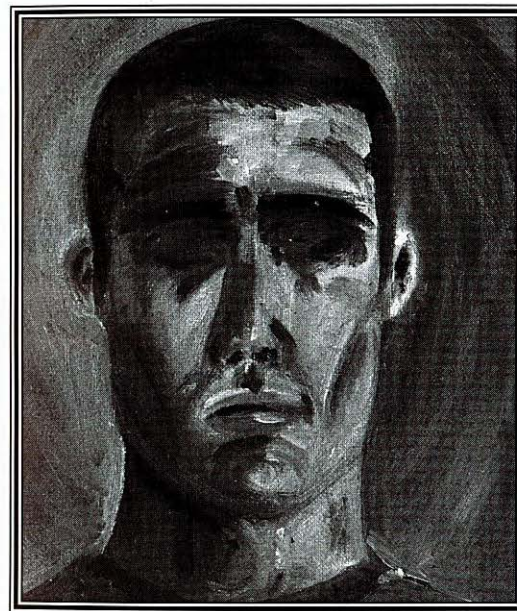
Painting

Angelee Homma

You

by Jackilyn Andersen

You smell like leather,
and fresh clean soap.
You like horses, and
you know how to rope.
You ride a motorcycle,
And have dark brown eyes.
You have courage,
and dignity,
and lots of pride.
You're out there
somewhere,
Other than my dreams.
I know I'll find you.
By any means.



Self Portrait

Painting

Jon Gerhold

Bound Freedom

by Zach Aulbach

Taking a stroll on the tip of a wing,
The wing swirling on, longs to you, "sing!"
Doubt not the ones with nothing to gain,
And wary ye be of those who cause pain.
For the world is wholly unworldly it seems.
That does not mean giving up on your dreams.
It just means that nothing is quite how it seems.
Except the allusion you find in your dreams.
Whispering around below and above,
Your pain and emotions – intensify love,
Shrug off those cities of steel and stone,
You fly to new places, but still you're alone,
Your spirit is a safe and you are it's key.
In the safe, in your safe spot, the answers are free,
Shut your eyes turn your back, and swallow your key.
If that's what you do you'll never be free.
The answer to death is your answer to life,
And with effort you balance the edge with a knife.
A fierce blade you made with the secrets you kept.
The more you cared less the more others wept.
To let yourself breathe give in and go out,
You give in but stay in, your mind leaden with doubt,
Your soul will die first before your body gives out.
When you find the right path you'll not parry with doubt!

Island Dreams by Michelle Querin

Island Dreams...

Broken heart, faded dreams...
WAIT, is he real?

Could this island stranger be different?

Sweet, sincere, trustworthy and creatively beautiful...

Qualities unknown to the masses surrounding her life.

She keeps saying "don't jinx this" ... this could be real, she doesn't want to ruin this one

Unintentionally inspiring ... she discovers beauty and creativity in herself again ... thanks to his mind

So caring and strong willed ... he is truly amazing

She finds herself so wrapped up in it that the world around her doesn't matter at this point

Could this be love or could this be fate?

This girl takes it day by day ... step by step ... moment by moment

She promises herself she won't ruin this one...

This is real.

Pleading Artist
by Zach Aulbach

His mind cannot gain purchase,
In these grounds beyond his bounds,
Feverish as an addition swallows,
Triumphant surrender into infinite possibilities,
Echoing off the chambered seals of his mind,
Yet seeking to release them,
Spins his silk adhesive,
Horribly tangling his web,
Soul needs imagination,
Unquestioned love,
Designs with no meanings,
But the utter pouring out,
As the mind and the heart and the spirit,
That's throughout.

Call Me Home
by Yalimar Vidal

So many people say that death is not the way.
That suicide is like a pill to ease the pain.
How would you know if you've never felt my pain?
The things I feel so deep down inside of me are nothing like what you imagine.
The days go by listless and empty; blissless and blind.
No one can see what I see in myself.
The shadow that pushes itself upon.
The darkness that wants to swallow me, but I can't let go.
I want to hold on to you.
I am trying so hard to stay put and fight all the pain.
You are so important to me, but I don't know how to stop the pain.
I want to keep myself alive.
The bleeding has to stop.
The end has to come soon.
Don't fucking do this to me anymore.
I cry, because I miss you and you make me want to cry when I kiss you.
You take away my freedom with your love and I don't care.
You keep me alive although I think nothing matters.
I know you want me to follow you.
There is always a smile on your face that is just not for me.
The look in your eyes tells me that there are so many things I will never know.
Your voice lets me know that you always care about me.
The truth is that I'm trying, so hard to talk to you and stay with you that I can't
do anything.
It ends here.
Good Bye.

While You Were Out

by T.N. Adams

While you were out, I missed you,
And I thought about us.
I dreamed about our future,
And I made myself a promise
To make you mine,
To make mine ours,
To make our love complete.

While you were out, I missed you,
And I thought about our life.
I took out my wedding gown,
And I felt proud to be your wife
To make you happy,
To make you whole,
To make our family grow.

While you were out, I missed you
And our kids away at school.
I wondered why both God and you
Could ever be so cruel
To make me feel unwanted,
To make me feel so small,
To make me wonder why I live at all.

While you were out, I missed you
And me, myself, and us.
I tried to see why, while you were out,
You never made a fuss
To let me know you missed me,
To let me know you cared,
To let me know why you weren't there.

While you were out, I missed you
And couldn't take it anymore,
So I took a knife
And with it my life.

Love always,
Your wife



So Far From Home

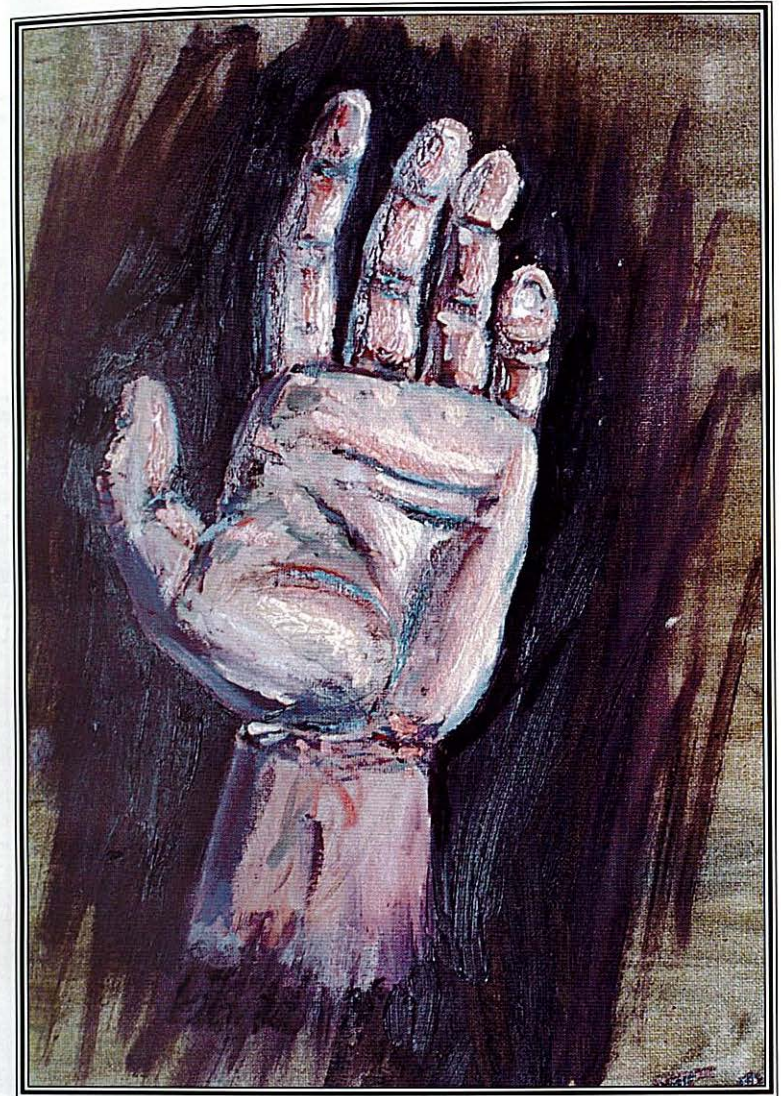
Photograph by Cory Petersen

Cory Petersen

Starting All Over Again

by Yalimar Vidal

I started at my fingertips
I moved down closer to my wrist
I felt the blade across my wrist as my hand trembled
I don't want to feel anymore
I hate all this God forsaken pain
There is nothing left to love
All I can do is hate it all
I hate myself when you are gone
I hate myself when there's no one left to hate me
I know you want to save me from myself when I am alone
I'm sorry I can't let you interfere
You will soon hate me too
I Love You
Although I can't quite love myself at all
I know you want to hold me
But I only want to go home
There is no need to bind me for I have no real place to go
Stop looking to protect me
All I want to do is go alone
I have so much pain
You will never comprehend this which I feel
I already tried to save me
I'm done with feeling pain
The blade will dig down deeper and I'm sorry if I cause you pain
I never meant to do anything
I was only trying to cope
I only hope the blade will always go across



Painting

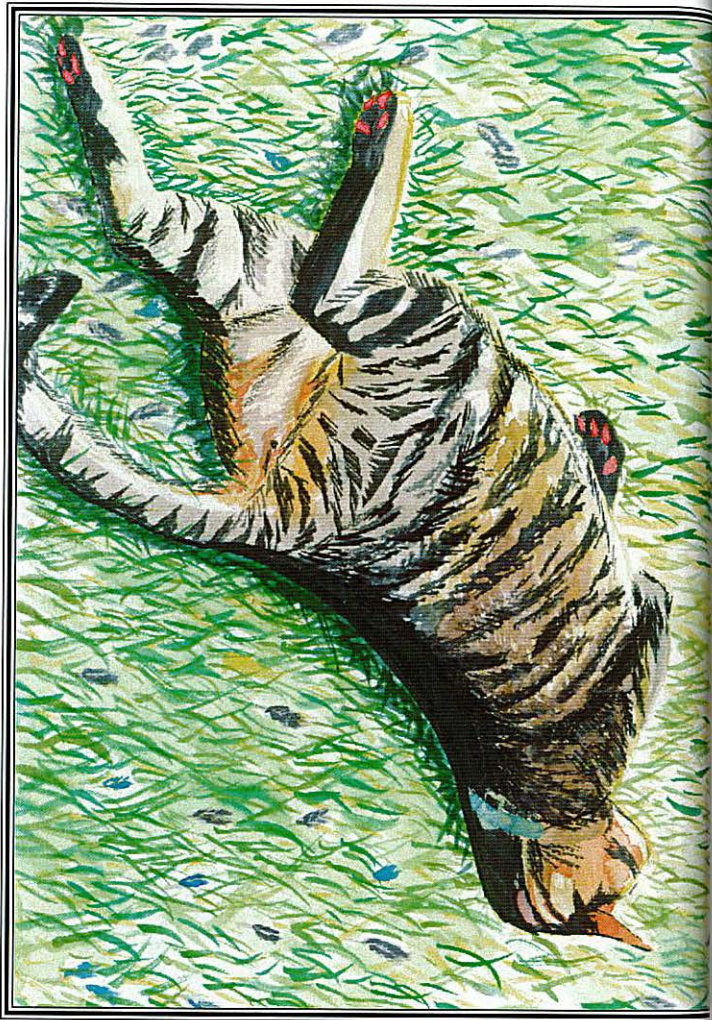
Upper Hand

Jon Gerhold

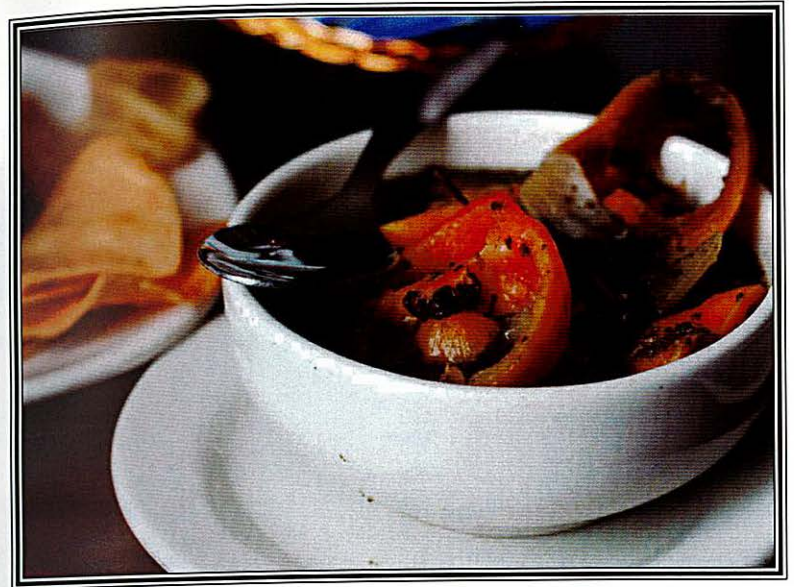
Painting

Lazy Afternoon

Angelee Homma



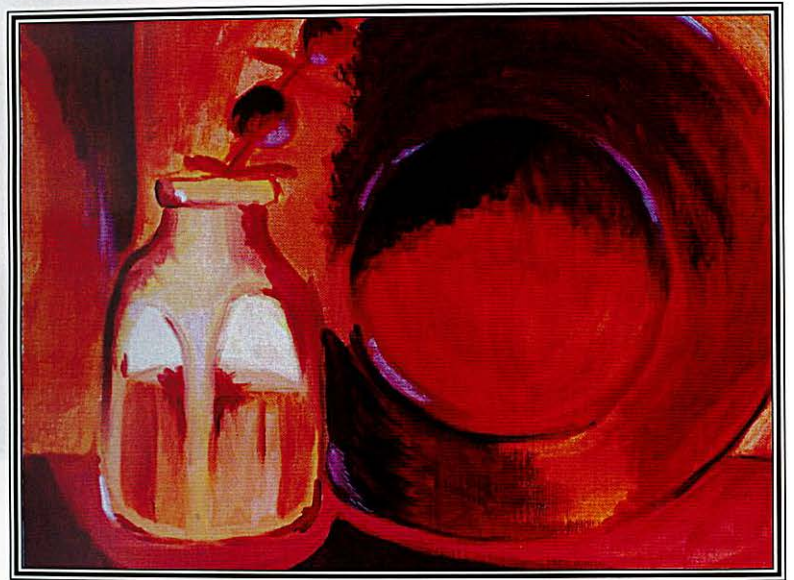
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Peppers in Progresso

Photograph

Cory Petersen



Red Plate

Painting

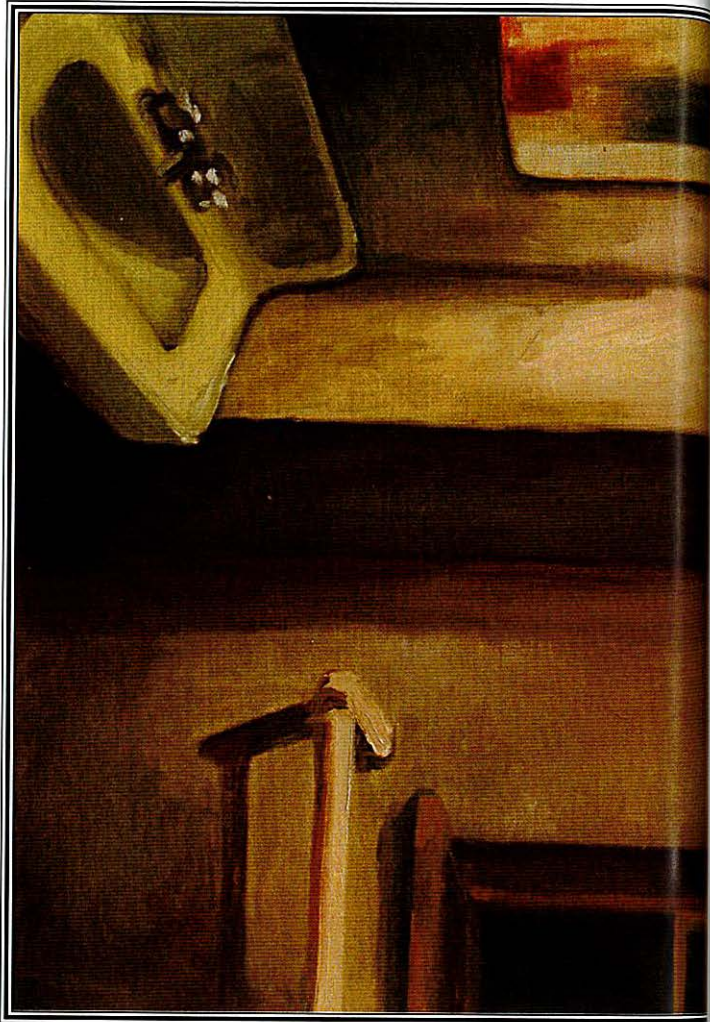
Michele Querin

43

Painting

Midnight Run

Angelee Homma



Grand Piano

Painting

Amber Ebert



Bombshell

Graphic Art

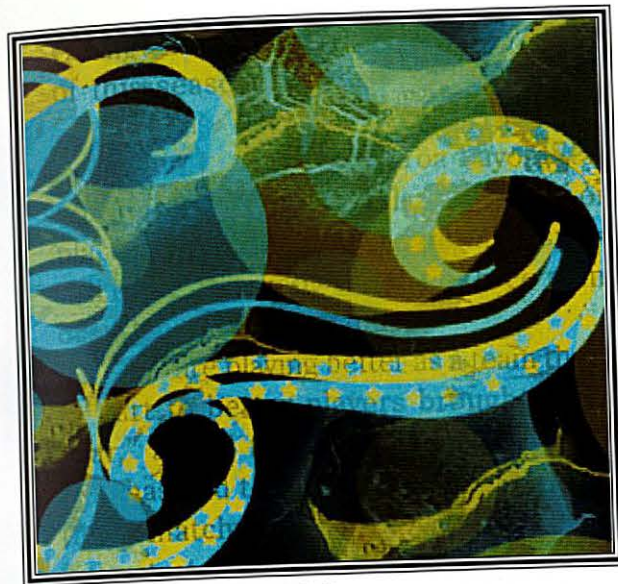
Megan Bolling



Summer of Our Discontent

Graphic Art

Megan Bolling



Text Message

Graphic Art

Megan Bolling



Symphony in Iraq

Graphic Art

Megan Bolling



Green Fern
Painting Kirsten Patrick



Red Lily
Painting Kirsten Patrick



Cherry Blossoms

Photograph

Keiin Tominaga



Buddha Brothers

Painting

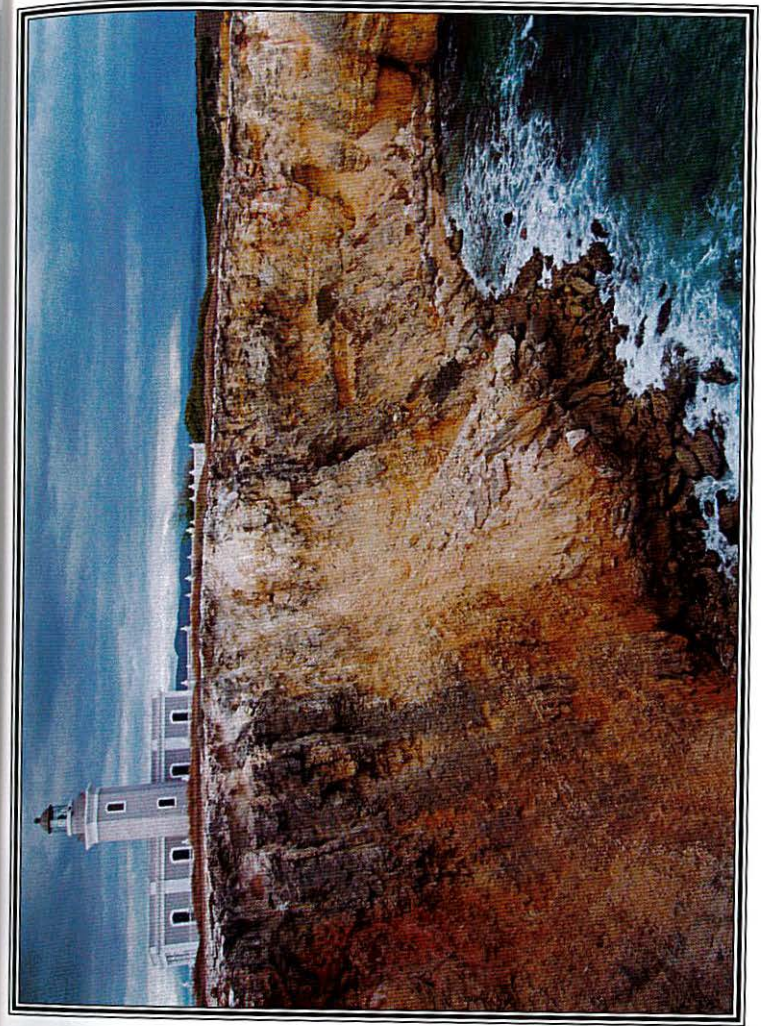
Zach Aulbach



Peripheral Illusion

Drawing

Zach Aulbach



Lighthouse

Photograph

Nicole Yoshimoto



At Sea

Photograph

Juan Garcia



Waimea View

Photograph

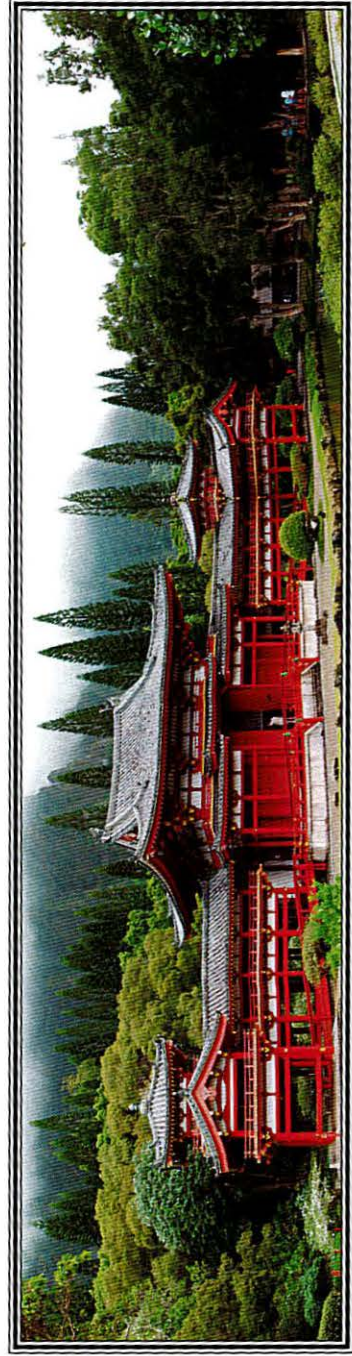
Juan Garcia



Pali Lookout

Photograph

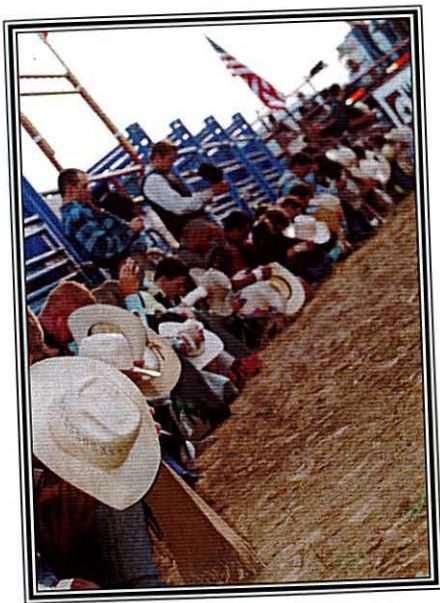
Juan Garcia



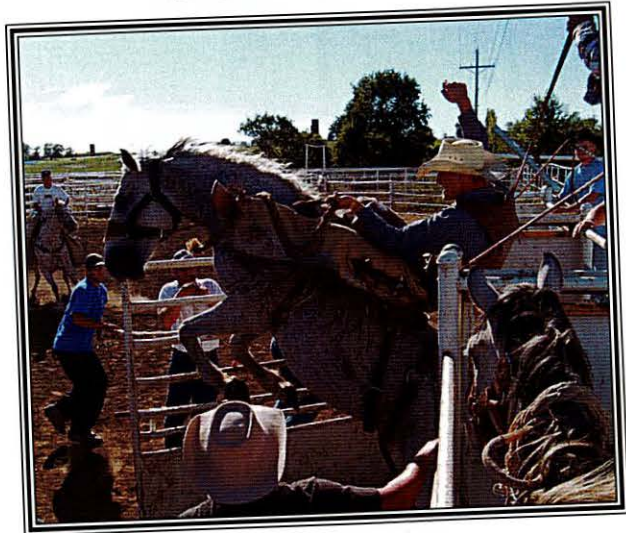
Valley of the Temple

Photograph

Juan Garcia



Bullrider's Prayer
Photograph Sasha Sankey



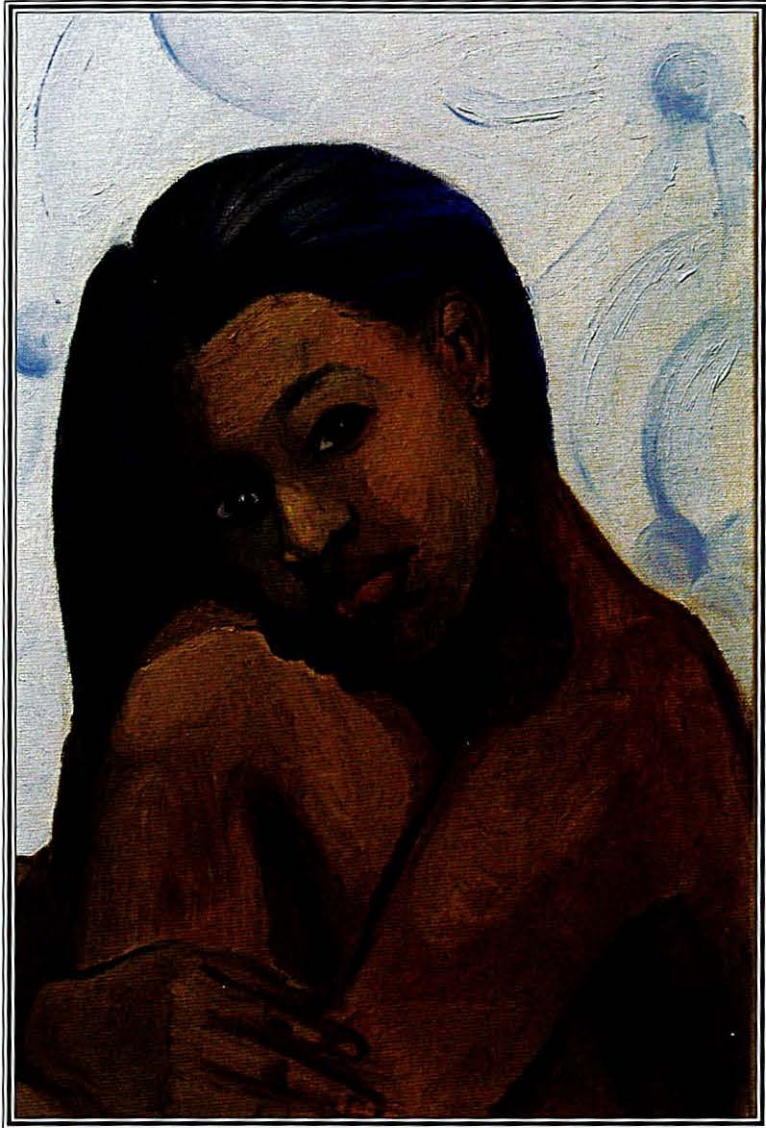
90 In Mind
Photograph Sasha Sankey



Go With The Flow
Photograph Cory Petersen



Puppy Love
Photograph Sequan Davison



Neecee

Painting

Angelee Homma

I Am

by Yalimar Vidal

I am chained to my body.
Relinquished!
I am held captive.
Hold me tight.
I don't want to lose you.
There's something about you.
Just hold me close.
I need to pray for my sanity.
I need to run away from here.
I want to break away.
I am a shadow of someone's former self.
I am not where I am.
Don't keep trying to stop me.
I can't help myself.
There's nothing wrong with wanting to die.
What about thinking or wanting to cry?
Can you deny me that too?
My temple...
It's not just my body; It's my soul as well.
The connection we make.
Your soul meets mine in a close embrace.
I look into your eyes.
I hate this fucking silence.
What do you want from me?
You're so amazing to me.
How did I get here?
Everything seems so far away.
The days ahead...
The days are so long.
I don't know why.
I just live the way I do.
I wanted to say I wouldn't be gone.
Tomorrow is one thing I can't guarantee.

The Need for Today

by T.N. Adams

I just don't need this,
Your abuse and hurtful words.
I'm leaving today.

I just don't need this,
All this smoke and cigarettes.
I'm quitting today.

I just don't need this,
All this binging and purging.
I'm stopping today.

I just don't need this,
Selling my body for cash.
I'm changing today.

I just don't need this,
Hitting my kids and my wife.
I'm stopping today.

I just don't need this,
Drinking as much as I can.
I'm quitting today.

I just don't need this,
Waiting in vain for a cure.
I'm leaving today.

Leaving and quitting
And changing and stopping, too,
Can be done today.

Asked For Answers

by Lora Persinger

I stared at the moon and asked it for answers
Smiled and whispered and asked for more chances
To take things on my own, to bring things into sight
To fix the wrongs, to bring the good, to find it all that night
I asked for answers and maybe I have some
I asked for answers and maybe I know one
I asked for hope and will never be without
I smiled in the silver light which knew what it was about
I asked for answers and maybe it said so
I asked for truths and maybe I should go
I asked for hope and have more than I did
I smiled in the silver light and wondered why I ever hid.



Ghost Tree

Photograph

Sequan Davison

The Rain

by Theodore Devere

The Rain.

Silent and peaceful. Wet, cool, refreshing and cleansing. Calm and joyful as it washes away the heat and the dust from the road. Giving life, coming downward and lulling the vegetation into contentedness.

It hits the old tin roof and calms, not only the animals but, the farmer inside. He leans back, listens and closes his eyes as he smiles, hearing the rain pitter-pattering upon the metal overhead. The wind blows gently, bringing in the smell of clean and the humidity, gently dampening the inside of the barn.

Thunder cracks and the cattle twitch. The rain continues to fall; harder and harder as the storm continues. Massive torrents converge and creeks rise, washing away soil.

The rain persists.

The ground softens and buildings crumble; water-logged plants shrivel and wilt. Mud puddles, once separate and forlorn, congregate into larger pools that hide the roadbed. Motorists struggle with the precipitation onslaught so much that they slow down yet become careless. Bridges covered by the flood; the roadway obscured causing some to run into the high waters and be swept downstream to their deaths. Others as unfortunate crawl out upon their homes, as the waters rise, in desperation for their lives.

The clouds boil and churn like slithering snakes. Glimpses of the sun tantalize the drowned earth. A beam breaks through, though hope had been lost, cutting to the soaked ground. Light radiates through, bringing warmth to begin the drawdown of the floods.

Waters recede and the world, once covered, shows herself and bathes in the heavy light.



Break Through

Photograph

Sequan Davison

Men, Women, and Thanksgiving

by Amanda Gordon

Thanksgiving has pre-assigned roles in every household. At my parent's house, Dad takes control and puts everyone to work so that dinner is done in time for company. In "Lost in the Kitchen," Dave Barry states how the wives get together and know exactly what to do and how to do it. This leaves the men feeling like "scum" and in charge of the children (Cohen 82). This outlook is typical of most families.

Thanksgiving makes Barry feel useless. His wife goes straight to work with his buddy's wife, leaving the men no choice but to stay out of the way. The women give them the duty of babysitting, which is soon boring as compared to football (Cohen 83). This leaves the husbands feeling even more guilty for not staying on task. They consider themselves typical men as far as cooking goes. Notice, though, how they make small attempt to change their position, not because they are lazy, but because it is not their place.

At Granny's house on Thanksgiving I experience the same roles taking place. All my aunts and older female cousins gather in the kitchen working hastily to finish every dish at the same time. They kick out all men and children at their first attempt to help. As Barry says, "[D]espite all that has been said in the past 20 years or so about sexual equality, most men make themselves as useful around the kitchen as ill-trained Labrador retrievers" (Cohen 82). They know what they are doing and they are determined to do it without interruption. They send my uncles and cousins and children all outside and expect Dad and Uncle Sammy to entertain and watch the little ones. Last Thanksgiving they made a "tater gun." For those who don't know what a "tater gun" is, it's a PVC pipe constructed to launch raw potatoes as far as possible, in this case across the lake.

After launching all of the potatoes my brilliant uncle suggested using potato- sized rocks as a logical substitute. Within

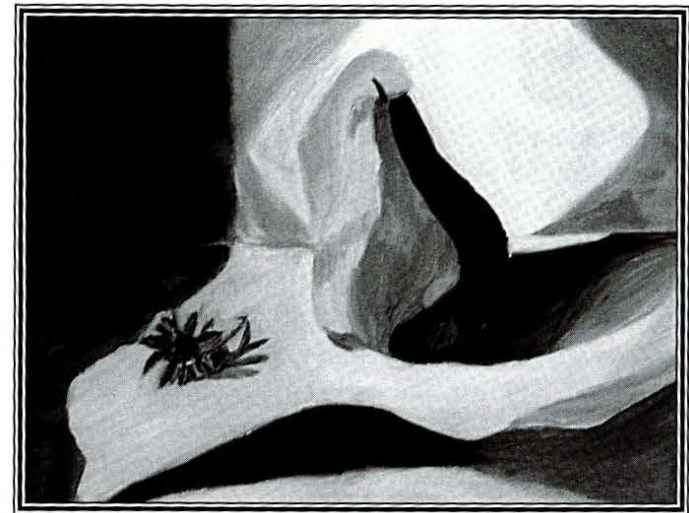
minutes my father successfully managed to hurt himself as well as cause every kid under his watch to cry, scream or faint at the site of his busted kneecap.

Barry's situation is much like Thanksgiving at Granny's house. The women slave in the kitchen while the men are to watch the kids. The men can never just "watch the kids" they want to do their own thing. The best part is that it is ok.

Thanksgiving would not be as memorable, fun and sometimes chaotic if it was not for the pre-assigned roles that we make subconsciously. There is no need for men in the kitchen just there is no need for a housewife in a mechanic shop. This may come off as sexist or may not apply to everyone, but this is my take on the subject. I'd ask my fiancé for his opinion, but right now he's playing video games.

Work Cited

Barry, Dave. "Lost in the Kitchen." 50 Essays: A Portable Anthology, 2nd ed. Ed. Samuel Cohen. Bedford/St. Martin's: Boston, 2007. 82-84.



Contrasts

Painting

Kirsten Patrick

Dies Irae

by Adam Crain

Cell phones are horrid things; you can be involved in any task and yet a simple ring from it and you are off in another world. I wonder what would happen if the great architects of history had cellular phones, I'm sure the great Sphinx would stand unfinished, the Tower of Pisa not tall enough to lean, or Mount Rushmore any distinguishable face.

I was cleaning the house one day, diligently dusting and scrubbing so that the surfaces would shine, and my phone rang. I would've ignored it if it wouldn't have been Cyndi Lauper's "True Colors." That ringtone signified a member of my close and personal clique, a group I had recently lost touch with after graduating high school. I accidentally hit the large speaker-phone feature on the side of the phone, sending a loud beep through my ears.

"Hell! Dammit!" I yelled.

"Excuse me?" a voice asked, holding back a laugh. "Kyle? What's wrong?"

"Hi, Edie, sorry the speakerphone had this loud beep and I just freaked and I completely ..."

"You're rambling," Edie interjected. "I see not much has changed."

I laughed a reply before she started again.

"I miss you and so does Kia, and therefore I have a proposal!"

"Ok," I replied. "And what does this proposal entail?"

"You, Kia, and I. Going to the Cimarron Mansion."

"What?!" I exclaimed. "No way, the Cimarron Mansion is, well, its scary."

"Have you ever been there?" Edie coyly stated.

"No."

"Well, neither have we, and as our best friend you are obliged to escort us there. You are a strong, virile man who has every capability of defending us from whatever aliens, ghosts and/or aggressive native American tribal people that are there," Edie explained.

"Edith Marie Burton, I am not going to the most haunted place in the state with you, besides, it's off limits. We'll get arrested if we go there," I tried to reason.

"Come outside, we are waiting. We're going, whether you like it or not."

With that Edie hung up, and I resolved not to go outside. Exactly thirty seconds later I opened the front door and spied on the waiting Edie and Kia, in Edie's blue convertible. Edie, a ravishing brunette that was every idea of the popular cheerleader in one gorgeous frame, was head bopping to a hip-hop song on the radio. Kia was simply a smaller version of Edie, but every bit as beautiful, sporting oversized sunglasses and pulling her hair back with a red bow. I had met them at a freshman orientation in high school, where we all had been lost ducklings. We three sat as the football team headed off, the soccer team met, the dance squad practiced, and there seemed to be only one option left, cheerleading. We signed on as the only freshman recruits, and had a blast. We made pyramids, yelled chants, decorated locker poster after locker poster and endured many a cold dreary game for the sake of the team. When the girls had been offered a scholarship at State University for cheerleading, and I was offered one in academics, we naturally split paths. It wasn't until today that we'd talked, which I found strange, but shook away as I walked towards the car.

"Get In!" Kia yelled, bopping her head along with Edie.

I smiled and jumped into the backseat and got ready for the trip. Twenty miles later we were in a small town, Cimarron. Cimarron had a population of twenty-eight people, and featured one business, called the Cimarron Station, which sold alcohol, gas, soft drinks and cigarettes to the town. We stopped in for a drink, (and to ask someone about the mansion). The store was small, so small in fact that the three of us, the one customer besides us that was there and the two owners were very crowded. We each picked up a can of soda and edged our way to the small table where they were sitting. They were old, probably married, and seemed haunted by something.

"Hi," Edie started, flashing that million dollar smile she was famous for. "We are college students doing a thesis project, are

there any interesting areas around here we should be aware of?"

The bluntness of the question flashed across my mind as a frown came upon the women's face.

"Stay away from that mansion, y'hear? Nothing good has ever come from it."

"What mansion?" Kia asked.

"Don't think I'm stupid, I know you've heard of the Mansion and you are here to see if it's real. It's there alright, and it's full of demons! Demonic forces that will kill you. Don't go."

"Ok, how much for the soda?"

Eddie held a bill in her direction. She raised her hand and swatted away the money and looked at us again.

"You better not go down there, I've seen too much come from it. You kids won't come back from there. See all those missing posters?"

She pointed to a wall where a plethora of papers were hung.

"They all came here looking for the same thing you were, now go on."

Eddie turned from them and made an angry face at us before heading out the screen door.

"Hey!" someone shouted after us.

We were almost to the car by then. We turned to find the only other person that had been in the store with us, a boy about our age, who was simply, beautiful. He had blonde hair like mine, but his skin was so bronze, and he seemed so perfect.

"Go there; those old geezers have no idea what they are talking about."

He smiled at us.

"Wait," Kia said. "Why should we?"

"There's no one up there now, there used to be a group of people who lived there. Mediators."

We all stared blankly at him.

"They knew how to fly ..." he explained.

"Don't you mean levit ..." I began, but he cut me off.

"They are all dead and gone now, it's a beautiful property, just go, and see it."

"Thanks!" Eddie, giggled. "What's your name?"

"I'm Derek. Derek Diego. Go ahead, make fun of the name."

The eyebrow above his left eye arched as he prepared for laughter, which none of us supplied.

"That's a very ... heroic name," Eddie told him. "And thank you Derek Diego, I hope to see you again."

He sighed and turned around, headed in no particular direction as we headed into the car, and then to the mansion.

"Where is it?" Eddie asked.

"I don't know, my grandpa showed me the road to it when I was five, I'll remember it. It's past the Lucky Tree Orchard," Kia stated.

We kept driving along the road, and soon enough a big red sign announcing the Lucky Tree Orchard was overhead.

"Ok," Kia said, examining the surrounding. "There!"

She pointed to a large tree, with no visible path near it.

"There's no road," I told them.

"Just drive, I know, believe me it's there," Kia smiled and settled into her seat.

Eddie hit the gas and soon we were flying through the woods with just enough room to pass in between the trees. We drove for nearly five miles, when suddenly and unexpectedly, we ran into a large object.

"Oh dear," Eddie exclaimed. "That came out of nowhere!"

Kia and I were almost too shocked to speak as we got out examining the damage. The thing we had ran into was a large pillar made of stone, it had no writing or design on it, but there seemed to be many scattered along the area, because two were visible where we stood.

"What am I going to do? My dad is going to kill me."

Eddie sat on the ground and buried her face into her hands.

"Let's try to find a house, something has to be out here, right Kia?"

I winked at Kia and tried to get her to follow, but she was looking in the distance.

"No," She replied. "The only thing that would be out here would be the mansion."

I glared at her, and she shrugged her shoulders at me.

"Its not far from here," Kia said, picking Edie up from the ground. "Let's keep walking, who knows, they may have a phone. A phone!"

We all realized at that moment how asinine we had been acting. We pulled out our cellar phones to find out we had no signal.

"Damn." I said through my teeth. "We have no choice, let's go."

We all started walking in the direction that we should have been driving, and tried to sing songs along the way. Halfway through Cher's "Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves," we stopped. There was a brick road, and trees, things that a normal old-fashioned town would have.

"Where are we?" Edie asked, taking a peach from one of the trees.

"Some town, it looks like," I smiled stealing one for myself.

We laughed and ran down the road, only to stop once more, and glare at the large building that stood before us. Longer than any house I'd seen before. It seemed to stretch forever. The golden roof was so bright I had to shield my eyes from it. A perfectly manicured topiary was in the shape of two hands, and the place seemed bathed in white light.

"Oh ... " I started.

"My ... " Edie continued.

"Tits," Kia finished.

We both looked at her, and she shrugged again. We all walked towards the mansion, which had a large plaque on the door that read Cimmarron. We had finally seen the famed Cimmarron Mansion. It seemed deserted, some windows boarded and others broken; and the door seemed heavy and permanent. We walked closer, past the greenery and stopped at the front door.

"What is this?" I asked.

"The Cimmarron Mansion, duh," Kia answered, putting her hand on the door.

"Don't!" Edie yelled before she knocked. "What if we disturb something?"

"Like what?" Kia asked.

"Who knows, ghosts?" Edie swallowed, I could hear the fear in her voice.

"Lets do it, we have no choice, we're stuck otherwise," and with that, I knocked on the door.

It echoed within the house, and the door opened. We all braced for whatever was behind it, but there was no one. I figured the knock must have jimmied it loose. We all walked into the house together, holding hands wishing that we hadn't started out on this trip.

Directly inside was a large foyer, made of marble, so pristine and shiny that it seemed like it was freshly cleaned. The air smelled of flowers, maybe gardenias. Yet something didn't seem quite right. Two large staircases led to opposite upstairs corridors. The place was accented in gold, carpets, vases, and mirrors lined with it.

"Hello?" Edie yelled. "Is anyone here?"

Her voice echoed through the downstairs which seemed to go on forever, up to a large black wall. We walked down the main hall, where locked doors concealed what we wanted to find.

"Any sign of a phone?" I wondered out loud.

"Not that I see," Kia sighed, and Edie shook her head in agreement.

We walked up to the black wall, which had nothing on it except for a large golden circle with inscriptions on it.

"What does that say?" Edie asked.

"Wanna find out?"

Kia looked at me with a smile, and I knew what she wanted to do.

Edie and I stood together, with our elbows and forearms linked. We crouched together and chanted.

"... 5,6,7,."

On "8" Kia jumped onto our locked arms and we lifted her as high as we could.

"Glad cheerleading paid off somehow," I mumbled as Kia strained to see the circle.

"It has the outer circle, an inner circle, and three small circles inside that. They are labeled plant, tend, and fruit. The bigger circles are labeled Charity and Resu-, Resu-," she strained for the word. "R, E, S, S, U, R, E, C, T, I, O, N. What's that spell?"

"Dear lord, are you serious?" Edie asked me under her breath. "Its resurrection honey, it means being alive after death."

"Oh, like in Super Mario Bros. where you grab a mushroom and even though the koopas jump on you, you come back?" She added as we put her on the ground.

Edie rolled her eyes.

"Yes, honey, that's exactly what resurrection is."

We started back through the corridor, not sure what to do next. We reached the front door in silence, and decided to walk back to town, however long it would take us. We started down the brick road, to where we had entered, prepared for the long trip back. When we got to the woods, we heard something, and stopped together.

"Lady Mayor, what is this sign?"

The voice was deep, British, and definitely right in front of them. I grabbed the girls, and pushed them towards the ground. I prayed that they wouldn't hear us.

"This troubles me, Walter, how could they have found us?"

The response came from a woman, she sounded old, and also British. She spoke again, and the voice seemed to be getting closer.

"We must stop them from leaving, where were they last?"

"They were in the foyer, examining the Crest of the Sun. They are strong, they lifted each other to be able to see it. They are also very handsome, and one has likeness of Nicolae."

"Nicolae?" Edie mouthed to me, her brows furrowed. I put my hand on her mouth to silence her, but nothing could have stopped the henchmen behind us, who hit me so hard on the head that I blacked out.

I awoke in a dark room, tied with Edie and Kia.

"Kyle? Are you awake?" Kia cried. "Edie, his eyes opened."

"We thought you were dead, they hit you so hard. I don't know why they only hit you. I think they assume we want to hurt them," Edie explained and took a deep breath.

"What are we going to do?" I whispered, still groggy from the hit.

"I have no clue," Edie answered.

A door opened just then, flooding the room with light. A man with a lantern came in, wordlessly, and helped us up. He nodded as if to follow him, so we did. We had been in one of the locked rooms along the foyer of the mansion, only this time as we walked through people had lined the hallway, maybe a hundred or so.

"Kyle," Edie whispered. "My shirt was taken, Kia's ribbon was too, why didn't they take something of yours?"

"I don't know, what were they?" I replied under my breath.

"Mine was the red top from UCA Camp, and Kia had a red bow, maybe they have something against it?"

"I don't know, but I'm wearing red underwear, lets not tell them," Kia interjected.

I let her stupidity pass this once, as people stared at us. The people wore old-fashioned clothing, bodices, dresses, hair in bonnets and men in simple suits. The children wore robes of white and stared as we walked the rest of the hall in silence, until we reached the black wall which looked much different. There were large golden stands placed there, three of them, like ones you'd see in a courtroom. Staircases led up to them, they must've been 10 feet high. The man stood us before the central one and walked away. We hadn't noticed before, but a woman sat behind the stand, and stood up so that we could see her. Two men also stood in the adjacent stands.

"Hello intruders, my name is Demelza, I am mayor of this village."

We recognized the voice from the woods as hers. She continued.

"We demand to know why you're here. Be aware that armed guards stand behind you."

We stood there, intimidated by the small woman, scared to speak, shaking. Edie tapped my back and whispered.

"Go on."

"Hello!" I shouted. "My name is Kyle Fairfax, and we are not here to harm you."

"What do you want then?" the man to her left demanded.

"Peace, Garrick." Demelza said, not taking her eyes off of us. "Well?"

"Our car broke down in the woods outside your ... umm ... village, we wondered if you had a phone we could use to call a tow truck?"

I cowered after I spoke this time, afraid of the reply.

"What are these things they speak of?" the man to Demelza's right asked.

"They are things not of this world, Beldon. They have come here to tell us of prophecy. I must speak to them in my chambers. Alone!"

With that, Demelza descended the stairs and came to us.

"Follow Me," she ordered.

We followed her down the hall once more, and to the front of the mansion. She led us up the central set of stairs to the upper floor, and to a door right at the top of the staircase. She produced a golden skeleton key from the rope around her neck, and opened the door.

The room was simple, and had wood floors. A bench sat before a desk that was bare except for the golden symbol that was on the black wall.

"Now tell me, children, what really brings you here?"

Demelza sat down at her desk and rested her hands upon it.

"We told you," I said. "Our car broke down."

"I understand that," Demelza smiled. "But what brought your car to our little wood? What made you crash into the pillars we strategically built to keep your kind out?"

"Our kind?" Edie blurted out.

"Yes!" Demelza retorted. "Curious teenagers, meddling pastors, officials, the police, usually people catch the hint at the pillars after the long hike. They leave, like they are suppose to."

"What are you doing here?" I asked her.

"I'm asking the questions here, not you."

Demelza was old, probably my grandmother's age. Her face was skinny, as was her frame. Her frizzy hair was drawn back from her face, into a small bun, yet you could see a haunted expression behind her grey eyes.

"Excuse me!" She barked. "Answer my question."

"We heard rumors about the mansion here. We wanted to see if it really existed."

I looked down, ashamed at the truth.

"Well, as you can see, it exists. Unfortunately, you will not be returning to tell your friends about it."

She arched her left eyebrow and pursed her lips, satisfied with what she had said.

"What do you mean?" Kia asked.

"I mean that you will not be telling everyone of our village. We live here in peace, our own world. We don't need more people like you invading it."

"You can't keep us here," I said to her, no longer afraid.

"Oh I can, my dear, and I will. I am the leader here. These people eat out of my hand. Whatever I tell them is truth, and the truth here is that you are prophets sent forth from the sun. You will explain to them that the world is doomed and will impact with the sun in exactly thirty-two years."

"Why?" Edie asked. "Why make us lie to them?"

"These are not lies!"

Demelza spoke with a greater force now, like something else was talking for her, something evil.

"The sun is all powerful, and let me tell you he speaks to me, I am his prophet, but the people will act with more haste if the sun sent new prophets to tell us. So there you are."

After our little discussion, Demelza gave us clothing to change into. The girls both had brown cotton dresses and bonnets to pull their hair back with. I had black pants and an oversized white shirt with laces at the top. She gave us no shoes to wear, instead giving us leather-bound bookes entitled: The Sun Journal.

After we had changed, we walked down the stairs and outside.

"Holy hell." I said, rubbing my head.

"What just happened?" Edie asked.

"Well, we got kidnapped by a prosyletic doomsday cult, whose leader wants us to tell the followers that they are going to die soon." Kia smiled, proud of her recap.

Edie glared at her, as we walked to the side of the house.

"Why do they keep calling this a village?" Kia asked.

She was answered as we reached the back of the mansion.

A small community stood before us, huts, small houses, stands selling things, and the like. There was a large field as well, with a lush green crop growing from it.

"Woah," Edie gasped.

We walked towards the hoi polloi, all of them staring at us.

A small girl brought Edie and Kia flowered headbands.

"From the Carrington family," she said and frolicked away.

Another girl brought us a bowl filled with bright candy.

"From the Gytha Family."

"We are like celebrities here," Kia smiled.

After receiving more goodies, flowers, and clothing;

Demelza met us.

"Nice, isn't it?" she said to us, staring at the throng. "I created this, crafted into perfection. I even named it myself, we call it Nineveh, after the city that God gave a second chance."

"Why'd you do it?" I asked her.

"The world did nothing but let me down. Murder, theft, sin was everywhere, so I left it. My husband and I came here, to America, bought some land, and invited a few families to come with us. Over the years people have found us, but we usually erase their memories or kill them. Consider yourself lucky."

"Do they know about the outside world? Remember it?"

I stared at her, completely entranced.

"Those who were founders with us, they chose to forget, or simply keep it to themselves. The new generation only knows of this world, where we live. They don't know about electricity, or processed foods, or even simple subjects like math and science. Things like those lead to questions, and we don't need that here.

We work in the fields, and keep to ourselves."

"You're own personal Utopia?" Edie laughed, accepting it all.

"I never got your names children, pray tell, what are they?"

I felt like she was opening now, as long as we followed her plan. We talked with her some more, telling her about our lives and activities, until a loud bell rung.

"It's time for supper, my dears, let us go," Demelza smiled as I helped her up from the grass.

She led us to a long table that had been moved in the roadway of the village. We set in the direct middle, across from Demelza, Garrick and Beldon. Bowls upon bowls of vegetables and bread, meats and desserts lay before us. I wanted to dig right in, but Demelza held her hands into the air. Everyone else did the same after her, so I lifted my hands in the air as well. They all spoke in unison then, a chant that broke into a cry to the heavens.

"Oh gracious Sun above, give us thy power, make the red sin no more, and produce Greenleaf as your blessing."

They chanted this four times and sat at the same time.

Demelza and her councilors smiled at us, and we began to eat.

After dinner, Garrick, the councilor that had sat on her left, led us to our sleeping quarters. He took us into the mansion and unlocked one of the doors along the foyer. The room was golden, and housed three beds, with white bed linens.

"Prophecy has told us about you. Tomorrow morning you shall meet with the people and let us know what the Sun sent with you. Goodnight, travelers. I've left some green leaf on your bed stands for relaxation."

He bowed out and left us to ourselves.

"Greenleaf?" Kia asked.

I examined the plant on the table, and recognized it immediately.

"It's pot! Oh my, oh my gosh; I finally realize what this is all about!"

The room was lit with a candelabra, so we huddled together to discuss the next day.

"After we tell them about the thirty-two year deal, we are out of here, ok?" Edie stated.

"How?" Kia asked. "They watch us at all times, and they lock us in these rooms if they aren't."

"We will gain their trust, and use it against them. We will get out of here, ok guys?"

I knew that my words had comforted them, because of the soft smiles on their faces. I knew something else needed to be done, there was a problem here, but I didn't want to upset the girls. We pushed the beds together, and slept in close proximity for safety. That night I dreamed of a world I'd never seen before, bright and clean. There was no crime, only love, and I wondered why the dream was so vivid and clear. I'd never had one before.

We awoke to the sound of a choir singing, church style, so beautifully soft and angelic.

"Morning, girls," I said as I stretched.

The room was completely dark now, the candles log past spent.

"Morning," they yawned.

The door opened. Demelza stood there with a plate of food and set it on the beds.

"She shut the door behind her, and lit some candles so we could see."

"Today, you will tell them everything," she softly said. "If you do as told, you can stay here, and rule with me. They see you as gods, sent from another time. Please don't ruin this. Eat, I left clothes outside your door, change into them, and come into the foyer."

None of us replied as she left, instead choosing to snack on the fruits she'd laid before us. We changed into a set of black robes with the golden symbol on it after that, and made our way into the foyer. The village waited there, as we climbed up the stairs to the tops of the stands Demelza and her council had spoken at before. I cleared my throat as the crowd calmed down, and began to speak.

"Citizens of Nineveh, we were sent here by the great and powerful SUN! We are here to let you know that your world is full

of sin and turmoil. You have not done us penance, and for that you will be eradicated. You have thirty-two years, after which, this planet will be destroyed. Thank you."

I looked at the girls with a smile, and we made our way down together, to where Demelza was standing.

"Why thank you great prophets, I'm sure with this we shall strive to be a better society. I will implore you in my office, if that be pleasing," she boomed with a broad smile on her face.

Edie nodded, and led the way for us upstairs in the room where it had all started.

"Very nice!" Demelza smiled. "It was convincing. You have impressed me!"

"Can I ask you a question?" Edie asked.

"Anything, my child," the woman answered.

"You said in the woods that one of us had likeness of Nicolae. Who is that?"

"Nicolae is the demon I created for this village. Within a society you need danger to scare the people into their place. Nicolae has done this. I told our gatekeeper, Walter that you must've been demons, so he should keep a better watch out. It's a cycle you see. I scare the gatekeeper, he shoots more efficiently, and we live."

"Wow," Kia said, staring out the door. "That boy looks so familiar. Where have I seen him before?"

We all moved to look out the door into the hall, where Derek Diego stood before us.

"You!" Edie yelled. "You told us to come here!"

She turned to Demelza.

"He told us about this place!"

"Nice job, Deorwhyn, I didn't realize they were fruits of your labor. Take this for your good work."

She handed him a pile of green leaves and she smiled at him.

"Go outside and use this to soak in the sun."

"Thanks grandmother," he smiled back at her, taking the leaves and then walking down the stairs.

"He's your ... your ... your related to him?" I asked, flabbergasted.

"Yes, let me explain, I sent Deorwhyn to find us suitable prophets from a town nearby. He's young, and very capable of making the trip in a day, and he's mine, so he knows not to say anything to the others. It looks like I trained him well."

Demelza sat at her desk again, with a look of happiness.

"Demelza, I wonder if we might construct something," I asked her later on in the day.

We had been mingling with the villagers, investigating my leads, and eventually concocted a plan.

"Like what, my dear?"

"A monument, a sort of temple to the sun. It will be simple, and efficient. It will help the villagers worship as well," Kia explained.

"That's a marvelous idea!" Demelza replied. "Go see Eadric to get supplies from him; he is in the last hut in the village, on the right side."

"Thanks a lot, I really think we are going to like it here," Edie added as we walked away.

"Your welcome children and I'm delighted to hear it!"

We walked down the stairs and talked under hushed breaths.

"We need nails, rope, wood, and hopefully knives. We can do without them though, as long as we have the other stuff. We'll be out of here in an hour!"

I began to contemplate exactly how everything would go down, and I became increasingly excited as I did so.

We received nails, rope and wood from Eadric, but they didn't have knives. In fact, he didn't even know what we were talking about when we asked him. We went to the far side of the mansion to begin construction. We imbedded nails in the rope, to make a faux cat-of-nine-tails, and then used a rock to pound a few through a board of wood. If we were leaving, we were leaving with a bang, and we had a feeling this wasn't going to be easy. I tried as hard as I could to make a sharp edge out of the rock, to some success. They had a fear of the color red, so we used the panties that had never been removed from Kia, no matter how

disgusting the thought was. We tore them in half, and tied strips along the weapons so that it would scare off the villagers. After we made another board with nails through it, I looked at the girls.

"You ready?" I asked.

"Hell yes," Kia replied.

"Let's do this," Edie added as we got up.

The weapons went under our clothes, so we didn't alert anyone right away. Clouds quickly shadowed the village, an omen, I assumed to shadow our behavior. We walked toward the village, people smiled as we passed them. We walked to the hill that stood over the village, a clear vantage point for everyone to see.

"People of Nineveh!" I shouted as loud as I could. "The sun has been observing your daily habits and is displeased. He has relinquished the thirty-two years he granted out of kindness. Today! You will die!"

The people looked around in confusion, as we ran toward them. What we did next is not something to be proud of, but something that was necessary. While most villagers ran into the woods surrounding the property, a group of elders stayed behind. We figured this was the founding group, and knew what we were up to.

"What is the meaning of this?" an old man yelled at us.

I hit him in the face with the board before he expected a reply, making sure the nail struck him. He bled, and I hit him again, trying to knock him out, and to produce more blood. After three more hits he was out, and blood was all over the place. Edie and Kia had already taken out three of the others, and only one stood left to defeat.

Demelza.

She stood atop the hill, watching our every move, holding something we could not see. We made our way up to her, and she brought it out for us to see; a small pistol, she held it with shaking hands.

"Come closer and I'll shoot!" she yelled. "I made this place, and I rid it of sin, and technology so that humanity could start again! You have taken that and released it into a bloodshed that cannot be fixed! So what if I'm not perfect, so what if I've done

things wrong, I forgot all that and started a new, and here you are fucking it up! Damn you all to hell!”

She didn't expect what came next. First I threw the sharp rock in her direction, distracting and striking her. I threw the cat-of-nine-tails in her direction and one of the nails luckily got caught on her shoe. She was standing on it unintentionally, and had no idea as she regained her composure.

“Why'd you do it?” I screamed at her.

“You still don't get it do you? I grow the plant, they harvest the plant and I sell it for profit, it's the perfect money-making scheme. So what if I lied to them? God isn't real? Only the Sun stands testament to what grows on Earth. He has helped me make millions and I'll make millions more. After you're dead!”

I reached down and yanked the rope, tripping the woman. Her gun fired toward the sky and she fell. I ran quickly towards her, picking up the gun she had dropped.

“Goodbye Demelza,” I said, pointing her own gun toward her. “The Son is not impressed with your actions.”

I shot her just then, with no remorse.

I had been raised to believe in God, a single deity that believed in our souls and knew to worship him only. A false prophet had emerged. It was my duty to take her out. It may have been murder, but what I did that day saved more people than it harmed. I may be quiet, not charismatic like most others, but I am a believer. This village was the exact opposite of what it appeared, it was unholy ground. The clouds cleared just then, and I've always wondered if that was Gods affirmation to me.

*A false prophet
had emerged. It
was my duty to
take her out.*

By the time we made it back into the town of Cimarron, police swarmed the place. The gunshot had scared someone and they called the authorities. Apparently Demelza had outstanding warrants in Great Britain, Ireland, Africa and the United States. She was using the village to harvest marijuana without them knowing it. They considered what I did to be a heroic deed, and I received presidential thanks for it.

Edie, Kia and I speak at least once a day. It doesn't take an overthrow of a cult to realize who your best friends are. They sent helicopters to pick up the remaining villagers who they took to a hospital to be checked out. That woman had created her own Utopia alright, but to benefit herself, to make herself a god; and in that there is no good. She worshiped the sun because that's what she needed in order to grow her crop. She had convinced an entire people that the sun was a god, and that marijuana was its gift. It made me sick. People can say whatever they want, and do whatever they want, but no matter how hard someone tries, they can never over rule the power of God.



Full Moon

Photograph

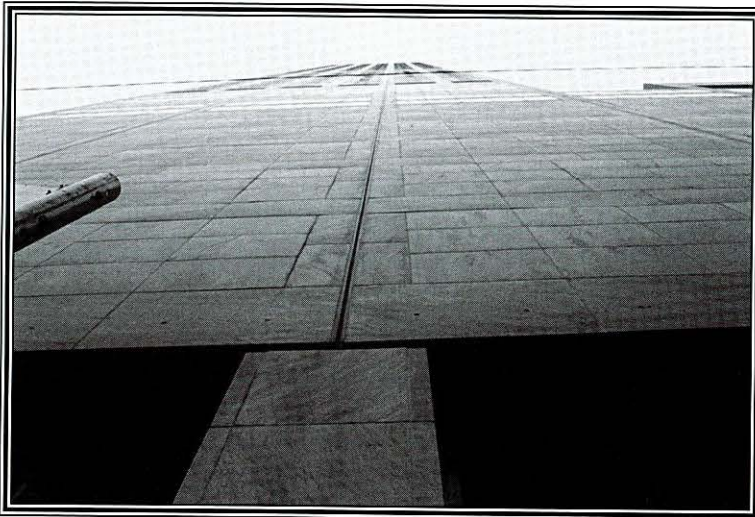
Sequan Davison



Sunday Morning

Photograph

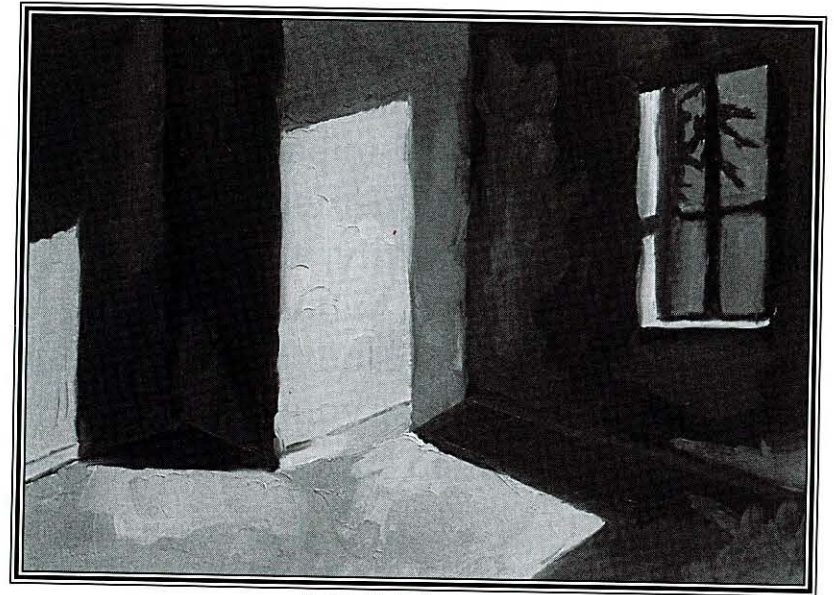
Casey McNamara



Sky

Photograph

Casey McNamara



A Fall Morning

Painting

Michele Querin

Heading Home

by Lora Persinger

I like the snow and the rain and the cold wind blowing
I like the quiet surrender that comes from not knowing

I like the way that I feel safe and sure

That this world belongs to me

At least for this moment

I hate the restraints that are put upon a child

I hate that I am not allowed to just be wild

I hate uncertainty of feeling

Lost within my own skin

At least at this moment

I'm heading home – my life's mixed with joy and sorrow

I'm heading home – to a world that won't fit in my tomorrow

I'm heading home – to friends and faces of people who have loved me

Oh, Fly me home – I can't wait to be home

The printing cost of Vol. 7
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“Thank you to all who contributed to the
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 College and Marshall community that gives
 students the opportunity for their creative
 voice to be heard.”

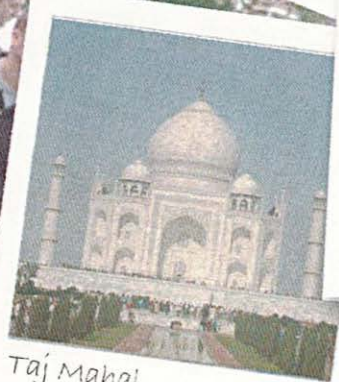
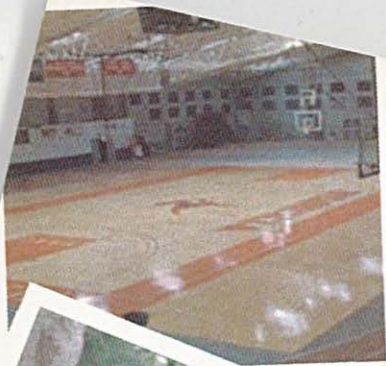
Jon Strickland, Editor

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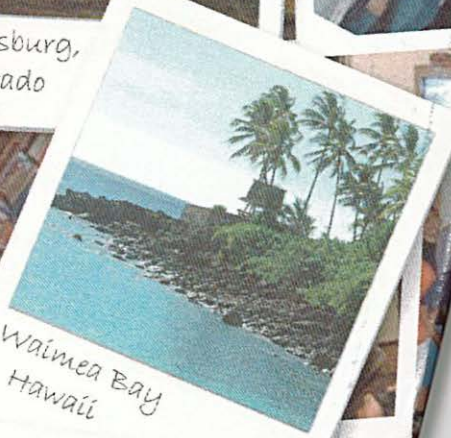
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Agra, India



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Fort -