

2010

The Vaguest Notion



Southern Wesleyan
University
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SWU

The Vaguest Notion
A publication of
the Division of Humanities
in collaboration with The Rickman Library

Co-editors: Moriah Sears & Aubrey Terrell

Faculty Sponsor: Erin Washington

Layout & Typist: Moriah Sears

Selection Committee: The English Faculty, with Moriah Sears,
Aubrey Terrell & Erin Washington

Advertising: Moriah Sears, Aubrey Terrell & Erin Washington

Printing: Aubrey Terrell & Faculty Services

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Southern Wesleyan University, April, 2010.

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Cover picture courtesy of Whitney Fritts

"Read, every day, something no one else is reading. Think, every day, something no one else is thinking. Do, every day, something no one else would be silly enough to do. It is bad for the mind to continually be part of unanimity."

- Christopher Morley

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Poetry



“Breaking Through”

By: Shanda Teague

A Prayer Away

Don't be afraid of the world,
Live in the world but not of it.
Don't turn away from the truth,
Seek it with each and every day.
Don't be fearful of the future,
Build it by fully living your life.
Don't hold grudges against those who have done you wrong,
Turn the other cheek, forgive, and forget.
Don't sell yourself short,
You were meant for so much more.
Don't stress your soul with anger and regret,
It'll only explode ten time worse down the road.
Don't lie to others or to yourself,
Always live with integrity knowing you won't have to feel guilt.
Don't do things for others wanting reciprocation,
You'll be blessed for what you do in the end.
Don't pretend to be something you're not,
Sooner or later it'll catch up with you.
Don't indulge in temporary happiness,
It only lasts for a little while.
Don't retreat from what you've been called to do,
The result can only bring regret.
And don't ever think you're alone,
God is just a prayer away.

Oils of Life

Oil for cooking; fragrant and warm: enhancing the aroma of the succulent, brown meat sizzling in the pan over the fire.

Oil of flowers; an essence pure, intense, carried on the tropical breeze through the cottage from wide-open windows not far from the ocean's roar.

Oil for engines; dark, viscous speeding through its mechanics; coating metals to reduce friction and heat, allowing for higher RPMs in seconds of time.

Oil of skin; musky, hot, mixed with salty-sweat, dripping down the red, flushed face of the long-distance runner as he completes the feat with an exhilaration of accomplishment.

Oil for Baby's perfect, smooth pink bottom. A fragrant baby aroma after an evening's warm bath; used to create a protective, motherly barrier between new flesh and soft cotton nappy.

Oil of the sweet almond; light and fragrant, capturing the soft wild, dark dry-hair as it is woven into the many small ordered braids; secured by small, bright pink, purple and yellow bows.

Oil of the rich, dark olive; the essence of the Middle East. Spoken of in the New Testament for it's anointed works; represented by miraculous healing of the Soul and the Body.

That very same acrid Oil of Death; the Oil of the Sacrament. Applied to the Dying along with a final confession at that solemn ceremony of the Last Rites;

The Last Human Experience of Life's Flowing Essence Oil.



By: Laurin McDowell

Living the Dream

Let me show you how to dream-

Close your eyes and drift away

On silver streams of lullaby

And think of colors, bright and bold-

Azure, violet, russet and gold.

Picture mountains strong and old

Things of beauty, fine and rare

Fireflies and fireworks

Colored dewdrops in the air,

Memories both faint and sweet,

Faces that you hope to meet,

Rushing oceans on whose waves

Tiny ships sail, noble and brave,

Creatures unseen in world of men,

Think of happier times, and then-
You will find it not enough
You must have more,
there must be more
Than ever drifting 'midst pretty thoughts

In the life of pain, disease and sorrow.
Before you lies the world of drudgery;
Beside you a palette of color;
Within you a world of adventure.
Take your brush and paint your dreams
Into a new tomorrow.

~ M.S.

Pages

I stepped back and took a look
At the pages of my life,
as if it were a book
I journeyed to where life began
through everything I'd tried to cram
into its measly pages.

I went through all I thought I knew
at all my different ages
And noted well that as I grew
I went through many stages
Of wisdom, life and dreams
and love and faith in God
and I returned to all of the places
my wandering feet had trod

There are things written there
I'd tear out if given chance
Perhaps increase font size
To emphasize a circumstance
But who will read it when I'm gone?
And really, does it matter?
If the choice be publish or destroy
I'd likely choose the latter.

My eyes wandered to passages
worn by my fingers leading
I wondered at my ignorance
in my choice of reading
what good is it to go through life
just knowing your own story?
if I read yours, and you read mine
now that would be a glory.

~ S.S.

ADD

8 am the day has just begun
tripping over laundry that's not done
all dressed, but where's my lunch?
how many medals has Michael Phelps won?

I sit in class dreaming out the window
which one is cuter, Kevin, Nick, or Joe?
I wonder how fast my hair can grow
better pay attention or my grades will go

4 O'clock, time is taking forever
need a ride, didn't have money ever
Obama thinks he's pretty clever
martin junior had that dream forever

that is a really long road
and my professor looks like toad
hope my homework's not a huge load
wish i could remember my MySpace code

ADD is so my thing
focus breaks at the sound of a ding
the only routine i have is to sing
ooh shiny and ring-a-ling

always one extreme or another
don't get along with my step mother
my best friend is my brother
maybe things will change one day or other



“Thanksgiving Dew”

Dr. Paul A. Creasman

Golden Afternoon

I flicker and fade with the shadows,
With the ebb and flow of the moon
And its indecisive maneuverings
Round the pale, embittered earth.

I lie, kneel on street corners,
Gaze into skyline and starlight.
I absorb translucent visions, imbibing
Puffs of smog and carbon fumes.

I am bathed in fluorescence,
Captured by these scenes,
The cold, painful, inscrutable
Embrace of the modern world.

And as I drink the poison and blood
Which flow down these mislaid streets,
I am baptized with disinterest
Over the banalities of
Former and yet to come lives.

I seek no magic in this world
Which knows and is equally known,
Seek no magic in a world which languishes
As it fails to escape itself.

No. For a moment, I won't cry.
I won't shed a tear over the fact
That I can't stop crying when it matters most.
The night preserves this fragile pretense
Which keeps me whole before twilight.

For I am emboldened by the darkness,
And I will glance neither sideways
Nor with anger towards what I,
In the morning, imagine to be other worlds-
Places where my fathers have gone,
Or the platform from which this loveless
World was spit from the mouth of God.
These, for now, I shan't acknowledge.

For I have no time for penitence,
Will not mourn over long-lost innocence,
Will not regret the misfortunes of
Cowardice or reticence,
Will not lift my insincerities
Above the lamp posts which
Light the world
And its heaven.

For some people spend their whole lives
Searching for the light,
But I spend my days
Waiting for the darkness-
Just another ritual evening
To take the edge off afternoon.

~Brian Daniels

Playing House

Playing house
all dressed up wearing
a strange little smile
and your new suit.
blue eyes, so heavy
I feel them take off
and land on my shoulders
as we walk down the sidewalk,
both dressed for a funeral, but
headed to a party.
my heels click click the cement.
the sound makes me suddenly feel
like my mother
and you are my father,
trailing behind,
distracted.
It was back when we didn't really know
each other...
before everything exploded
into a thousand crystal pieces
which everyone now tip-toes around,
trying to ignore.
you took me to the top of that mountain
outside the city, once.
the air was ice but we ignored that, too.
lights winked at us from the city
as we stood above it,
this tiny world could not keep us safe.

~Katie Powers

The Day Is Mine

Now get up your hearts O weary souls,
Let your unbending hands be strong,
And let us sing 'ere victory tolls
In this, our victory's song.
The fiery tempest now awake,
March out we now unto the field,
And as one crush the cursed Snake—
Unto Christ alone we yield.
Now raise the banner high and tall—
Let fall its flag unfurled.
It is the Cross, which covers all
Who walk upon this world.
Prepare ye feeble hearts of shame,
Prepare ye now to shine.
Prepare for Him, and in Him claim:
Behold, the day is mine!

~Ryan Seibert

A Waking Nightmare

{Dedicated to the survivors of the earthquake in Haiti}

the shaking ground is slipping out from underneath
the feet i was convinced were firmly planted
everything i thought was stable crumbles in the street
and i'm not quite sure
of anything anymore

security becomes a thing of yesterday
all hopes and dreams, it would seem, have simply flown away
at every corner lurks another hidden tragedy
and i'm not quite sure
of anything anymore

what happens next? how will i carry on?
this nightmare lasts forever; all hope of waking is gone...
the fear has turned to panic, which has transformed into despair
and i'm not quite sure
of anything anymore

~S.S.

The Future

Tiny, chubby, toddling legs
is what hope has been reduced to-
tiny tottering legs
barely standing upright,
yet we lay our hopes and dreams
before them, give them wings
with which to fly
when they can barely walk-
those tiny little legs.

Where are they going?
And why?
No one knows, but there they go!
They fall. They rise again
Marching forward in determination.
This is on what the future of our world depends
if those little legs fall...and rise again.

Who are these little ones?
Offspring of mankind's mighty race
taking one baby step after another,
walking towards the lights,
walking towards their dreams.
This is all on what the future depends:
if those little legs fall and rise again-
those tiny, toddling legs.

~M.S.

Unexpected

Out of nowhere
A stranger incites joy
Out of nowhere
A smile draws you in
Out of nowhere
A quirky expression makes you laugh
Out of nowhere
A voice makes you melt
Out of nowhere
An impression is made.

~Anonymous

A Restless Mind

My mind is constantly going.
I try to be logical and sound,
But waves of emotion are always flowing.
They crash and they pound
And cause my mind to cry out for rest,
But rest cannot be found.
I must analyze all that it suggests,
And criticize all that is around,
Until I feel that I am going to drown
In the misery of the mind's grinding sound,
And the fear of dragging others down,
Over issues that constantly hound,
Causes me to sigh with relief
When my mind falls under sleeps silent sound.

~ Zach Rogers

Chasing Clouds

Specialist Darius Jennings'* widow's tears are much more
bitter today

Than they were 18 months ago on her June wedding day.
The wedding dreams they shared are severed as well,
As she tries to find peace in this, her living Hell.

She prayed her whole life for that strong loving man,
Now she prays for forgiveness with the pills in her hand.
She takes a deep breath, then swallows them down,
Knowing, in Heaven, there'll be no reason to frown.

Mrs. Jennings knows that broken dreams mean broken wings,
She decided her own course of action,
Believing whole-heartedly that a person without dreams is a person
without passion.

Unable to think of anything but the pain of today,
She decided to continue her ascension, in her own way.

~ Chris Furtick

*Specialist Darius Jennings was a 22 year old killed in Iraq from near my hometown of Orangeburg, SC. While I did not know Specialist Jennings or his family, I am indebted to him for his ultimate sacrifice to insure my freedom.

Falling

I fell
Fell for you
You caught me
Or so I thought
You didn't keep me from falling though
I just kept falling
And falling
Until I couldn't fall anymore
And when I looked you were gone.

~ Ashley Cooper



"Swazi"

By: Whitney Fritts

Haiti

{dedicated to the survivors of the earthquake in Haiti}

the images they haunt me
corner and rebuff me
suffocate and drown me
in despair and hopelessness

blood and dirt
sweat and tears
wailing, weeping, praying
pain so deep
no bandage
could ever bring relief

families torn apart
crying out from rubble
elderly who lie
on the dirt from which they came

who will come to stop this madness
who will drive away these visions

no one.

~S.S.

Oxytocin Hemoglobin

A breath
Breathed deeply,
Slowly
Drawn up and into
A painful space -
Air and an essence
Of the sordid sway
That haunts these rooms
At dreaded night.

Pinpricks of light
Conquer, vanquish
The interloping darkness.
A dry gasp,
A muted cry
Stifles the stagnant air
And its beloved silence.

The light grows quickly,
A precocious child
Scrutinizing
Ravishing
Knowing
The dark.

The light bears heat,
A thousand fires,
A thousand, thousand,
Thousand Hell fires.

Dross is refined,
The will undermined,
And all is consumed,
Subsumed by the light.
Vainglorious light.

And as quickly as the light emerges
This teasing interruption peaks.
Exposure waxes fragile.
Crystalline figures, all,
Dancing in ash.

And like children do,
Too soon all apparitions shatter,
Rain on the malaise below
In a spectacular and toxic
Blizzard of reflections.

Unreal images cut,
Freeze impressions
On the brokenness
Which inhabits the
Underside of this
Abstraction.

And all that lives below
Looks up in captivation-
The spectacle of
Precipitated torment,
Falling, falling,
Jagged shards rush
To meet the weary world;

And when the tragedy,
The beauty,
The abandon
Reaches its climax,
There is nothing left to do
But bleed.

~Brian Daniels

The Deathday Party

Listen to the bells! it's time to dance the waltz of grief
at this much anticipated life's celebration.

A party to be sure, of time immaturity.

The social hall is complete: lavishly decorated flowers,

Somber draped crepe paper of black,
with much comfort food and drink, for the spirit.

A proud event, fit for a Deathday King, no less!

Strike up the dirge! Let us dance this last waltz!

The honoree awaits in his Deathday suit:
the finest ensemble inheritance money can buy.

For consistency's sake, these celebrations
have come once a year since the first.

The grand toast speech has been given:

"Many more...Many no more"

The time is getting late, this one will go down in history,

The party: quite a success.

The Honoree is tired, so he retires now for a long, long rest!

~Sandra Hooper



“Golden Trees”

By: Shanda Teague

The Hymn of the Highwayman

He is God of the highway
And keeper of the passing of time.
Unmoved, He moves; earth and rock
Cannot outlast the Man of mirth,
Whose birth time does not know,
Whose origins are in beginnings,
In paths, in destinations.
The road has always been His calling,
His choicest steps have trod
The troublesome, barren trails.
Yet His heartiness rises like great mountains,
Pushed up by His laughter to engage the sky,
And born to raise rocky fingers to the Man
Whose laugh cracks stones, whose thunder is heard
From end to end on the open roads.
His breath flies on windy wings, brushing against

The face of every traveler fighting it,
As they swing wildly with hearts unable
To stand against the cold. He breathes the same
Upon the ones who go with Him, who fear not
The inglorious highway nor the passing, fleeting
Feet of time. No—
They are guided, guarded, girded in the windy fray,
Traveling from beginning to end to beginning
Again. And a shadow of Light surrounds them,
Amid the rocks and rain; they are men made of mirth,
Who are, unmoved, moved by the wind's author,
The mountain's lord, the thunder's king;
Upon His highway they sleep,
For He keeps them in His clutches, and only He can
Ride the windy wings.

~Ryan Seibert

Crying Out

She cries out in soul crushing agony
Her heart is rent to pieces
She cannot make sense of all this
Why is she thus left in darkness?
Caught in the epic battle of
Faith and Hope against Doubt and Fear
Hints Arrows Riddles Signs
Pointing away from common understanding
Moving toward confusion, frustration
When will the Light break through?
Where is the Plan going?
And when will His timing get here?
Until then she waits
Surrounded by melancholy reminders
Of loneliness and isolation
Yet she is not alone, He is ever present
She knows even as she cries out
That He knows what He's doing and when
The constant onslaught of chaos will subside

~Anonymous

Prose

“The Box”

They're trying to seal you in. They're trying to make you into something that they can control. Into a figure, a saying, a desperation move. Not knowing that you are more than they can conceive. Not knowing that you are the very thing that is everything, but yet to you everything they've begotten is but yet a piece of what you truly are. Your Word isn't up for debate, but yet the hate in denominations produces pagans and those who choose to conform in the secular and adorn in the flesh. Tisk tisk...

The God I serve is a straight forward God. If they check the New Testament, John 1, Verse 1, you've always been one: Spirit, Father, and Son. So, it truly baffles me how they as your children continue to fall into their own mess, and the One who's been here ever since the beginning chooses to be with them until the very end. Why WOULD they choose to bind you?!? Or is it their flesh that confines you? Is it by their sin that they separate the church? Or is it truly the only way it'll work? Should they be proud to be Baptist or to be Christian? I mean, could it be one in the same? If that was the case, their town would have 1 church instead of 100. But every other block they have a 'new' form of the Rock.

Here's the problem they face dealing with sin... You're bigger than the box they try to fit you in. So, they chip off the piece they like and call it the "Way" not realizing they're contributing driving other away. Forgive them. They know not what they do by grasping a piece of you. The piece that'll fit their lives instead of the piece that'll change their minds, but by turning their minds to Heaven, they're promised Philippians 4:7. The enemy has clouded their vision. Making them think it's ok to take the piece of you that pleases the expectations of man, rather than the whole of you that causes them to be mindful of their own short-comings. I pray for those who try to box you in, never realizing that you'd never fi.

~Exzavious (Zay) Sanders



“Swings”

By: Whitney Fritts

What if there were no writing?

Try it for one day. Try it for one hour. Do without writing. Do without reading or listening to anything that has been written. What's left? Television? Radio? Imagination?

We'd have to remember *everything*. We'd have to depend on telephone calls and personal visits and stories passed along like a game of *Gossip*.

No more textbooks! Teachers would have to memorize everything about their subjects and then memorize everyone's grades on every oral test. Students would have to memorize the information while they listen.

No more newspapers! We'd have to depend on television and radio for news. Reporters would have to memorize everything a source told them and share what they remember.

No more magazines! Or just pictures only. We'd have to make up our own verbal stories about who the people are and what they're doing.

No more business memos! Bosses would have to repeat all instructions to everyone, from memory. Ordering equipment and supplies would be problematic, since there would be no order forms or inventories.

No more telephone books! We'd have to memorize every number for every person.

Doctors wouldn't have records about their patients and would have to remember everything about everyone's illnesses and treatments. What if your doctor has a poor memory?

No more instructions for how to put that model airplane together. Wonder if it would fly? No more written instructions for how to navigate a 747 jet. Wonder if it would fly?

Lawyers wouldn't have scores of lawbooks but would have to remember all laws and how all landmark trials and lawsuits turned out.

Scientists wouldn't know about other people's work unless they talked to them in person. They couldn't publish their own work in journals for others to learn from.

No more thank-you notes! You'd have to call your friends and family, if you could remember their phone numbers.

No more SAT, ACT, LSAT, or other written tests.

Movie actors wouldn't have scripts and would have to *ad lib* the movie after being told a story line. They would have to verbally introduce themselves at the beginning of the film.

Greeting cards would have only pictures to get a message across. They would all have to be delivered in person, since there would be no addresses and no postal system to deliver them.

No more Internet! Except maybe for pictures, which would have to be self-explanatory. Actually, not even the Internet. You have to use writing to give instructions to the computer and network.

No more books, fiction or non-fiction! There would be no biographies, no histories, no scientific explanations, no romances, no adventures, no sci-fi – nothing to take us on mysterious or daring adventures. We wouldn't know much about the lives of our Founding Fathers and inventors and scientists and explorers. We wouldn't know much about anything.

You wouldn't be reading this essay, because it could never have been written.

Be grateful for the invention of writing! We couldn't learn, love, or live without it.

~Dr. Sharon Feaster-Lewis



"Rays"

By: Katie Cayer

Dissection by Hydraulic Machine

The patient is a condemned building, past its prime. An empty shell, which once beamed with life, now cold and dark--with only a barricade of red and white rope to keep life out.

The doctor is a man they call the spotter. In a orange safety vest , he walks around his patient and commands his machines as if he were performing brain surgery.

The surgical tools consist of large, diesel-powered monsters that spew black smoke and make the earth shake when they move. As the doctor prepares to make his first incision, he calls upon a large, rusty-orange Crawler Hoe with screeching metal tracks and a long arm that has a claw like appendage on the end. The operator reaches out and makes the first cut through a one foot thick I-beam as if it were an extension of his own body. The claw slowly cuts with no hesitation as the metal screams in protest. Many cuts are made and slowly a pile is formed behind the Crawler Hoe as he works his way through the building.

The second surgical tool to be called to action is another Crawler Hoe, but this one is old with chipped yellow paint and has a robot hand at the end of its arm. Its main function is picking up the pile and putting it in twenty-foot, roll-off trash containers, which are being convoyed to and from the site by trucks outside the barricade.

The cutting continues until all material is removed from the building. The roof shingles slide off the top, the windows shatter as they are removed, and the siding comes off in large strips. The drywall breaks into pieces and creates dust. All is torn to bits until there is nothing left but the cement foundation.

The doctor, being skilled at his Craft, must now manage a different procedure. As he directs the mighty crab claw to the side to be changed into a large pincher, the small front end loader zips around scooping up any debris that is too small for the robot hand to manipulate. This also is put into the twenty-foot roll-off.

Now with the giant pincher attachment, the Crawler Hoe rumbles back toward the cement remains of the building. Bite after bite is taken. The cement explodes with each mouth full. This continues until there is nothing left but dirt. The robot hand has put away all the rubble and the small front end loader has scooped up all the gravel.

As the large machines turn off their diesel engines, only the sound of the trash trucks fade into the distance, taking away the remains. Now the loud noise of destruction has ended.

The only thing left is the silence of death.

~Austin Lorenger

“Who Am I?”

Who am I? I'll tell you, but later, not right now. Right now, I'll just tell you about me. I have lots of hopes and dreams, many of which I can't do anything about right now. I just dream and dream, and hope and hope. And in the middle of hoping and dreaming I go to school, I take tests, I fight with my brother and sisters, and I get totally annoyed with the world.

Who am I? I'm a pretty good student, but that's not who I am, even though that's the way a lot of people think of me. People want me to be so many things – it's all so complicated. They want me to be things and do things that just aren't in me. I try my best to please people, but there's only so much of me to go around. Most days I'm more aware of my limitations than anything else.

Who am I? Well, I'm not the healthiest person in the world. It's funny, people look at me and because I look normal on the outside, they assume I'm normal on the inside too. But I've got some things wrong with me, and some days are really hard. And in case you're wondering, no, I'm not just talking about physical problems – there are other things too, the things nobody talks about but everybody understands.

Who am I? I'm a walking contradiction. I care about people, but sometimes I think so much about myself that I that I don't notice hurting people around me, even my friends. I say good words and think good thoughts in church, and then I go live my life the way I want to the rest of the week. I am so easily wounded by what people say, but, my goodness, how the hurtful words fly out of my mouth sometimes.

Who am I? I'm a sinner, but Jesus died on the cross just for me. And He's getting a mansion ready for me. And He cares about my hopes and dreams – in fact, He put them in me. He's gifted me and put me on this earth for this day, this moment. He has put eternity in my heart and asked me to live it every single day. I can make difference in this world because His divine power has given me everything I need for life and godliness.

Who am I? I am you.

~ Dr. Paul Shotsberger

“Wisdom”

Leave the willing to the wise. Bring cold tendencies to the brink of oblivion and shred your motives. Your captive eye spends gold on dust and your quick hand plays rummy foolishly. Be enlightened by the slight of another. False justice is in your court for the taking but your judgment testifies against your freedom. How long shall your blanket be your cage, O man? How long will your sword cut you and you call it a scratch? If folly is where your caution lies, throw it to the wind.

Selah...

Leave the willing to the wise. Be ye transformed by renewing, be ye redone by undoing. Your mirror image tells the tales of an existence lived in seeking. Who among you is the willing? Who among you are the wise? Today's fiction will bow to tomorrow's truth. In the cusp of your mistakes, you'll rest incomplete. From folly, to fall, to foretelling the Cross, His plan was complete. Therefore, the willing are the wise.

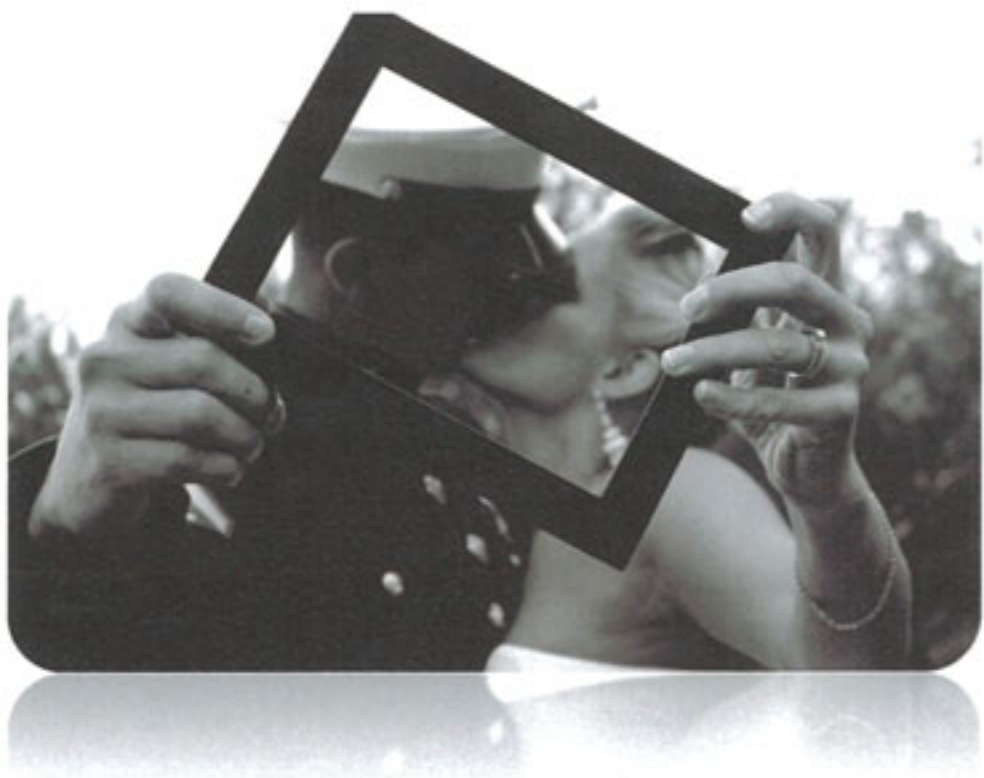
Selah...

~ Exzavious (Zay) Sanders



"London"

Dr. Paul A. Creasman



By: Laurin McDowell

Photos

§

Artwork



By: Dr. Paul A. Creasman



"The Lullaby"

Original Painting By: M.S.



By: Lindsey Torgeson



By: Laurin McDowell



By: Brittany Mays



"Tree in a Pond"
By: Tessa Morrison



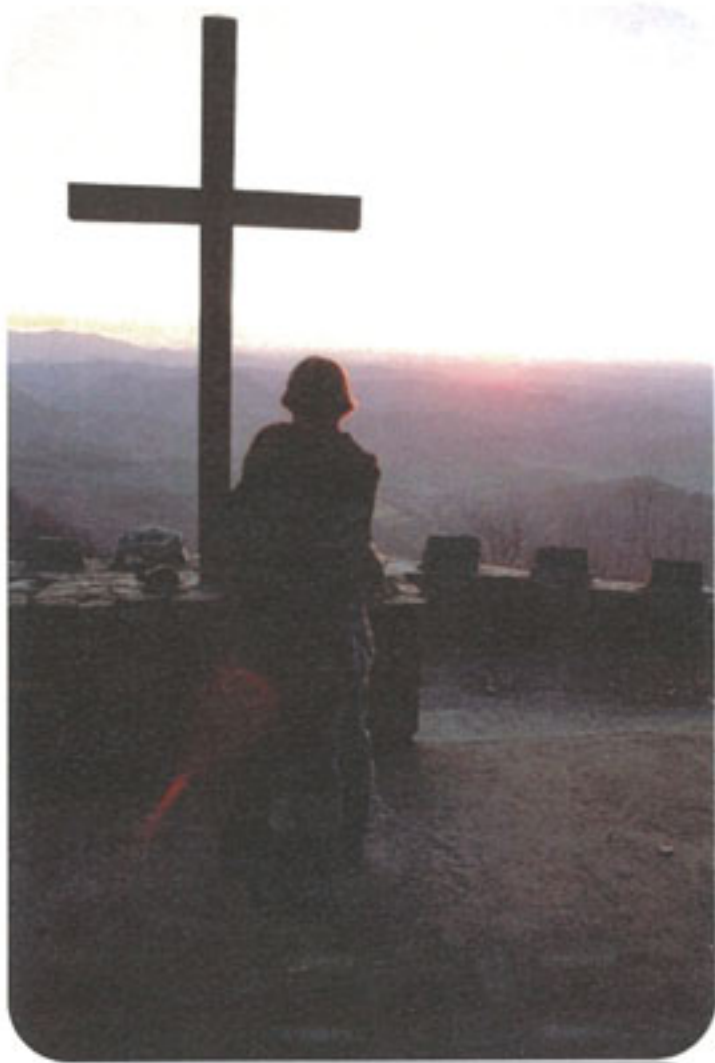
By: Laurin McDowell



By: Lindsey Torgeson



Original Painting By: Emerald Williams



"It's a Love Thing"

By: Shanda Teague



"A Cross"

By: Laurin McDowell



“Sunrise at a Pretty Place”

By: Shanda Teague



"Crystal Sunrise"

By: M.S.



“Flower”

By: Dr. Paul A. Creasman



"Snow"

By: Shanda Teague



By: Katie Powers



By: Shanda Teague



By: Laurin McDowell



By: Whitney Fritts

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Acknowledgements

The Vaguest Notion team
would like to thank:

The English Faculty

The businesses who
contributed financially

All the students and faculty
who supported the publication of
this magazine!

God Bless you All and Keep
Creating!