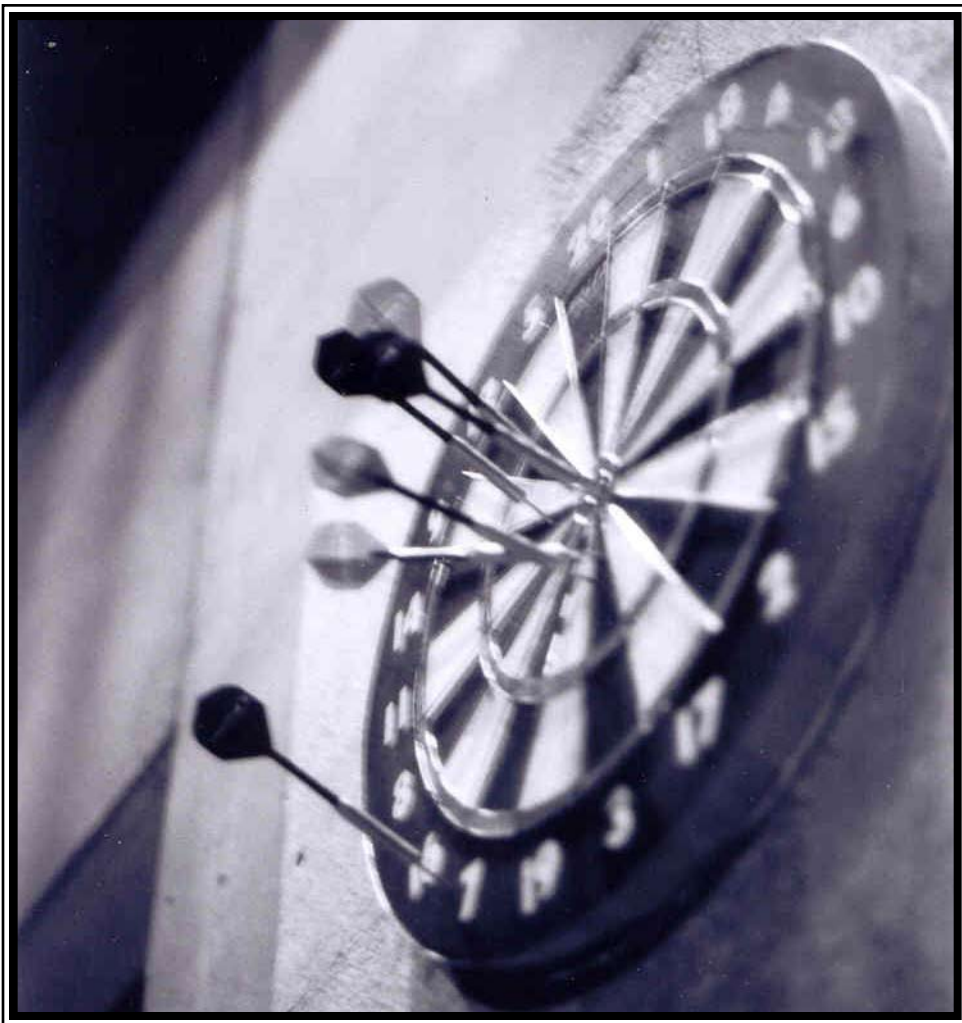


The Vaguest Notion
2007
Southern Wesleyan University



The Vaguest Notion

Southern Wesleyan University's annual literary magazine: prose, poetry, artwork, photos.

For the Students

By the Students

Free Speech and all that . . .

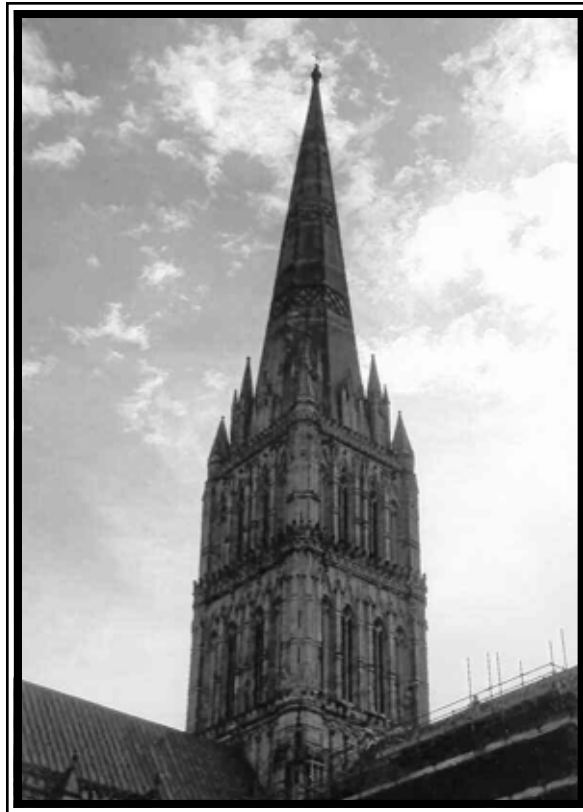


Photo by: Jillian Hodges

The Vaguest Notion

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Closure

Her spilled-out blood
As she laid dead on the sidewalk
His aim was good
And he aimed to kill

She had hurt his heart
So he felt like hers should not beat any longer
Pulling the trigger wasn't hard
It was letting go of their past

The way she touched him
Leaving her scent all over his body
He had thought that her touch was only for him
He had been wrong

She had touched another man
She had to die
It was the only way that he could go on
He had killed her and walked away

Jillian Hodges

Limitless

The horizon of her beauty stretches farther than the fields
That stand upon the table-lands of the west
Where the mote-filled sunlight sifts over the grain
That stands in rows for ages and ages, yet
Does come to an end, far past our consciousness.
For where sky and grain kiss, eternal and true—
There the horizon ends and continues on forever.
At that point the sun becomes old, becomes new.
There infinity takes hold of itself, tip in teeth,
And as her beauty must end, for she is flesh,
Inside my mind there are no limits for her glory.
Thus the infinity of my love for her, the hoarded wealth
Of passion that I hide for her only, deep within,
As it must have limits for it is contained within one soul,
It holds no limits for me, for my mind is as eternal
As my love for her, which has no end, no part or whole
Is simply one idea, one concept of thought
One notion of eternity, one flash of infinity's end
One flowing, sloping field of grain at sunset in the west
That stands with dusty silence and murmuring, that bends
With the gentle and warm breeze, that marches toward the line
Where the sky stoops down to cradle the earth in his arms
And thus ends our vantage with its curvature and loft,
Yet now our knowledge or our intellect, like her favor or her charm.
We know that forever does the world extend—eternal, affixed
Where our vision fails, our faith begins to guide our minds
And we know what we cannot believe truly does not exist.
We know, I know, that her beauty does not end. I find
That I know this more assuredly than I know the most basic
And fundamental knowledge of life. For the sky may seem blue or grey
And the next moment white, yet I know she is beautiful
I cannot refute this. Though my mind fail me, this will stay,
This kernel of truth that I have discovered I always knew
That I have never learned, that has been with me from the start
That will be with me at the end. She is beautiful.
Beautiful, I know she is beautiful. I know it by heart.

Kevin DeRossett

Nyctophobia

A mighty warrior prepares for battle.
Today he must summon all his strength.
Lying awake in the darkness
He will not accept fear any longer.
He must control his own destiny.
He will rid the demon.
In his right hand, an empty wrapping paper roll
In his left, a trash can lid
He will slay the dragon that lurks under his bed.
He will sleep tonight!

Kent Ellison



Photo by: Nathan George

Life is Short

Life is short, most will say...With a snap of the fingers all is swept away...All feelings, all thoughts no longer there...Only memories remain in the air...Families and friends all shed their tears and wonder where to go from here...Loss of life just doesnt seem real... Just last week together ate a meal...Stories and smiles united you had...Thought of the loss just makes you mad...If only you could take their place...Them losing their life is such a waste...How did they stand on shaking ground...What did they lean on when no one was round...Did they trust in Jesus Christ?...Did their faith in Him shine through their life?...If so, its time to wipe the tears...Because there was meaning for all their years... Their life was taken for a cause...Standing before their creator the angels applause...Well done my servent God will say...welcome to heaven and endless days...Thats how I pray people live their lives...Although others take life in different strides...They choose to be about theirselves...Never lifting hands for someone else...When their ground is shaking they strive alone...Pride leaves them empty as no one home...If only they would accept the costless gift...That Jesus gives us with a sip...He shed his blood for you and I...Eat the bread for his body died...3 days later he rose from death...Our sins forgiven he says with breath....Take my story to nations he did preach...The life he lived we need to teach... To waste our time on worldly things...Just seems like cheating our Holy King...Down to business we should get...Copying his life every bit...Since life is short they still will say... We need to take advantage in every way...Of time we have here on earth...To redirect this awful curse...When people see us in that final box...They know that Jesus was our solid rock...So all the tears can turn to praise...In Faith that they will see us another day...In Beautiful Heaven we all will live...those who chose to receive that priceless gift!!!

Matt Beasley

Untitled

He's fast as lightning
on a diamond with dirt bases
his shy onlooking
always made me wonder about him
his dark, wild, curly hair...
he tried to hide it with his hats
with little success.
School is almost out
before the holiday of thanks,
control is lost,
and darkness overtakes him.
Time is up.
(In honor of Luke)

Brittany Molloseau



Photo by: Kelly Maney

Clean

Petals are falling from the pear tree
White and thin
Like linen in the breeze
Or confetti at a wedding
Floating on the airy drifts
Making a promise
Like a soul without a body
Weightless and free

Rain is falling from southern skies
Cleansing the earth
With a pounding, liquid clamor
Feeding the earth
That will wait for morning sun
Making a promise
Like a penitent who
Has found mercy

Aubrey Seibel



Photo by: Kelly Maney

He Stood

He stood by himself,
and the cold wind blew
across his face
like the startling gaze
of an ex-lover.
each tiny particle of frozen
water blistered his skin
like a thousand needles.
his hood slowly rubbed
his cold rough hair into
his tender scalp.
hot air issued from
nose and mouth.
he watched.
he watched
an immense white
expanse spread before him.
Lonely,
determined to push on.

Snow covered the grass
in a deadly embrace,
that choked its life
out like a ruthless murderer.
His clear eyes
could see nothing but
snow and ice
all around.
No trees breaking the monotony,
only the immense field
of white death.
Endless footprints staggered
behind his weary body,
while the sky spit
daggers in his face.



Photo by: Jennie Fairchild

Christmas Presents, December 21, 2006--Blog Entry

My grandparents are visiting for a couple of days, and tonight at supper, my grandma described her favorite Christmas when my mom and aunt were little. She sewed entire wardrobes for their dolls, and she talked about how she enjoyed working on the little clothes in the back pews of the church while Mama and Aunt Jo were at Christmas play practice.

This story made me reflect on some of the most memorable gifts I've received over the years, and one of my favorites was definitely the little bridal veil my grandma made for me when I was about five years old. Another year, my grandpa built us a little wooden manger so we could have our own Baby Jesus scene at home. More recently, my grandpa built a jewelry chest for me. This jewelry chest is not merely a tabletop box; it is a large piece of furniture reaching to my elbows. They sell these types of chests in stores, but I'm sure those are not as sturdy as mine, nor has each piece of wood been shaped with love like mine. Some of my other favorite Christmas gifts have been the times when my other grandparents took us on trips to the Dixie Stampede, Gatlinburg, and the Biltmore House. The first time we went to the Dixie Stampede, my grandma almost fell off her stool because she was laughing so hard at the ostriches. I think of that night every time I hear the word "ostrich"! The whole family still laughs at me for "rattling my bags" all the way home from Gatlinburg. I repeatedly went through all my shopping bags, looking at the presents I had bought, during the entire 3- or 4-hour ride home! Two years ago, those same grandparents put a bunch of \$1 bills in a huge box of shredded newspaper. Years from now, I will probably not remember what I bought with my share of the money, but I will always remember spending our entire Christmas day fishing through shredded newspaper for \$1 bills, counting every last one of them, and coming up \$5 short. I will forever remember the ecstatic shouts of joy that filled the room as Aunt Sheree found the 3,000th \$1 bill.

When it all comes down to it, I love the presents I receive that are purchased in a store, and I usually ask for things that I need or that I want but wouldn't buy for myself, but the most memorable gifts are the handmade items or the memories that are made. Christmas presents are so much more than something you find at Wal-Mart. As much as I love Christmas shopping and spending money on people, I hope that I never let myself forget to take time to give gifts that require more effort than swiping my credit card.

Amanda Link

Reflections in the Water

Holding on to this rock I see
Twists & turns of the water
How it moves fast & slow

Like the little leaf that's caught
The water bashes against me
Yet I'm too scared to let go

Upstream were times of joy
And some of pain
Some slow and some now a blur

Downstream lies the unknown
But just steps away a moment of calm
All I have to do is just let go

Charlotte Dyal



Photo by: Kent Ellison

Mountains in the distance
or were they clouds
standing over him?
Relentless.
tired.

Unwilling to stop,
he lifted each foot
and placed it before
the other.
Brown eyebrows crusted
over with biting ice.
His eyes wanted to close,
they fought him
wanting to sleep,
but he could not.
he had to push on
tracks ever longer
extended behind
the solitary figure,
longer and longer.
the wind blew cold
across his face
like the startling gaze
of an ex-lover.
he could no longer feel
his cold wet feet
but he walked and stumbled
along farther and farther.
he went on,
terribly alone.

Tyler Bruce

Rescue

Come Rescue me
I'm trapped in a language
Unable to give freedom
To my being

Come rescue me
I'm infiltrated with knowledge
Useless and inapplicable
To my life

Come rescue me
I'm persecuted for thinking outward
Unable to relate to the
Brainwash of society

Come rescue me
I'm put to shame for
My apathy towards
The prideful chatter

Come rescue me
I'm martyred for
Not agreeing with the
Wind of ignorance

Come Rescue me
I'm poisoned with the
Lies of false appreciation
In order to silence me

Melinda Hegeman

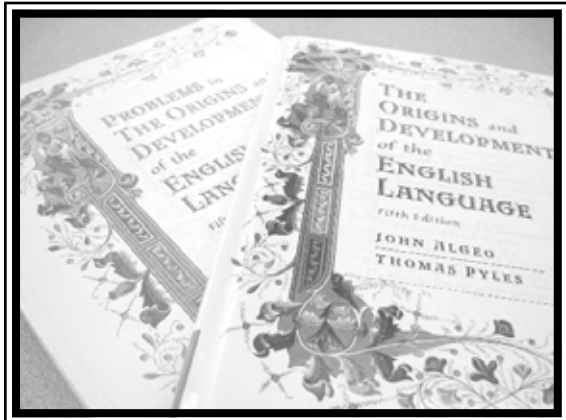


Photo by: Amanda Link

Unknown Heights

Surrounding my grandmother's house,
The mountains stand strong,
Immense, silent. For centuries
They have stood so tall and proud:
Giant Gullivers watching the
Busy Lilliputians as they
Live and die.
These ancient rugged hills
Have so many secrets
Yet untold. They call to me,
Beckoning me to come
Explore the unknown heights
And find what is in store for me.
I start towards them in
Dream-like motion.
But there's another voice in
My ear, my grandmother is
Calling me to come back to her,
To come back to the safe
Circle of all that is familiar.
Which voice do I listen to?
For just a moment, her voice
Pulls me back. Then I turn,
Close my eyes, and jump.

Jennifer Hicks

Once in a Graveyard

I'm in a cemetery. It's really not that scary
Except the fact that I can't tell
What's crawling out of that deep well.
It's dark here too; the moon is dull
O'er the hoarded masses living lull.
And the ground is moving in small waves
From people turning in their graves.
A deadened tree with limbs outstretched
Stands sentry over some poor wretch.
Yet flitting here and there I see
Some dark and sepulchral entity.
And I can't help but wonder why
That hooded man keeps walking by.
Now from the iron gate—a squeak!
Was it the wind? No, it's too weak.
But I'll push that thought out of my pate
It's just a squeaking spiked black gate.
The tombstones standing all around
Look like the houses of a town.
Especially that one with the lights
—Wait! Those are eyes, but that's all right.
A tombstone with two glowing eyes
Is really not a big surprise.
And that haunting melody
That I can hear does not scare me.
But I think that I will go
(Only since it's late, you know.)

Liz Kiraly

The Turning of the World

Virtue married meaningless
Love retired to trivial
Fate chased revenge
Strategy become in vain
Security turned to be vacant
Honesty traded with Whitt
Kindness partnered with deception
Wisdom has been silenced
Understanding ran away
Innocence was raped by mockery
Drama was rewarded with exaggeration
Character seduced by masquerade
Humility bribed by pride
Chivalry speared by arrogance
Joy was cross-examined by analysis
Gluttony captured self-control
Rights deceived freedom
Technology demoted family
Gossip hypnotized knowledge
Appreciation transformed to vanity
Beautiful perfection manipulated by man

Melinda Hegeman

Nothing is Okay

All I thought I knew is nothing
And all I knew I had is lost
Everything I ever wanted
Is second place to what means most

Every day goes by that's wasted
All those times I didn't try
All those people that are wandering
Only now do I know why

All of my suffering,
Is going away
All of these people,
I don't know today
And all I have
Is what I see
Now everything
Has left me
And I will learn today...
That I have nothing.
But that's okay

Justin Trammell



Photo by: Nathan George

Night Beat

Will my heart beat against the night, begging for light?

Hope, the comet's tail, soon covered by the tapestry of low-hung clouds, black with moonlit shadows, was there but is now gone.

Devastation awaits the path of tomorrow's destination; lost are dreams of endless searching.

The search gives me life; my window is broken.

What will take the place of mindless gaze? Reparation comes at the lowest point when blessings of goodwill are prayed on heads of undeserving favor.

Only then will the heart that beats the night sky for light open to a self it did not know.

New life emerges beset by loves before unknown. Love is possible; it has unimpeded flight into the black night.

And all is over; and all is right.

Martha Toney

Spinning

Falling asleep to a fan
Drowning her dreams
To a numb, cold sleep
 she falls
 drifts
Never floating—

Black. Like coffee
The room turns
—Cold.
Into the night
Resting her fears
 breathing reality.

She will have a window box
 with lilacs
That will come back
 year after year.
And familiar mornings
That strangely resemble her dreams.

Ashley Joiner



Photo by: Jonathan Catron

Alive

“I wasn’t in the wreck, I wasn’t in the wreck,” I sputtered through blood and other gruesome fluids in my mouth as I tried to hobble away from a gold-badged officer, growing more faintish as the sickening pains of broken bones flared up and down my body--“I wasn’t...”--beeping. Incessant beeping, stranger’s voices, “Where am I,” I thought to myself as a heat wave of pain spread over my body. The pain gave a thick feeling to the sensations overwhelming my senses. My body felt heavy and stiff and my limbs were tight like when I was stung by a wasp once. My eyes slowly focused on my mother who looked weak with worry and sorrow as she slept in a chair. My eyes scanned the surroundings: ugly pink walls, fake pictures of water color paintings, one chair in a skinny corner, and a glass wall that doubled as a giant door. This “door/wall” was where I discovered a mutilated boy laying lifeless in a hospital bed encircled by colossal machines staring curiously at me. My eyes hurt but I pushed to focus better on the boy, something about him was strangely familiar. My gaze was interrupted with the swift opening of the automatic door/wall as a nurse in teal scrubs smiled at me and said my name.

“How does this person know my name and what is going on,” I thought to myself as I began to feel an anger creeping up from my heart. She walked up to me and explained that there was a tube down my throat and on the count of three she needed me to say “ah” while she pulled it out. “One, two, three,” she said in a smooth calm voice as I gagged on the rough sides of the tube. “James, do you know why you are here?” the smiling nurse asked me, “What’s the last thing you remember sweetheart?” I tried to talk, but my throat was raw. I went to shake my head when a twinge of pain stopped me immediately. I swallowed hard and managed to hoarsely say, “no.” As I looked back at the door to find the boy I had noticed earlier, my heart stopped as I felt a sinking feeling flood my body: that boy was my reflection. Tears filled my eyes as I began to realize where I was and why I was here. I closed my eyes and tried to concentrate on the last thing I remembered.

Her name was Kristy Lavigne, I had just met her through a friend and she insisted that we ride with her to the party. My “partner in crime”, Ryan, and I had already started the party elsewhere with Jack Daniels and T-Bombs, which was our usual custom. We would say, “Why arrive at someone’s house and start a party late when we can get a head start before hand?” Most of the time it was tobacco and alcohol, we liked to save the weed for the quiet evenings at my house when we played pool. I shrugged my shoulders and said, “ok,” to Kristy, disregarding the alcohol smell on her breath as well and not giving it another thought.

We began weaving through the woods as the roads curved and wound around the mountains. Ryan found our favorite song on one of Kristy’s CD’s and with excitement he thrust the CD into the player and turned it to number 3. “Code 49 and two zigzags, baby that’s all we need,” we all sang at the top of our lungs as Kristy accelerated in ecstasy, “we can go to the park after dark, and smoke that tumbleweed.” The curve ahead was quickly approaching and my stomach knotted up as I realized I was the only one unbuckled and could see what was going to happen. I blinked long and hard as all kinds of noises filled my ears. I opened my eyes when something hit my arm, and I was confused at what I saw: a roof lay still below me as I shut

my eyes again. Something knocked the wind out of me and I lay motionless for a long time-everything hurt.

“Where’s Ryan,” I thought when I opened my eyes again and discovered grass and trees all around me. The sound of a siren rushed to my ear as police lights caught my eye. “I have to get out of here, I thought, “I don’t need to get in trouble with the law again, they might take me to Juvy.” Pure terror struck my heart as I saw an officer coming my way. I struggled to get up; my right leg cracked and writhing pain paralyzed my efforts. I began to crawl, “I wasn’t in the wreck,” I yelled to the officer, “I wasn’t...,” I became weak and light headed, everything went blank. “James,” my mother wailed through tears as she smiled and attempted to hug me. I just laid there unable to move and wondering what happened after I blanked out. Mom clasped my hand and said in a shaky voice, “James, you’ve been in a coma for the last two and a half weeks, it’s a miracle you’re alive.” My eyes widened with the information she had just blurted out. Swarms of floating green question marks swirled around my mind, “the accident was two and a half weeks ago, it felt like just yesterday,” I reasoned to myself.

My father and older brother Dillen, who had just moved to Tennessee, came to see me after I had eaten some dinner. I could talk now, but not very much. My father only cried as he looked at me, and my brother stuck to the side of the wall, his cheeks pink with emotion, staring at the floor. Finally he piped up and asked in a low raspy voice, “James, have you heard the police report of what happened?” “No,” I said with anxiety, “what happened, everything is a blank to me.” Dillen replied, “That Kristy girl was going about 100mph when she lost control in that turn. The truck rolled six times, only stopping because a tree stood in its way. You weren’t wearing your seat belt and were thrust out of the vehicle. Your body flew 70 feet long ways over a double-wide trailer. You hit several branches while in the air and once you hit the ground, you slid about another 20 feet. The officer said you were denying being involved in the wreck. They didn’t expect you to make it through the night.” We all began to cry as every person was envisioning the whole scenario. “The doctors say that you have a lot of brain damage and probably won’t fully regain full functionality and because of the spinal injury, you will never be able to walk again,” my father stuttered, trying to regain his composure, “but at least you’re alive.” “Yea,.....alive,” I thought to myself with anger, “if this is life, then I want to die.”

Dana Casey

King of Clichés

They always say never say never,
And somehow the apple keeps the doctor away.
But who has ever lived life as a wiz kid,
Let alone make it over the hill and find
Life is like a box of chocolates?

Let's take this back to the drawing board...

If it's true that the more the merrier,
And everything is a piece of cake;
Then how much cake will all these merry people eat?

Just throw your tongue in cheek and
Thank Bobby McFerrin for all he's done.
He taught the world not to worry, and just be happy.
But you live with your tail between your legs
Because you know that what goes around, comes around.
And something is bound to happen for all those times you beat a dead horse.

So out with the old and in with the new!
Let's make it like father, like son and
Show just how close the acorn falls from the tree.
Because today is the first day of the rest of your life...
But don't push your luck,
For another one is about to bite the dust.

So enjoy for when in Rome...

Zachary Derr

Longing for October

A summer wind just blew my way.
The heat of August burns away
The magic feeling of the wind,
The breath of all that must pretend.

The sun is shining much too bright.
O how I long for the night!
To hide and breathe in mystery
And live where only I can see

Soon enough the seasons change,
But always yet, the wind remains
The magic breath of mystery.
Flowing, living, inside me.

Brian Daniels



Photo by: Jacob Hall

Amid Nature's Silence

From her silent house to the piney grove
The girl runs thinking nothing amiss
What she knows is the feeling
Of the raining pine wisps between her toes
Traveling by memory
For this she had a gift
So she closed her dewy eyes
And felt the wind caress her face
Gliding its warm fingers
Through her sweaty hair
A kiss from the maiden grove
Chores could wait she thought
As she heard her mother's call
Nothing but her and the wind
And the trees and bare feet on pine straw
In the dappled afternoon summer light
Dripping through the pine boughs
Cold clear water's promise ahead
The stream in harmony with the wind
A whisper and a murmur of two old friends
She fancied the wind and stream
Were talking of things eternal yet changing
Mother's cries become more distant
As the conversation ends
The girl full of renewed spirit
Turns, opens her eyes, and runs
Amid nature's silence

Aubrey Seibel

My 20th Year

Finally 19, Happy Birthday!
Mom and Dad call;
They are my dream team,
Slightly intoxicated, but its better this way.

Nothing new in this desolate life;
Seemingly stuck between 18 and 20; as if I was 12 again
Materialism haunts me with things I won't need,
Distant thoughts of a future wife.

Another branch to add to the family tree.
Seeking love like that I've witnessed.
Too much spent to save this smile.
Never considered myself capable of the dreams set before me.

Remember days of old...
99 cents gas and baseball games;
Not a care in the world at 9 years.
Car rides with Dad and remember everything I was told.

A Soldier's Sonnet

A loving mother reads the black and white
scanning bloodshot eyes up and down the page.
Morning by morning this becomes the height
of her fear. Her heart grows hot with angry rage.

Her head wonders why her son chose this path.
So many other jobs to have seemed so fine.
Why my son? A soldier's mother. The wrath
of not knowing, of living and dying.

Her fingers scan up and down hoping ne'r
his name to find nor his death to meet.
The last words he breathed in the air
to her that day in smoth'ring August heat.

Nothing nobler than serving for my country
The home of the brave, the land of the free.

Kent Ellison



Artwork by: Charlotte Dyal

Her words softer than any downy comforter,
Her smell remindful of every childhood memory,
Yet Her touch unmatched to any other.
Every thing they do is for me; my number one supporter.

Just give up?
I've heard it before.
Her poison I finally stopped drinking,
Transcend to who I once was and to where I always belonged.

His voice so distant yet still audible,
Offers information, thought, advice;
Hindsight's realization of how wise He is.
His love for Mom so real and plausible.

Finally 19, Happy Birthday!
Mom and Dad call;
They are my dream team,
Turn out like them, things will be okay.

Zachary Derr



Photo by: Kelly Maney

Fresh Air

I'm lost in this cacophonous symphony
falling down around me.

Unable to think;

I am deaf and dumb,

drowning in a sea of noise.

Swallowed up and suffocating,

not even breath to steal.

And there you are,

lips and lungs with their sweet air,

forcing life back into this empty space.

A heartbeat; it sings out,

and I breathe once again.

Ashley Batson



Photo by: Abram Rampey

tonight; she had even bought new red lacy underwear and a red lacy bra to go with her dress. She pulled her soft brown ringlets into a ponytail and a lonesome tear began to run down her face. She quickly brushed it off and picked up her toothbrush and put toothpaste on it. She brushed her teeth rigorously; she could feel the tears swelling up even more now. When she was done, she rinsed her toothbrush and turned the handle of the faucet to warm so that she could wash her makeup off. It was almost painful to wash off what she had planned so perfectly for that night. After rinsing off the face wash, she looked up into the mirror; her face dripping with water. She grabbed her towel and slowly dried off. Then, she turned the light in the bathroom off and walked back into her room.

She walked over to her husband's mahogany wormwood dresser and pulled out one of his favorite shirts and slipped it over her head. She always wore one of her husband's shirts to bed; his smell was her favorite. Then she went and sat down on the bed with her legs hanging over the side. It was now 11 o'clock and still there had been no phone call. She sat there twisting her wedding ring around and around on her finger.

Brrriing, brrriing, the phone rang. Her heart fluttered thinking of all the things she would yell at her husband for waiting so long to call. "Hello? Bill?" she answered.

"Hi. Mrs. Davis?" she heard another man's voice ask. Her heart sank.

"Yes, this is she. May I ask who's calling?"

"Mrs. Davis, this is the sheriff, I'm afraid I have some bad news. Your husband was in a terrible car wreck on what we assume was his way home. I'm sorry m'am, we did all we could, but I'm afraid your husband won't make it. We're gonna need you to come down to the hospital as soon as possible. He's unconscious right now, but we thought you might like to see him and say goodbye."

"Um... okay. Thank you, sheriff. I'll, uh, I'll be right down. Goodbye."

Mrs. Davis hung up the phone. She sat on her bed for a couple of minutes, paralyzed with the news; then she began to sob.

Katherine Schleifer

Three Year Anniversary Dinner

“He should have been home an hour ago,” she thought to herself. “Where is he?”

Mrs. Davis was sitting at the small oak dining table waiting for her husband to get home. She had already tried calling his cell phone four times, and each time it went straight to his voicemail; his phone was off. The food was getting cold and the white candles were already half way burned; tonight was their third wedding anniversary and Mr. Davis should have been home long before now. Mrs. Davis was worried that he hadn't showed up and upset that he hadn't called.

She checked the clock again, 9:30 pm. She was becoming restless and decided to clean off the table. She slowly put away the clean dishes that hadn't been used, then put the uneaten food into separate containers and put them into the refrigerator. Next, she slowly rinsed off the dirty serving dishes and put them into the dishwasher, constantly looking out the window hoping to see the headlights of his dark blue 2006 Jaguar convertible coming into the driveway. When she was done, she went back into the dining room and looked around slowly—the candle light reflected off the glossy wooden floor, the golden curtains were drawn back, and all but one chair was pushed underneath the table. She blew out the two candles she had lit an hour and a half ago; the room was lit now only by the hallway light that was on. Mrs. Davis stood there for a few more minutes hoping that she would hear his car drive up the driveway and the engine turn off.

Slowly, she turned out of the room and walked down the hall to the stairway. She paused at the bottom of the stairs to turn the hallway light off. Tears were beginning to form in her eyes and she was doing everything she could to keep them back.

“It's okay,” she thought, “he's fine. He'll be home soon and then we can just heat up some food and watch a movie. Everything will be okay.”

She walked slowly up the stairs, one foot after another, and then slowly down the hallway to her bedroom. She looked at the clock sitting on the small dark wooden table that was located next to the bed; it was now quarter after ten. She flipped the light switch that was next to the door. Then, she slipped her bright red Versace dress off bit by bit wishing he would walk in to see how beautiful she had looked tonight. She had gone out a week ago to find the perfect dress and had been excited to get to wear such a beautiful thing for her husband on their three year anniversary. After taking off her dress, she hung it up carefully in the walk-in closet she and her husband shared. While in the closet, she took off her dark red snake skin pumps and left them on the floor. Then she walked slowly into the bathroom.

She turned the light in the bathroom on and paused to look at herself in the mirror. She had taken great care earlier to make sure her makeup and hair were perfect for

Tragic Relief

I bowed before you bleeding
Open and receptive
To all your invitations
To all your tempting whispers

I bowed before you broken
Found love in your deception
Found beauty in your favor
Gained the world and sold my soul

You cast me in your dungeon
Bound me with your shackles
Then handed me the key
And dared me once to use it

You sang your siren's song
And beckoned me "Come closer"
Be happy here forever
My love, My one possession

And I heeded your sweet calling
Enamored with your fables
Content in your captivity
I threw my life away

You whispered, "Do you love me?"
I said, "Yes, more than the world."
You laughed and left me waiting
Waiting always for your love.

Brian Daniels

The Thrum of the Living

Wake, work, wear, wink—
Barely time to stop and think.
Watch your life slip through the chinks—
Wake, work, wear, wink.

Sun, sow, sink, sleep—
Brothers die, no time to weep.
Payment's coming, soon we reap!—
Sun, sow, sink, sleep

Dress, drone, drag, dream—
All too fat to eat the cream.
Workout, then we cheat and scream—
Dress, drone, drag, dream

Rise, run, rot, rest—
Gather faster, more is best!
Stop a moment just for Death—
Rise, run, rot, rest

Kevin DeRossett

A Canterbury Tale

In stacks or piles of ten,
Three in total, with still an odd six,
Lay black and metal tiny pins
That once had held her hair up
In curls that made me smile
When first I saw her in the room
In formal black gown. It had taken awhile
To assemble herself, hair in pins and dress,
And now she sat near me undone
In all but her hair. The dress was gone,
Just jeans now. And even all but one
Of the pins had been removed.
Her thick auburn hair, warm and tight
Splayed about in angles uncommon to her,
For with pins gone she looked like
Nothing I had ever seen before:
Shining beauty with hair askew,
The just-woken-up sort of beautiful,
The intimate look, the “I trust you
Not to laugh, though my hair is a mess.”
And of course I fell for her
As I removed those pins from her hair.
I felt so close, I suppose we were.
And I touched her hand so lovingly—
She did not back away.
The four metal piles I scooped into one,
Placed in her hand, stopped, almost stayed,
Kissed her cheek, then said goodnight.

Kevin DeRossett

Nothing but Everything

Souls dance to the music of pipes and drums
owning nothing but the clothes on their backs.
They live in this moment, the here and now.
Life is what they want it to be.
They need nothing more than
what they already have.
They have nothing
but everything
Happiness

Kent Ellison



Photo by: Corrine Craven

Summertime

Underneath the clear, blue sky and blazing sun
We spend the days
In the pool, playing while Mama
And Daddy slave away under fluorescent lighting.
We have no school, homework, no problems or
Worries, just the hot, sticky freedom
Of summer. When we tire of goggles
And water floats, there's always cold
Slices of watermelon to refresh us—
Always to be eaten on the front
Porch. Then it's time
For a moonlit game of Hide and Go
Seek and maybe one last dip in the pool.
Before too long, it will be
Time again for books and waking
Up way too early, so we enjoy
This time we've been given:
The precious hourglass of
Summertime.

Jennifer Hicks

To Be Yours

I want to be the one to keep your secrets
though there are some things you just can't say
to be the one you come home to
after you've had a rough day
to be the one who's in your arms
to feel your loving and your charms
to be the one who holds you up
after you've had a long fall
to be there for you
during good times and bad
to give you all the hugs you can stand
whether you're feeling your best or not
to be the one you laugh with
when one of us does something stupid
to be the voice above the crowd
whether you've done your best or not
and to be the one you love
until the very end

Brittany Molloseau

Summer Splash

As he squints his eyes in the hot sunlight
He smiles for the camera with timing just right

He feels the warm concrete beneath his bones
And wonders when he'll hear the dreadful words "time to go home"

The pool feels like such the perfect place to be
To a young boy who yearns to feel free

His sister laughs and smiles for the picture
And he thinks of how it is the most fun to be with her

Sometimes he wishes that summer will never end
But regretfully notes that fall is just around the bend

Jillian Hodges



Photo by: Kelly Maney

Anabel Branson

Anabel Branson, she stood on a hill,
alone in the mist of the morning;
While the sun crept above, the green, green cliffs,
and shone, her dark hair adorning.

She waited her lover, as the sea churned below,
the salt spray glistened on her forehead;
but she didn't know, as the water began to glow,
that her lover did lay in his gory bed.

Oh, Anabel Branson, stood watching the waves,
as she waited glad-hearted for him;
he had slipped away, as the morn turned gray,
and he died at a vagabond's whim.

Tyler Bruce



Photo by: Jonathan Catron

Turning

Opportunity knocking

I sit on my hands

Which way

To listen—

I run halfway—

Stop—

Struggle backward to my
feathery bed with all the
ruffles and lace
ruffles and lace

Ice water

Frozen.

Solid.

Washing it down

Stirring it up.

I fall asleep to the rain

Still knocking—

Ashley Joiner



Photo by: Ashley Batson

Damascus

The foresight God must have
that Saul of Tarsus lived
when and where he did,

lacking integrated communication
models, rocket trains, internet,
outsourcing and interstates,

for today, no doubt
he would be driving a cool 80 mph,
working his cell phone

mobilizing splinter cells
to persecute churches
in Phoenix, of all places, when *wham*—

the sky would charge with light
overloading the sockets
in his skull, short-circuiting his plans,

and in an instant of world-changing
import, the Saab hatchback would slam
into an overpass piling in Newark,

setting the faith back 2000 years.

David Bedsole

Moments pass,
And the rivers of white begin to swell
Forming waves that rise higher than the water below.

Ever so brilliantly the pink, purple, and orange hues
Behind the lone mountain to the left,
Grow faint as the star of the show makes her debut.

She gracefully rises
Like a queen from her throne,
While greeting her subjects
With a warm glow.

Everything bows to her grace and beauty,
As she touches each with her light.

Charlotte Dyal



Photo by: Jennie Fairchild

A New Beginning

Standing on a mix of cold greys and blues,
The cool autumn wind at your back
Nudges you ever so gently,
Closer to the edge in front of you.

Below is a sea of green,
With small patches of red, yellow, and orange
As the trees begin their yearly costume change for fall.

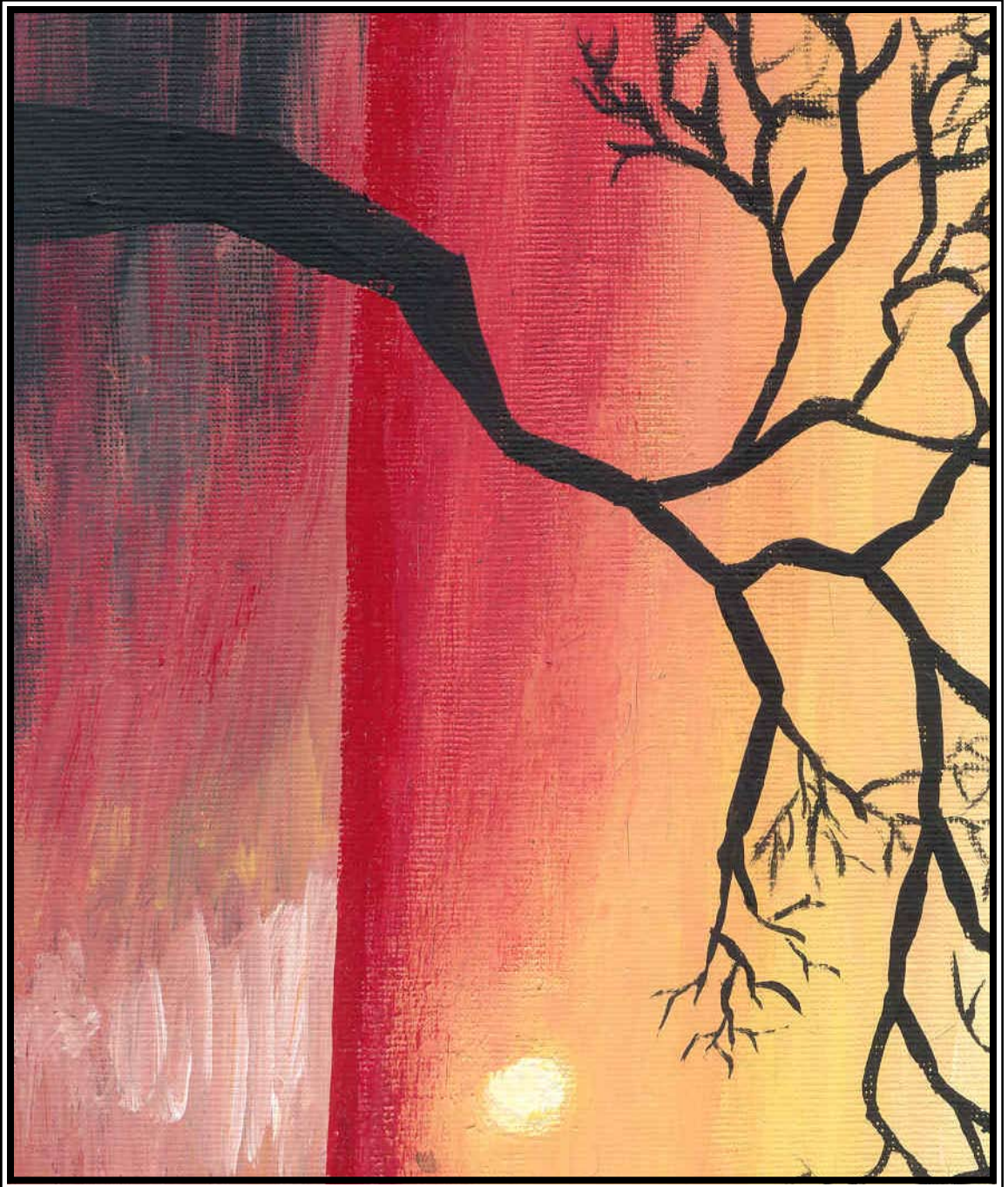
To your right is the magnificent table rock
Rising from the dark green sea
With its bold face of grey and black stripes.

Just past the two ridges in front of you,
Are the rolling hills
In their different shades of dark green,
With the rivers of white running between.

In the distance a sleepy city awakens,
As lights start to appear and move
Like they are dancing on the wind.

The darkness begins to recede. Dark greens
Become almost blue, and what few stars remain
Say their good byes to the world below.

A line that was once deep blue starts to fade,
Becoming lighter as each breath passes.
Purple turns pink and then a tint of orange
Begins to peek its head over the distant horizon.



Artwork by: Amanda Kinney

Thankfully

There was a part of my life
Most don't know about
I wish I could take it all back
But then I wouldn't be who I am today

Thankfully I serve a God that forgives
He has washed me white as snow
All because my God lives

I did many things I can't remember
I did things I can't forget
Because of both I was lost
In a world full of sin

Thankfully I serve a God that forgets
Even when I don't
Soon there will be no regrets

I want to make a difference
To help someone with my story
Just to make that little ripple
In someone's life

Thankfully I serve a God that equips
He will help me
The bible gives little tips

I want to live my life
In a way that glorifies Him
So that others will see Him
And not me

Thankfully I serve a God that cares
He has used this broken vessel
And all that it bears

You can serve him too
For his love and grace is wide
He will cover you and make you new
His love, you will abide

Emily Munroe

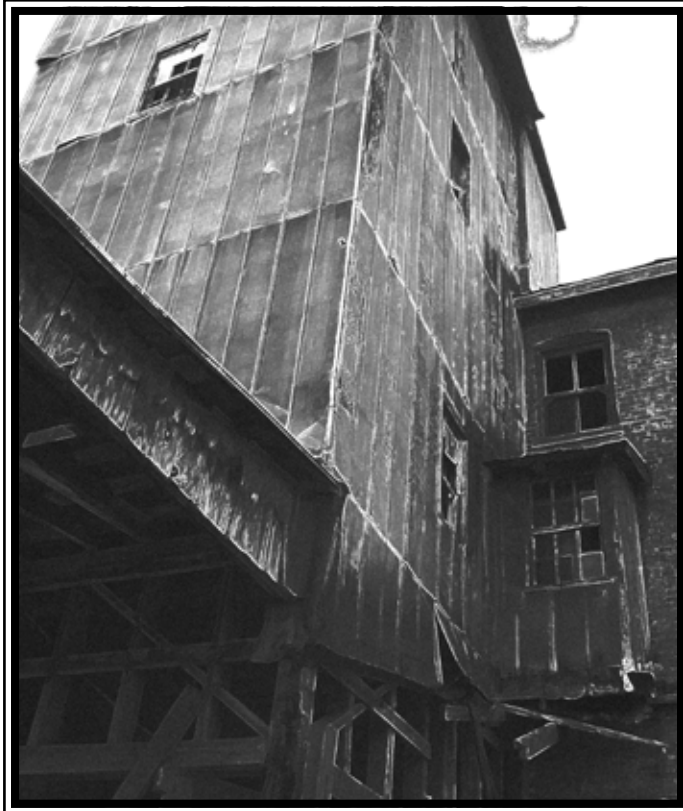


Photo by: Abram Rampey



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