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This issue is comprised of the winners of the annual writing and photography contest. There were 56 poems, 6 short stories, and 15 black and white photographs submitted.

There were only two entries in the essay category, neither of which were really essays. Still, I passed them along to the judges without comment. When the judges handed in the results, they said the two entries didn't belong in that category and were judged in the short fiction category. Having no essays, then, we have no essay awards.

We do, however, have an extra honorable mention in both poetry and photography. In each case, first and second place had been awarded and the judges were left with two pieces they could not choose between. So, we have two equal honorable mentions in those categories.

Many thanks to the judges. Judging writing were Dr. Carol Ellis, assistant professor, English; Jim Geistman, adjunct faculty, English; and Dr. Nan Yun, associate professor, English. Hideki Kihata, assistant professor of art, judged photography.

Thanks also to Perry Toyzan and the Graphics Center crew.

Snead, I promise never to ask again.

Thanks most of all to those who entered, whether eager, timid, or forced, and congratulations to all of the winners.

--Beth Medley, editor-in-chief, *Cardinal Sins*

*Cardinal Sins* is the student literary magazine of Saginaw Valley State University. All SVSU students, faculty, and staff are invited to submit poetry, short fiction, essays, 2D art, and black and white photography for consideration at the office, which is so far still in the northeast corner of first floor Wickes.

# Cardinal Sins

all from the tree of knowledge

## Tell Us A Story, Grampa

The winter winds pummeled the brittle snow against the window in a chilling tocatta as the aged one tucked the children into bed.

"Tell us a story, grampa," spoke little Nerbert, as the even smaller Lucy nodded her head.

Grampa sighed inwardly, and quickly ran through his story list. He selected one of his didactic favorites, and sat at the end of Lucy's bed (because Nerbert was a squirmer, and grampa found it hard to concentrate when the little porker started up).

"Once there was a starship. A very large starship on a very long voyage--"

"Aw c'mon grampa, not the Spaceship Earth story again!" whined Nerbert.

"Yeah, you told us that one last year," added Lucy with a petulant pout.

Grampa, visions of woodsheds and willow switches running through his head, suppressed a grimace and counted ten.

"Sorry," he said through tightly clenched dentures, "I forgot I already told you that one." He thought hard of fuzzy puppies and cold beer, and the dentures came unstuck.

"Tell us a good one," demanded Lucy, still the model of petulance, as Nerbert smiled his innocent smile and fidgeted.

Grampa started. "Once upon a time, an evil witch--"

Nerbert fairly howled. "An evil witch story? Grampa, this is the '80s!"

"Yeah!" quoth Lucy, looking quite happy to trot out such a pithy statement.

Grampa turned the light out, so they could not see him flipping them the bird.

After this cathartic release, he went over and stood with his back to the window.

"Try this one!" he said. "The time-space continuum opened briefly, spilling blinding light and two children (who happened to look much as you do) onto the ground near the gate of the large and foreboding castle. Just as quickly as it had opened, the continuum closed, leaving only the youngsters, who fumbled their way to the castle's massive gates. They reached out and touched the gate with their fingertips, and began chanting the spell that the WhiteMaster had taught them. The one that would gain them access to the castle and allow them to destroy the evil within. The gate rose silently, and the children looked at each other and smiled in wonder just before they were blown into their component atoms by a particularly vicious guard-spell the WhiteMaster hadn't known about."

Except for two sharp intakes of breath, the children were silent. Grampa smiled heartily to himself and went downstairs to get a beer, closing the bedroo door behind him.

cover	untitled	Scott Douglas Second place, photography
3	Tell Us a Story, Grampa	J. A. Gillman
4	untitled	Scott Douglas
5	Departure	Michael Griffor
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8	Ying Yang	Sue Ann Sadler
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12	Mountain	
13	Fatal Beauty	Kim Nowak Honorable mention, photography
14	A Second Chance	Janel Nellenbach

J.A. Gillman  
Second place  
Short fiction



Scott Douglas  
Honorable mention  
Black and white photography

#### DEPARTURE

The last time we talked  
things went badly  
neither of us knew  
how to say good-bye.  
You looked as if  
you wanted to be held  
but said it's time to go.  
I tried to say  
how much I care  
mumbling about the weather  
instead.  
Now almost a year later  
we meet again.  
I say how long it's been  
wishing I could hold you.  
You stand very close to me  
and talk about the rain.  
Neither of us have learned  
how to say hello.

Michael Griffor  
Honorable mention  
Poetry

## TERRIFIED

### I.

No more will the filthy water  
be permitted to steal  
my breath away.  
The fearful agony of  
death  
by  
drowning  
is more than I can swallow.

### II.

It is gone!  
It can never be restored.  
Gone, irreversibly gone!  
The flame has won again.

loss

by fire  
is more than I can stand.

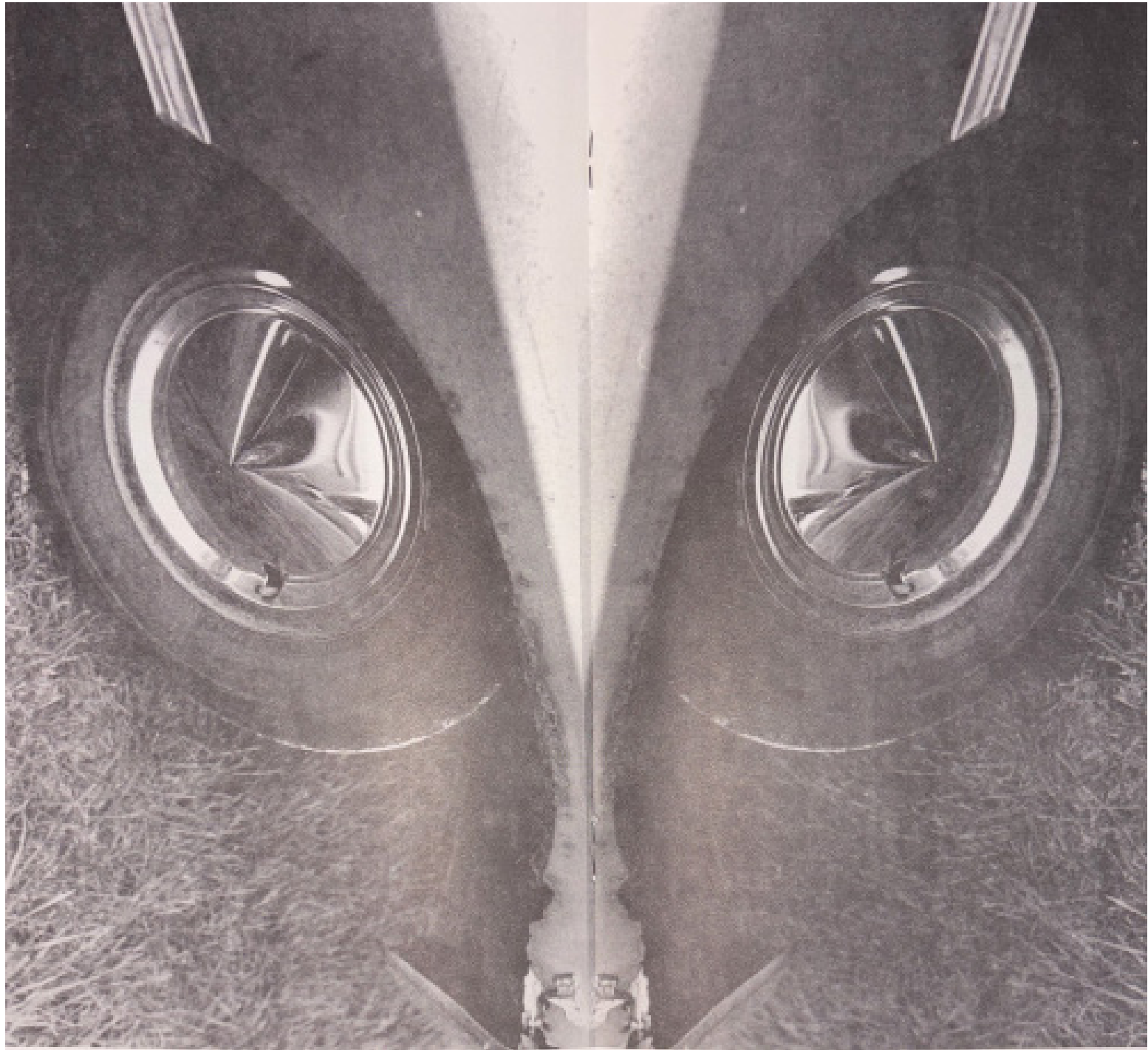
### III.

That wild animal is creeping  
toward me--it is *not*  
stopping.  
Why is it crouched so low to  
the ground? no, No, NO!  
Being mauled  
by a wild animal  
is more than I can take.

### IV.

The terror in life are  
innumerable.  
And peculiar to each  
individual.  
but  
The most savage terror of all  
is trying to write poetry.

M. L. McFarland  
Honorable mention  
Poetry



## Filling a Tag

Camouflaged from head to toe, the avid bow hunter positioned himself in a tree stand affixed to a large oak. He knocked his arrow and began scouring the area in search of his prey.

After two hours of entertaining bluejays and squirrels, the hunter decided to give chase on the ground. As he prepared to descend from his spot, he heard a loud noise coming towards him. He froze. A million things entered his mind. "Should I regain my position? Should I move? Or was it just another damn squirrel?" He decided to wait until he heard the sound again.

Minutes passed before the source became visible.

There he stood. A magnificent eight point buck. As the buck drew closer, the hunter realized buck fever had set in. His heart began racing and he started shaking. The unsuspecting deer approached the tree stand. At this, the hunter drew back his bow and set his 20 yd. sight pin on the deer's chest area. The arrow flew. The buck whirled and bounded off.

Although he knew he should wait before tracking the deer, the hunter wanted to see if he had scored. He climbed down from his stand and walked to the area where the deer presumably had been hit. When he found his arrow covered with blood, the hunter realized he had hit his target. He decided to start tracking. He began at a slow pace following the trail of blood which had been splattered on the fallen leaves. As the blood became more pronounced, his pace quickened. Soon he found himself on the edge of a field. He spotted the deer staggering. Pumping his arms so his legs would move faster, he ran towards the deer at top speed.

As he neared the end of the field, he lost sight of the deer. The deer had fallen. Cautiously, the hunter approached the deer. All at once the deer stood up. The hunter took aim for a second time shooting at the deer's heart. Instantly the deer fell lifelessly to the ground.

The hunter, exhausted, also dropped to the ground. He had succeeded. His tag was filled.

Lynette Gasser  
Honorable mention  
Short fiction

## Gus' Store

Not the corner store,

Gus' store.

Small and wooden,

Every available inch crammed with stuffs.

The smell of candy and spices like winds from other lands.

The sight of a flystrip just disgusting enough

To hold a child's interest.

The big round face of Gus descending over the counter,

His meaty fist sprouting two suckers.

(I would come to see him even without the treats.)

He left town, or passed away, but I don't remember when.

He still lives.

J.A. Gillman  
First place  
Poetry

## MOUNTAIN

They stand high, reaching edges  
on their journey to the sky  
not minding their cold blanket  
of mirrored white blueness  
they are all anchored, dead  
side by side  
their margining borders form  
a coalition of rocks  
which harbor the needle trees  
their rangeful presence  
makes them united  
yet each solitary, beautiful  
two expressions on each face  
the rocky face is marred  
by the loving touch of the star  
to make tears run down  
its white side  
while the blue remains passive

Second place  
Poetry



## A SECOND CHANCE

My son and I follow the flashlight's glare through the dark, early morning woods. We crunch snow beneath our boots, creating a different pattern.

Many people describe the woods as peaceful, but somehow it forces my mind to wander hallucinating fears.

We choose to sit beneath a pine, the limbs becoming our umbrella, trying to sit as near to motionless as possible. Our only movements are our eyelids blinking and our pupils scanning from side to side.

We watch the early grays of light grow beneath the trees. Shadows begin to form. My mind imagines creatures, deer or bear, where there is only gray or black.

The yellow-orange smear of sun lifts as steam begins to rise. Branches, brittle overnight, now heated by the sun, lose their rigidity and bow down dripping with dew.

For the first hour, Jody sits beside me, miraculously quiet. We remain annoyingly still, listening to every twitch and movement, always hoping to see a rack of antlers or a deer's white tail.

As the sun becomes higher in the sky, Jody grows restless, rubbing his back against the tree.

I start to scold him but realize I shouldn't. It is my fault that we are sitting here.

Jody is a little more than 16 but since hunter's safety classes are held in the fall, during his football season, he has yet to obtain his hunting license. In fact, today is his first hunting experience. His father, uncles, and grandfather have never allowed him to join their expeditions, but I am glad he is with me.

This opening day would have been no different than the last 17. Every November my husband, Marty, and I pack his orange overalls, thick-lined boots, ear muffers, thermal underwear, and drive up north to Lupton where Marty and I grew up. At that time, it was a booming resort reaping the entertainment attractions of nearby Sage Lake. Both our parents still live here, but now it only resembles such prominence two times a year--during hunting season and the start of summer.

As always Marty hunts at his parents', the Caverlys. This year I tried to make him change. I told him surely there were deer at my parents' as there were deer twelve miles away at the Caverlys', but he remained faithful to his parents, at the same time ignoring mine. Our disagreement would not end our marriage, but I think I vowed I'd kill my own. Now as the wind begins to gust and my toes stiffen so it hurts to move, my confidence fades.

Jody provides a little heat, leaning against my coat, warming my left side. I consider offering him a lunch that grandma had packed, but he seems content to watch the woods, intensely staring.

We had chosen a spot next to a barbed wire fence which divided the woods and a field of corn stubble to the east. A pile of pumpkins, squash, corn and carrots lay about 20 yards in front of us. Every week during the fall Grandpa carries buckets of vegetables, to purposely entice the deer to wander a habitual path to their eventual slaughter.

Grandma is probably in town telling her friends what her little dear would bring home and how they'd fill their freezer with venison steaks and venison

hamburger. She is probably asking her friend Joyce for a recipe for venison sausage.

Too engrossed in my thoughts I didn't hear branches breaking or food crunched between rows of small teeth. A sharp elbow from Jody jerks me conscious.

Standing before me is a marvelous 8-point rack, topping a white pelt and powerful sandy body. Two dark brown eyes with long curly lashes stare back at us with ears erect.

"Shoot him," Jody whispers, "shoot him."

The deer didn't move as if tempting us to admire every inch of his massive frame.

"Crash"

I hesitantly feel the kick-back of the gun against my shoulder.

I see blood spurt over his immaculate mane. His muscled stature agonizingly collapses, ankles, knees, forceps bowing. His rack slices the air.

My eyelids blink together washing sweat from my eyes. I see a white tail leap safely over the underbrush. His unblemished body gracefully vanished into the forest.

"Shit, Mom!" Jody yells, waking me from my trance.

"You didn't shoot him," he said.

My palms are sweaty. I looked down to see my fingers shaking against my knees. Neither the gun nor my hands had ever left my lap.

"That's enough," I answer.

He looked at me in disbelief.

"It's time we should go home," I said.

We packed our gear and headed down the tree-lined trail. Silently we walked, but again our feet beat two different patterns.

Janel Nellenbach  
First place  
Short fiction