Cardinal Sins



WINTER 2005 PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER

SVSU SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

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*Congratulations to Suzanne Burns, Karen Corbin, Helen Raica-Klotz, Rob Bastek, and Kyle Reed, winners of the poetry, fiction, flash fiction, artwork, and photography awards respectively.

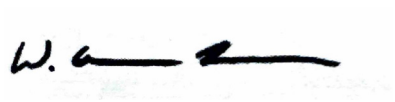
**Congratulations to Ahmad Pritchett, who was the winner of the *Cardinal Sins* and *Expressions* Poetry Slam and to Bakari McClendon and Jaquetta Browder, who were co-winners of SVSU's 2004 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest. Their pieces were chosen for publication in *Cardinal Sins* by the editor.

This semester, I have had the privilege and opportunity to meet and get to know Dr. Adnan Salhi. Dr. Salhi is the first and only Palestinian that I have ever known. Through our experiences in the classroom, and conversations outside of the classroom, I have learned much about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This, in spite of the fact that I already felt well versed on the subject, after co-writing a thirty-page paper on it recently. "So what?" you may ask.

I am now informed as a citizen (a primary goal of higher education) because of my contact with someone from a different culture. When I hear someone say that they have no prejudices, I laugh at their lack of metacognition. We all have prejudices. According to psychologists, the human mind makes associations and stores memories based on generalizations. When I see a red burner on a stove, without touching or coming even close to it, I assume that it is hot. Why? Because my brain has stored memories that tell me that red burners are hot. I apply those memories and experiences to my current situation without testing their validity.

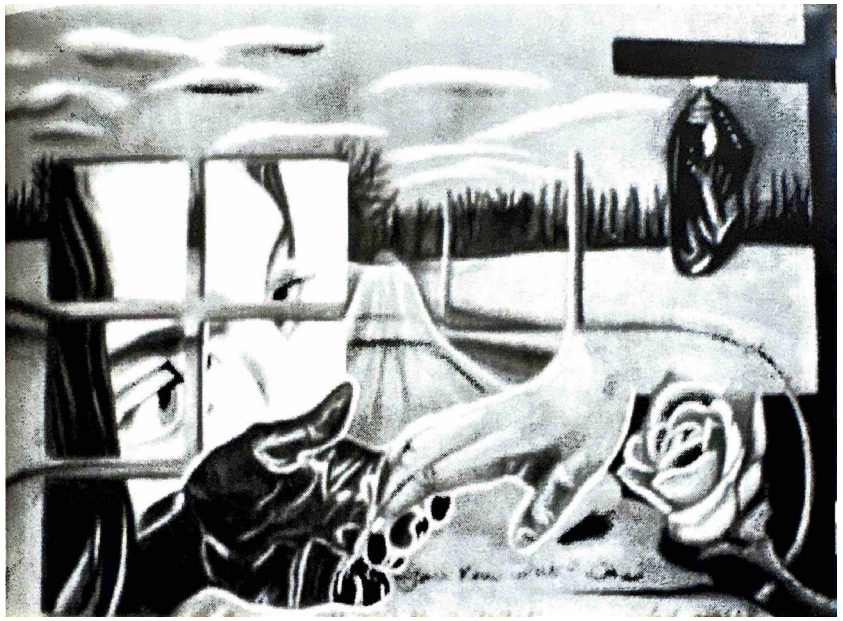
Burners on a stove are simple; people are complex. The memories and experiences that we use to create our assumptions about individuals can, and do, betray. I prejudge every individual that I meet. I make assumptions about them based on my prior experiences. Some of these assessments are positive, some negative, some right, and some wrong. The key is that we must move beyond our initial impressions to find out whether our predictions make sense.

As you read this edition of Cardinal Sins, I urge you to examine each piece for connections to your own experience. With each page, consider the wonderful coexistence of commonality and uniqueness. Enjoy

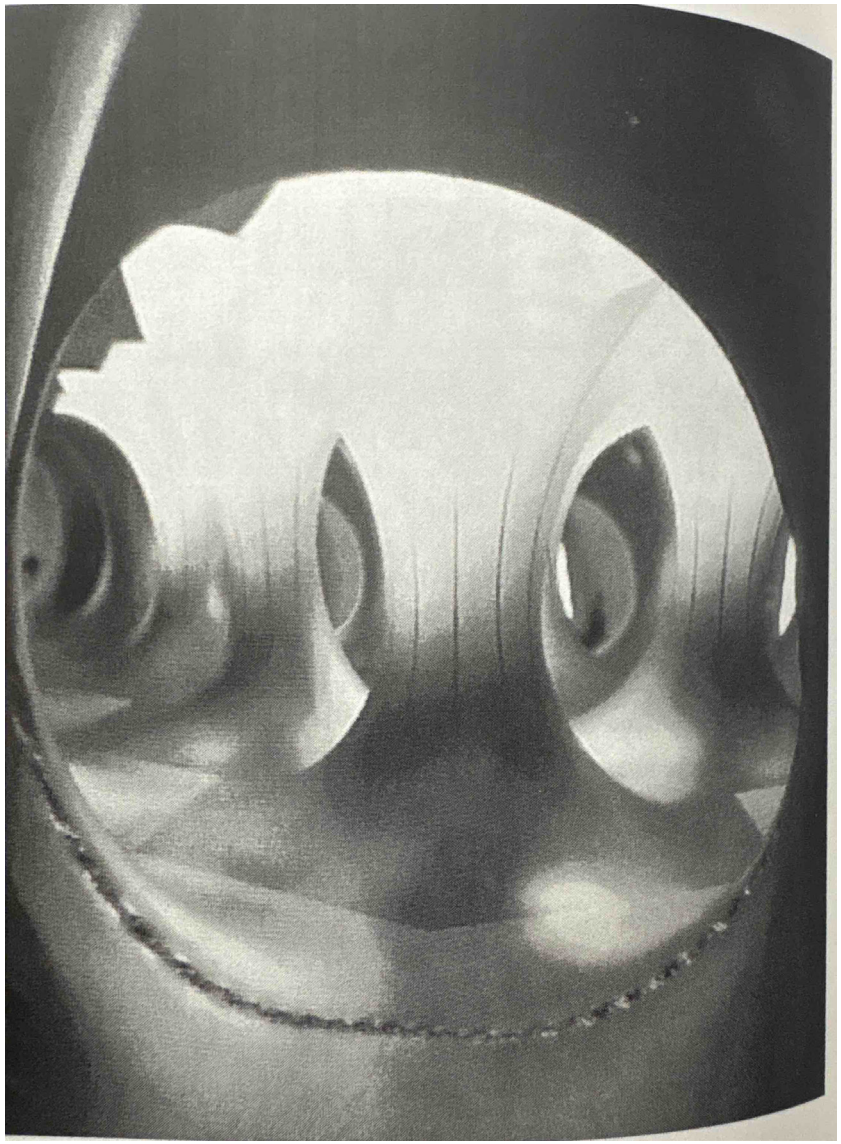


W. Anderson Bearden
Editor-in-Chief

By Holly Morningstar



By Corey Verdusco



By Mathew C. Easterwood

red rain falls
down to the filled sink—
staining,
rippling

blooming rose,
a lamb opened for the first,
and last
time—
beautiful, ephemeral

crimson stream flows
down the pale arm—
the Nile red with blood,
hopes of freedom

streaming off—
red flames hitting tile,
splashing
like fluttering,
drying petals

fogged vision—
abysmal night sky,
twinkling,
un-divine light
in out

By Erin Ledy

woman [womb-mother]
woman [(w)horae-mate]
woman [ineluctable Death]
o woman Judith:
        you did not quite play
                (or write)
        the tale from *Gesta Romanorum*.
in fact, you are

not found

in the tomes
        tombs
        tongues
    tales—wait, maybe tales—

of unconscious history of men

unconscious History
as woman
and your intimations of existence.

By Brian Cabrera

They could tell us
of robed monks
sent by Chinese clubs
into permanent prostration
of bodhisattvas smashed
and thankas torn
of nuns
crumpled and crying
in the center of a circle
of soldiers.

They would be telling us
that all our life
is suffering
that our suffering
is caused by our desires
that all things conditioned
are empty
that our empty
is our greatest teacher
that all things created
complete their cycle
only by being
destroyed.

And all the broken
Buddhas of Tibet
are telling us
that nowhere else
can these lessons
be learned but
right here
and
right now.

By Helen Raica-Klotz

It was only October, but it had been snowing for days. Starting slowly, the first flakes drifted aimlessly through the icy air, but then the wind shifted and the snow began to fall heavy and fast, covering everything in its path—the cigarette butts and candy bar wrappers on the side of the road, the rusted Chevy pickup parked in the driveway, the red three-speed bike abandoned in the front yard, and the long rambling branches of a pine tree that curved around the sloping back porch. That's the thing about snow, she thought. It makes everything disappear. Well, almost everything.

Tyler said he wanted to carve a pumpkin last night. Now he sat at the table, watching her, smiling broadly through a mouthful of Froot Loops.

"It's almost time, Mom!" he said, his voice still scratchy from sleep, a dribble of blue milk slipping down his chin. "Come on!"

She looked out the back window, the vegetable garden was buried underneath a good six inches. She would have to put on her sorrels, her parka, her hat and mittens, get the snow shovel from the garage—the whole idea seemed too much, too excessive.

"Oh, sweetie, what a good idea," she said, with what she hoped was an acceptable level of enthusiasm. "Maybe later tonight, when your dad gets home..."

Her voice trailed off as she watched her son's eyes veil over, the disappointment blanketing his face.

"I'm just so tired this morning...," she tried again.

"You're always tired," Tyler mumbled, not looking up from the table, tracing his small bony fingers around a circle of spilt milk.

She sighed. He was right. She was always tired. The constant trips to the doctor's, the relentless treatments every month, the special diets and medicines to keep track of—it exhausted her. She felt the tears rise, her eyes sting, and she turned quickly to look out the window again at the falling snow.

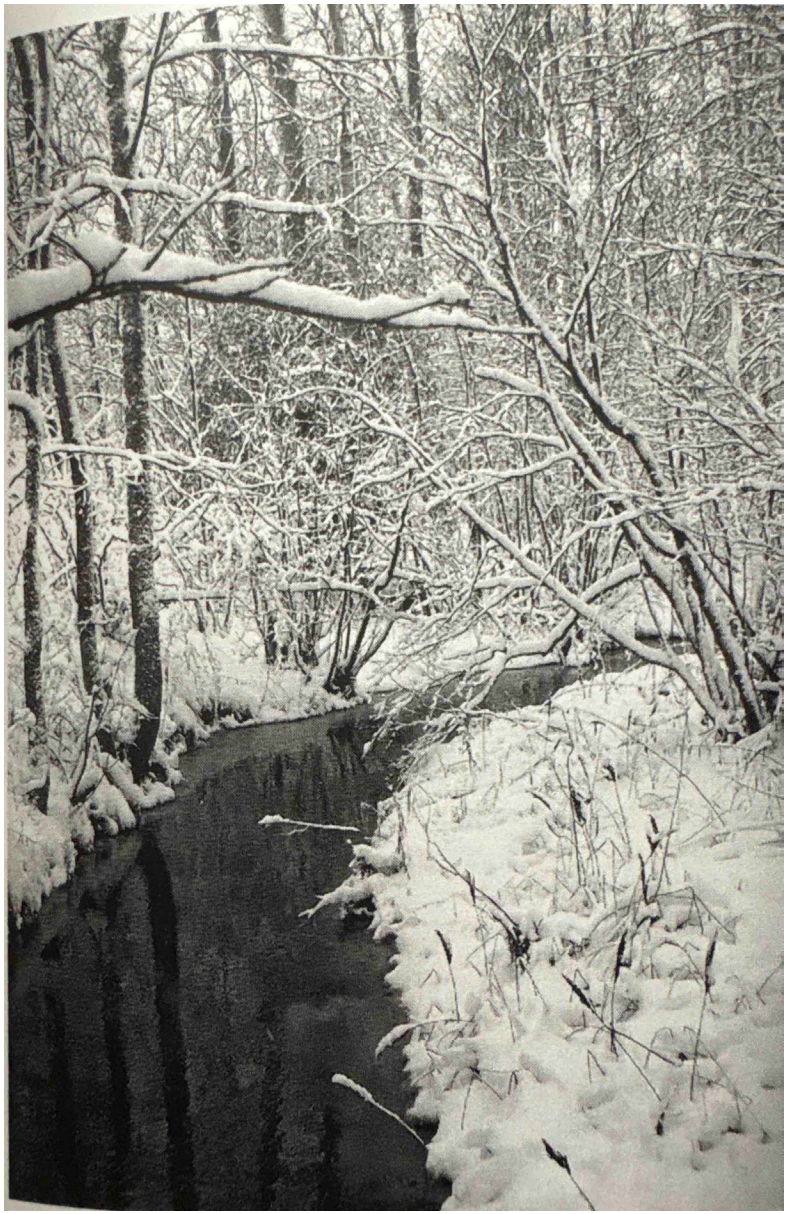
"I'll go get it Mom—I'll go get the pumpkin. It won't be that hard."

"Okay." She turned. "And I'll go with you. Come on kiddo—grab your duds. We'll dig that pumpkin out together."

Tyler raced for the coatrack, throwing himself on the floor to pull on his boots. She followed, more slowly, resting her hand lightly on his head, still bald from the chemotherapy. She paused, feeling the blue veins lining her son's smooth bare skin under her fingertips. Reaching out, she grabbed a blue and gold striped hat and tugged it down over his ears.

"Let's go."

By Amber King



By Ashley Pfenninger



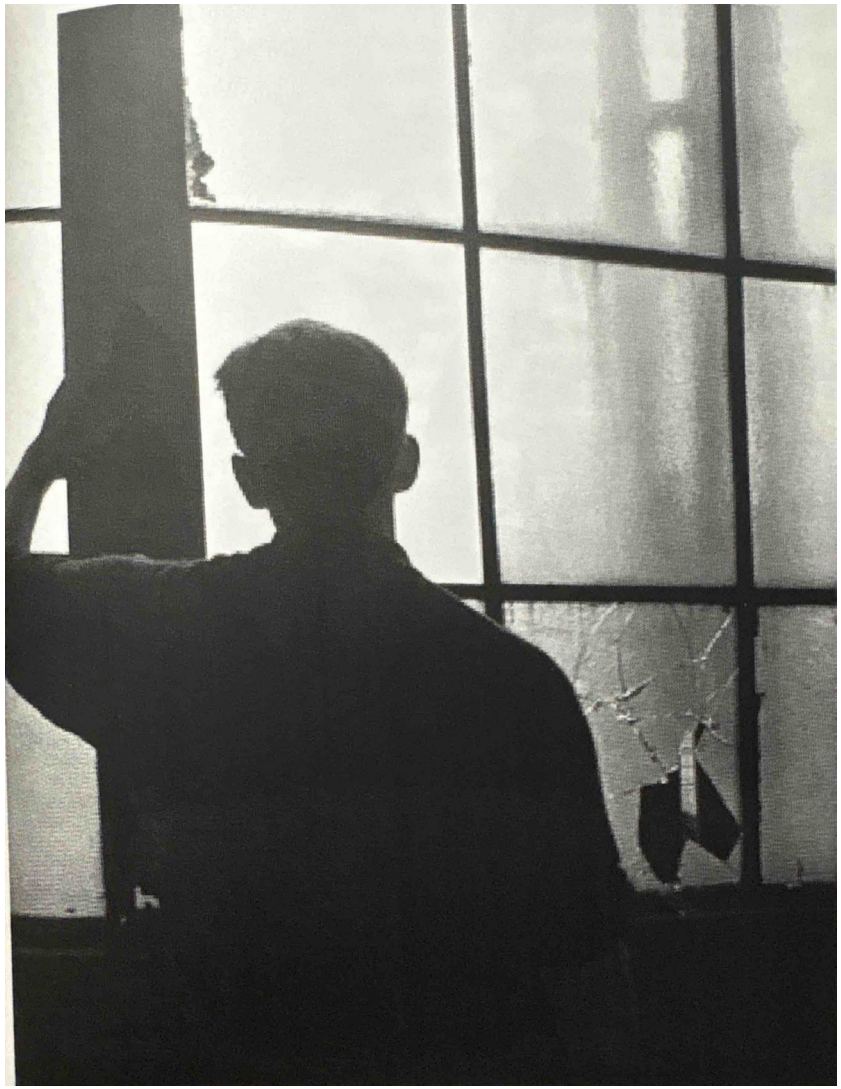
By Suzanne Burns

I smooth white cotton sheets fresh from the line onto the bed,
while a warm breeze flutters the sheers. The open light
behind them, and the sound of someone cutting
the grass three houses down passes for harmony today,
a time in an afternoon, when the house is untroubled,
like a warm summer on the porch, clinking ice cubes
in a tall glass of tea. Gently, the frankness of June
brushes the sheers; the brisk scent of an Oregon redwood
and spooning notes of a Windy City clarinet arrive in my
upstairs bedroom like a postcard. How unfortunate, I think,
that an afternoon this perfect drifted in through the window
on a day when I have all this laundry to do.

By Suzanne Burns

Houses on Franklin Street inch toward the curb,
shoulder to shoulder, like brick runners crouched,
permanently stuck at the starting line.
Jackie once told me that no one on Franklin
passes go. He had a pistol, so he would know.
His little sister, Maria, saw the Sarta family leave
in the middle of a Sunday afternoon.
They didn't come back, and rats had moved in
by Wednesday.
Cassandra Renee, Misty's only biracial daughter,
salvaged pieces of burrito and corn dog
from her kitchen trash can
and fed them to the rat family
whenever her mom worked the bar on Friday.
As she laid out the pieces in a perfect V pattern
on the sidewalk in front of the house,
she told me the girl rats had pink eyes that glowed in the dark.
"That's their way of getting attention," she said.
And we lay still,
under the Normans' front porch,
and watched on the sidewalk for action.
She was right—about the girls.
There they were, desperately fierce
as they inched their way to the sidewalk
and scored just enough
to survive.

By Jeannette Fleury



By Rob Bastek



By Brian Cabrera

From the moment he woke, he knew that his fever had broken. His head felt clear, and he even noticed that he was hungry. He knew this to be a good sign. In the darkness, he stared up at the ceiling and recalled the past weeks of struggle. The days of delirium, sweating, and vomiting. The shock of being told that they would have to fly him out to Rochester, not next week, not tomorrow, but right now. The panic he felt on that plane, for he mistook the lurch of take-off for the moment of slipping away. Then the nurses during admittance, who were distorted and grotesque, and how he had raised his head to ask them if they were real. The antiseptic smells and the taste of bile. Doctors consulting in his room, speaking an unknown medical language. The harsh white lights in his eyes and the needles in his arms.

Sitting up, he turned on the overhead light and checked his wrist for the time. He saw that he had no watch and a quick glance around the room revealed no clocks on the wall or at his bedside. He picked up the phone at his nightstand, put the receiver to his ear, and dialed with a shaky hand.

"Operator. May I help you?"

"Yes, could you tell me the number for time, please?"

"Are you kidding?"

"Excuse me?"

"You really want to know what time it is?"

"Well...yes. Yes, I do."

"It's 6:56."

She had already hung up before he had the chance to thank her. He returned the receiver, turned off the light, and lay back down. Turning his head, he looked out the window and watched the city below grow light. Beyond the city's skyline, he could see gently rolling hills that were covered with trees. The majority of the leaves on these trees had already fallen, and he understood that he had missed much of what had always been his favorite season. But the few leaves that stubbornly clung to the branches also held onto their late autumn colors, which contrasted gently with the pale blue sky. He found it beautiful, and when he smiled, it felt unfamiliar and welcome.

He woke up to the sound of voices in his room. He recognized one voice as his father's. Keeping his eyes closed, he lay still and listened to the conversation, which included words like percutaneous drainage and endoscopic retrograde topographies. It made him feel strange to know that

these words were pertaining to him. Lying therem he remembered how his father used to sing to him as a child. He recalled the smell of his pipe and the way that he always called him son.

When he opened his eyes, the conversation stopped and the two men looked down at him.

"Hello, son."

"Dad."

"You look better today."

"I think I feel better."

"You look good."

"I think I may be getting better."

"You slept through lunch."

"Slept through lunch? What time is it?"

"It's past three. Can I get you anything?"

"Is that possible? This late?"

"The kitchens here even close down," the doctor said. "I'll go get you a menu. It is good to see you feeling better," he added before he left, leaving the father and son alone in the room.

"Dad?"

"Yes, son."

"Could you do something for me?"

"I'll do anything for you."

"Could you get me a watch?"

"A watch?"

"I don't have my watch. They must have left it behind."

"Of course, I'll get you a watch. I'll go get it right now."

"It's just that I need to keep track of the time."

"Son," his father said. "I'll do anything for you."

He sat up, supported by his adjustable bed, as the single light from above cast a soft glow over him in the otherwise darkened room. He held his left wrist in front of him and absorbed himself in his new watch. It was an inexpensive digital model with a black ribbed rubber band, the kind he hadn't worn since junior high. He lost himself in the changing numbers and was startled by the voice at the door.

"Are you still up, honey?"

"I'm still here," he answered.

"But it's after one o'clock."

"It's exactly one thirty-six and sixteen seconds, seventeen seconds, eighteen seconds..."

"What have you got there?"

"A watch."

"That may be the last thing you need in this place."

"It's the only thing I need in this place."

"Can't you sleep?"

"I'll sleep eventually."

"You've got a TV in your room, you know," the nurse said as she nodded to the silent box that hung next to him.

"I know."

"I could get you something."

"I've got all I need," he laughed, holding up his left arm.

"But are you still in pain? I could give you another shot of Demerol."

"It doesn't really help. Not really."

"Well, let me know if I can get you anything. You know how to use the call button."

"I will. Thank you so much."

"You try to get some sleep now."

"Good-night."

When the nurse had left the room, he checked the time again and then reached up and turned off the light. He sat in the darkness and turned to look out the window. The traffic lights were blinking in their after-hours mode, and his eyes followed the occasional car's headlights until they drove out of sight. The seconds were still adding up when his head finally nodded, and he drifted off to sleep.

By Ahmad Pritchett Winter 2005 Poetry Slam Winner

Slowly sweeping me off my feet
Tender hearts flutter when our eyes do meet
Sweet innocence across the room does grow
As hips and hair sway to and fro
A queen he sees amidst the clouds
Her elegant grace dismisses the crowd
A king she seeks to take her hand
To drink the pure waters and rule the land
A smile arises when such a fellow is found
He takes her in his arms and upon her head places a crown
He cherishes her and by her side he stands
He loves, honors, and respects her because he is a true black man

By Holly Morningstar



By Amy Ladensack



By Doug McGaw

Does suffering aways equal pain?
Absurd lessons of life resonate.
Consequences, fate, and retribution
just rumors floating through time and space.
History vilifies the wicked, yet crucifies the saintly.
Paradoxical paradigms of existence,
waves and waves, real and merely metaphoric,
carry away the vanquished.
The only transgressions being bad karma
and their haphazardly constructed homes.
The Malibu fuck-pads of the rich
and vapid remain perfectly intact.
Doesn't it always happen that way?
Sure, we always root for the underdog,
but are we laying down all of our chips in Vegas?
Compassion never quite catches up to empathy.
Yet, I can hear the whispers.
Voices from the past gaining momentum—gaining clarity.
Somewhere, Tom Joad, Sitting Bull, and Woody Guthrie
are voicing their dissent, waiting for answers
that never come by the roaring fire.
The smoke spiraling skyward for someone to discern.
Still, the changes slowly come.
Look, someone changed the channel from some
star-fucker Hollywood show on E! to the History Channel.
Reality slowly reveals itself from under
the revisionist history the spin-artists
in Washington force-feed the masses.
From underneath the subterfuge
the steely-eyed truth is slowly illuminated.

By Amee Schmidt

I am certain
that the road to happiness is paved
with promiscuity.

Consistently sporadic,
no identity,
no expectations.
Serendipitous anticipation.

Fresh teeth on inner thighs,
fluid resistance,
relentless hesitation.
Biting lips, and nipples.

Intermission.

Exploratory intervals,
fingers provoked in feminine oscillation,
craving orgasm.
Content in pursuit.

Discovering desperation,
withholding gratification,
merciless ecstasy...
Felicitous cessation.

By Brian Cabrera

She stood there before her class
and went into great detail
on the science of global weather,
all about the advance and retreat
of the glaciers and how they
had carved out the Great Lakes.
And how (most horrifying to him)
our climate is always changing
and that the glaciers
will someday advance again.
“Look around you children,
all that you see will one day be gone,
swallowed up by the ice.”
He raised his hand repeatedly
to ask her if this was really true.
“Tell me honestly,
because if it is, everything is already gone.”
The class laughed at his inquiries,
and for the life of him,
he couldn’t understand
how they could.
She asserted that this was indeed
true and inevitable,
a matter of science
and a matter of fact.
But she said this to him gently,
and for that moment
there was an understanding between them.
And when he asked to be excused,
“I need to go to my locker,”
and returned twenty minutes later,
she made no comment,
only quietly placed a new worksheet
on his desk, pointed to where they were,
and continued on with the class.

By Mathew C. Easterwood

An aging man sat at the popcorn table making, bagging, and selling popcorn for twenty-five cents apiece during the morning and early afternoon hours of the craft show. He wore a faded and worn yellow Kiwanis vest—the encircled "K" crest on the upper right breast. Despite the garment's obvious lack of luster, it still managed to shimmer in the fluorescent lighting that the high school's main lobby offered—giving it an appearance of newness for those more than twenty feet away.

Beneath the vest, he wore a ragged-looking navy blue sweater that his grandson had brough him the previous Christmas. He couldn't remember which grandson it had been and didn't like the way that it fit his body or the feel of the fleece-like material on his wrinkling skin, but it kept him warm.

He had a nametag pinned to his left breast that read:

HELLO!
My Name Is:

His name was jaggedly written below.

He had sold at least three batches of popcorn in the hour before noon. He wasn't sure if it was three or four to be exact, but he knew he had, at least three times, popped kernels in the silver kettle within the popcorn machine that the Kiwanis group had purchased in the fall. The previous machine had begun to successfully burn half of every batch of popcorn it popped at the Easter Egg Hunt earlier that year. He occasionally would give cute little girls and boys a free bag of popcorn, as he deemed them worthy.

It was sometime shortly after noon that a seven-year-old girl with her hair pulled back witnessed the man as he handed a four-year-old girl a bag of popcorn without her handing him a quarter. At this, she left the presence of her mother, who was not paying the least attention to her to begin with. She approached in her used-to-be white tennis shoes and obviously used, tattered, and stained pink jacket to receive *her* free bag of popcorn.

He looked her up and down as she approached and then stood there for a moment before him—exploring her rather plump figure, chipmunk-like cheeks, and raggedy clothing with eyes that had once witnessed the burning of a house with the family still in it.

Can I have a bag of popcorn? she inquired of the wrinkling figure behind the table. Bags cost a quarter, he replied gruffly—eyes still seeming to search for something her figure did not reveal. But I saw you give that other girl a bag and didn't see her give you a quarter, came a voice more mature than her appearance would have suggested. Her father gave me a quarter about ten minutes ago—eyes still searching. Why didn't she take the bag then? The man shifted in his seat so slightly that even the girl hardly saw it and said sternly, It's twenty-five cents a bag. For a moment, she glared out at him through eyes older than she—eyes that had witnessed a mother nearly beaten to death by a drunken husband—and said to him in a defiant child's voice, I'll tell my mommy to you!

At this, the old man shifted again—very clearly this time—and perspiration began to form on his forehead. His slightly wrinkled face filled with creases and crevices that weren't there just moments before. He leaned forward; his brown eyes flashed red momentarily as he looked at the girl with a distorted face. He glared at her for somewhere between ten and fifteen seconds and finalized that audacity was what her figure didn't exclude, but still held within it. In that time, she considered running back to her mother four different times, but something, or someone, she couldn't see held her feet to the floor.

Seemingly defeated, the creases and crevices disappeared from the man's face as he leaned back and let out a sigh between breaths that sounded labored. It was the same sigh he released in a small German village sometime in 1945 right after he had slit the throat of a thirteen-year-old boy who had shot and killed his platoon sergeant moments before, and the same sigh that left his body the day his wife died giving birth to what would have been his only son (the child strangled by his umbilical cord in the womb). Harshly, he shoved a bag across the table toward the girl so that several kernels fell to the floor. The little girl grabbed her bag and scurried away. As she did, the man whispered under his breath, Damn little piglet didn't need any more food!

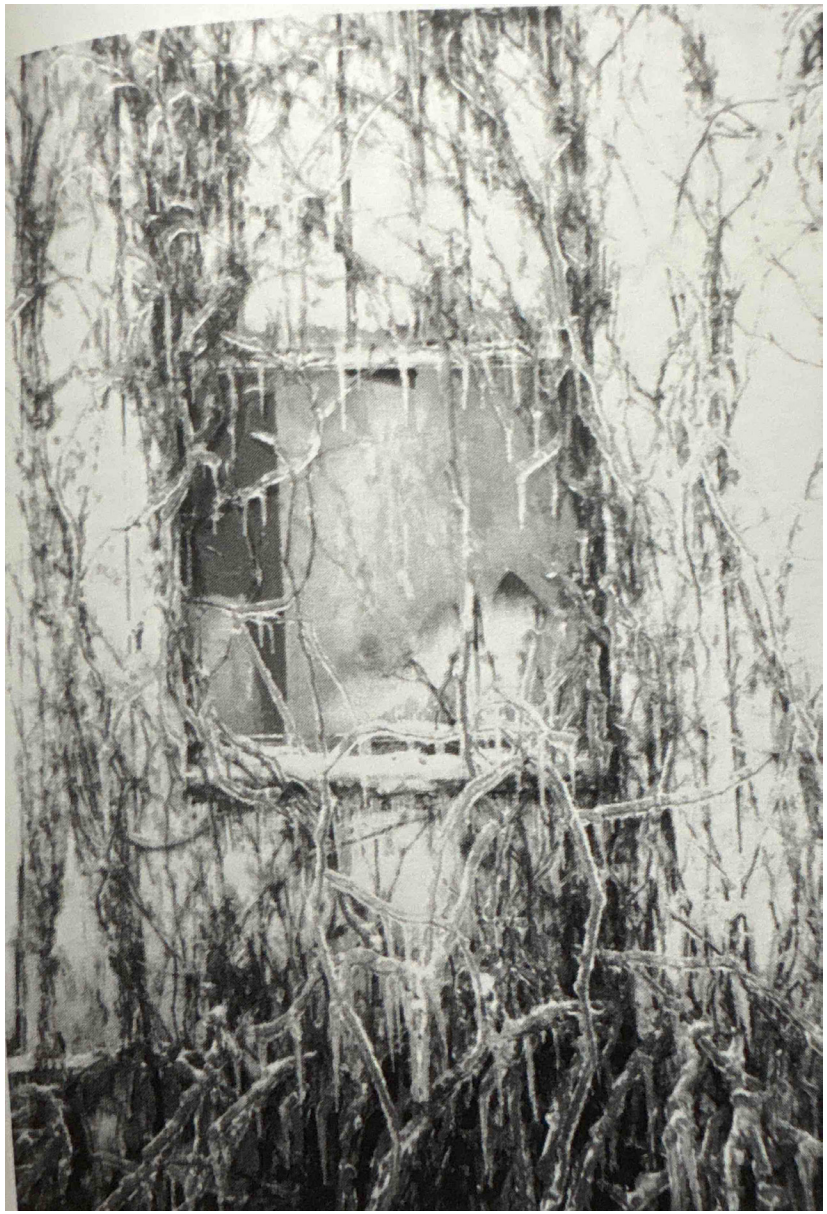
The man then began to breathe very heavily, and the perspiration on his head was now sweat streaming down his face in the beds of the wrinkles that were constantly visible. His right hand moved to his chest at that moment, and he wrenched in pain, gripping his right breast firmly. His left hand flew to the table and knocked numerous bags of popcorn to the floor—the popped kernels covering the linoleum like the remnants of souls on the long road to Hell. The man fell from the chair onto the floor. His head hit with a thud, and his body trembled only a

few minutes before it was still forever.

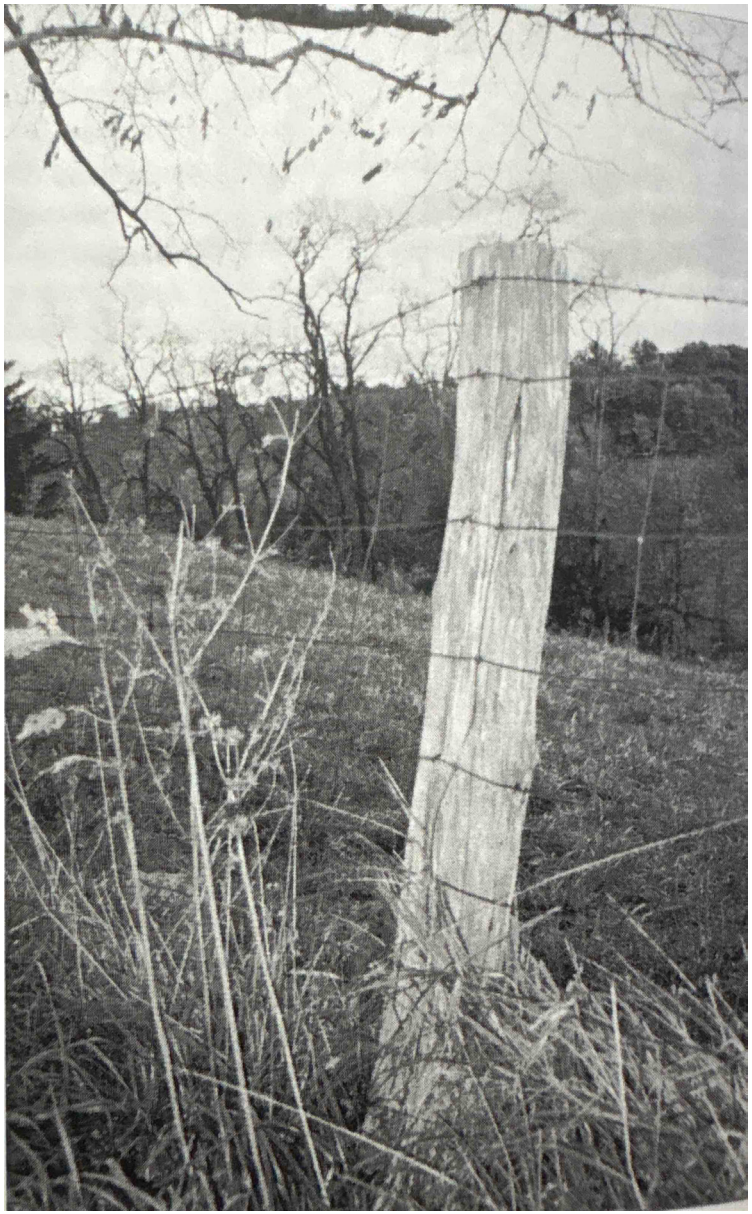
It was later discerned that the heart attack was why he had gotten ready so slowly that morning, the reason for the heartburn he had complained about several times to his Kiwanis Brothers throughout the day, and the stiffness he had felt in his left arm getting ready for his shift working the popcorn machine.

The local weekly newspaper would have a touching obituary for the man the following week—telling of his devotion to God, family, and the community. Many faces would hold depressive frowns at his funeral, and many more tears would fall from the eyes of those present—and some from eyes not. But as people from all around the craft show surrounded his body on the early afternoon of his death, a little girl sat quietly on a cement hallway bench next to a woodcraftsman's booth not all that far from the scene—a subtle grin between her popcorn-filled, chipmunk-like cheeks.

By Saun Strobel



By Saun Strobel



By K.F. Peterson

the air tastes differently in her absence
stagnant
dormant

the word “possible” shrivels

two lonely “ss”
wind from once full sails

the light laughs gawkily with her departure
no tilt to its giggle
no cheek on which the shadows may softly pirouette

the darkness gluttons
the light starves

the earth behaves foreign in her void
my steps hold no gravity
the soil masticates my soul

i am any god’s pariah

then
and then again
and then before then
she was

the earth relearns its cardinal points
the light breaks forth in rapture
finding the perfect subject to frame
in an abandoned café window
the wind picks up to greedily taste
the sweetness of a shadow’s neck

By Holly Morningstar

I am not your Blue Kentucky Girl
clumsily strumming guitar strings
to the rhythm of your words.
I am not your sullen stone fountain muse
gushing your liquid youth systematically every second.
I do not have the sexy southern drawl
or lazy twang you so adore,
and I am not as careless as you wish I were
(a dry leaf of autumn scritch-scratching down a busy intersection)

But haven't you ever wondered why
Van Gogh painted Snow
in shades of lavender and sky
as if to reveal a long-buried truth?
I am not sun-kissed but amidst my frozen bliss
I am revealed to you:

Through the sweetest nothings lips could ever tell
spill my fountain kisses and then your smile swells
and I swear just like Neruda I'd write fifty sonnets more
even as you smash my bones across the kitchen floor

For you have me where you want me
though now I'm not entirely composed
and my blood stains green with bleach
just like the grass I've known

Yet you claim me perfect now
because when I cry, I sing
and my tears would do best to fit
in any diamond ring

These verses are like lyrics
and my insides are like Snow
for Blue are the biggest bruises
once the light shines on my soul

By Karen Corbin

She walked quietly down the cracked sidewalk, her boots clicking on the cement. A warm summer breeze ruffled her short auburn hair and stirred an empty McDonald's cup, dislodging it from among the dry leaves gathered against the curb and rolling it into the street. She heard sounds of congested traffic from the next street over, but this side of the block was quiet.

Though dusk was an hour away, the sun was already sliding behind glass, steel and cement towers. She saw her building up ahead in the middle of the block. The old three-story brownstone looked dwarfish among the tall, hazy, gray rectangles looming on either side.

Her mother would hate this neighborhood. It wouldn't suit her highbred Manhattan ideals for social acceptance. She would have perferred massive glass and steel, with a twenty-four-hour doorman, an approved vistors list, and an intercom system. She would have exercised her seemingly infinite influential power to see that her daughter lived in a location she considered suitable, if she were still alive. The heart attack was sudden, just three months ago, with nothing to even suggest a problem. Of course, her mother was never one to admit, or expect any brand of weakness.

Brandyn pulled herself away from thoughts of her mother as she noticed two men sprawled on the steps of her building passing a bottle between them. One was a scrawny, hollow-faced man with a loose jaw and greasy hair that might be blonde if he washed it. The other was a big man; about two-hundred pounds with brush-cut red hair and a rough, unshaven face. A third man leaned against the railing with his head down.

The scrawny man tilted his head and gazed at Brandyn. His eyes traveled up her legs to her breasts then back down to her black, spike-heeled boots. She had really liked the tight black pants and gray silk blouse when she put them on, but now she was thinking that the pinstripe suit with the baggy pleated pants and a turtleneck might've been a better choice.

"Hey, J.D.," he leaned forward, wagging a long, skinny finger at her boots, "Lookit them shit-kickers."

J.D. pushed himself to his feet. Standing on the bottom step, the husky redhead towered above Brandyn. "Naw, Shithead." Leering down at her, he drawled, "Them's 'fuck me' boots." He cocked his head and lifted his left eyebrow while his eyes traveled lazily up then down

her torso. “I just might give her what she wants.

Shithead let out a wheezy, high pitched giggle. J.D. grinned triumphantly, taking pride in his speculation. Brandyn avoided looking directly at any of the men during this exchange, but noted details in their positions and postures, especially the third man leaning on the rail. He hadn’t moved or spoken, hadn’t even lifted his eyes. He was the one to watch.

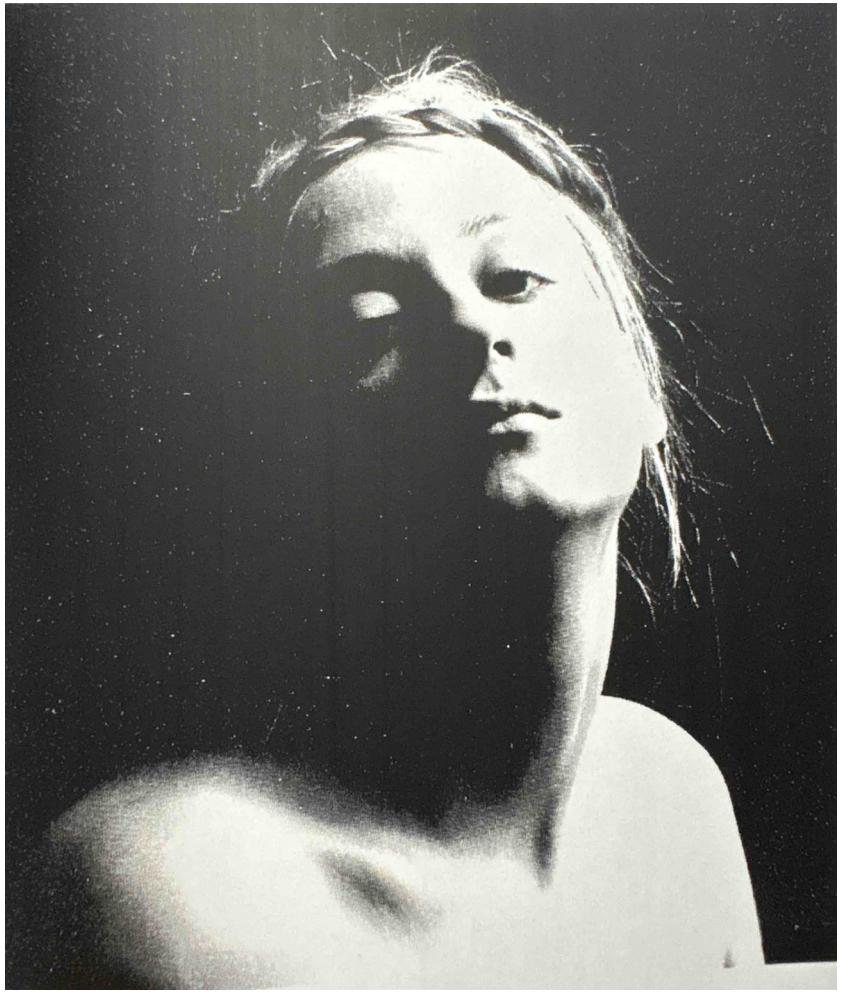
“You boys want to know what these boots are really good for?” As she spoke in a soft, yet clearly discernible voice, her eyes moved up slowly from J.D.’s dusty cowboy boots to linger on his crotch just long enough to make it burn, then traveled slowly over his paunchy gut, finally coming to gaze directly into his eyes. With her dark green eyes locked on his, she continued in that same low, even tone, “They’d punch a nice neat little hole right between her balls.”

Fixed by her cold, steady, unreadable stare, J.D. began to hope, deep in his heart, that she was not serious. He hesitated, unsure how to respond. Shithead’s grin faded into slack-jawed shock. He watched to see what J.D. would do.

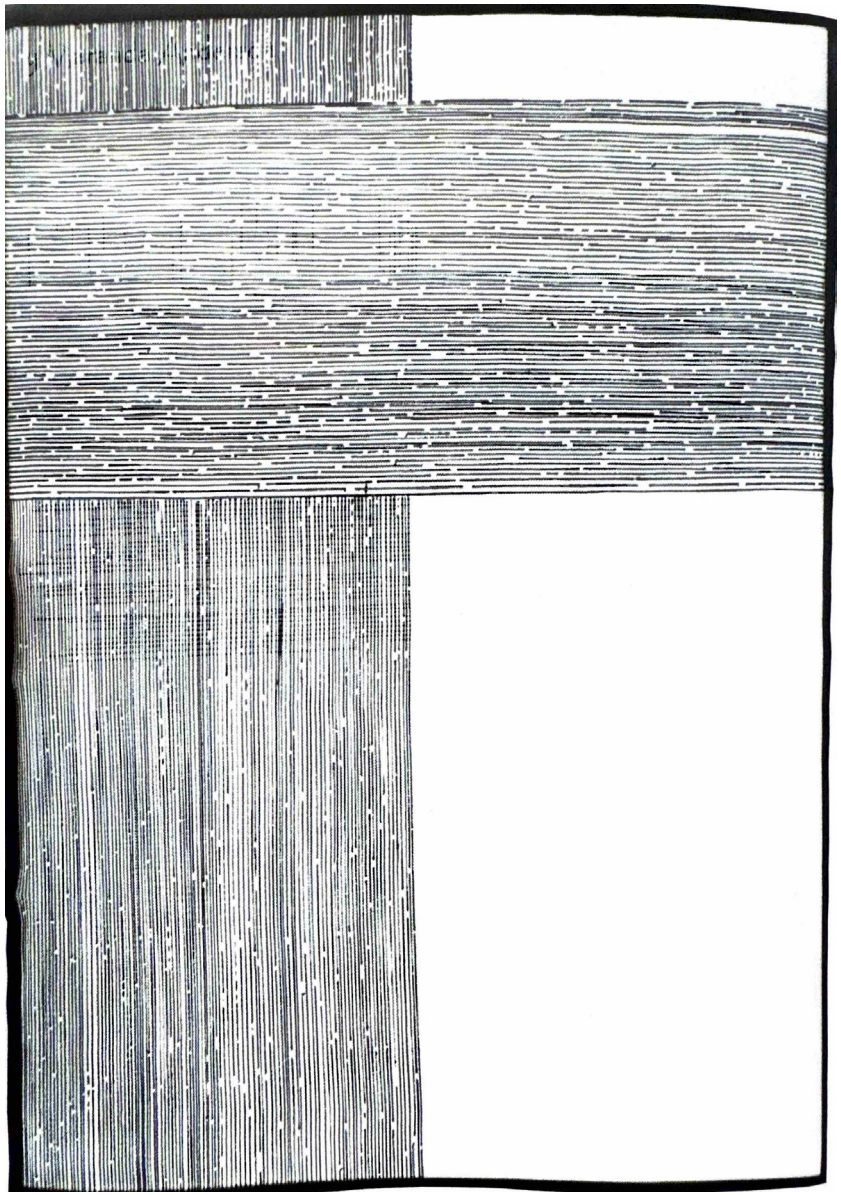
While also watching J.D., she maintained peripheral focus on the third man. He had finally lifted his eyes, deep blue eyes, almost indigo. Straight, dark hair fell across his forehead, clinging to the sides of a strong, angular face. With those brilliant eyes held steady on her face, he moved slowly off the railing, straightened to a lean five foot eleven inches, and in a smooth, slightly southern voice said, “Now, J.D., that ain’t no way to welcome a new neighbor.” Stepping toward her, he held out his hand, “Name’s Jack, ma’am. Welcome to the neighborhood.”

She met his gaze and slowly took his hand. “Brandyn,” she replied. Instead of releasing her hand, he pulled ever so slightly as a dancer might to guide his partner into a twirl. Turning as he did so, he led her up the steps to the door.

By Christina Kababik



By Maranda Anderson



By K.F. Peterson

to rise and fall
beneath her delicate rib cage
beneath the inverse tug-of-war

i count her cadence

a train sounds
with some aloofness
if she read the subtext
between my_self
like the book she holds
the train could be going any way

if time were a glass of water
we'd float
as life greedily sips
we'd drift to a rounded corner
clutching one another
'til we looked up
at an empty glass
filled only with the existence of us

By Jean Moore

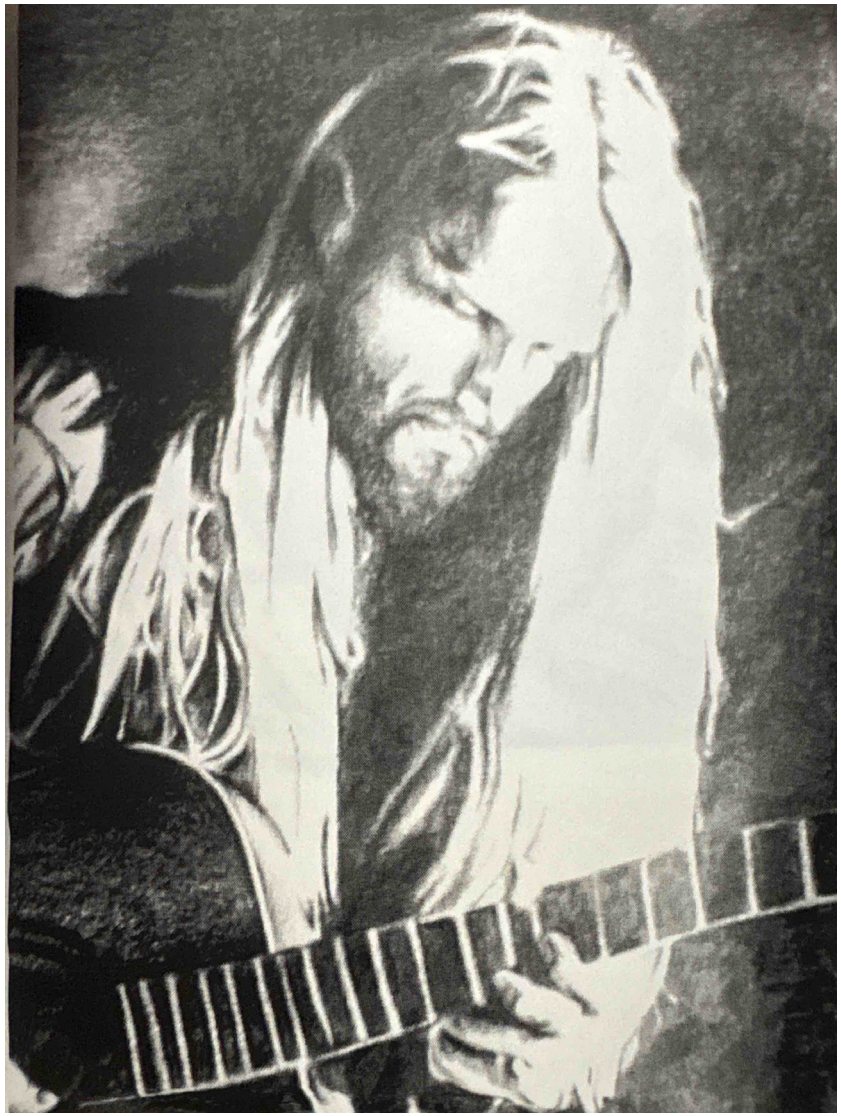
For Jimmy Wallet

You went out for ice cream on a Monday.
You came home to find
your wife and daughters buried under tons of mud,
your house, sticks and stones,
your daughters, broken dolls,
your wife, Michelle, flesh and bones and hair.

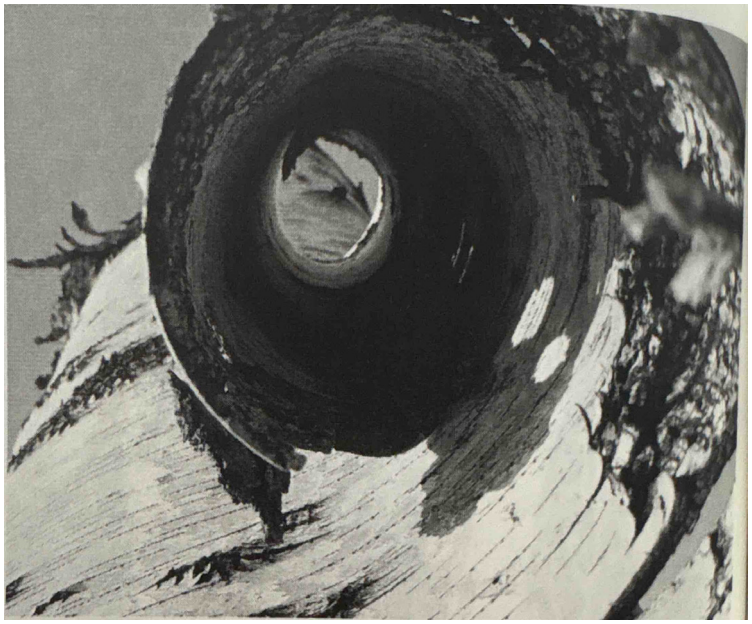
You have become famous,
the dad arrested for clawing his way through tons of mud,
your wife and daughters' unplanned graves,
your long, dark dreadlocks floating above
your swaying body,
an out-of-sync pendulum,
your face, a metaphor for pain.

The news reporters say you play guitar.
I imagine you, fingers poised above the frets,
slowly lowering them, gently touching the strings at first,
thinking you cannot play ever again,
thinking you cannot move.
You hesitate.
You think of ice cream melting
somewhere in La Conchita,
and your fingers begin to slide along
the frets like a promise,
and as you begin to strum Walker's chords,
G7/ C9 / C6 / C9 / G7 / G#7 / G7 /
C9 / C6 / C9 / C9 / C6 / C9 / G7 / Am7 /
Bm7 / Bb7 / D9 / Db9 / D9 / D#9 / D9 /...
the air lifts you up like a sail.

By Holly Morningstar



By Kyle Reed



By Mathew C. Easterwood

a drive to her home.
defroster moans,
incessantly melting,
tiny streams
crawl up the glass

she stares
out the windshield,
falling snowflakes
race by in lines of white.

she gently sets her head
upon his shoulder
with a timid
first
“I love you.”

thousands of white crosses
at his back.
Lincoln stands
waiting,
the calm the silence
before the wholesome tempest of applause

By Christopher Giroux

We are strangers in this town
where my younger self spent summers
connecting with grandparents,
braving rollers,
and scavenging for beach glass and blue slag
now held captive
by apothecary jars
in my mother's dining room.

We return to this house, a rental,
and sit upstairs, the attic really,
the windows propped open with sticks,
their roped sashings frayed from use;
the ceiling slopes so
that we stoop
when we round the landing.

We keep time to a wristwatch this night
and the measured lap-lap-lapping
of Lake Michigan,
which mixes with the murmurs
of wavering leaves
tensing for another fall.
The eaves sigh; the house settles.

We sit and rock,
you, the new generation, on my lap,
your doll,
variously named Pink Baby, Old Pink Baby, Miss Kayla, Michaela,
a hint of some future generation,
tumbling off
yours
into mine.

Your ear on my chest, my chin on your head,
the rise and fall of our breaths
enacting our own private language, rhyme, meter,
all this a prayer for you.

The portable carries classical music from Interlochen,
a poem by Laura Kasischke reminisces about the county fair,
and the sunset,
glimpsed over your head,
is a series of time-lapse slides
with every fifth, tenth, or nth displayed,

and with each global rotation, Goldberg variation, heartbeat,
each twirl of the secondhand,
each wave,
your childhood dissipates...

and now I lay you down to sleep.

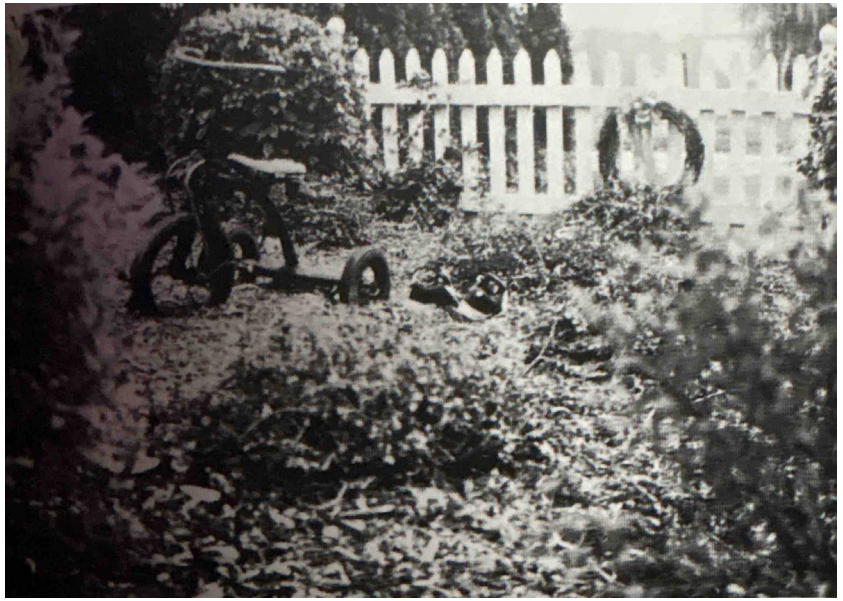
By Brian Dalke

No blonde tail that curls in humid air.
No dark eyes, looking glasses into his sensitive, yet playful soul.
No wide, somewhat shy, yet mischievous smile.
No shirts smeared with handprints of mud and yogurt.
No dissecting of bug-infested milkweed pods on the kitchen table.
No Legos and K'nex scattered across the middle of the carpet.
No jacket pockets weighted down with handfuls of stones.
No building, digging, and dreaming in the sandbox.
No mountains of sand in the back hall.
No whizzing rubber bands followed by scampering feet and giggling smirks.
No objecting, frustrated voices defiantly mumbling his beloved spelling list.
No wide-armed, full-body hugs saying I need you.
No little big-man.
No hipless, lipless, bunless wonder.

What if during the Depression
a farm girl and well-educated piano player had not
joined jittery hands
secretly before a judge?
What if after the War at a bus stop
a young college woman had not
offered a thing, ex-Navy man her Hershey's bar?
What if I had not
let my fingers nervously spin that dial phone,
or if she had politely said "I'm busy that night"?
What if she had listened to her mother
and there'd been no wedding feast,
no carrot cake with creamy sweet frosting
smeared on our giggling faces?
What if on that hot August night
she had puffed that dreaded "not-tonight-dear" sigh?
Or my fingers had just lingered a moment longer on her breasts?
Or our lips had loitered longer in eternity?

Everything would be so different:
No dirty shirts,
no pockets full of rocks,
no dark eyes,
no sly smiles...

By Saun Strobel



By Kyle Reed



By Brian Cabrera

The two kickboxers had just touched gloves and retreated to their neutral corners when Bennett returned with the beers. As he handed one to Ryan, the bell rang and the fighters squared off.

"Perfect timing," Ryan said as he took the beer. Bennett gave a small shrug and sat down. He didn't share Ryan's enthusiasm for the sport, especially not for the undercards. They both took pulls from their beers and watched the first round in silence. When the bell rang, the top and middle ropes were pulled apart and the ring-girl made her entrance. They both remained silent. They both took another long pull from their beers. When the second round began, Ryan placed his beer on the floor and leaned forward as Bennett slouched back in his seat and looked into his drink.

"This thing is not going to last past the third round," Ryan said. "Takahashi's legs are already gone. Look at the way he hesitates."

"These guys are scrubs, Ryan."

"Not all of them."

"Well, these two are."

They watched as Takahashi was stalked around the ring. He retreated in response to every advance and held his guard up high. Then he suddenly came to life and delivered a brisk right round-house kick that caught his opponent in the ribs. They could hear the solid thwack of impact, and the crowd collectively oohed in appreciation.

Then Bennett couldn't keep it in any longer. He put his beer down and turned to his friend. "I broke up with Akiko last night."

"So, you finally did it?"

"Finally did."

"Did you end up doing it over dinner?"

"Well, no. It ended at the train station."

"You're kidding."

"I wish I was."

"Damn, Bennett. I was only joking when I said that would be the best place."

"It's not like I planned it that way. I meant to do it over dinner."

The bell rang, and they watched the handlers rush to place stools in their corners. They then poured water over the fighters' heads and massaged their arms and legs. Both fighters breathed heavily and nodded as their trainers shouted in their ears. The ring-girl again made her entrance, and Ryan and Bennett followed her as she floated around

the ring. When she stepped out, they both picked up their beers and took a drink.

"So, what happened?" Ryan asked as the fight resumed.

"We were out, as planned. All through dinner I did nothing to hold up my end of the conversation. I just let the silences drag. I kept waiting for her to feel it herself, maybe come to the same conclusion that I had."

"And?"

"And nothing, which is just the problem. We got through dinner, and as I was walking her to the station, she started talking about calling her friends, so they could meet me next weekend. Before she did something like that, I knew it had to be then."

"What did you do, drop the bomb as soon as her train was in sight?"

"Give me some credit, Ryan. It was off near the vending machines."

"How did she take it?"

"Not well. Not well at all."

Just then Takahashi got tagged with a sharp left jab to the jaw. He wobbled and sank down to his knees. He leaned on his arms and breathed heavily as the referee started the count. When it reached five, Takahashi was up, but kept his head down until the count reached eight. He then looked up and nodded to the referee, who let the fight continue.

"She was a good one, Bennett."

"She wasn't so good."

"She was beautiful."

"She was that night."

"What do you mean?"

"This is what I really want to tell you about. There we were at the station, by the vending machines as I said. It must have shown on our faces. All around us people became suddenly quiet; most moved away. It made a kind bubble around us. She looked so beautiful, in her sadness and all. It was actually the closest I had ever felt to her."

"Well, you know what they say," Ryan said as he turned back to the fight. "We hurt only the ones we love."

"I don't know, Ryan," Bennett said as he finished off his beer. "We seem to be hurting them all."

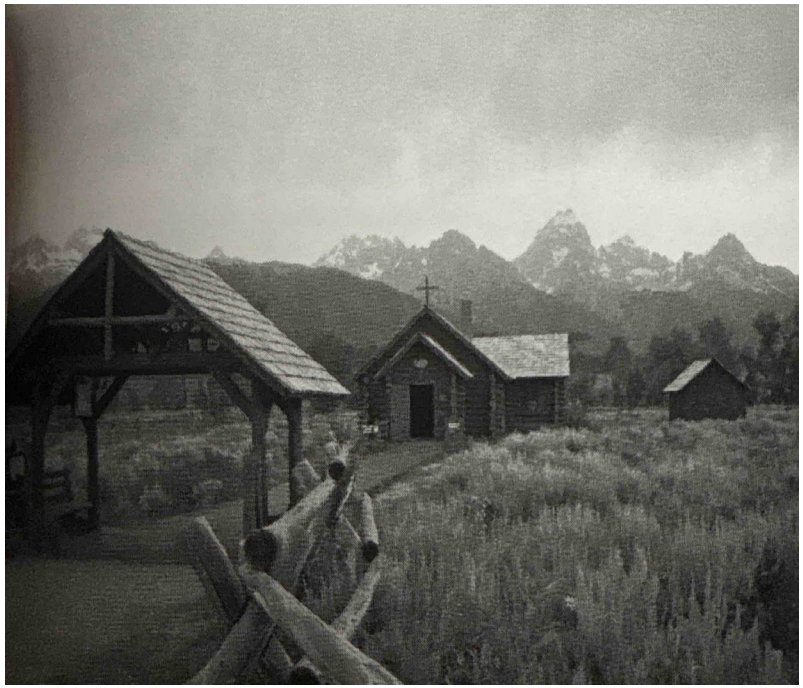
By Kyle Reed



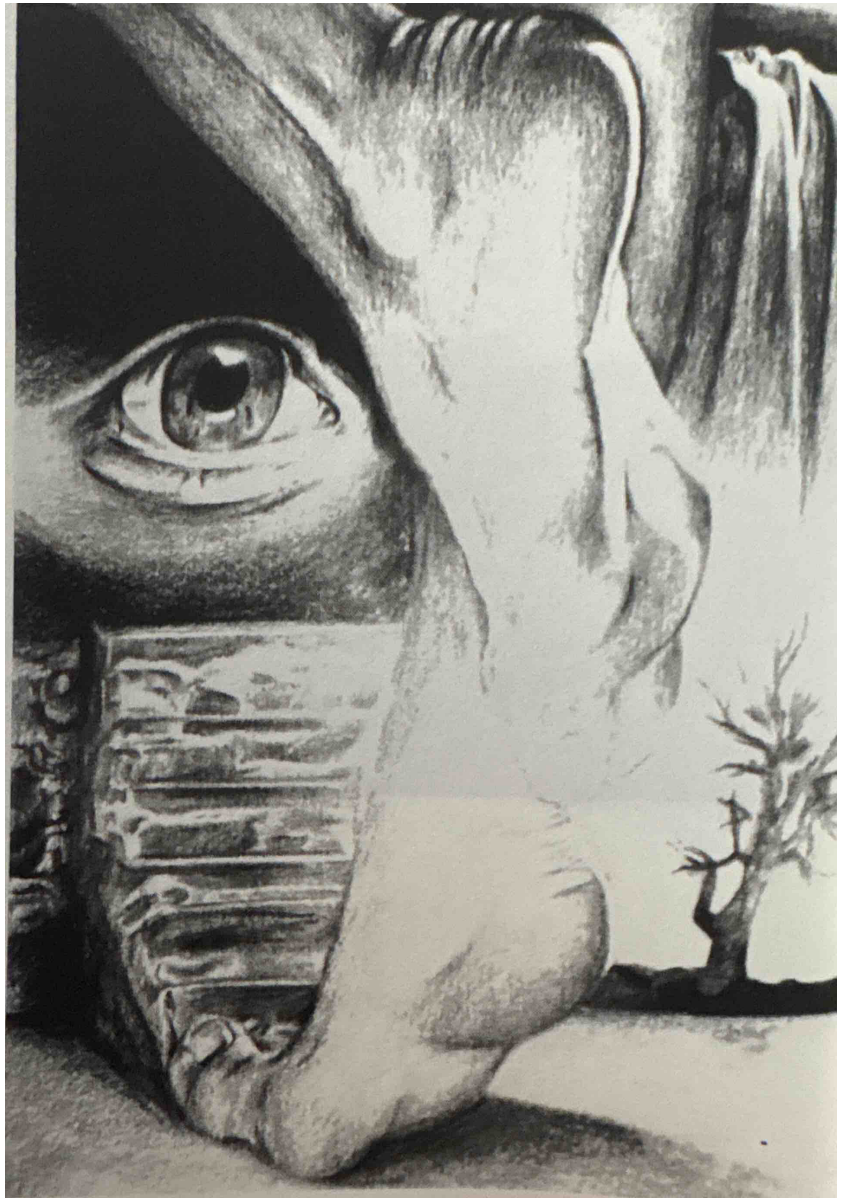
By Jean Moore

Red fingernails
drag along your flesh
re-carve the cicatrix
along the river that is your spine.
Red paint:
blood of my youth.
You swear you understand
the spectrum,
the ramifications
of irony
and what edges past
the visible light.
Red/orange/yellow/green/blue/indigo/violet,
the sequence smooth,
aas you glide through
ghost-like,
unscathed,
ignoring the verisimilitude
of violet,
ignoring the rage that
feeds red.
You settle for what lies in-between
as you hold the stems of daffodils
and taste the edge of my tongue,
as it drips with honey.
Infrared-ultraviolet:
Bookends of nothing.
You seek me there,
delicious in the visible,
ignoring my paint on your skin,
as my fingernails,
like a shark's teeth,
rip you to shreds.

By Ashley Pfenninger



By Holly Morningstar



By Doug McGaw

1919

The grass was impeccably green. He blinked, radiant rays obstructing his Zen-like concentration. His hands were on his knees, pensive and waiting in the vast outfield. Everything seemed to be at a standstill. The pitcher spat an obscenely large wad of tobacco onto the sandy mound. The behemoth of a first baseman cocked his bat patiently, waiting for his pitch. All of this registered in Charley's mind.

Blinking again, he pounded his mitt and awaited the pitch. With a high kick, the pitcher delievered the ball to the plate. The curveball hung tantalizingly down the middle. The burly first baseman connected with a powerful swing. Craaaack! The fly ball immediately seemed to be over his head. Instinctively turning, he seemingly raced against all laws of gravity and motion. His long spikes gleamed with a glorious luster in the afternoon light. He slowed his gallop as he approached the fence, composed himself, and hurled his body with suicidal abandon against the steel wall. He fell violently, glove outstetched. The rawhide orb rested innocently in the webbing.

Charley Sinclair awoke from his daydream with the train whistle blaring in his ear. He slowly gathered his wits about him. Charley wondered how long he slept. In truth, this was the first real rest he was afforded in almost two years. He sat up; the old familiar pain surged in his leg. Charley winced and shook his head, laughing to himself at the absurdity of his life. You had to learn to laugh. The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, Charley dad had admonished him a thousand times.

He thought of that glorious afternoon he had dreamt about. Was it all a dream? The ravages of the wretched human condition in France had left him wondering if he was capable of anything great. Was mankind capable of anything great? Blinking, Charley recounted that day's events just for his sanity's sake. Had he gone 3-4 that day, with a double and two singles? Had he made that great catch to save the game for the Mud Hens? Did that scout for the Red Sox really say he was Shoeless Joe and Tris Speaker rolled in one? Of course, it was all true, he thought, shaking his head. It was all a blur. One week he was on the verge of signing a contract for give grand; the next he was off to Paris. Wearily, Charley sat back. It never was worth anything. The suffering he saw there, he hoped, beyond hope, would never be seen again. He blinked and closed his eyes, the weight of his lids too much. As he

drifted off, the events came rushing back.

Madness waws all around him. Shells exploded with deafening rumblings. Stupefied by the apocalytic visions he saw, Charley could hardly move. He saw Sgt. Wilcox's lips move, but the words never registered. White-knuckled hands gripping their rifles, with delusional abandon, the unit charged from the muddy trench. The dizzying roar of gunfire echoed through the countryside. Machine guns rattled incessantly, cutting down those in their paths. Clouds of smoke enveloped entire fields. The gastly stench of burning flesh filled his nostrils. His mouth agape, the terror rendered him mute. His instinct for survival was the only factor that kept his knees from failing.

"Gas! Gas! Get your masks on!"

Someone yelled, the green cloud of fumes surrounding everything. Suddenly, he could make out the ditch fifty yards or so ahead. He kept running with reckless abandon as the German machine guns intensified, the deafening rattling cutting down young men like stalks of corn. "We're almost there!" As the unit approached the trench, a shell ripped through Charley's leg. He fell, screaming until his voice was hoarse. Delirious, Charley lay on the field in the countryside of France, agony filling every minute, death becoming a warm, friendly place.

"We need a medic; it's Charley Baseball. He's hurt real bad!"

That was the last thing he heard until the dreams conquered his nightmare.

Charley Sinclair slowly walked off the train at Penn Station, pain shooting through his entire leg. He walked off and never looked back.

Winter 2004

Abby Simmons gazed at the black and white photograph of her great-grandfather, Charley Sinclair. It was taken sometime in the thirties. He was gaunt; his eyes seemed almost black. It reminded her of the Holocaust photos she had seen in Washington. The "Great War," as the history books called it, took a giant toll on the man. A sense of mystery and despair had always accompanied him. While he did his best, raising his family and working as a longshoreman, he was always unhappy. He had once been a great ballplayer, but the war changed everything. Life was never the same for him. A sense of dread filled her heart, knowing her son was at war himself. Would

Sean suffer the same fate? Sadness nearly overwhelmed her, thinking how much she loved her son. She remembered giving him chicken noodle soup and warm Vernor's when he was sick. She did whatever she could to be therre for him. Now, she was helpless. His fate would be in the hands of another. Calming her senses, she poured another drink.

Fallujah, December 2005

The Humvee rolled through the empty street. Everything was calm, too calm. Tense, Sean Simmons looked nervously around for assurance that everything was alright. The forlorn looks he got told him otherwise.

"It's a fucking setup," Anthony Grant muttered. He was the outspoken leader of the unit and had opposed the mission. Before anyone could respond, the Humvee rocked as the unsurgent Rocket smashed into the side. Smoke and debris filled the air. Sean grabbed his night vision goggles as the unit rushed out of the burning transport. The salvo of AK-47s sounded off in the desert night. Sean dove for any cover he could find. A masked face caught the corner of his eye; turning, he fired. He missed his target. The other man did not. Sean Simmons lay dying in the desert. The hollowpoint bullet had pierced his armor. Life slowly oozed out of him. Looking skyward, he thought about his mom.

By Amanda Thompson

I walk the streets of Changzhi as a stranger.
Crowds pass by, on bikes, not hearing what I speak.
Through foreign eyes I see the rainy world anew,
fresh contrasts making wonders in my mind.

The fashion shops, neon-lit, with tiny painted shirts,
six juxtaposed to carts of rotting fruit
on slummy streets, with beggars holding bowls
we'd fill with dreams, but they haven't even rice.

A high heel treads the street-stones caked with dirt,
a child stoops to defecate beside the wall,
and spices mingle with the odors on the air.
A Chinese woman floats by, fashioned like a bubble.

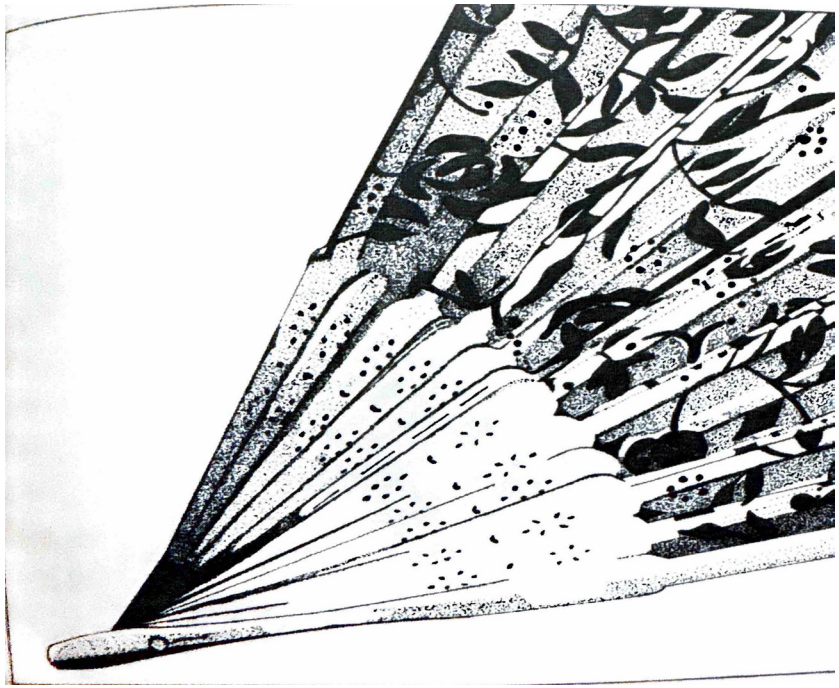
The Chinese belle steps ninety pounds upon the street;
her beige heels cleanly stir the dust upon the stone.
With skin fair as the silk drawn over her small chest,
she doesn't fit amongst the smog and toilets in the ground.

Here upon the streets my world is shattered by the din
of the language and the sights rising from the rim.
My mores crushed beneath the heels of this girl's shoes,
her culture burning down the buildings of my mind.

An American Phoenix, I rise up from the ash
of all ideals I've carried like a load.
Inhibitionless I shout my joy into the neon night.
I rise up freed from all I've ever known.

As the rain falls on the Changzhi evening,
though the raindrops outnumber people with ease,
my heart floats light below my umbrella:
A stranger finds her heart a home at last.

By Maranda Anderson



By Kyle Reed



By Suzanne Burns

On the neat sidewalk in front of St. Augustine's,
while my mother swore to Aunt Rosalie that
Armenti's artichokes never have black spots,
Marty pelted the back of my pink satin coat
with a wet knot of sod.
He slapped his porky thighs
and howled in boy-tease,
curling his lips like Uncle Carmen
sucking on the Lamb's bone.
Gimme one perfect artichoke,
I swear, I'll make him eat dirt.
Marty had attendance in Sunday school,
but slinging vegetables
in my dirty pink coat,
I feel justified.

By K.F. Peterson

visible time splinter me
a single neuron
births
in me
the multi-denominational religion
of you
can you understand the difference
in doctrine and worship
or is it dismissible
a monotheistic god
have my four letters become just that
relegated to lower case
sounds of a voice
no longer a voice
but a sound
no longer a sound
but an ambient impression
have you flipped through the stations
only to find
a brittle-bubblegum-pop refrain
leaving intact
not words or music
but merely a crippling annoyance
have I crucified too many times
on this cross
has hollowness now filled
a shelled symbol
crash
cymbal
and it began
can you hear me

or have you lost your faith
somewhere deep within your voluminous bag
lies a hammer
forged firm in ovens of kitchens
that refuse to prepare my meals
let me provide the chisel
break me
splinter me
make time visible
do what you will
with the mess

Untitled

By Mallari Herriman



Hello, Wild Flower

By Kyle Reed



By Amanda Thompson

You stretch out before me
as a testament to my apathy:
nonchalant bricks held together
by the mortar of my breathing,

I begin to climb your heights—
crumbling stones on a perilous ridge—
and I can remember
more than once, the times
I fell apart.

Within moments you strike me down.
I'm not so great after all, it's true—
sitting in a corner of your tower,
wheezing in a fit of vomit.

I came to you depressed:
scars on my skin like the
carvings in your rock,
wondering why I'd not yet destroyed myself.

Now, there's no turning back, ten miles ahead
and nowhere to give up.
A dot on the earth, I press on—
once in my life with no goal.
No end—just the means
of surviving this great journey in
single, little moments.

I push, push, push myself on,
but you keep me weary—
making me stop each step of the way,
cringing in fear as I stand on the edge.

Yet, when I pause to look out on your cushion
of green mountains and dales,
I find
myself—
a living, breathing pebble on this wall
with the unknown stretching before me.

So I run, run, run to the top
straining the muscles of my legs
and pulling myself up
when I stumble.

And as I climb and tiny rocks break
under my feet and trickle to the dirt below,
some walls break in my heart as well,
and fall out from under me.

As I hug the wall, pressing on past
the dizzying cliffs,
knowing I can strain my body beyond itself,
I grow less afraid of heights
and less afraid of
living.

By Bakari McClendon MLK Essay Contest Winner

Dream Deferred

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?
—Langston Hughes

"There's a tension at the heart of human nature. And whenever we set out to dream our dreams and to build our temples, we must be honest enough to recognize it."
—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.

"It takes skill to be real, time to heal each other."
—Tupac, Shakur,
"I Wonder if Heaven Got a Ghetto"

When I set out to write this essay in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., at first, I was struck by the task at hand and overwhelmed with emotion. The question "What's become of the dream" echoes in my mind every time I hear of a drive-by shooting on the east side. It echoes every time I hear of a child taken into state custody because she has been physically abused, her young life changed forever. It echoes as I think about our government, as politicians play chess with lives and our loved ones are sent to the front lines to fight for our country in Iraq. It even echoes on Wall Street and my street, as many Americans scramble to provide for their families while digging a deeper pit of debt and financial slavery. Media portrayals of black and

brown faces often aggregate a modern-day minstrel show, where no deeper cultural understanding is gained, just glorified squalor in the name of "diversity." Yet, I still dream. We need more dreamers.

I still dream because the times now aare as they were then. There exists a generation gap in American society. There are those, such as entertainer and philanthropist Bill Cosby, who lived during the Civil Rights era and witnessed, in real time, the crucial and necessary struggle of African Americans, then called "Negroes." The advancements of his generation should not be underestimated, but built upon. Maybe for younger generations this plight is only a folk tale, a harsh situation so far removed from consciousness that it is taken for granted—or perhaps it is a chapter skimmed through in history books, or a special topic of discussion for the month of February. Nevertheless, Dr. King's dream must live on if this generation is not only to survive, but carry the torch on further until it is a reality.

In Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, he acknowledged the current and future challenges, yet his vision was steadfast. The tenets of American freedom—liberty and justice for all people—were the elements of this vision.

While reading selected chapters in The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr., I read about how Dr. King was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and how he was inspired by the work of Kwame Nkrumah for the independence of Ghana in 1957. Dr. King wrote, "He was an agitator. He was imprisoned on the basis of sedition, but he had inspired some people outside of the prison." Not only did Dr. King oppose colonialism, domination and exploitation of other countries, but he realized that, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Two concepts seemed to jump out of the page to me as I read. The first is that, in order for his dream to ever manifest itself, there has to be tension in order to create change. Dr. King, like Jesus, Socrates, and Gandhi, was an agitator. Bill Cosby may even be seen as an agitator. "We the people" must take ownership of the dream if it is ever to become real. It is up to us to become the change we want to see around us. This ownership helps us to

become the change we want to see around us. This ownership helps us to realize the second concept: that we are all connected. No one is free if others are oppressed, despite the challenges we, as individuals, face everyday. So I ask the reader, "What has become of the dream?"

If someone were to look at the life of Dr. King, I believe the keys to fulfilling the dream through one's own life are apparent: knowledge, determination, courage, and faith. Through these things we must agitate, agitate, and agitate. Americans today are going back to school in record numbers despite tuition costs. Why? It is because education is vital to our quality of life. This knowledge gives us the mental capacity to synthesize information in order to create new solutions to old problems. Dr. King was a very well-versed and educated man. Yet without determination, the Civil Rights movement would not exist. It would have folded under the first act of police brutality or dog attack. For individuals, courage and determination are a couplet of sheer will and strength. One must be brave and bold in order to stand in times of adversity. Faith is the spiritual connection that steadfast conviction draws from. Faith is the knowing without knowing, regardless of current circumstances. Through his faith, Dr. King had already "seen the mountaintop."

The question the is "When?" In life, no one is promised tomorrow. In the final chapter of Dr. King's autobiography titled "Unfulfilled Dreams," he said, "I just want to leave a committed life behind. And that's all I wanted to say." Many have dreams they would like to fulfill. The time is now. Do not be a dream deferred.

I Still Have a Dream

By Jacquetta Browder MLK Essay Contest Winner

"To accomplish great things we must first dream,
then visualize, then plan...believe...act!"

—Alfred Montapert

According to Alfred Montapert, a dream is achievable in the event that you fertilize and nurture it. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. not only had a dream, but he had all the components to nurture it. As he spoke of his dream, he visualized it, devised a plan, believed in it, and acted in a way that supported his dream; because of this, his dream lives on today.

It is a great compliment to him that his speech is not outdated. It was delievered August 28, 1963, yet we still refer to it, memorize it, and write essays discussing it. This is beautiful because we still have a piece of him thirty-six years after his untimely death. However, it is bittersweet because there is something saddening about us continuing work toward equality in a country where we would like to believe it has been achieved. We suffer imprisonment of our own minds, and are victimized by our own prejudices. In many instances, racism and inequality are ignored. A large portion of our society chooses to believe that racism is only a figment of others' imagination. Ignoring racism is as dangerous as practicing it.

In his "I Have a Dream" speech, Dr. King chose the phrase "...one day this nation will rise up." This is a powerful statement because it illustrates the fact that there is a need to be lifted from a current position—a position where we choose to dislike others because we feel we are better than they are—but are ultimately proving ourselves inferior. It is only necessary to rise up once one has fallen. To rise is to overcome, to grow, to gain. Dr. King was suggesting that equality was a journey. It is not a social charity, but a betterment process. It is necessary to treat your fellow man as an equal not only for *his* sake, but for yours as well.

Prejudices are unhealthy to those who fall prey to them, as well those who are the predators. In the end, both parties lose, and it is vital to come together and unite for the good of all

mankind. In his speech, Dr. King used the word "rise" again when he said, "Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice." Here he uses "rise" as a synonym for betterment. Today we are frightened that the rising of our nation is, ironically, an allusion to its fall, especially in this time of war.

Dr. King had a dream in spite of what was going on in the world around him. Too often, we allow our current circumstances to defer us from our dreams. At a time when African Americans were made to sit, eat, and mingle separately in unequal facilities, he propelled a dream for change. Not only did he dream, but also he spoke of his dream openly. His dream may have seemed to others a hopeless fantasy, but to him it was worth pursuing. That type of drive alone is enough to produce progress.

To speak of his dream being deeply rooted in the American Dream paints a portrait of the American Dream we do not often see. When one thinks of the American Dream, one usually visualizes wealth and popularity. Now we are encouraged to explore that there may be more to America than superficial values. We are encouraged to entertain an idea, that it is a common goal to have a nation that practices civility and teaches love instead of hate. Personally, I enjoy the thought of a peaceful world that embraces its differences. It is not enough to tolerate various races, cultures, and languages. It is better to respect them and come to understand them;'to make an honest attempt to teach our children about acceptance. The reality is that we are *all* different. It would be incorrect to say "The Asian students in my class are different." I am as different from them as they are from me. When we label people "different," we are singling them out. It is a fact that we are all a minority at some point in our lives.

What has become of his dream? I believe that because Dr. King had a dream, believed, and acted on that dream, it continues today. The significant few that have adopted it are making a difference all over the world. Even those who have never heard him speak have been inspired. Although we have a long journey ahead of us, we have traveled far from the Jim Crow laws. The famous poet Tupac Amaru Shakur once said, "I may not change the world, but I guarantee that I will spark the brain that will change the world." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has undoubtedly changed the world. He has impacted not only African Americans, but a nation, through insightful speeches, organized boycotts, the philosophy of non-violence, and more.

I too have a dream, actually several, but one dream underlies them all. That dream, being the most important, is that after I no longer exist on this earth, my legacy carries the fulfillment of the dreams I nurtured. I hope that my contributions will not only change the world while I am here, but spark the brain that will change it after I have gone. With the lasting impressions made by this man whom I have never met, I feel compelled to thank him. I recognize that a person of Dr. King's stature can only be thanked by the practice of his words. So for the next thirty-six years, and beyond, may we continue to honor his dream. Here's to you, Dr. King.

Maranda Anderson is currently working toward a teaching degree at SVSU with a focus in secondary art. She would like to thank Matt Beauvais for his support and her mom for talking her into submitting her work to *Cardinal Sins*.

Rob Bastek is in his third year at SVSU. He is majoring in graphic design and minoring in communication, with a creative writing minor soon to follow. This is his first published work.

W. Anderson Bearden is a senior from Chattanooga, Tennessee. He currently resides in Essexville, Michigan, with his wife, Kristin. He has no previous publishing experience, but has enjoyed this challenge immensely. He owes a debt of gratitude to his underpaid (volunteer) staff.

Suzanne Burns lives in Saginaw with her husband and three children. She is a senior in SVSU's creative writing program and is deciding between English and creative writing for her graduate program.

Brian Cabrera is majoring in elementary education at SVSU. He has returned to mid-Michigan after teaching English in Japan for eight years. During that time, he has traveled extensively throughout south, east, and south-east Asia. He was the recipient of the Tyner-Roethke Prize for poetry in 2004.

Amanda R. Conner is a pre-occupational therapy student at SVSU. She works in the English department as a work study student. She also had poetry published in the Winter 2004 issue of *Cardinal Sins*.

Malerie Cope is a graphic design major and a communication minor at SVSU. Besides being on the Cardinal Sins staff, she likes to be involved on campus.

Karen Corbin is a junior at SVSU who transferred from Delta College after a ten-year hiatus, during which she worked as a freelance writer and started a small desktop publishing business. She lives in Saginaw with her son, a dog, two cats, a rat, and a frog named Godzilla. Karen is majoring in creative writing with a minor in graphic design. She received an honorable mention for fiction in the 2004 Tyner Awards and is currently working on a novel.

Brian Dalke holds a B.S. in physics and chemistry from the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire. Currently, he is a student teacher of English and chemistry at John Glenn High School. This spring he expects to be certified to teach physics, chemistry, mathematics, and English at the secondary level. He formerly was an industrial scientist at The Dow Chemical Company.

Mathew C. Easterwood is a newly initiated "theatre freak" and member of the *Cardinal Sins* staff. He has now had four works published in the magazine and can think of only one thing better than meeting with his fellow staff members on Friday mornings: sleep. He thanks his mother for everything, except his brain, which he has decided is both a cursed and blessed abnormality.

Jeannette Fleury is currently a sophomore at SVSU and had no idea what she wanted to do with her life until the beginning of this year. She has now since fallen deeply in love with photography and is looking to transfer next year to either Boston or Chicago to live out her dream of becoming a professional photographer.

Ann M. García has worked with *Sins* for many, many years. English major and darn proud of it. She has had other poems and short fiction published in *Cardinal Sins* over the years.

Stacie Gatza is not a pen name (but could be for a small fee). She is a senior studying elementary education and will be student teaching next winter. She would especially like to thank W.A.B and M.J.S. for their support this semester.

Mallari Herriman is a sophomore at SVSU and is working to get a degree in special education. Her hometown in East Tawas, Michigan. In her spare time, she enjoys taking pictures, spending time with friends, and shopping. She is a member of Alpha Phi Omega and loves volunteering.

Nick Hildenbrand is a freshman at SVSU. He is currently working on a computer science major with minors in mathematics and graphic design. Nick has done the web design for Cardinal Sins for two semesters. He would like to thank the staff for putting up with his limited knowledge of the English language and allowing him to be a part of something great.

Jenn Joseph is majoring in creative writing/theatre. She plays softball and pool, and is the mother of three, two boys and a girl. With one amazing granddaughter and a grandson due in May, she plans to spend her golden years writing poetry and fiction, acting in community theatre, and babysitting.

Christina Kababik was born in Cass City, Michigan. She is currently pursuing her bachelor of fine arts at SVSU. Her background includes two years in advertising design at the Tuscola Technology Center, which led to her receiving the Fine Arts Scholarship Award from SVSU. She relies heavily on music and the human form. Her graphic works combines the musical aspect of her life with text and design.

Amber King is currently a fourth-year student at SVSU. She is originally from Oscoda, Michigan. Amber is pursuing a degree in secondary education with a major in English and a minor in physical and health education. After graduation, she would like to find a teaching job and hopes to travel.

Amy Ladensack is in her third year at SVSU. She is pursuing a bachelor of fine arts with a concentration in painting/drawing.

Erin Ledy is a senior majoring in English literature, with minors in math and psychology. If she ever graduates, she plans to get her TESOL certification and travel abroad.

Bakari McClendon is a transfer student from Jacksonville, Florida. He is a marketing major and hopes to someday publish a book of poetry like his grandmother Nonar Walton. He shares a birthday with Malcolm X and Lorraine Hansberry. He has been published in *The Florida Times-Union* and *The Independent Florida Alligator*.

Doug McGaw is a 1999 graduate of Freeland High. He is a member of the SVSU track and cross country teams. Hobbies include loyally supporting all Michigan sport franchises, reading, writing, and hanging out on Hamilton Street. He would like to thank Melissa and all the staff for giving him the opportunity to be on *Cardinal Sins*.

Howard James Miller III is currently a senior at SVSU, who has been living in a state of semi-retirement in a secular palace that has, as its central selling point, a grand vista of the beautiful Saginaw River. The aforementioned castle is located in the teeming industrial metropolis of Bay City.

Jean Moore is a pseudonym.

Holly Morningstar was raised in Hart, Michigan, with her two brothers by her grandmother, Fern Huizenga. She owes everything in her life to God. Aside from being a student at SVSU, she is also an artist and a music critic for a roots/alternative country music ezine, RootsHighway.com.

K.F. Peterson's educational endeavors are greatly hampered due to his myriad disabilities: near deafness, near-sightedness, far-sightedness, exotic sinus condition, and sleep apnea. Doctors have instructed him that one day he will die in his sleep.

Ashley Pfenninger feels very honored to have a second publication in *Cardinal Sins*, her first being a flash fiction piece in the Fall 2004 edition. She will be graduating this year with a degree in creative writing and a minor in theatre. Ashley would like to thank her family, friends, and the SVSU staff for their support in her endeavors, and the western part of the United States for providing some gorgeous scenery for her photos.

Helen Raica-Klotz When not watching her daughter play hockey, being beaten by her son in a game of Risk, or walking her one-hundred-pound golden retriever, she can be found in the SVSU Writing Center, where she works as the coordinator. She has published poetry in other journals, but this is her first published work in fiction.

Kyle Reed is a junior studying computer science. He enjoys graphic design and photography as well as the performing arts. During the summer, you can find him outside with his camera taking pictures of interesting things. Go to http://cs.svsu.edu/~kareed/ to see some of his favorite photos.

Amee Schmidt is a senior, and a literature and creative writing major. She works at the Writing Center, is involved in Alpha Chi, the English Club, and various other campus activities. Currently, her plans are to graduate next May and continue to a literature Ph.D. program with a strong emphasis in creative writing. This is Amee's first creative publication.

Melissa Seitz is a lecturer in the English Department at SVSU. She grew up in Dodge City, Kansas; lived in California for a few years; and currently lives in Midland with her husband, son, and dog. She plays electric guitar, runs half-marathons, and writes poetry and fiction.

Saun Strobel is an English major specializing in professional and technical writing. She is happily married to a man who makes her laugh, enables her quilting addiction, tolerates her many activities, and encourages her pursuit of a degree that began in 1987.

Megan Strohkirch is a fourth-year student at SVSU. She is from Gladwin, Michigan. She is an elementary education major with social studies and math minors, she competes for the cross country and track teams at SVSU.

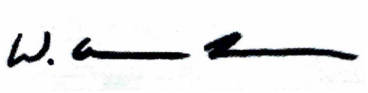
Amanda Thompson graduated from SVSU in 2004 with an education degree. Her love of writing began in second grade when she made a book about a racing seahorse. Her faith is the most important part of her life, and she thanks God for the gift of expressing herself through the written word.

Corey Verdusco is a first-year theatre major with an emphasis in design. After completing high school, Corey joined Ringling Brothers Circus as an electrician and currently works at three auditoriums. Hoping to one day be a designer on Broadway, he continues to refine his theatre skills.

As I finish my last semester as the editor, and enter my last year at SVSU, I would like to thank all those who supported *Cardinal Sins* in a variety of ways. Your encouragement, commitment, and effort have made this an enjoyable experience for me, and continue to make this magazine a success year after year.

Thank you to...

Melissa Seitz for her vision and expertise. Your fiery commitment to the magazine always amazes; President Gilbertson, Dean Bachand, and Linda Farynk for sponsoring the post-publication reading in the Roberta Allen Reading Room; Ann García and the Evening Services staff for accepting and filing a record number of submissions; Saun Strobel for her willingness to help out when we need it the most; Chris Giroux for his editorial expertise; the editorial staff for accepting my vision and working so hard to make it a reality—I hope that you all realize the magnitude of your contributions to the SVSU community; Perry Toyzan for your patience and commitment to *Cardinal Sins*; Jill Allardyce for your creative input; Mamie Thorns for remaining a constant supporter and inspiration; Dick Thompson, J.J. Boehm, Brian Abbott, and the rest of the PJPC for showing faith in me and in my staff; Lucille Beuthin and Alana Rabedioux for all their help with fund-raising; Cliff Dorne, Calvin McFarland, Armen Hratchian, and the Student Association for helping to make *Cardinal Sins* a more integral part of SVSU; all those who participated in the Cardinal Sins Poetry Slams; and all those who submitted a piece of themselves to the magazine in their artwork, writing, and photography.



W. Anderson Bearden
Editor-in-Chief

Entries are due on September 26th, 2005, at 8:30 p.m.

Requirements:
All submissions should:
- Have a cover sheet submitted with the work. These should be downloaded from the Cardinal Sins website and saved on the submission disk. Cover sheets may also be obtained from Evening Services (SE 201).
- Be titled (all file names should reflect the work's formal title).

Text submissions should:
- Be in 12-pt., Times New Roman font, with average margins (except where variations are integral to the piece).
- Have a title centered at the top of the page.
- Have a title and page numbers in the header for prose pieces.
- Be submitted on a 3.5-inch disk or CD in .rtf format. Disks and CDs will not be returned. Hard copies will not be accepted.

Poetry Requirements:
- Individual poems should not exceed more than 60 lines.

Flash Fiction Requirements:
- Each flash fiction piece should be between 500 and 1000 words.

Short Fiction Requirements:
- Each short fiction piece should be between 1000 and 1500 words.

Note: Limit of five poems, two flash fiction, and two short fiction pieces per person.

Artwork/Photography Requirements:
- Submit black and white images only.
- Artwork must have high contrast and be sharply defined.
- Save images digitally as a .tif file and submit on a CD (scanning the image is acceptable).

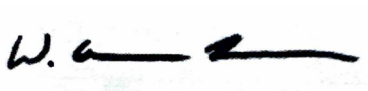
Important!
Do not put contact information on the entries themselves. A copy of the submission guidelines, necessary coversheets, and additional information on the genre of flash fiction are avaliable at **www.svsu.edu/cardinalsins** and at the Evening Services (SE 201). Please direct questions to the Fall 2005 editor, Amanda R. Conner, at arconner@svsu.edu, or (989) 964-4097 ext. 9777.

All entries will be considered for the contest unless otherwise requested. Judging is done by the blind voting of the editorial staff. The first place winner in each category will receive $100 and recognition in the Fall 2005 publication.

Cardinal Sins

This year, Cardinal Sins, Saginaw Valley's student literary magazine, celebrates its 24th year of print. The staff of *Cardinal Sins* is excited about the enhancements to this year's magazines. The magazine contains contributions from more individuals this year than at any point in history. As a result, the magazine features more diverse content within the categories of poetry, art, photography, and fiction. This is due, in part, to the significant improvements that we have made to the magazine's appearance by publishing it with perfect binding and a color cover.

In order to make these improvements permanent, *Cardinal Sins* needs your help. Please take this opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to the arts and to SVSU by providing a gift to *Cardinal Sins*. Contributors receive recognition in the magazine as "Friends of *Cardinal Sins*." A contribution form can be found online at **www.svsu.edu/cardinalsins**.
Sincerely,



W. Anderson Bearden
Editor-in-Chief

Lifetime Members of *Cardinal Sins*

Jim and Melissa Seitz
In memory of Carl E. Seitz

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Elizabeth Virgin Rodriguiz
Sam and Cindy Shortes
Paul and Melissa Teed
Odail and Mamie Thorns and the Office of Diversity Programs
Perry Toyzan
Janice Wolff
Laura Yelsik

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