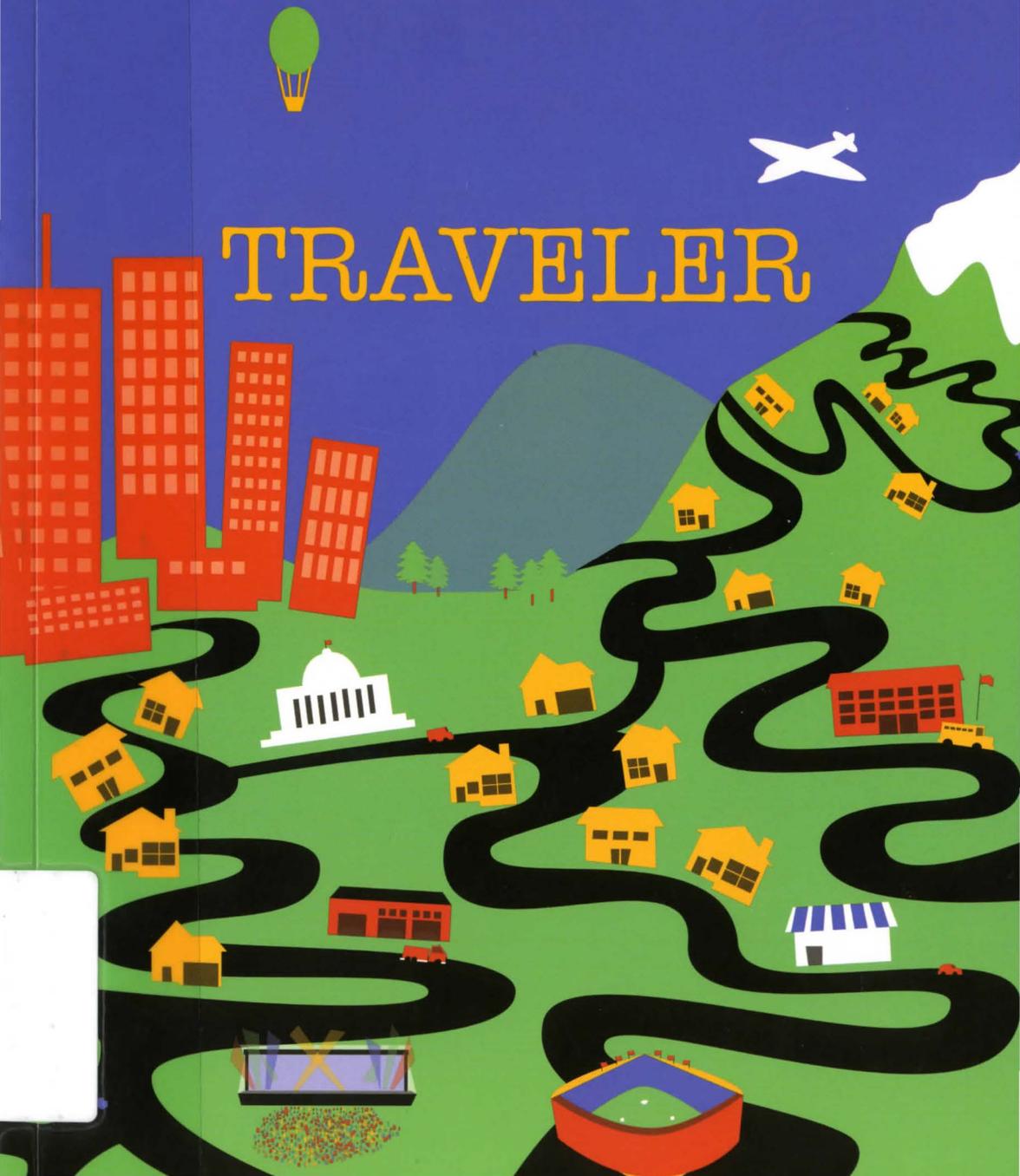


TRAVELER



The Traveler is a student creative arts magazine
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The Traveler

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Everyone must start somewhere. Every dream must first be dreamt, then aspired to, cultivated, matured and then finally realized; always with the knowledge that we never truly stop growing, just as we never truly stop dreaming. As children we are encouraged to be all we can be; dream big and we will do great things. Why does adulthood kill that notion? Why can't dreams and reality coexist? As artists we know that they can. We know that our words hold great power and that the stroke of a brush can change a nation. So with this year's Traveler let's bring people back to the time when they dreamed about all they could be. Let's awaken the ballerinas, the firemen, and the astronauts of yesterday and remind them that the only way to kill a dream is to forget about it.

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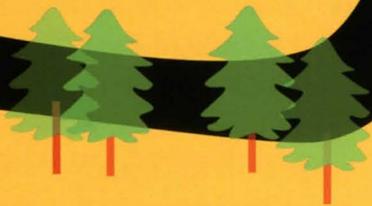
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Fiction



1st Place

“Leela”

by Maneesha Lee

It would be yet another week before the monsoons truly broke. Before it grew dark at noon, and fractured bolts of quicksilver raced through the thunder clouds brooding like angry bison. It would be another three weeks before the heavens unleashed their torrents and the earth grew pliant enough to receive the emboldened caresses of the swelling Brahmaputra, a river whose ocean-like majesty bestowed gifts and shaped the fates of so many. It would be months before the world was once again naked and new.

As she neared the clinic, Leela felt raindrops spatter on her arm and indigo sari. They clung to the handwoven fabric, turning the orange polka dots embroidered all over it to a deep, rich crimson. Leela signed in and sat on the plain wooden bench, flipping the assigned token in the air like a coin and thinking about how much she wished Digu were by her side. The ward boy who escorted her into the large, comfortable consulting room pocketed the token and showed Leela the aluminium cubby for her purse and umbrella.

When she turned around, a lean man with a shock of dark, springy hair and keen green eyes was waiting to greet her. “Ian McLellan,” he said, engulfing her small, cold hand in his and giving it a quick, downward tug. “Pleased to meet you.” Leela had to look up a long way to meet the warmth in his eyes.

A smiling nurse had Leela step on and off the weighing scales, scribbling the figure into a pocket-sized notepad. She led Leela to the surgeon’s desk where the doctor was already waiting. He waited till she was comfortably seated before sitting down himself.

He looked up from the thick folder on his desk. “I’ve looked carefully over the referrals and reports from the fertility clinic. Dr. Godbole is an



excellent obstetrician, one of the best in my opinion, and her concern seems warranted.”

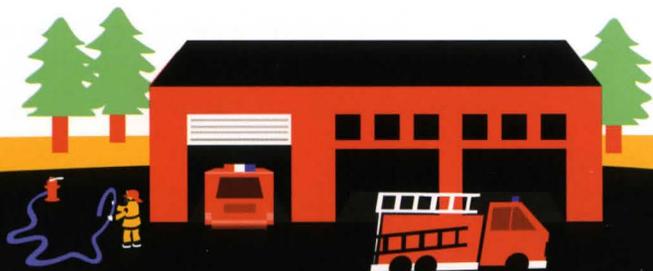
Leela nodded her comprehension.

“In my opinion, there is no reason why you shouldn’t aspire to a child in the near future, but much will depend on how well you recover from surgery, should you need it.”

Gently, he drew Leela out, nodding as Leela spoke, haltingly at first, and then with growing confidence. He listened intently to her descriptions of recurrent fatigue and sporadic chest pain and how difficult it was for her sometimes to get a deep enough breath. He recorded his findings on a chart and dictated his observations to the nurse, using a sort of verbal shorthand.

The crisp white sheet over Leela’s body smelled vaguely of lemon. It felt cool as did the padding beneath her soles. She felt oddly cocooned on the examination table, tucked into bed in the middle of the day, even as the rain came down in buckets outside the clinic.

The nurse wheeled in a tall, semi-circular steel trolley, joining it to the table where Leela lay. She drew closed the floor length curtains hanging from its curved upper bar, then poked her head back in through saying, “We’re going to do an ECG. I’ll need you to unbutton your blouse for me while I get the machine set up. Please take off all your jewelry.” The light filtering through the daffodil yellow of the curtains made Leela feel like she were inside an eggshell.



Dr. McLellan waved Leela back into the seat across from him.

“Most of the time, young lady, and heart murmurs like yours don’t amount to anything life-threatening. All bark and no bite, as it were.” He looked Leela straight in the eye as he said, “But in your case, the history of rheumatic fever seems to confirm the diagnosis of mitral stenosis.”

Dr. McLellan had then spread out on the table before Leela enlarged color photographs and illustrated diagrams of the heart. He explained how the heart functioned as two separate pumps working in tandem and how the valve between the upper and lower chambers on the left side of Leela’s heart had stopped closing completely because it had been left deformed and misshapen by an illness she had had as a child. An innocuous fever that had begun with a sore throat and may have left her joints swollen for a couple of weeks, but whose deceptive pathology could be summed up by the phrase, “licks the joints and bites the heart.”

Neon arrows ran through Dr. McLellan’s diagrams, detailing the journey of the blood pumping through, as though explaining in great detail how to read the map of the human heart and chart a course through its shallows and depths so as to avoid getting stuck anywhere. One diagram even allowed her to look right down into it as though she were a bee poised on the very tip of an innermost petal of a blossoming flower, at the very instant when everything opened wide, as though to welcome the bee in.

“I would like you to come in for more tests so we can be absolutely sure,” Dr. McLellan said. And then we can set a date for surgery.” One vigorous hand clamped down briefly on Leela’s drooping shoulder. “There is no time to lose.”

Leela had felt a chill go through her as she mopped her brow. The sheen on her forehead had been a constant companion for the past few months. She clenched her fingers around the lacy pink handkerchief with



scalloped edges, now grimy with dust and sweat.

Later Leela would remember her reaction to Dr. McLellan's verdict. She had raised a quick hand to smooth the gold-edged pleats straddling her left shoulder, to check that the safety pin fastening her sari to the form fitting blouse underneath hadn't moved a centimeter. She had readjusted her long train to sit in her lap instead of trailing all over the floor like it wanted to. And made sure her marriage necklace lay dead center with the hollowed gold shells facing in, like they were supposed to.

And when Dr. McLellan had hunched over his desk to finish his notes, sealing her fate in bold, slanting letters, the blue of a peacock's wing, she remembered the sudden impulse to tilt her head back and spin like a child, throwing her arms out and laughing hysterically until the world was a blur. For who, in their right mind, could doubt the words of this man? The lanky cardio-thoracic specialist from the Royal College of Surgeons in Scotland was considered an authority in his field.

Leela let herself in to the cool, dark passageway, the entrance to the home she and Digu shared. Here, she could never quite shake the feeling of being in a tunnel. Perhaps it was because it brought him closer to her somehow. She leaned against the cool, moist stone. And in her mind's ear she heard the rush and whistle of a train rattling in the distance, the sharp, percussive groove of its flinty wheels sparking against the smooth tracks, the hypnotic thump-thump of its heavy carriages rolling and swaying from side to side, the phantom growl of its steamy heart pulsing as it flew across the



plains. She pressed the pink kerchief to her forehead. It was the one that Digu had thrust into her hand through the barred window, just before the train had begun to roll, silently and imperceptibly at first, and then gradually picking up in speed as it carried him away from her.

“You’ll need it more than I will,” he had shouted. And waved furiously at her, his smile wavering then holding as Leela had run alongside the train until platform ended, waving back just as furiously until Digu, her Digu, was a mere speck in the distance. Then she had waved some more. For good luck.

How prophetic those words had been. Leela pulled her long hair forward over her shoulder, burying her nose in the small clump of white jasmine flowers threaded into her braid hair, drinking in their fragrance for a few heady seconds. Digu so loved her hair. And suddenly she was crying, the tears falling unchecked. Her shoulders shook as she whimpered. God, how she missed him!

It was late afternoon by the time Leela was through with the battery of tests she had been subjected to. The reports had been sent directly to Dr. McLellan. The quick smile on his craggy face had warmed Leela. The icicles that had taken root just inside her ribcage began to thaw. They had been growing taller by the hour, tangling like ice-weeds ever since her first visit to the clinic.

In another meeting five days after the first, he had gone over every detail of what she should expect before, during and after surgery. He had encouraged questions, allayed her fears and soothed her nerves. At the very end, he had introduced her to the anesthesiologist who would be present at the surgery and physiotherapist she would be working closely with after. Together they had negotiated the best date for Leela’s mitral valve replacement surgery.



Now she had to telephone Digu to see if he could get a few days off. Generally speaking, Leela felt brave and independent. But this was, after all heart surgery. And she was beginning to feel overwhelmed because it had all happened so fast. Plus it felt like so long since she had last seen Digu. Dr. McLellan seemed very competent and experienced and thorough, but what if something went wrong? What if she never woke up from the anesthesia? It was rare, but it happened.

Out across the border, Digu lived in another world. He thrived on danger.

On the way home, Leela stopped for a pistachio-almond kulfi cone, the kind that had always comforted her as a little girl. It was the place she escaped to when school had exploded into an unruly, screeching din. The place she and her classmates had always gone to after their last final. The day on which she could finally smile back when all of summer beckoned like an old friend, waiting to envelop her in its warmth and freedom.

She walked to the last stall in a long line of street food eateries that had sprung up around the perimeter of a popular children's park. Here, it always felt like holiday time, like preparations for a festival were under way. The mini frosted light bulbs of every color draped over tree branches. The happy jingling and squealing from the hand-pushed merry-go-round. The couples strolling arm in arm, their eyes reserved for each other. The aromatic food scents from all the different stalls vying with each other – peanuts, idly-dosa, cotton candy, bhel, milkshakes, fruit pulp, paani-poori



and sugarcane juice. The hawkers with balloons blown up into magical shapes.

"The usual, right?" the street vendor broke into Leela's thoughts. She smiled at him and nodded, taking the money out of her purse for the parcel she would carry home with her. She counted out the money and placed the notes and coins in her upturned palm for him to collect. She was startled when he caught her sleeve instead. Leela looked up to see tears in his eyes. He jerked his hand away even as hers came up automatically, to pull the train around her shoulders like some sort of flimsy defense. He was crying openly now, his Adam's apple bobbing uncontrollably beneath the rough hands cupping his narrow, twisted, face, his shoulders twitching like live things.

Leela worried her lip while he composed himself.

"Memsaab," he said, "I don't know how to else tell you." He looked down. "I am a poor man. My daughter weds this Diwali." His hands pressed together in the classic Indian gesture of greeting, respect or entreaty. Tears made deep tracks down his ashen cheeks. "I need money for her dowry." He dragged a soiled shirt sleeve across his face. "My brother cheated me out of farmland to sell to builders. He made thousands. But now he won't share. Tells me he squandered it all away." A haunted look replaced the sobs. "I have known you since you were little. You were always such a good, kind child. I don't know who else to share my troubles with. Who else to ask."

It was odd Leela thought – embarrassing and heartbreaking at the same time -- to see an elderly person you had known all your life cry desolately in his own shop, on the street he had come to work on, every single day of his adult life, as passersby watched, their heads whipping around in curiosity.

"Please don't lose heart. I'll see what I can do," was all Leela could



think to say. She put the money down on his cart and fled, the desperate voice ringing in her ears, the crumbling face mocking her from every street corner. Her legs grew heavier with each step. She felt crushed by the knowledge that beyond a few rupees, there wasn't anything significant that she could do to help him. Certain traditions were as deeply entrenched in this culture as time. She was as much a product of it as was he. As were his unfortunate daughter and Digu.

It was the sound of steady rain pounding on the roof that woke Leela up. She stretched luxuriously and rolled over in bed, happy for the first time in days. She slipped Digu's letter out from under the pillow where it had kept her company all night, savoring it all over again.

"Darling Leela,

I wanted to surprise you but can't bear it in anymore. I miss you too much. I'm coming home Wednesday. The surgery is going to go like a dream, because I'm going to be home to take care of every last niggling detail. So don't fret, my pet. And, don't worry about meeting me at the station. My squadron leader has offered me a ride home. Plus, it's way too early in the day for pretty sleepyheads. Can't wait to see you.

Love always,

Digu

P.S. I've made a reservation at the Lobo's next weekend, so start packing. Honeymoon time all over again. ☺"

She had just settled down with a breakfast tray and the morning's



papers when she heard a knock. She opened the door to a tall woman in a transparent raincoat which fit snugly over an air force uniform. A smart purse nestled in the crook of her arm. Leela had a fleeting impression of immense beauty. Pale skin and almond eyes, the color of honey, above a delicate nose and full lips, a stylish coiffure framing the heart-shaped face.

"Hello," the stranger said, holding out an elegant hand. "I'm Flight Lt. Sabina Barua. I work with your husband. We train cadets at the same institute."

Leela flushed with pleasure. "How nice to meet you. Please come in. You must be soaked."

The woman seemed reluctant to speak further but followed her into the house, taking in the simple wooden furniture and tasteful décor. She took off the raincoat and slipped it on to a plastic hanger dangling from a nail in the back porch. She paused in front of a framed wedding picture of Leela and Digu that had pride of place on the mantel. She looked at it for a long time and finally said, "How long has it been since that was taken?"

"It'll be five years next week." Leela said with a little laugh. "How time flies." She smiled, handing Sabina a clean dry towel. "Would you like a cup of tea and some toast? I was just about to have some. I have the nicest marmalade."

"Yes thanks. I'd like that," Sabina said with a strained smile. She settled into a cushy red armchair.

"When did you last hear from Digu?" Sabina asked abruptly, taking her first sip of tea. The saucer rattled and some tea sloshed into it. She put it down on the coffee table and looked at Leela.

"Is something the matter?" Leela had put down her own cup and



was now kneading the hem of her nightgown.

"Listen," Sabina said. "You're obviously a really great girl and this is turning out to be much harder than I thought. I can't pretend anymore. She opened her purse and took out a small but thick photo album. "I'm really sorry to be the one to have to tell you, but he's made a fool of us both."

Leela felt a great thumping in her chest as she opened it. Inside, dating back ten years, were pictures of Digu, her Digu, with Sabina. Sabina made a radiant bride in a white silk dress with just the right amount of ruffles and tulle. She was pointing to twin diamond rings as she and Digu beamed into the camera. But the picture which would haunt Leela the most for years to come was one of two little girls with their arms around a golden collie, all three in front of a beautiful seaside cottage.

Three weeks later, on the eve of her surgery, Leela stopped at the ice-cream vendor's stall. He looked surprised to see her that soon.

"I've brought you something," she said, handing him a plastic bag.

He took out the burgundy jewelry box and ran his fingers wonderingly over the rich velvet. His eyes widened as he snapped open the lid and took in the wealth of gold bangles, coral pendant-and-earring set and the black and gold marriage necklace.

He handed the last back to her and said, "Keep this. Sometimes things go terribly wrong, but you never know. Even widows never part with this until death."



"I know some would consider it bad luck," said Leela, "but why not melt it down and make whatever you like with it. It's no use to me anymore."

The last thing Leela remembered as she went under was Dr. McLellan's chocolate voice saying, "Take it easy now, Leela. Everything's going to be fine. Just fine."



2nd Place

“Stray Dogs and Leftover Bagels”

By Dexter Ferrie

Laying in bed, Charles wondered what he'd do with his day. After retiring, this became an essential part of his routine. He'd brew some coffee, read the newspaper, and then do something. Some days that something was different, some days it wasn't. Today, like most days, he decided he go to his favorite bagel place. Rothschild's had the best bagels. Not surprising, Charles thought, given their jewish inclinations. Categorizing people like that made him feel a little sick, but he couldn't deny they made a damn good bagel. And any race of people responsible for the combination of smoked salmon on cream cheese on said bagel were on the side of the gods. So Charles got up from his kitchen table, stretched and moaned a bit, and rinsed out his mug. As he did so, he heard a clamor from his front door. A bunch of very messy and obtrusive yet recognizable knocks broke through his household. Shit, is it the twenty-eighth already? How many times had he heard this asshole basically try to knock down his front door? He walked over, checked to make sure the chain was still holding the door closed, and opened it, being careful not to let the man on the other side in. It wasn't that Charles had anything to hide, but when he opened his front door all the way to people he didn't like he felt so vulnerable. As if her were saying , here, take a look at me. I may be wearing clothes but this is as undressed as you'll ever see me.



"Hey jackoff-ski," said the man on the other side, who loved to butcher Charles' name, "I need my money, where's my money?"

"My check doesn't come in for another couple of days."

"Well give me a down payment then, I know you're good for it," he said trying to push his face through the opening. The sight of this both angered and disgusted Charles, more so than the words he was hearing. He was used to these words. But he hated rats, especially this one.

"I don't owe you anything, just give me-"

"You what? You think you're tough jackoff-ski? You owe me everything for letting your wrinkled ass stay here. I'll be back tomorrow."

Charles sighed a sigh that seemed to last ten minutes, or long enough before Charles felt safe enough to go outside. The rat landlord (Ratlord?), could yell all he wanted, but Charles would be damned if he let him take his bagels. Especially the ones with the sesame seeds. Those were the best ones. The garlic bagels were good too, so were the asiago ones. But nothing beat those sesame seeds.

So Charles threw on a windbreaker and headed outside. It hadn't started snowing yet, but that brisk winter wind started to cut through. It seemed earlier than usual this time, too. Charles felt everything and everyone was becoming impatient. Couldn't the Ratlord just wait until the first? What difference did it make? Couldn't the cold wait until November? Nobody would mind if the cold waited until November. Charles thought about more things that just couldn't wait anymore on his ten-minute walk to Rothschild's, all the while avoiding puddles left by impatient rain. During this ten-minute walk he also noticed something lying on the sidewalk. At least, Charles thought it was a something at first, but this something turned out to be a someone. A woman, swaddled in filth colored rags and blankets. Living in a big city as long as Charles had, this sight wasn't unusual. In fact the only



thing unusual about it was that this woman caught his eye. After a while the homeless become more scenery than anything else.

Without a second thought Charles walked past the woman and entered the bagel shop. A big man with a thick black beard greeted Charles as he did so.

“Hey, Chucky boy, long time no see!” said the bagel man.

“I was here yesterday, you gotta lay off them cigarettes ‘Child, they’re eating your brain away.”

“Nonsense,” said Rothschild, “smoking builds character!” Rothschild boomed as he spoke, and Charles kind of liked this. There was something sincere about a man who boomed when he spoke. Like he isn’t trying to hide anything, letting every syllable slam out into the air like that.

“You want I should make the usual, yes?”

“Yeah, make two of ‘em though,” said Charles.

“Oh! Expecting company are we?”

“Nothing like that, I just want two, okay?”

“Alright alright, I’ll have them out in a few.”

Charles sat down and watched the news on the TV. It was the weather report. Charles couldn’t explain it, but he loved the weather report. Keeping track of the change in weather helped him feel in control. A few minutes passed and Rothschild yelled for Charles to pick up his bagels.

“Put them in a bag,” Charles said, “I’ll take them to go.”

So Charles walked out with two bagels in a bag, walked over to



the woman lying on the sidewalk, and tried to get her attention.

"Excuse me," said Charles. No response. He hunched over and gave her a little nudge on what appeared to be her shoulder, though he couldn't tell what was what beneath all the blankets.

"I'm not gonna fight, just leave me alone 'kay?"

"Fight? No I was just wondering if you wanted my extra bagel."

"For what?"

"It's not for anything, I thought you might need something to eat."

She rolled over and sat up, brushing the wiry brown hair from her face.

"You fucking with me old man?"

Charles didn't expect this to be so hard.

"I'm not, aren't you hungry?"

"What's on it?"

"What's on it? What does that matter to you?"

"It just does."

"It's salmon and cream cheese."

"I don't like fish."

"Well you can take the fish off."

"It's still gonna taste like fish though."

"Fine, whatever," said Charles as he took one bagel out of the bag and left the other in the bag on the ground next to her. He ate his bagel on the way home, thinking about what just happened. In what kind of world do we live that the hungry deny food? This question plagued him, and the more he thought about it the less answers he had. In the end, and by the time he got back to his apartment, he decided to dismiss it, and chalk it up to



extenuating circumstances.

Charles woke up the next morning with that thought in mind, and came to the realization that he couldn't fully dismiss what happened. To do so would be inhuman. So after his morning bout with Ratlord, he walked to Rothschild's again, and ordered two bagels again. This time without the salmon. Then he walked outside, and nudged the woman, who was lying in the same exact place.

"I told you I don't want your money!" said the woman.

"No money, just a bagel," said Charles.

"Oh," she said as she rolled over and sat up, "it's you again." It was this time that he noticed her bright green, nearly glowing, eyes. They reminded him of geodes. Those rocks with the crystals growing inside. He pulled one out of the bag and handed it to her, and to his surprise she took it and opened it up.

"Where's the fish?" she said.

"You said you don't like fish."

"I don't," she said, "but the salmon was pretty good."

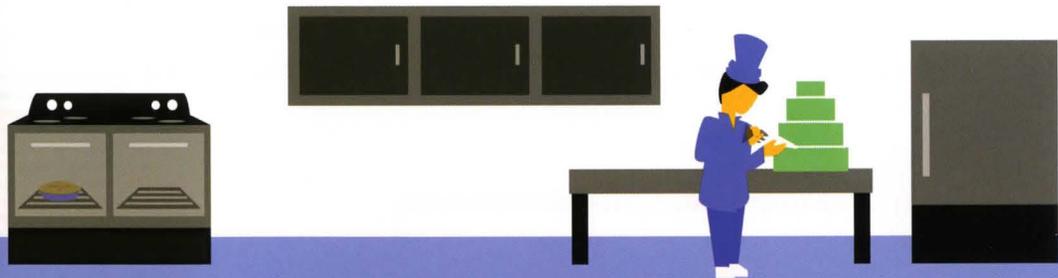
Charles grunted.

"So you ate it?"

"Course I ate it, not like I got a buffet hiding under here," she said as she patted down her blankets, which produced a thin cloud of dust.

"What's your name?" said Charles.

"Rosalind," said the woman.



"Is it really?"

"Why do you care?"

Charles thought about it, and decided he didn't, and then told her he didn't. He really liked the name Rosalind, he just never expected to meet a homeless woman named Rosalind. Like it seemed too fancy or something. Not that homeless people chose their name or chose to be homeless. It was just unexpected was all.

"You're not going to ask me my name?"

"No," she said, "I don't really care. Not like you need a name anyway."

"Why's that?"

"How many people you think I talk to?"

"Good point," he said, and then told her he'd see her tomorrow. She didn't respond. On his way back to his apartment he remembered a dog he had, years back. He couldn't even remember his name, it was a male, but he remembered how much he loved that dog. That was the funny thing about memories, Charles thought. Details like names and such didn't really matter, it was the things you felt, those emotions you associate with those memories that matter. The dog was a stray he found hanging around his house, back when he had a house and a good paying job. He would feed the dog scraps leftover from dinner every night, and soon enough the dog started hanging around more, and at one point didn't leave his side. Until one day, the dog was just gone. That was the thing about strays, Charles thought, they're always bound to leave one day.

The next day he woke up, and did the same thing all over again. Except this time he didn't see Rosalind on the way there. She wasn't lying in her usual spot. The moment he noticed her absence his heart rate spiked. Not again, Charles thought. This can't be happening again. He paced around



the corner of Rothschild's, and found another something on the ground. His heart calmed for a second, until he walked closer, and noticed that the figure hidden beneath the blankets was far too bulky to be Rosalind's. He took a second to think about it, then approached this something much in the same way he approached Rosalind. He nudged it and what he thought to be the shoulder.

"Fuck off," said the something, which revealed itself to be a man. His voice felt sort of ashy to Charles, like he'd put out countless cigarettes with his throat.

"Have you seen the woman who was lying around the corner?"

"A woman? Man this world ain't got no women left. Just children, man!"

"Her name was Rosalind, surely you must have known her."

"I told you I don't know no women! I did see something that looked like a woman, though. Put up a good fight too, had a mean right hook," said the homeless man, as he swung his right arm out in a wide arc.

"What are you talking about?"

The homeless man started laughing. It sounded like a sort cracking, like air bursting out of the Earth's crust. Charles walked away, with his head held low. He walked into Rothschild's.

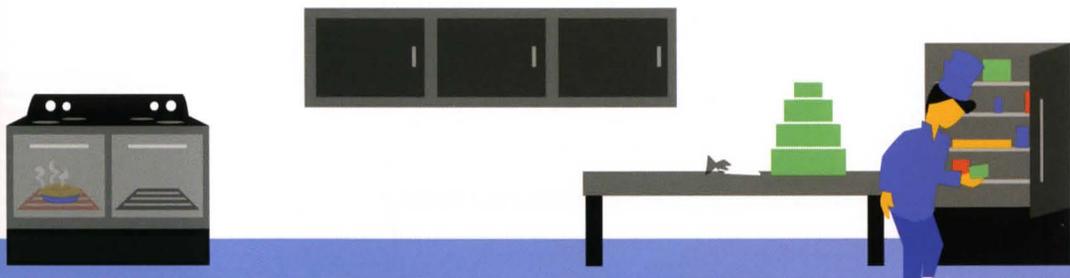
"The usual?" boomed Rothschild.

"What?" said Charles.

"Do you want your new usual or your usual usual?"

"The new usual."

Charles walked out of the bagel shop minutes later with two bagels



and cream cheese. As he did so a foreign sense of hope resonated within him. Not foreign in that it was unusual, but foreign in that it just didn't belong. Maybe she would be outside waiting for him, maybe she just chose another spot. Surely the homeless must get tired of staying in the same place, too. These thoughts and more raced through Charles' mind, slowing until an eventual halt when he opened the front door. As he walked in the front door the hope exited out the back, hoping not to be seen.

A couple days passed like this, with no sign of Rosalind. Leftover bagels piled up in his fridge, with no sign of stopping. Then one day, as he walked to Rothschild's, he noticed Rosalind's spot was occupied. It took a couple seconds to register, but the more he studied the figure the more he was sure it was her. He picked up his pace a bit.

"Rosalind," he said as he approached her, "Rosalind is that you?"

No response.

"Rosalind I know it's you."

Still no response, and she refused to roll over. He kneeled down and gave her a nudge.

"Just leave me alone," she said.

"Why? I've been worried about you."

"Don't be, just go on with your life."

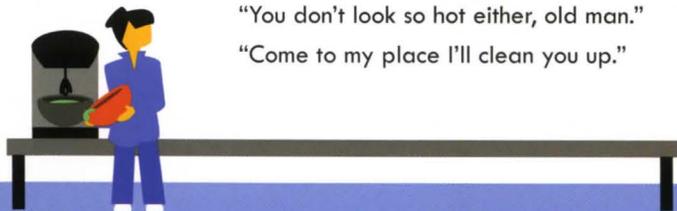
"Rosalind would you just-"

She rolled over and uncovered her face. What was once just a shade of brown was now purple and black in spots and red in others. Her beautiful green eyes has swollen to the point where they were now hidden; her thin lips busted and inflamed. She looked like some sort of sick caricature to Charles.

"Jesus Christ what happened to you?"

"You don't look so hot either, old man."

"Come to my place I'll clean you up."



"I'm not some sick dog you found on the street. Just leave me alone."

"But-"

"Just leave me alone damnit!"

"At least tell me what happened to you."

"I'll talk for the price of a bagel."

"Fine," said Charles as he got up, and rushed over to Rothschild's.

He walked in and without even speaking Rothschild prepared two bagels, wrapped them up and put them in a bag. A strange worry started to overcome Charles. The longer he left her alone out there the greater the possibility she might be gone. So he quickened his pace to nearly a jog, and calmed down a bit when he noticed Rosalind was still there.

"Calm down old-timer, don't want you to have a heart attack. I'm not going anywhere."

Charles pulled the bagel out of the bag and handed it to her, then he sat down next to her.

"Some guys were comin' around here, two of 'em," she started, "One had a camera, the other had an evil smile on his face. Like the kind you see in those funky mirrors at the state fair. They'd been saying they could give me some money if I did something for 'em. I told 'em I wasn't no hooker, but they said it wasn't anything like that. They said all I had to do was fight another hobo, and they'd pay me a hundred bucks."

"Jesus."

"Yeah, so I told 'em to fuck off. And they did. But every day they kept coming back. Until a couple days ago and I gave in. Hundred bucks is



a lot of money to someone who hasn't got shit, you know." She took a bite of her bagel.

"Why'd you do it though?"

"Didn't I just say? Hundred bucks is a lot of money to an urchin like me."

"So then why didn't you do it right away?"

"What?"

"I mean if you wanted the money why didn't you just take it from the beginning?"

"Don't worry about it."

"I am worried about it."

"It wasn't for drugs or anything."

"Then what was it?"

"Would you get off my ass old man? Maybe I just wanted a bagel!"

"A bagel? I give you bagels every day."

"You wouldn't understand."

"I'll try."

She lowered her head in an attempt to bury her words beneath her blankets.

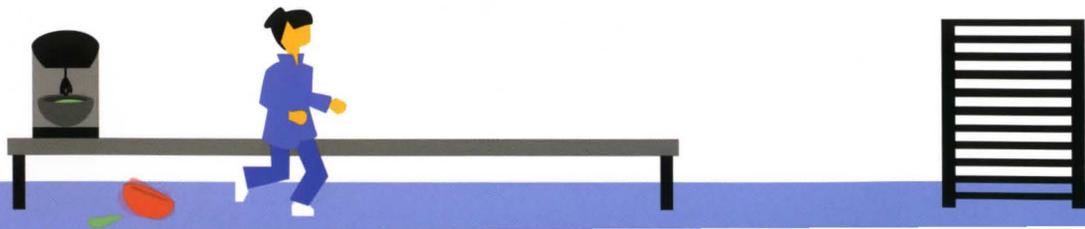
"I wanted to buy you one."

"You what?"

"I wanted to buy you a bagel, alright?"

"But I don't need a bagel."

"Neither do I," she said, "I've been getting along just fine without you buying me shit. I thought just once I could pay you back. I knew if I did that I'd feel respectable again."



Charles tried to say something but the words caught in his mouth, tears starting to well up at the bottom of his eyelids.

“Don’t you cry old man. You’re starting to look like a pansy. I can’t be seen with a pansy, I got a reputation here.”

Charles laughed a bit.

“Where did you go, then?” said Charles.

“I was hiding, that’s all.”

“Did you think they were going to come back?”

“No, nothing like that, just drop it.”

“Fine,” Charles said. He thought he’d made her talk enough. After a couple minutes eating their bagels in silence watching cars pass by, Charles stood up and reached his hand out to Rosalind. “Come live with me.”

“You’ve finally gone senile haven’t you?”

“No, I can give you a place to stay, no expectations, I just want you to be safe.”

“In your dreams, pervert.”

“Fine,” Charles said. He decided to give it a rest. He told her he’d be back tomorrow, and once again she didn’t respond.

The next day he returned, and she was gone. Every day after that he bought two bagels at Rothschild’s, but she never showed up again. His fridge just filled up with more and more leftover bagels.



3rd Place

“Immersion”

By Maneesha Lee

We are finally at Badagry. The sun is hot, the breeze crisp. A few shacks populate the stretch of beach between the highway and the sea. Palms bow low, their fronds caressing the fine textured gold beneath. We roll up our windows and the five of us spill out of the orange Subaru compact, dying to stretch.

Divya takes out the sturdy jute picnic basket with the crisscross pattern and O shaped handles. The one thick with goodies. The one our mothers have toiled over, Mrs. T pacing up and down our messy kitchen, blowing a steady stream of smoke through her nose and discussing the trials of faculty life between puffs as my mother nods and clucks commiserations, wedging spoons and napkins and tiny jars into stray spaces.

Divya seizes the O shaped handles and yanks the basket up with a soft “ummh,” her lips pressed tight. Her body curves to one side as she sets off, her other arm shooting skywards to balance the weight. Mr. T hoists the collective duffel of swim-wear over his right shoulder and stays behind to help the rest of us finish unloading and locking up. By the time he catches up to Divya to lend her a hand, she is nearly at the water’s edge. The three of us follow, train-fashion, the towels and large, plastic, picnic blanket dangling from Sam’s arms, the rolled beach mats tucked under my brother’s, his arms holding out ahead of him the cardboard case of bottles, cans, bottle openers and knives and me bringing up the rear, the portable radio clutched close to my middle to still the funny feeling left over from the ride. I dip my head as I stumble after the others. My flip-flops are borrowed. Two sizes too big but too pretty to pass up. They are Divya’s and I wear them with pride. The sun

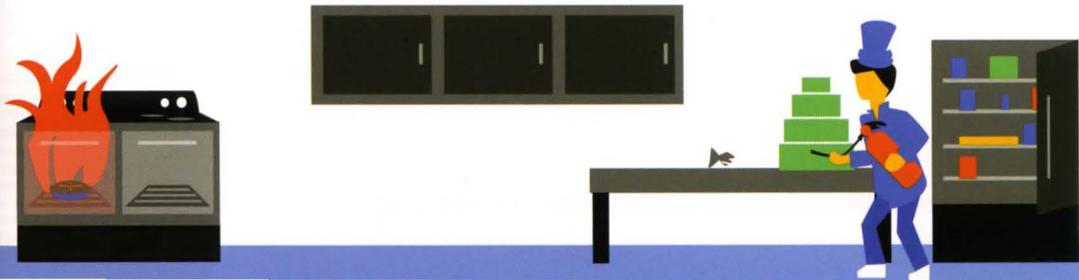


feels too warm on my face but the fresh air feels fine. I tune in to the growly music of the sea, which stretches as far as the eye can see. Wave upon wave of shining, shimmering, emerald sea. The ebb and flow of its tides on the wet gold are like memories scored in invisible ink. The waves spell “welcome” in frothy, fading letters, singing as they kiss the shore. I cannot stop smiling.

We find a spot to heap our belongings. The boys stake claim to the closest beach-shack, unzipping the swim bag on their way over to change. Mr. T is next. I, my brother and Sam roll out the mats, towels and blanket. Meanwhile, Divya unpacks the basket, strewing the tightly packed contents over one of the mats and frowning as she tells Sam not to shake sand into the cake tin and box of boiled eggs. He takes no notice, listening instead to something my brother is saying. The sun glints off Sam’s glasses as he squeezes his face into a knot of concentration. He is placing stones at strategic points on picnic blanket and towels, in perfect intervals along the edge.

Mr. T’s big belly sways over the top of his bathing shorts as he returns from the shack, hum-singing the tune we were listening to on the four hour trip from Ibadan. The wind blows peepholes in the salty lyrics. Mr. T rubs his belly as he spies the dewy bottles of cold beer and looks pleased as he claps my brother on the shoulder. “Good man,” he says.

Divya and I go next, scrunching our way across. My feet slide around some more in the flip flops, so I take them off and slip my fingers through the straps. The warm sand is delicious beneath my bare feet. Little sand fountains flow up and over our toes. We giggle, blinking as we adjust to the cool dimness of the shack’s interior. We emerge a few minutes later,



shy and squinting at the sun's sudden brightness. I admire the way the wind whips Divya's dark, unruly hair around her face. I admire her smooth leggy-ness in the white one piece and the matching sparkle of her rare smile. Her face is heart shaped like Mrs. T's, but she looks just like Mr. T when she smiles. Except, he smiles a lot.

My new costume is a blue halter neck with very long strings. I like how the strings fasten tight against the nape of my neck the way the black, fuchsia and mustard yellow squiggles chase each other around the billowy skirt part. I love its silky snugness and the way the string tips dangle and bounce against my bare back as I walk. I can't wait to go into the water.

My lips and eyelashes feel crusty from the brisk, briny air. I shiver a little as Mr. T hands me the bottle of coconut oil, which my mother insisted we slather our bodies and hair with before we go into the water. I drop the flip flops, finish quickly and pass the bottle to Divya. I run down to the water's edge and pencil a hopscotch house in the wet sand with my toe. The wavelets hiss and crackle their way into the squares, triangles and rectangles. I laugh as they flood the roof, foaming over the ridges in lacy webs, and popping as they settle. Already, they are dissolving the edges.

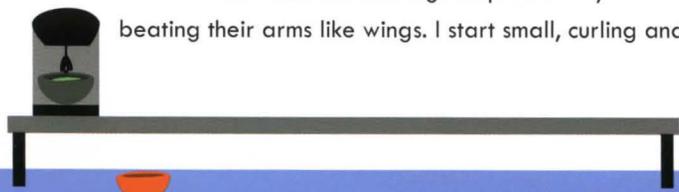
My brother beckons me back to join the loose circle Divya, Sam and he have formed around Mr. T. The oil has made the rounds and now we all shiny and slick as seals.

"Don't be afraid explore, but don't go too far in. The sea is a tricky beast, so stay where I can see you, OK? Stay close to the shore." Mr. T rests his gaze meaningfully on me at this last. His lips twitch. "OK?"

We nod. I feel my brother edging closer.

I am dying to go in, but I am afraid anyway. Some of the waves are taller than I am.

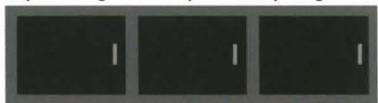
Mr. T and the rest high step their way into the water, laughing and beating their arms like wings. I start small, curling and uncurling my toes in



frilly, scalloped pockets of water. Then I venture in up to my ankles. I love the way the surf rushes headlong toward me and then dashes back, as much in a hurry coming in as it is going out. I feel my feet ground, sinking in deeper and deeper till I am rooted in squishy mud. Slowly, I lower myself and sit where I have been standing I let the water have its way with me, laughing as it drags me back and forth in a warm, grooved hollow, pushing me back and dragging me back in, rolling me from side to side, the fine dark silt scrubbing at my feet, legs and thighs. I close my eyes and lose track of time. I can see the others a little way out. Mr. T is gone. They are laughing and spraying water over each other and ducking their heads underwater. I look back toward the shore. Mr. T is reclining against a sand hill, engrossed in a novel, a striped towel over his head. Occasionally, he swigs from a bottle, then slaps his thigh as he laughs out loud. I close my eyes, lulled by the gentle motion of the waves.

Gradually, I realize that I am alone in my mud cocoon. The waves have departed, gifting me bits of shell and strands of seaweed and wobbly rainbow bubbles. I decide to follow them in, not nearly so afraid now. The waves are tall, but friendly and I am really starting to enjoy myself. The sun feels wonderful. The water feels magical. It surges back around me, coming up to my knees, then to up my waist. I walk along, crouching down till the water skims my chest, throwing one arm over the other, wind mill-like, as I have seen swimmers do. I toss my head from side to side, then finally I hold my breath and put my face in the water. I take large strides as I keep walking.

Suddenly the water is up to my chin. I'm not crouching anymore. The sand beneath my feet gives way and my legs start to buckle. I can't



feel the bottom anymore. A nameless terror grips me as I am I am knocked clean off my feet. I open my mouth to shout and find myself choking on salt water and mud. My throat is burning. I try to throw my hands up, to wave, hoping someone will notice, but it's no use. My windmill arms have no more power than straws. An enormous sideways tunnel of water envelops me and pulls me under. It doubles me over and twists me up and spins me around in strange ways. I don't know which direction is up anymore. The sunshine is gone. I can't breathe or hear or see. Only a sense of pitch darkness and a fiery thundering in my chest remain. My head hits something hard. I see a flash then everything goes dark again. I feel myself go limp. I think I hear far away voices screaming, "Help! Please help. She can't swim." And then there is a beautiful, resounding silence. I feel as though I am flying through the air, over the water. I feel a deep, utter peace. Time stops.

What feels like hours later, my feet hit something firm. I try to scramble up, terrified that I will go under again, but I cannot. I am lying down. I am in no pain but I have no power. None whatsoever. I can't move a finger. I am exhausted, starving, thirsty and weak as a kitten. And yet, I have the sense that I am moving. Drifting, in slow, wide circles, like a leaf or a snowflake. Except I am ascending. I have the sense that I am being examined. Deeply and thoroughly. The sense I am in the presence of a vast, immense goodness. A vast, immense love and intelligence.

Slowly, I begin to feel as though I am at the center of another sort of tunnel. A deep blue, velvety tunnel, through which I can discern faint glimmerings of lights, like faraway stars. Peace floods through me, I hear a chorus of strange sounds. Clicks and squeaks and rumblings and low hummings. Together they make a rhythm. An ancient drum beat. Together, they sound like a song. An ancient song, in a language I once knew, a very long time ago. These are words, I feel certain, but I cannot catch their meaning. Something large and soft is nosing into my back, pushing me along. Helping me to spiral upwards towards the light. I resist, suddenly afraid of an



ambush. The pushing becomes more determined, the clicking more insistent.

Dimly, I become aware that I am being told to wake up. To wake up and float out of this liquid turquoise cylinder. To float home. But I am too comfortable. I have no desire to leave. I am already home. The clicking gets very loud. I feel something sharp puncture my leg. I cry out in pain. The first I have felt in a long time.

I open my eyes. The sun is low on the horizon. I am covered in a grey shawl but my body feels cold. I can see Divya, Sam, Mr. T and my brother, all bending over me, their bodies draping long shadows over mine.

"Where did you go?" Divya looked serious. "We've been so worried."

"I don't know," I said slowly. "Through a blue tunnel. And stars."

"We looked everywhere," said Sam, "Why on earth didn't you say anything?" he worried his lower lip. "Didn't you hear us calling your name?"

"No." I drew wavy lines in the sand. "But I heard singing." Suddenly I was very tired. "Can we go home now?"

"Heat stroke," said my brother.

"Aren't you hungry?" said Mr. T

"Not really. Just slee...." I yawned hugely. "I had an adventure. Maybe it was all a dream."

"What's this?" my mother asks as she plucks something pointy out of my stiff, matted hair before bath time. Then exclaims as she hands it to me, "how perfectly odd."

It is a single, sharp, conical, tooth.

I never showed them the mark on my left calf, into which the tooth point fitted perfectly.





Non-Fiction



NON-FICTION
1st Place

“Fag Country”

By Jamie Heath

Grandpa and I are seated at far, opposite ends of a pool table draped and disguised with a festive, autumn-leaf cloth. On both sides, distant cousins, aunts, uncles, and sneezing offspring shovel turkey and casserole into their unfamiliar faces, pasty as potatoes. No one wants to talk to me. Most can't be bothered with the chore of realizing I am here at all.

I nibble on a dinner roll and respond to a tender text from my girlfriend. I smile at the tile, and miss her.

Somewhere along the length of the table, the deep, baritone of a word—“homosexual”—cuts across the crowded branches of conversation. Suddenly, everyone hushes. Grandpa's grey teeth scrape and squeak against the fork as he bites into a cranberry. It bursts like a bloody bag between his teeth.

My body tenses. My posture aches. I put my phone face-down. Here we go again.

“I just don't understand it,” Grandpa says. “What business do they have on a judge's panel at a women's fashion show? What do they know about what makes a woman beautiful? If they're gay, they should go and judge men's fashion.”

“I completely agree,” one of my nameless Aunts replies. She speaks through a pointed nose, like a bird beak. Pecking for scraps. “But now that I think about it, I don't believe there are any men's fashion shows.”

“Oh, they're out there, sweetheart. Call 'em drag shows,” Grandpa says. “They're put together by perverts. All these grown men get together to wear makeup and dress in women's clothes. Most of 'em don't even shave.

You can see all of their business just hangin' out on stage.”



"That's nasty..."

"Please, Dan, we're eating!"

The table erupts with laughter. Eyes drift over to me, expecting a retaliation. I tuck my hands into my lap. My rainbow bracelet jingles with guilt.

"It's true," Grandpa says. "They strut down the runways in these big high heels and strip on poles, pretendin' to be women. I don't know why they want to impersonate women so bad if the whole point is to be gay, stupid fag'its."

Something in my stomach twinges. He only ever uses that word when he wants to start shit. Last time, he asked about the lipstick heart on the back of my hand, red as a kiss. I told him my friend Jared wrote it before a drag show. Grandpa spat, narrowly avoiding my fingers, and asked if my friend was a fag'it.

It's just a word, he told me. It's what they are, he told me.

Through the blinds, an Arizona sunset cuts hard, orange lines across my hand, my thighs. My skin is a blank slate, my fingers quaking.

Grandpa continues, "People even bring their children to these shows."

My aunt gasps. "No!"

"True. I seen it on Fox last week. This family had their three teenage boys sittin' in the front row, all decked out in glitter an' lipstick, lookin' like one of those fag'it vampires from that movie. What's it called?"

"Twilight," someone interjects.



"That's the one. These boys were waving signs and screaming. Pretendin' to be little Twilight girls. Can you believe that? What respectable parent would bring their child to a pedophile parade? You are asking for something to happen."

I take a deep breath through my nose and count the reasons not to speak up.

Grandpa would just love that, wouldn't he? He'd love for a drag queen like Jared to make headlines for touching a kid.

"Might as well cut off their fingers and toss 'em in a shark tank," Grandpa says. He pushes mushy yams around on his plate. "I have a thought about this, y'know."

I turn my eyes into a cup and swallow a mouthful of cider. I'm sure you do. He always has a 'thought' about the dreaded homosexuals. At least when I'm around.

"Oh yeah?" someone asks.

"Oh yeah," he says. "'Cuz they're in the schools, now. They're recruitin' em young. If we keep letting these 'drag shows' happen, they're gonna run our economy into the ground. I seen 'em everywhere these days, and not just in the shoe stores. Now they're cooking our food and brewing our coffee. They're poppin' up all over the damn place. Like stupid, fag'it weeds..."

He really emphasizes the word this time, flinging a fleck of meat fat from his lip. He stabs a cut of white flesh with his fork, and knifes it to pieces. Everyone else at the table has gone quiet, listening.

"What we need to do, what we need to do, is conduct a nationwide survey, and find out who all's a ho-mo-sex-ual. Then, we 'round em all up. Move em to their own damn country. Give em an island in the middle of the ocean, for all I care. Let them have their own borders, let them govern



themselves. We'd be done with AIDS and pedophiles by Christmas. Call it Fag Country."

My phone vibrates defiantly on the table. All heads turn to look at the sound. Grandpa catches me with this army of eyes, the good family at his beck and call, pinning me to my seat: a prisoner of war.

My heart bursts into butterflies and I realize, They know. They all know. I'm not sure when Grandpa told them, but they know. My cousins, my aunts, my uncles, even the germs leaking out of their kids. They don't remember my name, but they know about me.

Grandpa stares right into my face while he gnaws a bite of meat, teeth scraping on the fork.

"And then," he says, "We nuke the shit out of it."

Layers of laughter sever the silence. One person starts it, then it's a snowball. They throw their heads back. They bang their hands on the table. They spit cider back into their cups. They laugh. And laugh. And laugh.

"Oh my god, Dan! You can't just say stuff like that!"

"You're so smart, Dan. You always know just what to say."

Dirty water burns in my throat. I shoot a glance to my right. Mom pretends not to notice. Her sweet potatoes are infinitely more interesting, and her reputation mustn't be muddled. Oh no, we wouldn't want that. Almost as bad as having a daughter from Fag Country.

I clear my throat to get her attention. Her eyes slide up to me, both of our mouths buttoned shut. I beg with my eyes. Please, please let me say



something. I'm ready to shoulder the blame. I'll take all the heat. These guys want a fight, and I'm poised to dish it out with my "fag'it" fists of fury. I'll shove a rainbow right up their asses and make them thank me for it. I'll go to war for Fag Country. Please, let me say something.

Mom purses her lips into a long line and shakes her head, trying to stay subtle so she won't get caught. Once to the left, once to the right. Her stringy red fly hairs follow behind like a ghostly imprint of the mother I once knew. Then she's gone, diving back into her plate. Part of me wonders if the potatoes have been poisoned; she's looking pretty pale. Poor, poor thing. It must be so hard being her.

My family laughs. I shove my food away and stand up. The fork clangs on the plate and my seat scrapes noisy claw marks into the tile. Everyone hushes again, like the commercials have ended and the show is back on. They shift their heads back and forth between me and Grandpa. He calmly sets his silverware down, and dabs his mouth with a cloth napkin, getting it wet with cranberry juice.

"Yes, Jennifer?" he asks. "Got somethin' to say?"
The fire is there, on my tongue. Bitter and biting and ready to burn them up.

But when you're underaged in this family, you need a parent's signature to stand up for yourself.

"Thank you. For dinner," I tell him, and excuse myself, leaving my pile of uneaten food for someone else to clean up.

Mom calls at my back, but I'm already gone. I cut through the kitchen and all its warm smells, pushing through the back door. My boots crunch on the gravel. I taste acid in my mouth. I breathe out a cloud and touch my own face, dismissing the tears before they can fall. The crisp, November air stirs my nerves, and reminds me: I am alive. I matter. I'm alive.

They haven't nuked me yet.



2nd Place

“Victims of the Time”

By Tina Daquilante

Police lights shine through my blinds. It's hard to believe moments ago, my street was lined with officers armed with AK47s as long as my frame. They came on report of a gunshot—just a few feet of fence separating my neighbor's backyard from ours. Weighing like a double pregnancy on everyone's mind is attempted murder, if the early evidence was anything to go by.

Flashback to seventh grade: I'm sitting next to a twelve-year-old girl with long dark hair, hazel eyes, and a predilection for the monthly men on the cover of *Alternative Press*. She's the archetype for the new kid at school: unnoticed and abnormally quiet. I won't find out until later on she was bullied by the “Plastics”—aka the popular girls—for something much bigger than herself.

“What's that?” I ask, referencing to the glossy pages in her hands.

“AP, it's a magazine,” she replies non-committedly. “Who're you drawing?”

“Tim McGraw. He's my favorite singer.” I refrain from totally geeking out in front of someone I barely know—this girl seems like she has some self-control for the cult of then-nascent “rock stars” in the music industry. (Note to my future fangirl: No one is just a fan.)

I zeroed in on my drawing. It isn't by any means da Vinci, but—

The girl nods. “Oh, cool.”



In acquiescence, she turns her head and must catch me smiling because she's smiling too.

From then on, Eve and I become inseparable. We bond over art, music, men, and, if we're feeling especially brave, sports. To this day, she's the Watson to my Sherlock, the Patrick to my SpongeBob, the... you get it. We're the kind of friends that make it insufferable for other people to be around us. Our coalition falls somewhere between insanity and just plain stupidity, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Depression is one of the factors in our friendship. I've witnessed Eve go through every stage of depression and incidents that were just plain hard—mental illness or not—to recover from. There have been times when I wouldn't talk to her for weeks, but in a way, Eve is my teacher. One of the things I've learned over the years is mental illness allows you to be selfish sometimes. Isolation isn't always a bad thing.

But don't mistake her for the depressive type. In fact, most people who suffer from depression are likely the ones who make others laugh, even when they hit rock bottom. And that's exactly who Eve is in my life, despite talking through a 17-inch screen over two hundred miles away.

Of course, the downside to being the literal light of someone's life is feeling the weight of their life on my shoulders. Not just Eve, but a lot of my friends who struggle with depression, bipolar, etc., continue to turn to little ole me as a safe haven. ("You have a nice way with words," one of my online friends told me recently.) At one point, I began retreating into myself and became the kind of person I was once helping.

And who was there for me when I was the one doubting myself, when I was drowning in self-deprecation? The same person I was always there for. The one who, despite her unparalleled agnostic view of herself, always tried to put a smile on my face: Eve.



"You're part of the reason I'm still alive," she says, heart emojis and all.

"He committed suicide," my stepdad, who was at the scene of the crime that chilly afternoon, told us.

I came to find out the neighborhood victim was a boy around the same age as Eve and I.

There's a lyric in a song by The Fray that goes, "I'd rather run away than stay and see/the smoke and who's still standing when it clears." It wasn't until after graduation I understood the cadence those words held. That boy who committed that night was the smoke, and standing in the clearing was his closest friends and family.

It was then I realized while I can't save everyone, everyone can be saved by someone, just by being in their life. To Eve, I was and still am that someone. And in more ways than one—despite lacking a tear-jerking backstory—she's my someone.

I still see the police lights beating against my window.



3rd Place

“Suicidal Reasoning”

By Charles Hisey

My name was James, James Day. Everyone called me Jim. I use the past tense because I am dead, have been since 1963. I committed suicide in the basement of my house, on the cot we had set up for game-time relaxation. I used a 22 caliber long rifle round placed in my Savage sport rifle. I put the rifle butt on the floor, leaned over as I sat on the cot, placed the muzzle tight against my right temple and stretched down and pulled the trigger. I didn't think of my family finding me that way, I just knew I could not continue my existence. This is my story.

Obviously I can't relate my tale to you, but my former brother-in-law is doing it for me. He finally understands the reasons. First he'll tell of my history, then the reasons I did the deed. I hope you'll understand and not judge me too harshly. I didn't intend for my oldest son Bob to find me that way, and I deeply regret the mental trauma I caused him. I was tall at six feet 4 inches, at least, that was tall for the '40's and '50's. I had what is called a lantern jaw and always kept my hair in a crew cut. I served as a corporal in the U.S. Army in World War II, and was one of those troops caught in The Battle of the Bulge. I survived the terribly loud booming of the German 88's on their Tiger tanks, and came through the battle OK. The excruciating noise from those 88's and our returning fire from our 105's was most certainly the start of my problem, but I'll get into that later.

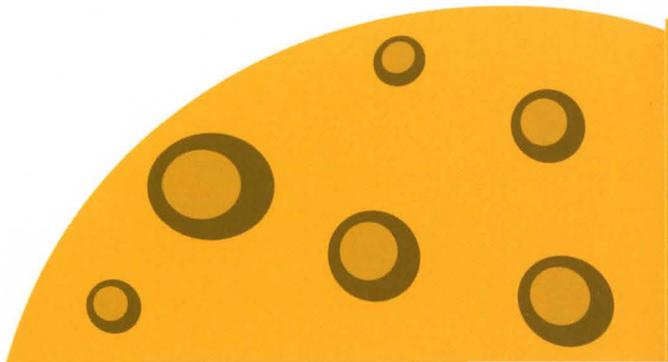
When I got back stateside I landed a job as an insurance adjuster, a very nice job with great remuneration. When I went to Pittsburg Kansas on a job related task I met and fell in love with Mary Jean Hisey, the oldest of the 3 Hisey children. To cut a long story short, we got married, moved to Hutchinson Kansas, and had our first child, Tommy. Tommy was born with a



digestive tract disorder, and after endless surgeries and treatments, Tommy died at 6 months of age in 1952. Mary Jean and I were devastated, but we wanted a family, so we kept on trying. The end result was five Children, Bob, Carol, John, Bill, and Karen – all healthy, and quite a handful, but we managed. I was transferred to Saint Louis Missouri with a great promotion, and we purchased a home in Belleville Illinois, just across the Mississippi river so I could commute. That was the house where I died.

My reasons for my suicide are all a result of my affliction, the gradually deepening well of deafness. It started with a mild hearing loss, sometimes a barely-heard buzzing in my ears, and progressed over many years to a nearly complete loss of any and all sounds. It started with my asking “What?” or “Pardon me?” when I couldn’t quite discern the words that were spoken in simple conversation, and progressed to my ultimate deafness. No more could I hear my father-in-law jest when I bummed a cigarette from him, “Hell, Jim, you didn’t quit smoking, you just quit buying.” The process was slow, but it was steadily removing me from contact with others. There was no way I could let this get to me – I was the man, the husband, the father, the provider. I had to keep on and be the strong one in the family. It was the right thing to do. I guess that was the reason I didn’t get tested for hearing aids, just pride and stubborn reasoning – I couldn’t appear weak. It just wasn’t the manly thing to do.

The problem with hearing loss, as my former brother-in-law now knows, is the loss. The loss of belonging, being the outsider, knowing ev-



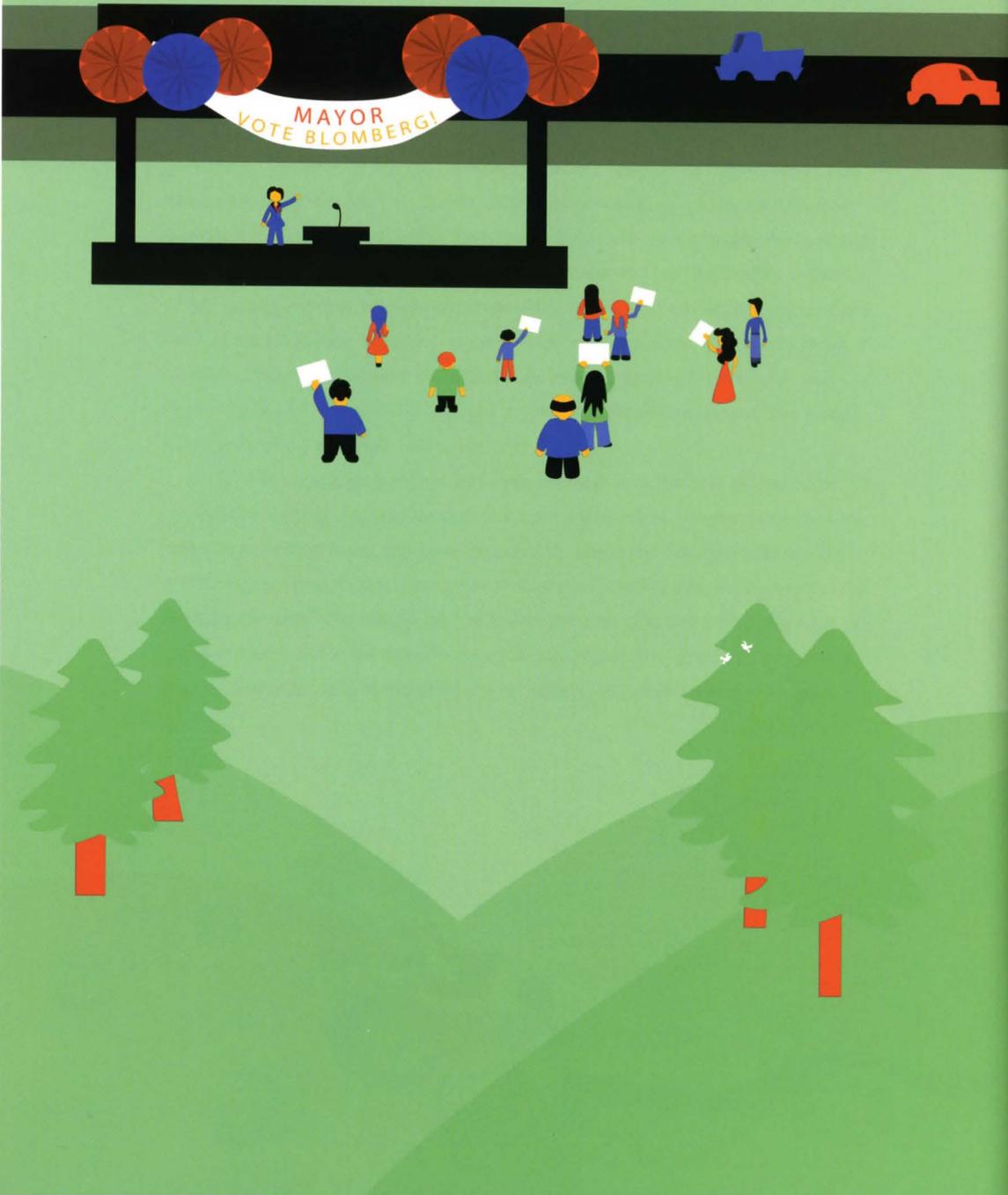
everyone is talking but not knowing what they are saying, the isolation as you are excluded from gatherings because you just can't keep up – it dampens the mood when you have to keep asking what everyone is saying during a gathering. Gradually the isolation kept worsening – I was being left out of family events - I couldn't go to my children's concerts, or plays, or baseball games, because without sound they seem to confirm and expand the isolation I felt. When I came home I just went to my room as I was no longer a part of my family, my job was almost impossible to do, as hearing is an important part of an insurance adjuster's duties – how can you deal with a loss claim when you can't understand a word the claimant is saying? Even with the slight amount of lip reading I taught myself, I couldn't understand the words when someone turns their head, or turns away.

The deepening chasm between my-self and the rest of humanity caused the aching depression that fell on my shoulders. It was getting to be more than I could bear, but I was the strong one in the family and I had to pull through, I had to overcome this problem. I was the one everyone should lean on, the one who should be the pillar, the one who should be the rock. I couldn't bend under all this pressure. It was impossible, it wasn't something a man would do, and it didn't fit my character, so I didn't bend – instead, I broke.



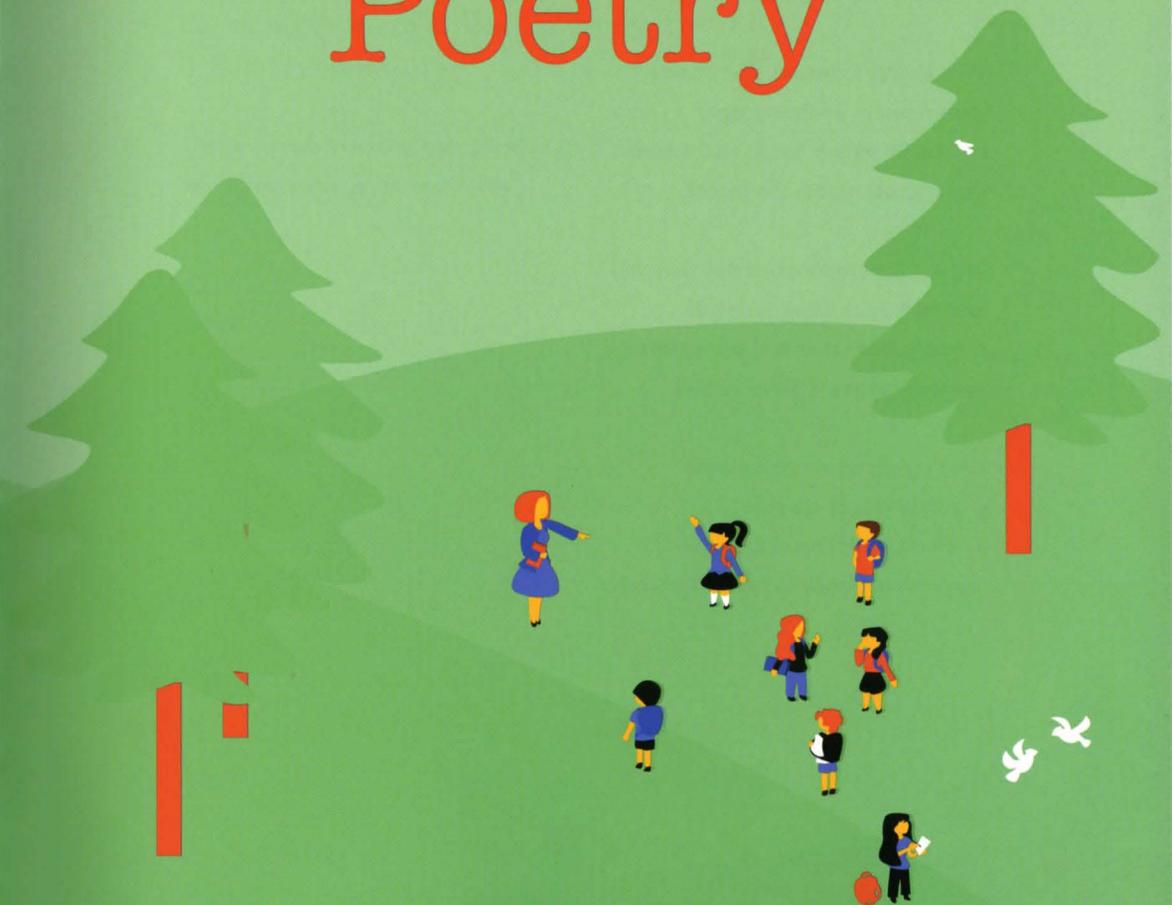


GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE





Poetry



1st Place

“Civility’s End”

By Charles Hisey

What was the date when civility died?
It seems to have slipped my mind.
When “Good Morning” was met with a nod and
a “Good Morning” back in kind.

Was civility’s demise fast or slow?
Was it just a slamming door
or, like Dr Who’s Tardis did it fade
like a ghost across the moor?

Did we just stop interacting one day
and text each other instead?
A colon, dash and end parenthesis -
you can’t make a smile of this.

Am I a relic of an older age,
a person out of his time,
or simply soliciting a saner
much more peaceful type of crime?



Back when politically correctness meant
you held your facts to be right,
when dis was this and grammatically wrong,
and seldom led to a fight.

In some later age only time will tell
if we've got it right or wrong.
Did we err? Do we care? Soon time will tell.
Is this civility's knell?

I hope we all live long and prosper as
the Vulcans say – then we'll see.



2nd Place

“Grandfather’s Gift”

By Charles Hisey

The wood from the local lumber yard, then
Hand sawn,
Hand carved,
Hand nailed.

The gingerbread placed beneath the eaves,
So difficult to paint, its dark blue in sharp
Contrast with the snow white that clothed the home,
Gave proof of the love he had for his English bride.

The gift of a home to call her own,
Built with his own hands, standing regal
On the immense lot he bought
For her, just for her.

The lengthy brick sidewalks,
So difficult to weed, in their herringbone pattern,
For her, just for her.

No prairie cabin, built from unfinished logs,
But a proper palace
For her, just for her.

When last I visited my grandfather’s gift
I remember the bones were old,
The wood was as porous as granite.

I remember the floor furnaces
So hot in winter; standing for



More than a minute would sear your feet.
Grandfather passed on 'fore I was born,
The lady of the house when I was but nine,
But grandfather's gift still stands - a few new
Coats of paint, a few new touches,
But grandfather's gift still stands,
For her, just for her.



3rd Place

“Obsession: Always Climbing”

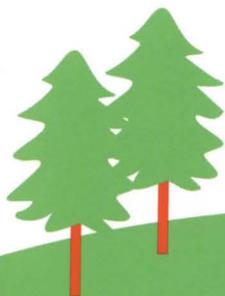
By Karina Pineda

Losing so much weight I need to gain it.
Gaining so much weight I need to lose it.
Need to clean over here- it's dirty,
Falling behind in school, need to study.

Saving up is key;
I need more money. Overtime? Fine with me.
Not enough time – I need to sleep.
Clean myself up. No time to be me.

Be my best friend? That's not the case,
Overwhelmed relationships, that's what I face.
Stress free is what it may seem,
But everyone's problems bury me.

Perfection is the building I try to scale
But I climb its high wall with bricks tied to my feet as I trail
When will this battle ever end?
The sound of my voice echoes within



Honorable Mention

“Learning the Ways of the South”

By Roderick McIver

I was only a boy of 11 years, but I knew the civil war had ended long ago.
My parents, born of Texas, lived “up north” in Philadelphia town.
My mother, more southern than my dad, freely used the epithet “damn Yankee” for any native or visitor without regard.

This label meant little to me, but came to prominence when we moved to Austin, in the Lone Star state, where “youngins” always said “Sir” or “Ma’am.”

I learned to say “all ya’ all” and “might could” or “yonder” with equal ease.

But little did I know, there was yet another language at 6th grade school.

From a First Class school in Philadelphia, to Robert E. Lee in Austin, was quite a shock. Most boys went barefoot and not a one in knickers or long sox. I made my way from room to room, and then wound up in math class.

And there before me stood the reincarnation of Grendel in women’s dress.

Her voice was a screeching scream akin to claw-like nails on midnight slate. I thought the other students must all be deaf for her bellow was so fierce.



I tried to shrink my body so she'd see me not, but even God abandoned me that day.

Her face, oh so close to mine; she belched fire and screamed.

"What's naught times naught?" I was near to wettin' my pants, for I didn't know that word.

"Ought, bought, sought" my mind scanned the "ght" words every one.

I joined the mute and deaf ones in the class ___ waiting for Grendel to strike me dead.

But then God's mercy seized my body and "zero" tumbled faintly from my lips.

"Well my Gawd, the Yankee boy knows. You Yankees may say zero, But here in Texas it's naught."

"Yes'em" I said as the rest of my classmates had the look of vacancy in their eyes.

If you listened close, you could hear the question roll across the room.

"What's zero?"



Honorable Mention

“Flora”

By Taylor Robinson

Does the lovely Flora talk
Today and breathe this putrid air,
With gold daisies strewn through golden hair,
Plucked gently from a delicate stalk?
Does she with Youth and Love still walk
Through springtime meadows bright and fair?
Does she flush rose red when men stare
At her fine skin, more pale than chalk?

Nay, for the time of Gods is gone;
Having lost their immortal spell
They lie in fields of asphodel.
But what! Flowers still grace my lawn,
Each morn heavy with the dew of dawn.
I'm troubled, for I thought all Gods fell.
Flora must be alive and well,
For in front of me there breathes her spawn!

How can orange marigolds grow
In ground below polluted sky,

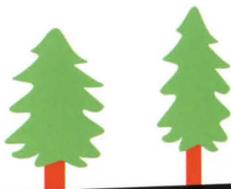


In ground where dead generations lie,
And bright as the sun still glow?
With no help how does mankind sow
Lilac seeds, which make women sigh
With petals of pale purple dye,
Where Zephyr's wind has ceased to blow?

This world now is far too unclean:
Alongside the lines of concrete
Piles of waste litter the street;
And where can green grass be seen?
Flora bathed in waters of blue green,
And on greener grass here bare feet
Treaded lightly; how her heart beat
For a virgin nature so pristine!

But it's not all lost! The world today
Has some beauty still: In a bed
On which pure white lilies are spread
Lovers, young and old, kiss and lay.
And in light winds those flowers sway,
With the cupped buds of scarlet red,
Which honor and mark the fallen dead,
In poppy fields where mourners pray.

What's more proof that Flora does remain?
On April days it still does storm,
And in May, when it's bright and warm,



New buds blossom after the rain.
Could it be that she, dead and lain
Under this Earth, now common and norm,
Has returned as a mortal form
To beautify this world once again?

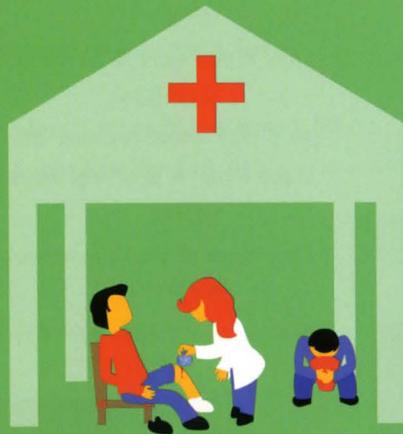
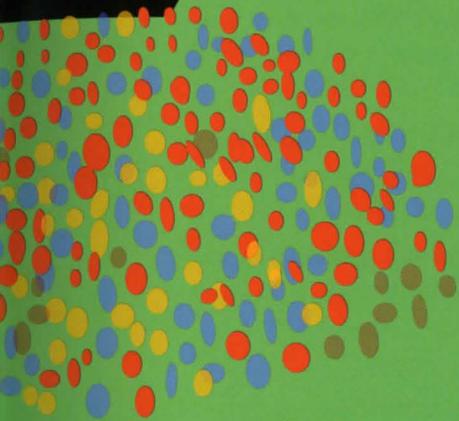
Why else should she tarry behind
With tender hands and pretty face
In such a harsh time and place,
And from such high company bind
Herself to the ranks of mankind?
To seize with tender hands that trace
Of beauty left and return grace
Back to the world she first designed!

Or, maybe, in her heart she knows
That Zephyr's grave in the far west
Has endured ages of times test
And now on it some ugly weed grows.
So she wanders there with a rose
And a dull ache in her fair breast,
Holding her stately head high lest
Tears should drip from her noble nose.





Drama



1st Place

"One Brief Shining Moment"

By Eric Bond

FADE IN:

SCENE 1

Lights up as Thomas MORTON speaks

MORTON

"And so it is a great honor for me to introduce you to our next president of the United States, a dedicated servant of the people and outstanding individual. A defender of the disenfranchis"...Jesus Christ Henry do I really have to say this?

HENRY

That's what I gave you to say, so, yes that's what you need to say. Sir.

MORTON

I just lost the primaries to him, and on top of that agreed to be his running mate. And now I have to stroke him off in public just so he keeps me around?

HENRY

Only if you want to be on the ticket sir.

MORTON

As if they would replace me. I am the most visible liberal democrat in the south. A practical unicorn in a field of DINOs.

HENRY

Oh please, if you're a liberal then Henry Kissinger was a peacenik.

MORTON

Hey, at least I don't think families should have arsenals. How many



other Southern Democrats could you get to admit that?

HENRY

You'd be surprised.

MORTON

When pigs fly, who could they get?

HENRY

Congresswoman Reeves of the Texas 23rd, Sir.

MORTON

Still couldn't carry Texas.

HENRY

True, but it would give us a better shot at their vote than you would, sir.

MORTON

I have Georgia's 16 electoral votes with me!

HENRY

And Texas has twice as many!

MORTON

Still more than Vermont.

HENRY

But who's the nominee and whom the running mate, Sir?

MORTON

Fine. But I want everything cut after "Our next president". We do not require to keep the public in suspense for that long.



HENRY

NO, YOU'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH-(ENTERS PENN) GOVERNOR PENN, HOW ARE YOU?

PENN

I'm quite well thank you Henry. Thomas, good morning.

MORTON

Good morning Governor Penn.

PENN

I was just passing down the hall and heard some yelling, is everything okay?

HENRY

We were just going over the language for the rally tomorrow sir.

PENN

May I see? "Defender of the disenfranchised"? Henry, I am truly flattered, I am, but don't you think this is a little much?

MORTON

Exactly the point I was trying to make.

HENRY

I was just trying to build up your entrance sir.

PENN

Yes, but let's bear in mind, this is a presidential election, not the second coming. What edits did you want Thomas?

MORTON

Everything after "introduce you to our next president of the United States."

PENN

Yeah, that's fine. No need to keep people in suspense over who the



nominee is. If that is all gentlemen, I promised to take Amanda and the kids out for a little ice cream tonight before tomorrow.

HENRY

Of course, sir. I'll make the changes right away.

PENN

See that you do. Thomas, Henry. (Penn exits)

MORTON

Better hop to it now Henry.

HENRY

Yes Sir.

Henry Exits & lights fade

SCENE 2

In the car the rally

DEBRA

After the rally, you have a lunch with Ted about the upcoming luncheon in Council Bluffs. Oh and I've also scheduled an interview tonight with MSNBC.

MORTON

Thank you Debra. God damn it. I forgot to ask, do you have the new introduction?

DEBRA

Here you go senator.

MORTON

Thank you Debra. Alright.

KNOCK
KNOCK



DEBRA

Sir?

MORTON

Henry made the changes I, well Penn asked for.

DEBRA

I saw. Well that's good he changed it though, right?

MORTON

Yes, but it makes me wonder. Do you think if I... Never mind it's foolish.

DEBRA

What is sir?

MORTON

It's alright Debra. You'd probably think it's foolish anyway.

DEBRA

Sir. With all due respect, spill it.

MORTON

Debra. We've been through this.

DEBRA

Yes we have and that's why you better spill it now or you're going to be angry and confused all day and the pretty anchors at MSNBC deserve more than that.

MORTON

Do I pay you to be insubordinate?

DEBRA

No, you pay me to assist you which is what I'm doing now. So are you going to say what's on your mind or am I going to have to reschedule tonight?



MORTON

You wouldn't dare.

DEBRA

I would if not doing so results in tomorrow's headline being "Senator Morton Brain Dead-Live". With the follow up question of whether he is worthy of being not only vice president, but the next president. So tell me what is bothering you about the speech?

MORTON

Nothing it's just... Do you think if I had won and Penn was my running mate that folks would force him to say what Henry wanted me to? It's a foolish question I know. I just...forget it.

DEBRA

Honestly Senator? Yes I do.

MORTON

Really?

DEBRA

Of course I do. Senator I have been with you since this crazy campaign started and I've sat through dozens upon dozens of speeches and debates and you're still my first choice for President every time.

MORTON

You must think I'm crazy for putting myself in this position. Especially when I could have gone back home to Georgia.



DEBRA

No, I understand why. You said it in your concession speech. What was it? Something like “We cannot always be the change we wanted to be...”

MORTON

“We can’t always be the change we want to see. Sometimes all one can do is be the best change they can.”

DEBRA

You know I watch that speech online for fun?

MORTON

You do?

DEBRA

Yes I do and read the comments. All about how you should have won and ready for you to run again.

MORTON

Truly?

DEBRA

Yes, admittedly I wrote most of them, but there is plenty of us who wish you were the nominee. Most of all me.

MORTON

Thank you Debra. It’s nice to know someone thinks that. But in the end it’s what you do that people remember, not what you said. Even if you have to kowtow to your betters.

DEBRA

Chin up sir. For who knows, maybe he’ll die.

MORTON

One can only hope. This must be the place. Thank you Debra. I don’t know where I’d be without you.



DEBRA

Anytime Sir. Good luck!

MORTON

Don't need it. At this point I've heard this damn speech so many times, I've effectively tuned it out till the end.

DEBRA

Still Senator, at least look like your listening.

MORTON

My inside may say "Shut up," but my outside will say "Tell me more."

DEBRA

I know you'll knock 'em dead.

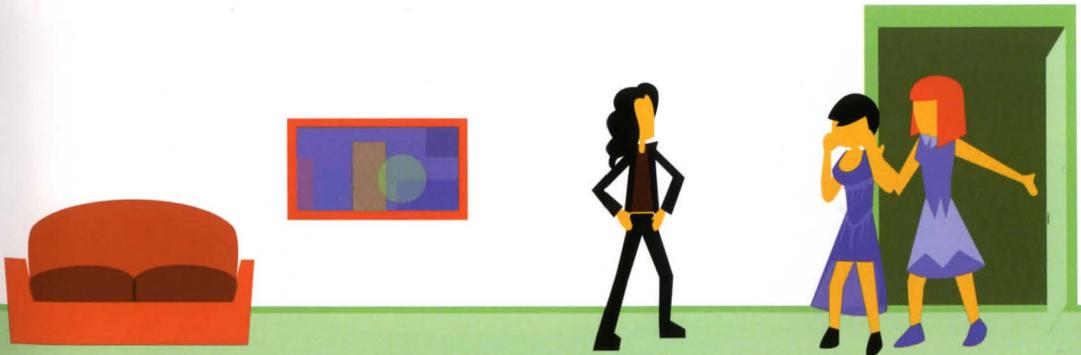
Fade out

SCENE 3

The Rally, the middle of Penn's speech Morton is standing next to Penn, who is flanked by retired commander and senator Theresa Lord and special agent Linda Geer.

PENN

Lastly I want to be president in order to change this destiny. To ensure that you, your families, and the families of all Americans are protected by the rule of Law and not the tyranny of fear. We are Americans and we decide our own fates and fortunes. Together we



shall decide to create America and the world anew! To this end, I
promise you. God bless you, and God bless America!

Walks down the podium to meet the voters

LORD

Well done Arthur.

PENN

Thank you Theresa. Well done to you Thomas, how do you think I
faired?

MORTON

Excellent performance governor, but don't you think you may be
your giving the game away by being so strident?

PENN

The people need to know what they're voting for. Good morning,
sir.

CALVIN WILLIAM PILGRAM

Sic Semper Motherfucker!

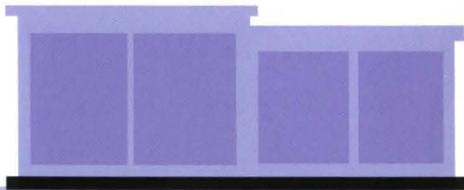
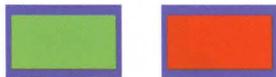
*Pulls out a gun, people scream, everyone freezes but MORTON. Suggestion
for The Angel is that they speak through Penn, Lord, and Geer, but never
William Wingate. Another suggestion would be in the form of Debra. However
the director is free to interpret anyway they wish.*

MORTON

What the hell?

ANGEL

Thomas Randall Morton.



MORTON

What's going on? Who are you?

ANGEL

We are what we are.

MORTON

God?

ANGEL

We are but their servant.

MORTON

Well if you are, why do you look like?

ANGEL

Our true form would blind you. Driving you to madness. This is our way.

MORTON

Well what do you want?

ANGEL

You.

MORTON

What? Why?

ANGEL

To die.

MORTON

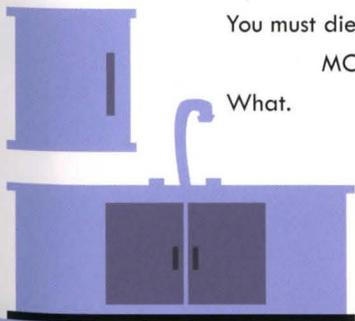
What?

ANGEL

You must die, so that Arthur Penn may live.

MORTON

What.



ANGEL

You must die, so that Arthur Penn Ma-

MORTON

I heard you, but why?

ANGEL

He is necessary.

MORTON

And I'm not?

ANGEL

You are.

MORTON

For what?

ANGEL

To die.

MORTON

I should have seen that coming. Why is Penn's survival necessary?

ANGEL

To bring about the golden age of Humanity.

MORTON

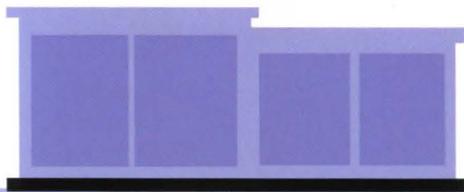
He's going to do that?

ANGEL

Yes it has been seen.

MORTON

By who?



ANGEL

They whom you call GOD.

MORTON

Well, why couldn't I do it?

ANGEL

You will, by dying for Penn.

MORTON

No, what if I allow Penn to die and I take his place?

ANGEL

You will fail. You are not strong enough. You would placate than lead. Penn will lead regardless of others.

MORTON

So just because I choose to live in the real world I am to be cast aside?

ANGEL

Yes.

MORTON

That's not fair.

ANGEL

Yes it is.

MORTON

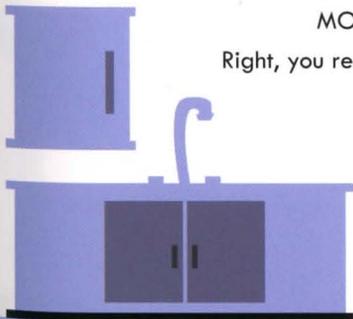
How?

ANGEL

Because you will die.

MORTON

Right, you really think he could win? With all of his grandstanding?



ANGEL

Not if you live, no.

MORTON

Because if I die, then he can campaign off of me.

ANGEL

Yes.

MORTON

Of all the angels to be stuck with I get the ones with political savvy. Wait a minute. Wait one minute. Does it have to be me? What about Lord? Theresa Lord I mean, not like Christ. She was supposed to be his pick for VP anyway. She's former Navy, and a lesbian. Wouldn't she make a better lamb for slaughter?

ANGEL

No, she must be the one to follow him. She will secure the age he starts...

MORTON

What about Geer? She's practically trained to die for others. She's female, perhaps not as great as an offering as Lord but certainly a step above m-

ANGEL

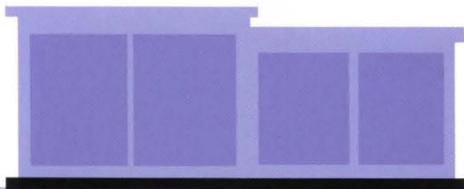
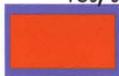
NO. She is to die at another time.

MORTON

Protecting Penn?

ANGEL

Yes, she must be there to die or else Penn will.



MORTON

Well, what about the shooter, can't you talk to him as you do to me?

ANGEL

We have tried. He has strayed too far from the light.

MORTON

So it's fixed then. Then why bother with this exercise?

ANGEL

To give you a choice.

MORTON

But you have said it is better I die?

ANGEL

True, and it is further true that it would be best you did. But the choice must be yours.

MORTON

Do you do this with all your martyrs?

ANGEL

Yes.

MORTON

Do they all say yes?

ANGEL

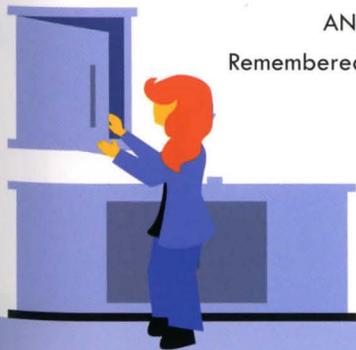
Those who have were never forgotten.

MORTON

If I say yes then I would be...?

ANGEL

Remembered. A hero and martyr to all who follow. You are to be



the foundation upon which this new Camelot shall be built.

MORTON

And if I say no?

ANGEL

Remembered, as a failure for all time.

MORTON

So mediocre or martyr? Not inspired choices.

ANGEL

To be remembered or be forgotten. Those are the choices.

MORTON

But what if I want to make a difference on my own? Why do I have to die to create a better world? You know the old saying about "being the change you want to see"?

ANGEL

Some people can't be the change they want to see. Sometimes all one can do is be the best change they can.

MORTON

But I want to live.

ANGEL

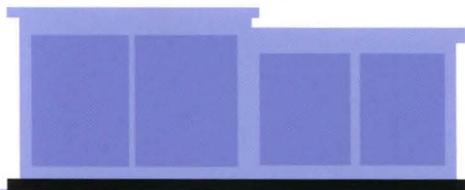
Everyone wants to Thomas Randall MORTON. No one does.

MORTON

...What will happen?

ANGEL

You shall see. Be ready.



The characters reverse into position for the end of the speech

PENN

Together we shall create America and the world anew! To this end,
I promise you. God bless you, and God bless America!

Walks down the podium to meet the voters

LORD

Well done Arthur.

PENN

Thank you Theresa. Well done to you Thomas, how do you think I
faired?

MORTON

Excellent performance governor, but don't you think you may be
your giving the game away by being so strident?

PENN

The people need to know what they're voting for.

MORTON

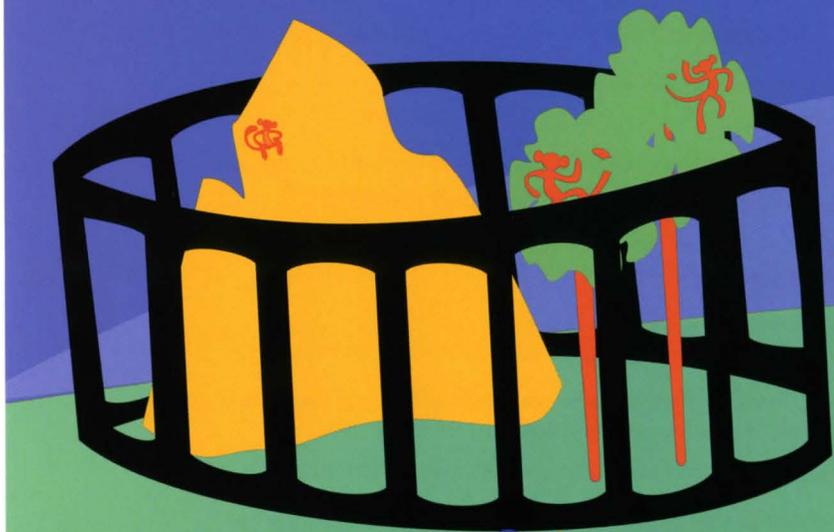
Good morning sir.

Gun shot black out

FADE OUT

THE END





Flash-Fiction



1st Place

“The Ghost of John”

By Daisy Cannon

My brother, John, died last Tuesday. A freak incident with salmonella tainted cucumbers. The poor guy puked to death. I know how callous I must seem, to joke so quickly after my brother's death. But you don't know the whole story. John's body died, but he is by no means gone.

You may think I'm speaking of “his spirit living on” but I am being quite literal when I say that he is still here, still cranking out his excel spreadsheets. It gave me quite the fright when I heard the familiar clack of computer keys and not seeing the man who made the strokes. I go throughout my day, watching and listening as John makes coffee, waters the garden, and takes a shower. His car even disappears from the driveway, as he leaves for work.

But how strange I find it, that no one else can see. The idiosyncrasies of John, to them, are not visible. They repeatedly try to “calm” me, telling me that John isn't here, and that these remnants of my brother are made up by my grief stricken mind. But what they don't know, is that when they leave, I sit at the carved wooden table, coffee mug in hand, and watch as John makes the coffee yet again.

They don't know that every so often he speaks, and the voice is as real as the world is round:

“Remember.”



2nd Place

“A Pair of Galoshes”

By Roderick McIver

A sky grey as dirty snow spread above and hid the sun as Mother and Dad worked in the yard pruning and raking up leaves. The freezing nights of fall had laid death on everything but the evergreens. I put on my warm jacket and my new galoshes and walked down to Darby Creek where it ran under the suburban trolley line making a playground for a boy growing up during World War II. Trails abounded along both sides of the creek. In winter thickets of blackberry bushes made hiding places. At some spots smooth rounded boulders edged with ice provided a rock-hopping path from one side of the creek to the other. Imagined Olympic skills helped me jump to a sloping rock and plant both feet firmly without losing my balance. Under no circumstances could I allow myself to plunge a steady foot in cold water deep enough to pour over the top of my galosh and down inside wetting my warm sock, school shoes and foot. I made good progress toward the far side until a chasm too wide to jump stopped me. I paused on a wide flat rock allowing me room to sit and decided the best plan would be to wade the frigid waters to the stream bank only a few steps away.

The one galosh removed from my foot waited while I wrestled the other from my foot. As it came free, my right elbow shot backwards, hit the waiting galosh and launched it afloat down the creek. But then as I stared in real horror my new overshoe tipped to the side, filled with water and sunk



to the bottom. I could see the water was deep; it was further than I could reach.

A growing sadness accompanied me on the long walk home. I had done something stupid. New galoshes for a growing boy cost a lot of money. I felt sick. My parents still worked in the back yard as I dragged myself into the house, went down to the cellar and took my jacket off and threw my one galosh way back under the shelves holding Mother's canned fruits and vegetables. I went upstairs and got in to bed. My Dad must have known something was up; he came in to my room.

"Are you sick?" he asked.

"I don't feel well."

"Where are your galoshes? I couldn't find them in the cellar."

"I put them under the canned fruit shelves."

Dad gave me a funny look and left. I felt worse and thought I might throw up. I knew what was coming. Dad returned and sat on the side of the bed. I dreaded hearing the question I knew he'd ask.

"Where's your other overshoe?"

"I started to cry. Between sobs I explained how I had carelessly knocked it into the creek and it had sunk in a deep spot.

"Get dressed. We'll go and find it. Galoshes cost a lot of money."

I dressed and we walked down to the creek. I couldn't imagine what thoughts were in his mind. I felt there was a cardboard sign on my back saying 'Shame'. We walked along the bank of the creek.

"Where?" he asked.

"It's down a little farther."

The bank along the creek stood four or five feet above the stream.



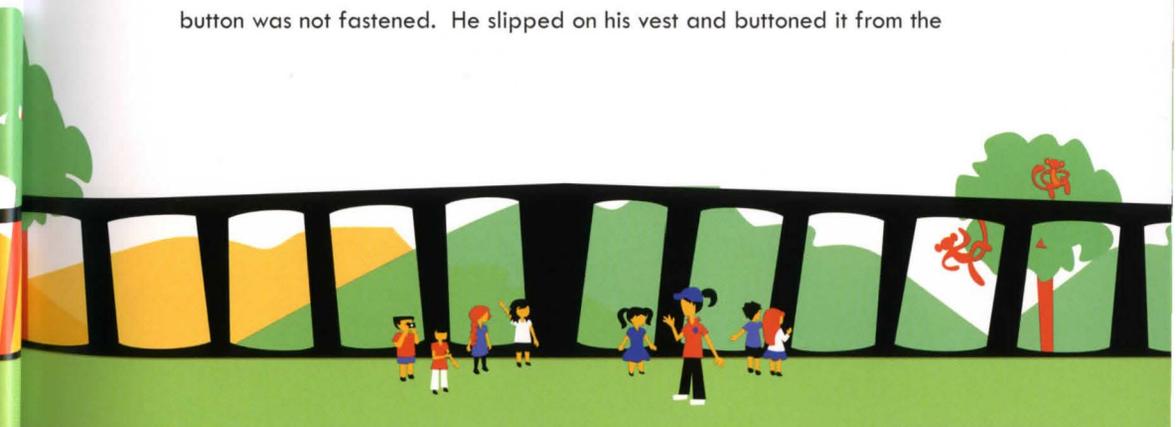
We moved down until I spotted the galosh in the deep part of the creek.

“There it is.”

My dad saw it as I spoke. Dad, a professor who taught English at Drexel Institute, seldom dressed in anything other than his three piece suit — the same suit he wore at this moment. As I watched, he took off his suit coat and folded it neatly and laid it on the ground. Next his vest, then his tie and shirt and trousers and finally his shoes and socks formed a neat pile beside his clothes. Bundled in my warm jacket I wondered why he wasn't shivering with cold.

“Stay up here,” he said as he carefully descended the bank and made his way across the rocks until he could wade into the hole. I watched in awe, imagining the icy cold of the water as my dad waded deeper and deeper with not a shiver or a sound. Reaching the middle, standing directly above the overshoe, he leaned over nearly submerging himself, reached down and brought it to the surface. His funny-looking one-piece underwear was soaked and hanging like ice cycles as he stood and retraced his steps to the edge of the creek. He handed the galosh to me and I clutched it to my chest as he climbed the embankment.

Fetching his handkerchief to use as a towel he shed the wet underwear and dried as best he could before starting to dress. Shivering and rubbing his hands for warmth, he pulled his pants on first, then his shirt tucking in the tail front and back. His tie hug around his neck; his collar button was not fastened. He slipped on his vest and buttoned it from the



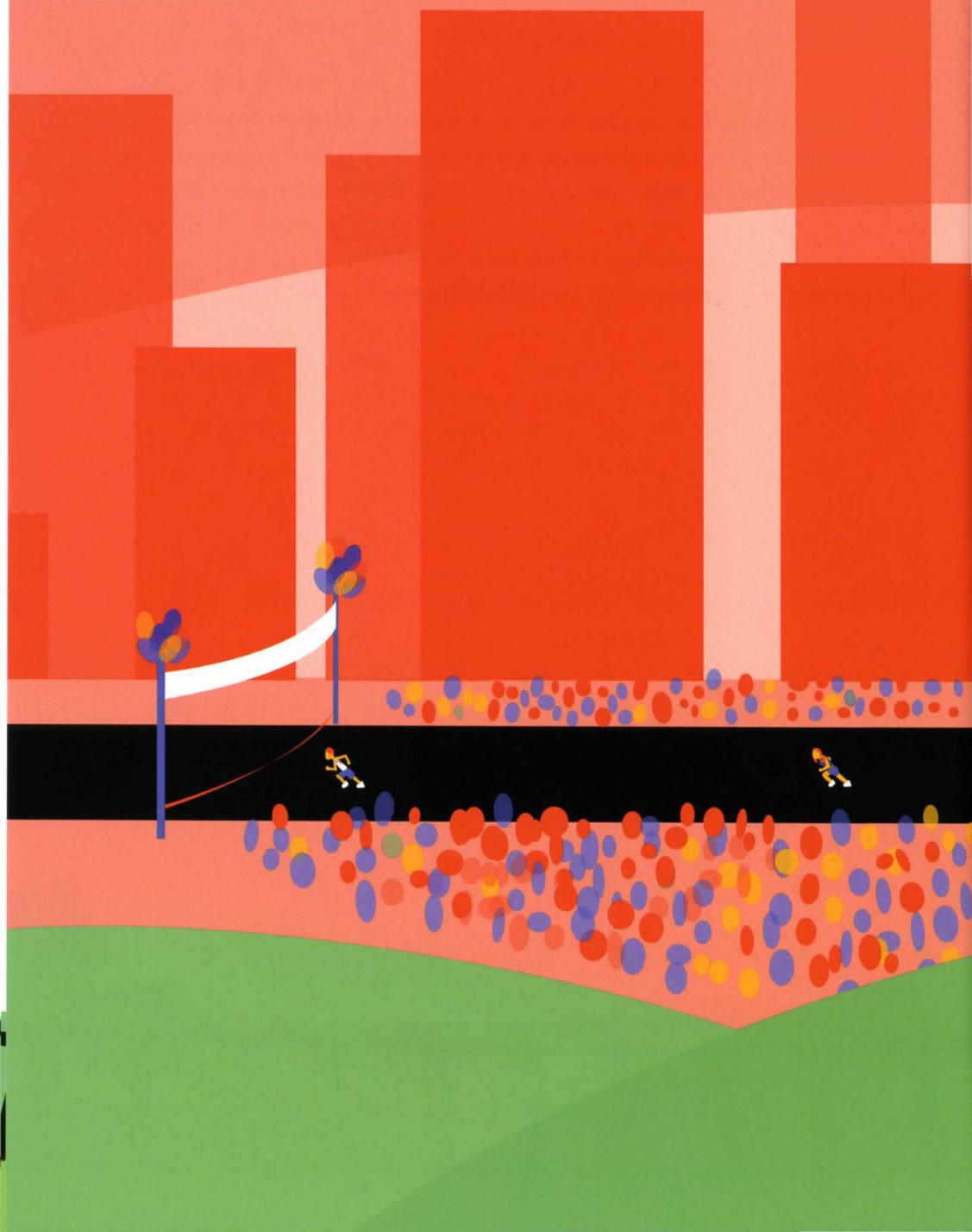
bottom up. Finding a dry spot in the grass, he sat down and put on his socks and shoes. Each step was part of a choreographed ballet which I thought might culminate in a whipping for my foolish deed. Tears were beginning to form in my eyes.

As he slipped on his suit coat I clutched my overshoe to my chest and he pulled me to his side and hugged me. Then he took my hand and said:

“Let’s go home.”







Visual Arts



1st Place



“Stream Line”

By Karen Gonzalez

Medium: Archival Ink Jet

2nd Place



“Auburn Bridge”

By Gregg Griffith

Medium: Photo



3rd Place***"Puzzle/Monica"*****By Andres Rodriguez Jr.****Medium: Gelatin Silver Print**

Honorable Mention



“This One Day”

By Elizabeth Pineda

Medium: Gelatin Silver Print

Accepted



“Water View”

By Raymond Marquez

Medium: Photography

“Railroad Tie #5”

By Wayne Young

Medium: Archival Ink Jet



Accepted

“Untitled 7”

By Angela Adams

Medium: Archival Ink Jet



“In the Meadows”

By Carly Eyrich

Medium: Archival Ink Jet



1st Place



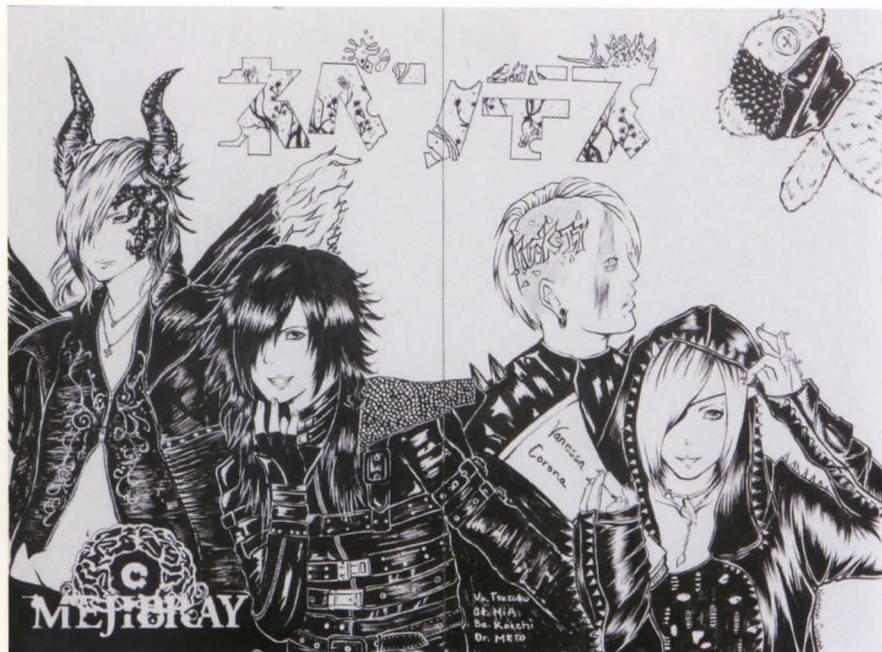
“Watercolor Creature”

By Alicia Robles

Medium: Ball point pen & watercolor



2nd Place



“Nepenthes” (Anti-sorrow)

By Vanessa Corona

Medium: Ink



3rd Place***“Night Mare”*****By Susan Belen Alvarado****Medium: Pastels**

Honorable Mention



"Pirouette"

By Joshua Hernandez

Medium: Charcoal



Accepted



“Cat Nap”

By Nicole Rademacher

Medium: Pen & Ink

“Danica”

By Casandra Burke

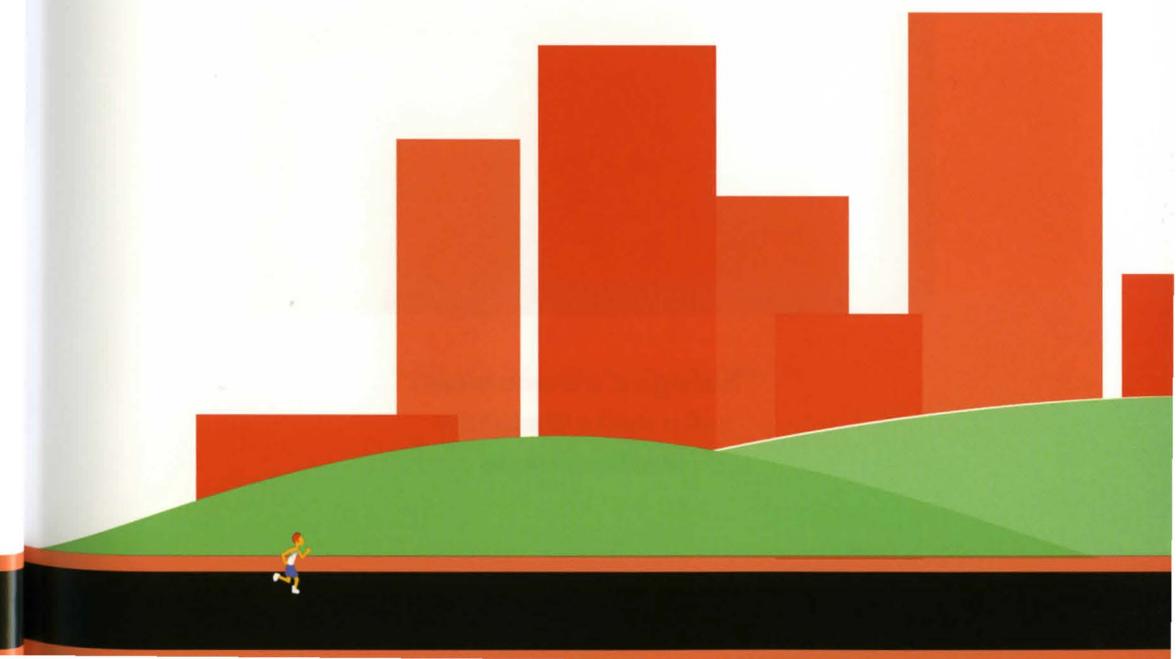
Medium: Chalk Pastel



“American Made”

By Jessica Brock

Medium: Pen, Ink & Prismacolor Marker



1st Place***“Refugee’s Documents”*****By Rafiq Majeed****Medium: Acrylic**

2nd Place



“Palo Verde’s Dream”

By Claudia Martinez

Medium: Acrylic

PAINTING & WATERCOLOR
3rd Place



"Forty"

By Jessica Razer

Medium: Acrylic



Honorable Mention

“Foods Before Dudes”

By Mackenzie Hill

Medium: Acrylic



“Fallen”

By Odessa Price

Medium: Acrylic



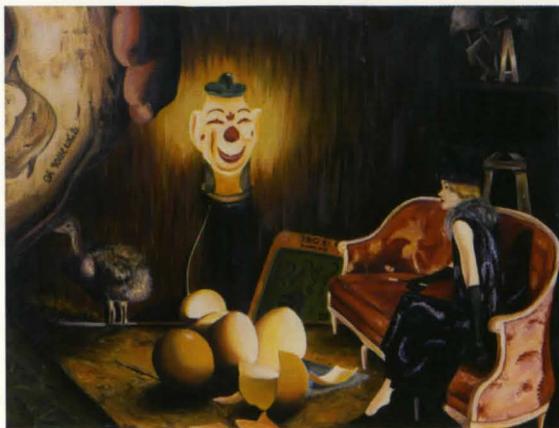
Accepted



"This Little Light of Mine"

By Nicole Rademacher

Medium: Oil



"Heavy Dreams Grow Lighter"

By Elena Compton

Medium: Oil



1st Place***"The Pursuit of Balance"*****By Kervyn Lopez****Medium: Wood**

2nd Place



“Battle on Mars”
By Rebekah Koprivnikar
Medium: Mixed/Found Objects



3rd Place



"Dragon Teapot"

By Dora C. Rodriguez

Medium: Ceramics

Honorable Mention



"A-Muse"

By Nannette White

Medium: Ceramics



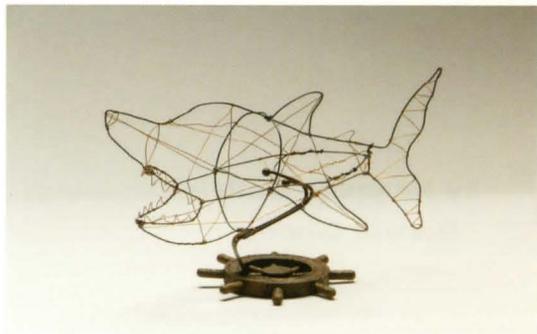
"To the Heart"

By Rachel Pauwels

Medium: Ceramics



Accepted



"Transparent Sea"

By Kervyn Lopez

Medium: Wire



"Lucky Charm"

By Rumi Poling

Medium: Mosaic Sculpture



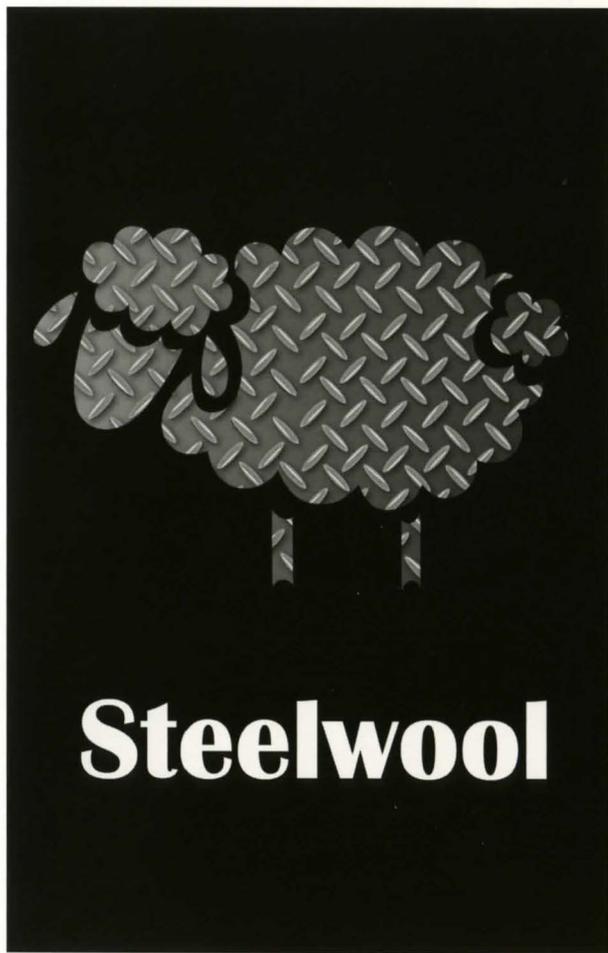
"I remember"

By Rachel Pauwels

Medium: Ceramics



1st Place



"Steelwool"

By Gabriela Castillo

Medium: Illustrator

GRAPHIC DESIGN
2nd Place

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“Permanent Waves”
By Austin Roberts
Medium: 3D-Digital Art



3rd Place



“City Girl”

By Casandra Burke

Medium: Photoshop

Accepted



"Pink House" Webpage
 By Christina Kim
 Medium: Illustrator



Accepted



“Amazing X-Men Variant Cover”

By Courtney Riches

Medium: Digital Paint



1st Place***“Blue Illusion of Squares”*****By Joy L. Dunn****Medium: Glass**

2nd Place



“Pick Up the Pieces, No. 5

By Elizabeth Pineda

Medium: Glass



3rd Place



"Sendero"

By Elizabeth Pineda

Medium: Glass on Metal

Honorable Mention



"Mistakes Were Made"

By Melissa Palacios

Medium: Sterling Silver & Copper

"Splatter Platter"

By Patricia Keanini

Medium: Glass



Accepted



"Fall Festival"
By Wendy Retzer
Medium: Glass

"Honey"
By Joy L. Dunn
Medium: Glass



"Green Bowl"
By Mary Worel
Medium: Glass



The Traveler

Volume 49
2016

Credits

Design Team

Amanda Hughes - Project Manager and Designer

Rachelle Anderson - Lead Illustrator and Designer

Emily Shipman - Concept Artist

Production Team

Wyatt Morris

Jurgen Soto

Student Jurors

InRumi Poling

Miguel Moreno

Jay Franzen

Student Literary Staff

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Dawna Kremin

Heather Ledgerwood

Roderick McIver

Tina Daquilante

Jabari Jawan

Rhonda Fisher

Matthew Ledbetter

Jamie Heath

Holli Anderson

Philip L. Boddy Jr.

Faculty Advisors

Michelle Blomberg, Design and Production

Sharon Forsmo, Art Competition

Jenna Duncan, Production and Layout

Community Judge

Kermit Lee

Community Reader

David Martinez

Faculty Literary Judges

Lori Walk

Phillip Roderick

Emily Gwinn

Laura White

David Nelson

John Ventola

Roxanna Dewey

Jim Veihdeffer

Mark Broeske

Jeffrey Sanger

Kimberly Mathes

Rene Barstack

Jayne Cook

Angela Lopez

Special Thanks

Dr. Pam Hall, Art Department Chair

Ryan Kennedy, Photographer

Sherri McClendon, Art Department Secretary

David Miller, English Department Chair

Scott Schulz, Dean of Instruction

