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LITERALINES

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Statement of Policy and Purpose

The *Literalines* Editorial Board accepts original works of fiction, poetry, black and white photography and line drawings from students at IUPU Columbus and IUPUI. Each anonymous submission is reviewed by at least three members of the English faculty and is judged solely on the basis of artistic merit.

Cover Art: "The Braid" Shaun Watkins
Fractal Art

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Workers' Lament
(Apologies to D.T.)

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Reason should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men shown the door know wrong from right,
Because their words for them found no voice they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, with pension bye, crying how bright
Their great deeds might have worked in company,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Leaders who caught and sank the sun in flight,
And still, too late, deny it's gone away,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near pension, who see with blinding sight
Lost vision lay waste their 401K,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, with new job held tight,
Curse, bless, us now with your workload, we pray.
So you go gentle into that good night,
As we rage against the dying of the light.

--L. Paul Tracy

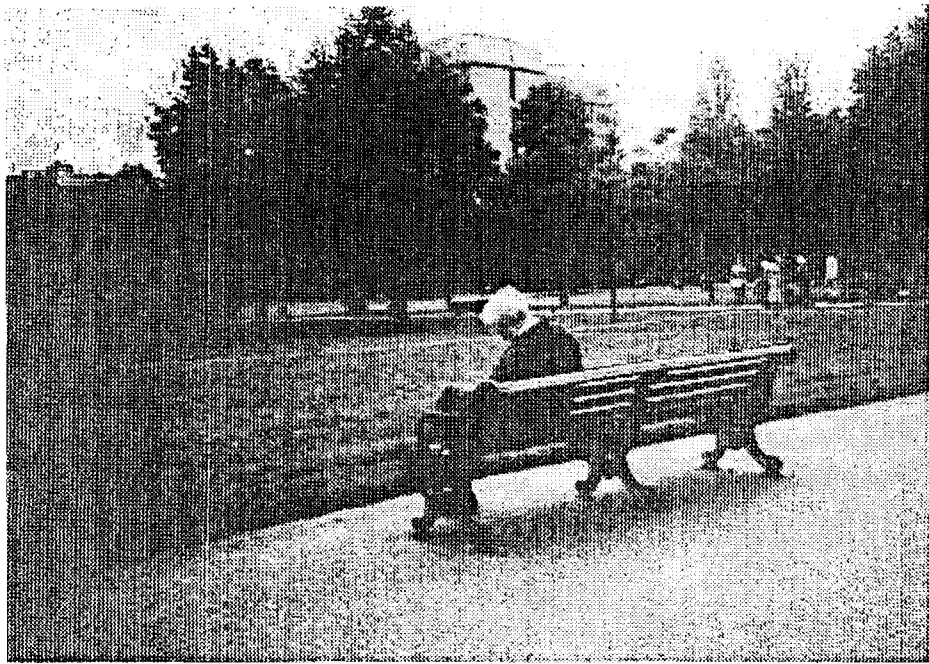


Photo: Sandy Rilenge

Passage

“Last day of summer, dear”,
Mother mentions metaphorically.

“Yes”...I know it
a sense of fall coming soon.

Fragile twig on an ancient tree
She wears 80 rings of years now.

Her steps falter on the uneven ground
The earth cooling at the touch of her feet.

She takes my hand and I reach over to button her sweater
It's coming of course, but today we keep autumn at bay.

—Sharon Mangus

Where Unicorns Run

I wonder where tomorrow goes,
where yesterdays come from.
I think about where the moon arises
and where is the house of the sun.
Days are full of mysteries,
while nights hold nothing but truth.
Death is birth and birth is death,
what was old can always renew.
Running along a destined path,
but not knowing where the road leads.
Terrified, blinded, leaping in faith,
evermore gaining in speed.
A man can stand up, call God a liar,
and be considered humanity's champion.
A King steps forth to claim his right,
only to be slaughtered by his own sons.
Love is taboo, love is no more
than a whimsical fantasy in myth.
The white knight never comes, Beauty sleeps on,
nevermore will the prince awake with a kiss.
I pity the masses, trapped in this world,
slaves locked in their shackles of pain.
If only they'd learn, every thorn has its rose,
unicorns would run once again.

--Natalie Hinton

Requiem for the Poet with Writer's Block

I feel love, and it hurts. Or is it
fascination? Same difference.
Go away. Remain. Please,
I'm begging. What are you
talking about? I told you to leave!
No, please you can't leave. Don't.
That's insane. I'm insane.
But if I think I'm crazy, then I'm
obviously not, aren't I?
It's Beautiful Perfection that to be truly
sane one must doubt one's own sanity.
I'm sad. I'm confused. I'm angry.
I'm dreaming. I'm shaken. I'm nervous.
I'm twirling. I'm breathless.
Am I happy? I'm human and I accept.
I invite my sufferings and I appreciate
my pains. I hold wonder for the aches
assailing me. Stresses and bad feelings
come around, and I can love each for
what they are. I am me who is she and no one else.
Beauty is in the eye of the beholder
or so they say. I wonder whose
eye beholds me. I wonder.

--Natalie Hinton



New Hope Bridge

(Road 400N at the Flatrock River)

The bridge's strength is its foundation,
the river bridge with massive concrete pillars
supported with skipping rocks
and fossils a million years in the making,
the living bridge in faith
and strength gained from places
and loved ones we have known,
in thoughts of paradise lost.

Wanted Posters

I used to see them
Hanging in the Post Office
Cold old criminals
Armed and dangerous
Wanted
Dead or Alive

But now I see her
Paper grin pinned everywhere
Young and vulnerable
Vibrant, promising
Wanted
Dead or Alive

---Sharon Mangus

Cowgirl Blues

Sharon Mangus

Slouched in front of the TV, I keep half an eye on American Bandstand, and down the last of my Pepsi. I'm still not dressed, despite several urgent reminders from my mother. I glare at the Girl Scout uniform ironed so carefully and hanging primly on the door of my closet.

"For the last time, Rosemary, it's 6:00 already! The Thompson's will be here any minute- get dressed and get downstairs NOW!" my mother yells from the kitchen.

Sighing the powerless sigh of an eleven-year-old, I pull myself up with effort and don my paramilitary garb. Sash in place, badges just so, Scout pin gleaming. The nerdy green beret is the final insult. I give my reflection a once over in the full-length mirror, and offer myself a sarcastic scout salute. I click my heels together Nazi style for good measure. Chubby Checker sings in the background, urging me to do the twist, so I manage a profane little dance all the way downstairs. I leave the TV on, just to annoy my mother.

"Well finally, Miss Rosemary! What took you so long?" Mother fusses with my sash, picks a stray hair off my right shoulder, and takes a step back to admire me. "Rosie, you look so sweet, honey! It was kind of Mr. Thompson to agree to escort you and Angie both to the "Father-Daughter" Banquet tonight. They'll be here any minute. We don't want to keep them waiting."

I didn't see any "we" about it, since I was the only one that had to go. "I'd love to keep them waiting," I thought. The last thing I want to do is go to the damn banquet. I might as well wear a sandwich board tonight, one that advertised in huge red letters: 'FATHERLESS CHILD. OPEN SEASON. TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT'. My stomach is heavy and my armpits feel sticky as I put on my jacket and zip it up. I suffer a hug from my well-meaning mother as she pushes me out the door. Angie is her usual annoying and chirpy self all the way to the Knights of

Columbus hall, and her father barely grunts a hello. I look out the car window and pass the time counting streetlights. We pass 85 of them on the way there, not counting the broken ones.

The K of C is hot and stuffy, and the smell of watery chili wafts from the kitchen. Girl Scouts from every troop in Green County are here tonight. Conversation buzzes and dishes clatter in the background. Fathers of every shape and size engage other Dads in small talk, their arms looped securely around their daughters' shoulders. I feel awkward and out of place. I'd rather be on the moon, and the last man I want as an escort is weird Mr. Thompson. Mother thinks he is *so* nice, but she doesn't know his secret life like Angie and I do. Many afternoons after school, Angie and I sneak his hidden stash of "girlie" magazines from a bedroom closet to look at while he's at work. Of course, her Mom thinks we're studying. My Dad was polished and sophisticated, not a sleaze like Mr. Thompson. I had a Dad to be proud of. Only problem is: he's dead.

I crush some soda crackers in my chili to thicken it up--it's sticking like cotton in my throat. I force down a few spoonfuls of the vile stuff, and wash it down with syrupy orange drink. I swirl the punch around in the paper cup and pretend it's whisky. I'm a cowgirl gone bad, steeling her nerves for the final shoot-out. I'll need something to prop me up when the inevitable questions begin. Lordy hallelujah, spare me! A district leader in full scouting regalia heads right for our table.

"Hello dear, let's see, uh... " (The frumpy leader cranes her head my direction and squints to read my nametag). "Oh, yes ... now I see ... Rosemary Hutton. Troop 85 from Windsor Elementary. How nice! And this must be your father. Mr. Hutton, we're sure glad to have you here with us this evening."

Her voice is all fakey singsong sweetness. If my crazy Aunt Bonnie were here, she'd roll her eyes up in her head, lean over to me, and whisper something irreverent in my ear, like: "God Rosie-Lou, this dizzy dame could gag a maggot!" The thought makes me smile.

Naturally, at the moment, Mr. Thompson is distracted. He's chewing on a toothpick and ogling the entertainment. Troop 19 from Guilford Junior High, all sixteen of them, are up on stage, their reedy voices belting out sappy scout tunes. Mr. T turns and faces Frumpy Pants, about to speak, but I hurry and beat him to the punch.

"Well, Ma'am, actually I'm here with Mr. *Thompson* tonight. He's my friend Angie's Dad. They're my neighbors."

"Oh, isn't that nice. I'm sorry your Dad couldn't be here Rosemary. I hope he's not sick or something."

"No ma'am, my father's *dead*."

I get a perverse pleasure watching her face fall. Her smile melts away, the color drains from her cheeks, and she stammers and squirms. Next she turns red, manages an awkward apology, and scurries away like I've got cooties or something. Old man Thompson doesn't know what to say. He pats my shoulder like you'd pat a dog, and tries to look sympathetic. I shrink at his touch and excuse myself to go to the bathroom.

Usually I hate to throw up, but night now it feels good. Bits of bean, tomato chunks, and wormy pieces of macaroni swirl around the toilet bowl, mixed with stringy globs of orange. One last heave and it's over. I wipe my mouth off with some toilet paper and flush the john. A nasty pukey taste lingers in my mouth. I sit down on the floor in front of the stool with my back against the stall door for a couple of minutes to catch my breath. Anytime I throw up at home, my mother hovers over me, mopping my brow and clucking little words of sympathy. I wish she were here night now. When I unlock the door and fumble out, a couple of older girls are

preening in the mirror. One is adjusting her petticoat, and her ugly friend is backcombing her hair. They must've heard me barf. I could just die, so I took straight ahead and ignore them as I wash my hands. I glance in the mirror and see them shooting each other looks. They finish their business and turn to leave. I hear them stifle laughs as the bathroom door swings shut.

After I'm sure they're gone I run cold water in the sink, splash some on my face, and swish the last strings of pukey saliva from my mouth. One last look in the mirror and I notice the rings of sweat decorating the underarm areas of my uniform. Great! A major case of armpit failure. One last embarrassment to cap off the evening.

When I finally go back in to the hall of terror, Angie zeros in on me. She runs over and grabs my arm in a killer death grip, and throws my jacket at me.

"Thanks a whole big bunch, Rose-o," Angie spits out sarcastically. "Dad is really honked off. He's been out in the car waiting for us 10 minutes already. Where *were* you?"

I don't bother to answer her--she doesn't have a clue how I feel. I knot my jacket around my waist and follow her out to the parking lot. I climb into the back seat, and Angie sits up front. Her Dad exhales a breath of silent annoyance and starts up the car.

The streets are dark, punctuated by the streetlights as we make our way home. Angie chatters on and on, Mr. Thompson looks bored, and I'm patching up my heart again and hoping the stitches will hold.

Human Race

Pounding hooves,

Pounding hearts,

Pounding feet,

Pounding fists in the air . . .

Yelling, screaming, urging, hoping . . .

Let her be there!

Win, place, or show . . .

Does the horse even care?

--Dana Turnbow

Just a Girl

I'm a girl.

Don't act like a girl.

But I am a girl.

Don't be such a girl.

Sometimes, I just need to cry.

Just like a girl.

Maybe I want some chocolate.

Geez, like a girl!

I like to go shopping.

What a girl.

I can work like a man.

But you're only a girl.

I am only a girl.

--Dana Turnbow

THE END OF TIME

L. Paul Tracy

"It's the end of time, I tell you! Look! . . . Look!"

The bony hand of the old woman trembled as it pointed the remote toward a blank TV screen, the lime green channel numbers flickering on it in sickening succession to the sound of static and the unanswered phone ringing down the hall.

The daughter groaned with long-suffering impatience as she snatched the control from the old woman's hand. "The cable's out again . . .and holding your finger on the channel changer ain't gonna help!"

With that the daughter pointed the remote at the TV and turned it off. The mother grabbed the daughter's outstretched hand, her eyes fixed on her daughter's freshly manicured nails. Clucking her tongue, she exclaimed "Such vanity!" as she flung the daughter's hand away in disgust.

The daughter ignored her mother, set the control on the nightstand and tried to head to the kitchen so she could catch her caller while the answering machine was still on. The old woman moaned, "Today's Sunday. Why didn't you take me to church?"

"Today is Friday!"

"Monday?"

"No! . . . Today is Fri-day!"

"Tuesday?"

"Fri-day! Today is Friday! FRIDAY!!"

"You should have taken me to church . . . it's a sin." The old woman picked up the remote and turned the TV on.

"Oh, eat me!" the daughter blurted out as she stormed out of the room. It wouldn't matter if she had danced naked in front of her mother; seconds after leaving the room her mother wouldn't remember a thing.

The daughter hurried to the answering machine in the kitchen, but the caller had already hung up. A husky voice on the recording greeted her with, "Look babe, it's nine o'clock and you ain't here Look this thing ain't gonna work. I gotta go."

The old woman was usually asleep by eight, but she was so agitated this night there was no telling when she would fall asleep. The daughter had desperately hoped to sneak out for a few hours of companionship, but nothing ever worked out her way anymore. She reached for her coat on the hook by the back door. Maybe she could still meet him and beg his forgiveness for being late.

Turning around to get her purse, she stopped suddenly by the kitchen table. An ancient memory had popped into her head of a frightened little girl hiding under it. Staring at the table, she now couldn't remember what had scared her, only that her mother had come through that kitchen door from the backyard carrying a basket of laundry to find her crying beneath it. She could feel the soft warmth of her mother's embrace and the kisses that followed.

Like a whisper, the memory was gone as fast as it came, but the woman stood motionless in the kitchen for a very long time before she slowly removed her coat. As she re-hung it by the back door, the distant cry of a siren rose slowly in timbre through the isolation of the night and the walls of her home.

Away

I want to go away.
I want to see the pyramids
And look Imhotep in the eye myself.
I want to sip rich red wine
While observing the Eiffel tower from an outdoor café.
I want to follow the paths my Lord
Took through the Holiest City itself.
I want to smell the sweet, sweet wind
That ripples my hair under an Irish sun.
I want to feel the velvet of cherry blossoms
As they fall from a tree by a pagoda.
I want my tears to fall on the dust
By the entrance to Pompeii.
I want to laugh and dance until dawn
On Bourbon Street and the Rue Royale.
I want the sun to brown my skin
As I gallop a stallion back to a wilder west.
I want to get lost in the field of stars
Scattered through an endless Moroccan midnight.
I want to glide like a silvery dolphin
Through waters of the richest Caribbean blue.
I want to be all, do all, taste all, feel all, touch all, know all, and see all
Of life.

--Natalie Hinton

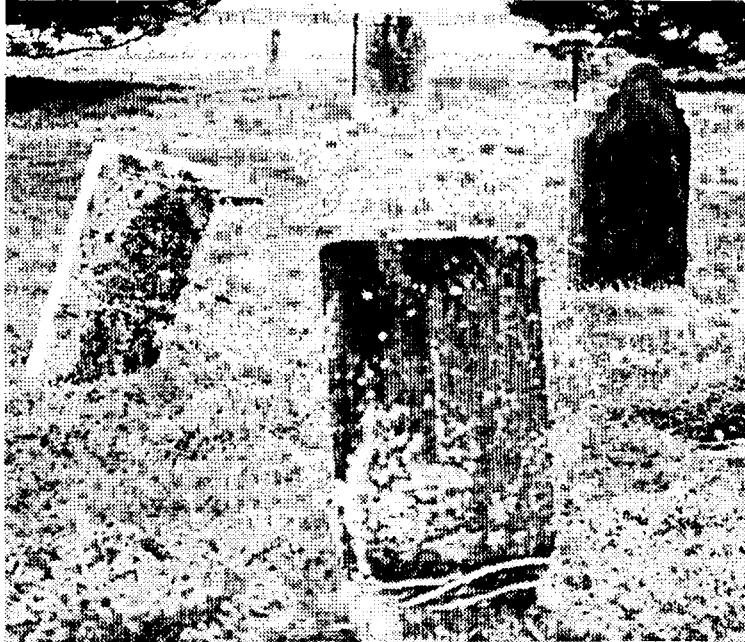
Abused

Bluebird,
Bluebell,
Blue-black,
Pain.

Summer sky,
Storm Cloud,
Thunderclap,
Rain.

White dress,
Church bells,
Blood-red,
Stain.

--Natalie Hinton



The Unknown

One night on a road less traveled
Past a field of dead seeds
And deeds left undone
Lay ancient stones familiar
Dull and companion gray
And thoughts of those asleep
Of what it is we see
In color and shape they've lent this path
Long past the ashen twilight
When stone has forgotten their names

—L. Paul Tracy

Tea for Two

My life was Lipton tea until I met him:
Tepid, proper, zest of lemon now and then.
Familiar and predictable; never filled up to the brim.

The cupid splashed me with Red Zinger sin
I was tangy and wicked, honey oozing from my pores
Bold now and carefree, I slipped the bonds of my tin.

Celestial Seasoning nirvana right there on the floor
Yes, I gulped Morning Thunder, and sipped Bengal Spice
I was souchong and oolong...and I begged one cup more.

---Sharon Mangus

Puppy Upper

Kids off to college, the house finally settled
My key in the doorway scrapes metal on metal

The quiet I wished for has now come to pass
The light pierces darkness. I lay down my pack

Then, a clatter of toenails, a wild hip-hop dance
My dog barks a greeting, a welcome home chant

--Sharon Mangus

True Eagle of the Academy

Long hours Ms. R.?
Yes, how do you stand them? The hours . . .
I don't know, I guess we just have to keep trying.
True, we must continue . . .they are kids.

When I looked into those beautiful brown eyes I saw his soul.
We are of the same spirit.
I promised not to cry.
Sonje--I have to break my promise now,
the tears won't stop falling.
This was a test flight.
Eagles are nearing extinction.
Spread your wings and rest Brother Jenkins.
Your work is done.

Dedicated to the memory of Sonje Jenkins

--Sandy Rilenge

While The City Sleeps

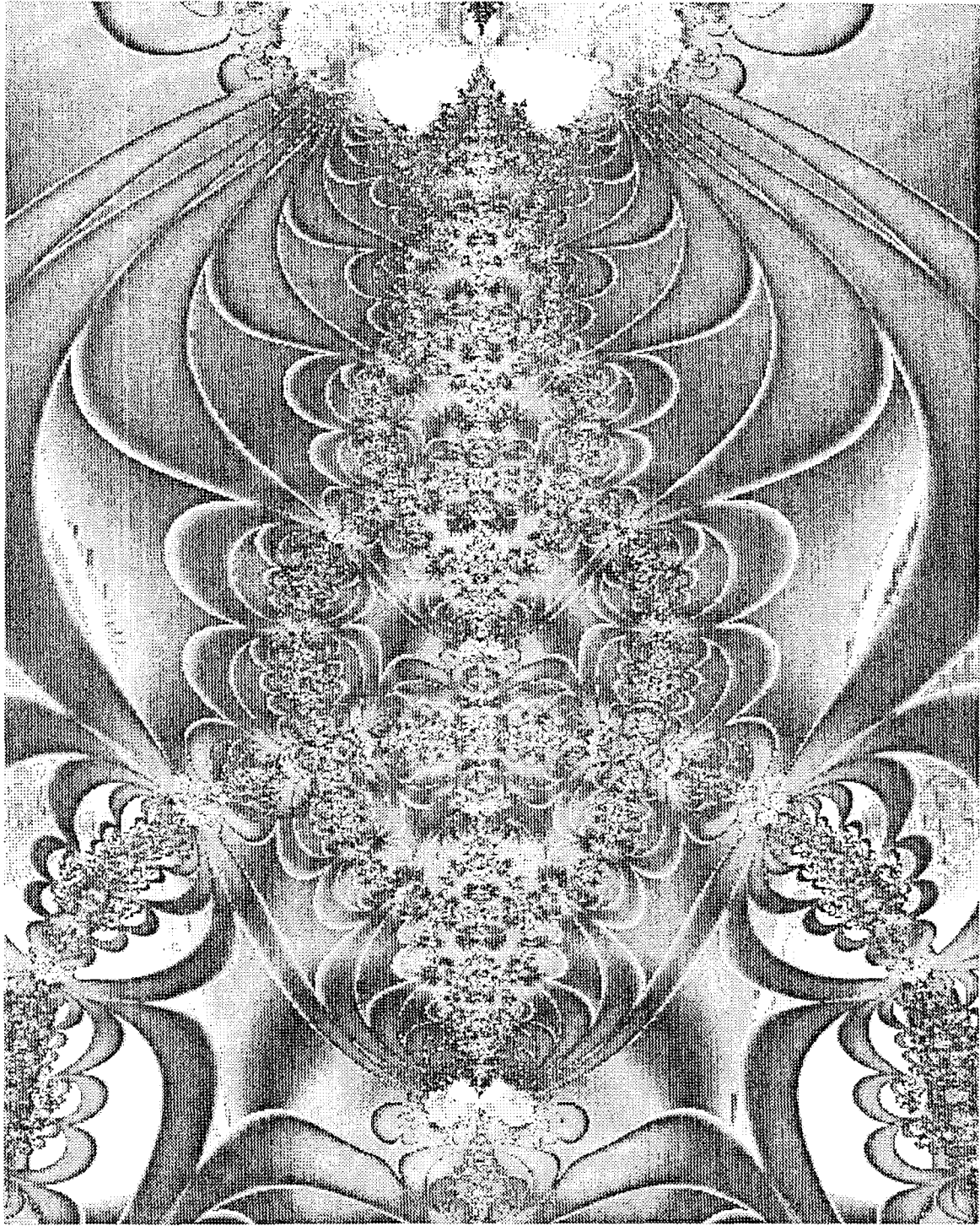
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Two
Lovers
Caress
One another
Promises are made
At the same time promises are broken.
A child cries
Another child dies
Mom and Dad ask themselves why.
A businessman tosses and turns
Punches his pillow
Seeking comfort for his head
Sleep will not come.
A homeless man lies on a park bench
Covers himself with newspapers
Seeking warmth from the cold
Newspapers can't warm
this cold.
I
am
awake.

--Sandy Rilenge



Graphic by Shaun Watkins

I'm Different

I never asked to be different,
Different from them over there.

I never asked to look different,
Different from them over there.

I never asked to think different,
Different from them over there.

I never asked to walk different,
Different from them over there.

I never wanted to be Different,
But Different I very well am.

And now I see I am Different,
Just like them.

--Natalie Hinton

The Eternal Carol, An Elizabethan Sonnet

The harvest moon is riding on the sky tonight
A cricket calls her sad lament to fall
“September” cries the crow as south he flies
The smoke of campfires bend to autumns call

The winter stars are icy gems on high
A rabbit carves his footprints in the snow
“December” sings a bird on fence post nigh
As cold of blizzard chills the earth below

The warming sun returns to waken blooms
A doe and fawn emerge from sylvan wood
“It’s springtime” call the brides out to their grooms
The green of velvet pastures sets the mood

All nature hums a sweet and ancient aire
As seasons paint their beauty fine and rare.

---Sharon Mangus

The Brass Rail

Brad Whetstine

It was a Monday night, and my expectations were running low. I struggled with second, even third thoughts about going into a tavern on such a night, but I heard about this place from some guys on campus, and as I stood before the door, I could hear the jukebox playing inside, and could feel the sounds of Tom Petty sending waves of intrinsic potential through the handle of the door, straight into my finger tips. *I should have been a drummer*, I thought, pulling the door toward me, letting myself in.

I make a quick survey of the room. Crack! goes the cue ball, and a moan is heard over the hollow roll as the table swallows yet another victim. Players, both pro and non sink their challenges of the day into the various pool tables that line the wall to my left. It's dark; more so to my right than anyplace else: thick cigarette smoke chokes out the only source of light above a table of seven, as an unhappy patron complains to the empty glass before him. The tables in the middle of the room are tall and empty except for one occupied by a small, frail, looking kid whose head is weighed down by over-sized Coke bottle type glasses. He tilts his head back to look at me; his nose is pinched shut as if he were wearing a clothespin; his face is as greasy as the ball cap that is pulled down to his eyes. Judging by the oil stains on his jacket, he has worked all day long on his car just so he could sit alone in the middle of the pub to drink cola from a dirty glass.

I'm attracted toward the spectacle before me. It is of course, the light: its source is the overhead televisions that project a kaleidoscope of colors throughout the rows of liquors displayed behind the three-foot mahogany "altar." I pull the stool from its vacancy careful not to

get my foot caught between the brass rail that runs along the base of the platform. I like the brass rail. It's a shame that it is at the bottom and not the top where it could be admired more, appreciated. I hate to step on it, but it serves a purpose. I promise myself I will only use it twice: to ascend and descend from the altar.

The bartender flips her hair to the side and asks me "What can I get ya?" with her eyes. "Miller Lite" escapes my lips.

Pure talent. They call her Tiffany, but I will refer to her as Susan. I'm attracted to Tiffany, but Tiffany reminds me of my sister, so I will call her Susan. I'm not attracted to Susan, you see....

Anyway, the beer is cold; I take a swallow; then another. Susan intercepts the sweaty bottle with a small white napkin just as I go to give it a rest. *Women! Yes, women—by God—where are they? That is why I'm here!* I feel as if everybody knows that somehow. I look to my left; I look to my right; but there is not a *single* woman in sight. Everyone who comes through the door has someone already.

The guy at the end of the altar is staring at me. He is middle aged, balding, overweight—very annoying: he constantly picks up his empty mug and sips air through the straw. I notice Susan never goes to his end of the altar. Only once does she become busy, and finds herself at that end by accident. That is when he inquires about her birthday. She snaps out "September twenty-seventh" and rolls her eyes away from his, catching a glimpse of the water rings that have coagulated beside his dry napkin. He grins in accomplishment; she flips him off with her hair; he pats the side of his face several times before she walks off to safety at the other end of the altar. I wonder if Susan is really a Libra, as the guy lifts the dripping mug to have another sip of air—"on the house."

That is when I notice the mirror that runs the entire length of the altar. You cannot tell it is even there, due to the vast array of bottles that align the front of it. Susan removes a large bottle of vodka from the shelf directly in front of me, exposing a rectangular area of mirror. I look at it, and of course, see myself. I look tired, and immediately sit up to pull my shoulders back. I compliment myself on the shirt I am wearing, and wonder if anyone even notices it. I take off my glasses to look at myself through different eyes, but quickly realize the impossibility of the thought.

Lenny Kravitz seeps from the jukebox. It's slow Kravitz, not fast, and the one I have been waiting for appears in the mirror, on the stool beside me, eyes big and bright with attention, hanging on my every word. She laughs and pats the inside of my forearm, using the back of my stool and the brass rail to pull herself closer to me, not wanting to miss a thing. I quickly admire the smoothness of her neck as she pulls her hair to the side to speak into my ear; using the time for my reply to retrieve her "Long Island" left behind on the altar top. She lifts it with the style and grace of a "10," bringing with it the napkin that is stuck to the bottom of the glass. She is *so* perfect. "Can you sing?" She asks, and I lean into her to tell a lie, taking in her fragrance as it escapes from the depths of her shirt.

We're sitting upon a red and white checkered cloth, spread out onto the glen, overlooking the loch. A warm breeze is at our backs as we drink wine, eat cheese, and toast Dylan. We then lie back, side by side, and I read to her passages from *Jane Eyre* while she uses the clouds as paint against the sky-blue canvas to illustrate my narrations. Happy we are, but no more: I can no longer see myself smile; I can no longer see her: for Susan has returned the vodka to the shelf.

Kravitz is all of a sudden boring, and I grow sad, and work quickly to fish some coins from my pockets to tip Susan so I can leave the pub before the song is over. I step upon the brass

rail to make my descent from the altar, pulling the car keys from my pocket, and sift through the mass of metal until I identify the plastic handle of the door key by touch alone.

Then I see her: a single woman!

Her head snaps to the left as the cue ball “cracks!” She sways clear of the smoke cloud to her right, and looks directly at me as she continues her parade toward the altar. *Aerosmith* wails from the jukebox. I back up, stuffing the keys into my pocket, spinning just in time to cover the tip of coins with my hand before Susan has a chance to wipe all evidence of my presence from the altar top. “I thought you were leaving?” is what her eyebrows said to me as “Miller Lite” escapes my lips once more.

She is contemplating where to sit. The stool beside mine is empty. Susan arrives with a bottle of beer on a fresh napkin before me, then turns and pulls a bottle of Scotch from the shelf a couple of stools down. I quickly rub the cold bottle with both hands as if it were a magic lamp, and the woman is just one of three wishes. I use the sweat to wet my hands, and take a couple of steps down to the vacancy in the mirror to slick back my hair, then return to my stool and cuss myself for using the brass rail for a third time.

She sits down beside me; her back is at an angle to mine, and I have to crane my neck to see her face. Our eyes meet. She quickly looks away; I look at the ceiling; she says “Hi” and I turn to exchange introductions, only to find she was addressing a man other than myself. I turn pale; I look at Susan for help. Grinning, she slams one eye shut, which tells me that I have to be quick, if I’m going to succeed here at the altar. Defeated for the night, I drink and wait, considering the vanity of it all.

---The mirror that is...

Nadine

Debbie Sexton

People agreed that Nadine wasn't the brightest bulb in the box. When she was killed in a freak refrigeration accident in the back room of her father's small grocery store, most thought it sounded like something that could only happen to Nadine. It was like the time she got stuck in a port-o-pot behind the pig shed at the county fair. Instead of calling for help, she tried to wiggle herself free and only succeeded in sliding farther down. When the cleaning crew found her the next morning, all they could see was the top of her head, and her arms and legs sticking out of the hole.

That winter she had been cleaning out the chest freezer in the storeroom when a box fell off a shelf above her, knocking her unconscious. Unfortunately for Nadine, when she fell, she fell into the freezer. The door she had been holding open with one hand, while she chipped away at the ice with the other, dropped closed with a thud and the lock hasp fell into its slot. No one knew if she regained consciousness, but four days later when her father went to the freezer, she was as solid as the ice cream and frozen vegetables on which she landed.

Her body presented an engineering problem to the undertaker. Mr. Henry, or "creepy ol' Mr. Henry" as the kids called him, was a quiet, isolated old man. The nature of his work kept him at a distance from his fellow townspeople, but in the end they all came to him. He knew who beat his wife, who was too heavy handed with their kids, who had a problem with the bottle or the needle. The dead told him the truth of their existence.

Poor Nadine, thought Mr. Henry as he gazed sadly down at her twisted body. *Life hasn't treated you very well, has it.* He began to pull on her stiffened limbs, trying to get some semblance of normalcy back into them. He realized he was going to have to have help to do it and the thought sickened him a bit, but he consoled himself with the thought that Nadine wouldn't have to suffer it. *Suffer. I suppose that's a good word for it.* He had watched her grow from a grubby little kid; *hell, her parents never did seem to care*; into a lanky tomboy with scabby knees; *not the most graceful girl in the world*, he thought with a chuckle. As a kid Nadine had the tendency to fall down a lot . . . or to walk into light poles. *Seems she always had a goose egg on her forehead*, he reminisced. Finally, he thought of her the way she was now. Well, not NOW, now, but how she was before the accident. She had blossomed into a very pretty girl with long wavy brown hair, deep blue eyes, and a figure that promised to grow more breathtaking with every passing year. At 16, she turned heads when she walked down the street in the short shorts and cut off T-shirts that she favored in the hot weather.

Mr. Henry was probably the only person in the entire town, including her family that gave a damn about what happened to Nadine. He had seen people take advantage of not only her innocence, but of her body as well. He bitterly recalled the scene after a rousing tent revival by a very charismatic Baptist preacher who called himself Hallelujah Jones. Rounding the corner of the tent he saw Nadine and the preacher. Jones had his hands on top of her head and was moaning the Lord's name over and over. A greasy lock of black hair had flipped down over his bloodshot and protruding eyes and Nadine had traded the scabs on her knees for grass stains. Mr. Henry managed to duck back around the tent before either of them saw him, but he couldn't get the image out of his mind. Now, looking down at her cold body, he remembered the conversation he *tried* to have with her about the incident. She had just come out of the five and dime with a sack full of hard candy; how it didn't rot her teeth he never knew, but she had a

beautiful white smile. The little sundress she wore stopped well above her knees and her legs and bare shoulders glistened bronze in the sunlight. Nadine was a looker all right; it was too bad God didn't give her some brains to go with it.

"Nadine honey," he said, his face red from embarrassment, "I need to talk to you about last Sunday."

Everyone called Nadine "honey." It was as natural as saying "peanut butter and jelly"; the words just seemed to go together. Nadine turned her sweet face up to Mr. Henry and smiled her little dazed smile. "Yes, Mr. Henry?" she asked.

"Sweetie," he muttered, his ears and neck turning a glorious shade of purple, "honey, I don't know if you know it or not, but that preacher last Sunday? You know, after the service?" Nadine's smile grew wider and she nodded eagerly, "Yes Mr. Henry, I remember him. He was so nice. He made Jesus sound like he was right in the room with us!"

"Well, yes honey, he did, but that's not what I want to talk to you about." Mr. Henry shuffled his feet nervously, then, glancing both ways down the street; he took Nadine's elbow and led her around the corner of the store into the alley that ran beside it. "Nadine honey," he repeated, "I don't know if you know it or not, but that preacher shouldn't have done what he done to you." His face was so red that Nadine worried he might have a fit. She had seen a cousin have one once and it was a very scary experience. "He shoulda never took you out behind the tent Nadine. What he done was wrong."

A small frown puckered Nadine's brow and she seemed to be mulling over Mr. Henry's words, then a huge beaming grin wiped her concern away.

"Oh Mr. Henry," she giggled, clutching her knees, "what he did wasn't wrong. I was gettin saved!"

Poor Nadine recalled Mr. Henry, as he remembered the scene. He had tried to explain to her what had happened, but she just could not understand. Shaking his head, he reached up and turned off the light over the table.

Two days later at her funeral he scrutinized the procession of mourners as they filed slowly by her casket. Her mother and father stood at the head of the line, the former looking bewildered and confused, the latter at his girlfriend in the fourth row. Outside the immediate family, callers also included most of the townspeople and many of *their* relatives. Word of Nadine's bizarre death had spread throughout the county, and the curious were anxious to see what a frozen body looked like. Stories had been flying all over town about what had really happened, and as they passed through the line Mr. Henry could hear what people were saying. From where he stood in his little niche behind the guest book, he overheard Mrs. Potter, of Potters Five and Dime, talking to Mrs. Compton, of Bernice's Beauty Bazaar, about Nadine and the abuse she had suffered at her father's hand. Mrs. Potter speculated that Nadine's dad had killed her in some barbaric sexual ritual and that he had stashed her body in the freezer. *You should know about that stuff, Eugenia*, Mr. Henry thought. *Those weren't Indian rope burns on your husband's wrists and ankles.* The late Mr. Potter had passed away after a lengthy illness that had kept him confined to his bed. *Confined was right*, the mortician thought contemptuously. *Those marks could have only been made by shackles.*

The rest of the conversation was lost to him as the women passed down the line. Mr. Henry found himself hoping that the service would start soon. He was uncomfortable in his stiff black suit and the heat radiating from the tightly packed bodies was making him ill. Ordinarily these discomforts didn't bother him. He had been taking care of the dead for over forty years and, other than in the beginning of his career, he never lost control. He didn't know why, but this time was different. Nadine's death had affected him deeply and when he saw the traveling

preacher take the podium to deliver his fire and brimstone sermon, Mr. Henry slipped out the side door to smoke his pipe. He couldn't bear the sight of the man after what he had done to Nadine and only hoped that he wouldn't stretch out the sermon to include a call from Jesus to the audience. At the last funeral, a revival followed a two-hour sermon in which fourteen new souls were added to his flock. Of course, he had saved most of those people at previous funerals, and the "new" converts were only trying to get him to hurry so they could get to the free food and booze at the wake.

When Mr. Henry came back inside the sermon was at a fever pitch. Sweat was running down Jones's face and half the audience was on their feet, hands raised in the air, bodies swaying to his rhythmic hypnotic patter.

"Do you feel Jesus?" he asked the crowd.

"Yes Lord!" they replied in unison.

"No, I say do you *feel* Jesus?"

"Yes Lord!" they shouted. Those still sitting, rose to avoid being drowned in the waves of sweat and cologne pouring off the bodies of two hundred people packed into a chapel built to hold half that number. Jones was working himself into an apoplectic fit on the stage and the crowd loved it. This kind of sideshow was just what they were looking for. They would miss having Nadine around to pick on and make fun of-- she was always good for a laugh or to gossip about; but damn that Jones could work a crowd! The veins stood out on his neck and his face glowed fire engine red as he screamed to the assembly:

"I SAID DO YOU *FEEL* JESUS!"

"YES LORD! They shrieked in response, jumping up and down and dancing in the aisles. "AMEN!" the audience shouted. Both Mrs. Compton and Mrs. Potter were sweating profusely; their cotton tent dresses clung to their bodies like Saran Wrap over Jell-O. *Looks*

about the same too, thought Mr. Henry wryly. "Hallelujah Jesus!" cried out Miss Maness, the forty-eight-year-old spinster librarian, who then fainted dead away. Eight-year-old Brittany Bowman threw up in her little brothers hair, and Hallelujah Jones fell to the floor in an orgiastic display of the Divine Spirit. Disgusted with the whole affair, Mr. Henry slid out the door to wait for the conclusion of the service.

An hour later all was quiet in the chapel. Everyone had filed out, leaving Mr. Henry to close the casket and take Nadine to the cemetery. This was where he said good-bye to them. After they left this place, they became a memory; all he put into the ground was a box. He remembered them the way he thought they would like to be remembered. He would always see Nadine as he saw her that day outside the Five and Dime . . . sweet . . . innocent . . . not like she was now. There was a skinned place on one of her cheeks. He had used a hair dryer to thaw the package of Del Monte peas that had been frozen there, but it had still torn the skin. The make up had done a good job of covering the blemish, but the heat in the little room had caused some of the imperfections to show through. There were a couple of odd-looking lumps where he, along with Hank and Ernie Ballard, had to wrestle her into a normal position, but Mr. Henry had thoughtfully covered these protrusions with a few strategically placed pillows. They had become dislodged during the service, and he lovingly replaced them over her twisted body.

Looking at her one last time, Mr. Henry closed the lid to the casket.

Poor Nadine.

Magic

A little boy's magic,
A nearby field
Along the river,
An untamed land
To be explored.

An old cargo box
In thick jungle
And our dog to protect us
From tigers, river pirates
And bridge goblins.

---L. Paul Tracy



Innocence Lost

Looking in the mirror,
Though frightened to see,
Before her—a blurred image.
The tears that flooded her eyes,
And stained her face,
Made it virtually impossible
...to see clearly.

She took a tissue from the box
With a trembling hand.
Carefully, she dabbed at the tears.
Occasionally she would wince.
The discolored flesh below her eye,
Was a reminder of the illusion.
The illusion others were able to see beyond.
But she could not believe...it was true.

The blues, purples, and greens
They would fade away.
But the bruises to her soul and mind
...would forever stay.
Locked up deep inside,
Tarnishing her faith,
And crippling her pride

When the last of her tears had dried,
She attempted one last glance
Before she turned out the light.
A clearer image—now.
Colors more distinct.
With her glance,
A single tear fell.
A tear shed for innocence lost.

--Isis Rain

Risen from the Ashes

Jennifer Phillips

I didn't hear him leave, but I knew the moment I awoke that he was gone. Stillness seemed to have settled into the room. There was a coldness that had entered the air that made me shiver. It hurt to take that first breath and every breath shortly after as the realization that I would probably never see him again set in. There is the photograph I had taken, there are my memories, but they are hardly enough.

It is difficult to put into words something that I myself don't really understand. There aren't enough words possible to describe the emotions he awoke in me or any words in existence beautiful enough to properly describe him or what he did for me. I can only say that my life began the day I was dying and he brought me back to life. That was the day I realized that I had never really been living at all.

It had begun as a typical Friday. I went to my classes, drifting from subject to subject as I did every day, there in body but distant in mind. After my last class it was off to my job at the 24-hour convenience store. The girl who was supposed to work with me that night called in sick at the last minute, leaving me to do twice the work and bear the graveyard shift alone.

Right around eleven a robber came into the store so quickly that I had no time to contact help. He was tall, masked and demanding. I did everything he told me to without hesitation, but he shot me anyway. Through the blinding haze of pain I heard the front doors being opened as I fell to the ground. Seconds later I saw the robber knocked to the floor only a few feet from me, his body still and lifeless. That was when I first saw him, standing over me like some magnificent paladin.

As he knelt down beside me I began to weep. In retrospect, I'm not sure if the tears were invoked from the pain and fear or from looking into his eyes. He had the eyes of an angel. I remember thinking that even back then, in that moment, as I lay dying. I was dying; I could feel the end swiftly approaching as my bleeding continued. There was a great deal of terror settling into my heart as I stared at him, but the unwavering serenity in his face somehow made my panic fade.

He was, beyond a doubt, the most beautiful creature I had ever set eyes upon. My words cannot do justice to his thin, pale face so full of compassion and repose, yet hinting of some dark nature lurking behind the angelic gaze. His hair was an unnatural shade of red, much like the color of a deep crimson blaze. It hung about his face in thin, silky strands, resting just slightly on his shoulders. And his eyes . . . I can't even begin to describe his eyes in true enough detail. They were so sharp that they seemed to pierce my own and I simply could not look away from them. There was an air of self-assurance and awareness in their steady gaze that made me feel as though they were looking into me, searching my soul. Their color was like blue velvet, so dark and endless, soft and hard to ascertain.

He placed his hands on top of my bleeding chest with gentle but firm pressure and gazed down into my eyes once again. He asked me to relax, which, given my circumstances, seemed impossible to do. However, at his simple request, my mind did relax completely. His full, rose-colored lips parted, revealing perfect white teeth, as he softly told me that I would be all right. His voice was smooth and sweet, kissed with some exotic accent I didn't recognize.

What exactly happened next, I can't really say. All I can remember is the brilliant, blinding light that burst out all around him, flooding the room as it enveloped my body. I had to close my eyes from the brightness. My body became seized by incredible warmth, as if someone had just wrapped me inside a heated blanket. I was no longer able to move but not at all frightened. The sensation lasted only a few seconds, I think, though it felt as if it had taken much longer. The light faded as quickly as it had come and when I opened my eyes my body was healed.

I stared at him, unable to speak, my mind in a complete daze. His lips moved into a slight, closed-lipped smile as he rose to his feet. I managed to sit up, feeling a bit dizzy, and looked over to where the robber's body lay. He was dead, I was quite sure of that, and yet I could see no reasoning for his death, no visible wounds. I looked away from the corpse, planning to ask the man what exactly had happened, only to find that he had vanished.

The police came to ask the usual questions and collect the dead body. I didn't know what to tell them. What could I say? They told me the robber must have had a heart attack before he could make his get away, much to their amusement, of course. Poetic justice in their eyes, I suppose. I didn't argue with their theory, as I didn't have a better one to offer, and was sent home for the night.

I took my time walking home, still in a daze. I didn't understand what had happened or why it had happened to me. Nothing made sense. I even began to think the mysterious stranger must have been a dream on my part, but I remembered his touch too well to let myself believe that. I wanted to see him again but I wasn't sure what I would do if I did. I wanted to talk to him, to get answers, to have the opportunity to look into those eyes again. If I knew then what I know now I wonder if I would still wish for that chance to reunite with him.

He was waiting for me. As I rounded the corner I saw him sitting on the front steps of my apartment building. My heart skipped a beat and, only for a brief second, the idea of turning around and running away from him entered my mind. He seemed to know I was there before I had even seen him. Without even looking up at me he rose to his feet as if preparing to leave.

"If you want me to go," he said. "I'll go. Just say so."

"No," I replied, speaking before I even thought to do so. "Come up to my apartment with me."

That was when he finally looked at me, making that painfully beautiful eye contact. There seemed to be tears in his eyes as he nodded at me and waited for me to lead him into the building.

He followed me up the stairs to my apartment in silence, keeping his head lowered as if he were a shy little child. He stood in my living room in the same manner, as if timidly awaiting me to give him instructions. He was trembling. That was the first thing I noticed. He was dressed in all black, his jeans worn about the knees. The only protection from the cold winds outside he had was the thin, snug black sweater he wore, which was even more battered than the jeans.

"Are you homeless?" I blurted.

"Yes," he answered simply, not bothered by my insensitivity. "I have to move around too often to keep a home."

"Because of work or something?"

A flat smile danced across his lips. "Something like that."

"Do you have a name?"

He laughed quietly, a delicate kind of laugh. "Sorry. It's Ashley."

"Ashley? Kinda unusual name for a guy these days."

He shrugged in nonchalant agreement. "My mother named me after a character in an old tale she used to read... about a boy risen from the ashes. Or at least that is what I've been told."

"Where did she read that at? Doesn't sound familiar."

"I don't know. My mom... she died giving birth to me. She'd told the people around her before I was born that was to be my name."

"I'm sorry."

"It's all right. I may have never known my mother but I feel her near me."

I was dying to ask him for details about what had happened at the convenience store but something stopped me. I assumed Ashley had bothered showing up at my place to deliver that explanation. Once he'd given it to me I feared he would leave. Suddenly the thought of him leaving my apartment seemed unbearable. I needed him close. So, rather than ask all the questions burning on the tip of my tongue, I instead asked what he needed. What he needed.... Ashley himself didn't seem to have an immediate answer to that.

"Peace," was what he finally said. "I need peace. We always need things most that are hardest to have."

It's hard to describe the enormous amount of pain I could see deep within Ashley's eyes at that moment. He was haunted, hunted, and unable to rest. Whether it was by himself or others he was so tormented by I couldn't be sure, but I suspected it was both. I offered him the use of my shower and a hot meal, to which he first refused. I didn't sense it was a lack of trust in me that made him so hesitant to stay but rather a feeling of genuine concern for me. Upon my insistence, however, he finally agreed. While he

showered I put his clothes in one of the washers downstairs and began cooking some food. He emerged from the shower wearing the pants I had lent him, an old pair left behind by my brother at sometime or another. The pants were several sizes too large for Ashley's thin frame, needing to be constantly held up as he made his way to the table.

Over our late dinner Ashley told me a bit about his life, about the various people he had known and helped over the last few years. Many people he cared deeply for were taken away from him at the hands of others and he had been unable to help them. However there were many more people he had met while traveling around, like me, who he had been able to help in one way or another. I listened to all of his stories in complete amazement. It was all beyond belief and yet how could I not believe it after my own experience?

"How do you do it?" I had to ask. "I mean, you *did* heal me, didn't you?"

Ashley gave a half nod. "I did."

"How?"

"I don't know," he whispered. "I am what I am. That's all I can tell you."

A single tear rolled down Ashley's cheek and he lowered his eyes. I felt myself near tears as I looked at him, for suddenly I could understand him much more clearly than I had before. He held the power within himself to heal but also the power to kill, as I had seen with the robber, and hadn't a clue how he was able to do either. He spoke on, of how his world was constantly threatened and unstable. There were people who wanted to get hold of him for profit, those who wanted to exploit him, and those who simply wanted to put an end to him because his very existence threatened their ideas of security. I gazed upon his well-toned chest, the otherwise flawless ivory skin tainted by scars of various shapes, and severity. I didn't know much about what had happened in his life, but it certainly had not been a peaceful existence by the look of it.

"People have hurt you," I softly thought aloud.

"I frighten them," Ashley replied.

"Why? You saved me. You... you're an angel, right? You must be."

He gave a short, unamused laugh. "There's a demon in me, too."

I shook my head. "You saved me. You're an angel in my book."

"I didn't save you, Maya. I only brought you back to life. You've got to save yourself."

"How did you know my name?" I suddenly asked. "How did you know where I lived?"

"Little late to think to ask that now, isn't it?" he asked with a good-natured smile. "I know everything about you. I saw your soul. You were dying long before that robber shot you. You don't do what you want to do, you do what you think is expected of you. That'll drown you for sure."

I stared at him for a long time, not even able to grow defensive because I knew he was right. I shook my head, trying to find an escape from the conversation. I was studying psychology in school to analyze other people, not to analyze myself. I spotted the camera on a nearby shelf and, hit by inspiration, smiled. Ashley watched me pick up the camera with mild interest in his eyes, knowing full well what I was doing. He turned away from me at first, sitting sideways in the chair. I confronted him with the camera a second time and he succumbed. Leaning forward a bit, arms resting on his knees, he gazed at me through the camera. Solemn, face both tired and melancholy, he stayed that way until I took the picture. I pulled the picture out and set it on the shelf to develop safely. It seems now that even then I knew that picture was soon to be all I had left of him.

He went to lie down in my bed shortly after that. I tried my best to lay on my couch and go to sleep but the thought of his body in my bed haunted me. I got up from the couch in a huff and made my way to my bedroom. He was lying on his side, facing me, his eyes wide open. I hovered in the doorway, simply breathing in his presence, and then laid down beside him in the bed. He rolled over to look at me, his face showing great vulnerability. I have no idea what compelled me to do so, but I kissed him. I put my arms around his bare back and caressed him tenderly. I could feel him shaking, tears freely rolling down his cheeks as he pushed me away.

"I can't stay here," he breathed. "I can't."

"Why can't you? You'd be safe here."

"If I stayed here, it would be you who wouldn't be safe."

I held him again and we spent the night together, laying in my bed, listening to various songs on the radio and talking about things now too bittersweet for me to recall. He thanked me, just before he fell asleep, for giving him a few hours of peace. He said that no matter what, our hearts would always be connected somehow. I remained awake for several hours after that, simply watching Ashley breathe and dream as he slept, trying my best to memorize everything about him.

When I awoke late on Saturday morning, he was gone. His clothes were gone from the wash room downstairs. His presence was completely gone from my apartment. I felt near tears for a long time, mourning the absence of a man I'd only known for less than a day, but no tears fell. Less than an hour after discovering Ashley was gone, some men dressed in dark suits came to my door asking about him. I lied and told them I'd never even seen Ashley before. Reluctantly, they went away but they are probably still watching my building, hoping to catch him coming to see me. I hope they never find him, for Ashley's sake.

"I am what I am," he had said. It isn't easy to get back to life not knowing where Ashley is or if he is okay. It isn't easy getting back into a life I know he won't be in. However, I now know that I would have invited Ashley up to my apartment that night all over again if given the chance. I'm not going to waste the second chance at life that he gave to me. He made me feel and made me realize things that I had either tried hard to forget or never allowed myself to know at all. I've since quit school and taken up photography, which has always been my true love. One thing Ashley taught me is that what is expected isn't always what is the best and that some things are unexplainable and better left that way. He is always with me, when I sit down to eat, when I lay down to sleep, any time I draw in breath... I know that he is still out there somewhere, helping others, searching for his own salvation. I hope he finds it. I'm always thinking that maybe, by some miracle, I'll be able to see him again and thank him for everything that he's done for me. Until then, though, all I have is the black and white Polaroid and this, a record of my memories of the day my life was restored by the eyes of an angel named Ashley.

Student Essays

Written self-expression takes many forms. We are pleased to include a selection of student essays. Some are scholarly, some are personal, but they all have a place in the writing we do at IUPU Columbus.

The following essay was written in response to an assignment to examine one's writing style.

When Poetry Does Justice

Natalie Hinton

I hate my family. Just kidding, I really don't hate my family at all. I'm actually quite fond of it, slightly odd that it is. Maybe that's the reason I have the problem that I do right now. Poetry has been a fairly significant part of my life ever since seventh grade, which is when I can remember writing my first poem of real substance, a poem I still consider one of my favorite works. Ever since then I have used poetry as a sort of emotional release, a way to show what I was feeling even when I might not be able to express those emotions otherwise. My poems once flowed freely, and I could find inspiration in many things, both happy and sorrowful. Unfortunately, I have recently become stricken with every writer's nightmare: writer's block.

Now, you, the reader, might be wondering what hating my family would have to do with having writer's block. Well, I've come to the conclusion that some of the most moving and emotionally charged poetry was written by people who were driven by some suffering or another in their lives. I read poems written by other teenage or young adult poets, and almost without fail the poems are all chock-full of angst. One might think these poor kids live in dark caverns a la *Phantom of the Opera*, hidden away from normal society. Then you have me. I live in a modest two-story house with a large holly tree in the front yard and a plot of the most vibrantly colored pink impatiens along the north side. My mother and I both drive fairly new cars and I am never in want for the latest in name brand fashions. My mother and grandmother both love me and give me anything I could ever need or want, and I even have a bathroom attached to my bedroom. Doesn't exactly sound like the typical inspiration for angst-filled heartstring-tugging poetry, does it? So, since I don't have plans on moving to a dark hole of woe any time soon, I suppose I will have to break out of my writer's block some other way.

My first real poem came to me while sitting in Bible Banking class. Well, that wasn't really the name of the class, but it was what my best friend and I referred to it as. I hated that class. The teacher was supposed to teach up things about managing our own money and things like that, but instead seemed to find a damnable sin in everything involving credit cards and so forth. Naturally, since I wasn't paying attention to my teacher, I had a lot of time on my hands with which to think and daydream. The poem that sprang forth on one such day bewildered me. I had never before written anything that had that kind of emotion or personal soul-searching in it. Over the years, that poem has come to be named "Untitled" (original, I know), and has always been a cherished work of mine.

"Untitled"

Running, to escape the fears,
Crying to release the tears.

Hoping, to make the sun shine,
Retreating, to cross the line.

Laughing, to hide the pain,
Smiling, to conceal the shame.

Thinking, to feel the power,
Wondering, to lose the hours.

Loving, to disguise the hate,
Ignoring, to ease the wait.

Praying, to find the lies,
Reaching, to cut the ties.

Whispering, to tell a story,
Bowling, to keep the glory.

Wounding, to never feel,
Imagining, to learn what's real.

Releasing, to hold on tighter,
Surrendering, to remain a fighter.

Dying, because I cannot go on,
Living, because I can.

After writing that first poem, I was hooked and began searching for new sources of inspiration with which to spin my sonnets.

Over the next few years I did a lot of changing, physically, mentally, and also in how I wrote. My poetry from my freshman and sophomore years reflected a very sad girl. I wrote quite a few works about unrequited crushes I had on a several different guys over the years. It seemed everywhere I turned there were people laughing, finding teenage romances, and having fun in their high school years. But I was not one of those people, and this reflected heavily on my poetry, which was my only release from my pain.

My junior year of high school was a tumultuous year indeed. In this year my life turned completely upside down and I loved it. Suddenly, I didn't care that guys didn't like me, or that I wasn't as pretty as the other girls. I had a brand new circle of friends and best friend, and for the first time in my life I felt like I belonged somewhere. This newfound sense of freedom and happiness in my own skin influenced my poetry a great deal. My confidence in myself led me to push the envelope a little farther each time, delving into more and more abstract and modern styles. True, a few of the poems seemed to show a disturbing dark side of me, such as "Requiem for the Poet with

Writer's Block," but I feel that they were just ways I was purging my demons instead of wallowing in my self-pity.

I looked like a whole new person when my senior year of high school started. I finally began to take care of myself, exercising and eating right. I also drifted away from my friends of the year before, and started going out with my first boyfriend. I still felt depressed quite a lot, but did not use my poetry as an outlet for my pain. Instead, for the first time I wrote poems about happy and true love. Instead of being desperately needed escapes from pain, my poems were now outlets where I could express this new light I had in my heart.

Now that I am starting my first year of college, it seems like my inspiration has all but vanished. My joyful love sonnets come very few and far between, but I have not sunk into my wallowing pit of despair from my early days of high school. I seem to be at a poetic stalemate. I have nothing to rekindle that spark which set afire many poems about the wonders of young love. I also am not depressed about anything enough to be inspired to write a poem about tragedy and heartbreak. But I'm not worried; I know my muse will return someday. She's probably just on vacation right now. Writing poetry has been a far too important part of my life for me to dry up just like that. I have many more poems left in me, waiting for the right moment of inspiration.

This piece addresses the analytical essay, an examination of another author's work.

Falling Between the Cracks

Stephanie Mathes

In his book, *Lives on the Boundary*, Mike Rose uses a combination of strong emotional appeal and modern thinking to rip open the deepest, darkest failures of America's educational system. He offers story after story of impoverished adults and children who have fallen between the cracks, and have been labeled and treated by society as "remedial" or "delinquent." But although Rose succeeds in revealing these obvious problems, he fails to divulge the root of these dilemmas, and therefore cannot offer valuable solutions.

Throughout his work, Rose points to social structure and cultural backgrounds as the barriers we must cross in order to educate every child. He states, "class and culture erect boundaries that hinder our vision—blind us to the logic of error and everpresent stirring of language—encourage the designation of otherness, difference, deficiency" (205). He then, in the final paragraphs of the book, explains how we can overcome these obstacles.

To have a prayer of success, we'll need...a philosophy of language and literacy that affirms the diverse sources of linguistic competence and deepens our understanding of the way class and culture blind us to the logic of error...At heart, we'll need a guiding set of principles that do not encourage us to retreat from, but move us closer to, an understanding of the rich mix of speech and ritual, and story that is America. (238)

While Rose is correct in identifying these barricades, he fails not only to clarify where we will discover the "set of principles" that he deems so vital, but also to give a detailed strategy for reconstruction in the academic world. There are two primary reasons as to why Rose is unable to give us a specific plan for reform. First, he neglects to incorporate the aspect of mankind's integrity and morality in his assessment of our educational problems, and second, he allows his actions to contradict his written philosophy.

By cunningly incorporating his autobiography into his critique of our educational system, Rose allows the reader to experience the emotional as well as academic struggles these individuals must overcome in order to succeed not only in school, but also in life. Fortunately, Rose was able to rise above similar societal hindrances through the careful guidance and encouragement of several accomplished teachers. As Rose points out, though, many children do not receive such instruction and are therefore left behind. He acknowledges this early in his book when he asserts,

To live your early life on the streets of South LA – and to journey up through the top levels of the American educational system will call for support and guidance at many, many points along the way...You'll need people to help you center yourself in your own developing ideas...You'll need people to watch out for you. (48)

In his case, Rose found that not only did the attentiveness of teachers like Jack McFarland help him overcome his trials but also the love for books that he developed throughout his early life.

Because Rose believes that reading good books can change people's lives and give them a more profound knowledge of life, he often discusses such volumes as Abraham Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being*. In fact, Maslow's discussions, which included "the quest for one's identity," "had a profound effect on [him]" (51). It is interesting to discover, however, that despite his attendance at a college that "prided itself on providing spiritual as well as intellectual guidance for its students" (41), Rose appears to overlook the need for morality, values, and integrity, and instead focuses on "the social context in which [the nature and development of literacy] occurs – the political, economic, and cultural forces that encourage or inhibit it" (237). Is it possible, though, that before we can even attempt to change the entire education system, we must first change the hearts of the American people? For is it not through the heart that every other action of our lives is made possible? While Rose does a superb job of analyzing, in detail, many other aspects of human nature – the psychological, the mental, the practical, the cultural – he excludes the spiritual, which is the part of humanity that establishes ethics and character, a significant element of mankind.

As Anthony Quinton, former president of Trinity College, Oxford, and author of numerous books, states, "Strength of character...allows the cognitive harvest of our reasoning powers to have an effect on what we do" (qtd. in Sommers p. 559). In other words, our character, or moral nature, is fundamental to human life because it determines how we allow our rational

development to be fulfilled in our actions. Dr. Stephen R. Covey also discusses the importance of “restoring the character ethic,” in his book *the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. He states, “If you want the secondary greatness of recognized talent, focus first on primary greatness of character” (43). Here again we find the idea that individual character and morality is key in achieving success, whether it be in school or elsewhere. As a result, children who are not given instruction in their cognitive and moral lives often become irresponsible in their actions, thus possible leading to the recent increase in school violence. The questions must be raised, then, of why, after completing most of his education in religious institutions, Rose gradually ignores the human need for the establishment of integrity and spirituality? Why does he take on a sociocultural view of reform instead of scrutinizing and discovering that perhaps there lies an even deeper problem – that is a lack of character, or high moral standards, in today’s parents, teachers, and students.

The second hindrance Rose faces in attempting to offer solutions is the fact that he fails to allow his actions to carry out his written philosophy. As a reader can easily discover from reading *Lives on the Boundary*, the most important key to Rose’s success was the teachers who mentored him, who encouraged him, and never gave up on him. It was their determination and understanding that allowed Rose to slowly discover who he was and what he could do. He recalls one of his teachers who “tapped my old interest in reading and creating stories. He gave me a way to feel special using my mind” (34). It was because of professors such as this that Rose decided he, too, would go into the teaching world. What is interesting to uncover, however, is the lack of determination we see in Rose when the Veteran’s Program, a school where he was teaching, had to close down due to lack of funding. Rose asserts, “Programs like this come and go. Political winds shift with the seasons” (163). Here we see Rose giving up on a program which he found had, “taught [him] for a sense of human cognitive potential” (164). Just as we are beginning to find hope for our education system in schools such as the Veteran’s Program (which allow students to be taught by teachers who care about them and are willing to help them succeed), Rose slams the door in our face and declares that these programs “come and go.” He does not appear to fight or object, but simply acknowledges the fact and moves on with his life. Yet when we look back at Rose’s childhood, it was not the teachers who quit that helped him, but those who were persistent, that pushed their students and made them work in order to learn. This paradox in Rose’s life leads up to wonder if his ideas are the kind, which we ourselves would

want to adopt. If the author cannot live out his philosophy, is it truly one that should be implemented?

Despite Rose's enlightening look at America and his discernment of our problems, his two faults in reasoning – his exclusion of the need for character and his own inconsistency – hinder him from offering a systematic solution to our educational failures. They prevent him from discovering the foundation of failure, which may include a lack of morality. If this is true, we, as a nation, must first establish a "set of principles" that teach our children personal responsibility and integrity before we can have a prayer at bettering their cognitive development.

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Another essay describing writing personality.

Praise Kept the Butterfly Afloat

Melanie Hargis

As I thought back in an effort to determine a single event that transpired to develop my writing personality as it is today, I found that a single, significant event was impossible to select. Just as a person grows physically, so have my writing habits and interests.

I recall my writing interest beginning in the second grade. At that time, I had a teacher who was considered by all to be mean. I was shy, and our two personalities were not a good combination. She gave us an assignment of selecting a picture out of a magazine and then writing a story about this clipping. This assignment seemed unfair and difficult. After all, at that age, we were still in the process of learning the basics like spelling, sentence forming and even the art of writing the letters perfectly.

For lack of pictures in the particular magazine I was handed, I cut out a picture of a butterfly. I was also emotionally stressed over this. Eventually, though, I ended up with my one-page, fictional story about Freddy the Butterfly.

Maybe this was the event that formed my writing personality, as I can still remember how excited I was to get the paper back marked "great job" written across the top in bold red marker. I looked at the papers of the kids who sat near me, and their papers did not reflect compliments. This was quite a confidence booster to a shy kid. The mean lady had given me some pride significant enough that I still have the paper today.

In ninth grade, I received another push toward developing my writing. This time, I had a teacher who was nice but graded harshly. Every Friday, we were given time in class to write a journal entry about our life for the past week. I struggled with this at first, as I believed the teacher was just being nosey, and I viewed it as an invasion of privacy. However, as the school year went on, I continually received high compliments on my journal for my writing style. This, in turn, caused my confidence level to increase again.

I found I had unknowingly put my resentment aside and I had begun to write for the achievement.

In future years, I became interested in writing poetry, simply for the enjoyment of being able to select any topic based on any thought and then creatively developing a set of words to describe that emotion, thought, scene or event. It was a challenge to me, and I have always loved a challenge.

Eventually I began receiving requests to write poems for people to give to others. This was a new endeavor as I would personalize a requested poem to fit the recipient, and sometimes I had never laid eyes on this person. I wrote poems for others for Valentine's Day, birthdays, anniversaries, inside Christmas cards as a substitute for a gift that would be delivered late and, most frequently, to accompany gag gifts. This is one area that, though I rarely have time to just sit and write, I have continued with upon request.

I later began taking some of my poems and turned them into songs with the help of my guitar. Yet, I felt that creating melodies was not my best talent. This genre did not provide the encouragement I needed to enhance my abilities and, being honest with myself, I had to admit that I did not have the belief in my work that a lyricist should have.

Still seeking self-satisfaction, I received a piece of junk mail one-day in 1996 that caught my interest. It was for a course in authoring children's short stories or magazine articles. Since I like children, I thought this might be a good way to combine two interests, and I enrolled in the correspondence course.

This course helped me to improve my abilities in writing and even taught me how to market short stories. My work was graded and criticized by an author who has strong credentials in publication. He praised, but he also helped me to sharpen my skills and see things at a different angle to open up a world of choices in writing style. Through his instruction, I wrote several short stories for children's magazines, and I sent them in to various magazines.

An immediate realization for any writer who tries to sell work is that he better have a large folder labeled "Rejection Slips," because many will be received. Though I had spent my life thriving on praise about my writing, the rejection slips did not bother me. I

found that something was still missing for me, and I finally pinpointed the missing link as self-satisfaction.

The last assignment posed a choice. I could write three more short stories, complete with all of the enclosures needed for marketing, or I could write the first three chapters of a book. Due to having kids at home, I decided I would need to stay with short stories until after they had all moved out years down the road when I would have more time to devote to something as major as book writing. I thought I would keep writing short stories, and maybe someday I would write the one that brought in a few extra dollars. Yet, when this assignment presented itself, I decided it might be a good idea to write the first three chapters of a book while I had an author to critique it. This would give me a foundation for writing after the kids did not demand so much of my time.

Within one hour of sitting down with paper and an ink pen, I knew I had found the "niche" that I had been longing for. My thoughts were flowing faster than I could write. There was a passion burning within, and I had no desire to extinguish the fire. The book was finished, including a cover page, chapter-by-chapter summary and the synopsis, in slightly over five weeks. Upon completion, I fired it off to a publisher. Suddenly I had all kinds of book ideas swimming in my head, but I wanted to be sure that this was where my passion lay, so I started the second book right away. It, too, was done in less than six weeks. The excitement was still just as strong. Without a doubt, I knew that writing teenage adventure novels was my passion, and I completed four books within six months.

What is the single event that led to my writing personality today? Is it the compliments from the mean, second grade teacher? Is it the encouragement to open up more in my writing learned from the nosey, ninth grade teacher? Is it the experience given me of expressing emotions in writing by the many people who frequently requested specialized poems? Could the single event be that of being critiqued by a published author who gave me his input? Or was it simply my struggle to continue on until I found my passion in writing? I do not think that I will ever be able to pinpoint a single event. Just as I grew up from a small, shy second grader, I think my writing personality has grown up due to encouragement given by a group of wonderful people!

The writing exercise that follows is based on an assignment to write about a simple story in different styles, and from different perspectives.

The Pink House

Delores Willett

She met the realtor at the pink house at 4:00 p.m. The realtor unlocked the door and showed her all the rooms. She signed some papers. The house was hers.

The Stuff Dreams are Made of

I had to ask the boss if he would allow me to leave work earlier than usual. Now, the boss is testy. Oh well, he is always testy about something. It must be another testosterone surge. This was not my first choice, but the real estate agent gave me no other option. He could only let me see that darling pink house at 4:00 p.m. This was a huge inconvenience. Personally, I would have liked to look at the house at 7:00 p.m., after having gone to my apartment, made sure the cats had eaten, consumed the meal purchased at Long John Silver's on the way home, and watched the news on television.

The realtor said we should see the pink house during the daylight hours. I already love that pink house. I drive past it everyday on the way to work. The salesman must have a hot date and is just squeezing my appointment in before going out for the evening.

Anyway, I met the real estate guy at the darling pink house at 4:00pm. The realtor was standing on the veranda waiting for me. He called it a porch, but I saw a veranda with blue and white morning glories and red roses climbing up the trellises.

He opened the door and we entered into a huge living room. Of course, there was no furniture in the house, but I could already see where my sofa, loveseat, two overstuffed chairs, coffee table, end tables, desk, home entertainment center, computer

station, and piano would be placed. The realtor was saying something about ten by twelve. I think he is just trying to impress me with real estate jargon.

The lovely yellow kitchen was next. It was just as cute as it could be. Imagine how cunning the green appliances would be with my pink heart decals all over them. I guess the table will have to be placed in another room, because once the cat food bowls are on the floor the table will not fit. This is great.

The salesman opened the door to the first bedroom. He said something about ten by eight, and maybe a wall could be knocked out. Surely, he is just saying that to show off his construction knowledge. Certainly my queen-size bed, dresser, chest and cedar chest will fit in here with room to spare. This guy is starting to irritate me. He is so obsessed with details.

I just glanced at the second bedroom and did not really worry about it. Who needs a door for an exercise room? All of the workout equipment that has been ordered will definitely fit in there. How much room could possibly be needed for a Stairmaster, a Bio-flex machine, a treadmill, a rowing machine, and the ab-thing Suzanne Sommers was selling? The realtor was making noises about six by nine. Who cares?

We walked out the kitchen door into this immense back yard with a fence around it. The brown yard will green up quite well when some grass is planted. He was saying, "quarter of a city lot." A gazebo painted lavender and a big flower garden will do nicely back here. My cats will love this. They can play outside and be safe because there is that chicken wire fence to protect them from the neighborhood dogs.

Oh look! We can see the wheels in the airplanes as they fly over. How neat! This is the house for me. Where do I sign? I plan to paint the window shutters aqua and paint big red hearts and green vines all over the outside of my house. My new neighbors will just love that. This is the vine-covered cottage I have always dreamed of.

Breach of Ethics

This is the official notification of the decision rendered by the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors regarding the complaint of non-disclosure of defects and misrepresentation of contents. This complaint was filed by Suzanne Barker and is against Robert Harrigan, realtor and ABC Real Estate Brokers, Inc.

To summarize the complaint, Ms. Barker was shown the house at 649 Belvedere Lane in the city of Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana on June 6, 1999 by Robert Harrigan, realtor and sales associate for ABC Real Estate Brokers, Inc. of Indianapolis.

Ms. Barker claims to have done a close personal inspection of the house, both inside and out at the time of the showing appointment. She agreed to purchase the house and signed all papers presented to her by Robert Harrigan. She submitted an earnest money check for ten percent of the purchase price. The property cleared escrow and closing of the sale was June 20, 1999 at Great American Title Company in Indianapolis.

The claimant states that upon receipt of clear title and payment of 72,5000.00, she was given the keys to the house and full possession. Upon entry to the property, Ms. Barker noticed that items present at the first showing were not on the premises when she took possession. Discrepancies noted were as follows: trellises missing from front porch, blue and white morning glories and red roses were not in evidence, door to second bedroom was missing, new appliances that had been in kitchen were replaced with old green ones, rooms were smaller size than she remembered, back yard had no grass planted and fencing around back yard was inadequate.

Ms. Barker claims that the realtor, Robert Harrigan, misrepresented room sizes when showing her the house and did not inform her that the property was adjacent to an international airport. The house is also painted pink. She remembered the exterior color of the domicile as being white.

The claimant requested that ABC Real Estate Brokers, Inc. reimburse her the 80,500.00 paid for the house as it will cost her that much to bring the property back up to the condition it was in when she made the offer to purchase.

At the request of the MIBOR review committee, ABC Real Estate Brokers, Inc., provided copies of all documents pertaining to the property transaction in question. Also, the seller, Mr. Rudolph Bonnatti, provided a statement as to the condition and contents of the house at the time of the listing.

Article 1 of the NAR Code of Ethics states, "When serving a buyer, seller, landlord, tenant, or party in a non-agency capacity, Realtors remain obligated to treat all parties honestly." Article 2 of the NAR Code of Ethics states, "Realtors shall avoid exaggeration, misrepresentation, or concealment of pertinent facts relating to the property or transaction."

Upon final review, this Board of Realtors has decided that no further arbitration is necessary. The Realtor code of Ethics was not breached.

Paradise Found

Cunning! Fascinating! Deliciously hilarious! Our favorite madcap author has tweaked our senses with this outrageous new novel, *The Stuff Dreams are Made of*. The mystical pink house shines in all its glory. The plot takes many unexpected twists and turns. Doors open to new adventures. You won't expect the ending! Once again, Delilah Deveraux has perfectly defined the in-depth emotions of the lovely, erudite heroine. This best selling author paints her scenes with vivid, vibrant words of color. There is no room for improvement with this story. This novel is another unquestioned success!

This essay explores the creative aspects of writing personality

Chasing a Bullet

Joshua Verbeke

It is a cold day on a street called Broadway. It is not the kind of Broadway with lights and celebration. This Broadway is the kind that spits fumes from its sewer drains that could choke anyone who was not used to its toxin. I just happen to be from here. I have not been to Gay, Indiana in a long time. I came here today to face some old ghosts not just with my pen, but also with my presence.

It was about fourteen years ago when I was here last. I remember it being a cold day. The leaves had fallen off of the trees out back and I had diligently crushed every one into dust. My favorite thing to do was write. Well, it was a special brand of writing. I used to make up my own little hieroglyphics if I didn't know a word. They told the story of my life and the lives of all the wild fancy dancing in my tiny head.

I didn't get to finish writing my story that day. I had flattened the tip of my crayon with fury against the paper. I was determined to depict Santa Claus in such a way that he would be proud to bring my family the very best. My artwork was interrupted by a sudden snapping sound. Before I knew what was happening, a bullet made its way through the picture window and into the head of my brother. I gripped my red crayon hard enough to break it and held my breath. I was trying to breathe, but I was overwhelmed.

The rest of the day I held that remaining piece of red crayon. The paper wrapping bearing the name of the obvious color was soggy in my sweaty palm. First it went with me in the car with my grandparents. They tried not to disclose their urgency, but their tones revealed the emergency at hand. I knew there had been a lot of chaos around the house after that, but somehow I remember only silence.

When I let the crayon out of my hand the next morning the wax was soft with warmth and moisture. I decided to graduate to pencils and try to use more coherent forms of expressing myself. That's when I wanted everyone to see what I had to say. I was eager to flush that persistent memory of silence out of my head. I began to write. Sometimes I would fall back on my form of symbol writing. More often, though, I would just draw letters with a look of fierce indignation as I drew them over and over again.

I soon moved from tracing the manuscript shapes into etching out beautiful, elegant cursive. It was the fastest way I could write so far, and I had progressed to using a pen by this time. It was also about this time in my life when I learned how to write a letter, so I rebuilt the bridge between my brother and me. I wrote him letters quite a bit. At first they were about my life, then later about my feelings. Sometimes I would curse him for dying and doing this to the family. Sometimes the ink ran with tears. Pretty soon he was my pen pal, he just never wrote back.

I kept the notebook with letters to him in my backpack, which was always with me. If I had anything to tell anyone it would be him I told it to. He was my best friend and nobody knew it. I asked him to teach me how to play the guitar as he had, and I knew that he would. I told him about the guy at school who teased me in gym class. Somehow I felt safe thinking he would protect me. And he did. I never had to fear because it was enough just to feel him there.

It took me a while, but I learned about the parts of him that live on in me. I try to give to those parts by continuing to write. I branched off from those letters to stories about what he would have been like. I painted him as a hero in my stories. I wrote to him still, but the use of the word "you" became obsolete. I was now basically keeping a journal. My every thought and feeling bled onto those pages. Without a second thought, the words would fill page after page as if put there by machine. I had no control except when I had that book open. My journal became my shield and sword. Somehow, now I was supposed to be the hero.

Today I can feel him behind me when I write, but it is not just another part of me. I know him for himself and me for myself. There is no more pretending. I imagine us as we would have been had he not died. That is to be expected. There is no way to replace my brother, but to learn from who he was benefits me to no end. I have learned

how to play guitar, just like he did.. I have made him the hero of my stories and sent him to many foreign lands. My stories have evolved into being about people other than him. In an odd sort of way, he has taught me how to let go without even being there.

I am here today on Broadway in Gary, Indiana to remember who he really was. I think it is unfair to make him my comic book hero. I owe it to him after all he has done for me. I feel safe with just his presence and I no longer need to feel he is alive for him to be my brother. I want to grant him that same peace. I want to put down the pen and show him that I recognize him and his life. I am here for *him*, not the man I made a pretend world for. I may not have had a pen pal, but I'll always have a brother.

Biographical Notes

Melanie Hargis is a freshman working toward a degree in psychology.

Natalie Hinton is currently a freshman at IUPUC with the Purdue School of Technology.

Jennifer Phillips is a student at IUPUC. She is working towards a BA in Psychology and plans to go on and earn an MA. Jennifer has been writing as a hobby since she was young.

Sharon Mangas returned to college as a seeker and a questioner after an absence of almost 20 years. An avid reader and sometime writer, this is her first appearance in Literalines.

Stephanie Mathes is a freshman here at IUPUI, planning to major in Communications. As a football and basketball enthusiast, she would like to use her degree to pursue a career in a sports related field. Stephanie credits her family as one of her greatest influences and gifts.

Isis Rain an enormous fan of the Beat generation authors, Isis Rain is a junior in disguise pursuing a degree in English. She is currently working on a project with an independent publisher in New Hampshire. She is a tutor in the IUPUC Writing Center and a member of the Literalines production staff. Oh, and she loves kittens!

Sandy Rilenge is currently a senior at IUPUC. Her interests include Jungian Psychology and photography.

Debbie Sexton is a fifth year sophomore working toward retirement and a bachelor's degree. She anticipates the arrival of the latter with arrival of the former. She is an English major and is senior tutor in the IUPUC Writing Center, as well as a member of the Literalines production staff.

John A. Schwenk wrote his piece as a visiting student to IUPU Columbus last summer. He now is continuing his education at Purdue University.

L. Paul Tracy is an English major at IUPUC who toils as an engineer, vocational hobbyist and freelance writer. His writing is dedicated to his wife and son, who have taught him the beauty in words, and to his dog, who has taught him that sometimes even the greatest of words have no meaning.

Dana Turnbow is an English major in her junior year. A former Literalines production staff member, her submission is a response to a class assignment. She has a two-year old golden retriever, Sweet Pea and three-year old black lab, Mooch.

Shaun Watkins is a junior at IUPUC. He is interested in psychology and philosophy. In his spare time he likes to read, play euchre, and tell jokes. He currently works as a student mentor in the IUPUC Learning Communities program. He is also exploring fractal art. As well as being an aspiring artist, Shaun continues to contribute his technical expertise in the production of Literalines.

Brad Whetstine resides in the small town of Trafalgar. He grew up in the even smaller town of Nineveh. A 1988 graduate of Indian Creek High School, Brad is currently a sophomore at IUPUC, where he is working toward a degree in English, and is also a member of Alpha Sigma Lambda. He diligently pursues his writing career, waiting anxiously for his "big break."

Joshua Verbeke is a musician and writer. He is currently a freshman at IUPUC and hopes to attend IU Bloomington in the fall.

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