

5-1-1992

## Editorial

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### Recommended Citation

Brown, Peggy (1992) "Editorial," *Forces*: Vol. 1992 , Article 45.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces/vol1992/iss1/45>

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## Editorial

**G**rand Canyon, a recent film, depicts a violent LA in which Steve Martin's character steps out of his Ferrari and gets shot in the leg by a robber after his Rolex; Kevin Kline's character takes a wrong turn leaving a Raiders game and ends up in Watts where a gang drags him from his stalled BMW; a single, African-American mother in the same neighborhood dives to the floor screaming for her daughter in a drive-by shelling of her home.

The video cover describes this as an "uplifting" movie. Obviously, with such an epithet, this movie is not about violence. It does acknowledge that life-changing incidents occur, and many of such changes result from a world out of control, in a world where nature spews monsters who bear guns, abandon babies, and eschew family bonds. But that world also spews caring people who rescue victims of the armed attack, stop to pick up the abandoned baby hidden in shrubbery, or find a job and apartment for the terrified mother cowering in the shelled tenant home she occupies.

The title of the movie offers the key: in the midst of the violence, people find love, show compassion, see beauty. In other words, they can stand at the rim of the canyon. In Greek there is a word that better expresses the meaning of the awesome power that they encounter there: *deinos* refers to something that is both terrible and wondrous at the same time. For example, encountering the Grand Canyon is awe inspiring in several ways: it is dangerous or terrible (the park rangers still record one or two deaths each year of careless hikers who take "the 12-second tour") and it is wondrous (the grandeur of it can suck the breath of the most calloused soul).

As I contemplated the goal of this edition of *Forces*, I found this aspect of the film resourceful in illustrating the unifying idea behind this publication. That idea? This staff has emphasized the impact of art on the individual. How does art impact them? some Philistines may ask. The answer lurks in the caverns of confusion facing us in daily struggles frighteningly similar to those exaggerated in *Grand Canyon*. Many of us have been touched by crime, have encountered the disintegrating family, have found the ledger bleeding at the end of the month. The problems of *Grand Canyon's* LA are our own to greater or lesser degrees. The promise is ours as well.

This staff sees art as the link. Certainly not that art is always uplifting or magnificent, but it does emerge from the desire of another human being who seeks to communicate out of the realization that while insignificant, humans can still exist--we can stand on

the rim of the canyon and not disappear. Each work of art, whether poetry or pottery, fiction or photography, painting or sculpture, emerges from an individual encounter with a wide range of experiences, and only in the communication of that unique perspective can the inner voice gain expression. That expression, then, finds meaning as others encounter and recreate the sense of it. At that moment of understanding, art expresses the promise of something more than a limp from the wound made by a handgun or the emptiness of Central at 5:15. It insures our awareness of each other, of ourselves.

The staff of this edition of *Forces* reviewed the submissions accepted by the honors creative writing class of Spring 1991 and found this unifying theme. They decided that art helps individuals look inside and examine the crags and canyons within. They sat in meetings in my office and discussed the thread that ran through the various art forms and decided that it makes no difference whether artists write poetry or fiction, take or paint pictures, sculpt pottery or wire; all hear an almost inaudible voice that echoes from their depths and if they stand at the rim of their souls they can hear. And only when they hear can they create in the midst of the chaos of a world reeling out of control.

That is what this staff hopes to suggest both in the choice of the works and in the arrangement of those works as they appear in the journal. Moreover, by choosing to interview Robert Nelsen, they hope to imply that the suggestions he makes about writing apply equally to the other arts as well. In other words, it makes no difference what medium one chooses; the degree of risk in expression seems to determine the artfulness of the product.

E. M. Forster once said that he wrote to see what he was thinking about. This staff believes that encountering an artful expression in any medium also allows that introspection, and they urge the readers of this journal to explore the works with that goal in mind.

This is the last edition of the honors journal. In the future, the honors program will undertake different projects. Future editions of *Forces* will assume a new format although each will remain the product of the creative writing classes with students making the selections and compiling the journals. As editor, I encourage anyone interested in submitting work to do so, and I also encourage students to consider joining the editorial staff by enrolling in Brown's creative writing class.

Peggy Brown