

5-1-2014

2014 Forces

Scott Yarbrough

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Recommended Citation

Yarbrough, Scott (2014) "2014 Forces," *Forces*: Vol. 2014 , Article 63.

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FORCES 2014



Darting, tripping, running to and fro...

AN INDIVIDUAL'S JOURNEY from innocence to experience

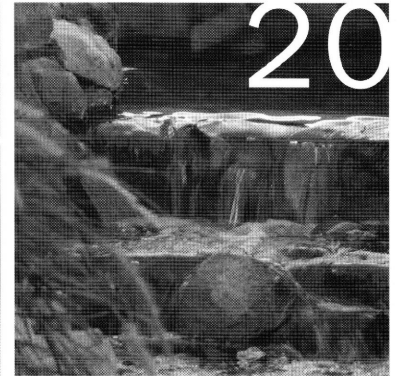
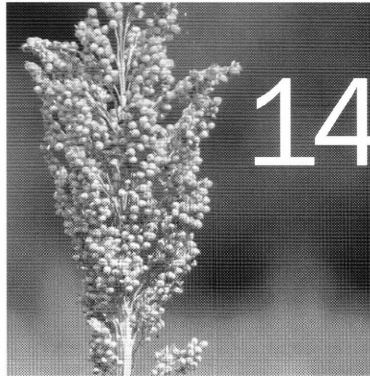
is a personal journey marked by personal time, not necessarily "real time" clicked off of a measured, traditional clock. The journey is reckless and early for some, others contemplate and weave their way to a quilt of memories chosen, placed, categorized, ranked, then stored: like a poet comparing her words to an "infant's finger paints," or a soldier contemplating moral duty in an absurd situation, or another's "addiction" to the art of producing art, even the conundrum of two women at a funeral, who in their old age realize that in loving the same man they have somehow shared a common nurturing bond of comradeship - unspoken - but understood.

Our world is not black and white, right and wrong, "fer" or "gainst;" it is a mercurial, mellifluous flow through moments, some stilted and as boring as tying a shoe and others as immediate as the popping of a balloon of an idea made real, a dream - beautiful or nightmarish - that through action becomes reality.

As always I applaud District President Cary A. Israel and the Board of Trustees for their farsighted vision for Collin College and its students though continued support of the Journal, a multi-award winning Public Relations department, and lastly, this year's, Spring 2014, Student Editors' Board:

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Faculty Editor of Forces Literary Journal of the Arts: R. Scott Yarbrough



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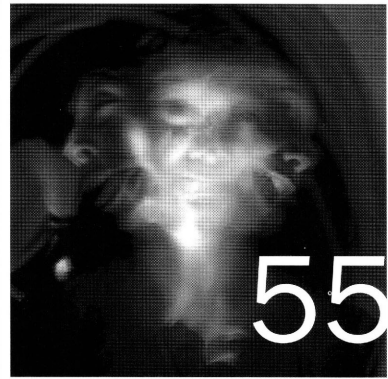
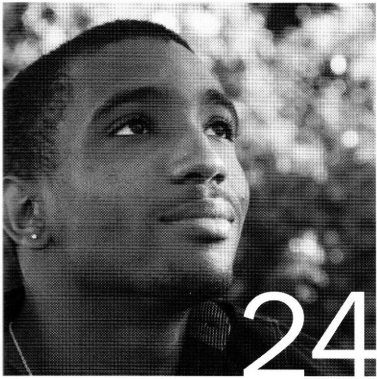
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FORCES
is an annual student publication
sponsored by the
Communication and Humanities and Fine Art Divisions of Collin College.

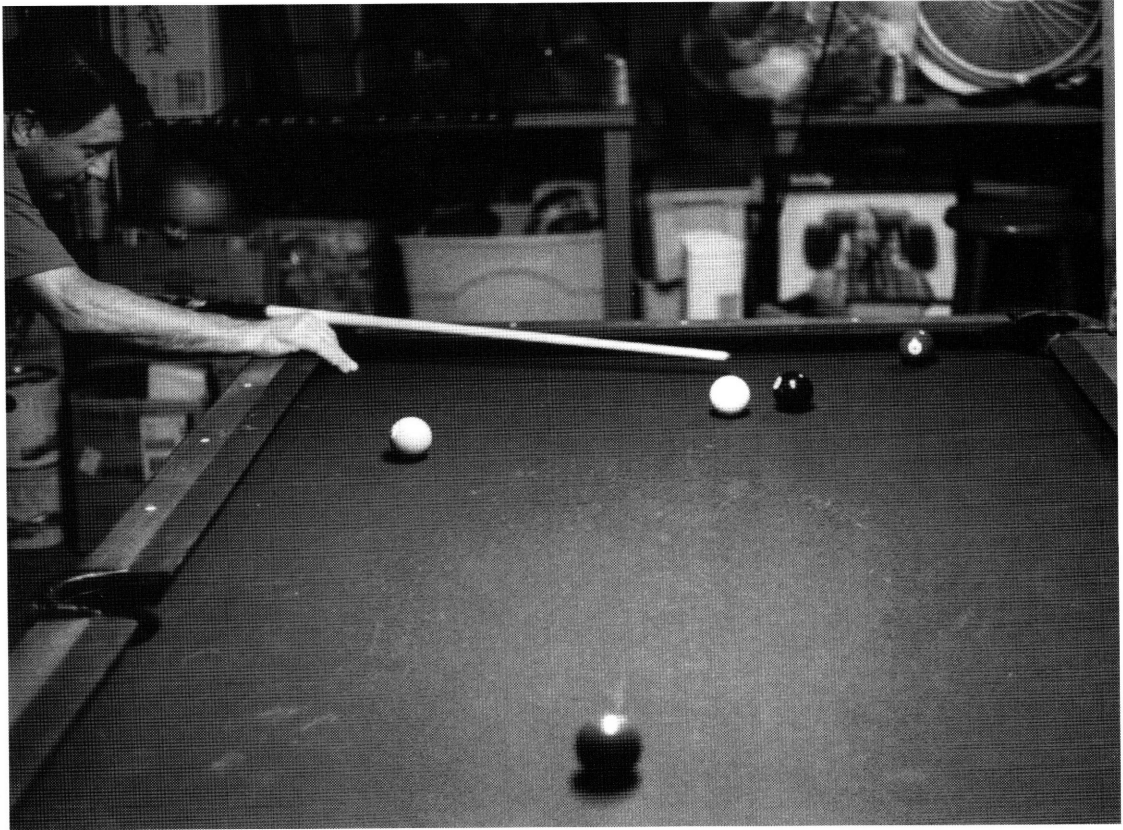
My Addiction

BETH TURNER AYERS

My greatest needs are met
By the proximity of those I love
People are more important
Than things
And, yet, I have a need
No person can fully fill
An experience to repeat
A prescription for health
Take as needed
But the bottle is often empty
So I must wait and wish
And plan my course
To meet my addiction
To stand in the awe
To let inspiration seep
Inside with advancing light
More than a wish
More than desire
More than a passing fancy
I crave the sight
Of the sun's arrival
At the edge of the world
Surrounded by endless sea

**IMAGE 001** KOSH K. MANDAVA

I am an amateur...



POOL SHARK ALEXANDER NAVARRO

Amateur

VICTORIA LARRIVA

I am an amateur
I slap words against the page
Like a toddler with finger paints
There is sometimes beauty, accidental
But never grace
Grace comes with age
Grace comes with age and self-discovery

Grace comes with age and learning at a
Master's knee
But I am arrogant, impatient
I will not wait for grace or age
I smear my words across that page
And read the works of my betters
Hoping, someday
To be half as skilled as they

I am not the perfect one...



TROUBLEMAKERS ALEXANDER NAVARRO

Inside

KERRY JEFFREY

Torn, scathed and bruised,
Nurturing lumpen thought;
I am unaware; used.

Upon the epicene minority,
Burning tear arose on skin,
Falls from slick cheek; guilty.

Soft voice, quiet talk heart,
Stripped of crooked smile,
To emotion impart.

I am not the perfect one,
With rage, I subdue.
To be happy, I hide.
Relinquished thoughts imbued.



ILLUSTRATION VICTORIA DAVENPORT

Kisses in the Dark

ELIZABETH CROZIER

It's not as easy
as initials carved in the park bench,
secret phone calls in the night.

It's cocksure caresses
rather than slow dances
in the gym—
arms straight, feet avoiding feet.

Condoms and keys in the same pocket
where she used to keep gum
and unfinished love letters
written in a language
she didn't understand.

But lips are strong
and not plush
as she pretended.

They taste warm
and slick
like bath water.

And they come
with more than teeth
and tongues.

A wordless speech
spills out of split, chapped skin
and into her mouth;
she adopts the new language.

The Fog

SAMUEL ROPER

a Thin layer of fog resides beTween Them
each looking upon tHe same moment
thE fog distorts the momEnt EvEr slowly
timing is off and heRe becomes theRe
likE touching fog, try to touch rEal

Indlgo black
SecondS paSS

a milliseCoNd ago
the fOg was real

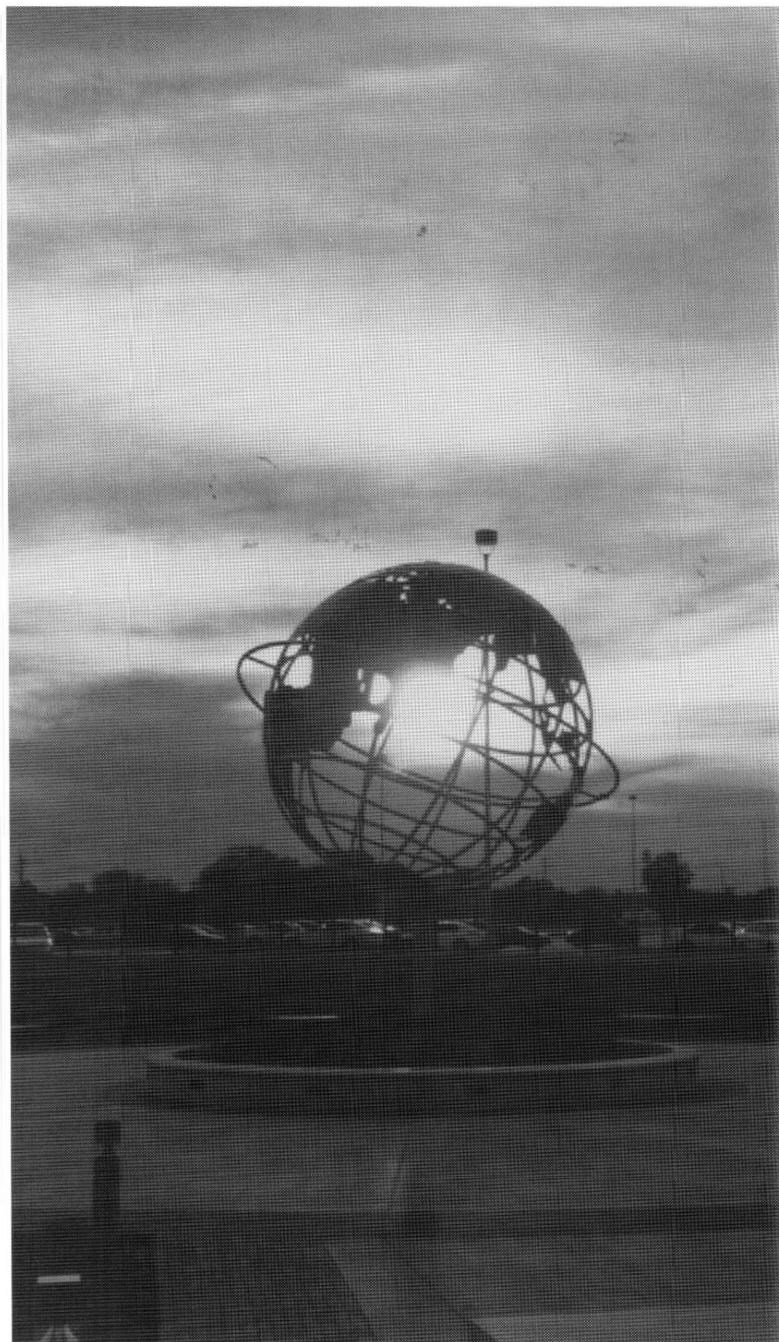
to gRasp a moment in time
is lost to Each othEr
definining what is reAl

but unablE to grasp that

In each moment
when The fog clears
realitY is onlY between them

concealed with a kiss!

But lips are strong...



Collin College

LISHAN DESTA

Because you hold aloft
The candle of wisdom---
Kindled and blazing bright
In your uplifted hand,

That you raise your voice, calling
“Ye children of near and far-flung lands,
Ye masses of youth, thirsty for knowledge,
Come unto me! Let me slake your thirst,
Feed you from my fountain breast.”

Hearing your call, they rush...
Flowing to your gates,
They crowd you, these from,
the teeming of Asia,
the depths of Africa,
the coasts of Latina,
the metropolises of Europe, and
the islands of the seas...

They come to you from,
the heights of the Himalayas,
the slopes of the Andes,
the ridges of the Atlas,
the foothills of the Kilimanjaro,
the Plateau of the Futa Jallo...

IMAGE 3 LISHAN DESTA

They come, crossing...

the Danube, the Volga,
the Nile, the Volta,
the Amazon, the Mekong Delta...

They come to you, these decedents of

the Aztec, Inca, Maya,
the Berber, Arab, Habasha.
the Han, Mongol, Elamite,
the Tartar, Cossack, Edomite.
the Saxon, Celtic, Spaniard...

Ancient blood flowing in their veins,

Past glory shimmering on each face.

These sons and daughters of the ...

Arab, Hindu, Bengali,
Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani,
Malay, Thai, Punjabi.

Chinese, Vietnam, Cambodia,

Brazil, Mexico, Colombia...

These sons and daughters of the ancient lines

They carry creeds of their fathers to your gates,

Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists,

Jew, Christians, Muslims,

Bahia, Druids, assortment of faiths....

which all these you nestle under your wings.

These multitudes gathered to your fold,

You shape them, you form them - as arrows

crafting them at the hands of the masters

who faithful to sacred duty, labor they,

to finish them as deadly darts

that will pierce the darkness.

And these young, as they rush to the masters' classes

brushing shoulders with your natives

they co-mingle mother tongues

English, Chinese,

Hindi, Vietnamese.

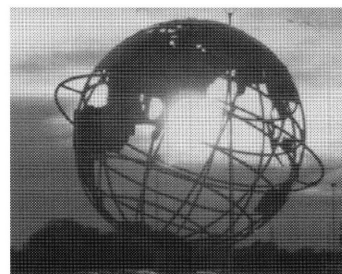
Urdu, Bengali,

Farsi, Afghani,

Yoruba, Fulani.

French, Arabic,

Spanish, Amharic...



It is in you, Collin, the symphony of nations

that plays out day and night in your hallways...

making you the veritable melting pot,

that harmonize hues of color,

differences to blur...

that would have exploded otherwise.

Mrs. Audubon

MARY F. WHITESIDE

tree swallow

family: Hirundinidae

passerine bird noted as social and adaptable; nests in natural hollows of dead trees, old woodpecker cavities, nest boxes, or other unconventional sites; the female lines her nest with feathers often gathered by the male; agile fliers

Second-floor dormitories, gawking men. Married life amid raucous strangers. A private room in a public house. This meager roost's array of clothing, watercolors, crayons, and paper; bird skins, nests, tiny eggs, and feathers. Smoldering tapers. A waiting cradle. Soon, he promises, a house of our own. Yet, the Indian Queen. This crowded room.

Like a specimen pinned to John's board, I await our first child. Confined by shouting and fetid tavern odors while he escapes to draw and note the habits of everything, I burrow into my feather tick. John tirelessly restive. His undivided attention implausible. I thought he'd change.

eastern phoebe

family: Tyrannidae

passerine bird considered hardy and very active, rarely lives in groups; a mated pair spends little time together; unlike many other birds only the female constructs the nest usually in niches or overhangs

New territory called John. My wave the answer to his shrinking boat. Downriver, smoke drifts from chimneys.

Inside the cabin, a roaring fire. Deer hide over narrow windows. Bearskin across plank door. Rocking cradle near feather-tick-covered walnut bedstead. Mother's china sooty; trunks of clothing needless. John's cherished La Fontaine's Fables and his tattered Linnaeus remain—his flat tin-lined chest of drawings, secure.

Snowflake minutes drift into gray-banked hours. In every candlestick, a taper. Lullaby sung, story read.

So he makes promises...

chuck-will's-widow**family: Caprimulgidae**

crepuscular bird that is solitary, except after nesting and when migrating; builds no nest structure; distinctive, repetitive melancholy call; graceful, buoyant flight

Pushing aside beginner spelling and grammar books, I hover over a thin, leather-bound ledger. Squint in candlelight, the columns never adding up to my expectations. John says he'll earn his way as long as he can hold a piece of chalk to drawing paper. But his dream—a book of American birds—has yet to take flight.

So he makes promises. While I struggle. For most of our married life, I've lived in someone else's home. In this old overseer's cabin, I am governess and mother, forced to haggle with planters whose children attend my school. Yet even in dwindling light, I clutch hope and smother my worries—shadow-birds, unrecognized by John, that flicker and flit as great-winged creatures.

**OBSCURE MIST** JULIE COVINGTON**WALKABOUT** JULIE COVINGTON



IMAGE 4566 AMY HASKELL

Custom or Crime

DAVID SIEG

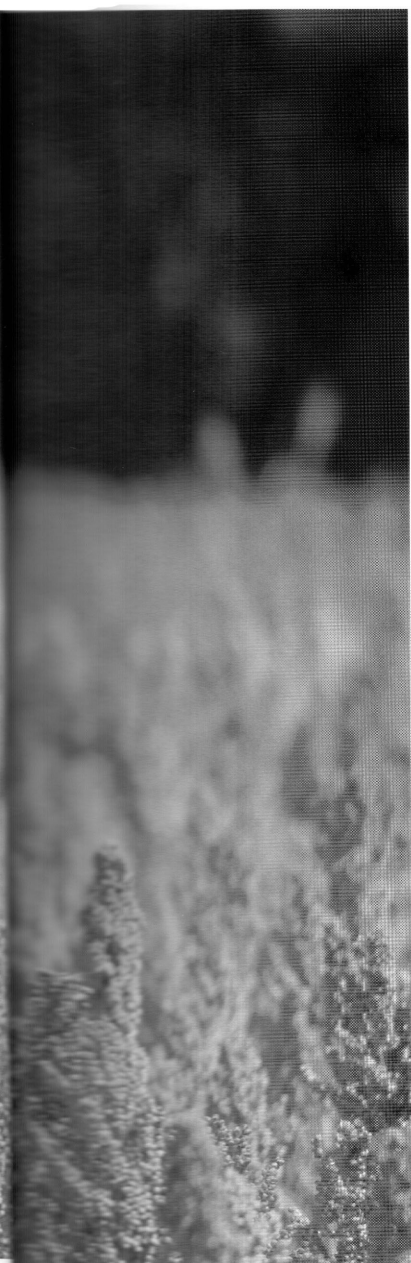
“IN GOD WE TRUST”, “LIFE AND LIBERTY”,

“De Oppresso Liber” (liberate the oppressed). Are these just words to make people feel all warm and fuzzy inside? Or, do they really have a meaning? What lengths will we go through to ensure these words hold true in our hearts? I am a soldier and I have a protocol to follow. The soldier’s creed says I should place the mission first and I do, but I also took an oath to preserve life, defend my nation against all threats foreign and domestic and to uphold the laws of the United States. I am also bound by my duties as a soldier of the United States Army not to interfere in the daily lives and customs of the host nation. Iraq has her own customs and

WE STOPPED IN THIS VILLAGE DUE TO AN UNUSUAL GATHERING OF FEMALE VILLAGERS. THE MEN IN THE VILLAGE ACTED AS IF NOTHING WAS HAPPENING.

laws. Does this mean I have to set aside my beliefs that I hold true, just to appease the powers that be? What kind of soldier, father or man would I be if I let this happen?

These words ran through my mind that morning when we stopped in a little village outside of the city of Rabiah, in the Ninawa Province, Iraq. We were on our way to Rabiah because I needed to check back with the mayor of the city. We had problems concerning insurgents crossing the border from Syria into Iraq. We stopped in this village due to an unusual gathering of female villagers. The men in the village acted as if nothing was happening. Lt. Resole, Sgt. 1st Class Naylor and myself dismounted from our vehicles and stood watching. Another soldier



Why do we do what we do...

said he could see a lone young female in the center of the circle of women. There was a lot of screaming and a form of uniform chanting going on.

I could see that all the women (20 to 25 of them) were holding rocks in their hands. Some of the rocks were quite large and could inflict serious damage and I deemed it a life-threatening situation. I started to step toward the crowd and Lt. Resole reminded me of the mission and the "No Interference" orders that were in place.

I was not Cavalry. I was Special Operations. I knew Resole and Naylor wanted to intervene, but were bound by higher authority. I wasn't in a position to violate an order, but what order do I listen to? I decided to follow the order to do what was right and that was to preserve life! I knew that I would pay dearly for this one, but I wasn't about to let this 15-year-old girl be stoned to death. I walked up to her and stood between her and the crowd.

I situated myself (weapon in the down position and my arms crossed) and stood there. I hoped no one would launch a rock in my direction. Just then I heard something behind me and I turned. It was Sgt. 1st Class Naylor and he was on the other side of her facing the other way. Because I placed myself in a situation now, it gave the others reason to react. Naylor said, "Sieg, if I get hit with a rock, you are buying my coffee for the next month." I responded, "Well, what if I get hit?" He replied back, "Well if it hits you in the face, it would be a definite improvement." We both chuckled and waited to see what would happen. Just then, the town elder and an Imam approached us. I had my interpreter Max exit the vehicle and we all talked.

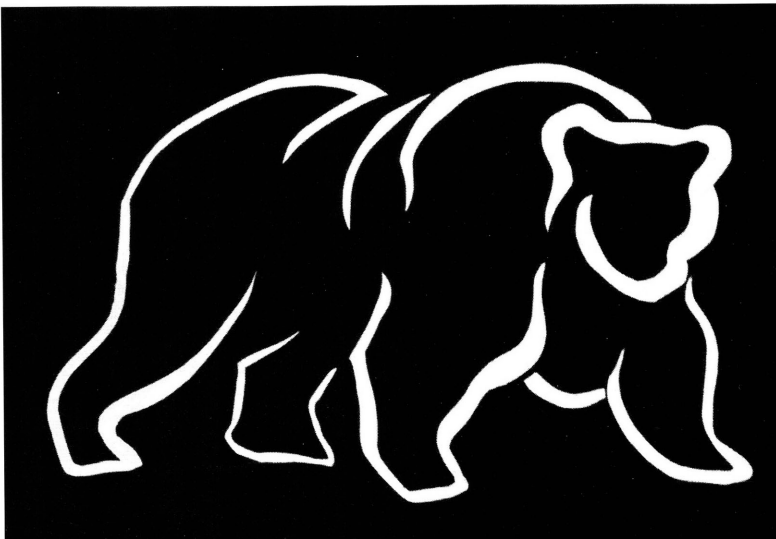
It seems the young lady had held hands with a boy and this was her punishment. Her mother was in the crowd and was sporting the largest rock. This action is the norm for their society, but not here, not at this time on this day. I informed the Imam that back home, I had children and would never punish them in such a way as to cause them bodily harm. I told him that in a free society, doing harm to another is a crime in itself. The Imam understood and disbursed the crowd. I talked with the village elder and found that he supported the efforts to have a society with a little more freedom. As the situation was brought to a close, the young girl was led off by her mother. I felt that the worst was yet to come for me. We completed the mission and returned to Forward Operating Base Sykes.

I was ready to accept responsibility for my actions. I was to meet Lt. Resole and Sgt. 1st Class Naylor in front of the Cinnabon coffee house at 7:00 p.m. I arrived for this "formal" counseling and figured I would lose rank or face an Article 15 (non-judicial punishment). As it turned out they were glad I took the step to protect the well-being of a local civilian. However, I was informed by Lt. Resole, that I had to write 100 times "I will listen to what my daddy says from now on" and I had to buy the coffee that night. So, at the end of this day we had a successful mission, practiced our beliefs, helped a young girl out and made an ally in our efforts to bring freedom to a foreign land. A tired hand from writing and \$12.75 for coffee was a small price to pay for the day's accomplishments.

Soldier's Honor

ROBERT WILLIAMS

Strange places, unknown roads
Unfamiliar people, eyes filled with fear and distrust
Why does giving protection to people breed violence
Smiles behind the barrel of a gun
Seconds pass like minutes, minutes to hours, hours feel like days
In a devastating micro moment without warning sound blasts then all goes quiet
Searing unmistakable pain, disorientation
What was now, now is no more
Blood, wreckage, people frantic
Stripped, bandaged, shaking
Longest, fastest trip back
Bearing return, reality sets in
Why do we do what we do
We endure, we survive, and we die
For those who we leave behind, and those who we will soon return
Why do we do what we do
For the moment we walk through a cramped corridor with those we walked with
thousands of times before towards what we had left behind
For the moment our past becomes our present and our future appears perfect

**IMAGE**

JAMES STUART

Droplets fall...



**IMAGE 2** ALISHA MERRILL**Mother's Day Bouquet**

JESSICA GONSOULIN

The flowers were left at the front door
 without card or explanation.
 Only my son could have done it.
 I didn't expect it from anyone else.
 Who would claim to be my child?
 A profusion of red peonies
 dipped in and deepened with black ink
 thin silky petals like petunias
 The usual sprightly pink carnations
 too large to sprout in a buttonhole
 Golden spider lilies like sunrays exploding
 Palm leaves like green porcupines
 An unidentified shrub
 Bridal Wreath like a cloud of white insects
 Purple larkspur buds shriveled at the water line
 I gave them plant food and sugar
 to make them bloom gloriously.
 A large pale pod opened overnight
 into a hot-orange lily with six anthers.
 Black seeds fell onto the six petals
 that also fell lightly and awkwardly--
 hors d'oeuvres for bees.
 One of the spider mums awakened
 to a bad hair day.
 I trimmed off the cancerous parts of the bouquet,
 removing dead leaves and fragile blossoms,
 And filled the vase with tap water.
 Droplets fell like petals upon the table.



LANDSCAPE TERRY WHITE

Forgiven

ANITA VAN OUWERKERK

**HELEN PEERED INTO THE DARKENED** chapel of

Materna's Funeral Home. Turning to the attendant she said, "Thank you. Everything is ready. I suppose the minister will be here in a minute or two. I think I'll just sit in here and wait. Thank you."

Inside the chapel, she moved to one of the three walls covered with flowers. Picking up a tag, she mused, "Who would have guessed Tom would have so many lovely flowers. These are from Thoma Lynn's company. This one is from the English Department at Texas A&M University, Rhona's co-workers." She shook her head. The flowers were from all over the country - most from people who never met Tom.

"Few visited him these past ten years. After his stroke, not even his nephews visited, but here are flowers from them as well."

She slumped into a nearby chair. Suddenly the dying flowers triggered a wave of nausea and brought back memories of her father's funeral. The artistically arranged displays of yellow chrysanthemums, red roses, blue and orange birds-of-paradise now seemed gaudy. She stared at the silver casket. "Why there's a fortune here. Why do we do this? Tom can't enjoy it. Why?"

Behind her, light streamed in as the outside door opened. Helen turned to see the silhouette of large woman against the bright afternoon light.

"The body isn't to be viewed by the public for another hour," she murmured. The woman moved toward her, so Helen pushed herself up and walked to meet the shadowed figure. When the woman's face was clear, she stopped. "Willie? Wilhelmina?" She choked.

"Helen, I'm so sorry."

"...leave those cares."

They had not spoken in close to thirty years. The younger woman was middle aged now. Her hair was white, but her voice was the same. Peering into her face, Helen envisioned the thin blond Willie had been and saw her again in Tom's arms in that darkened dance hall.

Helen shook her head, but the scene re-played itself in her mind/ Willie laughing as Tom whirled her around the dance hall and kissed her.

Willie's sobbing interrupted the scene in Helen's mind. "I don't know what else to say, but I'm sorry, so sorry." Willie's voice broke.

Helen looked at her, and the pain of remembering the scene; the confirmation of Tom's adultery flooded her with anger just as it had then. Again tears streamed down Helen's flushed cheeks.

Willie took her hand. "I had to come, Helen. I had to. I know it was a long time ago, and I don't know how to tell you, but Tom made me, skinny ol' me, feel beautiful. I know it was wrong. But, only after I was married did I understand what I had done to you. I had to come today. I have to tell you how sorry, how very sorry I've been all these years. Please, forgive me, Helen. Please."

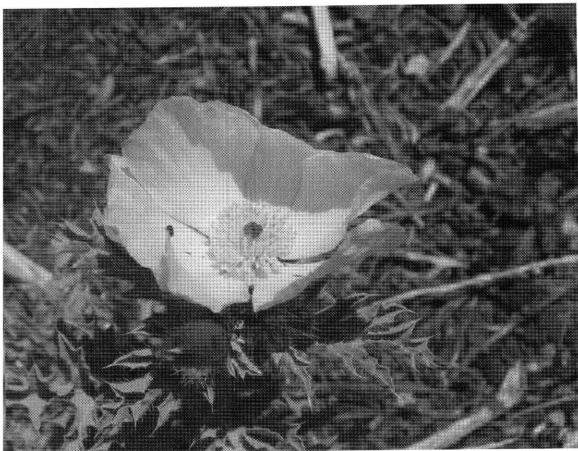
Looking past Willie, Helen saw the banner on a wreath of red roses, Texas A&M Choir-- more of Rhona's friends.

Then she searched Willie's tear-stained face and squeezed her hand. "Forgive you? Willie, you were eighteen - a child compared to Tom. It was wartime--so long ago. But..." She paused searching for words, "I'm, I'm glad you came. I'm glad someone who knew Tom came."

Looking around, she pulled Willie's hand. "Come, let's sit here and talk. We only have a minute. I've read about Jackie's basketball success and now she's the coach



BLOOM FAREN MANUEL



WHITE FLOWER FAREN MANUEL

at Banner State? Everyone is so proud of her. She took that basketball talent to its heights." Then quietly, "Tom and I never talked about it, but I know he was proud of her and happy for you."

"Yes, thank you. Helen, we have too much to say now. Let's have coffee one day soon and catch up."

Willie stood, and Helen stood beside her. "Of course that makes sense. Thank you, Willie. Will Jackie be here today?"

"No, she's coaching a basketball tournament. They have a chance at a trophy this year. Give our condolences to Thoma Lynn and Rhona."

"Please tell Jackie we follow her team and wish them well. I've heard she's a wonderful coach." As Willie walked to the back of the chapel, Helen turned to the casket. Then neighbors, friends, and family stopped to extend condolences and share memories. Some remembered how Tom loaned them money, fixed their cars or gave them rides when they were younger.

Finally, joined by her two daughters, she sat in the front row where armchairs were set up for family members.

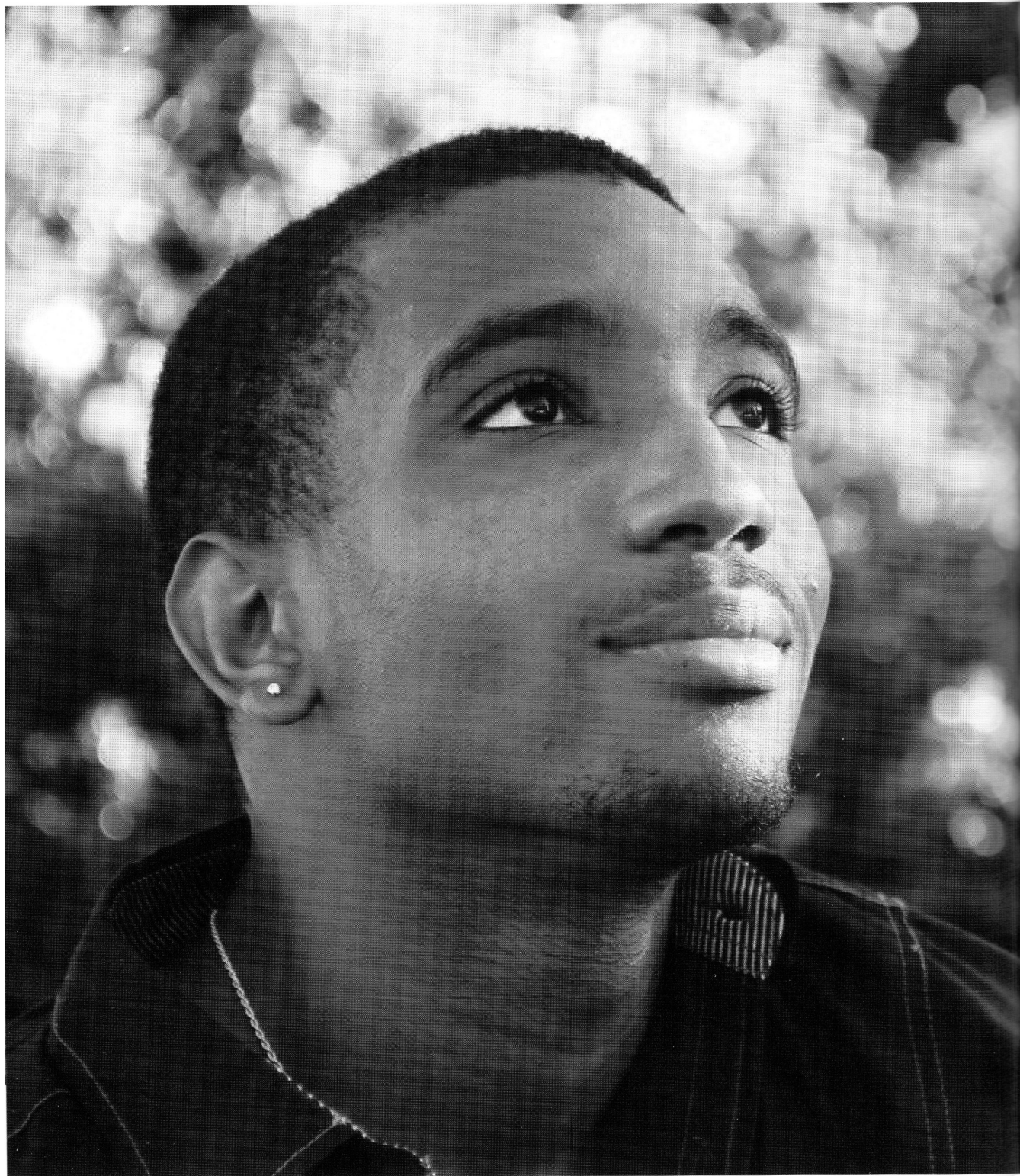
The service began with the voice of Jim Reeves singing "Knock and the door will open; seek and ye shall find; ask and you'll be given, but leave those cares behind." Tom was not religious, but he loved that song.

".....leave those cares." Helen's mind derailed, and once again she asked for strength to get through this day. Squeezing the arms of the chair, her knuckles turned white. She had vowed she wouldn't cry, and she didn't - not then - not in front of everyone.

Perspective

JENNIFER GRAHNQUIST

I stand upon the mountain
And look across the plain,
But for that layered, rocky range
My eyes will search in vain.
That's the mountains' paradox:
One cannot see them from the rocks.
You must step back to see the view
That time and space unlocks.
Yet not to venture from below,
There would be sights you'd never know,
Respective of perspective
That only height will show.
And so I alternate the two:
"Of" and "from" the mountain view.
Westward up and eastward down,
Learning things I never knew.



**HOPE** ALISHA MERRILL**From a Gloaming Flight**

JESSICA L. LEEPER

Yes, this is why we live.
To watch the fading hues of sunset
At breathless high altitudes
Over seas of Antarctic blues.
To be above the oceans
Peering down, freer than the eagles,
For they cannot fly so high and see
The airy Himalayas
Beckoning to be explored.
Oh if I could!
Displaying their starry kingdoms
In pastels of Paris afternoons,
But so still, vast snowy deserts.
Oh, to peer down towards earth
Within that drifting cloud.
We are journeymen
In her diaphanous realm,
Sailing through passing ice sheets,
Never to melt nor dry.
Oh what an ineffable paradise!
We roam to conquer celestial skies.
Ah, there is no wall, no end,
Descent is only one option.
Why settle for known lands?
For the clouds are ever changing,
And there is never a claim by man.
Silver stars reveal a frosty night,
The orange veins of sunset
Blazing gold within the ice.
Is it not a wonder?
To be free, and thus alive!



LOVE ALISHA MERRILL

Leave the world behind...

If I Were the Moon

ELIZABETH CROZIER

If I were the moon,
I'd never fall down on you,
unless you wanted me to.

Got down on your knees
and begged me to descend into your world.
Let you wrap your arms around me.
The crude bumps pressed into your soft flesh.

I will not burn you.

I will let you live in me.
Climb your way to my surface,
and bury yourself in my sand.
Finally you can use the ladders and ropes
you've been weaving all your life.

Leave this world behind
so you can scratch your name into my skin.
I'll give you night vision,
and let you walk around my dark side,
and if you like it there too,
my eyes will remain glazed
with the overflow of ocean water that swells in my soul.

No one ever says what's at the core of the moon,
and I don't know what's at the core of myself.

But I know deep inside you,
you know the truth;
you have the tools for finding it— me.
We'll discover the guts together.

And if I were the moon,
I'd never stop watching you.
I'd stay in your sky day and night
waiting for the day you pull me down.

IMAGE 1103 STEFANI COLMENARES

Goats Out

ANGELA CHAPMAN

Mama yells, "The goats are out!"
We all scramble here and there...
Darting, tripping, running to and fro.
We herd them in and latch the gate.

Mama turns, accessing the damage.
Broken limbs, bushes eaten to the ground.
Wasn't there a young tree growing there?
But the grass, it hasn't been touched.

THE FOREST TAMANEECA SMITH

Period.

STEVE SEALE

As I'm lowered into the ground,
my final wish is to confound
the Eternity worshipers gathered 'round
by having a band play the Looney Tunes jig
with the immortal words of Porky the Pig,
"That's all, folks!"

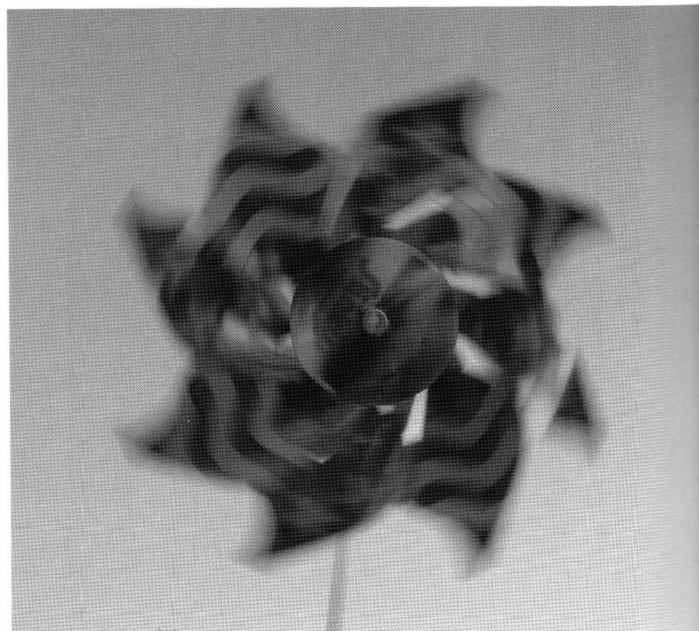


IMAGE 4324 AMY HASKELL



IMAGE AMY HASKELL

Darting, tripping, running to and fro...



IMAGE 008 KOSH K. MANDAVA

Item 0719 – Slated for Deletion

WILLIAM ELLIOTT

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO LOOK BEHIND YOU. Administrator SVHJ

smiled as he gazed at the one personal decoration in his office at Crius Research: a humorous image of a cat sneaking up behind someone. It was the only thing he really remembered from — An unexpected clatter jerked Administrator SVHJ back to reality. Groaning, he picked the first item from his pile of work. This one was a bit different from the usual:

As per required protocol, this message has been delivered to you, Facility Administrator SVHJ, for review. After examination, you will determine the next course of action regarding the document, ITEM 0719.

Deletion is recommended.

The Document:

Start of audio journal.

Escape. Run while you can.

Its appearance is deceiving.

It is a lie. It is all a lie.

**IF ANY FELLOW GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR
FINDS THIS RECORDING, THIS IS WHAT
HAPPENS WHEN YOU ENTER THE BUILDING,
WHICH THEY CLAIM IS JUST ANOTHER
RESEARCH CENTER.**

I say this to anyone considering entering this abominable place—don't. Things are going on in here—horrible things. Human beings are disassembled, piece by piece. I am not sure what they are doing with these pieces, but I intend to find out.

I've just dispatched one of the drones that wander the halls. I hit it on the back of the neck, and it fell to the floor, dead. When I used a pyro cutter to remove its mouth guard, I found dozens of wires. This thing was partially human, but its mind was replaced, its memories deleted.

Yet, not all of the people here are like this. Some seem perfectly human. I avoid all of these people, regardless. I must escape this place. I must.

If any fellow government inspector finds this recording, this is what happens when you enter the building, which they claim is just another research center. First, their cold fingers close on any weapons or communications devices you may have. Then, they lead you into a chamber with a representative, who drawls on about how great the place is. White walls smeared with grease. Rooms that haven't been cleaned, possibly not even occupied by a human. With unnatural jerks of his arms, the representative babbles nonsense. The one I met had a strange marking on his forehead. His eyes seemed glazed the entire time.

One thing you must know. The representative leaves the room to “get a drink.” When he does, kill him by any means necessary before the door can close. As soon as he leaves the room, you are gassed.

I awoke early from the gas, while they were hauling me off—I am fortunate enough to possess an unnaturally quick metabolism. Those heinous things, humans—or so I thought—in silvery suits and thick, metal mouth guards hauled me off as if I were a piece of machinery. I surprised them and escaped down a nearby hallway.

That was where I saw the “Disassembly Room.” Hundreds of people are torn apart by those strange machines, which send various parts down chutes. I shudder to think what this place does with those parts.

I soon came across a square protrusion in the wall. Like everything else here, it was once perfectly box-shaped, but was now chipped and peeling. A label was slapped above it that read, “Do not press.”

I peeled off the layer to find something more chilling written underneath. It was written by a wild hand, and in a mixture of oil and blood. “HELP.”

I forced the protrusion into the wall, and a door opened in front of me. An icy blast shot out and nearly froze me. This new room was filled with what appeared to be maintenance equipment, but equipment that was advanced beyond our current hardware. Strangely, the entire room was covered in ice. All of the equipment brittle with cold.

I soon found out why.

A man lay curled up in the corner of the room, frozen to death. I recognized him as Government Inspector Mills.

Apparently, the people who run this place found out he was hiding here, so they shut him in and killed him.

I soon found the culprit lying on the ground. After examining it, I realized it was a type of grenade that delivered a chilling blast to its surroundings. The thick door was shut so tight

that little cold could escape the room. This was how Mills had frozen to death.

When I exited the room, I jumped back. A cable ran along the ceiling, and a security camera rode along it, armed with some sort of weapon. The thing buzzed serenely as it passed by the room.

It was then that I made a foolish decision.

I jumped at it from behind. With a shout, I tore it from the cable and smashed it against a wall. The cable vibrated, sending electric pulses along its length. I heard the angry hum of dozens of security devices coming from nearby zones, zooming toward me like a swarm of angry hornets.



DOLLS TABITHA BOLSTAD

Before they could reach me, I ducked back inside the room I had found. There was a series of clicks as all of the devices halted. They whirred, scanning the surrounding area for an intruder. When they were gone, I sprinted down the hallway, hunting for an exit.



Since my last entry, I have found a pyro cutter and a bulletproof helmet. It was when I hid in a particularly large room just a few minutes ago that I made a grotesque discovery.

I had emerged in a steaming, rusty factory. Those drone things took various human organs and placed them in suits of armor. These organs were connected with various cables, and I watched with horror as these robots began to move. Powered by human cells, these things could do all the work of a normal human, except with a few improvements. I had encountered enough of them to know that they were juggernauts.

I escaped that room, only to bump into someone else in the hallway. She was completely human, just like the representative I had talked to at the beginning. However, this person was not an ordinary person.

It seemed like the only thing she could talk about was how great this “facility” was. There was a scar on her forehead, shaped in a jagged symbol like the one on the representative. When I asked her about it, she said that they had gone in and done something with her brain, speaking as if it were completely normal. An eerie pleasantness cloaked her words.

I left then, while she told me to have a “great time” in the “glorious facility.” I was determined to find whatever was at the bottom of all this, and to discover all of the secrets of this place.

Yet, I feared that I was destined for failure.



After numerous escapes from security guards and devices, I met a fellow I knew called Mark. He was another governmental inspector, the one who had been sent to examine this place just before me.

He didn’t talk much. His left eyebrow sagged over his eye. I didn’t notice this facial feature on him back when I had seen him outside of this facility. But I discounted this as a mere injury. Other than that, he looked perfectly normal, if a little haggard.

With a squadron of drones following us, we ducked into a strange room and hid behind a pile of crates. Their optical sensors glowed red as they slid by. I relaxed as soon as they were gone, and, turning to my fellow renegade, I swapped stories with him.

After I had recounted the things that had happened to me here, he said, “I was terrified as well, but I found the perfect place to hide. It was the room of one of those



CREEPY DOLL TABITHA BOLSTAD

brainwashed people who walk around. I knocked out the person who lived there and grabbed as many supplies as I could. When the drones came, I left the room. I've been wandering around looking for an exit, or at least another room where I can get more supplies, but I haven't had any success yet. My supplies are also running low."

As he spoke, his eyebrows raised every second or so, as if he were feigning emotion. His voice lacked vigor; it had almost a mechanical monotone. Above all, his eyes remained focused on me, boring holes in my brain.

We sat in silence for a few moments before I spoke. Deciding to change the conversation to something more pleasant, I said, "How was your family doing before you came here?"

"They were doing well, my wife and three children."

"You have two children."

His forehead wrinkled, and he seemed perplexed. "I was sure I had four." He shook his head and rolled his eyes strangely. "I mean three."

"No, you definitely have two. Surely you remember."

He shook his head and grinned. He intended to make me relax, but he only sent a dark chill through my bones.

"Does it matter? Let's look around this room."

He trudged in without a word.

There was a large device attached to the wall. A person was inside a chamber, and mechanical arms were folded up against the chamber's side. A pile of corpses lay in a large bin nearby.

"What is this place?" I said, "What are they doing here?"

The other inspector did not speak.

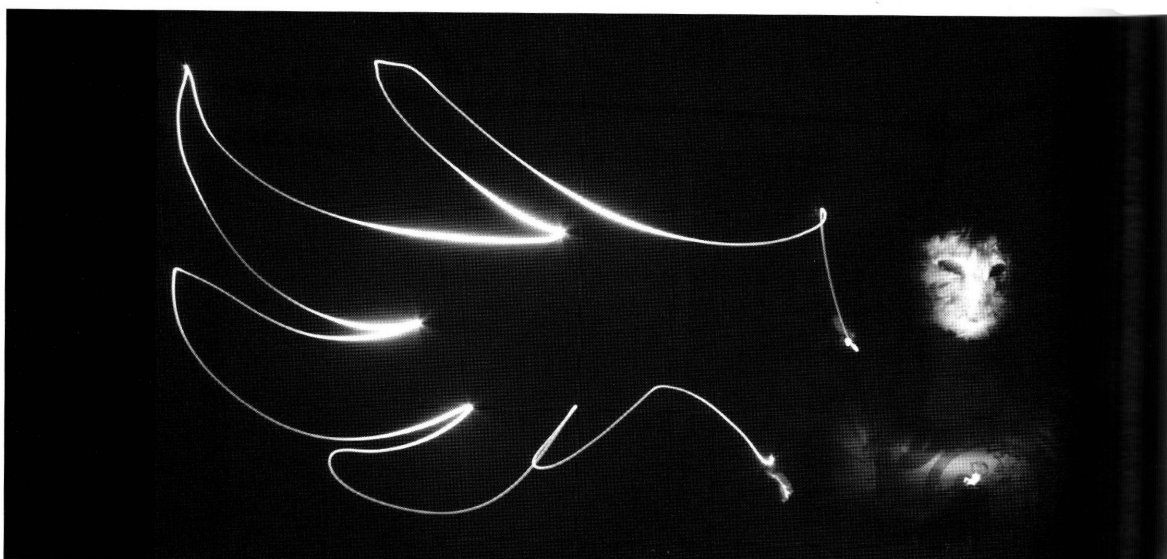


IMAGE 0946 STEFANI COLMENARES

I walked over to a control panel on the side of the device. The various panels seemed to measure life signals on the subject. One display showed a map of the brain, and another displayed the words "Motor Cortex Examination—Successful."

Still confused, I forced open the chamber. A hiss followed a sizzling of greenish liquid on the walls of the room. I examined the body, which hung limp. I also noticed that its left eyebrow sagged. Determined to figure out why this common injury appeared on so many, I lifted its eyebrow. There was a mark underneath, right above the eye, as if something had cut through there, and had added synthetic flesh to seal the hole.

Then, it came alive.

With a roar, it tore free from the cables attached to it. The thing lunged toward me. Giving in to my fighting instincts, I landed an uppercut. The thing staggered back, and then it collapsed to the ground.

With a grin, I turned toward the other inspector, and I said, "That was—"

He had grabbed me by the throat. I realized how foolish I was. The sagging eyebrow, the damaged memory—he had also been reanimated by the device. Now, he planned to do the same to me!

He squeezed with ferocity, foaming at the mouth. I steeled myself against the man who was once my friend and kicked at his knees. The man's grip loosened. Telling myself that he was no longer truly alive, I delivered another blow to his chest.

He tottered around, left eyebrow flapping up and down. He gave a primal roar and charged. Instinctively, I dodged and tripped him. His head crashed down on the control panel. Smoke and sparks erupted from the device as a cacophony of alarms and explosions blared through the room. My legs felt frozen for a moment—so many things going on I didn't know what to do next.

Drones blasted open the door and fired at me. I tore a panel off of the device and used it as cover. While blocking fire, I searched the inspector and found a small grenade. I lobbed it at the drones.

The grenade exploded into a blast of flames. It scorched the drones and melted a large hole in the wall.

Without wasting any time, I sprinted out the opening, and into the next threat.



I could never hope to escape. I was starving, since I had run out of supplies I had taken from the other inspector. How much time had passed? Hours? Days? Weeks? Now, I was desperate to do anything that would either help me, or harm this terrible place.

I wandered into a room that buzzed with artificial life. A huge machine was surrounded by cables and panels, a deep, deafening humming reverberating throughout the room. Various drones scuttled about, intent on eliminating any intruders. When they saw me, they fired round after round of bullets.

I ducked behind an outcropping. Though the move was risky, I peered out and realized that these drones were armed with grenades, like the ones I had seen earlier. I pulled my head down as bullets flew by.

Without any kind of weapon, I was trapped. I could hear the drones closing in, their sharp footsteps growing louder. I took a deep breath, and a plan formed in my mind.

My only chance for survival was a wild one. I said with the same flat pitch that the reanimated inspector used before, "Stop, you are firing on a subject of the motor cortex experiments."

Instantly, they stopped firing. I emerged from behind, careful to cover my eyebrows. What should I do? What could I do?

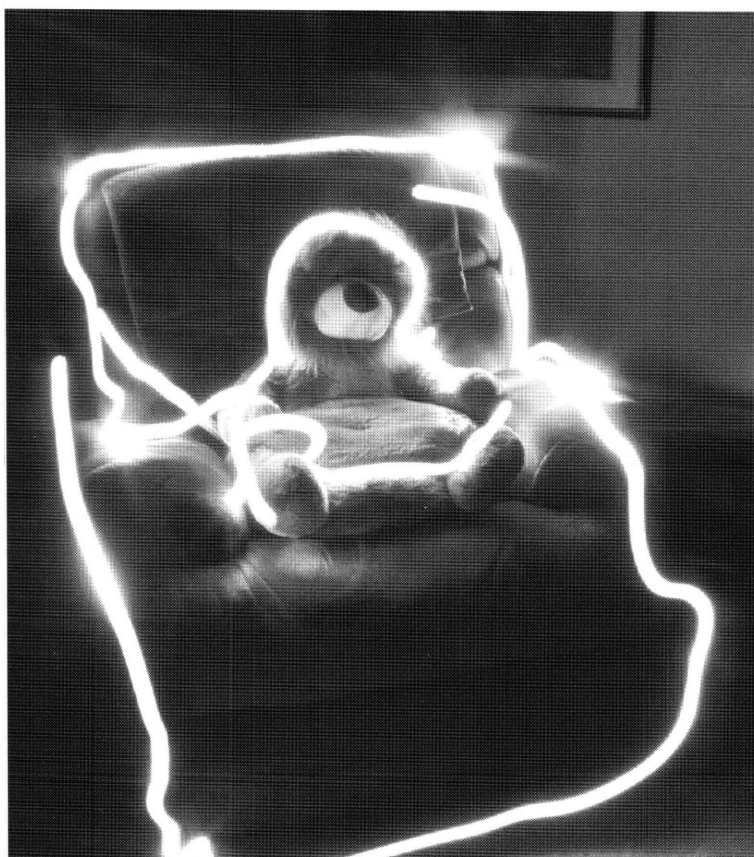
I treaded over to one of the units and took a freeze grenade. They did not know what I would do next. I licked my lips with delight—my ticket to revenge. With a casual flick of the wrist, I tossed the

device toward the still-running generator. As I sprinted out into the corridor, I heard nothing, felt nothing. Perhaps the drones still did not know what was going on, or maybe I am already dead.

I do not know how much damage I had caused, nor whether it will really make any difference. As I lie dying, I feel grim hopelessness in the face of the endless facility. I hope that someone will chance upon this journal and discover the threat that lurks within this place.



End of audio journal.



LIGHT LION MAYA RUTLEDGE

Those Nights of Broken China and Tissues Thrown Away

BRODIE GRESS

One evening in a beat-up car,
she cried into his shoulder.
He was a tissue she wouldn't throw away,
though he wished she would,
wanting to shake the unrequited love
out of his best friend.
Her foot curled around his for warmth
while he scraped for tears to shed for her.
Some boy had broke her heart. Again.

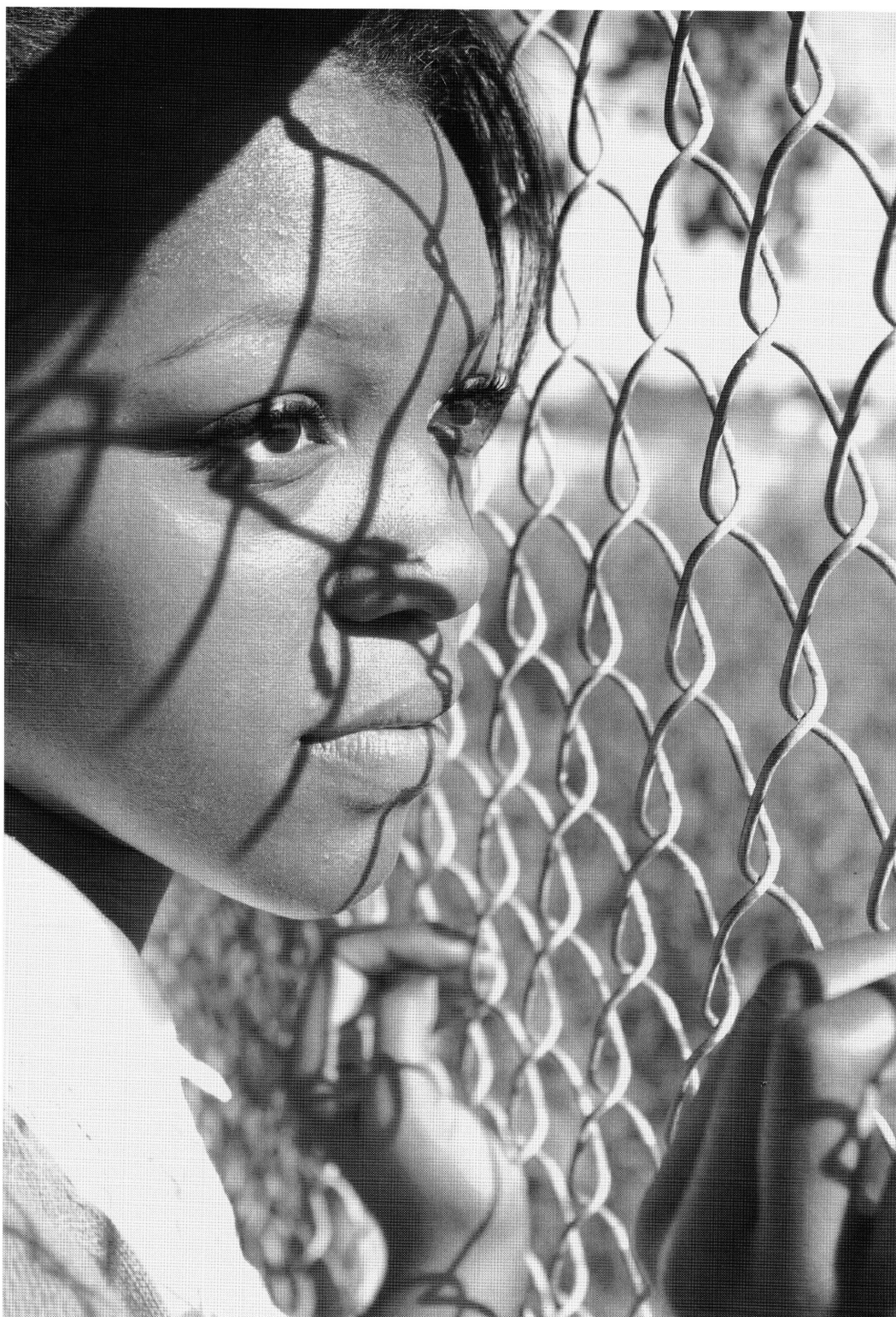
Years later in that beat-up car,
he would kick and break its dashboard,
letting moonlight expose
the fuses, prongs, and wires
that he wished to coil around the neck
of another boy who'd left him seizing up
with aroused and forlorn nerves.
He let his foot fall slow as a dirge
as his pain superseded him.

He'd remember, in that beat-up car,
that night when his friend finally quit crying.
Her orange window light beckoned them
inside. She grabbed the white china
her ex had bought her,
and threw it against the wall.
They smiled
and cleaned every shard
off the floor, with the smooth exhalation
of knowing their feet were safe from wounds.

But the night inside his beat-up car
when his foot throbbed and froze on the mat,
he wanted to crack the sunroof, too,
shatter the windshield, tear up the headrest
until the beat-up car collapsed on him
because that would suffice until morning
came, when he could pretend he was fine.
That night he wished for china he could break.
Or a tissue he hadn't thrown away.



DAYDREAMING TERRY WHITE



ON THE FENCE ERICA KING

The Masks We Wear

GABY WOHEAD

GATHERED IN A TIGHT, TENSION-FILLED HUDDLE, I inhaled deeply, checking that I still knew how to breathe. The air smelled like a hairspray explosion, the feeling was absolute distress and the sky outside had become strikingly black. I zoned my focus in on the perfect stack of letters my coach held, as he rambled on about how the results didn't matter as much as how hard we tried. Lie.

The results enclosed in that white envelope mattered to everything about me and who I was. Four years of cheerleading memories were flashing through my brain like a slideshow: the countless laughs with my best friends, the exhilarating feeling of being thrown ten feet into the air in front of an entire pep rally, hugging each other when we won playoff games, and sticking together through the tears and smeared mascara when we lost.

I thought back to all those elementary years on the sidelines, in the broken-down bleachers of the old Allen Eagle Stadium, when I wished

that one day I would have the privilege of cheering on the famous Allen Eagle football boys, the big varsity ones. And now, somehow, I had the opportunity. I had paid my dues, worked my way up through middle school, freshman year, and junior varsity, the whole time looking up and admiring the beautiful varsity girls.

I had spent the past months crashing and falling on my butt, leaving bruises, but getting stronger, making every moment count in the challenge to conquer my back tuck, all to ensure my spot on the varsity squad. All this preparation was about to pay off. I had nailed my tumbling pass during tryouts, perfectly executed my stunt without wobbling, and danced with the biggest "pick me" smile on my face. It was such an adrenaline-filled moment, and certainly I had one of the highest scores.

"Gaby Wohead, 42." I snapped back to reality as I heard my name called. Many of my teammates were already outside, with opened letters and exuberant expressions. I clenched my letter and walked toward the glass exit doors. I stepped over two tragedy-struck girls crying just outside the doors on the ground, and avoided eye contact with all the eager, competitive, crazy cheer moms. They looked at me funny as I went to my traditional "letter opening bush," sat down and ripped the paper open.

I CHOKED ON THE AIR. I STOOD UP AND FORCED MY SHAKY LEGS TO MOVE THEMSELVES, AWAY FROM THE CELEBRATING MASS OF CHEERLEADERS, AWAY FROM THE CONFUSED, EAGER BYSTANDERS, AWAY FROM THE SCREAMS AND THE CRIES AND THE CHAOS.

I read the first sentence. I read it again. It didn't say congratulations.

"Dear Candidate, we thank you for your interests in the Allen Cheerleading Association. Unfortunately, you were not selected as a member of the 2012-2013 squad."

I choked on the air. I stood up and forced my shaky legs to move themselves, away from the celebrating mass of cheerleaders, away from the confused, eager bystanders, away from the screams and the cries and the chaos. I made it all the way to the smelly dumpster behind the school before my legs gave out. I collapsed, and I allowed the salty tears to stream down my blush-covered cheeks. I didn't even realize it was raining. I didn't acknowledge the nonstop vibrations of my phone. I refused to let my mind

**CHEERLEADING BROUGHT ME AN ESCAPE,
AND NO MATTER WHAT WAS GOING ON
OUTSIDE OF THE FIELD, WITH MY POM-POMS
IN HAND, I ALWAYS FELT RELEVANT.**

reflect on all the aspects of my life that were just ripped out of my hands. I sat there, alone, leaned up against the cold, wet dumpster. I sat there and I cried.

After what seemed like eternity in this timeless bubble of shock, I saw my dad. Almost like a tall, goofy-looking angel, walking from his car in the pouring rain, with a face of pure concern. I saw worry in his eyes that can only be displayed by a loving parent who is hurting for their child. My dad looked comforting, and I ran to him, jumped into his arms - a place that had once protected me from anything that could make me sad.

"I did perfect, Daddy, it's not fair," I said.

He said "I'm proud of you Gaby, because you fought for this with everything you had."

It didn't seem real. We got in the car and drove back to the front of the school, where girls were still gathered, along with other people. I knew I had to stay strong, just temporarily, as I went to hear my best friends discuss what had just happened. I was even more hurt when I found out that barely any of my girls has made the team. I glared at the group taking pictures holding their letters, and did a double take when I processed that the new, never-been cheerleaders had made it. It was almost like someone slapped me right in the face, and the tears started running faster than ever.

After all the years of preparing for this one moment, I couldn't even fathom my anger and pure hatred for these girls who has never found cheerleading of any interest, until coincidentally, the "big time year", the year of posters and football programs and being on the new stadium field on television on Friday nights. I knew as a cold hard fact that I was much better than them, and my heart literally began to ache as I watched them celebrate. My childhood best friend, Justin, a tall, blond, blue-eyed teddy bear, was dating a girl who had just made the team, and as I stood alone, taking in the nightmare around me, I felt his arms wrap around me.

"I'm so sorry, Gaby," he said with honest sadness in his voice. It felt a little better to know that someone cared, but when I say a little, I mean microscopic. I felt a slight sense of numbness. I felt in that moment that nothing made sense or would ever be how it was supposed to be again.

My identity was in cheer, and I deserved to be able to support the "boys in blue" because there was truly nothing I loved more in the world. I cannot put into words how I felt about it, like it was what I was destined to do. For some reason, when I tumbled onto that field, and peered out into

the blue-and-white-colored crowd, I felt the same happiness and excitement that little kids feel on Christmas morning.

Cheerleading brought me an escape, and no matter what was going on outside of the field, with my pom-poms in hand, I always felt relevant. I felt a sense of belonging with my teammates, because of the bond that we shared that other people couldn't quite understand. We knew each others' strengths and weaknesses, and we knew that no matter what ridiculous number of sprints our coaches forced us to do, we were going to pee our pants laughing the whole time they yelled at us. We knew that we were always together, and if people were to judge us, they could judge us all, because it was just jealousy. Being very secretive about my problems and insecurities, I suppose cheerleading served as some sort of perfect, happy, pretty girl mask for me. It was a superficial façade for the girl I really was underneath, and it gave me two temporary hours of happiness once a week under the stadium lights. It made me feel recognized and necessary, something that I have always struggled with and still have a hard time with today.

So, I suppose the obvious lesson I could have learned from having my childhood dream ripped from my fingertips was that life isn't fair. Oh, but obviously this broken, insecure, fake-happy cheerleader must have already known such a thing. No, I didn't learn that life isn't fair. I learned that we all wear masks in this life, to hide who we truly are. Although cheerleading was what I did, it was also too much a part of who I was.

This striking epiphany hit me hard, and still continues to affect me. Not making the team still irks me to this day, 8 months later, because I feel strongly about the fact that I deserve to be on that team more than many people who are luckier than I am. Yet, as time passes, I realize how freedom is acknowledging that mask that we all wear, and possessing the strength to take it off. Maybe I didn't voluntarily take it off, rather it was thrown away, but without it, I can clearly see the world, and they can see me. Being the insecure girl without cheerleading has taught me how to



A RAINY DAY TAMANEECA SMITH

be myself, an individual, without the safety of the team to fall back on, without 23 other girls who looked and acted just like I did. I cannot say I'm not still bitter about the situation in general, but at least I know I have stood strong in the face of adversity, stared it in the eye, with my own two eyes. Maskless.



BE HAPPY FAREN MANUEL

One Tropical Summer Day

SYLVIA S. MEDEL

By the river bank, underneath a stalwart acacia tree,
that filtered the blazing heat of the tropical sun,
its wide shade likened to a large canopy to me,
I lay down on the bed of soft green grasses
to rest at ease awhile, after the morning kiss was gone.

Afar, I could see the mystical twin mountain peaks,
known to the locals as Mt. Maiden's Breasts;
lush vegetation and coconut trees— tall and slender
adorned the slopes of the grandiose twin peaks.

Down the mountain sides sprawled the rice fields
already dressed in an array of yellow and gold.
The exotic Maya birds were on an early harvest yields,
as they pecked the grains, happily and freely,
jumping from one golden grain to another.

I thought how truly the birds were so blessed,
as they danced and sang for every rice grain they pecked!
No worries to shun; no stresses to deal with—
The good nature provided for their clothes to wear,
food to eat, shelter to sleep in and rest.

The whispering winds, the melodious sound
of the rippling water, the sweet and mellow notes
of the birds were like lullabies drawing
my eyes to close and my mind into oblivion.

And like the Maya birds, I had all cares flung,
letting the good nature take toll on me,
though temporarily, but contentedly,
on that picnic spot—one tropical summer day.

LOVE TO LAUGH FAREN MANUEL



IMAGE 1103 AMY HASKELL

Running My Own Race

KEONI HOLOMAN

I HAD CONTINUOUSLY BEEN applying for colleges, keeping up good grades, asking for recommendation letters, completing hours of community service and balancing time for extracurricular activities. Senior year in high school was a hectic time in my life. I missed out on spending time with friends, family meals and even sleep trying to juggle all of these tasks, but at the time it was worth it. Right?

Imagine little me, from a suburb in Texas, attending a major university in a big city like New York University, or being accepted into the best journalism program in the country at the University of Missouri, or even better, attending the Harvard of the South - Southern Methodist University. It was the dream that always ran through my head and fueled my spirit when I felt I was about to break down.

**WHAT WAS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
I AM RUNNING MY OWN RACE.**

Being in an environment like Plano Senior High School, filled with very intelligent students with a history of successful at the highest academic universities in the country made this seem like only a great grade point average away. Students there had high expectations of themselves, as well as their parents, and going off to a university was their plan A with no other option; thus it was mine as well. Trying to keep up with my successful peers was so important to me and drove me to the brink of obsession, so much so that my Spanish teacher could tell. One day after class he approached me asking if I was OK because I seemed completely worn out. I explained to him how stressed out I was because of the tasks ahead of me in applying for colleges and trying to keep a competitive grade point average with my top classmates. In a simple response, he gave me the most genuine smile and told me, "Run your own race."

What was that supposed to mean? I am running my own race. He made no sense! In utter confusion I walked off with no understanding of his words or what to make of them.

Later my senior year, I got to experience the total devastation of not getting into any of the universities I applied to which meant I would have to start off my college life at Collin College. New York University, University of Missouri, Southern Methodist University, and even various last choice colleges that I applied to in hopes of going to any university turned me down one by one because of my low SAT scores. I was completely paralyzed with the turn of events. I had spent my entire high school life doing exactly what all of the adults from counselors, parents and teachers had told me to do to ensure my collegiate success and this was the result. All because of low SAT scores.

Coupled with that, a majority of my life I carried on the weight of becoming the first in my immediate family to go to a major university and graduate. My mother never got to finish her college experience due to the major obstacle of having me and it was supposed to be my turn to finish that dream for me and her. It was my self-imposed responsibility to break the pathology of our family and set an example for my little brother. I wanted to prove to my family and my peers that I was successful and would go on to accomplish great things in life.

I watched all of my peers go off to the schools of their choice. The fact that my life was going in the opposite direction than I preferred overwhelmed me with depression. There were endless nights that summer of my freshman college year that I'd cry and ask myself a million questions until I fell asleep. What am I going to do now? I have disappointed my entire family. How am I going to get out of my parents' house? What if I never do? Am I a failure now? The shame of my own self was unbearable.

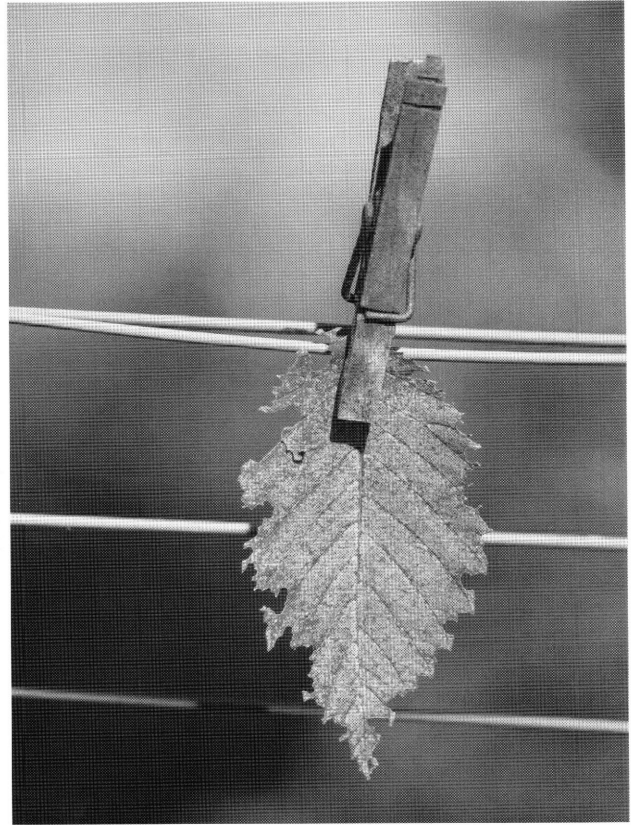
Summer ended and it was time for my freshman fall semester at Collin College to begin. Each day I attended my classes praying for the time to pass by faster so that I could hurry home and crawl in bed to cry the rest of the day - and that was my routine for the rest of the fall semester.

With the tons of idle time I had on my hands, I finally spent it doing something I never gave myself time to do before - think. Though this would seem like a process that might help me figure out what to do with my life, it often ended in more self-doubting questions that would lead me back into depression. I was the true definition of misery. I kept trying to think about my life and figure out how to move on and succeed past my current circumstances.

Throughout the semester, my efforts to move forward eventually began to flourish. Spring semester rolled around and my life turned around. I met new friends and surprisingly saw a lot of old school mates. I found a really cool job at the college and I grew accustomed to Collin. I took the time that I usually used for a pity party and used it to immerse myself in the Collin student body. As I gradually met more people at Collin, my perspective began to change. The students here were intelligent, successful, interesting and very goal oriented. After reflecting on the people I met and new things I had learned, my perspective of my life path took on a whole new direction. All of the stereotypes of Collin and the people there were a far cry from the truth and being at Collin didn't make their goals and their lives any less valuable, achievable, or successful. I obtained so much valuable insight on overcoming obstacles in my life.

Those words and sentiment from my Spanish teacher became overwhelmingly clear to me. I finally realized what he meant by run your own race. Going off to a university right after high school was not the route I was supposed to take, which is why it was altered. My journey needed to start off at Collin College because it was an experience I needed to prepare me for my bright future ahead. I had to realize that everybody has their own path, but competing with my peers' path would ultimately deviate me from my own path. I also realized that this was nowhere near the end of my life like I felt it was at that moment, it was only the beginning!

Could it be possible that my course was starting my college experience at Collin all along but I was too blinded by the paths of others to see it? Could it be possible I will never know the true answer to that question but I will always make sure to remember that my race is unique and to love every second of it because in the end my success will not be shared with my peers but it will be my own to enjoy. Forever I will draw from that experience in my life as an experience of a lifetime.



IMAGES 2802, 2817

AMY HASKELL



FLYING HIGH MAYA RUTLEDGE



She Birthed Her

RACHEL DELIGHT WALKER

I had to birth this
Pen in hand
This labored write

I had to birth this
Tear in eye
Contractions timed in cite

She was meek and docile
Without any indication of self
She, selfishly selfless seeking sheep
He sheep - she wanted

She sought love through herding
Love, even when she knew of sharing
She, shamelessly sat silent seeking
He slept - she left

I wanted to show her strength of self
Remind her, she could do the shit herself

I needed to reveal the power from within
And to embrace her beautiful skin

Remind her of her beautiful daughters
And refuse this path to generations after

So... she no longer stands
But of sand she drifts

I
Am not
Her.

The Blind Owl

CARLOS JOSE SAFLOR

A brown owl stooped in front of the window.

I lifted the pane and he flew inside.

We had a long stare, not knowing what to make of each other,
but my head tilted and his head turned.

I didn't know what to do at first.

He never flew out. He became my guest.

I went out in the fields to find food for the owl.

But mice become invisible once hunted for.

For the first few days, he starved.

Adapt quick. The guest is hungry.



IMAGE 1032 STEPHANI COLMENARES

I called other hunters in the area.
 Figure Four Trap. Simple. Effective. Got it.
 On the tenth day, he scarfed down the first meal.
 A glow of accomplishment.

 Over time, I learned more traps and techniques
 to catch not just mice, but squirrels and rabbits.
 Winter months yielded less meals for my friend.
 And some nights, he starved and starved and starved.

 It was cold. The fireplace needed wood.
 I chopped the trees, chucked and chopped.
 When a tree branch fell with its odd shape and tone,
 an idea pelted into the depths of thought - a different trap.

 Mice and squirrels filled the stomach of the friendly owl.
 And little did I know of the doors he built.
 The countless doors out of this small home.
 What a strange owl. I rubbed my face and noticed the skin
 grew rougher from hunting.

 But when a storm destroyed the house,
 The doors stood strong and tall.
 I opened a door, looking back to the owl.
 He stooped there with the same expression.

 With a whisper, I thanked him. He flew away.
 The traps will feed a man in the harsh wilderness.

To Be A Mockingbird

DAVID KNAPE

A Sparrow sits upon a tree
 and feels a pinch of jealousy,
 for occupying the same tree
 a Mockingbird sings brilliantly

The Mockingbird goes through his drill
 his repertoire of lyric trills,
 how he performs for all to thrill
 the Sparrow listens, waits until

The Mockingbird is through his part
 then it replies with all its heart,
 but only common chirps are made
 it has no trait to serenade

So the Sparrow, woebegone
 unable to copy others song,
 will never have what he has longed
 his song will not be bragged upon

Sparrow must be content to hear
 the song of others it appears,
 yet in its wishing still reserves
 the right to be a Mockingbird.



MAGICAL ALISHA MERRILL

It was a beautiful place.

The Ivaroy

MIKE COHICK

MY FATHER WAS ONE OF NINE CHILDREN, next to the youngest. Of the nine, seven stayed in the Burg after they married and raised families. There were 26 of us cousins (or “cuzzins”, as they said back then), but that is another story.

The second oldest was Roy. Roy became a Methodist minister and had retired before I was old enough to be aware. Roy married Iva and they had four children: Katherine, Bishop, Jim and Mary Ruth, who was the youngest. She was two years older than I was.

Roy lived across Main Street from my house and just up a couple of houses. His house backed onto the mill race. His property was verdant and a pleasant place to be on a warm summer’s day.

As I said, Roy was retired. I was about ten. Many an afternoon, I walked over to Roy’s house and we played anagrams. For those of you who haven’t heard of anagrams, it was a primitive ancestor to Scrabble. The main differences were that there was no board, no multiple word scores and no points on the tiles. Also, there were a lot more tiles. Roy would put the tiles in a box, mix them up and spill out about two dozen onto the table. The object was to use all the letters on the table. Whoever used up the last letters got points. Then another dozen letters were dumped out. Roy played a tough game. It was in these sessions that I learned words like viz, syzygy and chiffon.

THAT SUMMER, THE IVAROY WAS THE SENSATION OF THE BURG. EVERYONE HAD TO COME BY AND ADMIRE IT.

One spring, Roy hired some workmen to build an outdoor pavilion in his backyard. It had a concrete floor, four sturdy pillars in each corner holding up the rainproof roof, a barbecue at one end and a table with parallel benches at the other end. It looked out across the heavily flowered backyard toward the mill race and the grove of trees beyond. It was a beautiful place. Roy christened it the “Ivaroy,” amalgamating his name with this wife’s name.

That summer, the Ivaroy was the sensation of the Burg. Everyone had to come by and admire it. Roy and I moved our anagrams game outside into the Ivaroy for the rest of the summer.

Roy’s younger brother, Jake, came by to check out this marvelous structure. Jake was building a new house at the far north end of the Burg, where Main Street rejoined the bypass. Jake was smitten by the Ivaroy. He directed the builders to replicate it at his new home. When Jake and his family moved in, they held an open house. Jake proudly showed off the new pavilion in his backyard. “This is my Ivaroy,” he said.

When someone pointed out to Jake that “Ivaroy” was not the proper name for such a structure, that his brother had made up the term from his and his wife’s name, Jake piped up and said, “It’s still the Ivaroy. That sounds so much better than calling it after my wife and me, the Beulahjake.”

Rolling through...

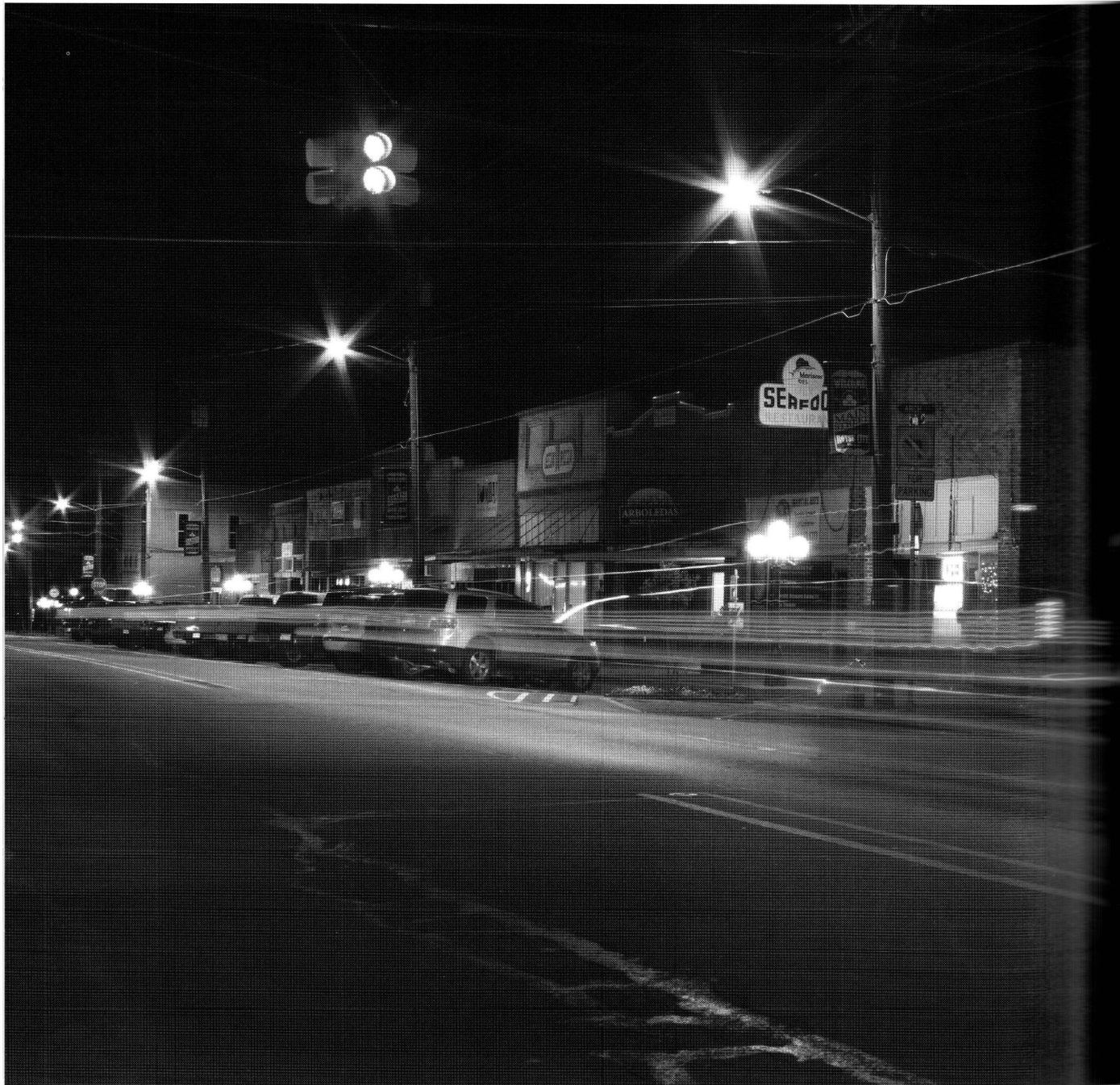




IMAGE 8882 AMY HASKELL

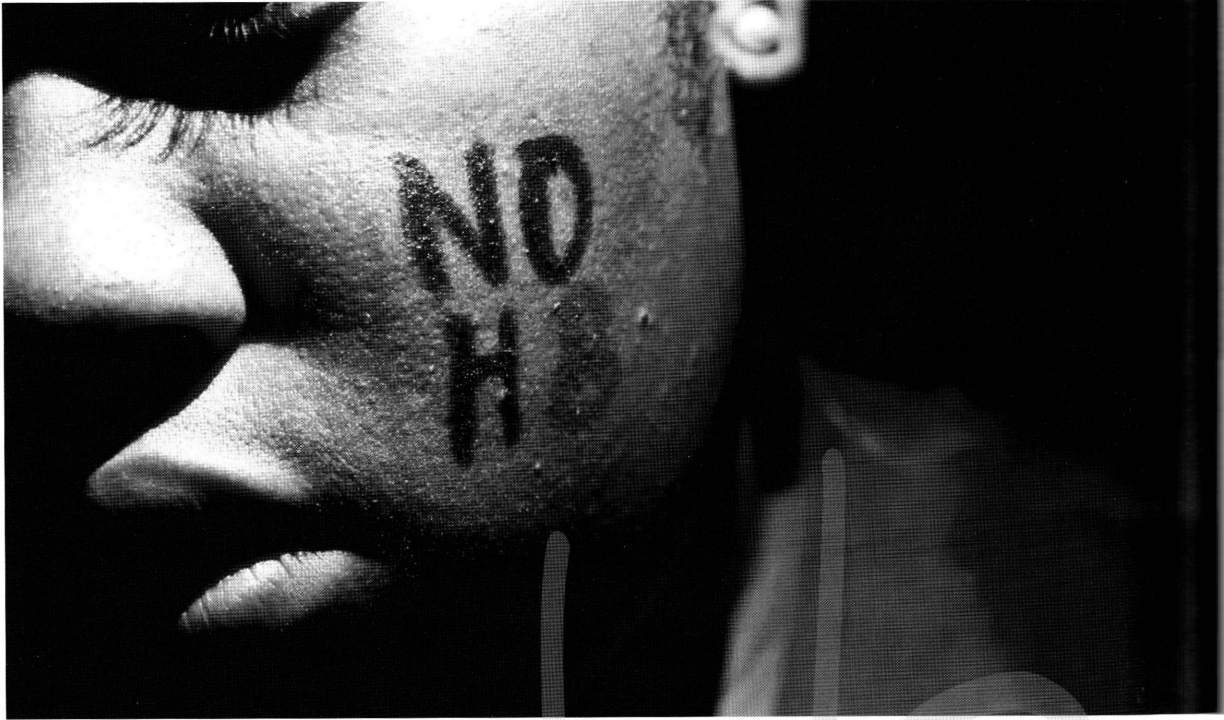
What Was Wrong With Us?

DAVID DRANE

Rolling through my old neighborhood
 My son and I
 Then 703 Bumpas Street came to mind
 Now I didn't realize or maybe I forgot
 We were standing in the same spot
 Where the old security guard was shot and dropped
 Right in front of our bus stop
 Where no one cared or had enough love
 To clean up the glass and pool of blood
 Where yellow crime tape hovered over chalk lines
 And spent shells covered up speed bumps
 In front of the place
 Where young children would catch the bus
 And the city still had the nerve to ask...
 "What was wrong with us?"

SLOW SHUTTER SPEED LORENA BURNS





NO HATE ERICA KING

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