

# kiosk

THE ART AND LITERARY MAGAZINE OF MORNINGSIDE COLLEGE

2009





# kiosk

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VOLUME 71

2009

THE ART AND LITERARY MAGAZINE  
OF MORNINGSIDE COLLEGE

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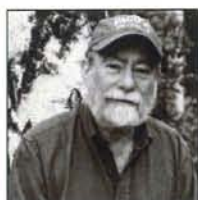
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## ABOUT OUR JUDGES:

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**Marvin Bell** (1937 - ) an American poet, is famous for creating "dead man" poems. He also taught for many years at the famed Writers Workshop at the University of Iowa. Bell was born in New York City. He earned his bachelor's degree from Alfred University, master's degree from the University of Chicago, and his MFA from the University of Iowa. He has written 16 books of poetry. Honors for his work include Guggenheim and NEA fellowships, and Fulbright appointments in Yugoslavia and Australia. In 2000 Bell was appointed as the first Poet Laureate for the state of Iowa.

**Mark Kochen** is a serial artist from Sioux City. He is currently teaching painting at WITCC. Mark spends most of his time painting stuff on stuff in his studio in Leeds.

**Christine McAvoy** has been part of the G.R. Lindblade & Company creative team for 20 years. As Creative Director, Christine works in still photography and videography. Images of her work from Saturday in the Park appear in the book and DVD, *All Access*, which has won a Telly Award in 2006, a Millennium Award and a Communicator Award in 2005.



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

*"Good art can not be immoral. By good art I mean art that bears true witness, I mean the art that is most precise."*

EZRA POUND

Dear old Ezra put it best.

Over the last 71 years, the *Kiosk* has had three names, dozens of editors, numerous formatting and style improvements, and an increase in submissions. The *Kiosk* has morphed from a slim chapbook to a thick, glossy magazine. Despite all these changes, one thing remains the same—honesty.

To portray honestly the human condition, the world, and our place in it is a goal writers and artists strive for in every draft—something extremely difficult to achieve but invaluable in its effect. The "true witness" Pound mentions allows us to see, for a moment, into lives that are not our own. Honest writing provides us with a vivid view that we otherwise would never get to experience.

The *Kiosk* has always strived to showcase literature and art that portray familiar subjects but present them from new perspectives. Many of the subjects in this year's offering aren't traditionally pleasant: a patient's isolation in a hospital, a young girl struggling with depression, a boy's curiosity as he watches his dying aunt; but the writers have found ways to write honestly and to cast the truth in new and unusual lights.

I would like to commend the contributors to the *Kiosk* for their work; submitting takes courage. The act of creation is by nature personal. All art contains some piece of the artist; all stories or poems contain truths from the writers' lives. When students submit their works to the *Kiosk*, they are revealing parts of themselves to the community; they also face the chance of rejection. For such actions, their courage should be commended.

I would like to extend thanks to President John Reynders, who has supported the *Kiosk's* growth and made the improvements

of the last five years possible. The *Kiosk* has been a finalist in the Pacemaker Award, sponsored by the Associated Collegiate Press, and has received a gold medal from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. Thank you to the Associate Editors Gregory Anderson, Philip Lieder, and Adrianna Radosti for their commitment to the poetry, fiction and non-fiction departments as well as to all members of the editorial boards and to our proof reading team: Emily Domayer and Alicia Prewett.

I am also grateful to Art Editor Alicia Runyan, and her faculty advisors Instructor John Kolbo and Assistant Professor Terri McGaffin, who have played crucial roles in the design of the magazine as well as in managing the artwork. I would also like to thank everyone in the English Department, especially to Administrative Assistant Marcie Ponder for her commitment to help out with any problem, big or small.

Absolutely none of this would be possible without the advice and guidance of Professor of English and advisor to the *Kiosk* Steve Coyne. In the past few months he has served as a mentor to the process, and at times, an ear to the troubles that go along with editing a magazine. Steve, thank you. You have truly kept me sane.

Finally, I would like to thank you, the reader. Without you, the *Kiosk* would have no audience. So sit back and enjoy this collection of the literature and art of Morningside College.



AUDREY HANTLA  
Editor-in-Chief

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All entries are considered objectively by the judges with no artist name or special consideration for any piece. Assistant editors are eligible for contest placement but not prize money.

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# THE TEDDY BEAR

BY TYREL DREY

The teddy bear glared at me with its black beady eyes, smiling coyly in its orange overalls, staring at me, taunting me. The teacher had begun calling out names: Adams, Brennan, Brown, Christophsen, Dahm, Flannigan, Frank...

It hung in the air, taunting me, mocking me, bringing my first day of kindergarten to an ominous failure. Each child, as their name

bear, grinning, triumphant, knowing it had beaten me. We started kindergarten with a few simple rules—the most important: raise your hand and wait to be called on. That rule would always haunt me. I was articulate and outgoing. I could do anything, except raise my hand.

We started out with two buttons on our bear, one over each strap on the bear's bib overalls. If we broke a rule, one of the buttons was removed. If we finished the day with a button on the bear, we got a gold star on our chart, and after thirty gold stars, got a free pencil. Not just any pencil, no I had a desk full of regular pencils. These were bright, vibrant, multi-colored pencils. I wanted one. I wanted one badly.

But I'd lost both of my buttons. No buttons, no gold star, no pencil. I'd failed. And I sat there watching the kids hastily put their stars on the chart. They walked over to the board and back to their seats with smiles of satisfaction on their faces. Smiles of satisfaction just like the bear's. Taunting smiles, each mocking me unintentionally. Stupid kids putting their torn stars on their charts. Not even putting them on well. They were all off center, without a point pointing up like on a real star. If the kids weren't so stupid I wouldn't even be in this mess.

We would go around the room, letting everyone try at an answer—me sitting in my desk, waving my hand, straining to draw the teacher's attention. I knew the answer. Looking back I don't even remember the question, but I remember deciding that maybe if I just answered we could move on. I remember giving the answer out of turn and being right. I remember her taking my button and saying not to talk out of turn. I remember the twinge of anger that poked into my glorious first day of school and broke away the grand illusion I had about my education. I remember being punished for being right, for knowing the answer. What's the point of



THE WICKED DONUT  
by Jasmine Richards  
relief print

was called, got up to receive their star. A shiny, golden star. Most of the kids ended up tearing off one of the edges as they received it from the teacher. Stupid kids. I wouldn't have torn the star—I'd have kept it pristine in its golden splendor. I longed to place it next to my name on the board.

I stared back at that bear. That damn



letting people be wrong? What's the point of letting children get laughed at because they answered wrong? Why not let me answer, get it right, and move on?

I sat there, nearly in tears as the teacher dismissed us. My mom was waiting for me outside. She had a big grin, and was surprised that her chatty son was no longer glowing with the excitement he'd had earlier that morning. I didn't say much on the ride home. I was trying not to cry and let the shame out, let her know that I was a failure. What if they didn't let me come back because I lost my buttons? What if my mom was angry because I was right, and they punished me and didn't let me go back to my friends?

We got home, and my mom asked me what went wrong. I let it go. I started crying and through the tears of my failure explained the story of my lost buttons. The story of my failure on the first day of school.

"I see," she said. She searched for a change of subject. "But your teacher likes you right?"

I assured her that Mrs. Brown loved all the children, and I'm sure it wasn't any personal dislike for me that spurred the incident. I cried for a bit longer. Eventually my dad arrived home, and I sat in my room and played with my Lego's while he and my mom talked. I loved my Lego's. I could build for hours, and since I had my own room, I could leave them in a heap on the floor, and never clean them up—until my mom told me to, but usually then I decided to play with them more—that way I didn't have to pick them up. My dad was concerned that I wasn't buzzing around the house with the day's adventures as I usually was. I listened as my mom explained it to him.

I couldn't bear to hear the retelling of my day's mistakes. I decided that Lego's were stupid. Stupid Lego's. I went and played in the sand box where there weren't any stupid Lego's and I didn't have to listen to my mom

talk about that stupid bear anymore. Stupid bear, stupid Lego's, stupid sandbox.

You can't kneel down in sand. It sticks to your legs and gets you dirty and leaves stupid red marks on your legs. Stupid sand, I hate sand, I hate Lego's, I hate stupid grinning teddy bears in stupid orange overalls, and I hate stupid kindergarten and stupid kids who tear their stupid stars and get stupid multicolored pencils with glitter on them. I went and sat on the wrap-around porch. There wasn't any stupid sand there.

My dad came out and sat beside me on the steps.

"So," he said, lighting a cigarette. "I hear you had a rough day."

I nodded because I couldn't talk. I was going to cry again. I didn't want to cry in front of my dad. Not that he would care; I'd done it plenty of times before. I didn't want to cry because that meant I cared. I cared about stupid bears and buttons and stars and kindergarten. I cared a lot. A lot more than I should have.

"So explain this bear thing to me. I don't quite get it," he said, exhaling smoke into the surrounding air.

I retold the tale of the buttons, bears, reiterating how stupid they were. I told him how I knew the answer but the teacher wouldn't call on me again.

He looked at me and said, "So if you lose the buttons on your bear, you miss recess time?"

"No..." Where was he going with this?

"So then they put you in time out."

"No..." I said once again.

"Well then what really happens?" It was more of a statement than a question.

"Well..." I paused. Nothing really. I thought for a moment. "Well, you don't get one of the stupid pencils."

"Oh, so you really want a pencil," he proclaimed, as if insight was dawning on him.

*"I couldn't bear to hear the retelling of my day's mistakes."*

"Not really, I guess." I had never genuinely thought about it that way. I didn't really want a pencil all that much.

"So, you're telling me," he paused to make sure I was paying attention, "that if you misbehave they take away a button, but nothing really happens?" This time it really was a question.

I pondered. Then as it dawned on me, I said, "Yeah."

My dad looked at me with a playful grin. "I'll tell you what you should do," he said. "Go in tomorrow and right away lose both your buttons."

He'd lost me. Lose both my buttons?

"That way," he said, "you can do whatever the hell you want for the rest of the day and they can't do anything to you."

I was stunned at the simple brilliance of his plan.

When people talk about defining experiences, generally they talk about finding someone they love, finding something they love to do, finding God. Me? I found anarchy.



## LA VISTA DALLA TERRAZZA DELLA QUARTA

### (THE VIEW FROM THE FOURTH TERRACE)

Somewhere along the line, I lost  
the poems of my youth.

Stoic Midwest ghosts that lurk inside of me  
still recall the night the stinking water came,  
and place the blame on the Flood of '93:

Basement walls sprung leaks, and they could not contain  
the water: Boxes, boxes! Papers and clothes!  
All soaked beyond saving, thanks to springtime rains.

All that paper, steeped in water, growing mold;  
papers too old to sort, much too old to save.  
The work of my youth, even by then too old:

Now, I'm not so sure: We threw it all away?  
Suppose there wasn't a noble tragedy;  
Suppose the truth is less, something more mundane:  
Just misplaced... No irony, no comedy.  
Then, perhaps, that sacred book is still around,  
buried under weight of age: Banality.

Then some day, my youthful poems may be found—  
And I'll see the words I worked so hard to find.  
And I'll hear my youthful voice again: the sound,

the rhythms and patterns, the beats and the rhymes.  
Somewhere in this place, I'm sure it's packed away,  
with the visions and dreams of a youthful mind.

Even then I knew it's something I should save;  
something I would want to see again, because  
once upon a time, I had so much to say.

DANIEL ANDERSON

## JUST OFF THE HIGHWAY, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN

---

Dashboard collection of red sand  
from the valley between the Dragoons  
and Chirakowa Mountains, rocks, shells,  
a green smiling Buddha and a snow globe  
from Tennessee. Like mantras,  
they travel alongside me. So I  
don't feel abandoned in the great open  
range of Arizona. Today her  
bareness will not seduce me.

I have in mind a Minnesotan  
woman, one-sixteenth Santee Sioux,  
who is all that I could ever believe.  
Her skin is gentle, her lips taste  
like cocoa butter, her eyes full  
of mischief, and her passion calls me  
up north to the land of lakes and curdled  
cheese.

Out past my bumper, on the tail  
of a white-beat up Lebaron  
one sticker reads "I heart S Carolina"  
and another "If you can read this  
you're an ASSHOLE." I pass them doing  
sixty, and the driver is busy  
adjusting her baby's car seat.  
I imagine she is wearing a tee-shirt—  
a Tasmanian Devil tee-shirt  
decorated with baby formula  
and spaghetti sauce from last night.

Arizona I am leaving you,  
your dry heat, wide roads and easy parking.  
I am leaving friends from the Atomic  
Comic book store. Bye Bonnie,  
bye Rhonda, bye Eric, Rick and Christina.  
Buddha's still laughing, looking and laughing  
at me—the one who hasn't got the smarts  
to stay home. I camp on a reservation,  
right outside Taos, New Mexico.

I find a free camping site. It's full of snow birds, at their prime ages, all over sixty. They are making the same trek as me, only in the opposite direction. For dinner I have a forty of Mickey's malt liquor and some hot dogs, warmed up over a fire of twigs and leaves.

Little packs of dogs run past every once and a while. Signs have warned me not to feed them. So instead I wonder what it would be like to be a wild dog in these times. Is it easier than following the hunters and the gathers? I can't decide so I sit back and watch as the stars start to show. All around me are RVs, monstrous and elaborate. It is suddenly strange that they carry everything and camp in the air conditioning.

COLIN O'SULLIVAN

THE GREAT TRAIN  
by Tony Wiley  
digital photograph





# THE PREGNANCY KNOT

BY RANDY UHL

The boy sat on the floor behind her; she between his legs and leaning forward, his thumbs firmly pushing and kneading the seventh month pressure that had given birth to her pregnancy knot. Beginning at the small of her back with little circular motions, he worked his way up the map of her body and back down until guttural sounds leaked from her mouth. Responding to his adolescent touch, her body arched making her mountainous stomach rise up like Kili-

manjaro with her copper hair thrown back into his face. He buried his nose in the crimson and grew dizzy in the smell of licorice.

They had this daily habit of con-

juring baby names, one each, offering one at a time, hoping that the perfect name would slide through the ether and choose them.

"Horton," the boy said, half proud of his choice.

"I'm not sure about that one."

"Why?"

"It sounds heavy."

"Heavy can be good."

"Everything is already too heavy ... hearts, hands." The boy stopped what he was doing and let his fingers rest at his side.

"What's yours then?"

The girl thought beyond the ticking clock on the headboard of the boy's bed and focused instead on the statue of Buddha they purchased in a downtown deli. Realizing his hands were empty, she pushed back to remind him that the knot was still there. His hands continued the work. "I like the name Ernest," she said.

"Can we call him Ernie?"

"Ernest. Yes. It makes him sound determined; like it was his decision."

"As long as we can call him Ernie," and

then as if it was an afterthought, "What if the baby is a girl?"

Without flinching she replied, "He's a boy," and giggled and said under her breath, "I've had a boy inside me before. I know what it feels like."

"Beg your pardon."

She shook her head. "Never mind." Reaching up, she took the glass of milk from the night stand and drank.

The girl looked about the boy's room, which was clean and well-lit and not at all like her own house, her parent's house. A far-away gaze settled in her eyes and she stared at a map of Europe, creased by long-ago folding and edges peeled, taped to his wall; countries outlined in red where someday they would travel.

"Sadie," the boy hesitated, "have your parents come around?"

The girl hesitated and added a sigh. "My mother's still upset that I didn't go through with it. She says I'm too young to know what I'm giving up. My father won't talk about it. He's worried about how it will look... concerned about money, afraid we'll go belly-up. He talks around it, and I sit there; the white elephant in the room."

"Pink," the boy said.

"Huh?"

"Pink—it's the pink elephant in the room that no one talks about."

"Does the color really matter?"

"I'm not sure. I think so."

"Why should it matter what color it is? White, pink, grey. If there's an elephant in the room someone should mention it."

"I suppose." The boy nodded.

"Find me someone who wouldn't talk about the elephant."

"I don't think I could."

"Speaking of elephants," she wavered for a moment and continued, "I never asked this before, but what ran through your mind when I told you?"

*"A far-away gaze settled in her eyes and she stared at a map of Europe... countries outlined in red where someday they would travel."*

The boy paused, "The second you told me I never wanted to see you again. Now, whenever I walk in a room, you're the first person I look for." He took the glass of milk from her, brought it to his lips and finished it. He set it back on the night stand as a small white snail of milk slowly crawled down the side.

He jumped to his feet, bent forward, slid his forearms under her arm pits and slowly, as if they had practiced this many times, craned her upright until she was standing firmly on her own. The girl turned and faced the boy and enfolded her arms around his neck while he automatically shifted his torso to the right. This was something they had taught themselves; to show affection for each other without letting her stomach get in the way. She kissed him on the cheek, and then rested her forehead against his chest. After kissing the crest of her head the boy noticed something the girl couldn't for the past two months.

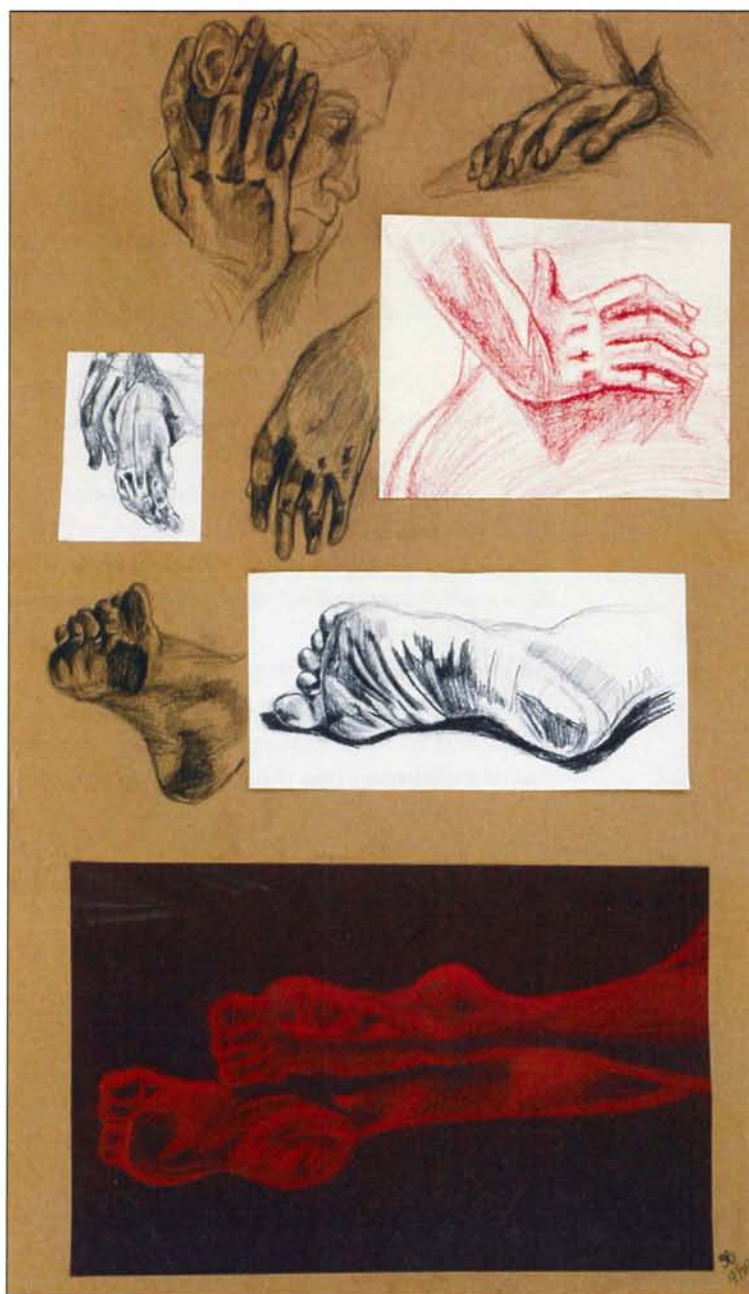
"Your shoe is untied. Let me."

He knelt down on one knee, and not for the last time, to tie her shoe.

Smiling, with a catch in her throat, the girl instructed, "Make it tight."

He took the two white laces in each hand, wound them, looped them around his thumbs, and pulled them hard together. He watched the knot get smaller until it practically disappeared and the two strings looked as if they were one. Standing, the boy noticed her watered eyes and said, "Are you alright?"

"I feel fine," she said. "There's nothing wrong with me. I feel fine."



**FINGERS AND TOES**  
by Sasha Backhaus  
mixed media drawing



## TO SPEAK OF HORSES

---



I sit cross-legged and still  
in my grandparents' living room,  
listening to my dad and uncles.  
They are talking with my grandfather  
about the horses.  
Which one sired that one, and who broke it again?  
The dapple, the strong bay, an appaloosa, old Duke,  
now that was a horse. Near sixteen hands and lived to be thirty-two.  
Never another like him, not before and not since.

A smell wafts through and teases my nostrils,  
a mix of starches, potato water and gravy.  
In the kitchen are the Aunts.  
Dodi, plagued by silent dissatisfaction,  
her voice and hips thick  
with Pennsylvania Dutch. She screams at her children  
and makes my mother seem not so bad after all.

An argument begins in the living room,  
uncle against uncle, but neither is right.  
No one really remembers when they got the yearling,  
but the old man has the final say, and he knows damn well it was 1963.

LINDSAY WASHBURN



# THE DEAD MAN IS NOT HERE

---

*Live as if you were already dead.*

ZEN ADMONITION

*More about the dead man.*

MARVIN BELL

I sleep where the dead man died.  
I bought the dead man's house  
and the dead man's bed, and I sleep  
in the dead man's room. He was  
an engineer, and I think he greased  
the tracks between here and not here  
because when I close my eyes at night,  
a tunnel swallows me, and I barrel  
through the dark, hand on the throttle,  
eyes riveted to the blackness.  
What trust it takes to follow a road  
we cannot see, did not make, do not  
really trust. I must abandon myself  
to the dead man when I sleep, blowing  
at crossings for the sheer joy of speed.  
The horn of our apocalypse stops  
services at the churches we pass.  
We roar through sermons—You cannot  
stand in the way of this train. Climb  
aboard or be destroyed. These dreams  
leave me spent in the mornings. I know  
I have been not here and I have seen  
what I did not see and know it exists  
because I did not see it. This is what  
the dead man tries to teach about being  
not here, but it's what I refuse to learn.  
And that's why I find myself each morning  
exactly where I left me the night before.

STEPHEN COYNE

## POVERTY FEEDS ITSELF

BY KRYSTAL SHEARER

I can't remember the word "poor" being used to describe me when I was growing up. I can't remember the specific arguments between my parents. Only that they involved money, something I had no clue about. I do remember in the beginning of my elementary school career the feeling of my cold toes under tattered blankets in a house with no heat. I remember winters spent in misery and torment—coming home from first, second, and third grades from a cozy classroom to a frigid house.

We couldn't afford the heat, so we used the ancient wood stove that must have been built during the same time period as the house—early 1900s—and was just as inefficient at holding heat as the thin and cracked wood paneling on the walls. The fake forest backdrop on one wall—wallpaper put up by residents before us—made me feel as though I was constantly camping out. Adding to the illusion of camping: my family crowding around our little wood stove, burning hot on our fronts, freezing cold on our backs.

I remember not having all the TV channels that everyone else grew up with—what is Nickelodeon? What is TNT? What's Cinemax, the channel that all the other kids in sixth grade talk about, with sly and sneaky glances to make sure their friends are listening?

I had no idea I was poor, no clue that I had the reduced price meal plan at school and that teachers liked my bold personality, not just because I stood out, but because I was overcoming something I knew nothing about. To be politically correct, I was very close to—but not quite touching—the poverty line. I went through grade school close to, but never quite hitting, poverty, in mismatched hand-me-down clothes that made me the brunt of the joke, the weird kid, the slightly smelly little girl with ragged red hair and chubby cheeks that could never be outgrown.

The poverty threshold for 2006 for two people plus one child was \$16,227 total income, before taxes. The poverty threshold

is the financial line that separates people or families who are in poverty from those who are not. By the Census Bureau's definition, "the dollar amounts used to determine poverty status." But how far, by a Morningside College student's normal standards of living, can an income of \$16,227 get you? A semester of education with a few thousand dollars left over—half a year of school for a year of pay. Why waste the money? For someone in poverty, college is not generally the first priority. So how much does it actually cost for an average family comparable to my own consisting of two adults and one child to live in a year?

Let's assume the child is around fourth grade, as I was, and the parents were in their late thirties, as mine were. In my small Iowa town, house payments each month amounted to about \$500, groceries were about \$150 a month (we bought the cheap brands as well), we had old cars so rather than having car payments, we had the possibility of making unexpected repairs. Electric bills were about \$200. Cable, internet, and telephone all combined would be about \$100. Two cell phones would be about \$60. Insurance for both the house and two cars were about \$125/month, and a family plan for health insurance would be around \$320. One month of living for this family would be around \$1,455. But if you divide the \$16,227 yearly income up into twelve months, the average pay for one month would be about \$1,352, which is \$103 short of what you would need to cover general costs of living. These costs don't include miscellaneous expenses, such as gas, clothing, holidays, or even taxes.

The U.S. takes very few personal aspects of life into account in the process of measuring poverty status. The U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of income thresholds that vary by family size and composition in order to determine who is in poverty. The thresholds are the minimum amount of money a per-



son is supposed to be able to eat off of for a year, times three—not taking into account the taxes they pay or any number of other circumstances that may significantly reduce the amount of money they are actually able to spend. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold (so that each person has the minimum dollar amount that allows them to eat all year), then they are considered to be in poverty.

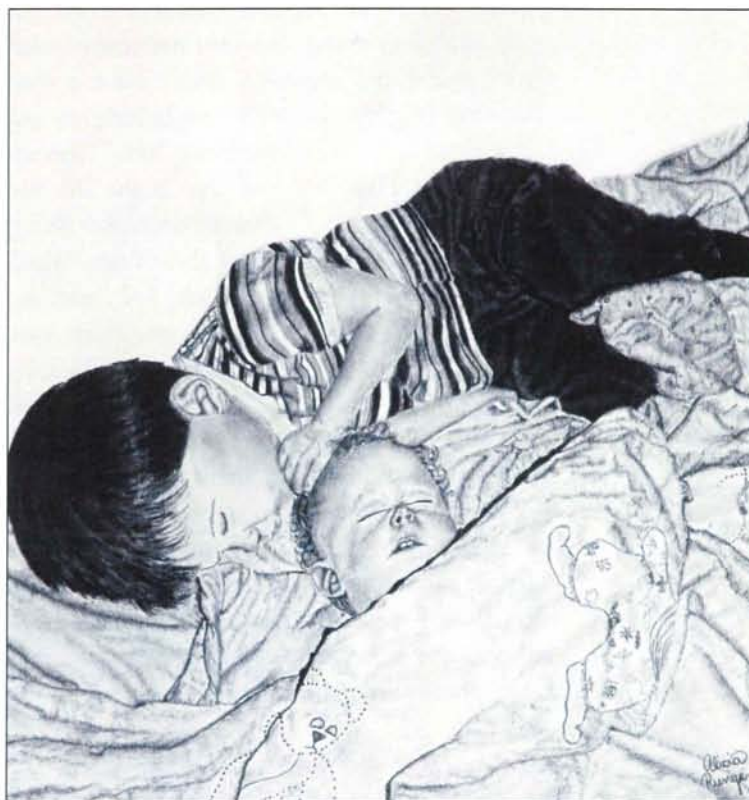
These thresholds are "equal" throughout the United States—the set dollar amount does not vary geographically, although there is definitely a difference in cost of practically everything in the Midwest vs. on the coasts. The poverty thresholds vary each year, but only to update them for inflation, according to the Consumer Price Index. It's hard to see that, under all the figures and perceptions of poverty, people live on this bare income.

*Our lights were out again—I think Mom said something about forgetting to pay the bill but I knew better. This was the third time in three months, and I thought she overspent her paycheck again. The wood-paneled walls of our living room in combination with the mock-forest backdrop gave me the chills and my over-active fourth grade imagination produced terrible prowling animals between the 2D trees, flashing eyes and sharp teeth. The woodstove was our only source of heat and light, although it produced very little of both, so Dad stomped off to find another light. Returning with a blackened, cold lantern in his hand, he stooped down with a match in his thick, gnarled mechanic's hands. The lantern flared into bold, golden light, the two small and deflated bags transforming into twin suns. My cold hands reached out in wonder toward the vibrant source of light, maybe even happiness, reaching through the open door to touch the balls of radiance. My parents began to shout too late and the pain turned me stupid. I screamed and jumped. The lantern tipped ominously, and the three of us watched it shatter over the bare floor, the flame*

*instantly extinguished. My screams turned to sobs. I longed for the glow I had naïvely doused.*

It's such a confusing thing, poverty. The media has skewed the public's view of the poorest regions of the U.S.—stereotypes that include single mothers with too many kids to count, black Americans that somehow can't get back on their feet, dodgy characters

**MY PROTECTOR**  
by Alicia Runyan  
charcoal



all drugged up, and the one shining figure among them all that breaks free and becomes a millionaire. Somehow that poverty-stricken hero prevails, no matter that there are very few individuals who manage to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty. The movie *The Pursuit of Happyness* holds one of the most common misconceptions among the upper-middle class, especially in children—the belief that “You can do anything if you try your hardest!”



*“My mom yanked at the steering wheel as though she were navigating a ship through a field of icebergs...”*

The classroom was alive with debate over an issue most of the students hadn't given much thought to before. Set up into four separate clusters of desks, the twelve of us had been chattering on about the morality of something or other in our textbooks. Normally I am decent friends with most of the class, but now I glared at my peers in frustration—how could these spoiled, under-challenged, over-privileged children who've had everything they own handed to them in a basket with a bow ever understand poverty? The point was, they didn't. Even the noticeably intelligent girl who I respected, didn't have a clue. She was leading the pack, explaining to our

professor how, “the life you live is the life you choose” and other things along these lines. Words failed me, but I was angry. My professor was, too, and began to lecture us all on how the cycle

of poverty worked, at first gently prodding us into understanding, and then verbally stomping in frustration when most of us didn't get the point. But eventually, he gave up, and after class I left in shocked anger at the ignorance that had surrounded me every day—and I had been just as ignorant in not knowing their beliefs as they were ignorant in believing them.

I interviewed Patrick McKinlay, professor in Morningside College's political science department and director of the college's poverty simulation. He is trying to shine light on this dark and complex subject. His words are a saddening reminder of the utter selfishness of people. “We've learned to hate the poor because we're so afraid of becoming them, but the thing is, the poor are people too.” Professor McKinlay broke free of generational poverty, the type of poorness that is passed through families, to become a role model for his students. He also oversees Morningside College's involvement with Americorps, a

non-profit organization that spreads the word on the realities of poverty and tries to fight against the growing number of Americans in this cyclical financial disease. During a conversation on the causes of poverty and how students at an expensive private college view the poor, he shared some insights into what may be some of the leading causes of poverty: education problems—having no education, or having learning disabilities that add to the difficulty of an already over-burdened college career; poor preparation for accidents and unexpected expenses, such as a major financial setback if a car breaks down; and illness in one's family or in oneself that can financially and emotionally break a person.

By the time I realized there was a real problem with my dad, we were already on the road to the hospital that was about fifteen minutes away. His face had been a ruddy, sick crimson color for the past two days, and his wispy hair lay in a halo around the shiny redness of his balding head. Pain was etched into the deepening lines of his face, and he clutched his hand to his chest. My mom yanked at the steering wheel as though she were navigating a ship through a field of icebergs, combing through her coarse dark hair, creating untamable fly-aways that tangled from the open car window. A sharp turn that left my head reeling and my dad gasping for breath took us into the hospital parking lot, and from there it became a dizzying blur of sterile whites and ugly seafoam greens. Someone in my family picked me up, and as we drove away I watched an ambulance speeding away, sirens a-blare, into the deepening dusk.

Life takes twists and turns, and we have basically two choices: anticipate those twists and turns, or get off the road. There are so many levels of poverty, so much more than can't be done justice in a few pages. The cycle of poverty feeds off of itself—and the general population doesn't seem to understand. I

could wish for a better system, but that would not change enough. I could wish for more equal distributions of money, but there will always be those people who are in power and those who are completely without. What I wish for is compassion, understanding, in-

formation, and the experience and tolerance to put up with the stupidity of the world. So until my wish morphs into something more tangible than the dust on a windowsill, life goes on, and the gap between the middle class and the poor widens into a canyon.



BLISSFUL IGNORANCE  
by Anne Torkelson  
intaglio print

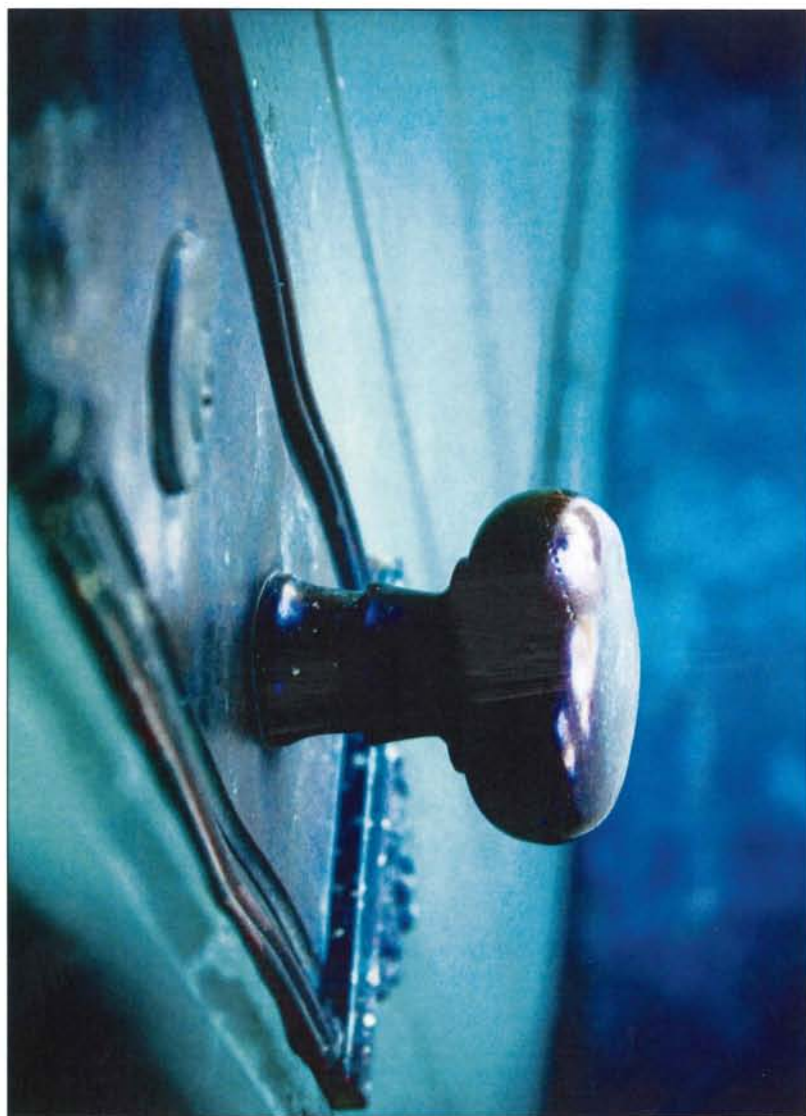




## SLEEPWALKING

BY GREGORY ANDERSON

She was 16 years old, 97 pounds and upset. Zoë had been watching the Discovery Channel and saw a lion sink its jaws into the back of a zebra, but the zebra just kept running. It wasn't that it was trying to run from fate. No it was too stupid for that. It



DOOR KNOB  
by Alyssa Filipek  
digital photograph

just didn't even know it was dead yet. She flipped the channel—infomercial on an amazing sponge—flip Fox News—flip infomercial on weight loss—flip History Channel special on the end of the world—flip infomercial on amazing sponges again—off. She tossed the

remote onto the coffee table and went to the bathroom. Zoë knew what she needed. She opened the medicine cabinet, grabbed her Ambien, and swallowed it with no water. She put the bottle back, but then took another one, just to make sure she'd fall asleep. She then took off all her clothes and stepped onto the scale. Her feet and fingers were freezing, not enough iron the doctors said, anemic. Not enough exercise the doctors said, lazy. The scale landed at ninety-seven again. Hadn't cracked a hundred yet. She wondered when she would.

The girl walked naked through the darkness to her room and went to her desk. She pulled out an old Swiss Army knife, a present from dead Grandpa. Alive Grandpa didn't do shit, just lived in Arizona for the dry heat. Zoë took the knife and started carving into her door. She pushed hard. This was deep. It needed to be deep. When she was finished, she stepped back and could see her creation illuminated by the moonlight and streetlights: "Even death has her sleepwalkers."

Proud of her vandalism, Zoë ambled to the bed and pulled the covers over her head. She had to get to sleep. There was school tomorrow; that was important, wasn't it? A test in American History tomorrow. That should have been important too, but it wasn't. Her hands were chilled, and her feet were like ice cubes. She wondered what it felt like when Mom put the pistol on her temple, if it was cold.

She was 16 years old, 97 pounds and a half-orphan. Tomorrow should have been important.

It was seven a.m. and she needed to get up. School started at eight, but that was when school started as the teachers always reminded her, not when she needed to get there. She had to be there before that, at the latest 7:55. She got up and went to the kitchen for some coffee. Dad had left some from earlier before he went to work. He was gone now, so she



could stroll around the house however she damn well pleased. Besides, she was going to get into the shower soon anyway. She poured herself some coffee, sat down at the kitchen table, and thought of a song her mom used to sing her, "Someone's in the Kitchen with Dinah," but now no one was in the kitchen Dinah. She was all alone.

Before she took a shower, she had to shit. First she had to step on the scale. 97 again. She took the shit. She stepped on the scale again. 96 now. She'd lost a pound. At this rate, she'd disappear by summer. She looked down at her chest, but it looked no different than a boy's.

At school, the caffeine wore off quickly. Everything was too fast and everyone was too loud. Hallways were the worst. All the echoes of pointless conversation and gossip ricocheted off aluminum lockers while the fluorescent bulb buzzed like bumblebees. It was too much. Zoë opened her locker. It was organized, but organization is easy when there's barely anything there. No posters, no pictures of friends, only schoolbooks, notebooks and her jacket. She could hear the clip-clop of stilettos approaching. It was Ruby, the redhead pothead. Ruby's stilettos made her look like an Amazon, as if she wasn't tall enough. Her breasts were the size of cantaloupes. Zoë glanced at them. How could she compete with her plums?

"Hey hun," said Ruby, "you look awful. Sleep okay?"

"Thanks sweetie," said Zoë. "Yeah, I think I got enough, to live anyway."

"Me and Ashley are going to toke up after school in her garage. You're coming."

"I can't, Ruby. I got a chiropractor's appointment after school."

"Why the hell are you going to a chiropractor? And why didn't you schedule it during school?"

"My back's killing me. And I didn't schedule it, my dad did."

"Well, maybe it wouldn't hurt so bad if you didn't slouch," said Ruby, sticking her chest out.

"I can't this afternoon, but call me tonight, okay?"

"I don't know, I'll be pretty baked."

Zoë then felt a hard pinch on her ass. It wasn't Ruby. Every muscle tensed in Zoë's body. It was just some boy, completely random, but she hated it. She hated the fact that she went to school with such boys. She wanted a man, someone with hair on his chest who could grow a decent beard. All these high school boys, even the seniors, were just boys, and she could never date any of them.

"I'll try to call you, okay?" said Ruby, and she walked off to class.

Zoë went the other way to American History with the test that was supposed to be important, but wasn't. She thought about getting high, which she hated doing with the friends that she hated, but they were the best she could afford.

She sat in the waiting room and flipped through the magazines, but all they had were *Chiropractic Monthly* and *Highlights for Kids*. Who reads that kind of shit? Kids and chiropractors, she told herself. A plain, but not unattractive nurse came into the waiting room and called her name. The nurse told her to step on the scale. Why do they need to weigh her at the chiropractor? 97 pounds. Well, at least she was back up to 97. The nurse told her she needed to eat more, that she was all skin and bones. She said it in that flippant tone that was supposed suggest she wasn't entirely serious, but Zoë was serious about her weight. If she didn't start gaining soon, she'd disappear. The nurse led her into the examining room

*"She thought about getting high, which she hated doing with the friends that she hated, but they were the best she could afford."*



and told her the doctor would be in soon.

The nurse wasn't lying, he was in soon. He introduced himself as Dr. Robbins, but told Zoë she could just call him Sam. He didn't get into medicine for titles, and he laughed at himself even though what he said wasn't really funny. Zoë was very quiet and thought he looked the Brawny Paper Towel man. His shoulders were massive like a linebacker's and he must have been at least 6'5. When he questioned her about what was troubling her, she noticed his hands. They were enormous. She could tell they were rough too, like sandpaper.

"Okay, then, let's get started," said Sam. "Just lie on that table." He motioned towards the padded table that was almost vertical.

"Don't worry, it moves down." He laughed to himself again. She lay on the table and felt it moving toward horizontal. She then felt his hands on her neck and she was right, they were rough, but they were warm. It made her tense, but not like when the boy in the hallway pinched her. No, this was a good tension. It was like a million electrodes were jumping through her body sending warmth everywhere, even to her fingers and her toes. Sam made little noises to himself, little doctor noises like "hmm" and "I see" and "okay," like a child talking himself through a math problem. Then the hands were gone and she felt a tool on her back. It made clicking sounds, and Zoë could feel her spine align. Then the doctor took off her shoes and felt her feet. It didn't seem sexual for him. This was his job. He had gone to school for this. Through her socks, his fingers tickled. The warmth started spreading again. She could feel it in her secret, and she was scared and excited. He then put his hands on her butt and started adjusting again, and she on the verge. This was just his job. He didn't seem to know what Zoë was getting out of this. This is what she had been missing, why the

boys couldn't satisfy her, why she hated to be touched by them.

"Okay, I think we're all done," said Sam. "Call me if your back hurts again. It was pretty out of alignment, probably from too much slouching." And the doctor put his hand on Zoë's shoulder like she was his daughter and walked her out of the office, smiling, oblivious to what had just happened.

She went home and the house was empty. Dad was still at work, always at work. Zoë had to take care of herself. Dad designed homes, new concept homes; they were supposed to look like turn-of-the-century houses but with all the modern amenities. He was always building houses, but he was never home. She cooked a frozen pizza and ate it, then chugged three glasses of water. She took off her clothes, went to the bathroom, and weighed herself. 99 pounds. So close. She then went to her room and lay on the bed. She closed her eyes and started thinking about Sam, the stone man, her Brawny Paper Towel man. Her hands crept over her body and they were cold. All her extremities were cold, her nose, her toes and especially her fingertips, but ah, her core was burning, her secret was burning and her hands crept down her belly button until they got to her secret. She thought about what the doctor's hands would feel like down there, examining, inspecting, adjusting. She wondered what his face would feel like against hers. Would his beard be scratchy? Then her daddy was in the fantasy, but she didn't want him there. He didn't get to watch so she tried to shut him out, but the more she tried not to have him there the more he kept popping up like a peeping tom, watching her and the doctor. No, she thought, you aren't allowed. After finishing, she noticed what she had written the night before during a bout of insomnia. The message so clear the night before didn't make any sense. It wasn't a lack of understanding. It was how she felt at the time, but something had changed.



"Even death has her sleepwalkers."

I'm not sleepwalking, she thought. It's morning and my eyes are wide.

The phone rang. Zoë put on a bathrobe and sauntered to get it. What's the rush? It was Ruby. Apparently, she wasn't high enough yet to forget to call.

"C'mon over, bitch," said Ruby.

"Are you guys just going to smoke?"

"No, we're going to watch a movie too. Some arty French shit. You'd like it."

"Okay, I'll be over in a bit." She hung up the phone and went to get dressed. While she was in her room changing, she heard the garage door open. Dad was home. She hurried, but he caught her at the door; his tie was loose and he smelled like cigarettes. He wasn't tall, but he was powerfully built, solid.

"Hey, Sweetie, where are you off to in such a rush?" asked her Dad. "Avoiding me?" He gave her a jagged smile.

"I'm just going to go hang out with Ruby."

He looked disappointed. "Really? I thought we could just hang out tonight. I never get to see you anymore."

"That's not really my fault," said Zoë.

"I know. Just thought we could watch *The Office* together, hell, maybe even make some margaritas!"

"Jesus Daddy, I'm 16. That's illegal," said Zoë.

"Sorry. Just thought it'd be fun."

"I'm not Mom," said Zoë.

"I never said you were."

"I've got to go."

"Wait a sec, okay?" he said.

She did. "I know it's been hard since... you know, but I'm doing the best job I can. I'm sorry."

Jesus, he looks pathetic, she thought. He should man up a little, grow a pair, and move on.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Sweetie?" he asked.

"Yeah" said Zoë. "Get me another chiropractor visit. My back is killing me."

She hated getting high. It wasn't the smoking part that bothered her. In fact she rather enjoyed the ritual aspect of the whole thing, sitting in a circle, giggling, taking turns, the excitement of getting caught, doing something illegal, but she hated actually being high. The very word was a lie to her; she didn't feel elated—she felt low, like she couldn't think. Zoë felt stupid when she was high, and that her friends were even dumber. When she heard Ruby ask if they kept the milk in the freezer, it wasn't funny to her. They were all just being idiots. While her friends Ruby and Ash would get very talkative after they smoked, Zoë would zone out, delve even farther into herself, and forget where she was. The other two girls also became disturbingly sexual after they smoked, sometimes making out with one another and trying to get Zoë to do it too, but she never would.

They'd also talk about all the guys they'd been with and who they'd like to get with, what they would do to them, where they would do it to them, and Zoë hated hearing all of it.

"Are we going to start the movie?" asked Zoë.

"Chill, Bill," said Ruby. "How can you watch a French movie... when you don't even know French?" This set Ruby and Ashley over the edge, and they both started laughing and snorting like pigs.

Zoë didn't get the joke.



UNTITLED  
by Annika Kolbo  
graphite



Around eleven, she came home and Dad was already asleep. He had left some food out for her, some burritos he had picked up, which was great because she was starving. She watched some television but found nothing except infomercials and nature programs on again, so she went to the bathroom, swallowed her Ambien, took off her clothes, weighed herself and looked in the mirror.

She was 16, 97 pounds, and in lust with her chiropractor. Something needed to change.

A few days later, she was at the chiropractor's office again, but this time she was prepared. She wore her short jean-skirt, the one Dad always told her to change out of. She didn't have any underwear on; that really excited her. She also wore the low-cut black tee Ruby always referred to as the, "I want to get fucked" shirt, which Zoë had thought was entirely appropriate, given the situation. She had also put on heavy eye liner, her mother's leftover. Hell, she even put on a pair of Ruby's heels that were too big for her. She was ready; she was a woman.

Dr. Sam still looked gorgeous and tough, like he'd kick somebody's ass for her. He was all smiles that day too, like he was happy to see her.

"Back still troubling you?" he asked.

"Sure is, Sam," said Zoë.

"And what are you all dressed up for?"

"You," she said. He must have taken it as a joke because he laughed.

"Very funny. Would you lie down on the table again?"

"Could you close the door?" asked Zoë.

"Sure," said Sam. He didn't even seemed fazed by the request. He must know what I'm doing, she thought. It excited her. She lay herself down on the tilted table again and felt it moving, becoming more horizontal. She wondered if he could tell she wasn't wearing underwear. She wondered if he was looking. She could feel those hands on her neck again,

the warm hands, the toasty fingers, adjusting her neck and it sent a chill through her body. Sam laughed and asked her if she had goose bumps. Zoë said she was just a little cold, and he continued adjusting her. He clicked his tool and straightened her spine. He felt her feet again, this time just bare feet; he had to take the stilettos off. It excited her. He was undressing her. Then he started to adjust her butt again—she had to bite down on the padding. When she couldn't take it anymore, she flipped over, grabbed Sam by the tie and pulled him close to her, trying to kiss him. For a moment, he was kissing her too, but he stopped, his face still close to hers because she had him by his tie.

"Give it to me," said Zoë, trying to sound like a movie star. He pulled away and slapped her—hard. Her cheek stung.

"You need to leave," said Sam quietly. He sat down in his chair and looked down, waiting for her to leave.

Later that night, she wept on her couch, alone, unable to eat, drink, even weigh herself. She hated herself. She was an idiot, a pervert. She thought about Mom and the pistol; how bad it probably hurt. The friends she didn't like, everything. Someone had once told her that grief comes at you like a wave, but this was more like a tsunami, an earthquake and fire happening all at the same time, and she couldn't take it. Zoë finally picked herself up and went to her room and noticed the words she had carved: "Even death has her sleepwalkers."

She placed her fingers over the words, felt the notches and dug into them, as if trying to make them make sense, but they didn't, they wouldn't and they never did. She felt the tide of her grief, her embarrassment pulling her in, but she knew it would never drown her, that it couldn't if it wanted to; she would stay afloat. She could never be at peace.



FINDING LIGHT  
by Anne Torkelson  
oil on canvas





We stand around Aunt Ionne, dying  
 Ionne, in her white room in the corner  
 of the nursing home. The day her son Louis  
 carried her here, kicking and screaming,  
 she referred to it as "that dying place."  
 Because of her stroke-induced dementia,  
 she forgot where she was the next day.

Now, she lies on her death bed, and I,  
 at eye level with her body,  
 along with my family, stand watching her.  
 She groans, wincing in pain, her knees bent and  
 protruding in the air, her white gown crawling  
 slowly up her thigh, revealing more and more  
 of her eroded flesh. My tiny grandmother  
 stands at Ionne's side, holding her hand, trying  
 to comfort her. And her groans go on, the  
 moans of agony, and Ionne's gown creeps  
 further up her thigh. I scoot a few inches  
 closer to the foot of her bed, wondering  
 what could be behind the white gown, and I inch  
 further, closer, and gaze at the long, black,  
 scraggly hairs at the center of her thighs.

ROSS WILCOX





POSTERIOR VIEW  
by Amy Foltz  
linoleum reduction print

# A NEW LIFE IN HONDURAS

BY VICTORIA REED

**H**onduras is a country of extremes. There is very little room for the gray areas between rich and poor, safe and dangerous, hot and cold, comfortable and disconcerting. I am a resident in a country where most Americans are presumed to be Bible-toting missionaries, and I find myself explaining that I am not here to build a roof over the heads of poor school children in the mountains or to pave a road to an impoverished community. I am here for years, not weeks. I'm still not sure why I came here or what I am still doing here. All I know is that I, a pampered American girl, am slowly falling in love with this tumultuous country.

The weather in Honduras is poetic—a bitch and a saint. During the hot months, the heat crawled into my veins and caused the sweat on my forearm to boil. I watched as condensation evaporated and hovered in the thick, humid air. Even my elbows were wet in this

tropical country. During the day, the sun grabbed my skin and pinched hard. Sunburns take minutes. My first steamy

months here were months for complaining, water and shade—constant craving for iced coffee and cool breezes. Some people choose to find cooler places in the shade. Often, this is underneath trees in the middle of the road where men bunch up their shirts to expose their sweaty, protruding bellies and fan their dripping faces with their hats. Life seems to slow down in August. The women performing their daily chores walk slower, with concern for exhaustion. Children don't run as much and soccer matches are shortened. Even through the steamy rays, the sun shined through the surrounding palm fronds, making a stark contrast between the translucent green leaves and the brilliant blue of the sky above.

Then comes the cold and the rain—both a blessing and a curse in Honduras.

The country needs the rain to replenish its natural beauty, but too much rain means flooding rivers and ruined neighborhoods. A flooded river means the destruction of mostly impoverished communities. It means taking away an already meager living from hard-working families. Blue skies become gray and clouds funnel over the surrounding mountains. One has never seen a sky so black as a storm over the mountains. It is a menacing omen of thundering rain drops to come. Once the rain begins falling, it dances a strong dance. It slams onto your shoulders and pricks your feet until you begin to match your movements to the quick rhythm it creates on the concrete.

The cold, however, is welcomed happily, as if it is a silent holiday. I didn't even notice it had come until I reached for an extra blanket to sleep with at night. People bundle up in scarves and proudly saunter into restaurants with jackets. Everyone's skin becomes one shade lighter than sunburn and sandals are switched for boots. The cold in Honduras is gentle and comforting, and my body is reminded how to make goose-bumps or shivers. I have to admit that I enjoy the fact that news in Honduras is streamed from Denver, Colorado. I have the evil pleasure of listening to the weather person warn about ice storms while I sit under a blanket in 70 degree weather. My skin doesn't remember the sting of winter wind, nor can it recall the red throb of wind burn. Now my skin is ice cold at anything below seventy.

As much as I enjoy being poetic about how beautiful the country of Honduras is, I have to be realistic. The country itself is beautiful. It is full of lush green mountains and historical Mayan ruins. The city of San Pedro Sula, however, is not considered to be a gem. I live in a valley in Honduras—a bowl of heat and pollution. San Pedro Sula is the second-largest city in Honduras and the commercial capital. The city itself is dirty and loud and,

*"I live in a valley in Honduras—  
a bowl of heat and pollution."*



at times, overwhelming. Bigger cities often lead to more crime. I have only lived here for seven months and I am already desensitized to the machine gun-toting guards who stand in front of bakeries, malls and pharmacies. It has become normal for me to walk around the tip of a shotgun sticking out from a man on the sidewalk. Protection is necessary. Already, I find myself glancing over my shoulder to check if anyone is stalking behind me. I cross the street if there is someone walking toward me on the same sidewalk. I don't stay out at night and I don't carry a purse. This is part of the motivation to travel on weekends. Most people can only take two or three weeks of crime, threat, and noise before they find themselves thirsting for a friendly beach town only an hour away or a cool mountain village a few hours from the city.

There is a big gap between rich and poor here. At red lights, cars are bombarded with dirty, barefoot children begging for money. They wear ripped clothing and have dirt smeared around their eyes and on their knees. They walk up to your car and knock on the window, hoping for one Lempira (about five cents in U.S. money.) Children spend hours breathing car exhaust and dodging traffic in hopes of taking home a few Lempira. It is tough to know whether or not you should give them money. One side argues that if people don't give them money the children will stop begging and will earn money another way. The other side argues that the population with money can stand to give away a few Lempiras here and there. It is heartbreaking, and I have to admit that I am so embarrassed by the situation that I don't give them money. It's hard to face that I am wealthy in a country that aches for financial security. Honduras is proud yet struggling, rich yet poor, generous yet selfish. I find myself unable to cope with the differences, and I shrink under the pressure to be decent.

I struggle with the idea of self-decency

on a daily level here. I live on a tight budget, but make more than quadruple the amount of the average person in Honduras. I enjoy relaxing hikes through the mountains where people build shacks with Twister mats as curtains because they can't afford the rent to live in the city—so they squat in the hills. I go on vacations to what I consider paradise while others will never have the opportunity to travel even an hour away.

It is truly a different life here. I live in a country that is struggling to find itself. I suppose it fits; it is comforting for a person right out of college. I find a close relationship between the growth and the exploration we are making together. In this country full of desperate poverty and filthy richness a person finds it difficult to know where to look. When do I give money? When do I negotiate for a lower price? The best I can do, the best anyone can do here, is to live day by day. Travel when you can, appreciate what you find beautiful, and go out on a limb to explore something new. Living in Honduras is a life of contradictions. It is confusing and overwhelming, and utterly blissful.

*"Everywhere I go there is a man carrying a gun to protect someone or something."*

## HOW AN INDIAN COULD BE REPUBLICAN

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Quinton could palm a basketball  
at the age of nine and that same summer  
he could beat up kids as old as  
twelve. Quinton is a big man.  
He could tackle an ox if he had to,  
but he hasn't.

"What are you up to Quinton?"  
"About the weight of a Buick."

A canoe would rather sink  
than stay afloat  
when Quinton mans the paddle.  
Quinton gets to say whatever the hell he wants.

"What do you call a white man in the middle of twelve Indians?"  
"I don't know Quinton, what?"  
"Bartender!"

He can't understand why people are  
intimidated by him. He is from Oklahoma,  
north eastern part, near Ozark  
Mountain Country. He tries to explain  
that raising chickens, pigs, ducks, and sheep  
don't mean he's trash.

"Just because we shit in an outhouse..."

Quinton loves his politics. And a man  
who says whatever the hell he wants,  
says a lot messed up stuff.  
You need a solution  
to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

"Fill those tunnels up with oil, burn them out,  
every one of them sons of bitches."

Even a little of his talk  
gets to be enough. How an Indian  
could be Republican  
has but one answer, well maybe two.

"Taxes and Bill Clinton," I say, "That's  
all you care about."



Quinton likes it when I stand up  
for myself, but sometimes his arms rise up.  
His hands come at me—  
big oven mitts going in  
for a roasted turkey. Just smiling at me.  
And I know Quinton could snap my neck  
like he was snapping his fingers.

“Quinton, you know you’re messed up, right?”

Like it’s a question.

COLIN O’SULLIVAN

OBAMA  
by Mack Maschmeier  
pastel



## DISTORTION

BY TYREL DREY



**W**hen we did it, we screwed. At the time I would have said we made love. But looking back we just screwed. Now it hits me, I've been crying pretty constantly since I found out I was pregnant three weeks ago. He left me a few days later, said I was a "lousy lay" and laughed about it to a few of his buddies he'd invited to watch how manly he was dumping me. I can't have a kid. I've got college, basketball, the fall play, prom, my future, my career, everything. I'm only sixteen. I can't talk to anyone, what would my friends say? What would my dad, my little sister say?



Mix

by Sarah Chambers  
digital photograph

My mom would never forgive me. We couldn't walk into church and sit down in the front row. No more Christmas candle lightings. No more reading from the hymnal in front of church now, everyone would disown her, and she would never speak to me again. She is probably at Planned

Parenthood right now. Sitting with her friends telling all the people walking in how horrible they are, how trappy they were. How God can see what they're doing. God—if only she knew. I wipe some more tears from my eyes with a Kleenex. I'm sitting on my red twin bed holding Theo, my bear, close. I pull him away and look at his shabby tan fur and brown eyes. His eyes always get me. They look so real, so innocent—almost childlike. Another set of tears come.

There are 14 little white morning after pills. I pulled them out of their wrapping about two days ago in the bathroom at school. I'd managed to get them from a girl in homeroom. She buys them and sells them to other girls so they don't have to. How horrible must she feel, walking into the stores, buying 10 or 20 pills at time. I let her eat with us the next day, and all the girls were nice enough until she left. Then they called her a tramp and asked why I let her eat with us. "Oh no," I thought, they know, they know, they'll tell everyone and I'll be done for. Think, THINK. I told them I was just trying to be nice. It was the Christian thing to do. They all knew I was religious and bought the story. They don't know. I hope they don't know.

I wipe away more tears and look at the mounting pile of Kleenex at the foot of my bed next to the pills. It's been six weeks and I don't think just one will do it, but 14 might. I calm myself down and walk downstairs to grab some water. My dad is reading a newspaper at the kitchen table. He lowers it and lifts his head up to view me through the glasses sitting much too low on his nose. He smiles and I laugh at how goofy he looks.

"Good to see you smile again." He grins.

I wrinkle my forehead and look at him questioningly.

"I didn't mean anything by it." His eyes grow and he shakes his head. "You've just been sort of sad lately." He sets down the paper as I pour a glass of water. "You can talk to us about anything you know. Your mom and me, we're here for ya."



*I look at the floor, "I know."*

*He walks over and kisses me on the head, "You're okay, right?"*

*I nod and flash him a smile. I'm back upstairs and staring at the pills through the warp of the glass. Now or never. I down all 14 and swig the water.*

My uncle has been raping me since I was nine. He told me if I told anyone he'd kill me. That worked until I was about 12. It took three years to figure out that he wouldn't kill me. By that point, it was my fault. I couldn't just all of a sudden say that my uncle, the family's golden boy, the real estate millionaire who set up my parents and grandparents with good houses, the same man who gave my dad the job that allowed us to go to private schools, and would pay for college, I couldn't just suddenly say, "He's raping me. He's been raping me for six years." No one would believe me. I always figured some day, I'd get something, some piece of proof, and I would tell. I remember those two blue lines, and the set of directions on that box that said pregnant.

Now I'm walking down the sidewalk. Listening to the protesters shout, "Baby killer," and "God is watching!" I push open the door as I hear one woman say, almost in a whisper, "What would your mother say?" I hold it in until I sit down in the Planned Parenthood lobby. But then the tears come, clouding the white that turned blue halfway down. I recognize a chubby redheaded nurse from my first visit; she comes over and gives me a Kleenex and pats my back.

I hold it in until I get through the doors. I've learned to control my emotions. Sitting next to the man molesting you at Thanksgiving teaches you how to control your emotions. But that last comment, it gets me. "What would your mother say?" I don't know. She'd be ashamed. Ashamed her daughter took this abuse for six years. Is it still abuse,

is it still rape when you're 15 years old and you let your uncle rape you every couple of months, or are you just a whore? A doctor comes out and says, "Stephanie, we're ready for you." She gives me a little smile, with just her mouth and not her eyes. I smile like that a lot, usually when the world is telling me how great my uncle is and how he helped some local charity, or when he cracks a joke at Christmas and everyone laughs. Because even though it's funny, it's wrong, everything he does is wrong. Now I'm sitting in Planned Parenthood, watching a doctor walk away. A doctor who just smiled and told me it's okay. It's wrong, but okay. I wipe my tears away and walk into the changing room.

I hang my clothes on a hook and put on a blue surgical gown. There's a mirror in the center of the wall and I just notice my butt hanging out. I turn my head away. I haven't looked below my waist in years. I don't shower after gym; I keep my eyes closed in the shower. I can't look down there. I know what has happened. I know how horrible I am, and now I walk through the doors to compound my sins, and abort the... I can't call it a baby. I won't. Babies come from love, from two people who care about each other. This isn't that.

I take a deep breath and clear my head. You learn to do that when you're lying on your stomach as your uncle rapes you. You learn to clear your head and think about something else. I walk through the door.

*I didn't have to wear a tampon today, that's good... well as good as anything can be I guess. My headache and stomach cramps went away too. The doctor told me that taking 14 morning after pills was probably the dumbest thing*

*"I wipe away more tears and look at the mounting pile of Kleenex at the foot of my bed next to the pills."*



*I could have done. He promised not to tell my parents. I told them I just had a sore throat. He said I would probably bleed for awhile until all the medication worked out of my system, and to let him know if it wasn't gone in a week or two. It's been 12 days and I think I'm clear.*

*My mom reaches across the car and kisses my cheek. "Thanks for the ride, Catherine." She pushes some hair behind my ear. "If you can just run to the store and get the pot roast. I left instructions for your sister on how to cook it." She has me drop her off at Planned Parenthood so I can use the car to run and get some groceries.*

*I nod.*



**WELCOME TO PIZZA RANCH**  
by Annika Kolbo  
oil on mdf

*"Thanks," she says. "Love you." She gets out of the car. She's been spending her Saturdays at Planned Parenthood for the last month. She and some women from the church have made it their personal mission to get the place closed down.*

*She told me last night that if kids can't control themselves they should at least have the decency to live with their mistakes. I didn't think I'd ever be able to cry again after I took the pills. I didn't really figure I would have any tears left. Now sitting in that parking lot, looking at the girls across the street I pull into a lot a block or so down, and cry.*

*I'm sitting in the recovery room staring at the wall. The recovery room is a very calming shade of light pink. I like it. My stomach hurts; well I suppose it's not my stomach. It feels empty, a good kind of*

*empty. I guess. They said I could wait here until I feel better.*

*I told them I had a ride and they said okay. You're supposed to have a ride scheduled for afterward. Who the hell do you get to come pick you up after aborting the baby? No, no, not a baby. How do you tell someone to come and pick you up after having your uncle's baby aborted?*

*I get up and head for the door. They will still be there. I can take a lot. Six years of abuse, having an abortion. I can take the looks from kids at school who think I'm a whore because I sell morning after pills. But I can't, won't, take another bout with them. Not after that, not after mentioning my mother.*

*I notice the window. It looks like the kind you can open clear up. So I back away from the door, open the window as far as it will go, and crawl out. It's a fenced in area with a bunch of cars parked in gravel. A big wooden privacy fence, probably so the protestors don't take down the doctors names and harass them at their homes.*

*I hop the fence and land on the other side. It hurts my... it hurts a lot. I can see why they don't want you to walk home. I take a deep breath, bury the pain, and walk down the alley to the sidewalk. I turn the corner and light a cigarette. Haven't had one since I was pregnant. Don't know why, not like I was going to keep the thing. But I didn't smoke until now. I breathe in deep and it tastes good, fills my lungs, and calms me a little bit. Planned Parenthood told me not to smoke, but hell it's not like I'm listening to them.*

*I take about two more steps when a car stops beside me. It's Catherine, one of the girls from school, plays basketball, does theatre, she's a stupid popular kid. I sold her some pills a few weeks ago. She let me eat lunch with her and the stupid popular kids.*

*She stops a few feet away and waves me*



over. I look into the car. She rolls down the window of what must be her mom's green Taurus and beckons me in.

"Hey, Steph. You need a ride home or something?" She looks like she's been crying. "C'mon, I'm sure you could use a ride."

Yeah I could. "No," I wave her off. "I can walk."

"C'mon, get in, it's no big deal."

I stomp out my cigarette as I open the door.

"Thanks." I close the door and give her a nod.

"You going home?"

"Yeah," I pull my purse up over my lap and hug it close. "It's over on Jackson Street."

We drive for a second before she glances over at me. "Smoking's bad for you, ya know."

"Maybe I don't like it here that much," I snap. She stares out the front of the car and bites her lip a bit. I shouldn't have snapped at her. She's just trying to be nice. "Sorry." I sit up a little higher in the seat. "I didn't mean to snap."

"It's okay," she gives me a smile. Another little fake smile.

"I just wanted to thank you," she pauses and turns down the radio. "For the pills. I just..." she doesn't know what to say. She isn't really thankful. She looks a little scared. That's how most people look at me. They're glad I'm there, only when they need me.

"It's okay," I offer. "I know how... I mean I can imagine."

She notices how I am clutching my abdomen. I watch the realization hit her, that she just picked me up a block from Planned Parenthood. Now the car is suffocating me, I'm not about to be judged. She doesn't know. She has no fucking idea. "Stop," I shout. She snaps out of her stare and jerks the wheel a bit. "I said 'stop.' Let me out of the car. Pull over dammit."

She pulls over and stops. I can't even grab the damn door handle I'm so angry. I just want to get out, get away. She doesn't know. She doesn't know. Now I'm fucking crying. I slam my purse on the ground.

"I'm not here to judge." She looks down.

"Good because you don't even know. I'm not some whore. I'm not some goddamned sex fiend or something. I'm not here to..." I throw my purse on the floor and hit the dashboard with my palms. The tears are still coming, and my stomach hurts. I feel sick, so sick. I rip open the door and vomit out the side of the car onto the gutter. I pull my head back in and lean back in the chair. "I'm sorry, so sorry, but everyone thinks—"

"I'm not here to judge," Cathy offers. "Who am I to judge?" Now she's crying too.

I laugh through the tears. "I guess."

She lets out a laugh too. And now we're sitting there, laughing, I don't know what the hell we're laughing about, but we are.

We laugh for a few minutes, and then suddenly stop.

"Do you want to go get a, I dunno." She looks back at me. "You want to get some ice cream or something?"

"Yeah, I say." I nod and pick up my purse. "Yeah, I'd like that a lot."

*"She notices how I am clutching my abdomen. I watch the realization hit her..."*

## “MAKING OTHER PEOPLE’S BEEF”

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Cold January wind  
breaks your body  
like a forty-five mile per hour car-crash  
this is only morning...

before the sun wakes  
before the cock crows  
before deathly cold  
thaws into simply freezing  
coax the dirty white tractor to life  
fill the wagon  
feed the bulls  
you're in the mud  
you're in the shit  
making straight lines  
along the bunks  
put out hay  
get stuck  
pull yourself out  
get filthy  
get yelled at  
blade the snow  
thaw the fountains.  
wage a war against winter  
gather the herd  
fix the fence  
gain twenty pounds  
lose self-worth  
lose the war  
get yelled at  
for everything  
realize  
this just ain't right.  
feeding time again  
do the same  
as before  
now go home  
eat some dinner

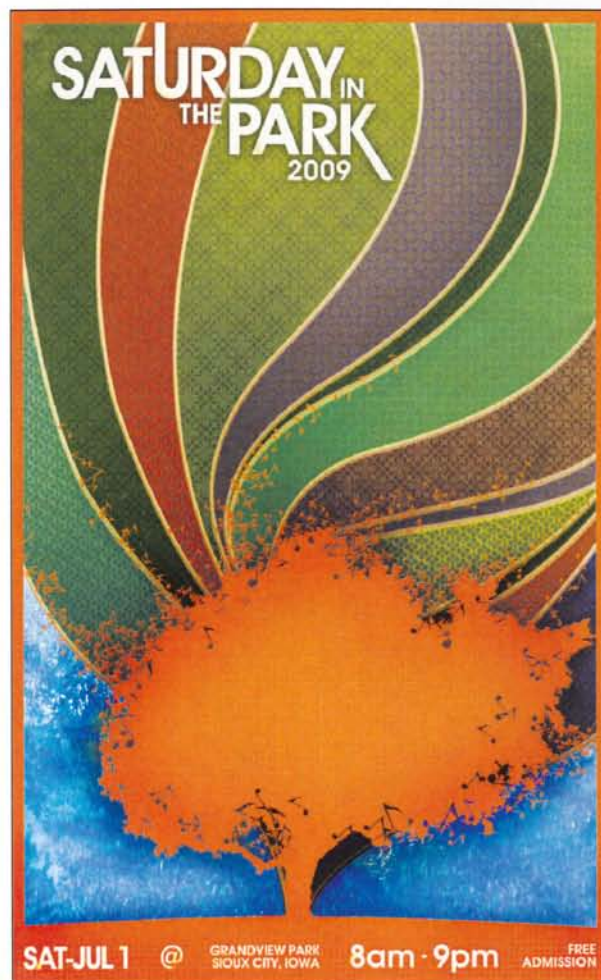


turn a blind eye  
don't call the collectors  
don't pay the bills  
make the bed  
start a fight...make-up  
make some love  
cry some tonight  
before abruptly falling away  
realize  
god is a ghost  
inhabiting  
the shit  
in the yard  
on your boots  
and in your heart.

KIEL PLOEN



**HURLEY**  
by Kayla Curry  
acrylic on canvas

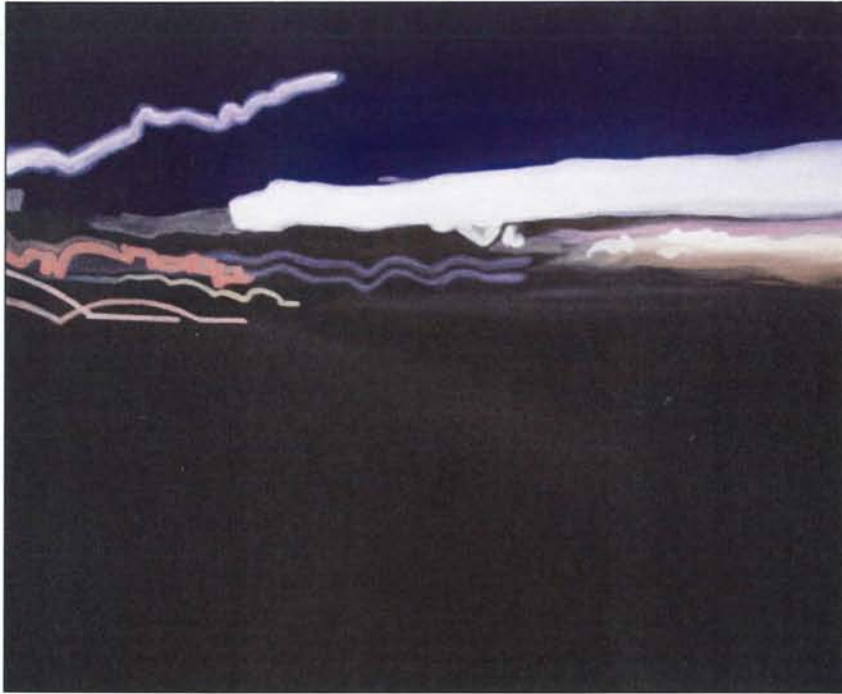


**SATURDAY IN THE PARK**  
by Sean Delperdang  
digital



**CANINE ESSENCE**  
by Alicia Runyan  
packaging design





**LIGHTS**  
by Mack Moschmeier  
acrylic on canvas

**SEATING PATTERNS**  
by Becca Bauer  
digital photograph



**MORNINGSIDE MASCOT**  
by Patrick Oxendole  
photograph



HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN  
by Becca Bower  
digital photograph

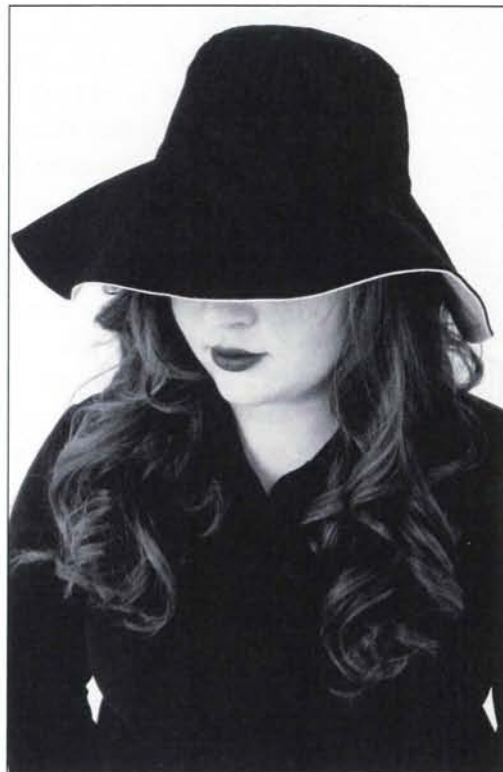


INDUSTRY  
by Wyeth Lynch  
digital photograph





**RUSSIAN PRINCESS**  
by Breanne Evans  
digital photograph



**BLACK AND WHITE**  
by Leslie DePeel  
digital photograph



**TRIO**  
by Sarah Chambers  
digital photograph

# I NEED TO CRY

BY TYREL DREY

I need to cry. I can be angry, happy, sad, perplexed, elated, surprised or any other emotion. But I can't cry. I've been doing theatre for four years now, and I've taken the college's best performer award every year. I'm sitting here in a dark corner backstage, staring at a bit of light from the stage that trails the floor as it bends around the curtain. Resting my head on my hand, I search.

In theatre we call it an affective memory. Some memory, however insignificant or out of place, conjures an emotion. I have a ton of memories that make me happy, more that make me angry, and even more that make me sad. But none that make me cry. To be honest, I can't even remember the last time I cried.

I can remember very clearly being 13. It was a Sunday. We were having breakfast, sausage and hash browns. Dad must have burnt my toast because I remember how black the crumbs seemed sitting on the white phone receiver.

"Hey Chuck." It was my uncle Jim.

"Hey Jim, pretty early for a farmer to be up." I liked to poke fun at him; he never got out of bed till 10 or so, and took a three or four hour nap every day after feeding the hogs. Pretty good sport, but he didn't laugh that day. He chortled. It seemed very forced, and then he asked to speak with my dad.

That's when I knew something was wrong. He asked to speak to my dad. Not talk, or holler at, or chat or any other phrase he'd used a million times. No, he asked to speak to my dad.

My dad cried. He sat back down at the table very calmly. Took a drink of coffee. Lit a cigarette. The smoke from the ember tip mingled with the steam from his coffee and hit him in the face all at once. Maybe that's what made him cry. Maybe it wasn't really that his dad had just died. Maybe it was just the smoke and steam, the pepper from the eggs or something. Maybe it was that. Maybe.

The stage manager shouts for actors to come to warm-ups. I hop up and walk back from behind the curtain. I pop my neck and put on my happy face.

It's funny, I spend all this time and energy learning how to act, getting in touch with my emotions. I sit and observe people. I can tell when they have a test by how much tension is in their shoulders. I can tell what sport someone plays by how they carry themselves. I can look at someone's posture and tell you what instrument he plays in the marching band. I can spot someone who's angry, tell you whether or not she'll be violent, how hard they'll hit, whether they want a fight or just to seem tough. I can tell you how happy, sad, or angry someone is by a million tiny things they do. It's important for an actor to do this, so he can watch for them in himself.

The theatre is doing *Dancing at Lughnasa* this semester. It's a play set in Ireland in the early 20th century. The play recounts the lives of six unmarried sisters and their struggles to keep their family together. It's all recounted through the narration of Michael, the bastard son of the youngest sister. His monologues are intermixed with scenes to weave the story. I'm Michael, so half the play is me on stage alone doing monologues. There are five of them in all, and I can't get my head around the fourth one. I stand, and explain how two of the aunts die, alone and derelict in the streets of London some years later, and how much life generally sucks for the remaining sisters.

I've got the play down to a tee, except for this monologue. I need to cry for it to work. The director says not to force it, and I won't, but this calls for me to cry. Lots of actors who are way worse than me can cry on cue, so why can't I? Practice winds down and Jan, the director, asks to speak to me for a moment. I walk up to the front of the stage and hang my feet off the edge. I flash her a quick



smile. She's standing just in front of me and grins back.

"I got a call from Iowa today," she says. Iowa has a great theatre program and they are considering me for a teaching assistant position there, to help me pay my way through grad school. "They said they were sending someone up to see the play next weekend, wanted to know which seats were closest to

because deep down the real Jan wanted to use her hands when she was excited, but had trained herself not to.

"Damn," I offer. "Pressures on now, huh?"

"You don't seem that excited." Jan can read people too, probably better than me.

I shrug, "No, no, just got a lot on my mind right now." I grin a little bit and look up; looking up generally means someone is



you so they could watch you." Iowa is a huge theatre school, a great program, and very hard to get into.

She is excited. I can tell because she takes off her glasses when she's excited. She sort of waves them around. Jan has big hands. Big in the acting sense that they take up attention and accentuate points. When you act long enough you learn not to do things like use your hands too much, or use gestures that are too big. I think Jan used her glasses

thinking about the future or taking in some kind of meaning. I look up and nod. "That's great. I'm just trying not to get complacent." I raise my eyebrows and laugh a little bit to get rid of the tension for the last part.

Jan gives a half-smile. "Just don't worry too much. You're doing great; don't get too stuck on that crying thing. You're too good an actor to try and force an emotion. You play it wonderfully." She pats me on the shoulder. Physical contact builds trust.

**RAIL BRIDGE**  
by Josh Beckwith  
oil on canvas



I'm walking back to my room. It's cold. In northwest Iowa the wind blows all the time. It's nice in summer, but in the winter it makes 30 degrees feel like zero. I leave my eyes open and look into the wind. The freezing dries

*"I leave my eyes open and look into the wind. The freezing dries my eyes almost immediately... A tear gathers and falls a few inches before disappearing into the dry air. If only it was that easy."*

my eyes almost immediately, and the wind blowing makes them tear up to counteract the dryness. A tear gathers and falls a few inches before disappearing into the dry air. If only it was that easy.

My mom always cried. She would cry for anything—graduations, weddings, funerals, birthdays anniversaries, whatever. She was a broken pump. I remember my mom cried when my neighbor got married. Tim had been a good friend of mine for as long as I can remember. His mom, Pat, had died of cancer when we were 15. She was a great lady. A big lady too, but one of the nicest women I'd ever met. She had her angry moments, but she was always sincere and honest.

Pat used to make us do chores around the house and pay us too much. She gave us \$50 once to paint the fence in their backyard. We got about halfway done when it started to rain. She called us inside and made us cookies while we watched football. Then she gave us the money and took us to Wal-Mart. Told us we could paint the fence tomorrow about noon. Tim and I decided to go fishing instead. I'll never forget the fear in his eyes when his mom showed up on the dock. She didn't say anything; she didn't yell, cry, wave her arms or threaten us in any way. Just looked down at the two of us, with our feet dangling just above the water and said, "You boys must have forgotten about the fence, right." It wasn't a question, not

one bit. We nodded, got up, walked back and painted the fence.

She was diagnosed with cancer just a few days after that. Tim and I hung out a lot after she got diagnosed. I think he enjoyed having someone around who didn't stare at his mom. When people think someone is going to die they tend to stare, or not look at all. But 11-year-old boys stare. He liked it, too, because I knew not to ask. Sometimes his mom was gone at chemo; sometimes she would lie in bed for two or three days at a time. I never acted like anything had changed. The doctors gave her three months. She lasted four years; I think it was just her proving the doctors wrong. Pat was stubborn.

At her funeral, Tim cried a very quiet cry. He cried so that if it weren't for the tears streaming down his face he would have looked normal. He smiled when he needed to smile, frowned when he needed to frown. He laughed here and there; he wiped his nose and covered his face when things got sentimental. But the tears seemed somehow... out of place. I've got to wonder, after watching a parent die for 4 years, were the tears for sadness, joy, or something else? Maybe, if Tim just cried because he thought he should.

Back at the dorm, I could use a cigarette to calm down the thoughts a little bit. I could use a beer. No it's cold. I could use some scotch, maybe whiskey. Whiskey warms you up. I walk into my room and open a bottle of Jameson. It's very smooth and fairly strong, but mostly it's cheap. So I pour a glass, pondering Coke for a moment before deciding to just down the shaker glass. I sit and ponder. Who else cries, why, when, how? I pour another glass and down it. Forget cups. I'm not mixing it; might as well just use the bottle.

My ex cried once, when we broke up. We had this little conversation about how we just weren't right for each other. I could tell she was on the verge of tears. Her lower lip was shaking. Her lip gloss was less bright



on the lower lip because she kept biting it to stop it from shaking. I think I'd told her once that lower lips shake when people are going to cry. I used to make her laugh by explaining how to tell what people were thinking by how they acted. Shoulders tensed for stress, football players hold their shoulders back, woodwind players tend to hold their forearms forward. She always got a kick out of little stuff like that. I loved to see her laugh. That was about the last real thing I felt.

I take another swig of the whiskey and it drips down my chin. I wipe it away with my sleeve. I look drunker than I am.

I loved to see her laugh, and that's why it killed me inside. Seeing her sitting there, biting the gloss off of her lower lip, losing the shimmer. Watching her eyes well up, the long blinks she used to stop the tears from coming. She didn't want to cry, and I just wanted her to be happy. So I said okay, we should break up. If it made her happy I would have said anything. She cried anyway. Evidently I was wrong. All my observing my little insights into human nature were for nothing.

I take another drink. It settles a little rough, and I pat my chest with my fist. It doesn't help, just another meaningless motion I think I need. Just another meaningless bit for a non-existent audience. What made her cry? Was it because she wanted me to argue, to save the relationship? No, it was too hard for her to talk, to form words, she clearly really wanted this. She looked at me right in the eyes; she wanted to make sure I understood her. People look at the eyes for comprehension. The eyes widen a little bit when someone finally gets a concept. So people watch for that, unconsciously, but they watch nonetheless. I got her point. Why did she still cry?

I don't know. I put the last little bit of the whiskey in a cup and take it outside to have a cigarette. It's dark out now. The moon is white, a brilliant pale white as it glows

through the jagged tree branches. I pull out a cigarette and some matches. I'm trying not to burn myself, so I hold the match as far away from the red chemical head as possible. After wasting six matches I've decided to just get it over with and burn myself. I like smoking, and I'm gonna smoke. Sometimes it hurts to do something you like.

I take a drag and finish my whiskey. There are two people walking into the dorm through the side door. They're a couple. I can tell because they're holding hands. They're not looking at each other or chatting, so they probably just got done fighting and are still mad even though they've made up.

I've just drunk a liter of whiskey, and I can't stop dissecting everything people do. I don't want to. I want to stop, no more thinking. I want to feel something. I throw my coat on the ground and let the sub-zero temperature envelope me. I light another cigarette off the last bit of my first and sit down in the snow. Its cold, but I don't care. At least it's real, and that's all I want. I want to shine. I want to glimmer. I want to cry.

You spend enough time tweaking your emotions, putting on a false front, and pretty soon you don't know what emotion you're actually feeling anymore. If you play dumb enough, eventually you get dumb. You become a mask. Spend enough time faking emotions, and eventually you don't know how you feel anymore.



AUTUMN'S LAST DANCE  
by Nicole Raphael  
digital photograph

I wake up with a headache. I drank too much again. I stayed up until about 5 a.m. smoking cigarettes in the snow and freezing my ass off. Then I slept through my classes and woke up with a headache, dehydration, and a runny nose. I have rehearsal in 2 hours. I'm gonna get yelled at. I'm still pissed at everything. So I crack open a beer. A cheap, foamy, simple beer. I drink 10 of them. Then I go to play practice.

Now Jan's yelling, telling me how this is unacceptable, kicking me off the show. I don't give a damn. I tell her I don't care about grad school, or Iowa teaching assistantship, or the real world or professionalism. I just want to feel again. I want to not be the robot of human interaction this theatre has made me. I tell her to shove the part up her ass.

Now I'm storming out of the theatre through the blackness of the backstage. I'm storming back to the dorm across campus. I know I just took a hit, and I know tomorrow I'll have to fix all this. The good news is most actors do this. But not me. I control myself. I don't throw fits. I don't have problems. I understand my emotions. I keep them in check, I understand them. I dissect them. I control them.

Now I'm back in my room, and I'm staring down at the script, the plain tan cover of the script. The pile of beer cans next to it, the empty emerald bottle of whiskey. The full impact of my mistake hits me. Part of the script is a different color, it's darker, less faded, and it's wet.

I'm crying. I've messed up, and now I'm crying. Now I know how. I've got it now. Next time, at least next time, I'll have it.



## THE ENCOUNTER

BY LINDSAY WASHBURN

**B**oom! Boom! My shotgun aim was spot on. I ran down the alley, picking them off easily. At the end of the alley I kicked open the door and bam! One shot and he flew backwards into the burnt out building. But he was not dead yet. He was a zombie. When he came back I went for the knees, knocked him down to give me time. Then, it was the kill shot. I aimed carefully, took my time, and fired. His head exploded in a shower of blood and brains. Yeah! Take that!

I pressed pause on my PlayStation 2 controller. My nurse had come into my room to give me my after dinner pudding cup. She busied herself about the room as I tore the shiny flap off the top of the pudding. There is one good thing about being stuck in the hospital for two weeks. If you want pudding, all you have to do is push a button. I had been admitted eight days ago for a serious blood infection, but I was starting to come around. The problem was that I was coming down with a serious case of bored outta-my-mind. Luckily, the staff humored me and let my dad bring me my PS2, and some DVDs. Having watched all the movies by the second day, I committed myself to beating the latest version of *Resident Evil*. I could geek out on a game like that for the rest of my sentence. At least I had a private room to conduct my mission in peace. My nurse took her time in my room. She was the nosy one. After making sure I was comfortable, and ensuring that I was uncomfortable, she headed for the door. Before she shut it behind her she reminded me that I had yet to take my daily walk.

I was supposed to take a walk at least once every day. The staff wished I would take more than one, but it was usually just one. The wing of the hospital was set up like all of the other wings. The rooms were set around a circular hallway at both ends of the floor. A long, wide corridor connected these two hallways to each other, making an oddly stretched figure eight. In the corridor were

the nurses' station and the elevators. I hated the elevators. It was in those elevators that all of the smells of the different floors of the hospital got trapped and mutated into putrid concoctions unclassifiable by the human olfactory system.

When I took my walks, I almost always took the figure-eight around to the other rooms in my hallway, past the nurses' station, into the other circle, around and back past the funky elevators, into my room and back into bed. It was good enough for me, and good enough for my doctors to stop lecturing me about blood clots. I put down my finished pudding cup and licked the back of the spoon. If I wanted to slaughter zombies in peace, I had better take my walk or the nosy one would come back. I saved my progress and slipped on my robe while trying not to snag any of the tubes coming out of me.

I did have company on these walks, however. Actually, it went everywhere with me, even into the bathroom. My I.V. stand was overloaded with bags of I don't know what. Mostly antibiotics, I think. The weight at the top from the bags, and the weight mid-way down from the pump made it slightly top heavy. When I walked I had to pull it along to keep the tubes from ripping out of me, but I also had to steady it from tipping



UNTITLED  
by Holly Becker  
oil on canvas



over. I grabbed the I.V. stand underneath the pump and made my way towards the door. The weight of the door and the weight of trying to keep the stand steady were almost too much for me, so I grabbed the pole with both hands and pushed the door open the rest of the way with my hip. I made my way around the circle of rooms nearest mine. All sorts of beeps and bleeps came from inside each room. I often wondered who was in those rooms and why they were in those rooms. But I still kept on walking.

The nurses' station was ahead of me on my right. There were nurses talking to patients' family members, doctors dictating into beige phones, and guys in green smocks picking up orders for this or that. I made my

way past them, trying to be invisible, but a few of them said "hi," or "off for your walk?" I really did like most of them, but was stuck in a place I didn't want to be. Excuse me if I was a little less than cordial. When

I got past the nurses' station, the elevators greeted me with a loud ping, opened their doors, and belched a nasty mix of latex and sterilized urine into my face. Up ahead in the other circle hallway there was some sort of commotion. I couldn't see anything, but four guys in green smocks and two nurses rushed past me. They disappeared around the circle and the commotion got much louder. A man in a room down the hall was having a stroke. A big stroke, and he wasn't taking it mildly. I decided that I had better find another route for the rest of my walk.

At the end of the nurses' station, directly across from the first elevator, there was an opening to a long white corridor. I had never seen anyone go into or come out of it. This

looked like as good a place as any to finish my walk, so I turned away from the chaos in the circle hallway and walked towards the opening. I stood at the opening and looked down the length of the tunnel. It was stark white and had no windows or doors. It seemed Orwellian and strange, as if it wasn't really there. Like I was the only one who could see it. I took a deep breath, my lungs filling with the remnants of the elevator stink, and began to descend into the void.

The fluorescent lights overhead buzzed into my retinas until I felt snow-blind. The tunnel smelled of powerful disinfectant. This place was alien and I was a foreign object in it. The only sound came from the strained wheels of my I.V. stand. They squeaked at every rotation, the sound amplified in the quiet around me. After about six feet, the floor tilted downward. My I.V. stand began to pitch forward so I grabbed it with both hands. After I was steady I continued forward, gripping my I.V. stand like a life raft. I was halfway through the tunnel.

My biceps were starting to burn with the strain of holding my I.V. stand. I knew that if I let go it would either fall over or roll down the rest of the tunnel on its own. Neither of these things was good, so I switched sides and held it to my right instead of my left. I looked back up at the opening to my wing. It hovered in midair in front of my face, just out of reach. I was three-quarters of the way through the corridor. No going back now. This damn thing had to lead somewhere. I shuffled forward, my arms burning. The floor leveled off so I let go of the stand. It wobbled as I let go. I was at a dead end. The corridor ended at a blank wall. What a rip off. When I turned to leave, I saw that it was not a dead end at all. The tunnel took a 90 degree turn to the left into a large open doorway. What was in there? Better yet, who was in there? There were no signs or nameplates anywhere. I hesitated at the corner

*"I stood at the opening and looked down the length of the tunnel. It was stark white and had no windows or doors. It seemed Orwellian and strange, as if it wasn't really there."*



of the long white corridor, shivering in my hospital gown and robe. I took one last look back up the way I came and then stepped around the corner.

Through the door was a large open waiting room littered with chairs and sofas of different sizes. Most of them were some shade of pale blue. They were arranged around an open area in the middle. At the far left end of the room was a desk, unattended. I swept the room with my eyes, searching for something that would identify this place. My eyes moved from the right, past a ring of chairs, and stopped dead at a sofa set near the empty desk. Sitting there alone, was a middle-aged man. He looked normal except that he was wearing a back brace connected to a medical halo. The metal prongs formed a crude cage around his head, stiffening his body. He looked like something out of a Marilyn Manson video. Despite this he sat completely peaceful and content. I stood there watching him. It could have been an hour. It could have been a minute. It felt like a day. He never moved. I'm not even sure he blinked. I couldn't look away. I wanted to say something, or at least make some sort of physical gesture to let him know I saw him and regarded him as a fellow human being. But I just stood.

A scream sounded through the corridor, so loud it made me jump. I spun around. My I.V. was empty, the red light on the pump flashing. I looked back at the man. He hadn't moved. I grabbed my I.V. stand with both hands and pushed it in front of me as I quickly hobbled back up the tunnel, around the corner of the nurses' station, past the belching elevators, past the smiling nurses and guys in green smocks, past the rooms down the hall. For the first time, I actually looked inside those other rooms as I passed their doorways. A different scene set in each, but all somehow the same. In one, an arm draped over the side of the bed and stuck out

from behind the drawn curtain. Darth Vader breathing and the television with its volume turned all the way down—the only light in the room cast eerie shadows that changed with each camera angle. In another, visitors silently staring at a bed, women holding their purses on their laps, their anticipation flowing out the door in my direction. Each doorway held another feeling, even the ones that were closed. It vibrated through the paneled wood, but people still passed by, not giving a second thought to what was on the other side.

I hobbled back into my little room, shut the door behind me, and pushed my stand back into its usual place next to my bed. The nosy one would be in any second to change the empty bag. As I grabbed my PS2 controller, wanting nothing more at that moment than to blow off a zombie's head, I thought to myself, "Maybe tomorrow, I'll go outside for my walk."



CITY OF GREEN  
by Kayla Curry  
oil on wood panel

## FROM A LOBSTER TANK

---

Kids splatter their greasy palms on the glass,  
which is always the worst. Look, you can pinpoint  
the moment their synapses get a whiff of virgin stimuli:  
eyes glinting from across the room, they crowd around  
to blot out our overhead light.  
And they are upon us.

The happy parents, a couple of lifeless thirty-somethings,  
invariably follow the tugs from their invisible leashes.  
All descend on us, an orgy,  
a flock of vultures devoid of decency.  
As the little ones slap glass and point in my direction,  
I scan the horizon for the pimpled assistant  
in the apron with the hook,  
the Arbiter of Death.

Wait, is that him? No...  
Yes! Quick boys, scramble.  
Get the hell outta my way. Oh God, the pimply teenager  
is dipping the hook in.  
Bunch up in the corners!  
Why was I resting in the middle of the tank?  
Move!  
Ugh, the hook prods around me. Such unnatural selection!  
Is it my time?

...And yet I remain grounded. The pimpled reaper  
chose somebody else. Our feverish tempest dies down  
and the hungry human eyes turn to the unfortunate one.  
Palms peel off the glass, and all returns to calm.

Our collective mass diffuses,  
enjoying the vacant space of the victim.  
As I listen to the cracks and steam screams  
of our hapless comrade in the kitchen,  
I can't help but come to the conclusion that

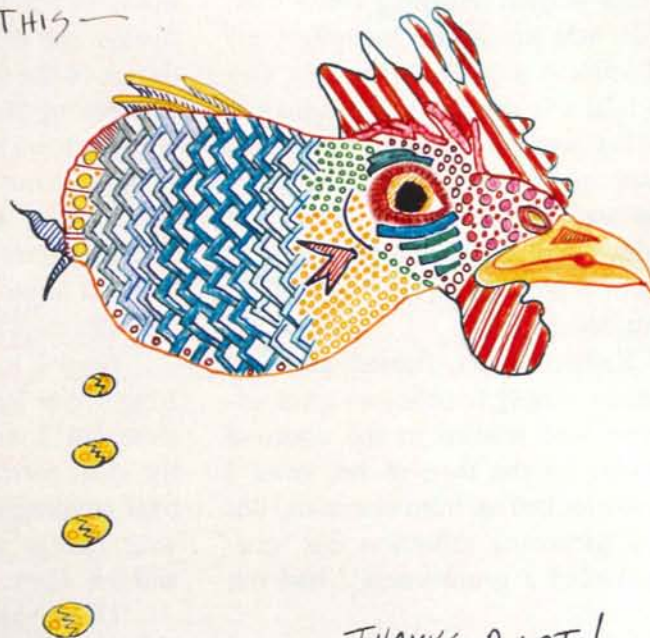
In the cosmic struggle between lobster and human,  
it's good to be scrawny.

MARK HANTLA





DEAR MR. BEAR ,  
CATCH ME A FISH THAT LOOKS LIKE  
THIS —



THANKS A LOT!  
John Bowitz

2009

MR. BEAR  
by John Bowitz  
mixed drawing & print media

## QUICK TRIP COURTING

BY KRISTINA STURM

Kailinn came to work for Quick Trip, a convenience store and gas station, the summer before my senior year. She was cold and aloof with me, but always flashing her dazzling smile and melodically laughing with customers. I tried to get close to her throughout our shifts but she never let me near. I tried jokes but she never laughed. I tried questions but she always skirted around the answers. I chalked it up to her superiority. She was a woman returning home from college and I was just a boy, but when our eyes met I knew it was more than this. Her hazel eyes told a harrowing tale of mistrust and hurt. They narrowed at men's passes and rolled at any compliment, but somehow I knew there was a bright light, hidden by a dusty window pane. I had never seen the illumination of a pure green until he walked through our doors.

"Hey." Kailinn's voice floated past her broad smile. It was Q.T. policy to greet every customer who walked in the door—if it hadn't been for the tone of her voice I wouldn't have looked up from sweeping. But there was a surprising inflection this time. Her voice cradled a genuineness I had not yet heard.

I looked at the man who had just opened the door. He was holding it for a pregnant customer and her summer-tanned kids. I followed his gaze back to Kailinn as she stood at the check stand like a figurehead on the front of a prosperous ship. Dark hair swept across her face, but I could see her solitary dimple and it was enough to clue me in. She was grinning. I disdainfully looked back at him. He wore khaki shorts and a bright blue t-shirt. He swept his sunglasses onto his blonde hair and boldly held her smile. A clatter behind me broke my judgment and I turned to see a bunch of miscreants had dumped Freezoni all over the floor.

"Jordan, you need to get the mop," the manager said.

"Got it." I turned away from this customer's lingering eye contact. I was dismayed at not being able to watch Kailinn reject another Q.T. suitor. A couple times a week some guy waltzed in and offered her his number or asked for hers. She had never been charmed into a number exchange. I held onto the fleeting hope that she was saving her digits for me. I wasn't worried about this guy; he didn't have anything new and definitely not anything I didn't have. I filled the mop bucket and dumped in a cup of Coca-Cola, a trick of the trade, and worked at mopping the melting blue puddle between the island and the drink bar. The store was busy; voices weaved in and out, but I could pull out Kailinn's voice at the check stand.

"Marlboro Reds, sure. Can I see your ID?" She was so great with customers.

"You need to swipe it?" the customer said.

"Naw, I may be an English major, but I bet I can figure out your age." Everyone chuckled. I could guess she had winked at the older man at the counter. "Alrighty your total is going to be \$5.48. Out of ten? And your change makes six, seven, eight, nine and ten. Have a great day and stop back!"

"I'll see you tomorrow!" the man hollered over his shoulder.

The intercom clicked on and Kailinn's voice rang out, "Help to the front." I leaned the mop against a wall and popped to the counter next to her.

"Sir, I can help you down here?" I nodded toward the same Abercrombie model who had so obviously been entranced by Kailinn already.

"Uh..." he looked to Kailinn then back to me, "go ahead and get someone else." He turned and whispered something to a grey-haired man holding a cup of coffee. The old man shuffled towards me. I rang him up and made small talk but I kept my eye on the smooth talker as he inched closer to Kailinn. Every time the guy reached the front of the



line, he looked behind him at the other people in line and stepped out of line for another quick lap around the store. I had to laugh. What, was this guy nervous? If he only knew how surely he would be denied.

I had grabbed the last pack of Bronson menthols for a customer. I scanned all the cigarette slots and mentally noted what I needed to stock. The top box fell off my pile and I crouched down to get it; it had tumbled right next to Kailinn's legs. Kneeling on the floor I noticed they were beautiful. Muscular. Tan. I could almost see softness. I wished I could take her home, where we would sit on the couch. She would drape them across my lap. I could touch them freely then.

Her right leg kicked up, almost into my face, breaking me from my daydream. I fell back in surprise. The tip of her shoe dragged across the floor and hooked behind her left ankle. I had never seen her do this before. What the hell?

"How are you today?" Kailinn said.

"Can't complain—it's hot out but the office is air-conditioned." He slid a Snickers and a Dr. Pepper across the counter. "How are you?"

"Peachy, thanks. It's gonna be \$2.04." She looked up at him again. I quit stocking cigarettes. I wanted to see his rejection.

He pulled out three ones. She took the bills and gathered his change.

"Your change will make three." She held her cupped hand out for his. He tucked his hand under hers, and I swear I saw the sparks flying. She dropped the change and quickly pulled her hand back. I looked from face to face. Both had flushed pink.

"Stop back." She dismissed him and looked down at me "Let me help you with those." She dropped quickly to her knees beside me. I'm not sure what the guy did next, I was too caught up in crouching close enough to smell her perfume. Being within inches of her made me feel drunk. She was fumbling

with the cartons of cigarettes.

"Oh my-lanta, Jordan." She said my name. She said my name breathily. I could feel the sweet air from her mouth. I looked into her eyes and for the first time saw a bright green swirl through the brown. It was like that guy had taken a cloth to the dirty window pane. "Did you see that guy?"

"Yeah, what a tool. The office? No one believes that, I bet he sits at home and watches MTV drinking his Dr Pepper and Snickers. He's real cool." I chuckled, but she wasn't laughing. I watched a few traces of green disappear back into her brown eyes. They were no longer soft and laughing.

"Right." She tossed the carton she had been tugging at back on to the floor and stood up. From my place on the floor I watched her legs carry her out of the check-stand and away from me.

Awesome Jordan, maybe she actually liked that guy. I'm such an idiot! Someone was snickering behind me. I quit beating myself up and turned to look at my manager. "What?" I asked.

"If it was any more obvious that you are in love I think Disney would be filming." Terry was leaning against the cigarette racks behind me. His blonde hair had thinned enough to allow the light to reflect off his scalp. He may have been getting older but he was married with four kids. Surely he knew a thing or two about love, but he was wrong about me.

I just shook my head at him and stood up. Kailinn found the only other clerk working that day, and they were excitedly gabbing away in the corner, but I couldn't hear them so I guess they couldn't hear me.

"I am not in love. Do you think she

*"I watched a few traces of green disappear back into her brown eyes. They were no longer soft and laughing."*



actually likes that guy?"

Terry just scoffed and walked past me to help another customer at the counter.

I assumed I was rid of the brazen blonde after his Snickers and Dr. Pepper craving

had been quenched, but I was wrong. This guy kept coming back. There had to be a mole giving out her schedule to him. I never saw him when she wasn't there, but every time she worked he sauntered in, always buying the same things—a candy bar and a Dr. Pepper. I wanted to resent him, but something about him made her even more beautiful. Her steps were light on the way into work and she sang in the coolers. I wanted to make her sing in the coolers, not him. I didn't understand why she was so

interested in him. They never talked about anything. But somehow I couldn't hate him. Somehow he brought her to me.

"Hey Jordy." Her ponytail bobbed as she popped her head in the cooler.

"Why in the world do you call me that?" I loved that she had given me a nickname.

"Fine," she picked up an empty pop flat and tossed it at me, "I'll quit."

"Stop." I threw the box back. She swung the door shut blocking the throw. Her head peeked in through the window and she stuck her tongue out at me and disappeared. I kept sliding cans and bottles down the shelf. The doors would open and slam shut letting spurts of conversation and warm air rush past the racks.

The intercom beeped. "Help to the front." Mini rushes weren't bad. Terry always put Kailinn on the middle register; the regulars loved her and I got to stand by her side on the second register, so who was I to complain? A middle-aged man with a loaf of bread and a 24-pack of Mountain Dew handed me his food stamps card. Our only food stamps reader was on the first register. I walked up behind Kailinn and comfortably rested a hand on the small of her back to let her know I was behind her. This intimacy I only recently learned I could do. My hand seared from the heat of her body. I leaned around her to swipe the food stamps card. She took a half step back into me, in order to reach down and grab a bag. The step placed her dangerously close to me. I knew her body could fit perfectly into mine if she so much as leaned back.

She bent slightly to grab the bag; she pressed into my leg, "Oh, I didn't see you there." She winked. The green in her eyes was becoming a constant thing and I loved it.

I pushed a few buttons on the card reader and grabbed the keypad. "Sir if you could put your pin in here." I handed the pin pad to the customer. "Did you want a sack for your bread?"

"No thank you," the man's voice was hoarse as he handed me back the pin pad. "Can I get a pack of Bronson no-filters, too?"

"Sure thing." I grabbed a pack from the cigarette drawer below me. "It's going to be \$3.59."

"Hey you!" Kailinn said. Even though I was focused on the customer I knew who had walked through the door.

"Aloha." He perched his sunglasses on the top of his head and smiled—always Mr. Suave. The rush was over and only a few people remained milling around the store.

"Uh, Kailinn, why don't you go fill cups," Terry said, nodding toward the guy who was standing by the cups. Was Terry trying to set



CRUSHED PEPSI  
by Alyssa Filipek  
digital photograph



them up? How could he do that to me?

She blushed. "Just for you, Terry." Kailinn and Terry had grown fond of each other. Terry doted on her like a father, and Kailinn was eager to please. She walked off the stand and towards the cups.

I looked at Terry. "Why'd you have to go and do that?"

"Jordan. She likes him. Look." His eyes pointed towards them. She was filling cup lids and he was leaning against the counter-top next to her. Her single dimple grew as she tipped her head back and laughed. He was saying something to her but I couldn't hear it. He reached up and brushed the hair away from her eyes. She blushed. I could imagine him telling her that she was beautiful and her eyes were gorgeous, all the things I wanted to tell her. What did he know? Who was he to make her smile that way?

"I'm gonna go stock the large vault. Don't expect me back any time soon." I shoved past Terry and threw open the vault doors. I dragged the step ladder to the end of the beer and started pushing the boxes to the front. I wished I could just drink some of it, so I could forget about him touching her. The doors burst open and I turned to see Kailinn lean up against the wall.

"Jordy?" She tucked her hands in her front pockets and looked at me—green eyes dazzling against the grey of the cooler.

"Yea?" I went back to moving beer around.

"Can I talk to you? I need a guy's opinion."

I didn't want to be that guy. It was going to be about him. I had managed three weeks of their Quick Trip courtship without really hearing about him and now here it came—the atomic bomb to my heart.

"Is it about him?"

"Duane," she corrected. "Well, he hasn't asked for my number or to go get coffee or anything." She looked up at me. From my position on the step ladder I could see just

how curvy she was. I loved the nights when I worked later than she and she had plans. She'd change in our bathroom and come out in non-work clothes. Her figure was glorious.

I imagined taking her home with me and exploring the winding roads of her body. She was still looking at me, so I ended my adventure early and raised my eyebrows at her.

"Do you think he actually likes me?" Her voice was small.

"If he didn't why would he been in here spending two dollars every day?"

"\$2.04." She winced a smile realizing how ridiculous the correction was. "Well, why hasn't he asked?"

"Maybe he's shy?"

"So should I ask him?"

"Sure if you want to." Maybe if she asked him he'd be put off by her forwardness, or maybe he'd be turned on by it.

"But I'm not that type of girl!" Her face pleaded me to tell her what to do.

"Just be patient. He's probably working up the courage."

"I've even dropped hints like, 'I don't have anything going on tonight,' or 'what are you doing this weekend?' but he never picks up on it." She had come closer and was leaning on the stool now; she was close enough I could feel her heat in the cold cooler.

"Well," I didn't know what to say. "You're a great girl. He's probably just shy."

The intercom interrupted us, "Help to the front."

"I'll go," she said and rushed out.

Another few weeks passed and he hadn't asked her out. She caught me in the cooler on a regular basis to chat. I began to appreciate this guy. His inability to ask her out seemed to match mine, but as he was growing bolder,

*"Her single dimple grew as she tipped her head back and laughed. He was saying something to her but I couldn't hear it."*



I was creeping into the friend zone.

One night after work she came sprinting back into the store. I could see her gleaming smile as she bolted back through the doors.

"LOOK!" She slammed a receipt onto the counter. I looked at the receipt. It was for \$2.04. "It was under my windshield wiper."

She giggled and flipped it over. On the back was a note scrawled in blue ink.

"After you get off Friday, plan to go out with me, Duane."

I felt like throwing up but everyone else was thrilled.

"That's in two days!" "Be sure you look good!" "Are you excited?" The clerks were all chiming in, but I was silent.

"You were right Jordy! He was just shy!" She playfully punched my arm.

"Yea, woo. I was right."

I walked to the back leaving them chirping with excitement. Why hadn't I jumped the gun? Why didn't I ask her

out first? His stupid note stole the limelight again. I could only imagine what sort of gallant white-knight heroics he would pull off Friday.

Friday at work the air was jittery. Every time the door opened, all heads turned. The sun was beginning to set and Kailinn was off at eight. We drew the window tints and there was still no sign of Romeo. Terry asked her to stay on for a little bit after eight because we needed the third register. Kailinn's chipper

mood sank as the night progressed, her green eyes fading into brown. It was eight-thirty and I knew she was beginning to wonder if it had all been a cruel joke.

A help call from one of the pumps went off.

"How can I help you?" She was monotone.

"Yea I need some help with the pump, I can't get my gas to start," the voice from the other end said.

"The computer says you ran your card. Did you select your grade of gas?" I watched her lean over the mic and talk.

"Yeah, it still won't go."

"Un-click your pump and try again." People's inability to run our incredibly simple pumps was frustrating for us. In the end we almost always had to go outside to do exactly what they said they had done.

"Nope, still not working. Maybe you should just come out."

"Okay sir, I'll send someone right out." She turned and looked at me and then looked at the other clerk. "Will you handle this?" The other clerk walked to the door.

"Uh, actually Kailinn I think you should handle this guy." The clerk grinned at Kailinn.

"Fine." She stomped off the register, but when she got to the door her whole demeanor changed. Her posture straightened her cheeks scrunched into a smile. It was him. He was a half hour late, and she didn't even care. I never would have made her wait. Everyone in the store tried to peek out the window. He was sitting on the hood of his car, waiting under the lights of our gas pumps. As she got closer, to him and farther from me, my heart sank.

He grabbed her and pulled her to him. She tried to push herself off his chest, but his hand came around, grabbing her butt. Everyone who was crowded around the windows to watch this romantic scene was now gaping at each other. My blood was pumping. She was struggling against him. She pulled her hand away and hit him in the face. He let



#### MOMENT

by Breanne Evans  
digital photograph



go and she ran back to the store. She burst through the doors. I'd never seen her cry before, but something about watching the waterfall of her tears made me want to save the world, to kill him and to save her.

She bolted to the bathroom. Everyone who had been rooting for them was now standing, mouths hanging wide open. I went after her.

I pounded on the door of the bathroom. No answer—so I started to push the door open.

"Kailinn?" I asked, peering through the small crack. She looked back for an instant.

"Jordan, no. Leave me alone." The door slammed back into my face, but before it hid her from me, I saw mascara staining her cheeks. There was no longer green in her eyes; they were brown. I was no longer Jordy; I was Jordan. When there was a them, I had an us. But now she didn't have him, and I wasn't sure if I could ever have her.

My mother buckled me up  
in the back next to a coffee  
cake she baked.  
—Marv's favorite. We drove  
for miles, all the way to Waterloo,  
where Marv lived. I hated  
going to Marv's, because  
he lived with other handicapped  
people and they smoked  
and shouted fuck, shit, and fuck that shit,  
but he was her brother.  
We gave Marv his cake  
and he thanked us, but his speech  
was slurred and slow  
like a broken tuba. He tried talking  
to me, but he didn't realize  
a five-year-old  
and forty-year-old handicapped man  
have very little to discuss.

On the way home, I told Mother I hated  
Uncle Marv and never wanted  
to go back to that place. She started crying  
and said, "The accident  
wasn't his fault," to which I retorted,  
"Was Icarus' fall not his fault?"  
Mother pondered this and said,  
"No, it was Daedalus' fault for  
building the wings for him."  
Her answer was impeccable,  
but far from irrefutable.  
"Who built the shoddy plane,  
with passion instead of knowledge?  
Who chose not to wear a helmet?  
Who didn't heed the warning of  
wise Daedalus?" I asked.  
She gave me some gummy bears and  
I quieted down, though the seatbelt  
was a bit too tight.

GREGORY ANDERSON



## GRANDPA TELLS A STORY

---

That day the little menfolk were a listless herd,  
as sometimes was the case. They clustered, belt buckles glinting  
like spackle on a roof bent upward toward a celestial something,  
and I'll be damned if each wasn't waiting, ears pricked,  
mouths cottoned, fixated sunward in a blue-eyed funk:

A secret sense of purpose had penetrated the ears  
of the menfolk that dawn break.  
Each awoke mindful of a Pied Piper, a primal voodoo  
tugging at his heart,  
promising warmth.

Later, the womenfolk arose, having sunk heavy-center in their beds,  
perturbed by the neutered smells of their bedrooms, to find  
missing boots, missing coats, empty resting places.  
Panic spread as each knew,  
though none dared speak,  
of her husband's exodus.  
The village, it seemed, was in an uproar.  
The womenfolk gathered purposefully  
in town square. Each, expressing her futility,  
stood, head cocked back, staring sunward,  
churning hours into eternities.

At the coming of dusk.  
the womenfolk, as if on cue, disbanded.  
Each retraced her steps back through her empty doorway,  
Past her empty coat rack, into her empty bed  
where she sank heavy center into night.

You see, kids, life's a symphony  
when the hurricane brings the caskets to the surface,  
and you're organizing the dead bodies,  
grinning, belt buckles glinting,  
in the sun of a Sunday morning.

MARK HANTLA

# WAIKIKI BEACH

BY ALISHA WILEY

It was my last day on Waikiki Beach. I spread out my hotel towel, but when I turned on my stomach my toes were still in the sand. This didn't bother me as I wiggled and dug them deeper and deeper into the warmth. Cara spread her towel and sat down beside me. Her cheap sunglasses were so large they made her look like a movie star—

or maybe an alien. The beach was crowded with hundreds of people on each side of us and a mass of twenty-five story resorts behind us. I tried to listen for the waves crashing into the shore, but instead I heard children behind me, so I put on my headphones.

Just as I started getting bored and agitated by the sun, an old man began setting up camp in the small space next to me. His dark skin was wrinkled from many days on the beach just like this. With a hollow metal pole, he dug into

the sand to make a hole for his umbrella to stand. I glanced back to see him strategically wrapping himself in a towel as he changed from baggy shorts to a Speedo.

"Hey Cara," I said, "check this out." She turned to look.

"Damn it, Laura!" Cara said. "I think I just saw a grey pube." I shook my head and laughed.

He sat in his folding chair, low to the ground, and plopped a handful of books and

loose papers next to him. He pulled out a green canteen full of coffee and poured himself a cup.

I don't recall how the conversation began, but after awhile we knew he was 70 years old and spent over 50 of those years on the beaches of Hawaii. I was curious so I asked bluntly, "What do you do for work?"

"I don't believe in work." This man was crazy. Who doesn't work? Hard work is all I know. I was raised on the American Dream. Anything is possible with enough hard work.

"How do you make money?" I asked, squinting.

"Have you ever heard of the stock market?"

"Well, yeah."

"Well, the stock market pumps money just like your heart pumps blood." He tapped on his wrist in a steady rhythm. "I'll put it this way. You could work at McDonalds and put half your earnings in the stock market and you'd be set. How many hours do you take at school?"

"I took 17 last semester."

"Well then, six hours of research in the library would be easy." I realized he was talking about spending six hours studying the stock market.

As we talked he ate pineapple chunks out of a plastic bag. I imagined this was all he ever ate. It looked like he hadn't had a good Iowa steak for years. A teenage boy approached him and said, "I've been thinking about it and I decided I wanted surf lessons."

The old man said, "A hundred dollars. That'll be for two days—a verbal lesson and a lesson out in the water. Come back at noon with no oil on the skin and no alcohol on the brain." I wondered if the old man put half of every hundred dollars he made teaching surfing in the stock market. Probably not.

He proudly told us he never married. I wondered if he was lonely surrounded by tourists. One man walked by and said, "Hey there, Jacque."



ARROW SHOE  
by Amy Foltz  
2 plate wood reduction print



Jacque shrugged indicating he had no idea who this man was. He said, "Everyone knows me, but I don't know anyone." Everyone on the beach at this moment would fly back to reality within the next week, except for Jacque.

I asked, "Do you ever get sick of all these tourists?"

He laughed. "No, I screw tourists." I made sure my bikini was covering as much of my smooth skin as it could.

I wondered if Jacque was his real name. I think he made it up—just like he told us he had a Ph.D. in political science. And how later on he told two guys behind us drinking at the bar that he owns a modeling agency for tall women and we were his clients.

I said, "Jacque, you know, I've never surfed before."

"Well, you're an idiot," he said, "because never surfing is like never hearing music."

Our conversation started to slow down as the sky began to sprinkle rain. I looked up at the irony of a cloudless sky as a shiver ran down my back. Cara woke up and took off her head phones and started complaining that she was cold.

Jacque said, "Just get in the ocean. That's what it's there for."

So we looked at each other, shrugged our shoulders, and quickly got up, running toward the sand, and in unison jumped over the incoming wave. After the rain stopped, we waded back to our spot on the sand but Jacque was gone.

We took our places back on our towels, and let the sun evaporate the small pools of water on our skin. There were times when I honestly avoided thinking about my future, but this wasn't one of those times. It seemed crazy that something that hadn't even happened yet could be so terrifying. My future scared me the same way that the ocean scared me. I didn't know what was out there, I didn't know my possibilities, the same way that I

would never see what was hidden beneath the deepest waters. I could go snorkeling and see some coral and small fish, but not the mountains and monsters beneath.

Up to this point in my life I was uninspired. In a strange way this man on the beach changed me. He made me think about my future and it didn't seem so bad. I could do whatever the hell I wanted. I could get to the other side of the ocean even if it meant leaving Iowa and moving to Hawaii. Even if I had to eat pineapple for the rest of my life. Even if I had to screw Jacque for my airfare.

As the sun set, two guys approached Cara and me. One guy was obviously better looking than the other, kind of like a superhero and his sidekick. They introduced themselves as Brendan and Luke and told us that our friend Jacque had sent them over. I thought, "Thank you Jacque!" We sat on our towels facing the ocean and the guys sat facing us. Brendan, the one with a six pack, sat with his elbow resting on his knee, his chin on his hand. I could tell by his direct, yet smooth approach that he'd had a few drinks. When we got through with all the boring chatter such as age and location, we talked about selection. Brendan asked, "What do you look for in a man?"

We shrugged our shoulders, neither one of us willing to share, so instead we turned the question around, "Well what do you like in women?"

"I like tall women," he said winking. I wondered if he had been talking to two short women, he'd tell them the exact opposite.

*"My future scared me the same way that the ocean scared me. I didn't know what was out there, I didn't know my possibilities, the same way that I would never see what was hidden beneath the deepest waters."*

We found out that Brendan lived in Hawaii for part of each year as a contractor and was an avid surfer. I jumped on the opportunity and asked him for surf lessons. He agreed, and as the two of us walked along the beach, Cara jumped up and said she wanted to go, too. So my romantic twosome turned into a not-so-romantic threesome. We ran up the beach and stopped at the first place that rented out surfboards. As we approached, a worker putting away boards said, "Sorry, we don't rent out surfboards after five." My whole body suddenly felt heavy. Who has the right to tell me I can't surf? We stopped at the next place where the worker told us the same thing. Brendan saved the day and said, "Hey man, this is their last day here, couldn't we just rent a board for half an hour?"

"It better be back in a half an hour," the worker said.

I tried picking up my surfboard, but dropped it, surprised by the weight. I tried again, this time with my muscles tightened and prepared. I was awkward carrying the surfboard down the beach. Brendan helped Cara find her balance so she could swim on top of her board. I waded out a ways and then spread out on my stomach and paddled straight into the waves. As the waves came toward us, Brendan coached us to put our hands on the board and push our bodies away, arching our backs to let the water flow between our chests and the boards.

We paddled out to where Brendan told us the wave would break. We let a couple waves pass, and Brendan told Cara to go first. She paddled hard towards shore as Brendan gave her a push. The wave began to carry her away and she started to rise, but then fell. The next wave was mine. He pushed, I paddled. I could feel the wave start to pick me up, so I slowly lifted to my knees and then to my feet. I was standing, but only for a second. I fell sideways and came safely up from the water. We tried a couple more waves before our 30 minutes were up. We paddled back to shore, turned in our surfboards and started walking to our spot on the beach. Brendan said, "We missed the red flash."

"What's the red flash?" I asked.

"On a clear night like this, just as the sun is completely below the horizon, there's a flash of red light that reflects off the ocean."

The thing is, I did see a flash. A single flash of light over a dark, bottomless ocean.



## A NIGHTMARE ABOUT BEING OLD AND ALONE

---

The tiles beneath my naked body  
are cold, reminding me of how old I am  
getting. They're not as soft as her.  
Drifting into pine green memories  
of Wisconsin, her skin beneath me instead  
of cold tiles. In the great cheese state we  
danced to Bob Dylan, drunk off vodka  
we couldn't afford and made love in  
Wisconsin on the orange carpet floor.  
In the morning she would spray herself with  
that green plastic bottle, covering herself in  
some fruity concoction. Strawberry-watermelon  
or something like that. The only thing I smell now  
are the volumes of books I haven't touched  
for years, but keep anyway. Back in Wisconsin  
we read books we didn't understand and drank  
vodka we couldn't afford and again made love  
on the orange carpet floor.

I stand up to take a leak and walk  
out my office door. No one should  
be around, it's late or maybe it's  
early.

I'm wrong, there's a secretary, she's  
working late, or maybe early. I stop  
walking and look at her. Something  
should be said, some excuse to why I've  
been sleeping naked in my office,  
but I can only think of Wisconsin  
and empty bottles of vodka and her  
tearing up the orange carpet to  
reveal hardwood. I let out a  
laugh and say,

"Well isn't this the cat's pajamas?"

GREGORY ANDERSON

## HOW LOVERS CAN ENJOY CITRUS FRUITS WHILE DINING ON SEAFOOD

---

The steaming trout on my plate,  
With his glossy, deadened eye, looks at it,

The dimpled, yellow wedge.  
I smell Country Tyme and Lemon Pledge.

Parsley leaves shield the naked citrus,  
As the fig leaves did for man and woman in  
The Garden of Eden,

This time, it is my lover who wants first fruits.

I squeeze it tauntingly and lick its ripened edge,  
The juice leaving my fingers squeaky.

Greedily, he takes the prized piece of fruit and puts it in  
Whole, smiling a yellow rind,  
Lips barely puckered,  
His cheeks slightly sucked in, like the dead fish  
On my plate.

He draws in the biting juice and drains the citrus  
Dry.  
With bits of pulp between his teeth and a pool of  
Distasteful spit under his tongue, he pulls my face to his.

The other patrons  
Gasp.

Our mouths caress, with bitterness. The Lemon Kiss.

TRISH REGNERUS  
(1993)



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE KIOSK

“Subject to editorial fallibility, the best will be printed.” This quote first appeared in the foreword of the 1938 issue of *Manuscript*, the ancestor of the *Kiosk*. In the earlier years at Morningside, student satire and short fiction was often published in the yearbook, but an idea for a student literary magazine began to grow in 1937 during a meeting of the Manuscript Club. In March, 1938, students and faculty gathered to read aloud stories and poems, which had undergone a screening process; only pieces of “sufficient literary merit” made it to readings, recalled Miriam Baker Nye, first editor. That fall, South Dakota poet laureate Badger Clark visited campus, further fueling student desire for a literary magazine, and so on December 7th, 1938 *Manuscript* was printed and distributed. Response to the publication was instant. One of the stories described students skipping Chapel to go to an ice cream parlor, and the next week President Roadman started taking roll during Chapel.

Over the following years, students were driven to submit their work and have their voices heard. *Manuscript* was printed for 16 issues, but disappeared in 1952, only to rise again in 1955 under the title, *Perspectives*. After skipping 1957, it reappeared under the direction of faculty advisor William Palmer. In 1971, students renamed it *Kiosk*, and it has been printed nearly every year since, advised by Donald Stefanson, Carole Van Wyngarden, Janice Eidus, Scott Simmer, Robert Conley, Jan Hodge, and for the past 20 years by Stephen Coyne.

The *Kiosk* has included cover art from nearly the beginning, but in 2006 student editor Cliff Thompson along with assistance of John Kolbo and the support of Morningside President John Reynders revamped the

format of the magazine to better accommodate student art; thus, art began to take a more central role in the magazine.

In some ways this story mirrors the current atmosphere of the *Kiosk*. Morningside was fortunate this year to have Marvin Bell, former poet laureate of Iowa, visit the campus, which certainly raised awareness of the English Department and its literary maga-



zine. The *Kiosk* sponsored its first poetry slam in February of 2009, and excitement buzzed around campus during the week of the slam. Submissions have skyrocketed in recent years. In the last two years, the *Kiosk* has won two major national awards. It was a finalist in the Pacemaker Award, sponsored by the Associated Collegiate Press, and received a gold medal from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

The *Kiosk* is published annually by Morningside College and is distributed at no cost to Morningside students and alumni.

It is printed in four process colors on a digital printing press on 80# matte coated cover and 80# matte coated book paper stock. Adobe InDesign CS3 is the page layout software used to assemble the entire publication.

KIOSKS OF THE PAST  
from left to right,  
2006, 2007, 2008, 2009

## WRITING

**Daniel Anderson** graduated in 1977 with a BA in English at Morningside. He is now Associate Pastor at Wesley United Methodist Church in Sioux City.

**Gregory Anderson** is a junior from Sioux City. In 2007, his poem, "Kismet," won first place in the Kiosk's literary contest. He edited the Kiosk in 2008. He is majoring in English education.

**Stephen Coyne** is a Professor of English at Morningside College. He has served as faculty advisor to the Kiosk since 1989. His short stories and poems have been published in numerous literary journals.

**Tyrel Drey** is a junior from Storm Lake, Iowa. He is pursuing majors in both theatre and English. He is involved in several honor societies on campus, and is a member of the Delta Sigma Phi fraternity. His short story, "Distortion," won second place in this year's Kiosk literary contest.

**Mark Hantla** is a junior religious studies major pursuing a career in teaching and ministry. This is his first year submitting to the Kiosk. His interests include writing, history, philosophy, and music.

**Colin O'Sullivan** is a senior at Morningside College. He is finishing his BS in Chemistry. This is his third contribution to the Kiosk. His piece, "Where are My Glasses?" won an Editor's Choice award in 2008.

**Kiel Ploen** is a 2008 Morningside graduate. This is his second contribution to the Kiosk. His piece, "An Odd Bit," won second place in the Kiosk's Publication Contest in 2008.

**Victoria Reed** graduated with a BA in English with a teaching credential in May of 2008. She accepted a job at an International school in Honduras for the 2008-2009 school year.

**Krystal Shearer** is a sophomore from Emerson, Iowa, majoring in English. Her new motto has become, "Work without boundaries; create without boundaries." This is Krystal's first contribution to the Kiosk.

**Kristina Sturm** is a senior English Education major from Polk City, Iowa. After May graduation, she plans to move back to Polk City. Her goal is to teach high school English in a rural Iowa high school as well as coach tennis.

**Randy Uhl** recently finished his Master's degree in educational leadership and is currently teaching high school English and literature at Lawton-Bronson Community School. A graduate from Morningside College in 1990, he has contributed numerous times to the Kiosk over the past twenty years.

**Lindsay Washburn** is a junior at Morningside. She is working toward an English degree with an emphasis in both literature and writing, as well as a minor in psychology. Besides school, Lindsay is involved in the local theatre community. Her poem, "To Speak of Horses," won third place in this year's Kiosk literary contest. She would like to thank Jeremy and her friends and family for always being supportive with her writing.

**Ross Wilcox** is a junior at Morningside College. He is studying English and literature in the hopes of becoming an English professor. His poem, "Ionne," won first place in this year's Kiosk literary contest.

**Alisha Willey** graduated from Morningside College in 2008 with her BA in English and psychology. She currently attends the University of South Dakota where she is working toward her EdS in school psychology. At USD Alisha works as a graduate assistant in Athletic Academics where one of her primary jobs is tutoring athletes in English.



**Sasha Backhaus** is a junior studio art major from Westside, Iowa. She also is a minor in English and is a part of the Morningside softball team.

**Becca Bauer**, from Alliance, Nebraska, is a senior majoring in graphic design, advertising, and photography. After four years at Morningside, she will graduate in May 2009.

**Holly Becker** is a junior art education major from Sioux City.

**Josh Beckwith** is a senior art student from Sioux City. This is his second year contributing to the Morningside Kiosk.

**John Bowitz** was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He has taught art at Morningside College since 1977.

**Sarah Chambers** is a sophomore majoring in photography from Sheldon, Iowa. She has two photos and also contributed to last year's Kiosk.

**Kayla Curry** is a senior studio art major from Sioux City.

**Sean Delperdang** is a junior from Akron, Iowa, majoring in graphic design and advertising.

**Leslie DePeel** is a junior photography and business double major. She comes from O'Neill, Nebraska. She hopes to own her own photography studio one day.

**Breanne Evans**, a senior majoring in business administration with an emphasis in marketing, comes from Crofton, Nebraska. Digital photography is not her usual hobby, but she is making strides to become more appreciative of "fine" art.

**Alyssa Filipek** is a freshman graphic design and advertising major. She's from Bettendorf, Iowa.

**Amy Foltz** is an adjunct art faculty member at Morningside College, where she teaches design, printmaking and figure drawing. Foltz has an MFA from The University of South Dakota and a BFA from Ohio State University.

**Annika Kolbo** is a junior art education and music major from Sioux City, Iowa.

**Wyeth Lynch** is a senior photography and international affairs double major from Prole, Iowa. He contributed to the Kiosk last year.

**Mack Maschmeier**, a senior graphic design major and studio art minor, is from Fremont, Nebraska. He won first and third places in last year's Kiosk.

**Patrick Oxendale** is a senior biology major. His true passion is spending time with his wife and daughter, but unfortunately that doesn't pay the bills.

**Nicole Raphael**, a freshman majoring in art, is from Papillion, Nebraska. After graduation she hopes to pursue her career as a photographer in the fashion industry.

**Jasmine Richards** is a senior double majoring in K-12 art education and elementary education from Hawarden, Iowa. She plans on getting a job in education after graduation.

**Alicia Runyan**, from Cherokee, Iowa, is a senior majoring in graphic design, advertising, and studio art. After graduating in May, she hopes to attain a job in publication design.

**Anne Torkelson** is a senior art education major. She has contributed to the Kiosk for the past three years.

**Tony Wiley** is a freshman from Diagonal, Iowa. He is majoring in art education with a minor in photography.









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The Morningside College experience cultivates a passion for life-long learning  
and a dedication to ethical leadership and civic responsibility.