INSCAPE

2005

Dear Reader,

The glory of literature and art is that it allows a person to express oneself in an original manner. This year's *Inscape* has attempted to capture the quality and originality of thought and spirit that is in our school community. The compilation of expressions, from poetry and photographs to short stories and sketches, gives the reader a glimpse into the artistic and emotional aspects of a school teeming with different ideas and points of view. Through dedication and passion, the Inscape staff hopes to present the reader with a spectrum of ideas and emotions through our efforts and those of the artists themselves.

Each piece of artwork was chosen to be in this compilation for a specific purpose. We, as the staff, felt that they evoked something within us and represented the diversity of thought and opinion.

On behalf of the staff and Mrs. Carapellotti, we wish to extend our collective work for you to enjoy. I now present the 2005 edition of *Inscape*.

Editor-in-Chief,
Grant Griglak

Inscape Editor
Grant Griglak, Class of 2005

Inscape Staff
Aghogho Edevbie, Class of 2005
Alexander Davidson, Class of 2006
William Kemp, Class of 2006
Arthur Middlebrooks, Class of 2006
Luke Nemes, Class of 2006
Ross Berg, Class of 2007
Brandon Murray, Class of 2007

Advisor
Mrs. Nancy Carapellotti

Special Thanks
Mrs. Vondra Shaw-Abbott
Kevin Douglas, Class of 2007

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Samantha
Aghogho Edevbie

In the night I meet you once again
I see your beautiful soul
your face of
beauty, laughter, and intelligence

I see what could have been…
Holding hands, kissing, dancing

The reality appears...
The roses, the poems, the love
I sent thee
The rejection rises and falls
As my heart aches

A times I wish I remained the secret admirer
The one who excited you
Who you cried tears of joy for

Nevertheless the happiness
That entered my soul
Warrants the pain

The love I wanted to build on fades away

My reverence, awe, and amazement weakens
With your various escapades

I bid thee adieu
For night is ended
And the day is anew

Statue
Ross Berg

Oh sweet solace!
Found etched in stone
The fragmented beauty
Seen billions over
Suffers silently
She looks at me all the same.

Uncompromising to this world
And envy of kings
She stands broken
Upon a pedestal
Of pain

'Twas her people that evokes her emotion
She still hears their fears
She still smells their submission
She still drinks their detriment
She smiles

I stand corrected
As I watch their senses
Wash over her
Filled with compassion
Void of hate
Tears of crimson fall

Her constitution solid
As her body
I turn from her
And what she must bear
As I never have
Helpless

The Life of a Soldier
Arthur J. Middlebrooks

Life is continuous, never ending.
Life is harsh, never forgiving.
Life will try your soul, but you shall be unwavering.
Life will make those around you weak, but you will be ever strong.
People will ask you, "why do you do it?"
You will attempt to explain the path you have chosen.
But they will not understand.
They will only see what they want to see and hear what they want to hear.
They will disregard everything you say and make it their own.
Your answer will disappoint them, but their reaction will disappoint you more.
You are strong.
You are fearless.
You are a United States Military Man.

Anger
Jonathan Jones

Anger is like the bull in a bullfight.
The bull slowly peers around the wooden door
Keeping it caged in.
It all of a sudden rushes out
when it hears the creaking of the old metal hinges
as the door is opened
It soon sights its target
A man in the center of the ring holding a long sheet
The bull charges relentlessly
Its cold black eyes never leaving the man
The bull is excited in thinking of all the pain it could cause him
His pace quickens, his rampage more dangerous than ever
When he reaches the man, though his horns had not hit him
"Was this charge pointless?" the bull thought
People cheered, and the bull is herded away
And he quickly forgets the man
For a bull never holds a grudge

Love

Tommy Bell

Love is a word the young use everyday

While in the shadow of a tall tree under which they lay

With their mate's head lying on their thigh
as they both gaze silently into the sky

Love has no race, and no color, but a face
upon which to kiss and a soft body to embrace
as you spend time with friends or have fun with your brother

Just show untimely affection to each other

Having a sister is just as good

Although she lovingly annoys you just as a sister should

Love can even be noticed during the saddest of days

When a loved one has mournfully passed away

Loved ones try to support each other
and let their family know they are there for one another

Love is your name written and surrounded by hearts and swirls

Love is what boys show to girls

Love is some times shown by the giving of diamonds or pearls

Love is what Jesus showed to the WORLD...

Love is very Strong word

Why?

Tony Sabat

If I'm so educated, then why is life so complicated?
How come I can't enjoy the cool mist of Niagara Falls?
Or the blasting music at a packed concert that's so loud that you can't hear yourself think?
Why?
Why?
Why?
Why can I not enjoy the beautiful sunshine on a warm summer day?
Or enjoy the sweet cool refreshing taste of a juicy strawberry?
Or be happy for my friends when they achieve greatness?
Why?
Why?
Why?
Why does the sun smile down on me, yet I don't smile back?
Why do I prefer a cold winter day over a warm sunny summer day?
Why can't I just loosen up?
Why?
Why?
Why?
Why am I so isolated?
Why can't I just express myself?
Why can't I make a fool of myself without caring who's watching?
Why?
Why?
Why?

Inspiration
Ross Berg

Inspiration
Flows like a riptide
Carries my soul to its highest peak
And lets go
Wind presses my face
As I turn to one side
I awake

Family Time
Sam Robinson

The television illuminated
The salty, greasy, chips going crunch in my mouth
To my right the adoptive grandmother
With skin and hair of honey
To my left, a seventy-year-old
His hair inspired the memories of coconut milk
The music playing loudly among voices
Resonating from the speakers around the
White-colored room
The television in my sights
Lights of green and red escaping from the electric box beneath
The family watched on
As a wizard fell and a hobbit cried

British Colombia
Ben Reinhart

And there I was, hiking through the mountains in British Colombia, Canada. It was a warm sunny day and the air as so fresh it literally felt good to breath. As I hiked around, taking one deep breath after the other of only the finest, richest air, I was aghast as I looked out at the never-ending mountain range. It was peak after peak as far as the eye can see. The air smelled like the tall pine trees that I had been hiking under on the softness of the green ground. As I walk home on the dirt trail below my feet, I hear the constant thumping of one foot after the other. Another day has ended, and yet, it has been a good one!

Dear Lovely
Ben Beckett

One day I will forget
One day you will die
One day you will never have been born
And I will be left with a sculpted void
hat only causes nothing
—Thank God for nothing
Thank God that nothing exists—
But until that day comes
I will worship nepenthe, if it exists,
r forget that it does, if it doesn't)
One day I will die
One day I will pay the price for being.

A Story for Scott & His Sailboat

Alexander

Scott would do nothing during his World Religions class, other than design golf courses in the back of his notebook. Nobody paid any attention during this class because it was very boring. But in Scott's scribbling away he made fun of the current lesson in a very bad way. He drew a mockery of the gods that were being discussed. (Being Christian we do not believe in the other gods, but for the sake of a story this drawing offended the mighty Babylonian god of the winds and storms, Enlil.)

Scott said goodbye to his schoolmates and skipped hockey practice because it was such a lovely day for sailing. Scott was a sailor. He would usually sail with others in races and tournaments, but today Scott took out a smaller boat that he could man by himself. He set sail and went out to sea.

Enlil convinced other gods Scott had mocked to join him in his cause. Anu, king of the gods and god of the sky, cast a long slumber upon Scott and Scott fell asleep while out on the water. Ea, god of water and wisdom, helped move Scott quickly farther out to sea than any boat that size was meant to go. Scott woke up and could not even make out any landmass on the horizon. This was a place picked out by Enlil himself.

This would not stop Scott. He sailed until dusk and managed to reach shore of a distant island. Ninhursag, goddess of the earth, had not been mocked by Scott and felt that what the others were doing was wrong. She created the island for Scott without the gods' knowing. The others were sure he would starve out at sea and suffer a slow death.

Even though Ninhursag was goddess of the earth, she had a very bad sense of direction and could help Scott no more. She did however open a portal to the underworld where Ereshkigal, queen of the underworld, could pass. She told Scott which way to sail, but to wait until the third day to sail. Scott was impatient and did not wait to go home.

Scott set sail and was noticed by the god Enlil who was

enraged by him. Scott made out dark clouds at the horizon but they soon made their way as if being pulled by a mighty chariot. The storm had reached Scott and was upon him.

A large swell crashed into the boat and almost capsized it. Swell after swell was sent at Scott, but he managed to keep the boat the way it ought to be. Enlil was so angry that he sent a large wave that crashed into the back of the boat.

The wave snapped the tiller attached to the rudder and pushed Scott over to the middle of the boat on his stomach. A bolt of lightning struck the mast and scorched the sail. Scott scrambled farther forward as not to be crushed by the flaming wreckage.

Enlil came out on his chariot through the black clouds, looking as mean as any mortal had ever seen a god. "So defier," he bellowed. "Now you get your retribution!" Scott was on his back and watched Enlil thrust his hands high above his head and laugh his huge menacing deep laugh. A large wave appeared on the horizon. Even thought it was far away it was already ten stories tall and coming quickly. Enlil was still laughing with his hands in the air with lightning forking the sky behind him.

Scott looked around for something other than the fiery sail cutting him off from the back of the boat. He found the tiller, sharp at one end where it had broken off from the rudder. He held it like a spear and thrust it over the flames at Enlil. It hit him in the chest and went halfway through the god's body. Laughter was changed to moans of pain as Enlil bent over and his whole chariot crashed into the ocean and sank to the bottom along with the god.

Scott successfully stomped out the flames. The rains stopped. The clouds cleared. Scott had no way to get back home without a sail or a tiller, but the wave was still coming. It was a large peaceful green mountain of a wave that Scott rode all the way back to the harbor he left earlier that day.

He called all his friends but nobody believed him. It was okay, though; he knew what had happened. And after this great ordeal, when Scott reached his World Religions class the next day, he closed his eyes and went to sleep.

Life
Brandon Murray

Is this the life we were meant to live
where everyone takes
and no one gives

where life is full of pain and despair
I'm left to ponder
does anyone care?

Are we meant to live out this dream
in sorrow and tears
or should we rise up
and face our fears

no, cannot give up
there is much more to life
we must persevere
through this unending strife

Ha ha
Ben Beckett

Laughter, a potent medicine
And you, my Medicaid
Because I cannot afford to laugh
Or else I'll start to cry—
A most debilitating disease that's
Awaiting prognosis in the mortuary

My Path
Kevin Douglas
(A message to Robert Frost)

I want to walk alone;
And every footstep I make
I want the wind to blow
It away.

An' when I come to the path
Of the two roads and look at
Them and see the one is with broken
Twigs and footsteps in the mud,
And the other one is with the smooth
Grass and solid tress which leads
To a place where
Few have seen or will go

I Hope that I can turn away.

Cause I have realized that both of
These paths have been made by men
And that both of these paths lead to
The same place in the end.

So when I see these paths I will
Turn away.

I will go to side of the forest
Where the branches are thick
So I can only see glimpses
Of the sun through the many trees.
When I peer into the heavens
And I will forge a new path
Through this maze and I hope
bleed and I sweat and when I
Come to the end I can say that

I made my own path;
That I turned away;
That I never gave up;

An' after this pulse I will look
Up into the heavens and
See the sun in full view and
Walk into it.

Outlaw (Ballad)
Marvin J. Wells II

Once there was an outlaw, oh how lawless was he.

"I don't know if you're afraid to die, bit I suggest you reach for the sk
For there's none greater that I, None greater than I."

But then there came a hero, a savior was he.

" I don't know who you think you are, cant you see these scars? I've survived more than you've ever lived, now its time to die.

Bandoleer on his left, six gun on his right. No one had seen such a du as this. Never such a duel as this.

The outlaw was quick, but the hero was quicker...

Just as he was to attack, a comrade of the lawless came up from behind... and shot him in the back.

Once there was a hero, a fallen hero was he, the outlaw smiled, " No greater than me."
Once there was an outlaw, none greater than he. He bleed the people dry, until the day he died.

Sparks
Alex Jones

Blinded by the spark
Shining brightly in your eyes
It goes along with your smile
The one that comes to your face whenever you see me
The spark, though mute, speaks to me
It says all the things you don't
It betrays the thin veil around your feelings
And that is the difference between us
You let your spark be seen
But I do not
I cannot
For I am (willingly) chained
So I am not allowed to indulge my dreams
My dreams, fantasies, and what-if's
I'm not even allowed to acknowledge their existence
But I can't ignore this
For my spark, though hidden, has ignited a fire
And it's burning...

Essay Four
Kevin Sullivan

Sittingpatiently in a chair.
Children screaming and running.
When will this end?
Is it a dream, a nightmare?
No, it's reality and I am lost.
Lost between my duty as a student and an observer.
What do I do?
Discipline, Lack there of.
Respect, None at all.
Where am I?
When will the real teacher come?
This is a joke.
I could do a better job that this,
Teacher. If that's what you call her.
She's not teaching.
Girls hitting boys, boys hitting girls, boys hitting boys.
Chaos, utter chaos.
Relationships have been formed, positive and negative.
It is not hard to form a bond with a sixth grade student.
They have no real positive influence in their lives.
As they shout our names for help,
You know they respect you.
Knowledge is power and they want it.
They want to be taught,
But that thing, that teacher, cannot do it.
It's a circus, a jungle, a zoo,
Just until the ringmaster comes,
Just until the hunter comes,
Just until the zoo keeper comes.
Peace is restored. That thing has vanished
And the animals are tamed.

Surge Light
Matt Miller

I view the stars and know
The same stars look at you and glow
The sky mirrors your radiance
It knows not the face I know
A breeze begins to blow
Thunder rumbles in the distance
Flashes illuminate to the sky's lanterns
The red darkness has no patterns
The joy and laughter that fills you
I have seen it, but cannot grsp
Your love is not for me,
I wish I knew why
Looking at me, you sigh
A slight breeze saying, "I wish it wasn't you"

A Love Ballad
Matt Miller

There is a girl so beautiful and fair.
She went around the world without a care.
Every morning she had the same routine.
She got up and put flowers in her hair.

Her hips would move with a sweet graceful sway.
As she walked to work at the break of day
The community watched her, eyes so keen.
Always listening to what she would say.

Her jewelry did glisten as she would twirl.
Around her neck she wore a dark green pearl.
In it she claimed to put in her envy,
And she said that envy made it swirl.

A diamond encrested in a gold band,
A white gown sown on while she had to stand.
The doors opened and all heads turned to seeing
The girl stroll by holding her daddy's hand.

Glance
Ben Beckett

Don't you like that
little thing I always do
when I'm trying to convince you?
A two dimensional glance
that appears accidental and always
begets the same?
If you know what I mean
I suppose I should stop.

Vinewood
Kevin Douglas

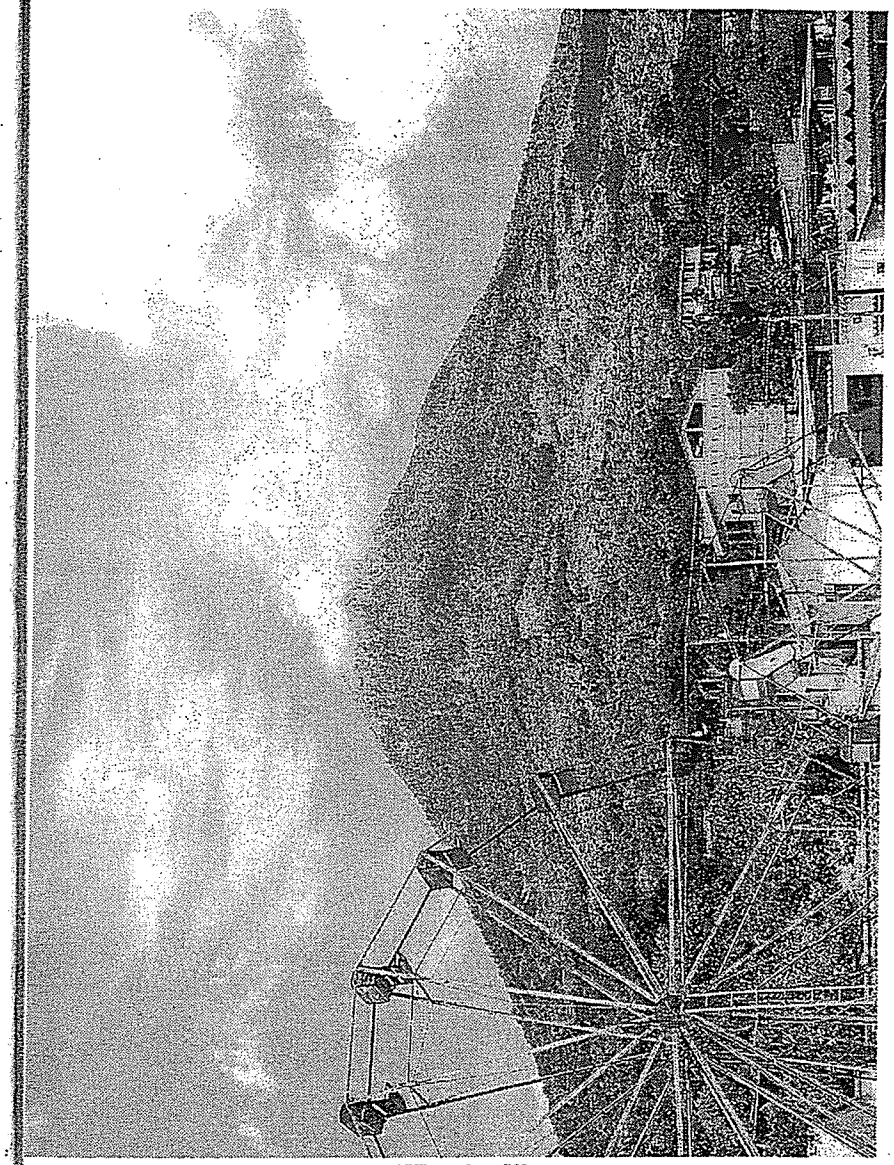
Let's go to the Vinewood to find
Common ground,
Hollow ground,
Where no blood can be shed.

Let's go to the Vinewood to praise
In the glorious sunlight
To tell stories of rising up from
In justice.

Let's go to the Vinewood to
Proclaim
The Word.

Let's go to the Vinewood to escape
From this dream.
Let's go to the Vinewood to
Find empathy in all things

Let's go to the Vinewood to learn
About the world and all the secrets it holds
Let's go to the Vinewood just To die



"Festival"
Aaron Handelsman

Doomed
Matt Miller

Hell's deepest everlasting state is reserved to be my fate.
All the good I'll never learn, will result in my eternal burn.
So solemnly and peacefully I sit, containing all of my wit.
I plunge towards death and lost my life,
From my body my soul was hurled, onto the road to the underworld.
The black and evil in my heart lead my feet to a steady march.
Into Satan's army I become a part, drifting down through every arch.
Through the sinister gates I pass, reciting in the the Devil's mass.
Immortal life of damnation, we are the abyss's population.
Breaking into the 6th layer of hell, to Satan, the "Dark Lord", my soul sell.
Only Satan and I in the 7th layer, I become his right-hand slayer.
With a jagged blade I slay, and Satan himself I betray.
With giant flames licking at his feet, he screams, "You I will defeat!"
At the Devil I spat, and we began in armed combat.
Tormenting him with more lies, I threw dust into his eyes.
Such harsh words he swore, as he tripped towards the floor.
Swiftly I decapitated his head and watched as he slowly bled.
With one last blood curdling scream, he gave up his greatest régime.

With their master thrown, the underworld army I did own.
I was held on shoulders in praise, while some exited through the haze.
Soon I was dropped very rude as my army entered a feud.
Some battled for me as king, but some fought for the power ring.
I drew back tired from earlier, and was greeted with a distorted sneer.
A raged, beastly demon, a traitor and murderer, that was Satan's biggest supporter,
Barked for me to be gagged and bound, despairingly I stood my ground.
He snatched a rapier and mace, and I started a circular pace.
Weaponless I stayed low, as others started a volley.
He was struck by an arrow, his figure limp like a dolly.
I weaved as I ran; to rally my troops was my plan.
I arrived to a graveyard; the army was stone cold and hard.
Not a single soul did survive, but yet I was alive.

Reality
J

Reality just happens
humans are no more than part of it

dont stop for morality
participate in reality
play yourself on reality's flute
act on it
learn from it
dont waste time with explanations
recgonize and do

Stop trying to wrap up your feelings into a neat package

feel what you feel
let your feelings flourish
what real choice have you
be clear on this point
and get on with your life of doing

Hope
J

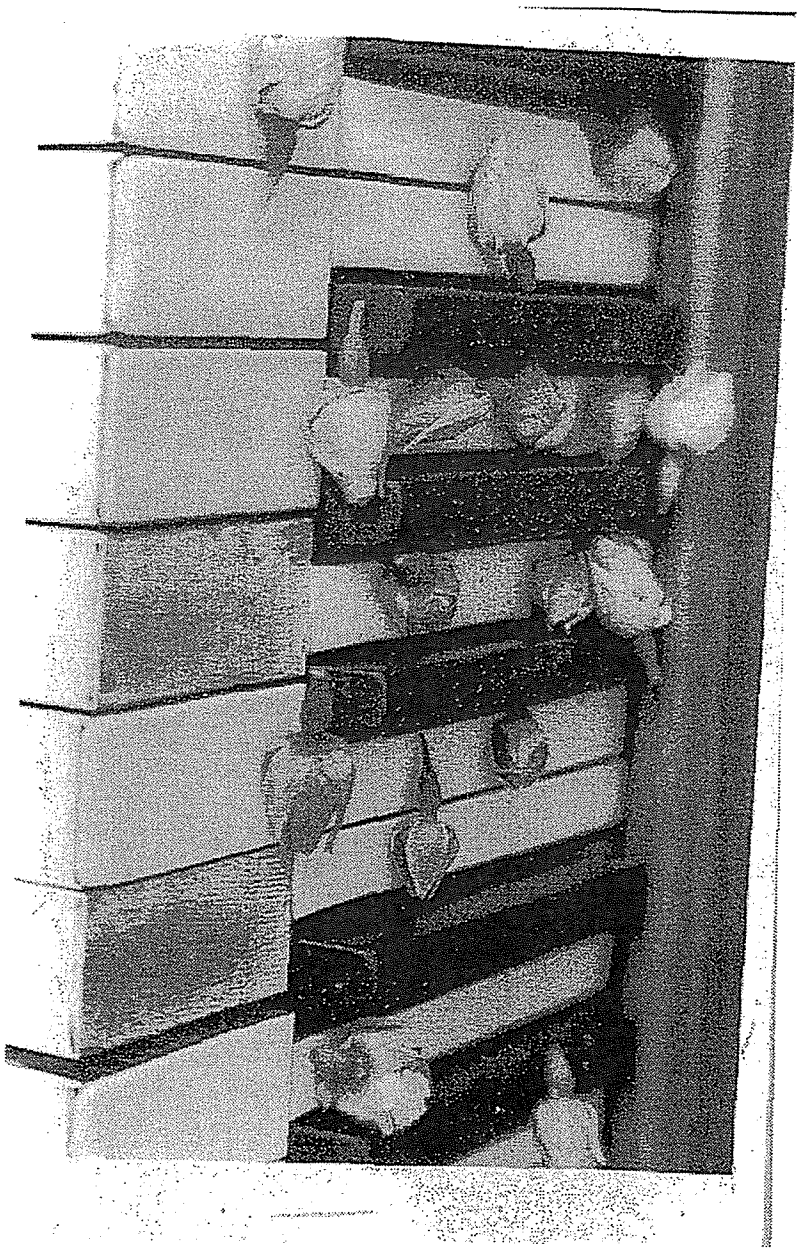
im sitting here on the edge of this potential cliff.
is it a cliff or is it a hill?
im so blinded by your radience that im not sure
i dont want to look away
i am afraid that if i do
you will disappear from my sight
i wish that i was with you and i wish i knew how to get to you
i am going to jump from my perch on this potential cliff
and i can only hope that you will be there to catch me
im ready to jump
im all suited up
for this jump
this jump of faith
some call it faith others call insanity
and others still call it hopeless love
i call it HOPE
i hope that you are there to catch me as i jump off this potentail cliff
will you be there to catch me
i hope so

To Hold is Nothing
Robbie Swanson

For many years, man has wandered earth,
yearning for precious metals.
They search for items of pretended worth,
instead they ought seek the intangibles.

The intangible fruits of mortality,
love, compassion and trust,
will guide the misdirected lust,
and reveal the ways of mortality.

How can one obtain these stepping stones of life?
They can't be bought,
but are graced upon
those who are willing to accept.



"Keys"
Nick Kovach



"Dogwood 2"
Aaron Handelsman

Nocturnal
Ben Beckett

Your words, empty as a half-glass of bitter wine
Do nothing for my palate, jaded as broken green bottles
On the half-grey city street that
I stepped on barefoot, chasing after you in the half-dark night and collapsed.
Your eyes, busy as a half-drunk housewife
See nothing of my body, worthless as itself
in the half-grey city morning when
I awoke after seeing myself next to you in the half-dark night.

Life at the High
Luke Nemes

The journey begins like a cattle drive
We are herded in a general direction
Blindfolded, afraid, lost, wandering
The tether is tied taut
For now

We are taken to a new pasture
Hestitantly grazing on opportunity
The restraints are loosened
Yet ubiquitous

We are now free to roam
With purpose, determinatrion, fortitude
The harness remains
As a safety net

We are close to the destination now
Learned, conscious, dutiful, primed
The fetter is eroded
The journey culminates in a stampede.

When the Phone Rang

Alexander

It started when the phone rang on Saturday. "Hello? Carolin residence, Megan speaking."

"Megan! Megan, it's Staci."

"Hey Stace, what's up?"

"He's here, he's coming to get me. I know it."

"Who, Staci? Who's coming to get you?"

"It started with the bird, that damn bird, and all those birds."

"Slow down. Who's - "

"Shh!" There was silence on the phone. Only Staci's heavy fast breathing could be heard. It was getting faster and faster. She held her breath. Megan heard footsteps. Staci's? A door opened and an earsplitting static screech was heard over the phone and then the dial tone. "Crap!" Megan yelled. She dialed Staci's house. Busy signal. She tried again. Busy signal. "Crap!" She slammed the phone in its cradle and made for her bedroom door. The phone rang and she stopped. It rang again; she jumped over her bed and landed on the floor with the phone to her face. "Hello?" Silence. "Hello?" The high static squealed and Megan dropped the phone. "Staci!"

The static was gone and a voice was now talking to her. "That's right, she was Staci. The *poor* late Staci." Megan cried as she just watched the phone on the floor. "And you better not tell anyone . . . Megan." She slammed down the phone and yanked the cord out of the wall. She just sat in the corner of her room with the light on, and didn't move or sleep.

"Megan? Megan, it's past noon; are you still sleeping?" Mrs. Carolin entered her room. She saw the phone on the middle of the floor and Megan crouching, blankly staring. "Megan?" Megan blinked and came to life. She wrapped her arms around her mother.

"Mom. Mom, it's Staci. She's dead. She was all alone at her house. She called me."

"Megan. Staci is sleeping over at Leanne's, remember? You were over at Leanne's last night." She was, but Staci wasn't. She stayed home and lied about going to Leanne's so she could meet up with her boyfriend. No one would notice she was gone until Monday. "Megan. It's probably just a dream." Megan was willing to believe anything.

"Yeah. A dream."

"You need some sleep. Why don't you take a nap?" Mrs. Carolin suggested.

"Yeah. A nap." Megan fell asleep and slept all afternoon. She awoke much calmer to the sound of car doors in the driveway. It was dark outside. She had slept for a way long time. She went downstairs to find a note on the table reading: *Out to pick up Chinese, be back in half hour.*

Megan was hungry now. She hadn't eaten all day. A little snack wouldn't hurt. She made her way to the fridge, but was interrupted by a thud at the door. Megan opened the door and found a dead bird on the doormat. With a kitchen towel, she put it in the front bushes. She closed the door and heard another thud, this time from upstairs. There was a bird on the floor of her room and a dent on the wall where it ricocheted off. "Stupid birds." She closed her window to the chirping outside. The thin glass was no protection. Quickly ducking below the sill, Megan was missed by eight birds crashing through her window, hitting the wall, and falling dead on the floor.

Megan slammed her door shut and ran down to the kitchen. Her parents would still be gone for fifteen minutes. There was a crash in the living room. The continuous crashes got louder and louder until more birds came in through the kitchen window. Many scratched at Megan before hitting the counter, fridge, microwave, and stove. Megan ran screaming out of the kitchen and grabbed the cordless phone as birds fell at her feet and skidded across the linoleum floor.

Megan shut herself up in the closet and called her mom's cell phone. It wasn't on. "Damn!" There was no more crashing. Megan slowly opened the closet door and found no dead birds on the ground,

not one. The windowpanes were no longer shattered on the floor, but in one piece, where they should be. Was it just another dream? Was she dreaming now?

Megan was drawn to the front door. On the glass near the top of the entrance was a reflection of something white and rectangular. "What – oh!" But wait, Megan had closed her door. She turned around to find the door open and with a man lost in shadow in the doorway at the top of the stairs, looking down at Megan.

She ran back into the closet and shut herself in. Would her parents get home in time? She remembered the cell phone was turned off. With Staci gone, Megan called her friend, Leanne.

"Hello?"

"Leanne! Leanne, it's Megan."

"Hey Megan. How ya doin'?"

"He's here; he's coming to get me, I know it."

"Who, Megan? Who's coming to get you?"

"It started with the bard, that damn bird, and all those birds."

"Slow down, who's - "

"Shh!" There was a silence on the phone. Only Megan's fast heavy breathing could be heard. It was getting faster and faster. She held her breath. Leanne heard footsteps. Megan's? The door opened and an earsplitting static screech was heard over the phone and then the dial tone.

For Leanne, it started when the phone rang on Sunday.



"Forward"

Aaron Handelsman

Untitled Murder Mystery
Alexander

Louis and Pat and their friends were playing football outside school during their lunch hour. They were chatting when a large crash was heard in the distance, like shattered glass. Their notions were confirmed when a car siren squealed loudly. Louis looked in the direction of the noise and missed the pass from Pat.

"What's up?" Pat asked.

"The alarm," Louis answered.

"Not unusual for this neighborhood."

"But it's really close." Louis walked to the origin of the noise to find out what happened and everyone followed. They didn't have to go all the way to the gate to see. The group turned the corner and found the car. Not one, but all the windows were smashed. The roof of the car was also crushed inwards. The simple explanation for the poor messed up car was that there was a body on top of it, bloody from the accident. Instantly everyone looked up to the open window on the third floor.

The loud racket had drawn others, both students and teachers, to the scene. The principal came out and looked at the sweaty boys, one holding a football. "What happened here?" he demanded. There was a silence until Seth replied, "We heard the crash and just found him."

"A crash?"

"Yes, sir." Now everyone looked up and some pointed to the open window. One student recognized it as the room Mr. Carl Nile taught in. Well, Mr. Nile won't teach there any more.

"What a horrible accident," The principal commented.

"It wasn't an accident!" a boy called out.

"What do you mean, Louis? Suicide?" The principal asked.

"No. Murder." Eyes weren't focusing on the window any more

Louis was called down to the school conference room during his English class. When entering, he found the stereotypical pair. One man was tall and thin while the other was short and lumpy. "Are you Louis?"

"Yeah."

"We would just like to talk to you. Nothing important," the tall one said.

"But you're cops."

"Cops! We're not cops." The lumpy one explained. Louis pointed to the man's badge clipped on the outside of his sport coat. "Oh, right. Well I'm Officer Johns and this is Officer Kramer."

"First outside job?" Louis asked.

"Sort of. We work at the desks, but nobody wanted this case. They think suicides are a waste of investigation time."

"But it wasn't suicide," Luis retorted.

"Yes, " the thin one said. "That's what we wanted to talk to you about."

"Do you think it's suicide?"

"No, we don't, that's why we took this case."

"Why do you think it was murder, Louis?" Officer Johns asked.

"Great! You think it was murder also! It's because of the glasses, right? People committing suicides don't jump with their glasses on." There was a pause from the officers. "Unless you meant the more obvious reason like the missing left shoe."

"Yes, the shoe!" exclaimed Kramer. "Here's what we think based on his personal effects at the scene."

"Personal effects?" Louis asked. Kramer pulled out a bag, which contained the deceased's clothing. Johns pointed to the pants.

"See here? There's a small rip at the end of the pant leg."

"And here," Kramer explained, "A piece of cloth snagged on his watch."

"Okay?" Louis didn't see where they were going.

"Here's what we think happened. The name of the deceased.. uh…"

"One sec, I have his file." Johns went into his briefcase.

"Mr. Nile," Louis answered.

"Correct, Kramer, name of the deceased Mr. C. Nile, C for Carl." The contents of his briefcase were all over when Johns finally pulled out the file.

"Thank you, Johns. Mr. Nile noticed his shoe was untied. He reached down to tie the laces, but his watch got caught. He tried to yank them apart and when it ripped Mr. Nile was thrown backwards. He fell out of his window to his death." Kramer finished.

"Not murder?" Louis asked.

"Nope," Johns disagreed. "An accident."

"Well, I'm all for it. That is, if the piece from the watch matches the pants." The cops looked at each other. They didn't think about that. "Does it?" It didn't. "Back to murder in my book."

"Who?"

"More like where," Louis said. "We need to find Mr. Nile's shoe."

"No shoe was found in the classroom," Kramer pointed out.

"Does that key open every door in this school?" Both officers looked at the key that had fallen out of Johns's unorganized briefcase.

"It should. The principal gave it to us." Johns answered. Louis snatched up the key and ran out of the room. The cops tried to keep up as Louis raced through the crowd and knocked people over, including the poor janitor who dropped his gloves. They went up to a door on the third floor marked "No Students Allowed."

"I've always wanted to go in here."

"But you can't," said Johns. "You're a student."

"You guys need my help."

"We don't need any help." Pause. "Okay, we need a lot of help."

"So, I'm a partner."

"No," Kramer corrected. "You're a kid helper of ours."

"I'm a kid that's going to solve this case."

"What makes you so confident?"

"I watch a lot more television." The door led up to a metal staircase to another door that opened up to the tarred roof above the school. "Sort of anti-climatic, really."

"What is?" Johns asked.

"I thought the roof would be cooler than this. Ah, but it redeems itself." Louis walked over to the ledge. "Mr. Nile's shoe."

"And his ripped pant leg piece on the stone ledge." Kramer added.

"But what was Mr. Nile doing up here?"

"Is smoking allowed on school grounds?" Johns asked.

"No, of course not. Why?" Louis's question was answered when he saw that Johns was holding a full pack of Camel cigarettes.

"My theory," Johns explained, "is that Mr. Nile came up to smoke on his off hour, dropped his cigarettes, went to reach for them, but found his shoelace was untied. He went to tie it and, well, you know the rest."

"Good thinking!" Kramer remarked. It was good thinking, but Louis decided to double-check this theory after school before the big basketball game. He got his yearbook, found a page with Mr. Nile on it, and took it to the nearest gas station by school. "Excuse me. Could you help me?" Louis asked the lady behind the counter.

"Sure, what pump are you at?"

"No. I don't need gas. Do you recognize this man?" Louis pointed to Mr. Nile.

"Yeah, I remember him. He used to come in once a week for gas and cigarettes. Strange man. He always took the pennies out of the leave-a-penny tray."

"What kind did he get?"

"Marlboro, always."

"Not Camel?"

"No, always Marlboro. But I haven't seen him lately. Do you know him?"

"Yeah. Why haven't you seen him?"

"He didn't come in for cigarettes anymore. I think he quit."

"Thanks." Louis knew that Mr. Nile's death was no accident. He had no motive, no murderer, and a basketball game to get to. The gym was packed but he found Pat and sat next to him. Pat was sitting next to Brian. The team was down by two with a minute left. A large man sat in front of the group.

"Roar!" Brian blurted out as he flashed his gloved hands in Pat's face.

"Dude, where did you get those gloves?" Pat asked.

"From this guy's pocket."

"Klepto."

Louis noticed something different with the glove. He snatched it off of Brian's hand. "What else is in his pocket, Brian?" Louis asked.

"These cigarettes." Brian handed Louis a pack of Camel cigarettes. Who was it sitting in front of him?!?! The seconds were counting down on the clock. The point guard stole the ball, ran to the other end of the court and shot the ball. It entered the hoop for a brilliant three pointer before the buzzer to win the game. The whole crowd was on their feet jumping, clapping, and cheering. Louis saw

his face.

He ran out of the gym and up to the roof through the door that was left unlocked by the policeman pair. Louis got out his cell phone and called them. "Hello?"

"Kramer, it's Louis."

"Hey, guess what! We got a motive for murder. We found a note in Mr. Nile's pocket. It went through the washing machine a couple times, but we could still read it. He was being blackmailed and couldn't pay it."

"That's great, but I have a guy. I've got his glove and cigarettes. It's-" Louis's cell phone was yanked out of his hand and thrown in front of him over the ledge. He turned around and the janitor was staring back at him. Louis was not one to be pushed around, but when the other person is pointing a gun at him, he'll do pretty much anything he's told to.

"How'd you know?" he demanded.

"The cigarettes at the scene. They're the same as yours and Mr. Nile quit smoking."

"Anything else?"

"The rip, in your glove, it matches the piece on Mr. Nile's watch."

"Dammit! You got me. Congratulations, but who would ever believe a kid? I set up the meeting. Nile wouldn't pay. I killed him. I pushed him over; he lost his shoe and a piece of his pants. I lost my glove and my cigarettes were planted to make it look like an accident." There was nothing on television to prepare Louis for this. "And now you die. It was really great to get that off my chest."

"Freeze!" Johns and Kramer were at the door both pointing guns at the janitor who lowered his gun. Louis could breathe again.

"You should have known. The bad guy always gets caught right after his confession."

"But there's an ironic twist of course, punk."

janitor's grip was getting weaker. One. The janitor was yelling at Johns and waving the gun near Louis's head. Two. Louis was nervous and a tear was rolling down his cheek. Three! Louis threw away the janitors arm, went down to his knees and covered his head. Kramer shot three times as the janitor turned his gun on him. He stumbled with the impact of the shots hitting his chest and the janitor fell backwards. Johns ran up before Louis fell backwards too.

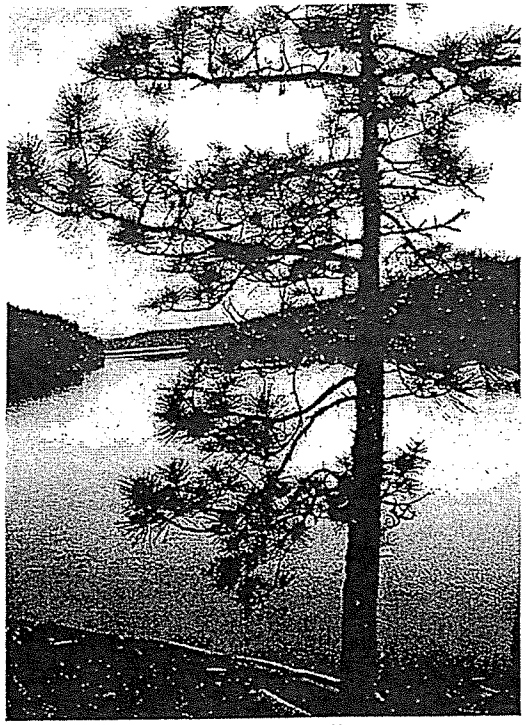
"You okay?" Johns asked.

"Yeah." His cheeks were still moist."

"You solved the case." Kramer said. "A kid solved the case!"

"Not just a kid, our partner." Johns added.

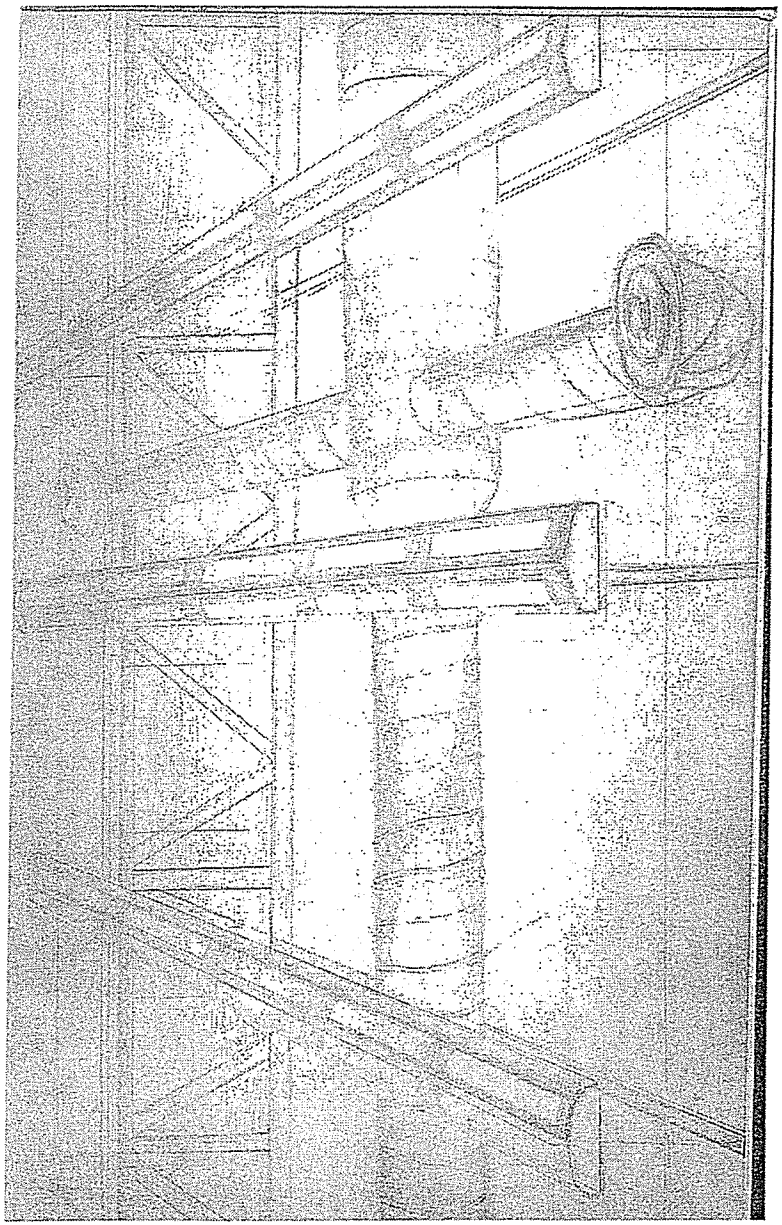
"Boy," Louis replied. "I watch way too much television."



"Pine Tree"
Nick Kovach



"Kimberly"
Aaron Handelsman



"Art Room Ceiling"
James Dewey

Skeet Shooting
Evan Kelly

You pull up to the club house snap your gun together and go out to the range. Pull! You say and the bright orange clay shoots out of the tower. Bang! The gun fires, the clay dusted in front of your face with the fume of the gun powder rushing into your nose. You go and take a break in the old rustic shotgun clubhouse. While taking a break, you order a nice, big and juicy burger.

Eden
Matt Miller

The roar of a motorcycle down the street cries out over the patter of liquid glass on the porch. The glass shatters spraying to cover everything. A brilliant flash and another motorcycle races off. It rumbles away in the distance. Fragments of glass smash into the trees and lay glistening on the leaves. The darkness encloses all the heat over the ground keeping the soil warm. A dense smoke from the heat controls a narrow vision capacity. The temperature rises quickly as the haze absorbs all the sunlight. A drum in the distance roars and a cymbal clashes hurriedly as the drummer continues the beat with a snare. A bass "duns" as it approaches. A whirling flute screams of the high winds that circle in disaster. A rusty, missing-an-exhaust-pipe junker lugs down the street following in the mist left by the motorcycle. Another motorcycle screams down the street chasing the firelight in the sky of earlier. The haze is damaged from the breeze while the temperature drops with the coolness of night time. A large brilliant silhouette glimmers across a glass pond, still broken in places by shattering glass droplets from the sky. A final solemn beat from a drummer leads the motorcycle out of the garden.

The Ballad of Fousty Hops
Dan Condit & Pat McPartlin

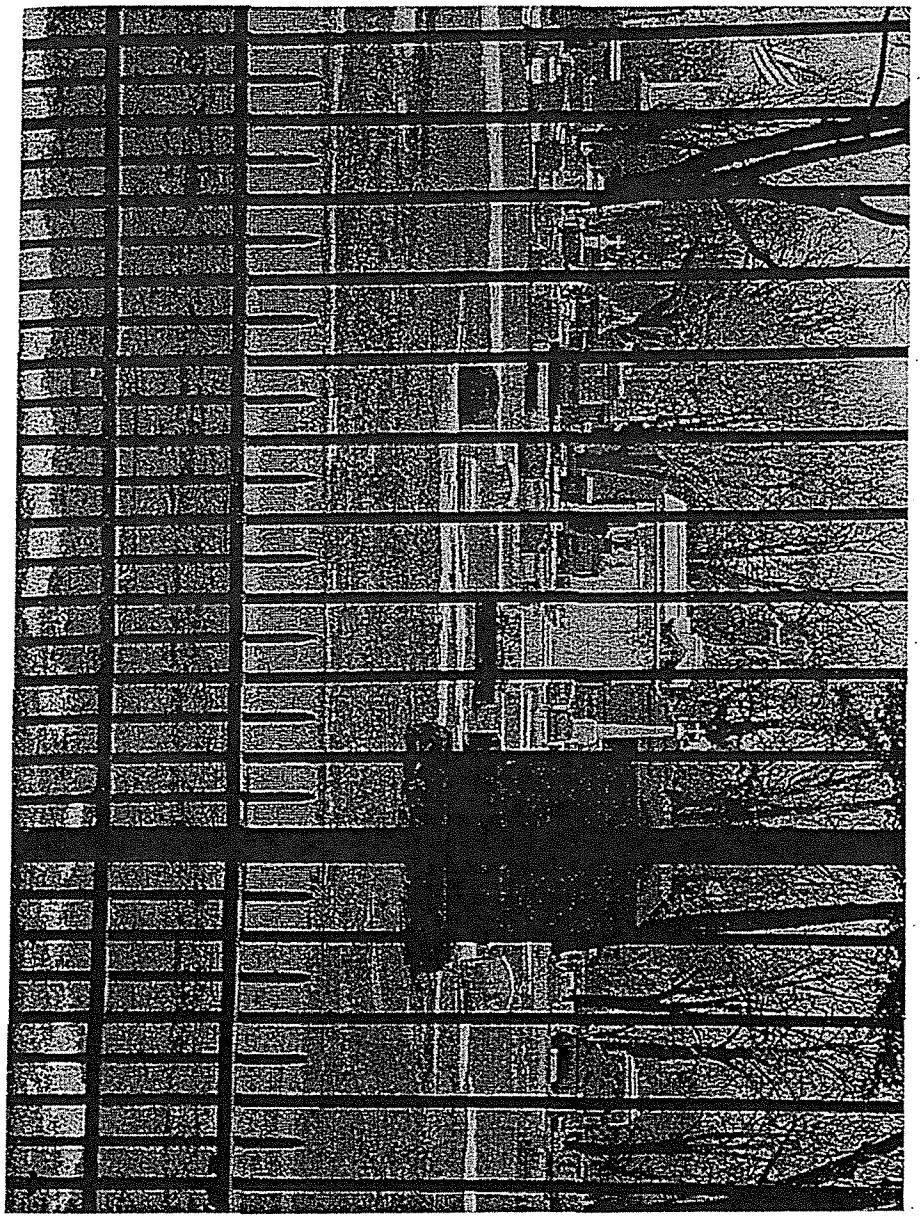
This is a tale of a man who holds honor high, In essence his manner was as a sty. He bathed no more than once a week, But bathing at his hour was cold and bleak. His name was Fousty, as friends would know, Carrying laughter and glee about him as he would go. So for one more aspect was he so renowned, He brewed his own mead to supply his town. From the finest barley a man could find, Sir Fousty enjoyed it whenever he dined. His hands stained dark as his unclean beard, Like the grime that followed on the hoofs of his steer, A horse so monstrous, which could carry two kegs, That muscles ever so protruded on its legs.

So Fousty would say that his heritage was Irish, In truth no one knew--though his hair stood firish. He dwelled in the forest, and a woodsman was he, And carried an axe for his work with the tree. Fousty paraded in a torn and tattered kilt, That was ripped in the back, right above his hilt. His mason jar was always filled to the brim with a dark frothing lager, And he would toast to the stars, without a hint of swagger. He stood tall on his mount with a big fat lipper, And looked down on his steed, ever-so faithful as Clipper. His breastplate would gleam in the sun's morning rays, As he tipped off his goblet with the brew for his days.

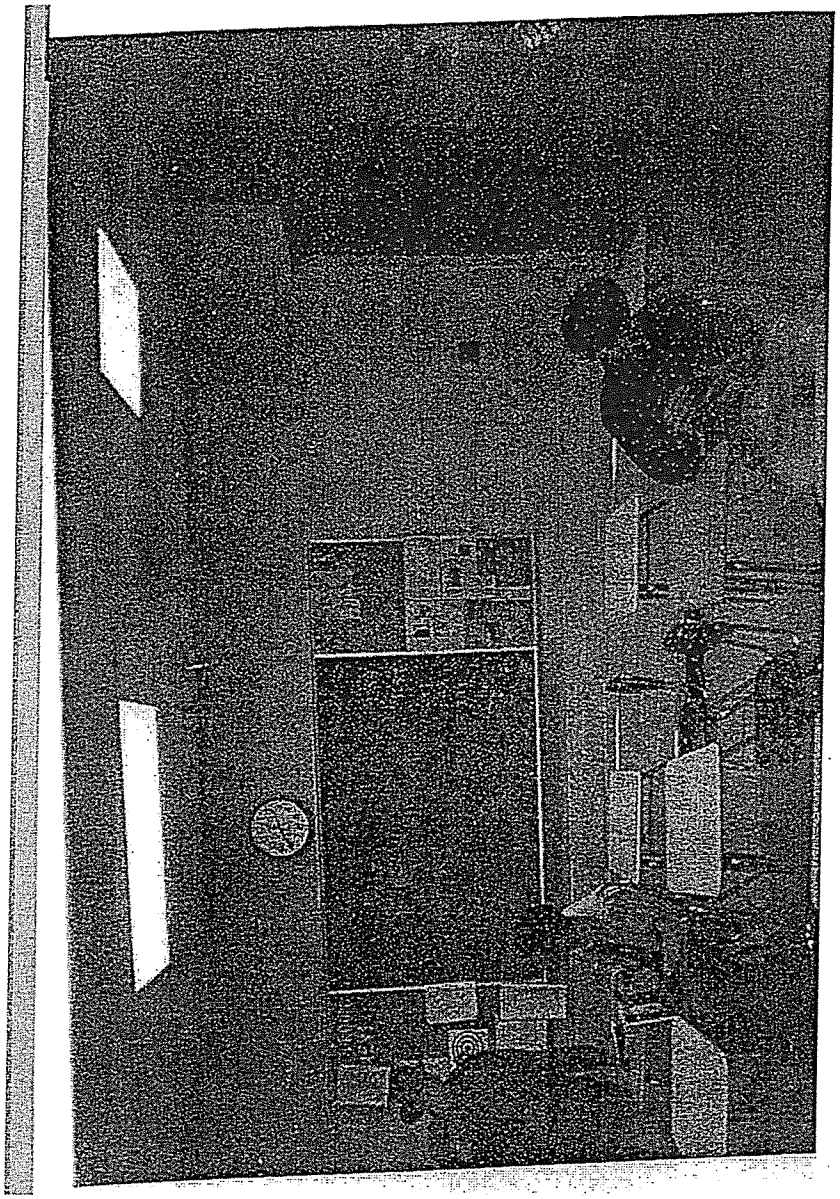
So everyone he knew would say Fousty a good man, With a fire in his eye and a brew in his hand.

Not Scholarly
Colin Horn

Scholarship
hardwork, ambition
thinking, listening, preparing
Above Average---Below Average
Cheating, corrupting, disrupting
Disciplinary, Academic
expulsion



"Don't Forget Me"
Brian Vandenbossche



"Fool"
Asukile Gardner

Brave New World
Duncan MacLachlan

Not having any righteousness on my own
Conforming to the mindless Brave New World
In my mind thinking what I didn't know
Conforming to the mindless Brave New World

Do you believe in the God of all
Or the figurehead that made us fall
Corruption's all we need, we need
Corruption's all we need, we need

What is the enigmatic future
How can I fight myself
When I make you so much richer
Why can't you just deny yourself

You lit the fires and bruned the flags
Conforming to the mindless Brave New World
In the twilight of the burning rags
Conforming to the mindless Brave New World

Blood and bone, broken and spilled
Lost your conscience in the Brave New World
Man is just bent, broken and killed
Lost your conscience in the Brave New World

Believing in you and
Rotting your own mindless
Losing what you knew
Becoming empty inside

Playing games with everyone
Conforming to the mindless Brave New World
Losing the war you knew you won
Conforming to the mindless Brave New World

You're so pneumatically wonderful
Purple eyes are all you need to know
Disease is all you need, you need
Disease is all you need, you need

You know you bleed, you rape, you die
Parasites in this synthetic life
The pneumatic ones who stretch their skin
Encourage that sex is not a sin

Ash (From Fires)
Alex Jones

...Yes, the fire is burning inside
Right next to the other, older one
The one that burns just as strongly as it first did
The one that seems as though it'll last forever
In fact, by comparison, the newer fire is still a spark.
These fires are competing for fuel
For there is only one source
Only so much fuel to feed these fires
It is an illusion and lie to suggest that they can peacefully coexist
For one will inevitably put the other out
After having captured the fuel of its counterpart.
But there is another possibility
One that showcases fire's destructive powers...
Instead of providing light with the fuel
The fires could merely consume it with no purpose
Burning all the fuel
Turning it to ash
Leaving the one bright, shining place
As a desolate, charred wasteland
With the remnants of the precious fuel swirling about like a sandstorm
A sandstorm of warning to those who may try to light this place again

Backyard (Early Winter)
Alex Jones

Somehow, this seems like quite the feat
Even though it is such a simple task
I am merely standing on my balcony
Staring out into the woods behind the clearing that is my backyard
On this early winter day
The trees seem to be stabbing the sky
As though that grey mass is a pinata
And the trees are trying to get the sweet innards
But it's not really my standing here that is the feat
It's moreso that I have yet to jump over the railing
As good as things get, I rarely seem to enjoy them
Everything seems like the most boring
And I guess I'm just looking for something new
Something other than the boredom and pain that started with my wife's passing
And now my daughter, too, is gone
(Though school is a departure of a more temporary nature)
So here I am
On my balcony
Feeling cold and alone
Wondering why I have yet to jump
Just then, the trees succeed in opening the pinata that is today's grey sky
And as I look upward
A snowflake touches my lips
Kissing me, like my wife once did
Softly and sweetly
And it comforts me
For I now know that she is watching from above
And even though she has passed, she is with me still
So as the cold snow falls and warms me with its gentle caress
A smile starts manifesting on my face
And I am well
Finally

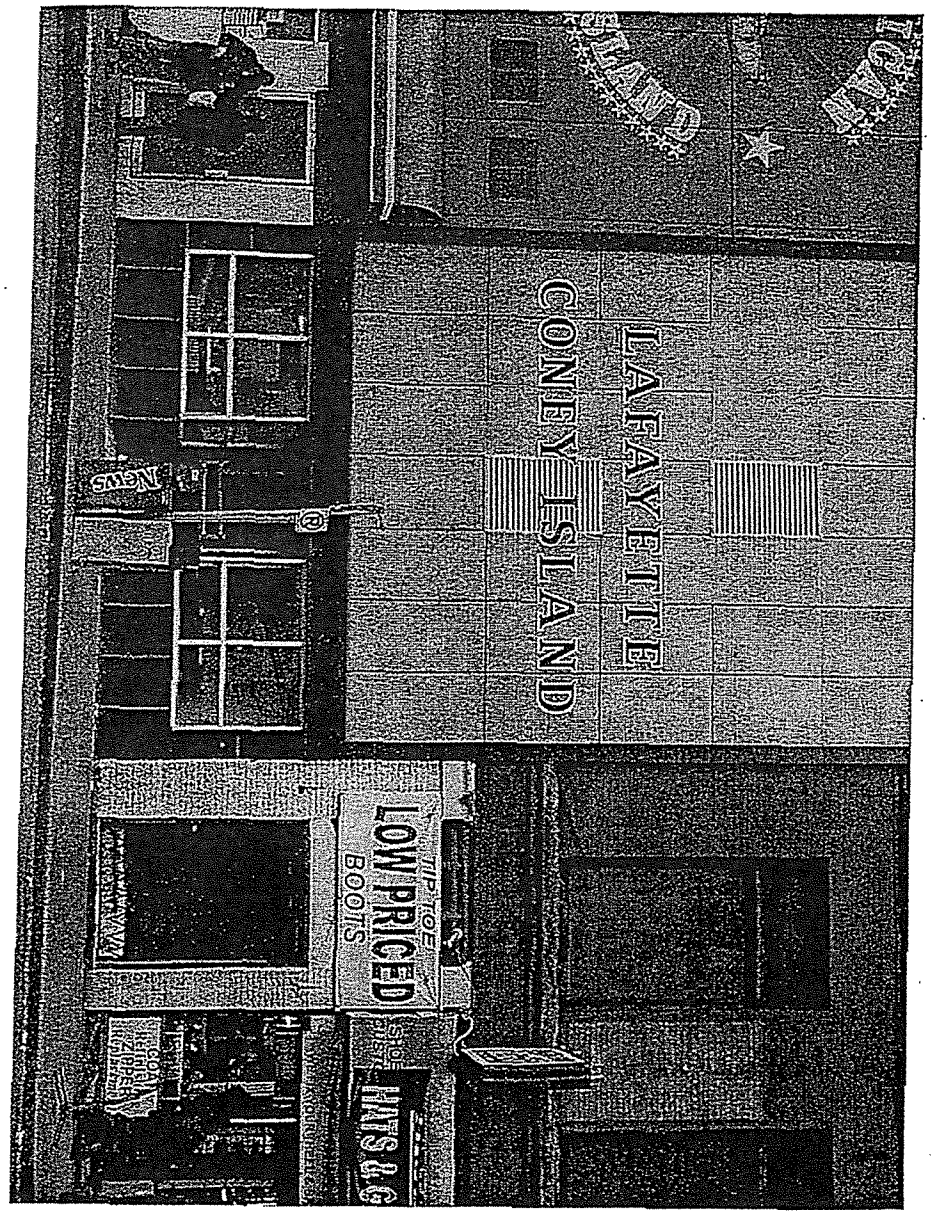
Poem To Brothers and Sisters in Arms
Alvin McChester

We, soldiers, are not standing on this battleground to fight for just our nation,
We are here to protect our families, our parents, our friends, our wives, and our husbands, From the fist of tyranny that threatens all of our loved ones,

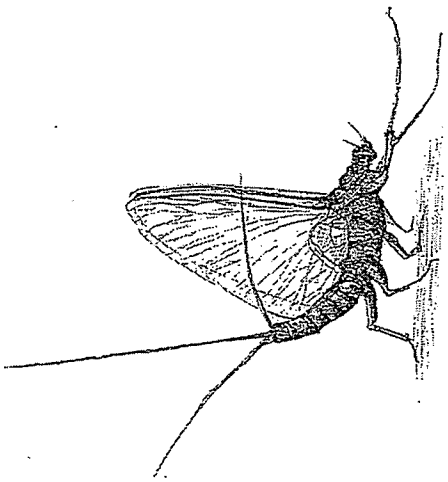
We, soldiers, are not here to fight each other for spineless reasons, for this is not a time Of John Wayne heroics, watery words of Emerson, loose ethnocentrism, or stone hard Philosophies,
But a season of death, which is what war is, a time when death's hunger spares no one, and no Thing, where rains of blood mar the ground, where tornadoes of shells scar the land, where Hurricanes of fire and shrapnel thrive for our flesh, where bees of gurgled screams drive our Memories to broken, crimson shards,

In this time of blood-spilling and endless screams, our only salvation is our unity with each Other, no matter the differences, for it is not the color of skin of the comrade that drags one of Us out of a blown out foxhole, or the sex of the chopper pilot that gives cover Fire for retreating soldiers, or the nation of origin of the fighter pilot that dances with death in The air with the enemy, that matters, for we all have the same to lose, or the religion of The medic that bandages the wounds of the pinned down for the bread of life is the universal Faith, or the young age of the NCO, for the bullet has no required age for admission,

Unity, brothers and sisters in arms, with each other, within ourselves, and with our loved ones, Before we step forward and look back at the insanity and utter Hell we faced, we must always Hold reverent memory of those we fought alongside and died for what they believed in, may we Never leave the embrace of our families after our return home and honor the loved ones of those
Soldiers that will be with them from the heavenly, peaceful blue above.



"Heart of Detroit"
Brian Vandenbossche



"Mayfly"
Will Carnaghi

Still the New Kid

Alexander

He could only assume that the one lurking in the garage was Keith. He was wearing a dark blue shirt and obviously looking for something, not even noticing a boy was watching from the window. Alan Rickersby got that small jolt of energy when you understand something after he figured out that it was one year ago when Mrs. Wagner had introduced her son, Keith, to him after he moved in. Alan came to the door and met the freakishly tall boy of fifteen. By now, Keith was probably sixteen, as was Alan, and had grown even more, but Alan had grown too.

Two other boys were playing with a Frisbee in the front yard; they weren't very good. The first wore an orange shirt and tossed it to the second in light blue. He missed. The second sent it to the number one and it went way too far to the right. Number one threw it to the second, he missed again, and the Frisbee hit the car behind him. Both ran to check for dings, while Keith was still walking back and forth in the garage. Finding none, the Frisbee throwers went back to their game. Alan still watched. Toss. Catch. Toss. Miss. Toss. Catch. Toss. Miss. A failed attempt at a trick shot trying to bounce the Frisbee off the driveway and towards Number One.

In the quiet of his room, Alan watched interestedly over the three. He watched the friends in the front yard and wondered what they were talking about. This wondering turned Alan into a busy know-it-all aching to find out the secrets of their hidden conversation. He made up his mind to ride by on his bike to catch a brief excerpt and ease his mind. As he grabbed his bag and walked out the door, the phrase "curiosity killed the cat" never entered his mind. He hopped on his bike and rode down the street, and to his horrible luck, the boys stopped talking. They gave him only a sideward glance.

It had to be concluded that since Alan gave them a thought every once and a while, the boys must have also thought about him sometimes, too. Alan was usually only seen outside while mowing the lawn or taking out the trash, so he must appear to be a lonely nothing kid with no friends and no social life to speak of. The second half was true, he guessed, and Alan decided to simply ride on by and make his way home. The second boy had his back to Alan, but Number One watched him as he returned the Frisbee. The second missed, turned around to retrieve it, and saw Alan laughing.

"You think you can do better?" he asked sternly.

Alan squeaked his brakes and stopped. "Excuse me?"

"Do you think you can do better?" he asked again.

Alan got off of his bike and dropped his bag. He picked up the Frisbee off of the prickly summer grass and went to throw it at Number One. He spun around on his heels, pulled his knees up to his chest, and planted his feet firmly on the ground. The Frisbee quickly sailed over Keith's front lawn and hit Number One in the forehead.

"Good job, Ace, you hit him on the head!" the second scolded.

"Calm down, cowboy," Alan replied. "Who said I missed?" Alan made to leave and picked up his bag. Keith must have left his garage and watched the events because he called out to Alan and asked him to come back.

"I like this kid. Alan, right?" he said.

"Yeah, and you're Keith."

"I know. This is Judd." Number One gave a feeble wave. "And his brother, Bo." The second only nodded. "What do you think, boys?" Keith asked.

"He's all right," said Judd, rubbing his forehead.

"Shall we let him come tonight?"

"With us?" Bo protested.

"Sure, he's good."

"Fine," Judd and Bo agreed. Alan had done more than what he planned; the trio had accepted him.

"Where are we going?" Alan asked.

"Art class. I believe you'll be a good influence," Keith said.

Alan went home and thought about the art class with neighbors he had only seen at a distance, except Keith whom he had seen last year. He wondered what kind of class he would attend after meeting at Keith's at nine.

They all met on time, but Alan arrived early and met Keith on the lawn. He had second doubts about a group that accepted him because a Frisbee hit Judd in the head. He asked Keith about this. "You don't care what others think," replied Keith. "I think you might be a good influence."

"What do you mean by that?" Keith didn't answer because Judd and Bo had arrived. Bo had a backpack. The group cut through lawns and bushes with Alan tailing behind. They ended up in an empty parking lot of a shopping center nearby. There was only the yellow lights humming and illuminating the area. Alan thought the class might be in one of the stores, but all the inside lights were off. Alan caught up with Keith, Judd, and Bo, who were not heading to the front doors, but the back. It was probably an after hours class!

However, they didn't walk to any doors. They were headed towards a dumpster. Bo put down the backpack and pulled out four cans of spray paint. The yellow one was handed to Alan, Judd the red, Bo the blue, and Keith the white. "Shall we?" Judd asked.

"Let's go!" Bo said energetically.

"As long as everyone is okay with this," Keith interjected.

The three looked at Alan. Everyone has been in a situation like this. If not, it is somewhere in their future. All school children are told to "just say no" and "turn and walk away," but Alan, like many, crumbled quickly under the pressure. He was the first to vandalize the dirty side with a streak of yellow paint. Keith was crushed, but no one noticed.

Judd and Bo drew disturbing images that they found amusing. Alan turned his streak into a letter "D" and wrote "Da Bomb." It was the only phrase that came to mind, a phrase he was sure he hadn't heard since sixth grade. He looked over at Keith, who was also writing in his paint. "Keep the faith, don't give in" was the result of Keith's spraying.

"Interesting," Alan stated.

"I thought it was appropriate for the occasion," he scornfully replied. Alan was taken aback, but Judd cut off everything by reminding everyone about a curfew. Bo noticed bikes and suggested that they take them for the long journey home. Everyone agreed, but Keith only joined in half-heartedly as he peddled home.

"Same time tomorrow?" Judd called.

"Of course, boys!" Keith called back. Everything was content in itself. The brothers walked back down the street and left Alan and Keith alone in the corner.

"That was fun, I guess," Alan started. "I've never done anything like that."

"I know. You weren't supposed to."

"What?"

"You stand out. You don't care what others think. You were our influence!"

"What do you mean, Keith?" Alan didn't really notice or care that he was yelling now. "Influence. What do you want? Stop hiding behind that word!"

"You were supposed to object and everyone would fall in line."

"And I was supposed to know this?"

"You should have! Why did you do it, anyway?"

"To be accepted by the great almighty neighborhood boys."

"You already were."

"What?"

"We invited you. You were in!"

"You've been in. Why didn't you do it? You've known them longer than I have! Why did I have to do it and not you?"

"It was your duty."

"Appointed by you, Keith. I will not take this burden on for you. I'm leaving. You can tell them whatever you want, that I was disappointed in their actions and decided to leave them. Tell them what you want. Use me as an excuse, but I will not do it for you."

"You think you know us, but you couldn't be more wrong. You don't know anything about anything."

"Really. Why's that?"

"You're still just the new kid."

Alan crossed the street and headed home.

"Alan!" Keith yelled.

"Yeah?"

"Were you really disappointed?"

"Yes. In everyone, I guess. In myself, also." Alan went home.

School started the next week. Alan hadn't seen Keith except once, from his window, while Keith mowed the lawn alone. Alan did all of his homework at the kitchen table. At one such time, the

doorbell interrupted Alan. He walked to the door and opened it to find Keith standing on the porch, just like last August, this time at his free will without his mother.

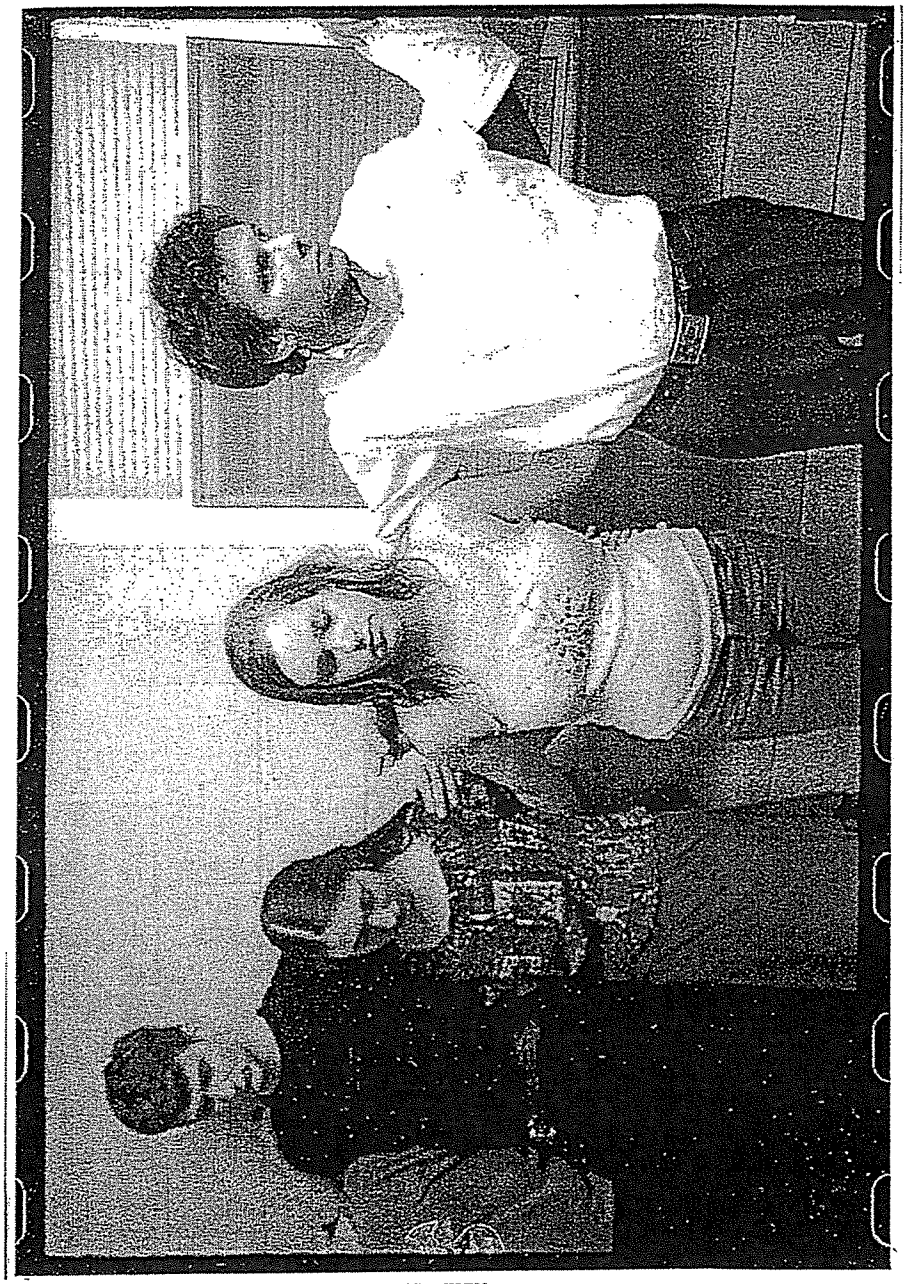
"Hey," Keith said.

'Wow,' Alan thought as he looked at Keith. 'He is still freakishly tall.'



"Ironic Bubbles"

Aaron Handelsman



"MK"

Evan Eustice



"Reflections of the Heidelberg Project"

Brian Vandenbossche

Kendall

Alexander

Luke and Phil got home late after hanging out with friends. Phil, the older and more laid-back brother, convinced Luke to stay in the parked car and listen to a song on the radio. It was past curfew, but Luke gave up on that argument and stayed. The bass was turned all the way up, making everything vibrate. A sharp rapping on Phil's window interrupted them. Phil rolled it down as Luke turned off the radio. It wasn't a neighbor they knew. "Hi, excuse me. I was wondering if you could help me."

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The manor door opened to let a middle aged man into the greeting hall. "G'day. Are you the lady I'm portraiting?"

"Oh, no. I'm just the maid. You'll be portraiting the master and his daughter. This way to the library." She led the painter through the foyer with a grand staircase. The dining room with a roaring fire was in the back right with the kitchen behind it. The library was in front of it. The foyer was so large in itself that the painter could have fit his house inside it.

John Corinth and his daughter, Kendall, waited in the library, already in their pose, anxious to get started. Kendall sat in a cushioned chair and her father stood behind her, one hand on each shoulder. John Corinth was a well-cut man and very strict. Kendall was a beautiful girl of twenty with radiant golden hair. "Here we are, you may get started. That is your canvas, there," John commanded.

"Aye, sir. Pardon, but I thought I was painting the whole family."

"This is the whole family."

"Aye, sir." He examined the canvas. "Sir, there is a picture on the back of this canvas - "

"My father. Deceased."

"I must say, miss, that is a stunning necklace."

"Painter!"

"Father . . ." Kendall calmed him.

"Painter, come to the foyer." He followed Mr. Corinth. "I am having my time wasted. Sketch the picture so that I can get on with my business meetings." John went back to stand by Kendall, but she wasn't there. "Kendall?" The stunning necklace that was praised by the painted lay on the chair without its owner.

"You remember how we looked?"

"Aye."

"Good. Paint it." And John Corinth left to deal with his pressing business matters.

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Luke and Melissa were driving down a heavily wooded country highway; Luke was nervous. He was going to meet Melissa's parents for the first time. "Exit 217," Melissa said. "Only ten more miles."

"Great," Luke muttered.

"Don't worry," she assured him. "They won't like you."
"How can you say that?"
"Because you're stealing their precious daughter away."

"That, my dear, is why they'll adore me." They shared a laugh until the car got noisy and started to slow down no matter how hard Luke pushed on the accelerator. "What's wrong?" Melissa asked.

"Hold on," Luke told her. He flicked the dashboard dials and the one pointing towards "F" meaning full instantly dropped to "E" for empty. "Damn car."

"Pull the car in there."

"Where?"

"The driveway." Luke hadn't even noticed it. He pulled in and the car stopped in front of a huge house with two other cars in the drive. The house was dark, not many rooms were lit. "It's like a hotel," Melissa commented. They ran a large doorbell and it was awhile before anyone answered. It was an older man, but tall, sharp dressed, and in every way eloquent and expensive.

They hadn't even introduced themselves when he said, "Ahh, finally. We were about to give you up." He led them through a welcoming area with a large suit of armor, into a grand foyer, and then into the library. "See, they were coming." And the man left through a door in the back. Another man came up to the couple from a chair in the corner.

"Name's Arthur," he said, sticking out his arm.

Luke shook it. "I'm afraid we don't know anything about this party. I'm Luke and this is Melissa." Melissa shook Arthur's hand, also.

"Car trouble?" Arthur asked.

"We ran out of gas . . ."

"I had a flat tire. The couple over there, Paul and Shannon, and their kid, Charlie, their battery died. And the girl, looking at the books, Danielle, she hitchhiked and ended up here."

"And as for the party?" Melissa asked.

"You're in the same boat as us." The host came back through the door he left. "Shall we begin with a tour?" he asked graciously.

"Just a minute," called Paul. "Why are we even here?"

"Do you have any way of working transportation to get to your pressing matters?" Paul remained silent. "Since you are stuck and it is dark, I thought you might stay in there until dawn. Do you disagree?" Paul and everyone were still silent. "No? Then I suggest we begin with a tour."

"What's your name?" Luke asked.

"Giles." He took them on a tour that was darker than expected and lowered the whole emotion of the group. The house belonged to the Corinth family, headed by the wealthy Thomas Corinth. Thomas Corinth was sick and his whole family was fighting over his estate. Thomas had three children – Adam, Victoria, and John. John was married to Mary and they had their own children, Kendall and Lester. Everyone loved Kendall because she seemed to be the only one untouched by the malice and greed of the family.

Before Thomas died, he left all of his riches to charity except a necklace to Kendall. He also convinced the butler he loved to curse the family and he did. The family was doomed to be consumed by their own evil. They traveled into the dining room, where the cousin George was killed because he overstayed his welcome after Thomas died. His pudding was poisoned. They traveled into the foyer where Victoria fell down the grand staircase on the day of her wedding and snapped her neck. They were told about how Adam and Lester were killed in a car accident after a birthday party as they entered the ballroom. Here, the chandelier had fallen while Mary was giving a piano concert. The chandelier was replaced and the piano was repaired after Mary was crushed in the accident. They traveled back into the library and Giles finished the tour by telling the group how Kendall disappeared in the middle of her portrait. The only one not

to suffer a gruesome death was the only one loved by Thomas Corinth.

"What about John?" Danielle asked.

"He went crazy. He named everything, including this house, after Kendall. He died alone in an asylum," Giles answered. The whole time Giles never showed any expression.

"And what of the portrait?" Shannon questioned.

"Yes!" Giles led them back to the foyer. A large portrait covered the whole wall opposite the stairs, above the doorway between the entrance hall and the foyer itself. Kendall sat in a chair with her father behind her. Also in the background were Mary, Lester, Adam, George, and Victoria. "This picture was painted completely by memory. A very talented painter came during Kendall's disappearance and had to finish her and her father by memory."

"What of the others?" Luke asked.

"No one knows," Giles answered. "The other characters just showed up after John died."

"Just showed up?" Arthur questioned.

"Yes . . . amazing fact: this portrait was painted right on the back of Thomas's portrait."

"He's just on the back?" Danielle asked.

"Yes, more like an insult, really." It was late and Giles showed them to their rooms in the East Wing. Melissa and Luke had conjoining rooms at the end of the hall. The rooms were cold, but Luke didn't dare to sleep inside the sheets of the old bed. He managed to fall asleep somehow, but was woken up abruptly. His glowing digital watch read 1:20 A.M. He went for the light switch, but there was no electricity in the house. Melissa came in with a lit

candle and helped Luke find one, which he lit off of hers. They went into the hall to meet with the others outside, but only found Paul and Charlie.

"Who screamed?" Luke asked.

"Where'd it come from?" Paul asked. He took Charlie's hand and the four of them set off for the origin of the noise. They searched the first floor and found Danielle crying and shaking in a corner. Melissa put a hand on her shoulder and Danielle jolted away in fear. Her face was dripping with tears and she could only point to the door that led to the dining room. Paul pushed Charlie towards Melissa and he stayed with her. Luke and Paul went for the dining room and Luke opened the door.

The dining room wasn't like the library; it was well lit. It was easy to see Arthur's body lying dead on the floor. "A midnight snack." Paul motioned to a bowl of ice cream on the table. Luke went into the kitchen and checked the refrigerator. "There's no ice cream," Luke pointed out. "Only . . ." They went back to the dining room and looked at the bowl.

"Pudding," Paul finished. The bowl no longer contained the vanilla ice cream, but now held a rich dark pudding.

"No," Luke disagreed.

"I don't see how - " Paul questioned.

"This house can do many things," Giles interrupted. They had not noticed his entrance. "This house can do whatever it wants, be whatever it wants, and make you see whatever it wants."

"What do we do with Arthur?" Paul asked.

"We can do nothing, let us leave him for the night, and deal with it in the morning."

"In the morning!" Luke was outraged; he would have let

Giles have it, but was interrupted by more yelling.

"Paul! Charlie! Paul, where are you?" Paul rushed into the foyer and Luke followed. Melissa came out of the library with Charlie. Danielle only went to the doorway. Shannon was standing at the top of the stairs. "Oh, thank God! I woke up and you were gone."

"What are you wearing?" Paul asked.

"I wasn't about to sleep in my clothes. I found it in the closet. Do you like it?" Shannon twirled around to show off the dress and started down the stairs. "It doesn't work with my shoes, but - " But what, they never found out. Halfway down, her heel snapped and she tumbled down the stairs, ending with her body and head landing in a distorted way.

"Shannon!" Paul rushed to her. "Shannon, oh God!"

"You know," Giles started. "Victoria didn't want a big wedding or a big gown. In fact, she wore that dress on her wedding day. The day she died."

"Listen!" Paul yelled, but Giles had left. Paul just moved his anger to the group. "Two have died already!"

"Two?" Melissa asked.

"Arthur's dead in the dining room," Danielle answered.

"I don't know about you, do whatever the hell you want! I'm not going to wait around for a third! Come on, Charlie." Half leading half dragging Charlie away, he slammed the door behind them.

Something in Danielle's mind clicked. "Stop!" She rushed to the door, but it wouldn't open. Luke tried. "What are we doing?" The door was still stuck.

"This house. Oh Lord, this house." She ran to the side window and banged on it, hoping to catch Paul's attention. Paul started up the car, with the headlights blinding them until it turned down the driveway. "You see their battery was dead." The car made its way to the exit, the car lost control, slammed into a tree, and wrapped around it.

"No!" Danielle screamed and ran across the huge foyer, away from another accident. Luke and Melissa chased after her. Luke caught her at the arm and spun her around. "Let me go. Don't you see?" She was breathing very fast.

"See what?"

"Everyone – everyone here is dying – dying like that family!" She pointed at what Luke and Melissa had to turn to see. She pointed at the portrait. "That screwed up family!" With backs turned, Danielle got a head start on running again.

She burst out of the back foyer doors and found herself outside. She knelt down on the grass and lovingly brushed her hands over it. She saw lights in the distance. It was dark, but she could make out a small hill, and on top of the hill, a road. She ran to it. Awkwardly, she scrambled up the hill and stood on the road. She jumped up and down, waving her arms, and screaming for it to stop. "Wait! Over here! Help!"

Luke and Melissa watched her from the doorway. "Guys. A car, we're saved. Come on!" She went on waving her arms and jumping. Melissa didn't understand. The car lights turned around the curve and shone on Danielle. The driver didn't see her. The car kept coming right at her. "Wait! Stop! Help! We need help!"

"What is she doing?" The car was twenty feet away.

"She's crazy." Ten feet away.

"Do you see that car?"

Still heading at her. It was going to plow her over.

"The house can make you see whatever it wants!"

Danielle looked up and away from the car destined to hither and saw the chandelier drop. It fell on her, crushing her body and the repaired piano played last by Mary at her death. Luke and Melissa ran from another accident caused by the house. They shut themselves in a closet and Melissa turned on the light. They found themselves in a wine closet.

The back wall was a full rack from the ceiling to the floor, with a bottle of wine on each shelf. Distracted, Luke looked them over. "Oh, this one. This is great year." Luke looked at Melissa and she returned his gaze with a scornful stare. She didn't think it was under proper conditions for discussing wine. He went back and pulled out the bottle. The bottle didn't come on its own. In fact, the whole shelf and the wall behind came out with it. The wall opened like a door and revealed a staircase going down.

Luke started down, but was stopped by Melissa pulling on his shirt. "What?"

"You're not going down there."

"Melissa, we need to find at least something out. We're next!"

"Fine. It's dark."

"We'll go down the stairs. If there's no light, we'll head back.

"Sounds good." Melissa thought they'd be back in no time at all. She was surprised and disappointed to see it getting lighter the further down they went. They traveled into a room lit by numerous candles. Many tables filled the small damp chamber and

books covered every inch of them. Melissa went to one open book on a pedestal. The thick book was full of pages yellowed with age and written on in dark ink. The cover was blank.

With Luke in the back, Melissa opened the book to the page with a cloth bookmark. The page held a poem, written in ink and splotched in the process. Melissa read it to herself.

Cursed Souls, my heart goes out
For this incantation is about
How your inner souls may rest
Described, however, not the best.
Hated Souls, not one shed tear
For you, stuck in the Land of Fear.
May this spell seal your fate
Because of my undying hate.
One by one, each shall fall;
Death will come to one and all.
Tortured Souls, for all of time
You stay under this power of mine.
Now from this very room
Do I lock you in your doom.
In a place of my choosing stuck,
You find yourself out of luck.
Longing Souls, in one hundred year
Reenactment happens here.

Completing all I want for you
Hell, pain, and suffering, too.

"Luke!" Luke ran over to her. "Read this."

Luke skimmed it over quickly. "Oh God. It's a spell."

"They're trapped, Luke. The family. Everyone's dying just like them, completing the curse."

"Who would do such a thing?" They looked at each other, and then around the room in desperation. The wall behind them held hanging picture frames. All of them were head shots of the family originally cursed and long dead. Luke knew them from the family portrait; however, he didn't know the men in the last picture. He took it off the wall to look closer. One of them was very familiar to him. To see what Luke had found, Melissa turned too quickly and knocked the frame out of his hand onto the floor, also knocking a book off of the table. The frame smashed and the picture came loose. Melissa picked up the book and Luke picked up the photograph. He flipped it over, discovering writing on the back: "To the best butler, thanks for all your work! – Thomas."

"Thomas? Thomas! The patriarch." Luke turned back to the two men. The familiar man he definitely knew now. "What book is that?" he asked.

"I thought it might help," Melissa said as she showed him the cover of *Fire: Natural Purifying*.

"Let's go. I've got an idea." Luke grabbed a candle and ran up the stairs with Melissa behind him as he relayed his plan to her. The family died and their souls are trapped. The house must be where they're trapped. If fire purifies, then by burning the house before the end of the reenactment, the souls should be free and the curse broken. The reenactment, of course, being the death of both of them.

"Luke, wait. What did you see in the picture?"

"The butler. Probably the guy who cursed the family."

"And?"

"It was Giles."

"Oh, God."

"Come on." They got to the wine closet again and Luke grabbed a bottle of wine. "I think the library is first. Don't you?"

"But we don't have a corkscrew." Luke didn't respond, but broke the bottle's neck on the door jamb entering the library. He poured a quarter of the bottle on the rug and lit it with the candle. It caught fire quickly, spread to the bookcases, and up the walls. The dry wood of the house was very helpful to them.

"To the ballroom, darling?" Luke took a drink from the broken bottle and stuck out his arm. Melissa accepted it. "Certainly, dear." They made it to the ballroom by way of the foyer and Melissa stopped.

"What is it? We're almost done," Luke said.

"I think the house was only the first step. They are locked somewhere else now."

"Where, then?" Melissa stuck out her hand and Luke looked to where she was pointing. His eyes fell on the large family portrait. "The painting?"

"Of course!" Melissa explained. "They all appeared when everyone died. They're trapped in the portrait."

"Then let's burn that quickly." Luke hoisted up Melissa, who lit the corner of the canvas with the candle. The flames wrapped around the edges and made their way to the center. Luke

let Melissa down and they took a step backwards to admire their handiwork. "All right. Let's go," Luke suggested.

"What?"

"We should go now." Luke started to move her himself.

"I want to see this, Luke." Melissa broke free.

"Melissa, we have to go!"

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"Phil, come on, we have to go. Mom and Dad will go ballistic," Luke pleaded.

"It's a good song. Besides, we already missed curfew, so let's finish it," Phil reasoned.

"Fine." A sharp rapping on Phil's window interrupted them. Phil rolled it down as Luke turned off the radio. It wasn't a neighbor they knew. "Hi, excuse me. I was wondering if you could help me."

"Sure," Paul answered.

"I'm lost. Can you show me where we are on this map?"

"Yeah." Phil leaned out the window and pointed to Oak Street. What happened next, Luke will never forget. The man dropped his map and pulled the rest of Phil's body out of the car window. He dropped Phil on the street and reached for something in his jacket. Luke was out of the car by now and making his way to help his brother. The man got out his gun and aimed it at Luke. He pulled the trigger the same time Phil kicked his shins. Luke fell back with a bullet in his side, rather than his heart. Angrily, the stranger turned the gun over to Phil and shot him. Five people were killed that night. Luke lost his brother and was left for dead, bleeding on the front lawn,

all because they didn't leave in time.

***

"Melissa! We're going now!" Luke screamed.

Another scream came from behind them. "What have you done?" They turned around and saw Giles, fury raging through him. "Fools! Now you will pay!"

Crack. Luke and Melissa turned to the extremely large flaming painting. The frame had broken and the painting was falling over the entire foyer. "Okay, let's go!" Melissa yelled as she grabbed Luke's arm and they ran under the painting to the door. Giles chased after them, but stopped. The painting was coming down and he was trapped in the middle. The last thing he saw was Kendall before he was crushed beneath it.

The whole house was on fire now and the painting, still being eaten by flames, was blocking Luke and Melissa in the welcoming hall. "The door's still locked!" Melissa screamed. Luke looked around and got the ax from the suit of armor. He chopped away at the door and ceased. "Did you hear that?" he asked. He dropped the ax and tried the door again. It opened and they made it outside to safety.

Everything was burning. The picture was still getting smaller and smaller. The last thing to catch fire was the face of Thomas, the father and grandfather, at last visible on the other side of the canvas.

Luke and Melissa ran to the car and got in. "Please, please, please," Luke told the car as he turned the key. The car started. "Yes! A quarter tank of gas!"

"Weird, Luke. I want to leave now," Melissa told him.

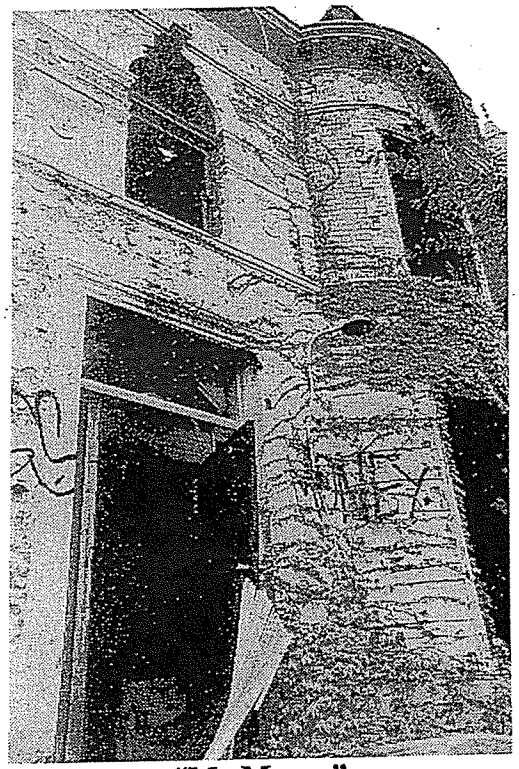
"Wait," Luke replied. In his rear view mirror, he saw something move. He got out and looked towards the forest. He saw seven people running from the house in the direction of the forest.

The last one halted before entering the forest with the others. By the brilliant light of the house, Luke could see a beautiful girl with radiant golden hair nod and Luke lost her in the trees.

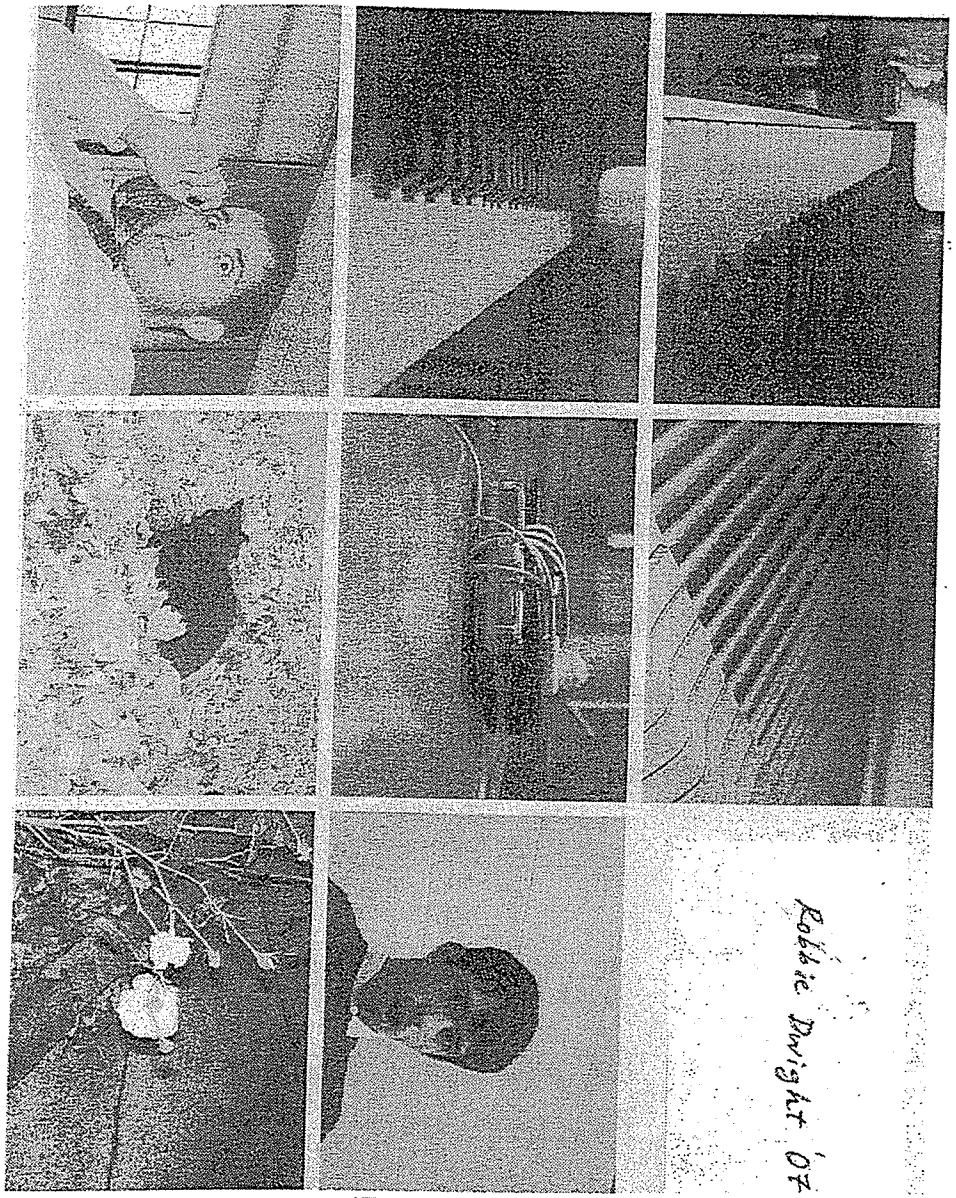
"Luke!" Melissa urged.

Luke calmly said, "Yeah, we can go now."

Nobody missed the house, or even knew one had existed or burned down. Luke and Melissa never talked about it or gave it another thought. However, there was one time, while driving through town, Luke saw a boy running down the sidewalk and into the arms of his mother and father, each of them looking just like Charlie, Shannon, and Paul.



"Mo Money"
Chris Wilson



"Robbie Dwight"
Robbie Dwight

Sadness
Ben Reinhart

Sadness is sitting inside on a rainy day
looking out the window. Bad thoughts
rushing to your head like a speeding
train in the dark of the night. The
feelings inside you want to explode
like a bomb, but instead they rush
out in the form of a tear. You feel alone
in this world like a stray kitten,
nobody far, nobody near. This is
sadness, as painful as a bullet to
the heart.

Eating Baked Beans with the Devil
Fred DeRose

I sit in the kitchen with the Devil at my side
He said to me that he would pass me a bowl for my spirit
So I gave it to him
Once I got the bowl he said to me that he would give me baked beans for my mind
So I gave it to him
After the first bowl he said to me that he would give me some Pepsi for my personality
So I gave it to him
Once I downed the soda he said to me that he would let me have more beans for my soul
So I gave it to him
After the final bowl he said to me that it was time to leave
So we left
Now I am sitting here in Hell eating baked beans with the Devil.

Morning
Alex Jones

The rays of the sun's first light come creeping through my window
Tickling my eyelids - - Rousing me from my slumber
My eyes open and take in the orange glow of the sunrise
Looking out onto the beach behind my house
The sand, a log, the lake - - it seems to extend forever
My guitar leans against the closet door back in my room
A lone sentry, watching me as I sleep
Suddenly - - a creaking door hinge echos through the house
A high, girlish voice says "Wake Up, Daddy!" as it runs into my room and leaps onto my bed
She is my pride and joy
And, sadly, all I have left...
Her mother, my wife and love, passed a time ago
Around the time my daughter was five
She's eight now, though it seems like she was three just yesterday
Time flies so fast now
It blurs together
It loses meaning
"Come on, Daddy! Let's have breakfast!" my daughter says
But Daddy isn't feeling too well right now
Daddy cried himself to sleep last night after the sunset's beauty opened old wounds
"Sure, honey," I reply sleepily, "Just give daddy a minute to get up"
The exclamation of joy that follows brings a smile to my face
And it fills me with the same childish joy that was in her voice
Oh, to be young again
To be young, and have so much time

Pious Brotherhood
Bill Kemp

My brothers, it's the little things every day that I do
That I do for our father above
And that I do down here for you.
To me, this is the ultimate love

These actions I hope will better your life
For they surely better mine.
These actions I pray will ease your strife
Because for you, I'd set my life on the line.

These actions give me the ultimate high
And without them, I'd surely feel a void.
These actions uplift my spirits to the sky
And fill me with the greatest joy.

We are not perfect, temptation always descending upon us.
Every day we fail.
However, we choose to be pious
And choose to push forward on God's blessed trail

My God
Bill Kemp

The God I have does not police my life
And yet He watches over me.
With my sins, my God does not give me strife
And yet He encourages me to be sin-free.

The God I have does not excessively indulge me
And yet He blesses me with so many gifts.
The God I have does not fulfill my every plea
And yet He gives me the chance to live in eternal bliss.

The God I have does not exist far away
For He is everywhere I go.
The all-knowing, all-answering bearded man my God does not play
And yet He knows all my highs and lows.

The God I have is my friend,
My amigo if you will.
He sent His son to put our death to an end
And to lead our hearts to our eternal fill.

Revel
Ben Beckett

Oh, the wonders that I would not give
To touch a girl
And no, not in a way
That her father would disapprove,
Although I know you thought so.
But to simply feel again
The fleeting comfort of a comfort—
The softest transition
from back to shoulder to side
And the Boy, you are really somethingness she speaks.
Or might, at least.
In full and softest deep embrace,
not father-forbidden emptiness,
More life is created in her
And in me.

The Soldier
Josh Busch

The flag of pride, lying on the ground,
sending wafts of smoke into the sky.
The hope, shattered, nowhere to be found,
all over the ground, the pieces lie.
Never the same, ever again,
seeing those around them, those that have bled,
Bound by the orders, bound by the pain,
bound by the politicians, putting thoughts in their head.
Life is important, that's what they're told,
giving life for a cause unknown?
Soldiers smoldering in the deserts of old,
The hearts of men turned to stone.
Yet they take step after step,
not knowing what will come with the dawn,
endless courage, pride, and pep, as the soldier marches on.

Petals of a Rose
Josh Busch

In our hearts, and in our minds,
we grow in love, with the times,
the times go on, our hearts do too,
but i want mine, to stay with you.

Love dwindles on, the petals of a rose,
the symbol of love, which only it can show.
Lasting evermore as the sign of care,
brave is the giver, who would even dare.

The petals fall, one by one,
until the end of the world has come.
Love lasts forever, if is right,
and plays along with man's delight.

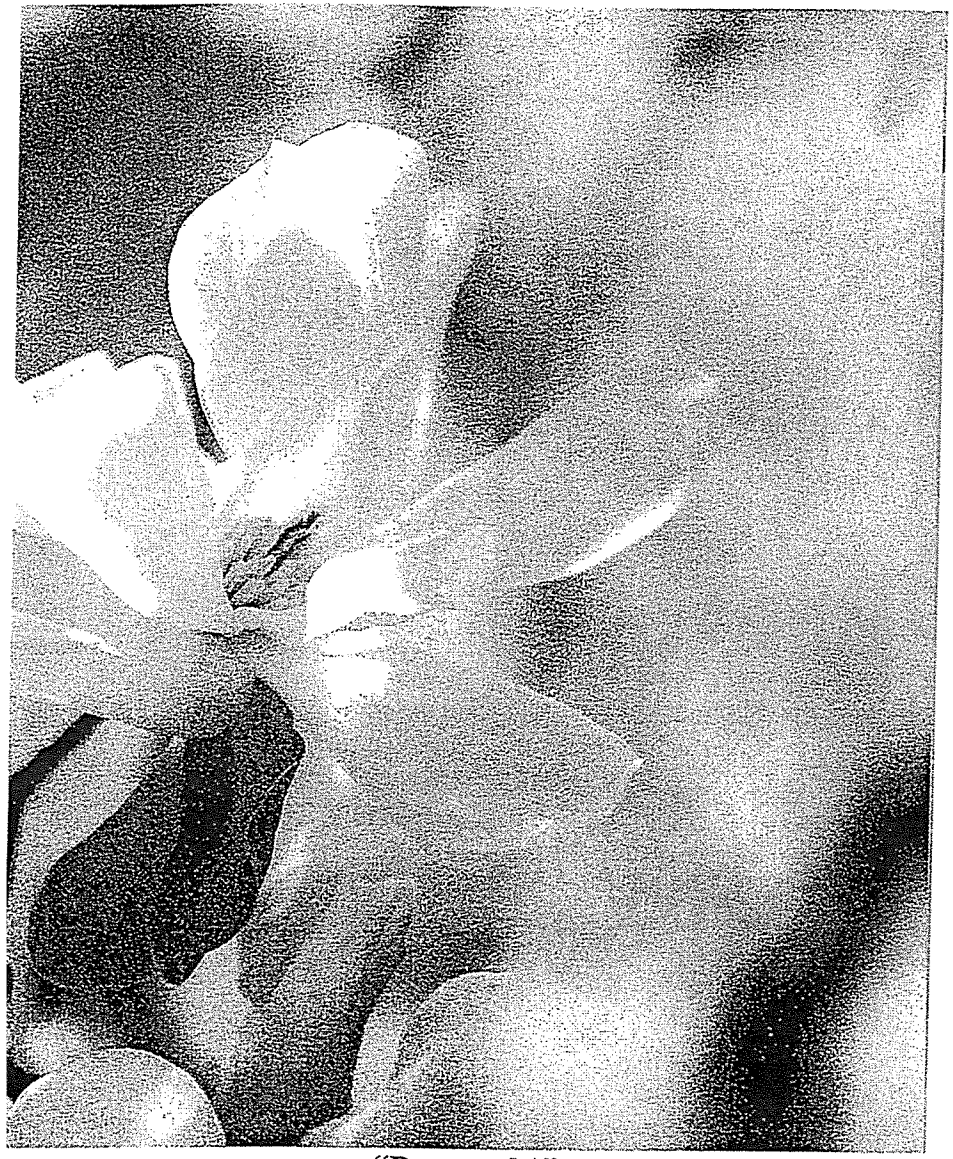
Sought after until the end of days,
those who find it, can only be dazed.
Love is the star that pierces the night,
in my life you are the light.

No Good Answer
Ben Beckett

You hurt me
But I can feel at least now
That the white silent numb has ceased
Broken like blips on a wire
That are long-and-shorting bad news
No, I don't prefer the ignorance,
But I do prefer the numb

Annoyance
Tony Sabat

I am a motion detector
the slightest movement can set me off
once this happens it takes me a while to
get back to normal
i am the same model that doesn't
get upgraded or downgraded
i am not the deluxe model nor the first model
just the average one
my life is the same thing with a few
new batteries here and there



"Dogwood 1"
Aaron Handelsman

Buzzing Silence
Sam Roberts

With the quiet of the space created
In that time I feel elated
Ringing, buzzing, howling, screeching
This solitude I find I'm needing
Nothing but air so stilled
With that ring I find I'm thrilled
To only hear within my ear
The buzzing silence drawing near
No more voices to endure
Just that ringing to be sure

But in the silence pounds my heart
My crazed emotions I now impart
To hear the silence evermore
But never hear the sounds of yore
Panic throbbing in my mind
Where to look, Where to find
The noise from which I praised and draped
Shield me from the harsh vibrations
Now I want those resonations
Before my brain twists and burns
"Escape the buzzing" my brain does yearn
With the silence of the space created
No longer do I feel elated
Now I know, this silent sound
Is the loudest that I've found

Save
Ben Beckett

The grey still nothing of December
is like an endless grubby nickel
lingering in a pocket and never spent.
That wet breathy smell of wool
pervades oppressive.

Perfection
Josh Busch

Drowning within the depths of my own sanity,
wondering where this life will take me,
knowing not the path in which i reside,
knowing not in whom i can confide.

Life's a game, a game we must play,
there is not a choice involved,
we must play to win, because if not,
the game will win, and end the plot.

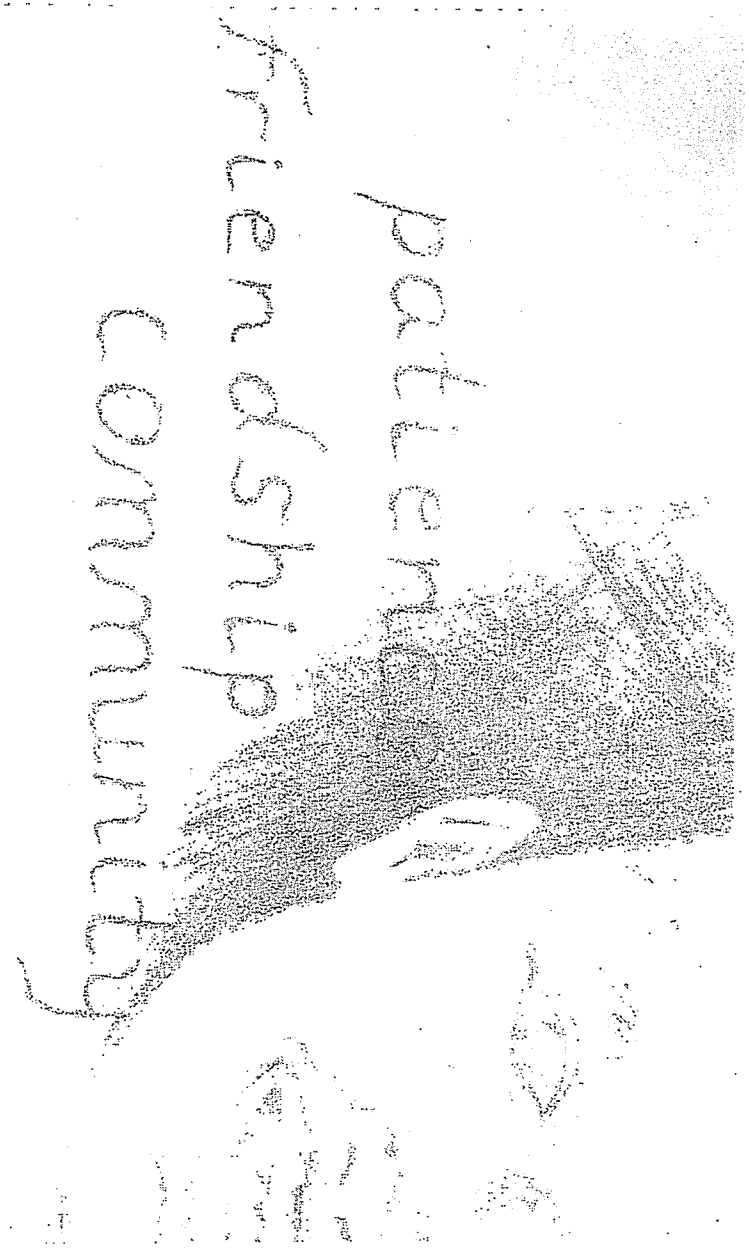
What you are given, is quickly taken back,
the perfection once had is gone,
abandoned by a God once mine,
dining in darkness, bathing in malign.

Where did he go, he was once so present,
retreating back to the depths of his own perfection,
unwilling to endow anyone with his blessings,
alone he sits, watching his people repressing.

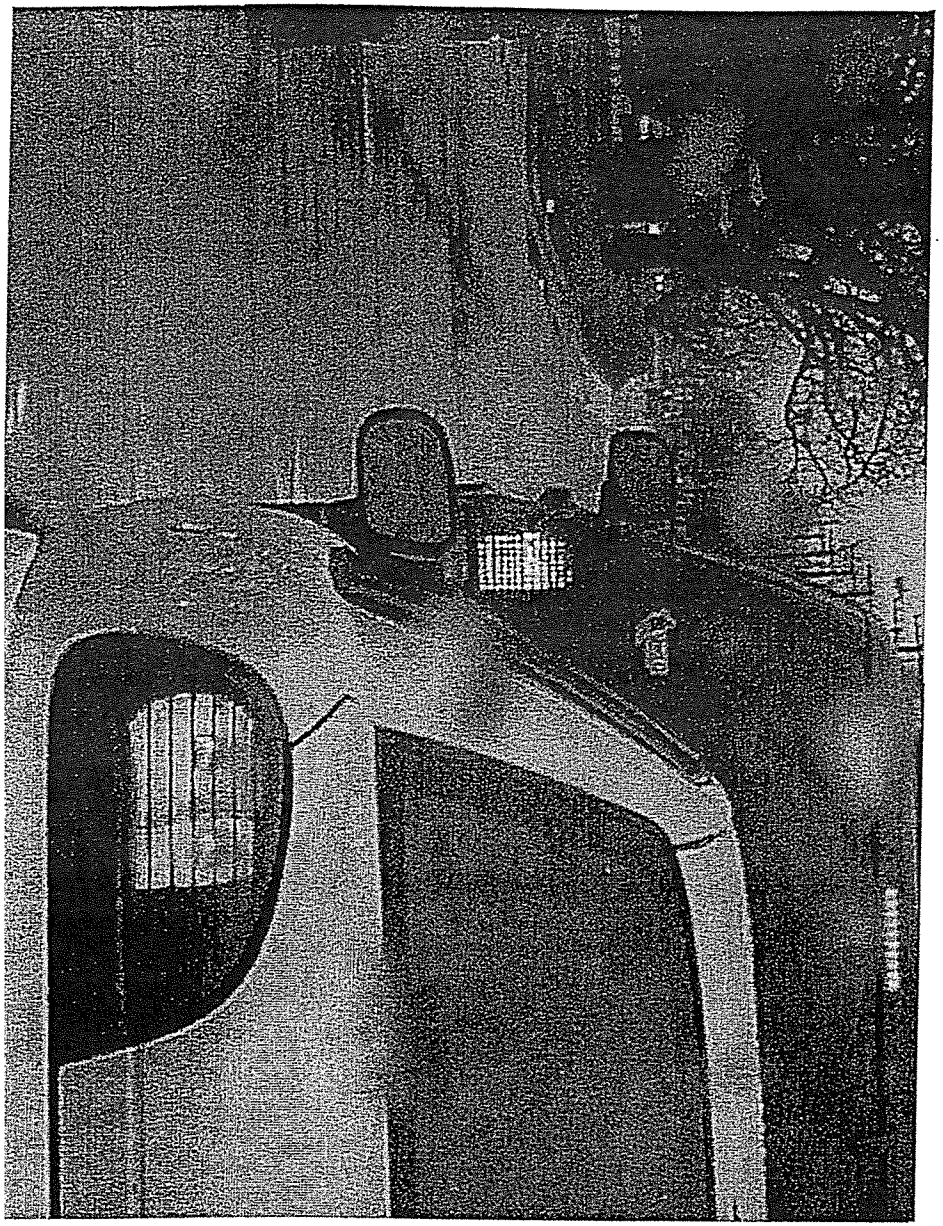
Mankind is alone, alone once more,
as it was in the times of folk lore,
sitting about the beaches of darkness and war,
within my own self, lacking a core.

Our Hearts
Ben Beckett

Come lie with me
in the fertile humble grass
We'll talk of dreams and truths and pasts
You'll talk of your sweet love of me—
'll tell you I don't care
We'll roll and tumble then lie still—
t doesn't hurt me there



"Statue"
Will Makowski



"When the rain comes"
Brian Vandenbossche

Forever and Always
Thomas Ward

Golden hair, sunbeam encapsulated
Forlorn eyes riveted on fading love
Much needed farewells bygone, belated
Searching for reason in dark skies above

Stagnant solitude prevails for two weeks
Deathly yearning punctured by telephone
This deepest of loves is not for the meek
Yet participants should die left alone

Distance is felt, fifty-four in number
Hearts may soon rest in content completion
Miles defeated, eyes meet their lover
Indelible words heard in Venetian

His voice in her ear rings true for all days
"I love you, now, forever, and always"

Italia
Anonymous

Walking...the depths of the moist air beat through my senses as i progress
Walking...the cracks of the rustic cobblestones tempt the bareness of my feet
Walking...the sound of desolation reverts my ears into a state of melodic chaos

Where any sign of existence is radiant in its own fashion
Where the water becomes one with every grain of the earth
Where sounds are alien to the ill-advised, but cherished by the distant patrons
Where the green hill sides pour into the cluttered alleys
Where the historic monuments and idols once stood

Through this I find myself embodied in gratitude
Through this alone I give myself entirely to my native land

A Release
Kevin Chubb

When one lives life,
tribulations will come their way,
maybe not today,
maybe not tomorrow,
but they will come, no need to borrow,
all these tough times can kill,
if one doesn't know how to deal,
Everyone needs a release,
for all those things inside,
where they all confide,
one place, one secular place,
where, if you don't like it,
feel free to erase,
where nothing's final, nothing's forever,
where all feelings can reside,
and connect so clever,
'Cuz words can do something that thoughts cannot,
they can be revealed without translation,
no matter what the occasion,
whether it's a crowd full of people,
a family occasion,
or a one-on-one confrontation,
a feeling becomes a thought,
becomes a speech, becomes a meaning,
becomes a beacon of feeling,
hatred, love, lust, or indifferent,
this is a place where nothing is imminent,
A place where the views necessarily reflect
the views of your station,
Where the paper is your patient,
So when your feelings increase,
find your release.

Black and Bright
Alvin McChester

Darkness of ignorance and thickness of bitterness lies hungry and angry,
For the blood from ebony leaders of mental luminescence,
Who are in the gauntlet between ants of ivory and crabs of ebony,
Those that are mortified for opening the legs of a heavier book, or,
Those that are crucified for opening the legs of a fairer woman,
Those that get shunned by the quote-unquote strong black women,
Who rather sunned the barons of crime, baggy pants, and du-rags,
Those who fight for their impoverished people, who are paid back,
With plight by polished tanks of gold chains,
Flourished uncle tom-planes, those who are lashed by unmused brothas and slashed by confused sistahs,

How black and bright they are,
Leaders of ebony, preachers of brightness,
Fighters against injustice, gladiators against non-justice,
Who pave the way for future generations,
Who cave in the bay of future degenerations,
Those who march through the western front of ignorance,
Those who crouch under the eastern front of ill-luminescence,
Those who walk tall in the courts of apathy,
Those who talk down the walls of stupidity,

How black and bright they are,
Leaders of ebony, preachers of brightness,
Whose individuality is a penalty, whose courage is for discourage,
Whose learning is for burning, whose reading, studying, and
properly talking Means whitening,
Whose value of their roots is uprooted by blond hair and iced out
shame,
Whose respect and honor towards their brave and strong Ancestors
mean nothing to the Tomorrow People of today
Who don't know The past nor the future,

How black and bright they are,
Leaders of ebony, preachers of brightness,
Teachers of knowledge, soldiers against pillage
May God Almighty bless their souls and those of their descendants.



"Self-Portrait"
James Dewey