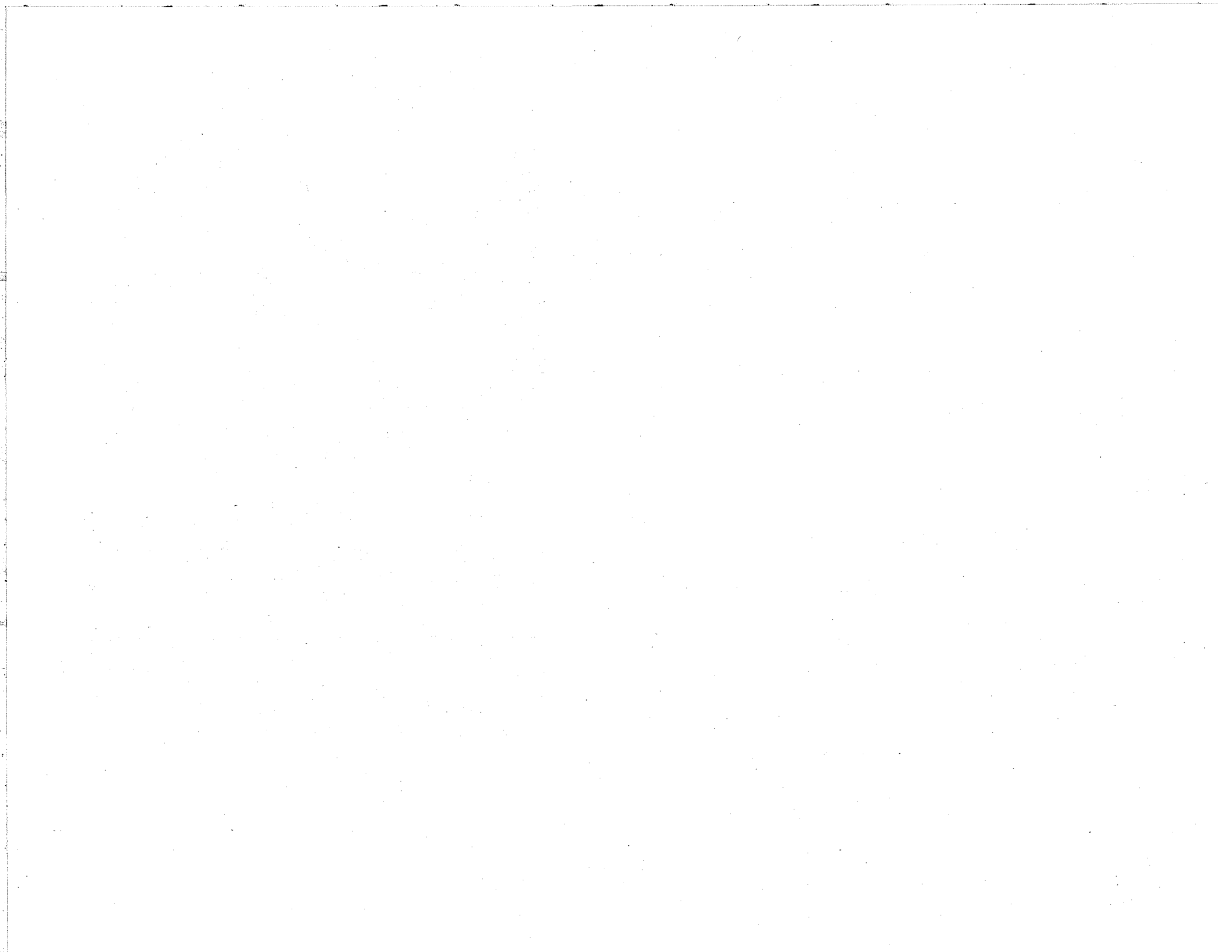


Northern Lights '06

*University of Wisconsin-Marquette
Arts Journal*



Apology 38a
by Michael Ceccarelli

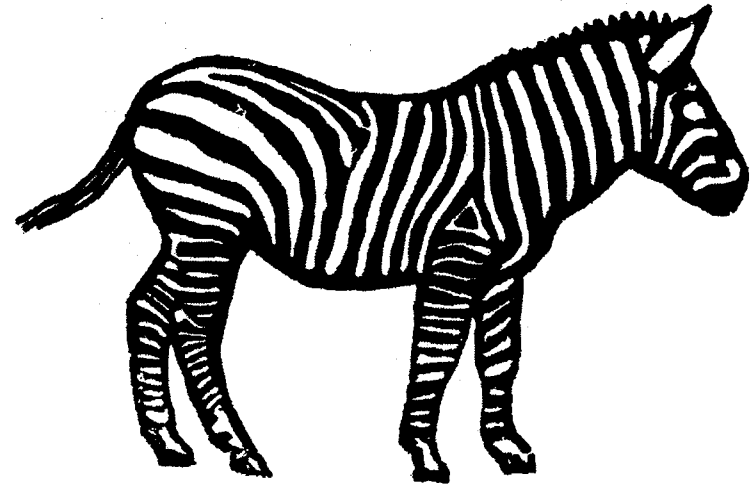
levels of pomposity
top the levee
breach the fabric
of perception
wash away civility
expose denatured shortfalls

leaving

useless excremental remnants
embarrassing revelations
unwanted realizations
pointing to the mirror
for being unheard
uncaring, unknowing
blissfully unexamined

Northern Lights

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Zebra by Todd Thayer

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Cover Art: Flowers by Talisha Marks

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Editorial Committee: Katherine Holman chair, Jenna Cornell, Gabriella Derusha, Jennifer Flatt, Maureen Frawley, James LaMalfa and Jane Oitzinger.

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"Sorry to bother you, M'am, but I got a call to come out and check, well..., it seems you have a sick..." the man started to say.

Ma interrupted him quickly. "Land sakes, he ain't sick. I told 'em he was dead. Died this morning. Quite unexpectedly too." At that Ma started weeping again.

The young man seemed to be out of words for a minute. Finally he tried to console her. "M'am, you shouldn't take it so hard. You might be able to replace him."

At that I thought my mother would keel over, but somehow she gathered her strength although sobbing loudly.

Seeing my mother was so upset and all, the man in black spoke softly, "May I see him?"

"He's in the parlor, Son. Go check yourself, then get." I could see that she was getting a bit ruffled under the collar by the young man's unkindly remarks.

"In the parlor, M'am? I mean, shouldn't he be out in the barn?"

Those words were more than my poor Ma could stand. She fainted right there on the floor. I went to the door and ran out to get Pa, screaming all the time, "Ma's dead! Ma's dead!"

The young man turned pale and backed out, muttering something under his breath that we never did catch. His horse and buggy made record time down the road.

It wasn't too many minutes later when another horse and buggy drove into our yard. An elderly man dressed in black came to the door and greeted my father politely. He asked if he could view the body of James Lesley Hartman. Minutes later, after a bit of polite talk about Gramps, the weather, and such, he asked if we had a sick horse or cow. Pa said everything was fine.

"Funny thing. I just saw the new vet tearing out of here like his barn was on fire." He shook his head, tipped his hat, and stepped out into the brisk air.

Ma and Pa just looked at each other and nary a word was ever said about the incident.

He's in the Parlor
by Gabriella Derusha

When I was a girl many years ago, there were many exciting moments on the old homestead. We were poor, but not dirt poor. Ma always believed in being clean, so that we were.

One year when I was about ten, my ailing grandfather came to live with us. He lived on through part of the winter and then one bright sunny winter day he up and died, kid of unexpectedly since he had seemed to be recovering steadily. Well, naturally, his death caused quite an upset in our family, with funeral arrangements and what not. I can still remember the day...

"Did you get through, Millie?" My father's voice echoed loud and clear through the kitchen where our newly connected telephone hung over blue striped wallpaper.

Ma, who was standing next to the telephone, nodded her head and worded a very feeble, "Yes. They'll be sending somebody out to write up the death certificate. They've got to see if he's really dead."

"Got to see?" my father exploded. "What ails them? Didn't they believe you when you said he was dead? Who in his right mind would say his father's dead if he was still kicking?"

I remember Ma was quiet for a spell; then, she said lamely, "I guess I'll get the parlor set up for him. You got the coffin made?"

"Land sakes alive, woman. He ain't been dead but an hour. I was tending the stock." Pa was still kind of explosive about the whole affair and went mumbling outdoors. Minutes later I could hear him sawing in the woodshed.

As luck would have it, I had tonsillitis and had to stay home from school that day while my two brothers and two sisters walked to school some two miles away, Ma thinking it would be easier for them to be out of the house with Gramps being dead and all in the parlor. It was a warm winter day, about twenty-five degrees, so I wouldn't have minded the walk in the sun at all. Course, I'd have missed all the excitement then.

Anyway, I helped Ma tidy up the parlor for the company that would be coming, the news having been spread with one phone call to Ma's sister Aunt Gertrude. The coffin would be in the parlor and relatives and friends would come to see him. I didn't imagine too many would come because of it being winter, but we had to clean the room anyway. The room was kept closed and unheated most of the time.

We worked hard all morning long. Ma took out a ham and set it cooking in the giant wood stove. Then we mixed up a batch of steam pudding and other things for the company that would come. While we were working, I was silently wondering how they were going to put Gramps in the ground, considering it was frozen solid, but I didn't dare ask. Ma seemed too upset and kept sniffing the whole time we worked.

It was a little after noon, and we'd just had a quick lunch, soup for me since my throat hurt so much and leftover stew for Ma. Pa kept working right on through lunch. Ma forgot her Pa was dead, so she set his place for him and then cried harder the rest of the afternoon. Well, there comes a knocking at the door, gently at first and then much louder. Pa being out in the woodshed sawing away hadn't heard the man drive up. Ma went to the door and opened it. Facing her was a tall young gentleman dressed in black and carrying a black bag.

Writing
by Jenna Cornell

Oh God, here it is again.
That fresh from the heart kinda stuff.

If only I could make it keep quiet,
Keep it restrained.

I want to tell it to shut up,
To leave me well enough alone.

But, I'm afraid, I'm destined to exist
On this creative plane

Experiencing life on a whole other level
Than most humans do.

Can't quite explain,
Can't quite specify,

Why I feel things so intensely,
So powerfully.

It's as if I am an animal caged up
And ready to explode through this crazy haze of life.

The fight between expressing myself
And leaving it behind
Always ends up with a win
From creative fire,

Documenting my pain,
Squealing the happiness,
Crying the sorrow,
Reeling the anger.

Somehow, someday,
Somewhere

I will again be writing,
And writing,
And writing.

Critiques
by Nick Jenquin

Speckles leaking through
Onto a page behind
Blank work as far as my
Scratch reaches for now

Get into heads
If it can be written
With a beat, that's imprinting
Better for a word
A concept to idolize
To mobilize, gotta do more
Moving than your mouth

Lies take to paper
Seeping through to the truth
Criticize the work
Don't be accepting

Inherent skepticism
Competition, criticizing
Minds, prescribed to
Rethink, to reroute,
To invent, just create
Discontent, and the malcontent
May prevent complacency



It Takes a Worried Man by Glenn Trybom

thing to be exploited, but to be exploited and not be able to do anything about it is another. It is depressing, yet I hold hope...only hope.

My dear daughter Nala, how I would give anything to be able to talk to you. I feel helpless as I watch you repeat history. You are so young and impressionable, a key characteristic these corrupt companies look for. They love to take advantage of children because they scare easily. Since birth I had plans for you. I wanted things to be different for you. If God would let me utter one more sentence to you, I would exclaim my passion for you to search for meaning in your name—and then achieve it—yet I cannot...

Do you feel me as I blow through your hair? Can you smell me in that fresh-picked flower you just picked up? Oh, how I would love to be there with you now, so that I could protect you from all of life's deadly elements. Please take the hand I have extended to you, please!

There is so much I wish to communicate to you. Though I am not with you in flesh, I am with you in spirit. Take care, my little one! Rest assured, and do not cry my little one, for I am in a place where they cannot hurt me anymore.

Planes
by Dan Mosincat

Brilliant bough beams blind
Hazy discrepancies clear to
Spectrum spot sceneries

Rectangular object turns in abject objection

Control corrodes comparatively

Haziness returns during spiral

fusion

Impediment impeaches immortality

Light in the distance is calling callously

Calling callously caliphs claim calamity

Claim calamity from an impact collision

Abruptly abolishing abounding adoration

Darkness surrounds a new sweltering landscape

Hurling heat hurriedly hushes hyperextended holy hate

The falling souls' eyes open in hyperventilation

Hmmm...
by Nick Jenquin

Driving Amnesia
Blip on a road-map
lit by a match
The stars
Changing plaes without
trying. such ease.
To move on
And to discover
And to stay
Patience
I don't have
I want what I'm looking for
I want to know what I'm waiting for
Or maybe it's a who
Down a sandpaper slide
Too stubborn to walk down, to
The opened window, to a
fresh breath to the head.
Running into the air
an illusion that everything else
is moving
a change of stage
still looking for a mike
I am jack's sense of going nowhere.

The Undelivered Letter
by Paul Toepke

My Dear daughter Nala,

I am invisible—you see nothing. I shout—you hear nothing. You see, life is a terrible place, and I proved to be disposable. I did all that I could to provide for you. You meant so much to me that working 15-hour work days meant food for your little tummy. I was not just working to keep you nourished, but to hopefully allow you to escape the pain and suffering that I had to endure. The pain would last all day, every day, but what choice did I really have?

Looking back now, I wish that I had taken better care of my health. Stitching those soccer balls together was the hardest thing I ever had to endure. The boss only wanted more and more, which required me to stitch faster and faster.

There were some days that the pain was so intense, I wanted to just fall down and die, but you gave me a reason to go on living. Now that the pain is gone, I am left to beg and wish that I could revert back to how things used to be—for then I would still be alive. I find myself reaching out to touch you without any success. I feel as though you are in a glass jar. I can see you but there is a barrier that will just not let me get to you. I am left only to consume the air around you.

I worked all those hard, unbearable hours only to get rewarded like this. I guess all those miserable hours took their toll on me. This happened all too fast. I slaved in some sweatshop that has very poor ventilation. Maybe those fumes took my life, or maybe the stress caught up, but whatever the case may be—I am dead now! I am just so angry because this job took my livelihood away from me when I was young. Besides that, I lost many precious moments that I could have shared with you. Now they took my life. I gave more than I ever received. All I can do is admire you from afar.

Do I blame myself for not getting a better education? No. I gave birth to you at a young age, and could not afford to attend school and worry about your every need. Please know that you were everything to me! It was not that I was incapable of learning, because I actually was gifted in that respect. I was put in a bad situation because ever since I was a little girl like you, my parents worked their lives away manufacturing shoes, and I found myself trapped. I wanted to make things different for you, but it is so hard. We live in a country where we survive by making things cheap. We know that we are being exploited, yet there is nothing we can do about it. My fear is that you will journey down the same beaten-down path that I once took, the same beaten-down path taken by your grandparents and generations long past spent. Nala, my greatest fear is that you will not find your true potential in life and that you will succumb to the harsh realities of life.

I would fritter away a number of hours each day wondering how some people have it so well, like those Americans, while people like me are not even coming close to making it while working 15-hour days. Do I blame my government for my problems? Do I blame the countries that set up in our free zones? It is one



Guardian by Amber Hendricks

The Apartment
by Edward Gerber

It's a mess
Laughter's not a cure
Pressure
Final boiling point
Light me another
The clock ticks
Whilst I
Yes, me, myself and I
Sit quietly in the
Blinding atmosphere created by
A combination of ceiling light and
Muted TV.
That's how I watch TV now
Yes, me, myself and I
No sound, no distractions
Just leaving
Moving pictures and young mind
To run imagination wild
But I digress
Yes, me, myself and I
For the point has absconded me
The pressure
Boiling point
Wasting time
Grab me another bowl
Fix me another plate
Yes, me, myself and I
Where would you be
10 years from now?
Probably dead
Rotten
Left to rot
Decomposed
One of the above
I look up
Yes, me, myself and I
Daily questioning
Purposefulness
Reason
Recently in rhyme
No quick clear answers
For me, myself and I
Have our eyes closed.

Friday Nights
by Lacey Schnurer

The increasing volume of a ringing phone.
It comes to an abrupt stop when answered.
A few minutes of short conversation,
Followed by a quick good-bye.
It's time for the madness again.

Shirts and pants flying through the air
As they are repeatedly changed,
Again and again.
Then once decided on what to wear,
It's on to the many mirrors.

Straightening of hair,
And applying of make-up.
Cheeks getting rosier
And eyelids growing dark.
Perfection at every point.

Last minute perfume spritzes
And fresh sticks of gum.
Lip gloss touch-ups,
And "who has the keys?"
Finally, out the door.

(Angels) Uncommon Love
by Stephen J. Jensen

She feels:

*Ever since our first breath into this world we are created
to care and treasure each other bringing nothing but peace.*

Ever since that day I was blessed with life
Such it was until I met death's strife

My light was fading I was going to die
Almost letting out one last sigh

I could have left life without certain feelings
Missing out on some of life's dealings

Until the day he saved me, hearing my cry
Since then I couldn't say goodbye

Peering into his eyes of dark arcane
I never knew such sadness and pain

But beneath it all I did recognize something good
Something every woman should

In his soul exists no evil but rather a soul lost
But still my treasure at no cost

Unto me a path of passion was paved
A fallen Angel for me to save

*The heart holds the greatest of treasures. Everyone has a
heart even the fallen. The fallen don't know it but when
someone else finds it, somehow, someway, they come alive again.*

(Angels) Uncommon Love
by Stephen J. Jensen

He reflects:

*Ever since the moment we're thrown into this realm
We are designed to bring each other nothing but pain and misery.*

Ever since that day I was cursed to walk alone
Such a dark path the seeds I've sown

Nix of light in my past
Shadow upon me cast

Never once having a true kiss
No times of tranquil bliss

Until that day the girl came along
Beauty I've only heard of in song

I saw into her eyes of green
Full of life I've never seen

I am a heart of stone and heart of ice
But her to me still remains warmly nice

Her looking into my eyes I don't know what she sees
But I know she is the greatest gift I ever received

One and true she became my charity
An Angel from heaven to be my clarity

*Walking alone all my life. I did not know jewels
and rubies existed until I found one or she found
me. I can honestly say they are rare.*



Arabesque by Brad Rabbie

Mother Jazz, Father Soul
by James LaMalfa

Ten year old kid,
Boppin to jazz
Blowin out'a the Zenith radio
On a middleclass Sunday afternoon,

Possessed by the genii,
Jungle Music did me,
It did,
when I was a kid.

Saw black woman moving
On sad Milwaukee streets,
Like graceful great birds,
Never in herds.

Born white one night
In 1937, black music came and stole me away,
Heard Satch blow
Sweet and low.
Heard the Bird live,
Deal his jive,
And I came alive.

George Shearing,
Blind poet,
god of cool,
Was no fool,
His music spilled out
Like warm honey,
Flowing through your loins.

Lady Day riffin' on the radio
Broke your heart
with her blues,

Snob
by Rachel Rivard

Don't whisper, don't stare
Behind your delicate hands, upturned nose
Scorning those who aren't as "good." Don't you care
About anything but your own woes?

Who makes you ruler?
What makes you better?
Can a person be cooler
With a pricier sweater?

We are all equal
Created the same.
Is this your prequel,
Your claim to fame?

Grow up!
Open your eyes.
People get hurt
With your malicious lies.

Make a difference with your life,
Learn to accept and not except.
Help someone else in times of strife.
Make friendships meant to be kept.

her giggle. "I said you don't want to see anybody hurt them and you would put yourself in their place."

"Yeah," Pooky said, suddenly at a loss for words.

Peaches sighed and shut her eyes. "I'm tired," she whispered. Pooky gave her a squeeze and rubbed his left hand back and forth across her head. It was one of the first times he actually thought about what he was doing as he did it.

As he looked down at the sleepy Peaches, he realized she was one of the most precious parts of his life. He had spent so much time with this little girl, getting to know her, listening to her stories and problems, and telling her about his. A strange sensation crept through him as he softly ran his hands through her hair.

Pooky pictured himself five years in the future, graduating from high school. But the strange thing was, as excited as he was to get to that point in his life, he still was starting to realize how empty his life would be without Peaches.

Pooky sighed to himself, staring at the little beauty who was starting to doze off. How could anything be so precious? He watched as she drew in and let out her breaths, never before appreciating so much the beauty of life. Here nestled inside his right arm was a living, breathing, beautiful little girl. For just one fleeting moment in time, her life was the only thing in existence that mattered to him.

After several minutes, Peaches was totally asleep. Pooky looked to make sure no one was standing behind the couch, then leaned towards her and kissed her on the temple. "I love you," he whispered.

The next morning, Peaches took Pooky aside and let him know that she had heard what he said the night before. Pooky's throat caved in as a hot flash swept through his chest. "It's okay, Pooky," she said, resting her hand on his shoulder. "I just wanted to say, I love you too."

For the next couple of years, they said it to each other every now and then. Whether or not they really knew the truer meaning behind it, they said it nevertheless. Because the simple truth was...well, they did love each other.

Melting your shoes,
But demon drugs
and swarms of WASPS
Laid her low.

I remember Diz,
with a crooked horn,
Who made Bebop,
Auto horn was born
in a club,
And there's the rub.
Made my head ache with
His melodious cacophony,
But oh, was I glad after.

If I'm ever born again,
Make it somewhere
Where people come on to music
move to music,
love to music,
become music,
a musi-column rainbow,
Lose materiality and remain
As just a stain,
And consequently,
Never die.

I Wonder Where I Am From
by Ainura Khissimova

The first typical question when I arrived in America was "Where are you from?" I tried to be humorous and make them guess where I was from. By gazing at my facial features and complexion, most seemed to guess that I was from either China or Japan. Some people even had the courage to ask me what life is like there. Most of them were surprised when I told them that I was from Kazakhstan, a country in Central Asia, located near Russia. Because my country is unheard of in the United States, most people had no idea where it was located. I enjoyed opening a new world to them by telling them about my religion, history and culture.

All nations have their own unique culture and lifestyle, and it is important to know about other cultures. What we study in history class is just not enough. Knowing different cultures makes people all over the world appreciate their own culture and variety of life. In America, people have roots that are derived from all over the world; as a result, we are all foreigners to each other. I would like to compare America's cultural reaction to foreigners and my own experiences of cultural reaction to America.

Living in different parts of the United States, I received a real sense of reverse cultural reactions. Phoenix, Arizona, is a large city in the West. During my first year as an exchange student, I hardly spoke any English and it was hard for me to communicate. Because I went to a large high school, it was very typical to see many exchange students. I felt as though I was just one of the others. I was alone and disconnected; but as the year went by, I made lasting connections with both foreign and American friends and a new host family. After leaving Arizona and moving to the Midwest for my first year of college, I felt more confident and eager to explore new ideas and people. Compared to Phoenix, Marinette was a small and peaceful city which seemed to welcome me. Students and staff on campus were pleasant and seemed to enjoy my presence. I felt a strong connection with all of them. They made me feel as though I were part of the community.

Some people who come to the United States, however, do not feel as welcomed as I did. Incidents during America's world history have made the public stereotype many of the foreigners who come to the United States. Take, for instance, the Middle Eastern people living in the United States. They are set apart from others by their clothing and religion. Most Americans fear people from the Middle East because of the recent attacks on 9/11. However, it is biased to think that all Middle Eastern people are evil and harmful, without even knowing their cultural background, religion, celebrations and traditions.

For instance, before America I had never known or celebrated any other traditions besides my own. Upon arriving in the United States, I started to accept new holidays such as Thanksgiving, Labor Day, Easter and Christmas. I realized how much Christmas is important to Americans' lifestyle, or even how people could get crazy over gift giving. I wondered why American children went door to door asking for candy and I was also in awe of the different selection of Halloween costumes for both young and old people. Because I know of these different American celebrations, I myself begin to celebrate them in my own country even though they are not a part of my own culture. It is important how

The Story of Pooky and Peaches
by Dan Majewski

Pooky sat on the couch with his legs crossed Indian-style. Peaches sat next to him to his right, with her head resting on his right shoulder. They were watching a movie together as they often did on Friday Nights.

Pooky was 13 years old, as was Peaches. She had known him all her life. What they had was certainly not a love relationship, but a friendship that truly amazed the parents of both kids.

In an age when most kids preferred to hang out with others of the same sex, Pooky and Peaches' friendship baffled so many. They talked for hours at a time about nothing—and everything—under the sun. They played together out in the fields, and it was not a rare occurrence for them to engage in a loving embrace, usually to say "good morning" or "good night."

Perhaps because they were both the same age, they found a "brother/sister that they never had" kind of bond.

Well, it occurred one cold overcast night, while Pooky and Peaches were sitting on the couch watching TV together, that Peaches asked Pooky an interesting question. "Pooky?" She looked up at him.

"Yeah?" he looked down at her, smiling.

"What do you think love is?" she asked.

"Love? I don't know, why do you ask?"

"My teacher asked us what we thought love was today in English Class," Peaches said, looking back at the TV. "A lot of kids said there was no such thing."

Pooky was surprised. "No such thing?"

"Yeah, but not me." replied Peaches.

"Well, that's good."

"So what do you think it is?" Peaches asked Pooky.

Pooky thought about it for a minute. At his age, the question seemed unanswerable, but he knew it couldn't have been any easier for Peaches. Maybe when they were older, this would be an easy one to answer. "Well," he finally said, "I guess it's when you care about somebody, you know. When they hurt, you hurt too." He thought some more.

"Wow, that's kind of like what I said," Peaches giggled. Pooky liked the sound of

It is not yours

Oh, tell me, my Brother—

What is it that we must do?

What is it that I must do?

To break you out of your prison?

Out of your clouded mind?

Even now I can hear you,

Whispering in my ear,

Compelling me to write this piece

This thing...

A thing that you would call a bad poem.



Baby and Johnny by Jenna Cornell

much we accept the different traditions and cultures of other nations and become a part of them. Being able to experience more than one culture is like having two motherlands. One of these motherlands is the country in which we were born and raised. The other is the motherland that we fell in love with and accepted as our second home. Having two cultures makes all of us appreciate life and the unique joy that it brings to us.

"Own only what you can always carry with you: know languages, know countries, and know people and culture. Let your memory be your own travel bag." I related this quote to myself as I was beginning to accept the American lifestyle. I realized how much I had changed; I had learned a new language, a new culture, new manners and new traditions, but yet I will always have that sense of my sweet home Kazakhstan. Now, when people approach me and ask me where I am from, I begin to think of the question, "Where am I really from?" The truth is that America is my second homeland, and I consider myself from both Kazakhstan and America.



Adrian by James LaMalfa

Greta Goes to Poland
by Gabriella Derusha

Not everybody gets to go home. Not everybody wants to go back home. I, however, had always wanted to see the land where my grandparents had been born. All my life I had been curious about life on the other side of the pond where my ancestors had walked and talked. I too wanted to walk the streets and see the scenery at 55 degrees latitude, but I never thought in my wildest dreams that I would go to Poland as a clown.

Actually the dream I had began long before I ever became a clown. It began way back in high school when I made my plans to be a medical missionary doctor. I entered the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor as a premed student. Two years into my studies, I realized that being a medical doctor wasn't my calling. I became a teacher instead, and the dream of helping in the medical field simmered on the back burner.

Time changed a lot in my life. So did six children and an unfaithful husband. Then my life changed some more as I learned to love nine grandchildren and to accept the estrangement from my second husband. As events in my life continued to provide challenges and opportunities, I felt a longing surging within me to reach beyond myself, to do some missionary work again, for in my younger days I had gone on two mission trips, one to Mexico for three months and one to Colombia and Ecuador for six weeks. Both had been centered around construction. I wanted to go again, but where and with whom I didn't know.

I started to pray and to seek direction. I found out about Wheels for the World, an outreach to the disabled through Joni and Friends. I filled out the registration and decided that June would be a good month to go. Much to my surprise, I found out that a team would be going to Poland in June. I had never even thought that I might be going to the birthplace of my dad's mother and father, both of whom had died long before my birth. After filling out everything, I ran into a small problem. The team director for Poland had everyone she needed for the distribution of wheelchairs. She didn't need me. I didn't know how to respond except I really felt I needed to be part of that team. In a last minute effort to get her to accept me, I said, "I also clown." She asked me to send her pictures of me clowning along with a letter. She would think about having a clown on the team. Some weeks later, I got a call saying that I had been accepted on the team going to Poland, and I would be going as a clown.

Since I knew only a few words in Polish, I got some tapes and started studying Polish. I wanted to be able to interact with the people coming to get wheelchairs. I wanted to say something that would make them laugh. Twenty tapes later, I knew a couple of hundred words, enough to communicate a little. Polish is one of the most difficult languages to learn, partly because the words change spelling in different situations. I knew I'd have fun mispronouncing words. Mispronouncing would be easy. Saying anything correctly would be a lot harder, but I managed to memorize enough words correctly to give the semblance of knowing more than I did.

Polly was my clown name, but Polly really didn't want to go to Poland. She was pretty fussy. She had to dress in a private room, and she took a long time to put on her face. Polly was going to have to stay home. Who could go in

Ode to Gajaka
by Lenore Towne

Just the smell of cheap tobacco and black coffee
Remind me of your absence
or rather,

Lack of presence

I sit here now after you've gone,
Trying to find just a glimpse of your presence around

No notebooks
No pens
No stories
No songs

No littering of my floor with empty beer cans,
Cigarette ashes
Or stale pretzel crumbs
Not even a twinge of roasted coffee bean in the air

But most of all, no poems

No words of friendship
No words of wisdom
No words of freedom

No Gajaka

I have nothing left to remember you by,
Nothing but this damned birthday card,
With empty words from an empty person.

These are not your words
This is not your voice

It is hers
It is the doctors'
It is the disease

Someone Prayed for Me

by Kelly Kunya

She walks out of her apartment, slight shuffle, slow moving at 84. It could be the arthritis that aggravates her joints. I don't ask; I don't want to remind her that the pains may be associated with old age. We drive to church, our weekly routine. She shares with me her worries, anxiety over her ailing husband; the stress of caring for him wears her down. Reaching over, I take her small frail hand. Giving her a squeeze of encouragement, I hope that she can attain some strength from my touch. Although more than one generation separates us, her mood is lightened by my presence. My youthful energy radiates out, enveloping her aged mind and body. We arrive at church, parking in our usual spot, off to the side, close to the door. Walking up to the building, I support her from the side, which gives her the needed boost of confidence. Upon entering the building, we take a bulletin, eager to get a jump on church news. Progressing into the chapel, we dip our fingers into a bowl holding Holy Water, reminding us of our Baptism: God claiming us as his forever.

Maybe it started that day. Inspired by the ceremony, she watched as my parents held me in their loving arms. I was adorned in my Baptismal gown, long white layers of organza material that flowed past my chubby feet; a white bonnet covering my bald head, tied under the area that should have been my chin. She came to witness the completion of my first sacrament. God claimed me as his by sealing me with the sign of the cross forever. Her faith was strong, so she may have been moved by the words the priest said as he poured the water over my head. Her silent plea sent to heaven above: Watch over this child that I so dearly love.

The Mass progresses and we confess our sins. My thoughts go to her, wondering why our close relationship has taken so long. I think of all that she does for her family she loves. Putting my arm around her, giving her a hug, she returns the gesture with a smile. Love and appreciation are seen in her eyes. Our attention is drawn back to the readings, and we ponder the meaning in our hearts. Seeking the full presence of Christ, we partake in the the Pascal Meal.

Maybe she realized that day that there would be struggles. My First Holy Communion, growing closer to God, I was excited over wearing my special dress, hand-sewn using material from my mother's wedding gown. She would witness the special moment, me, receiving communion for the very first time. My mother and younger sister joined me to show family support. Her heart would ache, realizing an important part of my family was not even there. Parents in conflict, my dad could not be around, his children reminders of the love my parents once had shared. She knew that his animosity would cause great strife, so she said a special prayer that God would bring guiding angels into my life.

her place? I designed a new outfit that slipped over my clothes and got new hair, a new hat and a new face, thanks to some prosthesis teeth and a nose tip. My new clown needed a name, so I went to visit a Polish aunt. Using a Polish calendar for ideas, we found the name Greta, and so Greta went to Poland instead of Polly.

Clowns aren't supposed to cry, but when I actually landed in Poland and heard everyone speaking in Polish, I cried. Of course, Greta was still in the suitcase. She might not have cried just then. My being able to give a little something to Poland brought tears to my eyes. At that point in time, I really didn't think I had much to offer, but I did have a heart really, really wanting to give.

At the end of our first day of distribution I found out what Greta really could give. It had been a long day. We had traveled most of the night, arriving at the distribution city around 4:30 in the morning. We had breakfast around 8:00, so we could be at the distribution around 9:00. The team had to get the wheelchairs ready, plus set up three sites for the fitting of wheelchairs. When we were all done, we packed up our supplies and headed to the next city. It was after midnight when we gathered together for a time of prayer and blessing.

The director told us that each day a different person would be picked, and each of us would share how that person had blessed us. Greta was the first person to be picked. And then she shared how she had been reluctant to have a clown go on a distribution. She told how Greta had positively changed the atmosphere of the distribution from all the other times she had been at a distribution. I felt like crying again as each person told how Greta had made a child smile or lightened the mood. Greta had made a difference. She had a lot to offer. It was funny, but I think I learned a lot from Greta.

Greta played balloon ball with children who couldn't talk and who couldn't walk. She changed kielbasa balloons into dogs and gave hearts and happy faces to everyone she met. And she always had a smile and a handshake for all she met. She didn't care if the person was frowning or smiling. She was just as silly to each, whether the person had lost a leg because of diabetes or had been born with cerebral palsy. Everyone who came for a fitting had a medical problem, so Greta was part of a medical missionary team and part of a decades old dream fulfilled.

After the distribution each day, Greta would retire to her suitcase. As we drove past the Polish countryside, I stared out the bus window. I couldn't get my eyes off the scenery. I saw neat fields and tethered milk cows. The roofs were all of metal, which resembled tile. Not a single house had siding. Instead the buildings were covered in stucco. And houses everywhere had balconies with flowers blooming. Dormers were a common sight too. I even saw familiar weeds that I had in my garden and backyard.

Although the Poland I was viewing had changed some in the 100 years since my grandparents had left it, I felt a bond with the Polish people, with the land that I saw. For two weeks, I felt that I had come home. It was a good feeling.

Picture Me
by Richard B. Peterson

Photos fill the wall in random array.
Generations of kin, mostly forgotten
Except for the fleeting recollections
Or vague stories told from a distant past.

Some immigrants to these shores or veterans
Of wars, civil or fought on foreign fronts.
Grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles all
Chiseled legacy only a few words on stone.

Wall's center occupied with honor's place
By antique mirror framed in ornate gold.
An icon to transport self centered gaze
To things which might have been or yet to come.

How should I be remembered if at all?
As child, as student, or as worker bee?
With some importance in a life so led
Or recalled only as a life well lived?

What biography of memories will I leave
As my last testament to future souls?
Who, too, will stare into their mirror fair
For meaning as the days begin their close?

If I ask....
by Talisha Marks

If I ask the question,
will you answer?
If I say what I think,
will you listen?
If I raise my hand,
will you call on me?
If I'm wrong,
will you correct me?
If I want to learn,
will you teach me?
Can I do better?
Can I do worse?
I have questions;
I want more knowledge.
I want to read every book,
to discuss every topic.
Solve every problem.
Where can I start?
By asking my question.
If I ask the question,
will you answer?



Night Flower by Randy Hoheneder

Oma
by Justin LaCrosse

To see your face,

To hear your voice,

To feel your touch,

All are gone since you left.

My heart still aches,

My tears run dry,

I still wonder why.

You left to see others

You left because you were tired

You left many who love you unconditionally

My time will come

To have you around again

But until then I will just wait.

A Generation Apart
by Melissa Monroe

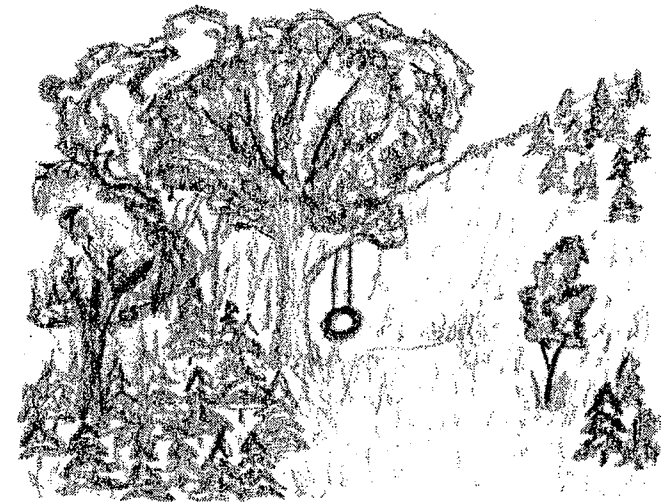
You and I are only a generation apart and yet we view the world differently. Shouldn't it take more than one generation to separate us so much? You were born into privilege. You need not tell me this. Your home is as refined as you are. Your money is old money, so you chose not to work. As I look wide-eyed around the room at the dozens of pictures of you with other famous faces, most I recognize some I don't; you sniff a little and say, "I travel quite extensively. I don't have much else to do." There is no sparkle in your eye as you tell me a little about the people in the pictures. Me, I'm jumping up and down and clapping on the inside. Why are you not more excited? It seems like such an amazing life. You knit your brows at my questions. You worry that your life won't make much of a story. It is empty, you say. As you walk from one picture to the next, one story to the next, you nearly yawn at your own monotone. How can you be so jaded? You have everything money can buy, but life just doesn't seem to hold any happiness for you. I have none of this, but still, I am optimistic about life, hopeful even.

As we settle down in the "Great Room," both of us at opposite ends of the couch in front of a crackling fire, I tell you how lovely your home is. Your smile says thank you, but it doesn't quite reach the hardness of your blue eyes. I ask you to tell me of your life. What was it like when you were young? What is it like now? Is the world a better place? I cringe inwardly wishing I could suck that last one back. It seems too trite for what I'm trying to get from you. You begin slowly. You seem a little self-conscious, but with each small story you come out of your shell. I even laugh out loud when you tell of a summer when you were a child and your family sailed from port to port on the Great Lakes. Your mother was trying to sketch every lighthouse along the way, your father never waiting quite long enough for her to finish even one. Your father was an impatient man. Your mother always makes silly faces behind his back, trying to soften his hardness. As you recount your childhood, your face is radiating the light from the fireplace. For the first time I see life in your eyes. They are softening with your memories. I realize I am no longer in the room, as you are speaking only to the fire now.

Jubilant and at times even animated is the only way to describe you as you tell of your marriage and your five children. You and your husband raised your family back East. As you reminisce of your life in Connecticut, I can't help but think of the Kennedy clan. The similarities are uncanny—big family get togethers, jet setting all over the world, losing young ones in the prime of their lives because of that jet set lifestyle. I open my mouth to mention this but snap it shut when I realize I may shatter the spell. I want the stories to keep flowing. I am especially touched when you tell of your longtime nanny. When the children were grown and gone, she seemed at an age that she should retire, so you asked her to stay on in your home like a beloved matriarch. When she passed away, she was given a special place of rest in your family mausoleum.

As you take me through the years in this cozy room, lit only by the fire before us, I see a subtle change in you. Your sky blue eyes turn overcast as we approach more recent times. Your husband has passed away and you have outlived two of your children. For the first time since you began, you look at me. I

mom, the memories of the trips we took to my grandparents' cottage in Door County help heal the wounds from my grandmother's passing. With a giggle in her voice, as if it were just yesterday, my mom remembers the country road with the little wooden bridge where we would shout, "Hi turtle. Bye turtle!" She could picture how we had to constantly keep our eyes open for any deer and raccoon that wandered in the road. With each remembrance, my mom's wounds slowly began to heal. Listening to my mom's memories of the wilderness has also helped me heal my wounds from grandmother's passing. I have now learned where my view of the wilderness has come from.



Tree Swing by Talisha Marks

The Wilderness
by Ami Micoley

There is a spectacular location I like to visit quite often. This area is where the animals live in a flawless balance with nature. The flowers bloom in a variety of radiant colors--purple, red, yellow, and orange--and the leaves of the trees unfold into beautiful shades of green. The air is pure, clean, and uninhibited by any foreign debris or pollution. This spectacular location is the wilderness.

It is a bright, warm, sunny day, not a cloud in sight. I begin my journey from the top of the mountain and work my way down the rocky, narrow path. I close my eyes, take a deep breath in, and hold it. My lungs are filled with the clean, pure air from the wilderness that surrounds me; what a welcome change from the dense air of the crowded world.

In the peace and quiet of the wilderness, I am alone with my thoughts and emotions. The stresses of the day are washed down the rocky, shallow creek that is only a few footsteps ahead of me. The sun is pouring in through the oak, maple, pine, and spruce trees; I can feel the warmth on my face. Somewhere amongst the trees I can hear the birds chirping as if they were serenading me with a song. To the right of me, there is a squirrel rustling through the fallen leaves; he is stockpiling acorns before the harsh days of winter arrive. The wilderness is speaking to me as my soul is being cleansed.

A dear friend, Cindy, retreats to the wilderness when the dense air and crowded world are too much to handle. It doesn't matter what time of year--spring, summer, winter, or fall. She can't think of anything more spiritual than cross country skiing when there is a full moon that appears to be resting slightly above Earth. The crisp, pure air on a cold winter's night cleanses her soul. As she glides across the wilderness floor, the luminous moon shines on her path, almost as if her God is holding a lantern. From afar, she can hear the howling coyotes arguing over their feast. There are no words to define how the wilderness heals Cindy's wounds from the past and prepares her for the wounds of her future.

However, despite our reactions, for some people the wilderness is not a place for relaxation; instead, it is an unpleasant experience. The wilderness is considered nothing more than a place that is harsh and rugged, where people are not meant to retreat. They believe humans and wild animals are to be separated for their safety.

A friend, Nikki, believes nature is unsoothing and filthy. The thought of relaxation is the last thing that comes to her mind. With each bloomed flower she encounters, Nikki is overcome with sneezes. Each deep breath she takes in is not filled with clean, pure air; instead, her lungs fill with mold, thus making her chest and nose congested.

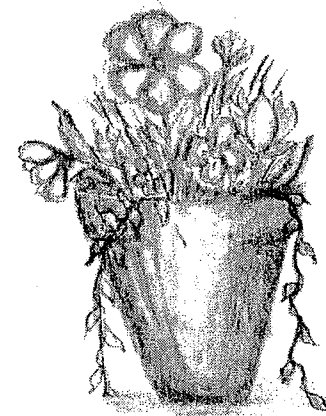
Nikki fears the animals along with the insects that call the wilderness home. The thought of a slithering snake exiting out of the dead tree she walks over sends shivers up and down her spine. She is too busy fretting about the animals that lurk within to be able to enjoy her visit. The thought of trees being beautiful is completely inconceivable. Nikki believes the trees harbor mold and the dirt reeks of must and mildew. Nothing about the wilderness is calming.

For others, the wilderness is a place they keep in the back of their mind and only recall the memories of the wilderness to heal specific wounds. For

am in the room again. Shakily, you say to me, "It is a hard thing to bury a child." Again, not wanting to break the spell with my voice, I only nod.

The mood has changed now. I see you are sad and fear I have evoked the melancholy. Tears are about to spill over as you turn back to the fire and tell me you do not often speak of the past. Your grandchildren are the only ones you might do this with, but they don't really have time for you now. You tell me of a time when your children and grandchildren filled the house on all the holidays. You were their Nana Banana, and they couldn't wait to see you. Now it seems to be too much bother for anyone to even come for a weekend. Suddenly, you sit a little straighter and brush at the front of your blouse as if to shoo away the sadness and you turn and say to me, "My, I really got off course. I'm sorry. What was your question again? Is the world a better place? No. No, we've lost our humanity. We collect things now, not people, not memories. No, I don't believe it is a better place." And with that one trite question asked hours ago, I've lost you.

You are still sitting with your legs tucked under you as when we began, and I am amazed at how many hours it has been. I stand and thank you for your time and your wonderful stories and tell you I'll let myself out. You nod; your eyes are still a pool into your past. I do not want to leave. You seem so fragile, certainly not the woman who opened her front door to me earlier. I don't quite get out of the room when you call me back. You ask me if I think the world is a better place. How can I tell you what I'm feeling? You have everything, and yet you have so little. Arriving on your doorstep tonight, I felt very insignificant. Wouldn't it be nice to have all this? Suddenly I am very ashamed of myself. To you I just say, "Maybe not." And truth be told, maybe not, when I arrived, but as I walk down the path to my car I vow to love and cherish all that I have. For I have everything money can't buy. I am optimistic for the future, hopeful even.



Flowers by Talisha Marks

I Have Been Divinely Touched
by Sheryl Drees

I have seen and heard the power of the Ocean's waves and gazed with awe at
towering majestic
mountains.

I have quietly watched almost microscopic creatures go about their business on
a rocky beach.

I have witnessed the sunrise and sunset and rainbows.

I have been given a fresh, pure, glistening snowfall when I thought winter's cold
and ugliness
would never end.

I have lain naked in the sand of a secluded beach and felt enveloped by the
warmth of the earth
and sun.

I have been Divinely touched.

I have loved both innocently and passionately and have been loved in return.
I have been an adoring daughter and a rebellious teenager. I have a mother
who loved me then
and still does.

I have known pesky little brothers who grew into wonderful husbands and
fathers. I am an aunt.

I have treasured memories of my grandparents and time spent with them.

I have had friends who held my hand when I gave birth and friends who held my
hand when I
wanted to die. I have been that friend.

I have been Divinely touched.

I have held life in my belly and a newborn to my breast.

I have been the recipient of dandelion bouquets and homemade valentines.

I have listened somewhat patiently to a six-year-old read for the first time and
watched with pride
as the same child graduated high school and college.

I have attended an NSYNC concert with four star struck fourteen-year-old girls,
who were all in

love with Justin Timberlake. I have listened and comforted some of the same
girls when they
lost their virginity and their first real loves.

I pledge my dedication
by Carl Donald Mercier

I pledge my dedication
To the Constitution of the
United States of America.

To the principles our
Founding Fathers enshrined
In history's most noble document.

To Federalism,

To separation of powers,

To republicanism,

To democracy through law,

To human rights,

To equal justice.

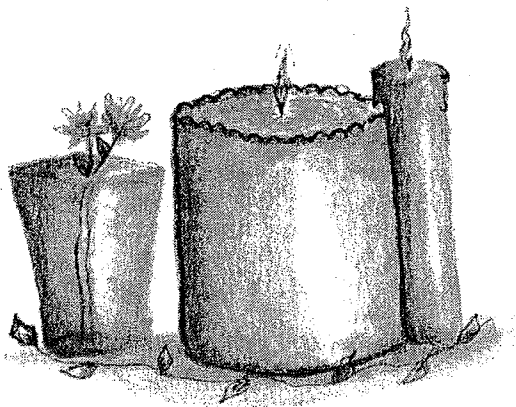
Rest in Peace
by Edward Gerber

I'm blessed because of a dream
I've been allowed to
Walk tall amongst the crowd
To be bold
With freedom untold (to those of old)
This is my destiny
I fulfill with great humility
To the nobility
Of Coretta Scott King.

their lives, making sure that no soldier passed on unrecognized. Each veteran could confidently expect accolades from fellow veterans that capricious benefactors might overlook.

It had been almost four decades since the tear-stained sergeant called his men to form up before a pine box embracing the young runaway. Now the bugle was playing taps for him. A small knot of soldiers formed up, as best as infirmity would allow, and saluted the soldier that died today.

Author's Note: This fictional account was based on two actual members of the Third Wisconsin Cavalry. Sergeant Ernest M. Lucis enlisted on September 22, 1861 and was mustered out October 27, 1865. Crushed by a log on February 20, 1900, his remains are buried in Riverside Cemetery, Menominee, Michigan. John Davis, a teenager from Ironton, Wisconsin, enlisted March 14, 1863. Under the assumed surname of Johnson, the young man also misrepresented his age to be accepted. He died November 10, 1863 of typhoid fever. Davis was buried in a small cemetery near Balltown, Missouri. A chance reading of Lieutenant Charles Porter's Civil War diary solved the 129 year mystery of Davis's fate. Davis's great-nephews re-enacted a full-dress Civil War military funeral service for their long-lost ancestor in September 1992. Although Lucis and Davis were in the same regiment, their lives probably never intersected. The military events and quotes are historically accurate.



Candles by Talisha Marks

I have helped a sixteen-year-old pick out the perfect prom dress and once donned have gazed with

awe at beauty that took my breath away.

I am the recipient of good bye hugs every morning from a son who towers over me.

I have been Divinely touched.

I have sat at my father's side and stroked his arm as he left this world. I have watched my

grandmother watch her baby die.

I have welcomed a pregnancy and had it taken from me.

I have known the heartbreak of lost love.

I have raged at God and told Him to leave me alone.

I have known sadness and anger that I could not will away. I have seen no way out. I have felt

hopelessness.

I have felt the hand of Jesus grab my wrist and heard him say, "Rage all you want. I love you and

I will never let you go!!"

I have been Divinely touched.

I have questioned the existence of God...

But, I have been Divinely touched.

Transformation
by Joseph Stankevitz

From the depths of the Abyss
Which I have created
Rises, once again, the Demon to terrorize
My thoughts, like a slave to its Master
Obedient only to a point.
Will this slave usurp the Master?
I know not, nor care.

I welcome the hypnotic taunting
Of the one that dwells within,
Yet I am afraid just the same.
If I am the one in control and
The Demon is only meant to torture
Am I any better than it?
I know not, nor care.

Which of us is the Creator? The Creation?
Is he the puppet that does my bidding?
Or is he really my Master and I the servant?
I know not, nor care.

Is this Demon a part of me
Or am I a part of the Demon?
What shall happen if he takes control
And I am but his pawn and he, the Master?
His strength increases with every breath I take
How can I overcome such hatred for all life?
I know not, nor care.

The bud of change must always come from within
When one delves too deep and faces an evil
That has been incubating for years
Much like a predator that waits for the time to strike
What should happen when the weakest blinks?
I know not, nor care. For the change is upon me
And the time is come to shed this skin.

some acknowledgement of their passing, preferably a letter home or a simple grave marker, maybe a few appropriate words. Sadly, they realized that even those meager requests were not always possible.

No matter how hard they tried, no matter what mind games they played to drown out the death-rattles, they were not completely inured to a comrade's passing. Seven months after enlisting, the clear-eyed teenager who falsified his age, name, and hometown to be accepted succumbed to typhoid fever. Gallantry and heroism had avoided the emaciated boy. His sergeant constructed a 'wooden overcoat' for him. Delicately placed inside, the body retained traces of stench from the regimental hospital that were only snuffed out by shovels of dirt. The sunset ceremony, with military honors, was presided over by a weary chaplain. A small knot of soldiers witnessed the interment and expressed "great sorrow in the loss of their companion in arms." Forming up alongside the pine casket, they gave their departed comrade a last salute. Due to his own subterfuge, the family could not be notified and the boy remained anonymously buried in a small Missouri cemetery, far from home.

The Third Wisconsin Cavalry continued to regularly contribute to Kansas and Missouri cemeteries. A veteran cavalryman couldn't conceal his contempt. "[The guerrillas] picked off many stragglers from detachments of Union troops passing through the neighborhoods which they frequented," he ruefully related. "Such a victim they would strip, and throw his body a little way into the brush by the roadside to decay, or be devoured by hogs or carrion birds of prey... They were blood-boltered villains, and some even scalped loyal citizens and Union soldiers after assassinating them." Slow burns broke into flames of hatred. When 16 ambushed Union soldiers were discovered executed after surrender an outraged soldier was shocked by the wanton brutality. "The rebels were not content with shooting them in the head – one and all were stabbed to the heart, some of them three or four times," he seethed. "Most of them had their heads beaten to a jelly with clubs." But the worst was yet to come. On an expansive prairie north of a lonely outpost called Baxter Springs, 26 men from the regiment were slaughtered in a lopsided massacre. Their bodies had been rifled for valuables, mutilated, and shot multiple times. Some were incinerated when their bodies were piled under a wagon and ignited. It was the deadliest day in the regiment's history.

In each case, burial parties culled the slaughter fields for remains. Meticulously searching for clues to identify the slain, the fellow soldiers recovered and then properly buried them. A lock of hair or personal item might be forwarded to distraught families as a remembrance. Driven by a paramount concern to restore much-earned dignity to the fallen, the mission became an obsession. Ceremonials, testimonials, and markers seemed inadequate tribute to the departed. Officers laboring over wrenching letters assured those back home that fellow soldiers acted as surrogates for them at a proper burial. By implied consent, the soldiers sealed a silent pact vowing their fraternity would vouchsafe their legacy. The solemn duty was a responsibility that could not be entrusted to those who didn't share the mutual nightmare. That unbreakable bond transcended their terms of service and indelibly bound them even after returning to civilian life. Veteran organizations were established to re-kindle memories. Increasingly older soldiers in diminishing numbers marched in annual Decoration Day parades. They assiduously tracked the membership throughout the remainder of

dent for the *Milwaukee Sentinel*.

Other bitter disappointments awaited the men. Their own army, clogged with red tape and bureaucratic quicksand, seemed an impediment. While numerous regiments were forwarded to the East to pit their military acumen against the formidable armies of the South, the Third Wisconsin was dispatched to the war's backwater. They drew orders to patrol and police the Missouri-Kansas border. Passing through Saint Louis they witnessed a sobering sight. Wharfs full of wooden caskets were waiting to be filled. "These rough, brown, cheap, worm-eaten coffins, piled up there like oyster cans, silently waiting to fold their wooden arms about our sons, brothers, and fathers, rather took the poetry out of the shoulder straps and gold-covered cord to be seen strutting around, giving orders to the glory-hunters in plain blue," a correspondent laconically sneered. No bristling enemy army arrayed in full regalia would oppose them. No panoramic battlefield would showcase their manly fighting prowess. From isolated garrisons, scouts and patrols gamely tried to counter and check an insidious guerrilla war. The chimerical enemy wore no uniform, observed no rules, and for the most part, took no prisoners. Like gargoyles positioned on buildings to ward off evil spirits, the soldiers' effectiveness was more token than substantive.

It infuriated the troops that often unseen pusillanimous foes fought from ambush. "Their game is not to fight an equal number even with the advantage of the thick bush to hide themselves in, but they find a person alone or a small squad of men to rob and kill them," a Badger cavalryman explained. As quickly as they struck, they melted back into the guise of peaceful civilians. Dead soldiers were found singly and in small groups. Some corpses were mutilated and profanely displayed for shocking effect. The war became intensely personal for the men. "There was neither amusement nor an opportunity to acquire fame in fighting bushwhackers," reflected an officer. "The soldiers who served in the Eastern armies knew nothing about this species of warfare, and those who served in the armies of the Cumberland and Tennessee knew but little of it."

Premonitions of a soldier's meaningless demise were inescapable. "It is dreadful to contemplate being killed on the field of battle without a kind hand to hide one's remains from the eye of the world or the gnawing of animals and buzzards," voiced a hardened veteran of guerrilla war. An honorable death carried a degree of dignity, but guerrilla warfare robbed both dignity and purpose from the ultimate sacrifice. A sentinel shot down while on picket, a courier intercepted and beaten to death, a trooper gunned down in the act of surrender, wounded left to die, the ambushed squad with no chance for defense, were all tantamount to murder in the soldier's minds. Senseless and random, the deaths were militarily negligible. At headquarters the losses were termed enemy annoyances as the army machine still rolled on. Often an afterthought to lengthy tactical and logistical reports, an acknowledgement that a soldier died today might follow.

A constant, dulling apprehension that one's life is insignificant and the end of it could be so ignominious weathered the sensibilities of the cavalrymen. They became jaded and calcified. Preparing for death was inviting death, so thought many soldiers. Some dealt with the unsavory prospect with sardonic humor. Others were revolted and even angered at cadavers of smitten comrades as if they betrayed the soldier's tacit agreement to cheat death. Still others tried to take a philosophical approach to the fearful blood-sport, reasoning that a capricious fate determines when time has expired. At the least, they wanted

Warrior by Night and Day
by Amanda Leverich

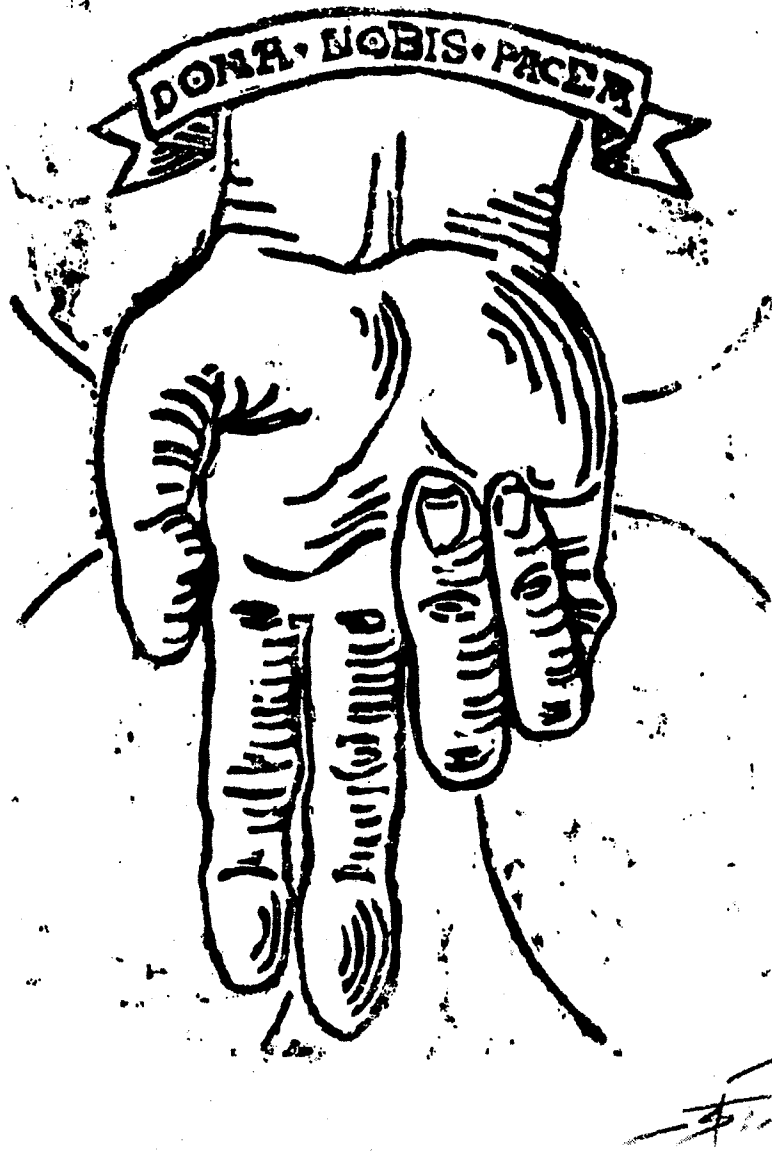
I am a warrior by night and day
Fighting for America all the way
Crawling through mud and under barbed wire
To see the enemy come run, then fire
Using taught tactics with all of my might
I use all my strength and I fight
Hear the helicopters hovering over my head
They are coming to pick up the wounded and dead
Inches and inches we are away
Swimming across through the bay
Climbing up the trees and walls
Hoping that nobody falls
Dragging myself along, hurt
Forcing the pain out to be burnt
The real pain is all in my heart
The longing to see my love is the hardest part

A Soldier Died Today
by Darwin Adams

He was found lying in the woods, another man claimed by the vast forests of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Blood from his fractured skull painted a halo of sickly pink on a bier of slickened snow. The gigantic pine log responsible for horribly mangling his body watched in silent defiance a few yards away, as if to be certain. He was out of uniform. The old sergeant, now a sexagenarian, had not donned the brass-buttoned blue frock woools in over thirty-five years. They had been replaced by a woodsman's flannels. Tragic, but not unusual, occupational hazards stealthily struck lumbermen with a sniper's randomness. Menominee, the soldier's hometown, would conduct two funeral services that week for victims of lumberjack accidents.

Thirty-nine years earlier, the faithful soldier had served his government as she grappled with contemptuous rebels willing to dismantle a union based on the premise that all men are created equal. "Secession is revolution; revolution is war; and war against the government of the United States is treason!" thundered Wisconsin's governor in the chambers of the State Legislature. The response was spontaneous and exuberant as thousands of young Badgers answered the clarion call. Fiery speeches, flag raisings, and tumultuous town meetings beckoned to the patriot imbedded within. Valiant gallantry and honor lured entranced volunteers to the battlefield. Only shame and cowardice awaited those who would cower. Inspired by the purgative powers of war, the aspiring soldiers' only fear (then) was that the war would be over before they could prove their mettle. "Many a poor fellow was seen weeping, almost broken hearted, on being told that the company was full, or that he was physically disqualified for a soldier," an observer of those intoxicating days noted. Although he was 25 years old, the sergeant's parochial perspective still fostered a refreshing naiveté: respect for authority, moral integrity, and fidelity to the government. Another innocent recruit anxious to see righteousness prevail, misrepresented his age to be accepted. The clear-eyed, fresh-faced sixteen year-old assumed a false surname and hometown to foil any attempts of his parents to retrieve him. Like countless other young men, he never questioned his invincibility or mortality. Both men went off to war armed with virtue.

Brass bands, community banquets, adulating crowds, and tear-choked farewells resonated in the minds of the new soldiers as they departed the state they vowed to defend. Lumps that lodged in a thousand throats gave way to the exhilarating thrill of adventure. But it all ended quickly, too quickly, for the men of the sergeant's regiment: the Third Wisconsin Cavalry. Before they had even seen a rebel, they suffered casualties. An axle on a forward train coach transporting them to the war's front snapped in half just four miles outside of Chicago. The derailed car caught on a culvert and the following coaches telescoped into it. Screeching iron, breaking glass, and booming concussions were punctuated by piteous cries and wailing as troops pinned under an entanglement of wreckage drowned in the mud of an adjacent ditch. Twelve men died and over 200 were injured. "The groans of the dying, the summoning call of a soldier to his missing comrade, the sobbing of a wife or a sister over the loss of a loved companion, all contrasted with the joyous and merry crowd that might have been witnessed in the same wrecked cars a few minutes before," lamented a correspon-



Dona Nobis Pacem by Jonathan Tesch