Waynessence, the student literary magazine of The University of Akron Wayne College, is published for the campus community to provide an audience for aspiring writers and artists. All materials are published with the consent of the contributors, who accept full credit for their work.
Thanks To:

God, for guiding us
Susanna Horn
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All the English Faculty
Everyone who submitted to Waynessence

Advisor's Note:

Amidst the tragedy and the tension, may creativity continue.

With respect and hope,
Susanna K. Horn, advisor to Waynessence
Coordinator of Basic Writing
The Smucker Learning Center
Note: The Waynessence staff reserves the right to choose and edit written submissions as well as art and photography based on length, technical accuracy, and audience considerations.
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john mann ii
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Danielle Putt
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Terry Williams of Wooster recently relocated from Atlanta, GA.
Gillian Zuchniak
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Cell
by Charles Callen

Four white walls
A padded cell
My life, my home
My living hell

You're welcome here
Come on inside
You've nothing to fear
I've nothing to hide

The room is empty
And bitter cold
The empty and cold
Of my barren soul

Living nightmares
Broken dreams
Unseen love
And tortured screams

A spirit and heart
A mind and emotions
Imprisoned by space
But tossed by life's oceans

Fate is cruel
It brought you here
But not for your company
And not for your cheer

Don't feel sorry
Don't wish me well
There's a reason you're with me
Inside of this cell
Cheyenne, My Precious Little Girl

by Linda Bruce

The most treasured thing in my life is my dog, Cheyenne. She is 6 years old. I obtained her from a dog pound in Miles City, Montana, in the summer of 1995. She’s the love of my life.

Cheyenne is a very beautiful dog. She’s mixed with Austrian Shepherd, Blue Healer, Collie and part Wolf. She’s a medium size dog. She weighs 40 pounds. She has a distinctive left eye. It’s brown, with gray specks. It’s the mark of the Austrian Shepherd. Her head has white patches above the eyes, and a white snout with black speckles. Her face looks just like a wolf. Her coat is a taupe color, with different shades of light and dark brown with black. Her tail is long, like a collie. She has a nice conformation of her back and legs, due to the fact she’s very active.

She’s also very intelligent. Sometimes, you would think she was human by the way she acts. One day, she got mad at me. I wasn’t home to take her for our daily walk. When I got home after my appointment, I got a big surprise. I thought someone had broken into my house. The living room was a mess. The blanket was off of the couch, along with the couch cushions. The cushions were on the floor, unzipped, but there wasn’t any foam pulled out. I was so puzzled. I yelled for her. I said, “Did you do this, little girl?” She looked up at me with her doggie eyes as if to say, “Yes, mom.” I said, “Cheyenne, why did you do this?” She ran behind the couch, with her tail between her legs. She knew she was in trouble. She does funny things when she gets upset with mom.

Cheyenne can sense a lot about humans. One thing, she’s very good at trying to cheer me up when I’m down. She comes over by me and puts her nose right by my hand so I’ll pet her. If I don’t, she keeps trying until I acknowledge her. When I finally give her some attention, she sees me smile and laughing. She’s satisfied. She then comes over and cuddles right beside me.

She’s a very unusual dog. For instance, she has to ride in my truck all the time. Only, she has to drive. She sits on my lap when I’m driving, puts her paws on the steering wheel, and drives. You’d have to see it for yourself to believe it.

She’s very protective of the family. No one touches us. When a person arrives at our house, she begins to sniff them. If she doesn’t like them, she’ll let me know by barking continuously. If she likes them, she’ll jump on them, trying to get their attention. If that doesn’t work, she tries to play with them until they acknowledge her. She has to be the center of attention at all times. She gets jealous if she isn’t.

When the boys are playing and she thinks they’re hurting each other, she intervenes, puts her mouth on their legs and actually pulls them apart. If they don’t stop, she’ll bark outrageously. Actually, it’s pretty hilarious to watch her. She hates violence. I feel she must have been abused when she was a pup. She doesn’t like men with beards.

It seems like we’re meant to be together. To take care of each other. She has helped me through so much in my life. I love her dearly. She’s my precious little girl. I would be lost without her. She’s my world.
Cries
By Josh Porter

Cries call out
Tears fall down
As they put him in his place

Flag comes down
Moon shines bright
As the shots ring out
To signal one more life now torn

Kin now crying, desperately trying
To remember the life that was slain
Giving his all, paying his toll
For a man, just like his own

Drenched is the flag
Torn from his hands
From the son now on his knees

Now resting in a case
Trying to place
A memory still deep and near
In the loved ones left behind

The flag a symbol of
Lives now lost
Lives at a cost
Of a man, just like his own.

High Times
by Travis Kirk
In Hiding

By Stephen Shaum

In hiding, Salmon make a suave argument. They remain in such a hideout- the catacombs of Europe; the reach, beyond the stretch of mind, a winding road, it leads to the basements of the soft. These basements, dark, dank, full of what once was a certain estate; this estate, the intrigue, belonged to a man of latitude. His trifles sit on the mantle: little abbreviations of life. Life in the disarray, clutter; a smile only to those brave to look: a brass fish; a molten statue; a picture of his wife at the Dead Sea, a baleful owl guards the window. These sit as appeasing tapestries. The flowers are brown; he looks to his bouts, his solitude. He sees the making of the man, alone. He does not cry at night anymore. He is full of happiness.

Huh?

by Esther Hodgdon
Old Farm House
by Thomas Rezack

Untitled #1
by Holly Miller
Intercivil

By Stephen Shaum

My poetry is interchangeable. I can write these lines for days. They can be viewed together and separate. I invented interchangeable parts. It was I of 1850. I fueled the civil war. I am the great conflict. It is my responsibility. I am industry. I’ll make you bleed.

Conflicting Conflict

by Jeff Beaver
This semester for me has been stressful. Lots of reading, notes to take, and papers due. The tragedy has really added stress and worry onto what was already there. It also has gotten us off syllabus in my classes. It has affected my concentration level, sleep pattern, and study habits. Supposedly, I knew what assignments/readings this semester would consist of, based on the syllabus for each class. Because of the national tragedy/war, it’s like the world is moving in slow motion. In the past few weeks I’ve learned that this whole world is not permanent. Nothing in this world is written in stone. Marriages can end in divorce, jobs can be terminated, and the brakes on your car can go out at any moment. In this whole process, I’ve heard many concerns/questions and had many of them myself. Also I’ve learned all the worry in the world won’t change a thing. No matter what you or I do, or where we go, we’re not truly safe.

Emotions/responses to bad situations will come, but also there will come a time when you have to let go and accept what you cannot change. Let go of what you cannot control and stop asking questions like, why, who, or what. Let go of a situation that isn’t yours to worry about/take charge of in the first place. Let go of unknown love because if it comes back to you, it’s truly yours. Let go of your fears, sadness, and pain. Realizing that miring in it won’t get you anywhere. So what do we do then? Take action. Maybe it’s living in the here and now, letting go of the past and learning from it instead. Maybe it’s venting your feelings, good and bad, before the sun goes down on them. Whatever it is with you, I think the best we can do as humans on a temporary, unsafe place such as this is keep moving. Don’t stop, for if you do, the enemy has won. Do what you have to do RIGHT NOW, the rest will take care of itself.
Do you consider yourself
a kindred traveler
treading the lites
of Ev-ening Street?

I saw you, solemn and silent by
the dim lane dressed in lunar lace
and just below a vast and brilliant
billion star bedazzled sky.
you bewitched me with an enchanting and
dandelion-smile which
matched the welcome warmth of March,
but I, in somber, December-cloak and shy,
did twist aside with liquid-eye and
tearlet-tepid cheek.

I ached to dub thee Duchess Sweet,
Splendor Desert Sand Transcendor,
Diamond Dust Defiant Dancer, or
Whatever Thou Desire, for
you were the fire that kept me warm
and locked in cotton, solitary slumber;
you were the candle, beacon-burning,
within my cold, subconscious conscience.

I picked a Morning Glory, in
remembrance of the time
that we danced
stark-naked
beside the moonlite,
I felt your shadow on
my face and sensed
my soul beyond your eyes,
But suddenly, without consent,
and too soon, I realized
that I, now in the moon-sunken gleam
of morning shroud, had swum
thru and out of the cool,
serene, sanctuary-womb
of a Dream,
morose and slow, I swept the space I lied
beside, it empty as I, and ‘Your Name’, aloud I cried, for
you were lost to the sacrificial
icy flames of Dawn’s Resurrection,
leaving me with nothing but the
vestige of a memory, the shadow
of your afterglow, merely a breathless
locket-soul, minus pulse or promise.

My greatest regret was awaking without You,
for You were the Tender of My Dreams,
the Shepherdess of My Sanity.

Alas. . .

And so, When the sand turns to rain
and my soul stirs to wake,
I’ll strap the bag across
my back and place
them soles upon my feet,
and set out for those halo-lites . . .
**Limbo**  
*by Kelly Underman*

so this is  
my life: in limbo  
so this is  
Self Hatred!  
Glammed up; To the max  
this is  
selfless/selfish spinning  
into self  
(absorption)(?)  
unknown and i  
miss my boyfriend and myself  
while i wish  
(!!!)  
why am i hungry  
again?

**Cloud Study**  
*by Abigail Butler*
Kids Can Be Cruel

by Rhonda Mack

After school one day, my oldest son, Joshua stormed into the house. He was almost in tears. Joshua’s reaction startled me so much that I immediately ran across the living room to where he was standing in front of the door. When I asked him what was wrong, it took him a minute to calm down before he could speak. Joshua began telling me about his first day in a new school, and how the other kids had picked on him and called him names. Suddenly, I was no longer a mom, but I was an eight year old starting over in a new school. Packing up everything I owned and moving to a new place was a very dramatic experience for me as a little girl. Trying to make new friends was not as easy as it sounded. When you are the new kid, the other kids tend to disregard you. It is like you have the plague, and coming into contact with you will pass the disease on to them. The other kids’ reactions could be caused from many things: you dress differently, or you act differently, or it could be just because you haven’t lived in that particular town since birth. Children will always find a reason to avoid letting you into their cliques.

The third grade class was sent out to the playground after lunch. It was a breezy March day, and my first day in a new school. A group of kids were playing tag, and I walked over to see if I could play also. When they realized that I wanted to join in the game, they all stopped running and began staring at me. The way they looked at me made me feel like I was from another planet. One of the girls walked over and asked me what I wanted. When I told her that I would like to play tag with them, the whole group began to laugh. The girl asked me why I thought they would let me play. I didn’t know what to say. It was then that I realized I wasn’t going to be able to fit in. All I could do was hang my head and try not to cry as I walked away. Is it possible that they might think I would have changed their lives in any way? Could it be that the children that I wanted to play with were afraid that I might take away their friends? Did these children see me as a threat because I might change the way of life they had become accustomed to? A great many friendships are lost because newcomers are not getting the chance to show other people who they really are on the inside.

We, as people, crave human contact. Friendships are an important part of our lives. Our friends share in our good times, but they also help us to get through our bad times. As long as others avoid or make fun of you, you’ll never get to satisfy your yearning for human contact. Will our society ever see a friendship that can be gained in a person before they see the threat a person that is different can have on our society? When I tried to make friends, I got laughed at and pushed away. That event in my life hurt me so deeply that it took me until the following school year to try again to form a friendship. The same routine of being laughed at and pushed
away occurred all the way through my school years. People just don’t realize how much words and actions can hurt a person. The person being tormented begins to feel that there is something wrong with them. I beat myself up inside trying to figure out what I could do to change and have the other kids accept me. I wasn’t able to come up with a solution. Now, as an adult, I still have trouble reaching out to make a new friend.

Why is it so difficult for countries to accept other people for their differences? When an immigrant first enters the United States, he or she is forced to change their ways. We make them learn our language, our laws, and our ways. If they refuse, they can not become US citizens. They are forced to live by our standards. We don’t accept them for who they are. We see them as a threat to our society.

We promote these kinds of actions against others in some of our TV programs. For example, on Family Matters, Steve Erkel is, in a sense, a nerd. Steve was just a little boy when he moved in next door to the Winslows. He had a high IQ and was always making some kind of contraption to help the Winslow family; however, he was treated like a pest. In just about every episode, Steve’s feelings got hurt because he was different. Another show with a similar character would be Saved By The Bell. In this show, Screech was portrayed as the nerd. Screech had lived in the same town all his life. The characters that are supposed to be his friends used him for their means, called him names, and played tricks on him. You don’t have to be a newcomer for people to see you as a threat to their way of life.

I’ve tried to use my experience of being the different kid as a guide when helping Joshua to cope with his pressures of being a different kid on the block. Knowing how much words and actions can hurt others is very important. No one likes to get his or her feelings hurt by another person. Everyone likes to think of their differences as a contribution to their society, and not as a threat to the “normal” way of life in that society.
Let Your Arms Down

By Mike Tipton

When you’re alone
Let down your arms
When you feel hurt
Let your arms down
When life tortures your heart
Let your arms down
For when the farmer welcomed the animals
With outstretched arms
They were scared of his new scare crow
So when life no longer feels whole
Let your arms down
And we shall all gather around you

Anisa

by Danielle Putt
An Open Letter to Granny

By Terry Williams

This short story is original and is not based on the work of any other writer, living or dead. The names, characters and incidents are fictional and any resemblance to any person living or dead is purely coincidental.

Granny what happened? It’s not like you to not say good-bye. You could have called me or let me know something. I’m right here in Atlanta. I would have come to your side. I was considering a trip anyway. James was there that weekend to see his grandparents, I could have even come with him. I just didn’t want to be there without any money...as usual. I wanted to be able to give you some money. You know how we planned it, “When I made it big, you made it big.”

I can’t believe you’ve done this; you didn’t even say you were sick. I remember our last phone conversation; you were a bit short with me. I thought it was because you didn’t want me to accumulate a phone bill. Still, you would always tell me when you weren’t feeling well. Remember when you would have to go to the hospital, and I would call from upstate to ask how the doctors were treating you. I would joke about beating them all up if they didn’t do better. Is it true that you were trying to reach the phone when little Tote peered through the window? Grandmother, what happened? I need to know if you were in any pain. I will never forgive God if He put you through any pain.

I guess I knew you were going to die, but only after Mom called on Monday. She was crying. She told me that you had lapsed into a coma on Sunday night. She gave me the number to the hospital and I called. Aunti Iris said you were bleeding from the nose. I knew that was it! What was wrong with you? A coma is nothing to play with! I went to work that morning and confided to a close friend about your condition. At that time, I never really entertained the thought of you actually dying. I left work early to get some work done on my car. That’s when it hit me! What if Granny dies? (Pause) That or what they were up to. Who would Mom call on holiday mornings? To whom would I brag about my many women? Do you recall Aimee the rich girl? I sure wish that I could find her now. I heard that she had set up a private practice here in Atlanta.

Granny, I miss you. I don’t have another best friend; I don’t want another best friend. I’m sure you know, but I’ll tell you anyway. I kissed you at your funeral. I didn’t cry as much as I thought I would. It was only after your coffin was opened that I began to cry. I just couldn’t believe it was my favorite person lying there motionless.

I began to have many flashbacks; about 1000 per second. I visualized our last moments together when I cooked Sunday dinner of broccoli and steak. I could see the pert little smile you gave me when you wouldn’t let me prepare your plate. You never told me why. Knowing you, I gather preparing your plate was one of those little things you liked to do for yourself.

The week of the funeral, Mom and Dad stopped here along with Joey before going on to your house. Joey stayed with me until my car was ready. We didn’t get to Florida until 5:00 AM Saturday morning, only a few hours before your funeral. As soon as we arrived, we found Jimmy, went to the liquor store and bought some Smirnoff vodka. You know how Jimmy loves the stuff. Well, anyway, we had a few drinks before the funeral. I’m sorry Granny, we meant no disrespect. We just didn’t want to feel sad. I know you wouldn’t have wanted us to feel sad. Jimmy got very upset. I thought he would lose it when he looked at you; he kissed you also. Mom and Renee cried a lot. I had to comfort Renee outside the church. And poor Alicia was crying so hard. I walked and talked with her outside also. At the time of your funeral, they hadn’t told Lena of your death. They decided that she wasn’t strong enough to handle it. (Pause)

Granny, you know how the family is at making the best of any situation, always having a good time. After we left the church, we went back to your house to party and socialize. All of your best friends were there. They all looked so good. As I was sitting at the picnic table, little Dana walked up to me and began talking. She and I are really tight now. What she said to me, I will never forget. Her exact words were, “It’s not that I’m afraid of Grandmama now that she’s gone, because I really loved her. It’s just that when I go into her house now, it hurts my feelings.” At that point, I went into the house myself; I just had to get away. As I walked down the sidewalk to the
back door, I thought about all the good times we’ve had there. All of our names are forever engraved in that sidewalk. Along with the message, “Maeretha, please stop fussing!” Of course, I didn’t write that; I couldn’t even spell my own name correctly. That sidewalk never seemed so long before.

Once inside the house, I began to clean up, beginning with the kitchen. When I got to your bedroom, I felt your presence strongly. It was as though we were about to conversate. Your favorite bathrobe was hanging behind the door, the long blue one with the hood. I took it down and held it to my face. It smelled of you; the lotion, the Ben-Gay. The tears began to flow. I cried like I have never cried before. I just can’t believe that you won’t be living there anymore. Neither can King. The entire time we were there, King would go from the front door to the back door looking for you, looking for his water. He will really miss you. My dear Granny, I know I could have prayed for God not to take your life, but instead I prayed for Him to keep you safe and warm. This I believe He will do. Even though you will no longer be a part of this earth in body, I know you will be here in spirit. I promise to think of you every single day for the remainder of my natural life. (Pause)

Most of all Granny, I will miss your beautiful smile; the warmth and comfort it gave me. Because of you, my life has meaning and direction. This I am thankful for. I really feel that I will accomplish my long-term goals and do the greatness for mankind that I was put on this earth to do. And I know that somewhere you will be watching. But just in case I get weary and go astray, just give me a smile. Be good and take care of yourself. And say hello to Grandmother Resa for me.

Love, Terry

A Seat for One
by Matt Smucker
Harvest II
by Thomas Rezack

Rusting Gently
by Erin Hack
Untitled #1
by Erin Hack

Harvest
by Thomas Rezack
My Ethnic Background

by Jason Genis

My curiosity about my ethnic background first came in an unusual way. When I was very young I remember going over to my friends’ houses. I remember one of my friends talking about his grandfather. This was strange to me because I did not know what the word “grandfather” meant. As soon as I got home, I asked my dad, and he laughed when he said, “Oh Jason, grandfather is just another name for papoo.” Then I asked why I call my grandfather papoo. He said that my grandfather is Greek, and that is what they call grandfathers in Greece. Of course this new, interesting information conjured up many other fascinating question that I had, and now I wanted to learn more about my ethnic background.

I have heard many friends from my high school who talked about their ethnic background. They usually say, “Ya, I have some German, some of this, and some of that too,” meaning that they do not really know where their families are from or how they got to where they are now. To this day, my friends still do not know where they come from. I always thought, “How could you lose track of your family origin?” I feel that the children of today do not give the simplest bit of respect to their ancestors. I think that in today’s society children tend to want to be just like the other kids and are afraid to set themselves apart by letting their ethnic background be known. To me, your family origin is like one big story. It is a story about how you were brought to where you are now. I feel very strongly that one should remember all the past hardships that our ancestors went through to get you to where you are now. To lose your family origin would mean that you have lost the very reason why you are here today.

From the numerous stories that I have heard from my dad, my ethnic background began in the country of Greece, on the small island of Crete. When my grandfather got older, he had six other brothers and two sisters to look after. From what my dad told me, papoo decided to move to the United States for two reasons. The first reason was because he had heard that in the United States people had a better opportunity to get a good long term job. The second reason was to get away from a long war that the Greeks had with the Turkish people.

So my grandfather left for a long trip, all alone to the United States of America. His first stop was at Ellis Island, New York, where he got his citizenship. When he applied for his citizenship he was asked his last name. He told the man Genitakis. Then the man looked up and said, “With a name like that, you will be lucky to even get a job.” The problem was, if you had a foreign sounding last name, many Americans would treat you very unfairly. So papoo decided to change his last name to Genis.

While living with his relatives and working several jobs at once, my grandfather was able to save up all the money he needed to bring all of his family with him to the United States.

When I think about it now, I am glad that I asked my dad why I called my grandfather papoo, instead of grandfather. To this day when my dad tells me the stories, I can still sense a bit of pride in his speech. I think the pride comes from knowing the hardships and struggles that the Genis family had to go through to get to where they are now. He may not notice it, but he is not only telling me the stories. He is also passing along the history of my ethnic background to me. I am sure someday I will pass that same ethnic background on to my kids. Therefore, our background will never be lost.
My heart leapt seeming to start and stop itself on a drive
My eyes were wide with enchanting energy
My mind is so distraught, I cannot even say hi
Never have I felt this way
Yet it seems a part of my life that was so empty
Now feels so warm and complete
With my mouth drier than the Sahara Desert
My stomach begins to float away with the help of butterflies.
How could I let myself feel this way?
How could you make me go to such extremes?
You make me feel so whole
All I know is that I am addicted to these things
In which only you can provide
How could a little four letter word
Evoke more emotion than any other word
So I open my arms and welcome
That in which shall make me whole
So please take my hand and together welcome…love
**Untitled**

*by Megan Bolinger*

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**Fall Flower**

*by Thomas Rezack*
My father came into my life when I was seven years old. Although he may not be my biological father, I consider him my real father and the best dad I could ask for. Ernie Bolton Jr. is his name. He’s a big guy, with shoulders that are wider than a doorway. Weighing about two hundred eighty pounds and six foot tall, he looks very intimidating, but his looks can be deceiving. My dad’s smile makes me smile, and his deep laugh would make you laugh. His eyes are brown and can be mean like a lion or gentle like a big baby. Dad will honestly let you know that he likes you or make it very clear if he can’t stand you.

My dad has stood up for me. When I was in second grade, I had a hard time reading. My teacher made fun of me, so I made a smart-ass comment. I can’t remember what exactly I said, but she grabbed me by the face and put me in the hallway. My dad came straight up to the school and confronted the teacher. He told her that if she ever grabbed me again, he would take her and her husband by the face, in front of the class, and help her understand what it feels like. It made me feel good to see that my dad stuck up for me because she embarrassed me. When my dad confronted her, I think it embarrassed her, so then she realized how it feels.

When it came to sports, he always let me know he believed in me. He loved to take me to my wrestling matches. Win or lose, he was always proud of me, which gave me incentive to keep trying. He taught me everything I ever wanted to know about baseball, and it helped me to do well. Even though he hated soccer, he was always there to support me when I played. This meant a lot to me, and I tried even harder knowing my dad was there.

One time, while I was playing a soccer game, I got hurt and needed fifty-six stitches in my head. When I was running for the ball, a player from the other team tripped me, and I went headfirst into the wall. When my mom brought me home from the hospital, and dad saw how badly my head was hurt, he held me and cried. At the age of twelve, hearing and seeing him cry was weird, but it showed me how much he loved me. He stayed up all night with me to make sure I was okay.

Then, when I was fifteen, I was in a state final wrestling match and was winning five to one. My opponent put my arm behind my back and pushed my hand up until it touched the back of my head. When this happened, my shoulder popped out of place, and I could not move it, which made it impossible to continue wrestling. I ended up losing the match. I was rushed to the hospital and had to have surgery on my shoulder. My dad spent the whole night at my bedside, keeping me company.

When it came to my schoolwork, my dad had a hard time trying to help me with math. When it came to history, he would know the answers without even looking at the book. For any maps or posters that I had to do, he was there, helping me draw different things or helping find the right words to write. He always tried to encourage me to get my schoolwork done to the best of my ability.

One of my most memorable moments with my dad was when he taught me how to hunt. He taught me how to shoot a gun safely and how to keep it clean. When I got my first rabbit, he was there, taking pictures. He showed me how to clean and cook the rabbit. My very favorite moment with him was when I killed my first monster buck. My dad quit hunting that day so he could help me clean the buck out and get him back to the truck. He was so proud of me that you would have thought he had shot the buck himself. Dad told me that seeing me kill my buck was the most exciting thing he had done with me. He made me feel like I was on top of the world.

Even though he does not have the same genetic make-up as me, I could not have asked for a better man to be my father. Nobody could have been a better father to me. He has been there for me through thick and thin. I can tell him anything and know he will be there to listen without judging me. No matter how mad he gets at me, I know that he really loves me and cares about me. He will always be there for me. In my eyes, nobody could compare to him, and that’s why I love knowing that he’s my dad.
Wayne’s Oldest Hidden Treasure
by Matt Smucker
Untitled #1
by Jessi Kulow

Untitled #2
by Holly Miller
The Effects on a Mother Raising a Crimefighter

By Melonie Queberg

Some would agree that the stress of motherhood can sometimes be overwhelming. Can you imagine the weight on the shoulders of a superhero’s mother? Yes, it’s true. I am the mother of a superhero. Through no fault or choice of my own, the fate of the free world has fallen into my hands. My four-year-old son, who we used to call Jake but now affectionately refer to as Batman, has decided his future occupation. He has become Batman. Raising a superhero can be very stressful both physically and mentally. The financial expense has, at times, become a burden but is a necessary evil. It is my duty as a citizen of earth to do all I can to help my fellow man (or mom). How can I let the world down?

It all began with a simple cartoon - the Superfriends, to be exact. Jake was so taken with the magical way Batman’s cape flapped in the breeze and his commanding presence that he immediately began the transformation from a mortal boy to his new alter ego. What started as a mystical fascination with the fight of good over evil has quickly become a lifestyle for all those living in my household.

I must admit that I often wonder whether the stress I must endure to do the duty of a crimefighter’s mom is really worth it. A normal day begins at 7:00 o’clock when Batman bounces out of his racecar-shaped bed and races into the heart of Gotham City (also known as the living room). That is where a rigorous session of training videos must be viewed. It is extremely important when viewing these lessons to correctly mimic every move and mannerism made by the Superfriends; this is so that it can be repeated at a later time when justice calls and must be done. These training exercises are continued at various intervals throughout the day. In addition to the videos, feats of strength and courage are required duties. Karate kicks, chops, punches, and “yells” are necessary when completing this sort of training session. Numerous jumps from places such as coffee tables, couches, chairs, and beds are imperative to complete the daily training session. Bathing and healthy food are not a necessity during training.

The physical signs of the stress have begun to surface. The constant rumble of noise has plagued me with excruciating headaches. The confusion and fear of never knowing which arch enemy will be creeping around next has caused a slight twitch in my left eye, which gets progressively worse on rainy days when training is performed indoors only. Often pain shoots up my lower legs from the bottoms of my feet. This ailment has been diagnosed as “OuchIthoughtItoldYouToPickThoseUplits” which is caused by stepping on one or more action figures that were left lying on the floor. Battling Batman each night at bedtime has caused sleep deprivation to become an issue also. Apparently, superheroes do not require the same amount of sleep or rest as mortals. When sleep can no longer be avoided, it is often disrupted by the glow of the Batsignal being sent by Police Commissioner Gordon or the Mayor of Gotham City. This signal signifies that the good citizens of Gotham have been threatened in some way and, therefore, cannot be ignored.

The financial effects of living with a crime fighter have been a great burden. Our homeowner’s insurance skyrocketed when we were forced to turn Jake’s bedroom into the Batcave. I anticipate that our insurance coverage will be canceled all together when the agent discovers that my minivan was converted into the Batmobile. This was necessary in order to carpool with other superheroes to the Halls of Justice each day.

Shoot Me in the Heart

by Jeff Beaver
In addition to insurance expenses, weekly trips to the local grocery store have become somewhat costly. It is required for me to purchase every item in the store that directly (or indirectly) relates to Batman. These items include, but are not limited to, Batman Pez dispensers with candy, Batman Beyond fruit snacks, Batman gumballs with gumball dispenser, and when available, Batman breakfast cereal. When shopping at stores other than the grocery store, a visit to the toy isle is mandatory. I have begun a mission to purchase each and every Batman action figure, including all 200 of the poseable Batmen and his enemies ranging in various shapes and sizes. Clothing purchases consisting of underwear, t-shirts, sweatshirts, capes, and pajamas are also imperative regardless of actual size or cost.

The celebrity of it all has been the most difficult to deal with. Right after Jake appeared on the cover of Superhero Weekly, we were confronted with mobs of anxious well wishers everywhere we went. It is often hard for us to go to public places while Jake is clad in all his Batman attire. There are always photographers flashing cameras and screaming for interviews. The public scrutiny has been hard to take, too. My parenting abilities are constantly under the microscope by critics and cynics everywhere. Thankfully, I have a wonderful support system. The Green Lantern’s mother has been very reassuring in times of need.

Some would argue that raising a potential world leader would be a satisfying experience; maybe even fun. In all honesty, it has had many positive effects. I can now leave my home without any sort of fear from potential muggers, knowing that Batman is by my side. Because of the amount of top secret documents and paraphernalia kept in our home/Batcave, security is kept very tight. The family is on a first name basis with the entire police force, which has proven to be a blessing many times over.

More importantly, the experience has taught me to look at people and the world with a different perspective - a perspective that has me questioning whether or not the world has to be the complex place that we have created. Sometimes the answers really are small and the rewards can be enormous. If we all could live by a certain code of honor and respect, what a wonderful world we would have. Perhaps there is a little superhero in all of us that has been lost somewhere along the way; we just need a four-year-old to find it again.
Weary Old Giants

By Josh Porter

Weary old giants daunt the path I walk
Pillows of sand so hushly talk
Old giants eyes burn with amber light
Tempted eyes, they vanish in the night
Whispering winds they blow
Tossing leaf to and fro
Wintry winds—their stories tell
Constructions of love—hidden well
Strangers’ eyes love to see
What will happen—what will come of me
Weary old giants daunt the path I walk
Remembrances of souls they once stalked
Through the timeless ages they bore
And the tears of yesterday—which they wore.

Twins

by Christina Halliwell
Genuine Baby Steps
by Kelly Underman

tonight when i kissed you and you grabbed me again
it proved my point
that baby steps pay off and that flying kites is like learning to watch the world with the eyes of a child
and someday
maybe
i’ll be the kind of girlfriend who doesn’t cry when her boss gets angry
doesn’t have a fetish for sleeping pills
who is happy like you are

a smile more than feigned

genuine
Lucifer’s Gleeful Legion and
The Quest for the Cola-Halo

by john mann ii

Angels dove from heaven, they
were aching for a soda-pop.
Shook loose the shackles
from ankle-grip.
Quick sip from the spirit-tap.

What mortal wounds have
we inflicted
upon their fleshy
celestial tombs?

Shaman say: ‘They pass thru womb again!
Give ‘em dose of gin and double-shot
of deja-vooodoo medi-sin!
Just don’t give ‘em room to bleeed!’

They each had a spade-card up their sleeve.
A C E, it was, wasn’t it?

Omen-image of
malignant death.

Thought Motion

by Jeff Beaver
In My Golden Box of Treasures
My Daddy Left For Me

by Diane Barker

In my Golden Box of Treasures
My Daddy left for me:
A set of glasses
I’m sure he wore to see.

In my Golden Box of Treasures
My Daddy left for me:
A pocket knife he carried as a kid;
And as he aged he used it
To get the dirt from under his nails.

In my Golden Box of Treasures
My Daddy left for me:
A Services Pin, I am sure
It meant the world to him.

In my Golden Box of Treasures
My Daddy left for me:
Memories of his employment
5 – 10 – 15 year pins
To show me he worked
As when I was a kid.

In my Golden Box of Treasures
My Daddy left for me:
A picture of the two of us
And me sitting his knee
With smiles that look like
We just found that
Golden Box of Treasures

My Golden Box of Treasures
Sets on my mantle
For everyone to see
But it’s my Golden Box of Treasures
My Daddy left for me.

Note: The Spring 2001 Waynessence contained an incomplete version of this poem.
"Golden Box of Treasures My Daddy Left For Me" appears here in its entirety. We apologize for the error.
Raja’s Pets

By Stephen Shaum

Raja’s pets hurt it so. Makes the breath of Merlot, cutting the ends of what was.

I never knew this raja pet. It made the Middle East hurt.

The cognition was to jurisdiction. The pet never knew.

The pet hurt. It made its rinds squeal, the back tires fast.

Raja was a hunter. I knew that the pet didn’t mean harm. Raja spelled mistrust.

The jungle was too wide. It eats the easiest.

Raja was a jungle cat.
Thank You
By Carrie Gwin

I would like to say a little thank you to all my family and friends. I want to thank you all for being there to support me and listen to me go on and on when I have a problem, to give me advice of all kinds, to lift me up when I’m down, to give me a shoulder to cry on, to encourage me when I’m unsure, for inspiring me, for making me laugh, for making me feel loved and accepted, for helping make me who I am today. Without all your love support I’d be nothing. I want you to know that if at anytime you need me, I would be more than grateful to return the love you’ve given to me. Thank you – I love you.

Sunflowers
by Sally Krueger
It was the year 1990. It was as if the floodgates had been opened, and I wasn’t prepared for what was about to happen. One of my favorite uncles had passed away. A few months later my stepfather was diagnosed with cancer. I watched as my mother’s life changed from contentment to tears and sorrow, anguish and suffering. Frankie was a good father and husband. Little did I know, in a few months I would be going down that same path. Some days it seems as if it was yesterday. But it was November 1991 when my nightmare began.

My husband Spike hadn’t been feeling good, so he asked if I would make him a doctor’s appointment. He had always been a healthy person, so I knew there was something wrong. A few days prior, my daughter had washed his head for him and found a soft spot like you would see on a baby’s head. When we went in for the doctor’s visit, I was explaining to the doctor what my daughter had found. I asked if it was normal for adult an to have a soft spot. The doctor said it wasn’t and ordered x-rays of Spikes head and chest. The doctor read the x-rays and asked if we could go to the hospital immediately for further tests. As we rode over, it was silence between us, but my mind was racing like a stock market board. The hospital ran more tests then called our doctor to let him know what was going on. The hospital then admitted my husband Spike. I stayed the rest of the evening, then went home. I hardly slept that night. I got up early the next morning and left for the hospital. Dr. Carney came in and spoke with us, and he said he was going to make a small incision on the top of Spikes head so he could run a biopsy. Dr. Carney said he would be back later that day with the results. Thanksgiving was only a week away. Spike and I sat and talked through the afternoon. He told me every thing would be o.k. and we would go home later that day. The doctor came walking through the door, and I could see by the expression on his face it wasn’t good news. It reflected hopelessness. It was like gazing into a tunnel and seeing no light. I could feel the emotions coming through. I felt helpless and alone. The world went dark, as did my mind. It was my worst nightmare, and I was awake. It was like being blind folded and having it torn off, only to see a firing squad in front of you.

Spike had cancer throughout his body, from exposure to “Agent Orange.” At first I was told 6 months. A day later it was 3 months, and a day after that it was maybe a month. I told the doctor I wanted Spike released as soon as possible, so I could get him home and care for him there. Within a few days the word had spread like the disease inside of him. We had family, friends, and co-workers stopping by every day to visit until Spike was too weak. Sprint, the company he worked for, was very supportive. I also had Hospice coming in and out, bringing his medication and answering questions. What a wonderful organization. They were a great help. Food was being brought in every day, and someone was always there to help out in any way they could.

I am sure you can’t understand what it is like to care for someone you love, and watching him or her wither away to nothing day after day, not being able to give them what you want most, their life back. Not unless you have been through it. Keeping my composure together in front of him was the hardest. Whenever I was in front of him, I had to hold back the tears. But whenever I was out of the room, they came as if a faucet had been turned on, and there was no turn off switch. I did what I had to, and it wasn’t easy. I was a knight with armor strong, brave, and fearless when others were around. But by myself I was like a child lost out in the wilderness without anyone. Imagine losing one of the most precious things you love never to see them again,
touch them again, speak to them again, or to Love them. My husband was my life. How does one deal with this? I would question GOD and ask why? Why was God doing this to me? What had I done? Why was he taking this wonderful man from me? I felt resentment in my heart. But as days went to weeks, and I saw Spike so weak lying there not living any more, my selfishness for him subsided. Then out of my mouth words came, asking God to take him. I couldn’t believe what I heard myself asking. I was no longer thinking of myself but of Spike, and I knew he would not want to lie there not living, only breathing. He enjoyed life too much.

On Dec.23, at 5a.m.God answered my prayers. My husband had taken his last breath. I sat there on his bedside before calling the funeral home, reflecting on the whole evening. I repeatedly said, these words I LOVE YOU! In those final minutes I reassured him it was all right to let go, the hardest thing I ever had to do.

We are all given life, but do we live it? Embrace it! And enjoy it to the fullest. All things that live must also die. Most people don’t like to think about death, but we all face it at some point in our lives. When you feel you are having a bad day, just remember there are always people out there having a worse day than you. By chance, if you are wondering how I am doing these days, just look around the halls here at Wayne. I am going on with my life.
Somewhere South of Heaven on
the edge of a highway bridge horizon,
in crucifix-stance balance sways
an angel-faced beauty with
emotion-soaked cheeks,
glistening in the halo-lampposts of
the forlorn-lites that lined the street;
begs she the stars for guidance, while
about her throat, a noose, she ties,
attaching the terminal vertice to
the gallows/guardian rail.
why has this woebegone goddess chosen to
plunge blind-fold and lonesome into
gravity’s solid shore as some
wayward, wounded rose-soul deciding to
detach from the soil which
gave its root true
impulse, once radiant?

BUT WHY?! we do cry.
she be not ugly, but in doubt of it.
so he said her thighs are a little flabby, butt
that doesn’t detract from the entrancing-size
allure pools of her ocean-blush eyes.
(yet she has scratched her final epitaph upon the
bathroom door, her parents might awaken to
find it tomorrow, no more shall she be foiled by
the blood-clot letdown of several yesterdays’
‘raise-her-in-vain’,
‘raise-her-in-vain’,
‘[razor-in-vein]’, aborted
wrist-splice experiments)
she puts one foot forward, and then steps back
to stall for one last breath,
the echoes of an after-sex conversation
lurking in the shadow depths of her
tear-mist beclouded mind.
a squad car arrives four-seconds-to-soon to see
her fall and clench the death-knot.
the rope glows, gill-sick, in the blue-strobe as it
grinds against the barrier pole.
the girl sway-ticks like a pendulum as
her soul exits to dive again.
for her, we cry, because she be
victim of a double
suicide.
And her name was . . .

. . . Ophelia.
"3"

by Abigail Butler

Space

By Josh Porter

As I look into the Heavens
The sun warms my face
The gentle reminders of
How big God is in space
Some offer love, some offer haste
Why are you always taking my place?
Seems good things come in sevens
Or maybe even elevens
I bet you think you have my place
But I say to you . . .
No rock will take my place.
Cups
by Thomas Rezack